

## QUESTIONS REGARDING NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

1. What is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)?
  - a. The main idea underlying the survey is that students who put more time and energy into the activities that matter most to their education (inside and outside the classroom) learn more in college than those who are not as involved. It's all about involvement.
  - b. In the past six years, more than 844,000 students at 972 four-year colleges and universities across the country have reported their college activities and experiences using the NSSE instrument.
  - c. As a result, NSSE is a leading authority on the improvement of undergraduate education, enhancing student success, and promoting college quality.
  - d. The overall national results for 2005 represent 237,000 randomly selected first-year and senior students from 528 four-year institutions across the United States. The national response rate was 37%.
  - e. A total of 478 students responded from VSU (261 freshmen and 217 seniors). This represents a response rate of 31%.
  - f. The survey was available on-line to the randomly selected freshmen and seniors at VSU from March through early May. It takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.
  - g. No individual student responses are ever identified. The survey is completed administered and the results analyzed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research in Bloomington, Indiana.
  - h. The objectives of the survey are to “provide data to colleges and universities to use for improving undergraduate education, inform state accountability and accreditation efforts, and facilitate national and sector benchmarking efforts.” (“Benchmarking” refers to comparing your university’s performance with that of institutions that are recognized as consistently providing a very high quality educational experience for all students.)
  
2. Why did you participate in the survey?
  - a. We wanted to learn more about our students’ educational experiences at VSU and to hear directly from students about the activities in which they routinely engage.
  - b. The results will help VSU better understand to what extent students are involved in the programs and activities associated with a quality undergraduate educational experience. The answers will help faculty and administrators adopt strategies in and out of the classroom to engage students in activities that are most related to student success.
  - c. NSSE will help us understand areas and activities in which VSU excels in comparison with other institutions as well as areas where we can improve.

- d. All 34 University System of Georgia institutions participated in the survey during 2005. This was such an important initiative for the University System that they funded the cost for every institution to participate.
3. What are some of the important findings **nationally** from the 2005 survey?
    - a. The single best predictor of student satisfaction with college is the degree to which students perceive the college environment to be supportive of their academic and social needs.
    - b. Almost half (45%) of all seniors took at least one course from another postsecondary institution prior to enrolling at their current institution.
    - c. At institutions where faculty members use effective educational practices (e.g., frequent feedback and class discussions) more frequently in their classes, students are more engaged overall and gain more from college.
    - d. The 54% of students who took a first-year seminar were more likely to use campus services, were more satisfied with college, and gained more in terms of personal and social development.
    - e. A majority of students (57% of first-year students, 65% of seniors) say they often discuss ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class; more than 9 out of 10 do this at least sometimes.
    - f. One-fifth of all seniors worked on a research project with a faculty member.
    - g. “Disappointing” national findings:
      - i. Less than one-fifth of first-year students expect to spend more than 25 hours per week studying, the approximate amount of time faculty say is needed to do well in college.
      - ii. Between 40% and 50% of first-year students *never* use career planning, financial advising, or academic tutoring services.
      - iii. Transfer students participated in fewer educationally enriching activities.
      - iv. A majority of seniors (55%) say their institution gives very little or some emphasis on encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.
      - v. More than two-fifths of students (36% of first-year and 43% of seniors) spend no time on co-curricular activities.
4. How are the results reported?
    - a. The number and percentage of student responses to each question are reported for VSU as well as for the following comparison groups: students attending Master’s degree category institutions like VSU and all students responding nationwide. (All responses are grouped; no individual student responses are ever identified.)
    - b. In addition, survey questions are grouped into five critical benchmark categories: (1) Level of Academic Challenge; (2) Active and Collaborative Learning; (3) Student-Faculty Interaction; (4) Enriching Educational Experiences; and (5) Supportive Campus Environment.

5. What do the results mean to VSU?
  - a. With relation to the five benchmark categories, responses of both first-year students and seniors at VSU are very comparable to the responses of their counterparts for: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Supportive Campus Environment.
  - b. For Enriching Educational Experiences, VSU's first-year students and seniors responded in a similar manner to students at other Master's institutions.
  - c. For Level of Academic Challenge, responses of VSU students were lower than those of their counterparts both at other Master's institutions and nationally.
  - d. We are very pleased that our student responses are comparable to those of both Master's institutions and national peers for three of the five benchmark categories. This indicates that many good interactions and experiences are occurring throughout VSU's classrooms and residence halls and in service to the community.
  - e. However, our goal is to continually increase student success. Consequently, we will begin conversations about strategies that will further enhance the educational experiences and environment so that, over time, responses for VSU students become comparable to those for the top-ranked institutions.
  - f. The somewhat lower responses on the Level of Academic Challenge benchmark is disappointing, and we know this can improve. Again, specific programs and strategies can be developed to address this finding.
  - g. Some "good news" for VSU:
    - i. 88% of VSU's first-year students and 88% of seniors evaluate their educational experience at VSU as "good" or "excellent." (National norms: 87% and 88%, respectively)
    - ii. 85% of VSU's first-year students and 85% of seniors report that they would "probably" or "definitely" attend VSU again if they could start over. (National: 83% and 82%, respectively)
6. How will we use the results?
  - a. It is extremely important that we turn the results into action. The findings will be shared with appropriate groups across campus, including the Enrollment Management Council to begin the conversations on ways to improve student success.
  - b. Throughout these discussions, it is important to remember that these results reflect only one administration of the survey. It will be helpful to obtain several years of data so that we can distinguish patterns or trends of responses over time.
7. When will we administer NSSE again?
  - a. In Spring 2006. This will offer VSU an opportunity to compare the findings from this first administration with responses from additional first-year and senior students.

- b. As we rotate this survey with other surveys over time, we hope that a random sample of students from each entering class will have an opportunity to participate and help VSU continually improve our educational experiences and activities.