

FSSE 2013 Overview

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) complements the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and is coordinated by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. FSSE (pronounced “fessie”) measures faculty members’ expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of student learning and development. The survey also collects information about how faculty members spend their time on professorial activities, such as teaching and scholarship, and the kinds of learning experiences their institutions emphasize.

FSSE results can be used to identify areas of institutional strength, as well as aspects of the undergraduate experience that may warrant attention. The information can be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students’ educational experiences.

This overview provides general information about the institutions and faculty members that participated in the 2013 administration of FSSE and highlights ways institutions can use their results. It is divided into two sections. In the first section, we compare the characteristics of FSSE participating institutions to those of NSSE participating institutions and those of the U.S. profile of bachelor’s-granting institutions. We also compare the characteristics of FSSE respondents to those of faculty members at U.S. bachelor’s-granting institutions and provide general information about response rates. In the second section, we provide guidelines for using and interpreting FSSE 2013 results and highlight resources for analyzing and presenting FSSE findings. Resources intended to help with the use of FSSE data are also available on the FSSE Web site.

FSSE 2013 Institutions and Respondents

In the 2013 administration of FSSE, 18,133 faculty members responded from 146 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities (141 U.S., four Canadian, and one American university abroad) that selected their own faculty samples. Faculty members at participating institutions were sent email invitations asking them to respond to the online survey. Nearly all FSSE institutions (144) also administered NSSE to their students in 2013; two had used NSSE in a previous year.

Having recent data from NSSE allows participating institutions to examine how faculty members and students respond to similar questions. Each campus receives electronic copies of its reports and data file, along with a list of participating institutions. The list is also publicly available through the FSSE Web site.

The 2013 FSSE administration was the first year that institutions were able to add topical modules and consortium items to the end of the core FSSE instrument. This year, the module on Academic Advising was appended by 47 institutions, Experiences with Writing by 31, Learning with Technology by 21, Civic Engagement by 18, Experiences with Diverse Perspectives by 18, and Development of Transferable Skills by 14; 10 institutions appended consortium items. Institutions could append as many as two modules or a module and a set of consortium questions.

Tables 1 through 3 on the following pages provide more information about the participating institutions and faculty members who responded to the survey. While included here and in each institution’s *FSSE 2013 Respondent Profile*, certain demographics (e.g., gender, rank, and employment status) were withheld from each institution’s data file to ensure that responses remain anonymous.

Profile of FSSE 2013 Institutions

The FSSE 2013 institutions were similar in many ways to the U.S. profile of bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities (Table 1). Like NSSE 2013, however, there are a few places, noted below, where the FSSE 2013 profile differed slightly from the U.S. profile. While these differences exist between the profiles, the distribution of FSSE 2013 institutions reflects a wide range of U.S. institutions, which helps ensure that FSSE results represent a broad cross section of U.S. faculty members.

Carnegie 2010 Basic Classification

Compared to the U.S. profile, FSSE had a larger proportion of Master’s Colleges and Universities (larger programs) and a smaller proportion of Master’s Colleges and Universities (medium programs).

Control

FSSE had a larger proportion of public institutions.

Undergraduate Enrollment

FSSE had a larger proportion of institutions with undergraduate enrollments between 5,000 and 9,999.

Region

FSSE had smaller proportions of institutions in New England, the Great Lakes, and the Far West, and larger proportions in the Plains, Southeast, and Southwest.

Locale

FSSE had a smaller proportion of institutions in cities and a larger proportion in towns.

Table 1
Profile of FSSE and NSSE 2013 U.S. Institutions and All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions^a

Institution Characteristics	FSSE 2013	NSSE 2013	U.S. ^b
Carnegie Basic Classification^c			
Research Universities (very high research activity)	2%	4%	6%
Research Universities (high research activity)	5%	9%	6%
Doctoral/Research Universities	9%	7%	5%
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	33%	30%	25%
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	5%	10%	11%
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	7%	5%	8%
Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences	16%	15%	16%
Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	24%	19%	23%
Control			
Public	39%	39%	34%
Private	61%	61%	66%
Undergraduate Enrollment			
Fewer than 1,000	19%	12%	18%
1,000 – 2,499	31%	32%	33%
2,500 – 4,999	21%	19%	18%
5,000 – 9,999	21%	17%	14%
10,000 – 19,999	6%	13%	10%
20,000 or more	2%	7%	6%
Region			
New England	3%	8%	8%
Mideast	16%	16%	18%
Great Lakes	10%	16%	15%
Plains	18%	13%	10%
Southeast	30%	25%	25%
Southwest	14%	11%	7%
Rocky Mountains	4%	3%	4%
Far West	6%	8%	11%
Outlying Areas	0%	1%	2%
Locale			
City	38%	44%	46%
Suburban	23%	21%	23%
Town	26%	25%	21%
Rural	12%	10%	10%

a. All percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in this table. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

b. U.S. percentages are based on data from the 2011 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics file.

c. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's Basic Classification, see classifications.carnegiefoundation.org

Profile of FSSE 2013 Respondents

Tables 2 and 3 show selected characteristics of faculty members who completed FSSE in 2013. FSSE columns represent faculty members who responded to the FSSE survey and the U.S. columns represent the U.S. profile of instructional faculty and staff at all bachelor's-granting institutions based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Gender

As with NSSE respondents and most other surveys, women were overrepresented among FSSE respondents. This year was the first year female respondents outnumbered male respondents (7,794 females versus 7,525 males).

Table 2
Characteristics of FSSE 2013 Respondents and Faculty Population at All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions

Respondent Characteristics	FSSE Respondents	U.S. ^a
Gender		
Male	49%	54%
Female	51%	46%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	<1%
Asian	4%	7%
Black or African American	6%	6%
Hispanic or Latino	3%	5%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%
White	73%	75%
Other ^b	2%	-
Multiracial	2%	1%
Preferred not to respond ^b	9%	5%
Employment Status		
Full-time	73%	57%
Part-time	27%	43%
Rank of Full-Time Faculty^c		
Professor	26%	26%
Associate professor	27%	23%
Assistant professor	29%	25%
Instructor or lecturer	14%	14%
Other ^d	5%	12%

a. U.S. percentages come from the 2011 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.

b. Category did not exist in the 2011 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component. U.S. percentage for "Preferred not to respond" row is for faculty whose race was "unknown."

c. Rank is not reported in IPEDS for part-time faculty. Among FSSE respondents, most part-timers are either instructors or lecturers (60%) or fall into the "Other" category (15%).

d. Includes instructors with alternative appointment types (e.g., administrators and researchers).

Race and Ethnicity

The racial and ethnic profile of FSSE respondents was similar to that of all U.S. faculty.

Employment Status

A larger proportion of FSSE respondents were full-time faculty members compared to the U.S. profile, which may reflect the decision of some institutions to survey only full-time faculty as well as the possibility that part-time faculty respond at a lower rate than their full-time colleagues.

Academic Rank

FSSE had a smaller proportion of faculty falling into the “Other” category.

Discipline

The FSSE and U.S. profiles by disciplinary area were similar across most categories. A greater proportion of FSSE respondents had appointments in the arts and humanities and a smaller proportion were from communications, media, and public relations and the health professions. These differences likely relate to the types of institutions that participate in FSSE (i.e., the FSSE institutional profile includes only 21 institutions that fall outside the eight categories of the Carnegie Basic Classification, listed in Table 1).

Table 3
Percentage Distribution of Faculty by Disciplinary Area

Disciplinary Area	FSSE Respondents ^a	U.S. ^b
Arts and Humanities	25%	15%
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources	6%	7%
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science	11%	7%
Social Science	13%	13%
Business	11%	8%
Communications, Media, and Public Relations	4%	12%
Education	11%	8%
Engineering	3%	5%
Health Professions	12%	21%
Social Science Professions	5%	4%

a. FSSE distributions based on 15,439 respondents from these disciplinary areas.

b. U.S. percentages come from the 2013 Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.

Response Rates

After adjusting for faculty members who could not be reached (usually because of invalid email addresses), a response rate (total number of responses divided by the total number of faculty members contacted) was calculated for each FSSE institution. In 2013, 43% of the faculty contacted responded to the survey. Response rates at individual institutions ranged from 11% to 88%. The average institutional response rate was 49%.

Using FSSE Results

Before sharing FSSE results on campus, individuals should become familiar with the nature of the data, the reports, and the “story line” of their institution’s performance.

Become Familiar with FSSE Reports and Resources

Each institution receives several reports and a data file that will help individuals better understand their FSSE results. Reports are delivered in the *Institutional Report 2013* binder and are available electronically through the Institution Interface (each campus has up to three representatives who can access the Interface from the NSSE or FSSE Web sites using their own unique username and password). The data file, codebook, list of participating institutions, this overview, and other supporting materials are also available through the Interface.

Institution-specific resources include:

- A *FSSE-NSSE Combined Report 2013* presenting faculty results side-by-side with student results, which allows institutions to identify areas of correspondence.
- A *FSSE 2013 Frequencies* report providing the response percentages for each survey item broken down by the level of the students taught by faculty members.
- A *FSSE 2013 Respondent Profile* report summarizing demographic information from faculty members who responded. Much of this information is not contained in the institutional data file in order to protect respondents’ identities.
- A *FSSE 2013 Administrative Summary* report highlighting important administration details, including details about your sample, response rates, survey customization choices, and recruitment message schedule.
- A data file allowing for additional analyses while still protecting the identity of individual respondents (some demographic data are not contained in the file; see the “Know How FSSE Protects Respondent Anonymity” section below).
- The *FSSE 2013 Codebook* providing details about each survey question, including variable names and response sets.
- Topical Module and Consortium reports providing results for those institutions that administered additional survey items.

In addition, the FSSE Web site (fsse.iub.edu) includes several important documents and resources:

- Facsimiles of the FSSE survey instrument.
- Frequency reports by Carnegie Basic Classification category and disciplinary area based on faculty responses from all participating institutions.

- Topical findings that can be used as examples of different ways to use FSSE data alone (e.g., examining the proportion of class time devoted to lecturing, small group work, and experiential activities by disciplinary area) or in combination with NSSE data (e.g., comparing faculty expectations to faculty estimates and student self-reports of time spent studying). Topical findings can also be used for comparative purposes.
- Examples of how to display FSSE results in tables and graphs.
- A facilitator’s guide to assist in presentations of FSSE findings to campus audiences.
- Examples of how other institutions share their FSSE results with different audiences.

Check Data Quality

An essential early step in reviewing a campus’s results is comparing the *FSSE 2013 Respondent Profile* report with institutional data on faculty. The closer the characteristics match, the more confidence an institution can have that their respondents represent the faculty surveyed.

Another way to gauge data quality is through sampling error, an estimate of the margin by which the “true” score for an institution on a given item could differ from the reported score for one or more reasons, such as differences in important characteristics between the sample and the populations. For example, if 60% reply “very often” to a particular item and the sampling error is +/- 4%, there is a 95% chance that the population value is between 56% and 64%.

Communicate FSSE Results

We offer the following suggestions for communicating FSSE results to interested parties:

- Examine representativeness as described above.
- Check the sample size and sampling error since questions often arise as to whether a small sample adequately represents the population from which it is drawn.
- Use student and faculty matched items to stimulate discussion about student engagement, its relationship to learning, and which engagement activities to emphasize on campus. Faculty and student responses can differ for many reasons. For example, questions for students and faculty may be framed differently (e.g., over an academic year or in a particular course), or FSSE and NSSE response options for a specific item may not match exactly. A strong understanding of the instruments as well as one’s institutional context should help in interpreting differences.

- Meet with those responsible for faculty development and undergraduate improvement initiatives to begin sharing results and discussing ways in which FSSE data can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Use the worksheets in *Working with FSSE* and *NSSE Findings: A Facilitator’s Guide* to help focus these discussions (see the Resources section under the Tools and Services tab on the FSSE Web site).
- Consult *Using FSSE Data* and *Using NSSE Data* (found online or in the User Resources section of the *Institutional Report 2013* binder) for examples of how other institutions use FSSE and NSSE in professional development and assessment initiatives.
- Contact the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice (nsse.iub.edu/institute) for additional ideas about making the best use of FSSE and NSSE results on campus.

Know How FSSE Protects Respondent Anonymity

The FSSE project takes several measures to ensure the anonymity of respondents. For example:

- Each institution’s data file excludes faculty members’ responses to demographic questions such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, number of years as a faculty member, appointment status, rank, and tenure status.
- To mask faculty members’ particular disciplines, disciplines have been collapsed into ten categories (see codebook) which parallel major organizational units on campus.
- Customized reports by faculty demographics are available for institutions wishing to examine FSSE findings while protecting respondent anonymity. Costs for these reports vary by the complexity of the request. Contact FSSE (fsse@indiana.edu) for information.



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