

Engagement Insights

Survey Findings on the Quality of
Undergraduate Education



Annual Results 2019



Has Student Engagement Changed Over Time?

As NSSE Enters Its Third Decade,
We Examine Longitudinal Trends

New Findings About Academic Advising

Quality Matters More Than Quantity

First-Year Students Who Engage Are Likely to Persist

Plus: Reasons Given by Those Who
Considered Leaving...and Left

Quick Facts from NSSE 2019

Audiences

NSSE's audiences include college and university leaders, faculty members, advisors, teaching and learning center staff, assessment professionals, institutional researchers, student life staff, governing boards, students, higher education scholars, accreditors, government agencies, higher education organizations, prospective students and their families, high school counselors, and journalists.

Participating Colleges & Universities

More than 1,600 four-year colleges and universities in the US and Canada have participated in NSSE since its launch in 2000, with 531 institutions participating in 2019. Participating institutions in the US generally mirror the national distribution of institutions in the Carnegie 2018 Basic Classification (Figure 1).

In addition to the participation of individual institutions, state and multi-campus systems may coordinate system-level participation in NSSE. Institutions sharing a common interest or mission also can coordinate to add questions to the core survey through consortium participation.

Participation Benefits

Participation benefits include uniform third-party survey administration with several customization options. Deliverables include a student-level data file of all respondents, a comprehensive report package with results for three customizable comparison groups, major field reports, concise summary reports for campus leaders and prospective students, and resources for interpreting results and using them to inform practice.

Survey

The Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University's School of Education administers NSSE, in partnership with the Indiana University Center for Survey Research. Completed in about 15 minutes, the online survey represents a census or a random sample of first-year and senior students. Institutions may append up to two topical modules to the core survey, permitting deeper examination of particular interest areas.

Key Measures

Engagement Indicators (EIs) and measures of participation in High-Impact Practices (HIPs) (pp. 14–15) summarize key facets of student engagement. Visit the NSSE website for summaries of EIs, HIPs, and individual items. The website also provides access to NSSE publications, examples of institutional data use, lists of participating institutions, and much more.

Validity & Reliability

NSSE is continuously and extensively tested to ensure validity and reliability. The Psychometric Portfolio available on the NSSE website provides more information about NSSE data quality.

Response Rate & Respondents

The average institutional response rate in 2019 was 28%. The highest response rate among U.S. institutions was 67%, and three out of five institutions achieved a response rate of 25% or higher. Unless otherwise noted, the results in this report are based on 281,136 first-year (46%) and senior (54%) respondents from 491 U.S. colleges and universities.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) documents dimensions of quality in undergraduate education and provides information and assistance to colleges, universities, and other organizations to improve student learning. Its primary activity is annually surveying college students to assess the extent to which they engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development.

Use of Student Data

Participating colleges and universities agree that NSSE can use the data for aggregate reporting and other research and improvement initiatives. NSSE may not disclose institutionally identified results without permission. Colleges and universities may use their own data for institutional purposes, including public reporting, which NSSE encourages.

Other Programs & Services

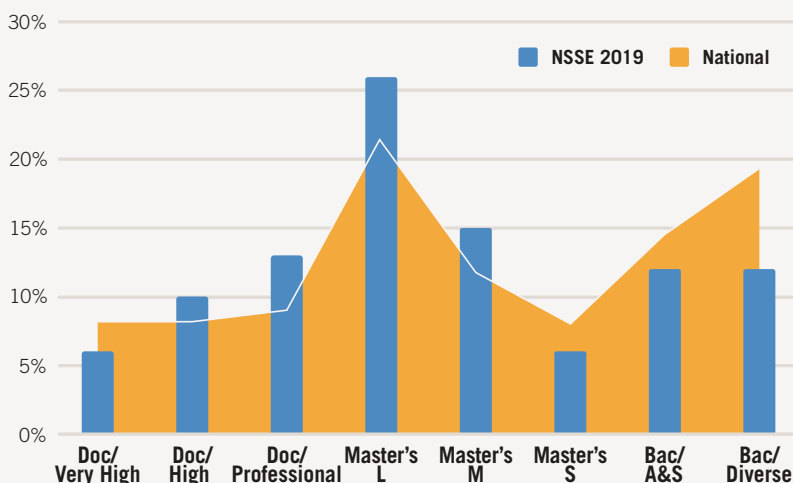
The NSSE Institute offers workshops and webinars, faculty and staff retreats, custom analyses, and consulting. Companion surveys include the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE) and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE).

NSSE Website

The NSSE website includes a participating institution search, sample reports, examples of NSSE data use, access to summary statistics, archived webinars, a research blog, publications, presentations, and more (see p. 16).

nsse.indiana.edu

Figure 1: NSSE 2019 Participating Colleges and Universities



Carnegie 2018 Basic Classification

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Doc/Very High | Doctoral Universities (Very High Research Activity) |
| Doc/High | Doctoral Universities (High Research Activity) |
| Doc/Professional | Doctoral/Professional Universities |
| Master's L | Master's Colleges and Universities (Larger Programs) |
| Master's M | Master's Colleges and Universities (Medium Programs) |
| Master's S | Master's Colleges and Universities (Small Programs) |
| Bac/A&S | Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus |
| Bac/Diverse | Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields |

Percentages are based on U.S. institutions that belong to one of the eight Carnegie Classifications above.

carnegieclassifications.iu.edu

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Seton Hall University

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A Bold Experiment, 20 Years In

A Message from the Director

When the National Survey of Student Engagement launched in 2000, it represented a bold experiment. One can think of that experiment as seeking to answer two questions:

1. If we reframe the discourse about college quality away from reputation and resources to focus on activities and practices that truly matter to student learning and development, will anyone pay attention?
2. If colleges and universities can have valid, reliable data about how much their students engage in those activities and practices, will they use the information to guide improvement?

In that first year, 276 bachelor's degree-granting colleges and universities in 47 states and the District of Columbia signed on. In 2004 the project expanded to include Canadian higher education, starting with 11 institutions in four provinces. By its 20th year, more than 1,600 colleges and universities in the US and Canada had implemented the survey. What's more, seven out of eight institutions from the inaugural year continue to participate, having done so at least once in the last five years. The high rate of repeat participation demonstrates both continued interest in student engagement and the value of tracking it over time.

NSSE has also attracted considerable interest beyond North America, with participation by institutions from 11 other countries as well as authorized countrywide adaptations operating in Chile, China, Indonesia, Ireland, Korea, South Africa, and the United Kingdom plus a large number of single-institution adaptations in other countries. From this evidence, we can confidently answer the first question in the affirmative. Student engagement is an idea that resonates with a wide range of actors with a stake in the quality of undergraduate education,



including faculty members, student affairs professionals, deans, presidents and provosts, board members, and the general public. Its resonance is attributable in part to the deep

research foundation that undergirds it, and also to a palpable hunger for quality assessments that attend meaningfully to the student experience in ways that reputation, student satisfaction, or research prowess do not.

Given the embrace of student engagement as a window on the quality of undergraduate education, the second question is even more important—will colleges and universities use student engagement information to guide improvement? It's easy for us to track institutional participation in the project, but somewhat more complicated to know how institutions use their results to inform practice. Nevertheless, our outreach to participating institutions over the years has resulted in an impressive array of examples of what institutions do in response to results from NSSE and its companion surveys—the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement and the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement. This report includes examples from four institutions: Eastern Connecticut State University, Marian University, Nevada State College, and The University of Tampa. Many more are documented in a searchable database on the NSSE website and in our *Lessons from the Field* series (see links below). These examples offer an unequivocal “yes” in response to the second question posed above.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/DUG
nsse.indiana.edu/links/lessons

Student engagement's resonance is attributable in part to the deep research foundation that undergirds it, and also to a palpable hunger for quality assessments that attend meaningfully to the student experience.

The NSSE experiment would never have gotten off the ground without the generous support of The Pew Charitable Trusts, which underwrote the project's development. That support reflected the vision and creative energy of Russ Edgerton, whose leadership of Pew's higher education program produced an impressive array of interventions to promote and support student learning in higher education.

Celebrating NSSE's 20th!

We are thrilled to commemorate twenty years of NSSE! Since its first national administration in 2000, a large and diverse group of bachelor's degree-granting institutions—from research universities to baccalaureate colleges—have adopted NSSE as an important component of their assessment programs. NSSE has helped focus the national discourse about college quality on teaching and learning and has provided colleges and universities diagnostic, actionable data to inform the improvement of undergraduate education.

Here are just a few of the noteworthy accomplishments in NSSE's history:

- Over 5 million students surveyed
- More than 600 accounts of data-informed institutional action
- 1,654 institutions, with the majority participating on a regular basis
- More than 304,000 faculty from over 870 colleges and universities have participated in FSSE

To plan for NSSE's third decade, we are launching a series of listening sessions and activities to gather input from NSSE institutional contacts, administrative leaders, assessment and institutional research professionals, faculty and staff, and higher education scholars regarding current needs and concerns about undergraduate education and student success. What aspects of student learning and success deserve further study? What is on the assessment horizon? What data needs do you anticipate? How do you expect to involve students in assessment?

We hope to interact with NSSE users at upcoming professional meetings and welcome your input.

Visit our dedicated website “Celebrating NSSE's 20th” to suggest ideas and comment on new developments for NSSE.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/NSSEat20

What began as a bold experiment is now part of the higher education landscape, and is marked by ongoing innovation. This report continues NSSE's tradition of annual publications documenting important new findings related to student engagement and success. Read on to learn about long-term trends in student engagement, the vital role that high-quality advising plays in promoting engagement, and how engagement relates to student persistence.

Alexander C. McCormick, Ph.D.
Director

Selected Results and Institution Stories

In light of our 20th anniversary (see sidebar), our lead story (pp. 4–5) is a look at longitudinal trends in student engagement drawing from annual data averaging more than 300,000 students and 461–725 institutions per year since 2004. The results suggest that colleges and universities participating in NSSE have made concerted efforts to improve in key areas, improvements that are evident in broad, aggregate results throughout the time span. The second story is from our newly updated Academic Advising Topical Module, and examines results from 25,000 students at 57 institutions that used the module in 2019 (pp. 6–8). Results point to an important conclusion—that the *quality* of academic advising is far more important than the number of advising visits. Finally, we share findings on the relationship between student engagement and college persistence from more than 17,000 first-year students at 75 institutions that participated in a grant-funded study (pp. 9–11). Student attrition after the first year is costly for students and institutions, so it is affirming that institutions that engage students in and outside of the classroom may do a better job retaining their students.

Look for the “Faculty Insights”

The faculty insights shared throughout this report come from the 2019 administration of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), based on results from 16,190 faculty from 120 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities in the United States (118) and Canada (2). FSSE measures faculty members’ expectations and practices related to student engagement in educational activities that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. FSSE results, especially when used in combination with NSSE findings, can identify areas of institutional strength as well as aspects of the undergraduate experience that may warrant attention. More information is available on the FSSE website.

fsse.indiana.edu

Institution Stories – Examples of Data Use

Throughout this section you’ll also find four brief examples on how institutions put NSSE data to use. Many more examples are documented in our series, *Lessons from the Field*.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/lessons

“The NSSE survey focuses on the processes that produce the outcomes. That means each campus can really do something with the information it gets.”

RUSSELL EDGERTON, DIRECTOR,
PEW FORUM ON UNDERGRADUATE
LEARNING



Selected Results and Institution Stories *continued*

How Has Engagement Changed Over Time? Longitudinal Trends: 2004–2019

Anniversaries are an opportunity to reflect. As NSSE enters its third decade surveying hundreds of thousands of college students each year, we can take a long look back to examine progress and identify any trends. Much has happened in higher education since NSSE's launch in 2000—the assessment of teaching and learning has advanced, new technologies have transformed our institutions, and perhaps most importantly, more institutions have made a serious commitment to evidence-informed improvement.

Colleges and universities that participate in NSSE deserve credit for taking their engagement results seriously and doing the hard work of changing practice to positively affect the quality of their students' experiences.

NSSE itself has changed over time. Questionnaire items have been added, revised, or dropped over the years – particularly with the major update in 2013 – but a few dozen items have remained unchanged or changed in only minimal ways. We assembled a longitudinal file of these items using data from 1,583 U.S. colleges and universities that participated in NSSE between 2004¹ and 2019. The number of institutions per year ranged from 461 (2004) to 725 (2008), averaging about 580 per year. The total number of respondents from this time period is over 5 million, ranging from 158,943 to 434,149 per year, with an average of 316,770.

We identified three engagement areas that appeared to increase consistently over time, and that did not seem to be affected by the 2013 survey update: first-year interactions with faculty, time spent on academic preparation, and perceptions of the campus environment.

Interactions with Faculty in the First Year of College

Three forms of first-year students' interactions with faculty show notable positive trends: talking about career plans, discussing course topics outside of class, and working with faculty on activities other than coursework (Figure 2). Indeed, the portion of first-year students who interacted frequently (“very often” or “often”) in each of these areas increased by more than 10 percentage points over the time span.

This suggests that by and large, faculty who teach first-year students have devoted more effort to having meaningful conversations with students outside of the classroom—a form of engagement that helps to socialize new students, promotes their persistence, and facilitates their ongoing development. It also suggests that institutions have intentionally structured orientations, career services, and support units to connect students to the resources they most need.

Time Spent in Academic Preparation

Students also appear to spend more time on academic preparation than they did over a decade ago, although this trend appears to have plateaued in recent years (Figure 3). For example, the percentage of first-year students who spent more than 15 hours per week preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework or lab work, etc.) increased from 34% in 2004 to as high as 45% in 2017. Seniors matched this pattern, increasing about 10 percentage points and leveling off in recent years. These increases correspond to as much as two more hours per week for all students on average. Spending more time on academics is a positive outcome, whether the result is from higher expectations, more emphasis on collaborative learning, or wider adoption of new instructional methods such as flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, or real-world applications.

This is an especially encouraging finding, because previous NSSE analyses (NSSE, 2016) found that the average amount of time that first-year students devote to academic preparation is strongly correlated with institutional retention and graduation rates.

Perceptions of the Campus Environment

Finally, two positive trends exist related to perceptions of the campus environment. First, students increasingly rated the emphasis on diverse interactions as substantial (“very much” or “quite a bit”), with the percentage rising more than 10 points for both first-year students and seniors, and most of the increases in the first half of the time span. For example, seniors' perceptions of substantial institutional emphasis on diverse interactions increased from 43% to 55% (Figure 4). Support for helping students manage their nonacademic responsibilities such as work or family increased for first-year students and seniors. For example, seniors' perceptions increased from 23% to a high of 33% before leveling off in recent years. Such results are encouraging considering the changing demographics of higher education, with historically underrepresented and nontraditional-age students enrolling in larger numbers.

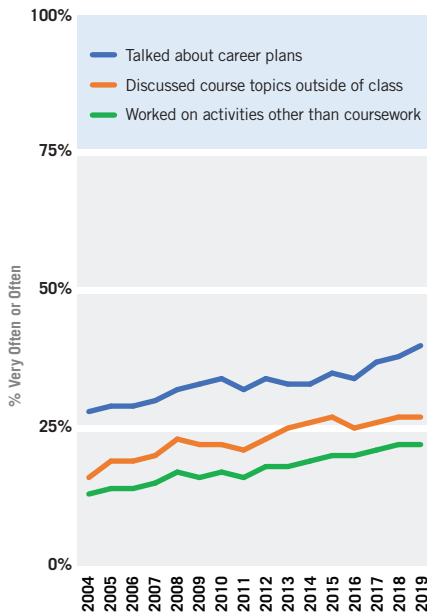
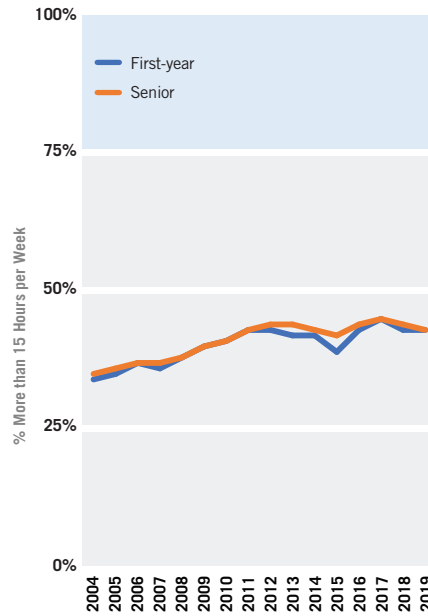
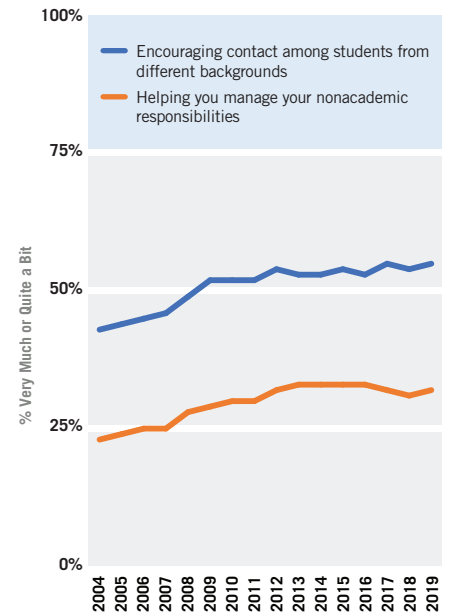
Institutions see improvement in areas that they measure and attend to as a priority. Of course, not everything NSSE measures has increased as much, if at all, but we find it promising to observe growth over 16 years in meaningful interactions with faculty, time devoted to academic work, and supportive aspects of the campus environment. Colleges and universities that participate in NSSE deserve credit for taking their engagement results seriously and doing the hard work of changing practice to positively affect the quality of their students' experiences.

“I have definitely met with each of my professors outside of class time for help or better understanding. I believe this is incredibly helpful. I love my small school and the learning environment it provides.”

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT, EXERCISE SCIENCE,
SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

Notes: These results provide a high-altitude view of engagement trends over time. This analysis examines individual survey questions rather than NSSE's Engagement Indicators because changes made in 2013 preclude tracking multi-item scales over time. The sample of institutions represented in each annual cohort varies. Some question wording changed over the years, especially with the survey update in 2013. The effect of such changes varies, sometimes in unknown ways. The order of questions also changed between the original survey and the 2013 update, which also may affect responses.

1. We selected 2004 as the beginning year for this longitudinal dataset because the NSSE questionnaire underwent several changes in the early years, and the number of participating institutions grew markedly over the same period.

Figure 2: First-Year Students' Interactions with Faculty 2004–2019**Figure 3: Time Spent in Academic Preparation 2004–2019****Figure 4: Seniors' Perceptions of the Campus Environment 2004–2019**

Institution Data Use Story

Telling an Evidence-Based Story of Mission Fulfillment and Educational Effectiveness

Since its founding in 2002, **Nevada State College (NSC)** has focused its attention on fostering an inclusive and innovative educational environment for students. NSC fulfills this mission in part through a comprehensive focus on assessment that includes regular participation in NSSE. NSC has incorporated NSSE in the creation of benchmark comparisons with peer institutions, promotional materials, and the accreditation process. For example, first-year student results that were significantly higher than those at peer institutions on nine of the ten Engagement Indicators helped NSC demonstrate its strong institutional emphasis on academics and supportive faculty. As part of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) accreditation, NSC incorporated NSSE results in its Mission Fulfillment & Sustainability Report to produce a comprehensive portrait of what it means to be a mission-driven institution. NSSE results demonstrated key elements of the mission and were used to inform the identification of quantitative thresholds for determining the fulfillment of objectives. Nevada State College exemplifies how NSSE data can be incorporated into an evidence-based story of institutional effectiveness.

Faculty Insights

Student-Faculty Interaction

How often do faculty say they interact with students on various substantive matters?

Faculty Interactions^a with Undergraduates They Taught or Advised in 2019



68% discussed their academic performance



68% talked about career plans



59% discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts outside of class



40% worked on activities other than coursework

Note: See page 3 for information about the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
a. "Very often" or "Often"

Selected Results and Institution Stories *continued*

Academic Advising: Quality Matters More Than Quantity

The advising needs of new students differ from the emphasis on graduation and post-college planning for seniors, but interactions with advisors and the quality of the advising experience are important for all students. The analyses below examine two characteristics of advising—the number of times a student discussed academic interests, course selections, or academic performance with an advisor and the quality of those advising experiences—among 10,000 first-year students and nearly 15,000 seniors at 55 US and two Canadian institutions.

Frequency of Discussion About Academic Matters

It is generally recommended that students meet with their advisor at least once per semester. It is thus unsurprising that only 3% of first-year students and 6% of seniors never discussed their academic interests, course selections, or academic performance with an academic advisor, faculty member, or a success or academic coach (hereafter collectively referred to as advisor) during the 2018–19 school year. Indeed, more than half of both first-year students and seniors had five or more such meetings (Table 1).

Advising Quality

NSSE's Topical Module on Academic Advising includes 10 questions regarding students' experiences with an advisor, including how much an advisor was available when needed, provided prompt and accurate information, and actively listened to student concerns. We combined these responses for an overall measure of advising quality, and then grouped the scores into four categories ranging from low to high (Table 2).

Table 1: Number of Times Students Discussed Their Academic Interests, Course Selections, or Academic Performance with an Advisor

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 or more |
|---------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----------|
| First-year students | 3% | 6% | 11% | 11% | 13% | 56% |
| Seniors | 6% | 7% | 11% | 10% | 13% | 53% |

Table 2: Quality of Academic Advising

| | Low | Low-Medium | Medium-High | High |
|---------------------|-----|------------|-------------|------|
| First-year students | 11% | 38% | 38% | 14% |
| Seniors | 15% | 36% | 34% | 15% |

Note: Scores were computed for students who responded "Very little" to "Very much" (excluding "Not applicable") on at least six of the 10 items. Students who had no advising meetings were excluded. The 10 items representing advising quality are from question 3 of NSSE's Topical Module on Academic Advising: nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/NSSE_2020_Academic_Advising_Module.pdf

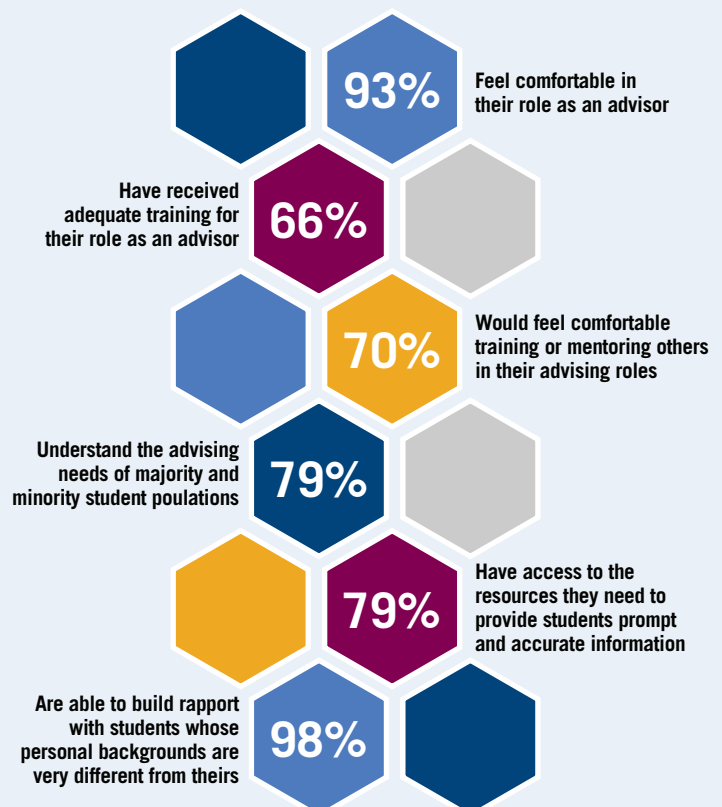
These results reveal that the frequency of advising is not nearly as important as the quality of advising to crucial aspects of student engagement and success.

Faculty Insights

Advising

In 2019, faculty at institutions that used the FSSE Academic Advising module were asked to what extent they agreed with a number of statements regarding the quality of advising. Here's what they said:

Faculty Agreement^a Regarding Advising



Note: See page 3 for information about the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
a. "Strongly agree" or "Agree"

Advising in the First Year

For first-year students, the perception of institutional emphasis on support for academic success and use of learning support services remained nearly constant regardless of how many discussions students had with advisors, but it was positively related to quality of advising (Figure 5). For example, students who experienced high-quality advising reported much higher institutional emphasis on supporting academic success (about 3.5 on the 4-point scale) regardless of the frequency, compared to those who experienced low-quality advising (2.3 to 2.6). We found a similar pattern for institutional emphasis on use of learning support services. This suggests that advising quality matters much more to students' perception of academic support than the number of meetings with an advisor.

Similarly, first-year students' intention to return for their second year showed only a modest relationship with the number of discussions with an advisor, while those who experienced higher levels of advising quality were more likely to plan to return the following year (Figure 6). For example, among first-year students who met 5 or more times with an advisor, there was a 17 percentage-point difference on intention to return between those who experienced high- and low-quality advising (94% versus 77%).

Academic advising for first-year students can also facilitate interactions with faculty. Although Student-Faculty Interaction was nearly constant across the number of advising discussions, it was positively related to advising quality (Figure 7). (See p. 15 for details on NSSE's measure of Student-Faculty Interaction).

“My advisor has helped me discover my artistic talents, challenged my work, and best of all has been my number one supporter. She always makes time to discuss my work and my career goals for after college. I spend the majority of my time in the studio, and would not have it any other way.”

SENIOR, ART AND DESIGN, CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Figure 5: Among First-Year Students, Relationship of Advising Frequency, Advising Quality, and Institution Emphasis on Support for Academic Success

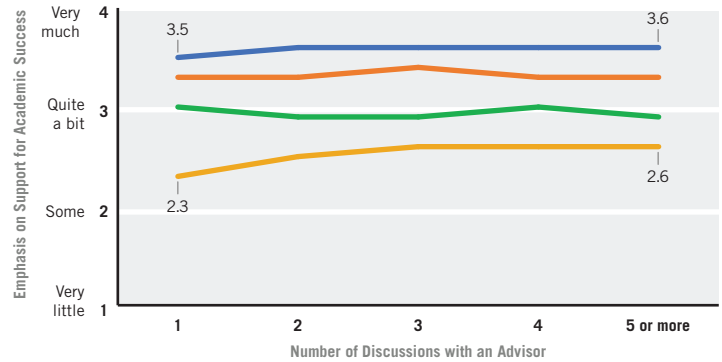


Figure 6: Among First-Year Students, Relationship of Advising Frequency, Advising Quality, and Intention to Return the Following Year

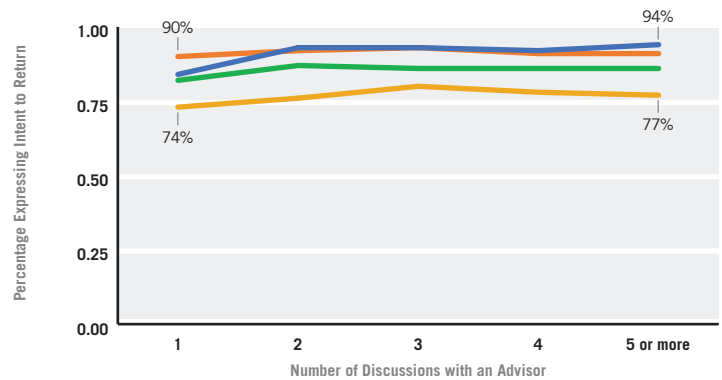
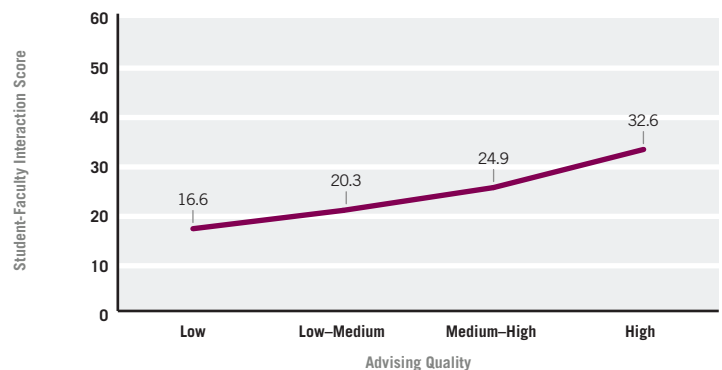


Figure 7: Among First-Year Students, Relationship of Advising Quality and Student-Faculty Interaction



Selected Results and Institution Stories *continued*

Advising in the Senior Year

Career preparation is a major focus for seniors, advisors, and the institution as a whole, and here we found larger differences for advising quality than for frequency. Regardless of how many discussions seniors had with advisors, those who experienced high-quality advising consistently reported that their experience at the institution made a much greater contribution to their job- or work-related knowledge and skills (Figure 8).

Many seniors have obligations outside school, such as work and family that can pose significant challenges to managing schoolwork. Those who experienced higher quality advising were more likely to say that their institution emphasized providing support for managing nonacademic responsibilities (Figure 9).

Conclusion

These results reveal that the frequency of advising is not nearly as important as the quality of advising to crucial aspects of student engagement and success. Though meeting more often with an advisor had some benefits, the strongest and most consistent relationships were with the quality of academic advising. These results demonstrate the importance of institutional efforts to improve the quality of advising at all phases of the undergraduate career. Such efforts involve regular monitoring of students' advising experiences and commensurate attention to advisor professional development to promote high-quality academic advising.

Faculty Insights

Support for Learners

How much do faculty endorse supporting students in their efforts to succeed, maintain health, and thrive socially?

Faculty Views of Importance^a Regarding Increased Institutional Support for Students



92% Providing support to help students succeed academically



88% Providing support for student's overall well-being



87% Students using learning support services



73% Providing students with social opportunities

Note: See page 3 for information about the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)
a. "Very important" or "Important"

Institution Data Use Story

Using NSSE Data in Strategic Decision Making for Advising

In **Eastern Connecticut State University's** NSSE 2010 results, end-of-survey comments clearly indicated that the advising system was broken and that depending on faculty to advise students wasn't working. The survey's hard data were also compelling: only 46% of first-year students and 49% of seniors had talked with a faculty member about career plans. What's more, on a scale of 1=poor to 4=excellent, students rated Eastern's academic advising program only 2.9, significantly below ratings by their peers at comparable institutions.

While the problem itself was clear enough, how to engage faculty in owning and implementing an improved advising model was a challenge. Eastern's President, Elsa Núñez, asked an award-winning professor—who was respected by his colleagues and loved by his students—to join her in promoting the new advising model across academic departments. The plan was for a professional advising office to take over some aspects of advising outside of the faculty's subject matter expertise so that professors could focus on providing students with program- and course-specific counseling and support. Faculty challenged the plan and questioned the findings, but the student voices were hard to ignore and the faculty champion's endorsement was persuasive.

An academic advising committee led by faculty finalized the plan for a multi-tiered advising model. The new structure included a newly staffed office of professional advisors; clear roles for that office and for faculty; and programs to provide advising at four critical stages in a student's time at Eastern: pre-enrollment, first-year experience, choosing a major, and career planning. Eastern even brought advising into the residence halls so that students are "at home" when talking about their academic and career futures.

Using Title III funds as well as other university resources, Eastern invested \$4 million in the new program, and a year after it was implemented student satisfaction rose from 69% to 78%. NSSE data showed that from 2008 to 2012 student ratings increased by 31 percentage points for faculty accessibility, 11 points for Eastern as a supportive campus, and 12 points for prompt feedback from faculty. NSSE 2017 data showed Eastern outperforming its Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges peers with regard to faculty and students discussing careers and topics beyond the classroom. These successes may partly explain why Eastern's retention rose almost 6 points over a decade.



Eastern Connecticut
State University

Figure 8: Among Seniors, Relationship of Advising Frequency, Advising Quality, and Perceived Institution Contribution to Acquiring Job- or Work-Related Knowledge and Skills

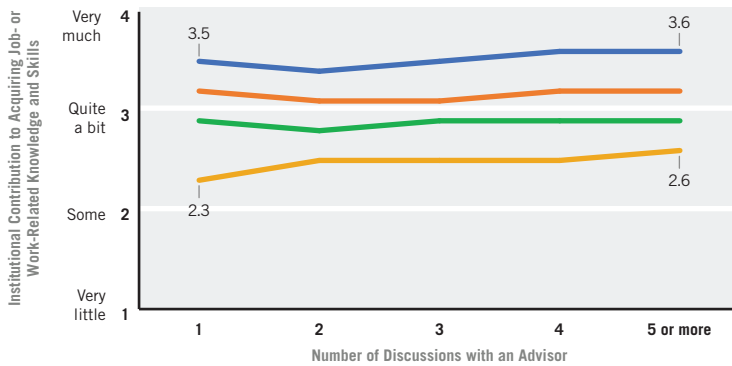


Figure 9: Relationship of Advising Frequency, Advising Quality, and Institution Emphasis on Support for Managing Nonacademic Responsibilities

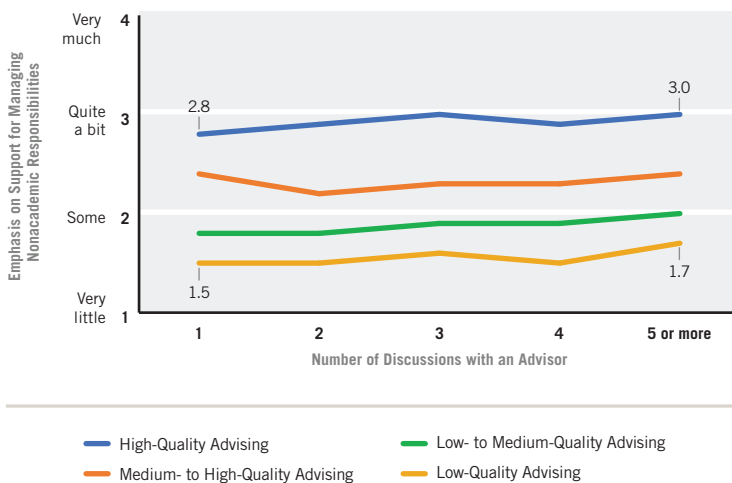
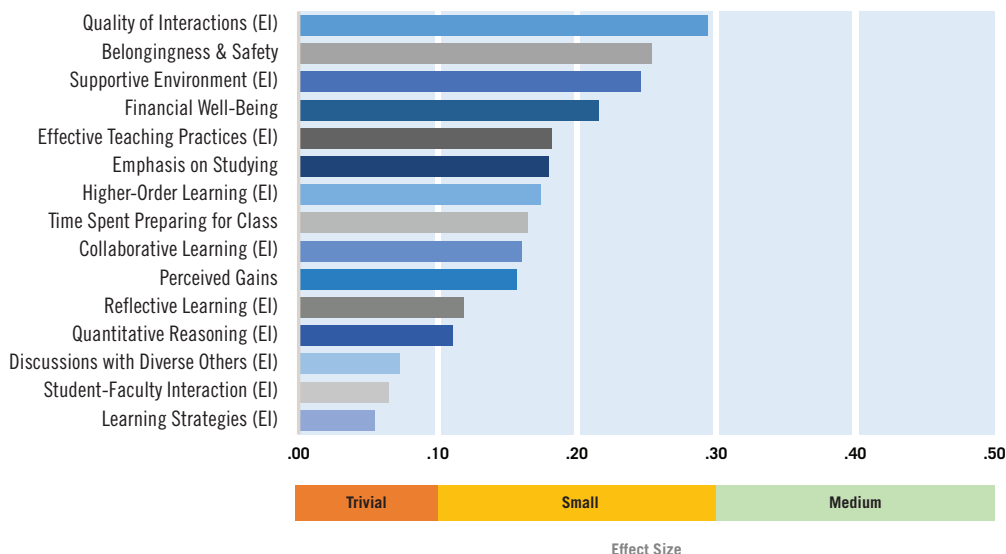


Figure 10: First-Year Student Engagement, Perceived Gains and Experiences, and Their Relationships with Persistence



Notes: Effect size is the standardized mean difference between persisters and nonpersisters. NSSE research finds small effects start at .1, medium start at .3, and large effects start at .5 (see Rocconi & Gonyea, 2018). Belongingness & Safety inquires about feeling comfortable and safe where one lives. Financial Well-Being assesses how financial concerns influence academic and social behaviors in college.

First-Year Students Who Engage Also Persist

Sadly, many college students fail to complete their degrees. For example, only 60% of students entering a bachelor's degree-granting institution earn a degree within six years (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Compared to graduates, students who drop out tend to earn less, are more likely to default on student loans, and have lower life satisfaction on average. Low degree-completion rates are also costly to institutions that invested in students through financial aid and other forms of subsidy, and must recruit new students to replace those who leave. Because colleges and universities can stem the tide of student attrition by emphasizing aspects of the student experience that matter to retention, we examined the relationship between engagement in the first year and a student's likelihood of returning to campus the following fall term.

We obtained student-level persistence data (spring 2018 to fall 2018) for a sample of first-year students from 75 institutions that participated in a study funded by the ACUHO-I Research and Education Foundation examining students' living arrangements. These institutions were diverse in terms of size, sector, student body, and Carnegie Classification, reflecting the diversity of four-year public and private, not-for-profit institutions nationally. Institutional persistence rates ranged from 53% to 98%, with a median of 92%. (These persistence rates are higher than what is typically reported because they focus on spring to fall, not fall to fall, persistence.) We compared persisters and nonpersisters on NSSE Engagement Indicators (EIs; see pp. 14–15), two key academic challenge items, and two factors from the living arrangements study.

Results show that all 10 Engagement Indicators as well as the other four measures were positively related to persistence, but the magnitude of the relationships varied (Figure 10). Among EIs, Quality of Interactions and Supportive Environment had the strongest relationship with persistence, while the differences for Higher-Order Learning, Reflective & Integrative Learning, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning, and Effective Teaching Practices were nontrivial, but lesser in magnitude. Students who persisted also spent more time preparing for class and were more likely to believe their institution emphasizes spending significant amounts of time on academic work. What's more, students who returned to the institution exhibited greater levels of financial well-being as well as belongingness and safety. These results demonstrate the vital role of the student experience in promoting persistence to the second year of college.

Results show that all 10 Engagement Indicators as well as four other measures were positively related to persistence.

Selected Results and Institution Stories *continued*

In addition, we examined potential reasons for departure using data from 17 institutions in the study that also participated in NSSE's First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions Topical Module. This module asks first-year students whether they had considered leaving the institution and if so, to indicate reasons why. Among students who did not return for the second year, the two most-cited reasons were financial concerns and personal reasons (46% and 41% respectively; Figure 11). About one in three cited campus climate, location, or culture, and about one quarter identified inadequate social opportunities, relationships with other students, or "other academic issues" as a reason for considering leaving. Overall, these results highlight the diversity of reasons why students leave college and the need for multifaceted solutions to improve college persistence.

The need to help more students stay in college and complete their degree is ongoing. These results highlight the importance to persistence of aspects of the student experience including high-quality interactions with peers, faculty and administrators, a sense of feeling valued and safe in the community, and institutional support for students' academic and personal well-being. Institutions intent on maximizing persistence and completion would be well advised to monitor and enhance these dimensions of student engagement.

The Relationship Between Persistence and Intention to Return

NSSE does not collect persistence rates as matter of course, but the questionnaire does ask first-year students if they *intend to return* to the institution the following year. However, with persistence data from the housing study, we were curious to know how well students' intentions to return matched their *actual* spring-to-fall persistence. The data included over 17,000 students from 75 institutions who completed the "intention to return" question in Spring 2018, and for whom we obtained Fall 2018 enrollment information (Table 3). Nine in 10 first-year students in this specialized dataset returned to their campuses the following fall, and results show a strong relationship with their intentions as reported in NSSE. For example, fully 95% of those who intended to return actually did so, while nearly two thirds of those who did not intend to return left the institution. Interestingly, students who were not sure whether they would return the following year were quite likely to return (74%). These results give us confidence that—while not a perfect predictor—NSSE's intention-to-return question is an adequate proxy for actual persistence.

Figure 11: Reasons Cited by Nonpersisters for Having Considered Leaving the Institution



Notes: Students who said in the spring that they had considered leaving the institution at any time during the school year were asked to indicate their reasons. Percentages sum to more than 100% because respondents had the ability to identify multiple reasons.

Institution Data Use Story

A Collaborative, Data-Based Approach to Student Retention and Success

Since 2018, **The University of Tampa** (UT) has aimed a laser-like focus on raising the first-year student retention rate. This campaign inspires all campus units to identify how they influence retention and where opportunities for improvement exist, and then to work collaboratively to plan, implement, and assess retention efforts. A key aspect of UT's approach was a deeper dive into data from the perspectives of academic and student affairs and multiple years of NSSE data. Motivation for improvement came from a first-year retention rate 3 to 4 points lower than that of peer institutions. NSSE results provided nuance, for example, demonstrating UT's strengths in student-faculty interaction and students' dedication of time to co-curricular activities and community service. NSSE also pointed to areas for improvement such as support for learning and interactions among students, faculty, and administrators.

UT designed a series of professional development activities, including a day of division-wide focus on retention and student engagement, student affairs exchanges, monthly forums for collaboration across all functional areas, follow-up sessions reinforcing interest in fostering a growth mindset and supporting marginalized populations, and a facilitated dialogue on qualities of High-Impact Practices.

UT's registration task force, a cross-functional group of 22 departments, has focused on what it means to belong. The provost, vice president for student affairs, and vice president for operations and planning have also formalized how they can better coordinate student success efforts, capitalizing on well-established planning and budgeting processes. Although these administrators have long collaborated, the data and professional development suggested they should straighten the paths toward attainment of retention goals.

UT's model inspires student affairs professionals and demonstrates effective stewardship of institutional resources. It also illustrates the importance of hardwiring collaboration into the institutional culture and structure.

Table 3: Persistence Rates by Intention to Return

| Do you intend to return to this institution next year? | Persistence Status | | |
|--|--------------------|----------|-------|
| | Did not return | Returned | Total |
| No (N=667) | 62% | 39% | 100% |
| Yes (N=15,489) | 5% | 95% | 100% |
| Not sure (N=1,156) | 26% | 74% | 100% |
| Total (N=17,312) | 9% | 91% | 100% |

“Meeting with an advisor in the same career field that I want to potentially go into was the most influential experience I've had. She helped me pick an emphasis and minor and begin pursuing a major I'm passionate about.”

FIRST-YEAR STUDENT, PSYCHOLOGY, PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

The University
of Tampa



Selected Results and Institution Stories *continued*

Institution Data Use Story

Assessing Career-Related HIPs

Since 2015, when **Marian University** (Indiana) first administered NSSE and began an institutional effort to increase student participation in internships and field experiences, participation in these career-related High-Impact Practices (HIPs) has grown by 16 percentage points. In NSSE 2019, 82% of Marian's seniors reported participating in an internship.

This program's success has largely been driven by Marian's institutional culture of cross-department support as well as an institutional focus on remaining learning centered. Housed within The Exchange, Marian's career development office, the program comprises an institutional system for internships that includes partnerships between academic departments and the Office of Institutional Research, which oversees the administration of NSSE and strives to make both quantitative and qualitative data accessible to all stakeholders through presentations across campus and intranet access. This extent of access and communication has increased support for more comprehensive HIP programs like the internship initiative.

Marian is also committed to assessment to ensure equity and quality. For example, they plan to examine which students participate in internships and how their engagement outcomes compare to those of nonparticipants. Using the NSSE Report Builder to focus on findings related to internships as well as incorporating other sources of institutional data, The Exchange can help improve HIPs by providing more training and resources for supervisors of internship programs.

Marian University

A Closer Look at High-Impact Practices

Table 4 displays the percentage of all U.S. respondents who participated in each HIP by selected student and institution characteristics. In general, results show the following:

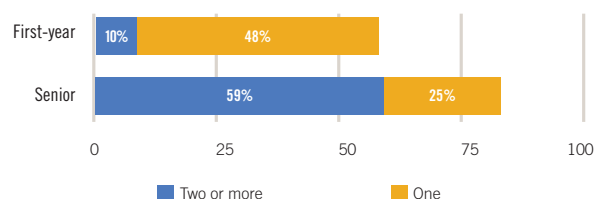
- Seniors at Baccalaureate Arts and Sciences colleges experienced HIPs at considerably higher rates.
- HIP participation showed little variation by sex but did vary somewhat by race/ethnicity, with some students of color less likely to have done research with faculty, study abroad, or an internship or field experience.
- HIP participation was much more common among traditional-age students and those enrolled full time, and somewhat less common among first-generation and transfer students.
- HIP participation varied by major-field category. For example, seniors in the biological sciences (including related fields such as agriculture and natural resources) and physical sciences (including math and computer science) were more likely to participate in research with faculty, while those in education and social service professions were more likely to participate in service-learning.

Are Students Meeting the HIP Challenge?

NSSE recommends that institutions make it possible for all students to participate in at least two HIPs over the course of their undergraduate experience—including one in the first year and another in the context of the major. Figure 12 displays the percentage of students who participated in High-Impact Practices. About 3 in 5 first-year students participated in at least one HIP, and about 5 out of 8 seniors participated in at least two HIPs.

See page 15 for additional information about HIPs.

Figure 12: Percentage of Students Experiencing One, or Two or More, HIPs



Note: All counts include participation in service-learning, learning community, and research with faculty. The senior counts also include internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience.

“The most satisfying element of my experience at OSU has been the opportunity to learn from researchers in my field of interest and participate in actual research.”

SENIOR, BOTANY, OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY

Table 4: Percentage of Students Who Participated in High-Impact Practices by Institution and Student Characteristics

| Participated in High-Impact Practices by Institution and Student Characteristics | | First-Year | | | Senior | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------|------------------------|
| | | Service-Learning | Learning Community | Research w/ Faculty | Service-Learning | Learning Community | Research w/ Faculty | Internship/Field Exp. | Study Abroad | Culminating Experience |
| Institution Characteristics | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carnegie Classification | Doctoral Universities (Very high research activity) | 48 | 15 | 5 | 55 | 24 | 26 | 52 | 18 | 45 |
| | Doctoral Universities (High research activity) | 50 | 14 | 4 | 58 | 24 | 24 | 51 | 16 | 44 |
| | Doctoral/Professional Universities | 53 | 12 | 4 | 59 | 19 | 16 | 39 | 11 | 37 |
| | Master's Colleges and Universities (Larger programs) | 54 | 11 | 4 | 61 | 19 | 19 | 42 | 8 | 41 |
| | Master's Colleges and Universities (Medium programs) | 64 | 12 | 5 | 73 | 26 | 25 | 53 | 12 | 52 |
| | Master's Colleges and Universities (Smaller programs) | 56 | 8 | 4 | 68 | 24 | 25 | 52 | 10 | 50 |
| | Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus | 54 | 9 | 5 | 69 | 30 | 43 | 68 | 36 | 76 |
| | Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields | 62 | 11 | 6 | 74 | 29 | 26 | 54 | 13 | 54 |
| Control | Public | 52 | 13 | 5 | 59 | 23 | 23 | 49 | 13 | 43 |
| | Private | 56 | 11 | 4 | 62 | 21 | 21 | 46 | 14 | 46 |
| Undergraduate Enrollment | Fewer than 1,000 | 66 | 10 | 6 | 75 | 28 | 30 | 61 | 14 | 59 |
| | 1,000–2,499 | 64 | 11 | 5 | 74 | 29 | 31 | 59 | 20 | 60 |
| | 2,500–4,999 | 58 | 13 | 5 | 67 | 26 | 26 | 53 | 15 | 53 |
| | 5,000–9,999 | 54 | 12 | 4 | 62 | 23 | 22 | 48 | 13 | 46 |
| | 10,000–19,999 | 51 | 14 | 5 | 59 | 23 | 21 | 46 | 11 | 40 |
| | 20,000 or more | 45 | 13 | 5 | 54 | 19 | 20 | 43 | 13 | 39 |
| Student Characteristics | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sex ^a | Female | 53 | 13 | 5 | 64 | 24 | 23 | 50 | 16 | 44 |
| | Male | 53 | 12 | 5 | 55 | 20 | 22 | 45 | 11 | 44 |
| Race/Ethnicity or International | American Indian or Alaska Native | 56 | 9 | 3 | 65 | 22 | 18 | 39 | 9 | 42 |
| | Asian | 54 | 12 | 6 | 64 | 23 | 24 | 45 | 13 | 40 |
| | Black or African American | 57 | 13 | 6 | 65 | 25 | 18 | 40 | 8 | 39 |
| | Hispanic or Latino | 55 | 12 | 4 | 63 | 21 | 18 | 41 | 11 | 37 |
| | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | 51 | 14 | 3 | 66 | 22 | 17 | 43 | 14 | 38 |
| | White | 50 | 13 | 4 | 58 | 22 | 24 | 51 | 15 | 47 |
| | Other | 64 | 14 | 1 | 58 | 25 | 19 | 51 | 11 | 50 |
| | Foreign or nonresident | 69 | 13 | 8 | 74 | 22 | 26 | 38 | 20 | 45 |
| | Two or more races/ethnicities | 52 | 13 | 5 | 59 | 23 | 25 | 49 | 16 | 46 |
| Age | Traditional (First-year < 21, Senior < 25) | 54 | 13 | 5 | 64 | 28 | 29 | 59 | 19 | 53 |
| | Nontraditional (First-year 21+, Senior 25+) | 40 | 6 | 4 | 53 | 13 | 12 | 30 | 4 | 30 |
| First-generation ^b | Not first-generation | 51 | 14 | 5 | 59 | 25 | 27 | 55 | 18 | 50 |
| | First-generation | 55 | 11 | 4 | 61 | 19 | 17 | 40 | 8 | 39 |
| Enrollment | Less than full-time | 44 | 6 | 4 | 52 | 13 | 12 | 31 | 6 | 29 |
| | Full-time | 54 | 13 | 5 | 62 | 25 | 25 | 52 | 16 | 48 |
| Residence | Living off campus | 50 | 8 | 4 | 59 | 21 | 21 | 46 | 12 | 42 |
| | Living on campus | 54 | 15 | 5 | 67 | 34 | 34 | 62 | 24 | 59 |
| Transfer | Started here | 53 | 13 | 5 | 64 | 28 | 30 | 59 | 21 | 54 |
| | Started elsewhere | 47 | 11 | 5 | 56 | 16 | 15 | 36 | 6 | 34 |
| Major Category ^c | Arts & humanities | 51 | 12 | 4 | 55 | 21 | 25 | 41 | 21 | 56 |
| | Biological sciences, agriculture, natural resources | 52 | 16 | 8 | 56 | 25 | 46 | 50 | 18 | 45 |
| | Physical sciences, math, computer science | 44 | 12 | 6 | 43 | 20 | 36 | 47 | 13 | 45 |
| | Social sciences | 51 | 12 | 5 | 60 | 20 | 30 | 44 | 19 | 47 |
| | Business | 52 | 11 | 4 | 54 | 18 | 11 | 41 | 14 | 42 |
| | Communications, media, public relations | 53 | 13 | 5 | 64 | 24 | 22 | 60 | 21 | 60 |
| | Education | 61 | 13 | 4 | 78 | 36 | 15 | 68 | 11 | 46 |
| | Engineering | 48 | 16 | 5 | 45 | 24 | 30 | 57 | 13 | 55 |
| | Health professions | 57 | 13 | 4 | 78 | 25 | 19 | 50 | 10 | 36 |
| | Social service professions | 59 | 10 | 5 | 67 | 23 | 15 | 46 | 8 | 38 |
| | Undecided/undeclared | 54 | 8 | 3 | 59 | 10 | 11 | 21 | 3 | 18 |
| | Overall | | 53 | 13 | 5 | 60 | 22 | 22 | 48 | 14 |

Notes: Percentages weighted by sex, enrollment status, and institution size. Participating students are those who responded "Done or in progress" for all HIPs except service-learning, where students reported at least "Some" of their courses included a community-based project. Sex, enrollment status, and race/ethnicity or international are institution-reported variables. For more information on Carnegie Classifications, visit carnegieclassifications.iu.edu.

a. If provided, "Another" and "Unknown" categories are not displayed due to low Ns.

b. Neither parent holds a bachelor's degree.

c. NSSE's default related-major categories, based on students' first reported major. Excludes majors categorized as "all other."

Engagement Indicators and High-Impact Practices

To represent the multiple dimensions of student engagement, NSSE reports scores for 10 Engagement Indicators calculated from 47 questions and grouped within four themes. Additionally, NSSE provides results on six High-Impact Practices, aptly named for their positive associations with student learning and retention.

Engagement Indicators

Engagement Indicators (EIs) provide valuable information about distinct aspects of student engagement by summarizing students' responses to sets of related survey questions.

The EIs and component items were rigorously tested both qualitatively and quantitatively in a multiyear effort that included student focus groups, cognitive interviews, and two years of pilot testing and analysis. As a result, each EI provides valuable, concise, actionable information about a distinct aspect of student engagement.

| Theme | Engagement Indicator |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Academic Challenge | Higher-Order Learning |
| | Reflective & Integrative Learning |
| | Learning Strategies |
| | Quantitative Reasoning |
| Learning with Peers | Collaborative Learning |
| | Discussions with Diverse Others |
| Experiences with Faculty | Student-Faculty Interaction |
| | Effective Teaching Practices |
| Campus Environment | Quality of Interactions |
| | Supportive Environment |

EI Component Items

Theme: Academic Challenge

Higher-Order Learning

During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following:

- Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations
- Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts
- Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source
- Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information

Reflective & Integrative Learning

During the current school year, how often have you

- Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments
- Connected your learning to societal problems or issues
- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments
- Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue
- Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective
- Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept
- Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge

Learning Strategies

During the current school year, how often have you

- Identified key information from reading assignments
- Reviewed your notes after class
- Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials

“The comparative data is some of the most actionable data we have gathered.”

MAURI S. PELTO, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, NICHOLS COLLEGE

Quantitative Reasoning

During the current school year, how often have you

- Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)
- Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)
- Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

Theme: Learning with Peers

Collaborative Learning

During the current school year, how often have you

- Asked another student to help you understand course material
- Explained course material to one or more students
- Prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students
- Worked with other students on course projects or assignments

Discussions with Diverse Others

During the current school year, how often have you had discussions with people from the following groups:

- People from a race or ethnicity other than your own
- People from an economic background other than your own
- People with religious beliefs other than your own
- People with political views other than your own

Available on the NSSE Website:

The **NSSE Report Builder**—an interactive tool that displays results by user-selected student and institutional characteristics. There is both a *public* version (accessible to anyone) and a secure *institution* version (for participating institutions to run customized reports using their own data).

nsse.indiana.edu/links/report_builder

Hope College

Theme: Experiences with Faculty

Student-Faculty Interaction

During the current school year, how often have you

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.)
- Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member

Effective Teaching Practices

During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following:

- Clearly explained course goals and requirements
- Taught course sessions in an organized way
- Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
- Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress
- Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments

Theme: Campus Environment

Quality of Interactions

Indicate the quality of your interactions with the following people at your institution:

- Students
- Academic advisors
- Faculty
- Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
- Other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

Supportive Environment

How much does your institution emphasize the following:

- Providing support to help students succeed academically
- Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)
- Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially
- Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues

High-Impact Practices

High-Impact Practices (HIPs) represent enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing. They typically demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and other students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback.

NSSE founding director George Kuh recommends that all students participate in at least two HIPs over the course of their undergraduate experience—one during the first year and one in the context of their major.

NSSE reports student participation in six HIPs (see below), including first-year students' plans to participate in internships, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences.

High-Impact Practices

Service-Learning

About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?^a

Learning Community

Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together^b

Research with Faculty

Work with a faculty member on a research project^b

Internship or Field Experience

Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement^b

Study Abroad

Participate in a study abroad program^b

Culminating Senior Experience

Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)^b

a. Response options: "All," "Most," "Some," and "None"

b. Stem question: "Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?" Response options: "Done or in progress," "Plan to do," and "Do not plan to do," "Have not decided"

Resources Available Online

To support efforts to improve undergraduate education, NSSE provides multiple tools and resources—including those listed below—to participating institutions and others interested in utilizing engagement data.

Lessons from the Field

Volume 4 highlights examples of data-informed improvement and how institutions are using NSSE results to enhance undergraduate teaching and learning. Dispatch 1 (released in August 2019) is the first supplement to the series. View stories from institutions in the series on the NSSE website:

nsse.indiana.edu/links/lessons

Data Use in Brief

These briefs present themed summaries—Topical Modules, High-Impact Practices, Specific Student Populations, and Educational Practices—illustrating how institutions have used student engagement results to inform efforts to enhance undergraduate education.

nsse.indiana.edu

How Institutions Use NSSE

A searchable database featuring hundreds of examples of how colleges and universities have used NSSE, FSSE, and BCSSE data is available:

nsse.indiana.edu/links/use_examples

NSSE Data User's Guide

This ready-to-use resource assists campus leaders in sharing results and facilitating workshops, presentations, and discussions about their findings. The guide includes worksheets and exercises to identify priorities for action and to generate productive, campuswide conversations about using data for improvement.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/DUG

Inclusive Data Sharing and Analysis

Designed to help campuses work with data from small student populations, this guide offers tips and resources for analyzing and comparing the experiences reported by these students.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/smallpop

NSSE Item Campuswide Mapping

This tool connects NSSE items to institutional departments, units, committees, functional areas, and interest groups, and encourages institutions to think more broadly about how engagement data can be shared and used campuswide.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/item_mapping

Webinars

Live webinars are offered for faculty, administrators, institutional researchers, and student affairs professionals, and all are recorded and available in NSSE's Webinar Archive. Topics include tips for data use and sharing, interpreting results, ideas for a successful survey administration, trends in engagement research, and much more.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/webinar

Summary Tables

Annual survey responses as well as scores for Engagement Indicators and High-Impact Practices are available by Carnegie Classification, sex, and related-major category:

nsse.indiana.edu/links/summary_tables

NSSE Report Builder

This interactive tool displays NSSE results by user-selected student and institutional characteristics. Two versions are available:

- The *Public Version* is for media, institutions, researchers, and others interested in unidentified, aggregated results.
- The *Institution Version* is for participating institutions to create tailored reports using their own NSSE data.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/rb_intro



NSSE Sightings

NSSE Sightings is a blog by staff featuring publications, conference presentations, and other findings about student engagement.

nssesightings.indiana.edu

Publications and Presentations

NSSE staff actively conduct and present scholarly research on students, faculty, and institutional quality. One salient example is the chapter by McCormick, Kinzie, and Gonyea, “Student Engagement: Bridging Research and Practice to Improve the Quality of Undergraduate Education,” in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, Vol. 28 (2013, Springer). For a full list of NSSE-related research articles, book chapters, conference presentations, and other works, visit the searchable database:

nsse.indiana.edu/links/pubs

Psychometric Portfolio

Studies of validity, reliability, and other indicators of NSSE data—including breakdowns by a variety of student and institutional characteristics—are detailed in this resource.

nsse.indiana.edu/links/PP

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Glossary of Terms

Belongingness & Safety: A scale of six items from a set of questions designed for a special study of student living arrangements in 2018 that asks students about their physical safety, freedom from harassment and discrimination, feeling comfortable “being myself,” feeling valued, feeling a sense of community, and ability to resolve conflicts where they live.

Effect Size: An estimate of the practical importance of an observed difference or relationship, often used to complement statistical significance. As in this report, effect sizes can be standardized mean differences (mean difference divided by the standard deviation) or standardized regression coefficients. When comparing means, NSSE classifies effects based on their magnitude as follows: small ≥ 0.1 ; medium ≥ 0.3 ; and large ≥ 0.5 (Rocconi & Gonyea, 2018).

Engagement Indicator (EI): See pp. 14–15.

Financial Well-Being: A scale of five items from a set of questions designed for a special study of student living arrangements in 2018. The scale asks students how often they worried about meeting regular expenses, worried about paying for college, refrained from activities due to lack of money, chose not to buy academic materials due to cost, and skipped meals due to lack of funds.

Intention to Return: NSSE asks the following question only of first-year students: “Do you intend to return to this institution next year?” (Response options: Yes, No, Not sure)

Perceived Gains: A set of NSSE questions that ask how much students believe their experience at the institution contributed to their knowledge and development in various outcomes such as writing and speaking clearly, thinking critically, working effectively with others, etc.

Statistical Controls or Control Variables: Variables used in statistical models to limit the influence of confounding factors. For example, a model examining the impact of learning strategies on grades might control for major to account for different grading practices across majors.

For further explanation of statistical methods and terminology, refer to: journalistsresource.org/tip-sheets/research/statistics-for-journalists

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