

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Spring 2015 Administration

THE UNIVERSITY OF SCRANTON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH OFFICE

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Executive Summary

The University of Scranton administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-year and senior students during spring 2015. Scranton collected 449 responses for a 20% overall response rate (first-year plus senior). Survey items represent empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education which promote student engagement. NSSE questions are categorized into four (4) themes including ten (10) areas of engagement.

Theme	Engagement Indicators
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

Listed below are several observations from the 2015 NSSE responses.

- Diversity Students reported limited opportunities for discussions with diverse others, including in course discussions or assignments, along with opportunities for discussions with people with different religious beliefs.
- High-Impact Practices (HIPs) First-year student participation in HIPs, including participation in a community-based project (service-learning) is at a high level. Student participation in a second HIP by senior year could be higher, particularly in study abroad and culminating senior experiences.
- Campus Environment Students rate favorably many areas related to the quality of interactions and a supportive environment at Scranton.
- Satisfaction Although overall satisfaction for both first-year and senior students is high (96% and 95%), the percentage of seniors that say they would definitely or probably attend Scranton again is much lower than that of first-year students (91% vs 81%).



Introduction

The University of Scranton administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to first-year and seniors students during spring 2015. This is Scranton's fifth NSSE administration with 2012, 2010, 2008, and 2005 as the other administration years. Survey items represent empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. That is, they reflect behaviors by students and institutions that are associated with desired outcomes of college. NSSE doesn't assess student learning directly, but survey results point to areas where colleges and universities are performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved (NSSE, 2015).

The NSSE launched its first survey in 2000, and after years of evidence-based and collaborative testing, an updated NSSE survey was administered in 2013. While changes range from minor adjustments to entirely new content, the survey maintains NSSE's signature focus on diagnostic and actionable information related to effective educational practice (NSSE, 2015).

The 2015 NSSE administration collected 300,543 student surveys representing 541 institutions with an average response rate of 29%. Scranton collected 449 responses for a 20% overall response rate (first-year plus senior).

Additional Reports

Two additional modules: *Development of Transferable Skills* and *First-Year Experience and Senior Transitions*, and the *Major Field Reports*, will be available spring 2016 under separate cover. Scranton faculty also participated in the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), the accompanying survey to the NSSE, spring 2015. These results will also be disseminated spring 2016.

Methodology

The research design and data collection methods for this survey were approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) of Indiana University and the University of Scranton. The population surveyed included all first-year and senior students, totaling 2,270 (1,283 first-year, 987 seniors). The initial survey invitation was emailed from Father Quinn, S.J., President, University of Scranton, with four (4) reminder emails from NSSE over the course of the spring semester. All surveys were submitted using the NSSE online portal, and a Starbucks[™] gift card was offered as an incentive.

2015 NSSE	First-Year	Senior
Survey sample	1283	987
Total respondents	258	191
Response rate	20%	19%



Response Rates and Sampling Error

As shown in the chart below, Scranton's response rate was lower for both first-year and senior students as compared to our Peer Aspirant, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups. Moreover, our sampling error was much larger than all three comparison groups. Therefore, no conclusions should be made from these data, but should provide a starting point for further discussion and study of particular areas and issues important to the University.

First-Year				Sei	nior				
	Scranton	Peer Aspirant	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2014 & 2015		Scranton	Peer Aspirant	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2014 & 2015
Response Rate	20%	26%	21%	22%		19%	30%	24%	25%
Sampling Error	+/-5.5%	+/-1.2%	+/-0.3%	+/0.2%		+/- 6.4%	+/-1.1%	+/-0.3%	+/0.2%

Note: Sampling error, also called 'margin of error,' is an estimate of the amount the true score on a given item could differ from the estimate based on a sample. For example, if the sampling error is +/- 5% and 40% of your students reply "Very Often" to a particular item, then the true population value is most likely between 35% and 45%.

Proportional Representativeness & Weighting

Proportional representativeness relates to the extent to which respondent demographics match those of the population. NSSE adds a weight/multiplier to gender and enrollment status (full-time) to adjust the results in a statistically meaningful way. NSSE weighs its data by gender and enrollment, not only because females and full-time students respond at higher rates, but also because they respond differently to important NSSE measures (Gonyea, et. al).

It should be noted that a 2008 study by NSSE examined whether only 'highly engaged' students responded to the NSSE survey, hence over-representing the level of engagement. Researchers found levels of engagement had no effect whether a student responds to the NSSE survey (Gonyea, et. al).

Statistical Significance & Effect Size

In addition to overall comparisons, statistical significance and effect size are discussed in this report. Significance in this report refers to the difference in the means and is a result that is not likely to occur randomly.

Effect size indicates the practical importance, or magnitude, of observed differences. For Engagement Indicator comparisons, NSSE research has concluded that an effect size of about 0.1 may be considered small, 0.3 medium, and 0.5 large. NSSE research finds for service-learning, internships, study abroad, and culminating senior experiences, an effect size of about 0.2 may be considered small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 large. For learning community and research with faculty, an effect size of about 0.1 may be considered small, 0.3 medium, and 0.5 large (Rocconi & Gonyea, 2015).

This report highlights comparisons of at least a p < 0.05 and 0.3 or greater effect size.



Theme & Engagement Indicators (EI)

Peer/Aspirant, Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 & 2015 Comparisons

Theme	EI	Peer Aspirant	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2014 & 2015	
	Higher-Order Learning	_	合		>
Academic	Reflective & Integrative Learning	_		_	
Challenge	Learning Strategies	仑	$\mathbf{\hat{C}}$		
	Quantitative Reasoning	_	_		
Learning with	Collaborative Learning				>
Peers	Discussions with Diverse Others				
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction		$\widehat{1}$	$\hat{\mathbf{r}}$	>
	Effective Teaching Practices				>
Campus	Quality of Interactions	仓		1	$\overline{}$
Environment	Supportive Environment	仓			

First-Year Students

 \bigcirc Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size of at least 0.3.

The chart above displays NSSE Themes and Engagement Indicators (EI) of Scranton's **first-year students** compared with first-year students in our Peer Aspirant, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups. Arrows represent significant differences (both positive and negative) between Scranton and the comparison groups. Scranton's average was significantly higher than our Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups in the same 7 out of 10 Engagement Indicators. As compared to our Peer Aspirant group, Scranton's average was significantly higher in only 3 Engagement Indicators.

The shaded arrows show significance with a higher effect size, and these are the areas that should be of particular focus. The theme of *Campus Environment*, which includes *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment*, is an area where the University rated significantly higher than all groups. The University should continue to reinforce its good practices related to this theme.



Four areas worth exploring are *Higher-Order Learning, Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interactions* and *Effective Teaching Practices.* Although these areas show Scranton having a significantly higher level compared to Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 & 2015, no significant difference is observed between Scranton and our Peer Aspirant group. The chart below shows NSSE Themes and Engagement Indicators (EI) of Scranton's **senior students** compared to seniors in our Peer Aspirant, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups. Scranton seniors rate significantly higher on only 4 out of 10 Engagement Indicators when compared to our Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups. More concerning, however, is that Scranton seniors rate significantly lower than both the Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups in *Discussions with Diverse Others*. Also, Scranton seniors rate higher than our Peer, Aspirant Group in only one category – *Quality of Interactions*.

Again, areas containing dark arrows show significance and effect size and should remain areas of focus. Both *Collaborative Learning* and *Student-Faculty Interaction* were rated significantly higher than our Carnegie Class and NSSE 2014 &2015 groups.

Theme	EI	Peer Aspirant	Carnegie Class	NSSE 2014 & 2015
	Higher-Order Learning	_		—
	Reflective &			
Academic	Integrative			_
Challenge	Learning			
	Learning Strategies			
	Quantitative			
	Reasoning	—		
	Collaborative			
Learning with	Learning			\rightarrow
Peers	Discussions with			
	Diverse Others	—		
	Student-Faculty			
Experiences with	Interaction	—		
Faculty	Effective Teaching			
	Practices	\frown		—
	Quality of	(\land)		
Campus	Interactions			
Environment	Supportive	(-)		$\land \neg \neg$
	Environment			

Senior Students

 \Box Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

Scranton's average is significantly lower (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size of at least 0.3.

The next logical examination of these data after observable differences in first-year and senior students when compared to Peers, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2014 & 2015 groups is to compare Scranton's first-year to senior students. Most observable is the number of EIs present in the first-year group decreases in the senior group. The first-year students rate 17 EIs that are higher, whereas the seniors rate only 9, plus 2 now show a significant decrease. It is suggested that the University review each theme and corresponding EI to determine which would be considered 'acceptable' or 'reasonable' levels and then focus on areas where we compare lower or not all. One area, *Quality of Interactions*, shows a higher than average level of significance when compared to all three groups.



Theme & Engagement Indicators (EI)

High-Performing Institutions

Theme	EI	NSSE Top 50%	NSSE Top 10%
	Higher-Order Learning		
Academic Challenge	Reflective & Integrative Learning	$\mathbf{\nabla}$	$\overline{\Box}$
ge	Learning Strategies		_
	Quantitative Reasoning	_	\mathbf{r}
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning		
•	Discussions with Diverse Others	\mathbf{c}	
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction		\mathbf{r}
	Effective Teaching Practices		$\overline{\nabla}$
Campus	Quality of Interactions		
Environment	Supportive Environment	$\widehat{\mathbf{L}}$	_

First-Year Students

 \bigcirc Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

 \clubsuit Scranton's average is significantly lower (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

The charts above and below compare Engagement Indicators (EI) of Scranton compared to high-performing institutions. In the chart above, Scranton's **first-year students** are compared with first-year students in NSSE's Top 50% and Top 10%. Scranton's average rate is significantly higher than that of the NSSE Top 50% in the theme of *Campus Environment* which includes both *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment*. However, Scranton's average is significantly lower in *Reflective & Integrative Learning* and *Discussions with Diverse Others*.

When compared to NSSE Top 10%, Scranton is significantly lower in 6 EIs, 2 of which have an observable effect size – *Higher-Order Learning* and *Discussions with Diverse Others*.

Looking at the **senior student** comparisons in the chart below, Scranton's average level is higher than the Top 50% in *Collaborative Learning*, but lower in 3 other EIs (*Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies*, and *Discussions with Diverse Others*). Again, there's a significant difference and observable effect size in *Discussions with Diverse Others*. Compared to the Top 50%, Scranton's average was significantly lower in 7 EIs, with Reflective & Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, and Discussions with Diverse Others as significant with an observable effect size.



Senior Students					
Theme	EI	NSSE Top 50%	NSSE Top 10%		
	Higher-Order Learning Reflective & Integrative Learning				
Academic Challenge	Learning Strategies				
	Quantitative Reasoning	_	₹ Ţ		
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning				
	Discussions with Diverse Others				
Experiences with	Student-Faculty Interaction	_	\mathbf{r}		
Faculty	Effective Teaching Practices	_	\mathbf{r}		
Campus	Quality of Interactions		_		
Environment	Supportive Environment				

 \clubsuit Scranton's average is significantly lower (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

\pm Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size of at least 0.3.

Scranton's average is significantly higher (p<0.05) with effect size less than 0.3.

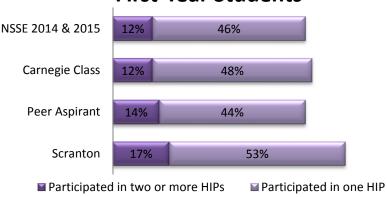
Overall trends comparing Scranton's first-year to senior students show several differences. First-year students showed a significantly lower difference in 8 EIs and only two significantly higher. The senior students showed a significantly lower difference in 10 EIs and only 1 significantly higher. Although many of the individual EIs changed in significance (+ or -), some continue to trend one way or the other. *Reflective & Integrative Learning* and *Discussions with Diverse Others* both show lower significance levels. Another observation is that first-year students rated *Campus Environment,* which includes *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment,* at a high level of significance whereas none was shown by the seniors. Conversely, there was no significate difference detected by first-year students for *Collaborative Learning* as rated high by seniors.



High-Impact Practices

High-Impact Practices (HIPS) represent enriching educational experiences that can be life-changing. HIPs are techniques and designs for teaching and learning that have proven to be beneficial for student engagement and successful learning among students from many backgrounds. Through intentional program design and advanced pedagogy, these types of practices can enhance student learning and work to narrow gaps in achievement across student populations.

Both first-year and senior students include participation in a learning community, service-learning, and research with faculty as a HIP. The senior students also include participation in an internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience. Among first-year students participation in HIPs was higher at Scranton as compared to all other groups - between 10% and 12% higher.

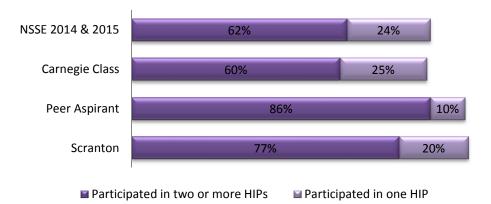


First-Year Students

NSSE founding director George Kuh (Kuh, 2008) 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.

Overall, Scranton students participate in HIPs more often than our comparisons groups. However, seniors in our Peer Aspirant group participates more often in 2 or more activities as compared to Scranton (77% vs. 86%)







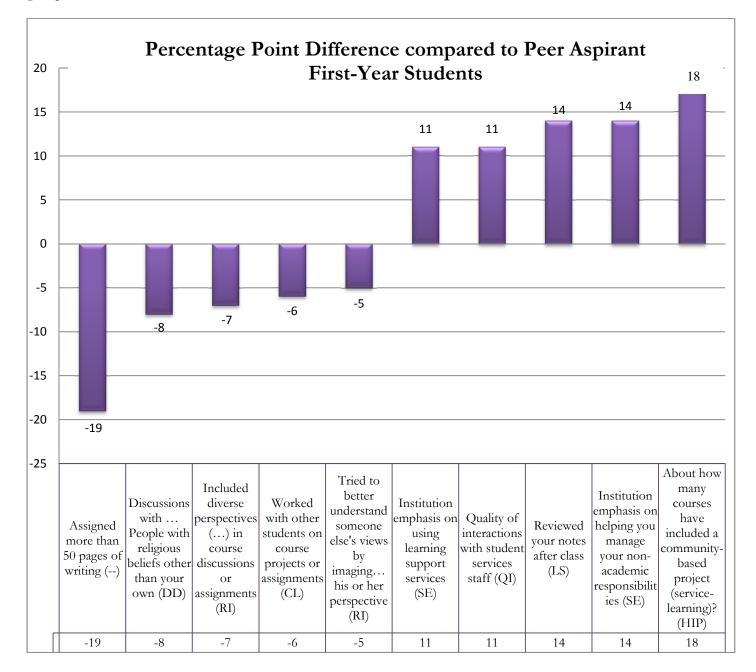
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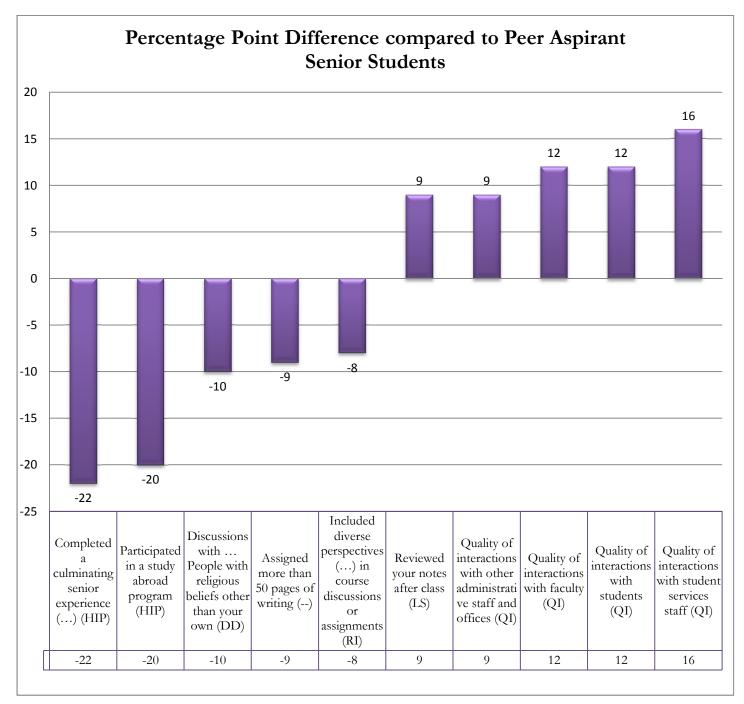
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Individual Question Comparisons

By examining individual NSSE questions, we can better understand what contributes to Scranton's performance on Engagement Indicators (EI) and High Impact Practices (HIPs). This section discusses the five questions which Scranton's first-year and senior students scored the highest and lowest, relative to students in our peer aspirant group.







In the 2 graphs above, the 5 questions to the right on each graph represent areas where the University shows an increase compared to our Peer Aspirant group, and should continue to reinforce these good practices. The five questions on the left of the graphs represent areas in which the University should focus more attention to improve student engagement.



Largest Percentage Point Differences (Areas for Improvement)

- Both first-year and senior students
 - assigned more than 50 pages of writing (--)
 - o discussions with...people with religious beliefs other than your own (DD)
 - o included diverse perspectives (...) in course discussions or assignments (RI)
- first-year students
 - worked with other students on course projects or assignments (CL)
 - o tried to better understand someone else's views by imaging... his or her perspective (RI)
- seniors students
 - completed a culminating senior experience (...) (HIP)
 - participated in a study abroad program (HIP)

Smallest Percentage Point Differences (Areas to Reinforce)

- Both first-year and senior students
 - o quality of interactions with student services staff (QI)
 - reviewed your notes after class. (LS)
- first-year students
 - o institution emphasis on using learning support services,
 - o institution emphasis on helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (SE)
 - o how many courses have included a community-based project (service-learning) (HIP)
- senior students
 - o interactions with other administrative staff, faculty, and students (QI)

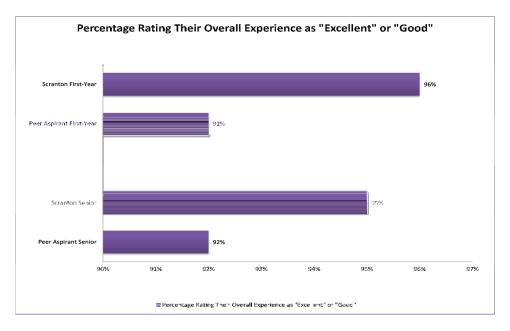
Engagement Indicator and High-Impact Practices Key

- (HIP) High-Impact Practice
- (DD) Discussions with Diverse Others
- (RI) Reflective & Integrative Learning
- (QI) Quality of Interactions
- (LS) Learning Strategies
- (CL) Collaborative Learning
- (SE) Supportive Environment
- (---) No Assigned EI

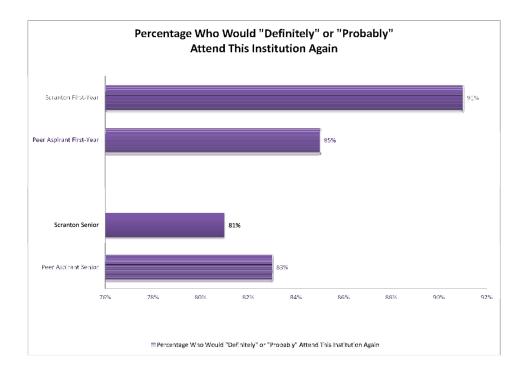


Overall Satisfaction

Both first-year and senior students at Scranton rated their overall experience as 'Excellent' or 'Good' higher than our Peer Aspirant group; although the percentage did decrease by 1% between first-year and seniors (96% vs. 95%).



Ninety-one (91%) percent of Scranton's first-year students said they would "Definitely" or "Probably" attend Scranton again. However, this dropped to 81% for our seniors – even lower than our Peer Aspirant average (83%).



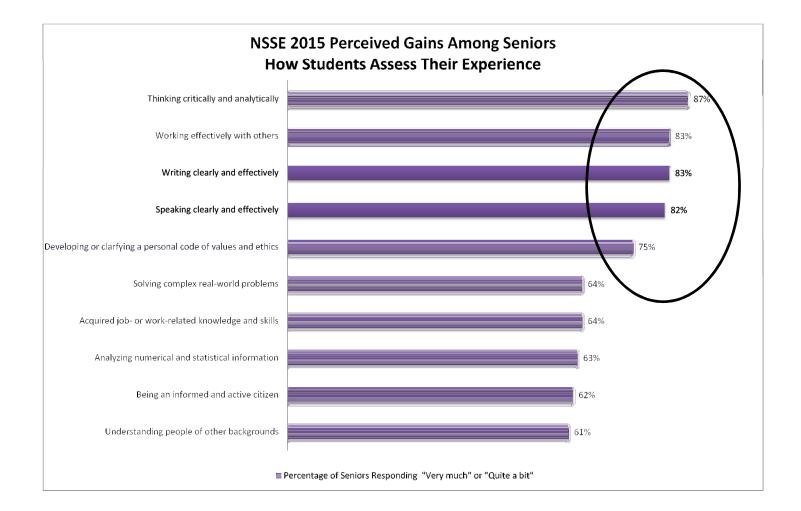


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Perceived Gains by Senior Students

Reviewing senior responses to questions of perceived gains while attending Scranton, about three (3) out of four (4) students said that they perceived gains in the following areas:

- thinking critically and analytically;
- working effectively with others;
- writing clearly and effectively;
- speaking clearly and effectively; and
- developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics.





Conclusions

Areas for Improvements

- > Opportunities for *Discussions with Diverse* Others
- Participation in second HIP by senior year
- Participation in the following HIPs
 - Participated in a study abroad program
 - Completed a culminating senior experience (...)
- Opportunities to included diverse perspectives (...) in course discussions or assignments
- > Opportunities for discussions with... people with religious beliefs other than your own
- > Increase the percentage of senior students that would 'Definitely' or 'Probably' attend Scranton

Areas to Reinforce

- Continue effort and resources towards the campus environment including *Quality of Interactions* and a Supportive Environment
- Continue participation of HIPs among first-year students
- Continue participation in a community-based project (service-learning) among first-year students

Next Steps

- Create a NSSE communication plan and continue to disseminate results through 2016
- Discuss 'reasonable' levels of engagement with University community
- Prior to the 2018 (?) NSSE administration:
 - Create a campaign to raise awareness
 - Solicit stakeholder input on selection of comparison groups
 - Consider how results can be used for IE and educational processes Work with OEA, Provost, Deans, VPs, Student Formation, assessment liaisons, etc. to increase participation rates
 - o Identify how results fit assessment plans
- Determine the 2 topical survey modules or additional questions
- Distribute NSSE/FSSE Report and Additional Modules Report Spring 2016



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Appendices

Appendix A – NSSE Themes & Engagement Indicators (EI)

Theme	Engagement Indicators
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

Appendix B – Peer Aspirant (N=16)

Bentley University (MA) Bucknell University (PA) Colgate University (NY) Elon University (NC) Fairfield University (CT) Lehigh University (PA) Loyola University Maryland (MD) Marist College (NY) Providence College (RI) Quinnipiac University (CT) Saint Joseph's University (PA) Santa Clara University (CA) Seattle University (WA) Valparaiso University (IN) Villanova University (PA) Xavier University (OH)



Appendix C – Carnegie Class (N=267)

Abilene Christian University (Abilene, TX) Alabama A&M University (Normal, AL) Alfred University (Alfred, NY) American InterContinental University Online (Hoffman Estates, IL) Anderson University (Anderson, N) Appalachian State University (Boone, NC) Arms trong State University (Savannah, GA)* Augsburg College (Minneapolis, MN)* Aurora University (Aurora, IL) Austin Peay State University (Clarks ville, TN)* Bellarmine University (Louis ville, KY) Bellevue University (Bellevue, NE) Belmont University (Nashville, TN)* Bentley University (Waltham, MA) Bethel University (Saint Paul, MN) Blooms burg University of Penns ylvania (Blooms burg, PA) Boise State University (Boise, ID) Bradley University (Peoria, IL) Brenau University (Gaines ville, GA)* Bridge water State University (Bridge water, MA)* Cabrini College (Radnor, PA)* California Baptist University (Riverside, CA) California Lutheran University (Thous and Oaks, CA)* California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo (San Luis Obispo, CA CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice (New York, NY) California State Polytechnic University-Pomona (Pomona, CA)* California State University-Bakers field (Bakers field, CA) California State University-Chico (Chico, CA)* California State University-Dominguez Hills (Carson, CA) California State University-Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)* California State University-Stanis laus (Turlock, CA)* California State University, East Bay (Hayward, CA) California State University, Fresno (Fresno, CA) California State University, Fullerton (Fullerton, CA)* California State University, Northridge (Northridge, CA) California State University, Sacramento (Sacramento, CA)* Emerson College (Boston, MA) Emporia State University (Emporia, KS)* Fairfield University (Fairfield, CT)* Ferris State University (Grand Rapids, MI)* Fitchburg State University (Fitchburg, MA) Fontbonne University (Saint Louis, MO)* Fort Havs State University (Havs, KS)* Friends University (Wichita, KS)* Gannon University (Erie, PA)* George Fox University (Newberg, OR) Georgia College & State University (Milledgeville, GA)* Georgian Court University (Lakewood, NJ) Golden Gate University-San Francisco (San Francisco, CA) Governors State University (University Park, IL) Graceland University-Lamoni (Lamoni, IA)

California State University, San Bernardino (San Bernardino, CA) California University of Penns ylvania (California, PA) Campbell University Inc. (Buies Creek, NC) Central Connecticut State University (New Britain, CT) Chaminade University of Honolulu (Honolulu, HI) Chapman University (Orange, CA) Chestnut Hill College (Philadelphia, PA)* Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, The (Charleston, SC) Clarion University of Penns ylvania (Clarion, PA) College at Brockport, SUNY, The (Brockport, NY)* College of New Jersey, The (Ewing, NJ) College of Saint Rose, The (Albany, NY) Colorado Technical University Online (Colorado Springs, CO)* Columbus State University (Columbus, GA)* Concordia University (Portland, OR) Concordia University Chicago (River Forest, IL)* Concordia University Irvine (Irvine, CA) Concordia University Texas (Austin, TX) Concordia University-Saint Paul (Saint Paul, MN)* Cornerstone University (Grand Rapids, MI) CUNY Bernard M Baruch College (New York, NY) CUNY Herbert H. Lehman College (Bronx, NY)* CUNY Hunter College (New York, NY)* CUNY Queens College (Flushing, NY)* Daemen College (Amherst, NY) DeSales University (Center Valley, PA) Dominican University (River Forest, IL)* East Central University (Ada, OK) East Strouds burg University of Pennsylvania (East Strouds burg, PA) Eastern Kentucky University (Richmond, KY) Eastern Michigan University (Ypsilanti, MI)* Eastern University (Saint Davids, PA)* Eastern Washington University (Cheney, WA)* Edinboro University of Pennsylvania (Edinboro, PA) M is souri State University (Springfield, MO) MolloyCollege (Rockville Centre, NY)* Monmouth University (West Long Branch, NJ) Montclair State University (Montclair, NJ) Morehead State University (Morehead, KY) Mount Saint Mary College (Newburgh, NY)* Murray State University (Murray, KY) National University (La Jolla, CA) New Jersey City University (Jersey City, NJ) New Mexico Highlands University (Las Vegas, NM)* New York Institute of Technology (Old Westbury, NY)* Newman University (Wichita, KS)* Niagara University (Niagara University, NY) Norfolk State University (Norfolk, VA) North Carolina Central University (Durham, NC)*



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Appendix D – NSSE 2014 & 2015 (N=963)

All other NSSE 2014 & 2015 U.S. participants View list at nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/nsse2014and2015_list.pdf

Appendix E - References

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