NSSE NUGGETS 2010

Overview

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
2010 Administration at UCD – Denver Campus

NSSE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT COMPONENTS OF COLLEGIATE QUALITY:

■ “amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities”
■ “how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities”
Intro

Why do the NSSE?
One of UC Denver’s strategic priorities is to “deliver an outstanding and innovative educational experience.” Administering the NSSE allows the university to assess student experiences and identify areas for improvement and of excellence.

Conceived in 1998 and supported by The Pew Charitable Trusts, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was first piloted in 1999. Since then, it has become a gold standard for institutions gathering information from students with the goals of improving undergraduate education, facilitating benchmarking, and responding to external constituencies.

The University of Colorado Denver has been administering the NSSE since 2001, although not annually, nor on a set schedule as of yet. While results of previous NSSE administrations had been shared with various campus groups, relatively low response rates for the 2008 administration resulted in reluctance to utilize the findings to initiate change.

With the advent of the Survey Working Group, efforts were undertaken to engage students, faculty, and staff in the NSSE administration. The result: the 2010 administration response rates improved dramatically (32% compared to 20%). This document represents a renewed commitment to disseminating NSSE data and facilitating a campus dialog about the findings.
Nuggets

The following information is based upon responses from 563 UC Denver students on the 2010 NSSE.
- Web administration (no paper)
- 32% response rate (compared to overall NSSE cohort rate of 37%)
  - 28% response rate for first-years and 37% for seniors
- Reports include comparison data for 3 groups: urban universities, Carnegie class, and DC peers

One of the ACL items is “Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions.” UC Denver first-years and seniors had very similar response patterns to Carnegie Class peers and Denver Campus peers, with more than half of first-years and about two-thirds of seniors reporting that it occurred often or very often. Urban university students reported asking or contributing occurred significantly more frequently.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Being immersed and involved in their own education, as well as thinking about what is being learned, enhances student learning. Collaborative problem-solving and mastery of challenging material prepare students for the complicated problems they will encounter during and post-college. NSSE includes seven items related to active and collaborative learning (ACL).

Student-Faculty Interaction

Through interactions with faculty in and out of the classroom, students learn how experts consider and solve problems. The result is that instructors are transformed into role models, mentors and facilitators for life-long learning.

46% of first-years and 49% of seniors judged the quality of their relationships with faculty as “available, helpful, sympathetic.” Aside from urban university seniors (54%), these were the most positive rates reported compared to peer groups.
Supportive Campus Environment

Environments that foster student success and positive relationships among the diverse campus groups result in higher levels of student performance and satisfaction.

One of the six elements of this dimension is “Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically.”

76% of first-years believed UC Denver was substantially committed to their academic success, while 60% of seniors believed this to be the case. Although the latter is lower than for Carnegie class peers (69%), UC Denver data suggest students find the environment supportive of academic accomplishment; however, there seems to be a loss of positive perception between freshman and senior years.

Enriching Educational Experiences

Academic programs are enhanced by complementary learning opportunities; students learn about themselves and others through diversity experiences; collaborations among peers and faculty are facilitated via technology. Students can seek out opportunities for knowledge integration and utilization through experiences such as internships, community services, and capstone courses.

One of the items assessing this dimension is “Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment.” Although just 7% of first-years had participated, another 73% indicated that they planned to do so. Seniors had already completed (42%) or planned to complete (28%) a practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment. These first-year proportions are very similar to all three peer groups. However, UC Denver seniors lag behind its Carnegie class peers.

Panning for more NSSE Nuggets?
Contact Dr. Christine Stroup-Benham (christine.stroup-benham@ucdenver.edu or 303-315-2835)