

## STETSON UNIVERSITY



### Lessons from NSSE: Enriching Student Learning at Stetson University

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*November 17, 2006*



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### Overview

- Students today
- Why student engagement matters
- Stetson University NSSE data
- Data informed action



### Points to Ponder

- What can we do individually and collectively to take more responsibility for student learning?
- How do we get students to take greater advantage of Stetson's resources for learning?

### Students Today

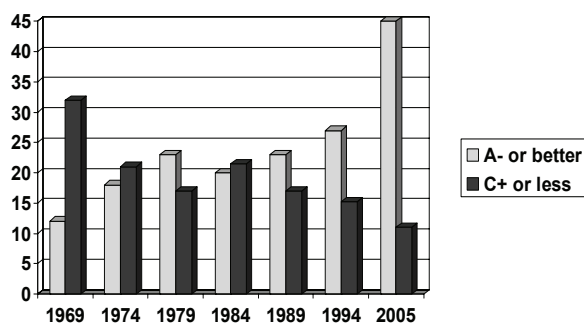
*Who are they?*

*What are they telling us?*

- An entitlement mentality



### Trends in High School Grades



### Students Today

- Cumulative deficit re: attitudes, study habits, academic skills
- More diverse than previous cohorts
- Techno-savvy "NetGens"



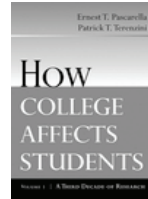
## What To Do?!?

Student success in college may require that professors explain more things to students today that were once taken for granted –

*“You must buy the book, you must read it and come to class, you must observe deadlines or make special arrangements when you miss one”*

Prof. Richard Turner (1998, p.4)

## What Really Matters in College: Student Engagement



Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage *student engagement*.

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 602

## The Student Engagement Trinity

- What students *do* -- time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
- What institutions *do* -- using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things
- Educationally effective institutions channel student energy toward the right activities

## Good Practices in Undergraduate Education

(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

- ✓ Student-faculty contact
- ✓ Active learning
- ✓ Prompt feedback
- ✓ Time on task
- ✓ High expectations
- ✓ Respect for diverse learning styles
- ✓ Cooperation among students



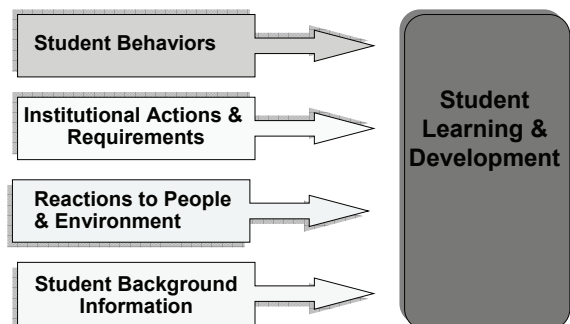
**National Survey of Student Engagement**  
(pronounced “nessie”)



Undergraduate student survey that assesses the extent to which first-year and senior students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development

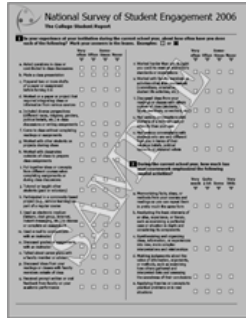


## NSSE Survey



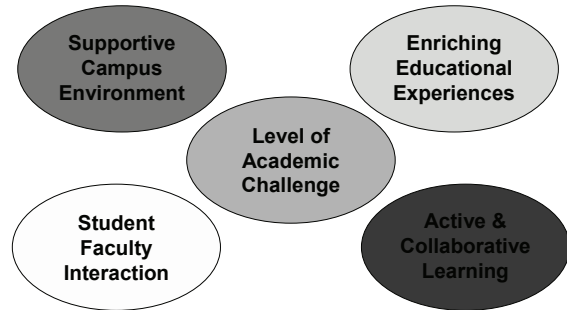
## Taking a look at NSSE:

- Items based on effective educational practices
- Designed and tested for high validity and reliability
- Relatively stable over time
- High credibility of self-reported data
- Students will participate
- Actionable data
- Psychometric properties document on website
- Random sample administration



**\*What questions do you have about the items??**

## NSSE's Five Indicators of Effective Educational Practice



## What have we learned from NSSE so far?



- The single best predictor of student satisfaction with college is the degree to which they perceive the college environment to be supportive of their academic and social needs.
- At institutions where faculty members use effective educational practices more frequently in their classes, students are more engaged over all and gain more from college.
- Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand.

## Student Engagement Quiz

What percent of full-time seniors study, on average, more than 20 hours per week?

- (a) 14%
- (b) 23%
- (c) 32%
- (d) 41%
- (e) 50%

## NSSE Disappointing Findings



- New students studied fewer hours during their first year than they expected to when they started college.
- Between 40% and 50% of first-year students **never** used career planning, financial advising, or academic tutoring services.
- Almost **half of all students** (43% first-years, 48% seniors) spend **no time** on cocurricular activities.

## Promise of Student Engagement

***"If faculty and administrators use principles of good practice to arrange the curriculum and other aspects of the college experience, students would... write more papers, read more books, meet with faculty and peers, and use information technology appropriately, all of which would result in greater gains in such areas as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship."***

Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, *Student Success in College*, 2005

## NSSE at Stetson



- ❖ NSSE administered spring 2006
- ❖ About 310 FY and 250 SR randomly selected students responded in 2006 (100% via Web).
- ❖ 58% Response Rate 2006 (avg RR Peer Institutions = 42%)
- ❖ Sample error 2.7%
- ❖ Stetson's results compared to Select Peers (Drake University; Eckerd College; Elon University; Furman University; Rollins College; Samford University; St. Lawrence University; University of Richmond; Xavier University) and Carnegie Peer Institutions (36 Bac LA & Masters Institutions)

## Considering Student Engagement at Stetson

### Quick Assessment #1:

1. Assess Stetson's effectiveness on the five NSSE Clusters of Effective Educational Practice

### Ratings:

- + we do this very well
- ☒ we do this pretty well
- we could improve in this area
- ? not sure



## NSSE at Stetson



NSSE Benchmarks	First-Year comparisons				Senior comparisons			
	BM Score	Select Peers	Carn Type	NSSE 2006	BM Score	Select Peers	Carn Type	NSSE 2006
Level of Academic Challenge	55	—		+	59			+
Active and Collaborative Learning	43	—			54			+
Student-Faculty Interaction	34				49			+
Enriching Educational Experiences	31			+	50			+
Supportive Campus Environment	61				59			

+ signif. above\* on par: - signif. below peers

## NSSE at Stetson



1. What percent of Stetson's first-years frequently\* worked with other students on projects during class?

(\* % very often and often)

(a) 50% (b) 45% (c) 39% (d) 30% (e) 23%

## NSSE at Stetson



### Active and Collaborative Learning

Students indicate how often (1 = "never" to 4 = "very often") they've done the following:

1. Asked questions in class
2. Made a class presentation
3. Worked with classmates outside of class
4. Participated in a community-based project (e.g. service learning) as part of a course

First-Years (% often, very often)	Seniors (% often, very often)
1. 66%	1. 80%
2. 26% (-)	2. 75%
3. 41% (-)	3. 61% (-)
4. 10%	4. 14% (-)

- and + signif different from select peers

## NSSE at Stetson



### True or False?

2. Stetson seniors spend more time studying than first year students.

## NSSE at Stetson



True or False?

3. More Stetson *seniors* than *first year* students report that they frequently\* attended an art exhibit, gallery, play, dance or other theater performance than peers at Bac Gen Private.

(\* often or very often)

## NSSE at Stetson



4. What percent of Stetson first-year students frequently\* used email to communicate with an instructor?

(\* often and very often)

(a) 86% (b) 76% (c) 65% (d) 60% (e) 58%

## NSSE at Stetson



5. What percent of Stetson first-year students rate the quality of advising as “good” or “excellent”?

(a) 82% (b) 77% (c) 71% (d) 60% (e) 55%

## First-year student Educational Gains at Stetson



“To what extent has your experience at Stetson contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?”

(1 = very little ---- 4 = very much) “% very much”

- ✓ Acquiring a broad general education (-)  
✓ 36% Stetson vs. 47% select peers
- ✓ Writing clearly and effectively (-)  
✓ 30% Stetson vs. 37% select peers
- ✓ Speaking clearly and effectively (-)  
✓ 18% Stetson vs. 28% select peers
- ✓ Working effectively with others (-)  
✓ 25% Stetson vs. 36% select peers
- ✓ Developing personal code of values and ethics (-)  
✓ 17% Stetson vs. 25% select peers

## Considering Student Engagement at Stetson:



- ✓ Do these data fit your perceptions? Your mission? What surprised you?
- ✓ How can expectations for active learning be increased for first-years?
- ✓ Are first-year students making desirable educational gains?
- ✓ In what ways can Seniors’ academic experience be enriched?
- ✓ What distinguishes a Stetson education?
- ✓ Where might you look to improve?

## Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (pronounced “fessie”)

FSSE measures faculty expectations and activities related to student engagement in effective educational practices





### FSSE-NSSE Gap Analysis

- About two-thirds (65%) of faculty expect students to spend more than 25 hours preparing for class
- Only about one-fifth (20%) *think* that students spend this amount of time
- Only about one in ten (12%) students *actually* spends this much time



### Prompt Feedback



FACULTY gave prompt feedback often or very often

Lower Division      Upper Division

**93% | 93%**



STUDENTS received prompt feedback often or very often

1<sup>st</sup> yr. Students      Seniors

**64% | 76%**

### Course Emphasis



FACULTY report very much or quite a bit of emphasis on memorizing

Lower Division      Upper Division

**29% | 14%**



STUDENTS report very much or quite a bit of emphasis on memorizing

1<sup>st</sup> yr. Students      Seniors

**65% | 63%**

### Characteristic of Educationally Effective Institutions: “Positive Restlessness”

- ✓ Self-correcting orientation
- ✓ Continually question, “are we performing as well as we can?”
- ✓ Confident, responsive, but never quite satisfied...
- ✓ “We know who we are and what we aspire to.”

### Best Practices in Using NSSE Results: Institutional Examples


- NSSE results framed a “Sophomore Experience”
- 2005 = Pace’s 5<sup>th</sup> year of participation
- Concern regarding SP- JR persistence; FY results offers context for understanding exp. as students enter SP year
- Established “SP Experience Working Group” to investigate if FY exp. carried over in SP year. Focused on low NSSE score items, conducted focus groups, created sophomore survey. Led to pilot of “Pace Plan” (mentoring), includes Career Exploration Course, Sophomore Kick-Off Day
- NSSE also used in strategic indicators, Accredited, NCATE, AACSB, Faculty Development/Colloquia, items used by offices (Technology, Multicultural Affairs), studies performed by Enrollment Mngmt.



### Best Practices in Using NSSE Results: Institutional Examples

- Concerned about FY-SP retention. Used NSSE to identify conflict between UC image and student experience. Shared with stakeholders to brainstorm around retention.
- Only 50% of FY students reported that they participated in a “learning community,” though all were required. UC made LC goals, purpose more explicit, saw rise to 75% in next NSSE.
- UC mission focuses on writing, yet NSSE data did not stand out. Used data to propose new strategies around developmental writing.
- Saw 5% retention boost, over 2 years.

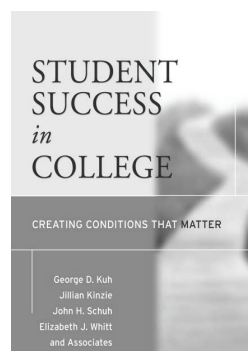




### Best Practices in Using NSSE Results: Institutional Examples

- Created engagement agenda on campus
- NSSE introduced to New Faculty Teaching Scholars
- Workshops held with academic leaders to link results with University's strategic indicators
- NSSE items in course evaluations
- Open forum to get student input about ways to improve learning environment

## What does an educationally effective college look like at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?



Project DEEP = To discover, document, and describe what strong performing institutions do to achieve their notable level of effectiveness.

### Project DEEP Schools\*

**\*Higher-than-predicted NSSE scores and graduation rates**

<u><b>Doctoral Extensives</b></u>	<u><b>Liberal Arts</b></u>
University of Kansas	California State, Monterey Bay
University of Michigan	Macalester College
	Sweet Briar College
<u><b>Doctoral Intensives</b></u>	The Evergreen State College
George Mason University	Sewanee: University of the South
Miami University (Ohio)	Ursinus College
University of Texas El Paso	Wabash College
	Wheaton College (MA)
	Wofford College
<u><b>Master's Granting</b></u>	<u><b>Baccalaureate General</b></u>
Fayetteville State University	Alverno College
Gonzaga University	University of Maine at Farmington
Longwood University	Winston-Salem State University

### Framework from DEEP: Conditions to Promote Student Success

1. "Living" Mission and "Lived" Educational Philosophy
2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
3. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
4. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
5. Improvement-Oriented Ethos
6. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality

### Use NSSE & DEEP Findings To Prompt Institutional Reflection

- ☒ How well do our programs work and how do we know?
- ☒ How many students do our efforts reach in meaningful ways and how do we know?
- ☒ To what degree are our programs and practices complementary and synergistic?
- ☒ What are we doing that is not represented among the DEEP practices? Should we continue to do it?
- ☒ What are we not doing that we should?

### DEEP Lessons

4. *Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success*
  - ❖ Make plain to students the resources and services available to help them succeed.
  - ❖ Some guideposts tied directly to the academic program; others related to student and campus culture.
  - ❖ Institutional publications accurately describe what students experience.
  - ❖ Efforts tailored to student needs.
  - ❖ Mutually reinforcing student expectations and behavior, institutional expectations, and institutional reward systems.
  - ❖ Redundant early warning systems and safety nets

### **Socialization to Academic Expectations**

**Wofford first-year students read a common novel and write a short essay connecting it to their own lives. The eight best essays are published and distributed to all new students, creating the first class celebrities.**

### **Socialization to Academic Expectations**

**Wheaton new students read a common book and essays by faculty that respond to the reading. Assigned readings, faculty responses, and the website combine to introduce incoming students to preferred ways to grapple with intellectual issues.**

### **Anticipatory socialization to involvement opportunities**

**At Longwood, the “New Student Leadership Program” brings 80 first-year students to campus prior to the beginning of the fall semester to explore leadership skills, build support networks for leadership development, and provide opportunities for faculty and staff to identify potential student leaders.**

### **Intentional acculturation**

**Rituals and traditions connect students to each other and the institution**

**KU’s “Traditions Night.” 3,000 + students gather in the football stadium to rehearse the Rock Chalk Chant, listen to stories about the Jayhawk, learn the “I’m a Jayhawk” school song, and hear stories intended to instill students’ commitment to graduation**



### **Intentional acculturation**

**At Longwood, peer mentors --“students helping other students” -- are catalysts to promote student achievement and learning and introduce students’ to volunteer and other educational opportunities through the Longwood Seminar, residence halls leadership roles, and the strong co-curricular program.**

### **Connect Students to Campus in Meaningful Ways**

**University of Maine at Farmington’s Student Work Initiative employs students\* in meaningful work in student services, laboratories, and field-research. Such experiences provide students opportunities to apply what they are learning to practical, real-life situations.**

*\*50% of UMF’s students work on campus*



### Redundant early warning systems: "Tag Teaming"

- Wheaton first-year student advising team includes faculty, student preceptors, librarians and administrative staff.
- At Ursinus, Miami, and Wheaton representatives from both academic affairs and student affairs serve as academic advisors.

### Reflecting on Pathways at Stetson:

- What do prospective students learn about what they can expect and what is expected of them?
- How do new students (first years and transfers) learn what it takes to succeed?
- What rituals or traditions signal student success?
- What signature programs exist for assuring student success?
- What warning systems or safety nets are in place for intervention?
- How do you know???

### Assessing Conditions to Enhance Educational Effectiveness

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### Acculturation

##### *Teaching Students How to Succeed*

- What messages do we send to prospective students about:
  - expectations for their performance and outcomes,
  - expectations that students assume a fair share of responsibility for their learning?
- Do we communicate high expectations to all students – stretching them beyond their perceived limits?

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### *Building Community*

- Do all students feel a sense of 'specialness' about the institution? Or are feelings of 'specialness' limited to certain groups of students?
- What traditions and events introduce students to the values of the institution? To what extent are those traditions consistent and/or inconsistent with the espoused institutional values? What acculturation experiences should be added?

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### • Alignment

##### *Mark the Pathways to Student Success*

- To what extent are resources, structures, programs, policies, and practices consistent with the institution's mission and students' characteristics?
- Are forms of challenge and support consistent with the needs of students and with the institution's educational priorities? Do students who need extra support receive it?

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### *Front-loading Resources*

- To what extent are resources 'front-loaded' to foster academic and social success? Are these efforts integrated with, or tangential to, the curriculum? How might they be more effective?
- Can students find resources when they need them?
- What programs assist students who need additional skill preparation to succeed in college? Who uses them? Are they effective? How do you know?

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### *Early Warning Systems & Safety Nets*

- What policies and practices identify students at risk? To what extent are they used, in what ways, and by whom? Are they effective?
- Are safety nets (programs, policies, practices) for students in difficulty available and used? Who uses them? Who does not?
- To what extent are these resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures effective, and for whom?

#### 4. Clear Pathways to Student Success

##### *Integration of Initiatives*

- Are our resources, programs, policies, practices and structures for student success redundant and responsive?
- In what ways do students' out-of-class lives facilitate or inhibit their learning and success?
- Who collects and disseminates information about students and their experiences?
- Who brings together various pictures of students and their experiences to create a holistic understanding of the quality of undergraduate programs?

#### Recommendations

##### Lay out the path to student success

- Draw a map for student success*
- Front load resources to smooth the transition*
- Teach newcomers about the campus culture*
- Create a sense of specialness*
- Emphasize student initiative*
- If something works, consider requiring it*
- Focus on underengaged students*

#### Last Word

**A college or university cannot change the lineage of its students. Campus cultures do not change easily or willingly. But we can do far more to shape the way students approach college and what they do after they arrive.**

**Do we have the *will* to more consistently use promising policies and practices to increase the odds that more students “get ready,” “get in,” and “get through?”**

## DEEP Practice Briefs

DEEP Practice Briefs - Promoting Student Success Series – 16 Papers available:  
[www.nsse.iub.edu](http://www.nsse.iub.edu)

- Kuh, G.D. (2005). What campus leaders can do. Occasional Paper No. 1.
- Kuh, G.D. & Kinzie, J. (2005). What the media and the general public need to know. Occasional Paper No. 2.
- Chickering, A.W. & Kuh, G.D. (2005). Creating conditions so every student can learn. Occasional Paper No. 3.
- Kezar, A. J. (2005). The importance of shared leadership and collaboration. Occasional Paper No. 4.

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