National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2009 Findings and Implications

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National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

• Instrument samples freshman and senior students about nature and quality of undergraduate experience

• Provides for a national comparison with more than 1,200 other colleges or universities (643 in Spring 2009)

• Existed since 2000, launched through a grant from Pew Charitable Trusts administered through Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research
NSSE Theoretical Basis

• Astin (1991) Theory of Student Involvement

• Chickering and Gamson (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

• Educationally effective colleges channel student energies towards appropriate actives and engage students at a high level
NSSE Design

• Students report how often they participate in activities that represent good educational practice

• Students report their perceptions of the college environment associated with achievement and satisfaction

• Students estimate their own educational and personal growth

• Student demographic information
NSSE Scales

42 key questions grouped to define 5 scales:

1. Level of Academic Challenge
2. Active and Collaborative Learning
3. Student Faculty Interaction
4. Enriching Educational Experience
5. Supportive Campus Environment
NSSE Validity

Self reported (psychometric) information known to be valid when:

1. The information requested is known to the respondents.
2. The questions are phrased clearly and unambiguously.
3. The questions refer to recent activities.
4. The respondents think the questions merit a serious and thoughtful response.
5. Answering the questions does not threaten, embarrass, or violate the privacy of the respondent or encourage the respondent to respond in socially desirable ways.
NSSE Administration at UNLV

• Every 3 years

• How?
  – Random sample of freshman and seniors with at least one complete semester at UNLV
  – E-mail with web link
  – Non-respondents receive 2 follow-up e-mail and 1 paper version
## NSSE UNLV Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent demographics consistent with UNLV profile
NSSE Reliability

• NSSE results mirror 2007 Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)
  – 2,223 responses - random sample, classroom administration by Canon Research Center
NSSE Peer Groups

- Far West – 22 institutions
- Carnegie Class – 56 institutions
- All NSSE institutions – 643 institutions
NSSE 2009 Overall Findings

• How would you evaluate your entire educational experience?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean 2.95*** 2.94***

Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers
*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001 versus Carnegie peers
Overall Experience

* * * p<.05     ** * p<.01     *** * p<.001  versus Carnegie peers
NSSE - Overall Experience

• Demographics of students had no significant impact on how rated overall experience
  – Latino(a) students slightly higher
  – Native American slightly lower
  – Positive correlation with age
  – Positive correlation with grades
NSSE – The Good News

- UNLV freshman and seniors reported improvement in all 5 scales between 2006 and 2009
  - Freshman reported largest gain in ‘Supportive Campus Environment’
  - Seniors reported largest gain in ‘Enriching Educational Experiences’
NSSE – The Bad News

• UNLV rated behind our peers in all 5 scales in 2006 and 2009
  – Largest gap between UNLV and peers for both freshman and seniors is ‘Supportive Campus Environments’

• But . . . the gap is closing in most scales – especially for seniors
Level of Academic Challenge

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001 versus Carnegie peers
Active and Collaborative Learning

* p < .05  ** p < .01  *** p < .001 versus Carnegie peers
Student-Faculty Interaction

*p<.05  **p<.01  ***p<.001  versus Carnegie peers
Enriching Educational Experiences

*\( p < 0.05 \)  \( **p < 0.01 \)  \( ***p < 0.001 \) versus Carnegie peers
Supportive Campus Environment

\[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|}
 & F06*** & F09*** & S06*** & S09*** \\
\hline
UNLV & 49.5 & 54.5 & 48.4 & 51.8 \\
Carnegie & 58 & 60.3 & 55.9 & 56.8 \\
\end{array}\]

\*p<.05 \quad \**p<.01 \quad \***p<.001 \quad versus \ Carnegie \ peers
NSSE – More Good News

• Out of 16 self reported educational outcomes Seniors rated their growth higher than Freshman in all but 2

  – i.e. college environment positively impacts outcomes
NSSE – More Bad News

- Out of 16 self reported educational outcomes
  - Freshman below Carnegie peers in 11
  - Seniors below Carnegie peers in 8

weighted by gender, enroll status, institutional size
minimally significant to the p<.05
## NSSE Findings - Educational and Personal Growth Outcomes

- **Order of gain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing quantitative problems</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working effectively with others</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring job knowledge /skills</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring broad general education</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding yourself</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving complex real-world problems</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning effectively on own</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to community</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing personal ethics</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using computing and info technology</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding other race/ethnicities</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking critically and analytically</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
### NSSE Findings - Educational and Personal Growth Outcomes

**Downward trend consistent with national peers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voting in elections</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing deepened spirituality</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Downward trend inconsistent with peers:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing clearly and effectively</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking clearly and effectively</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
NSSE Findings – Faculty Impact

- Order of significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received prompt feedback from faculty</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included diverse perspectives in class</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put together concepts from different courses</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked hard to meet instructor standards</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed course concepts outside of class</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed ideas with faculty outside of class</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used email to communicate w/ instructor</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about career plans w/ faculty/advisor</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked w/ faculty on activities other than coursework (student orgs, events, etc)</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers
NSSE Findings – Coursework Emphasized

- Order of significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing basic elements of idea or theory</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesizing and organizing ideas</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applying concepts to practical problems</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making judgments about value of info</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only mental activity not significant:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
NSSE Findings – Academics

- UNLV spend less time than peers:
  - Working with students outside of class to prepare class assignments
  - Tutoring other students
  - Working w/ faculty not related to class
  - Write 5 to 19 page papers (freshman only)
  - Service learning projects
  - E-mail faculty (freshman only)
  - Talk about career plans w/ faculty
  - Preparing for class (freshman only)
  - Number of assigned readings (freshman only)
  - Study abroad
NSSE Findings – Academics

• UNLV spend more time than peers:
  – Writing two or more drafts of paper (freshman only)
  – Reading non-assigned books (freshman only)
  – Included diverse ideas (race, religion, gender, political) in class discussion (seniors only)
  – Memorizing (seniors only)
NSSE Findings – Academics

• UNLV spend same time as peers:
  – Asking questions in class
  – Making class presentations
  – Integrating ideas from various sources
  – Attend class when not prepared
  – Put together ideas from different courses to complete assignment
  – Use electronic medium to complete assignment
  – Discuss grades with faculty
  – Work harder than thought could to meet faculty standards
NSSE Findings – Academics

• UNLV spend **same** time as peers:
  – Writing 20 or more page papers
  – Number of problem sets take more than an hour to complete
  – Number of problem sets take less than an hour to complete
  – Examine strengths & weaknesses of own views
  – Try to understand someone else’s views by imagining how issue looks from his/her perspective
  – Learned something that changed the way you understand a concept or problem
NSSE Findings – Enriching Experiences

• Order of significance

Community-based service learning project
Community service or volunteer work
Participate in learning community
Work on research project w/ faculty
Culminating senior experience
Practicum or internship experience
Participate in co-curricular activities
Attended art exhibit, theater performance

Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

• Participation in co-curricular has positive impact on outcomes:
  – Contribute to welfare of community .28
  – Solving complex real-world problems .24
  – Understanding yourself .22
  – Developing personal code of ethics .21
  – Understanding people of other race and ethnic backgrounds .20

Value is difference between mean of involved and non-involved peer
## NSSE Findings – Campus Life

- How many hours per a week do you participate in co-curricular activities (organizations, intramurals, etc)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th></th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNLV</td>
<td>Carnegie</td>
<td>UNLV</td>
<td>Carnegie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 hrs/wk</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 10 hrs/wk</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+ hrs/wk</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>2.33***</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.14**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

- Participation in community service has positive impact on outcomes:
  - Contribute to welfare of community \( .39 \)
  - Solving complex real-world problems \( .28 \)
  - Developing personal code of ethics \( .27 \)

Value is difference between mean of volunteer and non-volunteer peer
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

- Participation in community service or volunteer work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th></th>
<th>Senior</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UNLV</td>
<td>Carnegie</td>
<td>UNLV</td>
<td>Carnegie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Done</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.40***</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.59***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

• UNLV spend more time than peers:
  – Working for pay off campus*
  – Providing care for dependants*
  – Commuting to class*
  – Having serious conversations with students of different race/ethnicity than own

*None of these factors had significant impact on how students rated UNLV
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

- UNLV spend less time than peers:
  - Spiritual activities
  - Community service*
  - Co-curricular involvement*
  - Exercising
  - Attending fine art performance

*Do have an impact on outcomes and how students rated UNLV
NSSE Findings – Campus Life

• UNLV spend **same** time as peers:
  – Relaxing and socializing (TV, etc)
  – Working for pay on campus
  – Having serious conversations with students who are different from you in terms of religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
NSSE – Where focus?

- Scales in order of degree impacted students overall experience at UNLV:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Campus Environment</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Academic Challenge</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active and Collaborative Learning</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Faculty Interaction</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enriching Educational Experience</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
**NSSE – Supportive Campus Environment**

- **Order of significance:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support need to help you succeed academically</th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Seniors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of relationships with faculty members</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of relationships with administrative staff</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of relationships with other students</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>5.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support need to cope with non-academic concerns</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support need to thrive socially</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
NSSE – Academic Advising

How students rated the quality of academic advising had the most significance on how rated overall experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Senior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Blue = below Carnegie peers / Green = above Carnegie peers*
NSSE – Academic Advising

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UNLV</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F06***</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F09</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S06***</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S09</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05    ** p<.01    *** p<.001 versus Carnegie peers
Implications - Freshman

- Academic Support
- Academic Advising
- Non-academic support
- Social opportunities - environment that encourages community
- Peer to peer projects – learning communities, service learning
- Academic challenge
Implications - Seniors

- Faculty relationships
- Academic support – faculty
- Peer to peer projects – transdisciplinary focus on real world problems
- Academic to career advising
Implications - Overall

- Sense of community
- Ethic of care
NSSE – Student quotes

• “UNLV is not a school you go to make friends, or have the "typical" experience. Everyone, including staff, is very independent & could care less.”

• “There is no sense of community at UNLV, nothing about the school compels me to want to stay loyal to it.”
NSSE – Student quotes

• “UNLV doesn't make it easy for people that want to do well. The registration office is terrible and their policies don't accommodate reasonable requests, academic advising is useless, many instructors care little about teaching.”

• “I have been very disappointed with how UNLV is run. Advisors didn't know the answers to many of my career path questions, several teachers have been very disorganized and unreachable. I transferred from a different school and regret the decision.”
Questions?

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sunny.gittens@unlv.edu