NSSE
national survey of
student engagement

Lessons from the Field is a growing repository of practical ideas for NSSE institutions' evidence-based assessment and improvement initiatives. Read more than 120 data use stories in volumes 1-4 on NSSE's website at *go.iu.edu/4NYB*.

Using NSSE to Increase Conversations Among Campus Partners

Marian University (Indianapolis, IN)

Marian University has continued to use NSSE data in a variety of ways. Recently, we connected with Dr. Tony Ribera, Director of Educational Assessment, who was able to share more about their ways of sharing data with the entire campus. Marian had done quite a bit with their data from the past administration (See *Lessons from the Field Dispatch #2*) and in the last year it was more intentional using a comprehensive lens to look at everything that was happening on their campus. They held their first roundtable data share which was a half day event to analyze and understand all the data they had gathered from the NSSE administration.

Looking at various themes in comparison to their peer institution really allowed for discussions around what needed to happen on their campus and the areas that they were lacking in. Dr. Ribera also shared that they already had an event called the 'Assessment showcase,' dedicated to faculty presenting their research and scholarship for the grants they receive for teaching and learning. This year they decided to combine this event and redesigned it as 'an assessment day,' where the first half of the day was dedicated towards the various presentations for faculty and latter half of the day involved bringing various stakeholders together for a roundtable discussion.

"We setup an internal Canvas shell and gave access to relevant stakeholders on campus, so they could access the various reports and data before we had the roundtable data share meeting," said, Dr. Ribera. The Canvas shell was designed three weeks in advance of this meeting, which allowed enough time for all participants across campus to review the reports and data before the meeting. They also utilized the discussion feature on Canvas to allow for conversations and interactions prior to their meeting. At the campus event, they began by discussing the general overview and then divided everyone into smaller groups and discussed areas that had their strengths and needed improvements as well the ideas that were shared through the online Canvas shell. The in-person meeting brough together over 40 faculty, staff members, alumni and students from their campus.

Marian also administered the inclusiveness and engagement with diversity module and participated in the Catholic Colleges and Universities Consortium both of which yielded data that contributed towards a rich conversation at the roundtable meeting. Last year, Marian University also joined the higher education data sharing consortium which provided additional sources of data comparisons along with the data reports that their institutional research office was able to provide internally. "Marian is very learning centered and really just wants to do the best for students." Said Dr. Ribera who also provided an analysis of quantitative data that his office was able to create and identified themes that appeared to be like the findings of their 2019 data. Using data from NSSE in different ways to engage campus partners is an effective practice and Marian University continues to demonstrate this effort through their Center for Teaching and Learning.

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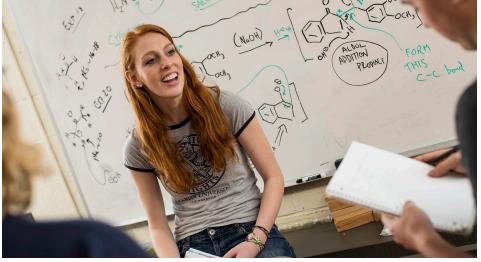Youngstown State University

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Sharing NSSE Data Widely with Support from the Institute for Teaching and Learning

Youngstown State University (Youngstown, OH)

Youngstown State University (YSU), in Youngstown, Ohio, has participated in NSSE for many years, and it allows the university to view trends in student perceptions and behavior. NSSE data points are used as Key Performance Indicators to the Board of Trustees for their university strategic plan. Many of their co-curricular units utilize NSSE data as part of their assessment reporting, as well as some of the academic departments/colleges utilizing NSSE data for both accreditation and assessment reports.

A multi-year analysis of NSSE data, particularly around Learning Strategies and Effective Teaching Practices, in combination with data from other student surveys was a key part of the rationale for the creation of YSU's Institute for Teaching and Learning. From 2013 to 2018, YSU saw downwards trends in Learning Strategies and Effective Teaching Practices Engagement Indicators for both first-year and senior students (at the same time their incoming student body had higher GPA and ACT scores). Relevant results from the YSU's 2018 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) revealed faculty reporting engagement in continuous improvement activities at lower rates than desired. In 2019, a team of stakeholders visited academic departments on campus to explore these trends in more detail and find out what faculty needed in terms of institutional support for effective teaching. Utilizing this faculty feedback, the Institute for Teaching and Learning was launched, bringing together assessment of student learning and faculty development initiatives on campus. Since 2019, the Institute for Teaching and Learning has supported 838 unique faculty, staff, administrators, and students on YSU's campus through workshops and consultation. Importantly, NSSE and

FSSE 2021 results are already showing improvements in some indicators that YSU believes point to the impact of some of the Institute's programming and services. For example, FSSE results indicate that faculty are spending more time on active learning-type activities over lecture.

Maximizing NSSE Data Use

YSU's uses their NSSE data in a variety of other ways to engage with the campus community. Some of these examples include:

- As a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to their Board of Trustees, they report multi-year data on seniors rating of their entire educational experience, as well as all students' responses to the "Would you go to the same institution?" question.
- In 2021, they specifically looked at data from 2018 to 2021, to further analyze the 'belonging series of questions.' Prior work in this area using the Inclusiveness module had been conducted in 2018 which generated data that was used to explore trends prior to and during COVID and discuss ways to help

students feel valued and a part of the campus community after remote and hybrid instruction. These data were shared with various stakeholders, from campus leadership to student leaders, to discuss strategies for building community. In both years, they also disaggregated the data by various student characteristics. This past spring a group of graduate students worked on an additional survey for Student Veterans to explore their campus belonging, since Student Veterans rated their perception of value and belonging lower than the campus average.

- YSU recently launched a new first-year seminar course, YSU 1500. They matched NSSE data with data from their Division of Student Success to begin exploring the impact of first-year student participation in that course.
- In 2021, YSU also participated in the Academic Advising module under their regular NSSE administration and saw first-year students responding positively to their perceptions of advising compared to YSU seniors and first-year students at peer institutions. Disaggregated NSSE data and module data were used to triangulate retention data and direct feedback collected by the Division of Student Success.

YSU's Institute for Teaching and Learning also offered department and college disaggregation of NSSE data for any campus stakeholder who requests it for accreditation purposes. Recently, their office provided disaggregated NSSE data

Marian University

to the Williamson College of Business to support their work for the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation. Institutionally they are accredited through the Higher Learning Commission and use NSSE data at various points as evidence in their assurance argument.

Sharing NSSE Results More Widely

YSU makes their NSSE data and an array of supporting resources available on their website. The institution's NSSE Snapshot report and results from two Topical Modules – Academic Advising and Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity – are summarized in a report titled "Key Module Takeaways". In an effort to continue disseminating NSSE data and results across campus and engaging various stakeholders, they created a webinar which was shared online to supplement these documents. The Institute for Teaching and Learning also encouraged people to review the webinar and snapshot before attending their spring Lunch &

Learn Data Conversations which was open to the entire campus community. Internally, they also created data reports/summaries which have been shared with Student Government Association, Campus Leadership, Deans, Division of Student Success, First-Year Student Services, Athletics, Veterans Affairs, Housing, Senate Teaching and Learning Committee, Student Organization Leaders, Student Presidential Mentors, and the Division of Student Affairs. They also created disaggregated reports as requested by colleagues and departments.

The Institute for Teaching and Learning staff is primarily responsible for the dissemination of NSSE data on campus. They actively disseminate to the campus stakeholder groups through tailored data, presentations, and reports. Overall, YSU's continued efforts to reduce gatekeeping of NSSE data and finding creative ways to share this information with relevant partners across campus continues to prove beneficial.

Lessons from the Field

NSSE's *Lessons from the Field -- Dispatch #3* is a supplement to NSSE's multi-volume series *Lessons from the Field*. For more institution examples, see Volume 4 (pictured) or other examples on our website at *go.iu.edu/4NYB*.

Mapping HIP Participation

Clemson University (Clemson, SC)

Clemson University is committed to supporting students' participation in High-Impact Practices (HIPs). Students have a wide variety of opportunities that provide real-world, hands-on, problem-solving experiences, such as Creative Inquiry, ClemsonThinks2, service-learning, cooperative education, the University Professional Internship Program, among others. In the institution's current 10-year strategic plan, *ClemsonForward*, they outline a plan to continue these opportunities while also integrating student engagement more fully into the curriculum and instructional program. To take Clemson's HIPs to the next level, a committed team of faculty and staff set out to identify gaps related to HIP taxonomy on campus, explore disparate data collection, determine evaluation activities and opportunities for collaboration, and promote common reporting to advance efforts to achieve *ClemsonFoward* Engagement goals.

For years, Clemson had wanted to reproduce a report that connects their NSSE data and disaggregates HIPs by student demographic factors that is based on the data that can be verified at the institution.

By engaging in this project, Clemson was able to map, define, and identify data while also understanding where and who was engaging in this process and areas that needed improvement. This work entailed partial use of institutional-level data, partial use of programmatic-level data, and some good old-fashioned walking around campus to talk to those who had pieces of the student engagement puzzle. However, much of their data is not centralized which prevented from engaging in learning more about the High Impact Practices (HIPs) that they were engaging in across their campus. They began this process by identifying the institutional scope of HIPs and conducted a two-part focus group

with faculty and staff stakeholders. They also made use of the partial data they had and combined it with data that was available at their campus through various offices. The longitudinal aspects of this project was carried out with a entering cohort of students by identifying each students' involvement in high-impact practices each semester for the entire time they spent at the institution or for six years until they left the institution with or without a degree.

With an intent to provide a roadmap for other institutions to fully understand engagement and drive change on their campus, they decided to focus on activities that fit the criteria of high impact practices or better known as HIPs.

The list of HIPs includes activities such as first-year seminars & experiences, learning communities, student-faculty research, study abroad and diversity/global learning, service-learning, internships, senior experiences/capstones, common intellectual experiences, writing intensive courses, and collaborative assignments and projects. However, through research they also determined that simply

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Scan the QR code (right) with your phone's camera to visit our *Lessons from the Field* institution examples page!

creating a list of HIP activities does not contribute towards significant change at the institution. Quality institutional alignment for HIPs has implications for improved curricular planning, strategic initiative generation, and democratization of data for decision-making. They found through discussions at their own institution and their counterparts at other institutions that integrated data systems for HIPs and collaboration across units on shared values are essential to an engaged institution, a belief also supported in the literature (Kinzie et al., 2015; Kinzie & Franklin, 2020; Nadasen & Alig, 2021).

Clemson scholars published their work in the article, *Mapping and Making Meaning from Undergraduate Student Engagement in High-Impact Educational Practices* (Trogden, et al., 2022).

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Sharing NSSE Results in a Video

Memorial University (Newfoundland, Canada)

Memorial University in Newfoundland Canada created an attractive and informative video introducing NSSE and the interpretation of their NSSE 2020 results, focusing on data that captured the attention of the ad-hoc committee of faculty and staff who were formed to review and interpret their 2020 results.

Memorial participates in NSSE every three years, having done so for the first time in 2008, and shares highlights of its results and a report from the NSSE Review Committee Fall 2020 on the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning website.

The ad-hoc committee review of results emphasized engagement as a priority in the institution's Teaching and Learning Framework and goals for their learner-centered culture. With a 38% response rate, the committee felt confident identifying Memorial's successes and areas for improvement, while simultaneously considering how the results align with the priorities in their Teaching and Learning Framework. The committee found it was most meaningful to use the Canadian Comprehensive Universities as a comparison group, since these universities hold similar

characteristics to that of Memorial.

The committee identified notable successes including: students' overall satisfaction; the quality of their interactions with faculty; and their experiences with academic advising and learning support services. For example, Memorial students are more satisfied with their experiences than students in the comparison group, with 80% of first-years and 83% of fourth-year students rating their educational experience as "excellent" or "good". They also report a higher quality of interaction with faculty and with academic advisors than students in the comparison group.

While it's important to acknowledge and celebrate successes it's even more important to understand where there is room to grow. Three areas to improve engagement include: high-impact practices (HIPs); first-year experiences; and diversity. In 2020 NSSE data, HIPs appear relatively strong for fourth year students, but less so for first-year students. These results suggest that incorporating HIPs into first-year courses and curricula could be a priority. Memorial's first-year students appear to be working less with their

classmates on things like team projects and assignments, and participating less in classroom discussions. These results suggest that first-year students may require greater support to engage meaningfully with their peers, and that instructional practices should be designed to help students transform their course preparation into active learning, promoting opportunities for greater participation, interaction and cooperation. A third area of focus to improve student engagement at Memorial is diversity. Students report having fewer diverse interactions, yet the majority indicate that their university experiences have contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development in understanding people of other backgrounds. Given this information, it would be valuable to further investigate curricular strategies that support students' experiences with and understandings of diversity, and to create meaningful opportunities for more students to work and engage with diverse others.

NSSE results provide Memorial with a gauge for success and a helpful guide for strengthening students' experiences.