

The Use of NSSE Results on the UWSP Campus

Discussion Points for the October 27, 2005 NSSE Workshop

The NSSE instrument was administered at UWSP in 2001 and 2004. Results have been distributed in numerous formats and contexts: the full campus report was presented to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, the deans council, and the Academic Affairs Administrative Staff; a summary report of the five benchmark categories was presented to the Assessment Subcommittee and included in their annual report; a three page summary of data was posted on our Institutional Research web; a PowerPoint presentation was made to University Centers staff. In addition, college deans have an item analysis for their colleges in comparison with the other colleges. The Ad Hoc Committee on Student Success was specifically charged with interpreting the data and correlating them with activities on campus. This committee responded with a proposed plan of five initiatives focused on student success in 2002. These initiatives are in various phases of implementation. During the spring and summer of 2005, this committee made four additional recommendations aimed at enhancing student success and thereby improving our NSSE scores; these are listed below. The 2004 results will be highlighted in a series of short newsletters starting in November and leading up to the analysis of the next rendition in the spring. We have also administered the FSSE and are correlating these results with those from the 2004 NSSE.

Some specific uses of the NSSE results follow.

- In the College of Professional Studies, the NSSE results were discussed at the August all-college meeting, with the department heads, and with the college Teaching Partners program participants. The college results for active and collaborative learning *were* particularly good and college staff discussed what aspects of college programming led to the high results. A presentation at the upcoming POD Conference (October 20-30, 2005) will highlight how the Teaching Partners Program initiated an apparent culture change that produced a heightened use of active and collaborative teaching strategies. Survey results from participants in the program especially highlight a significant increase in the use of collaborative learning approaches.
- The College of Fine Arts and Communication has adopted “improving our use of the NSSE materials” as one of three *annual* goals. This includes understanding the relevance of the NSSE results as well as the methodologies that have been used to collect the data.
- The NSSE Briefs (“Occasional Papers”) will be distributed on campus to raise awareness of the NSSE results. A crucial step is to discuss how the NSSE results have been empirically correlated with student success. Also, the values that form the basis of the NSSE must be explored for their connection with our campus culture/values.
- The Student Success Advisory Committee generated a report that maps activities in both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs that are related to the five benchmark categories of the NSSE report. The map underscores the many things that student life professionals, faculty, and teaching academic staff do on campus to promote the success of our students. This Committee made four recommendations in the summer of 2005. In brief summary, these recommendations are:
 - consider specific ways to foster improved academic advising by recognizing advising as an essential aspect of student success; ask departments to consider explicitly including advising in the faculty rewards system;
 - foster discussions among faculty and teaching staff on 1) the level of academic challenge in their courses and 2) the connections between their courses and a liberal education;
 - encourage faculty to develop personal teaching philosophies that are responsive to the five NSSE benchmark categories;
 - create a first year experience to help smooth the transition to the college culture.