

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) Three-years of Responses from SUU Students Instructional Innovations

NSSE Overview

Each spring since 2001, SUU has participated in a national study of college students, along with hundreds of other four-year colleges and universities. During each of the three years of participation, 700 randomly selected first-year and senior students at SUU have been invited to share their views by completing *The College Student Report*. This survey is part of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) that is administered by Indiana University at Bloomington.

The NSSE questionnaire took students less than 15 minutes to complete and participants had the choice of using paper or the Web. The survey asked students how they spend time, the nature and quality of their interactions with faculty members and peers, and what they had gained from their classes, as well as other aspects of their college experience. NSSE is not a survey of perceptions, but a survey of engagement.

Year	2001	2002	2003
Respondents	298	301	265
Response Rate	46%	47%	41%

Each year, SUU's response rate has been higher than master's peer or national averages. In 2003 106 freshmen and 159 seniors responded to the survey.

Instructional Innovations

Several NSSE questions addressed different types of instructional innovations. Categories of innovation include A. use of technology, B. student-faculty interaction, C. cooperation among students, D. active learning, and E. communicating high expectations to students.

A. Use of Technology: Findings suggest that SUU freshmen start out using technology about the same in their classes as their counterparts at master's peer institutions, and are using technology at higher rates by the time they are seniors. But throughout, SUU students are using email at rates lower than their peers. Specifically, two types of technology were examined: 1) use of an electronic medium, such as a list-serv, chat group, or the Internet, to discuss or complete an assignment, and 2) use of email to communicate with an instructor.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

How often have you:		2001		2002		2003	
		<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Used an electronic medium to discuss or complete an assignment	<i>SUU</i>	2.55	2.74	2.57	2.86	2.45	2.90
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.52	2.69	2.58	2.76	2.61	2.82
Used email to communicate with an instructor	<i>SUU</i>	2.39	2.51	2.45	2.51	2.57	2.76
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.62	2.81	2.75	2.95	2.87	3.09

When asked whether the institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of using computing and information technology, students responded similarly to students at other public institutions.

B. Student-Faculty Interaction: Freshmen and seniors were asked about the frequency of their contact with faculty concerning grades and assignments or discussing ideas with faculty outside class. These students were also asked if they receive prompt feedback on their performance.

The majority of SUU' freshmen and seniors reported they discussed grades or assignments with faculty and received prompt feedback (written or oral) from faculty on their academic performance. Levels of interaction in these areas are somewhat less for freshmen, but show an improving trend.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

How often have you:		2001		2002		2003	
		<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	<i>SUU</i>	2.61	2.86	2.50	2.81	2.61	2.87
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.53	2.79	2.57	2.79	2.59	2.82
Discussed ideas from your reading or classes with faculty members outside of class	<i>SUU</i>	1.54	2.12	1.64	2.15	1.65	2.16
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	1.71	2.01	1.77	2.06	1.77	2.06
Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance	<i>SUU</i>	2.39	2.86	2.50	2.80	2.58	2.83
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.56	2.80	2.58	2.80	2.58	2.82

Findings note interaction between students and faculty in the classroom at SUU is occurring. As the mean scores above reveal, the NSSE benchmarks indicate even more frequent dialog is occurring at other master's institutions among Freshmen. SUU seniors are at or above rates of master's counterparts..

C. Cooperation Among Students: SUU students compared better with fellow freshmen and seniors from other public institutions when asked how often they worked with other students on projects during and outside of class.

1=never, 2=sometimes, 3=often, 4=very often

How often have you:		2001		2002		2003	
		<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Worked with other students on projects during class	<i>SUU</i>	2.60	2.70	2.46	2.73	2.46	2.68
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.47	2.60	2.40	2.54	2.39	2.55
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	<i>SUU</i>	2.46	2.83	2.51	2.89	2.41	2.85
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.28	2.73	2.32	2.69	2.32	2.71
Tutored or taught other students	<i>SUU</i>	1.51	1.86	1.64	1.95	1.78	1.96
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	1.59	1.80	1.62	1.81	1.63	1.81

Mean responses indicate that both freshmen and seniors work with other students on projects during class as well as with classmates outside of class. As a dimension of student engagement in learning, this area of cooperation among students is positive for SUU. Likewise, tutoring other students at least sometimes was more commonplace among freshmen and seniors here than elsewhere.

D. Active Learning: The survey asked students to rate their coursework by tasks that characterize active learning. The results find some comparability among seniors, but synthesizing and applying are less commonplace at SUU among both freshmen and seniors

1= very little, 2= some, 3= quite a bit, 4= very much

To what extent has your coursework emphasized:		2001		2002		2003	
		<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>
Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into	<i>SUU</i>	2.61	2.99	2.67	2.88	2.56	2.85
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	2.76	3.00	2.83	3.04	2.82	3.04

new, more complex interactions and relationships							
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	<i>SUU</i>	<i>2.71</i>	<i>3.17</i>	<i>2.79</i>	<i>3.02</i>	<i>2.85</i>	<i>3.19</i>
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	<i>2.91</i>	<i>3.16</i>	<i>2.94</i>	<i>3.17</i>	<i>2.96</i>	<i>3.18</i>

Nearly sixty-percent of seniors reported participating in a culminating senior experience, including capstone, thesis, or comprehensive exam, compared to 55% of seniors at master's peer institutions. About the same proportion of seniors (76% at SUU to 72% at peer schools) have participated in a practicum, internship, field experience, or clinical assignment.

E. Communicating High Expectations: Student motivation levels to succeed academically are examined in two NSSE inquiries. The first provides self-reported data on effort devoted to studies outside of class. The second confided the frequency that instructor expectations made them work harder than they thought they could.

The primary difference in effort toward study is that SUU freshmen are more inclined to devote at least the minimum amount of hours to maintain good standing. Among counterparts at master's peer institutions, 72% to 79% of freshmen spend 6 hours or more per week in study. At SUU, 71% to 75% of freshmen devote this same level of effort.

Hours per Week Spent Preparing for Class		2001		2002		2003	
		<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Freshman</i>	<i>Senior</i>
0 - 5 hours	<i>SUU</i>	<i>32.1%</i>	<i>18.1%</i>	<i>29.1%</i>	<i>19.1%</i>	<i>25.0%</i>	<i>17.0%</i>
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	<i>24.6%</i>	<i>23.6%</i>	<i>22.6%</i>	<i>22.2%</i>	<i>21.0%</i>	<i>23.0%</i>
6 - 15 hours	<i>SUU</i>	<i>42.8%</i>	<i>44.8%</i>	<i>46.3%</i>	<i>45.7%</i>	<i>51.0%</i>	<i>51.0%</i>
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	<i>45.9%</i>	<i>43.6%</i>	<i>44.9%</i>	<i>43.8%</i>	<i>46.0%</i>	<i>44.0%</i>
16-25 hours	<i>SUU</i>	<i>17.7%</i>	<i>20.5%</i>	<i>20.9%</i>	<i>21.6%</i>	<i>19.0%</i>	<i>21.0%</i>
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	<i>17.6%</i>	<i>21.5%</i>	<i>23.1%</i>	<i>22.7%</i>	<i>24.0%</i>	<i>22.0%</i>
26 or more hours	<i>SUU</i>	<i>7.6%</i>	<i>6.6%</i>	<i>3.7%</i>	<i>13.6%</i>	<i>5.0%</i>	<i>11.0%</i>
	<i>Master's Peers</i>	<i>8.4%</i>	<i>11.3%</i>	<i>9.2%</i>	<i>11.3%</i>	<i>9.0%</i>	<i>10.0%</i>

Levels of expectation placed upon the student by instructors mirror national rates. In 2003, 53% of freshmen and 56% of seniors responded “often or very often” when asked whether they had worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructors standards or expectations.

Conclusions

NSSE results presented in this report provide a valuable look into the types of instructional innovations taking place at SUU.

SUU students are using technology at rates less than students at master’s peer institutions. A positive dimension of learning at SUU, student-faculty interaction is occurring inside and outside the classroom as well as student-to-student interaction. Students agree that active learning is a part of their studies at rates similar or less than their master’s peer counterparts.

In addition, SUU students spend similar time preparing for class as their peers at other master’s institutions, and agree that they have often worked harder than they thought they could to meet instructor expectations.