NSSE

St. John's University
Executive Summary
2001

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ST. JOHN’S UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) – 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

St. John’s University was one of 321 institutions that participated in the 2001 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). This annual project is co-sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and The Pew Forum for Undergraduate Learning. A random sample of undergraduates are surveyed to assess the extent to which they engage in a variety of generally accepted good educational practices that are associated with high levels of learning and development. At St. John’s, NSSE was administered as a part of the University’s assessment initiatives to refocus conversations about student learning and educational quality; enhance institutional improvement efforts; and foster comparative activity.

The NSSE sampling procedures called for an equal number of first-year and senior students, with the standard sample size determined by the number of undergraduate students enrolled at the institution. For St. John’s, the standard sample size was 500 for each group. We opted to oversample each group by 250 to ensure adequate response for analysis by campus and school/college. The survey was conducted in late spring 2001 semester. Our overall response rate of 37% was slightly lower than the national rate of 42%. Respondents were fairly representative of the undergraduate first-year and senior population by campus; school/college; race and ethnicity; gender; and other characteristics.

NSSE provided survey results for:

- St. John’s University (SJU);
- Participating institutions with the same Carnegie classification as SJU (Doctoral/Research – Intensive); and
- All colleges and universities that participated in the NSSE survey.

These results, which can be used for institutional and comparative analyses, included:

- Data summarized under one of five national benchmarks of effective educational practice;
- Mean comparisons and frequency distributions of each survey question; and
- A file with the raw data for St. John’s respondents.

The rest of this report focuses on responses to individual survey questions.
HIGHLIGHTS OF INSTITUTIONAL RESULTS

The responses of St. John’s students mirrored overall responses and those at Doctoral/Research – Intensive institutions on most characteristics. For example:

- More than three-quarters of respondents indicated that:
  - Their coursework emphasized analyzing very much or quite a bit, followed by applying concepts, making judgments, and synthesizing.
  - They worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.
  - The institution emphasized spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work.
  - They had a good or excellent educational experience and would attend St. John’s if they could start over again.

- More than two-thirds:
  - Evaluated the quality of academic advising they received as good or excellent.
  - Indicated that they worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.

- The following were among the least frequently reported activities, with more than one-third of students indicating that they never:
  - Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course;
  - Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework;
  - Tutored or taught other students
  - Discussed ideas from reading or classes with faculty members outside of class.

There were some significant differences between St. John’s students and those at Doctoral/Research – Intensive institutions related to academic experiences, social experiences, and time on task:
• A significantly higher proportion of SJU first-year and seniors:
  - Work for pay off campus.
  - Provide care for dependents living with them.
  - Have held serious conversations with students of different race/ethnicity.
  - Indicated that their experience at St. John’s has contributed very much or quite a bit to their understanding people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.
  - Have never worked with other students on projects during or outside of class.
  - Have never communicated with a professor via e-mail.
  - Came to class unprepared
  - Indicated that their coursework very much or quite a bit emphasized memorizing facts to repeat them in the same form.
  - Spent 15 hours or less per week preparing for class.

In addition, a significantly higher proportion of our first-year students credited the institution with contributing very much or quite a bit to their:
  - Speaking clearly and effectively.
  - Development of a personal code of values and ethics.

• A significantly lower proportion of our first-year and seniors:
  - Received prompt feedback from faculty very often or often.
  - Participated in co-curricular activities.

USING NSSE DATA

As suggested by NSSE, results can be used in a variety of ways for public accountability and institutional improvement, including:

- Discovering current levels of engagement
- Establishing benchmarks for selected items
- Making comparisons
- Identifying, developing, and marketing distinctive competencies
- Targeting areas for improvement
- Teaching students what is needed to “succeed”
- Monitoring student and institutional performance.