NSSE Results Highlights
IPFW & Strategic Planning Peer Institutions
Spring 2006

What is the NSSE?

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses the extent of student engagement in effective educational practices and provides insight into what they are gaining from their college experience. According to the NSSE, it reports “student behaviors that are highly correlated with many desirable learning and personal development outcomes of college education.” The NSSE survey is organized around five Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences and Supportive Campus Environment.

Who Participated?

- 762 or about 29% of first-year students and 441 or about 37% of seniors responded for a total response rate of 31%
- The overall sampling error was quite low at 2.3%
- 79% of respondents were full-time while the full-time student population was 63%
- 66% of respondents were female while the female student population was 56%
- The race/ethnicity of respondents was representative of the student population
- No age comparison between respondents and the population was possible due to differences in institutional research and the NSSE classifications

In general, full-time and female students were over-represented among those responding to the NSSE.

What Did We Learn?

IPFW students generally responded comparably to students from its strategic planning peers, less comparably to its Carnegie peers (master comprehensive institutions) and even less to all campuses participating in the NSSE. In other words, levels of statistical significance and the effect sizes are smallest, overall, when IPFW student responses are compared to its strategic planning benchmark institutions and greatest when they are compared to all institutions participating in the NSSE.

Level of Academic Challenge. Academic challenge is measured by 9 survey questions centering on coursework, class preparation and the campus environment. Compared to our strategic planning benchmark peers:

- IPFW students perform comparably on mental activities such as analyzing, synthesizing, judging and applying knowledge
- IPFW student perform comparably in the number of assigned readings and papers
- IPFW students spend comparable amounts of time studying and on academic work
Active and Collaborative Learning. Active and collaborative learning is measured by 7 survey items related to in-class activities, working with classmates and community-based learning. Compared to our strategic planning benchmark peers:

- First-year students made more class presentations and senior made fewer
- First-year students worked with other student on projects during class more
- IPFW students worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments less
- IPFW students participated in community-based projects as part of a regular course less

Student-Faculty Interaction. Interaction with faculty is measured by 6 survey questions. These questions focus on interactions with faculty outside the classroom. Compared to our strategic planning benchmark peers:

- IPFW students received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty more
- First-year students worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework less

Enriching Educational Experiences. Enriching educational experiences is measured by 11 items related to interactions with diverse others, use of technology to facilitate collaboration and opportunities to integrate and apply knowledge such as internships and capstone courses. Compared to our strategic planning benchmark peers:

- First-year students have fewer conversations with students from a different race or ethnicity and with different beliefs and values
- First-year students were either less engaged or planned to be less engaged in community service or volunteer work
- First-year students planned to or were engaged in foreign language coursework less
- IPFW students participate less in co-curricular activities

Supportive Campus Environment. Measured by 6 items on the survey, supportive campus environment involves support for succeeding academically and thriving socially. It also includes the quality of relationships with faculty, staff and other students. Compared to our strategic planning benchmark peers:

- Seniors find relationships with other students less supportive
- IPFW students find faculty comparably available, helpful, and sympathetic
- Students indicate IPFW provides more support to succeed academically

What Else?

Results of some individual items on the NSSE are noteworthy, either because they are unexpected or because they differ significantly from the mean scores from other institutions. Below are some examples of how IPFW first-year and senior students compare to students from our strategic planning benchmark peers:

Challenges:

- IPFW students attend fewer art exhibits and theatre performances
- IPFW students exercise less
- First-year and senior students work for pay off campus more and on campus less
- IPFW students spend more time providing care for dependents
- IPFW students attend campus events and activities less
- IPFW contributed to voting less
- IPFW contributed less to understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds
- IPFW contributed less to developing a personal code of values and ethics
- IPFW contributed less to the welfare of the community

Cheers:
- First-year students more often prepare multiple drafts of papers before turning them in
- First-year student more often work on a paper or project that required integrating ideas from various sources
- Seniors read more books on their own for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment
- First-year students report being more challenged to do their best work on exams
- IPFW contributed to writing and speaking skills for first-year students more
- Seniors spend less time commuting to class
- Overall, on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent), first-year students report satisfaction with their educational experience at IPFW as 2.98 and seniors a 3.02

The NSSE was also administered to a small sample of IPFW students in 2003. In general, responses in 2006 were more positive than those in 2003. However, any conclusions drawn from comparing data from the two administrations should be made with caution.