“The research is unequivocal: students who are actively involved in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the college experience than those who are not so involved... [therefore,] it is important to focus on the ways in which an institution can shape its academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offering to encourage student engagement.”

Two key components of Engagement:

• The amount of time and effort students put into their studies and educationally purposeful activities.

• The ways an institution uses its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to encourage student participation

What is NSSE?

Administered by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is the most comprehensive assessment of effective practice in higher education and includes data from more than 334,000 students at 640 four-year college and universities.*

*Statistics above are from the 2009 NSSE Results
In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a class presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come to class without completing readings or assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with other students on projects during class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.1 - Academic activities
Q.2 - Learning mental activities
Q 3 - Reading & Writing
Q.4 - Homework
Q.5 - Academic challenge
Q.6 - Co-curricular activities
Q.7 - Enriching educational experiences
Q.8 - Campus relationship
Q.9 - Time usage
Q.10 - Institutional emphasis
Q. 11 - Gains
Q.12-14 - Satisfaction
## Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Characteristics</th>
<th>First Year (n=496)</th>
<th>Seniors (n=631)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Rate</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Am. Indian/Native American</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian Am/Pacific Is.</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White (non-Hispanic)</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulitracial</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/No response</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Students</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-Campus</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Age (less than 24)</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

• Level of Academic Challenge (LAC)
• Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)
• Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)
• Enriching Educational Experiences (EEE)
• Supportive Campus Environment (SCE)
Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Colleges and universities promote high levels of student achievement by emphasizing the importance of academic effort and setting high expectations for student performance.
Level of Academic Challenge

Activities and conditions:

- Time spent preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, and other activities related to your academic program)
- Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor’s standards or expectations
- Number of assigned textbooks, books, or booklength packs of course readings
- Number of written papers or reports of 20 pages or more
- Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages
- Number of written papers or reports fewer than 5 pages
- Coursework emphasizes: Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory
- Coursework emphasizes: Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences
- Coursework emphasizes: Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods
- Coursework emphasizes: Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
- Campus environment emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work
Student-Faculty Interaction

Students see first-hand how experts think about and solve practical problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, life-long learning.
Student-Faculty Interaction

Activities:

• Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
• Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
• Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)
• Received prompt written or oral feedback from faculty on your academic performance
• Worked with a faculty member on a research project
Student-Faculty Interactions Benchmark

- **NIU**: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1, 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0, 48.8
- **Great Lakes Public**: 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1, 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0, 48.8
- **Carnegie Class**: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1, 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0, 48.8
- **NSSE 2009**: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1, 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0, 48.8
- **NSSE 2009 Top 50%**: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1, 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0, 48.8

**First Year**

- Great Lakes Public: 33.8, 33.2, 34.6, 39.1
- Carnegie Class: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6
- NSSE 2009: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6
- NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 35.9, 33.8, 33.2, 34.6

**Senior**

- Great Lakes Public: 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0
- Carnegie Class: 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0
- NSSE 2009: 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0
- NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 43.5, 40.3, 40.8, 42.0
Supportive Campus Environment

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.
Supportive Campus Environment

Conditions:

- Campus environment provides support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices
**Supportive Campus Environment**

### Student-Faculty Interactions Benchmark

![Bar chart showing student-faculty interactions benchmark for first year and senior students across different categories.

- **NIU**
- **Great Lakes Public**
- **Carnegie Class**
- **NSSE 2009**
- **NSSE 2009 Top 50%**

- **First Year**
  - NIU: 35.9
  - Great Lakes Public: 33.8
  - Carnegie Class: 33.2
  - NSSE 2009: 34.6
  - NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 39.1

- **Senior**
  - NIU: 43.5
  - Great Lakes Public: 40.3
  - Carnegie Class: 40.8
  - NSSE 2009: 42.0
  - NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 48.8
Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are asked to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings.

Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily during and after college.
Active and Collaborative Learning

Activities:

• Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
• Made a class presentation
• Worked with other students on projects during class
• Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
• Tutored or taught other students
• Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
• Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark

First Year
- NIU: 41.2
- Great Lakes Public: 42.1
- Carnegie Class: 42.2
- NIU 2009: 43.2
- NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 47.8

Senior
- NIU: 52.2
- Great Lakes Public: 50.0
- Carnegie Class: 50.4
- NIU 2009: 51.0
- NSSE 2009 Top 50%: 55.7
Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augment the academic program. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures. Used appropriately, technology facilitates learning and promotes collaboration between peers and instructors. Internships, community service, and senior capstone courses provide students with opportunities to synthesize, integrate, and apply their knowledge. Such experiences make learning more meaningful and, ultimately, more useful because what students know becomes a part of who they are.
Activities and conditions:

- Talking with students with different religious beliefs, political opinions, or values
- Talking with students of a different race or ethnicity
- An institutional climate that encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds
- Using electronic technology to discuss or complete assignments

Participating in:

- Internships or field experiences
- Community service or volunteer work
- Foreign language coursework
- Study abroad
- Independent study or self-assigned major
- Culminating senior experience
- Co-curricular activities
- Learning communities
## Enriching Educational Experiences Benchmark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NIU Mean</th>
<th>Great Lakes Public Mean</th>
<th>Carnegie Class Mean</th>
<th>NSSE 2009 Mean</th>
<th>NSSE 2009 Top 50% Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trends

• NIU Seniors scored higher than Great Lake Publics, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2009 institutions in all benchmarks, except EEE.

• NIU First Year students scored higher than Great Lake Publics, Carnegie Class, and NSSE 2009 institutions in LAC and SFI benchmarks.

• In both populations, NIU scored than our comparison groups in the Enriching Educational Experience benchmark.

• First year students lagged behind our comparison groups in Active and Collaborative Learning.
Enriching Educational Experience is an improvement area.

Strengths:
• Both groups scored higher than our comparison groups on the two questions asking about whether a student had engaged in a serious conversation with others of a different race/ethnicity and/or with different beliefs, opinion etc.

Areas for Growth:
• Seniors are lower in community service or volunteer work and culminating senior experience than our comparison groups.
• First year students are lower in participation in learning communities than our comparison groups.
• Both groups are lower in undergraduate research participation, study abroad experience, and foreign language study than our comparison groups.
Recommendations

• With the implementation of components in the Great Journeys Strategic Plan, and the completion of the Foundations of Excellence and Baccalaureate Review in early 2010, NIU is poised to roll out multiple engaged learning programs for 2010 including:
  − Campus-wide learning communities for incoming freshman,
  − Enhanced and expanded undergraduate research programs.

• Increase awareness among faculty, staff and students of NIU’s “high impact educational practices” and encourage the development of more engagement opportunities.

• We should make our aspirational goal to be in the Top 50% of NSSE Institutes when the next NSSE data are collected.