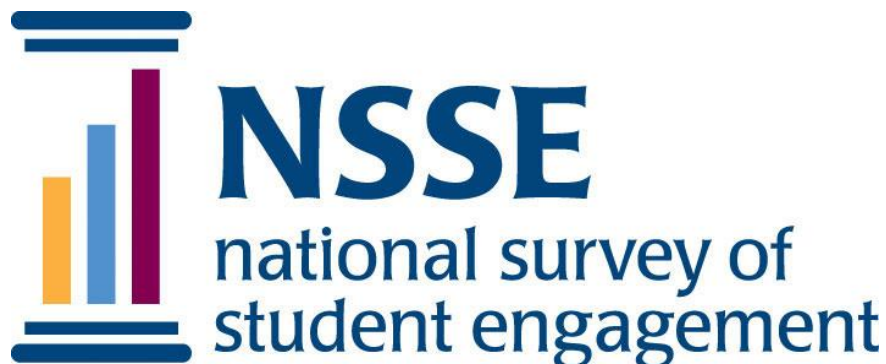




FSSE – NSSE Comparison Report  
University of Scranton

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## Introduction

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is an annual survey administered to undergraduate students online. Specifically, NSSE looks at first-year and senior students' engagement and participation in institutional programs and activities. These results provide an overall look at the nature and quality of the undergraduate experience from the perspective of the students. Meanwhile, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is administered to faculty as a complementary survey to the NSSE. The complementary nature of the surveys allows institutions to compare and contrast similar items, which demonstrate the experiences and perceptions of students and faculty. This report illustrates several areas in which students and faculty have differing experiences and perceptions; hence, the results will prove valuable in facilitating discussion about teaching, learning, and improving the quality of the undergraduate experience. The structure of the tables used in this report is adapted from that of a similar report constructed by the University of Louisville (2011).

## Methodology

In March and April of 2015, FSSE and NSSE administered online surveys to faculty and students, respectively, via email. FSSE and NSSE handled the administration of the surveys and collection of the results, thus ensuring the confidentiality of all respondents. The NSSE looked at first-year and senior students, providing an overall look at the undergraduate experience. At the University of Scranton, 1,279 first-years and 984 seniors were surveyed; of these 258 first-years (20%) and 191 seniors (19%) responded.

For the FSSE, faculty who taught at least one undergraduate course in the current academic year were surveyed. Of the 449 University of Scranton faculty members who were surveyed, 174 responded, constituting a response rate of about 39%. Those respondents were then asked whether the class level of most of their students in their selected course section (faculty were asked to select one course section they believed was representative) was lower division (100-200 level courses) or upper division (300-400 level courses).

## The Report

From the results of the FSSE and NSSE, several tables were produced (as shown below). To draw inferences from these results, similar items were grouped together in three different sections entitled:

- ◆ High Impact Areas of Engagement
- ◆ Classroom Practices
- ◆ Cognitive Activities in Coursework

The results of these sections are presented in tables, which align corresponding faculty and student responses; results of first-year students are matched with those of lower-division faculty, while results of seniors are matched with those of upper-division faculty.

The left side of each of these tables presents the wording of each item for faculty members, as well as their results. Meanwhile, the right side of the tables shows the wording of each item for students and their results. The center column of the tables calculates the differences between the faculty and student results. As such, positive values indicate that faculty value each area more highly than students engage in it; values near 0 indicate that faculty value each area about as highly as students engage in it; and negative values indicate that students engage more in each area than faculty value it.

For additional information about the Respondent Characteristics for the FSSE and the NSSE, please refer to Appendices A and B, respectively.

## Findings

This section provides an overview of the major findings of the comparison tables. Like the tables, the summary is divided into the three major sections listed above. For more detailed results, please refer to the individual tables.

### High Impact Areas of Engagement

- ◆ Compared to lower-division and upper-division faculty, both first-year and senior students seem to *overvalue* the importance of holding a formal leadership role in student organizations or groups.
- ◆ While over half of upper-division faculty believed that it was important for students to work with a faculty member on a research project, only a little over one-third of seniors had done so or planned to do so.
- ◆ Both lower-division and upper-division faculty highly valued completing a culminating senior experience, but markedly fewer first-years and seniors planned to do so or had done so.

### Classroom Practices

- ◆ Though two-thirds or more of lower-division and upper-division faculty considered it important for students to include diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments, only about half of first-years and seniors reported doing so often during the current school year.
- ◆ Most lower-division and upper-division faculty also highlighted the importance of students examining the strengths and weaknesses of their own views on topics or issues, but noticeably fewer first-years and seniors reported doing so often.
- ◆ While over 90% of lower-division faculty valued their students learning something that changes the way they understand issues or concepts, only about two-thirds of first-years reported doing so often.

## Cognitive Activities in Coursework

- ◆ Only about one-third of lower-division and upper-division faculty reported that their coursework had highly emphasized memorizing course material, but 80% or more of first-years and seniors believed that their coursework had done so.
- ◆ While nearly three-fifths of lower-division faculty reported that their coursework had highly emphasized applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations, four-fifths of first-years believed that their coursework had done so.

## Report Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the data presented in this report:

- ◆ The results presented in the tables were not subject to statistical analysis, and thus no determinations of statistical significance or effect size were made. Consequently, the large differences highlighted above may not be significant.
- ◆ For the sake of comparison, the results of first-years were paired with those of lower division faculty and the results of seniors were paired with those of upper division faculty. Though the pairs are comparable, the overlap between these groups is imprecise.
- ◆ Faculty members based their responses on *one course* of their own selection, which may not be representative of all of their courses. Conversely, student responses were based on their *overall experiences* in their courses taken during the academic year.
- ◆ The wording of some questions for faculty and students differed somewhat. For example, many student questions asked about *frequencies* of activities while corresponding faculty questions asked about the *importance* of those activities. The inconsistency in wording may limit the degree to which these results can be compared.

## High Impact Areas of Engagement

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Important" and "Very Important."

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Done" and "Plan to do."

**Faculty**  
were asked:  
"How important is it to you that undergraduates at your institution do the following?"

<b>79% LD</b>	Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.	<b>-13</b>	Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.	<b>FY 92%</b>
<b>84% UD</b>		<b>+3</b>		<b>SR 81%</b>
<b>41% LD</b>	Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group.	<b>-17</b>	Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group.	<b>FY 58%</b>
<b>41% UD</b>		<b>-21</b>		<b>SR 62%</b>
<b>33% LD</b>	Participate in a learning community or other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.	<b>-10</b>	Participate in a learning community or other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.	<b>FY 43%</b>
<b>58% UD</b>		<b>+13</b>		<b>SR 45%</b>
<b>44% LD</b>	Participate in a study abroad program.	<b>-7</b>	Participate in a study abroad program.	<b>FY 51%</b>
<b>38% UD</b>		<b>+12</b>		<b>SR 26%</b>
<b>52% LD</b>	Work with a faculty member on a research project.	<b>+7</b>	Work with a faculty member on a research project.	<b>FY 45%</b>
<b>56% UD</b>		<b>+18</b>		<b>SR 38%</b>
<b>84% LD</b>	Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	<b>+21</b>	Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	<b>FY 63%</b>
<b>78% UD</b>		<b>+13</b>		<b>SR 65%</b>

**Abbreviations**  
LD = Lower division faculty (taught 100-200 level courses)

UD = Upper division faculty (taught 300-400 level courses)

**Students**  
were asked:  
"Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?"

**Abbreviations**  
FY = First-year students (0 to 29 credit hours)

SR = seniors (90 credit hours or more)

Positive values indicate that faculty value each area more highly than students engage in it.

Values near 0 indicate that faculty value each area about as highly as students engage in it.

Negative values indicate that students engage more in each area than faculty value it.

## Classroom Practices

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Important" and "Very Important."

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Often" and "Very often."

**Faculty**  
were asked:  
  
"In your selected course section, how important is it to you that the typical student do the following?"

<b>69% LD</b>	Combine ideas from different courses when completing assignments.	<b>+11</b>	Combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments.	<b>FY 58%</b>
<b>83% UD</b>		<b>+7</b>		<b>SR 76%</b>
<b>70% LD</b>	Connect his or her learning to societal problems or issues.	<b>+15</b>	Connect your learning to societal problems or issues.	<b>FY 55%</b>
<b>75% UD</b>		<b>+10</b>		<b>SR 65%</b>
<b>66% LD</b>	Include diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments.	<b>+15</b>	Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments.	<b>FY 51%</b>
<b>74% UD</b>		<b>+22</b>		<b>SR 52%</b>
<b>78% LD</b>	Examine the strengths and weaknesses of his or her own views on a topic or issue.	<b>+17</b>	Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue.	<b>FY 61%</b>
<b>81% UD</b>		<b>+14</b>		<b>SR 67%</b>
<b>77% LD</b>	Try to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.	<b>+13</b>	Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective.	<b>FY 64%</b>
<b>76% UD</b>		<b>+2</b>		<b>SR 74%</b>
<b>90% LD</b>	Learn something that changes the way he or she understands an issue or concept.	<b>+23</b>	Learn something that changes the way you understand an issue or concept.	<b>FY 67%</b>
<b>87% UD</b>		<b>+11</b>		<b>SR 76%</b>
<b>79% LD</b>	Connect ideas from your course to his or her prior experiences and knowledge.	<b>+1</b>	Connect ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge.	<b>FY 78%</b>
<b>87% UD</b>		<b>+3</b>		<b>SR 84%</b>

**Students**  
were asked:  
  
"During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?"

**Abbreviations**

LD = Lower division faculty (taught 100-200 level courses)

UD = Upper division faculty (taught 300-400 level courses)

**Abbreviations**

FY = First-year students (0 to 29 credit hours)

SR = seniors (90 credit hours or more)

Positive values indicate that faculty value each area more highly than students engage in it.

Values near 0 indicate that faculty value each area about as highly as students engage in it.

Negative values indicate that students engage more in each area than faculty value it.

## Cognitive Activities in Coursework

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Quite a bit" and "Very much."

Percentages provided below reflect combined responses of "Quite a bit" and "Very much."

**Faculty**  
were asked:  
"In your selected course section, how much does the coursework emphasize the following?"

33% LD	Memorizing course material	-50	Memorizing course material	FY 83%
27% UD		-53		SR 80%
58% LD	Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	-20	Applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations	FY 78%
80% UD		-5		SR 85%
80% LD	Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	-2	Analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts	FY 82%
86% UD		+8		SR 78%
66% LD	Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	-10	Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	FY 76%
62% UD		-12		SR 74%
71% LD	Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	+1	Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	FY 70%
70% UD		-1		SR 71%

**Students**  
were asked:  
"During the current school year, how much has your coursework emphasized the following?"

**Abbreviations**  
LD = Lower division faculty (taught 100-200 level courses)

UD = Upper division faculty (taught 300-400 level courses)

**Abbreviations**  
FY = First-year students (0 to 29 credit hours)

SR = seniors (90 credit hours or more)

Positive values indicate that faculty value each area more highly than students engage in it.

Values near 0 indicate that faculty value each area about as highly as students engage in it.

Negative values indicate that students engage more in each area than faculty value it.

## Appendix A

### FSSE Respondent Characteristics

	Lower Division (n = 58)	Upper Division (n = 77)
<b>Gender Identity</b>		
Man	58%	54%
Woman	40%	42%
Prefer not to respond	2%	4%
<b>Racial/Ethnic Identification</b>		
Asian	4%	3%
Black or African American	2%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	11%	3%
White	75%	87%
Other	1%	0%
Multiracial	4%	4%
Prefer not to respond	4%	1%
<b>Full-time/Part-time</b>		
Full-time	72%	80%
Less than full-time	28%	20%
<b>Academic Rank</b>		
Professor	20%	36%
Associate Professor	20%	21%
Assistant Professor	24%	16%
Instructor	17%	13%
Lecturer	4%	0%
Other	15%	14%
<b>Tenure Status</b>		
No tenure system at this institution	2%	3%
Not on tenure track	42%	29%
On tenure track but not tenured	15%	7%
Tenured	42%	61%
<b>General Academic Discipline</b>		
Arts & Humanities	29%	22%
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	3%	4%
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science	21%	12%
Social Sciences	10%	11%
Business	2%	9%
Communications, Media, & Public Relations	3%	5%
Education	0%	3%
Engineering	0%	1%
Health Professions	12%	22%
Social Service Professions	5%	4%
All Other	14%	9%



## Appendix B

### NSSE Respondent Characteristics

	First-Years (n = 205)	Seniors (n = 160)
<b>Gender Identity</b>		
Man	40%	49%
Woman	59%	51%
Prefer not to respond	1%	0%
<b>Enrollment Status</b>		
Full-time	96%	95%
Less than full-time	4%	5%
<b>Racial/Ethnic Identification</b>		
Asian	4%	3%
Black or African American	2%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	11%	3%
White	75%	87%
Other	1%	0%
Multiracial	4%	4%
Prefer not to respond	4%	1%
<b>Place of Residence</b>		
On-campus housing	78%	46%
Residence (within walking distance of campus)	5%	31%
Residence (farther than walking distance of campus)	15%	19%
None of the above	2%	4%
<b>Transfer Status</b>		
Started elsewhere	4%	11%
<b>First Major</b>		
Arts & Humanities	5%	6%
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, & Natural Resources	18%	29%
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, & Computer Science	3%	3%
Social Sciences	7%	8%
Business	20%	13%
Communications, Media, & Public Relations	5%	5%
Education	3%	3%
Engineering	2%	0%
Health Professions	30%	28%
Social Service Professions	3%	3%
All Other	2%	2%
Undecided/Undeclared	2%	0%