

Chapter 2: National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Who takes it?

All freshmen and seniors are invited to complete the survey.

When is it administered?

During the spring semester

How long does it take for the students to complete the survey?

Approximately 15 minutes

What office administers it?

NSSE personnel administer it online with campus coordination by the Office of Assessment and Testing

Who originates the survey?

Center for Postsecondary Research

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When are results typically available?

Early Fall.

What type of information is sought?

NSSE attempts to measure levels of student engagement. Updated in 2013, the survey asked students to answer questions in five different categories: participation in educationally purposeful activities, institutional requirements and the challenging nature of coursework, perceptions of the college environment, estimates of educational and personal growth since starting college, and background and demographic information. A copy of the 2017 survey is available at http://nsse.indiana.edu/pdf/survey_instruments/2018/NSSE_2018_US.pdf

From whom are the results available?

The Office of Assessment and Testing

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

The University community through this Almanac, the President, and the Strategic Planning and Assessment Workshop.

Are the results available by department or discipline?

No. However, some reports are available by predetermined groupings of majors provided the grouping had at least the minimum number of required responses provided.

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

Yes.

Selected NSSE Results and Interpretation

Because NSSE results are now tied to state performance funding, NSSE is administered every year, rather than every other year. NSSE allows several kinds of comparisons across institutions. Truman's selected comparison groups were the following:

1. Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC) Schools. Truman State University is one of 30 public colleges and universities aimed at driving awareness of the importance of public liberal arts education in a student-centered, residential environment per COPLAC's mission statement.
2. National Liberal Arts Colleges.
3. NSSE 2017 and 2018 colleges. The 943 U.S. colleges and universities that administered NSSE in 2017 and/or 2018.

In 2018, 345 Truman first-year students responded for a response rate of 27%. In the same year, 288 Truman seniors answered the survey for a response rate of 24%. These response rates are similar to those of other institutions, and likely provide a representative sample of the population.

Select Findings:

First-year and senior Truman students reported at a higher frequency than the COPLAC institutions and all NSSE participating institutions that they asked another student to help them understand course material and that they explained course material to one or more students. First-year Truman students reported preparing for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students more often than the students within the COPLAC and all NSSE participating organizations, but less often than the National Liberal Arts. Seniors reported preparing for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students more often than COPLAC, National Liberal Arts, and all NSSE participating organizations groups. Both first-year and seniors reported memorizing course materials more often than the COPLAC and the National Liberal Arts groups and seniors also reported memorizing more often than the all NSSE participating institution group. First-year students reported their courses challenged them to do their best work more than the COPLAC and all NSSE participating groups. Seniors reported their courses challenged them to do their best work less than COPLAC and equally compared to the National Liberal Arts and all NSSE participating organizations. Related to the number of hours spent in a typical 7-day week on various activities, Truman students reported they spent more time preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, doing homework, etc.) than first-year students at all three comparison group institutions and seniors at COPLAC and all NSSE participating institutions.

Freshman and senior Truman students reported at a higher frequency than the COPLAC group and the all NSSE participating institutions group that they attended an art exhibit, play, or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.). First-year and senior students reported having discussions with people with political views other than their own more frequently than all three comparison groups. First-year students reported having discussions with religious beliefs other than their own more often than all comparison groups, while seniors reported having discussions with religious beliefs other than their own equally often compared to all participating groups. First-year Truman students reported equal quality of interactions with students at COPLAC and all NSSE participating groups and more poor interactions compared to the National Liberal Arts group. Truman seniors reported better quality of interactions with students than the COPLAC group and equal quality compared to National Liberal Arts and all NSSE participating institutions.

Seniors reported holding a formal leadership role in a student organization or group more than all 3 comparison groups. Seniors participated in study abroad, worked with a faculty member on a research

project or completed a culminating senior experience more than both the COPLAC and all NSSE participating groups.

Both first-year and senior students reported that Truman emphasizes spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work significantly more than all three comparison groups. First-year Truman students reported Truman provided support for their overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.) equally compared to COPLAC and all NSSE participating institutions. Seniors reported Truman provided opportunities to be involved socially equally compared to COPLAC and all NSSE participating groups and less than the National Liberal Arts group. Truman seniors reported that Truman contributed more to their knowledge, skills, and personal development related to thinking critically and analytically than students at the COPLAC and all NSSE participating institutions. First-year students reported spending less time participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.) than all comparison groups. Senior Truman students reported spending more time participating in co-curricular activities (organizations, campus publications, student government, etc.) than COPLAC and all NSSE participating institutions.

First-year and senior students evaluated their entire educational experience at Truman as more poor than students' educational experiences in all comparison groups. First-year Truman students also reported that if they could start over again, they would go to Truman again more than students in the COPLAC group and equally likely compared to National Liberal Arts and all NSSE institutions groups.

Areas where Truman first-year students' responses did not compare well with all three comparison groups (the COPLAC, National Liberal Arts, and All NSSE participating institutions) were: Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in; Included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments; Discussed your academic performance with a faculty member; Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source; Instructors didn't provide feedback on as draft or work in progress; Instructors didn't provide prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments; Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue; Lengths of writing tasks, papers or reports; Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement; Participate in study abroad program; Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities; and Writing clearly and effectively.

Areas where Truman seniors' responses did not compare well with all three comparison groups were: Summarized what you learned in class or from course materials; quality of interactions with Academic advisors; Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities; and Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues.

Each year the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks students at hundreds of colleges and universities to reflect on the time they devote to various learning activities. The topics explored are linked to previous research on student success in college.

Results from NSSE can provide prospective students with insights into how they might learn and develop at a given college. To help in the college exploration process, NSSE developed *A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College* to give students and their families key questions to ask during campus visits.

The following responses were provided by 633 Truman students on the 2018 survey.



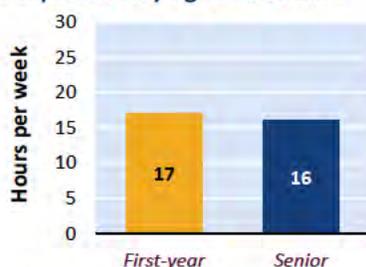
A Pocket Guide to Choosing a College is available at nsse.indiana.edu/html/pocket_guide.cfm



Academics

How much time do students spend studying each week?

First-year (FY) students spent an average of 17 hours per week preparing for class while seniors spent an average of 16 hours per week.



Do courses challenge students to do their best?^a

51% of FY students reported that their courses "highly" challenged them to do their best work.

How much writing is expected?

In an academic year, FY students estimated they were assigned an average of 39 pages of writing and seniors estimated an average of 73 pages.

How much reading is expected?

FY students estimated they spent an average of 8 hours per week on assigned reading, and seniors read 8 hours per week.

How often do students make course presentations?^b

28% of FY students and 69% of seniors "frequently" gave course presentations.

Do class discussions and assignments include the perspectives of diverse groups of people?^b

48% of FY students "frequently" included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments.

Are students expected to use numbers or statistics throughout their coursework?^b

32% of FY students "frequently" used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue; 49% of seniors "frequently" reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information.

Experiences with Faculty

How do students rate their interactions with faculty?^c

46% of FY students rated the quality of their interactions with faculty as "high."

How often do students talk with faculty members or advisors about their career plans?^b

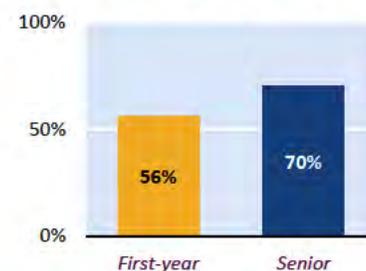
27% of FY and 48% of seniors "frequently" discussed career plans with faculty.

Do faculty members clearly explain course goals and requirements?

81% of FY students said instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements "quite a bit" or "very much."

Do students receive prompt and detailed feedback?^d

56% of FY students and 70% of seniors said instructors "substantially" gave prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments.



How often do students talk with faculty members outside class about what they are learning?^b

18% of FY students "frequently" discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class.

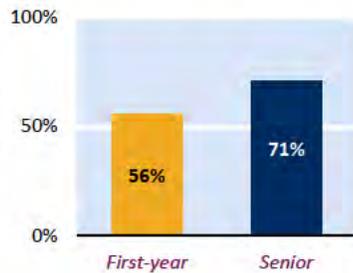
How many students work on research projects with faculty?

4% of FY students and 38% of seniors worked on a research project with a faculty member.

Learning with Peers

How often do students work together on class projects and assignments?^b

56% of FY students and 71% of seniors "frequently" worked with their peers on course projects and assignments.



Do students help each other learn?^b

65% of seniors "frequently" explained course material to one or more students.

How often do students work together to prepare for exams?^b

51% of FY students "frequently" prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students.

How often do students interact with others who have different viewpoints or who come from different backgrounds?^b

Among FY students, 74% "frequently" had discussions with people with different political views, 78% "frequently" had discussions with people from a different economic background, and 71% "frequently" had discussions with people from a different race or ethnicity.

Campus Environment

Are students encouraged to use learning support services (tutors, writing center)?^d

74% of FY students said the institution "substantially" emphasized the use of learning support services.

How do students rate their interactions with academic advisors?^c

44% of FY students and 37% of seniors gave the quality of their interactions with academic advisors a "high" rating.

How well do students get along with each other?^c

52% of FY students gave the quality of their interactions with their peers a "high" rating.

How satisfied are students with their educational experience?

83% of FY and 84% of seniors rated their entire educational experience at this institution as "excellent" or "good."

Rich Educational Experiences

What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?

During their first year, 6% of students participated in a learning community. By spring of their senior year, 71% of students had done (or were doing) a culminating senior experience.

How many students study in other countries?

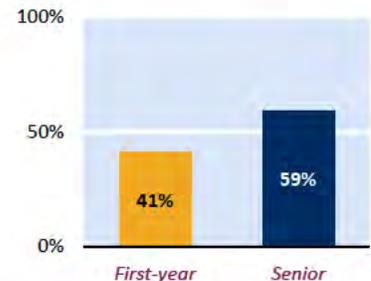
By their senior year, 22% of students had studied abroad.

How many students get practical, real-world experience through internships or field experiences?

By spring of their senior year, 59% of students had participated in some form of internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.

How many courses include community-based service-learning projects?^e

41% of FY students and 59% of seniors said "at least some" of their courses included a community-based service-learning project.



Notes

- "Highly" is a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale where 1 is "Not at all" and 7 is "Very much."
- "Frequently" is "Often" or "Very often."
- A "High" rating is a 6 or 7 on a seven-point scale where 1 is "Poor" and 7 is "Excellent."
- "Substantially" is "Quite a bit" or "Very much."
- "At least some" is defined by combining responses of "Some," "Most," and "All."



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