

## Research Universities and NSSE

More than 160 Carnegie-classified research universities (“very high” or “high” research activity) have participated in NSSE at least once in the last five years, including 31 Association of American Universities (AAU) member institutions. This represents about 77% of U.S. research universities. NSSE provides valuable information about the quality of the undergraduate experience, including how students spend their time and what they gain from college.

## Benefits of NSSE Participation

NSSE participation offers large research institutions several advantages including flexible third-party administration via a census or random sample, reports with up to three customized comparison groups, and detailed reporting by customizable major-field groups. Since NSSE’s launch in 2000, the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) consortium has afforded 30 research institutions the opportunity to append additional questions about class size, quality of instruction, course availability, general education, courses in the major, and advising. The consortium provides research institutions the opportunity to share data and explore topics of mutual interest.

## Examples of Data Use

Research universities have made productive use of their results to assess educational effectiveness and improve the conditions for student success. The following examples reflect the growing sophistication of NSSE users to integrate results in strategic planning and the program assessment, and tighten links between assessment results and improvements to teaching and learning.

### The Ohio State University

In its Self-Study Report prepared for the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET, Ohio State (OSU) used NSSE results as evidence for institutional level assessment-related criteria. OSU administers NSSE every three years to chart improvement on University-wide goals such as promoting academic excellence, enhancing the undergraduate experience, and maintaining a commitment to quality.



The Ohio State University



View a sample of newly designed reports in the *Institutional Report*: [www.nsse.iub.edu/html/sampleInstitutionalReport.cfm](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/html/sampleInstitutionalReport.cfm)

### Case Western Reserve University

Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) has participated in nine NSSE administrations. The institution featured NSSE 2012 results in a concise “College Outcomes” report highlighting students’ overall evaluation of their educational experience and ratings of academic advising, including variation by gender, underrepresented minority status, college, and major. The report summarized students’ perceived educational gains, and concluded with a discussion of deep approaches to learning and results showing the extent of higher-order learning experiences, and favorable levels of select reflective and integrative learning.

CWRU’s results have been shared with the Retention Task Force, and included in annual reports from units such as Greek Life. Analyses of student satisfaction showed supportive environment and quality of advising were key predictors. Advising experiences in the upper division were of particular interest to the campus, and data from the AAUDE consortium questions provided CWRU with useful information about advising experiences and comparable data to inform improvement initiatives.

### Iowa State University

The Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Iowa State University (ISU) has shared NSSE results at campus-wide Faculty Forums, the annual University Teaching Seminar, at new faculty orientation, and at faculty workshops throughout the year to stimulate discussion about ways to enhance learning through the lens of student engagement. In collaboration with the vice provost for Undergraduate Programs and the Center, the ISU Research Institute for Studies in Education (RISE) conducted a longitudinal analysis of its NSSE data for its regional accreditation self-study. RISE also used the analyses to propose curricular models and programming efforts for different departments to enhance student engagement.

## Tulane University

Tulane University used NSSE results related to students' expectations for and involvement in service-learning, undergraduate research, and internships, plus other indicators of students' interest in public service and research, to establish the warrant for the Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching (CELT). Developed as part of its Quality Enhancement Plan for regional accreditation, CELT is the hub for fostering engagement in four core areas: (1) research engagement; (2) social innovation engagement; (3) classroom engagement; and (4) experiential engagement. The project expands opportunities for more students and faculty to participate in meaningful, high-impact practices and learning experiences that complement their academic and career goals.

NSSE data related to CELT's mission will be used as baseline indicators to monitor student participation and educational effectiveness. For example, NSSE items will serve to assess engaged classroom activity, and participation in undergraduate research and service-learning will provide feedback on participation in high-impact activities. Tulane's assessment plan includes the mapping of learning outcomes to assessment activities and the use of multiple measures, including NSSE.

## University of Colorado Boulder

The office of Institutional Analysis at the University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) administers a cycle of student surveys including NSSE to emphasize program-level data, benchmarking, student reflection on learning, and other campus goals. Results are reported publicly by college, school, division, and department. CU-Boulder also coordinates of the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE). The AAUDE-NSSE consortium appends a set of research university-focused questions to NSSE and facilitates the sharing of student-level NSSE data among participating institutions. Information gathered from these efforts was used in the CU Boulder self-study, *Shaping the New Flagship*, for regional accreditation.



University of Colorado Boulder

Data from a national pilot of a joint NSSE and Writing Program Administrators survey of student engagement and writing experiences provided CU-Boulder the opportunity to compare its performance to that of other schools in the Consortium for the Study of Writing in College (CSWC). A major focus of CU-Boulder's self-study described the

Program for Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) and the creation of the campus Writing Center to address a decentralized and diffuse writing curriculum and lack of focus on first-year writing programs. PWR expanded upper-division courses, redesigned lower-division courses, and established a full-service Writing Center to reinforce pedagogical reforms driven by assessment. Results on several NSSE survey items related to student writing from four NSSE administrations showed that CU-Boulder students improved over time and compared well to their counterparts at peer institutions.

## University of Nebraska – Lincoln

The University of Nebraska – Lincoln's (UNL) NSSE results from three administrations contributed to two campus-wide reports about the experiences of faculty, staff, and students. The first report, *Intellectual Engagement and Achievement at UNL* assessed how the experiences of faculty, staff, and students related to the goals identified in the university's strategic plan for 2020. The second report, *Everyone a Teacher, Everyone a Learner*, addressed the effectiveness of first-year undergraduate orientation and transition programs. Both documents integrated NSSE results with findings from UNL's Quality Performance Indicators and the Gallup Climate Survey. To view these reports go to:

[www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/blue\\_sky\\_report.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/blue_sky_report.pdf)

[www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/2020report.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/2020report.pdf)

[www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/everyone\\_a\\_learner.pdf](http://www.unl.edu/svcaa/documents/everyone_a_learner.pdf)

NSSE findings also called attention to the need to revisit learning outcomes and the structure of the existing general education program. UNL provided each college with a detailed report of their students' NSSE responses. Some colleges shared the results with other constituent groups (students, alumni, faculty members) and all colleges used the results as benchmark data.

## AAUDE Consortium Participants

Since 2000, the following institutions have participated in the Association of American Universities Data Exchange consortium to append additional questions, share data and explore topics of mutual interest:

Case Western Reserve University	University of Florida
Indiana University Bloomington	University of Illinois at
Iowa State University	Urbana-Champaign
Michigan State University	University of Iowa
Penn State University –	University of Kansas
University Park	University of Maryland-
Rutgers University-New	College Park
Brunswick	University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
Stony Brook University	University of Minnesota-
Syracuse University	Twin Cities
The Ohio State University	University of Missouri-Columbia
The University of Arizona	University of Nebraska at Lincoln
The University of Texas at Austin	University of North Carolina at
Tulane University of Louisiana	Chapel Hill
University at Buffalo, State	University of Oregon
University of New York	University of Pittsburgh
University of California-Berkeley	University of Virginia
University of California-Davis	University of Washington-Seattle
University of Colorado Boulder	University of Wisconsin-Madison