FSSE
faculty survey of student engagement

FSSE 2015 Overview

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) complements the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). FSSE (pronounced "fessie") measures faculty members' expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development. The survey also collects information about how faculty members spend their time on professorial activities, such as teaching and scholarship, and the kinds of learning experiences their institutions emphasize.

FSSE results can be used to identify areas of institutional strength, as well as aspects of the undergraduate experience that may warrant attention. The information can be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students' educational experiences.

This overview provides general information about the institutions and faculty members that participated in the 2015 administration of FSSE, and highlights ways institutions can use their results. In the first section, we compare the characteristics of FSSE-participating institutions to those of NSSE-participating institutions and those of the U.S. profile of bachelor's-granting institutions. We also compare the characteristics of FSSE respondents to those of faculty members at U.S. bachelor's-granting institutions and provide general information about response rates. In the second section, we provide guidelines for using and interpreting FSSE 2015 results, and highlight resources for analyzing and presenting FSSE findings. Resources intended to help with the use of FSSE data are also on the FSSE website.

FSSE 2015 Institutions and Respondents

In the 2015 administration of FSSE, 19,056 faculty members responded from 133 bachelor's-granting colleges and universities in the United States that selected their own faculty samples. Faculty members at participating institutions were sent email invitations asking them to respond to the online survey. Nearly all FSSE institutions (125) also administered NSSE to their students in 2015; eight FSSE institutions had used NSSE in a previous year. Having recent data from NSSE allows participating institutions to examine how faculty members and students respond to similar questions. Each campus receives electronic copies of its reports and data file, along with a

list of participating institutions. The list is also publicly available through the FSSE website.

For the FSSE 2015 administration, institutions were able to add Topical Modules and consortium items to the end of the core FSSE instrument. This year, the module on Academic Advising was appended by 43 institutions, Learning with Technology by 18, Development of Transferable Skills by 13, Civic Engagement by 7, Experiences with Writing by 28, Experiences with Diverse Perspectives by 15, and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by 23; and 8 institutions appended consortium items. Institutions could append as many as two modules or a module and a set of consortium items.

Tables 1 through 3 on the following pages provide more information about the participating institutions and faculty members who responded to the survey. While included here and in each institution's FSSE Respondent Profile, certain demographics (e.g., gender, rank, and employment status) were withheld from each institution's data file to ensure that responses remain anonymous.

SUNY College at Oneonta

Profile of FSSE 2015 Institutions

FSSE 2015 institutions are similar in many ways to the profile of U.S. bachelor's-granting colleges and universities, while differing in a few respects (see Table 1). Although slight differences exist between these profiles, the distribution of FSSE 2015 institutions reflects a wide range of U.S. institutions, which helps ensure that FSSE results represent a broad cross section of U.S. faculty members.

Table 1

Profile of FSSE and NSSE 2015 U.S. Institutions and All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions[a]

Institution Characteristics	FSSE 2015 %	NSSE 2015 %	U.S.[b] %
Carnegie Basic Classification[c]			
Research Universities (very high research activity)	5	4	7
Research Universities (high research activity)	7	9	6
Doctoral/Research Universities	5	6	5
Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	32	32	25
Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	13	11	11
Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	8	5	8
Baccalaureate Colleges–Arts & Sciences	12	15	16
Baccalaureate Colleges–Diverse Fields	19	18	23
Control			
Public	48	38	34
Private	52	62	66
Undergraduate Enrollment			
Fewer than 1,000	13	13	20
1,000–2,499	27	31	33
2,500–4,999	20	21	17
5,000–9,999	23	18	14
10,000–19,999	16	11	9
20,000 or more	2	6	6
Region			
New England	5	8	8
Mideast	15	19	18
Great Lakes	12	17	15
Plains	19	11	11
Southeast	27	23	24
Sourthwest	8	9	7
Rocky Mountains	3	4	4
Far West	11	9	11
Outlying Areas	1	1	2
Locale			
City	41	48	47
Suburban	25	24	26
Town	28	23	21
Rural	5	5	6

a. All percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in this table. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

b. U.S. percentages are based on data from the 2013 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics file.

c. For information on the Carnegie Foundation's Basic Classification, see: carnegieclassifications.iu.edu

Profile of FSSE 2015 Respondents

Tables 2 and 3 show selected characteristics of faculty who completed FSSE 2015, compared with those of their counterparts across the US. The percentages in the FSSE columns are based on data from FSSE 2015. The percentages in the U.S. columns, based on the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, represent the instructional faculty and staff at all U.S. bachelor's-granting institutions.

Table 2

Characteristics of FSSE 2015 Respondents and Faculty Population at All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions

Respondent Characteristics	FSSE Respondents %	U.S.[a] %
Gender Identity		
Man	49	54
Woman	51	46
Racial/Ethnic Identification		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	<1
Asian	5	7
Black or African American	5	6
Hispanic or Latino	3	5
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	<1	1
White	72	75
Multiracial	3	1
Other[b]	1	–
Preferred not to respond[b]	10	5
Employment Status		
Full-time	80	57
Part-time	20	43
Rank of Full-Time Faculty		
Professor	27	26
Associate professor	28	23
Assistant professor	28	25
Instructor or lecturer	14	14
Other[d]	3	12

a. U.S. percentages come from the 2013 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component (with the exception of rank for full-time faculty, which is from 2011) and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.

b. Category did not exist in the 2013 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component. U.S. percentage for "Preferred not to respond" row is for faculty whose race was "unknown."

c. Rank is not reported in 2011 IPEDS for part-time faculty. Among FSSE respondents, most part-timers are either instructors or lecturers (61%).

d. Includes instructors with alternative appointment types (e.g., administrators and researchers).

Georgia Institute of Technology

Table 3 Percentage of Faculty by Disciplinary Area		
Disciplinary Area	FSSE [a]	U.S. [b]
	%	%
Arts and Humanities	25	23
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources	7	8
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science	12	11
Social Science	13	12
Business	10	8
Communications, Media, and Public Relations	4	2
Education	11	7
Engineering	4	4
Health Professions	11	21
Social Science Professions	4	4

a. FSSE distributions based on 17,776 respondents from these disciplinary areas.
b. U.S. percentages come from the 2014 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.

Response Rates

Adjusted for faculty members who could not be reached (usually because of incorrect email addresses), a response rate (the number of respondents divided by the number of faculty members contacted) was calculated for each institution. In 2015, 42% of invited faculty responded to the survey. The response rate of individual institutions ranged from 15% to 83%, while the average was 48%.

Using FSSE Results

Before sharing FSSE results on campus, users should become familiar with the nature of the data, the reports, and the "story line" of their institution's performance.

Becoming Familiar with FSSE Reports and Resources

Each institution receives several reports and a data file that will help users better understand their FSSE results. Reports are delivered in the *Institutional Report 2015* binder and are available electronically on the NSSE and FSSE websites through the Institution Interface, which can be accessed by up to three campus representatives using their own unique username and password. The data file, codebook, list of participating institutions, this overview, and other supporting materials are also available via the Institution Interface.

Institution-specific resources include:

- A *Snapshot* report giving an overview of results, an easy-to-digest summary of key FSSE findings.
- A *FSSE-NSSE Combined Report* presenting faculty results side by side with student results, allowing institutions to identify areas of correspondence.
- A *FSSE Frequencies* report providing the response percentages for each survey item broken down by the level of the students taught by faculty members.
- A *FSSE Respondent Profile* report summarizing demographic information from faculty members who responded. Much of this information is not contained in the institutional data file in order to protect respondents' identities.
- A *FSSE Administrative Summary* report highlighting important administration details, including details about your sample, response rates, survey customization choices, and recruitment message schedule.
- A data file allowing for additional analyses that protects the identity of respondents (some demographic data are not contained in the file; see the "How Does FSSE Protect Respondent Anonymity?" section below).
- A codebook with details about each survey question, including variable names and response sets.
- Topical Module and consortium reports providing results for those institutions that administered additional survey items.

In addition, the FSSE website (fsse.indiana.edu) includes several important documents and resources:

- Facsimiles of the core FSSE survey and Topical Module instruments.
- Frequency reports by Carnegie Basic Classification category and disciplinary area based on faculty responses from all participating institutions.
- Sample analyses that can be used as examples of different ways to use FSSE data alone (e.g., examining the proportion of class time devoted to lecturing, small group work, and experiential activities by disciplinary area) or in combination with NSSE (e.g., comparing faculty expectations to faculty perceptions and student self-reports of time spent studying). Sample analyses can also be used for comparative purposes.
- A *FSSE Data User's Guide* to assist in presentations of FSSE findings to campus audiences.
- Examples of how other institutions share their FSSE results with different audiences.

Checking Data Quality

An essential early step in reviewing a campus's results is comparing the *FSSE Respondent Profile* report with institutional data on faculty. The closer the characteristics match, the more confidence an institution can have that their respondents represent the faculty surveyed.

Another way to gauge data quality is through sampling error, an estimate of the margin by which the "true" score for an institution on a given item could differ from the reported score for one or more reasons, such as differences in important characteristics between the sample and the populations. For example, if 60% reply "very often" to a particular item and the sampling error is +/- 4%, there is a 95% chance that the population value is between 56% and 64%.

Queens University of Charlotte

Communicating FSSE Results

We offer the following suggestions for communicating FSSE results to interested parties:

- Examine representativeness as described above.
- Check the respondent count and sampling error since questions often arise as to whether a small number of respondents adequately represents the population from which it is drawn.
- Use student and faculty matched items to stimulate discussion about student engagement, its relationship to learning, and which engagement activities to emphasize on campus. Faculty and student responses can differ for many reasons. For example, questions for students and faculty may be framed differently (e.g., over an academic year or in a particular course), or FSSE and NSSE response options for a specific item may not match exactly. A strong understanding of the instruments as well as one's institutional context should help in interpreting differences.

- Meet with those responsible for faculty development and undergraduate improvement initiatives to begin sharing results and discussing ways in which FSSE data can be used to enhance teaching and learning. Use the worksheets in the *FSSE Data User's Guide* to help focus these discussions (see the Tools and Services tab on the FSSE website).
- Consult *Using FSSE Data* and *Using NSSE Data* (found online or in the User Resources section of the *Institutional Report 2015* binder) for examples of how other institutions use FSSE and NSSE in professional development and assessment initiatives.
- Contact the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice (**nsse.indiana.edu/institute**) for additional ideas about making the best use of FSSE and NSSE results on campus.

How Does FSSE Protect Respondent Anonymity?

Measures the FSSE project takes to ensure the anonymity of respondents include the following:

- Each institution's data file excludes faculty members' responses to demographic questions such as racial/ethnic identification, gender identity, age, number of years as a faculty member, appointment status, rank, and tenure status.
- To mask identifiability, disciplines have been collapsed into ten categories that parallel major organizational units on campus.
- Customized reports by faculty demographics are available for institutions wishing to examine FSSE findings while protecting respondent anonymity. FSSE staff can assist in the production of such reports. For reports produced by FSSE staff, costs vary by the complexity of the request. Contact FSSE (**fsse@indiana.edu**) for further information.