

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 what 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 2017 FSSE administration, 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 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 2017 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.indiana.edu.

FSSE 2017 Institutions and Respondents

In the 2017 administration of FSSE, 24,418 faculty members responded from 154 bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities in the United States (153) and Canada (1). All participating FSSE institutions select 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 (143) also administered NSSE to their students in 2017; the remainder administered NSSE in previous years. Having recent data from NSSE allows participating institutions to examine how faculty

members and students respond to similar questions. For the FSSE 2017 administration, institutions could choose to add Topical Modules and consortium items to the end of the core FSSE instrument. The module on Academic Advising was appended by 48 institutions, Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity by 30, Experiences with Writing by 19, Teaching Professional Development by 17, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by 16, Development of Transferable Skills by 15, Civic Engagement by 15, Learning with Technology by 12; and 8 institutions appended consortium questions. Institutions could append up to two modules or a module and a set of consortium questions.

Tables 1 through 3 on the following pages provide more information about the participating institutions and faculty members who responded to the survey in the U.S.

Profile of FSSE 2017 Institutions

FSSE 2017 institutions were similar in many ways to the profile of U.S. bachelor’s-granting colleges and universities, while differing in a few respects (Table 1). Although slight differences exist between these profiles, the distribution of FSSE 2017 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.



Simon Fraser University

Table 1**Profile of FSSE and NSSE 2017 U.S. Institutions and All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions**

Institution Characteristics	FSSE 2017 (%)	NSSE 2017 (%)	U.S. ^a (%)
Carnegie Basic Classification^b			
Doc/Highest: Doctoral Universities (Highest Research Activity)	3	5	7
Doc/Higher: Doctoral Universities (Higher Research Activity)	8	6	6
Doc/Moderate: Doctoral Universities (Moderate Research Activity)	12	7	7
Master's L: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	27	29	24
Master's M: Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	13	13	13
Master's S: Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	8	8	9
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences Focus	12	16	15
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	16	15	19
Control			
Public	52	44	35
Private	48	56	65
Undergraduate Enrollment			
Fewer than 1,000	16	15	21
1,000–2,499	25	32	33
2,500–4,999	16	18	17
5,000–9,999	24	19	14
10,000–19,999	12	9	9
20,000 or more	8	7	6
Region			
New England	3	9	8
Mid East	10	18	18
Great Lakes	12	15	15
Plains	14	10	10
Southeast	35	25	25
Southwest	12	9	8
Rocky Mountains	1	2	3
Far West	12	11	10
Outlying Areas	1	<1	2
Locale			
City	46	44	47
Suburban	17	24	26
Town	27	26	21
Rural	10	6	6

Notes: Percentages are unweighted and based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees and belong to one of the eight Carnegie classifications in the table. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- U.S. percentages are based on the 2015 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics data.
- For information on the Carnegie Foundation's 2015 Basic Classification, see carnegieclassifications.iu.edu.

Profile of FSSE 2017 Respondents

Tables 2 and 3 show selected characteristics of U.S. faculty who completed FSSE 2017 and of their counterparts across the U.S. 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 2017 Respondents and Faculty Population at All U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Institutions**

Respondent Characteristics	FSSE 2017 Respondents (%)	U.S. Bachelor's-Granting Population ^a (%)
Gender Identity^b		
Man	47	52
Woman	48	48
Racial/Ethnic Identification		
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1	<1
Asian	6	6
Black or African American	6	10
Hispanic or Latino	4	8
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Isl.	<1	<1
White	70	68
Multiracial	3	1
Other ^c	2	-
Preferred not to respond ^c	9	4
Employment Status		
Full-time	77	58
Part-time	23	42
Rank of Full-Time Faculty		
Professor	28	28
Associate Professor	25	25
Assistant Professor	27	27
Instructor or Lecturer	15	15
Other ^d	5	5

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

- U.S. percentages are from the 2015 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component and are based on instructional staff at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.
- FSSE respondents were able to select "Prefer not to respond" or "Another gender identity" as response options.
- The "Other" category did not exist in the 2015 IPEDS Human Resources Survey component. U.S. percentage for "Preferred not to respond" is for faculty whose race was "unknown."
- Includes instructors with alternate appointment types (e.g., administrators and researchers).

Table 3
Percentage of Faculty by Disciplinary Area

Disciplinary Area	FSSE ^a (%)	U.S. ^b (%)
Arts and Humanities	23	23
Biological Sciences, Agriculture, and Natural Resources	8	7
Physical Sciences, Mathematics, and Computer Science	12	9
Social Sciences	13	11
Business	11	8
Communications, Media, and Public Relations	4	3
Education	9	7
Engineering	5	4
Health Professions	11	24
Social Service Professions	4	4

- a. FSSE distributions based on 21,018 U.S. respondents from these disciplinary areas.
- b. U.S. percentages are from the 2015 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment Statistics and are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award bachelor's degrees.



University of St. Thomas–Houston

Response Rates

A response rate is the number of respondents divided by the number of faculty members contacted, adjusted for faculty members who could not be reached (usually because of incorrect email addresses). In 2017, 36% of invited faculty responded to the survey. The response rate of individual institutions ranged from 13% to 80%, while the average was 43%.

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 help them better understand their FSSE results. Reports are delivered in the *Institutional Report 2017* 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* summarizing key FSSE findings in an easy to digest two-page report
- 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* summarizing demographic information from faculty respondents
- A *FSSE Administration Summary* highlighting important administration details about your sample, response rates, survey customization choices, and recruitment message schedule
- A data file allowing for additional analyses and a codebook with details about each survey question, including variable names and response sets
- Topical Module and consortium reports, if applicable, providing results for those additional questions

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

- Facsimiles of the core FSSE questionnaire and Topical Modules
- Summary reports based on faculty responses from all participating U.S. institutions
- Sample analyses as examples of different ways to use FSSE
- A *FSSE Data User’s Guide* to assist in presentations of FSSE findings to campus audiences
- A psychometric portfolio presenting evidence of validity, reliability, and other indicators of data quality

Checking Data Quality

An essential early step in reviewing a campus's results is comparing the *FSSE Respondent Profile* with institutional data on faculty. The closer the characteristics match, the more confidence an institution can have that 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 respondents and the population. For example, if 60% reply "Very often" to a particular item and the sampling error is +/- 4%, there is a 95% chance that the true value is between 56% and 64%.



University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth

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 & 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 2017* binder) for examples of how other institutions use FSSE and NSSE in professional development and assessment initiatives.
- Contact the FSSE team (fsse@indiana.edu) or 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.