

**The University of Georgia Teaching Academy
Spring 2004 Business Meeting and Workshop
April 23, 2003**

What is NSSE? (<http://www.iub.edu/~nsse/html/about.shtml>)

The National Survey of Student Engagement does exactly what its name suggests: In the Spring of 2003, its fourth year, the survey -- known as "Nessie," after its acronym, NSSE -- surveyed 145,000 freshmen and seniors at 437 four-year colleges about their education. In 2002-2003, the University of Georgia took part in NSSE, as well as in a pilot project surveying faculty. The *Columns* story is on the back of this sheet.

What do the NSSE results mean to the University of Georgia?

The results tell us what students experience in five areas:

Level of Academic Challenge	Active and Collaborative Learning
Student-Faculty Interactions	Enriching Educational Experiences
Supportive Campus Environment	

The Vice Presidents for Instruction and for Student Affairs funded the survey to understand how our institution works and to make the process better. Then a committee of students, faculty, and administrators identified six themes to investigate: curriculum, diversity, student-faculty interaction, writing, technology, and service-community learning. That's why we want to talk with you today and hear what you think about how we're doing and how we might do better.

Tell us about it

For over a year, the committee has been working on the NSSE project, arranging for the first survey and now considering the results. We've identified six interrelated themes in the data that the campus will consider in sessions like this one. What do we do well and how can we do it better?

- **Curriculum** Does our core curriculum encourage student engagement? How about the curriculum in a major? Why does general education matter?
- **Diversity** UGA faculty and students value diversity in ideas, in colleagues, and in their experiences. How does diversity add value to a UGA education? What does the term "diversity" mean in intellectual, as well as social terms?
- **Student-Faculty Interaction** Students think that one-on-one interaction with faculty changes what happens in their education. Do you? What are other programs that encourage interaction?
- **Writing** UGA students and faculty agree that writing is important, but they also agree that students do less writing here than elsewhere. How can faculty and students address that issue? Do students need more training in writing or do faculty need help to integrate writing into their teaching?
- **Technology** The NSSE results suggest that UGA students have a slightly higher engagement with technology than do students at comparable institutions. Do you think that finding is good news? Does technology help faculty-student interaction? How can we best use technology to enhance students' learning experience?
- **Community** One of the best things about UGA is Athens, Georgia, and we can also take pride in the communities on campus. But how can faculty incorporate service or community involvement in the classroom? How do extra-curricular and student life activities fit in?

More Ideas? We'd Love to Hear Them! - Email NSSE@uga.edu

Survey says: Happy
Study finds UGA students happier with educational experience
By Larry B. Dendy, *Columns*, 3 November 2003

A national survey shows that freshmen and seniors at UGA are generally more pleased with their educational experience than their counterparts at other major research institutions and would be much more likely than their peers to attend the same school if they started college over again. . . . At UGA, 1,500 randomly selected freshmen and 1,500 seniors [were invited to take] the survey. . . .

When asked "How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at [your] institution," UGA students gave a slightly higher positive response than students at other extensive doctoral institutions.

When asked "If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending," UGA students responded positively at a rate significantly higher statistically than their counterparts.

UGA students also evaluate their academic advising at a higher level than students at other schools. Both freshmen and seniors feel they receive a "broad **general education**" at a higher rate than students at other schools, and UGA seniors think they acquire job or work-related knowledge and skills at a higher rate.

"The purpose of this study is to provide information that will help improve the learning environment at the university," says Del Dunn, vice president for instruction. "The results give us some very valuable insights on how to go about doing that."

The survey indicates a strong interest among UGA students in **international studies**. UGA offers courses in 25 foreign languages, and freshmen and seniors take foreign language coursework at a higher rate than their national counterparts.

UGA freshmen and seniors participate in study-abroad programs at a significantly higher rate than at similar schools. More than 1,200 UGA students take part in 45 exchange and 75 study-abroad programs annually. UGA ranks 12th among all research institutions in study-abroad participation.

But UGA students aren't much different from others in their on-campus interactions with students of other **ethnic or cultural backgrounds**. Both UGA freshmen and seniors are slightly less likely than students elsewhere to have had a serious conversation with a person of another race or ethnicity. UGA seniors are somewhat more likely to have had a serious conversation with a person with different religious beliefs, political opinions or personal values.

Students at UGA and other schools feel about the same regarding whether their institution encourages contact among students of differing economic, social, racial and ethnic backgrounds. However, UGA students are less positive than their counterparts on the question of whether their institution helps them understand people of other ethnic and racial backgrounds.

UGA freshmen and seniors rate their **relationships with other students and with faculty** slightly more favorably than their counterparts.

The survey indicates that UGA freshmen and seniors spend **less time studying** and preparing for class than students at other schools. UGA students devote less time to class preparation activities and homework problems, produce written papers at a lower rate, and are more likely to come to class without having completed readings or class assignments.

UGA students also don't work with other students on projects, either in class or outside of class, at the same rate as students at other schools. But they do use **electronic media**, such as the Internet, e-mail lists and chat rooms, to work on projects at a higher rate than their counterparts, and UGA seniors use e-mail to communicate with instructors more than seniors at other schools. . . .

UGA students report higher rates of participation in such **extracurricular activities** as student organizations, fraternity and sorority activities and intramural sports, and seniors report relaxing and socializing more than seniors at other schools. . . .