

Student Pulse

a publication of the Office of Student Affairs Assessment
Division of Student Affairs • University of Georgia

OFFICE OF Student Affairs Assessment	
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SPECIAL ISSUE: NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEYS

This issue of the Student Pulse is devoted to the topic of national student surveys. While it is common to see the national results of these surveys in the news media, often those stories do not include the background of the survey questionnaires and other basic information. In this issue, we are providing the background for major national student surveys, while also explaining how they are utilized at The University of Georgia. In this edition you will read about the CIRP Freshman Survey (Cooperative Institutional Research Project), CORE Alcohol and Other Drug Survey, EBI housing survey (Educational Benchmarking, Inc.) and NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement). Concluding this edition is a review of *Student Success in College*, a book documenting effective educational practices based upon NSSE results, and an article that will help you understand the differences between national and local survey instruments.

NSSE: UNDERSTANDING THE NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

In a time of increased demands for accountability across all facets of higher education, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) serves as a vital tool to understand how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from the college experience. NSSE was developed in the late 1990s with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, which assembled a group of national leaders in higher education to discuss measures of quality and the limitations of current college ranking systems. They were charged with looking beyond traditional measures of student selectivity, faculty credentials, and procedural compliance to establish a more comprehensive picture of institutional quality. The result was the inception of NSSE, which was piloted successfully in 1999 and has been administered at more than 1,100 schools since its official launch in 2000. It is housed at Indiana University-Bloomington and directed by Student Affairs scholar George Kuh of the Center for Postsecondary Research and School of Education and Peter Ewell of the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

BY LESLIE ATCHLEY

NSSE Design

NSSE is designed to measure students' levels of engagement in their studies and the effects on quality of learning and the overall educational experience. The survey items are derived from empirically tested, high quality student outcomes that result from good educational policy and practice. Most questions fall into one of three categories: institutional actions and requirements, including curriculum and faculty; student behavior, which addresses how students spend their time on coursework in and out of the classroom; and student reactions to college, which measures student perceptions of their own experience and self-reported gains in different skill areas. Currently enrolled freshmen and senior students who have completed at least one full term at their four-year institution are the participants in the NSSE survey. Comparing the experiences of these two groups allows schools to examine how students develop during college, looking specifically at their levels of engagement. A random sample of students is selected from the freshman and senior classes; the sample size depends on the undergraduate enrollment and typically ranges from 450 to 5,000 students. Institutions can choose to use an electronic or paper survey format. Colleges and universities can also design their own questions for inclusion on the survey if at least six schools agree to participate in a data-sharing consortium; the survey can be expanded to include additional questions relevant to specific institutional characteristics or areas of student engagement of particular interest.

The information provided by NSSE is intended to help schools identify areas in which the student experience can be improved through purposeful changes to policy and practice. Participating institutions receive a report with results for each question, data for comparable institutions (which can be self-selected), and a data file of all student responses. These responses can be viewed in the aggregate, broken down by particular student characteristics, and combined with data from other schools. The results can also assist prospective college students and their families, advisors, and educators to learn more about how students spend their time and what they gain at a particular institution.

(continued on page 2)

NSSE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)**NSSE at UGA**

The University of Georgia first administered NSSE in 2003; in 2004, the Board of Regents decided that all schools in the University System of Georgia would be required to administer it to their students. In summer of 2002, the Vice Presidents for Instruction and Student Affairs agreed to fund UGA's participation in NSSE. That fall, a steering committee of faculty, administrators, and students partnered with then Vice President for Instruction Dr. Delmer Dunn to oversee the promotion of the survey, its administration, data analysis, creation of proposals based on the results, and reporting. The response rate to the 2003 survey, administered in electronic format, was 27%. UGA compared its results to those of 16 other institutions. The committee compiled a report that identified six major themes of interest: diversity, curriculum, student-faculty interaction, technology, community, and writing. They made a number of recommendations, including the creation of the Office of Service Learning, which opened in 2005. They also encouraged a year-long campus conversation on teaching and learning; this recommendation led to the establishment of the Task Force on General Education and Student Learning. The steering committee planned a series of NSSE conversations between Dr. Dunn and various campus constituents to share the results and use them to spark fuller conversations about student engagement and effective teaching and learning.

In 2005 UGA again administered NSSE, this time under the leadership of Dr. Ann Crowther of the Office of the Vice President for Instruction and Dr. Karen Bauer of the Office of Institutional Research. The results were analyzed by Dr. Diane Cooper, a faculty member in the Department of Counseling and Human Development Services, and Ning Wong of the Office of Institutional Research. Dr. Crowther and Dr. Denise Gardner of the Office of Institutional Research are leading the 2007 NSSE project, which collected data from a sample of 2,500 freshmen and 2,500 seniors this spring; the results will arrive in August. The University of Georgia will use the information from the 2007 survey to examine campus-wide trends of student engagement and to compare itself to other institutions. "Because NSSE is administered through the Office of the Vice President for Instruction," says Dr. Crowther, "we are able to address the findings and respond at the university level."

NSSE Data in Action

NSSE has already proven to be an integral factor in the University's quest for academic rigor and overall educational excellence, serving as the catalyst for major advancements in teaching and learning. Though NSSE is used primarily as a force for academic change at the University of Georgia, the

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data have great potential to inform the policy and practice of the Division of Student Affairs as well. Student Affairs shares in the responsibility to enhance the overall undergraduate experience, and collaborating with Academic Affairs in using the NSSE data is an excellent start to achieving this goal. Breaking down the NSSE data by demographics could help individual Student Affairs departments examine the levels of engagement of the student populations they serve. Identifying discrepancies in levels of engagement could allow Student Affairs to adjust and improve their services and programs designed to target different student groups. For example, if the Office of Greek Life wanted to improve its Sophomore Leaders Circle program, staff could examine Greek freshmen's responses to relevant NSSE items to identify interests, strengths, and areas for improvement within their target population as compared to the general student body. They might be particularly interested in questions addressing students' participation in community service; contact with students of a different race, ethnicity, or ideology; or development of a personal code of values and ethics. If NSSE data for this group of students identified high levels of community services but lower levels of interaction with diverse individuals, for instance, Greek Life staff might decide to bring in an individual who specializes in service and leadership of diverse populations, such as a staff member in the Office of Intercultural Affairs, to conduct a program workshop with the students.

In addition to using the data to examine demographic patterns of engagement, Student Affairs can look to the developmentally oriented survey items as excellent examples in the process of creating or revising quality learning and development outcomes for specific programs or the Division as a whole. Also, examining the data in the aggregate can help Student Affairs professionals gain a comprehensive understanding of the students we serve. **SP**

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EBI: UNDERSTANDING ASSESSMENTS IN UNIVERSITY HOUSING

BY J.D. WHITE

Educational Benchmarking Inc. (EBI). The conception of EBI began at a conference

where Dr. Joseph Pica and Glenn Detrick discussed their frustrations with the lack of data and standards to allow for the comparison of MBA programs (EBI, 2007). In 1994, a pilot assessment with 68 schools was conducted and its findings reported at the 1994 Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC) annual meeting. This conversation and pilot assessment led to the creation of EBI. Since 1994, EBI has expanded its assessment offerings to aspects of Student Affairs that include student unions, fraternity and sorority life, and first year initiatives. In 1998, EBI developed assessments for University Housing and now offers three types: Resident, Resident Assistants (RA), and Apartments. These assessments are based on the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) Professional Standards, created by a task force comprised of housing officers and research specialists. The assessments are grounded in housing principles and considered both a reliable and valid data source.

EBI Design

EBI measures student satisfaction through students' sense of community, the hall facilities, safety and security, and overall program effectiveness. Each assessment provides a statistical factor analysis to uncover areas that affect student perception of overall program effectiveness. Participating housing departments are able to ask up to ten custom questions. These questions allow departments to assess areas particular to that program and explore institution-specific interests. The results can be benchmarked against multiple comparison groups, including all participating institutions and Carnegie classifications. Each housing department also selects six institutions to create a unique comparison group. University Housing at UGA bases its selections on similar housing departments, demographics of residential population similar to UGA, or peer and aspirational institutions. Last year, 268 institutions participated in the Resident Assessment with more than 339,000 students completing the assessment nationwide.

Housing departments conducting EBI studies can select paper or web-based administration. Web administration allows for real time viewing and reporting of results once ten questionnaires have been completed. EBI provides a comprehensive written report of the findings that includes statistical results, longitudinal trends, and benchmark comparisons. Each year, University Housing conducts all three EBI

housing assessments and a custom assessment designed for East Campus Village residents. In 2006, the Apartment Assessment for Family and Graduate Housing and the East Campus Village were conducted online. This spring all the EBI assessments were conducted online in an effort to help with the administrative challenges of a paper administration and to quicken the availability of the results.

EBI Data in Action

One of the most beneficial aspects of the assessment is the Priority Matrix compiled by EBI. The Priority Matrix allows University Housing to see which factors have the highest impact and serve as predictors of overall program effectiveness. The matrix provides areas to monitor, maintain, or improve upon in order to increase program effectiveness. While EBI provides the majority of the data analysis for the assessments, the Doctoral Intern for Assessment and Evaluation further examines the data to assist staff in planning for and improving services. University Housing produces *The Measuring Stick*, a series of overview reports on the findings from each EBI study. Data from these assessments are often included in departmental publications, reports and presentations to university stakeholders, and to other units on campus. EBI data also serve as a foundation for additional assessments to further understand the experiences of our residents and staff. One example is a current examination of RA satisfaction with hall policies and their confrontation of violations of these policies.

Continuing to understand the experiences of our residents and staff and working to improve the quality of our services drives University Housing's assessment efforts. Large scale assessments such as EBI allow University Housing to understand the efficacy of our services and identify areas for growth and improvement. SP

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About the Practitioner

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CORE: UNDERSTANDING A NATIONAL ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG SURVEY

Housed in the Student Health Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, the CORE Institute is a leading research, assessment, and development organization for alcohol and other drug prevention programs across the nation. The CORE Institute's Alcohol and Other Drug Survey was initially funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education and has been administered annually since its development in 1989. This survey assesses the nature, scope, and consequences of alcohol and other drug use. The CORE Alcohol and Other Drug Survey was expanded in 1994 to include questions on sexuality, campus violence, institutional climate, perceptions of alcohol and other drug use, and extracurricular activity involvement. The long form of the survey has 39 questions and takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

BY ERIN ENGLISH

search, assessment, and development organization for alcohol and other drug prevention programs across the nation. The CORE Institute's Alcohol and Other Drug Survey was initially funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education and has been administered annually since its development in 1989. This survey assesses the nature, scope, and consequences of alcohol and other drug use. The CORE Alcohol and Other Drug Survey was expanded in 1994 to include questions on sexuality, campus violence, institutional climate, perceptions of alcohol and other drug use, and extracurricular activity involvement. The long form of the survey has 39 questions and takes approximately 25 minutes to complete.

CORE Design

This survey documents and quantifies the negative effects of alcohol and other drug use among college students by asking questions about perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors involving alcohol, other drugs, sexual behaviors, and violence. Close-ended questions are used to assess students' knowledge of campus alcohol and drug policies and prevention programs. Questions about quantity and frequency of alcohol and drug use, age of first use, and negative consequences are asked in a similar manner. The CORE survey also uses close-ended, categorical questions to assess demographics such as age, ethnic origin, marital status, living arrangements, and cumulative grade point average. Participation varies from year to year. In 2003, for example, the CORE Institute compiled data based on a sample of 38,857 undergraduate students from 89 two and four-year colleges located in the United States.

Methods of survey administration vary across institutions. Some prefer to administer pen and paper surveys to randomly selected classrooms, though institutions on the whole are increasingly using the online survey as a viable means of collecting data. Data from the national sample are reported annually on the CORE Institute's Web site and at professional meetings. The Institute also provides customized reports (cross-tabs) and a CD with the raw data to each institution that administers the survey. The Institute has used the national data to develop benchmarks or explicit standards by which to measure performance. The benchmarks reflect the characteristics of colleges with the lowest alcohol and other drug prevalence and the lowest average number of alcohol-related negative consequences. A college can evaluate its success relative to the benchmarks that represent optimal levels of performance and readily diagnose areas where they can make further improvements in the ar-

About the Author

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eas of education, policy, and campus environment.

CORE at UGA

The Health Promotion Department in the University Health Center administers the survey at UGA. Traditionally, the survey was administered biannually in paper format to a convenience sample of classrooms. This year, the survey was administered online to a random sample of undergraduate students. The results are used (1) to examine trends in alcohol and other drug use, as well as beliefs and attitudes among undergraduates at UGA; (2) to examine students' perceptions of the campus climate in regard to alcohol and drug use; and (3) to inform alcohol and other drug prevention and intervention programs that are offered by the University Health Center. The data are posted on the University Health Center's Web site and shared with students, faculty, staff and administrators.

CORE Data in Action

The data inform educational programs that are offered through the University Health Center. For example, if this year's data were to indicate a significant increase in the use (or perceived acceptance of use) of a certain illegal substance, we might focus our efforts on an educational campaign regarding the health and legal implications of that substance. Or if, for example, a certain population of UGA students experienced greater negative consequences related to their alcohol use than others, then we may develop an intervention for that target population, ultimately aiming to reduce those negative consequences.

In closing, defining and measuring success would be complicated, but this survey provides one way to identify programmatic needs among our students. UGA could use the national benchmarks created by the CORE Institute to identify environmental factors and educational programs offered by institutions with comparatively lower rates of alcohol and other drug use and negative consequences to further inform programs and policies. **SP**

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CIRP: UNDERSTANDING THE COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

At the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) sponsors several national surveys used to better understand college and university student populations. One such survey is the CIRP, or the Cooperative Institutional Research Program. CIRP is known as “the nation’s oldest and largest empirical study of higher education” (Cooperative Institutional Research Program, n.d., ¶ 1). Created in 1966 by The American Council on Education, CIRP has surveyed several generations of college students as a way of gauging national norms as well as campus norms in relation to nationally aggregated results.

BY DONNA LEE DAVIS

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CIRP Design

CIRP questions cover a broad range of subject areas, including financial aid, academic preparedness, academic habits and experiences, technology use, college plans, career plans, political ideology, and values. Other questions include student demographic information, the number and rank of college applications, and what factors influenced the eventual institutional choice. Some examples of questions on today’s CIRP address social issues, asking students’ stance on issues like abortion and legalization of marijuana. Certain questions are repeated each year so that longitudinal data can inform the study of college freshmen over time (Pryor, Hurtado, Saenz, Korn, Santos, & Korn, 2006). As a way of tracking national trends, specific questions related to cultural trends are asked. Because of this, some questions will change throughout the years. Not only are standard questions available, but colleges and universities may choose to include custom questions associated with institutional trends they hope to track. This is helpful because not only is an institution given the opportunity to compare itself to other institutions nationwide, but also to track local concerns (Hurtado & Pryor, 2007).

In 2006, 271,441 respondents at 393 colleges took the CIRP Freshman Survey. Over the past 42 years, 8,319,319 total students have taken the CIRP and 200 institutions have participated consistently to provide a strong base for result comparison (Hurtado & Pryor, 2007). Although many schools participate, some are unable to be included in national reports due to a response rate that is less than 85% (Hurtado & Pryor). Current surveys are administered at many types of institutions, including community colleges and different types of four-year public and private universities.

CIRP Data in Action

The CIRP is administered by paper to UGA students at freshmen orientation. CIRP and HERI analyze the data as

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part of the participation fee. At many institutions, results are sent to the Office of Institutional Research or Office of Institutional Effectiveness (Hurtado & Pryor, 2007); however, at UGA, the CIRP results are sent to the Office of Student Affairs Assessment (OSAA) and then shared with other offices on campus with a vested interest in the results, such as the Campus Student Research Team, the Student Affairs Leadership Team, and the Office of Admissions. OSAA is currently doing a longitudinal study of CIRP data to share with other offices on campus and highlights current UGA student trends, interests, and values on their Web site. CIRP data on entering student demographics are discussed in the *Columns* newsletter to faculty and staff. Data are also taken to Academic Affairs and Student Affairs joint meetings in efforts to make the data more accessible across campus. Use of CIRP data is not limited to Student Affairs practice. As faculty become more informed about the students they are teaching, the more effective their lessons can be taught to the student populations with which they work. **SP**

(See Pages 10-11 for excerpts of UGA CIRP Freshmen Data)

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UNDERSTANDING SURVEYS: DEMYSTIFYING THE PROCESS

basic guidelines you can follow to ensure that your survey is measuring what it is intended to measure and is the best-design for gathering the data you need to answer your department's assessment question. The following are some suggestions for writing survey items, testing the instrument, and keeping in mind the aesthetic details of your survey. According to Babbie (2007), following a few basic tips in writing your questions can go a long way in ensuring that your survey instrument is collecting the information you are seeking.

BY JILL CHILDRESS

- **Choose the right form of question for what you are measuring.** Questionnaires can include statements or different question types, and using both can lead to a more flexible questionnaire design. Recognize that questions can be open-ended or closed-ended, and depending on what type of information you want to know and how the data will be analyzed, one form may be more appropriate than the other, or both may be used.

- **Steer clear of double-barreled questions.** A double-barreled question is one in which the respondent can provide only one answer for a multiple-part question. This becomes problematic when a respondent disagrees with one part of the question but not the other, but can only select one answer. One telling sign that it is a double-barreled question is if the word "and" appears in a question or statement.

- **Respondents must be able to answer reliably.** Asking respondents to answer a question where they have little knowledge or expertise or are missing important facts can lead to answers that are not useful for the department. When designing the item, ask if the audience you are writing for would be able to provide a meaningful answer based on what they already know.

- **Respondents must be willing to answer.** Be cautious when writing questionnaire items that are sensitive or that ask for information that is personal or private. One potential outcome of a sensitive item would be an answer that someone has "no opinion" or does not know what his/her opinion is, even if he/she has one. If the item is necessary, be sure to

(continued on next page)

take steps to ensure respondent confidentiality and notify potential respondents accordingly.

- **Ask relevant questions.** Try not to ask respondents questions that they probably have not thought much about or do not care about either way. In cases where such items are necessary, be sure to provide an answer selection by which the respondents can indicate that they have no opinion, do not know, or are undecided in their opinion.

- **Keep items brief and to the point.** Respondents are

About the Author

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more likely to not take a survey or ignore an item than respond to one that is lengthy and difficult to understand. It is better to create simple, precise items that a respondent can easily read and understand.

- **Avoid negatively-worded items.** Negative words in questionnaires can lead to confusion, and in cases where the items are misunderstood, can lead to answers opposite of what the respondent really feels. Items that use double-negatives or which have negative terms should be corrected for clarity.

- **Steer clear of items and terms that are biased or jargon-filled.** Any items with wording that encourages one response over another would be biased, and sometimes this influence can be subtle. Likewise, avoid jargon that may confuse the respondent. If you are unsure about the best question to ask on a particular topic, ask more than one question.

Aesthetic Details

Design is important to consider when planning your instrument because an unclear or visually-displeasing survey can distract respondents or discourage potential respondents from even taking the questionnaire. Babbie (2007) offers some helpful tips for designing a survey that will make for a pleasing and inviting questionnaire format.

- **The survey should be uncluttered and simple.** Avoid putting more than one question per line; be sure that headings and subheadings are used appropriately, and provide plenty of white space to make the instrument appear less cluttered.

- **Provide clear instruction for responding to items.** Do you want the respondent to check a box, circle an item, or write in an answer? Giving clear direction will make data processing and analysis much easier.

Give clear direction when using contingency questions. Contingency questions are those that are intended for only some respondents to answer, based on their responses to other questions. If you ask contingency questions, be clear about who should answer the question, how it is linked to other questions, and for those to whom the question is

UNDERSTANDING SURVEYS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

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to other questions, and for those to whom the question is irrelevant, provide further instruction (“If no, skip to question...”).

- **Decide on the best order for items in your instrument.** Do you have a number of questions that require in-depth thought? If so, you may want to begin with questions that are easier to answer to get the respondent engaged. Do you have a series of questions that may become boring quickly? Consider mixing in questions that ask for an opinion or ideas that may interest the respondents and maintain their interest.

Testing the Instrument

So now that you have carefully considered, planned, and designed an eye-catching, thoughtful questionnaire, you are ready to go, right? Not yet. One last important element is to pretest your questionnaire to ensure that it is error-free. Testing the instrument involves allowing others to take the questionnaire to see if all of the question items make sense, that the instructions are clear, and that the survey items are measuring what they are intended to measure. This important step can save time and effort by catching any mistakes before the instrument is widely disseminated.

Surveys can be a powerful way of collecting information for assessment purposes. The information surveys yield can be useful and helpful in understanding student opinions, attitudes, and cultures. Surveys can also be used to help discern how effectively a department or unit is providing a service or meeting a need. Surveys, however, are not proper instrument for every assessment question, and not all surveys are the same. There are a number of resources available to help with designing a survey, and remember that your department’s A-Team (Assessment Team) representative and the Office of Student Affairs Assessment (OSSA) can both offer assistance in choosing or designing a survey to best fit your needs. **SP**

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TAKING A “DEEPER” LOOK AT PROMOTING

STUDENT SUCCESS: A REVIEW OF *STUDENT SUCCESS IN COLLEGE*

Student Success in College, authored by George Kuh, Jillian Kinzie, John Schuh, and Elizabeth Whitt, (2005) illustrates

BY ANDREA HAYNES the impact broad-based assessment can have at an institution. The book draws conclusions from a national research project and provides colleges and universities a roadmap to increase the success of their students. Before reviewing the major findings, it is important to understand the background of the project. The vision of the book was inspired by the *Documenting Effective Educational Practice* (DEEP) project sponsored by the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University. The purpose of the project was to examine the practices of strong-performing four-year colleges and universities in order to determine how they encourage their students to succeed, and to provide practical instruction for institutions wanting to create a climate and culture of student success. Institutions creating a climate of student success were selected according to their above-average performance in two areas: graduation rates and student engagement. Institutional performance in student engagement was evaluated by using the five domains of effective practice identified by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The domains include academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student interaction with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment. The DEEP project research team selected 20 institutions that varied across mission, size, selectivity, geographic location, and student characteristics. The team traveled to each institution and conducted a series of extensive interviews, observations, and document analyses in order to find out qualitatively how these institutions were creating cultures for student engagement and success.

Student Success in College is based upon the themes or common characteristics that emerged across the 20 DEEP institutions. Each institution had: (1) A “living” mission and “lived” educational philosophy; (2) an unshakeable focus on student learning; (3) environments adapted for educational enrichment; (4) clearly marked pathways to student success; (5) an improvement-oriented ethos, and (6) a shared responsibility for educational quality and student success. The following section briefly describe the themes using practical examples.

DEEP Themes

First, a “living” mission and “lived” educational philosophy, are the central concepts among the 20 institutions, highlighting the importance of having a mission that is both espoused and enacted. All DEEP institutions have clearly articulated educational purposes and a coherent,

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stood philosophy of “how we do things.” At Gonzaga University, the espoused mission communicates “being Christ at work in the world” and emphasizes service and civic engagement. The mission is enacted through the activities of its students: hundreds of students provide 300,000 hours of community service every year. Second, the activities of DEEP schools intentionally focus on student learning. Holistic student learning drives all the activities at DEEP schools, and a united body of administrators, staff, faculty, and students promote practices that support student learning, such as intentionally making time for students and experimenting with engaging pedagogies. For example, Evergreen State College practices “seminaring,” courses in which students engage in intelligent discussion with peers over curricular readings or controversial topics.

Third, although DEEP schools vary in geographic location, architecture, and campus resources, all institutions embrace their location and campus settings and use them for teaching and learning. They create learning opportunities on and off campus. Sewanee, an institution located in the mountains of Tennessee, sees its rural location as an educational resource. It utilizes surrounding wooded acres as a laboratory for teaching, research, and recreation. Students majoring in geology and forestry, and even psychology, study the ecosystem from a 65-foot high walkway and use the surrounding environment as inspiration for their senior capstone projects.

Having clearly marked pathways to student success is the fourth common characteristic of DEEP schools. These institutions give students clear direction toward success through acculturation and alignment. They first teach students institutional values, good practices for achieving success, and how to take advantage of institutional resources. DEEP institutions provide students with what they need to be successful. Some DEEP institutions serve underprepared students who need clear direction and support in

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A REVIEW OF STUDENT SUCCESS IN COLLEGE (CONTINUED)

order to persist and succeed. At Fayetteville State University, faculty and staff embrace their student body: “We work with the students we have, not those we wish we had.” FSU especially promotes the success of its first-year students through a summer transition program that helps them acquire the skills and confidence they need in order to succeed in college. Furthermore, FSU implements an early-alert system involving faculty, mentors, and staff. Within the first two weeks of the semester, all faculty and staff are able to alert the mentor of any first-year student who is having difficulty. The mentor then contacts the student to determine which measures are needed to help the student succeed academically.

Fifth, DEEP institutions operate from an improvement-oriented ethos. These institutions are in a constant state of evaluating their programs and curriculum in order to gather assessment data that can be used to improve and enhance programs, activities, and academia. In 1986, the University of Michigan launched an institution-wide effort to assess and improve the institution. The institution earmarked \$1 million per year for 10 years to complete the assessment effort that examined specific initiatives, such as promoting critical thinking and writing skills in students, improving student-faculty interactions, and enriching the intellectual life of all undergraduate students. Data from the project resulted in a revision of curriculum, creation of first-year seminars, founding of an alternative career center, and improvement of numerous physical facilities.

Finally, the administration, faculty, staff, and students at DEEP institutions share the responsibility for educational quality and student success. The strong relationships among academic faculty and student affairs staff, senior leadership, and students, fuel the collaborative spirit and positive attitude of DEEP schools. Wofford College, for example expects students to teach others through tutoring, presentations, and collaboration, while students at the University of Maine Farmington are involved in campus governance committees so they can learn about decision-making and university issues.

Implications for Student Affairs

While many of the practices employed by the DEEP schools are familiar effective practices (learning communities, first-year seminars, service learning, study abroad), the difference lies in how well the institutions implement these programs. Whether you are an administrator, academic faculty member, or student affairs professional, this text offers practical recommendations for creating environments that will enhance the success of students. Keeping in mind that all recommendations for best practices need to be translated into the context of your specific institution’s culture, I conclude with suggestions that could enhance student success at UGA:

- First, review UGA’s Task Force for General Education and Student Learning. It is a great starting place for planning and designing student success unique to UGA.
- Second, invite more student participation in the curricular and co-curricular design and institutional planning and governance; doing so encourages greater student engagement and empowerment.
- Finally, create smaller, more intimate campus communities in order to make the size of UGA seem more manageable for students; for instance, continue to increase the number and quality of living-learning communities. **SP**

Mission

The *Student Pulse* serves to introduce the University community to the unique research being conducted on college students both at UGA and in the field of Student Affairs. In addition, this publication serves to increase the Division’s exposure to, knowledge of, and experience with assessment principles.

Student Pulse

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**CIRP 2006—UGA SPECIFIC DATA
STUDENT ATTITUDES, OBJECTIVES AND OPINIONS**

BY MATT EDWARDS

The following is an excerpt of the 2006 CIRP report. Each section contains bulleted statements that summarize UGA response data and make comparisons to the aggregate data of public university peers of UGA. UGA percentages are indicated in **bold font**. Further data on a number of viewpoints is presented on page 11. For the entire data set, refer to the full institutional summary found at <http://www.uga.edu/studentaffairs/assess/>.

Attitudes, Objectives, & Opinions

Students were asked to respond if they agreed “strongly or somewhat strongly” with a list of statements.

- **52.1%** of UGA respondents agreed that abortion should be legal, compared to 65.4% of public peers.
- **41.8%** of responding UGA students agreed that “wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now,” compared to 58.2% of public peers.
- **55.8%** of UGA respondents agreed that “a national health care plan is needed to cover everybody’s medical costs,” while 71% of public peers agreed.
- A majority of responding UGA students (**56.3%**) agreed that “undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education,” while less than a majority (44.6%) of public peers agreed.
- **83.1%** of UGA respondents agreed that “through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society,” compared with 76.1% of public peers.
- **20%** of UGA respondents characterized their political views as liberal, compared to 34.3% of public peers.
- **36.9%** of UGA respondents characterized their political views as conservative, compared to 21.3% of public peers.

Students were asked to estimate if their chances were “very good” for an event/action to occur while in college.

- More UGA students (**28.1%**) said there was a very good chance they would join a fraternity or sorority, than their public peers (12%).
- **78.9%** of UGA respondents reported a very good chance of making at least a “B” average, compared to 64.5% of public peers.
- Responding UGA students (**43.9%**) indicated there was a very good chance they would participate in a study abroad program; 36% of public peers reported the same.
- **72.5%** of UGA respondents reported a very good chance of being “satisfied with your college,” while only 58.5% of public peers reported the same.
- Fewer UGA respondents (**5.5%**) reported a very good chance they would “seek personal counseling” than public peers (8.8%).

Students were asked to indicate statements of objectives that they considered to be “essential” or “very important.”

- The top five objectives for UGA respondents were: raising a family (**78.1%**), being very well off financially (**73.9%**), helping others who are in difficulty (**67.1%**), becoming an authority in my field (**63.9%**), and improving my understanding of other countries and cultures (**57.7%**).
- The top five objectives for public peers were very similar: raising a family (74.4%), being very well off financially (74.2%), helping others who are in difficulty (66.4%), becoming an authority in my field (59.3%), and obtaining recognition from my colleagues for contributions to my special field (55.4%).

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2006 UGA CIRP DATA (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

The tables below represent data from the 2006 CIRP report. In the data section of each question are the UGA data, UGA public peers data, and data of all public universities. Also provided is a breakdown of male and female responses. All responses are reported in percentages of total sample. In an effort to make the report easier to read, the columns of data for total UGA respondents and total public university peer respondents have been highlighted.

	U of Georgia		# of Respondents	First-time Full-time		UGA Total	Public Univ-hi		Total
	First-time	Full-time		Men	Women		Men	Women	
Number of Respondents			1,796	659	1,198	1,857	18,720	23,773	42,493
How would you characterize your political									
Far left				2.0	0.8	1.2	3.6	2.5	3.0
Liberal				17.9	22.4	20.8	30.2	38.1	34.3
Middle-of-the-road				37.5	40.5	39.4	40.8	39.5	40.1
Conservative				39.7	35.3	36.9	23.5	19.4	21.3
Far right				2.8	1.0	1.7	1.9	0.6	1.2
Student rated self "above average or "highest 10%" as compared with the average" person of his/her age									
Academic ability			1,844	92.8	88.9	90.3	85.8	80.0	82.8
Artistic ability			1,842	27.0	30.2	29.1	28.4	32.1	30.3
Computer skills			1,845	50.7	28.9	36.6	52.9	28.7	40.2
Cooperativeness			1,842	73.9	78.3	76.7	74.2	76.1	75.2
Creativity			1,842	58.7	61.1	60.3	57.7	56.3	57.0
Drive to achieve			1,844	80.3	88.1	85.3	73.4	81.5	77.6
Emotional health			1,839	77.6	64.4	69.1	65.3	53.7	59.2
Leadership ability			1,843	74.4	70.5	71.9	64.6	61.7	63.1
Mathematical ability			1,841	70.3	53.1	59.2	65.9	46.4	55.7
Physical health			1,840	72.4	55.1	61.3	67.5	50.1	58.4
Public speaking ability			1,841	45.8	39.5	41.7	42.6	38.4	40.4
Religiousness			1,837	34.5	39.9	38.0	25.6	28.9	27.4
Self-confidence (intellectual)			1,838	81.0	63.9	70.0	73.3	57.7	65.1
Self-confidence (social)			1,835	68.6	57.3	61.3	57.2	51.0	53.9
Self-understanding			1,832	72.1	62.5	65.9	64.7	57.7	61.0
Spirituality			1,834	42.2	47.5	45.6	34.7	37.1	36.0
Understanding of others			1,834	68.0	71.6	70.3	66.3	71.0	68.7
Writing ability			1,836	58.0	57.0	57.4	51.0	53.8	52.5

*For "academic ability," **90.3%** of UGA respondents rated themselves above average, compared to 82.8% of public peers.

***85.3%** of responding UGA students reported above average "drive to achieve," compared to 77.6% of public peers.

*More UGA respondents rated selves above average (**71.9%**) in "leadership ability" than public peers (63.1%).

*In fact, more UGA respondents rated themselves above average than public peers in all but two of the 18 categories for this question. Those categories were "artistic ability" (**29.1% to 30.3%**) and "computer skills" (**36.6% to 40.2%**).

OSAA on the WEB

<http://www.uga.edu/studentaffairs/assess>

The OSAA web site serves as a resource for practitioners who would like to learn more about assessment.

The site offers a variety of information about OSAA, including:

- A list of selected projects
- Reports from selected projects
- Consulting services and processes
- Assessment training resources
- Examples such as IRB forms

You can also access general assessment and research information, including:

- A glossary of assessment terminology
- A list of available research grant and funding sources
- Links to other assessment-related organizations



If you have any questions about the OSAA or the web site, contact us at (706) 542-3564 or osaamail@uga.edu.



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