

## National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2011

*Debbie E McGhee*

*September 2011*

### INTRODUCTION

How often do students go to class unprepared? Do first-year students party more than seniors? To what extent do ethnic minority students feel supported by faculty and administration relative to their majority peers? These are but a few of the questions that can be explored through data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE).

Since 2002 the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research has invited colleges and universities to participate in its annual survey of undergraduates in the United States and Canada. The University of Washington (Seattle; UW-S) participated that inaugural year and again biennially since 2005.

This document describes the methodology of the 2011 NSSE and also serves as a compendium of several descriptive reports of UW-S results. These include frequencies and means for all items, means of aggregated scales by student major, and means by survey year.

### METHOD

#### Instrument

Respondents completed the *College Student Report* questionnaire via the Web. The CSR's 28-multi-part items can be grouped into six categories: level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching educational experiences, supportive campus environment, and background information (e.g., demographics and grades). This year, UW opted not to include the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) consortium items.

#### Sampling

Beginning with the 2011 administration, the NSSE was a census survey, meaning that all first-year (freshmen) and senior students were invited to participate. The target population consisted of all first-year (freshmen) and senior students who were enrolled both Autumn 2010 and Spring 2011. Selection of the survey population was a multi-stage process. First, the UW Office of Educational Assessment (OEA) identified all first-year and senior students enrolled as of the tenth day of Autumn quarter, 2010. The initial population consisted of 6,366 first-year and 7,006 senior students. Once census data were available for Spring quarter, OEA staff verified the enrollment status of each member of the initial population, and NSSE staff removed any students who were not enrolled. The final population consisted of 5,515 first-year and 5,122 senior students.

## Recruitment

Survey recruitment consisted of a maximum of five contacts. The first contact was an invitation over the signature of Ed Taylor, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Academic Affairs sent in mid-April to students at their primary email addresses. All email messages described the purpose of the survey and notification that all survey respondents would be entered into a drawing for one of ten \$50 UW Book Store gift certificates. Over the following five weeks, students who had not responded received up to four reminder emails. All email contacts were handled by NSSE project staff but bore the signature of the Vice Provost.

## RESULTS

### Response Rates

The overall response rate was 26%. Specifically, 1,319 first-year students and 1,463 senior students fully or partially completed the questionnaire. Only 1.0% of the sample explicitly declined to participate.

Women were more likely to respond than men. Among first-year students, women comprised 53% of the sample but 64% of the respondents. Among seniors, women were 49% of the sample but 60% of the respondents. Response rates did not vary by native/transfer status or under-represented minority status.

### Reports

#### [Frequency Distributions](#)

This report presents frequencies for all standard items, broken down by class rank. Frequencies are reported for UW-S students and for three comparison groups: Far West Public (FWP; 24 schools), Basic Carnegie Classification 15 – Doctoral-granting, Very High Research Universities (35 schools), and all NSSE 2011 participating institutions (751 schools).

#### [Mean Comparisons](#)

This report presents means for all applicable items, broken down by class rank, for UW-S students and for the three comparison groups.

#### [Benchmarks by Survey Year](#)

This report summarizes student responses in each of three survey years on the five NSSE benchmark scales: Level of Academic Challenge, Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, Enriching Educational Experiences, and Supportive Campus Environment.

#### [Benchmarks by UW Student Major Group](#)

This report presents results for the five NSSE benchmarks by self-reported student major. In general, majors were grouped by UW-S college. Within the College of Arts & Sciences there were three groups: Arts/Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. Undergraduate majors that represented medical professions (e.g., Nursing, Public Health, Dentistry, Medicine) formed a single group.