



Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

FSSE Overview

The Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is a project coordinated by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Indiana University Bloomington. FSSE (pronounced 'fessie') is designed to measure faculty 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 related to professorial activities and the kinds of learning experiences their institution emphasizes.

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Results

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 is intended to be a catalyst for productive discussions related to teaching, learning, and the quality of students' educational experiences.

This overview is divided into three sections. First, we compare the characteristics of participating institutions and faculty with institutional and national profiles as well as provide general information about overall participation rates. In the second section we present selected findings, including descriptive information about the faculty members who completed the survey and make some comparisons to student responses on NSSE 2005. Finally, we suggest guidelines for using and interpreting FSSE 2005 results.

FSSE 2005 Institutions and Respondents

The FSSE 2005 survey was completed by over 19,000 faculty members at 109 four-year colleges and universities. All of these institutions participated in at least one of the last three administrations of NSSE (2003 - 2005). This allows participating schools to examine how faculty and students respond to similar questions. A list of participating institutions is available in the document following this overview. Faculty at participating institutions were sent an invitation email and asked to respond to the online survey.

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages provide more information about the faculty members who responded to the survey. Certain demographic information is withheld from the individual school data files in order to ensure that responses remain anonymous.

Profile of FSSE 2005 Institutions

In general, the FSSE 2005 schools are similar in many ways to the national profile of four-year colleges and universities (Table 1). Like NSSE 2005, there are a few places where the FSSE 2005 profile deviates from the national profile. Compared to all four-year institutions, a greater percentage of FSSE 2005 institutions were Master's and Doctoral/Research Intensive and a smaller percentage were Baccalaureate institutions (Liberal Arts or General). Public four-year institutions are overrepresented compared to the national pool of all four-year institutions. Also, FSSE schools were overrepresented in the Southeast region and slightly underrepresented in the Mideast and New England. Doctoral/Research and Master's institutions enroll more than three-quarters of all undergraduates and employ over 80% of all faculty. At the same time, ample numbers of smaller institutions participated in FSSE 2005, insuring that the results reflect a broad cross-section of faculty from across the nation.



Table 1
FSSE and NSSE 2005 Institutions and all
Four-Year Colleges and Universities

	<i>FSSE 2005</i>	<i>NSSE 2005</i>	<i>National</i>
Carnegie Classification			
Doctoral/Research – Ext	11%	11%	11%
Doctoral/Research – Int	12%	8%	8%
Master's I & II	50%	47%	43%
Baccalaureate – Liberal Arts	9%	19%	16%
Baccalaureate – General	19%	15%	23%
Sector			
Public 4-year	53%	47%	38%
Private 4-year	47%	53%	62%
Region			
Far West	10%	10%	10%
Great Lakes	17%	14%	15%
Mideast	14%	19%	19%
New England	5%	10%	9%
Plains	11%	11%	11%
Rocky Mountains	4%	3%	3%
Southeast	30%	26%	25%
Southwest	10%	7%	7%
Location			
Large city (>250,000)	24%	18%	19%
Mid-size city (<250,000)	30%	30%	29%
Urban fringe large city	12%	17%	16%
Urban fringe mid-size city	7%	8%	8%
Large town (>25,000)	8%	4%	4%
Small town (~5,000)	17%	18%	17%
Rural	2%	5%	6%

Source: National percentages are based on data from the 2004 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics File

Notes: Percentages are based on U. S. public and private four-year institutions. NSSE and FSSE-participating or other national institutions that do not share these characteristics were not included in the tabulations.

Profile of FSSE 2005 Respondents

Table 2 shows selected characteristics of faculty members who completed FSSE in 2005. The first column represents faculty who responded to the FSSE survey and the second column represents the national profile of instructional faculty and staff at all public and private four-year institutions based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data.

Table 2
Characteristics of FSSE 2005 Respondents

	<i>FSSE</i> <i>Respondents</i>	<i>National</i>
Gender		
Men	56%	62%
Women	44%	38%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or other		
Native American	1%	<1%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	4%	8%
Black or African American	5%	5%
White (non-Hispanic)	84%	82%
Hispanic or Latino	3%	3%
Multiracial	1%	2%
Other	2%	-
Employment Status		
Full-time	83%	66%
Part-time	17%	34%

Source: National percentages are based on the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty

Notes: National percentages are based on faculty at U.S. public and private four-year institutions.

Gender

Nationally, women comprise 40% of faculty at four-year institutions. As with NSSE respondents, women are overrepresented in the FSSE respondents, 44% of whom are women faculty.

Race and Ethnicity

Respondents' race and ethnicity closely matched national faculty percentages. The NCES data used for the "National" column in Table 2 does not contain comparable information for the "Other" category.

Employment Status

Eighty-three percent of FSSE respondents were full-time faculty members, whereas 17% were employed on a part-time basis. This departs significantly from the national figures for all public and private four-year colleges and universities, which indicate that only two-thirds of faculty members are employed full-time.

Academic Rank

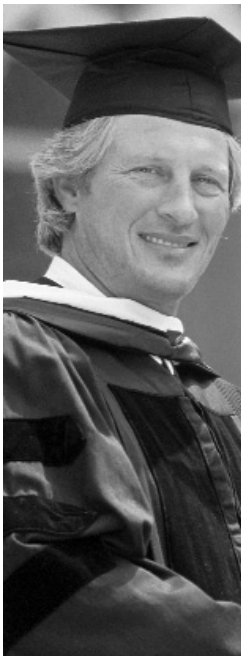
Table 3 shows the percentage of faculty respondents by rank is similar for FSSE 2005 and faculty nationally. Assistant and associate professors as well as instructors and lecturers are over-represented in FSSE 2005 while instructional staff and faculty that fit the “other” category are considerably under-represented.

Table 3
Percentage of Total Faculty by Academic Rank

<i>Rank</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>
Professor	23%	22%
Associate Professor	22%	18%
Assistant Professor	26%	20%
Instructor or Lecturer	22%	19%
Other	7%	21%

Source: National percentages are based on the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty

Notes: National faculty percentages based on faculty at U.S. public and private four-year institutions.



Discipline

Table 4 shows the percentage of faculty respondents in disciplinary areas by gender. The percentages indicate that faculty members in the arts and humanities as well as social and physical science are slightly overrepresented, while faculty members in education and professional fields are slightly underrepresented. Males outnumber females in all disciplinary areas except education and professional fields where faculty members are predominantly women.

Table 4
Percentage of Total Faculty by Disciplinary Area and Gender

<i>Disciplinary Area</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
		<i>National</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>FSSE</i>
Arts and Humanities	25%	20%	29%	24%	27%	22%	
Biological Science	7%	9%	5%	6%	6%	7%	
Business	10%	9%	6%	5%	9%	8%	
Education	5%	7%	11%	17%	7%	11%	
Engineering	6%	7%	1%	1%	4%	5%	
Physical Science	15%	11%	7%	6%	12%	9%	
Professional	4%	14%	13%	20%	7%	16%	
Social Science	14%	11%	15%	11%	14%	11%	
Other	16%	12%	13%	11%	13%	12%	

Source: National percentages are based on the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty

Notes: National faculty percentages based on faculty at U.S. public and private four-year institutions.

Participation Rates

After adjusting for faculty who could not be reached (usually because of incorrect email addresses), a participation rate (total number of responses divided by the total number of faculty contacted) is calculated for each FSSE institution. The “participation rate” is used for FSSE because faculty members are not identifiable when they respond; consequently, a true response rate cannot be calculated. In 2005, the average institutional participation rate was 54%. This is higher than the 39% average institutional response rate for NSSE 2005.

Selected Results

This section highlights some of the more interesting findings from FSSE 2005. In several instances faculty responses are compared with student responses from NSSE 2005.

Time Spent Preparing for Class

The FSSE survey asks each faculty member how much time students are expected to spend preparing for a selected course and how much time students actually spent preparing for the course. Table 5 presents the responses by subject area and by faculty who teach upper versus lower division courses.

Table 5
Time Spent by Students Preparing for Class Per Class Per Week

<i>Disciplinary Area</i>	<i>Faculty expectation of hours/week</i>		<i>Faculty belief of actual hours/week</i>		<i>Student reported hours/week from NSSE</i>	
	<i>Lower Div.</i>	<i>Upper Div.</i>	<i>Lower Div.</i>	<i>Upper Div.</i>	<i>First-Year</i>	<i>Senior</i>
	Arts and Humanities	5.7	6.2	2.9	3.6	3.4
Biological Science	6.4	6.2	2.6	3.2	3.9	4.0
Business	5.4	5.6	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.9
Education	4.4	4.9	2.5	3.1	3.1	3.3
Engineering	6.5	6.4	4.1	4.3	3.9	4.3
Physical Science	6.7	7.0	3.4	4.2	4.0	4.1
Professional	5.9	6.0	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.7
Social Science	5.4	5.6	2.4	2.9	3.4	3.3
Other	5.1	5.4	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.9
All Disciplinary Areas	5.8	5.9	2.9	3.3	3.3	3.4

The student-reported data represent first-year and senior responses to the NSSE 2005 survey regarding how much time they reported they spent preparing for class. As in previous years, faculty members expect students to study about twice as much as students actually reported. In addition, faculty members in the Physical Sciences, Engineering, and Biological/Life Sciences reported more per class study time than other subject areas.

Differences by Employment Status

Part-time faculty *expect* students to spend about 1 hour less per week preparing for their classes than full-time faculty, almost 5 hours and 6 hours per class, respectively. Part-time faculty estimate that their students *actually* spend about half an hour less preparing for their classes than full-time faculty. For example, lower division part-time faculty estimate their students spend about 2.5 hours per week preparing for class, while the estimate for lower division full-time faculty is 3 hours per week.

Faculty Time

Across disciplines, full-time faculty respondents devote about 58% of their time to teaching-related activities (e.g. time in class, grading), 17% of their time to research and scholarly activities, and 25% of their time to other activities (e.g., advising, service). The FSSE percentages closely mirror those derived from data collected nationally (Table 6).



- The average amount of time spent on all of these professorial activities varies by discipline from 55 hours per week in the Physical Sciences to 63 hours per week in Education.
- On average, faculty from across the disciplines are spending between 50% and 65% of their time on teaching—Arts and Humanities faculty spend about 63% of their time while Engineering faculty spend about 50% of their time.
- Engineering and Biological/Life Sciences faculty spend more of their time per week on research and scholarly activities (26% and 23%, respectively) while Education and Professional Studies faculty spend less (12% in both areas).
- Education and Professional Studies faculty devote more of their time to “other” activities (32% and 31% respectively) whereas faculty from the Physical Sciences and Arts and Humanities spend less than their colleagues (21% and 22% respectively) on such activities.

Table 6
Proportion of Time Spent by Full-Time Faculty on Professorial Activities by Disciplinary Area

<i>Disciplinary Area</i>	<i>Teaching Activities</i>		<i>Research Activities</i>		<i>Other Activities</i>	
	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>FSSE</i>	<i>National</i>
Arts and Humanities	63%	64%	15%	17%	22%	19%
Biological Science	53%	39%	23%	44%	24%	17%
Business	58%	60%	16%	22%	26%	19%
Education	56%	58%	12%	15%	32%	27%
Engineering	50%	54%	26%	28%	25%	18%
Physical Science	60%	58%	19%	26%	21%	16%
Professional	57%	47%	12%	21%	31%	32%
Social Science	54%	54%	20%	27%	25%	20%
Other	56%	54%	16%	20%	28%	27%
All Disciplinary Areas	58%	54%	17%	24%	25%	23%

Source: National percentages are based on the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty

Notes: National percentages are based on faculty at U.S. public and private four-year institutions.

Class Time

The average faculty member reports spending more than 40% of class time lecturing, 14% on small group work, and a bit more than 10% on experiential activities such as labs and field work (Table 7). The remainder is spent on a variety of activities (e.g., instructor led discussions, student presentations).

- Across course levels, Biological/Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Engineering faculty report spending more class time (between 57% and 60%) lecturing while Education faculty spend the least amount of time (around 25%).
- Within disciplinary area, faculty teaching lower and upper division courses spend approximately the same percentage of class time on the activities in Table 7. The most notable exceptions are for upper division Social Sciences and Professional faculty, who spend less time on lecturing (44% and 41%, respectively) than their lower division colleagues (54% and 49%, respectively).
- Lower division and upper division Education faculty devote more class time (26% and 25%, respectively) to small group work than do their colleagues from other disciplines.
- Biological Science faculty devote slightly less than one-quarter of their class time to experiential work, which in this discipline is more than likely lab or field work.

Table 7
Proportion of Class Time Devoted to Lecturing, Small Group Work, and Experiential Activities by Disciplinary Area

<i>Disciplinary Area</i>	<i>Lecturing</i>		<i>Small Group Work</i>		<i>Experiential</i>	
	<i>Lower Div.</i>	<i>Upper Div.</i>	<i>Lower Div.</i>	<i>Upper Div.</i>	<i>Lower Div.</i>	<i>Upper Div.</i>
Physical Science	58%	57%	12%	11%	12%	15%
Biological Science	57%	56%	14%	11%	23%	21%
Social Science	54%	44%	9%	11%	4%	6%
Engineering	54%	58%	12%	11%	17%	15%
Professional	49%	41%	15%	14%	20%	19%
Business	45%	43%	12%	13%	4%	4%
Other	40%	42%	15%	14%	14%	13%
Arts and Humanities	34%	31%	17%	13%	6%	9%
Education	24%	21%	26%	25%	14%	17%
All Disciplinary Areas	44%	41%	14%	14%	10%	12%

Guidelines for Using FSSE Results

Before sharing your FSSE results on-campus, familiarize yourself with the nature of the data, the reports, and “story line” of your institution’s performance. Here are some things to consider.

Familiarize Yourself with FSSE Reports

We have included several reports and a data file that will help you better understand your FSSE results.

- This Overview provides a profile of the FSSE institutions and respondents nationally as well as selected results.
- The Respondent Characteristics Table summarizes some background information from faculty members who responded. Much of this data is not contained on the institutional data file in order to protect respondents’ identities. See the Anonymity of Respondents section below. .
- The Frequency Report provides the response percentages to each item broken down by level of courses taught.
- The FSSE-NSSE Frequency Report is a template for identifying interesting ways to look for gaps in perceptions between faculty responses and student responses.
- A Data File allows for additional analyses to be conducted and the Codebook provides details of each question, variable name, and response set.

In addition, the FSSE website includes a frequency table that displays the national and Carnegie norms for each item.

Check the Representativeness of Your Respondents

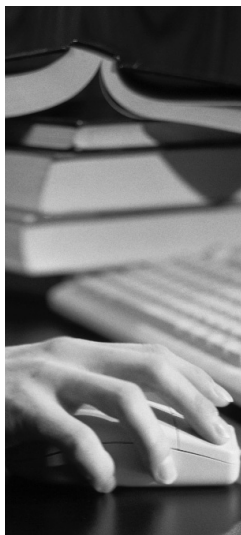
An essential early step in reviewing your results is to compare your faculty respondents’ demographic characteristics, summarized in the Respondent Characteristics Table, with your institutional data on faculty.

Another way to gauge representativeness is through sampling error, an estimate of the margin by which the “true” score for your institution on a given item could differ from the reported score for one or more reasons, such as differences in one or more important characteristics between the sample and the populations. For example, if 60% reply "very often" to a particular item and the sampling error is +/- 5%, there is a 95% chance that the population value is between 55% and 65%.

Protecting Respondent Anonymity

The FSSE project takes several measures to ensure the anonymity of those who responded to the survey. For example:

- All faculty members at your institution were given the same login ID and password so their responses could not be linked back to them.
- Your data file does not include faculty member responses to demographic questions such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, number of years as a faculty member, appointment status, rank, and tenure status.
- More than 80 disciplines have been collapsed into 9 categories (see codebook) designed to parallel major organizational units on campus. Visit the FSSE website to see how your institution can have your faculty grouped in a way that parallels your campus structure.



Communicating FSSE Results

We offer the following suggestions to help you think about interpreting and communicating FSSE results to interested parties.

- Before disseminating results, please check the respondent characteristics to see if the faculty members who completed the survey reasonably represent your faculty as a whole. In addition, make sure you are aware of your sample size since questions often arise as to whether a small sample actually represents the population from which it is drawn.
- Faculty and student items and responses may not match exactly and institutional context should be considered to help interpret any differences that may exist.
- Consider using student and faculty matched items as a way to begin general discussions about which engagement activities might become a greater priority on campus and about student engagement and its relationship to learning.
- Meet with others on campus who are 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.
- Contact the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice for additional consultation on maximizing the use of your results.

We appreciate your participation in FSSE and hope you share the information from the survey widely on your campus. We also invite suggestions for improving the FSSE project and the quality and utility of the information it provides. Please direct inquiries and suggestions to the project staff at fsse@indiana.edu.



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A project of the National Survey of Student Engagement

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