

Team 2 – National Survey of Student Engagement

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An Academic Planning Micro committee reviewed the StFX results from the 2020 National Survey of Student Engagement. The NSSE is used by hundreds of four-year institutions across Canada and the US to assess the learning experience of their first- and fourth-year undergraduate students. The results provide an estimate of how much time undergraduates spend on activities that are proven to support learning.

The committee looked at StFX's eleven university-wide reports. The data is rich and report is substantial. The group Considered how NSSE could be used to inform the academic planning exercise.

Recommendations to APP on the use of NSSE in the Academic Planning Exercise

1. Share the following NSSE 2020 reports during the consultation process

- Snapshot
- High-impact practices
- Engagement Indicators

Key points

- Overall, StFX's scores are very similar to those of our comparator institutions. Additionally, our scores are similar to those at larger Canadian institutions and are fairly consistent year-over-year. Nevertheless, there is room for targeted improvement.
- Some of the items on which StFX scores better than its comparator group:
 - Supportive campus environment
 - Participation in Service Learning
 - Emphasis on attending campus activities and events
 - Emphasis on attending events that address issues of soci/ econ/ political importance
 - Student-faculty interaction (senior students)
 - Challenging students to do their best work
- Some of the items on which StFX scores less than its comparator group:
 - Time spent preparing for class
 - Amount of reading and writing
 - Discussion with people of a race or ethnicity other than our own (senior students)
 - Completed a senior capstone experience
 - Participated in an internship, coop, field experience, etc. (senior students)
- Surveys are based on student self-reporting and, therefore, subject to students' understanding of terms and their interpretation of their experience. As a result of this, absolute scores may not be as useful as comparator results.

2. Recommend referring to NSSE ‘high impact practices’ and ‘engagement indicators’ throughout the consultation as a way to frame discussion.

Doing this will help build awareness about NSSE among faculty and also help focus discussion on practices that research has shown are effective in the classroom.

3. Recommend that the campus community use the academic planning exercise to identify which high impact practices should be priorities at StFX.

4. Recommend that the academic plan encourage the ongoing use of NSSE at the unit, department, program, and Faculty level.

Many institutions use NSSE as a tool to structure parts of their academic planning. Normally institutions only complete NSSE every three years to allow sufficient time to implement items that will influence the scores. Recommend regularly sharing NSSE results across campus. This should include regular opportunities for departments, programs, or Faculties to dig into the data and determine the best way to use it to influence their planning. NSSE also includes Faculty-level results

Additional observations

- Faculty have extremely limited/ no access to information about individual students. Often support services can access and share information that faculty can't access. How can this be improved?
- Faculty often have little information about academic preparation at the high school level.
- Important that that academic plan focus on not only what actions to take but how to make them happen.