

Academic Matters

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FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR:

All of us in the Office of Academic Affairs wish to welcome you to the 2002-2003 academic year. We hope that your first few weeks have gone well.

We are excited about working with you this year to continue the institution's efforts in student engagement. This focus on students and their success is the central concept that informs and connects what we do in Academic Affairs.

One part of the student engagement effort has been to survey students on their perceptions of the degree to which they are involved or perceive themselves to be involved with the many aspects of life in the UW Colleges. The NCA Self-Study Coordinating Committee surveyed students this past academic year; part of that survey concerned student engagement. In addition, we participated in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) this past spring along with 48 other two-year colleges. The survey provides a new focus on educational practices that research shows are related to student success. CCSSE is the "daughter" of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) conducted by the four-year UW institutions in 2000-2001. We thank the Office of Policy Analysis and Research at UW System for contributing funds for our survey.

We are pleased to share with you the results of this survey in our first newsletter of 2002-2003.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE)
By Greg Lampe

CCSSE RESULTS

Background

For the administration of the survey, CCSSE established a target number of respondents for the UW Colleges of 1,125 students. CCSSE provided the UWC with randomly selected courses and supplemental courses to adjust for student absenteeism and cancelled classes. Because the UW Colleges is a geographically dispersed institution, we were provided with a primary sample listing and an over-sampling listing. The primary sample listing was intended to provide the institution with institution-wide data. The over-sampling provided us with campus-specific data. A survey administrator was selected on each of the 13 campuses that was responsible for contacting selected faculty members and arranging a day to implement the surveys during classes. All survey administrators read the CCSSE script to each class and instructed students to complete the survey, which took 25 to 30 minutes. At the end of the allotted time, surveys were collected, placed in an envelope and sent to the Central Office in Madison. The surveys were then forwarded to CCSSE for scanning and analysis.

Respondent Characteristics

Eight hundred and eighty UW Colleges' students were surveyed as part of the primary sample, which resulted in reaching 78.2% of the target established by the CCSSE. The over-sample results were used to generate campus-specific data and will be shared with the individual campuses. CCSSE did not include the over-sampling data with the institutional report because the over-sampling was not random (it was targeted to specific campuses) and would have, therefore, skewed the national data.

Of those respondents who were part of the primary sample:

Gender:

56.9%, female

43.1%, male

Race/Ethnicity:

91.8%, White

2.5%, Asian

1.9%, Latino

0.6%, Black

1.0%, Native American

1.9%, International

Enrollment Status:

85.6%, Full-time

14.4%, Part-time

Student Age:

2.9%, Under 18

82%, 18 to 24

6.5%, 25 to 29

4.5%, 30 to 39

3.3%, 40 to 49

0.8%, 50 and over

Successes and Challenges

The items listed below are areas where the UW Colleges is either outperforming (Successes) or under performing (Challenges) as compared to all other large colleges who participated in the Spring 2002 CCSSE administration. The Office of Academic Affairs and the CCSSE recommends looking at the items below as starting discussion points. The items that appear under "Successes" are items where the UW Colleges' means are significantly higher than all other institutions its size, at the .001 level; whereas the items that appear under "Challenges" are items where the UW Colleges' means are significantly lower.

Successes

College Activities:

Students identified the following college activities as the UW College's successes:

- ❖ Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.
- ❖ Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.
- ❖ Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor.
- ❖ Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor.
- ❖ Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or book-length packs of course readings.
- ❖ Number of written papers or reports of any length.
- ❖ The examinations during the current school year have challenged you to do your best work at this college.

Opinions About Your School:

Students hold the following positive opinions about the Colleges:

- ❖ Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying.
- ❖ Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college.

Quality of Relationships:

Students identified the following relationships as important:

- ❖ Relationships with administrative personnel and their offices (helpful, considerate, flexible).

Student Services:

Students identified the following services as significant to their experiences at the UW Colleges:

- ❖ Frequency: Academic advising/planning.
- ❖ Frequency: Computer lab.
- ❖ Frequency: Student organizations.
- ❖ Importance: Computer lab.
- ❖ Importance: Transfer credit assistance.
- ❖ Satisfaction: Academic advising/planning.
- ❖ Satisfaction: Computer lab.

College Experiences:

Students identified the following as significant to their UW Colleges' experience:

- ❖ Often use the Internet or World Wide Web for class projects or assignments.

Challenges/Areas for Improvement

College Activities:

Students identified the following college activities where the UW College's could improve:

- ❖ Participated in a community-based project as a part of a regular course.
- ❖ Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity other than your own.
- ❖ Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill.

Opinions About Your School:

Students identified the following items as areas where improvement is needed:

- ❖ Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Educational and Personal Growth:

Students identified the following items as areas where improvement is needed:

- ❖ Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills.
- ❖ Using computing and information technology.
- ❖ Voting in local, state, or national elections.
- ❖ Understanding yourself.
- ❖ Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- ❖ Contributing to the welfare of your community.
- ❖ Developing clearer career goals.
- ❖ Gaining information about career opportunities.

Student Services:

Students identified the following services where improvement is needed:

- ❖ Frequency: Job placement assistance.
- ❖ Frequency: Skill labs (writing, math, etc.).
- ❖ Importance: Childcare.
- ❖ Satisfaction: Job placement assistance.

College Experiences:

Students identified the following item as an area where improvement is needed:

- ❖ At this college, in what range is your overall college grade average?

Only the Beginning:

The completion of the survey and reporting of the results are only the first steps of an important process at the UW Colleges. Using the results to improve student learning and retention is the ultimate goal. The Office of Academic Affairs hopes you find this information to be highly informative and useful.

We also wish to recognize the significant effort on the part of the survey administrators, and we are grateful for their commitment to implementing the survey on the campuses. Without their assistance, administering the survey would not have been possible.

First day of Fall--September 23

