



# Faculty Survey of Student Engagement

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## FSSE 2007 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’) measures faculty members’ 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.

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* provides some general information about the institutions and faculty members that participated in the 2007 administration of FSSE and highlights ways institutions can and should use their results. The *Overview* is divided into two sections. First, we compare the characteristics of participating institutions and faculty members with national profiles as well as provide general information about overall response rates. In the second section we provide guidelines for using and interpreting FSSE 2007 results in addition to highlighting resources available for analyzing and presenting FSSE findings. Resources intended to help with the use and interpretation of FSSE data are also available on the FSSE Web site: [www.fsse.iub.edu](http://www.fsse.iub.edu).

## FSSE 2007 Institutions and Respondents

In 2007, 24,450 faculty members at 162 baccalaureate degree-granting colleges and universities responded to FSSE. Faculty members at participating institutions were sent an invitation e-mail and asked to respond to the online survey. In 2007, institutions chose between two survey options (“course-based” or “typical student” questions). Of the 2007 participating institutions, 62% (101) administered course-based questions to their faculties and 38% (61) administered typical student questions.

Nearly all (150) of these institutions also administered NSSE to their students in 2007; 12 used NSSE in 2006. Having recent data from NSSE allows participating schools to examine how faculty members and students respond to similar questions. Campuses receive a list of participating institutions along with the electronic copies of their reports and data files. The list is also publicly available through the FSSE Web site: [www.fsse.iub.edu](http://www.fsse.iub.edu).

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages provide more information about the participating institutions and faculty members who responded to the survey. While included here and in the *Respondent Characteristics Report*, certain demographic information (e.g., gender, rank, and employment status) is withheld from individual school data files in order to ensure that responses remain anonymous.

## Profile of FSSE 2007 Institutions

The FSSE 2007 schools are similar in many ways to the national profile of baccalaureate degree-granting colleges and universities (Table 1). Based on the 2005 Basic Carnegie Classification, the distribution of FSSE institutions mirrors that of all U.S. baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. In addition, FSSE institutions mirror the national distribution in terms of location in cities, towns, and rural areas. Like NSSE 2007, there are a few places where the FSSE 2007 profile differs slightly from the national profile. For example, public institutions are overrepresented in FSSE compared to the national pool of institutions. Also, FSSE schools were somewhat overrepresented in the Plains region. With a few modest exceptions, the distribution of FSSE 2007 institutions reflects that of all U.S. institutions, which means that FSSE results reflect a broad cross-section of faculty members from across the nation.



Drake University

**Table 1**  
**Profile of U.S. FSSE and NSSE 2007 Institutions against all U.S. Baccalaureate Degree-Granting Colleges and Universities**

	FSSE 2007	NSSE 2007	National
<b>Carnegie Classification – Basic 2005<sup>a</sup></b>			
DRU-VH	4%	6%	6%
DRU-H	7%	9%	7%
DRU	7%	6%	5%
Master's-L	28%	20%	22%
Master's-M	12%	11%	12%
Master's-S	8%	6%	8%
Bac-AS	18%	21%	18%
Bac-DIV	16%	15%	23%
<b>Sector</b>			
Public 4-year	50%	41%	35%
Private 4-year	50%	59%	65%
<b>Region</b>			
New England	8%	10%	8%
Mideast	16%	17%	18%
Great Lakes	12%	16%	15%
Plains	18%	11%	11%
Southeast	22%	27%	24%
Southwest	11%	8%	8%
Rocky Mountains	3%	2%	3%
Far West	9%	8%	10%
Outlying Areas	0%	1%	2%
<b>Location</b>			
City	42%	47%	46%
Suburban	20%	21%	23%
Town (~5,000)	27%	24%	22%
Rural	10%	8%	8%

Note: Percentages are based on U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees and that are classified into one of eight Carnegie classes in the table. NSSE and FSSE-participating or other U.S. institutions that do not share these characteristics were not included. Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Source: National percentages are based on data from the 2005 IPEDS Institutional Characteristics File.

<sup>a</sup> For information on the 2005 Carnegie Classifications, see: [www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/classifications).



## Profile of FSSE 2007 Respondents

Table 2 shows selected characteristics of faculty members who completed FSSE in 2007. The first column represents faculty members who responded to the FSSE survey and the second column represents the national profile of instructional faculty and staff at all baccalaureate degree-granting institutions based on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data.



William Woods University

**Table 2**  
Characteristics of FSSE 2007 Respondents

	FSSE Respondents	National
Gender		
Male	54%	60%
Female	46%	40%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or other Native American	1%	<1%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	6%	8%
Black or African American	5%	5%
White (non-Hispanic)	82%	82%
Hispanic or Latino	4%	3%
Multiracial	1%	2%
Other	2%	-
Employment Status		
Full-time	84%	66%
Part-time	16%	34%
Rank		
Professor	25%	22%
Associate Professor	23%	18%
Assistant Professor	26%	20%
Instructor or Lecturer	21%	19%
Other	5%	21%

Note: National percentages are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees.

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



### *Gender*

Nationally, women comprise 40% of faculty members at baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. As with NSSE respondents and most other surveys, women are overrepresented among FSSE respondents, 46% of whom are women.

### *Race and Ethnicity*

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

### *Employment Status*

Eighty-four percent of FSSE respondents were full-time faculty members, whereas 16% were employed on a part-time basis. This departs significantly from the national figures for all public and private baccalaureate degree-granting colleges and universities, which indicate that only two-thirds of faculty members are employed full-time. This reflects the decision of some institutions to survey only full-time faculty.

### Academic Rank

Assistant and associate professors as well as instructors and lecturers are slightly overrepresented in FSSE 2007 while instructional staff and faculty that fit the “other” category are considerably underrepresented.

### Discipline

Table 3 shows the percentage of faculty respondents in disciplinary areas by gender. The percentages indicate that faculty members in the arts and humanities are overrepresented, while faculty members in professional fields are underrepresented. Males outnumber females in all disciplinary areas except education and professional fields where faculty members are predominantly women.

**Table 3**  
Percentage of Faculty by Disciplinary Area and Gender

Disciplinary Area	Male		Female		Total	
	FSSE	National	FSSE	National	FSSE	National
Arts and Humanities	26%	20%	30%	24%	28%	22%
Biological Science	8%	9%	5%	6%	6%	7%
Business	10%	9%	6%	5%	8%	8%
Education	5%	7%	11%	17%	8%	11%
Engineering	5%	7%	1%	1%	3%	5%
Physical Science	14%	11%	7%	6%	11%	9%
Professional	4%	14%	13%	20%	8%	16%
Social Science	15%	11%	15%	11%	15%	11%
Other	15%	12%	12%	11%	13%	12%

Note: National percentages are based on faculty at U.S. postsecondary institutions that award baccalaureate degrees.  
Source: National percentages are based on the 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty.



## Response Rates

After adjusting for faculty members who could not be reached (usually because of incorrect e-mail addresses), a response rate (total number of responses divided by the total number of faculty members contacted) is calculated for each FSSE institution. In 2007, 47% of the faculty contacted responded to the survey. Response rates at individual institutions varied from 22% to 93%. The average institutional response rate was 53%.



Earlham College

## Using FSSE Results

Before sharing FSSE results on campus, individuals should become familiar with the nature of the data, the reports, and “story line” of their institution’s performance.

### Becoming Familiar with FSSE Reports and Resources

Each institution receives several reports and a data file that will help individuals better understand the institution’s FSSE results. The reports are delivered in hard copy in the *Institutional Report* binder and are available electronically through the Institution Interface (each campus has up to three representatives that can access the Interface from the NSSE or FSSE Web sites; each representative has a username and password to access the institution’s files). The data file, codebook, list of participating institutions, and this *Overview* are also available through the Interface.

- This *Overview* provides a profile of the FSSE institutions and respondents nationally. It also highlights how to use FSSE information and resources.
- The *Respondent Characteristics Report* summarizes some background information from faculty members who responded. Much of this data is not contained in the institutional data file in order to protect respondents' identities. See the Protecting Respondent Anonymity section.
- The *Frequency Distributions Report* provides the response percentages for each item broken down by the level of the students taught by faculty members.
- The *FSSE-NSSE Combined Report* is a template for identifying instructive ways to identify gaps in perceptions between faculty responses and student responses.
- An institution's data file allows for additional analyses to be conducted and the *Codebook* provides details of each question, variable name, and response set while protecting the identity of individual respondents.

In addition, the FSSE Web site, [www.fsse.iub.edu](http://www.fsse.iub.edu), includes several important documents and resources:

- Copies of the FSSE survey instrument in multiple formats (.html and .pdf).
- Grand frequency reports by Carnegie Classification based on faculty responses from all participating institutions.
- Selected analyses that can be used for comparison purposes and as examples of different ways to use FSSE data. For instance, examining the proportion of class time devoted to lecturing, small group work, and experiential activities by disciplinary area or by combining FSSE and NSSE, comparing faculty expectations to faculty estimates and student self-reports of time spent studying.
- Examples displaying FSSE results in tables and graphs.

## Check the Representativeness of a Campus's Respondents

An essential early step in reviewing a campus's results is to compare faculty respondents' demographic characteristics, summarized in the *Respondent Characteristics Report*, with institutional data on faculty.

Another way to gauge representativeness is through sampling error, an estimate of the margin by which the "true" score for an 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 +/- 4%, there is a 95% chance that the population value is between 56% and 64%.

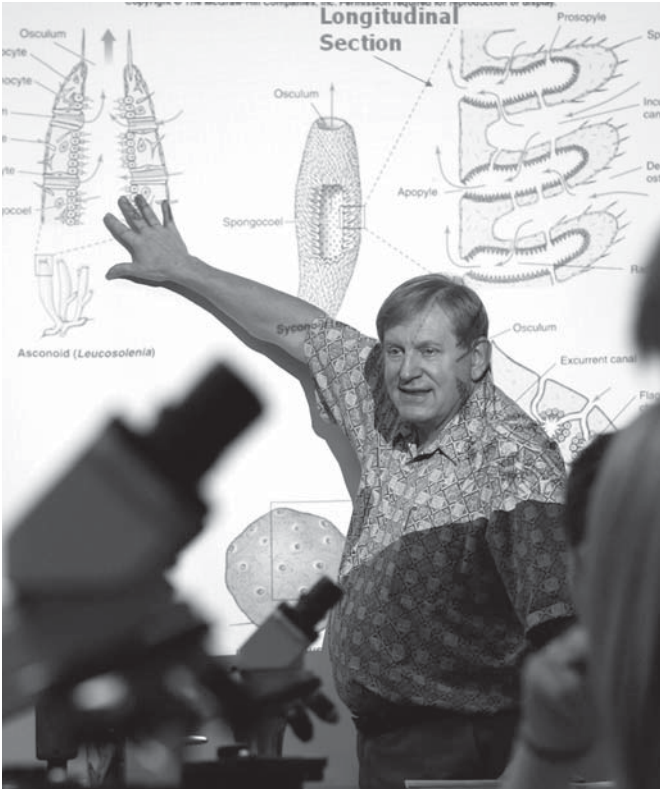
## Communicating FSSE Results

We offer the following suggestions for interpreting and communicating FSSE results to interested parties.

- In addition to examining representativeness as described above, check the sample strategy and size because questions often arise as to whether a small sample size 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 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 responsible for faculty development and undergraduate improvement initiatives to begin sharing results and discussing ways in which FSSE can be used to enhance teaching and learning.
- Consult *Using NSSE Data* (found in the User Tools section of the *Institutional Report* binder) for examples of how other institutions are using FSSE and NSSE in professional development and assessment initiatives.
- Contact the NSSE Institute for Effective Educational Practice ([www.nsse.iub.edu/institute](http://www.nsse.iub.edu/institute)) for additional consultation on maximizing the use of FSSE and NSSE results on campus.



University of Akron



Eastern Kentucky University

## Protecting Respondent Anonymity

As noted previously, the FSSE project takes several measures to ensure the anonymity of those who responded to the survey. For example:

- Institution data files *do not* include faculty members' responses to demographic questions such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, number of years as a faculty member, appointment status, rank, and tenure status.
- To mask faculty members' particular disciplines, more than 80 disciplines have been collapsed into nine categories (see codebook) designed to parallel major organizational units on campus.

*Protecting respondent anonymity is critical to ensure that faculty members answer the survey as honestly as possible.*

**We want to hear from our users. Please send us descriptions of how FSSE results are being used on campus. We also invite suggestions for improving the FSSE project and the quality and utility of the information it provides. Please direct correspondence to the project staff at [fsse@indiana.edu](mailto:fsse@indiana.edu).**



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