



1-22-2019

National Survey of Student Engagement Shows Students Benefit from Winthrop Experience

Winthrop University

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Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "National Survey of Student Engagement Shows Students Benefit from Winthrop Experience" (2019). *Winthrop News 2019*. 97.

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National Survey of Student Engagement Shows Students Benefit from Winthrop Experience

January 22, 2019

HIGHLIGHTS

- Winthrop's NSSE participants—836 first-year students and seniors—were among students from hundreds of North American institutions whose university experiences were reflected in the report.
- The results come from the 2018 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is considered the gold standard for evaluating engagement factors and high impact practices and is conducted by the Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington School of Education.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University's first-year students and seniors reported in a recent national survey that their engagement with faculty members and fellow students contributed to a supportive environment and a fulfilling college experience.

The results come from the 2018 [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), which is considered the gold standard for evaluating engagement factors and high impact practices and is conducted by the [Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington School of Education](#).

"I am pleased that once again NSSE data suggest that Winthrop has unique value in its diversity, its strong conferral of support to students, and in its personalized experience—where faculty really know their students," said [Winthrop President Dan Mahony](#). "The results will help guide us as we continue efforts such as providing faculty training on best practices in teaching and building community; highlighting campus activities and opportunities for student involvement; and expanding the use of support services tied to student success, among others."

Winthrop's NSSE participants—836 first-year students and seniors—were among students from hundreds of North American institutions whose university experiences were reflected in the report.

The 511 colleges and universities who administered NSSE in 2018 includes public and private institutions of all different sizes, regions, locales (rural, urban and suburban), and types (bachelor's, master's and doctoral granting).

The **NSSE results** are one of the few measures in the country to determine how colleges and universities have an impact on the learning and personal development of their students. Just as SAT or ACT scores reflect to an extent what a student knows heading into college, NSSE asks first-year students and seniors what they have experienced during their college years.

The survey assesses four general topics about the university experience—degree of academic challenge, student's engagement in learning with their peers, their connections and experiences with faculty and their perceptions of the campus environment—as well as their participation in high-impact practices (HIPs). Examples of HIPs include participation in a learning community, a course that has a service-learning project, research with a faculty member, internship, study abroad experience or a capstone course.

Winthrop's 2018 NSSE Snapshot indicates:

Freshmen reported that they often or very often engaged in the following activities at significant rates higher than the NSSE average:

- Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc) in course discussions or assignments
- Had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than their own
- Connected their learning to societal problems and issues

In addition, freshmen and seniors reported that Winthrop emphasizes the following quite a bit or very much at rates much higher than the NSSE average:

- Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc)
- Providing support for their overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc)
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc)
- Attending events that address important social, economic or political issues

Freshmen and seniors reported that they often or very often engaged in the following activities at rates higher than the NSSE average:

- Talked about career plans with a faculty member
- Discussed course topics, ideas or concepts with a faculty member outside of class
- Discussed their academic performance with a faculty member

Since 2003, Winthrop has administered NSSE 12 times and has used the results to improve student's learning and increase their engagement.

In 2014, Winthrop was one of 25 institutions featured in **Volume Three: Lessons from the Field** (pg. 18) for the innovative use of NSSE results to assess student achievement related to Winthrop's University-Level Competencies. Winthrop also appeared in a NSSE newsletter in March 2016 for using its institutional results to assess inclusive excellence; a [2016 NSSE annual report](#) for using the results to improve retention and graduation with special populations; and a [2017 NSSE annual report](#) which mentioned Winthrop's use of the NSSE findings in its strategic plan.

NSSE was established with a grant from [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#). Subsequent research and development projects have been supported by the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College, the Spencer Foundation, The Teagle Foundation and the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative.

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