

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY | Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

2020 NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE) SUMMARY REPORT

November 2022

Compiled by Robin Arseneault, Teaching and Learning Project Coordinator

OVERVIEW

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects feedback from students studying in undergraduate and four-year degree-granting colleges and universities in North America to assess their levels of engagement and their post-secondary experience. [The survey](#) is fully administered by the Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University, in close collaboration with the University of Calgary (UCalgary). The NSSE survey is targeted to first year and senior-year students. NSSE results are used to benchmark institutional improvement, public reporting, and ultimately to enhance students' learning experiences.

The work of NSSE is overseen by a NSSE Steering Committee, which is led out of the teaching and learning portfolio. This committee helps prepare NSSE reports, plan and facilitate institutional conversations around NSSE data, and support the academic units and central units that work with NSSE.

Members of the NSSE Steering Committee for the NSSE 2020 and upcoming NSSE 2023 cycle includes:

- Leslie Reid (Vice Provost Teaching and Learning)
- Susan Barker (Vice Provost Student Experience, until July 2022)
- Jennifer Quin (on behalf of Vice Provost Student Experience, Verity Turpin)
- Natasha Kenny (Senior Director, Taylor Institute)
- Kim Grant (Educational Development Consultant, Taylor Institute)
- Christine Johns (Senior Director, Program Innovation & Planning)
- Jacqueline Lambert (Senior Institutional Analyst, Office of Institutional Analysis)
- Adnan Ahmed (Director, Office of Institutional Analysis)
- Robin Arsenault (Teaching & Learning Project Coordinator)

2020 NSSE SURVEY

The 2020 NSSE survey opened to participating UCalgary students in February 2020 and closed just as we moved to remote and online teaching in mid-March 2020 because the COVID-19 global pandemic. Student participation in the survey was almost complete at the time, and remaining responses (under 10%) showed very little impact on survey results.

Our institutional survey data were received by the National Survey of Student Engagement Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University School of Education, in the summer 2020. Under the leadership of the Vice-Provost (teaching and learning) and Vice-Provost (student experience), a team from the Office of Institutional Analysis and the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning prepared institutional and unit-specific NSSE reports for both the quantitative and qualitative data. The institutional reports include the [NSSE Snapshot](#), a [summary of the qualitative data](#) collected from three open-ended questions, and a report on how students describe their [experiential learning](#) opportunities. The report on experiential learning was led by the team in the Office of Experiential Learning.

TAKING ACTION - NSSE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Each NSSE cycle we bring together NSSE teams from across the institution to work with our institutional level and their unit-level NSSE data. Academic units that have students participating in NSSE receive unit-level NSSE reports and work with their data to enhance ongoing initiatives and activities, as well as take action in response to their NSSE data as needed. This report is a snapshot of that institutional work, demonstrating our commitment to responding to student feedback and enhancing student engagement.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, the NSSE teams gathered three times to meet as a learning community. At these gatherings each is given an opportunity to share the work they are doing with their NSSE data and learn from others. The NSSE steering committee provided resources and facilitated discussion to help teams work through this very rich data set and create short summaries of their work. The summary tables provided, starting on page 4 of this document, include highlights of the work undertaken by units across campus in response to their NSSE reports.

NSSE 2020 Actions

Below are summaries that capture the work that is informed and/or inspired by faculty or unit-level NSSE 2020 data. Teams were invited to share initiatives that were happening in their units and indicate how NSSE data inspires, bolsters, shifts, or corroborates these initiatives.

Faculty of Arts / NSSE 2020 Contact: Jason Wiens & Dawn Johnston

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
<p>Increase opportunities for collaborative learning</p>	<p>At the faculty level, we will be holding a Collaboration Colloquium: a series of presentations by faculty members alongside students on assessments, learning activities, and other pedagogical initiatives designed to facilitate collaborative learning. Individual units are also pursuing initiatives to address this; for example, in the coming year English will offer workshops at which colleagues can share strategies and recent SoTL research to encourage collaborative learning in its courses, including new ways of conceiving group projects, piloting social annotation software in exercises and assignments, and deploying GAT resources in ways that can facilitate small group discussion.</p>	<p>The NSSE data consistently shows, both across the faculty and in many departments, that opportunities for collaborative learning was an area for improvement in our faculty. We have some theories about why that may be but wanted to initiate a faculty-level conversation. Knowing that collaborative learning plays a bigger role in some departments / schools, we want to leverage and share that knowledge across the faculty.</p>
<p>EDI initiatives including introduction of EDI committees in units and developing new</p>	<p>The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization Committee developed by the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures was designed with the NSSE data in mind. Part of the mandate of this committee that relates directly to undergraduate engagement and the NSSE data will be a regular climate survey, and one of the suggested ongoing projects will be an examination of course content across the School. Examples of curricular development include, in English, developing</p>	<p>Although our faculty generally does well in the area of Reflective and Integrative Learning and Discussions with Diverse Others, in some units this was an area for development, and overall, as a faculty we want to continue to improve in this area. The Faculty hopes that the establishment of EDI committees will be able to identify the root causes</p>

courses with EDI concerns in mind	new courses in Black Literatures, pending a tenure-track hire in this area, and developing a new course, ENGL 212, for the Indigenous Pathways program. In Classics and Religion, courses were revised to include greater diversity of perspectives. E.g., 'Women & Family' course was updated to 'Gender & Sexuality' and new courses added in this area; new courses on Pluralism. Some of the new courses are already running in 2021-2022; others expected to begin 2022-2023.	of the lower performance in these areas at senior levels and make recommendations for curricular changes to address this area as well.
Increase experiential learning opportunities	At the faculty level, we are the home of the newly developed UNIV 304 course, which allows a more flexible WIL opportunity for students in Arts and across campus. Several programs in our faculty have expanded their curricular experiential learning offerings this year. One International Indigenous Studies course provided a cultural immersion field course inside a tipi on campus focusing on ceremony, discussion, reflection and cultural activities, and an Urban Studies capstone course partnered students with Calgary-based community associations and their residents to work on locally important projects, many with a focus on accessibility.	The NSSE data showed that students in our faculty want increased opportunities for experiential learning, including work integrated learning.

Cumming School of Medicine / Bachelor of Community Rehabilitation Medicine / NSSE 2020 Contact: Ebba Kurz & Meaghan Edwards

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Senior seminar redesign	The connection of theory and practice will be emphasized as a learning outcome in senior seminar. Assessment in practicum/experiential learning senior seminars will be a series of reflections designed to support students in a progression towards connecting theory to practice in the field.	Students identified challenges in applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations

Inclusion of peer connection opportunities beginning in first year	Syllabi will be revised after discussion with the BCR faculty to include further opportunities for peer debriefing and support opportunities. This might include breakout groups in practicum seminars and peer review and strategizing opportunities in courses where major papers are included. Students will have more opportunities to discuss their projects and experiences during class time and will be able to ask their classmates for input on project outlines.	First year students indicated lower levels of collaborative learning than previous years. There was also a drop in reported sense of supportive environment
Peer support leadership opportunities	A structured peer support project will be developed by three senior practicum students. This project will be based on evidence in the field and will have evaluation embedded in the design. The design will facilitate opportunities for collaborative learning for students undertaking placements in the field.	Students reported lower levels of collaborative learning in their senior year.

**Cumming School of Medicine / Bachelor of Health Sciences (BHSc) Honours / NSSE 2020
Contact: Ebba Kurz & Fabiola Aparicio-Ting**

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Transferable Skills Table for Course Outline Template	A table that explicitly identifies the transferable or workplace-related skills that are introduced, developed, or enhanced in each course will be added to the BHSc (and BCR) course outline template. The table will include a list of transferable skills that align with our program-level learning outcomes (for example, oral communication skills, academic writing, collaborations skills, project management skills). Instructors will indicate which skills are introduced, developed or enhanced in their course when they draft their course outline(s) for the 2022-2023 academic year.	NSSE data for the BHSc indicated that students did not see the connection between their academic work and building transferable skills applicable across a wide breadth of employment settings.

BHSc Town Hall

We will continue offering a Town Hall in the early part of the Fall semester that engages BHSc students in all years of study. This event provides important information about resources for student well-being and academic work-life balance, both within and external to CSM. With a stronger focus on work-life balance, we will engage the BHSC Student Engagement Committee (BEC) to highlight social and community-building events.

First-year BHSc students report spending significantly more time per week preparing for class than their campus counterparts (20.9 hours vs. 16.1 hours). As a consequence, first-year BHSc students spent less time working for pay or relaxing and socializing. Similar trends were observed for senior-year respondents. As an honours-only program, we attract high-achieving students. However, academic achievement should not come at the expense of personal well-being.

Opportunities for
Global Health
Experience Event

Plan an event in partnership with the BHSC Student Engagement Committee (BEC), the CSM Indigenous, Local and Global Health Office and UC International to highlight study abroad and global health research opportunities, both international and virtual. Advice on how first-year students can prepare for a future global study or research experience can be provided. Testimonials and advice from students who have participated in such programs will be included so that students can see the breadth of possibilities.

NESSE 2020 data indicate that 40% of first-year students plan to participate in study abroad program but only 10% of fourth year students report actually doing so. Given the structure of the BHSc curriculum (required full-year inquiry courses), studying abroad or an international experience may not seem possible to students. However, there are courses in development that will offer a virtual global health experience in the Spring semester.

Faculty of Kinesiology / NSSE 2020 Contact: William Bridel

Name of Initiative

Description

How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?

KNES 375 Rebuild

In Kinesiology 375 (tests and measures), we leveraged an initiative called the CURE that was offered through the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning (TI). The primary objective was to integrate research experiences into undergraduate courses. Traditional labs were replaced by reports created for a client, coach, and athlete. Students were then

Students reported a disconnect between practical skills and research/theoretical skills; did not always see the application of knowledge that they were acquiring

asked to use the skills they had learned to design specific tests that would measure someone's fitness to participate in a conceptual task.

Practicums

We are expanding practicum opportunities for Kinesiology students, that extend beyond more "traditional" options. For example, we are seeking partnerships with community organizations focused on social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in relation to sport, recreation, health, wellness. Some of these opportunities will be in place for the 2022-2023 academic year. With more breadth and greater numbers of opportunities, more students should be able to experience high-impact practices

While a robust practicum program existed, students asked for greater variety. They were particularly interested in practicum opportunities that aligned more with sociocultural aspects of sport, physical activity, and health

Professional Development

To further enhance teaching excellence in our faculty, we have created a D2L shell for teaching & learning resources and opportunities; full-time academic staff and sessional instructors have access to the shell, and it is updated regularly. We have also offered professional development opportunities to academic staff and sessional instructors over the last year; topics have included pedagogy and EDI, as well as changes to course delivery based on "small teaching" practices (Lang, 2016)

Curriculum review and NSSE data didn't point to effective teaching practices as an "area of concern", however, we want to continue to improve student experience in this regard

Kin Peer Connections Program (KPCP)

Introduced in 2021-2022 for first- and second-year students, a series of events (in-person, virtual, hybrid) were offered covering a variety of topics (welcome to campus, managing stress, study tips, getting involved, etc.). Current upper year undergrad students and Kin alumni were trained as KPCP Leaders (training included information on leadership, student wellness) and led these events. The initiative will continue for first-year students moving forward

Comments in NSSE and curriculum review pointed to the need to foster a more supportive environment for students (particularly given the "double cohort" arriving on campus in F2021)

Faculty of Nursing / NSSE 2020 Contact: Candace Lind

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
A Concept Map of Engagement for the Faculty of Nursing: The Bigger Picture.	Four key areas under the umbrella of “Engagement in the Faculty of Nursing” (FON) were explored by our team and became components of our concept map: 1. Engagement as defined by students, faculty & staff; 2. Evaluation data already collected; 3. Barriers & gaps; and 4. Current engagement strategies. Each of these key areas were further broken down to identify what data or initiatives we already had, or needed, and identified recommendations or areas for further development. A key realization for our NSSE team was that student engagement in learning is a multi-faceted, complex concept that is intricately linked to the larger culture of the FON and overall, to the wellbeing and engagement of students, faculty and staff as a whole. We also realized that student engagement is an integral component of the FON relational mission statement.	Exploring the NSSE 2020 data sparked the realization our faculty has been tackling student engagement for some years. We set out to understand the bigger picture of what engagement means in the FON, map the breadth and scope of engagement activities across the faculty and identify remaining gaps that initiatives could address.

Faculty of Science / NSSE 2020 Contact: Wendy Benoit

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Student opportunities on Elevate platform	Science serves a large (ca. 5800) population of undergraduate students and offers, supports, and encourages experiential learning opportunities with meaningful impact across all levels of study. FoS undergraduate students at any level of study have three opportunities per year to apply for Innovation, Development, and Experiential Activities in Science (IDEAS) funding. Science students can now (since August 2021) apply to	NSSE 2020 data for the FoS reported that Science students place strong value in hands-on experiences and wanted more of these high-impact learning opportunities and venues for skill development. Senior-level students reflected on how they wanted more ways to learn about such opportunities,

	and complete their IDEAS Fund requirements within UCalgary’s career, advising, and student-experience portal, Elevate. During the 2022-23 academic year, FoS teams are working to include research opportunities within the Elevate platform as well.	beyond research with a faculty member, earlier in their degree. By incorporating activity funding details, and, in future, research opportunities, into Elevate, we have more ways to communicate these opportunities to students.
Science Internship Program	The Science Internship Program was established in Fall 2020, creating opportunities for all Science students to apply their knowledge and skills, gain real industry experience, develop networks, discover career options, and earn a full-time salary. In its first iteration, the program had 99 work term placements, which has grown to 158 work term placements in Summer 2022.	NSSE 2020 data includes frequent mention of the Science Internship Program launch as a valuable opportunity students wished they had more chances to engage with. NSSE 2020 data also emphasized how deeply students are seeking ways to define their personal and professional skill development. The Science Internship Program is only one example of the explicit emphasis on skill development that continues to grow across academic and non-academic opportunities for Science students.
Future-focused programming and agile skill development	Many Science courses already include laboratory, field, and interactive course work, and supporting science learning through the pandemic illuminated new ways of thinking about accessibility, skill development, and equitable inclusion in teaching choices. All Science departments will engage in curriculum review over the upcoming academic years (in 2022-23 or 2023-24), and curricular discussions will provide an opportune time for programs to reflect on and integrate lessons learned from the pandemic (and beyond).	FoS NSSE 2020 data revealed a strong desire from students to connect ideas across their courses, expressing the importance of “courses that encourage synthesis of information acquired from previous courses” and “courses that emphasized solving practical real-life problems.” Upcoming curricular reviews will enable Science programs to celebrate strengths (e.g., skill development in Quantitative Reasoning) and identify program-specific actions on areas for growth (e.g., skill development in Reflective & Integrative Learning).

Schulich School of Engineering / NSSE 2020 Contact: Kim Johnston

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Co-curricular Certificates	SSE has approved new co-curricular certificates in Entrepreneurship and Mental Wellbeing that will be available to students in Fall 2022	The NSSE qualitative data indicated many students felt their most meaningful learning experiences happened in co-curricular experiences
Guaranteed WIL: Degree requirement	Introduce a degree requirement to require students to engage in a meaningful WIL experience. WIL experiences include internship, practicum, research placements or a proposed WIL course.	In qualitative data, Internship was very commonly reported as one of the most significant learning experiences
Global Experiences	SSE has a plan to expand the opportunities for students to take part in global experiences – 7-9 day international trips run in Winter and Fall break.	The NSSE qualitative data indicated many students felt their most meaningful learning experiences happened in global experiences

Werklund School of Education / NSSE 2020 Contact: Barb Brown

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Field Self Care Streak	The Field Experience Self Care Streak is an initiative that is woven throughout the four practicums associated with the BED degree. It encourages all students, their partner teachers, their instructors and the community to take 20 minutes per day for self-care. It has	NSSE informs this initiative as it attends to personal connections and supportive environments which are areas for growth to which we are attending.

developed through Twitter (#fieldselfcarestreak) and has created the foundation for a focus on wellness throughout our practicum program.

Extended Student Advising

Currently our advisers do an exceptional job of advising both current and prospective student advising. Our student advisers offer webinars for prospective students, regular advising appointments in flexible formats, career advising and so on. They provide a wrap-around program of support for students. A goal for further exploration in this area will be ways to enhance how we might connect with first-year students who are in the program but not yet taking Education courses.

NSSE informs what is already occurring in that it speaks to our desire to enhance supportive environments. Our desire to increase connection with students not yet in Education courses is informed by the development of quality interactions among student services staff.

Honors Bachelor of Education

The Bachelor of Education Honours program is a pathway that allows undergraduate Education students to incorporate a formal research study under the supervision of a faculty supervisor into their Bachelor of Education degree. It will be comprised of a six-credit research methodologies and ethics course and an independent study under the mentorship of their supervisor.

NSSE is informing this program as it is deemed a high impact, experiential practice that allows students to undertake research with faculty.

Student Experience / NSSE 2020 Contact: Jennifer Quin

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Toolkit for Academic Success	This resource contains student-facing academic support resources for course instructors to embed within their course D2Ls. The guide is part of the Student Success Centre's strategy to normalize academic support, and support faculty in connecting students with resources in a timely manner.	Our NSSE data identified stronger institutional emphasis on promoting learning support services as an area of opportunity. Through NSSE data, and the one-on-one nature of learning support services and exploratory academic advising, we have developed an understanding of aspects of the university experience that students find challenging. The

academic success toolkit draws upon the experience of our advisors and current literature to provide high quality learning support resources to students. This project leverages the importance of our classroom instructors in identifying these resources to students and encouraging their use.

Advising Network of Care

The University of Calgary Advising Network, with the leadership of our Sr. Specialist, Academic Advising have supported the professional development of advisors across the institution related to the Campus Mental Health Strategy. Regular training has supported advisors in thinking about their roles in terms of the connection to well-being through the development of a referral network, trauma-informed training, and a focus on psychologically attuned communication. The latter relates to student communication, typically associated with difficult news, that is tuned towards encouragement, reducing shame, and providing a process orientation in helping students to navigate their next steps. Finally, efforts have been made to provide resources to advisors who may experience the effects of secondary trauma as helping professionals.

NSSE data informs the importance of quality of interactions with academic advisors. We recognize the critical role that academic advisors play in student engagement, success and retention. This work further equips academic advisors to support our students, and to care for themselves and one another in what can be a very challenging student support role.

Designing Your Life

An amalgamation of the Leadership and Student Engagement Office with Career Services into the Centre for Career and Personal Development, and a Life Design Hub will provide students the opportunity to engage in the critical work of vocational wayfinding more fully. The focus of the Centre and the Hub will be career development, engaging with community, and professional development and self-discovery. Students will work with career and life design advisors from first year through graduation to design their unique student experience with a focus on integration of high impact and meaningful practices. This work will support students in considering all aspects of what creates an engaging and fulfilling

NSSE data illustrates that students are seeking more institutional emphasis on career development, building community and self-discovery. They want these opportunities to be easier to find and navigate. Amalgamating these synergistic student facing units to support our students in designing an experience that layers meaningful opportunities (social, personal, professional, future/career oriented) is essential to the student experience.

student experience and will holistically consider and incorporate their goals and vision for life beyond university.

Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning / NSSE 2020 Contact: Natasha Kenny

Name of Initiative	Description	How has NSSE informed or inspired your initiative?
Supporting and strengthening Experiential (EL) and Working Integrated Learning (WIL)	<p>The Office of Experiential Learning (OEL) is committed to supporting projects to strengthen and amplify EL across campus. Specific initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation EL Foundations Badge for academic & non-academic staff• Launch of a Critical Reflection online module• Growth of the student Experience Catalogue on Elevate, including promotion of undergraduate research opportunities• Promotion of the FUSION skills development modules for inclusion in EL/WIL courses and programs• Co-develop with the Faculty of Arts and launch of a flexible, early-degree introduction to WIL course (UNIV 304), together with the Faculty of Arts• Collaborate with the Registrar's Office, academic units, and other key partners to identify WIL and EL courses in peoplesoft; and in 2022-23, use this information to better signal the availability of EL and WIL courses to students.	<p>Student responses to NSSE revealed that they valued EL activities such as co-op, internships, clinical experiences, senior-level capstone courses, research with faculty, study abroad, field schools, volunteering, and co-curricular experiences. NSSE participants also suggested that participating in these EL activities pushed them beyond their comfort zone, helped them develop professionalization skills and career readiness, increased their intercultural skills, and helped them become better collaborators and team members. Despite the positive effects of engaging in an EL activity, some respondents suggested that they found it hard to engage with EL early in their degree program because of lack of awareness. Other respondents also suggested that EL opportunities need to be embedded in first- and second-year courses. The OEL is using NSSE data to develop EL programming that addresses some of the barriers outlined by respondents. NSSE can help with conversations around EL in the Curriculum and provide student voices to conversations around how to embed more EL into courses and how to make it more visible to students.</p>

Supporting and strengthening Undergraduate Research Experiences

Undergraduate Research Initiative - the CDCI and OEL seek to advance undergraduate research across campus by providing multiple entry points for students to access research opportunities. In all undergraduate research experiences supported by the CDCI, students learn about research by doing research. This “learning by doing” is captured as one of the categories of Experiential Learning defined in the Experiential Learning Plan (2020-25), Research-Based Experiential Learning, where students lead or contribute to a research project.

NSSE revealed strong demand and impact of undergraduate research experiences on student engagement and learning. We have used this demand and interest to inform several aspects of our programming:

1. Creation of a new “Ready for Research” microcredential for undergraduate research interested in getting involved in research.
2. Development of a “Designing Course-based Undergraduate Research Experiences” microcredential for Faculty members who are interested in integrating research opportunities into the curriculum.
3. Adding a way for undergraduate research opportunities to be advertised to students in the UCalgary's Experience Catalogue.

The NSSE data has also informed conversations about undergraduate research on campus. We have used student interest in undergraduate research, and the gap in completion of undergraduate research along with the strong impact to build a case for our programming and expanding curricular opportunities for students.

Supporting and enhancing

professional learning to strengthen student engagement, and curriculum review and development processes

Strengthening curriculum review and development processes:

- Supporting curriculum review committees and other academic units in incorporating NSSE data into their processes.
- Helping academic units to develop and map program-level learning outcomes related to WIL and EL.
- Working with campus partners such as the Program Innovation Hub and academic units to broaden our conceptualization of curriculum to include more holistic student learning experiences.
- Supporting the prioritization of equity, diversity and inclusion, and Indigenous engagement in curriculum review and development.

Strengthening professional learning to support teaching assistants and course instructors in creating quality student learning experiences including initiatives such as:

- New graduate teaching assistant workshop series
- New blended and online workshop series
- New microcredentials and resources in online and blended learning, equity, diversity and inclusion and Indigenous Ways of Knowing

NSSE data are an important source of information for program-level curriculum review, particularly in relation to EL and WIL. The themes in the institutional NSSE report regarding student wellbeing and sense of community also inform the work around EDI and IE in curriculum projects. NSSE data informs specific course design elements, programming and resources that have a direct impact on student engagement and learning such as:

- Foundations of Course Design Program
- Supporting the use of learning spaces and educational technology
- The Online Community of Practice for Large Enrolment
- Learning Technology Forum
- Open Pedagogy Series

NSSE data reiterates the importance of: a) TAs as part of students learning experiences, b) creating community, belonging and positive learning environments, and c) ensuring meaningful and active student engagement in academic courses. Feedback and information collected over the course of the pandemic have aligned with the

need to amplify supports in the areas of online and blended learning across the TI.
