



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA ST. PETERSBURG

NSSE Report

Summary of NSSE Items Relating to: General Education USF St. Petersburg

Executive Summary

USF St. Petersburg participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) from 2004-2007 and is again participating in the NSSE in 2009. The NSSE which is administered to entering freshmen and graduating seniors measures the extent to which: *“...students engage in effective educational practices that are empirically linked with learning, personal development and other desired outcomes such as student satisfaction, persistence, and graduation (NSSE 2006 Overview, p. 1)...”*

In addition to helping institutions understand student perceptions of their college experiences, the NSSE includes a bank of sixteen items that measure knowledge, skills and personal development which are organized around general education. A subset of these items relate to USF St. Petersburg’s General Education allowing the institution to evaluate components of its General Education program.

Over a four-year period, and across both freshmen and senior groups, well over one-half of respondents indicated that USF St. Petersburg had contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development in communicating effectively, analyzing quantitative problems and in acquiring a broad general education. However, student self reports also indicated several areas of weakness, namely solving real-world problems and understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups.

The NSSE provides USF St. Petersburg with information about its General Education program that is actionable.

Background

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was developed and is administered by Indiana University and its theoretical basis is Chickering and Gamson’s Seven Principles of Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (1987). NSSE is administered in the spring to freshmen and graduating seniors and it gathers information on student behavior and institutional practices that are empirically related to college outcomes. NSSE benchmarks effective practices in the areas of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, student-faculty interaction, enriching experiences, and a supportive campus environment.

Findings from the NSSE can be used for many purposes however the emphasis of this report is general education. Responses by freshmen and seniors are compared on a bank of sixteen questions relating to knowledge, skills and personal development resulting from general education. Responses are collected via Likert-scale, so USF St. Petersburg group mean responses can be compared with national responses.

Findings

Table 1 focuses on the subset of items that relate to USF St. Petersburg. In order to facilitate comparison, response categories have been collapsed from four to two. On Item #1: Acquiring a broad general education – the overwhelming response by freshmen and seniors, across four years, is that the institution contributed “quite a bit or very much” to their knowledge, skills and personal development in this area. In contrast, on Items #12 and #13, responses for freshmen and seniors across all years are split evenly by response categories. Students indicated that the institution did not overwhelmingly contribute to their knowledge, skills or personal development in “Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups” and “Solving complex real world problems.”

Table 1
Items Relating to USF St. Petersburg’s General Education

	Freshmen				Seniors			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
1. Acquiring a broad general education								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	23.9	21.7	17.1	27.5	17.9	11.6	8.9	16.2
Quite a Bit/Very Much	76.1	78.3	82.9	72.5	82.1	88.4	91.1	83.8
3. Writing clearly and effectively								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	29.9	38.3	21.9	31.0	21.8	26.3	23.9	18.8
Quite a Bit/Very Much	70.1	61.7	78.1	69.0	78.2	73.7	76.1	81.2
4. Speaking clearly and effectively								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	47.8	50.0	41.4	48.3	30.7	29.5	25.3	23.1
Quite a Bit/Very Much	52.2	50.0	58.6	51.7	69.3	70.2	74.7	76.9
5. Thinking critically and analytically								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	19.4	18.3	21.9	31.0	18.8	14.2	8.9	7.7
Quite a Bit/Very Much	80.6	81.7	78.1	69.0	81.2	85.8	91.1	92.3
6. Analyzing quantitative problems								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	38.8	48.3	19.5	41.3	36.6	32.4	22.6	20.5
Quite a Bit/Very Much	61.2	51.7	80.5	58.7	63.4	67.6	77.4	79.5
12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	49.3	47.5	53.7	51.7	47.6	45.2	53.4	44.4
Quite a Bit/Very Much	50.7	52.5	46.3	48.3	52.4	54.8	46.6	55.6
13. Solving complex real-world problems								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
Very Little/Some	59.1	55.0	48.8	55.2	50.5	42.6	41.8	45.3
Quite a Bit/Very Much	40.9	45.0	51.2	44.8	49.5	57.4	58.2	54.7

Four response categories are collapsed to two: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.

Table 2 shows average Likert-scaled responses and average responses for all NSSE respondents. USF St. Petersburg freshmen and senior average scores are at the NSSE average.

Table 2
Average Scores for National Comparison – General Education Items

	Freshmen				Seniors			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
1. Acquiring a broad general education								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.3
NSSE Avg. Score	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2
3. Writing clearly and effectively								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	2.9	2.8	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.0
4. Speaking clearly and effectively								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.4	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9
5. Thinking critically and analytically								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.8	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5
NSSE Avg. Score	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3
6. Analyzing quantitative problems								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	2.7	2.6	3.0	2.6	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0
12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.7
NSSE Avg. Score	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
13. Solving complex real-world problems								
	FR04	FR05	FR06	FR07	SR04	SR05	SR06	SR07
USF Avg. Score	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7
NSSE Avg. Score	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7

Note: USFSP and NSSE Avg. Scores are weighted averages based on the numerical values of the Likert scores where: Very Little=1, Some=2, Quite a Bit=3, and Very Much=4.

Detailed responses to the sixteen general education items including average mean scores which can be used to compare to national statistics are reported in [Appendix 1](#).

Discussion

Responses suggest that USF St. Petersburg is consistently contributing to students' knowledge, skills and personal development in general education. However, two response categories may suggest areas of institutional concern. Students indicated that the institution did not overwhelmingly contribute to their knowledge, skills or personal

development in “understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups” nor in “solving complex real world problems.”

Actions Taken

These findings have been forwarded to the GE Committee for discussion by GE Taskforces.

Appendix 1

Detail on General Education Survey Items Including Avg. Score for National Comparison

	2004		2005		2006		2007	
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
1. Acquiring a broad general education								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	1.5	4.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.4	3.4	3.4
Some	22.4	13.9	21.7	10.5	17.1	7.5	24.1	12.8
Quite a Bit	44.8	38.6	46.7	43.7	43.9	37.7	37.9	30.8
Very Much	31.3	43.6	31.7	44.7	39.0	53.4	34.5	53.0
USFSP Avg. Score	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.3
NSSE Avg. Score	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.2
2. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	10.4	10.9	28.3	11.1	9.8	9.0	13.8	8.5
Some	53.7	28.7	33.3	28.4	51.2	25.7	41.4	19.7
Quite a Bit	25.4	34.7	25.0	28.4	22.0	27.1	37.9	29.1
Very Much	10.4	25.7	13.3	32.1	17.1	38.2	6.9	42.7
USFSP Avg. Score	2.4	2.8	2.2	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.4	3.1
NSSE Avg. Score	2.7	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.7	3.0	2.7	3.0
3. Writing clearly and effectively								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	3.0	3.0	8.3	5.8	2.4	2.7	10.3	1.7
Some	26.9	18.8	30.0	20.5	19.5	21.2	20.7	17.1
Quite a Bit	44.8	42.6	38.3	39.5	41.5	38.4	48.3	37.6
Very Much	25.4	35.6	23.3	34.2	36.6	37.7	20.7	43.6
USFSP Avg. Score	2.9	3.1	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.8	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.0
4. Speaking clearly and effectively								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	9.0	7.9	16.7	11.1	7.3	4.8	20.7	2.6
Some	38.8	22.8	33.3	18.4	34.1	20.5	27.6	20.5
Quite a Bit	35.8	36.6	30.0	40.0	26.8	45.2	41.4	35.9
Very Much	16.4	32.7	20.0	30.5	31.7	29.5	10.3	41.0
USFSP Avg. Score	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.9	2.8	3.0	2.4	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.7	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.9
5. Thinking critically and analytically								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	1.4	10.3	1.7
Some	16.4	18.8	18.3	14.2	19.5	7.5	20.7	6.0
Quite a Bit	46.3	37.6	48.3	41.1	36.6	41.8	44.8	36.8
Very Much	34.3	43.6	33.3	44.7	41.5	49.3	24.1	55.6
USFSP Avg. Score	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.4	2.8	3.5
NSSE Avg. Score	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.3
6. Analyzing quantitative problems								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	6.0	5.9	13.3	6.9	4.9	2.7	17.2	3.4
Some	32.8	30.7	35.0	25.5	14.6	19.9	24.1	17.1
Quite a Bit	44.8	36.6	31.7	36.7	56.1	39.0	44.8	34.2
Very Much	16.4	26.7	20.0	30.9	24.4	38.4	13.8	45.3
USFSP Avg. Score	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.6	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.6	2.8	2.8	3.0	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0

Note: USFSP and NSSE Avg. Scores are weighted averages based on the numerical values of the Likert scores where: Very Little=1, Some=2, Quite a Bit=3, and Very Much=4.

Appendix 1 (Continued)

2004 2005 2006 2007

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

7. Using computing and information technology

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	7.5	4.0	8.3	4.2	4.9	.7	17.2	3.4
Some	32.8	17.0	30.0	20.0	29.3	18.5	27.6	12.8
Quite a Bit	50.7	33.0	40.0	33.7	24.4	31.5	41.4	29.1
Very Much	9.0	46.0	21.7	42.1	41.5	49.3	13.8	54.7
USFSP Avg. Score	2.6	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.3	2.5	3.4
NSSE Avg. Score	2.8	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.2

8. Working effectively with others

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	4.5	1.0	13.3	4.2	10.0	4.1	13.8	3.4
Some	31.3	25.7	26.7	21.1	37.5	18.5	37.9	19.7
Quite a Bit	46.3	45.5	45.0	41.6	30.0	37.7	34.5	31.6
Very Much	17.9	27.7	15.0	33.2	22.5	39.7	13.8	45.3
USFSP Avg. Score	2.8	3.0	2.6	3.0	2.7	3.1	2.5	3.2
NSSE Avg. Score	2.8	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.2	2.9	3.1

9. Voting in local, state, or national elections

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	40.9	52.5	45.0	41.1	56.1	46.6	37.9	41.9
Some	40.9	30.7	23.3	25.8	26.8	28.1	27.6	30.8
Quite a Bit	9.1	11.9	18.3	20.0	9.8	13.7	20.7	12.8
Very Much	9.1	5.0	13.3	13.2	7.3	11.6	13.8	14.5
USFSP Avg. Score	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.1	1.7	1.9	2.1	2.0
NSSE Avg. Score	1.9	1.8	2.5	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.1

10. Learning effectively on your own

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	4.5	5.0	6.7	6.3	9.8	5.5	6.9	7.7
Some	29.9	23.0	21.7	17.4	22.0	24.7	24.1	23.1
Quite a Bit	40.3	44.0	50.0	50.0	34.1	38.4	48.3	33.3
Very Much	25.4	28.0	21.7	26.3	34.1	31.5	20.7	35.9
USFSP Avg. Score	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9
NSSE Avg. Score	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.0

11. Understanding yourself

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	14.9	25.7	13.3	16.3	17.1	14.4	17.2	13.7
Some	34.3	21.8	35.0	32.1	26.8	30.8	24.1	29.1
Quite a Bit	37.3	33.7	31.7	31.1	31.7	31.5	37.9	25.6
Very Much	13.4	18.8	20.0	20.5	24.4	23.3	20.7	31.6
USFSP Avg. Score	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.8
NSSE Avg. Score	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.8

12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups

	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	20.9	22.8	15.3	10.5	12.2	13.0	20.7	16.2
Some	28.4	24.8	32.2	34.7	41.5	40.4	31.0	28.2
Quite a Bit	41.8	34.7	30.5	33.2	24.4	28.8	31.0	29.9
Very Much	9.0	17.8	22.0	21.6	22.0	17.8	17.2	25.6
USFSP Avg. Score	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.7
NSSE Avg. Score	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6

Note: USFSP and NSSE Avg. Scores are weighted averages based on the numerical values of the Likert scores where: Very Little=1, Some=2, Quite a Bit=3, and Very Much=4.

Appendix 1 (Continued)

	2004		2005		2006		2007	
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
13. Solving complex real-world problems								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	12.1	9.9	21.7	8.9	17.1	8.2	20.7	9.4
Some	47.0	40.6	33.3	33.7	31.7	33.6	34.5	35.9
Quite a Bit	36.4	34.7	30.0	42.1	31.7	40.4	27.6	27.4
Very Much	4.5	14.9	15.0	15.3	19.5	17.8	17.2	27.4
USFSP Avg. Score	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.7
NSSE Avg. Score	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.7
14. Developing a personal code of values and ethics								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	15.2	21.8	25.0	22.1	24.4	15.8	27.6	12.8
Some	36.4	33.7	31.7	33.7	34.1	34.9	34.5	35.9
Quite a Bit	34.8	32.7	28.3	27.9	19.5	33.6	27.6	29.1
Very Much	13.6	11.9	15.0	16.3	22.0	15.8	10.3	22.2
USFSP Avg. Score	2.5	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.2	2.6
NSSE Avg. Score	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.7
15. Contributing to the welfare of your community								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	22.7	35.6	40.0	29.5	34.1	24.7	24.1	17.1
Some	34.8	35.6	31.7	35.3	36.6	38.4	51.7	41.0
Quite a Bit	34.8	17.8	20.0	22.1	17.1	22.6	17.2	26.5
Very Much	7.6	10.9	8.3	13.2	12.2	14.4	6.9	15.4
USFSP Avg. Score	2.3	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.4
NSSE Avg. Score	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4
16. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little	39.4	68.3	58.3	58.9	58.5	68.5	55.2	56.4
Some	34.8	16.8	21.7	21.1	26.8	15.8	20.7	21.4
Quite a Bit	19.7	5.9	11.7	10.5	7.3	6.8	20.7	10.3
Very Much	6.1	8.9	8.3	9.5	7.3	8.9	3.4	12.0
USFSP Avg. Score	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.8
NSSE Avg. Score	2.1	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.9

Note: USFSP and NSSE Avg. Scores are weighted averages based on the numerical values of the Likert scores where: Very Little=1, Some=2, Quite a Bit=3, and Very Much=4.

Table 1
Items Relating to USF St. Petersburg's General Education

	2004		2005		2006		2007	
To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?								
1. Acquiring a broad general education								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	23.9	17.9	21.7	11.6	17.1	8.9	27.5	16.2
Quite a Bit/Very Much	76.1	82.1	78.3	88.4	82.9	91.1	72.5	83.8
3. Writing clearly and effectively								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	29.9	21.8	38.3	26.3	21.9	23.9	31.0	18.8
Quite a Bit/Very Much	70.1	78.2	61.7	73.7	78.1	76.1	69.0	81.2
4. Speaking clearly and effectively								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	47.8	30.7	50.0	29.5	41.4	25.3	48.3	23.1
Quite a Bit/Very Much	52.2	69.3	50.0	70.2	58.6	74.7	51.7	76.9
5. Thinking critically and analytically								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	19.4	18.8	18.3	14.2	21.9	8.9	31.0	7.7
Quite a Bit/Very Much	80.6	81.2	81.7	85.8	78.1	91.1	69.0	92.3
6. Analyzing quantitative problems								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	38.8	36.6	48.3	32.4	19.5	22.6	41.3	20.5
Quite a Bit/Very Much	61.2	63.4	51.7	67.6	80.5	77.4	58.7	79.5
12. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic groups								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	49.3	47.6	47.5	45.2	53.7	53.4	51.7	44.4
Quite a Bit/Very Much	50.7	52.4	52.5	54.8	46.3	46.6	48.3	55.6
13. Solving complex real-world problems								
	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR	FR	SR
Very Little/Some	59.1	50.5	55.0	42.6	48.8	41.8	55.2	45.3
Quite a Bit/Very Much	40.9	49.5	45.0	57.4	51.2	58.2	44.8	54.7

Response categories are collapsed: 1. Very Little and Some; 2. Quite a Bit and Very Much.