



## National Survey of Student Engagement

The College Student Report

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### **Information Technology Comes of Age; Intercollegiate Athletes Hold Their Own**

Findings from a national survey released today show that the vast majority of undergraduate students are regularly using information technology in their academic work. About 83% frequently go to the World Wide Web to obtain resources for their classes and 80% report that their instructors often require them to use computer conferencing, the WWW, and other forms of information technology for completing assignments. The universal access to an endless stream of information has its downside, however, as 87% say that their peers at least “sometimes” copy and paste information from the WWW for reports and papers without citing the source.

The 2003 report from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is based on information from 185,000 first-year and senior students at 649 different four-year colleges and universities. The NSSE study, titled “*Converting Data Into Action: Expanding the Boundaries of Institutional Improvement*,” gives schools an idea of how well students are learning and what they put into and get out of their undergraduate experience.

“Engagement is a critical factor in the educational process because the more time and energy students devote to desired activities, the more likely they are to develop the habits of the mind that are key to success after college including participating in civic affairs,” says George Kuh, the NSSE director and Indiana University Bloomington professor of higher education.

The survey results annually provide comparative standards for determining how effectively colleges are contributing to learning. Five benchmarks are measured: 1) level of academic challenge; 2) active and collaborative learning; 3) student-faculty interaction; 4) enriching educational experiences; and 5) supportive campus environment.

“Without persuasive evidence of the patterns of student engagement, administrators and faculty remain blind to important aspects of the undergraduate experience,” says Lee Shulman, president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

Other key findings from the 2003 report are:

- Contrary to popular opinion, intercollegiate athletes are generally as engaged in learning activities as other students.
- Men are generally less engaged than women, especially in the areas of academic challenge and enriching educational experiences.
- Less than half of seniors frequently have serious conversations with students from different racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- More than a third of all seniors only “occasionally” get prompt feedback from faculty members.
- Student experiences vary greatly by major field, with students in professional areas such as architecture and health sciences reporting higher levels of engagement than other fields.
- Two fifths of all students report A grades; only 3% of students have C or lower average grades. A third of the students earning A grades study only 10 or fewer hours per week.

According to Kuh, “Substantial improvement in the overall quality of undergraduate education is possible by focusing on the performance of our least engaged students.”

Student engagement results are the topic of discussion on scores of campuses at faculty and governing board retreats and teaching and learning workshops. According to John Gardner, executive director of The Policy Center on the First Year of College, “NSSE is one of the most powerful tools available to stimulate and guide intellectually powerful and credible conversations to focus us on what needs to be changed and how.”

“We’re using information from NSSE to help assess curriculum requirements and help policymakers and governing board members better understand the higher education process,” says Tad Perry, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents Staff.

The NSSE 2003 Report is co-sponsored by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning. NSSE is supported by grants to Indiana University from Lumina Foundation for Education and The Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College.

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The NSSE 2003 Report, “*Converting Data Into Action: Expanding the Boundaries of Institutional Improvement*,” is available in PDF format on NSSE’s website or may be obtained for \$20 from the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, 1900 E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Eigenmann Hall, Suite 419, Bloomington IN 47406-7512. The NSSE Website: [www.iub.edu/~nsse](http://www.iub.edu/~nsse).