

NSSE HIPs: Expectations versus Realizations

By

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Table 1

Percentages of First-Year and Senior NSSE 2018 & 2019 Respondents

All First Year					
All		Adults	5.0%	Traditional	95.0%
On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
96.1%	3.9%	48.0%	52.0%	98.7%	1.3%
All Senior					
All		Adults	35.3%	Traditional	64.7%
On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
88.2%	11.8%	71.00%	29.0%	97.5%	2.5%

Note: Adult students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

Table 1 Demographics

Table 1 displays the NSSE 2017 & 2018 data for first-year and senior respondents. When looking at the first-year respondents, the traditional students make up 95% and the adult students account for only 5%, where adult students are defined as students 24 and older.

Taking a further look at the differences in the on Campus and Online students, it shows that there is an extreme difference in the Adult students, whereas the traditional students were only 1.3% online and the adult first-year students were 52% online.

In the NSSE survey, respondents are designated as online only if they take all of their courses online, which is the strictest definition of online. For the Senior students 35.3% of the students were Adults 24 and older and 29% of the adults take all online courses. However, of the traditional Senior students only 2.5% took all of their courses online.

Table 2

High-Impact Practices: First-Year Expectation versus Senior-Year Realization (All Learners)

	Expectation			Realization		
	1st Year All	1st Year Adult	1st Year Traditional	Seniors All	Seniors Adult	Seniors Traditional
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?						
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	83.9%	60.0%	85.2%	75.3%	62.3%	82.4%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	51.4%	25.2%	52.8%	46.0%	26.2%	56.7%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	40.9%	28.3%	41.5%	33.8%	27.6%	37.2%
Participate in a study abroad program	47.3%	18.9%	48.8%	23.0%	12.7%	28.7%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	39.4%	26.0%	40.1%	35.9%	27.4%	40.5%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	58.5%	45.8%	59.2%	71.2%	65.4%	74.3%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	53.0%	40.0%	53.0%	63.0%	68.0%	65.0%

Note: Adults students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

Expectations vs. Realizations

When looking at the HIPs that are designated in the NSSE 2017 & 2018 survey, it is shown how the first-year students' expectations differ from the senior students' realization.

The percentages in Table 2 are based on the students who have responded that they "Plan to do" or have "Done or in progress" for each of the HIPs examined in the NSSE survey.

The expectations are captured by the first-year students who have done or plan to do each of the HIPs examined.

The realizations are captured by the Senior students who have done or still plan to do the particular HIPs throughout the remainder of their college experience. The results from Table 2 are discussed further by each of the NSSE HIPs.

Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement

The expectations of the first-year students are very high at 83.9 for all students. However, the adult first-year students have much lower expectations at 60%.

Looking at the realizations that are shown by the Senior respondents, it shows that while the adult students' expectation was very close to their realizations, being 60% and 62.3%, respectively.

The comparison of the first-year all respondents show that the expectations were higher than their realizations, at 83.9% and 75.3%, respectively.

Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group

When the first-year students were asked if they expected to hold a leadership role in a student organization approximately half, 51.4%, expected to do so.

When further analyzing the responses, only 25.2% of the adult first-year students population expected to engage in this HIP.

The expectations of all first-year students were aligned with the realizations of the senior students, with 51.4% and 46%. respectively.

Outreach to students about the student organizations and having some of the meetings in an online format may increase the realization for this HIP.

Participate in a learning community or some other formal program

The adult students did not expect to participate in a learning program or formal program where students take two or more classes together, with only 28.3% responding that they plan to do or have done in their first year. The realization of the engagement in this HIP was not far from the adult respondents, at 27.6%.

The traditional students the expectations were 41.5% and realizations were 37.2%. The realizations did fall slightly short of the expectations for both the adult and traditional student groups.

Increasing the number of learning communities that are available for the students and presenting options through the student's advisor may help to meet the students' expectations.

Participate in a study abroad program

As for participating in a study abroad program, the first-year expectations for the traditional student was 48.8% and for the adult student expectation was 18.9%.

The realizations for both the traditional and adult students were lower at 28.7 and 12.7%, respectively.

The largest difference in expectations versus realizations seen in the examination of this HIP was that of the traditional students who had expected to participate in a study abroad program but did not realize the participation in the study abroad opportunity in their college career.

Making some shorter and less expensive study abroad opportunities may tend to close the gap between the expectations and realizations for both traditional and adult students.

Work with a faculty member on a research project

In regards to working with a faculty member on a research project. 40.1% of the traditional first-year students expected to do so, as compared to 26% for the adult first-year students. From the data from the senior adult and traditional students it is clear that the expectations were aligned to the realizations for working with faculty on research.

The adult student's expectations and realizations are again lower on this HIP, likely due to the amount of time that they are able or willing to commit to engaging in the HIP given that they have other obligations and priorities.

Completing a culminating senior experience

The first-year student expectations for planning to do a culminating senior experience, which includes a capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc., were lower than the realization for this HIP.

For the adult students the expectation was 45.8% plan to do, and the adult senior students' realization was 65.4%, the traditional student expectation was 59.2% and the traditional student realization was 74.3%.

The reason that these expectations are not aligned with the realization is likely because the students have not heard of some of these culminating experiences during the first year.

Letting students know about these culminating senior experiences during their first-year orientation may help to align the expectations with their realizations.

Service-learning

Just as the culminating senior experience the students' expectations as to engaging in service-learning were not aligned with their realizations.

For the adult students, 40% expect to engage in community-based projects or service-learning; however, 68% of the senior adult respondents indicated that they engaged in service-learning.

Also, for the traditional respondents, 53% expected to be engaged in service-learning and the seniors surveyed indicated that 65% did or plan to engage in service-learning.

Table 3

High-Impact Practices: First-Year Expectation versus Senior-Year Realization (Online Learners)

	Expectation			Realization		
	1st Year All	1st Year Adult	1st Year Traditional	Seniors All	Seniors Adult	Seniors Traditional
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?						
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	58.4%	53.2%	69.3%	48.9%	44.9%	74.2%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	29.2%	22.1%	43.0%	20.6%	17.3%	41.3%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	30.1%	23.9%	41.1%	21.1%	18.9%	34.7%
Participate in a study abroad program	23.2%	13.5%	41.6%	9.2%	7.2%	21.5%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	26.1%	19.7%	37.6%	17.0%	15.2%	28.5%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	46.5%	43.3%	52.7%	61.0%	60.6%	64.0%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	43.0%	35.0%	59.0%	54.0%	53.0%	66.0%

Note: Adults students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

Table 4

High-Impact Practices: Expectation and Realization (On-Campus versus Online)

	Freshmen All		Senior All		Freshmen Adult		Senior Adult		Freshmen Traditional		Senior Traditional	
	Expectation	Realization	Expectation	Realization	Expectation	Realization	Expectation	Realization	Expectation	Realization	Expectation	Realization
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	85%	58%	79%	49%	67%	53%	69%	45%	85%	69%	83%	74%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	52%	29%	49%	21%	28%	22%	30%	17%	53%	43%	57%	41%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	41%	30%	36%	21%	33%	24%	31%	19%	42%	41%	37%	35%
Participate in a study abroad program	48%	23%	25%	9%	25%	14%	15%	7%	49%	42%	29%	22%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	40%	26%	38%	17%	33%	20%	32%	15%	40%	38%	41%	29%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	59%	46%	73%	61%	49%	43%	67%	61%	59%	53%	75%	64%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	53%	43%	64%	54%	46%	35%	61%	53%	53%	59%	65%	66%

Note: Adults students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

Conclusion

From this analysis, some suggestions regarding the HIPs offered by four-year higher education institutions could help the expectations of engagement in the HIPs be closer in line with the realization.

For the culminating senior experience and service learning, institutions may want to advertise these HIPs in their recruitment brochures and orientation courses so that the freshmen would know that these HIPs are expected to be part of their college experience.

This may drive the expectations to be more aligned with the realizations for all students.

Conclusions

Also, given that the adult students and the online students tend to have less expectations to be involved with the HIPs, more HIPs geared toward the non-traditional adult students would make them more engaged in the HIPs offered by the institution.

This group of adult students and online students may not have the time and or inclination to participate in the HIPs.

When the expectation is a great deal more than the realization such as the study abroad HIP, this shows an interest but the students may not follow through because some other barrier, in this case it may be a combination of time and cost.

SESSION HANDOUTS/MATERIALS

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