

## Introduction

**The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)** is administered by hundreds of colleges and universities every year (560 in 2016), and is designed to measure the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities. Additionally, the instrument measures how the institution deploys resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to encourage student participation in activities linked with student learning. NSSE is based on the premise that engaging in a variety of educationally productive activities builds the foundation of skills and dispositions people need to live a productive, satisfying life after college. Temple has administered the NSSE since 2001, with the last two administrations in 2013 and 2016. For more information about NSSE: <http://nsse.indiana.edu/>.

### Instrument

NSSE is developed by the Center for Postsecondary Research at the Indiana University School of Education. The NSSE consists of 88 questions which are grouped within ten **Engagement Indicators**: *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning, Discussions with Diverse Others, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions, and Supportive Environment*. The report of results is organized around four themes: *Academic Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment*.

### Sampling & Response Rates

All first year and senior students (excluding Temple Japan students) enrolled during the Spring 2016 semester were invited to participate in the survey via email and through the Next Steps Channel on TU Portal, with the eligible population consisting of 4,715 "first year" and 9,604 "senior" students. The

overall response rate was 25% (n = 3,567), with 1,539 (33%) of freshmen and 2,028 (21%) of seniors responding. This is a 6 percentage point increase compared to the overall response rate (19%) for the last administration of NSSE in 2013. NSSE weights the survey results by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (full-time versus part-time) to ensure that institutional estimates reflect the population.

### Comparison Groups

NSSE reports are constructed so that Temple's results are presented next to the aggregated results of three comparison groups. The first group, *Carnegie: Highest Research Activity*, is composed of 44 2016 NSSE participant institutions classified as having the highest research activity by Carnegie. The second comparison group, *Urban Peers*, is made up of 14 institutions classified as public institutions in large cities with 20,000+ undergraduate enrollment. The third group, *Custom Peers*, is comprised of 15 universities Temple views as peers.

## Overall Satisfaction

Results suggest that most students are highly satisfied with their experience at Temple, and both freshmen and seniors rated their satisfaction with Temple higher than in 2013. Eighty-eight percent of freshmen (up from 87% in 2013) and 86% of seniors (84% in 2013) rated their educational experience as good or excellent, while 90% of freshmen (86% in 2013) and 84% of seniors (81% in 2013) said they would probably or definitely choose Temple if they had the chance to start over again.

## Academic Challenge

Temple students reported significantly higher levels of engagement than students at comparison group institutions for items related to **Higher-Order Learning**, with 74% of seniors (75% in 2013)

reporting that Temple coursework emphasized evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source either “quite a bit” or “very much” (compared to 65% of seniors from the 2016 Highest Research Activity group). Other items contributing to the Higher-Order Learning score include coursework emphasis on applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations; analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts; and forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information.

Temple students also showed higher engagement in areas related to **Reflective & Integrative Learning** compared to peers in all three comparison groups. For example, 64% of Temple freshmen (66% in 2013) responded that they included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments “very often” or “often,” compared to only 49% of students from the Highest Research Activity comparison group. Other items that contributed to the *Reflective & Integrative Learning* overall score include connecting learning to societal problems, examining the strengths and weaknesses of one’s own views on an issue, and learning something that changed the way one understands an issue or concept.

The **Learning Strategies** scale is another area of Academic Challenge where Temple students were more engaged than students at comparison institutions, with both freshmen and seniors reporting more engagement than all three comparison groups. When asked how often they identified key information from reading assignments, 85% of Temple freshmen (86% in 2013) and 83% of seniors (87% in 2013) replied “often” or “very often,” compared to 77% of freshmen and 79% of seniors at other Highest Research Activity schools. Two additional items contributed to the Learning Strategies scale: “reviewed your notes after class”

and “summarized what you learned in class or from course materials.”

In the area of **Quantitative Reasoning**, both Temple freshmen and senior students reported higher levels of engagement than their peers at comparison schools when asked to report how often they evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information: 44% of freshmen (39% in 2013) and 49% of seniors (44% in 2013) said “very often” or “frequently,” and how often they used numerical information to examine real-world problems or issues: 46% of freshmen and 50% of seniors said “very often” or “frequently.” Both freshmen and seniors reported less engagement than comparison groups for the third item in the Quantitative Reasoning scale which asked students how often they reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information. For this item, 55% of freshmen (52% in 2013) and 56% of seniors (56% in 2013) said “very often” or “frequently.”

### Experiences with Faculty

The majority of students reported that instructors at Temple engaged in **Effective Teaching Practices**, with 82% of freshmen (85% in 2013) and 81% of seniors (82% in 2013) responding that instructors clearly explained course goals and requirements “quite a bit” or “very much.” Additionally, the majority of Temple freshmen (77% in 2016, 78% in 2013) agreed that instructors taught course sessions in an organized way and used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points (77% in 2016 and 2013). Student responses regarding how much instructors have “provided feedback on a draft or work in progress” and “provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments” also contributed to the Effective Teaching Practices scale.

On the scale that measures **Student-Faculty Interaction**, Temple seniors reported significantly more engagement than students from all three comparison groups. Seniors responded that they engaged in the following activities that comprise the Student-Faculty Interaction scale either “very often” or “often”: 44% talked about career plans with a faculty member (up from 39% in 2013); 35% discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class and discussed academic performance with a faculty member (32% in 2013), while 29% worked with faculty on activities other than coursework (committees, student groups, etc.) (up from 24% in 2013). Temple freshmen scored higher than all three comparison groups for two items on this scale: 26% discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class (compared to 24% in 2013), and 29% discussed academic performance with a faculty member (same as in 2013).

### Learning with Peers

In the area of **Discussions with Diverse Others** Temple freshmen reported higher levels of engagement than their peers in all three comparison groups. For example, 86% of Temple freshmen (up from 82% in 2013), had discussions (either “often” or “very often”) with people from a different race or ethnicity, compared to 75% of seniors from the Highest Research Activity group. Temple freshmen and seniors also reported more interactions with people from different economic and religious backgrounds than their comparison group peers, and about the same level of interaction with people with different political views.

Temple students tended to report lower engagement than students in comparison groups for items related to **Collaborative Learning**. Temple freshmen reported significantly lower levels of engagement than all three groups, and seniors

reported about the same or slightly lower levels than students in the comparison groups. Temple students were less likely to ask another student to help them understand course material, explain course material to other students, and prepare for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students. Temple students worked with other students on course projects and assignments at levels similar to students at comparison group institutions.

### Campus Environment

Temple students experienced the institutional emphasis on maintaining a **Supportive Environment** at levels similar to or significantly higher than students from comparison group schools. Temple freshmen and seniors were likely to report that Temple encouraged contact among students from different backgrounds (social, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.) at significantly higher levels than their peers at comparison group schools. Other items that contributed to the Supportive Environment scale have to do with institutional emphasis on providing support for academic success; learning support services; opportunities to socialize; support for overall well-being (recreation, healthcare, counseling, etc.); help with managing non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.); and attending both campus events and events that address social, economic, and political issues.

**Quality of Interactions** is an area with which Temple freshmen and seniors were similar to or significantly less engaged than their peer groups. Notably, however, both freshmen and senior student ratings for all items in the quality of interactions area have increased since the last time NSSE was administered in 2013. Respondents rated the quality of their interactions with a number of groups on a scale from 1 (“poor”) to 7 (“excellent”). The majority of Temple freshmen rated the quality of interactions

with other students highly, with 56% responding with a rating of either 6 or 7 (55% in 2013). Seniors rated interactions with other students even higher, with 62% providing a rating of either 6 or 7 (59% in 2013). Lower quality of interaction ratings were observed for both freshmen and senior respondents regarding academic advisors: 45% of freshmen (41% in 2013) and 41% of seniors (37% in 2013) endorsed a rating of 6 or 7. Forty-four percent of freshmen (41% in 2013) and 52% of seniors (51% in 2013) rated quality of interaction with faculty as 6 or 7. Quality of interactions with student services staff (career services, student activities, and housing) received a 6 or 7 rating from 36% of freshmen (31% in 2013) and 32% for seniors (26% in 2013). The lowest-rated item for both freshmen and seniors was interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) with 29% of freshmen (26% in 2013) and 28% of seniors (24% in 2013) rating the quality of interaction either 6 or 7.

### Supplemental Studies

#### Civic Engagement

Temple opted to add two additional question sets to the main NSSE survey tool. One of the optional topical modules measures civic engagement and the other measures students' experiences with information literacy. The module on civic engagement was also selected by Temple in 2013. This module asks students to assess their conflict resolution skills and examines how often students engaged with local or campus and state/national/global issues. The module complements questions on the core NSSE survey about service-learning, community service or volunteer work, and becoming an informed and active citizen. Eighty-four institutions participated in the Civic Engagement module and NSSE provided Temple with comparison results for each question in the survey. Temple freshmen had significantly higher

average scores for their self-rated abilities and experiences around civic engagement, compared to their peer groups for all but one item on the survey, for which they had a mean equal to that of freshmen at other participating institutions. The largest differences between freshmen at Temple and the comparison group were related to how often students informed themselves about local or campus issues (Temple freshmen had a mean of 2.8, compared to 2.5 for the comparison group) and how often students discussed local or campus issues with others (Temple mean was 2.7, compared to 2.4 for comparison group). Temple freshmen also seem to be increasingly more civically engaged: in 2016, Temple freshmen had higher mean scores for 10 out of the 14 items in the Civic Engagement module compared to Temple freshmen in 2013, and did not have lower mean scores for any of the items. Compared to seniors in their peer groups, Temple seniors had significantly higher mean scores for 8 out of the 14 items. Temple seniors had significantly lower scores for 3 items related to ability to help people resolve disagreements with each other, lead a group where people from different backgrounds feel welcomed, and contribute to the well-being of one's community. Temple seniors in 2016 had higher mean scores for 5 items and the same mean scores for the remaining 9 items in this module, compared to Temple seniors in 2013.

#### Experiences with Information Literacy

Temple, along with 98 other institutions, also participated in an optional module on information literacy. Developed in collaboration with college and university librarians, this module asks students about their use of information and how much their instructors emphasized the proper use of information sources. This module complements questions on the core survey about higher-order learning and how much writing students do. Temple freshmen had higher average scores for 8 out of 14

items in this module, compared to their peers at other institutions, and had similar scores for the remaining 6 items. Temple freshmen had the highest average scores for an item that asked how often instructors emphasized not plagiarizing the work of others; 92% of students said their instructors emphasized this “quite a bit” or “very much.” The overwhelming majority of freshmen also said their instructors emphasized either “quite a bit” or “very much” that students cite their sources when writing a paper (90%), and encouraged the use of scholarly or peer-reviewed sources for writing course assignments (86%). Temple seniors had higher mean scores for 7 of the 14 items, compared to the peer group of seniors, and had scores similar to the peer group for the other 7 items. Seniors had mean scores similar to freshmen for the items related to the degree to which instructors emphasize not plagiarizing (89% said this was emphasized “quite a bit” or “very much”), citation of sources (87%) and use of scholarly or peer reviewed sources (81%).

### Reports Available by Request

Selected Comparison Groups

Engagement Indicators Report

Frequencies & Statistical Comparisons

Experiences with Information Literacy Module:

Frequencies & Statistical Comparisons

Civic Engagement Module:

Frequencies & Statistical Comparisons

High-Impact Practices Report

Respondent Characteristics