



# HIGHLIGHTS

*Published by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement*

***"I think CCSSE is the most powerful tool I have ever seen for identifying strengths and weaknesses in behaviors and practices that impact student learning."***

**John Brame, Director of Planning and Institutional Research, Surry Community College, NC**

In response to CCSSE's annual solicitation of feedback from participating colleges, the staff received valuable information about perceptions of CCSSE's current and potential value to community colleges; examples of how colleges plan to use CCSSE results; and suggestions about potential improvements in CCSSE reports. In this publication, CCSSE highlights helpful insights and suggestions from community college colleagues across the nation. Moreover, CCSSE responds to member colleges by indicating how some of their suggestions will be incorporated in CCSSE's future work.

Member colleges were asked a series of questions in the annual evaluation survey. Four of those questions are listed below, along with a variety of responses CCSSE received:

**What is your overall assessment of CCSSE's current and potential value to your institution in particular and to community colleges more generally?**

- I am optimistic that we will get a better understanding of the student experience and their needs.
- CCSSE provides a useful supplement to other data collected for the assessment of student outcomes.
- Excellent value as community colleges deal with accountability and forecasting future options and developing strategies.
- CCSSE has great potential to help our institution use data to drive decision making and build a culture of evidence — two extremely important concepts for our institution to start formalizing and building into our planning process.
- As we continue our participation with CCSSE, our college will be able to see trends (past, present, and projected future) about our students and be able to compare our college to other community colleges comparable in size to us nationwide.
- CCSSE is an excellent tool for assisting colleges in continuous improvement efforts. It is a good

companion survey to the Noel-Levitz since it concentrates on issues not covered by Noel-Levitz.

**Please describe how you plan to use, or are using, the CCSSE results at your institution.**

- We use CCSSE results for both operational and strategic planning. Each area of weakness is meticulously analyzed and assessed; action plans are constructed to correct weaknesses. CCSSE data are used extensively by our grant writer, our IR director and our leadership team to gain critical insights on our institutional effectiveness.
- Benchmark reports and comparisons to last year's results will be distributed to the campus community. Focus groups will be conducted with academic and student services divisions to develop/modify programs and services based on results and to plan implementation of change.
- A core commitment of administration, faculty, and staff will be using the CCSSE results to identify areas of improvement for a Quality Enhancement Plan required as part of the SACS [accreditation] process.
- ...[R]esults were highlighted in the Education and Student Development Newsletter distributed to all employees as a "preliminary" glance. A series of 2-4 Research Briefs are planned for a more focused look at select topics with the most relevance to the institution. These will serve as launching points for forum discussions.
- CCSSE is part of our institutional effectiveness report to the community, Board of Regents, and stakeholders. I will share our data with our College Council — the decision-making body on our campus. I will have brainstorming sessions with different stakeholders (program heads) to review strategies for addressing low areas and to look at what we must be doing right.
- Will send out a synopsis of results to employees and the student newspaper as well as provide relevant

portions as requested or at appropriate times to various internal committees and constituencies. Will also update the institutional Key Performance Indicator tied to *CCSSE* results.

- We plan to share with the college those areas in which we are most successful and also to identify the key areas where opportunities for improvement exist. We will be comparing findings from our Noel-Levitz survey this fall to the *CCSSE* for congruencies and gaps.

#### What information within the Institutional Report did you find most useful?

- The comparative data with other colleges within the consortium and also those of the same size. The questions were excellent and addressed areas of student engagement not addressed in other surveys we have participated in. The notebook was well organized and relatively easy to follow, as well as very thorough.
- The student evaluation of effectiveness of student and academic support services and the benchmark results.
- I found the means summary useful. Showing the comparison with the other consortium colleges and 2004 colleges in the same report was useful.

#### What was missing from the Institutional Report that you would have liked to see included?

- It would have helped if report had been combined into one PDF file.
- ...[T]here should be a complete PDF file to enable the institution to print additional copies.
- I would have liked to have seen an ethnicity breakdown for all of the questions at the individual college level, not just for the demographic portion of the survey.
- Nothing missing too much. However, for multi-campus institutions, disaggregation by campus location is needed.
- Overall the process and data provided are valuable. However, I can't stress enough how useful an executive summary would be — one that contains only the high-level data on institutional results and comparisons.

### CCSSE RESPONDS

*CCSSE* takes seriously the rigor of its survey sampling and administration procedures, its reporting, and colleges' use of *CCSSE* results. *CCSSE* also highly values input from its member colleges and continuously strives to serve colleges for the purpose of institutional improvement. Accordingly, *CCSSE* reviews annual feedback and, where

appropriate and feasible, incorporates suggestions into its procedures and services.

In response to feedback from 2004 member colleges regarding issues noted above, *CCSSE* will:

- Provide a PDF file of the Institutional Report on CD. This will ensure consistency between print and electronic versions as well as enable institutions to print additional copies as needed.
- *CCSSE* provides standard reports on breakouts that college members have indicated are most useful (i.e., institutional size and students' enrollment status). Beyond that, each college is able, using its own electronic data file, to disaggregate data by race/ethnicity and a number of other student-level variables. Colleges interested in benchmarking by race/ethnicity should contact *CCSSE* and inquire about options for requesting special reports.
- Include an annotated Table of Contents for the Institutional Report. This revision will provide the reader with additional context and descriptions of the various reports included in the college's binder.
- Create an "Overview" template for use by member colleges. Colleges will be able to insert their figures and tables for use in presentations with both internal and external constituents.

*CCSSE* also reminds institutions, particularly multi-campus institutions, about the opportunity to conduct oversampling. For very large institutions, it will often be appropriate to "oversample" in order to enlarge the standard sample size. Further, when a college with multiple campuses or sites wishes to look at each site individually, it is necessary to increase the sample size in order to ensure that the results are appropriately representative of the students at the site.

### CCSSE'S 2005 MEMBERSHIP DEADLINE

**November 1, 2004**

Register online now at  
<http://www.ccsse.org/join/join.cfm>.