

# CCSSE Administration: Tips for Success



## Introduction

CCSSE is a survey of community college student engagement administered in the classroom during the spring academic term.

The following is a brief overview of the CCSSE administration process. Further administration details can be found in the [CCSSE Survey Administration Timeline](#) and [CCSSE Procedure Guide](#), both of which are available on the [Survey Administration](#) page of the CCSSE website.

## Pre-Administration

The first step in a successful CCSSE administration is establishing regular, early communication about the survey with stakeholders at your institution. Key stakeholders include faculty, staff, administrators, and students. The college's designated Campus Coordinator typically heads up this communication effort. Prior to the start of survey administration, the Campus Coordinator is also responsible for responding to requests for information from the college's Center-based CCSSE Liaison and for submitting a complete Course Master Data File (CMDF) of survey-eligible courses to the Center.

## Communicating with Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Continual dialogue with faculty, staff, and administrators about the survey's purpose and value to your institution is crucial to a successful survey administration. The [CCSSE Participant News Release](#) and [CCSSE/CCFSSE Participant News Release](#) templates can be used to inform key stakeholders of the institution's CCSSE participation. News releases can be followed by the [President's Memo to Faculty](#), to be sent early in the term in which the survey will be administered.

The Center recommends using various forms of communication about the survey to reach

the widest possible audience at your college. Campus Coordinators may want to:

- Share the [CCSSE Talking Points](#) to inform faculty and staff about the survey's purpose and sampling and administration procedures.
- Provide faculty and staff with sample copies of the [survey instrument](#) so all are aware of the types of items to which students will respond.
- Show innovative ways in which other colleges have used their CCSSE results. Examples are provided in the Center's National Reports available in the [Publications](#) section of the Center website.

## Communicating with Students

Many colleges inform their students about participation in CCSSE with an e-mail message based on the [President's Memo to Students](#). Announcements regarding the survey administration can also be placed in the college newspaper and other print and online publications.

The Center encourages college administrators to work with student government and other student groups to publicize and support survey administration.

## Selecting Survey Administrators

The Campus Coordinators serve as the single point of contact between their college and the Center, and designate Survey Administrators to administer the survey to students in sampled courses. The number of Survey Administrators needed by each college varies based on enrollment size and number of campuses. The Center provides [Survey Administrator Staffing Tips](#) to assist colleges in determining how many administrators to designate.

## During Administration

During *CCSSE* administration on your campus, Survey Administrators will be responsible for communicating with faculty and conducting in-class survey administration.

The *CCSSE* administration window is open from February to April for colleges that submit well-formatted CMDFs by the date listed on the [Survey Administration Timeline](#). However, most Campus Coordinators choose a much smaller window of time for their on-campus administration.

## Working with Survey Administrators

Survey Administrators are an integral part of the administration process; the Center recommends that Campus Coordinators work with a team of administrators whenever possible.

Survey Administrators facilitate a smooth *CCSSE* administration by: scheduling and conducting in-class survey administration, adhering to the survey administration instructions, and returning completed surveys to the Campus Coordinator.

Campus Coordinators should orient Survey Administrators to their responsibilities by:

- Training them on the administration process as outlined in the [CCSSE Procedure Guide](#).
- Providing administrators with relevant documents from the Administration Materials section of the [Survey Administration](#) page.
- Ensuring administrators use the [Scheduling Letter](#) to arrange survey administration times and dates with the instructors.
- Emphasizing the importance of following the [In-Class Administration Instructions](#) and returning completed surveys to the Campus Coordinator as described in this document.

## Post-Administration

*CCSSE* results are released electronically at the end of July. The Center suggests reviewing your institution's results thoroughly and utilizing the following tips to engage internal and external audiences in discussions about the data.

## Working with Faculty, Staff, and Administrators

Several steps can be taken in working with faculty and staff to determine your institution's priorities for improving educational practices. The Center provides a number of recommendations below for initiating these discussions:

- Use the [CCSSE Faculty Predictions Exercise](#) and the [CCSSE Student Services Staff Predictions Exercise](#) to engage faculty and staff in a discussion of the findings.
- Recruit committees to explore and interpret findings. Use the [Data Narrative Exercise](#) to identify a cluster of items on the *CCSSE* instrument that relate to an existing initiative or identified concern at your college. Examples might include academic advising and planning or collaborative learning. Use results from the item cluster to inform further work in this area.
- Sponsor a discussion series or “brown bag lunches” to review results on the five *CCSSE* benchmarks of effective educational practice.
- Plan a convocation day or professional development event focused on student engagement.

## Working with Students

*CCSSE* data provide valuable information to help institutions identify strengths and areas in need of improvement. The Center encourages colleges to hold focus groups to learn more about what students are reporting in their survey responses. Survey responses illuminate the “what” of students' experiences; focus groups can uncover the “why.” In addition to gathering specific details about student experiences, these structured discussions will help you uncover possible strategies for institutional improvement. The [Focus Group Toolkit](#) provides information on planning for and conducting focus groups.

## Sharing your Story

Your college can share success stories in a number of ways, including the following:

- Present your *CCSSE* findings at national,

statewide, and local conferences.

- Showcase findings, initiatives, and program improvements on your college website.
- Educate the media about your college's successes: submit information to local newspapers, and/or provide helpful findings to your recruitment office. Utilize the [CCSSE Participant News Release](#) or [CCSSE/CCFSSE Participant News Release](#) template.

## Future Administrations

Most *CCSSE* member colleges participate on a two- or three-year administration cycle. Consistent participation allows colleges to engage in continuous improvement processes and to gauge the effectiveness of newly implemented student success initiatives based on survey results. Often, member colleges also participate in the Center's other survey projects, *CCFSSE* and *SENSE*, to bolster their findings.

### **CCFSSE**

As a companion to *CCSSE*, the [Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement](#) (*CCFSSE*) provides institutions information about how faculty members spend their time both in and out of the classroom, as well as information about faculty members' perceptions of students engagement at the college. Sharing *CCFSSE* results can be an effective method for engaging faculty members in data-driven conversations.

### **SENSE**

In addition to *CCSSE* and *CCFSSE*, member colleges also participate in the [Survey of Entering Student Engagement](#) (*SENSE*) to help understand students' critical early experiences at the college and improve institutional practices that affect student success in the first college year. Whereas *CCSSE* is conducted in the spring term, *SENSE* is conducted during the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall academic term. *SENSE* data should be useful in improving course completion rates and the rate at which students persist beyond the first term of enrollment.

## Questions?

To learn more about *CCSSE* or the Center's other surveys:

- visit the Center's *CCSSE* website at [www.ccsse.org](http://www.ccsse.org)
- write to the Center at [info@cccse.org](mailto:info@cccse.org)
- call the Center at 512-471-6807.

