

**NSSE Summary Information**  
**Spring 2016 Administration**  
Beth Hinga, Director of Assessment

### About our students

- 37% of graduating seniors were transfer students.
- 32% of graduating seniors attended a community college.
- 23% of graduating seniors attended another 4-year university. Together with community college data, this means a significant number of students have changed institutions more than once, and/or taken courses at other institutions during the summer.
- 49% of students attended another school, other than UNK. Comparison with the transfer percentage (only 37%) means that many students must have been co-enrolled at another institution and/or taken courses elsewhere during the summer.
- 52% of freshmen expected to pursue education beyond the bachelor's degree.
- 60% of seniors expected to pursue education beyond the bachelor's degree.
- 14% of seniors planned to complete a second major.
- 29% of graduating seniors are "nontraditional students." This means they are aged 24 years or above.
- 9% of graduating seniors are over age 30.
- Only 2% of freshmen are nontraditional students, aged 24 or above.
- 5% of both freshmen and graduating seniors are international students. The highest percentage of international students is from Asia (75%). The second highest percentage of international students is from Latin America and the Caribbean (13%).
- 21% of seniors and 23% of freshmen are members of a fraternity or sorority.
- 12% of freshmen and 9% of seniors are student-athletes.
- 10% of students have disabilities. Of students with disabilities, 40% of those disabilities are mental health disorders and 32% are learning disabilities. Only 15% have sensory impairments (vision or hearing) and 10% have a mobility impairment.

### NSSE Findings

#### Strengths, according to NSSE findings

- Student-faculty interactions, both at the freshman and senior levels.
  - Talked about career plans with a faculty member
  - Worked with faculty on activities other than course work (committees, student groups, etc.)
  - Discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside class.
  - Discussed academic performance with a faculty member.
- High-impact practices
  - Learning community participation
  - Service-learning
  - Research with faculty
  - Internship or field experience
  - Study abroad
  - Culminating senior experience

- Quality of interactions on campus for seniors
  - Interactions with students, academic advisors, faculty, and other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)

#### Opportunities for growth

- Time spent reading, writing, and preparing for class lags behind peer institutions, particularly for freshmen.
- Diverse perspectives and discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own.
- Effective teaching practices at the freshman level. Deficiencies are perceived in the areas of:
  - Clearly explained course goals and requirements
  - Taught course in an organized way
  - Used examples or illustrations to explain difficult points
  - Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress
  - Provided prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments
- Quality of Interactions across campus at the freshman level, in particular:
  - Academic advisors
  - Faculty
  - Student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.)
- Supportive environment at the freshman level, in particular:
  - Using learning support services (tutoring, writing center)
  - Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds
  - Helping manage non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
  - Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues
- Academic challenge in the broad areas of:
  - Higher order learning
  - Learning strategies (freshmen)
  - Quantitative reasoning

#### Observations and recommendations

Freshman students feel that teaching practices are less effective than those of their peers at other Plains public institutions. The campus may benefit from reinstating the Center for Teaching Excellence to support faculty members in developing better, more effective teaching practices.

Freshman students are also feeling less supported than their peers at other Plains public institutions. Though resources exist on campus, it is possible that they need more guidance from academic advisors, residence hall staff, and instructors to connect with the services they need. Seniors generally feel better supported, perhaps because they have been connected with the resources they need at some point, and are being advised well by their faculty advisers in their majors.

Seniors students in general feel that teaching practices are effective, and that they are academically challenged, except in the realm of quantitative reasoning. Quantitative reasoning is the only common area in which freshmen and seniors feel less challenged than their peers.

UNK is very good at high impact practices. We are well above the mean for Plains public institutions in all three categories appropriate for freshmen (learning communities, service-learning, and research with faculty). At the senior level, UNK leads Plains public institutions in three of the five categories (service-

learning, internship or field experiences, and culminating senior experiences). 50% of first year students participated in at least one high impact practice, and 20% participated in more than one. 80% of seniors participated in more than one high impact practice, and 16% only participated in one.

We lag by only 2% behind the mean in the other categories of high impact practices (research with faculty and study abroad). Better incentives for faculty for supervising research students may help boost research numbers. Major-defined programs with partner universities would be beneficial in the study abroad arena, as would partnerships with low-cost study abroad consortiums such as USAC out of the University of Nevada at Reno. Small scholarships for students who study abroad on their own, rather than through UNK sponsored programs, would encourage more students to study abroad within their majors. Additional programs in which UNK faculty take students abroad in groups could also boost these numbers. If numbers of majors support the idea, it might be helpful to design a UNK program targeted to specific majors so upperclassmen could take advantage of study abroad while continuing to progress within their majors. This might be feasible for larger majors such as Business the pre-health professions.

Comparisons with the 2013 administration of the NSSE indicate that we have improved slightly in a number of areas, including many aspects of academic challenge, in learning with peers, and in all high impact practices with the exception of research with faculty. The greatest gains have been in study abroad for first year students (increase of 11%) and culminating senior experiences for seniors (an increase of 19%).

Comparisons with the 2013 administration of the NSSE also indicate losses in a few areas, including academic challenge for seniors and the perception of a supportive environment for freshmen. The greatest magnitude of change was a loss of 5.8% in the number of assigned pages of writing for senior students.