

Summary Report

**for the 2022 Administration of the
National Survey of Student Engagement
(NSSE)**



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March 3, 2023

2022 NSSE Summary Report

In Spring 2022, Sam Houston State University (SHSU) administered the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) to a sample of first-year and senior students. The NSSE is administered at SHSU on a three-year cycle, with the Spring 2022 administration being the third administration. Survey data is used as part of SHSU's assessment of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's (THECB) core learning objectives. Additionally, the survey results provide robust information about student learning, engagement, and perceptions of campus experiences.

This report references comparisons between SHSU students and comparison groups. Comparison groups for the 2022 survey administration are described below.

- **IPEDS Group:** This group includes SHSU's 2020-2021 IPEDS comparison group institutions that participated in the 2021 or 2022 NSSE administration.
- **Texas Public Group:** This group consists of all Texas public institutions that participated in the 2021 or 2022 NSSE administration.
- **UG Research Group:** This group was created in partnership with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. The primary goal of this group was to explore how engagement at other commuter, high research active schools compared to SHSU. The group includes institutions with the following characteristics: public, 4-year, medium or large, high or very high research, full-time (FT) or medium full-time (FT= >80% enrolled; Medium FT= >60%), inclusive admissions (versus selective), high transfer-in (>20% of entering undergraduates), and primarily non-residential (<25% of undergraduates live on campus).

Response Rates and Representativeness

First-year and senior response rates were 20%, which were comparable to those of the Texas Public group response rates of 22% for both first-year and senior students. A total of 667 first-year and 1,172 senior students attending SHSU responded to the survey.

Respondent and population percentages were reviewed to determine how well the identities of survey respondents reflect SHSU's first-year and senior populations. There were no substantial differences in respondent percentage vs. population percentage for race/ethnicity, with the largest difference being two percentage points. The most sizable differences were seen in institution-reported sex, with a higher percentage of female respondents than the percentage of the female population, and conversely, a lower percentage of male respondents than the percentage of the male population. For example, 77% of first-year survey respondents were female, but only 62% of the first-year population was female.

Student Satisfaction with SHSU

The NSSE captured generally positive student perceptions of institutional quality. Approximately 82% of first-year students and 84% of senior students evaluated their entire educational experience at SHSU as being *good* or *excellent*. When asked if they would attend the same institution they are now attending if they could start over again, approximately 82% of first-year students and 81% of senior students selected *probably yes* or *definitely yes*.

In 2019, approximately 90% of first-year and 89% of senior students evaluated their experience at SHSU as being good or excellent. Further, 89% of first-year and 86% of senior students indicated they would *probably* or *definitely* go to the same institution if they could start over again. Although the percentages for 2022 were lower than those for 2019, the 2022 results were similar to those of comparison groups.

High-Impact Practices

Certain undergraduate opportunities are considered high-impact practices (HIPs) because they have positive associations with student learning and retention. NSSE asks students about their participation in six HIPs: service-learning, learning community, research with faculty, internship or field experience, study abroad, and culminating senior experience (e.g., capstone course, senior project or thesis, portfolio, recital, comprehensive exam).

NSSE founding director George Kuh recommends that institutions aspire for all undergraduate students to participate in at least two HIPs - one during the first year and one in the context of their major (NSSE, 2007). In 2022, 53% of first-year students reported participating in at least one HIP (service-learning, a learning community, or research with faculty). Overall, the percentage of first-year students participating in HIPs is equal to or greater than comparison groups. Conversely, senior students are participating in HIPs significantly less than students in the IPEDS and UG Research groups. Further, although 74% of senior students participated in at least one HIP, only 38% participated in two or more. Unlike most questions on the NSSE, the HIP questions are not limited to the current academic year, so seniors' responses include participation for prior years.

Service-Learning

Service-learning as a HIP assessed through NSSE typically refers to classroom-connected experiences. At SHSU, course-based experiences like these are referred to as Academic Community Engagement (ACE), and service-learning opportunities are also offered through co-curricular experiences. The majority of first-year and senior students reported feeling comfortable being themselves, feeling valued, and feeling part of a community while participating in service-learning experiences at SHSU.

Both first-year and senior students reported participating in service-learning at rates higher than the IPEDS comparison group. However, more than half of first-year and senior students reported a lack of awareness of service-learning opportunities, and first-year student engagement with service-learning was lower than that of seniors. Recommendations for improvement include raising overall awareness of opportunities, providing education about what the opportunities entail, providing additional assistance for students with outside obligations (family, work, etc.), and supporting faculty to integrate ACE into more first-year courses.

Learning Community

Learning communities are commonly known in higher education as two or more linked courses; however, SHSU currently does not offer these types of linked courses and instead considers specialized sections of UNIV 1101 to be learning communities. UNIV 1101 is a one-credit-hour course that allows students to explore career paths, connect to campus resources, and develop and apply self-directed learning skills. Each section of the course has an instructor and a peer

mentor. These sections are arranged by interest or college, for example, College of Education, Pre-Law, Honors College, STEM, and TRIO. Because of the difference in the meaning of *learning community* between SHSU and NSSE, where the item wording on the survey asks students if they have *participated in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more formal classes together*, results may not be fully reliable. Nonetheless, reported participation for first-year students was on par with that of comparison groups. Potential solutions for enhancement in this area include identifying courses where students would benefit from co-enrollment and expanding learning communities beyond the first year.

Research with Faculty

NSSE asks students if they have worked with a faculty member on a research project. First-year students at SHSU reported that they participated in research at rates higher than those in comparison groups. However, the percentage of first-year students who participated in research with faculty was only 7%. Seniors' reported participation was 14%, which was lower than that of comparison groups. However, 50% of first-year and 78% of senior students who conducted research with faculty rated their experience as *excellent*. Of the seniors who had completed or were in the process of completing research experiences, 92% selected that this helped them *very much* understand concepts related to their major, and 90% selected that it *very much* helped them in acquiring job/work related skills, highlighting the benefits of students working with faculty on research projects.

Results from this section of NSSE revealed possible areas for improvement. For example, not many first-year students in STEM areas (physical sciences, math, computer science, health professions) are engaging in research with faculty. Reasons first-year students reported for not participating in research included not knowing enough about research, not needing it to graduate, not feeling prepared for it, and not meeting the GPA requirements. Senior students reported engaging in research at lower rates than students in comparison groups. Reasons for not participating were similar to reasons selected by first-year students, and 25% of seniors reported they did not know it was offered at this institution.

When students participate in research, it appears they receive quality engagement, specifically as it relates to belonging. However, many students still do not know about research or opportunities to conduct research in their disciplines. It is recommended that the university community increases such opportunities, and awareness of these opportunities, which will in turn increase overall engagement in HIPs.

Internship or Field Experience

Senior students are asked to respond to questions related to internships or field experience. Only 29% of seniors responded that they participated in an internship or field experience. This is 16 percentage points less than the IPEDS comparison group, three percentage points less than the Texas Public group, and eight percentage points less than the UG Research group. The percentage of students who participated in this type of experience is similar to the percentage reported for the 2019 survey administration, indicating that COVID-19 did little to impact plans to participate. Some programs may not require students to participate in internships or field experiences. However, because these experiences can be beneficial, it is recommended that

opportunities for all students are increased. These opportunities could include micro-internships or externships, especially for students who have responsibilities outside of the classroom, such as working, caretaking, etc.

Study Abroad

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the study abroad program at SHSU was paused in 2020, and at the time of the 2022 NSSE administration, it had not yet been reinstated. Therefore, only three percent of seniors responded that they had participated in a study abroad experience. This percentage was only slightly lower than those from comparison groups.

Culminating Senior Experience

Forty percent of first-year students responded that they planned to complete a culminating senior experience, which includes capstone courses, senior projects or theses, comprehensive exams, and portfolios. However, only 20% of seniors responded that they completed an experience of this type. This percentage is less than that of all three comparison groups, and it is 18 points less than the IPEDS group. Further, 54% of seniors responded that they have not decided or do not plan to complete a culminating senior experience before they graduate from SHSU. Of those who completed this type of experience, only 60% rated it as *excellent*, which is lower than the percentage of students who rated learning communities, research with faculty, and internships as *excellent*.

Students who completed or were in the process of completing a culminating senior experience overwhelmingly claimed that this prepared them for the workforce, helped them understand concepts relevant to their courses/major, and prepared them for graduation. Because it is often required or otherwise embedded into the curriculum, the culminating senior experience is a key HIP that can be relied upon by institutions to meet HIP engagement guidelines. Therefore, it is recommended that emphasis is placed on increasing these experiences across disciplines.

Participation in HIPs by Student Social Experiences and Identities

Participation rates for different groups were examined to provide insight into how engagement varies within SHSU's population. No major discrepancies were found in the percentages of students from different races/ethnicities who participated in the various HIPs. However, senior students who identify as *American Indian or Alaska Native* and *foreign or nonresident* participated in learning communities, research with faculty, and culminating senior experiences at percentages lower than other racial/ethnic groups. Further, only 13% of *Hispanic or Latino*, 14% of *Black or African American*, and 14% of *white* senior students participated in research with faculty, compared to 24% of *Asian* senior students and 25% of senior students with *two or more races/ethnicities*.

Other notable differences for first-year students included:

- Only 9% of first-generation students (neither parent/guardian holds a bachelor's degree) participated in a learning community, compared to 13% of continuing generation.
- A larger percentage of full-time students (12%) participated in learning communities than students who were not full time (4%).
- A larger percentage of full-time students (7%) participated in research with faculty than students who were not full time (0%).

- The percentage of students in the *physical sciences, math, computer science* major category who participated in service-learning was lower than the percentage of students from any other major category. Further, no students from this major category reported participating in learning communities or research with faculty.
- Other major categories with low percentages of participation for learning communities and research with faculty include *health professions, social sciences, and business*.

Other notable differences for senior students included:

- Twenty-four percent of female students participated in a culminating senior experience, compared to only 12% of male students.
- A larger percentage of full-time students (20%) participated in learning communities than students who were not full time (10%).
- A larger percentage of full-time students (16%) participated in research with faculty than students who were not full time (8%).
- A larger percentage of full-time students (24%) participated in a culminating senior experience than students who were not full time (12%).
- Although 100% of students in the *engineering* major category reported participating in service-learning, only 8% reported participating in a learning community, and only 8% reported participating in an internship or field experience.
- There were low percentages in the *business* major category for several HIPs: learning community (8%), research with faculty (8%), internship or field experience (11%), and culminating senior experience (11%).
- The major category with the lowest percentage of participation in a culminating senior experience was *social service professions*, with only 6% participation.

Summary of High Impact Practices

Data from each of the NSSE administrations (2016, 2019, 2022) revealed that SHSU student participation in HIPs remains an area for improvement. First-year students participated in service-learning, learning communities, and research with faculty at rates higher than the IPEDS comparison group. However, senior students reported participating in all HIPs except service-learning at rates lower than comparison groups. Further, only 38% of seniors participated in two or more HIPs. Recommendations include increasing opportunities and awareness of HIPs, particularly research projects with faculty, internships or field experiences, and culminating senior experiences.

Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity

As part of the 2022 NSSE administration, SHSU students completed an *Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity* topical module. Questions within this module inquire about students' exposure to inclusive teaching practices and intercultural learning; perceptions of institutional values and commitment regarding diversity; and participation in diversity-related programming and coursework.

Areas of Strength

The perceptions of both first-year and senior students at SHSU were statistically significantly higher than students at other institutions on several questions within this module, indicating that

inclusiveness and engagement with diversity were strengths for both student populations. Items not mentioned below were not statistically significantly different than the comparison group.

First-year and senior students reported that they completed coursework which emphasized:

- Developing the skills necessary to work effectively with people from various backgrounds

Senior students also reported that they completed coursework which emphasized:

- Recognizing your own cultural norms and biases
- Sharing their own perspectives and experiences
- Exploring their own backgrounds through projects, assignments, or programs
- Learning about other cultures

Both populations noted that SHSU:

- Created an overall sense of community among students
- Took allegation of discrimination or harassment seriously
- Helped students develop the skills to confront discrimination and harassment

Additionally, both first-year and senior students noted that SHSU provided a supportive environment for the following forms of diversity:

- Racial/ethnic identity
- Economic background

Finally, first-year students noted participating in the following activities at rates statistically significantly higher than students at other institutions:

- Attending events, activities, or presentations that reflected on appreciation for diverse groups of people
- Participating in the activities of centers related to specific groups (racial-ethnic, cultural, religious, gender, LGBT, etc.)
- Participating in a diversity-related club or organization
- Participating in a demonstration for a diversity-related cause (rally, protest, etc.)

Areas for Improvement

The only item where SHSU students' average was significantly lower than the comparison group was senior responses to how often they reflected on their cultural identity during the current school year. Although the differences were not statistically significant, first-year students' responses regarding whether SHSU provides a supportive environment for the following forms of diversity were slightly lower than responses of students at other institutions: gender identity and sexual orientation. Additionally, senior students noted participating in a demonstration for a diversity-related cause (rally, protest, etc.) at lower rates. It is recommended that the campus community places a greater emphasis on student identity.

Student Engagement (Engagement Indicators)

Engagement indicators provide summaries based on sets of questions examining key dimensions of student engagement. There are 10 indicators, organized within four broad themes: *Academic*

Challenge, Learning with Peers, Experiences with Faculty, and Campus Environment.

Academic Challenge

Four engagement indicators are part of this theme: *Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies*, and *Quantitative Reasoning*. Overall, both first-year and senior students reported *very much* and *quite a bit* that coursework emphasized higher order learning, and there was no significant difference between SHSU students and students from comparison groups. Overall, SHSU students' average was higher than both the IPEDS and Texas Public comparison groups for *Reflective and Integrative Learning*, which includes self-reported behaviors such as combining ideas from different courses when completing assignments, connecting learning to societal problems or issues, and including diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments. First-year and senior students reported *often* or *very often* engaging in learning strategies, such as identifying key information from reading assignments, reviewing notes after class, and summarizing what was learned in class or from course materials at higher rates than the IPEDS group.

Within the Academic Challenge theme, the indicator showing the most need for improvement was *Quantitative Reasoning*, with first-year SHSU students responding that they reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information at significantly lower rates than the IPEDS and Texas Public comparison groups - a result consistent with NSSE data from 2019. Additionally, SHSU seniors reported reaching conclusions based on their own analysis, using numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue, and evaluating what others have concluded from numerical information at rates lower than all comparison groups. Only half of seniors reported frequently reaching conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information, and less than half of first-year students frequently used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue.

Learning with Peers

This theme includes two engagement indicators: *Collaborative Learning* and *Discussions with Diverse Others*. First-year students and seniors responded that they *often* or *very often* engaged in collaborative learning (asked another student to help them understand course material, explained course material to one or more students, prepared for exams by discussing or working through course material with other students, and worked with other students on course projects or assignments) at rates equivalent to or higher than the IPEDS and Texas Public groups. Within the area of *Discussions with Diverse Others*, first-year and senior students at SHSU reported higher rates than all comparison groups for all items, which includes *often* or *very often* having discussions with: people of a race or ethnicity other than their own, people from an economic background other than their own, people with religious beliefs other than their own, and people with political views other than their own. Overall, SHSU students appear to be excelling in this area, with 79% of first-year students and 78% of seniors reporting that they frequently had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than their own and 76% of both first-year students and seniors reporting that they frequently had discussions with people from an economic background other than their own.

Experiences with Faculty

This theme includes two engagement indicators: *Student-Faculty Interaction* and *Effective Teaching Practices*. First-year students and seniors responded that they *often* or *very often* engaged in interactions with faculty (talked about career plans, discussed their academic performance, worked on activities other than coursework, and discussed course topics outside of class) at rates higher than all three comparison groups. Effective teaching practices include clearly explaining course goals and requirements, teaching course sessions in an organized way, using examples or illustrations to explain difficult points, providing feedback on a draft or work in progress, and providing prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments. Both first-year students and seniors reported that instructors *very much* or *quite a bit* engaged in these practices at higher rates than the Texas Public group, with 78% of seniors and 73% of first-year students reporting that faculty clearly explained course goals and requirements. Although SHSU students reported that faculty *very much* or *quite a bit* provided prompt and detailed feedback (on tests or completed assignments) at rates higher than the IPEDS and Texas Public comparison groups, only 63% of SHSU seniors and 55% of first-year students responded this way.

Campus Environment

This theme includes two engagement indicators: *Quality of Interactions* and *Supportive Environment*. For the *Quality of Interactions* section, students rated their interactions (on a scale from 1 = *poor* to 7 = *excellent*) with students, academic advisors, faculty, student services staff, and other administrative staff and offices. SHSU seniors rated the quality of each of these interactions as a 6 or 7 at rates higher than all three comparison groups. However, the percentage of seniors rating faculty or staff at a 6 or 7 was only 49% for student services staff (career services, student activities, housing, etc.), 55% for academic advisors and faculty, and 51% for other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.). First-year students' ratings of interactions were similar but slightly lower, with only 50% selecting a 6 or 7 for faculty and other administrative staff and 52% selecting a 6 or 7 for student services staff. The percentage of first-year student ratings of positive interactions with academic advisors was the same as senior ratings (55%). One noticeable difference was that of senior vs. first-year student ratings of interactions with students, where 59% of senior students and only 48% of first-year students at SHSU rated those interactions a 6 or 7.

The *Supportive Environment* section asks students how much the institution emphasized:

- Providing support to help students succeed academically
- Using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)
- Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds
- Providing opportunities to be involved socially
- Providing support for your overall well-being
- Helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Attending campus activities and events (performing arts, athletic events, etc.)
- Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues

First-year students responded that the institution emphasized all of these things *very much* or *quite a bit* at rates higher than those of all three comparison groups. Although seniors also responded to most items at rates higher than the three comparison groups, senior percentages were lower than those of first-year students. For example, 72% of first-year students responded

that the institution emphasized providing support to help students succeed academically, compared to only 68% of seniors. Further, 73% of first-year students felt the institution emphasized using learning support services, whereas only 63% of seniors responded that way.

Summary of Student Engagement Results

Student engagement represents two overall features of academic quality: the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities; and how institutional resources, courses, and other learning opportunities facilitate participation in activities that matter to student learning. Compared to the IPEDS group, overall averages for both first-year and senior students at SHSU were statistically significantly higher for many engagement indicators: reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies, collaborative learning, discussions with diverse others, student-faculty interaction, quality of interactions, and supportive environment. Averages for seniors were also higher than the IPEDS group for higher-order learning and effective teaching practices, while there were no significant differences in averages for first-year students. For quantitative reasoning, there was no significant difference for seniors or first-year students at SHSU compared to the IPEDS group. Overall, SHSU students' averages were not lower than the IPEDS group for any of the engagement indicators. However, within those indicators, the results showed possible areas for improvement, such as better preparing students to reach conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information and to evaluate what others have concluded from numerical information.

Summary of Recommendations

The NSSE captured generally positive student perceptions of institutional quality. However, the percentage of students who evaluated their entire educational experience at SHSU as being *good* or *excellent* decreased from 2019 to 2022 (90% of first-year students in 2019; 82% of first-year students in 2022), so there is room for general improvement. Areas for improvement and recommendations for each major section of the survey are provided below.

High Impact Practices

Data from each of the NSSE administrations (2016, 2019, 2022) revealed that SHSU student participation in HIPs remains an area for improvement. Recommendations for HIPs are provided below:

- **Service-Learning:** Raise overall awareness of opportunities, provide education about what the opportunities entail, provide additional assistance for students with outside obligations (family, work, etc.), and support faculty to integrate ACE into more first-year courses.
- **Learning Community:** Identify courses where students would benefit from co-enrollment and expand learning communities beyond the first year.
- **Research with Faculty:** Raise awareness of research opportunities, what research entails, and the benefits of participation.
- **Internship or Field Experience:** Increase these opportunities for all students; experiences could include micro-internships or externships, especially for students who have responsibilities outside of the classroom (working, caretaking, etc.).
- **Culminating Senior Experience:** Place an emphasis on increasing these experiences across disciplines.

Inclusiveness & Engagement with Diversity

The only item where SHSU students' average was significantly lower than the comparison group was senior responses to how often they reflected on their cultural identity during the current school year. Although the differences were not statistically significant, first-year students' responses regarding whether SHSU provides a supportive environment for the following forms of diversity were slightly lower than responses of students at other institutions: gender identity and sexual orientation. It is recommended that the campus community places a greater emphasis on student identity.

Student Engagement (Engagement Indicators)

Overall, SHSU students' averages were not lower than the IPEDS group for any of the engagement indicators. However, within those indicators, the results showed possible areas for improvement.

- **Academic Challenge:** Within this theme, the indicator showing the most need for improvement was *Quantitative Reasoning*, with first-year SHSU students responding that they reached conclusions based on their own analysis of numerical information at significantly lower rates than the IPEDS and Texas Public comparison groups - a result consistent with NSSE data from 2019. SHSU should seek to identify ways to further engage first-year students in quantitative reasoning, which has remained a weakness over time, and consider targeted initiatives to address areas in need of improvement.
- **Campus Environment:** Although ratings for *Quality of Interactions* were generally higher than those for comparison groups, the percentages of students rating interactions as a 6 or 7 (on a scale from 1 = *poor* to 7 = *excellent*) could be improved. For example, the percentage of both first-year and senior student ratings of positive interactions with academic advisors was only 55%. SHSU should investigate ways to increase positive ratings of interactions with faculty and staff.

References

National Survey of Student Engagement. (2007). *Experiences that matter: Enhancing student learning and success—Annual Report 2007*. Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.