Each year the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) is used at hundreds of colleges and universities to obtain the faculty viewpoints and expectations of the student engagement in their classes. The topics explored in the survey are similar to the NSSE questions and are linked by previous research on student success in college.

Results from the FSSE can be used to identify institutional strengths as well as provide information about areas that may need some attention. The survey results are intended for productive discussions on teaching and learning, and to explore the quality of the undergraduate experience.

The following responses were provided by 115 USM faculty members, as reported on the 2009 FSSE survey.

**Academic Challenge**

To what degree is studying and spending time on academic work emphasized?
46% of faculty reported that this institution places substantial emphasis on academics in the first year.¹

Do faculty hold students to high standards?
37% of faculty reported that FY students frequently worked harder than they expected to meet faculty expectations.²

How much time do students spend on homework each week?
10% of faculty said that FY students spend more than 15 hours per week preparing for class; and 64% believe that FY students spend 10 hours or less doing homework.

What types of thinking do assignments require?
Faculty report that the institution emphasizes the following activities during a student’s first year:

- Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods: 53%
- Analyzing basic elements of an idea or theory: 70%
- Synthesizing and organizing ideas: 60%
- Making judgments about value of information: 48%
- Applying theories or concepts: 52%

How much writing is expected?
3% of faculty reported that FY students write more than 10 papers between 5 and 19 pages, 75% of faculty believe students have written less than 10 papers during the first year.

How much reading is expected during the school year?
54% of faculty reported that FY students read more than 10 assigned books and packs of course readings; and 47% feel that FY students read fewer than 5.

Do exams require students to do their best work?
25% of faculty said that exams strongly challenge FY students to do their best work.³

**Active Learning**

How often are topics from class discussed outside of the classroom?
17% of faculty said that FY students frequently discuss readings or ideas from coursework outside of class.

Do students work together on projects – inside and outside of class?
35% of faculty reported that FY students frequently work with other students on projects in class, and 32% said the students work with peers on assignments outside of class.

How often do students make class presentations?
25% of faculty reported that FY students make frequent presentations in class.

How many students participate in community-based projects in regular courses?
9% of faculty members believe that FY students participate in service-learning or community-based projects. 62% of faculty said that students never take part in such activities during the first year.

How many students apply their classroom learning to real life through internships or off-campus field experiences?
By their senior year, 66% of faculty reported that students should have participated in some form of practicum, internship, field experience, co-op, or clinical assignment.

Do students have opportunities to tutor or teach other students?
17% of faculty reported that seniors frequently assist their fellow students by tutoring or teaching them.

**Student-Faculty Interaction**

Are faculty members accessible and supportive?
68% of faculty said that they are available, helpful and sympathetic to FY students.

How many students work on research projects with faculty?
By their senior year, 56% of faculty reported that students have done research with a faculty member.

Do students receive prompt feedback on academic performance?
97% of faculty members reported that they give frequent and prompt verbal or written feedback to FY students.

Note: FY = First-Year Student  SR = Senior Student
How often do students talk with advisors or faculty members about their career plans?
51% of faculty said that they occasionally discuss career plans with seniors.4

Do students and faculty members work together on committees and projects outside of course work?
36% of faculty reported that FY students occasionally spend time with faculty members on activities other than coursework.

The FSSE survey measures the faculty members’ expectations of student engagement in educational practices that are empirically linked with high levels of learning and development.

Enriching Educational Experiences

What types of honors courses, learning communities, and other distinctive programs are offered?
42% of faculty said that students participate in a learning community during their first year. 92% of faculty reported that students have completed a senior project or taken an independent study class by the senior year.

How often do students interact with peers with different social, political, or religious views?
17% of faculty reported that FY students frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from themselves in terms of their religious, political, or personal beliefs.

How often do students interact with peers from different racial or ethnic backgrounds?
14% of faculty reported that FY students frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race.

How many students study in other countries?
By their senior year, 41% of faculty believe that students have studied abroad.

Do students develop a personal code of values and ethics?
21% of faculty perceive that students have developed a code of ethics by the end of the first-year, and 36% perceive that SR students develop it by their last year.

What percentage of students participate in community service?
By the time they are seniors, 59% of faculty members believe students have participated in community service or volunteer work.

Supportive Campus Environment

How well do students get along with other students?
65% of faculty reported that FY students are friendly and supportive to their peers.

Are students highly encouraged to attend campus events and activities?
30% of faculty reported that there is an emphasis for FY students to attend campus events (i.e. special speakers, athletic events, cultural performances, etc), yet 48% reported that SR students are encouraged to attend campus activities.

How much time do students devote to co-curricular activities?
Only 9% of faculty said that FY students spend more than 15 hours a week participating in co-curricular activities. 57% faculty said that FY students spend less than 5 hours per week devoted to co-curricular activities.

How well do students get along with administrators and staff?
35% of faculty members believe that the administrative personnel and offices are flexible, helpful, and considerate to FY students.

To what extent does the school help students deal with their academic and social needs?
42% of faculty reported that this institution has a substantial commitment to the FY student’s academic success; but 28% of the faculty said that the institution supports the social needs of the FY student.

Notes:
1. “Substantial” emphasis is defined by combining the responses to values of “Very much” and “Quite a bit.”
2. “Frequently” is defined by combining the responses to values of “Very often” and “Often.”
3. “Strongly challenge” is defined by combining response values of “6” and “7” on a one-to-seven point scale where 1 is “Very little” and 7 is “Very much.”
4. “Occasionally” is defined by combining the responses to values of “Very often,” “Often,” and “Sometimes.”

Data source: Faculty Survey of Student Engagement 2009

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