Introduction

The Office of Academic Assessment conducts several assessment projects each academic year; hence, there are numerous reports and data to be reviewed for improving the campus environment. In order to make the assessment results more useful to the university community, the findings of the student survey projects administered recently have been highlighted and summarized below. All of these reports can be accessed from the assessment website: www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/assessment-reports.

NSSE Survey, Fall 2014 Reports

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was designed to help colleges and universities assess the level of engagement of their first-year and senior students. According to the research literature on higher education, students who have high levels of engagement (in and out of the classroom) tend to have higher retention rates. There were a total of 487 USM students who responded to the NSSE 2014 Survey (i.e. 128 first-year and 359 senior students). Overall, over 70% rated their educational experience as positive and would recommend USM to others. There was a high percentage of students who reported being engaged in their academic work and having gains in their educational growth; yet small percentages of students were engaged in quantitative reasoning activities or felt they had enough real-world applications. Although, low numbers of students were engaged in high-impact activities (i.e. learning communities, research with faculty, field experiences, internships); there was an increase in students engaged in service-learning courses, compared to previous years.

Additionally, the NSSE respondents reported that they had little engagement with faculty; such as: talking with faculty about career plans, discussing course performance, and working with faculty on activities outside of class. Also, students reported that they used technology quite-a-bit to communicate with faculty, but that there was little emphasis on teaching with technology or assisting students using technology for completing course assignments.

The NSSE survey results were also broken down several ways to help the campus administrators make program improvements; including: Senior Experiences by Major, Freshmen Trends, Senior Trends, Reviewing Community Engagement Items, and a report on Student Comments and Action Steps.

Click here to view NSSE reports: www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/reports#nsse
USM Strengths Program Survey, Spring 2015 Report

The USM Strengths Program, as part of the Title 3 Grant, was an online learning activity designed to provide supportive services to USM freshmen students. Students learned to identify their academic strengths and weaknesses and could discuss with their academic advisor or other student support staff. A survey was administered to the students who participated (N=403), but only a total of 46 students responded to the survey. Overall, over half of the students reported having discussions about their strengths with their peers or classmates, and that the knowledge about their strengths was mostly helpful for their own self-awareness.

Link to report:  www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/reports#Adm

USM Student Advising Survey, Summer 2015 Report

An online Advising Survey was administered to all continuing students in the summer 2015 to obtain their perceptions about their advising experiences on campus. There were 518 students who completed the survey (mostly juniors and seniors). Overall, 84% of the students feel that advising is an important part of their experience at USM, and many students reported having positive interactions with their advisor. However, nearly 50% of the students reported having academic challenges in which advisors were ill-prepared to deal with and could not provide options or solutions. In order to make adequate improvements in the Advising area, the survey responses were broken down by those who had a professional advisor and those who had a faculty advisor. The survey results are currently being reviewed.

Link to report:  www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/reports#Adm

USM Graduating Senior Survey, Summer 2015 Report

All seniors graduating from their undergraduate program were asked to complete the Graduating Senior Survey in the later part of the spring 2015 semester. There were 326 seniors who completed the online survey (44% response rate). The survey consists of items asking them their perceptions of their undergraduate experience, their expected employment plans, and if they were planning to attend graduate school. Overall, 63% of the seniors rated their experience as good or excellent, and 81% reported having a positive experience in their major (somewhat to very satisfied). However, less than 50% were very satisfied with things like their career preparation and guidance, access to courses in their major, and the advising in their department. Many students reported having a capstone experience, but a much small percentage had an internship experience. A little over half (59%) reported they would be looking for a job in their field, and 20% said they were planning to attend graduate school in the upcoming fall semester.

Link to report:  www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/reports#GSS
USM Alumni Survey, Summer 2015 Report

The students who graduated in 2013 or 2014 from an undergraduate program at USM were asked to complete the online Alumni Survey during the summer 2015. There were only 281 responses (12% response rate); however, the results can still provide valuable information for USM’s improvement efforts. To summarize the findings, 74% of the respondents rated their entire educational experience as good or excellent; however, many alums reported that were dissatisfied with some aspects of their undergraduate major (especially the quality of teaching and faculty accessibility). Regarding employment, 67% were working in Maine, 66% had full-time jobs, and 56% said their current job is related to their major. Approximately one-third of the students were currently pursuing another degree.

Link to report:  www.usm.maine.edu/assessment/reports#alumsur

USM Student Preference Survey, Fall 2015 Report

*Results not available yet, survey will be administered in Fall 2015.

*Please note: If you have questions about any of the reports listed above, please contact Susan King, Director of Academic Assessment, USM, 207-780-4681, susank@maine.edu.