

**Commit to Living as an Engaged and Informed Citizen
Assessment Summary Report
2002-2003**

Assessment Method I – NSSE

The NSSE and Scoring

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) collects information from undergraduate students at four-year colleges and universities to assess the extent that these students from across the country engage in various educational practices. The NSSE 2002 sample was comprised of 206,844 first-year and senior students who were randomly selected from electronic data files provided by 366 participating four-year colleges and universities.

Mean scores are reported for each variable (item) of the NSSE. The mean is the arithmetic average of all responses on a particular item. Means are provided for Mercer, for the Mercer Carnegie 2000 Classification group, and for the NSSE 2002 national sample

More detailed information about the NSSE can be found on the NSSE web site:

<http://www.iub.edu/~nsse/>

Sample

The following table outlines some demographic information on the Mercer sample and offers comparisons with other Master's level institutions and with the NSSE 2002 sample.

Respondent Characteristics NSSE 2002			
	Mercer U	Master's	NSSE 2002
<u>Overall Response Rate</u>	47%	39%	41%
<u>Sampling</u>			
Number of Respondents	198	32,498	80,497
NSSE Sample Size	450	85,068	206,844
Total FY and Senior Population	1158	340,738	917,756
<u>Student Characteristics</u>			
Mode of Completion – Paper	64%	68%	55%
– Web	36%	32%	45%
Gender – Male	40%	31%	34%
– Female	60%	69%	66%
Race/Ethnicity – African American	14%	7%	6%
– Asian Amer./Pacific Islander	3%	6%	6%
– Caucasian/White	76%	71%	75%
– Hispanic	2%	10%	7%
– International	6%	1%	1%
<u>Class Level</u>			
First-year	47%	47%	49%
Senior	53%	53%	51%
<u>Enrollment Status</u>			
Full-time	95%	84%	88%
Part-time	5%	16%	12%
<u>Place of Residence</u>			
On-campus	50%	33%	44%
Off-campus	50%	67%	56%

Results

Mercer freshmen and seniors were expected to score at least .50 on each of the dimensions of (a) community service or volunteer work, (b) practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment, and (c) study abroad. On the dimension of “voting in local, state, or national elections” Mercer freshmen and seniors were expected to score at least 1.50. Mercer students were also expected to score higher than students at other Master’s level institutions and higher than the national NSSE 2002 group.

The student response rate on the NSSE was 47% with a total 198 students completing the measure (450 Mercer students were contacted to participate). Forty-seven percent (47%) of the Mercer sample of students were freshmen and 53% were seniors. The demographic features of

those responding were representative of the Mercer student population with:

- < 40% males and 60% females
- < 76% Caucasian/White students, 14% African-American/Black, 6% International

Although the 50-50 split for on-campus and off-campus living does not reflect the percentages for the total student population, it is reflective of the fact that most freshmen live on campus, but most seniors do not.

The following table contains the mean scores of Mercer students, students at other Master’s level institutions, and the national NSSE 2002 group on 4 dimensions. Students are asked – “Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate from your institution?” Means are the proportion of students responding “Yes.”

Item	Mercer	Master’s Level	NSSE 2002
Community service or volunteer work			
Freshmen	.93	.87*	.89
Seniors	.76	.66*	.69
Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment			
Freshmen	.95	.93	.94
Seniors	.65	.76*	.76*
Study Abroad			
Freshmen	.54	.49	.56
Seniors	.26	.15*	.20

* p<.05

Students were asked to indicate on a four-point Likert scale the extent to which they participated in voting in local, state, or national elections. The scores of the Mercer freshmen and seniors were compared with freshmen and seniors at Master’s level institutions and the NSSE 2002 group. The results appear below:

Voting in local, state, or national elections			
Class	Mercer	Master’s Level	NSSE 2002
Freshmen	1.66	1.58	1.54
Seniors	1.80	1.78	1.76

Conclusions

The expectations were not fully met. The results indicate that Mercer students scored at least a .50 on each of the dimensions of community service and practicum. However for Study Abroad the seniors scored below this figure (.26). This figure may be a reflection of the national events that have thwarted growth in this area at most institutions. Mercer students did not consistently outpace the Master's level and NSSE groups. Mercer seniors fell short on practicum, etc. and Mercer freshmen fell short on Study Abroad. Mercer freshmen and seniors scored higher than the students at other Master's level institutions and the NSSE 2002 group only on

- community service or volunteer work
- voting in local, state, or national elections.

The expectation regarding “voting in local, state, or national elections” was met.

Assessment Method II – Alumni Survey 2002-2003

Alumni Survey 2002-2003 and Scoring

The Alumni Survey 2002-2003 is a local measure designed to assess alumni perceptions of Mercer’s contribution to their personal growth/development in both academic and personal areas.

Sample

Mercer alumni who graduated in 2001 (one year out) and 1997 (five years out) were administered the survey. Surveys were mailed to approximately 1800 alumni.

A total of 118 Alumni Surveys were completed. A higher percentage of women completed the surveys than men (35% males, 65% females). Eighty-five percent (85%) of the respondents earned an undergraduate degree at Mercer. With regard to race and ethnicity 82.4% of the surveys came from Caucasians/Whites and 12.6% came from African-Americans/Blacks. The return rate by College/School indicates the following:

- College of Liberal Arts 40.3%
- School of Business & Economics 23.5%
- College of Education/CCPS 27.7%
- School of Engineering 8.4%
- College of Nursing 0.0%

The various campuses were represented as follows:

- Macon 68.9%
- Atlanta 1.6%
- Covington 6.6%
- Douglas 13.1%
- Eastman 1.6%
- Griffin 8.2%

Results

On this measure 70% of the Mercer alumni were expected to indicate that their educational experience at Mercer “very much” or “somewhat” contributed to their personal growth in (a) the development of a commitment to community service, (b) relating well to people of different races and religions, and (c) pursuing a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation. In actuality, 71.3% indicated that their educational experience at Mercer “very much” or “somewhat” contributed to their personal growth in the development of a commitment to community service. As many as 88.1% indicated that their educational experience at Mercer contributed to their personal growth in relating well to people of different races and religions while 79.5% indicated that Mercer contributed to their pursuing a socially useful and self-fulfilling vocation.

Conclusions

The expectations were met according to the results of the Alumni Survey 2002-2003. However the number of completed surveys was low. The likelihood of getting a bigger sample size must be considered.

Recommendations/Use of Results

This assessment will be made more robust as the following are considered:

- Use at least one measure that captures the entire undergraduate student population
- Determine a method of behavioral demonstration that reflects this outcome

Following the assessment of students’ commitment to living as an engaged and informed citizen in 2002-2003 the following has occurred:

- The goals and standards of the First-Year Seminar were re-evaluated
- An FYS focus will be on the exploration of ways to be active citizens.