

NSSE HIPS: EXPECTATIONS VERSUS REALIZATIONS

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The NSSE data is used to examine the expectation versus realization of HIPs in the college experience. The expectations of HIPs as it pertains to adult, and online students are examined to see if the expectations of the NSSE HIPS that first-year students have are aligned with the realization of HIPs seniors have experienced. Methods on how to promote the HIPs to first-year students will be discussed, as higher expectations may tend to drive the realizations of HIPs in higher education. An increase in HIPs is known to increase engagement and graduation rates, as well as enhance the college experience.

The inclusion of High Impact Practices (HIPs) has been found to increase student engagement, increase their persistence and satisfaction with college and through reflection the student comes away with a deeper learning experience (Watson et al., 2016). The first-year students may not have heard about or know what to expect regarding HIPs within their college experience. However, by the time they are seniors they know what HIPs they have experienced. This paper looks at the expectations of first-year students, in regard to HIP practices that are included in the National Survey of Student Engagement, NSSE, and compares the expectations to the realizations of senior students to see if the expectations are aligned with the realizations.

Lanning and Brown (2019) noted that increased student engagement can increase stu-

dent retention rates. They are focused on undergraduate research efforts that were found to increase student engagement. Undergraduate research is also one of the NSSE HIPs focused on in this study. The undergraduate research may also factor into the student- faculty interaction which is one of the NSSE HIPs with a lower engagement rate for first-year and senior students.

In this study, the data from the NSSE Report Builder-Public 2017 & 2018 is used to further compare the expectations and realizations of adult students and traditional students and on ground and online students. This is done to see if increasing expectations may drive realizations in regards to the use of HIPs within the college experience. Increasing the students' expectation of HIPs may allow for higher education institutions to obtain engaged students

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that achieve deeper learning and increased overall level of college satisfaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expectations of HIPs

When students enter college, they are excited and motivated to get through their college courses. At this point, some students may have been exposed to High-Impact Practices (HIPs) from high school while others have not even heard of the term. Universities across the nation have taken several steps to incorporate HIPs to inspire higher student engagement and retention rates (Conefrey, 2021). Those HIPs as defined by Kuh (2008), are first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, ePortfolios, service learning, community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. Students are willing to participate in HIPs as they enter college, but some studies have shown that as they matriculate through college, they do not get to experience many HIPs. For example, during their first year of college students were planning to engage in HIPs, but it was the students that also joined in a Residential Learning Communities (RLC) who truly participated and completed more HIPs by the time they graduated (Wolaver & Finley, 2020). Overall, students benefit and enjoy courses that include HIPs. In a study completed by Hansen and Schmidt (2017), they found that by exposing students to multiple HIPs and offering a summer bridge program, created a “synergistic” outcome on academic achievement (p.76).

RESULTS

Table 1 displays the NSSE 2017 & 2018 data for first-year and senior respondents. When

looking at the first-year respondents, the traditional students make up 95% and the adult students account for only 5%, where adult students are defined as students 24 and older. Taking a further look at the differences in the on Campus and Online students, it shows that there is an extreme difference in the Adult students, whereas the traditional students were only 1.3% online and the adult first-year students were 52% online. In the NSSE survey, respondents are designated as online only if they take all of their courses online, which is the strictest definition of online. For the Senior students 35.3% of the students were Adults 24 and older and 29% of the adults take all online courses. However, of the traditional Senior students only 2.5% took all of their courses online.

When looking at the HIPs that are designated in the NSSE 2017 & 2018 survey, it is shown how the first-year students’ expectations differ from the senior students’ realization. The percentages in Table 2 are based on the students who have responded that they “Plan to do” or have “Done or in progress” for each of the HIPs examined in the NSSE survey. The expectations are captured by the first-year students who have done or plan to do each of the HIPs examined. The realizations are captured by the Senior students who have done or still plan to do the particular HIPs throughout the remainder of their college experience. The results from Table 2 are discussed further by each of the NSSE HIPs.

Participate in an Internship, Co-Op, Field Experience, Student Teaching, or Clinical Placement

The expectations of the first-year students are very high at 83.9 for all students. However, the adult first-year students have much lower expectations at 60%. So, the overall expectations of the first-year students has been driven up by the traditional first-year student population, which was shown in Table 1 as 95% of the first-year respondents. Looking at the realizations that are shown by the Senior respondents,

it shows that while the adult students' expectation was very close to their realizations, being 60% and 62.3%, respectively. The comparison of the first-year all respondents show that the expectations were higher than their realizations, at 83.9% and 75.3%, respectively. This can be somewhat explained by the percentage of adult students in the Seniors surveyed.

Hold a Formal Leadership Role in a Student Organization or Group

When the first-year students were asked if they expected to hold a leadership role in a student organization approximately half, 51.4%, expected to do so. When further analyzing the responses, only 25.2% of the adult first-year students population expected to engage in this HIP, and the expectations of the first-year students were aligned with the realizations of the senior students.

Participate in a Learning Community or Some Other Formal Program

The adult students did not expect to participate in a learning program or formal program where students take two or more classes together, with only 28.3% responding that they plan to do or have done in their first year. The realization of the engagement in this HIP was not far from the adult respondents, at 27.6%, but for the traditional students the expectations were 41.5% and realizations were 37.2%. The realizations did fall slightly short of the expectations for both the adult and traditional student groups.

Participate in a Study Abroad Program

As for participating in a study abroad program, the first-year expectations for the traditional student was 48.8% and for the adult student expectation was 18.9%. The realizations for both the adult and traditional students were lower at 12.7% and 28.7%, respectively. The largest difference in expectations versus reali-

zations seen in the examination of this HIP was that of the traditional students who had expected to participate in a study abroad program but did not realize the participation in the study abroad opportunity in their college career. The adults with many responsibilities other than school did not expect to be able to participate in the study abroad program and for the adults the realization was unexpectedly higher than the expectation.

Work With a Faculty Member on a Research Project

In regards to working with a faculty member on a research project. 40.1% of the traditional first-year students expected to do so, as compared to 26% for the adult first-year students. From the data from the senior adult and traditional students it is clear that the expectations were aligned to the realizations for working with faculty on research. The adult student's expectations and realizations are again lower on this HIP, likely due to the amount of time that they are able or willing to commit to engaging in the HIP given that they have other obligations and priorities.

Completing a Culminating Senior Experience

The first-year student expectations for planning to do a culminating senior experience, which includes a capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc., were lower than the realization for this HIP. For the adult students the expectation was 45.8% plan to do, and the adult senior students' realization was 65.4%, the traditional student expectation was 59.2% and the traditional student realization was 74.3%. The reason that these expectations are not aligned with the realization is likely because the students have not heard of some of these culminating experiences during the first year. As the ePortfolio has been added to the list of HIPs that students can engage in, students are going to be advised

in first-year orientation to save artifacts that were completed in their coursework to add to their eportfolio which will build throughout the student's college experience. Letting students know about these culminating senior experiences during their first-year orientation may help to align the expectations with their realizations.

Service-Learning

Just as the culminating senior experience the students' expectations as to engaging in service-learning were not aligned with their realizations. For the adult students, 40% expect to engage in community-based projects or service-learning; however, 68% of the senior adult respondents indicated that they engaged in service-learning. Also, for the traditional respondents, 53% expected to be engaged in service-learning and the seniors surveyed indicated that 65% did or plan to engage in service-learning.

In general, the adult respondents have lower expectations of engaging in the HIPs for all HIPs in the NSSE survey. The expectation and the realization for the adult students were aligned except for the completion of a culminating senior experience and experiencing a community-based project, otherwise referred to as service-learning.

When looking at the results on Table 3, it shows that for all but two of the NSSE HIPs the expectations are higher than the realizations from comparison between the "First Year All" and the "Seniors All". When looking at this grouping, the only two HIPs for which the expectations are greater than the realizations are completing a culminating senior experience and service learning. In order to raise the students' expectations for these two HIPs, the culminating senior experience and service learning, they can be promoted in webpage program descriptions and in first-year orientation courses. It may be considered more important for first-year expectations to live up to the realizations that come from the seniors surveyed. There could be information about the

HIPs expected by the first-year students and then see how those HIPs falling short in the realization of the programs could be incorporated into the degree programs. It is therefore important to learn what the expectations are for first-year students and use them to target these HIPs for program growth. As in finance, it is the expectations that drive the market. It is when the expectations that are known lead people to take action that the expectations are realized. If we see the expectations and act in a way to add more of the HIPs throughout the program, then the students will be able to realize and experience the HIPs that they expected in their curriculum.

It is important to point out the study abroad experience is a HIP that has a low expectation but an even lower realization. Finding a way for institutions to fund some portion of the sometimes life changing study abroad experience can help to make the expectations become realizations for the students.

In financial markets, expectations drive the market. As something happens, that information feeds into the market expectations and those expectations cause people to act on the information and drive the market to equilibrium, where expectations are equal to realization. When the HIPs are expected by students, these expectations tend to drive the higher education institutions to offer opportunities for these expectations to be realized, especially given that engagement in HIPs tends to increase students success measures such as retention and graduation rates.

All students do not come in with the same expectations for the HIPs in their college education. Shown in the first four data columns in Table 4 is the comparison of expectations and realizations for all students surveyed. The differences in the expectation and the realization for HIPs for on-campus students and all online students shows that online students come in as freshman with lower expectations to become involved in the HIPs and their realization of becoming involved in the HIPs is even lower, except for the culminating senior experience and service-learning. This makes sense because the

students that are taking all online courses may be doing so because of work, children, or other responsibilities that they have, leaving less time and less motivation to become engaged in the HIPs while earning their college education.

When further breaking down the data to examine the adult students 24 and older and the traditional students younger than 24, we can see that the adult expectations are lower whether on campus or online and the realization of having participated in the HIPs is more aligned with the expectations for these students, that is except for the culminating senior experience and service learning.

For the traditional students under 24 years old, there is a difference in expectations and realizations when looking at the on-campus and online. The traditional students that are all on-line students had lower expectations of participating in HIPs than those that are on-campus students, this is true except for service-learning. The traditional students' realization is higher for on-campus than it is for the online only students. Again, except for the small difference for the service-learning HIP, where traditional on-campus is 65% and traditional online is 66%.

CONCLUSIONS

From this analysis, some suggestions regarding the HIPs offered by four-year higher education institutions could help the expectations of engagement in the HIPs be closer in line with the realization. For the culminating senior experience and service learning, institutions may want to advertise these HIPs in their recruitment brochures and orientation courses so that the freshmen would know that these HIPs are expected to be part of their college experience. This would drive the expectations to be more aligned with the realizations for all students. Also, given that the adult students and the online students tend to have less expectations to be involved with the HIPs, more

HIPs geared toward the non-traditional adult students would make them more engaged in the HIPs offered by the institution. This group of adult students and online students may not have the time and or inclination to participate in the HIPs. Making some study abroad opportunities that are shorter and lower in cost may allow both adult or traditional students more able to participate in them. This would allow the expectations be more in line with the realizations for the study abroad. When the expectation is a great deal more than the realization such as the study abroad HIP, this shows an interest but the students may not follow through because some other barrier, in this case it may be a combination of time and cost.

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APPENDIX

TABLE 1

Percentages of First-Year and Senior NSSE 2018 & 2019 Respondents

All First Year					
All		Adults		Traditional	
On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
96.1%	3.9%	48.0%	52.0%	98.7%	1.3%
All Senior					
All		Adults		Traditional	
On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
88.2%	11.8%	71.00%	29.0%	97.5%	2.5%

Note: Adult students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

TABLE 2

High-Impact Practices: First-Year Expectation Versus Senior-Year Realization (All Learners)

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?	Expectation			Realization		
	1st Year All	1st Year Adult	1st Year Traditional	Seniors All	Seniors Adult	Seniors Traditional
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	83.9%	60.0%	85.2%	75.3%	62.3%	82.4%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	51.4%	25.2%	52.8%	46.0%	26.2%	56.7%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	40.9%	28.3%	41.5%	33.8%	27.6%	37.2%
Participate in a study abroad program	47.3%	18.9%	48.8%	23.0%	12.7%	28.7%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	39.4%	26.0%	40.1%	35.9%	27.4%	40.5%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	58.5%	45.8%	59.2%	71.2%	65.4%	74.3%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	53.0%	40.0%	53.0%	63.0%	68.0%	65.0%

Note: Adult students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

TABLE 3

High-Impact Practices: First-Year Expectation Versus Senior-Year Realization (Online Learners)

Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?	Expectation			Realization		
	1st Year All	1st Year Adult	1st Year Traditional	Seniors All	Seniors Adult	Seniors Traditional
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	58.4%	53.2%	69.3%	48.9%	44.9%	74.2%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	29.2%	22.1%	43.0%	20.6%	17.3%	41.3%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	30.1%	23.9%	41.1%	21.1%	18.9%	34.7%
Participate in a study abroad program	23.2%	13.5%	41.6%	9.2%	7.2%	21.5%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	26.1%	19.7%	37.6%	17.0%	15.2%	28.5%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	46.5%	43.3%	52.7%	61.0%	60.6%	64.0%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	43.0%	35.0%	59.0%	54.0%	53.0%	66.0%

Note: Adult students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.

TABLE 4
High-Impact Practices: Expectation and Realization (On-Campus Versus Online)

	Freshmen All Expectation		Senior All Realization		Freshmen Adult Expectation		Senior Adult Realization		Freshmen Traditional Expectation		Senior Traditional Realization	
	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online	On-Campus	Online
Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate?												
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement	85%	58%	79%	49%	67%	53%	69%	45%	85%	69%	83%	74%
Hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group	52%	29%	49%	21%	28%	22%	30%	17%	53%	43%	57%	41%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	41%	30%	35%	21%	33%	24%	31%	19%	42%	41%	37%	35%
Participate in a study abroad program	48%	23%	25%	9%	25%	14%	15%	7%	49%	42%	29%	22%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	40%	26%	38%	17%	33%	20%	32%	15%	40%	38%	41%	29%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)	59%	46%	73%	61%	49%	43%	67%	61%	59%	53%	75%	64%
About how many of your courses at this institution have included a community-based project (service-learning)?	53%	43%	64%	54%	46%	35%	61%	53%	53%	59%	65%	66%

Note: Adults students are 24 years old and older; traditional students are under the age of 24; and students are classified online only if they take all online courses.