NATIONAL SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (NSSE)

This spring, Kutztown University will be participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement or NSSE for the third time. Every two years, a sample of First-year students and a sample of Senior-year students are invited to respond to a survey that asks about their experiences as a student. In part, this article seeks to inform the campus community about the upcoming survey, and asks faculty and staff to encourage these students to complete the survey.

With the NSSE, students report on their experiences in and out of class, and provide their perceptions of the nature and quality of their education. To give the reader a flavor of the survey, several categories of items are described, along with some sample items. A complete list of the items from the 2009 and 2011 surveys, along with KU students’ responses, can be found at: http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/ir/nsse.html.

One category of items asks about their academic and intellectual experiences, and the frequency with which they made class presentations, followed a revision process in writing papers, worked with peers on class projects, and communicated with instructors. Another category of items asks about the extent to which students write papers of various lengths, or work problem sets. A third set asks whether students have engaged in or plan to engage in experiences that qualify as High Impact Practices. Lastly, there are items that inquire about students’ perceptions of the educational environment, and include their relationships with students, faculty and administration, quality of advising, campus climate, and their overall satisfaction.

Along with the individual items, NSSE calculates institutional scores on five clusters of items. There are: Level of Academic Challenge (e.g., number of written papers 20 or more pages, spending significant time studying or doing academic work); Active and Collaborative Learning (e.g., working
with other students on class projects, contributing to class discussions); Student – Faculty Interactions (e.g., talked with faculty outside of class, worked with faculty outside of a course); Enriching Educational Experiences (e.g., participating in the high impact practices); and Supportive Campus Environment (e.g., the quality of relationships).

Given that NSSE is a survey, it serves as an indirect assessment measure rather than a direct assessment of performance (e.g., actual papers written or time spent studying). Nonetheless, it does provide useful information about how students think about their educational experiences, and in some cases, provides measurements that would otherwise be unavailable (e.g., monitoring students’ studying). Moreover, the surveys provide several comparisons that may be useful, beginning with a comparison of the perceptions and reports of KU first-year students and KU senior-year students. In addition, institutions receive comparisons of their students’ responses and those from selected peer groups. In our case, comparisons include the other PASSHE institutions who participated in the same survey and institutions nationally who have comparable retention and graduation rates.

As reported earlier, our students’ responses to the 2009 and 2011 NSSEs are available on the Institutional Research website: http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/ir/nsse.html. These reports provide first-year and senior-year students’ responses in the aggregate; however, it is possible to also look at responses by college.

Lastly, please encourage the first-year and senior-year students you encounter to complete the NSSE – and let them know that six students will win a new iPad mini through their participation.

College Assessment Committee News

**College of Business**
Currently, the Department of Business Administration is "closing the loop" on assessments conducted in the past few years by implementing curricular changes. Major changes included adding required courses in business strategy, operations management, and international business. In spring of 2010 and again in fall of 2012, our seniors participated in the ETS’s Major Field Test in Business, and each discipline area within business is now analyzing our students' achievements in each area of business over time and by major (accounting, finance, management, and marketing). We hope to see that the new requirements have significantly affected our students’ learning. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we also expect that each discipline will produce at least one idea for improving our students' performance in its area. All ideas will be discussed faculty-wide, and some will be chosen for implementation in fall of 2013... to be assessed again in spring 2014.

**College of Education**
Kutztown University’s College of Education (KU COE) recognizes a responsibility to produce educators who can work effectively with a broad range of stakeholders to lead the drive for excellence, equity, and opportunity for all students in Pennsylvania in the 21st century. The central role of collaboration in the preparation of educators and our high expectations for their role in leading educational excellence is grounded in our Conceptual Framework, Teacher as a Lifelong Learner. Elements of the framework, which are the proficiencies required of teacher candidates, are categorized under three Domains:

- **Knowledge domain** includes effective communication skills and the critical thinking skills of moving from asking appropriate questions to sorting through
relevant information to arriving at reliable and trustworthy conclusions.

- **Skills domain** includes such interpersonal skills as **capacity for empathy** and ability to provide a positive, caring atmosphere for learning, ability to **integrate the discipline** with a larger context, ability to use **technology** to engage students, and adopting a proactive **organizational and managerial style** that involves interventions and strategies designed to include positive expectations, self-evaluation, and growth.

- **Dispositions domain** includes professional values, beliefs, and attitudes such as the tendency to adopt a **scholarly inquiry stance** and use action within their academic disciplines, a tendency to use **reflection to gain** a deeper understanding of their own teaching style and effectiveness as a teacher, and **cultural awareness** that enables the candidate to work with an ever-changing diverse student population and have the perception to see diversity in people as a strength rather than a deficit.

The Conceptual Framework, then, guides the educational experiences that the college’s programs provide to students and represent the learning goals that we assess in determining the effectiveness of our work with students. The graphic presented here is our visual representation of the Conceptual Framework; for additional information about the framework, refer to [http://www2.kutztown.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/education/teacher-as-a-lifelong-learner.htm](http://www2.kutztown.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/education/teacher-as-a-lifelong-learner.htm).

**College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

Engagement in a community affects student retention and progress towards graduation. In the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences there are myriad ways in which we work to build a sense of community as well as encouraging student engagement within those communities. From living community options to in-class exercises designed to foster group participation and communication, KU students come together in interactive and inclusive ways. Clubs and honor societies are supplemented by preceptorships and student-to-student mentoring programs that assist in building ties between upper and lower classmen. Currently, students self-select to participate in many of these opportunities. The college’s Assessment Committee has begun sharing innovative practices amongst departments in order to increase the availability of these experiences as well as student participation. Discussion centers on scalability and the creation of community, both in physical and virtual space, which can encourage increased engagement, resulting in a more rewarding academic experience for all members of the College.

**College of Visual & Performing Arts**

Kutztown University’s Communication Design (KUCD) program produces some of the finest
designers in the field. We like to think it is because we treat our students like real designers from the start and expect professionalism throughout their experience at KU. The capstone of that experience is our internship program, and requires the use of many skills learned throughout the program. Moreover, feedback from the student and site placement is instrumental to assessing the strength of the CD program as it prepares students for careers in design. At its best, a KUCD internship is beneficial to both the intern and the design firm. There, students interact with real-world designers and put everything they have learned into practice. They begin to understand the challenges that come in a real design studio whose purpose is not only to make effective and beautiful design, but also to prosper as a business. They learn the thrill of holding their first printed piece in their hands, or seeing their first website up and running. It is so much more than a bullet point for their resume; it’s their first big toe in the real world. Design studios that use KUCD interns get eager, young creative designers who have real skills, both digital and traditional, and ideas that are fresh, new and inventive. Their point of view brings a new perspective, and they know the trends because they are the trendsetters. That’s why companies like Crayola, Red Tetteiner, Partners Design, Neo Pangea, and William Fox Munroe among many others, have made a permanent place on their staff for KUCD interns.

General Education and Assessment Update: Goal Two

The General Education Assessment Committee is currently receiving data that will be used to assess student performance related to Goal Two of the Kutztown University General Education Program. According to Kutztown University’s model of General Education:

Goal Two: To develop an understanding of human cultures and the physical and natural world that is focused by engagement with big questions, both contemporary and enduring, and consists of the domains of Sciences, Mathematics, Social Sciences, Humanities, Histories, Languages, and Arts.

Instructors from English, Geology, History, Music, Psychology, and Social Work, to name but a few, are contributing assessments of assignments that speak to one of the domains in Goal 2. In conducting the assessments, instructors are utilizing the reporting templates developed by the General Education Assessment Committee in consultation with appropriate academic programs, which are designed to reflect levels of learning with respect to the domain. The reporting templates can be found at http://www.kutztown.edu/gened/GEAC.html#templates.

Looking ahead to next year, GEAC will be assessing student performance related to Goal Three:

To inculcate a sense of personal and social responsibility that is anchored through active involvement with diverse communities and real world challenges.

This goal will be particularly challenging to assess and it will be difficult to target particular courses
that address the domains without significant input from faculty. Goal 3 addresses local and global civic knowledge and engagement, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and personal qualities and attitudes such as passion, curiosity, self-confidence, imagination, cooperation, commitment, and support for lifelong learning. To help identify which courses support student fulfillment of this goal, GEAC will be working with departments to create a curriculum map this semester, and has begun to investigate the ways in which KU’s co-curriculum helps students to fulfill this goal.

Assessment Spotlight: January 2013 General Education & Assessment Workshop

On January 24, 2013, over 70 members of the KU community gathered for the annual January workshop on General Education and Assessment, and this year’s focus was on the connections between the curriculum (or inside the classroom experiences) and co-curriculum (or outside the classroom experiences). The event featured a presentation by Dr. Nancy Mitchell, Professor of Advertising and Director of General Education and Undergraduate Studies at the University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Dr. Mitchell’s presentation described three ways the curriculum and co-curriculum can be connected, using examples from her institution. Her power point presentation can be found at: http://www2.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/office-of-assessment/symposia.htm, and an electronic folder of additional materials can be accessed with the following link: https://docs.google.com/folder/d/0B2gc5cYeEJoUzJrM1BMdFU/edit or the QR code below.

One highlight of the workshop was a series of “speed learning” opportunities where workshop attendees could learn more about current curricular – co-curricular connections at Kutztown University. These conversations were designed to help participants to explore potential connections involving their own work with students, and one long-term goal of the session is to increase these kinds of experiences for KU students. The list of speed learning opportunities is provided below, along with the presenters and a short description of the nature of each connection. For additional information, please contact the appropriate KU faculty or staff member.

**SPEED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

Art Bus to NYC – Dr. Michelle Kiec (College of Visual & Performing Arts): The Art Bus, sponsored by the College of Visual and Performing Arts Dean’s Office, affords all KU students, faculty, and staff an opportunity for a day trip to New York City at an affordable price. For $20, participants receive round-trip bus transportation directly from the KU campus to New York City. The bus drops off and picks up participants both in Chelsea and next to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Participants spend the day in the city, visiting museums and galleries, hearing performances, attending lectures and exhibits, and shopping. This co-curricular activity allows students to interact with the vibrancy of NYC, engage outside of the classroom with their professors, and experience the real world through their chosen activities.
Cultural programs in the library – Mr. Bruce Jensen (Rohrbach Library): The Rohrbach Library offers multiple opportunities to connect inside-the-classroom experiences with those outside-the-classroom, and particularly experiences that are related to learning more about American or foreign cultures. This academic year, for example, there have been events associated with the Chinese New Year celebration, Black History Month, and the African American Baseball experience.

Diversity – Dr. Claire Van Ens (Communication Studies), Ms. Grace Hill, Ms. Mary Borst (Women’s Center, and GLBTQ Resource Center): The Women’s Center and the GLBTQ Resource Center both offer a wide variety of programming for students, which represent opportunities for connecting with courses that include diversity-related learning goals. Information about programs can be found at www.kutztown.edu/womenscenter and www.kutztown.edu/glbtqccenter.

Internships – Ms. Kerri Gardi (Career Development Center): The Career Development Center encourages and supports students seeking for-credit, and not-for-credit, internships and externship (1-3 day job shadowing) experiences through various events and services. These include information sessions (e.g., Resume Writing, Successful Interviewing), Internship and Job Fairs, and mock interview practice. CDC staff welcomes opportunities for partnering with academic programs or instructors of specific courses.

Learning Communities – Dr. Lisa Frye (Computer Science), Dr. Andrea Kirshman (Academic & Student Affairs): Learning communities provide students with the opportunity to be part of a cohort of students taking the same two or three courses together with the overall goal of enhancing the relationship between students and the university. In addition, with the grouping of courses and students, there are opportunities for collaborative learning approaches and connecting learning across course and disciplinary boundaries. For example, the Computer Science Department offers a learning community each fall that links the introductory computer science course with a math course, and includes enrichment activities that are focused on academic skills, career development, and computer science.

Residence Life, living–learning communities – Dr. Rolf Mayrhofer, Dr. Erin Kraal (Physical Science), Ms. Melissa Stock-Moon, Ms. Apryle Carney (Residence Life): The Residence Halls offers a number of opportunities to connect the curriculum with the co-curriculum. This year, Residence Life and the Physical Science Department are collaborating on a living–learning community for first year physical science majors, which features mentoring, supplemental instruction, and additional faculty involvement. More broadly, Residence Life provides its own First Year Learning Community which assists first-year students’ transition from high school to college. There are also specific halls with higher percentages of first year students that have Freshman Mentors. Both programs provide the residents with resource information and offer a variety of programs, and leadership opportunities.

Service Learning & Community Service – Dr. Carissa Pokorny-Golden (English), Mr. Jerry Schearer (New Student Programs & Services), Dr. Carol Jones (The Literacy Center of Allentown): Service learning courses connect academic courses with community service in order to facilitate deep learning of outcomes related to civic engagement, social responsibility, diversity and commitment, to name but a few. Service opportunities include tutoring adults in English, building houses with Habitat for Humanity, mentoring young people through Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and volunteering with the Special Olympics.
Student Involvement, civic engagement – Ms. Leah Cassellia (Student Involvement): The resources available to KU students through the Office of Student Involvement include: KUnited - the online service for students and student organizations to track involvement, advertise events, store documents, and log service hours; TurboVote - sponsored by Student Government Board, this gives students the opportunity to engage in the important process of voting; Leadership opportunities - leadership positions and leadership training sessions for student organizations; and Speakers series. All of these represent opportunities for connecting classroom experiences with those outside the classroom.

Toastmasters – Dr. Trisha Scarica-King (Student Union): Oral communication skills are one of the essential learning outcomes of the General Education program at KU and elsewhere, and is also an essential component of effective leadership. One important opportunity for students to develop and refine both skills outside of class is through Toastmasters, an international organization with an on-campus presence. Along with leadership opportunities with Kutztown Area Toastmasters, participants can deliver prepared speeches, impromptu speeches, and feedback to others.

Undergraduate Research – Dr. Kurt Friehauf (Physical Sciences), Dr. Jennifer Forsyth (English): Undergraduate research provides an opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in their discipline, and to engage in the kind of research conducted by professionals in their field. While the experiences are frequently found in the sciences, they are not limited to these disciplines. Through a project that is designed to contribute to the literature of the discipline, a student enhances his or her understanding of the theories and methods of the field, participates in a mentoring relationship, and experiences the excitement of pursuing important questions.

Wellness & Recreation – Dr. Duane Crider (Sport Management), Prof. Cara Cotellese (Electronic Media), Ms. Amy Sandt (Recreational Services): Wellness & Recreation: Based upon eight years of experience supervising sport management interns, site supervisors reported a common deficit in student preparation in the area of “personal selling”. In this context, personal selling skills include selling their professional skills, sport management products, and program memberships. To further develop these skills, sport management students selected a product or program to promote through 30 second video commercials. In collaboration with professional staff who oversee the highlighted programs, electronic media students, and through self-critique and peer reviews, the students gained confidence in their ability to sell not only the product, but also themselves.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Faculty of the Future workshop at Bucks County Community College – May 31, 2013