



## The SSI and NSSE

The **Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)** and the **National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE)** are regularly administered on four-year colleges and universities. The two survey instruments capture different aspects of the student experience, but the items on each instrument also support each other. The combination of survey results provide a more complete perspective for institutions to consider.

The **Student Satisfaction Inventory** captures how students feel at the institution, both inside and outside of the classroom. It asks students to identify levels of importance and satisfaction with a variety of items including instruction, advising, registration, financial aid, residence life, campus climate, and others. It is administered across all class levels during any time in the academic year, as determined by the institution.

The **National Survey on Student Engagement** asks students to identify the amount of time and effort they put into their studies and other educational activities. The NSSE also captures student perceptions on the ways their institution provides resources, organizes the curriculum and encourages students to participate in activities that have been linked to student learning outcomes. The instrument is administered to first year and senior students only, in the spring of the academic year.

## Using both the SSI and NSSE on your campus

Both assessments provide complementary opportunities to capture a more complete picture of the undergraduate experience which is central to promoting student learning, success, and educational attainment. Both instruments help campuses to think about how students interact with the institution.

Engagement assessments show how students invest their time, the effort they devote to various academic and co-curricular endeavors and the resulting gains they feel they achieve. Student satisfaction assessments look at satisfaction and the importance students place on various services, programs and experiences and the relative degree of satisfaction that results from their transactions. Student satisfaction assessments pinpoint areas within the institution that need immediate attention.

Student satisfaction and engagement assessments share some common characteristics as well. Both surveys examine important elements of the student experience with engagement assessments focusing more on the academic / classroom dimensions while student satisfaction assessments focus more broadly on the total experience. In addition, both instruments yield information designed to illuminate and improve student and institutional performance. Student retention results from high levels of student engagement *and* satisfaction.

Assessing both student satisfaction and student engagement is important in order to inform and guide an institution's retention efforts. Both types of assessments will provide timely, systematic, and relevant information on various facets of the undergraduate experience. Both instruments play an important role in crafting retention activities that improve student and institutional performance.

## How this document can help

This document helps you to think about how the SSI and NSSE items are supportive to each other. It will help you to position the combination of items and see clearly how the survey tools complement each other. As you share the results on your campus, using this document as a guideline can assist you with explaining both sets of data to key campus constituents. It will help you to explore the student perceptions from the satisfaction and engagement perspective in similar areas on campus.

**Keep in mind: Students are more likely to be satisfied if they are engaged, and more likely to be engaged if they are satisfied.**

## RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory™ (SSI) Four-year • Form A items (by scales) mapped to relevant items on the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) items

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NSSE Version as of 2016

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### Academic Advising

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#### SSI: Academic advising items

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|----|--|
| 6  | My academic advisor is approachable.                                 |
| 14 | My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.  |
| 19 | My academic advisor helps me set goals to work towards.              |
| 33 | My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major. |
| 55 | Major requirements are clear and reasonable.                         |
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#### NSSE: Academic advising items

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|-----|--|
| 03a | Have you talked about career plans with a faculty member?  |
| 03d | Have you discussed your academic performance with a faculty member?  |
| 13b | Rate the quality of your interactions with academic advisors.  |
| 13c | Rate the quality of your interactions with faculty.  |
| 14b | How much as the school provided support to help students succeed academically?                                 |
| 14c | How much as the school emphasized using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)             |
| 14g | How much has the school emphasized helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)? |
| 17e | How much has your school helped your ability in acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills?            |
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## Campus Climate

### SSI: Campus climate items

1	Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
2	The campus staff are caring and helpful.
3	Faculty care about me as an individual.
7	The campus is safe and secure for all students.
10	Administrators are approachable to students.
29	It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
37	I feel a sense of pride about my campus.
41	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.
45	Students are made to feel welcome here.
51	This institution has a good reputation within the community.
57	I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.
59	This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
60	I generally know what is happening on campus.
62	There is a strong commitment to racial harmony.
66	Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
67	Freedom of expression is protected on campus.
71	Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.

### NSSE: Campus climate items

01d	Have you attended an art exhibit, play or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)?
02c	Have you included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments?
02e	Have you tried to understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective?
02f	Have you learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?
08a	How often have you had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own?
08b	How often have you had discussions with people from an economic background other than your own?
08c	How often have you had discussions with people with religious beliefs other than your own?
08d	How often have you had discussions with people with political views other than your own?
11b	Have you or will you hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group?
11c	Have you or will you participate in a learning community or group where students take 2 or more classes together?
11d	Have you or will you participate in study abroad program?

**NSSE: Campus climate items continued**

- 11e Have you or will you work with a faculty member on a research project?
- 11f Have you or will you complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, etc.?)
- 12 How many of your courses have included a community –based project (service-learning)?
- 13a Rate the quality of your interactions with other students.
- 13b Rate the quality of your interactions with academic advisors.
- 13c Rate the quality of your interactions with faculty.
- 13d Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)
- 13e Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)
- 14b How much as the school provided support to help students succeed academically?
- 14c How much as the school emphasized using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)
- 14d How much as the school encouraged contact among students from different backgrounds?
- 14e How much has the school emphasized providing opportunities to be involved socially?
- 14f How much has the school provided support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, etc.)?
- 14g How much has the school emphasized helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)?
- 14h How much as the school emphasized attending campus activities and events (art shows, athletics, etc.)?
- 14i How much has the school emphasized attending events that address social, economic or political issues?
- 15a How much time do you spend preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, homework, rehearsing, etc.)?
- 15b How much time do you spend participating in co-curricular activities (student groups, intramurals, etc.)?
- 15c How much time to you spend working for pay on campus?
- 17e How much has your school helped your ability for acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills?
- 17f How much has your school helped your ability in working effectively with others?
- 17g How much has your school helped your ability in developing or clarifying personal code of value and ethics?
- 17h How much has your school helped your ability in understanding people of other backgrounds?
- 17i How much has your school helped your ability in solving complex real-world problems?
- 17j How much has your school helped your ability in being an informed and active citizen?

## Campus Life

<b>SSI: Campus life items</b>	
9	A variety of intramural activities are offered.
23	Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.
24	The intercollegiate athletic programs contribute to a strong sense of school spirit.
30	Residence hall staff are concerned about my success as an individual.
31	Males and females have equal opportunities to participate in intercollegiate athletics.
38	There is an adequate selection of food available in the cafeteria.
40	Residence hall regulations are reasonable.
42	There are sufficient number of weekend activities for students.
46	I can easily get involved in campus organizations.
52	The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.
56	The student handbook provides helpful information about campus life.
63	Student disciplinary procedures are fair.
64	New student orientation services help students adjust to college.
67	Freedom of expressing is projected on campus.
73	Student activities fees are put to good use.

<b>NSSE Campus life items</b>	
01d	Have you attended an art exhibit, play or other arts performance (dance, music, etc.)?
11b	Have you or will you hold a formal leadership role in a student organization or group?
13d	Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)
14e	How much has the school emphasized providing opportunities to be involved socially?
14f	How much has the school provided support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, etc.)
14h	How much as the school emphasized attending campus activities and events (art shows, athletics, etc.)?
14i	How much has the school emphasized attending events that address social, economic or political issues?
15b	How much time do you spend participating in co-curricular activities (student groups, intramurals, etc.)?
15f	How much time do you spend relaxing and socializing (time with friends, video games, TV, etc.)?

## Campus Support Services

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### SSI: Campus support services items

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|----|---|
| 13 | Library staff are helpful and approachable.                         |
| 18 | Library resources and services are adequate.                        |
| 26 | Computer labs are adequate and accessible.                          |
| 32 | Tutoring services are readily available.                            |
| 44 | Academic support services adequately meet the needs of students.    |
| 49 | There are adequate career services to help me decide upon a career. |
| 54 | Bookstore staff are helpful.  |
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### NSSE: Campus support services items

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|-----|--|
| 03a | Have you talked about career plans with a faculty member?  |
| 13d | Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)     |
| 13e | Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) |
| 14c | How much as the school emphasized using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)                 |
| 17a | How much has your school helped your ability in writing clearly and effectively?                                   |
| 17b | How much as your school helped your ability in speaking clearly and effectively?                                   |
| 17c | How much as your school helped your ability in thinking critically and analytically?                               |
| 17d | How much as your school helped your ability in analyzing numerical and statistical information?                    |
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## Concern for the Individual

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### SSI: Concern for the individual items

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|----|--|
| 3  | Faculty care about me as an individual.                                  |
| 14 | My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.      |
| 22 | Counseling staff care about students as individuals.                     |
| 25 | Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students. |
| 30 | Residence hall staff are concerned about me as an individual.            |
| 59 | This institution shows concern for students as individual.               |
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### NSSE: Concern for the individual items.

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|-----|--|
| 03a | Have you talked about career plans with a faculty member?  |
| 03b | Have you worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework?   |
| 03c | Have you discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class?                       |
| 03d | Have you discussed your academic performance with a faculty member?  |
| 11e | Have you or will you work with a faculty member on a research project?   |
| 13b | Rate the quality of your interactions with academic advisors.  |
| 13c | Rate the quality of your interactions with faculty.  |
| 13d | Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)     |
| 13e | Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) |
| 14f | How much has the school provided support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, etc.)?              |
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## Instructional Effectiveness

### SSI: Instructional effectiveness items

3	Faculty care about me as an individual.
8	The content of courses within my major is valuable.
16	The instruction in my major field is excellent.
25	Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
39	I able to experience intellectual growth here.
41	There is a commitment to academic excellence on this campus.
47	Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
53	Faculty take into consideration student differences as they teach a course.
58	The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.
61	Adjunct faculty are competent as classroom instructors.
65	Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
68	Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in their field.
69	There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
70	Graduate teaching assistants are competent as classroom instructors.

### NSSE: Instructional effectiveness items

01a	Have you asked questions or contributed to course discussions in other ways?
01b	Have you prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in?
01c	Have you come to class without completing readings or assignments?
01e	Have you asked another student to help you understand course material?
01f	Have you explained course material to one or more students?
01g	Have you prepared for exams by discussing or working through course materials with other students?
01h	Have you worked with other students on course projects or assignments?
01i	Have you given a course presentation?
02a	Have you combined ideas from different courses when completing assignments?
02b	Have you connected your learning to societal problems or issues?
02c	Have you included diverse perspective in course discussions or assignments?
02d	Have you examined strengths and weaknesses in your own views on a topic or issue?
02e	Have you tried to understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective?
02f	Have you learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept?
02g	Have you connected ideas from your courses to prior experiences and knowledge?
03a	Have you talked about career plans with a faculty member?

**NSSE: Instructional effectiveness items continued**

- 03b Have you worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework?
- 03c Have you discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class?
- 03d Have you discussed your academic performance with a faculty member?
- 04b How much were you applying facts, theories, or methods to practical problems or new situations?
- 04c How much were you analyzing an idea, experience, or line of reasoning in depth by examining its parts?
- 04d How much were you evaluating a point of view, decisions, or information source?
- 04e How much were you forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information?
- 05a How much did instructors clearly explain course goals and requirements?
- 05b How much did instructors teach course sessions in an organized way?
- 05c How much did instructors use examples or illustrations to explain difficult points?
- 05d How much did instructors provide feedback on a draft or work in progress?
- 05e How much did instructors provide prompt and detailed feedback on tests or completed assignments?
- 06a How much did you reach conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, etc.)?
- 06b How much did you use numerical information to examine a real-world problem or issue (unemployment, etc.)?
- 06c How much did you evaluate what others have concluded from numerical information?
- 07 How many papers, reports or other writing tasks have you been assigned?
- 08a How often have you had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own?
- 08b How often have you had discussions with people from an economic background other than your own?
- 08c How often have you had discussions with people with religious beliefs other than your own?
- 08d How often have you had discussions with people with political views other than your own?
- 10 How much have your courses challenged you do to your best work?
- 11a Have you or will you participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, teaching or clinical experience?
- 11c Have you or will you participate in a learning community or group where students take 2 or more classes together?
- 11d Have you or will you participate in study abroad program?
- 11f Have you or will you complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project, etc.)?
- 11e Have you or will you work with a faculty member on a research project?

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**NSSE: Instructional effectiveness items continued**

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|-----|---|
| 13c | Rate the quality of your interactions with faculty.   |
| 14a | How much has the school emphasized spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work?      |
| 14b | How much has the school provided support to help students succeed academically?                             |
| 15a | How much time do you spend preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, homework, rehearsing, etc.)?    |
| 17a | How much has your school helped your ability in writing clearly and effectively?                            |
| 17b | How much as your school helped your ability in speaking clearly and effectively?                            |
| 17c | How much as your school helped your ability in thinking critically and analytically?                        |
| 17d | How much has your school helped your ability in analyzing numerical and statistical information?            |
| 17e | How much as your school helped your ability in acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills?         |
| 17f | How much as your school helped your ability in working effectively with others?                             |
| 17g | How much has your school helped your ability in developing or clarifying personal code of value and ethics? |
| 17h | How much as your school helped your ability in understanding people of other backgrounds?                   |
| 17i | How much has your school helped your ability in solving complex real-world problems?                        |
| 17j | How much has your school helped your ability in being an informed and active citizen?                       |
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## Recruitment and Financial Aid

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### SSI: Recruitment and financial aid items

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|----|--|
| 4  | Admissions staff are knowledgeable.  |
| 5  | Financial aid counselors are helpful.  |
| 12 | Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful in college planning.      |
| 17 | Adequate financial aid is available for most students.                             |
| 43 | Admissions counselors respond to prospective students' unique needs and requests.  |
| 48 | Admissions counselors accurately portray the campus in their recruiting practices. |
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### NSSE: Recruitment and financial aid items

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|-----|--|
| 13e | Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) |
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## Registration Effectiveness

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### SSI: Registration effectiveness items

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|----|--|
| 11 | Billing policies are reasonable.   |
| 20 | The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students. |
| 27 | The personnel involved in registration are helpful.                              |
| 34 | I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.                     |
| 50 | Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.                                 |
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### NSSE: Registration effectiveness items

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|-----|--|
| 13e | Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) |
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## Responsiveness to Diverse Populations

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### SSI: Responsiveness to diverse populations items

84	Institution's commitment to part-time students?
85	Institution's commitment to evening students?
86	Institution's commitment to older, returning learners?
87	Institution's commitment to under-represented populations?
88	Institution's commitment to commuters?
89	Institution's commitment to students with disabilities?

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### NSSE: Responsiveness to diverse populations items

No clear correlating items on the NSSE instrument.

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## Safety and Security

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### SSI: Safety and security items

7	The campus is safe and secure for all students.
21	The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
28	Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.
36	Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.

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### NSSE: Safety and security items

No clear correlating items on the NSSE instrument.

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## Service Excellence

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SSI: Service excellence items	
2	The campus staff are caring and helpful.
13	Library staff are helpful and approachable.
15	The staff in the health services area are competent.
22	Counseling staff care about students as individuals.
27	The personnel involved in registration are helpful.
57	I seldom get the “run-around” when seeking information on this campus.
60	I generally know what’s happening on campus.
71	Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.

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NSSE: Service excellence items	
13d	Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)
13e	Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.)
14b	How much has the school provided support to help students succeed academically?
14c	How much as the school emphasized using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)
14f	How much has the school provided support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, etc.)?

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## Student Centeredness

### SSI: Student centeredness items

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|----|---|
| 1  | Most students feel a sense of belonging here.                 |
| 2  | The campus staff are caring and helpful.                      |
| 10 | Administrators are approachable to students.                  |
| 29 | It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus. |
| 45 | Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.             |
| 59 | The institution shows concern for students as individuals.    |

### NSSE: Student centered items

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|-----|--|
| 03a | Have you talked about career plans with a faculty member?  |
| 03b | Have you worked with a faculty member on activities other than coursework?   |
| 03c | Have you discussed course topics, ideas, or concepts with a faculty member outside of class?                       |
| 08a | How often have you had discussions with people of a race or ethnicity other than your own?                         |
| 08b | How often have you had discussions with people from an economic background other than your own?                    |
| 08c | How often have you had discussions with people with religious beliefs other than your own?                         |
| 08d | How often have you had discussions with people with political views other than your own?                           |
| 11c | Have you or will you participate in a learning community or group where students take 2 or more classes together?  |
| 12  | How many of your courses have included a community –based project (service-learning)?                              |
| 13a | Rate the quality of your interactions with other students.   |
| 13b | Rate the quality of your interactions with academic advisors.  |
| 13c | Rate the quality of your interactions with faculty.  |
| 13d | Rate the quality of your interactions with student services staff (career services, activities, housing, etc.)     |
| 13e | Rate the quality of your interactions with other administrative staff and offices (registrar, financial aid, etc.) |
| 14b | How much as the school provided support to help students succeed academically?                                     |
| 14c | How much as the school emphasized using learning support services (tutoring, writing center, etc.)                 |
| 14d | How much as the school encouraged contact among students from different backgrounds?                               |
| 14e | How much has the school emphasized providing opportunities to be involved socially?                                |
| 14f | How much has the school provided support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, etc.)               |

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**NSSE: Student centered items continued**

14g	How much has the school emphasized helping you manage your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)?
14h	How much as the school emphasized attending campus activities and events (art shows, athletics, etc.)?
14i	How much has the school emphasized attending events that address social, economic or political issues?
17j	How much has your school helped your ability in being an informed and active citizen?

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## Stand Alone Items

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**SSI: Stand alone items**

35	The assessment and course placement procedures are reasonable.
72	On the whole the campus is well maintained.

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**NSSE: items**

No clear correlating items on the NSSE instrument.

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## Factors in the Decision to Enroll

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**SSI: Factors in the decision to enroll items**

90	Cost as a factor in the decision to enroll.
91	Financial aid as a factor in the decision to enroll.
92	Academic reputation as a factor in the decision to enroll.
93	Size of institution as a factor in the decision to enroll.
94	Opportunity to play sports as a factor in the decision to enroll.
95	Recommendations from family/friends as a factor in the decision to enroll.
96	Geographic setting as a factor in the decision to enroll.
97	Campus appearance as a factor in the decision to enroll.
98	Personalized attention prior to enrollment as a factor in the decision to enroll.

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**NSSE: Factors in the decision to enroll items**

No clear correlating items on the NSSE instrument.

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## Summary Items

SSI: Summary items	
99	So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?
100	Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far.
101	All in all, if you had it to do over again, would you enroll here?

NSSE: Summary items	
18	How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?
19	If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?

## Important notes:

Keep in mind that the SSI is typically administered across all four class levels, while the NSSE is administered to first year and senior students.

The institution may want to slice the data for the SSI with target group reports or by using the raw data files to look at the results for first year and senior students separately from the group as a whole for a better point of comparison with the NSSE results by class level.

Also note: this document was prepared by Ruffalo Noel Levitz based on an initial review of the items in 2017 and organized into the current format as of October 2019. The document has been shared with the team at NSSE but not yet approved by them.

## Questions:

Contact Shannon Cook ([Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Shannon.Cook@RuffaloNL.com)) or Julie Bryant ([Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com](mailto:Julie.Bryant@RuffaloNL.com)) with questions about this document or about using the Student Satisfaction Inventory on your campus. You may also call RNL at 800.876.1117.