

## **2005 NUGGET FROM NSSE: EVIDENCE OF KSU'S STRONG IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Producing evidence of student learning is the gold standard of accountability for institutional and program accreditation. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides valuable evidence of an institution's impact on student learning in a number of fundamental and important college-level competencies.

### **Assessment Results for KSU's Educational Impact on College-Level Competencies**

- Undergraduate seniors evaluated the impact of the KSU experience on their educational growth in 16 general areas of knowledge, skill, and personal development (a.k.a, student learning outcomes). The results from the 2005 NSSE replicated and confirmed similar findings from the 2004 NSSE for KSU.
- Most seniors (typically three-fourths or more) reported that the KSU experience contributed substantially to their educational growth in nine of the 16 college-level competencies. Those nine learning outcomes represent fundamental areas of knowledge and skill that are commonly expected of a well-educated college graduate. KSU's results reflected broad-based educational growth in general and specialized knowledge, critical thinking and problem solving skills, technological sophistication, effectiveness in communication and teamwork, and capacity for independent learning. (See Table 1.)

**Table 1**

### **Percent of Seniors in NSSE 2005 & NSSE 2004 Whose Educational Growth in 16 Student Learning Outcomes was Substantially Impacted by Their KSU Experience**

Contribution of the KSU Experience to this Student Learning Outcome	<u>% Rating the Contribution as Substantial</u>	
	2005 NSSE	2004 NSSE

#### **KSU's Greatest Impact on Nine Fundamental Competencies Involving Knowledge and Skill**

Thinking critically and analytically	87%	88%
Using computing and information technology	84%	81%
Acquiring a broad general education	83%	87%
Working effectively with others	81%	83%
Analyzing quantitative problems	79%	75%
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge & skills	73%	74%
Writing clearly and effectively	73%	84%
Learning effectively on your own	70%	72%
Speaking clearly and effectively	68%	78%

#### **KSU's Lesser Impact on Seven Learning Outcomes Involving Attitudes & Values**

Understanding yourself	56%	56%
Solving complex real-world problems	56%	59%
Understanding people of other racial & ethnic backgrounds	53%	50%
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	46%	45%
Contributing to the welfare of your community	35%	31%
Voting in local, state, or national elections	32%	20%
Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	19%	9%

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\*The percentages for substantial contribution reflect the combined responses of "very much" and "quite a bit" for KSU's educational impact on the learning outcomes in items 11a to 11p. of the NSSE.

- The impact of the KSU experience on the other seven learning outcomes, which tend to emphasize educational growth in personal attitudes and values, was not as broad-based. About half of the seniors reported substantial gains attributable to the KSU experience in their understanding of self, understanding of others different from themselves, solving complex real-world problems, or developing a personal code of values and ethics. Only a third or fewer of the seniors reported that their KSU experience contributed substantially to their service to their communities, participation in a democratic society or a deepened sense of spirituality.
- Significantly more KSU seniors than seniors at other master's level institutions reported having been substantially impacted by their college experience in two of the 16 college-level competencies: 1) using computing and information technology, and 2) analyzing quantitative problems. For most of the key competencies (nine out of 16), KSU's educational impact was not significantly different from the impact of other universities. Significantly fewer KSU seniors than seniors elsewhere experienced substantial educational growth in self-understanding, ethical development, community service, voting participation, and spiritual development. (See Table 2.)

**Table 2**

**KSU's Educational Impact on Student Learning Outcomes  
Compared with Other Master's Level Institutions in NSSE 2005**

Contribution of the Institutional Experience to this Student Learning Outcome	% of Seniors Rating the Contribution as Substantial	
	KSU	Master's
<b>KSU's Educational Impact was Significantly Higher*</b>		
Using computing and information technology	84%	79%
Analyzing quantitative problems	79%	72%
<b>KSU's Educational Impact was Comparable (Not Significantly Different)*</b>		
Thinking critically and analytically	87%	87%
Acquiring a broad general education	83%	86%
Working effectively with others	81%	80%
Acquiring job or work-related knowledge & skills	73%	75%
Writing clearly and effectively	73%	77%
Learning effectively on your own	70%	75%
Speaking clearly and effectively	68%	74%
Solving complex real-world problems	56%	59%
Understanding people of other racial & ethnic backgrounds	53%	53%
<b>KSU's Educational Impact was Significantly Lower*</b>		
Understanding yourself	56%	65%
Developing a personal code of values and ethics	46%	59%
Contributing to the welfare of your community	35%	48%
Voting in local, state, or national elections	32%	40%
Developing a deepened sense of spirituality	19%	33%

\*From NSSE Means Comparison Report (p<.001 two-tailed test for significance)

### **Observations About KSU's Exceptional Strengths in Advancing Student Learning**

- KSU's long-standing strategic priorities and considerable investments in advancing the educational use of computing and information technology appear to have worked effectively to produce an exceptionally broad impact on student learning in this vital area of knowledge and skill. Building upon the University System of Georgia's notable investments in PeachNet, Gallileo, WebCT, and SCT Banner, KSU has capitalized on opportunities to gain technological advantage through its CIO's leadership, digital library resources, student technology fee, innovative CS/IS faculty and degree programs, talented technical support team, and acquisition of state-of-the-art instructional resources and applications. The use of sophisticated computing and information technology permeates virtually all aspects of the KSU experience from the first-year through the senior year, reinforcing KSU's educational impact.
- KSU's broad-based impact on student learning for analyzing quantitative problems is probably attributable to several factors. For example, KSU has had a long-standing commitment to major-specific 6-hour mathematics requirements in its general education program for all undergraduates, as opposed to the more common 3-hour requirement at many colleges and universities. KSU has also maintained a decade-long track record of federally-funded innovation in mathematics education and curricula reform. Equally if not more important, the vast majority of baccalaureate graduates at KSU complete major programs with additional quantitative courses beyond those required in general education (e.g., all business programs, all computer science and information systems programs, all science and mathematics programs, most social science programs, the nursing program, many fields of teacher education, etc.). Consequently, quantitative skills are frequently reinforced, not only at the lower division in general education, but also at the upper division by the major.

### **Observations About KSU's Comparable Strengths in Advancing Student Learning**

- KSU's contributions to student learning are largely comparable in strength to those of its national comparators in many of the learning outcomes expected of a well-educated college graduate. KSU's educational impact is on par with and in the mainstream of higher education's contributions to the development of critical thinking, general education, work-related knowledge and skills, effective teamwork, communication skills, independent learning, multicultural understanding, and applied problem-solving skills. In these important areas of student learning, the KSU experience appears to be solidly positioned in the mainstream and is neither exceptionally strong nor notably weak.

### **Observations About KSU's Lesser Impacts in Advancing Student Learning**

- The national results from NSSE suggest that collegiate experiences in general often do not make a substantial contribution to learning outcomes involving personal attitudes and values. Higher education's impact on student learning for spiritual development, democratic participation, and community service is low, especially at KSU. Our university's initiatives in recent years to strengthen and promote service learning, civic engagement, American Democracy, and ethical leadership address such weaknesses in the college experience, but have a long way to go before most graduates report substantial educational growth from the KSU experience.