



# DataBytes

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

## Spring 2016

BITE-SIZE DATA FOR YOUR PERUSAL, EVALUATION, AND PLANNING

IN THIS ISSUE: COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY

## Reflecting on our Mission

by Josie Welsh, Director

The mission, vision, and values of Missouri Southern recently were reviewed and affirmed by Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, and the Board of Governors. Steps for achieving that mission are outlined in the University's Strategic Plan, which can be accessed electronically at

<http://www.mssu.edu/faculty-staff-information/pdfs/entire-strategic-plan2011.pdf>.

One of the many ways we evaluate progress toward that plan is through assessment of student learning and co-curricular experiences.

Surveys are indirect measures of fulfillment of our goals; however, when combined with direct measures, or primary sources of evidence such as test scores, grades, evaluations by faculty and supervisors, and other achievement indices, survey data can guide our planning and budgeting.

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (IE) is responsible for analyzing data and aligning findings with the University's mission, vision, and values. Data we collect, aggregate, and disseminate include demographic and enrollment information, program reviews, student learning assessment, co-curricular outcomes, and career and financial data.

In order to avoid survey fatigue, we administer surveys on a rotating schedule. The current issue of DataBytes highlights findings from a survey that was administered to seniors graduating in May, 2015. The survey is managed by The Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA. To learn more about the College Senior Survey, visit <http://www.heri.ucla.edu>.

The response rate for the College Senior Survey was 21% (313/1491). HERI created two comparison groups. Comparison Group 1 is public, four-year colleges and universities. Comparison Group 2 includes public and private four-year colleges and universities.

Data were presented to our Assessment Advisory Committee in April. The committee asked IE to disseminate findings campus wide. Members identified three areas that may warrant attention for improvement: **academic enhancement, or high-impact learning experiences** (internships, undergraduate research), **health and wellness**, and **preparation for career**.

Please contact Josie Welsh with any comments or plans for use of data. The next issue of DataBytes will disseminate data from senior testing in general education.

### Strategic Plan Goal 1: Achieve Student Success through Quality Academic Programs

When asked, "*How often have your professors provided you with feedback on your academic work (outside of grades)?*" 47% of our students said *frequently*, compared to 38% of students from comparison groups.

Academic engagement is high at Missouri Southern. Ninety-six percent of students said they communicate regularly with their professors. Compared to students at other universities, our students are less likely to arrive late for class, miss class, or sleep in class. Unfortunately, our students' academic self-concept also is lower than average. Student self-ratings of intellectual self-confidence, academic ability, and mathematical ability were significantly below average self-ratings of students at comparative institutions. Students' perceived gains in disciplinary knowledge, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving skills were similar to their peers. Communication through discussion boards was significantly higher at MSSU; 61% of our students reported use of technology for online discussion boards.

### Academic enhancement experiences

such as internships and undergraduate research were significantly lower than both comparison groups. While 30.3% of respondents at MSSU reported internship experience, participation from comparison groups ranged from 54.5% to 67.1%. Undergraduate research experience lagged by about 6% when compared with other institutions. *Academic Affairs has responded to this finding by sponsoring the inaugural student research fair, which will be held April 28, 9AM-1PM, in BSC Connor Ballroom.*

In the area of co-curricular learning, results indicate that our students have strong political views but do not consider themselves to be strong leaders. The percentage of seniors reporting training and experience leading a group at MSSU was about 10% lower than comparative data.

Respondents indicated low satisfaction with student housing. Thirty-two percent of students were satisfied or very satisfied with campus housing at MSSU compared with 70% at comparative institutions. Sixty-two percent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of campus social activities. Eighty-one percent of said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their ability to find a faculty or staff mentor.

### When it comes to health and wellness

seniors at Missouri Southern report that they not only party less but also exercise less than their peers at comparative institutions.

- *During the past year how much time did you spend during a typical week:*
  - *Exercising (11 or more hours)*
    - MSSU 5.1%
    - Comp 1 10.7%
    - Comp 2 13.1%
  - *Partying (11 or more hours)*
    - MSSU 0.9%
    - Comp 1 4.1%
    - Comp 2 7.9%
- *My physical health is above average*
  - MSSU 34.0%
  - Comp 1 46.4%

Seniors at Missouri Southern drink less than their peers do, but they smoke more.

- *During the past year how often did you:(answered occasionally or frequently)*
  - *Smoke cigarettes*
    - MSSU 23.2%
    - Comp 1 15.3%
    - Comp 2 17.8%
  - *Drink Beer*
    - MSSU 58.0%
    - Comp 1 68.6%
    - Comp 2 76.8%
  - *Drink Wine or Liquor*
    - MSSU 65.2%
    - Comp 1 79.9%
    - Comp 2 86.1%

Seniors at MSSU may feel overwhelmed and depressed, but they rarely seek help.

- *During the past year how often did you (% that answered frequently):*
  - *Feel Depressed*
    - MSSU 14.5%
    - Comp 1 12.9%
  - *Feel Overwhelmed by all you have to do*
    - MSSU 47.3%
    - Comp 1 41.7%
  - *Seek Personal Counseling*
    - MSSU 1.8%
    - Comp 1 5.9%

Forty-one percent of students were satisfied or very satisfied with student psychological services; 67% were satisfied or very satisfied with student health services. The importance of integrating spirituality and developing a meaningful philosophy of life was significantly higher for MSSU students.

*Kinesiology has responded to these findings by calling a May 12 meeting with their Community Advisory Board to share these results and discuss possible action steps to address concerns.*

## Strategic Plan Goal 2: Provide a Total University Experience through Quality Programs and Services

### Objective 2.1 – Commit to Excellence in Academic Advising

- 74% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with academic advising

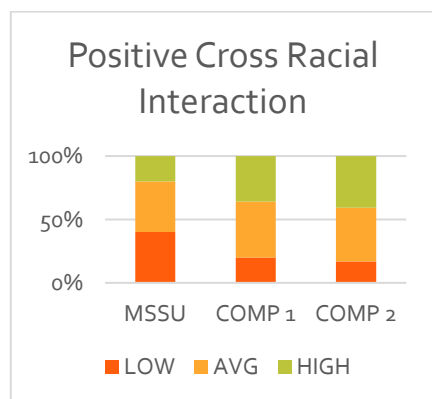
### Objective 2.2 – Provide Programs and Services that Promote Student Success and Academic Progression

- 64% were satisfied or very satisfied with tutoring or other academic assistance
- 76% were satisfied or very satisfied with technology resources
- 81% were satisfied or very satisfied with library resources
- 70% were satisfied or very satisfied with laboratory facilities and equipment

When it comes to **planning for the future** 69% of respondents said they were satisfied with career-related services and support. However, Missouri Southern students do not spend as much time actively seeking employment or future schooling when compared with their peers. When asked:

- During the past year, how much time did you spend during a typical week :
  - Career Planning – 6 or more hours (job searches, internships, etc.)
    - MSSU 5.1%
    - Comp 1 13.4%
    - Comp 2 12.8%
- If you are planning to attend graduate or professional school, which of the following best describes the current state of your plans :
  - Accepted and will be attending in the fall:
    - MSSU 7.9%
    - Comp 1 15.8%
    - Comp 2 18.1%
- If you are planning on being employed after graduation, which best describes the current state of your employment plans:
  - Not actively looking for a position
    - MSSU 22.1%
    - Comp 1 16.2%
    - Comp 2 13.5%
  - Accepted an offer of employment
    - MSSU 17.3%
    - Comp 1 22.5%
    - Comp 2 27.0%

Goal 5 of the Strategic Plan centers on **diversity and inclusion**. Results of the survey indicate that POSITIVE cross-racial interaction (intellectual discussion, sharing meals together, studying together) is low at Missouri Southern.



However, negative cross-racial interaction (tense, hostile, guarded, threatened) also was lower for Missouri Southern than it was for the comparative institutions.

*In March, 2016, a DIVERSITY FORUM was held in an effort to make sense of these seemingly contradictory findings.* One possible explanation that was discussed is the observation that student interaction, not just with diverse others but with fellow students in general, is significantly lower at Missouri Southern. Twenty-seven percent of respondents said they frequently work with classmates on group projects outside of class, compared with a median of 46% at other institutions. Studying together was more common, but the percentage of students reporting frequent study time with others was 7-10% lower at MSSU.

Eighty-six percent of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that MSSU has contributed to their knowledge of people from different races/cultures, and 76% were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall sense of community among students. Why then, are there not more positive cross racial interactions? International students attending the forum provided some ideas. They said most of their bonding time happens in the cafeteria, sitting together and fellowshiping over a meal. The focus group leader asked if domestic students slight the internationals by forming cliques. The group responded by noting that most Americans sit alone in the cafeteria, eating quickly and looking down at their phones.

Although 82% of respondents rated themselves above average in their ability to work cooperatively with diverse people, and 67% said they interact often with people holding religious or political views different from their own, only 27% said they often have meaningful and honest discussions about race/ethnic relations outside of class. Moreover, only 56% of respondents rated themselves above average in their openness to "having my own views challenged." This may or may not reflect student reticence specific to *diversity* issues. Seventy percent of respondents rated themselves above average in their ability to "discuss and negotiate controversial issues."

Students at the Diversity Forum were less surprised by the results than were the faculty and administrators. Students said there ARE opportunities to interact, but students just do not spend much time talking to each other.

What can we do to encourage meaningful conversation? Attend the next Forum!

### Strategic Plan Goal 3: Promote an International Perspective to Foster Understanding and Success in a Culturally Diverse World

#### Goal 5: Promote a Culture that Values All Members of Our Campus Community

*I have felt discriminated against at MSSU because of my race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation.*

- Agree/Strongly Agree
  - MSSU 7.3%
  - Comp 1 12.2%
  - Comp 2 13.8%

*In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes based on race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation.*

- Agree/Strongly Agree
  - MSSU 12.8%
  - Comp 1 22.5%
  - Comp 2 26.2%

*There is a lot of racial tension on this campus*

- Agree/Strongly Agree
  - MSSU 8.2%
  - Comp 1 12.3%
  - Comp 2 25.1%

# DataBytes

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