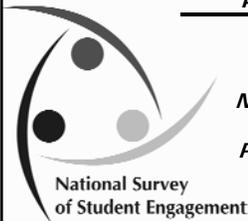


## Pathways to Student Success: Enriching Student Learning and Engagement at Gallaudet University

August 18, 2008



Jillian Kinzie  
NSSE Institute,  
IU Center for  
Postsecondary  
Research

National Survey  
of Student Engagement



### Foundational assertions 1:

**We all want the same thing—an undergraduate experience that results in high levels of learning and personal development *and* success for all students.**

**Student retention is about engaging students in high levels in educationally purposeful activities.**

### Foundational assertions 2:

**Students set in place in their first semester of college the pattern of time allocation that will serve them across their years in college.**

Source: Schilling & Schilling (2005), in *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student*

**The first year presents a unique opportunity to engage students in the habits of learning. -- John Gardner**

FOUNDATIONS OF EXCELLENCE  
for the First-Year Student

### What we know about student learning...

Educators must be concerned with the learning environment – in *and* outside the classroom, socio-cultural aspects & physical settings – in which students interact with peers, the content, educators & others, and the implementation of strategies that help guide students toward the intended outcomes



**"It's about our students and helping them be successful."**

### Summary:

- ◆ Student success in college is no accident.
- ◆ Student engagement in intentionally designed educationally purposeful activities is necessary to achieve desirable learning outcomes.
- ◆ Institutions must deploy resources appropriately and provide students explicit messages about success-oriented behaviors.
- ◆ Institutions need information about how well they're doing & to use this information to enhance student engagement & success.



### Focus on the First Year

- Research supports focus on first year
- Assessment data can help institutions
- Need more in-depth examinations
- Use results in recruitment, retention, and to enhance student engagement and success



## Assessment Matters

"Assessment is critical...for the successful development of any endeavor. At Gallaudet, faculty and staff have been increasingly involved in collecting and analyzing data about student learning, making improvements, monitoring the results, and beginning the cycle once again."

- Eileen Matthews, executive director of Assessment and Innovative Programs, Gallaudet University



## The NSSE Challenge

How might we more effectively use data about quality in undergraduate education to:

- ✓ provide evidence of student learning
- ✓ motivate and inspire effective educational practice
- ✓ strengthen the learning environment?



8

## What Really Matters: Student Engagement



Because individual effort and involvement are the critical determinants of impact, institutions should focus on the ways they can shape their academic, interpersonal, and extracurricular offerings to encourage *student engagement*.

Pascarella & Terenzini, *How College Affects Students*, 2005, p. 602

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## Definition:

**Student engagement:**

A domain of constructs that measures both the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities, and how students perceive different facets of the institutional environment that facilitate and support their learning.

Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning. *Change*.

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## Foundations of Student Engagement

- Time on task (Tyler, 1930s)
- Quality of effort (Pace, 1960-70s)
- Student involvement (Astin, 1984)
- Social, academic integration (Tinto, 1993)
- Good practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1987)
- College Impact (Pascarella, 1985)
- Student engagement (Kuh, 2001, 2003)



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## Two Components of Student Engagement

1. What students do – time and energy devoted to educationally purposeful activities
2. What institutions do – using effective educational practices to induce students to do the right things



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## Good Practices in Undergraduate Education

- ✓ Student-faculty contact
- ✓ Active learning
- ✓ Prompt feedback
- ✓ Time on task
- ✓ High expectations
- ✓ Experiences with diversity
- ✓ Cooperation among students



(Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)

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## What do we know about student engagement...

*Grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand*



## What do we know about student engagement...

*- Engagement has compensatory effect on FY grades and persistence to the second year of college.*

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## Conditions that Support Retention

- ♦ Provide clear and consistent information to students as well as the advice they need to arrive at reasonable decisions about their programs of study and future career goals.
- ♦ Provide academic, social, and personal support that is readily available and connected to other parts of student collegiate experience to retention.

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## Conditions that Support Retention

- ♦ **Involve students** as valued members of institution. **Frequency & quality of contact** with faculty, staff, and other students is an important independent predictor of student persistence.
- ♦ Foster learning. Learning has always been the key to student retention. ***Students who learn are students who stay.*** Institutions that are successful in building settings that educate their students are successful in retaining their students. Students who are involved in learning, that is who spend more time on task, especially with others, are more likely to learn and, in turn, more likely to stay. (Tinto, 2002)

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## Faculty Priorities and Student Engagement

AVG FACULTY	AVG STUDENT			
	Academic challenge	Active-collab	Diversity experiences	Student-faculty
Academic challenge emphasis	✓	✓	✓	
Active-collab practices	✓	✓	✓	✓
Emphasis on diversity experiences	✓	✓	✓	
Emphasis on higher order thinking	✓	✓	✓	
Importance enriching educ experiences	✓	✓		✓

## What to Make of This?

1. *When faculty members emphasize certain educational practices, students engage in them to a greater extent than their peers elsewhere.*
2. *Good things go together*



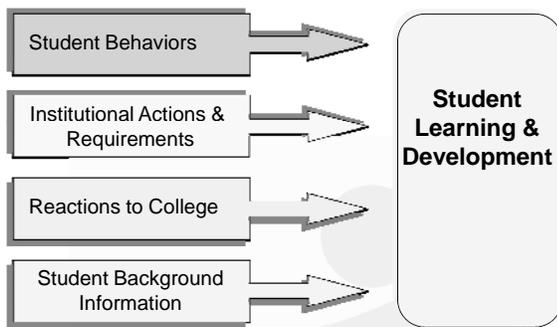
## NSSE Survey & Administration



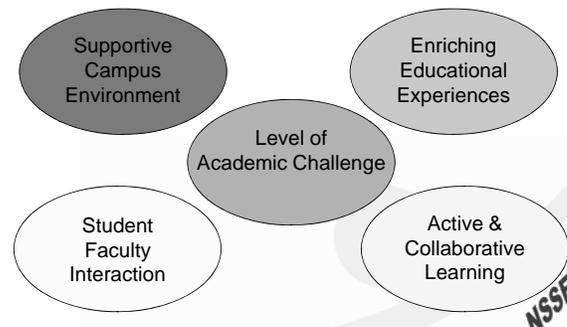
- ◆ NSSE = *College student survey that assesses the extent to which students engage in educational practices associated with high levels of learning and development*
- ◆ Third party administration (IU Center for Survey Research)
- ◆ Students surveyed in the spring
- ◆ **Random sample** of first-year students & seniors
- ◆ Web-based administration
- ◆ In 2008, over 1.4 million students from 769 institutions were invited to participate, with an average institutional response rate of 38%

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## NSSE's Survey Instrument *The College Student Report*



## NSSE's Five Indicators of Effective Educational Practice



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## Taking a look at NSSE:



- ◆ Based on effective educational practices
- ◆ Designed and tested for high validity and reliability
- ◆ Relatively stable over time
- ◆ High credibility of self-reported data
- ◆ Students will participate
- ◆ Actionable data
- ◆ Psychometric properties document on Web site

National Survey of Student Engagement 2008 The College Student Report	
Q.1	Q.2
1. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals	1. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals
2. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals	2. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals
3. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals	3. Read or listen to books, newspapers, magazines, or journals
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## NSSE Survey Item Organization

- ◆ Q.1 – Academic activities
- ◆ Q.2 – Learning mental activities
- ◆ Q.3 – Reading & writing
- ◆ Q.4 – Homework
- ◆ Q.5 – Academic challenge
- ◆ Q.6 – Co-curricular activities
- ◆ Q.7 – Enriching educational experiences
- ◆ Q.8 – Campus relationship
- ◆ Q.9 – Time usage
- ◆ Q.10 – Institutional emphasis
- ◆ Q.11 – Gains
- ◆ Q.12-14 – Satisfaction

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## Purpose of NSSE Results



- ♦ Diagnostic; a window into the undergraduate experience
- ♦ Help pinpoint aspects not in line with mission, or what institution expects
- ♦ Discover weaknesses and strengths in educational program
- ♦ Help institutions know what to focus on to improve student learning and success

## Using NSSE Results for Institutional Improvement

- ♦ NSSE results provide opportunity for reflection on institutional performance.
  - ♦ Are we doing as well as we claim?
  - ♦ How are we doing in comparison to our peer institutions?
  - ♦ How do our results align with current institutional concerns and plans?



## Using NSSE Results for Institutional Improvement

- ♦ NSSE results are actionable.
  - ♦ We're not satisfied that only X% of our seniors report making a presentation in class – Can we infuse more presentation experiences in senior courses?



## NSSE at Gallaudet

- ❖ NSSE administered 2005, 2006, 2008. 177 students responded in 2008.
  - ❖ 113 First-years (FY)
  - ❖ 57 Seniors (SR)
- ❖ 33% Response Rate (avg RR Bac= 41%); Sampling error 6%.
- ❖ Gallaudet's 2008 results compared to "Mid East Privates" (70 schools in region i.e., Daemen, Elmira College, Drexel, Goucher, Seton Hill, Washington College) ; Carnegie Peers (masters); and "NSSE cohort" (all NSSE 2008)

## Questions to consider when you're reviewing your NSSE Results...

1. What NSSE items are of interest to you and to your department?
2. Given the Gallaudet mission, what results do you *want* to see on NSSE?
3. Given your observations and understanding of Gallaudet students, what results do you *expect* to see?
4. Do these results resonate with your view of Gallaudet? With other data?
5. How well do you do in comparison to peers?

## Gallaudet's NSSE Results



## Academic Challenge

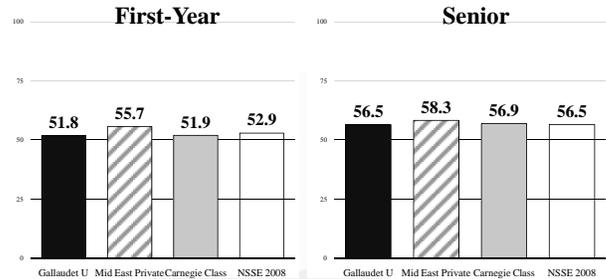
- ♦ To what extent is academic effort emphasized at Gallaudet? Are students devoting time and effort to preparing for class?
- ♦ Are students reading and writing at high levels?
- ♦ Are they having higher-order thinking experiences?



## Academic Challenge Benchmark

First Year Score BELOW Mid East Private

Senior Score on par with comparators



 **Academic Environment at Gallaudet**

1. To what extent do Gallaudet students report “quite a bit or very much” that the environment emphasizes spending time studying?  
50% ? 60%? 70%? 80%?

	Gallaudet	Mid-East Peers
First-Year:	_____	80%
Senior:	_____	83%

\* signif. difference

*NSSE*

## Amount of Reading and Writing

- ♦ In comparison to students at Peer institutions, students at Gallaudet are mostly reading & writing about the same...
  - ♦ Distinct reading & writing elements at Gallaudet:
    - ♦ FY report fewer assigned books/course readings than peers
    - ♦ FY students writing significantly more LONG (20+ pages) papers
    - ♦ SR writing more medium (5-19 pages) length papers
- NSSE*

## Active and Collaborative Learning

“In your experience at your institution during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following?”

- ...asked questions in class
- ...made a presentation
- ...tutored other students
- ...worked with classmates on projects in class
- ...discussed ideas with others outside of class
- ...participated in service learning

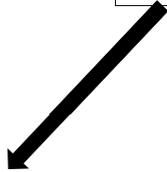


## What do Gallaudet Students Do?

2. What percent of first-year students **frequently\*** made a class presentation? (\*often+ very often)
- (a) 20% (b) 37% (c) 41% (d) 55%
- NSSE*

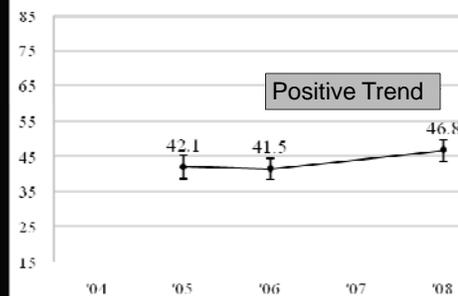
## Gallaudet Students Peer Tutoring/Teaching

Significantly different



## Multi-Year Benchmark Comparisons Gallaudet First Years 2005-06-2008

Active and Collaborative Learning (ACL)



## Student Faculty Interaction:

In general, First Year students interact with Gallaudet faculty *more frequently* than peers at comparison schools, Seniors are about the same as peers at comparison schools

- ...talk about career plans
- ...discuss ideas outside of class
- ...discuss grades & assignments



## What do Gallaudet Students Do?

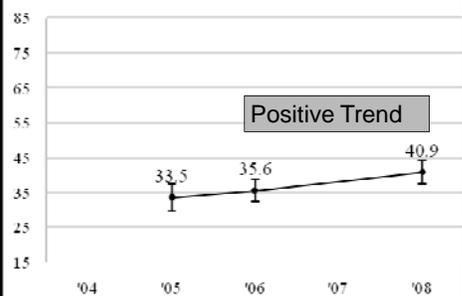
3. What percent of first-year students **NEVER** talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor?

(a) 10% (b) 15% (c) 23% (d) 35%

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## Multi-Year Benchmark Comparisons Gallaudet First Years 2005-06-2008

Student-Faculty Interaction (SFI)



## Enriching Educational Experiences:

In general, Gallaudet First Year students don't partake in enriching experiences, **BUT**, Seniors take advantage of enriching experiences, *more than* peers...

- FEWER Gallaudet Seniors do: practicum, internship & culminating experience
- MORE SR do community service and foreign language
- MORE SR spend time in co-curriculars
- FEWER FY report having serious conversations with diverse peers

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### Hours in Co-curricular activities

Gallaudet Seniors  
MORE than peers

### Supportive Campus Environment:

- Gallaudet SCE scores mostly on par with peers at all comparison schools
- Gallaudet FY & SR report campus environment provides support for learning
- BUT, first year students report LESS helpful relationships with faculty and administrative personnel than peers at Mid East Private institutions



### NSSE: Integrative Learning Scale at Gallaudet

	Gallaudet- FY 2008
Students indicate: 1 = "never" to 4 = "very often", they did the following during school year: [% = "very often" and "often"]	71%
1. Worked on paper/project that required integrating ideas, info. from various sources	-
2. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	60%
3. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	67%
4. Discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty members outside of class	=
5. Discussed ideas from readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	36%
	47%
	-

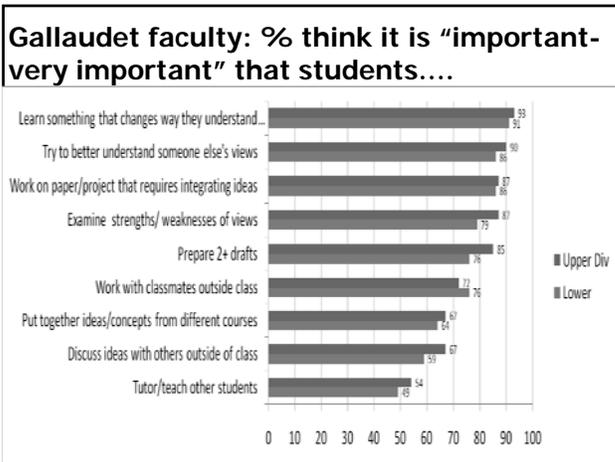
### Educational Gains – Gallaudet contributed to skills in these areas

(significantly different compared to any of 3 peer groups)

- ◆ First Year Students
  - ◆ Low = Acquiring broad general education; Writing Clearly; Speaking Clearly & Effectively;
  - ◆ High = Understanding self; Understanding people of other race-ethnicity; Developing Deepened Sense of Spirituality; Solving Complex Real World Problems
- ◆ Seniors
  - ◆ Low = Writing Clearly;
  - ◆ High = Understanding self; Understanding people of other race-ethnicity; Solving Complex Real World Problems; Developing Personal code of values & ethics; Developing Deepened Sense of Spirituality

### Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

- ◆ Faculty perceptions of how often their students engage in different activities
- ◆ Importance faculty place on various areas of learning and development
- ◆ Nature and frequency of interactions faculty have with students
- ◆ How faculty members organize class time

### FSSE – Percent class time spent...

1. What percent of Gallaudet faculty teaching upper division courses report spending MORE than half of class time lecturing?

10%? 20%? 30%? 40%?

2. Do faculty teaching lower division courses do this *more or less* than upper division?

**NSSE**

### FSSE- NSSE: Prompt Feedback

<b>FACULTY</b> gave prompt feedback often or very often	Lower Division	Upper Division
	% / %	
<b>STUDENTS</b> received prompt feedback often or very often	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. Students	Seniors
	% / %	

**NSSE**

### Why Prompt Feedback?

- ♦ Most useful feedback is timely, apt - provides opportunity for students to use information to improve their performance
- ♦ First-year (FY) students need immediate feedback to understand what is expected
- ♦ FY need feedback in first 3 weeks to modify their behaviors accordingly
- ♦ Pre-university study habits, and those developed in first couple months amazingly persistent

**NSSE**

### To Consider: Teaching & Learning

Provide meaningful feedback to students

- ♦ timely, formative assessment & feedback vital to maximize students' learning
- ♦ peer evaluation enhances responsibility to students' study and/or work group & self assessment encourages reflection on quality of their own effort.
- ♦ Model importance of giving and using feedback by asking students about the helpfulness of your feedback and telling them how you're using their ideas to improve your own teaching

**NSSE**

### FSSE- NSSE: Critical Thinking

<b>FACULTY</b> report very much or quite a bit that they structure their course so students think critically and analytically	Lower Division	Upper Division
	100% / 96%	
<b>STUDENTS</b> report very much or quite a bit that their college experience contributed to their knowledge, skills in critical and analytical thinking	1 <sup>st</sup> yr. Students	Seniors
	79% / 79%	

**NSSE**

### Enriching experiences

What percent of senior students have **participated** in a culminating experience?

(a) 20% (b) 27% (c) 41% (d) 53%

Gallaudet SR = %  
(less than Mid East peers)

% Gallaudet faculty think this is "important – very important" = 84%

**NSSE**

## Value of “Enriching High-Impact” Practices



Students who took part in one or more “high-impact” practice such as a learning community, research with faculty, study abroad, and culminating senior experience reported greater levels of deep learning and greater gains in learning and personal development.

## Gallaudet Faculty & Students: Environment for Studying??

- ♦ 60% of FY students report spending about 10 or FEWER hours per week studying (Mid East Priv. = 38%)
- ♦ 80% of Lower Division faculty expected students to study 5-10 hrs per week for ONE course!
- ♦ Hours these same faculty think students actually spend?
  - ♦ **Less than 4 hours (76%)**
- ♦ 45% faculty reported that Gallaudet emphasizes spending time studying “quite a bit or very much” vs. 69% FY students

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## Worrisome Gap? Time spent studying

- ♦ First-year students average about 13-14 hrs. per week studying
- ♦ Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) data indicate that faculty expect students to spend more than twice that amount preparing (estimated 24-30 hrs. a week for FT)
- ♦ Entering first-year students **EXPECT** to study more than they actually do in college

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## Questions about Gallaudet NSSE results

- ♦ *What results surprised you?*
- ♦ *What results correspond with your hunches or other Gallaudet data?*
- ♦ *What additional questions do these results raise?*
- ♦ *Around which data points do you want more evidence?*
- ♦ *Which results might be used to inform improvement initiatives?*

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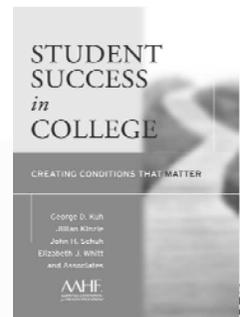
## To Ponder...



- ♦ To what extent is academic effort emphasized in the FY at Gallaudet? How can this be elevated?
- ♦ How might Gallaudet students gain more frequent, and varied writing experiences?
- ♦ What accounts for FY high engagement in the student-faculty interaction?
- ♦ How might Senior experiences be made more distinct and provide more culminating activities?

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What does an educationally effective college look like at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?



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**DEEP Results:  
Conditions to Promote Student Success**

1. "Living" Mission and "Lived" Educational Philosophy
2. Unshakeable Focus on Student Learning
3. Environments Adapted for Educational Enrichment
4. Clearly Marked Pathways to Student Success
5. Improvement-Oriented Ethos
6. Shared Responsibility for Educational Quality

NSSE

**4. Clear Pathways to Student Success**

- ♦ Guideposts tied directly to academic program, i.e., first-year seminars, others less formal, i.e., convocations that celebrate educational attainment
- ♦ Publications accurately describe what students experience
- ♦ Redundant early warning systems and safety nets
- ♦ Clear messages about the resources and services available to help students succeed and clear expectations for their use

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**Socialization to academic expectations**

At Wheaton, new students read a common book and essays by faculty that respond to the reading. Assigned readings, faculty responses, and the website combine to introduce incoming students to preferred ways to grapple with intellectual issues.

NSSE

**Intentional acculturation**

KU's "Traditions Night." 3,000 + students gather in the football stadium to rehearse the Rock Chalk Chant, listen to stories about the Jayhawk, learn the "I'm a Jayhawk" school song, and hear stories intended to instill students' commitment to graduation

**Clarify What Students Need to do to Succeed**

- ♦ Ursinus College mission claims a distinct mission to develop "independent learners." All students now required to complete an "Independent Learning Experience (ILE)" to graduate.

*ILEs = independent research, internship, field experience; department committee approves what satisfies requirement*

NSSE

**DEEP Lessons: Teaching & Learning**

Clarify what students need to do to succeed

- ♦ Students will better manage academic challenges if they have an idea of what to expect and when and how to deal with these issues
- ♦ Do not leave students to discover on their own what it takes to be successful
- ♦ If activity or experience is valuable, consider requiring it (e.g., must revise assignment with a writing tutor)

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**Be Explicit About What it Takes...  
"Introduce Students to Academic  
Citizenship"**

Student success requires that professors explain more things to today's students that we once took for granted –

*"Make clear the demands of academic work and show students how to begin to address those tasks... You must buy the book, you must read it and come to class, you must observe deadlines or make special arrangements when you miss one"*

Prof. Richard Turner (*Thought & Action*, 1998, p.34)

NSSE

**Redundant early warning systems:  
"Tag Teaming"**

❖Wheaton first-year student advising team includes faculty, student preceptors, librarians and administrative staff.

❖At Ursinus, Miami, and Wheaton representatives from both academic affairs and student affairs serve as academic advisors.

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**Redundant early warning systems**

FSU's Early Alert program enables faculty to contact first-year student mentors and University College personnel to alert them to students experiencing difficulty during the first two weeks of the semester. Mentors contact students to advise and refer as appropriate.

NSSE

**Creating Conditions that Matter**

**Specify The Path To Student Success**

- Draw an accurate map; 'distribute' it widely and follow it consistently
- Implement a comprehensive network of early warning systems and safety nets
- Front load resources to smooth the transition, increase coherence
- If something works, consider requiring it

NSSE

**Taking Action at Gallaudet**

1. Identify 1 student behavior to be changed. Note how the behavior is to be changed and indicate how you will determine if it has.
2. Identify 1 faculty/administrator behavior to be changed... (preferably your own behavior!)
3. Note which of NSSE Benchmarks, or particular NSSE items that are best exemplified in your department. What evidence supports this?
4. Which of these principles deserve greater attention?
5. What might you do differently in your own practice to enhance undergraduate student learning at Gallaudet?

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***Last Word on Student Success....***

***"We don't want students to go through school, but for school to go through them."***

***Faculty member, Fayetteville State University***

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