

# FAST FACTS

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research

August 26, 2019

## National Survey of Student Engagement (part 1)

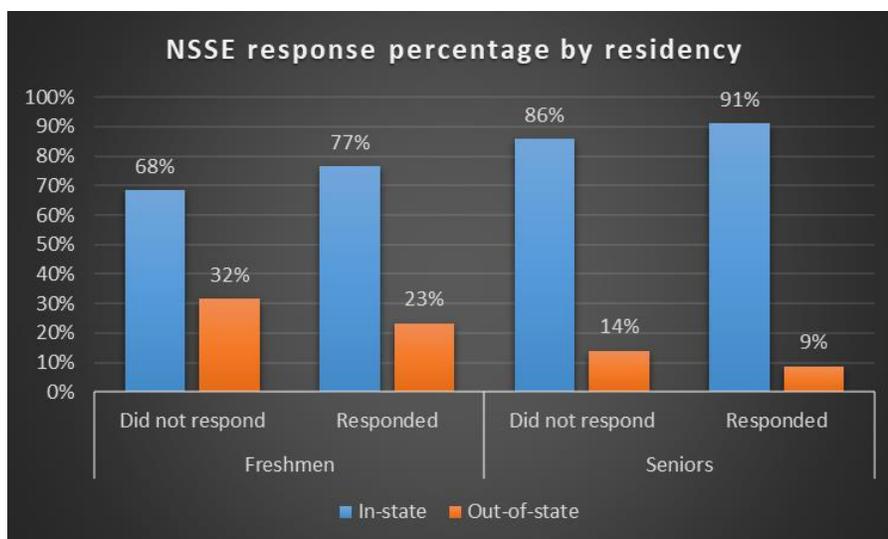
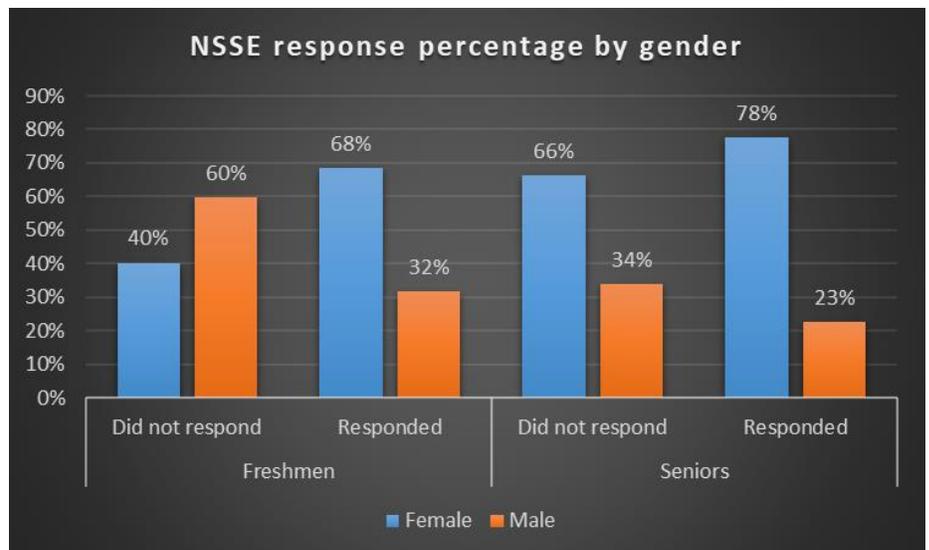
This week in *Fast Facts* we will begin looking at the results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), a nationally normed survey that we administer to freshmen and seniors every three years. The NSSE survey measures student involvement in a number of academic activities as well as co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

In spring 2019, we invited 755 students to take the survey; 220 students responded for a 29% response rate, which is quite good for this type of survey.

A basic question that is typically asked in evaluating the results of this type of survey is whether the survey respondents are representative of the population as a whole. More specifically, are the 220 students who took the NSSE survey at Highlands representative of the 755 students who were invited to take the survey? If not, one has to be cautious about interpreting survey results.

The chart to the right shows the response rates by gender. (For the NSSE survey, results are always reported separately for freshmen and seniors.) These data indicate that for freshmen, the response rate was much higher for female

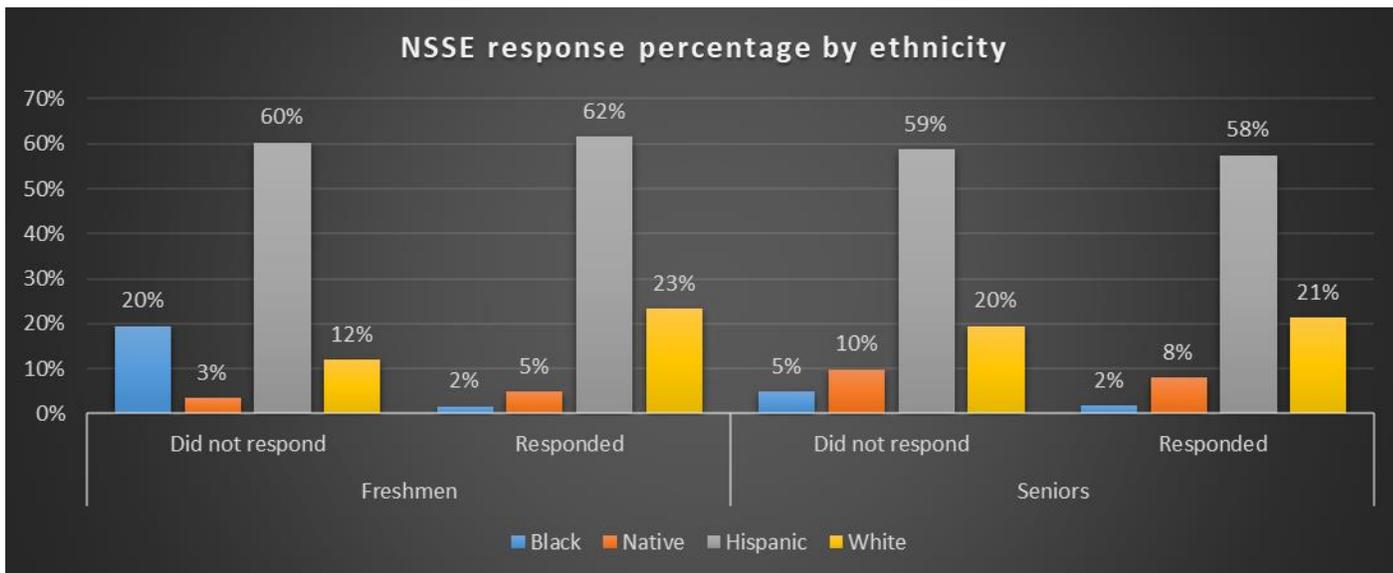
students. Specifically, 68% of respondents were female, but only 40% of non-respondents were female. For seniors, the response rate was somewhat higher for female students but the difference was not as marked.



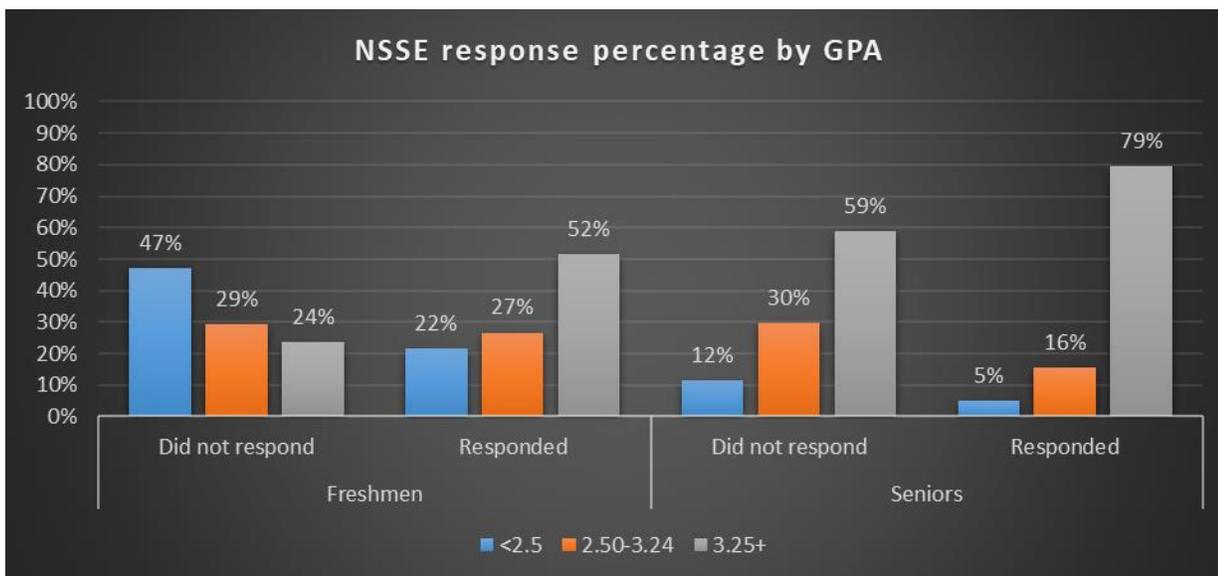
The chart to the left shows response rates by residency. These data indicate that response rates were somewhat higher for in-state students than for out-of-state students, although the differences are not marked.

The chart on the top of the next page shows response rates by ethnicity. These data indicate that for seniors, there were no marked differences in response rate by ethnicity. However, for freshmen the response rate was very low for African American students. Only 2% of respondents were African American, compared to

20% of non-respondents. On the other hand, the response rate was relatively high for white students.



The chart below shows response rate by cumulative NMHU GPA. These data show quite clearly that students who are more successful academically were more likely to respond to the survey. For example, among freshman 52% of respondents had a GPA of 3.25 or higher, compared to only 24% of non-respondents.



There are of course many other demographic and academic variables we could examine to help determine the representativeness of the survey respondents, but the data above give some idea of the general approach taken to addressing this question.

Overall, there were some demographic and background differences between respondents and non-respondents. Respondents were disproportionately female, white, and high GPA. It is possible that these demographic differences could bias the results to a certain degree, but extensive research on the NSSE survey has demonstrated that the survey results are relatively robust against these types of differences, as long as they are not extreme.

Please let us know if you have any comments or any suggestions for future *Fast Facts* topics. You can send an email to Lee Allard at [lallard@nmhu.edu](mailto:lallard@nmhu.edu).