

NSSE Civic Engagement Module Findings

Spring 2021

In spring 2021, all currently registered undergraduate students (N=16,752) were invited to participate in the civic engagement module of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey. A total of 990 students responded to the survey (response rate of 5.90 percent) and 771 completed the survey (a completion rate of 77.88 percent).

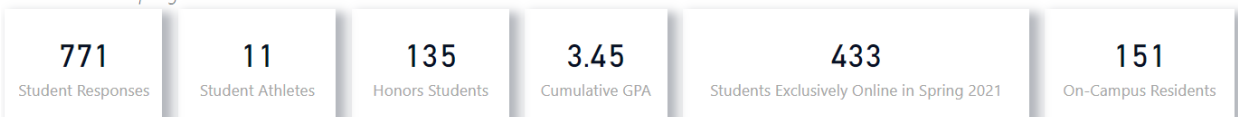
The survey included four groups of closed-ended rating questions, two open-ended questions, and two demographic questions. The four groups of rating questions asked students to rate their level of civic skills, their perception of how Illinois State University emphasizes civic engagement, where they felt they most practiced civic engagement, and the frequency with which they participated in civic engagement in during that school year.

Closed-Ended Responses

A breakdown of all closed-ended results can be found by requesting access to the [Power BI report](#). All questions can be filtered by college, department or school, student year in school, student gender identity, and student race/ethnic identity.

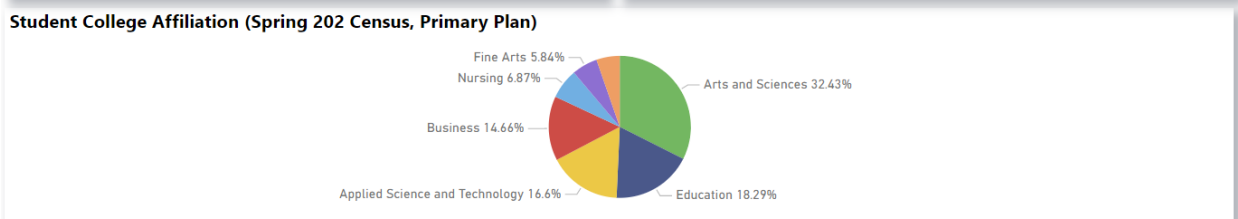
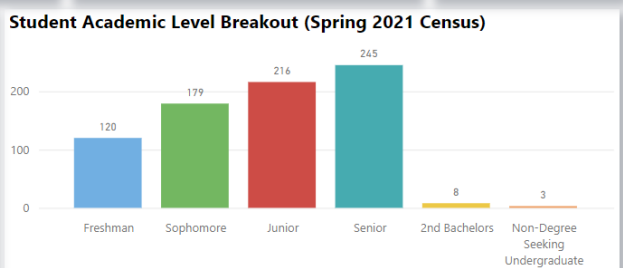
NSSE Civic Engagement Pulse Survey Results

Administered in spring 2021



Student Reported Racial/Ethnic and Gender Identities

Race/Ethnicity	Female	Male	Non-binary	Transgender	Not specified	Total
Asian or Asian American	18	7			1	26
Black or African American	25	5				30
Hispanic, Latino, Latina, or Latinx	36	7				43
Middle Eastern or North African	2	2				4
Multiple Racial/Ethnic Identities	26	13				39
White	449	130	11	3	4	597
Not specified	4	6			22	32
Total	560	170	11	3	27	771



Open-Ended Responses

The two open-ended questions were coded, thematized, and analyzed. The findings from that analysis are provided below.

Meaningful civic experiences at Illinois State

The first question asked students: “Think about the experiences you may have had with campus, local, state, national, or global issues while at ISU. What about these experiences has been most meaningful to you?”

A total of 444 students answered this question. These responses were content analyzed, coded, and categorized. Four responses were removed from the dataset in that the respondent did not answer the question. Of the remaining 440 responses, many identified a specific instance or provided a generalized context of how they have engaged with a variety of social issues while a student at Illinois State University. A description of how students identified where the experience(s) were found is provided in the frequency table below.

Where experience occurred	N	Percent
Illinois State University	283	64.32%
<i>Campus (overall)</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>40.90%</i>
<i>Co-curricular</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>12.05%</i>
<i>Curricular</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>11.36%</i>
Outside of Illinois State University	52	11.82%
Not identified	92	20.91%
No experience	13	2.95%
TOTAL	440	100%

Most students specified Illinois State University when describing the experiences where they have engaged with societal issues. Of the students who did not identify the meaningful experience as being a part of Illinois State (n=144), several listed national and global events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement (15.50%). Others indicated they engaged in service and volunteering in their local communities which was meaningful to them (8.94%). The vast majority of respondents indicated that discussions with individuals that had similar and divergent perspectives helped to broaden their understanding of the issue (31.53%) or helped them to build community with their discussants (19.44%). The remainder indicated they felt the experience helped them to make a difference/contribute to the issue or the community (20.10%) or they were able to develop new skills (4.39%).

The students that identified a specific or generalized experience with a societal issue while a student at Illinois State provided a variety of perspectives related to both curricular and co-curricular experiences. Students who articulated a positive view of the institution (90.2 percent) expressed that they felt like they have found or developed a community of peers who shared similar values, but also challenged them to broaden perspectives. Overwhelmingly, students identified that they contemplated social issues with peers in discussions both inside and outside of the classroom. Student responses specifically called out voting in the 2020 election, volunteering, class discussions about critical civic issues, participation in registered student organizations, campus Black Lives Matter protests, the campus-wide presidential emails in response to world events, and the institution’s COVID-19 response as critical and positive experiences during their time at Illinois State.

As consistent with the 2019 administration of the Civic Engagement module, the majority of students with negative views of Illinois State (8.3 percent) indicated that they felt that the campus was “too liberal” and alternative ways of thinking were not accepted on campus. Other negative perceptions of the institution stemmed from a perceived lack of action in response to critical campus and world events such as the Black Lives Matter movement and racial discrimination. Students with negative perceptions of the institution also indicated that they have not talked about critical social issues while at Illinois State and felt like campus did not respond appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Motivational faculty/staff at Illinois State

The second open-ended question asked students: “Please tell us about one ISU faculty or staff member who motivated you to make a difference in your community.”

A total of 523 students provided responses to the second question asking about a faculty/staff member that motivated them to make a difference in their community. All comments were analyzed, but not all identified an individual. The table below provides a breakdown of the categories of individuals respondents identified in their answers to this question.

Category	N	Percent
Faculty	329	62.79%
<i>Unidentified faculty member</i>	62	
<i>Identified tenured/tenure-track faculty member</i>	96	
<i>Identified non-tenure-track faculty member</i>	171	
Graduate Assistant	18	3.44%
Staff	84	16.04%
<i>Unidentified staff member</i>	9	
<i>Identified staff member</i>	75	
Student Organization/Group	5	0.95%
Student Resident Hall Assistant	9	1.72%
Unspecified/Unable to Identify	8	1.53%
No one	70	13.55%
TOTAL	523	100%

In total, 240 faculty/staff members were identified by name, and 68 of those faculty/staff members were listed by more than one student. There were also more generalize responses in which students reported a professor of an identified class or provided a broad response such as “my advisor,” “my RA,” or “the entire department.”

Just over half of the students that indicated they did not have a faculty/staff member to mention (n=70) took their first year or two of college coursework at Illinois State online during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Just under 80 percent of students who did not indicate a faculty/staff member were also considered first-time-in-college students.

Some students provided descriptions of how the identified and/or unidentified faculty/staff member motivated them to make a difference in their community. These responses were analyzed and

thematized. Each theme category is presented in the table below with specific examples from student responses.

Category	N	Percent
Be Active/Volunteer	64	24.90%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...always encouraging us to help out where we can because it's the right thing to do!"</i> • <i>"...taught me to get involved and active in the community"</i> • <i>"...encourages students to put their practices into action"</i> 		
Be Informed/Research/Listen	22	8.56%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...has been incredibly supportive in motivating us to do more for the community and ourselves. For example, he wants students to be knowledgeable about the going-on's of the world, and to think for ourselves."</i> • <i>"...always encouraged us to attend local meetings and discussions, encouraged us to do our own research into important social issues that mattered to us"</i> • <i>"The course reads topics happening in society. Talking about them makes me want to make a difference."</i> 		
Broadened Perspectives	46	17.90%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...inspired me to have empathy for those around me in and outside of the classroom!"</i> • <i>"...has been very helpful in making me more open to ideas outside of my own biases. In doing so, I stopped being as myopic as I was in terms of political affairs and began to focus on pressing local issues"</i> • <i>"...inspires a more inclusive and accessible train of thought in students."</i> 		
Campus Involvement	9	3.50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...has been a huge voice here at ISU. She informs me the most with what's going on and always makes us aware of what groups are available to join and what's going on."</i> • <i>"...motivated me to get outside more with friends"</i> • <i>"...talked to about why and what things you can do on campus and sometimes had discussions in class to talk about what you could do."</i> 		
Career/Professional Development	15	5.84%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...motivates me to be a great teacher and make a difference in my community by putting kids first and doing what is best for them. She emphasizes the importance of being a safe place for kids because for some kids, the only love they will see is at school."</i> • <i>"...motivated me recently to go you after your dreams, which involves being an employee/running a business, making the community feel more like a community."</i> • <i>"...has encouraged me to get an internship in environmental science and has been helping me work through the steps in career prep class"</i> 		
Promote Passion/Use Voice to Make Change	32	12.45%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...has motivated me to at least have meaningful conversations with others in the community because talking is the first step in making a difference in communities."</i> • <i>"...always advocated that we stand up for what we believe in"</i> • <i>"She helped me learn my purpose through her course work and made me feel like I owe it to our nation to help those around me through my voice."</i> 		
Personal Growth/Development	59	22.96%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"My advisor because she has encouraged me to continue to push through this school year & be my best self academically which in turn helps me be a better more active member of my college community"</i> • <i>"I went through a really rough time during the year and she always emailed me and checked in on me. She made me feel special and she really inspired me to be a better person to everyone around me."</i> • <i>"...has encouraged me to do so many things that I never thought I could. She helped me make a difference"</i> 		
Voting/Electoral Engagement	10	3.89%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...encouraged us to vote in the most recent election, regardless of our political affiliation because she cared about us having our voices heard"</i> • <i>"...One staff member that was very active in voicing how us students should interact in constructive dialogue no matter the individual opinions and vote for what we believe in"</i> 		

- *“...talks about the importance of voting and how your vote trues matters in every kind of election”*

TOTAL 257 100%