*University of Central Missouri*

2010 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE)

**Executive Summary**

**This report presents the results of the 2010 Faculty Survey of Student Engagement. The online survey consisted of a battery of questions organized along 13 topical dimensions/constructs. The following highlights the major findings of the study.**

1. **High-Impact Learning: Faculty members were asked how important is it for undergraduate students to experience certain high-impact learning. UCM faculty reported greater importance (90%) on student experiencing culminating senior experience, followed by practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment The data show that far fewer faculty members (23%) identified independent study or self-designed major (23%) and study abroad (38%) as “important” or “very important.”**
2. **Student Relationship with University Constituents: Respondents were asked to rate student-to-student relationships, student-to faculty, and student–to-staff/administration relationships. A sizable majority of respondents (88%) perceived student relationships with other students and with faculty members (85%) positive. Less than half of respondents (46%) rated the quality of student relationships with administrative personnel and offices as helpful, considerate, flexible.**
3. **Activities Emphasized at UCM: Responding faculty members were asked to rate the extent to which UCM emphasizes various tasks for undergraduate students that would enhance their success. The data suggest that faculty members believe strongly that UCM emphasis activities that are academic in nature- encouraging students to use computers in their academic work (91%), followed by providing students the support they need to help them succeed academically (84%). According to the survey results, the least emphasis of UCM is on helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.) at 38%.**
4. **Faculty Time Use: Faculty members were asked to respond to a set of questions about the number of hours in a typical 7-day week they work on various academic tasks. Faculty members spend the majority of their time in classroom based activities such as teaching, grading papers and exams, preparing for class and giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students.**

1. **Student Preparation for Class: The FSSE asked faculty members how much time they expect students to spend preparing for their class and how much time they believe students actually spend preparing for class. More UCM faculty members expect their students to spend 5-6 hours a week preparing for their class, and they believe that students actually spend 1-2 hours.**
2. **Course Activity: FSSE asked faculty members to indicate the percentage of students in their selected course section that engaged in various class activities. Forty-three percent of faculty reported that 50% or more of their students occasionally use email to communicate with them, frequently ask question (33%), at least once talk about career plans (32%), and frequently come to class without completing readings or assignments (30%). Eighty-seven percent of faculty members indicated that students receive prompt written or oral feedback from them on their academic performance “often” or “very often.”**

1. **Reading and writing: The survey asked faculty members how much reading and writing they assign students. An overwhelming majority of respondents assigned between 1-3 textbooks, books, or book length packs of course reading. About 46% of students write between 2-6 papers or reports of fewer than 5 pages. The survey further asked faculty members about the amount of student homework in a typical week. Thirty-six percent of students take 1-2 problem sets that take more than one hour to complete.**
2. **Emphasis on Mental Ability: Faculty members were asked how much during the current school year do they believe student coursework emphasized mental activities in the teaching and learning process. Nine out of ten faculty members indicated that their coursework emphasis analysis of ideas, followed by synthesis of ideas (87%).**
3. **Coursework Structure: Faculty members were asked to indicate the extent to which they structure their course section so that students learn and develop in a variety of areas. Across all levels, findings shows that faculty mostly structure their courses to enhance student development in thinking critically, and analytically, and learning effectively on their own.**

**Introduction**

The University of Central Missouri was one of the --- institutions participating in the spring 2010 administration of the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE). The survey was designed by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. The survey is designed to gauge faculty expectations for student engagement in educational practices that are known to be empirically associated with high levels of learning, progression, retention and graduation.

The survey, which consists of a battery 130 questions, focuses on:

(1) Faculty perceptions of how often students engage in various academic enrichment activities.

(2) The importance faculty place on various areas leaning and development.

(3) Faculty perception of student-faculty interaction.

(4) How faculty members organize their time, both in and of the classroom.

(4) Faculty opinions about the kinds of learning experiences that are emphasized at UCM.

(5) Amount of emphasis faculty place on higher -order cognitive learning.

(6) Level of academic challenge faculty provide undergraduate students.

Many of the items on the FSSE complement the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), thereby providing opportunity to compare faculty and student responses.

**Survey Methodology**

The Office of Institutional Research at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) provided the Research Coordinator at Indiana University, Bloomington, with the e-mail addresses of faculty members at UCM. Only those faculty members who taught at least one undergraduate course in the 2009-2010 academic year were included in the sample. In spring 2010, FSSE transmitted a link to the web-based survey to 474 UCM faculty members who were invited to respond to the online survey. Almost half (n=232) of faculty members responded, for a response rate of 49% - which is slightly higher than the national response rate of 48%.

Participating faculty members were asked to identify a particular undergraduate course-lower division or upper-division

- that they teach and use it as the basis for responding to FSSE. The survey group respondents into two main groups of undergraduate instruction: lower division faculty and upper division faculty. According to the survey results, 87 respondents identified themselves as lower division faculty (i.e., the students in their identified course sections are mostly first-year and sophomore students), 118 identified themselves as upper division faculty (the students in their identified course sections are mostly juniors and seniors), 16 taught “other” courses, and the remaining 11 respondents did not specify the course level they taught.

**Characteristics of Respondents**

The vast majority of respondents (98%) are full-time faculty. Most respondents (73%) have a doctorate degree, and 21% have a master’s degree. Sixty-one percent of responding faculty members are tenured, almost one-fifth (19%) are on tenure track but not tenured, and 21% are not on tenure track. About one-third (30%) of the responding faculty are at the rank of professor; associate professor (28%); assistant professor (26%); instructor (14%) and 2% belonged to “other” rank. More than half (52%) of respondents are women. Eighty percent are Caucasian. A small proportion (8%) of faculty respondents are 34 years of age or younger; 56% are between the ages 35 and 54; and 36% are 54 years of age or older.

Participants represent a variety of academic disciplines, withabout one-quarter (24%) reporting teaching in the arts and humanities disciplines, physical science (9%), social sciences (11%), professional (10%), education (14%), business (8%), biological sciences (3%), and “other” disciplines (21%). Forty five percent of respondents have taught their identified course sections for 15 years or more prior to spring 2010; 10-14 years (22%); 5-9 years (23%), and 10% stated they have taught the identified course sections for 4 years or less.

Ninety percent of respondents indicated they taught 4 or more classes in 2009-10 (26% taught 4-6 classes, and 64% taught 7 or more classes). Thirty- six percent of respondents (60% of lower division vs.19% of upper division faculty members) indicated that their identified course sections fulfill a general education requirement. Instructional formats varied among respondents-classroom, on-campus (85%), classroom, auxiliary location (4%) and distance education (11%).

**Summary of Findings**

***Out-of-Class Learning Experiences***

Academic enrichment activities or *high impact practices* have positive effects on student learning, progression and graduation. Participating faculty members were asked: How important is it to you that undergraduates at your institution do the following? Almost 9 out of 10 faculty members (89%) placed importance on participation in a *practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or*

*clinical assignmen*t. Another 70% of participating faculty members identified a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, etc.) as being “very important” or “important.” In addition, the data show that 60% of faculty members reported that it is “important” or “very important” for undergraduates to *community service or volunteer work, work on a research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirements (51%)*, foreign language coursework (50%), participation in learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together (48%), study abroad (38%) and independent study or self-designed major (23%).

Upper division faculty were more likely to report an increased in importance on student experiencing practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment than lower division faculty(92% vs.85%), and culminating senior experience (95% vs. 84%), community service or volunteer work (67% vs. 50%), and participation in learning community (50% vs. 46%). In contrast, lower division faculty members were more likely than upper division faculty to report an increased in importance on student experiencing work on research project with a faculty member outside of course or program requirement, foreign language coursework, study abroad, and independent study or self-designed major.

***Student Relationship with University Constituencies***

When faculty members were asked to rate the quality of student relationships with other students, faculty and administrative personnel, opinions varied. The data suggest that faculty respondents characterized “student relationships with other students” (88%) as being *friendly, supportive, with a sense of belonging*. A sizable majority (85%), characterized “student relationships with faculty members” at UCM as being *available, helpful and sympathetic*. Forty-six percent of participating faculty members perceived “student relationship with administrative personnel and offices” as helpful, considerate and flexible. Both upper and lower division faculty members were equally split on each of the three items.

***Activities Emphasized at UCM***

Faculty members were asked to indicate the extent to which each of the activities listed in Table 1 is emphasized at UCM. The data reveal that there is “very much” or “quite a bit” emphasis on academic activities. For example, almost all participating faculty members across all levels (91%) indicated that the University of Central Missouri places “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis in *encouraging students to use computers in their academic work.* A sizable majority of responding faculty 84% of faculty reported that *providing students the support they need to help them succeed academically is emphasized “*quite a bit*” and “*very much*.”* Surprisingly, only 55% of faculty indicated that they place “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis on activities *requiring students to spend significant amount of time studying and on academic work.*

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| **TABLE 1.** | | | |
| **Characteristics of FSSE 2010 Respondents** | | | |
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|  | **FSSE Respondents** | | |
|  | **(n=232)** | | |
| Gender |  |  |  |
| Male |  | 48% |  |
| Female |  | 52% |  |
| Race/Ethnicity |  |  |  |
| American Indian or other Native American |  | 1% |  |
| Asian American or Pacific Islander |  | 5% |  |
| Black or African American |  | 4% |  |
| White (non-Hispanic) |  | 84% |  |
| Hispanic or Latin |  | 4% |  |
| Multiracial |  | 1% |  |
| Other |  | 1% |  |
| Employment Status |  |  |  |
| Full-time |  | 98% |  |
| Part-time |  | 2% |  |
| Rank |  |  |  |
| Professor |  | 30% |  |
| Associate Professor |  | 28% |  |
| Assistant Professor |  | 26% |  |
| Instructor or Lecturer |  | 14% |  |
| Other |  | 2% |  |

It is important to note that participating faculty members who taught upper- division courses in their field were more likely to indicate that the university places emphasis in *requiring students to spend significant amounts of time studying and on academic work (57%)* than were lower-division faculty members (50%). In contrast, participating faculty members who taught lower-division courses were more likely than upper division faculty respondents to indicate that UCM places “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis in helping students cope with non – academic responsibilities- work, family, campus events and co-curricular activities.

**Faculty Time Use**

The FSSE survey asked faculty participants to report how many hours in a typical 7-day week they spend on twelve disparate teaching and learning activities. Responding faculty members across all levels spend a vast majority of their time engaging in instructional related activities. Five classroom activities in which more than half of faculty members spend 5 or more hours doing in a typical 7-day week include *teaching undergraduate students in class (90%); preparing for class (83%); grading papers and exams (74%); giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students (60%) and research and scholarly activities (53%).*

*Overall,* faculty members were less inclined to spend time on non-academic activities such as *supervising internships or other field experiences or* working with students on activities other than course work *(committees, orientation, student life activities, etc*.). *.*

**Academic and Intellectual Engagement**

The FSSE 2010 survey asked faculty participants to estimate the percentage of students in their selected course sections that engage in seven academic and intellectual experiences. Both lower- and upper-division faculty members (27% and 37%, respectively) were less inclined to report that 50% or more of their students *frequently ask question in class or contribute to class discussion.* Lower division faculty members were more likely (33%) than upper-division faculty (29%) to report that report that 50% or more of their students *frequently come to class without completing reading or assignment.*

The data suggest that upper–division faculty members were more inclined than lower-division faculty (50% vs. 33%) to report that 50% or more of their students *occasionally use e-mail to communicate with them,* *occasional discussed their grad*e (33% upper-division and 19% lower-division). Far fewer lower- division faculty members (10%) reported that 50% or more of their students *at least once, talk about career plans,* compared to (32%) of upper-division faculty members who stated that 50% or more of their students discussed their career plans with them.

Respondents were further asked to indicate how often the students in their selected course sections engage in various academic activities in the classrooms. Almost half of the participate faculty members reported that the students in their course sections “often” or “very often” have class discussions or writing assignment that include diverse perspective (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) – 52% of upper-division Vs. 46% of lower-division faculty members. Almost nine out of ten faculty lower and upper faculty members indicated that their students receive prompt written or oral feedback from them on their academic performance.

**Reading and Writing**

The 2010 FSSE asked UCM faculty members how much reading and writing they require of their students. Respondents were posed with the following question: “In your selected course section, about how much reading and writing do you assign students.” Analysis of the number of assigned textbooks, books, or book-length pacts of course readings suggest that a bulk of UCM faculty members in the sample assigned either 1 textbook (69% lower-division and 54% upper-division) or 2-3 textbooks ( 22% lower- division and 34% upper-division).

Few faculty members reported that students wrote many papers or reports of 20 pages or more- with 95% of lower-division faculty and 74% upper-division faculty reporting none. Faculty members across all levels assigned shorter, report-style paper of fewer than 5 pages- 32% of lower division and 20% of upper-division faculty report none. Overall, lower division faculty members at UCM require less reading and writing than do upper division faculty.

Participating faculty members were asked to report how many homework problems set they require of students in a typical week and whether the problem sets take their students more or less than one hour to complete. The findings revealed that 35% of faculty members are not requiring any home problem sets. These findings are consistent across all levels.

Respondents were asked, “In a typical 7-day week, about how many hours do you **expect** your students to spend preparing for your class.” More UCM faculty members (33%) expect their students to spend 5-6 hours a week preparing for their class. Faculty members were further asked to report how many hours they think their students **actually** spend preparing for classes. Sixty-six percent of respondents reported that their students actually spend 1-2 hours in a typical 7-day week preparing for classes.

**Importance Place on Various Areas of Learning**

Respondents were posed with the following question: “How important to you is it that your students do the following? The importance faculty members place on various areas of learning is shown in Table 2. According to FSSE 2010 results, almost all respondents (91%) indicated that it is important to them that their students *learn something that changes the way they understand an issue or concept* ; *work on a paper or project that require s integrating ideas or information from various sources* (82%); *try to better understand someone else’s views by imagining how an issue looks from that person’s perspective* (72%); examine the strengths and weaknesses of their views on a topic or issue (70%).

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| **TABLE 2.** | | | |
| **The Importance Faculty Place on Various Areas of Learning and Development** | | | |
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|  | **% Saying Task is Important** | | |
|  | **Lower** | **Upper** |  |
| **Task** | **Division** | **Division** | **Total** |
| a. Prepare two or more drafts of a paper |  |  |  |
| before turning it in. | 41 | 49 | 61 |
| b.Work on a paper or prject that requires |  |  |  |
| integrating ideas or information from |  |  |  |
| various sources. | 72 | 89 | 82 |
| c. Work with classmates outside of class |  |  |  |
| to prepare class assignments. | 32 | 56 | 44 |
| d. Put together ideas or concepts from different |  |  |  |
| courses when completing assignments or |  |  |  |
| during class discussion. | 49 | 77 | 63 |
| e. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes |  |  |  |
| with others outside of class (other students, |  |  |  |
| family members, co-workers, etc.) | 54 | 57 | 56 |
| f. tutor or teach other students (paid or voluntary). | 32 | 32 | 32 |
| g. Examine the strengths and weaknesses of |  |  |  |
| their views on a topic or issue. | 67 | 73 | 70 |
| h. Try to better understand someone else's views |  |  |  |
| by imagining how an issue looks from |  |  |  |
| that person's perspective. | 69 | 75 | 72 |
| i. Learn something that changes the way |  |  |  |
| they understand an issue or concept. | 87 | 95 | 91 |
| (1) Not important (2) Somewhat important (3) Important (4) Very important. Percentages are based on “Important and “Very Important” categories. |  |  |  |
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Reasonably enough, a higher proportion of faculty members teaching upper-division courses (77%) reported that it is “important” for their students to put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions, compared to faculty members teaching lower-division courses ( only 49%).

**Instructional Strategies**

According survey results, about 38% of faculty members teaching lower- division courses spend over one-half of their class time lecturing, compared to 30% of upper-division faculty members.

**Faculty Perception of Higher-Order Learning**

Five questions were posed to faculty members to assess how much emphasis they place on engaging students in higher-level learning activities. Figure 1 shows how much emphasis –“quite a bit” or “very much”- faculty members in the sample place on engaging undergraduates in higher0order learning. According to the survey results, both upper and lower-division faculty members (90%) agree that coursework at UCM places more ***emphasis*** *on analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory.*

A smaller proportion of faculty members teaching upper-level courses reported an emphasis on memorization (28%), compared to faculty members teaching lower-division faculty members (37%). A sizable majority of respondents (87%) reported “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis on ***synthesizing*** *and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships.* As one would expect, a higher proportion (94%) of upper-division faculty reported “quite a bit” or “very much” emphasis on applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations compare to lower-division faculty (72%). With one exception (see Fig.1), faculty teaching upper-division courses were more likely than those teaching lower-division courses to indicate that they place more emphasis on all measures of higher –order learning.

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| **FIGURE 1.** | | | | | | | | |
| **Emphasis Placed on Engaging Students in Higher-Order Learning** | | | | | | | | |
| **% Percent Reporting "Very Much or "Quite a Bit"** | | | | | | | | |
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**Educational and Personal Growth**

The 2010 FSSE asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they structure their course section so that undergraduate students learn and develop in a variety of areas. Table 4 reports the percentage responding “very much or quite a bit” to the 14 questions. Almost all faculty members (91%) indicated that they structure their courses so that students learn how to *think critically and analytically*. Surprisingly, this did not hold true “analyzing qualitative problems” (only 40% of lower-division and 50% of upper-division) indicated that they structure their courses to accomplish this goal.

It is interesting to note that more lower-division faculty members (66%) indicated that they structure their courses so that students learn and develop *acquiring a broad general education,* compared to (45%) ofupper-division faculty. This finding is not shocking, given that freshman and sophomore courses are often designed to meet general education requirements. A sizable majority of participating members structure their course section so that students can learn effectively on their own. Overall, upper-division faculty reported higher percentages than lower –division faculty on all but there questions- *developing a deepened sense of spirituality* and *acquiring a broad general education*.

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| **TABLE 3.** | | | |
| **Percent Of Faculty Members Who Structure Their Course** | | | |
| **So That Students Can Learn and Develop In The Following** | | | |
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|  | **% Saying "quite a bit" or very much"** | | |
|  | **Lower** | **Upper** |  |
| **Educational and Personal Growth** | **Division** | **Division** | **Total** |
| a. Writing clearly and effectively. | 47 | 63 | 57 |
| b. Speaking clearly and effectively. | 39 | 60 | 52 |
| c. Thinking critically and analytically. | 88 | 94 | 91 |
| d. Analyzing quantitative problems. | 40 | 50 | 45 |
| e. Using computing and information technology. | 38 | 53 | 47 |
| f. Working effectively with others. | 51 | 65 | 59 |
| g. Learning effectively on their own. | 85 | 88 | 86 |
| h. Understanding themselves. | 50 | 49 | 49 |
| i. Understanding people of other racial and |  |  |  |
| ethnic backgrounds. | 46 | 43 | 44 |
| j. Solving complex real-world problems. | 53 | 74 | 65 |
| k. Developing a personal code of values and ethics. | 45 | 56 | 51 |
| l. Developing a deepened sense of spirituality. | 11 | 8 | 9 |
| m. Acquiring a broad general education. | 66 | 45 | 54 |
| n. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and |  |  |  |
| skills. | 54 | 89 | 74 |