

ASUM Response to NSSE Snapshot (2016)

1. What area(s) of the snapshot did you find most surprising (positive/negative)?

- The four engagement indicators which STARTED significantly lower freshmen year
- UM is comparable to peer institutions in the area of challenging students to best work
- Female entrance is double that of males
- Low quality of interactions with staff and faculty
- Collaborative learning being high.
- It's interesting that for first year students all of the low performance in Item Comparisons had to deal with social interactions
- Lack of student help/assistance for freshman and seniors
- UM Students spend more time reading than peer institutions

2. Which areas do you think UM can most improve on?

- emphasis on providing opportunities to be more socially involved
- Discussion with people of a race different from our own- diversity awareness and sensitization
- People are not 'reaching their own conclusions' when presented with numerical information. This is bad and needs to be improved
- The quality of interactions with administrative staff and offices seems to be our lowest senior score.
- Improving awareness to attend campus activities and events.
- The institution providing support for students academically.
- Department and administrative transparency.
- Students working together in classes and better quality interactions with other students
- Provide better interactions with other students
- Better emphasis on University events
- Awareness toward diversity, race, etc.
- Destigmatizing mental health/encouraging students to seek mental health help especially during their freshman year

3. How can we improve these numbers?

- Invite guest lecturers of diverse cultures into regular classes and not just panels after class hours----Privilege training like S.I.N. is doing
- Actual critical thinking skills based on real quantifiable data need to be emphasized in general education here, rather than 'Critical Thinking' imposed by X Studies courses
- Student Club days on the oval for more than just the Welcome Feast -- with freshman seminar using a portion of class to invite student clubs to come speak
- Encouragement and incentivization of peer mentoring both in and out of the classroom should be increased. This will take stress off professors while contributing to greater

academic success among students, greater contact with peers of different religious and racial backgrounds, and a richer overall academic experience while addressing our shortcomings in these areas.

- There needs to be increased communication between administration and the academic departments it oversees. While this can seem difficult in light of the busy schedule most administrators already keep, a thorough examination of administrative structures and practices may reveal redundancies that can be dispensed with in order to make this a more practical and effective approach.
- Provide more peer mentoring to all students in a more specific manner. Traditional helping traditional students, non-traditional helping non-traditional, veterans helping veterans and so on. There should be a program or network of tutors, mentors and other support staff that are able to specifically match a student with a similar student to provide support.
- More open dialogue between faculty/staff and students. Peer mentorship programs instituted.
- The above would help with our academic emphasis being lower than that of other schools - this dialogue could encourage studying and allow professors to stress this importance directly to a student
- Encourage student groups and University leadership to attend more campus events and to do more things to get freshman/first-year students involved.

4. Where are we doing well?

- Courses with community-based projects
- People read more here
- More of our students on average feel that they have been exposed to diverse perspectives, have connected their learning to societal problems, and more freshman feel that they have been exposed to religious beliefs and discussions other than their own.
- Preparing for class, it seems that the average number of hours spent preparing for class do not change much as a student is here. I think that means that freshman come in preparing a lot for their classes.
- Collaborative learning.

5. What contributes to that success?

- Community-minded professors
- People are assigned more reading apparently
- A culturally diverse set of staff and UM employees as well as students; a plethora of multicultural events and academic opportunities, and the relative homogeneity of Montana's population when compared to the heterogeneity of the population at UM.
- Enthusiastic and involved professors