Evaluating a blended degree program through the use of the NSSE framework

Abstract

This session will highlight a student-faculty partnership research study that evaluated the effectiveness of a blended four year Bachelor of Education Elementary Program at a Canadian university using the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) framework. Data was collected from the first graduating cohort of students from the B.Ed. program in partnership with four Undergraduate Student Research Assistants (USRA). The students who participated in this study completed online surveys and focus groups at the end of their first and fourth years in the program. The study participants provided recommendations for improving the quality of the program based on the five NSSE benchmarks and the use of digital technologies. The main recommendations that emerged from this study were that student and faculty interactions, outside of the classroom, could be enhanced through the use of web-based conferencing tools to support “virtual” office hours. Course assignments that incorporate peer mentoring activities through the use of social media applications could provide richer opportunities for active and collaborative learning. Creating more intentional connections between academic coursework and field placements through the use of Google applications could help to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice in the program. Enriching educational experiences could be expanded through the use of social media applications to promote and communicate student led academic and social events. A supportive campus environment could be improved by the development of a digital “road map” and co-curricular record for the program.