

Law School Survey of Student Engagement

LSSSE Users Workshop



Lindsay Watkins

Julie Williams

**Center for Postsecondary Research,
Indiana University Bloomington**



Session Agenda

- ◆ Getting to know LSSSE
- ◆ Conveying the Import of Engagement Data
- ◆ Understanding the Basic LSSSE Reports
- ◆ Digging into Your Reports

Getting to Know LSSSE



What is LSSSE?

What is student engagement?

Why consider engagement data?



What is LSSSE?

- ◆ Based on extensive research on effective educational practice the well-respected National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)
- ◆ The *Law School Survey of Student Engagement* (LSSSE) is designed to provide reliable, credible information about the quality of the law student experience
- ◆ Co-sponsored by The Association of American Law Schools and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching



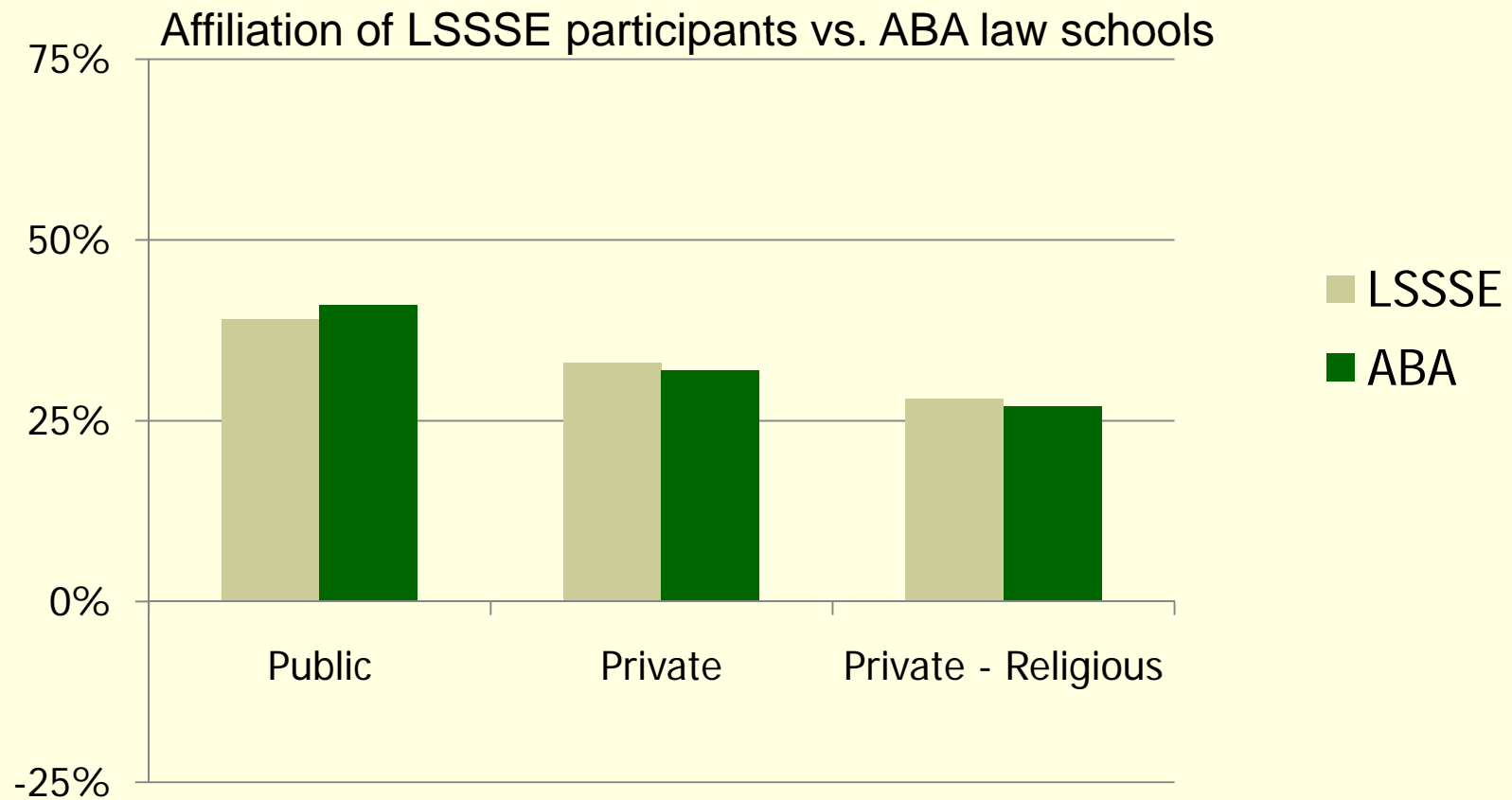
Quick Facts About LSSSE

- ◆ 148 different law schools since 2004
- ◆ More than 27,000 students at 79 law schools in 2007
- ◆ Average institutional response rate 57%
- ◆ Entirely web-based

YEAR	INSTITUTIONS
2008	85 law schools
2007	79 law schools
2006	64 law schools
2005	43 law schools
2004	21 law schools
2003	12 law schools (Pilot survey)



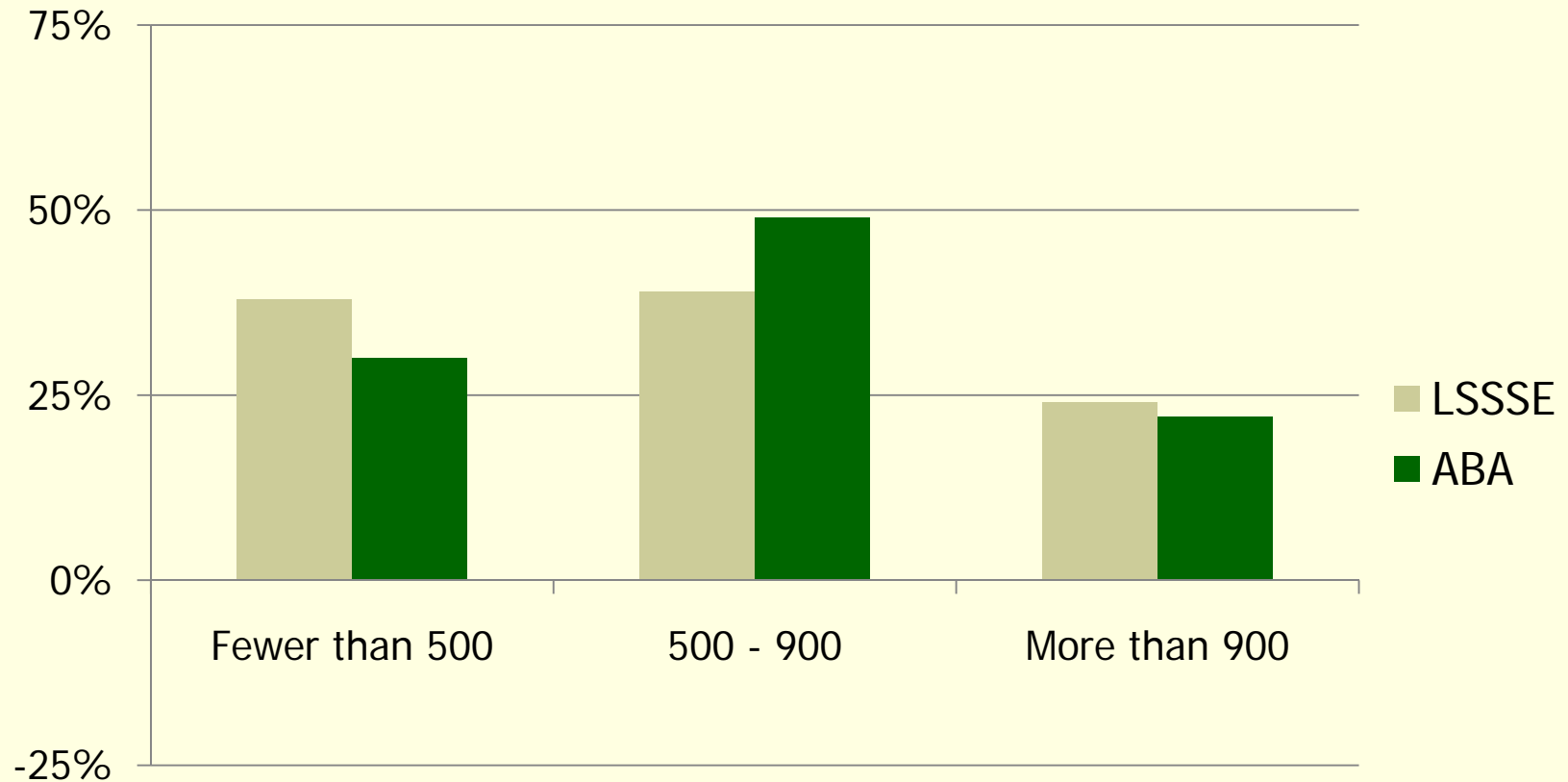
2008 LSSSE Participants





2008 LSSSE Participants

Size of LSSSE participants vs. ABA law schools





What *is* student engagement?

“The combination of time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities and the policies and practices that schools use to induce students to take part in such activities”

Gerald Hess, 49 J. Legal Educ. 371 (1999)

Patrick T. O'Day and George D. Kuh, *Assessing What Matters in Law School: the Law School Survey of Student Engagement*, 81 Ind. L. J. 401, 405 (2006)



Examples of engagement Q's

- ◆ In your experience at your law school during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following? (very often, often, sometimes, never)
 - ◆ Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
 - ◆ Talked about career plans or job search activities with a faculty member or advisor
 - ◆ Participated in a clinical or pro bono project as part of a course or for academic credit



Examples of engagement Q's

- ◆ Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do at your law school before you graduate? (done, plan to do, do not plan to do, undecided)
 - ◆ Clinical internship or field work
 - ◆ Volunteer or pro bono work
 - ◆ Law journal member
 - ◆ Moot court team



Examples of engagement Q's

- ◆ To what extent has your experience at your law school contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?
(very much, quite a bit, some, very little)
 - ◆ Acquiring a broad legal education
 - ◆ Writing clearly and effectively
 - ◆ Speaking clearly and effectively
 - ◆ Thinking critically and analytically



1: Conveying the Import

Know the answers to these questions:

1) Why are we administering this survey?

2) Data validity and reliability

3) What is the research foundation?

**“This survey isn’t appropriate
for **our** students!”**

“These results aren’t true!”



General Assessment Purposes

- ◆ **“If a school does not assess its performance, it can easily be deluded about its success,** the effectiveness of its pedagogical methods, the relevance of its curriculum, and the value of its services.”
- ◆ “[Institutions should ask] – about all policies, programs, and procedures – **‘What is our source of evidence for that assertion?’**”
- ◆ **“Examine, share, and act on assessment findings”**

Munro, Gregory S. (2000), *Outcomes Assessment for Law Schools*. Institute for Law School Teaching.

Wolff, R.A. & Harris, O.A. (1994). Using Assessment to Develop a Culture of Evidence (pp. 271–288). In: D. Halpern, Ed, *Changing College Classrooms: New Teaching and Learning Strategies for an Increasingly Complex World*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Palomba, C. A., & Banta, T. W. (1999). *Assessment essentials: Planning, implementing, and improving assessment in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.



What will you do with the data?

- ◆ Have an answer to this! What do you plan to do with the data. What schools are doing:
 - ◆ Establish a baseline
 - ◆ Prepare for site evaluation or self-assessment
 - ◆ Track changes. Know whether certain initiatives are working
 - ◆ Assess services, policies
 - ◆ Respond to burning questions on your campus



#2: Conveying the Import

Know the answers to these questions:

1) Why are we administering this survey?

2) Validity and reliability

3) What is the research foundation?



Validity of Self-Reported Data

- ◆ Self-reported data is *valid* if five conditions are met:
 1. Information is known to respondents
 2. Questions are phrased clearly & unambiguously
 3. Questions refer to recent activities
 4. Respondents think the questions merit a serious & thoughtful response
 5. Answering the questions does not threaten or embarrass students, violate their privacy, or encourage them to respond in socially-desirable ways
- ◆ LSSSE was intentionally designed to satisfy these five conditions



Quality of Survey Items

- ◆ Survey items...
 - ◆ Are clearly worded
 - ◆ Are well-defined
 - ◆ Have high content and construct validity
 - ◆ Relationships exist between items that are consistent with objective measures and other research
 - ◆ Responses are normally distributed
 - ◆ Patterns of responses are consistent both within and across major fields and institutions



Quality of Institution's Data

- ◆ Full population sampling
- ◆ 85 law schools in the aggregate data pool
- ◆ Response rate
 - ◆ 57% in 2007
 - ◆ What was your school's response rate
- ◆ Are our responses representative?
 - ◆ Examine Respondent Characteristics



3: Conveying the Import

Know the answers to these questions:

- 1) Why are we administering this survey?
- 2) Validity and reliability
- 3) What is the research foundation?**



Research Foundation

- ◆ Decades of research in higher education on best practices for learning. *49 J. Legal Ed. 371 (1999)*
- ◆ Student engagement: combination of time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities
- ◆ **Research shows that students who are more engaged learn more**
- ◆ Measures processes

Understanding the Basic LSSSE Reports





Getting Started: Things to Keep in Mind

- ◆ Engagement scores are **process** measures
- ◆ Engagement scores depend on **context**
- ◆ Ask general questions first
 - ◆ How accurate was your LSSSE sample? What confirms what you suspected? What surprises you?
- ◆ Consider significance and effect size
- ◆ Consider your comparison groups
- ◆ Look for differences in how sub-groups answer



Who is Included in Columns?

JD Population = 1075	Lssevile Law					Selected Peer ^d Group				
	1L	2L	3L	4L	All	1L	2L	3L	4L	All
Response Rate										
Adjusted Sample Size ^a	398	332	344	0	1074	4434	3972	3671	306	12418
Respondents	272	227	206	0	705	2430	2156	1906	131	6647
Response Rate ^b	68%	68%	60%	0%	66%	55%	54%	52%	43%	54%
Student Characteristics^c										
<i>Class Level</i>										
n	272	227	206	0	705	2449	2159	1906	131	6645
%	39%	32%	29%	0%	100%	37%	32%	29%	2%	100%
<i>Gender</i>										
Male	50%	56%	55%	0%	54%	47%	49%	50%	48%	48%
Female	45%	38%	41%	0%	42%	50%	48%	48%	48%	49%
I prefer not to respond	4%	5%	4%	0%	5%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%

Adjusted sample size: Does not include students with non-deliverable e-mail or ineligible students (e.g. no longer enrolled).

Response rate: Number respondents divided by adjusted sample size. Based on school-reported info (if available). Students for whom this info was not provided are included in the overall response rates, but not class response rates.

Student Characteristics: Student-reported class used when school-reported info not available. Students where class is unknown, not reported in 'All' column.

Comparison Groups: Comparison group does not include respondents from your law school. Comparative data by population size based on adjusted sample size.



Respondent Characteristics: Other Things to Consider

What is **Sampling Error**?

- ◆ An estimate of the margin likely to contain your "true" score, for various reasons including differences in characteristics between your sample and population.
- ◆ Ex: If 60% of students reply "very often" & sampling error is $\pm 5\%$, it is likely that the true value is between 55% and 65%.
- ◆ More respondents --> smaller sampling error



Respondent Characteristics: Other Things to Consider

Sampling Error:

Use when comparing frequencies.

	<u>2005</u>		<u>2007</u>	
sampling error	+/- 5%		+/- 3%	
lower bound	45%		52%	
point estimate	50%	—	55%	+ 5%
upper bound	55%		58%	



Data Quality Issues

Sampling Error:

Use when comparing frequencies.

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2007</u>	
sampling error	+/- 5%	+/- 3%	
lower bound	45%	52%	
point estimate	50%	55%	+ 13%
upper bound	55%	58%	



How many respondents do I need?

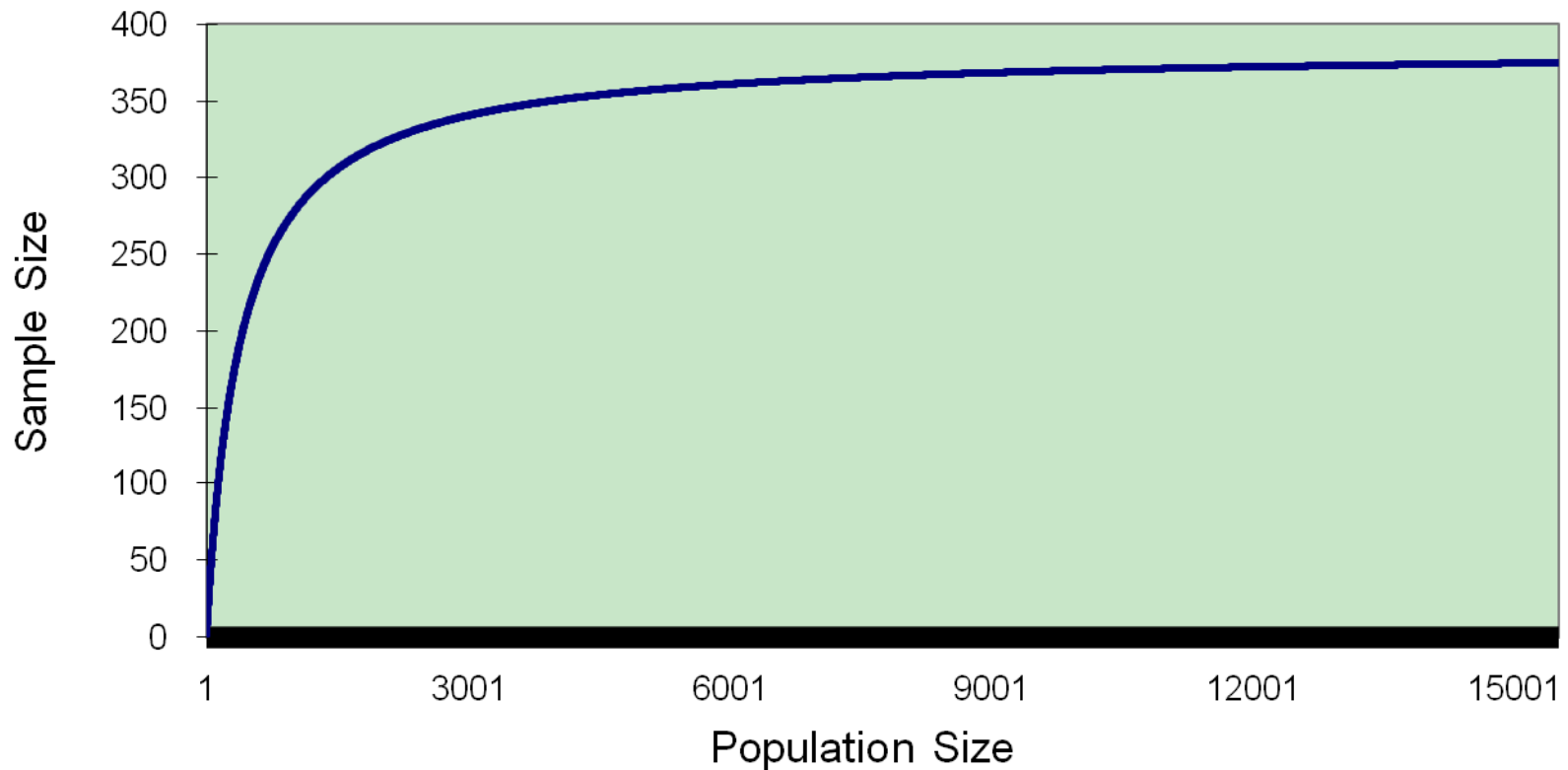
Sample size for 95% confidence level with 5% SE

Population Size	Sample Size
100	80
200	132
400	196
1000	278
2000	322
6000	361



Sampling Error vs. Sample Size

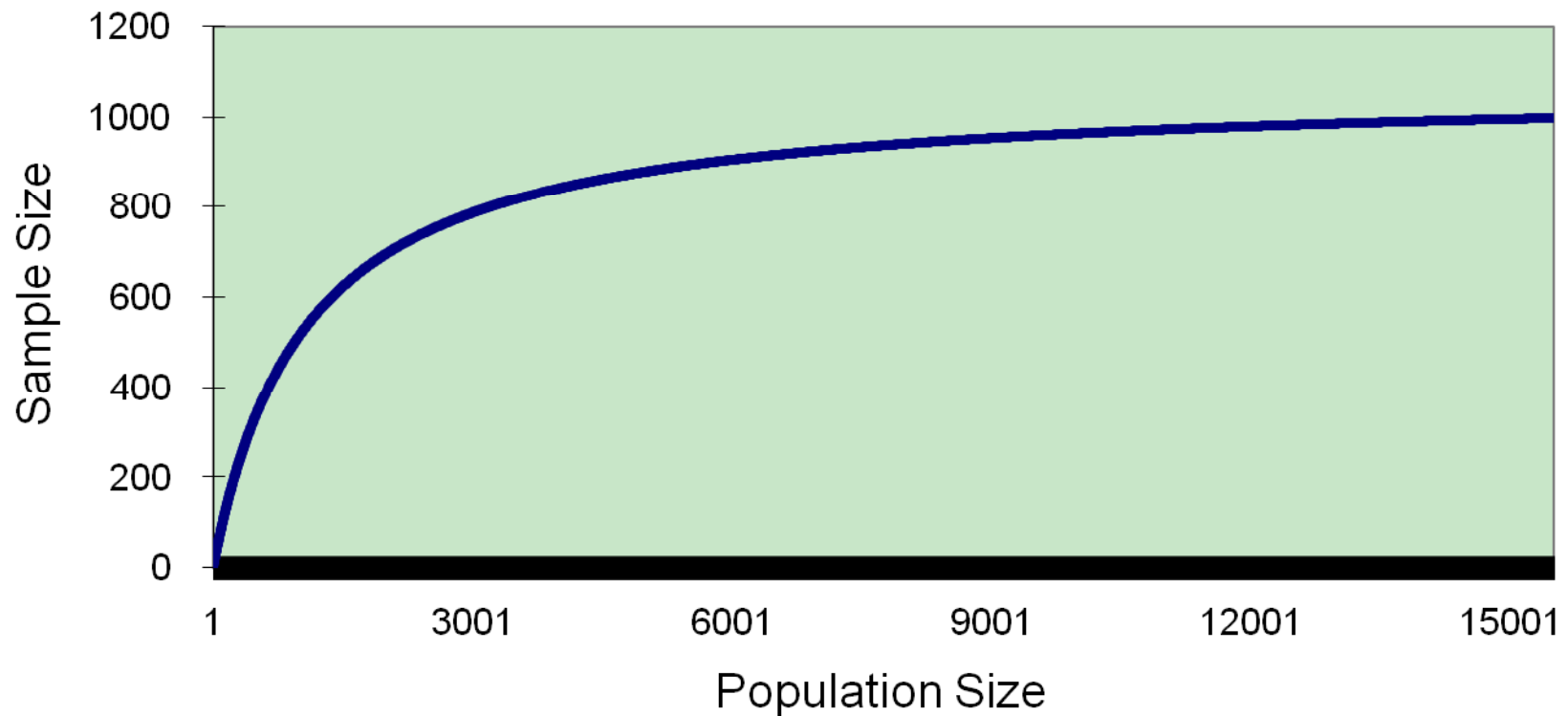
Sample size for the 95% confidence level with
5% sampling error





Sampling Error vs. Sample Size

Sample size for the 95% confidence level with 3% sampling error





Improving Response Rates

- ◆ Remove roadblocks (SPAM filter...etc.)
- ◆ Inform students about the survey beforehand
- ◆ Avoid bad timing (Mid-term exam, Final week...etc.)
- ◆ Provide incentives



The LSSSE Reports: Frequency Distributions

Counts and percentages for each response option



Law School Survey of
Student Engagement

LSSSE 2008 Frequency Dist
Lssevile Law School

				1L		2L		3L	
		<i>Variable</i>	<i>Response Options</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Academic and Intellectual Experiences									
1a.	Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	Never	12	5.2%	3	1.6%	4	2.1%
			Sometimes	120	51.7%	88	45.6%	79	41.1%
			Often	61	26.3%	51	26.4%	67	34.1%
			Very Often	39	16.8%	51	26.4%	42	21.1%
			Total	232	100.0%	193	100.0%	192	100
1b.	Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP	Never	13	5.6%	20	10.4%	18	9.1%
			Sometimes	52	22.4%	59	30.6%	57	29.0%
			Often	71	30.6%	60	31.1%	64	33.0%
			Very Often	96	41.4%	54	28.0%	53	27.0%
			Total	232	100.0%	193	100.0%	192	100
1c.	Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT	Never	0	0.0%	2	1.0%	3	1.4%
			Sometimes	23	9.9%	51	26.6%	48	25.0%
			Often	83	35.6%	68	35.4%	93	48.0%
			Very Often	127	54.5%	71	37.0%	48	25.0%
			Total	233	100.0%	192	100.0%	192	100
	Included diverse perspectives (different races religions sexual orientations genders)		Never	44	18.9%	18	9.4%	21	10.8%
			Sometimes	100	42.9%	86	44.8%	73	38.0%



Institution Results Compared to Peers By Class Year



Law School Survey of Student Engagement

LSSSE 2008 Frequency Distribution: 1L Students Lsseville Law School

<i>Variable</i>		<i>Response Options</i>	Lsseville Law		Selected Peers		More than 900		Private - Religious		LSSSE 2008	
			<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>%</i>
Academic and Intellectual Experiences												
1a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	Never	12	5.2%	127	5.0%	196	5.8%	143	4.9%	484	4.7%
		Sometimes	120	51.7%	1225	48.5%	1699	50.3%	1433	49.2%	4923	48.1%
		Often	61	26.3%	712	28.2%	887	26.2%	800	27.5%	2864	28.0%
		Very Often	39	16.8%	460	18.2%	598	17.7%	535	18.4%	1955	19.1%
		Total	232	100.0%	2524	100.0%	3380	100.0%	2911	100.0%	10226	100.0%
1b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP	Never	13	5.6%	256	10.2%	442	13.1%	240	8.3%	1084	10.6%
		Sometimes	52	22.4%	569	22.6%	699	20.8%	571	19.6%	2219	21.7%
		Often	71	30.6%	782	31.0%	1003	29.8%	960	33.0%	3216	31.5%
		Very Often	96	41.4%	913	36.2%	1224	36.3%	1135	39.1%	3692	36.2%
		Total	232	100.0%	2520	100.0%	3368	100.0%	2906	100.0%	10211	100.0%
1c. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT	Never	0	0.0%	59	2.3%	230	6.8%	43	1.5%	312	3.1%
		Sometimes	23	9.9%	450	17.9%	604	17.9%	493	17.0%	1903	18.7%
		Often	83	35.6%	1103	43.9%	1351	40.1%	1228	42.3%	4301	42.2%
		Very Often	127	54.5%	902	35.9%	1182	35.1%	1142	39.3%	3679	36.1%
		Total	233	100.0%	2514	100.0%	3367	100.0%	2906	100.0%	10195	100.0%
1d. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, sexual orientations, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	DIVCLASS	Never	44	18.9%	455	18.1%	666	19.8%	503	17.4%	1637	16.1%
		Sometimes	100	42.9%	1086	43.3%	1421	42.3%	1255	43.3%	4341	42.7%
		Often	62	26.6%	684	27.3%	877	26.1%	753	26.0%	2776	27.3%
		Very Often	27	11.6%	283	11.3%	394	11.7%	387	13.4%	1410	13.9%
		Total	233	100.0%	2508	100.0%	3358	100.0%	2898	100.0%	10164	100.0%
Come to class without completing		Never	122	52.6%	1135	45.2%	1503	44.7%	1230	42.4%	4222	41.4%



The LSSSE Reports: Mean Comparisons

Means,
statistical
significance
and effect
sizes



Law School Survey of Student Engagement

LSSSE 2008 Means Comparison R Lsosseville Law School

Variable Name	Class	Lsosseville Law	Lsosseville Law compared with								
		Mean	Selected Peers Mean	Sig [*]	Effect Size [†]	More than 900 Mean	Sig [*]	Effect Size [†]	Private - Religious Mean	Sig [*]	Effect Size [†]
<i>In your experience at your law school during the current school year, about how often following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often</i>											
Academic and Intellectual Experiences											
1a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	1L	2.55	2.60			2.56			2.59	
		2L	2.78	2.66			2.66			2.68	
		3L	2.77	2.68			2.71			2.69	
		4L	2.91	2.85			2.81			2.86	
1b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP	1L	3.08	2.93	*	.14	2.89	**	.18	3.03	
		2L	2.77	2.67			2.68			2.75	
		3L	2.79	2.63	*	.16	2.72			2.67	
		4L	2.76	2.56			2.53			2.50	
1c. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT	1L	3.45	3.13	***	.40	3.04	***	.46	3.19	***
		2L	3.08	2.84	***	.28	2.80	***	.32	2.96	
		3L	2.97	2.90			2.95			2.95	
		4L	2.71	2.77			2.83			2.88	
1d. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, sexual orientations, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	DIVCLASS	1L	2.31	2.32			2.30			2.35	
		2L	2.51	2.46			2.42			2.47	
		3L	2.55	2.46			2.46			2.46	
		4L	2.38	2.36			2.35			2.43	
1e. Come to class without completing readings or assignments <i>(Note: Item has been reverse coded so that 4=Never, 3=Sometimes, 2=Often, 1=Very Often)</i>	RCLUNPRE	1L	3.48	3.38	*	.17	3.37	*	.17	3.35	**
		2L	3.24	3.05	***	.25	3.04	***	.28	3.04	***
		3L	3.11	2.87	***	.31	2.90	***	.26	2.87	***
		4L	3.00	2.90			2.82			2.97	
1f. Worked with other students on projects during class	CLASSGRP	1L	2.01	1.81	***	.34	1.79	***	.34	1.83	***
		2L	2.04	1.74	***	.45	1.80	***	.36	1.86	***
		3L	2.12	1.80	***	.27	1.86	**	.25	1.80	***



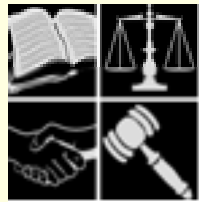
The LSSSE Reports: Mean Comparisons

What is **Statistical Significance**?

- ◆ Helps you know, "How likely is it that the difference between my average student and the average student at [group] is due to chance?"
- ◆ Significance determined by standard alpha values of $p < .05$, $.01$, or $.001$.
- ◆ Ex: $p < .05$, "this difference could have occurred by chance less than 5 times in 100", so you can be fairly certain a true difference exists



How Do I Know What is Statistically Significant?



Law School Survey of Student Engagement

LSSSE 2008 Means (L

Lsosseville La

Lsosseville
Law

Selected Peers

Lsosseville 1

More than 90

Variable Name

Class

Mean

Mean

Sig^a

Effect
Size^b

Mean

Sig^a

E

In your experience at your law school during the current school year, how often do you... following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

Academic and Intellectual Experiences

Item	Variable Name	Class	Lsosseville Law Mean	Selected Peers Mean	Sig ^a	Effect Size ^b	Lsosseville 1 Mean	Sig ^a
1a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	1L	2.55	2.60			2.56	
		2L	2.78	2.66			2.66	
		3L	2.77	2.68			2.71	
		4L	2.91	2.85			2.81	
1b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP	1L	3.08	2.93	*	.14	2.89	**
		2L	2.77	2.67			2.68	
		3L	2.79	2.63	*	.16	2.72	
		4L	2.76	2.56			2.53	
1c. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT	1L	3.45	3.13	***	.40	3.04	***
		2L	3.08	2.84	***	.28	2.80	***
		3L	2.97	2.90			2.95	
		4L	2.71	2.77			2.83	
1d. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, sexual orientations, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class	DIVCLASS	1L	2.31	2.32			2.30	
		2L	2.51	2.46			2.42	
		3L	2.55	2.46			2.46	



The LSSSE Reports: Mean Comparisons

- ◆ Potential problem:
As N becomes large, almost everything becomes statistically significant
- ◆ How do we identify truly significant differences?
- ◆ This is a question of ...

practical significance



The LSSSE Reports: Mean Comparisons

What is **Effect Size**?

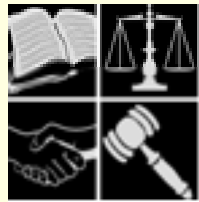
- ◆ *Practical significance* of the mean difference
- ◆ $ES = \text{mean difference} / \text{standard deviation}$
- ◆ .2 is often considered small,
.5 moderate, and
.8 large (but rare!)
- ◆ For example, while the difference in the means is statistically significant, the difference is so nominal that it doesn't warrant further attention



How Do I Know What is Statistically Significant?



How Do I Know What is Statistically Significant?



Law School Survey of Student Engagement

LSSSE 2008 Means (L

Lsosseville La

Lsosseville
Law

Selected Peers

Lsosseville 1
More than 90

Variable Name

Class

Mean

Mean

Sig^a

Effect
Size^b

Mean

Sig^a

E

In your experience at your law school during the current school year, how often do you... following? 1=Never, 2=Sometimes, 3=Often, 4=Very often

Academic and Intellectual Experiences

Item	Variable Name	Class	Lsosseville Law Mean	Selected Peers Mean	Sig ^a	Effect Size ^b	Lsosseville 1 Mean	Sig ^a
1a. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	CLQUEST	1L	2.55	2.60			2.56	
		2L	2.78	2.66			2.66	
		3L	2.77	2.68			2.71	
		4L	2.91	2.85			2.81	
1b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	REWROPAP	1L	3.08	2.93	*	.14	2.89	**
		2L	2.77	2.67			2.68	
		3L	2.79	2.63	*	.16	2.72	
		4L	2.76	2.56			2.53	
1c. Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	INTEGRAT	1L	3.45	3.13	***	.40	3.04	***
		2L	3.08	2.84	***	.28	2.80	***
		3L	2.97	2.90			2.95	
		4L	2.71	2.77			2.83	
1d. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, sexual orientations, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class	DIVCLASS	1L	2.31	2.32			2.30	
		2L	2.51	2.46			2.42	
		3L	2.55	2.46			2.46	



I Know What
an Effect Size Is:
Now What?



First Step: Dig into Reports

- ◆ Scan the results for trends you may not have anticipated.
 - ◆ Look for a pattern of responses in a particular area.
 - ◆ Even if effect sizes are small, a consistent pattern may signal more investigation is needed.



First Step: Dig into Reports

- ◆ For example:
 - ◆ A consistently low pattern of scoring (comparatively) for student/faculty interactions measures
 - ◆ 2Ls respond negatively to a variety of satisfaction measures



First Step: Dig into Reports

- ◆ Any Specific Questions.....
 - ◆ Minority students:
 - ◆ Do they experience law school similarly? Are they equally engaged in law school? Co-curriculars? Equally satisfied? Have as much contact with professors? Report similar gains?
 - ◆ Professionalism courses:
 - ◆ We've recently overhauled the requirements for professional responsibility courses? How effective is the new program?