



DATA SPOTLIGHT: FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE RESEARCH



Planning and Institutional Research has partnered with the Office of First Year Programs at NKU and graduate students in the MSIO capstone course to design the First-Year Transitions survey. This survey gathers student feedback on the NKU experience, including needs for counseling, food, or housing. Based upon responses, students are then connected with support offices on campus to ensure they can remain successful.

The First-Year Student Experience Committee and PIR designed the first iteration of the survey which launched this past fall. Graduate students in the MSIO capstone course interviewed first-year students this spring, and used findings from these interviews to create additional survey items on a Likert scale. The MSIO students administered the spring iteration of the survey, and produced an analysis of survey results to present to the Committee.

Some highlights from this research involve students’ worries regarding writing support and their feelings towards their overall mental wellbeing (see below). Student responses from the fall survey were compared to their spring responses showing significant changes in these two items.

Writing Worries Fade Over Time:

Many students who said they needed writing support in the fall no longer felt they needed help by spring.

Fall Mean 1.58

**Spring Mean
1.25**

Spring Mean

1.64

Fall Mean 1.48

Mental Health Concerns on the Rise:

A growing number of students who weren’t initially worried about their mental wellbeing in the fall reported concerns by spring.

Amanda Andrews, Director & Lecturer with First-Year Experience and Programming, is excited to see how this research can impact student success at NKU, noting that:

“The work done with PIR through the Transition Survey and in collaboration with MSIO Capstone, led by Phil Moberg, will provide us with information on the needs of students as they move through the entire first year of their time at NKU. This will also give students access to resources if they state a need within the survey, allowing us to provide intervention before the student falls into the risk of dropping out. This level of care will enable students to see that the university is here for them from the first day they step on campus and that the support doesn’t drop mid-semester; instead, it catches needs and connects with individuals on campus to help address their needs they have. “



Back Row: Dr. Phil Moberg with MSIO Capstone Students Gene Vowels, Hannah Bishop, Christopher Neeld
Front Row: Cori Henderson (Associate Director, Institutional Research), Amy Ishmael (Assistant Director, Institutional Research), Amanda Andrews (Director & Lecturer with First-Year Experience and Programming), and MSIO Capstone student Kendall Hyams

Dr. Phil Moberg, Director, Graduate Program in Industrial & Organizational Psychology, provided more background on the MSIO program and how this particular project intersects with students’ coursework:

“The graduate program in Industrial and Organizational (IO) psychology at NKU provides a capstone seminar in the final semester to enable graduates to apply their newly acquired competencies to real world projects having implications for organizations and their clients. Training in IO psychology combines rigorous methods from psychological science with findings from organizational behavior, and quantitative approaches of statistics to investigate, intervene, and generate empirical evidence that can guide organizational decision-making.

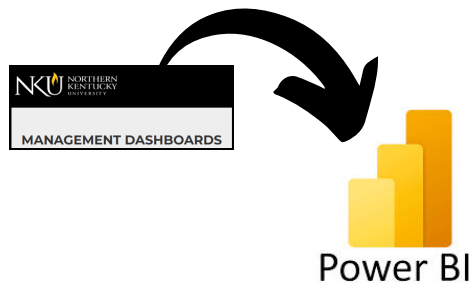
In collaborating with the Office of First Year Programs at NKU, our goals have been fourfold: to collect data and apply principles of psychological measurement to determine if the existing first-year needs survey (a) is interpreted uniformly by respondents, (b) assesses student needs validly and reliably, and (c) produces meaningful evidence to guide decision-making. In addition, graduate students applied their training in psychometrics and scientific survey research design to construct a new measure to explicitly assess the specific needs of first-year students.”



ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Management Dashboards Transitions to Power BI!

Management Dashboards is moving to Power BI. These new Multi-Year Dashboards have been redesigned to improve access and usability of institutional data. We are excited to offer training for faculty and staff coming in September. Be on the look out for more details soon!



Assessment Pro Tip:

Tell the Story Behind the Data - Don't Just Report the Numbers

When evaluating progress and completing the *Analysis of Findings* in WEAVE, go beyond listing results. Focus on **why** you met or didn't meet the target. Highlight trends, context, and contributing factors.

- **Interpret the results** - What do they mean? Why did this happen?
- **Connect it to action** - What's next? What worked? What needs improvement?

Pro Tip Bonus:

Actions for Improvements - Turn Insight Into Impact

By including *Actions for Improvement* in your *Analysis of Findings*, your WEAVE entry becomes a strategic narrative - not just a compliance task. You're showing that assessment is driving meaningful change.

- **Celebrate and scale** what worked well.
- **Identify gaps** and propose solutions.
- **Prioritize:** Not all issues need immediate action, but note what will be addressed now vs. later.
- Be **realistic and specific** in your action plans (e.g., timeline, responsible party, resource needs).

Reminder: The 2024-25 annual assessment plans are to be completed in WEAVE by September 15, 2025.



ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Planning a Survey? PIR Can Help.

Planning and Institutional Research provides survey design, administration, and analysis to academic and administrative units at NKU to support decision-making, planning, program evaluation, evaluation of administrative processes, and assessment of institutional effectiveness. Our consultation includes assistance in writing effective survey questions, ensuring your survey follows accessibility guidelines, providing methods to aid in response rates, and more.

For more information or assistance on your next survey, please contact PIR through our [request form](#).



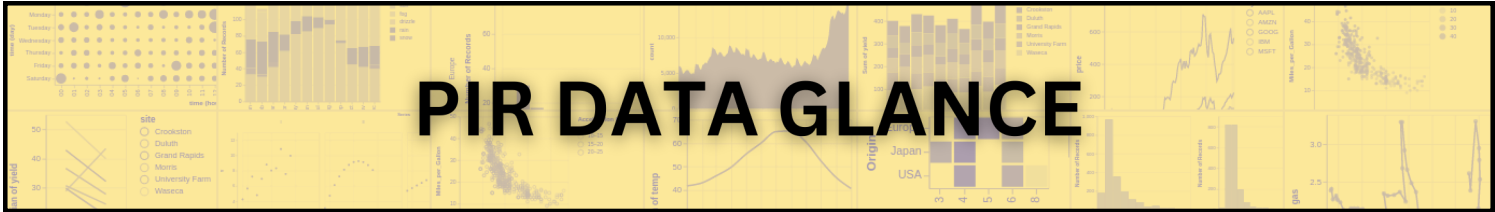
Thank You for Your Support!

PIR would like to extend a special thanks to the following Offices and faculty ambassadors for collaborating with PIR on the NSSE administration. We couldn't have done it without you!

- MarComm Office
- Alumni Engagement and Special Events
- Kimberly Allen-Kattus- Faculty Ambassador
- Kim Barber Foss- Faculty Ambassador
- Cristiane Biazzin- Faculty Ambassador
- Frederick Brockmeier- Faculty Ambassador
- Carole Cangioni- Faculty Ambassador
- Jen Cellio- Faculty Ambassador
- Jonathan Ko- Faculty Ambassador
- Tonya Krouse- Faculty Ambassador
- David Raska- Faculty Ambassador
- Dana Ripley- Faculty Ambassador
- Andy Meeks
- Chartwells
- Megan Downing- Faculty Ambassador
- Lee Ann Ernst- Faculty Ambassador
- Hailley Fargo- Faculty Ambassador
- Jason Farkas- Faculty Ambassador
- Shannon Fredrick- Faculty Ambassador
- Allyson Graf- Faculty Ambassador
- Kenneth Roth- Faculty Ambassador
- Jose Saavedra- Faculty Ambassador
- Tracy Songer- Faculty Ambassador
- David Thompson- Faculty Ambassador
- Mark Wasicsko- Faculty Ambassador



Tina Ryle (Senior Research Analyst, Planning and Institutional Research) with Victor E. Viking at the NSSE Ice Cream Social



Significant Decline in Student Debt At Graduation

According to the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the average federal and private loan balance for undergraduate completers at NKU has decreased by 36% since 2018–19. In 2018–19, the average loan balance was \$24,622, compared to \$15,677 in 2023–24.

You can find these data and others within the [CPE Student Debt At Graduation - NKU](#) report.

