

The Value of Data Buddies for Computing Departments

How Data Buddies Survey Reports Support Data-Driven Decisions in Higher Education

Overview

The Data Buddies Project, run by CERP, is an annual survey that collects data from individuals in computing and technology fields. Data collected via this project provide useful insights into student attrition and retention, factors that support the successful matriculation into graduate school and research careers, and trends that help departments make data-driven decisions to enhance their programs. Participating institutions receive customized reports that help them assess their students' experiences and compare results with similar institutions.

Why Departments Use Data Buddies

Comprehensive Data Collection	Many departments rely on Data Buddies reports as a key source of data about student experiences. These reports are used in different ways such as ABET reviews, faculty retreats, and curriculum development. “It is a piece of the puzzle that we use to provide insight to course instructors, advisors, and curriculum designers” - Kansas State University Computer Science Department “We use it for annual discussion, as well as part of our ABET review.” - Kean University Computer Science and Technology Department
Benchmarking	The comparative data provided by the Data Buddies reports help departments measure their performance against similar institutions. “The greatest benefit has been to provide a performance comparison against similar institutions to help us identify areas of improvement.” - Anonymous DBS Department “The reports are helpful to get a sense of what we really need to work on in our program. In many areas the "similar institutions" values and the "LACS" values are very similar, but there are places where they differ considerably and those give us additional perspective on where we are falling” - Bard College Computer Science Department
Insights for Program Improvement	Data Buddies reports help departments assess and identify areas for improvement in student experiences and program effectiveness. Departments use this data to drive strategic changes that enhance curriculum, student support, and overall academic environments. “I used the report to think about areas where we could improve and begin investigating them.” - Anonymous DBS Department “The information is shared in advance of our annual retreat and is helpful for generating improvement ideas.” - Montana State University Gianforte School of Computing
A Reliable Source of Information	Departments are provided with credible, anonymized data collected by an independent third party. Data Buddies offers an unbiased perspective that improves internal evaluations and decision-making processes. “To have a report generated by an external unbiased agency with anonymized surveying of our students is priceless. I have incorporated the reports' conclusions in our self study (for an external departmental review), in our proposals (both successful!!) for two new tenure lines.” - DePauw University Computer Science Department “We have an assessment done by an internal organization and it is not nearly as useful as DataBuddies. We rely on you!” - Anonymous DBS Department
Unique Data on Climate	Data Buddies offers unique perspectives about student satisfaction and perceptions that other surveys may not showcase. “Climate/opinion data is unique to Data Buddies and not part of any other student surveys that we use.” - Anonymous DBS Department “We are able to understand student satisfaction and also perceptions--perceptions of the field, the department, and themselves. I give department chairs a "state of your students" update annually. We also developed a "Know Your Students" Canvas training course using DB data.” - Anonymous DBS Department

Areas for Improvement



Participating departments have highlighted challenges like survey length and response rates, and CERP is taking steps to solve these. Updates like CSV report formats are being implemented to improve data accessibility.

Click [here](#) to sign up for Data Buddies

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