

Change in Student Involvement
From the First (Freshman) Year to the Senior Year
At Ohio University

University-Wide Results

Office of Institutional Research

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Student involvement is related to the quality of undergraduate education. The National Institute of Education report Involvement in Learning suggests that students who are more involved in activities related to their formal education will grow more as individuals, will be more satisfied with their education, will tend to persist in their education to graduation, and will tend to continue their learning after college. George Kuh's Involving Colleges discusses how colleges and universities should foster student involvement on their campuses. One way to do this is to assess student involvement; this is one aspect of the impact of Ohio University upon its graduates. The experiences during the first year (freshman year) affect students' development and performance throughout college. In 2000, Ohio University added the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) as a second component to its assessment of student involvement. This supports the following projects: the AQIP Action Projects for promoting an academically engaged campus, and the new General Education Program. The university-wide assessment program also includes the Career and Further Education Study (designed to collect information on graduates approximately one year after graduation), the Survey of Alumni (designed to collect information on graduates about five years after graduation), the First-year Marketing Study, and the Retention/Graduation Rate Studies. This report focuses on change in student involvement from the first year to the senior year.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Each year the Office of Institutional Research, Residence Life, and the Vice President for Student Affairs Office conduct the Involvement Study of first-year students. At the end of winter quarter all first-year students living in residence halls are given the student involvement questionnaire. Residence hall staff distribute these questionnaires. The five first-year student classes summarized in this report together with their combined response rate, are shown in the table below.

First-year students from these five classes are tracked to their senior year at Ohio University four years later. Students who have not left Ohio University are identified and surveyed again, using an instrument identical to the one they completed as first-year students. Only seniors who participated as first-year students are surveyed. This report presents summary data on 3040 respondents. The table below shows the first-year classes and their matching senior classes whose results are summarized in this report, together with the combined first-year and combined senior response rates.

Class	First-Year	Senior
	2003-04	2006-07
	2004-05	2007-08
	2005-06	2008-09
	2006-07	2009-10
	2007-08	2010-11
Combined		
Response Rate	83%	31%

The questionnaire collected information on three aspects of student involvement: academic involvement, social involvement and activities, and personal goals and adjustment to college. The results are presented in tables consisting of items divided among the above three categories. Many of these items ask how frequently students participated in various activities; these tables give the percentage of all students who participated in an activity at least once during a specified period (e.g., week, month, year) as well as the mean number of times they engaged in that activity during the same period. Other items ask students to rate how important various aspects of college life are to them on a five-point scale. Students are then asked to rate their level of satisfaction with those aspects. In the tables corresponding to these items the total percentages are presented for students who indicated "very" or "somewhat" important and "very" or "somewhat" satisfied.

ACADEMIC INVOLVEMENT

Academic-Related Activities

The first question asks how much time is spent per day during the academic year doing certain academic-related activities. The second question asks how much time is spent per week studying. The next two questions ask how much time is spent per year doing certain academic-related activities.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
On average, how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend on a computer for academic and coursework (research, writing papers, programming, etc.)?	Percent	52%	95%	43%
	Mean	1.5	3.6	140%
How many hours did you spend <u>each week</u> studying for your classes during this academic year?	Percent	78%	98%	20%
	Mean	9.3	12.3	32%
How many books other than those assigned for class did you read for your own pleasure or information this <u>academic year</u> ?	Percent	46%	78%	32%
	Mean	1.7	4.1	141%
How many times have you been to the library this <u>academic year</u> ?	Percent	76%	94%	18%
	Mean	14.7	32.7	122%

Frequency of Academic Conversations

The following items describe conversations about educational plans, problems, or progress students had with certain faculty, staff, and students during the academic year.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Conversations with Academic Advisor	Percent	67%	81%	14%
	Mean	1.7	4.1	141%
Conversations with Faculty Member	Percent	37%	81%	44%
	Mean	1.3	6.2	377%
Times communicated with Faculty Member via e-mail	Percent	66%	91%	25%
	Mean	7.3	31.6	333%
Conversations with Residential Life Staff	Percent	25%	6%	-19%
	Mean	1.1	0.9	-18%
Conversations with Student Organization Advisor	Percent	9%	23%	14%
	Mean	0.3	1.8	500%
Conversations with Other Staff	Percent	9%	19%	10%
	Mean	0.3	1.4	367%
Conversations about Faculty Research and Scholarship	Percent	5%	36%	31%
	Mean	0.1	2.4	2300%
Conversations with a Career Advisor or participation in a program concerning your Career	Percent	42%	58%	16%
	Mean	1.0	2.5	150%

Academics: Importance and Satisfaction

Students were first asked to rate how important each of the following items was to them here at Ohio University by circling the response that best describes their feelings. Second, students were asked to rate how satisfied they are with each item here at Ohio University by again circling the response that best describes their feelings. The results below present the percentages of those students who marked "very" or "somewhat" important and "very" or "somewhat" satisfied. The last item asking about the quality of instruction presents results only for the level of satisfaction. It presents the percentage of those students who marked "very" or "somewhat" satisfied. The level of importance was not asked for this item.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Instruction in My Major Courses	% Important	92%	85%	-7%
	% Satisfied	71%	73%	2%
Instruction in my Non-Major Courses	% Important	83%	78%	-5%
	% Satisfied	68%	65%	-3%
Faculty Availability Outside of Class	% Important	83%	78%	-5%
	% Satisfied	65%	73%	8%
Social Contacts with Faculty	% Important	54%	57%	3%
	% Satisfied	44%	60%	16%
Academic Advising	% Important	84%	73%	-11%
	% Satisfied	59%	53%	-6%
Adequate Academic/Intellectual Atmosphere	% Important	90%	71%	-19%
	% Satisfied	75%	70%	-5%
My Personal Motivation for Academic Success	% Important	88%	81%	-7%
	% Satisfied	74%	72%	-2%
My Personal Achievement of Academic Success	% Important	89%	82%	-7%
	% Satisfied	74%	74%	0%
Being Interested in My Studies	% Important	90%	84%	-6%
	% Satisfied	72%	72%	0%
How would you rate the quality of instruction at Ohio University?	% Very or Somewhat Satisfied	67%	85%	18%

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACTIVITIES

Frequency of Participation in Social Activities

The first five questions ask how much time was spent per month doing social activities. The sixth question on cultural events asks for the number of events attended during the academic year. The last two questions only ask students if they had either an on-campus or off-campus part-time job this year and not how much time was spent in job participation.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
On average, how many hours <u>each day</u> do you spend on a computer for personal use (e-mail to friends, games, Internet surfing, etc.)?	Percent	53%	96%	43%
	Mean	2.1	3.7	76%
How many weekends <u>each month</u> do you spend on campus?	Percent	78%	98%	20%
	Mean	2.8	3.9	39%
How many times did you go out with friends <u>each month</u> ?	Percent	78%	97%	19%
	Mean	7.9	10.2	29%
How many on-campus parties did you attend <u>each month</u> during this academic year?	Percent	67%	75%	8%
	Mean	4.7	4.6	-2%
At how many of these parties did you drink alcoholic beverages?	Percent	54%	72%	18%
	Mean	3.7	4.4	19%
How many conversations with International students have you had in an <u>average month</u> ?	Percent	38%	65%	27%
	Mean	2.3	4.3	87%
How many cultural events did you attend during this <u>academic year</u> ?	Percent	62%	54%	-8%
	Mean	3.6	4.1	14%
Did you have an on-campus part-time job this <u>academic year</u> ?	Percent	12%	42%	30%
Did you have an off-campus part-time job this <u>academic year</u> ?	Percent	6%	15%	9%

Frequency of Participation in College-Related Activities

Students were asked how many hours they spent each week during the academic year participating in the following activities. The means calculated were means of only those who participated. The last item is the total number of activities students participated in during the academic year.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Intercollegiate Athletics	Percent	8%	14%	6%
	Mean	9.9	7.6	-23%
Intramural Athletics	Percent	51%	74%	23%
	Mean	6.1	5.9	-3%
Publications	Percent	3%	15%	12%
	Mean	5.3	5.9	11%

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Productions/Performances	Percent	8%	14%	6%
	Mean	8.0	7.9	-1%
Greek Life	Percent	12%	19%	7%
	Mean	9.3	8.0	-14%
Professional Clubs	Percent	7%	41%	34%
	Mean	2.5	3.5	40%
Hobby/Social Clubs	Percent	9%	22%	13%
	Mean	5.2	4.2	-19%
Religious Organizations	Percent	9%	10%	1%
	Mean	3.4	4.6	35%
Residence Hall Activities	Percent	7%	5%	-2%
	Mean	2.4	6.6	175%
Student Government	Percent	1%	4%	3%
	Mean	2.9	6.3	117%
International Activities	Percent	1%	6%	5%
	Mean	2.4	3.5	46%
Leadership Programs	Percent	2%	8%	6%
	Mean	2.0	4.4	120%
Service Activities	Percent	6%	28%	22%
	Mean	4.4	3.6	-18%
Total Extracurriculars	Percent	65%	92%	27%
	Mean	6.0	12.4	107%

Number of Five Closest Friends

Students were asked to indicate how many of their five best (closest) friends currently attend Ohio University. Percentages were calculated for each number from zero to five (friends). The last item presents the mean for each year.

	First-year	Senior	% Change
None	40%	5%	-35%
One	15%	6%	-9%
Two	20%	15%	-5%
Three	13%	23%	10%
Four	6%	22%	16%
Five	5%	30%	25%
Mean	1.5	3.4	127%

Frequency of Faculty Social Contacts

Students were asked to indicate the number of times they had participated in these activities. The total number of social contacts with faculty is presented.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
How many times have you had dinner or refreshments at a faculty member's home?	Percent	5%	21%	16%
	Mean	0.2	0.4	100%
How many times did you go out for refreshments with a faculty member?	Percent	6%	28%	22%
	Mean	0.2	0.8	300%
How many times have you had a meal on campus with a faculty member?	Percent	7%	22%	15%
	Mean	0.2	0.7	250%
Total Faculty Social Contacts	Percent	13%	43%	30%
	Mean	0.5	1.9	280%

Social Involvement: Importance and Satisfaction

Students were first asked to rate how important each of the following items was to them here at Ohio University by circling the response that best describes their feelings. Second, students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with each item here at Ohio University by again circling the response that best describes their feelings. The results below present the percentages of those students who marked "very" or "somewhat" important and "very" or "somewhat" satisfied.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Establishing Personal Relationships with Peers at Ohio University	% Important	94%	85%	-9%
	% Satisfied	79%	65%	-14%
Having Close Friends at Ohio University	% Important	93%	85%	-8%
	% Satisfied	79%	77%	-2%
Interacting with International Students	% Important	31%	39%	8%
	% Satisfied	30%	41%	11%
Interacting with People of Different Races	% Important	54%	57%	3%
	% Satisfied	43%	36%	-7%

Campus Activities: Importance and Satisfaction

Students rated the importance of, and their satisfaction with, various items pertaining to activities on campus.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Getting Involved in Student Organizations	% Important	50%	66%	16%
	% Satisfied	50%	63%	13%

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Getting Involved in Campus Activities	% Important	60%	58%	-2%
	% Satisfied	46%	56%	10%
Attending Cultural Events on Campus	% Important	38%	43%	5%
	% Satisfied	37%	46%	9%
Getting Involved in Religious Activities	% Important	35%	24%	-11%
	% Satisfied	37%	38%	1%
Having a Job While Enrolled	% Important	38%	55%	17%
	% Satisfied	32%	58%	26%

Campus Environment: Importance and Satisfaction

Students rated the importance of, and their satisfaction with, various items pertaining to the campus environment.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Adequate Personal Security	% Important	89%	74%	-15%
	% Satisfied	79%	69%	-10%
Adequate Physical Environment on Campus	% Important	89%	71%	-18%
	% Satisfied	80%	72%	-8%
Adequate Social Atmosphere	% Important	90%	77%	-13%
	% Satisfied	76%	76%	0%
Fitting into the Campus Community	% Important	86%	78%	-8%
	% Satisfied	72%	72%	0%

PERSONAL GOALS AND ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE

Personal Goals: Importance and Satisfaction

Students were asked to rate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, personal goals.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Making Progress Toward Personal Goals	% Important	94%	85%	-9%
	% Satisfied	81%	78%	-3%
Making Progress Toward Academic Goals	% Important	94%	80%	-14%
	% Satisfied	79%	78%	-1%
Making Progress Toward Career Goals	% Important	92%	83%	-9%
	% Satisfied	73%	69%	-4%

Adjustment to College: Importance and Satisfaction

Students were asked to rate the importance of, and their satisfaction with, their adjustment to college.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
Adjusting Academically to College	% Important	92%	69%	-23%
	% Satisfied	77%	77%	0%
Adjusting Socially to College	% Important	91%	80%	-11%
	% Satisfied	75%	76%	1%
Adjusting Emotionally to College	% Important	87%	75%	-12%
	% Satisfied	73%	74%	1%
Managing Personal Stress	% Important	89%	79%	-10%
	% Satisfied	64%	66%	2%
Developing My Self-Esteem and Confidence	% Important	86%	74%	-12%
	% Satisfied	69%	72%	3%
Developing Personal Values and Beliefs	% Important	83%	73%	-10%
	% Satisfied	72%	72%	0%
Developing a Philosophy of Life	% Important	73%	55%	-18%
	% Satisfied	61%	61%	0%
Developing Spiritually	% Important	64%	53%	-11%
	% Satisfied	55%	42%	-13%

Importance in Attending and Graduating from Ohio University

Students were asked to respond to the following four items by circling the response that best describes their feelings about each item.

		First-year	Senior	% Change
How sure are you that you made the right choice in attending Ohio University?	% Extremely or Very Important	63%	87%	24%
How important is it to you that you graduate from Ohio University?	% Extremely or Very Important	78%	93%	15%
How important is it to you that you graduate from any University?	% Extremely or Very Important	98%	98%	0%
Will you return to Ohio University next fall?	% Extremely or Very Important	70%	31%	-39%

FIRST-YEAR (FRESHMAN)/SENIOR STUDENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY RESULTS

- **What is meant by "student involvement," and which students were surveyed?** "Student involvement" refers to participation in academic activities (e.g., contacts with advisors and faculty, trips to the library), social activities (e.g., extracurricular activities and interactions with other students), and goals and adjustment to college, (e.g., progress toward academic goals and the importance of graduating from Ohio University). Students' behavior in these activities and their perceptions of importance and satisfaction are assessed. The involvement study reports present student involvement results from five first-year classes surveyed during spring quarter of their first academic year and during spring quarter four years later when they were seniors. These were students who had the same major in their first year and senior year. Results are grouped for each academic department and for the university as a whole.
- **Why is student involvement important?** A number of prominent studies suggest that the more active (involved) students are in aspects of their college life, the more they grow personally, academically, and socially, and the more likely they will graduate and further their education later. In a recent essay, Tools for Assessing The First-Year Student Experience, George Kuh explains that in order for colleges and universities to be able to induce desirable student involvement behaviors they need to first determine how students are spending their time and to what extent students' expectations are consistent with the institution's and students' own aspirations. At Ohio University two assessments of student involvement are used to measure how students are spending their time and to what extent students value involvement activities. The first assessment study is the Freshman/Senior Student Involvement Survey, which measures student academic, social and personal involvement. This survey not only measures how much time a student is spending in each of the involvement areas, but also measures how important each activity is to our students and how satisfied they are with their involvement in each activity. The second assessment study of student involvement used at Ohio University is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). First used at Ohio University in 2000, this survey compliments the Freshman/Senior Student Involvement Study by focusing on specific classroom involvement behaviors of students. Together these assessment studies provide information on how Ohio University students are spending their time and to what extent they value involvement activities available to them. As Kuh suggests, these are the two important baseline measures needed to focus institutional efforts to increase desirable involvement behaviors and influence retention and graduation.
- **How do these results pertain to my academic unit?** These results may help you assess the areas of student involvement reported by students majoring in your academic unit, with the goal of encouraging more involvement where necessary to enhance your students' college experience.
- **What are the data in the tables?** For most activities or aspects reported the table shows the average number of times the activity occurred and the percentage of respondents engaging in the activity over a certain period of time. For activities/aspects which were rated as to their "importance" and "satisfaction," the percentages are the percentages who rated the item as "very" or "somewhat" important or "very" or "somewhat" satisfactory, respectively.
- **How do I use these results?** Compare your first-year and senior results (difference shown in "% Change" column), and compare your unit's results with the university-wide results. Did student involvement in your unit decrease? Are your unit's results are less positive when compared to the university-wide results? Are the results different from what you believed about your students? Note the following examples.
- **Example 1: Assessing "Quality of Instruction"** In your departmental table did the percentage of students indicating satisfaction with the quality of instruction increase or decrease from the first year to the senior year? Also, did your department's results become less positive over time while the university results became more positive? Can you think of factors that would explain this? To help interpret your results you could talk to students and faculty, and discuss instructor evaluations, curricula, and other assessment results among faculty.

- **Example 2: Assessing "Conversations with Academic Advisor"** If the number of conversations with academic advisors (page 3) during the academic year decreased, or if the percentage of those indicating satisfaction with academic advising decreased (page 4), you may consider if the change suggests that some action should be taken. For example, how many yearly advising conversations with first-year students or seniors do you consider optimal? If these results suggest that goal is not being met, what initiative can you take to enhance your own advising or the advising program within your department? How do your department's results compare to the university-wide results?
- **Example 3: Assessing what Students Value.** The Involvement Study asks students about a variety of academic and social activities. The results from academic and nonacademic involvement questions serve to inform faculty about students in their major. A number of studies have shown that student interaction with faculty is important in their development. This information could help faculty to better understand their students and facilitate interaction and engagement, in and out of the classroom.

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