

OSU Perspective

Understanding the 'Facts' & 'Figures' about our students and their learning . . .

Published by
The Division of
Student Affairs

Volume 1, Issue 3
May, 2003

http://oregonstate.edu/admin/student_affairs/research/perspective.html

What Do Incoming OSU First Year Students Tell Us?

During the 2002 summer orientation and advising sessions, entering first year students were asked to complete the CIRP Freshman Survey. The CIRP was given to entering students at colleges and universities across the country and is the longest standing research on student's attitudes, beliefs, and plans in the nation. This year 282,549 first year students were surveyed at 437 participating institutions.

OSU participated in the survey in the mid-1960s, and after a hiatus of about 34 years, resumed participation in 2001.

The CIRP posed questions covering a broad array of issues relevant to colleges and universities and the students attending them. In addition to demographic characteristics, CIRP asked questions concerning students' college expectations, high school experiences, degree and career goals, finances and reasons for attending college, and

beliefs, attitudes and values.

Over 2600 students were surveyed with a 42.5% return rate. Of those, 95% were first time, full time, first year students (ft-ft-fy); 46% of whom were male and 54% were female.



High School Activities

- 96% reported a high school GPA of a B or better.
- 66% spent 5 hours or less per week studying or

doing homework regardless of GPA.

- Socializing with friends and working for pay were the two most time-consuming activities in high school.

Substance Use

- 4.9% had drunk beer.
- 2.2% had smoked cigarettes.
- 5.9% had used marijuana in the last 30 days.
- 1.0% had used club drugs (e.g., ecstasy, GHB) in the last 30 days.

Financing College

- 84% reported little concern about financing college.
- 16% reported major concern about finances.
- Women reported significantly more concern about financing college than men.

Did You Know?

In October 2002 a random digit dial telephone survey was conducted by the following partnering groups: United Way, the City of Corvallis,

Benton County, and Good Samaritan Group. Of the 500 Benton County residents responding to the survey, 15% were full-time OSU stu-

dents. The following information was obtained from that survey data.

- 89% of the OSU students

surveyed reported that Benton County was an excellent /good community in which to live. (continued on page 2)

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Top 3 Very Important Factors in Deciding to Attend OSU

- 38% very good academic reputation.
- 23% offer of financial assistance.
- 21% good reputation for social life.

Academic Expectations

- About 3 times as
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Student Affairs Assessment Council Initiated

The Student Affairs Division has initiated an Assessment Council to guide the division-wide assessment efforts. Additionally, the Council is charged with ensuring that a structure is in place that will produce a common data reporting system, that all departments have assessment plans, that plans are implemented, that results are reported, and that results are applied to continuous improvement efforts.

For further information about the Student Affairs Assessment Council, please refer to: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/student_affairs/research/res_introduction.html

Did You Know? (continued from page 1)

- Students and non-students agreed that the most important problem facing Benton County was under-funded schools.
- 53% of OSU students surveyed believed that alcohol or drug abuse was a moderate/major problem.
- 62% of students reported that lack of affordable housing was a moderate/major problem.
- 25% of students surveyed said they needed help with anxiety, stress, or depression in the last 12 months.
- Percentage of students that needed help with having enough money to pay for: Housing—11%, Food—15%, Utility bills—15%, Child care—10%, Dental care—16%, Medical care—15%.
- 18% of students owned their home and 77% rented.
- 73% of students had some kind of health insurance.
- Most students (78%) were residing in households of 3 or fewer people.
- 60% of student respondents were male and 40% were female.

Total Immersion—Enhancing the OSU Student Experience

Participating in learning experiences that cause students to relate their learning to their lives and their future careers has been shown repeatedly to foster learning. Students come to OSU with high expectations for these types of experiences. According to the 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement, 80% of OSU first year students want to participate in internships and/or field experiences before they graduate from OSU.

For over 20 years, OSU students have been coming to OSU's Hatfield Marine Science Center (HMSC) in Newport to enrich their education with on-site, hands-on learning. Oceanography, fisheries, zoology, botany and biology students have immersed themselves in the coastal environment and interacted with fishermen, resource managers, policy makers, research scientists and each other. Studying the ocean and its near shore and estuarine habitats, going to sea and trawling

for samples in the bay, and conducting experimental work in tanks with a first-rate seawater system can only be done at the coast. Majors from several OSU colleges who have completed a term at the HMSC invariably mention that it was the best, and most memorable educational experience during their years at OSU.

"I can't say enough about how much I enjoyed the course and how much I learned. The caliber and experience of the people involved was amazing and I felt very fortunate to be in the class learning from them. The presentations we had to give and the information we read were applicable to 'real world' and 'real life' situations. Thanks for the wonderful learning experience."
—OSU student—

Students live in apartment units on the HMSC campus and develop a real sense of camaraderie. The Center is located on Yaquina Bay, a ten-minute walk to the beach, and a five-minute drive to the fishing fleet and seafood

processing plants. The Center is also home to five federal (EPA, NOAA, NMFS, ARS and USFWS) and one state agency (ODFW). A number of courtesy faculty in each of these agencies link students to unique research facilities, resource managers and front-line research scientists—and to potential internships and job opportunities.



Three major types of immersion courses are offered at the Center: **The department of Fisheries and Wildlife's fall quarter marine fisheries program.** A highlight is

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the Coastal Ecology and Resource Management class, a two-week, team-taught, all-day intensive field and lecture session that introduces students to the fish, wildlife and ecology of the Oregon coast, to Oregon coastal communities, and to current resource issues. Students visit net makers, fish plants, commercial docks, and other marine "players" and take two charter boat trips to study birds and mammals. They also go to the South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve to study coastal restoration issues.

"It was eye opening for me to learn how, when and why science affected and affects policy. When I started the class the science-policy interface was a black box to me. I now have a general framework of how the interface between science and policy works and a great start on understanding pathways I can try to use to affect policy with science. I thought the social interactions between instructors and students after class really set up the in-class time to be more interactive. It helped erase the distance that usually occurs between students and teachers, allowing discussion and Q & A periods to develop more easily." —OSU Student—

The spring Marine Biology course, often viewed as a "capstone" course for many biology or zoology majors. This 16-credit class is team taught and is a comprehensive introduction to the flora and fauna of the marine environment. Ecological patterns and processes are emphasized, as is field work. The *R/V Elakha*, a 54' vessel moored at the Center's dock, takes students out for estuarine and coastal field sampling.

The week-end intensive courses; recent offerings include Marine Resource Management courses, and Z565, Marine Conservation Science and Policy. These courses use the Center as a retreat and enable students to intensively focus on the course content; they can also delve into the riches of the Guin Library, a specialized branch of the Valley Library, stocked with over 30,000 volumes on marine science. It provides a handy base to invite policy makers and



"Best course I've had at OSU. Challenging, inventive, flexible, inspiring. Students clearly wanted to learn and work hard, teachers wanted to share. Exceeded my expectations. Much more interaction with the professors and guests than I would have imagined. Best group project experience since at OSU. . . . I also liked the fact that the professors took the group project seriously and tended to give feedback, as opposed to the numerous presentations we do at school with no feedback whatsoever." —OSU Student—

government scientists to interact with students and for students to interview appropriate coastal specialists. OSU students gain a rich educational benefit from these immersion courses. Dan Edge, Fisheries and Wildlife Department Head, sums it up— "Spending a term at HMSC is an outstanding learning experience that is rivaled by no other facility in the world."

"To begin this was an absolutely incredible class. I believe the guest lecturers, professors and TAs did an incredible job. The class has opened several new opportunities for me to establish a dialogue with scientists, advocates and the public. It helped me with my communication skills and helped give me confidence in my knowledge and ability . . ." —OSU Student—

For Further Reading

Graham, S. W., & Gisi, S. L. (2000). The effects of instructional climate and student affairs services on college outcomes and satisfaction. *Journal of college student development*, 41(3), 279-291.

Joint Task Force on Student Learning (1998). *Powerful partnerships: A shared responsibility for learning*. American Association for Higher Education, American College Personnel Association, National Association of Student Personnel Administrators. http://www.aahe.org/teaching/tsk_frce.htm

Pascarella, E. T. (2000). Identifying excellence in undergraduate education: Are we even close? *Change* 33(3), 19-23.

Using Assessment Data in Student Life

Student Life representatives met for a morning retreat at Peavy Arboretum at the end of April. The retreat allowed time for staff to focus on data regarding the student experience at OSU (i.e., 2002 National Survey of Student Engagement, 2002 Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshmen Survey). Questions that arose and that will continue to be discussed and addressed included: What difference does this information make in our planning and delivery of programs and services? What are the challenges? How can we use this data with students? What is our role? What else do we need to know?

For more information regarding how to engage work groups in these conversations, please contact Rich Shintaku, Dean of Students (541-737-8748).

**OSU
Perspective:
What is it?**

The **OSU Perspective** was developed to provide assessment and other information about our students and programs. We hope that by making this information available to OSU faculty and staff, we can stimulate conversation that helps to keep students and student learning at our core.

The **Perspective** is published quarterly both in print and on the web: http://oregonstate.edu/student_affairs/research/perspective.html

Ideas and suggestions for subsequent **OSU Perspective** publications are welcomed.

Please contact Rebecca Sanderson, Ph.D., Student Affairs Research and Evaluation Office, 102 Buxton Hall, 541-737-8738, or email: rebecca.sanderson@oregonstate.edu.

What Do OSU Incoming First Year Students Tell Us? (continued from page 1)

many women as men reported a history of special assistance with mathematics while in high school. In terms of expectations for mathematics assistance in college, about 1.5 times as many women as men reported this expectation.

- Male students expected to need additional assistance with English to a significantly greater degree ($p < .05$) than women students.
- 30% intended to get at least a bachelor's degree, 43% a master's degree, 25% a doctoral or professional degree.
- Women were twice as likely as men to report that they intended to get a professional degree in medicine (i.e., MD, DO, DD, DVM).

Political and Social Views

- Most OSU students (49%) rate themselves as middle-of-the road

politically; 24% as conservative or far right; 27% as liberal or far left.

- On social and political issues, there are significant differences in opinions between the sexes with female students taking a more liberal stance on most items (e.g., handgun control, same-sex marital status, abolishment of affirmative action).

Top Three Self-Rated Skills and Abilities

- Academic ability (73.6%)
- Cooperativeness (71.9%)
- Drive to achieve (71.6%)

For more information about incoming OSU first year students, consult the complete OSU 2002 CIRP Freshman Survey report at: http://oregonstate.edu/admin/student_affairs/research/reports.html

Assessment Highlights from Student Affairs Departments

University Housing and Dining

Services produces a quarterly report which details departmental activity and provides information to the OSU community about students living in residential housing (e.g., residence halls, cooperative houses).

The most popular majors for residents are Pre-Engineering (21.6%) and Science (16.4%) during the fall quarter and again in the Spring term.

Being wired is nearly the standard for students with 92% of residential students connecting to the Residential Computer Network.

Living in an on-campus residential environment enhances the student experience for most individuals. Grade point average has repeatedly been shown to be positively influenced by residential living.

Quarter Grades

	Fall Term 2002	Winter Term 2003
Residential FY Students	2.84	2.73
OSU FY Students	2.75	2.70

Students also provide valuable perceptions of their lives in the residence hall. For instance:

- 72% agree or strongly agree that students in their living group share ideas that are being learned in class.

- 83% report that living in their residence hall is helping them to learn how to get along with others.
- 94% agree or strongly agree that they value their residence hall contacts with people whose backgrounds differ from their own.
- 66% agree or strongly agree that they encourage each other to attend class.
- 92% agree or strongly agree that they trust their RA to handle problems on their floor.
- 94% agree or strongly agree that their RA is easy to talk to.

For more information about the impacts of residential living or to receive the UHDS Quarterly Report, contact Eric Hansen (737-7708).