OFF TO A GOOD START?

HOW NEW FRESHMEN NAVIGATE THEIR FIRST SEMESTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING CONFERENCE
AUGUST 14, 2012
ABOUT US

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About IRPA
- Not to be confused with the IRB office…
- We report out data on the University to internal and external constituents for the purposes of academic planning and policy
AGENDA

• First Semester Experience: Why is this important?
• What do we know?
• About the data
• First Semester Experience
  • Part 1: Entry
  • Part 2: Enrollment
  • Part 3: Performance
  • Part 4: Perceptions
• Discussion / Q&A
FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Ensure students are on the path to success from day one
- Provide points of reference about what students are experiencing on campus in their first term
- Understand how data can provide a portrait of student experiences, supporting or contextualizing anecdotal evidence
- Highlight successes and opportunities within the first-semester experiences of new freshmen
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FRESHMEN AND THEIR FIRST TERM EXPERIENCES?

Publicly available data on freshmen are limited and rarely focus on the first term experience

Examples:

• Beloit College: “The Mindset List”
• UC-Berkeley: First Semester Experience testimonials
• UCLA HERI “Your First College Year” Survey
• UMD: IRPA Profiles and OUA Admitted Freshmen Profile
BELOIT COLLEGE’S “MINDSET LIST”

Reviews the “cultural touchstones” that shaped the lives of first-year students

Excerpts from this year’s mindset list:

- Ferris Bueller and Sloane Peterson could be their parents
- Refer to LBJ, and they might assume you're talking about LeBron James
- Women have always been kissing women on television
UC-BERKELEY & UCLA HERI

Student Orientation (CalSO) website provides a glimpse of “First Semester Experiences”

UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) surveys first-year experiences of freshmen at over 400 colleges and universities

Rhetoric, College of Letters and Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American Studies 98</td>
<td>Freshmen Seminar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Writing 1A</td>
<td>Accelerated Reading and Composition</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology 2</td>
<td>Principles of Psychology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics 16A</td>
<td>Analytic Geometry and Calculus</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics 98</td>
<td>Supervised Group Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I chose Cal because it is the number one public university in the world. Growing up in a single-parent, low-socioeconomic home, my family didn’t know what college was. With my competitive mindset, it was important to me to be number one. That’s why I came to Cal.

Because I have always been an independent person, coming to Cal was nothing new. I was already treated like an adult at home. I’ve always helped to keep my home together and worked to pay bills, so I felt like my family still needed me even though I was in college. Constantly making phone calls to check on things at home, I would worry about how I could keep my family together. However, I finally put it in God’s hands and went on with my own business.

Coming from a high school that ranked in the bottom-tenth percentile in the state, my lack of resources made my first semester a challenge, as well as a great learning experience. I reached out for tutoring and everything else available, so I could be on top of my coursework.

I have always been involved with my community – I like to keep things moving in a positive direction, so I joined a number of clubs and programs on campus. I became engaged in groups that matched my interests: the Black Sociological Alliance, the Gates Millennium Scholars Association, the Black Recruitment and Retention Center, 100 College Black Men, Kelly Committee, Wrestling Club, Softball Intramural team, Bible study, and the Biology Scholars Program.

I learned so much during my first semester experience. Now, I am motivated to get all A’s!

—Terry, Rhetoric

Lived in the African American Theme Program during first year at Cal
From Vallejo, California
Previously attended Hogan High School
Currently, only enrollment and admissions data is available to the public

- IRPA Profiles
- Office of Undergraduate Admissions Freshman Profile

Our inquiry aims to look further into the experiences and perceptions of new freshmen, from admission to the end of their first term
ABOUT THE DATA: SOURCES

IRPA DATABASE
- Aggregated student enrollment data from the Fall 2009, 2010 and 2011 freshman cohorts
- Provides information on student demographics, registration, and course attributes
- Data includes all new freshmen, including part-time and non-degree seeking students

BEGINNING STUDENT SURVEY, 2010 & 2011
- Survey of freshmen taken 8-10 weeks into their first term
- 2010 survey gauges student perceptions of the academic and social experiences on campus; n = 1869
- 2011 survey assesses students’ degree completion expectations; n = 1498
ABOUT THE DATA

Aggregate Data

- Intentionally provides big picture perspective; does not distinguish between student groups by race, gender, college, academic performance, etc.
- Does not show trends

Timing and Method of Data Collection

- In some cases, only data from 2009 and 2010 are provided (e.g., Financial Aid)
- Data on student perceptions are limited to 2010 and 2011 surveys
FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCES:
ENTRY
A QUICK PROFILE OF FRESHMEN

First Generation 15%

Received Merit Scholarship 24%

Other 85%

Other 76%

Financial Need

71%

13%

16%

Received Pell

Received Sub Loan

Other

Source: IRPA database
The overwhelming majority of freshmen enter with freshman class standing; however, 10% enter with enough credits to reach sophomore class standing.

- Students entering as sophomores have an average of 40 pre-enrollment credits.

Source: IRPA database
70% enroll with college credit

- 65% of freshmen enter with AP credit
- 10% of freshmen enter with credit from another institution
- 3% of freshmen enter with IB credit

Average number of accepted pre-college credits is 17

Source: IRPA database
22% of freshmen satisfied the Fundamental English at entry using pre-enrollment credit

- Satisfied: 94%
- Via AP
- Via Other: 6%
- Not Satisfied: 78%

Only 3% satisfied Fundamental Math at entry

- Satisfied: 50%
- Via AP
- Via Other: 50%
- Not Satisfied: 97%

Source: IRPA database
Why freshmen took AB/IB/College-level courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Very much a reason</th>
<th>Somewhat a reason</th>
<th>Not a reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To receive college credit.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compete with my peers for college admission.</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was recommended by my guidance counselor/advisor.</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide more flexibility during my college career.</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parents strongly encouraged me.</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They were the only challenging courses I could take.</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends were taking the same courses.</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To graduate from college in less than four years.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: BSS11; responses may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: ENROLLMENT
Nearly 50% of freshmen participate in living-learning programs in their first semester.

- Not in LLP: 53%
- In LLP: 47%
- Honors: 49%
- CPS: 44%
- Other: 7%

Source: IRPA database
MAJORS: BY COLLEGE AND STEM

Source: IRPA database
MOST POPULAR MAJORS AMONG FRESHMEN

10. Bioengineering
9. Mechanical Engineering
8. Journalism
7. Physiology/Neurobiology
6. Computer Science
5. Government and Politics
4. Psychology
3. Business-Undecided
2. Engineering-Undecided
1. General Biology

But...25% of freshmen are undecided

Source: IRPA database
REQUESTED MAJOR / LEP ENROLLMENT

- Did not request LEP: 37%
- Requested LEP: 63%
- Enrolled in LEP: 70%
- Did not enroll in LEP: 30%

Non-LEP: 52%
LEP: 48%

Source: IRPA database
Freshmen attempt an average of 15 credits in their first semester; about half of which are CORE

Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

Source: IRPA database
Most freshmen have at least 2 courses taught by a tenured/tenure-track faculty member.

**Credits Attempted**

- 0%: < 12 credits
- 43%: 12-14.9 credits
- 57%: 15+ credits

**Freshmen Taught by T/TTK Faculty**

- 28%: 0 courses
- 28%: 1 course
- 12%: 2 courses
- 32%: 3+ courses

Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

Source: IRPA database
COURSES: CLASS SIZE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students enrolled in course</th>
<th>0 courses</th>
<th>1 course</th>
<th>2 or more courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 20</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-49</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-99</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-199</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 or more</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

Source: IRPA database
FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: PERFORMANCE
On average, freshmen earn 14 credits and a 3.1 GPA in their first semester.

5% of freshmen are placed on academic probation at the end of their first term.

Source: IRPA database
RETENTION

Less than 1% of freshmen withdraw in their first term

99% of BSS11 respondents expected to enroll full-time at the University of Maryland (College Park) during their second semester.

HOWEVER...

95.2% 94.5%

Fall 2009 Fall 2010

First Year Retention

Source: IRPA database
FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: PERCEPTIONS
At present, my general attitude towards the University of Maryland is:

- Positive or Very Positive: 89%
- Neutral: 9%
- Negative or Very Negative: 2%

When I entered this institution, it was my:

- 1st choice: 57%
- 2nd choice: 26%
- 3rd choice or lower: 17%

Source: BSS10
ACADEMIC LIFE

Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” …

Overall, my courses are intellectually stimulating. 82%

I'm adjusting to the academic work of college. 81%

I understand the purpose of the CORE (general education) program. 76%

I feel adequately prepared for the academic demands here. 75%

I am earning the grades I want. 44%

Source: BSS10
SOCIAL LIFE

Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” …

- I've made campus friends. 93%
- There are social/leisure activities on campus that I like. 87%
- I'm adjusting to the social life of college. 80%
- I'm as involved in campus activities as I want to be. 55%

Source: BSS10
FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

Percentage of freshmen who reported they are currently participating in or would like to participate in the following experiences:

- Internships: 95%
- International experiences: 79%
- Leadership: 75%
- Research: 69%
- Service-learning experiences: 66%
- Living-learning programs: 55%
- Learning communities: 49%

Source: BSS11
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” …

- Faculty are available outside class time if I have questions: 86%
- I've asked a faculty member for help: 71%
- I am interested in interacting with faculty on topics other than current coursework: 60%
- I am interested in working with a faculty member on a research project: 47%
- Faculty provide timely feedback about my progress in my courses: 45%
- Faculty care about me as an individual: 39%

Source: BSS10
**ADVISING**

Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” …

- I know how to contact an advisor in my college/department. 76%
- If I run into problems here, I know someone on campus who'll listen and help me. 75%
- I've been able to get the classes I wanted. 74%
- I know where to get help on campus with reading and study skills. 62%
- I've asked a staff member or administrator for help. 53%

Source: BSS10
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” …

- I've selected a field of study/major. 72%
- I've identified a career direction or interest. 70%

Source: BSS10

- Over 97% of respondents expected to receive their bachelor’s degree in 4 or fewer years.
- Over 90% also planned to complete their degree at the University of Maryland; 6% were unsure where they would complete their degree.

Source: BSS11
QUESTIONS?

Contact Us

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