

**Fall 2001 Freshman Survey Results
Assessment Committee
Division of Student Affairs
Oregon State University**

April, 2002

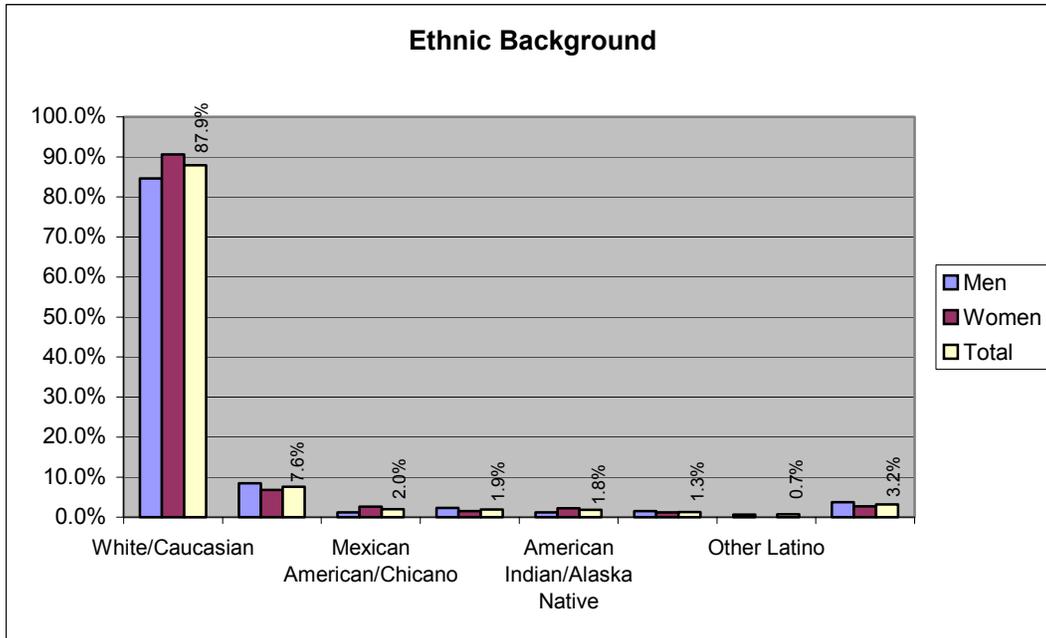
In the fall of 2001 the Assessment Committee of the Division of Student Affairs administered the national Freshman Survey (CIRP survey) to a sampling of first-time OSU freshmen. Now in its 36th year, the CIRP (Cooperative Institutional Research Program) Survey is the nation's longest-standing and most comprehensive assessment of student attitudes and plans. Established in 1966, the survey is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute, which is based in the Graduate School of Education & Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. Conducted in association with the American Council on Education, the survey serves as a resource for higher education researchers throughout the world. It is regarded as the most comprehensive source of information on college students. The annual report of the CIRP Freshman Survey provides normative data on each year's entering college students. Participating institutions receive a detailed profile of their entering freshman class, as well as national normative data for students in similar types of institutions (e.g., public four-year colleges, moderately selective Protestant colleges, highly selective Catholic colleges, public two-year colleges). These campus profile reports, together with the national normative profile, provide important data that are useful in a variety of program and policy areas.

The fall 2001 national survey included 411,970 entering freshmen at 704 of the nation's higher education institutions. Data culled from 281,064 of those students at 421 baccalaureate institutions have been statistically adjusted to be representative of the 1.2 million freshmen entering four-year colleges and universities as first-time, full-time students last fall. The vast majority of these respondents (97.5 percent) completed the survey before September 11.

This year represents the first time that OSU has participated in the Freshman Survey since 1967. We believe that participation in this national effort will provide us with data that can assist us in planning, improving academic programs, student services, and other institutional activities. Because of our academic calendar the survey was not administered to OSU students until after September 11.

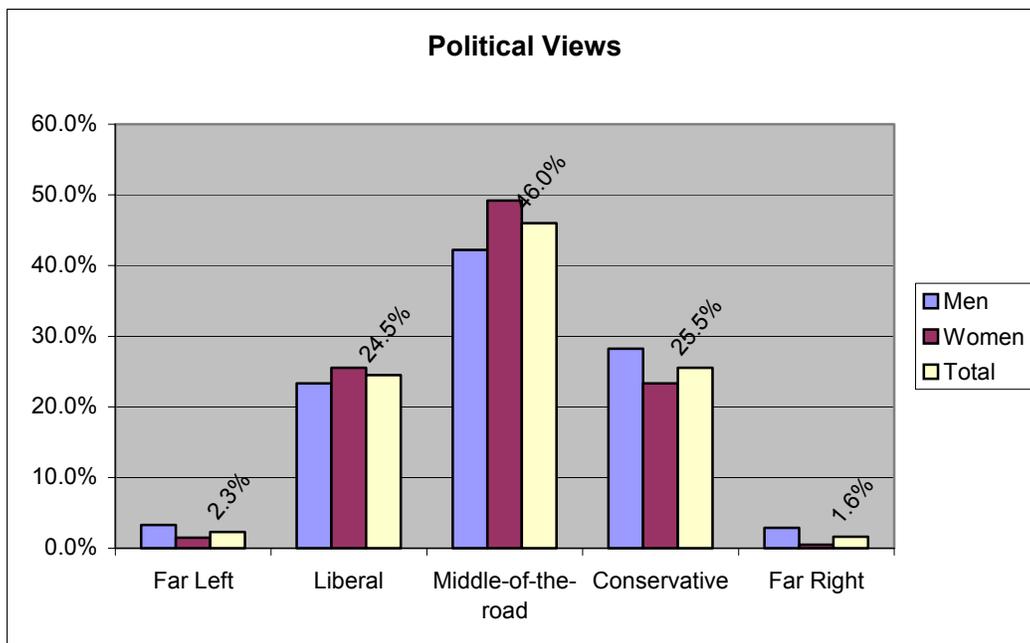
Demographic Profile

The CIRP Freshman Survey was administered to 1097 Oregon State University first-time full-time freshmen in October 2001. Of the students surveyed 98.5 percent were 18-19 years old, 88 percent are Caucasian, 9.5 percent Asian American or Pacific Islander, American Indian, African American and Mexican American each represent 2 percent or less. A large number of incoming students are from homes geographically close to OSU, more than half (57.5 percent) of those surveyed live 100 miles or less from the OSU campus. Over three-quarters (75.6 percent) of entering student come from homes where they lived with both of their parents; 76 percent of their families make less than \$100,000 dollars per year. Among entering students 45 percent applied only to OSU, this percentage represents a considerable difference from the peer university average of 26.8 percent. OSU was the first choice institution for 81 percent of students. One-third of students surveyed are from homes where at least one parent has a college degree.



VALUES AND ATTITUDES

The survey revealed that incoming students reflect a normal distribution along the political spectrum - 26.8 percent of students characterize their political views as "liberal" or "far left," comparable to the 27.1 percent who consider themselves to be "conservative" or "far right", 46.0 percent identify as middle-of-the-road.



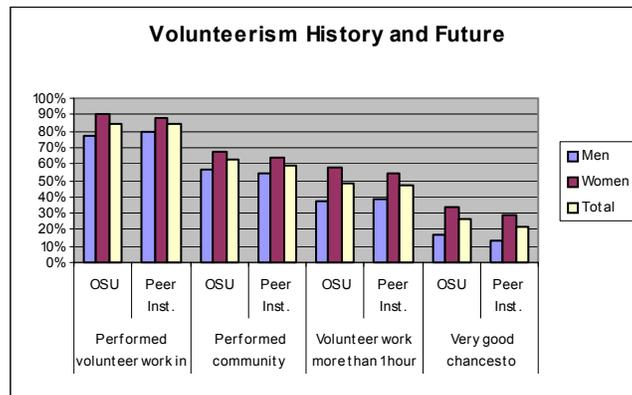
Incoming students reflect a range of views on social issues, for example; 57.4 percent of this year's freshmen believe that same sex couples should have the right to legal marital status; nearly one-fourth (23.4 percent) of entering students advocate laws prohibiting homosexual relationships; over one-third (39.6 percent) agree that marijuana should be legalized; and 80 percent of freshmen agree that employers should be allowed to require drug testing of employees or job applicants. Just under one-quarter (22.5 percent) of entering students agree that racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America. Men agree with that statement at a higher rate than women 29.4-16.9 percent.

Almost three-quarters (72.3 percent) of OSU students believe the federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns. There is a dramatic male-female difference on the sale of handguns, with women favoring more control 83.3 percent-58.7 percent. Additionally, 21.3 percent of incoming college students advocate ending capital punishment, a number that is considerably lower than the public university average of 27.6 percent.

More than one-quarter (25.7 percent) of entering students report that they have discussed politics within the last year, a number that is slightly higher than the public university average of 21.9 percent. Interestingly, the number of women who report discussing politics was 19.6 percent, while 33.1 percent of males indicate they discussed politics. We might expect that the unprecedented events associated with the presidential election influenced political discussion. But, how do we explain the male-female differences? The fact that men and women report discussing religion at comparable levels (35.3 and 35.8 percent, respectively) makes the disparity in discussing politics even more puzzling.

Entering OSU students bring with them a history of volunteerism, with 84.9 percent of incoming freshmen reporting frequent or occasional volunteer work. Male-female differences appear in volunteerism, as 77.6 percent of men report volunteer work compared to 90.8 percent of women. Part to this involvement is attributed to the requirement of community service as part of high school class assignments for 62.4 percent of students. Just over one-quarter (26.7 percent) of students anticipate a very likely chance that they will engage in volunteerism at OSU, with women being twice as optimistic as men (34.3 percent-17.4 percent). The results at OSU are similar views indicated at peer institutions with

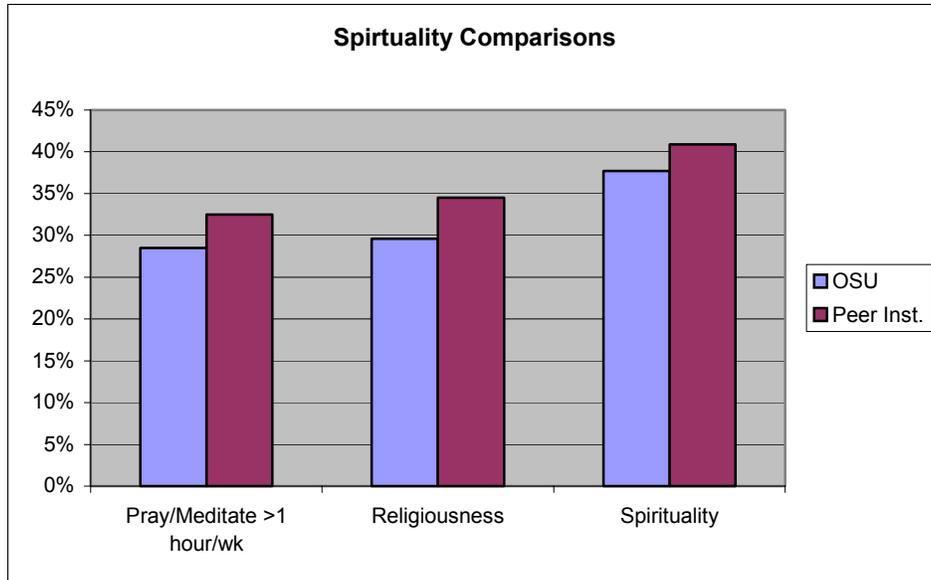
women having more hopeful beliefs about engaging in volunteerism (28.9 percent-13.2 percent), though a higher percentage of OSU students anticipate volunteering (26.7 percent-21.5 percent).



RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

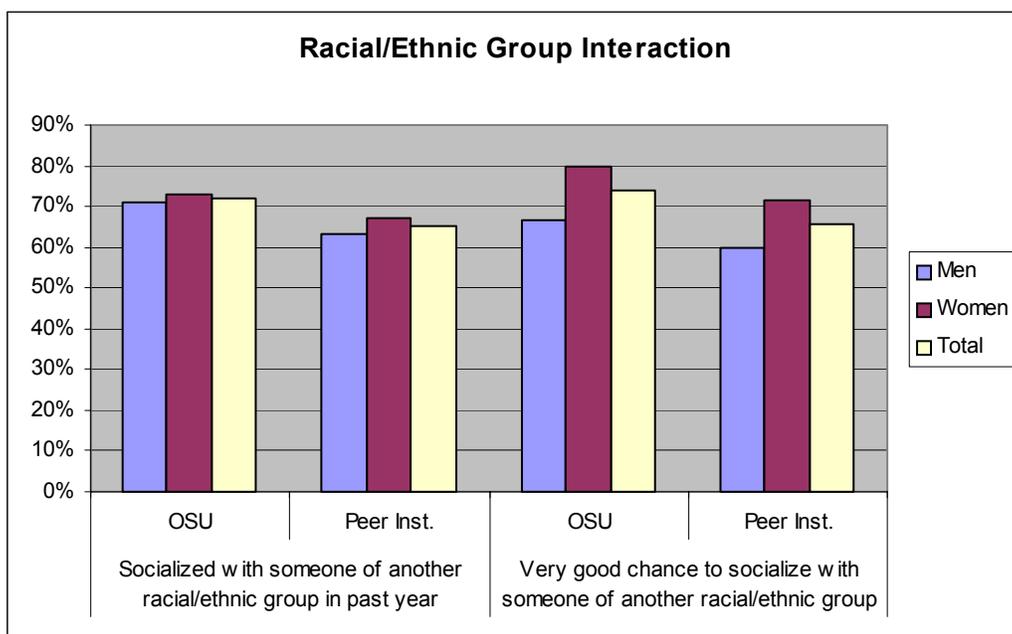
When asked to indicate their current religious preference, 28.8 percent of OSU students reported none, compared with 16.8 percent for survey participants at comparable medium-selective public universities. The lack of religious preference tracks closely with no religious preference for at least one parent. In the case of OSU students, 26.8 percent of freshmen describe their fathers as having no religious preference (13.5 percent national average), and 18.1 percent report no religious preference for their mothers (8.9 percent national average).

At the same time, OSU students engage in prayer/meditation at rates comparable to their peers at peer institutions. The percentage of students who pray or meditate at least one hour a week is 28.5 percent for incoming OSU students compared to 32.5 percent among peers. One survey question asked students to rate their level of "religiousness" as compared to the average person their age, 29.6 percent rated themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent; comparator peers rated themselves at 34.5 percent. This relative difference between OSU students and students at their peer institutions seems to be in alignment with the same question being asked in reference to "spirituality" when compared to the average person their own age. Here, 37.7 percent of the OSU students rated themselves above average or in the highest 10 percent while comparator peers rated themselves at 40.9 percent.



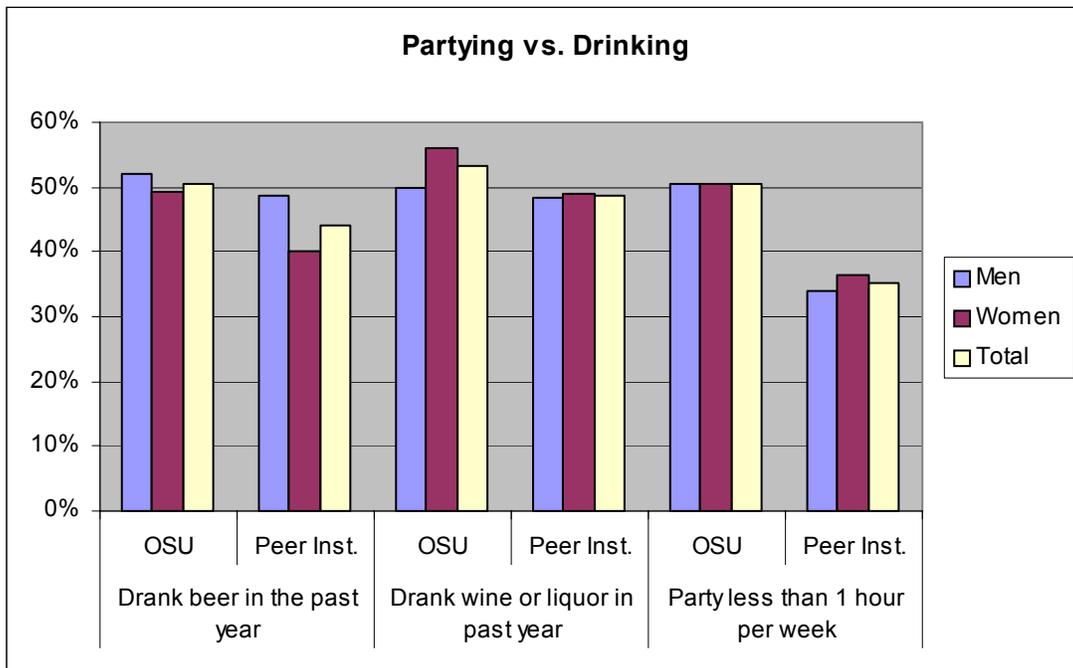
SOCIAL BEHAVIORS

Incoming students arrive at OSU with some history with interracial interaction; among freshmen 72.2 percent of entering college students report that they have socialized with someone of another racial/ethnic group. About three-quarters (73.9 percent) of entering students estimate that the chances are very good that they will socialize with someone of another racial/ethnic group while at OSU. Racial Interaction Graph



Female students anticipate interracial interactions at a much higher rate than males, 79.9 percent-66.5 percent, respectively. What does it mean that one-third of entering males do not expect that they will have interracial interactions as part of their OSU experience? This is an important question to ask in light of our University’s diversity goals. Three-quarters (75.9 percent) of entering students estimate that it is very likely that they will develop close friendships with others students. Again, female students have much higher expectations of interpersonal relationships than their male counterparts – 69.2 percent of men compared to 81.3 percent of women expect close relationships with student colleagues.

OSU freshman also report that they party less than their peers at other public universities; 50.4 percent of incoming students report partying one or less hours during the typical week, compared to 35.0 percent at peer public universities. When asked about their use of alcohol OSU students’ responses indicate that 50.6 percent have drunk beer before entering college and 53.4 percent have drunk wine or liquor, both rates are above those of peers at medium-selective public universities (44.2 percent and 48.8 percent, respectively).



It would be interesting to look deeper at what it means that incoming OSU students party less, yet a larger percentage drink than on other campuses. Only 3.6 percent of incoming

students smoked cigarettes in the year prior to coming to OSU, compared to 6.8 percent at comparator institutions.

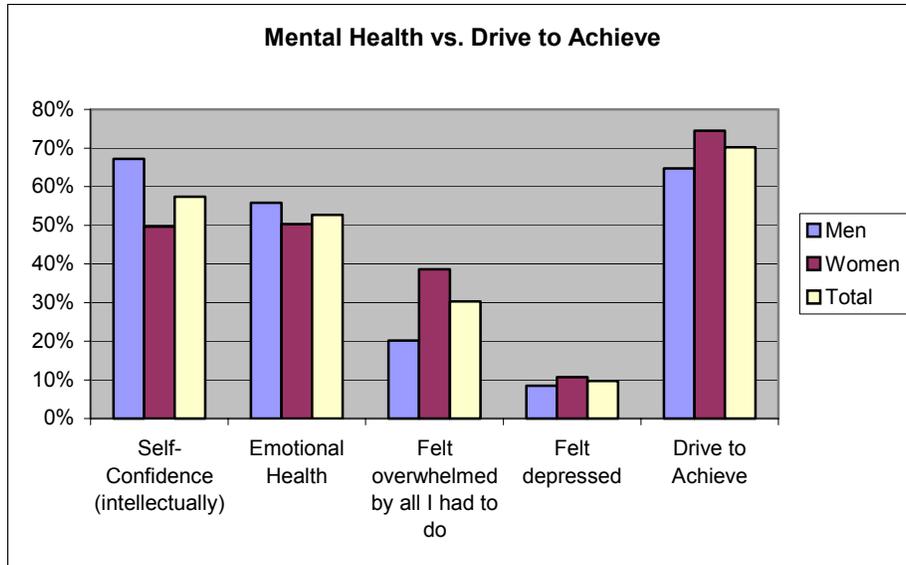
About one-third (33.8 percent) of OSU students report that during a typical week they spend no time playing video or computer games. A closer look shows that 49.5 percent of women do not play video games, compared to 14.3 percent of men. There are clear male-female differences in participation in video/computer games, with males showing much greater involvement. Male-female participation differs as follow, respectively: 1-2 hours (24.1 percent-11.9 percent); 3-5 hours (19.5 percent-6.5 percent); and 6-10 hours (13.0 percent-1.9 percent).

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The survey asked a number of question related to health and wellness. These questions focused on physical, psychological and emotional health. Just over one-half (51.8 percent) of freshmen rate their physical health above average or in the highest 10 percent compared to others their age. Students' self-rated emotional health almost equaled the ratings they gave themselves for physical health, with 52.7 percent of freshmen considering their emotional health as above average or in the highest 10 percent.

Female freshmen rate their sense of health and wellness at lower levels than men, with two-thirds of men (66.6 percent) rating their physical health as above average or in the highest 10 percent, compared with 39.9 percent of women. The gender gap is interesting considering that 42.9 percent of women report exercising or playing sports at least six hours per week, compared with 37.5 percent of men. Additionally, fewer women than men rate themselves highly on emotional health (50.3 percent of women, compared to 55.8 percent of men).

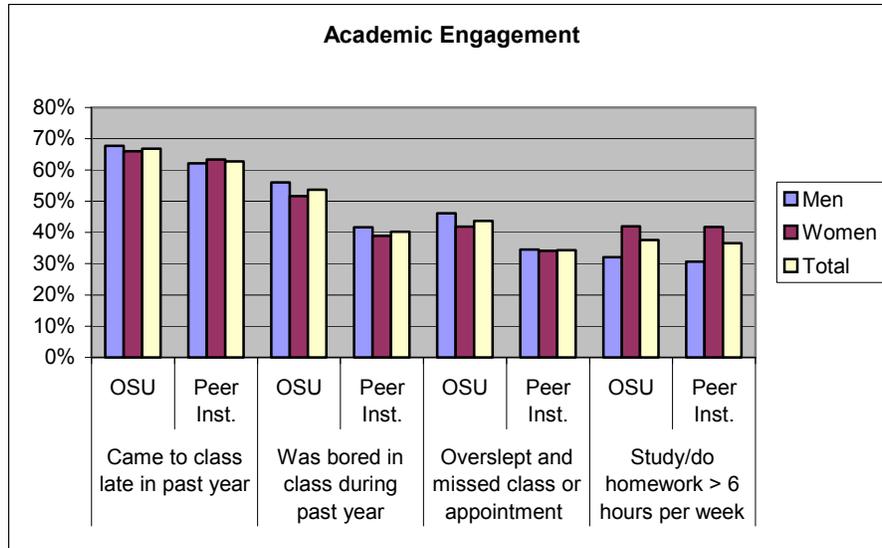
Women are almost twice as likely as men are to report feeling frequently overwhelmed by all the things they have to do (38.6 percent among women, compared to 20.2 percent among men). Women indicate a higher estimation of their drive to achieve, with 74.5 percent rating their drive to achieve as above average or in the highest 10 percent, compared to 64.5 percent for males.



Male scores for competitiveness are much higher than women’s, 64.0 percent of men rate their competitiveness as above average or in the highest 10 percent, as compared to 46.5 percent of women.

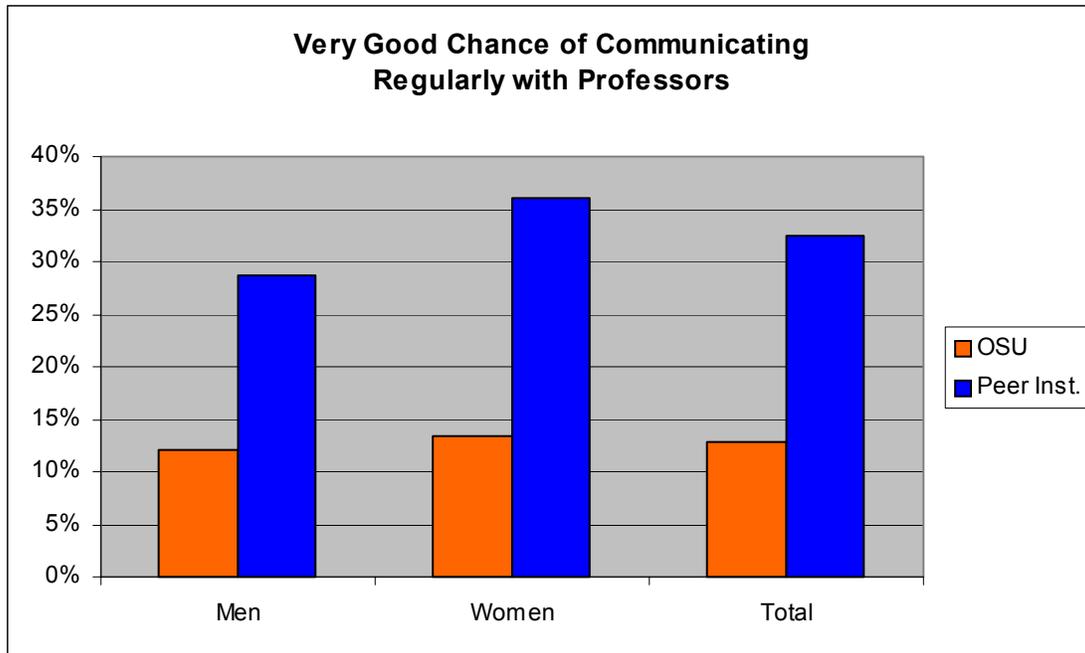
ACADEMIC PROFILE, ENGAGEMENT AND EXPECTATIONS

The survey yielded interesting data on the level of academic engagement among students. For the sake of this report academic engagement refers to the amount of time and energy spent on academically related activities. The number of students who indicated they chose OSU because it has “a very good academic reputation” compared to their peers at other medium selective institutions is quite low (37.9 percent-56.1 percent). OSU was the first-choice of college for 80.8 percent of our first year students, this compares favorable to the national average of 73.3 percent. More than half (53.6 percent) of OSU students report feeling frequently bored in class during their senior year in high school. In response to a question about punctuality 66.8 percent of in-coming students came late to class frequently or occasionally during the last year and 43.7 percent overslept and missed a class or an appointment as high school seniors. The survey also finds that students spend surprisingly little time studying and doing homework, with only 37.6 percent of entering students reporting that the studied or worked on assignments for six or more hours per week in the past year; this number is slightly higher than the national average for peer institutions (36.5).



Entering student took Advanced Placement (AP) courses at a slightly higher rate than their peers at other institutions (66.3 percent for OSU compared to 64.1 percent at other medium selective public universities). However, OSU students took AP exams at a much lower rate than peers at comparable institutions; 39.9 percent of entering students surveyed took AP exams, while 48.2 percent of those at peer institutions did so.

Entering freshmen report modest expectations for their campus involvement and interactions with faculty. A little less than half (46.3 percent) of entering students rate the chances are very good that they will be satisfied with college. 9.3 percent indicate chances are very good that they will transfer to another college before graduating; 5.2 percent of students at peer institutions indicate the same. Just over one-tenth (12.8 percent) of students believe chances are very good that they will communicate regularly with professors. This is a very surprising number given that 32.5 percent of incoming students at other medium selective institutions suggest chances are very good that they will communicate regularly with professors.



A small number of students bring expectations of graduating with honors, 12.7 percent rates chances are very good that they will graduate with honors; 21.3 percent of students at peer institutions believe chances are very good that they will graduate with honors. More than half of students (53.4 percent) expect to earn at least a “B” average in college.

The table below shows male-female differences in self-estimates of skills and abilities.

Percentage Rating "Above Average" or "Top 10 percent" compared others their age in:

<u>Self-rating</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Academic ability	73.6%	67.4%	70.1%
Computer skills	54.1%	21.4%	36.0%
Intellectual self-confidence	67.2%	49.6%	57.4%
Writing ability	47.1%	45.2%	46.1%
Mathematical ability	58.1%	37.3%	46.5%

The survey results suggest that males generally have a higher estimation of their abilities and personal qualities than females. We might want to consider what it means for campus and classroom dynamics that there is such a disparity in how men and women perceive themselves.

INTENTIONS AND GOALS

When provided with the opportunity to indicate objectives that are considered essential or very important to them, students identified raising a family (75.9 percent); being well off financially (68.1 percent); helping others who are in difficulty (59.8 percent); and being an authority in my field (53.7 percent). Some activities that focus on activism and community engagement drew less favorable responses: desire to participate in community action programs (20.3 percent); becoming a community leader (25.8 percent); help clean up the environment (17.0 percent); helping promote racial understanding (25.3 percent).

Students also have meager expectations in the area of extra-curricular involvement: 5.6 percent estimate chances are very good that they will participate in student government; 13.4 percent say chances are very good that they will join a fraternity or sorority; and 37.4 percent believe chances are very good that they will participate in student clubs/groups.

CONCLUSIONS

The intention of this report is to present the students' perspectives and experience, not to describe a specific course of action for the university. Nor, do we intend to offer analyses of the information – our hope is that we will gain deeper understanding of the experiences, needs and expectations through conversations among members of our campus community. Ultimately, as we come to understand students better and gain greater knowledge of the structures that will promote their growth, we will find ways to responsibly act on our knowledge.