

INTRODUCTION

This survey focuses on Penn State students' out-of-class experiences and cocurricular learning. Included in the survey are questions concerning the importance students place on their out-of-class experience, the likelihood and motivation for participation in educational workshops and programming, students' use of portfolios in tracking their experiences and learning, and their use of online learning modules. This survey, conducted by Student Affairs Research and Assessment, was administered by phone and also by Web¹ at the request of the Student Affairs Purposeful Education Committee.

In total, 1,937 undergraduate students across 20 Penn State campuses responded to the survey. By phone, 562 University Park students responded for a 23.8% response rate and, of those contacted, 59.0% participated. By Web, 1,375 responded for a 15.4% response rate. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.19%.

Of the respondents, 51.4% are female; 83.4% are white/Caucasian; 50.4% are first- or second-year students; and 54.9% attend University Park.

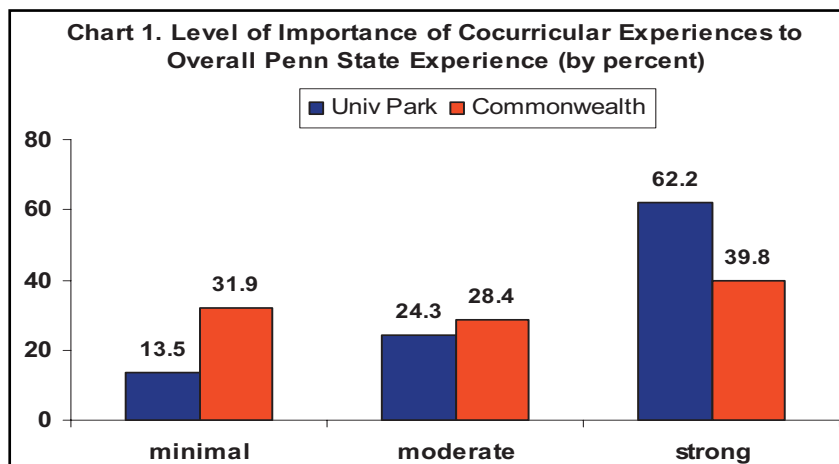
When appropriate, factors have been created to assist in the interpretation of the data.² For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

FINDINGS

Importance of Cocurricular Experiences

Students were asked a series of questions regarding the importance they place on cocurricular experiences. These experiences include formal and informal out-of-class opportunities such as clubs and organizations, workshops and lectures, internships and co-ops, interactions with faculty and other students, cultural events, and study abroad.

- At University Park, 62.2% responded that their out-of-class/cocurricular experiences were of at least "substantial" importance to their overall Penn State experience (see Chart 1).



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For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

¹ The Web survey administration is utilized in order to account for students for whom local phone information was unavailable.

² Factors are a data reduction tool that combines multiple questions into a larger concept based on logic and statistical analysis. The factor composition is typically found in the corresponding table, and factor names are denoted by the use of SMALL CAPS.

- Half of University Park students felt strongly that their cocurricular experiences enhance their ability to reach their career goals (see Table 1).
- Among students at University Park, those with a GPA of 3.30 or higher rated the IMPORTANCE OF COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES significantly higher than did students with a GPA of 2.75 or lower (data not shown).
- Students attending University Park rated the IMPORTANCE OF COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES significantly higher than did students attending the Commonwealth campuses (see Table 1).

Table 1: Importance of Cocurricular Experiences

Percent who felt strongly ³ that:	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
They have taken advantage of cocurricular opportunities at Penn State.	35.7	21.6
Their experiences with cocurricular programs, activities, and groups relate to their academic program.	36.4	26.4
Their cocurricular experiences enhance their ability to reach their career goals.	50.2	33.5
IMPORTANCE OF COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES⁴ (averages)	3.29	2.80

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=extremely

Student Affairs Certificate Program

Student Affairs is currently creating non-credit bearing certificates for students to complete by participating in a collection of workshops, programs, and experiential components that focus on a particular topic. The survey included questions focusing on students' motivation and likelihood of participating in this program.

- Students expressed the greatest motivation to participate in the Student Affairs certificate program in order to fulfill requirements or receive extra credit for class or for their major followed by expanding their resume (see Table 2).
- Moreover, 86.1% of students expressed at least "substantial" motivation to participate in the certificate program for at least one of the reasons defined in Table 2 (data not shown).
- While students attending University Park expressed the greatest likelihood to participate in a certificate on leadership development (69.5%), students at the Commonwealth campuses expressed the greatest likelihood to participate in a certificate on career development (70.4%) (see Table 3).
- Overall, 89.3% of students responded they were likely to participate in at least one of the five certificates (see Chart 2).⁵
- Students attending the Commonwealth campuses reported significantly higher MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM but significantly lower LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATING IN THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM when compared to students attending University Park (see Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2: Motivation to Participate in the Certificate Program

Percent who were at least "substantially" ⁶ motivated by the following:	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
Fulfill requirements or receive extra credit for class or for your major	65.8	67.7
Expand your resume for employment or grad / professional school	51.9	60.2
Explore career options	52.5	56.4
Enhance your learning	46.5	55.8
Provide skills you need for your cocurricular involvement (e.g. leader of an organization)	41.5	44.1
MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (averages)	3.45	3.60

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=extremely

Table 3: Likelihood of Participating in the Certificate Program

Percent who were likely to participate in the following certificates:	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
Leadership development	69.5	66.5
Service learning / community service	64.2	58.0
Career development	63.9	70.4
Health and wellness	60.1	55.5
Multicultural competency / diversity	45.0	40.6
LIKELIHOOD OF PARTICIPATING IN THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM (averages)	2.70	2.62

Scale: 1=very unlikely; 4=very likely

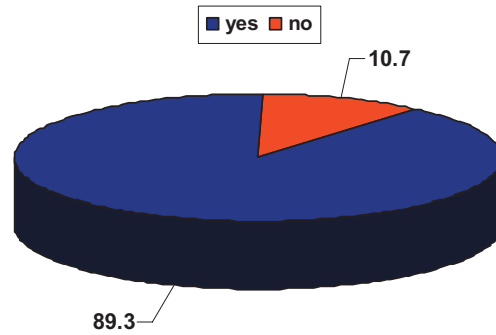
³ Percents represent those who indicated "substantially" or "extremely."

⁴ In addition to the three questions included in Table 1, the factor includes the data from the question represented in Chart 1.

⁵ A certificate on peer education is also being discussed but was not included in the survey.

⁶ Percents represent those who indicated "substantially" or "extremely."

Chart 2. Percent of Penn State Students who are Likely to Participate in at least One Certificate



e-Portfolio

Two additional sets of questions addressed the uses of an electronic portfolio system related to cocurricular experiences and the helpfulness of such a system.

- Among University Park students, over half responded that it is at least “substantially” important to plan their cocurricular involvement in order to reach their goals (58.9%) and to record/keep track of their cocurricular experiences (57.0%) (see Table 4).
- Over 75% of students felt it would be helpful to have an online system to manage and organize information for internships, graduate school, or job applications (see Table 5).
- Women and first-year students placed significantly higher IMPORTANCE OF E-PORTFOLIO FOR COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES and reported a significantly higher level of HELPFULNESS OF AN ONLINE SYSTEM than did men and upper-class students respectively (data not shown).
- While students attending University Park and those attending the Commonwealth campuses responded similarly with regard to the HELPFULNESS OF AN ONLINE SYSTEM, University Park students rated the IMPORTANCE OF E-PORTFOLIO FOR COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES significantly higher than their counterparts at the Commonwealth campuses (data not shown).
- At the time of the survey, 19.4% of University Park students and 8.7% of Commonwealth campus students reported using e-Portfolio or another means to keep track of their cocurricular experiences (data not shown).

Table 4: Importance of e-Portfolio for Cocurricular Experiences

Percent who think it is at least “substantially” ⁷ important to:	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
Plan your cocurricular involvement in order to reach your academic, career, or personal goals	58.9	50.7
Record/keep track of your cocurricular experiences	57.0	44.1
Reflect on your learning from cocurricular experiences	43.0	38.0
IMPORTANCE OF E-PORTFOLIO FOR COCURRICULAR EXPERIENCES (averages)	3.51	3.31

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=extremely

Table 5: Helpfulness of an Online System

Percent who think it would be at least “substantially” ⁷ helpful for:	University Park	Commonwealth Campuses
Managing and organizing information for internships, graduate school, or job applications	79.4	76.8
Storing important academic or cocurricular documents in one place	64.3	64.4
Sharing your accomplishments with others (e.g. faculty, employers, family)	52.6	55.5
Reflecting on your achievements, strengths, and gaps	49.0	53.0
HELPFULNESS OF AN ONLINE SYSTEM (averages)	3.71	3.75

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=extremely

⁷ Percents represent those who indicated “substantially” or “extremely.”

Online Workshops

Lastly, students were asked about their participation in online workshops or tutorials (not including online courses).

- Among all Penn State students, 47.0% had taken at least one workshop during their time at Penn State (see Chart 3).
- Most frequently, students found out about these online workshops or tutorials because they were required or recommended as part of a class (83.5%) (data not shown).
- Students indicated they would be most likely to participate in an online workshop on resume writing, interviewing skills, or other career services topics (69.4%) followed by leadership styles, group dynamics, or other leadership development topics (65.4%) (data not shown).

Chart 3. Number of Online Workshops/Tutorials Taken at Penn State (by percent)

