

INTRODUCTION

This survey focuses on the academic and social integration of University Park students at the end of their first year and is based on Penn State's Ten First-Year Student Outcomes and Competencies. Included in the survey are questions concerning students' satisfaction with Penn State and their progress in establishing academic and career goals, adjusting to college-level academics, developing inter- and intrapersonally, and navigating college.

In total, 1,156 students responded to the survey for a 28.9% response rate. By phone, 416 participated; 740 participated by Web. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.64%. Of the respondents, 58.5% are female; 83.4% are white/Caucasian; 91.6% lived on campus; 92.0% were 18 or 19 years of age; and 80.7% began in the fall semester. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit: <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

FINDINGS¹

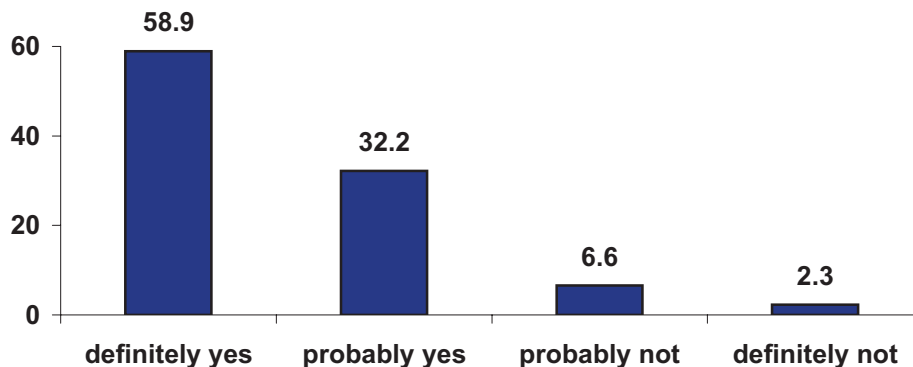
Satisfaction with Penn State

Students were asked several questions regarding their satisfaction with their Penn State experiences and their connectedness to the college community.

- Approximately 91% of first-year students replied that, if starting college again, they would definitely or probably choose to attend Penn State (see Chart 1).
- Furthermore, 93.8% reported they definitely intend to return to Penn State in the fall, and another 3.8% said they will probably return (data not shown).

Students' academic and social integration to college during their first year

Chart 1. If you were starting college again, would you choose to attend Penn State? (by percent)



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

¹Four factors were created based on the outcomes. 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.

- When asked about their overall experience at Penn State, 89.7% responded they were satisfied (see Table 1).
- In addition, 77.2% believed the Penn State community is welcoming (see Table 1).
- White students, women, and on-campus residents reported higher levels of SATISFACTION WITH PENN STATE than did students of color, men, and off-campus residents, respectively (data not shown).
- Evidence suggests that, in 2008, first-year students were less likely to be satisfied with Penn State when compared to 2006 (data not shown). However, at least some of these differences may be attributed to differences in data collection.

Table 1: Satisfaction with Penn State

Overall, how satisfied are you with your:	percent satisfied	average
Overall experience at Penn State	89.7	4.41
Social life at Penn State	84.3	4.28
Out-of-class/cocurricular experiences	82.4	4.23
Academic experiences at Penn State	85.2	4.16
To what degree:	percent²	average
Is the Penn State community welcoming	77.2	4.07
Do you personally feel a sense of belonging at PSU	71.3	3.93
SATISFACTION WITH PENN STATE (average)		4.19

Scales: 1=very dissatisfied, 3=neither, 5=very satisfied or 1=not at all, 3=moderately, 5=extremely

Becoming an Engaged Learner in a College Community

Important in the achievement of many of the other outcomes (including satisfaction) is students' development of interpersonal skills and successfully navigating college including being familiar with and using campus resources, interacting with faculty and staff, and interacting effectively with peers in social settings and through educationally purposeful student activities.

- First-year students' social integration into college is noted by 77.6% responding they had made at least substantial progress toward developing close friendships with other students (see Table 2).
- Almost 74% reported making at least substantial progress in developing empathy and compassion for others (see Table 2).
- Approximately 61% responded that they made substantial progress in getting to know others different from themselves (see Table 2).
- Within this area, students were least likely to report substantial progress in getting to know faculty (30.7%) (see Table 2).
- Women and on-campus residents reported significantly greater progress in BECOMING AN ENGAGED LEARNER IN A COLLEGE COMMUNITY when compared to men and off-campus residents, respectively (data not shown).

Table 2: Becoming an Engaged Learner in a College Community

To what degree have you made progress toward:	percent²	average
Developing close friendships with other students	77.6	4.13
Understanding the importance of lifelong learning	76.2	4.03
Developing empathy and compassion for others	73.8	3.98
Understanding the purpose of the general education requirements	67.3	3.81
Getting to know others different from yourself (i.e. race/ethnicity, sexual orientation)	60.6	3.71
Contributing positively to the Penn State community	62.2	3.70
Being aware of available campus services	59.2	3.67
Improving your personal health	55.9	3.54
Getting to know faculty	30.7	3.03
BECOMING AN ENGAGED LEARNER IN A COLLEGE COMMUNITY (average)		3.75

Scale: 1=not at all, 3=moderately, 5=extremely

Also important in successfully navigating college are the use of campus resources and cocurricular engagement.

- Close to 70% reported they at least sometimes used campus resources for help with course work (see Table 3).
- Approximately 42% indicated they never or rarely attended a workshop, lecture or presentation or met with a faculty member of instructor outside of class (see Table 3).
- Half reported attending multicultural events (51.1%) or volunteering (51.4%) at least sometimes (see Table 3).

²Percents represent those who indicated "substantially" or "extremely."

Table 3: Student Engagement

Percent	never or rarely	sometimes	often or very often
Discussed class projects or topics with other students outside of class	12.4	39.9	47.8
Met with an academic advisor	27.9	45.8	26.4
Used campus resources for help with course work	34.8	38.6	26.6
Attended a workshop, lecture, or presentation outside of class	42.7	39.0	18.3
Met with a faculty member or instructor outside of class	42.3	39.5	18.1
Volunteered on campus or in the community	48.6	33.9	17.5
Attended multicultural events	48.8	32.7	18.4
Used student services for personal/non-academic issues	70.7	21.4	8.0

Establishing Academic and Career Goals

Students were asked several questions related to their progress in refining their short- and long-term academic goals and establishing more specific career goals.

- Over three-quarters of students felt they had made at least substantial progress toward choosing a major/program of study (79.7%) and toward determining what classes they need to take (81.8%) (see Table 4).
- Over half (56.7%) reported making at least substantial progress in defining their career goals (see Table 4).
- White students, women, and off-campus residents reported significantly greater progress in ESTABLISHING ACADEMIC AND CAREER GOALS when compared to their respective counterparts (data not shown).

Table 4: Establishing Academic and Career Goals

To what degree have you made progress toward:	percent ³	average
Choosing a major/program of study	79.7	4.17
Determining what classes you need to take	81.8	4.14
Defining your career goals	56.7	3.58
Acquiring job-related skills	54.2	3.53
ESTABLISHING ACADEMIC AND CAREER GOALS (average)		3.86

Scale: 1=not at all, 3=moderately, 5=extremely

Adjusting to College-Level Academics

Other questions focused on students' abilities to meet academic demands and expectations.

- While 76.9% believed they had made at least substantial progress in improving their ability to successfully complete college-level work, 55.5% reported making similar progress in managing their time effectively (see Table 5).
- White students and women reported significantly greater progress in ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE-LEVEL ACADEMICS when compared to students of color and men, respectively (data not shown).

Table 5: Adjusting to College-Level Academics

To what degree have you made progress toward:	percent ³	average
Improving your ability to successfully complete college-level work	76.9	4.02
Adjusting to the academic demands of college life	73.9	3.95
Balancing your academic work with your social activities	70.3	3.87
Developing effective study skills	58.9	3.64
Managing your time effectively	55.5	3.59
ADJUSTING TO COLLEGE-LEVEL ACADEMICS (average)		3.82

Scale: 1=not at all, 3=moderately, 5=extremely

When asking students about various aspects of academic engagement, they reported the following:

- 49.7% participated in class discussions often or very often (see Table 6);
- 74.7% worked on a group project at least sometimes (see Table 6);
- 65.9% never turned in course assignments late, and 27.4% rarely did (data not shown); and
- 12.8% never skipped class, and 47.8% rarely skipped class (data not shown).

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

Table 6: Academic Engagement

Percent	never or rarely	sometimes	often or very often
Participated in class discussions	12.2	38.2	49.7
Worked on a group project for class	25.3	45.6	29.1

Time Spent

Other behaviors related to students achieving the outcomes and competencies for first-year students - and overlapping the various areas discussed previously - included the time students spent during a typical week in various activities.

- Students, on average, spent 6.48 hours a week exercising or participating in intercollegiate, club, or intramural sports (data not shown).
- In addition to participation in sports, 83.4% indicated they spent at least one hour a week participating in other cocurricular activities, with an average of 5.40 hours a week (data not shown).
- Approximately 42% reported spending 10 hours or less a week studying or preparing for class (see Chart 2).
- Only 15.6% and 10.9% reported working for pay on campus and off campus, respectively (data not shown).

Chart 2. Hours Spent in a Typical Week Studying or Preparing for Class (by percent)

