



New Students 2000

September 2000

Purpose

The focus of this survey was to explore the experiences of incoming students, their transition to college, the impact of specific orientation efforts, and their progress developing learning competencies.

Implications/Highlights

Most of the new students (76%) felt they were doing well feeling they belong as members of the Penn State community and making progress towards developing academic and personal competencies.

Participation Rate

N = 1067 (82%) agreed to participate

N = 241 (18%) did not agree to participate

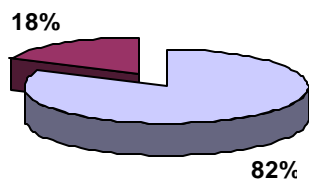


Figure 1. Participation rate

Findings

Three-fourths (78%) of incoming students felt that their transition to college went smoothly or very smoothly, which reflects little change over three years.

Transition to Penn State

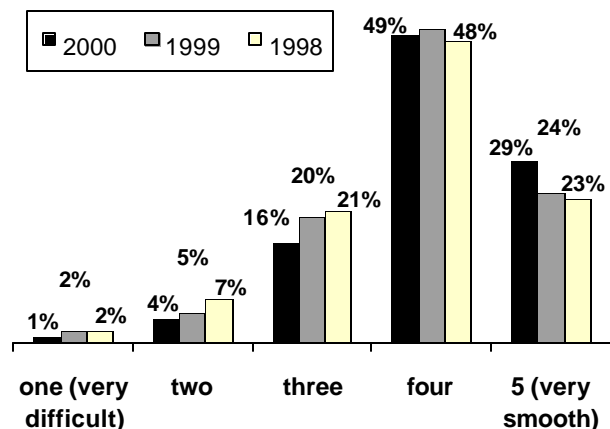


Figure 2. Transition of Incoming Students

Statistically significant at the .05* level

Incoming students this year were less likely than incoming students last year to report that their RA was helpful in assisting their transition to Penn State.

RA Helpful in Transition

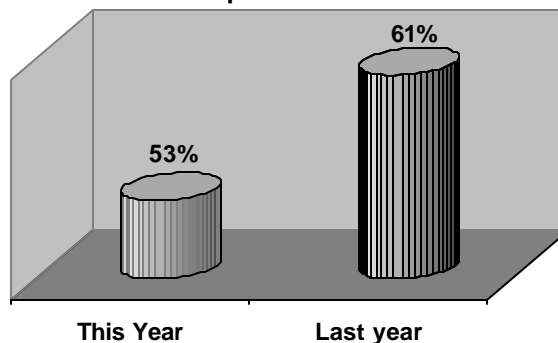


Figure 3. RA assisted student transition to Penn State

Students new this fall seem very similar to new students entering in recent years as far as their concerns before arriving.

Concerns Before Arriving at Penn State

Concerns	2000	1999	1998	1997
Being prepared for college classes	51%	52%	54%	62%
Getting along with roommates	49%	49%	53%	61%
Getting a start on academic skills	45%	45%	47%	59%
Finding way around campus	41%	43%	41%	51%
Making friends	37%	37%	34%	49%
Knowing about special offices/services	33%	33%	36%	50%
Learning about the social scene	33%	33%	31%	44%

Women were more likely to be concerned about making friends, learning about the social scene, finding their way around campus, and getting along with roommates.*

Minority students were more likely to be concerned about getting a head start on academics, being prepared for college classes, getting along with roommates, and being informed about special offices and services.*

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Student Affairs

Students were asked a series of questions about orientation events. Two-thirds (68%) attended the President's Welcome. One-fifth 'heard' the message about alcohol concerns.

Messages 'Heard' From the Welcome Event

- 31% don't remember
 - 21% alcohol concerns
 - 14% academic hints
 - 13% useful to get involved
 - 5% community responsibilities
 - 5% student characteristics
 - 3% get to know faculty
 - 8% other ^
- ^ balancing fun, enjoying self, making the most of time here, Penn State spirit, smartest class yet, saying 'hi'

Most students felt the President had clarified what was expected from students as members of the Penn State community.

President Clarified Community Expectations

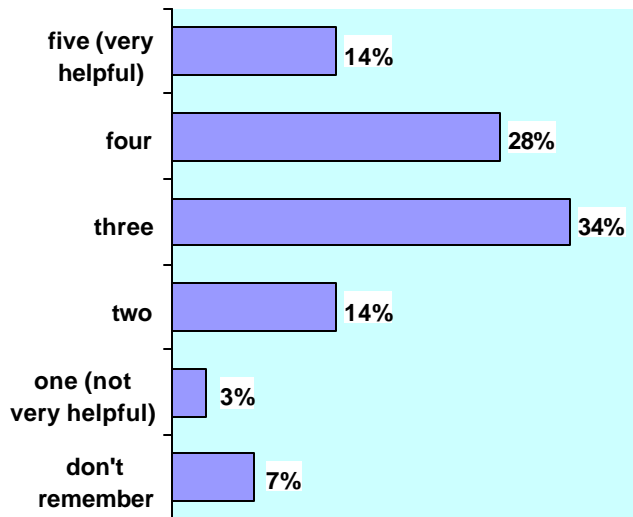


Figure 4. Clarification of expectations as members of the Penn State Community

Students were asked how helpful other orientation events were in making them feel a part of the Penn State community.

Helped Students Feel a Member of PSU Community

Event	Number Attended	Helpful plus Very Helpful
Post-Welcome activities	678	59%
Be A Part From the Start	506	60%
1 st House Meeting	955	71%
Real Life Choices	278	34%

A majority of students indicated progress developing learning and personal competencies - becoming comfortable with computer technology (69%), keeping physically (65%) and emotionally (65%) fit. Fewer felt informed about PSU procedures (42%) or rules (61%).

Students noted progress towards understanding their own strengths and weaknesses (72%) and establishing their career goals (46%).

Progress Developing Academic Competencies

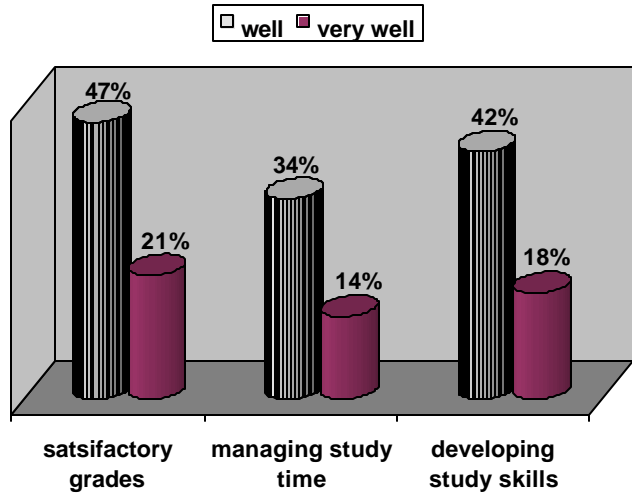


Figure 5. Progress developing academic competencies

Students reported progress in the development of relationship competencies.

Relationship Competencies

Competencies	well/very well
developing and maintaining new friendships	82%
meeting others from diverse backgrounds	60%
feeling a sense of responsibility towards others	43%
becoming involved in clubs and organizations	46%
expressing opinions to student leaders	31%

One month after arrival, students felt they were doing well developing personal competencies.

Progress Developing Personal Competencies

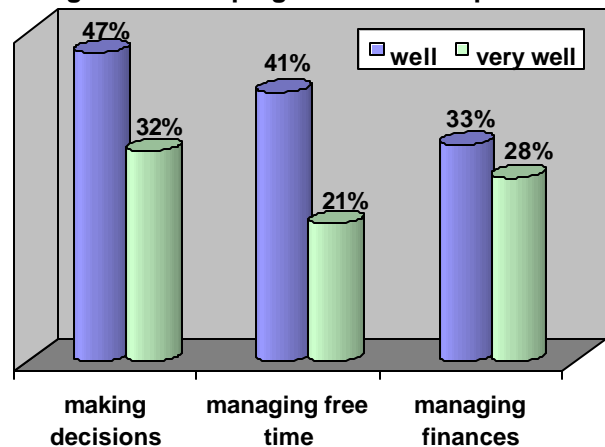


Figure 6. Progress developing personal competencies