



Impact of Mentoring on First Year Students

November 2000

Purpose

The central goals for this survey were to determine the extent of participation in new student mentoring plans and the impact of participation on their satisfaction with their experiences in college. A secondary goal was to compare the responses of a stratified random sample who took the survey over the phone or via the web.

Implications/Highlights

More of the First Year minority students than non-minority students participated in a mentoring program. There were few significant differences between those students who were and who were not part of a mentoring program. There were differences in the responses of those who completed the survey over the phone or via the web.

Participation Rate

All new minority students and a random sample of non-minority students were divided with half of each group assigned to be invited to participate in identical surveys on the web or in response to a Pulse phone call.

Survey Response		Survey Groups	
Overall	N=994	African American	N=103
Phone	N=365	Asian American	N=116
Web	N=629	Latino American	N=99
		Caucasian American	N=614
		Other	N=62

Findings

More of the minority students participated in a mentoring program.

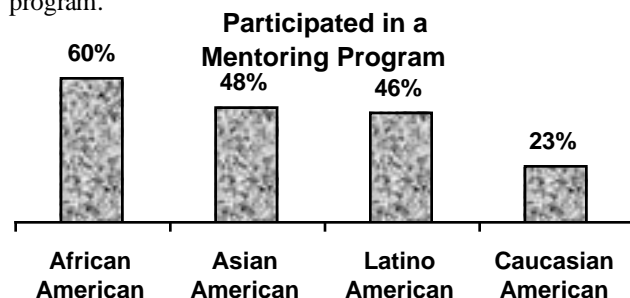


Figure 1. More of the minority students participated in a mentoring program

Statistically significant at the .05* level

Students overall were asked to evaluate their transition to college. The difference between those who participated and those who did not participate in a mentoring program was not significant.

Transition to College

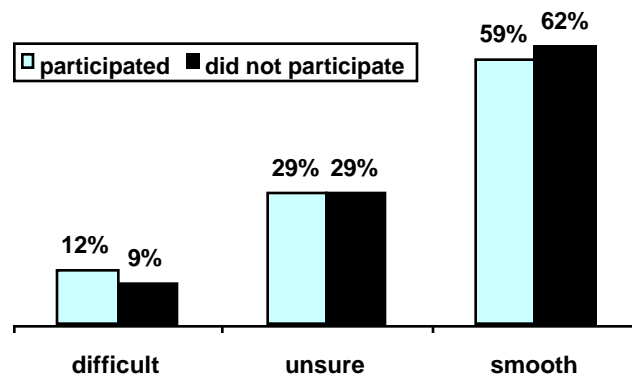


Figure 2. Students who did and who did not participate in a mentoring program did not differ in the evaluation of their transition to college

Students overall were asked how satisfied they were with their decision to come to Penn State. The difference between those who did and did not participate in a mentoring program was not significant.

Satisfaction with Decision to Come to PSU

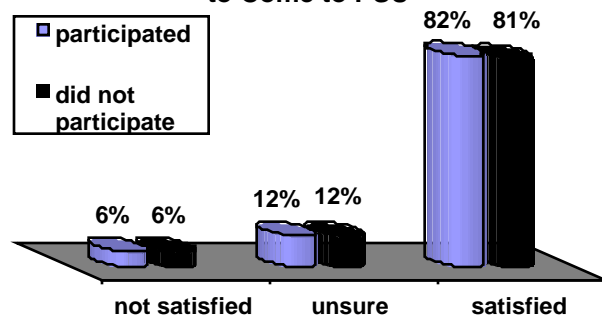


Figure 3. Students who did and who did not participate in a mentoring program did not differ in the level of satisfaction with their decision to come to Penn State

Similar 'no difference' findings emerged when focusing on the minority students who participated or did not participate in a mentoring program.

For further information, please contact Dr. Betty Moore at the Student Affairs Research and Assessment Office.
315 Grange, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 863-1809, blm1@psu.edu



Student Affairs

No significant differences were found between minority students who did or who did not participate in a mentoring program in how supportive they felt the environment was:

- in the overall campus climate
- in their classes
- in their living areas
- in their social settings

There were no significant differences between minority students who did or did not participate in a mentoring program regarding how satisfied they were with the sensitivity of their minority and non-minority instructors or the sensitivity of minority students.

Those minority students who did not participate in a mentoring program were more satisfied with the sensitivity level of non-minority students.*

Satisfaction with Sensitivity of Non-Minority Students

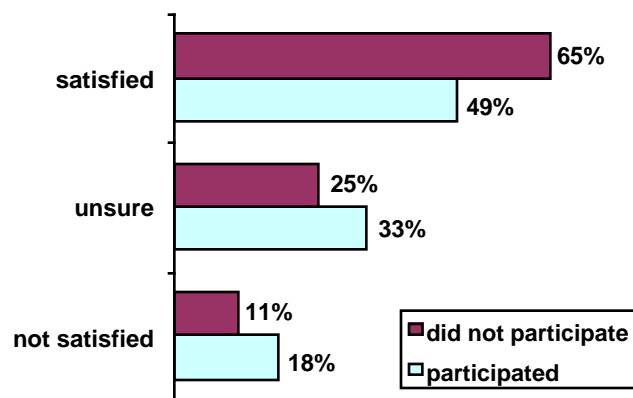


Figure 4. More of the minority students who did not participate in a mentoring program were satisfied with the sensitivity of non-minority students

Students were asked to look back at their first semester in college and to comment on their most positive experiences and what experiences they wished could have been improved.

Most Positive Experiences

- meeting new people
- being on their own
- whole 'dorm' experience
- various clubs/activities
- fraternity/sorority rush
- gorgeous campus
- doing well academically
- social scene
- classes
- finding religious friends
- helpful, encouraging teachers
- being part of Penn State

Could Be Improved

- weekends
- lost friendships
- provide printed policies
- being more active in class
- meeting more people
- being able to sit in on classes before scheduling them
- class size
- specific classes
- dorm security
- always being checked up on
- drinking

Mentoring programs in this survey included:

- S Plan** Support, Survival, Success
- FastStart** Robeson Center
- KEWL** Knowledge, Excellence, Wisdom & Learning
- College Based** (examples: Women in Engineering, Biology Big Sister, or Schreyer Honors)

Almost all the students who said they participated in a mentoring program had been contacted by their mentor. About a third felt that their mentoring program had been helpful in their transition to college.

Impact of Mentoring Program on Transition to College

Mentoring Program	Number	Been Contacted by Mentor		Mentoring Helped Transition
		Once or more	Seven times or more	
S Plan	N = 98	94%	34%	43%
FastStart	N = 39	87%	15%	36%
KEWL	N = 38	89%	27%	31%
College Program	N = 169	90%	12%	30%

A secondary goal of this survey was to compare the responses by survey type: online or over the phone.

No significant differences were found by survey type for gender, college of enrollment, or whether or not students participated in a mentoring program. There were differences by ethnic category with more Asian Americans (65%) and more Caucasian Americans (64%) responding to the web survey vs. the phone survey.

A larger proportion of those students who took the web survey did not complete all the questions although the web survey group did write extensively in response to the 'open-ended' questions. Those who did complete the web survey tended to be less satisfied overall with their experiences and their progress since beginning college this semester.

Doing well with:

	web	phone
- roommate situation *	68%	81%
- making friends *	67%	83%
- feeling you belong *	65%	78%
- getting good grades *	37%	46%
- managing study time *	32%	41%
- managing free time *	39%	56%
- finding support group *	45%	55%

More of the students who took the phone survey felt the campus climate was supportive.*

Campus Climate Supportive

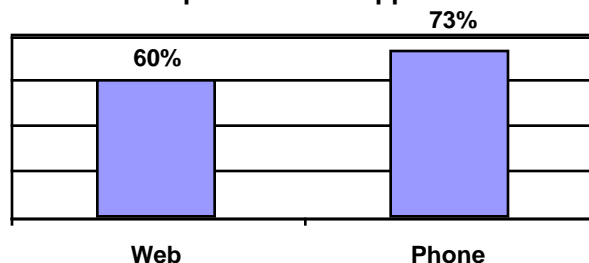


Figure 5. More of the phone survey than the web survey students felt the campus climate was supportive

*Statistically significant at the .05 level.