

# PENN STATE STUDENT AFFAIRS

# 2007 **Student** Satisfaction Survey

The Student Satisfaction Survey is one of the ongoing efforts within the Division of Student Affairs to garner feedback from students in a systematic way. Understanding students' experiences and satisfaction is important in our efforts to enrich the student experience and to make Penn State a more student-centered university. This effort provides the University with an overview and serves as a diagnostic tool to make improvements to our programs and services. The results of this survey will be discussed in various areas across the University with the goal of continuing to provide a quality experience for all students.



Penn State Campuses

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In this report, a summary of the 2007 survey findings are presented. Copies of survey questions and frequencies by campus location are available upon request from Student Affairs Research and Assessment, 222 Boucke Building, University Park, PA, 16802, (814) 863-1809. In addition, this report can be found online at:

<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/satisfaction.shtml>

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Division of Student Affairs



## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the Student Satisfaction Survey is to gather feedback from undergraduate students from 20 Penn State campuses about their experiences at Penn State, including their overall satisfaction with in- and out-of-class experiences, their use of and satisfaction with various student services, and their campus involvement. This survey provides the University with information regarding the effectiveness of services and programs and measures change over time by comparing results with similar surveys conducted in 2002 and 2004<sup>1</sup>.

A committee of staff, faculty, and students from across the Penn State system reviewed and revised the survey conducted in 2004 for the 2007 administration. Each campus was offered the opportunity to supply questions specific to their campus/college needs. The survey, approved by the Office for Research Protections, was administered online from March 25<sup>th</sup> to April 25<sup>th</sup> utilizing the services of Educational Benchmarking, Inc.

Random samples of undergraduate students from each of the Commonwealth campuses were invited (via e-mail) to participate in this Web survey. A total of 18,953 Commonwealth students were invited to participate. At University Park, the sample was drawn as a simple random sample with additional sampling from the smaller colleges; in total, 10,603 University Park students were invited to participate. In addition to a pre-invitation e-mail from the respective chief Student Affairs officer on each of the campuses, students received an initial invitation to participate and several reminders. Students who completed the survey were entered into a drawing to win a digital camera, an 80GB iPod, or an iPod Nano.

In total, 7,882 students completed the survey for a 26.7% overall response rate. Of those, 41.9% were University Park students, and 58.1% attended the Commonwealth campuses.

In this report, a summary of the 2007 survey findings are presented. Analysis includes system-wide data as well as data for University Park and the Commonwealth campuses. When appropriate, comparisons are provided between 2002, 2004, and 2007. This report and additional information about the project are available online at:

<http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/satisfaction.shtml>

<sup>1</sup> Statistical comparisons are provided between 2004 and 2007 while evidence of possible trends is provided across the three survey years when applicable.

## Limitations

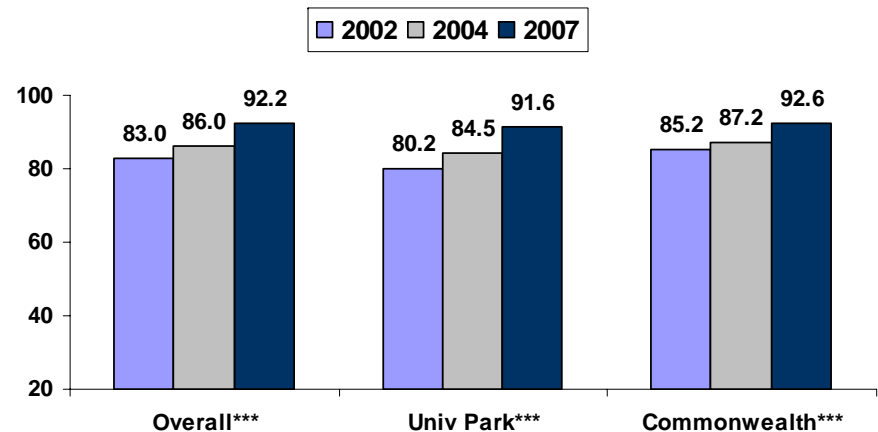
The Penn State Student Satisfaction Survey provides a broad overview of students' experiences. The data serve as gross indicators of how well Penn State is meeting students' needs. However, this does not provide the University with data on how to improve services and/or regarding what aspect of an area students express satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Hence, based on these survey findings, further efforts are needed to provide greater depth and meaning to make the data actionable. Similarly, this report provides an institutional overview; University Park colleges and each of Commonwealth campuses have been provided data specific to their college or campus. At this level, the data become more meaningful. Furthermore, the intent of the survey is to measure students' satisfaction with their experiences. While an important indicator of students' overall Penn State experiences, satisfaction does not necessarily denote a good educational experience (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). In addition to these caveats, inherent to survey research are limitations of imprecision such as bias associated with the wording and ordering of questions and with sampling error.

## FINDINGS

### Overall Satisfaction

Ninety-two percent (92.2%) of students responded that, if they were starting college again, they would choose to attend Penn State (see Chart 1). This marks a significant increase from the 86.0% in 2004 and the 83.0% in 2002.

Chart 1. Percent who Would Choose Penn State Again

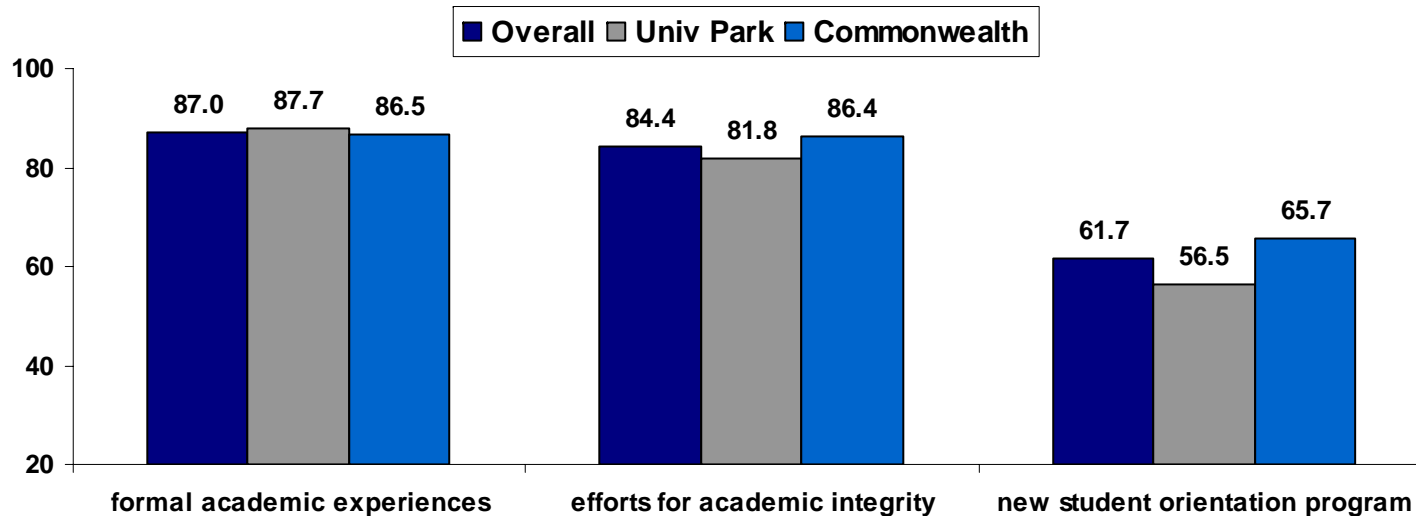


\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level.

When asked about their overall satisfaction with aspects of their Penn State experience, students reported the following (see Chart 2):

- 87.0% are satisfied with their formal academic experiences;
- 84.4% are satisfied with the institution's efforts to encourage academic integrity;
- 61.7% are satisfied with the orientation program provided when they were new students; and
- evidence suggests students at the campuses are more satisfied with efforts for academic integrity and the new student orientation program than are students at University Park.

**Chart 2. Students' Overall Satisfaction (by percent)**

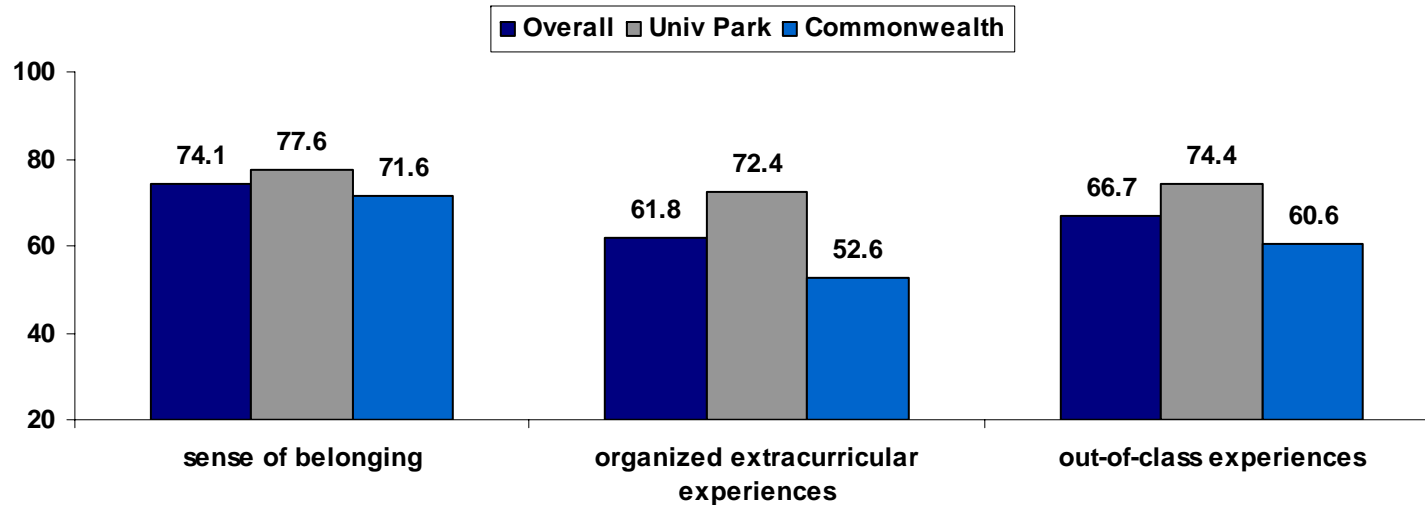


With regard to students' satisfaction with the out-of-class experience (see Chart 3):

- 74.1% are satisfied with their sense of belonging at Penn State;
- 61.8% are satisfied with their organized extracurricular experiences (e.g., member of student clubs, participating in intramural sports, involved in organized cultural or social activities);
- 66.7% are satisfied with their out-of-class experiences (e.g., attending plays, hearing speakers, having informal student discussions); and
- students at University Park reported greater satisfaction with their out-of-class engagement when compared to students at the Commonwealth campuses.

In addition, 84.4% of students expressed satisfaction with the safety and security at their campus (85.1% at University Park and 83.8% at the Commonwealth campuses) (data not shown).

**Chart 3. Students' Overall Satisfaction: Out-of-Class Engagement (by percent)**



The data suggest students' satisfaction with their overall experience at Penn State has increased since 2004 (see Table 1). Moreover, these increases occur at both University Park and the Commonwealth campuses (data not shown).

**Table 1. Overall Satisfaction: System-Wide Comparisons between 2004 and 2007 (mean scores)**

How satisfied are you with the overall quality of:	2004	2007	significance	direction
your formal academic experiences	3.88	4.28	***	↑
your organized extracurricular experiences	3.52	3.78	***	↑
your out-of-class experiences	3.57	3.85	***	↑
your sense of belonging at Penn State	3.67	4.07	***	↑
the safety and security of your campus location	3.87	4.35	***	↑
the University's effort to encourage academic integrity	4.02	4.35	***	↑
the orientation program for new students	3.49	3.72	***	↑

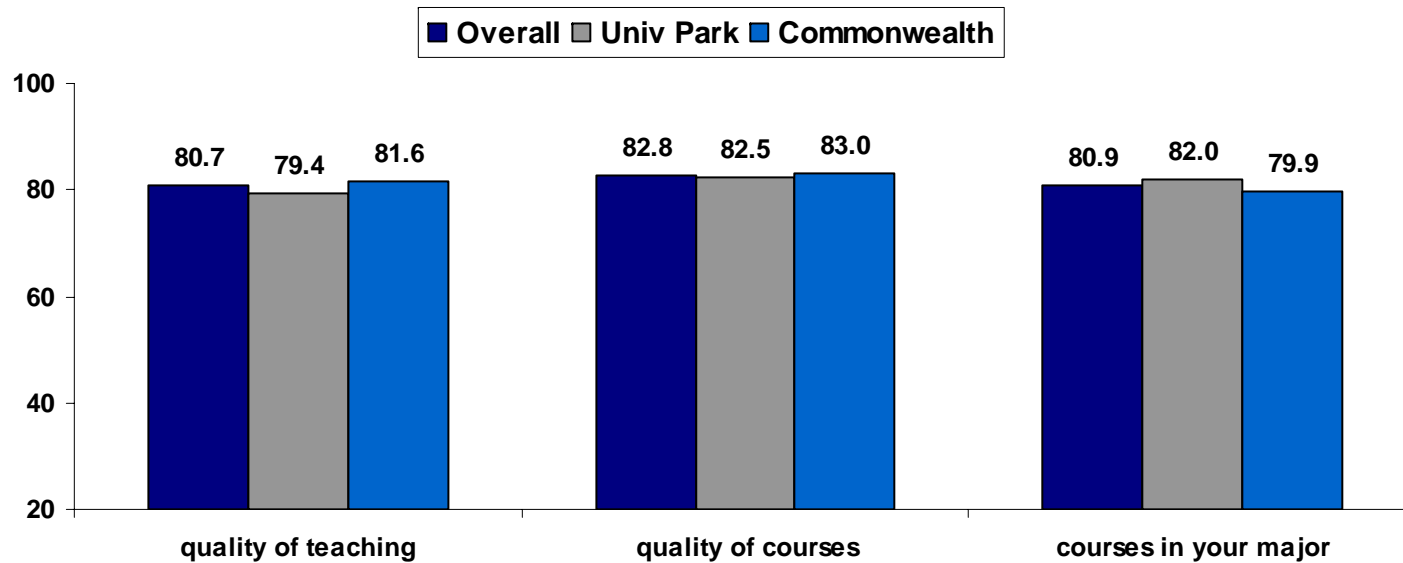
Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied

\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level.

## Quality of Instruction and Academic Facilities

Eighty-one to eighty-three percent of students across the University expressed satisfaction with the quality of teaching, the quality of the academic courses they have taken, and with the courses in their major (see Chart 4).

**Chart 4. Satisfaction with Classroom Experiences (by percent)**



Approximately 77% reported being satisfied with the quality of their classroom/lab facilities and with the use of technology in their classes. University Park students expressed greater satisfaction in these areas when compared to students attending the Commonwealth campuses (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Satisfaction with Instruction and Academic Facilities: 2007 (percent satisfied)**

How satisfied have you been at Penn State with the:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth campuses
quality of your classroom/lab facilities	77.4	80.2	75.4
use of technology in your classes	77.8	81.7	74.9
extent to which faculty included diversity/multicultural resources in their class materials	65.5	59.2	70.0

As demonstrated in Table 3, students' satisfaction increased with regard to instruction and academic facilities between 2004 and 2007. In addition, these increases are consistent at University Park and the campuses (data not shown).

**Table 3. Satisfaction with Instruction and Academic Facilities:  
System-Wide Comparisons between 2004 and 2007 (mean scores)**

How satisfied have you been at Penn State with the:	2004	2007	significance	direction
quality of teaching	3.73	4.06	***	↑
quality of academic courses you've taken	3.76	4.13	***	↑
quality of your classroom/lab facilities	3.65	4.05	***	↑
use of technology in your classes	3.75	4.10	***	↑

Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied

\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level.

Note: questions about courses in their major and inclusion of diversity materials in classes were not asked in 2004

### Structured Cocurricular Learning Experiences

Students' satisfaction with various structured cocurricular learning experiences fluctuated between the types of experiences and between University Park and the campuses. Across the University, 81.2% responded they are satisfied with the opportunities to meet with faculty outside of class (77.2% at University Park and 84.2% at the Commonwealth campuses) (see Table 4). In addition, students' satisfaction with the opportunities to meet with faculty outside of class increased between 2004 and 2007 (see Table 5). For other experiences (such as co-op/internships, study abroad, and participation in independent research) satisfaction is between 46% and 54% (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Satisfaction with Structured Cocurricular Experiences: 2007 (percent satisfied)**

How satisfied have you been at Penn State with:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth campuses
the opportunities to meet with faculty outside of class	81.2	77.2	84.2
your opportunity to participate in a Penn State approved co-op, internship, or student teaching experience	54.0	54.9	53.2
your opportunity to participate in a Penn State study abroad program	49.1	55.9	43.2
your opportunity to participate in an independent research project with a faculty member	45.7	42.3	48.3

**Table 5. Satisfaction with Structured Cocurricular Experiences:  
System-Wide Comparisons between 2004 and 2007 (mean scores)**

How satisfied have you been at Penn State with:	2004	2007	significance	direction
the opportunities to meet with faculty outside of class	3.93	4.23	***	↑

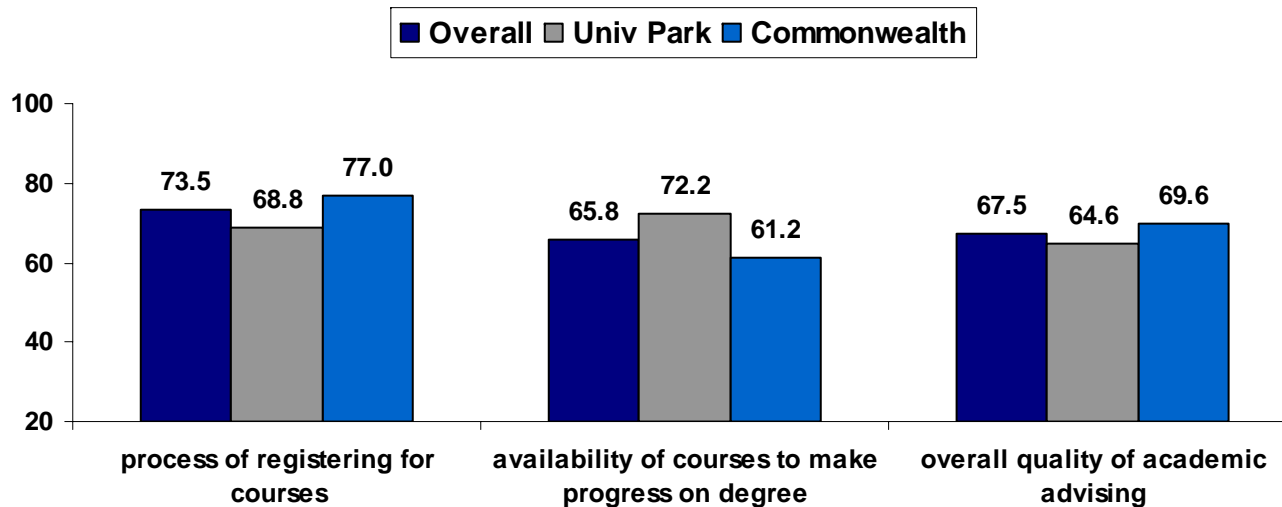
Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied  
 Note: questions about independent research, study abroad, and co-ops were not asked in 2004  
 \*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level.

### Academic Advising and Registration

Included in the survey are questions about students' satisfaction with academic advising and course registration. Students reported the following (see Chart 5):

- 73.5% are satisfied with the process of registering for courses (68.8% at University Park and 77.0% at the Commonwealth campuses);
- 65.8% are satisfied with the availability of courses to make progress toward their degree (72.2% at University Park and 61.2% at the Commonwealth campuses); and
- 67.5% are satisfied with the overall quality of academic advising.

**Chart 5. Satisfaction with Advising and Registration (by percent)**



Furthermore, 74.8% are satisfied with the advising resources available online, and 71.8% are satisfied with the accessibility of their academic advisor (see Table 6). The data suggest that students at the Commonwealth campuses are more satisfied with the academic advising process than University Park students (see Chart 5 and Table 6).

**Table 6. Satisfaction with Academic Advising: 2007 (percent satisfied)**

How satisfied have you been <u>this past year</u> with the:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth campuses
advising resources available online	74.8	72.2	76.8
accessibility of your academic advisor	71.8	69.5	73.4
information and/or referral your advisor provides	65.0	61.5	67.6

Students' satisfaction with the availability of courses, the advising resources available online and the overall quality of their academic advising significantly increased in 2007 when compared to 2004 (see Table 7). These differences are consistent at University Park and at the Commonwealth campuses (data not shown). While the overall satisfaction for the process of registering for classes is similar between 2004 and 2007, satisfaction at University Park significantly decreased between the two years, and at the Commonwealth campuses, the satisfaction significantly increased (data not shown).

**Table 7. Satisfaction Academic Advising and Registration: System-Wide Comparisons between 2004 and 2007 (mean scores)**

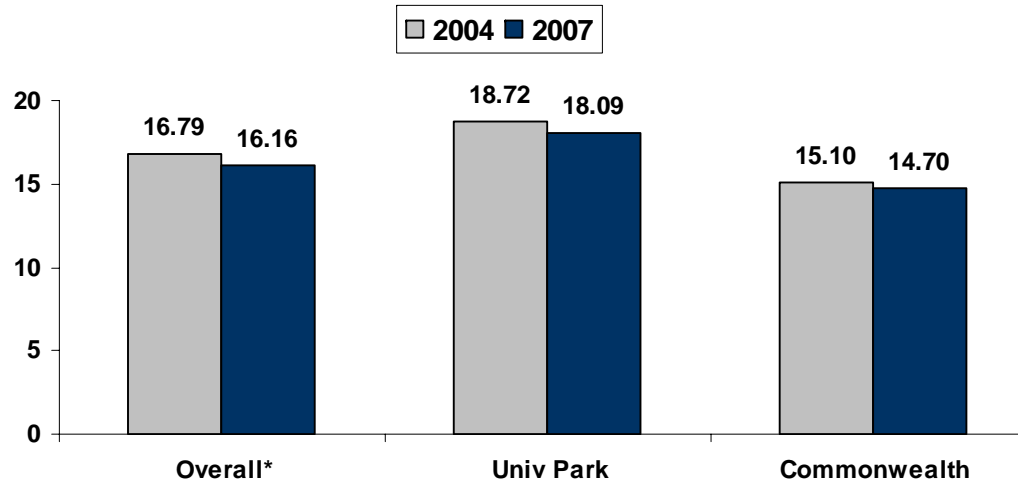
How satisfied have you been at Penn State with the:	2004	2007	significance	direction
availability of courses to make progress toward degree	3.33	<b>3.70</b>	***	↑
process of registering for courses	3.98	<b>4.00</b>	ns	-
advising resources available online	3.39	<b>4.04</b>	***	↑
overall quality of your academic advising	3.41	<b>3.85</b>	***	↑

Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied \*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; "ns" = not significant. Note: questions about the accessibility of advisors and information advisors provide were not asked in 2004

## Student Engagement

Overall, students reported a small (but significant) decrease in the average number of hours they spend per week studying or doing homework in 2007 when compared to 2004 (see Chart 6).

**Chart 6. Average Number of Hours Spent Per Week Studying or Doing Homework**



\* Statistically significant at the .05 level.

In Table 8, data regarding the level of engagement with faculty outside of class are presented. Approximately 30% of students reported having worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework.

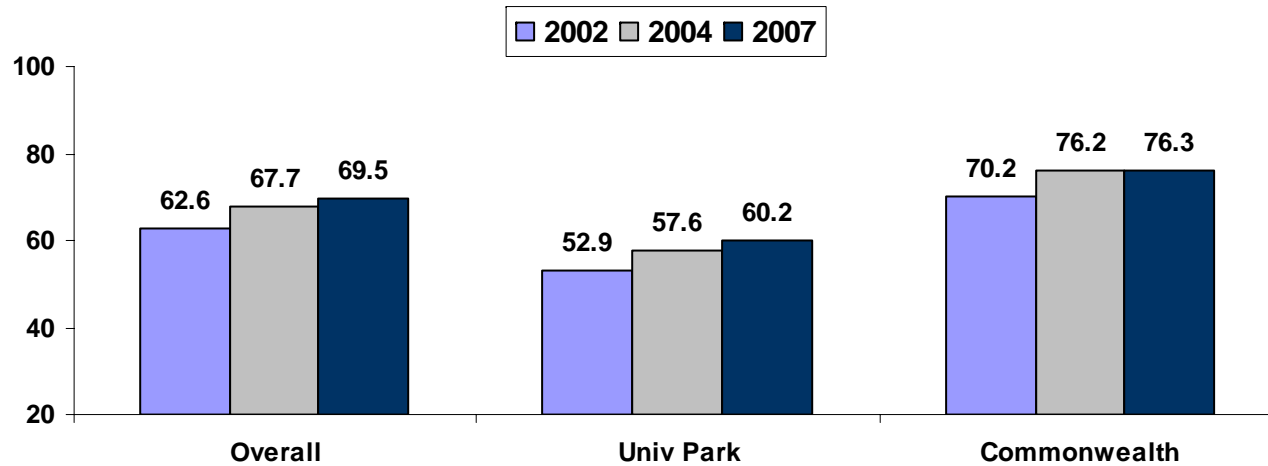
**Table 8. Engagement with Faculty (during the current academic year): 2007**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	percent <sup>2</sup>	avg. # of times	percent <sup>2</sup>	avg. # of times	percent <sup>2</sup>	avg. # of times
participated in academic research with faculty outside of class	22.5	1.48	26.2	2.13	19.7	0.98
worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, cocurricular activities)	30.1	2.23	29.2	2.14	30.8	2.29
served on a university committee with faculty / staff	9.4	0.36	8.6	0.33	10.1	0.38

<sup>2</sup> Percent who participated in each activity at least once during the current academic year.

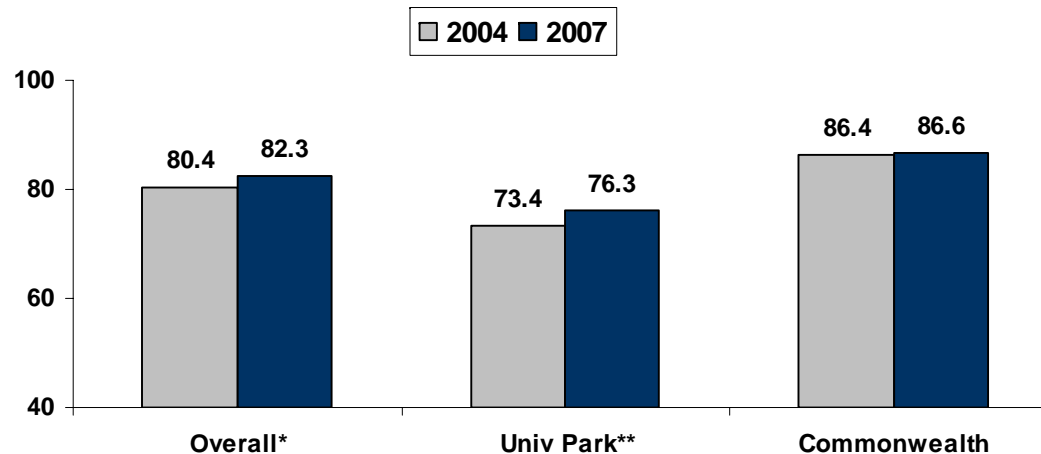
Although the differences are not statistically significant between 2004 and 2007, the percentage of students who reported not skipping a class in an average week has increased from 62.6% in 2002 to 69.5% in 2007 (see Chart 7).

**Chart 7. Percent who Did Not Skip Classes in an Average Week**



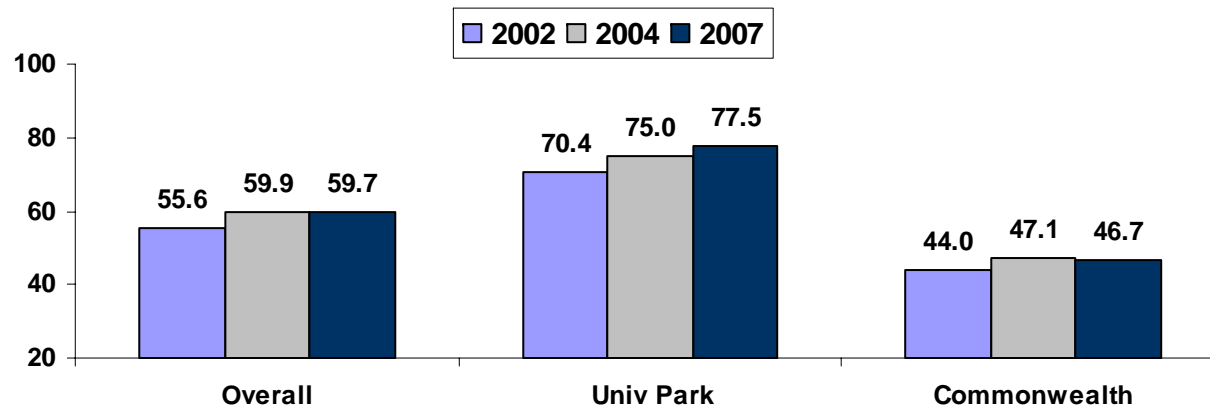
The percentage of students who reported knowing at least one faculty or staff person well enough to ask for a reference has increased from 80.4% in 2004 to 82.3% in 2007. While students at the campuses reported similarly in 2004 and 2007, students at University Park reported a significant increase in the percentage who know at least one faculty or staff person well enough to ask for a reference (see Chart 8).

**Chart 8. Percent who Know at least one Faculty/Staff Member Well Enough to Ask for a Recommendation**



In 2007, the percentage of students who reported having been a member of a club or organization is 59.7%. Although the differences are not statistically significant between 2004 and 2007, the percentage of University Park students who reported having been a member of a student club or organization increased from 70.4% in 2002 to 77.5% in 2007 (see Chart 9). In addition, approximately 83% of students involved in clubs or organizations indicated that their involvement contributed at least “moderately” to their overall satisfaction with their Penn State experience (84.4% at University Park and 80.8% at the campuses) (data not shown).

**Chart 9. Percent who Have Been a Member of a Student Club/Organization**



Students were asked about their involvement in various activities. Students reported the following (see Table 9):

- 69.2% of Penn State students attended at least one lecture outside of class during the current academic year (73.3% of University Park students and 66.1% of Commonwealth campus students);
- 88.5% of University Park students and 45.9% of Commonwealth campus students attended at least one athletic event during the current academic year; and
- 23.1% of Penn State students participated in at least one community event or organization during the current academic year (24.3% of University Park students and 22.2% of Commonwealth campus students).

**Table 9. Participation by Type of Activity during the Current Academic Year: 2007**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	percent <sup>3</sup>	avg. # of times	percent <sup>3</sup>	avg. # of times	percent <sup>3</sup>	avg. # of times
attended a lecture outside of class	69.2	2.38	73.3	2.54	66.1	2.26
attended an athletic event	64.0	7.65	88.5	12.82	45.9	3.79
attended a cultural event	63.8	2.42	72.8	3.23	57.3	1.80
participated in spiritual/ religious activities	27.3	4.29	39.1	6.20	18.1	2.78
participated in political activities	17.7	0.66	17.9	0.73	17.5	0.61
participated in community events / organizations	23.1	1.41	24.3	1.63	22.2	1.24

Based on their involvement during the spring semester (see Table 10):

- 61.0% of Penn State students reported spending at least one hour in a typical week exercising or participating in club or intramural sports (70.6% of University Park students and 53.8% of Commonwealth campus students); and
- 32.3% of Penn State students reported spending at least one hour in a typical week volunteering or participating in community services (34.3% of University Park students and 30.6% of Commonwealth campus students).

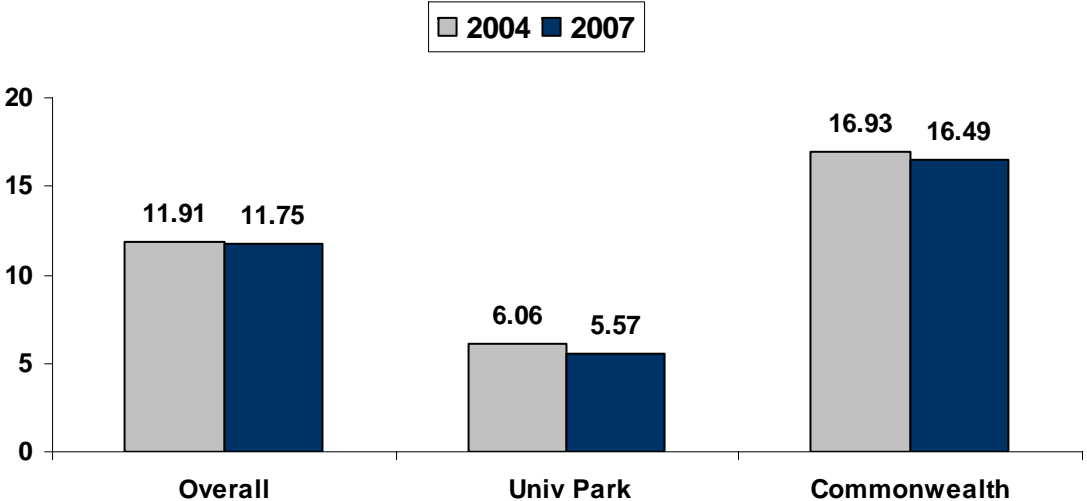
**Table 10. Participation in Various Activities during the Current Semester: 2007 (percent)**

Percent who participate at least one hour in a typical week during the current semester	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth campuses
exercising or participating in club or intramural sports	61.0	70.6	53.8
being involved in club-sponsored cocurricular activities	37.2	49.4	28.0
volunteering/ participating in community service	32.3	34.3	30.6
participating in intercollegiate athletics	6.7	5.6	7.4

<sup>3</sup> Percent who participated at least once during the current academic year.

Another important consideration in students' engagement is their employment patterns – both how much they work and where they work. Working off campus for more than 15 hours a week has been found to detract from students' educational experience, whereas working on campus for less than 15 hours a week can increase students' engagement and satisfaction with their educational experience (Astin, 1993). In 2007, University Park students reported working, on average, 5.57 hours per week; Commonwealth campus students average 16.49 hours per week (see Chart 10). In addition, among University Park students, 22.4% work on campus, and 18.9% work off campus. In contrast, among Commonwealth campus students, 13.1% work on campus, and 62.2% work off campus (see Chart 11).

**Chart 10. Average Number of Hours Spent Per Week Working for Pay (on and/or off campus)**



**Chart 11. Percent Working for Pay On and Off Campus**



### **Use of and Satisfaction with Student Services**

In Tables 11.1 to 11.4, data are presented with regard to students' use of and satisfaction with various student services. At University Park, in 2007, there were notable increases in the use of library services and learning support services and decreases in the use of job placement services, resources for women students, and resources for minority students compared to 2004. At the Commonwealth campuses, they experienced a decrease in the use of job placement services but an increase in the use of career planning services in the same time period (data not shown).

In addition, evidence suggests an increase in students' satisfaction with campus student services between 2004 and 2007. At University Park, there are significant increases in satisfaction for the following services: computer support services, student healthcare services, the campus bookstore, counseling and psychological services, financial aid, career planning services, job placement services, recreational sports facilities, library services, learning support services, food services, and resources for minority students (data not shown). At the Commonwealth campuses, there are significant increases in satisfaction for the following services: computer support services, student healthcare services, career planning services, the campus bookstore, financial aid, recreational sports facilities, library services, learning support services, food services, and resources for adult learners (data not shown).

**Table 11.1. Students' Use of and Satisfaction with Basic Student Services: 2007 (percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	use	satisfied	use	satisfied	use	satisfied
campus bookstore	99.3	73.2	99.1	74.8	99.3	72.1
library services	95.2	88.7	95.6	89.8	94.8	88.1
food services provided on campus	89.7	65.9	96.0	75.4	85.1	57.9
computer support services	62.8	81.2	64.0	79.8	61.9	82.4

**Table 11.2. Students' Use of and Satisfaction with Student Services Related to Health and Wellness: 2007 (percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	use	satisfied	use	satisfied	use	satisfied
recreational sports facilities	69.1	81.0	83.5	87.1	58.8	74.4
student healthcare services	42.9	75.1	62.5	72.2	28.8	79.7
counseling & psychological services	8.9	69.3	10.4	68.7	7.9	69.9

**Table 11.3. Students' Use of and Satisfaction with Student Support Services: 2007 (percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	use	satisfied	use	satisfied	use	satisfied
student financial aid services	62.3	70.3	47.1	59.3	72.7	75.3
learning support services	33.2	74.9	28.4	71.0	36.6	77.1
career planning services	32.7	73.8	34.1	73.2	31.7	74.3
job placement services	12.4	68.4	14.8	69.5	10.6	67.3

**Table 11.4. Students' Use of and Satisfaction with Constituency-Based Student Services: 2007 (percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth campuses	
	use	satisfied	use	satisfied	use	satisfied
resources for minority students	4.6	70.7	5.7	67.8	3.8	74.2
resources for women students	3.9	81.2	4.1	88.8	3.8	74.8
resources for adult learners	5.7	81.0	2.9	81.4	7.7	80.9

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of students who reported using each student service accounts for students who responded "not applicable" given the differences between campuses. Also, the percent of students satisfied represents those students who reported having used the service.