

# PENN STATE STUDENT AFFAIRS

# 2004 **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 us 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.



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Vice President for Student Affairs

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In this report, a summary of the 2004 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>

A special thanks to the Penn State Bookstore for their support!

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Division of Student Affairs

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of the Student Satisfaction Survey is to gather feedback from undergraduate students from the 20 Penn State locations about their experiences at the University, including their use of and satisfaction with various student services, their progress on specific learning outcomes, and their campus involvement. This survey provides the University with information regarding the effectiveness of services and programs and, through comparisons with similar surveys conducted in 1999 and 2002, provides the ability to measure change over time.

A committee of staff, faculty, and students from across the Penn State system reviewed and revised the survey conducted in 2002 for the 2004 administration. Each campus and college within the University Park (UP) 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 18<sup>th</sup> to April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Random samples of 400 undergraduate students from each of the Commonwealth College locations and stand-alone colleges were invited to participate in this Web survey via e-mail. At UP, the sample was drawn as a simple random sample with additional sampling from the smaller colleges; in total, 6,877 UP students were invited to participate. In addition to a pre-invitation e-mail from the respective chief Student Affairs officer at each campus and the initial invitation to participate, several reminders were sent. Students who completed the survey were invited to participate in a drawing for a \$100 bookstore gift certificate at each location.

In total, 3,770 students completed the survey for a 26.3% overall response rate. Of those, 45.9% were UP students, 31.2% attended the Commonwealth College, and 23.0% attended one of the seven stand-alone Penn State campuses.

### Limitations

The Penn State Student Satisfaction Survey is a broad, comprehensive overview of students' experiences that provides gross indicators of how well Penn State is meeting students' needs. General questions about satisfaction do not provide us with data on how to improve our services and/or what aspect of an area students expressed either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Further efforts are needed to provide greater depth and meaning to the survey findings. In addition, some questions are written based on the needs of the institution and the realities of the committee and hence, may not be consistent with strong survey construction. Furthermore, the intent of the survey is to measure students' satisfaction with their experience. While an important indicator of students' overall Penn State experiences, satisfaction does not necessarily denote a good educational experience.<sup>1</sup> In addition, inherent to survey research are limitations of imprecision, such as bias associated with the wording and ordering of questions and with sampling error. Given the nature of sampling, certain groups may be slightly over-represented in the sample when compared to the population.

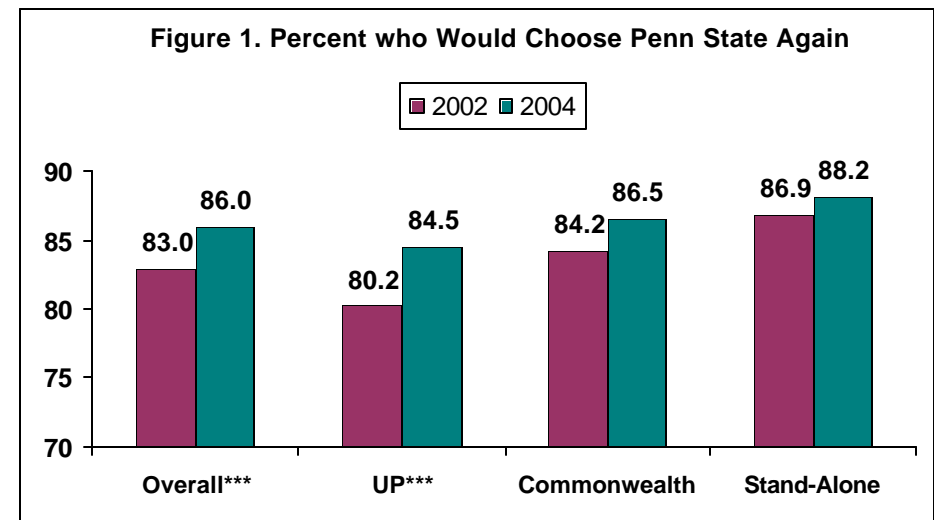
## FINDINGS

### Overview

In this report, findings are presented to the common questions, which were received by all respondents regardless of their location. Analysis includes system-wide data as well as more specific data from University Park, the Commonwealth College locations, and the stand-alone campuses. In addition, comparisons are made between 2002 and 2004 survey results when appropriate.

### Overall Satisfaction

Eighty-six percent (86%) of PSU students said if they were starting college again, they would choose to attend Penn State. This is a significant increase from the 83% who responded similarly in 2002. (See Figure 1.) In addition, students were significantly more satisfied in 2004 with their formal academic experiences, their sense of belonging, and Penn State's efforts to encourage academic integrity than they were in 2002. However, they were less satisfied in 2004 with the safety and security at their campus location.<sup>2</sup> (See Table 1.)



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

<sup>1</sup> Upcraft & Schuh (1996). Assessment in student affairs: A guide for practitioners.

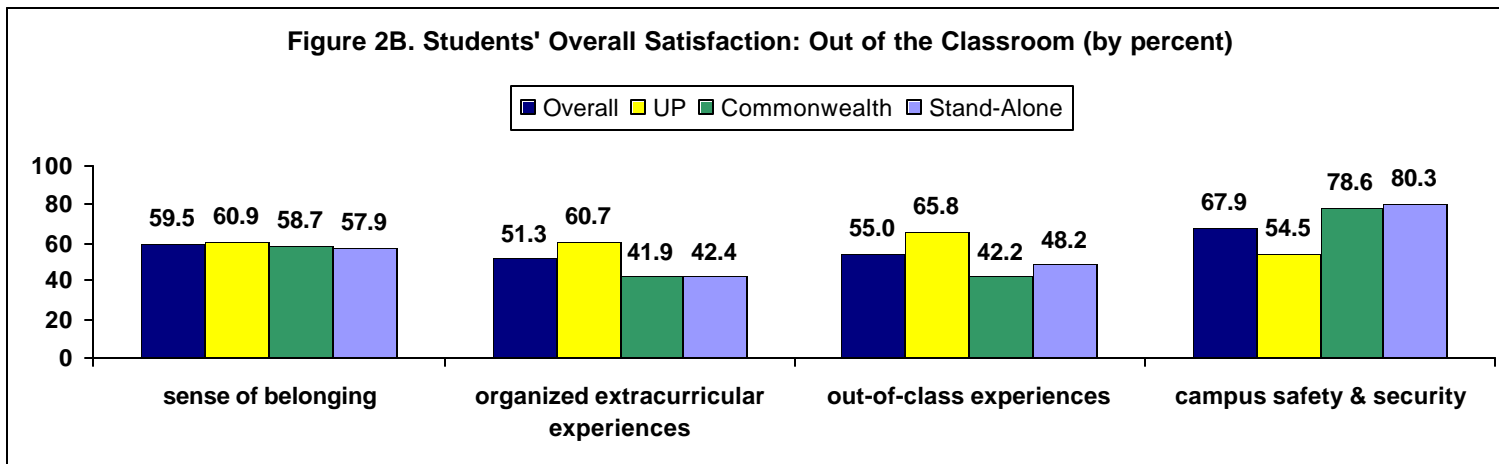
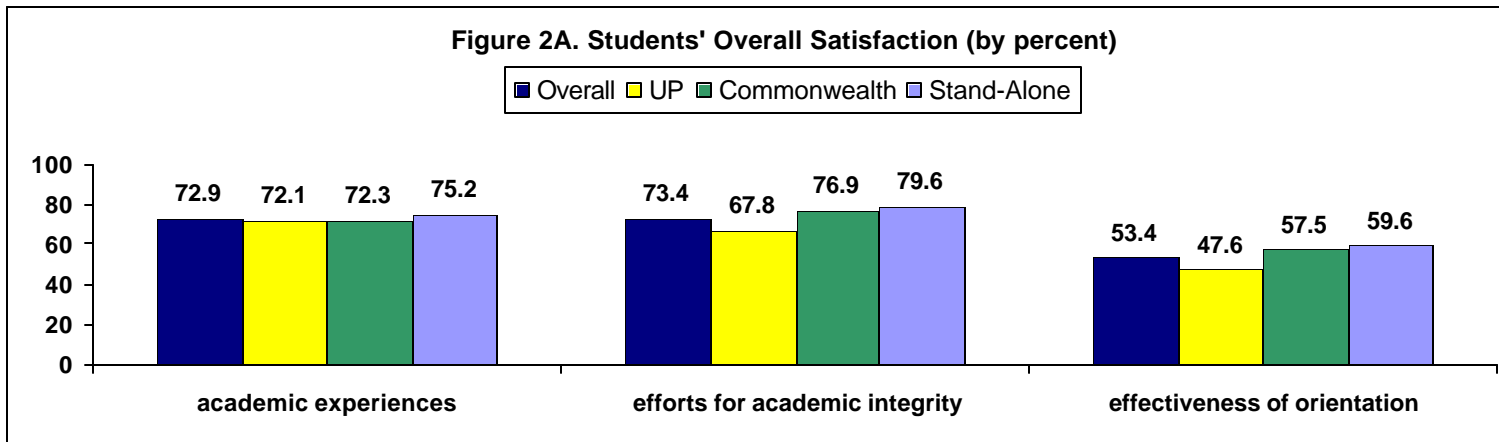
<sup>2</sup> This change may be reflective of the highly publicized sexual assault data.

**Table 1. Overall Satisfaction: System-Wide Comparison between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

How satisfied are you with the overall quality of:	2002	2004	significance	direction
your formal academic experiences	3.72	3.88	***	↑
your sense of belonging at Penn State	3.48	3.67	***	↑
the safety and security of your campus location	4.07	3.87	***	↓
the University's effort to encourage academic integrity	3.94	4.02	***	↑

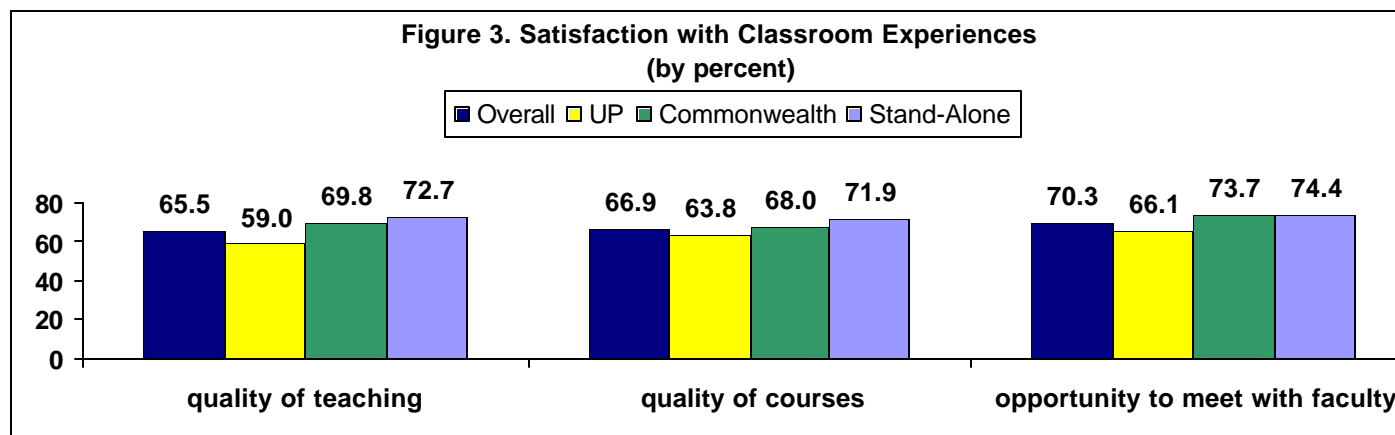
Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied \*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level.

In 2004, 72.9% of Penn State students were satisfied with their formal academic experience, and 59.5% were satisfied with their sense of belonging on campus. (See Figures 2A and 2B.) Evidence suggests that students attending the stand-alone campuses were more satisfied with academic aspects of their experience and that University Park students were more satisfied with aspects of their out-of-class experience.



## Satisfaction with Instruction and Advising

When asked about their level of satisfaction with aspects of their curricular experiences, between 66% and 70% of students were satisfied with the quality of teaching, the quality of the academic courses they had taken, and the opportunity to meet with faculty outside of the classroom. (See Figure 3.) Approximately 50% were satisfied with the availability of courses to make progress toward their degree and the overall quality of their academic advising. (See Tables 2 and 3.)



**Table 2. Students' Satisfaction with Instruction: 2004 (Percent Satisfied)**

How satisfied have you been at Penn State with the:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth College	Stand-Alone
quality of your classroom/lab facilities	60.3	59.8	58.1	64.1
process of registering for courses	73.0	72.2	75.4	71.1
availability of courses to make progress toward your degree	49.4	52.7	46.9	46.2
use of technology in your classes	63.7	65.5	62.0	62.1

**Table 3. Students' Satisfaction with Advising: 2004 (Percent Satisfied)**

How satisfied have you been <u>this past year</u> with the:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth College	Stand-Alone
advising resources available online	46.9	40.9	51.5	52.1
overall quality of your academic advising	51.2	47.5	54.0	54.9

In addition, students were asked for the number of faculty or staff members who they know well enough to ask for a recommendation. (See Table 4.) These percentages are consistent with what was reported in 2002. (Data not shown.)

**Table 4. Number of Faculty/Staff Students Know Well Enough to Ask for a Recommendation: 2004 (Percent)**

	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth College	Stand-Alone
0 faculty/staff	19.6	26.7	12.0	15.8
1-2 faculty/staff	42.5	45.4	40.4	39.7
3 or more faculty/staff	37.9	28.0	47.6	44.5

When comparing 2002 and 2004 responses, the level of satisfaction with the quality of instruction remained relatively consistent. Students were significantly more satisfied in 2004 with the quality of their classroom/lab facilities and the process of registering for courses. (See Table 5.)

**Table 5. Satisfaction with Instruction: System-Wide Comparisons between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

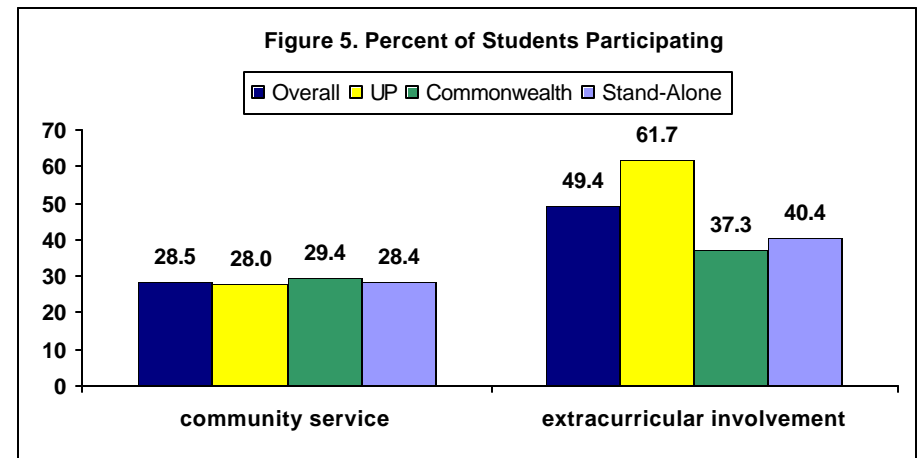
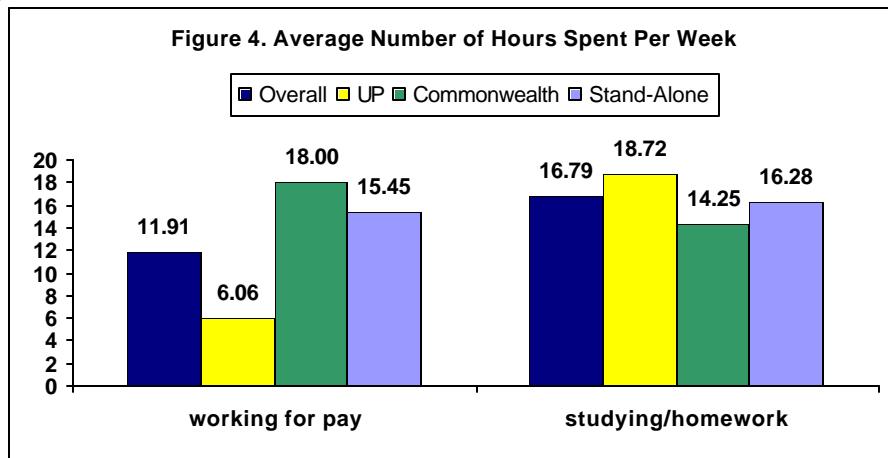
How satisfied have you been at Penn State with the:	2002	2004	significance	direction
quality of teaching	3.74	3.73	ns	
quality of academic courses you have taken	3.76	3.76	ns	
quality of your classroom/lab facilities	3.59	3.65	**	↑
process of registering for courses	3.92	3.98	**	↑
availability of courses to make progress toward your degree	3.28	3.33	ns	
opportunities to meet with faculty outside of the classroom	3.94	3.93	ns	

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

\*\* Statistically significant at the .01 level; "ns"= not significant.

## Use of Time

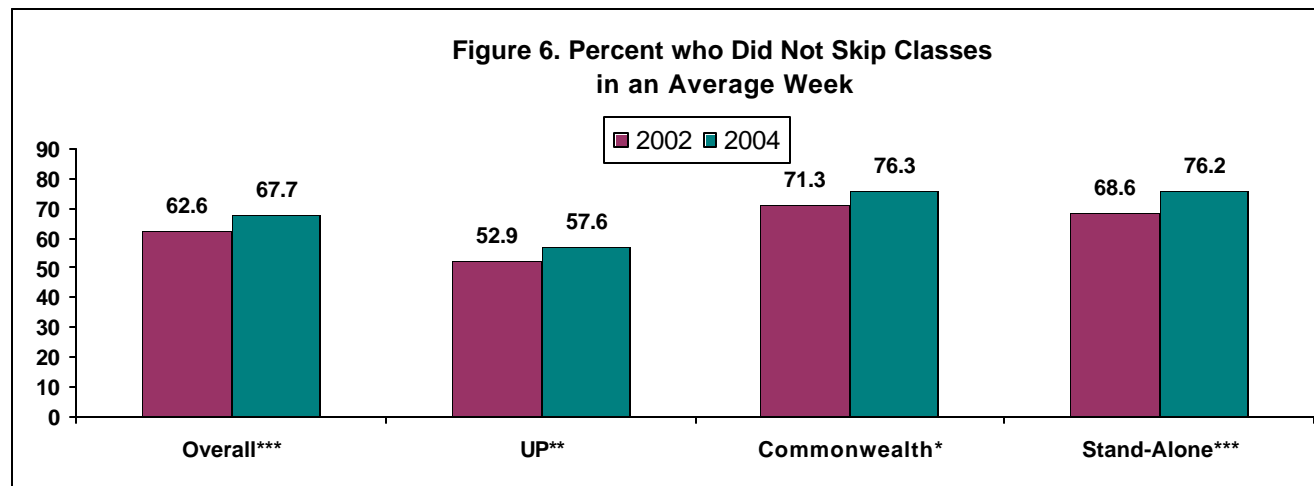
Knowledge of how students spend their time is important in understanding the student experience. Although there are striking differences between Penn State locations, overall, Penn State students spent 11.91 hours per week working and 16.79 hours per week studying, doing homework, or working on team projects outside of class. (See Figure 4.) Moreover, 24.2% and 20.8% at the Commonwealth College locations and stand-alone campuses, respectively, worked 30 hours or more per week. (Data not shown.) Approximately 29% of Penn State students participated in community service, and 49% were involved in club-sponsored extracurricular activities. (See Figure 5.)



In addition, students were asked about the time they spent on credit- and non-credit bearing internships/co-op experiences; 6.5% of Penn State students held a credit-bearing internship, and 3.4% held a non-credit bearing internship during the spring semester. (Data not shown.)

In comparing student responses from 2002 and 2004, some differences emerge.<sup>3</sup> (Data not shown.) Most striking is the significant difference in time spent studying. In 2002, 21.9% indicated that they spent 16 or more hours per week studying compared to 39.9% in 2004. (Note: some of this increase may be accounted for in the addition of “team projects” in the wording of question in 2004.) There was also an increase in students participating in community service. In 2002, 25.5% indicated they averaged at least an hour a week volunteering; in 2004, the percentage increased to 28.5%.

Respondents were also asked about the number of classes they skipped in an average week. Evidence suggests students’ absentee rates may be decreasing; in 2004, 67.7% reported they typically did not skip classes compared to 62.6% in 2002. (See Figure 6.)

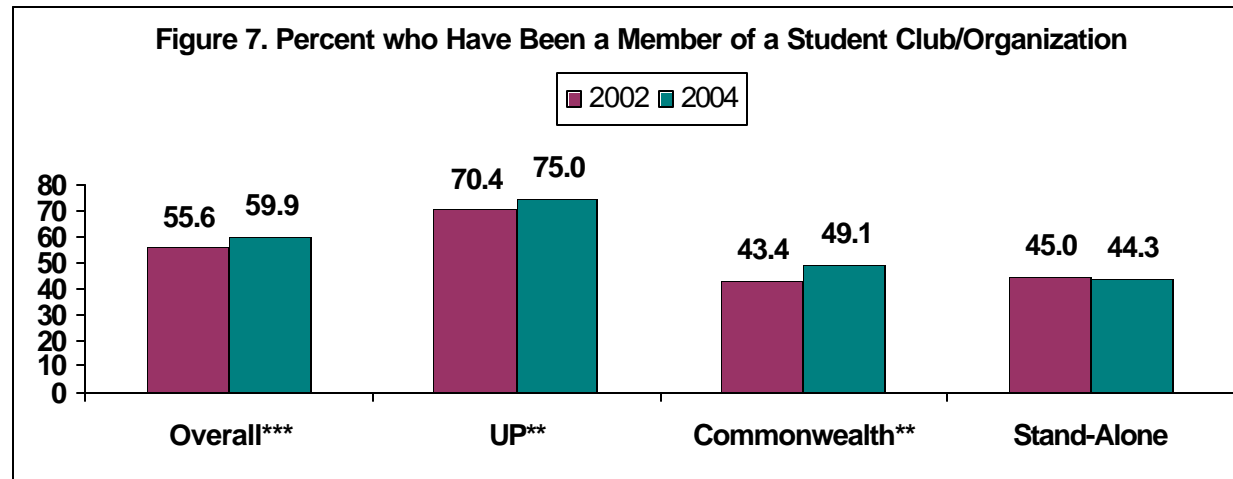


\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; \*\* at the .01 level; and \* at the .05 level.

<sup>3</sup> In 2002, the response options for these questions were categorized. Hence, comparisons entailed recoding data from 2004 and running chi-square analysis rather than t-tests. In addition, direct comparisons between 2002 and 2004 were not possible for questions regarding time spent on internships/co-op experiences and extracurricular activities.

## Cocurricular Involvement

Although there are differences between campus locations, overall, 59.9% of Penn State students have been members of a student club or organization. This is a significant increase from 2002 when 55.6% had been members. (See Figure 7.)



\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; and \*\* at the .01 level.

Students who indicated they had been a member of a club or organization were asked to what extent their participation had contributed to their overall satisfaction and improvement of their skills and abilities. Despite a decrease in the extent to which students felt their involvement had contributed to their overall satisfaction with their Penn State experience, there were significant increases in their reported learning outcomes such as communication skills and leadership effectiveness attributed to their out-of-class participation. (See Tables 6 and 7.)

**Table 6. Extent to Which Students Attribute Their Overall Satisfaction with Their Participation in Student Clubs and Organizations: Comparisons between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

Involvement and Overall Satisfaction	2002	2004	significance	direction
Overall	4.02	3.67	***	↓
University Park	4.06	3.74	***	↓
Commonwealth College	3.95	3.52	***	↓
Stand-Alone	3.95	3.64	***	↓

Scale (1-5): 1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=a great extent

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

**Table 7. Improved Skills and Abilities as a Result of Involvement:  
System-Wide Comparisons between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

Extent to which being involved...improved your skills and abilities:	2002	2004	significance	direction
communication skills	3.36	3.60	***	↑
interpersonal effectiveness	3.49	3.62	***	↑
self-reliance skills	3.31	3.54	***	↑
decision-making ability	3.29	3.47	***	↑
ability to execute or implement plans	3.35	3.57	***	↑
ability to work on group projects	3.36	3.53	***	↑
leadership effectiveness	3.53	3.71	***	↑
ability to handle conflict	na	3.46	na	na
time management skills	na	3.56	na	na

Scale (1-5): 1=not at all, 3=somewhat, 5=a great extent  
 \*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; "na" = not applicable.

## Use of and Satisfaction with Student Services

Respondents were asked about their use of and satisfaction with a variety of student services. The percent of students who reported that they had used a service at least once and the percent of those students who were satisfied with the service are reported in Tables 8A to 8D. Most students used the campus bookstore (99.1%), library services (93.9%), food services (89.6%), and Web-based services (88.8%). (See Table 8A.)

**Table 8A. Use of and Satisfaction with Basic Student Services: 2004 (Percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth College		Stand-Alone	
	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied
campus bookstore	99.1	50.8	98.8	51.4	99.5	56.2	99.5	42.2
library services	93.9	75.7	93.6	79.1	94.1	69.1	94.6	77.8
food services	89.6	48.7	94.7	56.1	83.5	44.4	87.9	38.2
Web-based services	88.8	74.8	85.9	70.5	91.4	77.7	90.7	78.8
computer support services	61.3	61.8	64.3	58.9	56.5	65.0	61.6	64.1

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of students who reported using each student service accounts for students who responded "not applicable" given the difference between campus locations.

At University Park, 82.1% of students reported using recreational sports facilities, and 65.4% used student healthcare services. (See Table 8B.)

**Table 8B. Use of and Satisfaction with Student Services Related to Health and Wellness: 2004 (Percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth College		Stand-Alone	
	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied
recreational sports facilities	68.8	65.6	82.1	70.2	53.3	56.9	63.5	63.2
student healthcare services	45.2	60.5	65.4	55.9	24.4	70.1	32.9	70.0
counseling & psychological services	10.2	62.2	12.3	55.3	7.0	64.0	10.7	76.4

Students at the Commonwealth College locations and stand-alone campuses were more likely to use student financial aid services and learning support services than were students at University Park. (See Table 8C.)

**Table 8C. Use of and Satisfaction with Student Support Services: 2004 (Percent)<sup>4</sup>**

	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth College		Stand-Alone	
	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied
student financial aid services	60.9	52.5	46.9	40.8	76.9	60.6	66.9	55.6
learning support services	31.9	60.9	23.1	55.3	38.6	63.3	40.2	64.3
career planning services	31.1	53.0	34.4	52.8	25.9	48.1	31.5	58.7
job placement services	15.9	56.9	18.6	55.3	13.1	56.4	14.6	61.6

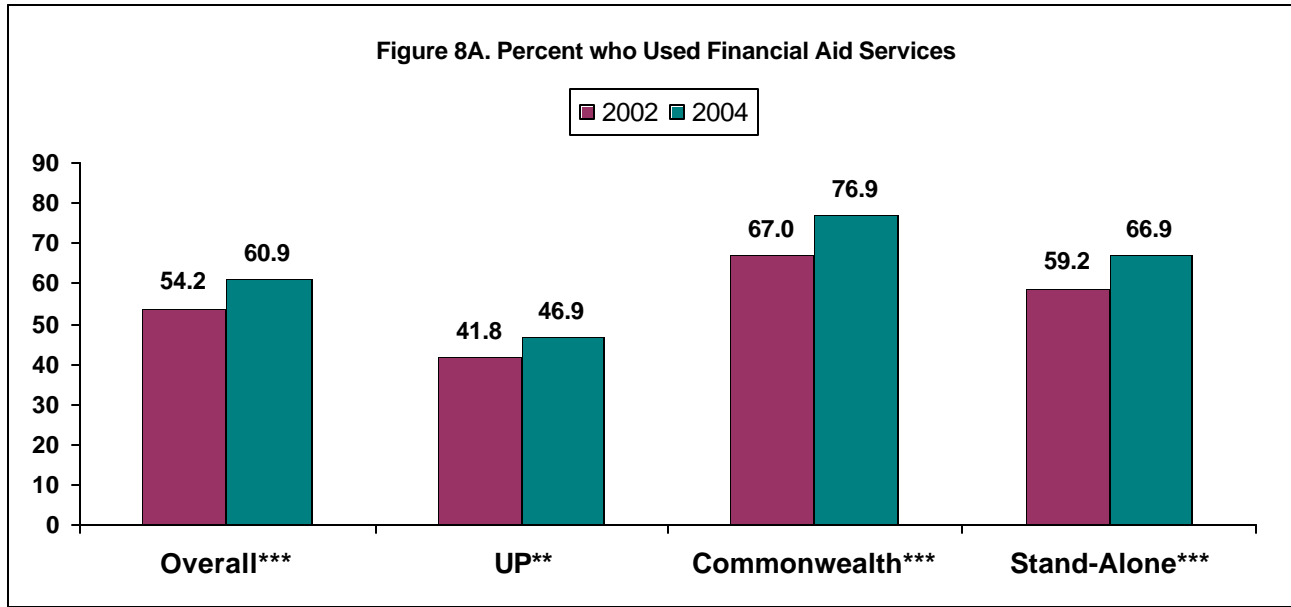
Approximately 6% of Penn State students used resources for minority students, women students, and adult learners. (See Table 8D.)

**Table 8D. Use of and Satisfaction with Constituency-Based Student Services: 2004 (Percent)<sup>4</sup>**

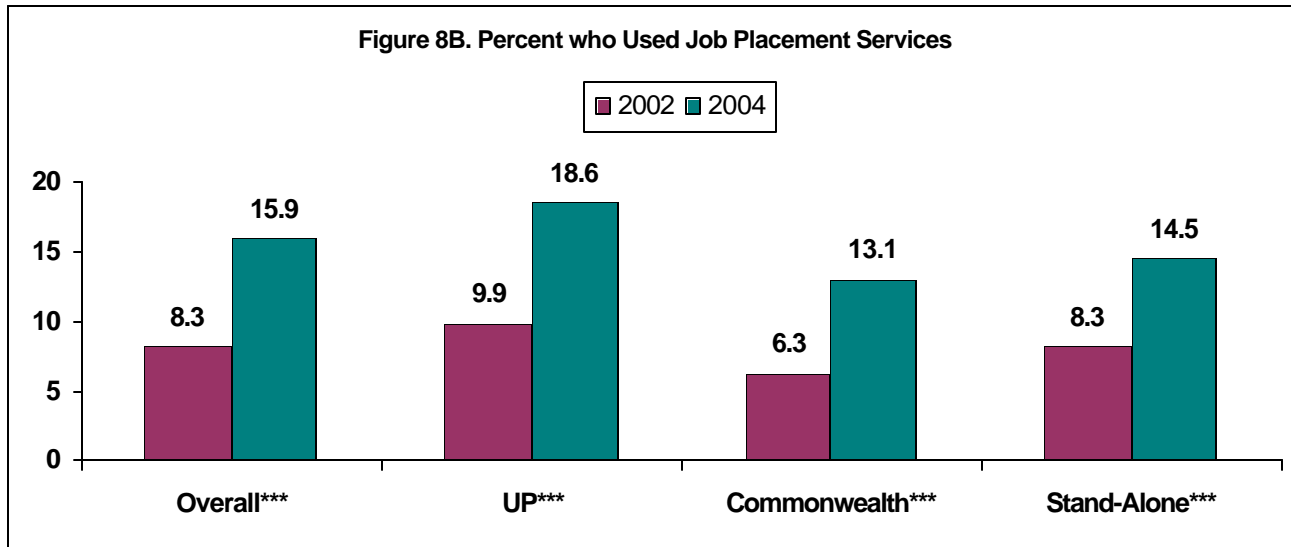
	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth College		Stand-Alone	
	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied	Use	Satisfied
resources for minority students	5.9	45.4	7.7	42.5	3.5	47.1	5.6	52.4
resources for women students	5.5	68.1	7.5	77.4	3.4	57.5	4.4	45.2
resources for adult learners	5.4	61.7	2.6	64.1	8.9	60.2	6.8	62.2

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of students who reported using each student service accounts for students who responded "not applicable" given the difference between campus locations.

When comparing responses from 2002 and 2004, significant increases were found in the use of financial aid and job placement services. (See Figures 8A and 8B.) In addition to these significant differences, students were slightly less likely to use the campus bookstore and library services. (Data not shown.)



\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; and \*\* at the .01 level.



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

Despite evidence that students' overall satisfaction with Penn State has increased since 2002, there has been a decrease in students' satisfaction with most of the student services.<sup>5</sup> For example, in 2002, 71.3% were satisfied with financial aid services compared to 52.3% in 2004, and in 2002, 77.7% were satisfied with services for adult learners compared to 58.8% in 2004. The only increase was in the satisfaction with job placement services (which also had a significant increase in use.) The level of satisfaction remained consistent for student healthcare and library services. (See Table 9.)

**Table 9. Students' Satisfaction with Student Services:  
System-Wide Comparisons between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

Satisfaction of students who used:	2002	2004	significance	direction
career planning services	3.67	3.46	***	↓
student healthcare services	3.62	3.62	ns	
campus bookstore	3.82	3.39	***	↓
counseling & psychological services	3.76	3.59	*	↓
student financial aid services	3.77	3.52	***	↓
job placement services	3.30	3.50	*	↑
recreational sports facilities	4.03	3.75	***	↓
library services	4.10	4.07	ns	
learning support services	3.83	3.71	**	↓
food services	3.51	3.36	***	↓
resources for women students	4.13	3.79	***	↓
resources for adult learners	3.94	3.62	**	↓
resources for minority students	3.67	3.41	*	↓

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

\*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; \*\* at the .01 level; \* at the .05 level; "ns"= not significant

<sup>5</sup> These rates of satisfaction are based on students who reported using the service.

## Satisfaction with Educational Progress

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the progress they made on the learning outcomes defined in the components of Penn State's General Education requirements.<sup>6</sup> Overall, the majority of Penn State students were satisfied with their progress. They were most satisfied with their progress in developing communication and writing skills. Although the rate of satisfaction was relatively consistent across locations, evidence suggests students attending the stand-alone campuses may be more satisfied with their educational progress than their counterparts. (See Table 10.)

**Table 10. Students' Satisfaction with their Educational Progress: 2004 (Percent Satisfied)**

How satisfied are you with the progress you have made in learning:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth College	Stand-Alone
to <b>communicate</b> information clearly and to set forth beliefs persuasively orally and in writing	62.1	59.5	63.6	64.7
to <b>write</b> for a particular audience or for a given profession or discipline	59.6	59.9	59.8	58.5
to <b>understand and appreciate creative works</b> , traditions, literature, and history of arts and architecture	57.5	56.4	57.0	60.6
to <b>understand the human condition</b> and values inherent in it	56.8	54.9	59.0	57.7
to work with numbers, to <b>reason quantitatively</b> , and to apply basic mathematical processes to daily work and everyday living	54.7	50.8	57.8	58.7
about <b>different cultures</b> and developing skills that will enable you to function in a complex global community	53.9	52.2	53.2	58.2
about <b>diverse</b> personal, interpersonal, and societal forces that shape people's lives and how to approach these subjects through the use of scientific inquiry	53.1	51.9	52.0	57.1
about the theory and practice of <b>wellness and fitness</b> activities, and the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to live well	52.3	50.0	53.1	55.5
how to acquire <b>scientific</b> information, to use scientific methodology, and to develop appreciation of the natural world	50.8	50.7	49.3	52.9

<sup>6</sup> These questions were significantly revised in 2004. Hence, it is not possible to compare to the 2002 responses.

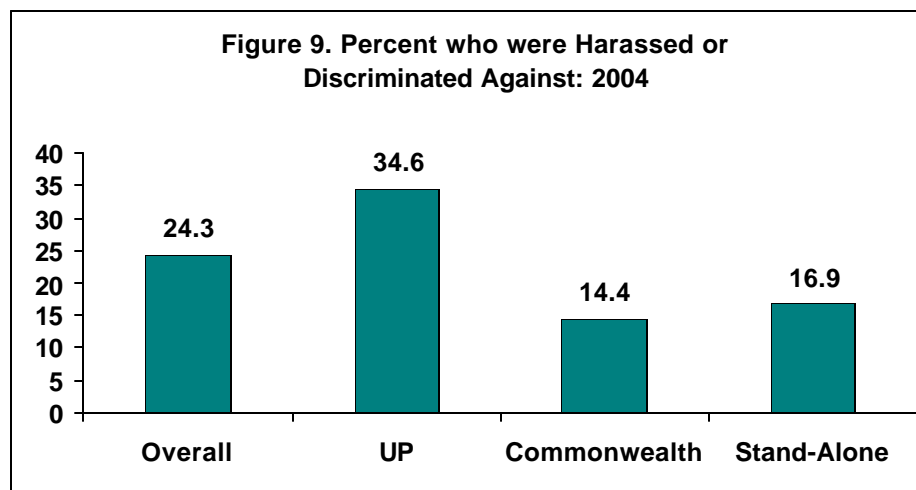
## Climate for Diversity

As an initial measure of the campus climate, students were asked whether or not they had been harassed or discriminated against based on a range of characteristics and whether or not they were satisfied with the general manner in which Penn State addresses campus harassment. Overall, harassment and/or discrimination based on race and gender appear to be most prevalent. In addition, data suggest the rate of harassment and/or discrimination has remained relatively consistent over the last several years. (See Table 11.)

**Table 11. Students who Reported Being Harassed or Discriminated Against: 2004 (Percent)**

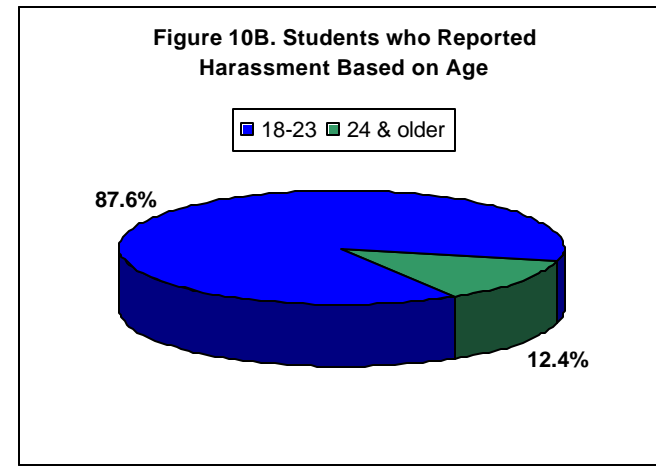
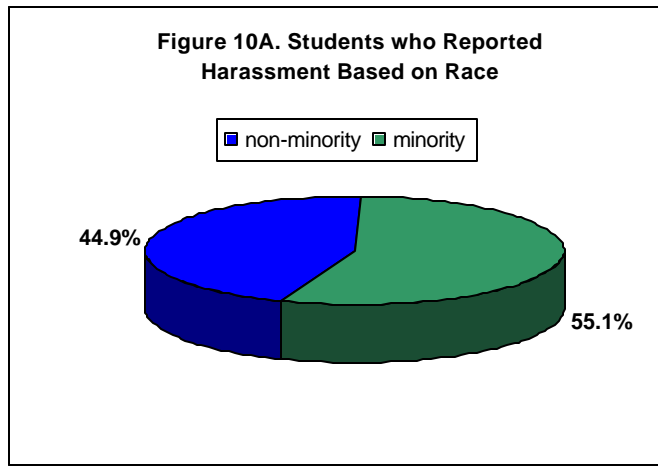
Characteristic	Overall		University Park		Commonwealth College		Stand-Alone	
	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004	2002	2004
age	6.8	7.1	9.4	10.8	4.4	4.7	5.2	3.3
disability	1.3	1.4	0.9	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	0.8
gender	12.4	11.9	18.2	18.3	7.5	6.3	8.4	6.8
racial/ethnic background	8.0	8.1	10.2	11.2	5.2	4.3	7.8	7.2
religious affiliation	5.5	5.9	7.7	8.6	3.0	3.6	4.8	3.6
sexual orientation	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.9	2.0	1.6	1.9	0.8
status as a veteran	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.0
gender identity	na	0.7	na	1.0	na	0.6	na	0.4
country of origin	na	3.0	na	4.3	na	1.7	na	2.5

In total, 24.3% of Penn State students reported having experienced some form of harassment or discrimination. (See Figure 9.)

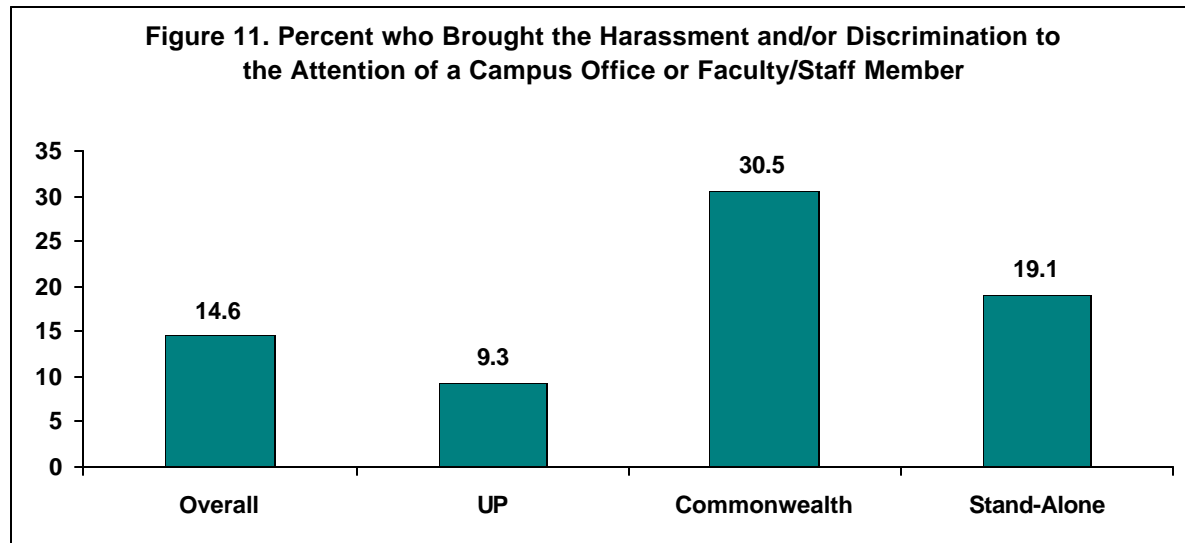


Note: Questions in 2002 did not include "gender identity" and "country of origin." Hence, the data between 2002 and 2004 are not comparable.

Without further information about students' experiences with harassment and/or discrimination, any interpretation of the data needs to be done with caution. For example, further analysis of the data related to harassment based on race and age reveals some interesting findings. (See Figures 10A and 10B.) Although minority students were significantly more likely to report harassment and/or discrimination based on race, 44.9% of those students who reported they had been harassed and/or discriminated against based on race were white/Caucasian. When examining rates of harassment and/or discrimination by age, students 18 to 23 were equally as likely to report such experiences as were students who were 24 and older, and of those who reported age discrimination, 87.6% were under 24.



Overall, 14.6% of Penn State students who indicated that they had been harassed and/or discriminated against brought the situation to the attention of a faculty/staff member or a campus office. (See Figure 11.)



Note: Percentages are of those students who reported having experienced harassment and/or discrimination.

In addition to measuring the percentage of students who had felt they had been harassed and/or discriminated against, students were asked their level of satisfaction with the manner in which Penn State addresses campus harassment. (See Table 12.) Overall, about half of Penn State students were satisfied. Furthermore, an additional third (at minimum) responded neutrally to each question.

**Table 12. Students' Satisfaction with how Penn State Addresses Campus Harassment: 2004 (Percent Satisfied)**

How satisfied are you with the general manner in which Penn State addresses campus harassment based on:	Overall	University Park	Commonwealth College	Stand-Alone
age	48.3	39.0	58.6	55.1
disability	53.8	46.2	61.5	60.9
gender	51.5	43.3	60.0	60.8
racial/ethnic background	51.1	43.0	61.3	57.7
religious affiliation	50.2	41.8	58.3	59.9
sexual orientation	50.1	42.9	57.8	58.1
status as a veteran	48.4	38.6	57.8	56.8
gender identity	48.5	38.9	57.2	58.8
country of origin	51.1	42.3	59.4	60.3

Although rates of harassment and/or discrimination appear consistent between 2002 and 2004, students were less satisfied with how Penn State addresses campus harassment in 2004. (See Table 13.)

**Table 13. Students' Satisfaction with how Penn State Addresses Campus Harassment: System-Wide Comparisons between 2002 and 2004 (Mean Scores)**

	2002	2004	significance	direction
age	4.20	3.65	***	↓
disability	4.30	3.72	***	↓
gender	4.09	3.60	***	↓
racial/ethnic background	3.96	3.55	***	↓
religious affiliation	4.12	3.62	***	↓
sexual orientation	4.08	3.56	***	↓
status as a veteran	4.49	3.70	***	↓
gender identity	na	3.63	na	
country of origin	na	3.68	na	

Scale (1-5): 1=not at all satisfied, 3=neutral, 5=very satisfied  
 \*\*\* Statistically significant at the .001 level; "na"=not applicable.