

Student and Parent Orientation Surveys 2000

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Office of Residence Life
Report prepared by the Office of Student Affairs Assessment

Report

The purpose of the Student and Parent Orientation Surveys is to assess students and parents about students' experiences prior to coming to college and their expectations of their experiences at the Ohio State University (OSU). Included in this report are four mini-reports that present findings regarding 1) students' academic experiences and expectations, 2) students' involvement outside the classroom and students' relationships with others, 3) students' experiences and attitudes regarding alcohol use, and 4) students' attitudes and experiences regarding diversity. Comparisons are made between students' and parents' responses, between male and female students, and between students of various races/ethnicities. By understanding students' experiences prior to coming to college and their expectations of their college experiences, University initiatives and policies can be implemented to assist students with their academic performance, in becoming involved on campus, in their relationships with others, in using alcohol responsibly, and in creating a diverse community. Furthermore, understanding parents' perceptions and views assist the University in educating parents as well as serving their needs as well.

Data Source

The surveys were conducted by the OSU Office of Residence Life and centered around academics, out-of-class involvement, alcohol use, diversity, and relationships. The mini-reports were prepared by the Office of Student Affairs Assessment.

The surveys were distributed during Summer Orientation (2000) to incoming students and parents during their respective sessions on residence life. In total, 2,904 students responded to the survey, 52.3% of the 5,556 incoming students who attended the two-day freshmen orientation program. A total of 1,221 parents completed surveys, approximately 19% of the 6,431 parents who attended summer orientation. The focus of the surveys is on first year students who intended to live on campus and their parents.

Overall Findings

The findings highlighted in this summary focus on the comparisons between parents' and students' responses, between male and female students' responses, and between the responses of the various racial/ethnic groups.

Comparisons between Parents and Students

Overall, the greatest differences between students' and parents' responses were with respect to their perspectives about the student's academic experiences and expectations and the student's experiences with and expectations of alcohol use. As to the student's activity involvement, feelings about diversity education and relationships with others, parents' and students' responses were only slightly different.

- More parents (over 45%) thought their child studied a lot in high school whereas only 25% of students reported having studied a lot in high school.
- Compared to 62.69% of students, a lower percentage of parents (49.36%) expected that their child's GPA during the first quarter at OSU would be "B+" or better.
- Over 51% of parents hoped their child would discuss his/her academic difficulties with them, but only 20.71% of students responded that they would choose to do so.
- More parents thought the reason why their child was looking forward to coming to OSU was to "succeed academically" than did students (37.76% compared to 21.73%).
- Over 62% of parents thought that their child would spend most of the time outside of class studying compared to 45% of students who responded this way.
- Parents thought that their child was less likely to deal directly with a conflict with his/her roommate than students were.
- Almost half of the parents (49.33%) responded that their child never consumed alcohol before coming to college, while only 26.16% of students responded that they never had.
- More students (25.78%) thought they would drink 9 or more alcoholic beverages every month during the first quarter on campus than parents (5.35%) who did.
- More parents (34.69%) responded that they would like the residence life staff to call them if the staff member encountered their child consuming or in possession of alcohol than students (3.45%) who responded this way.
- More students (33.39%) responded that they would be uncomfortable having a roommate of a different primary language than parents (30.06%) who thought their child would be uncomfortable with such a roommate.
- However, more parents (over 60%) indicated that their child would be uncomfortable having a roommate of a different sexual orientation than students (44.5%) who did.

Comparisons between Female and Male Students

Female students and male students responded only slightly differently when asked about their experiences and attitudes toward alcohol use and their feelings about diversity education. However, they described their academic experiences and expectations and their involvement outside the classroom quite differently.

- Male students (49%) were more "confident" in their academic course of action and future plans than were female students (43%).
- More female students (32.89%) responded that they studied a lot in high school than male students (16.09%) who did.
- Comparing high school GPAs, female students performed better than male students. Almost 90% of female students obtained a "B+" or better, while only 72.3% of male students did so.
- Although more female students (64.44%) occasionally consumed alcohol prior to coming to college than male students (52.42%), more male students (16.66%) responded that they frequently consumed alcohol (compared to 9.18% of female students).
- More female students (48.92%) believed they would consume 1 to 8 alcoholic beverages monthly during their first quarter at OSU than did male students (35.12%), but more male students (31.41%) reported they would consume 9 or more drinks than did female students (20.79%).
- Female students (76.28%) were more involved in high school activities than male students (63.17%) were.
- Compared to 48.13% of male students, more female students (over 66%) described their feelings about diversity education as being enthusiastically supportive.

Comparisons by Race/Ethnicity

Students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds responded differently when describing their academic experiences and expectations, their relationships with others, their experiences and attitudes toward alcohol use, and their attitudes and expectations regarding diversity.

- African American students (62%) were more confident with their academic course of action and future plans than any other racial/ethnic group.
- Asian American students (37.8%) and African American students (31.2%) were more likely to report that they studied a lot in high school than any other group.
- A lower percentage of African American students described themselves as an individual who “understood the necessity of sharing and comprising” than the other groups.
- More African American students (41.3%) responded that they never consumed alcohol prior to coming to college than any other group.
- Hispanic students (57.14%) and white/Caucasian students (49.28%) were most likely to express that they consumed alcohol without supervision prior to coming to college when compared to the other groups.
- More African American students (59.11%) and Asian American students (46.72%) believed they would not drink alcoholic beverages during the first quarter compared to the other groups.
- White/Caucasian students (over 70%) were more likely to come from a community where people were very similar.
- Furthermore, white/Caucasian students were more likely to describe their feelings about diversity education as being indifferent compared to students of color.
- More African American students responded that they were from a diverse community than any other group.
- More white/Caucasian students responded that they would be less comfortable having a roommate of different sexual orientation than any other group.