

The Scholars Programs: An Assessment Report on Recruitment, Transition & Adjustment, and Involvement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Student Affairs Assessment

This report is a description of selected experiences, and outcomes of students who participated in the OSU Communication Technology, Health Sciences, and Mount Leadership Society Scholars Programs at The Ohio State University during the 2001-02 academic year. The report is based on responses to a survey that was distributed to all members of the three aforementioned Scholars Programs during spring quarter. In total, 137 (or 45.1%) of the first-year students completed the survey of the 304 who participated in the Programs. In addition, a comparison group of 130 (35.7% of 364) eligible students also completed a parallel survey about their OSU experience.

In this report, the findings from 28 selected questions are reported. The questions are related to articulated goals of the Scholars Programs and of living learning communities. Findings from the questions are organized in three sections: recruitment, transition & adjustment, and involvement. Please note that references to page numbers in this summary correspond to the complete report.

Recruitment

- Just over half (51%) of the Scholars reported that their respective Scholars Program was an important factor in their decision to enroll at OSU (see Page 6).
- Approximately 92% of both the Scholars and 95% of the comparison group indicated that if they had to do it again, they would likely enroll at OSU (see Page 7).

Transition & Adjustment

- Satisfaction: Most Scholars and students in the comparison group were satisfied with their experience at Ohio State. However, more students participating in the Scholars Programs (53%) were “very satisfied” with their experience at Ohio State when compared to students not participating in a Scholars Program (45%) (see Pages 7-8).
- Connectedness: Evidence suggests that the Scholars Programs effectively facilitated connectedness to the OSU community, particularly with instructors and faculty members, and university staff and administrators. High proportions of students in both groups indicated that they had established close friendships with other students and felt connected to the OSU community. Scholars were significantly more likely to report higher levels of connectedness to OSU instructors and faculty members as well as staff and administrators when compared to other students (see Pages 8-10). In addition, a majority of Scholars (59%) agreed that they felt more connected to the campus community in general because of their involvement with their respective Scholars Program (see Page 12).

- Belonging: Scholars and students in the comparison group responded similarly with respect to their sense of belonging at OSU, in classes, and in the residence halls (see Pages 10-11).
- Academic Support: Evidence suggests that the Scholars Programs provided and enhanced the academic support needed for student success. Scholars (88%) were significantly more likely to report that they had the academic support they needed to succeed at OSU in comparison to first-year students not participating in a Scholars Program (75%) (see Page 12). Also of note, Scholars were significantly more likely to be comfortable with their academic plan compared to other first year students (see Page 5).

Involvement

- Scholars Programs: Sixty-one percent (61%) of the Scholars indicated that they were active in their respective Scholars Program and 61% of Scholars reported that they would participate in their Scholars Program if they had to do it over again (see Pages 13-14).
- Values: For the five values examined, Scholars rated the current level of importance higher, albeit small differences, compared to students not participating in the Scholars Programs. A high proportion of Scholars and students in the comparison group rated “desiring to learn for personal growth” with the highest level of importance. “Making the world a better place” was of significantly greater importance to the Scholars compared to other first-year students (see Pages 14-15 & Appendix A).
- Interaction with Others: Evidence suggests that the Scholars Programs facilitated a higher level of interaction with others academically and those different from themselves. Scholars participated in discussions of an academic nature outside the classroom more frequently. In addition, a significantly higher percentage of Scholars reported that they interacted with those who were of a different race/ethnicity more frequently when compared to other first-year students (see Pages 15-16).
- Cocurricular Activities: Scholars (77%) were significantly more likely to be involved in organizations and activities on campus, beyond their Scholars Program, when compared to students in the comparison group (58%). Additionally, more of the Scholars (12%) reported holding a leadership position on campus compared to other students (5%) (see Pages 17-18).

After only two quarters of enrollment at Ohio State, evidence suggests that participation in the Scholars Programs positively facilitated transition and adjustment to the University while also supporting student involvement, although differences between the Scholars and the comparison group are modest at times. Evidence related to recruitment gives no indication of notable differences in satisfaction with enrollment choice between student groups. However, evidence does suggest that for at least half of the Scholars, their respective Scholars Program played an influential role in their enrollment decision.