

Student Life Survey: Class Rank, Community, and Involvement

Center for the Study of Student Life

March 2012

INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Student Life survey was a modification of past Student Involvement surveys, which were conducted by The Ohio State University's Center for the Study of Student Life (formerly Student Life Research and Assessment). The 2011 Student Life survey included items related to involvement and culture at Ohio State as well as questions regarding student usage of student life departments. The aim of the survey was to measure various aspects of students' outside-the-classroom experiences. This brief highlights the differences among students at Ohio State according to class rank as it relates to campus involvement and sense of community. It will also shed light on the effects of student-faculty relationships

METHODOLOGY

The Student Life survey was sent to full time Ohio State students via email in the 2011 spring quarter. Five thousand students on the Columbus campus were randomly selected (in a sample stratified by class rank) to receive survey invitations. Twelve hundred students responded, yielding a 24.0% response rate.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Graduate (**59.9%**) and professional students (**58.0%**) were the most likely to report having relationships with Ohio State faculty while sophomores were the least likely (**25.6%**).
- Approximately **three quarters** of first-year students participated in Ohio State traditions, followed by non-first-year undergraduates (**61.9%**), professional (**49.0%**), and finally graduate students (**34.3%**).
- A lower percentage of graduate students reported that they recognize people on campus (**56.2%**), are involved in a student organization (**36.9%**), or felt like a member of the Ohio State community (**56.0%**) as compared with other class ranks.
- Professional students represented the largest percentage of students involved in a campus organization (**81.6%**).

DEMOGRAPHICS

The tables to the right show a breakdown of the survey respondents by class rank and by ethnicity. Most of the students (76.6%) who took the survey lived off-campus, which is representative of the Ohio State population. Women and first-year students were somewhat under-represented on the survey, while Asian American students were somewhat over-represented.

Class Rank	%
First-Years	6.0%
Sophomores	14.1%
Juniors	19.3%
Seniors	34.9%
Graduates	20.0%
Professionals	5.8%

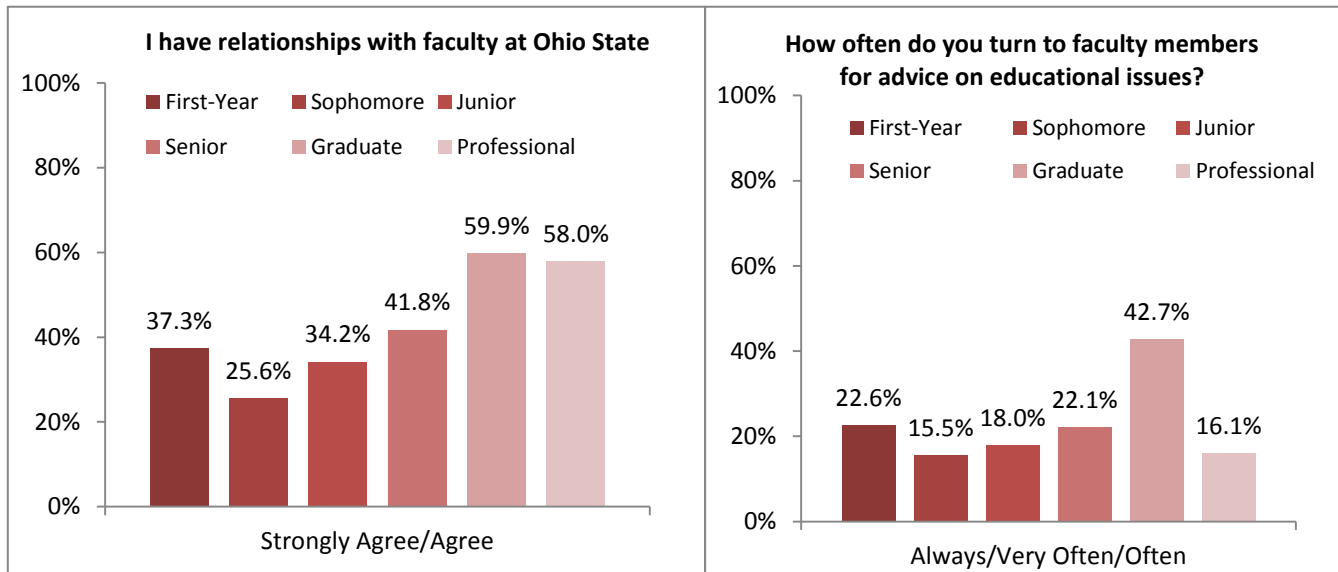
Ethnicity	%
Asian American	9.6%
Black	5.7%
Hispanic	2.7%
White	74.7%
Undisclosed	6.0%

FINDINGS

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OHIO STATE FACULTY

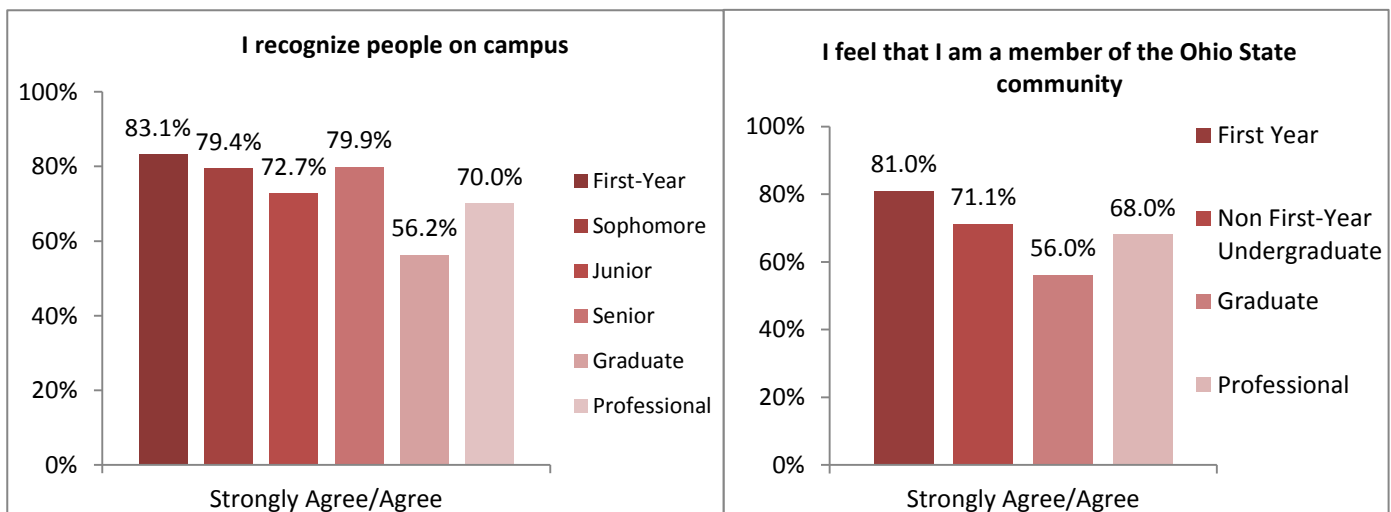
A significantly higher percentage of professional and graduate students *Strongly Agreed* or *Agreed* that they have relationships with faculty at Ohio State as compared with undergraduate students; sophomores were the least likely to have relationships with Ohio State faculty (below left). Graduate students reported turning to faculty members for advice on educational issues such as academic

progress, choosing or changing majors, or long-term educational plans significantly more often than other ranks, including professional students (below, right). Sophomore students were the least likely to turn to faculty members for educational issues.



OHIO STATE COMMUNITY

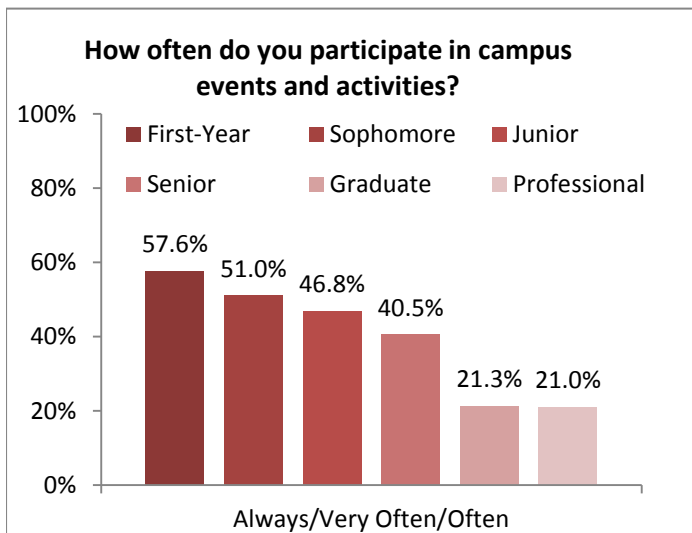
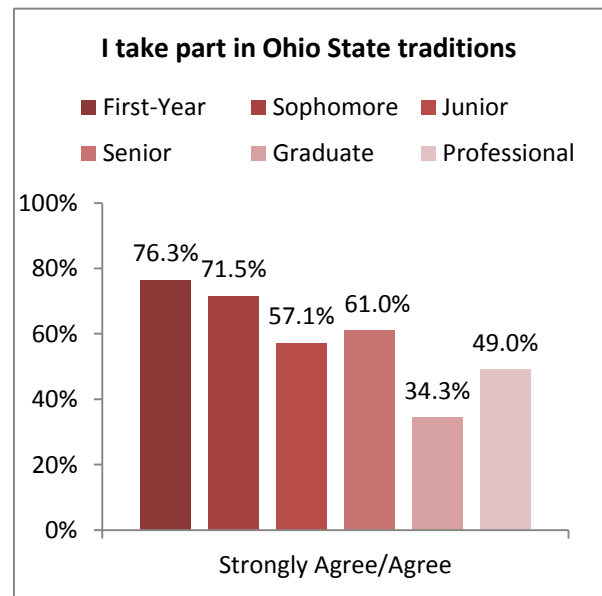
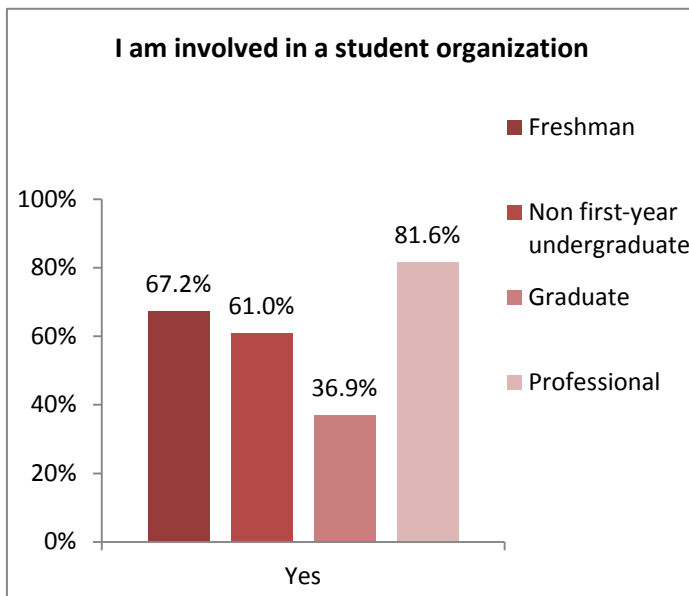
Graduate students were the least likely to report that they recognized people on campus, while first-year students were the most likely to report this. Overall, undergraduate students were more likely to recognize people on campus than graduate and professional students (below, left). When students were asked whether they feel like a member of the Ohio State community, first-year students were the most likely to agree, and graduate students were the least likely to agree (below, right). Since sophomores, juniors, and seniors had similar percentages of agreement with this statement, they are depicted together in the graph below.



CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT

A vast majority of professional students reported that they were involved in a student organization. Graduate students, on the other hand, constituted the lowest percentage of students who were involved in a student organization (below, left). Non first-year undergraduates were similar in their percentages of students involved in a student organization and are depicted together in the graph.

Approximately 80% of undergraduate students reported they joined a student organization to make new friends, while a significant portion of professional students joined to build their resumes (74.4%) and to gain leadership skills and abilities (76.9%).



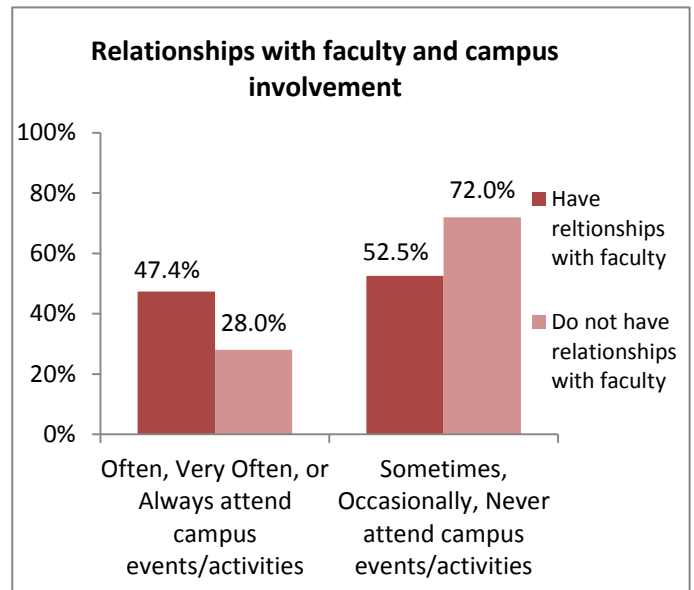
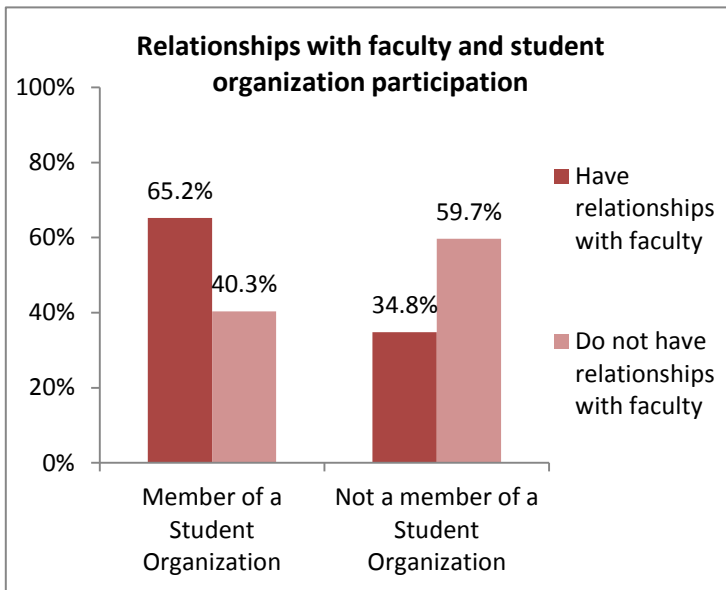
First-year students had the highest rate of participation in Ohio State traditions while graduate and professional students had the lowest rates of participation (above, right).

First-year students also had the highest percentage of participation in campus events and activities (graph, left). The percentage of students who frequently participate in campus events and activities decreased with each successive class rank, decreasing most dramatically among graduate and professional students.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Overall, there is a significant difference between the campus involvement of students who have relationships with Ohio State faculty members and those who do not. Students who *Strongly Agreed* or *Agreed* with the statement “I have relationships with Ohio State faculty members” were more likely to also be a member of a student organization than students who did not have relationships with faculty members (below, left).

Students who have relationships with Ohio State faculty members also reported a higher rate of involvement in campus events and activities such as lectures, cultural festivals, or athletic events (below, right).



SUMMARY

First-year students were the most likely of any class rank to report they participate in Ohio State traditions, recognize peers on campus, feel they are a member of the Ohio State community, and participate in campus events. The percentage of students who *Agreed* with these statements was lower for non-first-year undergraduates and even lower for graduate students. Professional students differed from graduate students by having lower rates of students who participate in campus traditions, recognize people on campus, feel they are a member of the Ohio State community, and who participate in campus events and activities. Future research might look at why graduate students and professional students differ so much in their responses with each other and with other student groups.