

2008 Ohio Union Involvement Survey

Prepared by

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The Ohio State University

Winter 2009

Executive Summary

Using the data collected by the 2008 Ohio Union Student Involvement Survey, this report describes student involvement in student organizations and use and expectations regarding resources provided by the Ohio Union. The report also compares several aspects of student experience and development for five subpopulations determined by student demographics.

In the winter quarter of 2008, 15,000 students who were enrolled at Columbus campus were randomly selected to participate in the Ohio Union Student Involvement survey. A total of 5,924 students responded, yielding a response rate of approximately 39.5%.

Frequency distributions were reported for questions on involvement in student organizations and use and need regarding campus resources. A principal component analysis was conducted on a number of questions measuring student perceptions of their general experience, development, and satisfaction at the university. For an in-depth explanation, please review the methods section.

Key Findings

- About half of the survey respondents indicated that they were involved in a student organization.
- The most frequently reported reasons for joining a student organization include *matched my interest, to make new friends, to build a resume, and to gain leadership skills and abilities.*
- The most frequently reported reasons for *not* having joined a student organization include *no time, focused on academics, and work commitments.*
- Over half of those students who were not involved in student organizations were involved in some other types of activities, such as community service, sports clubs, on-campus jobs, or research.
- About 67% of student organization participants said their organization highly or somewhat encourages hands-on community service.
- More than 50% of the students involved in student organizations considered it very important for the SOURCE to offer: *free photocopies, posters and poster enlargers, money to be used toward student organization general operating budget, and money to be used toward student organization programming.*
- Student organization participants reported significantly stronger sense of community and self-confidence than those who were not involved in student organizations.
- There is no statistical difference between student organization participants and nonparticipants regarding self-reported inter-group competence.

INTRODUCTION

The Ohio Union Student Involvement Survey was developed to gain a better understanding of student involvement in student organizations and use and expectations regarding resources and services provided by the Ohio Union. More general questions measuring student experiences and development at Ohio State were also included. It was hoped that in conducting this survey, the Ohio Union can use the results for service improvement and bring more students to its new location.

This report is intended to serve as a comprehensive summary of the findings. Hopefully, the results will help the Ohio Union and the University better understand its students and make informed decisions that influence future student services, programs, and initiatives.

Survey Administration and Sample

In the winter quarter of 2008, 15,000 students who were enrolled at Columbus campus were randomly selected to participate in the Ohio Union Student Involvement survey. As an incentive to participate, each student was given a certificate to receive one free Ohio State jersey drawstring bag upon completion of the survey as well as being entered to win one of four \$50 gift cards to Barnes & Noble.

Student Voice was used to administer the survey. Students were sent an initial email requesting their participation as well as information about the rewards for participating. In order to take the survey, students simply had to click on a web link. They were sent two reminders before the survey closed.

A total of 5,924 students responded, yielding a response rate of approximately 39.5%. Although a response rate about 40% is fairly good for online surveys conducted on the campus, it should be noted that the possibility of bias due to non-response still exists, since students who did not respond to the survey may have responded differently than those who did. The demographic information of the sample is presented in Table 1.

Methods

Frequency distributions were reported for questions on student involvement in student organizations and use and need regarding campus resources. A principal component analysis was conducted on a number of questions measuring student perceptions of their general experience, development, and satisfaction. (For detailed information on the principal component analysis, see the section entitled “Student Experience and Development” on page 13.)

Table 1

Respondent Demographics

Demographic Characteristics	Count	Percent
<u>Gender</u>		
Female	2,684	46.1
Male	3,119	53.6
Self-define	14	.2
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	479	8.3
Black, non-Hispanic	275	4.7
Hispanic/Latino	128	2.2
White, non-Hispanic	4,720	81.3
Self-define	185	3.2
<u>Class Rank</u>		
1st Year	793	13.6
2nd Year	939	16.1
3rd Year	1,052	18.0
4+ Year	1,405	24.0
Graduate	1,186	20.3
Professional	407	7.0
Other	60	1.0
<u>Undergraduate Entry to the University¹</u>		
New First Quarter Freshman (NFQF)	2,678	66.8
Transfer	1,012	25.2
Campus Change	319	8.0

Note. Count column within each demographic characteristic may not add up to the same overall sample size due to missing values. Percent column within each demographic characteristic may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

1. Analysis included undergraduate students only.

FINDINGS

Student Involvement

The survey asked questions about student involvement in student organizations and various activities. For students who indicated that they were not involved in student organizations, the survey asked if they were involved in community service, sports club or intramural sports, residence life/RA activities, research activities, religious or spiritual activities, major campus events, first year/honors/scholars programming, campus leader positions, or having an on-campus job. A total of 4,260 respondents (71.9%) were involved in student organizations or various other activities indicated above.

Involvement in Student Organizations

2,987 (50.4%) survey respondents indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Table 2

Types of Student Organizations in Which Students Were Involved¹

Type of Student Organizations	Count	Percent
Academic/College	1,401	46.9
Awareness/Activism	316	10.6
Community service/Service learning	734	24.6
Creative and performing arts	200	6.7
Ethnic/Cultural	297	9.9
Governing body (USG, CGS, IPC, councils, etc.)	267	8.9
Honoraries/Honor societies	511	17.1
Media, journalism, and creative writing	76	2.5
Religious/Spiritual	388	13.0
Social fraternities/sororities	402	13.5
Special interests	400	13.4
Sports and recreation	733	24.5
Technology	55	1.8
Graduate	285	9.5
Professional	415	13.9
Other involvement	194	6.5
None of the above	10	.3

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Table 3

Reasons for Joining a Student Organization¹

Reasons	Count	Percent
To make Ohio State seem smaller	722	24.2
To make new friends	1,875	62.8
Friend encouraged you to join	708	23.7
To gain leadership skills and abilities	1,599	53.5
To build a resume	1,862	62.3
Encouraged by University staff	409	13.7
Matched my interests	2,053	68.7
Nothing better to do/was bored	139	4.7
Academic reasons	938	31.4
Other	122	4.1

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Table 4

How Students Found out About Their Student Organizations¹

Reasons	Count	Percent
Word of mouth/a friend	1,814	60.7
Student Involvement Fair	1,132	37.9
Residence Hall Flyer	213	7.1
Flyer (not in a residence hall; i.e., academic building, campus, etc.)	354	11.9
Email/List serve	852	28.5
Faculty/Staff member	607	20.3
Facebook	192	6.4
Attended an event hosted by the organization	696	23.3
Website	362	12.1
Other	214	7.2

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Table 5

Self-reported Gains for Participating in Student Organizations¹

Gains	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel that I am learning as much participating in a student organization(s) as I am learning inside the classroom.	17.7%	40.2%	31.2%	11.0%
I feel that participation in a student organization(s) taught me problem solving skills.	26.9%	48.2%	19.8%	5.1%
I feel that participation in a student organization helps me manage stress.	20.3%	41.8%	29.8%	8.1%
Being in a student organization has made me more confident.	27.9%	51.9%	16.1%	4.1%

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

The 2,831 students (47.8%) who reported not being involved in student organizations were asked why they hadn't chosen to join a student organization. The distribution of student responses to this question is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Reasons for not Having Joined a Student Organization¹

Reasons	Count	Percent
No time	1,165	41.2
Focused on academics	1,050	37.1
Work commitments	871	30.8
Family commitments	448	15.8
Do not feel connected to campus	297	10.5
No organizations match my interests	112	4.0
I commute and do not have the opportunity to join an organization.	367	13.0
Don't know how to join a student organization.	233	8.2
Plan to join at a later date	386	13.6
Money	269	9.5
Other	178	6.3

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,831 respondents who indicated that they were not involved in a student organization.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Among survey respondents who were not involved in a student organization, 47.4% planned to join one in the future. Table 7 presents the distribution of student responses in terms of what types of things would encourage students to participate in a student organization.

Table 7

Type of Things That Would Encourage Participation in Student Organizations in Future¹

Reasons	Count	Percent
To gain leadership skills	626	22.1
Make new friends	1,029	36.3
Be more connected to the Ohio State community	777	27.4
Joining a student organization applicable to my major	941	33.2
Connections with alumni	386	13.6
Build my resume	1,203	42.5
Prepare me for the job search	732	25.9
Other	99	3.5

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,831 respondents who indicated that they were not involved in a student organization.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Involvement in Other Activities

Of those who were not involved in student organizations, 1,504 (25.4% of the overall sample) were involved in some other types of activities. 1,283 students (21.7% of the survey participants) were not involved in any student organization or other activities.

Table 8

Types of Other Activities in Which Student Organization Non-Participants were Involved¹

Other Activities	Count	Percent
Community service	364	24.2
Sports club or intramural sports	443	29.5
On-campus job	523	34.8
Residence life/RA	50	3.3
Research	426	28.3
Religious/spiritual	267	17.8
Major campus events	208	13.8
First year/honors/scholars programming	181	12.0
Campus Leader positions	16	1.1

1. This analysis only applies to the 1,504 respondents who indicated that they were not involved in student organizations but were involved in other activities.

Note. Because respondents can choose multiple response options for these questions, percentages displayed refer to the percents of respondents choosing the corresponding response option and do not add up to 100%.

Other Important Findings Regarding Involvement

- Nearly 49% of the survey respondents attended the Student Involvement Fair during the first week of Fall Quarter, while 4% attended the Winter Involvement Fair during the Winter Quarter.
- Compared to their high school experience, 17% of the survey respondents indicated that they were more involved than they were in high school, 29% reported that they were as involved now as they were in high school, and 55% said that they were less involved now than they were in high school.
- About 67% of student organization participants said their organization highly or somewhat encouraged hands-on community service; 17% indicated that their organization did not talk about community service.
- About 30% of the survey respondents had an on-campus job, 29% had an off-campus job in the campus/Columbus community, 8% had an off-campus job in their hometown during high school, and 33% did not work during school.
- Roughly 97% of the students involved in student organizations indicated that they would recommend getting involved to other students as a way to get the most out of The Ohio State University.

Campus Resources for Student Organizations

Students who reported being involved in student organizations were asked a series of questions regarding the importance and usefulness of a number of campus resources.

SOURCE

Among students who were involved in student organizations, 33.7% indicated that their organization used the SOURCE, 15.1% said their organization did not use the SOURCE, and 51.3% did not know if their organization used the SOURCE or not. All these students were asked about how important it is for the SOURCE to offer a number of resources. The distribution of student responses to these questions is presented in Table 9.

Table 9

How Important is it for the SOURCE to Offer the Following Resources to the Registered Student Organizations¹

Resources SOURCE can Offer	Very important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not important
Free photocopies (both color and black and white)	60.1%	29.8%	5.8%	4.3%
Black and white posters, color posters, and poster enlargers	52.9%	33.6%	8.5%	5.0%
Office services (staplers, binding, paper cutters, markers, paint, banner maker, etc.)	48.1%	34.9%	11.1%	6.0%
Retreat packages, including funding for ropes course, retreat supplies, food, etc.	44.3%	32.0%	13.3%	10.4%
Money to be used toward student organization general operating budget	69.0%	24.7%	3.4%	2.9%
Money to be used toward student organization programming	65.7%	26.8%	4.5%	3.0%
Icebreakers/Team builder supplies and instructions	29.6%	34.3%	21.2%	15.0%

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Importance and Benefit of Campus Resources for Student Organizations

Students who were involved in students organizations were asked to rate the importance and benefit of various campus resources (see Table 10).

Table 10

Student-Rated Importance and Benefit of Campus Resources for Student Organizations¹

How important are the following for you and your organization?				
Resources	Very important	Somewhat important	Slightly important	Not important
An office space on campus	28.3%	30.0%	18.3%	23.5%
A space to store your organization's items	34.7%	30.4%	17.2%	17.7%
A space to hang out (i.e., lounge space, rooms specifically assigned to student organizations)	37.6%	31.9%	15.0%	15.5%
A study space near your organization space	19.9%	28.1%	21.5%	30.5%
Food options near your organization space	24.5%	33.0%	20.2%	22.3%

Please rate the benefit of the following items to your organization:				
Items	Very beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Slightly beneficial	Not beneficial
Having a designated University person to help identify space on campus to host events	40.2%	38.8%	14.5%	6.6%
Having professional graphic designers available to create flyers, brochures, posters, and recruitment materials	30.5%	34.5%	23.7%	11.2%
Having professional quality printers to print color posters	39.2%	37.1%	16.6%	7.0%
Having top of the line computers available in the SOURCE with updated graphic design and video editing software	35.0%	36.4%	18.5%	10.1%
Attending programs on marketing strategy, marketing theory, and innovative ways to market	23.8%	35.0%	24.5%	16.7%

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Likelihood of Using Campus Resources

Students who were involved in student organizations were asked how likely their student organization would be to use a set of resources (see Table 11).

Table 11

Student-Rated Likelihood for Student Organizations to Use Campus Resources¹

Please rate how likely your organization would be to use each of the following resources:

Resources	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely
Free black and white or color copies	59.2%	28.9%	7.2%	4.6%
Free website design	43.1%	34.6%	14.5%	7.8%
Free graphic design by a professional graphic designer	40.5%	32.7%	18.1%	8.7%
Workshops on marketing, strategic planning, teambuilding, leadership skills, goal setting, time management, etc.	26.3%	34.5%	25.0%	14.1%
Video equipment (camcorders, digital camcorders, video computer software that would allow your organization to make movies, etc.)	29.4%	35.6%	23.7%	11.4%
Free video editing by a professional video editor	24.5%	33.3%	26.6%	15.6%
Computer software, including Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Moviemaker, etc.	34.9%	35.3%	18.9%	10.9%
Check out laptops	15.1%	30.1%	31.5%	23.3%
Check out digital cameras	24.2%	36.0%	23.1%	16.8%
Check out a LCD lap top projector and screen	28.7%	35.8%	21.2%	14.2%
Retreat packages, including a free ropes course, supplies, facilitators, etc.	27.1%	32.6%	22.3%	18.0%
A student organization "consultant" (a trained professional who would assess your organization and offer suggestions for improvement)	20.1%	34.6%	25.8%	19.5%
Banner maker (a person who would come over to your organization meeting and make you a banner)	24.8%	35.7%	23.2%	16.2%

1. This analysis only applies to the 2,987 respondents who indicated that they were involved in a student organization.

Student Experience and Development

The survey also includes a number of questions measuring student perceptions of their general experience, development, and satisfaction. For the purpose of data reduction, a principal component analysis was conducted on these items. As a result, three components, or factors, emerged from the analysis: **sense of community**, **self-confidence**, and **inter-group competence**. The appendix contains a list of the components, the survey items that load on the components, as well as their internal reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha values). Within each component, survey items comprising the component were summed to create a scale score on the component for each respondent. A higher value of the scale score is associated with a more positive group perception or experience. The mean scores of the scales were then analyzed for each of the following subpopulations determined by student characteristics available on the survey:

- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Class rank
- Undergraduate entry (undergraduates only)
- Whether involved in a student organization

The independent sample t-test was used to compare means between two groups. Analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used for mean comparisons among three or more groups. In this report, the level of statistical significance was set to be $p < .05$, which means that there is only 5% chance that the difference between groups happened randomly. We identify statistically significant differences with “*”. All other differences are not statistical. For ANOVA analyses, once it is determined that differences exist among the means, a post hoc test can detect which means differ. For post hoc comparisons, a Bonferroni test was used where equal variances were assumed, and Dunnett C was used where equal variances were not assumed. The significant p -value for the post hoc tests was also $p < .05$.

Sense of Community

Ten survey items constitute this component. The scale score of the component ranges from 10 to 40, with a mean of 30.1 and a standard deviation of 5.3.

Table 12

Sense of Community, by Various Student Characteristics

Student Characteristics	Component Mean¹	Comparisons of Mean Scores²
<u>Gender³</u>		
Male	29.9	No statistical mean difference was found based on gender.
Female	30.2	
<u>Race/Ethnicity*</u>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	31.0	Significantly lower than Hispanic's and White's
Asian or Pacific Islander	28.8	
Black, non-Hispanic	30.0	Significantly higher than Asian's
Hispanic/Latino	31.3	
White, non-Hispanic	30.2	Significantly higher than Asian's
Self-define	29.5	
<u>Class Rank*</u>		
Undergraduate	30.3	Significantly higher than Graduate's
Graduate	29.1	Significantly lower than Undergraduate's
Professional	30.0	
Other	28.6	
<u>Undergraduate Entry^{4*}</u>		
New First Quarter Freshman	31.0	Significantly higher than Transfer's and Campus Change's
Transfer Student	29.0	Significantly lower than NFQF's
Campus change	28.1	Significantly lower than NFQF's
<u>Involvement in Student Organizations*</u>		
Involved in a Student Organization	31.2	Significantly higher than non-involved students'
Not Involved	28.6	Significantly lower than involved students'

1. A higher mean score for the component is associated with a stronger sense of community.

2. Patterns of mean differences were listed only where the difference is statistically significant.

3. "Self-define" was eliminated from the categories of gender due to the extremely small number of students in this category.

4. Analysis included undergraduate students only.

*Statistically significant mean differences found based on the demographic characteristic, $p < .05$

Self-Confidence

Five survey items constitute this component. The scale score of the component ranges from 5 to 20, with a mean of 15.8 and a standard deviation of 2.9.

Table 13

Self-Confidence, by Various Student Characteristics

Student Characteristics	Component Mean¹	Comparisons of Mean Scores²
<u>Gender³</u>		
Male	15.9	No statistical mean difference was found based on gender.
Female	15.7	
<u>Race/Ethnicity*</u>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	16.9	Significantly lower than White's
Asian or Pacific Islander	15.2	
Black, non-Hispanic	15.8	
Hispanic/Latino	15.9	Significantly higher than Asian's
White, non-Hispanic	15.8	
Self-define	15.8	
<u>Class Rank*</u>		
Undergraduate	15.4	Significantly lower than Graduate's and Professional's
Graduate	16.8	Significantly higher than Undergraduate's
Professional	16.8	Significantly higher than Undergraduate's
Other	16.4	
<u>Undergraduate Entry^{4*}</u>		
New First Quarter Freshman	15.3	Significantly lower than Transfer's
Transfer Student	15.6	Significantly higher than NFQF's
Campus change	15.0	
<u>Involvement in Student Organizations*</u>		
Involved in a Student Organization	15.9	Significantly higher than non-involved students'
Not Involved	15.6	Significantly lower than involved students'

1. A higher mean score for the component is associated with a stronger self-confidence.

2. Patterns of mean differences were listed only where the difference is statistically significant.

3. "Self-define" was eliminated from the categories of gender due to the extremely small number of students in this category.

4. Analysis included undergraduate students only.

*Statistically significant mean differences found based on the demographic characteristic, $p < .05$

Inter-Group Competence

Two survey items constitute this component. The scale score of the component ranges from 2 to 8, with a mean of 7.2 and a standard deviation of 1.0.

Table 14

Inter-Group Competence, by Various Student Characteristics

Student Characteristics	Component Mean¹	Comparisons of Mean Scores²
<u>Gender^{3*}</u>		
Male	7.0	Significantly lower than Female's
Female	7.3	Significantly higher than Male's
<u>Race/Ethnicity*</u>		
American Indian or Alaska Native	6.9	Significantly lower than Black's, Hispanic's, White's, and Self-define's
Asian or Pacific Islander	6.7	
Black, non-Hispanic	7.2	Significantly higher than Asian's
Hispanic/Latino	7.5	Significantly higher than Asian's
White, non-Hispanic	7.2	Significantly higher than Asian's
Self-define	7.3	Significantly higher than Asian's
<u>Class Rank*</u>		
Undergraduate	7.2	Significantly lower than Graduate's
Graduate	7.3	Significantly higher than Undergraduate's
Professional	7.1	
Other	7.3	
<u>Undergraduate Entry⁴</u>		
New First Quarter Freshman	7.2	No statistical mean difference was found based on undergraduate entry.
Transfer Student	7.1	
Campus change	7.1	
<u>Involvement in Student Organizations</u>		
Involved in a Student Organization	7.2	No statistical mean difference was found based on involvement in student organizations.
Not Involved	7.2	

1. A higher mean score for the component is associated with a stronger perceived inter-group competence.

2. Patterns of mean differences were listed only where the difference is statistically significant.

3. "Self-define" was eliminated from the categories of gender due to the extremely small number of students in this category.

4. Analysis included undergraduate students only.

*Statistically significant mean differences found based on the demographic characteristic, $p < .05$

Appendix

Survey Items Contributing to Sense of Community, Self-confidence, and Inter-group Competence Measures

Sense of Community (Cronbach's alpha = .855)

- I intend on being an active alumnus of The Ohio State University.
- I feel connected to The Ohio State University community.
- I intend to donate money to the university when I graduate.
- I feel that The Ohio State University community supports and encourages my success.
- I feel that I have built relationships with faculty members and/or staff.
- I am satisfied with my Ohio State experience.
- I feel Ohio State supports and promotes involvement.
- It is easy to find something to do on campus.
- I feel connected to the greater Columbus Community.
- I feel that I am learning as much outside of the classroom as I am learning inside the classroom.

Self-confidence (Cronbach's alpha = .822)

- I feel prepared for life after college.
- I feel prepared to graduate.
- I feel confident I will be an attractive candidate to potential employers or graduate/professional schools.
- I feel that I know how to manage my time/schedule.
- I feel confident about my academic performance.

Inter-group Competence (Cronbach's alpha = .638)

- I feel comfortable interacting with someone of a different sexual orientation.
- I feel comfortable interacting with someone of a different race, ethnicity or religious background.

Note. These items rely on a 1 to 4 scale with "1" indicating "strongly disagree" and "4" indicating "strongly agree".