



2023-2025 Involvement Trend Report

**A Research Report from the
Student Life Survey**

Center for the Study of Student Life

March 2025



**THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY**

OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores the involvement, engagement and satisfaction of undergraduate, graduate and professional students at The Ohio State University. Data for this report are from the 2025 Student Life Survey. In January 2025, 9,000 students on the Columbus campus were surveyed, out of which 1,258 responded, resulting in a response rate of 14.0%. A sample of 5,500 undergraduate students were surveyed; 12.3% responded ($n = 676$). A sample of 3,500 graduate and professional students were surveyed; 16.6% responded ($n = 582$). Data were weighted to be representative of the full Ohio State population.

Overall Involvement

- Undergraduate students saw a significant difference in their overall involvement between 2023, 2024 and 2025 ($p < .01$).
- Graduate and professional students did not see a significant change in their overall involvement levels between 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Undergraduate Students

- Undergraduate student organization involvement in 2023 (**50.3%**), 2024 (**57.1%**) and 2025 (**59.7%**) was significantly different ($p < .01$) and is trending upward.
- Undergraduate research with faculty in 2023 (**12.7%**), 2024 (**11.3%**) and 2025 (**7.8%**) was significantly different ($p < .01$) and is trending downward.
- Undergraduate involvement in multi-day service events was significantly ($p < .05$) different in 2023 (**4.3%**), 2024 (**5.6%**) and 2025 (**7.9%**) and is trending upward.

Graduate Students

- Graduate research with faculty in 2023 (**35.8%**), 2024 (**41.3%**) and 2025 (**45.1%**) was significantly different ($p < .01$) and is trending upward.
- Graduate involvement in an academic course with a service-learning component in 2023 (**11.7%**), 2024 (**6.8%**) and 2025 (**8.5%**) was significantly different ($p < .05$).

Professional Students

- Professional student involvement did not change significantly for any activity between 2023, 2024, and 2025.

Students in Leadership Roles

- There were no significant differences in student involvement in leaderships roles between 2023, 2024, and 2025.
- Professional students report being involved in leadership roles across all years at about double the rate of undergraduate and graduate students

INTRODUCTION

This report explores involvement trends over time for students at The Ohio State University. Involvement in on-campus activities during college plays a critical role in student success, from bolstering a student's academic success to increasing retention and persistence (Tinto, 2006-2007). Involvement fosters experiential learning during college, which is linked to getting a good job after graduation, workplace engagement, overall well-being and alumni attachment (Gallup, 2014).

METHODS

The Student Life Survey is administered annually by the Center for the Study of Student Life to examine trends in student engagement, sense of belonging and satisfaction with the college experience. The 2025 Student Life Survey was administered to a stratified, random sample of 9,000 Ohio State students at the beginning of spring semester (January 6 to January 24, 2025). This sample comprised 5,500 undergraduate students and 3,500 graduate and professional students, all on the Columbus campus. A total of 1,258 students responded to the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 14.0%. The response rate was 12.3% among undergraduate students and 16.6% among graduate and professional students.

Data were broken down by students' educational level (undergraduate, graduate and professional). Data from 676 undergraduate students, 484 graduate students and 98 professional students are included in this report. Demographics of the students included in the report did not substantially vary from the overall Student Life Survey sample. Note that not all students who completed the survey answered every question, resulting in different totals for some questions.

Table 1: Number of Respondents by Year

	2023 (<i>n</i> = 1,282)	2024 (<i>n</i> = 1,488)	2025 (<i>n</i> = 1,258)
Undergraduate	582	850	676
Graduate	577	502	484
Professional	123	136	98

Weighting Procedure

Responses were weighted to address differences between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents compared to the general student population at Ohio State in the spring semester of 2025. Weights were adjusted so the survey data are representative of the student population at Ohio State. For example, 62.8% of survey respondents in the Student Life Survey were female, but 52.6% of the total population at Ohio State was female. The rake weight procedure adjusts for the over-representation of female students in the data to make responses more reflective of the student population, thus making the data more generalizable to Ohio State students. The procedure adjusted the base weight to the demographic data available on the sampling frame using sex, race/ethnicity and student status (i.e., undergraduate, graduate student or professional student).

FINDINGS

Overall Involvement

Student involvement by educational level was compared across the 2023, 2024 and 2025 administration of the Student Life Survey. As shown in the chart below and table 2, Chi-square tests of independence were used to test significant differences in involvement rates over the three years. In general, involvement rates were stable by educational level across the three years for graduate and professional students; however, undergraduate students saw a significant difference in involvement rates ($p < .01$).

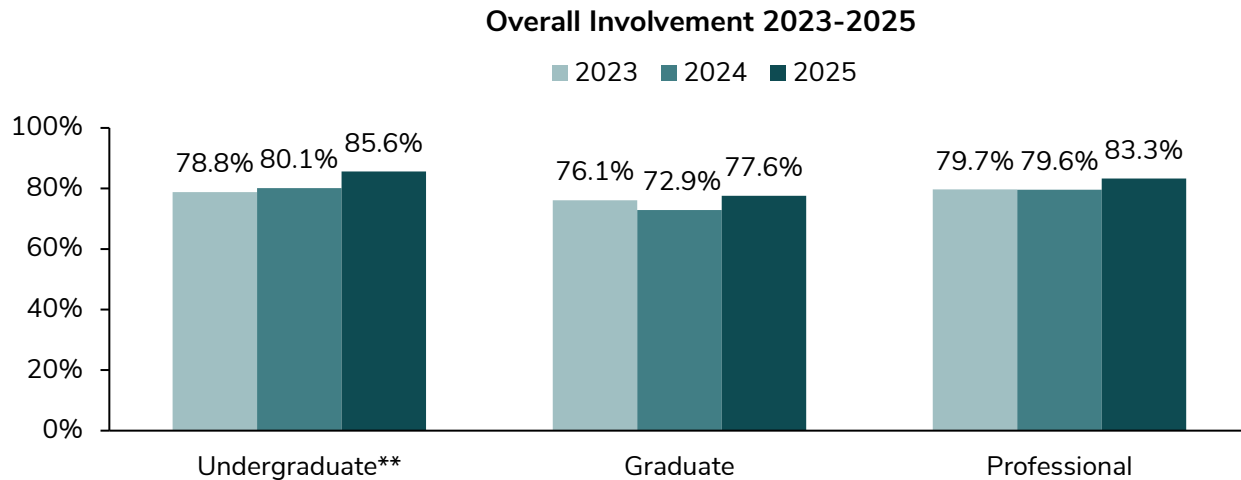


Table 2: Involvement 2023-2025

% Involved	2023 (n = 1,278)	2024 (n = 1,479)	2025 (n = 1,258)	Significance
Undergraduate	78.8%	80.1%	85.6%	**
Graduate	76.1%	72.9%	77.6%	
Professional	79.7%	79.6%	83.3%	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Undergraduate Involvement Over Time

Table 3: Undergraduate Campus Involvement

	2023 (<i>n</i> = 576)	2024 (<i>n</i> = 838)	2025 (<i>n</i> = 675)	Significance
A social fraternity or sorority	9.9%	8.7%	9.7%	
A business fraternity or sorority	2.6%	2.3%	3.9%	
Intramural sports	10.8%	11.2%	12.0%	
Sports clubs	9.8%	8.7%	8.9%	
Student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, Running Club, Black Student Association)	50.3%	57.1%	59.7%	**
Research with a faculty member	12.7%	11.3%	7.8%	**
Working at an on-campus job	28.9%	26.6%	29.3%	
A learning community in the Residence Halls (e.g., Engineering House, Stadium Scholarship Program, Morrill Scholars Program, Global Business)	7.9%	7.4%	7.5%	
A capstone project or experience (e.g., senior thesis, portfolio, doctoral dissertation)	5.7%	8.3%	5.9%	

Table 4: Undergraduate Community Service Involvement

	2023 (<i>n</i> = 567)	2024 (<i>n</i> = 806)	2025 (<i>n</i> = 665)	Significance
An academic course with a service-learning component	8.4%	7.9%	9.7%	
A one-day service event	20.6%	19.6%	24.8%	
Multi-day service event (e.g., Buck-I-SERV, a church or club-based service trip)	4.3%	5.6%	7.9%	*
An ongoing service/volunteer program (e.g., volunteered at a community organization once a month or more)	16.8%	19.5%	21.0%	

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Graduate Involvement Over Time

Table 5: Graduate Student Campus Involvement

	2023 (<i>n</i> = 567)	2024 (<i>n</i> = 495)	2025 (<i>n</i> = 484)	Significance
A social fraternity or sorority	0.5%	1.2%	0.8%	
A business fraternity or sorority	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	
Intramural sports	2.2%	1.6%	3.5%	
Sports clubs	2.3%	3.7%	3.4%	
Student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, Running Club, Black Student Association)	23.3%	22.5%	22.5%	
Research with a faculty member	35.8%	41.3%	45.1%	*
Working at an on-campus job	25.5%	21.2%	22.9%	
A learning community in the Residence Halls (e.g., Engineering House, Stadium Scholarship Program, Morrill Scholars Program, Global Business)	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	
A capstone project or experience (e.g., senior thesis, portfolio, doctoral dissertation)	15.5%	17.8%	20.6%	

Table 6: Graduate Student Community Service Involvement

	2023 (<i>n</i> = 568)	2024 (<i>n</i> = 492)	2025 (<i>n</i> = 474)	Significance
An academic course with a service-learning component	11.6%	6.8%	8.5%	*
A one-day service event	12.5%	11.4%	11.5%	
Multi-day service event (e.g., Buck-I-SERV, a church or club-based service trip)	4.2%	2.9%	3.2%	
An ongoing service/volunteer program (e.g., volunteered at a community organization once a month or more)	10.7%	9.9%	10.0%	

p* < .05, *p* < .01, ****p* < .001

Professional Student Involvement Over Time

Table 7: Professional Student Campus Involvement

	2023 (n = 122)	2024 (n = 134)	2025 (n = 98)	Significance
A social fraternity or sorority	6.1%	4.6%	5.0%	
A business fraternity or sorority	1.5%	2.3%	5.1%	
Intramural sports	8.6%	11.1%	11.6%	
Sports clubs	0.0%	2.3%	3.6%	
Student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, Running Club, Black Student Association)	66.2%	59.9%	67.8%	
Research with a faculty member	17.5%	16.2%	16.0%	
Working at an on-campus job	9.5%	5.4%	14.2%	
A learning community in the Residence Halls (e.g., Engineering House, Stadium Scholarship Program, Morrill Scholars Program, Global Business)	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	
A capstone project or experience (e.g., senior thesis, portfolio, doctoral dissertation)	3.5%	2.3%	0.0%	

Table 8: Professional Student Community Service Involvement

	2023 (n = 116)	2024 (n = 130)	2025 (n = 95)	Significance
An academic course with a service-learning component	7.1%	12.2%	16.4%	
A one-day service event	20.0%	24.6%	33.6%	
Multi-day service event (e.g., Buck-I-SERV, a church or club-based service trip)	2.6%	6.1%	5.7%	
An ongoing service/volunteer program (e.g., volunteered at a community organization once a month or more)	20.2%	25.4%	27.6%	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Students in Leadership Roles

Students were also asked to indicate if they held a leadership position in at least one of their involvement activities. While the proportion of students in leadership roles has not changed significantly across years, professional students tended to hold leadership roles at a higher rate than both undergraduate and graduate students.

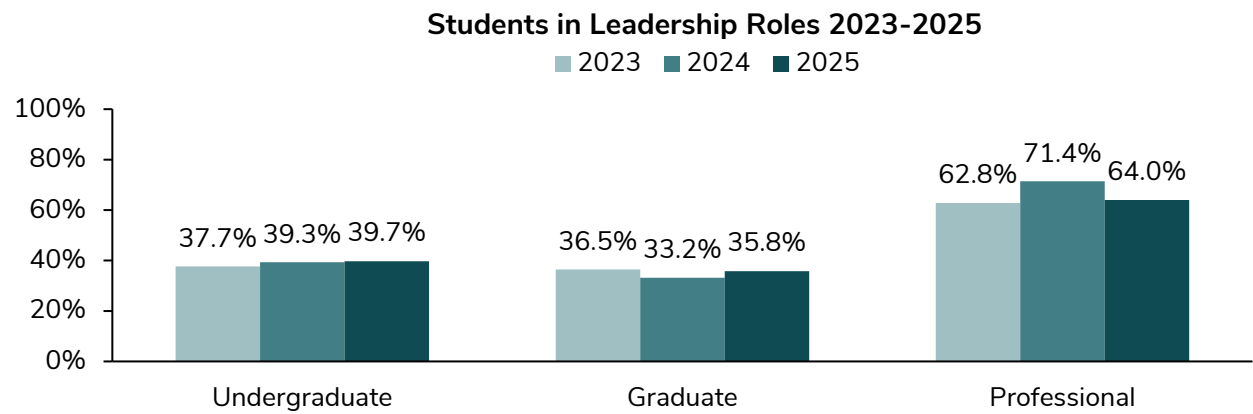


Table 9: Students in Leadership Roles 2023-2025

% Involved	2023 (n = 943)	2024 (n = 1,095)	2025 (n = 960)	Significance
Undergraduate	37.7%	39.3%	39.7%	
Graduate	36.5%	33.2%	35.8%	
Professional	62.8%	71.4%	64.0%	

CONCLUSION

This report underscores that Ohio State student involvement has remained relatively stable over the past three years. While undergraduate students experienced notable changes in their overall level of involvement, graduate and professional students did not exhibit these same variations. Certain activities showed significant differences in involvement over time for both undergraduate and graduate students, whereas professional students' involvement remained consistent across activities. These trends can assist Student Life in identifying activities with fluctuating levels of involvement and responding appropriately.

p < .05, **p < .01, *p < .001*