



Involvement and Satisfaction

**A Research Report from the 2025
Student Life Survey**

Center for the Study of Student Life

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**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.

Involvement

- **84.1%** of all Ohio State students report being involved with at least one campus activity, including **85.6%** of undergraduate students, **77.6%** of graduate students and **83.3%** of professional students.

Top campus activities among undergraduate students	Top campus activities among graduate students	Top campus activities among professional students
Student organizations (59.7%)	Research with a faculty member (45.1%)	Student organizations (67.8%)
Working at an on-campus job (29.3%)	Working at an on-campus job (22.9%)	A one-day service event (33.6%)
A one-day service event (24.8%)	Student organizations (22.5%)	An ongoing service/volunteer program (27.6%)
An ongoing service/volunteer program (21.0%)	A capstone project or experience (20.6%)	An academic course with a service-learning component (16.4%)

Satisfaction: Undergraduates

- **94.9%** of undergraduate students said they would recommend Ohio State to other students.
- **90.8%** of undergraduate students agreed or strongly agreed that Ohio State's academic programs met their needs.
- Generally, undergraduate students who were involved with on-campus activities **did not have significantly different levels of satisfaction** with Ohio State than students who were not involved.

Satisfaction: Graduate and Professional Students

- **89.9%** of graduate students and **94.8%** of professional students said they would recommend Ohio State to other students.
- **90.3%** of graduate students and **94.4%** of professional students agreed or strongly agreed that Ohio State's academic programs met their needs.

⁺ p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

- Compared to graduate and professional students who were not involved, graduate and professional students who were involved with campus activities were:
 - **1.5** times more likely to indicate that their experiences at Ohio State helped them to set professional goals ($p < .1$).
 - **1.7** times more likely to have developed as a leader during their time at Ohio State ($p < .05$).
 - **1.7** times more likely to share that their wellness has become more important to them while at Ohio State ($p < .05$).

INTRODUCTION

This report explores the involvement and satisfaction of 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 2025). This sample was comprised of 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. See Appendix A for a summary of respondents' demographic and academic characteristics.

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.

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 were 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

⁺ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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). Weighted and unweighted demographic data for survey respondents is available in Appendix A.

FINDINGS

Campus Involvement

The percentage of involved students was calculated by examining participation across thirteen different types of campus activities and community service. Among all respondents, 84.1% report being involved in at least one of thirteen types of involvement. More specifically, 85.6% of undergraduate students, 77.6% of graduate students and 83.3% of professional students reported being involved. The tables below summarize campus activities and community service involvement.

Undergraduate students were most likely to be involved with a student organization (59.7%) and working at an on-campus job (29.3%). Graduate students were most likely to be involved in research with a faculty member (45.1%) and working at an on-campus job (22.9%). Professional students were most likely to be involved in student organizations (67.8%) and one day service events (33.6%).

Table 1: Campus Involvement by Educational Level

	Undergraduate students (n = 675)	Graduate students (n = 484)	Professional students (n = 98)
A social fraternity or sorority	9.7%	0.9%	5.0%
A business fraternity or sorority	3.9%	0.4%	5.1%
Intramural sports	12.0%	3.5%	11.6%
Sports clubs	8.9%	3.4%	3.6%
Student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, Running Club, Black Student Association)	59.7%	22.5%	67.8%
Research with a faculty member	7.8%	45.1%	16.0%
Working at an on-campus job	29.3%	22.9%	14.2%
A learning community in the Residence Halls (e.g., Engineering House, Stadium Scholarship Program, Morrill Scholars Program, Global Business)	7.5%	0.0%	0.9%
A capstone project or experience (e.g., senior thesis, portfolio, doctoral dissertation)	5.9%	20.6%	0.0%

⁺ p < .1, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Table 2: Community Service Involvement by Educational Level

	Undergraduate students (n = 665)	Graduate students (n = 474)	Professional students (n = 95)
An academic course with a service-learning component	9.7%	8.5%	16.4%
A one-day service event	24.8%	11.5%	33.6%
Multi-day service event (e.g., Buck-I-SERV, a church or club-based service trip)	7.9%	3.2%	5.7%
An ongoing service/volunteer program (e.g., volunteered at a community organization once a month or more)	21.0%	10.0%	27.6%

Student Outcomes and Satisfaction

Students were asked to rate their agreement with multiple items related to student outcomes and satisfaction at Ohio State. Table 3 shows the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the satisfaction items by educational level.

Table 3: Satisfaction by Educational Level

	Undergraduate students (n = 622)	Graduate students (n = 451)	Professional students (n = 90)
My experiences at Ohio State have helped me to set professional goals.	91.0%	90.8%	96.6%
I have developed as a leader during my time at Ohio State.	74.4%	75.5%	89.9%
During my time at Ohio State, wellness (i.e., physical, mental and emotional health) has become more important to me.	84.9%	83.7%	84.7%
Academic programs at Ohio State meet my needs.	90.8%	90.3%	94.4%
Programs and services at Ohio State meet my needs (e.g., support offices, student activities).	90.7%	85.9%	88.2%
I would recommend Ohio State to other students.	94.9%	89.9%	94.8%
Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at The Ohio State University.	90.7%	88.8%	93.7%

⁺ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Student Outcomes, Satisfaction and Involvement: Undergraduates

To examine the association between involvement and satisfaction, chi-square tests of independence and logistic regressions were employed. A student was coded as involved if they participated in at least one of the thirteen activities illustrated in Tables 1 and 2.

First, associations between student responses and involvement status were examined. Second, logistic regression analyses were used to determine if the association between involvement and student outcomes remained after taking into account demographic and academic characteristics. Control variables included gender identity, race/ethnicity, international student status, living on campus, academic rank, cumulative GPA and first-generation student status. These analyses suggest that involvement did not have associations with student satisfaction and other outcomes, when controlling for demographic and academic factors.

Table 4: Undergraduate Involvement and Satisfaction

% Agree or Strongly Agree	Involved	Not Involved	χ^2	Odds Ratio ^a
My experiences at Ohio State have helped me to set professional goals.	91.8%	86.5%	2.5	1.4
I have developed as a leader during my time at Ohio State.	76.9%	58.9%	12.8***	1.6
During my time at Ohio State, wellness (i.e., physical, mental and emotional health) has become more important to me.	85.5%	81.7%	0.8	1.0
Academic programs at Ohio State meet my needs.	90.8%	90.7%	0.0	0.6 [†]
Programs and services at Ohio State meet my needs (e.g., support offices, student activities).	91.1%	88.1%	0.8	0.9
I would recommend Ohio State to other students.	95.1%	93.5%	0.4	0.7
Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at The Ohio State University.	91.3%	87.1%	1.6	0.7

^a Results from logistic regression controlling for, or taking into account: gender, race, international status, living on campus, academic rank, cumulative GPA and first-generation student status.

Student Outcomes, Satisfaction and Involvement: Graduate and Professional Students

A similar set of analyses employing chi-square tests of independence and logistic regressions were used to examine how involvement shapes graduate and professional students' satisfaction at Ohio State. As with the previous set of analyses, associations between student responses and involvement status were first examined. Second, logistic regression analyses were used to determine if the association between involvement and student outcomes remained after taking into account demographic and academic

[†] $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

characteristics. Control variables included gender identity, race/ethnicity, international student status, graduate/professional status, cumulative GPA and first-generation student status. Due to small sample sizes, graduate and professional students were analyzed together rather than separately.

As Table 5 demonstrates, there was some relationship between graduate and professional student involvement and satisfaction, particularly for items related to setting professional goals, leadership development, and prioritizing wellness.

Table 5: Graduate/Professional Student Involvement and Belonging

% Agree or Strongly Agree	Involved	Not Involved	χ^2	Odds Ratio ^a
My experiences at Ohio State have helped me to set professional goals.	92.6%	90.1%	0.7	1.5 [†]
I have developed as a leader during my time at Ohio State.	81.0%	69.7%	6.9**	1.7*
During my time at Ohio State, wellness (i.e., physical, mental and emotional health) has become more important to me.	85.6%	77.6%	4.3*	1.7*
Academic programs at Ohio State meet my needs.	91.2%	91.1%	0.0	1.1
Programs and services at Ohio State meet my needs (e.g., support offices, student activities).	86.0%	88.0%	0.3	0.9
I would recommend Ohio State to other students.	90.0%	94.7%	2.4	0.9
Overall, I am satisfied with my experiences at The Ohio State University.	90.2%	88.8%	0.2	1.2

^a Results from logistic regression controlling for, or taking into account: gender, race, international status, graduate/professional status, cumulative GPA and generational status.

CONCLUSION

This report provides valuable information for understanding students' satisfaction and involvement at Ohio State, as well as the relationship between these two variables. Over four out of five undergraduate and over three out of four graduate and professional students reported being involved in at least one campus activity at Ohio State. Nearly three out of every five undergraduate students reported being involved with a student organization, and over one quarter had an on-campus job. Over two out of every five graduate students were involved with research with a faculty member, and over three out of every five professional students were involved with a student organization.

Undergraduate activity involvement was generally not associated with higher levels of satisfaction, but satisfaction levels were generally high for both involved and not involved undergraduate students. For graduate and professional students, involvement was related to those student's satisfaction. For these students, involvement was positively related to

[†] $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

students feeling like their experience at Ohio State helped them to set professional goals, develop as a leader, and made their wellness more important to them.

Overall, this report reinforces the importance of examining involvement across all educational levels. Ohio State should continue to emphasize co-curricular student involvement for student development, academic growth and retention.

REFERENCES

- Gallup. (2014). *Great jobs, great lives: The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index report*. Washington, D.C.
- Tinto, V. (2006-2007). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* 8(1), 1-19.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Participant demographics below represent all respondents in the 2025 Student Life Survey.

	Undergraduate Students			Graduate Students			Professional Students		
	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Total	676			484			98		
Academic Level	548			—			—		
First-year undergraduate	158	28.8%	28.5%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Second-year undergraduate	122	22.3%	23.0%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Third-year undergraduate	154	28.1%	27.4%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fourth-year undergraduate	81	14.8%	14.4%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	33	6.0%	6.7%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gender Identity	676			484			98		
Man	239	35.4%	45.5%	176	36.4%	45.3%	26	26.5%	36.2 %
Non-binary	3	0.4%	0.4%	7	1.5%	1.6%	1	1.0%	0.9%
Woman	410	60.7%	50.5%	278	57.4%	48.3%	69	70.4%	61.3%
Another identity not listed	5	0.7%	0.8%	11	2.3%	2.1%	1	1.0%	0.7%
Multiple identities selected	10	1.5%	1.4%	5	1.0%	1.1%	1	1.0%	0.9%
Prefer not to answer	9	1.3%	1.5%	7	1.5%	1.6%	—	—	—
Transgender Identity	548			416			83		
Transgender	12	2.2%	2.2%	8	1.9%	2.0%	1	1.2%	1.2%
Cisgender	523	95.4%	95.1%	392	94.2%	93.7%	80	96.4%	96.0%
Prefer not to answer	13	2.4%	2.8%	16	3.9%	4.3%	2	2.4%	2.9%

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

	Undergraduate Students			Graduate Students			Professional Students		
	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Race/Ethnicity	676			484			98		
Black and/or African American	48	7.1%	9.2%	28	5.8%	7.1%	2	2.0%	2.5%
Asian/Asian American, Pacific Islander, Desi American, and/or Native Hawai'ian	99	14.6%	14.6%	84	17.4%	16.0%	6	6.1%	4.9%
Latine and/or Hispanic	36	5.3%	3.9%	21	4.3%	3.6%	8	8.2%	6.3%
Middle Eastern and/or North African (MENA)	10	1.5%	1.4%	15	3.1%	2.8%	3	3.1%	2.9%
White and/or European American	404	59.8%	59.6%	248	51.2%	52.8%	69	70.4%	74.0%
Multiracial and/or Biracial	53	7.8%	7.2%	32	6.6%	6.8%	7	7.1%	5.9%
Another identity not listed	3	0.4%	0.5%	5	1.0%	0.9%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Prefer not to answer	23	3.4%	3.7%	51	10.5%	9.9%	3	3.1%	3.6%
Sexual Orientation	544			415			84		
LGBQ+	124	22.8%	21.9%	106	25.5%	25.0%	10	11.9%	11.1%
Heterosexual/straight	398	73.2%	73.7%	279	67.2%	67.3%	67	79.8%	81.3%
Prefer not to answer	22	4.0%	4.4%	30	7.2%	7.7%	7	8.3%	7.5%
Generational Status	676			484			98		
First-generation student	162	24.0%	24.0%	138	28.5%	27.9%	11	11.2%	12.2%
Continuing-generation student	514	76.0%	76.0%	346	71.5%	72.1%	87	88.8%	87.8%
Disability	548			415			84		
Has a disability	86	15.7%	15.7%	63	15.2%	16.4%	10	11.9%	10.5%
Does not have a disability	440	80.3%	80.2%	325	78.3%	77.0%	68	81.0%	82.4%
Prefer not to answer	22	4.0%	4.1%	27	6.5%	6.6%	6	7.1%	7.1%

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

	Undergraduate Students			Graduate Students			Professional Students		
	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted	Weighted	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted	Weighted	<i>n</i>	Un-weighted	Weighted
		Percent	Percent		Percent	Percent		Percent	
Education Route	676			—			—		
Campus change	48	7.1%	7.5%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfer student	99	14.6%	14.5%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Continuing Ohio State student	529	78.3%	77.9%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Residence	549			416			84		
On-campus	227	41.4%	40.9%	24	5.8%	5.4%	2	2.4%	2.6%
Off-campus	308	56.1%	56.5%	391	94.0%	94.4%	82	97.6%	97.4%
Sorority or fraternity housing	14	2.6%	2.6%	1	0.2%	0.3%	—	—	—

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