



# Hazing Awareness

A Research Report from the  
2024 Student Life Survey

Columbus Campus

Center for the Study of Student Life

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April 2024



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report explores student knowledge about and perceptions around hazing of undergraduate, graduate and professional students at The Ohio State University Columbus Campus. Data for this report are from the 2024 Student Life Survey. In January 2024, 9,000 students on the Columbus campus were surveyed, out of which 1,488 responded, resulting in a response rate of 16.5%. A sample of 5,500 undergraduate students were surveyed; 15.5% responded ( $n = 850$ ). A sample of 3,500 graduate and professional students were surveyed; 18.2% responded ( $n = 638$ ). Data were weighted to be representative of the full Ohio State population.

## RECOGNITION OF HAZING BEHAVIORS

- **Undergraduate students** were most likely to indicate that being physically assaulted (**82.9%**), being required to participate in a drinking competition/game (**66.5%**), and being yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other team/organization members (**61.1%**) are hazing.
- **Graduate and professional students** were most likely to indicate that being physically assaulted (**75.3%**), being required to participate in a drinking competition/game (**66.2%**), and being yelled, screamed, or cursed at by other team/organization members (**63.1%**) are hazing.

## STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD HAZING

- **85.2%** of undergraduate students and **84.0%** of graduate students agreed/strongly agreed that hazing is unacceptable at Ohio State.
- **67.1%** of undergraduate students and **74.3%** of graduate students disagreed/strongly disagreed that hazing activities are common at Ohio State.

## INTERRUPTING AND REPORTING HAZING

- **64.8%** of undergraduate students and **70.3%** of graduate students agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to interrupt hazing.
- **97.5%** of undergraduate students and **96.2%** of graduate students agreed or strongly agreed that they would interrupt hazing if someone's life was in danger.
- **74.2%** of undergraduate students and **81.0%** of graduate students agreed or strongly agreed that they would interrupt hazing if someone's life was not in danger.
- The **top reporting options for undergraduate students** were another Ohio State student (**49.2%**), Ohio State staff affiliated with campus organizations for students (**42.7%**), and law enforcement (**35.0%**)
- The **top reporting options for graduate students** were Ohio State staff affiliated with campus organizations for students (**41.9%**), Ohio State faculty (**41.5%**), and law enforcement (**37.0%**).

## INTRODUCTION

This report explores recognition of behaviors, perceptions of the campus culture and reporting resources related to hazing of students at The Ohio State University.

## 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 2024 Student Life Survey was administered to a stratified, random sample of 9,000 Ohio State students at the beginning of spring semester (January 2024). This sample comprised 5,500 undergraduate students and 3,500 graduate and professional students, all on the Columbus campus. A total of 1,488 students responded to the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 16.5%. The response rate was 15.5% among undergraduate students and 18.2% 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 850 undergraduate students, 502 graduate students and 136 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 2024. Weights were adjusted so the survey data are representative of the student population at Ohio State. For example, 62.6% of survey respondents in the Student Life Survey were female, but 52.4% 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). Weighted and unweighted demographic data for survey respondents is available in Appendix A.



## SPECTRUM OF HAZING BEHAVIORS

The *Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup> was used as a framework to create the items used in the hazing module of the Student Life Survey (Allan & Kerschner, 2020). The *Spectrum* situates different hazing behaviors on two spectrums: recognition and frequency. According to Allan and Kerschner (2020) recognition and frequency of hazing behaviors have an inverse relation to one another, meaning that highly recognizable hazing behaviors (e.g., physical assault) tend to occur less often while less recognizable hazing behaviors (e.g., use of demeaning names) tend to occur more frequently. Within these two constructs are three categories (intimidation, harassment, and violence) that were used to group hazing behaviors together by recognition and frequency. A summary of the *Spectrum of Hazing*'s<sup>TM</sup> categories, recognition and frequency levels, and examples of behaviors is included in Table 1.

**Table 1. *The Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup> Summary<sup>1</sup>**

Category	Recognition Level	Frequency	Behavior Examples
Intimidation	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deception</li> <li>• Assignment of demerits</li> <li>• Social isolation</li> <li>• Use of demeaning names</li> <li>• Requiring members to always have certain items in their possession</li> </ul>
Harassment	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threats or implied threats</li> <li>• Degrading or humiliating acts</li> <li>• Sleep deprivation</li> </ul>
Violence	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forced alcohol or drug consumption.</li> <li>• Physical assault</li> <li>• Abduction/kidnapping</li> <li>• Sexual assault</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> This table was created using Allan and Kerschner's (2020) *The Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup>.



## FINDINGS

### RECOGNITION OF HAZING BEHAVIORS

Students were asked to identify if the behavior listed is hazing when required as a part of joining or maintaining membership in a student organization or group. Students could select 'never', 'sometimes' or 'always' as their answer. The Ohio State University (n.d.) Anti-Hazing Policy defines hazing as doing, requiring or encouraging any act, whether or not the act is voluntarily agreed upon, in conjunction with initiation or continued membership or participation in any group, that causes or creates a substantial risk of causing mental or physical harm or humiliation. Such acts may include, but are not limited to, use of alcohol, creation of excessive fatigue, and paddling, punching or kicking in any form.

Items were predefined as different types of hazing using *The Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup> created by Allan and Kerschner (2020). Items were categorized by their level of visibility (subtle/intimidation, harassment, violence and not hazing). Items were shown to students in a randomized order. Table 2 shows the list of behaviors categorized using *The Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup>.

**Table 2. Hazing Behavior Items**

When joining or maintaining membership in a student organization or group, which of the following activities do you consider hazing?	<i>The Spectrum of Hazing</i> <sup>TM</sup> Category <sup>2</sup>
Be called an embarrassing name	Intimidation
Be required to only associate with people in the organization	Intimidation
Be required to participate in excessive exercise/physical activity	Harassment
Be yelled, screamed or cursed at by other team/organization members	Harassment
Be required to wear matching outfits/clothing	Harassment
Be required to complete chores for active members	Harassment
Be required to participate in a drinking competition/game	Violence
Be transported to and dropped off in an unfamiliar location	Violence
Being physically assaulted (e.g., beaten, paddled or branded, etc.)	Violence
Be required to attend a new member meeting	Usually not hazing
Be required to attend an organization event	Usually not hazing
Be invited to a social event	Usually not hazing

<sup>2</sup> Items were assigned to overarching visibility levels using Allan and Kerschner's (2020) *The Spectrum of Hazing*<sup>TM</sup>.



Tables 3 and 4 show how students categorized the behaviors listed in the survey by educational level.

**Table 3. Undergraduate Student Categorization of Behaviors**

When joining or maintaining membership in a student organization or group, which of the following activities do you consider hazing?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Be called an embarrassing name	16.9%	44.0%	39.2%
Be required to only associate with people in the organization	15.2%	25.8%	59.0%
Be required to participate in excessive exercise/physical activity	14.6%	34.7%	50.7%
Be yelled, screamed or cursed at by other team/organization members	14.8%	24.1%	61.1%
Be required to wear matching outfits/clothing	41.9%	47.6%	10.4%
Be required to complete chores for active members	17.7%	34.8%	47.5%
Be required to participate in a drinking competition/game	12.7%	20.8%	66.5%
Be transported to and dropped off in an unfamiliar location	15.2%	26.2%	58.6%
Being physically assaulted (e.g., beaten, paddled or branded, etc.)	12.3%	4.8%	82.9%
Be required to attend a new member meeting	72.2%	24.9%	2.9%
Be required to attend an organization event	58.1%	38.7%	3.2%
Be invited to a social event	76.8%	20.1%	3.1%

Note. The sample included responses from  $n = 750-752$  undergraduate students.

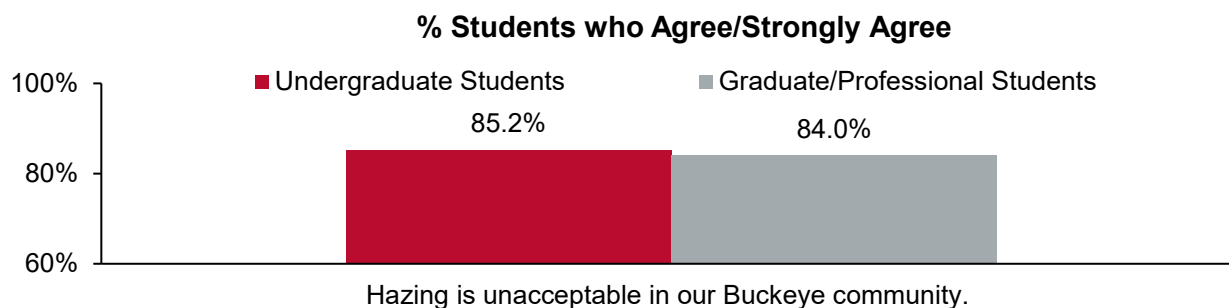
**Table 4. Graduate and Professional Student Categorization of Behaviors**

When joining or maintaining membership in a student organization or group, which of the following activities do you consider hazing?	Never	Sometimes	Always
Be called an embarrassing name	22.7%	25.5%	51.7%
Be required to only associate with people in the organization	22.0%	16.8%	61.2%
Be required to participate in excessive exercise/physical activity	22.3%	23.9%	53.8%
Be yelled, screamed or cursed at by other team/organization members	21.0%	15.9%	63.1%
Be required to wear matching outfits/clothing	35.8%	51.9%	12.3%
Be required to complete chores for active members	23.8%	26.1%	50.1%
Be required to participate in a drinking competition/game	20.0%	13.8%	66.2%
Be transported to and dropped off in an unfamiliar location	21.5%	21.9%	56.6%
Being physically assaulted (e.g., beaten, paddled or branded, etc.)	20.3%	4.4%	75.3%
Be required to attend a new member meeting	65.8%	30.7%	3.6%
Be required to attend an organization event	49.9%	44.3%	5.8%
Be invited to a social event	71.7%	23.9%	4.4%

Note. The sample included responses from  $n = 581-585$  graduate and professional students.

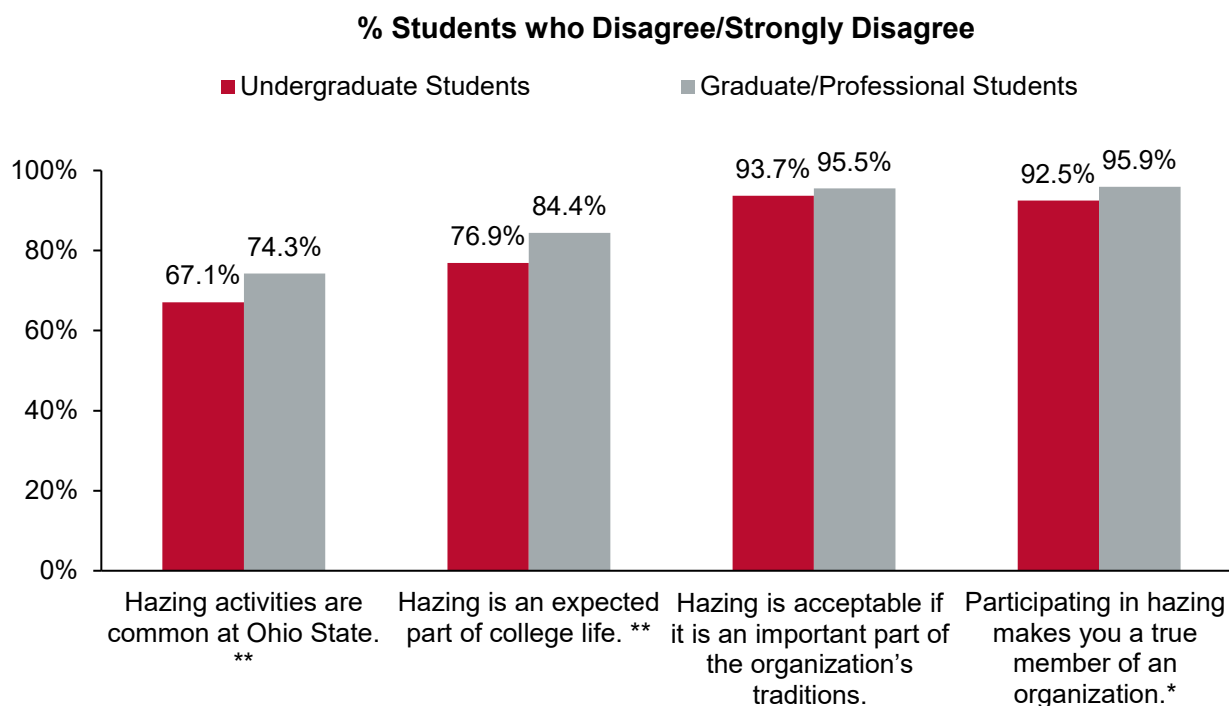
## STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD HAZING

Students were asked to rate their agreement with items about the presence and acceptability of hazing at Ohio State. A four-point Likert scale was used (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). As shown in the chart below, the majority of undergraduate (85.2%) and graduate and professional students (84.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that hazing was unacceptable in our Buckeye Community.



*Note.* The sample included responses from  $n = 738$  undergraduate students and  $n = 579$  graduate and professional students.

Students were also asked to rate their agreement with other statements on the acceptability and commonality of hazing at Ohio State. The majority of students disagreed with the statements as shown in the chart below.



*Note.* The sample included responses from  $n = 739-743$  undergraduate students and  $n = 564-580$  graduate and professional students. Statistically significant differences were determined using chi-square analyses.

## INTERRUPTING AND REPORTING HAZING

Students were asked to indicate their knowledge and likelihood of interrupting and reporting hazing. A four-point Likert scale was used (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). Table 5 and 6 compare student agreement on items related to interrupting and reporting hazing.

**Table 5. Interrupting Hazing**

% Agree/Strongly Agree	Undergraduate students	Graduate and Professional students	Significance
I know how to interrupt hazing.	64.8%	70.3%	*
I would disrupt a hazing activity if someone's life was in danger	97.5%	96.2%	
I would disrupt a hazing activity if someone's life was not in danger.	74.2%	81.0%	**

*Note.* The sample included responses from  $n = 742$  undergraduate students and  $n = 580$  graduate and professional students.

**Table 6. Reporting Hazing**

% Agree/Strongly Agree	Undergraduate students	Graduate and Professional students	Significance
I know where to report hazing.	49.9%	53.1%	
I would report someone I know for involvement in hazing.	78.8%	83.6%	*
I would report hazing even if I was afraid of the social consequences.	79.9%	83.7%	

*Note.* The sample included responses from  $n = 737-740$  undergraduate students and  $n = 579-580$  graduate and professional students. Statistically significant differences were determined using chi-square analyses.





**Table 7. Who do you feel most comfortable reporting hazing to? (Select up to 3 options)**

	Undergraduate students (n = 740)	Graduate and Professional students (n = 580)	Statistically Significant
Another Ohio State student	49.2%	29.6%	***
Ohio State staff affiliated with campus organizations for students (in Sorority and Fraternity Life, Student Organizations, Housing and Residence Education, Recreational Sports, etc.)	42.7%	41.9%	
Student Conduct staff	23.9%	32.8%	***
Other University staff (e.g., academic advisor, career counselor, program mentor)	33.2%	38.6%	*
Ohio State faculty	30.3%	41.5%	***
Someone outside of the university (a parent/guardian, volunteer advisor/coach not affiliated with the university, etc.)	31.1%	15.6%	***
Law enforcement (e.g., Campus Security, Ohio State Police Department, Local Police Department)	35.0%	37.0%	
None of these	2.5%	3.4%	
Other (write-in option)	0.9%	1.6%	

*Note.* Statistically significant differences were determined using chi-square analyses. To enhance readability, some open-ended responses were edited for length, spelling, or grammar.

#### Other Responses:

- “First I'd talk to the person being hazed and encourage them to report”
- “n/a grad student”
- “We all know if the university wanted to crack down they would. Hazing is incredibly prevalent and it's the frat advisors that allow it.”
- “Grad ombuds”
- “Office of Institutional Equity”
- “I'd not know where”
- “Somewhere anonymous or online.”
- “Anyone where I can escalate directly to authorities.
- “n/a”
- “Coaches”
- “Anonymous Hazing Reporting Hotline or email”
- “I would not consider it “reporting” if spoken with another student about it.”
- “Title IX”
- “Distance student”
- “Anonymously”



**Table 8. What Anti-Hazing training(s) have you taken during your time at Ohio State? Please select all that apply.**

	Undergraduate students (n = 733)	Graduate and Professional students (n = 581)	Statistically Significant
The BuckeyeLearn Collin's Law: Anti-Hazing Training	78.7%	64.9%	***
An anti-hazing training with an organization (e.g., with a student organization, Sorority, Fraternity, or Sports Club)	21.6%	12.0%	***
Hazing training outside of Ohio State	12.6%	11.3%	
None of these	16.5%	28.5%	***
Other (please specify)	0.5%	0.3%	

*Note.* Statistically significant differences were determined using chi-square analyses. To enhance readability, some open-ended responses were edited for length, spelling, or grammar.

Other Responses:

- "Not sure"
- "Military"
- "Don't remember"
- "Not on campus"
- "I don't remember."

## CONCLUSION

This report shared findings from the 2024 Student Life Survey module on student awareness of and attitudes towards hazing on the Columbus campus of the Ohio State University. Findings from this report indicate that both undergraduate and graduate students can identify a range of hazing behaviors, but some hazing behaviors such as required matching outfits, name calling, forced excessive exercise, and forced completion of chores for other members were more difficult for students to identify. Many students (85.2% of undergraduate students and 84.0% of graduate students) expressed agreement with the sentiment that hazing is not welcome at Ohio State. However, only half of undergraduate (49.9%) and graduate and professional students (53.1%) indicated that they knew where to report incidents of hazing. Additionally, more undergraduate students (49.2%) indicated that they were likely to feel comfortable reporting hazing to another Ohio State student than any other reporting option. These results indicate a need for targeted education around hazing recognition and reporting at Ohio State.

## REFERENCES

Allan, E. J. & Kerschner, D. (2020). *The Spectrum of Hazing™*, StopHazing Consulting.

<https://stophazing.org/resources/spectrum>

The Ohio State University. (n.d.). *Hazing Prevention*. Hazing Prevention.

<https://stophazing.osu.edu/>



## APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Note: Participant demographics below represent all respondents in the 2024 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>850</b>			<b>502</b>			<b>136</b>		
<b>Academic Level</b>	<b>848</b>			—			—		
First-year undergraduate	232	27.4%	28.2%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Second-year undergraduate	203	23.9%	24.0%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Third-year undergraduate	204	24.1%	23.5%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fourth-year undergraduate	172	20.3%	19.6%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	37	4.4%	4.6%	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Gender Identity</b>	<b>850</b>			<b>502</b>			<b>136</b>		
Man	306	36.0%	45.8%	179	35.7%	44.3%	36	26.5%	35.5%
Non-binary	11	1.3%	1.2%	11	2.2%	2.2%	1	0.7%	0.7%
Woman	499	58.7%	49.2%	300	59.8%	51.0%	96	70.6%	61.6%
Another identity not listed	5	0.6%	0.5%	2	0.4%	0.3%	1	0.7%	0.6%
Multiple identities selected	19	2.2%	2.0%	3	0.6%	0.6%	1	0.7%	1.0%
Prefer not to answer	10	1.2%	1.3%	7	1.4%	1.6%	1	0.7%	0.6%
<b>Transgender Identity</b>	<b>846</b>			<b>500</b>			<b>135</b>		
Transgender	15	1.8%	1.7%	9	1.8%	1.8%	2	1.5%	1.4%
Cisgender	814	96.2%	96.4%	483	96.6%	96.6%	132	97.8%	98.0%
Prefer not to answer	17	2.0%	1.8%	8	1.6%	1.6%	1	0.7%	0.6%

	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
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>850</b>			<b>502</b>			<b>136</b>		
Black and/or African American	49	5.8%	6.7%	50	10.0%	11.3%	9	6.6%	8.3%
Asian/Asian American, Pacific Islander, Desi American, and/or Native Hawai'ian	122	14.4%	12.7%	108	21.5%	17.8%	23	16.9%	15.8%
Latine and/or Hispanic	20	2.4%	2.3%	28	5.6%	5.0%	4	2.9%	2.8%
Middle Eastern and/or North African (MENA)	18	2.1%	2.0%	23	4.6%	4.2%	6	4.4%	4.5%
White and/or European American	525	61.8%	61.8%	222	44.2%	47.0%	80	58.8%	58.4%
Multiracial and/or Biracial	77	9.1%	9.9%	38	7.6%	8.7%	9	6.6%	6.8%
Another identity not listed	2	0.2%	0.3%	2	0.4%	0.5%	1	0.7%	0.5%
Prefer not to answer	37	4.4%	4.3%	31	6.2%	5.5%	4	2.9%	3.0%
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>844</b>			<b>501</b>			<b>135</b>		
LGBQ+	195	23.1%	22.5%	113	22.6%	22.6%	27	20.0%	19.6%
Heterosexual/straight	616	73.0%	73.7%	361	72.1%	72.2%	105	77.8%	77.8%
Prefer not to answer	33	3.9%	3.8%	27	5.4%	5.2%	3	2.2%	2.6%
<b>Generational Status</b>	<b>850</b>			<b>502</b>			<b>136</b>		
First-generation student	189	22.2%	22.0%	122	24.3%	24.0%	17	12.5%	12.4%
Continuing-generation student	645	75.9%	76.3%	248	49.4%	48.9%	56	41.2%	40.3%
Unknown	16	1.9%	1.7%	132	26.3%	27.2%	63	46.3%	47.3%
<b>Disability</b>	<b>847</b>			<b>501</b>			<b>134</b>		
Has a disability	82	9.7%	9.8%	54	10.8%	12.0%	10	7.5%	6.8%
Does not have a disability	728	86.0%	86.0%	430	85.8%	84.6%	121	90.3%	91.3%
Prefer not to answer	37	4.4%	4.2%	17	3.4%	3.5%	3	2.2%	1.9%

	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
<b>Education Route</b>	<b>848</b>			—			—		
Campus change	55	6.5%	6.8%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfer student	142	16.8%	16.6%	—	—	—	—	—	—
Continuing Ohio State student	651	76.8%	76.7%	—	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Residence</b>	<b>846</b>			<b>501</b>			<b>136</b>		
On-campus	361	42.7%	42.6%	15	3.0%	2.3%	4	2.9%	2.7%
Off-campus	480	56.7%	56.7%	483	96.4%	97.0%	131	96.3%	96.7%
Sorority or fraternity housing	5	0.6%	0.7%	3	0.6%	0.8%	1	0.7%	0.6%