



Participation in Campus Traditions

A Research Report from the
2020 Student Life Survey

Center for the Study of Student Life



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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

INTRODUCTION

This report examines students' self-reported participation in campus traditions at The Ohio State University. Specifically, this report focuses on varying participation levels across different demographics, including sex¹, race/ethnicity, citizenship, degree level, year in school, living situation (on- and off-campus housing), educational route (campus change and transfer students), campus, first-generation college student status and level of involvement. Results are based on students' agreement to the statement "I participate in campus traditions." Students self-defined what campus traditions meant to them.

HIGHLIGHTS

- **64%** of Ohio State students reported that they participate in campus traditions.
- Undergraduate students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**69%**) than graduate and professional students (**51%**).
- Female students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**66%**) than male students (**63%**).
- Participation in Ohio State traditions differed significantly between racial and ethnic identities.
 - White students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**69%**) than students from other racial and ethnic groups. Asian students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**63%**) than African American students (**51%**) and those with more than one race/ethnicity (**46%**).
- Domestic students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**64%**) than international students (**59%**).
- Students who were involved in one or more activity outside of the classroom were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**72%**) than those who were not involved in any activities outside of the classroom (**45%**).
- First-year and second-year students who lived on campus were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**80%**) than first-year and second-year students who lived off campus (**49%**).
- Students who began their education at Ohio State were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**76%**) than campus change (**46%**) and transfer students (**53%**). Transfer students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**53%**) than campus change students (**46%**).
- Continuing-generation students were significantly more likely to participate in campus traditions (**65%**) than first-generation students (**60%**).

¹ Throughout this report, the term "sex" and "female" and "male" are used rather than gender identity because data are from the Student Information System, which defines uses the terminology "sex", defined as male, female and unknown.

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 as well as to improve institutional practices. The 2020 Student Life Survey was administered to a stratified, random sample of 8,200 Ohio State students at the beginning of the 2020 spring semester. The sample was comprised of 4,000 undergraduate students on the Columbus campus, 1,000 graduate and professional students, and 3,200 undergraduate students attending Ohio State regional campuses. A total of 1,329 students responded to the survey for an overall response rate of 16.2%. The response rate was 16.1% among all undergraduate students and 16.7% among graduate and professional students. The response rate for students attending regional campuses was 18.0%. See Appendix A for a summary of respondents' demographic and academic characteristics.

Weighting Procedure

Responses were weighted to adjust for the oversampling of students on the regional campuses and to address differences between the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents compared to those invited to the survey and the general student population at Ohio State. A base weight of 1 was adjusted to reflect non-response. A raking procedure adjusted the base weight to the demographic data available on the sampling frame using sex, race/ethnicity, campus and incentive condition (conditions based on an experimental portion of this study, for more information, please email cssl@osu.edu). Weights were adjusted so the survey data are representative of the student population at Ohio State based on demographic data from the Student Information System. For example, 63.4% of the survey respondents in the Student Life Survey were female, but 51.0% of the student population at Ohio State is female. The survey weight 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. Weighted and unweighted demographic data for the survey respondents is available in Appendix A.

FINDINGS

The following tables display the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed that they participate in Ohio State traditions by demographic group. Response options “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree” were combined as well as “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” to create a dichotomous variable. Data are not reported for groups that had fewer than 20 respondents. Chi-square and logistic regression analyses were used to analyze statistically significant differences between demographic groups, with survey weights applied. Asterisks are used to indicate statistically significant differences between groups. Further investigation into group differences is detailed on the following pages.

I participate in Ohio State traditions.	% Agree/Strongly Agree
All students	63.9%
Academic Level	***
Undergraduate student	68.6%
Graduate/Professional student	50.9%
Year in School	***
First-year undergraduate	71.3%
Second-year undergraduate	68.7%
Third-year undergraduate	71.0%
Fourth-year undergraduate	67.5%
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	46.0%
Graduate student	49.6%
Professional student	58.4%
Sex	***
Female	65.8%
Male	62.7%
Unknown	39.5%
Race/Ethnicity¹	***
African American/Black	51.2%
Asian	62.7%
Hispanic/Latinx	--
White	69.0%
Two or more races	45.9%
Other/unknown	63.1%
Citizenship	**
International student	59.4%
Domestic student	64.4%

¹Racial/ethnic groups with fewer than five respondents were included in the “Other/unknown” category.

I participate in Ohio State traditions.	% Agree/Strongly Agree
Involvement Level²	***
Involved	72.0%
Uninvolved	44.8%
Residence³	***
On-campus	79.9%
Off-campus	49.3%
Educational Route	***
Continuing Ohio State student	76.4%
Campus change	46.0%
Transfer student	53.1%
Campus	*
Columbus	63.5%
Lima	75.1%
Mansfield	64.0%
Marion	73.2%
Newark	63.5%
Wooster	74.2%
First-Generation Status	***
First-Generation Student	59.9%
Continuing-Generation Student	65.1%

²Students included in the “Involved” category indicated that they are involved in one or more of the following activities outside of the classroom: student organization, Student Life-sponsored program, social fraternity or sorority, intramural sports, community service and/or service learning, undergraduate research or research with a faculty member, on-campus job, residential learning community, capstone project or experience or sports clubs. Students who did not select any of the activities or selected “none of the above” were included in the “Uninvolved” category.

³Only first-year and second-year undergraduate students are included in this group.

SUMMARY

Academic Level and Year

Undergraduate students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than graduate and professional students. First-, second-, third- and fourth-year students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than fifth-year and beyond undergraduates as well as graduate and professional students. First-year students were also significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than fourth-year students. Professional students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than graduate students and fifth-year and beyond undergraduate students. All p values < .05.

Sex

Female students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than male students and those whose sex is unknown. Male students were also significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than those whose sex is unknown. All p values < .01.

Race/Ethnicity

White students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than all other racial/ethnic groups. Asian students and those with a race not listed or unknown race were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than African American students and those with more than one race/ethnicity. Hispanic/Latinx students were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient sample size. All p values < .01.

Citizenship

Domestic students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than international students. p < .01.

Involvement Level

Students who were involved in one or more activity outside of the classroom (e.g., student organization, sorority or fraternity, intramural sports, etc.) were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than those who were uninvolved. p < .001.

Residence

First-year and second-year students who lived on campus were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions compared with first-year and second-year students who lived off campus. p < .001.

Educational Route

Students who started their educational career on Ohio State's Columbus campus were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than campus change and transfer students. Transfer students were also significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than campus change students. Note that this analysis did not include students on Ohio State's regional campuses. All p values < .05.

Campus

Students on the Lima and Marion campuses were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than students on the Columbus and Newark campuses. All p values $< .05$.

First-Generation Student Status

Continuing-generation college students were significantly *more* likely to participate in campus traditions than first-generation college students. $p < .001$.

CONCLUSION

Self-reported participation in Ohio State traditions varied significantly across different demographic groups, educational routes and levels of involvement. Students that participate in campus traditions the most are female, white, continuing-generation, undergraduate students, students who live on campus and students who are involved in at least one activity outside of the classroom. It is important to note that as there are many different participation opportunities at Ohio State, students' definitions of a campus tradition may differ. Students may self-define a range of activities as campus traditions, from football games to the African American Heritage Festival to BuckeyeThon Dance Marathon, and so on. Thus, future studies should explore what students consider to be Ohio State traditions.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS¹

	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Total	1,329		
Academic Level			
First-year undergraduate	505	38.2%	24.2%
Second-year undergraduate	259	19.6%	17.8%
Third-year undergraduate	181	13.7%	14.7%
Fourth-year undergraduate	162	12.3%	13.7%
Fifth-year or beyond undergraduate	41	3.1%	4.6%
Graduate student	152	11.5%	21.8%
Professional student	22	1.7%	3.3%
Sex			
Female	843	63.4%	51.0%
Male	459	34.5%	47.4%
Unknown	27	2.0%	1.6%
Race/Ethnicity²			
African American/Black	91	6.8%	6.7%
Asian	125	9.4%	6.9%
Hispanic/Latinx	11	0.8%	4.9%
White	964	72.5%	64.7%
Two or more races	94	7.1%	3.9%
Other/unknown	44	3.3%	13.0%
Citizenship			
International student	70	5.3%	9.6%
Domestic student	1,259	94.7%	90.4%
Involvement Level³			
Involved	814	61.2%	71.4%
Uninvolved	515	38.8%	28.6%
Educational Route			
Continuing Ohio State student	432	74.5%	71.0%
Campus change	46	7.9%	9.3%
Transfer student	102	17.6%	19.7%

¹Data are from the Student Information System and language/terms used reflect those used in the Student Information System.

²Racial/ethnic groups with fewer than five respondents were included in the "Other/unknown" category.

³Students included in the "Involved" category indicated that they are involved in one or more of the following activities outside of the classroom: student organization, Student Life-sponsored program (e.g., Wellness Ambassadors), social fraternity or sorority, intramural sports, community service and/or service learning, undergraduate research or research with a faculty member, on-campus job, residential learning community, capstone project or experience or sports clubs. Students who did not select any of the activities or selected "none of the above" were included in the "Uninvolved" category.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS CONTINUED¹

	<i>n</i>	Unweighted Percent	Weighted Percent
Residence⁴			
On-campus	266	38.7%	65.6%
Off-campus	421	61.3%	34.4%
Campus			
Columbus	752	56.6%	90.7%
Lima	94	7.1%	1.3%
Mansfield	81	6.1%	1.5%
Marion	97	7.3%	1.7%
Newark	243	18.3%	4.0%
Wooster	62	4.7%	0.8%
First-Generation Status			
First-generation student	364	27.4%	22.0%
Continuing-generation student	965	72.6%	78.0%

¹Data are from the Student Information System and language/terms used reflect those used in the Student Information System.

⁴Only first-year and second-year undergraduate students are included in this group.