

The Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) was created in 1996, linked to the University of Maryland's Continuous Quality Improvement Initiative. CAWG is charged with developing a campus "culture of evidence" in which data and assessment play a key role in campus decision making. CAWG is led by Associate Provost Ann Wylie and draws together individuals across all divisions of the university. See <http://www.umd.edu/CAWG/> for more information on CAWG. For additional copies of this report, send an email message to cawg@umail.umd.edu. The previous UnCommon Knowledge publications ("University of Maryland Undergraduates & Information Technology" and "Surveying Student Opinions") are available on the website as well.

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of the 1999 Beginning Student Survey (BSS) for first-time, full-time freshmen. The survey was administered in late October and early November, 1999. The BSS was developed by the Studies of Entry Subgroup of the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG), with input from various campus clients and has been administered annually since 1996.

Survey items cover a wide variety of student behaviors and attitudes through the eighth week of the first semester. This report highlights items of most interest to the general community, and groups them in themes generated by a factor analysis of the survey by first-year Masters' students in the College Student Personnel Program, EDCP615 assessment class. Complete survey results can be viewed by visiting the subgroup's link on the CAWG website at <http://www.umd.edu/CAWG>.

Survey administration was achieved through the assistance of various instructors who provided class time, and program administrators who helped distribute surveys via other methods. Surveys were administered in the following courses: ENGL101, EDCP108O/UNIV101, BSOS188A/188C, EDCP108N, HONR100/HONR100G, and ANSC101. Surveys were also distributed through the Academic Achievement Programs/IED.

The survey provided a space for students to write their Student Identification Number. When voluntarily provided it was used to link with student information records to include demo-

graphic information in the analysis. Results from students who did not provide their student ID number are not included in these analyses.

This broad scale survey administration yielded a return of 2628 surveys, representing a 72% response rate. Of those returned, 2253 (86%) included a voluntarily provided Student Identification Number and were thus matched with institutional data. Of those matched with institutional data, 2078 were first-time, full-time freshmen, representing 57% of the original sample.

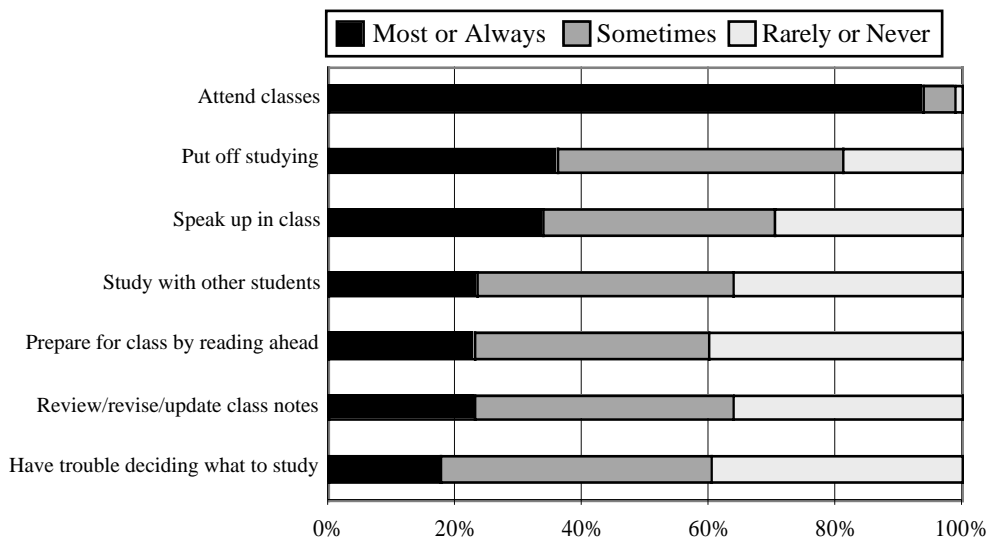
Respondents were similar to the overall group of freshmen, with the exception of gender. Whereas 54% of the overall population were male, respondents were evenly split between male and female. Eighty-eight percent of respondents lived in campus housing, 53% were attempting 12-14 credit hours, and 47% were attempting 15 or more credit hours. The racial distribution for respondents was: 63% Caucasian American/White, 15% African American/Black, 12% Asian American, 5% Hispanic, and 5% Unspecified or Other.

Confidence intervals (95%) for percentages presented in this report are conservatively estimated to be ± 2 . For example, when generalizing to the entire population of full-time freshmen, if the percentage in the sample is 65%, the estimate for all first-time, full-time freshmen would be 63% - 67%.

ACADEMIC BEHAVIORS

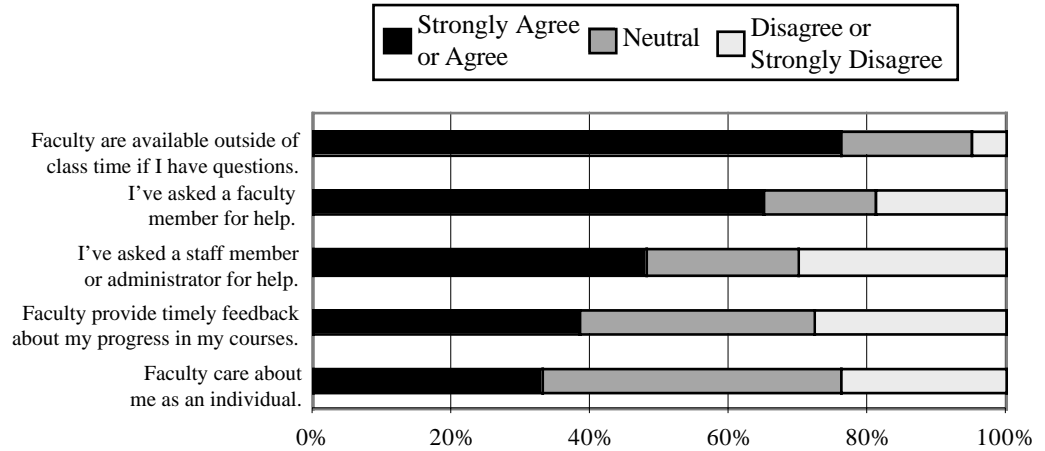
A series of items asked students about their study and in-class behavior. Virtually all students reported they attend class regularly, and 2 out of 3 indicated they speak up in class. The majority (80%) indicated they sometimes put off studying, with fewer indicating they had trouble deciding what to study. About 3 out of 5 said they studied with other students, read ahead for class, and reviewed, revised, and updated class notes.

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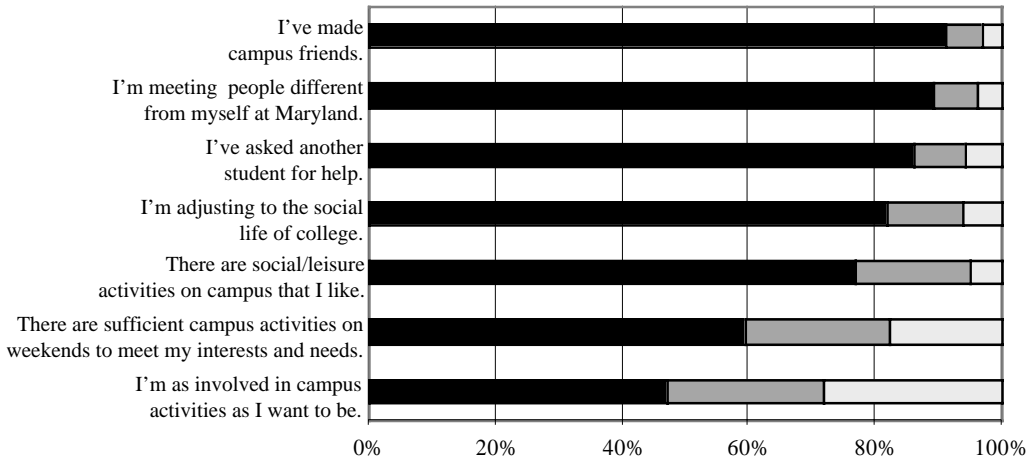
FACULTY AND STAFF SUPPORT

Students indicated that faculty are generally available outside of class, and 2 out of 3 have asked faculty for help. Much lower percentages said that faculty provide timely feedback or care about them as individuals. The number of neutral responses to both these items may reflect that this was difficult for students to evaluate so early in their first semester.



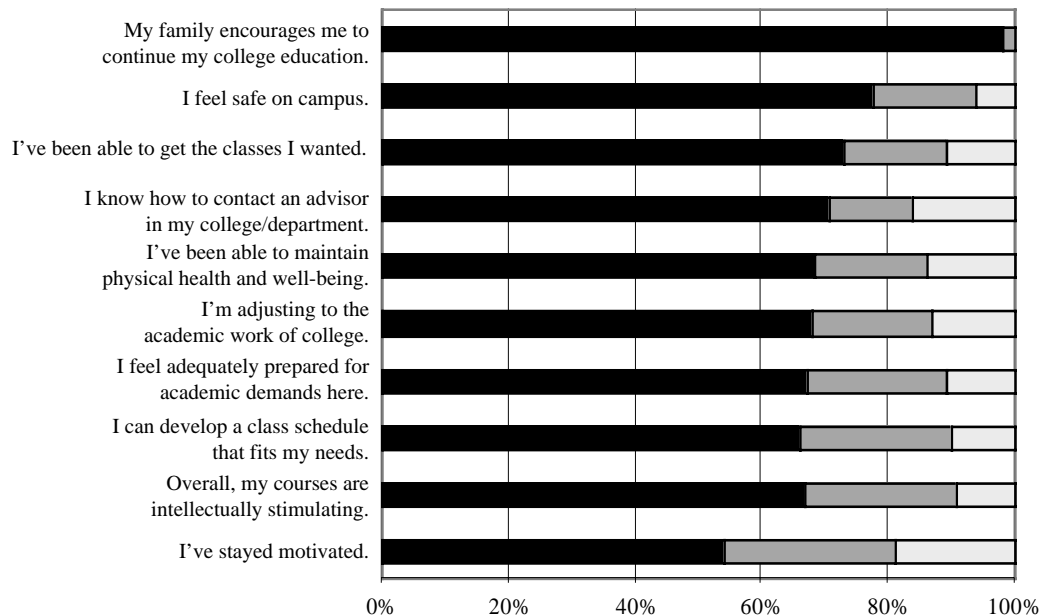
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

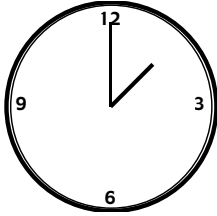
Most students agreed that they have made friends on campus, were meeting people different from themselves, had asked another student for help, and were adjusting to the social life of college. Lower agreement was found for the adequacy of campus activities, particularly on weekends. Many students would like to be more involved in campus activities.



SELF-EFFICACY

Virtually all students felt encouraged by their families to continue their education. A somewhat lower number felt safe on campus. Moderate numbers indicated they were managing the academic and physical demands of campus life. The lowest percentage (just over 50%) reported they were maintaining their motivation.





STUDENT TIME COMMITMENTS

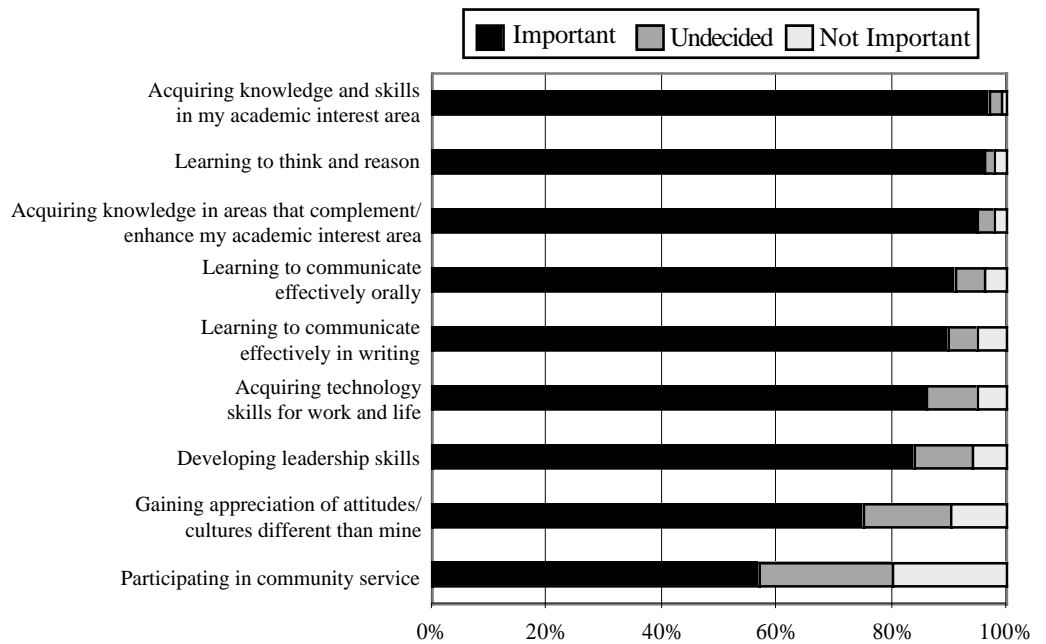
Work - Very few students reported they worked either on or off-campus (on-campus = 10%; off-campus = 15%). Sixty-two percent reported they expect to work more hours after adjusting to college-level work.

Study - Most students reported they studied from 1 to 10 hours per week (44%), with the next highest percentage (38%) reporting they studied from 11 to 20 hours per week. Eighteen percent reported they studied more than 20 hours per week.

Student Activities - The largest percentage (58%) reported they participated from 1 to 10 hours per week. Thirty-one percent reported they did not spend any time participating in student activities.

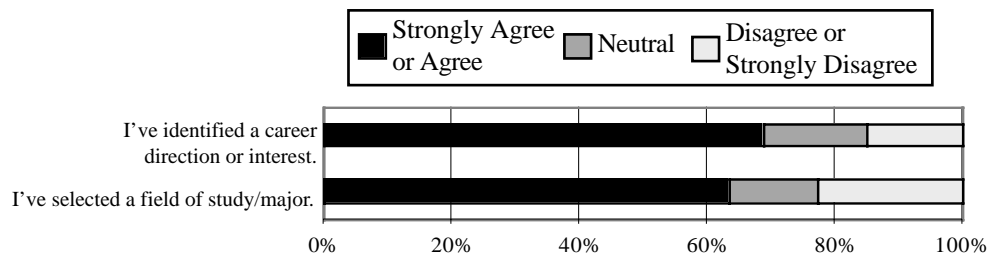
GOAL COMMITMENT

Students attached high importance to most of the goals included on the survey, including acquiring knowledge, learning to speak and write effectively, and learning about technology. Slightly lower importance was given to learning about multi-cultural issues, and less than 60% placed importance on participation in community service.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Seventy percent indicated they had identified a career direction or interest, and 63% had selected a major field of study. In additional questions (not included on this chart), slightly less than one-third of the students said that career exploration (31%) and networking (30%) were major reasons they planned to work while in college.



TRENDS OVER TIME

Although the layout and content of the Beginning Student Survey has changed over the years, many items have remained virtually the same since 1997. A comparison of student responses to items beginning with 1997 generally shows either stability or inconsistent patterns of change. A review of the few items that show consistent change follows. It is premature to assess these changes as long-term trends, but worth monitoring in the years ahead.

Social Development: The percentage responding that they were as involved in campus activities as they would like has steadily increased ('97=41%, '98=46%, '99=47%). Note that these percentages are still among the lowest of the social development items.

Faculty and Staff Support: An increasing percentage of students reported that faculty are available outside of class ('97=71%, '98=73%, '99=76%).

Goal Commitment: This section was added beginning in 1998. Two items showed a decline from 1998 to 1999: "participation in community service" ('98=61%, '99=57%), and "gaining an appreciation of attitudes/cultures different than mine" ('98=79%, '99=76%).

Self-Efficacy: Two items show changes since 1997. Lower percentages of students reported they were adjusting to the academic work of college ('97=71%, '98=70%, '99=68%), and that they had been able to maintain physical well-being ('97=72%, '98=71%, '99=69%).

Academic Behaviors: The percentage indicating they review, revise, or update class notes most or all of the time has steadily decreased ('97=28%; '98=25%; '99=23%).

Time Commitments: The percentage of students reporting they did *not* work either on or off-campus has steadily increased over the last four years: off-campus = '96=82%, '97=83%, '98=84%, '99=85%; on-campus = '96=88%, '97=89%, '98=91%, '99=90%. No consistent changes were found in the number of hours students participate in organized student activities. Although the change in percentages of students reporting various numbers of hours studied outside of class has not shown consistent changes over the four year period, it is worth noting that the percentage studying from 1 to 10 hours per week increased from 38% in 1996 to 44% in 1999, and the percentage reporting they studied more than 21 hours per week declined from 22% in 1996 to 18% in 1999.



CAWG

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