Our Students Today

Evidence-based insights and observations
Our Students Today

Characteristics and Demographics
Adulthood, Families, and Finances
Challenges
Engagement
Student Characteristics and Attitudes

- College choice
- Civic engagement
- Support for “green” initiatives
- Volunteer or community service
- Competencies for a diverse world
- Trends in diverse characteristics of students
College choice
- good academic reputation
- CSU graduates get good jobs
- a visit to the campus
- cost of attending this college
- good reputation for social activities
- I was offered financial assistance
- CSU graduates gain admission to top graduate schools
- I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college
- I wanted to live near home
- information from a website
- rankings in national magazines
College choice

- good academic reputation 67%
- CSU graduates get good jobs 54%
- a visit to the campus 47%
- cost of attending this college 46%
- good reputation for social activities 46%
- I was offered financial assistance 41%
- CSU graduates gain admission to top graduate schools 33%
- I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college 31%
- I wanted to live near home 23%
- information from a website 19%
- rankings in national magazines 19%

Percentages of freshmen at CSU indicating which reasons were “very important” in deciding to attend CSU.
(2009 Freshman Survey, HERI)
## College choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Fa’04</th>
<th>Fa’05</th>
<th>Fa’06</th>
<th>Fa’07</th>
<th>Fa’08</th>
<th>Fa’09</th>
<th>5 yr change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This college has a very good academic reputation</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>+22.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college’s graduates get good jobs</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>+20.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A visit to the campus</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>+10.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of attending this college</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>+21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college has a good reputation for its social activities</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>+18.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offered financial assistance</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>+19.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college’s graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>+13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>+5.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to live near home</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>+7.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information from a website</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>+8.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rankings in national magazines</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>+6.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages of freshmen at CSU indicating which reasons were “very important” in deciding to attend CSU.*

(2009 Freshman Survey, HERI)
Civic engagement and support for “green” initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>CSU</th>
<th>Peers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>becoming a community leader</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improving understanding of other countries</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>becoming successful in a business of my own</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>involved in cleaning up the environment</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adopting “green” practices for the environment</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages of freshmen at CSU indicating which of these were “essential” or “very important” “to you personally”.
(2009 Freshman Survey, HERI, over 219,000 responses from 297 four-year colleges and universities)
Student attitudes

- keeping up to date with political affairs (essential or very important)  
  \[\text{CSU: } 43.1\% \quad \text{Peers: } 38.6\%\]

- right to legal marriage for same-sex couples  
  \[\text{CSU: } 72.8\% \quad \text{Peers: } 70.8\%\]

- marijuana should be legalized (Strongly agree or agree)  
  \[\text{CSU: } 52.5\% \quad \text{Peers: } 51.9\%\]

- volunteer or community service

(2009 Freshman Survey, HERI)
Trends in the Expectation for Doing Volunteer or Community Service Work in College (2009 Freshman Survey)
Competencies for a diverse world

- see the world from another perspective: 73.7% | 64.1%
- tolerance of others beliefs: 79.7 | 72.6
- openness to having views challenged: 64.2 | 56.8
- ability to discuss controversial issues: 66.4 | 62.4
- work cooperatively with diverse people: 79.6 | 77.7

Percentage of freshmen rating themselves “above average” or “highest 10%” compared to the average person their age.
(2009 Freshman Survey, HERI)
Ethnic Enrollment 1985-2009

The graph shows the enrollment trends for APA, Black, Hispanic, and NA ethnic groups from 1985 to 2009. The Hispanic enrollment shows a steady increase over the years, while APA, Black, and NA enrollments show fluctuations but generally increase as well.
Ethnic Enrollment

- In 1985, ethnic enrollment made up nearly 5% of the total student population:
  - White student enrollment = 18,084
  - Asian/Pacific American student enrollment = 250 / 1.4%
  - Black/African American student enrollment = 202 / 1.1%
  - Hispanic student enrollment = 460 / 2.5%
  - Native American student enrollment = 71 / 4%
Ethnic Enrollment

- In 2009, ethnic enrollment made up nearly 13% of the total student population:
  - White student enrollment = 25,413
  - Asian/Pacific American student enrollment = 763/3.0%
  - Black/African American student enrollment = 580/2.3%
  - Hispanic student enrollment = 1,595/6.3%
  - Native American student enrollment = 401/1.6%
Income Background: Pell Grant Recipients

Enrollment of Pell Recipients as a Proportion of All New Freshmen by Entering Fall (FA)

Graduation Gap: ~ 10 percentage points
Parent Education Attainment: First Generation College Students

Enrollment of Students from First Generation Backgrounds, Expressed as a Proportion of the Entering Fall (FA) Cohort

Graduation Gap: ~ 9 percentage points
Students with Disabilities

Students with Documented Disabilities as a Percent of the Total Student Population

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students with Documented Disabilities
All students self identified to the office of Resources for Disabled Students
Fall 2008-917

- with a specific learning disability (non-ADD/ADHD)- 251
- with ADD/ADHD- 245
- suspected of having a learning disability (not documented)- 90
- with a mental health condition- 63
- with other chronic health conditions (diabetes, epilepsy, etc.)- 61
- with other mobility impairments (including limited arm/hand)- 41
- with a nut/peanut allergy- 38
- with a gluten intolerance (celiac)- 29
- with a head injury learning disability- 27
- with other hearing impairments- 21
- using wheelchair- 12
- with other sight impairments- 12
- with an autism spectrum condition (Aspergers)- 10
- with temporary mobility impairments (including limited arm/hand)- 7
- deaf (usually using interpreters)- 5
- suspected with Aspergers- 3
- with blindness- 2
Background Factors

- “Emerging Adulthood”
- Parents and Families
- Financial Pressures and Anxieties
Emerging Adulthood

- A new stage between ages 17 – 25
- “What does it mean to be an adult?”
- Societal influences and impacts

Importance of Parents & Families

• The biggest influence on students seeking a college education

• The biggest influence on retaining students semester to semester

• The biggest influence on graduation

Parents & Families serve as retention agents for the university!

Parental/Familial Involvement

- Student satisfaction with the level of their parent/family involvement on:
  - Decision to go to college, applying for college
  - Choosing college classes and activities
  - Dealing with college officials

Between 72.5 – 87.6% of students reported their familial involvement as “just right”…
Students’ Financial Woes

- Students are more concerned about finances than ever before.
- They are more likely to take out loans and qualify for grants at higher amounts.
- Students are graduating with higher debts.
- More students are reporting 1 or both parents are unemployed.
Challenges and Issues

- Transition
- Alcohol
- Mental Health
- Stress
- Sexualized Environments
Transition: Soccer Kids Come to College

- Most structured K-12 experience ever
- Freshmen report more unstructured time than ever before
- Activities and Involvement are protective factors
- Expectation they will leave behind high school activities
- Expectation they will replace other activities with parties “College Effect”
Alcohol: Good and Bad News

First-year students greatly over-estimate how much and how often their peers consume alcohol:

- 47% of CSU first-year students report they don’t drink at all.
- Over two-thirds of those who choose to drink do so once a week or less, but only 14% of freshmen think this is the norm.
- Less than one-third of first-year students report getting drunk more than twice a month, but 54% of CSU first-year students believe that the majority of CSU freshmen typically get drunk once a week or more.
Alcohol: Good and Bad News

Most studied college behavior data since post WWII

Important Trends

• More students than ever before choose not to drink alcohol
• More students are abusing/addicted
• 20% doing 80% of drinking
• High risk drinking (pre-party front loading)
Mental Health: Number 1 Issue

- Over the past 10-15 years there has been a significant increase in the number of university students diagnosed with a mental illness and that the severity of the symptoms are more significant.
- Able to come to University because of early identification and ongoing treatment
  - Anxiety/Stress
  - Depression
  - Alcohol/Drugs
  - Bi-polar disorders
  - Personality disorders
  - Psychotic disorders
- Increase in co-occurring disorders complicates the clinical picture.
Mental Health: Number 1 Issue

CSU DATA:

14 Completed Suicides:
- Males used firearms
- Females used combination of alcohol/drugs
- Ages were 19-36

64 Mental Health Hospitalizations (fall)
- 58 total prior year

77 Risk/Threat Consultations (fall)
Mental Health: Number 1 Issue

CSU Students Rely Most on Healthy Strategies – Including Doing Homework – to Cope with Anxiety, Sadness and Anger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in recreational entertainment</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work out or exercise</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time with friends</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do homework</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep less than needed</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat more than needed</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep more than needed</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drink alcohol</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sexualized Environments

- Facebook
- "Sexting"
- Closed systems and blurred boundaries
Engagement

- Academic Expectations
- Time on Task
- Extracurricular Involvement
Academic Expectations

• 96% of freshmen (5th week, Taking Stock) expect to earn a B or better in their classes.
  
  *Actual: Average Freshman GPA in Fall 08 was 2.7*

• 65% of students reported (5th week, Taking Stock) struggling in one or more classes. Of these, 76% did not talk with their professors.

  *Average hours spend studying for a test in high school: 82% spend 2 hours or less*

  *Expectation for hours spent studying for a test in college: 68% expect 4 hours or less; 23% expect 2 hours or less.*

-- Taking Stock, Fall 2009, 3,300 respondents
Time on Task: CSU Evidence

NSSE 2008: Distribution of Hours Spent per Week by Freshmen Preparing for Class

- 0 hours: 0%
- 1-5 hours: 20%
- 6-10 hours: 35%
- 11-15 hours: 25%
- 16-20 hours: 10%
- 21-25 hours: 5%
- 26-30 hours: 0%
- 30+ hours: 0%
Time on Task: CSU Evidence

• Freshmen spend, on average, 12-13 hours per week studying. (Less than students at similar Carnegie Class institutions participating in NSSE)

• Seniors spend, on average, about the same amount of time. (No difference from other institutions.)
Time on Task

“A substantial amount of subject matter learning depends not just on what the institution does in instructional settings but also on the quality of the student’s engagement or effort in making use of the range of learning opportunities provided by the institution. Other things being equal, the more the student is psychologically engaged in activities that reinforce and extend the formal academic experience, the more he or she will learn.”

--Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)
Structuring to increase engagement

• Active learning (.25 SD)
• Cooperative Learning (.51 SD)
• Small Group Learning (.51 SD)
• Supplemental Instruction (.39 SD)
• Constructivist-Oriented Approach (.14-.40 SD)
• Undergraduate Research (experiential and inquiry-based learning)
• Learning Communities
• Others…
Extracurricular Involvement

“...There is a substantial body of evidence suggesting that the nature of students’ social and extracurricular involvement has a unique impact on learning. ..

Non-classroom interactions with peers and faculty that extend and reinforce what happens in one’s academic experience appear to have the most consistent positive impact. Similarly, there is reasonably consistent evidence that interaction with racially and culturally diverse peers and involvement in academically integrated service learning experiences enhance subject matter knowledge.”

--Pascarella and Terenzini (2005)
Extracurricular Involvement: CSU Evidence

• Freshmen spend, on average, between 1-5 hours per week participating in co-curricular activities (somewhat less than students at similar Carnegie Class institutions in NSSE).

• Seniors spend, on average, about the same (somewhat less than students at similar Carnegie Class institutions in NSSE).
What do we make of this?
General Observations: Attitudes and Characteristics

• CSU Students are not dissimilar to students at comparable institutions across the country. If anything, they are more civically engaged, politically involved, environmentally conscious, and interested in diversity.

• Academic reputation is a primary factor in their choice of CSU, and CSU is generally their first choice college.

• CSU students are relatively diverse in terms of ethnic/racial background, family income, and first generation status. A growing number of students have physical and/or learning disabilities.
General Observations: Background Factors

• For many traditional age students at CSU and elsewhere, societal factors delay full adulthood (as compared to previous generations).

• Parents and family play an important part in many students’ success.

• Financial pressures weigh heavily on many students and families
General Observations: Challenges

- Many students encounter challenges related to the less structured environment, alcohol, mental health, stress, and highly sexualized contexts.
- At the same time, most students are managing alcohol responsibly, coping constructively with stress, and adjusting in other ways.
- The challenges students face have impacts on learning and the classroom.
General Observations: Engagement

• Students come with academic expectations, but are not well prepared for the demands and formats of the university environment.

• Many competing demands limit students’ time on academic tasks.

• Strategies that increase students’ engagement in “educationally purposeful activities” both in and out of the classroom serve to increase and deepen learning.
A Context for Thinking about Student Success

• Playing the hand we’re dealt:
  • Students come with new sets of assets and challenges
  • Data are preferable to anecdote.
• Given what we know, making informed strategic choices:
  • What is not changeable? (Mitigate effects)
  • Of those things that are changeable, what are the most important?
• What can we adjust in our own individual and institutional approaches that better respond to student learning characteristics?
• None of us (individuals or divisions) can do this well alone.
• Data to inform our choices will be at a premium
• Greater payoff is not in tinkering, but in structuring the learning environment in new ways
Great educators start where a student is, point out the pathway to the goal, provide the challenge, support, and structure to help students stretch to the new level.