

1997 SURVEY OF NEW UCSC FRESHPERSONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of a survey of new freshpersons at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) administered during fall 1997. One thousand three hundred and fifty nine surveys were analyzed (a response rate of 72%). Response rates differed significantly by residential college, however the composition of the respondents by sex, age, ethnicity, and admission status was very similar to the entire freshperson class. Highlights of this report include:

- The percentage of students choosing UCSC over other schools has dropped from 70% in 1994 to 50% in 1997. Page 3
- Respondents were most influenced to attend UCSC by an informal visit and by talking to UCSC students. They were the least influenced by US News & World Report or other magazine ratings. Page 4
- Two-thirds of new frosh rated UCSC's physical setting very important in choosing to attend UCSC. Half or more of respondents rated overall reputation, personal attention, small classes, majors offered and career preparation and commitment to teaching undergraduates as very important reasons for choosing UCSC. Page 5
- About one-fifth of students reported having some difficulties with Teleslug, inadequate course enrollment advising or inadequate financial aid. Students reported having large problems with financial aid, course advising, and housing-related issues. Page 7
- 81% of respondents often used computers for school work, up from 68% in 1995. Page 10
- Only about one-quarter of incoming frosh expected to need more than 4 years to earn a degree compared with 31% in 1995. Page 11
- Students who expected to transfer out were most often looking for a major or a stronger program than offered at UCSC. Page 12
- About half of students were concerned with choosing classes and time management. However, new students' single largest concern was about dining hall food. Page 13

This report was prepared by Kay Wilder. An electronic version is posted on the World Wide Web at <http://planning.ucsc.edu/irps/>. Additional copies may be available from the Office of Planning and Budget, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 956064 (831/459-2446). This report was released in summer, 1998.

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1997 Institutional Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) in the Office of Planning and Budget administered a survey to new freshpersons during college orientation and core course sessions. Earlier versions of this survey were given in 1993 and 1995. Results from these locally developed instruments are intended to help campus administrators understand the expectations and difficulties of new first-year students. The Survey of New Freshpersons will continue to be administered every other year, complimenting the biannual use of the nationally distributed ACE Freshman Survey. The following report contains sections on demographics of survey respondents; factors important in selecting a college; student finances; orientation; academic expectations; difficulties, concerns, and comments. A copy of the 1997 survey is appended to the report.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The survey was given to new freshpersons who attended college orientation or core course sessions (although one college declined to participate). Surveys were given to about 1894 students, and 1359 were returned by new freshmen for a 72% response rate. The response rate varied greatly among the colleges, see Table 1. However, response rates from men and women, regularly-admitted and specially-admitted students, and students in different ethnic groups were fairly similar to campus demographic profiles. Results are shown by college, ethnic group or sex for relevant topics.

Table 1
Demographics of Survey Respondents and All New Freshmen

	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Ethnicity</i>	African Am. /Black	Asian	Chicano	Other Latino	Native Amer.	Filipino	Other Minority	Euro.Am. /White
Responders	1.5	13.2	7.8	3.1	1.0	4.2	3.1	66.3
Population	2.1	11.7	8.8	3.7	1.0	3.6	3.5	65.6
<i>College</i>	Stevenson	Cowell	Merrill	Crown	Porter	Kresge	Oakes	Eight
Responders	7.6	17.1	12.4	19.9	16.3	9.6	0	16.9
Population	12.8	14.0	13.4	13.8	15.7	7.5	11.0	11.8
<i>Sex</i>	Men	Women						
Responders	40.3	59.7						
Population	41.0	59.0						
<i>Admit Type</i>	Regular	Exception						
Responders	96.1	3.9						
Population	95.7	4.3						

Respondents also closely resembled the population in terms of their high school grade point average, and mean SAT scores. This year's survey respondents reported a median income of about \$63,000, up from about \$59,000 reported in the 1996 ACE Highlights. Over half of student's parents had attained a bachelors or higher degree (60% of students' mothers and 67%

of students' fathers had done so). Over one-quarter of students mothers had earned a graduate or professional degree, compared with 38% of fathers. In contrast, about 20% of students were first in their family to attend college, and 10% of students came from families whose primary language was other than English. Eleven students were attending school on a visa. Thirteen students planned to enroll part time and three students supported dependent children. About a third of students' parents were divorced or separated and five percent of students had lost one or both parents. Eighteen students (1%) reported a physical disability, while 37 students (3%) reported having learning disabilities. Overall 94% of respondents planned to live on campus. Only 16% planned to have a car on campus. These demographic data are very similar to the demographics reported in the 1995 Survey of New Freshpersons.

COLLEGE SELECTION

Overall, UCSC was the first choice in four-year colleges for 50% of new freshpersons, down from 59% in 1996, 63% in 1995 and 70% in 1994. The percentage of students choosing UCSC over other schools dropped for all ethnic groups. The largest declines from 1995 were for students who checked the 'Other' category (minus 30 percentage points), Filipinos (down 21 percentage points), and Asian and White students whose ratings both fell by 14 percentage points. Currently, UC Santa Cruz is most popular with entering White, Native American, Chicano and other Latino freshpersons.

Table 2
Preference for UC Santa Cruz by Percentage of Ethnic Group

Fall 1997									
Choice	% Overall	% African Amer.	% Native Amer.	% Chicano	% Other Latino	% Filipino	% Asian	% White	% Other
1 st	50	47	54	53	53	21	27	56	42
2 nd	31	16	23	35	24	39	38	30	32
3 rd	19	37	23	12	24	40	35	14	26
Total	100	100	100	100	100 ¹	100	100	100	100

Fall 1995									
Choice	% Overall	% African Amer.	% Native Amer.	% Chicano	% Other Latino	% Filipino	% Asian	% White	% Other
1 st	63	58	65	57	44	42	41	70	72
2 nd	27	25	25	33	40	40	41	22	18
3 rd	10	18	10	10	16	18	18	8	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100 ²	100	100	100	100

¹ The apparent error in the total is due to a rounding error.

² The apparent error in the total is due to a rounding error.

Source of Information about UCSC

Table 3 shows how UCSC freshpersons rated the importance of 17 sources of information about colleges. Sources are shown in the order of average importance (1='less important'; 2='important'; and 3='very important'). Because the scale was changed from 1995 survey, the average values may not be directly comparable between 1995 and 1997. Also eight additional sources of information were added to the 1997 survey categories.

The sources of information considered most important to respondents in 1997 were an informal visit to UCSC, contact with UCSC students, and visits with faculty and staff. The 1997 freshmen ranked the influence of their families and friends more highly than in past years. Housing brochures, a tour of UCSC, advice from college graduates and UCSC sponsored campus tours were more important to recent freshmen. Although rated as less important, over half of respondents looked at the UCSC Web site and had phone conversations with faculty or staff. Also rated as having low importance, most new frosh did not have contact with UCSC recruiters and did not consult *US News and World Report* or *Money Magazine* ratings.

Table 3

Average ratings of Information Sources

<i>Information Source</i>	Average Importance	% Very Important	% Not Using
Informal Visit to UCSC	2.2	32	14
UCSC Students	2.1	26	18
Visits with Faculty/Staff	2.0	15	43
Parents and Family	1.9	22	11
Friends	1.9	21	14
Housing Brochures	1.9	19	10
UCSC Sponsored Tour	1.9	15	24
College Graduates	1.9	15	35
Admissions Brochures	1.8	16	7
College Catalogs	1.8	14	18
High School Teachers/Counselors	1.8	13	24
Phone Calls with Faculty/Staff	1.8	12	46
UCSC Recruiters at High School	1.8	7	64
College Guides e.g. Peterson's	1.7	12	29
Special Events at UCSC	1.7	10	26
UCSC Site on World Wide Web	1.6	7	47
<i>US News & World/Money Mags</i>	1.4	3	58

Some differences were found in average ratings when the results were examined by ethnicity and family income. For ease of interpretation income levels have been collapsed into four categories: low income (below \$30,000), middle income (\$30,000-\$59,999), high income (\$60,000-\$89,999) and very high income (above \$90,000). Using one-way analysis of variance tests significant differences ($p=.05$) between importance ratings were examined. Two-way tests were used to detect any interactive effects of ethnicity and income (none were found).

Significant differences between groups were marked with asterisks (*) in Tables 4, 5 and 8 (although most significant differences had only small effect). Differences marked by a "plus" (+) show a slightly greater association between the demographic variable and their effect on student ratings than others.

In Table 4 the greatest differences occur between ethnic groups in the importance they placed on admissions brochures, housing brochures, college guides, and UCSC recruiters at their high schools. In general, these four sources of information were more important to students-of-color than to white students. UCSC recruiters were shown to be more important to underrepresented students-of-color than to white students. Income levels were significant apart from ethnicity, but were statistically less important than ethnic distinctions.

Table 4
Average Ratings of Information
By Ethnic Group and Income Category

Information Source	Ave. Rating	Ethnic Group			Income in Thousands			
		UR	Asian	White	< 30	30-59	60-89	90+
Informal Visit to UCSC	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.2
UCSC Students	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2
Visits with Faculty/Staff	2.0	2.1	2.1	1.8 *	2.1	2.0	1.8	1.9 *
UCSC Sponsored Tour	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Housing Brochures	1.9	2.0	2.1	1.8 +	2.1	1.9	1.8	1.7 *
Friends	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
Parents and Family	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9 *	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.0
College Graduates	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.8 *	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.9
Admissions Brochures	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.7 +	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.7 *
College Catalogs	1.8	2.0	2.1	1.7 *	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.7 *
Phone Calls to Faculty/Staff	1.8	2.1	2.0	1.7 *	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.6 *
HS Teachers/Counselors	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.7 *	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7 *
UCSC Recruiters at School	1.8	2.1	1.8	1.6 +	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6 *
Special Events at UCSC	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.7 *	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7
College Guides (Peterson's)	1.7	1.9	2.0	1.6 +	1.9	1.8	1.6	1.6 *
UCSC Site on WWW	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.6 *	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5 *
<i>US News & World/Money</i>	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.4 *	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4

Factors Affecting Students' Decision to Attend

Students rated the importance of 22 factors that may have played a part in their decision to attend UCSC. The factors in Table 5 are listed in order of their average importance rating. As in past years the physical setting of the campus was the most important reason students chose UCSC, with two-thirds of students rating it very important and 95% of students rating it as important or very important. New to the freshperson survey, the rating for 'Personal attention to students' was the second most important reason students choose to come to UC Santa Cruz, with 60% rating it 'very important' and 95% 'important' or 'very important.' About half of new

fros listed five other factors as very important reasons for attending college at UC Santa Cruz. These included the overall campus reputation, small classes, career preparation, majors offered, and UCSC's commitment to teaching undergraduate students.

Table 5 shows that ratings for importance of decision factors were very similar for most students. In general white students rated many factors lower than students-of color, but the magnitude of the differences was fairly small. Among the larger effects, the university's physical setting was more important to white students than to students-of-color (who were most interested in the personal attention available). As expected, the importance ratings of total cost, the financial aid offer and the amount of grant money available were strongly affected by student's family income. Students with family incomes less than \$30,000 were most affected by these factors with 77% citing the overall financial aid award as very important and 73% citing the financial aid grant as very important. Students' ratings of financial awards were also influenced by their ethnicity independently of family income, although income exerted a stronger influence. The reasons for this are not apparent from the survey.

Table 5

Average Ratings of the Importance of Decision Factors

	% Very Import.	Ave, Rating	Ethnic Group				Income in Thousands				
			UR	Asian	White		<30	30 -59	60 -89	90+	
Physical Setting	67	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.7	+	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.4	
Personal Attention	60	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.5		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	
Overall Reputation	47	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4		2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	
Small Classes	50	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.4		2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	
Career Preparation	51	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.4		2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	
Availability of Majors	52	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.4	*	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	
Committed to Teach UGs	51	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.4	*	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.0	
Campus Size	37	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.3	*	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.3	
Reputation of Faculty	34	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2		2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	
Advanced Technologies	38	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.1	*	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1	
Rigorous Acad. Standards	29	2.1	2.1	2.4	2.1	*	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2	
Campus Housing Options	30	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.1	*	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	
Total Cost	37	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.1		2.5	2.2	2.1	1.9	+
Prep. for Grad School	34	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.1	*	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.2	*
Time to Complete Degree	31	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.0	*	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0	
Access to Urban Activities	25	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.1	*	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	
Grading/Eval System	27	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0	*	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	
Reputation of Students	24	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9		1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	
Overall F/A Offer	37	1.9	2.2	2.0	1.9	+	2.7	2.2	1.8	1.3	+
Amount of F/A Grant	34	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.8	+	2.7	2.1	1.6	1.3	+
Culture/Ethnicity Students	20	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.7	*	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.8	
Athletic Programs	10	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5	

ADMISSIONS, HOUSING AND FINANCIAL AID

This year students were asked if they experienced any difficulties commonly reported by new students (listed in Table 6), and to explain if any was more than a minor inconvenience.

Table 6

Percentage of New Frosh by Type of Difficulty Experienced

Type of Difficulty	N	%
Using Teleslug	284	21
Amount of financial aid award	267	20
Course enrollment advising	245	18
Using campus maps	213	16
Transcript processing	171	13
Advanced Placement Exams	169	12
Timing of financial aid award	158	12
Financial aid counseling	121	9
Information about colleges	107	8
Housing assignment	103	8
Accessibility of staff	97	7
Roommate assignment	94	7
Timing of housing offer	76	6
Other advising	70	5
Other	61	5
Timing of admission offer	54	4
Helpfulness of staff	50	4
College assignment	47	4

Overall, 70% of students had one or more difficulties. However, only about 17% of all respondents commented that problems were more than a minor inconvenience. Many remarks referred to large problems with financial aid, course advising and enrollment, or problems with housing or incompatible roommates. For instance, students thought they would have financial problems because of inadequate or no financial aid. Several students believed their middle-class family income disqualified them for a larger award, but thought their personal circumstances justified more aid. A few students were disturbed that their final offer was less than estimated. Others noted that UCSC's financial aid offer arrived very late – after other schools' offers. Several students were upset because their money arrived so late.

Students often commented on difficulties with course advising and enrollment processes. Many students had problems using Teleslug. Problems mentioned included difficulty of use, frequent break downs, not up to date with transcripts and Advanced Placement exam results, and the system needed a busy signal. New frosh were upset that by the time they used Teleslug their classes were full, or the classes they wanted overlapped. Two out-of-state students had no course information or staff help and were unable to enroll in classes. About seven students

wished for more help in making course choices, and wanted one-on-one advising both during Summer Orientation and outside of Summer Orientation.

Another area of problems was related to students housing situations. For example, five comments concerned incompatible roommates, and three described inappropriate housing assignments. Four students had trouble with telephones not working. Other comments involved a variety of issues. Students said move-in day was unorganized, 'didn't know I'd be assigned to an apartment,' they needed to know arrangements sooner, and water pressure in the shower was low. Other areas mentioned were needing more detailed maps, having difficulty setting up an e-mail account, offices that "lost paperwork, took too long to return phone calls, or never answered questions." In regard to problems with administrative offices a student summed it up: "More personal attention would have been helpful."

ORIENTATION

Students were asked which orientation sessions they had attended, and whether they were satisfied with orientation activities. Overall, 14% of respondents did not attend an orientation, 60% attended one orientation and 26% attended two or more programs. The majority (88%) of those attending orientation sessions valued the chance to get a feeling for the campus and their college. They appreciated the chance to plan a schedule and enroll in classes, take placement exams, meet other new frosh, faculty, staff and students, and take tours of the campus. Students attending Summer Orientation sessions also enjoyed staying in the residence halls overnight. Students attending special programs such as Summer Bridge and Wilderness Orientation were especially pleased. Of the 30 respondents attending the Summer Bridge about 29 were satisfied or very satisfied. For example one student wrote "Summer Bridge was an excellent program which helped me incredibly in both academics and social life. For me, as well as for my friends it was an unforgettable experience." One dissatisfied student felt the program was culturally biased, but did not elaborate. As in the past, the Wilderness Orientation received good to rave reviews from the 37 respondents who attended. As one student put it "[I am] extremely satisfied, Wilderness Orientation made a huge impact on my life!" Three students attending Scholars day were satisfied, and one mentioned it played a large role in his decision to come to UCSC.

About 12% of those attending one or more orientation sessions were not satisfied with their experiences. The comments of students who were not satisfied commonly described summer and fall orientation sessions as long, boring and repetitive, especially lecture sessions. Respondents said too many sessions were unimportant and unhelpful. Students attending the 1997 summer program and fall orientation sessions at Crown, Merrill and College Eight also objected to AP exams conflicting with other activities. Summer orientation was described by dissatisfied students as unorganized with too much 'lag' time between activities.

Suggestions made both by students who were generally satisfied with orientation and those who were not were similar. The most significant comment was that students wanted more individual help planning their class schedules. One student asked for more personal help in choosing classes, establishing goals, and deciding on a major. Students also wanted more of their questions answered, and wanted knowledgeable people to answer them. A number of students

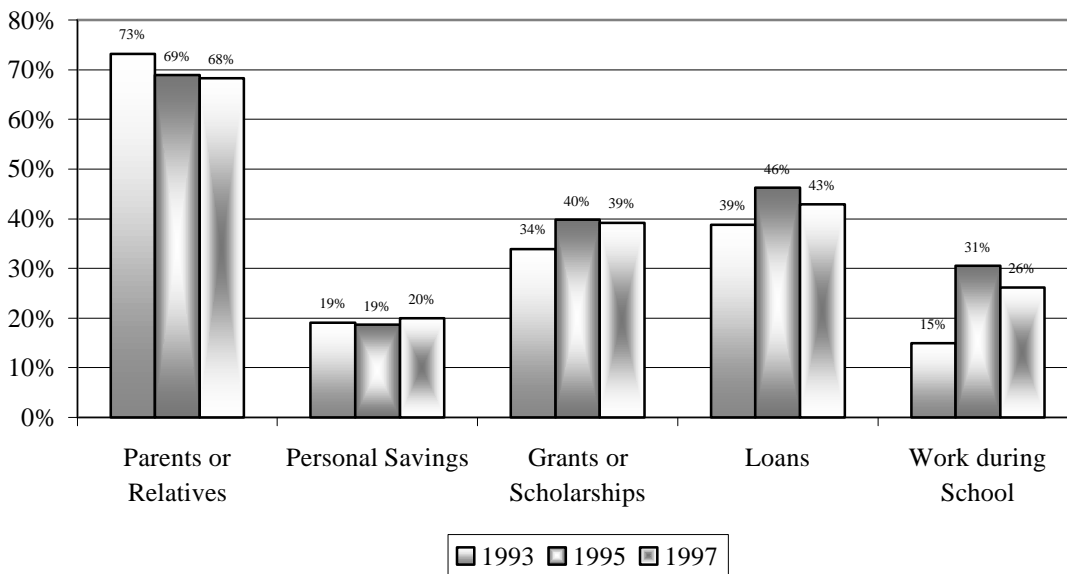
had problems with conflicting activities and someone asked if there might be one orientation schedule with the times and places of events. Several felt orientation schedules were too hectic, and should have fewer mandatory sessions. Several suggested orientations could be compacted into fewer days. Students who attended more than one orientation were especially likely to comment on the repetitiousness of the material. One student had trouble finding the room where an AP exam was being given, and another requested that building maps be made available. Another suggested a bus schedule should be handed out. Several people would have liked more social activities, but others did not like all the ‘get-to-know-you games.’

COLLEGE FINANCES

A profile of students’ funding sources of \$1,500 or more for 1993, 1995 and 1997 is shown in Figure 1. The percentage of frosh receiving this much funding remained about the same in 1997 as in 1995. As in 1995, nearly 70% of new frosh depended on financial support from parents or relatives, about 20% had that much in personal savings, and about 40% had obtained grants or scholarships of \$1,500 or more. There was a slight drop in the percentage of students taking out large loans and working during the school year, perhaps because the increase in the median family income in 1997 allowed larger family contributions than in 1995.

Figure 1

College Funding Sources by Percentage of Students



New freshpersons who were 19 or older were a little less likely to receive any money from their parents, and somewhat less likely to receive over \$3,000 than younger students (51% vs. 58%). Older students were more likely to receive loans of \$1,500 to \$3,000 than younger students.

This year about 44% of students said they were ‘very concerned’ about their ability to pay for college, down four percentage points from 1995. As expected, students concern about paying for college was strongly related to family income. Seventy percent of those whose family incomes were under \$30,000 were ‘very concerned’ about paying for college compared with 55% from families earning between \$30,000 and \$59,999, 43% of those earning between \$60,000 and \$89,999 and 18% of students from families with incomes of \$90,000 and over. However, of those students who did *not* expect to receive financial aid and who were very concerned about paying for college, 21% had family incomes of \$30,000 to \$59,000 compared to 36% had family incomes of \$60,000 to \$89,000 and 31% had higher incomes. This suggests an unmet need for financial aid among those with middle and even high family incomes.

EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANS

Areas of Study

Over one-third of new frosh in 1995 and 1997 were undecided about their major, while most others planned to pursue studies in the natural or social sciences. As shown in Table 7, men were more likely to plan a major in the natural sciences than women, and Asian students were more likely to major in the natural sciences than students of other ethnic groups.

Table 7

Students’ Preferred Areas of Study by Percentage of Students - 1997

	Men	Women	Underrep	Asian	White	Overall
Arts	10	10	9	6	11	10
Humanities	7	11	9	4	10	9
Natural Sciences	35	20	24	40	24	26
Social Sciences	14	20	19	13	18	18
Cross-Disciplinary	2	3	4	2	2	2
Undecided	33	36	35	36	35	35

Foreign Language Study

Similar to results in 1995, thirty-eight percent of students planned to study a foreign language, and women were more likely than men to study foreign languages than men in all academic areas, (44% vs. 29%). Differences by ethnic group were not found to be significant.

Computer Use

Asked about their use of computers for schoolwork, 81% of respondents said they often used a computer, up from 68% in 1995. Men and women were equally likely to use a computer, but white students were more likely to use one than underrepresented minority students. Students with family incomes over \$60,000 used them more than those with family incomes under \$30,000, and students whose parents did not graduate from high school were less likely to use computers than those with more education. Men were a little more likely than women, and white students more likely than others to buy computers, as were those with higher family incomes and educational levels.

Research and Career Experience

About 45% of students expressed an interest in research experience including men, women, and all ethnic groups. Students with lower family incomes more often wanted research experience than those from families with higher incomes. Women were a little more likely to seek work or career experience than men, and students-of-color were more likely to want work/career experience compared with white students. Those with lower incomes valued experience more highly than those with higher incomes, and work/career experience was most sought after by those from families with less than a college degree.

Other Academic Expectations

Compared with 1995, fewer new frosh (24%) in 1997 expected to take over four years to earn a degree than new frosh in 1995 (31%) and fewer expected to take time off before graduation (11% in 1997 versus 16% in 1995). Students whose parents had a college or graduate degree were a little more likely to take time off than others. Fewer students expected to need help with math (32% vs. 37%), and other expectations (e.g., help with writing, transferring out, and taking time off) were within a few percentage points of 1995 figures. The five other items were new to the 1997 survey.

The asterisks in Table 8 indicate statistical significance of academic expectations by demographic variables. For instance students' expectation of taking over four years to graduate was most closely associated with their total SAT scores, holding other demographics constant. Those in the lowest scoring group (below 1040) were a little more likely to anticipate a long undergraduate career than students scoring above 1240³. Students' concerns about needing extra academic help also corresponded most closely with their SAT scores. About 60% of those scoring in the lowest quartile in the math section of the SATs wanted tutoring in math, compared to about 10% of those in the highest quartile. Two-thirds of those with low verbal SAT scores wanted help with writing compared with about 15% of those in the highest quartile. Student's sex also influenced the expectation of needing help with math independently of SAT scores – an average of 36% of women wanted math tutoring vs. 26% of men when SAT scores were held constant.

Fifty-seven percent of students expected they would perform better than average in courses, with minor effects exerted by student's proposed academic division, SAT scores and sex. For example, those intending to major within the natural sciences expected to do better than those with undeclared majors, (64% vs. 51%). Seventy percent of students with SAT scores above 1240 thought they would do well compared with 45% of those with SAT scores less than 1040, and men more often believed they would do well than women (63% vs. 54%). Over one-quarter of students did not need help selecting a major and there was also a small effect from students' SAT scores. Students without a proposed major were more likely to need help than students with proposed majors.

³ Respondents SAT scores were categorized into four ranges with roughly equal numbers of students in each.

Table 8

Academic Expectations by Student Demographics

	% Ave.	College Choice	Acad. Div.	SAT Scores	Parent Educ	Income	Sex	Ethgrp
4+ Years to Graduate	24			*				
Tutoring in Math	32			+			*	
Help with Writing	39			+	*			
Do Better Than Ave.	57		*	*			*	
Work 10+ hours/week	28					*		
Transfer Out	20	*	*					
Take Time Off	11				*			
Live Off Campus	33							*
Not Need Help w/ Major	26		*	*				
Extracurricular Activities	68						*	

Some of the other factors that might affect students' expectations of success at UCSC were working more than ten hours a week (directly dependent only on parents income), living off-campus, (more likely among white students), extracurricular activities (women were more likely to participate than men), and the expectation of transferring out of UCSC (Asian students were more likely than white students to transfer). As in 1995, about 20% of new frosh came to UCSC with the expectation of transferring out.

This year students were asked where they thought they would transfer and why. Out of 277 respondents who were thinking about transferring, many gave two or more reasons for wanting to leave. The most common reason given was to attend a school that offered their major or offered a stronger major program than available at UCSC. Some students wanted more choice of majors, or more course offerings. About 17 respondents were looking for a business program. Nine wanted a better Art or Design program, four were interested in Film or Video majors, three wanted Theater programs, four Music programs, and one respondent wanted a Dance major. Other areas mentioned were Marine Biology, Biology, Zoology or Pre-Medical programs (by 8 students), Nursing, Physical Therapy, and Holistic Medicine (4 students), Psychology, Clinical Psychology or Social Work (3 students), Education (teaching credential) or Special Education (3 students), Economics (3 students), Computer Science, Computer Engineering or Engineering (4 students), Languages (2 students), Communications (3 students), Legal Studies (2 students) and others (11 students).

The second most common reason was to attend a school closer to home. Third, students wanted to attend a school with a better reputation, more rigorous standards, or more challenge. Some students just wanted to live in another geographic area such as southern California, the mountains, a more urban area, or on the east coast, especially New York.

About 16 students planned to transfer to Berkeley through the Dual Degree program. Schools students preferred over UCSC were UC Berkeley (29%), UCLA (18%), UC Santa Barbara (10%), UC San Diego (7%), and all California State Universities combined (6%). Twelve

students wanted better sports programs or facilities, and 11 wanted to go to schools their friends attended. A few mentioned wanting to attend a smaller school with more individual attention, a private school, or a less expensive school. Two students cited housing costs as a reason to leave.

RETENTION

Most new freshpersons successfully navigate the early challenges of social and academic integration into UCSC. However, in recent years UCSC has lost 15% to 20% of the freshman class before the completion of their first year. As of spring quarter 1998 about 10% of survey respondents had already left UCSC. Nearly half of those who left scored highly (above 1240) on the SAT exams, compared with about one-quarter of those who remained enrolled. Twenty-two percent of those who left expected to take time off from school (compared to 10% of those who remained enrolled). Otherwise, there were no differences found between students who left and those who stayed to complete their first year. Although the percentage of students for whom UC Santa Cruz was first choice has dropped sharply in recent years, students who left before Spring 1998 were equally likely to have picked UCSC as their first, second or third choice in a four year college.

CONCERNS AND COMMENTS

Students were asked to check concerns from a list shown in Table 9. Asked if any concerns were major, respondents specified concerns about the residence halls, academic concerns, finances, getting around, balancing school, work and other activities, and finding a social niche. The largest single major concern was about dining hall food. About 28 students found the food unappetizing, and many said it was too oily, especially vegetarian offerings. One student suggested fruit be made available all day long. Two students had special dietary requirements they were worried about. Eight students said the limited dining hall hours were a problem.

The second most frequent comment (made by about 22 students) was that there were too few phone jacks for the number of people, let alone people with computers. A student living in a campus apartment wanted phone jacks in the bedrooms rather than the living room, for privacy. About 10 students were uncomfortable with coed bathrooms, although 2 said they were getting used to it. Two students had problems because of too few working showers in the bathrooms. Other major apprehensions related to alcohol and drugs in the resident halls, wanting more personal space in the residence halls, and being incompatible with roommates or a residence hall assignment.

The third most frequent comment was that students wanted help planning their course schedules. Many students had no idea what to sign up for, and others wanted help understanding how to fulfill the general education and major requirements. Students also wanted help setting academic and career goals, and didn't know where to go for help. Another major concern was study skills and time management. One student explained he did not feel prepared for college because he had not developed study skills in high school. Time management was worrisome for many students, some because of the academic workload, and some were not sure how to balance school with work, social activities or other extracurricular activities. Students were also concerned with doing well academically, not knowing how to find tutors and get help in classes.

Table 9

Students Concerns by Percentage of Respondents

Concerns	%
Choosing classes	51
Time management	47
Finding way around campus	41
Budgeting finances	39
Setting academic or personal goals	36
Balancing work with school	34
Finding a social niche	31
Dining hall food	28
How to find work	25
Where to go for help	24
Number of telephone jacks	20
Study or Library skills	19
Feeling isolated	19
Finding personal space in residence hall	18
UCSC bureaucracy	17
Safety at night	17
Other students' attitudes	15
Finding tutors	12
Coed bathrooms in residence halls	11
Use of alcohol or drugs on campus	10
Students' political views	6

Students were concerned about their finances and whether they could pay for school for four or more years. They wanted help budgeting their money and finding jobs on and off campus. One student worried about accepting loans after watching her family struggle with debt. Another important type of problem was about getting around on and off campus. For example, 11 students were worried about getting lost on campus and getting to class late because of it. Several students wanted more detailed maps showing buildings and walking paths more clearly. Safety while walking alone at night was another large concern. One student did not know where to get a bus schedule. Finally, students worried about finding friends and a social niche. Some felt isolated because of shyness or feeling different than other students. One student fretted about making a rash decision to attend a school so far away from home.

Asked if they had any comments about joining the UCSC community 407 students responded with about 86% very positive and satisfied comments. There were about 6 fairly neutral comments, and about 12% of all those who responded were generally dissatisfied. Among the unhappy comments students reiterated that they didn't feel at home here, they had problems dealing with offices and information processing, that they didn't know how to find their classes, they needed more academic advising, dining hall food was bad, and that orientation programs were disorganized. A few were displeased with their living situation, and there were a variety of other comments. However students most often commented that their experience was great

and the people very friendly. One student gave UCSC a very strong endorsement: "I turned down Berkeley, UCLA, USC, Northwestern, Harvard, and many other colleges to come here. So far I am very satisfied with my choice. This is the best university, public or private, in my opinion, period." Another student said "It wasn't my first college choice, but now I'm grateful that fate put me here at UCSC."

DISCUSSION

This study has examined new freshpersons' decision to attend UCSC and their early adjustment to the campus community. The results show that most new frosh were satisfied with their introduction to the academic and social life at UCSC but that over half were concerned about choosing classes. This suggests a need for more help planning course schedules during the summer and fall orientations, especially for the 36% of freshpersons whose academic and personal goals were unclear and who had no idea where to start. This also suggests some students may need help defining their interests and skills either through counseling with advisors or through skills and interests tests. Perhaps optional sessions could be given during orientation sessions or at other times. Nearly half of new frosh were concerned with their lack of time management skills, and about 40% were concerned with their ability to manage their finances. Topics such as time management, budgeting finances, library, study and test taking skills could be incorporated in a variety of formats (workshops, classes, and videos) that frosh could be encouraged to master.

Asked to describe major concerns, students often mentioned the quality of dining hall food described as unhealthy and oily, suggesting more low fat alternatives to regular fare should be offered in the dining halls. As in earlier years, many students were also concerned about finding their way around campus (41%) and wanted tours of campus and more detailed maps. Organized campus walking tours departing from central locations such as the bookstore or library could help to orient students to class locations, or volunteers might be available for the first week of classes to help students find their way around. Another frequent comment was the lack of enough phone jacks for telephones and computer modems in residence halls. It seems reasonable that over the next several years each new class of freshmen will be more oriented to computers and communications technology than the last, and will have higher expectations for available telephone, modem, and ethernet connections.

UCSC continues to foster an image of a school where personal attention is possible, and the results of the study show one of the top reasons new frosh come to UCSC is their expectation for personal attention. Personal attention is certainly available for those who participate in intensive orientation sessions such as Wilderness Orientation and Summer Bridge. During the school year however, those students who are highly motivated or out-going have the best chance of obtaining on-going contact with faculty. This suggests other students may benefit from being taught to seek out individual contact with faculty during their undergraduate years. This study raises questions about the importance and long-term effects of bonding and personal interaction with faculty in the success and retention of students at UCSC.

If you would like to discuss the implications of the results of this study or have comments about new student research, please contact Kay Wilder at (831) 459-4316 or send e-mail to kay@cats.ucsc.edu.