

1999 SURVEY OF NEW UCSC FRESHMEN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the results of a survey of new freshmen at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) administered during fall 1999. One thousand nine hundred and twenty nine surveys were analyzed (a response rate of 80%). Response rates differed significantly by residential college, but the composition of the respondents was very similar to the entire freshmen class by sex, ethnicity, and admission status. Highlights of this report include:

- Overall, new UCSC freshmen were very pleased with the friendly campus environment and enjoyed meeting new people and socializing during orientation. Although most students experienced some difficulties or challenges as they became acquainted with the campus, very few had any significant problems with their new environment. Page 14-17
- Visiting the campus informally and talking with UCSC students were the two most important means of finding out about the campus for prospective students. Advice from parents and family, and Admissions and Housing brochures were also very important to most. However, students used a wide array of information for college selection. Page 4
- The overall quality of education, membership in the UC system, and the physical setting were the most influential factors in students' decision to attend UCSC. About half of students also rated commitment to undergraduate teaching, the quality of majors and the Bay Area location as very important reasons for choosing UCSC. Page 7
- Students lacking financial support from parents and dependent on financial aid were most often worried about being able to pay for college. Page 10
- Most new freshmen (88%) had often used computers for school, up from 81% in 1997 and 68% in 1995. But women were unlikely to plan majoring in Computer Science or Engineering. Page 11
- About 41% of incoming freshmen wanted advising before choosing a major, and over a third were undecided on any major. Over one-third thought they would need tutoring or help with math or writing. Less than one-quarter expected to need more than 4 years to earn a degree. Page 13
- Students who expected to transfer out were most often looking for a major or a stronger program than offered at UCSC. Intention to transfer was more predictive of attrition than other demographic factors. Page 14
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INTRODUCTION

Every other year since 1993 Institutional Research and Policy Studies (IRPS) in the Office of Planning and Budget has surveyed new freshmen about their reasons for choosing UCSC, their expectations for college, and their early college experiences. The locally developed Survey of New Freshmen compliments the biannual use of the nationally distributed CIRP Freshman Survey and is intended to help campus administrators understand the experiences and expectations of new first-year students. The most recent survey was administered by the colleges early in the fall quarter, either during orientation or during core course sessions. This report presents information on demographics of survey respondents; factors important in selecting a college; student finances; orientation; academic expectations; and difficulties and concerns. A copy of the 1999 survey is appended to the report.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Of the 2,399 surveys distributed, 1,929 were returned for a response rate of 80%. The response rates varied among the colleges, but the composition of the sample of respondents closely resembled the overall population of all new freshmen in terms of ethnicity, sex, and admit type (regular vs. exception) (see Table 1). Respondents' mean combined SAT score was slightly lower than the average score for all new freshmen (1143 vs. 1150), but both respondents and all freshmen had a high school grade point average of 3.52.

Table 1
Percentage of Survey Respondents and All New Freshmen by Characteristics

<i>Ethnicity</i>	African		<u>Chicano</u>	<u>Latino</u>	Native		Other	
	<u>Amer./Black</u>	<u>Asian</u>			<u>American</u>	<u>Filipino</u>	<u>Minority</u>	<u>White</u>
Responders	2.4%	15.2%	9.9%	4.0%	0.9%	4.0%	2.4%	61.3%
Population	2.2%	13.0%	9.0%	3.5%	0.8%	3.7%	2.1%	56.4%
<i>College</i>	<u>Stevenson</u>	<u>Cowell</u>	<u>Merrill</u>	<u>Crown</u>	<u>Porter</u>	<u>Kresge</u>	<u>Oakes</u>	<u>Eight</u>
	Responders	6.9%	13.3%	14.4%	17.5%	15.5%	7.5%	9.0%
Population	12.8%	13.4%	12.9%	14.6%	12.0%	9.0%	10.5%	13.1%
<i>Sex</i>	<u>Men</u>		<u>Women</u>					
	Responders	41.3%	58.7%					
Population	42.1%	57.9%						
<i>Admit Type</i>	<u>Regular</u>		<u>Exception</u>					
	Responders	96.5%	3.5%					
Population	96.5%	3.5%						

Respondents' self-reported median family income was \$70,000, up from about \$66,000 reported on the 1998 CIRP Survey. Three-quarters of students had at least one parent with a baccalaureate degree, and 45% had a parent with a graduate or professional degree. By contrast, 19% of new students were the first in their families to attend college. Ten percent of

students came from families whose primary language was other than English. About one-quarter of students' parents were divorced or separated. Physical disabilities and learning disabilities were reported by 24 students (1%) and 65 students (3%) respectively. Overall 94% of respondents planned to live on campus, and 12% planned to keep a car in Santa Cruz, down from 16% in 1997. Nearly all freshmen planned to enroll full-time.

COLLEGE CHOICE

UCSC was the first choice among four-year colleges for 44% of 1999 respondents, and the second choice of 33%. As shown in Table 2 the percentage of students for whom UCSC was first choice differed by ethnicity. White students were the most likely and Asian students the least likely to prefer UCSC. Family income did not appear to influence college choice except in the case of students with low family incomes (less than \$30,000 annually), only 36% of whom selected UCSC as first choice. However, about 41% of low-income students did select it as a viable second choice college.

Table 2
Preference for UCSC by Ethnicity

College Choice	% Overall	% Asian	% Under-represented Minorities ¹	% Other Minorities	% White
1 st	44%	21%	35%	42%	52%
2 nd	33%	34%	42%	24%	32%
Other	23%	45%	23%	34%	17%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source of Information about UCSC

As high school students contend with difficult choices about where to attend college, they often look to parents and family, counselors, friends, and other sources for guidance. Freshmen were asked to rate the importance of these sources of information from 3 ('very important') to 1 ('less important'). Mean ratings are presented in Table 3. Average ratings at or above 2 ('important') are in bold font. The 1999 ratings were similar to those from 1997 survey results, and again indicated that an informal visit to UCSC was the single most important source of information, followed closely by contact with UCSC students. But students were also influenced by a wide array of other sources including advice from parents and family, housing and admissions brochures, college catalogs, a formal tour of UCSC, and advice from college graduates, friends, and UCSC faculty and staff. Magazine ratings were the least important to UCSC freshmen in their college selection process.

¹ At UC Santa Cruz, traditionally underrepresented ethnic groups include African American/Black Native American, Chicano, other Latino, and Filipino students.

Phone calls with faculty and staff appear to have declined in importance, with only 15% of 1999 respondents rating them 'very important' compared to 22% in 1997. A similar drop in the importance of visits with faculty and staff was also observed. It may be that these declines indicate a decrease in staff capacity for personal attention due to larger numbers of admitted students than in previous years. Alternately, the youngest generation of students may be less accustomed to seeking direct contact given the popularity of electronic communications.

Table 3
Average ratings of Information Sources
(3='very important'; 2='important'; and 1='less important')

<i>Information Source</i>	Average Importance		% 'Very Important'	
	<i>1997</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1999</i>
Informal Visit to UCSC	2.2	2.2	37%	37%
UCSC Students	2.1	2.0	32%	30%
Parents and Family	1.9	1.9	25%	25%
Housing Brochures	1.9	1.9	21%	21%
Admissions Brochures	1.8	1.9	17%	19%
Friends	1.9	1.8	25%	23%
UCSC Sponsored Campus Tour	1.9	1.8	20%	20%
College Graduates	1.9	1.8	23%	22%
College Catalogs	1.8	1.8	17%	19%
Visits with Faculty/Staff	2.0	1.8	26%	21%
High School Teachers/Counselors	1.8	1.7	18%	18%
UCSC Site on World Wide Web	1.6	1.7	13%	16%
College Guides e.g. Peterson's	1.7	1.7	17%	15%
Special Events at UCSC	1.7	1.6	13%	12%
Phone Calls with Faculty/Staff	1.8	1.6	22%	15%
UCSC Recruiters at High School	1.8	1.6	19%	16%
<i>US News & World</i> or Magazines	1.4	1.4	8%	6%

Comparisons among importance ratings were made on the basis of ethnicity and family income (Table 4). Because of the small numbers of respondents in some ethnic categories, responses of all underrepresented minorities were aggregated. Family income levels were collapsed into four categories that approximate low (below \$30,000), low-middle (\$30,000-\$59,999), middle-high (\$60,000-\$89,999) and high income (above \$90,000). Statistically significant differences ($p < .005$) between at least two of the ethnic or family income groups are indicated with an asterisk, and all ratings of 2.0 and above are in bold font.

In general, students rated many sources of information very similarly regardless of ethnicity or family income. For example, informal visits to campus, information from other UCSC students and the advice of parents and family were among the strongest influences for all students. On the other hand students of color (underrepresented minorities and Asians) were more strongly influenced by high school teachers and counselors, UCSC admissions and housing brochures, and recruiters at their high school than were white students. They were also more influenced by personal phone calls with faculty and staff. Recruiters and phone calls were also especially important to students from low-income families. These differences may reflect the success of specific recruitment outreach activities, or they may indicate a preference among low-income students and students of color for those types of outreach.

Table 4
Mean Ratings of Information Source Importance
by Ethnicity and Family Income

Information Source	Avg. Rating	Ethnic Group			Income in Thousands				
		UR	Asian	White	< 30	30-59	60-89	90+	
Informal Visit to UCSC	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.2	*	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2
UCSC Students	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1	*	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.0
Parents and Family	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	*	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9
Housing Brochures	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.8	*	2.1	1.9	1.9	1.8 *
Admissions Brochures	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.8	*	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8 *
Friends	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8		1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
UCSC Sponsored Tour	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8		1.8	1.9	1.8	1.8
College Graduates	1.8	1.9	1.7	1.8	*	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
College Catalogs	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.8	*	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.8
Visits with Faculty/Staff	1.8	1.9	1.8	1.7		1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7 *
HS Teachers/Counselors	1.7	2.0	1.8	1.6	*	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.7 *
UCSC Site on WWW	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.6	*	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.7
College Guides (Peterson's)	1.7	1.8	1.9	1.6	*	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6
Special Events at UCSC	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.6	*	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.6
Phone Calls to Faculty/Staff	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.5	*	1.9	1.6	1.6	1.5 *
UCSC Recruiters at School	1.6	1.9	1.8	1.4	*	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.5 *
<i>US News & World/Money</i>	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.3	*	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4

Campus Characteristics Affecting Students' Decision to Attend

To determine which UCSC characteristics were most widely appealing, students were asked to rate the importance of 28 features of the campus on their decisions to attend. Table 5 lists characteristics in order of their mean importance ratings. Characteristics that at least half of the students rated "very important" are in bold font. Students generally favored UCSC for the overall quality of education, and because of a strong preference to attend a UC campus. Consistent with findings in previous years, the beauty of the campus was also very important to many students, although less so to students of color and to those from low-income families. About 41% of students of color rated campus beauty 'very important' compared to 66% of white students.

Commitment to undergraduate teaching, the quality of majors and career preparation were important to most underrepresented students of color. Although financial aid was equally important, it was largely related to family income. Asian students were very concerned about the quality of majors and career preparation, but were more focused on preparation for graduate school than other students. About 51% of Asians placed great importance on preparation for graduate school compared with 45% of other students of color and only 33% of white students.

Although most students (75%) from low-income families cited the overall financial aid as very important, the quality of education, major programs and career preparation were also high priorities. Students from more affluent families placed very high priority on the physical setting of the campus, but were equally interested in obtaining a quality education from a UC campus.

Table 5
Average Ratings of the Importance of Decision Factors

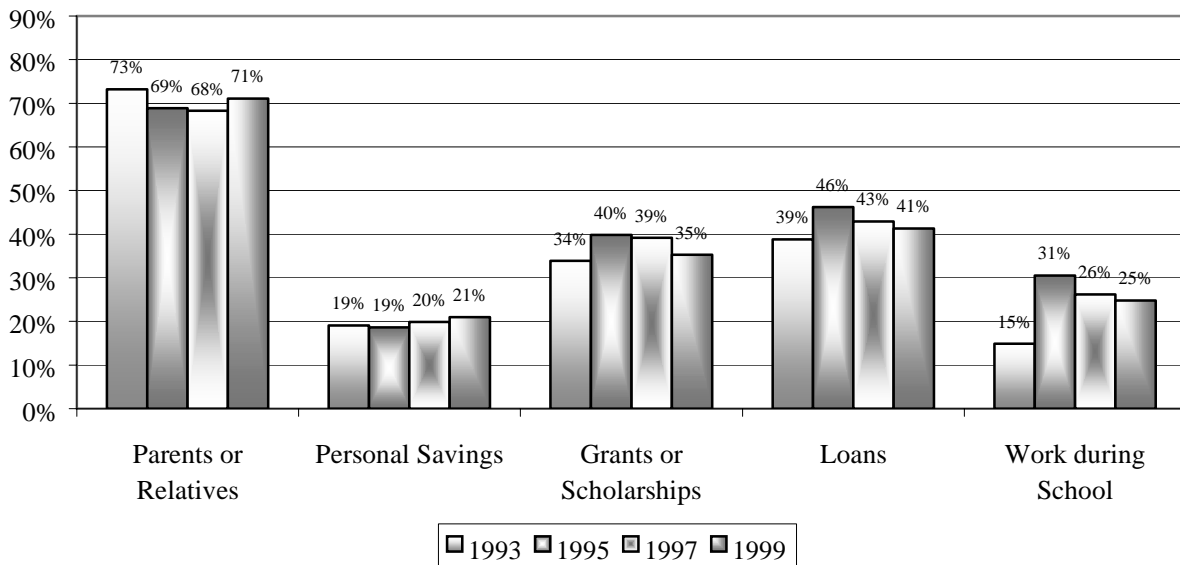
	Very	Avg.	Ethnic Group				Income (in Thousands)			
	Impt.	Rating	UR	Asian	White					
Overall Quality of Education	64	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6		2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Physical Setting	57	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.6	*	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.5 *
Attend a UC Campus	61	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	*	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Commitment to Teaching UG	48	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3		2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4
Quality of Majors	48	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.3	*	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3
Bay Area Location	48	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.4	*	2.1	2.3	2.4	2.4 *
Small Classes/Pers. Attention	44	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3		2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3
Career Preparation	45	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.2	*	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.2 *
Availability of Majors	43	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.3	*	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.2
Preparation for Grad. School	38	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.1	*	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1
Financial Aid Grant	45	2.1	2.4	2.1	2.0	*	2.7	2.4	1.8	1.5 *
Overall Financial Aid Award	44	2.1	2.4	2.2	2.0	*	2.7	2.4	1.9	1.6 *
Campus Housing Options	30	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.1	*	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1
Access to Adv. Technology	34	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.0	*	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.1
Total Cost	36	2.1	2.3	2.1	2.0	*	2.4	2.3	2.0	1.9 *
Undergraduate Research	32	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.0	*	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.0 *
Distance to Home	37	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.0		2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Reputation of Faculty	28	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0		2.1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Reputation of Students	31	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0		1.9	2.1	2.0	2.0
Campus Size	29	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.1	*	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1 *
Liberal Political Climate	30	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.0	*	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.0
Grade Option in Classes	27	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.9	*	2.1	2.0	1.9	1.9
Ethnic Diversity Students	26	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.8	*	2.0	1.9	1.9	1.8 *
Access to Urban Activities	20	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.9		1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
Narrative Evaluations	20	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8		1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8
Campus Clubs & Events	16	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.8		1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7
Time to Degree	18	1.7	2.0	2.0	1.6	*	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.7
Athletic Programs	11	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5		1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5

STUDENT FINANCES

A profile of students' funding sources of \$1,500 or more for 1993, 1995, 1997 and 1999 is shown in Figure 1. For the most part, the percentage of funding available from each source has remained about the same over those years. From 1993 to 1999 about 70% of new freshmen depended on financial support of at least \$1,500 from parents or relatives, about 20% had that much in personal savings, and 30% to 40% of new freshmen had obtained grants or scholarships of \$1,500 or more. The largest fluctuation has been in the percentage of students working during the school year. In recent years about one-quarter of freshmen said they expected to work while in school. The decrease between 1995 and 1999 in the percentage of students taking out large loans and working during the school year corresponds to an increase in the median family income during that time.

Figure 1

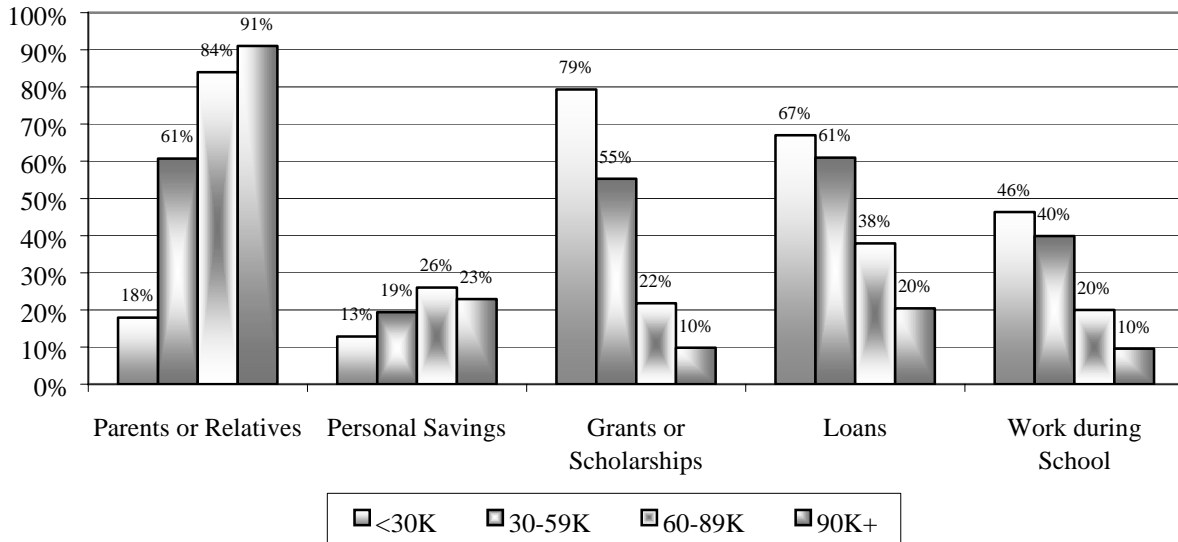
College Funding Sources by Percentage of Students



The types of funding available to students were generally related to reported family income, (Figure 2). For example, only about 18% of students from families making under \$30,000 expected substantial contributions (of at least \$1,500) from parents or relatives, compared with 88% of students whose families earned \$60,000 or more. Grants, scholarships, and loans were most likely to go to students from less affluent families, who were also more likely to work during the school year. For example, nine out of ten students from families making less than \$60,000 expected to work and 43% anticipated earning \$1,500 or more during the school year. In contrast, six out of ten students from more affluent families expected to work during the school year, and only about 14% expected to earn \$1,500 or more.

Figure 2

Percentage of Students Receiving \$1,500 or More by Source and Family Income Level



Overall, fewer students were ‘very concerned’ about their ability to pay for college in 1999 (36% of freshmen, down from 44% in 1997 and 48% in 1995). In 1999, over two-thirds of those whose family incomes fell under \$30,000 said they were ‘very concerned’ about paying for college compared with only 15% of students from families with incomes of \$90,000 and over (Table 6).

Table 6

Percentage of 1999 Freshmen Concerned about Paying for College By Family Income Level

Income Category	% Very Concerned
Less Than \$30,000	68%
\$30,000 - \$59,999	58%
\$60,000 – \$89,000	32%
\$90,000 and Above	15%
Overall	38%

In general, students receiving financial aid appeared to be more concerned about paying for college than student who were not dependent on financial aid. However, a number of students (about 17% of students who did not expect to receive financial aid) were very concerned about paying for college, including 61 students from middle and high-income families.

EDUCATIONAL AND CAREER PLANS

Areas of Academic Interest

Consistent with previous freshmen surveys, over one-third of new freshmen in 1999 were undecided about their academic major, while most others planned to pursue studies in the natural or social sciences, (see Table 7). Men were more likely than women, and Asian students more likely than students of other ethnic groups to plan a major in engineering. Women and underrepresented minority students more often chose majors within the social sciences than other students.

Table 7

Students' Preferred Areas of Study by Percentage of Students – 1999

	Men	Women	Underrep	Asian	White	Overall
Arts	12%	10%	7%	9%	12%	11%
Engineering	19%	2%	9%	18%	6%	9%
Humanities	8%	10%	9%	5%	11%	9%
Natural Sciences	12%	17%	18%	12%	15%	15%
Social Sciences	13%	22%	25%	16%	16%	18%
Cross-Disciplinary	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%
Undecided	35%	36%	29%	39%	37%	35%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Foreign Language Study

Similar to the results from 1997 survey, 37% of students planned to study a foreign language. Women were more likely to plan foreign language study than men (42% of women compared to 30% of men). About 19% of students said they would be interested in an intensive foreign language program if it were available.

Computer Use

Asked about their use of computers for schoolwork, 88% of respondents said they often used a computer, up from 81% in 1997 and 68% in 1995. Nearly as many students (83%) owned or planned to buy a computer. Men and women were equally likely to use, own or plan to buy a computer. There were also no significant differences in computer use and ownership based on intended academic division. However white students and students from high-income families were more likely to use, and own or plan to buy a computer than underrepresented minority or low-income students.

Research and Career Experience

About 42% of all respondents expressed an interest in research experience regardless of sex or ethnicity. Well over half (58%) of students that intended to earn a doctorate or professional degree wanted research experience, compared to only 26% of those aspiring only to the baccalaureate degree or a certificate. Nearly 57% wanted work or career experience during

college. Women, students-of-color, students with lower family incomes, and students whose parents had less education placed greater importance on work experience than others.

Other Optional Activities

New to the 1999 survey, students were asked to indicate if they would participate in a variety of activities. The information was intended as a general gauge of interest for actual or proposed campus programs. As indicated in Table 8, interest in career internships was quite high. Over half of the respondents reported that they would participate in internships if they were available. Over one-third of students expressed an interest in intramural sports, and over one-quarter reported that they would take rigorous honors courses, if available.

Table 8
Interest in Optional Activities

	% Would Participate
Career Internships	53%
Intramural Sports	37%
Honors Courses	28%
Intensive Foreign Language Programs	19%
Counseling with Peer Advisor	17%
Campus Learning/Tutorial Center	14%
Freshmen Classes with Same Students	10%
Non-credit College Success Courses	5%

FACTORS RELATED TO ACADEMIC PERSISTENCE AND SUCCESS

Students were asked about a myriad of academic expectations they had for themselves, ranging from needing tutoring and advising to taking more than four years to graduate and performing above average in their courses. They were also asked to indicate their intentions to take time off, work, live off campus, and participate in campus-sponsored activities. Comparisons were made between students based on a variety of demographic characteristics such as sex, ethnicity, parental income and education, and SAT scores. The percentage of all respondents who indicated particular expectations, as well as the demographic characteristics that distinguished groups of students on each of the various expectations are presented in Table 9.

In general, academic expectations were very similar for new freshmen in 1997 and 1999. For example, in both years over 20% of new freshmen expected to take longer than four years to graduate. Expectations about time to graduation were not dependent on ethnicity, sex, area of study, or parents' education or income level. However, students who had learned English as a second language (not shown in Table 9) were more likely to believe they would need extra time to complete their degree (31% of second language students compared with 22% of others).

There were also differences in the amount of academic help students expected needing to complete a degree. Students with lower SAT scores, those from less educated or lower-income families, and students of color were more likely to anticipate wanting help with math and writing, and women expected to need tutoring in math more often than men. Students who learned English as a second language were much more likely to need help with math (53% vs. 33%), and writing (67% vs. 32%) than other students. Asian students who were non-native English speakers were especially likely to want help with writing skills. There were also some differences based on student's proposed area of study. For example, between 30% and 40% of students thought they would need tutoring in math, *except* for those interested in studying within the arts (23%). Fewer humanities students wanted help with writing (23%), compared to students planning to study within the natural science (44%) or computer and engineering fields (49%).

Overall, 41% of students wanted advising before choosing a major, but women and students with lower SAT test scores wanted help more often than others. Naturally, students who were undecided on any major were the most likely to want help (62%), and students interested in the computer and engineering fields seemed to be the least likely to seek help (19%).

Table 9
Academic Expectations and Demographic Variables

	Ave	College Choice	Acad. Div.	SAT Scores	Parent Educ.	Parent Income	Sex	Ethnic Group
Over 4 Years to Degree	23%							
Tutoring in Math	35%		*	*	*		*	*
Help with Writing	36%	*	*	*	*	*		*
Do Better Than Avg.	56%			*			*	
Work 10+ hours/week	31%					*		
Transfer Out	21%	*		*		*		*
Take Time Off	10%				*			*
Live Off Campus	31%	*	*		*			*
Need Major Advising	42%		*	*			*	
Extracurricular Activities	68%		*				*	

Statistical significance ($p < .005$) is shown by an asterisk.

Additional factors that might affect students' persistence or academic success include performance expectations, working and living off campus, and participation in extra-curricular activities. Fifty-six percent of students thought they would perform better than average in courses, but the percentages varied by students' SAT scores and sex (64% of men expected to do well compared with 51% of women). Nearly one-third of students anticipated working more

than ten hours a week, but students from less affluent families (earning less than \$60,000) were more likely to work than others. Some factors were affected by demographics in unexpected ways. Students planning to study Computer Science or Engineering were more likely to plan to live on campus for their sophomore year, as were students who selected UCSC as their third choice. White students were more likely to plan move off campus within a year than other students. Over two-thirds of students intended to participate in extracurricular activities, but computer science and engineering students were less likely plan to do so (56%), and fewer men (65%) planned to participate than women (71%).

Students were asked if they had plans to transfer to another school, and if so, where they planned to apply, and why. As in 1995 and 1997, about 20% of new frosh came to UCSC with the expectation of transferring. Overall, about 400 respondents were considering transferring, and many (129) gave two or more reasons for wanting to leave. The most common reason (given by 133 students) was to attend a school that offered their choice of major or a stronger major program than available at UCSC. For example, within the Arts, about 20 respondents were looking for a Film program, and most were hoping to attend UCLA. Others wanted specific Art, Design or Music majors. Eighteen students wanted to major in Business. Within the sciences, 26 students thought they might want to pursue Computer Science or Engineering fields at other schools, and 17 students chose an assortment of health-related fields not offered at UC Santa Cruz (Nursing, Physical Therapy, Naturopathy, Physiology, Pre-med, Pre-vet, Dentistry). Overall, about two-thirds of students looking for more specific or stronger major programs were thinking about applying to other UC campuses.

The second most common reason for wanting to transfer was to attend a school closer to home (cited by 99 students). The third reason, given by about 85 students, was 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 17 students were thinking of transferring to less expensive schools. A variety of other reasons included wanting to attend the first choice school, experience new environments, and live closer to friends. An additional 16 students planned to transfer to Berkeley through the Dual Degree program.

ADJUSTMENT TO CAMPUS

Students were presented with a list of 18 common difficulties new students may face and asked to indicate which they had experienced. The new freshmen were also asked to comment on any large problems they had had. Although seven in ten new students (69% in 1999 and 70% in 1997) reported experiencing one or more difficulties, very few described substantial problems. The percentage of respondents who had experienced most of the difficulties listed on the survey remained fairly constant between 1997 and 1999 despite a larger freshmen class (see Table 10). Among the changes in 1999, more students reported inadequate financial aid awards than in 1997, and many more students had trouble finding footpaths, buildings and rooms. In contrast, the Teleslug enrollment system appeared to be less of a problem for students in 1999 than in 1997 (perhaps related to the availability of an on-line Web based Teleslug option).

Among the major problems students described were financial aid issues and orientation sessions. For instance, thirty-six freshmen anticipated large problems because of inadequate financial aid awards, and a few were disturbed that their final offer was less than estimated. Others noted that UCSC's financial aid offer arrived very late – often after other schools' offers. In some cases awards were too late to cover books and necessities. A number of students were not able participate in summer orientation sessions, which were offered during only one month in 1999. Students who attended both summer and fall sessions found the presentations repetitive. Others suggested the material presented could be condensed to cut down on the length of the process.

Additionally twenty-nine students reported major difficulties finding their way around campus. Many of these students suggested larger and more detailed maps. Course enrollment using the Teleslug system was another area of difficulty for some students, and several had problems with the limited hours of service. Other large difficulties involved receipt or processing of high school transcripts, which in some cases interfered with enrollment in classes. As always, there were some large problems with housing or roommate assignments (two students complained about smokers and non-smokers placed in the same room).

Table 10
Percentage of New Freshmen Reporting Common Difficulties

Type of Difficulty	1997		1999		
	Number Students	Percent Students	Number Students	Percent Students	Large Problems
Using campus maps	213	16%	459	24%	29
Amount of financial aid award	267	20%	432	22%	36
Course enrollment advising	245	18%	319	17%	10
Using Teleslug	284	21%	301	16%	20
Transcript processing	171	13%	249	13%	15
Timing of financial aid award	158	12%	221	12%	23
Orientation Sessions	na	na	199	10%	49
Information about colleges	107	8%	177	9%	7
Financial aid counseling	121	9%	166	9%	9
Housing assignment	103	8%	164	9%	9
Roommate assignment	94	7%	135	7%	13
Accessibility of staff	97	7%	99	5%	--
Other advising	70	5%	99	5%	--
College assignment	47	4%	96	5%	4
Timing of housing offer	76	6%	93	5%	--
Timing of admission offer	54	4%	72	4%	1
Helpfulness of staff	50	4%	69	4%	5

Other Concerns

Almost all freshmen (93%) also reported having initial concerns or worries about their new environment, but very few students had any major concerns (Table 11). Students commonly thought about choosing classes and time management, as well as managing finances and setting personal or academic goals. Those concerns were fairly stable from 1997 to 1999, and seem reasonable for freshmen just settling in to a new academic community. The largest change was an increase in the percentage of new freshmen worried about finding their way around campus, up from 41% in 1997 to 49% in 1999. That increase was consistent with an increase in difficulties understanding campus maps (Table 10).

Table 11
Student's Concerns by Percentage of Respondents

Type of Concern	1997	1999	Large (N) 1999
Choosing classes	51%	53%	12
Time management	47%	49%	7
Finding way around campus	41%	49%	11
Budgeting finances	39%	41%	10
Setting academic or personal goals	36%	35%	1
Balancing work with school	34%	35%	3
Finding a social niche	31%	29%	1
Dining hall food	28%	29%	17
How to find work	25%	27%	6
Where to go for help	24%	24%	2
Number of telephone jacks	20%	21%	10
Feeling isolated	19%	20%	7
Study or Library skills	19%	19%	4
Safety at night	17%	17%	7
Finding personal space in residence hall	18%	15%	11
UCSC bureaucracy	17%	13%	4
Other students' attitudes	15%	13%	2
Finding tutors	12%	12%	3
Coed bathrooms in residence halls	11%	11%	8
Use of alcohol or drugs on campus	10%	8%	4
Students' political views	6%	4%	1
General anxiety (mentioned in comments)	--	--	12
Other comments	--	--	57

About 11% (200) of respondents briefly commented on a wide variety of concerns. They included the quality of dining hall food, personal space in the residence halls, need for repairs or maintenance of housing facilities, the desire for improved housing amenities (such as telephone jacks and Ethernet connections), concerns about finding their way around campus, campus safety at night, the use of drugs on campus, choosing classes and getting into them, managing time, budgeting finances, loneliness or isolation, and general anxiety.

STUDENTS' BEST EXPERIENCES

Over 1500 students took the opportunity to comment briefly on their best experiences so far at UCSC. The majority of students said they enjoyed meeting so many new people and making friends. Students most often described people as friendly and helpful, (staff, faculty, other students and roommates), and generally seemed pleased with their early experiences. About 50 students mentioned an organized visit to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk as a special experience, and others praised their summer and fall orientation experiences. The Wilderness Orientation also stood out for those who had participated. Many others said they just enjoyed walking around campus or commented on the beautiful scenery. Experiences with drumming circles, dancing, and swimming, volleyball, tennis, and soccer teams also helped some students feel at home. Many students were enjoying their first taste of residence halls life, and a number mentioned having especially good experiences at Oakes and Porter colleges. Most students taking the Freshmen Survey had not yet attended classes and their impressions of UCSC were generally focused on their early social experiences. Students from several colleges were given the survey after instruction had begun, and about 30 spoke enthusiastically about their first classes.

RETENTION FOLLOW-UP STUDY

Most new freshmen successfully manage the early challenges of social and academic integration into UCSC. However, as of fall quarter 2000, about 14% of fall 1999 survey respondents had left UCSC. We examined variables from the 1999 Freshmen Survey to look for any relationships with retention and attrition patterns one year later, but found no clear profile of those who left. For example, there were no strong relationships between retention and common demographic factors such as ethnicity, or entering SAT scores, although men were a little more likely to leave than women (16% of men left compared to 12% of women). Students original choice of UCSC as a four-year college apparently played some part in retention. About 18% of those selecting UCSC as third choice left compared with 13% of first and second-choice students. While the percentage of new freshmen selecting UCSC as first choice declined during the 1990s, (for example from 50% in 1997 to 44% in 1999), the freshmen retention rate remained fairly steady (at about 85%) during the same time period. Early onset of difficulties and concerns apparently played no part in students' decisions to leave, and even those students experiencing many difficulties or large difficulties early in the fall quarter were no more likely to leave than other students. The strongest predictor of leaving appears to be the intention to transfer. About 21% of students that intended to transfer to another school did not return for their second year, compared with 12% of students that made no mention of transferring.

DISCUSSION

This study examined new freshmen's decisions to attend UCSC and their early adjustment to the campus community. Many factors contributed to students' decisions to attend UC Santa Cruz, and as in previous years an informal visit to the campus topped the list. The Office of Admissions strongly encourages prospective students and families to participate in organized campus tours, which point out the most important and attractive campus features, and allow prospective students to ask questions of current student guides. But it may also be worthwhile to accommodate informal visitors with large, easy to read campus maps that are widely distributed and easily available. Perhaps the locations of campus amenities such as the bookstore, restaurant, coffee shops, library, recreation facilities and arboretum could be highlighted. Visitors might also be notified about campus conditions, such as terrain, the need for comfortable shoes, campus shuttle schedules, and limited parking. Formal campus tours should continue to be widely advertised and made available as the easiest and most comprehensive introduction to campus, but the popularity of informal exploring will most likely continue to be one of the most important influences on college choice for many students.

Well over half of new freshmen who chose UCSC were drawn to the high quality education at the UC. Santa Cruz' spectacular Bay area setting, commitment to undergraduate teaching and strong major programs appear to be especially compelling features of this campus. Despite these characteristics, about one in five new freshmen came to UCSC considering transferring to another college or UC campus, and a significant percentage of those students did leave after one year. Students planning to leave often liked the campus but preferred a major program offered elsewhere, or wanted to be closer to home. Nonetheless, most of the students who came with the intention of transferring remained on campus after one year, and it is very likely that they changed their minds once they became better acquainted with and more attached to the campus.

As in previous years, new students' largest concerns were about choosing classes, time management, finding their way around campus, and budgeting finances. UCSC offers a Summer Orientation program where students learn to use the schedule of classes, and have the chance to talk to advisors about classes. Orientation sessions during the fall quarter again offer the chance for advisement. Given the importance of academic satisfaction in students' educational outcomes, it is possible that the issue of advising needs to be addressed in another study. Freshmen should also become acquainted with opportunities to learn time and money management skills that may be available on campus. Students who are especially concerned about finances should be encouraged to learn what campus resources may be available to help them, especially low-income students who bear an extra burden because of worries about paying for college. Additional walking tours of campus, and better campus maps might help new students to feel more at ease as they find their way around during the first weeks of the quarter.

Results from this survey indicate that students were very enthusiastic about being on campus. Given the complex requirements of admission, orientation to campus life, social adjustments, financial responsibility, and enrolling in classes, new students had remarkably few major problems or concerns. This suggests that the campus staff has responded extremely well to increasing enrollments in their efforts to welcome each new class of students to UCSC.

6. How important was each factor listed below in making the decision to attend UCSC?

	Very Important	Important	Less Important	Not Sure	Not Applicable
Total Cost:	1	2	3	8	9
Overall Financial Aid Offer:	1	2	3	8	9
Amount of Financial Aid <i>Grant</i> :	1	2	3	8	9
Average Time to Complete Degree:	1	2	3	8	9
Physical Setting/Beauty of the Campus:	1	2	3	8	9
Bay Area Location of the Campus:	1	2	3	8	9
Distance to Your Home:	1	2	3	8	9
Campus Size:	1	2	3	8	9
Small Class Size/Personal Attention:	1	2	3	8	9
Commitment to Teaching Undergraduates:	1	2	3	8	9
Ethnic Diversity of Students:	1	2	3	8	9
Liberal Political Climate:	1	2	3	8	9
Reputation/Character of UCSC Students:	1	2	3	8	9
Narrative Evaluations Given in All Classes:	1	2	3	8	9
Grade Option in Most Classes	1	2	3	8	9
Availability of Specific Majors:	1	2	3	8	9
Quality of Specific Majors or Programs:	1	2	3	8	9
Preparation for Graduate School:	1	2	3	8	9
Career Preparation:	1	2	3	8	9
Access to Advanced Technologies:	1	2	3	8	9
Reputation of the Faculty:	1	2	3	8	9
Opportunities for Undergraduate Research	1	2	3	8	9
Campus Clubs, Events and Activities	1	2	3	8	9
Access to Urban Activities:	1	2	3	8	9
Campus Housing Options:	1	2	3	8	9
Athletic Programs:	1	2	3	8	9
Overall Quality of the Education:	1	2	3	8	9
Wanted to Attend a UC Campus:	1	2	3	8	9

7. What career(s) are you considering? _____

8. Circle the highest educational level attained by your parents:

	Mother	Father
Less than High School	1)	1)
Some High School	2)	2)
High School Graduate	3)	3)
Some College Courses	4)	4)
College Graduate	5)	5)
Some Graduate Courses	6)	6)
Graduate Degree	7)	7)

9. What is the highest academic degree you intend to complete at any college or university?

- 1) None
- 2) Bachelors Degree
- 3) Vocational Certificate or License
- 4) Masters Degree
- 5) Doctorate Degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)
- 6) Law Degree (LL.B. or J.D.)
- 7) Medical Doctor, Optometry, or Veterinary Medicine

10. Please estimate your parent's annual income:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Less than \$10,000 | 7) \$35,000-39,999 | 13) \$65,000-69,000 | 19) \$95,000-99,000 |
| 2) \$10,000-14,999 | 8) \$40,000-44,999 | 14) \$70,000-74,999 | 20) \$100,000-124,999 |
| 3) \$15,000-19,999 | 9) \$45,000-49,999 | 15) \$75,000-79,999 | 21) \$125,000-149,000 |
| 4) \$20,000-24,999 | 10) \$50,000-54,999 | 16) \$80,000-84,999 | 22) \$150,000-174,999 |
| 5) \$25,000-29,999 | 11) \$55,000-59,999 | 17) \$85,000-89,999 | 23) \$175,000-199,999 |
| 6) \$30,000-34,999 | 12) \$60,000-64,999 | 18) \$90,000-94,999 | 24) \$200,000 or more |

11. How concerned are you about being able to pay for four years of college?

- 1) Not Concerned
- 2) Somewhat concerned
- 3) Very concerned

12. Estimate the amount of your first year's educational expenses (room, meals, fees) you expect to cover from each source listed below. *Exclude summer expenses.*

	None	Under \$500	\$500-\$1,499	\$1,500-\$3,000	Over \$3,000
Parents or relatives:	0	1	2	3	4
Personal savings:	0	1	2	3	4
Grants or Scholarships:	0	1	2	3	4
Loans:	0	1	2	3	4
Work while in school:	0	1	2	3	4

13. I expect that I will (*please mark all that apply*):

- A) Take over 4 years to graduate
- B) Need tutoring in math courses
- C) Need help with writing
- D) Do better than average in courses
- E) Work at job more than 10 hours/week during the school year
- F) Transfer to another school
- G) Take time off from school (for travel, job, etc.)
- H) Live off campus next year
- I) Need advising before selecting a major
- J) Participate in campus-sponsored clubs, sports, recreation, or organizations

14. If you are planning to transfer to another school, where will you apply? _____
 What are your reasons?

15. Did you have problems with any of the following? (*If yes, mark all that apply.*)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A) Transcript processing | G) Information about colleges | M) Amount of financial aid award |
| B) Timing of admissions offer | H) Timing of housing offer | N) Timing of financial aid award |
| C) Advanced Placement Exams | I) College assignment | O) Financial aid counseling |
| D) Course enrollment advising | J) Housing assignment | P) Accessibility of staff |
| E) Other advising | K) Roommate assignment | Q) Helpfulness of staff |
| F) Using Teleslug | L) Using campus maps | R) Orientation Sessions |

If you have had any large problems with these or other issues, please explain:

16. Have you had concerns about any of the following? (*If yes, mark all that apply.*)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A) Choosing classes | H) UCSC bureaucracy | O) Feeling isolated or lonely |
| B) Balancing work with school | I) Finding tutors | P) Number telephone jacks in room |
| C) Budgeting finances | J) Where to go for help | Q) Use of alcohol or drugs on campus |
| D) Time management | K) How to find work | R) Safety at night |
| E) Academic or personal goals | L) Others students' attitudes | S) Dining hall food |
| F) Finding a social niche | M) Students' political views | T) Personal space in residence hall |
| G) Finding way around campus | N) Study or library skills | U) Coed bathrooms in residence hall |

If you are having any major concerns about these or other issues, please explain:

17. Which of the following activities or programs would you participate in if they were available?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| A) Intramural Sports in: _____ | E) Intensive Foreign Language Programs |
| B) Honors Courses | F) Career Internships |
| C) Non-credit College Success Course | G) Campus Learning/Tutorial Center |
| D) Counseling with a Peer Advisor | H) Take Freshmen Classes with Same Students |

18. What are the best experiences you have had at UCSC so far? Does the campus meet your expectations?

Thank You! Please return the survey to your leader/instructor, or to:

Planning & Budget, 3rd Floor Kerr Hall