



9-1-1999

# Seniors Assess their Experience at Western Washington University: Senior Survey Results from 1993 through 1998

Gary (Gary Russell) McKinney  
*Western Washington University*

Joseph E. Trimble  
*Western Washington University*

Jacqueline M. Andrieu-Parker  
*Western Washington University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch\\_docs](https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs)

 Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

McKinney, Gary (Gary Russell); Trimble, Joseph E.; and Andrieu-Parker, Jacqueline M., "Seniors Assess their Experience at Western Washington University: Senior Survey Results from 1993 through 1998" (1999). *Office of Survey Research*. 441.  
[https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch\\_docs/441](https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs/441)

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Institutes, Centers, and Offices at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Office of Survey Research by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact [westerncedar@wwu.edu](mailto:westerncedar@wwu.edu).



Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing • Western Washington University

Volume 4, Issue 6

September, 1999

# SENIORS ASSESS THEIR EXPERIENCE AT WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY: SENIOR SURVEY RESULTS FROM 1993 THROUGH 1998

Prepared by Gary R. McKinney, Joseph E. Trimble,  
and Jacque M. Andrieu-Parker

## INTRODUCTION

This report combines findings from five Senior Surveys, administered during the spring quarters of 1993, and also 1995 through 1998. The surveys are longitudinal, resurveying in their senior year those students who had taken the freshmen survey four years previously. The survey form utilized was the College Student Survey (CSS), developed by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles. The CSS was designed to serve as a follow-up to the Student Information Form—the first-year, in-coming student survey questionnaire also developed by HERI—or to stand alone as a separate instrument. Both the senior and freshmen surveys profile student characteristics, attitudes, values, educational achievement, and goals.

When appropriate, this report makes some comparisons to national findings. In 1998,

overall, 167 institutions and 35,657 respondents participated in the CSS. For this report, however, comparisons will be limited to the institutions within the category assigned to Western by HERI: public, four-year institutions of higher education not granting Ph.D.'s. In 1998, this category had ten participants.

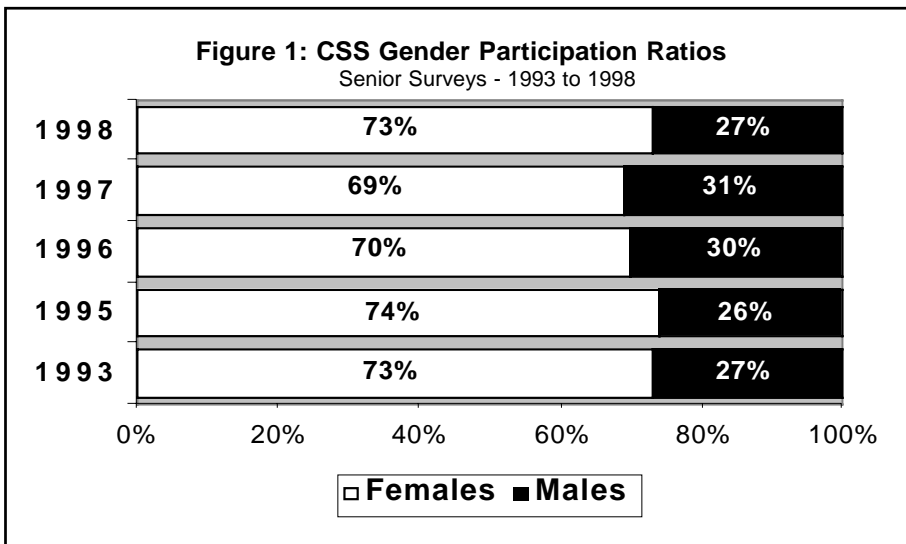
The number of respondents in 1998 was 175, compared to 448 in 1997, 304 in 1996 and 1995, and 213 in 1993. Beginning in the fall quarter, 1999, the CSS administration will include all graduating seniors, whether or not they had taken the Freshman Survey.

**OF SPECIAL NOTE:** *For the combined five-year data, 85.8% of seniors noted they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall college experience, while 76.7% noted they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall quality of instruction. When asked if they would enroll at Western again, 86.2% of seniors indicated they would.*

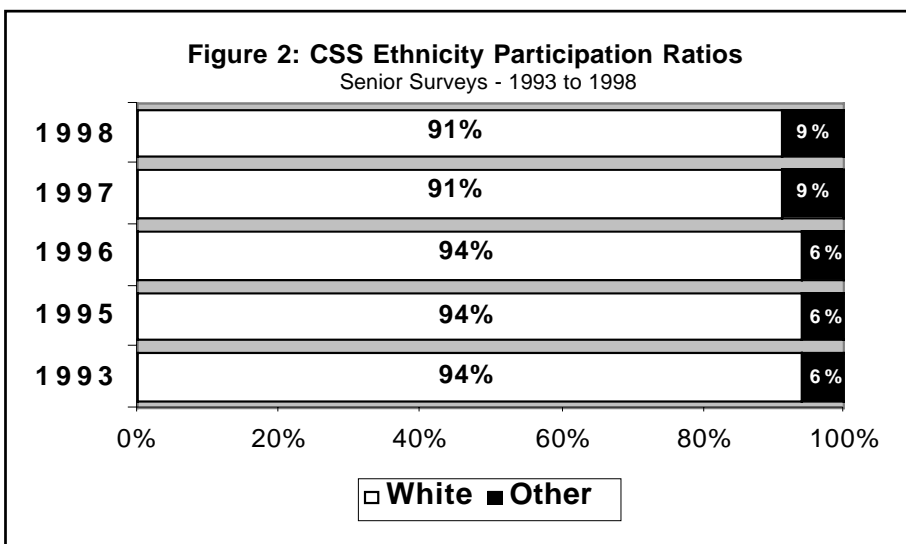


**FOR THE COMBINED SURVEY DATA, NEARLY ALL SENIOR SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ENROLLED AS FULL-TIME STUDENTS (99.5%) AS FRESHMEN. LIKEWISE, MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ENROLLED AS FULL-TIME STUDENTS (94.8%) AS SENIORS, THOUGH SOME WERE ALSO ENROLLED AS PART-TIME STUDENTS (5.2%).**

**SENIOR SURVEYS WERE ADMINISTERED IN THE SPRING QUARTERS TO STUDENTS WHO HAD TAKEN THE FRESHMAN SURVEY FOUR YEARS BEFORE.**



**FOR THE COMBINED SURVEY DATA, SENIOR RESPONDENTS WERE ALMOST ALL 22 OR 23 YEARS OLD (97.7%).**

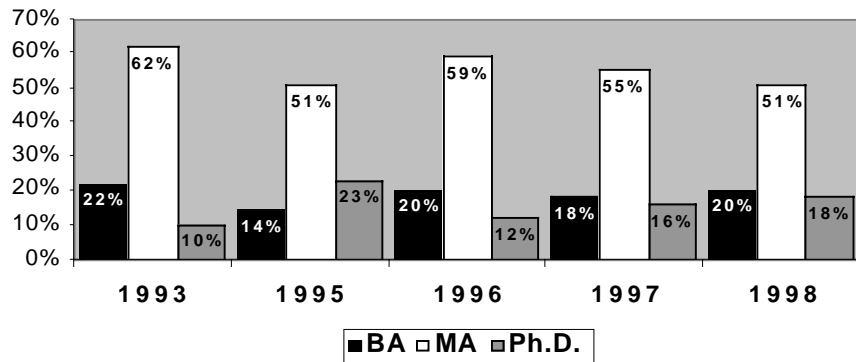


**AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY, 50.9% OF 1998 SENIORS SURVEYED HAD EARNED BA DEGREES, COMPARED TO 48.4% IN 1997, 44.1% IN 1996, AND 41.3% IN BOTH 1994 AND 1993.**

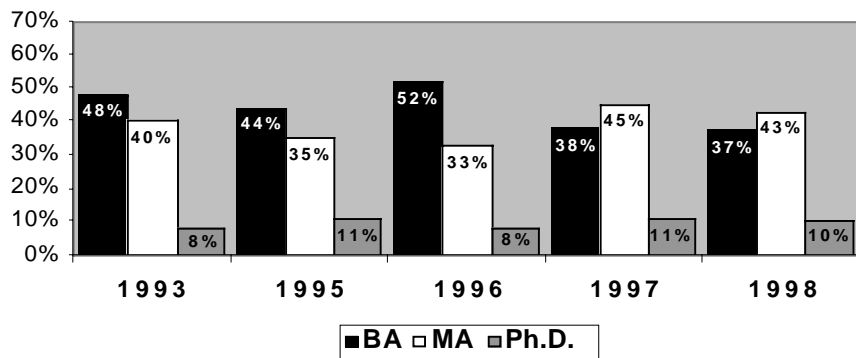
**FOR THE COMBINED SURVEY DATA, AS FRESHMEN, MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS ANTICIPATED THEY WOULD EARN A BA DEGREE (81.3%). As SENIORS, JUST UNDER HALF HAD ACTUALLY EARNED A BA DEGREE (45.3%), WHILE JUST OVER HALF ANTICIPATED THEY WOULD BE RETURNING TO COLLEGE AS FULL-TIME STUDENTS IN THE FOLLOWING FALL (54.2%).**

**IN THE 1998 SURVEY, 6.3% OF RESPONDENTS INDICATED THEY HAD EARNED AN AA DEGREE, COMPARED TO 9.4% IN 1997, 11.5% IN 1996, 10.6% IN 1995 AND 13.1% IN 1993.**

**Figure 3: Degree Aspirations as Freshmen**  
Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998



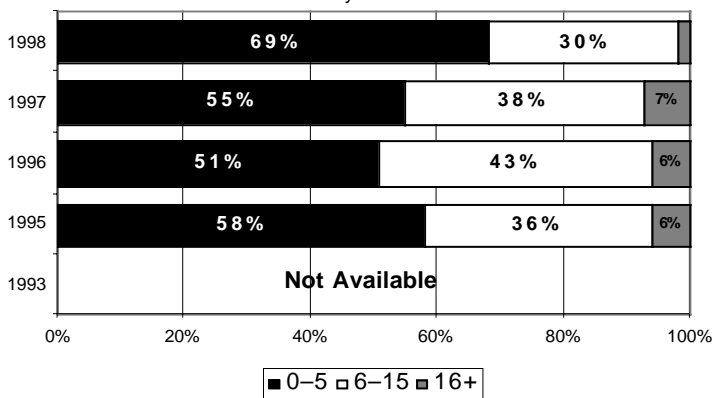
**Figure 4: Degree Aspirations as Seniors**  
Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998



**THE FRESHMAN SURVEY IS GIVEN TO FIRST-TIME, ENTERING STUDENTS BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN—MOST FILL OUT THE FORM DURING SUMMER START, BUT SOME ALSO DURING FALL ORIENTATION. THUS WHEN FRESHMEN RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES OVER THE COURSE OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR, THEY ARE REFERRING TO THEIR LAST YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL. AS MENTIONED, THE SENIOR SURVEY IS GIVEN DURING THE SPRING QUARTER. THUS WHEN SENIORS RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR ACTIVITIES OVER THE COURSE OF THE PREVIOUS YEAR, THEY ARE REFERRING TO THEIR LAST YEAR OF COLLEGE.**

**Figure 5: Hrs/wk studying as HS seniors**

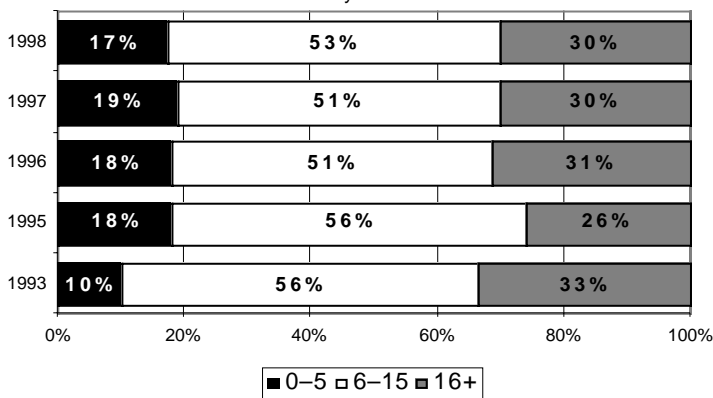
Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998



**FOR THE COMBINED DATA, MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS, AS FRESHMEN, INDICATED THEY HAD NOT COMPLETED HOMEWORK ON TIME IN HIGH SCHOOL (68.0%). LESS, AS SENIORS, INDICATED THEY HAD NOT COMPLETED HOMEWORK ON TIME IN COLLEGE (53.9%). NEARLY ALL SURVEY RESPONDENTS HAD STUDIED WITH OTHER STUDENTS, WHETHER AS FRESHMEN OR SENIORS (92.3% AS FRESHMEN; 97.3% AS SENIORS).**

**Figure 6: Hrs/wk studying as college seniors**

Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998



FOR THE COMBINED DATA, AS FRESHMEN, **33.7%** OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS INDICATED THEY HAD BEEN BORED IN CLASS WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL. As SENIORS, **30.6%** INDICATED THEY HAD BEEN BORED IN CLASS WHILE IN COLLEGE.

ON THE 1998 SURVEY, **69.2%** OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY HAD TAKEN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE SINCE ENTERING COLLEGE. ON THE 1993 SURVEY, ONLY **52.1%** OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY HAD TAKEN AN INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSE SINCE ENTERING COLLEGE.

FOR THE COMBINED DATA, MOST SURVEY RESPONDENTS, AS FRESHMEN, ANTICIPATED THEY WOULD GET A JOB WHILE IN COLLEGE (**58.3%**). ABOUT THE SAME PERCENTAGE, AS SENIORS, INDICATED THEY HAD HAD A JOB WHILE IN COLLEGE (**59.9%**).

Figure 7: Hrs/wk working as HS senior  
Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998

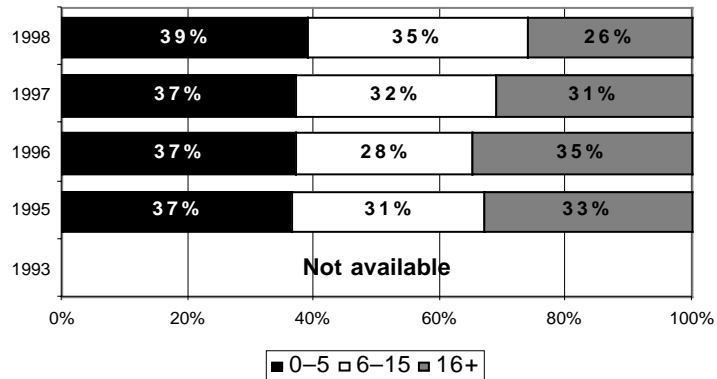
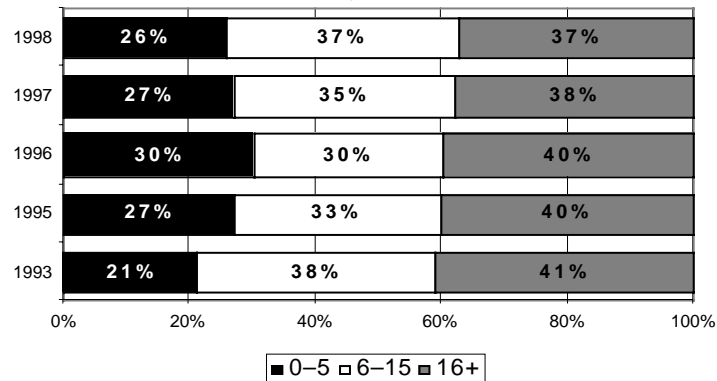
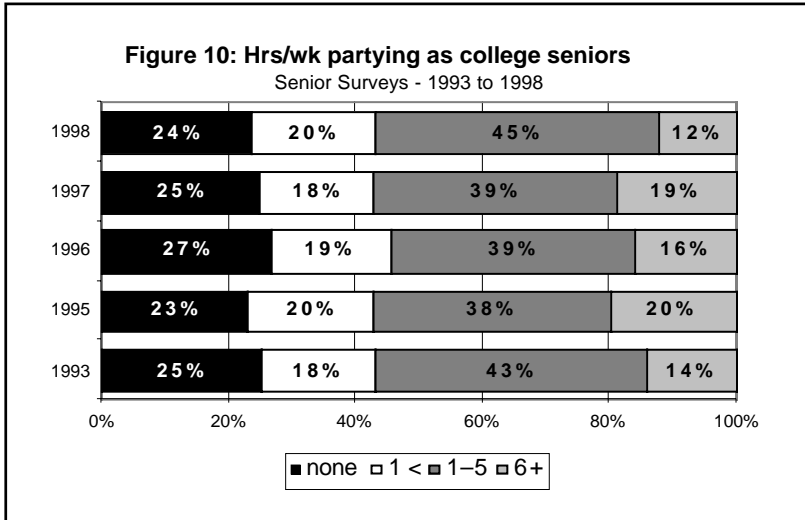


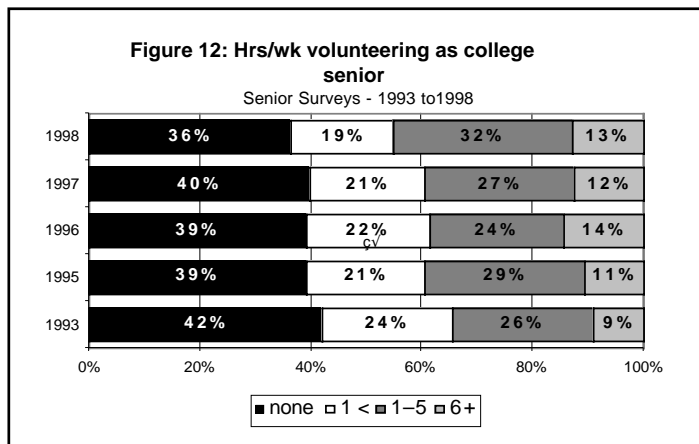
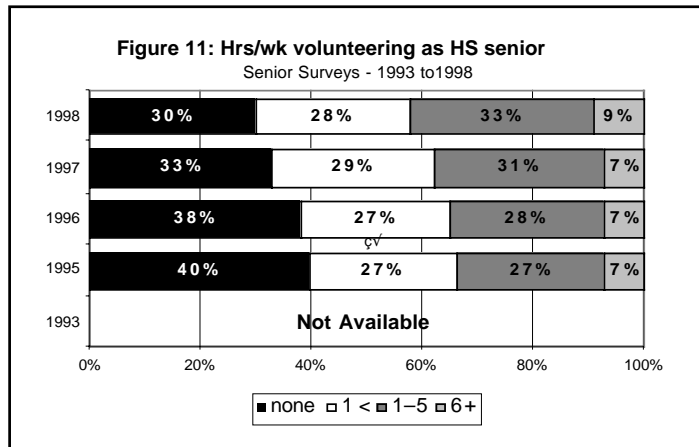
Figure 8: Hrs/wk working as college seniors  
Senior Surveys - 1993 to 1998





FOR THE COMBINED DATA, **77.3%** OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY DRANK BEER OVER THE LAST YEAR, AND **84.3%** INDICATED THEY DRANK WINE OR LIQUOR. WHILE THE PERCENTAGE OF SENIORS INDICATING THEY DRANK BEER REMAINED CONSISTENT OVER THE FIVE SURVEY ADMINISTRATIONS, THE PERCENTAGE INDICATING THEY DRANK WINE OR LIQUOR INCREASED FROM **76.1%** IN 1993 TO **87.9%** IN 1998.

FOR THE COMBINED DATA, **68.0%** OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY HAD PERFORMED SOME VOLUNTEER WORK—NOT ON A WEEKLY BASIS PARTICULARLY, BUT AT SOME POINT OVER THE LAST YEAR. FOR THE **1998 SURVEY**, **76.9%** OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY HAD PERFORMED SOME VOLUNTEER WORK OVER THE PAST YEAR, COMPARED TO **62.7%** IN **1993**.



**FOR THE COMBINED DATA, 54.8% OF IN-COMING FRESHMEN ANTICIPATED THEY WERE VERY LIKELY TO BE SATISFIED WITH WESTERN. THIS PERCENTAGE HAS VARIED SOMEWHAT OVER THE FIVE SURVEY ADMINISTRATIONS, FROM A HIGH IN 1993 OF 61.2% TO A LOW IN 1997 OF 49.5% (THE 1998 FINDINGS WAS 56.1%). AS SENIORS, 85.7% INDICATED THEY WERE SATISFIED WITH WESTERN. THIS PERCENTAGE HAS REMAINED CONSISTENT OVER THE FIVE SURVEY ADMINISTRATIONS. SPECIFIC AREAS OF SATISFACTION ARE LISTED BELOW IN TABLE 1.**

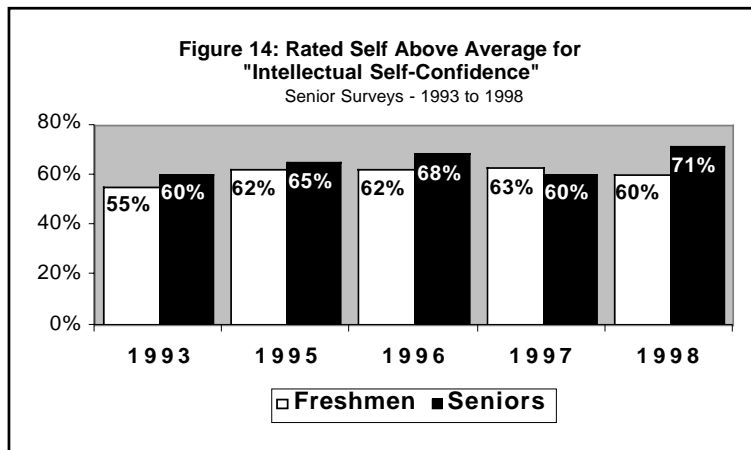
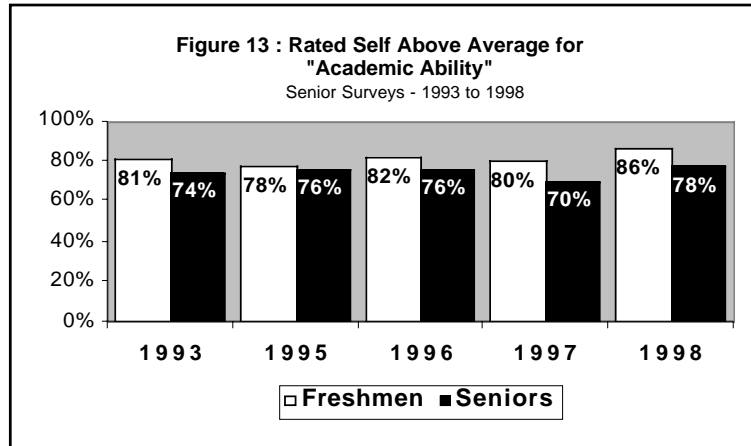
**Table 1: College experiences noted as satisfactory or very satisfactory**

	1993		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA
<b>Overall</b>										
Overall college experience	83%	80%	86%	81%	88%	79%	84%	81%	88%	84%
Overall quality of instruction	<b>77%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b>Courses</b>										
Courses in major field	88%	85%	92%	88%	89%	88%	87%	86%	91%	88%
Humanities courses	<b>72%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>63%</b>
Social science courses	71%	70%	72%	67%	49%	66%	68%	63%	69%	58%
Science and math courses	<b>53%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Services</b>										
Academic advising	32%	46%	37%	50%	36%	52%	30%	48%	29%	48%
Campus health services	<b>55%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Career counseling/ advising	29%	44%	38%	49%	33%	49%	36%	43%	37%	47%
Financial aid services	<b>28%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>51%</b>
Job placement services	38%	38%	39%	37%	27%	44%	32%	35%	30%	42%
Student housing	<b>52%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Tutorial help	58%	65%	49%	64%	48%	64%	49%	54%	45%	54%
<b>Facilities</b>										
Computer facilities	59%	63%	60%	69%	61%	58%	55%	60%	64%	63%
Lab facilities & equipment	<b>41%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Library facilities	50%	62%	49%	64%	46%	66%	42%	56%	49%	60%
<b>Other</b>										
Ability to find mentor	54%	60%	56%	65%	53%	66%	56%	59%	58%	67%
Amount of contact w/faculty	<b>55%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>61%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71%</b>
Interaction with other students	83%	81%	82%	84%	79%	83%	76%	78%	85%	82%
Sense of community on campus	<b>53%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>51%</b>
Class size	62%	69%	52%	73%	56%	75%	56%	69%	61%	74%
Diversity of faculty	<b>27%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>40%</b>
Relevance of coursework to life	42%	57%	54%	59%	53%	57%	50%	55%	53%	60%

NOTE: Comparisons are with peer institutions, between 8-10 others per year.



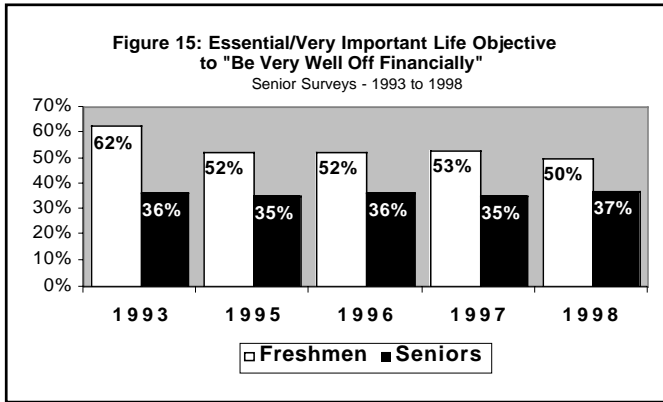
**SURVEY RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED TO RATE THEMSELVES AS COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE PERSON THEIR AGE. FOR THE COMBINED DATA, AS FRESHMEN, 46.1% OF RESPONDENTS RATED THEMSELVES ABOVE AVERAGE OR IN THE HIGHEST 10% IN MATHEMATICS ABILITY; AS SENIORS, 39.5% RATED THEMSELVES ABOVE AVERAGE OR IN THE HIGHEST 10% IN MATHEMATICS ABILITY. AS FRESHMEN, 54.7% RATED THEMSELVES ABOVE AVERAGE OR IN THE HIGHEST 10% IN WRITING ABILITY; AS SENIORS, 62.5% RATED THEMSELVES ABOVE AVERAGE OR IN THE HIGHEST 10%.**



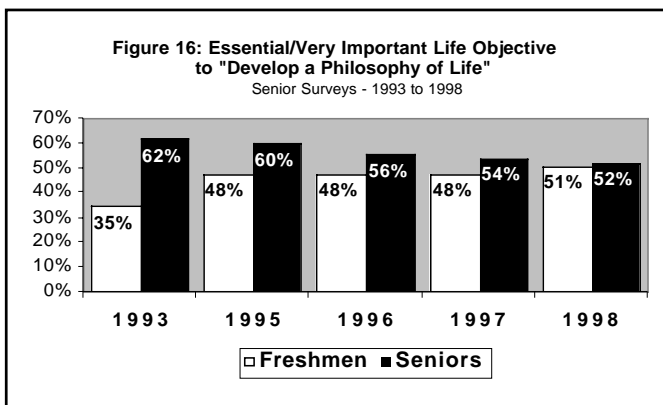
**Table 2: Percent of seniors reporting "much stronger" abilities than in their freshman year**

Item	1993		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA	WWU	USA
Ability to think critically	29%	26%	30%	31%	29%	35%	29%	26%	31%	31%
<b>Ability to work cooperatively</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Analytical and problem-solving skills	21%	21%	24%	27%	23%	30%	26%	24%	27%	30%
<b>Foreign language ability</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>
General knowledge	49%	37%	48%	45%	50%	46%	47%	37%	46%	46%
<b>Interpersonal skills</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>
Mathematical skills	7%	10%	7%	13%	6%	17%	7%	10%	7%	12%
<b>Public speaking ability</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Religious beliefs and convictions	14%	10%	10%	9%	15%	13%	15%	10%	12%	11%
<b>Reading speed and comprehension</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Writing skills	17%	17%	21%	19%	17%	20%	16%	16%	20%	18%
<b>Knowledge of people from different races/cultures</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>
Knowledge of a particular field	73%	48%	73%	57%	71%	64%	73%	53%	80%	66%

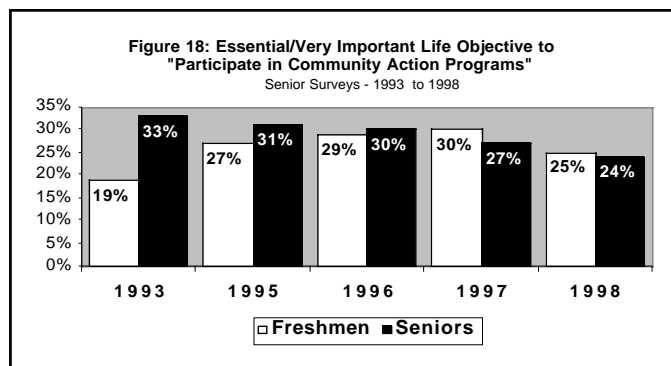
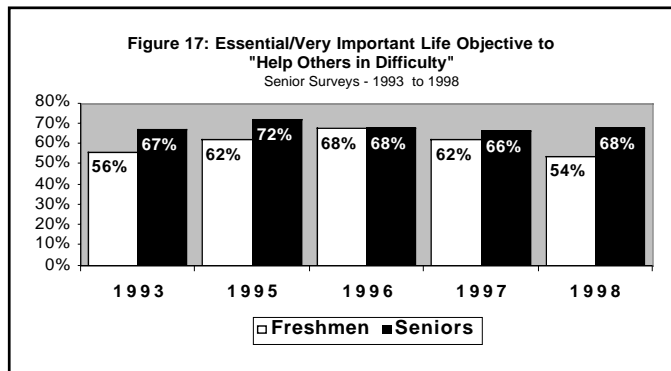
NOTE: Comparisons are with peer institutions, between 8-10 others per year.



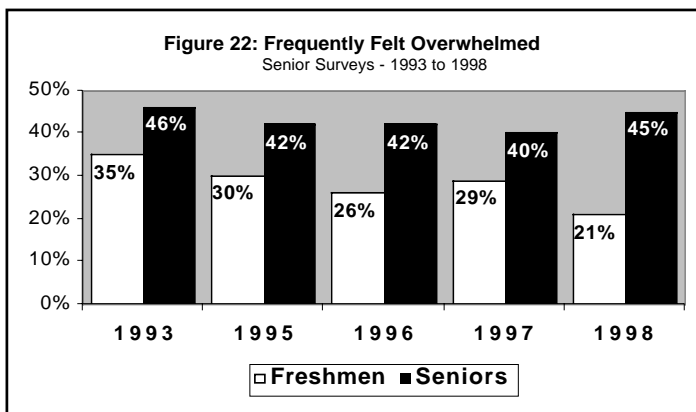
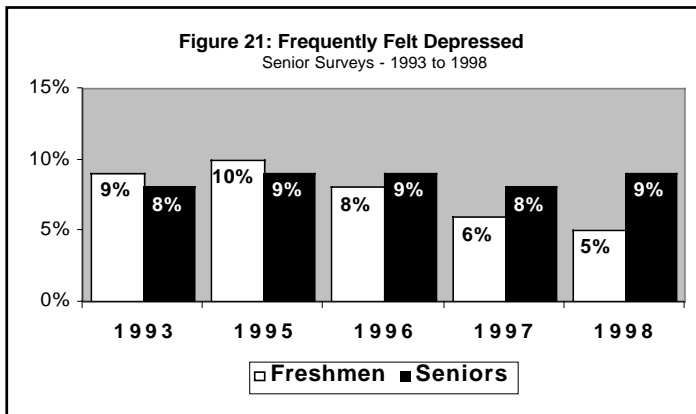
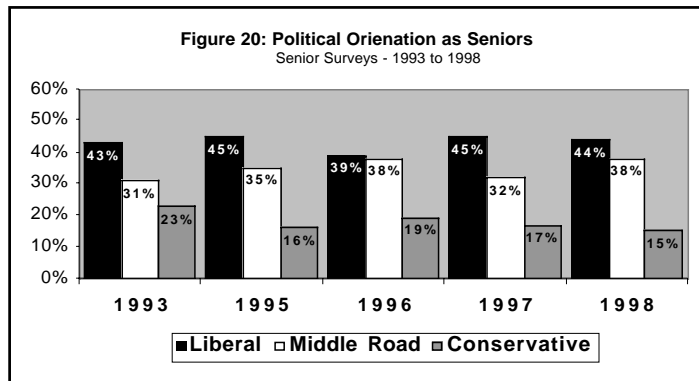
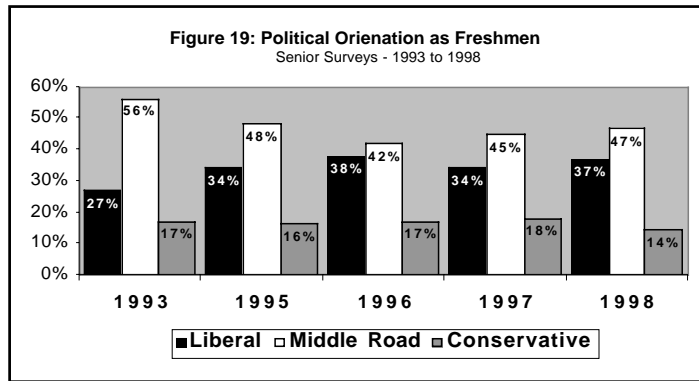
**FOR FRESHMEN, THE IMPORTANCE OF "BECOMING SUCCESSFUL IN A BUSINESS OF MY OWN" HAS REMAINED CONSISTENT (25% FOR THE COMBINED DATA). FOR SENIORS, IT HAS BECOME LESS SO. IN 1993, 26% OF SENIORS INDICATED IT WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY IMPORTANT TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR OWN BUSINESS, WHILE IN 1998 THE FIGURE WAS ONLY 13%.**



**SENIORS HAVE INCREASINGLY PLACED LESS IMPORTANCE ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO SOCIETY. IN 1995, 52.6% OF SENIORS INDICATED IT WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY IMPORTANT TO "INFLUENCE SOCIAL VALUES" COMPARED TO 35.6% IN 1998; ALSO IN 1995, 22.5% OF SENIORS INDICATED IT WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY IMPORTANT TO "INFLUENCE POLITICAL STRUCTURE" COMPARED TO 11.5% IN 1998.**



**FOR THE COMBINED DATA, FRESHMEN, AT 39.1%, WERE LESS LIKELY TO AGREE THAT PRE-MARITAL SEX WAS OKAY, COMPARED TO 52.2% OF SENIORS. SIMILARLY, FRESHMEN, AT 29.2%, WERE LESS LIKELY TO AGREE WITH LEGALIZING MARIJUANA, COMPARED TO 46.4% OF SENIORS.**



**SENIORS APPEAR TO BE GETTING LESS AMBITIOUS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN 1995, 44% OF SENIORS INDICATED IT WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY IMPORTANT TO “OBTAIN RECOGNITION FROM COLLEAGUES”; BY 1997, THAT FIGURE HAD FALLEN TO 34%. ALSO, IN 1995, 61% OF SENIORS INDICATED IT WAS ESSENTIAL OR VERY IMPORTANT TO “BECOME AN AUTHORITY IN MY FIELD”; BY 1998, THAT FIGURE HAD FALLEN TO 48%.**

**IN THE LAST TWO SURVEY YEARS, 64.1% OF SENIORS INDICATED THEY HAD CHANGED THEIR MAJOR SINCE ENTERING COLLEGE. AS FRESHMEN, ONLY 23.6% THOUGHT THEY WOULD CHANGE THEIR MAJOR WHILE IN COLLEGE.**

**Table 3: Major field as reported in freshman and senior years**

Major	1993		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	Frosh	Senior	Frosh	Senior	Frosh	Senior	Frosh	Senior	Frosh	Senior
biological sciences	2%	5%	9%	12%	8%	7%	8%	8%	11%	12%
<b>business</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>14%</b>
education	13%	14%	20%	15%	20%	13%	17%	12%	19%	13%
<b>engineering</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>
English	3%	8%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	4%	3%	6%
<b>health professional</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2%</b>
history or political science	2%	4%	4%	8%	5%	8%	3%	8%	4%	4%
<b>humanities</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>3%</b>
fine arts	8%	9%	4%	5%	5%	6%	6%	4%	4%	4%
<b>mathematics or statistics</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
physical science	2%	3%	4%	2%	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%	3%
<b>social science</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>18%</b>
other technical	3%	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	5%
<b>other non-technical</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>11%</b>
undecided	12%	1%	10%	0%	15%	0%	12%	0%	15%	0%

**Table 4: How often seniors felt professors frequently provided:**

	1996	1997	1998
encouragement for graduate/professional school	15%	19%	16%
<b>opportunity to work on a research project</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>
advice about educational program	19%	20%	16%
<b>respect (treated like a colleague/peer)</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>47%</b>
opportunity to publish	2%	2%	2%
<b>emotional support and encouragement</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>
a letter of recommendation	12%	12%	14%
<b>assistance to improve study skills</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>
honest feedback about skills and abilities	28%	26%	24%
<b>intellectual challenge and stimulation</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>49%</b>
opportunity to discuss coursework	38%	39%	44%

**IN 1998, 94.8% OF SENIORS FELT THE "FACULTY HAD TAKEN A PERSONAL INTEREST IN ME." ALSO IN 1998, 61.5% "CHALLENGED A PROFESSOR'S IDEAS IN CLASS," COMPARED TO 38.5% IN 1993. MOREOVER, IN 1998, 27.7% WERE "A GUEST IN A PROFESSOR'S HOUSE," COMPARED TO 18.9% IN 1993.**

## AFTERWORD

When reviewing these findings, it is vital to keep in mind who the survey participants were. First, respondents were students, mostly female, who filled out a Freshman Survey form upon entering Western, almost all at SummerStart, Western's summer orientation program. Second, as a mailout survey, respondents had to make an effort to participate (the response rate, at about 55%, was good, yet may not be representative). Third, an average of 288 respondents per year participated in the Senior Surveys, a small percentage of the number of students who entered Western in the fall quarters of the years the Freshman Survey was administered. And finally, about 50% of respondents indicated they had earned a Bachelor's degree at the time of the survey administration. This last issue is most revealing, as the four-year graduation rate for in-coming, first-time freshmen overall is between 20 to 24%. In other words, the cohort of students participating in the Senior Survey appear somewhat set apart from students in their class overall.

Most likely, those survey participants who were graduates earned BA rather than BS degrees, as the graduation rates for students earning BS degree is lower than that for those earning BA degrees. Indeed, about 73% of respondents indicated as majors academic areas that grant BA degrees, compared to about 27% granting BS degrees. Moreover, as seniors fewer of the Senior Survey participants indicated they were Education majors than had anticipated they would be as freshmen—another area where four-year graduation rates are low.

This profile of survey respondents thus colors some of the more obvious findings; for instance, that Western has had a "liberalizing" effect on students. It certainly appears true that respondents to this survey considered themselves more "liberal" politically as seniors than as freshmen, but is this true for the population of Western students overall? The answer to this question will likely be addressed in the next round of survey administrations, as the role of the Senior Survey (formally called the Student Information Form) changes from being the survey of a limited number of fourth-year students to one that all graduating seniors will be asked to fill out.

As for the current, and former, Senior Survey participants, Western appears to have done a good job overall of providing for their higher education. Most are pleased with the overarching experience provided by Western, and most indicate they would reenroll at Western if they had to do it over again.



Published by:

**OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND TESTING**

Dr. Joseph E. Trimble, Director

For copies of Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing (OIAT) technical reports, Focus Research Summaries, InfoFacts, or Dialogue forum discussions, please contact Gary McKinney:

Western Washington University, 516 High Street MS:9010, Bellingham, WA 98225

Phone: (360) 650-3409; FAX: (360) 650-6893; e-mail: garyr@cc.wwu.edu

Web page: <http://www.wwu.edu/~assess>

---