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# Group 8 Summary of Transcript

Western Washington University. Office of Survey Research

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# Freshmen Enrollment Focus Groups

## Summary of Group 8

Conducted February 28, 2008

Group 8. Ten students participated in the eighth focus group, which was defined by low fall state support credits and assignment to the business and economics advising group. Six participants are female and four male, three are students of color, and five transferred credit from high school. None of the students participated in an FYE or FIG, and none are in the honors program. Nine students attended Summerstart, and one participated in fall athletics. All took fewer than 15 credits in the fall: five took 12 credits, three took 13, and two took 14.

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### Introductions

**First, let's go around the room and say a little about yourself—What major you were interested in when you first started at Western and whether that's different now, and your educational plans for the future (do you plan to stay at Western, and how many years until you graduate?)**

Students selected for this focus group were assigned to a business and economics Summerstart advising group. However, only three of the ten students are certain that they want to major in business (or marketing). Three students are undecided as to major, although one is leaning toward business and another is leaning towards international business. Four students have different majors in mind: English-Creative Writing, Communications and Philosophy, Human Services, Communications or Sociology.

Plans for graduation vary: one and a half years (two students who came in with 80 and 95 running start credits); four years (two students); four to eight years (one

student planning to attend law school); and four to five years (five students). Four of the latter five students are business majors; one is undecided as to major so it may take longer depending on the major; and one student says “something could happen, or maybe I’ll take quarter off, or I’ll study abroad.”

*I declared my major today, English/creative writing. Probably one and half years to graduation, not counting this year, because I have a lot of Running Start credits (80).*

*I’m planning on doing a double major in communications and philosophy, and I will hope to graduate within the next year. I did Running Start. I came in with 95 credits.*

*I’m going probably to be a human service major, and I’ll probably graduate in 4 years. And the Running Start kids, you’re smart. I came in with 0 credits, and all of my friends register way earlier than I do, so it’s good.*

*I’m thinking about either communications or sociology, and I’m looking at sociology because I like just asking the question “why?” and like figuring out that particular reason why whoever does the stuff that they do. It’s pretty interested. Or I’d either do communications, and with that I’d probably use it to be a lawyer, but I think that’s going to be a long, competitive road, so I’m not so sure I’m gonna do that. So I’m still undecided. I would say between like 4 to 8, going to law school and all that.*

*I’m undecided, I don’t know what I want to do, and I’m hoping I’ll only be here for like 4 to 5 years depending on my major. I figured the average was like 4, and if it takes a little longer because I don’t know what to do, it might be 5.*

*I’m unsure about my major, but I’m leaning towards business, and I think I’ll probably graduate in a little over 4 years. Just because I’m taking a really big class load this quarter and it’s difficult.*

*I’m pretty undecided. I came in with 5 credits, so I’ll probably be out of here in 4 or 5 years maybe. I like taking a low class work load, but I’m leaning towards international business.*

*I’m planning to do business, as my major, and right now I’m just trying to get the prereqs done to get into the business school, and I’m guessing I’ll graduate in 4 years.*

*I want to be a business major. I’m not sure what type of business, but I think I’ll graduate in about 4 to 5 years.*

*I want to major in marketing. I don't have any credits right now except for fall. And 4 to 5 years for graduation. Something could happen, or maybe I'll take a quarter off, or I'll study abroad.*

## Registration Experience

**Please talk about your registration experience and the reasons why you chose to take the types of classes and the number of credits that you chose when you initially registered.**

Four students signed up for fewer credits so they would not be overloaded their first quarter. One of the four students also wanted to meet people and be more social; and another says that classes were full by the time s/he registered during Summerstart so it took a long time to put together a schedule.

*I signed up for 12 credits at Summerstart and, like at Summerstart, it was kind of confusing to sign up a little bit. I didn't really know what I wanted to take and what I should take, and I also took 12 because I didn't really want to be too overloaded my first quarter, and wanted a smooth transition.*

*I took 14 credits, I think. 14 or 13 and I decided on that because I didn't want to be overwhelmed with the work load, because I didn't know how it was going to be. And I did not go to Summerstart, so that's why I didn't sign up.*

*I signed up during Summerstart, and a lot of people that I talked to advised me to take a lower class load my fall quarter so that I wouldn't be overloaded during my first college year.*

*I took 13 credits, and I just wanted to have, like, a more social freshman first quarter because, it's just like, I want to meet people and do everything and I don't want to be overloaded, but also, Summerstart was really stressful, and I couldn't find – I was like on the last day to register, and there were no classes. It took a really long time for the schedules, to get the times right and stuff.*

Two students registered for classes at home. One originally had 16 credits but dropped to 12; and the other signed up for 12 credits needed for the major.

*I didn't register at Summerstart just because I felt like they were pressuring me to pick, so I waited until I got home. And I originally had 16 credits, but I was in the class for like 2 weeks and I dropped it, and I was down to 12.*

*I signed up at home, too. I signed up for 12 just because those were classes that I needed for my planned major. That's what fit into my schedule.*

One student signed up for 12 credits because s/he heard from students as well advisors that s/he should sign up for this amount, or "not too much."

*I definitely went to Summerstart, I was really excited to sign up early. I only signed up for 12 because every single person I talked to told me to sign up for 12--A lot of people that were already in college, and then when I called and asked, like what are good classes, they said not to usually take a math class if you don't like math and not to take over, like too many credits, and they suggested 12. I signed up for more intending to drop one of my classes, just in case I didn't like the ones that I picked. And then, the only reason I knew what, like, to look at the classes and know what I want is because my friend went to Western. She told me. But no one had told me that we were going to like, you needed to know what you were going to do. It wasn't very well communicated to anyone, and like, I was the only person in my group that like, knew what they were doing and that was only because I had talked to other people that went to Western before.*

One student was advised during Summerstart to not take too many credits.

*I took 13 credits, and I took 13 because when I was at Summerstart, they had like, advised us not to take too many credits.*

One student selected GUR's and the credit load came out to 13, which s/he thought was perfect.

*Well when I went to Summerstart, I had no idea that I was supposed to be looking at classes to take already, and so once we started signing up, most people already knew what they were signing up for, so I just went through the book and picked a couple GURs and they said that the credit load was like 12 to 17, and I got 13 so I thought that was perfect.*

Another student chose classes based on interests s/he had in high school, and the schedule turned out to be 14 credits.

*The reason why I chose my class load – well, I actually went to Summerstart, too, and I just, I wanted to go there to just meet all the other freshmen and stuff. I just thought it was a good opportunity, and so the reason why I chose the classes why I did, it was just from the interests that I had in high school. You know, I like psychology, so I took a psychology class, I like communicating, so I took a communication class, and I think I took about 14 credits.*

## Academic Advising

**How did the academic advising you received at Summer Start or from the advising center affect the number of credits you registered for? Were you encouraged to enroll in 15 or more credits? What were you told about this? What was your reaction to the advice?**

Nine of the ten students in this group say they were advised during Summerstart to take *15 or fewer credits* (the 10<sup>th</sup> student did not attend Summerstart). Advisors said to take fewer credits so that students would not be too overwhelmed during the first quarter.

*In the beginning, it was just like "Well don't overload yourself." They didn't even say to take 15. They said 15 or less.*

*They emphasized taking below average, not average, because they said the average would be overwhelming.*

*I liked it because I didn't know how many we were supposed to take, like I came in with no credits, so I didn't know what the average amount was to take, and I didn't know how people handled it. So I thought it was helpful to know not to do too many because you might be overloaded. Because they also said that you can take more your next quarters to make up for it.*

*I liked that they told me I can just take 12. Like, I was like "That's cool, my first quarter, I'm not going to be stressed out." I thought it was cool that they told us that, because if I really wanted to take 15 then I would take 15. Or 17. But I just chose to take 12 because I wanted a good transition to first quarter, because I had never taken any college classes or Running Start. I didn't mind the advising of only 12, but they definitely made it sound like you should only take 12.*

We asked students whether they thought advisors said to take less than 15 credits because of the types of courses they were going to take (business, econ, and math). Students say no, it was more about the concern that first-quarter students need time to transition into college, which they acknowledge is indeed true.

*I would say it was more transition into college.*

*You don't really know what to expect in college classes, basically.*

*I think it was also, like transition of environment and your living situation.*

*Yeah, that's a good point, because in the dorms, oh man, you can get distracted so easily. It's like ADD to the max, I swear, at least for me, I don't know about everybody else.*

*For me, too.*

*It's a challenge to get down and focus and zone in on that homework.*

*Especially in the first quarter.*

On the other hand, one student felt insulted about the advice to take fewer than 15 credits because of the assumption that it would be too much for him.

*I was insulted. I was like "I don't need your help, I know what I'm doing." I don't like how they automatically have that assumption that it was too much for me, that I couldn't take it.*

Five students are taking 16-18 credits Winter Quarter in order to make up for the credits they didn't take Fall Quarter. They feel that they need to "catch up."

*At the time I was glad that I was only taking 13, because I wasn't sure what to expect from college courses and how much work it would be, but now I wish that I did take at least 15, because now this second quarter, I'm trying to make up for the credits that I didn't get first quarter, so now I'm taking 18 credits this quarter. I could have easily taken another class first quarter.*

*Right here. I'm taking 18 now.*

*I have the exact same reason as she does. Because I felt like I kind of need to catch up almost, and I actually really didn't do as well in my first quarter as I wanted to, so I thought maybe just taking a little bit more classes would boost up my GPA. Because I'm in this martial arts class, and I'm also in a study skills class, which is actually really helpful. And yeah, so, I'm just glad I'm taking 18. I'm learning how to manage my time a lot better, too.*

*I have 16. I wanted to get 18, but because I'm just going for my major right now, I don't have any GURs to get, I couldn't fit any more useful classes into my schedule, so I just have 16, and I have to make up more next quarter.*

Three students got bored Fall Quarter so they are taking more than 15 credits Winter Quarter.

*I have 17 this quarter, because I'm too scared to take 18. But I got really bored last quarter.*

*Me too.*

*So I decided to take more this quarter.*

*I did, too.*

*I felt like everyone else was doing a lot of work, and like, all my suitemates and stuff were doing their homework all the time, and I was just like "Let's go do something."*

**Did other students or family members influence your decision about how many credits to enroll in? Who? How? Why?**

Two students were advised by peers (and student advisors) to stay low on the credits Fall quarter so they can meet people and transition into college.

*Yeah, I had a buddy that went here, he's a junior, and he said that freshman year, first quarter, you shouldn't take that many. Stay low on the credits so you can meet people, get used to your surroundings and stuff.*

*A lot of random students, like that gave us tours and stuff, we'd talk about that kind of stuff, they advised us to take less classes. It was like the Summerstart groups when we just were talking, and then I think when I came to visit on one of the campus tours, somebody asked about classes and they were like, don't take too many courses. It was students who were leading the groups.*

One student received advice from her mom about which classes to take, but not about credit load.

*My mom, she kind of, she didn't advise me about my credits, but it was more like, I took Intro to Cinema my first quarter, and she was kind of like, why would you take that class? She wasn't really on me about the credits I took, it was more about the classes I decided to take. And I think that was because a lot of the advisors, they kind of advised me toward classes like, why would cinema help me?*



## Logistics of Registering

**Since Western has courses with different numbers of credits attached to them, did this affect your ability to register for 15 or more credits?**

For three students, having courses with 3 or 4 credits affected their ability to register for 15 or more credits.

*I'd say yes. I was at a community college, and the classes, the majority, I'd say like over 90% were all just 5 credits. You didn't have to think about it. You'd just pick and get 15. Here, I was taking classes that I needed, but they were like 3 credits, 4 credits, and so it didn't add up to 15.*

*I did the community college thing, 5 credits just seemed standard to me, so 3 credit class, I was like "This is lowly, I want 5 credits." But, I ended up dropping a class anyway, so haha on me.*

*Yeah, I just would think that it would be easier to take 3 classes with more credits than 4 with like 3 or 4 credits.*

Six students wish that classes were 5 credits each so they could easily register for 15 credits. Also 4 credit classes (and sometimes 3-credit classes) are about the same workload as 5-credit classes.

*After I signed up, I talked to friends to go to UW and most of their classes are 5 credits, and so I still think it's unfair that we have to take 4 credits to get at least 15 credits, but they only have to take 3. So I really wish our classes were 5 credits each.*

*I'm with her.*

*I don't think there's much of a difference between 4 and 5 credit classes because I have a 4 and a 5 but it's like the same work load I feel, like history and German, so.*

*Yeah, I don't think there's really a difference, just like the amount of time that you're in class, whereas if you're taking a 3 credit class, you're not in class as long it seems. Like Intro to Cinema, it's 2 times a week, and I guess you have a lab, whereas like, biology, you're in Monday, Wednesday, Friday and then have a lab on Friday.*

*I'm in an anthropology class, and then a philosophy of logic. I find that that class is almost harder than my anthropology one, and philosophy is only 3 credits, and the other's*

*5 credits. And it seems like it should be worth more credits, because I've put a lot of time into that class, like the tutorial center and stuff, and I don't feel like 3 credits is very much for all the work I've put into it.*

*I'd agree with not too big a difference between 4 and 5 credit classes, but from my experiences, my 3 credit class was a lot less work than my 5 credit classes. But that could have been specific just to that class.*

## **Academic Interest Area**

**Do you think that the academic area you were interested in pursuing affected your decision to take the credit load that you took Fall quarter? How? In what ways?**

Four students could not get into classes they wanted for their major because they were filled, or because they didn't have the prerequisites.

*I couldn't get into most of the classes I wanted for my major anyway, which had many prerequisites.*

*That's how I was too, like, I couldn't get into most of it, and I'm like a freshman and they'd either be filled or I didn't have the prereqs for it, and so I haven't really thought about my major. My classes are just what I can take, to fit into the scheduling. Because like, seriously I didn't even go through and pick like, what I wanted, I just picked what I could get into.*

*I went through the same thing. When I registered, I registered the last day. All the classes were filled. Everything. I got into a 2 credit class, and that was it, and it wasn't a GUR, and that was it. Math was available, but I didn't want to take the math that was available because I'm not a big math person, but the rest of the stuff was completely full, and then eventually some people dropped and I got random classes, and like I'd look at Classfinder all day, and I finally got a schedule. So, right now I'd probably be taking like psychology, or I don't know, just different classes, that would kind of go with my major, but those weren't available. They weren't like prerequisites for my major, but they would have helped more than the classes I'm taking, but I'm just going to be enrolled in whatever opened up.*

*I had trouble at Summerstart because it was the last day to register, there was still, it was kind of the same thing. So I just gave up at Summerstart, and just finished at home.*

One student had a scheduling issue, with classes for the major being offered on just Tuesdays and Thursdays.

*Many of the classes for my major are offered for a Tuesday/Thursday schedule, so they're just long classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and I couldn't fit any more into a Tuesday/Thursday schedule. I went from 8:30 to 4:00, but...*

**For those students in this group who were undecided or unsure about your major, do you think that this uncertainty affected the number of credits you enrolled in?**

One student was undecided about his major so he selected from different areas of GURs. The GURs were "random" as far as the number of credits, so he ended up with 12 credits.

*The classes that I registered for for fall quarter were less credits because they were kind of random because I just selected them from the different areas of GUR credits, and I didn't know what to take, I didn't know what type of humanities credits to take, so then I just kind of went off whatever my advisor told me. So it was like, lower credit classes and random. I ended up with 12.*

### **Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities**

**When you were registering for classes, how many of you were interested in participating in extracurricular activities your first quarter?**

*Clubs— 6*

*Sports-- 4*

**Did these types of interests affect your decision about how many credits to take your first quarter?**

One student took 13 credits Fall quarter in order to be involved in a number of social activities.

*I knew I wanted to be involved, I just wanted to shove myself in every single thing that I could, like I was kind of interested in. So I got kind of stressed out in the beginning, so I was really glad I took less because I just knew that I really wanted to socialize my first quarter. I took 13 credits.*

Another student was on the golf team and could only find 12 credits that worked for a morning class schedule.

*Well I wanted to take all my classes early in the morning, because I'm on the golf team, so I have to have the afternoons open, so I needed to be done by like, 11:00 or 12:00, and I could only find 12 credits that worked in that time schedule during the week that ended before 11:00 or 12:00.*

## **Financial Concerns and Work Schedules**

**Did financial concerns enter into your thinking in any way when you were thinking about how many credits were enough or best for you your first quarter? In what ways?**

Four students are concerned about taking a minimum of 12 credits each quarter in order to receive their scholarships.

*I think you've got to have this number, because my scholarship says I have to, or my financial aid says I have to, or my dad will kill me if I don't take so many credits.*

*I have to have a minimum of 12 for my scholarship every quarter.*

*I do too.*

*I signed up for I think it was 17 credits knowing that I would drop one of my classes, just in case I hated one of my other classes. Someone told me to do this, I'm not that smart on my own. And so that's why I signed up for 17 in the beginning, so just in case I hated them, because I have to have 12 for financial aid.*

One student knew she would have a work study position and didn't want to get stressed out with this new job as well as school, so she registered for fewer credits Fall Quarter.

*I knew I'd be working, because I have work study. I knew it's a new job, and I work in between all of my classes, and so I wouldn't be able to do homework or socialize in between, so that affected it. And I knew it was a new job in an office, and I didn't want to get stressed out with that and school.*

## **Academic and Social Confidence Levels**

**To what extent would you say that you took fewer than 15 credits because you were not extremely confident about your ability to do well your first quarter?**

The majority felt confident about their ability to do well in their first quarter; however four students were nervous about how well they would do. One of the four

did not feel competent academically; another gets distracted easily; and two students knew they might have difficulty balancing academics and socializing.

*I did, because I didn't really care about high school that much, and I didn't really do a lot, a whole bunch of academic stuff, and I knew that I'd care more in college. I'm not sure how much more, but it turned out fine.*

*I thought, I was actually a little iffy, because I get distracted pretty easily, so I'm like between going out and doing your work and stuff.*

*I was really nervous about it because I don't think our high school – I thought a lot of the classes were jokes, like it was really easy, never had to do homework and you'd get A's. And I was like "Ah college, you're actually gonna have to do something," and I thought it was going to kick my butt, and it did. And I like to socialize and I like to be involved in stuff more than academics. I kind of came in with the attitude that, I want to get involved with the college rather than study.*

*I wasn't not confident about classes, I was pretty confident about my ability to do well in classes, but I was just kind of testing how I would go from like classwork to socializing, to being responsible in my life, in my dorm. I was just kind of testing my lifestyle.*

For another student it wasn't about confidence level. She took fewer credits because she was advised to take a smaller credit load.

*I don't think it was that, I think it was just that I was advised to take a smaller amount of credits. It wasn't that I wasn't confident.*

#### **Did community college or AP coursework help you to feel better prepared for college?**

Community college or AP coursework helped three students feel better prepared for college.

*I had been going to community college for 2 years already. I think it helped me.*

*I think my AP classes helped me because of the style of our class, like our history class was lecture style, and so is my history class this quarter. And my math work load is the same as my math work load here, except it was harder work because I'm taking an easier math class here. But I think like, the style of the class and the way the teachers ran it, it was basically on you, and it was like, if you did bad it was because you didn't study, and not because the teacher didn't help you through it.*

*I thought it helped a lot. I took AP history, and then I took History 104 here, and I thought my AP history class in high school was much harder than the history class I took here. Work load and everything, just like the stuff that we learned in that class.*

Two other students took AP coursework during high school, which didn't necessarily help them to feel better prepared for college. For them, college is harder than high school.

*And I took all honors and all AP stuff and I don't think it helped because our school, it was like a new thing. AP classes were new and so they didn't really know how to teach them, and so I think college is a lot harder than high school.*

*Yeah I took AP psychology and calculus, and I don't know why, I just think that the high school classes were a lot easier than college. Maybe it's just because I related with the teacher a lot better, it's a smaller classroom size. Yeah, and so I don't know, I just feel like college is a little bit harder.*

Four students discussed issues with time management and study habits.

*I'm not doing better, I think it's because I go snowboarding, and like I managed my schedule for that for the quarter, so I have my classes Monday, Wednesday, Friday, so I go snowboarding Tuesday, Thursdays.*

*I'm similar, and I still have snowboarding. I usually go all weekend. Time management has never been very good, but it hasn't affected my grades or anything. I've never had a need to fix it.*

*Yeah, I've never had a need to fix it until this quarter, and then I realized I really do need to manage my time better.*

*I think that it's just, the way I was studying was wrong. Like I think that the way, like for psychology, I would just read the thing and then that would take a long time, and it's better to skim and then take notes on that than just reading and not taking any. It's gotten better.*

**To what extent did you take fewer credits Fall Quarter because you wanted to make sure you got comfortable with the social climate here at Western first?**

Five students took fewer credits Fall Quarter because they wanted to get comfortable with the social climate at Western first.

*I think that's maybe true for me. The social aspect of it and getting involved and having people around me and friends was really important, so I wanted to focus on that my first quarter.*

*I was confident that I could do well in a 15 or more credit load fall quarter, but a lot of people advised me to do 12 credits, and because I wanted to be more social in the fall quarter, I went along with what they were telling me rather than what I knew I could do. So I was more dependent on other people, just because I wanted to be more social.*

*Same as her, basically.*

*I was glad I took 13 because I did get to do a lot more, and I got to do what I wanted to.*

*Yeah I'm happy to have taken 12, and I feel like I'll graduate in 4 years. Like, I looked at my major and I looked at all my GURs and planned it out, and taking 12 last quarter was fine.*

Three students signed up for more credits then dropped to less than 15. For one student it was because the class was too hard. Another didn't want morning classes but couldn't find classes to fit her schedule. Another started with 16 credits but one of the classes conflicted with snowboarding.

*It was a hard class (Physical Geography 203). It wasn't just that it was hard, I couldn't have passed the class. I know my abilities, and I didn't know anything that they were talking about.*

*After Summerstart, I went home, and I was like "I'm only taking 14 credits," and I wanted more, and then I looked at them, and I didn't like the way my schedule was, because it was all in the morning, and I didn't want morning classes because I didn't want to wake up early in the morning, so I dropped them, and I couldn't find anything else I could take that would make it over like 13 or 14. I only had a 2 credit class to replace a 4 credit class.*

*It was this quarter, I was taking 16 credits, and one of my classes was Comm 220 and it was from 6:00 to 8:20 at night, and snowboarding screwed that up.*

## Transfer credits

**Some of you brought in credits from either AP courses or community college coursework. Did having these credits affect your decision to take 15 or more credits? How?**

Two students thought of themselves as being ahead because they brought in AP credits or community college coursework.

*I still want to have the 2 years of college to total 4 years. I already had two years done, so I planned on just having two years here.*

*I have the same thinking. I wanted to keep being ahead, so when I did end up taking 12 credits, I was annoyed with myself.*

Two others brought in a lot of transfer credits, so they thought they didn't have to rush or take a lot of credits.

*I had a lot of transfer credits. I had 30. I don't know how that worked, but I thought that I had no rush, or no need to take a lot of credits because I already had that many.*

*I also didn't think anything of it.*

Others didn't think about their extra credits while registering for classes.

*I just had 5, so I really didn't think anything of it. Like I wasn't gonna know I was gonna use them, like take 11 credits this quarter. I never thought of it that way.*

*I only brought in 4 credits from AP, so I mean, I didn't even think about that when I was registering for classes, but now I can just see that as, I'm making up for a class that I didn't have first quarter because I only took 13 credits.*

## Academic and Social Adjustment

**Now we would like to find out how you think your credit load affected the experience you had at Western during your first quarter. Do you think that taking fewer than 15 credits affected your ability to do well in your classes this past quarter?**

Having fewer credits Fall Quarter, students had a lot of free time on their hands. One joined clubs, another golfed or had free time, and others spent the time socializing.



*I had a lot of free time on my hands, so I ended up joining a lot of clubs.*

*I kind of got done at 11:30 everyday, so. I had a lot of time on my hands. I was going to golf, but like Wednesday, the course is closed, so I had all of Wednesday to just do nothing.*

*I was bored. Like while everyone else was in class, I didn't have anything to do and most of my classes were GURs and they didn't have homework really. It was like a midterm and a final so I never really had homework to do.*

*I wasn't bored. I was really busy. I was just busy with making friends and doing stuff.*

*I only had classes twice a week, but I wouldn't say I was bored. I met a lot of people, I had a lot of time.*

Eight students wish they had taken 15 or 16 credits Fall Quarter (but no more). They felt they could have handled it, and some were bored.

*I wish I took more credits Fall quarter. I think I could have handled it.*

*Yeah, I easily could have taken another class and had the same social life, because one more class wouldn't have made that much of a difference.*

*I agree.*

*Like I enjoyed my first quarter, and I thought it was fine, but I also could have taken more. But not anymore than 15, like I don't think. So, I think they were right kind of, because they said 15 or less. Because I couldn't have handled 18 or even 16 I think.*

*I could have taken more because my lifestyle, it has in the past been extremely busy. Like I'd go from like 8:00 to like 8:00 everyday, and then do homework after that, and so I'm used to always being busy, but then taking 12 credits, I had time on my hands, and it was weird. So 15 credits or at least 16 credits would have been nice.*

*I agree because I was doing a sport in high school, so go to school, go to practice, go home and do homework, whereas now in college it's like, since I'm not doing a sport, I had so much more time on my hands, especially first quarter, and I think I kind of abused that privilege.*

*Yeah I could easily have taken 1 or 2 more classes.*

Eight students are taking 15 or more credits Winter Quarter. Although the workload is more than students expected, they say it is manageable and keeping busy helps to motivate them.

*The work load is a lot more than I was expecting, but I'm taking like 400 level classes, so that was part of the reason.*

*I'm in a 300 level, they're really hard, so I'm good with the workload.*

*Well the difference between my first quarter and winter quarter is that first quarter, I only took GURs, and now I'm taking business classes like accounting and econ and those have a lot more work in the classes than the GURs that I took did, so like I'm taking 18 credits, and I have a lot of work, but it keeps me busy and I like keeping busy.*

*I would feel that with 15, like taking the classes and stuff, I actually have more interest in the classes I'm taking, and so when it comes down to the work load and everything, it's not so bad, because it helps motivate me.*

One student is taking 17 credits Winter quarter because he hates winter quarter and would rather be studying. However he plans to take around 15 credits in Spring and Fall because he prefers to do things outside.

*I think I'm okay with taking 17 credits this quarter, because I don't really do anything in winter, because I hate the winter. So I would rather be studying, but in fall and spring, I'm definitely going to be taking like 15. So I'm not going to be taking that much, just because I like the outside.*

One student is taking 14 credits, and another is taking 11 (it was 16 originally). They would rather stick with these lighter loads because they would rather have time to do other things.

*I think 14 is perfect. And they're pretty easy, too. I mean, it's just GURs and stuff, and I like it. I'd rather do things other than school all the time, so kudos to you for taking 18, but I could not do that.*

*I couldn't imagine taking more than 15. I mean, I could handle it, but I wouldn't want to have that much work to do because school's not one of my favorite things.*

## Advice for Incoming Freshmen

**What advice would you give to new students coming in next fall with respect to how many credits they should try to register for? Why? What would you tell them about strategies they should use to make sure that they have a good course schedule?**

In sum, students in this group would advise incoming freshmen as follows:

- Take 15 credits because it is the average, and it will keep you on track for graduation in four years.; but take less if you're concerned about the workload
- Manage your time wisely!
- Do your homework!
- Get involved in various activities, but not too many
- Use the resources at the Advising Center
- Know the rules and requirements yourself so you won't be misled
- Meet people, socialize
- Know how Summerstart and registration works in advance, so you won't be overwhelmed while you're there

Eight of ten students say to take 15 credits because it is the average, and it will keep you on track for graduation in four years.

*I would say 15, just going with the average, keeping yourself on track. Also for a tip, your study ability. Because everybody learns differently, and I would really focus on the way that you learn, and then from there, you'll be able to interpret the material a lot better. And also to manage your time wisely.*

*I think she makes a really good point. Like most people know how much work they can take, but if you go into Summerstart not knowing how many credits are average or how the workload is, I would probably say try to hit 15 just to stay on track with trying to graduate in 4 years if that's what you're trying to do. And if you are maybe afraid of the work load, go down to like 13 or so, but if you're taking GURs, 15 is probably good.*

*I would say just try to stay as close to 15 as you can. It keeps you on track, keeps you at the average. Community college was really easy with 15 each quarter, and it kept me on track.*

*I would also say stay as close to 15 as possible because 15 they said is average, I think, for most students. And then, for having a good quarter, I would say, do your homework, like*

*in the afternoon, or right after you get out of class, and then go play in the evening, because that's when everybody wants to do stuff, and don't save your homework until like 11:00 because people will just walk in you're room, and you'll be like "I'm doing homework, oh crap, I have to stop and do socializing."*

*Yeah, I was going to say 15 or 16 credits. I think because it's a good average, I don't think it's a huge step up from 12 or 13, it's one other small class, and I really didn't think it was a big difference this quarter. It was just my time management that screwed me over, not the work. So manage your time. Get it done right away.*

*I would say 15 credits. I just think it's a good number. Like I took 13, so this quarter and next quarter I'm trying to take 16 to average 15 credits. Then good advice that I got first quarter was to think about if you're a morning person or an afternoon person, so last quarter I had a lot of afternoon classes, because I didn't want to get up early, and then this quarter I thought I could handle getting up early, and like this morning, I turned my alarm clock off like twice, and so really just think about what time your classes are at and stuff, and what you can handle.*

*I would say to look for classes before you go to Summerstart, and try to get into Summerstart the first or the second day, so there's a lot of classes you can sign up for. And also, it depends on how many credits you have coming in. If you have credits, you can take from 12-15, it doesn't matter, but if you don't have any, I would take 15 as well. Because you're still on track, and if you take less, then you're not as stressed, like you take 13, you have to take 17 to get it equal out, and it'd be less stressful. So if you take 2 15s, it's more even.*

*I also say 15 to 16 because like I think that anyone who went to high school can handle it. I don't know, and also, with the early class thing, because night life goes until like 1:00 or 2:00 even if it's not you. Like, everyone is so loud in the dorms and stuff, so and that's on week days, so I would say take late classes, even if you are a morning person.*

Two students say to take as many credits as you think you can handle personally.

*The advice I would give is to take as much as you think you could handle. Don't let someone else's advice, don't let them find the median for you. Decide on your own. For having a pleasant quarter, have fun. Don't overload yourself with classes every day. Like, I have Tuesdays and Thursdays off, and that's perfect for me. So have a few light days. Don't have all your classes on every day.*

*As for the amount of credits, just what you can handle. I mean, coming from me, I didn't*

*do any college credits at all, so 12 was good for me especially because I took a lot of writing classes and business law, so just want you can handle. 12 or 15. I probably could have done 15, but I'm glad I didn't. And before Summerstart, think about classes that are harder to get into, because it's a really good opportunity to get into those types of classes.*

Other advice includes getting involved in various activities, but not too many.

*Get involved in whatever you have an interest in, really. If you like snowboarding, go to some snowboarding. If you like rock climbing, hit up the outdoor center. You know, there's so many opportunities out there.*

*Go to school sponsored events and other activities like plays and musicals and all that kind of stuff, because you get more grounded.*

*Oh and don't get into too many things, because like I tried to be in everything, and I stopped trying to be in everything, because I was just like felt so overwhelmed, so just pick a couple of the things that they really like to do, and stay with them.*

Use the resources at the Advising Center.

*Oh, go do the advising center, and look at all the pretty colored papers of all the majors you could have because then you have more direction and you actually understand like where you're going and what major you want, so go there a lot. That helped me.*

Know the rules and requirements yourself to avoid being misled.

*I say for people who do Running Start, know the rules and requirements on your own, because the advisors at Summerstart didn't know anything about Running Start. They told me I had to go back and take GURs and stuff, and I had to get them to call the central office and get that all worked out. So it's better if you know because then you don't have to sign up for those classes.*

*I had the reverse. I had a mandatory class for my scholarship, but they told me that I didn't need to take it, so they dropped me out of it, and then I had to work really hard to get back into it.*

Meet people, socialize.

*Meet people, as many people as you can. Sit with people at dinner and lunch. Just like whatever, everyone's trying to meet everyone, so it shouldn't be weird. Everyone's in*

*that situation, and yeah.*

*I think that's a good one. Meet a bunch of people the first couple weeks, because I remember, everyone was so friendly the first couple weeks, and then you get settled into your groups, and people are still nice but it's a lot different than it was the first 2 weeks.*

Know how Summerstart and registration works in advance, so you won't be overwhelmed while you're there.

*I would also advise like, know how Summerstart and registering for classes works. Like make sure you understand it before you go, because I felt completely lost and overwhelmed without help from my advisor, and she was busy with other people too...Like go on tours, or if you go the day before, ask other students that had registered for classes, or like sophomores, or other older people.*

*I think Western should have sent an email or something, because the only reason I know is because I talked to my friend who was a sophomore at Western, and she was like "Oh my gosh, do you know what Summerstart is?" I was like "I don't know, I'm just going over there." And like, I had no idea, and everyone else around me, I was like teaching everyone how to do it, and I didn't even know how to do it. And it was like, is this really what's going on here? No one knows what's going on, and I was surprised that it was set up like that. It's kind of scary if you don't know what you're doing and you don't know how to do it.*

*I think that if you have any questions about anything, that first thing to do is just check the website, because it's college info on there.*