



## Results from the 2008 Your First College Year (YFCY) Survey - Social

At the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, first-year students were invited to complete the “Your First College Year (YFCY)” survey. This survey asked students a series of questions about their first year at the university. A total of 336 students replied, representing approximately 30% of the first-year class. The sample favored women—52% of respondents were female and 48% were male—and those who took the YFCY had significantly higher SAT Math and SAT Verbal scores than did their peers. That said, the sample was not significantly different from the population in terms of high school class size, high school class rank, or intended major.

This report covers results from survey items focusing on students’ satisfaction with student services, time management, social life, sense of community, and personal development and growth

### Student Satisfaction with Offices and Services

The majority of students said that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied<sup>1</sup>” with:

- Tutoring or other academic assistance (76%)
- Opportunities for community service (76%)
- Leadership opportunities (72%)
- Orientation for new students (70%)
- Recreational facilities (61%)
- Student health services (60%)
- Student housing office/services (58%)
- Student housing facilities (residence halls, etc.; 57%)

Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with psychological counseling services; however, results are difficult to interpret as 73% of students either said they couldn’t rate the service, or had no experience with the service, and 14% said they were “neutral” about psychological counseling services.

There were no significant differences on any of these items by students’ intended major; however, women were significantly more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with new student orientation (74% for women, 66% for men) and with opportunities for community service (77% for women, 74% for men).

---

<sup>1</sup> For information about this and other scale items (i.e., wording, placement in the survey instrument, response options) please contact institutional research directly: [ofir@case.edu](mailto:ofir@case.edu).

## Time Management

Students were asked to estimate the amount of time they spent per week, in the past year, on a number of activities. Below is the median response for each activity:

Activity	Median hours per week
Studying/homework	11-15 hours
Attending classes/labs	16-20 hours
Socializing with friends	11-15 hours
Talking with professors outside of class	< 1 hour
Exercising/sports	1-2 hours
Partying	1-2 hours
Working for pay on campus	0 hours (66% said 0 hours, 14% said 5 or fewer hours, 20% said 5 or more hours)
Working for pay off campus	0 hours (92% said 0 hours, 4% said 5 or fewer hours, 4% said 5 or more hours)
Student clubs/groups	1-2 hours
Watching TV	1-2 hours
Housework/childcare	0 hours
Reading for pleasure	< 1 hour
Commuting	0 hours
Playing video/computer games	< 1 hour
Volunteer work	<1 hour
Online social networks	1-2 hours

Men spent significantly more time than women exercising (3-5 hours for men, 1-2 hours for women), watching TV (1-2 hours for men, < 1 hour for women), reading for pleasure (< 1 hour for men, 0 hours for women), and playing computer games (1-2 hours for men, 0 hours for women). Women spend significantly more time than men on online social networks (3-5 hours for women, 1-2 hours for men).

Students intending to major in nursing spent more time working for pay off campus<sup>2</sup>. Students in nursing and management spent more time on household/childcare duties than did their peers<sup>3</sup>. Students intending to major in engineering or in math and natural science spent more time playing video games than did their peers<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Nurses spent significantly more time working for pay off campus than did those intending to major in engineering, math and natural science, or arts, humanities or social sciences.

<sup>3</sup> Nurses spent significantly more time on household/childcare duties than did those in all other majors besides management. Management majors spent significantly more time on household/childcare duties than did those intending to major in engineering or in math and natural sciences.

<sup>4</sup> Engineers spent significantly more time playing video games than did undecided students or students intending to major in nursing. Math and natural science majors spent significantly more time playing video games than did those intending to major in nursing.

## Social Life and Sense of Community

The majority of students said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with:

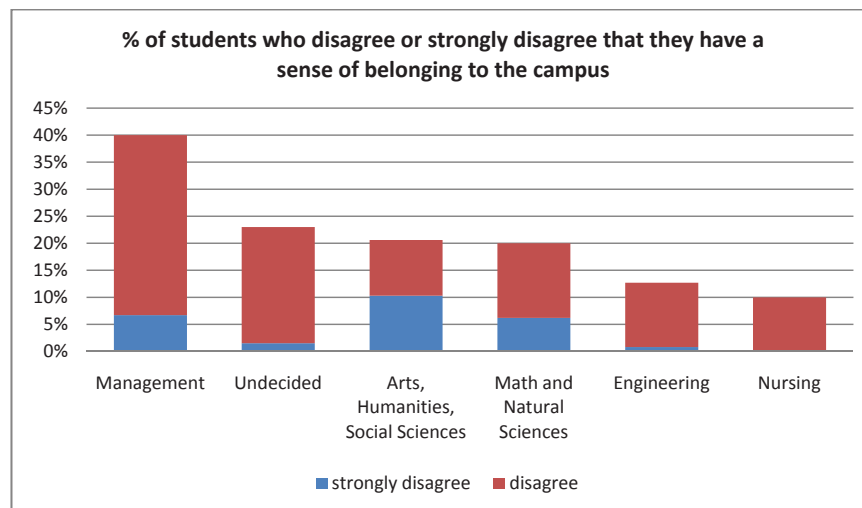
- Interactions with other students (79%)
- Their social lives (71%)
- Overall sense of community among students (68%)
- Availability of campus social activities (69%)

Likewise, the majority of students say that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statements:

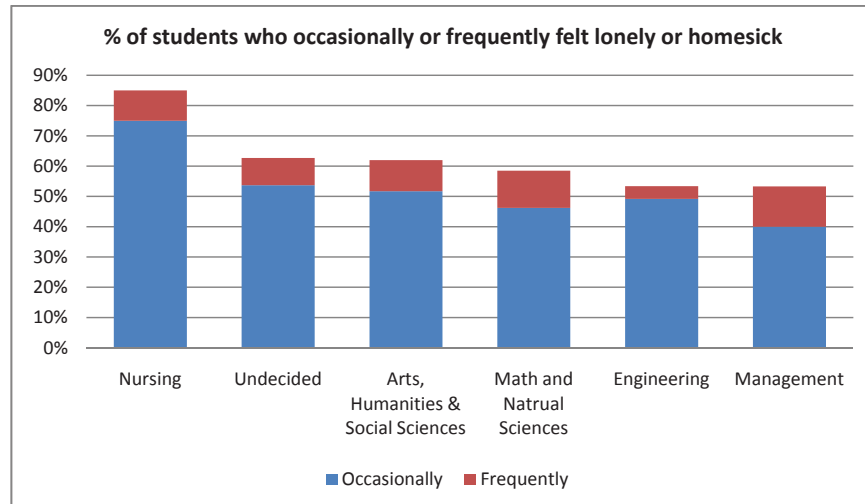
- I see myself as part of the campus community (87%)
- I feel I have a sense of belonging to this campus (82%)

In spite of the positive sense of community, however, 51% of students said they at least occasionally felt isolated from campus life since starting at Case, and 60% at least occasionally felt lonely or homesick.

Two items showed a difference by major. The first was the sense of belonging to the campus. As shown in the graph below, students in management were the most likely to disagree or strongly disagree that they felt a sense of belonging to the campus (40%), whereas those in nursing were the least likely to disagree (10%).



The second item to show a difference by major was feeling lonely or homesick. Specifically, 85% of students intending to major in nursing at least occasionally felt lonely or homesick at Case. For all other majors, less than 65% of students frequently or occasionally felt homesick.



There were also differences by gender. Women were significantly more likely than men to see themselves as part of the campus community and to feel a sense of belonging to the campus. Conversely, women were also more likely than men to say that they felt lonely or homesick in their first year at Case.

Though the majority of students said they were satisfied with the social life, those who participated in certain campus groups and organizations reported higher satisfaction than their peers. For example:

Those who joined a **social fraternity or sorority** (30% of sample), participated in **student clubs/groups** (82% of sample), or participated in **leadership training** (25% of sample):

- Were significantly more likely than their peers to be satisfied or very satisfied with:
  - Their interaction with other students
  - Their social lives
  - The overall sense of community among students
  - The availability of campus social activities
- And were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they:
  - See themselves as part of the campus community
  - Feel a sense of belonging to this campus
- Were significantly less likely to say that they frequently:
  - Felt isolated from campus life

Those who participated in **student government** (8% of sample):

- Were significantly more likely than their peers to be satisfied or very satisfied with:
  - The overall sense of community among students
  - Their social lives
  - The availability of campus social activities
- And were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they:
  - See themselves as part of the campus community
  - Feel a sense of belonging to this campus

Those who participated in **volunteer or community service work** (65% of sample):

- Were significantly more likely than their peers to be satisfied or very satisfied with:
  - Their interaction with other students
  - Their social lives
- And were significantly more likely than their peers to agree or strongly agree that they:
  - See themselves as part of the campus community
  - Feel a sense of belonging to this campus
- Were significantly less likely to say that they frequently:
  - Felt isolated from campus life

Students who participated in varsity or intercollegiate athletics did not report significantly greater gains than their peers in any of these measures of social life and sense of community. In fact, those who participated in athletics reported significantly less satisfaction with the availability of campus social activities. Though this was true for first-year participants, seniors who participated in athletics reported greater satisfaction than their peers with a number of social items, including the sense of community on campus and the availability of campus social activities. It may be that students participating in athletics initially have more demands placed on their time and struggle somewhat more with the transition to college. It appears, however, that once students learn to balance athletics and academics, participation in varsity sports improves their perception of the campus social life.

### **Gains in Academic and Personal Development**

The vast majority of students reported gains in areas of academic and personal development. Between when they started at Case and when they took the YFCY in the spring of their first year, the majority of students said that they were “stronger” or “much stronger” in terms of their :

- General knowledge (94%)
- Knowledge of a particular field or discipline (96%)
- Knowledge of people from different races or cultures (70%)
- Understanding of problems facing their community (60%)
- Ability to conduct research (60%)
- Ability to work as part of a team (56%)
- Critical thinking skills (79%)
- Analytical/problem-solving skills (80%)

Though the majority of students reported gains in academic and personal development during their time at Case, those who participated in certain campus groups and organizations reported greater gains than their peers. For example:

- Students who joined a **social fraternity or sorority** reported significantly greater gains than their peers in:
  - Understanding the problems facing their community
  - The ability to conduct research
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Analytical/problem-solving skills

- Those who participated in **volunteer or community service work** reported significantly greater gains than their peers in:
  - Knowledge of a particular field or discipline
  - Understanding of the problems facing their community
  - The ability to conduct research
  - The ability to work as part of a team
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Analytical/problem-solving skills
- Those who participated in **leadership training** reported significantly greater gains than their peers in:
  - Understanding of the problems facing their community
  - The ability to conduct research
  - The ability to work as part of a team
  - Critical thinking skills
- Those who participated in **student clubs/groups** reported significantly greater gains than their peers in:
  - General knowledge
  - Knowledge of a particular field or discipline
  - The ability to conduct research
  - The ability to work as part of a team
  - Critical thinking skills
  - Analytical/problem-solving skills
- Students who participated in student government or who played varsity or intercollegiate athletics did not report significantly greater gains than their peers in any of the personal development areas.

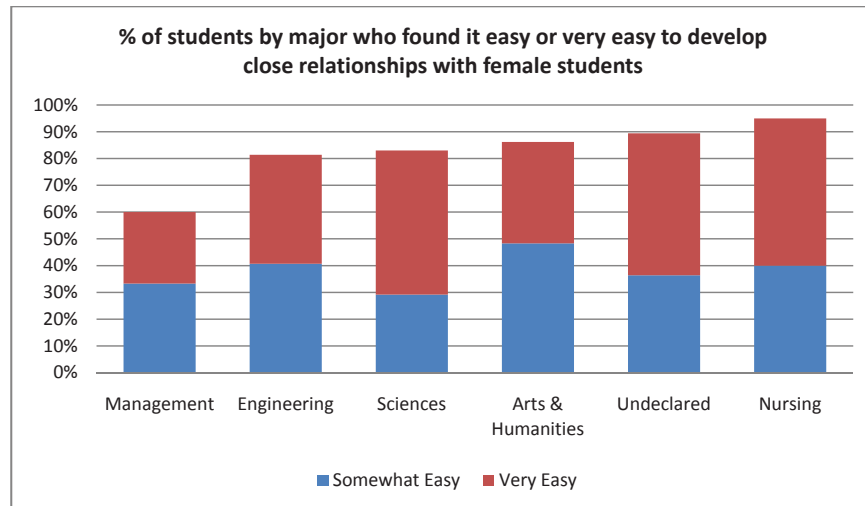
### **The Transition to College**

Developing close friendships. Students were asked a number of questions relating to the difficulty they had with the transition to college life. In general, most students felt that it was “somewhat” or “very” easy to develop close friendships with different types of students. Specifically, 89% of students said it was easy to develop close friendships with male students, 84% said it was easy to develop close friendships with female students, and 87% felt it was easy to develop close friendships with students of a different racial/ethnic group.

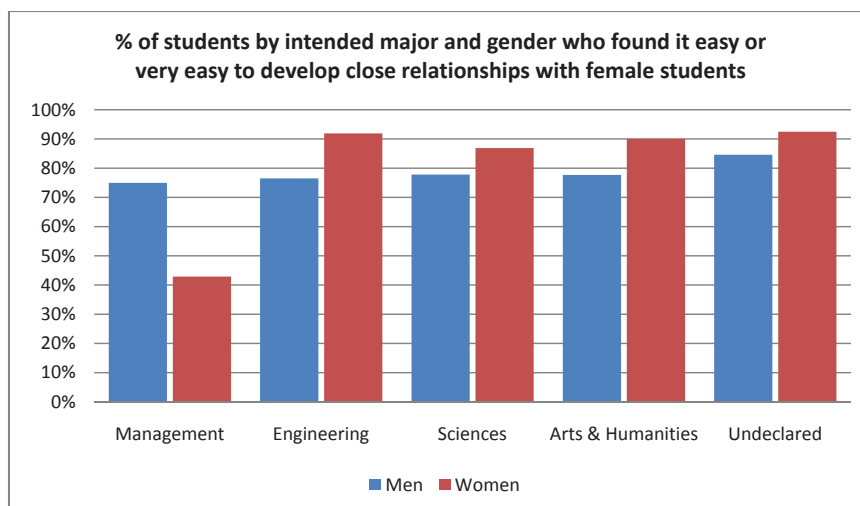
Men and women said it was equally easy to develop close relationships with male students and with students from different racial/ethnic groups. Women, however, felt it was significantly easier to develop close relationships with female students than did men.

Similarly, all majors said it was equally easy to develop close relationships with male students and with students from different racial/ethnic groups. There were, however, differences by major in terms of

students' ease of developing close relationships with women. Specifically, only 60% of management students felt it was easy to develop relationships with female students, compared to over 80% of students from all other majors.



A closer look at this data reveals that men in all majors said it was equally easy to develop close relationships with female students. Women in management, however, had a significantly harder time developing close relationships with females than did women in all other majors (only 43% of management women said it was easy or very easy to develop close relationships with females, compared to an average of 90% of women in all other majors). Caution should be taken when interpreting this result, as only 7 women from management responded; however, this is similar to the number of men in management (8) as well as the number of men in arts and humanities (9).



Utilizing campus services. Most students felt that it was somewhat or very easy to utilize the campus services available to them (90%). This number did not differ by intended major; however, women felt that it was significantly easier to utilize campus services available to them (93% said it was easy) than did men (86%).

Home for the weekend. Most students at occasionally (50%) or frequently (12%) went home for the weekend. Only 38% said they never went home for a weekend. Women went home for the weekend with significantly greater frequency (68% occasionally or frequently) than did men (56%). Nursing majors were significantly more likely than those in engineering, math and natural sciences, or undeclared students to go home for the weekend.

Difficulty with roommates. The majority of students never had difficulty getting along with their roommates (55%). That said, 32% occasionally had trouble getting along with roommates, and 13% frequently had trouble. Men and women did not differ on this measure, nor were there differences by major.

### **Highly Social Students**

As shown in the time management table above, the average Case first-year student spends 11-15 hours per week socializing with friends; however, 35% of students spend more than 16 hours per week socializing with their friends. Previous research conducted in the Office of Institutional Research has suggested that highly social students are among the happiest on campus. In order to test that hypothesis, we grouped students into two groups. “Typical” students were those who spent 15 hours per week or less socializing with their friends (65% of the sample) and “Highly Social” students were those who spent 16 or more hours per week socializing with friends (35% of the sample). Results confirmed our hypotheses:

Compared to the typical student, highly social students:

- Were significantly more likely than their peers to be satisfied or very satisfied with:
  - Their interaction with other students
  - Overall sense of community among students
- And were significantly more likely than their peers to agree or strongly agree that they:
  - Feel a sense of belonging to this campus
- Were significantly less likely to agree or strongly agree that they:
  - Felt isolated from campus life

Highly social students were significantly more satisfied with the overall college experience (43% were very satisfied, compared to only 24% of their peers), and they were significantly more likely to say they would still choose to enroll at Case (50% said they definitely would, compared to 33% of their peers).

Perhaps most importantly, the highly social students spent the same amount of time as their peers attending classes, studying/doing homework, and talking with professors outside of class. Similarly, the highly social did not differ from their peers in any of the measures of personal development, nor did they differ on SAT score, ACT score, high school class rank, high school class size, first semester GPA or second semester GPA. These results suggest that time spent socializing does not affect academic outcomes, but has a large positive effect on students’ satisfaction with Case as a whole.



## Overall Satisfaction

The majority of students said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall college experience (78%). Additionally, most students said that, if they could start over and make their college choice again, they “probably” (43%) or “definitely” (39%) would still choose to enroll at Case.

Those who joined a fraternity or sorority, participated in leadership training, or participated in student clubs/groups were significantly more satisfied with the overall college experience than were their peers, and were significantly more likely to say they definitely would still choose to enroll at Case. Those who joined student government or performed volunteer or community service work were significantly more likely than their peers to be satisfied with the overall college experience. Students who played varsity/intercollegiate athletics were no more likely than their peers to be satisfied with the overall college experience and were no more likely to say they would choose Case again.