

Executive Summary

2013 Your First College Year Survey

In spring 2013, we asked first-year students at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to participate in the *Your First College Year* survey. The survey was administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA in conjunction with the Office of Planning and Institutional Research. Due to low response rates, the results should be interpreted with caution.¹



The survey instrument includes 16 constructs based on rigorous statistical methods. The constructs are designed to capture the experiences and outcomes that institutions are often interested in but find challenging to measure because of their complex and multifaceted nature. Constructs are particularly helpful in examining trends over time and making comparisons to other institutions. Construct scores should not be converted into percentages or compared to other constructs.

The YFCY was last administered at CWRU in 2011.² Overall, three of the 16 construct scores changed significantly from 2011 to 2013. The civic awareness score increased significantly, while scores for the academic self-concept and student-faculty interaction constructs decreased significantly (table 1).

2011	2013	Constructs	2011	2013	Constructs
48	47	Academic Adjustment	49	48	Overall Satisfaction
51	53	Academic Disengagement	53	53	Pluralistic Orientation
53	50	Academic Self-Concept*	55	56	Positive Cross-Racial Interaction
45	50	Civic Awareness*	47	46	Satisfaction with Coursework
49	49	Civic Engagement	51	50	Sense of Belonging
49	49	Habits of the Mind	51	49	Social Self-Concept
49	50	Leadership	52	51	Social Agency
50	50	Negative Cross-Racial Interaction	50	48	Student-Faculty Interaction*

HERI provides comparison information to other universities, but the 2013 YFCY comparison group does not include universities that CWRU typically uses for benchmarking. Comparison group results are mentioned in some of the 2013 YFCY reports and a summary of the results are available to departments upon request. Appendix A provides a definition of each construct and a summary of the items included in each construct.

Additional Information

For additional information about this report, please contact Amanda Thomas at (216) 368-6119 or ast27@case.edu.

¹ Of the 1,336 students who received the survey, 27% (n=361) answered at least 50% of the questions. Compared to their peers, women, Asian/White, U.S. citizens, and students in non-management majors responded to the survey at significantly higher rates.

² There were 1,372 first-year students in 2012-13 versus 1,021 students in 2010-11. An asterisk (*) indicates a significant difference between 2011 and 2013, $p < 0.05$.

Appendix A: Construct Descriptions and Items

Academic Adjustment - The ease with which students adjust to the academic demands of college.

Percentage of first-year students who said it was *somewhat easy or very easy* to:

- 79% - understand what their professors expect of them academically
- 54% - adjust to the academic demands of college
- 54% - develop effective study skills
- 41% - manage their time effectively

Academic Disengagement – Extent to which students engage in behaviors that are inconsistent with academic success. Since entering college:

- 76% skipped class (at least occasionally)
- 67% have come late to class
- 65% fell asleep in class
- 35% turned in course assignment(s) late

Academic Self-Concept - Beliefs about abilities and confidence in academic environments. Percentage of first-year students who rated themselves *above average or higher* on:

- 80% - academic ability
- 73% - drive to achieve
- 60% - mathematical ability
- 58% - intellectual self-confidence

Civic Awareness - Changes in students' understanding of the issues facing their community, nation, and the world. Percentage of students who rated their understanding of the following as *strong or a major strength*:

- 43% - problems facing their community
- 42% - national issues
- 29% - global issues

Civic Engagement - Extent to which students are motivated and involved in civic, electoral, and political activities. Since entering CWRU:

- 73% performed volunteer work (at least occasionally)
- 44% helped raise money for a cause or campaign
- 41% publicly communicated their opinion about a cause (e.g., blog, e-mail, petition)
- 19% demonstrated for a cause (e.g., boycott, rally, protest)
- 14% worked on a local, state, or national political campaign

Additionally:

- 84% said it was at least somewhat important to keep up to date with political affairs
- 81% said it was at least somewhat important to influence social values
- 66% agreed that they are interested in seeking information about current social and political issues

Habits of the Mind - Behaviors and traits associated with academic success.

Occasionally	Frequently	How often in the past year did you:
39%	60%	Search for solutions to problems and explained them to others
39%	59%	Support your opinions with a logical argument
36%	62%	Accept mistakes as part of the learning process
55%	42%	Search for alternative solutions to a problem
51%	45%	Request feedback on academic work
46%	49%	Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received
44%	49%	Revise papers to improve writing
49%	42%	Look up scientific research articles
54%	33%	Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for class
56%	31%	Take a risk because you felt you had more to gain
65%	15%	Ask questions in class

Leadership - Beliefs about leadership development, capability, and experiences.

- 68% rated their leadership ability as somewhat strong or a major strength
- 62% rated themselves above average in leadership ability
- 58% agree or strongly agree that they have effectively led a group to a common purpose
- 26% have been the leader in an organization since entering CWRU
- 22% have participated in leadership training since entering CWRU

Negative Cross-Racial Interactions – Level of negative interaction with diverse peers. When asked about their interaction with students from a different racial/ethnic group other than their own:

- 9% experienced guarded, cautious interactions (at least sometimes)
- 5% experienced tense, somewhat hostile interactions
- 4% felt insulted or threatened because of their race/ethnicity

Overall Satisfaction – Satisfaction with the college experience.

- 82% said they would choose to enroll at CWRU if they could make their college choice over
- 82% were satisfied with their overall academic experience
- 80% were satisfied with the overall quality of instruction
- 76% were satisfied with their overall college experience

Pluralistic Orientation - Skills and dispositions for living and working in a diverse society. The majority of first-year students rated themselves *above average or higher* in:

- 84% - tolerance of others with different beliefs
- 81% - working cooperatively with diverse people
- 80% - ability to see the world from someone else's perspective
- 68% - ability to discuss and negotiate controversial issues
- 62% - openness to having their views challenged

Positive Cross-Racial Interactions - Level of positive interaction with diverse peers. When asked about their interaction with students from a different racial/ethnic group other than their own:

- 95% dined or shared a meal (at least sometimes)
- 92% studied or prepared for class
- 91% had intellectual discussions outside of class
- 87% socialized or partied
- 82% shared personal feelings and problems
- 73% had meaningful and honest discussions about racial/ethnic relations outside of class

Satisfaction with Coursework - Extent to which students see their coursework as relevant, useful, and applicable to their academic success and future plans. Percentage of first-year students who were satisfied with:

- 79% - general education and core curriculum
- 64% - relevance of coursework to their future career plans
- 58% - first-year programs (e.g., first-year seminar, learning community, linked courses)
- 51% - relevance of coursework to their everyday life

Sense of Belonging – Extent to which students feel a sense of academic and social integration on campus

- 92% said that if asked, they would recommend CWRU to others
- 89% felt they were a member of CWRU
- 88% saw themselves as part of the campus community
- 85% felt a sense of belonging to CWRU

Social Self-Concept – Beliefs about abilities and confidence in social situations. Percentage of students who rated themselves *above average or higher* on:

- 62% - leadership ability
- 40% - public speaking ability
- 36% - social self-confidence
- 25% - popularity

Social Agency – The extent to which students value political and social involvement as a personal goal.

Essential / Very Important	Somewhat Important	Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:
81%	18%	Help others who are in difficulty
41%	43%	Keep up to date with political affairs
41%	41%	Influence social values
39%	42%	Help promote racial understanding
38%	39%	Participate in a community action program
40%	36%	Become a community leader

Student-Faculty Interaction - Amount and type of interactions students have with faculty that is appropriate for the first year of college, as well as satisfaction with these issues. Fifty-seven percent (57%) were satisfied with the amount of contact with faculty. Since entering CWRU:

- 85% interacted with faculty during office hours, at least once
- 75% received advice/guidance about their educational program from their professor, at least occasionally
- 75% interacted with faculty outside of class or office hours, at least once
- 74% asked a professor for advice after class, at least occasionally
- 49% communicated regularly with professors