

Transition to CWRU

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 This report provides information about students' transition to college.



Transition Constructs

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.

Sense of Belonging

The sense of belonging construct measures the extent to which students feel a sense of academic and social integration on campus. Since 2011, CWRU's score on the sense of belonging construct has not changed significantly (51 in 2011 vs. 50 in 2013). Also, CWRU's 2013 score is not significantly different from the score for the private university comparison group (CWRU: 50 vs. private institutions: 49).² The 2013 results for the items included in the construct are:

- ❖ 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

Academic Adjustment

The academic adjustment construct measures the ease with which students adjust to the academic demands of college. CWRU's score for the academic adjustment construct has not changed significantly since 2011 (48 in 2011 vs. 47 in 2013). However, CWRU's 2013 score is significantly lower than the score for the private university comparison group (47 vs. 50). The 2013 results for the items included in the construct are:

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

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 The private university comparison group included Azusa Pacific University, Fordham University, Pepperdine University, University of the Pacific, Wake Forest University, and Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Academic Disengagement

The academic disengagement construct measures the extent to which students engage in behaviors that are inconsistent with academic success. Like the previous constructs, CWRU’s score for the academic disengagement has not changed significantly since 2011 (51 in 2011 vs. 53 in 2013) but is significantly higher than the score for the private university comparison group (53 vs. 50). Among first-year CWRU students who entered in fall 2012:

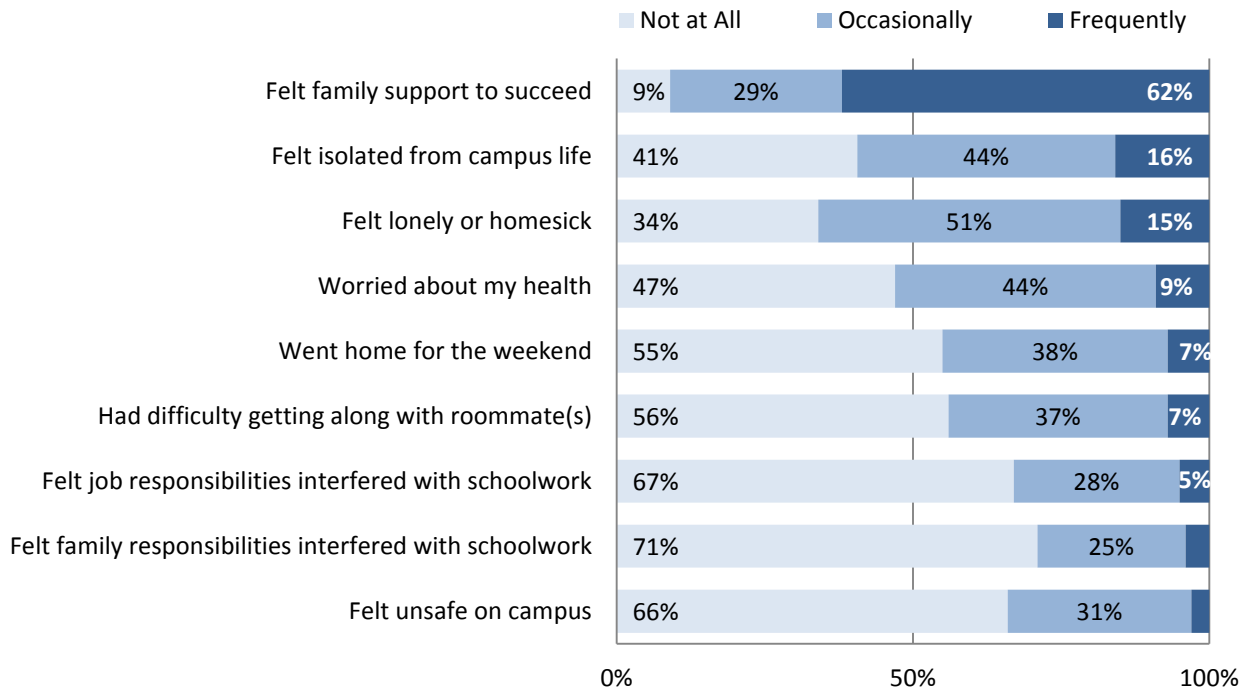
- ❖ 76% skipped class at least occasionally
- ❖ 67% came late to class
- ❖ 65% fell asleep in class
- ❖ 35% turned in course assignment(s) late

What Else Do We Know about the Transition to CWRU?

There were several items on the survey related to college transition which were not included in the constructs mentioned above. In terms of their personal experience (figure 1):

- ❖ 91% of students felt family support to succeed at least occasionally
- ❖ 66% felt lonely or homesick
- ❖ 60% felt isolated from campus life
- ❖ 53% worried about their health
- ❖ 45% went home for the weekend
- ❖ 44% had difficulty getting along with roommates
- ❖ 34% felt unsafe on campus
- ❖ 33% felt their job responsibilities interfered with their schoolwork
- ❖ 29% felt their family responsibilities interfered with their schoolwork

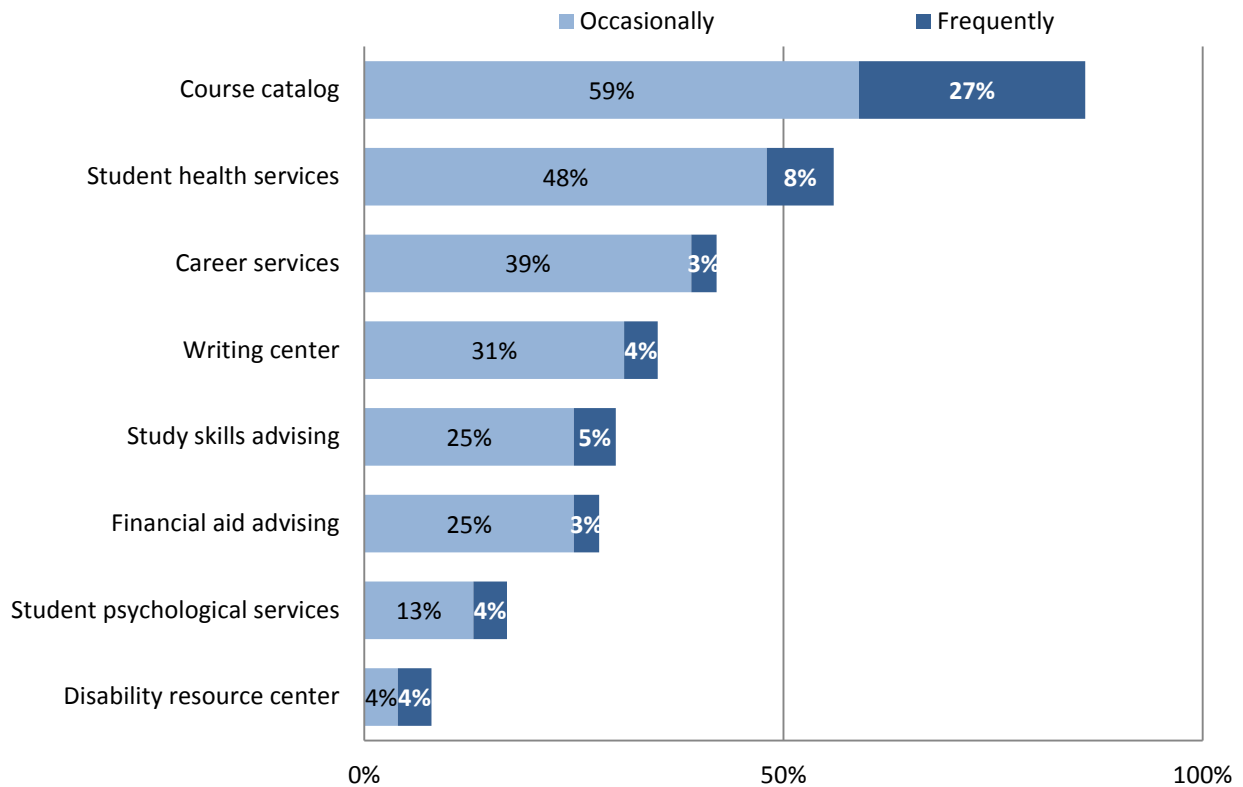
Figure 1. Since entering college, how often have you...



When asked about their use of campus services and resources:

- ❖ 86% said they used the course catalog
- ❖ 56% used student health services
- ❖ 42% used career services
- ❖ 35% used the writing center
- ❖ 30% used study skills advising
- ❖ 28% used financial aid advising
- ❖ 17% used student psychological services
- ❖ 8% used the disability resource center

Figure 2. Since entering college, how often have you used...



The vast majority of students agreed that faculty believe in their potential to succeed academically (84%) and that they have been able to find a balance between academics and extracurricular activities (78%). Three-fourths of students said it was easy to develop close friendships with other students. In terms of their interactions, 86% of students interacted daily with their friends at CWRU. The majority of students interacted with their family (54%) and friends outside of CWRU (53%) two or more times per week.

Additional Information

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