

First-Year Academic Experiences

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 the low response rate, results should be interpreted with caution.¹ This report provides information about students' academic experiences.



Academic Adjustment and Support

Four questions on the 2013 survey addressed academic adjustment. The majority of first-year students said it was easy to understand what professors expect of them academically (79%).² A little more than half of students said it was easy to develop effective study skills (54%) and adjust to the demands of college (54%). The majority of students said it was difficult to manage their time effectively (59%). Table 1 provides the results of these questions by college/school.³

Table 1. Since entering college, it has been somewhat/very easy to:	Overall	CAS (n=123)	ENG (n=163)	MGT (n=9)	NUR (n=25)	Undecided (n=40)
Understand what my professors expect of me academically	79%	80%	77%	89%	72%	81%
Develop effective study skills	54%	52%	53%	89%	52%	53%
Adjust to the academic demands of college	54%	54%	55%	78%	52%	48%
Manage my time effectively	41%	42%	40%	22%	52%	45%

During their first year of college, more than 90% of first-year students used at least one academic support service:

- 87% used academic advising, 15% frequently did so
- 42% used “career services”, 3% frequently did so
- 35% used the writing center, 4% frequently did so
- 30% used study skills advising, 5% frequently did so
- 8% used the “disability resource center”, 4% frequently did so

Since entering college, approximately one-third of students decided to pursue a different major (36%) and another 30% remained undecided about their major. A little more than half of students had difficulty getting into the courses they needed (at least occasionally, 53%) and 7% of students reported failing one or more courses during their first year.

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 Scale: very difficult, somewhat difficult, somewhat easy, very easy.

³ Results are based on the students' intended and declared majors at the beginning of Fall 2012.

Satisfaction with Academics

Despite the fact that the 2012-13 class was larger than the 2010-11 first-year class, satisfaction between the two groups did not differ significantly on the following (table 2):⁴

- Overall college experience
- Overall academic experience
- Overall quality of instruction
- Academic advising
- Amount of contact with faculty
- First-year programs
- General education/core curriculum
- Relevance of coursework to everyday life
- Interaction with other students

However, 2012-13 students were less satisfied than their 2010-11 peers in terms of:

- Class size
- Classroom facilities
- Computer facilities and labs
- Laboratory facilities and equipment
- Library facilities
- Racial/ethnic diversity of faculty
- Relevance of coursework to future plans

Table 2. Satisfaction with Academics

2010-11	2012-13	Satisfaction Items	2010-11	2012-13	Satisfaction Items
63%	66%	Academic advising	75%	60%	Laboratory facilities and equipment*
61%	57%	Amount of contact with faculty	90%	79%	Library facilities*
68%	53%	Class size*	80%	82%	Overall academic experience
78%	71%	Classroom facilities*	80%	76%	Overall college experience
83%	66%	Computer facilities and labs*	77%	80%	Overall quality of instruction
51%	58%	First-year programs	63%	53%	Racial/ethnic diversity of faculty*
74%	79%	General education/core curriculum	51%	51%	Relevance of coursework to everyday life
76%	75%	Interaction with other students	69%	64%	Relevance of coursework to future plans*

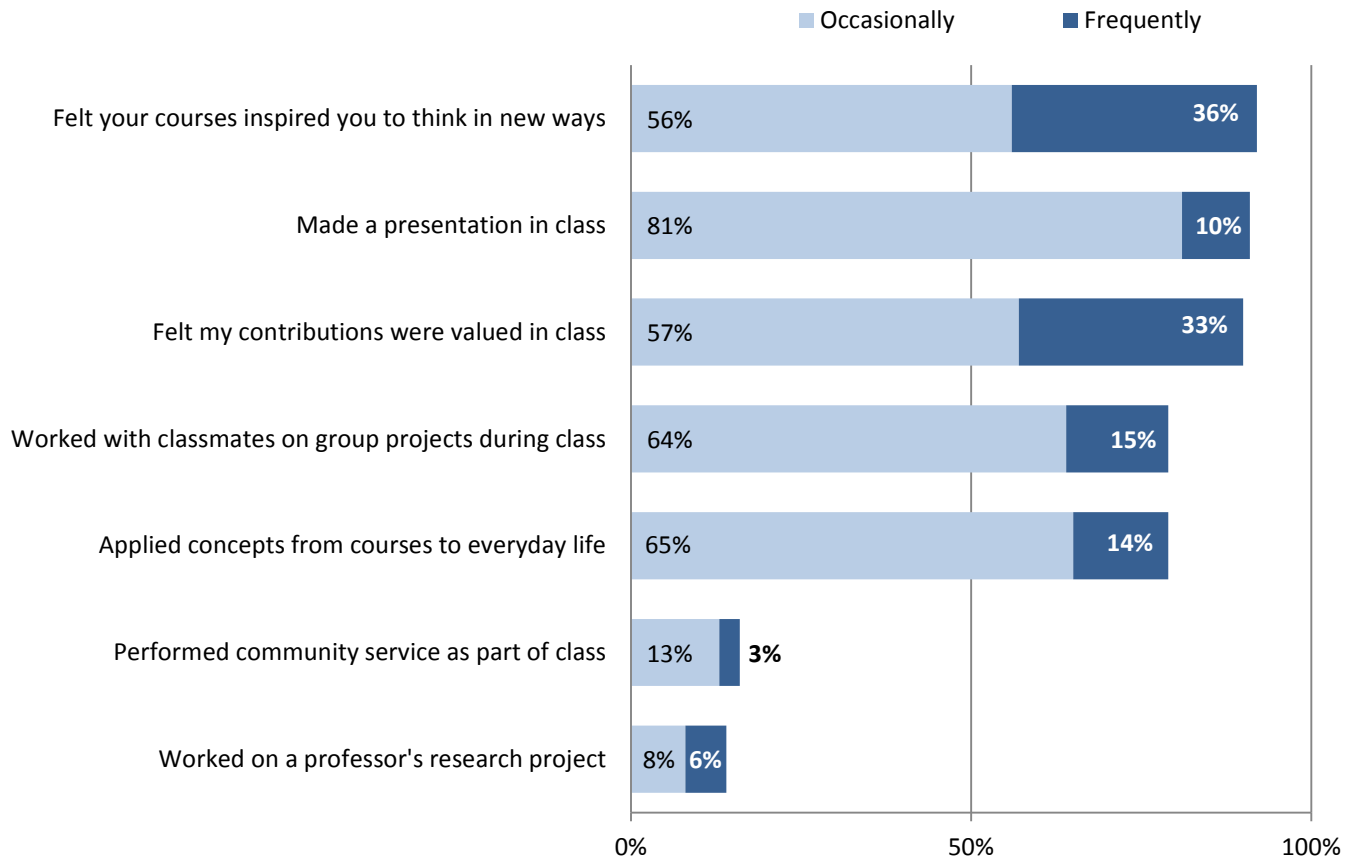
⁴ There were 1,372 first-year students in 2012-13 vs. 1,021 first-year students in 2010-11. An asterisk (*) indicates a significant difference between 2011 and 2013, $p < 0.05$.

Academic Experiences

More than half of first-year students spent 11 or more hours per week on studying or homework (59%) and 16 or more hours in class (59%). The majority of students (figure 1):

- Felt their courses inspired them to think in new ways
- Felt their contributions were valued in class
- Applied concepts from courses to everyday life
- Worked with classmates on group projects during class
- Made a presentation in class

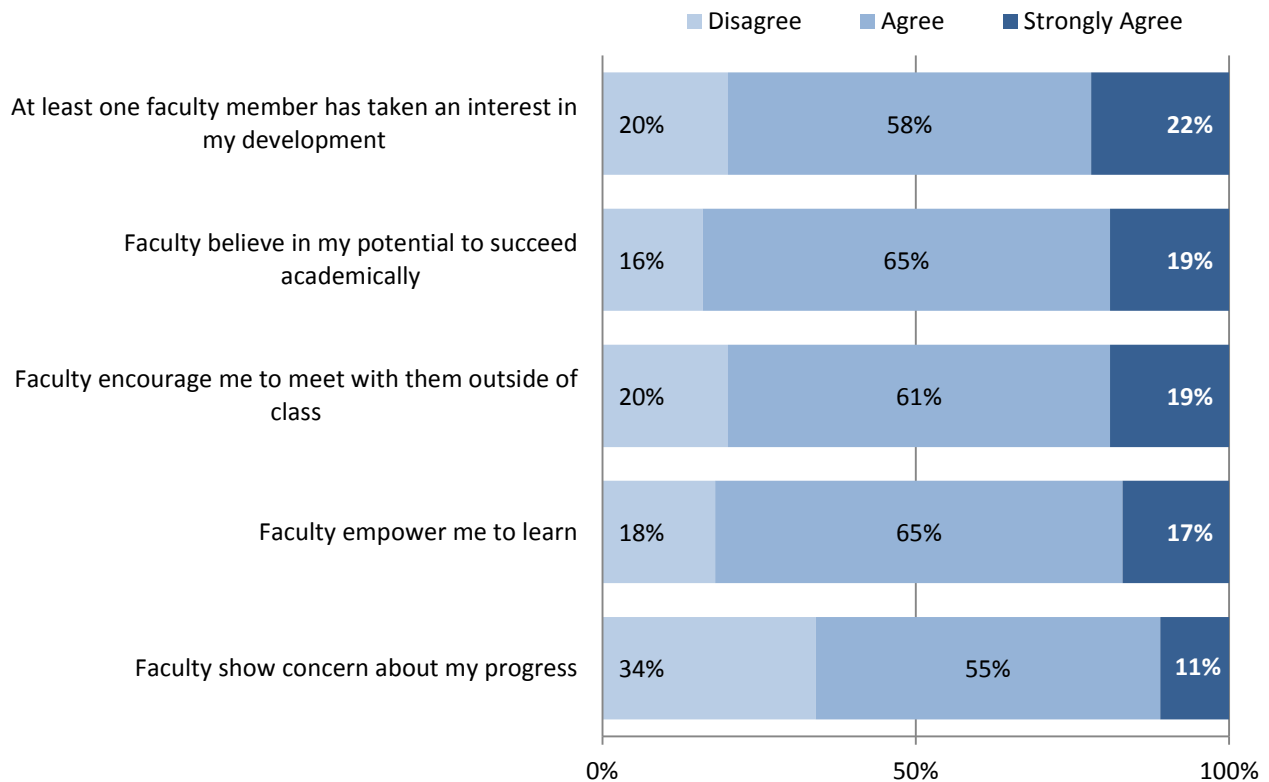
Figure 1. How often have you:



Interactions with Faculty

More than 90% of students agreed that faculty provided them with feedback that helped assess their progress in class and encouraged them to ask questions and participate in discussions (at least occasionally). Most students agreed that (figure 2):

- At least one faculty member has taken an interest in their development
- Faculty believe in their potential to succeed academically
- Faculty empower them to learn
- Faculty encourage students to meet with them outside of class
- Faculty show concern about their progress

Figure 2. To what extent do you agree with the following:

Almost all students contributed to class discussions (95%) and asked questions in class (98%) at least occasionally. Seventy-four percent (74%) of students asked a professor for advice after class and 49% said they communicated regularly with their professors.

Academic Behaviors

Almost all students said they discussed course content with other students outside of class and at least occasionally studied with other students. Ninety-one percent (91%) of students worked on group projects with classmates outside of class. A little less than half of students tutored another student or had received tutoring themselves (figure 3).

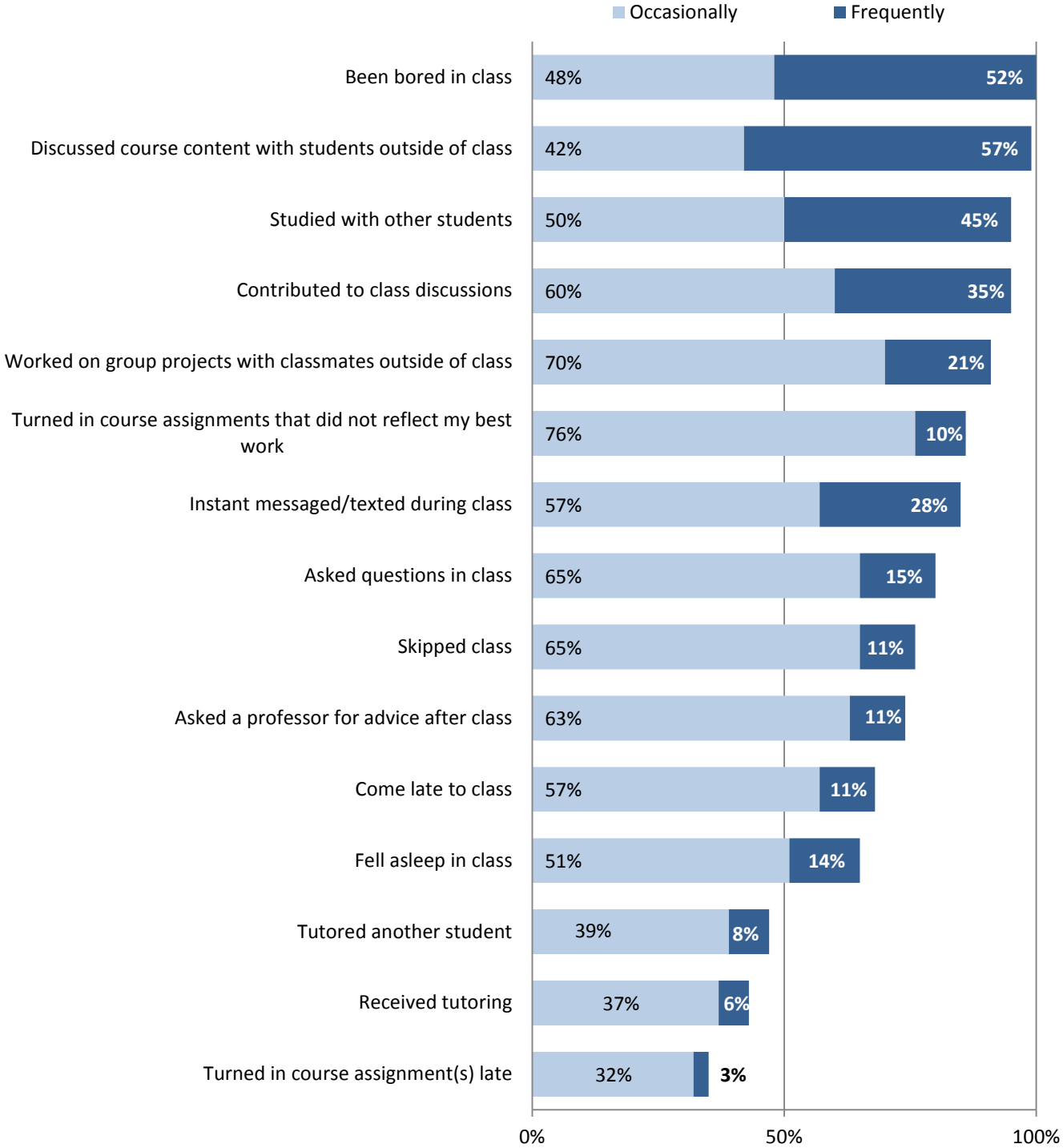
Academic Disengagement

In terms of academic disengagement, the majority of students had (at least occasionally):

- Been bored in class
- Come late to class
- Fallen asleep in class
- Instant messaged/texted during class
- Skipped class
- Turned in course assignments that did not reflect their best work

Fewer students turned in course assignments late (figure 3).

Figure 3. Academic Behaviors



Additional Information

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