

# Executive Summary

## 2014 College Senior Survey

In spring 2014, we asked graduating seniors at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) to participate in the *College Senior Survey*. The survey was administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in conjunction with the Office of Planning and Institutional Research. It is a follow-up to *The Freshman Survey* (TFS) which was administered to this cohort in fall of 2010. Of 983<sup>1</sup> potential participants, 33% (n=326)<sup>2</sup> submitted responses. Their results are compared to students at a group of peer institutions<sup>3</sup>. All significant differences include a measure of effect size, Cohen's *d*. Effect size allows us to estimate the size of the difference<sup>4</sup>.



This report highlights some of the key findings from the 2014 College Senior Survey. Specifically, this report shows the five largest positive differences and the five largest negative differences between CWRU and comparison schools. In other words, this report shows CWRU's biggest strengths and biggest opportunities for improvement relative to the comparison schools. The sizes of the differences were determined by Cohen's *d*. For the purposes of this report, we included only areas that may be linked to the institution's performance, rather than those that address students' opinions and behaviors relative to specific social, political, or spiritual concerns.

The differences highlighted include not only individual survey items, but also constructs. The constructs are derived from multiple items on the survey instrument. Collectively, 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 full distribution for constructs and individual items is available on the IR website at: <https://www.case.edu/ir/srvyresults/>.

### Strengths

This section shows the five largest positive differences between CWRU and the comparison schools. They are listed in order from the largest to smallest difference. Compared to those at the comparison

<sup>1</sup> Population n=983: Women=399 (41%), Men=584 (59%); Caucasian=515 (52%), Asian=189 (19%), Black=41 (4%), Hispanic=33 (3%), Other=29 (3%), Unknown=106 (11%), International=70 (7%)

<sup>2</sup> Sample n=326: Women=166 (51%), Men=160 (49%); Caucasian=184 (56%), Asian=53 (16%), Black=10 (3%), Hispanic=8 (3%), Other=11 (3%), Unknown=42 (13%); International=17 (5%)

<sup>3</sup> Pepperdine University, Northeastern University, Fordham University, Texas Christian University and Biola University

<sup>4</sup> The effect size is the size of the difference between two means. Cohen's *d* values were interpreted according to the criteria for NSSE benchmark comparisons as follows: small ~ .1, medium ~ .3, large ~ .5, very large ~ .7. These benchmark criteria were applied unilaterally to *both* constructs *and* individual items for simplicity.

institutions, CWRU students experienced the largest positive difference in terms of working on professors' research projects.

- 1.) Frequently worked on a professor's research project: 23% vs. 11%; ( $M=1.73$ ,  $SD=0.81$ ) vs. ( $M=1.45$ ,  $SD=0.69$ );  $d=0.41$ ,  $p<.001$
- 2.) Frequently received an opportunity to work on a professor's research project: 28% vs. 20%; ( $M=2.10$ ,  $SD=0.67$ ) vs. ( $M=1.88$ ,  $SD=0.71$ );  $d=0.31$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 3.) Satisfaction with mathematics and science courses: 27% vs. 18% very satisfied; ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ) vs. ( $M=3.68$ ,  $SD=0.94$ );  $d=0.22$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 4.) Academic Self-Concept\*: ( $M=53$ ,  $SD=10.08$ ) vs. ( $M=51$ ,  $SD=9.46$ );  $d=0.21$ ,  $p<.01$ .
- 5.) Self-assessment of problem-solving skills: 59% vs. 50% rated as a major strength; ( $M=4.50$ ,  $SD=0.66$ ) vs. ( $M=4.37$ ,  $SD=0.71$ );  $d=0.18$ ,  $p<.01$ .

\*Academic Self-Concept is a survey construct, so represents multiple items.

### Areas for Improvement

This section describes the five largest negative differences between CWRU and comparison schools. They are listed in order from largest to smallest. Relative to students in the comparison group, CWRU students experienced the largest negative difference in Overall Satisfaction\*.

- 1.) Overall Satisfaction\*: ( $M=48$ ,  $SD=8.90$ ) vs. ( $M=51$ ,  $SD=8.10$ );  $d=-0.41$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 2.) Satisfaction with student housing: 9% vs. 15% very satisfied; ( $M=3.10$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ) vs. ( $M=3.48$ ,  $SD=1.06$ );  $d=-0.36$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 3.) Satisfaction with Coursework\*: ( $M=47$ ,  $SD=10.20$ ) vs. ( $M=50$ ,  $SD=9.68$ );  $d=-0.35$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 4.) Satisfaction with academic advising: 16% vs. 21% very satisfied; ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ) vs. ( $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=1.11$ );  $d=-0.35$ ,  $p<.001$ .
- 5.) Satisfaction with student health services: 16% vs. 21% very satisfied; ( $M=3.17$ ,  $SD=1.23$ ) vs. ( $M=3.56$ ,  $SD=1.11$ );  $d=-0.35$ ,  $p<.001$ .

\*Overall Satisfaction and Satisfaction with Coursework are survey constructs, so represent multiple items.

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