

# Case Western Reserve University Student Experience Survey (CWRUSES): Undergraduate Student Summary

The Case Western Reserve University Student Experience Survey (CWRUSES) was launched in February 2019 to a sample of CWRU undergraduate and graduate students. This was a follow-up to the same survey that was administered in 2016.

A total of 800 students were sampled from each of the four undergraduate classes (1<sup>st</sup> years, 2<sup>nd</sup> years, 3<sup>rd</sup> years, and 4<sup>th</sup> year and beyond). A breakdown of respondent characteristics from the 2016 and 2019 administrations is provided in Table 1.

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Table 1. Characteristics of Undergraduate Respondents: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019

<b>Response Rate</b>		<b>2016</b>		<b>2019</b>	
	Total Responses	1,659		1,272	
	Response Rate	52%		40%	
<b>Survey Module</b>	Academic	816	49%	636	50%
	Quality of Life	843	51%	636	50%
<b>Year</b>	1st Year	471	28%	383	30%
	2nd Year	406	24%	297	23%
	3rd Year	392	24%	293	23%
	4th Year or later	390	24%	299	24%
<b>Student Status</b>	First-Time	1,622	98%	1,244	98%
	Transfer	37	2%	28	2%
<b>Institution-Reported Sex</b>	Women	849	51%	679	53%
	Men	810	49%	593	47%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	Asian	297	18%	249	20%
	Black	71	4%	45	4%
	International	123	7%	118	9%
	Latinx	98	6%	89	7%
	Multiracial	75	5%	69	5%
	Other & Unknown	55	3%	15	1%
	White	940	57%	687	54%
<b>School of Major*</b>	Arts and Sciences	392	48%	355	56%
	Engineering	438	54%	272	43%
	Management	80	10%	105	17%
	Nursing	52	6%	38	6%
	Other/Undecided	21	3%	15	2%

\*Percentages sum to more than 100 because students identified majors from multiple schools

Overall, the response rate for the 2019 administration (40%) is well below the 52% achieved during the 2016 administration. In 2019, a greater portion of students from under-represented groups responded, corresponding with a smaller proportion of White students completing the survey. The 2019 undergraduates represented primarily the College of Arts and Sciences (56%) and Case School of Engineering (43%). This profile of respondents mostly resembles the undergraduate student population at CWRU, except in one aspect: women— though outnumbered by men 46% to 54% in the population— were more likely to complete the survey.

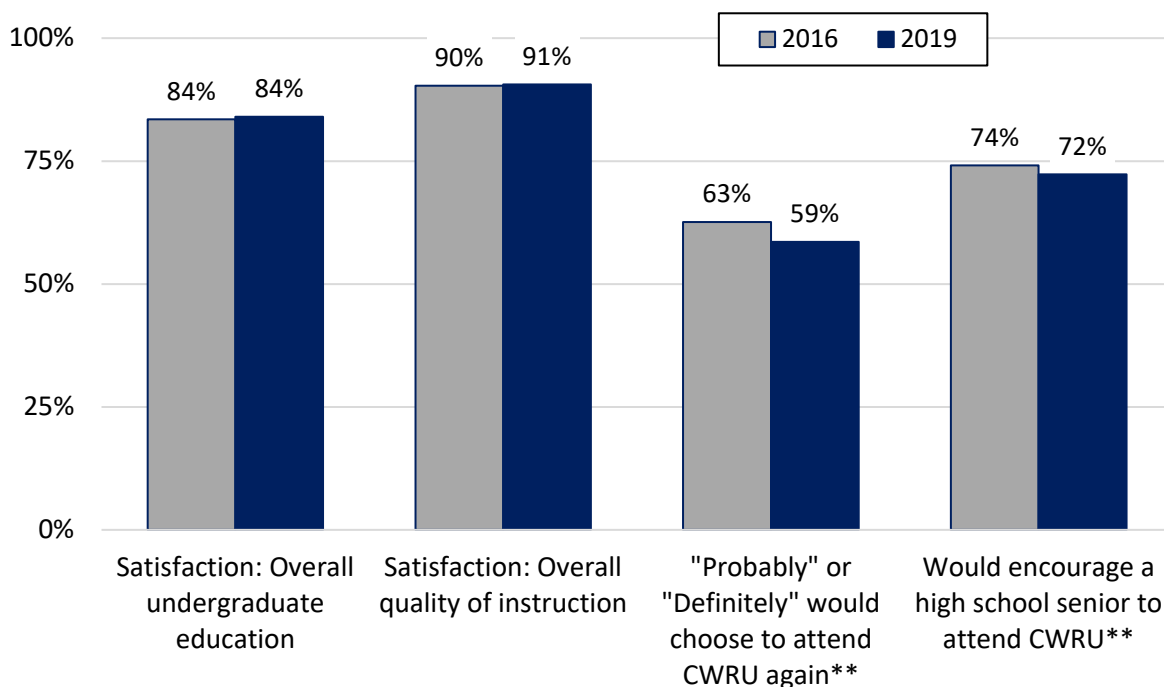
*Note on significance:*

The data presented below show comparisons between data collected in 2016 and 2019. While most data are presented as proportions of students (in %), analyses were conducted to determine if the differences between years demonstrate statistical significance. Since rating scale data at the item level are ordinal in nature, the analysis was done using a Mann-Whitney *U* test.

Overall Satisfaction

The overall satisfaction of undergraduate students at CWRU was evaluated using five items. Students were asked to rate their overall undergraduate education, the overall quality of instruction, whether they would choose to attend CWRU again, and whether or not they would encourage a high school senior like them to attend CWRU. The individual items and percentages are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Indicators of Overall Satisfaction: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019**

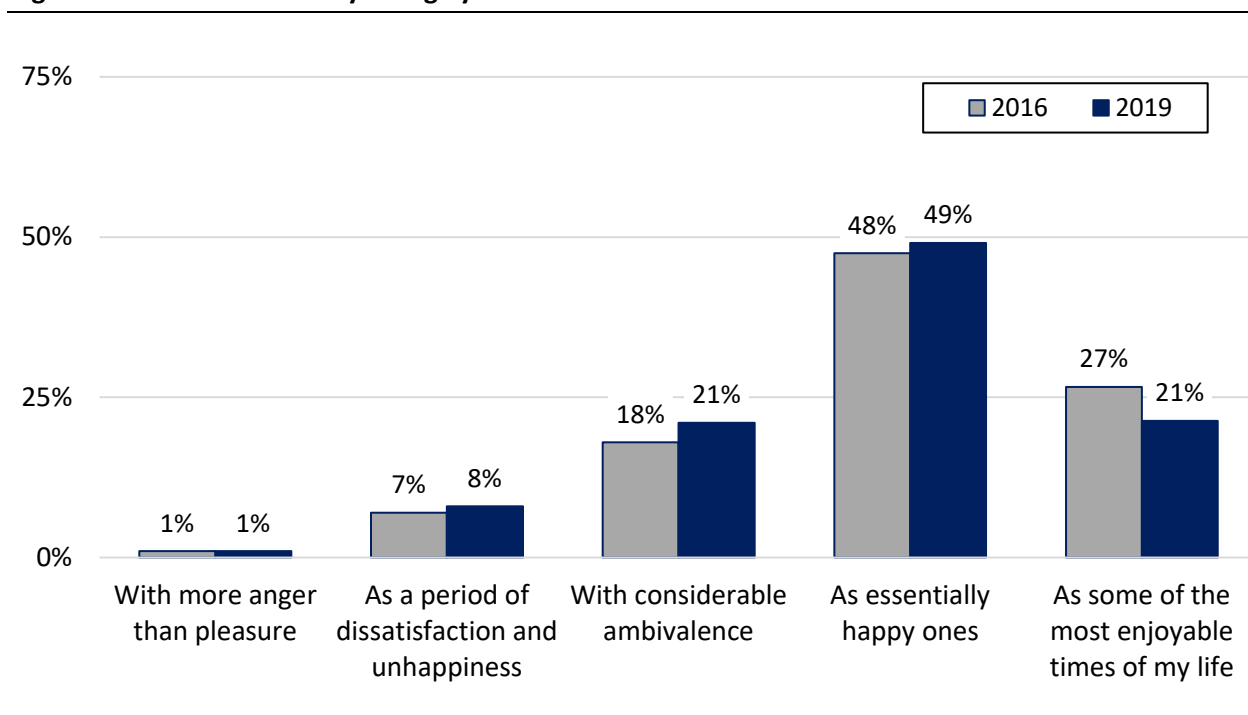


\*\*Difference is significant (p<.01)

The 2019 administration saw responses very closely associated to those collected in 2016. The same proportion of students said they were either “Generally Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their overall undergraduate education (84%) and almost the same in regards to overall quality of instruction (90% in 2016 compared with 91% in 2019). A slightly larger proportion of students were likely to choose to attend CWRU again and would encourage a high school senior who resembles them to attend CWRU in 2016 than they would in 2019. Taken together, very little has changed in terms of students’ overall satisfaction over the past three years.

The fifth item asked students how they would remember their college years. Given five options, students were most likely to say they will remember them “As essentially happy ones.” These data are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2. I will remember my college years...**



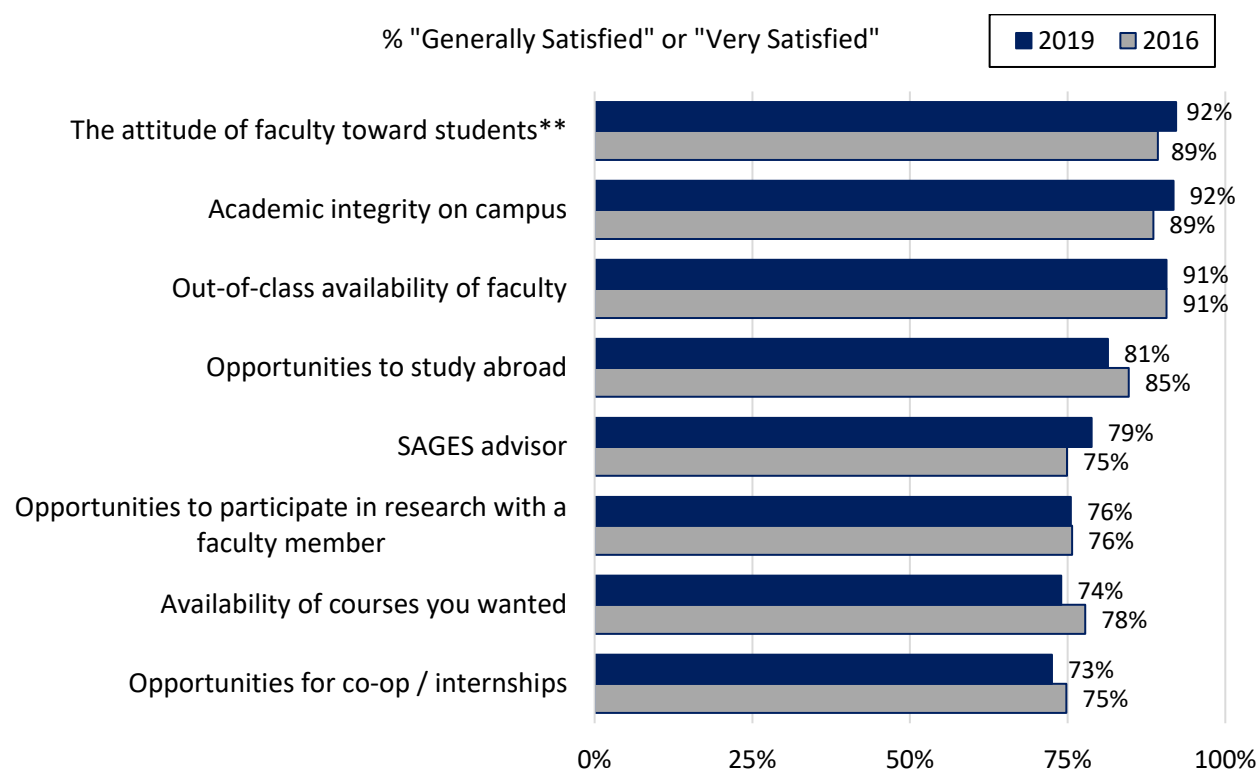
Since 2016, the proportion of students who would say they will remember their college years as some of the most enjoyable times of their lives has decreased by more than 5%, which resulted in increases on three of the other four response options. Thus, students feel less strongly that college was an enjoyable experience for them and more were likely to view their college experience with ambivalence or even dissatisfaction.

To further explore student satisfaction, the following sections present results of the survey broken down into the areas of academic opportunities, experience with faculty, extracurricular experiences, interactions with offices and departments, campus climate and discrimination, and CWRU’s contribution to students’ skill building and development before exploring satisfaction with major areas. It is expected that each of these contribute to students’ overall satisfaction in some ways, so these items and topics provide more detail into specific aspects with which students may or may not be satisfied.

Satisfaction with Academic Opportunities and Experience with Faculty

Eight items addressed undergraduate students' satisfaction with academic opportunities and their experience with faculty, which relates to their experience as they navigate through their academic programs. These items are presented in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. To what extent are you satisfied with the quality of the following aspects of your undergraduate experience? (Academic Opportunities and Experience with Faculty)**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Undergraduates are most satisfied with the attitude of faculty toward students— which has increased significantly since 2016— and academic integrity on campus, followed closely by out-of-class availability of faculty. These were also among the most satisfying aspects in 2016. There has been a slight decrease since 2016 in proportion of students satisfied with availability of courses, opportunities for co-op/internships, and opportunities for study abroad.

Though some significant differences were found, it should be noted that the proportion of students satisfied with these aspects of their undergraduate experience are similar and have not changed dramatically over the past few years. Significant differences can suggest that students felt more extreme (i.e., very satisfied or very dissatisfied) at one time point than the other as the significance is determined by testing item means, not differences in proportions.

## Satisfaction with Navigators

Students were also asked about their experience with their respective Navigator. The Navigator roles were created during summer 2018 as part of the greater Student Success Initiative, so no comparative data from 2016 exists. Data on navigators is presented by student year, as interactions with and reliance upon Navigators is likely dependent upon how long students have been at CWRU.

First-year students were most likely to have met their Navigator (91%), followed by students in their second year (34%). Third- (25%) and fourth- year (24%) students were much less likely to have met with their Navigator, likely due to Navigators' focus on first-year students and upper-class students' lack of interest in or need to meet with a Navigator.

Students that had not met with their Navigator were asked about ways in which a Navigator could assist them here at CWRU. In most cases, students cited being advanced in their studies and unclear of the Navigator's role. Some expressed desire for assistance in talking about graduation requirements, major/minor declaration, graduate school, and other opportunities that include post-graduate planning. Comments consistently reflected students' desire for assistance in planning and mapping out their experiences through their time at CWRU and into the future, as well as serving as a helpful contact person with knowledge of where to go and making connections to helpful resources.

Overall, more than two thirds of students are at least satisfied with their Navigator. The proportion of students who are "very satisfied" (37%) is a little larger than those that are "generally satisfied" (32%), and this is true across years. Second year students constituted the highest proportion of those at least satisfied with their Navigator, but sample sizes for the items are small due to fewer students in second year and beyond who have met with their Navigator. These data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. To what extent are you satisfied with your navigator?

Year	Very Dissatisfied	Generally Dissatisfied	Ambivalent	Generally Satisfied	Very Satisfied	% Satisfied	Total
First Year	3%	8%	21%	32%	36%	68%	163
Second Year	2%	4%	20%	34%	40%	74%	50
Third Year	6%	6%	22%	31%	36%	67%	36
Fourth Year or Later	5%	11%	19%	27%	38%	65%	37
<b>Total</b>	4%	7%	21%	32%	37%	69%	286

The next set of questions asked students to rate the extent to which they are satisfied with their Navigator's ability to help them in a variety of ways. Students were most satisfied with their Navigator's ability to provide them with accurate information, direct them to helpful resources, and encourage and support student-advisor relationships. Students were least satisfied with their Navigator's ability to intervene quickly when a problem arises. These results are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Satisfaction with Navigators' Abilities

To what extent are you satisfied with your Navigator's ability to...		Year				Total
		1st Yr	2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	
Direct you to helpful academic resources	Generally	43%	44%	36%	36%	42%
	Very	44%	42%	55%	42%	45%
	Total N	153	45	31	31	260
Direct you to helpful non-academic resources	Generally	49%	50%	33%	26%	45%
	Very	33%	38%	52%	48%	38%
	Total N	144	40	27	23	234
Provide relevant/timely information	Generally	42%	48%	29%	46%	42%
	Very	41%	37%	52%	39%	42%
	Total N	157	46	31	33	267
Understand your needs as a student	Generally	48%	42%	27%	31%	42%
	Very	37%	42%	53%	44%	41%
	Total N	156	50	34	32	272
Provide accurate information	Generally	41%	48%	44%	46%	43%
	Very	48%	40%	47%	46%	46%
	Total N	155	48	34	33	270
Encourage and support student-advisor relationships	Generally	43%	51%	30%	36%	42%
	Very	42%	40%	53%	44%	43%
	Total N	145	45	30	25	245
Intervene quickly when a problem arises	Generally	47%	50%	38%	38%	45%
	Very	39%	34%	42%	29%	37%
	Total N	113	32	24	21	190

Student comments provide support for their ratings. The open-ended responses suggest students early in their academic careers rely on their Navigator as a contact person for helpful information both about academic and non-academic topics, while students who have been at CWRU longer were less likely to have met their Navigator and to rely on them in the same way.

The last set of questions asked students about the extent to which they agree with statements about their Navigator. Most students agreed that their Navigator was responsive and that their Navigator follows-up in a timely manner. Students were least likely to agree that their Navigator has helped them make meaningful connections to experiential, social, and extracurricular opportunities. These results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Navigator Characteristics

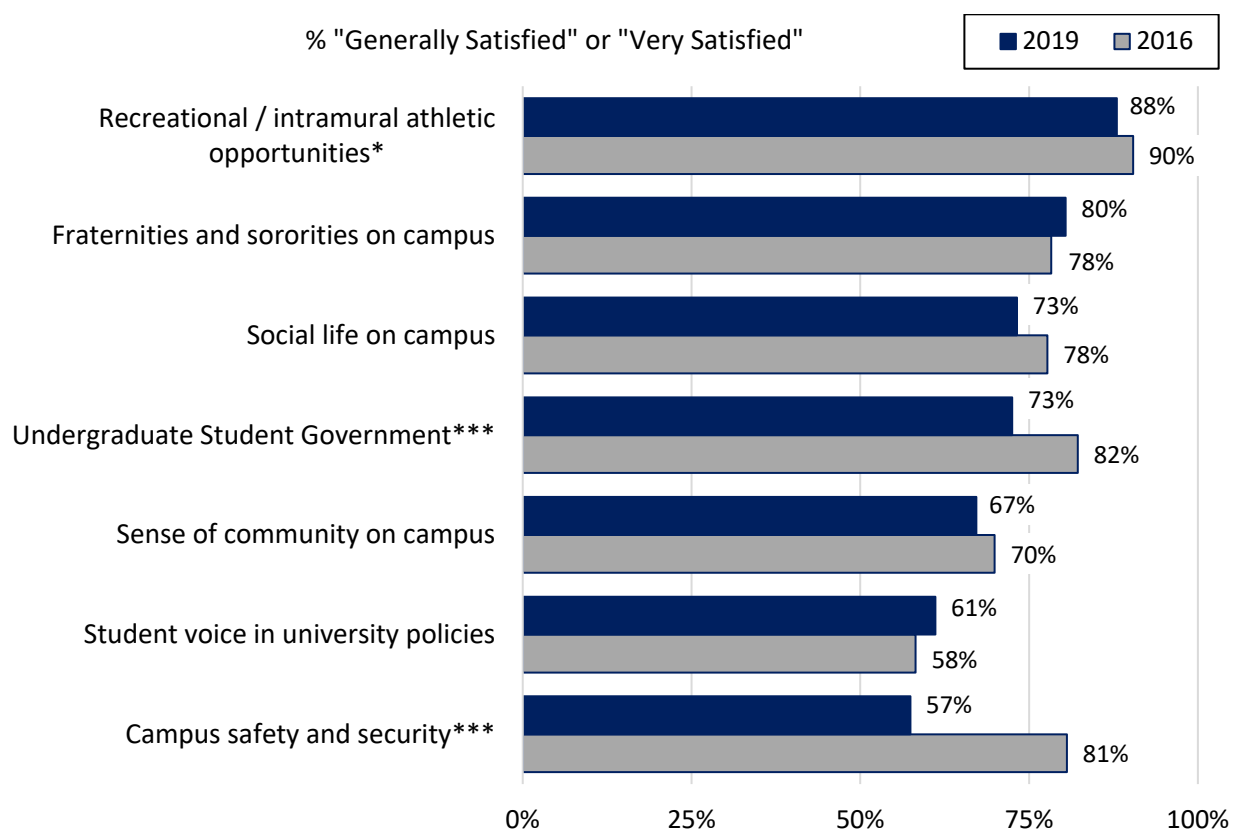
To what extent do you agree with the following statements:		Year				Total
		1st Yr	2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	
My navigator is responsive	Somewhat	22%	21%	22%	26%	22%
	Strongly	60%	51%	61%	60%	59%
	Total N	158	47	36	35	276
My navigator is likely to contact me on a consistent basis	Somewhat	37%	17%	17%	17%	28%
	Strongly	31%	21%	26%	20%	28%
	Total N	159	48	35	30	272
My navigator follows-up in a timely manner	Somewhat	24%	29%	22%	29%	26%
	Strongly	59%	42%	61%	44%	54%
	Total N	160	48	36	34	278
My navigator knows me as a person	Somewhat	35%	28%	17%	10%	28%
	Strongly	23%	19%	26%	36%	24%
	Total N	159	47	35	31	272
I am comfortable talking to my navigator about personal issues	Somewhat	28%	29%	24%	17%	26%
	Strongly	24%	17%	27%	50%	26%
	Total N	160	48	34	30	272
My navigator has helped me make meaningful connections to experiential, social, and extracurricular opportunities	Somewhat	30%	25%	13%	12%	25%
	Strongly	21%	10%	30%	27%	21%
	Total N	149	40	30	26	245

Overall, students seem to be satisfied with their Navigator and most of them have confidence in their Navigator to be responsive and to provide them relevant, timely, and accurate information. Though some areas of improvement could be inferred, the results should be interpreted with caution due to the sizes of samples from this survey. At the very least, these data should inform further exploration of students' experience with their Navigators and supplement other data sources.

Satisfaction with the Extracurricular Experience

Seven items addressed undergraduate students' satisfaction with their extracurricular experience, which relates to their broad experience as members of the campus community. These items are presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4. To what extent are you satisfied with the quality of the following aspects of your undergraduate experience? (Extracurricular Experience)**



\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

The recreational and intramural athletic opportunities (88%) and fraternities and sororities on campus (80%) remain among the most satisfying aspects of the undergraduate extracurricular experience, though satisfaction with the athletic opportunities is down significantly since 2016. Only about two thirds of students are satisfied with the sense of community on campus (67%) and 61% are satisfied with student voice in university policies. Significant and substantial drops in satisfaction were identified for campus safety and security and Undergraduate Student Government.

The precipitous decline in satisfaction with campus safety and security is likely a response to incidents on campus and within the surrounding area during the academic year, as multiple offices have been involved in boosting security, expanding services to students, and facilitating trainings.



## Satisfaction with Campus Offices and Services

Students were also asked about their satisfaction with various offices and services on campus, and the results are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Undergraduates' Satisfaction with Campus Offices and Services: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019

To what extent are you satisfied with the following offices and services available on campus?	% "Generally Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"	Year	
		2016	2019
Access Services*		77%	81%
Athletic Facilities		92%	93%
Bursar's Office		87%	86%
Campus shuttle/bus service		69%	66%
Campus housing		59%	62%
Residence Facilities		74%	71%
Career Center		86%	85%
Center for Women		95%	95%
Center for Civic Engagement and Learning (CCEL)		96%	95%
Classroom facilities		89%	86%
Computer facilities and resources		93%	91%
Computer services and support		87%	89%
Dining Services*		52%	46%
Disability Resources		85%	87%
Educational Services for Students		96%	92%
Financial Aid Office		83%	79%
Greek Life Office		77%	80%
Housing Office*		79%	83%
International Affairs (e.g., International Student Services, Study Abroad, etc.)		94%	87%
Laboratory facilities and resources		91%	90%
LGBT Center		96%	91%
Library facilities and resources		96%	97%
Office of Multicultural Affairs		96%	94%
Registrar's Office*		90%	93%
Residence Life Office**		86%	89%
Support of Undergraduate Research & Creative Endeavors (SOURCE)		85%	88%
Student Activities and Leadership Office		91%	92%
Student Financial Services		85%	82%
Thwing Center*		94%	96%
Tinkham Veale University Center		89%	93%
The Off-Campus Housing Listing Service (Aloha)		74%	74%
Undergraduate Studies		92%	91%
University Bookstore*		69%	72%
University Counseling Services		76%	83% <sup>†</sup>
University Health Services		74%	
Web-based registration (SIS Self-Service)*		73%	79%
Writing Resource Center		93%	93%

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

<sup>†</sup>Offices were combined into University Health and Counseling Services

Very little has changed over the past three years, with about the same proportion of students satisfied each year for most offices and services. Significant change occurred in the positive direction for Access Services, the Housing Office, the Registrar's Office, Residence Life, Thwing Center, the University Bookstore, and web-based registration (SIS). University Health and Counseling Services were previously separate entities that combined since 2016, so the data for 2019 reflects University Health and Counseling Services as it currently exists. The only area in which a negative change was significant was for Dining Services, where now less than 50% of students are satisfied.

## Campus Climate

Campus climate was addressed using several sections of the CWRUSES instrument. The first, exploring students' comfort, opportunities, perspectives, and interactions with others, are provided in Table 6.

Table 6. Undergraduate Student Campus Climate: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? <i>"Agree" or "Strongly Agree"</i>	Year	
	2016	2019
I see the value of having students of different genders in classes**	91%	92%
I see the value of having students from different racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds in classes***	88%	92%
I see the value of having instructors of different genders at CWRU***	90%	91%
I see the value of having instructors of different racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds at CWRU***	88%	91%
Instructors treat students fairly regardless of their sexual orientation*	86%	88%
Instructors treat students fairly regardless of their gender/gender identity*	84%	85%
Instructors treat students fairly regardless of their racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds**	82%	85%
I have ample opportunities to meet people of different racial, cultural, or ethnic backgrounds*	81%	84%
My experience at CWRU prepares me to work in a culturally diverse environment**	76%	81%
CWRU is a comfortable place for me as a student*	82%	81%
CWRU helps students understand the detrimental effects of discrimination**	56%	62%
I know how to seek help if I am discriminated against***	53%	60%
Faculty members make efforts to assist students with learning disabilities*	56%	60%
Faculty make efforts to assist students whose native language is not English	43%	47%
Staff make efforts to assist students whose native language is not English	43%	45%

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Compared to 2016, a much greater proportion of undergraduate students at CWRU report a positive climate, with percentages increasing across almost all items. In many cases, the change in climate has demonstrated statistical significance for most items. Holistically, CWRU is an environment where most

students feel comfortable and believe they are treated fairly regardless of their gender, gender identity, racial, cultural or ethnic background, and sexual orientation. More than 90% of students see the value of having students from diverse backgrounds in classes. There is still room for growth, particularly in how faculty and staff can make efforts to assist students whose native language is not English or who may have learning disabilities.

The other section on campus climate asks students about discrimination they have experienced. Table 7 provides the proportion of students who have been discriminated against based on certain characteristics.

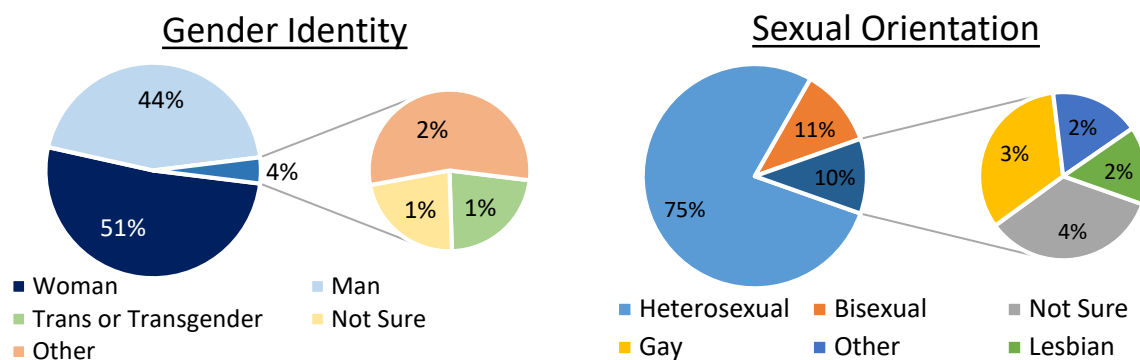
Table 7. Discrimination Felt by Undergraduate Students: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019

I have been discriminated against based on my...	Year	
	2016	2019
Racial, cultural, or ethnic background	14%	11%
Gender	10%	11%
Sexual orientation	2%	2%
Religious Affiliation	6%	5%
Socioeconomic status	8%	6%
Age	4%	3%
Disability	2%	3%
Other	5%	4%

The greatest feelings of discrimination of undergraduate students stems from their racial, cultural, or ethnic background. About the same proportion of students have identified the other characteristics as bases for discrimination in 2019 compared with 2016. Discrimination based on other reasons includes students’ accent or fluency in English, political affiliation, weight, and non-traditional academic career.

The proportion of students who identify gender-based or sexual orientation-based discrimination has remained about the same since 2016, which has coincided with a small increase in students who self-identify with a gender identity outside the traditional binary. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of 2019 respondents’ self-reported gender identity and sexual orientation.

Figure 5. Undergraduate Students' Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation



\* Respondents were able to identify as more than 1, so percentages sum to more than 100%

## Learning Outcomes and Student Development

Several questions asked students about the extent to which CWRU has contributed to their development personally, academically, and socially. The results are provided in Table 8.

Table 8. CWRU's Contribution to Undergraduates' Development: CWRUSES 2016 and 2019

CWRU has contributed to my...	"Quite a bit" or "Very much"	Year	
		2016	2019
Functioning independently, without supervision		72%	75%
In-depth knowledge of a field or discipline		74%	74%
Thinking critically		74%	72%
Functioning effectively as a member of a team		66%	68%
Understanding and using quantitative reasoning and methods		68%	68%
Ability to get along with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives		67%	68%
Establishing a course of action to accomplish goals		64%	67%
Judging the merits of arguments based on their sources, methods and reasoning		62%	64%
Understanding the process of science and experimentation		64%	63%
Creating original ideas and solutions		60%	60%
Developing awareness of social problems		55%	58%
Leading and supervising tasks and groups of people		56%	57%
Career- or work-related knowledge and skills		57%	57%
Understanding moral and ethical issues		55%	56%
Writing clearly and effectively*		51%	55%
Communicating well orally		47%	53%
Placing current problems in historical, cultural, or philosophical perspectives*		45%	52%
Understanding international perspectives on economic, political, social, or cultural issues		45%	49%
Constructively resolving interpersonal conflicts		43%	48%
Critical appreciation of art, music, literature, and drama		34%	37%
Reading or speaking a foreign language		23%	27%

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

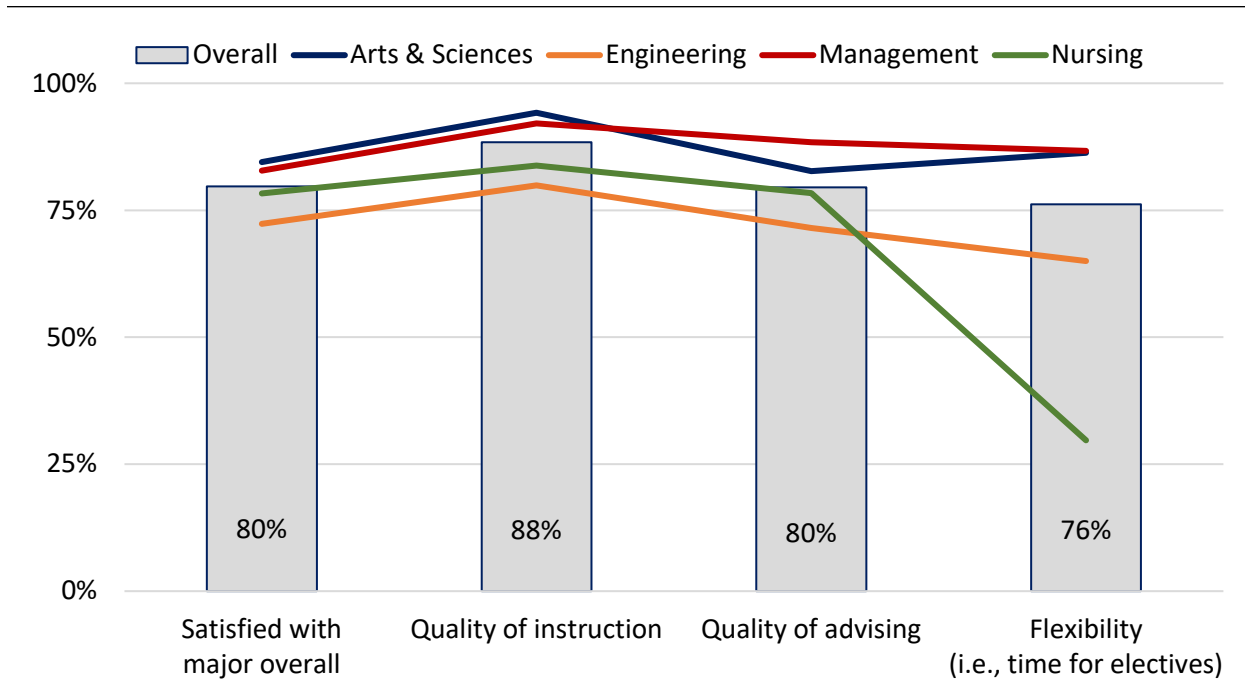
Based on 2019 responses, CWRU has contributed most to how undergraduate students function independently, without supervision; their in-depth knowledge of a field or discipline; and their critical thinking skills. The smallest proportion of students agree that CWRU has contributed to their critical appreciation of art, music, literature and drama, and their reading or speaking of a foreign language. Only small changes were found comparing the proportions between 2016 and 2019, but significant improvement was found for CWRU's contribution to students' writing clearly and effectively and their ability to place current problems in historical, cultural, or philosophical perspectives.

## Satisfaction within Major Areas

The final section assessed undergraduate students' satisfaction within their major areas. Data in this section are presented by school in which a respective major is based. Responses were maintained separately in cases where students have identified two majors, so each rating is unique to the school of each major.

There were four questions that explored satisfaction within major areas: Overall satisfaction, quality of instruction, quality of advising, and flexibility within the major, which included time for electives. These results are presented in Figure 6 with the bars indicating undergraduates overall and a line representing each school.

**Figure 6. Undergraduate Students' Satisfaction with Major (By School, 2019)**



About 80% of students report being satisfied with their major overall. The students who are most satisfied represent the College of Arts and Sciences, followed by Management, Nursing and Engineering. The same pattern was found in regards to students' ratings of quality of instruction within their majors, with more than 88% of students satisfied.

When asked about quality of advising, students from Management were the most satisfied, followed by Arts and Sciences, Nursing, then Engineering. However, flexibility within the major was met with much less satisfaction for students in Nursing than any other school. Engineering students are more satisfied, but not at the level seen in students from Management or Arts and Sciences.

Overall, there is substantial disparity between majors in Engineering and the other three schools in their satisfaction with their major. Differences on all four items between Engineering and the other schools were enough to demonstrate statistical significance when tested, and overall suggest more than 25% of students are dissatisfied with aspects of their major.

### Summary and Conclusions

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The broad indicators of undergraduate student satisfaction have remained about the same since 2016, but the 2019 survey provides evidence of change in a few ways. Current undergraduate students are:

- Less likely to recommend CWRU to a high school senior, less likely to choose CWRU again, and more likely to view their college years less favorably than in 2016
- More frequently satisfied with the attitude of faculty toward students and the level of academic integrity on campus, but less satisfied with opportunities for study abroad and co-op/internship
- More satisfied with several departments or offices, including Access Services and the offices of Housing, the Registrar, and Residence Life
- Less satisfied with recreational/intramural athletic opportunities, Undergraduate Student Government, and campus safety and security

Campus climate items suggest CWRU has improved as an environment where most students feel comfortable and believe they are treated fairly:

- Compared to 2016, significant positive change was found for twelve of the fifteen campus climate items, and two of the remaining three items have improved since 2016
- The only negative change was for the item “CWRU is a comfortable place for me as a student”, with which only 81% of students agreed (compared to 82% previously)

Undergraduate students were asked the extent to which CWRU has contributed to their personal, academic, and social development. These are the big takeaways:

- CWRU has most contributed to students’ functioning independently, without supervision, and gaining in-depth knowledge of a field or discipline. Significant improvement was made in students’ writing clearly and effectively and their ability to place current problems in historical, cultural, or philosophical perspectives since 2016
- Responses from the current survey resemble those from the previous survey, with significant changes accompanying a 2% drop in critical thinking and a 1% drop in understanding the process of science and experimentation

Satisfaction with major data were analyzed based on school for just the 2019 data. Overall, 80% of students are satisfied with their major overall and the quality of instruction is the most satisfying aspect of their major. However, some differences were noted between schools:

- Students with majors in Arts and Sciences and Management were most satisfied with their majors in all aspects: overall satisfaction, quality of instruction, quality of advising, and flexibility
- Students rate flexibility of their major (i.e., time for electives) as the least satisfying aspect overall, particularly in Nursing and Engineering
- Across the board, satisfaction with quality of advising lags behind quality of instruction

### Additional Information

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For additional information about the CWRU Student Experience Survey or this report, please contact:

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