

**Background:**

The University of New Orleans recently completed the first administration of what is planned to be an annual survey of new undergraduates; the New Student Survey (NSS). The NSS was designed to gather information about students' perceptions and expectations of the university as they began their college careers at UNO.

**Focus:**

The focus of this particular report is to examine similarities and differences among student respondents to the Fall 2010 NSS by their current college affiliation. Students are grouped according to their academic major into one of the following colleges at UNO:

- College of Business Administration (BADM)
- College of Education (EDUC)
- College of Engineering (ENGR)
- Interdisciplinary Programs (IDS)\*
- College of Liberal Arts (LA)
- College of Science (SCI)

\*IDS is not included in further discussion and analysis due to the small number of respondents. In order to protect student anonymity, IRDM does not report results for groups where the sample size is less than 10 respondents.

**Purpose:**

By examining similarities and differences among students by college, individual colleges may be able to better understand the background characteristics and expectations of their new students. The overarching goal of the NSS is to better understand UNO's new students as they begin their college careers so that they may be best served by their university.

**Summary of Findings:**

- There are no statistically significant differences in student high school GPA by college among respondents to the NSS.
- Among respondents to the NSS, the mean ACT composite scores for the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Engineering were statistically significantly higher than the mean ACT composite score for the College of Sciences. There were no significant differences on mean ACT score among the other colleges.
- There are no statistically significant differences in mean certainty about academic major by college. Most respondents indicated they are either "fairly certain" they are in the right college or "certain" they are in the right major.
- Most respondents expect to obtain their bachelor's degree in about 4 years. There were no statistically significant differences in the mean expected time to degree by college.
- There are a few statistically significant differences on individual items related to student expectations between certain colleges; despite the differences the means still indicate general agreement with the items.

**Student Background Characteristics by College:**

As a part of the Fall 2010 New Student Survey, the Office of Institutional Research and Data Management (IRDM) also pulled in student background characteristics for the purposes of comparing survey responses across different groups of students.

Using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in the high school GPAs or ACT composite scores of new students by college. The results include only those students who responded to the NSS.

| College     | Number of Respondents | Mean HS GPA |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| <b>BADM</b> | 31                    | 4.13        |
| <b>EDUC</b> | 17                    | 3.76        |
| <b>ENGR</b> | 29                    | 4.00        |
| <b>LA</b>   | 67                    | 4.19        |
| <b>SCI</b>  | 82                    | 4.20        |

*Mean HS GPA* is represented on the following scale: 1 = 1.99 or below; 2 = 2.00 – 2.49; 3 = 2.5 – 2.99; 4 = 3.00 – 3.24; 5 = 3.25 or above. There were no statically significant differences among any of the mean HS GPAs by college.

| College     | Number of Respondents | Mean ACT Composite |
|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>BADM</b> | 29                    | 22.79              |
| <b>EDUC</b> | 17                    | 22.00              |
| <b>ENGR</b> | 26                    | 23.92              |
| <b>LA</b>   | 65                    | 24.03              |
| <b>SCI</b>  | 78                    | 21.62              |

*Mean ACT Composite* utilizes students’ reported ACT composite score. The highest possible ACT score is 36. Only the mean ACT composite for the College of Science was found to be statistically significantly different from any of the other colleges. The mean ACT composite for the College of Science (SCI) was statistically significantly lower than the mean ACT composite for the College of Engineering and the College of Liberal Arts.

**Student Expectations by College:**

Several items on the NSS ask students about their expectations for the academic year. Items related to major, time to degree, courses, and faculty members will be examined.

*Certainty about major:* Students were asked to indicate their level of certainty about their current major using the following scale: 1 = Not certain at all, I will probably change my major; 2 = Fairly certain I am at least in the right college (business, education, engineering, liberal arts, sciences); 3 = Certain I will stay in this major; in response to the question “How certain are you about your current major/field of study?” A one-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences in the mean response to this item by college. However, responses by college may be of interest and are displayed in following table.

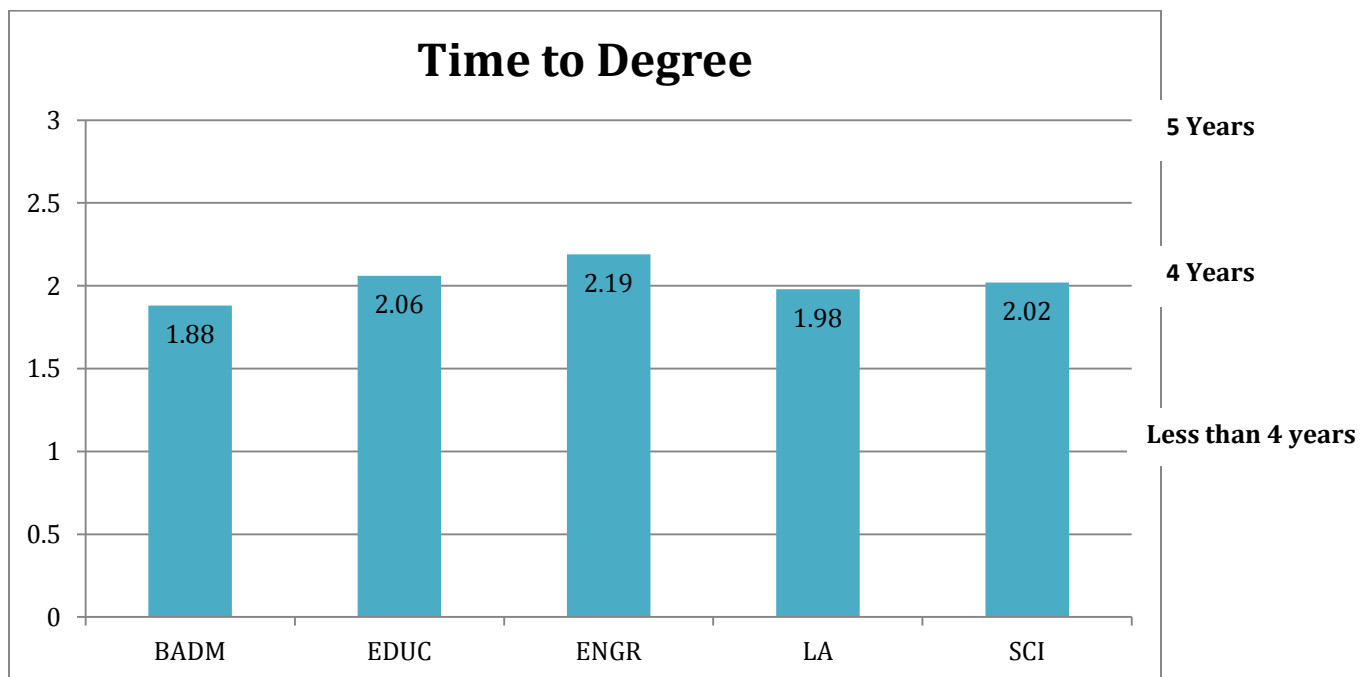
### Certainty About Major

1 = Not certain at all, I will probably change my major; 2 = Fairly certain I am at least in the right college;  
 3 = Certain I will stay in this major

| College     | Number of Respondents | Not certain at all (Percent) | Fairly certain (Percent) | Certain (Percent) | Mean |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------|
| <b>BADM</b> | 31                    | 6.5                          | 61.3                     | 32.3              | 2.26 |
| <b>EDUC</b> | 17                    | 11.8                         | 29.4                     | 58.8              | 2.47 |
| <b>ENGR</b> | 27                    | 11.1                         | 48.1                     | 40.7              | 2.30 |
| <b>LA</b>   | 70                    | 18.6                         | 35.7                     | 45.7              | 2.27 |
| <b>SCI</b>  | 70                    | 11.4                         | 45.7                     | 42.9              | 2.31 |

Most respondents indicated they were either fairly certain or certain about their major/field of study.

*Expectations of time to degree:* Students responded to the question “In how many years do you expect to complete your bachelor’s degree?” using the following scale: 1 = Less than 4 years; 2 = 4 years; 3 = 5 years; 4 = 6 years; 5 = More than 6 years. A one-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant differences in the mean response to this item by college. The mean across the colleges was 2.02. Most students who responded to the NSS plan to complete their bachelor’s degrees in about 4 years.



*Expectations of the first year:* Students indicated their level of agreement with a variety of items related to academic experiences in their first year. One-way ANOVA was performed for each item by college. For most of the items, there were no statistically significant differences in student level of agreement by college. The following scale was used for the expectation items: 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Disagree; 4 = Strongly Disagree. The statistically significant differences that were found and are designated in the following chart with an asterisk:

- For the item “My classes will be more exciting than my high school classes” the mean response for students in SCI (2.08) was significantly higher than the mean for LA (1.68). However, both groups are still expressing agreement with the statement.
- For the item “I will be able to maintain a balance between my academic work and other aspects of my life” the mean response for students in BADM (2.10) was significantly higher than the mean for ENGR (1.58). However, both groups are still expressing agreement with the statement.

**Means by College for Expectation Items**

1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree; 4 = Strongly Disagree

| Item  | BADM  | EDUC | ENGR  | LA    | SCI   | All Colleges |
|---|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| My classes will be more exciting than my high school classes  | 2.10  | 1.94 | 2.13  | 1.68* | 2.08* | 1.93         |
| I will be challenged academically   | 1.81  | 1.65 | 1.63  | 4.59  | 1.47  | 1.60         |
| Although I may feel challenged, I am confident in my ability to succeed academically                      | 1.87  | 2.00 | 1.50  | 1.63  | 1.72  | 1.70         |
| I will regularly come to classes prepared with homework and reading assignments completed                 | 1.55  | 1.53 | 1.42  | 1.53  | 1.50  | 1.50         |
| I will skip a class for a non-emergency reason  | 3.03  | 2.82 | 3.00  | 2.81  | 3.06  | 2.95         |
| Some of the subjects I study this year will be so interesting that I might do more than the required work | 2.39  | 2.25 | 2.08  | 2.07  | 2.32  | 2.21         |
| My instructors will be engaging   | 2.13  | 1.94 | 2.08  | 1.75  | 2.02  | 1.94         |
| Faculty will be encouraging and helpful   | 2.03  | 1.94 | 1.96  | 1.75  | 1.89  | 1.87         |
| I will talk with faculty members outside of class   | 2.35  | 2.41 | 2.17  | 2.19  | 2.03  | 2.17         |
| I will discuss ideas for a paper, project, or assignment with a faculty member                            | 2.19  | 2.18 | 2.08  | 2.06  | 2.09  | 2.09         |
| I will collaborate with and learn from other students   | 2.06  | 1.88 | 1.75  | 1.88  | 1.84  | 1.87         |
| My first year will give me good preparation for my sophomore year   | 1.84  | 1.75 | 1.67  | 1.54  | 1.53  | 1.60         |
| I will be able to maintain a balance between my academic work and other aspects of my life                | 2.10* | 2.06 | 1.58* | 1.72  | 1.77  | 1.80         |
| I will enjoy being a college student  | 1.68  | 1.65 | 1.58  | 1.38  | 1.38  | 1.46         |

In general for the expectation items, most students strongly agreed (1) or agreed (2) with the items. The exception is the item related to skipping class where students generally disagreed (3) with the statement.