

October SpotLight Survey 2000

58% or 8104 students responded to the October SpotLight Survey that was distributed to all undergraduate residence hall students.

The October SpotLight 2000 Survey contained 44 questions. The questions were in four categories; the role and performance of the Mentor, the floor community, individual learning activities, and personal experiences. The question stem, "Think about the last two weeks", preceded each question. Answers were arrayed across a scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." For the purposes of this summary, the categories of "Somewhat Agree" and "Strongly Agree" have been combined.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Seventy-seven percent of the students responding to the survey provided their PIDs. With the PID, demographic information can be linked to the student responses. The demographic profile of those students closely resembles the profile of the general MSU undergraduate population.

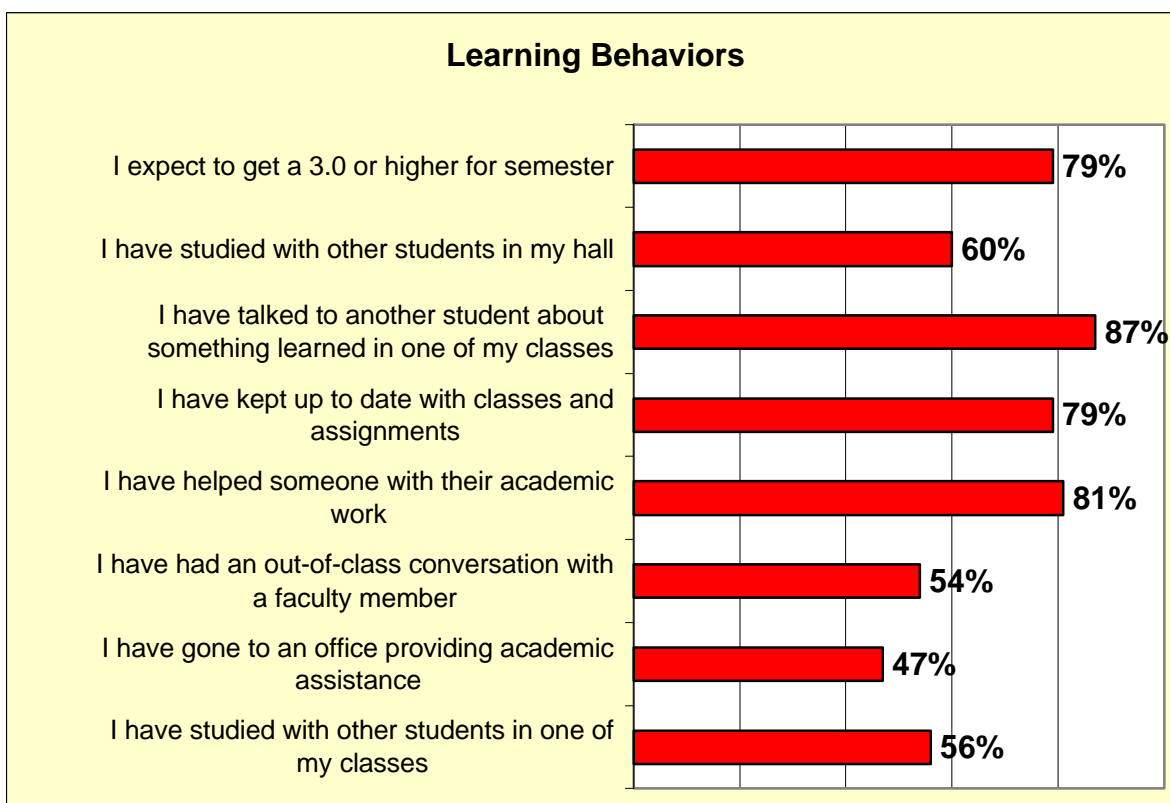
	Male	Female	Missing	Citizen	Non-Citizen	ant	Missing	White		Chicano	Hispanic	American Ind/AN	AP	Missing
MSU Undergraduates	46%	54%		96%	2%	2%		81%	9%	1%	1%	1%	6%	
2000 SpotLight Respondents	41%	57%	3%	94%	2%	1%	3%	77%	9%	1%	1%	0.40%	6%	3%

Of particular interest to the department were the following questions.

1. What types of learning-related behaviors have students engaged in?
2. What is the floor climate, especially relative to community standards?
3. What are some of the relevant personal experiences that are impacting students' lives?
4. How do residents rate the effectiveness of the Mentor staff?

LEARNING BEHAVIORS

Students reporting engaging in a number of behaviors which lead to academic success such as seeking academic assistance (47%), keeping up to date on classes and assignments (79%), having out of classroom conversations with faculty(54%), studying with other students in the hall (60%).

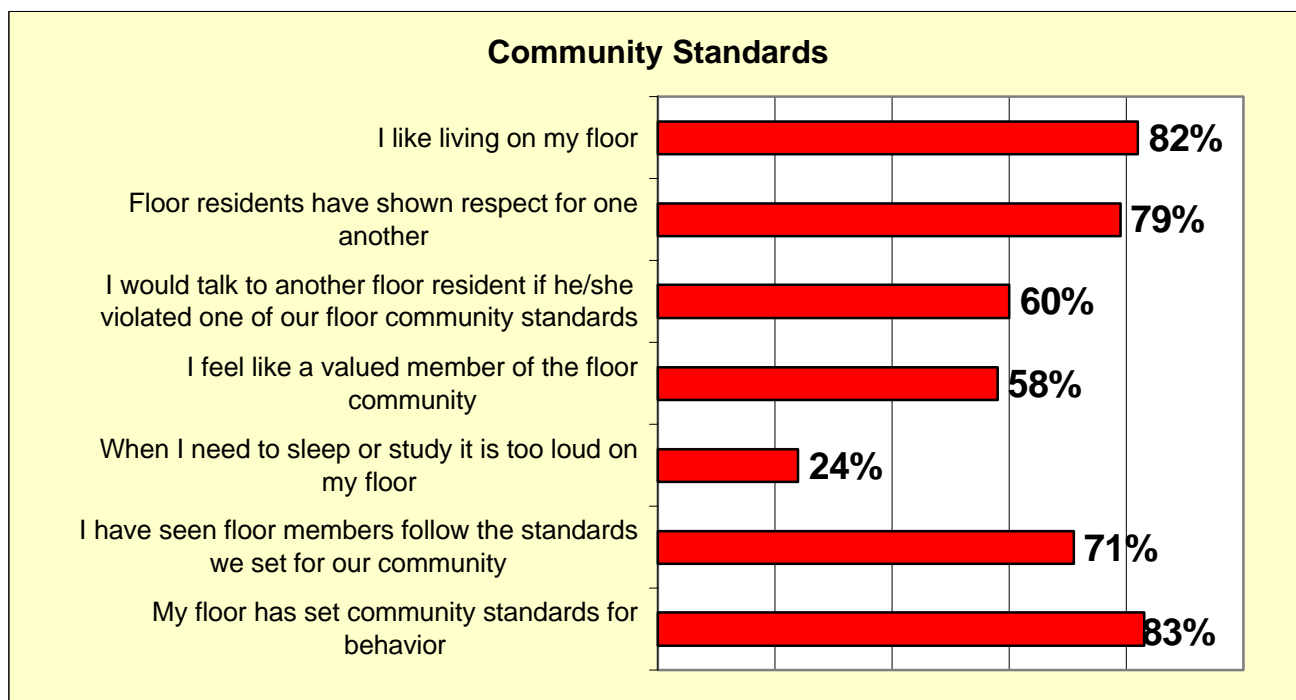


COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND THE FLOOR COMMUNITIES

A number of questions were developed to begin to understand the complexity of the implementation of the community standards model. The department was interested in determining more specifically what was working, and what was not working, for students. Another consideration was an awareness of the stage-related nature of the development of community, with an initial high “everyone gets along,” “we are all friends” stage evolving into a more chaotic period when the community must begin to recognize its diversity and find ways to communicate and compromise through community discussion. By timing the survey at this stage of community “storming and norming” there was an expectation that there would be some dissatisfaction with the floor environment.

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About 80% reported that they liked like living on their floors, had set community standards and that floor residents showed respect for one another. More than three-quarters reported that it was not too loud on the floor for them to study or sleep. Twenty-eight percent reported having had a conflict with another resident, with almost one-half reporting that they had solved that conflict successfully. An interesting, and encouraging finding was that 60% reported that they would talk to another floor resident if she or she violated a community standard. This peer monitoring aspect is essential for community standards to work. It is also a difficult thing for undergraduate students to do.

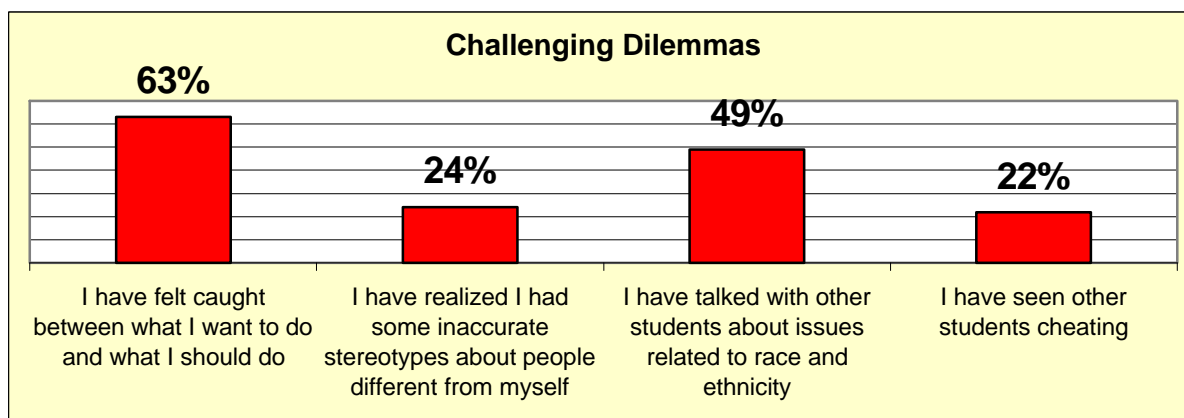


PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGING DILEMMAS

Despite their challenges, students are getting along with their roommates, and almost 60% report having the best time of their lives.

Twenty percent considered leaving MSU, 71% felt overwhelmed, 63% felt caught between what they wanted to do, and what they thought they should do, 24% began to confront their own personal stereotypes about people different from themselves, 22% observed other students cheating, 11% got into difficulty because of drinking too much, and 8% experienced disrespect because of their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or background.

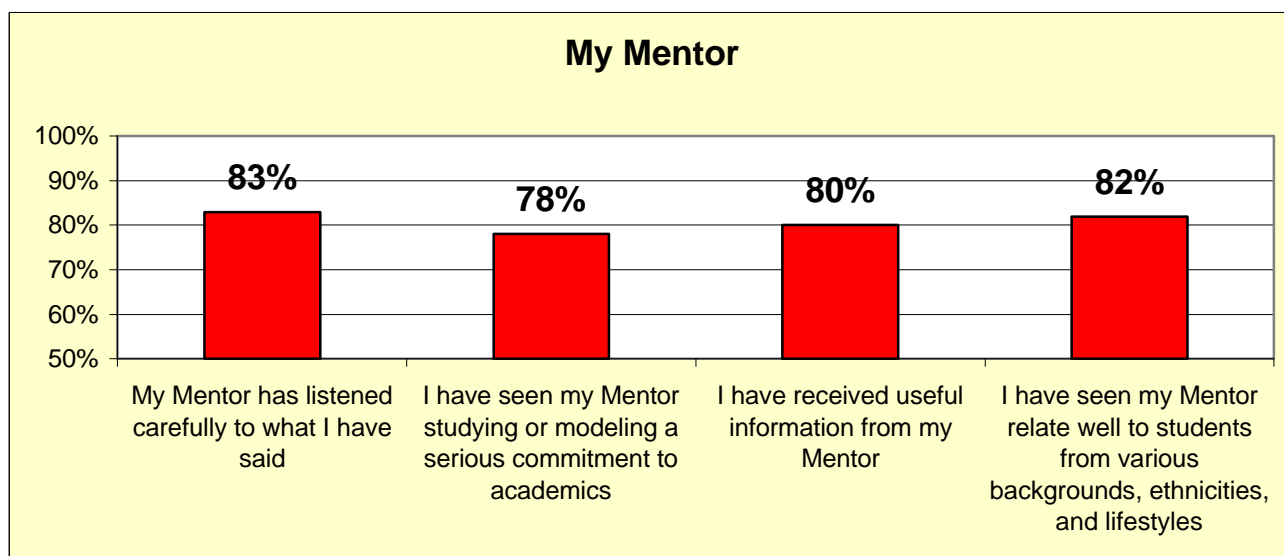
What is critical at this point in the semester may be the reflection which takes place around these experiences. While race and ethnicity can be difficult topics, almost half of the students reported talking with other students about these issues. It takes a heightened level of personal awareness to begin to identify issues of right and wrong, to evaluate one's stereotypes and to reflect on the negative consequences of personal or peer behaviors. Although early in the year, students are clearly in the midst of these reflections.



THE MENTOR

The Mentor role was reframed for the 2000-2001 academic year. A major responsibility of the position is to facilitate the participation of all residents in the development and maintenance of their own standards for behavior on the floor. The most positively rated item (87% marking "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree") was "My Mentor has helped our floor develop community standards." Primary skills of this position involve developing relationships with and between residents, which are characterized by respect, and genuineness. The items selected for measurement and the overall scores indicate that for many students this shift has been a helpful and positive one.

Eighty percent of the residents stated that their Mentor was an academic role model, a good listener, gave useful information, related well to students from various backgrounds, ethnicities, and lifestyles, ran effective community meetings, and had earned their respect.



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<http://www.reslife.msu.edu>