



August 2001 to January 2002

1005 Responses to the Fall Survey and 254 Responses to the January Survey

The following chart is a loose comparison between the expectations Freshman had at the beginning of their first semester, and what they reported in January that they actually did. The August responses reflect the percentage answering "Likely" or "A Sure Thing". The January responses represent the percentage marking "Yes".

The list that follows contains the 37 items that appeared on both surveys. They are listed in order of the percent of difference between expectation and reality. The blue section contains items in which January realities were at least 5% less than August expectations. The yellow section lists those items that in January were within 5% (plus or minus) from August expectations, and the green section lists the items where January realities exceeded August expectations by at least 5%.

REALITY LOWER THAN EXPECTATION

	August	Jan.	Diff.
Utilize an academic support service such as a tutor, resource center, or the writing center	54%	33%	-21%
Get a part-time job	60%	40%	-20%
Exercise regularly	65%	49%	-16%
Have the best time of your life	81%	66%	-15%
Attend the regular community meetings on your floor	74%	60%	-14%
Develop a significant romantic relationship	42%	29%	-13%
Get at least a 3.0 for your first semester GPA	83%	71%	-12%
Be pressured by others to do something you don't want to do	28%	18%	-10%
Manage your time effectively	78%	69%	-9%
Live successfully with your roommate	86%	78%	-8%
Join a campus, departmental or hall organization	54%	47%	-7%

REALITY CLOSE TO EXPECTATION

	August	Jan.	Diff.
Have conversations with faculty members outside of the classroom	67%	62%	-5%
Keep up-to-date with classes and assignments	91%	87%	-4%
Get into difficulty because of gambling	4%	0%	-4%
Get involved in volunteer work	39%	36%	-3%
Seek out opportunities to learn about different cultures or lifestyles	47%	44%	-3%
Be significantly homesick	18%	17%	-1%
Get into difficulty because of drinking too much	8%	8%	0%
Study with other students in some form of a study group	67%	67%	0%
Change your views because of conversations with people different from yourself	35%	35%	0%
Change your plan for your career or major	37%	38%	+1%

What a difference a few months make. First-time freshman on the first day of classes are filled with expectations and some trepidation about just how their first semester in college will go.

In August over 1000 freshman shared some of their expectations with the Department of Residence Life. In January 2002, those students who provided their personal identification information (N=799) were invited to complete a follow-up survey. Over 250 responded to this survey, giving information about whether the fall expectations turned into spring realities. PIDs were utilized only for the purposes of locating follow-up participants, and were not used to generate any individually-linked information.

LEARNING BEHAVIORS

More freshmen students skipped class than had expected to (33% to 83%) and utilized academic support services less than they had expected, (54% to 33%). Though 83% expected to get at least a 3.0 for the first semester GPA, 71% did. Their expectations matched reality for studying in a group with other students (67% to 67%), having conversations with faculty outside of the classroom (67% to 62%), changing their major or career plan (37% to 38%), and keeping up to date on classes and assignments (91% to 87%).

CONNECTIONS

The freshmen had higher expectations for attending community meetings (74% to 60%), developing a significant romantic relationship (42% to 29%), living successfully with their roommates (86% to 78%) and joining a campus, departmental or hall organization (54% to 47%).

Their expectations met reality in the areas of getting involved in volunteer work (39% to 36%), becoming significantly homesick (18% to 17%), and in having significant conflict with their parents or guardians (15% to 19%). Reality exceeded expectation in feeling connected to a formal or informal group of other students (64% to 77%).

Have a conflict with someone which you feel is based on ethnicity, background or lifestyle	17%	19%	+2%
Learn a great deal about who you are and what is important to you	79%	82%	+3%
Have experiences which challenge your beliefs	44%	48%	+4%
Have significant conflict with your parent(s)/guardian(s)	15%	19%	+4%
Spend more money than you had planned on spending	57%	61%	+4%
REALITY HIGHER THAN EXPECTATION			
	August	Jan.	Diff.
Be involved in establishing and maintaining floor-based community standards	54%	60%	+6%
Use an illegal substance (drug or marijuana, not alcohol)	14%	22%	+8%
Maintain your health so that you do not get ill enough to seek a doctor's attention	69%	77%	+8%
Feel connected to a formal or informal group of other students	64%	77%	+13%
Find yourself caught between doing what is "right" and what is "wrong"	37%	52%	+15%
Feel overwhelmed by all that you have to do	65%	80%	+15%
Consume alcohol while underage (Skip if you are over 21 years of age)	45%	68%	+23%
Think about leaving MSU	13%	38%	+25%
Feel personally safe while living on campus	65%	92%	+27%
Spend more than 3 hours a day on the internet (for any purpose)	44%	77%	+33%
Skip a class	33%	83%	+50%

VALUES AND BELIEFS

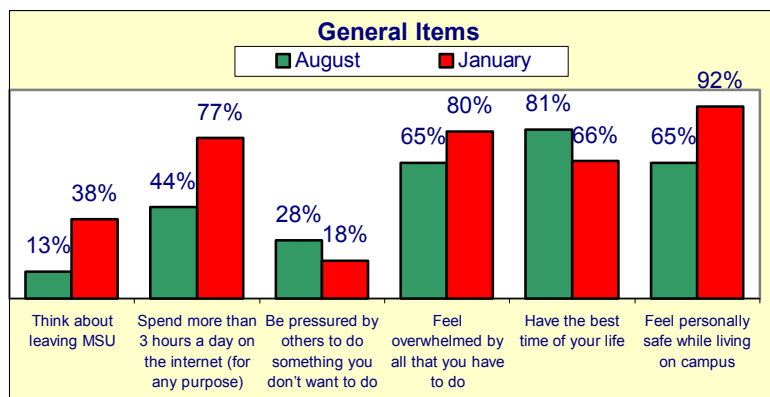
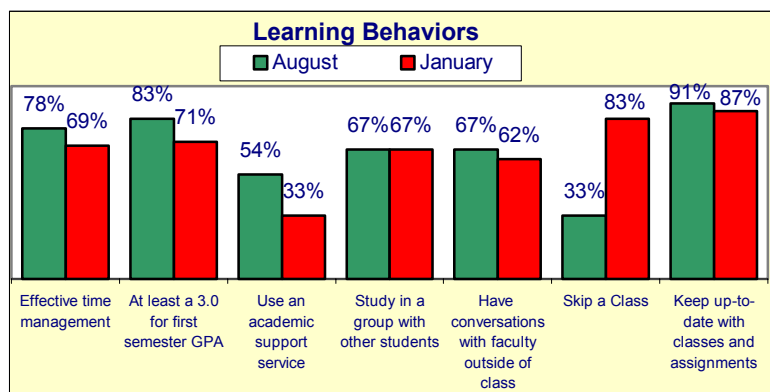
The freshmen reported that they were pressured less than they expected to be to do something they didn't want to do (28% to 18%). Expectation met reality in learning a great deal about themselves and what was important to them (79% to 82%) and having experiences that challenged their beliefs (44% to 48%). More frequently than expected, the freshmen found themselves caught between doing what was "right" and what was "wrong" (37% to 52%).

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

Students had an accurate sense of their openness to diversity. There was no change between expectation and reality in changing their views because of conversations with people different from themselves (35% to 35%) and only a 3% difference in seeking out opportunities to learn about other backgrounds and lifestyles (47% to 44%). While 17% expected to have a conflict with someone where ethnicity, lifestyle or background was a factor, 19% actually did.

PERSONAL

Many fewer freshmen got a part-time job (60% to 40%), exercised regularly (65% to 49%) or managed their time effectively (78% to 69%). The same percentage that expected to get into difficulty with their drinking, did (8% to 8%). The freshmen began the semester expecting to spend more money than they planned to, and even more did (57% to 61%). More used an illegal substance (14% to 22%), consumed alcohol while underage (45% to 68%), felt overwhelmed by all they had to do (65% to 80%) and thought about leaving MSU (13% to 38%). Though 81% expected to have the best time of their lives, 66% did.



Internet use was significantly higher than expected with 44% expecting to be on the internet 3 hours a day, and 77% reporting that they actually were. The freshmen were healthier than they expected to be with 59% expecting to maintain their health so that they didn't need to seek a doctor's attention, 77% did. The feeling of personal safety was much higher as well, with 65% expecting to feel safe, and 92% reporting that they actually did.