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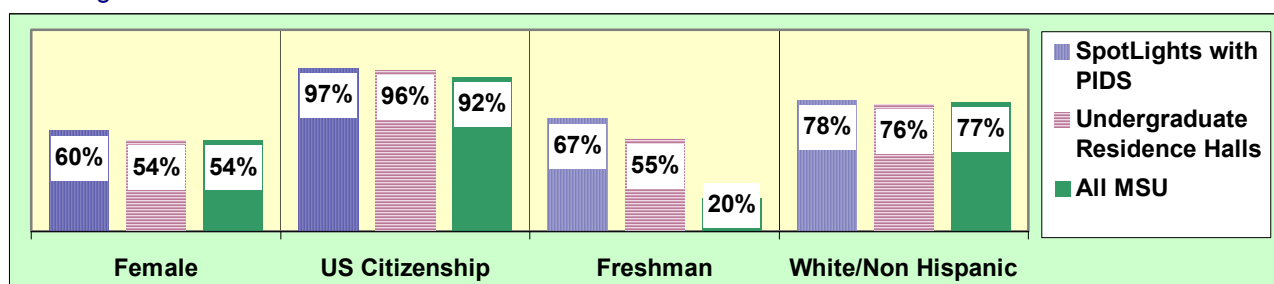
DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENCE LIFE
OCTOBER SPOTLIGHT SURVEY
 UNDERGRADUATE RESIDENCE HALLS- 2001



The October SpotLight 2001 Survey was distributed to residents of undergraduate residence halls during October 2001. The SpotLight is designed to assess the student experience in residence halls, with particular focus on learning behaviors, floor environment and the work of the Mentor, and general attitudes and adjustment.

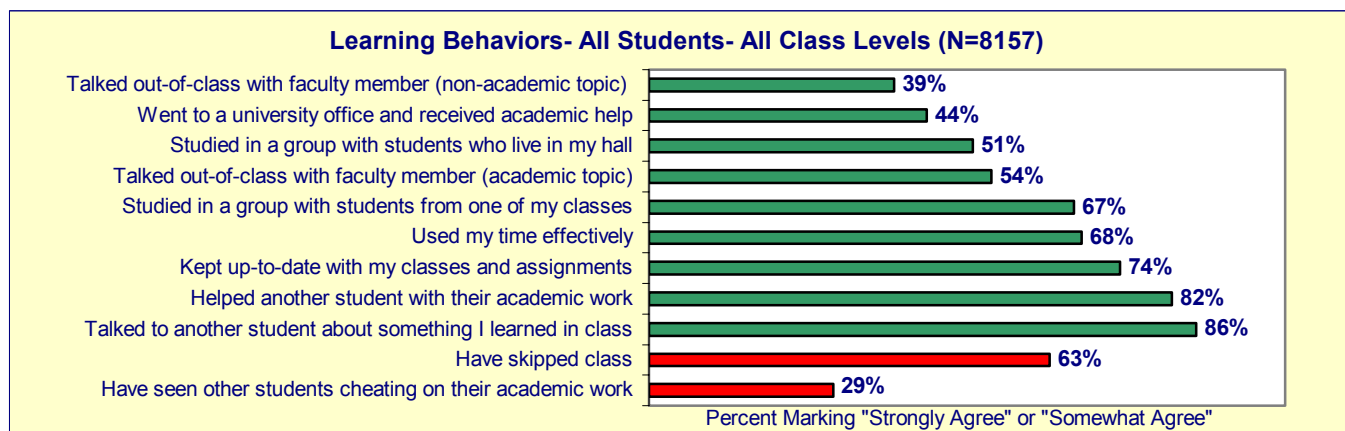
Respondents

Fifty-nine percent, or 8157 students, returned a survey. Providing personal identification (PIDs) was voluntary, however 4860 (60%) did. Where the PID was provided, the student's responses could be attached to various demographic variables. The chart below illustrates the demographics of the survey respondents (who provided PIDs), the undergraduate residence hall population and the general MSU population. SpotLight respondents are skewed towards freshmen, and somewhat towards women. Overall results should be viewed with that knowledge.



Learning Behaviors

Students reported engaging in many behaviors that support the accomplishment of their academic goals. These behaviors reflect an active engagement in the learning experience beyond the classroom.



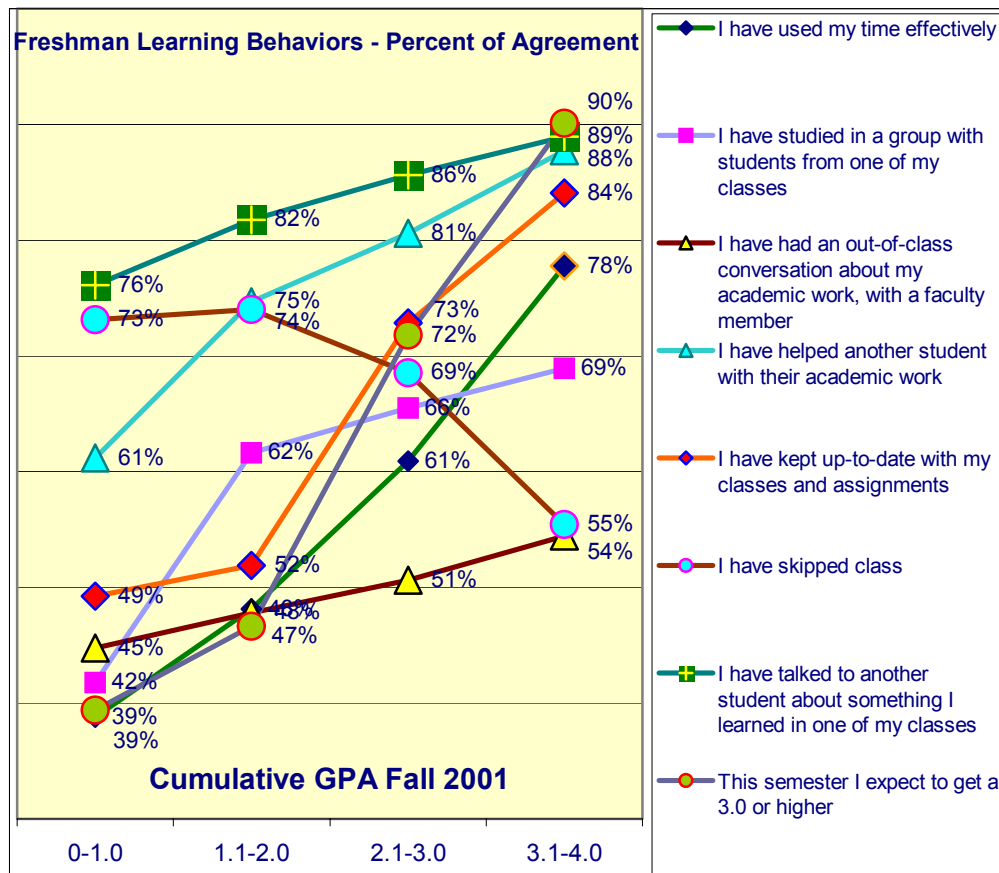
Class Level Differences

For the purposes of looking at differences by class level, only the returned surveys with student PIDs (N=4860) are included in this section. Additionally, juniors and seniors were combined into an "Upperclassmen" group because fewer upper level students live in residence halls. The class percentages for the group providing PIDs are 67% freshmen, 23% sophomores, 7% juniors and 3% seniors.

Upperclassmen, in addition to having greater contact with faculty reported that they used their time more effectively, and were more confident than freshman that they would achieve at least a 3.0 for fall semester. Sophomores were highest in reporting that they helped another person with academic work and more confident than freshmen that they would achieve a 3.0 for fall semester. Additionally sophomores were higher (though not significantly) in studying with other students from a class, and using a university resource for academic help. The class most likely to observe other students cheating and to skip class was also the sophomores. Freshmen

were most likely to keep up to date on classes and assignments, and study in a group with other students living in the residence hall. The chart below contains the percentages of agreement to each learning-related item.

Learning Behaviors By Class Level Groups <i>Percent reporting "Strongly Agree" or "Somewhat Agree"</i> <i>Items that produced significant differences between class levels on a chi-square test are shaded in green.</i> <i>The class level with the highest percentage is in bold for each item.</i>	Fresh.	Soph.	Jrs. & Srs.
I have talked to another student about something I learned in one of my classes	87%	90%	91%
I have helped another student with their academic work	83%	87%	83%
This semester I expect to get a 3.0 or higher	78%	84%	84%
I have kept up-to-date with my classes and assignments	76%	74%	74%
I have used my time effectively	68%	70%	71%
I have gained a great commitment to my academic goals	69%	68%	65%
I have studied in a group with students from one of my classes	66%	68%	67%
I have skipped class	62%	65%	63%
I have had an out-of-class conversation about my academic work, with a faculty member	52%	56%	63%
I have studied in a group with students who live in my hall	54%	48%	29%
I have gone to a university office and received academic help	43%	44%	42%
I have had an out-of-class conversation with a faculty member, about something not related to my academic work	34%	40%	55%
I have seen other students cheating on their academic work	26%	30%	26%



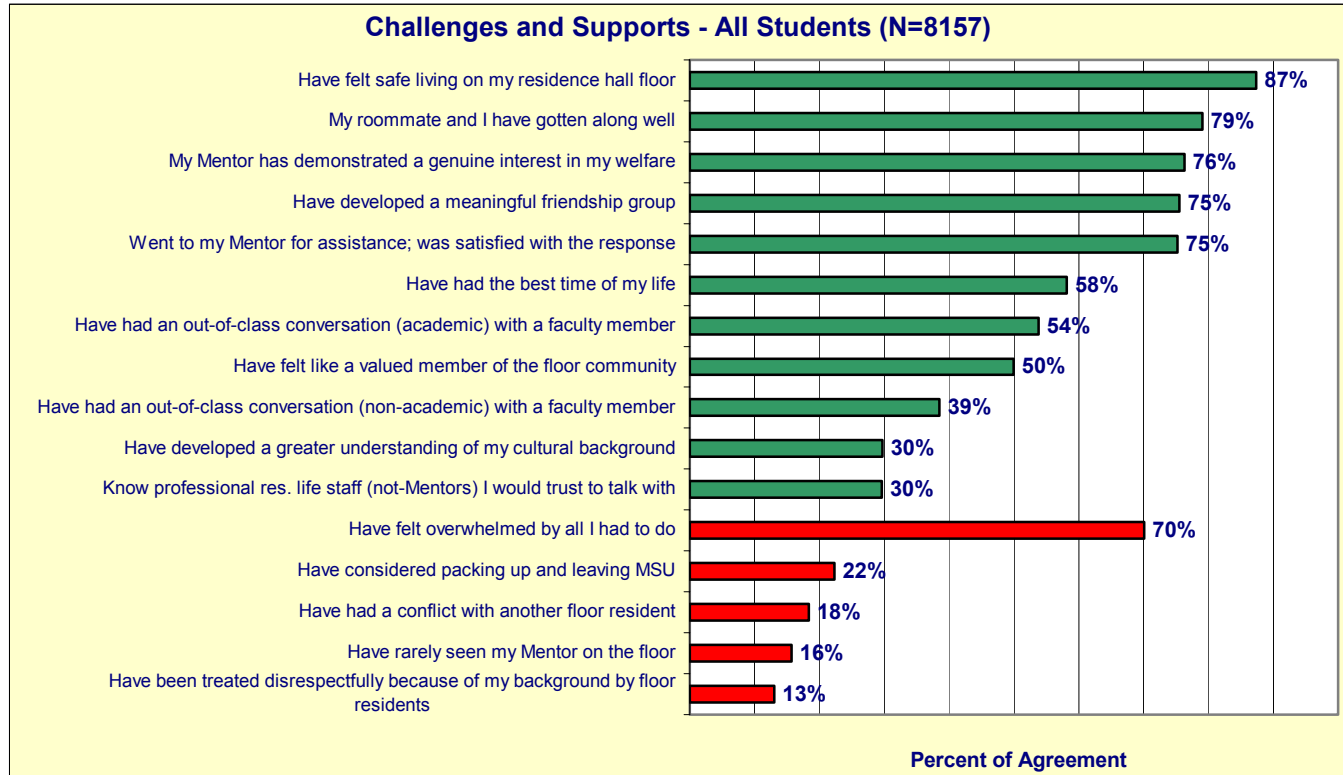
Freshman Class Academic Achievement

Freshman academic achievement is particularly important because first year experiences are strongly associated with retention. Factors both inside and outside of the classroom can influence first semester grades.

For this analysis GPA serves as a proxy for a student's ability to manage their increasing independence and adopt learning behaviors that are successful for college academic work. It can also represent the student's holistic adjustment to college life, which includes the supports and challenges they find their first semester.

Again, in this section, only the responses from freshmen who supplied their PIDs are reviewed. A consistent pattern can be seen when grade point averages are grouped into four categories and "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" are combined. On every learning behavior measured, students who obtained the highest cumulative GPAs, also reported the highest degree of agreement with the statements. In the chart above, it is then predictable that the only item descending by fall GPA was the item "I have skipped class".

Challenges and Supports for Learning



In comparing students by class level, using the same three categories (freshmen, sophomores, and juniors/seniors), a number of items proved to have significant differences in responses to a section of statements loosely grouped into “challenges” and “supports”.

Supports

Percent reporting “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”

Items which produced significant differences between class levels on a chi-square test are shaded

	Fresh.	Soph.	Jrs. & Srs.
I have been able to develop a friendship group which is meaningful for me	75%	82%	77%
My roommate and I have gotten along well (Leave blank if you do not have a roommate.)	80%	82%	82%
I have developed a greater understanding of my cultural background	27%	30%	32%
I have had the best time of my life	58%	62%	53%
My Mentor has demonstrated a genuine interest in my welfare	80%	75%	73%
I have felt like a valued member of the floor community	50%	53%	48%
I have felt safe living on my residence hall floor	89%	89%	88%
I know professional residence life staff (not-Mentors) who I would trust to talk to about a problem	26%	31%	33%
I have had an out-of-class conversation about my academic work, with a faculty member	52%	56%	63%
I have had an out-of-class conversation with a faculty member, about something not related to my academic work	34%	40%	55%

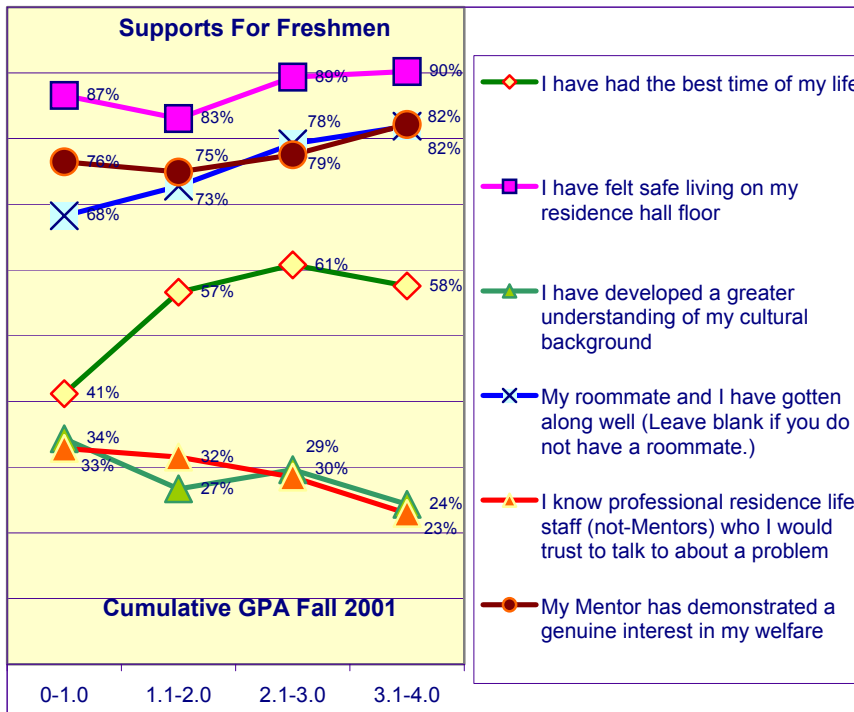
Challenges

I have been treated disrespectfully because of my background (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion) by other floor residents	11%	10%	11%
I have felt overwhelmed by all I had to do	68%	77%	75%
I have rarely seen my Mentor on the floor	13%	16%	15%
I have considered packing up and leaving MSU	22%	18%	16%
I have had a conflict with another floor resident	18%	16%	15%

The Relationship Between Freshmen GPA & Challenges and Supports

The chart to the right shows those items reflecting significant differences between students in the four grade point groupings.

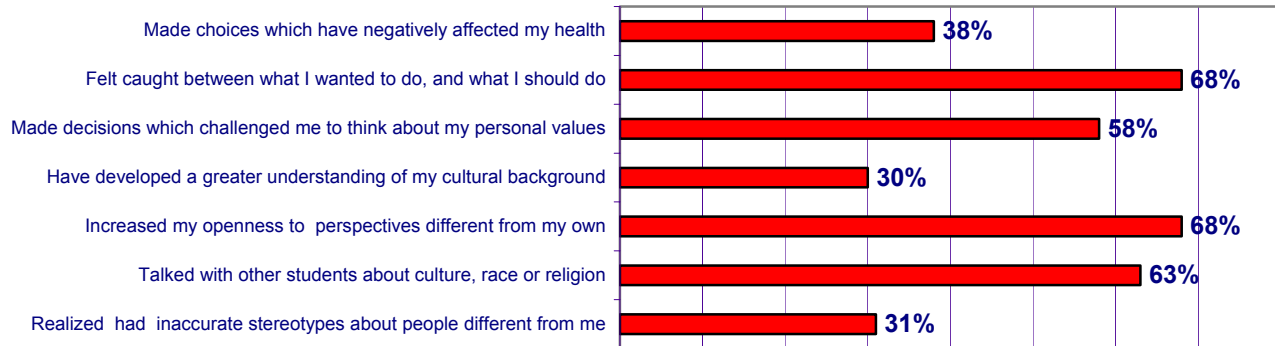
Additionally, students with the lowest GPAs agreed at a higher level that they had been treated disrespectfully because of my background (race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion) by other floor residents, and that they had considered packing up and leaving MSU.



Defining Issues and Establishing Identity

A significant aspect of the residential experience is defining or refining one's personal values, and experiencing a diversity of backgrounds, attitudes, and beliefs. This identity development process takes place through exposure and immersion experiences, balanced with discussion and reflection. Experience and learning go hand in hand. The campus environment, both inside and outside the formal classroom is filled with opportunities to gain information, perspective and experience. From these elements, students are in a daily process of shaping their characters.

Defining Values- Establishing Identity



When looking at this information by class level, the greater frequency in which this kind of discussion and exploration is taking place appears to be at the sophomore level. Seniors report more discussions on culture, race or religion, and also a greater understanding of their cultural background. Freshmen and sophomores both are highest in realizing inaccurate stereotypes. Taken together it appears that students are less attuned to moral dilemmas and challenges to their personal values. By the sophomore year, students are reported more engagement around these issues. Seniors appear to report fewer struggles.

Defining Values- Establishing Identity	Fr.	Soph.	Jr.+Sr.	Sig. Diff. Level
<i>Percent reporting "Strongly or Somewhat Agree"</i>				
I have realized that I had some inaccurate stereotypes about people different from myself	30%	30%	27%	
I have talked with other students about issues related to culture, race or religion	60%	69%	70%	0
I have increased my openness to considering perspectives different from my own	70%	71%	70%	
I have developed a greater understanding of my cultural background	27%	30%	32%	0
I have made decisions which have challenged me to think about my personal values	58%	63%	58%	0
I have felt caught between what I wanted to do, and what I thought I should do	64%	68%	66%	
I have made choices which have negatively affected my health	37%	41%	30%	0