



DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENCE LIFE
**FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN
FOLLOW-UP SURVEY - 2004**
August Expectations to January Realities



At the beginning of Fall Semester 2003 all first-time freshmen living in undergraduate residence halls were invited to complete a web-based survey about their expectations for the coming semester. Eleven hundred and twenty-nine freshmen responded and completed the "First-Time Freshman, First Week of Classes Survey". The results of that survey are featured in the SpotLight Series Volume 4 Number 1.

In the August survey a set of 46 possible behaviors and experiences were presented. The freshmen were asked to mark on a 5-point scale from "Not a Chance" to "A Sure Thing" the likelihood that they would engage in these behaviors or have these experiences during their first semester at Michigan State. In January they received the *First-Time Freshmen Follow-Up Survey*, and scored the same behaviors and experiences on a scale using either "Yes" they had done that behavior or had that experience, or "No" they had not.

This SpotLight features the difference between freshman expectations and actual experiences during the first semester in college. Note that the August survey respondents were proportionately more white and female than the total first-time freshman group at MSU. This same over-representation was true for the follow-up survey. See the demographics above. The final section contains information about these sub-population groups.

	MSU FTF in Halls n=6500	August n=112 9	Januar y n=417
Gender			
Male	43%	34%	25%
Female	57%	66%	75%
Race/Ethnicity			
White	79%	82%	89%
B/AA	9%	6%	4%
Other Race	12%	11%	8%
Citizenship			
US Citizen	96%	95%	98%
Non-US	2%	2%	1%
Perm. Res.	1%	3%	1%

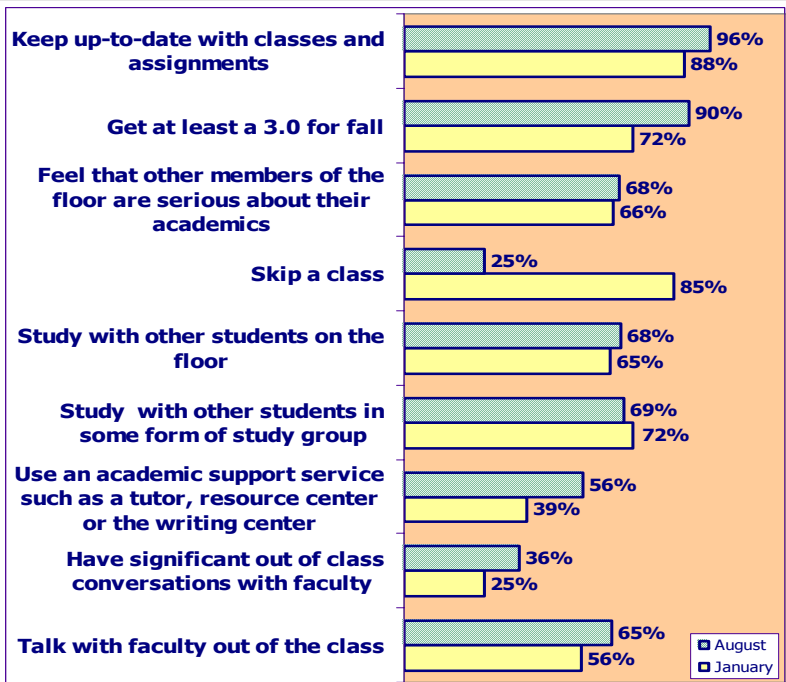
Of the 712 freshmen who provided their PIDs and were invited to complete the January survey, 417 did. Out of this group, 386 students again provided PIDS so that matched response pairs could be formed. Information presented in this SpotLight will compare this matched group; those who completed both the August and January surveys. For comparison purposes only, the "Likely" or "A Sure Thing" responses from the August survey are compared to the January "Yes" responses.

The following sections which reflect the core student learning values of the department are: **Integrated Learning, Personal Integrity and Civic Responsibility, Multicultural Competence, and Personal Well-Being .**

Integrated Learning

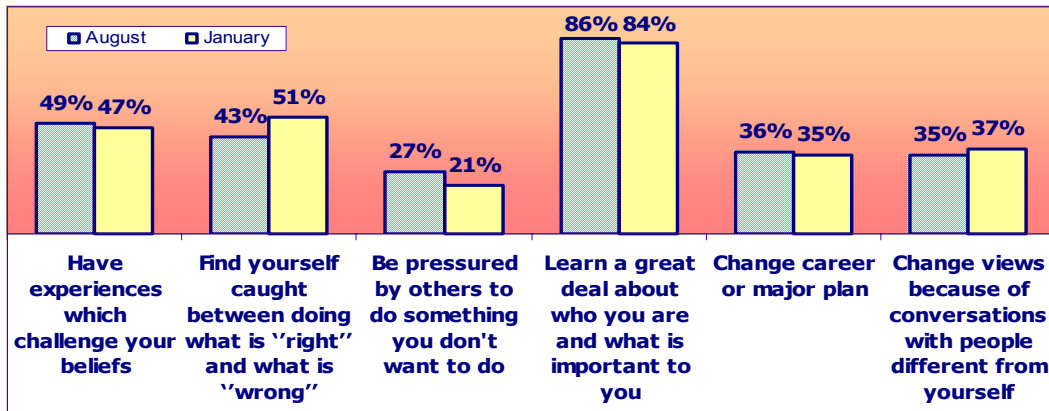
Students skipped class more than they expected to with 32% of the freshman stating that they thought they would, and 85% in January stating that they did. This is similar to last year's freshmen (33% in August; 82% in January). They also overestimated their use of an academic support service (57% in August; 39% in January).

About two-thirds planned to, and actually did, study collaboratively with others, becoming even more involved in study groups than they expected (69% in August; 72% in January). Ninety-five percent planned to keep up to date on classes and assignments and 88% reported that they did. Students continued to have expectations for high academic achievement with 90% expecting to get a 3.0 for fall semester, and 72% reporting that they did. Though two-thirds of the respondents had an expectation of out-of-classroom contact with faculty, only one-third expected the contact to be "significant". Neither faculty contact expectation was met .

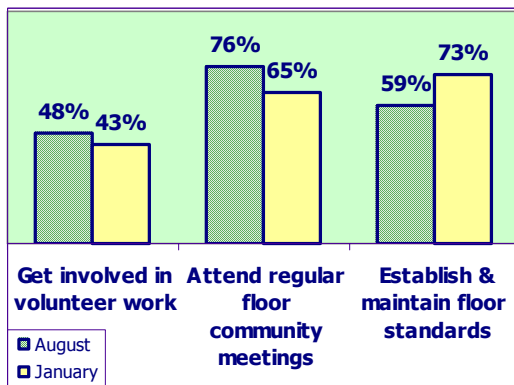


Personal Integrity and Civic Engagement

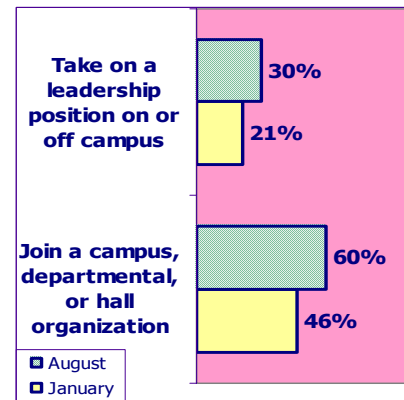
Values Clarification/Personal Integrity



Civic Engagement



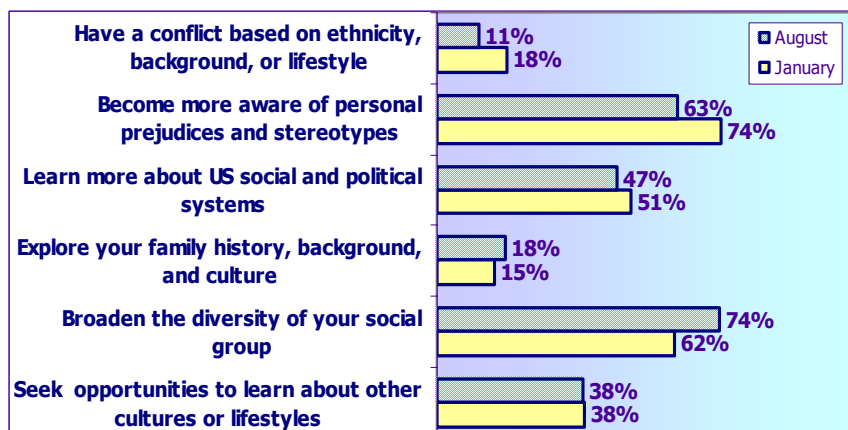
Leadership



Freshmen were extremely accurate in predicting whether they would explore their beliefs or values during their first semester at MSU. It appears that those who expected to be in situations where such learning could take place, managed to be in those places and experience those challenges. On the other hand, a large number of freshmen did not expect to challenge their values and beliefs, nor did they.

A large percentage of freshmen, however, expected to learn a great deal about themselves and what was important to them, and almost all of them did (August 86%; January 84%).

Multicultural Competence



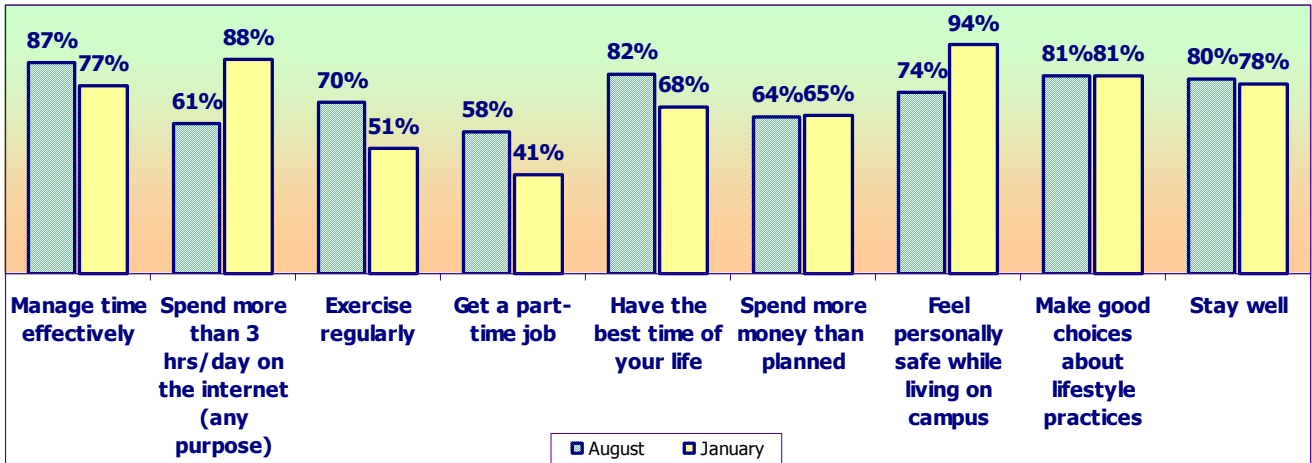
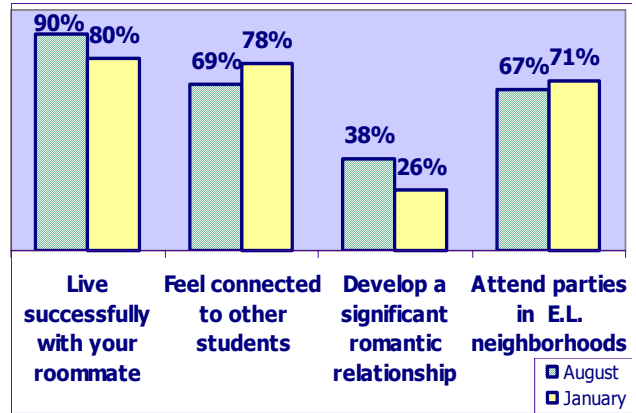
Students reported gaining greater awareness of their personal prejudices and stereotypes (August 63%; January 74%). At the same time, their expectations for broadening the diversity of their social group were not met (August 74%; January 62%) and more freshmen had conflicts based on ethnicity, background or lifestyle than expected to (August 11%; January 18%).

Personal Well-Being/Self-Management

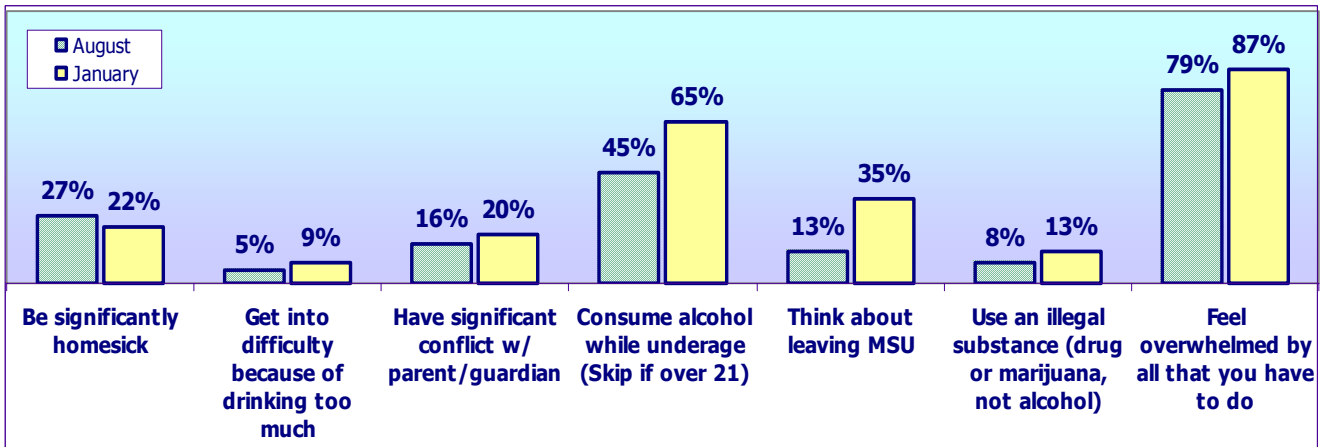
Eight of ten reported having a successful relationship with their roommates; 10% lower than had expected to do so. While 26% reported having formed a significant romantic relationship, 37% thought that they would. Within the first semester, 72% expected to feel connected to a formal or informal group of students. Seventy-eight percent reported in January that they felt that connection. Partying in East Lansing was a focus area for the campus and community fall semester; yet more freshmen reported attending parties in the East Lansing neighborhoods than expected to (65% in August; 71% in January).

Ninety-four percent of the freshmen felt personally safe while living on campus; In August, 76% expected to. Eighty-eight percent reported spending more than 3 hours a day on the internet, a much larger number than the 63% who expected to do so in August. Exercising on a regularly basis went from an expectation of 70% in August to the reality of 51% in January. Fewer freshmen got jobs than expected to (54% in August; 41% in January). Three quarters (77%) reported that they managed their time effectively, a lower percentage than expected that they would (87%). As in past years, two-thirds of the freshman expected to and did spend more money than they had planned to spend. Almost two-thirds of freshmen had the best time of their lives; however 82% thought they would.

Healthy Relationships



Barriers to Success



Freshmen engaged in illegal behaviors more than they expected to: drinking while underage (42% in August; 65% in January), and using illegal substances...drug or marijuana, not alcohol... (5% in August; 13% in January). Though a large percentage (79%) of freshman respondents expected to be overwhelmed with all they had to do, an even higher percentage (87%) reported that they were. Almost one-third of the freshmen thought about leaving MSU during their first semester; 13% expected to in August

Group Differences

The following tables feature the statements which produced significantly different responses ($p < .05$) between three subsets of students; male or female students, students living in one of the formal living-learning communities or in a residence hall community not designated as a learning community, and white students and students of color. The Mann-Whitney U non-parametric tests were performed. Those items which produced significant differences ($p < .05$) are reported in the tables below.

<i>Gender Differences</i>	Males n=97	Females n=291	<i>Living Learning Communities</i>	Not In a Learning Community n=298	In LLC n=119
Attended regular community meetings on floor	56%	69%	Felt living in a residence hall helped them to be a successful student	73%	83%
Was significantly homesick	10%	27%	Was significantly homesick	25%	15%
Had significant conflict with parent(s)/guardian(s)	11%	23%	Got at least a 3.0 for your first semester GPA	68%	82%
Studied with other students on the floor	56%	68%	Had experiences that challenged beliefs	44%	54%
Managed your time effectively	64%	81%	Got involved in volunteer work	39%	52%
Kept up-to-date with classes and assignments	83%	90%	Had conversations with faculty members outside of the classroom	52%	64%
Was involved in establishing and maintaining floor-based community standards	61%	77%	Joined a campus, departmental, or hall organization	42%	58%
Learned a great deal about who you are and what is important to you	77%	86%	Consumed alcohol while underage (Skip if you are over 21 years of age)	69%	57%
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	75%	90%	Thought about leaving MSU	38%	25%
Felt that other residents were serious about academics	57%	68%	Attended parties in the East Lansing neighborhoods	74%	61%
			Learned to make informed choices about lifestyle practices (health, sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.)	84%	75%

<i>Racial/Ethnic Differences</i>	White n=341	Non-White n=39
Got at least a 3.0 for your first semester GPA	75%	51%
Utilized an academic support service such as a tutor, resource center, or the writing center	36%	56%
Sought out opportunities to learn about different cultures or lifestyles	35%	54%
Spent more money than you had planned	64%	87%
Explored your family history, background, and culture	14%	26%