

First-Time Freshmen Expectations for Their First Semester at MSU Comparing Five Years – 2000 to 2004

During the first week of classes for Fall Semester 2004, first-time freshmen were asked to share their expectations for the coming semester. Their responses are compared to freshmen from the previous four years. The questions which have remained the same, or relatively the same, are featured in the following charts and tables. Questions are grouped into the following sets: Academics/Learning, Values Clarification, Involvement, Connections, Multicultural Development, and Personal Well-Being and Self-Management.

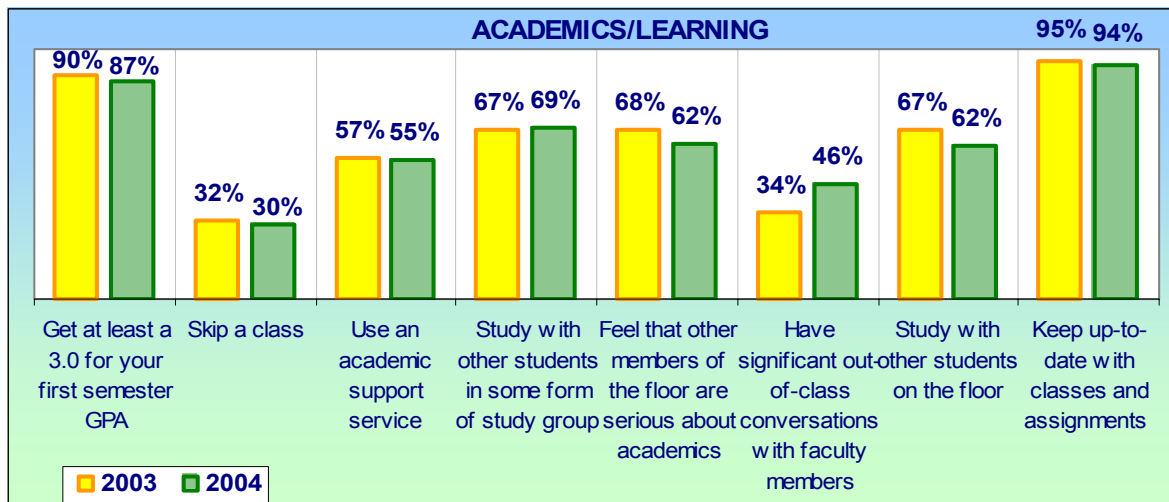
This survey was web-based and sent to all first-time, first-year students entering Michigan State University for Fall Semester 2004 (N=7169). Twenty-three percent (N=1669) of this group responded to the survey. Women and white students responded to the survey in higher proportions than in the general first-time freshman population. (See table on the right.)

The survey contained statements about a number of beliefs, experiences or behaviors related to the first-year experience. Students were asked to mark on a 5-point Likert scale their level of expectation that they would have that experience, engage in that behavior or have that belief during their first semester at Michigan State. They could mark their level of expectation: "Not a Chance", "Unlikely", "Neither Likely nor Unlikely", "Likely" or "A Sure Thing."

	First-Time Freshmen (N=7169)	Survey Respondents (N=1669)
Sexual Orientation		
Prefer not to say	NA	3%
Heterosexual	NA	94%
Bi-Sexual	NA	1%
Gay or Lesbian	NA	1%
Gender		
Male	44%	32%
Female	56%	68%
Transgender	NA	0.10%
Race/Ethnicity		
International	2%	1%
White	80%	83%
AA/Black	8%	7%
Chicano	1%	0.50%
Hispanic	2%	2%
American Indian	1%	0.30%
Asian American	5%	3%
Bi-Racial	NA	1%
Other	1%	1%

The bar charts accompanying each section feature the combined responses of "Likely" and "A Sure Thing" for the 2003 and 2004 surveys. The tables following the charts contain five years of the combined "Likely" and "A Sure Thing" responses to identical or similar questions. If wording was changed, it is noted. To determine significant differences ($p < .05$) for items with at least 3 years of data, one-way ANOVAs were conducted, followed by a LSD post-hoc comparison. For items with only two years of data, t-tests were performed.

ACADEMICS AND LEARNING



ACADEMICS/LEARNING	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Get at least a 3.0 for your first semester GPA (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000)***	77%	3.98	83%	4.10	85%	4.08	90%	4.16	87%	4.13
Skip a class (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	34%	2.95	33%	2.92	33%	2.87	32%	2.88	30%	2.82
Utilize an academic support service such as a tutor, resource center, or the writing center (No Sig. Diff.)	55%	3.58	54%	3.56	58%	3.67	57%	3.61	55%	3.60

ACADEMICS/LEARNING	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Study with other students in some form of study group (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000)	45%	3.32	68%	3.79	71%	3.80	67%	3.72	69%	3.77
Keep up-to-date with classes and assignments (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	90%	4.27	91%	4.29	96%	4.34	95%	4.36	94%	4.35
Feel that other members of the floor are serious about their academics (No Sig. Diff.)							68%	3.76	62%	3.67
Have significant out-of-class conversations with faculty members (No Sig. Diff.)							34%	3.18	46%	3.39

* % = Combined percentage of "Likely" or "A Sure Thing" responses
**Mean score is based on a 5 point scale with 1=Not a Chance 2=Unlikely, 3=Neither Likely nor Unlikely, 4=Likely and 5=A Sure Thing. Means were generated in order to compute significant differences.
***The only significant differences are those where 2004 was significantly different from any previous year.

Academics/ Learning Trends

Consistent with the prior four years, one-third of the first-time freshmen expect to skip class; almost 90% expect to keep up-to-date on assignments and class work and to get at least 3.0 for their first semester GPAs.

Two-thirds are expecting to work in study groups, and a little more than half think they will utilize a resource for academic assistance. Almost half (46%) this year expect to have significant conversations with faculty members outside of the classroom compared to 34% in 2003. Though not significantly different, due to the large number of "Neither Likely nor Unlikely" responses, this is an encouraging trend.

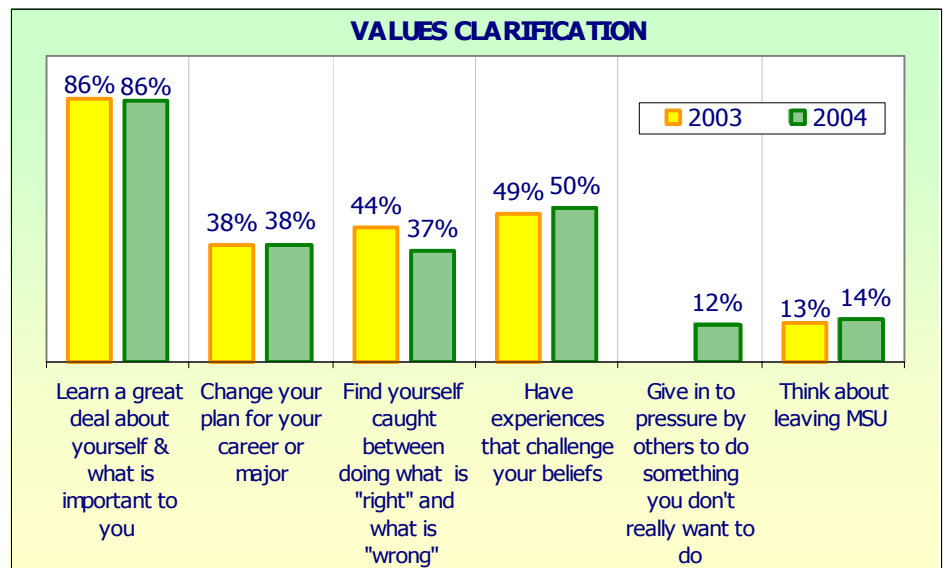
VALUES CLARIFICATION

Values Clarification Trends

Learning a great deal about themselves and what is important to them is an expectation shared by a large percentage of first-time freshmen (86%).

Consistent with the previous years, one-third (38%) expect to change their major or career plans within the first semester. Slightly more than in previous years (14%) expect to think about leaving MSU.

Half (50%) of the incoming freshmen expect to have their beliefs challenged by their experiences. This percentage has remained consistent for the five years of the survey.



VALUES CLARIFICATION	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Learn a great deal about who you are and what is important to you (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2002)	78%	4.01	79%	4.09	90%	4.27	86%	4.17	86%	4.13
Change your plan for your career or major (No Sig. Diff.)	40%	3.18	37%	3.09	39%	3.14	38%	3.06	38%	3.12
Have experiences that challenge your beliefs (No Sig. Diff.)	49%	3.37	44%	3.29	51%	3.38	49%	3.34	50%	3.35
Think about leaving MSU (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	14%	2.26	13%	2.26	12%	2.16	13%	2.14	14%	2.17
Find yourself caught between doing what you believe is "right" and what is "wrong" (Sig. Diff)							44%	3.17	37%	3.04
Give in to pressure by others to do something you don't really want to do									12%	2.24

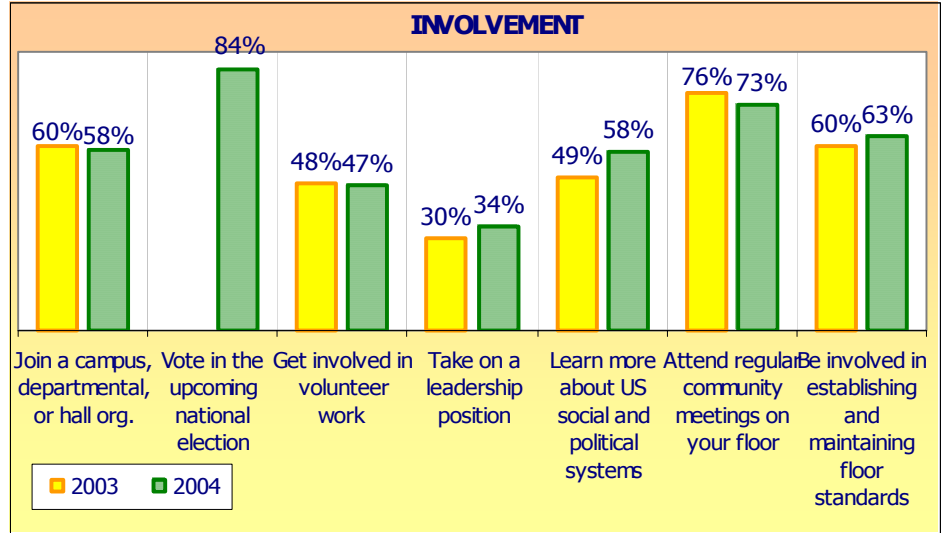
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INVOLVEMENT

Involvement Trends

In a year of the US presidential elections, it might be predicted that the students would expect to learn more about US social and political systems; 58% in 2004 and 49% in 2003. A new question about the expectation to vote in the national election yielded a very positive response, with 84% of the first-time freshmen expecting to vote.

Being involved in establishing and maintaining community standards on their floors has been rising over the past five years, from 53% in 2000 to 63% in 2004.



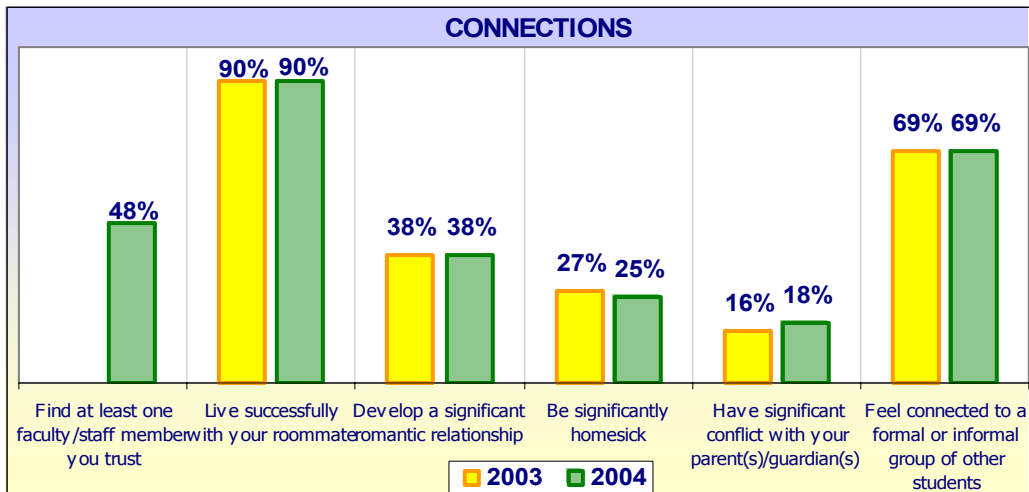
INVOLVEMENT	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Join a campus, departmental, or hall organization (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000)***	52%	3.47	54%	3.54	58%	3.63	60%	3.63	58%	3.59
Get involved in volunteer work (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000,2001)	40%	3.21	39%	3.19	49%	3.43	48%	3.42	47%	3.38
Attend regular community meetings on your floor (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2001, 2002)	72%	3.84	74%	3.87	78%	3.93	76%	3.86	73%	3.80
Be involved in establishing and maintaining floor-based community standards (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	53%	3.51	55%	3.59	61%	3.62	60%	3.65	63%	3.69
Take on a leadership position on or off campus (Sig. Diff 2004 and 2002, 2003)	-	-	-	-	32%	2.98	30%	3.06	34%	3.14
Learn more about the social and political systems that govern our society (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002, 2003)	-	-	-	-	61%	3.65	49%	3.38	58%	3.56
Vote in the upcoming national election	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	84%	4.29

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CONNECTIONS



CONNECTIONS	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Live successfully with your roommate (No Sig. Diff.)***	87%	4.23	86%	4.25	92%	4.30	90%	4.30	90%	4.25
Develop a significant romantic relationship (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002)	43%	3.27	42%	3.27	44%	3.35	38%	3.19	38%	3.23
Be significantly homesick (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	18%	2.49	18%	2.49	26%	2.72	27%	2.80	25%	2.73
Have significant conflict with your parent(s)/guardian(s)	26%	2.73	15%	2.36	16%	2.38	16%	2.41	18%	2.44
Feel connected to a formal or informal group of other students (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002)			64%	3.76	74%	3.89	69%	3.80	69%	3.79
Find at least one university faculty or staff member who you trust enough to share something important with									48%	3.37

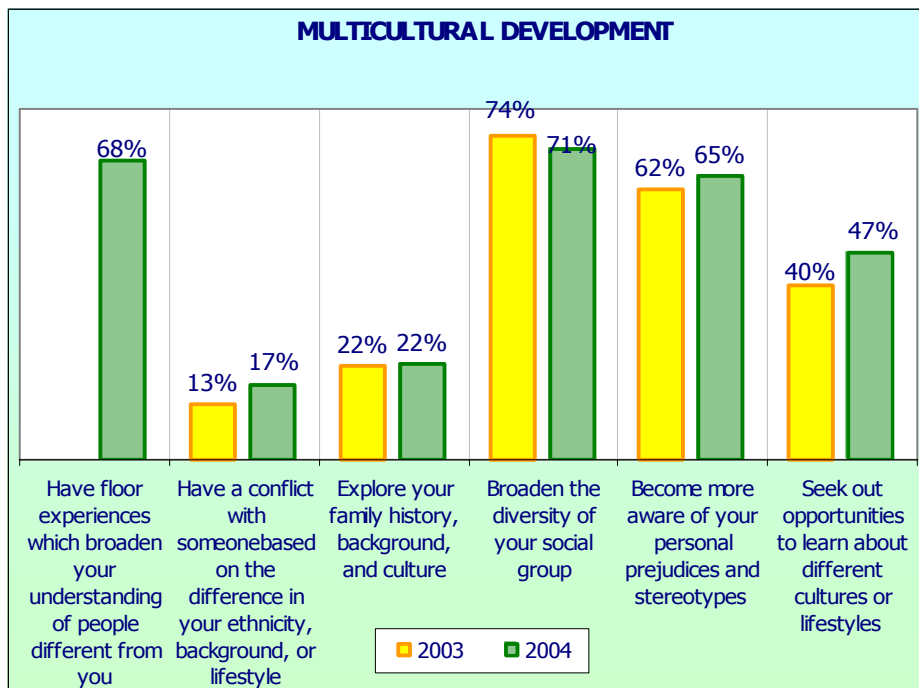
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Connection Trends

Freshmen over the past five years have had consistently high expectations to live successfully with their roommates. This expectation has remained close to 90% for five years. Almost 70% expect to feel connected to a formal or informal group of other students. More than one-third (38%) think that they will develop a significantly romantic relationship. This percentage is down somewhat from 2002 when 44% had this expectation. For the past three years approximately one-quarter have expected to be significantly homesick.

A new expectation was measured this year which reflects a more institutional connection; knowing at least one faculty or staff member they trust to share something important with. Almost half of the first-time freshmen have this expectation (48%).

MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



Multicultural Development Trends

Forty-seven percent of the 2004 first-year students expect to seek out opportunities to learn about different cultures and lifestyles, a significantly higher number than in 2003 (40%).

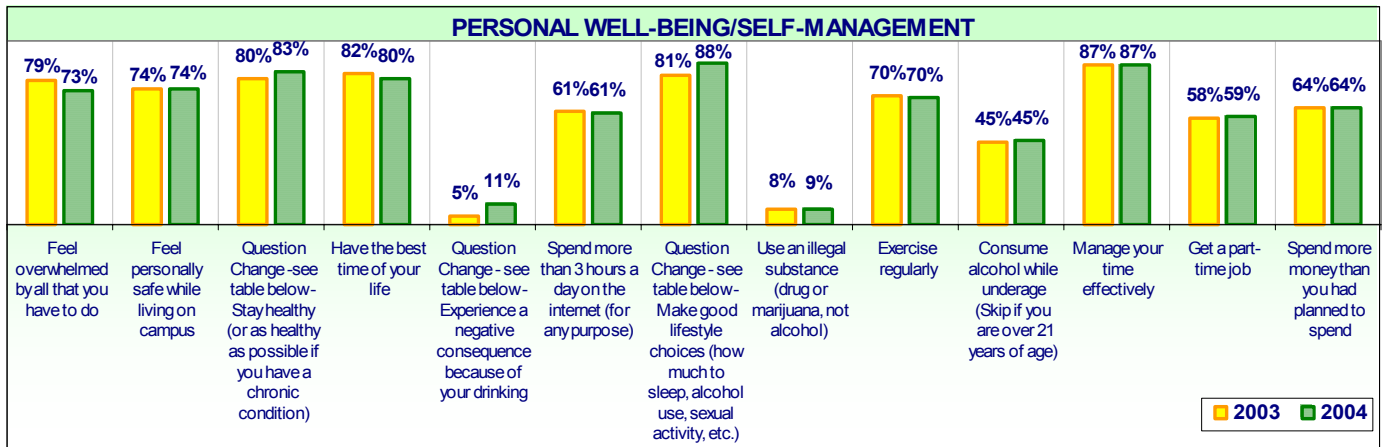
Almost three-quarters of first-time freshmen expect to broaden the diversity of their social group, though the percentage has decreased over the past three years. About two-thirds (65%) expect to become more aware of their personal stereotypes and prejudices.

A rising percentage (17%) of first-year students expect to have a conflict based on background, ethnicity or lifestyle; a number which has increased for each of the last three years.

MULTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Seek out opportunities to learn about different cultures or lifestyles (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2003)***	45%	3.37	47%	3.41	49%	3.44	40%	3.28	47%	3.39
Have a conflict with someone that you believe is based on the difference in your ethnicity, background, or lifestyle (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002, 2003)			17%	2.47	11%	2.25	13%	2.34	17%	2.52
Broaden the diversity of your social group (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002)					79%	3.96	74%	3.84	71%	3.81
Become more aware of your personal prejudices and stereotypes towards others (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2002)					72%	3.81	62%	3.64	65%	3.68
Explore your family history, background, and culture (No Sig. Diff.)							22%	2.80	22%	2.82
Have experiences on your floor which broaden your understanding of people different from yourself									68%	3.74

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PERSONAL WELL-BEING/SELF MANAGEMENT



Personal Well-Being and Self Management Trends

Forty-five percent of the first-time freshmen expect to consume alcohol (while still legally underage). This percentage has remained consistent for the past five years. Another area of consistency is their expectation of using an illegal drug (not including alcohol) which is 9% in 2004, down from a high of 14% in 2001. Eleven percent expect that they will experience a negative consequence because of their drinking. In previous years, fewer first-time freshmen expected to get into difficulty because of drinking too much.

A consistent 70% of the freshmen expect to exercise regularly. Most plan to make good lifestyle choices (88%), stay healthy (83%), feel safe (74%) and have the best time of their lives (80%).

Personal Well-Being/ Self Management	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Feel overwhelmed by all that you have to do (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003)	66%	3.76	65%	3.72	80%	4.08	79%	4.01	73%	3.89
Feel personally safe while living on campus (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2001)			65%	3.71	72%	3.77	74%	3.83	74%	3.81
Changed-2004=Stay healthy (or as healthy as possible if you have a chronic condition); 2000-2003=Maintain your health so that you do not get ill to the point that you need to seek a doctor's attention			69%	3.80	85%	4.04	80%	3.97	83%	4.01
Have the best time of your life (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2002, 2003)	77%	4.09	81%	4.25	85%	4.34	82%	4.31	80%	4.22
Changed-2004=Experience a negative consequence because of your drinking; 2000-2003=Get into difficulty because of drinking too much (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003)	8%	1.98	8%	1.96	3%	1.76	5%	1.86	11%	2.10

Personal Well-Being/ Self Management	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**	% *	Mean**
Spend more than 3 hours a day on the internet (for any purpose) (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	29%	2.89	44%	3.28	62%	3.68	61%	3.68	61%	3.65
Changed-2004=Make good lifestyle choices (for you) such as how much to sleep, alcohol use, sexual activity, etc.; 2000-2003=Learn to make informed choices about your lifestyle practices (health, sex, drugs, alcohol, etc.) (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2003)					84%	4.12	81%	4.00	88%	4.12
Use an illegal substance (drug or marijuana, not alcohol) (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	13%	1.90	14%	1.93	8%	1.60	8%	1.59	9%	1.63
Exercise regularly (No Sig. Diff.)	68%	3.83	65%	3.76	69%	3.83	70%	3.85	70%	3.81
Consume alcohol while underage (Skip if you are over 21 years of age) (No Sig. Diff.)	44%	3.10	45%	3.12	42%	2.99	45%	3.01	45%	3.07
Manage your time effectively (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000, 2001)	77%	3.85	78%	3.88	87%	3.95	87%	3.95	87%	3.97
Get a part-time job (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2000)	53%	3.45	61%	3.64	60%	3.63	58%	3.57	59%	3.56
Spend more money than you had planned to spend (Sig. Diff. 2004 and 2001)	61%	3.65	57%	3.60	68%	3.78	64%	3.69	64%	3.73
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Institutional Questions

In support of the One Book- One Community effort, questions related to the common freshmen reading were asked. Seventy-eight percent reporting reading "The Color of Water" by James McBride, and 38% reported that the book's contents prompted conversations with others. In 2003, the common freshman reading was "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley. Fifty-eight percent reported that they had read it and 22% reported that they had talked with others about the book.

Sixty-seven percent reported hearing about registering to vote since AOP. Sixty percent of the first-time freshmen attended a party in the East Lansing neighborhoods during the weekend before classes. Their primary motivation for attending was to have fun (32%), followed by making (19%) or meeting (15%) friends.

PERCENTAGE "YES" ANSWERS	2003 #	2003 %	2004 #	2004 %
Did you the required/recommended freshman reading?	630	58%	1270	78%
Did the book's content prompt you to have conversations with anyone?	230	22%	614	38%
Did you hear a message at AOP about being respectful and civil when you're in East Lansing?			1321	81%
Did you hear that same message (behavior in East Lansing) at your floor meetings?			1200	74%
Have you heard information at AOP and since you arrived this fall encouraging you to register to vote			1097	67%
Did you attend a party in the East Lansing neighborhoods Friday or Saturday night of welcome week?	585	57%	989	60%

