



## Freshmen's High School Behaviors/Experiences Affect Early Academic Adjustment

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Students' experiences during their senior year in high school affect their subsequent academic adjustment to college. In addition, students with different reasons for going to college, and for coming to Loyola in particular, may be correlated with their academic adjustment. This report looks at some of those factors and how they are related to new freshmen's self-reported academic adjustment two to three weeks into their first semester at Loyola.

This report draws on results from two surveys. The first is the HERI CIRP Freshman Survey, which is administered annually to new freshmen at participating institutions across the United States. It is administered to new freshmen during the "Discover Loyola" sessions **prior to students' first semester at Loyola**. It asks about, among other things, various activities and experiences during students' **senior year in high school** and their reasons for attending college and for attending Loyola.

The second survey is Loyola's President's Questionnaire for New Students (PQNS). It is administered to all new students about **two weeks into their first semester** at Loyola; the survey runs for one week, so it concludes at the end of the third week of the semester. It asks about early academic and social adjustment. The measures of academic adjustment include whether students feel stressed by coursework, are doing as well as they expected academically, are managing their time well enough to complete their coursework, and know where to go if they have academic difficulties.

This report includes only new freshmen who responded to both the Freshman Survey and the PQNS, a total of 377 students.<sup>1</sup> Thirty percent of the students who responded to the Freshman Survey also responded to the PQNS.

### Key findings

#### Academic and other experiences in high school

- New freshman respondents who frequently asked questions in class during their senior year in high school were more likely to feel that they were managing their time well enough to complete

<sup>1</sup> Transfer students are excluded from these analyses, since they are not coming directly from high school and do not take the Freshman Survey.

required work during their first few weeks at Loyola, compared to those who did not ask frequently questions (see Table 1).

- Respondents who said they frequently took class notes during their senior year in high school were more likely, compared to those who did not, to be managing their time well during their first few weeks at Loyola, and to know where to go at Loyola with academic difficulties.
- Freshmen who frequently sought feedback on their academic work during their senior year in high school were less likely, compared to those who did not, to be doing as well academically at Loyola as they expected.
- Freshmen who frequently revised their papers to improve their own writing during their senior year in high school were more likely to know where to go at Loyola with academic problems.
- Those who frequently supported their opinions with logical argument during their senior year in high school were more likely to be managing their time well.
- Those who frequently sought alternative solutions to problems during their senior year in high school were less likely to be stressed by coursework at Loyola.
- Those who frequently explored topics on their own outside of class during their senior year in high school were more likely to be managing their time well.
- Students who had frequently accepted mistakes as part of the learning process during their senior year in high school were less likely to feel stressed by coursework in their first few weeks at Loyola, and more likely to be managing their time well.
- Freshmen who frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do during their senior year in high school were more likely to feel stressed at Loyola, and less likely to know where to go with academic difficulties.
- Students who had spent at least three hours a week on social networking websites during their senior year in high school were more likely to feel stressed by their Loyola coursework, and less likely to be managing their time well enough to complete that work (see Table 2).

#### Reasons for going to college

- Students for whom their parents wanting them to go was a very important reason for going to college

were less likely to be doing as well as they expected academically at Loyola, compared to those for whom that was not an important reason (see Table 3).

- Students for whom becoming a more cultured person was a very important reason for going to college were less likely to be stressed by their coursework at Loyola, and more likely to be managing their time well enough to complete that work.
- Freshmen for whom getting a better job was a very important reason for going to college were less likely to be doing as well as they expected academically.
- Students for whom being able to make more money was a very important reason for going to college were less likely to be managing their time well enough to complete their coursework.

#### **Reasons for coming to Loyola**

- Freshmen for whom Loyola's academic reputation was a very important reason for choosing it were more likely to be managing their time well enough to complete their coursework, compared to those for whom that was not a very important reason (see Table 4).
- Students for whom the fact that Loyola's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools was a very important reason for coming here were more likely to feel stressed by coursework, less likely to be doing as well as they expected academically, and less likely to know where to go with academic difficulties.
- Freshmen for whom the fact that Loyola's graduates get good jobs was a very important reason for coming here were more likely to feel stressed by coursework and less likely to be doing as well as they expected academically.
- Students for whom national magazine rankings were a very important reason were more likely to be feeling stressed by coursework.
- Freshmen for whom information from a website was a very important reason for coming to Loyola were more likely to feel stressed by coursework.

## **Conclusions**

- Freshmen who had, in their senior year of high school, frequently sought alternative solutions to problems and accepted mistakes as part of the learning process were less stressed by coursework in their first few weeks at Loyola.
- Freshmen who were active in class during their senior year in high school (asking questions, taking notes) were more likely to be managing their time well enough to complete their Loyola coursework, a few weeks into their first semester.
- Freshmen who had frequently felt overwhelmed by all they had to do during their senior year in high school were more likely to be stressed by coursework and less likely to know where to go with academic difficulties.
- Freshmen who spent more time on online social networks during their senior year in high school were more likely, a few weeks into their first semester at Loyola, to feel stressed by coursework and less likely to be managing their time well.
- Students who said that one very important reason for going to college was to become a more cultured person were less likely to be stressed by coursework and more likely to be managing their time well.
- Freshmen who said that very important reasons for coming to Loyola were that Loyola's graduates get good jobs and/or get into good graduate/professional schools were more likely to be stressed by coursework and less likely to be doing as well academically as they expected.
- Overall, freshmen who came to Loyola with better intellectual habits and those who came to Loyola for more intrinsic educational/personal reasons were adapting better at the beginning of their freshman year than were those who came for more utilitarian reasons.

Table 1 New Freshmen: Activities and Experiences During Senior Year in High School and Early Academic Adjustment at Loyola				
Freshman Survey (senior year in high school)	President's Survey for New Students			
	Stressed by coursework	Doing as well as I expected academically	Managing time well enough to complete required work	Know where to go with academic difficulties
	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree
Asked questions in class				
Frequently	60	88	<b>87</b>	83
Not frequently	61	88	<b>78</b>	82
Took notes during class				
Frequently	62	88	<b>86</b>	<b>86</b>
Not frequently	54	90	<b>76</b>	<b>71</b>
Was bored in class				
Frequently	60	88	79	80
Not frequently	60	88	86	85
Worked with other students on class assignments				
Frequently	59	89	84	84
Not frequently	62	87	83	81
Sought feedback on your academic work				
Frequently	61	<b>85</b>	86	84
Not frequently	59	<b>93</b>	80	81
Revised your papers to improve your writing				
Frequently	63	87	84	<b>88</b>
Not frequently	55	91	83	<b>73</b>
Supported your opinions with a logical argument				
Frequently	57	87	<b>88</b>	85
Not frequently	67	90	<b>74</b>	77
Sought alternative solutions to a problem				
Frequently	<b>54</b>	90	86	82
Not frequently	<b>65</b>	87	82	83
Explored topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class				
Frequently	57	92	<b>89</b>	80
Not frequently	62	86	<b>80</b>	84
Accepted mistakes as part of the learning process				
Frequently	<b>55</b>	88	<b>87</b>	84
Not frequently	<b>66</b>	88	<b>79</b>	81
Felt overwhelmed by all I had to do				
Frequently	<b>69</b>	85	80	<b>75</b>
Not frequently	<b>55</b>	90	86	<b>88</b>

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008; President's Survey for New Students, 2009

Note: Bolded red indicates statistically significant difference.

Table 2				
New Freshmen: Time Use in Typical Week During Senior Year and Early Academic Adjustment at Loyola				
Freshman Survey: Time use in senior year	President's Survey for New Students			
	Stressed by	Doing as well as	Managing time	Know where to
	coursework	I expected	well enough to	go with
	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>	<i>% agree</i>
Talking with teachers outside of class				
At least 1 hour	58	85	84	83
Less than 1 hour	62	92	82	81
Online social networks (MySpace, Facebook, etc.)				
At least 3 hours	<b>65</b>	88	<b>80</b>	80
Less than 3 hours	<b>55</b>	89	<b>87</b>	85
Studying/homework				
At least 6 hours	63	87	84	83
Less than 6 hours	56	90	82	80
Socializing with friends				
At least 11 hours	61	89	81	81
Less than 11 hours	59	88	85	83

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008; President's Survey for New Students, 2009

Note: Bolded red indicates statistically significant difference.

Table 3 New Freshmen: Reasons for Going to College and Early Academic Adjustment				
Freshman Survey: Reasons for going to college	President's Survey for New Students			
	Stressed by coursework	Doing as well as I expected academically	Managing time well enough to complete required work	Know where to go with academic difficulties
	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree
My parents wanted me to go				
Very important	60	<b>83</b>	80	86
Somewhat or not important	60	<b>91</b>	85	80
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas				
Very important	59	89	85	83
Somewhat or not important	65	83	76	77
To make me a more cultured person				
Very important	<b>57</b>	90	<b>86</b>	81
Somewhat or not important	<b>68</b>	85	<b>77</b>	85
To be able to get a better job				
Very important	62	<b>86</b>	83	82
Somewhat or not important	50	<b>97</b>	85	83
To be able to make more money				
Very important	64	88	<b>79</b>	81
Somewhat or not important	55	89	<b>88</b>	84

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008; President's Survey for New Students, 2009

Note: Bolded red indicates statistically significant difference.

Table 4 New Freshmen: Reasons for Coming to Loyola and Early Academic Adjustment				
Freshman Survey: Reasons for coming to Loyola	President's Survey for New Students			
	Stressed by coursework	Doing as well as I expected academically	Managing time well enough to complete required work	Know where to go with academic difficulties
	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree
This college has a very good academic reputation				
Very important	61	88	<b>86</b>	82
Somewhat or not important	58	90	<b>77</b>	84
This college's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools				
Very important	<b>68</b>	<b>84</b>	86	<b>78</b>
Somewhat or not important	<b>54</b>	<b>92</b>	82	<b>87</b>
This college's graduates get good jobs				
Very important	<b>67</b>	<b>86</b>	86	80
Somewhat or not important	<b>48</b>	<b>93</b>	79	87
Rankings in national magazines				
Very important	<b>72</b>	86	79	80
Somewhat or not important	<b>58</b>	89	85	83
I was offered financial assistance				
Very important	60	89	86	83
Somewhat or not important	61	87	81	82
The cost of attending this college				
Very important	62	89	88	81
Somewhat or not important	60	88	82	83
Information from a website				
Very important	<b>71</b>	83	82	84
Somewhat or not important	<b>58</b>	90	84	82
A visit to campus				
Very important	64	86	84	81
Somewhat or not important	55	90	84	85

Source: CIRP Freshman Survey, 2008; President's Survey for New Students, 2009

Note: Bolded red indicates statistically significant difference.