

## **UNDERGRADUATE SURVEY, 2003 ANALYSIS BY MINORITY STATUS**

### **Overview**

During the spring of 2003 a random sample of University of Wisconsin – Madison undergraduates were surveyed as part of our regular efforts to assess student attitudes, engagement, and satisfaction with many aspects of campus life. This report presents preliminary analysis of the data focusing on comparisons across minority status.

A total of 1204 undergraduate students responded to the 2003 survey, including 261 minority students and 656 female students. Minority students include those who identified themselves as Black, Asian American, Hispanic, or Native American on the university's administrative records.

Previous Undergraduate Surveys, from 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 are available at <http://www.wisc.edu/uwsc/ssportal.htm>.

The attached tables compare responses of students to most questions on the survey by minority status. Shaded areas indicate statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level. Statistical significance does not provide information about the *strength* of the effects of minority status and it does not tell us about *substantive significance*. Statistical significance only tells us how sure we can be that an apparent difference is actually a difference at all. The purpose of this document is to provide a guide to the results rather than exploring interpretations and relevant policy analysis.

For more information about this analysis or the Undergraduate Survey, contact Margaret Harrigan [harrigan@vc.wisc.edu](mailto:harrigan@vc.wisc.edu), Office of Academic Planning and Analysis, or Associate Vice Chancellor Virginia Sapiro [vsapiro@wisc.edu](mailto:vsapiro@wisc.edu).

### **Overall Summary:**

These data allow us to consider the relationship of minority status to student experiences in at least two different ways. One is to compare the responses of minority and non-minority students to see where their experiences are similar, and where they are different. It is important to pay attention both to the similarities and the differences in order to use these data to identify possible avenues for improvement. The other strategy for using these data is to look specifically at the questions on students' perception of diversity and climate.

These tables show that, at least as indicated by these data, many aspects of student experience of UW-Madison do not differ across minority status. Students do not differ across minority status in whether they attend their classes; in their perception of advisors' attitudes toward them; in knowing where to get help; in their perceptions of faculty expectations for them; in their participation in internships, research with faculty members, and extracurricular academic experiences such as lectures; and in the highest degree they ever expect to earn. They judge the feedback they get from faculty members on their work the same way, and for those who have contact with academic advising, health care and personal counseling services, their satisfaction is the same.

Although student responses indicate that in many areas their activities and evaluations are the same, there are some key differences, and most of these are disturbing, from the point of view of

encouraging diversity and a positive campus climate for all. Minority students do not rate their experience with instruction as highly as nonminority students do (Table 4), they experience more social isolation (Table 8), a little more difficulty in transition to college (Table 1), they feel somewhat less safe on and around campus (Table 9) and they are less satisfied overall with their UW-Madison experience (Tables 10-11).

Where we find differences, how big are they, really? This is a judgment call, although clearly, our goal is to improve the experience for all, and eliminate systematic differences in the quality of experience among different groups of students, however defined. The size of the gaps varies across areas. Moreover, to understand these differences and the implications for improvement requires more in-depth and multivariate analysis of these data to sort out the sources of the perceptions. For example, in interpreting the results it is also important to understand that a higher proportion of the minority students who responded to the survey are first year undergraduates than is true of the nonminority students. For some questions (such as how likely it is that you will finish here, satisfaction with instruction in the major, etc.) we would expect to see differences by year in school. Thus, differences among students for which minority status is really the key factor may be larger or smaller once you take account of student year. Further, some of the patterns we see in these tables could also be due to the difference economic background of students.

There is clearly room for improvement in the climate according to students' overall judgments (Table 7) and according to many of the specific findings. Probing these data, along with the many other fact-finding efforts on campus can help us identify the avenues to get there.

### **Summary of Tables 1-11**

*Table 1: Transition from High School to UW-Madison:* What are students' perceptions of their transition into being a student at UW-Madison? Although there were no differences in how well first year students thought their high schools prepared them for UW-Madison, minority students reported somewhat greater difficulty in making the transition from high school than did other first-year students.

*Table 2: Academic Engagement and Choices:* What kinds of choices do students make with respect to engaging with their academic work, including attending class and completing their preparation and assignments? What pressures do the students perceive that inhibit their academic engagement? Although there were no differences in the likelihood that minority and non-minority status students attended at least 95% of their classes (roughly half in both cases), minority students are less likely to report getting 95% of their assignments in on time. The remainder of the questions on this page focus on a wide range of activities, experiences, and feelings that students might cite as reasons for missing class and work. It is crucial to note that in most cases there is no difference between minority and non-minority students. They are equally likely to say they are unprepared or skip class because they are stressed, bored, otherwise busy, etc. But nonminority students are *less* likely to reveal academic engagement problems because of conflicts between work and school, and *more* likely to reveal academic engagement problems because of partying.

*Table 3: Advising:* How much do students use the academic and other advising services available to them? What is their perception of the services? This table includes three basic issues: amount of contact with advisors, students' efforts in seeking help from advisors, and evaluation of advising. Minority students have about the same amount of email contact with advisors as nonminority students, but they have more face-to-face contact. There were no differences in

whether students ever found that they needed advising but didn't know where to go. Minority students were more likely to seek help (and successfully) with personal problems. Minority and nonminority students were about equally likely to seek help with career options or health problems and about equally likely to be successful in getting advice. The results of the advisor evaluation questions were mixed. Minority and nonminority students did not differ in rating advisors' attitudes toward them. Nonminority students were, however, somewhat more satisfied with the quality of advising with regard to requirements for their majors.

*Table 4: Quality of Instruction:* How do students perceive their interactions with faculty, the quality of instruction they receive, and the expectations faculty set for them? The results shown in this table reveal some of the most consistent differences, all pointing in the direction of more negative experiences on the part of minority students. Minority students give lower ratings than nonminority students with respect to the quality of instruction generally, the quality of instruction in their majors, their interaction with faculty, and faculty members' sensitivity to their needs as students. They are slightly less convinced that instructors are clear in what they expect of the student. At the same time, there are no differences in the perceived quality of feedback, in faculty expectations of the student, and in whether they care whether the student succeeds. Because many theories of differential success have to do with the expectations instructors have for their students, this last set of findings is especially important.

*Table 5: Satisfaction with University Services:* What university services do students use, and how do they evaluate these services? Minority and nonminority students have different reactions to many university services. Minority students are less satisfied with the libraries, SOAR, and student unions. They are less satisfied with both their ability to register for the courses they wanted and with the registration process. It is possible that some of these findings, especially, are due to higher percentage of freshmen among the minority students. They are more likely to have had contact with the financial aids office, more satisfied with the aid packages they received, but less satisfied with the service they received. There were no differences by minority status in satisfaction with places to study, recreational sports facilities, their housing situation, student health care services, and counseling services.

*Table 6: Out of Classroom Experiences:* What extra-curricular programs do students take advantage of? Minority and nonminority students are equally likely to attend public lectures and discussions, take part in internships, and engage in research with a faculty member. Nonminority students are more likely to participate in honor or professional organizations or intramural sports, while minority student are more likely to engage in community or campus volunteer service.

*Table 7: Assessment of Campus Climate:* How do students rate the campus climate in general, and what is their experience of issues relating to racism, sexism, and harassment? Differences emerge between minority and nonminority students on every one of these questions, with minority students rating the campus climate worse. Nonminority students are more likely to give positive marks to the campus in responding to the interests and concerns of the students, and in creating a sense of "belonging" for students. For both groups there is clearly significant room for improvement. Minority students are more likely to rate race relations as an extremely or somewhat serious problem on campus, and they are more likely to rate sexism as an extremely or somewhat serious problem on campus. (The gap is larger for race relations than sexism.) Nonminority students are more likely to think the university is doing an excellent or very good job dealing with race issues, although only a minority of either group fall in this category. More minority than nonminority students say they have experienced discrimination since the academic year began, but a large majority of both groups say they have not experienced discrimination.

*Table 8: Integration in to Campus Community:* To what degree do students experience social integration or isolation? The groups differ in their experience on all counts, with minority students feeling more isolated. The greatest gap is in how easy it has been to find people on campus who “share their background and experiences.” Nonminority students also find it easier to find students with whom they can socialize and with whom they can study, although the latter difference is quite small.

*Table 9: Assessment of Campus Safety:* Nonminority students are more likely to feel safe on campus in the evening and to feel safe near the campus in the evening (although the differences are not very large), and they are more satisfied with campus police and security.

*Table 10: Overall Satisfaction:* Nonminority students express more satisfaction with their overall experience at UW-Madison, and are especially more likely to say they are “extremely satisfied.”

*Table 11: Student Expectations:* Minority group students are more likely to have considered transferring to another college or university, although very few of either group say they “probably” or “definitely” will transfer out. Minority students are slightly more likely to say they have considered taking a leave of absence or dropping out, although the difference is very small. Nonminority students are more likely to say they definitely would enroll at UW-Madison if they had it to do over again. Nonminority students are slightly more likely to be extremely confident that they will finish their bachelor’s degree at UW-Madison. On some of these questions, at least, the higher number of first-year undergraduates among the minority group students may account for some of the differences. The overall expectations for the level of higher education they will complete is not statistically significantly different: their expectation for the highest degree they will receive is roughly the same; if anything, minority students expect to achieve a higher level of education overall.

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**Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003  
Analysis by Minority Status**

**Table 1: Transition from High School to UW-Madison  
(asked only of First Year Students)**

<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Minority Status</u>	
	<u>Minority</u>	<u>Non-minority</u>
How well do you think your <i>high school prepared you</i> for the UW-Madison?		
Extremely Well	38.0	39.0
Somewhat Well	56.2	52.3
Not Very Well	5.9	8.7
How much difficulty did you have in <i>making transition</i> from your <i>high school</i> to the UW-Madison?		
A Great Deal/ Some Difficulty	38.2	28.6
A Little	50.2	47.7
Not at All	11.7	23.7

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Shaded area indicates statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level.

## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

### Table 2: Academic Engagement and Choices

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>							
	<b>Minority</b>				<b>Non-minority</b>			
Since the beginning of the current academic year did you drop any courses after classes began? (Percent rating Yes)	39.7				34.6			
<i>Attended at least 95% of all your classes this academic year</i>	50.7				52.6			
<i>Gotten in on time at least 95% of all your assignments</i>	79.4				87.4			
How often have you missed class, discussion section or lab, or come to class unprepared because of	<b>Once a Week or More</b>	<b>Several times a month</b>	<b>Once a month or less</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once a Week or More</b>	<b>Several times a month</b>	<b>Once a month or less</b>	<b>Never</b>
too much school work to do	9.3	16.6	34.1	40.1	4.0	15.8	40.4	39.8
found the course boring	14.7	14.0	25.4	45.8	10.4	20.6	30.8	38.1
feeling too down or stressed	5.3	7.0	32.2	55.6	5.8	9.9	30.5	53.9
conflict between employment and academic work	5.1	4.9	32.8	57.3	3.0	7.0	21.7	68.3
physical health problems	1.3	2.3	25.2	71.2	1.1	4.1	28.5	66.4
partying the day of the class or the previous night	2.6	4.6	21.1	71.7	1.7	7.7	26.2	64.4
not understanding what was going on in the class	4.7	4.1	12.5	78.7	1.5	3.8	8.9	85.9
other campus activities	1.8	3.5	5.4	89.3	0.8	2.9	11.3	85.0
athletic activities	0.3	1.2	4.5	94.0	0.6	3.0	4.2	92.2
volunteer work	0.7	0.7	3.5	95.1	0.1	0.1	4.2	95.6

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**Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003**

**Table 3: Advising**

Survey Question	Minority Status							
	Minority				Non-minority			
	None	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times	None	Once	2-3 times	More than 3 times
How many times did you talk on the <i>telephone</i> with an academic advisor since the Fall semester began?	62.8	15.0	17.5	4.8	77.4	10.7	9.7	2.2
communicate by <i>e-mail</i> with an academic advisor since the Fall semester began?	33.2	18.4	25.7	22.7	36.6	18.1	24.1	21.2
<i>meet with</i> an academic advisor since the Fall semester began?	20.9	27.2	31.0	21.0	18.4	30.4	37.7	13.5
How do you rate the advisor's attitude toward you? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	63.3				69.9			
How do you rate the advising regarding requirements of your major or majors you are considering? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	50.2				60.3			
During the current academic year when you needed advising on your academic program, was there ever a time when you were not sure where to go? (Percent rating Yes)	18.6				14.9			
In the current academic year, have you <i>sought help or advice</i> from University staff regarding career options or career preparation and get the help you needed?	Didn't try	Tried & not successful	Tried & successful		Didn't try	Tried & not successful	Tried & successful	
health problems and get the help you needed?	68.7	1.6	29.8		66.4	2.9	30.7	
personal problems and get the help you needed?	86.4	1.5	12.0		81.2	1.2	17.6	
personal problems and get the help you needed?	87.4	1.2	11.4		91.9	0.8	7.3	

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 4: Quality of Instruction**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
How do you rate: (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)		
<i>Overall quality of instruction?</i>	51.5	65.3
<i>Feedback you were given by instructors on your work?</i>	34.6	40.3
<i>Faculty members' sensitivity to your needs as a student?</i>	36.5	42.8
<i>Availability of faculty to discuss course-related issues in person outside the class?</i>	44.2	59.9
<i>Interaction with faculty by e-mail?</i>	58.0	71.7
<i>Quality of teaching by faculty in your major?</i>	63.0	70.5
 (Percent rating Strongly Agree or Agree)		
<i>My instructors are clear in what they expect of me.</i>	89.7	94.6
<i>My instructors really don't seem to care whether or not I succeed.</i>	25.5	21.6
<i>Too many instructors set unrealistically high expectations for their students.</i>	30.8	30.2
<i>I would learn more if my instructors had higher expectations and set higher standards.</i>	24.2	22.9
 Do you feel that the <i>standards and expectations</i> that are set by your instructors are		
Too High	8.3	8.9
About Right	87.5	86.4
Not High Enough	4.2	4.7

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 5: Satisfaction with University Services**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
How do you rate the following <i>services and facilities</i> on campus? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)		
Libraries	69.5	81.3
Registration for courses you wanted	46.0	52.3
Registration process	54.6	63.9
Financial aid package	51.0	46.5
Availability of places to study on campus	69.7	74.7
SOAR program in orientating new students	23.8	32.3
Student unions	64.4	76.1
Recreational sports facilities on campus	63.1	66.8
Current housing situation	61.9	59.1
Services of <i>financial aid office</i> (not aid package)		
No Contact	55.1	72.1
Satisfaction with service: (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	40.0	55.9
Student health care services		
No Contact	32.2	29.0
Satisfaction with service: (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	47.3	55.6
<i>Counseling services for personal</i> , as opposed to academic problems		
No Contact	65.7	77.6
Satisfaction with service: (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	38.8	47.1

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 6: Out of Classroom Experiences**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
Participated in the following activities: (Percent rating Yes)		
Public lectures, discussions or coffee hours not required by class	58.7	55.2
Community or campus volunteer service	44.7	38.9
Intramural sports or Hoofers	22.2	33.6
Honor or professional organizations	12.2	21.2
Internship	21.1	20.6
Research with a faculty member either a paid or volunteer job	22.8	19.3

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 7: Assessment of Campus Climate**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
How do you rate the University in responding to the <i>interests and concerns of students</i> ? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	20.8	31.5
How do you rate the University in <i>creating a sense of "belonging" for students</i> ?	21.9	34.8
How serious a problem do you think <i>race relations</i> is at the UW-Madison? (Percent rating Extremely or Somewhat Serious)	68.0	47.8
How would you rate the UW-Madison in <i>dealing with issues of race relations</i> ? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	18.1	29.0
How serious a problem do you think <i>sexism</i> is at the UW-Madison? (Percent rating Extremely or Somewhat Serious)	49.5	39.9
How would you rate the UW-Madison <i>in dealing with issues of sexism</i> ? (Percent rating Excellent or Very Good)	31.4	35.7
Have you personally experienced what you feel is discrimination or harassment at the UW-Madison since the fall semester began? (Percent rating Yes)	16.1	5.6
How many times has this occurred during this academic year?		
None	84.4	94.5
Once or Twice	7.4	3.6
More Often	8.3	1.9

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 8: Integration into Campus Community**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
How easy has it been for you to find people on campus to <i>share your background and experiences</i> ?		
Extremely Easy	16.6	37.1
Somewhat Easy	42.1	46.2
Somewhat Difficult	32.7	13.4
Extremely Difficult	8.6	3.3
How easy has it been for you to find students in your classes to <i>study with for exams and class projects</i> ?		
Extremely Easy	30.2	36.2
Somewhat Easy	48.7	48.1
Somewhat Difficult	16.7	13.7
Extremely Difficult	4.4	2.0
How easy has it been for you to <i>find students you feel comfortable socializing with</i> ?		
Extremely Easy	41.6	58.2
Somewhat Easy	41.8	32.1
Somewhat Difficult	12.8	8.5
Extremely Difficult	3.9	1.3

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 9: Assessment of Campus Safety**

<b>Survey Questions</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
When I am <i>on campus</i> in the evening, I feel safe.		
Strongly Agree	31.5	38.7
Agree	52.8	51.6
Disagree	13.8	9.3
Strongly Disagree	1.9	0.4
When I am <i>near campus</i> in the evening, I feel safe.		
Strongly Agree	22.0	28.2
Agree	61.6	57.9
Disagree	14.4	13.7
Strongly Disagree	2.1	0.2
Satisfaction with <i>Campus Police and Security</i> : (Percent rating Service Excellent or Very Good)	39.7	48.8

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 10: Overall Satisfaction**

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Minority Status</b>	
	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority</b>
<i>How would you evaluate your overall experience thus far at the UW-Madison?</i>		
Extremely Satisfied	33.0	54.6
Somewhat Satisfied	51.1	36.2
Somewhat Dissatisfied	12.3	7.0
Extremely Dissatisfied	3.5	2.2

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## Undergraduate Student Satisfaction Survey, 2003

**Table 11: Student Expectations**

<u>Survey Question</u>	<u>Minority Status</u>	
	<u>Minority</u>	<u>Non-minority</u>
Have you ever considered <i>transferring to another college or university</i> ?		
No	65.4	81.0
Probably will not transfer	25.9	15.8
Probably/Definitely will transfer	8.6	3.2
If you could start your college education all over again, would you enroll at the UW-Madison?		
Definitely would	38.9	55.1
Probably would	44.2	35.4
Probably/Definitely would not	17.0	9.5
Have you ever considered taking a leave of absence or dropping out? (Percent rating Yes)	15.0	11.9
<i>How confident</i> are you that you will finish your <i>bachelor's degree at the UW-Madison</i> ? (Percent rating Extremely Confident)	80.6	86.6
What is your <i>highest degree</i> you ever expect to earn?		
Bachelor's degree	16.7	21.8
Master's degree	52.1	53.5
Doctoral Degree	28.1	20.0
Law Degree	3.2	4.6
Don't Expect to complete a degree	0.0	0.1

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