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A Profile of Sophomore Inquiry Students Fall 2011

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A Profile of Sophomore Inquiry Students Fall 2011

In order to better understand the students who enroll in Sophomore Inquiry (SINQ) courses and begin to identify areas where they may need support, University Studies (UNST) began collecting and compiling data on these students. This report presents a profile of SINQ students from fall 2011. It presents an overview of all students enrolled in SINQ during fall 2011 and then summarizes information from the Prior Learning Survey. It is organized around three areas that contribute to student success: academic preparation and concern; financial and physical wellbeing; and connectedness to campus.

Data Sources:

PSU Data Warehouse: PSU Office of Institutional Research and Planning 4th week student data file, includes demographic and enrollment data for all 2012 SINQ students.

Prior Learning Survey: Survey administered during weeks 1 and 2 of fall term. 1062 students responded to the survey (52% response rate).

OVERALL PROFILE (For all SINQ students, N=2012)

Academic Profile

New students: 23% of SINQ students were new to PSU during Fall 2011. The rest began at PSU prior to Fall 2011 as Freshmen or Transfer Students.

Full-time status: 83% of SINQ students were enrolled at PSU as full-time students.

Class level: Only 49% of SINQ students were sophomores. 25% were freshmen, 17% were juniors and 8% were seniors.

Transfer: 40% of SINQ students transferred to PSU from another institution.

Demographic Profile

Gender: 51% of SINQ students were female, 48% were male, and 1% were unknown or other genders.

Ethnicity: 1.6% were Native American, 9.4% were Asian, 3.7% were Black, 8.8% were Hispanic/Latino, 4.8% were International Students, 4.3% report multiple ethnicities, .7% were Pacific Islander, 64% were White, and 2.5% were unknown.

Residency Status: 80% of SINQ students were Oregon residents.

Age: 50% of SINQ students were 20 years or younger, 33% were between 21 and 25, and 17% were older than 25.

PRIOR LEARNING SURVEY RESPONSES (N=1062)

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Academic Experience

UNST Courses: Some SINQ students had completed other parts of the University Studies program:

FRINQ	SINQ (at least one other course)	Cluster	Capstone
71.2%	28%	8.5%	2.9%

Writing Experience:

- 65% of SINQ students had taken at least one college-level writing course.
- Students reported on how often they had done various writing activities over the last year (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 or more times) and rated their ability in each of those areas (1=Need much improvement, to 5=Very strong).

Activity	Mean number of times	Mean Rating of Ability
Generate a thesis for a writing assignment	3.89	3.39
Use a writing process that involved multiple drafts	4.23	3.64
Wrote a paper using proper citation of sources	4.18	3.49
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from multiple sources	4.17	3.75
Used a library or library resources (databases etc.) to complete a research assignment	3.83	3.71
Overall rating of academic writing ability	N/A	3.63

Academic Plans

PSU Plans: 94% of SINQ students planned to earn a bachelor’s degree from PSU

Degree Plans: For 33% a bachelor’s degree was the highest degree they intend to earn.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Work Hours: 37.7% of students planned to work 20 or more hours per week this year, the rest planned to work fewer than 20 hours per week or not work at all.

Financial Aid: 83.4% were receiving some form of financial aid to help with college expenses.

Financial Concern: 43.4% listed financial issues as their top concern as they start the year. 20.1% expressed a major concern about finances; they are worried they may not have enough money to finish school.

Students expressed agreement with the following questions about their finances

Question	% Agree or Strongly agree
I understand the various financial aid options available to me	64.1
I understand how student loans work	67.3
I understand where to go to ask questions about financial aid issues	72.4
I understand where to go to ask questions about my bill at PSU.	74.5
My personal financial situation makes me feel stressed	63.5
I feel prepared financially to meet an emergency (car repairs, medical bills, etc.)	30
I understand how to find a job to help pay for college	63.7
I understand how to make a plan for addressing my financial needs	60.2
I understand how to use credit cards responsibly	78.6

CONNECTEDNESS

Housing: 19.4% lived on campus.

Advising: 89.3% of students reported receiving some form of advising prior to fall term (orientation, major advisor, UASC, etc.).

STUDENT PROFILE

First Generation Status: 37% of students' mothers and 42% of students' fathers had completed a bachelor's or graduate degree. For 46% of students, neither parent had completed a bachelor's degree.

Home Language: 27.8% reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Care for Dependents: 9.1% had at least part-time responsibility for dependents.

CONCLUSION

This profile of students enrolled in Sophomore Inquiry courses for fall 2011 reveals that students have different levels of experience with academia, the University Studies program and PSU; only about half of the students enrolled in SINQ courses are sophomores, over two-thirds have taken FRINQ, and 40% are transfer students. Students also have varying levels of experience with writing, although most report having taken at least one college level writing course. First-generation students make up almost half of the students enrolled in SINQ courses almost 30% of SINQ students report speaking a language other than English at home. These findings suggest that multiple subpopulations bringing a range of potential needs make up any given SINQ course. A next step in these analyses will be to investigate students' reports of their writing experience and proficiency, paying particular attention to any differences for transfer students, English language learners and first-generation students.