

OFFICE OF ANALYSIS, ASSESSMENT, AND ACCREDITATION

**COMPARISON OF RESPONSES:
FRESHMAN/SOPHOMORE VERSUS GRADUATING STUDENTS
2005 & 2006**

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Description of Surveys

Each year, the Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation conducts a survey of freshmen and sophomore students and also graduating baccalaureate students to determine their attitudes and perceptions regarding their USU experience. In addition to some general demographic questions, the focus of the surveys included topics on: Advising, Faculty/Department Experiences, General Education, Libraries/Technology, Campus Climate, and Overall USU experiences.

With the exception of some demographic questions, both of these surveys are the same. The similarity of the instruments allows a comparison of responses of students early in their USU experience and upon the completion of their USU academic programs in order to see how attitudes and perceptions may have changed over time.

Sample Selection and Survey Administration

The Freshman/Sophomore Student Survey was administered during class time to a random sample of classes with high proportions of freshmen and sophomores. All of the students in each class filled out the survey and freshmen and sophomores were sorted out later. Sorting was done using the student's identification number and a survey question that asked the students to report the number of credit hours they had completed. A total of 1,185 completed surveys was obtained and these are the basis for the freshman/sophomore results.

With the Graduating Student Survey, an attempt was made to survey all of the undergraduate, graduating population. Surveys were distributed as part of the graduation application packet. All students were instructed to fill out the survey and return it with their graduation application materials. Upon payment of the graduation fee, surveys were collected by the Cashier's Office. A total of 1,816 usable surveys was obtained and these are the basis of the graduating student results.

Data Presentation

A subset of items from each survey is included in this comparison. Tables compare totals from the Freshman/Sophomore Student Survey 2005 and 2006 with totals from the Graduating Student Survey 2005 and 2006.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in Table 1, the sample of respondents from both groups contained a bare majority of female students with the exception of 2006 Freshman/Sophomore respondents where there were a few more males than females. Note that graduating students are about five times more likely to be married than freshman/sophomore students.

TABLE 1. RESPONDENTS CHARACTERISTICS

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
Gender				
Male	49.8%	46.5%	50.6%	45.4%
Female	50.2%	53.5%	49.4%	54.6%
Married	8.3%	47.4%	10.5%	50.4%

FINDINGS: SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Questions were asked to determine how students supported themselves through college (Table 2). Students were asked to indicate the percent of their financial support for school (tuition, books, housing, food, etc.) that came from each of the following sources. The percentages in the table are the mean for each source.

TABLE 2. SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

	FRESH- SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH- SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
Parents or other relative	35%	21%	31%	18%
Spouse	1%	3%	1%	3%
Personal Savings	14%	11%	15%	10%
Employment	11%	16%	10%	17%
Scholarship	19%	15%	20%	18%
Loans	10%	15%	11%	15%
Grants	9%	17%	8%	18%
Other	2%	2%	2%	2%
On average, how much do you work while taking courses at USU?				
Not at all	39.2%	10.2%	34.0%	9.7%
One-fourth time	17.8%	20.2%	19.0%	19.3%
One-half time	24.8%	32.6%	28.4%	34.5%
Three-fourths time	8.6%	20.2%	10.0%	17.7%
Full-time	9.7%	16.8%	8.6%	18.9%

For both freshman/sophomore and graduating respondents, self and families were the most important sources of funds. A few more graduating respondents received loans or grants.

Fewer graduating students did not work at all. Typically more graduating students work more hours than freshman and sophomore students. The increased tuition costs for students usually forces them to work more as time goes on.

FINDINGS: ADVISING

The survey included several questions about USU’s academic advising program (Table 3). When asked about the most important source of information used for academic planning the first choice of the freshman/sophomore respondents was their academic advisor, while the first choice for graduating respondents was the Major Requirement Sheets. More freshman/sophomore respondents had not met with their advisor during both school years. The most common number of advisor visits for both groups was once a semester.

When asked if their advisor gave them good advice, fewer freshman/sophomore respondents (59% and 61%) agreed or strongly agreed than graduating respondents (73% and 74%). There were nearly equal ratings of disagreement between the groups on this item. About 62% and 64% of the graduating respondents said their advisor cared about them as an individual, but only about 41% and 42% of the freshman/sophomore respondents felt the same way. When responding to the question, “I often have difficulty getting an appointment with an advisor,” more respondents in both groups disagreed or strongly disagreed that getting an appointment was difficult. When asked if they were satisfied with their advisor, more graduating respondents (72% and 73%) agreed or strongly agreed than freshman/sophomore respondents (53% and

52%). When rating the advising system at USU, 52% and 51% of the freshman/sophomore respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the advising system at USU, while 58% and 61% of the graduating respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

TABLE 3. ADVISING

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
Most important source of information used for academic planning.				
Advisor	46.2%	41.2%	46.3%	40.7%
Catalog	7.8%	4.4%	9.2%	3.3%
Other students	5.9%	4.2%	5.6%	4.2%
Faculty, not advisor	1.3%	3.7%	2.7%	3.2%
Major requirement sheets	32.0%	43.6%	29.9%	45.2%
Other	6.8%	2.9%	6.3%	3.4%
Met with advisor how often in the past school year.				
Once a week	1.0%	0.9%	0.2%	0.8%
Once a month	7.9%	17.0%	8.0%	16.3%
Once a semester	45.8%	58.2%	50.3%	56.9%
Once a year	21.6%	17.6%	18.6%	19.2%
Never	23.8%	6.3%	22.9%	6.8%
My USU advisors give me good advice.				
Strongly agree	22.7%	30.4%	22.7%	33.0%
Agree	36.2%	42.6%	38.1%	40.9%
Neutral	28.2%	16.9%	29.7%	17.0%
Disagree	7.5%	6.4%	5.7%	6.0%
Strongly disagree	5.4%	3.6%	3.8%	3.1%
My advisors care about me as an individual.				
Strongly agree	12.6%	27.3%	14.7%	30.0%
Agree	28.5%	34.6%	27.7%	33.8%
Neutral	40.5%	24.6%	41.5%	24.4%
Disagree	11.1%	8.1%	11.3%	6.9%
Strongly disagree	7.2%	5.4%	4.8%	4.9%
I often have difficulty getting an appointment with an advisor.				
Strongly agree	4.2%	8.9%	6.3%	8.0%
Agree	13.2%	16.3%	13.5%	15.4%
Neutral	39.2%	20.8%	39.9%	17.4%
Disagree	27.2%	27.8%	27.9%	30.4%
Strongly disagree	16.2%	26.1%	12.4%	28.9%

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I am satisfied with my advisor.				
Strongly agree	17.6%	31.5%	17.4%	35.6%
Agree	35.4%	40.4%	34.3%	37.3%
Neutral	33.8%	17.4%	37.1%	16.3%
Disagree	8.0%	6.4%	7.4%	5.7%
Strongly disagree	5.1%	4.3%	3.8%	5.1%
Overall, I am satisfied with the advising system at USU.				
Strongly agree	14.1%	19.3%	13.5%	22.7%
Agree	38.1%	38.3%	37.0%	38.4%
Neutral	34.1%	24.2%	37.6%	21.5%
Disagree	8.4%	11.7%	8.2%	10.6%
Strongly disagree	5.3%	6.6%	3.8%	6.8%

FINDINGS: FACULTY/DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES

Several questions about faculty and department interactions were included in the survey (Table 4). When responding to the statement, "I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my department", responses between the two groups and the two years were very similar, 75% and 78% agreement for freshman/sophomore respondents and 77% and 82% agreement from graduating respondents. More graduating respondents (86% and 87%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (77% and 79%) said they were treated fairly by their departments. When rating the availability of faculty after classes and during office hours, graduating respondents rated this item slightly higher in both years (85% and 88%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (78% and 85%).

When asked if requirements for their majors were clear and reasonable, more graduating respondents (79% and 82%) agreed or strongly agreed than freshman/sophomore respondents (71% both years). When asked if there was at least one faculty member students considered a friend, graduating respondents clearly had more opportunities for such to happen as 67% and 68% agreed or strongly agreed, while 31% and 35% of the freshman/sophomore respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

More graduating respondents (84% and 87%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (72% and 74%) agreed or strongly agreed that overall they were satisfied with their department.

TABLE 4. FACULTY/DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I am satisfied with the quality of teaching my department.				
Strongly agree	19.6%	25.3%	23.6%	29.6%
Agree	56.7%	52.1%	55.2%	52.5%
Neutral	19.1%	15.3%	17.2%	12.1%
Disagree	3.5%	5.6%	3.4%	4.2%
Strongly disagree	1.0%	1.7%	0.6%	1.6%

	FRESH- SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH- SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I am treated fairly by my department.				
Strongly agree	19.3%	30.1%	22.6%	35.1%
Agree	57.5%	55.4%	56.6%	52.1%
Neutral	21.0%	11.3%	19.2%	9.5%
Disagree	1.9%	2.6%	1.0%	2.2%
Strongly disagree	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	1.1%
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.				
Strongly agree	22.9%	32.5%	26.6%	35.5%
Agree	55.2%	52.2%	53.5%	52.6%
Neutral	19.7%	11.9%	17.6%	9.3%
Disagree	2.1%	3.0%	1.6%	2.0%
Strongly disagree	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%
Requirements for my major are clear and reasonable.				
Strongly agree	20.3%	29.6%	22.3%	31.6%
Agree	50.4%	48.9%	48.8%	49.9%
Neutral	24.0%	13.7%	23.5%	12.0%
Disagree	4.4%	5.9%	4.1%	4.6%
Strongly disagree	0.9%	2.0%	1.3%	1.9%
There is at least one faculty member that I consider a friend.				
Strongly agree	11.4%	32.8%	12.7%	35.7%
Agree	19.3%	33.7%	22.1%	32.0%
Neutral	35.0%	20.0%	36.7%	19.0%
Disagree	23.5%	10.2%	20.4%	9.2%
Strongly disagree	10.8%	3.3%	8.1%	4.1%
Overall, I am satisfied with my department.				
Strongly agree	15.1%	30.4%	19.7%	35.9%
Agree	56.5%	53.8%	54.5%	50.6%
Neutral	26.3%	12.2%	23.3%	9.4%
Disagree	1.4%	2.7%	1.9%	2.8%
Strongly disagree	0.7%	0.9%	0.6%	1.4%

FINDINGS: GENERAL EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY STUDIES

Most freshman/sophomore students spend much of their time in general education courses, while graduating students are often trying to finish the general education courses they had not yet completed earlier. These courses are designed to enhance students' communication, quantitative, and computer literacy skills and to give them needed background in humanities and in the social, life, and physical sciences. Students were asked to respond to the statement "General Education is a useful part of my university experience." As

shown in Table 5, only a few more freshman/sophomore respondents (50% both years) than graduating respondents (45% and 47%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Disagreement was 16% and 19% for freshman/sophomore respondents and 21% for graduating respondents. Again, a few more freshman/sophomore respondents (41% and 40%) than graduating respondents (34% and 37%) agreed or strongly agreed that general education courses were well taught.

Similar percentages in both groups, 35% and 32% of the freshman/sophomore respondents and 35% and 29% of the graduating respondents, indicated that they had difficulty scheduling general education courses. When asked if general education requirements were confusing, 31% and 30% of the freshman/sophomore respondents and 34% and 33% of the graduating respondents agreed or strongly agreed that requirements were confusing.

When respondents were asked about their writing, computer, and mathematics skills, graduating respondents were much more confident in their abilities in each of these areas. Since graduating students would have more experience, their confidence level would be expected to be higher.

TABLE 5. GENERAL EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY STUDIES

	FRESH- SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH- SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I have difficulty scheduling general education courses.				
Strongly agree	9.0%	11.1%	8.6%	8.2%
Agree	25.6%	23.7%	23.2%	20.3%
Neutral	28.5%	26.4%	28.7%	25.1%
Disagree	28.3%	27.6%	30.6%	30.9%
Strongly disagree	8.5%	11.1%	8.9%	15.5%
General Education requirements are confusing.				
Strongly agree	6.6%	10.0%	6.8%	8.3%
Agree	24.2%	24.0%	23.5%	24.2%
Neutral	30.5%	28.0%	29.8%	25.7%
Disagree	31.3%	27.2%	31.6%	29.0%
Strongly disagree	7.3%	10.7%	8.3%	12.8%
General Education courses are well taught.				
Strongly agree	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%	5.8%
Agree	35.9%	29.6%	35.1%	31.1%
Neutral	41.2%	41.9%	40.2%	40.4%
Disagree	15.2%	17.1%	16.3%	16.1%
Strongly disagree	3.1%	6.8%	3.8%	6.5%
I am a good writer.				
Strongly agree	11.6%	18.8%	10.9%	22.2%
Agree	48.3%	54.4%	47.6%	51.9%
Neutral	25.3%	19.4%	26.2%	18.9%
Disagree	12.3%	5.4%	11.3%	5.3%
Strongly disagree	2.6%	1.9%	4.0%	1.7%

	FRESH- SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH- SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I have good computer skills.				
Strongly agree	16.7%	26.9%	17.9%	29.0%
Agree	50.6%	52.9%	52.5%	52.6%
Neutral	25.3%	16.6%	23.0%	15.5%
Disagree	6.5%	2.6%	5.5%	2.4%
Strongly disagree	0.9%	0.9%	1.1%	0.5%
I have the skills that I need in mathematics.				
Strongly agree	15.1%	23.9%	15.4%	27.1%
Agree	44.9%	49.8%	43.5%	48.4%
Neutral	24.2%	18.1%	25.2%	18.4%
Disagree	12.0%	5.9%	11.6%	4.8%
Strongly disagree	3.8%	2.4%	4.3%	1.3%
General Education is a useful part of my university experience.				
Strongly agree	8.9%	9.2%	9.7%	8.7%
Agree	40.7%	35.7%	40.0%	37.9%
Neutral	34.3%	33.7%	31.4%	32.1%
Disagree	10.9%	14.2%	12.9%	11.9%
Strongly disagree	5.2%	7.2%	6.0%	9.4%

FINDINGS: LIBRARIES/TECHNOLOGY

These items deal with experiences involving library materials and staff, online courses, and classroom technology (Table 6). When asked if “USU libraries have the books, journals, materials I need”, both freshman/sophomore respondents and graduating respondents rated this between 68% and 73% agreement. More freshman/sophomore respondents (47% both years) than graduating respondents (31% and 37%) thought it was easy to locate materials in USU’s libraries. Similar percentages 62% to 68% of both the freshman/sophomore respondents and graduating respondents thought that the library staff was available and helpful.

When asked, “USU should offer more online courses”, more graduating respondents (52% and 46%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (32% and 30%) agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if their teachers used technology effectively in the classroom, both groups ranked this item between 74% and 80% agreement.

TABLE 6. LIBRARIES/TECHNOLOGY

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
USU libraries have the books, journals, materials I need.				
Strongly agree	18.9%	18.1%	23.8%	17.7%
Agree	48.9%	55.5%	47.3%	50.7%
Neutral	28.7%	20.9%	25.4%	24.3%
Disagree	3.2%	4.0%	2.7%	5.5%
Strongly disagree	0.3%	1.5%	0.8%	1.8%
It is easy to locate materials in USU's libraries.				
Strongly agree	9.8%	10.0%	11.8%	9.2%
Agree	37.1%	20.8%	35.3%	27.7%
Neutral	40.5%	34.2%	39.8%	34.4%
Disagree	10.5%	18.8%	11.2%	22.4%
Strongly disagree	2.2%	6.1%	1.9%	6.2%
USU library staff are available and helpful.				
Strongly agree	17.0%	17.8%	21.1%	14.6%
Agree	47.3%	50.3%	46.3%	47.5%
Neutral	32.8%	25.9%	28.5%	32.1%
Disagree	2.5%	4.5%	3.5%	4.2%
Strongly disagree	0.4%	1.4%	0.6%	1.6%
USU should offer more online courses.				
Strongly agree	11.6%	23.2%	9.7%	18.5%
Agree	20.5%	28.6%	20.4%	27.3%
Neutral	60.8%	41.2%	62.9%	45.2%
Disagree	5.2%	4.6%	5.5%	6.2%
Strongly disagree	2.0%	2.5%	1.6%	2.8%
My teachers use technology effectively in the classroom.				
Strongly agree	15.6%	17.6%	19.5%	18.5%
Agree	57.9%	56.5%	60.4%	58.8%
Neutral	22.5%	19.1%	15.9%	17.9%
Disagree	3.0%	5.7%	3.5%	3.5%
Strongly disagree	0.9%	1.1%	0.7%	1.3%

FINDINGS: CAMPUS CLIMATE

This group of questions dealt with student opinion regarding safety issues, tolerance of students and staff, diversity, and a sense of being cared about at Utah State University (Table 7).

An overwhelming majority of both freshman/sophomore respondents and graduating respondents (89% to 92%) felt safe on the USU campus. Seventy-four percent and 76% of the freshman/sophomore respondents and 67% and 72% of the graduating respondents agreed or strongly agreed that professors at USU are tolerant of different points of view. Fewer respondents in both groups felt students were tolerant of different points of view. Approximately 60% of the freshman/sophomore respondents and 55% of the graduating respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

More freshman/sophomore respondents (70%) than graduating respondents (52%) thought that USU provided enough activities for its students. A few more freshman/sophomore respondents (67% and 71%) than graduating respondents (62% and 58%) got to know students from other countries and of other races.

A majority of both groups of respondents, 57% and 63% (freshman/sophomore) and 64% and 67% (graduating) agreed or strongly agreed that faculty at USU cared about students. Similar percentages from both groups (about 56%) agreed or strongly agreed that staff at USU cared about students. Overall a majority of respondents from both groups saw US as safe, tolerant, and a caring place to be.

TABLE. 7. CAMPUS CLIMATE

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I feel safe on the USU campus.				
Strongly agree	33.6%	44.3%	38.0%	43.6%
Agree	54.2%	47.8%	53.9%	48.0%
Neutral	9.6%	6.8%	6.8%	6.8%
Disagree	1.8%	1.0%	1.0%	1.4%
Strongly disagree	0.8%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%
Professors at USU are tolerant of different points of view.				
Strongly agree	15.2%	17.6%	17.6%	17.7%
Agree	58.6%	49.7%	58.0%	54.2%
Neutral	20.5%	23.4%	19.8%	19.1%
Disagree	4.8%	7.4%	3.6%	7.0%
Strongly disagree	1.0%	1.9%	1.1%	1.9%
Students at USU are tolerant of different points of view.				
Strongly agree	8.8%	11.0%	10.3%	10.3%
Agree	51.7%	43.0%	48.8%	45.3%
Neutral	27.0%	28.5%	28.8%	28.5%
Disagree	8.4%	12.2%	8.8%	10.9%
Strongly disagree	4.1%	5.2%	3.4%	5.0%

	FRESH-SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH-SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
USU provides enough activities for its students.				
Strongly agree	16.4%	15.1%	19.2%	16.1%
Agree	53.9%	37.1%	50.6%	35.1%
Neutral	21.7%	34.4%	22.6%	37.8%
Disagree	6.0%	9.6%	5.3%	8.1%
Strongly disagree	2.0%	3.9%	2.3%	2.8%
I got to know students from other countries and of other races.				
Strongly agree	18.2%	15.4%	24.4%	14.6%
Agree	48.6%	46.2%	46.1%	43.0%
Neutral	20.3%	20.7%	17.1%	24.1%
Disagree	10.6%	12.9%	9.7%	14.1%
Strongly disagree	2.3%	4.8%	2.7%	4.1%
Faculty at USU care about students.				
Strongly agree	9.6%	13.4%	13.1%	13.8%
Agree	47.7%	50.2%	50.0%	53.5%
Neutral	36.6%	27.8%	31.1%	25.0%
Disagree	4.9%	6.5%	4.4%	5.5%
Strongly disagree	1.2%	2.1%	1.4%	2.1%
Staff at USU care about students.				
Strongly agree	8.9%	10.9%	12.3%	12.5%
Agree	45.8%	44.9%	47.9%	44.2%
Neutral	39.2%	32.3%	33.5%	32.4%
Disagree	5.1%	8.6%	4.7%	7.6%
Strongly disagree	1.0%	3.3%	1.6%	3.3%

FINDINGS: OVERALL USU EXPERIENCES

Several questions were included in the survey to determine students' general perceptions of USU. When students were asked if they were satisfied with the education they were receiving at USU, a few more graduating respondents (88% and 89%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (84%), agreed or strongly agreed.

In evaluating whether tuition was a worthwhile investment for USU students, more graduating respondents (70% and 69%) than freshman/sophomore respondents (54% and 58%) agreed or strongly agreed. When students were asked "If I had to make the decision again, I would still come to USU", 71% and 85% of the freshman/sophomore respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 75% and 78% of the graduating respondents agreed or strongly agreed.

Students were asked what they would tell a graduating high school student about Utah State University. The four choices were: (1) It's great, come here, (2) Mostly positive things, (3) Mostly negative things, (4) It's not

great, don't come here to school. Between 4% and 5% of both groups selected (3) and (4), while over 95% of both groups said USU was great or at least mostly positive things about the university.

TABLE 8. OVERALL USU EXPERIENCES

	FRESH- SOPH 2005	GRADUATING 2005	FRESH- SOPH 2006	GRADUATING 2006
I am satisfied with the education I am receiving at USU.				
Strongly agree	23.2%	29.1%	25.2%	32.3%
Agree	60.3%	58.6%	59.2%	56.8%
Neutral	12.8%	8.9%	12.1%	7.8%
Disagree	3.2%	2.6%	2.4%	2.4%
Strongly disagree	0.5%	0.7%	1.1%	0.6%
The tuition I pay at USU is a worthwhile investment.				
Strongly agree	12.4%	20.8%	14.7%	22.7%
Agree	41.3%	48.7%	43.1%	46.7%
Neutral	30.0%	20.8%	29.6%	20.9%
Disagree	11.8%	6.1%	9.3%	6.5%
Strongly disagree	4.5%	3.5%	3.4%	3.3%
If I had to make the decision again, I would still come to USU.				
Strongly agree	28.5%	32.5%	28.2%	37.0%
Agree	42.3%	42.8%	46.8%	40.9%
Neutral	19.2%	14.9%	16.8%	13.8%
Disagree	7.1%	6.5%	5.6%	4.9%
Strongly disagree	2.9%	3.3%	2.5%	3.4%
What would you tell a graduating high school student about Utah State University?				
It's great come here to school	47.6%	44.6%	47.7%	47.7%
Mostly positive things	47.8%	50.7%	48.6%	48.5%
Mostly negative things	3.5%	3.2%	2.8%	2.3%
It's not great, don't come here	1.0%	1.4%	1.0%	1.5%

LOCATION OF FULL REPORTS

The reports and additional data for each of these studies can be found on the Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation Web Site (<http://aaa.usu.edu/FactsFigures/surveys.asp>).