
Current Transfer Student Survey Report

Survey Results

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Current Transfer Student Survey

Review of Research

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research was to gather first-hand information from current transfer students who have attended school at the University of Nevada for at least one semester and up to one year. It was sent to transfer students who attended for the first time in spring or fall 2000. This report will discuss the following:

- ◆ who they are (demographic information)
- ◆ what their concerns are about being successful in college (specifically at the University of Nevada)
- ◆ what has helped the students most during the first semester
- ◆ what makes them feel valued at the University of Nevada
- ◆ what difficulties they faced during the first year and what was the hardest thing that they faced when transferring

To develop effective programs for recruiting and retaining transfer students, it is essential to have a concrete base of understanding of these topics.

Method

A survey consisting of 13 demographic and six subjective questions was sent to 576 students who were enrolled in the spring and/or fall 2000 semester.

Results - Demographics

Of 576 surveys sent, 21 were returned as “bad addresses,” leaving 555 as the sample. Of the 555, eighteen percent, or 101, were completed and used as the basis of the study. The demographic questions were set up so that participants could mark those that applied to them. Percentages in this report represent the percent of respondents that answered the question.

- ◆ 62 (61%) of the respondents were female
 - ◆ 39 (39%) were male
 - ◆ Average age is approximately 29
 - ◆ Average GPA is 3.36 (self-reported)
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MARITAL STATUS

Single	54	54%
Married	31	31%
Divorced/Separated	9	9%
Living w/Significant Partner	6	6%
NA	1	

- ◆ 33% have children

ETHNICITY

White	82	86.2%
Asian American	5	5.3%
Other	4	4.2%
Mexican American	2	2.1%
African American/Black	1	1.1%
Native American	1	1.1%
No response	6	

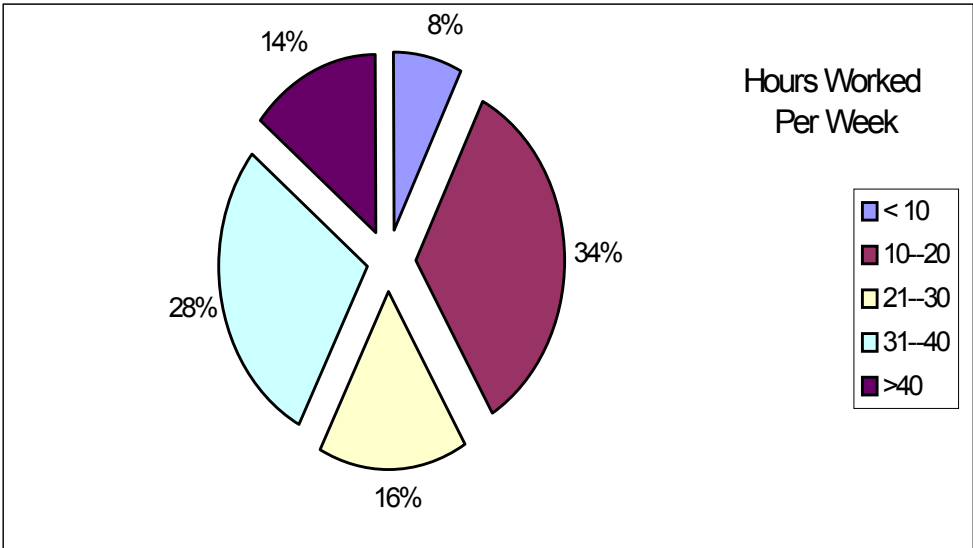
MAJORS

- ◆ 25 (25%) are in arts and science majors
- ◆ 18 (18%) are in business programs
- ◆ 15 (15%) are in human and community sciences
- ◆ 12 (12%) are in education
- ◆ 11 (11%) are in engineering
- ◆ 8 (8%) are in journalism
- ◆ 4 (4%) are in interdisciplinary programs
- ◆ 3 (3%) are in agriculture, biotechnology and natural resources and three are in Mackay
- ◆ one person is undecided and one did not respond

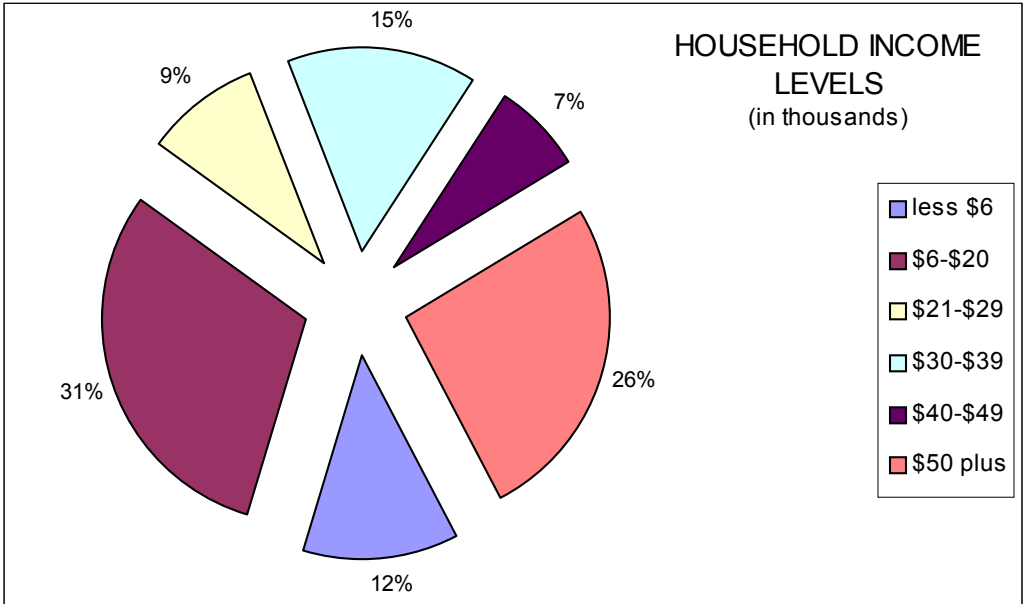
EMPLOYMENT

The majority of the respondents work full 32 (31.7%) or part 51 (50.5%) time. The mean number of hours worked per week is 25 (this includes the numbers from the unemployed individuals). The following graphs illustrate household income levels and number of hours worked per week.

HOURS WORKED



INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD



FAMILY SUPPORT

Ninety percent of respondents said that their family was either very or moderately supportive of their efforts to attend college.

Results – Subjective Questions

QUESTION: What was the hardest thing that you faced when you transferred to the University of Nevada?

- ◆ credits not transferring – 19 (20.4%)
- ◆ adjustment – 17 (18.3%)
- ◆ finding balance – 10 (10.8%)
- ◆ cost, extra class requirements and miscellaneous – 9 (9.7%) each
- ◆ commute, poor advising, need to change study habits – 5 (5.4%) each
- ◆ class times – 3 (3.1%)
- ◆ parking – 2 (2.1%)

QUESTION 1 – What are your concerns about being successful at the University of Nevada?

- ◆ academic success – 20 (20.8%)
- ◆ finding balance – 18 (18.8%)
- ◆ times classes are offered – 13 (13.4%)
- ◆ quality of services – 11 (11.5%)
- ◆ cost – 9 (9.4%)
- ◆ no concerns – 9 (9.4%)
- ◆ career and miscellaneous concerns – 5 (5.2%) each
- ◆ transfer credits not transferring properly – 4 (4.2%)
- ◆ adjustment to the university – 2 (2.1%)

Academic Success:

“being able to successfully pass my classes and gain knowledge for my career”
“graduating with a good GPA” or “getting a fair grade from my professors”
“pace of learning”
“being able to finish my degree in a reasonable amount of time”

Balance:

“juggling family and educational goals along with work”
“the strain of 12-15 units, a marriage and children and work”
“time to meet requirements of classes including reading load”
“that I will let the social aspect of college life affect the academic aspect”

Quality of Service:

“there are a lot of people at the university. Teachers may not have the time for individual help”

“concerned about not having good tutoring available in math and sciences”
“not enough awareness to the student body of the resources available to all students”

Miscellaneous:

“child care”
“my success ultimately depends on me”

QUESTION 2 – What has helped you the most during your first semester/year at the university?

- ◆ social support – 21 (22.9%)
- ◆ service/services – 18 (19.6%)
- ◆ other – 15 (16.3%)
- ◆ advising – 12 (13%)
- ◆ instructors – 12 (13%)
- ◆ scholarships/deferred payment plan – 9 (9.8%)
- ◆ nothing – 5 (5.4%)

Social Support:

“emotional support from my family and friends”
“a friend was a semester ahead so I asked her questions”
“fellow students”
“support from co-workers and classmates”

Service/Services:

“student services, people at Thompson”
“people at admissions”
“tutoring”
“long hours at the library”

Other:

“my own drive”
“being close to campus”
“not working”
“knowing the system”

Advising:

“advisement from COMPETENT professors”
“being able to talk to my advisor about certain class requirements”
“my advisor [many students listed specific advisors names]”

Instructors:

“great professors and a willingness to work with students”
“having great professors who provided me with a great learning experience”
“the help and concern of most of the instructors”

QUESTION 3 – What makes you feel valued at the University of Nevada?

- ◆ instructors – 32 (40%)
- ◆ service/services – 17 (21.2%)
- ◆ nothing – 14 (17.5%)
- ◆ other – 11 (13.7%)
- ◆ scholarships and social connections – 3 (3.8%) each

Instructors:

- “favorable feedback from instructors based on my efforts in class”
- “professors/instructors who are available for assistance or just a chat”
- “attention from the professors and the staff”
- “being known within my major by the people in the department”

Service/Services:

- “being helped with all aspects of school life like financial aid, advising, scheduling”
- “being informed on UNR events and what has been going on”
- “getting help when I need it”
- “that I can be a face rather than a number like at a lot of other universities”

Nothing:

- “I am not valued as a non-traditional student and the lack of evening and weekend class offerings proves this”
- “I do not feel valued at UNR most of the time. Many of the offices on campus do nothing to help the student”
- “I feel as though I ought to keep signing my money over and I’ll be allowed to stay, there is no sense of community”

Other:

- “I feel that graduating from UNR will give me a degree from a reputable college”
- “It seems that my opinion counts”
- “ UNR has a pleasant atmosphere”

QUESTION 4 – What difficulties have you faced in your first year/semester here?

- ◆ not getting classes/poor class availability – 18 (19.1%)
- ◆ other – 12 (12.8%)
- ◆ finding balance – 11 (11.7%)
- ◆ no difficulties – 10 (10.6%)
- ◆ parking – 8 (8.5%)
- ◆ advising (not getting in with an advisor/poor advising) – 7 (7.4%)
- ◆ poor service and not having credits transfer – 6 (6.4%) each
- ◆ social – 5 (5.3)%
- ◆ instructors and not getting scholarships – 4 (4.3%) each
- ◆ adjustment – 3 (3.2%)

Other:

- “bigger school, more buildings”
- “ I was struck with the lack of diversity. There are underlying currents of hostility in a few of the classes I’ve taken”
- “major surgery”
- “knowing where everything is”
- “facilitating my handicap”

Social:

- “getting good friends”
- “my age compared to others in the dorms”
- “too many people, it was crowded and hard to study in the dorms”

QUESTION 5 – How has your experience at the university lived up to or not met your expectations when you transferred?

- ◆ have met expectations – 48%
- ◆ not met expectations – 36%
- ◆ over expectations – 16%

** Note: 15 students answered question number one in the same manner as the first presented question. These answers varied, meaning that one response was not predominately repeated. Thirteen answered question number four as they did the first presented question.

OTHER INFORMATION

Class Time

Survey respondents were asked which time of day was most convenient for them to attend class.

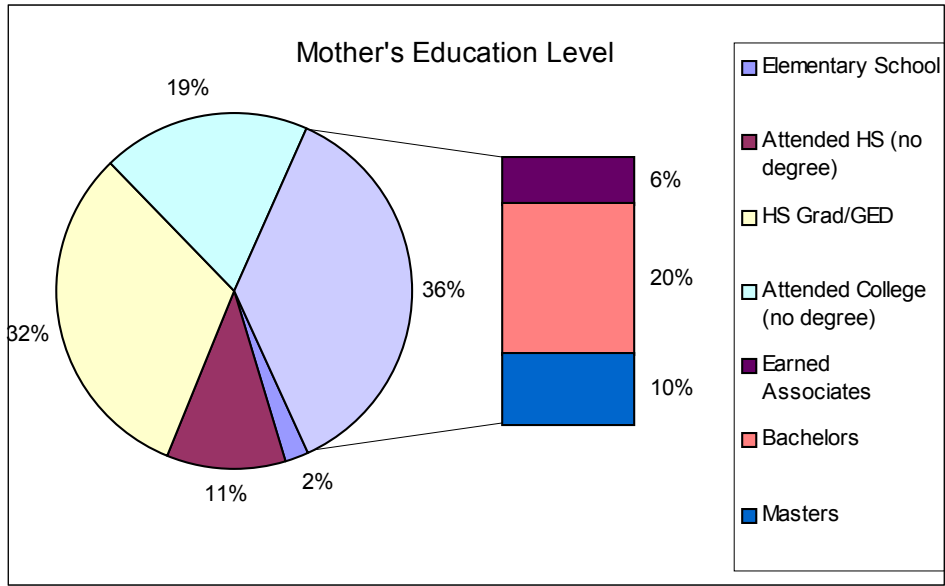
Class Time	Percent Preferred
Morning	46%
Noon	10.7%
Afternoon	15%
Evening	16.1%
Weekend	1%
Weekend/Evening	4.3%
Anytime is Fine	6.4%

Family Education Attainment History

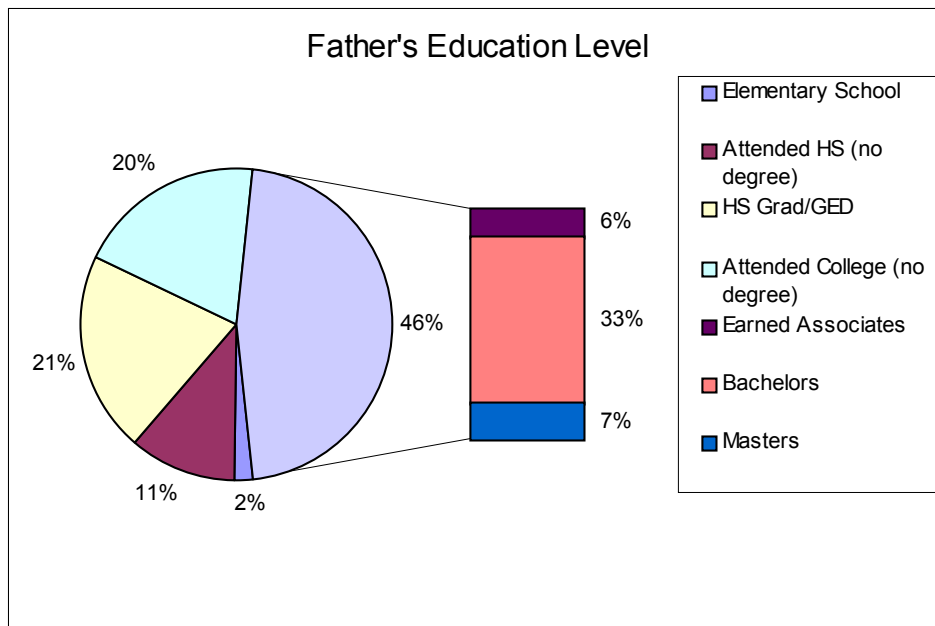
Note that the level indicated is the highest level of education that the respondents reported for each parent. Clarification for the terms is indicated below.

- ◆ Attended high school means the individual did not graduate or receive a GED equivalent
- ◆ Attended college means that no degree was earned. The parent may have achieved a vocational certification

Mother's Education Level



Father's Education Level



Discussion

There do not seem to be many surprises regarding concerns and difficulties that students faced upon transferring to the University of Nevada. Transferability of credits (20.4%) and having to struggle to get them accepted proved to be the hardest thing students faced along with adjusting (18.3%) to “life” at the university. It seems that after one semester or a year, these two items take a back seat (transfer credits not transferring properly – 4.2%, adjustment – 2.1%) to academic success (20.8%) and finding balance (18.8%) as main concerns. Class times moved up on the list of concerns after having attended one semester or a year (3.1% to 13.4%) and took top rating (20.2%) as the greatest difficulty after the first year/semester.

It seems that the main things helping students to feel valued and supported are related to how they are being treated and the connections that they are making on campus. The primary influence is with instructors (40%). Feeling as though the instructors have an interest in them is important. Advising (which is done mainly by instructors) ties into this concept too with 13 percent of students saying it was good advising that helped them most in the first year/semester. Social support (22.9%) is important too with regard to helping students during their initial time here. Having good, accessible people and services not only helped students during their time here (19.6%) but also make students feel valued (21.2%).

Observations

It is interesting to compare the results from this survey with the survey sent to prospective transfer students in June of 2000. There may be students that participated in both surveys.

Demographically, in the previous survey, 76 percent of the respondents were women as compared to 61 percent reported here. Average age was 33 compared to 29 years, ethnicity was about 86 percent white in both. Regarding marital status, in the first survey, 52 percent were either married or living with a significant partner as compared to 37 percent in this survey. About 43 percent of prospective students had children compared to 33 percent of current students surveyed.

Regarding employment, the respondents to the previous survey show 60 percent working full time and 32 percent part time versus about 32 percent working full time and nearly 51 percent part time of current students. The mean number of hours per week for prospective students is 31 versus 25 for current students. Prospective students noted that the preferred class time for them is evening and/or weekend (47%) where as current students indicated that morning classes are best (46%).

Though there are no formal correlations reported here, the differences in demographics and work habits leads to questioning if we are capturing the married, working, family students who need evening and weekend classes.

When asked “What would make it easier for you to transfer to the University of Nevada,” prospective students rated financial aid, more convenient class times and access (meaning on-line classes, parking and having the degree that the individual wants) (each at 16.4%) as the top three items. Advising ranked fourth with 14.8 percent. It seems that class times/availability are perceived difficulties that become actual difficulties stated by students after attending (19.1%).

The question “What are your concerns about transferring to and being successful at the university” generated specific responses as well. The top concern was the cost of going to school and getting financial aid (17.9%) with class time/time that services are offered pulling 13.3 percent and being in classes that are too big third with 10.9 percent. Though cost does appear in the current survey, it is minimized in comparison to the other concerns and difficulties. Students may meet their financial aid expectations or perhaps, we are losing those who do not secure scholarships or funding.

Students were asked to define “value” in education and, in a separate question, “what would make you feel valued at the University of Nevada.” The predominant response was quality of teachers (39.7%) and feeling like there is a focus on student success (39.8%) respectively. Quality of teachers was defined as:

- “teachers taking personal, individual interest in the academic success of students”
- “good, committed instructors with open door policy to questions and requests for help in classes”
- “practicality and accessibility of excellent teachers, “ “inspired, qualified, supportive instructors”

Focus on student success was defined as:

- “knowing that my instructors genuinely were concerned about my academic success”
- “ lots of student services and polite staff”
- “friendly people and advisors with my best interest at heart”

These values did not change. When ranking what makes them feel valued at the university, instructors came in first with 40 percent of the students choosing this and service/services at 21.2 percent.

Summary

Based on the information gathered, we now have a base point from which to develop programming. Helping to create “value” for students, both prospective and current, is important. This may be through helping students foster relationships with professors and fellow students. Further, to continue providing good quality, friendly service at a variety of times is in line with student needs. Better class availability and broadening class times continue to be important issues. It appears that more needs to be done to see if we are indeed capturing the married, working students with families who need scholarships/financial aid and weekend and evening classes.