Research in BRIEF

A Newsletter of the Institutional Research Office

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE SENIOR SURVEY (CSS)
2003-2007 TRENDS REPORT
Orange Campus
(Administered Annually Spring Semester)

The Higher Education Research Institute's *College Senior Survey* (CSS) was initiated in 1993 to allow individual campuses to conduct follow-up studies of their students. The four-page CSS instrument, also known as the "Senior Survey," contains over 50 items inquiring how undergraduates spend their time, their level of satisfaction with the college experience, student involvement, cognitive and affective development, student values, attitudes, and goals, degree aspirations, and future plans. Between 2003 and 2007, the CSS has been administered at Chapman University during the Spring Semester to graduating seniors on the Orange Campus. Initially, surveys were sent directly to students' homes via U.S. mail with commencement information and were returned with the students' Ceremony Attendance Form to the Office of the Chancellor. In 2006, HERI provided students with Internet and paper versions of the survey before moving to an Internet-only version in 2007. This edition of *Research in BRIEF* highlights some of the notable trends among Chapman seniors between 2003 and 2007.

Response Rate and Survey Sample

The table below displays the percentage of all graduating seniors who completed the CSS for each year. The sharp decline in 2006 and 2007 may be partially explained by the change in data collection methods.[i] Given the low response rates in 2006 and 2007, the findings for these two years should be interpreted with caution since they represent a smaller proportion of the senior class.

CSS Response Rate

		Survey Year			
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Response Rate	57.4	60.3	52.6	21.2	26.5

In line with the rest of the university, the CSS sample is disproportionately female during the examined period. The CSS data closely matches the actual population in 2003 and 2004. Between 2005 and 2007, the CSS samples are slightly skewed towards females by about eight percent. A racial/ethnic comparison was not conducted due to incompatible racial/ethnic categories employed by Chapman University and the CSS.

Population and Sample

		Survey Year				
		'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
CSS Respondents	M	40.3	35.7	36.8	33.3	30.7
	F	59.7	64.3	63.2	66.7	69.3
All Chapman Seniors	M	40.7	39.7	44.1	41.6	38.2
	F	59.3	60.3	55.9	58.4	61.8

FINDINGS

Curriculum

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction on various types of courses they may have taken during their time at Chapman University. It should be noted that none of the disciplinary labels in the chart were defined for students.

Satisfaction with Curriculum

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Humanities	70.5	74.6	75.9	74.5	80.7
Social Science	69.6	75.8	73.1	74.5	77.3
General Education	74.3	77.5	77.6	78.1	77.1
Science and Math	55.3	48.3	54.0	52.9	49.5

* Reporting "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

Student satisfaction with "Science and Math" courses fluctuated between 2003 and 2005 before slightly declining in

2006 and 2007. With the exception of 2003, student satisfaction with the "General Education" curriculum remained at either 77% or 78%. "Humanities" and "Social Sciences" courses experienced growth in the level of student satisfaction between 2003 and 2007. Overall, seniors reported a high level of satisfaction with humanities, social sciences, and general education courses.

Facilities

Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with various campus facilities. While satisfaction with "laboratory facilities" and "Internet access" has declined recently, Chapman seniors expressed growing satisfaction with other areas such as computer facilities and services. Not surprisingly, library satisfaction rose drastically after the opening of the new Leatherby Libraries and has continued to rise the last two years.

Satisfaction with Facilities

| | Percent* | | | | |
| | Survey Year | | | | |
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Laboratory Facilities	60.2	61.0	51.3	54.2	49.2
Library Facilities	31.6	31.7	79.8	84.5	86.1
Available Internet Access	83.6	80.6	74.2	77.2	76.1
Computer Facilities and Services	75.1	75.0	83.2	87.0	81.1

* Reporting "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

Services

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with tutoring and job placement services. As the data show, satisfaction with tutoring assistance and job placement services garnered substantial gains between 2003 and 2007.

Satisfaction with Services

| | Percent* | | | | |
| | Survey Year | | | | |
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Tutoring/Academic Assistance	56.6	53.9	58.5	61.0	72.0
Job Placement	33.2	37.5	36.1	41.4	46.6

* Reporting "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

The increased satisfaction with tutoring assistance may be due to the recent expansion of resources in the Center for Academic Success. Since 2006, the Center for Academic Success has moved into DeMille Hall and hired a Tutor Administrator. Both changes have allowed the Center to service more students than previously possible. Likewise, the Career Development Center (CDC) has strengthened its efforts to promote career fairs, workshops, and internship programs. The Career Development Center has recently targeted student organizations and classes to attract participation instead of using an open attendance strategy. As a result, CDC workshop (e.g., resume writing) attendance has improved.
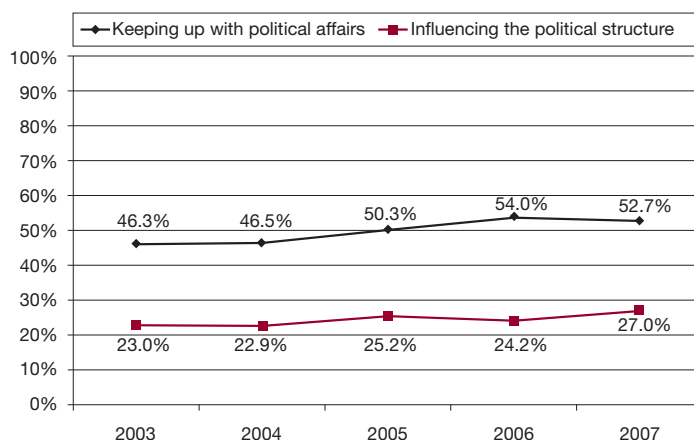
Political Orientations and Attitudes

The CSS asks students to report their political orientations and beliefs on the importance of politics. According to the findings, political orientations among Chapman seniors have slightly shifted from "middle-of-the-road" to "liberal" between 2003 and 2007. This trend is not unique to Chapman. According to national CSS data (not reported below), seniors at non-sectarian, private four-year institutions have also shifted towards "liberal" attitudes with a corresponding decline in "middle-of-the-road" attitudes.

Political Orientation

| | Survey Year | | | | |
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Far left	4.6	2.8	3.4	2.5	5.1
Liberal	28.7	31.4	35.4	31.7	39.0
Middle-of-the-road	43.2	42.8	34.1	34.8	32.6
Conservative	23.1	20.6	26.7	30.4	23.3
Far right	0.5	2.3	0.3	0.6	0.0

The chart below reveals the percentage of students reporting "essential" or "very important" for each item. The data shows that "keeping up with political affairs" has grown steadily among Chapman seniors. Perhaps the 2008 presidential election is affecting this increased interest in seniors. In contrast, student interest in "influencing the political structure" has remained stable.

Political Attitudes
Percent Reporting "Essential" or "Very Important"

Legend: ◆ Keeping up with political affairs ■ Influencing the political structure

Keeping up with political affairs: 2003: 46.3%, 2004: 46.5%, 2005: 50.3%, 2006: 54.0%, 2007: 52.7%

Influencing the political structure: 2003: 23.0%, 2004: 22.9%, 2005: 25.2%, 2006: 24.2%, 2007: 27.0%

## Attitudes Toward Civic Responsibility

Students were asked to rate the importance of various civic activities. Data show that the assigned importance in participating in community action programs almost doubled between 2003 and 2007. The other listed activities increased in perceived importance, but the gains were modest in comparison.

Civic Attitudes

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Helping to promote racial understanding	34.0	36.6	42.5	40.4	46.8
Influencing social values	47.9	51.0	48.5	47.2	59.1
Cleaning up environment	23.0	22.9	26.3	29.2	34.6
Community action program	22.5	24.7	29.6	29.8	43.0
Helping others in difficulty	69.8	69.8	76.3	78.8	78.5

* Reporting "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

The "Volunteer Work" chart below reports two measures. The "Past Year" measure reflects the percentage of respondents indicating "frequent" or "occasional" participation in volunteer work during the last year. The "After Graduation" measure is taken from a question which asks seniors what they plan to do after graduation, one of the options being "Doing volunteer work."
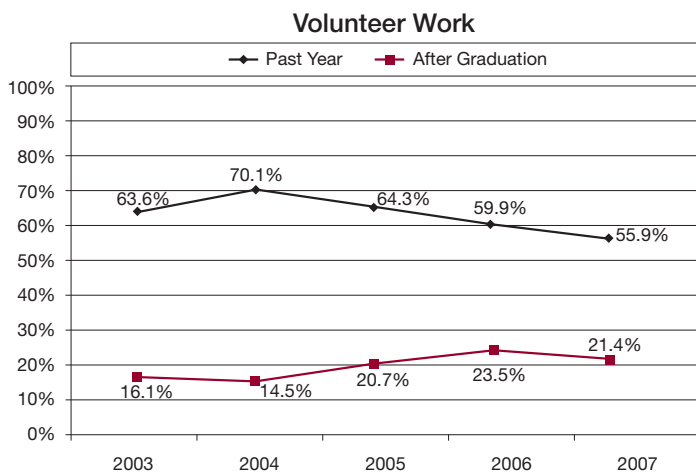
Volunteer Work

The percentage of graduating seniors reporting participation in volunteer work in the year before they graduate has declined between 2003 and 2007. The percentage of students planning to participate in volunteer work after graduation increased by 5.3% between 2003 and 2007, but its appeal was still limited to a minority of seniors.

Exposure to Diversity

The CSS asks seniors about their level of exposure to gender and ethnic issues. The findings show substantial gains in ethnic and women studies course enrollment between 2003 and 2007.

Participation in Ethnic or Women's Studies Courses
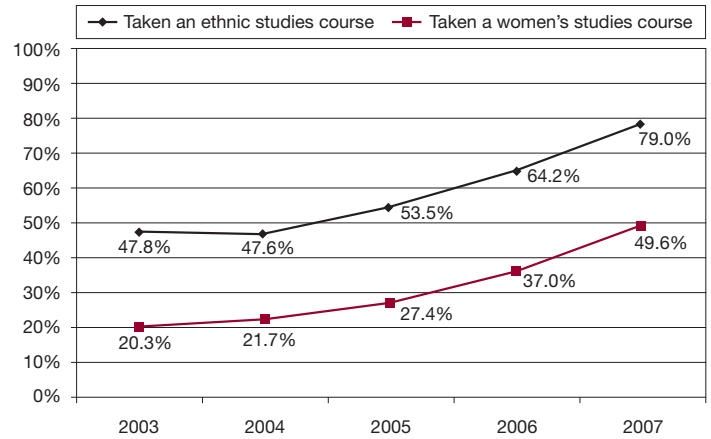
While data highlighted in the table below indicates growing contact with racial diversity through workshops and housing arrangements, the growth was modest in comparison to reported participation in diversity courses.

Exposure to Diversity

	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Percent reporting "much stronger" knowledge since entering college					
Knowledge of people from different races	21.9	20.6	20.8	25.3	33.8
Percent reporting "frequently or "occasionally"					
Attended a racial awareness workshop	23.4	25.9	28.6	32.7	38.2
Had a roommate of different race	36.9	42.9	45.8	40.7	52.1

Data also show that the percentage of seniors reporting much stronger knowledge of people from different ethnic cultures increased 13% between 2005 and 2007. It should be noted that strong interest in these issues may have always been present, but opportunities to pursue this interest through courses or events may have grown only recently. Or factors within Chapman may be partially driving the increase in diversity knowledge such as the increase in roommate diversity. In addition, professors may have nurtured growth by incorporating more multicultural course material in their classes. The new General Education Program's emphasis on developing "global citizens" through study abroad, travel courses, and experiential learning may continue to foster a host of benefits such as racial, ethnic, and cultural awareness.

Campus Interactions

Students were asked to rate their level of interaction with faculty members on a variety levels. The CSS asks, "How often have professors at your current (or more recent) college provided you with" for a variety of items. Several items remained relatively stable between 2003 and 2005 before

showing a 5-8 percent increase in 2006 or 2007. This increase in frequency is especially positive given the increase in the university's student-faculty ratio and the declining percentage of classes with fewer than 20 students since 2000.[ii] Thus, findings suggest that Chapman faculty members have maintained close relationships with students despite working with an increasing number of students.

Faculty-Student Interaction

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Encouragement to pursue graduate study	35.3	39.9	35.4	38.7	45.6
Opportunity to work on a research project	20.6	20.6	25.6	28.7	27.8
Advice about your educational program	32.3	39.9	32.4	37.5	43.6
Emotional support and encouragement	26.5	31.2	29.5	35.6	30.9
A letter of recommendation	29.9	33.0	30.3	27.7	34.7
Intellectual challenge and stimulation	49.7	51.4	50.5	50.6	57.2
Opportunity to discuss coursework outside of class	48.4	53.0	51.0	50.6	55.1
Help in achieving your professional goals	34.5	32.7	31.0	35.0	39.0

* Reporting "Frequently"

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction on various aspects of campus interaction (e.g., faculty contact). The "Satisfaction with Campus Interaction" table shows an increase in satisfaction with "interaction with other students" on campus in 2005 and 2007, but student satisfaction with the amount of contact with faculty and the ability to find a faculty/staff mentor has remained mostly steady between 2003 and 2007.

Satisfaction with Campus Interaction

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Interaction w/students	83.8	83.4	89.2	84.4	92.8
Amount of contact w/faculty	87.1	86.4	89.5	91.9	89.9
Ability to find a faculty/staff mentor	77.9	79.8	73.2	73.7	81.9

* Reporting "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"

The high level of satisfaction is most likely a reflection of Chapman University's small size and mission to provide a "personalized education." The item on "interaction with other students" shows a consistently high level of satisfaction.

Self Perceived Growth in College

Students were asked to rate their self-growth since entering college. The CSS data show growing confidence among seniors in several areas since 2003. In particular, analytical, critical, leadership, and interpersonal skills all show between 9.9% and 14.1% growth. However, this type of growth is not surprising given the improving caliber of incoming freshmen, and research has shown that college typically instills a sense of self-efficacy.[iii]

Self-Perception of Personal Growth

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
General knowledge	47.8	50.8	51.5	55.0	55.7
Analytical, problem-solving skills	31.7	31.7	33.3	38.1	44.3
Knowledge of a single discipline	69.5	73.8	68.5	65.6	77.6
Ability to think critically	35.6	38.4	36.4	39.4	48.1
Leadership abilities	26.4	27.1	30.0	25.6	36.3
Interpersonal skills	30.6	31.5	38.5	29.4	44.7
Understanding community problems	18.0	15.6	18.6	20.0	29.5
Understanding national problems	28.5	25.2	26.4	31.9	38.4

* Reporting "Much Stronger" Ability

Data also show increasing confidence among Chapman seniors in understanding local and national problems.

## Co-curricular Activities and Independent Studies

The CSS asks seniors about their participation in a variety of co-curricular and curriculum activities. As the "Co-curricular and Activities" table shows, participation in Greek life, sports, internships, or leadership training did not change much between 2003 and 2007. The percentage of students spending three hours or more per week on student clubs increased sharply between 2006 and 2007 (22.3% to 34.1%).

Co-curricular and Activities

	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Percent reporting "yes"					
Joined fraternity or sorority	27.3	28.4	22.5	19.8	23.9
Played varsity sports	N/A*	18.7	19.7	13.6	16.4
Studied abroad	19.7	17.5	23.0	18.5	36.6
Internship	47.5	50.1	49.9	49.4	48.7
Leadership training	21.3	20.4	17.6	21.0	18.9
Percent reporting three hours or more per week					
Student clubs	20.1	25.5	22.4	22.3	34.1

* Question worded differently in 2003.

The sharp increase in students having studied abroad is isolated to 2007, but reflects increased institutional support for such programs. According to the Center for Global Education, this increase is most likely due to increasing effectiveness of promotion activities via targeted marketing efforts and positive word of mouth from former participants. Interest in study abroad programs may also have been stimulated by the U.S. Congress declaring 2006 as "The Year of Study Abroad." Such a declaration may have boosted the visibility and value of study abroad programs among Chapman seniors.

Worked on Independent Study
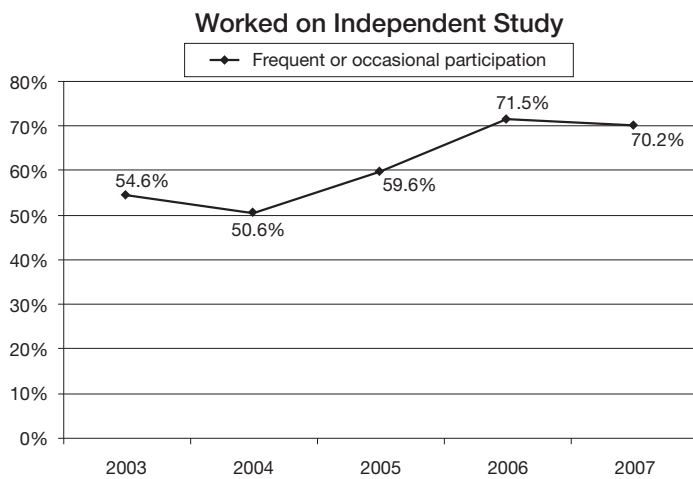
The chart above shows a sharp increase in independent studies enrollment between 2004 and 2006. In 2007, the level of participation in independent studies leveled off.

Future Plans

The CSS asks seniors about anticipated post-graduation plans. Only activities that attracted 10% or more of seniors for every year are illustrated.[iv]

Post-Graduation Plans

	Percent*				
	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Working full-time	73.0	66.6	69.3	78.4	72.7
Working part-time	17.4	18.5	21.2	14.2	18.5
Attending graduate/ professional school	29.9	32.2	33.2	22.8	26.9
Traveling	24.4	24.4	27.4	32.7	24.8

* Reporting "Yes."

Working full-time is clearly the most popular activity after graduation. About a quarter of seniors plan on attending graduate school and/or traveling in the fall. Working part-time and/or volunteer work attracted interest from about a fifth of seniors.

Overall Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with Chapman University can be determined by two items on the survey. Seniors were asked if they would enroll again at Chapman University.[v] The findings show a steady increase in the percentage of seniors indicating that they would attend Chapman University again. Between 2003 and 2007, this percentage increased 10.4%.

College Satisfaction

	Survey Year				
	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07
Would you attend Chapman University again?					
Yes	77.8	84.5	87.2	85.2	88.2
Don't know	5.0	4.5	3.1	4.9	N/A
No	17.2	11.0	9.7	9.8	11.7
Satisfaction with "Overall College Experience"					
"Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied"	83.4	87.7	91.3	88.3	83.5

Seniors were also asked to indicate their level of overall satisfaction with Chapman University. Between 2003 and 2005, satisfaction slightly rose before slowly falling to previous levels during 2006 and 2007. Overall, most seniors reported satisfaction with their educational experience at Chapman University.

CONCLUSION

Findings from the CSS from the past five years show many positive trends among Chapman seniors. Seniors have reported increasing satisfaction with the humanities and social science curriculum along with several areas of university facilities. In particular, faculty members, the Center for Academic Success, and Career Development Center deserve credit for the growth in satisfaction in faculty availability, intellectual/emotional support, tutoring, and career counseling. Chapman University aims to foster a sense of global citizenship and appreciation for a diversity of experiences, according to the university's mission and values statement.[vi] The data from the CSS indicate progress towards these goals. What is more, seniors have shown increasing self-confidence and interest in learning about racial and gender issues through classes or workshops. Independent studies, another growing activity, represent one avenue to explore these issues.

Despite growing enrollment, faculty members have successfully realized Chapman's emphasis on a "personalized education" as shown by the data on student-faculty interaction. In addition, seniors have undergone personal growth and reported increasing satisfaction with many areas of

Chapman University. For example, the increased satisfaction with "interaction with other students" may be partially driven by increased participation in student clubs since 2003 and new programs by Student L.E.A.D. (e.g., Ubantu, Project ROOTS). And the launching of Panther Connect, an online job database, may further enhance student satisfaction with Chapman's job placement capabilities.[vii]

At the March 28th, 2008 town hall meeting, the Chancellor pointed to study abroad programs as an integral part of internationalizing the Chapman brand. Between 2003 and 2006, study abroad participation remained steady around 20%. In 2007, this percentage took a strong step forward to 36.6%. With a growing interest in global issues and strong institutional support, participation in study abroad programs is expected to expand in the future. Overall, seniors expressed a high level of satisfaction with Chapman University with only a very small minority second-guessing their decision to enroll at Chapman.

IMPLICATIONS

The longitudinal data from the CSS can be used to benchmark both progress and areas of improvement. Some areas of potential improvement include addressing the decreasing satisfaction with lab facilities and Internet access. It is unclear what is driving the small decline in Internet access satisfaction. The vast majority of campus is covered by Chapman's wireless network. The university is currently making progress in securing a new campus for the Schmid College of Science, which should also expand the number of Internet access points for students. The completion of this new campus will undoubtedly improve satisfaction with lab facilities and Internet access much in the same way that the new Leatherby Libraries improved library student satisfaction. Student satisfaction with Chapman's science and math curriculum has slightly declined from 54% in 2005 to 49.5% in 2007. While the decline may be small enough to attribute to random sampling error rather than a significant decline in actual satisfaction, it is possible that the declining satisfaction with laboratory facilities is coloring perceptions of the science and math curriculum. Overall, science and math have lagged behind the other disciplines in satisfaction among Chapman seniors and may warrant attention.

Even though a majority of seniors still participate in volunteer work, its decline since 2004 also deserves attention. The decline could simply be due to students replacing time spent on volunteer work with study abroad or independent studies, given the trends discussed above. The new General Education Program instituted a Citizenship, Community, and Service program which should continue to stimulate service work in the future.

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[i] As part of that change, seniors no longer received an in-person reminder to complete the CSS. Before 2006, the Academic Events Coordinator reminded seniors to fill out the CSS when turning in their Ceremony Attendance Form in person. Also, the Career Development Center (CDC) began distributing a survey to the same target population as the CSS in 2006 and 2007, thus increasing email contact with seniors. As a result, the competing surveys may have depressed the CSS's response rate.

[ii] According to CIRO's records, the student-faculty ratio increased from 13:1 to 15:1 between the 2000-01 and 2006-07 school years. The percentage of classes with fewer than 20 students was in the upper 40% range between 2000 and 2004, then fell to the 30% range in 2005 and beyond.

[iii] See Pascarella, Ernest T. and Patrick T. Terenzini. 2005. *How College Affects Students: A Third Decade of Research.* Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

[iv] The wording of this question slightly changed. Through 2005, the CSS asked "What do you plan to be doing six months from now?" In 2006, the question changed to, "What do you plan to be doing in fall 2006?" Also, since respondents could choose more than one category, the annual percentages may not equal 100% in the "Post-Graduation Plans" table.

[v] HERI eliminated the "don't know" category in 2007. This change inevitably inflates the other categories in comparison to past years. The CSS asks "definitely yes," "probably yes," "probably not," and "definitely no" between 2003 and 2007. The table collapses these categories into "Yes" and "No" choices.

[vi] *http://www.chapman.edu/about/mission.asp*

[vii] Even though the CSS asks about "job placement" satisfaction, it should be noted that the CDC does not attempt to place students at jobs, but rather aims to cultivate skills that prepare students for the job market.