

2009 CIRP College Senior Survey (CSS)



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Executive Summary

The Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles sponsors the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). CIRP is a national, longitudinal study of the American higher education system, consisting of a series of three surveys: The Freshman Survey (TFS), Your First College Year (YFCY), and the College Senior Survey (CSS). UND has intermittently used the CSS, with the spring 2009 administration following a spring 2005 administration. UND also uses TFS, administering this survey to incoming freshmen of odd-numbered years. In the spring of 2009, UND invited 645 seniors who had completed TFS as incoming freshmen to complete the CSS. 98 students completed the survey for a response rate of 15%.

CIRP summarizes scores from select survey questions into nine constructs, where the individual items are summed into a construct score to allow institutions to compare themselves against all public universities in these broad categories. UND seniors score significantly better than seniors at public universities in four of the nine construct categories:

- **Student-Faculty Interaction** – UND senior respondents score a mean of 49.7 compared to 47.3 for public university seniors. UND scores high in areas of faculty giving advice about educational programs, providing help to improve study skills, receiving feedback on academic work, and providing help in achieving professional goals.
- **Satisfaction with Coursework** – With a mean of 51.4, UND scores higher than public universities who score a mean of 48.5. UND senior respondents report high satisfaction with the relevance of coursework, both relevance to everyday life (74% satisfied) and relevance to future career plans (84% satisfied).
- **Sense of Belonging** – Nearly all senior respondents (97%) report they have a sense of belonging on the campus and 92% report they see themselves as a part of the campus community. UND scores a mean of 52.9 on this construct compared to 50.8 scored at all public universities.
- **Negative Cross-Racial Interaction** – In this particular construct, a lower score is positive in that it indicates lower levels of negative interaction with persons of differing racial or ethnic groups. UND scores a mean of 47.6 compared to 50.5 at public universities. UND seniors responding indicate they have never had tense interactions with a fellow student from a different racial or ethnic group. 83% of UND respondents have never felt insulted or threatened because of their race or ethnicity and 51% report never having guarded interactions with students different from themselves.

UND scores significantly lower, or worse, in just one of the nine constructs – **Positive Cross-Racial Interaction**. UND respondents score a mean of 46.5 on this construct

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compared to public universities where the mean is 50.0. UND respondents are significantly less likely to experience each of the 5 components making up the construct. These component items ask students the frequency with which they interact with students from a racial or ethnic group different than their own. These interactions include having intellectual discussions outside of class, sharing personal feelings and problems, dining or sharing a meal, having meaningful and honest discussions about race relations, and studying or preparing for class.

The four constructs where UND scores are not significantly different than public university norms include:

- **Academic Disengagement** – UND respondents are less likely to frequently miss class for reasons other than employment (3% at UND versus 7% at public universities). UND respondents are also less likely to report falling asleep in class, with 37% reporting this occurs occasionally or frequently compared to 46% at public universities.
- **Overall Satisfaction** – UND respondents report higher levels of satisfaction with the quality of instruction received (91% satisfied at UND compared to 85% at public universities. Most UND respondents (93%) would also again come to UND if given the chance to start over.
- **Social Agency** – The six items making up this construct ask students how important it is for them the importance of items related to the common, social good. UND respondents rate *Helping others who are in difficulty* as being most important (79% state essential or very important) and *Helping to promote racial understanding* is rated least important (31% state essential or very important).
- **Civic Awareness** – The items of this construct ask students to self-evaluate the growth they have experienced throughout their college years when it comes to understanding problems facing society. Ninety-one percent (91%) of UND respondents report they have a stronger understanding of social problems facing the nation, 83% report they have a stronger understanding of global issues, and 78% report a stronger understanding of problems facing their community.