



*Office of Planning and Research*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Educational Policy Committee  
Faculty Executive Committee  
Student Affairs Committee  
Admissions Staff  
Dean of Students Staff  
Director of Planned Giving  
Director of Malott Commons  
First-Year Academic Advisors  
Registrar  
Senior Staff

**FR:** Janel Henriksen Hastings  
Director, Planning & Research

**RE:** Your First College Year Survey 2007

**DT:** January 29, 2008

I am pleased to forward to you a report that summarizes the data and findings from Scripps' participation in the Your First College Year (YFCY) study, conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA. This was the sixth year in which Scripps College participated in this study, and the second year that this survey was distributed in a web-based survey format. From a cohort of 218 students, a total of 51 students completed the survey, yielding a response rate of approximately 23%, a decrease from 36% in 2006.

The report is structured to report data that are relevant to the College's current strategic planning processes. Three of the five planning themes around which the College is structuring its planning work were considered as the basis for this report: *Academic Excellence*, *Leadership* and *Demographics & Diversity*. The following highlights are of particular interest.

- This cohort of Scripps students exude high levels of self-confidence and self-awareness, and regard themselves as being personally and academically competitive. In contrast to women at comparative colleges, Scripps students were more often inclined to rank themselves either "above average" or in the "top 10%" of students in their age group on *academic ability*, *writing ability* and *mathematical ability* (p. 4).

- The vast majority of students expressed satisfaction with Scripps' *classrooms* (88.2%), *computer facilities* (80%), *library facilities* (86.3%), and *housing* (86%). These percentages were consistently higher than satisfaction levels seen in the 2006 study (p. 6).
- Scripps students expressed lower levels of satisfaction with *class size* (82.4%) and higher levels of satisfaction with *overall quality of instruction* (94.1) than did their peers at non-sectarian four-year colleges. Contrary to 2006 data, Scripps students expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the *relevance of coursework to every day life* (70.6%) and to *future career plans* (75.5%) than in 2006; these satisfaction levels were also higher than those at peer colleges (p. 8).
- Students reported many more hours spent on academic work this year as compared to years past. For example, 49% stated they spend 11 or more hours each week *studying or completing homework*, only a slight decrease from 55.3% in 2006. Another 74.6 reported spending 11 or more hours per week *attending classes or labs*, an increase from 68.2% in 2006. In contrast, 39.2% stated they spent that much time *socializing with friends*, down from 42.4% in 2005 (p. 9).
- Scripps students who responded to the survey reported that their first year in college afforded them with many opportunities to come to a greater understanding and appreciation of issues on diversity. For example, Scripps students reported much higher frequency of interaction with students of color – be it through *dining together*, *having meaningful conversations* in and out of class, *studying together*, or *socializing together* – than did women at peer colleges (p. 10).
- Scripps women were more likely to identify the following as “very important” or essential objectives more often than did women at peer colleges: *influencing the political structure*, *participating in community action programs*, and *becoming a community leader* (p. 13).
- Of the 51 students who participated in the 2007 YFCY study, 94.1% stated that they would either “probably” or “definitely” *return to Scripps* in fall 2007, an increase from 91.8% in 2006 (p. 14).

This final report was compiled by Jocelyn Chong, the Graduate Research Associate in the Office of Planning and Research. I am grateful to her for her careful and thorough work on this important study.

I would be pleased to address any questions you may have.

JHH:ncc  
enclosure

SUR/yfc07/mem07

**YOUR FIRST COLLEGE YEAR**  
2007 Survey of First-Year Students

**HIGHLIGHTS OF DATA AND FINDINGS**

Prepared by

Office of Planning & Research  
Scripps College  
January 2008

In the spring of 2007, Scripps College participated in the seventh annual Your First College Year (YFCY) survey project administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. This survey asks first-year students a variety of questions about their perspective on college life, including academic expectations and experiences. A portion of the YFCY survey items are also included in HERI's annual Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey given to first-time, first-year students at the beginning of the academic year. While the CIRP survey is administered at the beginning of their first year in college, the YFCY survey is administered at the end of students' first year, and thus ideally reflects opinions shaped by their experiences in their first year at Scripps.

HERI also provides Scripps with comparative data from students in two separate sub-categories: a) four-year, nonsectarian colleges (with men and women separated out); b) four-year, private colleges (with men and women separated out). Comparative data used in this report are derived from very highly selective institutions, and only include responses from female students.

All first-year students at Scripps College in the spring of 2007 – both new and continuing – were sent an e-mail requesting their participation in the 2007 YFCY survey. The survey was administered in an on-line format. From a cohort of 218 students, a total of 51 students completed the survey, yielding a response rate of approximately 23% and reflecting a decrease from 36% in 2006.

This report is a summary of the responses that Scripps women provided in the 2007 YFCY survey with special attention given to data reflecting high consensus among students, strong polarity in responses, marked changes from responses given by last year's sample of Scripps students, and significant differences in comparison with women at peer institutions.

To contextualize the data presented in this report in a manner useful for Scripps in framing discussions and decision-making, survey findings, trends and data analyses in the 2007 YFCY Survey have been structured within the framework of **three of the** strategies and initiatives of the 2007 Strategic Plan<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Scripps College in the Next Decade: Leading with Excellence*, March 2007.

- Academic Excellence
- Diversity
- Leadership

Supplemental information, such as characteristics of student respondents, is also included.

### **Student Characteristics**

Table 1 illustrates the ethnic composition of women survey respondents at Scripps and comparative colleges. The data show that there were proportionately more Asian American/Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students at Scripps than at comparative institutions. The overall, non-White/Caucasian students totaled 41.3% at Scripps compared to 24.6% at peer institutions (including “other”). The percentage of Scripps respondents who self-reported themselves as “other” decreased from 8.3% to 5.9%.

**Table 1. Ethnicity of YFCY 2006 respondents, Scripps and Comparative Colleges<sup>2</sup>**

	Scripps (n=51)	Non-Sect 4-year (Women)	Private 4-year (Women)
White/Caucasian	80.4%	84.7%	84.0%
African American/Black	2.0%	5.6%	6.4%
American Indian/Alaska Native	3.9%	1.9%	1.9%
Asian American/Asian	15.7%	6.1%	4.9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2.0%	0.7%	0.9%
Mexican American/Chicano	5.9%	1.8%	2.8%
Puerto Rican	0.0%	1.2%	1.1%
Other Latino	5.9%	2.9%	2.7%
Other	5.9%	4.4%	3.9%

Students were also asked in the YFCY survey about their political leanings. First-year student respondents at Scripps did not differ greatly from the class before them and demonstrated similar patterns of political inclinations. However, a smaller percentage of students self-reported as “conservative” and a larger percentage indicated that they were “far left.” On average, Scripps women tend to lean more to the “left” in comparison to their peers.

The majority of student respondents from Scripps (74.5%) indicated a grade point average of B+ and above, down slightly from 78.8% in 2006. Nonetheless, the percentage of Scripps students with similar GPAs is significantly higher than the percentage of women students at non-sectarian (56.6%) and all private (57.7%) four-year institutions.

<sup>2</sup> Percentages may not total 100% because students were allowed to mark multiple responses.

**Table 2. Political Views of YFCY 2006 respondents, Scripps and Comparative Colleges**

	<b>Scripps 2007 (n=51) (%)</b>	Scripps 2006 (n=84) (%)	Non-Sect 4-year 2007 (Women) (%)	Private 4-year 2007 (Women) (%)
Far left	<b>19.6</b>	10.6	5.8	3.4
Liberal	<b>52.9</b>	58.8	41.5	32.1
Middle-of-the-road	<b>23.5</b>	21.2	36.7	39.4
Conservative	<b>3.9</b>	9.4	15.1	23.9
Far right	<b>2.0</b>	0.0	0.9	1.2

For the third year in a row, survey respondents' concerns about financing their college education decreased. In 2007, 58.9% student respondents reported that they have "some" or "major" concerns about financing their college education, down from 63.5% in 2006, and 65.8% in 2005. This percentage is also lower than at non-sectarian and private four-year colleges where 72.1% and 74.1% of women students voiced concern about financing their college education respectively.

### **Academic Excellence**

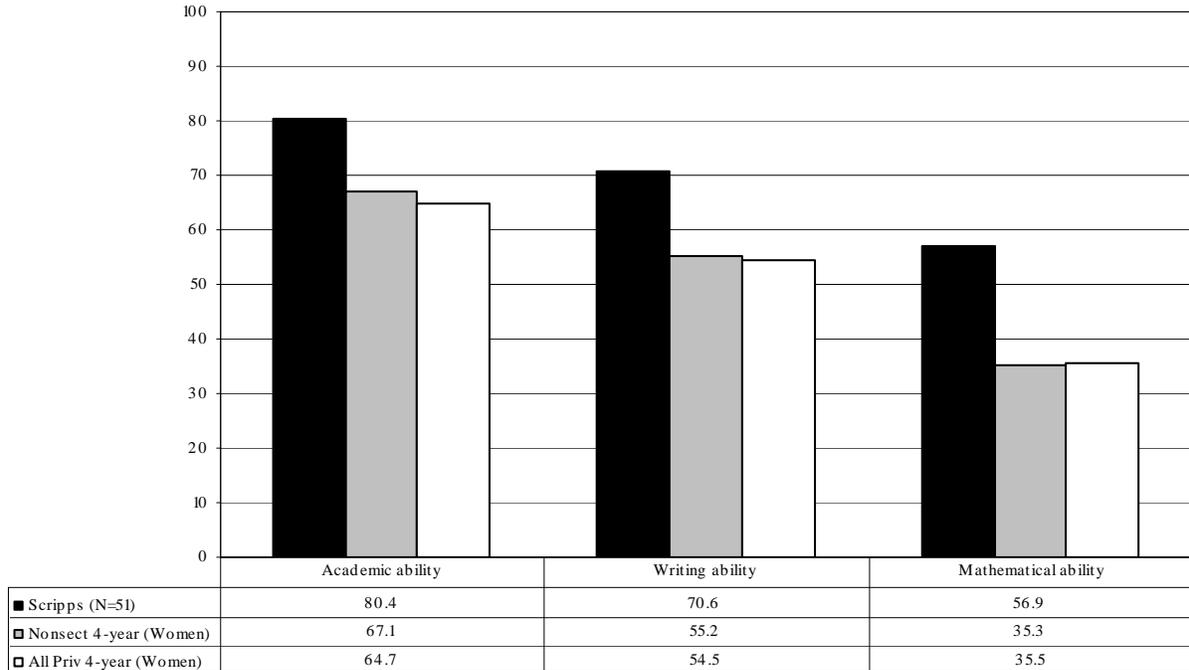
#### *Academic Self Image*

Students were asked to respond to various questions in the YFCY survey that assessed their perceptions of their own academic abilities, academic-related skills, and knowledge. The figures and data below provide an overview of student responses at Scripps and at peer institutions.

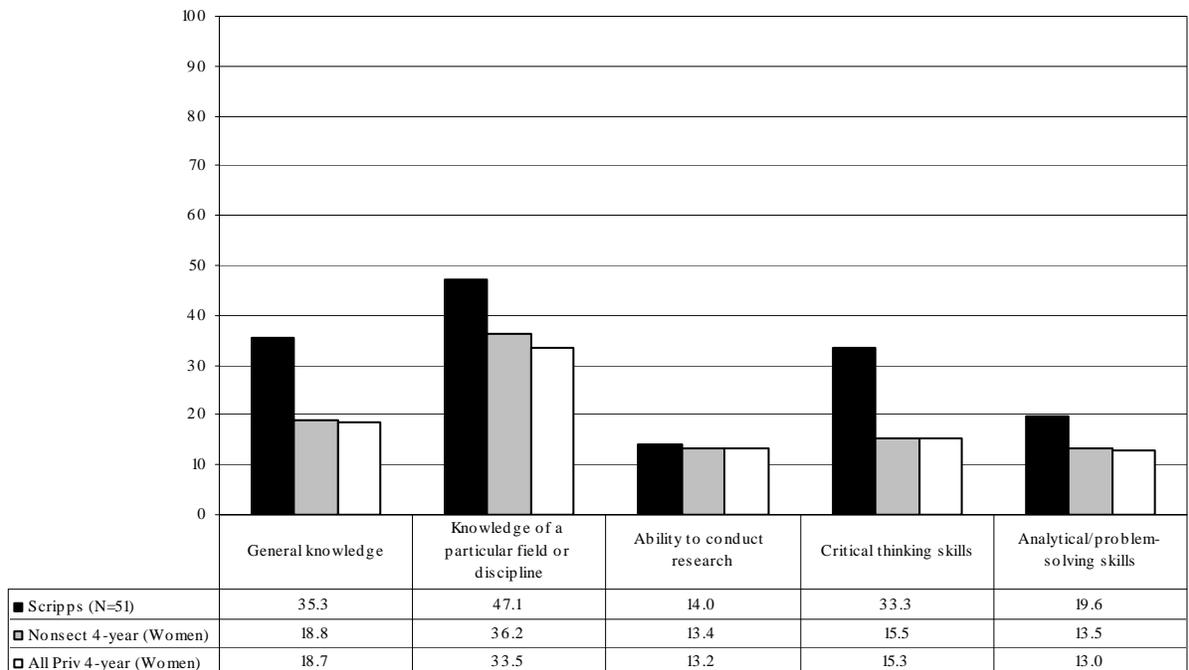
Figure 1 provides a snapshot of how first-year students at Scripps and female students at comparative colleges rate themselves regarding their academic abilities. The data show that Scripps students demonstrate confidence and perceive themselves to be "above average" or in the "highest 10%" amongst their peers in their academic, mathematical, and writing abilities. This pattern is similar to 2006.

Figure 2 illustrates that Scripps women consistently self-reported "much stronger" academic knowledge and skills than their peers at comparative institutions. As in 2006, the difference in self-perception of critical thinking skills is particularly striking between Scripps students and women at peer institutions with Scripps students indicating greater strength in their critical thinking skills by more than 50%. Scripps survey respondents also self-reported "much stronger" *knowledge of a particular field or discipline*.

**Figure 1. Students' Self-Rating of Academic Abilities, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



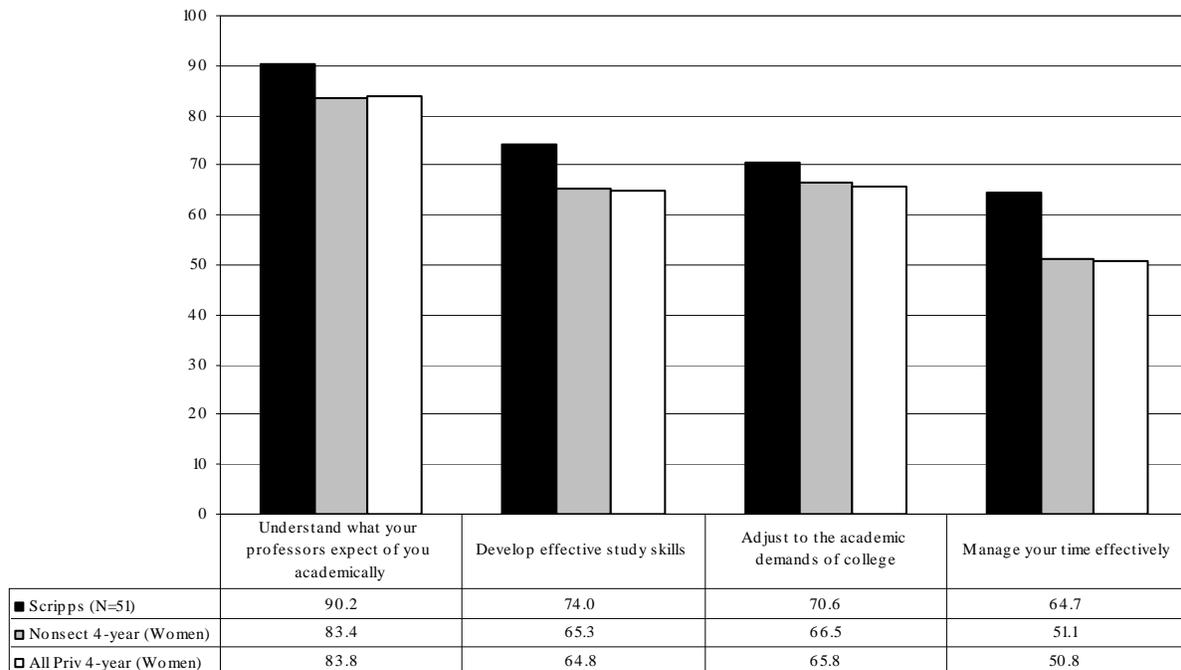
**Figure 2. Students' Self-Rating of Academic Skills, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



## Academic Adjustment

Figure 3 provides the percentage of students who found it “easy” or “somewhat easy” to adjust to the academic environment in college. The majority of respondents found the transition to college life relatively easy in terms of *understanding faculty members’ expectations, developing effective study skills, adjusting to the academic demands of college life, and time management*. A significant percentage of survey respondents from Scripps who self-reported “easy/somewhat easy” adjustments of *time management* rose from 45.9% in 2006 to 64.7% in 2007.

**Figure 3. Success at Adjusting to College Life, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



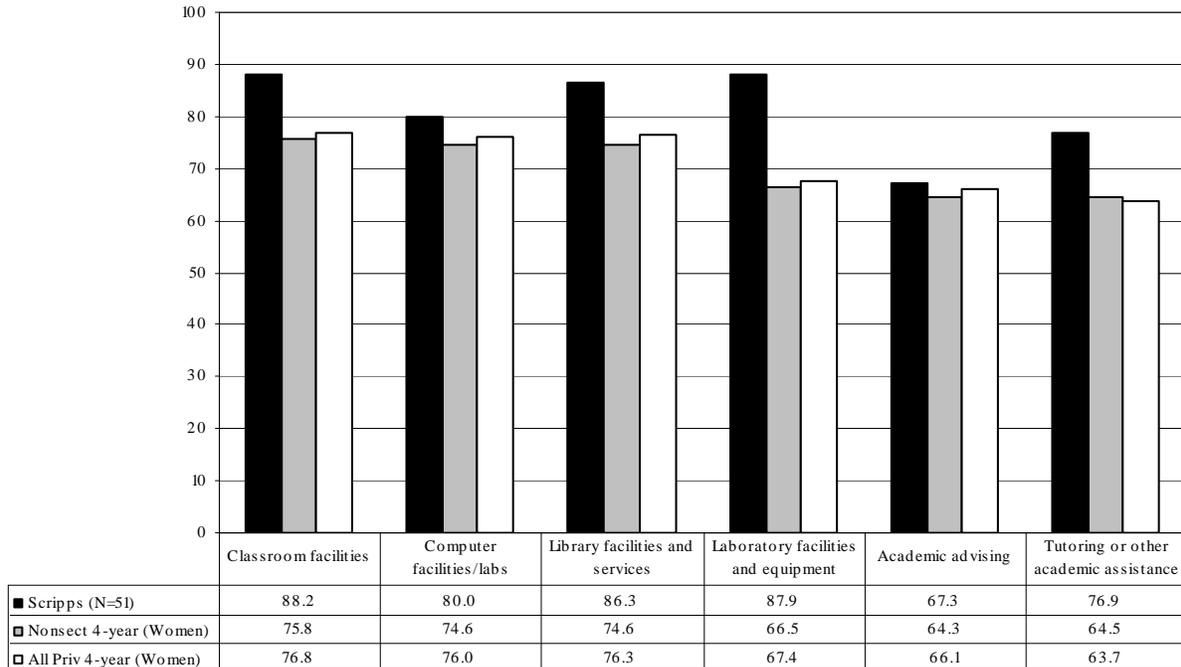
## Satisfaction with Scripps’ Academic Facilities and Services

The YFCY survey asked respondents to rate the extent to which they were satisfied with academic and non-academic programs, services, and facilities. Figures summarize the percentage of students at Scripps and comparative institutions who stated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with various services at their respective institutions.

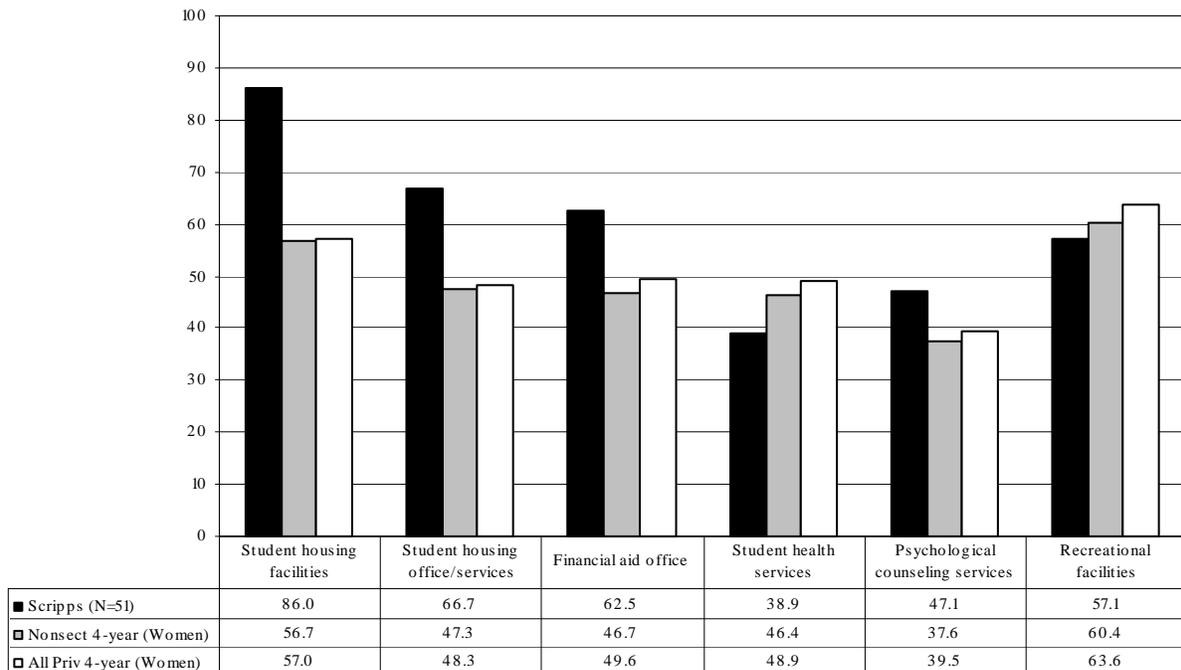
As suggested in Figure 4, compared to female students at peer institutions, Scripps students reported higher levels of satisfaction (“satisfied” and “very satisfied”) with academic programs and services particularly regarding *classroom* and *library facilities*.

Figure 5 shows the extent to which respondents were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with non-academic programs and services. With the exception of *student health services* and *recreational facilities*, Scripps students were more frequently satisfied with non-academic programs and services than their peers at comparative institutions.

**Figure 4. Satisfaction with Academic Programs/Services, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



**Figure 5. Satisfaction with Non-Academic Programs/Services, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



*Interaction with Faculty and Personnel*

Respondents were asked to rate the frequency of their interaction with various college personnel including faculty and academic advisors. Table 2 shows the frequency of such interaction, and includes communication by *phone, email, instant messenger, or in person*. Taken together, they reflect the level of interpersonal support students experience in their first year. The data show that Scripps students have a higher frequency of meeting with faculty *1 or 2 times a month outside of class or office house* than their peers at comparative institutions.

**Table 2. Frequency of Interaction with University Personnel, Scripps & Comparative Colleges**

	<b>Scripps (%) (n=51)</b>	<b>Nonsect 4-year (Women) (%)</b>	<b>All Priv 4-year (Women) (%)</b>
<b>Faculty <u>during</u> office hours</b>			
Never	5.9	6.1	5.5
1 or 2 times per term	35.3	32.0	32.4
1 or 2 times per month	33.3	30.4	30.2
Once a week	17.6	17.4	17.3
2 or 3 times per week	5.9	9.4	10.0
Daily	2.0	4.7	4.6
<b>Faculty <u>outside</u> of class or office hours</b>			
Never	5.9	18.2	19.3
1 or 2 times per term	25.5	29.0	29.0
1 or 2 times per month	33.3	23.8	24.2
Once a week	17.6	16.5	15.4
2 or 3 times per week	15.7	10.0	9.4
Daily	2.0	2.5	2.8
<b>Academic advisors/counselors</b>			
Never	3.9	5.8	4.9
1 or 2 times per term	72.5	58.4	57.3
1 or 2 times per month	21.6	22.8	24.8
Once a week	2.0	8.0	7.7
2 or 3 times per week	0.0	3.8	4.0
Daily	0.0	1.1	1.3
<b>Other college personnel</b>			
Never	11.8	20.8	20.1
1 or 2 times per term	33.3	31.8	32.2
1 or 2 times per month	25.5	19.6	20.0
Once a week	17.6	12.1	12.3
2 or 3 times per week	3.9	7.1	6.8
Daily	7.8	8.6	8.6

In a separate section of the YFCY survey, 80.4% of Scripps respondents found that it was “very easy” or “somewhat easy” to *get to know faculty*, reflecting an increase of 8.6% from 2006. In addition, 90.2% reported that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the *amount of contact with faculty*, up from 85.9% in 2006.

Figure 6 compares the levels of satisfaction with classes and coursework for Scripps and comparative colleges. The data show that Scripps students were significantly more satisfied (“satisfied” and “very satisfied”) with the *overall quality of instruction* in comparison to their peers. In terms of *relevance of coursework to everyday life and future career plans*, Scripps respondents reported higher levels of satisfaction than their peers. It is important to note that in 2006, Scripps students reported **lower** levels of satisfaction (57.6% for both) in comparison to their peers.

**Figure 6. Satisfaction with Classes and Coursework, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**

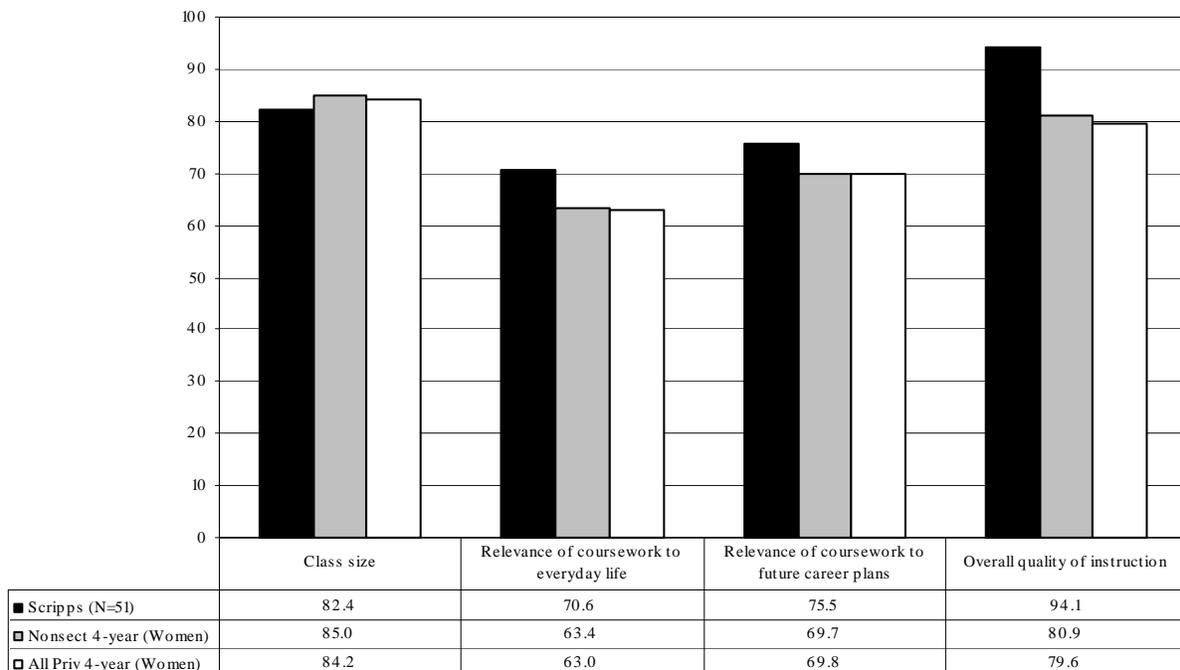
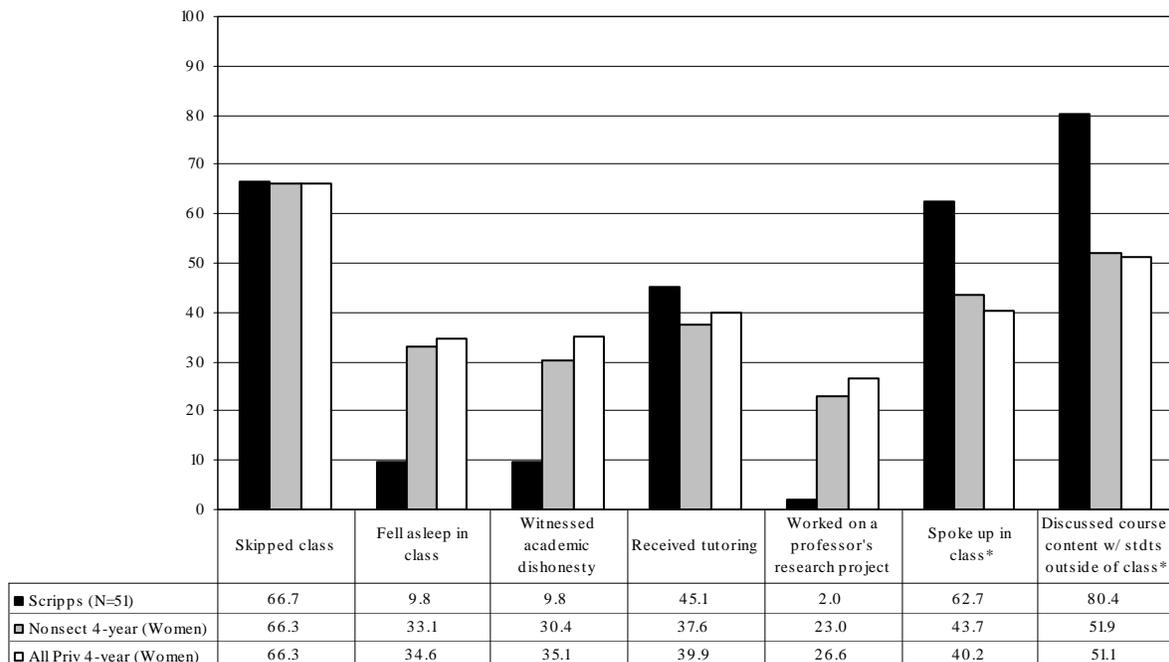


Figure 7 illustrates the frequency of respondents’ engagement in academic activities. The data suggest that Scripps students were just as likely to *skip class, fall asleep in class* or *witnessed academic dishonesty* less frequently. In comparison to their peers, Scripps respondents were also less likely to *work on a professor’s research project*. Scripps’ survey respondents reported significantly higher levels of *speaking up in class* and *discussion of course content with other students outside of the classroom setting*.

**Figure 7. Frequency of Engagement in Academic Activities, Scripps and Comparative Colleges<sup>3</sup> (%)**



**Table 3. Activities on which students spend 11 or more hours per week, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**

	Scripps 2007 (n=51) (%)	Scripps 2006 (n=85) (%)	Nonsect 4-year 2007 (Women) (%)	All Priv 4- year 2007 (Women) (%)
Attending classes/labs	<b>74.6</b>	68.2	77.8	77.4
Studying/homework	<b>49.0</b>	55.3	36.7	33.1
Socializing with friends	<b>39.2</b>	42.4	49.9	49.0
Exercising or sports	<b>4.0</b>	5.3	12.0	11.8
Partying	<b>7.8</b>	2.4	7.0	5.7
Working (for pay) on campus	<b>5.9</b>	9.4	7.4	7.5
Working (for pay) off campus	<b>2.0</b>	2.4	11.6	11.9
Student clubs and groups	<b>0.0</b>	1.2	2.8	2.6
Watching TV	<b>2.0</b>	0.0	4.4	4.7

<sup>3</sup> \* designates responses of “frequently” only. All others represent responses of “frequently” and “occasionally”.

## How Students Spend their Time

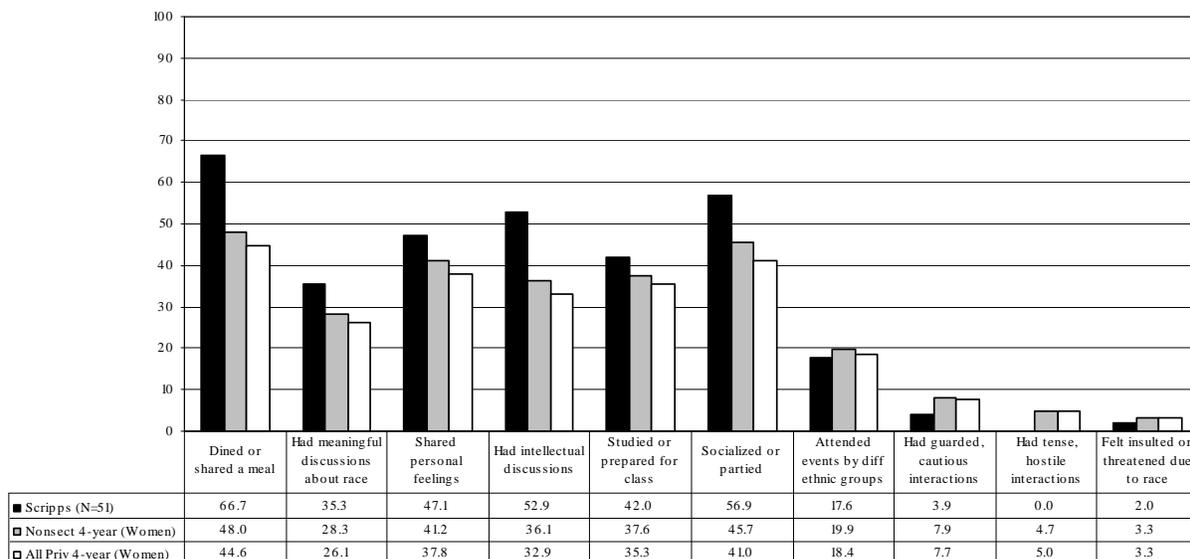
Students were asked to indicate how often they participated in a variety of personal, social, extracurricular and academic activities. The data in Table 3 show that 74.6% of Scripps respondents spent “11 or more hours per week” *attending classes/labs*, reflecting a 6.4% increase from 2006. Further disaggregation of available data also suggests that in terms of attending classes/labs, Scripps’ survey respondents were similar to their peers. However, they apparently spent more time studying/homework; in comparison to respondents at peer institutions, a smaller percentage of Scripps students spend “11 or more hours per week” on personal and recreational activities - *exercising or sports, partying, and watching TV* – than student respondents at peer institutions.

## Diversity

Students were asked how often they experienced various interactions with students from racial/ethnic groups other than their own. Figure 8 shows the students who experienced such interactions “often” or “very often.”

In comparison to peer institutions, a greater percentage of Scripps students have had *personal interactions* or *participated in meaningful activities* with students from racial/ethnic groups different from their own. Such interactions include *sharing a meal* with others from a different racial/ethnic group, *having meaningful and honest discussions about racial/ethnic relations outside of class*, *sharing personal feelings and problems*, and *having intellectual discourse outside of class*. The last three columns in Figure 8 also show a lower incidence of having *experienced tense interactions* with others from a different racial/ethnic group.

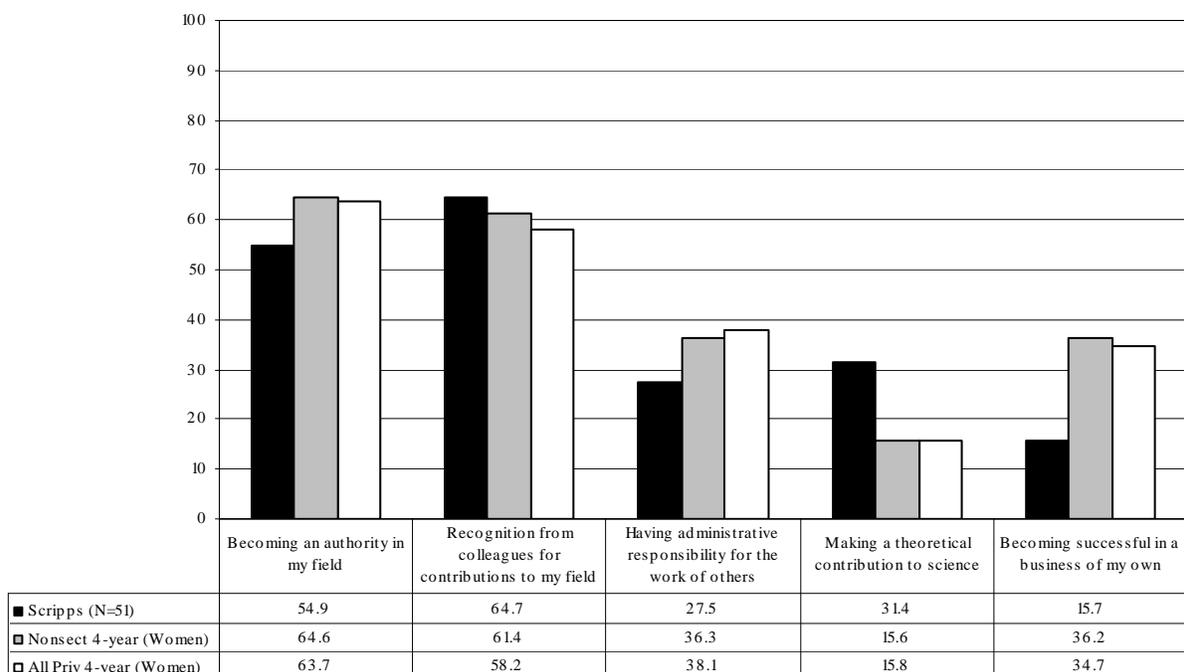
**Figure 8. Student Experience with Students from Different Racial/Ethnic Groups, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



## Leadership

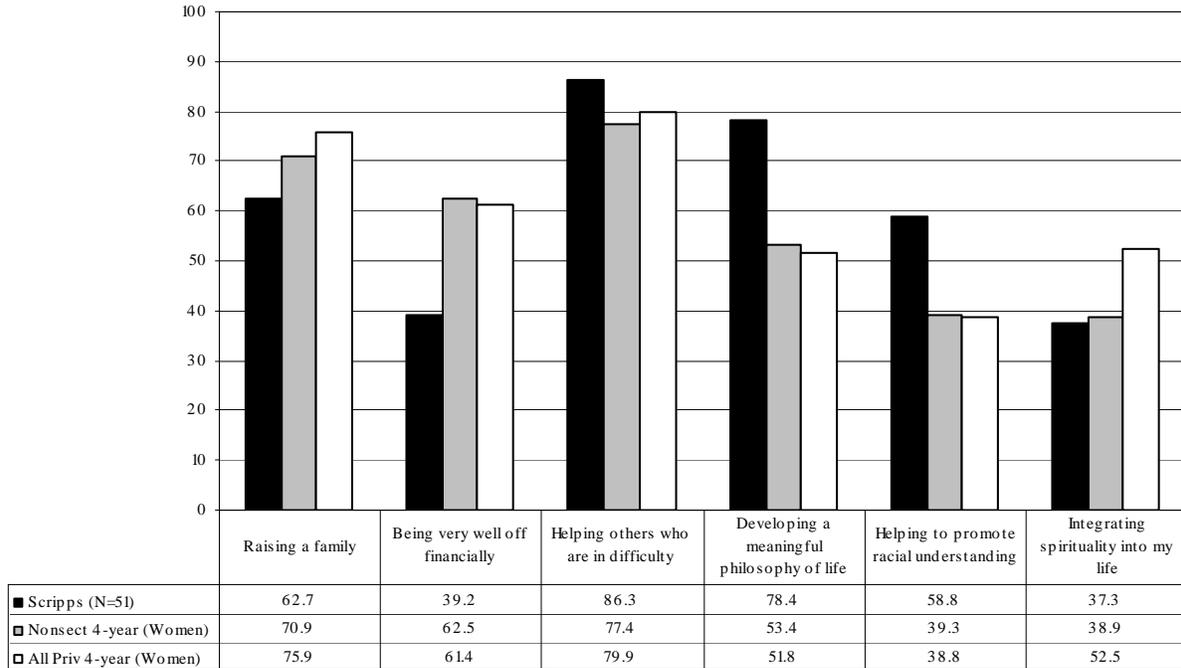
Respondents were asked the extent to which they considered certain professional objectives “very important” or “essential”. Figure 9 provides a snapshot of the responses which shows that for the most part, Scripps students do not vary much from students at peer institutions in this regard. There were exceptions, however. Close to approximately 35% of respondents at peer institutions considered *becoming successful in a business of their own* “very important” or “essential” but only 15.7% of Scripps respondents were of a similar opinion. Furthermore, while 31.4% of Scripps respondents considered *making a theoretical contribution to science* “very important” or “essential”, only 15% of Scripps’ peers felt the same way.

**Figure 9. Professional Objectives, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



The YFCY survey also asked respondents the level of importance they accorded various personal objectives. Figure 10 reports the percentage of respondents who considered various personal life objectives as “very important” or “essential”. Scripps students were more strongly committed to *developing a meaningful philosophy of life* with 78.4% indicating that it was “very important” or “essential”. *Being very well off financially* was deemed less important to Scripps respondents with 39.2% indicating that it was “very important” or “essential” while more than 60% of students at peer institutions reported the same. While *helping to promote racial understanding* was deemed more important to Scripps respondents than students at peer institutions, it was not deemed as important as *helping others who are in difficulty, developing a meaningful philosophy of life* or *raising a family*.

**Figure 10. Personal Objectives, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



**Figure 11. Citizenship-related Activities, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**

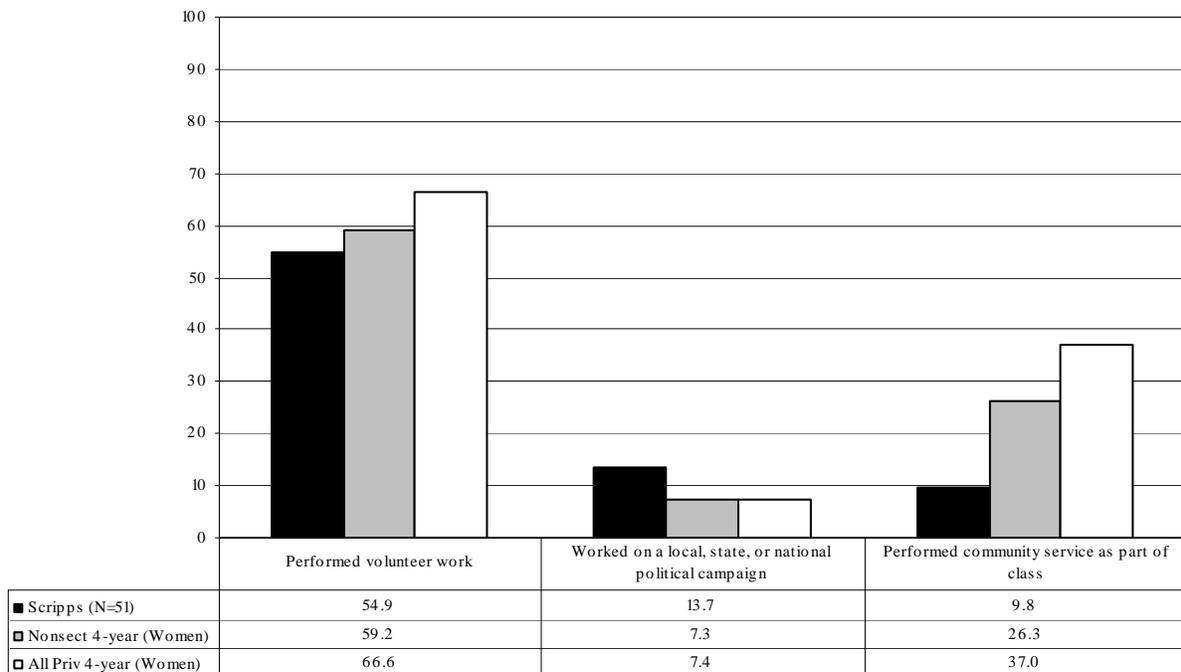
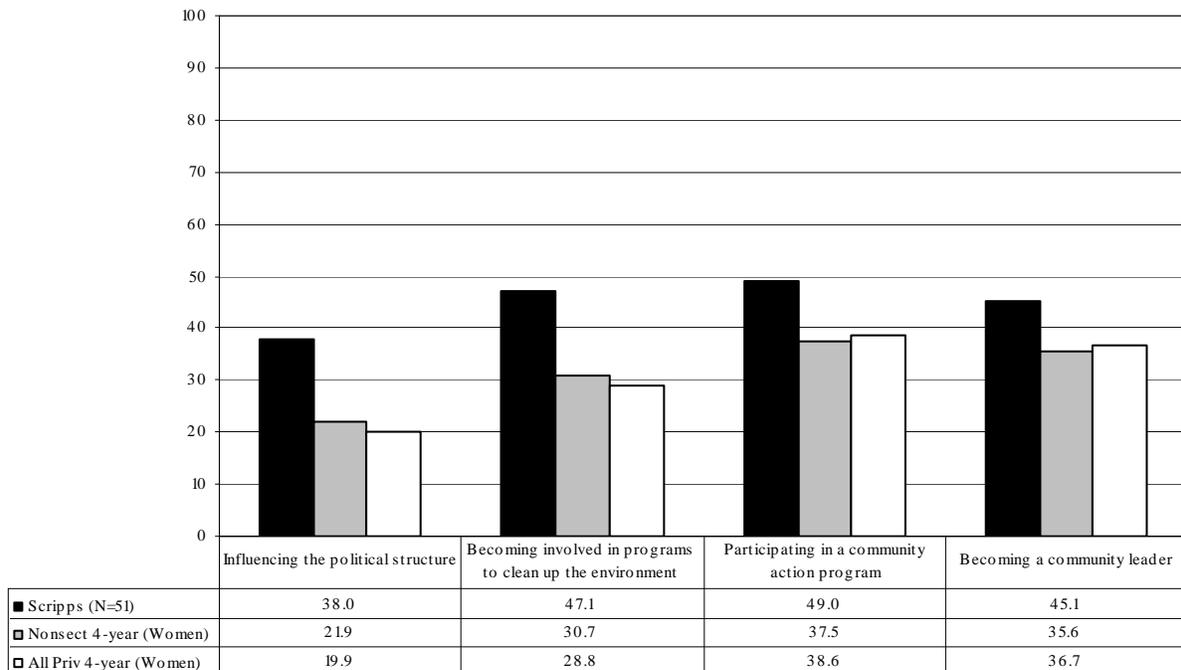


Figure 11 shows the frequency of citizenship-related activities that students participated in since enrolling in college. The data show that Scripps women performed less *community service* regardless of whether it was on their own accord or as part of a class. However, Scripps women *worked on a political campaign* twice as frequently as their peers.

Students were asked the level of importance citizenship-related objectives were in their lives. Figure 12 shows that Scripps students had a higher incidence of noting citizenship-related objectives as “very important” or “essential” in comparison to students at peer colleges.

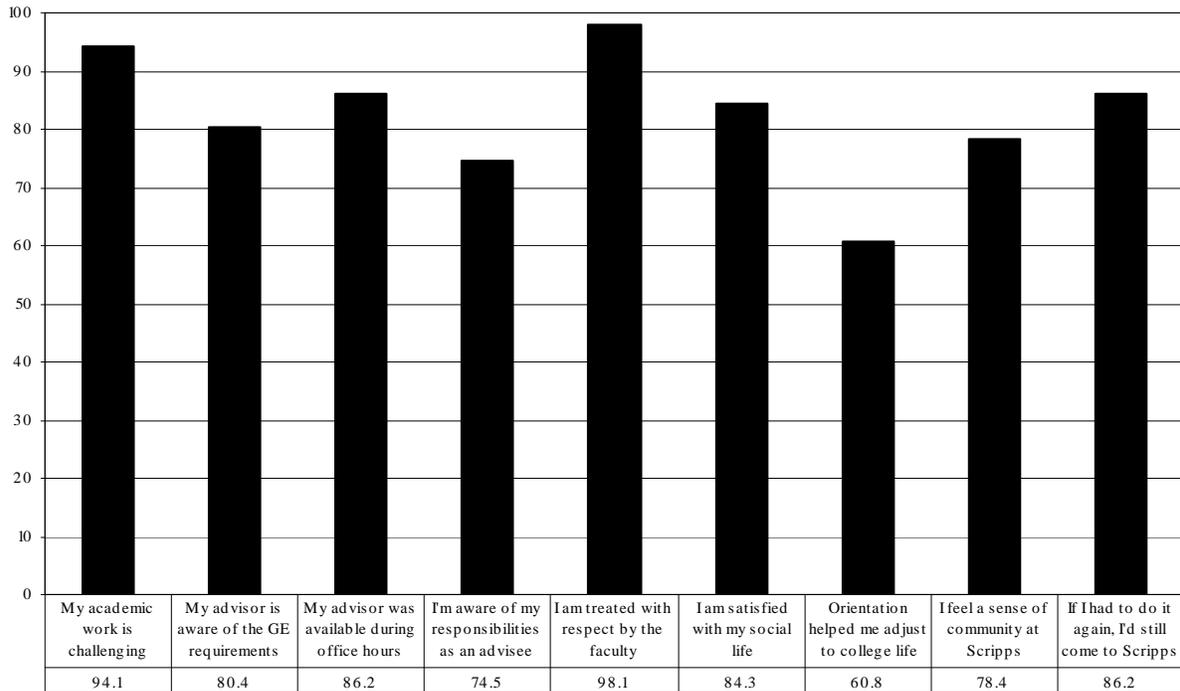
**Figure 12. Personal Citizenship-related Objectives, Scripps and Comparative Colleges (%)**



### **Supplemental Questions**

Additional questions were added to the YFCY survey to elicit student responses regarding their experiences specifically at Scripps, and were given only to Scripps students. Results show, as evident in Figure 13, that the vast majority of survey respondents were in agreement (“strongly agree” and “agree”) that they found the *academic work challenging* (94.1%) and that they were *treated with respect by faculty teaching their courses* (98.1%). Furthermore, 80.4% of students felt that their *advisor(s) were aware of the general education requirements for graduation*, and 74.5% of respondents were *aware of their responsibilities as an advisee*. From the supplemental items, it appears that only 60.8% of respondent considered Orientation key in helping them adjust to college life.

**Figure 13. Scripps' Responses to Supplemental Items**



Of the 51 Scripps student respondents of the YFCY survey, 86.3% (78.8%) indicated that they would “definitely” or “probably” *choose to enroll at Scripps if they had to make their college choice again* (7.5% increase from 2006) while only 7.8% indicated that would “definitely” or “probably” *choose not to enroll at Scripps*. However, 94.1% of student respondents indicated that they thought that they would *return to Scripps in fall 2007*.