

YOUR FIRST COLLEGE YEAR
2010 Survey of First-Year Students

HIGHLIGHTS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

In the spring of 2010, Scripps College participated in the tenth 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.

All first-year students at Scripps College in the spring of 2010 – both new and continuing – were sent an e-mail requesting their participation in the YFCY survey. The survey was administered online. From a cohort of 200 students, a total of 71 first-time, full-time, first-year students completed the survey, yielding a response rate of approximately 36%, reflecting an increase from 31% in 2008 (n=69) and 23% in 2007 (n=51). (Note that YFCY was not administered in 2009.)

This report is a summary of the responses that Scripps women provided to the 2010 YFCY survey with special attention given to data reflecting high consensus among students as well as strong polarity in responses. In addition, we provide selected results from the previous two YFCY survey administrations (2008 and 2007) to enable comparisons across several class years. Noteworthy results and trends are highlighted in bullet points.

Student Characteristics

Table 1 illustrates the ethnic composition of Scripps survey respondents. Racial/ethnic categories are listed on the survey, from which students are encouraged to “mark all that apply.”

Table 1. Racial/Ethnic Data for YFCY Respondents, 2007-2010*

	<u>2010</u> (n=69)**	<u>2008</u> (n=69)	<u>2007</u> (n=51)
White/Caucasian	76.8%	82.6%	80.4%
African American/Black	10.1%	1.4%	2.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.9%	2.9%	3.9%
Asian American/Asian	15.9%	11.6%	15.7%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%
Mexican American/Chicano	4.3%	2.9%	5.9%
Puerto Rican	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other Latino	1.4%	4.3%	5.9%
Other	4.3%	7.2%	5.9%

* Percentages in each column may not total 100% because students were allowed to mark multiple responses.

** The n value here is less than the total number of students who completed the survey because two students did not respond to this question.

Key Findings

- Survey respondents continue to be predominantly “White/Caucasian” (at least as part of their racial/ethnic identity).
- “Asian American/Asian” has been the largest minority group among respondents for the past three years; this year 15.9% of respondents indicated that they were Asian American/Asian.
- A larger percentage of African American/Black respondents (10.1%) completed the survey this year than in previous years.
- Students of color (excluding “Other”) composed 34.6% of respondents this year, compared to 23.1% in 2008 and 35.4% in 2007.

Table 2. Political Views of YFCY Respondents, 2007-2010

	<u>2010</u> (n=71)	<u>2008</u> (n=69)	<u>2007</u> (n=51)
Far left	8.5%	10.1%	19.6%
Liberal	54.9%	62.3%	52.9%
Middle-of-the-road	26.8%	24.6%	23.5%
Conservative	8.5%	2.9%	3.9%
Far right	1.4%	0.0%	2.0%

Question 5. “How would you characterize your political views? (Mark one).”

Key Findings

- This year’s respondents were more “Conservative” compared to the previous two years (8.5% compared to 2.9% and 3.9%).
- The majority of respondents continue to consider themselves “Liberal” (54.9%).

Table 3. Adjustment to College Life, “Very Easy/Somewhat Easy” Responses, 2007-2010

	<u>2010</u> (n=71)	<u>2008</u> (n=69)	<u>2007</u> (n=51)
Understand what your professors expect of you academically	83.1%	84.0%	90.2%
Develop effective study skills	70.5%	53.6%	74.0%
Adjust to the academic demands of college	76.1%	66.6%	70.6%
Manage your time effectively	62.0%	49.3%	64.7%

Question 8. “Since entering this college, how has it been to: (Mark one for each item).” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Very Easy, Somewhat Easy, Somewhat Difficult, or Very Difficult.

Key Findings

- More of this year’s respondents compared to 2008 report having had an easier time developing effective study skills, adjusting to the academic demands of college, and managing their time effectively.
- Respondents every year have found it easiest to understand what their professors expect of them academically (though this percentage has decreased from 90.2% in 2007 to 83.1% this year) and hardest to manage their time effectively.

Table 4. Satisfaction with Academic Programs and Services, “Satisfied/Very Satisfied” Responses, 2007-2010

	<u>2010</u> (n=71)	<u>2008</u> (n=69)	<u>2007</u> (n=51)
Classroom facilities	90.2%	89.9%	88.2%
Library facilities and services	91.6%	89.9%	86.3%
Laboratory facilities and equipment	86.7%	84.8%	87.9%
Academic advising	56.3%	48.5%	67.3%
Tutoring or other academic assistance	73.9%	71.7%	76.9%
Computer facilities/labs	78.8%	71.2%	80.0%

Question 6. “Please rate your satisfaction with this institution on each of the aspects of college life listed below: (mark one for each item).” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, or Can’t Rate/No Experience.

Key Findings

- Satisfaction levels with classroom facilities, library facilities and services, and laboratory facilities and equipment remain high, with more than 85% of respondents indicating that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with these aspects of the college.
- Only about half of respondents (56.3%) were satisfied with the academic advising offered by the college, which has consistently had the lowest satisfaction level of these items over the last few years.

Table 5. Frequency of Interaction with College Personnel, 2007-2010

	<u>2010</u> (n=71)	<u>2008</u> (n=69)	<u>2007</u> (n=51)
Faculty <u>during</u> office hours			
Never	2.8%	4.3%	5.9%
1 or 2 times per term	23.9%	36.2%	35.3%
1 or 2 times per month	45.1%	36.2%	33.3%
Once a week	15.5%	15.9%	17.6%
2 or 3 times per week	12.7%	5.8%	5.9%
Daily	0.0%	1.4%	2.0%
Faculty <u>outside</u> of class or office hours			
Never	15.5%	13.0%	5.9%
1 or 2 times per term	25.4%	34.8%	25.5%
1 or 2 times per month	26.8%	24.6%	33.3%
Once a week	23.9%	15.9%	17.6%
2 or 3 times per week	8.5%	7.2%	15.7%
Daily	0.0%	4.3%	2.0%
Academic advisors/counselors			
Never	1.4%	2.9%	3.9%
1 or 2 times per term	77.5%	84.1%	72.5%
1 or 2 times per month	16.9%	7.2%	21.6%
Once a week	4.2%	4.3%	2.0%
2 or 3 times per week	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Daily	0.0%	1.4%	0.0%

Question 2. "Since entering this college, how often have you interacted with the following people (e.g., by phone, e-mail, Instant Messenger, or in person): (Mark one for each item)." Respondents were given the option of choosing from the responses listed in the table.

Key Findings:

- Respondents in general appear to be interacting with faculty members during their office hours more frequently than before. The percentages of respondents who never interacted with a faculty member during office hours and who interacted with a faculty member during office hours only one or two times per term have declined, while the percentages of respondents who interact with their faculty during office hours either one to two times per month or two to three times per week have increased markedly in the last three years.
- The vast majority of respondents interact with their academic advisors or counselors one or two times per term.

Table 6: Opinions about Campus Climate and Sense of Belonging, “Agree/Strongly Agree” Responses, 2007-2010

	2010	2008	2007
I have felt discriminated against based on my race/ethnicity	18.3%	18.8%	9.8%
I have felt discriminated against based on my socio-economic status	18.3%	29.0%	13.7%
I have felt discriminated against based on my gender	19.7%	31.9%	19.6%
I have felt discriminated against based on my religion	16.9%	11.6%	5.9%
I have felt discriminated against based on my sexual orientation	1.4%	2.9%	4.0%
In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes about racial/ethnic groups	15.5%	11.6%	12.0%
The admission/recruitment materials portrayed this campus accurately	70.0%	69.1%	88.2%
I see myself as part of the campus community	83.1%	81.2%	88.2%
Faculty here are interested in students’ academic problems	94.4%	97.1%	98.0%
There is a lot of racial tension on this campus	22.9%	25.0%	9.8%
In class, I have heard faculty express gender stereotypes ¹	21.1%	N/A	N/A
Most students here are treated like ‘numbers in a book’ ²	1.4%	15.9%	11.8%
I have been able to find a balance between academics and extracurricular activities	93.0%	75.4%	76.5%
I feel I am a member of this college	90.1%	N/A	N/A
My college experiences have exposed me to diverse opinions, cultures, and values	88.6%	77.9%	82.4%
I feel a sense of belonging to this campus	83.1%	76.8%	90.2%
I am enthusiastic about this college	87.1%	N/A	N/A
If asked, I would recommend this college to others	88.7%	N/A	N/A

Question 12: “Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

¹ This statement was separated into two statements in the 2007 and 2008 surveys: “In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes about: Women” and “In class, I have heard faculty express stereotypes about: Men.”

² In the 2007 and 2008 surveys, this statement was phrased as “I feel like I am just another number on this campus.”

Key Findings

- Only 1.4% of respondents this year reported that they have felt discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. This contrasts with reported experiences of discrimination on the basis of other characteristics such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, and religion, which were all in the 15-20% range this year.
- Reports of discrimination based on race/ethnicity this year (18.3%) remained about as high as in 2008 (18.8%), which had been almost double the percentage in 2007 (9.8%).
- While the percentages of students reporting experiences of discrimination based on socio-economic status and gender this year (18.3% and 19.7% respectively) dropped from 2008, they still remain at about the 2007 levels or higher.
- The percentage of respondents reporting discrimination based on religion has steadily increased from 2007 when it was 5.9%, to 11.6% in 2008 and to 16.9% this year.
- Almost all respondents (94.4% this year) have consistently agreed over the past three years that faculty at Scripps are interested in students' academic problems.
- Hardly any respondents this year (1.4%) felt that students at Scripps are "treated like numbers in a book," a sizable decrease from 11.8% in 2007 and 15.9% in 2008.
- This year's respondents overwhelmingly reported that they have been able to find a balance between academics and extracurricular activities (93.0%), a significant increase from 76.5% in 2007 and 75.4% in 2008.

Table 7: Campus Satisfaction, “Satisfied/Very Satisfied” Responses, 2007-2010

	2010	2008	2007
Amount of contact with faculty	76.1%	87.0%	90.2%
Racial/ethnic diversity of faculty	31.9%	31.3%	20.4%
Racial/ethnic diversity of student body	30.0%	24.6%	14.0%
Class size	93.0%	79.7%	82.4%
Interaction with other students	83.1%	84.1%	88.2%
Relevance of coursework to everyday life	76.1%	63.8%	70.6%
Relevance of coursework to future career plans	75.0%	65.2%	75.5%
Overall quality of instruction	91.5%	91.3%	94.1%
Respect for the expression of diverse beliefs	77.5%	86.8%	78.4%
Overall sense of community among students	63.4%	50.7%	72.5%
Overall college experience	85.9%	78.3%	92.2%

Question 18: “Please rate your satisfaction with this institution on each of the aspects of college life listed below.” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied, or Can’t Rate/No Experience. Respondents marking “Can’t rate/No experience” were not included in the computation of these results.

Key Findings

- There has been a drop in reported satisfaction with the amount of contact that students have with faculty, from 90.2% in 2007 to 87.0% in 2008 to 76.1% this year.
- Respondents this year reported the most satisfaction with class size and overall quality of instruction at Scripps (93.0% and 91.5% respectively). The level of satisfaction with class size was a marked improvement from previous years (82.4% in 2007 and 79.7% in 2008), while the level of satisfaction with overall quality of instruction has remained very high.
- Respondents reported the least amount of satisfaction with the racial/ethnic diversity of the student body (30.0%) and of faculty (31.9%). However, these figures have shown improvement since 2007.
- Respondents were generally satisfied with their overall college experience at Scripps (85.9% were satisfied or very satisfied), but much less (63.4%) were satisfied with the overall sense of community among students. In both cases, levels of satisfaction have fluctuated over the past three years, but are still not as high as they were in 2007.

Supplemental Questions for Scripps Students

Additional questions have been added to the YFCY survey specifically for Scripps students. Two sets of statements are included on the supplemental form. First is a set of nine statements about topics ranging from students' academic work and their advisor to their impressions of community life at Scripps. Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement.

Table 8. Supplemental Statements, “Agree/Strongly Agree” Responses, 2007-2010

	2010	2008	2007
My academic work is challenging	95.8%	95.6%	94.1%
My advisor is aware of the general education requirements for graduation	88.7%	78.2%	80.4%
My advisor was available during office hours	84.5%	76.8%	86.2%
I am aware of my responsibilities as an advisee	83.1%	75.3%	74.5%
Issues related to women are reflected in Core I	71.8%	68.1%	98.1%
I am treated with respect by the faculty teaching my courses	95.8%	95.7%	98.1%
I feel a sense of community at Scripps	69.0%	53.6%	78.4%

“Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements: (Select one for each item).” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree , Disagree, or Strongly Disagree.

Key Findings:

- Nearly all survey respondents have agreed consistently over the last three years that their academic work at Scripps is challenging and that they are treated with respect by the faculty teaching their courses (95.8% for both items this year).
- It appears that more respondents had a better advising experience this year compared to 2008: 88.7% agreed that their advisors are aware of the general education requirements for graduation (an increase from 78.2% in 2008), 84.5% agreed that their advisors were available during office hours (an increase from 76.8% in 2008), and 83.1% were aware of their responsibilities as an advisee (an increase from 75.3% in 2008).
- There was a decrease in the percentage of respondents who agree that issues related to women are reflected in Core I from 2007 (98.1%) to 2008 (68.1%). There was a slight increase this year to 71.8%.
- More respondents this year felt a sense of community at Scripps (69.0%) compared to 2008 (53.6%), but the percentage has not reached the level of the 2007 survey (78.4%).

The second set of supplemental questions lists skill areas that are typically developed in college, and asks students to indicate whether they think they have grown stronger or weaker in those areas since they first entered Scripps.

Table 9. Skill Development, “Stronger/Much Stronger” Responses, 2008-2010*

	2010	2008
Creative thinking	66.2%	62.3%
Oral communication	67.6%	49.2%
Written communication	78.9%	69.6%
Technology proficiency	26.7%	23.1%
Quantitative reasoning	54.9%	60.8%

* These questions were not included in the supplemental form in 2007.

“Compared with when you entered Scripps, how would you now describe your skills in the following areas? (Select one for each item).” Respondents were given the option of choosing one of the following responses to each statement: Much Stronger, Stronger, No Change, Weaker, or Much Weaker.

Key Findings:

- Written communication was the skill in which the highest percentage of respondents felt they had become stronger (78.9%). This year’s result was slightly higher than in 2008.
- Technology proficiency received the lowest percentage of “stronger/much stronger” responses this year (26.7%), which was similar to 2008 (23.1%). Most of this year’s respondents (71.8%) felt that they had seen no change in their technology proficiency since the time they entered Scripps.
- A markedly higher percentage of respondents this year felt that their oral communication skills had become stronger while at Scripps (67.6% this year compared to 49.2% in 2008).

Revised 11/23/10 by Jonathan Lew, Office of Assessment, Planning, & Institutional Research