



*Office of Planning and Research*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Student Affairs Committee  
Director of Career Planning & Resources  
Educational Policy Committee  
Faculty Executive Committee  
Registrar  
Senior Staff

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

**RE:** Report on Class of 2007 Senior Survey

**DT:** December 17, 2007

I am pleased to provide you with a report on the 2007 HEDS Senior Survey. The survey instrument was distributed via a web-based survey to seniors approximately one month prior to Commencement. This report includes data for both Scripps students and students in two comparative groups of peer colleges: liberal arts colleges and women's colleges. Approximately 216 students were invited to participate in the on-line surveys, yet only 57 students completed the questionnaire, yielding a very low response rate of 27% (down from 45% in 2006).

Of particular interest, please note the following highlights from the 2007 report update:

- The survey participation by students of color was not consistent with trends seen in 2007; whereas slightly more African-American students participated in the 2007; fewer Hispanic/Latina and Asian/Pacific Islander students took part in the 2007 study.
- Approximately 89% of students at Scripps stated they received formal financial support during their college years, up from 58% in 2006.

- The pattern of Scripps students' employment status had not changed much over the last three years. Approximately 16% of survey respondents reported that they had accepted a job offer while 59% reported that they were either searching for a position, waiting for an offer, or plan on beginning the job search process after graduation. It was also reported that 20% of survey respondents were not planning on employment in the fall.
- "Greatly enhanced" skills most frequently and consistently noted by 2007 survey participants at Scripps included: *thinking analytically and logically* (73.8%); *gaining in-depth knowledge of a subject area* (69.4%); *working under pressure* (63.9%); *writing effectively* (63.5%); and *self-understanding* (62.9%).
- Students' satisfaction with their academic experiences at Scripps declined between 2006 and 2007, most notably for *availability of courses, faculty availability outside of class, tutorial help or other academic assistance, opportunities for independent study* and *first-year advising*. Satisfaction with academic experiences remained consistent or increased most notably for *major advising* and *students' interaction with faculty*.
- As shown in Figure 13 (page 12), the percentage of Scripps students who expressed satisfaction with *ethnic/racial diversity on campus, student voice in policies, sense of community on campus*, and with the *campus climate for minority students* increased between 2006 and 2007. In contrast, students' dissatisfaction appeared to decrease between 2006 and 2007 regarding *student government, campus safety, and religious/spiritual life*.

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

**Higher Education Data Sharing Survey of Seniors**  
Class of 2007 Senior Survey

**HIGHLIGHTS OF DATA AND FINDINGS**

Prepared by

Office of Planning & Research  
Scripps College  
December 2007

**Introduction**

In the spring of 2007, Scripps College participated in the eighth annual Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) consortium Survey of Seniors. Membership in the HEDS consortium affords Scripps the opportunity to learn more about the undergraduate experiences, and post-graduation plans, of seniors at Scripps and at peer colleges. In years past, HEDS has provided Scripps with aggregated data from comparative groups of institutions. However, only one (1) peer institution participated in the survey in 2007, and therefore the data presented in this report reflects only data from Scripps' respondents.

Prior to 2006, the HEDS Senior Survey was administered during the morning rehearsal the day of Commencement. As was done in 2006, the 2007 survey was administered in a web-based format. Three emails were sent to 216 graduating seniors (of which 213 were usable email addresses) in the spring of 2007 inviting them to participate in the survey. The initial call was sent in the first week of May. Despite multiple attempts to elicit additional responses, the final response rate was a relatively low 27% (57 usable responses). This reflects an 18% drop from 2006 which had a response rate of 45%. Hence, some caution should be exercised on drawing conclusions with long-term implications from this sole report.

This report is divided into the following main sections:

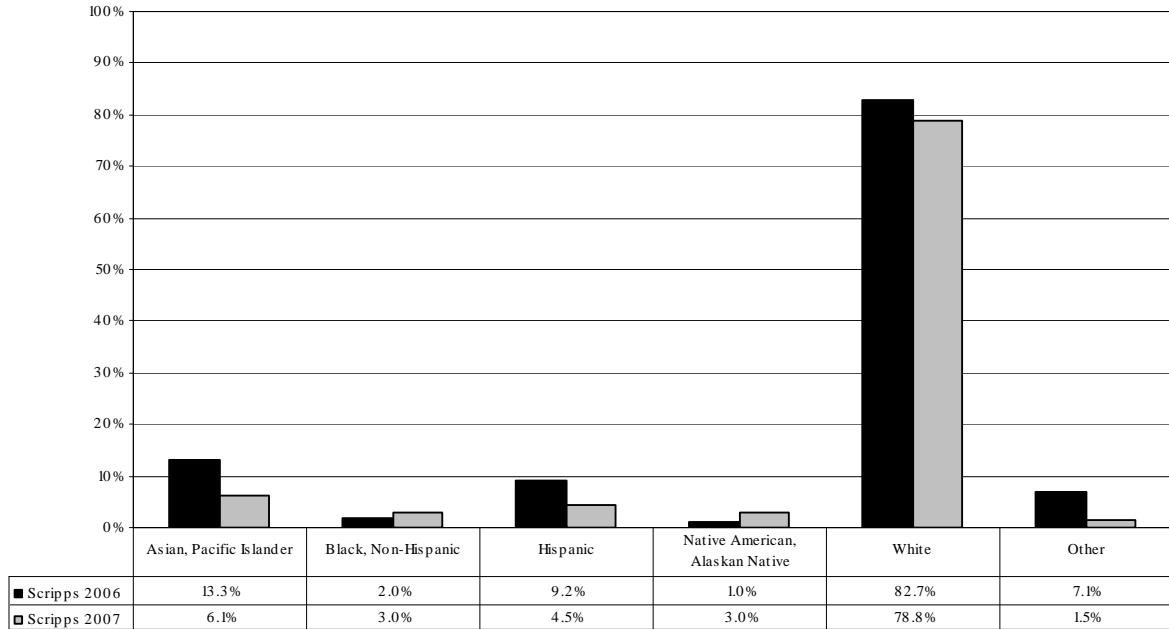
- Student Characteristics
- College Experiences
- Future Plans
- Overall Satisfaction
- Supplemental Items

## Student Characteristics

### *Race/Ethnicity*

Figure 1 below shows the race/ethnicity demographics of the students who responded to the survey.

**Figure 1. Race/Ethnicity of Scripps Survey Respondents, 2006-2007**<sup>1</sup>



### *Parents' Educational Level*

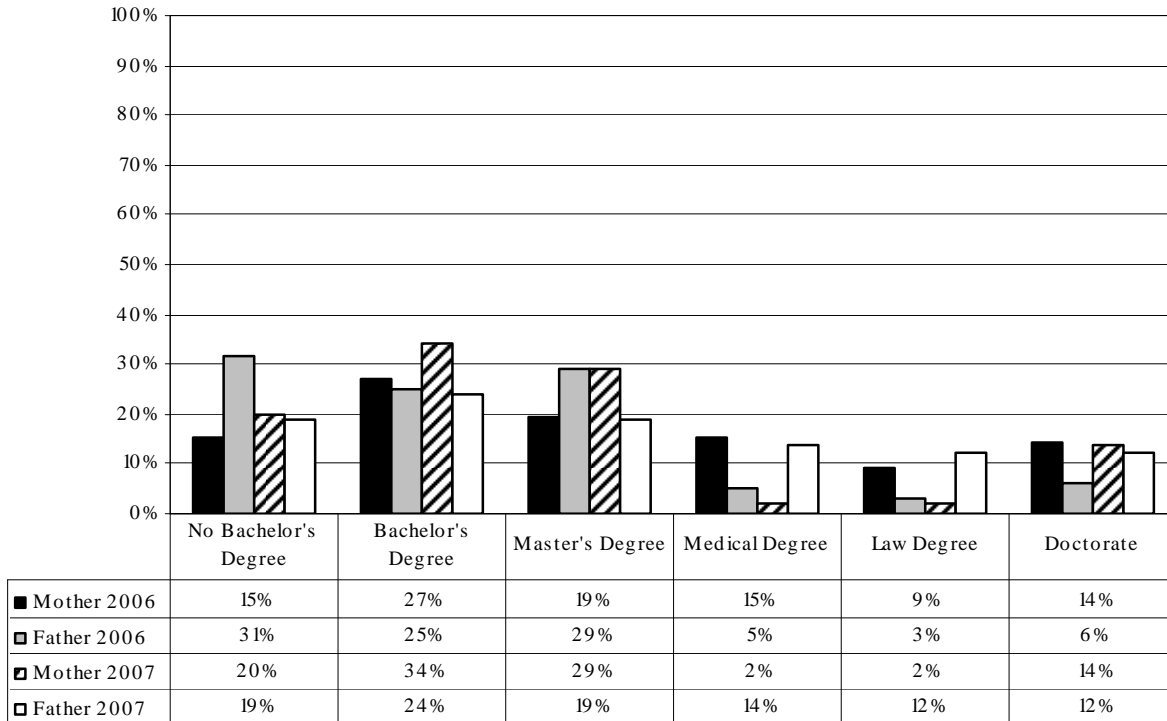
Data in Figure 2 demonstrate that the majority of Scripps respondents had at least one parent possessed a bachelor's degree or an advanced degree. Of the 2007 survey respondents, 81% of both mothers and fathers held bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, a higher percentage of fathers obtained medical and law degrees in comparison to mothers. In terms of highest education level attained, only 8.5% of both mothers and fathers did not complete high school or held a high school diploma.

### *Academic Performance*

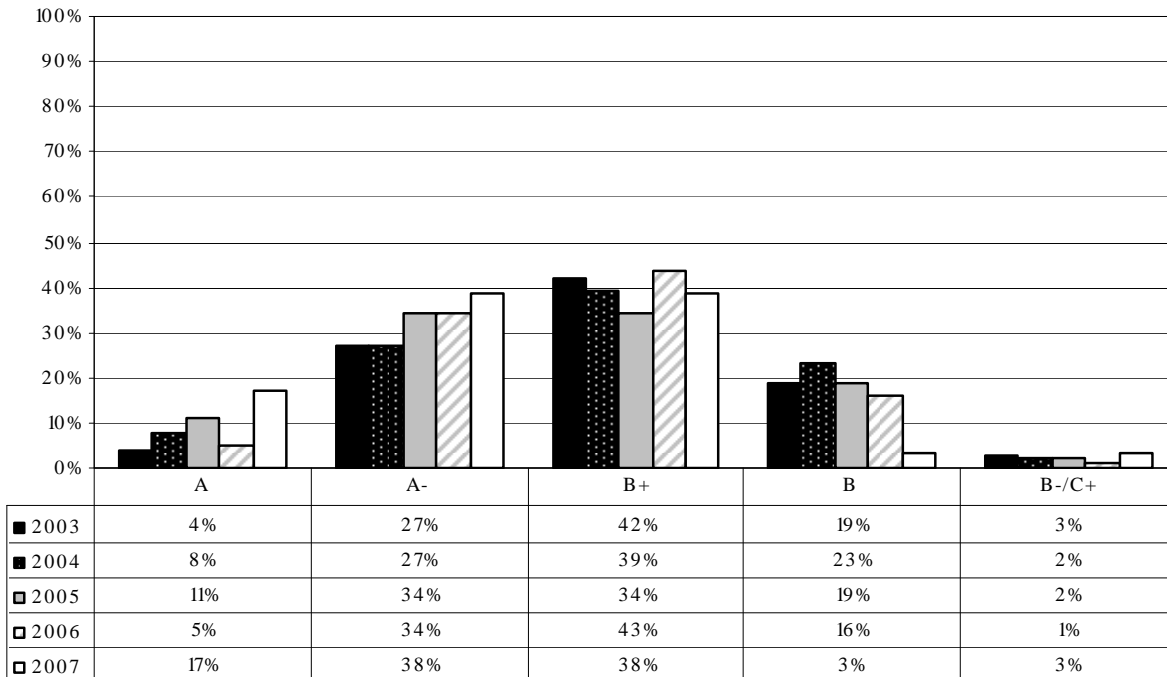
Longitudinal data over the last five years reveal that the overwhelming majority (92% - 99%) of Scripps survey respondents graduated with a GPA of *B or better*. Within the same group of students, for the first time, more than one-half (55.4%) of survey respondents self-reported an overall GPA of *A- or A*. Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of the GPA trends over time for Scripps students.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages may total more than 100%. Multiple responses allowed.

**Figure 2. Educational Levels of Scripps Parents, 2006-2007**



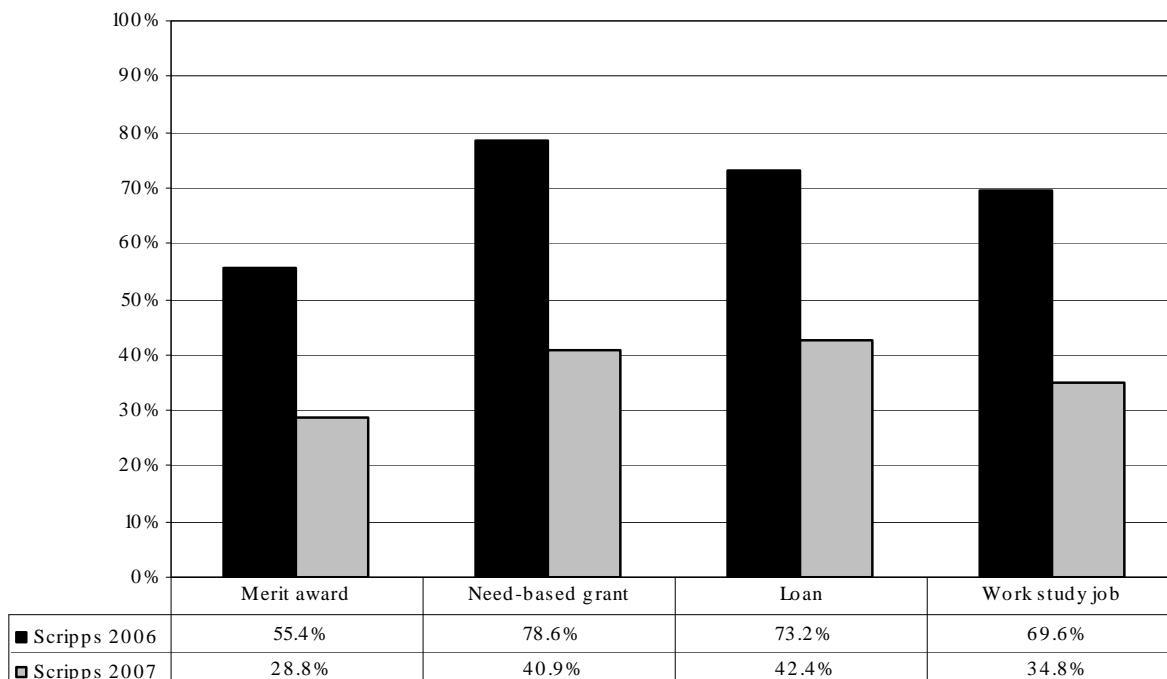
**Figure 3. Overall GPA of Scripps Survey Respondents, 2003-2007**



### Financing a College Education

Approximately 89% of survey respondents reported that they received some form of formal financial aid. Figure 4 shows the types of financial aid that Scripps students received, revealing that like the previous year, a smaller percentage of students received merit awards in comparison to need-based grants, loans, or work-study funding. It should be noted that a much smaller percentage of student respondents reported receiving financial aid in each of the aid categories in Figure 4 in comparison to 2006.

**Figure 4. Types of Financial Aid Received by Survey Respondents, 2006-2007<sup>2</sup>**



## College Experiences

### *Skill Enhancement*

One component of the HEDS Senior Survey elicits responses that allow institutions to assess the extent to which students' skills have been enhanced as a result of their college experiences. Table 1 demonstrates the skills that students identified as most *greatly* enhanced during their years in college. The percentage of student who attributed Scripps in *greatly* enhancing their analytical and logical thinking skills rose from 57% to 74% in 2007.

Students also identified specific skills that were *a little* or *not at all* developed during their college experience. Table 2 illustrates the skills that were reportedly enhanced the least for the least three years. In 2006, the five least enhanced skills included "relating to people of different races, nations, or religions." In 2007, this skill has been more greatly enhanced.

<sup>2</sup> Data reflects multiple responses regarding types of student financial aid received.

**Table 1. Most Enhanced Skills Identified by Scripps Survey Respondents, 2005-2007**

	2005	2006	2007
Think Analytically and Logically	65.0%	57.0%	73.8%
Gain In-Depth Knowledge of a Subject	67.0%	69.0%	69.4%
Work Under Pressure	57.0%	65.0%	63.9%
Write Effectively	64.0%	52.0%	63.5%
Understand Myself	57.0%	69.0%	62.9% <sup>3</sup>

**Table 2. Least Enhanced Skills Identified by Scripps Survey Respondents, 2005-2007**

	2005	2006	2007
Use Quantitative Tools	53.0%	52.0%	56.5%
Read or Speak Foreign Language	44.0%	46.0%	50.8%
Understand Process of Science	57.0%	61.0%	49.2%
Use Technology	46.0%	41.4%	45.2%
Evaluate Role of Science and Technology in Society	57.0%	51.0%	41.9%

### *Campus Involvement*

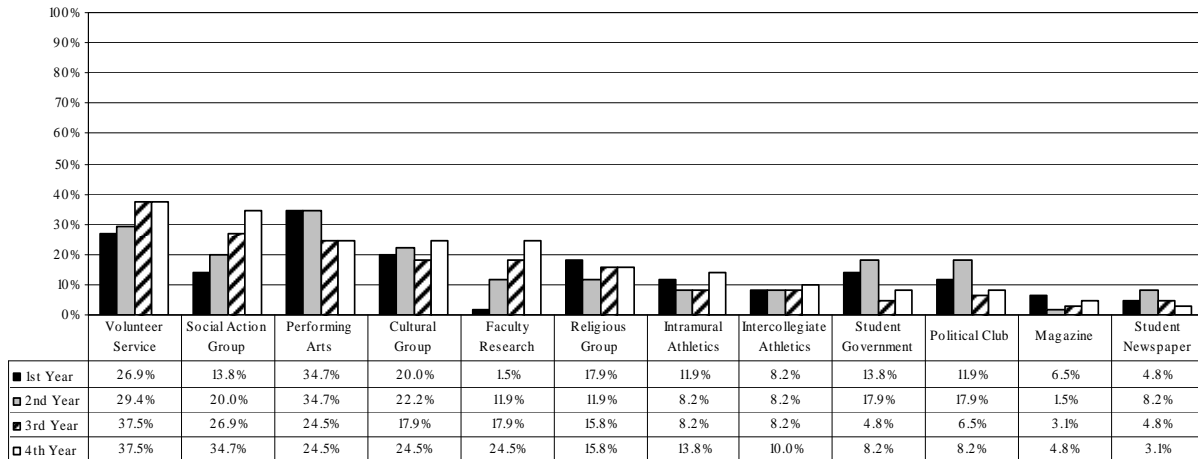
Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of respondents who actively participated in campus activities during their years in college. The data show that survey respondents were more actively involved on campus in their senior year in comparison to their first year at Scripps. This was particularly the case for involvement with *faculty research*, *social action groups*, and *volunteer service*. Participation in the *performing arts* saw the greatest decrease from respondents' first year at Scripps to their senior year.

### *Engagement*

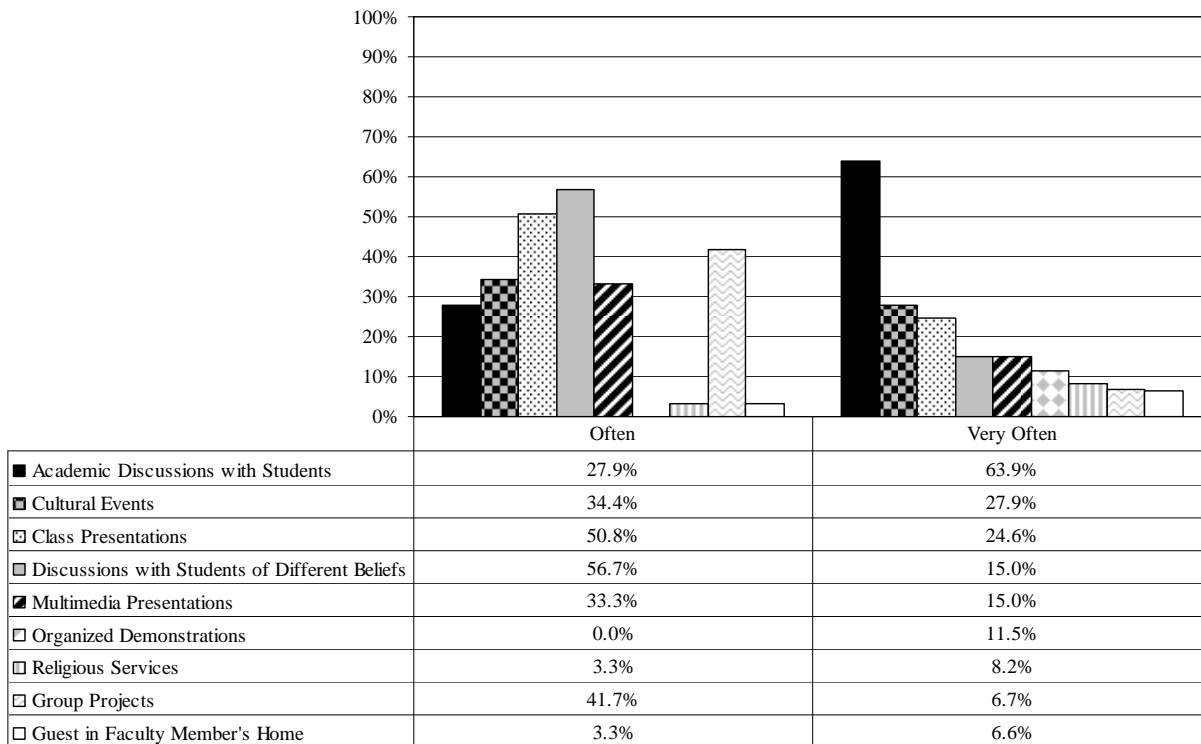
As demonstrated in Figure 6, survey respondents reported that while they *often/very often* engaged in academic-related activities, such as having *academic discussions with students* and participating in *class presentations*, being a *guest in a faculty member's home* was not a common occurrence. Data also show that the majority of respondents (57.4%) *never* attend *religious services*.

<sup>3</sup> 62.9% also cited "acquire new skills and knowledge" and "function independently" as a *greatly* enhanced skill in 2007.

**Figure 5. Active Campus Involvement of Survey Respondents, by year in school**



**Figure 6. Academic and Civic Engagement by Survey Respondents**



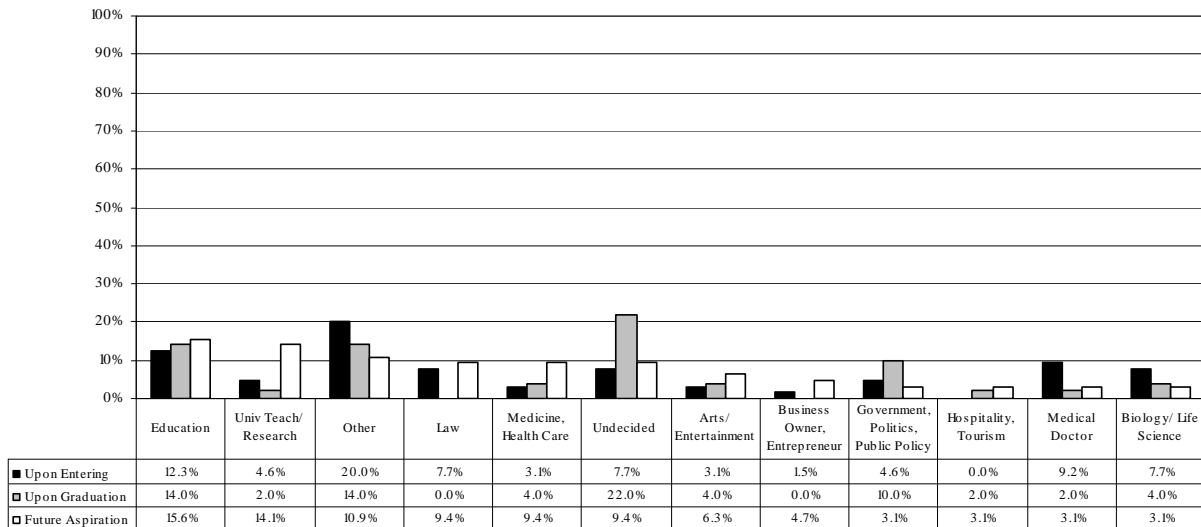


## Future Plans

### *Employment Objectives: Past, Present and Future*

The survey asked students to indicate the types of careers they envisioned for themselves at three points in time – when they entered college, when they graduate, and in the long-term. Figure 7 reflects the most popular career choices by future aspirations.

**Figure 7. Popular Career Aspirations of Scripps Students Over Time**

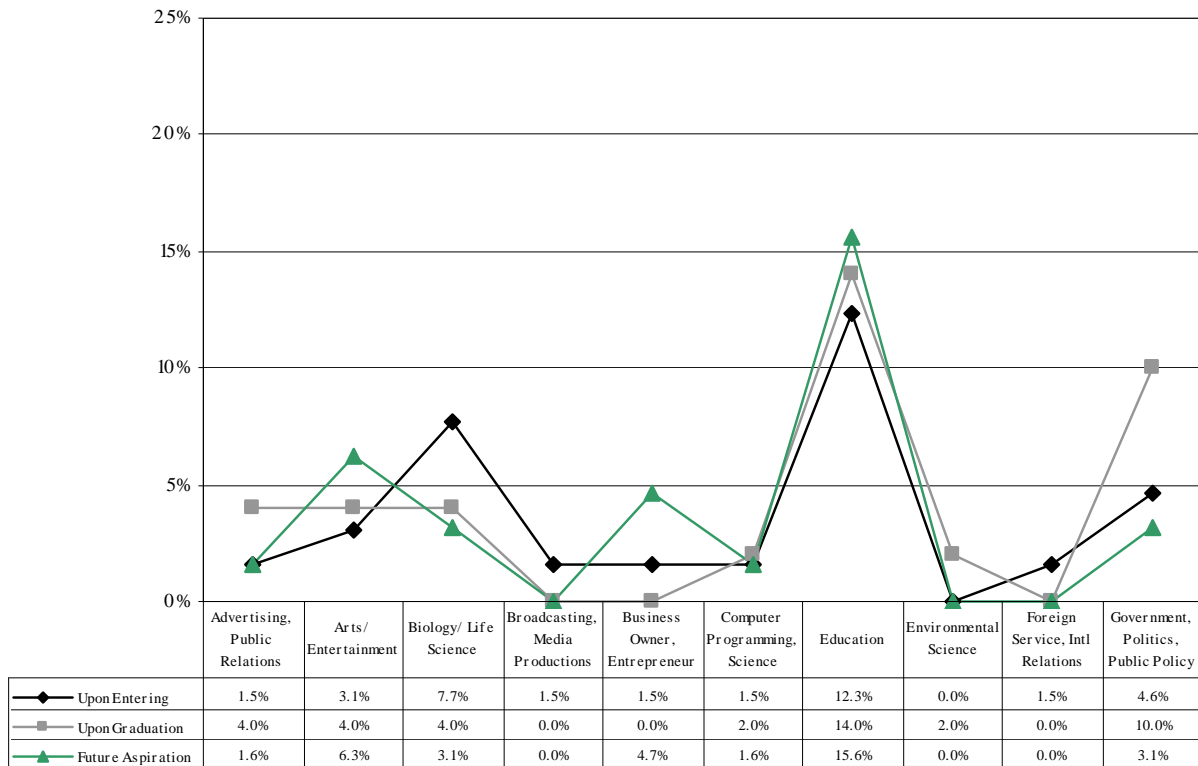


Student career aspirations have both waned and swelled over time. Other than those who indicated *other* or were *undecided*, careers in *government/politics/public policy* (+5.4%) and *biology/life science* (-3.7%) showed the most change from the time students entered college to the time they graduated. However, looking at the change from when students started college to what their long-term aspirations were, the careers that showed the most change were in *university teaching/research* (+9.5%), *medicine/health care* (+6.3%), and *biology/life science* (-4.6%).

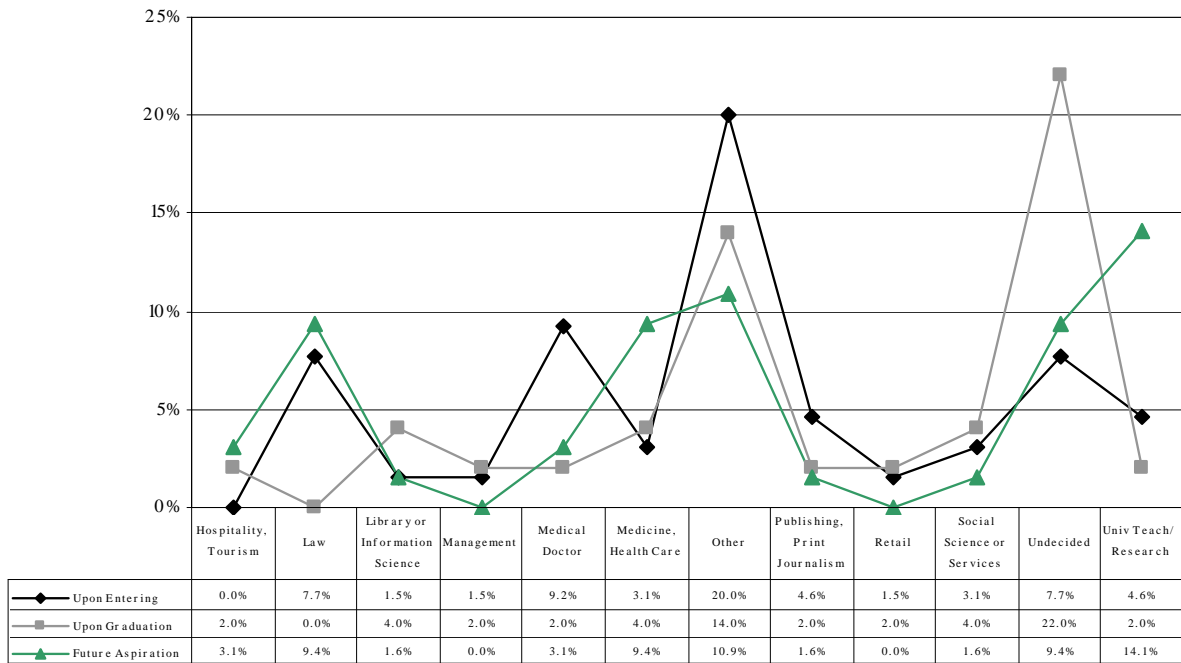
Perhaps most striking is that 20% of Scripps survey respondents indicated that they were interested in some *other* career from the list of options<sup>4</sup> upon entering college. However, by the time students graduated, that percentage had decreased to 10.9%. It is also interesting to note that while only 7.7% of survey respondents entered college *undecided* as to what their career aspirations were, 22% remained *undecided* upon graduation. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate the changes in career choices over time in each of the list of options offered in the survey.

<sup>4</sup> The survey offered 34 different career options, including *other* and *undecided*.

**Figure 8. Desired Careers of Scripps Students over Time<sup>5</sup>**



**Figure 9. Desired Careers of Scripps Students over Time (cont'd)**

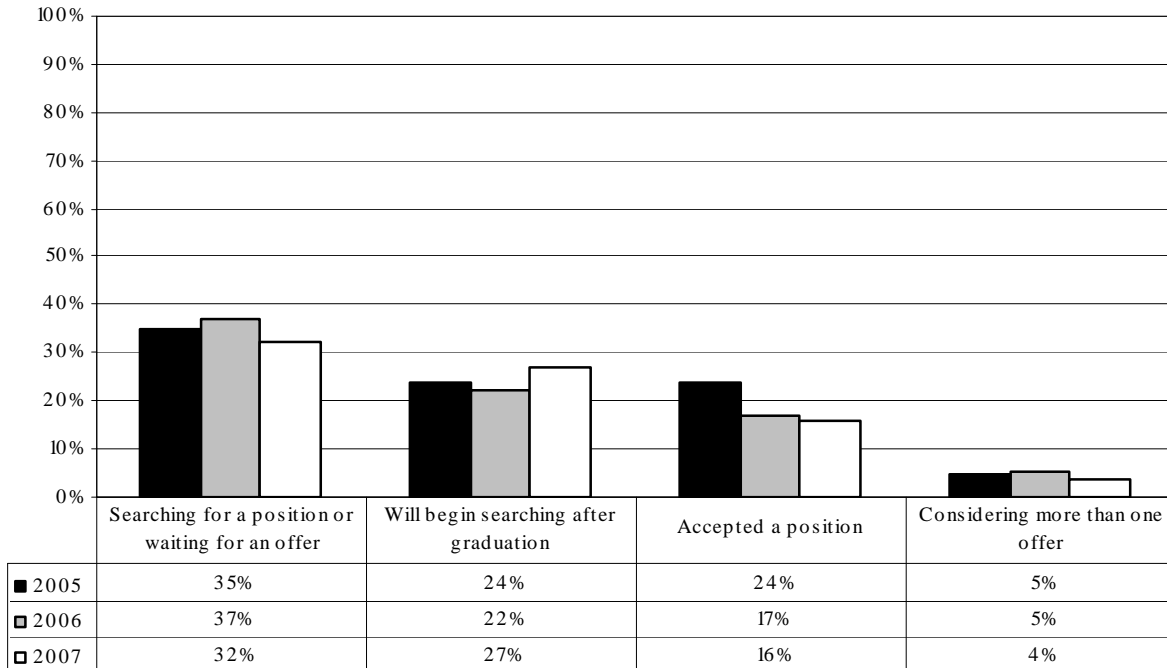


<sup>5</sup> Note y-axis of 25% to more clearly illustrate trend nuances.

*Post-Graduation Plans*

Senior students were also asked to indicate their primary activity in the fall following graduation in the spring. The pattern of Scripps students' employment status had not changed much over the last three years as evident in Figure 10. Approximately 16% of survey respondents reported that they had accepted a job offer while 59% reported that they were either searching for a position, waiting for an offer, or plan on beginning the job search process after graduation. It was also reported that 20% of survey respondents were not planning on employment in the fall.

**Figure 10. Scripps Students' Employment Status at Graduation, 2005-2007**



Of the Scripps students who planned to pursue graduate education, 50% intended to obtain an academic degree (includes M.A., M.S., and Ph.D.), 10% intended to pursue a law degree, and 5% intended to pursue a medical degree. 27.5% planned to pursue some *other degree*.

*Important Career Considerations*

Students were asked to rate the importance of various considerations in their choice of careers. Table 3 demonstrates those considerations deemed *very important* and *essential* by 2006 and 2007 survey respondents. For the most part, important considerations in career choices did not vary much from 2006 to 2007. *Interesting daily work* remained the most important aspect when considering career choices while having *limited working hours* remained the least important. The five career considerations regarded as *very important* or *essential* by more than 75% of Scripps survey respondents were: *interesting daily work* (94%), *quality of colleagues and clients* (88%), *creativity and initiative* (85%), *expression of personal values* (79%), and *stable, secure future* (77%). Nevertheless, the career consideration that demonstrated the greatest change was *intellectual challenge* where only 56% of survey respondents considered it *very important/essential*, reflecting a 26% decrease from 2006.

**Table 3. Important Career Considerations, Scripps 2006-2007**

	2006	2007
Interesting Daily Work	94%	94%
Quality of Colleagues and Clients	84%	88%
Creativity and Initiative	82%	85%
Expression of Personal Values	76%	79%
Stable, Secure Future	76%	77%
Work for Social Change	65%	70%
Availability of Jobs	53%	64%
Leadership Potential	58%	56%
Intellectual Challenge	82%	56%
High Income Potential	32%	29%
Social Recognition or Status	17%	14%
Limited Working Hours	13%	8%

### **Overall Satisfaction**

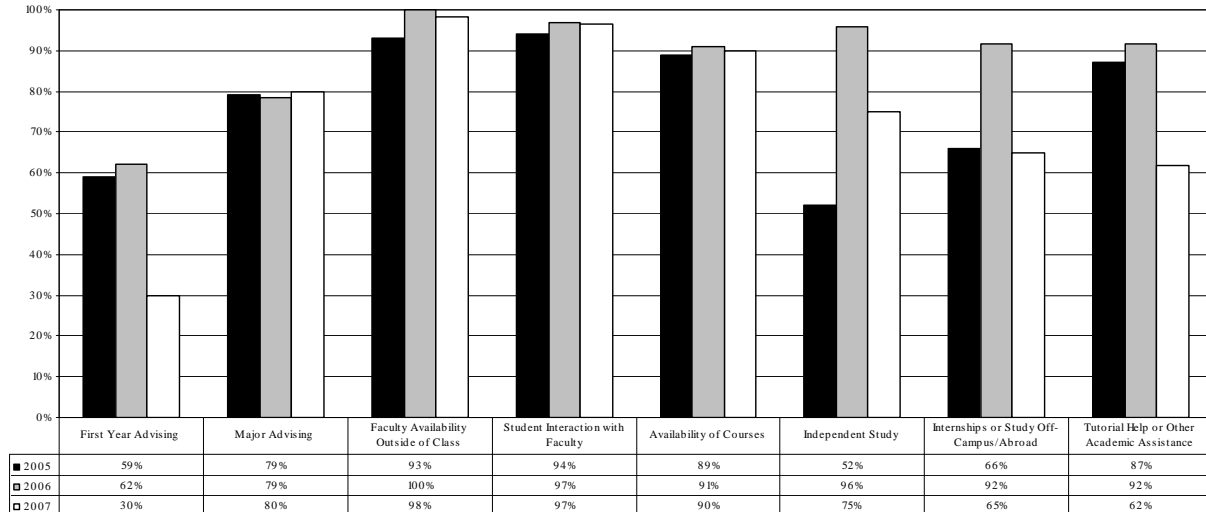
This section covers the overall satisfaction levels of students. It includes the quality of academic experiences, campus services and facilities, and campus life.

#### *Satisfaction with Academic Experiences*

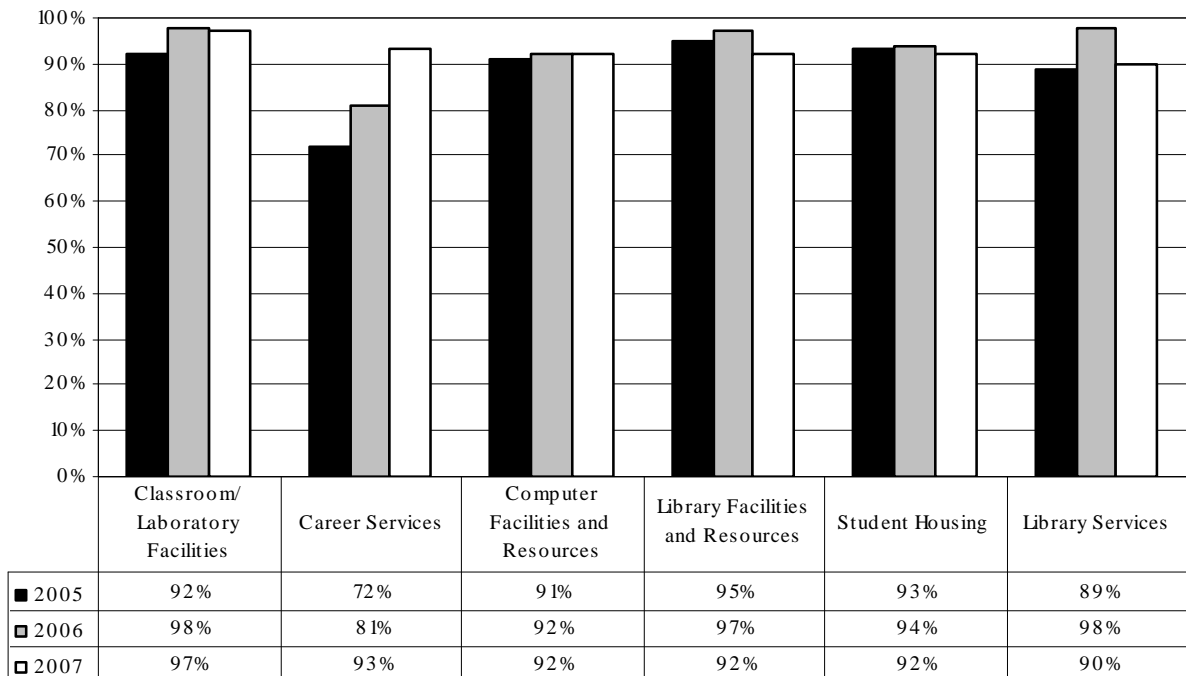
Figure 11 illustrates the level of student satisfaction with academic experiences for the last three years. Data from the survey show that the majority of students were *generally* or *very satisfied* with their academic experiences. While *major advising* showed a modest 1% increase in satisfaction level, all other aspects of the academic experience showed a decrease in satisfaction from the previous year. This was particularly the case for *first year advising* (-32% from previous year) and *tutorial help/academic assistance* (-30%).

Students were also asked to assess the quality of course instruction in broad disciplinary categories. Students were *generally* or *very satisfied* with course instruction, particularly in the *Humanities and Arts* (98%). This was followed by *Social Sciences* (93%) and *Science and Math* (68%).

**Figure 11. Scripps Students' Satisfaction with Academic Experiences, 2005-2007**



**Figure 12. Scripps Students' Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities, 2005-2007**



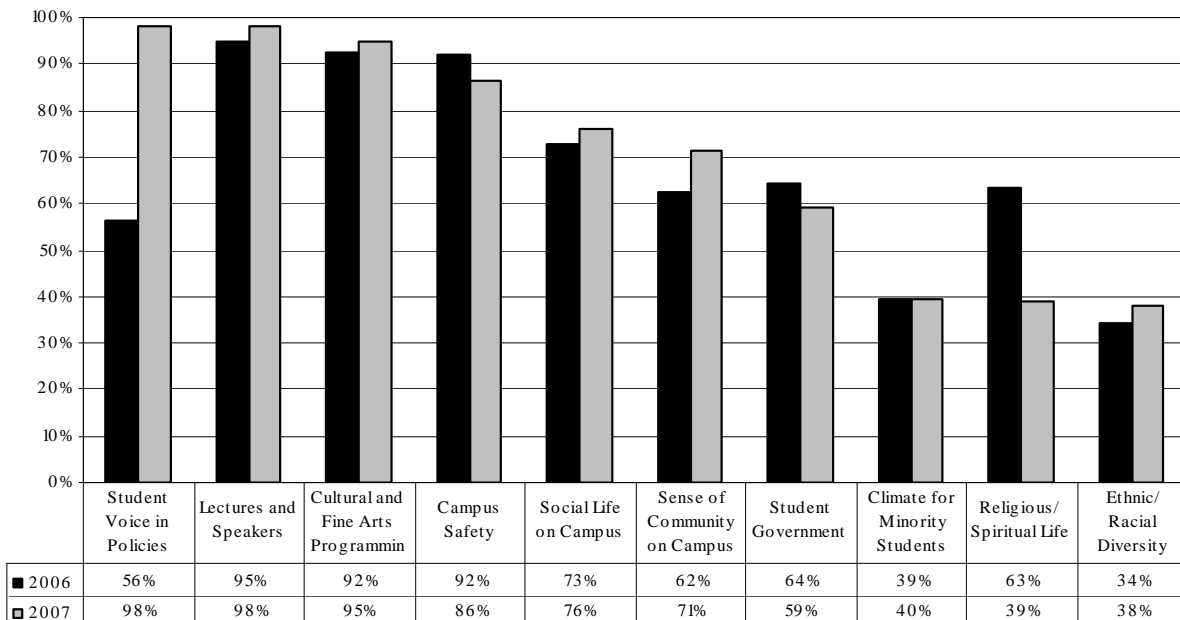
### Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities

Students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with 18 listed campus services and facilities. More than 40% of survey respondents indicated that they were *generally* or *very satisfied* with all listed services and facilities. The six services and facilities that received the highest percentages (> 90%) of satisfied students are shown in Figure 12.

### Satisfaction with Campus Life

For the sixth year in a row, Scripps seniors have expressed high levels of satisfaction with three aspects of campus life: *cultural and fine arts programming*, *lectures and speakers* and *campus safety*. Figure 13 illustrates students' levels of satisfaction with different aspects of student life. Data from the 2006 survey are also provided. A substantive change of +42% is reflected in satisfaction with *student voice in politics*. However, satisfaction levels remained low for a *sense of community on campus* with satisfaction levels hovering between 33% and 38% in the last four years.

**Figure 13. Satisfaction with Campus Life at Scripps, 2006-2007**



### Overall Satisfaction

While 70% of survey respondents *agree(d)/strongly agree(d)* that Scripps being a women's college was a positive factor, the percentage of students who felt this way decreased from 79% in the previous year. Yet, generally speaking, they were happy with their experience at Scripps with 80% indicating that they would encourage a current high school student to attend Scripps.

Overall, student respondents at Scripps were *generally/very satisfied* with their education (97%). In addition, 73% of respondents indicated that they *probably/definitely would* choose Scripps if they had to relive their college experience. Eleven percent indicated that they would *probably/definitely not* do so again, and 17% said that they *maybe* would choose to attend Scripps if they had to do it all over again.

## **Supplemental Items Specific to Scripps College**

Fourteen additional questions of the College's choosing were included as supplemental items in the survey. Scripps used this section of the survey to focus primarily on the role and status of women and the Interdisciplinary Core Program in the Humanities. Questions regarding the impact of the Malott Commons as a factor in facilitating social interaction with faculty/staff and fellow students were also included.

### *Women's Issues*

Students were asked to rate the level of importance of various developmental and growth opportunities afforded by a Scripps education. Figure 14 illustrates the issues identified as *important* or *very important* for Scripps women over the last five years. The data show that 80% of this year's survey respondents felt that it was *important/very important* that Scripps encouraged students to *increase awareness of women's roles in society* (87.5%), *focus attention on the opportunities and problems of women in the workforce* (82.8%), *become involved with women in leadership positions* (82.5%) and *develop friendships among women* (86.2%).

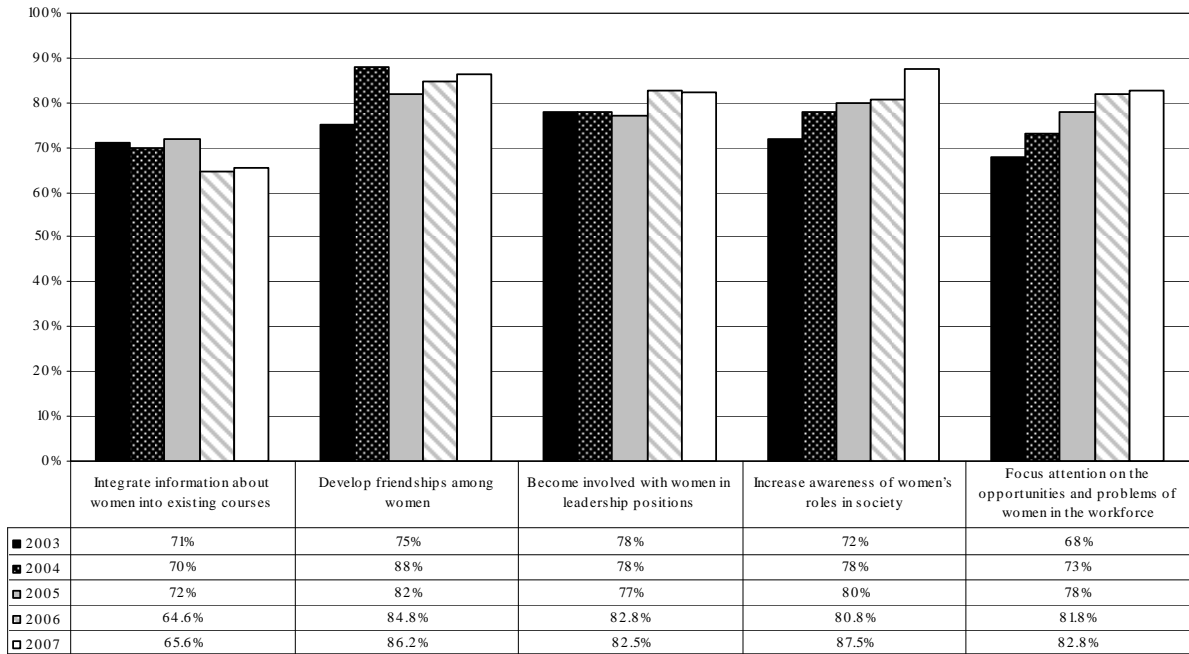
### *Social Interaction and the Malott Commons*

Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement regarding the role of Malott Commons in facilitating social interaction with different members of the Claremont community. Approximately 61% of survey respondents *agreed/strongly agreed* that the Malott Commons facilitated their social interaction with other Scripps students, an 8% decrease from the previous year. In addition, 44% (6% decrease) *agreed/strongly agreed* that the Malott Commons facilitated their social interaction with other Claremont Colleges' students. Only 30% felt that the Malott Commons facilitated their social interaction with faculty and staff.

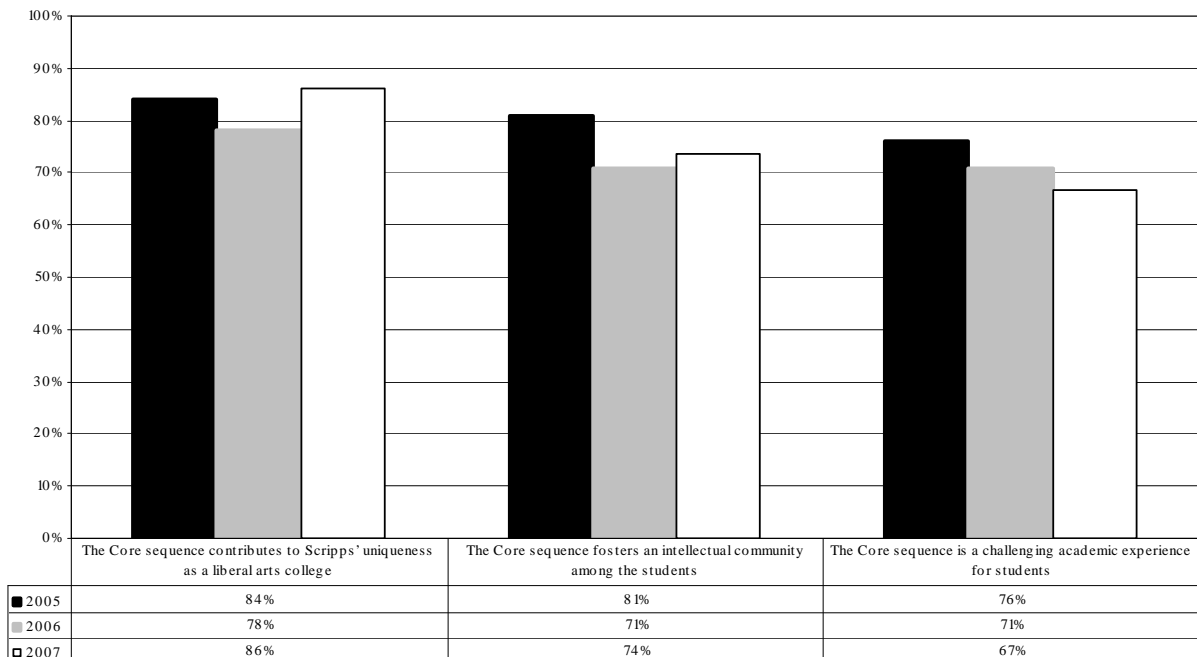
### *Core Sequence/Curriculum*

The supplemental questions also asked students for their perspective concerning the Core sequence. Eighty-six percent (86%) of survey respondents stated that they *agreed/strongly agreed* that the Core sequence contributed to the College's uniqueness; another 74% also *agreed/strongly agreed* that the Core sequence fosters an intellectual community among students. Responses to both these questions reflect an increase from the previous year's survey results. However, as demonstrated in Figure 19, the level of student agreement regarding the Core sequence being a challenging academic experience has fallen over the last three years from 76% to 67%.

**Figure 14. Important Issues for Scripps Women, 2003-2007**



**Figure 15. Student Agreement on the Core Sequence, 2005-2007**





## **Points to Note:**

### *Limitations*

It is important to caution against any decision making based solely on the results of this year's Senior Survey. As reported, this survey yielded a response rate of only 27% (57 responses) and thus results are only reflective of this sample. Instead, a longitudinal approach to account for a much broader view of our graduating students and their post-graduation plans would prove to be more accurate. The results of this survey may also be considered together with other surveys, such as the NSSE survey, to provide a more truthful view of senior students' perceptions.

### *Recommendations for the Future*

It is recommended that Scripps consider alternative means distributing this survey in order to increase the response rate. Except for a one-time increase in 2005, the response rate for this survey has decreased over the last five years. While possibly purely coincidental, the response rate has fallen below 50% in the two years that Scripps elected to administer the survey in a web-based version the prior to graduation.

Further consideration should be made regarding the risk of "over-surveying" Scripps students, particularly seniors. In spring 2007, the Office of Planning and Research invited seniors to participate in two surveys within two months. This does not include other surveys, such as the Core ten-year review and other surveys that individual departments may administer.