

Loyola College

**Adjustment to Campus and College Life
Class of 2010**

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Office of Institutional Research

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This report prepared by The Office of Institutional Research
Using data collected on the 2007 YFCY Survey

Social Adjustment to Campus and College Life Class of 2010

Introduction

In 2007, Loyola College participated in a national survey of students at the end of their first-year—the Your First College Year (YFCY)—that is administered by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California at Los Angeles. Items on the YFCY address issues related to students' social adjustment to campus and college life. This report focuses on these issues and is intended to inform program development at Loyola by describing the social behaviors and challenges that students face during their first year at the College.

Methodology

The YFCY survey was administered to all 922 students from the class of 2010 who had persisted into their spring semester. The surveys were provided to students online through HERI's survey research partner. The initial survey invitation was delivered on April 10th followed by up to three reminders for those students who had not completed the survey by April 28th.

A total of 269 students completed and returned their survey for a response rate of 29%. Based on this response, sampling error for proportions is $\pm 5\%$. Sampling error for subgroups may be higher and the number of responses to any one question may be smaller than 269 because of student non-response.

Demographics of the survey respondents and the Class of 2010 are found in Table 1. Women are overrepresented in the survey sample relative to the Class of 2010 but the ethnic diversity of the survey sample closely matches the diversity in the Class.

Table 1. Key Demographics of Survey Respondents

	Survey Respondents		Class of 2010
	Number	Percent	Percent
Gender			
Women	208	77%	63%
Men	61	23%	37%
Ethnicity			
African-American	13	5%	5%
Asian/Pacific Islander	13	5%	4%
Hispanic/Latino	9	3%	3%
White	222	84%	87%
Other	12	4%	1%

For purposes of the subgroup analyses throughout this report, African-Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics/Latinos are grouped together as "students of color;" "other" ethnicity students have been dropped from subgroup analyses.

Executive Summary

- ◆ Overall, students are satisfied with their experience at Loyola, their social life, and their sense of belonging. There is however, some dissatisfaction with the sense of community on campus and first-year students do experience feelings of isolation, loneliness, and homesickness.
- ◆ Most students are staying on-campus and not regularly going home on weekends.
 - ◆ While roommate difficulties occur, the vast majority of them are infrequent.
- ◆ The adjustment to academic demands and managing time is difficult for many students although the majority do report that they have found a balance between academics and other activities.
- ◆ First-year students experience worries about their health and many reported missing class at some point due to illness.
 - ◆ Most students report occasional but not frequent healthy eating and sleeping patterns.
- ◆ The vast majority of students rated their emotional health as average or better compared to others their age. Still nearly all students indicated that they felt overwhelmed at some point since entering college.
 - ◆ More than half of first-year students reported at least occasional feelings of depression since entering Loyola but only a small portion of them had sought counseling during their first year.
- ◆ Cigarette smoking is relatively uncommon among first-year students but drinking alcohol is not. Over three-quarters of students reporting drinking wine or liquor and slightly fewer reported drinking beer since entering college.
 - ◆ Over half of first-year students indicated that they had drank more than five drinks in a row at least once in the two weeks prior to the survey.
 - ◆ Just under two thirds of students reported that they had a conversation with their parents about alcohol before arriving at Loyola. The vast majority, however, had taken part in an online alcohol education program sponsored by the College.

Detailed Findings

Overall Satisfaction and Sense of Community

Overall, students are satisfied with their experience at Loyola with 79% indicating that they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied*. A similar proportion of students (77%) were satisfied with their social life but fewer (69%) were satisfied with the “overall sense of community among students.” In fact, just over half of all students indicated that they felt “isolated from campus life” during the year—9% indicated they felt *frequently* isolated and 46% stated that they *occasionally* felt isolated—and 74% stated that they were lonely or homesick at some point in time.

Although there seems to be some dissatisfaction with community, the vast majority of students indicated that they saw themselves as part of the Loyola community and felt a sense of belongingness (See Figure 1). Moreover, students report more frequent contact with close friends at Loyola than with any other group including close friends at other institutions and friends from high school (see Figure 2, next page).

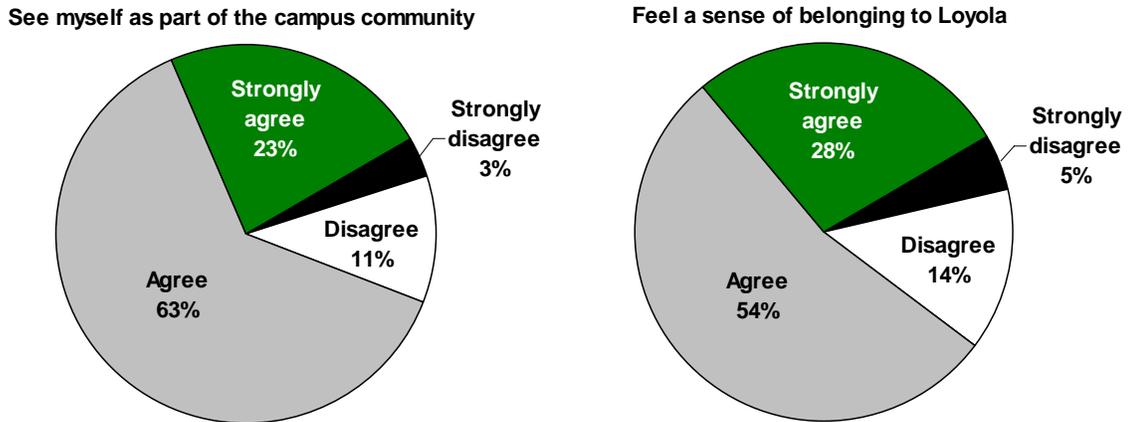


Figure 1. Sense of community and belongingness

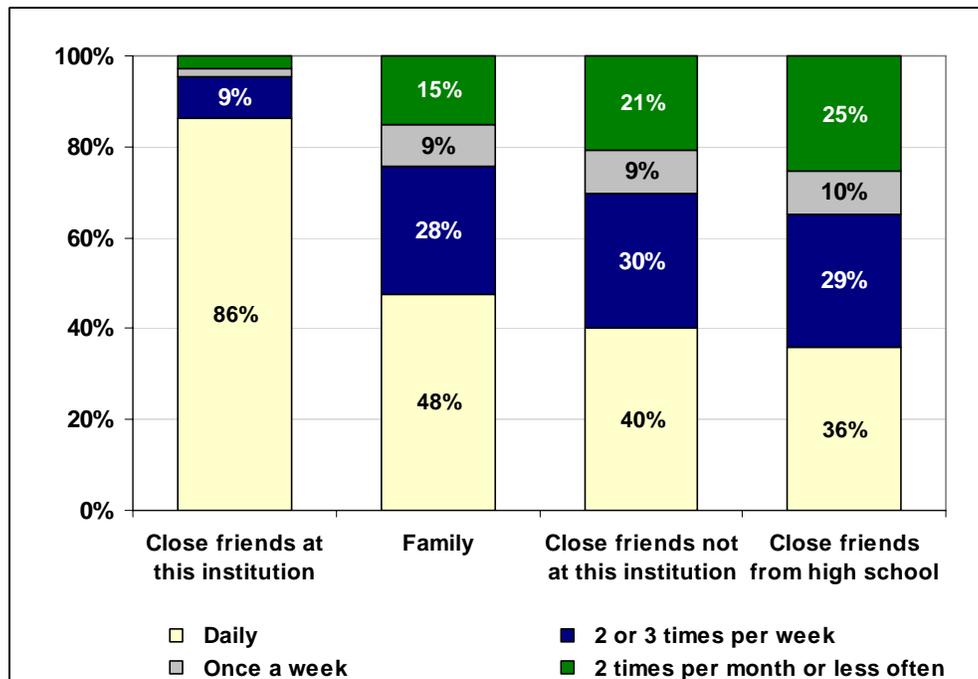


Figure 2. Interaction with friends and family

Home Life

One-third of students said that they did not go home for weekends at all during their first year and just 14% indicated that they frequently went home on weekends. Most students felt their families supported their success—67% felt *frequent* family support and 25% felt *occasional* family support.

Repeated difficulties were relatively few with just 12% of survey respondents saying that they *frequently* “had difficulty getting along with [their] roommate(s)/housemate(s)” since entering Loyola. Forty-five percent of respondents stated that they *occasionally* had difficulties with their roommates.

Academic and Social Balance

When asked about adjusting to the academic demands of college, over one-third of students said that their adjustment was difficult and nearly half of students indicated that they have had difficulty managing their time effectively since arriving at Loyola (see Figure 3, next page). Even with difficulty managing time, most students (83%) said that they had “been able to find a balance between academics and extracurricular activities.” As seen in Figure 4, next page, social life creates the most interference with schoolwork.

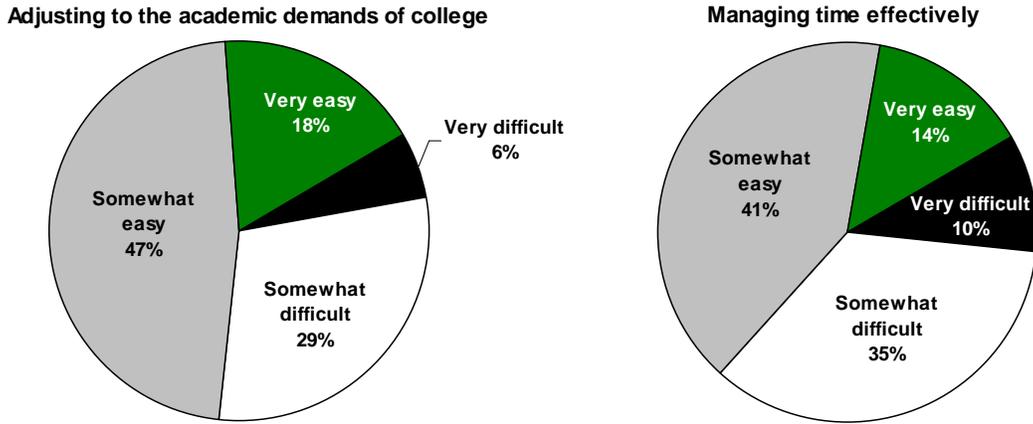


Figure 3. Adjusting to college and managing time

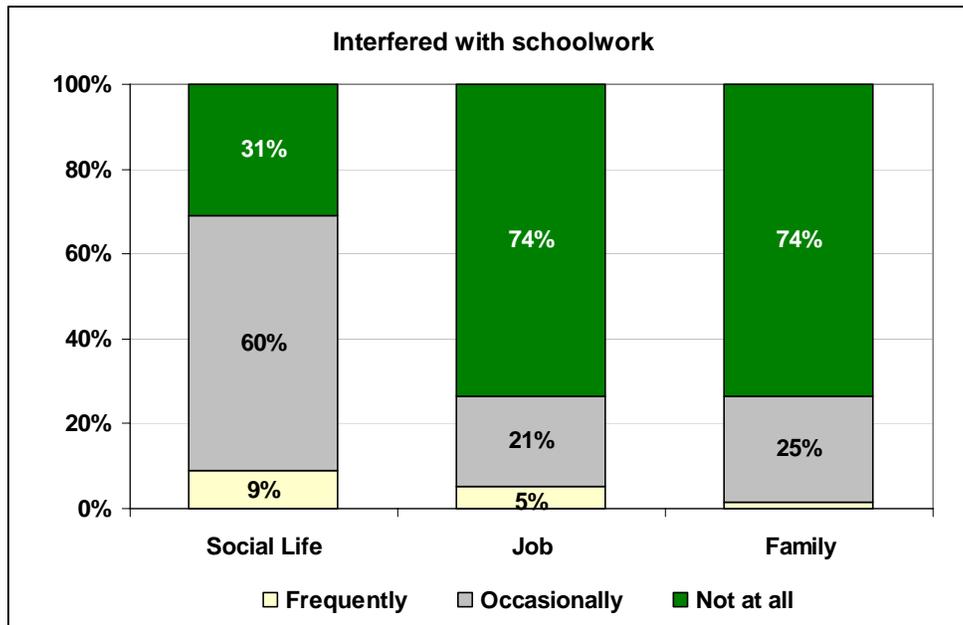


Figure 4. Extent to which various activities/responsibilities interfere with schoolwork

Health

Over half of survey respondents stated that they had been *occasionally* (48%) or *frequently* (6%) “worried about [their] health” since arriving at Loyola. Slightly fewer students (51%) reported that they had, at least occasionally, missed a class because of illness. When asked about healthy behaviors, a minority of students reported sleeping eight hours a day and eating a healthy diet on a frequent basis (see Figure 5).

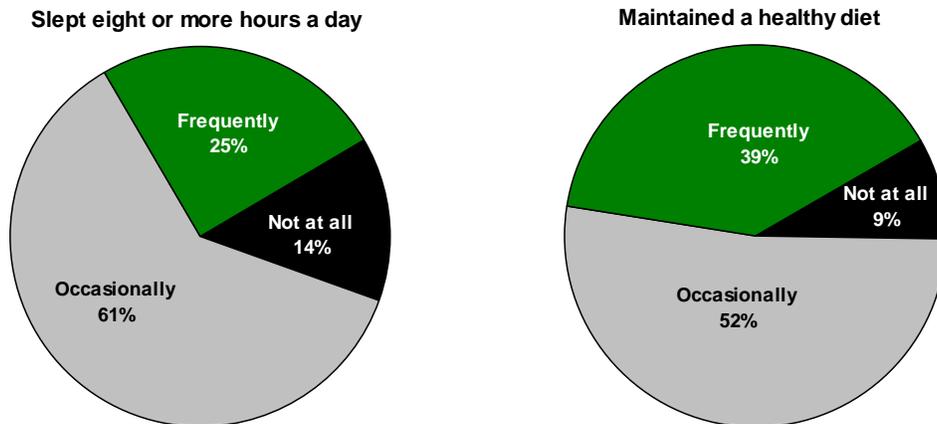


Figure 5. Sleeping and eating habits

Emotional Health

Although the vast majority of students (95%) rate their emotional health as average or better compared to others their age, nearly all students (99%) indicated that they had “felt overwhelmed by all [they] had to do” at some point since entering Loyola—43% said they were *frequently* overwhelmed and 56% were *occasionally* overwhelmed. Incidence of depression was lower, but still substantial, with 9% of respondents saying that they *frequently* felt depressed and 55% saying that they *occasionally* felt depressed during their first year. Thirteen percent of respondents stated that they sought personal counseling during their first year at Loyola.

Tobacco and Alcohol

Cigarette smokers are in the minority among first-year students with only 20% saying that they had smoked at least occasionally during the year. Drinking beer, wine, and liquor was much more common with 75% of students indicating that they drank wine or liquor and 72% saying that they drank beer at least occasionally during the year. Over 50% of first-year students indicated that they had drunk more than five drinks in a row at least once in the two weeks prior to the survey; 20% had five or more drinks in a row on three or more occasions in the two weeks prior to the survey.

Not quite two thirds of students (64%) stated that they had a conversation with their parents about alcohol before arriving at Loyola. The vast majority (98%) of first-year students indicated that they had taken part in an online alcohol education program sponsored by Loyola.

Summary

While first-year students are satisfied with Loyola and feel a sense of belongingness at the College, there is some dissatisfaction with the overall sense of community on campus which may be leading to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and homesickness. A sizable number of first-year students report feeling overwhelmed and depressed during their first year but few of them seek personal counseling.

Adjustment to academic demands and time management are challenges for first-year students although most feel that they do eventually achieve a balance between academics and other activities. Their social life, not jobs or family obligations, is the primary source of interference with academics and alcohol use—which is fairly high for a cohort of under-aged drinkers—is likely conflated with social life in the first year.