Introduction

On August 23rd the Residential Life Staff at SF State engaged our first-time freshman in an opportunity to complete a short survey containing a set of typical college experiences. The survey was designed to provide a snapshot of expectations for the incoming first year students living in the residential community.

The fall survey focused on the expectations freshmen have for their first semester of college. In January/February, a follow-up survey will be conducted with those who voluntarily provided their SF State Identification number. The follow-up survey provides similar follow up questions, allowing for comparisons between pre-semester expectations and post-semester realities.

Respondent Demographics

Below you will find demographic information of the respondents to this survey. Over 550 residents responded to the first iteration of this survey on the first day of move in during the 2012-13 academic year. Approximately 300 students provided their demographic information.

*Respondents to the survey were not required to provide this information and a number of respondents chose not to include this information.
Residential Community
A student’s experience in the residential community can have a profound effect on feelings of connectedness to the university. Based on the feedback from our first-time first year residents, they have an expectation of being involved and engage in their community, both within their individual room/apartment as well as with community members and staff.

Questions to Consider:
- What intentional programs take place early in the semester to facilitate healthy roommate relationships?
- What steps are student and professional staff taking to be visible in the residential community?

How likely are you to...live successfully with your roommate(s)?

How likely are you to...attend at least 3 floor meetings?

How likely are you to...attend at least 3 programs in the residential community?

How likely are you to...develop a good relationship with your Resident Assistant?
Academic Success and Growth

SF State first-time freshman residents expect to perform well academically. These students expect to utilize campus resources and on-campus community members to move through the academic experience successfully and continue toward the path of graduation.

Questions to consider:

- Will students benefit from having the Learning Assistance Center or tutoring hours in the residential community?
- Do these responses look different for Living Learning Community students?
- What support and/or resources can we provide to assist residents in achieving academic success in the community?
- Programmatically, how can we support these efforts?
- How might we reach out to residents who do not meet academic/GPA expectations during their first semester?

How likely are you to...get at least a 3.0 for your first semester @ SF State?

How likely are you to...utilize an academic support service such as a tutor or the Learning Assistance Center?

[Charts showing responses]

- How likely are you to...get at least a 3.0 for your first semester @ SF State?
  - Likely: 89%
  - Maybe: 11%
  - No: 0%

- How likely are you to...utilize an academic support service such as a tutor or the Learning Assistance Center?
  - Likely: 61%
  - Maybe: 33%
  - Unlikely: 6%
How likely are you to...utilize instructor office hours at least once?

- Likely: 78%
- Maybe: 21%
- Unlikely: 1%

How likely are you to...keep up with class sessions and assignments?

- Likely: 96%
- Maybe: 4%
- Unlikely: 0%

How likely are you to...study with other students in your hall/community?

- Likely: 79%
- Maybe: 19%
- No: 2%

How likely are you to...skip a class?

- Likely: 63%
- Maybe: 30%
- Unlikely: 7%
Multicultural Competence

The University Mission Statement strives to “…create and maintain an environment for learning that promotes respect for and appreciation of scholarship, freedom, human diversity, and the cultural mosaic of the City of San Francisco and the Bay Area.” SF State on campus residents report having a desire and willingness to learn about themselves through interactions with others. Our residents are also open to interacting with other campus community members that are different than them in hopes of fostering an environment of intellectual stimulation and an appreciation of differing viewpoints and perspectives.

Questions to Consider:
- How might Residential Life engage students in talking about this with each other?
- How do we work to prepare our staff participate in self-discovery as a model for helping others discover themselves?

**How likely are you to...learn something from someone who has very different beliefs?**

- Likely: 82%
- Maybe: 17%
- Unlikely: 1%

**How likely are you to...become more aware of your personal prejudices and stereotypes towards others?**

- Likely: 74%
- Maybe: 23%
- Unlikely: 3%

**How likely are you to...develop friendships with SF State students who are unlike people from home?**

- Likely: 92%
- Maybe: 8%
- Unlikely: 0%

**How likely are you to...attend a Residential Life program that focuses on Social Justice and Diversity?**

- Likely: 41%
- Maybe: 49%
- Unlikely: 10%
**Alcohol and other Drugs**

The information below indicates that our residents have somewhat of a realistic expectation about experimentation with alcohol and other drugs.

Questions to Consider:
- What programmatic efforts are we providing that encourage a harm reduction approach to alcohol and drug experimentation rather than abstinence from such substances?
- Based on conduct reports, how effective are the measures noted above?

**How likely are you to...experience a negative consequence of your drinking (physical, interpersonal, emotional)?**

- Likely: 4%
- Maybe: 19%
- Unlikely: 77%

**How likely are you to...consume alcohol while underage?**

- Likely: 13%
- Maybe: 38%
- Unlikely: 49%
How likely are you to experience a negative consequence because of your drinking?

- Likely: 2%
- Maybe: 20%
- Unlikely: 78%

How likely are you to use an illegal substance (drug or marijuana, not alcohol)?

- Likely: 5%
- Maybe: 19%
- Unlikely: 76%
**Leadership Involvement**

Astin's Theory of Involvement (1984) supports the notion that students who are involved in the higher education setting are more likely to view their collegiate experience as positive. These same students are also more likely to graduate within a reasonable timeframe and often pursue graduate and professional degrees at a higher rate.

Respondents seem to have initial ideas of what organizations exist in the residential community but based on a combination of assumptions and past participant turn out, ongoing participation within in-house organizations has dissipated throughout a given academic year.

Questions to Consider

- How do we engage students on day one of move-in?
- What outreach can we conduct before move-in that may assist in increased involvement in Residential Life organizations including Residence Hall Association (RHA), hall governments, etc.?
- How are we informing students of the opportunity to create their own organizations based on interest?
- How do we market the advantages of student involvement and attainment of valuable leadership skills?

**How likely are you to...attend a hall government meeting or program?**

- Likely: 26%
- Maybe: 55%
- Unlikely: 19%

**How likely are you to...attend a Residence Hall Association meeting or program?**

- Likely: 32%
- Maybe: 57%
- Unlikely: 11%
How likely are you to apply to join the Conduct Board?

- Likely: 9%
- Maybe: 34%
- Unlikely: 57%

How likely are you to apply to become a Resident Assistant or Community Assistant?

- Likely: 18%
- Maybe: 30%
- Unlikely: 52%
Personal Development and Accountability

The original research published on Chickering’s (1969) Seven Vectors of Identity Development and Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) work around Education and Identity supports the belief that college students will experience these steps or phases as they move toward understanding themselves, engage in value definition and congruency, and work to make meaning of the co-curricular experience. SF State residents seems to be open to gaining a better understanding of themselves and growing into adulthood.

Questions to Consider:
- What intentional programming and/or opportunities do we provide to assist students in:
  - Responding to peer pressure?
  - Understanding finances and/or financial literacy?
  - Value definition and congruency?
  - Time management and prioritizing?
- How do we/can we partner with other Student Affairs and Student Services departments to help meet the needs of our student population?

How likely are you to...to do something you normally wouldn't do because of peer pressure?

- Likely: 31%
- Maybe: 48%
- Unlikely: 21%

How likely are you to...spend more money than you had planned to spend?

- Likely: 21%
- Maybe: 48%
- Unlikely: 31%
How likely are you to...learn a great deal about who you are and what is important to you?

- Likely: 81%
- Maybe: 18%
- Unlikely: 1%

How likely are you to...manage your time effectively?

- Likely: 65%
- Maybe: 33%
- Unlikely: 2%
Community Engagement

It is sometimes difficult for students to see tangible ways in which they can contribute to their community, both on and off campus. Over three quarters (80%) of students are likely or may consider being active parts of their community by voicing concerns, participating in volunteer or service projects, and voting in the upcoming national election.

Questions to Consider:
- How are we preparing our students to appropriately voice their thoughts/opinions/concerns with each other and inside the classroom?
- What opportunities are we providing to involve students in service within and outside of the residential community?

How likely are you to...feel confident that you could talk to another person about something they are doing that bothers you?

How likely are you to...volunteer on campus or in the SF community?

How likely are you to...vote in the upcoming national election?
Follow-Up

As part of this assessment activity in Residential Life, the freshmen who provided their SF State ID numbers for this survey will be contacted in January 2013. If they are willing, they will be asked to complete another survey focused on whether the reality of their experiences aligned with their expectation of first year of college. Information gained from both this First Year Fall Survey and the follow-up survey will provide important information about the expectations and realities of SF State first year class.

Sources Cited

