

Office of

Testing Services and Assessment

1998 New Freshmen Survey

Beginning in June 1998, new freshmen registering for the Fall 1998 semester were surveyed about their motivations for attending college and their reasons for selecting UW-Green Bay. A total of 884 students completed the survey, representing 86 percent of the new freshmen enrolled for the Fall 1998 semester. Since the majority of the surveys were completed during the SOAR (Student Orientation, Advising, and Registration) sessions, the sample under represents populations that are less likely to attend SOAR (e.g., older students, international students, and students who registered late).

Why are our students attending college, and why did they choose UW-Green Bay?

The Data

In 1998, the top four reasons given by respondents for attending college were:

1. to be able to get a better job (38%; 45% in 1997)
2. to learn about things that interest me (26%; 20% in 1997)
3. to prepare myself for graduate or professional school (12%; 11% in 1997)
4. to be able to make more money (10%; 9% in 1997)

In both 1997 and 1998, 84 percent of the respondents said that **getting a better job** was a "very important" reason why they decided to attend college.

In 1998, 76 percent of the respondents said that **learning about things that interest them** was a "very important" reason why they decided to attend college; 71 percent said the same in 1997.

The top four reasons for choosing UW-Green Bay (1998 respondents) were:

1. majors or programs (24%; 27% in 1997)
2. good academic reputation (14%; 10% in 1997)
3. wanted to live near home (11%; 12% in 1997)
4. graduates get good jobs (9%; 14% in 1997)

90 percent of the respondents told us that it was "somewhat" (30%) or "very likely" (60%) that they would **need a job** to help with paying college expenses. About half (52%) thought they *might* need to work full-time while attending college. Two-thirds (67%) said they were planning to work at least part-time as freshmen.

Two-thirds believe they'll finish their bachelor's degree in four years or less. Another 30 percent say they'll finish within five years.

All but two percent of the respondents **expect to earn a bachelor's degree** or more. Over half (57%) plan to earn a master's, professional, or doctoral degree.

The top five words or word-groups used to describe UW-Green Bay were (Note: %'s will not add to 100 because each student listed three words):

1. Friendly (31%)
2. Pretty/beautiful/scenic (20%)

3. Small/smaller/size (20%)
4. Fun/exciting/cool (18%)
5. Close/convenient (10%)

One Interpretation

Good jobs in fields that interest them are important to our students. They believe that a bachelor's degree (and possibly a master's degree) will help them to get good jobs in fields interesting to them. They do not want to "make a career" from their current, primarily part-time, jobs.

Our students are somewhat naive. They *either* do not appreciate how difficult it will be to work (part- or full-time) and complete their bachelor's degree in four years, *or* they have very high expectations of themselves in terms of productivity. Regardless, they clearly believe that they need to both work and attend college. Perhaps the two activities are seen as complementary: "In order to go to school, I have to work (financial reasons)," and "Based on the work I've done in the past and am doing now, I need to go to school (financial and interest reasons)."

Ours is a pleasing campus. Our faculty and staff are friendly, our surroundings agreeable, and the UW-Green Bay experience promises to fulfill their needs for healthy interpersonal relations (without erasing the balance in their checkbook). "Affordable," "cheap," and similar words were listed by nine percent of the respondents. Words like "excellent" and "educational" were also listed, but accounted for fewer than five percent of all the descriptors.

Is UW-Green Bay an "institution of preference?"

The Data

Nearly three-fourths (71%) of the respondents identified UW-Green Bay as their **first choice of institutions** to attend, and another 25 percent identified us as their second choice.

Over one-third of the respondents (36%) didn't even apply to another institution.

57 percent of all respondents said they were "somewhat" or "very likely" to **transfer** to another institution.

Of the students who said we were their first choice, 50 percent indicated that they were "somewhat" or "very likely" to transfer.

When asked why they were "somewhat" or "very likely" to transfer to another college, the majority of the respondents (25% of the 497) said that their desired major was not offered by UW-Green Bay or that a change in desired major lead them to transfer. More than two-thirds (71%) said they were "somewhat" or "very likely" to change their major.

The second most popular reason for possibly transferring (12% of the 497) was that their first choice was elsewhere (most often listed: UW-Madison).

Only eight percent of the respondents cited enrollment in a pre-professional program as their reason for transferring.

One Interpretation

Most of our new freshmen see UW-Green Bay as a good place to start.

Some of our new freshmen don't want to stay here -- they're biding their time, perhaps hoping that a successful semester or two at UW-Green Bay will help them get into their "first choice" institution.

The students in the pre-professional programs know that they'll have to transfer to complete their programs.

Since many of our new freshmen have not yet committed to a particular area of study, or think that they might change their major, they don't know whether they'll be able to complete their degree at UW-Green Bay.

When they tell us that they are "somewhat" or "very likely" to transfer, they're "hedging their bets." After all, 93 percent of the students were 17 or 18 years of age, unmarried, and without children when they completed the

survey. The conditional phrasing used by many of the respondents is indicative of their uncertainty: "I *just might* transfer," "I *may* miss my friends and family," "I *might* want to move further away from home (or closer to home)," "I'm *not sure* if I'll fit in here," "I *may* change my major."

Acknowledgments

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Data

Reasons to Attend College (Part 1, Questions 1 and 2)

	Percent rated #1 in 1998	Percent rated #1 in 1997	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	National Data
To be able to get a better job	38%	45%	84%	15%	1%	75%
To learn about things that interest me	26%	20%	76%	23%	1%	74%
To prepare for graduate/professional school	12%	11%	49%	39%	12%	na
To be able to make more money	10%	9%	58%	38%	4%	73%
To gain a general education	8%	10%	62%	36%	2%	61%
To get away from home	1%	2%	16%	42%	42%	18%
My parents/relatives wanted me to go	1%	15%	10%	44%	46%	36%

Choice of Schools (Part 1, Question 3)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	National Data
UW-Green Bay is <i>first</i> choice	71%	75%	70%
UW-Green Bay is <i>second</i> choice	25%	22%	21%
UW-Green Bay is <i>third</i> choice	3%	3%	6%

Other Applications (Part 1, Question 4)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	National Data
Only applied to UW-Green Bay	36%	36%	35%
One other	30%	27%	15%
Two others	23%	25%	15%
Three others	8%	8%	14%
Four others	2%	3%	9%
Five or more others	1%	1%	12%

Reasons to Attend UW-Green Bay (Part 1, Questions 5 and 6)

	% rated #1 in 1998	% rated #1 in 1997	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	National Data
Majors or programs	24%	27%	69%	26%	5%	na
Good academic reputation	14%	10%	53%	44%	3%	54%
Wanted to live near home	11%	12%	28%	38%	34%	21%
Graduates get good jobs	9%	14%	55%	37%	8%	50%
Low tuition	9%	8%	45%	46%	95	30%
Appearance and facilities	6%	7%	43%	49%	8%	na
Size	4%	5%	30%	51%	19%	34%
Leads to top graduate schools	4%	3%	33%	48%	19%	31%
Campus housing	4%	35	41%	27%	32%	na
Parents'/relatives' wishes	2%	1%	6%	47%	47%	10%
Financial assistance	2%	2%	23%	34%	43%	34%
Athletic recruitment	2%	4%	5%	11%	84%	7%
Reputation for social activities	1%	1%	31%	53%	16%	26%
Interdisciplinary approach	1%	15	14%	63%	23%	na
Friends attend UW-Green Bay	1%	2%	11%	34%	55%	10%
Faculty/staff recruitment	1%	0%	3%	15%	82%	5%
Parent/relative is alumna/us	1%	<1%	4%	11%	85%	na
Local college, no other options	1%	<1%	6%	12%	82%	na
Teacher/counselor advice	<1%	1%	6%	43%	51%	13%
Not accepted elsewhere	<1%	<1%	2%	7%	91%	3%

Most Likely Area of Study (Part 1, Question 7)

1. Business (18%)
2. Education (14%)
3. Computer Science (6%)
4. Communication Processes (5%)
5. Psychology (5%)
6. Biology (4%)
7. Human Biology (4%)
8. Accounting (3%)
9. Art (3%)
10. Environmental Science (3%)
11. Music (3%)
12. Nursing (2%)
13. Social Work (2%)
14. Pre-Professional: Medicine (2%)
15. English (1%)
16. History (1%)
17. Journalism (1%)

18. Math (1%)
19. Political Science (1%)
20. Spanish (1%)
21. Theatre (1%)
22. Pre-Professional: Architecture (1%)
23. Pre-Professional: Engineering (1%)
24. Pre-Professional: Law (1%)
25. Chemistry (<1%)
26. Communication & the Arts (<1%)
27. Earth Science (<1%)
28. Economics (<1%)
29. Environmental Policy & Planning (<1%)
30. French (<1%)
31. Geography (<1%)
32. German (<1%)
33. Graphics (<1%)
34. HUD (<1%)
35. Nutritional Science (<1%)
36. Philosophy (<1%)
37. Photography (<1%)
38. Physics (<1%)
39. Public Administration (<1%)
40. Social Change & Development (<1%)
41. Urban Studies (<1%)
42. Pre-Professional: Chiropractic, Dentistry, Mortuary Science, Occupational Therapy, Optometry, Orthodontist, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physicians Assistant, Veterinary (each <1%)
43. Non-UWGB Majors (4%)
44. Unknown/Undecided (5%)

Things That Might Happen (Part 2, Question 1)

	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not At All Likely	National Data
Change your major	19%	52%	29%	13%
Need a job to help with paying college expenses	60%	30%	10%	40%
Work full time while attending college	12%	40%	48%	6%
Make at least a B average	60%	38%	2%	50%
Drop out of college temporarily or permanently	1%	6%	94%	2%
Attend summer session(s)	6%	58%	36%	na
Transfer to another college	16%	41%	43%	11%

Top ten reasons why they are "somewhat" or "very" likely to transfer to another college.

Of the 497 indicating they were "very" or "somewhat" likely to transfer

1. (25%) Availability of desired major or perception that a change in desired major may lead to the need to transfer.
2. (12%) First choice was elsewhere. Most popular first-choice for these students was UW-Madison.
3. (8%) Enrolled in pre-professional program. Must transfer to complete desired program.

4. (6%) Desire to move further away from home or closer to home.
5. (6%) Perception that a better major, program, or school may be out there.
6. (5%) Desire to "try out" new and different experiences.
7. (4%) Desire to live in a larger city and attend a larger school.
8. (3%) "Just might."
9. (3%) May miss friends and family.
10. (2%) Not sure that they will adapt to UW-Green Bay and/or be satisfied here.

Time to Complete Bachelor's Degree (Part 2, Question 3)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	Recent Cohorts
Four years or less	66%	64%	40%
Five years	30%	32%	44%
Six or more years	2%	2%	16%
I don't plan to complete a bachelor's degree	2%	1%	na

Highest Degree Planned (Part 2, Question 4)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	National Data
None	<1%	<1%	<1%
Associate's degree or vocational certificate	2%	2%	6%
Bachelor's degree	41%	33%	25%
Master's degree	35%	46%	39%
Professional degree (e.g., law, medicine)	13%	10%	12%
Doctoral degree	9%	9%	15%

Freshman Year Plans (Part 2, Question 5)

	Yes (1998)	Yes (1997)	Maybe (1998)	Maybe (1997)	No (1998)	No (1997)
Attend "Intro to College"	43%	34%	41%	47%	16%	19%
Live on campus	68%	67%	3%	6%	29%	27%
Take out a loan to pay for college expenses	46%	46%	24%	24%	30%	30%
Earn college credit through CLEP, AP, IB, or retroactively	24%	24%	35%	35%	41%	41%
Work part time	67%	64%	21%	25%	12%	11%
Work full time	6%	5%	21%	20%	73%	75%

Demographic Information (Part 3)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	National Data
<i>Gender</i>			
Female	66%	63%	56%
Male	34%	37%	44%
<i>Age</i>			
<=17	20%	19%	na

18	73%	74%	na
19	4%	4%	na
>=20	3%	3%	na
<i>Racial/ethnic background</i>			
White	94.8%	95.9%	80.7%
African American/Black	0.9%	0.4%	10.6%
American Indian	1.2%	1.2%	3.1%
Asian American (all)	1.9%	1.5%	5.3%
- Southeast Asian	0.7%	1.2%	0.6%
Hispanic	0.7%	0.5%	4.2%
Other	0.6%	0.6%	2.9%
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Single	99%	99%	98%
<i>Children</i>			
No	99%	98%	na

Parents' Level of Education (Part 3, Question 6)

	Mother			Father		
	% in 1998	% in 1997	National	% in 1998	% in 1997	National
HS or less	47%	46%	37%	43%	43%	35%
Some college	32%	28%	24%	30%	25%	20%
Bachelor's degree	14%	17%	27%	16%	20%	27%
Graduate degree	7%	9%	12%	11%	12%	18%

Distance from Home to College (Part 3, Question 7)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	National Data
10 or fewer miles	14%	14%	19%
11-50 miles	37%	36%	28%
51-100 miles	35%	35%	14%
101 to 500 miles	14%	14%	29%
More than 500 miles	0%	1%	10%

Self-Reported High School Rank (Part 3, Question 8)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	1998 actual	1997 actual
Upper quarter	56%	57%	49%	48%
Second quarter	36%	36%	41%	43%
Third quarter	8%	7%	9%	8%
Bottom quarter	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

Self-Reported High School GPA (Part 3, Question 9)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	1998 actual	1997 actual
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Planned Credit Load in Fall (Part 3, Question 10)

	% in 1998	% in 1997	1998 actual	1997 actual
Full-time	93%	94%	98%	98%
Part-time	7%	6%	2%	2%

Impressions of UW-Green Bay (Part 4)

(Note: % will not add to 100 since each student could list up to three words)

1. 277 (31%) Friendly
2. 177 (20%) Pretty/beautiful/scenic
3. 173 (20%) Small/smaller/size
4. 155 (18%) Fun/exciting/cool
5. 86 (10%) Close/convenient
6. 83 (9%) Nice
7. 80 (9%) Comfortable/cozy/homey/relaxing
8. 78 (9%) Affordable/cheap/inexpensive/economical
9. 72 (8%) Clean
10. 46 (5%) Helpful

Sources:

1. Source: "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 1997." Published by American Council on Education and University of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute. Referenced in the Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac Issue, August 28, 1998, Vol. XLV, No. 1, p. 22. The statistics are based on survey responses of 252,082 freshmen entering 464 two-year and four-year institutions in the fall of 1997. The figures were statistically adjusted to represent the total population of approximately 1.61 million first-time, full-time freshmen. Because of rounding or multiple responses, figures may add to more than 100 percent.
2. Source: UW-Green Bay Institutional Research data. Data reflects time to graduation for the 292 students who graduated in May/August 1998 and who started at UW-Green Bay within the previous seven years.
3. Sources: *Gender distribution*. Chronicle of Higher Education Almanac Issue, August 28, 1998, Vol. XLV, No. 1, p. 119. *Racial/ethnic background*. See Endnote 1. *Marital status*. Astin, Alexander, et al. (1997) The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA).
4. Source: Astin, Alexander, et al. (1997) The American Freshman: Thirty Year Trends (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA).
5. Source: UW-Green Bay Institutional Research data.