

**Report on the 2009 Administration of the  
UIC Entering Student Survey**

**October 2009**

**Office of the Vice Provost for  
Academic and Enrollment Services**

**Office of the Vice Chancellor  
for Student Affairs**

## **Preface**

This report details the results from the 2009 administration of the Entering Student Survey (ESS). The ESS is a UIC-developed instrument to track characteristics and trends of new freshmen at UIC. The results of the ESS are presented here for use by the University community in developing a more detailed understanding of the undergraduate students enrolling at UIC.

The ESS is a collaboration of the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Enrollment Services – Office of Degree Progress and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Research and Assessment Committee. We are indebted to the Office of Student Development Services which graciously allows time for the administration of the survey during the new student orientation program. In addition, the student orientation leaders have been our partners in encouraging students to complete the surveys. Finally, we wish to thank the over 2300 UIC students who took time from their busy student schedules to complete the survey.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this report. We also welcome future research collaborations on the ESS to build on our current findings and to provide information to promote educational improvement.

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## Highlights from the 2009 ESS

This is the second year for UIC administration of the ESS. A total of 2304 (73%) of the 3147 new freshmen enrolled for Fall 2009 completed the survey during summer orientation. Of the students who completed the survey, 2089 provided a UIN number which allows us to present additional information and conduct follow-up analyses.

The Entering Student Survey was first administered to UIC students who entered as new freshmen in the Fall of 2008. The survey is a two page instrument designed at UIC to gather information about new students' pre-enrollment attitudes and dispositions; as well as their aspirations and expectations. Most of the questions have remained from the 2008 instrument. Many of the questions are common to a variety of nationally marketed new student surveys.

Two additions of note in the 2009 instrument are: 1) an item on religious affiliation; and 2) an open-ended question asking students to indicate their *first* language as a follow-up for students who report that English is not their first language. We have known from past surveys that a first language other than English is another point of diversity among our students. This year 24% of the students reported that English is not their first language. In 2006, when the campus administered the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, about 35% of the respondents indicated that English was not their native language compared with less than 5% at comparable four- year institutions.

This open-ended question allowed students to report their first language. Thus, allowing us to capture the breadth of diversity in languages among our new students. Of the 510 students who completed the open-ended question, forty-five languages were named. From this group, the most frequently reported languages were:

- Spanish - 32.4%
- Polish – 12.2%
- Chinese – 10.8%
- Korean – 6.5%
- Tagalog (Philipino) – 3.9%

In addition, we calculated a degree aspiration variable from the two variables – highest degree sought at UIC and highest degree sought anywhere. From this recalculation, we found that 53% reported that they aspire to earn a postgraduate degree. Of that group, 40% plan to attend UIC for their postgraduate degree.

This report reflects a summary of the total response group. As in the past, we will make these tables available disaggregated in variety of breakout groups such as by college; by racial/ethnic groupings; and by students from Chicago Public High Schools.

## **Introduction**

This report presents summary data in table form on the Entering Student Survey (ESS), which was administered to new freshmen undergraduate students of the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) during New Student Orientation in the summer 2009. A total of 13 tables are presented which summarize the results of student responses to different sections of the ESS.

## **Survey Instrument**

The Entering Student Survey is a survey instrument developed by UIC administrators with the advice and input of the University Data Analysis Group (UDAG). The survey was initially administered during the summer 2008. The 2009 administration was a slightly expanded survey. It is a two-page paper and pencil instrument. It includes 113 quantitative items distributed as follow:

- 8 background information about students
- 32 items related to student pre-disposition and self-assessment of motivation
- 31 items on the college choice and decision
- 42 items related to student aspirations and future plans

The survey includes one open-ended question on the native language of students who indicate that English is not their first language. In addition, the survey requests student University Identification Number (UIN). Use of the UIN allows us to report demographic characteristics of the respondents.

## **Methodology**

The participants were students admitted to UIC as new freshmen who attended one of 14 summer orientation sessions held on the UIC campus during June, July and August 2009. Of the 3182 new freshmen students who participated in summer orientation, 2304 completed the ESS. This represents 73% of the new freshman cohort. Of the students who completed the survey, 2089 provided a UIN number (90% of the completers). The table below details the distribution of survey participants by racial/ethnic and college of enrollment compared to the entire freshman cohort.

<b>Entering Student Survey - 2009 Participants compared to enrollments</b>					
	Survey	% of	New	% of cohort	% of the cohort
	Participants	participants	Freshmen		who completed
			Enrollment		the survey
African Amer	180	7.8%	308	9.8%	58.4%
Asian	507	22.0%	754	24.0%	67.2%
Hispanic	448	19.4%	696	22.1%	64.4%
Caucasian	845	36.7%	1212	38.5%	69.7%
Other	109	4.7%	177	5.6%	61.6%
No UIN	215	9.3%	---	---	---
TOTALS	2304	100.0%	3147	100.0%	73.2%
Art & Arch	175	7.6%	270	8.6%	64.8%
AHS	69	3.0%	107	3.4%	64.5%
CBA	229	9.9%	337	10.7%	68.0%
Education	23	1.0%	29	0.9%	79.3%
Engineering	273	11.8%	394	12.5%	69.3%
LAS	1320	57.3%	2010	63.9%	65.7%
No UIN	215	9.3%	---	---	---
TOTALS	2304	100.0%	3147	100.0%	73.2%

## **Explanation of Tables**

### **Section 1: Student Characteristics (4 tables)**

Tables 1 through 6 present data on the characteristics and background of respondents ranging parents' level of education, concern about financing college, religion, citizenship and first language. Parent education is a calculated variable from questions about highest level of schooling for father and mother separately.

### **Section 2: Student Pre-dispositions and Self-reported Preparation (4 tables)**

Table 7 through 11 present information on students' pre-disposition based on self-reported high school activities and anticipated need for academic assistance.

Time spent on various activities ranging from studying, working to time spent texting provides a context for how students managed their time during the last year of high school.

Students provide information on enrollment in Advanced Placement courses, as well as use of tutoring in specific disciplines.

Finally, students are asked to rate themselves compared to the average person their age on 18 traits associated with aspects of college preparation and motivation such as mathematical ability, self-understanding, and self confidence and drive to achieve. The responses range from: 1=*highest 10%*; 2=*above average*; 3=*average*; 4=*below average*; and 5=*lowest 10%*.

### **Section 3: College Choice and Decision to Attend College (2 tables)**

Table 12 and 13 displays the results of two questions related to the college choice and decision to attend UIC.

Students were asked to indicate the importance of various factors in the decision to attend college. Reasons listed ranged from: to get training for a specific career to gain a general education and appreciate of ideas. In regard to the decision to attend UIC, students were asked to rate the importance of various factors in the decision to attend UIC; factors ranged from: 'A relative wanted me to come to UIC' to 'Not offered aid by my first choice'. Response categories for both variables were: 1) Very important; 2) Somewhat important; and 3) Not important.

### **Section 4: Future Plans and Aspirations (2 tables)**

Tables 14 and 15 detail responses to two questions regarding anticipated behaviors and activities during college in the question: "What is your best guess as to the chance you will:" followed by a list of 21 responses ranging from change major fields, to participate in student clubs/groups. A four level response scale is provided: 1) Very good chance; 2) some chance; 3) Very little chance; and 4) No chance.

Students are also asked to indicate the value placed on a range of 'life goals' ranging from 'Becoming an authority in my field' to 'Integrating spirituality into my life'. Response categories are: 1=Essential; 2=Very Important; 3=Somewhat Important; and 4=Not Important.

## Section 1: Student Characteristics

**Table 1: Parental Education**

No exposure to college (no college attendance)	28.9%
Some college experience (attend, but no degree)	17.9%
One college degree	23.2%
Both (or only parent reported) has college degree	29.9%

**Table 2: Do you have any concerns about your ability to finance your college education?**

None (confident sufficient funds)	19.0%
Some (probably enough funds)	60.5%
Major (not sure enough funds)	20.4%

**Table 3: Which best describes your religious affiliation?**

Buddhist	2.0%
Hindu	4.1%
Jewish	1.7%
Muslim	6.5%
Protestant Christian	14.4%
Roman Catholic	40.9%
Other Religion	9.9%
No Affiliation	20.5%

**Table 4: Citizenship Status and First Language**

U.S. Citizen	91.8%
Perm Resident/Green Card	5.9%
Neither	2.3%
<b>English is first language</b>	<b>76.0%</b>

## Section 2: Student Pre-dispositions and Self-reported preparation

**Table 6:** Have had or do think will need any special tutoring or help:

	<b>Had Help</b>	<b>Will need help</b>
Math	16.1%	23.5%
Science	10.2%	17.8%
Writing	11.8%	17.6%

**Table 7:** During last year in high school, how many hours during typical week, did you spend:

	None	Less than 2 hrs	3 to 5 hrs	6 to 10 hrs	more than 10 hrs
Studying/homework	2.1%	26.5%	40.5%	20.5%	10.5%
Socializing with friends	0.6%	10.1%	30.8%	32.1%	26.4%
Talking with teachers (not in class)	17.7%	60.7%	16.7%	3.5%	1.3%
Exercise or sports	6.8%	27.4%	27.5%	18.3%	19.9%
Partying	31.8%	35.6%	19.5%	10.0%	3.1%
Working (for pay)	38.1%	7.5%	9.7%	13.9%	30.8%
Volunteer work	39.6%	33.5%	17.1%	5.8%	4.0%
Student clubs/groups	29.3%	32.8%	23.1%	8.0%	6.8%
Watching TV	10.0%	42.3%	30.0%	11.4%	6.4%
Reading for pleasure	25.7%	44.1%	20.2%	6.7%	3.3%
Online social networking	11.9%	37.9%	29.6%	13.1%	7.4%
Texting	12.3%	30.1%	24.2%	14.7%	18.6%
Prayer/meditation	45.3%	42.0%	8.5%	2.6%	1.6%

**Table 8:** How many AP courses or exams did you take in high school?

	<u>AP courses</u>	<u>AP exams</u>
None	29.9%	40.0%
1 to 2	37.8%	33.7%
3 to 5	24.8%	20.8%
6 or more	7.5%	5.5%



## Section 2: Student Pre-dispositions and Self-reported preparation (continued)

**Table 9: Rate self on following traits compared with average person your age**

	<b>Highest 10%</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>Lowest 10%</b>
Academic Ability	17.1%	54.1%	27.8%	1.0%	0.0%
Artistic Ability	8.2%	22.0%	39.2%	22.8%	7.9%
Computer skills	10.3%	34.6%	49.9%	4.7%	0.5%
Competitiveness	21.0%	37.1%	33.2%	7.4%	1.3%
Cooperativeness	33.7%	46.0%	19.1%	1.0%	0.2%
Creativity	19.3%	36.3%	37.5%	6.1%	0.7%
Drive to achieve	38.8%	42.1%	17.7%	1.4%	0.1%
Emotional health	27.4%	39.0%	30.8%	2.5%	0.3%
Initiative	21.0%	39.3%	36.7%	2.8%	0.2%
Leadership ability	21.1%	37.9%	34.5%	6.0%	0.5%
Mathematical ability	15.2%	36.0%	37.6%	9.7%	1.4%
Physical health	21.6%	35.8%	37.6%	4.4%	0.5%
Self Confidence (intellectual)	24.0%	45.8%	28.3%	1.7%	0.2%
Self Confidence (social)	22.0%	37.6%	34.9%	5.0%	0.5%
Self-understanding	24.0%	44.2%	30.6%	1.1%	0.1%
Spirituality	13.3%	24.3%	44.7%	13.4%	4.2%
Understanding of others	24.7%	45.9%	27.7%	1.5%	0.1%
Writing ability	12.0%	31.9%	45.6%	9.9%	0.6%

### Section 3: College Choice and Decision to Attend College

**Table 10: How important is each reason influence decision to attend college**

	Very Impt	Somewhat Impt	Not Impt
Parents wanted me to go	51.5%	33.6%	15.0%
I couldn't find a job	7.2%	15.6%	77.2%
Opportunity to get away from home	16.3%	39.1%	44.6%
To get a better job	85.2%	11.8%	3.0%
Gain gen educ and apprec of ideas	78.1%	20.1%	1.8%
Improve reading and study skills	49.0%	40.8%	10.2%
Make me more cultured	44.3%	43.2%	12.5%
To be able to make more money	72.9%	23.6%	3.5%
Learn about things that interest me	82.8%	16.0%	1.3%
Prepare for grad or prof school	72.5%	21.2%	6.3%
Mentor encouraged me	18.0%	39.5%	42.5%
Get training for specific career	80.6%	16.0%	3.4%

**Table 11: Reasons that influenced decision to attend UIC**

	Very Impt	Somewhat Impt	Not Impt
Relatives wanted me to come here	12.6%	34.3%	53.1%
Teacher advised me	6.6%	29.5%	63.9%
Good academic reputation	60.9%	34.8%	4.3%
Good social reputation	32.1%	49.0%	19.0%
Racial and ethnic diversity	39.2%	39.0%	21.7%
Offered financial assistance	31.8%	28.0%	40.2%
Special educational programs	18.9%	32.8%	48.3%
Low tuition	44.0%	41.9%	14.1%
High school counselor advised me	9.8%	34.3%	55.9%
Wanted to live near home	36.1%	37.6%	26.3%
Not offered aid by 1st choice	7.3%	17.2%	75.5%
Grads are admitted to top prof sch	49.6%	38.3%	12.0%
Grads get good jobs	63.5%	30.0%	6.6%
Not accepted elsewhere	2.9%	7.8%	89.3%
Rankings in natl magazines	13.6%	41.0%	45.3%
Info from website	20.1%	48.3%	31.7%
Friends attending UIC	12.2%	36.0%	51.8%
Offered a scholarship	14.4%	19.3%	66.3%
Admitted to special program	33.5%	28.9%	37.6%

## Section 4: Future Plans and Aspirations

**Table 12: What is your best guess of chances that you will:**

	Very Good chance	Some chance	Very little chance	No chance
Change major	16.2%	34.0%	36.5%	13.3%
Change career choices	12.6%	36.7%	34.3%	16.4%
Grad with honors	28.1%	60.1%	10.6%	1.2%
Partic in stdt govt	5.7%	25.3%	45.6%	23.4%
Get job to help pay for college	60.1%	30.8%	7.3%	1.8%
Work fulltime	11.0%	30.1%	41.4%	17.6%
Play varsity athletics	6.1%	16.9%	37.7%	39.3%
Play intramural athletics	14.1%	28.3%	30.8%	26.8%
Make at least a "B" average	67.5%	30.8%	1.3%	0.4%
Need extra time to complete deg	5.3%	29.5%	49.4%	15.8%
Get bachelor's degree	83.6%	14.6%	1.5%	0.4%
Drop out of UIC temporarily	0.5%	2.5%	19.3%	77.7%
Drop out of UIC permanently	0.5%	1.6%	11.8%	86.1%
Transfer to another college	3.4%	17.7%	39.5%	39.4%
Be satisfied with college	56.7%	40.2%	2.2%	0.9%
Partic volunteer or comm svcs	27.4%	45.1%	22.3%	5.2%
Seek personal counseling	7.6%	26.4%	48.0%	18.0%
Dev close friendships w/oth stdts	68.8%	28.5%	2.3%	0.3%
Comm reg with professors	38.2%	53.2%	8.1%	0.5%
Socialize w/ other rac/ethn groups	74.3%	23.0%	2.2%	0.5%
Partic in stdt clubs/groups	40.7%	42.4%	15.1%	1.8%

**Table 13: Indicate the importance to you personally of each of the following:**

	Essential	Very Impt	Somewhat Impt	Not Impt
Accomplished in perf arts	7.7%	13.1%	29.5%	49.6%
Authority in my field	26.6%	41.4%	26.1%	5.9%
Recognition for contrib in my field	24.5%	44.1%	26.8%	4.7%
Influencing political structure	7.8%	14.0%	43.3%	34.9%
Influencing social values	13.9%	35.3%	40.2%	10.6%
Raising a family	35.6%	33.1%	21.2%	10.0%
Adm responsib for work of others	13.4%	34.2%	41.7%	10.7%
Being well off financially	47.1%	36.9%	13.4%	2.5%
Helping others in difficulty	31.5%	43.2%	23.2%	2.0%
Writing original works	5.7%	8.9%	29.7%	55.6%
Successful in own business	28.0%	29.8%	27.3%	14.9%
Involved in cleaning up environment	7.4%	19.2%	52.3%	21.1%
Meaningful philosophy of life	19.3%	31.7%	36.3%	12.7%
Particip in community action prog	8.6%	24.0%	48.0%	19.4%
Promote racial understanding	11.1%	27.4%	43.0%	18.5%
Keeping up with political affairs	7.2%	22.3%	46.9%	23.6%
Becoming community leaders	10.8%	25.6%	42.1%	21.5%
Integrating spirituality into life	12.3%	19.5%	38.5%	29.7%