

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Table of Contents	i
• Executive Summary	ii
• Part I.....	1
○ Introduction	2
○ Characteristics of the Respondent Pool.....	3
○ Academic/Intellectual Activities.....	5
○ Personal/Social Activities	8
○ Perceptions of the Campus Environment.....	11
○ Quality of Relationships.....	13
○ Student Development and Educational Attainment	14
○ Student Satisfaction.....	19
• Part II.....	22
○ Gender	23
○ Ethnicity	37
○ Disciplinary Area	52
○ Entering Status	66
○ Family Income.....	80
○ First Generation College Status	94
• References	108
• Appendix: Research Universities in CSEQ Norms.....	109

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of UCSD's long-standing commitment toward undergraduates and the quality of their experiences, periodic assessment and evaluation studies are carried out with the aid of the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). The CSEQ is a standardized survey instrument widely used among institutions of higher education for assessing the quality of student experiences and for examining sources of student progress toward attainment of important goals of higher education. Representing a time and educational impact sequence, the CSEQ provides faculty, program administrators, and decision-makers with answers to questions such as:

- ◆ Who are our students?
- ◆ What are their objectives?
- ◆ How much are they involved in the academic and social life of the campus?
- ◆ How do they characterize the institution's environment?
- ◆ What have they gained from their undergraduate experience?

SUMMARY

1. How involved are students in the academic and social life of the campus?

Results obtained from the 1999 administration of the CSEQ indicate that undergraduates at UCSD are involved in the academic and social life of the campus more now than they have ever been in the past. Significantly greater numbers of students invest "quality" time and effort to course learning, writing, scientific experimentation, and quantitative pursuits. Students also interact with faculty more now than they have ever done in the past. Students' participation in art, music, and theater events, their use of recreational and athletic facilities, study lounges, and library facilities has increased significantly since the last administration of the CSEQ. In short, students are taking a more active role in their self-development than past studies suggest and as a consequence are gaining more in the process.

2. How do they characterize the institution's environment?

On measures of campus climate, we found that students' impressions regarding the degree to which the university promotes or facilitates students' intellectual and scholarly development is high – exceeding the view of student respondents in research universities nationwide (e.g., 91% of our students view the campus environment as one that promotes the intellectual and scholarly development of students compared to the research university norm of 78%). Compared to the national norm, however, relatively few undergraduates consider the curriculum at UCSD as having personal relevance or practical value. Whereas 56% of the students in research universities nationally consider the curriculum as having practical value, only 38% of UCSD students hold a similar view. At UCSD, lack of emphasis on the practical is especially problematic for African American (20%) and Native American (26%) students who reportedly

view the course offerings as having substantially less value than students in general (i.e., 38%). The institution's emphasis on the vocational/career development of students is also viewed as being substantially below that of the research university norm (UCSD=34%; RU norm=54%). With respect to institution's emphasis on promoting an understanding and appreciation for human diversity, we found that over half (56%) of the student body viewed the emphasis at UCSD as being "strong". Again, we found variations based on ethnicity with proportionately fewer African American (25%), Native American (40%) and Hispanic (43%) students sharing the majority view. We found no other significant differences in students' perceptions of the campus environment based on characteristics of gender, parental income, educational level of parents, or entering status. Nor did we find differences in students' satisfaction ratings based on these background factors.

3. What have they gained from their undergraduate experience?

When compared with the results obtained from the 1994 administration of the CSEQ, we found that in today's educational environment, UCSD students report significantly greater gains in intellectual, science/technology, personal/social, and career/vocational development. Students' estimate of gains is highest in those areas that are closely related to their major field of interest – as one would anticipate. For example, students who major in engineering or science/math gain the most in science and technology development while students majoring in the arts gain the least. And consistent with the student development model on which the CSEQ is based, students estimate of gains increase significantly as they progress from freshman to senior class level – providing evidence for the "value-added" concept of higher education. Beyond these expected outcomes, we found no differences in the self-reported outcomes of students based on their gender, ethnicity, entering status, income or educational level of parent(s). Worthy of attention, however, is the fact that on all measures of student development (intellectual, scientific, cultural, personal, vocational), UCSD students report greater gains than students attending research universities nationwide.

Where do we go from here?

For the most part, the findings obtained in the 1999 administration of the CSEQ are encouraging. The quality of the undergraduate experience has improved substantially as measured by the amount of time and effort students devote to academic, interpersonal, and cultural activities. And according to their own self-assessment, students have made substantial progress in developmental areas considered to be important outcomes of the higher educational process. Writing skills, knowledge of computers and information technologies, quantitative skills, and the ability to function as a team member are just some of the areas in which students report significant gains. There remain, however, significant differences between ethnic groups in their views regarding the practical value of the curriculum and in their perceptions of the social environment at UCSD. By presenting the findings obtained from the CSEQ in full detail and broken down by personal characteristics of the student, it is hoped that the information will point to areas where collaboration among faculty, administrators, student affairs personnel, and students would lead to further improvements in student outcomes and an equally positive experience for all. We finish as we began with a series of questions to consider while reviewing the detailed results presented in the body of the report.

1. Are students gaining in those areas that are consistent with academic and student service program goals and objectives? If so, what can be done to sustain such efforts? If not, what areas are in need of attention?
2. Are first and second year students devoting time and energy in areas that will benefit them the most and help them become integrated into the campus community? Are seniors putting forth effort in areas that will ease their transition into the worlds of work or graduate school?
3. Are students' writing experiences sufficient at each class level? What kinds of writing experiences might faculty assign to encourage seniors to continue refining their writing skills?
4. What are the most effective programs for helping students feel confident to succeed in their academic and social pursuits? Given that research shows, rather convincingly, that involvement in the life of the campus is positively related to "successful" student outcomes, how can we encourage students to participate in campus activities soon after they matriculate?
5. In what ways are transfer students different from native students? Do they have different academic and social needs? Are different kinds of programs needed for different levels of students?
6. Given differences in students' views on the practical value of the curriculum, can we adjust the curriculum to meet the concerns of students? Are the educational and post-graduate objectives of students being adequately addressed?