

2014

Assessment Brief: Profile of Online Sophomore Inquiry Students

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Citation Details

Osborn, Nicholas and Carpenter, Rowanna L., "Assessment Brief: Profile of Online Sophomore Inquiry Students" (2014). *University Studies Assessment Research*. 14.

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ASSESSMENT BRIEF

inquiry. information. action.

THIS REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY: Nicholas Osborn, GTA Mathematics and Statistics and Rowanna Carpenter, Director of Assessment and Upper Division Clusters

As online learning environments become more prevalent in college curriculum, the need for information regarding student participation in them increases. The University Studies Department (UNST) at Portland State University (PSU) has yet to investigate the profile of students enrolled in the UNST courses offered online. This report provides an academic and demographic description of students taking at least one UNST Sophomore Inquiry course during the Fall of 2010 or 2011. In addition, online SINQ students are compared to the overall population of SINQ students to identify important differences.

In Summer 2013, UNST was awarded \$275,000 from the reTHINK Provost's Challenge project (<http://rethink.pdx.edu/>), for the purpose of translating the mission of UNST into coherent online pathways for students. As the work on that project begins, a profile of online UNST students would be useful in order to better serve and understand our online students.

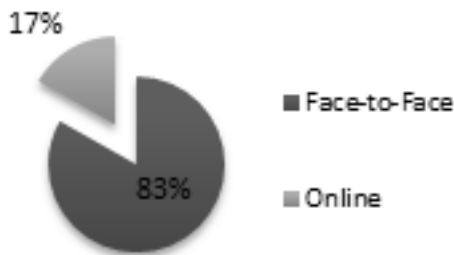
DATA SOURCE: PSU Data Warehouse: PSU Office of Institutional Research and Planning 4th week student data file, includes demographic and enrollment data for all fall 2010 and fall 2011 SINQ students. Overall N = 3964

OVERALL PROFILE

(All online SINQ Students, N=665)

As the following figure displays, out of 3964 students that were enrolled in a SINQ during Fall 2010 and 2011, 17% of them took at least one online SINQ. The academic and demographic profiles describe the 17% of students enrolled in at least one online SINQ.

At Least One Online vs Face-to-Face Only



Demographic Profile

Gender: 59% of SINQ students were female, 39% were male, and 2% were unknown or other genders.

Ethnicity: 1.5% were Native American, 3.9% were Asian, 5.3% were Black, 6.6% were Hispanic/Latino, 3.9% were International Students, 2.9% reported multiple ethnicities, 0.5% were Pacific Islander, 62.9% were White, and 7.1% were unknown.

Residency Status: 83% of online SINQ students were Oregon residents.

Age: 18% of online SINQ students were 19 years or younger, 53% were between 20 and 24, 15% were between 25 and 29, and 12% were 30 years or older.

Academic Profile

New students: 24% of online SINQ students were new to PSU during Fall 2010 and 2011.

Full-time status: 73% of online SINQ students were enrolled at PSU as full-time students.

Class level: 44% of online SINQ students were sophomores, 17% were freshmen, 27% were juniors and 12% were seniors.

Transfer: 38% of online SINQ students transferred to PSU from another institution.

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ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE SINQ STUDENT COMPARISON

Compared to the overall population of SINQ students, online students differ across several academic and demographic factors. In other words, the data suggest students with certain characteristics are either overrepresented or underrepresented, at varying degrees, among online SINQ students with respect to Fall 2010 and 2011 SINQs. All differences reported are significant, $p < .05$.

Demographic Comparison

Gender: Among online SINQ students, male students were underrepresented and female students were overrepresented. Also the 2% of students whose gender was unknown or other genders were overrepresented.

Ethnicity: The data regarding ethnicity yielded results that were borderline statistically significant ($p = .05$). With respect to this level of significance, international students were underrepresented and black students were overrepresented.

Residency Status: Among online SINQ students, Oregon residents were overrepresented and non-residents were underrepresented.

Age: Among online SINQ students, students age 19 or younger were underrepresented, while ages 25 and older were overrepresented.

Academic Comparison

New students: Among the online SINQ students new to PSU during Fall 2010 and 2011 transfer students were overrepresented.

Full-time status: Among online SINQ students, full-time students were underrepresented and part-time students were overrepresented.

Class level: Among online SINQ students, freshmen and sophomores were underrepresented, while juniors and seniors were overrepresented.

Transfer: Among online SINQ students, students transferring to PSU from another institution with 45-89 and 90-134 credit hours were overrepresented, while students transferring as freshman were underrepresented.

This report has provided a description of the 665 (17%) students enrolled in at least one online SINQ course during the Fall 2010 or Fall 2011 terms. Among these students just under three quarters of them were enrolled full-time; almost 60% were female, and over 80% were Oregon residents, while less than half of them were sophomores. There were several areas in which the online group differed from the face-to-face group.

In terms of academics, part-time students, juniors, and seniors were overrepresented; current freshman, and sophomores were underrepresented. With regard to demographics, students 25 years or older and female students, were overrepresented; students 19 years or younger and male students were underrepresented. The analysis provides both a profile of the students taking online SINQs within the UNST department and highlights some possible academic and demographic indicators for the type of student utilizing online courses. Future research should expand the population of students to see if these findings are consistent with online courses other than SINQ.