

2018

A Profile of Freshman Inquiry Students Fall 2018

Portland State University. University Studies Program

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A Profile of Freshman Inquiry Students Fall 2018

In order to better understand the students who enroll in Freshman Inquiry (FRINQ) courses and identify areas where they may need support, University Studies (UNST) began collecting and compiling data on these students. This report presents a profile of FRINQ students from Fall 2018. It presents an overview of all students enrolled in FRINQ during fall 2018 and then summarizes information from the Prior Learning Survey. It is organized around three areas that contribute to student success: academic preparation and concern; financial and physical wellbeing; and connectedness to campus.

Data Sources:

PSU Data Warehouse: PSU Office of Institutional Research and Planning 4th week student data file, includes demographic and enrollment data for all 2018 FRINQ students.

Prior Learning Survey: Survey administered during weeks 1 and 2 of fall term. 1247 students responded to the survey (77.8% response rate).

OVERALL PROFILE (For all FRINQ students, N=1434)

Academic Profile

New students: 94.6% of FRINQ students were new to PSU during Fall 2018. The rest began at PSU prior to Fall 2018.

Full-time status: 95.3% of FRINQ students were enrolled at PSU as full-time students.

Class level: 96.9% of FRINQ students were freshmen. 2.3% were sophomores, 0.8% were juniors and seniors.

Major: 10.3% of students were undecided about their majors. Psychology, Biology, Health Studies, Computer Science, Business Management and Leadership, and Business Marketing were the most popular majors.

Demographic Profile

Gender: 59.1% of FRINQ students were female, 40.9% were male.

Ethnicity: 1.2% were Native American, 11.2% were Asian, 3.4% were Black, 22.7% were Hispanic/Latino, 3.5% were International Students, 7.7% report multiple ethnicities, 1.0% were Pacific Islander, 45.6% were White.

Age: 91.3% of FRINQ students were 19 years or younger, 7.5% were between 20 and 25, and 1.4% were older than 25.

PRIOR LEARNING SURVEY RESPONSES (N=1247)

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Academic Background

First Generation Status: 52.0% of FRINQ students are first-generation college students; neither parent had earned a 4-year degree.

Prior Activity: 87.3% of FRINQ students were attending high school last year.

Academic Assistance

Graduation Requirements: 47.5% of FRINQ students report that they understand PSU graduation requirements fairly or very well. 37.1% understand the requirements a little and 15.5% do not understand the requirements very well or not at all.

Students reported on the kinds of help they think they need as they begin the school year.

Ratings made on a scale of 1 = I don't need any help to 3 = I need a lot of help

Activity	% of Students needing a lot of help
Writing	17.8
Math	35.2
Reading and understanding academic texts	13.9
Tutoring in other areas	10.0
Study skills	15.0
Finances	31.6
Using the library	5.6
Adjusting to college	9.4
Finding a job	16.2
Finding a social group	15.1

Academic Plans

PSU Plans: 86.9% of FRINQ students planned to earn a bachelor's degree from PSU

Degree Plans: For 41.8% a bachelor's degree was the highest degree they intend to earn.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Work Hours: 58.5% of FRINQ students planned to work between 1 and 20 hours per week. 21.6% do not plan to work, 19.9% will work more than 20 hours per week. 27.0% will work at least some of those hours on campus.

Financial Concern: 37.9% listed financial issues as their top concern as they start the year. 23.0% expressed a major concern about finances; they are worried they may not have enough money to finish school.

Students expressed agreement with the following questions about their finances

Question	% Agree or Strongly agree
I understand the various financial aid options available to me	58.3
I understand how student loans work	53.3
I understand where to go to ask questions about financial aid issues	62.0
My personal financial situation makes me feel stressed	63.2
I feel prepared financially to meet an emergency (car repairs, medical bills, etc.)	29.5
I understand how to find a job to help pay for college	68.9
I understand how to make a plan for addressing my financial needs	55.0
I understand how to use credit cards responsibly	72.5

CONNECTEDNESS

Housing: 46.2% lived on campus. 53.7% lived with their parents or families.

Orientation/ advising: 99.7% of students reported attending orientation or receiving advising prior to fall term.

Campus Involvement: Students reported where they would participate on campus.

Activity	% Planning to Participate
Student clubs or organizations	61.6
Volunteering in community	39.0
Student government	3.9
Greek life	4.1
Intramural sports	16.7
Outdoor program	14.9
Residential Life	15.7

STUDENT PROFILE

Home Language: 38.1% reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Care for Dependents: 9.5% had at least part-time responsibility for dependents.

CONCLUSION

This profile of students enrolled in Freshman Inquiry courses for fall 2018 reveals that while they represent the characteristics of traditional college students in many ways (e.g., age, transition directly from high school), they are also an increasingly diverse group. Although 87% of student report coming to PSU directly from high school, that is a 8% drop from 2016 and slight increase from 2017. In the last seven years, the proportion of White students in FRINQ has fallen 9%, from 55% to 46%. In the same time frame, our Hispanic/Latino population continues to increase. First-generation students make up over half of the students enrolled in FRINQ courses and over a third of FRINQ students report speaking a language other than English at home. FRINQ students vary in their level of concern over their finances; 23% are not sure they will have enough money to finish college. These findings suggest that multiple subpopulations bringing a range of potential needs make up any given FRINQ course.

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