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A Profile of Freshman Inquiry Students Fall 2021

Assessment & Research Report
University Studies Program, Portland State University
Rowanna Carpenter* & Osman G. Tanrikulu

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 2021. It presents an overview of all students enrolled in FRINQ during Fall 2021 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 2021 FRINQ students.

Prior Learning Survey: Survey administered during weeks 1 and 2 of Fall term. 880 students responded to the survey (68.1% response rate).

OVERALL PROFILE (For all FRINQ students, N=1293)

Academic Profile

New students: 94.2% of FRINQ students were new to PSU during Summer and Fall 2021. The rest began at PSU prior to Fall 2021.

Full-time status: 93.7% of FRINQ students were enrolled at PSU as full-time students.

Class level: 97.1% of FRINQ students were freshmen. 2.1% were sophomores, 0.6% were juniors and seniors.

Major: Psychology, Computer Science, Biology, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Public Health Studies, Business Technology & Analytics, Film, and Business Marketing were the most popular majors. 0.2% of students were undecided about their majors.

Demographic Profile

Gender: 58.0% of FRINQ students were female, 41.9% were male.

Ethnicity: 0.6% were Native American, 12.6% were Asian, 5.8% were Black, 28.0% were Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% were International Students, 8.7% report multiple ethnicities, 0.8% were Pacific Islander, 39.0% were White.

Age: 88.6% of FRINQ students were 19 years or younger, 10.0% were between 20 and 25, and 1.4% were older than 25.

* For more information about University Studies Assessment and Research, please contact Rowanna Carpenter, the Director of Assessment at 503-725-3445, or carpenterr@pdx.edu.

PRIOR LEARNING SURVEY RESPONSES (N=880)

ACADEMIC PROFILE

Academic Background

First Generation Status: 49.3% of FRINQ students are first-generation college students; neither parent had earned a 4-year degree.

Academic Assistance

Graduation Requirements: 38.9% of FRINQ students report that they understand PSU graduation requirements fairly or very well. 42.7.1% understand the requirements a little and 18.3% 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	13.3
Math	30.8
Reading and understanding academic texts	9.7
Tutoring in other areas	5.7
Study skills	15.0
Finances	22.4
Using the library	5.0
Adjusting to college	10.7
Finding a job	11.2
Finding a social group	12.4

Academic Plans

PSU Plans: 80.3% of FRINQ students planned to earn a bachelor's degree from PSU. 12.0% of the students were not sure about their immediate education plans.

Degree Plans: For 47.6% a bachelor's degree was the highest degree they intend to earn.

FINANCIAL PROFILE

Financial Concern: 33.2% listed financial issues as their top concern as they start the year. 19.9% expressed a major concern about finances; they are worried they may not have enough money to finish school.

Work Hours: 55.6% of FRINQ students planned to work between 1 and 20 hours per week. 21.4% do not plan to work, 22.9% will work more than 20 hours per week. 13.8% worked on campus for PSU.

Students expressed agreement with the following questions about their finances

Question	% Agree or Strongly Agree
My personal financial situation makes me feel stressed	57.0
I feel prepared financially to meet an emergency (car repairs, medical bills, etc.)	37.4
I understand how to make a plan for addressing my financial needs	48.5

Students were asked about their housing and food insecurity over the last 12 months

Question	% Yes
In the past 12 months, have you worried about whether you would run out of food before you had money to buy more?	12.3
In the past 12 months, have you worried about whether you would be able to pay your rent or mortgage, or have a place to stay?	14.9

CONNECTEDNESS

Housing: 39.8% lived on campus. 45.7% lived with their parents or families.

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

Activity	% Planning to Participate
Student clubs or organizations	65.0
Volunteering in community	36.9
Student government	4.5
Greek life	5.0
Intramural sports	15.7
Outdoor program	19.0
Residential Life	11.7

STUDENT PROFILE

Home Language: 42.8% reported speaking a language other than English at home.

Care for Dependents: 11.0% had at least part-time responsibility for dependents.