

OIR Assessment Tool
Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey
Revised November 2013

Purpose of Survey:

The purpose of the CIRP Freshman Survey is to assess the demographic characteristics, past experiences, current opinions, as well as the aspirations of new incoming freshmen.

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation? (i.e., from whom is the university collecting this information? Whose perceptions are we reading?)
Data are collected from entering /incoming first-year students at the University of North Dakota. In fall 2012, there were 2360 first-year students enrolled; 1440 students completed the survey.
2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year?
The survey is administered every two to three years. The survey was last administered during the institution's summer orientation program in 2012.
3. To whom does the assessment group believe that an analysis of this report would be beneficial? In other words, what individuals, departments, or programs need this information in order to have reliable information to 'close the loop' on their assessment process?
Anybody working with first year students and first year programs (i.e., academic advisors, student success center staff, and faculty) can find value in reviewing the results of the CIRP Freshman Survey. Other student services units, particularly enrollment services, may be interested in specific measures of college reputation orientation. In addition, academic department chairs and deans could use the data to assist in department or college-specific assessment efforts.
4. What UND student learning goals are assessed?
 - a. Use **Y** or **N** to indicate whether the instrument collects data relevant to each of the following Institutional and/or Essential Studies goals:

 Y 1 Communication – written or oral (“able to write and speak in various settings with a sense of purpose/audience”)
 Y 2 Thinking and reasoning – critical thinking (or “be intellectually curious”; analyze, synthesize, evaluate)
 Y 3 Thinking and reasoning – creative thinking (or “be intellectually creative”; explore, discover, engage)
 N 4 Thinking and reasoning – quantitative reasoning (“apply empirical data...analyze graphical information”)
 Y 5 Information literacy (“be able to access and evaluate...for effective, efficient, and ethical use”)
 Y 6 Diversity (“demonstrate understanding of diversity and use that understanding...”)
 Y 7 Lifelong learning (“commit themselves to lifelong learning”)
 Y 8 Service/citizenship (“share responsibility both for their communities and for the world”)

- b. Additional goals

In addition to the goals mentioned above, the CIRP Freshman Survey also provides a measure of student intent/aspiration for academic majors and career fields. This goal may be considered a form of professional socialization via career exploration and development.

5. What are the findings/results of this tool?

- a. From Question 4a above: For the goals with a Y, describe the relevant findings/results from this survey:

UND freshmen indicated average levels of confidence in social and academic skills when compared to students from peer institutions. They reported fewer instances of engaging in certain academic behaviors (i.e., asking questions in class, supporting opinions with a logical argument, seeking solutions to problems and explaining them to others, revising papers, etc.) prior to coming to campus.

Entering UND students engaged less frequently than students at peer institutions that represent a pluralistic orientation, social agency, civic engagement, and likelihood of college involvement. The most striking difference was in “likelihood of college involvement”. For this construct, entering UND students’ scores increased from 2009 but still exhibited the largest gap in the difference of scores between UND students and students at peer institutions.

- b. Other findings/results of note for faculty or in reference to student learning

General results indicate that the UND students’ primary motivations to attend college are to “get a better job”, “train for a specific career”, and “learn specific tasks”. They are career minded and focused on training; students may be more inclined to tune out in classes that are not tied to vocational goals. However, students also indicated a motivation to “learn about things that interest [them]” which is not necessarily aligned with career or vocational interests.

6. Does this tool measure student learning or behaviors associated with student learning? If it measures student learning, does it do so directly or indirectly?

This tool is a non-measure of student learning, but it does indirectly measure behaviors and self-perceptions associated with student learning.

7. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how?

The CIRP Freshman Survey measures behaviors (or patterns of behavior) and student self-perceptions associated with student learning. The data provide a baseline that is helpful in recognizing characteristics of the student population upon entry to the institution. This information is also helpful in setting goals for students, in the interest of promoting behaviors that lead to student success and persistence to graduation.

8. Are there recommendations for changes (e.g., additional or better tools, different means of analysis, etc.) that might improve the university’s ability to use this information?

- ***We appreciate that the survey can be customized, but we would like more information about the institution-specific questions. For example, how are these questions derived? Can there be different questions in different years?***

- *Pair data from the CIRP Freshman Survey with data from other tools such as the NSSE or FSSE in order to triangulate findings about behaviors that promote student success.*
- *Use the CIRP data to set up a longitudinal study of student behaviors and self-perceptions of learning. More specifically, pair freshman survey data with senior survey data to focus on the bigger picture rather than on “point in time” snapshots.*

9. What value does the committee place on this tool for helping to achieve the university’s assessment plan?

The CIRP Freshman Survey is a useful tool that provides us with information related to students’ experiences in habits of mind, likelihood of college involvement, civic engagement, social self-concept, college reputation orientation, social agency, academic self-concept, and pluralistic orientation.

10. Review Summary (one or two sentences).

The CIRP Freshman Survey is a source of baseline data on students who are entering UND. The focus is on understanding students’ self-perceptions, attitudes, and expectations related to learning. There is also value in using these data to compare to students at peer institutions.

11. What might faculty want to know about this survey? (Please provide one to two paragraphs describing some findings from this survey. These paragraphs will be forwarded to academic departments as a means of keeping them informed about the existence of information that might be useful to them.)

The CIRP Freshman Survey is a source of baseline data on students who are entering UND. The focus is on understanding students’ self-perceptions, attitudes, and expectations related to learning. The instrument combines items into eight global measures: habits of mind, academic self-concept, social self-concept, pluralistic orientation, social agency, civic engagement, college reputation orientation, and likelihood of college involvement.

UND freshmen indicated average levels of confidence in social and academic skills when compared to students from peer institutions. They reported fewer instances of engaging in certain academic behaviors (i.e., asking questions in class, supporting opinions with a logical argument, seeking solutions to problems and explaining them to others, revising papers, etc.) prior to coming to campus. Although entering UND students lagged behind their peers at other institutions in other areas, the most striking difference was in “likelihood of college involvement”. For this construct, entering UND students’ scores increased from 2009 but still exhibited the largest gap in the difference of scores between UND students and students at peer institutions.

General results indicate that the UND students’ primary motivations to attend college are to “get a better job”, “train for a specific career”, and “learn specific tasks”. They are career minded and focused on training; students may be more inclined to tune out in classes that are not tied to vocational goals. However, students also indicated a motivation to “learn about things that interest [them]” which is not necessarily aligned with career or vocational interests.

12. What results about this survey would students find interesting? (Please provide a few sentences or bullet points of highlights, written in student-friendly language. This will be posted on the assessment website and distributed to students via other means as well.)

- ***In 2012, the top five reasons that entering UND freshmen chose to attend UND were:***
 - *Very good academic reputation (60.1%)*
 - *Graduates get good jobs (52.4%)*
 - *Cost of attending (41.4%)*
 - *Good reputation for social activities (39.4%)*
 - *Campus visit (37.2%)*
- ***In 2012, the top five areas where entering UND students rated themselves as the “highest 10%” or “above average” when compared with the average person their age were:***
 - *Drive to achieve (70.9%)*
 - *Cooperativeness (66.4%)*
 - *Academic ability (63.0%)*
 - *Leadership ability (61.5%)*
 - *Competitiveness (61.1%)*
- ***The fewest number of entering UND students rated themselves as the “highest 10%” or “above average” when compared with the average person their age in:***
 - *Artistic ability (21.5%)*
 - *Spirituality (28.5%)*
 - *Public speaking ability (32.6%)*
 - *Computer skills (33.2%)*
 - *Popularity (33.5%)*
- ***Entering UND students in 2012 indicated that they were more likely to be involved in college than entering UND students were in 2009. Examples of ways to be involved included being members of student organizations, volunteering, socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group, studying abroad, and participating in student government. Overall, UND students were significantly less likely to be involved in these activities than students at peer institutions.***

13. Should review of this instrument be continued as part of the UAC review cycle? If so, how frequently?

Yes, review of this instrument should be continued as part of the UAC review cycle. The committee recommends that the instrument be reviewed once every three years.

Submitted by: Group Review – University Assessment Committee

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