

Office of the Vice President for Intercultural Affairs

helping loyola marymount university move toward inclusive excellence

Academic Community of Excellence

2010-2011 Cohort Profile

This report represents data on our 2010-2011 cohort. It includes data on precollege activities, 1st year experiences, planned activities for the 2010-2011 academic year, and graduate school aspirations.

Fall 2010

Introduction

The Academic Community of Excellence (ACE) prepares undergraduate scholars to successfully gain admission to a graduate or professional degree program. The goal of ACE is to increase the graduation entrance rates of qualified applicants at the master's and doctoral levels.

The ACE program focuses on the ***sophomore year experience*** of students from groups traditionally underrepresented (first generation and ethnic minority) in graduate school. ACE's services are linked to factors that positively influence college retention, academic excellence, and graduate school enrollment.

As of September 2010, there are 76 ACE students at LMU. The 2010-2011 ACE cohort consists of 30 students and represents 39% of all current ACE students.

Survey Goals

The primary purpose of the ACE pretest survey (the Pretest) was to gain a better understanding of who ACE students are upon entering the ACE program as a sophomore at LMU. More specifically, the survey assessed students' knowledge regarding graduate school admissions and enrollment given the goals of the ACE program. Additionally, the data from the Pretest will be used for program development/improvement.

We will follow-up with the 2010-2011 cohort in Spring of 2011 to determine if any changes have been observed between the beginning and end of the academic year as a result of participating in the ACE program.

Survey Methodology

The Pretest was designed in the Summer of 2010. It was administered on paper to the 2010-2011 ACE cohort during the ACE orientation in August 2010. Thirty students were invited to participate and 30 students completed the Pretest, yielding a 100% response rate. The Pretest consisted of a variety of items including students' background characteristics (such as academic preparation, activities in their 1st year of college, and high school activities), abilities and skills, aspirations, and attitudes about graduate school. These data were also linked to information from students' application to the program. In this way, longitudinal data could be considered.

This profile represents who our 2010-2011 ACE students are upon entering the ACE program. Each of the following sections focuses on student characteristics, behaviors, and knowledge about graduate school. Quantitative data¹ is presented to highlight the general trends observed at the start of the program. The profile concludes with next steps regarding the use of the data.

Demographic Information

Figure 1: High School Sector

N=30

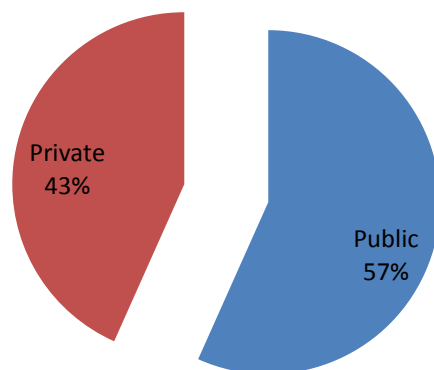


Figure 1 shows whether students attended a public or private high school. Most of the students (57%) indicated that they graduated from a public high school.

Figure 2: 1st Generation

N=26

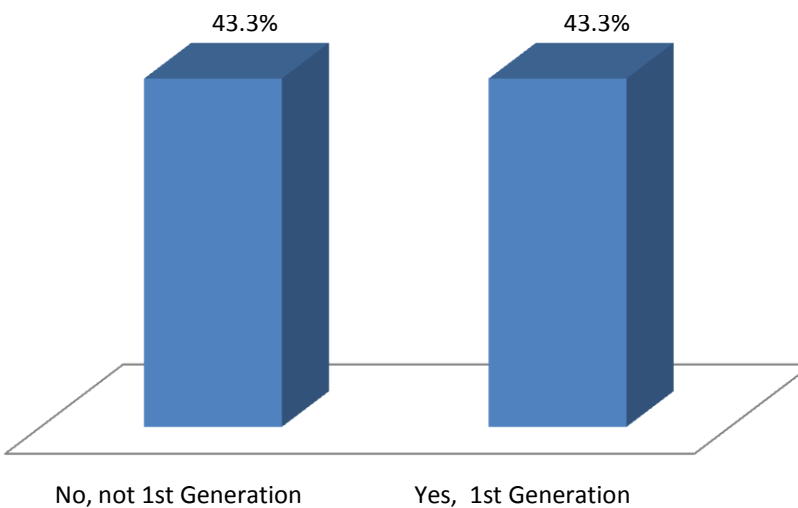


Figure 2 displays the percentage of 1st generation college students in the 2010-2011 ACE cohort. A first generation college student is defined as a student whose parents did not graduate from college. Nearly half of the ACE cohort are 1st generation college students.

¹ Quantitative data is most often presented in percentages. Caution should be taken when interpreting these percentages given the small number of students.

Figures 3a – 3c display the gender and ethnicity composition of three samples: the recruitment pool, applicant pool and the final 2010-2011 ACE cohort. Samples are derived from the freshman class that entered LMU in the Fall of 2009. This entering class consisted of 1,385 enrollees.

The recruitment pool has 398 students. In terms of gender, women make up an overwhelming majority of the recruitment pool (66%). Women are an overwhelming majority of each ethnic group. With respect to ethnicity, Latino/a and Asian Pacific Islander students combined to represent almost 80% of the recruitment pool.

The applicant pool consists of 50 students. Almost three-fourths of the applicant pool were women. The same trend continues where women are an overwhelming majority of each ethnic group. About 82% of the applicant pool are African American and Latino/a students.

The final 2010-2011 ACE cohort includes 30 students. With the exception of the Asian Pacific Islander category, women continue to be the majority. Latinos/as and African Americans make up more than 80% of the 2010-2011 ACE cohort. The small number of Asian Pacific Islanders may be explained by the federal government’s use of a new ethnic category – Mutli-Ethnic. Three students that had identified as Asian Pacific Islander in 2009-2010 are now in the Multi-Ethnic category or another ethnic category. One non-Asian Pacific Islander student is now reported in another ethnic category.

Figure 3a: Recruitment Pool

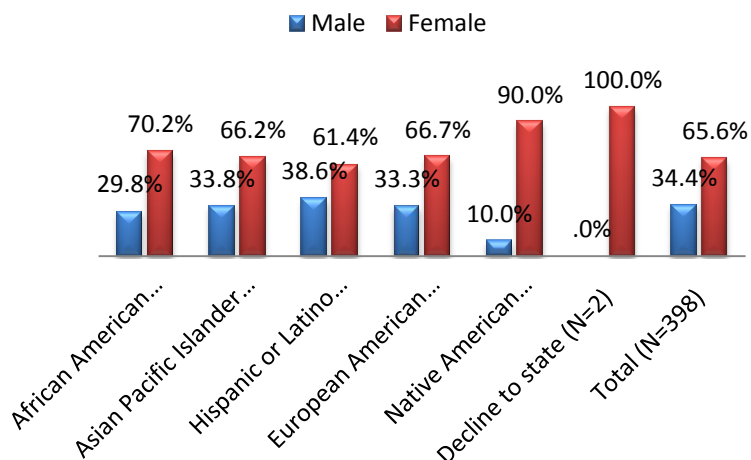


Figure 3b: Applicant Pool

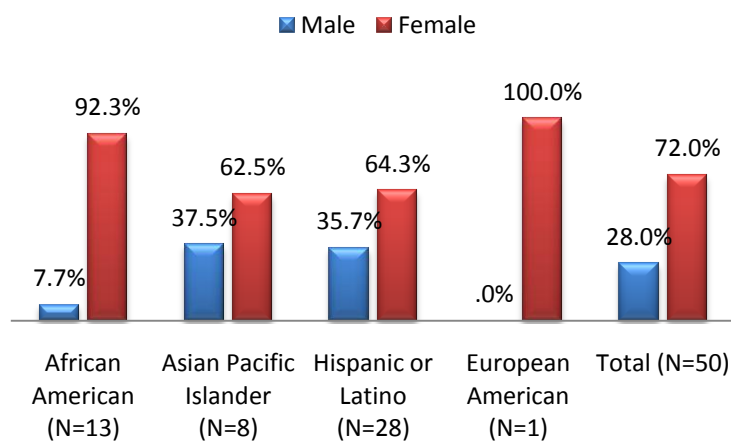
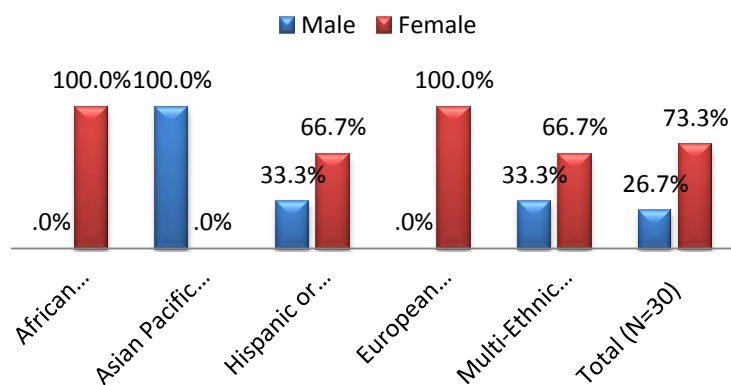


Figure 3c: 2010-2011 ACE Cohort



Precollege Activities

Table 4 shows the ACE cohort's involvement in activities such as sports, clubs, service and student government prior to entering college. Students indicated the highest percentage of involvement in volunteer and service activities before entering college, with 53% of students in the sample participating *often* in this precollege activity. Approximately two-fifths of students in the sample reported participating *often* in organized sports (43%) and student clubs (43%).

	Often % (Frequency)	Occasionally % (Frequency)	Rarely % (Frequency)	Never % (Frequency)	Mean
Organized sports/Athletics	43.3% (13)	23.3% (7)	13.3% (4)	20.0% (6)	2.90
Student clubs/groups	43.3% (13)	40.0% (12)	16.7% (5)	0%	3.27
Volunteer/Service activities	53.3% (16)	33.3% (10)	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)	3.33
Student government	16.7% (5)	13.3% (4)	16.7% (5)	50.0% (15)	1.93

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.
Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.
Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

First-Year Experiences

Students were asked a series of questions on how many hours per week they spent engaging in various activities during their first year at LMU. Table 5 displays the breakdown of how students spent their time in an average week during their first year at LMU. On average, students spent 1-5 hours per week on various academic and social activities.

	None	< 1 hr	1-5 hrs	6-10 hrs	11-15 hrs	16-20 hrs	> 20 hrs	Mean
<i>Academic Activities</i>								
Studying Math	16.7% (5)	3.3% (1)	56.7% (17)	13.3% (4)	6.7% (2)		3.3% (1)	3.03
Studying English		13.3% (4)	60.0% (18)	23.3% (7)	3.3% (1)			3.17
Studying Science	26.7% (8)	3.3% (1)	26.7% (8)	26.7% (8)	10.0% (3)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	3.13
Studying Social Science	33.3% (10)	6.7% (2)	26.7% (8)	26.7% (8)	6.7% (2)			2.67
Studying other subjects	3.3% (1)	13.3% (4)	46.7% (14)	26.7% (8)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	3.37
Using my smart phone/internet for research or homework	10.0% (3)	6.7% (2)	33.3% (10)	33.3% (10)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)		3.43
Reviewing notes/textbooks			46.7% (14)	20.0% (6)	23.3% (7)	10.0% (3)		3.97
Attending a study group	10.0% (3)	36.7% (11)	36.7% (11)	16.7% (5)				2.60
Getting individual help outside of class from an instructor	6.7% (2)	40.0% (12)	40.0% (12)	13.3% (4)				2.60
Getting support through the academic resource center	26.7% (8)	30.0% (9)	36.7% (11)		6.7% (2)			2.30
<i>Social and Familial Support</i>								
Socializing with friends			23.3% (7)	40.0% (12)	23.3% (7)	3.3% (1)	10.0% (3)	4.37
Using my smart phone/internet to talk to immediate family	10.0% (3)		50.0% (15)	20.0% (6)	10.0% (3)	3.3% (1)	6.7% (2)	3.67
Using my smart phone/internet for social networking	6.7% (2)	23.3% (7)	26.7% (8)	23.3% (7)	10.0% (3)	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	3.40

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.
Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.
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Major and Career

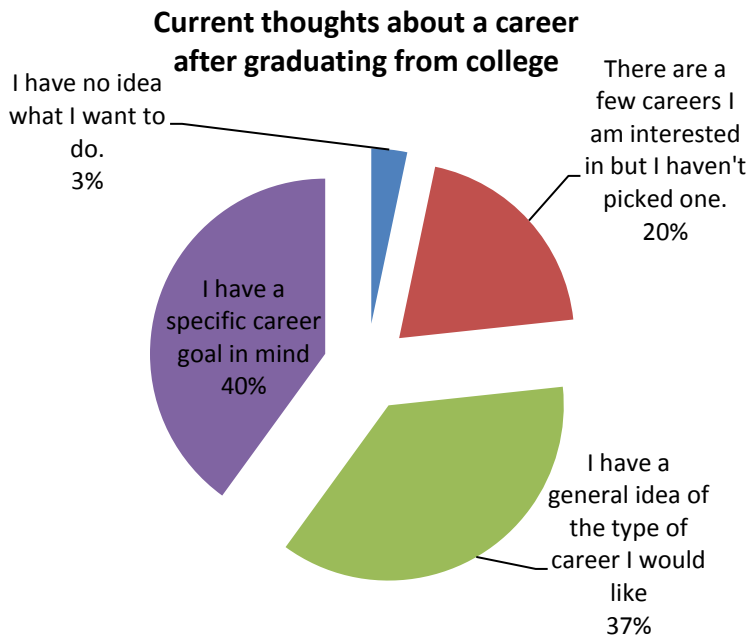


Figure 6: Career Goals

Figure 6 represents students' current thoughts about their future careers. An overwhelming majority of students (77%) either have a specific career goal in mind or have a general idea about their career goals. Conversely, only 3% of students in the sample have no idea what kind of career they want to pursue after graduating from college.

Primary reason for choosing your college major

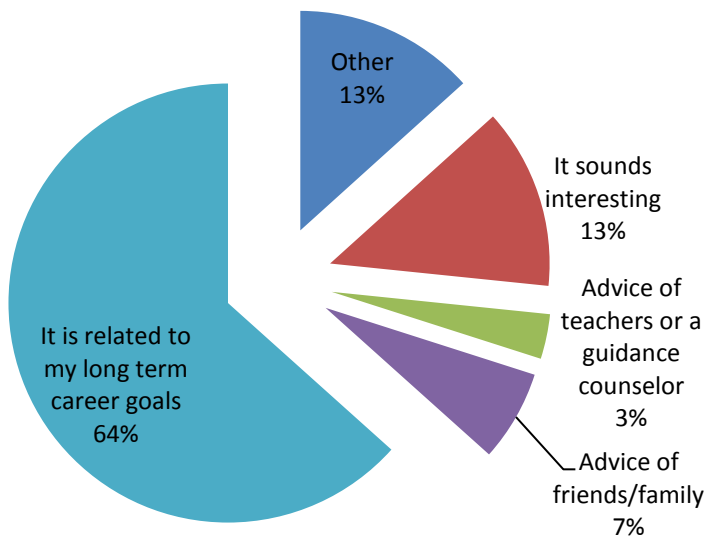


Figure 7: Major Choice

More than half of the sample chose their major because it was related to their long term career goals (64%) (See Figure 7). Ten percent chose their major because of advice they received from a teacher, guidance counselor, family, or friends. One student noted that they chose their major because it gave them a "Good chance of obtaining a job with a good salary." Another stated that "It is broad enough to keep as a major even if I was to decide to change my career goals."

Figure 7: Major Choice

Knowledge about and Attitudes toward Graduate School

Students were asked a series of questions about their level of knowledge about graduate school. Table 8 shows percentages for students' level of agreement or disagreement with the statements listed below. Many responses fell in the *agree somewhat* category. However, when students were asked about their familiarity with the leading scholars in their intended field of study, 47% indicated that they are not familiar with such scholars. Additionally, almost three-fourths of the sample do not feel prepared to take a graduate entrance exam.

	Strongly Agree % (Frequency)	Agree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Disagree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Strongly Disagree % (Frequency)	Not Applicable % (Frequency)	Mean
I know the difference between a Master's degree and a doctorate degree.	23.3% (7)	50.0% (15)	16.7% (5)	10.0% (3)		3.87
I meet regularly with a tenure track faculty member in my intended field of study (i.e. NOT a lecturer, graduate student, or TA).	13.3% (4)	36.7% (11)	20.0% (6)	20.0% (6)	10.0% (3)	3.23
I am familiar with the leading scholars in my intended field of study (i.e. you are aware of their books and published articles).	3.3% (1)	16.7% (5)	33.3% (10)	46.7% (14)		2.77
I have three or more faculty members that will write me strong letters of recommendation for graduate school. (N=29)	16.7% (5)	40.0% (12)	26.7% (8)	13.3% (4)		3.62
I am knowledgeable about the graduate school application process. (N=29)	6.7% (2)	33.3% (10)	26.7% (8)	30.0% (9)		3.17
I know the admission requirements for graduate school.	3.3% (1)	43.3% (13)	20.0% (6)	33.3% (10)		3.17
I am aware of the types of skills I need to succeed in graduate school.	23.3% (7)	53.3% (16)	16.7% (5)	6.7% (2)		3.93
I am aware of funding opportunities for graduate school.	13.3% (4)	40.0% (12)	20.0% (6)	26.7% (8)		3.40
I feel prepared to take a graduate entrance exam (e.g., GMAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.).	3.3% (1)	20.0% (6)	73.3% (22)	3.3% (1)		2.23

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.
Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.
Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

Table 9 represents students' graduate school aspirations. Upon entering ACE, more than half of 2010-2011 ACE students are *very likely* to pursue graduate degrees.

	Very likely % (Frequency)	Somewhat likely % (Frequency)	Not likely % (Frequency)	I don't know % (Frequency)	Mean
Likelihood of pursuing a Masters degree (N=29)	60.0% (18)	23.3% (7)	3.3% (1)	10.0% (3)	3.38
Likelihood of pursuing a doctorate degree	56.7% (17)	30.0% (9)	10.0% (3)	3.3% (1)	3.40

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.
Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.
Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

Academic Self-Confidence

Table 10 shows three measures that reflect students' academic self-confidence. About 70% of the sample is confident in their ability to succeed academically while in college. Less than 20% of ACE students expressed strong agreement regarding concern about outside commitments and how they might interfere with their academic success. Similarly, less than 20% of the 2010-2011 ACE students expressed strong agreement regarding concern about feeling unsupported.

Table 10: Academic Self-Confidence	Strongly Agree % (Frequency)	Agree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Disagree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Strongly Disagree % (Frequency)	Not Applicable % (Frequency)	Mean
I am confident in my ability to succeed academically at college.	70.0% (21)	26.7% (8)		3.3% (1)		4.63
I am concerned that commitments outside of school will interfere with my ability to succeed academically. (Reverse recoded*)	16.7% (5)	30.0% (9)	33.3% (10)	20.0% (6)		3.57
I am concerned that a lack of available support/information will interfere with my ability to succeed academically. (Reverse recoded*)	16.7% (5)	16.7% (5)	26.7% (8)	36.7% (11)	3.3% (1)	3.77

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.

Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.

Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

*Reverse recoding refers to a procedure done to transform variables so that they are all coded in the same direction as the rest of the dataset.

Table 11 shows students' self-rating in Math, Science, English, Foreign Language, and History/Social Science. An overwhelming majority of students are academically self-confident in Math and English. Less than half of our students are academically self-confident in Science, Foreign Language, and History/Social Science.

Table 11: Academic Self-Rating	Highest 10% % (Frequency)	Above Average % (Frequency)	Average % (Frequency)	Below Average % (Frequency)	Lowest 10% % (Frequency)	Mean
Math	10.0% (3)	63.3% (19)	23.3% (7)		3.3% (1)	3.77
Science	10.0% (3)	40.0% (12)	40.0% (12)	6.7% (2)	3.3% (1)	3.47
English	10.0% (3)	50.0% (15)	33.3% (10)	6.7% (2)		3.63
Foreign Language (N=29)	20.0% (6)	23.3% (7)	36.7% (11)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)	3.45
History/Social Science	16.7% (5)	30.0% (9)	46.7% (14)	6.7% (2)		3.57

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.

Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.

Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

Social Self-Confidence

Table 12 displays three measures that capture students' social self-confidence. Half of the 2010-2011 ACE cohort strongly agrees that they are confident in their ability to make friends and maintain a social network. Slightly more than half of this year's ACE students note that they have a support system outside of their family or the ACE program. Less than half of the sample expressed concern about being tempted to socialize and how it might interfere with their academic success.

	Strongly Agree % (Frequency)	Agree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Disagree Somewhat % (Frequency)	Strongly Disagree % (Frequency)	Not Applicable % (Frequency)	Mean
I am confident in my ability to make friends/maintain a social network at college.	50.0% (15)	36.7% (11)	10.0% (3)	3.3% (1)		4.33
I have a support system outside of my family or the ACE program.	53.3% (16)	26.7% (8)	16.7% (5)	3.3% (1)		4.30
I am concerned that the temptation to socialize with friends will interfere with my ability to succeed academically. (Reverse recoded*)	20.0% (6)	20.0% (6)	36.7% (11)	20.0% (6)	3.3% (1)	3.50

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.

Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.

Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

*Reverse recoding refers to a procedure done to transform variables so that they are all coded in the same direction as the rest of the dataset.

Planned Academic and Social Activities in 2010-2011

Students were also asked a series of questions about how they plan to spend their time in 2010-2011. Table 13 represents the number of hours per week students plan to spend in extracurricular activities, peer support, studying, working and socializing. Students' responses are varied. Approximately 80 percent of the sample reported that they plan to spend 6-20 hours per week studying. About 67% of students in the sample reported that they would spend 6-20 hours per week socializing with friends.

	None	< 1 hr	1-5 hrs	6-10 hrs	11-15 hrs	16-20 hrs	> 20 hrs	Mean
Studying			6.7% (2)	23.3% (7)	23.3% (7)	33.3% (10)	13.3% (4)	5.23
Peer Support								
through the ACE living learning community		16.7% (5)	26.7% (8)	40.0% (12)	13.3% (4)		3.3% (1)	3.63
through peer tutoring	6.7% (2)	16.7% (5)	66.7% (20)		10.0% (3)			2.90
through peer mentorship	10.0% (3)	23.3% (7)	53.3% (16)	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)			2.77
through the ACE Facebook page	13.3% (4)	36.7% (11)	33.3% (10)	16.7% (5)	3.3% (1)			2.67
Organized sports/athletics	50.0% (15)	26.7% (8)	16.7% (5)	6.7% (2)				1.80
Student clubs/groups		3.3% (1)	63.3% (19)	33.3% (10)				3.30
Working on-campus	13.3% (4)		10.0% (3)	43.3% (13)	20.0% (6)	10.0% (3)	3.3% (1)	4.00
Working off campus	66.7% (20)		13.3% (4)	6.7% (2)	13.3% (4)			2.00
Socializing with friends (N=29)			30.0% (9)	36.7% (11)	16.7% (5)	13.3% (4)		4.14
Spending time with family	13.3% (4)	16.7% (5)	30.0% (9)	30.0% (9)	10.0% (3)			3.07

Note: Frequency of each response is in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, N=30.

Highest percentage within each row is indicated in **bold** type.

Highest mean score is also indicated in **bold** type.

Intervention Strategies

As mentioned previously, these data were collected for program improvement/development purposes. Data was used to identify areas of concern. Additionally, data can be used to develop strategies to address areas of concern. Below are survey items in which the data pointed to areas of concern. Corresponding intervention strategies are then listed to demonstrate how these concerns will be addressed this year.

Finding/ Survey Item	Intervention Strategy
Seventy three percent (73%) of the sample “Disagree Somewhat” with the statement, I feel prepared to take a graduate entrance examination (e.g., GMAT, GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.).	<p>In spring 2011, the ACE program will employ the following interventions :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will take a class entitled, <i>LIBA 198: Strategies for Graduate and Professional School Admission II</i>. One class will be dedicated to educating students about the content and format of the graduate admissions tests. 2. Students will learn test taking strategies through assigned readings in the ACE class. 3. Students will take a practice graduate admission test through an approved testing agency and identify areas of weakness. 4. Students will report the following to the ACE director: a) the date, test, and sponsoring agency of the practice test that they took; b) their strengths and weaknesses; and c) strategies they will implement and/or classes they will enroll in to prepare for the actual test. <p>Students who plan to attend graduate school will attend the California Forum for Diversity in Graduate Education, where they may receive a free online GRE prep course from Princeton Review.</p>
Forty seven percent (47%) of students reported that they were unfamiliar with the leading scholars in their intended fields of study.	<p>In spring 2011, the ACE program will employ the following interventions :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify a professor in their major whom they would like to speak to about leading scholars and top tier academic journals in their fields, 2. develop a group of questions and schedule a meeting to interview the professor, 3. report the outcome of the interview to the ACE director and/or during the ACE class, 4. research professional associations that produce academic journals and sponsor conferences attended by leading scholars and practitioners in their field, 5. use online databases to access top tier journals, and 6. write a one page review of a research article and discuss their reviews in class. <p>The ACE program may host a faculty and student mixer during which, students will speak to professors about top tier academic journals, seminal scholars, graduate school, and undergraduate research.</p>

Next Steps

In the Spring of 2011, a follow-up survey will be administered to the 2010-2011 cohort to determine the impact of the ACE course and other ACE activities on students' knowledge about graduate school and the admissions processes. These data will be used to further develop the ACE program for continuing and future ACE students.

Lastly, students will be tracked as alumni. Given the goals of ACE, students are tracked to determine whether or not they attended or are attending graduate school after they leave LMU.