2012 First Generation Freshman Survey Key Findings

249 of the 282 freshmen first generation student cohort were invited to participate in the First Generation survey and 44% (110) of those invited completed the survey. The survey contained both qualitative and quantitative variables. The survey was distributed to the students via their LNU Lion email account and participants received a $10 In-N-Out gift card for completing the survey.

The survey findings are presented below.

Demographic Data

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<tr>
<th>Class Cohort</th>
<th>First Generation Cohort</th>
<th>First Generation Survey Cohort</th>
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1 The demographic data was compiled from Banner based upon the student's University ID number
2 249 of the 282 freshmen first generation student cohort were invited to participate and 110 completed the survey

If you should encounter any of these issues, please contact Jennifer Bellchesky-Larson (contact info above).

If a student reports suicidal ideation or self-mutilation, please walk them directly to Student Psychological Services

If a student reports sexual assault, please contact Public Safety at 310.338.2893.
Decision to attend LMU

When asked which factors influenced their decision to come to LMU, the students indicated that the following factors were very important: university location (61%), university reputation (53%), academic major (77%) and scholarship (71%). University religious affiliation (1%) and family wanted me to attend (22%) appeared to be less important in their decision making process.

Concerns about attending LMU

In preparing to come to LMU, the students were asked which aspects of college life most concerned them about the transition to college. The students indicated they were very concerned about paying tuition (79%), making new friends (73%) and the homework load (72%). The students were less concerned about living away from home (39%) and homesickness (37%).

Now that they have been at LMU for seven months, the students were asked which aspects of college life concern them. The students indicated they were very concerned about paying tuition (84%), ability to perform academically (57%) and homework load (57%). The students were less concerned about the emotional transition (18%), culture shock (17%), homesickness (15%) and living away from home (17%).

Campus Engagement

Sense of Belonging:
Overall, the students' responses indicated a strong sense of belonging to the institution. The students strongly agreed (78%) that their faculty and peers are friendly and supportive (71%), and that they have made meaningful connections with their peers (78%), but they did not indicate the same level of agreement in regards to making strong connections with the staff (63%) and with their faculty (55%). They also strongly agreed (71%) that they feel a strong sense of belonging to LMU (70%) and are actively involved at LMU (83%).

Campus Engagement by University Resources:
When asked about their awareness and utilization of university resources, the students' responses demonstrated an overall awareness and utilization of university resources.

In regards to resource utilization, the resources most utilized by the students were:
- the library (94%), academic advisors (71%), CDS (17%) and the ARC (50%)

In regards to resource awareness, the students indicated they were most aware of the following resources but had not yet found a need to use them:
- SFS (91%), FYE (91%), EIS (99%) and Campus Ministry (71%)

Campus Engagement by Involvements:
Overall, the students indicated a greater awareness of campus involvements but were less likely to be actively involved in on-campus opportunities (i.e. academic, co-curricular, faith-based, leadership and service involvements). Students were most actively involved in working on campus (81%), extracurricular activities (65%), and athletics (58%).

When asked what types of programs they were most likely to attend, the students indicated that they preferred larger scale campus wide events (81%), club or organization of interest (88%), and social events (88%).

Communication

When learning about LMU resources and services, students were very likely/likely to read an email (81%) and explore a website (44%) and they were less inclined to watch a tutorial online (35%).

In regards to receiving information about upcoming activities, programs and events on campus, the students indicated their highest mode of preferred communication was email (62%), schedule of events (42%), poster (30%) and Facebook (29%). The least preferred mode of communication was print (41%), Instagram (10%) and twitter (11%).

Qualitative Findings:

When asked what they found most challenging about being a first generation student at LMU and what else they would like us to know about their LMU experience, four major themes emerged in their responses:

Theme 1: Family
'Being a positive example for my family members who expect me to do well with the opportunity I have to go to college' - First Generation survey participant

A prevalent theme to emerge was the role of family in the transition to college life:
- Family expectations: The students indicated family pressure to succeed in college and to motivate other family members to attend college in the near future.
- Parental support: Students struggled with their parents' inability to guide them through the college transition, their perception that college is not more challenging than high school and that their parents do not understand the importance of being both academically and socially engaged on campus.

Theme 2: Transition to college life
'In the first semester, it was tough making the transition from home to the on campus college experience' - First Generation survey participant

A second prevalent theme was the transition to college life at LMU:
- Balance: They indicated concern about how to successfully manage the different aspects of the college experience and struggle with time management.
- Transition Guidance: They also expressed a need for guidance to ease their transition to college life. Students noted that they needed to figure things out on their own and were not aware of when they should ask for help.
- Social Environment: The students were also concerned about finding new friends, especially students who had similar experiences, living with roommates and finding their place at LMU.

Theme 3: Financial cost at LMU
'LMU is everything that I could have hoped for [...] However, because of my financial situation, I am considering the possibility that I may have to transfer after my sophomore year' - First Generation survey participant

The cost of attending LMU has created a challenge as the students and families struggled to figure out how to find the resources to pay for college. Students were also not prepared for the tuition expenses and pressure to afford a college education.

Theme 4: Academic Challenges
'It's been ok. I have found the lack of guidance especially when it comes to choosing classes astounding' - First Generation survey participant

Another important concern was the variety of academic challenges the students faced: understanding their course work, managing their homework load, waking up for morning classes and motivation to study. In addition, students also felt they were not academically prepared to excel in their courses.
### 2012 Freshman Commuter Survey Key Findings

57% (n=40) of the freshman commuter student cohort participated in the Freshmen Commuter survey. The qualitative survey contained both qualitative and quantitative variables. The survey was distributed to the students via their LMU Lion email account and participants received a $10 In-N-Out gift card or completing the survey.

The survey findings are presented below.

#### Demographic Data

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1 The demographic data was compiled from Banner based upon the student's University ID number.

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### Decision to attend LMU

When asked which factors influenced their decision to come to LMU, the students indicated that the following factors were very important/important: university location (93%), academic major (88%), university reputation (88%), university size (88%), scholarship (85%) and financial aid (83%). Family wanted me to attend (95%), university religious affiliation and recommendation by a high school counselor/teacher (33%) appeared to be less important factors in their decision making process.

### Decision to commute to LMU

In deciding to commute to LMU, the students indicated that the following factors were very important/important: cost of living on campus (90%) and family (78%). Off Campus job (15%) and applied too late to housing (9%) seemed to be less important in their decision to commute.

In regards to their commute to LMU (one way), students traveled:
- 1-5 miles (20%), 6-10 miles (21%), 11-15 miles (21%), 16-20 miles (10%) and 21-50 miles (10%)

In regards to their time spent commuting to LMU (one way), students commuted:
- 15 minutes (23%), 10-15 minutes (20%), less than 15 minutes (18%), 1 1/2 hours (15%), 45 minutes (13%), 1 hour (8%) and 2 hours (3%)

Students indicated a variety of transportation modes to campus with most students indicating they drive themselves to campus (82%) or a parent/relative drives them (28%).

#### Campus Engagement

##### Sense of Belonging
In regards to a sense of belonging, the students' responses did not suggest a strong sense of belonging to the institution. The students strongly agreed/agreed that their faculty (90%), staff (79%) and peers (69%) are friendly and supportive. They also strongly agreed/agreed that LMU cares about them as an individual (69%) but only 49% felt that LMU considered their needs. Less than half of them strongly agreed/agreed that they feel a strong sense of belonging to LMU (44%), have made strong connections with their staff (44%) and are actively involved at LMU (41%).

##### Campus Engagement by University Resources:
When asked about their awareness and utilization of university resources, the students' responses demonstrated an overall awareness and utilization of university resources.

In regards to resource utilization, the resources most utilized by the students were:
- The library (97%), academic advisors (72%), CDS (59%) and SES (54%)

In regards to resource awareness, students indicated they were most aware of the following resources but had not yet found a need to use them:
- Campus Minstry (62%), SPS (79%), SMC (72%), EIS (69%), PYE (64%), CSA (62%), OCSL (69%) and ARC (61%)

In regards to resource awareness, the students indicated they were not aware of the following resources:
- GREC (33%) and CSA (31%)

##### Campus Engagement by Involvements:

First Year Experience 4.30.13
Overall, the students indicated an awareness of campus involvements but were less likely to be actively involved or interested in on-campus opportunities (i.e. academic, co-curricular, faith-based, leadership, and service involvements). Students were most actively involved in working on campus (85%), commuter convos (20%), commuter chubs (19%) and First to Go (10%).

When asked what types of programs they were most likely to attend, the students indicated that they preferred large scale campus wide events (87%), club or organization of interest events (68%) and commuter specific events (61%).

Communication

When learning about LMU resources and services, students were very likely/likely to read an email (80%) and explore a website (74%) and they were less likely to attend a program/event (49%) or watch an online tutorial (36%).

In regards to receiving information about upcoming activities, programs and events on campus, the students indicated their highest mode of preferred communication was email (87%), schedule of events (42%), facebook (34%) and website (32%).

The least preferred mode of communication was p利息 (5%), postcard (1%) and twitter (1%).

Qualitative Findings

When asked what they found most challenging about commuting to LMU and what else they would like us to know about their LMU experience, four major themes emerged in their responses:

Theme 1: Parking

"Sometimes parking can be difficult. It is not so bad now with the permits but I wish commuters didn’t have to pay" - Commuter survey participant

A prevalent theme to emerge for commuters has been parking on campus:

- Cost of parking: For many of the participants, an important challenge has been the additional cost of parking on campus.
- Parking permits: Although the parking fees and strict parking enforcement has served as challenges for commuters, it was noted that the parking permits have helped alleviate the difficulty of finding available parking on campus.

Theme 2: Social

"Actually feeling a part of the school when you're never here to experience what everyone else is" - Commuter survey participant

Primarily the survey participants indicated that it was difficult to feel that they were part of the campus because they found it difficult to meet new people, make friends and find a social group. They felt this was due to limited time on campus, being away from their other friends and not being able to participate in late night activities. They also felt their on-campus counterparts had an easier time making friends and were able to develop stronger and more meaningful bonds with their peers.

Theme 3: Co-curricular

"As a commuter I was not able to really join any clubs because the meeting hours were so late and this was frustrating because in high school I was extremely involved in school" - Commuter survey participant

The survey participants expressed frustration regarding their inability to participate in co-curricular activities due to club meetings and events occurring late at night. Students also rely on family/relatives or friends to commute to LMU which also makes it difficult to participate in co-curricular activities. In addition, students expressed an interest to receive more information about co-curricular activities.

Theme 4: Commuting to and from campus

"The clubs that I would want to join always meet at 10pm and I cannot leave that late because my dad usually commutes me and it is an 1 1/2 drive. Also when events are held over the weekend it is hard to make it because of the cost of gas and the time" - Commuter survey participant

The students indicated that the overall experience of commuting has been difficult due to the cost of gas, time and additional expenses. Students also felt their dependency on others to receive rides to and from campus restricted their amount of time on campus and their level of engagement with the LMU community.

The following sub-patterns also were identified:

- Class times: For many of these students, their classes proved stressful due to traffic and parking issues. Late night classes caused a different set of concerns, especially late night driving and fatigue. Many of them indicated that having more control over creating their schedule would be preferred (i.e. priority registration)
- Class Involvement: Students were also frustrated with the level of interaction (e.g. group projects) required for their courses. Some of them relied on other forms of transportation to get to campus and scheduling additional meetings with their group members to complete projects proved to be frustrating.
Out of State Freshmen Experience Key Findings

In March 2011, a mixed methods data collection was conducted about the first year out of state cohort. 128 freshmen out of state students, staff, faculty, and student staff were invited to participate in a focus group. 78 parents of out of state students were sent a Qualtrics survey about their students' experience at LMU. The key findings are presented below.

Qualitative Findings

When asked what they found challenging about being an out of state student at LMU, five major themes emerged in their responses:

Theme 1: Culture shock

'It feels like I'm from an alien state' - first year AZ student

These students experienced a significant culture shock that negatively impacts their transition to LMU and exploration of Los Angeles:

- Students' preconceived perceptions of Los Angeles and LMU did not match with their experiences.
- Students were completely unprepared for the transition to LMU and Los Angeles.

Theme 2: Transition

The rhythmic nature of their transition to LMU is not in sync with the way LMU programs for first year students:

- Fall semester: initially too overwhelming and then becomes too underwhelming:
  - LMU Connect, Club Fest and the Job Fair are too much too soon.
  - When they finally get their bearings, they feel they have missed the opportunity to become involved.
  - They are unaware of how to get involved or what LMU has to offer.
  - Fall does not provide any 'real' involvements.
  - They feel like they are lacking a true sense of belonging and purpose.
- Spring semester provides a combination of excitement, belonging, rejection and loss:
  - The recruitment season is overwhelming.
  - Waiting in anticipation for the major recruitments and feeling that they are not getting the experience they were anticipating.
  - Feel like the university is not coordinated in scheduling recruitments and rejection notifications.
  - If they do not join an organization, they feel more isolated and feel like there is nothing for them to do on campus.
  - They are unaware/informed of how else to get involved outside of the recruitment opportunities.

Theme 3: Weekends and Holidays

'LMU keeps it quiet that 60% of students are from CA making it a suitcase school for freshman.' - First year out of state parent

Students and parents are disappointed and challenged by the lack of weekend and holiday campus community and offerings:

- They feel the Monday through Thursday campus community to be vibrant and engaging:
  - The campus community feels alive.
  - Everything is open and programs and activities are visible.
  - There is a lot to do.
  - Creates an environment conducive to organic peer connections and experiences.
- They feel isolated and trapped on weekends and holidays:
  - The weekends lack a defined social scene.
  - A large majority of local students leave making the campus feel deserted and making them feel alone.
  - They feel isolated and are unaware of where the other out-of-state students are.
  - There is nothing to do on the weekends and if they are not part of a group they feel even more isolated.
  - They feel trapped on campus and are unaware/informed of what LMU has to offer.
  - They want to do things, but they are also seeking organic opportunities.

Theme 4: Food services, location and hours

'It is a struggle to find food on weekends and breaks...Spring Break was BRUTAL.' - Out-of-state RA

Food services, locations, selection and hours of operation are not meeting students' needs or assisting in creating community:

- Limited hours and locations of operation make students feel the campus is deserted and they are stranded.

Theme 5: Misinformation about LMU programs, resources, activities and services

'I find myself unable to help them navigate the university.' - Teaching Fellow

There is a significant lack of awareness and misinformation about LMU programs, resources, activities and services:

- Students are unaware of or misinformed about and unable to locate what LMU has to offer.
- Faculty and staff are not fully aware of what is happening on campus and how to appropriately guide students who are struggling.

Student Affairs Retention Initiatives

In order to increase the retention of first year out of state students, Student Affairs must provide for the freshmen class cohort with the needs of first year out of state students in mind through:

- Community & Collaboration
- Communication
- The LMU Experience