

Highlights
College Student Survey (CSS) - Messiah College Seniors
Spring 2003

Sample made up of 267 graduating seniors. With the sample 32.2% male and 67.8% female, the balance is tipped slightly toward a larger number of female students than the actual profile of the senior class.

Approximately 1 in 5 students plan on graduate study in the fall (19.5%) while most of the rest plan on working either part time or full time.

Compared with other private colleges, Messiah students (MC) were more likely to report working on campus as opposed to working off-campus. MC students were more likely to discuss courses with other students, be in professors' homes and take ethnic studies courses.

Some 38.7% of the students report drinking beer and 56.8% report drinking wine or alcohol during the past year. Generally these rates are lower than comparison private colleges (beer drinking - 69.4%; wine/alcohol - 78.4%). A majority of students reported being occasionally or frequently homesick (64.7%) and depressed (63.9%). About one third of the students said they *frequently* felt overwhelmed (38.7%; private colleges - 34.0%).

MC students spent about 25 hours per week on academic pursuits (classes/studying) while the comparison students (private colleges) reported about 22 hours per week on the same activities.

Compared to other colleges, MC students were more likely to rate themselves higher in areas of knowledge (majors; general knowledge) but lower in drive to achieve.

MC students found their professors *frequently* provided intellectual challenge / stimulation (MC 55.6%; private 50.3%) and about one third felt that professors *frequently* provided emotional support / development (MC 36.5% private 32.0%).

Some 91.0% of the MC students are satisfied with their overall college experience (private 86.1%) and most (MC 89.1%; private 79.7%) would definitely or probably choose Messiah again.

The top four objectives were integrating spirituality into my life (94.3%), helping others in difficulty (82.3%), raising a family (77.0%) and developing a philosophy of life (61.4%); least important were writing original works (11.7%), achieving in the performing arts (10.2%) and making a contribution to science (9.1%).

While at Messiah, there are some shifts in political identity. By their senior year, MC students are more likely to say they are "middle of the road" (46.3% versus first year-32.4%) and less likely to be "conservative" (38.0% versus first year-58.8%).

In regard to certain social/political issues, by their senior year, MC students are more in favor of abolishing the death penalty (47.5% versus first year - 22.4%) and less likely to say that married women should remain at home (11.5% versus first year - 22.6%).

Supplementary Questions - Spring 2003

Seniors were asked to respond to a set of twenty additional questions concerning their experiences in their major. These questions were also used in spring 2001. Below are the twenty statements ranked from high to low in terms of “strongly agree” or “agree” responses combined. The [*] identifies greater than 5% differences between years.

My major....	Percent agreeing or strongly agreeing....	Spring 2003 (n=267)	Spring 2001 (n=152)
introduced me to the major issues in the field		98.2%	95.4%
the professors in my major were normally available and very helpful		92.0	90.1
in my major the student/teacher rapport was very good		91.4	90.0
enabled me to become competent to discuss theoretical and practical problems in the field			90.8 90.8
contributes to Messiah College’s mission of preparing alumni for “lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church/society”		86.7	83.4
I would highly recommend this major to interested students			85.3 83.4
helped prepare me for my career objectives		84.0	87.4
internships should be an important part of the total program in my major		84.0	82.8
expanded my world view in distinctive ways			80.4 73.5*
was well organized with clear objectives		79.8	72.2*
overall, the professors in my major rank among the best I have ever had		79.1	78.8
overall, the courses in my major rank among the best I have ever taken		78.5	76.1
the professors in my major effectively integrated learning and Biblical truth		77.8	76.2
interdisciplinary study should be an important part of my major		77.3	70.9*
helped me to learn how to accept and work effectively with diverse people			72.4 68.9
has enriched my day to day living		72.4	67.6
made a unique contribution to my Christian development		71.8	67.5
helped me to know how to develop healthy interpersonal relationships		68.7	64.9
introduced me to issues that involve the church today		63.2	59.6
contributed significantly to my involvement in Christian service		43.6	40.4

The responses for the two groups of seniors are relatively similar. In some ways, the seniors of 2003 are somewhat more positive than those in 2001. This could simply be a reflection of differences between the samples.