

**National Research Study Supplement**

# **2010 Freshman Attitudes at Two-Year Colleges: A Closer Look**

This supplemental report expands on the findings of the 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report from Noel-Levitz by examining the wide-ranging attitudes and motivations of **incoming, first-year students** at two-year community, junior, career, and technical colleges.

Specifically, this report contrasts the attitudes of:

- Adult versus traditional-age students at two-year colleges
- First-generation versus non-first-generation students at two-year colleges
- Male versus female students at two-year colleges

The substantial differences in attitudes shown on the tables in this report speak to the distinctive missions of two-year colleges and underscore the importance of adapting student advisement, instruction, orientation, and other services to fit the varied needs of the student populations served. For recommendations on how to address the range of needs identified, please see the conclusions on pages 6 and 7.

For the complete findings of this study, including a demographic breakdown of respondents and an explanation of the research process that was used, see the appendix on pages 8-14.

To access the main 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report, visit [www.noellevitz.com/freshmanreport](http://www.noellevitz.com/freshmanreport).



**Noel-Levitz®**



**With the goal of identifying ways to improve completion rates for two-year colleges, this study examined attitudes that made it more difficult or less difficult for entering students to complete their educational programs as they began their studies in fall 2009.**

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### **View more reports online by race/ethnicity, by gender, and for nontraditional-age learners**

To access the entire series of National Freshman Attitudes Reports from Noel-Levitz, including previous reports that looked at the data by race/ethnicity, by gender, and for nontraditional-age learners, visit [www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport](http://www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport).



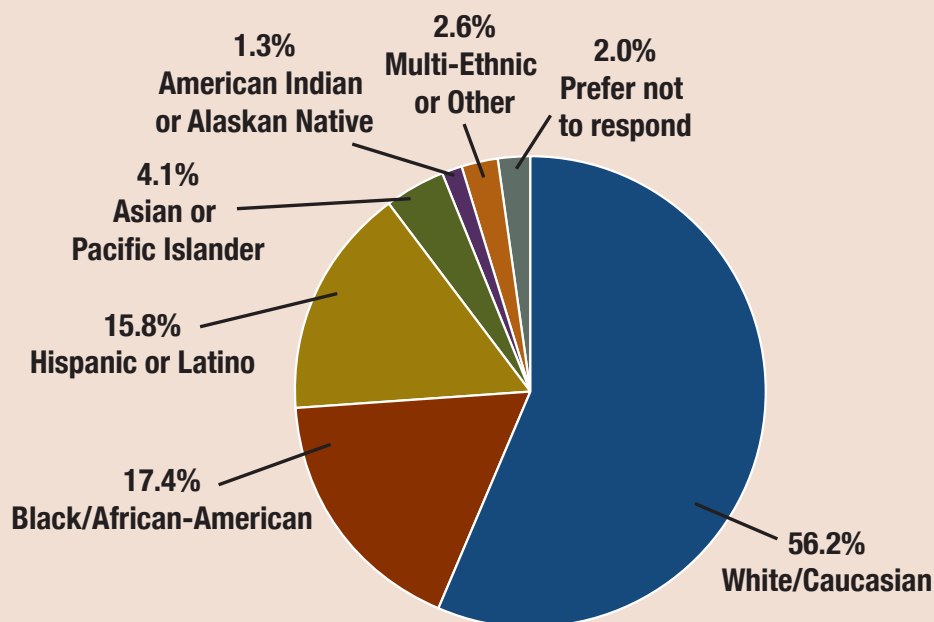
## The source of data

In the summer and fall of 2009, a total of 24,745 first-year students at 86 two-year colleges in the United States and Canada completed a 100-item attitudinal survey during orientation or within their first few weeks of classes. The survey examined a broad range of motivational attitudes that students brought with them to their collegiate learning experience. Students completed the survey online or used a traditional paper-and-pencil format. Consistent with national enrollment trends, a slight majority of respondents (51.4 percent) were female. The average age of respondents was 23.4.

The survey instrument used for this report was the College Student Inventory™ Form B (CSI-B), from the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System™. This motivational assessment identifies self-reported attitudes, including barriers and opportunities for students as they transition to college. For more information on the survey instrument and Noel-Levitz, please see page 16.

For additional context, please refer to the entire series of National Freshman Attitudes Reports from Noel-Levitz available at [www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport](http://www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport).

**For additional findings, including a demographic breakdown of the data sample, please see the appendix on pages 8-14.**



A broad cross-section of students and institutions were represented in the study. The ethnic/racial breakdown of respondents was 56.2 percent White/Caucasian, 17.4 percent Black/African-American, 15.8 percent Hispanic or Latino, 4.1 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, 2.6 percent Multi-Ethnic or Other, and 2.0 percent "prefer not to respond." For more details, please see the information on page 13 of the appendix.

**Highlights from  
the findings**

**Wide range of attitudes displayed by various incoming cohorts**

As shown in Table 1 below, the self-reported motivations and attitudes of incoming first-year students varied widely by the different cohorts of students examined. For example, compared to traditional students and to students overall, adult learners were much more likely to find reading satisfying and to study very hard. Yet, they were also more likely to report difficulty understanding and solving complex math problems. Below, contrasts between first-generation and non-first-generation students, and between male and female students, can be observed as well.

**Table 1: Academic Motivation**— Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| Selected survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| I get a great deal of personal satisfaction from reading.           | 62.5%          | 41.8%                | 48.3%                     | 46.6%                         | 37.6% | 56.4%   | 47.3%                                |
| I study very hard for all my courses, even those I don't like.      | 78.1%          | 56.6%                | 67.0%                     | 58.9%                         | 54.4% | 69.9%   | 62.4%                                |
| I have a hard time understanding and solving complex math problems. | 58.5%          | 49.9%                | 54.8%                     | 50.1%                         | 47.2% | 56.9%   | 52.2%                                |

One can readily gain a sense for differing student attitudes upon viewing this table, which reveals contrasts between adult and traditional learners at two-year colleges, along with differences in attitudes between first-generation and non-first-generation students, as well as between males and females.

**Definitions used in this study**

**Adult students:**  
Students age 25 and above.

**First-generation:**  
Students whose parents did not have any college experience.

**Adult learners especially concerned about finances**

In Table 2 below, the greatest contrasts were between adult and traditional-age students. For example, 43.9 percent of adult learners indicated they had “financial problems that are very distracting and troublesome,” whereas only 32.6 percent of traditional students agreed with that statement. Note that 40 percent of first-generation students also reported having distracting financial problems, compared to 32.3 percent of their non-first-generation counterparts.

**Table 2: Financial Concerns**— Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| Selected survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| I have financial problems that are very distracting and troublesome.                          | 43.9%          | 32.6%                | 40.0%                     | 32.3%                         | 34.1% | 37.0%   | 35.6%                                |
| I would like to talk with someone about getting a loan to help me through school.             | 40.3%          | 30.3%                | 35.2%                     | 31.4%                         | 33.3% | 32.7%   | 33.0%                                |
| I would like to talk to someone about getting a part-time job during the regular school year. | 33.1%          | 44.1%                | 42.5%                     | 40.0%                         | 45.5% | 37.0%   | 41.1%                                |

Overall, more than one-third of students at two-year colleges (35.6 percent) reported having distracting or troublesome financial problems. Of the cohorts shown, adult learners reported having the greatest concerns financially, followed closely by first-generation students.

## First-generation students more receptive to assistance

When compared to non-first-generation students, the first-generation students in this study were more receptive to academic support and guidance toward occupational choice, as shown in Table 3. For example, indicating an opportunity for educators and students alike, 47.8 percent of first-generation students reported that they would like “individual help in improving my writing skills” contrasted with 38.8 percent of non-first-generation students. Differences can also be observed in Table 3 between male and female students and between adult learners and traditional students.

**Table 3: Receptivity to Assistance**— Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| Selected survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| I would like to receive some instruction in the most effective ways to take college exams.        | 76.6%          | 71.9%                | 76.6%                     | 70.6%                         | 70.6% | 75.6%   | 73.1%                                |
| I would like to receive some individual help in improving my math skills.                         | 58.4%          | 49.1%                | 56.3%                     | 47.8%                         | 48.3% | 54.6%   | 51.6%                                |
| I would like to receive some individual help in improving my writing skills.                      | 47.2%          | 41.1%                | 47.8%                     | 38.8%                         | 42.0% | 43.4%   | 42.8%                                |
| I would like some help selecting an occupation that is well suited to my interests and abilities. | 38.9%          | 43.7%                | 43.7%                     | 41.3%                         | 43.6% | 41.3%   | 42.4%                                |

Above, one can observe that first-generation students were consistently more receptive to assistance than were non-first-generation students.

## Female students and adult learners more willing to make sacrifices

Compared to male students, female students reported a deeper commitment to their educational goals, as indicated by their willingness to make sacrifices to finish college, as shown in Table 4 below. Also representing a focus on goal attainment, adult learners indicated they were prepared to make necessary efforts to attain their goals. Only a slight difference was evident in this area between first-generation and non-first-generation students, both indicating high proportions in agreement.

**For more findings,  
see the appendix  
on pages 8 to 14.**

**Table 4: Willingness to Make Sacrifices to Finish College**— Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| Selected survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| I am deeply committed to my educational goals, and I’m fully prepared to make the effort and sacrifices that will be needed to attain them. | 95.0%          | 87.2%                | 90.7%                     | 88.2%                         | 86.5% | 91.9%   | 89.3%                                |
| I often wonder if a college education is really worth all the time, money, and effort that I’m being asked to spend on it.                  | 12.5%          | 19.0%                | 17.6%                     | 16.9%                         | 20.9% | 13.8%   | 17.2%                                |

How much are students considering the trade-offs inherent in their commitment to college? Are they willing to forgo immediate opportunities in order to accomplish their educational goals? Table 4 shows the contrasts in this area, especially between male and female students and between adult and traditional-age learners.



## Some reflections and recommendations from Noel-Levitz student retention professionals

In today's economy, with its accompanying changing circumstances in the socio-political landscape, the adage that "the success of students and the institution are inseparable" remains a strong guiding principle for effective student outreach and engagement. In this context, the aforementioned motivational assessment data serve as your students' voice; your responsiveness demonstrates your commitment to their concerns. As the data indicate, different cohorts of incoming students bring diverse attitudes to college, reflective of their backgrounds, goals, and circumstances.

As a leader at a two-year college, your involvement in the broader communities you serve keeps you informed, visible, and in a position to monitor and anticipate the needs of your particular region. As an informed leader, you are situated to raise questions for policy and practice related to tailoring of current programs, to support your institution's mission. Given the diversity of students you serve, and their distinctive strengths and needs, programs you currently offer may need to be adjusted to better serve these specific populations.

Toward this end, reviewing a variety of data sources may be instructive. Motivational assessment data, in addition to reports of student satisfaction and engagement, often supplement and shed light on your students' academic progress, persistence, stop-out behaviors, and overall enrollment patterns. Student focus groups can add dimension to your findings, as you seek to integrate the qualitative and quantitative perspectives across multiple data sources.

In our experience, best practices in student retention are an outgrowth of strong educational services. Not only are such interventions educationally worthy, they also make business sense. Focused interventions provide the avenue for you to experience a stronger return from your efforts in the form of student success, an outcome of relevant and timely services. (To estimate your cost savings from reduced attrition, see our Retention Revenue Estimator and Return on Investment Estimator at [www.noellevitz.com/estimators](http://www.noellevitz.com/estimators).)

**Specific comments on adult students:** A number of the findings of this study suggest that adult learners have characteristics that support their success in college, providing they can continue to manage their financial situations while enrolled. Their satisfaction with reading, willingness to make sacrifices toward attaining their goals, and diligence in studying – even in classes they don't like – reflect their "can-do" attitudes. Institutions that can schedule classes effectively and provide quality financial aid and employment services are positioned to see good returns on those efforts.

**Specific comments on male students:** This study provides keen insights into why males in our society may be more inclined to leave college without a degree than their female counterparts; namely, in contrast to other student populations, they are less likely to find reading satisfying and are more likely to wonder if attending college is worth the effort and resources. They are also more likely to be looking for part-time work, further distracting them from their studies. Orientation and advising programs that help male students understand the value of their education and to see the return on their investment in coursework help to counterbalance these frameworks.

*Please continue  
next page*

**These observations and suggestions are provided by Noel-Levitz student retention professionals. To learn more about the Noel-Levitz retention consulting team, visit [www.noellevitz.com/retentionteam](http://www.noellevitz.com/retentionteam).**

**Specific comments on first-generation students:** How do you engage these students with the services they need most? For starters, your work with first-generation students should include developing awareness of the expectations of college life, cultivating skills of preparedness for academic demands, instructing on the logistics of campus processes and procedures, and providing encouragement and support, while creating a heightened sense of possibilities that may inform their academic and personal aspirations.

You might also consider unconventional mentoring programs for students that draw upon the talents of campus staff, as well as faculty and administration. In addition, you will want to communicate value-added features to families, while reaffirming the rationale of a college education.

Finally, to intervene effectively with these students, a deliberate strategy is needed to encourage and facilitate student participation – this cannot be left to chance. Through early intervention in the form of intensified engagement with your campus services, your campus demonstrates its mission as a student-centered organization, actively supporting students in their academic progress. In the process of making productive connections on campus, you pave the road for smoother transitions and more positive learning experiences.

If you have questions about this report, or to learn more about how our retention professionals can help you increase completion rates through additional data gathering, analysis, and prioritization of resources, please contact Beth Richter at [beth-richter@noellevitz.com](mailto:beth-richter@noellevitz.com). Additionally, please call us at 1-800-876-1117 to learn how motivational assessment can support you in prioritizing your resources, programs, and services.

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**Appendix with additional findings and data from fall 2009**

The findings of this study appear in their entirety in this section. Included are the percentages of students from each of the six student groupings that agreed with the items, along with the overall percentages for the two-year colleges in the sample.

Due to the large sample sizes, virtually all differences in the means shown proved to be statistically significant based on either a t-test or ANOVA analysis.

**Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement**

| All survey items  | Adult students* | Traditional students | First-generation students** | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Desire to finish college</b>   |                 |                      |                             |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I have a very strong desire to continue my education, and I am quite determined to finish a degree.   | 95.8%           | 92.2%                | 93.6%                       | 92.9%                         | 91.1% | 95.1%   | 93.2%                                |
| I am very strongly dedicated to finishing college—no matter what obstacles get in my way.   | 95.7%           | 92.2%                | 93.7%                       | 92.8%                         | 91.6% | 94.7%   | 93.2%                                |
| I am deeply committed to my educational goals, and I'm fully prepared to make the effort and sacrifices that will be needed to attain them.       | 95.0%           | 87.2%                | 90.7%                       | 88.2%                         | 86.5% | 91.9%   | 89.3%                                |
| Of all the things I could do at this point in my life, going to college is definitely the most satisfying.  | 86.0%           | 82.2%                | 86.1%                       | 81.1%                         | 79.5% | 86.7%   | 83.2%                                |
| I often wonder if a college education is really worth all the time, money, and effort that I'm being asked to spend on it.                        | 12.5%           | 19.0%                | 17.6%                       | 16.9%                         | 20.9% | 13.8%   | 17.2%                                |
| I can think of many things I would rather do than go to college.  | 10.8%           | 14.6%                | 12.4%                       | 14.4%                         | 17.7% | 9.6%    | 13.6%                                |
| I wish that society did not put so much pressure on people to go to college, as I'd really rather be doing other things at this point in my life. | 8.4%            | 12.9%                | 11.3%                       | 12.0%                         | 14.3% | 9.2%    | 11.7%                                |
| I dread the thought of going to school for several more years, and there is a part of me that would like to give the whole thing up.              | 9.7%            | 11.7%                | 11.2%                       | 11.2%                         | 11.4% | 10.9%   | 11.2%                                |
| <b>Attitude toward educators</b>  |                 |                      |                             |                               |       |         |                                      |
| The teachers I had in school respected me as a person and treated me fairly.  | 77.3%           | 78.7%                | 79.1%                       | 77.9%                         | 75.1% | 81.4%   | 78.3%                                |
| Most of my teachers have been very caring and dedicated.  | 80.3%           | 79.6%                | 80.8%                       | 79.0%                         | 78.1% | 81.3%   | 79.8%                                |
| I liked my teachers, and I feel they did a good job.  | 77.3%           | 73.3%                | 75.3%                       | 73.7%                         | 71.0% | 77.6%   | 74.4%                                |
| Most teachers have a superior attitude that I find very annoying.   | 8.2%            | 18.2%                | 14.7%                       | 16.2%                         | 18.8% | 12.5%   | 15.5%                                |
| Most of the teachers I had in school were too opinionated and inflexible.   | 15.4%           | 19.7%                | 19.6%                       | 17.7%                         | 21.6% | 15.7%   | 18.6%                                |
| In my opinion, many teachers are more concerned about themselves than they are about their students.  | 8.6%            | 15.0%                | 12.9%                       | 13.6%                         | 16.1% | 10.7%   | 13.3%                                |

\* Adult learners were defined, for this study, as students age 25 and above.

\*\* First-generation students were defined, for this study, as students whose parents did not have *any* college experience.



## Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| All survey items  | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Intellectual interests</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| Over the years, books have broadened my horizons and stimulated my imagination.   | 66.0%          | 47.0%                | 51.1%                     | 52.7%                         | 45.1% | 58.6%   | 52.1%                                |
| I get a great deal of satisfaction from reading.  | 62.5%          | 41.8%                | 48.3%                     | 46.6%                         | 37.6% | 56.4%   | 47.3%                                |
| I don't enjoy reading serious books and articles, and I only do it when I have to.  | 31.1%          | 45.4%                | 41.8%                     | 41.5%                         | 44.8% | 38.6%   | 41.6%                                |
| Books have never gotten me very excited.  | 34.8%          | 46.5%                | 42.9%                     | 43.7%                         | 50.4% | 36.7%   | 43.3%                                |
| <b>Study habits</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I take very careful notes during class, and I review them thoroughly before a test.   | 76.7%          | 58.3%                | 67.6%                     | 60.1%                         | 52.2% | 73.7%   | 63.3%                                |
| I study very hard for all my courses, even those I don't like.  | 78.1%          | 56.6%                | 67.0%                     | 58.9%                         | 54.4% | 69.9%   | 62.4%                                |
| I have developed a solid system of self-discipline, which helps me keep up with my schoolwork.                                | 62.6%          | 53.5%                | 58.1%                     | 54.4%                         | 52.1% | 59.5%   | 55.9%                                |
| My studying is very irregular and unpredictable.  | 23.1%          | 34.6%                | 30.2%                     | 32.5%                         | 35.4% | 27.8%   | 31.5%                                |
| When I try to study, I usually get bored and quit after a few minutes.  | 15.6%          | 32.9%                | 27.8%                     | 28.5%                         | 30.4% | 26.2%   | 28.2%                                |
| I have great difficulty concentrating on schoolwork, and I often get behind.  | 22.6%          | 26.9%                | 26.5%                     | 25.2%                         | 28.1% | 23.6%   | 25.8%                                |
| <b>Math and science confidence</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I have a very good grasp of the scientific ideas I've studied in school.  | 41.1%          | 40.4%                | 36.4%                     | 43.9%                         | 45.4% | 36.0%   | 40.6%                                |
| I have a hard time understanding and solving complex math problems.   | 58.5%          | 49.9%                | 54.8%                     | 50.1%                         | 47.2% | 56.9%   | 52.2%                                |
| Math has always been a challenge for me.  | 58.7%          | 50.7%                | 55.0%                     | 51.1%                         | 46.4% | 58.8%   | 52.8%                                |
| I have always enjoyed the challenge of trying to solve complex math problems.   | 37.5%          | 33.4%                | 35.0%                     | 34.1%                         | 37.8% | 31.3%   | 34.5%                                |
| I have a very good understanding of general biology (e.g., cell structure, metabolism, genetics, and the circulatory system). | 31.2%          | 33.1%                | 29.1%                     | 35.4%                         | 34.3% | 31.0%   | 32.6%                                |
| My understanding of the physical sciences is very weak.   | 34.9%          | 30.2%                | 35.3%                     | 28.4%                         | 27.0% | 35.6%   | 31.4%                                |
| <b>Verbal confidence</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I am capable of writing a very clear and well-organized paper.  | 54.8%          | 54.9%                | 51.2%                     | 57.8%                         | 52.1% | 57.5%   | 54.9%                                |
| I pick up new vocabulary words quickly, and I find it easy to use them in my speech and writing.                              | 61.3%          | 52.3%                | 52.2%                     | 56.7%                         | 56.4% | 53.1%   | 54.7%                                |
| I am very good at figuring out the deeper meaning of a short story or novel.  | 55.4%          | 48.3%                | 48.5%                     | 51.6%                         | 47.4% | 52.9%   | 50.2%                                |
| I have difficulty organizing my ideas in a paper, and I tend to make a lot of punctuation and grammar mistakes.               | 39.7%          | 39.5%                | 42.9%                     | 37.0%                         | 41.1% | 38.1%   | 39.6%                                |
| In English classes, I've had difficulty analyzing an author's style and theme.  | 29.0%          | 31.9%                | 33.3%                     | 29.5%                         | 33.4% | 29.0%   | 31.1%                                |
| Learning new vocabulary words is a slow and difficult process for me.   | 18.7%          | 20.8%                | 23.5%                     | 17.6%                         | 19.0% | 21.4%   | 20.2%                                |

## Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| All survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|--|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Career closure</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I have found a potential career that strongly attracts me.   | 88.1%          | 80.6%                | 83.4%                     | 82.1%                         | 81.5% | 83.6%   | 82.6%                                |
| I have made a firm decision to enter a certain occupation and have begun planning my life around that decision.          | 76.9%          | 66.2%                | 70.6%                     | 68.0%                         | 67.3% | 70.7%   | 69.0%                                |
| I become very confused when I try to choose an occupation.   | 18.4%          | 24.2%                | 22.7%                     | 22.6%                         | 22.9% | 22.4%   | 22.7%                                |
| I am very confused about what occupation to pursue.  | 14.0%          | 19.1%                | 17.3%                     | 18.0%                         | 18.0% | 17.5%   | 17.7%                                |
| <b>Family emotional support</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| When I was a child, my parents usually understood me, respected my judgment, and treated me in ways that helped me grow. | 60.6%          | 73.7%                | 66.4%                     | 73.2%                         | 71.5% | 68.9%   | 70.2%                                |
| My family and I communicated very well when I was young, and we had a good understanding of each other's point of view.  | 54.6%          | 64.7%                | 59.4%                     | 64.2%                         | 62.9% | 61.1%   | 62.0%                                |
| My family had one way of looking at me when I was a child, and they didn't understand my feelings very well.             | 25.7%          | 18.3%                | 23.6%                     | 17.7%                         | 18.4% | 22.1%   | 20.3%                                |
| When I was a child, the other members of my family often said hurtful things that caused unpleasant feelings.            | 23.5%          | 15.2%                | 20.1%                     | 15.2%                         | 14.0% | 20.7%   | 17.4%                                |
| <b>Sense of financial security</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I have the financial resources that I need to finish college.  | 40.0%          | 45.6%                | 40.8%                     | 46.9%                         | 45.5% | 42.9%   | 44.1%                                |
| I don't have any financial problems that will interfere with my schoolwork.  | 31.3%          | 36.3%                | 32.0%                     | 37.3%                         | 37.0% | 33.1%   | 35.0%                                |
| I have financial problems that are very distracting and troublesome.   | 43.9%          | 32.6%                | 40.0%                     | 32.3%                         | 34.1% | 37.0%   | 35.6%                                |
| I am in a bad financial position, and the pressure to earn extra money will probably interfere with my studies.          | 21.9%          | 20.5%                | 23.3%                     | 19.1%                         | 21.3% | 20.5%   | 20.9%                                |
| <b>Sociability</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I greatly enjoy getting together with a crowd of people and having fun.  | 65.4%          | 76.5%                | 72.0%                     | 74.8%                         | 72.7% | 74.2%   | 73.5%                                |
| I am very adventurous and outgoing at social gatherings.   | 51.4%          | 58.3%                | 54.7%                     | 58.1%                         | 56.3% | 56.6%   | 56.5%                                |
| Participating in large social gatherings is of little interest to me.  | 35.1%          | 31.1%                | 34.6%                     | 30.4%                         | 32.8% | 31.7%   | 32.2%                                |
| It is hard for me to relax and just have fun with a group of people.   | 17.8%          | 13.3%                | 16.3%                     | 13.0%                         | 13.7% | 15.3%   | 14.5%                                |

## Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| All survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|--|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Opinion tolerance</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I get along well with people who disagree with my opinion openly.  | 73.7%          | 61.2%                | 66.1%                     | 63.5%                         | 63.8% | 65.3%   | 64.6%                                |
| I can feel comfortable with someone who thinks quite differently than I do on major social issues.                                       | 71.9%          | 60.4%                | 63.7%                     | 63.2%                         | 63.5% | 63.5%   | 63.5%                                |
| I find it easy to be friends with people whose political ideas differ sharply from my own.   | 65.1%          | 55.2%                | 58.3%                     | 57.6%                         | 56.8% | 58.9%   | 57.9%                                |
| When someone's opinions strongly disagree with my own, I tend to develop unfriendly feelings and to avoid close contact with the person. | 12.5%          | 13.9%                | 13.5%                     | 13.5%                         | 14.0% | 13.0%   | 13.5%                                |
| I feel uneasy and distrustful toward people whose way of thinking is quite dissimilar to my own.   | 8.1%           | 10.7%                | 10.5%                     | 9.6%                          | 11.0% | 9.0%    | 10.0%                                |
| Because they irritate me, I tend to stay away from people whose ideas are quite different from my own.                                   | 8.8%           | 11.1%                | 10.7%                     | 10.4%                         | 11.9% | 9.3%    | 10.5%                                |
| <b>Receptivity to academic assistance</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I would like to receive some instruction in the most effective ways to take college exams.   | 76.6%          | 71.9%                | 76.6%                     | 70.6%                         | 70.6% | 75.6%   | 73.1%                                |
| I would like to receive some help in improving my study habits.  | 59.1%          | 55.6%                | 60.8%                     | 53.3%                         | 54.1% | 58.8%   | 56.5%                                |
| I would like to receive some individual help in improving my math skills.  | 58.4%          | 49.1%                | 56.3%                     | 47.8%                         | 48.3% | 54.6%   | 51.6%                                |
| I would like to receive some individual help in improving my writing skills.   | 47.2%          | 41.1%                | 47.8%                     | 38.8%                         | 42.0% | 43.4%   | 42.8%                                |
| I would like to receive tutoring in one or more of my courses.   | 43.1%          | 36.3%                | 42.0%                     | 35.1%                         | 35.3% | 40.8%   | 38.1%                                |
| I would like to receive some training to improve my reading skills.  | 33.0%          | 28.0%                | 34.3%                     | 25.4%                         | 29.7% | 29.0%   | 29.4%                                |
| <b>Receptivity to career counseling</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I would like some help selecting an educational plan that will prepare me to get a good job.   | 60.8%          | 60.8%                | 63.6%                     | 58.7%                         | 60.0% | 61.5%   | 60.8%                                |
| I would like to talk with someone about the qualifications needed for certain occupations.   | 55.6%          | 58.3%                | 59.0%                     | 56.6%                         | 56.7% | 58.3%   | 57.5%                                |
| I would like to talk with someone about the salaries and future outlook for various occupations.   | 49.2%          | 50.6%                | 51.6%                     | 49.1%                         | 52.8% | 47.7%   | 50.2%                                |
| I would like to talk with someone about the advantages and disadvantages of various occupations.   | 39.3%          | 41.3%                | 41.8%                     | 40.0%                         | 42.1% | 39.5%   | 40.8%                                |
| I would like some help selecting an occupation that is well-suited to my interests and abilities.  | 38.9%          | 43.7%                | 43.7%                     | 41.3%                         | 43.6% | 41.3%   | 42.4%                                |

**Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement**

| All survey items   | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|--|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Receptivity to financial guidance</b>   |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I would like to talk to someone about getting a scholarship.   | 53.2%          | 56.5%                | 57.0%                     | 54.6%                         | 52.9% | 58.3%   | 55.7%                                |
| I would like to talk to someone about getting a part-time job during the regular school year.                                    | 33.1%          | 44.1%                | 42.5%                     | 40.0%                         | 45.5% | 37.0%   | 41.1%                                |
| I would like to talk to someone about the opportunities available for summer employment.   | 36.9%          | 44.1%                | 44.3%                     | 40.5%                         | 43.9% | 40.5%   | 42.2%                                |
| I would like to talk with someone about getting a loan to help me through school.  | 40.3%          | 30.3%                | 35.2%                     | 31.4%                         | 33.3% | 32.7%   | 33.0%                                |
| <b>Receptivity to personal counseling</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about my general attitude toward school.   | 21.7%          | 18.6%                | 21.6%                     | 17.7%                         | 19.1% | 19.7%   | 19.4%                                |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about some difficulties in my personal relationships or social life.                       | 11.0%          | 11.1%                | 12.2%                     | 10.2%                         | 10.5% | 11.7%   | 11.1%                                |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about eliminating an unwanted habit (involving food, drugs, cigarettes, or alcohol, etc.). | 11.6%          | 10.0%                | 11.3%                     | 9.6%                          | 11.1% | 9.7%    | 10.4%                                |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about some emotional tensions that are bothering me.                                       | 9.1%           | 8.9%                 | 9.9%                      | 8.2%                          | 8.3%  | 9.6%    | 9.0%                                 |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about some feelings of discouragement or unhappy thoughts that keep bothering me.          | 8.6%           | 9.1%                 | 10.1%                     | 8.0%                          | 8.5%  | 9.5%    | 9.0%                                 |
| I would like to talk with a counselor about some family problems.  | 7.1%           | 7.0%                 | 8.0%                      | 6.2%                          | 6.1%  | 7.8%    | 7.0%                                 |
| <b>Receptivity to social enrichment</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I would like to attend an informal gathering where I can meet some new friends.  | 40.3%          | 45.0%                | 43.6%                     | 43.9%                         | 44.5% | 43.0%   | 43.7%                                |
| I would like to find out more about the clubs and social organizations at my college.  | 33.1%          | 43.5%                | 41.2%                     | 40.2%                         | 40.8% | 40.7%   | 40.7%                                |
| I would like to find out more about student government and the various student activities on campus.                             | 32.2%          | 36.6%                | 37.4%                     | 33.9%                         | 33.9% | 36.9%   | 35.5%                                |
| I would like to meet an experienced student who can show me around and give me some advice.                                      | 34.9%          | 37.8%                | 40.1%                     | 34.7%                         | 36.8% | 37.2%   | 37.0%                                |
| <b>Desire to transfer</b>  |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| I have no desire to transfer to another school before finishing a degree at this college or university.                          | 69.5%          | 50.5%                | 59.2%                     | 52.9%                         | 57.0% | 54.3%   | 55.6%                                |
| I plan to transfer to another school before completing a degree at this college or university.                                   | 9.9%           | 24.2%                | 17.8%                     | 22.4%                         | 19.4% | 21.3%   | 20.4%                                |

## Respondent demographics (Fall 2009)

### Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

| All survey items                            | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males    | Females  | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Number of respondents                       | 6,625          | 18,120               | 10,669*                   | 13,779*                       | 12,007** | 12,730** | 24,745                               |
| Percent of respondents                      | 26.8%          | 73.2%                | 43.1%                     | 55.7%                         | 48.5%    | 51.4%    | 100.0%                               |
| Percent male                                | 40.8%          | 51.3%                | 44.3%                     | 51.8%                         | 100.0%   | 0.0%     | 48.5%                                |
| Percent female                              | 59.2%          | 48.6%                | 55.6%                     | 48.2%                         | 0.0%     | 100.0%   | 54.1%                                |
| Average age of students                     | 34.8           | 19.2                 | 25.1                      | 22.1                          | 22.5     | 24.2     | 23.4                                 |
| <b>Racial/ethnic origin</b>                 |                |                      |                           |                               |          |          |                                      |
| Black/African-American                      | 20.3%          | 16.3%                | 19.9%                     | 15.4%                         | 14.6%    | 20.0%    | 17.4%                                |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native           | 1.0%           | 1.3%                 | 1.0%                      | 1.5%                          | 1.3%     | 1.2%     | 1.3%                                 |
| Asian or Pacific Islander                   | 2.5%           | 4.7%                 | 3.5%                      | 4.4%                          | 4.4%     | 3.8%     | 4.1%                                 |
| White/Caucasian                             | 55.4%          | 56.4%                | 48.7%                     | 62.3%                         | 58.8%    | 53.7%    | 56.2%                                |
| Hispanic or Latino                          | 15.7%          | 15.8%                | 22.9%                     | 10.3%                         | 15.6%    | 16.0%    | 15.8%                                |
| Multi-ethnic or other ethnic origin         | 2.2%           | 2.8%                 | 2.0%                      | 3.1%                          | 2.4%     | 2.8%     | 2.6%                                 |
| Prefer not to respond                       | 2.4%           | 1.8%                 | 1.6%                      | 2.2%                          | 2.0%     | 2.0%     | 2.0%                                 |
| <b>Highest education level of mother</b>    |                |                      |                           |                               |          |          |                                      |
| 8 years or less                             | 11.2%          | 5.5%                 | 14.7%                     | 1.2%                          | 5.8%     | 8.2%     | 7.0%                                 |
| Some high school                            | 16.9%          | 10.5%                | 23.9%                     | 3.3%                          | 10.5%    | 13.9%    | 12.2%                                |
| High school diploma                         | 38.7%          | 35.7%                | 61.4%                     | 17.7%                         | 36.7%    | 36.3%    | 36.5%                                |
| 1 to 3 years of college                     | 22.2%          | 29.9%                | 0.0%                      | 49.6%                         | 28.0%    | 27.6%    | 27.8%                                |
| Bachelor's degree                           | 6.8%           | 11.5%                | 0.0%                      | 18.3%                         | 12.2%    | 8.4%     | 10.3%                                |
| Master's degree                             | 2.4%           | 4.3%                 | 0.0%                      | 6.8%                          | 4.3%     | 3.4%     | 3.8%                                 |
| Professional degree                         | 1.4%           | 1.9%                 | 0.0%                      | 3.1%                          | 1.9%     | 1.6%     | 1.8%                                 |
| <b>Highest education level of father</b>    |                |                      |                           |                               |          |          |                                      |
| 8 years or less                             | 13.6%          | 6.6%                 | 17.2%                     | 1.9%                          | 7.4%     | 9.5%     | 8.5%                                 |
| Some high school                            | 18.2%          | 13.8%                | 26.2%                     | 6.6%                          | 13.1%    | 16.8%    | 15.0%                                |
| High school diploma                         | 39.3%          | 38.7%                | 56.6%                     | 25.9%                         | 38.0%    | 39.6%    | 38.8%                                |
| 1 to 3 years of college                     | 16.4%          | 23.6%                | 0.0%                      | 38.8%                         | 23.1%    | 20.3%    | 21.7%                                |
| Bachelor's degree                           | 6.9%           | 10.1%                | 0.0%                      | 16.5%                         | 10.8%    | 7.8%     | 9.2%                                 |
| Master's degree                             | 2.9%           | 4.1%                 | 0.0%                      | 6.8%                          | 4.5%     | 3.1%     | 3.8%                                 |
| Professional degree                         | 1.8%           | 2.0%                 | 0.0%                      | 3.4%                          | 2.1%     | 1.8%     | 1.9%                                 |
| <b>Highest degree planned by respondent</b> |                |                      |                           |                               |          |          |                                      |
| None  | 0.5%           | 0.3%                 | 0.4%                      | 0.4%                          | 0.5%     | 0.2%     | 0.4%                                 |
| 1-year certificate                          | 6.4%           | 3.4%                 | 5.6%                      | 3.1%                          | 5.1%     | 3.3%     | 4.2%                                 |
| 2-year degree (associate's)                 | 43.6%          | 30.8%                | 38.7%                     | 30.9%                         | 37.7%    | 30.9%    | 34.2%                                |
| 4-year degree (bachelor's)                  | 29.6%          | 37.0%                | 33.5%                     | 36.2%                         | 34.5%    | 35.5%    | 35.0%                                |
| Master's degree                             | 12.8%          | 16.7%                | 13.0%                     | 17.5%                         | 14.3%    | 17.0%    | 15.7%                                |
| Professional degree                         | 7.2%           | 11.7%                | 8.7%                      | 11.8%                         | 7.8%     | 13.1%    | 10.5%                                |

\* 297 students did not provide the necessary data to classify them as first-generation or non-first-generation students. These students have not been included in the percentages for first-generation and non-first-generation students.

\*\* Eight students did not provide the necessary data to classify them as male or female students. These students have not been included in the percentages for male and female students.

Proportion of Incoming Students in Agreement

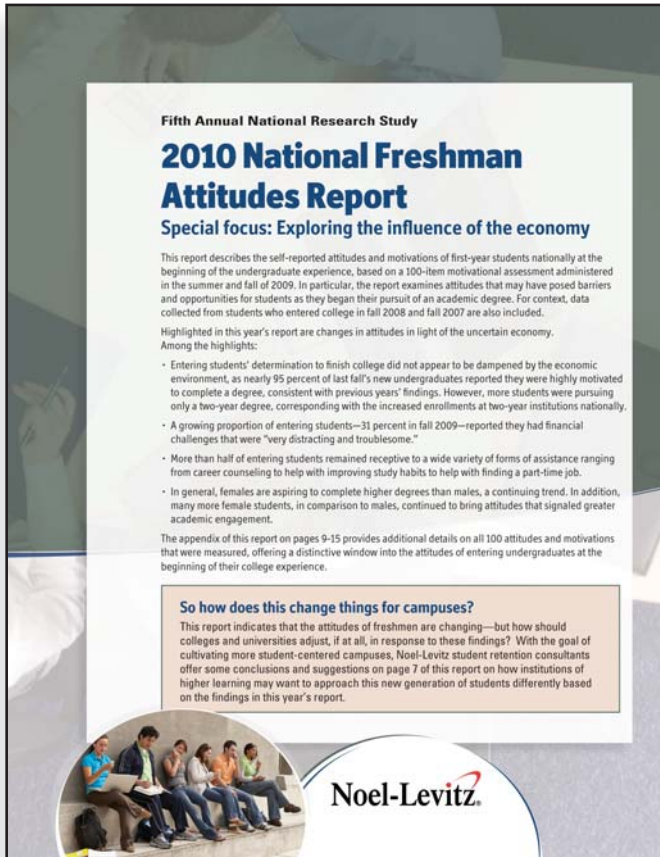
| All survey items  | Adult students | Traditional students | First-generation students | Non-first-generation students | Males | Females | OVERALL two-year college percentages |
|---|----------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Time expecting to spend at work</b>                        |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| 0 (I have no plans to work)                                   | 26.5%          | 15.8%                | 19.9%                     | 17.7%                         | 17.2% | 20.0%   | 18.7%                                |
| 1 to 10 hours per week  | 8.8%           | 13.1%                | 10.8%                     | 12.8%                         | 12.0% | 11.9%   | 11.9%                                |
| 11 to 20 hours per week                                       | 17.4%          | 30.0%                | 24.7%                     | 28.1%                         | 27.7% | 25.7%   | 26.6%                                |
| 21 to 30 hours per week                                       | 17.2%          | 23.6%                | 21.5%                     | 22.1%                         | 22.1% | 21.6%   | 21.9%                                |
| 31 to 40 hours per week                                       | 22.3%          | 14.0%                | 17.9%                     | 14.9%                         | 15.1% | 17.2%   | 16.2%                                |
| Over 40 hours per week  | 7.8%           | 3.6%                 | 5.1%                      | 4.4%                          | 5.9%  | 3.6%    | 4.7%                                 |
| <b>Average grades as senior in high school</b>                |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| A   | 3.8%           | 7.3%                 | 5.0%                      | 7.4%                          | 5.2%  | 7.5%    | 6.4%                                 |
| A to B  | 19.5%          | 28.9%                | 25.2%                     | 27.3%                         | 23.3% | 29.3%   | 26.4%                                |
| B   | 19.2%          | 19.8%                | 18.6%                     | 20.5%                         | 20.2% | 19.0%   | 19.6%                                |
| B to C  | 33.0%          | 30.5%                | 32.9%                     | 29.9%                         | 32.2% | 30.3%   | 31.2%                                |
| C   | 14.7%          | 8.5%                 | 10.9%                     | 9.6%                          | 12.0% | 8.5%    | 10.2%                                |
| C to D  | 7.9%           | 4.2%                 | 6.1%                      | 4.4%                          | 5.6%  | 4.8%    | 5.2%                                 |
| D   | 1.9%           | 0.7%                 | 1.3%                      | 0.8%                          | 1.4%  | 0.7%    | 1.0%                                 |
| <b>Respondent's self-assessment of academic knowledge</b>     |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| Highest 20%   | 9.1%           | 8.2%                 | 6.2%                      | 10.2%                         | 9.3%  | 7.6%    | 8.4%                                 |
| Next to highest 20%   | 19.3%          | 24.2%                | 19.7%                     | 25.3%                         | 23.6% | 22.2%   | 22.9%                                |
| Middle 20%  | 60.0%          | 61.6%                | 64.6%                     | 58.6%                         | 59.7% | 62.6%   | 61.2%                                |
| Next to lowest 20%  | 9.1%           | 5.1%                 | 7.6%                      | 5.0%                          | 6.0%  | 6.3%    | 6.2%                                 |
| Lowest 20%  | 2.4%           | 0.8%                 | 1.7%                      | 0.9%                          | 1.3%  | 1.2%    | 1.2%                                 |
| <b>Respondent's self-assessment of academic ability</b>       |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| Considerably below average                                    | 1.4%           | 0.7%                 | 1.2%                      | 0.6%                          | 0.9%  | 0.9%    | 0.9%                                 |
| Slightly below average  | 8.1%           | 6.3%                 | 8.1%                      | 5.7%                          | 6.8%  | 6.7%    | 6.8%                                 |
| Average   | 48.6%          | 47.6%                | 53.8%                     | 43.3%                         | 43.0% | 52.5%   | 47.9%                                |
| Slightly above average  | 25.8%          | 29.5%                | 24.8%                     | 31.3%                         | 31.5% | 25.7%   | 28.5%                                |
| Considerably above average (top 20%)                          | 14.3%          | 14.3%                | 11.0%                     | 17.0%                         | 15.8% | 12.9%   | 14.3%                                |
| Extremely high (top 5%)                                       | 1.8%           | 1.5%                 | 1.2%                      | 2.0%                          | 1.9%  | 1.3%    | 1.6%                                 |
| <b>Timing of decision to attend chosen college/university</b> |                |                      |                           |                               |       |         |                                      |
| Decision made few days before                                 | 4.1%           | 4.2%                 | 4.5%                      | 3.9%                          | 5.0%  | 3.3%    | 4.1%                                 |
| Decision made weeks before                                    | 23.2%          | 21.0%                | 23.2%                     | 20.4%                         | 23.7% | 19.6%   | 21.6%                                |
| Decision made many months before                              | 72.7%          | 74.5%                | 72.2%                     | 75.4%                         | 71.0% | 76.9%   | 74.0%                                |



## See the main 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report

Visit [www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport](http://www.noellevitz.com/FreshmanReport) to access the main 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report and its 2010 Addendum by Race/Ethnicity.

By examining the attitudes of first-year students at the very beginning of their college experience, these reports add another layer to the existing national research on college freshmen.



**Fifth Annual National Research Study**  
**2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report**  
**Special focus: Exploring the influence of the economy**

This report describes the self-reported attitudes and motivations of first-year students nationally at the beginning of the undergraduate experience, based on a 100-item motivational assessment administered in the summer and fall of 2009. In particular, the report examines attitudes that may have posed barriers and opportunities for students as they began their pursuit of an academic degree. For context, data collected from students who entered college in fall 2008 and fall 2007 are also included.

Highlighted in this year's report are changes in attitudes in light of the uncertain economy.



Among the highlights:

- Entering students' determination to finish college did not appear to be dampened by the economic environment, as nearly 95 percent of last fall's new undergraduates reported they were highly motivated to complete a degree, consistent with previous years' findings. However, more students were pursuing only a two-year degree, corresponding with the increased enrollments at two-year institutions nationally.
- A growing proportion of entering students—31 percent in fall 2009—reported they had financial challenges that were "very distracting and troublesome."
- More than half of entering students remained receptive to a wide variety of forms of assistance ranging from career counseling to help with improving study habits to help with finding a part-time job.
- In general, females are aspiring to complete higher degrees than males, a continuing trend. In addition, many more female students, in comparison to males, continued to bring attitudes that signaled greater academic engagement.

The appendix of this report on pages 9-15 provides additional details on all 100 attitudes and motivations that were measured, offering a distinctive window into the attitudes of entering undergraduates at the beginning of their college experience.

**So how does this change things for campuses?**

This report indicates that the attitudes of freshmen are changing—but how should colleges and universities adjust, if at all, in response to these findings? With the goal of cultivating more student-centered campuses, Noel-Levitz student retention consultants offer some conclusions and suggestions on page 7 of this report on how institutions of higher learning may want to approach this new generation of students differently based on the findings in this year's report.

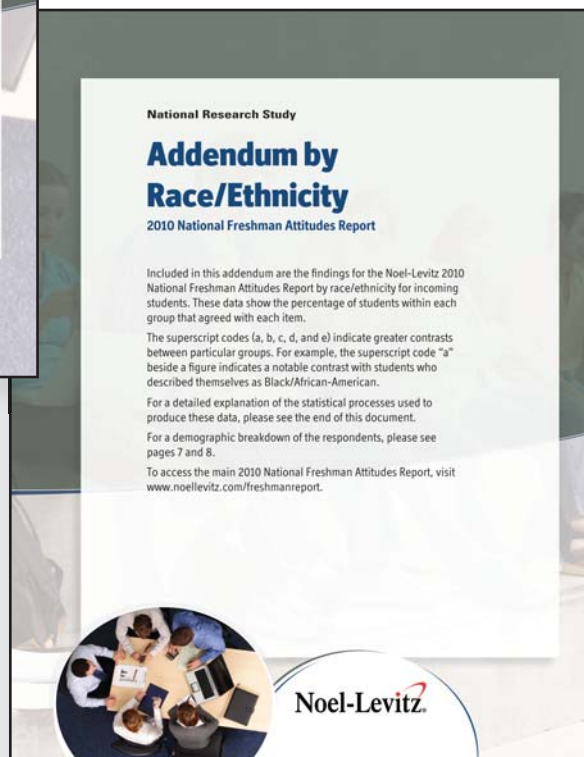


**96,641 students**

*2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report*

**90,687 students**

*2010 Addendum by Race/Ethnicity*



**National Research Study**  
**Addendum by Race/Ethnicity**  
**2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report**



Included in this addendum are the findings for the Noel-Levitz 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report by race/ethnicity for incoming students. These data show the percentage of students within each group that agreed with each item.

The superscript codes (a, b, c, d, and e) indicate greater contrasts between particular groups. For example, the superscript code "a" beside a figure indicates a notable contrast with students who described themselves as Black/African-American.

For a detailed explanation of the statistical processes used to produce these data, please see the end of this document.

For a demographic breakdown of the respondents, please see pages 7 and 8.

To access the main 2010 National Freshman Attitudes Report, visit [www.noellevitz.com/freshmanreport](http://www.noellevitz.com/freshmanreport).



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## Questions? Want additional information?

If you have questions about this report, or to learn more about how motivational assessment can support you in prioritizing your resources, programs, and services, please contact Beth Richter at [beth-richter@noellevitz.com](mailto:beth-richter@noellevitz.com). Additionally, please call us at 1-800-876-1117 to learn how our retention professionals can help you increase completion rates through additional data gathering, analysis, and prioritization of resources.

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## About Noel-Levitz and the survey instrument used in this study

**This report has been brought to you by Noel-Levitz as part of our series of student research reports.**

Noel-Levitz has served the higher education community for more than 35 years. Campus leaders turn to the firm for consultation and resources for student recruitment, student retention, marketing, and strategic enrollment planning. Noel-Levitz has served more than 2,600 colleges and universities throughout North America.

The survey instrument used in this study was the 100-item Form B version of the College Student Inventory (CSI-B), of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System™ (RMS). The inventory is designed to assess the motivational characteristics of incoming first-year students. It profiles incoming first-year students' strengths and needs and serves as a retention management tool on hundreds of campuses nationwide. The College Student Inventory (available in Forms A, B, and C) is typically administered prior or during summer or fall orientation, alongside the administration of placement tests, in first-year seminar classes, or through other forums near the beginning of the term.

In addition to illuminating first-year students' attitudes nationally in this report, the findings of the inventory were reported directly and promptly to the participating campuses, to provide timely guidance for early interventions. Using the findings, educators are able to foster student success by building upon students' strengths and by creating proactive strategies to address students' self-identified areas of challenge.

To see a sample copy of CSI-B, please visit [www.noellevitz.com/CSIB](http://www.noellevitz.com/CSIB) (click on "samples").

| RATING SCALE    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                 |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| NOT AT ALL TRUE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | COMPLETELY TRUE |

The rating scale at left is used by the survey instrument, CSI-B. For this report, "agreement" was defined as the aggregated number of students who selected a rating of 5, 6, or 7.

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