



University  
of  
Minnesota  
Students:  
A  
Research  
Profile



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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA STUDENTS:  
A RESEARCH PROFILE

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The student population of modern urban mega-universities such as the University of Minnesota represents a heterogeneous aggregate of individuals. Attempting to describe them is much like the proverbial description of an elephant by a group of blindmen. The reports were accurate but either limited in their points of view or so global they distorted reality. In the same manner statements purporting to describe "the student" at the University frequently are limited by the narrow focus of the original data seeker or in attempting to encapsulate such a diverse population alter the reality of studenthood.

This brochure is an attempt to pull together some salient facts about the characteristics of U of M students. The sources are diverse and since the writers were often gathering information for other purposes the findings may not be quite as sharply focused as we might like for a composite view of the "typical" U of M student. Originally the intent was to provide new faculty members with an overview of the student population. However, it became obvious that many other persons also had interest in such information. Therefore, we have expanded the text to provide those who have need for more detailed information with references to the original reports. All of these reports can be found in the rich archival accumulations of the Bibliographic Center of Student Life Studies. The majority of the data refer to the student population on the Twin Cities Campuses of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

## Enrollment

Over 43,000 students were registered for fall quarter, 1974 on the Twin Cities campuses. Of these, 60% were men and 40% were women. Typically, enrollment decreases through the academic year and by spring quarter, 1975 39,615 students, 24,033 men and 15,582 women, were enrolled. Approximate total enrollment in both summer sessions is 13,000 students.

Enrollment fall quarter according to academic unit was:

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>
General College	2505	2651
University College	310	303
Liberal Arts	16157	16558
Institute of Technology	3662	3936
Agriculture	1308	1506
Forestry	524	550
Home Economics	1253	1221
Law School	707	711
Medical School	1115	1308
Medical Technology	129	138
Mortuary Science	84	85
Occupational Therapy	62	71
Physical Therapy	58	63
Nursing	381	411
Public Health	253	271
Dentistry	513	537
Dental Hygiene	166	218
Pharmacy	380	400
Education	2533	2476
Business Administration	1326	1612
Graduate School	6843	7078
Veterinary Medicine	270	281
Biological Sciences	<u>466</u>	<u>585</u>
Total Minneapolis and St. Paul	41,648	43,507

Students at the coordinate campuses included:

	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	
Duluth	5632	5578	
Morris	1656	1559	
Crookston	765	851	
Waseca	406	536	
Mayo	<u>471</u>	<u>340</u>	
Total University of Minn.	49,935	51,834	(12, 1974)

## Part-time/Full-time Students

The percentage of all Twin Cities students enrolled on a part-time basis (fewer than 12 credits for undergraduates or less than 9 for graduate students) in 1974 was approximately 25%. Freshman-admitting colleges have recently experienced a slight increase in the proportion of their students enrolled on a part-time basis to about 17% of their enrollment. At the same time, part-time enrollment dropped slightly in professional and graduate schools. Part-time attendance in the graduate school comprised 59% of the total enrollment in 1974, and 18% of the enrollment in the professional schools. (18, 1975).

## Distribution by Class

In fall 1974 the major undergraduate colleges of Liberal Arts, Agriculture, Forestry, Home Economics, Institute of Technology, University College, and General College had combined totals of 5351 freshmen, 7723 sophomores, 5405 juniors, and 6807 seniors. The colleges of Education, Business Administration, and Biological Sciences enrolled an additional 1307 juniors and 2270 seniors. (12, 1974)

## Attrition Rates

Data are currently unavailable on the percentage of any given freshman cohort who receives a degree. What can be provided are data on the percentage of individuals who register in the successive five years after their initial entrance into the University system. At the beginning of fall quarter 1973 (four years after entering as freshmen) 29% of the 1970 cohort were registered in the same college in which they matriculated, 18% were registered in some other college within the University, and 53% were not registered (members of the non-registered group may either not be attending any college or attending some other institution). Five years after their matriculation 25% were still enrolled as undergraduates within the University system (5, 1975)

## Minority Group Students

Just over 5% of the students on the Twin Cities campus in the Fall of 1974 were identified as members of minority groups. Black students comprised 2.2% (N=937) of the total enrollment, Asian Americans 1.7% (N=720), American Indians 0.9% (N=383), and Spanish-surnamed Americans 0.5% (N=226).

The ratio of minority students to total enrollment is approximately equal for each sex.

Seventy-six percent of the minority group students are undergraduates, which is only 6% more than the same ratio for all stu-

dents. Eighty-seven percent of the Asian Americans are undergraduates, while 76% of the American Indians attending the University are undergraduates. Blacks and the Spanish-surnamed Americans are approximately 70% undergraduates. The total minority student group has a higher proportion of students in freshman and sophomore levels and a lesser percentage of juniors and seniors than the total student population.

About 5% of the minority students are enrolled in the professional schools, as are 6% of all other students. Differences between minorities are evident, however, with only 2% of the Asian American students and over 12% of the Spanish-surnamed students registered in professional schools. Fourteen percent of the minority students are enrolled in the Graduate School, as compared to 18% of all other students. Asian Americans are again the most underrepresented with 7% of their total in the Graduate School. Thirteen percent of the American Indian group are graduate students, as well as 14% of the Spanish-surnamed Americans and 18% of the Blacks (19, 1975).

### Continuing Education and Extension Participants

Continuing Education and Extension provides access to University programs to many in the community, serving a cross-section of people from all occupational groups. The Conference Department offers workshops and seminars for professionals and occupational refresher and retraining courses as well as specialized learning opportunities in new fields. Extension (Evening) Classes and Independent Study by Correspondence offer degree credit courses, special certificate courses, and no credit courses, all of which also serve the interests of many individuals not pursuing degrees or certificates. In 1974-75 approximately 25,000 students participated in Conference programs, 6,000 in Independent Study by Correspondence, and approximately 40,000 in Extension (Evening) Classes. This includes registration in off-campus metropolitan locations as well as in Duluth, Morris and Rochester. These participants come from all age groups but most descriptive information is available for the Extension Classes students. Among the 40,000 approximately 63% are male, 37% female, 54% are married, 44% single, and the remainder widowed or divorced. More than half (51%) of Extension students are 27 years or younger, 20% are between 26-30 years, 11% 31-35, 7% 36-40, 8% 41-50, and 3% 50 or older. More than 72% of Extension students have some college background. Approximately half of these hold degrees with many also holding graduate degrees (21, 1975).

## Where Are U of M Students From?

Students entering from high schools for the 1972-73 academic year came from the following schools:

Minneapolis Public Schools	760
St. Paul Public Schools	588
Other Minnesota High Schools	5185
Minnesota Private Schools	<u>702</u>
Minnesota Schools TOTAL	7235
Other States and Territories	436
Foreign Countries	107
Special Students	182
Missing Information	<u>101</u>
GRAND TOTAL	8061 (14, 1973)

Of 7525 students entering the University in fall 1973, 7060 (94%) were Minnesota residents (1, 1975).

Students entering the University with advanced standing from other colleges and universities in the academic year 1972-73 came from the following institutions:

Institutions in Minnesota	2689
Institutions in other states and territories	1679
Institutions in foreign countries	251
Special students	1082
Missing information	<u>426</u>
GRAND TOTAL	6127 (14, 1973)

## Foreign Students

Almost 1600 foreign students (holding visa status as students or trainees) were identified by the International Student Advisors Office in the academic year 1974-75. Although these students comprise only 5% of all University full-time enrollment on the Twin Cities campuses, they make up about 16% of the graduate student population. Sixty-five percent of the foreign students are in graduate or professional programs as compared to 28% of the students on campus in general. Over half (850) of the foreign student group come from Asian countries (6, 1975).

## Scholastic Aptitude of Freshmen

About half of the 1973 entering freshmen came from the top 25% of their graduating classes, with the average High School Rank (HSR) for all colleges at the 72nd percentile. Average HSRs range across colleges from the 84th percentile in the Institute of Technology to the 38th in General College. College of Liberal Arts freshmen which comprise the largest group of entering freshmen, average at the 77th percentile, with a median at the 80th percentile (1, 1975; 9, 1974).



Half of the 1973 entering freshmen scored at or above the 64th percentile on the Minnesota Scholastic Aptitude Test, with median percentiles ranging from 77 in IT, to 72 in CLA, and 25 in GC (9, 1974).

In general, average scores on both HSR and MSAT are lower for the University's two-year colleges than for the four-year colleges. On a statewide level, average HSRs and MSAT scores are highest for freshmen in four-year private liberal arts colleges, followed by University freshmen. Freshmen from state colleges, private junior colleges, community colleges, and area vocational-technical institutes follow in that order. The scholastic aptitude of entering freshmen has remained relatively constant over the past ten years (1, 1975).

### Age of Entering Freshmen

Entering freshmen are a very age-homogeneous group with 91% between the ages of 17 and 19 years. Six percent are 21 or over and only 1% are 25 or older in the all-college group. General College, however, attracts a somewhat older group with 17% of its entering freshmen 21 years or more and 7% 25 or older (9, 1974).

### Family Background

Comparing the occupations of the parents of 1967 freshmen with 1973 freshmen showed increasing numbers in the "professional" category, and a decrease in the percentage of skilled workers. The following data were obtained from 1973 entering freshmen:

<u>Father's Occupation</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Professional	24%
Owens or manages business	14
Office or clerical	4
Sales	10
Owens or manages farm	6
Skilled	22
Semi-skilled	6
Unskilled	3
Other	11

Ninety percent of both mothers and fathers of 1973 freshmen were high school graduates, and 28% of the mothers and 34% of the fathers had college degrees. Since 1967, students' parents have shown high levels of education at the post high school and college levels with fewer who terminated their education with a high school diploma (9, 1974).

## Religious Preferences

Each year at fall registration, students have an opportunity to indicate their religious preference. In 1974, 36% (15,513) of the students returned the religious census cards. Twenty-eight percent (11,920) of the registering students listed a specific religious faith or religion while the remainder of the respondents indicated no preference or returned blank cards.

The following major groupings emerge from the responses obtained Fall Quarter 1974.

Catholic	4118
Lutheran	3412
Methodist	771
Jewish	748
Presbyterian	600
Baptist	391
Episcopal	320
Congregational	231
Unitarian-Universalist	220
Evangelical United Brethren	125
United Church of Christ	118
Buddhist	102

## Student Housing

Long term trends in student housing choices show off-campus rentals increasing in popularity and the proportion of students living in the homes of parents or relatives declining. Approximately 38% of the students rented apartments, 27% lived with parents or relatives, 11% owned or rented a house, 11% lived in a University residence hall, and 3% lived in a fraternity or sorority. Only 1% resided in University married student housing, and the rest (less than 1% each) have other housing arrangements such as co-ops, rented rooms.

A progressive decline in the proportion of students living in University residence halls or with parents or relatives appears as students advance in their academic careers and home ownership or rental and apartment rental become increasingly popular. There is, however, a slight increase at the graduate level in the proportion of students in residence halls. This pattern reflects age differences in the selection of various types of residences. Ninety-seven percent of students living with parents or relatives are less than 24 years of age, as are 95% of the students in residence halls. Of those students living in married student cooperatives, 62% are 25 years or older.

Most undergraduates spend less than \$100 per month for rent whereas graduate students tend to rent units costing \$120 or more per month - indicating a steady progression in per capita rental costs across the span of age groups from youngest to oldest.

Single students tend to fall in the \$100 per month or less category while married students tend to pay over \$100 (11, 1974).

### Distribution throughout the Metropolitan Area

Apart from the nearly 5000 students living on campus in University housing the heaviest concentrations of student populations are found in Southeast Minneapolis (4,483) and the West Bank (1,615) areas near the Minneapolis campus, and in St. Anthony-Como Park (1,488 students), South St. Anthony-Midway (1,074) and Lauderdale, Falcon Heights-Roseville (1,282) near the St. Paul Campus. Students are widely dispersed throughout the older residential areas of the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, as well as into the established suburban communities surrounding these cities (11, 1974).

### Student Transportation

The overwhelming majority of University students spend less than \$1.50 per day on transportation expenses (13, 1974). A recent University Opinion Poll reports that 52% of the students travel to and from the University via car, 21% each use a bicycle or walk, weather permitting, and 20% commute by bus (13, 1974).

### Married Students

Of 43,194 total students in Winter 1974, approximately 20% were married (12, 1974). About 70% of the married students are men, but the number of married women students is increasing. About half of the married students have at least one child, with 83% of these children in the preschool age category (10, 1971).

### How Students Finance their Education

In 1975, 48% of sampled undergraduate students received some amount of financial contribution from their parents. Parental contributions decline from freshman to senior years with 62% of the freshmen receiving a contribution as compared to 41.5% of the seniors.

Eighteen percent of the sampled undergraduates received some financial assistance from federal or state grants and scholarships, while 5% had private scholarships. Thirteen percent were recipients of the G.I. Bill, Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation or Social Security with most of these recipients being 24 or more years of age.

Over 14% have federal or state loans, with a higher percentage of older students utilizing this source. Another 4% have loans directly from banks, credit unions, or on insurance policies.

Income from employment was used by 68% to finance their

educational expenses, and another 68% applied summer earnings to their expenses. Ten percent used a spouse's earnings for their own expenses, and 38% had their own savings on which to draw. Only 2.5% used various forms of welfare payments or food stamps to assist in financing their education.

Each student employs a unique combination of possible resources for financing his educational expenses, but if one were to compute the source of the total money spent by students for their education on a percentage basis, the figures would approximate the following:

Student employment	46.5%
Parents or guardians (not including free room and board)	20.9
Own savings	8.5
Grants and scholarships	6.6
G.I. Bill, Disabled Veterans Rehabilitation, Social Security	6.5
Loans	5.3
Spouse's employment during school term	4.0
Other sources	.9
Welfare, Relief, Unemployment, Food Stamps	.8 (7, 1975)

### Student Expenses

For the academic year 1974-75, mean student expenses were the following:

Tuition	\$ 780
Room and Board (not living with parents)	1490
Books and supplies	160
Transportation	270
Entertainment	240
Personal	<u>330</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3270 (7, 1975)

### Loan Indebtedness

Over 63% of U of M students expect to have no loans when they graduate. Of those who do expect to have loans, almost half estimate that their amount of loan indebtedness will be less than \$1500. Recipients of financial aid, however, estimate their average debt at graduation will be between \$2501 and \$3000 (7, 1975).

### Who Should Pay?

Whereas the majority of students believe that their parents do

not have a responsibility to contribute to the financing of their undergraduate education, 62% believe that the federal or state government has such a responsibility. Ninety-two percent of the students think the student has a responsibility to contribute to the financing of his or her education through employment (7, 1975).

### Student Employment

The vast majority (79%) of U of M students report employment at sometime during the academic year. Twenty-six percent of those employed work on campus, 69% have off-campus jobs, and 5% work both on and off campus. Almost 90% of the students were employed during the summer of 1974 (7, 1975). Although 52% of the 1973 entering freshmen indicated that they were working in their first year, only about 10% of the 1973 freshmen expected to finance 40% or more of their educational costs through their own employment (9, 1974; 17, 1974).

The majority of students work from 11 to 30 hours per week (11, 1974). In 1975 almost 60% of those students employed estimated their earnings to be under \$1500 per academic year. There appears to be little variation in the distribution of incomes across academic class lines from sophomores to seniors, but freshmen earn considerably less than the other three classes. The mean earnings of freshmen are in the \$1001 to \$1500 range, while the mean earnings for the other three classes are \$2001 to \$2500 (7, 1975). There is a marked increase in earning power among graduate students with almost one-third of them earning more than \$100 per week (11, 1974).

### Extra-Curricular Activities

Students were asked four years after entering the University to report the extra-curricular activities in which they had participated. Below are listed categories of activities and the percentages of students reporting they had participated some or a great deal in these activities.

Music	20%
Writing	9
Student government	17
Science clubs	10
Debate	2
Dramatics	7
Academic clubs	37
Intramural athletics	38
Varsity athletics	7

Twenty-one percent said they had selected that activity as an

opportunity to develop a special talent. Twenty-two percent said they selected the activity because it was something they had done in high school, while another 12% selected the activity because someone asked them to participate. Twenty-seven percent said they had not participated in extra-curricular activities (3, 1970).

### Change of Majors

Nearly half (46%) of a sample of students did not change their major in college. Thirty-six percent made one change and ten percent changed twice. Only seven percent made three or more changes in their major while they were in college. (3, 1970).

### Time of Vocational Choice

A survey of college seniors indicated that nearly a third (31%) made a vocational choice before entering college. Eight percent chose during their freshman year, 22% as sophomores, 14% as juniors, 13% as seniors, and 12% were still undecided in their senior year (3, 1970).

### Employment Status

A study of University of Minnesota graduates nine months after their graduation in June 1972 showed their employment status to be:

- 65% employed full-time
- 11 employed part-time
- 13 returned to University for full-time advanced study
- 4 sought employment without success
- 3 enlisted in armed services
- 2 housewives
- 2 other descriptions

Major full-time employers of University graduates were private industry (49%), educational institutions (25%), and governmental agencies (13%). Graduates who majored in Nursing, Pharmacy, Law, Education, or Business Administration encountered little difficulty in obtaining positions, while graduates from Liberal Arts programs experienced the most difficulty in obtaining adequate employment in which they felt their University education was of direct relevance. These graduates made up the majority of those returning to the University for further education.

Regardless of their employment status, most graduates expressed satisfaction with the education they received at the University of Minnesota. They stressed a need for more practicality of course work in order to feel better prepared in performing their work and indicated the need for the University to be in close contact with the community it serves for the purpose

of gearing programs more to the needs of industry. A number of graduates thought that a University degree had better long-term prospects even though a technical training would probably have more immediate value job-wise than a university education (8, 1973).

### Students' Attitudes Toward their College Education

A survey of 1971 students found that students described themselves as "vocationals" (36%) whose main reason for being in college was to prepare for an occupation, as "academics" (30%) interested in learning about life and believing classes are one way of gaining this knowledge, or as "nonconformists" (28%) who prefer to learn about life in a manner of their own choosing. Only 6% described themselves as "collegiates" or students concerned with education but whose college experiences are mainly centered about the social phases of campus life (4, 1971).

A more recent (1974) survey of educational attitudes of CLA students suggested that most students look on the B. A. degree as a preparation for living rather than as vocational preparation, and worth obtaining regardless of its direct market value. Nevertheless, they expect to get jobs closely related to their majors. More than half plan on graduate or professional school to develop special competencies. Women are more likely to think they will find jobs closely related to their major, and are less likely to plan for graduate or professional education than men.

Analysis of responses to questions concerning future employment shows increasing reality of responses from the freshman through the senior year. Freshmen are more likely than seniors to expect post-graduation jobs to be related to their major fields, more likely than upper classmen to regard the B. A. as vocational preparation, and more frequently report that they would leave school if they thought the B. A. would not help to get a good job. Most (75%) of the students believe the University contributes to their education in many ways other than courses (15, 1974).

### Valued Educational Opportunities

In 1975, a sample of CLA students rated field experience in their major or related area as very important. They were most enthusiastic about programs and services related to career development such as a career planning office. Students also endorsed more varied classroom opportunities such as the scheduling of regular classes in evening hours and more freedom to visit or take courses without credit or grade.

Students generally thought the grading standards were "tough" enough, and a sizable number thought there should be

less stress on academic achievement. Most approved of the double record system, the internal record showing all work attempted, and the external transcript showing only successfully completed work; and most approved of the University's policy of not computing an official GPA for students (16, 1975).

### **Student Satisfaction**

A survey of 1972 graduates showed that regardless of their employment status, most graduates were satisfied with the education they received at the University of Minnesota (8, 1973). In 1973, 85% of students surveyed reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of instruction they received at the U of M, and 67% expressed satisfaction with most or all of the faculty members from whom they had taken classes at the University (2, 1973).



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