

The Activities, Interests, and Characteristics of Students

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Results from the *1996 Student Interest Survey*
with trend analyses from interest surveys conducted
at five-year intervals from 1971 to 1996

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Office of the Vice President for Student Development & Athletics
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Executive Summary

In a few instances, data included in this report represent findings from the University's student database not collected as part of the Student Interest Survey. The data are included because they represent important benchmarks during the years in which the survey was conducted. In a few cases, demographic items were included in the survey for which total population data was available in the student database. Such items were included because the returned surveys were anonymous, and it was thus impossible to link survey data with the student database.

Student demographics

- ◆ Over the 25-year period from 1971 to 1996, the undergraduate student population has declined by 8,287 students, reflecting a 39.2 percent decline in the male population and a 5.7 percent decline in the female population. This decline can be attributed to a strategic effort in the management of enrollment. In 1971, male students constituted 60 percent of the undergraduate population; by 1996, male students constituted only 49 percent of the undergraduate population.
- ◆ The enrollment of graduate and professional males from 1971 to 1996 dropped 18 percent, while enrollment of graduate and professional females during this period increased 131 percent.
- ◆ The percentage of undergraduates graduating from Twin Cities high schools dropped steadily from 71 percent in 1971 to 50 percent in 1996. This decline is offset by a progressive increase in the percentage of undergraduates from U.S. high schools outside Minnesota, from 10 percent in 1976 to 26 percent in 1996.
- ◆ The percentage of undergraduates living with their parents declined from 43 percent in 1971 to 33 percent in 1996, while the percentage living in a University residence hall more than doubled, from 8 percent in 1971 to 20 percent in 1996.
- ◆ The percentage of undergraduates who walk to campus increased steadily, from 28 percent in 1976 to 40 percent in 1996. The percentage who drive alone to campus increased from 24 percent in 1976 to 35 percent in 1996. Offsetting these increases have been declines in the percentage of students using car pooling and students riding the MCTO bus system.
- ◆ The percentage of undergraduates who consider themselves to be commuters dropped from 58 percent in 1981 to 47 percent in 1996.
- ◆ When asked, "To what extent is money a factor in your attendance or participation in leisure events or activities?" Nearly three out of every five undergraduates (58 percent) said money is often a problem or a major problem. Only two percent said money is not a problem.
- ◆ Employment patterns for undergraduates over the past 15 years have been relatively stable. The decade from 1981 to 1991 witnessed an increase in the percentage of undergraduates working, from 74 percent to 79 percent. This dropped off slightly, to 76 percent, in 1996.

- ◆ Since 1976, survey participants have been asked to identify which subculture (out of four subculture types) best describes them. The four subculture types were defined, but their names were omitted from the survey.

The percentage of undergraduates identifying with the *academic subculture* (“learning for learning’s sake”) declined from 37 percent in 1976 to 18 percent in 1996. Conversely, the percentage identifying with the *collegiate subculture* (“participation in campus life and activities outside the classroom is equally important to me”) increased steadily from 17 percent in 1976 to 34 percent in 1996.

The percentage of undergraduates identifying with the *vocational subculture* (“of greatest importance is getting a degree in my chosen field”) was highest in 1976, at 39 percent, but dropped off somewhat to 30 percent in 1991 and 1996. The percentage of undergraduates identifying with the *non-conformist subculture* (“I feel alienated from the University and its formal programs and activities”) was lowest in 1976, at 7 percent, and fluctuated in the range of 13-18 percent between 1981 and 1996.

- ◆ The prevailing residence pattern for undergraduates seems to be the following: start out the first year living in a University residence hall; after the first or second year, move out of the residence hall into a shared apartment; if there is a fifth year, move out of a shared apartment and move back home.
- ◆ By tracking typical arrival and departure times of undergraduates and graduate/professional students, it was possible to plot the percentage of each population on campus throughout the day. The percentage of undergraduates peaks at 11-12 a.m., with 92 percent on campus at that time. This contrasts with the graduate/professional student population, which peaks two hours later, at 1-2 p.m., with 77 percent on campus at that time.
- ◆ Survey participants were asked to indicate the number of hours, on average, they spend per week in class and in out-of-class study. Undergraduates spend more hours in class per week (14.26) than do graduate/professional students (10.67). Graduate/professional students, however, spend more hours per week in study (20.96) than do undergraduates (15.91). Undergraduates spend 1.11 hours in study for each hour in class, while graduate/professional students spend 1.96 hours in study for each hour in class.

Leisure interests of students

- ◆ Of 11 broad categories of leisure interests and activities encompassing 65 specific activities, the top four categories are music, social activities, reading, and watching television.
- ◆ The most frequently read publication by undergraduates is *The Minnesota Daily*, with 56 percent reading *The Daily* frequently and another 37 percent reading it occasionally.
- ◆ The percentage of undergraduates frequently watching televised daily news/weather/sports programs dropped from 67 percent in 1991 to 47 percent in 1996—the lowest level observed in the 15 years this leisure activity has been measured.
- ◆ Use of computers for word processing is nearly universal among undergraduates. Two-thirds use computers for this purpose frequently, and all but 3 percent use it at least occasionally. Nearly three-fifths (59 percent) use a computer for e-mail frequently.

- ◆ There are no gender differences in the frequency of using computers for e-mail and word processing, but men tend to use computers more frequently for other purposes.
- ◆ Fifty-five percent of all undergraduates participate in some form of volunteer work either on campus or off campus. This reflects a steady increase from 32 percent in 1981.
- ◆ Even though the 1996 Student Interest Survey was conducted during a year of national elections, the percentage of undergraduates participating at least occasionally in political activities and groups was only 13 percent. Participation in political activities and groups has declined steadily from 24 percent in 1981.
- ◆ In the student interest surveys conducted since 1971, women have always been found to read books more frequently than men do. Over the years of this study, men watch sports on television more frequently than do women, and men also more frequently attend University men's sports and professional sports.
- ◆ Over the years, women have tended to predominate involvement in the creative arts—with the exception of film and photography, in which no significant differences have been observed.

Involvement of students on campus

- ◆ Fifty percent of all undergraduates are or have been involved to some degree in student groups or activities on campus. This represents a substantial increase over the past 10 years, from 34 percent in 1986 and 43 percent in 1991.
- ◆ Students who were involved to any degree in student groups were asked about the impact of their involvement on 11 specific aspects of personal development. For each aspect, the greater the degree of involvement the greater the impact on personal development.
- ◆ The greatest impact, particularly for those deeply involved in student groups, is seen in four aspects of personal development: leadership skills, interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, and program/event planning skills.
- ◆ Four aspects of personal development—multicultural awareness, development of global perspectives, ethical development, and commitment to civic involvement—represent outcomes intended by the University for all undergraduates. Involvement in groups and activities at the University, however, does not have a significant impact on these aspects of personal development.
- ◆ Approximately half of all undergraduates in each of the years of the survey have participated in recreational sports at the University. This represents the area of highest participation in campus life at the University.
- ◆ Participation in both team sports and open recreation has declined since 1981. The percentage of undergraduates participating in exercise and self fitness activities in the University's recreational facilities, however, has increased from 30 percent in 1991 to 41 percent in 1996. Exercise and fitness represent the area of highest participation in the recreational sports program. The increases reflect the vast improvement in fitness facilities with the opening of the new Recreation Center in 1993.

- ◆ The question is often asked, “How many students participate in campus life at the University?” The survey did not attempt to measure meaningful involvement either in the activities and programs of Coffman Union and the St. Paul Student Center, or in the activities and programs of the residence halls.
- ◆ A minimal measure of involvement in campus life obtainable from the survey would be the percentage of undergraduates who participate in student groups, activities, or one or more aspects of recreational sports. Two-thirds of all undergraduates (69 percent) participate in one or more of these areas of campus life. That represents approximately 16,400 of the undergraduate students enrolled during winter quarter 1996, when the study was most recently conducted.

1. Introduction

In 1971, a survey of student leisure interests was developed and administered to a random sample of 1,000 undergraduates on the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota. The primary goal of the survey was to develop a better understanding of the nature of the University's students—demographics that would describe their life situations, something of their leisure interests, and their participation in extracurricular activities so that planning by relevant University departments could proceed on the basis of solid data.

Since 1971, these student interest surveys have been conducted every five years in an attempt to provide updated perspectives on students and to measure trends from student generation to generation. Since the 1976 survey, all surveys have included graduate and professional students in the random sample. In 1996, a separate sample of 600 University College (formerly Continuing Education and Extension) students was included for the first time, although these findings are not included in this report.

“Relevant departments” mentioned above include Recreational Sports, Minneapolis Union, St. Paul Student Center, Campus Involvement Center, and Boynton Health Service. The data from these surveys have had broader application, including information requests made by central administration, planning units, and collegiate units.

In order to insure high quality results that would be reliable for practical use, special effort was made to achieve high response rates for these eight-page, 250-item mail surveys. Sample sizes ranged from 800 to 1,000 students; response rates ranged from 79 percent to 91 percent.

1.1 Research method

The Student Interest Survey Planning Committee was established fall quarter 1995 to consider revisions to the 1991 survey for implementation as the 1996 Student Interest Survey. Members of the committee are identified in the Acknowledgments section. The committee considered the need to make the 1991 version contemporary in terms of phrasing and terminology and to update the inventory of leisure activities to include activities that had surfaced since 1991. As in the 1991 survey, we measured student perceptions of a sense of community on campus and factors contributing to one's experiencing of community. The results of the analysis of community were reported in *Students' Views of Community on the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities Campus* (February 1997).

In winter quarter 1996, copies of the survey were mailed to a random sample of 800 degree-seeking students on the Twin Cities campus. A system of phone call follow-ups, a post card reminder, and a final mailing employed over a period of six weeks resulted in a response rate of 79 percent. Sample size and response rate for each year's edition of the survey are reported in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1
Response rates for
Student Interest Surveys:
1971-1996

Survey year	Sample size	Response rate %
1971	1,000	79
1976	800	84
1981	800	85
1986	800	91
1991	800	85
1996	800	79

2. Demographics

The Student Interest Survey was first conducted in 1971. Twenty five years later, the undergraduate population had declined by 8,287 students, largely due to a campus plan for enrollment management. This reflects a 39.2 percent decline in the undergraduate male population and a 5.7 percent decline in the undergraduate female population.

The graduate/professional student population, however, has increased 16.7 percent over this period of time, reflecting a 17.7 percent decline in the male population and a 131.5 percent increase in the female population.

The student population data for each year in which the Student Interest Survey was conducted are reported in Tables 2-1 and 2-2. These figures represent the official enrollment statistics for winter quarter, when all of the surveys were conducted. The primary focus of the reporting and analysis will be on undergraduates, but data on graduate and professional students will be reported where appropriate.

Table 2-1
Undergraduate
student population* data:
1971-1996

Year	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1971	19,261	60.0	12,820	40.0	32,081	100.0
1976	18,939	57.1	14,219	42.9	33,158	100.0
1981	18,162	53.6	15,745	46.4	33,907	100.0
1986	16,844	53.3	14,734	46.7	31,578	100.0
1991	13,081	51.5	12,314	48.5	25,395	100.0
1996	11,709	49.2	12,085	50.8	23,794	100.0
Change: 1971-1996	-7,552	-39.2	-735	-5.7	-8,287	-25.8

*Official registration statistics for winter quarters in each of the above years.

The data in Table 2-1 reveal a progressive, major decline in the population of undergraduate men: from 19,261 in 1971 to 11,709 in 1996. Male students constituted 60 percent of the undergraduate population in 1971, but only 49.2 percent of the undergraduate population in 1996. The population of women students during this 25-year period peaked in 1981. Comparing the figures for 1996 with those for 1971, the decline in undergraduate male enrollment (7,552) has been 10 times as great as the decline in undergraduate female enrollment (735).

Table 2-2

Graduate/professional
student population* data:
1971-1996

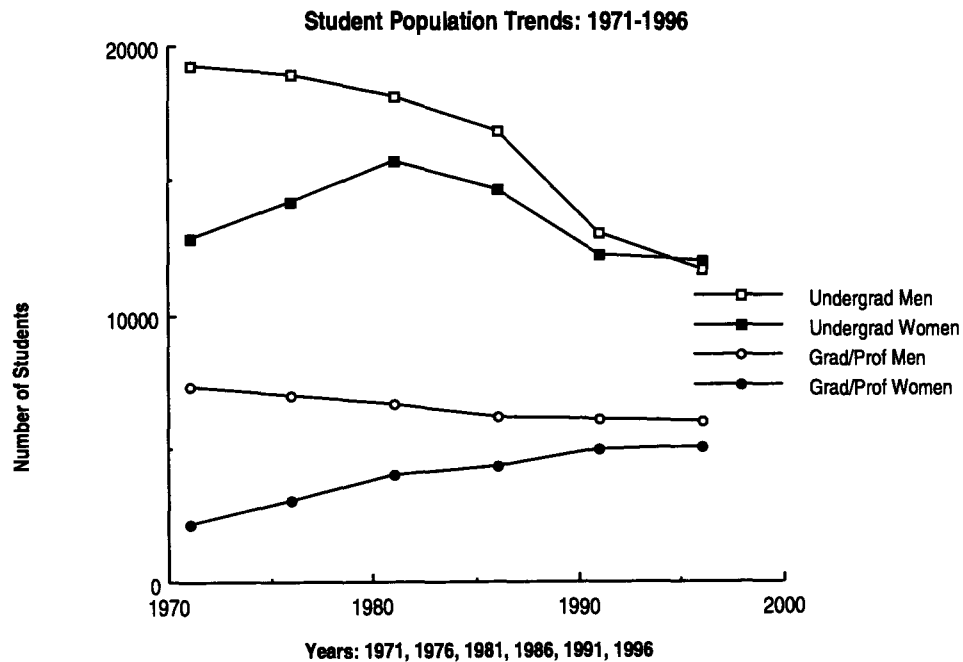
Year	Men		Women		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1971	7,294	77.0	2,184	23.0	9,478	100.0
1976	6,955	69.3	3,078	30.7	10,033	100.0
1981	6,673	62.3	4,035	37.7	10,708	100.0
1986	6,220	59.0	4,326	41.0	10,546	100.0
1991	6,083	54.9	5,001	45.1	11,084	100.0
1996	6,006	54.3	5,055	45.7	11,061	100.0
Change: 1971-1996	-1,288	-17.7	+2,871	+131.5	+1,583	+16.7

*Official registration statistics for winter quarters in each of the above years.

The decline in enrollment for graduate and professional males from 1971 to 1996, albeit progressive, has not been as severe as that for undergraduate males. The big change, genderwise, has been the increase in enrollment for graduate and professional women, from 2,184 in 1971 to 5,055 in 1996, an increase of 131.5 percent.

Although the hard data, the actual figures in Table 2-1 and 2-2, represent important baseline data, the overall enrollment trends for undergraduate men and women and graduate/professional men and women are easier to see in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1
Population trends: 1971-1996



The Student Interest Surveys over the past 25 years have included a generous dose of questions that, for lack of a better term, could be referred to as *demographic*. These questions are means to understand changes in the student population, and the questions enable analysis of subpopulations of students. Much (though not all) of the discussion in this section deals with information that is not gathered anywhere else at the University. In some instances, such as 2.1 below, data items are also a part of the student database, but the data presented always represents Student Interest Survey data.

2.1 Entry status and high school

The data in Table 2-3 show a steady decline in the percentage of undergraduates who graduated from Twin Cities area high schools over the 20-year period from 1976 to 1996. This decline is offset by a progressive increase in the percentage of undergraduates who graduated from U.S. high schools outside Minnesota, primarily students from Wisconsin who took advantage of reciprocity. Today, a higher percentage of undergraduates come from U.S. non-Minnesota high schools than from Greater Minnesota. Though small in number, the percentage of students from high schools (or their equivalents) outside the United States has increased over the past two decades.

Table 2-3
Location of high school
of undergraduates:
1976-1996

Survey Year	Twin Cities	Greater Minn	U.S., but non-Minn	Non-U.S.
1976	71.0%	17.1%	10.2%	1.7%
1981	62.2	22.2	12.4	3.1
1986	60.4	23.1	14.3	2.2
1991	54.3	19.4	21.7	4.6
1996	49.6	19.2	26.4	4.8

Although significant changes in the size and composition of the undergraduate population have been evidenced over the past two decades, the percentages of undergraduates who enter as new freshmen and those who transfer to the University have remained fairly constant (see Table 2-4).

Table 2-4
Undergraduates who entered
as new freshmen or transfers:
1981-1996

Survey year	New freshmen	Transfer students
1981	64.2%	35.8%
1986	61.1	38.9
1991	64.7	35.3
1996	63.2	36.8

2.2 Campus locale

Students were asked to indicate the part of the Twin Cities campus on which they spend most of their time. Two-thirds (67.2 percent) of all undergraduates indicated they spend most of their time on the East Bank; 22.0 percent spend most of their time on the West Bank; and 10.8 percent spend most of their time on the St. Paul campus. These percentages have changed little over the last 15 years.

2.3 Residence and mode of transportation to campus

Table 2-5 reports the residence patterns of undergraduates over the 25 years of the Student Interest Survey.

Table 2-5
Residence of
undergraduates:
1971-1996

Year	With parents	Own/rent a house	University res hall	Fraternity/sorority	Rent apt on own	Share an apartment	Rent a room	Other
1971	42.5%		7.9%	5.1%	5.6%	29.5%		9.4%
1976	37.4	11.3	9.8	2.6	15.6	19.7		3.6
1981	35.4	12.3	14.6	3.8	13.5	15.8	1.9	2.7
1986	30.9	11.2	14.8	3.2	8.0	23.0	5.6	3.4
1991	25.1	11.8	16.5	5.1	11.1	24.4	3.7	2.3
1996	32.6	12.8	19.8	2.4	5.9	24.1	1.9	0.5

The percentage of undergraduates living with their parents declined steadily from 1971 to 1991, but increased in 1996. The percentage of undergraduates living in University residence halls steadily increased and more than doubled between 1971 and 1996. Patterns of apartment rentals fluctuated throughout the 25 years.

Beyond the residence patterns over the years in which the interest survey has been conducted, a closer examination of the 1996 data on residence type by year in college is revealing. To reflect the more typical undergraduates, the data is restricted to unmarried students. The data is represented in Figure 2-2. Within the maze of darting lines in this figure, patterns can be found.

Note that 70.0 percent of first year undergraduates live in the residence halls. For second year undergraduates, only 24.4 percent live in residence halls, and for third year undergraduates the number drops further to 9.4 percent. That number ultimately drops to 2.0 percent for fifth year undergraduates.

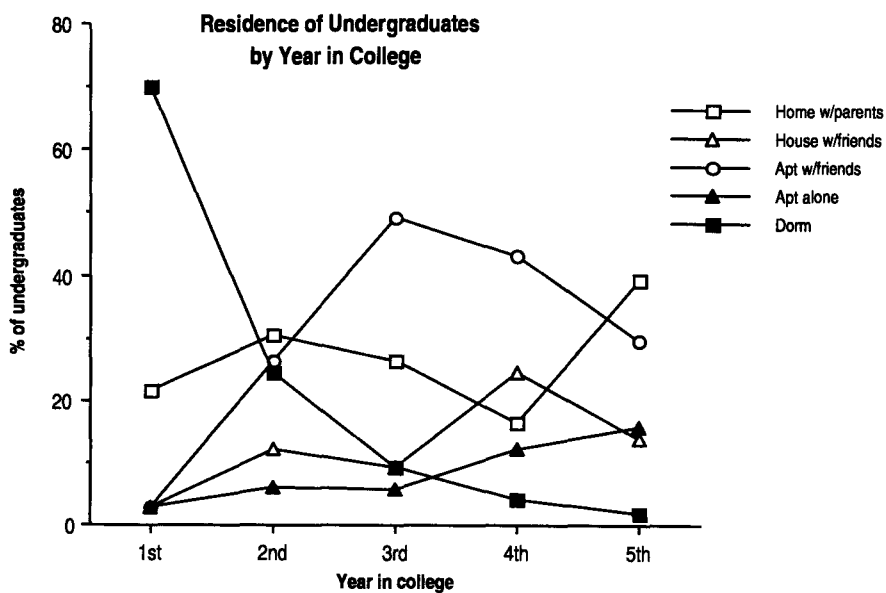
The declines by year in residence hall living are offset by significant increases in sharing an apartment. Only 2.9 percent of first year undergraduates share an apartment, but the percentage increases dramatically to 26.5 percent for second year undergraduates and peaks at 49.1 percent among third year undergraduates. The percentage drops off slightly to 43.9 percent among fourth year undergraduates, and drops more significantly to 29.4 percent among fifth year undergraduates.

Living alone in an apartment is less common and does not exceed 6 percent of first through third year undergraduates. This percentage increases somewhat to 12.2 percent among fourth year undergraduates and 15.7 percent for fifth year undergraduates.

Living at home with one's parents fluctuates considerably. One in five (21.4 percent) of first year undergraduates live with their parents. This increases to 30.6 percent for second year undergraduates, but drops off for third year (26.4 percent) and fourth year (16.3 percent). Interestingly, 39.2 percent of fifth year undergraduates live with their parents. Without talking to these students, there is no way to affirmatively determine why these patterns occur. The following (speculative) scenario might apply to a number of undergraduates:

1. Entering freshmen, for reasons of convenience and wanting to be as connected as possible to their new university experience, choose to live on campus. They are initially supported, or at least encouraged, by their parents to do so.
2. After a year or two, many of these students decide to live off campus (but probably near campus) and share an apartment with friends they have acquired. There could be any number of reasons for this: a dislike for their roommates in the dorm; a desire for a smaller, more intimate environment in an apartment; a dislike for dorm food or a desire to prepare their own meals; a desire for freedom (i.e., the absence of dorm policies).
3. To increase their privacy and their control over their environment, larger numbers of fourth year students live alone in an apartment or share a house.
4. Having not finished in four years, anxious to get on with their lives, and wanting or needing to save money, a large number of fifth year undergraduates move back into their parents' home.

Figure 2-2
Residence patterns of
traditional age undergraduates



Modes of transportation used by undergraduates in getting to and from campus are given in Table 2-6.

Table 2-6
 Modes of transportation
 used by undergraduates:
 1976-1996

Year	Live on campus	Walk to campus	Ride MTCO bus	Ride U express bus	Drive alone	Drive/ride car pool	Car/bus combo	Bicycle/motorcycle
1976	*see walk	28.3%	17.0%	6.1%	24.2%	18.4%	-	2.7%
1981	11.3%	21.7	14.3	7.9	24.7	4.7	7.2	8.1
1986	12.6	24.9	9.5	7.1	26.5	6.7	8.3	4.5
1991	15.1	21.0	10.1	7.3	30.9	4.7	6.8	4.0
1996	15.9	23.9	5.9	5.1	34.7	5.1	4.0	5.4

Walkers (i.e., those who live on campus or walk to campus) have increased fairly steadily, from 28.3 percent in 1976 to 39.8 percent in 1996. The percentage of undergraduates riding the MCTO (Metropolitan Council Transit Operations) bus to campus has fluctuated over the 20-year period, but overall has declined, particularly between 1991 and 1996. The percentage of those riding the U Express Bus has fluctuated only slightly and has ranged from 5.1 percent to 7.9 percent.

The percentage of those who drive alone to campus has increased in each of the five-year intervals of the survey, but particularly in the decade from 1986 to 1996. This is not what University leaders had in mind in terms of conserving energy and mediating the congestion of automobile traffic and parking in the campus area.

Equally disappointing must be the decline in car pooling. The University developed initiatives to encourage car pooling by (1) offering to connect those interested in car pooling from various neighborhoods and (2) designating close-in parking lots for car poolers.

These initiatives of the 1970s responded to the energy shortage created by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil cartel. The data in Table 2-6 show that car pooling was highest in 1976, with 18.4 percent participating in car pools. Rather than becoming habit forming, however, car pooling dropped sharply by 1981 with only 4.7 percent participating. After OPEC lost its grip on oil prices, gas became readily available again. The perceived need to car pool was apparently over, and the percentage of car poolers has remained low to this day.

2.4 Distance of residence from campus and commuting

Distance of residence from campus is often viewed as having an effect on one's involvement in campus life. How far from campus do students live? The figures for both undergraduate and graduate/professional students in the 1996 Student Interest Survey are reported in Table 2-7.

Table 2-7
Distance of residence
from campus: 1996

Distance to residence	Undergraduates	Graduate/ Professional
I live on campus	22.5%	0.8%
Less than one mile	19.3	14.1
1-3 miles	11.8	24.5
4-10 miles	20.4	33.2
More than 10 miles	26.1	27.4

Percentagewise, nearly three times as many undergraduates (41.8 percent) live on campus or within a mile of campus than do graduate and professional students (14.9 percent). Conversely, a higher percentage of graduate and professional students live 1-3 miles and 4-10 miles from campus.

The Twin Cities campus is often referred to as a commuter campus. What defines a commuter student? Some researchers use *distance from campus* as a defining characteristic, while others use *students who live in University residence facilities* to define noncommuters or selected *transportation modes* to define commuters.

Another approach to distinguish commuters from non-commuters, albeit arbitrary, is simply to ask: "Do you consider yourself to be a commuter student?" Although this calls for a judgment on the part of the survey respondent, the respondent may be in the best position to make the determination. Using this self-perception definition, the figures in Table 2-8 were generated.

Table 2-8
Undergraduates who consider
themselves to be commuters

Year	%
1981	57.7%
1986	55.2
1991	49.1
1996	46.6

A clear, declining pattern of undergraduates who view themselves as commuters can be observed for the 15 years since this item was introduced into the Student Interest Surveys in 1981. Since 1991, less than half of undergraduates see themselves as commuters.

It is conceivable that students' response to the question, "*Do you consider yourself to be a commuter student?*" may be a behavioral indicant; the notion being that a commuter student is one who uses a car or bus to get to campus, leaves campus after classes are over, and is not involved in campus life. It will be reported that, at the same time the percentage of students identifying themselves as commuters was declining, the percentage of students involved in campus life was increasing.

2.5 Financial concerns

Several demographic variables have been included in the survey because they are seen as possible constraints to involvement, particularly involvement on campus. Financial status is seen as a possible constraint in getting to and from locales for leisure participation and paying for certain events and activities. Rather than using traditional approaches to measuring financial status, such as focusing on personal or family gross income, the question was phrased in behavioral terms: "To what extent is money a factor in your attendance or participation in leisure events or activities?" The results for undergraduates are reported in Table 2.9.

Table 2-9
Extent to which money
is a factor in leisure
participation: 1976-1996

Survey Year	No problem	Not usually a problem	Often a problem	A major problem
1976	10.0%	40.5%	35.2%	14.2%
1981	7.1	39.0	37.8	16.2
1986	4.8	38.1	40.3	16.8
1991	3.5	32.5	46.5	17.5
1996	1.9	40.3	41.9	15.9

The data suggest that very few students have enough money to do whatever they want. The percentage of students who said money is "often a problem" or "a major problem" increased from 49.4 percent in 1976 to 64.0 percent in 1991, before declining to 57.8 percent in 1996.

A part of the financial picture is employment. Employment figures for undergraduates from 1981 to 1996 are reported in Table 2-10.

Table 2-10
Hours working per week
by undergraduates:
1981-1996

Year	None	1-9	10-20	21-39	40 up
1981	26.2%	11.1%	34.7%	18.7%	9.3%
1986	21.1	10.2	35.9	22.3	10.5
1991	20.9	7.9	37.0	22.8	11.4
1996	24.2	10.1	35.4	18.9	11.4

The employment patterns for undergraduates over the past 15 years have been relatively stable. The decade of 1981 to 1991 witnessed an increase in the percentage of undergraduates working: from 73.8 percent to 79.1 percent. This dropped off to 75.8 percent in 1996. Significant differences between the work locations of undergraduates and those of graduate/professional students can be observed in Table 2-11.

Table 2-11
 Work location of
 undergraduates and
 graduate/professional:
 1996

Work location	Undergraduates	Graduate/ Professional
Off campus	57.4%	38.4%
On campus	33.2	52.1
Both on and off campus	9.4	9.5

With respect to working off campus or on campus, the patterns of undergraduates and graduate/professional students are near opposites. The majority of undergraduates work off campus, while the majority of graduate/professional students work on campus. This is not surprising, given the higher number of on-campus jobs for graduate/professional students through assistantships.

2.6 Student subcultures

In the 1960s, Clark and Trow (1966) posited a typology of students to describe the generation of college students. That typology became the standard in the decades thereafter for making general assessments of student populations. The four subcultures of the typology, with slight adaptations, have been used in each Student Interest Survey since 1976 and are described below.

Academic: “Although I may be ultimately concerned about a career, currently I am interested in enriching myself through education focusing on the world of knowledge and ideas.”

Collegiate: “Although my academic work and progress are important, I believe an equally significant part of the college experience exists outside the classroom. Participation in campus life and activities is important to me.”

Vocational: “Of greatest importance to me is getting a degree in my chosen field. Consequently, other intellectual and social activities are necessarily of secondary importance to me.”

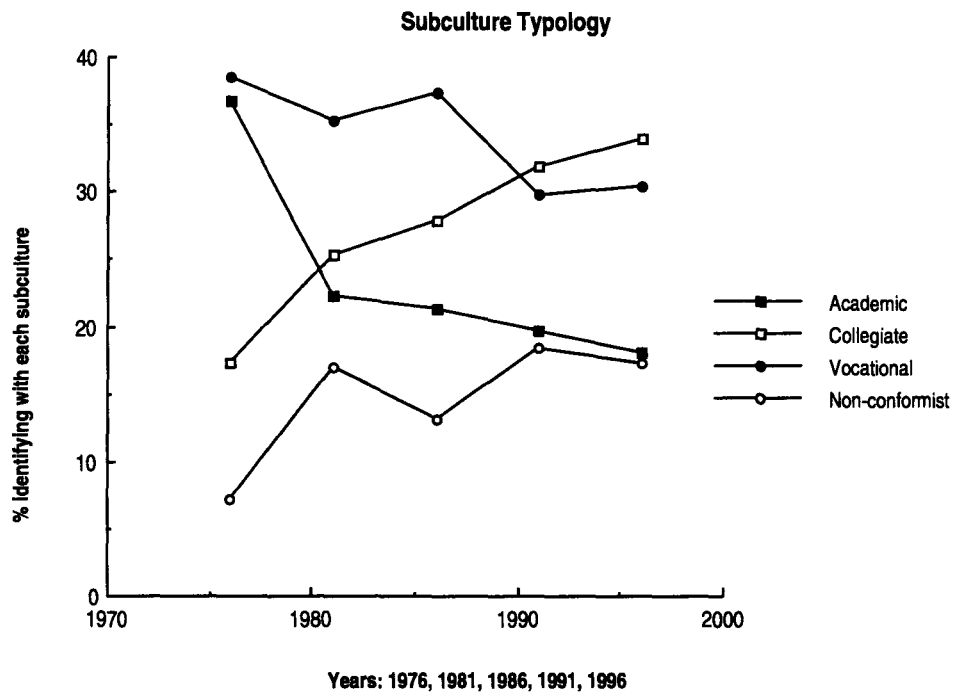
Non-conformist: “Although I find the University environment stimulating, I feel alienated from the institution and its formal programs and activities. Currently, I am interested in pursuing the meaning and purpose of life through involvement and self-exploration outside the University.”

The student was asked to identify the one subculture type that best described him or her. (The titles of the subcultures, shown in italics above, were not printed in the survey booklet and therefore not known by survey participants when they selected the particular subculture description with which they identified.) The data for subculture self-identity are reported in Table 2-12, while the trends for the subculture self-identity of undergraduates from 1976 to 1996 are shown in Figure 2-3.

Table 2-12
 Percent of undergraduates
 identifying with each
 subculture: 1976-1996

Year	Academic	Collegiate	Vocational	Non-conformist
1976	36.8%	17.3%	38.6%	7.2%
1981	22.3	25.4	35.3	17.0
1986	21.4	27.9	37.5	13.2
1991	19.7	32.0	29.9	18.5
1996	18.1	34.1	30.5	17.3

Figure 2-3
 Self-identification
 with a subculture type by
 undergraduates



The academic subculture embraces what might be considered the classical notion of what a college education is about, namely, learning for learning's sake. Students identifying with the academic subculture are most likely to view the University as a community of scholars. The percentage of undergraduates who identify with the academic subculture declined significantly between 1976 and 1981, from 36.8 to 22.3 percent. Slight but persistent declines occurred between 1981 and 1996. Compared with the percentage of undergraduates who in 1976 claimed to identify with the academic subculture, today the percentage has been cut in half.

The percentage of students identifying with the collegiate subculture, however, steadily increased over a 20-year period, from 17.3 percent in 1976 to 34.1 percent in 1996. Students identifying with this subculture see extracurricular involvement as an important part of their college experience, along with academics.

In the decade from 1976 to 1986, the largest percentage of undergraduates (35.3 to 38.6 percent) identified with the vocational subculture. In 1991 and 1996, however, the percentage of undergraduates identifying with the vocational subculture dropped to 30 percent, lower than the one for those identifying with the collegiate subculture. The primary focus of students identifying with the vocational subculture is getting a degree in order to get a job in their chosen field.

The percentage of undergraduates identifying with the non-conformist subculture was lowest in 1976, at 7.2 percent. Between 1981 and 1996 the percentage remained relatively steady, in the range of 13-18 percent. The low percentage in 1976 might have reflected a return to a quieter period on campus following the student activism in political and social issues in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Graduate and professional students responded quite differently from undergraduate students in subculture identification. Table 2-13 contrasts the responses of these two groups.

Table 2-13
 Percentage of undergraduates
 vs. grad/professional students
 identifying with each
 subculture: 1996

	Academic	Collegiate	Vocational	Non-conformist
Undergraduates	18.1%	34.1%	30.5%	17.3%
Grad/professional	17.4	15.7	52.3	14.5

The differences in Table 2-13 are worth noting. Though graduate and professional students are involved in advanced academic programs, they are not there for "learning for learning's sake." The percentage of graduate and professional students identifying with the academic subculture is nearly the same as the percentage of undergraduates. For graduate and professional students, however, their academic pursuits are really vocational pursuits. The percentage of graduate and professional students who identify with the collegiate subculture is considerably lower (15.7 percent) than is the percentage of undergraduates who do so (34.1 percent). Involvement in extracurricular activities is more common among undergraduates, since graduate and professional students are focused more closely on their degree programs.

2.7 Year-in-college differences among undergraduates

Distinctions are often made between undergraduate and graduate/professional students, as though each population were internally homogeneous. In reality there is a great variation among undergraduate students. Among the dimensions where this variation can be observed is a student's year in college. During the four or five years that students enroll as undergraduates, many transitions can be observed. This analysis focuses on distinctions observed among *traditionally-aged* undergraduates in their first through fifth years. (Traditionally-aged students are defined as first-year students who are 19 years old or younger, increasing to fifth-year students who at most are 23 years old.)

Much happens over this five-year period. At the beginning, most students have just finished high school and are uncertain about a major or career. At the end of the period, students are looking beyond college to a job, career, or field of graduate studies. These five years represent a period of substantial development and personal growth.

The demographic variable of local residence is furnished as an example. Patterns of living arrangements for first year through fifth year undergraduates are shown in Table 2-14.

Table 2-14
Residence patterns
of traditional age
undergraduates by
year in college:
1996

Year	With parents	Own/rent a house	University res hall	Fraternity/sorority	Rent apt on own	Share an apartment	Rent a room	Other
1st	20.5%	2.7%	69.9%	1.4%	2.7%	1.4%	1.4%	-
2nd	35.3	11.8	27.5	3.9	2.0	19.6	-	-
3rd	29.7	9.4	7.8	3.1	1.6	45.3	1.6	1.6
4th	25.6	17.9	2.6	2.6	5.1	43.6	2.6	-
5th	42.5	12.5	5.0	2.5	7.5	27.5	2.5	-

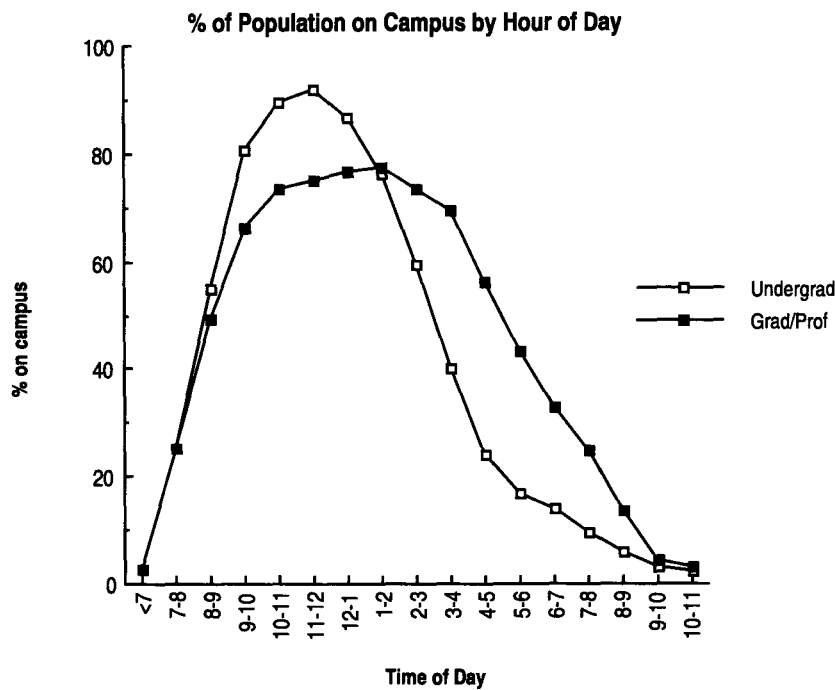
Nearly 70 percent of traditional age first year undergraduates live in residence halls. This drops to 27.5 percent for second year undergraduates and to 7.8 percent for third year undergraduates. These declines appear to be offset by increases after the first year in the percent of students sharing an apartment, approaching half of the third and fourth year undergraduates. The percent of fifth year undergraduates living at home with parents jumps to 42.5 percent while fifth year undergraduates sharing an apartment drops to 27.5 percent.

A prevailing residence pattern seems to be the following: start out the first year living in a University residence hall; after the first or second year, move out of the residence hall into a shared apartment; by the fifth year, move out of a shared apartment and move back home.

3. Dimensions of time

Important for creating student programs and events is knowing when students are on campus. The survey included a question aimed at understanding students' patterns of arriving at and leaving campus. Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of undergraduate and graduate/professional students on campus at various hours of the day.

Figure 3-1
Percentage of student population
on campus by hour



As Figure 3-1 reveals, the percentage of undergraduate and graduate/professional students on campus is quite similar for the early hours of the morning. The undergraduate population on campus, however, continues to rise to a high of 91.8 percent of the total undergraduate population at 11-12 a.m., while the rate of increase for the graduate/professional student population on campus tapers off, reaching its peak two hours later, at 1-2 p.m., at a maximum of 77.4 percent of the total graduate/professional population.

Having peaked at 11-12 a.m., the percentage of undergraduates on campus drops rather precipitously after 2 p.m., with only 24.1 percent being on campus by 4-5 p.m. By contrast, 56.3 percent of the graduate/professional student remains on campus at 4-5 p.m. This continuance of graduate/professional students later in the day reflects the fact that more graduate level courses are scheduled in mid to late afternoon and early evening to accommodate full time and part time graduate/professional students.

Another dimension of time is time spent in class and study. Survey participants were asked to indicate the number of hours, on average, they spend per week either in class or in out-of-class study. The average or mean number of hours for class time and study time for both undergraduates and graduate/professional students is reported in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1
Average (mean) number
of hours spent in class and
study per week: undergraduates
and graduate/professional:
1996

Hours per week spent in...	Undergraduates	Graduate/ Professional
Class	14.26	10.67
Out-of-class study	15.91	20.96
Hours study per hour in class	1.11	1.96

Undergraduates spend more hours in class but fewer hours in out-of-class study than do graduate/professional students. The common standard espoused by the academic counseling profession is two hours spent on study for each hour in class. According to the 1996 Student Interest Survey, undergraduates spend 1.11 hours on study for each hour in class, while graduate/professional students spend 1.96 hours on study for each hour in class.

4. Leisure interests

The study of leisure interests has been a central element of each Student Interest Survey, dating back to 1971. Information about how students spend their leisure time is important for program planning. In addition, it provides a clearer profile of the nature of students and their interests. Students' level of interest in the different areas of leisure has changed over the past 25 years. Some leisure areas and specific leisure items have changed as a result of socio-cultural change or technological innovation.

To enable valid comparisons with previous generations of students, most survey items regarding leisure interests have remained the same. Twelve interest areas encompassed 65 specific leisure interests. Seven areas perceived by the author to be of greatest interest are included in this report.

Students were asked to indicate how often they participated in each activity. "Never," "occasionally," and "frequently" were used as the standards of frequency. Since each leisure activity has its own norms of frequency, the following definitions for guiding survey participants were included in the questionnaire.

Never: "Literally never, zero. I am not into this activity at all."

Occasionally: "I am a 'once-in-a-while' participant in this particular activity; my participation is not steady—it is irregular." or "I am somewhat into this; I have done this before."

Frequently: "I regularly participate in or spend time on this particular activity—whether it's a year 'round activity or a seasonal activity (sailing, downhill skiing, etc.); I do this thing often; I'm really into this."

4.1 Reading

Figure 4-1 represents six specific reading activities in descending order of frequency or participation. The most frequently read publication is *The Minnesota Daily*, with 55.6 percent of undergraduates reading this campus publication frequently and another 36.5 percent reading it occasionally. Only 6.1 percent never read *The Daily*.

Nearly half (48.5 percent) of all students read *newspapers* frequently and nearly as many (46.6 percent) read newspapers occasionally. The third most popular form of reading among those studied was *books*. Following books were *weekly news magazines*. This form of readership has declined rather precipitously among undergraduates over the past 15 years as noted in Table 4.1.

Figure 4-1
Participation in reading activities

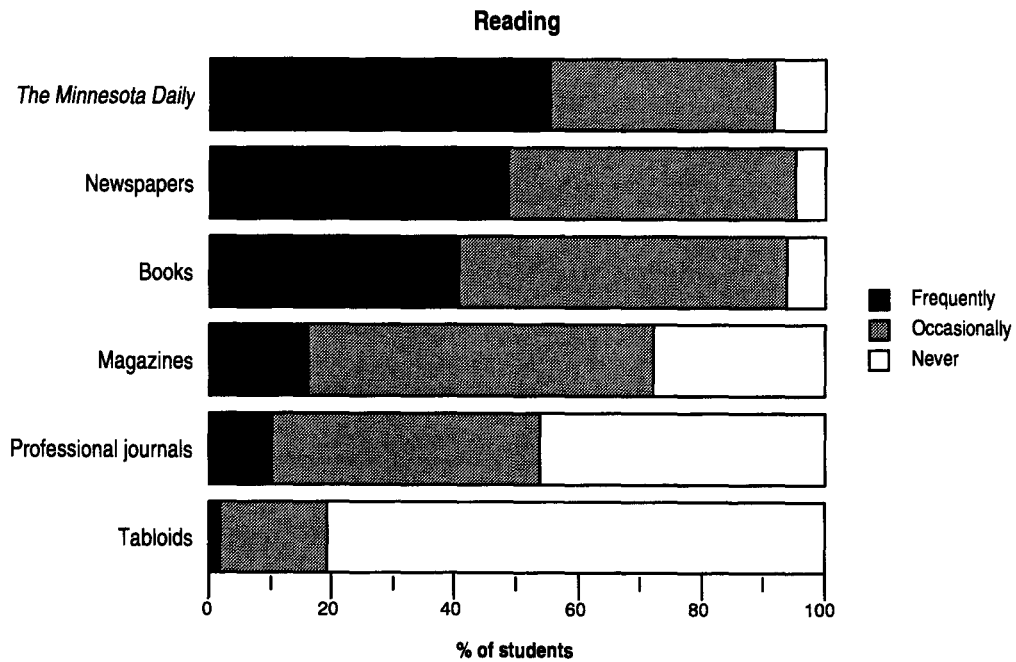


Table 4-1
Percentage of undergraduates
reading weekly news
magazines frequently

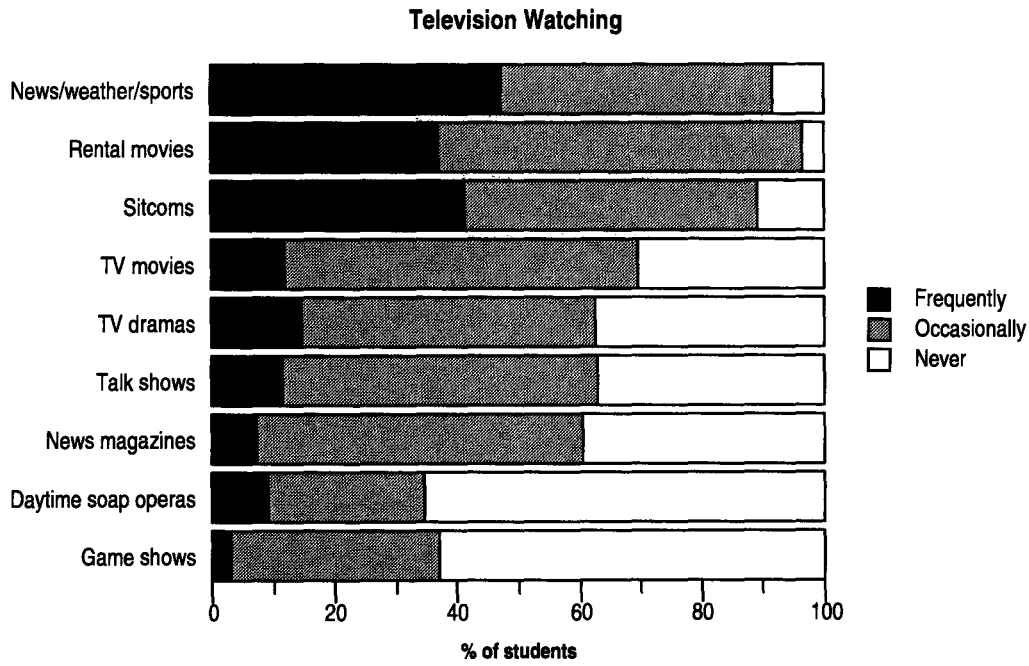
Year	%
1981	31.9%
1986	23.4
1991	18.0
1996	10.2

Considerably less interest is shown in reading professional journals in one's major field of study. Only 1 in 10 undergraduates engage in this form of reading frequently. Not surprisingly, readership of professional journals among undergraduates is low until the senior year. Readership is lowest for tabloids: 81 percent of students never read these publications, and only 2 percent do so frequently.

4.2 Television watching

Frequencies for watching various forms of television programming are reported in Figure 4-2. The most commonly watched television programming is daily news/weather/sports. Nearly half of all students (47.1 percent) watch these programs frequently, while nearly as many (44.7 percent) watch occasionally. Only 8.3 percent of undergraduates never watch news/weather/sports.

Figure 4-2
 Television watching
 by undergraduates:
 1996



The figures for the watching of daily news/weather/sports, from 1981 to 1996, are shown in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2
 Percentage of undergraduates
 watching the daily news, weather
 and sports program frequently

Year	%
1981	56.8%
1986	55.8
1991	66.9
1996	47.1

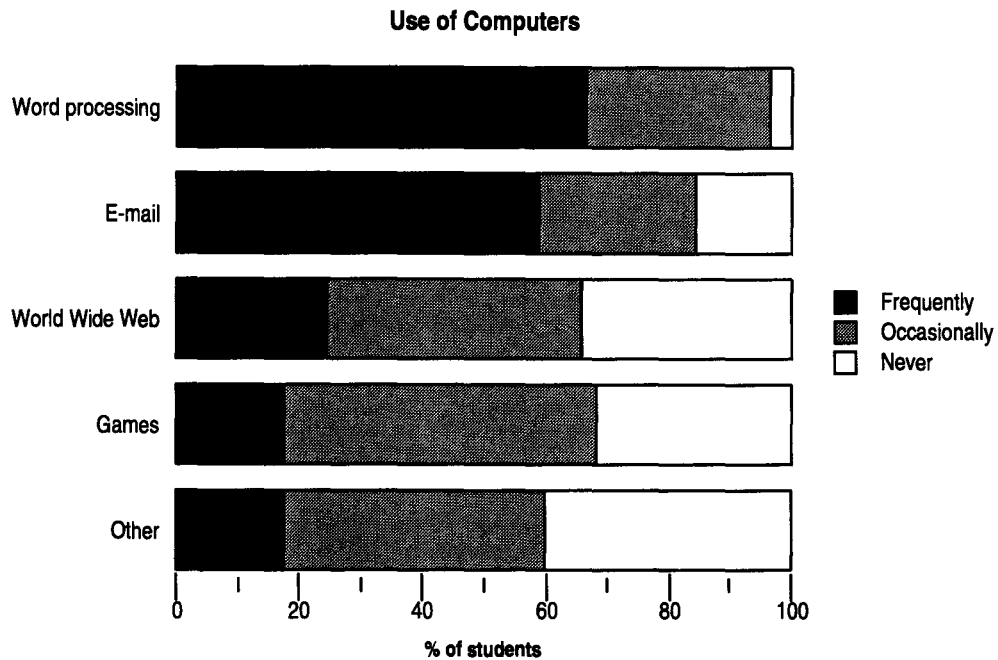
After hovering around 56 percent in 1981 and 1986, the percentage of those watching news/weather/sports “frequently” in 1991 jumped to 66.9 percent. The Student Interest Survey in 1991 was conducted during the height of the Gulf War. This event marked the coming of age of CNN News, bringing daily coverage of the war in Iraq into the living rooms of America. The public, including students, seemed transfixed by events in the Middle East. The percent of undergraduates watching news/weather/sports dropped to 47.1 percent in 1996, the lowest level measured by the interest survey. The second highest use of television was not actually watching a televised program, but rather, with the use of a VCR, watching rental movies.

A relatively new phenomenon, watching rental movies on TV “at least occasionally” increased from 67.0 percent of all undergraduates in 1986 to 96.5 percent in 1996. In a related item, 89.0 percent of students said they get together at least occasionally with friends to watch a rental movie. Among the survey items related to television, game shows and day-time soap operas were least watched.

4.3 Use of computers

As a relatively new phenomenon, computer use was not yet included at the time of the 1991 Student Interest Survey. Five specific computer uses were included in the 1996 survey, and the frequency of participation by undergraduates is reported in Figure 4-3.

Figure 4-3
Use of computers
by undergraduates:
1996

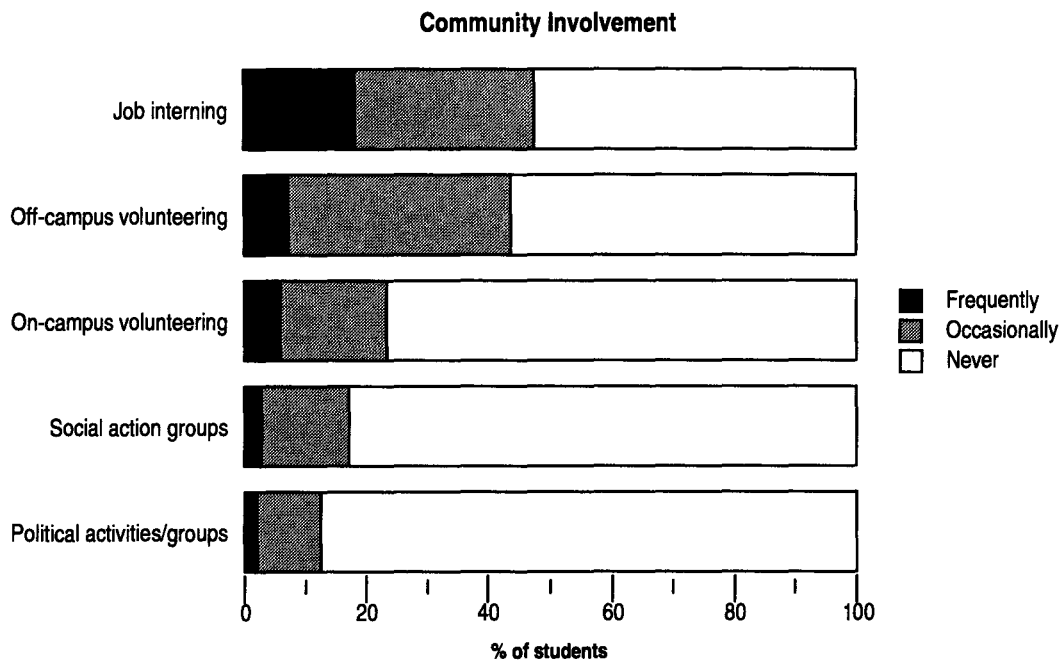


Use of computers for word processing is nearly universal among undergraduates. Two-thirds (66.4 percent) use a computer frequently for word processing, and another 30.1 percent use it at least occasionally. The second most common use among the options in Figure 4-3 is e-mail. At the time of the 1996 survey, an e-mail address was available to all students. Nearly three-fifths (58.7 percent) of students use a computer for e-mail frequently, while another 25.6 percent use it occasionally for this purpose. An application not universally available and not included in the 1996 survey was registration by computer. A rapidly growing number of web sites regarding the University are available to students and the public. The World Wide Web is used at least occasionally by nearly two-thirds (65.8 percent) of all undergraduates. One can only imagine what computer applications will be available and used by students on the occasion of the next Student Interest Survey in 2001.

4.4 Community involvement

Community involvement is seen by the University as not only valuable in its own right as a civic investment, but also as providing personal development opportunities valuable to one's future career. The various types of community involvement included in this survey are shown in Figure 4-4.

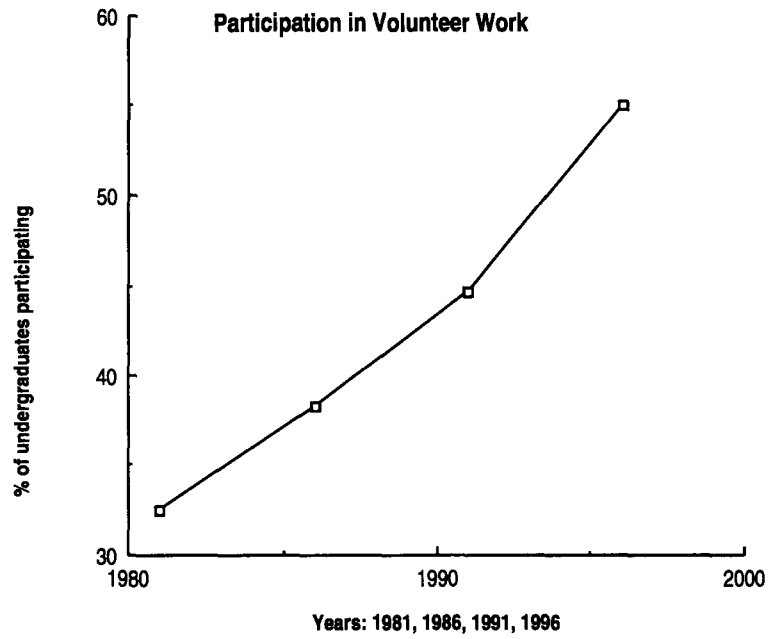
Figure 4-4
Community involvement
by undergraduates: 1996



A form of community involvement not included in previous interest surveys and not normally perceived as community involvement is the *job internship*. It is viewed both as a learning opportunity and a career enhancement opportunity by career development offices. Of all undergraduates, 47.6 percent participate at least occasionally in job internships. Not surprisingly, the percentage of fourth year undergraduates (66.1 percent) and fifth year undergraduates (68.7 percent) who participate at least occasionally in job internships is higher than it is for other undergraduates.

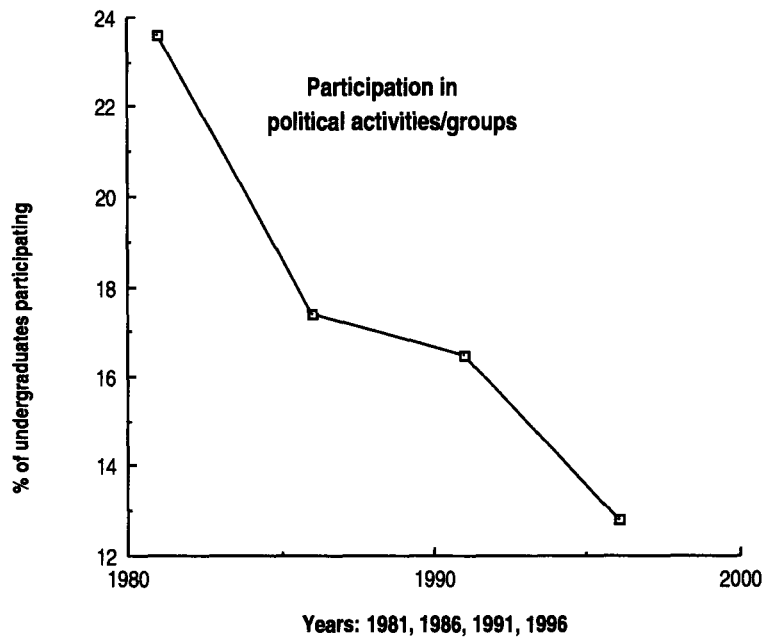
Nearly half (43.7 percent) of all undergraduates participate at least occasionally in volunteer work *off campus*. Only one-fourth (23.5 percent) participate in some form of volunteer work *on campus*. There are fewer opportunities for on-campus volunteer work. The percentage who participate at least occasionally in either on-campus work or off-campus work is 55.1 percent. This is compared with the percentages for 1981 through 1991 in Figure 4-5.

Figure 4-5
Participation in
volunteer work
by undergraduates:
1981-1996



Even though the 1996 Student Interest Survey was conducted during a year of national elections, the percentage of undergraduates participating at least occasionally in political activities and groups was only 12.8 percent. Though participation was never high over the past 15 years, Figure 4-6 shows a steady decline in involvement from 1981 to 1996.

Figure 4-6
Percentage of undergraduates who
participate in political activities/groups:
1981-1996



4.5 Music

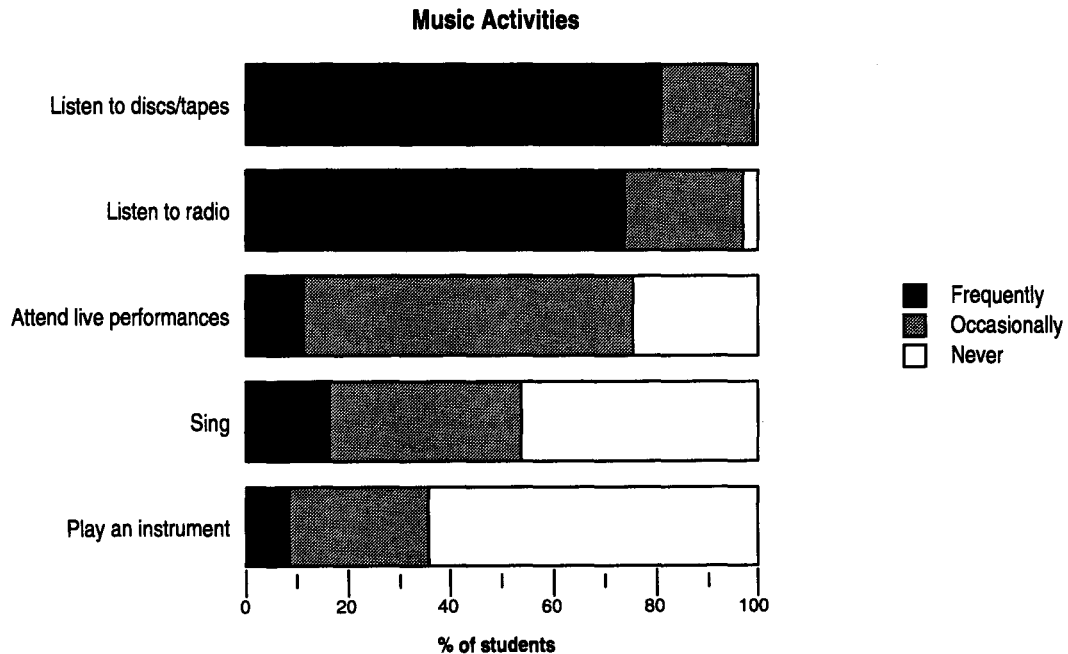
Music has always been an area of high interest among University students. Figure 4-7 portrays two distinct forms: (1) listening to music and (2) personally participating in music (e.g., singing or playing a musical instrument).

Over the past 10-15 years, electronic innovations have resulted in increases in listening to music: the first was the walkman, which enabled students to listen to high quality music anywhere, anytime; the second was the compact disc, which has greater storage capacity and higher sound quality than a cassette tape.

Four out of every five undergraduates (81.0 percent) listen frequently to recorded music, while 98.9 percent listen to it at least occasionally. Second in popularity is listening to music on the radio; 74.0 percent of students listen frequently. Only 11.3 percent attend musical performances frequently, but 75.6 percent do so at least occasionally.

Personally engaging in music occurs less frequently. Only one in six students (16.4 percent) sing frequently, while an additional 37.6 percent do so occasionally. Only 8.3 percent of undergraduates play a musical instrument frequently, and 27.2 percent do so occasionally.

Figure 4-7
Music activities:
1996



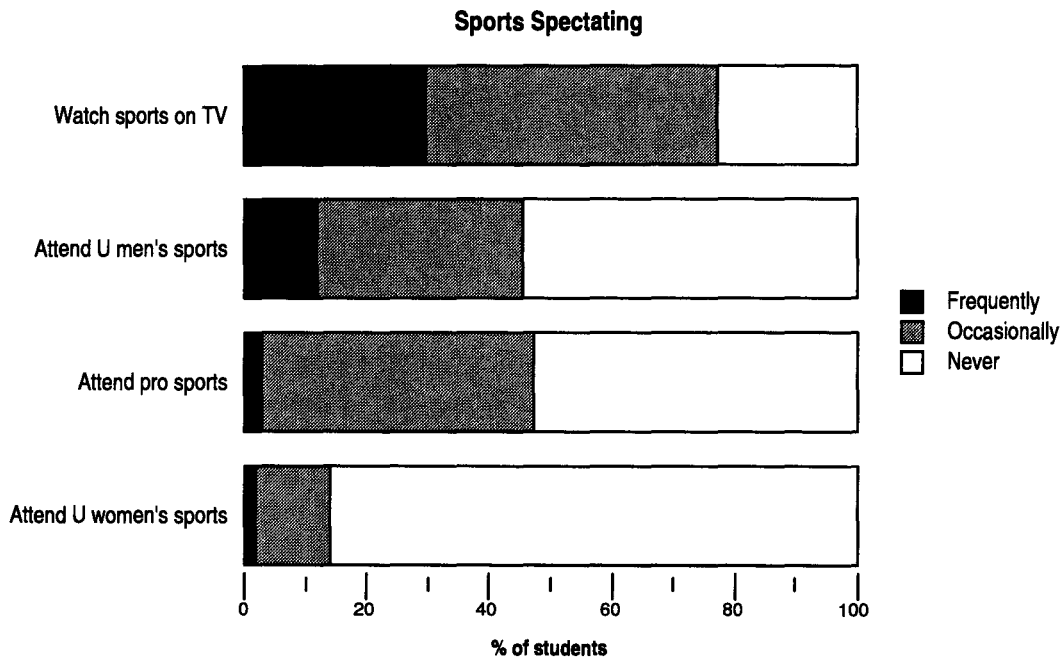
4.6 Sports spectating

Attending sports events and watching sports on television has been measured in the Student Interest Survey for a number of years. Students were asked for their general levels of frequency for attending University men's and women's sports and professional sports. The results are presented in Figure 4-8.

Watching sports on television is the most common form of sports spectating by undergraduates. More than three-fourths (77.4 percent) watch sports on television at least occasionally. The percentages of students who at least occasionally attend University men's sports events (45.6 percent) and professional sports events (47.1 percent) are nearly identical. Three times as many students frequently attend University men's sports events as attend professional sports events, however. Only 13.9 percent attend University women's sports events.

The percentage of students attending professional sports events declined between 1991 and 1996 from 60.3 percent to 47.2 percent after hovering around 60 percent from 1981 to 1991. This is probably attributable to rather unimpressive performances by the Twins, Vikings, and Timberwolves during this period (excepting the 1991 World Series victory by the Minnesota Twins) and to the departure of the North Stars hockey team.

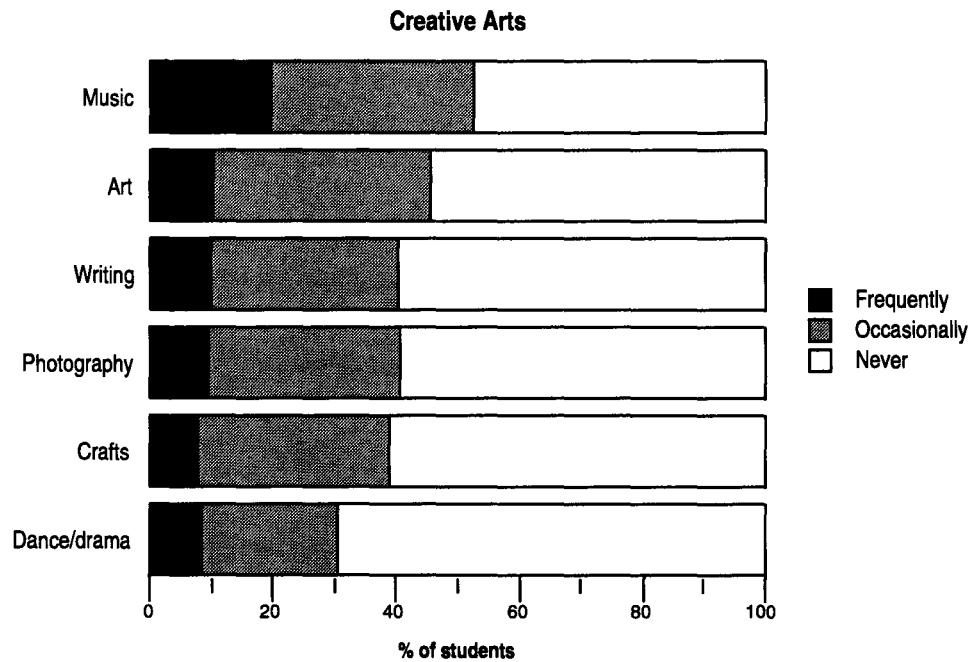
Figure 4-8
Sports spectating
by students:
1996



4.7 Creative arts

The level of participation of students in various creative arts (see Figure 4-9) is low when compared with participation in other leisure areas, with the exception of music.

Figure 4-9
 Percentage of undergraduates
 participating in creative arts



4.8 Gender and leisure involvement

Do differences occur with respect to participation by women and men in leisure activities? If so, are there patterns to these differences? Have changes occurred over the past 20 years in the relative participation of women and men in various activities? Primary attention will be focused on the leisure participation of women and men as examined in the 1996 survey and reported in Table 4-3 (see following page).

In interest surveys, women have always been found to read books more frequently than men do. In the early years of the study, men tended to read newspapers more than women did; no differences presently exist between men and women in frequency of reading newspapers.

In the 1991 and 1996 studies, women tend to watch talk shows on television more than men do, and throughout the studies women watch day-time soap operas more frequently than men do.

Over the years of this study, men watch sports on television more frequently than women do, and men also more frequently attend University men's sports and professional sports events. There have been no gender differences in the frequency of attending University women's sports events.

There are no gender differences in the frequency of using computers for e-mail and word processing, but men tend to use computers more frequently for other purposes. Involvement in the creative arts has tended to be dominated by women over the years with the exception of film and photography in which no significant differences have been observed.

Table 4-3
 Gender differences in
 leisure participation:
 1996

Women participate more than men do	No significant difference between women and men	Men participate more than women do
Reading		
Reading books Reading tabloids	Reading newspapers Reading news magazines Reading journals in my major Reading <i>The Minnesota Daily</i>	
Music		
Singing	Listening to recorded music Listening to music on radio Playing musical instrument Attending musical performances	
Sports spectating		
	Attending U women's sports	Watching sports on TV Attending U men's sports Attending pro sports
Television		
Talk shows Daytime soap operas Rental movies TV dramas	Daily news/weather/sports Game shows Sitcoms TV news magazines TV movies	
Computers		
	Use e-mail Word processing	Play games World Wide Web Other Internet use
Creative arts		
Crafts Acting/dance/drama Creative writing	Art Film/photography	
Community involvement		
Volunteer off campus	Volunteer on campus Political activities/groups Social action groups Job/career internships	

5. Campus involvement

5.1 Use of Coffman Union and the St. Paul Student Center

The Minneapolis Union and the St. Paul Student Center organize and present programs, provide a wide variety of services and amenities, and operate facilities in order to support and enrich the experience of students, faculty, and staff on campus.

This section of the survey assesses the frequency of visiting Coffman Union and the St. Paul Student Center. The frequency of use by undergraduate and graduate/professional students is reported in Table 5-1 and Table 5-2. For simplicity, categories of frequency were regrouped into (1) Never visited the union; (2) Visited the union, but not in the past 12 months; (3) Visited the union in the past 12 months, but less than weekly (“*infrequent user*”); and (4) Visited the union at least once a week or more (“*regular user*”).

Table 5-1
Frequency of visiting
Coffman Union:
Twin Cities students

User by frequency of use	Undergraduates	Graduate/ Professional	All students
Never used	2.8%	14.6%	7.4%
Past user (not in past 12 months)	6.4	22.3	12.6
Infrequent user (less than weekly)	56.4	52.8	55.0
Regular user (at least weekly)	34.5	10.3	25.0

Nearly all students (92.6 percent) have used Coffman Union. Three times as many undergraduates (34.5 percent) as graduate/professional students (10.3 percent) are regular users of Coffman Union.

Table 5-2
Frequency of visiting
St. Paul Student Center:
Twin Cities students

User by frequency of use	Undergraduates	Graduate/ Professional	All students
Never used	48.1%	42.9%	46.0%
Past user (not in past 12 months)	12.1	18.8	14.7
Infrequent user (less than weekly)	24.8	29.9	26.8
Regular user (at least weekly)	15.5	8.5	12.4

Nearly half of all students (46.0 percent) have never used the St. Paul Student Center. This is not surprising, since 88.0 percent say they spend most of their time on the east bank or west bank of the Minneapolis campus.

Another, perhaps more useful, way to look at use of Coffman Union and the St. Paul Student Center is to compare the use of each facility by Minneapolis campus students versus St. Paul campus students. Although each serves students from both campuses, it is worth examining the extent to which they serve students who function primarily on their own campus. Comparative use of Coffman Union by Minneapolis and St. Paul campus students is reported in Table 5-3.

Table 5-3
Use of Coffman Union
by Minneapolis campus versus
St. Paul campus undergraduates

	Never used	Past user	Infrequent user	Regular user
Minneapolis students	2.2%	4.7%	57.1%	36.0%
St. Paul students	5.1	17.9	51.3	25.6

Although the use of Coffman union is higher by Minneapolis campus students, use of Coffman by St. Paul campus students is substantial. As a whole, St. Paul campus students are more likely to visit the Minneapolis campus (taking classes, etc.) than are Minneapolis campus students to visit the St. Paul campus. This distinction is seen in Table 5-4.

Table 5-4
Use of St. Paul Student Center
by St. Paul campus versus
Minneapolis campus undergraduates

	Never used	Past user	Infrequent user	Regular user
St. Paul students	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	80.0%
Minneapolis students	54.4	13.6	25.5	6.5

5.2 Involvement in campus groups and activities

As Table 5-5 reports, half of all undergraduates are or have been involved to some degree in student organizations, groups, or activities on campus.

Table 5-5
Percentage of undergraduates
involved in student groups
and activities

Degree of involvement	%
Not at all involved	50.0%
Involved only to a slight degree	17.9
Involved to a moderate degree	15.8
Involved to a large degree	6.7
Deeply involved	9.6

This represents a substantial increase over the past 10 years, from 34.1 percent in 1986 and 43.2 percent in 1991.

Students who indicated they were involved to any degree were asked about the impact of their involvement (*no impact, some impact, great impact*) on 11 specific aspects of personal development.

To correctly interpret the data in Table 5-6, the following illustration is offered. Of all students who were involved, 33.9 percent reported that their involvement had a great impact on their development of leadership skills. For those who were deeply involved in student groups and activities, however, 83.3 percent reported that their involvement had a great impact on their development of leadership skills.

Table 5-6
Impact of involvement
in campus groups and activities

Of undergraduates involved in student groups, percentage
indicating their involvement had a great impact on . . .

	All involved	Deeply involved
Leadership skills	33.9%	83.3%
Interpersonal skills	35.0	77.8
Decision-making skills	28.0	69.4
Program/event planning skills	29.5	61.1
Problem solving skills	19.1	50.0
Critical thinking skills	15.8	50.0
Conflict resolution skills	17.5	41.7
Multicultural awareness	19.1	27.8
Development of global perspectives	15.8	22.2
Ethical development	13.7	30.6
Commitment to civic involvement	11.5	22.2

The greatest impact, particularly for those deeply involved in campus groups, is seen in the first four aspects of personal development in Table 5-6. Three of these—leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and decision-making skills—would seem to address skills sought by prospective employers for future leaders.

The degree of impact on those deeply involved is significantly higher than for all others who are involved for all aspects of personal growth and development in Table 5-6.

It should be noted that the three areas of lowest impact from campus group involvement—development of global perspectives, ethical development, and commitment to civic involvement—represent outcomes intended by the University for all undergraduates.

Those students who were involved in campus organizations, groups, and activities were asked, “*What motivates you to become involved?*” A rank ordering of responses is shown in Table 5-7. Survey participants were permitted to indicate all reasons that applied.

Table 5-7
Reasons for becoming
involved in campus groups

Reason	%
To meet people, establish friendships	37.9%
Learning opportunities	30.9
Career development	29.1
A desire to “make a difference”	22.1
Sense of responsibility to others/the community	19.2
Academic credit	9.9
Financial incentives	6.7

In other studies over the years, the opportunity to meet people and establish friendships, to “anchor in” to the University, is most often cited as the major reason for becoming involved. At a large institution such as the Twin Cities campus this helps the student to establish ties, to feel more a part of the campus community. Learning opportunities—the development of leadership, interpersonal, and decision-making skills—are a part of the education of many students and often enhance one’s career development by complementing knowledge and skills gained through coursework.

5.3 Participation in recreational sports programs

General participation in sports and exercise

Sports participation (including fitness and exercise) appears to be a relatively common kind of activity for students. The survey first attempted to determine the extent to which sports participation is a part of the students’ experience irrespective of location—on campus or off campus. The survey reported on five levels of sports involvement: not involved, slightly involved, moderately involved, involved to a large degree, and deeply involved. Table 5-8 reports the percentage of undergraduates who participate *to a large degree* or are *deeply involved* in sports, from 1981 to 1996.

Table 5-8
 Percentage who participate in sports to a large degree or are deeply involved

Year	%
1981	26.6%
1986	29.0
1991	31.9
1996	33.2

This 15-year period has witnessed a gradual but steady increase in the percentage of students who participate to a large degree or are deeply involved.

Overall participation in the University's recreational sports programs and facilities

Before delving into four specific areas of programming, a moment should be taken to review overall participation by undergraduates in recreational sports at the University. Table 5-9 reports current participation in one or more areas of recreational sports over the 20-year period from 1976 to 1996.

Table 5-9
 Undergraduate participation in recreational sports

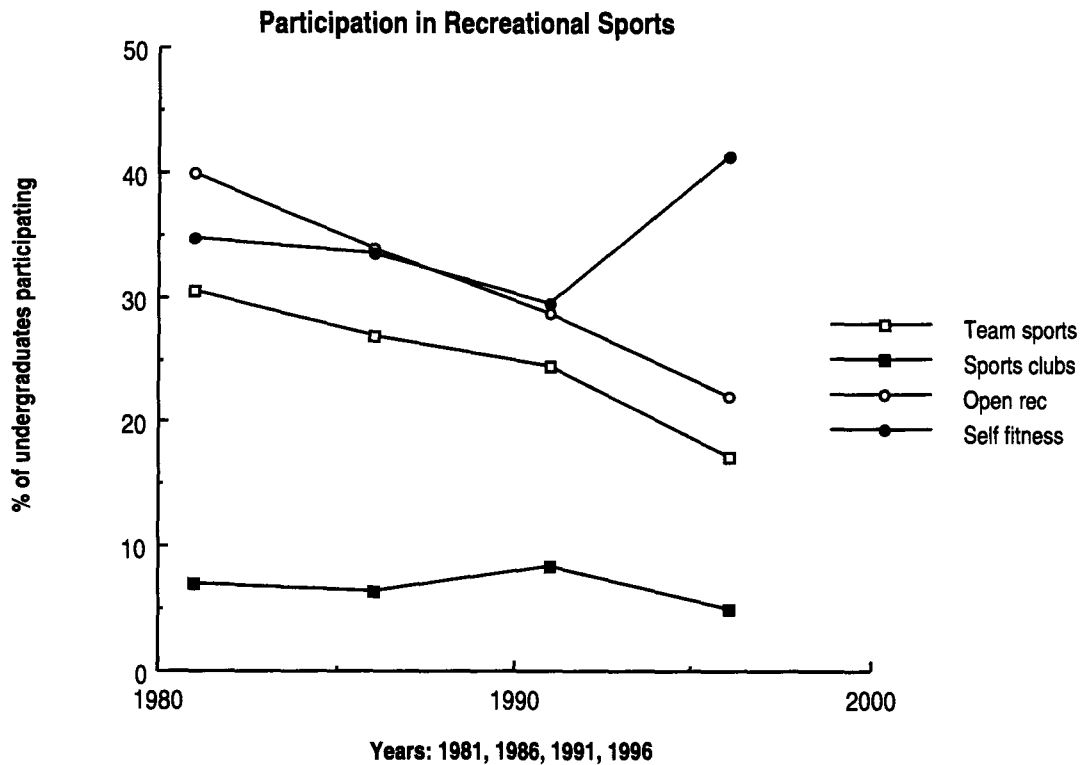
Year	% of undergraduates
1981	55.3%
1986	53.0
1991	48.0
1996	48.9

Approximately half of all undergraduates in each of the years of the survey have participated in recreational sports at the University. This represents the area of highest participation in campus life at the University. The highest level of participation occurred in 1981 and has declined slightly thereafter.

Trends in participation in recreational sports programs

Participation rates in the four specific areas of recreational sports in Figure 5-1 have been measured by the student interest survey since 1981.

Figure 5-1
 Percentage of undergraduates
 participating in four areas
 of recreational sports



Participation in both team sports and open recreation (pickup basketball, racquetball, tennis, etc.) has declined consistently since 1981. Participation in sports clubs, as a percentage of the undergraduate population, has never been high, but has remained consistently in the 5-8 percent range. Exercise and self-fitness activities declined from 34.8 percent in 1981 to 29.6 percent in 1991, but jumped to 41.3 percent in 1996 and represents the highest area of student participation in the recreational sports program.

This increase can probably be attributed to the development of the new Recreation Center, which opened at the midpoint between the 1991 and 1996 student interest surveys. This enabled the University to move from worst to first in the Big Ten in quality of recreational sports facilities. A major feature of this new facility is the top flight exercise and conditioning facilities and equipment, reflecting the trend toward increased interest in fitness and wellness.

Gender differences in recreational sports participation

Within the overall trends described above are significant differences between men and women in levels of participation. Sports clubs are not included because the levels of participation are low.

Table 5-10
 Gender comparisons
 in participation in
 recreational sports

	% of undergraduates participating in recreational sports					
	Team Sports		Open Recreation		Exercise/fitness	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
1981	37.2%	22.1%	43.2%	36.0%	35.5%	34.0%
1986	37.2	16.3	38.6	28.8	34.8	31.8
1991	35.5	13.5	38.1	19.9	35.9	19.9
1996	22.7	12.1	36.0	8.9	43.3	40.0

Men's participation in team sports remained steady from 1981 through 1991, but dropped significantly in 1996. Women's participation, significantly lower than men's, also dropped over this 15-year period.

Men's participation in open recreation declined somewhat from 1981 to 1986, but has remained relatively steady since that time. Women's participation in open recreation, however, has declined consistently over the period of 1981 to 1996. Participation in 1996 is only one-fourth of that in 1981.

Men's participation in exercise and fitness has remained steady at 35 percent from 1981 to 1991 while women's participation dropped substantially from 1986 to 1991. The percentage of undergraduate women using recreational sports facilities for exercise and fitness doubled between 1991 and 1996, while the increase for men, though less dramatic, was also significant. The large increase for women was probably a reflection of high quality facilities and equipment and perhaps of security measures at the entrance to the Recreation Center.

5.4 Summary

The question is often asked, "How many students participate in campus life at the University?" The survey asked how often students visit the unions, but merely visiting the unions is not a good qualitative measure of participation in campus life. It is fair to say, however, that a number of students visiting the unions do participate in meaningful ways in campus life.

Excluding the unions, one measure of involvement in campus life would be the percentage of undergraduates who participate in student organizations, groups or activities, or one or more aspects of recreational sports. Two-thirds of all undergraduates (68.6 percent) participate in one or more of these areas of campus life. That would represent approximately 16,400 of the undergraduate students enrolled during winter quarter, 1996, when this study was conducted.