

I. Assessment Report



**University Counseling Services & DOS/Health Promotion and Wellness
Annual Assessment Report Template
Academic Year: 2013-2014**

Name of Department: University Counseling Services & Dean of Student's Office/Health Promotion and Wellness

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A. (Partial) Abstract

National College Health Assessment (NCHA) data (Spring, 2013, N=736) revealed a significant degree of student distress across a number of populations. These data corroborate with other national surveys and DePaul institutional data which indicates increasing levels of reported stress (emotional, academic, financial) across colleges and populations within the student body. Over the past year, University Counseling Services (UCS)/Dean of Students (DOS) and Health Promotion and Wellness (HPW) has been engaged in a study of the NCHA data in order to learn more about student populations and to guide our practices and strategic planning. Institutional research data from DePaul (IRMA, 2014) reveals a very large number of transfer students, many of whom report a significant degree of stress around their transition to DePaul (especially in terms of finances, academics and meeting new people). DePaul institutional data indicate that the largest group of transfers is located within the Driehaus College of Business [COB], (N= 1,080 per year). As such, consultative discussions have been taking place between UCS/DOS/HPW in order to better understand how we might improve the transfer student experience – especially in terms of stress management, coping and engagement. A partnership has been created with advisors and leadership of COB. An intervention (e.g., email messages, online and on-campus programming) will be administered and analyzed in fall quarter 2014 and winter quarter 2015 in order to further assess the needs and concerns of COB transfers and determine the efficacy of various approaches to student resilience and engagement. Findings and implications will be more fully reported in the report for the 2014-2015 assessment cycle.

B. Introduction and context for this year's report

1. What is the question being asked? What learning outcomes are being assessed?

According to DePaul institutional data, the National College Health Assessment and the experience of key personnel (i.e., academic advisors, student affairs professionals) what are the needs of DePaul transfer students? What do we know about student demographics and the impact of the student experience based on transfer status?

If we drill down further and focus on one particular college (i.e., the College of Business – with the largest numbers of transfer students), what can we learn about the needs of transfer students? How can the data guide us toward more effectively intervening to support this rather large group of students?

2. What is the relevance of the question as it relates to the work of the department and/or division?

Although many departments within the Division of Student Affairs focus a great deal on orienting and acclimating new students, transfer students per se are not often a clear focus of attention – despite DePaul University's historically large numbers of transfer students.

3. How does answering this question help your department?

University Counseling Services, the Dean of Students Office and the Office of Health Promotion and Wellness are all entrusted with enhancing resilience and creating evidence-based and effective interventions to support student success. Learning more about the specific issues of transfer students in a given college can lead us to support, education and/or messaging that may positively impact a group of students with demonstrated need and at higher risk for disengagement and thus adverse academic outcomes.

4. How is the question linked to the Student Affairs Strategic Plan (2010-2013) and Vision Twenty18 goals?

Vision 2018, Objective 1a challenges the DePaul community to Focus the entire university community on student learning and success in the following ways:

- Enhance and expand learning support services.
- Expand and strengthen programs that focus on critical student transitions, **including the first year for freshman and transfer students**, beginning or reentering college for adult students and entrance to major.

5. Provide any relevant research and/or literature that informs or contextualizes this project. Please summarize and cite this information.

In autumn 2013, DePaul University welcomed approximately 1,698 new undergraduate students many of who were transferring from various institutions around the country and world. Transfer students now make up approximately 41% of all new degree-seeking undergraduates at DePaul (DePaul University, 2014). While the first quarter as a new student is an exciting time, transferring can be cause for trepidation. Students may experience anxiety adjusting to their new environment, stress from classes, finances, and creating a new social group of peers. In 1965, John Hills coined the term "transfer shock" to refer to notable decline in the GPAs of transfer students the first term or two after enrolling in a new institution (Thurmond, 2007). This decline can be attributed to a number of factors including transition to a new academic environment, variation in academic rigor, financial stress, and social stress (Tinto, 1988). While developing coping strategies for this adjustment may come naturally to some, research suggests formal interactions with peers, staff, and faculty at the new institution aid students in the adjustment process.

While there are some programs that aim to help transfers feel welcome and included on campus, many universities direct resources to incoming first year students. Institutions may assume that transfer students can more easily adjust to college since they previously attended a two year or four year school or schools in the past. Making assumptions that transfer students can more easily navigate a new institution can have a negative impact on the transfer population. According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2005), many transfer students may not recognize how to connect with various support services. Transfer students may not be aware of ways to connect with resources such as writing and tutoring centers, counseling centers, and disability support centers. Without a connection to multiple services, students may feel less connected and disengage from the university.

One way colleges and universities can help students transition to their new institutions and alleviate transfer shock is create intentional programming and offer services that support the academic, social, and financial transition students experience. Tinto (1993) states that student retention is largely based on the integration of social and academic experiences in college. For transfer students, simply connecting them with academic resources or course registration help upon entering the four year institution is not enough to help them feel a part of campus. Townsend and Wilson (2006) note transfer students many need additional support at the time of their transfer to help with the social and academic adjustment from a community college to a four year institution. Kuh et al. (2005) also suggest implementing a system of multiple safety nets made up of faculty, academic advisors, and student affairs staff to help make connections with newly admitted transfer students. Helping students connect with their academic and co-curricular environments will help them feel a better sense of belonging and contribute to improved academic and personal outcomes.

References (see Appendix I)

C. Methodology

1. On what group(s) of individuals did the question focus (were particular groups intentionally excluded)?

National College Health Assessment data (N= 736, Spring 2013 administration) revealed a large number of DePaul students present with stress and wellness issues. (NCHA survey was sent to 6,000 students with 736 respondents, yielding a 12.4% response rate; +/- 3.56, 95% confidence interval). Survey sample roughly mirrors the

DePaul population with women overrepresented 12%, white students overrepresented 10%.

Because the Driehaus College of Business (COB) has the largest group of transfer students among DePaul's 10 colleges, the focus of the present study is on COB transfer students.

2. *What steps were taken to ensure consent of participants? How did you inform participants of their role in this assessment project? Was participation optional?*
Phase I of this assessment project was administering the NCHA survey. The NCHA survey received approval from DePaul's IRB and participation in the survey was voluntary. Additionally, each participant was provided informed consent and could discontinue participation in the survey at any time.

Representatives from UCS, DOS and HPW worked together to make meaning of the data and to determine which pieces of the data were the most significant. After much discussion, it was determined that the amount of stress, anxiety, and mental health concerns that students reported were most salient to investigate further. However, the NCHA survey is administered to a random sample of ALL DePaul students. In order to prepare to focus on Phase II (which will implement and assess a specific intervention) a target population needed to be determined.

It was at this point that discussion about which target population would be best served. The transfer student population became a point of consideration as generally speaking, the DOS/HPW/UCS professionals agreed that there appeared to be a lack of support programming for this population. Additionally, there is data to support that transfer students have unique concerns that differ from other students as it relates to their well-being. The Transfer Coordinator from New Student and Family Engagement was invited in to consult with DOS/HPW/UCS. She validated the team's concerns regarding transfer students. They are provided mainly academic support in the orientation they receive from NSFE but further, targeted support is not as readily available.

With this knowledge, it was decided that the Phase II intervention will target transfer students. However, transfer students often blend into the rest of the student body post orientation to DePaul. This makes them challenging to program to directly. At this point the DOS/HPW/UCS team decided to focus on transfer students within a particular College, specifically the College of Business. The Phase II project is intended to enhance and overlay already existing outreach and wellness programming initiatives which align with COB advising structures. The Driehaus College of Business enrolled 4,255 undergraduate students and 1,866 graduate students for the 2013-2014. Since the focus of this project is on undergraduate transfers ($N=4,255$) x 24.4%. As such approximately 1,080 students will be reviewed for intervention and additional orientation efforts. Participation in the online and/or on-campus wellness initiatives and focus group or survey will be optional.

3. *Was any identifying information about individual participants collected through this assessment? If so, what precautions were taken to keep this information secure (i.e. kept in a locked file).*

The NCHA survey was administered through the American College Health Association. Any identifying data was kept by the ACHA and was sent to DePaul's Principle Investigators in aggregate form only.

4. *Describe the methods used to answer the question, as well as a description and size of the group initially invited to participate in the project.*

After the proposed intervention in Year II of the project, a survey will be sent to new transfer students in Fall Quarter 2014 and Winter Quarter 2015 to assess learning outcomes related to health and wellness initiatives utilized by COB transfer students.

5. *Please include a copy of the assessment instruments (surveys, focus group questions, interview questions, etc.) and consent forms or written requests to complete instruments.*

Phase I – a copy of the NCHA survey is included as a pdf attachment.

Phase II: Assessment instruments will be developed in the 2014-15 academic year .

10. *Who are potential partners you might involve with this assessment project? (Other Student Affairs departments, Office of Institutional Planning and Research, Graduate Assistants, specific academic departments)*

- a) University Counseling services
- b) Health Promotion & Wellness
- c) Dean of Students Office
- d) Driehaus College of Business academic advisors
- e) Student Affairs campus partners
- f) New Student and Family Engagement

11. *If collecting data directly from students please describe how you plan to obtain informed*

Phase I: as described above, the NHCA survey obtained informed consent and was voluntary participation and is complete

Phase II: Focus group participation will be optional and Qualtrics survey data will be anonymous and de-identified.

12. *Do you plan to present or publish this assessment project for external audiences (i.e. professional association conference or journals)? If yes, please list the potential audience.*

a. *No*

Phase I: received IRB approval and the survey was administered in Spring, 2013

Phase II: As yet, we have not sought IRB approval.

D. Findings/Results and Discussion

1. Describe the results

NCHA data (N=736) revealed the following:

- NCHA data (N=736) revealed a high level of stress and anxiety across multiple colleges at DePaul.
- Nearly 80% of COB students report that they are overwhelmed by all they have to do (NCHA, 2013).
- Nearly 80% of COB students report that they feel exhausted (NCHA, 2013)
- Nearly 50% of COB students report feeling overwhelming anxiety (NCHA, 2013).
- 49.6% of COB students reported ‘more than average’ or ‘tremendous stress’ over the past year (NCHA, 2013).
- Over 15% of COB students reported that they were diagnosed with or treated for anxiety in the last year.
- NCHA respondents were 22.4% international students.
- 21.6% of COB students report that they are without health insurance.
- Significant disparities exist between white students and students of color who are much less likely to have health insurance.

Other DePaul University institutional research data provides further context for transfer students in general and COB transfers in particular:

- Transfer students comprise 41% of all new degree seeking students at DePaul (IRMA, 2014).
- The Driehaus College of Business (COB) has the largest numbers of transfer students per year (over 1,000).
- Most transfer students come from the suburbs (58.9%) and the City of Chicago (25.0%).
- Latino (17.4%) and African American students (9.1%) are slightly overrepresented in the population of DePaul transfer students.
- Nearly 70% of transfer students are under 24. Adult students (24 and older) comprise 30% of transfers.

- The transfer student population is somewhat weighted towards male students (50.8% as compared to the general male student population of 46%).
- The top 3 concerns of transfer students (Transition DePaul Survey, Summer 2013, N=1509) are financial concerns, academic concerns and difficulty meeting new people.

As this project is phased over 2 years (Year I: analysis of NCHA data, discussion with the colleges, decisions about focus of study and intervention; Year II: fall quarter and winter quarter intervention, spring quarter analysis and recommendations).

As such, results will be more fully reported in the 2014-15 academic year. In short, a lot has been learned about the magnitude of the DePaul transfer population(s) which has been described in graphs and charts (see pp.).

E. Implications

Since the transfer population at DePaul is quite large, decisions were made about how to narrow the focus of the study. Driehaus College of Business transfer students may not be fully representative of other transfer populations. Nonetheless, the study will highlight an often overlooked population and may provide some data which may inform Student Affairs practice with regard to other transfer student populations.

Data to be obtained will be of specific interest and applicability to the College of Business. However, it may also have generalizability to other transfer student populations at DePaul University. It is hoped that as the project continues into Year II, more awareness will be raised about the needs and concerns of transfer students at DePaul. Furthermore, the creation of a pilot program to enhance the transfer student experience may provide important data on the relative efficacy of various interventions to support student health and wellness, resilience and engagement.

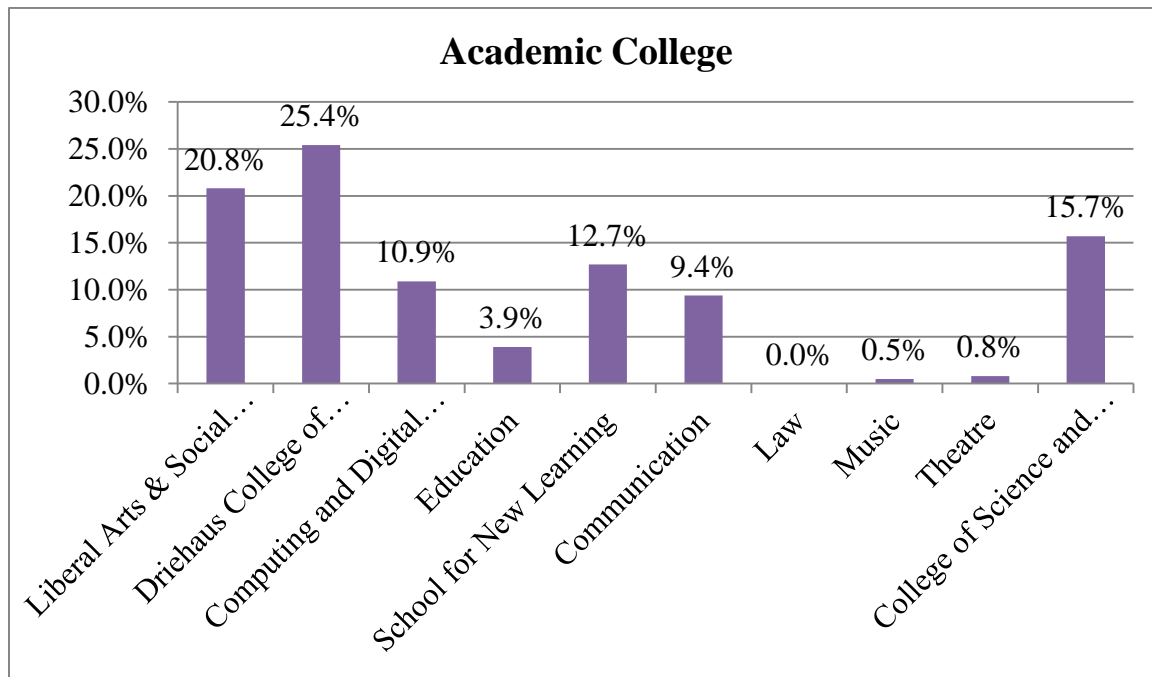
This data will be especially useful to New Student and Family Engagement (NSFE), DePaul Academic Advising Network (DAAN) as well as academic advisors, counselors, and a variety of personnel in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs who provide advocacy and support to enhance persistence, retention, goal attainment and the overall student experience.

Appendix I: References

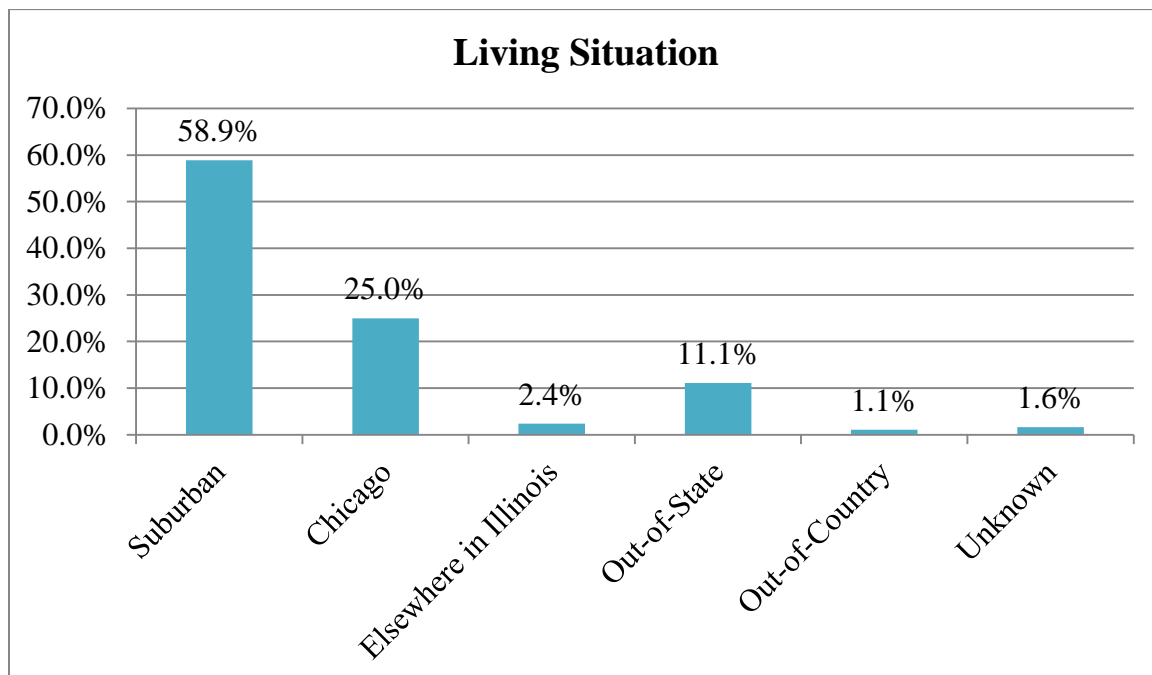
- DePaul University. (2014). *Facts & Figures*. Retrieved from <http://offices.depaul.edu/emm/facts-and-figures/Pages/transfer-enrollment.aspx>
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J., Whitt, E., & Associates (2010). *Student success in college*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Thurmond, K. (2007). Transfer shock: Why a term forty years old is still relevant. NACADA Clearing House of Academic Advising Resources. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Dealing-with-transfer-shock.aspx>
- Tinto, V. (1988). Stages of student departure: reflections on the longitudinal character of student leaving. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 68(6), 599-623.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. (2nd Ed.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Townsend, B. K., & Wilson, K. B. (2006). A hand hold for A little bit: Factors facilitating the success of community college transfer students to a large research university. *Journal of College Student Development*, 47(4), 439-456. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy1.lib.depaul.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/195180100?accountid=10477>

Appendix II:

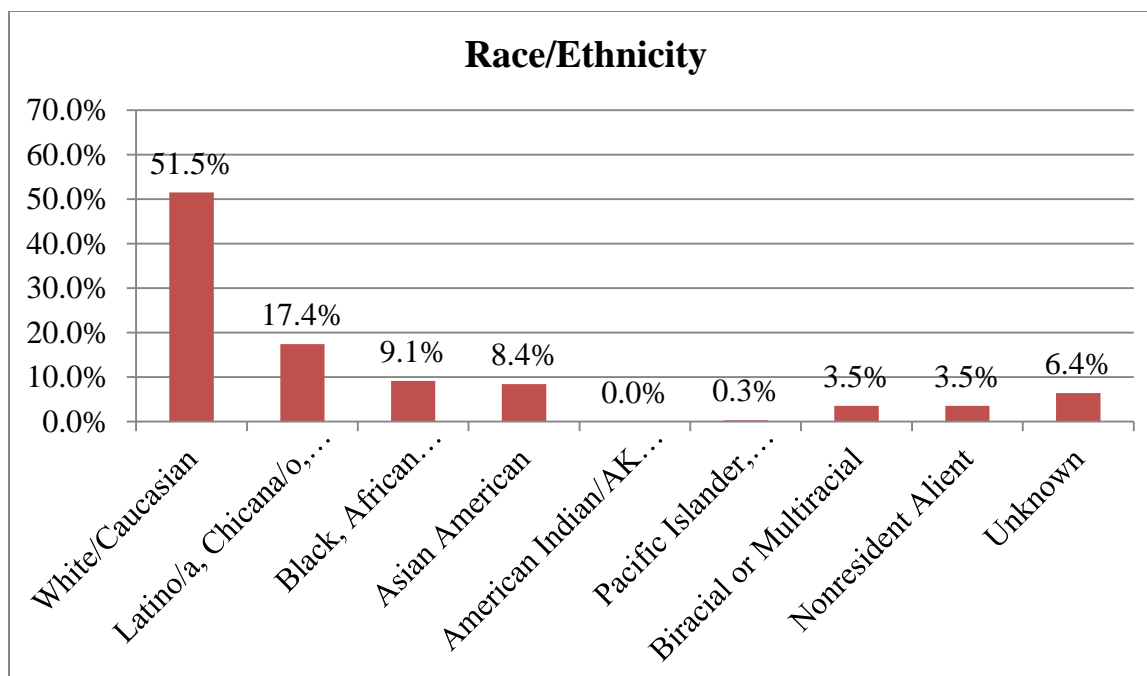
DePaul University Institutional Research & Market Analytics (IRMA) – Transfer Student Demographics



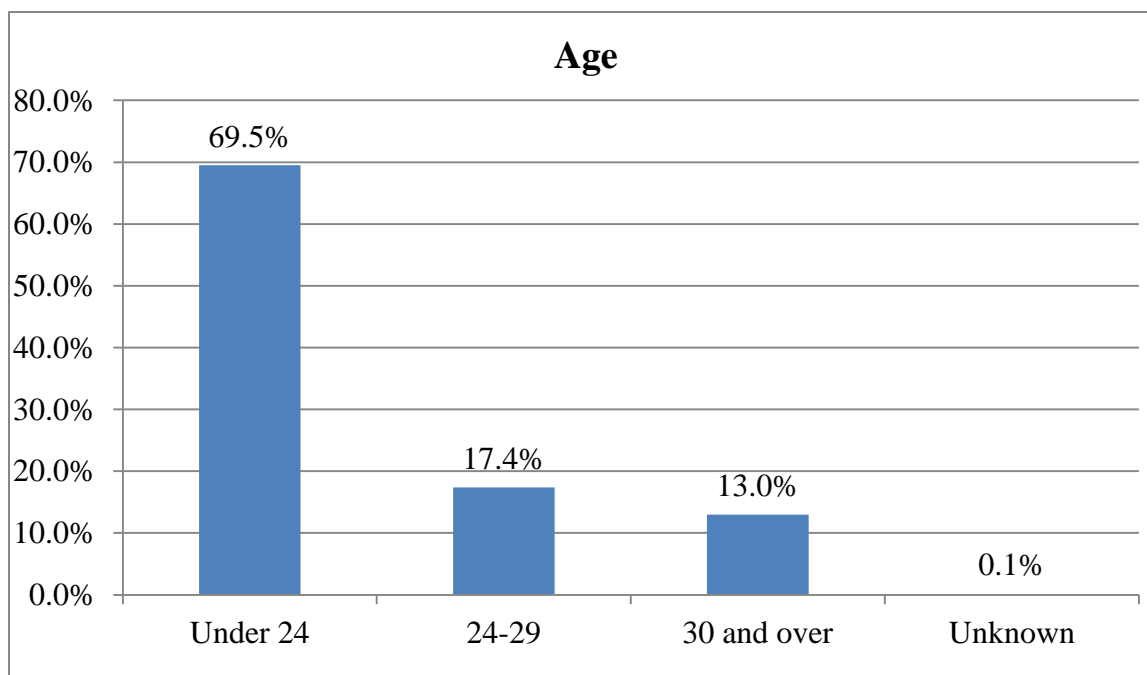
The Driehaus College of Business has the largest percentage (24.7%) of transfer students within the University.



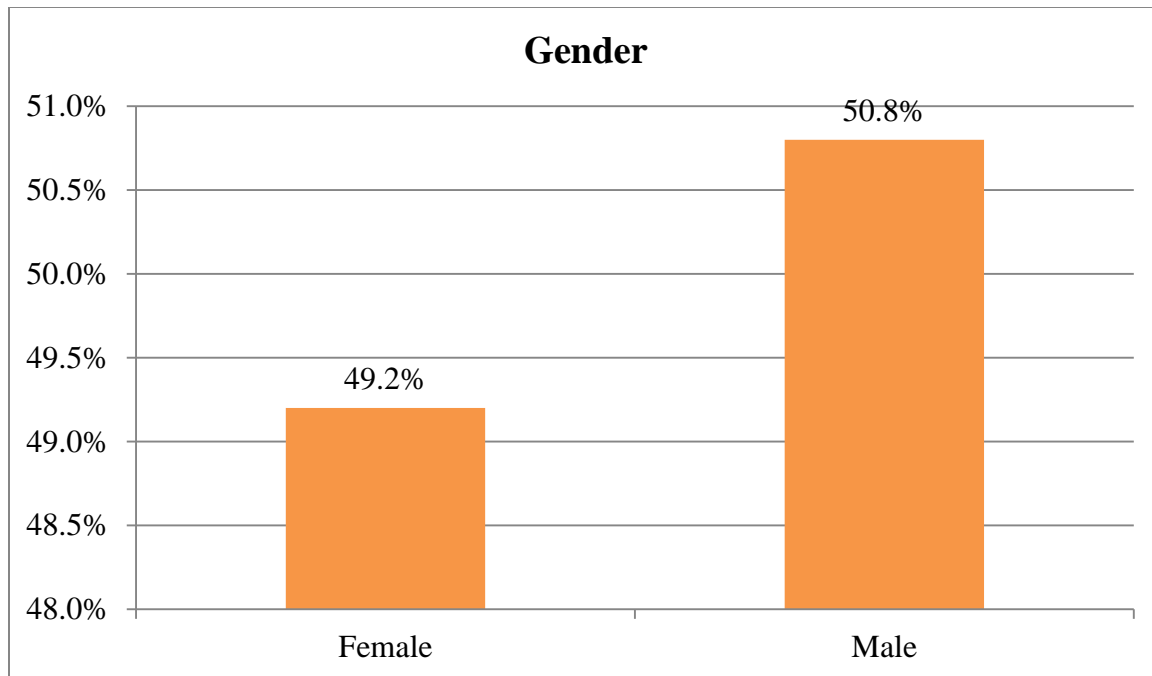
The greatest percentage of transfer students come from suburban areas of Chicago.



Consistent with other reported university demographics, white/caucasian students represent the largest group. Latino students are slightly over-represented within the transfer population at DePaul.

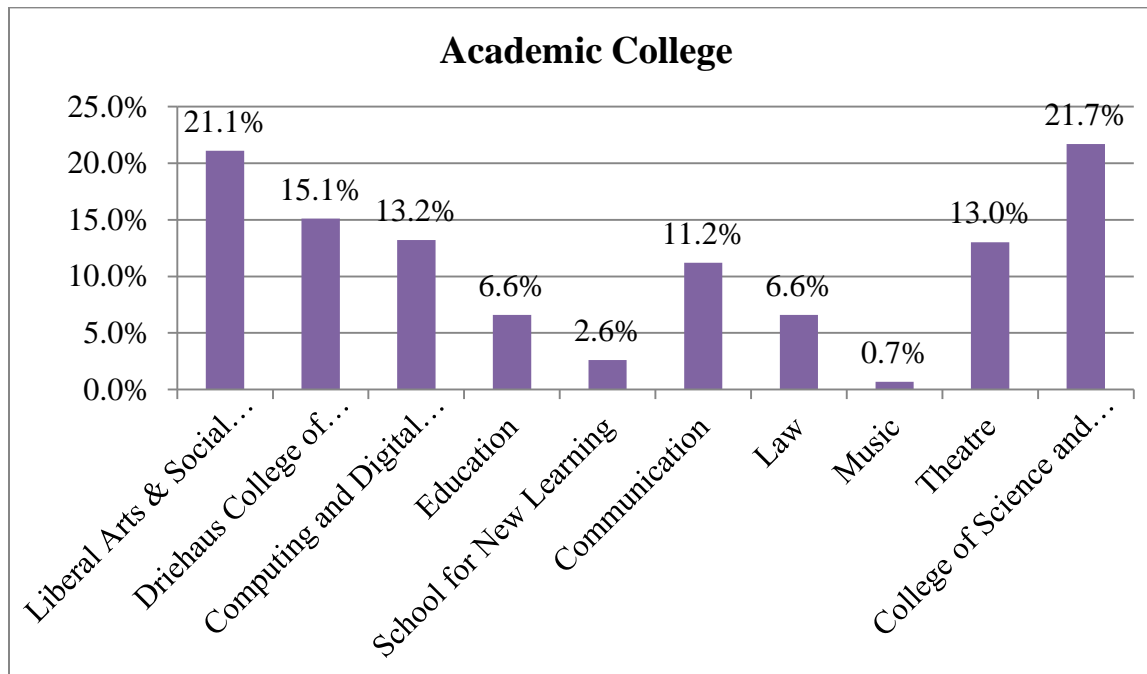


A large majority of transfers are traditional age college students. However, over 30% of transfers are adult students.

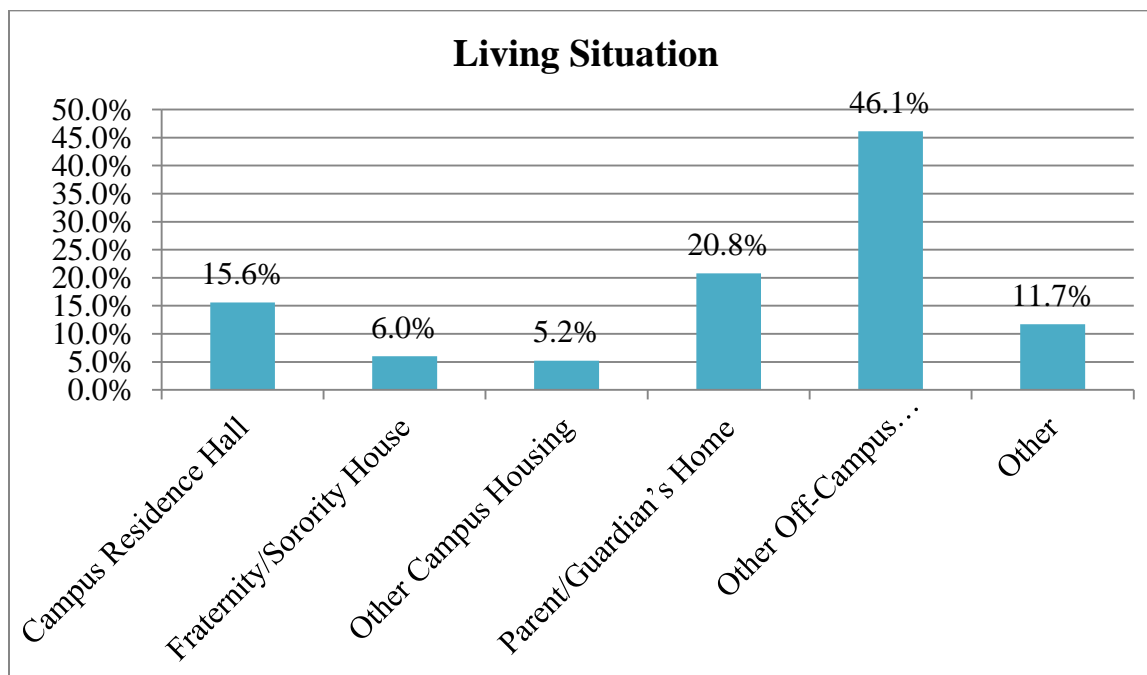


In contrast with a majority of non-transfer female students, male students are somewhat more likely to transfer than female students.

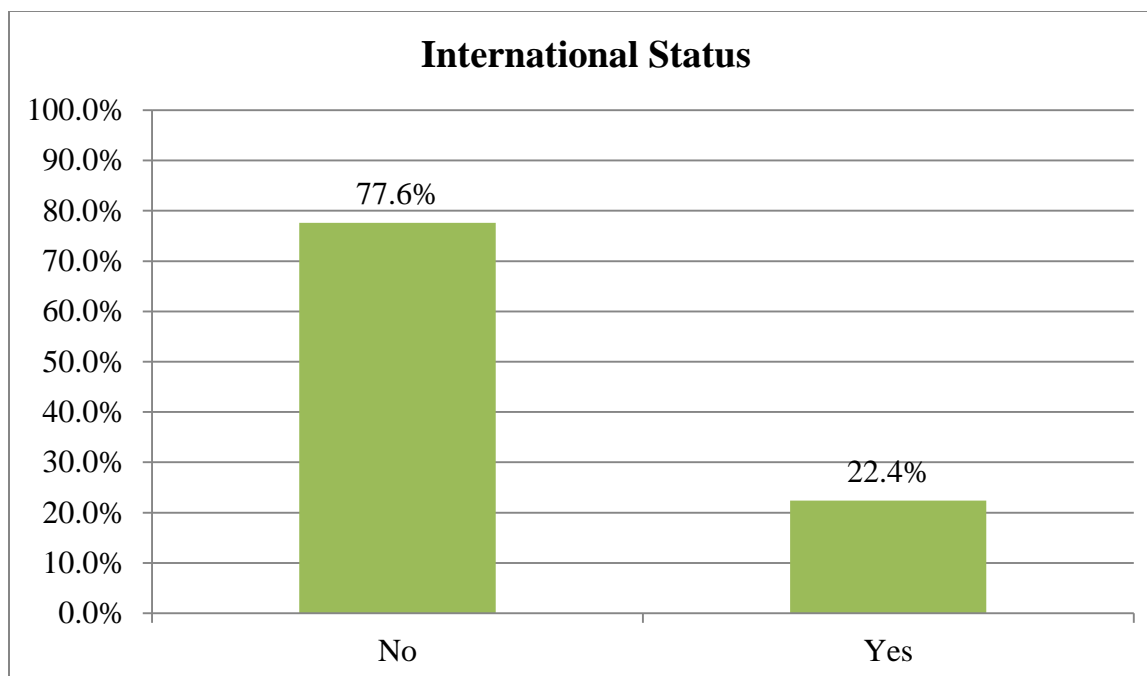
Appendix III:
NCHA Transfer Student Demographics (N=736)



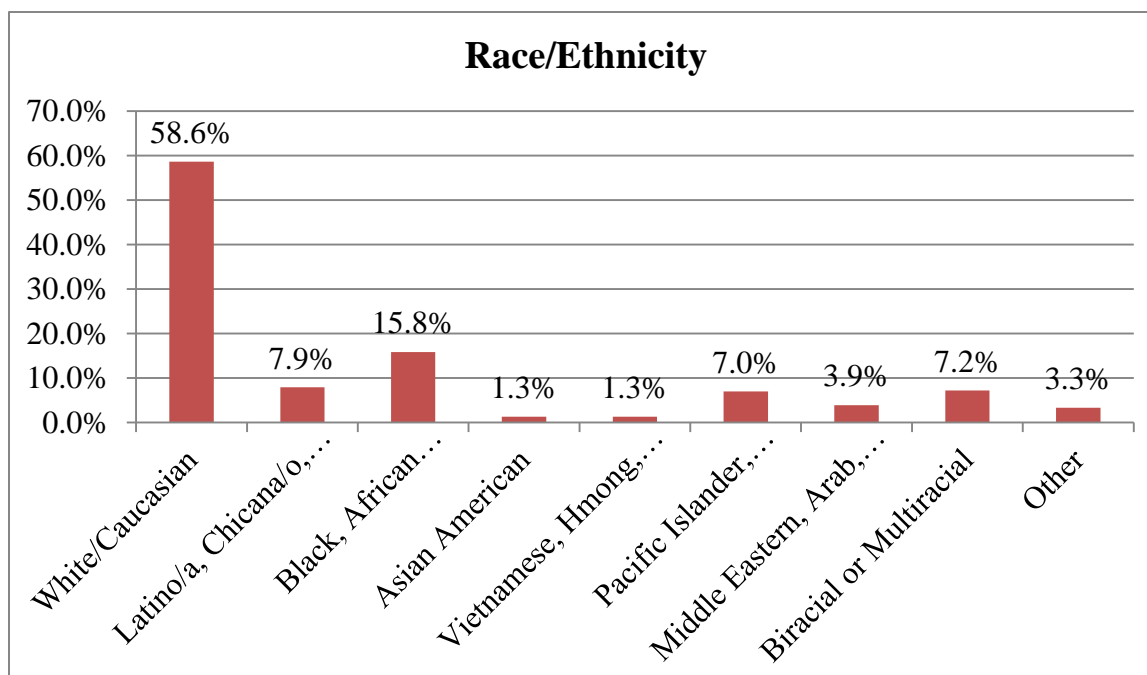
Although College of Business students are the largest DePaul transfer group, NCHA data is more weighted towards College of Science and Health and Liberal Arts and Social Science transfer students.



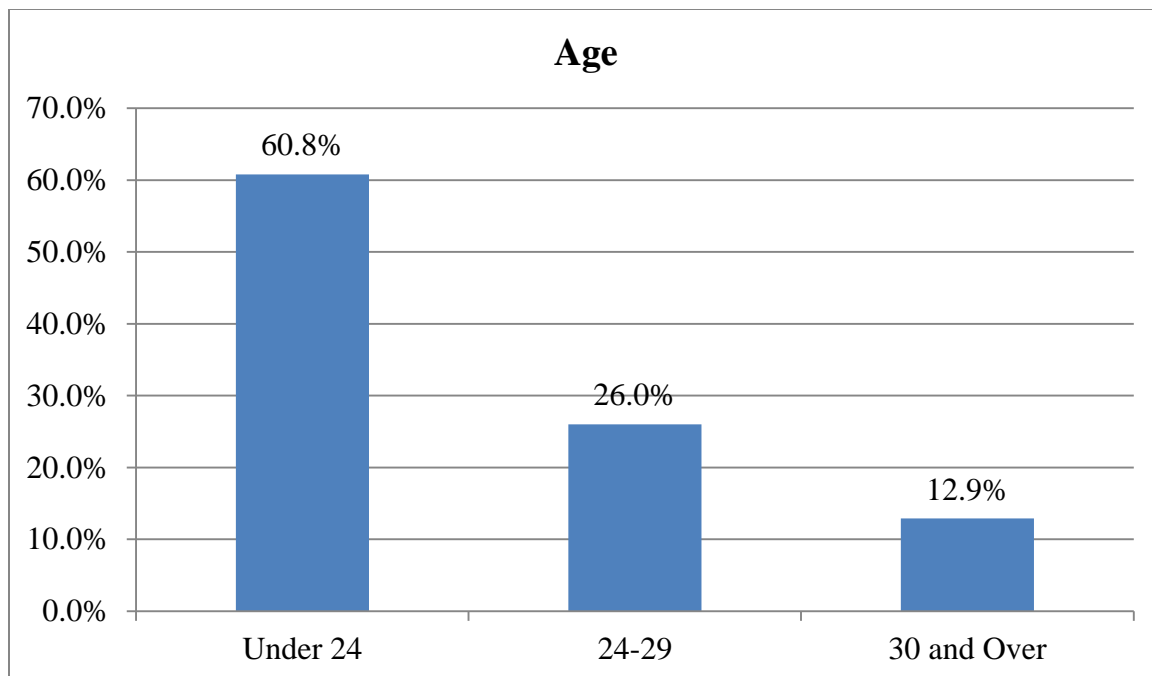
Although a fairly significant percentage of transfers are residential (for a primarily commuter institution), a large majority of transfers are non-residential.



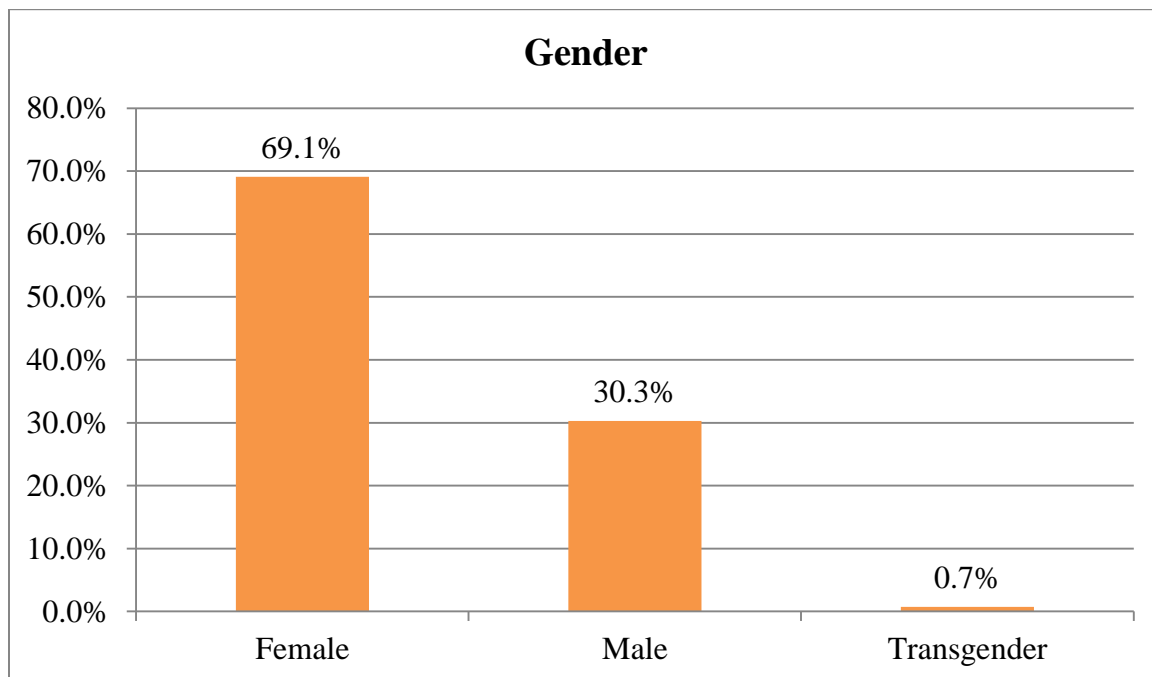
A sizeable percentage (22.4%) of transfer students (at least those completing the NCHA survey) are International students.



African American students are overrepresented in the DePaul transfer NCHA sample, while Latino students are slightly underrepresented.



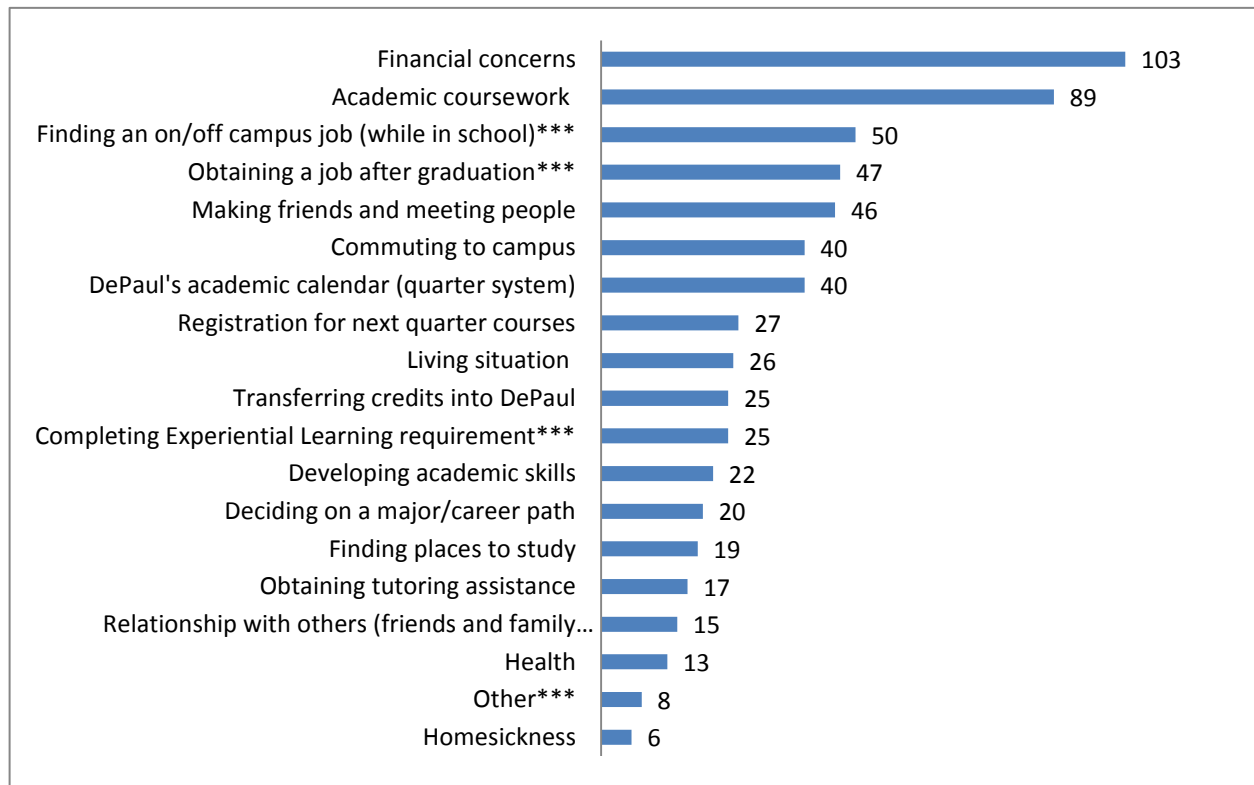
The NCHA transfer data set has slightly higher numbers of adult transfers (38.9%) than the IRMA data set.



NCHA transfer participants were more likely to be female than the IRMA transfer data set.

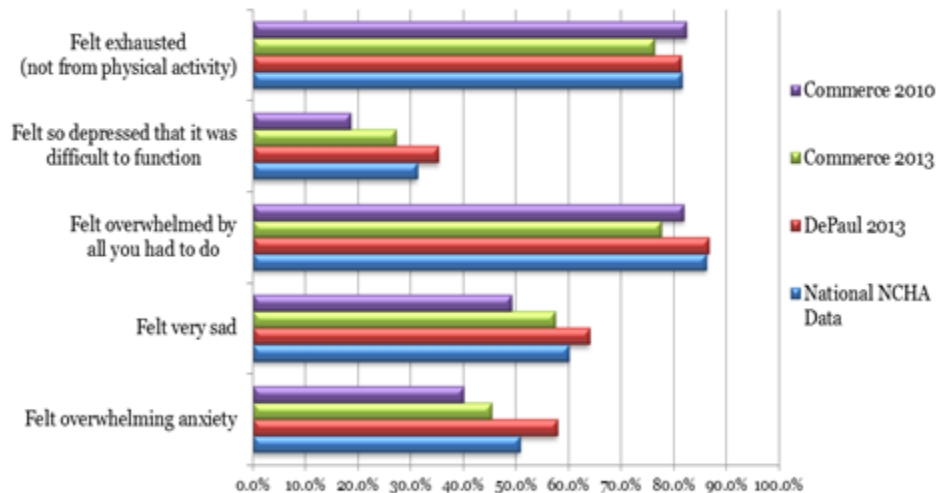
Appendix IV:
‘Transition DePaul’ Transfer Student Data (N=1509)

Primary Concerns of Adult/Transfer Students – Summer 2013

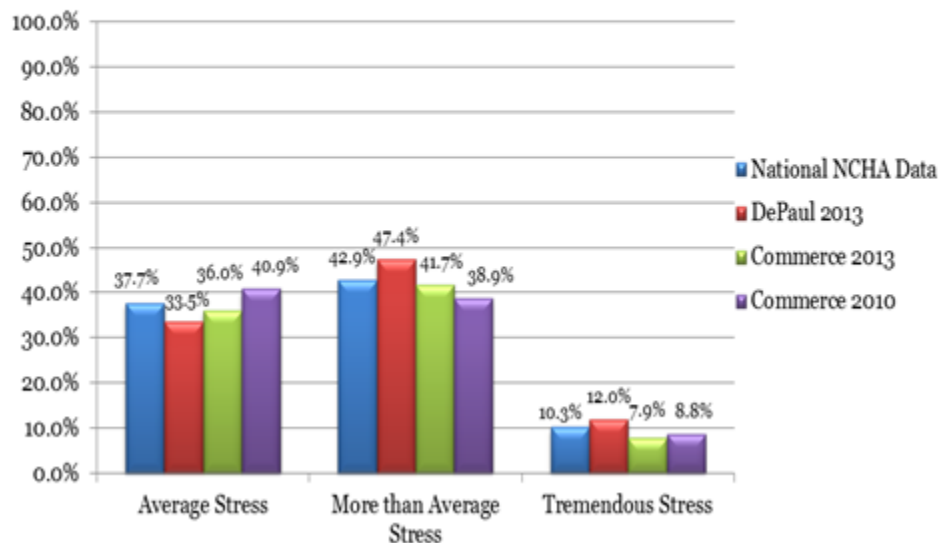


Appendix V: NCHA data (N=736)

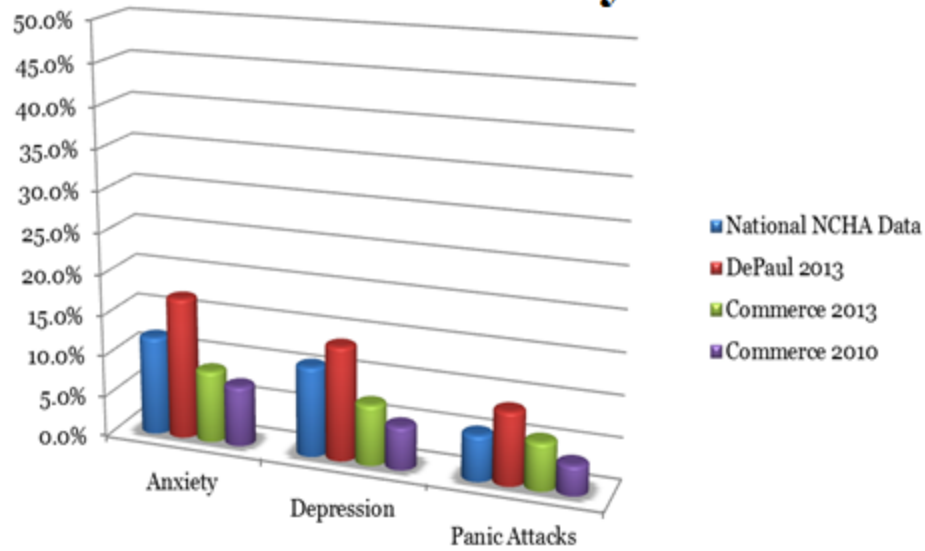
Commerce-Feelings over the past year (in last 2 weeks, 30 days and 12 months)



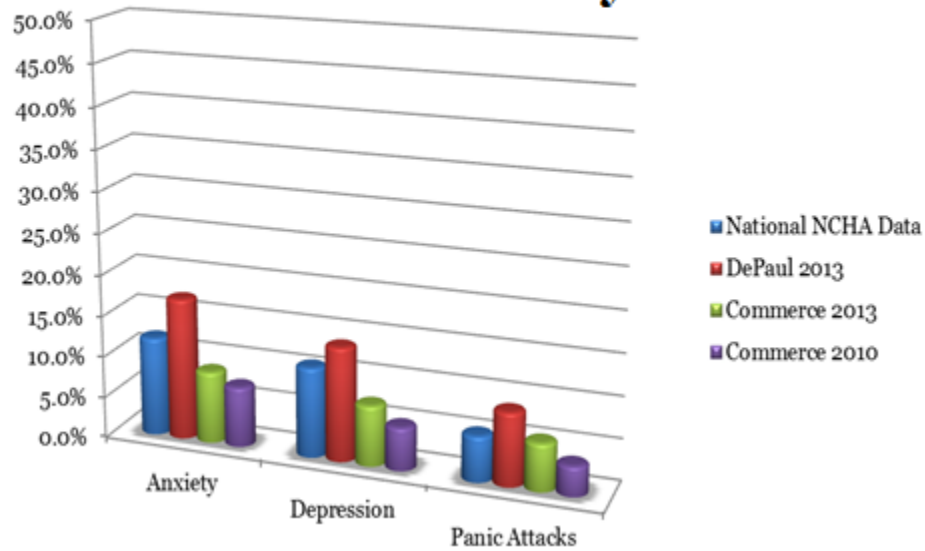
Commerce-Reported stress level over the past year



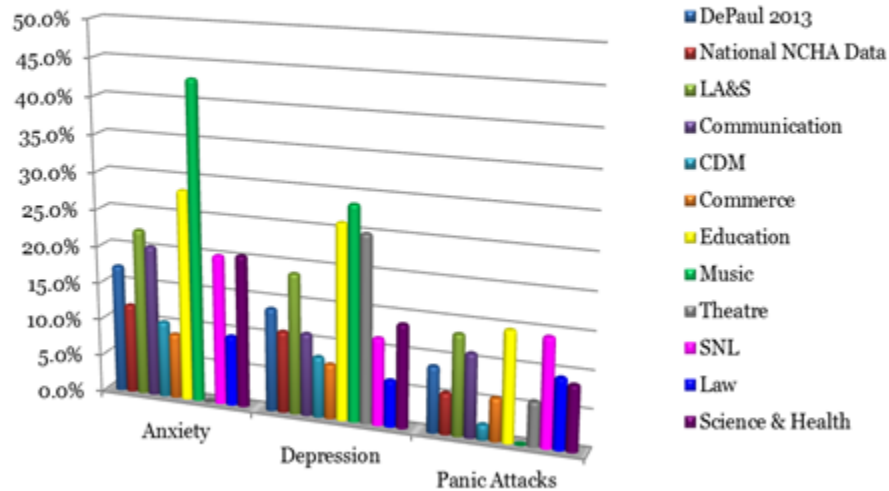
Commerce-Diagnosed or treated in last year



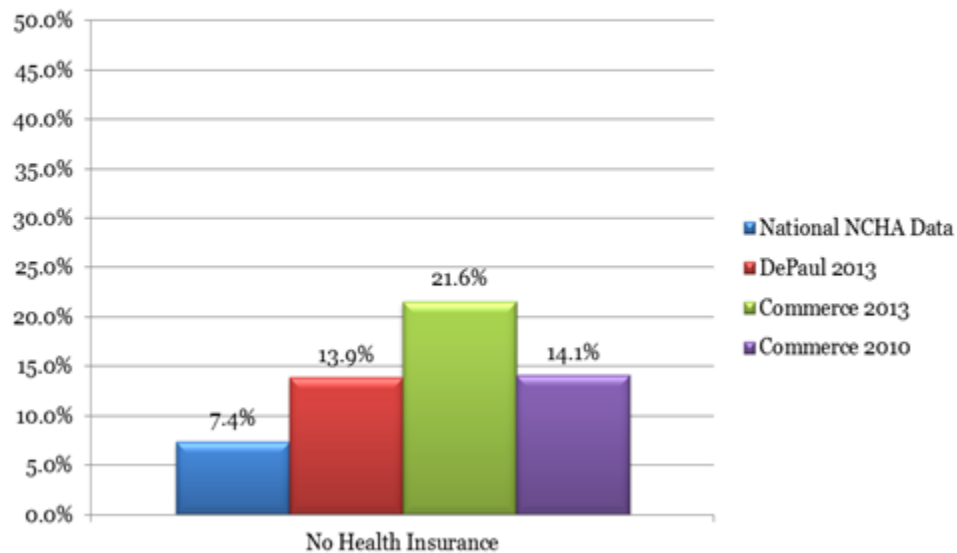
Commerce-Diagnosed or treated in last year



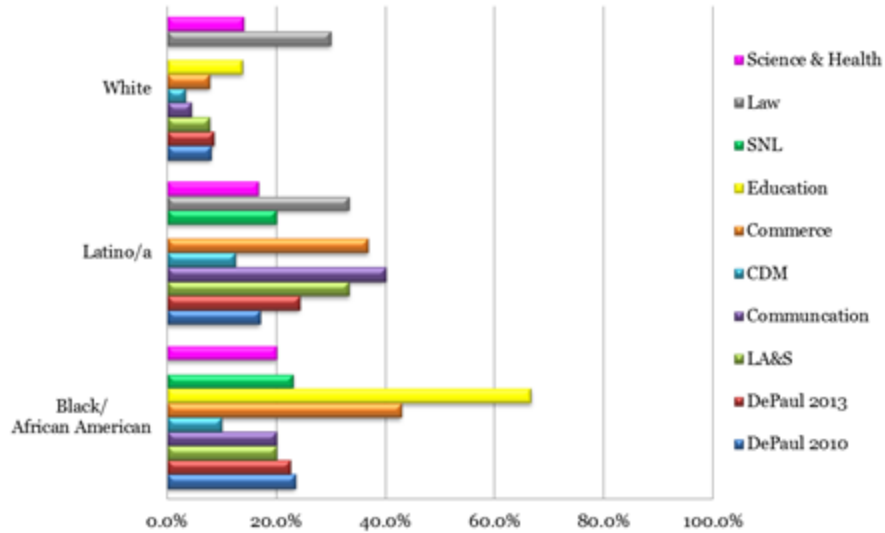
All Colleges-Diagnosed or treated in last year



Commerce-Students without Health Insurance



All Colleges-DePaul Communities Without Health Insurance by Ethnicity/Race



All Colleges-DePaul Communities Without Health Insurance by

