

2010 Transfer Student Survey

University of North Dakota

Office of Institutional Research



Carmen Williams

Mike Braget

Sue Erickson

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA

2010 TRANSFER STUDENT SURVEY

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the locally-developed Transfer Student Survey is to better identify and assess the strengths and shortcomings of the UND transfer process. Initially, the 2006-2007 Transfer Student Survey was undertaken for the UND Transfer Student Task Force. Survey administration has taken place every other year and this is the third time that Institutional Research has administered the survey.

This report describes some of the demographics of the students, their considerations when choosing an institution, and some expectations of their first semester at UND. By combining the students' actual fall semester term grade point average, we are also able to tabulate educational plans by mean grade point averages.

In 2006-2007 the survey was conducted as a paper-pencil survey; in 2008-2009 and again in 2010 the same survey (with a few minor additions) was administered electronically (Appendix 1). The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board approved this study (Project Number: IRB-201009-049).

B. METHODOLOGY

In the fall 2010 a total of 880 new undergraduate transfer students enrolled at the University of North Dakota. This is the fourth year the transfer population has seen an increase in enrollment (2007=674, 2008=759, 2009=811, 2010=880). Of the fall 880 transfer students, 857 were identified to receive the survey. The timeline for survey administration was different this year; students were surveyed in the fall semester instead of previous administrations in spring semester. This was done to get at first impressions more quickly and also to avoid competition from other spring semester surveys.

In early October, a pre-survey postcard was sent to eligible transfer students announcing the upcoming Transfer Student Survey. On October 11, 2010, the initial email invitation went out to 857 transfer students, with email reminders on October 12 and October 18. A reminder postcard was mailed on October 22 and a final email reminder was sent on November 1.

C. RESPONSE RATE

At the close of the survey, a total of 266 students responded to the survey with 57 emails as undeliverable representing a 33% response rate. A timeline showing survey communications and response rates is included in Appendix 2.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

The main method for analysis was descriptive analysis looking at data frequencies. A mean was calculated for each item to allow comparison among the items and between years. A content analysis was performed to identify themes from the students' comments as well as the use of multiple analyses of variance to analyze if statistical differences exist between some of the data variables.

E. RESULTS

1. Demographics

Table 1 shows the demographics of the respondents for the two reporting years. Interestingly, in 2010 men responded at a higher rate than women (53% men, 47% women). When considering the survey population, women account for 42% of the overall total compared to men at 58%. In past survey administrations, women tend to respond at higher rates than male participants.

While the majority (60%) of respondents was age 20-24, Table 1 shows a wide range of age categories. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents were full-time students; 42% were lower-classmen (10% freshmen, 32% sophomores), 47% were upper-classmen (35% juniors, 12% seniors), and 10% reporting their classification as *other*.

Table 1. Demographics of respondents

Demographics of respondents		2010		2008-09		2006-07	
		<i>n</i> =266		<i>n</i> =184		<i>n</i> =216	
		Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
Gender	Male	139	53%	90	49%	103	48%
	Female	124	47%	94	51%	113	52%
	Total	263	100%	184	100%	216	100%
Age	18	1	0%	1	1%	0	0%
	19	38	14%	17	9%	24	11%
	20	63	24%	40	22%	51	24%
	21-24	70	26%	82	45%	78	36%
	25-29	37	14%	18	10%	34	16%
	30-39	41	15%	14	8%	19	9%
	40-54	14	5%	11	6%	10	5%
	55 or older	2	1%	1	1%	1	0%
Total	266	100%	184	100%	217	100%	
Full-time	Yes	208	78%	156	85%	186	86%
	No	57	22%	28	15%	30	14%
	Total	265	100%	184	100%	216	100%
Student Classification	FR	26	10%	18	10%	13	6%
	SO	86	32%	49	27%	70	32%
	JR	93	35%	81	44%	95	44%
	SR	33	12%	28	15%	25	12%
	Other	27	10%	8	4%	13	6%
	Total	265	100%	184	100%	216	100%

2. Major

The incoming transfer students enter UND into a variety of majors. To more generalize the results, the majors are categorized into program areas (see Table 2). About one-fifth (21%) of the students indicated their program area was in health sciences followed by engineering (20%) and business (10%). The greatest differences

from the 2010 survey compared to the 2008-2009 survey was in health sciences and aviation. In the 2010 survey there was an increase of 6% more respondents in the health sciences areas, whereas aviation saw a 5% drop in their number of responders in 2010 from the 2008-2009 survey. This difference is also reflected in actual enrollment figures for fall 2008 and fall 2010 where UND saw an increased enrollment of transfer students in the health science area and a (slight) decrease in aviation.

Table 2. Program area of respondents

Program Area	2010		2008-09		2006-07	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
Nurs/OT/PT/MedTc	57	21%	28	15%	34	16%
Engineering	54	20%	43	23%	49	23%
Business	27	10%	20	11%	31	14%
Aviation	22	8%	24	13%	29	13%
Education	17	6%	10	5%	5	2%
Biol/Bot	10	4%	6	3%	6	3%
PAdmin/SWK	10	4%	3	2%	9	4%
Psychology	9	3%	5	3%	5	2%
Hist/Psci/Soc/SSci	9	3%	0	0%	1	0%
Criminal Justice	8	3%	10	5%	8	4%
Other	8	3%	10	5%	7	3%
Physical Sciences	7	3%	8	4%	10	5%
Visual & Perform. Arts	7	3%	0	0%	6	3%
Undecided	6	2%	10	5%	10	5%
IT/Engr Tech	6	2%	1	1%	1	0%
Engl/Comm	5	2%	3	2%	3	1%
No Response	4	2%	3	2%	2	1%
Total	266	100%	184	100%	216	100%

3. Education Level of Parent

Students were asked about their *parent's highest level of formal education* (see Table 3). Overall, students reported that their mothers' educational level is higher than their fathers' level. While graduate degree attainment (masters, doctorate, or professional degree) for both mothers and fathers is quite similar (11% mothers, 12% fathers), parents earning some college or a bachelor's degree show 64% of mothers' education at this level compared to 50% of fathers. Students indicated that 25% of their mothers have either some high school or earned a high school diploma compared to 35% of their fathers.

Table 3. Parent's Highest Level of Formal Education

What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your (mother/father)?	2010			
	Mother		Father	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
Some HS (no diploma)	10	4%	10	4%
HS graduate	55	21%	80	31%
Some college (1-3 years)	83	32%	68	26%
Bachelors degree	78	30%	63	24%
Some graduate school	6	2%	5	2%
Graduate degree	29	11%	32	12%
Total	261	100%	258	99%

4. Transfer plans

When asked how many credits were completed before coming to UND, 85% of the students reported completing an average of 72 semester hours and 8% reported completing an average of 66 quarter credits. This is comparable to the overall actual average of 63 incoming transfer credits as reported on the *Student Profile of New Transfers for Fall 2010*. Students bringing in the highest number of credits were in the program areas of engineering, health sciences, aviation, and business. Surprisingly, *undecided* students bring in the fifth highest number of credits. The individual majors with the most incoming credits were nursing, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, undecided majors, electrical engineering, clinical lab sciences, and psychology.

Sixty percent (n=159) of the respondents reported attending one college prior to UND, 28% (n=75) reported attending two colleges, and 5% (n=14) reported attending three colleges. Two students reported that they had attended five schools prior to enrolling at UND.

Students were asked "When you started college, did you plan to transfer to another college?" Of the respondents, 45% responded "Yes" and 55% responded "No." This is similar to two years ago when the 2008-09 responses were 47% "Yes" and 53% "No." Students were asked about school choice and whether UND was their first, second, third, or other choice. There was a slight drop in the percentage of first choice responses (70% versus 65%) from both previous administrations of the survey (see Table 4) but overall the categories represent a steady trend in the choice order of schools.

Table 4. Choice of Schools

Of the schools you considered for transfer, was UND your first, second, third, or other choice?						
Choice	2010		2008-09		2006-07	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
First choice	170	65%	128	70%	152	70%
Second choice	45	17%	26	14%	36	17%
Third choice	11	4%	4	2%	6	3%
Other choice	34	13%	24	13%	19	9%
No Response	0	0%	0	0%	3	1%
Total	260	100%	182	100%	216	100%

5. Why UND?

Student respondents reported a much lower percentage of “hearing about UND” from *family or friends* than on the previous survey. Fifty-two percent of the 2010 respondents mentioned that they first heard about UND from *family or friends* compared to 64% in 2008-09 (see Table 5). On the other hand, the greatest increase reported was *UND website* where 15% of the 2010 reported their “first hearing about UND” this way compared to 8% of the respondents in 2008-2009.

Table 5. How did you first hear about UND?

Hear About	2010		2008-09		2006-07	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
Family or friends	135	52%	114	64%	117	51%
Other	61	24%	33	18%	61	26%
UND website	39	15%	15	8%	19	8%
Previous college advisor/faculty	20	8%	13	7%	20	9%
UND faculty/staff	3	1%	4	2%	1	0%
UND mailing	1	0%	0	0%	13	6%
Total	259	100%	179	100%	231	100%

Sixty-five of the respondents provided “other” reasons for first hearing about UND. Signifying the importance of web materials and search engines, more than one-third of these respondents (35%) mentioned that they found UND from some sort of an internet search, including a military.com advertisement and a “Facebook sidebar ad.” A number of other respondents (n=12) reported being a current or former resident of Grand Forks/area. Other students mentioned reasons such as magazine ads, recruiter, employer, or family members with UND associations for how why first heard about UND. More detail is given in Table 6.

Table 6. How did you first hear about UND? "Other" reasons noted

"Other" reasons	Nbr	"Other" reasons	Nbr
Internet search	12	I live near here and always watch UND football	1
Current area resident	9	internet search for online schools offering engineering	1
Former resident of GF/area	3	internet search on pilot training	1
Avinor	2	Its a college	1
Baseball Coach	2	military.com advertisement	1
Recruiting	2	My parents are both alumni	1
ABET.org	1	Newspaper	1
AMTA website	1	Online Civil Engineering Program search	1
Applied directly out of HS	1	online search for online degrees	1
Athletics	1	professional journal	1
Childhood dreams	1	Purdue Advisor	1
CLS program advisors for UND cohort program at Mayo Clinic	1	Random	1
Company	1	several different psychology program review discussion boards online	1
Dantes	1	SFSU CLS Program	1
During Flight School	1	Through another college	1
Employer	1	Tokai University flight training program	1
Facebook sidebar ad	1	USA Education Guide	1
from the Engelstad through the hockey games	1	Web search for BSEE online options	1
Graduate	1	Web search regarding online engineering programs with accreditation	1
grew up a Sioux fan	1	work	1
High school	1	<i>Total</i>	<i>65</i>

In another question, students were asked "How many times did you access UND's website to gain information regarding UND?" There was a noteworthy increase in the percentage of students accessing the UND site 5 or more times (70%) over previous years: 2008-09 (59%), 2006-07 (64%) (see Table 7).

Table 7. Number of times accessing UND's website for information

Web access	2010		2008-09		2006-07	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
7 or more	150	57%	84	46%	109	50%
5-6	34	13%	24	13%	31	14%
3-4	55	21%	50	27%	40	19%
1-2	20	8%	17	9%	30	14%
0	6	2%	8	4%	6	3%
Total	265	100%	183	100%	216	100%

As can be seen in Table 8, the survey categories for educational plans changed in 2010 from previous survey administrations. However, the percentage of students planning on graduating in less than four years remained relatively the same with 74% compared to previous years of 80% and 74%. The changes capture more

accurately the plans of transfer students as 27% plan to graduate in two or less years while 29% plan to do so in three. Also added for 2010 is an “attend, not graduate” category which 5% of respondents report as their plan at UND.

Table 8. What are your educational plans at UND?

Educational Plan	2010		2008-09		2006-07	
	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent	Nbr	Percent
Graduate in <=2 yrs	72	27%	-	-	-	-
Graduate in 3 yrs	77	29%	-	-	-	-
Graduate in 4 yrs (previously <= 4 yrs)	48	18%	146	80%	161	74%
Graduate in > 4 yrs	27	10%	27	15%	35	16%
Transfer out	9	3%	6	3%	13	6%
Attend, not graduate	13	5%	-	-	-	-
Unsure	17	6%	4	2%	9	4%
Total	263	100%	183	100%	218	100%

The fall 2010 end-of-term grade point average (tgpa) was added into the respondent database. When producing a crosstab of education plan compared with mean term grade point average, it shows that students intending to graduate in four years or fewer have obtained a slightly higher tgpa (3.04) than students who indicate to graduate in more than four years (2.92). The respondents with the lowest tgpa is the *unsure* group (tgpa=2.40) and the *attending but not graduating* group (tgpa=2.38).

Table 9. Education plan compared with mean term grade point average

Education plan	2010	
	Nbr	TGPA
Graduate < 4 years	148	3.04
Graduate in 4 years	48	3.05
Graduate > 4 years	26	2.92
Transfer prior to graduating	9	2.71
Attend but not graduate	13	2.38
Not sure	17	2.40

6. Important factors in decision to attend

What's important when deciding to attend UND? Knowing what credits transfer is the highest factor of importance when students were asked to rate a list of thirteen items. On a scale of one to three, with one equal to "not important" and three equal to "very important," Table 10 compares the 2010 and 2008-09 mean responses. *Transfer credit evaluation* was ranked the most important (mean=2.74) in 2008-09 as well as in 2010 (mean=2.72).

Table 10. When deciding to attend UND, how **important** were the following?

Factor	2010		2008-09		Mean Difference from 2008 to 2010
	Responses	Mean	Responses	Mean	
<i>scale 1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=very important (not applicable set to "missing")</i>					
Transfer credit evaluation	254	2.72	178	2.74	-0.02
Cost of attending	258	2.60	174	2.62	-0.02
Academic reputation	257	2.56	172	2.52	0.04
Financial assistance offered	248	2.35	171	2.35	0.00
Graduates at UND get good jobs	250	2.34	170	2.34	0.00
Website information	259	2.12	173	2.08	0.04
Faculty/advisor at UND	241	2.05	163	1.94	0.11
Size of university	252	1.90	175	1.99	-0.09
Desire to live near home	228	1.83	160	1.90	-0.07
Social activities	239	1.78	170	1.80	-0.02
Campus visit	213	1.72	147	1.89	-0.17
Relatives	221	1.65	161	1.68	-0.03
Faculty/advisor at prior clg	228	1.54	161	1.66	-0.12
Total		2.09		2.12	-0.03

Overall, there was little difference in rankings and mean scores from 2008-09 to 2010. The largest increase in mean score was for *Faculty/advisor at UND* which increased from 1.94 in 2008-09 to 2.05 in 2010. The largest decrease was for *Campus Visit* which decreased from 1.89 to 1.72 and also for *Faculty/advisor at prior clg* which decreased from 1.66 to 1.54.

Table 11 reports the differences in *importance* by gender. Overall, women ranked all factors of importance higher than the men and, for the most part, in similar order. Three items with the largest amount of difference are *financial assistance offered* (0.39 higher than men), *relatives* (0.25 higher than men), and *live near home* (0.22 higher than men). It is difficult to know how students interpreted the item "*relatives*." The interpretation could have been made about *relatives* suggesting to attend UND, or that students desired to live near their *relatives*.

Table 11. When deciding to attend UND, how **important** were the following? (women vs men)

Factor scale 1= <i>not important</i> , 2= <i>somewhat important</i> , 3= <i>very important</i> (not applicable set to "missing")	Women		Men		Difference between women and men
	Mean	Mean Rank	Mean	Mean Rank	
	Transfer credit evaluation	2.78	1	2.67	
Cost of attending	2.68	2	2.52	2	0.16
Academic reputation	2.64	3	2.50	3	0.14
Graduates at UND get good jobs	2.41	5	2.26	4	0.15
Financial assistance offered	2.55	4	2.17	5	0.39
Website information	2.18	6	2.05	6	0.12
Faculty/advisor at UND	2.15	7	1.98	7	0.16
Size of university	1.99	8	1.81	8	0.18
Social activities	1.81	11	1.77	9	0.04
Live near home	1.94	9	1.72	10	0.22
Campus visit	1.82	10	1.64	11	0.19
Relatives	1.79	12	1.55	12	0.25
Faculty/advisor at prior college	1.65	13	1.46	13	0.19

7. Expectations met?

Students were asked whether UND has met or exceeded their expectations on twelve factors. Continuing on a similar scale of one to three, with one being equal to "did not meet my expectations" to three being equal to "exceeded my expectations," means were calculated and reported (see Table 12). Topping the list is *academic reputation* (2.23), followed by *facilities* (2.21), *friendliness* (2.20), and a new factor for 2010: *faculty at UND* (2.19). The items that fell slightly below the "met my expectations" were *admissions materials and/or contacts* (1.98), and *transfer credit evaluation* (1.89). When comparing changes over time of mean responses, *social activities* (2.16 in 2010, 2.07 in 2008), and *financial assistance offered* (2.01 in 2010, 1.91 in 2008) were the factors with the largest differences. For the 2008-09 administration of the survey, only one item, *financial assistance was offered*, had a positive change from the previous year. For 2010, seven of the 12 factors increased from the 2008-09 administration.

Table 12. How has UND met your **expectations**?

<i>Factor scale 1=didn't meet expectation, 2=met expectation, 3=exceeded my expectation (not applicable set to "missing")</i>	2010	2008-09	Mean Difference from 2008 to 2010
	Mean	Mean	
Faculty/advisor at UND	n/a	2.2	n/a
Academic reputation	2.23	2.17	0.06
Facilities	2.21	2.17	0.04
Friendliness	2.20	2.27	-0.07
Faculty at UND	2.19	n/a	n/a
Size of university	2.17	2.11	0.06
Social activities	2.16	2.05	0.11
Advising at UND	2.12	n/a	n/a
Availability of online courses	2.10	2.02	0.08
Orientation	2.03	2.05	-0.02
Cost of attending	2.01	1.93	0.08
Financial assistance offered	2.01	1.91	0.10
Admissions materials and/or contacts	1.98	1.98	0.00
Transfer credit eval	1.89	1.95	-0.06

Comparisons of *expectations* by gender are reported in Table 13. While there is some variation between men and women, it is not widespread as no factor has a difference greater than one-tenth (0.1). On seven of the 12 factors, men rated their met-expectation higher than women, including many of the higher ranked (for both men and women) factors of *facilities* (2.21 versus 2.20), *academic reputation* (2.23 versus 2.21) and *friendliness* (2.21 versus 2.17). However, the differences, as already noted, are quite small. The largest areas of difference include: *admissions materials and or contacts* where men believed UND met expectations (2.01) while women believed UND did not meet expectations (1.92) which also seems to be the case for *orientation* (2.07 for men, 1.98 for women), and *social activities* where women believed UND met expectations slightly more than men (2.20 versus 2.12, respectively).

Table 13. How has UND met your **expectations?** (women vs men)

<i>Factor scale 1=didn't meet expectation, 2=met expectation, 3=exceeded my expectation (not applicable set to "missing")</i>	Mean		Difference between women and men
	Women	Men	
Friendliness	2.17	2.21	-0.04
Faculty at UND	2.16	2.21	-0.05
Orientation	1.98	2.07	-0.09
Facilities	2.20	2.21	-0.01
Academic reputation	2.21	2.23	-0.02
Size of university	2.17	2.16	0.01
Social activities	2.20	2.12	0.08
Availability of online courses	2.09	2.09	0.00
Admissions materials and/or contacts	1.92	2.01	-0.09
Advising at UND	2.12	2.13	-0.01
Transfer credit evaluation	1.92	1.84	0.08
Financial assistance offered	2.03	1.99	0.04
Cost of attending	2.03	1.98	0.05

8. Comments

When asked "Please provide general comments about anything that would have improved your transfer experience," a total of 128 students supplied a comment. This is a considerable jump from the 2008 administration of the survey in which 75 students provided comments. A content analysis was done on the comments to organize similar ideas and themes into categories. Since some of the comments had multiple content, the total number of categories adds up to 172 (see Table 14).

Topping the list for students was the *transfer process* in general and *credit transfers* (credits earned at a previous institution that students wish to gain credit for at UND). For *transfer process* there were a wide variety of comments ranging from "My transfer has gone very easy and UND has done a great job of helping it be that way" and "there is nothing that I think needs to be improved. It was all great" to "When I transferred I received no help, and was never assigned an adviser. I then had to run all over campus and attempt to figure out my transfer issues. Not helpful at all, I was not impressed by the transfer program here."

As students make a change from an institution they have perhaps felt at home attending to an unfamiliar campus and atmosphere at UND, it is not surprising to see *advising* and *orientation* as highly commented areas. For example one student commented, "I wish I had been able to attend the welcome weekend. The first few days of school were very overwhelming to me but I have since adjusted," while another stated, "I would have appreciated having an assigned advisor that was willing to discuss enrollment possibilities openly. I am not impressed with UND's student advising system."

All of the students' comments are appreciated and should be noted. The comments give valuable insight on possible procedure changes and/or enhancements that would improve the student experience. All comments, along with student major, appear at the back of this report in Appendix 3.

Table 14. Frequency of categories mentioned in comments

Comment category	2010	
	Nbr	Percent
Transfer Process	32	18.6%
Credit Transfers	23	13.4%
Advising	14	8.1%
Orientation	13	7.6%
Financial Aid	12	7.0%
Other	12	7.0%
Services	11	6.4%
School	10	5.8%
Online Classes	9	5.2%
Staff	8	4.7%
Admission Process	7	4.1%
Registration Process	6	3.5%
Communication	4	2.3%
Online Degree	4	2.3%
Cost	3	1.7%
Campus Connection	2	1.2%
Housing	1	0.6%
Web-page	1	0.6%
total	172	100.0%

F. CONCLUSION

The Transfer Student Survey was developed to better identify and assess the strengths and shortcomings of the UND transfer process. This is the third time that Institutional Research has administered this survey. With comparable responses from 2006-07, 2008-09, and 2010-2011 it is not only possible to be reminded of initial student responses but to follow factors over time to see the impact of procedural changes and/or improvements that might have been implemented. Since student processes and procedures should be of continuous improvement, observing responses over time is important in any assessment practice.

Students have an educational plan (e.g. to graduate in four years or fewer) in mind when they transfer to UND – with most transfer students entering with a decided major. This makes it all the more important to be able to quickly report which of their credits transfer to UND so that students can keep on track with their educational plan. While student expectations concerning this process may be slightly unrealistic given the unique nature of each individual transfer credit evaluation, it's important to keep this in mind and try to figure out ways to make processes more streamlined.

Transfer students expressed other concerns. Based on information gathered through the comments, assisting students in adjusting to the UND campus and processes, possibly through orientation or via

communication, would be a welcomed benefit to many students. Many services are already in place for transfer students; however, it seems from the numerous comments that many students feel lost when trying to navigate at UND. Such things as providing check lists of different processes, information about costs of attendance, or assigning an advisor (prior to registration) to discuss transfer credits and degree requirements are some possible areas of improvement in UND's transfer process.

Student success equals UND success. General assessment of UND practices and procedures is an important process in order to make sure that students are receiving a positive and rewarding UND experience. Surveys such as this one help by identifying what the important factors are to students as well as which activities are coming up short. These studies are all aimed at optimizing the UND student experience.