

## Sources and Notes

### First Year Experiences 2007 Survey

Q: During your first year at UCR how easy/difficult was it for you to/adjust to:

#### *Academic adjustment items:*

- Difficulty of college courses
- Amount of academic work
- Choose a major
- Select courses

#### *Personal adjustment items:*

- Living away from home
- Deal with homesickness
- Personal freedom
- Living with a roommate(s)
- Manage relationships with family

\* 1<sup>st</sup> generation college student can also be defined as 'neither parent has a four-year degree.' By this definition 50% of entering freshmen are 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students. However, comparable results regarding 1<sup>st</sup> generation and non-1<sup>st</sup> generation experiences are obtained using their alternate definition.

\*\*Chicana/Chicano is a gender neutral term used to refer to individuals of Mexican origin; Latina/Latino is used to refer to individuals of Central and South American origin. Chicana/Latino in this brief is used as a gender neutral abbreviation for these two terms.

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## ***“ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE”***

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
**UC RIVERSIDE**

## STUDENT SURVEY BRIEF

WINTER 2008

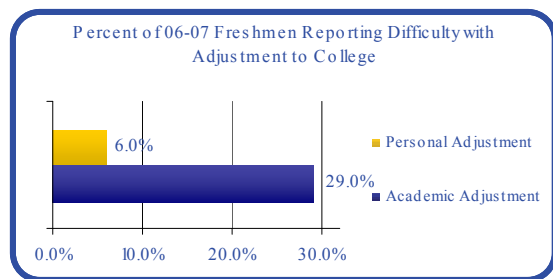
This edition of the “Student Survey Brief” draws from the UCR 2007 First Year Experiences (FYE) survey on college adjustment for freshmen. Two questions are addressed here. Do UCR students in general have an easy or difficult experience adjusting to college? Are adjustment difficulties more prevalent in some groups of students?

The reports are meant to raise more questions than they answer. Contact us with follow-up questions at: [guadalupe.anaya@ucr.edu](mailto:guadalupe.anaya@ucr.edu) and [junelyn.peeples@ucr.edu](mailto:junelyn.peeples@ucr.edu).

## ADJUSTMENT TO COLLEGE

The first year of college is very important for positive adjustment. Students must select a major and courses from among a great variety of academic options. They may find college academic work more difficult and a greater amount of it in comparison to high school. They are likely to establish new relationships and living arrangements and face homesickness.

The FYE survey asked several questions regarding experiences with college adjustment. The response options are on a four point scale: 1 = Very difficult, 2 = Difficult, 3 = Easy, and 4 = Very easy. The first two response options are combined and reported as “difficult adjustment.” The figure below illustrates the proportion indicating difficulty with adjustment. More freshmen (29%) experience diffi-



culty with academic adjustment than with personal adjustment (6%). These figures provide a reference point for comparing the experiences of different student groups.

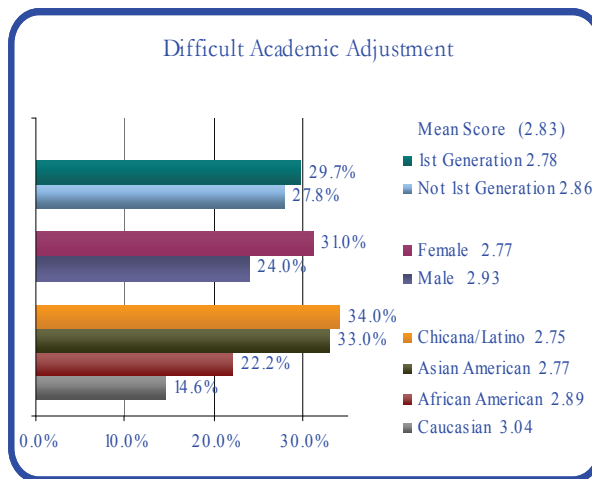
## ADJUSTMENT FOR DIFFERENT STUDENT GROUPS

### DIVERSITY AT UCR

The freshman class at UCR is among the most diverse at any public research university in the country; it is made up of approximately 42% Asian American, 30% Chicana/Latino, and 8% African American students. Nationally, public universities enroll 14%, 8%, and 7% in these various categories

respectively. A fairly large group (27%) of 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students (parents have no college education\*) also contributes to UCR’s diversity; the national figure is 18%. Do more underrepresented and 1<sup>st</sup> generation students face difficult academic and social adjustment challenges at UCR?

### NO GREATER ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> GENERATION STUDENTS



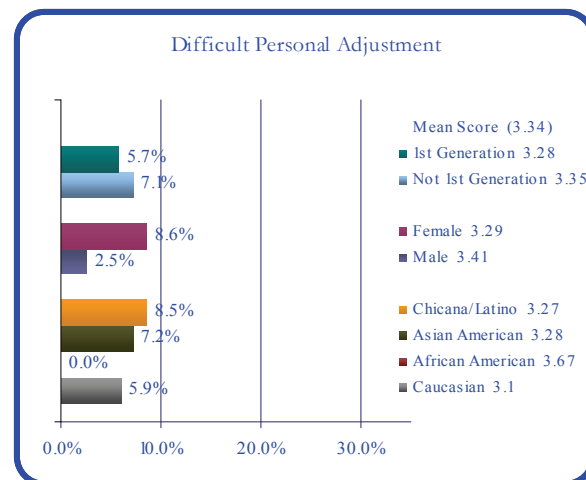
The graph above illustrates that 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students are not more likely to have difficulty with academic adjustment than their peers whose parents attended college -- 30% versus 27%. (The demographic distribution of survey participants is comparable to the distribution within the freshman class. Statistically significant between-group differences in mean scores guide the comparisons in this brief.)

### MORE WOMEN, CHICANA/LATINO\*\*, AND ASIAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

Freshmen who report difficulties are more likely to be female (31%), Chicana/Latino (34%), and Asian American (33%) in comparison to men (24%), African American (22%), and Caucasian students (15%). A comparison of means indicates that the differences between female and male students and between racial/ethnic groups of freshmen are statistically significant.

## PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

While more students in certain groups are likely to report academic adjustment difficulties, this appears to be much less true with respect to personal adjustment. The figure below shows that 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students do not experience greater personal adjustment difficulties than their peers (6% versus 9%). And differences across race and ethnic categories are also much less than those found in regard to academic adjustment. The one stand out is that fewer male students (3%) report difficulties in comparison to females (9%). The average personal adjustment score for survey participants is 3.34. As



with the analysis of academic adjustment, the personal adjustment difference between female and male students is statistically significant.

The data presented here show that during the first year of college academic adjustment is challenging for many students. However, 1<sup>st</sup> generation college students are not more likely to experience difficulties than their peers. Female students, and Chicana/Latino, and Asian American freshmen report greater academic adjustment difficulties than their peers. Men are less likely to report personal adjustment difficulties than women.