

**Student Residence and the Relationship to Engagement and Satisfaction:  
Evidence from the UC Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES 2004) and the  
Your First College Year Survey (YFCY 2004)**

Data from the UC Undergraduate Experiences Survey (UCUES, 2004) and the Your First College Year Survey (YFCY, 2004) were used to examine the relationship between student perceptions of their academic experience and residence (on campus and commuter students) during the first college year. Both surveys have questions pertaining to the primary residence of the student during the past year. The YFCY is administered to first year freshmen entering directly from high school in the final weeks of the spring quarter. The UCUES analyses include data for both new (first time freshmen and transfers) and continuing students. These surveys provided evidence to compare the academic, social, behavioral, and affective outcomes of students with respect to primary residence.

In general, students who live on campus tend to be more engaged in campus life, (as indicated by lower scores on the "Non Academic Commitments" scale, although both groups of first year students tend to show the same levels of "Academic Disengagement"). On-campus students indicate greater access and use of campus services, feel less isolated from the university, and tend to indicate higher levels of satisfaction with their overall college experience compared to students who reside in private homes or apartments. There does not appear to be a significant difference in the amount of interaction with faculty, or involvement with research projects. Although

students living on campus tend to find faculty more accessible, both groups tended to rate the quality of instruction similarly.

With respect to academic performance, students living on-campus achieved higher grades, particularly among first year students. Both on- and off-campus groupings report similar levels of difficulty in maintaining a high GPA with on-campus residents reporting somewhat less difficulty. In general, living on campus is associated with higher levels of involvement and satisfaction with the university. It appears that the on-campus residents spend somewhat more time involved in other campus pursuits and co-curricular activities. The first year students who report living on campus report greater success in adjusting to campus life and achieve somewhat higher grades while maintaining more active social life compared to first year commuter students.

### **The Value of Residential Life to the UC Experience**

Data from the UCUES and the YFCY indicate a generally positive relationship between living on -campus and several measures such as perceived feelings of isolation, first year grades, making friends, and other indicators. The data suggest that being a resident at UCSD during your first college year at UCSD has positive effects. In particular, students living on-campus during their first or second college year were more likely to indicate satisfaction with the campus experience, social life, and higher levels integration with campus life. When analyzed for first year students, on-campus students tended to spend more time studying, have higher GPA's and complete more units than first year students living off-campus. On a variety of factor scales that included

Academic Motivation, Civic Engagement, Cognitive Development, Academic Engagement, Physical Health and Activity, and Satisfaction with Student Services first year on campus residents scored significantly higher than their non-resident counterparts. On-campus residents indicated a “greater sense of belonging” at a significantly higher rate than students living off-campus. First year students living on campus also reported a greater ability to make close friends with other students, and participate in campus activities such as intramural sports at significantly higher rates than first year students living off-campus.