

Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation

UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS SURVEY 2007

November, 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each Fall Semester USU offers a University Connections courses for incoming freshmen. The Connections course starts on the Wednesday before the semester begins and students attend Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and half day on Saturday. They then meet three more times in the first three weeks of the semester, each session is one hour. The course was completed by September 14th. The objective of the course is to “provide an environment of challenge and support to help new students make a successful transition to USU. Class curriculum and activities provide an environment wherein students become familiar with the broad academic, social, and cultural opportunities offered by USU and the surrounding community” (USU Catalog).

The Connections Survey was designed to assess how helpful the Connections course was, and evaluate satisfaction with various components of the course. Several demographic questions were also asked. A total of 1,496 students were enrolled in the course and 1,236 students responded to the survey yielding a return rate of 82.6%. As this was the first time for Blackboard and Connections, there were system problems that created confusion for many instructors and students. This affected the number of respondents.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

- 62.8% of the respondents were female.
- 74.6% of the respondents graduated from a high school in Utah
- 63.5% of the respondents were living on campus.
- 95.6% of the respondents were between the ages of 17 and 19.
- When asked the difficulty of their Fall Semester courses 48.5% of the respondents indicated that their courses were moderately difficult and 8.7% said they were very difficult.

THE CONNECTIONS COURSE WAS PERCEIVED AS BEING MOST USEFUL IN HELPING STUDENTS TO:

- Learn about University Policies (90.7%).
- Navigate the physical layout of the campus (90.7%).

OVERALL ATTITUDES ABOUT CONNECTIONS

- 83.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they received useful information in the Connections course.
- 68.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the Connections course to other students.

SELECTED FINDINGS

- 85.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Convocations speaker enriched the literature assignment.
- 83.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that because of the course they were more informed about campus events.
- 79.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Connections course helped ease their transition to USU.
- 75.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they were glad there were evening activities for Connections students.
- 74.6% agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the Connections experience.
- 73.9% agreed or strongly agreed that the SAAVI presentation provided useful information.
- 71.1% agreed or strongly agreed that the technology workshop provided useful information.
- 70.8% agreed or strongly agreed that the peer mentor assistance was important to the course.

2007 UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS SURVEY

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INTRODUCTION

Each Fall Semester USU offers a University Connections courses for incoming freshmen. The Connections course starts on the Wednesday before the semester begins and students attend Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and half day on Saturday. The students then meet once a week for the first three weeks of the semester, each session is one hour. The course was completed by September 14th. The University Connections course was designed to give students an early introduction to the expectations and challenges of university life; to the academic, geographic, social/communal, and procedural maps of the University. Connections 2007 also emphasized some of the learning skills students would need to achieve their university goals successfully. The course explored problems common in the transition of students from high school to university life. The course provided an orientation to the breadth of University services and resources, to basic policies and procedures governing the conduct of staff and students, and to the physical layout of the USU campus and the Cache County community.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate student opinion in the 60 sections of the Connections course. The survey consisted of three parts: survey demographics, a section of questions evaluating students' experiences with the course, and a section asking students how useful Connections was in helping them with various goals. The Connections Survey was placed on Blackboard Vista and all students were asked to submit their responses by September 28, 2007. There were also five open ended questions which asked students to make comments and give more specific feedback about their impressions of the course. These questions will be addressed in a separate report.

A total of 1,496 students were enrolled in the Connections course during Fall Semester of 2007 and a total of 1,236 students responded to the course survey. This is a response rate of 82.6%. A copy of the Connections Survey appears as Appendix A.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS (See Table 1)

Of the 1,236 respondents, 62.8% were female and 37.2% were male. A majority of respondents (74.6%) graduated from a Utah high school. Sixty-four percent of the respondents lived on campus. Ninety-six percent of the respondents were between the ages of 17 and 19.

When the students were asked to report their high school grade point average, a majority of respondents (73.9%) said they had a GPA of 3.5 to 4.0. They were then asked to predict their Fall Semester grade point average - 58.1% of the respondents anticipated getting between a 3.5 to a 4.0 GPA. Students were asked how difficult their Fall Semester courses had been - a plurality of respondents (48.5%) said that they were moderately difficult while 8.7% said they were very difficult.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Gender: **Male** **Female**
 37.2% 62.8%

Graduated from (High School Location):

Utah High School	Non-Utah High School
74.6%	25.4%

Residence: **On Campus** **Off Campus**
 63.5% 36.5%

Age: **17-19 years** **20-22 years** **More than 22 years old**
 95.6% 3.5% 0.9%

High School GPA:

4.00 - 3.50	3.49 - 3.0	2.99 - 2.5	2.49 - 2.0	Less than 2.0
73.9%	20.9%	3.7%	1.3%	0.2%

Predicted GPA for Fall Semester:

4.00 - 3.50	3.49 - 3.0	2.99 - 2.5	2.49 - 2.0	Less than 2.0
58.1%	36.0%	5.0%	0.8%	0.1%

Before college, I expected my first semester classes to be:

Not Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult
1.8%	27.0%	52.8%	18.4%

How difficult have your Fall Semester courses been?

Not Difficult	Somewhat Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult
4.5%	38.3%	48.5%	8.7%

FINDINGS: THE USEFULNESS OF THE CONNECTIONS COURSE (See Table 2)

Students were asked if they agreed or disagreed with ten statements about how useful the Connections course was in helping them with various objectives. They were to rate each statement as Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. Results are discussed in descending order of responses based on the percentage of respondents agreeing plus strongly agreeing with the statement.

Ninety-one percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Connections was useful in helping them to learn more about university policies. Only 1.3% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Ninety-one percent of the respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that Connections was useful in helping them navigate the physical layout of the campus. Approximately 3% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Connections was useful to 88.7% of the respondents in helping them to get settled before school started, only 3.6% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Approximately 87% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the course was useful in helping them learn about opportunities to be involved on campus, 2.4 % disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Connections was helpful in making friends with other new students, 7.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Sixty-seven percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Connections was useful in helping them gain a sense of what is expected in a college class. Almost 12% of the respondents disagreed or strong disagree that it helped them with college class expectations. Approximately 67% of the respondents said Connections helped them understand what there was to do in Logan, 9.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-one percent of the respondents reported that Connections helped them meet faculty and staff, 10.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When it came to obtaining valuable academic skills and techniques from the Connections course, 67.2% agreed or strongly agreed that Connections provided these skills and techniques. Approximately 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they obtain these skills and techniques from the Connections course. Approximately 57% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Connections help them learn more about a possible major, while 13.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 2. Connections was useful in helping me to:					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Learn about University Policies.	24.9%	65.8%	8.0%	1.1%	0.2%
Navigate the physical layout of the campus.	44.5%	46.2%	6.5%	2.3%	0.5%
Get settled before school started.	40.4%	48.3%	7.7%	3.2%	0.4%
Learn about opportunities to be involved on campus.	25.4%	61.3%	11.0%	1.9%	0.5%
Make Friends with other new students.	26.6%	47.9%	17.8%	6.1%	1.5%
Gain a sense of what is expected in a college class.	17.9%	49.3%	21.3%	9.0%	2.5%
Understand what there is to do in Logan.	18.1%	48.7%	23.5%	8.1%	1.5%
Meet faculty and staff.	13.5%	47.8%	27.9%	9.5%	1.4%
Obtain valuable academic skills and techniques.	14.7%	45.1%	27.5%	10.1%	2.5%
Learn more about a possible major.	15.8%	41.4%	29.0%	11.6%	2.1%

FINDINGS: STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES WITH THE CONNECTIONS COURSE (See Table 3)

The survey included questions requiring students to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements about Connections in general as it related to course content and assignments. Results are discussed in descending order of responses based on the percentage of respondents agreeing plus strongly agreeing with the statement.

A majority of respondents (85.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that the Convocations speaker enriched the literature assignment. Only 2.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if students received useful information in the course, 83.8% agreed or strongly agreed, while 4.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Almost 84% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that because of the course they were more informed about campus events, 4.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Nearly 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Connections course helped ease their transition to USU, while 6.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said they were glad there were evening activities for Connections students. Four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Nearly three quarters of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the Connections experience, while 7.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-four percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the SAAVI presentation provided useful information about rape/sexual assault/sexual harassment resources. Six percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. A majority of respondents (71.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that the technology workshop provided useful information, while 5.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Approximately 71% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the peer mentor assistance was important to the course. Seven percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Sixty-nine percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Connections Student Manual was user friendly. Eight percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents said they would recommend the Connections course to other students, while 9.8% said they would not. Sixty-six percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the course enabled them to feel more comfortable contacting professors. Ten percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that because of the library workshop they were more likely to ask for assistance from the library staff. Ten percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-four percent of the respondents said that the Kent Concert Hall Connections Opening helped them to feel welcome at USU. Almost 7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-four percent indicated that the "Welcome to USU Fair" provided information that was helpful in connecting them to USU and the local community. Five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Approximately 60% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Connections course assignments helped them learn more about what is expected of a college student, while 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that making friends at USU was easier because of Connections. Thirteen percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if the course helped them to learn how to manage their time more effectively, 49.6% agreed or strongly agreed, while 18.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Forty-six percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the "Complications" literature assignment helped them understand what would be required in a college course. Twenty-four percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if they would encourage friends not to attend Connections, only 20% agreed or strongly agreed, while 56.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Table 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The Convocations speaker enriched the literature assignment.	47.5%	38.2%	12.1%	1.9%	0.3%
I received useful information in this course.	24.8%	59.0%	12.0%	3.2%	1.1%
Because of the course I was more informed about campus events.	32.9%	50.8%	12.1%	3.5%	0.7%
The Connections course helped ease my transition to USU.	26.7%	52.9%	14.3%	4.7%	1.4%
I was glad there were evening activities for Connections students.	33.8%	41.4%	20.8%	3.6%	0.4%
I am satisfied with my Connections experience.	24.5%	50.1%	18.1%	5.8%	1.5%
The SAAVI presentation provided useful information about rape/sexual assault/sexual harassment resources.	19.2%	54.7%	20.5%	4.8%	0.7%
The technology workshop provided useful information.	16.1%	55.0%	23.0%	5.2%	0.6%
The peer mentor assistance was important to the course.	23.4%	47.4%	22.1%	5.4%	1.8%
The Connections Student Manual was user friendly.	20.9%	47.9%	23.2%	5.7%	2.3%
I would recommend the Connections course to other students.	24.8%	43.6%	21.8%	7.3%	2.5%
The course enabled me to feel more comfortable contacting professors.	21.0%	44.8%	23.9%	9.1%	1.1%
Because of the library workshop, I am more likely to ask for assistance from the library staff.	16.6%	48.5%	24.8%	9.4%	0.7%
The Kent Concert Hall Connections Opening helped me to feel welcome at USU.	15.7%	48.3%	29.5%	5.7%	0.8%
The "Welcome to USU Fair" provided information that was helpful to me in connecting to USU and the local community.	15.1%	48.6%	31.0%	4.1%	1.1%
The Connections course assignments helped me to learn more about what is expected of a college student.	13.9%	45.7%	23.4%	12.8%	4.2%
Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections.	19.7%	38.6%	28.4%	10.7%	2.7%
The course helped me learn how to manage my time more effectively.	11.2%	38.4%	30.6%	15.4%	3.4%
The "Complications" literature assignment helped me to understand what would be required in a college course.	9.4%	36.6%	29.6%	20.4%	4.0%
I would encourage friends <u>not</u> to attend Connections.	7.3%	12.7%	23.4%	36.6%	20.1%

APPENDIX A

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS SURVEY 2007



Connection Survey

Mark one response to each question.

1. My Connections course instructor is: Select your instructor
2. I am male female
3. I from a Utah High School Non-Utah High School
4. I live on campus off campus
5. I am 17-19 years old 20-22 years old More than 22 years old
6. My high school gpa was:
 4.00-3.50 3.49-3.0 2.99-2.50 2.49-2.00 Less than 2.00
7. What do you predict your grade point average will be at the end of the Fall Semester?
 4.00-3.50 3.49-3.0 2.99-2.50 2.49-2.00 Less than 2.00
8. Before college, I expected my first semester classes to be:
 Not difficult Somewhat difficult Moderately difficult Very difficult
9. How difficult have your Fall Semester courses been?
 Not difficult Somewhat difficult Moderately difficult Very difficult

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

- | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. The Connections courses helped ease my transition to USU. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Making friends at USU was easier because of Connections. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. The "Complications" literature assignment helped me to understand what would be required in a college course. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I received useful information in this course. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. The course enabled me to feel more comfortable contacting my professors. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. I would encourage friends not to attend Connections. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Because of the course I was more informed about campus events. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I am satisfied with my Connections experience. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. The course helped me learn how to manage my time more effectively. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. The SAAVI presentation provided useful information about rape/sexual assault/sexual harassment resources. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. The technology workshop provided useful information. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. The peer mentor assistance was important to the course. | <input type="radio"/> |

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 13. I was glad there were evening activities for Connections students. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. The Connections course assignments helped me to learn more about what is expected of a college student. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. I would recommend the Connections course to other students. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Because of the library workshop, I am more likely to ask for assistance from the library staff. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. The Kent Concert Hall Connections Opening helped me to feel welcome at USU. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. The Convocations speaker enriched the literature assignment. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. The Connections Student Manual was user friendly. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. The "Welcome to USU Fair" provided information that was helpful to me in connecting to USU and the local community. | <input type="radio"/> |

Connections was useful in helping me to:

- | | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. make friends with other new students. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. learn about University polices. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. navigate the physical layout of the campus | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. get settled before school started. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. learn more about a possible major. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. learn about opportunities to be involved on campus. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. understand what there is do to in Logan. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. meet faculty and staff. | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. obtain valuable academic skills and techniques | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. gain a sense of what is expected in a college class | <input type="radio"/> |

Please answer the following questions in the box provided below the question:

1. What aspects of the teaching or content of this course do you feel were especially good?

2. What changes could be made to improve the teaching or the content of this course?

3. Should the required literature reading and assignment be continued as part of the Connections curriculum? Why or why not?

4. How effective was your Connections instructor in helping you to transition to Utah State University? Please explain.

5. What was the primary reason you enrolled in the Connections course?

Submit