The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey is designed to capture a portrait of student characteristics of our incoming first-year (FY) class. This survey was administered early in the fall 2012 semester to students enrolled in English Composition I. There were 1,132 respondents. Of these, 998 (88 percent) were first-time, full-time college students.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is designed to capture the views of FY and senior students on the nature and quality of their undergraduate education. This survey was administered in the spring of 2012 to all FY and senior students. There were 1,149 respondents (805 senior students and 344 FY students).

Together these surveys provide a glimpse of student habits and perceptions as they enter UCO, as they finish their first year, and before they graduate.

**Career Skills**

The top three reasons UCO’s entering FY students reported coming to college all had to do with attaining a job. UCO’s FY entering class rated the following reasons as very important: “to be able to get a better job (89 percent), “to be able to make more money,” (83 percent), and “to get training for a specific career” (83 percent). Although majors may change throughout students’ time here at UCO, their focus does not. According to NSSE data, UCO seniors put just as much emphasis on acquiring career specific skills as they did when they first entered college.
**Education and Career**

By the time UCO students are seniors, many have already started their careers. While about 15 percent of students report they do not know how their undergraduate education will impact their career. These students may be going on to attain a higher degree or may not be confident in what career path they want to pursue. Only 48 percent of UCO seniors report their undergraduate education will help them start their career. Students may need help in defining their career goals earlier in their education and many might need more guidance and help than they previously thought.

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**Could this data be relevant to your work?**

This report highlights several findings that the Office of Institutional Assessment thought might be of interest to you. The Freshman Survey Report and the NSSE data are very rich and can provide many insights into our students and their experiences at UCO. Sometimes the data is much more meaningful if the responses are disaggregated to reveal contrasts or patterns among different categories of students or over time. Please let us know if you want us to create a report for you that reflects your specific interests. If you are unsure how the data could be helpful to you, the Institutional Assessment staff will work with you to clarify the parameters of a useful report. Please call or send us an e-mail; we welcome working with you to use the data to help us understand and improve UCO.

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**Contact us...**

Office of Institutional Assessment

405-974-3342

Cia Verschelden (cverschelden@uco.edu)
Heather Rabalais (hrabalais@uco.edu)
Sarah Combs (scombs3@uco.edu)