

## First Year Survey

Muriel C. Lopez-Wagner  
January 24, 2010

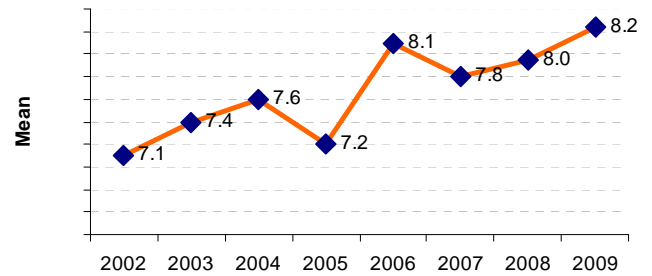
This survey measures the experiences and opinions of First Year students during their first month at Pitzer and focuses on three areas: social responsibility, intercultural understanding, and participation in activities. Of the 256 new First Year students in Fall 2009, 148 (58%) completed the survey in their First Year Seminar classes. This is the first year that students completed the survey online.

Sample	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009
First Year Students	223	242	253	264	256
Survey Participants	162	159	208	195	148
Participation Rate	73%	66%	82%	74%	58%

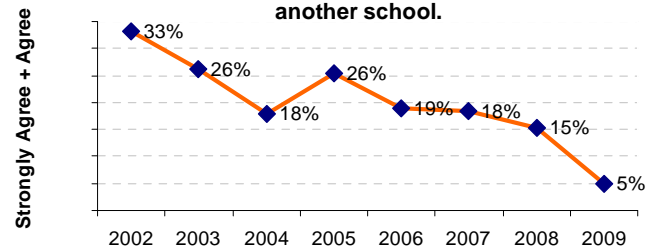
Demographics	2007	2008	2009
African/African American	3%	6%	3%
Asian Pacific Islander	15%	12%	11%
Latino/Hispanic	8%	13%	13%
Native American	0%	1%	1%
Caucasian	68%	65%	66%
Other	6%	5%	7%
Female	54%	65%	68%
Male	46%	35%	32%
First Generation College Student	0%	8%	11%

The graphs indicate that 2009 has the strongest ratings since Pitzer administered the First Year Survey in 2002. With a maximum of 10 as a “perfect fit”, the most recent new First Year students reported an average of 8.2, the strongest perceived “fit” with Pitzer, compared to the average of 7.1 in 2002. Also, only 5% of the latest group of First Year students reported about thinking of transferring to another school which is the lowest percentage of students since 2002.

How good a fit are you with Pitzer?



I am seriously thinking about transferring to another school.



After last year’s presidential election, the highlighted areas in the table below show a significant decrease in the percentage of students who are registered to vote and who find it difficult to tolerate a different political viewpoint.

Social Responsibility (% Strongly Agree + % Agree)	2007	2008	2009
I have capacity to express empathy.			98%
I am aware of my own biases about others.			98%
I understand ethical issues pertaining to community service and research.			94%
I have the skills to recognize assets and needs of communities.			93%
I have the skills to apply social theories to real-life community issues.			92%
Before coming to Pitzer, I volunteered in two or more different community service projects or internships.	89%	91%	91%
One of my college goals is to take courses that will help me develop a deeper sense of the ethical issues involved in socially responsible actions.	81%	86%	88%

Since coming to Pitzer, I engage more frequently in activities that promote environmental protection or conservation (like recycling, composting, using less water, etc.)	70%	65%	72%
I have become more environmentally aware since coming to Pitzer.	73%	71%	71%
I am registered to vote in political elections.	62%	90%	59%
Before coming to Pitzer, I participated in some political action (protest rally, writing to political leaders, etc.) to fight discrimination or to support equal rights.	51%	58%	58%
I find it difficult to speak to other students about their behavior when I see them being destructive to residence hall property.	28%	33%	42%
I find it difficult to speak out in class when I hear someone make statements that I think are discriminatory.	14%	14%	22%
I find it difficult to tolerate people whose political views are very different from my own.	19%	31%	18%
Respecting different viewpoints is difficult here at Pitzer.	11%	9%	11%

The top five popular activities for First Year students are:

- Joined another campus or 5-C organization
- Attended a speaker series
- Gone to the Writing Center for assistance
- Volunteered in a community service project
- Participated in the Outdoor Adventure

In the open-ended comments, the top three “best things” about the new First Years’ experience at Pitzer were 1) community, people, students, acceptance, belonging, 2) great faculty, classes, discussions, and 3) lots of activities, things to do, opportunities. The top three aspects of Pitzer that “need improvement” were 1) more social, activities, transportation service, 2) better food, selection, dining hall, and times, and 3) diversity in ethnicity and perspective.

---

There are no unusual changes between 2008 and 2009 new First Year students’ responses in terms of Intercultural Understanding.

Intercultural Understanding (% Strongly Agree + % Agree)	2007	2008	2009
It would be OK if my roommate or someone else close to me turned out to be gay or lesbian.	92%	95%	97%
I am able to speak sensitively about a culture other than my own.	92%	92%	97%
I find it easy to develop close friendships with people of another culture.	88%	87%	94%
One of my college goals is to take courses that will help me become more knowledgeable about diverse cultures.	78%	81%	87%
I seek out opportunities to interact with people from different cultures.	86%	88%	85%
When I hear the word “diversity,” my first images are about race.	73%	72%	73%
In general, I prefer being with people from my own cultural background.	21%	26%	19%
Because of my socio-economic class background, I feel that I may not fit in well.	9%	10%	8%
Because of my racial/ethnic background, I feel that I may not fit in well at Pitzer.	3%	4%	3%

This section of the report shows detailed summaries of students' responses from all questions in the First Year Survey.

<b>How good a fit are you with Pitzer?</b>					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
"Not a good fit" 1	4				2
2	3			2	
3	3	1	2	4	1
4	8	5	6	4	1
5	13	9	13	3	2
6	11	8	12	14	10
7	31	23	31	37	24
8	37	39	47	40	36
9	33	41	60	59	36
"...perfect fit" 10	14	31	19	27	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Range 1-3	6%	1%	1%	3%	2%
Range 4-6	20%	14%	16%	11%	9%
Range 7-10	73%	85%	83%	86%	89%

<b>I am seriously thinking about transferring to another school.</b>					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	14	5	10	9	2
Agree	25	23	28	21	4
Disagree	54	54	60	69	39
Strongly Disagree	60	75	107	95	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>124</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	25%	18%	19%	15%	5%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	75%	82%	81%	85%	95%

### **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

<b>Before coming to Pitzer, I volunteered in two or more different community service projects or internships.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	118	116	74
Agree	67	62	44
Disagree	18	14	9
Strongly Disagree	4	3	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>129</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	89%	91%	91%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	11%	9%	9%

<b>I am registered to vote in political elections.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	84	137	40
Agree	45	35	35
Disagree	55	6	35
Strongly Disagree	24	14	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>127</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	62%	90%	59%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	38%	10%	41%

<b>One of my college goals is to take courses that will help me develop a deeper sense of the ethical issues involved in socially responsible actions.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	75	77	48
Agree	89	89	66
Disagree	32	23	14
Strongly Disagree	7	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>130</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	81%	86%	88%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	19%	14%	12%

<b>I have become more environmentally aware since coming to Pitzer.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	46	39	34
Agree	104	98	58
Disagree	50	51	35
Strongly Disagree	6	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>130</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	73%	71%	71%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	27%	29%	29%

<b>Since coming to Pitzer, I engage more frequently in activities that promote environmental protection or conservation.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	39	34	26
Agree	106	92	66
Disagree	56	60	30
Strongly Disagree	7	8	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>127</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	70%	65%	72%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	30%	35%	28%

<b>Before coming to Pitzer, I participated in some political action to fight discrimination or to support equal rights.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	39	46	27
Agree	67	66	46
Disagree	74	58	39
Strongly Disagree	27	24	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>125</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	51%	58%	58%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	49%	42%	42%

<b>I find it difficult to speak to other students about their behavior when I see them being destructive to residence hall property.</b>			
	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	10	7	10
Agree	48	56	39
Disagree	118	107	56
Strongly Disagree	28	22	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>116</b>
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	28%	33%	42%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	72%	67%	58%

I find it difficult to tolerate people whose political views are very different from my own.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	6	8	3
Agree	32	53	21
Disagree	140	99	85
Strongly Disagree	27	35	23
Total	205	195	132
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	19%	31%	18%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	81%	69%	82%

I find it difficult to speak out in class when I hear someone make statements that I think are discriminatory.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	4	2	5
Agree	24	25	21
Disagree	119	116	68
Strongly Disagree	60	50	24
Total	207	193	118
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	14%	14%	22%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	86%	86%	78%

Respecting different viewpoints is difficult here at Pitzer	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	1	5	2
Agree	21	13	12
Disagree	106	110	64
Strongly Disagree	76	66	55
Total	204	194	133
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	11%	9%	11%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	89%	91%	89%

The next five questions are new:

I have the skills to apply social theories to real-life community issues.	2009
Strongly Agree	19
Agree	95
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	3
Total	124
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	92%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	8%

I have the skills to recognize assets and needs of communities.	2009
Strongly Agree	21
Agree	90
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	1
Total	120
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	93%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	8%

I understand ethical issues pertaining to community service and research.	2009
Strongly Agree	27
Agree	92
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	127
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	94%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	6%

I have capacity to express empathy.	2009
Strongly Agree	61
Agree	73
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	137
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	98%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	2%

I am aware of my own biases about others.	2009
Strongly Agree	40
Agree	91
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0
Total	134
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	98%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	2%

#### INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

It would be OK if my roommate or someone else close to me turned out to be gay or lesbian.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	118	139	75
Agree	74	45	54
Disagree	13	7	3
Strongly Disagree	3	2	1
Total	208	193	133
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	92%	95%	97%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	8%	5%	3%

I am able to speak sensitively about a culture other than my own.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	77	79	41
Agree	114	97	84
Disagree	14	15	3
Strongly Disagree	2	1	1
Total	207	192	129
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	92%	92%	97%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	8%	8%	3%

I seek out opportunities to interact with people from different cultures.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	50	45	31
Agree	127	127	74
Disagree	29	21	17
Strongly Disagree		2	2
Total	206	195	124
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	86%	88%	85%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	14%	12%	15%

I find it easy to develop close friendships with people of another culture.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	78	73	36
Agree	102	97	79
Disagree	22	22	6
Strongly Disagree	3	3	1
Total	205	195	122
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	88%	87%	94%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	12%	13%	6%

One of my college goals is to take courses that will help me become more knowledgeable about diverse cultures.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	64	67	44
Agree	97	91	67
Disagree	40	34	15
Strongly Disagree	6	2	2
Total	207	194	128
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	78%	81%	87%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	22%	19%	13%

When I hear the word "diversity," my first images are about race.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	37	36	15
Agree	114	103	83
Disagree	51	46	33
Strongly Disagree	6	9	3
Total	208	194	134
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	73%	72%	73%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	27%	28%	27%

In general, I prefer being with people from my own cultural background	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	1	2	3
Agree	42	46	20
Disagree	129	100	69
Strongly Disagree	31	40	29
Total	203	188	121
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	21%	26%	19%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	79%	74%	81%

Because of my socio-economic class background, I feel that I may not fit in well.	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	2	2	0
Agree	17	17	11
Disagree	94	98	58
Strongly Disagree	94	78	65
Total	207	195	134
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	9%	10%	8%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	91%	90%	92%

Because of my racial/ethnic background, I feel that I may not fit in well	2007	2008	2009
Strongly Agree	4	1	1
Agree	3	6	3
Disagree	87	79	53
Strongly Disagree	113	108	77
Total	207	194	134
% Strongly Agree + % Agree	3%	4%	3%
% Disagree + % Strongly Disagree	97%	96%	97%

PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES					
Which of the following have you done so far at Pitzer?	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009
Joined another campus or 5-C organization	154	148	139	108	87
Attended a speaker series					85
Gone to the Writing Center for assistance					61
Volunteered in a community service project	62	94	57	72	55
Participated in the Outdoor Adventure					47
Joined an environmental club or organization			57	36	30
Joined one of the campus religious organizations	51	36	25	21	29
Attended an exhibition in the art galleries					29
Attend student senate or hall council meetings regularly	20	29	29	15	17
Joined Jumpstart					10
Became a student member of a faculty committee	13	2	8	5	1

Note: This question on Participation in Activities was not asked in 2006. New activities were added in 2009.