

Results from the 2007 Survey of Oberlin Parents

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During spring semester 2007, a sample of parents of Oberlin College students was surveyed. This is the third time we have participated in this survey with twenty or so other selective private colleges and universities.¹ The purpose is to gauge parent satisfaction with a number of activities and services, determine the extent to which parents are informed about campus life, what they worry about and to better understand how families pay for an Oberlin education. This report provides a brief summary of these major components and should be useful to a number of offices on campus. For comparison purposes the other institutions are grouped by those that are co-educational, women's colleges and universities. The areas in which Oberlin parents differ that are highlighted in this report refer primarily to comparisons with the co-ed colleges.

Parent Satisfaction

As we have found with student surveys, overall parent satisfaction has increased over the three administrations of this survey both in absolute and relative terms.

Satisfaction with undergrad education	Institution			
	Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
very dissatisfied	0.0%	1.3%	1.6%	1.7%
generally dissatisfied	0.5%	1.5%	2.2%	1.8%
ambivalent	3.8%	3.7%	4.2%	4.0%
generally satisfied	36.0%	31.4%	33.7%	34.9%
very satisfied	59.7%	62.1%	58.4%	57.6%

Encourage a high school senior like your child to attend?	Institution			
	Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
definitely not	0.5%	0.9%	1.5%	0.8%
probably not	3.2%	2.6%	3.2%	2.7%
maybe	7.7%	6.3%	8.1%	6.4%
probably would	18.1%	16.9%	21.3%	17.7%
definitely would	70.6%	73.4%	65.9%	72.3%

As we drill down into specific areas we see that satisfaction levels are relatively high though in the "Academic Experience" category Oberlin parents are less satisfied with academic assistance services (tutoring for example), and research opportunities for their student. Because the response "don't know" can at times be illuminating, those

¹ We also participated in 1997 and 2002. This year the survey was administered via the web. However, Oberlin does not have reliable e-mail addresses for parents so the link was sent as part of the letter announcing the survey. This hybrid approach likely contributed to the low response rate of 24% from the 950 sampled. Therefore caution should be used when reviewing and interpreting these results.

percentages are reported in the following table but the satisfaction responses have been re-calibrated to treat “don’t know” responses as missing. Therefore these tables provide us with proportionate responses for those who indeed have an opinion while allowing us to note the percentage of parents who do not know enough to respond. Note for example the high percentage in that category under research opportunities.

Academic Experience		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
instruction	very dissatisfied	0.0%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
	genl dissatisfied	1.9%	1.5%	1.4%	2.2%
	genl satisfied	37.8%	31.7%	31.2%	38.6%
	very satisfied	60.3%	66.1%	66.9%	58.4%
	don't know	5.9%	5.5%	6.3%	6.8%
emphasis on undergrad education	very dissatisfied	0.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.9%
	genl dissatisfied	0.5%	0.7%	0.7%	2.4%
	genl satisfied	14.4%	16.6%	19.3%	32.4%
	very satisfied	85.2%	82.1%	79.4%	64.3%
	don't know	5.4%	4.3%	5.8%	7.1%
academic advising	very dissatisfied	2.0%	3.9%	3.9%	4.9%
	genl dissatisfied	15.6%	13.8%	10.4%	15.0%
	genl satisfied	54.3%	45.3%	43.2%	44.6%
	very satisfied	28.1%	37.0%	42.5%	35.6%
	don't know	10.0%	15.5%	11.5%	12.0%
academic assistance	very dissatisfied	3.1%	1.6%	2.2%	2.7%
	genl dissatisfied	11.2%	6.2%	6.5%	10.3%
	genl satisfied	43.9%	41.6%	40.2%	47.2%
	very satisfied	41.8%	50.6%	51.0%	39.8%
	don't know	55.7%	47.7%	43.6%	43.2%
research opportunities	very dissatisfied	2.7%	1.7%	2.2%	1.9%
	genl dissatisfied	5.5%	7.6%	8.5%	9.1%
	genl satisfied	56.2%	37.0%	36.1%	37.4%
	very satisfied	35.6%	53.7%	53.2%	51.5%
	don't know	66.8%	54.4%	52.9%	47.0%
faculty contact	very dissatisfied	0.0%	1.5%	1.8%	2.1%
	genl dissatisfied	4.7%	3.5%	3.2%	7.2%
	genl satisfied	40.6%	29.1%	30.0%	42.3%
	very satisfied	54.7%	65.9%	65.0%	48.3%
	don't know	13.1%	12.9%	13.7%	17.0%

In campus life areas, Oberlin parents are slightly more satisfied with security issues and social life.

Campus Life		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
social life	very dissatisfied	1.0%	1.3%	3.9%	1.7%
	genl dissatisfied	4.0%	5.8%	12.8%	5.8%
	genl satisfied	40.1%	45.4%	49.2%	46.0%
	very satisfied	55.0%	47.5%	34.1%	46.6%
	don't know	8.6%	6.6%	8.5%	7.2%
sense of community	very dissatisfied	0.5%	1.1%	2.2%	1.5%
	genl dissatisfied	3.9%	4.5%	6.8%	5.4%
	genl satisfied	36.9%	33.2%	38.2%	39.6%
	very satisfied	58.7%	61.2%	52.9%	53.5%
	don't know	7.2%	7.8%	7.6%	8.9%
child's safety	very dissatisfied	0.0%	2.2%	0.6%	1.1%
	genl dissatisfied	1.0%	4.1%	1.5%	2.9%
	genl satisfied	35.9%	36.9%	35.0%	49.7%
	very satisfied	63.1%	56.7%	63.0%	46.3%
	don't know	6.8%	4.7%	5.0%	5.2%
intellectual atmosphere	very dissatisfied	0.5%	1.1%	1.0%	0.9%
	genl dissatisfied	2.0%	3.2%	3.2%	3.0%
	genl satisfied	28.6%	28.7%	34.6%	36.1%
	very satisfied	68.9%	67.0%	61.3%	60.1%
	don't know	11.3%	13.1%	15.3%	14.4%
racial diversity	very dissatisfied	0.5%	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%
	genl dissatisfied	6.7%	6.5%	3.2%	4.4%
	genl satisfied	40.9%	40.7%	33.4%	42.8%
	very satisfied	51.8%	51.3%	62.2%	51.6%
	don't know	13.1%	12.2%	9.0%	12.8%

In the following table there is less awareness of several areas as represented by the “don’t know” response and lower levels of satisfaction with student housing, student health and counseling services. This is consistent with previous surveys. Oberlin parents are more satisfied however with the financial aid award.

Campus Services and Facilities		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
student housing	very dissatisfied	5.0%	3.7%	2.5%	3.8%
	generally dissatisfied	14.9%	10.6%	8.4%	11.2%
	generally satisfied	60.6%	50.8%	44.3%	51.2%
	very satisfied	19.5%	34.9%	44.8%	33.9%
	don't know	0.5%	0.5%	1.1%	1.2%
career counseling	very dissatisfied	4.5%	5.4%	5.4%	4.8%
	generally dissatisfied	19.7%	18.1%	15.4%	17.5%
	generally satisfied	56.1%	46.7%	45.7%	47.9%
	very satisfied	19.7%	29.8%	33.5%	29.7%
	don't know	70.1%	53.6%	50.1%	45.8%

Campus Services and Facilities		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
campus police	very dissatisfied	1.2%	3.1%	1.6%	1.9%
	generally dissatisfied	4.8%	6.5%	2.8%	4.8%
	generally satisfied	61.9%	54.5%	43.2%	55.6%
	very satisfied	32.1%	35.9%	52.4%	37.6%
	don't know	61.6%	48.6%	37.6%	42.4%
student health services	very dissatisfied	6.3%	2.3%	2.8%	2.8%
	generally dissatisfied	14.7%	9.2%	9.8%	8.9%
	generally satisfied	53.8%	51.1%	47.1%	50.1%
	very satisfied	25.2%	37.3%	40.3%	38.3%
	don't know	35.3%	22.1%	21.5%	21.2%
student counseling services	very dissatisfied	11.3%	4.3%	5.7%	4.5%
	generally dissatisfied	11.3%	11.3%	11.4%	10.6%
	generally satisfied	47.2%	45.6%	41.9%	48.7%
	very satisfied	30.2%	38.8%	40.9%	36.2%
	don't know	76.0%	74.5%	65.3%	75.4%
financial aid office	very dissatisfied	2.0%	3.3%	3.7%	4.9%
	generally dissatisfied	5.3%	6.9%	10.9%	11.1%
	generally satisfied	39.1%	37.3%	40.9%	41.7%
	very satisfied	53.6%	52.5%	44.5%	42.2%
	don't know	31.7%	46.1%	32.2%	41.9%
financial aid award	very dissatisfied	6.7%	9.5%	10.4%	13.0%
	generally dissatisfied	12.1%	17.3%	17.9%	19.2%
	generally satisfied	40.0%	32.3%	31.0%	32.8%
	very satisfied	41.2%	40.9%	40.7%	34.9%
	don't know	25.0%	43.1%	28.1%	37.6%
financial services	very dissatisfied	1.1%	1.6%	2.7%	2.5%
	generally dissatisfied	3.9%	4.5%	6.5%	6.5%
	generally satisfied	54.2%	48.6%	52.0%	52.6%
	very satisfied	40.8%	45.3%	38.8%	38.4%
	don't know	18.3%	20.1%	20.9%	14.0%
administration responsiveness	very dissatisfied	4.8%	3.0%	4.8%	4.5%
	generally dissatisfied	6.5%	7.3%	10.0%	9.0%
	generally satisfied	47.6%	43.0%	42.9%	47.2%
	very satisfied	41.1%	46.6%	42.3%	39.2%
	don't know	43.6%	35.2%	38.7%	38.4%

Information Sources

Parents were asked to consider all of the information sources they have about Oberlin and evaluate the extent to which they meet their needs. Oberlin parents tend to want more information on resources for parents (such as a Parents Association), residential life and policies, off campus programs, academic support services, and medical and psychological counseling. They are also more likely to respond that they do not need information on athletics. This undoubtedly reflects the fact that a smaller proportion of our students participate in athletics than those at the other institutions.

Information Sources		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
resources for parents	generally satisfied	52.7%	79.8%	54.6%	67.8%
	want more	34.5%	13.4%	32.4%	23.0%
	too much	0.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.6%
	dont need	12.3%	5.1%	11.7%	7.6%
academic life and policies	generally satisfied	68.0%	73.1%	67.1%	69.2%
	want more	29.7%	24.3%	27.7%	27.4%
	too much	0.0%	0.4%	1.1%	0.5%
	dont need	2.3%	2.2%	4.0%	2.9%
residential life and policies	generally satisfied	67.3%	71.4%	69.6%	70.2%
	want more	29.0%	24.8%	23.6%	24.3%
	too much	0.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.5%
	dont need	3.2%	3.3%	6.0%	5.0%
religious life	generally satisfied	50.9%	53.8%	52.8%	56.3%
	want more	13.8%	12.9%	13.8%	14.1%
	too much	0.9%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
	dont need	34.4%	32.8%	32.9%	28.7%
special events on campus	generally satisfied	65.1%	66.4%	54.4%	59.7%
	want more	25.7%	24.0%	34.3%	30.8%
	too much	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%	0.6%
	dont need	8.7%	8.8%	10.6%	8.8%
campus safety	generally satisfied	63.5%	68.1%	65.8%	62.8%
	want more	28.3%	27.2%	27.8%	32.6%
	too much	0.5%	0.5%	0.9%	0.6%
	dont need	7.8%	4.2%	5.5%	4.1%
student organizations	generally satisfied	58.3%	64.4%	60.2%	62.7%
	want more	18.8%	18.2%	20.2%	21.4%
	too much	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%
	dont need	22.9%	17.0%	18.8%	15.3%
athletics	generally satisfied	54.4%	69.4%	57.3%	67.0%
	want more	9.2%	9.9%	12.4%	11.4%
	too much	0.0%	0.7%	0.8%	1.1%
	dont need	36.4%	20.0%	29.6%	20.5%
off-campus programs	generally satisfied	39.3%	50.0%	42.5%	46.3%
	want more	57.1%	44.3%	50.7%	45.9%
	too much	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	0.5%
	dont need	3.7%	5.4%	5.9%	7.3%
financial aid	generally satisfied	58.9%	56.5%	51.9%	49.5%
	want more	20.5%	17.1%	29.7%	27.4%
	too much	0.9%	0.4%	0.8%	0.4%
	dont need	19.6%	26.0%	17.6%	22.7%
financing	generally satisfied	69.6%	69.2%	65.6%	62.5%
	want more	13.8%	11.3%	18.3%	18.5%
	too much	0.9%	0.6%	1.0%	0.6%
	dont need	15.7%	18.9%	15.2%	18.4%

Information Sources		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
academic support services	generally satisfied	46.3%	50.3%	48.5%	46.7%
	want more	32.1%	27.9%	30.8%	32.5%
	too much	0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.5%
	dont need	21.6%	21.3%	20.1%	20.3%
career counseling	generally satisfied	28.4%	33.8%	32.8%	34.2%
	want more	59.2%	57.6%	57.6%	57.4%
	too much	1.4%	0.7%	1.0%	0.7%
	dont need	11.0%	7.9%	8.5%	7.7%
medical/health services	generally satisfied	55.7%	63.2%	59.8%	63.1%
	want more	36.5%	29.0%	31.4%	28.3%
	too much	0.0%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%
	dont need	7.8%	7.3%	8.2%	8.0%
psychological/counseling services	generally satisfied	51.8%	54.6%	50.7%	52.8%
	want more	31.2%	24.8%	29.8%	23.1%
	too much	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
	dont need	17.0%	20.0%	18.9%	23.6%

When asked about their primary sources of information about Oberlin, we note that all schools report the child as the single biggest source. In Oberlin's case, our parents are also more likely to rely on our web pages, and calling someone on campus. Neither Oberlin nor the women's colleges appear to make much use of e-mails to communicate with parents.²

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
talking with my child	not at all	1.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
	some	15.3%	15.9%	10.1%	15.0%
	to a great extent	83.3%	83.5%	89.2%	84.3%
school publications	not at all	6.8%	3.4%	7.4%	5.9%
	some	64.7%	59.5%	61.3%	61.6%
	to a great extent	28.5%	37.1%	31.3%	32.5%
school web pages	not at all	7.2%	11.0%	18.5%	13.8%
	some	46.8%	52.5%	52.1%	53.9%
	to a great extent	45.9%	36.5%	29.4%	32.3%
blogs about the school	not at all	91.0%	85.7%	88.5%	84.5%
	some	7.7%	11.1%	9.4%	12.5%
	to a great extent	1.4%	3.2%	2.1%	3.0%
calling someone at the school	not at all	45.7%	57.2%	58.0%	59.3%
	some	48.9%	39.2%	37.5%	36.5%
	to a great extent	5.4%	3.7%	4.5%	4.2%
emails from the school	not at all	62.1%	37.5%	63.8%	37.8%
	some	31.1%	49.8%	30.6%	48.6%
	to a great extent	6.8%	12.7%	5.6%	13.6%

² Most likely for the same reason we were unable to e-mail parents about this survey.

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
other parents	not at all	74.7%	63.8%	81.8%	65.1%
	some	23.1%	32.0%	16.6%	30.9%
	to a great extent	2.3%	4.2%	1.5%	4.0%

Much has been written about today's "helicopter parents"³, referring to their propensity to hover over their child even after they have left campus. Though this survey doesn't provide direct information on this phenomenon it is striking to see how often parents report being in contact with their child across all of the institutions.

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
contact with child	more than once a day	2.3%	2.4%	6.1%	4.8%
	daily	9.0%	10.3%	20.3%	16.2%
	few times per week	37.8%	42.9%	46.0%	45.5%
	weekly	32.9%	30.6%	19.9%	24.6%
	few times per month	14.9%	11.7%	6.5%	7.7%
	few times per semester	2.7%	1.8%	1.0%	1.0%
	once a semester or less	0.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%

Classes, health and personal relationships are the primary topics of those contacts.

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
classes	almost every time	50.0%	44.3%	42.8%	45.1%
	often	32.0%	36.3%	37.7%	38.2%
	sometimes	17.1%	18.3%	18.3%	15.8%
	rarely/never	0.9%	1.1%	1.2%	0.9%
graduate school plans	almost every time	4.5%	3.5%	5.3%	4.7%
	often	8.1%	15.1%	18.7%	20.3%
	sometimes	42.8%	43.4%	46.5%	45.1%
	rarely/never	44.6%	38.1%	29.6%	29.9%
career	almost every time	4.1%	4.4%	6.9%	6.7%
	often	12.2%	22.6%	28.4%	30.4%
	sometimes	57.5%	53.4%	52.2%	50.5%
	rarely/never	26.2%	19.6%	12.6%	12.4%
finances	almost every time	4.1%	5.6%	7.3%	7.9%
	often	22.0%	20.0%	24.1%	24.9%
	sometimes	57.8%	51.8%	50.8%	49.1%
	rarely/never	16.1%	22.6%	17.7%	18.2%
personal relationships	almost every time	24.9%	22.3%	28.2%	22.7%
	often	38.5%	37.8%	37.5%	38.9%
	sometimes	32.6%	34.8%	30.6%	33.9%
	rarely/never	4.1%	5.1%	3.7%	4.4%

³ See for example <http://www.collegeboard.com/parents/plan/getting-ready/50129.html>

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
physical or emotional health	almost every time	37.6%	34.1%	38.9%	35.3%
	often	33.5%	36.5%	35.8%	36.6%
	sometimes	27.1%	26.6%	23.2%	25.2%
	rarely/never	1.8%	2.8%	2.1%	2.8%

What Parents Worry About

Generally, Oberlin parents worry about more about career choices, underachievement, health issues, academic progress, illegal drugs, exercise and student debt than their counterparts at the other institutions. They are less worried about their child's alcohol use and personal safety.

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
academic stress	not at all	34.4%	35.7%	29.5%	27.7%
	somewhat	54.3%	47.3%	48.8%	48.2%
	quite a bit	7.2%	12.2%	13.4%	16.1%
	a great deal	4.1%	4.8%	8.3%	8.0%
child is lonely or isolated	not at all	66.2%	66.3%	53.1%	64.4%
	somewhat	23.0%	24.4%	31.5%	25.7%
	quite a bit	7.2%	6.0%	9.1%	6.5%
	a great deal	3.6%	3.3%	6.3%	3.4%
child may drink too much	not at all	70.3%	62.0%	80.1%	65.9%
	somewhat	23.9%	29.4%	16.3%	25.9%
	quite a bit	4.1%	5.5%	2.5%	5.2%
	a great deal	1.8%	3.1%	1.1%	3.0%
child not adequately prepared for chosen career	not at all	53.2%	61.4%	61.4%	63.8%
	somewhat	35.9%	29.1%	27.2%	26.1%
	quite a bit	7.7%	6.4%	7.4%	7.0%
	a great deal	3.2%	3.1%	4.0%	3.1%
making the wrong friends	not at all	89.6%	90.1%	86.8%	88.4%
	somewhat	9.0%	8.2%	10.6%	9.5%
	quite a bit	1.4%	1.0%	1.4%	1.4%
	a great deal	0.0%	0.6%	1.2%	0.7%
choosing the wrong career	not at all	74.2%	71.5%	69.7%	69.7%
	somewhat	22.2%	23.5%	23.6%	24.2%
	quite a bit	2.7%	3.5%	4.5%	4.3%
	a great deal	0.9%	1.5%	2.3%	1.8%
is underachieving	not at all	61.4%	72.2%	73.9%	71.1%
	somewhat	30.5%	21.5%	18.9%	21.3%
	quite a bit	5.5%	4.4%	4.7%	5.1%
	a great deal	2.7%	1.9%	2.5%	2.5%

		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
not eating right	not at all	50.9%	51.9%	50.0%	47.0%
	somewhat	35.1%	36.3%	33.5%	38.1%
	quite a bit	9.0%	8.1%	10.8%	10.0%
	a great deal	5.0%	3.7%	5.8%	4.9%
peer pressure	not at all	75.7%	74.3%	71.9%	68.4%
	somewhat	20.7%	21.8%	22.4%	25.8%
	quite a bit	2.7%	3.0%	4.1%	4.1%
	a great deal	0.9%	0.8%	1.7%	1.6%
not maturing as fast as she/he should	not at all	82.8%	84.6%	85.2%	84.5%
	somewhat	13.1%	12.5%	11.6%	12.3%
	quite a bit	2.3%	1.8%	1.9%	2.3%
	a great deal	1.8%	1.0%	1.3%	0.9%
not performing at top of the class	not at all	80.6%	79.7%	79.7%	75.2%
	somewhat	14.4%	16.8%	15.3%	18.9%
	quite a bit	4.5%	2.5%	3.3%	4.2%
	a great deal	0.5%	1.0%	1.7%	1.7%
unable to manage own health issues independently	not at all	55.9%	64.9%	64.7%	64.9%
	somewhat	37.4%	29.9%	28.5%	28.9%
	quite a bit	4.5%	3.9%	4.5%	4.5%
	a great deal	2.3%	1.2%	2.3%	1.7%
not safe from crime	not at all	74.3%	61.6%	58.8%	44.1%
	somewhat	22.5%	31.7%	36.4%	46.7%
	quite a bit	2.7%	4.0%	3.5%	6.5%
	a great deal	0.5%	2.7%	1.3%	2.6%
not studying enough	not at all	62.6%	70.0%	74.2%	68.7%
	somewhat	29.7%	24.5%	20.9%	25.0%
	quite a bit	5.0%	4.1%	3.5%	4.7%
	a great deal	2.7%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%
bad choices about sex	not at all	70.0%	68.0%	73.4%	69.8%
	somewhat	28.2%	28.9%	22.4%	26.6%
	quite a bit	1.4%	2.3%	2.7%	2.5%
	a great deal	0.5%	0.8%	1.5%	1.1%
not attending religious services	not at all	80.6%	80.1%	81.0%	75.4%
	somewhat	17.1%	15.5%	14.5%	18.7%
	quite a bit	2.3%	3.2%	2.6%	4.0%
	a great deal	0.0%	1.2%	1.8%	2.0%
not making adequate academic progress	not at all	70.6%	79.0%	79.7%	76.0%
	somewhat	23.5%	17.2%	15.2%	18.7%
	quite a bit	2.7%	2.7%	3.5%	3.7%
	a great deal	3.2%	1.1%	1.6%	1.7%
may use illegal drugs	not at all	67.1%	78.8%	87.4%	85.3%
	somewhat	27.0%	18.8%	10.7%	13.0%
	quite a bit	4.5%	1.6%	1.0%	1.0%
	a great deal	1.4%	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%

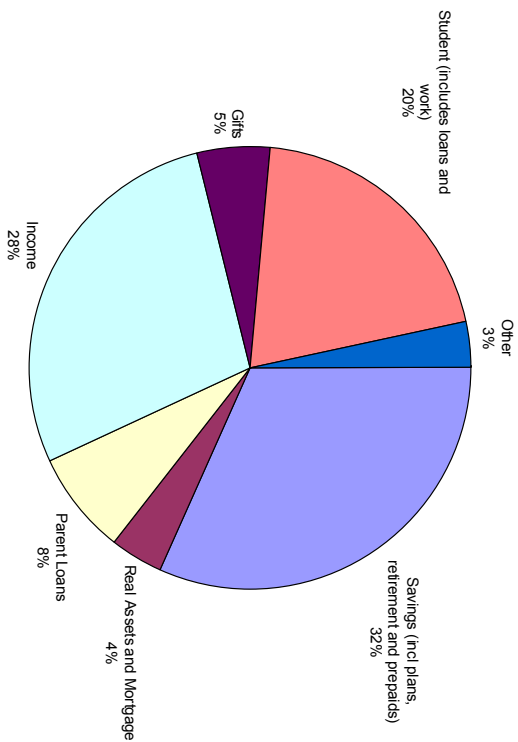
		Institution			
		Oberlin	Co-ed	Womens	Universities
growing away from me	not at all	78.4%	81.1%	80.9%	78.9%
	somewhat	20.7%	16.2%	15.8%	17.8%
	quite a bit	0.5%	2.0%	2.1%	2.3%
	a great deal	0.5%	0.7%	1.1%	1.0%
not getting enough exercise	not at all	48.0%	63.5%	53.1%	58.9%
	somewhat	40.7%	27.1%	33.8%	30.2%
	quite a bit	9.0%	7.2%	9.1%	8.2%
	a great deal	2.3%	2.3%	4.1%	2.7%
will have trouble finding job after graduation	not at all	35.1%	48.0%	43.8%	57.5%
	somewhat	44.6%	36.5%	38.3%	30.9%
	quite a bit	13.1%	10.1%	10.9%	7.6%
	a great deal	7.2%	5.4%	7.0%	4.1%
will not know what career to pursue after graduation	not at all	43.6%	42.5%	44.1%	51.9%
	somewhat	36.8%	40.6%	38.8%	34.7%
	quite a bit	10.0%	11.1%	10.4%	9.0%
	a great deal	9.5%	5.8%	6.7%	4.4%
will graduate with too much debt	not at all	60.2%	66.1%	51.7%	62.2%
	somewhat	24.0%	21.1%	26.5%	21.3%
	quite a bit	8.6%	6.6%	11.1%	8.2%
	a great deal	7.2%	6.2%	10.8%	8.2%

Paying for College

The Parents Survey is the best source of how parents, regardless of aid status, pay their portion of college expenses. There aren't major differences across the institution groups, but predictably there are differences between families who receive financial aid and those that don't. On the following page are three charts showing how Oberlin families in general meet their financial obligations and how aided and non-aided families do.⁴

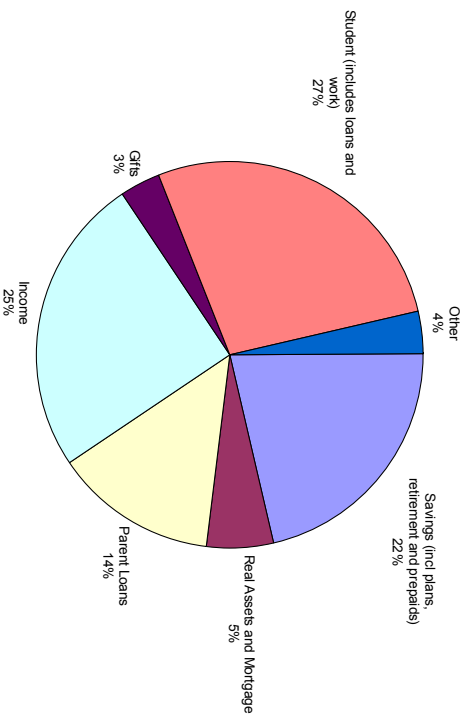
⁴ Parents were asked to estimate using categories of did not use, 1-25%, 26-50% and 51-100%. To create the charts, actual percentages were estimated.

Paying the Family Contribution
Oberlin

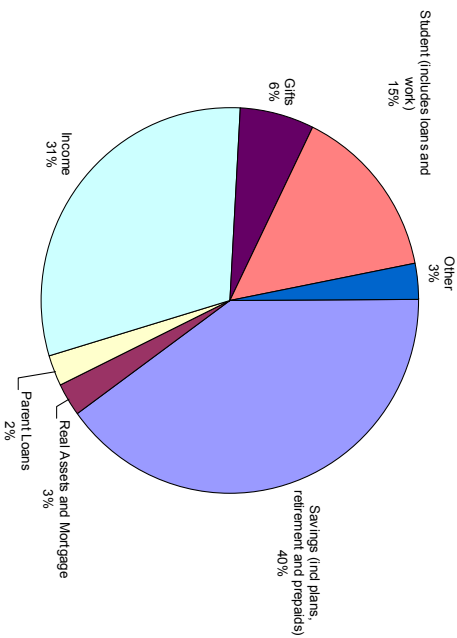


This data comes from the 2007 Parents Survey. Respondents were asked to estimate what portion from a variety of sources they used to meet their financial obligations. The estimates in these charts are derived from the response categories. The top chart represents responses regardless of financial aid status. The bottom two separate those receiving need-based aid from those who are not. Not surprisingly the student pays a larger share for families receiving need-based aid and the parents borrow more. Families not receiving need-based aid rely on savings and income to a greater degree.

Paying the Family Contribution
Oberlin College Need-Based Aid



Paying the Family Contribution
Oberlin College Not Need-Based Aid



The imputed mean income⁵ reported in the Parents survey is higher than in the 2007 Enrolled Student Survey.⁶ At first glance this was a flag that perhaps our respondents were not representative. However, all schools show an increase in the mean income and the differences across institution groups are fairly consistent with the ESS and prior surveys. Though we still must be concerned with representation overall, a more likely explanation for the differences in mean income rests with students estimating incorrectly.

	Parent Survey	ESS Survey
Oberlin	\$171,204	\$143,165
Co-ed	\$203,357	\$155,329
Womens	\$152,997	\$129,121
Universities	\$199,681	\$157,658
Total	\$194,320	\$154,912

When asked what impact paying for college has had on the family, responses from Oberlin parents tend more towards moderate. Surveys in the 90's of both students and parents were consistently more towards considerable or severe. Not surprisingly, we do see differential levels of impact by family income and note that middle income families report the greatest impact.

	impact of paying for college			
	none/slight/na	moderate	considerable	severe
Oberlin	25.7%	41.3%	28.0%	5.0%
Co-ed	26.5%	36.0%	31.7%	5.8%
Womens	19.2%	33.0%	39.4%	8.4%
Universities	24.3%	35.9%	32.5%	7.3%
Total	24.0%	35.6%	33.2%	7.2%

Income Oberlin families	impact of paying for college			
	none/slight/na	moderate	considerable	severe
lt \$25,000	28.5%	31.4%	28.5%	11.7%
\$25,000-\$49,999	17.3%	39.4%	33.8%	9.5%
\$50,000-\$74,999	11.8%	38.4%	39.7%	10.1%
\$75,000-\$99,999	8.3%	34.4%	45.4%	12.0%
\$100,000-\$124,999	9.4%	31.5%	46.8%	12.3%
\$125,000-\$149,000	12.6%	31.9%	44.9%	10.7%
\$150,000-\$174,999	16.2%	34.5%	40.4%	8.9%
\$175,000-\$199,999	16.1%	38.2%	38.4%	7.3%
\$200,000-\$249,000	22.1%	39.6%	32.3%	6.0%
\$250,000-\$300,000	27.7%	42.7%	25.9%	3.7%
\$300,000 or more	52.1%	35.4%	11.6%	0.9%

⁵ Calculated using the weighted mid-point of each category

⁶ http://oberlin.edu/institres/irhome/2007ESS/2007ESS_report.pdf

All schools matched their parent samples with the student samples for the ESS.

The bottom-line assessment of whether the impact has been worth the value of the experience has Oberlin parents more likely responding “yes”.

	has the experience been worth the impact?		
	yes	somewhat	no
Oberlin	85.8%	12.4%	1.8%
Co-ed	79.6%	18.0%	2.4%
Womens	75.2%	21.7%	3.1%
Universities	76.7%	20.6%	2.8%
Total	77.1%	20.2%	2.7%

Overall, these results present a positive picture. Our parents are satisfied with the experiences of their children and feel that they are worth the sometimes significant sacrifices. As in the other two parent surveys however, we should work to improve how we communicate with parents and integrate them appropriately into the campus community. National studies as well as the results from this survey not presented here show that parents are deeply involved from the application process through the years in college. While the appropriateness of that can be debated, providing parents with proper and *accurate* information, and bringing them into the college community in more formal ways are to the benefit of the student, parent and institution.