

# What are students learning at The University of Iowa?



## Student Experience in the Research University (SERU)

### How Students Report Using Their Time

#### Student Experience in the Research University

Student learning in higher education is complex and multidimensional, leading to academic, social, and personal development. To gain a better understanding of student experiences at UI, we administered the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU) survey to all degree-seeking undergraduates during Spring 2018.

Nearly 20% of students responded, and the profile of respondents was broadly representative of the undergraduate population in terms of academic characteristics, college, race/ethnicity, and year of study. This brief report provides an overview of student responses on how they report using their time.

For more information about SERU, visit [uiowa.edu/seru](http://uiowa.edu/seru)

This *SERU Brief* provides an overview of responses to SERU survey questions on how students use their time. Most faculty and academic staff interact with students in a relatively narrow range of activities related to their academic experiences, and we rarely get a window on student life outside those settings. SERU provides a snapshot of how students use their time in addition to the time spent on their academic work.

To explore time use, SERU presents students with a list of academic and non-academic activities and asks them to estimate the average number of hours they spend on each activity in a 7-day week. Response options are in 5-hour intervals (1-5, 6-10, and so on, through 25-30). Students also have the option of selecting “zero” or “more than 30.” For employment, students entered the exact number of hours; in order to compare employment to other time uses, these reported hours have been grouped into the same five-hour intervals.

Figure One shows that on average, most students devote the greatest share of their time to academic work, in class and out of class. The next most frequently reported use of time for students on average was paid employment: Just over 30% reported working zero hours per week, but more than one-third of students reported working more than 15 hours per week.

The median response for attending class and for academic activities outside of class was 11-15 hours per week. For employment, the median response was 10 hours per week. For other activities in Figure One, the median response was 6-10 hours per week.

Figure One: Activities for which median reported time use is 11-15 or 6-10 hours per week

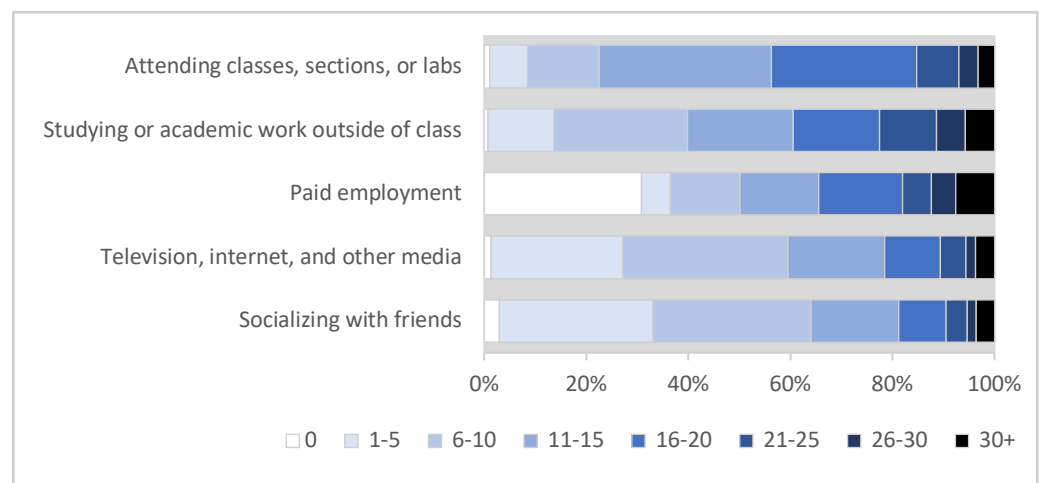


Figure Two: Activities for which median reported time use is 1-5 or zero hours per week

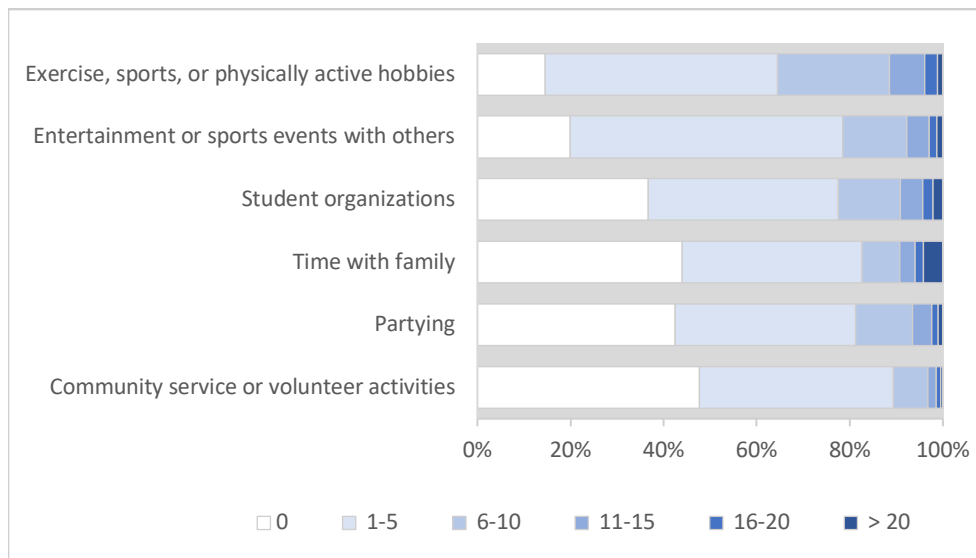


Figure Two presents activities for which the median student response was either zero or 1-5 hours per week, identifying activities for which a greater number of students are likely to report relatively little or no participation. For example, more than half of students report participating in exercise, sports, or physically active hobbies 1-5 hours per week, and 15% report zero hours per week.

Approximately one-third of students report participating in community service, student organizations, or time with family 1-5 hours per week, while a slightly greater number of students report zero hours per week in each of these activities. Over 42% report zero hours of partying per week; 39% report 1-5 hours per week.

When asked to estimate their amount of time sleeping, well over half of students reported an average of 7-8 hours (or more) per weeknight (Figure Three); 39% reported an average of 5-6 hours. Only a few reported higher or lower average levels of sleep per weeknight.

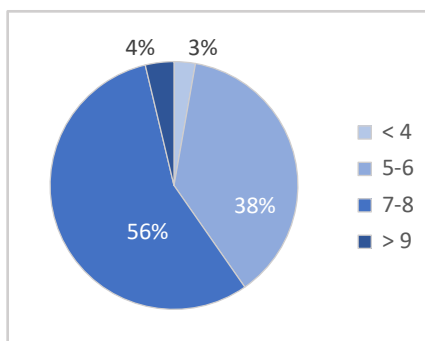
### Continuity and Change

Since the university first administered SERU in 2013, the reported amount of time in class and in academic activities outside of class has remained consistent. These two categories have consistently remained the most frequently reported use of student time by far.

The percentage of students who report having jobs has increased from just over 60% to nearly 70%, and fewer report taking part in exercise, sports, or physically active hobbies. The 42% who report zero hours of partying per week represents an increase from just over one-third in 2013.

These patterns represent the student population as a whole. Individual student experiences may vary significantly, but these patterns help demonstrate how typical particular student experiences are in comparison to experiences of the student population as a whole.

Figure Three: Percent of students indicating average hours of sleep per weeknight



Sample invitation to complete the SERU survey:

TELL US

### Student Voices Make a Difference

The University of Iowa has over 24,000 undergraduates, in more than 100 different fields of study, and we want to know what each of you thinks.

Tell us by taking a survey that lets us hear from all of you – about your classes, your major, life as a student here, and your overall experience at UI. When we hear from you, *everybody* benefits.

### Digging Deeper

This *Brief* provides a snapshot of responses to just a few SERU questions. Other sections of SERU address a wide range of topics, including:

- o satisfaction and interaction with faculty
- o perceptions of majors
- o future plans
- o student financial concerns
- o perceptions of their learning and development
- o climate for diversity
- o community involvement
- o reflections on their most meaningful learning experience at UI

The full survey is online at [uiowa.edu/seru](http://uiowa.edu/seru)

To view student responses to other SERU questions, or to explore responses by college, major, class level, or other demographic variables, contact [seru@uiowa.edu](mailto:seru@uiowa.edu)