

# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

## SERU



**A REVIEW OF STUDENT FINANCIAL CONCERNS AND WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**



**2016 - ADMINISTRATION**

**OFFICE OF ASSESSMENT - SPRING 2017**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

The following report summarizes responses from the Student Experience in the Research University (SERU), administered in spring 2016 to all degree-seeking undergraduates. This edition of the financial concerns and working review updates the previous review produced by the Office of Assessment and presents new findings based on student responses to the 2016 survey.

In order to assist with interpretation, included in some charts is a benchmark group that is comprised of the other large research institutions that administered during the same period. A list of institutions included in this group can be found in the “Overview” section of this report.

This report is organized according to the survey question topic. Below are selected highlights:

### STUDENTS WHO WORK

- Findings from the 2016 administration of SERU continue to confirm previous findings that close to 60% of the student body chooses to work while being enrolled at UI (48% for the comparison group). When examined further, we find that UI students work not only in higher rates but also for more hours (≈3 hours per week) than the comparison institutions.
- Compared to other institutions, the University of Iowa has a larger proportion (20%) of out-of-state students that work.
  - UI out-of-state – 32%
  - Comparison group – 12%

### HOW WORKING EFFECTS STUDENTS

- The majority of UI students report that working does assist in the development of communication skills (69%), confidence (67%), leadership (65%), problem solving skills (96%), and time management (75%).
- While the work undergraduates do is often not related to any academic assignments (68%), students report that working has helped them develop skills that could be useful in the future (60%) and they benefit from the examples and experiences of others (63%).

### ASSOCIATED FINANCIAL CONCERNS

- Student responses show that higher levels of concern about finances, across the board, are negatively associated with cumulative GPA.
- Over half (52%) of students report worrying about their financial situations “often,” which is comparable to the rate reported by students in the benchmark group (55%).
- 72% of UI students report being “satisfied” with the value of the education they are receiving, a 7-point difference from the comparison group (65%)
- 60% of UI students report that given the amount of financial aid they receive the cost of attendance is manageable, slightly higher than the comparison group (57%).

# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY PROJECT AT IOWA (SERU)

## OVERVIEW

The SERU survey instrument provides the University of Iowa with a systematic scan of the undergraduate student experience not easily obtained through other means. The survey is comprised of two sections, a “core” section that contains questions that all participants receive regardless of institution and the “modules” section that is distributed according to the desires of the institution. The “module” section can be comprised of either a pre-crafted module (which is benchmarked) or a wildcard section entirely made up of institution specific questions (which cannot be benchmarked).

Findings from the survey are used to inform policy, address unique institutional questions, and support research endeavors across the campus.

## THE SERU CONSORTIUM

Based at the Center for Studies in Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley, the SERU Consortium is comprised of top tier research-intensive universities interested in learning more about the student experience via a suite of surveys that are administered online.

Participation in the consortium enables the University of Iowa to:

- benchmark UI responses against a peer group of top ranked U.S. research universities
- participate in the construction, implementation, and administration of the survey instrument itself
- create powerful collaborations that shed light on policy relevant research
- participate in a forum designed to share best practices and enhance methods for evidence based management

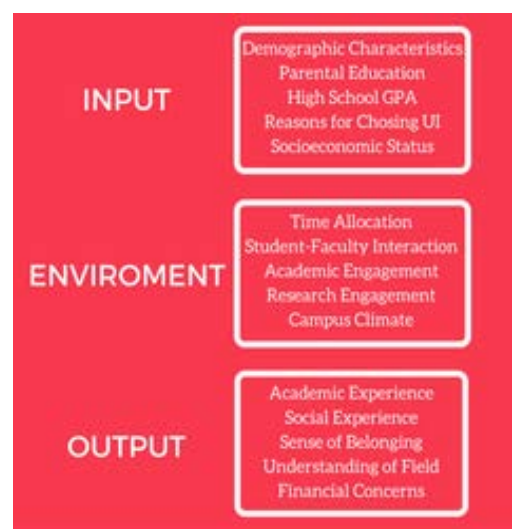
## METHODOLOGY

The SERU survey is administered at The University of Iowa during the spring semester to all degree-seeking undergraduates. Participants are recruited through a variety of campus advertisements and electronic invitations. The SERU Survey employs a modular design in which all students are asked to respond to a set of core questions followed by random assignment to an additional specified module(s).

Topics include: time use, academic engagement (in class and out of class), evaluation of the major, financial concerns, and overall satisfaction, student employment, perspective-taking, and perceived obstacles to academic success.

The SERU Project currently includes 16 major U.S. research universities

- University of California System
- Rutgers University
- University of Florida
- University of Kansas
- University of Michigan
- University of Minnesota
- University of Oregon
- University of Pittsburgh
- University of Texas
- University of Southern California
- University of North Carolina
- University of Virginia
- Texas A&M University
- University of Iowa
- Purdue University
- University of Washington

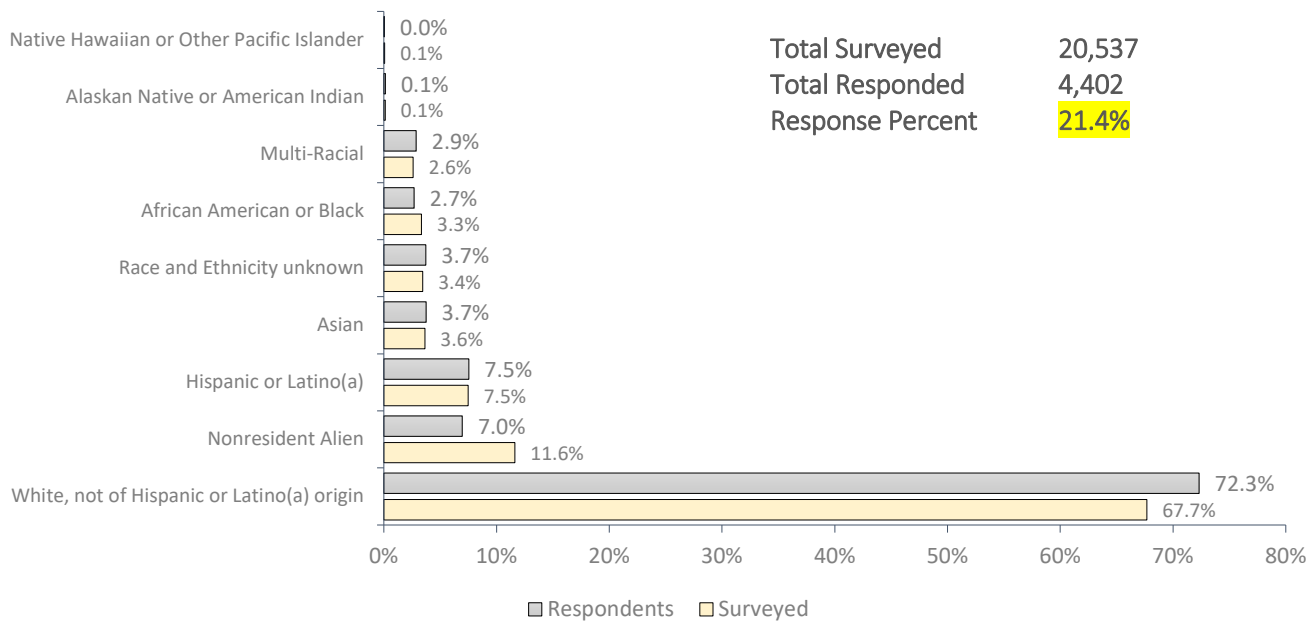


# THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY PROJECT AT IOWA (SERU)

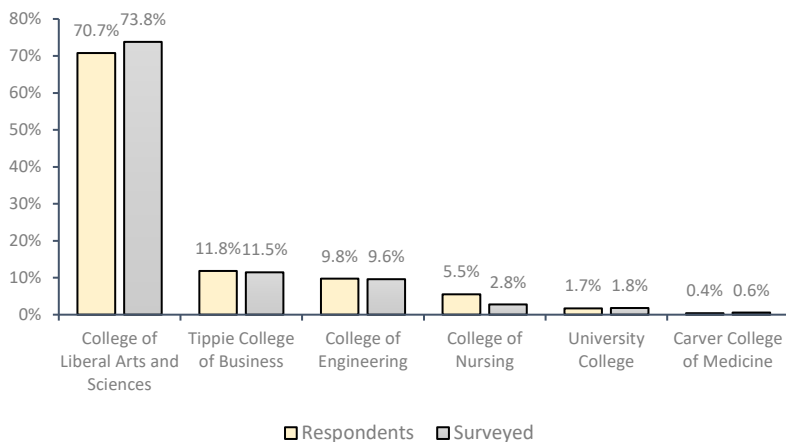
## RESPONSE

The UI campus response rate for the 2016 SERU was 21.4%. When we examine the demographic profile of respondents, we find that the respondent population was generally proportional to the profile of the undergraduate population enrolled during the spring 2016 semester. Students who are identified as international or African American are somewhat underrepresented, while students identified as White are somewhat overrepresented. Also, as typically occurs in many surveys, just over 66% of respondents identified as female and 34% as male, even though they are nearly equally balanced in the undergraduate population.

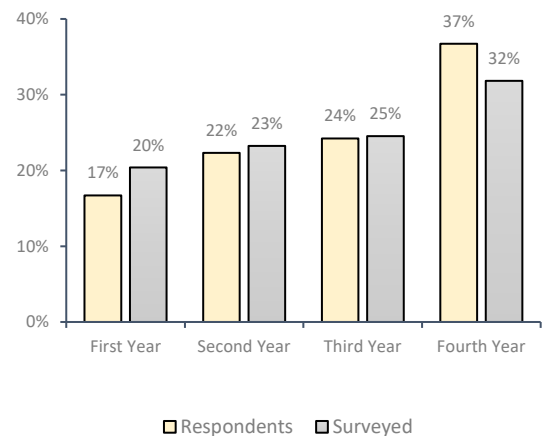
SERU 2016 DISTRIBUTION OF UNDERGRADUATE SURVEYED AND RESPONDENTS BY ETHNICITY



SERU 2016 RESPONSE DISTRIBUTION BY COLLEGIATE INSTITUTION



SERU 2016 RESPONSE DISTRIBUTION BY CLASSIFICATION LEVEL



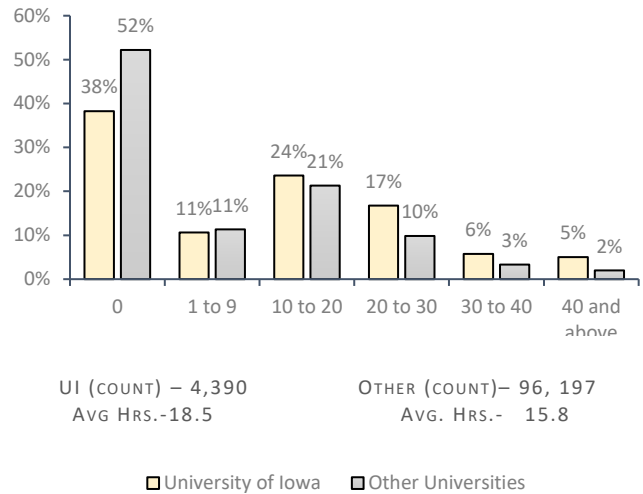
# STUDENT WORKERS

Student responses regarding working behaviors suggests that University of Iowa students maintains a larger proportion of working students than do other institutions. Further, Iowa students that report working do so for more hours than the comparison institutions.

When we examine on-campus vs off-campus working we see that the overall trend continues with UI students reporting working 1.8 hours more on-campus and 3.6 more off campus working hours (on average) than did students from comparison institutions.

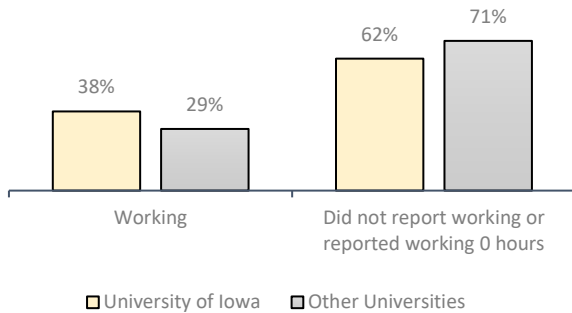
Interestingly, when we examine by residency the proportion of working students, we see even larger differences for UI in comparison to other institutions.

DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL HOURS REPORTED WORKING DURING A TYPICAL 7 DAY WORK WEEK.



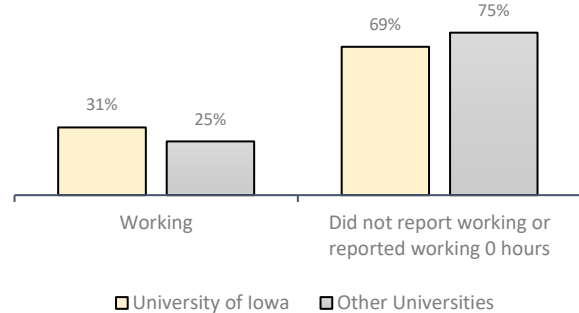
ON-CAMPUS

AVERAGE HOURS REPORTED WORKING ON-CAMPUS  
UI - 14.2      OTHER - 12.4

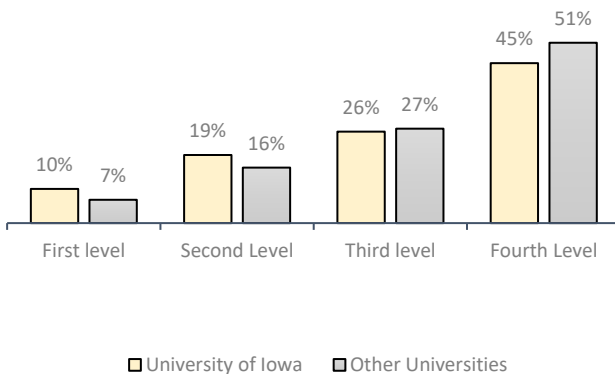


OFF-CAMPUS

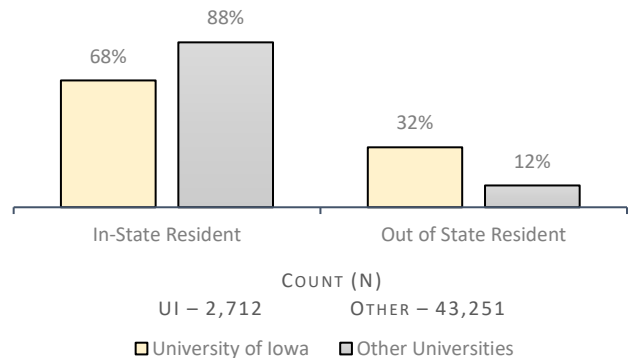
AVERAGE HOURS REPORTED WORKING OFF-CAMPUS  
UI - 19.5      OTHER - 15.9



DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING BY LEVEL



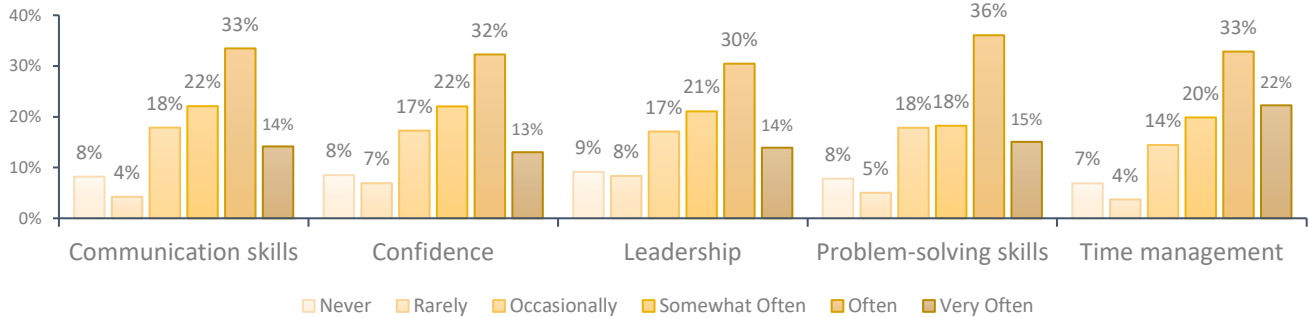
DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING STUDENTS BY STATE RESIDENCY



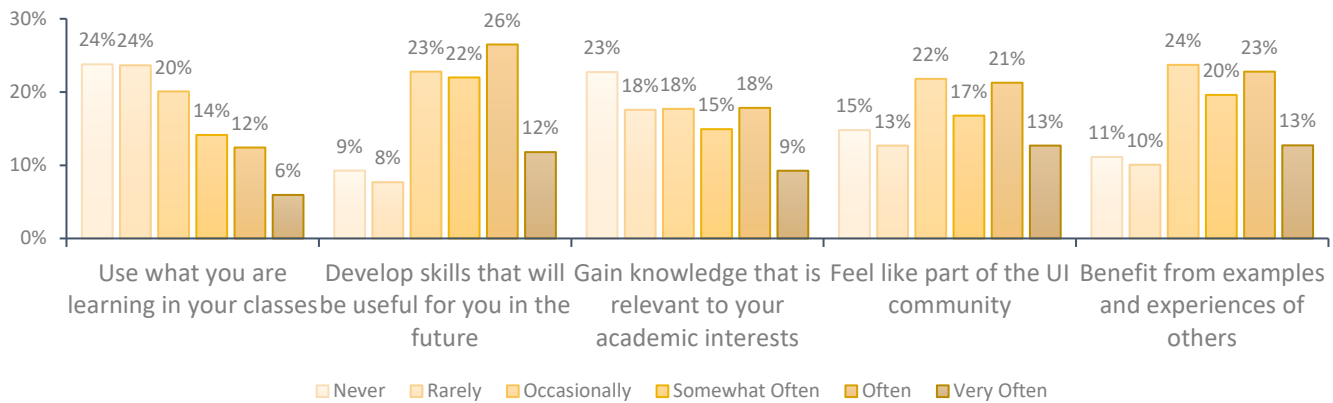
# THE EFFECTS OF WORKING

The majority of UI students report that working does assist in the development of communication skills, confidence, leadership, problem solving skills, and time management. Additionally, while their work assignments are often not related to any class assignments (68%), students do report that working has helped them develop skills that could be useful in the future (60%) and they have benefited from the examples and experiences of others (63%).

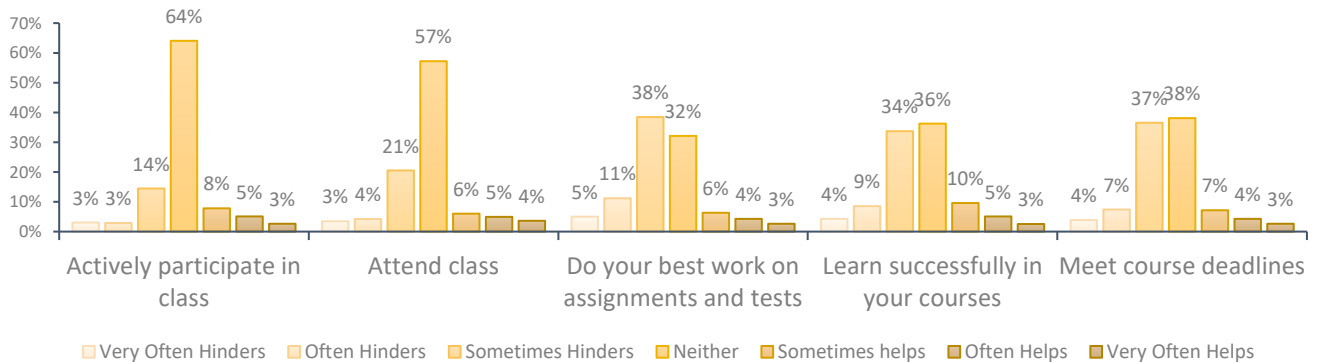
HOW OFTEN HAS WORKING FOR PAY HELPED DEVELOP YOUR...



HOW OFTEN HAS WORKING FOR PAY HELPED YOU...

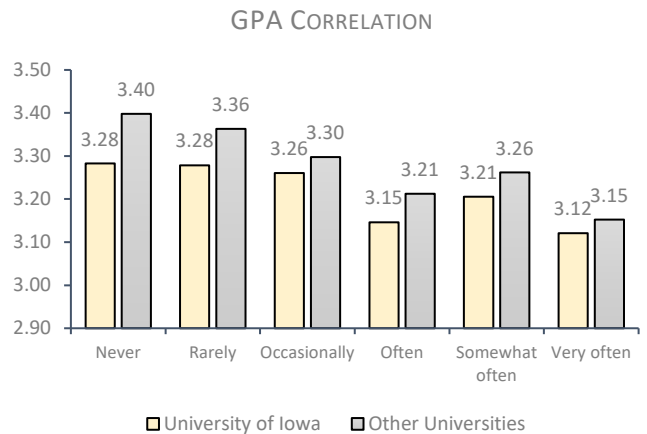
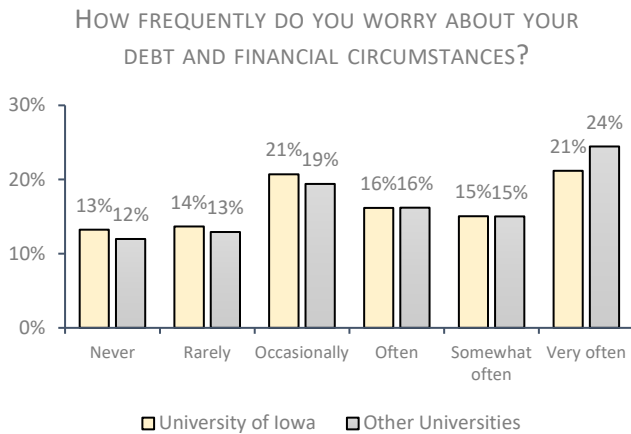
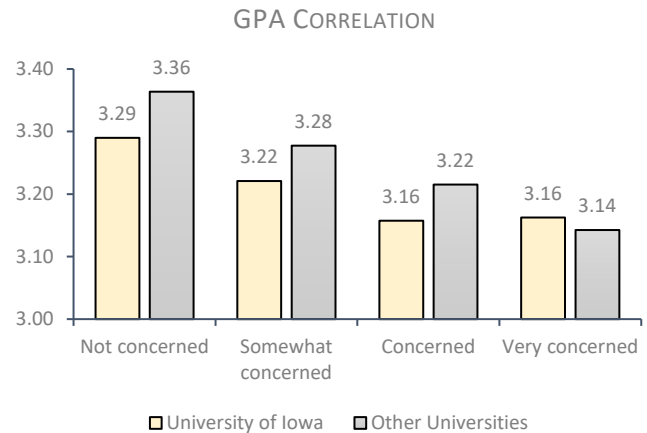
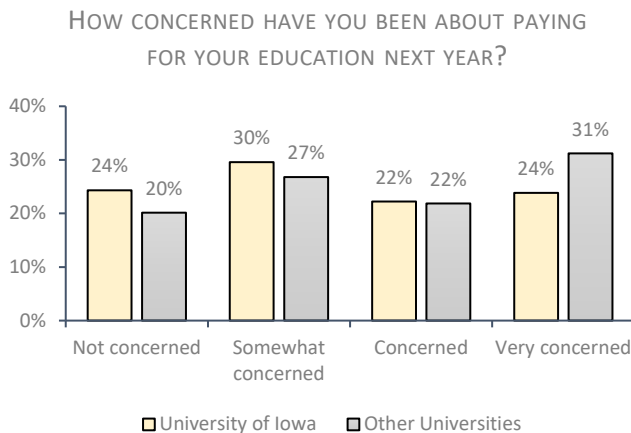
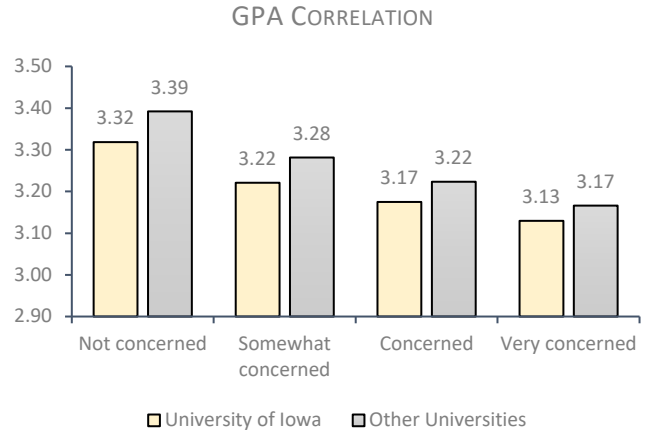
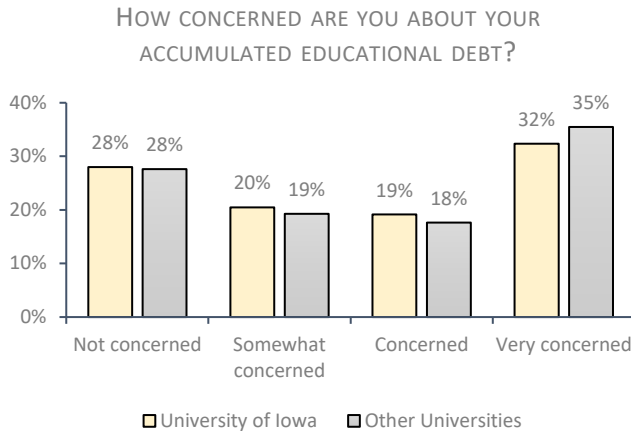


TO WHAT EXTENT HAS WORKING FOR PAY AFFECTED YOUR ABILITY TO...



## FINANCIAL CONCERN

When asked about the amount of anxiety and concern associated with financial insecurity and accumulated debt, undergraduate responses show that higher levels of concern are consistently associated with lower levels of GPA. This trend is evident in the comparison institutions as well although at a somewhat attenuated rate.

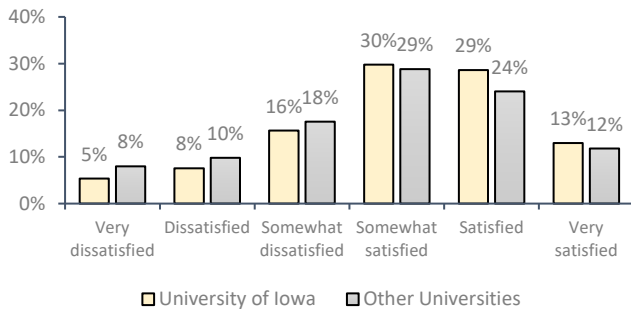




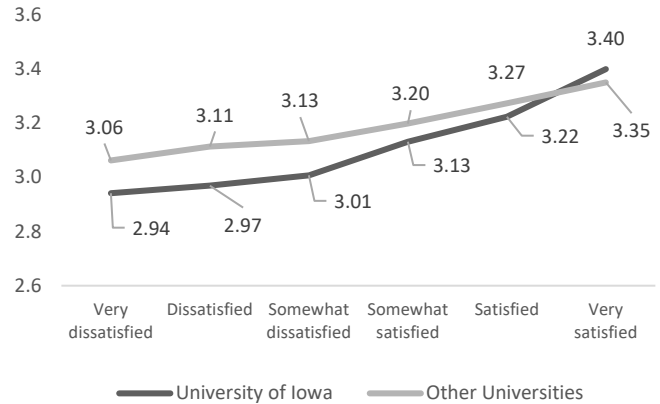
## SATISFACTION WITH VALUE AND MANAGEABILITY OF EDUCATIONAL COST

Students that report higher levels of satisfaction also have higher GPA's than those who do not. This GPA discrepancy may not be surprising, but it is worth noting since, on average, there is about a half a grade point difference between those who are least satisfied and those who are most satisfied with the value of their education for the price they are paying.

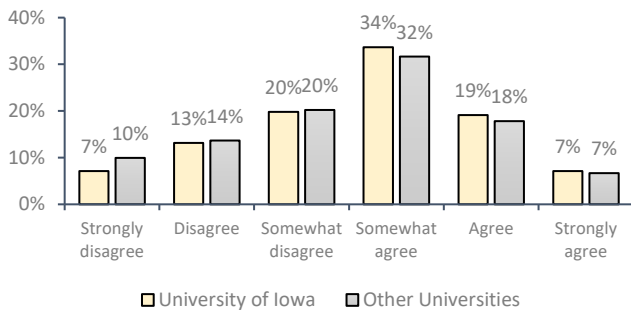
HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE VALUE OF EDUCATION YOU ARE RECEIVING FOR THE PRICE YOU ARE PAYING?



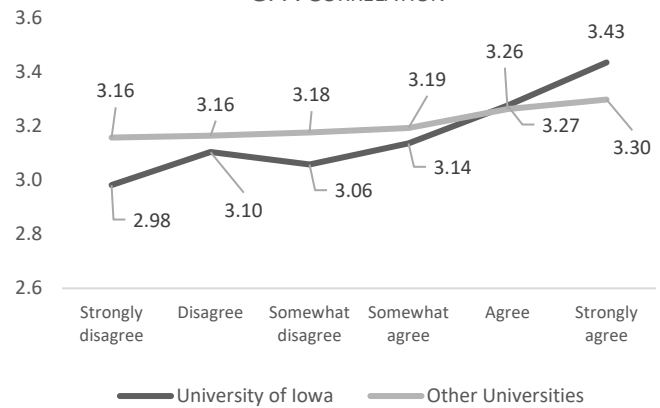
GPA CORRELATION



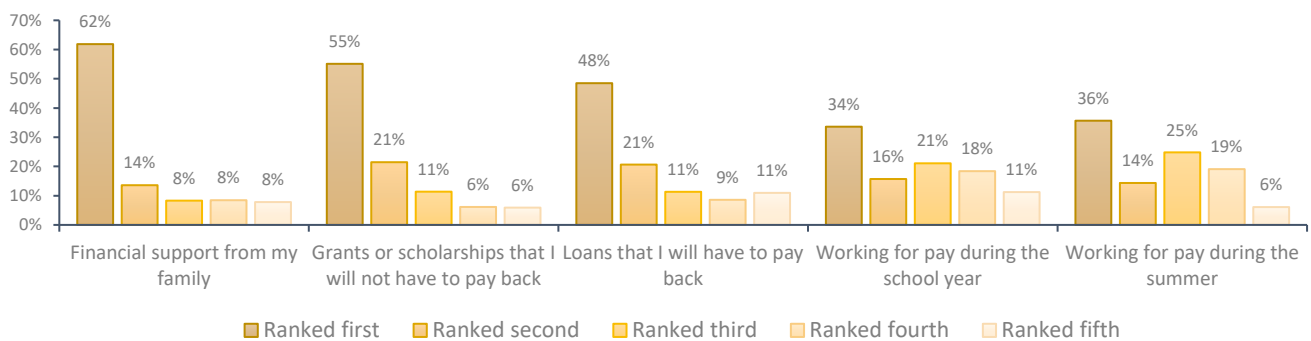
GIVEN THE GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS THAT YOU RECIEVE IS THE TOTAL COST OF ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA MANAGEABLE?



GPA CORRELATION



PLEASE RANK THE FOLOWING SOURCES OF MONEY IN TERMS OF THERI IMPORTANCE IN PAYING FOR YOUR COLLEGE EXPENSES AT IOWA.



## A NOTE CONCERNING THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT

---

All survey questions used in this report may be manipulated using various demographics as is possible with the responses to other questions in the survey. The Office of Assessment makes available a variety of reports and dashboards that will allow any campus partner to review the survey results for actionable data.

The SERU survey can also be used to address research questions and has already been used in multiple publications. If you have any questions or would like to review the data in more depth, please contact the Office of Assessment.

Find more information about our services online at:

<http://www.uiowa.edu/assessment>