

Chapter 1: FIRST-YEAR SURVEY

Who takes it?

All first-year students who start in the fall semester are offered to take the survey.

When is it administered?

It was administered during Truman Week, which is the first three days of school for the first-year students.

How long does it take the students to complete the instrument?

15 to 25 minutes.

What office administers it?

The Center for Academic Excellence in conjunction with the Provost's Office administers the survey.

Who originates this survey?

The survey is a local instrument prepared by Truman faculty and administrators.

When are results typically available?

Late fall.

What type of information is sought?

The survey provides information on the student's perception of the admission process, summer orientation, and expectations of college. It also provides some basic demographic information on first-generation status and family income.

From whom are the results available?

Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

Results are available to the University community through this almanac and available by request from the Assistant Vice President for Student Success and Institutional Effectiveness.

Are the results available by department or discipline?

Neither.

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

No.

The first-year survey is a short survey given to all students at the conclusion of Truman Week. It allows for a better understanding of student demographics and expectations. In fall 2023, 228 students completed the survey giving a response rate of approximately 32%. Although 32% is slightly higher than last year's 29%, previous response rates for the First-Year Survey were typically much stronger (with nearly 100% of first year students completing the survey when Truman Week was a credit bearing activity). In fall 2021, a small prize incentive was utilized to entice students to complete the survey and a much higher response rate of 65% was achieved indicating that it might be advantageous to offer incentives for future surveys.

The following highlights some of the most relevant findings:

Choosing Truman

Prior to admission, approximately 77% of students had visited more than one college and 98% of respondents visited Truman State's campus at least once as part of the admission process. Although visit activities have not returned fully to pre-pandemic levels, the Fall 2023 cohort clearly visited more campuses than the Fall 2022 continuing the trend of increasing visits. In ranking the reasons that they chose Truman, students indicated academic reputation as the top reason for attending with financial aid being the next most important reasons. Although cost and financial aid have always been the next most important reasons for choosing Truman, financial aid surpassed cost as the second most important reason for the first time ever (indicating a possible shift in the primary reason students are choosing Truman). When identifying influences, first-year students clearly indicate that their campus visit was the most influential reason for them choosing Truman. In general, other potential factors were approximately equal and responses on parental influence were somewhat polarizing but in general parent influence was positive.

Demographics

The 2023 entering class is similar in makeup to the 2022 first-year cohort but with a shift towards increased lower income level individuals (more closely resembling the 2021 cohort). Approximately 20% identifying themselves as upper class, 27% as upper middle class, 19% as middle class, 23% as working class, and 11% as lower class. The biggest decrease from 2022 was in students identifying as middle class (\$75-99K), while the largest increase was those identifying as working class (\$40-75k). The general trend over the last 5 years is an increasing number of students indicating income levels above \$100K. Approximately 23% of the incoming students indicate they are first generation (with neither parent having a bachelor's degree) while 48% of the incoming class indicate that both of their parents have a bachelor's degree. Although first generation status increased this year, there has been a decreasing trend in self-reported first generation status over the last 5 years.

Connections within Truman Days

Approximately 97% of students felt that Truman Days was helpful in introducing them to faculty and staff while more than 98% of students felt that Truman Days was helpful in meeting fellow students. Students indicated that Truman Days was less effective at meeting multiple students than 2022, as there was a decrease in multiple associations and an increase in singular associations. Additionally, following Truman Days, 93% of the students could identify at least one connection for mutual support, which was a decrease from the previous year. In comparing 2023 data to 2022, there is slight decrease in perceived student interactions with students indicating fewer strong bonds with multiple students and fewer students identifying a strong support individual.

Expectations

Over 98% of respondents expect to graduate Truman knowing at least one faculty member well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation and 45% expect to know four or more faculty members that well upon graduation. The most common expectation for first semester grades was A-/B+ and fewer than 3% of students expect to average lower than a B during their first semester at Truman.

Attitude towards Truman

Approximately 88% of the first-year students reported having a positive or strongly positive attitude towards Truman at the time of the survey (with less than 2% indicating any type of negative attitude). There was a substantial drop in students being strongly positive with that falling from 41% to 28% for the 2023 cohort. Following Truman Days, 95% of students indicated some commitment to returning to Truman for their second year (with 58% being almost certain to return). In general, the attitude of the 2023 cohort is slightly lower than that of the 2022 cohort.

Experiences with Truman Days

The Majors Welcome activity was a clear favorite amongst first-year students being both well attended and strongly rated. The LGBTQ Dessert also scored highly (for those choosing to attend) for both Social and Civic purposes, while Bulldogs in Action scored highly for Civic Engagement. Attendance for various other activities varied substantially but rated success was similar for most programs. One new activity this year was “The Beginnings of Belonging” which was well attended and scored fairly high (Fig 19). One new question on the survey this year attempted to evaluate the social activities on their merits for fun and relaxation (Fig 20 & Table 7). All the activities scored reasonably well with the SAB after Party being a clear hit with students who attended.

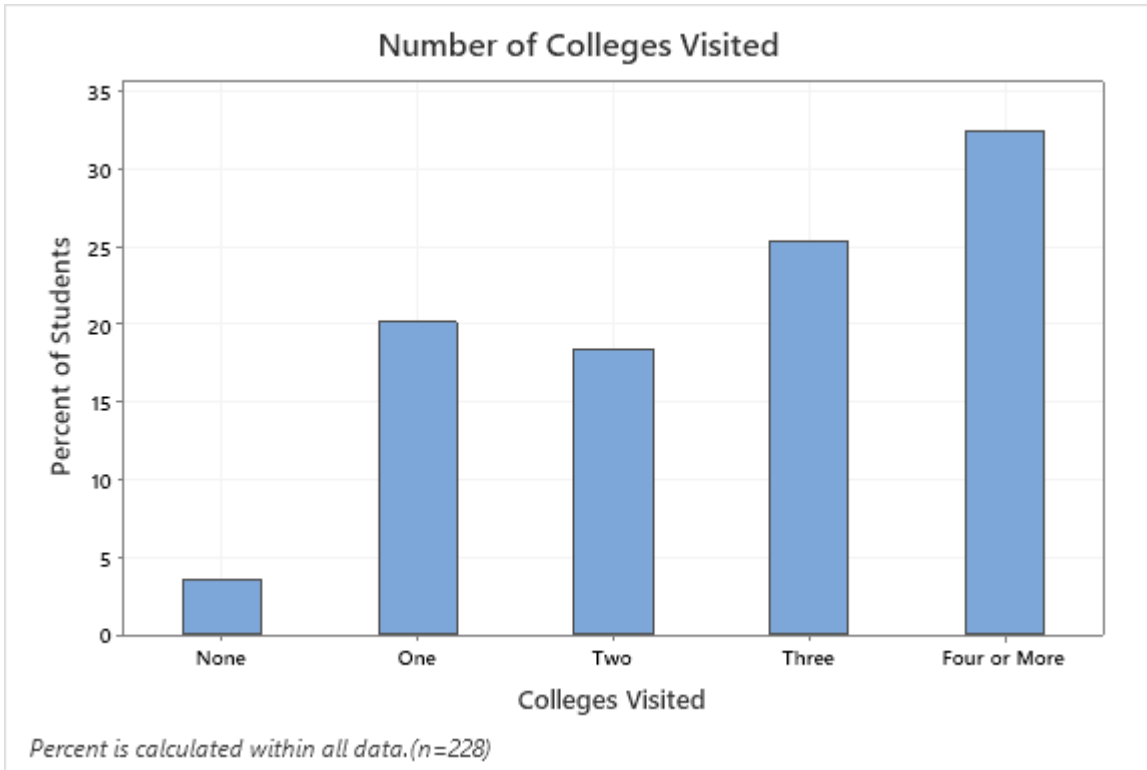


Figure 1 – “In selecting a college, how many colleges or university campuses did you visit?”

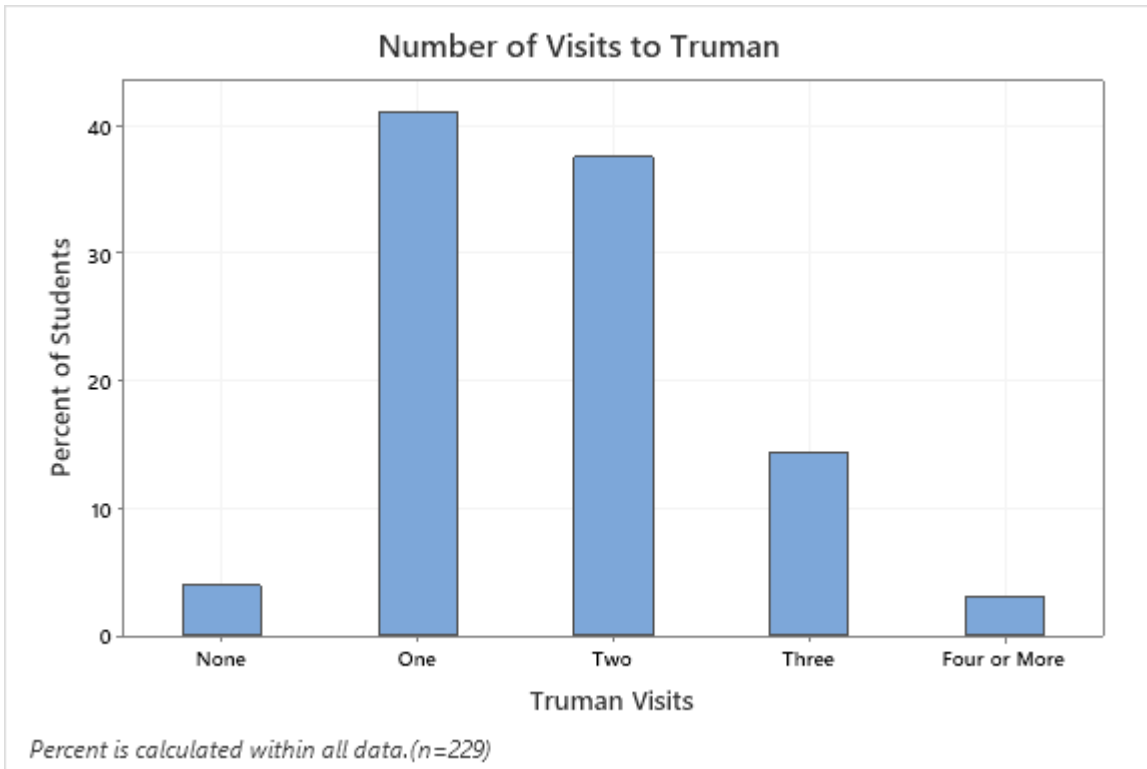


Figure 2 – “In making a college selection, how many times did you visit Truman State University?”

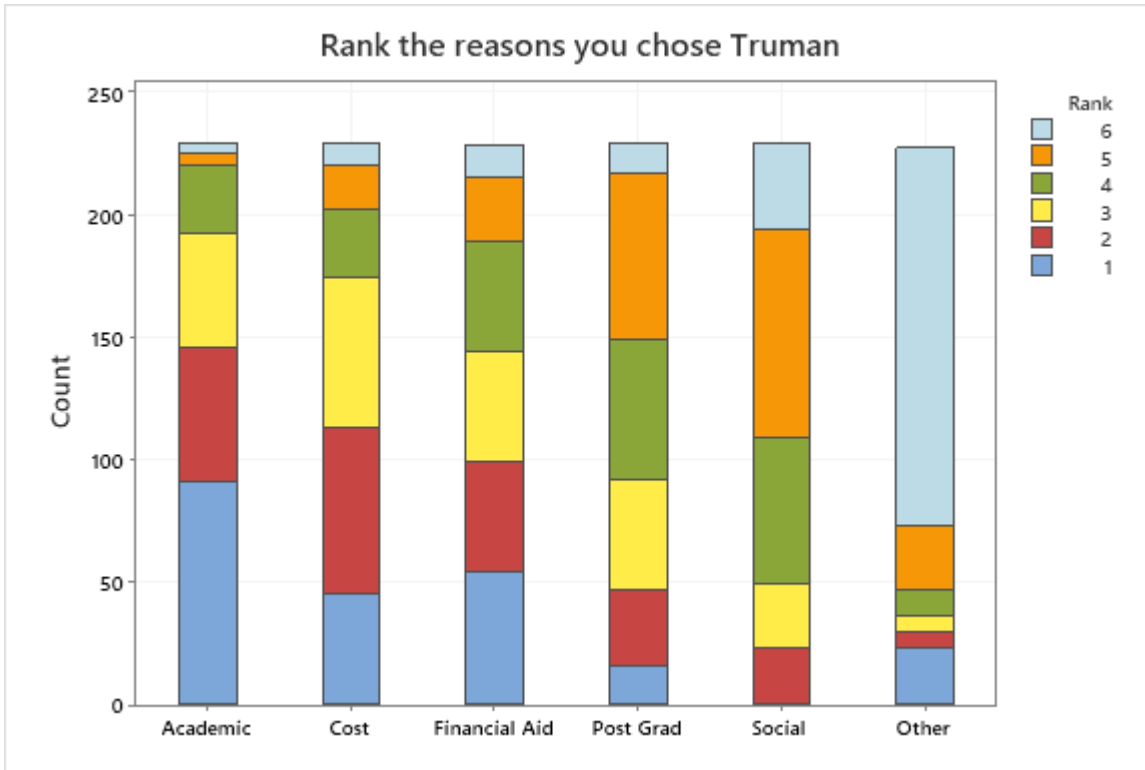


Figure 3 – “Please rank these reasons for choosing Truman. Assign the most important reason number 1, the second most important number 2, etc. until you have used all six ranks.

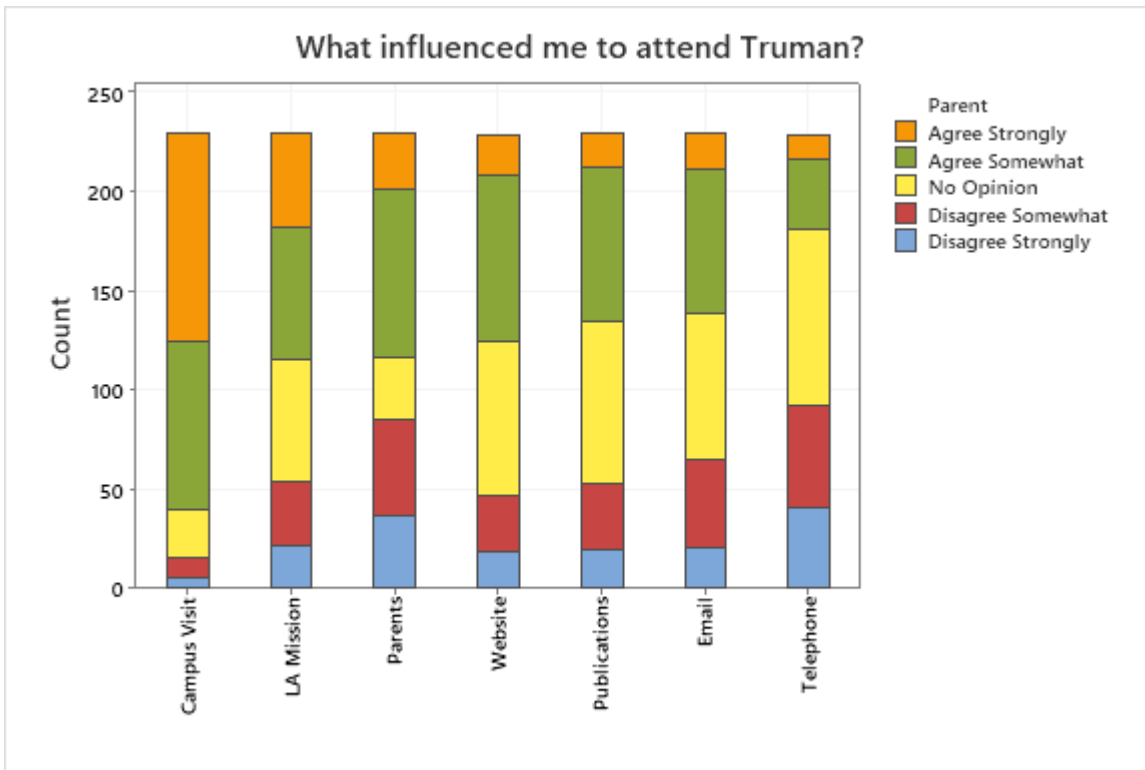


Figure 4a – “Please indicate your opinion (on the level of influence in attending Truman) by marking one response on each question”

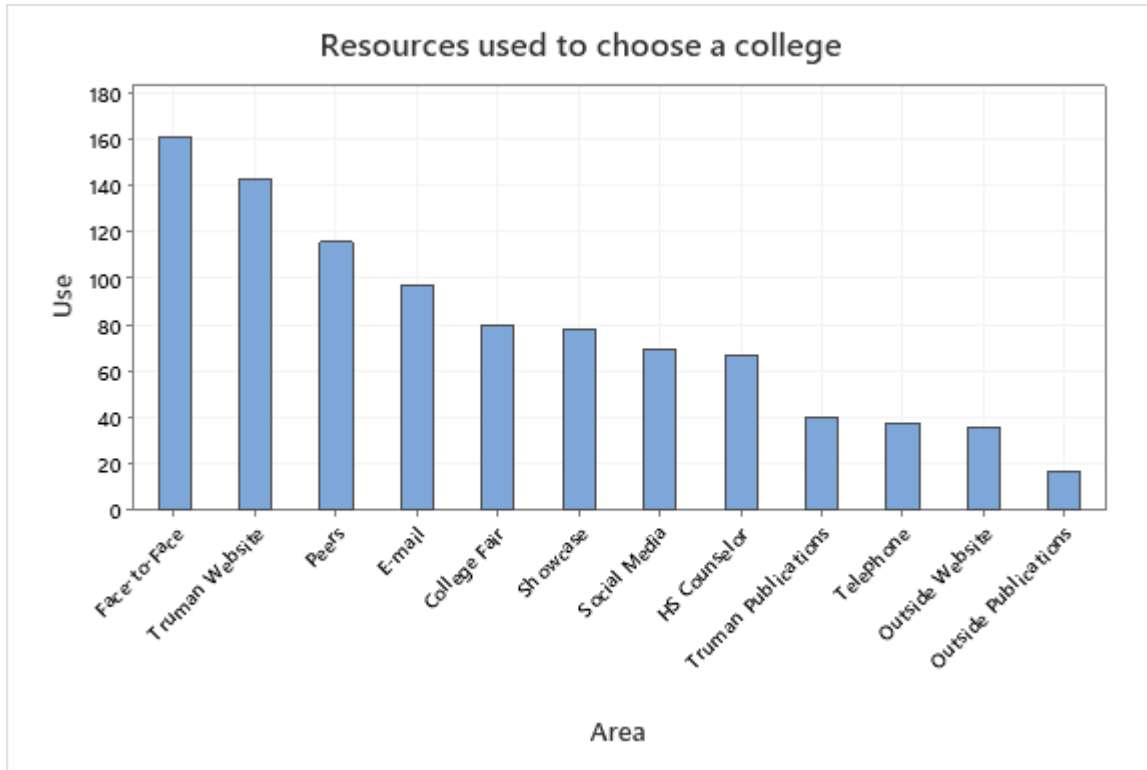


Figure 4b – “Which of these resources did you use to choose a college? (Check as many as apply)”

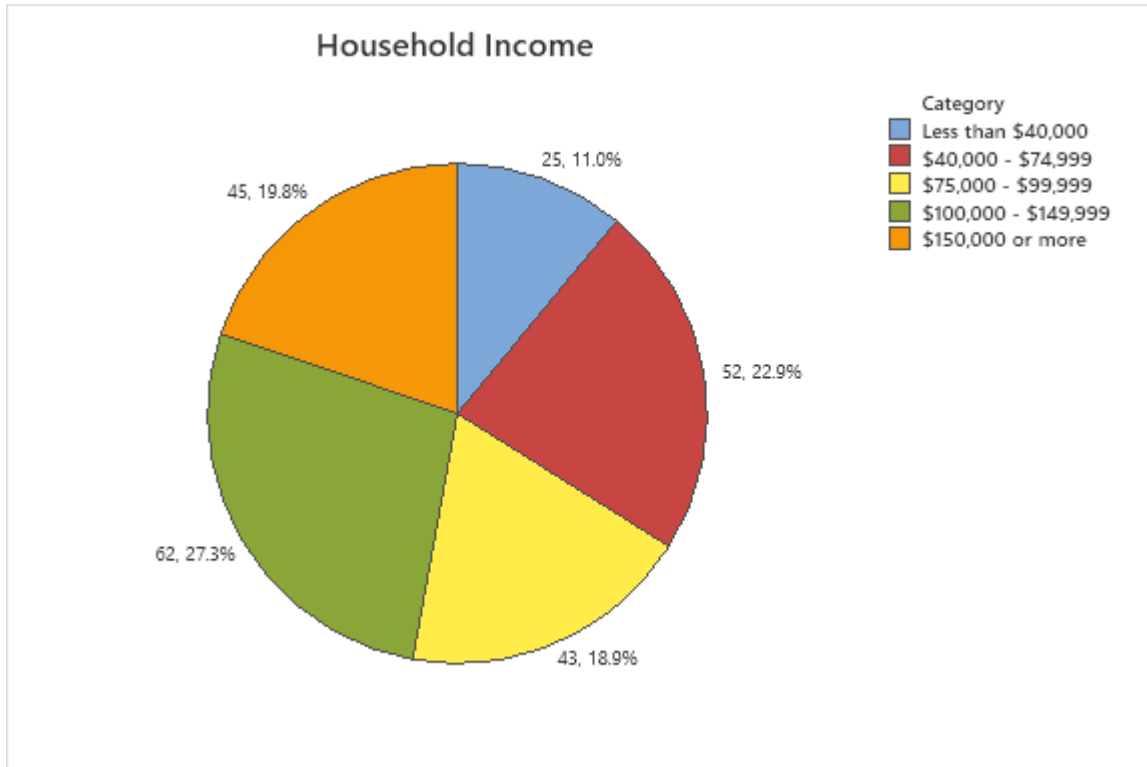


Figure 5 – “What is your best estimate of your parent's total income last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes.”

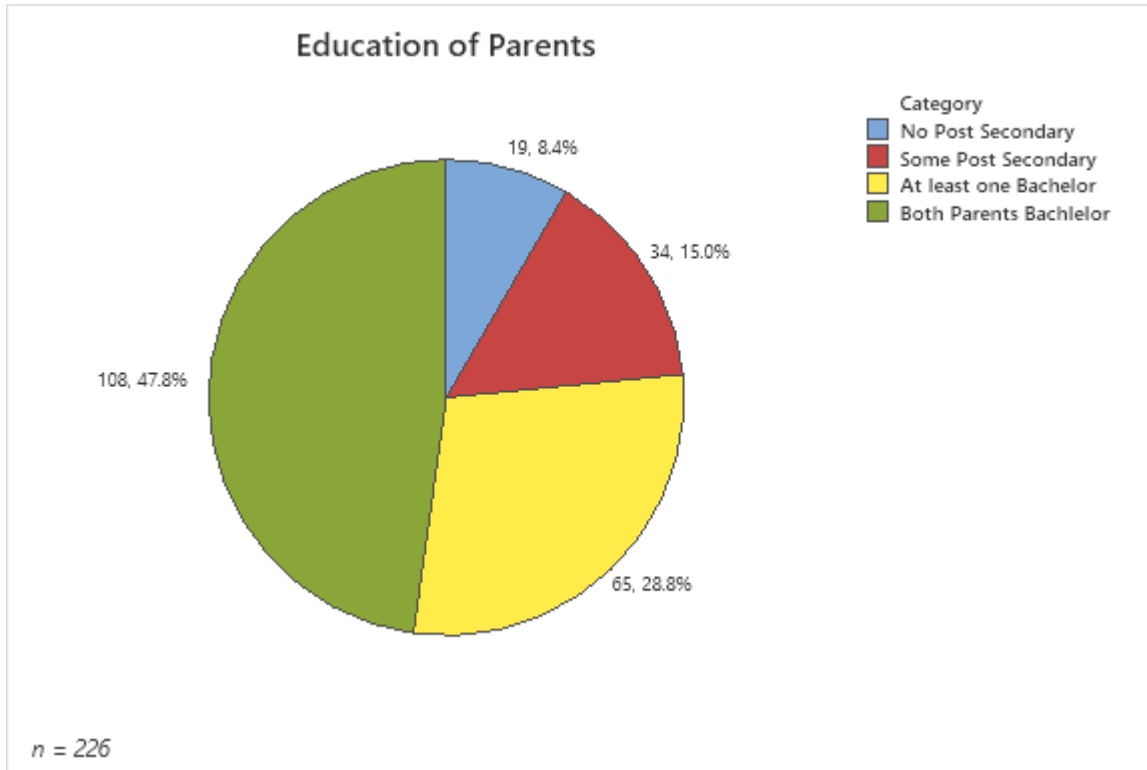


Figure 6 – “What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?”

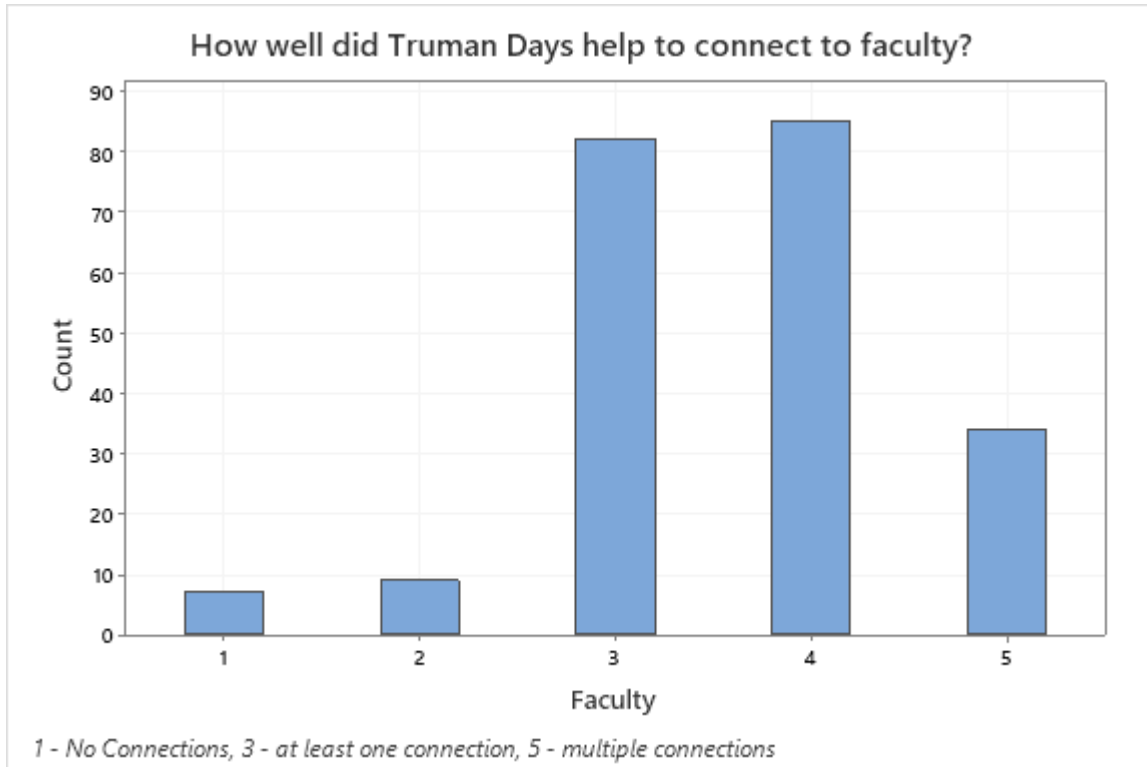


Figure 7 – “How well did Truman Days do at introducing you to faculty and staff?”

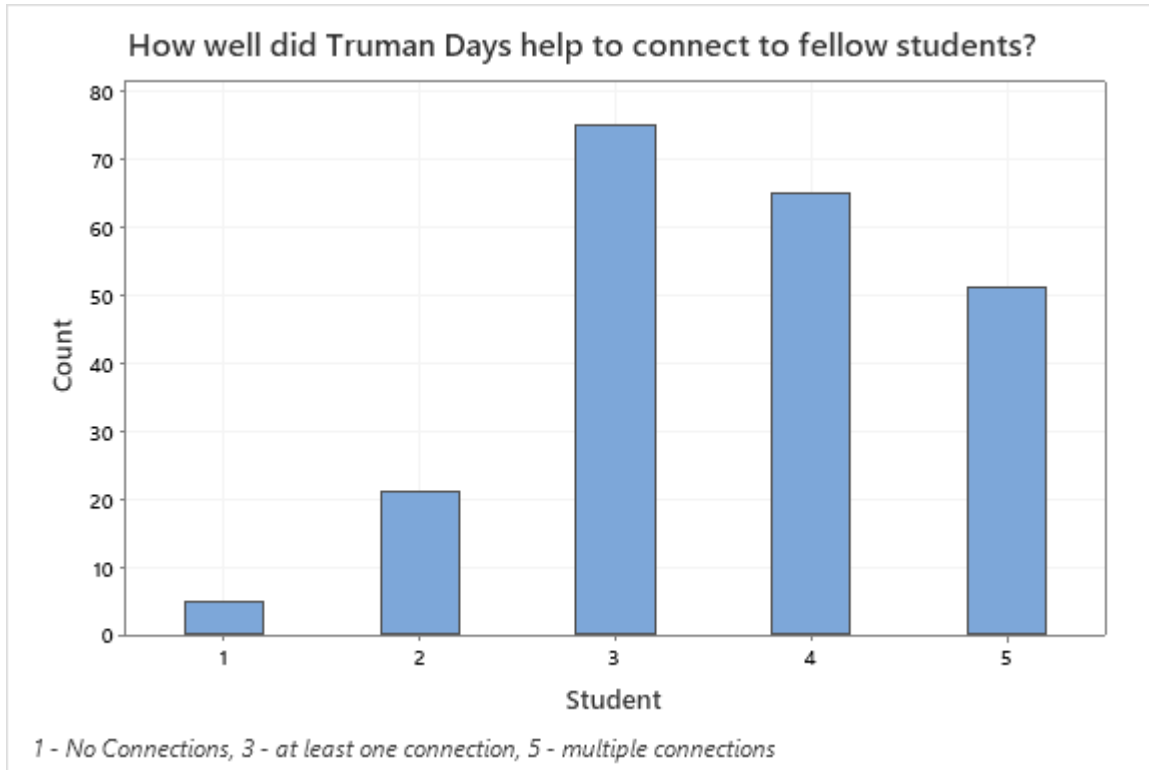


Figure 8 – “How well did Truman Days help you get connected to your fellow students?”

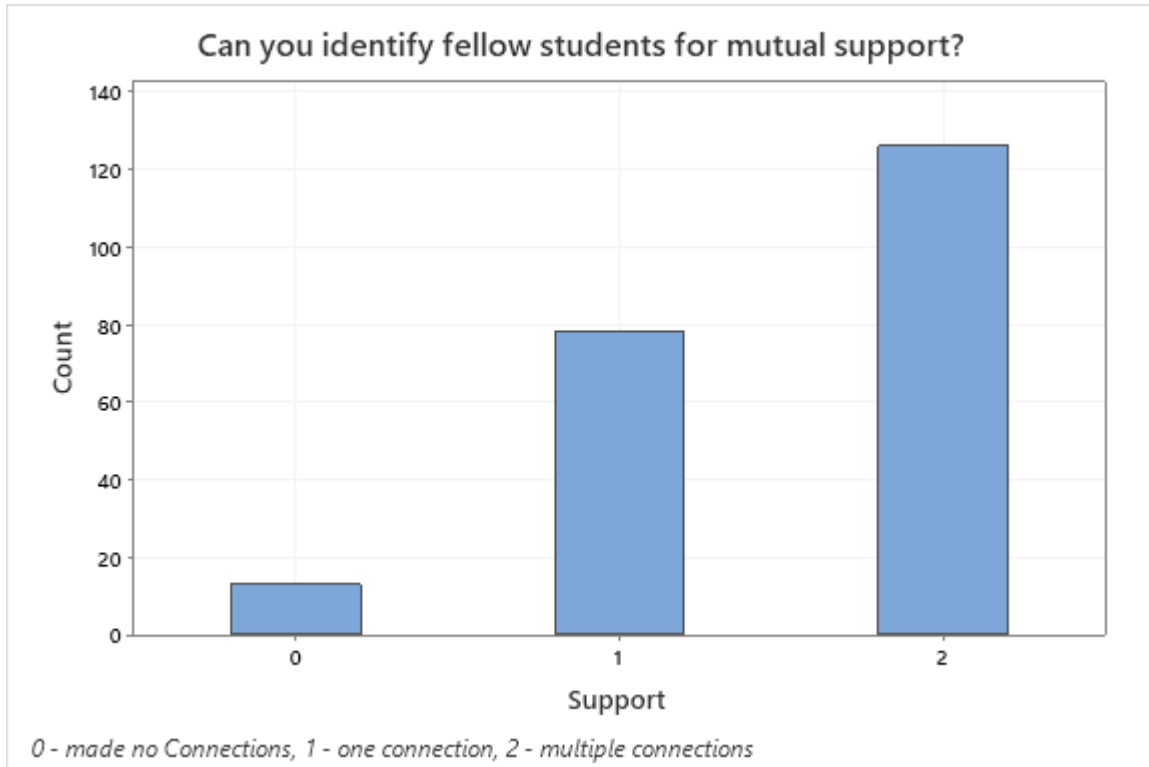


Figure 9 – “Can you identify fellow students that can help support you and that you can help support?”

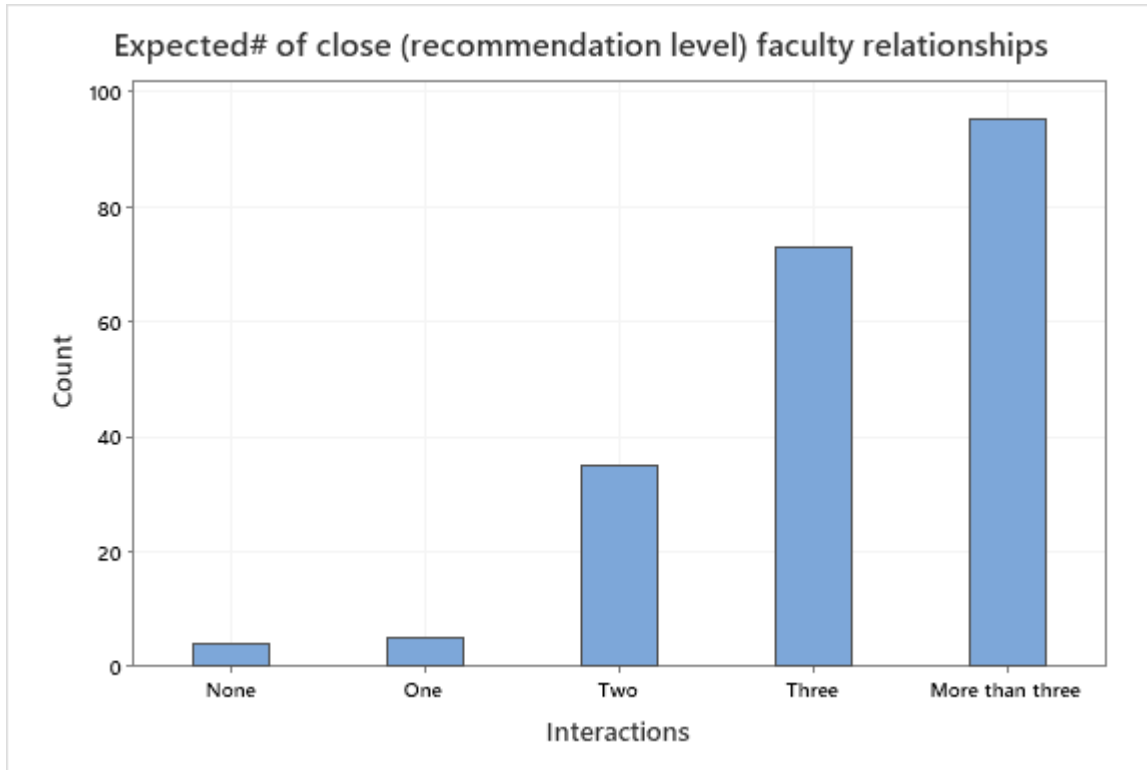


Figure 10 – “Upon graduation from Truman, how many faculty members do you expect to know well enough that you would ask them for a letter of recommendation?”

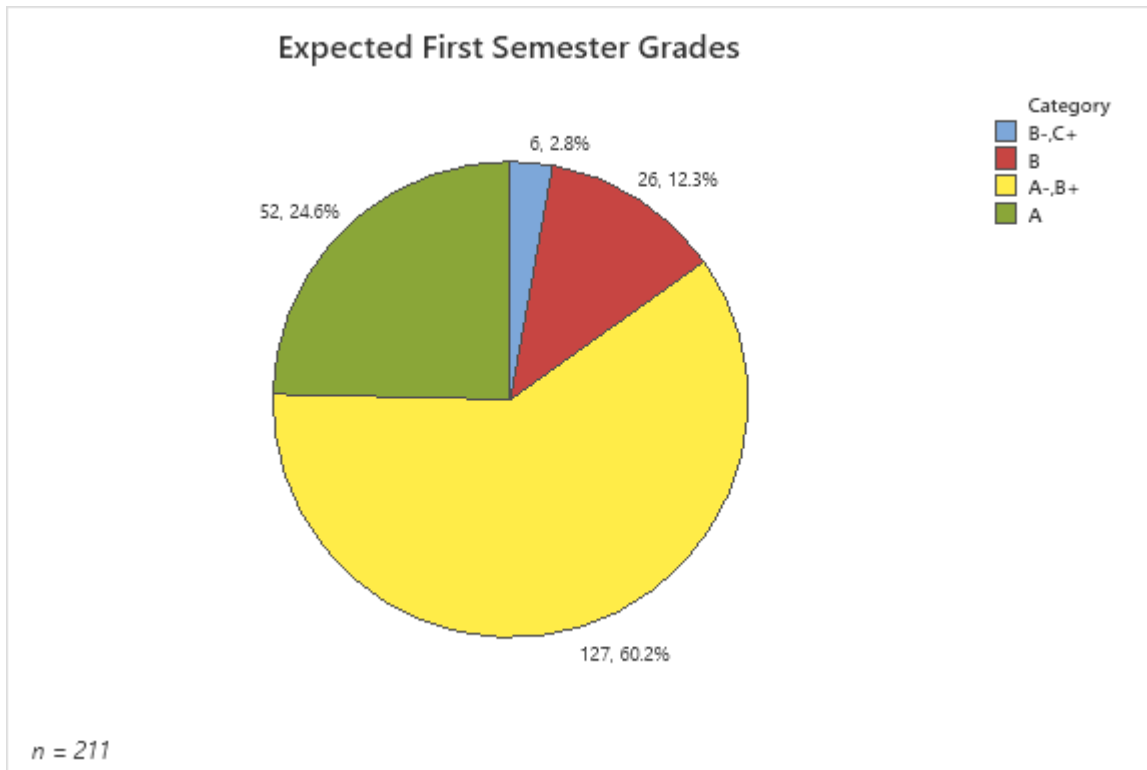


Figure 11 – “What do you expect most of your first semester grades at Truman to be?”

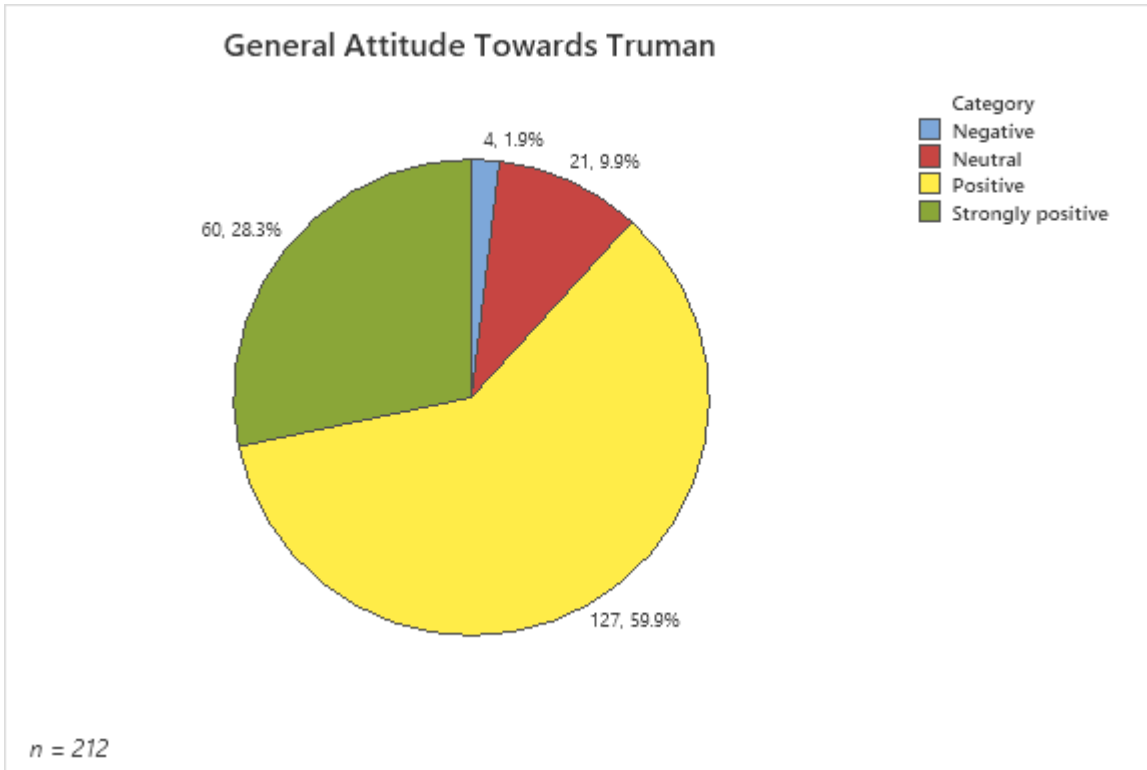


Figure 12 – “At the present time, your general attitude toward Truman is?”

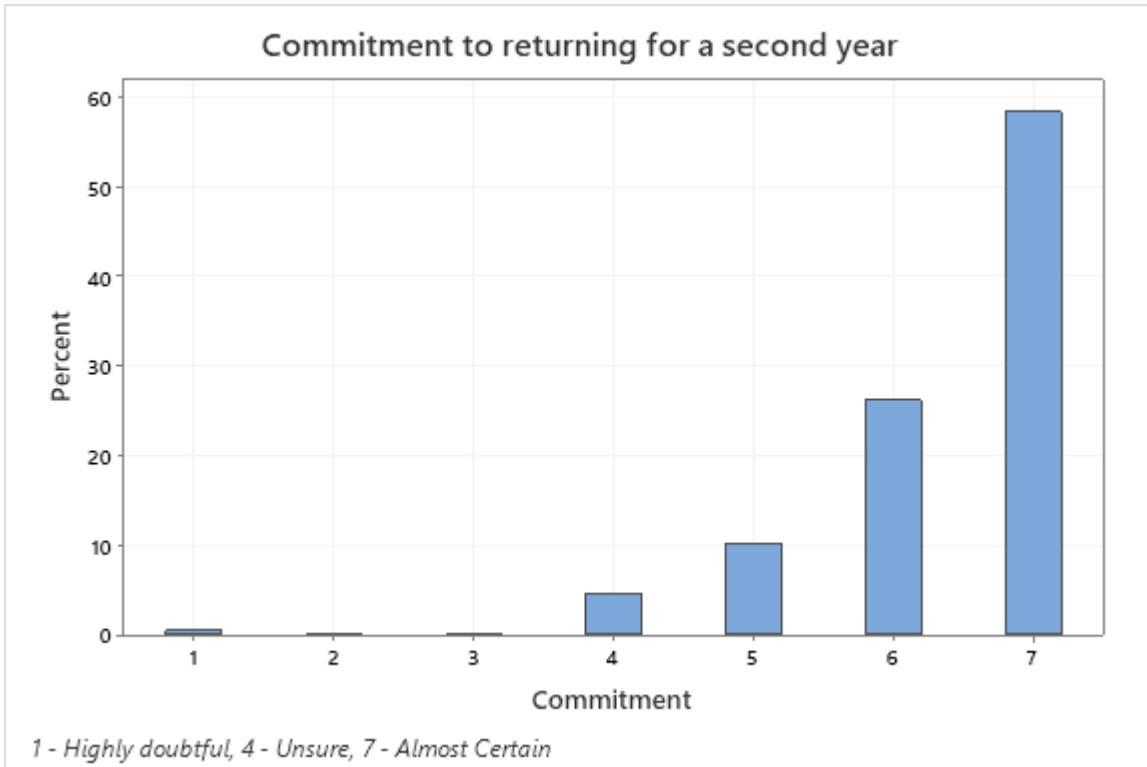


Figure 13 – “Now that Truman Week is over, how committed are you to staying to Truman for a second year and beyond?”

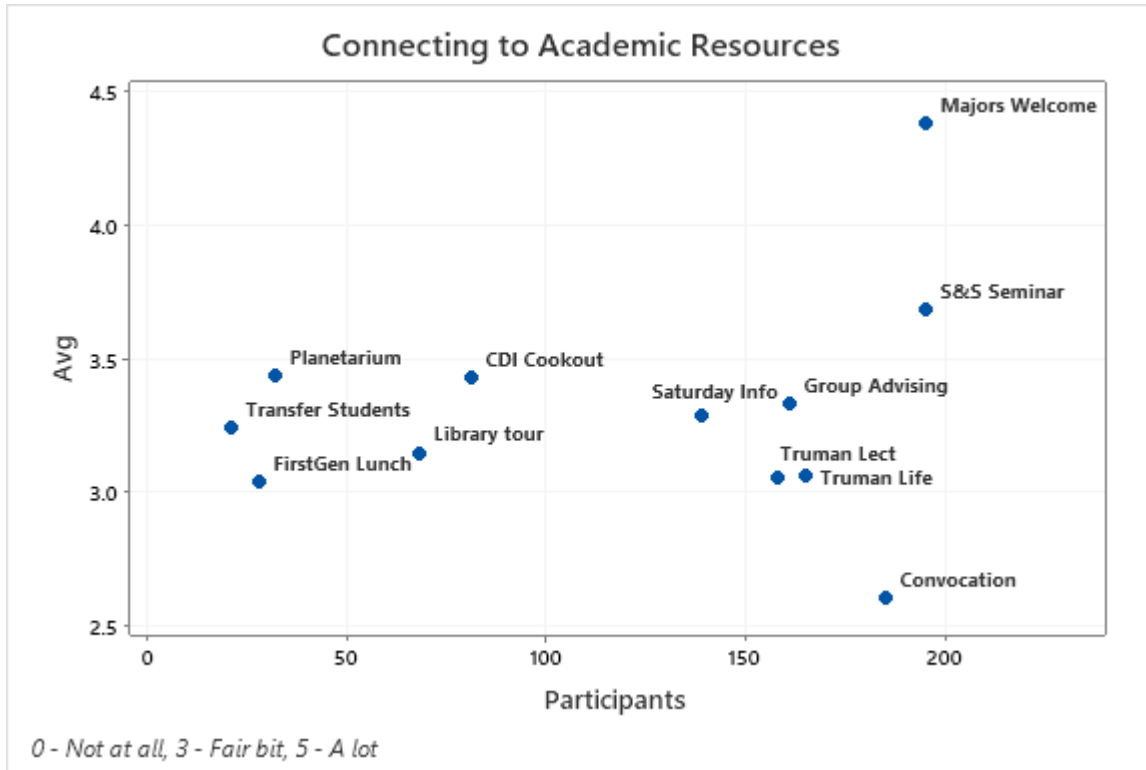


Figure 14 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Academic Resources?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Convocation	31	33	54	63	24	11	2.6	185
Truman Life	48	11	35	65	41	13	3.1	165
FirstGen Lunch	187	5	5	6	8	4	3.0	28
Group Advising	50	6	24	64	45	22	3.3	161
Saturday Info	75	10	25	41	41	22	3.3	139
Library tour	146	4	19	19	15	11	3.1	68
Majors Welcome	20	2	5	24	50	114	4.4	195
Planetarium	183	2	7	8	5	10	3.4	32
S&S Seminar	19	3	30	48	58	56	3.7	195
Transfer Students	193	3	3	5	6	4	3.2	21
Truman Lect	57	11	34	64	33	16	3.1	158
CDI Cookout	135	4	12	22	31	12	3.4	81

Table 1 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Academic Resources? (0 = did not participate)”

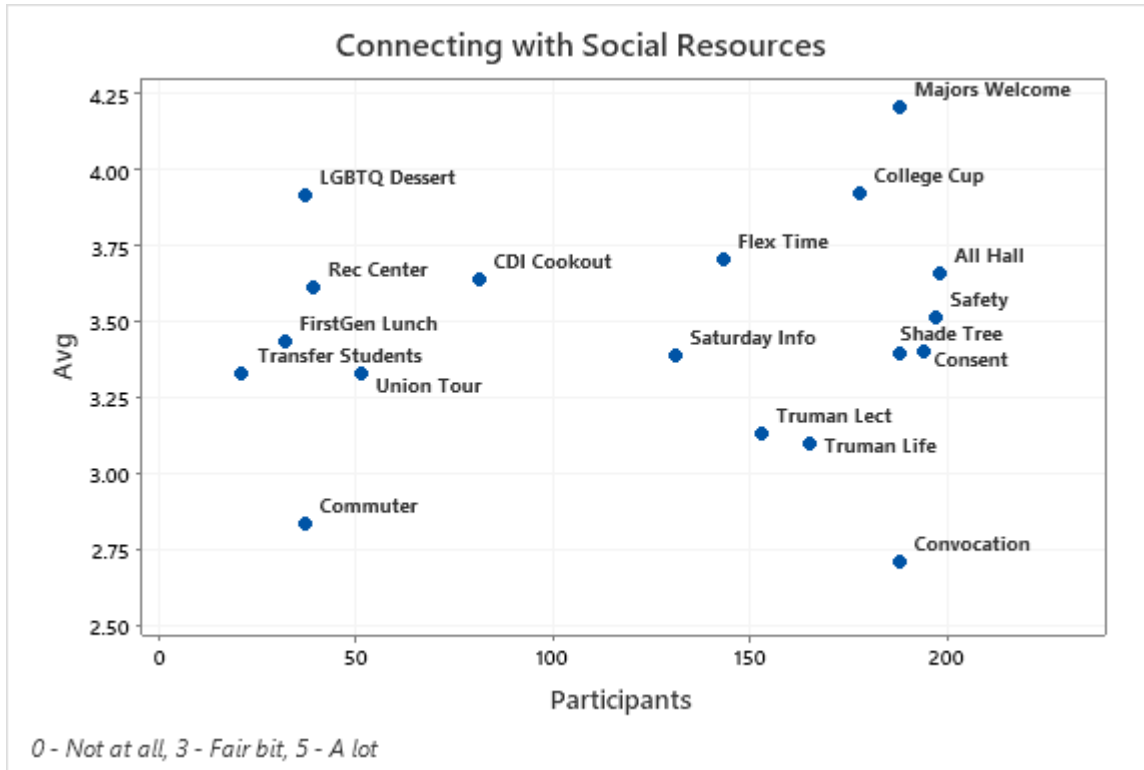


Figure 15 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Social Resources?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
All Hall	16	8	20	57	59	54	3.7	198
Safety	17	7	26	61	64	39	3.5	197
College Cup	38	7	17	34	45	75	3.9	178
Commuter	178	8	6	13	4	6	2.8	37
Consent	21	13	32	57	48	44	3.4	194
Convocation	28	27	55	64	29	13	2.7	188
Truman Life	48	9	39	62	37	18	3.1	165
FirstGen Lunch	183	2	5	11	5	9	3.4	32
Flex Time	72	4	19	36	40	44	3.7	143
Saturday Info	81	5	19	51	32	24	3.4	131
LGBTQ Dessert	176	1	3	9	9	15	3.9	37
Majors Welcome	24	1	11	28	56	92	4.2	188
Rec Center	173	3	1	13	13	9	3.6	39
Shade Tree	25	10	37	48	54	39	3.4	188
Transfer Students	192	1	5	5	6	4	3.3	21
Truman Lect	59	10	35	56	29	23	3.1	153
CDI Cookout	132	1	12	24	22	22	3.6	81
Union Tour	161	0	13	15	16	7	3.3	51

Table 2 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Social Resources?” (0 = did not participate)

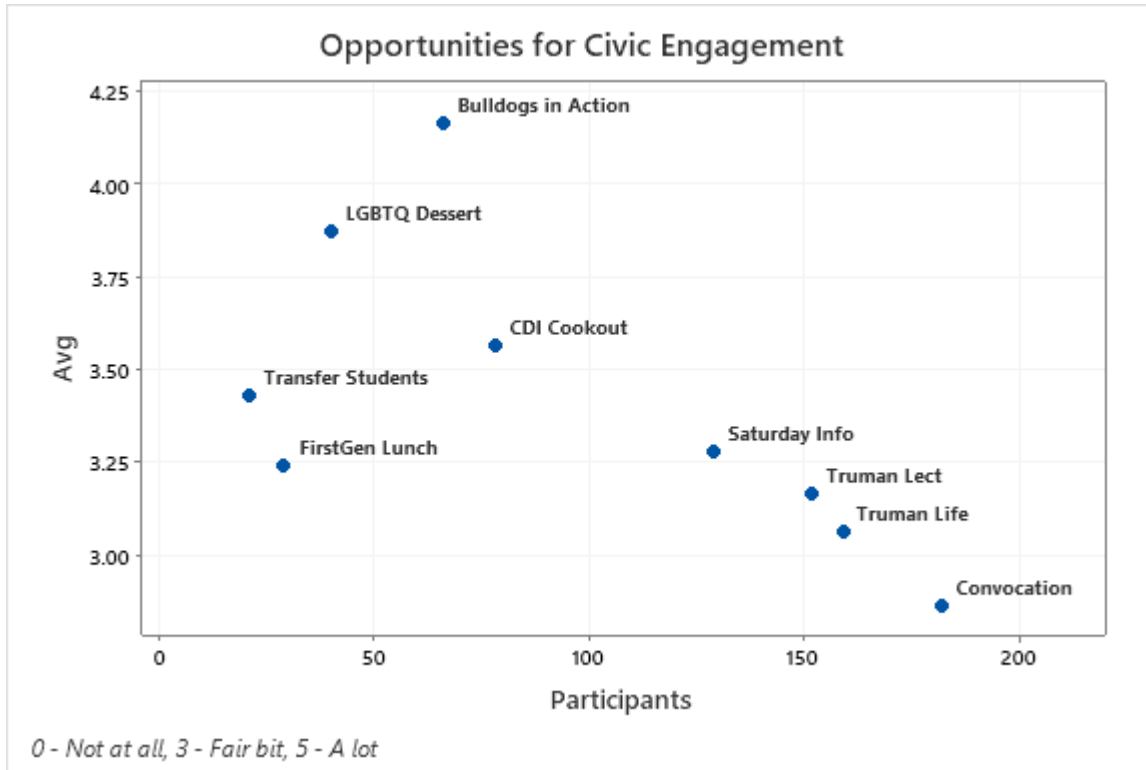


Figure 16 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help identify opportunities for Civic Engagement and its role in the Truman Culture?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	147	0	4	13	17	32	4.2	66
Convocation	31	25	45	60	34	18	2.9	182
Truman Life	53	9	38	65	28	19	3.1	159
FirstGen Lunch	185	2	7	7	8	5	3.2	29
Saturday Info	84	10	15	52	33	19	3.3	129
LGBTQ Dessert	174	2	3	8	12	15	3.9	40
Transfer Students	191	1	5	6	2	7	3.4	21
Truman Lect	59	5	36	60	31	20	3.2	152
CDI Cookout	134	2	9	27	23	17	3.6	78

Table 3 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help identify opportunities for Civic Engagement and its role in the Truman Culture?” (0 = did not participate)

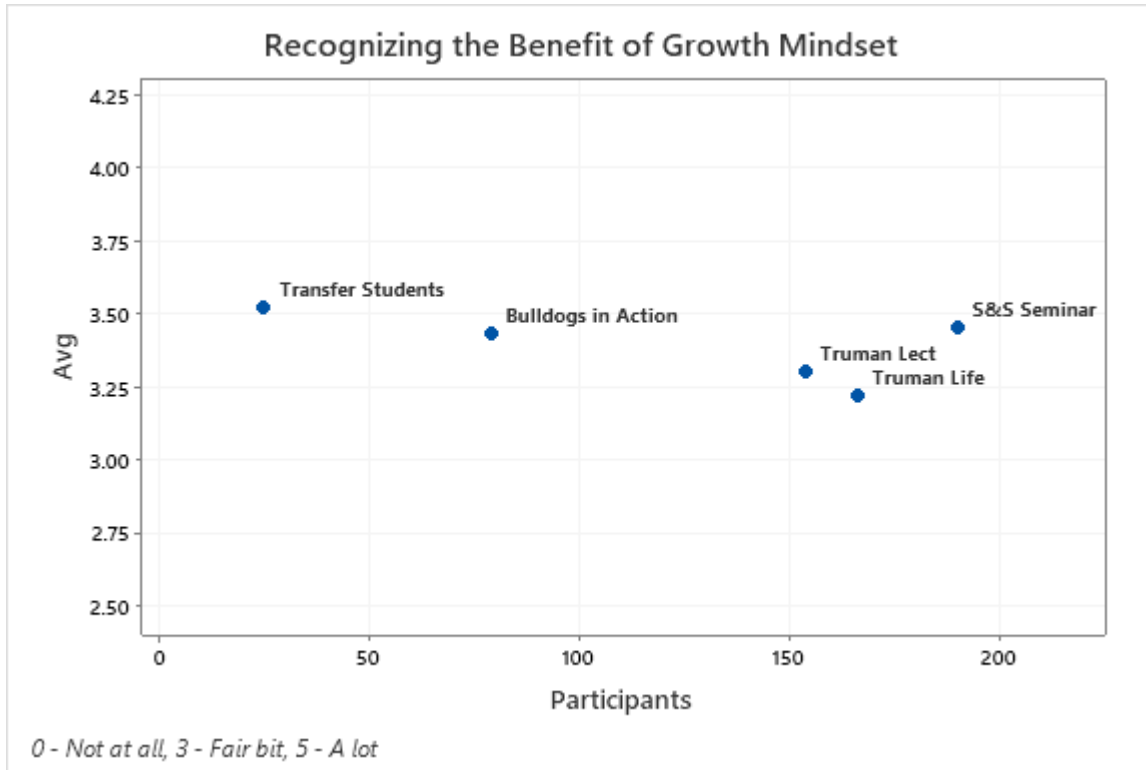


Figure 17 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to recognize the benefits of a growth mindset and the value of failure as data in the pursuit of success?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	133	2	11	34	15	17	3.4	79
Truman Life	45	9	36	53	46	22	3.2	166
Transfer Students	185	1	2	10	7	5	3.5	25
Truman Lect	57	8	26	56	40	24	3.3	154
S&S Seminar	21	12	26	55	58	39	3.5	190

Table 4 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to recognize the benefits of a growth mindset and the value of failure as data in the pursuit of success?” (0 = did not participate)

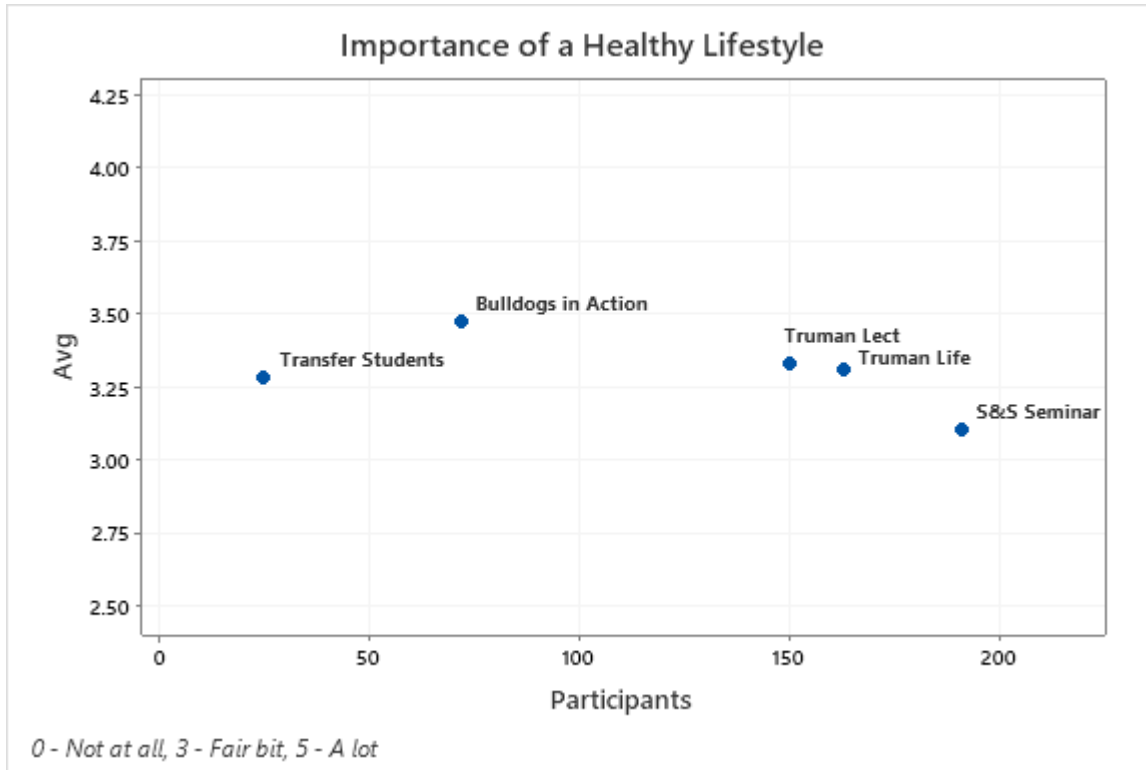


Figure 18 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you understand the importance of a balanced, healthy life habits?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	139	6	11	19	15	21	3.5	72
Truman Life	48	11	13	74	45	20	3.3	163
S&S Seminar	19	18	37	68	43	25	3.1	191
Transfer Students	185	1	5	9	6	4	3.3	25
Truman Lect	61	6	27	58	30	29	3.3	150

Table 5 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you understand the importance of a balanced, healthy life habits?” (0 = did not participate)

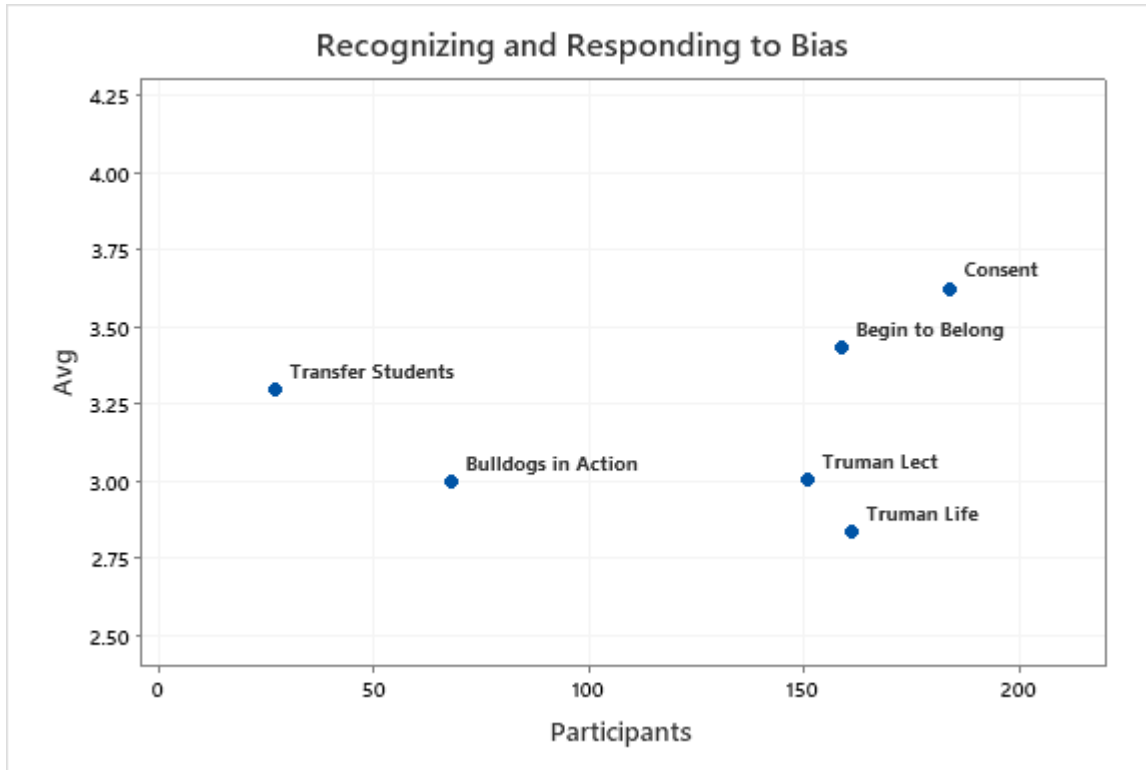


Figure 19 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you recognize bias and unconscious bias and develop strategies to respond and/or intervene?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	141	10	13	22	13	10	3.0	68
Consent	25	7	23	50	56	48	3.6	184
Truman Life	49	23	34	64	26	14	2.8	161
Transfer Students	182	2	3	11	7	4	3.3	27
Truman Lect	60	12	29	72	22	16	3.0	151
Begin to Belong	52	8	19	56	48	28	3.4	159

Table 6 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you recognize bias and unconscious bias and develop strategies to respond and/or intervene?” (0 = did not participate)

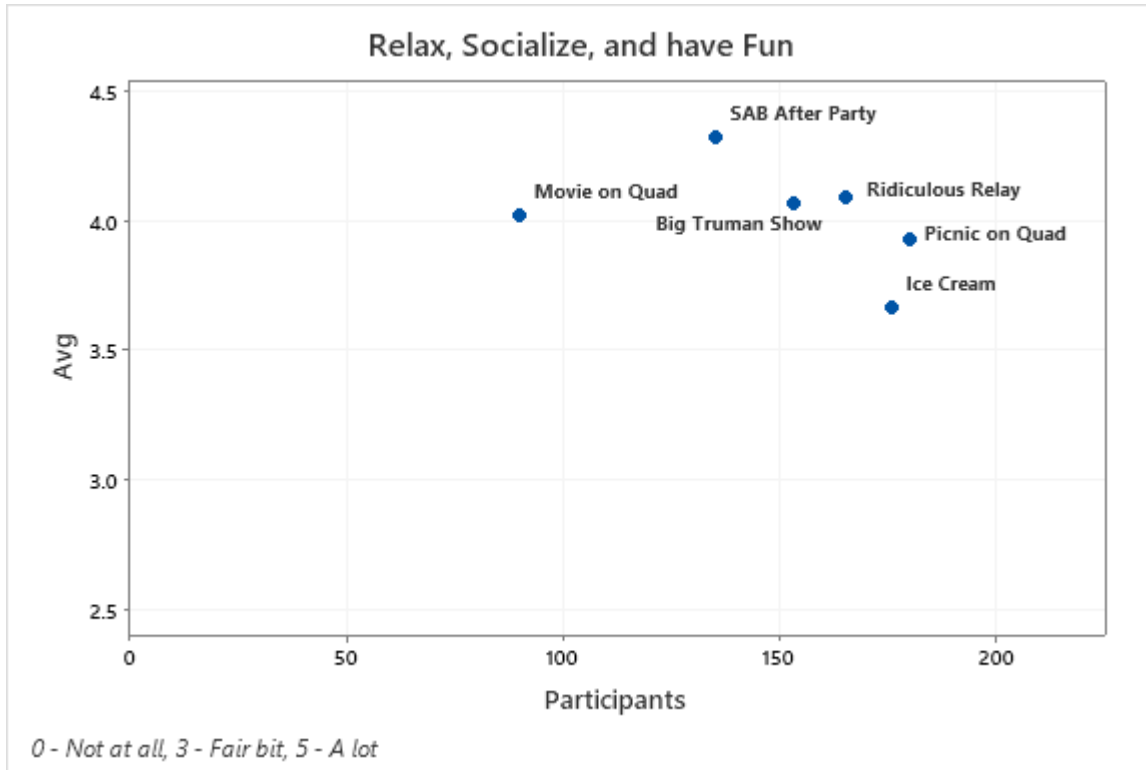


Figure 20 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to relax, socialize, and have some fun?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Ice Cream	33	9	22	44	45	56	3.7	176
Picnic on Quad	29	2	20	34	57	67	3.9	180
Movie on Quad	119	0	8	19	26	37	4.0	90
Ridiculous Relay	44	5	11	28	41	80	4.1	165
Big Truman Show	53	4	9	26	47	67	4.1	153
SAB After Party	73	2	8	19	21	85	4.3	135

Table 7 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to relax, socialize, and have some fun?” (0 = did not participate)