

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 during new student orientation. It allows a better understanding of student demographics and expectations. In 2024, 518 students completed the survey resulting in a response rate of approximately 82%. This was a dramatic increase in response rate from recent years and approaches the rates seen before the pandemic.

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 89% of respondents visited Truman State's campus at least once as part of the admission process. The percentage of students who had not visited Truman before attending, or who had not visited any college campus, was substantially higher in this First Year cohort than in previous years. This could be due to sampling bias (possibly a higher response rate amongst international students) but could be due to actual trends in Truman recruiting. Although the number of students not conducting a campus visit was increased, there was also a general increase in the number of campus visits with more students taking multiple visits before choosing Truman (with the only substantial decrease incurring in students only visiting a single college).

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 historically been the second and third most important reasons for choosing Truman, respectively, financial aid surpassed cost as the second most important reason for the first time ever last fall and this was seen again this year. This new ordering indicates a possible shift in the primary reason students are choosing Truman and a review of the last 6 years shows a decreasing emphasis on academics and an increase focus on financial aid.

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 2024 entering class is very similar in makeup to the 2023 first-year cohort with each classification being within 1% of the previous year. Approximately 20% identifying themselves as upper class, 27% as upper middle class, 19% as middle class, 22% as working class, and 12% as lower class. The general trend over the last 5 years is an increasing number of students indicating income levels above \$100K but that classification remained stable from 2023 to 2024. The educational background of the 2024 cohort is also very similar to the 2023 cohort, with approximately 24% of the incoming students indicate they are first generation (with neither parent having a bachelor's degree) while 47% of the incoming class indicate that both of their parents have a bachelor's degree. Although first generation status increased slightly this year, there has been a decreasing trend in self-reported first generation status over the last 5 years.

Connections within Truman Week

Connections derived from Truman Week 2024 were slightly less than 2023 and 2022. Students felt that Truman Week was equally effect at introducing them to faculty, staff and other students with approximately 95% of respondents indicating that Truman Week was helpful in meeting individuals

within these groups, but that was several percentages lower than previous years. Additionally, students indicated that Truman Week was less effective at meeting multiple faculty, as there was a decrease in multiple associations and an increase in singular associations. Following Truman Week, 94% of the students could identify at least one connection for mutual support, which was similar to the previous year. In comparing 2024 data to previous cohorts, there is slight decrease in perceived student interactions with students and faculty and fewer strong bonds with multiple individuals.

Expectations

Over 97% of respondents expect to graduate Truman knowing at least one faculty member well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation and 43% expect to know four or more faculty members that well upon graduation. The most common expectation for first semester grades was A-/B+ and about 4% of students expect to average lower than a B during their first semester at Truman.

Attitude towards Truman

Approximately 87% of the first-year students reported having a positive or strongly positive attitude towards Truman at the time of the survey (with less than 1% indicating any type of negative attitude). There was a substantial increase in students being strongly positive with that going from 28% to 36% for the 2024 cohort (approaching the 41% from Fall 2022). Following Truman Days, 93% of students indicated some commitment to returning to Truman for their second year (with 64% being almost certain to return). In general, the attitude of the 2024 cohort is very similar than that of the 2023 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 and CDI Cookout 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 newer activity this year was “The Beginnings of Belonging” which was well attended and scored fairly high (Fig 19). This was the second year of a new question on the survey to evaluate the social activities on their merits for fun and relaxation (Fig 20 & Table 7). All the activities scored similarly to 2023 except for the Picnic on the Quad, which saw a substantial decrease in both attendance and rating. Amongst the social activities, the SAB after Party was a clear hit with students who attended.

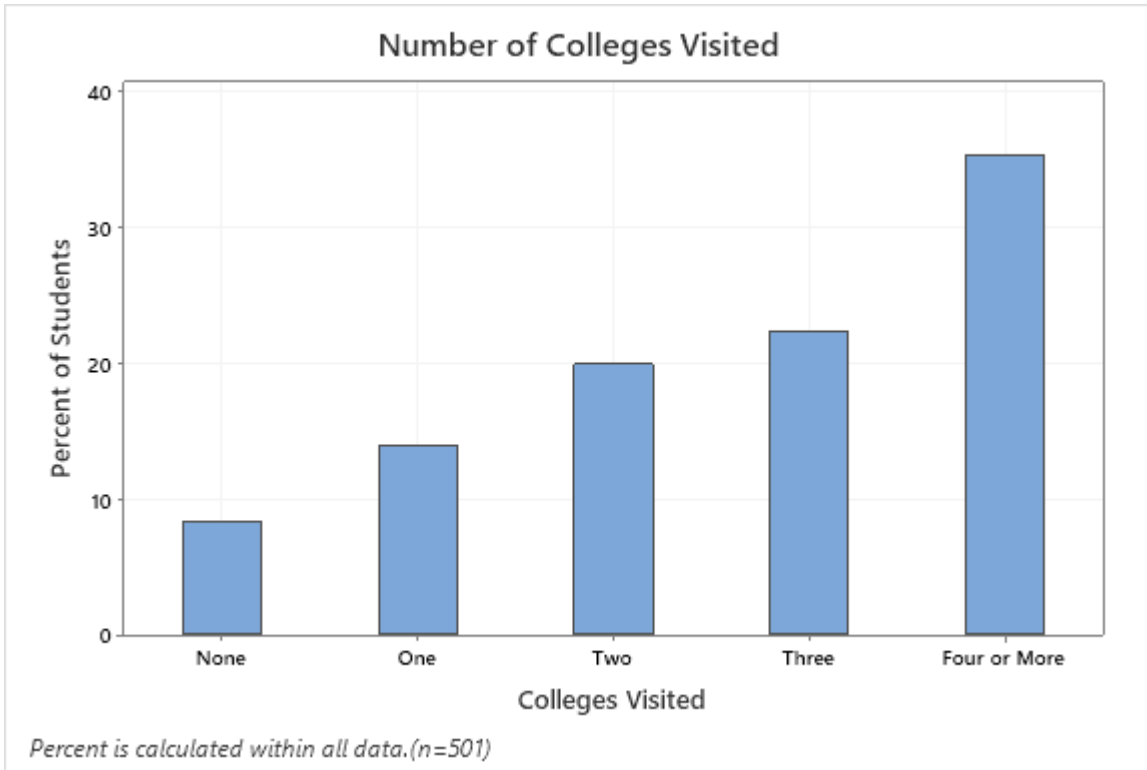


Figure 1 – “In selecting a college, how many colleges or university campuses did you visit?”

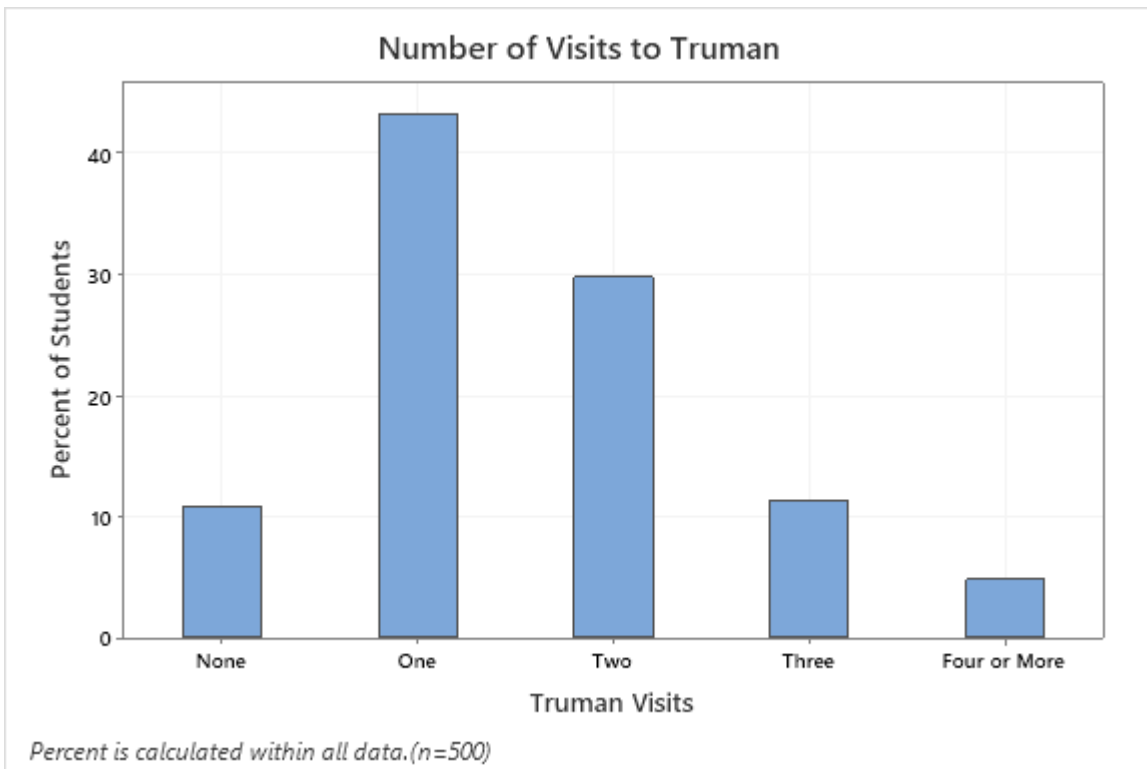


Figure 2 – “In making a college selection, how many times did you visit Truman State University?”

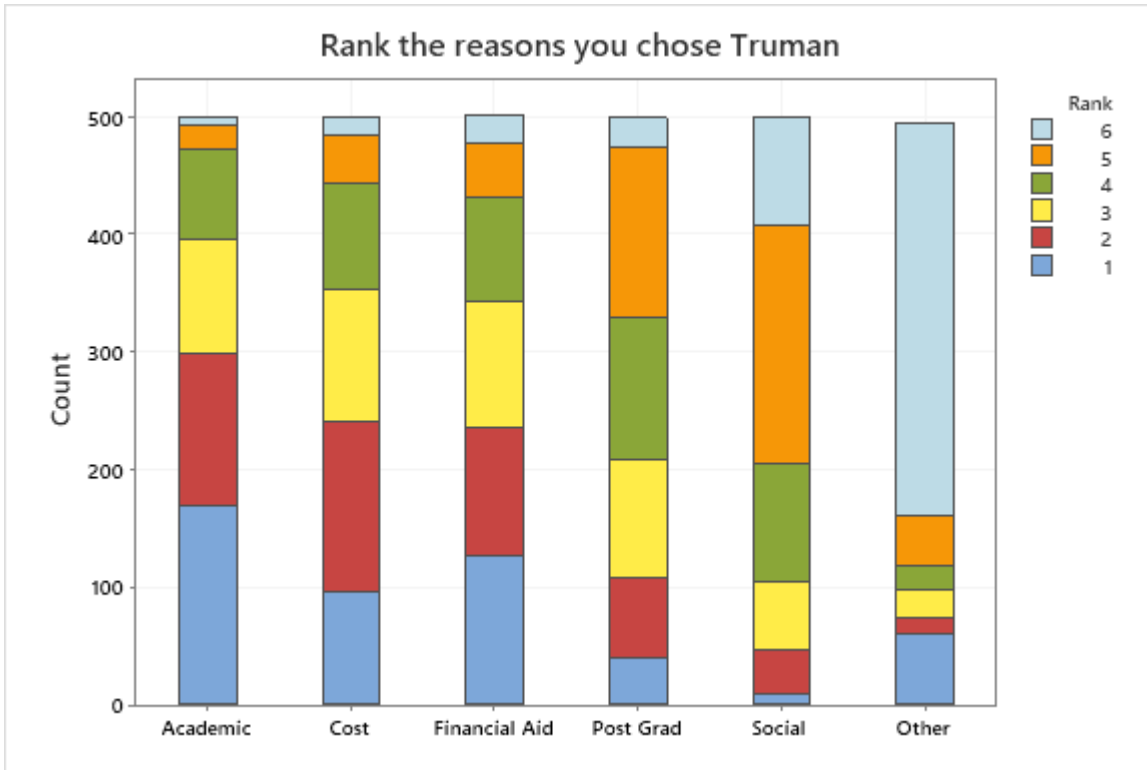


Figure 3 – “Please rank these reasons for choosing Truman. Assign the most important reason number 1, the second most important number 2, etc. until you have used all six ranks.

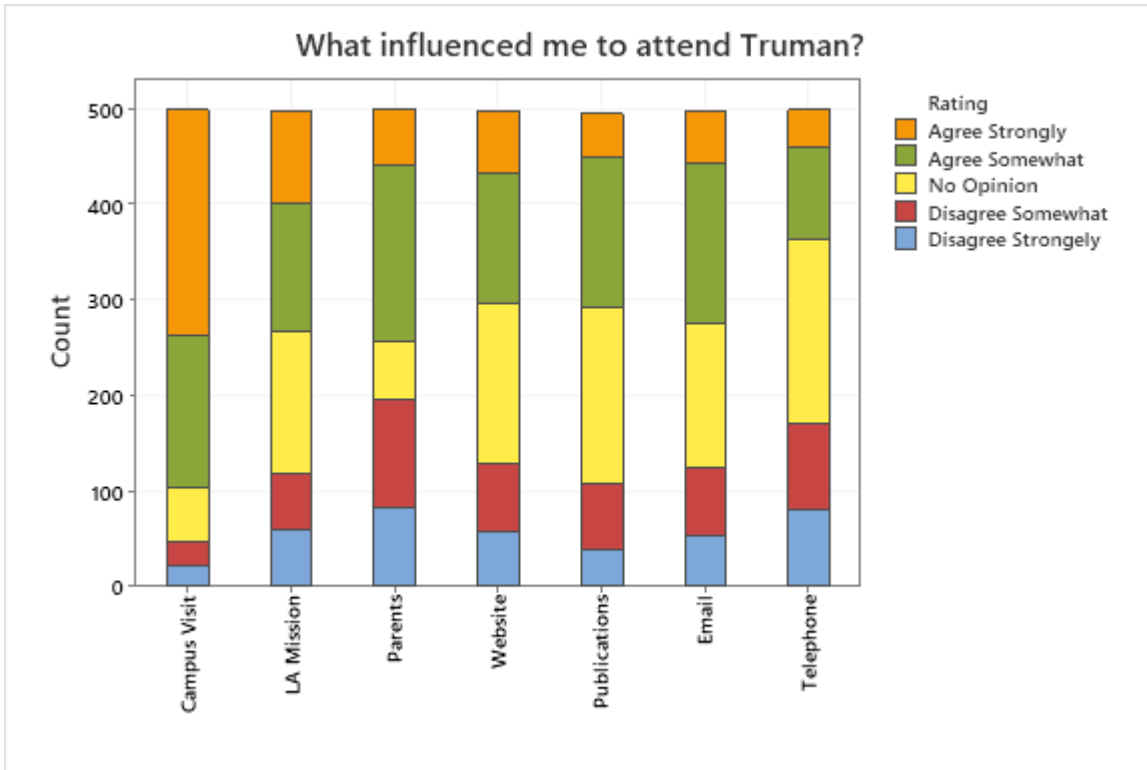


Figure 4a – “Please indicate your opinion (on the level of influence in attending Truman) by marking one response on each question”

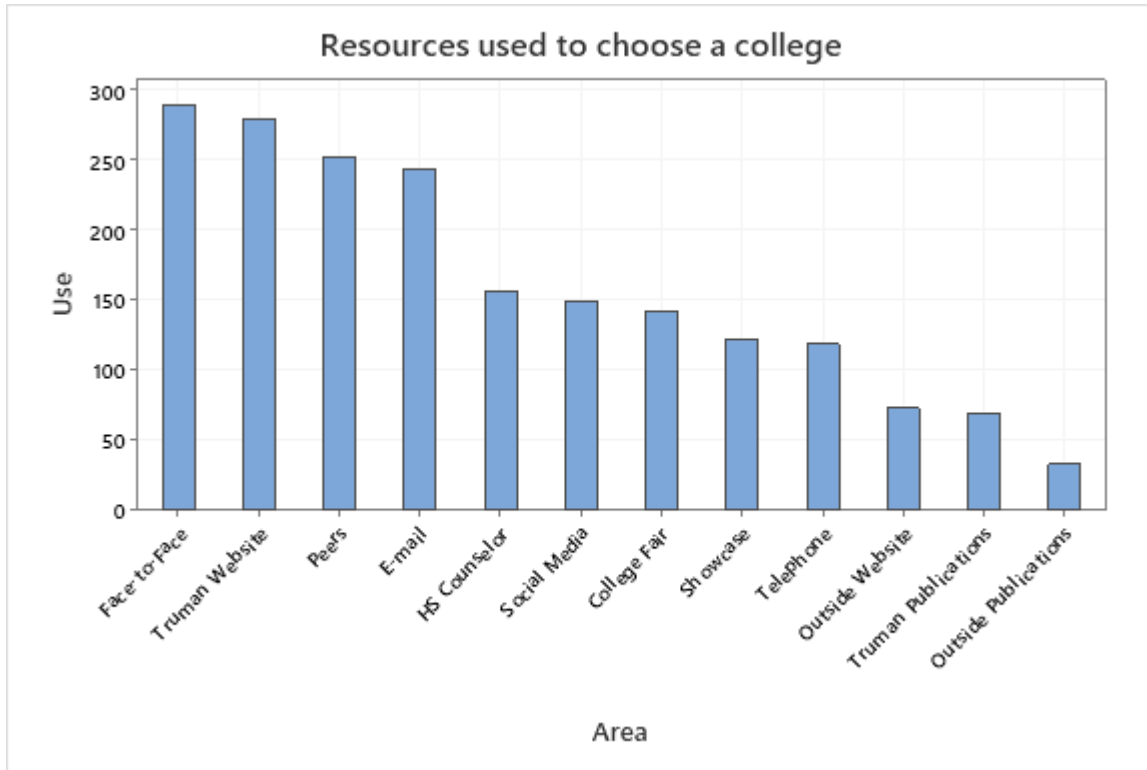


Figure 4b – “Which of these resources did you use to choose a college? (Check as many as apply)”

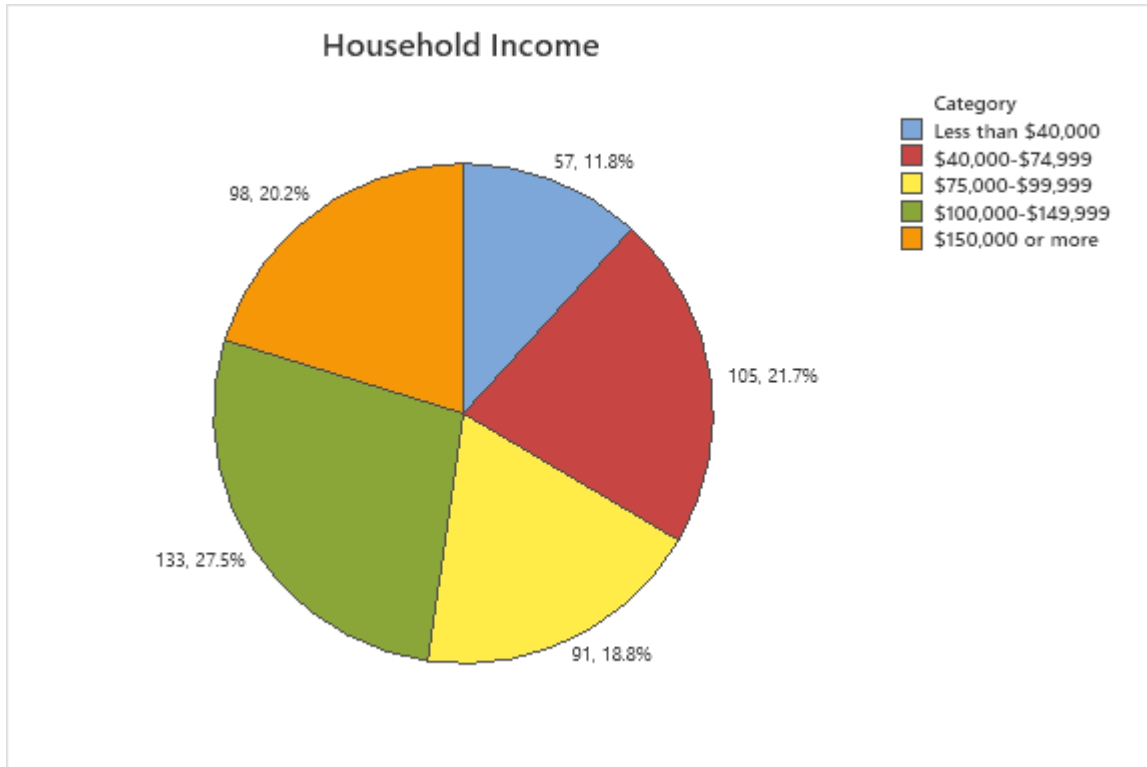


Figure 5 – “What is your best estimate of your parent's total income last year? Consider income from all sources before taxes.”

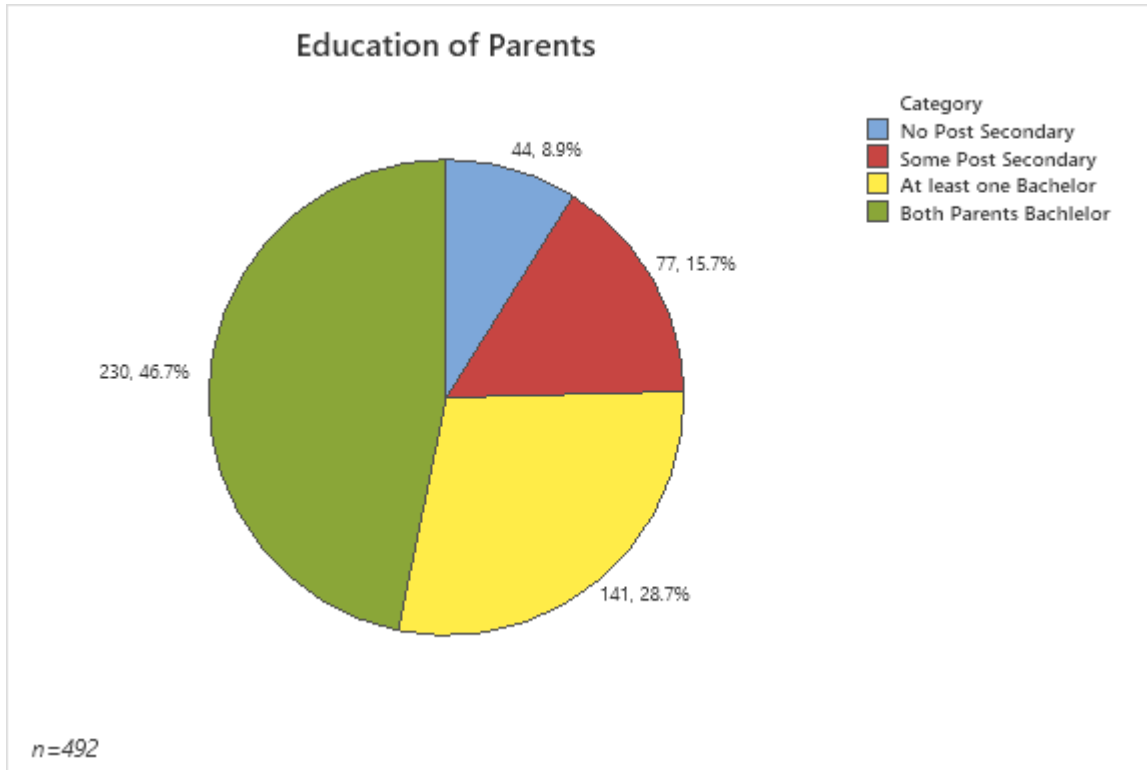


Figure 6 – “What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?”

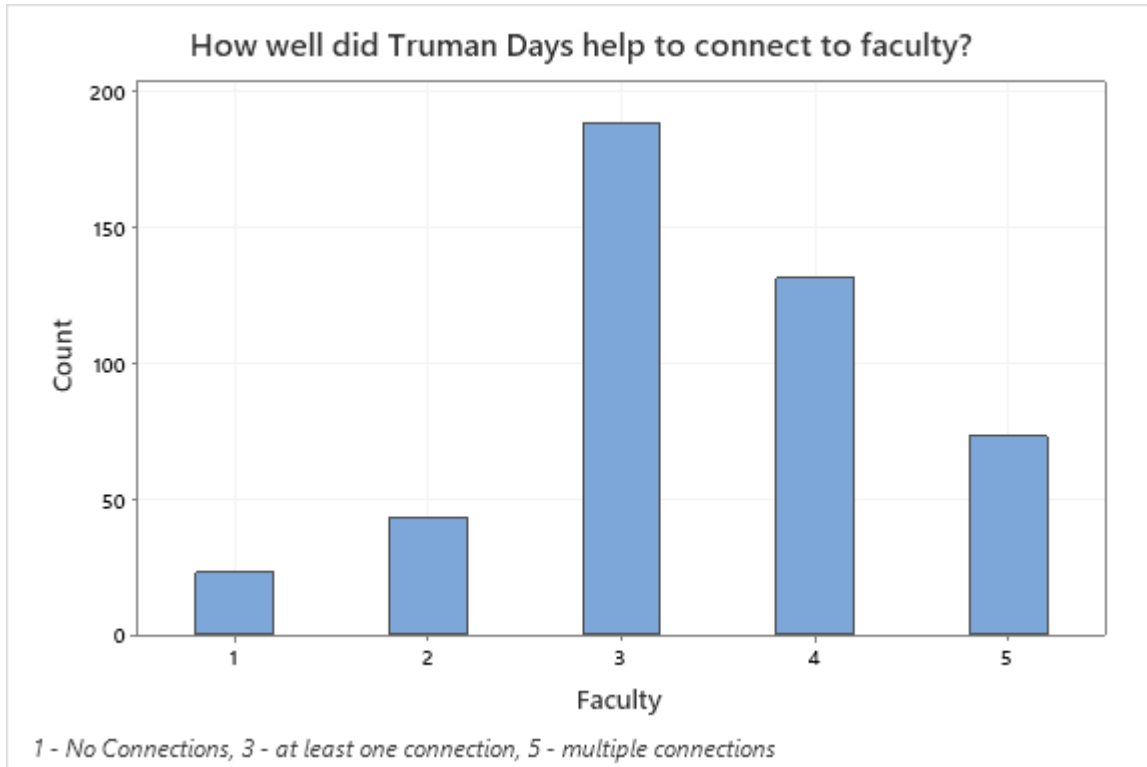


Figure 7 – “How well did Truman Days do at introducing you to faculty and staff?”

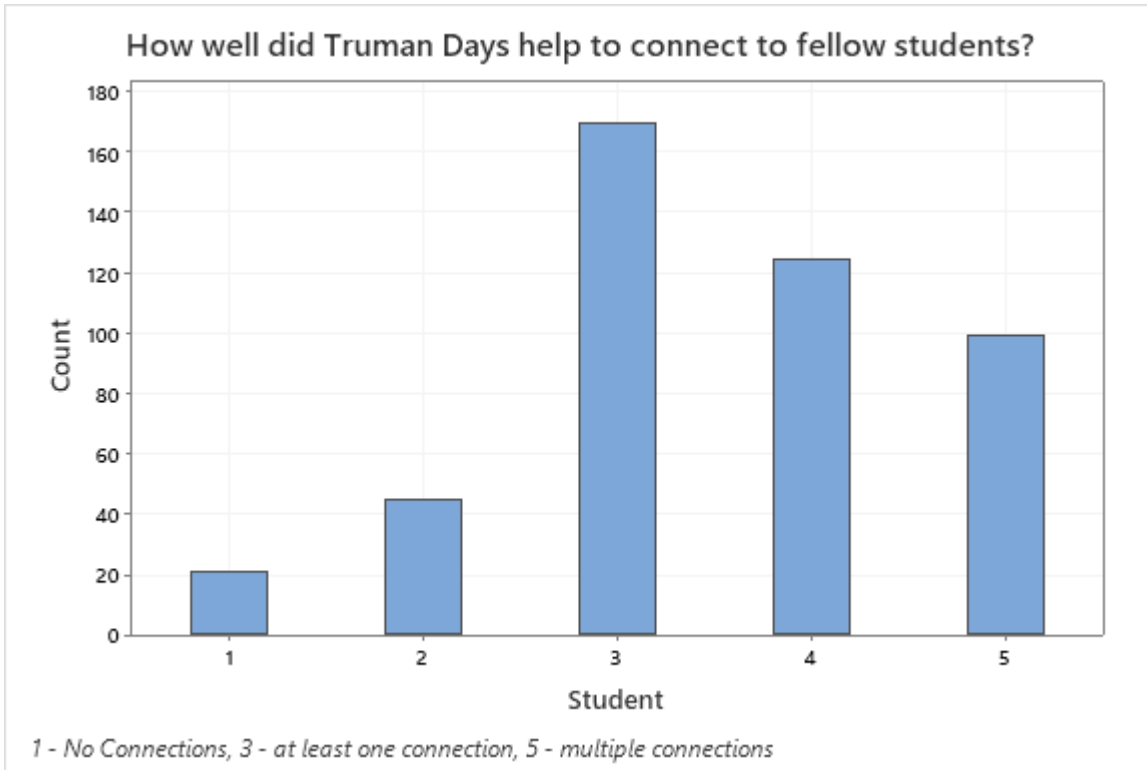


Figure 8 – “How well did Truman Days help you get connected to your fellow students?”

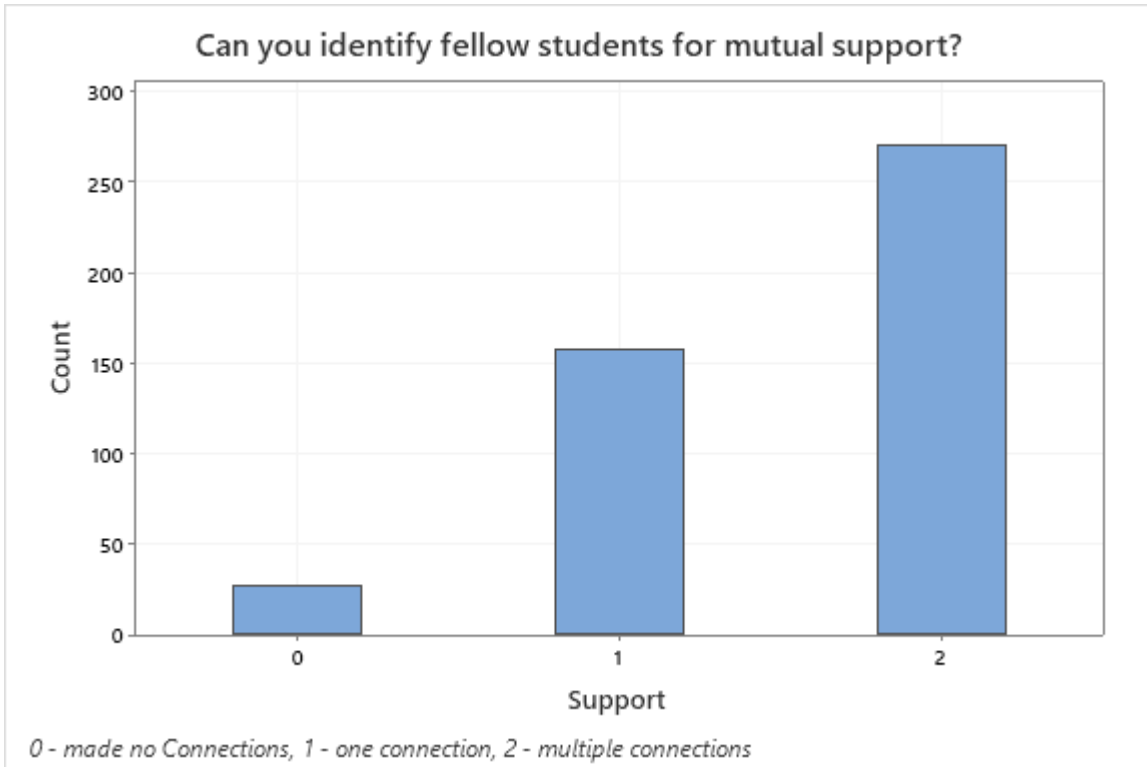


Figure 9 – “Can you identify fellow students that can help support you and that you can help support?”

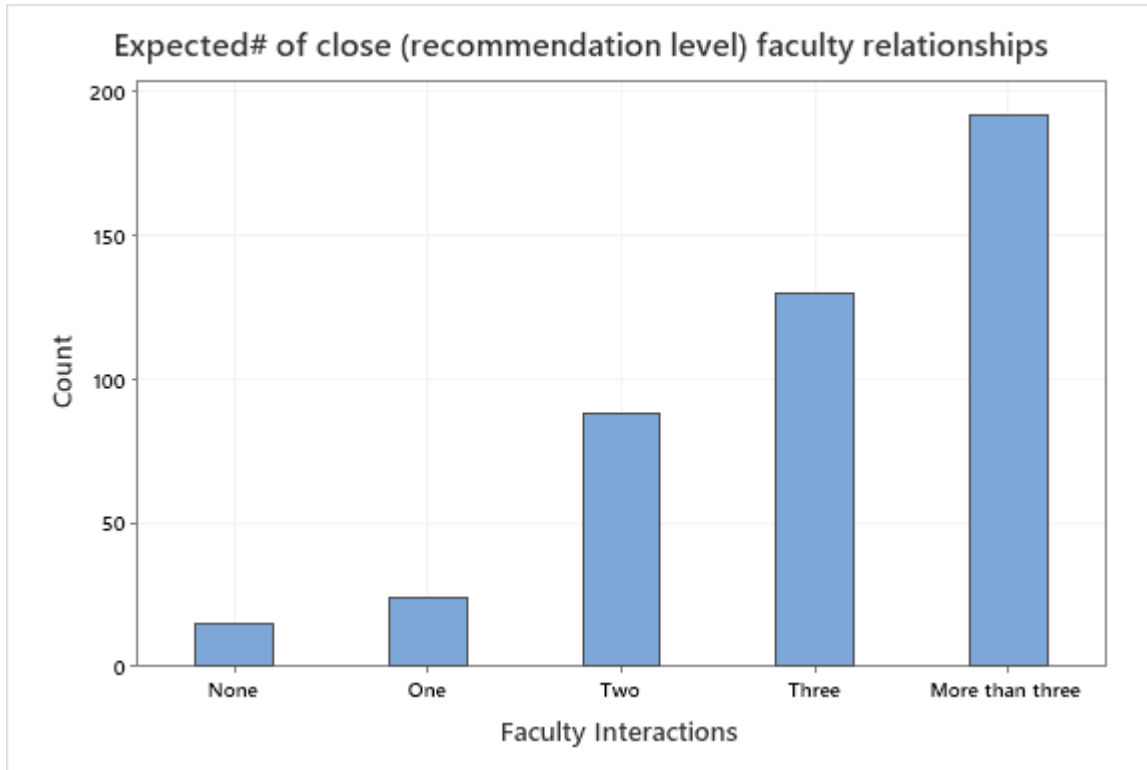


Figure 10 – “Upon graduation from Truman, how many faculty members do you expect to know well enough that you would ask them for a letter of recommendation?”

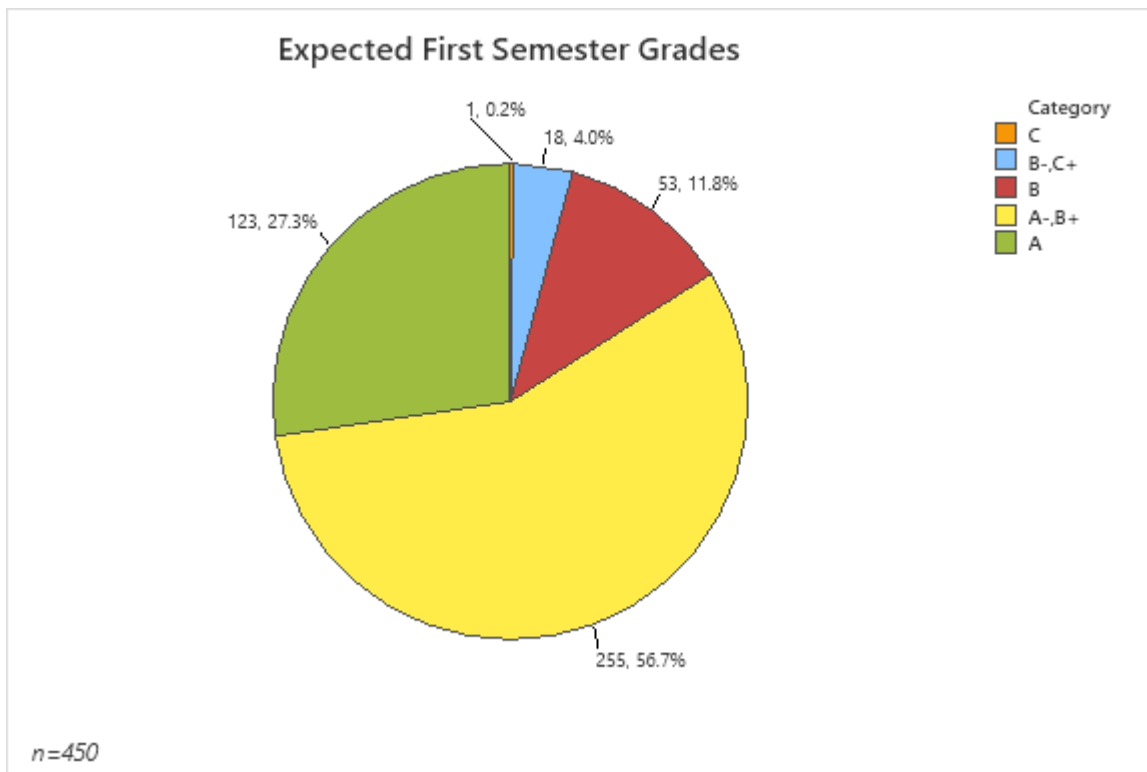


Figure 11 – “What do you expect most of your first semester grades at Truman to be?”

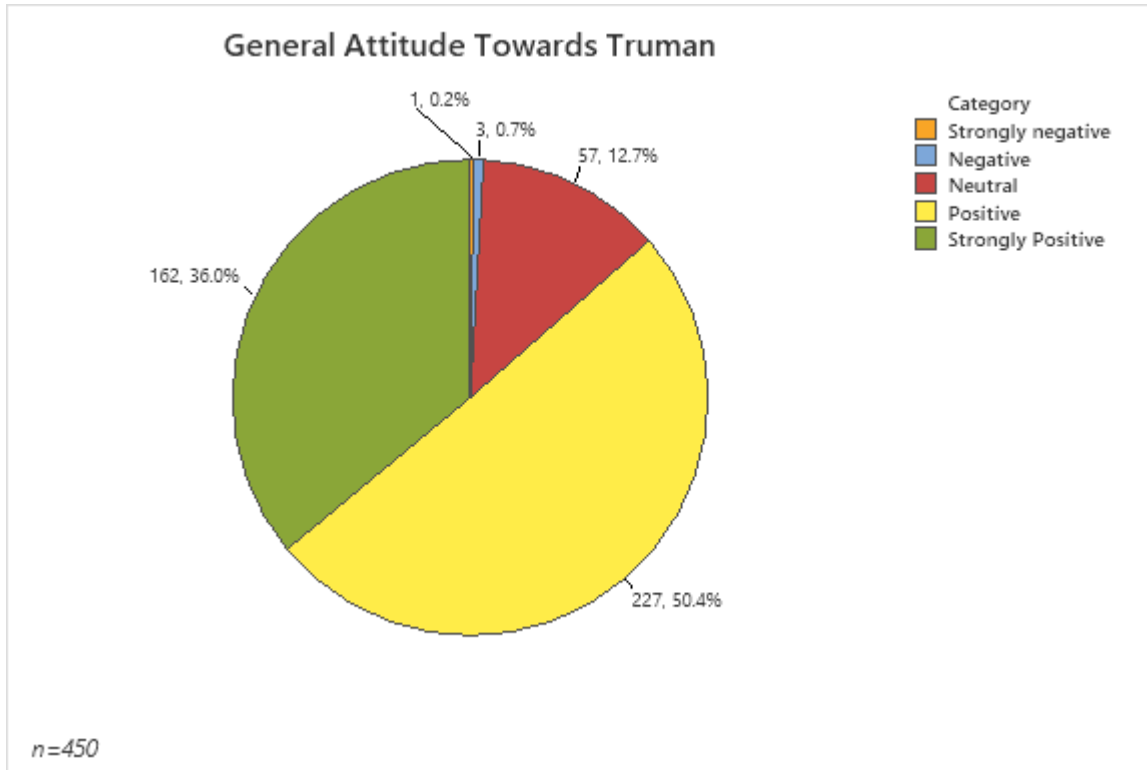


Figure 12 – “At the present time, your general attitude toward Truman is?”

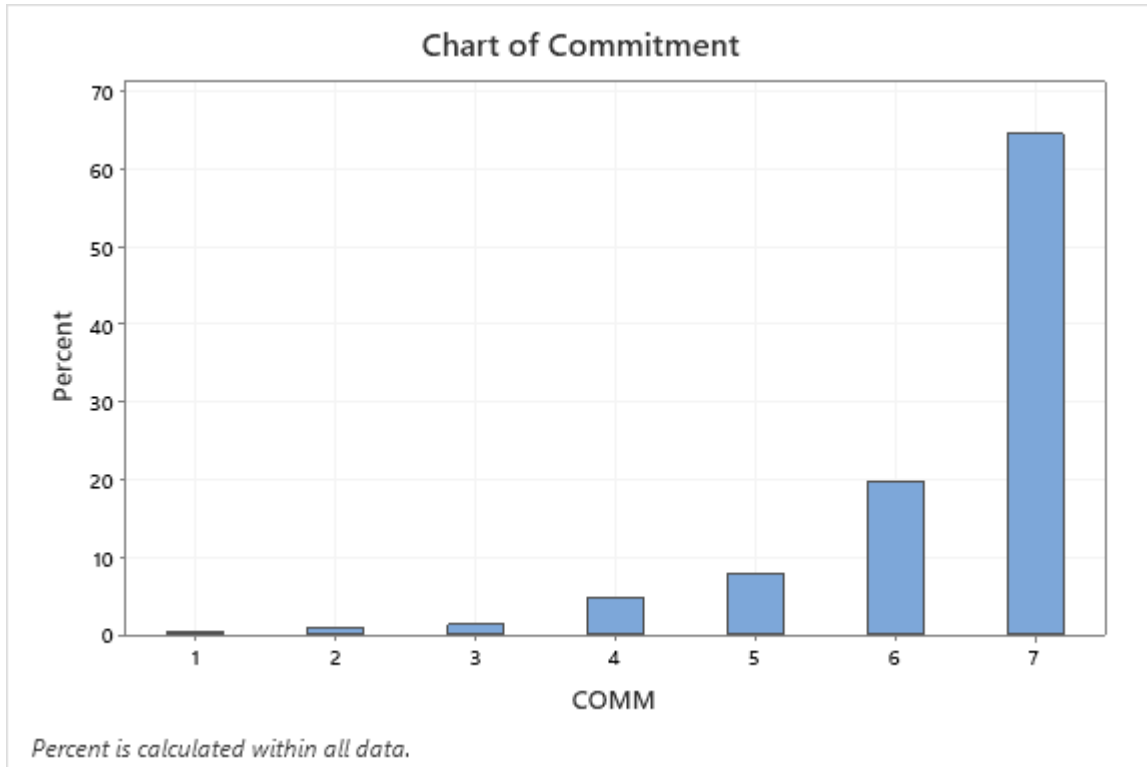


Figure 13 – “Now that Truman Week is over, how committed are you to staying to Truman for a second year and beyond?”

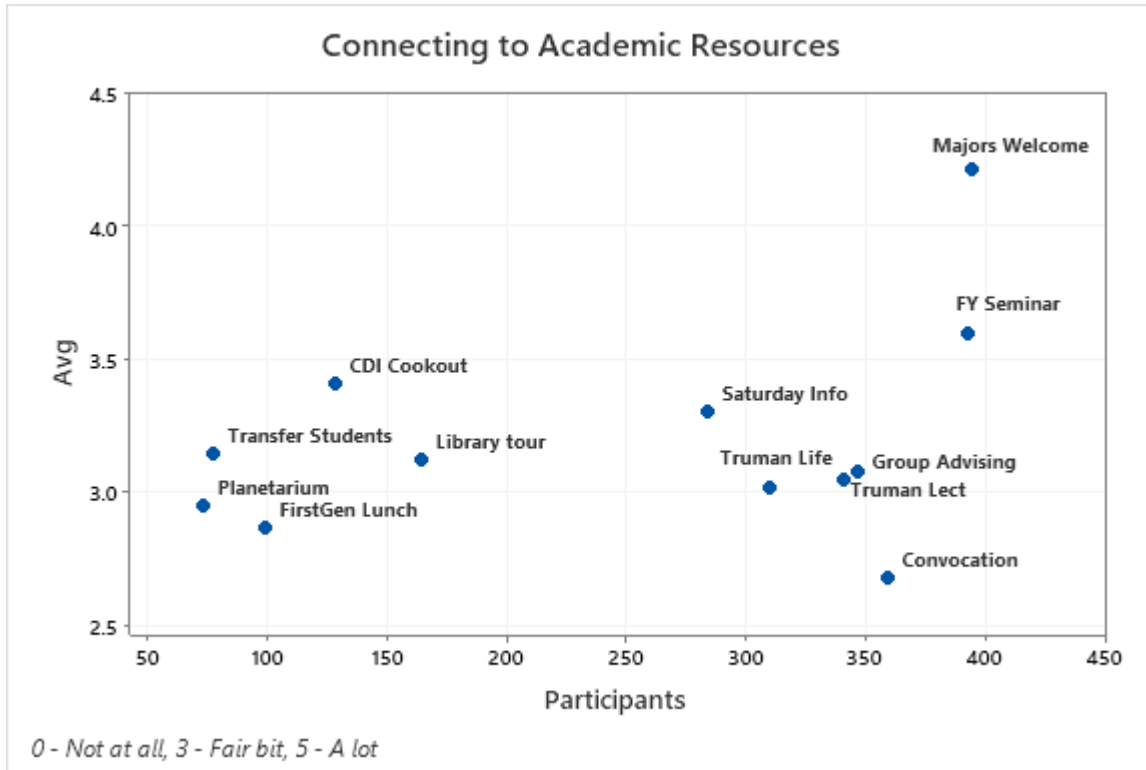


Figure 14 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Academic Resources?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Convocation	97	68	95	112	52	32	2.7	359
Truman Life	140	27	59	136	57	31	3.0	310
FirstGen Lunch	357	22	16	32	11	18	2.9	99
Group Advising	104	36	58	133	83	37	3.1	347
Saturday Info	166	21	37	103	82	41	3.3	284
Library tour	285	19	29	58	29	29	3.1	164
Majors Welcome	61	9	20	50	114	201	4.2	394
Planetarium	382	14	13	24	7	15	2.9	73
FY Seminar	59	15	47	114	122	95	3.6	393
Transfer Students	377	13	9	25	14	16	3.1	77
Truman Lect	114	34	62	134	76	35	3.0	341
CDI Cookout	326	19	11	30	35	33	3.4	128

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

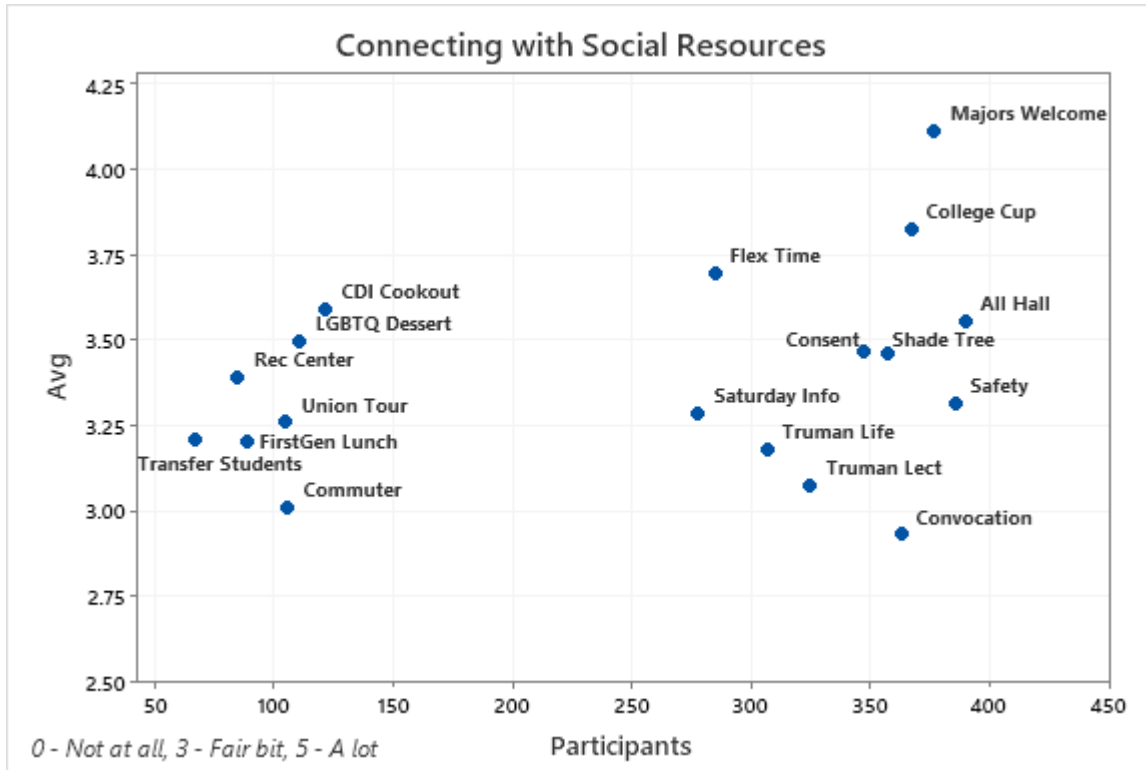


Figure 15 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help connecting you with relevant Social Resources?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
All Hall	61	19	53	112	106	100	3.6	390
Safety	64	33	63	114	102	74	3.3	386
College Cup	86	17	38	75	100	137	3.8	367
Commuter	348	17	14	42	17	16	3.0	106
Consent	103	26	37	113	91	80	3.5	347
Convocation	88	53	78	121	64	47	2.9	363
Truman Life	141	21	51	120	83	32	3.2	307
FirstGen Lunch	359	16	8	27	18	20	3.2	89
Flex Time	166	14	32	71	78	90	3.7	285
Saturday Info	173	21	43	95	74	45	3.3	278
LGBTQ Dessert	340	17	6	27	27	34	3.5	111
Majors Welcome	69	11	16	67	109	174	4.1	377
Rec Center	366	9	8	32	13	23	3.4	85
Shade Tree	96	25	43	113	95	81	3.5	357
Transfer Students	385	13	6	18	14	16	3.2	67
Truman Lect	127	33	57	126	71	38	3.1	325
CDI Cookout	331	13	9	29	35	36	3.6	122
Union Tour	348	11	11	43	20	20	3.3	105

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

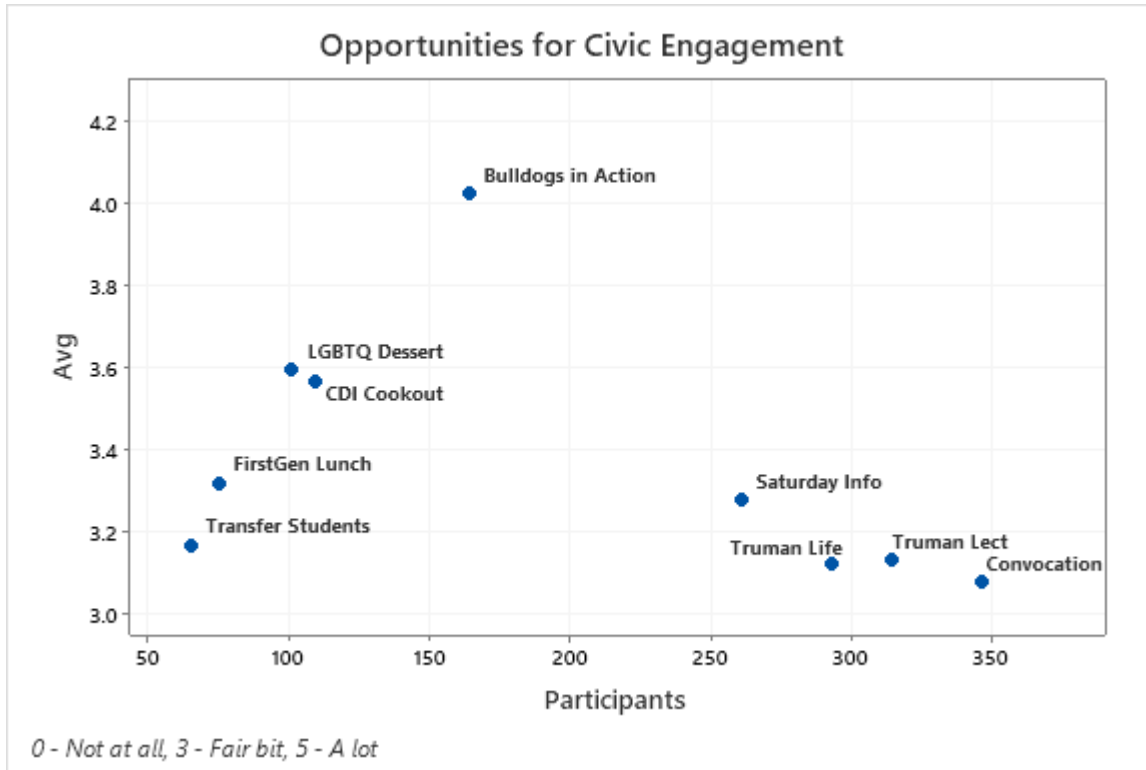


Figure 16 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help identify opportunities for Civic Engagement and its role in the Truman Culture?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	281	9	9	36	25	85	4.0	164
Convocation	97	39	71	105	85	46	3.1	346
Truman Life	146	21	54	118	68	32	3.1	293
FirstGen Lunch	366	10	10	19	18	18	3.3	75
Saturday Info	180	20	37	94	70	40	3.3	261
LGBTQ Dessert	340	11	7	26	25	32	3.6	101
Transfer Students	374	11	8	19	13	14	3.2	65
Truman Lect	129	25	60	120	67	42	3.1	314
CDI Cookout	330	11	9	26	33	30	3.6	109

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)

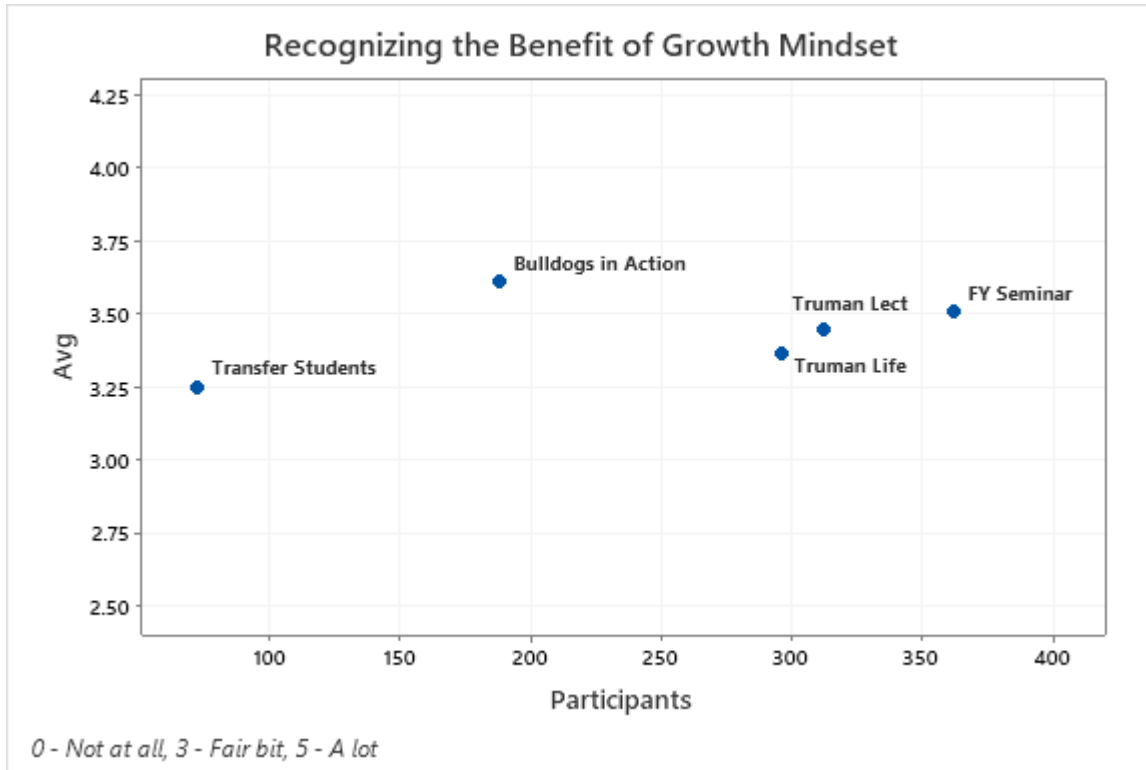


Figure 17 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to recognize the benefits of a growth mindset and the value of failure as data in the pursuit of success?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	249	12	19	50	56	51	3.6	188
Truman Life	138	18	40	104	84	50	3.4	296
Transfer Students	362	11	5	25	17	14	3.3	72
Truman Lect	123	22	34	106	83	67	3.4	312
FY Seminar	72	25	37	111	108	81	3.5	362

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)

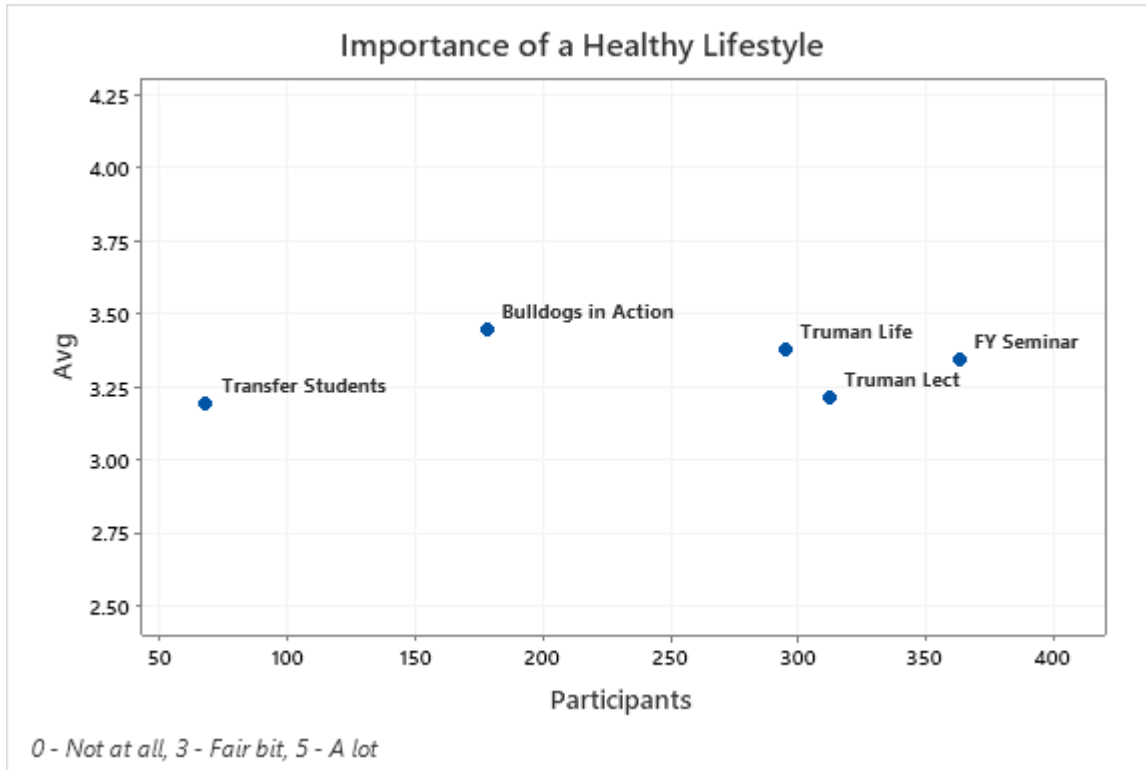


Figure 18 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you understand the importance of a balanced, healthy life habits?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	260	18	14	62	39	45	3.4	178
Truman Life	139	23	33	102	84	53	3.4	295
FY Seminar	76	31	47	119	98	68	3.3	363
Transfer Students	366	11	5	26	12	14	3.2	68
Truman Lect	125	31	44	113	76	48	3.2	312

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)

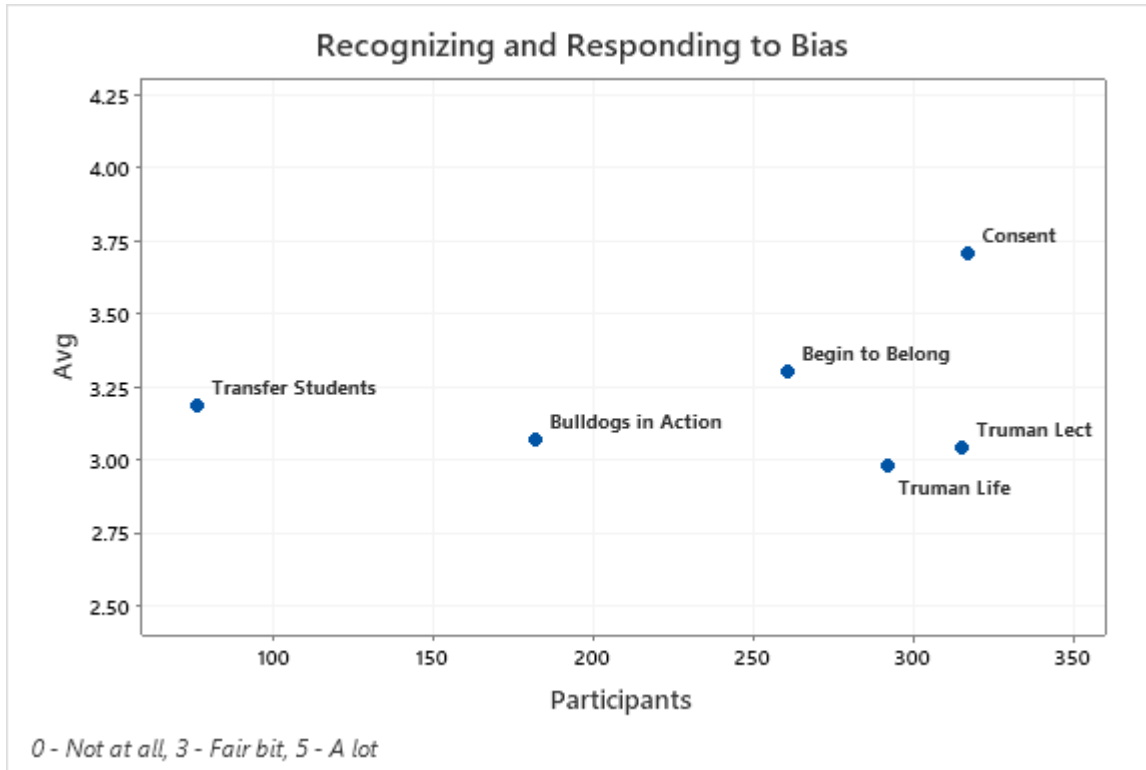


Figure 19 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you recognize bias and unconscious bias and develop strategies to respond and/or intervene?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Bulldogs in Action	255	30	30	56	30	36	3.1	182
Consent	121	17	23	91	91	95	3.7	317
Truman Life	144	37	52	116	54	33	3.0	292
Transfer Students	359	14	4	27	16	15	3.2	76
Truman Lect	121	40	47	125	67	36	3.0	315
Begin to Belong	176	21	33	97	66	44	3.3	261

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)

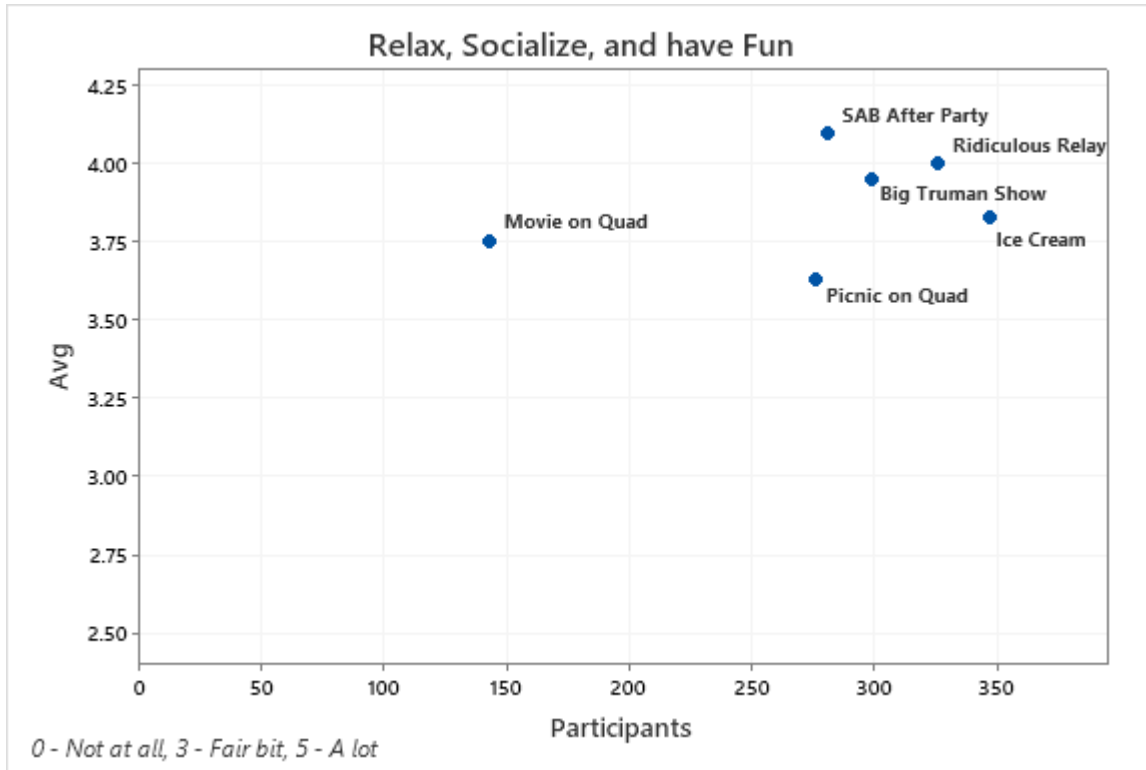


Figure 20 – “How well did each listed Truman Week activity help you to relax, socialize, and have some fun?”

Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	Avg	Participants
Ice Cream	92	14	33	83	85	132	3.8	347
Picnic on Quad	161	13	32	71	88	72	3.6	276
Movie on Quad	294	9	6	44	36	48	3.8	143
Ridiculous Relay	111	13	25	61	77	150	4.0	326
Big Truman Show	141	13	21	62	75	128	3.9	299
SAB After Party	159	12	17	46	62	144	4.1	281

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