

# First year students mostly satisfied

By Bethel Swift  
**First Year Contributor**

As they wrap up their first semester, most Columbia freshmen are pleased with the school, engaged in campus events and planning to return for another term, according to a Chronicle survey of more than 100 first-year students.

The Chronicle talked to 93 freshmen and nine transfers enrolled in required New Millennium Studies: First Year Seminar courses. Most students indicated they were happy with their first term at Columbia. The average satisfaction rating among the surveyed students was 4.1 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest.

Ninety of the students, or 89 percent, said they would continue at Columbia. Just seven students, or 8 percent, indicated they would not return, while three, or about 3 percent, were undecided.

According to the survey, students were most pleased with their classmates and Columbia's downtown location.

"I love being in downtown Chicago," said Ali Kangas, a freshman majoring in fashion/retail management. "There are so many opportunities for the future."

Kangas said the school does have some drawbacks, though. She said she wishes there were athletics at Columbia, and added, "It's kind of hard to meet people when you commute."

Still, the survey showed that 95 percent of those new students surveyed were not having trouble making friends at Columbia.

"I didn't expect to find really close friends so fast here," said

MeSun Barnett, a freshman film major.

Film and video major Azania Jarvis agreed.

"It is too good to be true. Everyone is so supportive and approachable," she said.

Time spent commuting was one of the students' biggest complaints, along with cost of attendance and organization on the administrative level. Students were divided on coursework and orientation.

"Books are way too much money; so is the cost to [live in the] dorm[s] on campus," said Christina Newbauer, a freshman majoring in public relations. "I spent almost \$400 [my] first semester on books."

Newbauer said she usually spends at least an hour each way on her commute from her home in Lockport, south of Chicago. The cost of Columbia's dorms is keeping her from living in the city, she said.

In spite of the distance issue for commuters, a majority of the students surveyed said they have gotten involved in Columbia's social scene. About 20 percent of the students surveyed said they were involved in at least one student club or organization at Columbia, and about 72 percent said they had attended an on-campus event this semester.

Newbauer said she loved Columbia's convocation and wishes the school would have more school-wide events like it.

"I loved the costumes, the free stuff and the overall idea of the creepy circus [theme]," she said.

While extracurricular activities

are significant, students also answered questions about how they were adjusting to their classes at Columbia

"Classes are a touch longer than I am used to," said Gurther Shabady, a freshman audio arts and acoustics major.

Lily Xue, a fashion design major who transferred to Columbia this fall, agrees:

"The once-a-week classes are long," she said.

Latham Williams, a film and video major, said he hasn't learned a lot of new material in his classes at Columbia.

"[I'm] not too impressed, considering how much I'm paying," added Marie Heilich, a freshman who won't be returning to Columbia.

Gissela Faggi, also a film and video major, disagreed. She said

she was surprised at the intensity of her core classes.

"I spend my entire weekend doing homework," she said.

A number of students were displeased with class availability. Heather Barry, a transfer student majoring in photography, said she was disappointed to find out that classes she had seen in an older course catalog are no longer offered.

Sixty-five percent of the students surveyed said their teachers were very supportive and available, and another 34 percent said their teachers were at least somewhat available and supportive. Only one respondent said the teachers at Columbia were not available or supportive at all.

"So far, I like Columbia," said Katie Faltus, a freshman majoring in theater.

## Loans: Possible loan cuts would be largest in history

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is a percentage of the loan's principle balance. However, the impact on individual students would be minimal. Students would have to pay an extra \$10 to \$15, according to Waters.

The typical freshman Stafford loan is \$2,625 and right now students pay a 1.5 percent origination fee, which comes to \$40. If the legislation is passed into law, the origination fee will be raised to 2.5 percent, according to Waters, increasing the fee on a \$2,625 loan to \$65.

"Just because it doesn't impact people individually doesn't mean you shouldn't express your unhappiness with it, because it does represent a cut in funding for students," Waters said.

Molly Massell, a junior illustration major, thinks it would be harsh to cut student loans to lower the federal deficit.

"I'm depending on loans, and I'm going to have to pay them back," Massell said. "If they were cut I wouldn't have the money to pay for school."

If the budget bill is passed it will be the largest cut to federal student aid in history.

"I find it ironic that the government, as of late, has been looking for ways to cut the budget," said Adam Pluth, a junior graphic design major. "Instead of, you know, not starting wars in the first place and spending money like oil tycoons."

