



**Nelson Mandela
Metropolitan
University**

f o r t o m o r r o w

**REPORT ON THE 2012
STUDENT LIFE SURVEY**

**Developed by the Department of Student Governance and
Development and the Department of Educational Administration
(MSU)**

Author: D. Potgieter

Assisted by:

Associate Professor M. Wawrzynski, (Michigan State University)

November 2012

CONTENTS PAGE

SECTION ONE

1. Introduction: Overview of Student Life Survey	1
1.1 Structure of the report	2
1.2 Questionnaire design and data collection process	2

SECTION TWO

2. Interpretation and presentation of the results	6
2.1 Demographic trends with respect to the survey	7
2.1.1 Gender	7
2.1.2 Age	8
2.1.3 Race	8
2.1.4 Year of study	9
2.1.5 Faculty representation	10
2.1.6 Campus base	11
2.1.7 On campus vs. Off campus	12
2.2 Perceptions of student life at NMMU	13
2.3 General overview of student life activities	15
2.4 Activity according to race	16
3. Time spent on student life activities	17
4. On vs. Off campus participation	20
5. Events students are most likely to attend	23
6. Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction with student life activity participation	24
6.1 General overview of students' satisfaction	24
6.2 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction according to gender	25

6.3 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction according to race	26
6.4 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction On vs. Off campus	27
7. Perceived benefits of participating in student life activities by students who currently do not participate in student life activities	29
8. Interference with involvement in student life activities	33
9. Communication	33
10. Oppidani Council	34
11. Transport	34
Mode of transport according to race	34
SECTION THREE	
12. Areas of concern	35
13. Recommendations and conclusion	36
14. Acknowledgements	36
Appendix A: Final version of Student Life Survey	37

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Registered students vs. respondents according to gender	7
Graph 2: Registered students vs. respondents according to race	8
Graph 3: Registered students vs. respondents according to year of study	9
Graph 4: Faculty representation	10
Graph 5: Participation according to campus	11
Graph 6: On campus vs. off campus breakdown	12
Graph 7: Participation in student life activities	15
Graph 8: Participation according to race	16
Graph 9: Society participation per race group	17
Graph 10: Sport participation per race group	18
Graph 11: Residence events participation per race group	18
Graph 12: Arts & Culture participation per race group	19
Graph 13: On vs. off campus participation per student life activity	20
Graph 14: On vs. off campus society participation	21
Graph 15: On vs. off campus sport participation	21

Graph 16: On vs. off campus Residence events participation	22
Graph 17: On vs. off campus Arts & Culture participation	22
Graph 18: Mode of transport according to race	34

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Perceptions of student life	13
Table 2: Differences in perceptions according to race	14
Table 3: Events students are most likely to attend	23
Table 4: General overview of perceived benefits and satisfaction for students who participate in student life activities	24
Table 5: Perceived benefits and satisfaction of student life activity participants by gender	25
Table 6: Perceived benefits and satisfaction of participants according to race	27
Table 7: Perceived benefits and satisfaction of participants according to on vs. off campus students	27
Table 8: Perceived benefits associated with participating in student life activities by non-participants	29
Table 9: Perceived benefits of participation by non- participants according to gender	30

Table 10: Perceived benefits of participation by non-participants according to race	31
Table 11: Perceived benefits of participation by non-participants according to on vs. off campus students	32
Table 12: Single best way to communicate with students about events and activities	33

SECTION 1

1. INTRODUCTION: OVERVIEW OF STUDENT LIFE SURVEY

This is the fourth year the Department of Student Governance and Development (SGD) has engaged in the Student Life Survey. The objectives of the study were to

- assist in identifying possible causes in the lack of interest in student life;
- develop possible strategies to revive student interest; and
- analyse participation in student life with regards to race and nationality.

The survey is an assessment of the student experience in an effort to both understand the issues and challenges of students. It provided NMMU students with an opportunity to give their input and contribute to improving the overall student life experience at the NMMU.

The results of the previous surveys highlighted the following :

- Major constraints regarding student participation in campus life activities are transport, time and financial. .
- Activities were predominantly supported by black and the on-campus students.
- Students preferred communicating via NMMU e-mail, and the use of social media was increasing.

Continuation of the survey in 2012 should indicate if changes occurred.

Results of the survey have at least three specific benefits to the NMMU. First, it provides information to student affairs departments regarding the perceptions of students' views on student life with specific analysis given to the different cultural and gender attitudes. Second, it clarifies the issue of transport with regards to student life participation is as severe a challenge as previously thought. Third, it indicates the best possible communication strategies and tools to consider with regards to campus wide communication to the general student body.

The total number of respondents to the Student Life Survey comprised 2739 students. This represents 12.53 % of the 21 848 students who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. The estimated sampling error based on the survey sample size, the total number of respondents, and the overall response rate is 2.17.

Registered NMMU students on the North, South, 2nd Avenue and Missionvale campuses were offered the opportunity to participate in the study. George campus students were not included. Bird Street campus deals with mature students and the focus was specifically aimed at the student life offered on the North, South, 2nd Avenue and Missionvale campuses.

1.1 Structure of the report

The report is comprised of four sections. Section one discusses the design and data collection, section two contains an interpretation of the data results and section three discusses the areas of concern and recommendations and conclusions. Section four provides the appendix, which includes a copy of the survey.

1.2 Questionnaire design and data collection process

A two-pronged approach to data collection was employed. First, we used a census approach and posted a notice informing students about the Student Life Survey (SLS) and the relevant URL address on the University Portal System. Our rationale for choosing such an approach was that all NMMU students have access to the portal. The second means of recruitment used convenience sampling by placing student volunteers strategically around campus (e.g. cafeterias and public transportation areas) to ask students to complete a paper and pencil version of the SLS if they did not complete the on-line version. The second method of recruiting students was used because students *may* not be willing to deplete their web account by accessing and completing the survey on-line, may not have easy access to computers, or by completing a hardcopy may feel less threatened with regards to their own computer literacy. The respondents were assured anonymity in the on-line and paper versions of the consent form.

Chi-square tests for independence were used to determine if differences existed between the paper and pencil version and the on-line version respondents and also the survey responses for the two versions of the survey.

When compared to students who completed the survey online versus paper versions (although the results had statistical significance, the effect sizes were small):

- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that their family encourages them to continue their university education.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that overall, they are satisfied with their level of involvement in campus life activities at NMMU.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that participating in campus life activities enhances their academic work.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in acquiring skills that they can use after university.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping them to develop leadership skills.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping them to enhance their academic work.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping them to decide the type of work they want to do after university.

- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping them to relieve stress.
- A slightly greater proportion of students who completed the paper version of the survey than expected strongly agreed that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping them to enhance their CV and look more attractive to employers.
- A slightly greater proportion of females completed the paper version of the survey than expected and a slightly greater proportion of men completed the online version than expected.
- A slightly greater proportion of 2nd year students than expected completed the paper version of the survey. A slightly greater proportion of 1st and 4th years than expected completed the survey online.
- A greater proportion of students than expected in Engineering, the Built Environment, and Information Technology completed the survey online. A greater proportion of law students than expected completed the paper version of the survey.

The Student Life Survey was developed through a consultative process with the members of the Co-curricular Forum. Stakeholders included representatives from the Sport department, Arts and Culture and Residences. Associate Professor Matthew Wawrzynski from Michigan State University assisted with the design of a draft version of the Student Life Survey. The draft survey was distributed at the Co-curricular Forum and further suggestions and recommendations were incorporated into the final version. The Student Life Survey was submitted to the NMMU Research Ethics Committee (Human) for final approval.

The final version of the Student Life Survey comprised of the following sections (see Appendix A):

1. Perceptions of student life at NMMU (A Likert type scale was used).
2. Hours per week spent on student life activities
3. Events most likely to attend

4. For students participating: Students' satisfaction with their participation. (A Likert scale was used.)
5. For students not participating: Students' satisfaction with their participation. (A Likert scale was used.)
6. Interferences with involvement in student life activities
7. Communication
8. Biographical information

SECTION TWO

2. INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

A Likert-type rating scale with an unequal 1-5 agreement format was selected. There is an argument against having a mid-point being that people usually hold opinions or judgements one way or the other. The support for the idea of neutrality is that it represents a genuine alternative judgement and so does not express their opinions if they have no genuine position.

The responses for individual items are presented in tabular form as mean scores. The number of respondents who answered each question (n) is indicated in a separate column after the mean scores in the tables.

The mean scores represent the aggregate of the responses on the range from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). In the interpretation of the individual items, mean scores are interpreted in the following manner:

- A score of 4.2 and more indicates a high level of satisfaction
- A score of between 3.4 and 4.2 indicates an acceptable level of satisfaction;
- A score of between 2.6 and 3.4 indicates room for improvement
- A score of 2.6 and less signals a problem that is in need of urgent attention.

The data were coded and analysed with the assistance of a statistician. The statistical techniques used in the analysis, based on the relevance to the research questions is frequency analysis; cross-tabulation analysis and correlation analyses. Frequency analysis produces frequency counts and percentages for the value of an individual variable. Cross-tabulation enabled researchers to see if there is a relationship between two variables, while correlation analysis was used to test the existence of relationships between the variables being studied. Descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequencies, tables, percentages and correlation tests were used in the data analysis and summaries. Relationships between variables were identified, using

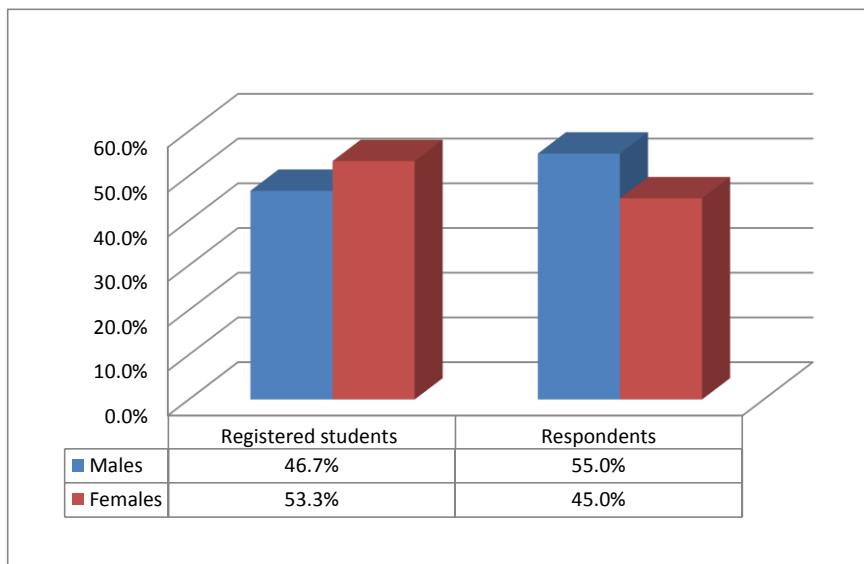
frequencies, chi-square tests for independence, independent sample t-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and multiple analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests.

2.1 Demographic trends with respect to the survey

In this section, respondents are described according to specific biographical variables including gender, age, race, year of study, faculty campus base, and on campus vs. off campus. Demographic comparisons showed respondents to be generally representative of the student population.

2.1.1 Gender

Graph 1: Registered students vs. respondents according to gender



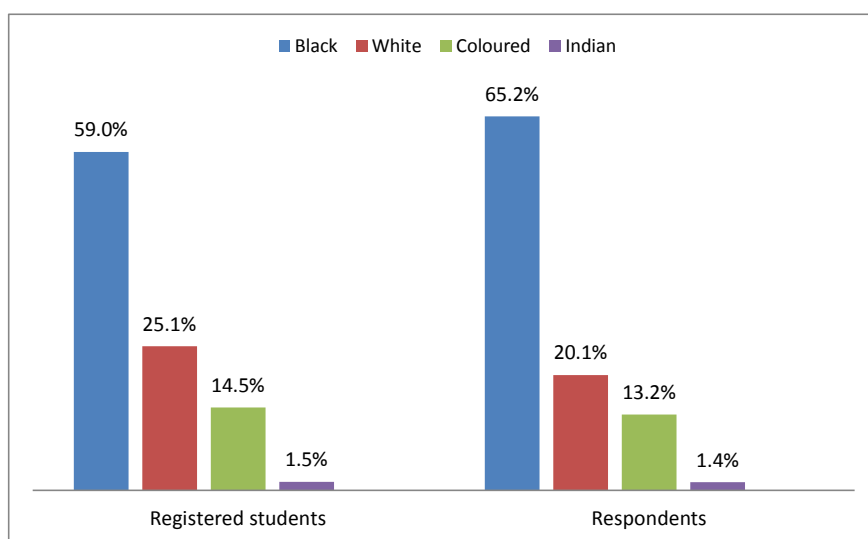
Graph 1 demonstrates the gender breakdown of the respondents compared to the NMMU general student population.

2.1.2 Age

The average age of respondents to the survey is 21.31 years of age (SD = 3.54). The average age of the general student population is 25

2.1.3 Race

Graph 2: Registered students vs. respondents according to race

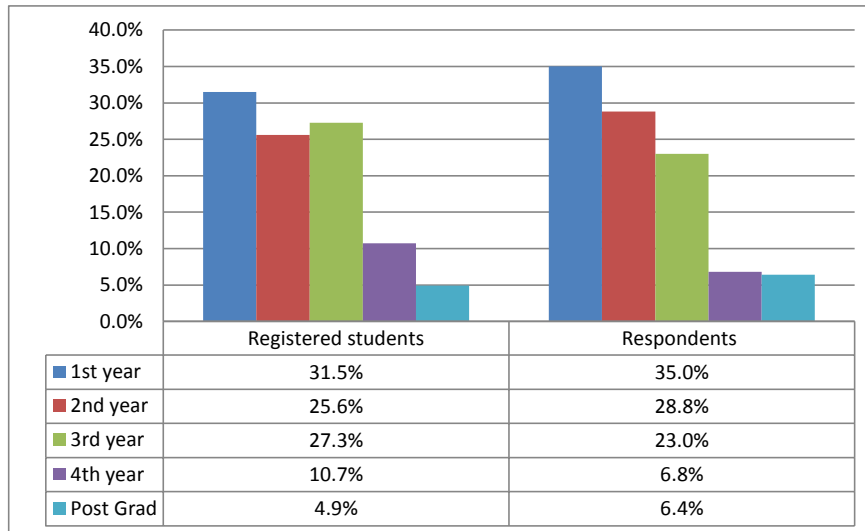


Graph 2 reflects the race classification of the respondents and the race classification of NMMU students. The highest percentage of registered students (59.0) is Black and the majority of the respondents of the survey (65.2 %) were Black. The lowest percentage of respondents (1.4 %) was Indian which is relatively proportionate to the percentage of registered Indians (1.5).

Respondents were also asked if they were South African or International students. 11.7 % of respondents were International students. NMMU has a complement of 6.8% International students.

2.1.4 Year of study

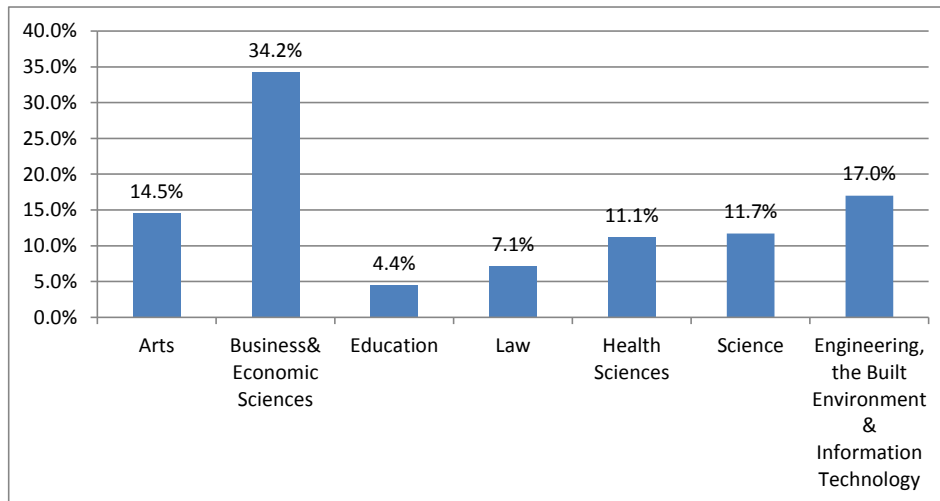
Graph 3: Registered students vs. respondents according to year of study



Graph 3 reflects the breakdown of the sample size into the year of study. When compared to the statistics of the registered students, it was found to be relatively proportionate. The highest response rate of the survey was amongst the first year students (35.0%) and the lowest response rate amongst the Post Graduate students (6.4%).

2.1.5 Faculty representation

Graph 4: Respondents according to faculty.

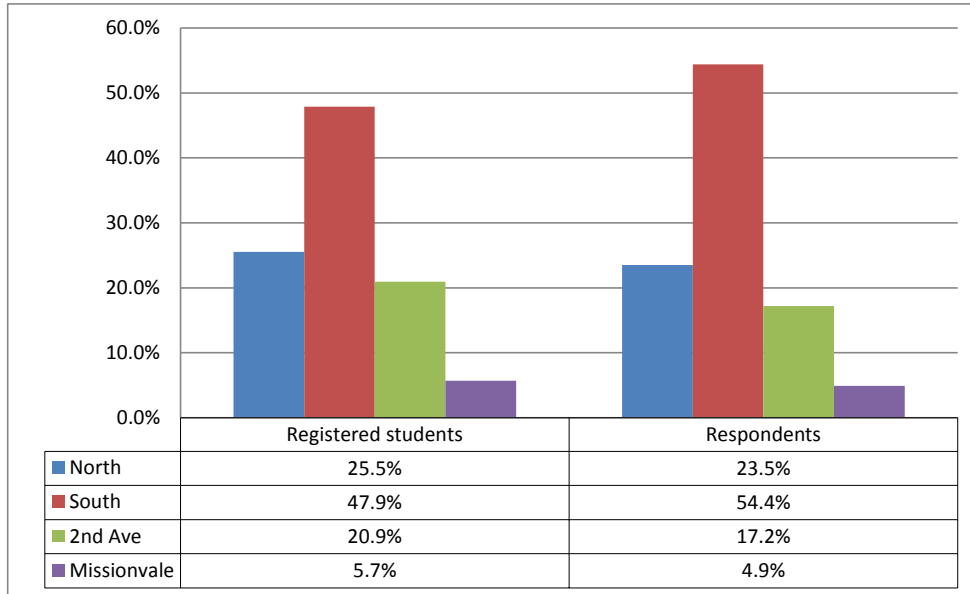


Graph 4 reflects the breakdown of the respondents according to the faculties.

The biggest complement of respondents (34.2%) was from the Business & Economic Sciences Faculty, which is the largest faculty at NMMU.

2.1.6 Campus base

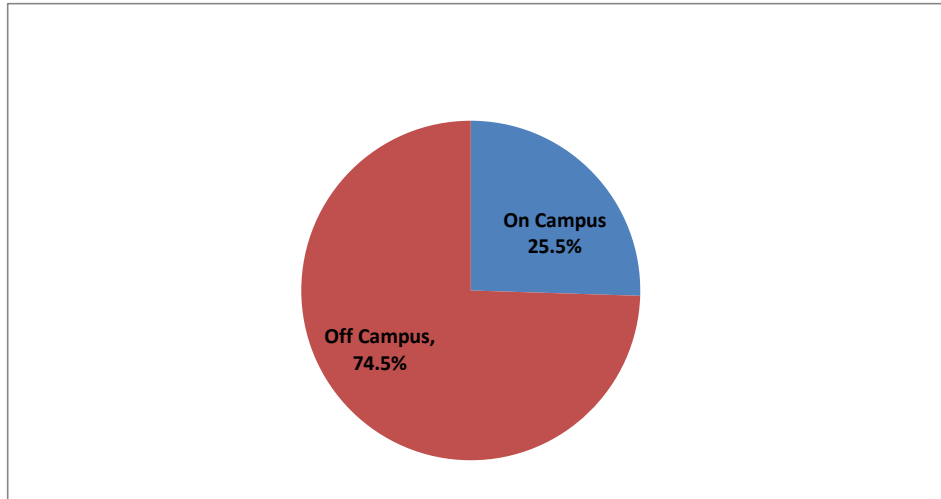
Graph 5: Participation according to campus



Graph 5 indicates the respondents according to campus base. The highest proportion of respondents (54.4%) was from South Campus which has the highest proportion of registered students (47.9%).

2.1.7 On campus vs. Off campus

Graph 6: On vs. off campus breakdown



Graph 6 reflects the breakdown between on campus and off campus students. The majority of the respondents (74.5%) live off campus, which is in proportion with NMMU students. 85.2% of students live off-campus.

2.2 Perceptions of student life at NMMU

Section 1 of the survey was completed by all respondents to get an idea of their perceptions of student life at NMMU.

Table 1: Perceptions of student life

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Mean	Number (n)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My family encourages me to continue with my university education	4.61	2663	78.3	14.2	3.8	.1.2	2.4
I feel a sense of connection with NMMU.	3.61	2644	19.2	41.0	30.7	6.3	2.9
I am meeting people with different backgrounds to me at NMMU.	4.33	2644	54.9	33.5	8.1	1.1	2.4
I am proud to be going to NMMU	4.18	2646	48.8	32.5	14.4	1.9	2.3
I feel like NMMU is a community	3.65	2639	26.3	35.3	27.0	8.1	3.3

Students have similar views on student life on campus. Mean scores indicate a general congruence towards a positive perception. The statements “*I feel a sense of connection with NMMU*” and “*I feel like NMMU is a community*” received a lower rating than the rest. Respondents tended to waver between agreeing and being neutral.

The results were further analysed. T-tests were conducted on student views using the following variables:

- Gender
- On vs. Off Campus

The results indicate that the differences among scores are not statistically or practically significant. Both sets of student groupings indicated an acceptable to high level of satisfaction with student life.

Multiple analysis of variance tests (MANOVAS) were then used to determine the differences between the race groups in terms of satisfaction with regards to student life. See table 2.

Table 2: Differences in perceptions according to race.

	Black n=1158	Coloured n=236	Indian n=26	White n=359	Effect
My family encourages me to continue my university education.	4.67	4.58	4.58	4.64	No effect
I feel a sense of connection with NMMU.	3.71	3.63	3.92	3.28	No effect
I am meeting people with different backgrounds to me at NMMU	4.40	4.42	4.50	4.18	No effect
I am proud to be going to NMMU	4.34	4.21	4.38	3.79	No effect
I feel like NMMU is a community	3.84	3.62	4.00	3.11	Medium effect

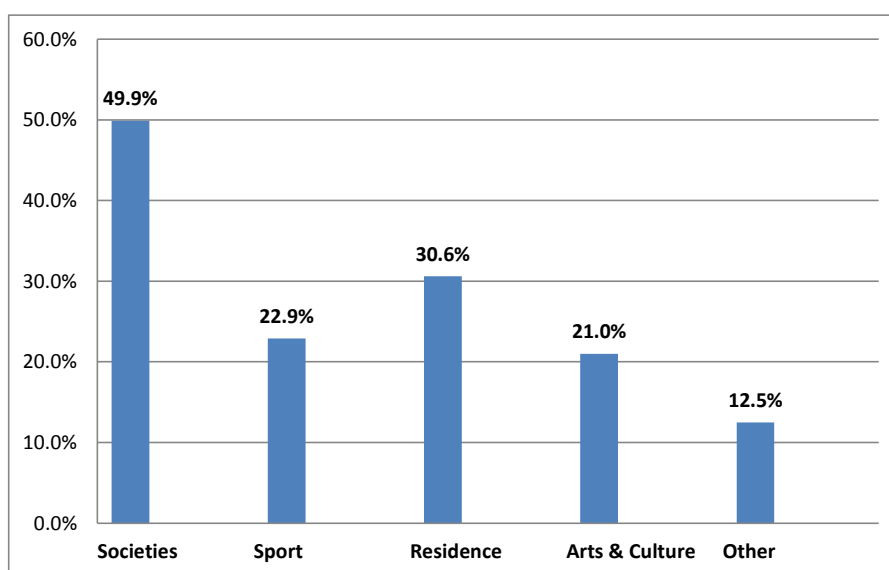
F (15, 4293) = 6.99, $p \leq .001$; Pillai's Trace = .072; partial eta squared = .02

The overall MANOVA was statistically significant, yet when the statements were examined separately, generally students from all race groupings felt the same. The exceptions were the statements "*I feel like NMMU is a community*" and "*I am proud to be going to NMMU*". Black, Coloured and Indian students tended to agree more with the statement than White students who tended to be more neutral in their response.

2.3 General overview of student life activities

Although residence events are reflected in the graphs below (the residences makeup is predominantly Black) a more detailed graph is included at the end of the student life activities section. Also, despite the fact that 193 non-residents attended residence events, residence events must be viewed in the light that generally only residence students participate in residence life and make up a very smaller percentage of the respondent total. It must be noted that 58.5% of respondents indicated they didn't spend any time participating in organised campus life activities.

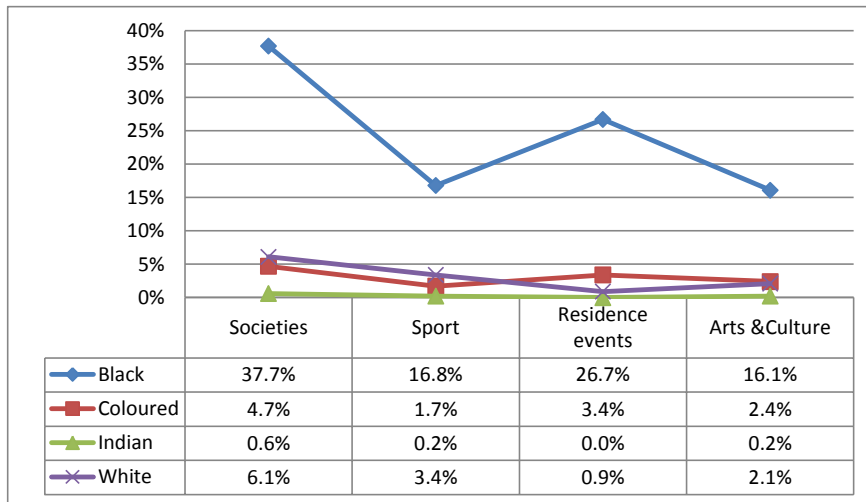
Graph 7: Participation in student life activities



Graph 7 reflects the percentage of participation in student life activities. The majority of the respondents (49.9%) participate in Societies. 12.5% of respondents were involved in other activities on campus. Other activities were varied and ranged from leadership development programmes to attending community outreach, the gym, and church.

2.4 Activity according to race

Graph 8: Participation according to race

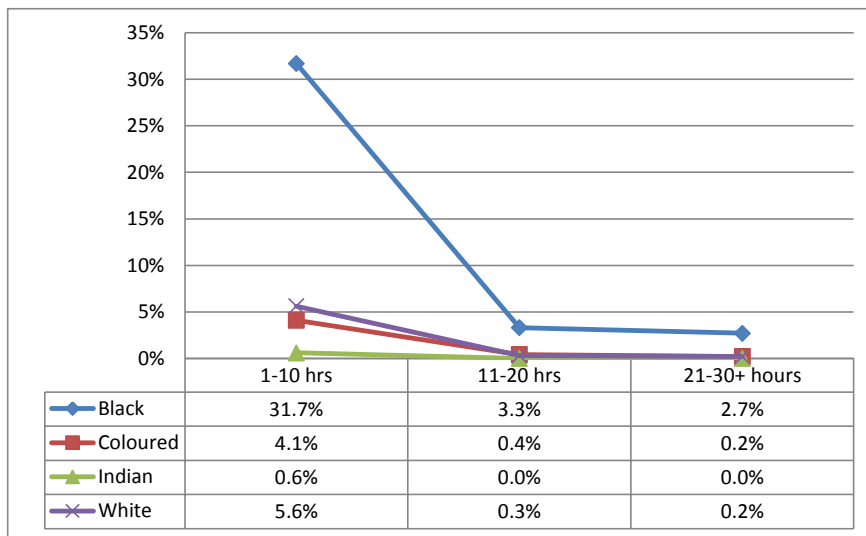


As reflected in the graph, the majority of the respondents who participate in all the different student life activities are Black students. Indian students tend to not participate in student life activities.

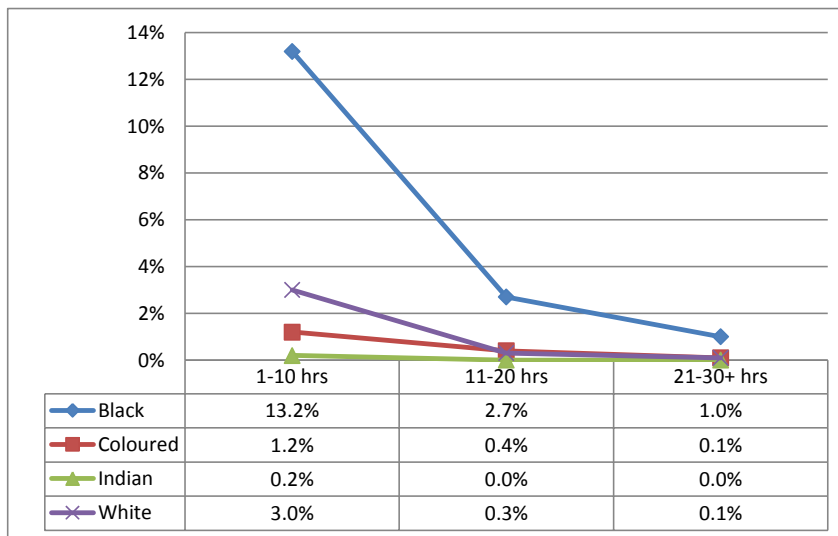
3. Time spent on student life activities

The data were further analysed to determine the time spent on student life activities according to race. Graphs 9-12 illustrate the differences in time according to the race groupings.

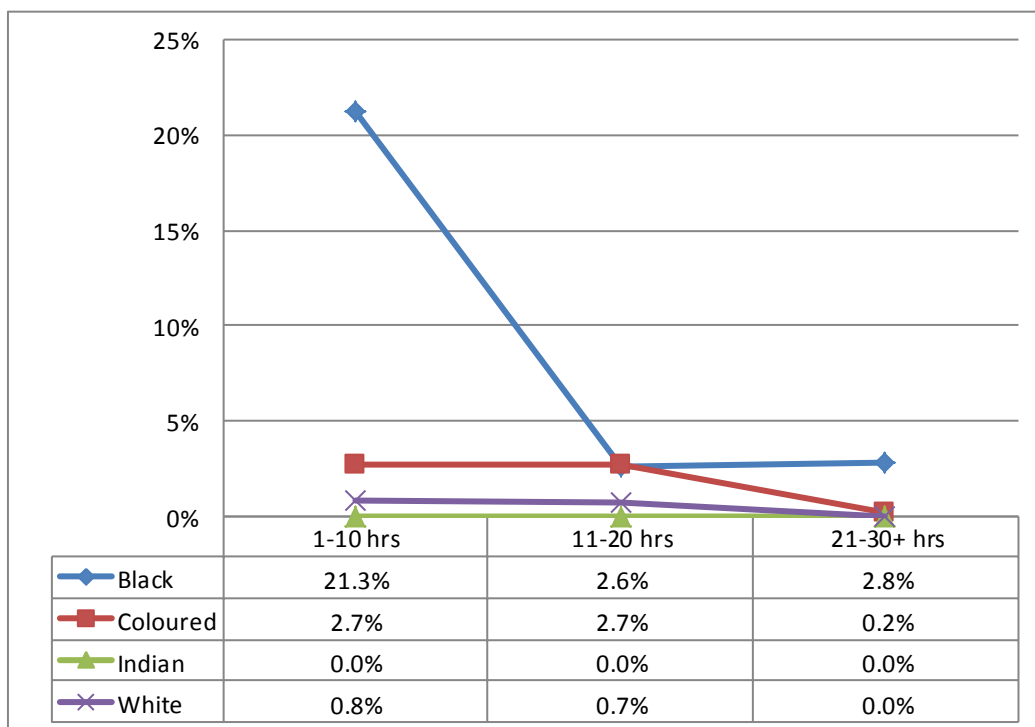
Graph 9: Society participation per race group



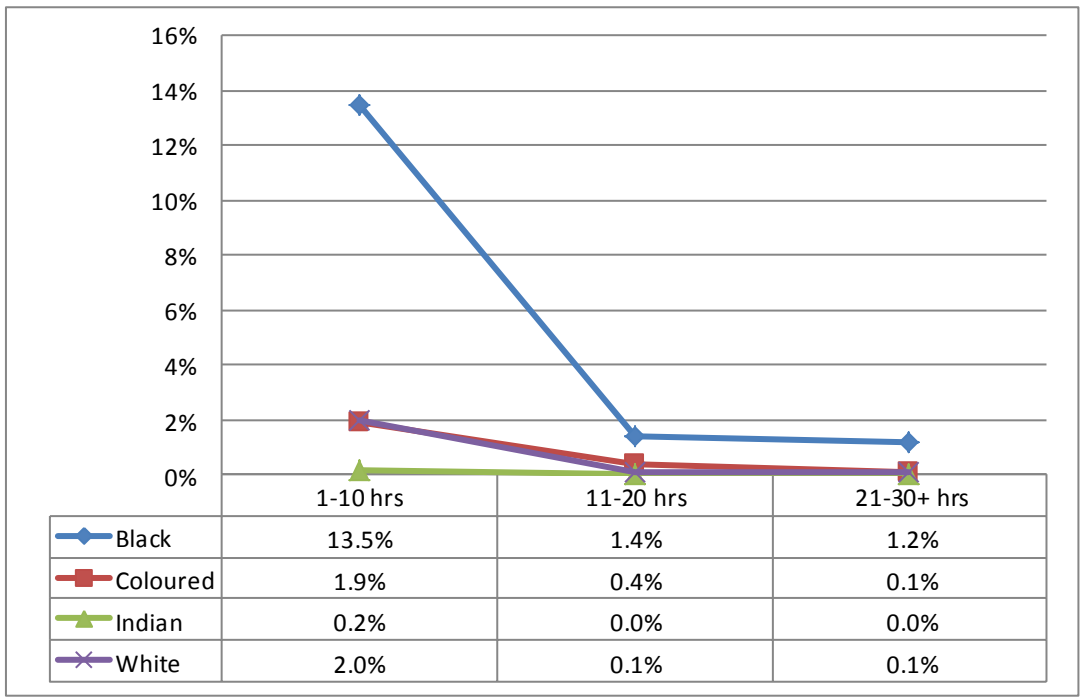
Graph 10: Sport participation per race group



Graph 11: Residence event participation per race group



Graph 12: Arts & Culture participation per race group

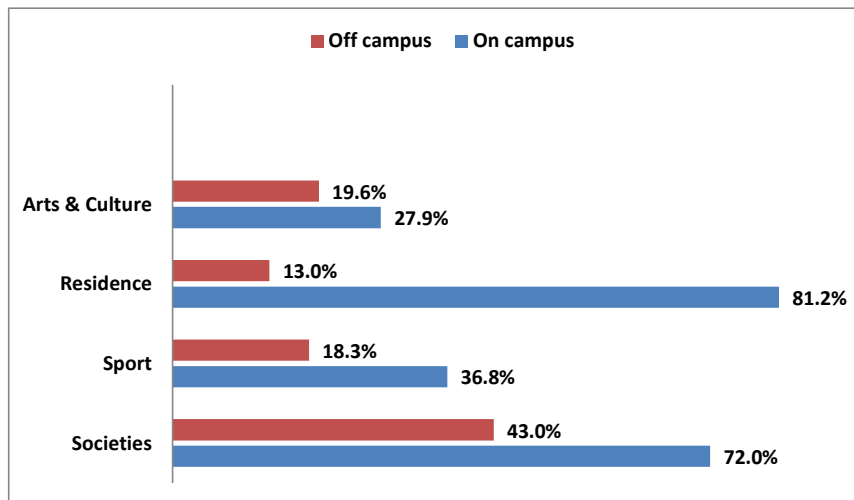


All the graphs above indicate that student life activities are predominantly attended by Black students and that the majority of the Black students spend between 1-10 hours per week on these activities.

4. On vs. Off campus participation

Participation in student life was also analysed according to students living on campus versus those living off campus.

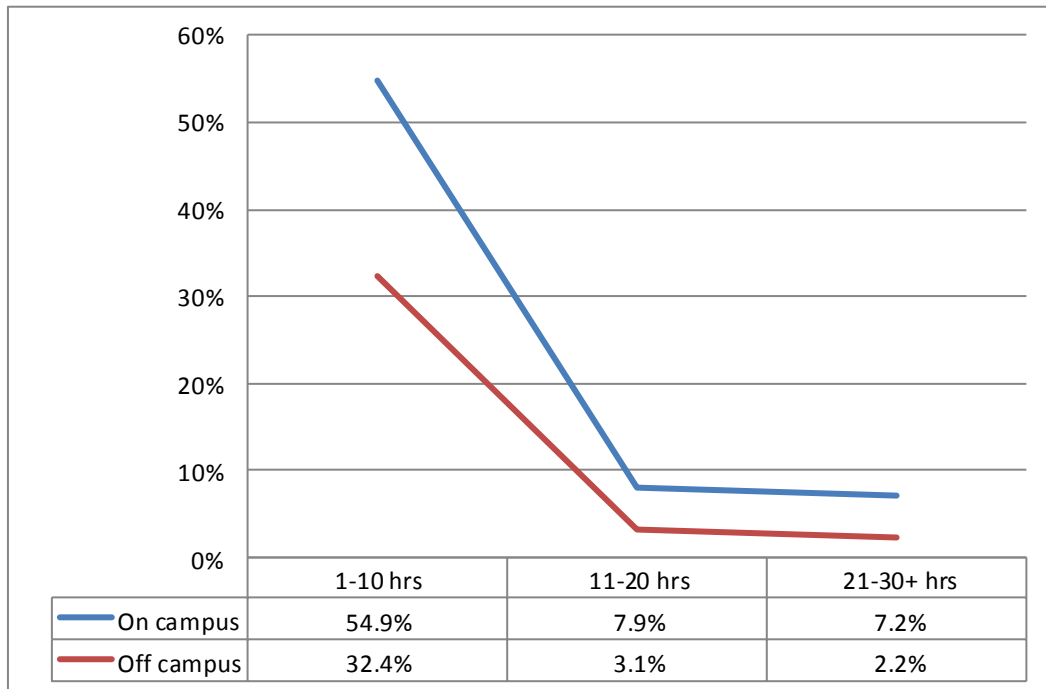
Graph 13: On vs. Off campus participation per student life activity



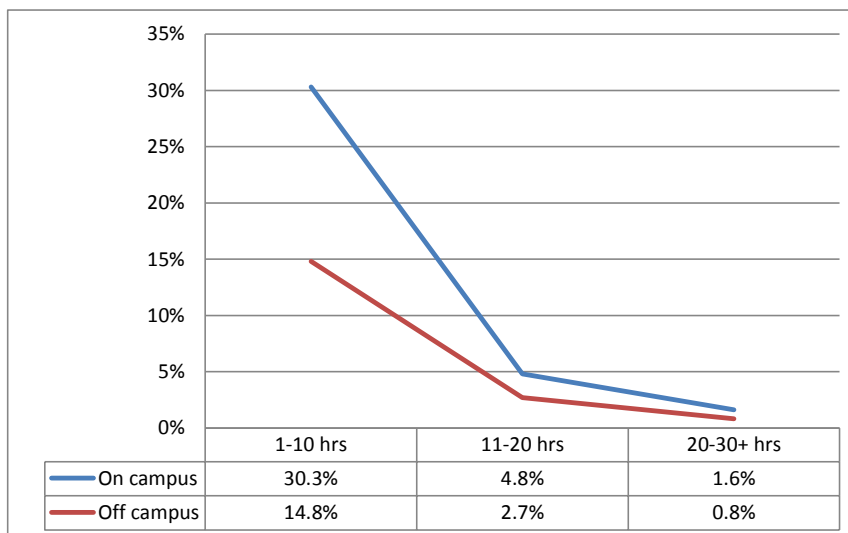
As illustrated in graph 13, the majority of student life activities are predominantly attended by students who reside on campus.

This information was further analysed according to the different student life activities. Graphs 14-17 reflect the findings.

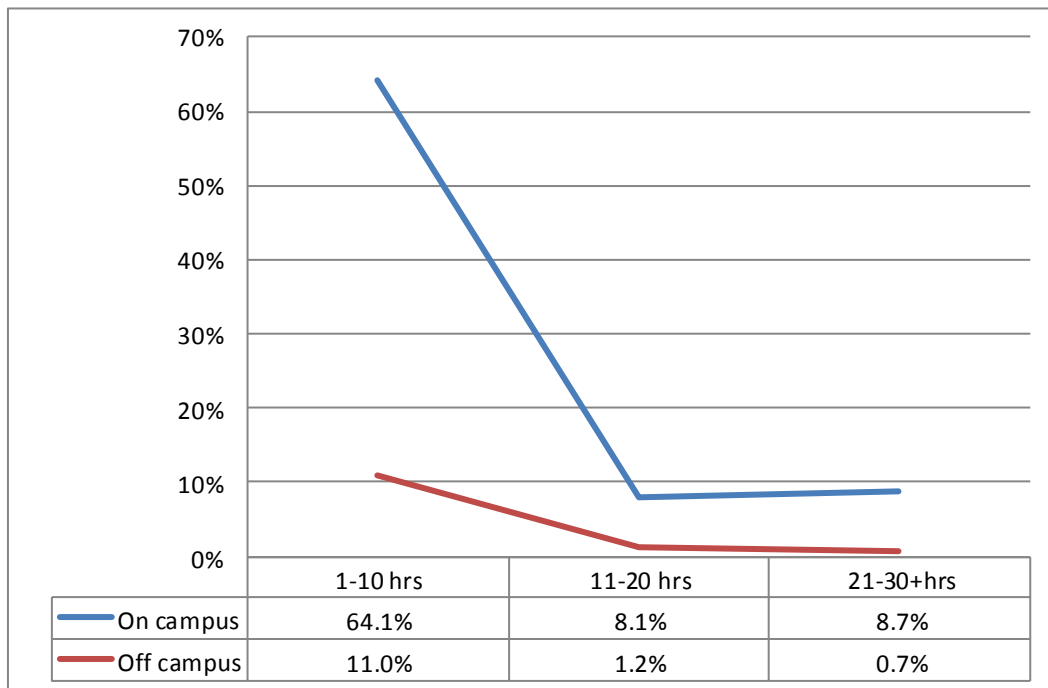
Graph 14: On vs. Off campus society participation



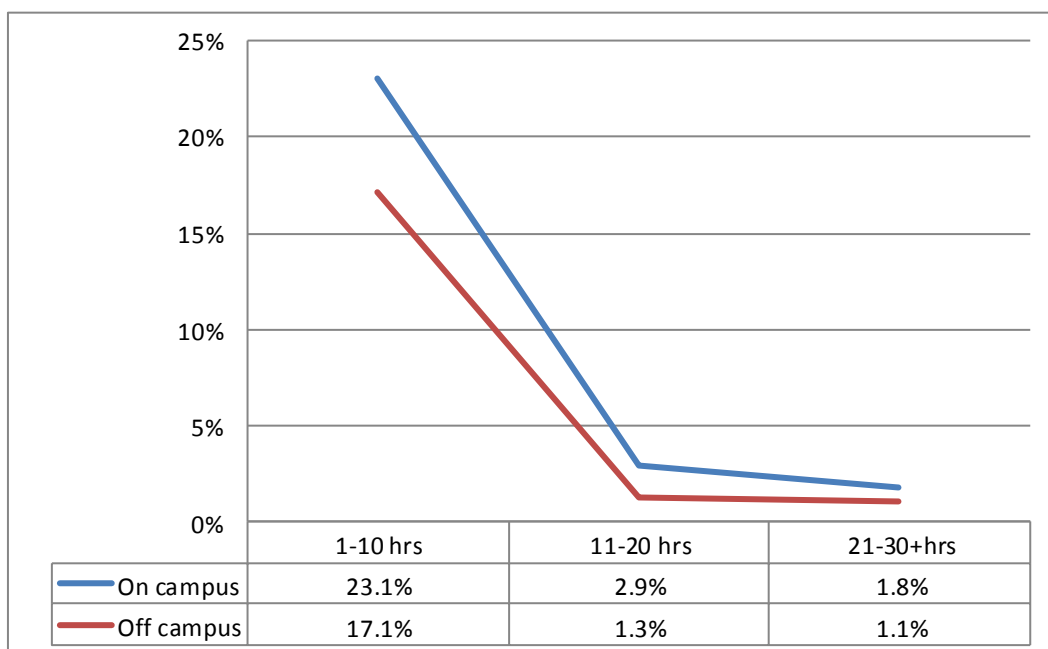
Graph 15: On vs. Off Campus sport participation



Graph 16: On vs. Off campus residence events participation



Graph 17: On vs. Off campus arts and culture participation



5. Events students are most likely to attend

According to the survey, in order of preference, the following NMMU co-curricular events that students are most likely to attend are:

(Students could select any number of preferences.)

Table 3: Events students are most likely to attend.

Event	Percent
1. Personal development workshops (e.g. academics success, leadership, employability)	47.5%
2. Entertainment events (e.g. parties, pageants)	41.2.%
3. Spectator at sport events	39%
4. Bands/ live music	36.8 %
5. Religious / Spiritual events	30.9%
6. Society events	29.3%
7. Cultural events	27.9%
8. Film screening	17.8%
9. Talk shops	12.9%

The next section of the survey was only completed by respondents who participated in student life activities. It enabled the researchers to gauge students' satisfaction with their participation.

6. Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction with student life activity participation

6.1 General overview of student satisfaction

Table 4: General overview of perceived benefits and student satisfaction for students who participated in student life activities

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Mean	Number (n)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, I am satisfied with my level of involvement in campus life activities at NMMU.	3.64	885	16.7	38.3	30.2	11.2	3.6
Participating in campus life activities enhances my academic work.	3.31	884	8.1	33.9	39.7	15.3	2.9
Participating in campus life activities helps me develop leadership skills.	3.93	870	28.4	43.4	21.8	4.5	1.8
Participating in campus life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after university.	4.09	879	34.4	44.7	14.3	5.0	1.6
Participating in campus life activities helps me decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	3.44	878	19.0	32.8	33.6	11.2	3.4
Participating in campus life helps me to enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	3.83	881	34.7	34.4	19.6	7.8	3.4
Being involved in campus life activities at NMMU is a good use of my time	3.79	876	21.8	45.0	26.4	4.9	1.9
Participating in campus life activities helps me increase my self-confidence.	4.05	872	34.6	42.3	17.9	4.8	2.88
Participating in campus life activities helps me relieve stress.	3.91	867	30.9	38.6	22.8	4.8	2.8
Participating in campus life activities helps me give back to the campus community.	3.84	874	24.9	44.4	24.3	3.8	2.6
Participating in campus life is a good way for me to meet people.	4.38	874	52.7	37.0	7.2	1.4	1.7
Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to help others.	3.96	880	32.2	40.9	22.3	2.7	1.9

Mean scores indicate that students have similar views on student life activities and are generally satisfied with their participation. The highest mean ratings show high levels of satisfaction. “*Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to meet people*” (M=4.38) and “*Participating in campus life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after university*” (M=4.09).

6.2 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction according to gender

Table 5: Perceived benefits of satisfaction of student life activity participants by gender.

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Sex	Mean	Number (n)
Overall, I am satisfied with my level of involvement in campus life activities at NMMU.	Female	3.64	373
	Male	3.43	451
Participating in campus life activities enhance my academic work.	Female	3.31	372
	Male	3.27	451
Participating in campus life activities helps me develop leadership skills.	Female	3.93	364
	Male	3.90	448
Participating in campus life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after university.	Female	4.09	371
	Male	4.01	449
Participating in campus activities helps me to decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	Female	3.44	372
	Male	3.57	447
Participating in campus life activities helps me to enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Female	3.83	372
	Male	3.94	450
Being involved in campus like activities is a good use of my time	Female	3.79	370
	Male	3.81	447
Participating in campus life activities helps me increase my self-confidence.	Female	4.05	366
	Male	4.04	448
Participating in campus life activities helps me relieve stress.	Female	3.91	365
	Male	3.90	443
Participating in campus life activities helps me give back to the campus community.	Female	3.84	368
	Male	3.85	448
Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to meet people.	Female	4.38	371
	Male	4.39	444
Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to help others.	Female	3.96	372
	Male	4.01	450

Table 5 reflects the differences in perceptions between male and female respondents. No statically significant differences were found amongst gender. Interesting to note: Female respondents scored their satisfaction with their level of involvement in campus life activities higher than the male respondents. Males also saw participation in student life activities as helping them to decide on the type of work they wanted to do after university.

6.3 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction according to race

Table 6: Perceived benefits and satisfaction of participants according to race.

Please answer the following statements using the scale left to right	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Effect
Overall, I am satisfied with my level of involvement in student life activities at NMMU.	3.51	3.46	4.00	3.40	medium
Participating in campus life activities enhances my academic work.	3.29	3.14	3.20	3.22	no
Participating in campus life activities helps me develop leadership skills.	3.96	3.82	2.80	3.78	small
Participating in campus life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after leaving the university.	4.08	3.95	3.00	3.83	medium
Participating in campus life activities helps me decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	3.52	3.54	2.60	3.44	medium
Participating in campus life activities helps me to enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	3.91	3.94	3.60	3.62	small
Being involved in student life activities at NMMU is a good use of my time.	3.86	3.74	3.60	3.25	small
Participating in campus life activities helps me increase my self-confidence.	4.08	4.06	3.60	3.74	small
Participating in campus life activities helps me relieve stress.	3.98	3.85	3.80	3.30	small
Participating in campus life activities helps me give back to the campus community.	3.86	3.86	3.20	3.51	small
Participating in campus life activities at NMMU is a good way for me to meet people.	4.44	4.35	4.00	4.20	no
Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to help others.	4.03	3.94	4.20	3.28	medium

Table 6 reflects the students' perceptions according to race. There were statistically significant findings according to race. Black, Coloured and White students tended to agree on certain variables, whilst the Indian students tended to waver between disagreeing and neutral. However, although the Indian students rated their level of satisfaction in student life activities higher than the

other race groups, they were less likely to see participation helping them to develop leadership skills, acquiring skills they could use after leaving the university, helping them increase their self-confidence, and giving back to the campus community.

6.4 Students' perceived benefits and satisfaction On vs. Off campus students

Results were analysed according to students who live on campus and those who do not.

Table 7: Perceived benefits and satisfaction of participants according to on vs. off campus students

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	On / Off campus	Mean	Number
Overall, I am satisfied with my level of student life involvement activities at NMMU	On Campus	3.59	364
	Off Campus	3.50	485
Participating in student life activities enhances my academic work.	On Campus	3.29	364
	Off Campus	3.29	484
Participating in student life activities helps me develop leadership skills.	On Campus	3.96	358
	Off Campus	3.90	479
Participating in student life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after university.	On Campus	4.06	364
	Off Campus	4.05	481
Participating in student life activities helps me decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	On Campus	3.45	364
	Off Campus	3.58	480
Participating in student life activities helps me to enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	On Campus	3.86	364
	Off Campus	3.91	483
Being involved in campus life activities at NMMU is a good use of my time.	On Campus	3.87	361
	Off Campus	3.75	481

Participating in student life activities helps me increase my self-confidence.	On Campus	4.09	360
	Off Campus	4.02	478
Participating in student life activities helps me relieve stress.	On Campus	3.97	353
	Off Campus	4.80	480
Participating in student life activities helps me give back to the campus community.	On Campus	3.85	360
	Off Campus	3.86	480
Participating in student life activities is a good way for me to meet people.	On Campus	4.39	359
	Off Campus	4.38	481
Participating in student life activities is a good way for me to help others.	On Campus	3.94	364
	Off Campus	4.02	483

The average mean scores reflect no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Scores indicate that students are relatively satisfied and have strong beliefs about the benefits of participation in student life activities.

Interesting to note: Off campus students scored very high $M=4.8$, on the statement “*Participating in student life activities helps me relieve stress*”. Both groups thought that “*Participating in student life activities is a good way for me to meet people*”, as the mean scores (higher than 4.3) indicate a high level of perceived benefit and satisfaction.

7. Perceived benefits of participating in student life activities by students who currently do not participate in student life activities

This section was completed by students who did not participate in student life activities. This was included to determine their perceptions about the benefits associated with participation in student life activities. Results indicate a general congruence regarding the benefits attached to participating in student life activities.

Table 8: Benefits associated with participating in student life activities by non-participants

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right	Mean	Number (n)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I think that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to:							
acquire skills that I can use after university.	3.75	1102	24.0	39.8	27.5	4.8	3.8
meet new people.	4.28	1100	41.5	49.7	5.4	1.5	1.9
develop leadership skills	3.87	1077	25.8	45.2	22.0	4.5	2.5
enhance my academic work.	3.39	1100	17.7	28.0	34.6	15.1	4.6
decide on the type of work I may want to do after university	3.45	1104	17.9	32.1	30.8	13.8	5.4
increase my self-confidence.	3.90	1100	29.5	43.7	17.7	5.4	3.8
relieve stress.	3.64	1085	25.3	35.3	24.9	9.6	4.9
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	3.96	1099	35.2	37.2	18.7	5.4	3.5

The table reflects a general consensus regarding participation in campus life activities. Respondents agree that participation would be beneficial in “*helping them to meet new people* (M = 4.28), “*enhance their CV to look more attractive to future employers*” (M= 3.96), and “*increase their self-confidence*” (M=3.90).

The results were further analysed according to gender, race and on campus vs. off campus students.

Table 9: Perceived benefits of participation by non-participants according to gender

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right	Sex	Mean	Number (n)
I think that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to:			
acquire skills that I can use after university.	Female	3.70	549
	Male	3.80	685
meet new people.	Female	4.24	547
	Male	4.31	684
develop leadership skills	Female	3.80	535
	Male	3.93	668
enhance my academic work.	Female	3.33	545
	Male	3.41	684
decide on the type of work I may want to do after university	Female	3.34	547
	Male	3.48	687
increase my self-confidence.	Female	3.85	546
	Male	3.93	685
relieve stress.	Female	3.59	540
	Male	3.69	677
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Female	3.86	548
	Male	4.02	684

No statistically significant differences were found between male and female respondents. However both respondents thought that participating in student life activities would be beneficial in helping them to “*meet new people*”. The mean scores are higher than 4.2 which indicate that respondents tended to strongly agree with the statement.

Table 10: Perceived benefits of participation by non-participants according to race:

Please answer the following statements using the scale left to right I think that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Effect
acquire skills that I can use after university?	3.90	3.82	3.57	3.43	medium
meet new people?	4.33	4.31	4.29	4.15	small
develop leadership skills?	4.00	4.00	3.76	3.57	small
enhance my academic work.	3.46	3.59	3.33	3.11	small
decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	3.52	3.59	3.52	3.17	small
increase my self-confidence.	3.97	4.03	3.67	3.69	small
relieve stress.	3.86	3.54	3.52	3.18	small
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	4.00	4.03	4.10	3.77	small

Practically significant differences occurred between Black, Coloured and Indian respondents when compared to White respondents. White respondents tend to be neutral in their responses, while the Black, Coloured and Indian respondents tend to agree or be neutral with the following statements:

Participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to

- *meet new people;*
- *to acquire skills that I can use after university;*
- *enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers; and*
- *relieve stress.*

Table 11: Perceived benefits of participation by non-participants on campus vs. off campus

Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right I think that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to:	On/ off Campus	Mean	Number (n)
acquire skills that I can use after university.	On campus	3.83	178
meet new people.	Off campus	3.75	1102
develop leadership skills	On campus	4.25	178
enhance my academic work.	Off campus	4.28	1100
decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	On campus	3.88	170
increase my self-confidence.	Off campus	3.87	1077
relieve stress.	On campus	3.41	176
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Off campus	3.39	1100
relieve stress.	On campus	3.30	176
increase my self-confidence.	Off campus	3.45	1104
relieve stress.	On campus	3.90	178
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Off campus	3.90	1100
relieve stress.	On campus	3.82	175
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Off campus	3.64	1085
relieve stress.	On campus	3.93	179
enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	Off campus	3.96	1099

Both groups of respondents thought that participating in student life activities would be beneficial in helping them to “*meet new people*”. The mean scores are higher than 4.2 which indicate that respondents tended to agree strongly with the statement. Interesting to note that on campus students rated the benefit of “*stress relief*” higher than the off campus students.

8. Interference with involvement in student life activities

Respondents were asked to rate the top 3 reasons for interference with student life activities. The top three reasons were:

1. Transport (difficulty getting to activities)
2. Time(involvement in other activities)
3. Day/ time that the activity is held

9. Communication

Students were asked to choose **the single** best way to inform them about campus events and information.

Table 12: Single best way to communicate with students about events and activities

1. NMMU Email	48.5%
2. SMS	25.9%
3. NMMU Communiqué	7.9%
4. Facebook	4.0%
5. Student Portal	3.6%
6. Banners at campus entrance	2.8%
7. Posters on notice boards	2.5%
8. Word of mouth	1.9%
9. Promotional displays	1.9%
10. Fliers	1.19%
11. Electronic notice boards	0.4%

The highest ratings in this section of the questionnaire were namely: (1) NMMU Email as the source of information about events (48.5%), and (2) SMS as the second most popular method of communicating (25.9). Interesting to note is that this year NMMU communiqué is preferred above Facebook.

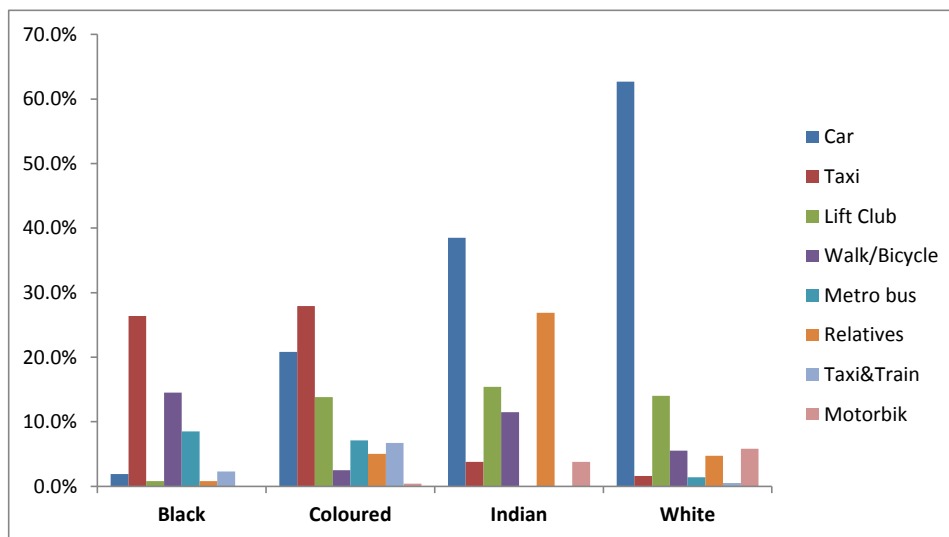
10. Oppidani Council

71.7 % of the students answered negative to the question “Are you aware of the Oppidani Council?”

11. Transport

74.5 % of respondents live off campus and take an average of 36 minutes to travel to campus (one way).

Graph 18: Mode of transport according to race



Graph 18 reflects the way respondents commute to campus. The majority of the Black (26.4%) and Coloured (27.9%) students use the taxi system. White (62.7%) and Indian (38.5%) students arrive by car.

SECTION THREE

12. Areas of concern

Transport, time and financial constraints were once again identified as the major interferences with student participation in campus life activities. In terms of the quantitative results no areas scored in the “urgent need of attention” category (i.e., very few items had mean ratings of below 2.6).

Only 41.5% of respondents participate in structured campus life activities.

Although all students realise the benefits attached to participating in campus life activities, these activities are still predominantly supported by Black students and the students who live in the residences.

NMMU E-mail is still the preferred method of communication, SMS was ranked second, NMMU Communiqué third and Facebook fourth.

It must be noted that the outcomes of this study support the findings from previous research - the 2009, 2010 and 2011 NMMU Student Life Survey.

13. Recommendations and conclusion

Student involvement in co-curricular activities impacts learning in many ways. The concept of partnership between academic and co-curricular activities is important for the development of the students and assists the institution in achieving its goals.

Focus needs to be placed on student engagement and building relationships that effectively put the student at the centre of all efforts. These needs support students in their academic success while enhancing their personal, social and cognitive development.

It is recommended that the issues receive consideration as a follow-up to the survey and to:

- Communicate the findings of the student life survey with relevant staff
- Intensify marketing and communication with students to increase their awareness of programmes on offer that will assist them to be more employable graduates
- Use the results of the survey to enhance the current offerings to inform the development of future programmes to best meet the needs of our students.

14. Acknowledgements

We wish to thank

- Professor Matthew Wawrzynski, Michigan State University for his continued support, motivation and expertise in the design, collation and interpretation of the data.

APPENDIX A

NMMU STUDENT LIFE SURVEY

This survey is to identify strategies to revive student interest in campus life at NMMU. We need your help to obtain the best possible information about your experiences. Your honest and thoughtful responses are very important, much appreciated, and are anonymous. If you have completed the survey this year, please do not complete it again.

SECTION 1. Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My family encourages me to continue my university education.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel a sense of connection with NMMU.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am meeting people with different backgrounds than me at NMMU.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I am proud to be going to NMMU.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel like NMMU is a community.	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 2. On average, how many hours per week do you participate in the following:	I do not participate	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	More than 25
1. Student Societies (Religious, academic, political, developmental, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Organised sport at NMMU (campus league, league sport)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Residence events	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. NMMU Arts and Culture Societies (Jazz, Choir, Film, Creative arts, etc)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Other (please specify) _____	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

SECTION 3. What type of NMMU student life events are you most likely to attend (select all that apply):

1. Cultural Events (plays, poetry readings)
 2. Spectator at NMMU sports games
 3. Society Events
 4. Talk shops
 5. Bands/Live music
 6. Film Screening
 7. Entertainment events (parties, pageants)
 8. Religious/Spiritual Events
9. Personal development workshops (Academic success, leadership, employability)
 10. Other _____

SECTION 4. COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU PARTICPATE IN CAMPUS LIFE ACTIVITIES AT NMMU. (IF YOU DO NOT PARTICIPATE IN STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES GO TO SECTION 5.) Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Overall, I am satisfied with my level of involvement in campus life activities at NMMU.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Participating in campus life activities enhances my academic work.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Participating in campus life activities helps me develop leadership skills.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Participating in campus life activities helps me acquire skills that I can use after university.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Participating in campus life activities helps me to decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Participating in campus life activities help me to enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Being involved in campus life activities at NMMU is a good use of my time.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Participating in campus life activities helps me to increase my self-confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Participating in campus life activities helps me relieve stress.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Participating in campus life activities helps me give back to the campus community.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to meet people.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Participating in campus life activities is a good way for me to help others.	1	2	3	4	5

(Please complete the other side)

SECTION 5. COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOU DO NOT PARTICPATE IN CAMPUS LIFE ACTIVITIES AT NMMU. Please answer the following statements using the scale to the right	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think that participating in campus life activities would be beneficial in helping me to:					
1. acquire skills that I can use after university.	1	2	3	4	5
2. meet new people.	1	2	3	4	5
3. develop leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
4. enhance my academic work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. decide on the type of work I may want to do after university.	1	2	3	4	5
6. increase my self-confidence.	1	2	3	4	5
7. relieve stress.	1	2	3	4	5
8. enhance my CV so that I look more attractive to future employers.	1	2	3	4	5

Section 6. What are the top <u>three</u> reasons likely to interfere with your participation in campus life activities? (Please select only 3 and rank them with 1 for the most likely to 3 for the least likely)			
1. Transport (difficulty getting to activities)		6. Lectures/class	
2. Time (involvement in other activities)		7. Day/Time that the activity is held	
3. Finances, lack of money		8. Family commitments	
4. Lack of knowledge of activities		9. Job/work	
5. Limited interest		10. Feeling isolated/not fitting in	

Section 7. The single best way to inform me about campus events and information is (choose only one):

1. NMMU student e-mail
 2. NMMU Communiqué (mass emails)
 3. Fliers
 4. Student Portal
 5. Electronic notice board
 6. Word of Mouth/another student
 7. SMS
 8. Posters on notice boards
 9. Banners at Campus entrance
 10. Facebook
 11. Promotional display
 12. Other – please specify _____

2. Are you aware of the Oppidani Council? yes no

Section 8. Tell us about you

1. I live: on-campus off-campus

2. If you live off-campus, on an average day, how many minutes does it take you to commute to campus (one way), if you live on-campus please leave blank _____

3. If you live off-campus, what is the primary way that you commute to campus?

1. I live on campus
 2. Drive my own car
 3. Taxi
 4. Lift club
 5. Walk or bike
 6. Metro bus
 7. Relative drives me
 8. Motorbike
 9. Train and then other form of transport
 10. Other (please specify) _____

4. If you live on campus, which residence do you live in? 1. I don't live on-campus 2. Letaba 3. Lebombo 4. Xanadu 5. Unitas 6. Veritas 7. Melodi 8. Renaissance Postgraduate Student Village 9. Oceana 10. South Point 11. Sanlam Student Village 12. Laboria

5. Which campus are you based on? 1. North 2. South 3. 2nd Avenue 4. Missionvale

6. Age _____ **7. Gender** female male **8. Are you an international student?** yes no

9. If you are South African, what race group do you belong to: 1. Black 2. Coloured 3. Indian 4. White 5. Other

10. What year are you in: 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year post-graduate

11. What faculty are you in: 1. Arts 2. Business and Economic Sciences 3. Education 4. Law 5. Health Sciences 6. Science 7. Engineering, the Built Environment & Information Technology

12. What course are you studying: _____