



NYU Undergraduate Time-Use Study Reveals Surprising Findings

In a city that never sleeps, a new study conducted by NYU's Division of Student Affairs found that undergraduates are getting more than seven hours of sleep per night (7.3) while still managing to dedicate 41.0 hours a week to academics (more than a traditional 40-hour work week). Following up on last year's study, the NYU Undergraduate Time-Use Study was administered the week of November 5th - 11th to a random sample of 1,212 full-time NYU undergraduate students who are currently studying in New York City (both commuter and residential students). This year's more robust study of 1,212 respondents generally mirrors the baseline data generated in last year's pilot study of 284 NYU undergraduates.

Each of the 1,212 participants logged their time in half-hour increments for seven days in an online diary. The diary allowed students to select from 15 major categories: sleeping, academic preparation, for-credit class participation (including studio time, rehearsals, labs, etc.), internship/employment, community service/volunteering, multimedia, everyday tasks, social activities, exercise, commuting/traveling, cultural, religious, sexual activities, partying/alcohol and other. Each participant received their individual time-use profile at the end of the study that compared their time-use with the average from the overall study.

Researchers hope the findings will prove useful in learning more about NYU students and in guiding the University on how it can provide programs and services that best fit students' lifestyles. To their knowledge, no other American institution of higher education has implemented a comprehensive weeklong undergraduate time-use study.

Major Findings and Observations (statements below reflect average participant data)

- Students sleep 8.1 hours per day or 56.3 hours per week. Naps during the day account for an average of 43 minutes a day, leaving an average over-night sleeping time of 7.3 hours per night.
- Students go to sleep at 1:12am and wake up at 8:54am on the weekdays (Monday through Thursday nights); times shift later on the weekends, as students sleep from 1:42am to 10:24am.
- Students are spending an average of 5.9 hours per day or 41.0 hours per week on academics, either in academic preparation or in class/lab/studio/etc.
- 724 (59.7%) participants reported spending an average of 15.5 hours per week engaged in internships and/or employment. Daily trends show that Friday is the day most are working (7.2 hours).
- 195 (16.1%) participants completed and average of 3.4 hours engaged in community service/volunteer work over the course of the week.
- Of the students who completed the study, only 24.0% recorded sexual activity that week. We believe this may be one area in which students were reluctant to divulge this type of personal information.
- Reported use of alcohol varied widely between weekdays (when 29.4% reported using alcohol) and on the weekends (when 70.6% reported using alcohol).
- A significant positive correlation ($p = .025$) was found between alcohol use and sexual activities, showing that as alcohol use increases so does sexual activity.

- No significant correlations were found between students' GPA connected to sleep, academic preparation or employment.
- Social activities (17.5 hours/week) and academic preparation (44.6 hours/week) peak freshman year and gradually decrease each year until senior year where social activity (10.5 hours/week) and academics (35.7 hours/week) are at a low. In contrast, employment/internships are lowest with freshmen (4.2 hours/week) and steadily increase by senior year (14.0 hours/week).

“While caution should be used against making sweeping generalizations from this study, we believe that we captured a snapshot of how students tend to spend their time,” said NYU’s Vice President for Student Affairs Dr. Marc Wais. “In a period and an environment in which time seems to be among the most precious of commodities, a healthy, satisfying and productive undergraduate career depends significantly on choices one makes in allocating time to various activities.”

“The data reflects that NYU students are first and foremost committed to their academic pursuits,” continued Dr. Wais. “Their level of participation in jobs, internships and community service demonstrates they live by NYU's philosophy of being ‘in and of the city.’”

Interested parties who have questions or would like to obtain more information regarding the study are encouraged to contact Dr. Marc Wais, Vice President for Student Affairs, at marc.wais@nyu.edu or Dr. Kimberly Yousey, Director of Research and Assessment for the Division of Student Affairs, at kim.yousey@nyu.edu.

If undergraduate deans would like specific information regarding students' time-use in their particular school, or if graduate/professional school deans would be interested in conducting this study with their students, please contact Dr. Wais at your convenience.

For more information about the Undergraduate Time-Use Study, or to view the full report, visit: <http://www.nyu.edu/student-affairs/assessment/assessment/projects.html>.