Howard University School of Business
College Student Needs Assessment Survey (CSNAS)
Results – 2008
First-year Student Academic and Personal Needs

Prepared by the

Office of Institutional Assessment & Evaluation
“Working together to create a culture of evidence-based decision making...”

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The Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) administered the College Students Needs Assessment Survey (CSNAS) to incoming students at the beginning of the Fall Semester 2008. The schools and colleges that participated in the survey included the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS), the School of Business (SB), the College of Engineering, Architecture and Computer Science (COEAC), the School of Communications (SOC), the School of Education (SOE), and the College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (CPNAH). A total sample of 737 students completed surveys. Of that total, approximately 158 students are enrolled in the School of Business. The purpose of the survey, developed by the American College Testing Program (ACT), was to gather specific information from incoming college students about their perceived academic and personal needs. The survey was administered via paper mode by trained OIAE staff using standardized procedures.

The results of the survey indicate that SB students need a lot of help with financial aid and career planning. Other areas in which large proportions of SB students report needing help include developing study skills and reinforcing general academic skills.

Needs in Personal Areas
Less than half of the SB respondents (49%) report needing help with learning how to solve personal problems. However, 71% of the SB respondents report needing help with deciding what to do with their lives and the majority of SB respondents (59%) indicate needing some level of help with learning how to handle stress and anxiety.

Needs in General Academic Support Skills
An overwhelming proportion of SB students report needing some level of help with improving study skills (86%) and with improving test-taking skills (81%). However, relatively few SB students (38%) report needing some level of help with coping with academic difficulties.

Needs in General Education Areas
More than two-thirds of SB respondents report needing some level of help in every area in this category including: increasing skills in mathematics (77%); expressing ideas in writing (76%); increasing understanding of art, literature and culture (76%); improving reading comprehension (72%); and increasing reading speed (70%)

Areas of Greatest Need
Large proportions of SB students (83%-94%) report needing some level of help with funding their education. Similarly large proportions of SB students (84%-96%) report needing some level of help in areas related to career planning. Specifically, significant proportions of SB students report needing a lot of help with:

- Learning more about available financial aid sources (49%)
- Obtaining adequate funds to finance education (49%)
- Obtaining work experience in career areas of interest (44%)
- Discussing career interests with people in the field (33%)
- Learning about educational opportunities after graduation (30%)

Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation
“Working together to create a culture of evidence-based decision making...”
The Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation (OIAE) administered the *College Students Needs Assessment Survey* (CSNAS) to incoming students during the opening weeks of the fall semester (August and September, 2008). The standardized instrument, developed by the American College Testing Program (ACT) to gather specific information from college students about their perceived academic and personal needs, was administered to students within each school and college via paper mode by trained OIAE staff using standardized procedures. The schools and colleges included the College of Arts and Sciences (COAS), the School of Business (SB), the College of Engineering, Architecture and Computer Science (COEAC), the School of Communications (SOC), the School of Education (SOE), and the College of Pharmacy, Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (CPNAH). A total sample of 737 students completed surveys. Of that total, approximately 158 students are enrolled in the School of Business.

This report highlights the five areas in which incoming students indicate the greatest amount of need. In addition, selected CSNAS results from each survey subscale are reported in the following tables and figures. The CSNAS subscales of focus in this report include Career Development (CD), Educational Planning (EP), Intellectual Skills Development (ISD) and Life Skills Development (LSD). All areas of focus were selected based on their basic relative importance and priorities set by University administrators. The results for SB are the focus of this report.

**Five Areas of Greatest Need**

Table 1 and Figure 1 below present the five areas of greatest need as indicated by the total Howard University (HU) sample. Table 1 presents the levels of need reported by the student samples from the School of Business (SB) total Howard University (HU) sample the national norm group (NRM). Figure 1 presents summary data for areas of greatest need for the three samples of students.

Table 1 suggests that the two areas of greatest need cited by responding SB students relate to financial matters. Nearly half of the SB respondents indicate needing *a lot* of help with obtaining adequate funds to finance their education, as well as the needing *a lot* of help with learning more about other available sources of financial aid (49% and 49% respectively). These figures are nearly double the respective proportions of students in the national norm group that need a lot of help in these areas (26% and 26% respectively) and are not significantly different from the proportion of students in the total HU sample reporting such needs (50% and 50% respectively).
Other major areas of need cited most by SB students include obtaining work experience while in college that is related to their career interests, and obtaining opportunities for discussing career interests with individuals in their respective potential fields. The proportion of SB students that report needing a lot of help in these areas is equivalent to the proportion of students in the total HU sample who report needing a lot of help in these areas (44% and 33% respectively). However, the proportion of SB students who report needing a lot of help in these areas significantly exceeds the proportion of students in the national norm group that report needing a lot of help in these areas (approximately 16% and 18% respectively). Just under one-third (30%) of SB students report needing a lot of help with learning about educational opportunities after graduation (30%). This proportion exceeds the proportion of students in the national norm group who need a lot of help in this area (21%) but falls slightly below the total HU sample of students who need a lot of help in this area (34%).

### Table 1:
Overall Areas of Greatest Need*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>SB LOT</th>
<th>SB MED</th>
<th>SB LITTLE</th>
<th>SB NONE</th>
<th>HU LOT</th>
<th>HU MED</th>
<th>HU LITTLE</th>
<th>HU NONE</th>
<th>NRM LOT</th>
<th>NRM MED</th>
<th>NRM LITTLE</th>
<th>NRM NONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining work experience in career areas of my interest</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging to discuss my career interests with people in my planned career area</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more about other sources of financial aid available</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about educational opportunities after graduation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining adequate funds to finance my education</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentage may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.

Note: SB= School of Business; HU =Howard University Total Sample; NRM=National Normative Group

Figure 1 below presents summary data that describe the proportion of students who express any level of help needed (a little, a medium amount, or a lot) for each of the three sample groups with respect to the areas of greatest need.
Obtaining work experience in career areas of my interest
Approximately 96% of SB students report needing any level of help with obtaining work experience in careers of interest. This figure exceeds the respective proportions of students from the total HU sample and from the national norm group (93% and 65% respectively) reporting such needs.

Arranging to discuss my career interests with people in my planned career area
Approximately 95% of SB students report needing any level of help with making arrangements to discuss their career interests. Although this proportion is not significantly higher than the proportion of students from the total HU sample (93%) reporting such needs, it exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group (87%) reporting such needs.

Learning more about other sources of financial aid available
Approximately 94% of SB students report needing any level of help with learning more about other sources of financial aid. This figure exceeds the proportion of students from the total HU sample (90%) reporting such needs and far exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group (78%) reporting such needs.

Learning about educational opportunities after graduation
Approximately 84% of SB students report needing help with learning about educational opportunities after graduation. This figure is less than the proportion of students from the total HU sample (88%) reporting such needs and not significantly different from the proportion of students from the national norm group (83%) reporting such needs.

Obtaining adequate funds to finance my education
Approximately 83% of SB students report needing any level of help with obtaining adequate funds to finance their education. This figure is not significantly different from the proportion of students from the total HU sample (85%) reporting such needs and higher than the proportion of students from the national norm group (75%) reporting such needs.

Figure 1

Percentages of Students' Needs* in Overall Areas of Greatest Need

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Need</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>HU Total</th>
<th>NRM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining work experience in career areas of my interest</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging to discuss my career interests with people in my planned career area</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning more about other sources of financial aid available</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about educational opportunities after graduation</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining adequate funds to finance my education</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages represent all levels of need (from a little to a lot).
Note: SB=HU School of Business; HU Total=Howard University Total Sample; NRM=National Normative Group
Additional Important Areas of Need

Table 2 below presents data on selected items from the subscales in the survey that were identified as additional important areas of need. The subscales include Life Skills Development (LSD), Career Development (CD), Intellectual Skills Development (ISD), and Educational Planning (EP). Items were selected based on their basic relative importance and the priorities set by University administrators.

The majority of SB students report needing either a medium amount of help or a little bit of help for most of the selected items presented in Table 2 however, relatively significant proportions of SB students report needing a lot of help in the following three important areas.

Improving study skills and habits
A larger proportion of SB students indicate needing a lot of help with improving study skills and habits (27%) than the proportion of students from the total HU sample (23%) and the proportion of students from the national norm group (15%).

Expressing ideas in writing
A larger proportion of SB students report needing a lot of help with expressing their ideas in writing (23%) than the proportion of students from the total HU sample (14%) and the proportion of students from the national norm group (10%).

Managing my time more effectively
Approximately 19% of SB students report needing a lot of help with managing time more effectively. This proportion exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group reporting such needs (11%) and is equivalent to the proportion of students from the total HU sample of students reporting such needs (19%).

In addition, large proportions of SB students report needing no help in two important areas.

Coping with academic difficulties
Approximately 61% of SB students report needing no help with coping with academic difficulties. This figure falls below the proportion of students from the total HU sample (70%) and exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group (58%).

Learning how to solve personal problems
Approximately 51% of SB students report needing no help with learning how to solve personal problems. This figure is exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group (47%) and is not significantly different from the proportion of students from the total HU sample (53%).
Table 2:
Levels of Student Self-Perceived Personal and Academic Needs
Comparison of HU School of Business Sample, Total HU Sample, and National Norm Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Item (CSNAS Subscale)</th>
<th>SB LOT</th>
<th>SB MED</th>
<th>SB LITTLE</th>
<th>SB NONE</th>
<th>HU LOT</th>
<th>HU MED</th>
<th>HU LITTLE</th>
<th>HU NONE</th>
<th>NRM LOT</th>
<th>NRM MED</th>
<th>NRM LITTLE</th>
<th>NRM NONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing my time more effectively (LSD)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying career areas that fit my skills, abilities, and interests (CD)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding what to do with my life (CD)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to handle stress and anxiety in my life (LSD)</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to solve personal problems (LSD)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my study skills and habits (ISD)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my test-taking skills (ISD)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my problem-solving abilities and reasoning skills (ISD)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to make better use of library facilities (ISD)</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and using computers (ISD)</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining remedial/tutorial assistance (EP)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with academic difficulties (EP)</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing skills in mathematics (ISD)</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressing ideas in writing (ISD)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing understanding of art, literature, and culture (ISD)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving my understanding of what I read (ISD)</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing my reading speed (ISD)</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentage may not sum to 100 due to rounding error.
Note: SB = School of Business; HU = Howard University Total Sample; NRM = National Normative Group
Figures 2a-2c below present summary data that describe the proportion of students that express any level of help needed (a little, a medium amount, or a lot) for each of the three sample groups on selected items from the subscales in the survey that were identified as additional important areas of need. The subscales include Life Skills Development (LSD), Career Development (CD), Intellectual Skills Development (ISD), and Educational Planning (EP). Subscale items were grouped into three broad categories: needs in personal areas, needs in general academic support skills and needs in general education areas.

The needs in personal areas category, presented in Figure 2a, includes items from the Life Skills Development subscale (LSD) and the Career Development subscale (CD). The needs in general academic support skills category, presented in Figure 2b, includes items from the Educational Planning subscale (EP) and from the Intellectual Skills Development subscale (ISD). The needs in general academic support skill category, presented in Figure 2c, includes items from the Intellectual Skills Development subscale (ISD).

**Needs in Personal Areas**

A large proportion of SB students report needing some level of help in managing time more effectively (76%). This figure is slightly lower than the proportion of students from the total HU sample (77%) and higher than proportion of students from the national norm group (69%). A large proportion of SB students report needing some level of help in identifying careers that match their skills and interests and in deciding what to do with their lives (73% and 71% respectively). These figures exceed the respective proportions of students from the total HU sample (62% and 59% respectively) reporting such needs and are not significantly different from the respective proportions of students from the national norm group (72% and 71% respectively) reporting such needs.

Well over half (approximately 59%) of SB students report needing help with learning how to handle stress and anxiety. This figure falls below the respective proportions of students from the total HU sample and students from the nation norm group (63% and 67% respectively) reporting such needs. Approximately 49% of SB students indicate needing assistance with learning how to solve personal problems. This figure falls below the proportion of students in the national norm group (53%) reporting such needs and exceeds the proportion of students from the total HU sample (47%) reporting such needs.

**Figure 2a**

*Note: Percentages represent all levels of need (from little to a lot). 
Note: SB=HU School of Business; HU Total=Howard University Total Sample; NRM=National Normative Group 
Note: CD=Career Development; LSD=Life Skills Development; EP=Educational Planning; ISD=Intellectual Skills Development*
Needs in General Academic Support Skills
Approximately 55% of SB students report needing some level of help with obtaining remedial/tutorial assistance. This figure exceeds the proportion of students from the total HU sample (44%) reporting such needs and is not significantly different from the proportion of students from the national norm group (54%) reporting such needs.

Relatively few SB students (38%) report needing some level of help with coping with academic difficulties. This figure exceeds the proportion of students from the total HU sample (30%) reporting such needs and falls below the proportion of students from the national norm group (42%) reporting such needs.

A large proportion of SB students report needing some level of help with improving study skills, improving test-taking skills, and improving reasoning skills (86%, 81%, and 77% respectively). Theses figures exceed the respective proportions of the students from the total HU sample (84%, 81%, and 74% respectively) reporting such needs and exceed the respective proportions of students from the national norm group (77%, 77% and 72% respectively) reporting such needs.

Approximately 72% of SB students report needing some level of help with learning how to make better use of library facilities. This figure exceeds the respective proportions of students from the total HU sample and students from the national norm group (69% and 66% respectively) reporting such needs.

Approximately 56% of SB students report needing some level of help with understanding and using computers. This figure exceeds the proportion of students from the total HU sample (48%) reporting such needs and falls far below the proportion of students from the national norm group (70%) reporting such needs.

![Figure 2b](image-url)

*Note: Percentages represent all levels of need (from little to a lot).
Note: SB=HU School of Business; HU Total=Howard University Total Sample; NRM=National Normative Group
Note: CD=Career Development; LSD=Life Skills Development; EP=Educational Planning; ISD=Intellectual Skills Development

Needs in General Education Areas
Over two-thirds of SB students report needing some level of help with strengthening their ability to express their ideas in writing, increasing their understanding of the arts, improving reading comprehension and increasing reading speed (76%, 76%, 72% and 70% respectively). These figures exceed the respective
proportions of students from the total HU sample (70%, 69%, 64%, and 61% respectively) reporting such needs and exceed the proportions of students from the national norm group (68%, 69%, 65%, and 66% respectively) reporting such needs.

Approximately 77% of SB students report needing some level of help with increasing skills in mathematics. This figure falls below the proportion of students from the total HU sample (79%) reporting such needs and exceeds the proportion of students from the national norm group (75%) reporting such needs.

**Figure 2c**

Percentages of Students' Needs in General Education Areas

*Note: Percentages represent all levels of need (from little to a lot).  
Note: SB=HU School of Business; HU Total=Howard University Total Sample; NRM=National Normative Group  
Note: CD=Career Development; LSD=Life Skills Development; EP=Educational Planning; ISD=Intellectual Skills Development*

**Implications**

Because the majority of SB students are confident in their ability to solve personal problems and cope with academic difficulties, they appear to be willing and more likely to utilize any available resources that will help them improve their areas of weakness (e.g. time management skills, study skills, writing skills etc.). The timely allocations of supportive University resources to address the identified student needs may positively influence student retention and academic outcomes. The key is make students aware of the available resources and encourage their use and participation.

**Recommendations**

Inform the faculty in the various departments of the School of Business of the self-perceived needs of new students. Share this report broadly and encourage its use, along with other related information, for planning and implementing appropriate student supports. In addition:

- Continue to provide comprehensive, detailed, and timely information to incoming students (and their families) about financial aid and many of its various sources.
- Continue to build opportunities for students to have internship/practicum experiences in their fields of interest.
• Continue to conduct career fairs and to create other opportunities for students to interact directly with professionals in their fields of career interest for guidance and assistance in personal planning.
• Strongly consider allocation or reallocation of sufficient resources that will provide the student support services necessary to address the identified and targeted student educational and personal needs.

The School of Business should provide information to the Office of Institutional Assessment and Evaluation on the implementation of plans to address the identified immediate needs of new and continuing students in order to facilitate assessment and evaluation of program and student support service improvement strategies in relation to targeted student outcomes.

Limitations

Survey data are indirect measures of perceptions at a certain period in time. Participation in the survey was voluntary for schools and colleges and for students within them. In addition, the participants were incoming freshmen who may over or under estimate their levels of need.

Reference
American College Testing Program, ACT (1999). What Helps or Hinders Students' Educational Achievement?