

Sac State: An Exciting University with Strong Academic Programs, Vital Regional Contributions, and Solid Support in the Capital Area

Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph. D.
Mindy Edwards
Erin Gonzales
California State University, Sacramento

The majority of the residents in the Sacramento region believe California State University, Sacramento (Sac State) is a vibrant university (57%) that offers strong academic programs (68%). More than eighty percent of the public also think Sac State makes the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region better (83%), and would recommend the university to people who plan to go to college (85%). Compared to those who don't know the university well, those residents who are well-informed about the university's activities are much more likely to view it positively, with 73 percent considering it an exciting school (73% vs. 48%), 85 percent reporting Sac State has strong academic programs (85% vs. 58%), and 92 percent recommending it to those who plan to attend college (92% vs. 81%). However, only 37 percent of the residents in the Sacramento region are well-informed about events and activities at Sac State that are open to the public, and people in El Dorado (20%), Placer (29%), and Yolo (35%) counties are much less informed than those in Sacramento County (42%). Therefore, Sac State needs to make a great deal more effort to keep the public better informed, especially residents living in Yolo, El Dorado, and Placer counties.

These are some of the results from *The 2005 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*, conducted from February 15 through March 16, 2005, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Sac State: A Vibrant Higher Education Institute with Strong Academic Programs

More than two-thirds of residents (68%) in the Sacramento region believe Sac State has strong academic programs. Only 3 percent hold a negative view, and 29 percent don't know. This positive perception is shared by two-thirds of the public, regardless of their age, race, gender, or household income. Registered voters of different party affiliations, whether they are Republicans, Democrats or other voters, also agree.

Those who live in Sacramento County (71%) are more likely to report that Sac State has strong academic programs than those living in the other counties (63% in Yolo, 61% in El Dorado, and 57% in Placer). This may be because the latter are less informed about the academic programs in the university (39% don't know in Placer, 37% don't know in Yolo, and 37% don't know in El Dorado vs. 25% don't know in Sacramento). Moreover, those who have attended Sac State (87% vs. 61%) or visited the campus (76% vs. 38%) are much more likely to report that Sac State provides excellent education, and those who have attended the school (9% vs. 36%) or visited the campus (21% vs. 59%) are much less likely to say they don't know about the quality of its academic programs.

A majority of area residents also believe that Sac State is an exciting, vibrant university, with 57 percent agreeing with this statement, 10 percent disagreeing, and 33 percent reporting they don't know. Women (60%) and lower income residents (62% for those households making less than \$30,000 a year) find Sac State more exciting than men (52%) and higher income residents (53% for those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more). Residents from Sacramento County (62%) are also more positive about Sac State than the public in other counties. This may be because many don't know Sac State that well (50% don't know in Yolo, 44% don't know in Placer, 43% don't know in El Dorado, and 27% don't know in Sacramento).

“Now, I’m going to ask you a few questions about Sacramento State University--also known as Sacramento State or CSUS. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. Sacramento State has strong academic programs.”

Comparison among People in Different Counties

	All Adults	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Strongly agree/Agree	68%	61%	57%	71%	63%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	3	2	4	4	0
Don't know	29	37	39	25	37

Comparison between Those Who Have Attended Sacramento State and Others

	Attended	Not Attended	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	87%	61%	43%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	4	3	14
Don't know	9	36	43

Comparison between Those Who Have Visited Sacramento State and Others

	Visited	Not Visited	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	76%	38%	0%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	3	3	0
Don't know	21	59	100

“Sacramento State is an exciting, vibrant university.”

Comparison among People in Different Counties

	All Adults	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Strongly agree/Agree	57%	50%	48%	62%	44
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	10	7	8	11	6
Don't know	33	43	44	27	50

Comparison between Men and Women

	Men	Women
Strongly agree/Agree	52%	60%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	13	8
Don't know	35	32

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 - 99,999	\$100,000 or More
Strongly agree/Agree	62%	58%	53%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	4	10	16
Don't know	34	32	31

Comparison between Those Who Have Attended Sac State and Others

	Attended	Not Attended	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	71%	52%	29%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	18	7	0
Don't know	11	41	71

Comparison between Those Who Have Visited Sac State and Others

	Visited	Not Visited	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	64%	31%	0
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	11	5	0
Don't know	25	64	100

Sac State: A Well-connected Campus Vital to the Sacramento Region

California State University, Sacramento and the Sacramento region are closely tied to each other. One out of four respondents (25%) have attended Sac State, and about three out of four (78%) have visited the campus. In addition, an overwhelming majority of the public (83%) think Sac State makes the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region better. Eighty-five percent think Sac State provides the future workforce for the Sacramento region. Nine out of ten residents (92%) believe it is valuable that Sac State provides opportunities for students to work for and do research with the state government, with 72 percent saying it is extremely or very valuable.

Sac State: A Campus Many Residents Willing to Support Financially

The majority of the residents of the Sacramento region agree that Sac State provides strong academic programs and contributes to their overall quality of life, and some are therefore willing to show their financial support. One out of five respondents (20%) report that they have donated to a four-year public university in the past 12 months, and 29 percent report that if they were asked by Sac State for a donation, they would be willing to give. Those who have attended the university (38%) and people identifying themselves racially as non-white (38%) are much more likely to give to Sac State. Adults from Sacramento County (32%), females (32%), people under the age of 55 (32%), and residents who have visited Sac State (31%) are more willing to donate. Among the registered voters, Democrats (32%) are more willing to support this school financially than Republicans (29%), which, in turn, are more generous financially than voters from other party affiliations (20%).

“If Sacramento State asked you for a donation, would you be willing to give?”

Comparison between Those Who Have Attended Sacramento State and Others

	All Adults	Attended	Not Attended	Don't Know
Yes	29%	38%	26%	57%
No	61	54	63	43
Don't know	10	8	11	0

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Non-White
Yes	26%	38%
No	66	48
Don't Know	8	14

Comparison among People in Different Counties

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Yes	25%	22%	32%	23%
No	66	69	57	74
Don't Know	9	9	11	3

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Yes	25%	32%
No	66	58
Don't know	9	10

Comparison between Those under 55 and Those 55 or Above

	54 or Under	55 or Above
Yes	32%	25%
No	58	65
Don't know	10	10

Comparison between Those Who Have Visited Sac State and Others

	Visited	Not Visited	Don't Know
Yes	31%	21%	100%
No	59	69	0
Don't know	10	10	0

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
Yes	32%	29%	20%
No	56	64	71
Don't know	12	7	9

Sac State: A University Highly Recommended to the World

An overwhelming majority of the public (85%) indicate that they would recommend Sac State to people who plan to go to college, with 69 percent reporting that they would recommend Sac State to people not just from the Sacramento region or California, but to people from anywhere. These results hold true regardless of age, gender, race, or household income. However, residents living in Sacramento (87%) and Placer (84%) counties are more likely to make this recommendation than residents in El Dorado (78%) and Yolo (78%) counties. Those who have attended (92%) or visited (90%) this school are much more likely to make such a favorable recommendation.

“Would you recommend Sacramento State to people who plan to go to college?”

Comparison among People in Different Counties

	All Adults	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Yes	85%	78%	84%	87%	78%
No	6	10	5	5	5
Don't Know	9	12	11	8	17

Comparison between Those Who Have Attended Sacramento State and Others

	Attended	Not Attended	Don't Know
Yes	92%	83%	29%
No	6	5	0
Don't know	2	12	71

Comparison between Those Who Have Visited Sac State and Others

	Visited	Not Visited	Don't Know
Yes	90%	68%	0%
No	5	6	0
Don't know	5	26	100

Sac State Needs to Better Inform the Public

Many people in the Sacramento region still don't know Sac State well. For example, only 37 percent of the residents in the region think they are well informed about the university's activities that are open to the public, while the majority (61%) of the residents don't know them well. This is consistent with the statistics found in the *2004 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*, which reported very similar findings (35% yes, 62% no, and 24% don't know) (Liu 2004).

This trend continues for residents in El Dorado (79%), Placer (70%), and Yolo (64%) counties, those who haven't visited (79%) or attended (65%) the school, and white residents (63%) in the region. Republican (67%) and other voters (60%) are also less likely to be well informed, compared to Democrats (52%).

Sac State needs to do a better job publicizing its activities and events, because a lack of such knowledge affects residents' views about Sac State (Champany 2005). Those who are well-informed about its activities are much more likely to think Sac State has strong academic programs (85% vs. 58%), is an exciting university (73% vs. 48%), and makes the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region much better (42% vs. 31%). They are also much more likely to recommend the university to people who plan to go to college (92% vs. 81%), and to donate to the school (35% vs. 26%).

“Are you well informed about events at Sacramento State that are open to the public?”

Comparison among People in Different Counties

	All Adults In the Region	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Yes	37%	20%	29%	42%	35%
No	61	79	70	55	64
Don't know	2	1	1	3	1

Comparison between Those Who Have Visited Sac State and Others

	Visited	Not Visited	Don't Know
Yes	43%	18%	0%
No	55	79	100
Don't know	2	3	0

Comparison between Those Who Have Attended Sacramento State and Others

	Attended	Not Attended	Don't Know
Yes	52%	33%	14%
No	48	65	72
Don't know	0	2	14

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	White	Non-White
Yes	35%	44%
No	63	53
Don't Know	2	3

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Democrats	Republicans	Others
Yes	46%	31%	37%
No	52	67	60
Don't know	2	2	3

“Now, I’m going to ask you a few questions about Sacramento State University--also known as Sacramento State or CSUS. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. Sacramento State has strong academic programs.”

	All Adults	Well-Informed	Not Well-Informed	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	68%	85%	58%	32%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	3	2	4	9
Don't know	29	13	38	59

“Sacramento State is an exciting, vibrant university.”

	All Adults	Well-Informed	Not Well-Informed	Don't Know
Strongly agree/Agree	57%	73%	48%	46%
Strongly disagree/ Disagree	10	11	9	4
Don't know	33	16	43	50

“Do you think Sacramento State makes the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region much better, somewhat better, worse, or makes no difference?”

	All Adults	Well-Informed	Not Well-Informed	Don't Know
Much better	35%	42%	31%	27%
Somewhat better	48	48	49	32
Worse	1	0	1	5
Makes no difference	11	9	12	9
Don't know	5	1	7	27

“Would you recommend Sacramento State to people who plan to go college?”

	All Adults	Well-Informed	Not Well-Informed	Don't Know
Yes	85%	92%	81%	76%
No	6	4	6	10
Don't know	9	4	13	14

“If Sacramento State asked you for a donation, would you be willing to give?”

	All Adults	Well-Informed	Not Well-Informed	Don't Know
Yes	29%	35%	26%	24%
No	61	56	65	43
Don't know	10	9	9	33

Survey Methods

The above results are based on our fourth annual survey, *The 2005 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1002 randomly selected adult residents age 18 or over in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion regarding a wide range of important local and national issues in the Sacramento region.

More than 20 students conducted the phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 15 to March 16, 2005, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region and comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census (68% residents in the Census vs. 66% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 15% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 9% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 10% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS), Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Office of Community Collaboration at the university have sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley, Interim Executive Vice President, California State University, Sacramento, is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

This research is directed by Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2004, 2003, and 2002 Annual Surveys of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment
- Marshalltown United Way Survey

Direct all correspondence to Dr. Amy Q. Liu, Department of Sociology, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95819-6005; 916-278-7572 (phone); 916-278-6281 (fax); amyliuus@yahoo.com. Please visit our web site (www.csus.edu/ssis/) for the executive summaries and full reports for the 2004, 2003, and 2002 annual surveys in the Sacramento region.

References:

Champany, Sarah. 2005. "Lack of Information is Affecting Attitudes toward Sacramento State." Student research paper. California State University, Sacramento. Sacramento, CA.

Liu, Amy Qiaoming, August 2004. "California State University, Sacramento: Excellent, Exciting, Affordable, and Vital to the Sacramento Region." California State University, Sacramento. Sacramento, CA.

Appendix I: The 2005 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors

Director: Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph. D.
Associate Professor, Department of Sociology
California State University, Sacramento
6000 J. Street
Sacramento, CA 95819-6005
916-278-7572 (phone)
916-278-6281 (fax)
amyliuus@yahoo.com (e-mail)

Advisor: Joseph Sheley, Ph. D.
Interim Executive Vice President
California State University, Sacramento
916-278-7737 (phone)
sheleyj@csus.edu (e-mail)

Data Collection Supervisors: Laura Jones
Angie Mendoza
Sandra Sutherland
Institute for Social Research
California State University, Sacramento

Editors: Britte H. Livingston
Nicole Stanfill
California State University, Sacramento

Graphic Designer: California State University, Sacramento

Team Members: Manuel Barajas, Ginger Bennett, Kerby Boschee, Jacqueline Carrigan, Sarah Champany, Claudia Chavez, Katie Conner, Vera Conrad, Ernest Cowles, Ravi Dhami, Mindy Edwards, Dimari Epps, Erin Gonzales, Joe Gutierrez, Julie Harrington, Brenda Hofer, Leora Holbann, Jensen Kile, Britte H. Livingston, Annie Ly, Sharon Maher, Mazie Ngai, Veronica Perez, Jennie Reiken, Refugio Rivas, Jane Rodstein, Susan Smith, Lana Sumati, Sandra Sutherland, and Tonya Todd

Sponsors: College of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies
Department of Sociology
Office of Public Affairs
Office of Community Collaboration
California State University, Sacramento

Appendix II: Sacramento State Survey¹

1. Now, I'm going to ask you a few questions about Sacramento State University--also known as Sacramento State or CSUS. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

1A. Sacramento State has strong academic programs.

12%	Strongly agree
56	Agree
3	Disagree
0	Strongly disagree
29	Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

1B. Sacramento State is an exciting, vibrant university.

8%	Strongly agree
49	Agree
10	Disagree
0	Strongly disagree
33	Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

1C. It produces the future workforce for the Sacramento region.

18%	Strongly agree
67	Agree
4	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree
10	Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

2. Do you think Sacramento State makes the overall quality of life in the Sacramento region much better, somewhat better, worse, or makes no difference?

35%	Much better
48	Somewhat better
1	Worse
11	Makes no difference
5	Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

3. Would you recommend Sacramento State to people who plan to go to college?

85%	Yes
6	No
9	Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

¹ Some of the questions in this survey have been modified and/or adopted from the Survey of Public Life of a Capital University. See http://www.csus.edu/portfolio/institutional_portfolio/Public_Life.pdf for details. I really appreciate the assistance by Frank Whitlatch from the Sacramento State Public Affairs Office.

4. To whom would you recommend?

- 13% Only people from the four-county Sacramento region
- 13 Only people in California
- 3 Only people from Western states including California
- 69 People from anywhere
- 2 Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

5. Have you ever attended Sacramento State?

- 25 Yes
- 75 No

6. Have you ever visited the Sacramento campus?

- 78% Yes
- 22 No

7. Are you well informed about events at Sacramento State that are open to the public?

- 37% Yes
- 61 No
- 2 Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

8. In the past 12 months, have you donated any money to a four-year public university?

- 20% Yes
- 79 No
- 1 Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

9. If Sacramento State asked you for a donation, would you be willing to give?

- 29% Yes
- 61 No
- 10 Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)

10. How valuable is it that Sacramento State provides opportunities for students to work for and do research with state government?

- 35% Extremely valuable
- 37 Very valuable
- 20 Moderately valuable
- 4 Not that valuable
- 4 Don't know/No opinion (Vol.)