

BRIEF: Graduate/Professional Student Satisfaction with the UB Experience: Results of the 2009 Graduate-Professional Student Opinion Survey

The SUNY Student Opinion Survey has traditionally been administered every three years to all SUNY undergraduates. For the first time in spring 2009, a graduate/professional on-line version of the survey was developed and administered exclusively at UB by Institutional Analysis and Student Affairs. This brief describes the results of that survey.

Survey Response and Representation

Of the 8,723 graduate and professional students enrolled for spring 2009 semester, 1,674 completed the survey (19.2%). The response rate is significantly higher for graduate students as compared to professional students (20.4% versus 15.1%). Although respondents do not differ from the full pool of graduate and professional students in terms of gender, they are more likely to be international students. An additional 13 students who were enrolled through fall 2008 completed the survey, and their responses are also included in these analyses ($N = 1687$).

All 12 Colleges/Schools and the Roswell Park Cancer Institute are represented among the respondents, with the greatest proportion enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences (23.3%). Half of the respondents are seeking a master's degree (51.5%), and an additional 30.0% are seeking a Ph.D. Before enrolling in the current program, 41.4% of respondents were enrolled in an undergraduate program, 39.1% were working (39.1%), and 16.1% were completing a graduate degree. Only 21.6% of respondents received an undergraduate degree at UB.

Table 1: Overall Satisfaction with UB

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Satisfied</i>
UB Overall	87.7
Academic Experience	88.3
Student Life Experience	81.0
<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Agree</i>
Advisor Performs Role Well	81.9
Overall Program Climate is Positive	85.7
Student Peers are Collegial	91.3
Treated with Respect by Faculty	88.9
UB Met or Exceeded My Expectations	82.1
Would Enroll at UB Again	78.7
Would Recommend UB to a Friend	83.7

Overall Satisfaction with UB

Graduate and professional students are satisfied with the experience they are having at UB (see Table 1). Most respondents (88.3%) are satisfied with the academic experience at UB, and 82.1% of respondents indicate that their expectations for UB have been met or exceeded. When asked if they would enroll at UB again, 78.7% indicate that they either probably or definitely would do so, and, when asked if they would recommend UB to a friend, 83.5% indicate that they probably or definitely would do so. In addition, 85.7% of the students agree that the climate of their academic programs is primarily positive. Most respondents agree that peers are collegial (91.3%) and that students are treated with respect by faculty members (88.9%). Further, 81.9% agree with the statement, “My advisor performs the role well.”

Table 2: Satisfaction with the Academic Program

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Satisfied</i>
Assistance in career preparation and placement	61.4
Availability of assistantships in your field of study	54.7
Availability of internships or applied training	53.7
Intellectual quality of faculty	93.1
Intellectual quality of other students	81.5
Number and variety of courses offered	63.0
Opportunities for interdisciplinary work	67.4
Overall program quality	82.7
Program facilities	69.9
Quality of teaching	78.9

Satisfaction with the Academic Program at UB

Respondents were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction with several aspects of their academic program (see Table 2). Areas of greatest satisfaction include the intellectual quality of faculty and other students and overall program quality. Areas of least satisfaction include availability of internships and applied training and assistantships in the field of study and assistance in career preparation and placement.

Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities

When asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with a variety of campus services and facilities (shown in Table 3), students generally report satisfaction with most items. The areas of greatest satisfaction are the campus bus/shuttle service, disability services, library resources and services, student activities, and the Student Union. The areas of least satisfaction are campus dining services, career planning and placement services, child care services, and on-campus housing services.

Table 3: Satisfaction with Campus Services and Facilities

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Satisfied</i>
Campus Bus/Shuttle Service (N = 1149)	87.6
Campus Dining Services (N = 1169)	67.9
Career Planning/Placement Services (N = 955)	63.6
Child Care Services (N = 269)	69.5
Classroom Resources and Condition (N = 1637)	78.7
Computing Resources and Services (N = 1592)	84.4
Disability Services (N = 272)	87.1
Financial Aid Services (N = 1305)	76.2
General Condition of Buildings and Grounds (N = 1620)	74.9
Health Services (N = 1171)	82.0
Library Resources and Services (N = 1616)	89.8
Ombudsperson's Office (N = 279)	82.4
On-Campus Housing Services (N = 508)	67.7
Personal Safety/Security On Campus (N = 1463)	74.9
Sports and Recreation Facilities (N = 1233)	82.6
Student Activities (N = 1119)	87.2
Student Counseling Center (N = 607)	81.2
Student Government Association (N = 1193)	78.7
Student Union (N = 1355)	87.7
University Book Store (N = 1452)	70.8

Note: For each item, the percent satisfied is based only on the number of students who found it to be relevant which is shown in parentheses following the item.

Table 4: Satisfaction with Community at UB

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Satisfied</i>
Freedom from Harassment on Campus	92.7
Respect for Differing Points of View/Opinions	90.5
Respect for Ethnic/Cultural Diversity	92.6
Respect for Religious Diversity	92.2
Sense of Respect Among Faculty, Staff, and Students	87.9
Your Sense of Belonging in Your Department/Program	81.7
Your Sense of Belonging at UB	76.5

Satisfaction with Community and Co-Curricular Programming at UB

As shown in Table 4, most respondents report satisfaction with the various aspects of community at UB. The areas of greatest satisfaction are freedom from harassment on campus, respect for ethnic/cultural diversity, and respect for religious diversity. The area of least satisfaction is the overall sense of belonging at UB. In terms of co-curricular programming at UB, most students (at least 80.0%) report satisfaction with the programs offered (see Table 5). However, for one area, student input in UB policies/plans/decision-making, only about two-thirds of respondents report satisfaction.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Co-Curricular Programming at UB

<i>Survey Item</i>	<i>Percent Satisfied</i>
Cultural Programs (N = 1108)	90.5
Distinguished Speakers Series (N = 1293)	91.2
Educational Programs Regarding Alcohol and Substance Abuse (N = 651)	91.9
Health and Wellness Programs (N = 967)	94.0
Number and Variety of Campus Clubs and Activities (N = 1135)	89.3
Number and Variety of Intercollegiate Sports (N = 874)	88.8
Recreation and Intramural Programs (N = 916)	88.8
Religious/Spiritual Activities and Programs (N = 402)	85.1
Sexual Assault Prevention Programs (N = 695)	89.2
Student Input in UB policies/plans/decision-making (N = 477)	68.4
Student Newspaper (N = 1221)	80.8

Note: For each item, the percent satisfied is based only on the number of students who found it to be relevant which is shown in parentheses following the item.

Conclusions

Overall, graduate and professional students are well satisfied with their experiences at UB. The primary areas where they report lower satisfaction are those relating to practical training and experiences and assistance in career preparation, both at the department level and at the university level. In today's economy where finding employment after graduation is essential, it should be no surprise that students are least satisfied with aspects of the program related to practical training and assistance in finding employment. It may be that the most sought out graduate and professional programs of the future will be those that offer many opportunities for practical experiences and work hard to help students make career connections.

Carol VanZile-Tamsen, Office of Institutional Analysis, 6/22/09