



Institutional Research and Assessment Report

February 18, 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY GRADUATING SENIOR SURVEY CLASS OF 2007-2008

The focus of the Graduating Senior Survey is to assess students' satisfaction with and opinions about their experiences at the University of Idaho. Results are used to improve our degree programs to enhance learning, as well as to provide feedback to faculty and student service units to improve student experiences. This survey has been administered annually since 1992.

Potential respondents included the 1,756 baccalaureate degree recipients for August and December 2007 and May 2008. This year 1,488 (85%, down 5% from last year) responded in time for their surveys to be included in the analysis. The median age of respondents at graduation was 23. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents were female and eighty-five percent (85%) were Caucasian American.

One-half (47%) of all respondents had begun their job search at the time they completed the survey, with only twenty-one percent (21%, down 2%) having been offered a position, a decline for the fourth year in a row. Six percent (6%, down 1%) of respondents reported that the positions they were offered had been listed with the Career and Professional Planning Office. Students who had been offered a position were asked if "this position was a result of an internship/practicum experience." Twenty-seven percent (27%, up 1%) of those offered a position responded "yes".

More than nine out of ten graduating seniors indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their "undergraduate education in general" (98%, up 2%), "valued friendships" (96%, up 2%), "increased confidence in my knowledge and abilities" (95%, no change from last year), "education in my major field" (93%, up 1%) and "services for students, in general" (90%, no change). Eight out of ten respondents reported they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" in all other areas.

Nearly six out of ten (59%, up 1%) of responding seniors reported they had an opportunity to participate in research during their undergraduate coursework. When asked to describe the type of research in which they were involved, seniors reported their experiences as "field study" (35%, no change), "experimental research" (32%, down 1%), and "historical, philosophical original writing" (24%, no change). Thirty-eight percent (38%, no change) reported their experiences were "independent," forty percent (42%, up 2%) were "collaborative with students," and twenty-five percent (23%, down 2%) "collaborative with faculty."

University of Idaho
GRADUATING SENIOR SURVEY
Class of 2007-2008

INTRODUCTION

Since the spring of 1992, seniors planning to graduate have been expected to complete a Graduating Senior Survey. The content of the survey is based on goals and objectives relative to academic programs and student services offered campus wide. Student opinions, satisfaction with their experiences, and reflections on their learning are dimensions of this exit survey.

Questions on the survey elicit satisfaction ratings regarding experiences and learning in the general education programs and in the major; student services and resources for students; library and learning resources; academic computing; financial support for education; research experience and study patterns; career advising resources; semesters spent earning a degree and reasons for extended programs; and, living and employment patterns. An entire section of this survey is devoted to the department, its teaching and learning environment, and advising.

The Graduating Senior Survey is administered on-line. Students are notified that the survey is available when they log in to the University of Idaho Vandal Web using their ID and PINs, and informed that the survey should be completed at the time they complete the Application for Degree. When the survey has been completed and submitted, demographic data is gathered from Banner and retained along with the survey responses. These data include gender, campus location, college, major, ethnic group, and grade point average. When survey responses are submitted, the student ID is encrypted to preserve the confidentiality of the respondents. After the time the survey is completed the student is required to print the confirmation page, which is submitted with the Application for Degree to the student's dean's office. Deans' offices are asked to verify that the survey has been completed. This gives university personnel an opportunity to explain to students the importance of the process and the value of their responses to departments, colleges and the university as a whole.

As a part of the administration process Institutional Research and Assessment staff meet with representatives from each dean's office at the beginning of each academic year, to discuss ways to improve the process, address any problems that might have arisen, and remind staff of the importance of these data collection efforts to the university's overall assessment program.

Analysis of results occurs after spring graduation. Departments with twenty or more respondents receive a departmental frequency analysis along with the college and university frequency analyses for comparative purposes. Data are used only in the aggregate, and no individual student identity is connected to any survey response or report.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADUATING SENIORS

Potential respondents included the 1,756 baccalaureate degree recipients for August and December 2007 and May 2008. This year 1,488 (85%, down 5% from last year) responded in time for their surveys to be included in the analysis.

As it has been since the survey's inception, the age of respondents at graduation ranged from 21 years or younger to 30 years of age or older, with a median age of 23 (mode of 22). Eighty-two percent (82%) of our graduating seniors report they are 25 years of age or younger. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents were female, up slightly (1%) from the previous two years. Eighty-five percent (85%) were Caucasian. Ninety-five percent (95%, no change from the previous year) of respondents took most of their UI coursework on the Moscow campus, while three percent (3%) took coursework on the Coeur d'Alene campus. Thirty-six percent (36%) report they will graduate in the summer or fall semesters rather than in May.

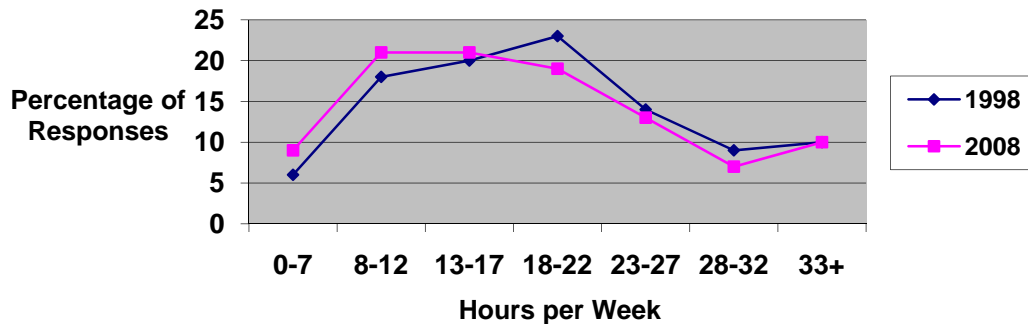
Forty-six percent (46%, up 2%) of respondents indicated they first entered UI as transfer students, with the median number of credits transferred between 35 and 49, and the mode between 1 and 19, similar to previous years. Respondents were also asked if they had transferred "to the college/department from another college/department within the university." Thirty-four percent (34%, the same as the last two years) responded that they had transferred within the university, with twenty percent (20%, down 2%) of those transferring doing so as freshman, forty-three percent (43%, up 3%) transferring as sophomores, and twenty-nine percent (29%, no change) as juniors.

ACADEMIC AND STUDY COMMITMENTS

For graduating seniors, time spent on academic work outside of class spanned from fewer than 7 hours per week to more than 33 hours per week; the median time for the senior year was in the interval of 13 to 17 hours, consistent with the last two years, but slightly lower than previous years. Thirty percent (30%) of respondents reported that they study 23 or more hours each week outside of class, an increase of three percent (3%) since 2006-07. Respondents most frequently reported meeting with faculty outside of class, for advice, or about coursework or research, between one and four times during their senior year, with a median interval of five to eight times, also consistent with previous years.

The chart below outlines how respondents reported spending their time on academic work (studying, doing library research, writing papers, etc.) outside of the classroom over the past ten years.

**Hours Spent Per Week on Academic Work Outside of Class
10-Year Comparison**



EMPLOYMENT AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

During their senior year, sixty-seven percent (67%, down 1%) of respondents reported that they were employed, with the median number of hours between 23 and 27 per week, as it has been in recent years. Twenty percent (20%, down 2%) reported they were employed 23 hours or more per week during their senior year. Thus, it appears UI students continue to work more and study less than in the past.

When asked about participating in a list of activities available on campus, one-half of respondents report participating in “intramural or club sports” (54%, up 3% last year), “civic, community service” (48%, up 2%), “internship” (46%, no change from last year), and “professional organizations/clubs related to major” (46%, up 3%). Over one-quarter participated in an “independent study” (28%, no change), a “social fraternity or sorority” (28%, up 1%), and an “Honors society” (27%, down 1%). Consistent with 2006-07 results, those areas reporting the lowest participation rates included “student government” (7%, no change 2%), “intercollegiate athletics” (10%, up 1%), “arts productions” (11%, down 1%), and “national/international exchange” (12%, down 1%).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As in previous years, student loans are most frequently reported as the primary source of funding to support education (50%, no change from 2006-2007), with an additional nineteen percent (19%, also no change) using loans as a lesser source of support. Other areas most frequently used as primary sources include “parents or guardians” (36%, no change), and “grants” (24%, down 3%). Seventy-seven percent (77%, up 1%) of respondents use “summer job earnings” as a primary or lesser source of support for their education, with seventy-nine percent (79%, no change) using “scholarships.” Over one-half use personal savings as a primary or lesser source (54, down 2%), and forty-eight percent (48%, up 2%) use off-campus employment. Ten percent (10%, down 2%) of respondents reported they used “internship/cooperative education earnings” as a lesser source of financing, while two percent (2%) reported using these earnings as a primary source of support; this is consistent with last year’s results.

Sixty-four percent (64%, down 1%) of responding seniors received scholarships, and thirty-one percent (31%, up 4%) relied on scholarships as a primary source of funding, while forty-eight percent (48%, down 3%) relied on them as a lesser source of funding for their undergraduate education. This is a significant change from the survey's inception in 1992 when only forty-two percent (42%) of seniors reported that they had received a scholarship, and sixteen percent (16%) relied on them as a primary source of support.

SATISFACTION WITH CHOICE OF MAJOR

Sixty percent (60%, down 2%) of graduating seniors report having changed their majors while in college, with twenty-four percent (24%, the same as in 2006-2007) having changed it two or more times. Fewer than one-half of students (45%, no change) selected their major in which they graduated during their freshman year, with over one-quarter (28%, no change) selecting their major in their sophomore year, and over one-fifth (22%, no change) waiting until their junior year to decide.

FUTURE PLANS

Fewer than one-half (44%) of all graduating seniors report that they expect their principle activity after graduation to be "full-time employment in my major field." Thirteen percent (12%, down 1%) anticipate being employed in some other field. Nearly one-quarter (24%, up 5%) expect to be in "graduate school", while an additional five percent (5%, up 1%) plan to be "continuing education for credential/professional certificate." Nine percent (9%, up 1% from last year's class) are "completely undecided" about their principle activity after graduation, though sixty-two percent (62%, up 1%) of respondents plan to pursue further studies at some point in the future.

About one-half (47%) of all respondents had begun their job search at the time they completed the survey, with twenty-one percent (21%, down 2%) having been offered a position, a decline for the fourth year in a row. Six percent (6%, down 1%) of respondents reported that the positions they were offered had been listed with the Career and Professional Planning Office. Students who had been offered a position were asked if "this position was a result of an internship/practicum experience," with twenty-seven percent (27%, up 1%) responding "yes". Twenty-one percent (21%, down 1%) of respondents reported that an internship was required in the major, with thirty-three percent (33%, down 4%) reporting that they had completed the internship at the time they were responding to the Graduating Senior Survey.

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF LIFE AND EDUCATION

In one element of the Graduating Senior Survey where various aspects of undergraduate programs and living experiences are measured, students are asked about their satisfaction with the University of Idaho. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of respondents (down 1%) reported that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the quality of education overall.

More than nine out of ten graduating seniors indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their "undergraduate education in general" (98%, up 2%), "valued

friendships" (96%, up 2%), "increased confidence in my knowledge and abilities" (95%, no change from last year), "education in my major field" (93%, up 1%) and "services for students, in general" (90%, no change). Eight out of ten respondents reported they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" in all other areas. Interestingly, eighty percent (80%, up 4%) of respondents reported being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the cost of their UI education.

Student satisfaction with "campus life, social interactions" and "opportunity to interact with faculty informally" remained at eighty-eight percent (88%) each this year, while satisfaction with "opportunity to get to know diverse people" remained at eighty-one percent (81%) and "services for students in general" declined one percent (1%) to eighty-five percent (85%).

SATISFACTION WITH THE UI AND THE COLLEGE/DEPARTMENT

Since the survey's inception, graduating seniors have been asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with their college/major department in several areas. The top areas in which students reported their satisfaction was "good" or "excellent" were "class size" (87%, up 1%), "student-student interactions" (86%, no change), "faculty-student interactions" (85%, no change), and "quality of instructions" (85%, no change from the previous year).

Additional areas in which eight out of ten students reported that their satisfaction was "good" or "excellent" include:

- "currency of curriculum content" (84%, down 1%);
- "academic rigor" (84%, up 1%);
- "practical relevance of content" (83%, down 1%);
- "fairness of grading" (84%, no change);
- "academic advice from faculty" (82%, up 2%);
- "personal attention to students" (82%, down 1%); and,
- "quality of students in classes" (80%, up 2%).

Consistent with previous years, the three elements in which less than three-fourths of students reported that their satisfaction was "good" or "excellent" were:

- "collaborative learning opportunities" (73%, up 2%);
- "availability of required courses" (71%, up 2%);
- "research reputation" (61%, up 2%).

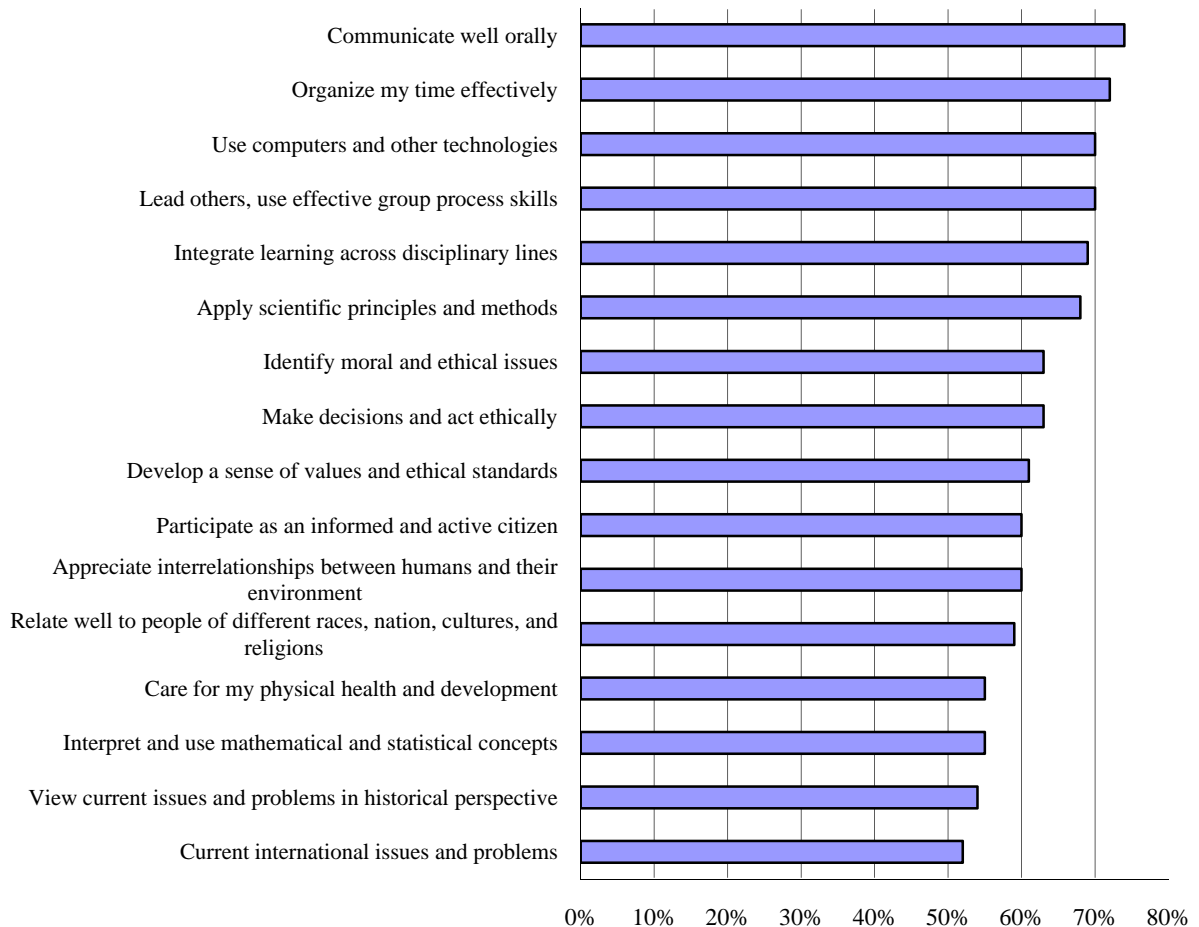
GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS

One item on the senior survey lists a variety of abilities and types of knowledge that may be developed in a bachelor's degree program and asks respondents to indicate the extent to which each capacity was enhanced by their UI undergraduate education. The ratings in most of these elements increased for the second year in a row. Four of the top five items that were reported by the highest frequencies of seniors to be those "greatly" or "moderately" enhanced are consistent with previous years, and include: "think analytically and critically" (84%, up 2%), "identify and solve problems" (82%, up 1%), "function independently without supervision" (79%, up 2%), and "formulate creative/original ideas and solutions" (78%, up 4%). Other areas in which three-quarters

of respondents reported their abilities were “moderately” or “greatly” increased were: “write effectively” (77%, no change), and “acquire new skills and knowledge on my own, continue to be intellectually curious” (77%, up 1%), and “understand myself: abilities, interests, limitations, and personality” (77%, up 2%).

The chart below includes additional areas that students report are moderately or greatly enhanced:

Reported Capacity Moderately or Greatly Enhanced



Conversely, abilities reported by graduating students as being "not at all" enhanced at the UI are also important goals of general education. There was no change again this year in the top five elements reported in this category. Those in which more than half report their abilities have increased “not at all” or “a little” comprise “contributions to knowledge and culture by ethnic minorities” (59%, down 3%), “contributions to knowledge and culture by women” (59%, up 1%), “understand another culture, know another language” (57%, down 3%), “knowledge of the evolution of economic, social, and political institutions” (51%, down 3%), and “appreciate our western and non-western cultural heritage” (51%, down 2%).

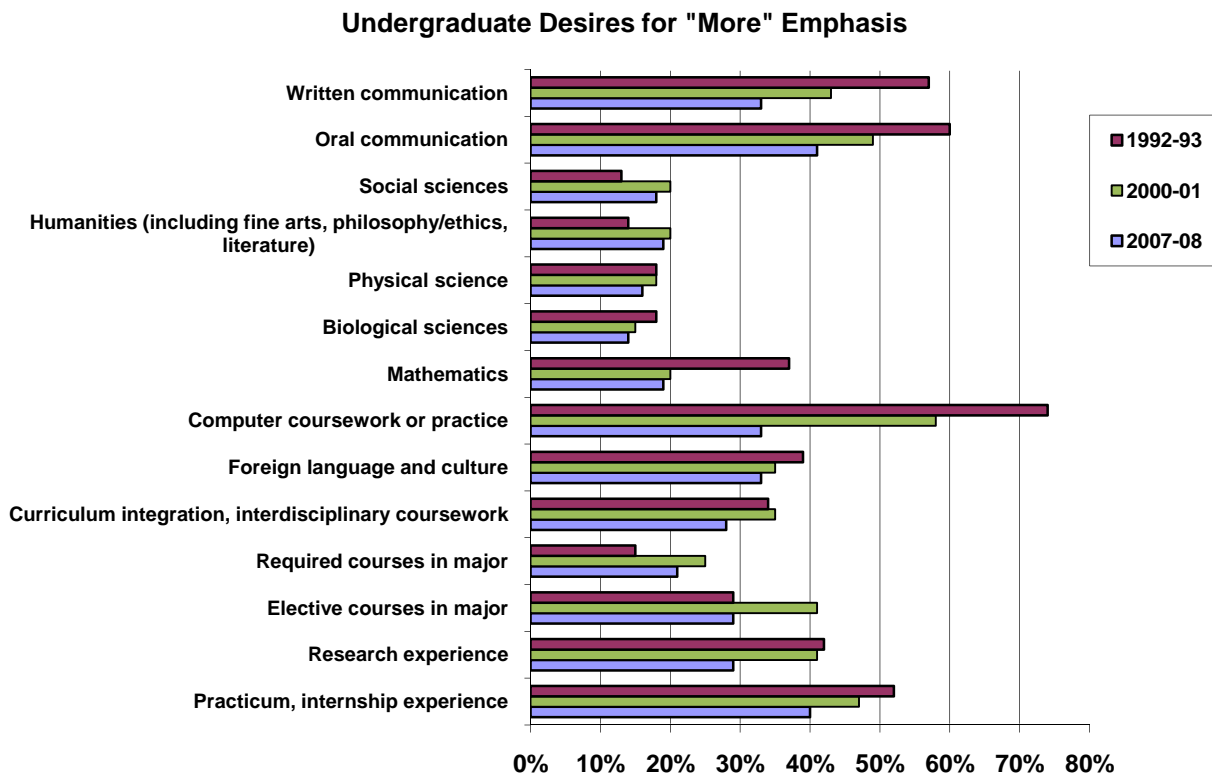
EMPHASIS AND SATISFACTION IN CORE CURRICULUM

The Graduating Senior Survey asks students to evaluate some of the goals and objectives of our core curriculum. These elements ask for student views regarding how much emphasis the core curriculum should place on a variety of skills and abilities. This is done by asking students to indicate where they believe more, less, or the same emphasis should be applied for future undergraduates' study. This question also asks seniors about the quality of the educational experiences they received in these areas while at the UI. Each of these items correlates with one or more of the University Learning outcomes that broadly describe expected and desired consequences of learning through integrated curricular and co-curricular experiences. The chart below indicates the relationship between the learning outcomes and each of the abilities and types of knowledge that graduating seniors are asked to rate.

Ability to:	University of Idaho Learning Outcomes				
	1. Learn and Integrate	2. Think and Create	3. Communicate	4. Clarify Purpose and Perspective	5. Practices Citizenship
Write effectively	X		X		
Communicate well orally	X		X		
Apply scientific principles and methods	X	X			
Use computers and other technologies	X		X		
Participate as an informed and active citizen				X	X
Identify moral and ethical issues				X	X
Develop a sense of values and ethical standards				X	X
Makes decisions and act ethically		X		X	X
Integrate learning across disciplinary lines	X	X			
Think analytically and critically	X	X			
Identify and solve problems	X	X			
Formulate creative/original ideas and solutions	X	X			X
Organize my time effectively		X		X	X
Function independently	X	X		X	
Lead others, use effective group process skills		X	X	X	X
Care for my physical health and development		X		X	X
Relate well to people of different races, nations, cultures, and religions	X	X	X	X	X
Appreciate interrelationships between humans and their environment	X	X		X	X
Interpret and use mathematical and statistical concepts	X	X			
View current issues and problems in historical perspective	X	X		X	X
Appreciate our western and non-western cultural heritage	X	X	X	X	X
Acquire new skills and knowledge on my own, continue to be intellectually curious	X	X		X	X
Understand another culture, know another language	X	X	X	X	X
Understand myself: abilities, interests, limitations, and personality		X		X	X
Understand current international issues and problems	X	X		X	X
Understand contributions to knowledge and culture by women	X	X		X	X
Understand contributions to knowledge and culture by ethnic minorities	X	X		X	X
Knowledge of economic, social and political institutions	X	X		X	X

The top five areas in which seniors recommended more emphasis for future students were: "oral communication" (41%, down 1%), "practicum, internship experience" (40%, down 7%), "written communication" (33%, up 1%), "computer coursework and practice" (33%, down 3%) and "foreign language and culture" (33%, down 1%.) Similar to previous years, the items in which respondents most frequently reported that the UI should retain the same emphasis for all undergraduates were "required courses in the major" (62%, up 2%), "biological sciences" (59%, up 1%), "mathematics" (58%, down 2%), "statistics" (57%, down 1%), and "social sciences" (55%, up 3%). Those items receiving the greatest number of recommendations to provide less emphasis were "fine arts" (14%, no change), "philosophy/ethics" (12%, down 3%), and "literature", "social sciences" and "statistics" (all 11%).

When comparing student responses from the survey's inception in 1992 to the current graduating class, we can see some significant shifts in the areas where respondents report core curriculum objectives should be emphasized (see chart below.)

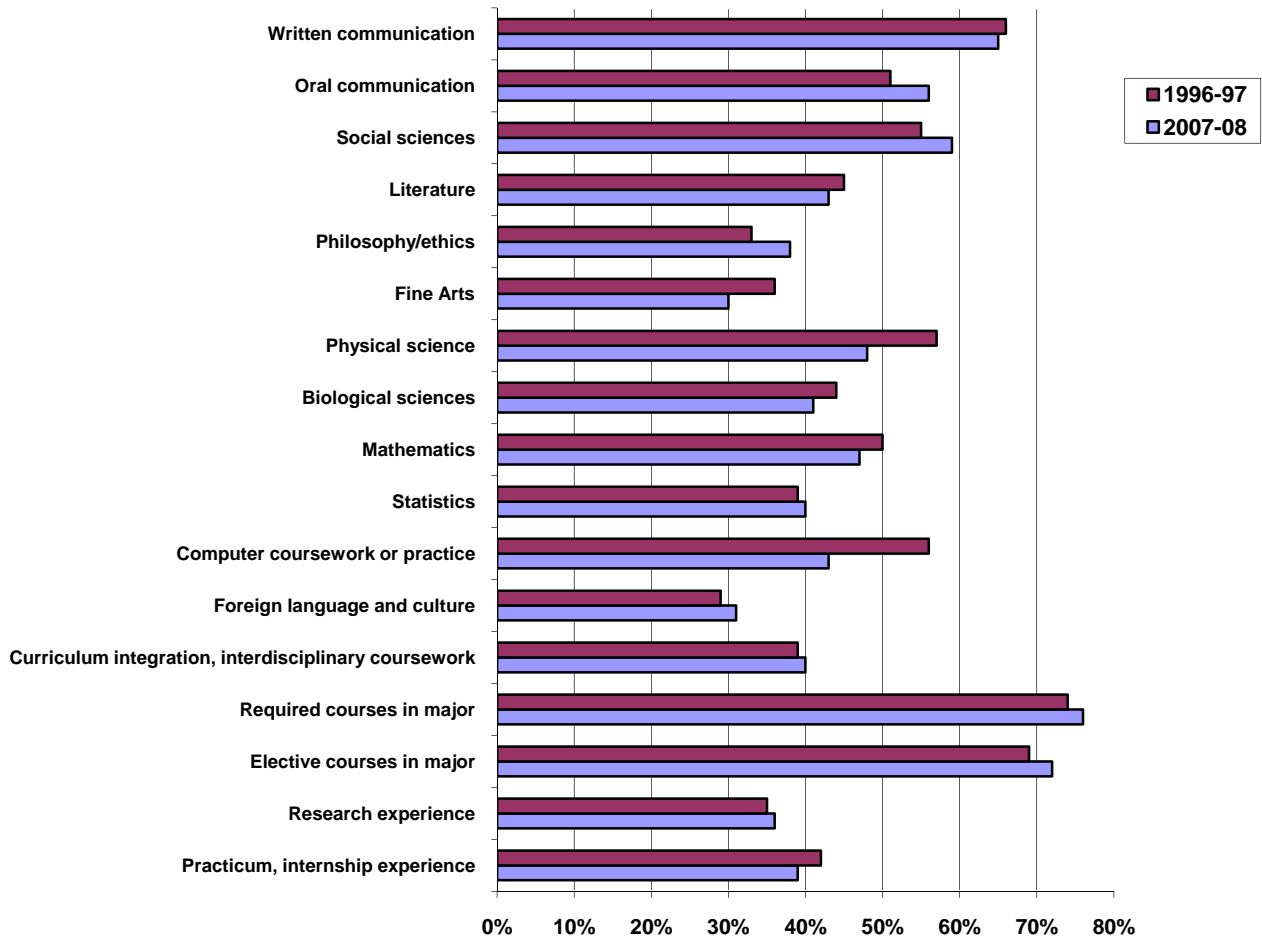


Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of their experiences in each of these areas at the UI. Consistent with the previous year, the top five elements in which students reported the quality of their experience as "excellent" or "good" were "required courses in the major" (76%, down 1%); "elective courses in the major" (72%, up 1%), "written communication" (65%, down 1%); "social sciences" (59%, down 1%), and "oral communication" (56%, up 2%).

The chart below shows the change in student satisfaction with the quality of their experience at the UI since these data were first collected. These charts show that in

several areas (for example written communication, oral communication, mathematics, statistics, and computer coursework) student satisfaction with their experience in general education areas has remained fairly constant, even though student desires for more emphasis have changed over the years,

"Good" and "Excellent" Response Rates on Quality of Experience at UI



It is important to note that for eleven of the seventeen elements in this item, nearly one third or more of the students reported that these were not experiences or courses completed at the University of Idaho. When the frequency distribution is adjusted for students who have not had the experience at the UI, more than one-half of all respondents report the quality of their experience as “good” or “excellent” for every item.

SATISFACTION WITH SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR STUDENT SUPPORT

In two items seniors are asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a variety of support services, facilities, and activities available to students. This year, satisfaction was down in over one-half of the elements. Support services and offices receiving ratings of "satisfied" or "very satisfied" from eight of ten or more of respondents included:

- “Library services” (91%, down 1%);
- “Registrar's Office” (90%, no change from last year);
- “Admissions Office” (89%, no change);
- “Library holdings” (84%, down 3%);
- “Idaho Commons” (87%, no change);
- “Bookstore services” (82%, down 2%);
- “Business and Accounting, Cashiers” (80%, no change);
- “Computer lab access” (89%, down 2%);
- “Help Desk support services” (86%, no change);
- “Adequacy of classrooms” (87%, up 1%);
- “Individual study space on campus” (81%, down 3%);
- “Group study/work space on campus” (81%, up 2%);
- “Attractiveness of campus” (93%, no change); and
- “Recreation center” (89%, no change).

When adjusted for students who reported that they had not used the services, additional elements become prominent for student satisfaction: “Tutoring and Learning Services,” “Student Disability Services,” “Student Support Services,” “Student Wellness Program,” “International Student Advisor,” the “Women’s Center,” “music/theatre/dance/art performances,” “intramural sports,” and “campus organizations, clubs, special interest groups” all receiving ratings of “satisfied” or “very satisfied” by ninety percent (90%) or more of respondents.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Nearly six out of ten (59%, up 1%) responding seniors reported they had an opportunity to participate in research during their undergraduate coursework. When asked to describe the type of research in which they were involved, seniors reported their experiences as "field study" (35%, no change), "experimental research" (32%, down 1%), and "historical, philosophical original writing" (24%, no change). Thirty-eight percent (38%, no change) reported their experiences were "independent," forty percent (42%, up 2%) were "collaborative with students," and twenty-five percent (23%, down 2%) "collaborative with faculty."

This year, twenty-nine percent (29%, down 11%) of graduating seniors reported that the UI should have more emphasis on “research experience”, with thirty-six percent (36%, down 1%) reporting that the quality of their research experience was “good” or “excellent.” When asked about satisfaction with departmental offerings, fifty-one percent (51%, up 3%) reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with "opportunities for participation in faculty or individual research".

TIME TO GRADUATION

The Graduating Senior Survey asks students a series of questions about their progress to their degrees. Students were asked how many semesters their undergraduate studies took to complete, with response options ranging from fewer than seven semesters to more than 15. While the most frequent response, as in the past, was eight semesters (29%, up 2%), forty-one percent (41%, no change) of students reported that it took 10 or more semesters

to complete their undergraduate studies. The reasons cited by the greatest number of respondents for why they took longer than eight semesters to complete their studies were the same as in the past several years: "changed majors or selected major late" (31%, down 1%). Other top reasons cited were also consistent with previous years: "took difficult and/or time-consuming courses" (16%, no change), "needed to repeat a course" (14%, up 2%), "needed to work ½ time or more to meet college costs" (13%, down 3%), and "had double major" (13%, no change).

CAREER CHOICE

When graduating seniors were asked how certain they are of their career choices, slightly more than one-half (55%, up 2%) responded that they were "very certain," while eleven percent (12%, up 1%) were still undecided at the time of graduation. In addition, fifty-five percent (55%, up 2%) reported that the quality of "help with career selection" they received from their academic departments was "good/excellent."

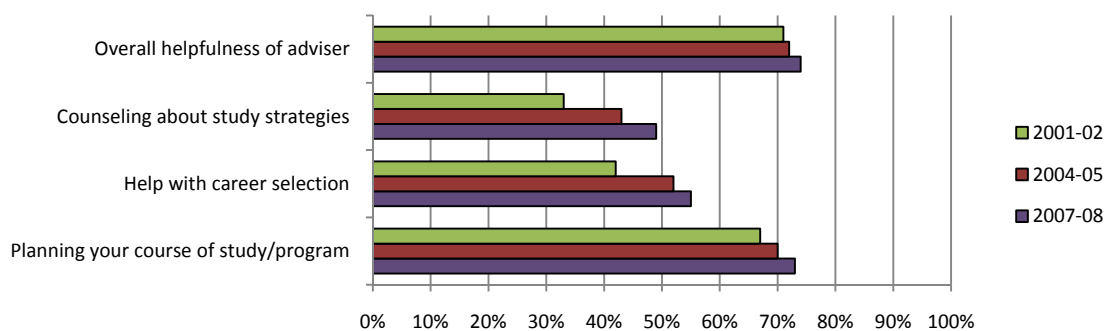
DEPARTMENTAL FACULTY

An important portion of the UI Graduating Senior Survey relates to student assessment of their departments, its faculty, curriculum instruction, advising, and services. Consistent with previous years, respondents reported their most positive rating of their department faculty in "knowledge and competence in area of expertise" (93%, up 1%). "Professional stature and reputation" received "excellent" or "good" ratings from eighty-eight percent (88% , up 1%) of responding seniors, with "teaching performance" at eighty-five percent (85%, no change no change from last year), and "helpfulness to students" receiving eighty-seven (87%, also no change). Students were also asked to rate the graduate assistants in their department, with fifty-two percent (52%, no change) of students rating them "good" or "excellent."

ADVISING

Each year students are asked their perception of the quality of advising they received from their department. Ratings for "overall helpfulness" of their advisors decreased this year (74%, down 2%), with "good" or "excellent" ratings for "counseling about study strategies" rising (up 2%, to 49%). Other elements of this question include the quality of advising for "planning your course of study/program" (73%, no change in "good" or "excellent" ratings), and "help with career selection" (55%, up 2%). The chart below provides a picture of the changes in advising in the past few years.

"Good" and "Excellent" Quality of Advising



DEPARTMENTAL RATINGS

Level of satisfaction with department offerings is also elicited from graduating seniors each year. Overall, students appear to be slightly more satisfied with department offerings this year, with response options ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied," and including a "not applicable" option. Consistent with previous years, the highest percentage of combined "satisfied" and "very satisfied" ratings were: "helpfulness of department office staff" (92%, no change), "advanced courses in the major" (88%, up 1%), "printed information about the program and requirements" (82%, up 2%), "introductory courses in the major" (78%, no change), and "quality of courses and experience in preparing you for career/employment" (78%, no change). Over one-half of all students were "satisfied or "very satisfied" in all areas except "quality of internships," (which has the highest rating of "not relevant" responses at 47%, up 5%).

Areas in which students reported the greatest amount of dissatisfaction were "facilities and equipment support for the major" (17%, up 1% since 2006-07), "opportunities for participation in faculty or individual research" (16% report "very dissatisfied" or "dissatisfied"), and "quality of courses and experiences in preparing you for career/employment" (15%, down 1%).

OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

The remainder of the survey elicited, through open-ended questions, the most salient experiences the respondents had at UI, both positive and negative. These written comments are distributed to the deans' and department offices, as they often yield information that is helpful for program improvement.

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