

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON STUDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY, SPRING 1999

Methodology and Results

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INTRODUCTION

As one part of a continuing effort to better serve the needs of University of Oregon (UO) undergraduates, the University contracted with the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct a representative survey of student satisfaction, as well as factors which may mediate or facilitate satisfaction. This Spring 1999 survey largely replicated parallel UO student satisfaction surveys conducted Fall 1994 and Fall 1995. This report summarizes the survey methodology and results, offering some comparisons between Spring 1999 and Fall 1994 and 1995.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey's broad goal was to assist UO in determining levels of undergraduate student satisfaction with their UO education. The specific project goals were to assess UO students' overall impressions of and satisfaction with UO; freshman experiences; difficulties encountered in the undergraduate career; participation in campus activities; and background and demographic information.

Survey questions were developed by OSRL in close consultation with an *ad hoc* faculty and administrative committee. Many questions replicate those in student and alumni surveys conducted previously by OSRL, to allow comparison.

The survey instrument was pretested using OSRL's standard three-pronged pretest procedure. This involves (a) potential members of the survey population, (b) OSRL's Questionnaire Review Committee, comprised of survey experts from our staff and university-wide advisory committee, and (c) potential users of the data at UO. Individual questions were pretested for clarity, accuracy, validity, and variability of response. The entire instrument was pretested for flow, length, comprehensiveness, and factors which affect respondents' cooperation and attention. Based on these pretests, the survey instrument was revised and finalized, programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI), and then tested again.

The telephone survey instrument comprised the following specific topics:

1. Overall impressions and satisfaction with UO, including general feelings when thinking of UO; overall satisfaction with a UO education; satisfaction with undergraduate teaching, how teachers integrate research into teaching, libraries, academic advising, DUCKCALL registration, and special services (tutoring, learning communities); feeling that a professor cares; belief in the value of a UO degree; belief in the importance of a UO degree for the future; recommending UO to friends; and narrative comments about UO's "one best thing" and the one thing respondents would "change or improve" about UO.
2. Learning communities and freshmen experiences, including year first started, UO's rank in schools respondents wished to attend, academic preparation, anticipated and experienced academic difficulty, participation in freshman programs and other learning communities, and satisfaction with such programs (scaled and narrative).
3. Difficulties encountered in undergraduate career, including ever received an incomplete, ever failed a class, ever repeated a course, ever been on academic probation, ever withdrawn from UO, ever taken a leave of absence (if so, how many times and how long), and ever been an undeclared major; concerns about finances, health, family, academic ability, academic advising, and getting needed classes affecting ability to complete a degree; and experiences with special tutoring at UO (subject area, difficulty finding help, how much tutoring improved skills, satisfaction with tutoring, and need for more special help).
4. Participation in student activities such as campus events (like Homecoming), college sports, religious groups, fraternities/sororities, clubs, artistic performances, protests or demonstrations, volunteer work or internships on- and off-campus, helping professors with research or teaching, and honors society or program.
5. Demographic, student and status characteristics, including commitment to completing a UO degree, degree aspirations, in-class vs. out-of-class learning, residence in-state/out-of-state, and plans to return to UO in the Fall.

The original plan was to merge UO's student database information with the survey data, avoiding unneeded data collection (e.g., sex, age, cumulative credits, GPA, etc.). However, the database information was not supplied with the sample, and these questions had to be added to the survey instrument at the last minute. Thus, the reliability of data on student characteristics may not be as high as if it had been supplied from UO's database.

SAMPLING

UO provided OSRL with a list of 1,000 undergraduate students who enrolled at UO Spring 1999. In 4,191 dial attempts, OSRL completed 403 interviews. From the original list, 75 numbers (7.5%) were wrong, disconnected, non-working, non-residential, or fax/modem, or the respondent was too ill, was gone survey dates, etc. Fully 98 students (9.8%) were ineligible because they said they had already graduated and were no longer taking classes. The CASRO survey response rate was 52%¹ and the refusal rate was 2.9%.

DATA COLLECTION

The “*Student Satisfaction Survey*” was conducted with the use of OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing system (CATI). In the CATI system, sampling, interviewing and data entry is accomplished interactively and seamlessly. The programmed survey instrument contains all survey questions, interviewer probes for consistency, and pre-coded answer categories. Skip logic is programmed into the system, preventing inappropriate or incorrect questions from being asked.

In administering the survey, trained interviewers use telephone headsets in sound-reduced carrels at computer workstations connected by an NT network. Randomly distributed telephone numbers appear automatically at each workstation and are mated to pre-programmed survey instruments. Telephone calls are placed with a computer keystroke, preventing dialing errors. As respondents answer questions, interviewers enter the data into the CATI data file. Names and telephone numbers are automatically stripped from the interview data to ensure confidentiality. The CATI system eliminates out-of-range responses and wild codes by validating each response interactively and not allowing inappropriate responses to be entered. Thus, the CATI system eliminates many routine and error-prone coding and data entry tasks and enables OSRL to maintain the highest standards of quality control.

Project-specific interviewer training took place May 4, 1999. Interviewing was conducted from 9:00 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. May 5 to May 20, 1999.

SURVEY RESULTS

The results section of this report is organized into five parts. Part 1 summarizes the demographic, student, and status characteristics of survey respondents, to provide context for the substantive results. Part 2 presents various aspects of students' satisfaction with UO. Part 3 compares UO student satisfaction in 1999 to the results of previous surveys in 1995 and 1994. Part 4 provides information on students' concerns and difficulties, which can mediate satisfaction or be risk factors for stopping out or dropping out. Included in Part 4 are the

¹ CASRO response rates, the most rigorous industry standard, are calculated in following manner. Completed interview / (Eligible sample + ((Eligible sample / (Eligible sample + Ineligible sample)) * Sample with unknown status)).

results for students' participation in special tutoring or remedial work. Part 5 summarizes students' participation in various activities at the University of Oregon.

1: DEMOGRAPHIC, STUDENT, AND STATUS CHARACTERISTICS

For context, this section briefly describes survey respondents' demographic attributes (sex, race/ethnicity, age) and student characteristics (class level, cumulative credits, grade point average, living arrangements, degree aspirations, in-class *vs.* out-of-class learning, residence in-state/out-of-state, attended another college, plan to complete a UO degree), as well as their citizen, language and employment statuses. In addition, results of a "callback" question are presented, along with volunteered information from students not planning to return to UO in the Fall. All data are from survey questions (i.e., none are from UO's student database). In an open-ended question, students also provided their major. But this and other open-ended questions were not coded, in order to save money; see Section 7 for narrative answers to open-ended questions.

Sex: Men comprised 46% of survey respondents and women comprised 54%.

Race/Ethnicity: Non-Hispanic Whites constituted 78% of respondents. Other races were Asians/Pacific Islanders 10%, Blacks 1%, American Indians 1%, mixed race 4% and "other" 4%. One percent refused to answer the race question. Latinos/Hispanics (who may be of any race) comprised 4% of the sample.

Age: The median age of survey respondents was 20. Nine percent of the respondents were age 25 and over.

Class Level: Freshmen comprised 28% of survey respondents, sophomores 19%, juniors 22%, seniors 22%, and "fifth-year" seniors 8%.

Cumulative Credits: Twenty-three percent of students had 45 or fewer cumulative credits, 16% had 46-89 credits, 18% had 90-134, and 33% had 135 or more. Ten percent of students did not know how many credits they had completed.

Grade Point Average: Self-reported grade point averages were 12% 2.51 or less, 9% 2.51-2.75, 26% 2.76-3.0, 14% 3.01-3.25, 16% 3.26-3.50, 10% 3.51-3.75, and 9% 3.76 or greater. Four percent did not know or refused.

Living Arrangements: Fifty-four percent of students live in off-campus houses or apartments, 36% in UO residence halls or dormitories, 6% with family or relatives in the community, and 3.5% in fraternities or sororities (compared to 15% who had pledged a fraternity or sorority).

Plan to Complete a UO Degree: Ninety-one percent of the survey respondents said they plan to complete a BA or BS degree at UO, 5% did not, and 4% were unsure. Those who answered "no" or "don't know" were asked why; their narrative answers may be found in Section 7 of this report.

Degree Aspirations: Just 37% of UO students plan to stop at a bachelor's degree, and these were significantly more likely to be minorities and not U.S. citizens. Forty percent plan to achieve a master's degree, 18% a doctorate degree, and 5% were unsure.

Where Most Learning Occurs: Just 15% of students say that most of their learning comes from “inside classrooms, labs and seminars.” Thirteen percent say that most of their learning comes from “out-of-classroom experiences, such as conversations with professors and other students, studying, from special lectures and plays, and from general activities around campus.” Seventy-one percent say that their learning comes equally from inside and outside the classroom.

Attended Another College: Forty-four percent of the survey respondents reported having attended another college besides UO.

Residence: Seventy-three percent of the survey respondents were in-state students.

Citizenship and Language: Ninety-three percent of survey respondents were U.S. citizens, but slightly fewer, 91%, speak English as a native language. Fully 37% of UO students report proficiency in a language other than English.

Employment: Forty percent of survey respondents had worked on the UO campus at some point in their undergraduate career. Fifty percent were employed for pay during Spring term, and the median number of hours of work per week was about 14. While just 4.4% of employed students worked 31 or more hours per week, nearly one-fifth (18%) worked more than half time, 21-30 hours per week.

Callback: From discussions with the *ad hoc* survey advisory committee, OSRL anticipates the possibility that UO may wish for future student satisfaction surveys to be a combination panel study and random sample. To allow for such a design next year, we asked respondents if we could call them back next year. Of those who plan to return to UO (84%), 91% answered affirmatively. This overwhelmingly positive response may also indicate that respondents appreciated the survey experience.

Returning to UO: In answer to the callback question above, 64 students (16%) volunteered that they would not be returning to UO next academic year. While 83% of these non-returning students were apparently graduating seniors, 4.7% were freshmen, 4.7% sophomores, and 7.8% juniors. These 11 students were much more likely to have changed majors multiple times, already attended another college, and be out-of-state students, and they are slightly more likely to be minority group members.

2: ELEMENTS OF SATISFACTION WITH UO

This section examines several direct and indirect measures of undergraduate student satisfaction with UO. We begin with students’ general feelings about UO and overall satisfaction with UO. Then we present satisfaction levels for particular services, programs, and activities. We conclude with the results of four indirect indicators of student satisfaction.

General Feelings When Thinking about UO: At the very beginning of the survey, before respondents had had a chance to think about the various elements of their UO experience, we asked them for their general impressions when they think about UO: “When you think about the University of Oregon, are your feelings generally positive, generally negative, or are they neutral?” Three-quarters said their general impressions were positive, 2% said negative, and 23% said neutral.

Students with the most positive impressions were freshmen, those who had UO as their first choice of colleges to attend, who were involved in campus activities, who had pledged a fraternity or sorority, and, not surprisingly, who were also quite satisfied with their UO experience.

Students with negative impressions were more often women, near graduation, have attended a college other than UO, who did not have UO as their first choice of colleges to attend, who have changed majors, who saw themselves as “very” academically prepared for UO, who have high academic aspirations, and who do not feel there is a faculty member who cares about them. Again, only 9 of 403 respondents voiced negative impressions, so these differences are slight.

Students with neutral impressions are more likely to have changed their majors two or more times, to not have wanted to attend UO in the first place, to be uninvolved in campus activities, and to not have been academically prepared for UO.

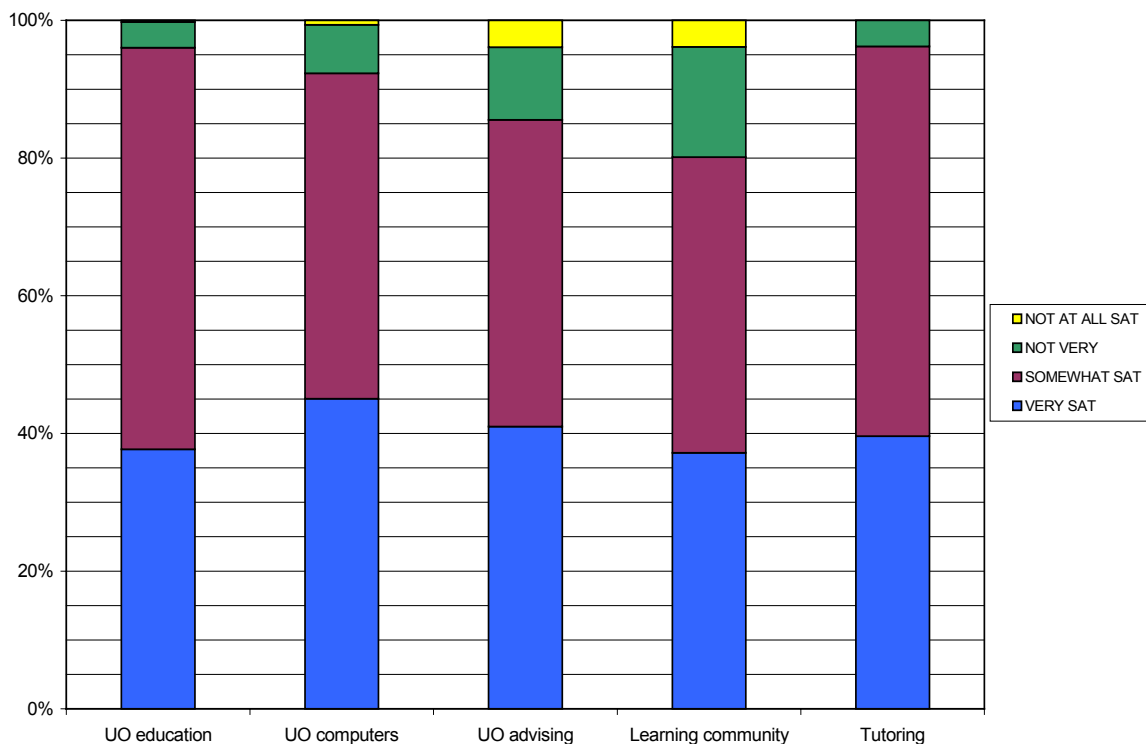
Overall Satisfaction with UO Education: At the end of the survey, after students had been asked to examine many different aspects of their UO experience, they were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their UO education: “Overall, how satisfied are you with the education you have received at the University of Oregon?” Thirty-eight percent were very satisfied, 58% somewhat satisfied, 4% not very satisfied, and 1 person was not at all satisfied (see Figure 1).

Students who voiced the highest levels of satisfaction tended to be freshmen or students in their first year at UO, students who had UO as their top college choice, those who had not changed majors, those who felt very academically prepared for UO, students who had high degree aspirations and excellent grades, those involved in campus activities, those who feel that a professor cares about them, and students who pledged a fraternity or sorority.

Students least satisfied with their UO education tended to be fifth-year seniors, those who had UO as their lowest choice of schools to attend, those academically unprepared for college, those getting lower-than-average grades, and those not at all involved in campus activities.

The overall impressions of UO, discussed above, were fairly stable by the end of the survey. Most respondents with initial positive impressions at the survey beginning also reported overall satisfaction with their UO education (99%) at the survey ending. Those with neutral impressions tended to give lower satisfaction ratings (89% satisfied, but more in the “somewhat satisfied” category, instead of “very satisfied”). Still, 5 of the 9 respondents with negative impressions said they were satisfied, overall, with their UO education (56%).

Figure 1: How satisfied are you with ...



A singularly important finding of this study is that students who reported *both* positive impressions of UO and overall satisfaction with their UO education comprised 74% of the survey’s sample.

Satisfaction with UO Undergraduate Teaching: One quarter of the survey respondents thought UO does a “very good” job teaching undergraduate students, 68% said a “somewhat good” job, 6% said a “somewhat bad” job, and one person said a very bad job (see Figure 2).² Those with the highest opinions tend to be freshmen, new arrivals on campus, those who plan to obtain doctorate degrees, those who felt very academically prepared for UO, and those who are very satisfied with UO overall.

Students with the most negative opinions of undergraduate teaching are seniors and 5th year seniors, students who felt no professor cares about them, and students who are generally dissatisfied with UO.

Satisfaction with How Professors Bring Research into Teaching: Students were asked “How good a job do you think the faculty does bringing their research into the classroom?” We speculate that most students are unaware of UO’s research mission. The fact that 21 students

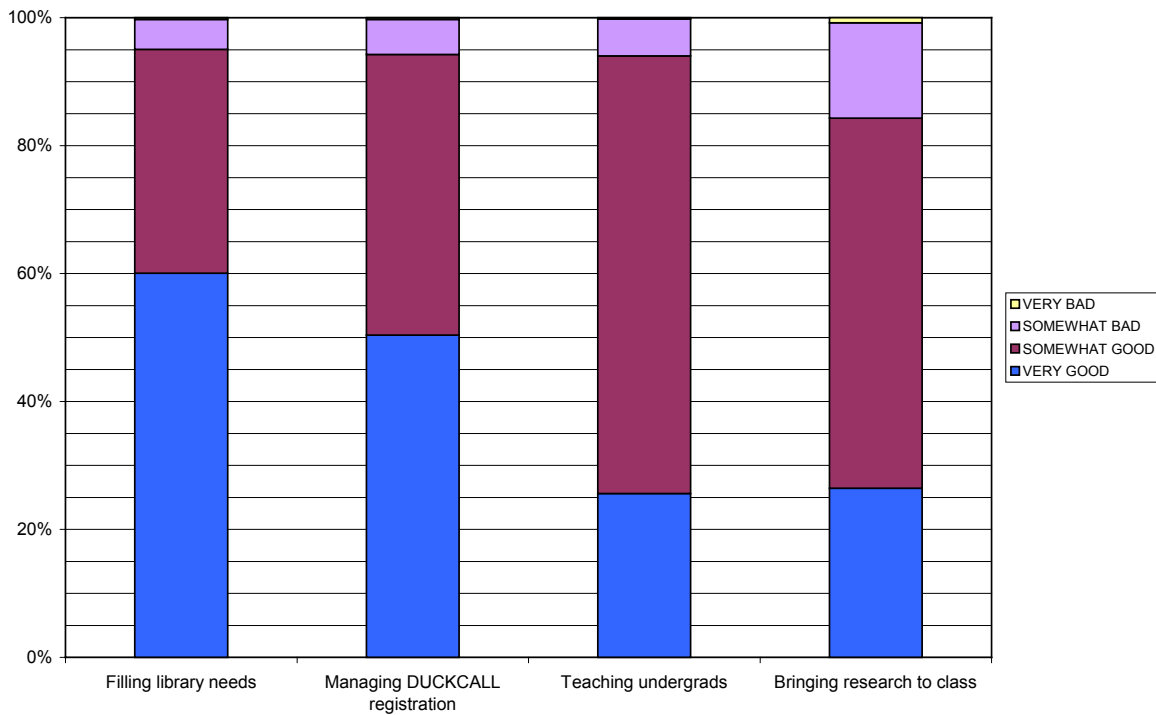
² Note: It appears that the same single person had the most negative opinions to several of the questions in this series: a white male, junior, in-state student, who has attended another college, who did not want to attend UO (3rd choice), but who is “very involved” on campus and who aims for a doctorate degree.

could not answer the question supports the speculation. Of those who could answer, 25% felt that the faculty does a “very good” job, 55% said “somewhat good,” 14% “somewhat bad,” and 1% said “very bad.”

Students most likely to say “very good” are non-citizens, those who have just started at UO in 1999, and those who have high levels of overall satisfaction with UO.

Students most likely to say “bad job” are sophomores, those who have changed majors two or more times, those who did not want to attend UO in the first place (lower than 3rd choice on college priority list), those who are not at all involved in campus activities, those who feel no professor cares about them, and those who are generally dissatisfied with UO.

Figure 2: How good a job do you think UO does ...



Satisfaction with UO Libraries: In rating how good a job the UO library system does in “getting what you need from the library collections and materials,” including library databases, fully 57% of students said “very good,” 33% “somewhat good,” 4% “somewhat bad,” and 1 person said “very bad.”

Students with negative opinions of the libraries were more likely to be Asian or mixed-race, those who have changed majors two or more times, those who said UO was their third choice of colleges to attend, and, especially, those who are “not very satisfied” with UO overall.

Students most satisfied with UO libraries tend to be non-citizens, out-of-state-students, those who have attended other colleges, students who have been on campus since 1995 or earlier, fifth-year seniors, those who plan to achieve doctorates, those who felt very academically

prepared for UO, those for whom UO as their first choice of colleges, fraternity and sorority members, and those very involved in campus activities.³

Satisfaction with Academic Advising: Students who had received formal academic advising from a major professor, peer advisor, or an Oregon Hall advisor were asked how satisfied they were with those experiences overall. Of all respondents, 64% had received such advising. Forty-one percent said they were “very satisfied,” 44% said “somewhat satisfied,” 11% reported “not very satisfied,” 4% were “not at all satisfied,” and one student volunteered that her experiences “varied.”

Hispanics, those who feel that no professor cares about them, those not academically prepared for UO, and students who did not want to attend UO (3rd choice or lower of colleges) were twice as likely to voice dissatisfaction with the academic advising they received. Also more likely to voice dissatisfaction with advising are students who are not involved in campus activities, seniors, those on campus since 1995 or before, older students, those who have been undeclared majors, mixed race and “other” race students, and out-of-state students.

Students with the highest satisfaction with academic advising were Blacks, American Indians, non-citizens, freshmen, new arrivals (on campus since 1998 or 1999), those very involved in campus activities, and those with high levels of overall satisfaction. Paradoxically, older students and Hispanics had *both* higher-than-average and lower-than-average levels of satisfaction with advising, because their opinions were more split than other students’.

Satisfaction with DUCKCALL Registration: Students were also asked how good a job UO is doing with certain services and programs. When asked how good a job UO is doing managing DUCKCALL registration for classes, 50% reported “very good,” 44% “somewhat good,” 5% said “somewhat bad,” 1 person said “very bad,” and 2 did not know.

With so many students thinking so highly of DUCKCALL, it is difficult to find patterns in the praise. A few patterns, however, can be discerned among the students having problems. Those most likely to say that UO is not doing a good job with registration tend to be non-citizens, of Asian or mixed-race descent, Hispanics, and who did not feel academically prepared for UO.

Satisfaction with Campus Computer Laboratories: Seventy-eight percent of students interviewed had used an on-campus computer laboratory or other campus computer (e.g., in the library) to do classwork. Fifty-three percent used them “often,” 22% “sometimes,” and 25% “rarely.” Of the computer users, 45% are “very satisfied” with UO’s computer labs, 47% are “somewhat satisfied,” 7% are “not very satisfied,” and 2 students (1%) were “not at all satisfied.” There are few patterns among the dissatisfied computer users, but non-Hispanic nonwhites, non-citizens and freshmen are somewhat over-represented.

Satisfaction with Special Programs – Tutoring, Learning Communities: Students who participated in special on-campus programs were asked to rate their satisfaction with the

³ In this and several other satisfaction questions, African American and American Indian students also had very high opinions, but their numbers are too small in this study to make confident generalizations (4 Blacks and 5 American Indians).

programs, specifically tutoring and participation in a Learning Community (i.e., freshman seminar, freshman interest group, transfer interest group, honors track, Honors College, or a Discover Oregon class).

Fifty-three students had received on-campus tutoring (13%). Of these, 40% were “very satisfied,” 57% were “somewhat satisfied,” 4% “not very satisfied,” and none were “not at all satisfied.” The two students voicing dissatisfaction were both older-than-average women, and both seniors very involved in campus activities. One was a new transfer student and one had been on campus since before 1995. One was a non-Hispanic white and one American Indian. Both felt academically prepared for UO, both planned to achieve doctorate degrees, both felt that a faculty member cared about them, and both were “very satisfied” with their overall UO education. The key features in their dissatisfaction with tutoring seems to be that finding help was difficult for them, and they said the tutoring did little or nothing to help improve their skills.

Altogether, 156 students had participated in a freshman seminar, freshman interest group, transfer interest group, honors track, Honors College, or a Discover Oregon class (39%). Of these, 37% were “very satisfied,” 43% were “somewhat satisfied,” 16% “not very satisfied,” and 4% were “not at all satisfied.” Commonalties among the six students who voiced extreme dissatisfaction were that three were transfer students, three had changed majors once, three were seniors, UO was not their first choice of colleges for four, none considered themselves “very” academically prepared, and three did not feel a faculty member cares for them (compared to one-fifth of all respondents).

In Section 7 of this report, students’ narrative responses to open-ended questions provide detailed information on the “one most meaningful part of your experience in that group or class,” as well as reasons for why dissatisfied students were not satisfied.

Indirect Indicators of Student Satisfaction: This section presents the results of four questions which may be considered indirect indicators of students’ satisfaction with their UO education and their campus experiences, namely: whether they believe there is a UO professor who cares about them; whether they would recommend UO to a friend; how important they think their UO degree will be to their future; and whether they believe UO’s reputation will add to the value of their degree. Two additional indirect indicators of student satisfaction are not analyzed in this report (in order to save money), namely answers to two open-ended questions: “Please tell me what you think is UO’s one greatest strength” and “If there is one thing you could change or improve at the U of O, what would it be?” The narrative answers to these questions may be reviewed in Section 7.

Eighty percent of UO students feel there is a *faculty member who cares* about them. Nineteen percent said no faculty member cared for them, and 1% did not know. Satisfaction levels, as measured by faculty caring, vary directly with year in school, age, involvement in campus activities, and, to a lesser extent, with GPA. Freshmen and sophomores are the least likely to feel a professor cares about them, at 75% each, compared to 84% for juniors, 78% for seniors, and 94% for 5th-year seniors. Likewise, older students more frequently feel a professor cares about them: for 18-19-year-olds 75-75% feel a faculty connection, compared to 90% for

25-year-olds and older. Concerning involvement in campus activities, just 67% of those “not at all involved” feel a faculty connection, compared to 75% of those “not very involved,” and 88% each of those “somewhat involved” and “very involved.” Students at the highest ends of the GPA scale feel that a professor cares for them (85-92% for those with the highest grades, 77%-83% for those with medium grades, and 67%-80% for those with the lowest grades). 100% of Blacks and American Indians feel a faculty connection, compared to 79% for whites, 80% for “others,” 76% for Asians, and just 65% for Hispanics. Importantly, no substantial differences appear for students who have taken part in “learning communities,” nor for students who work on campus. Interestingly, overall satisfaction levels do not very directly with a faculty connection: students with very low and very high satisfaction levels feel strong faculty connections, but among students who are “somewhat satisfied” just 74% feel a UO faculty member cares about them.

Fully 95% of the sample said they would *recommend UO to a friend*, 4% would not, and 1% were unsure. Fully 100% of Black, American Indian and Hispanic students interviewed, those who started in 1999, and those who are “very satisfied” with their overall UO education would recommend UO to a friend. Over half those who would not recommend UO to a friend are seniors, and for over one-third UO was their 4th choice or lower of colleges to attend. Not surprisingly, these students have far lower overall satisfaction levels with UO.

When asked the *overall importance of a UO degree for their future*, 63% of respondents said the UO degree would be “very important,” 34% said “somewhat important,” 2% said “not very important,” two students said “not at all important,” and two students did not know. Freshmen, Blacks, Hispanics, and those “very satisfied” with their UO education overall are somewhat more likely to believe a UO degree is important to their future. Few distinct patterns show among those few who do not think their UO degree is important to their future, except that fewer had UO as their top college choice and they are more likely to be dissatisfied overall with UO.

Asked if *UO’s reputation would add to the value of their college degree*, 72% answered “yes,” 22% said “no,” and 5% did not know. Students most likely to agree with the statement were Black, American Indian, Asian, non-citizens, on campus for three or fewer years, who did not plan to go beyond a bachelor’s degree, who are not working for pay, who are “somewhat involved” in campus activities, and who are “very satisfied” with UO overall. Students most likely to disagree with the statement are Hispanic (fully 47% of 17 Hispanics disagreed with the statement), on campus for more than three years, seniors, have changed majors two or more times, who aim for a doctorate degree, who had UO as 4th or lower on their priority list of colleges to attend, who felt academically unprepared for college, who are not at all involved in campus activities, who do not feel a faculty member cares about them, and who are not satisfied overall with UO.

3: STUDENT SATISFACTION IN 1999 COMPARED TO 1995 AND 1994

In Spring 1999, 75% of students had generally positive feelings toward UO, 2% generally negative, and 23% neutral, compared with 77%, 2%, 21% respectively in 1995 and 75%, 4%, 21% respectively in 1994.

In 1999, 38% of students were “very satisfied” with the overall education they have received at UO, 58% “somewhat satisfied,” 4% “not very satisfied,” and 0.25% (1 student) “not at all satisfied.” The parallel figures for 1995 were 42%, 47%, 10%, and 1%. The parallel figures for 1994 were 38%, 53%, 7%, and 1%. Thus, while the percentage of students who are “very satisfied” with their UO education is smaller than in 1995, the percentage of students that are “very” and “somewhat” satisfied has actually increased from 91% in 1994 and 89% in 1995, to 96% in 1999.

When asked how good a job UO does in teaching undergraduate students, in 1999 26% said “very good,” 68% said “somewhat good,” 6% said “somewhat bad,” and 0.25% (1 student) said “very bad.” The parallel figures for 1995 were 25%, 63%, 10%, and 1%. The parallel figures for 1994 were 27%, 63%, 9%, and 0.4%. Once again, combining the two positive response categories, students seem to think UO is doing a better job teaching undergraduate students in 1999 (94% “very” and “somewhat” good) than in 1995 (88%) or 1994 (90%).

4: STUDENTS’ CONCERNS AND DIFFICULTIES

This section presents results for factors which may mediate student satisfaction, namely difficulties and concerns they encounter during college. These can also be considered risk factors for students dropping out or stopping out of college.⁴ Also included in this section is student participation in tutoring and remedial coursework.

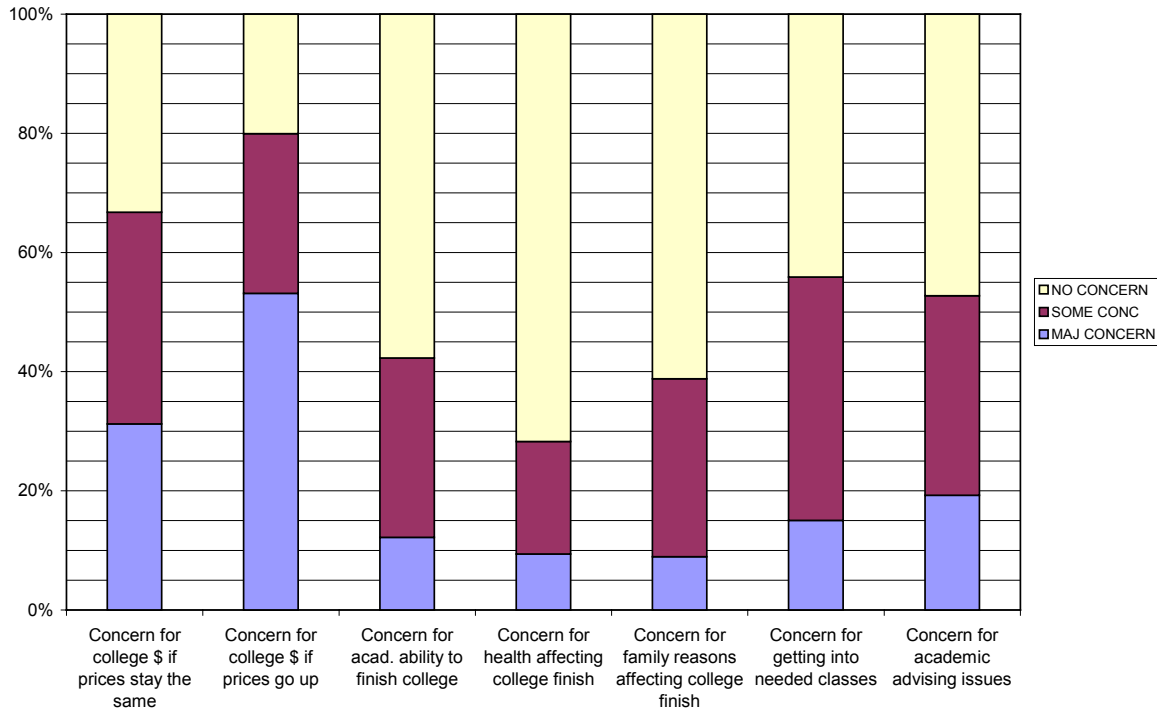
Student Concerns: Students were asked about concerns they may have about their ability to complete their college education. If the costs of college education “stay about what they are now,” 31% said that their “ability to finance [their] college education” would be a “major concern,” 35% said “some concern” and 33% said “no concern” (see Figure 3). This concern was voiced disproportionately by Hispanics, American Indians, mixed-race students, and non-citizens, as well as those who said they are “very involved” in campus activities. Students disproportionately represented in the “no concern” group are members of fraternities and sororities, 5th year seniors, students who began attending UO in 1995, and those who have changed their majors. In-state and out-of-state students show no differences.

If costs go up, 53% of students say that their ability to finance their college education would become a “major concern,” 27% say “some concern,” 20% said “no concern,” and 3 students said “it depends” or “don’t know.” If costs go up, women students’ voice considerably greater “major concern” than men, and minority students’ concerns intensify and spread across all races. Others voicing “major concern” are students new to campus (since 1998 or 1999),

⁴ A comparison of these results to the same questions’ results in the Spring and Winter 1999 surveys of nonreturning students may prove particularly useful.

freshmen, working students, those “very involved” in campus activities, and students “not very satisfied” with UO overall.

Figure 3: Ability to Complete Degree



Only 12% of students have major concerns about their academic ability to complete college, with another 30% voicing “some concern,” and 58% saying “no concern.” Forty-eight percent of non-citizens said academic ability was a major concern for them, as well as 41% of Asians. Others disproportionately concerned are American Indians, older students, out-of-state students, those who said they were “not very” academically prepared, and those who are not very satisfied with UO overall. Those with the fewest concerns about their academic ability are Blacks, seniors and 5th year seniors, students who have been on campus since 1995 or earlier, those who have changed their major two or more times, those “very” academically prepared, those aiming for doctoral degrees, fraternity and sorority members, and those “not at all involved” in campus activities.

Just 9% of UO students had major concerns about “issues related to [their] physical or mental health affecting [their] ability to finish [their] college education,” while 19% had “some concern,” and 72% had “no concern.” Minority group members and non-citizens had greater health concerns, as did those who are older, those who did not want to attend UO as a first choice, those “very involved” in campus activities, and students who were “not very prepared” academically. Health concerns decline directly with years at UO; e.g., 93% of those at UO since before 1995 had no health concerns, compared to 39% of those who began in 1990.

Nine percent of students say that issues related to family, such as balancing work and family, or helping out with family members' problems, is a “major concern” affecting their ability to complete their college education. Thirty percent say this is “some concern,” and 61% say it is “no concern.” Family issues are greatest for older students, those in the “other” race category, Hispanics, students who began in 1999, and those who were “not very prepared” academically.

Getting into classes students want or need is a “major concern” for 15%, “some concern” for 40%, and “no concern” for 44%. Groups of students voicing highest levels of major concern are Asians (38%), Hispanics (29%), non-citizens (38%), students who started in 1999 (44%), students for whom UO was 3rd or greater choice (about 26%), and those “not very prepared” for college (23%). Concern about getting needed classes declines directly with year in school: 73% of 5th year seniors say “no concern,” compared to 48% of juniors, 30% of sophomores, and 25% of freshmen.

Academic advising, “like knowing who to ask for advice when you need to know what courses to take or are confused about the academic system,” is a “major concern” for 19% of UO students. It is “some concern” for 33%, and “no concern” for 47%. It is of greatest concern for Asians, Hispanics, non-citizens, new arrivals to campus, students for whom UO was 3rd or greater choice, those “not very prepared” for college, those not involved in campus activities, and students who feel no professor cares about them.⁵

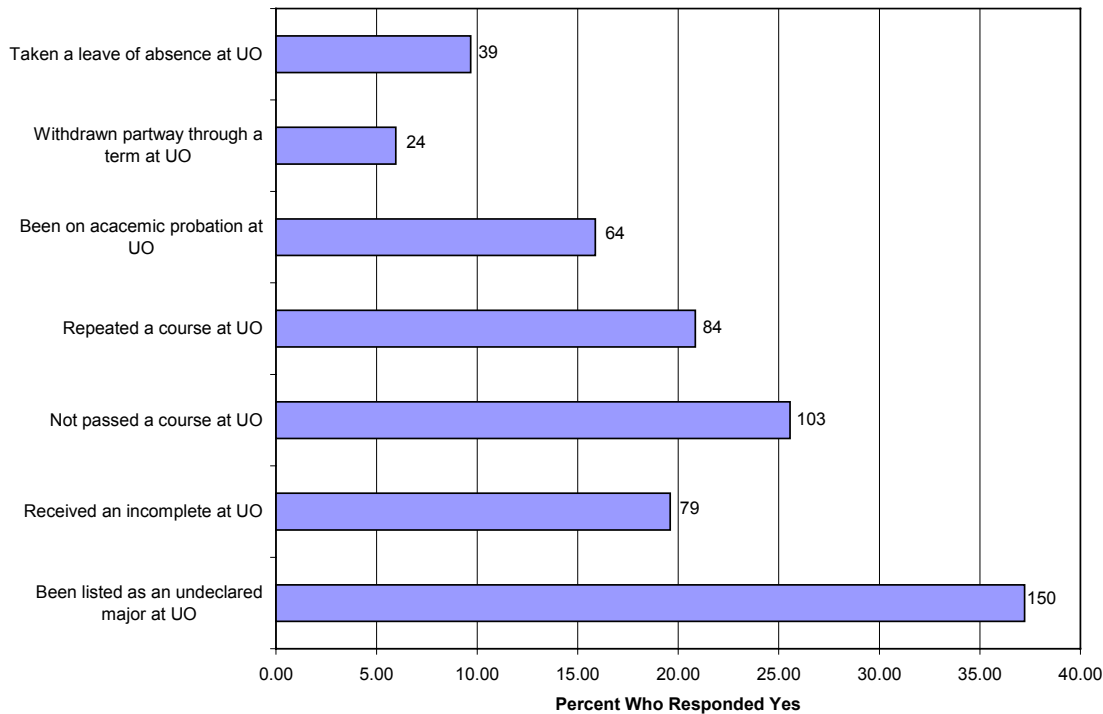
Risk Factors: This section briefly discusses an assortment of factors that may impede student progress, affect their participation in campus activities, and prevent their feeling satisfied with the university experience (see Figure 4). All items were asked for students’ experiences *while at UO*; thus, for example, failing a class at another college would not be included here.

Having ever been an undeclared major is akin to being among the homeless of the university, for such students have no department “home” to speak with professor advisors, departmental secretaries, or peer advisors for information on classes, schedules, requirements, prerequisites, and so forth. Thirty-seven percent of UO students have been undeclared majors overall, but the figures are somewhat higher for minority group members, freshmen, students who have changed majors, and fraternity and sorority members. Students with who plan to achieve graduate degrees and those very involved in campus activities are less likely to have ever been an undeclared major.

One-fifth of all students have received an incomplete for a course, 26% have not passed one or more classes, 21% have had to repeat a class, 16% have been placed on academic probation, 6% have had to withdraw from classes partway through a term, 10% have taken a leave of absence (and 18% of those have taken more than one). The chance of any of these events increases with students’ class level and years in college. All are more common among men, except withdrawing partway through a term.

⁵ One-third of UO students “usually” go to a professor in their department for academic advising, 24% usually advise themselves, 17% consult peer advisors, 14% see Oregon Hall advisors, and 12% report “other,” usually friends or family members.

Figure 4: Student Risk Factors - Have you ever ...



Not listed in Figure 4, but something which might be considered in this section, is the number of times students have changed majors. Students who change majors are likely to progress more slowly and become frustrated. Fully 62% of students have never changed their major, 28% have changed once, 6% twice, 3% three times, and 1% four or more times. Women are much more likely to change majors than men (44% compared to 32%), and the longer students have been in school, the more likely they are to have changed majors: 51% for 5th years seniors, compared to 44% for seniors, 44% for juniors, and 20% for freshmen. Academically prepared students are substantially less likely to change majors than those unprepared. Students who have not changed majors have much higher levels of overall satisfaction.

Special Tutoring and Remedial Work: Thirteen percent of UO students reported “any special tutoring in math, reading, English, science, the social sciences, a foreign language or anything else (while a UO student).” Tutoring is most common among American Indian students, “other” race students, Hispanics, non-citizens, out-of-state students, fraternity and sorority members, and students “very involved” in campus activities.

Of the 53 students who have had special tutoring, 31 were tutored in math or statistics, 14 in foreign languages, 7 in English, 5 in science, 3 in the social sciences, zero in reading, and 7 in other subjects. Nearly two-thirds (64%), said finding needed tutoring on campus was “very easy,” 28% said “somewhat easy,” 8% said “somewhat difficult,” and zero said “very difficult.”

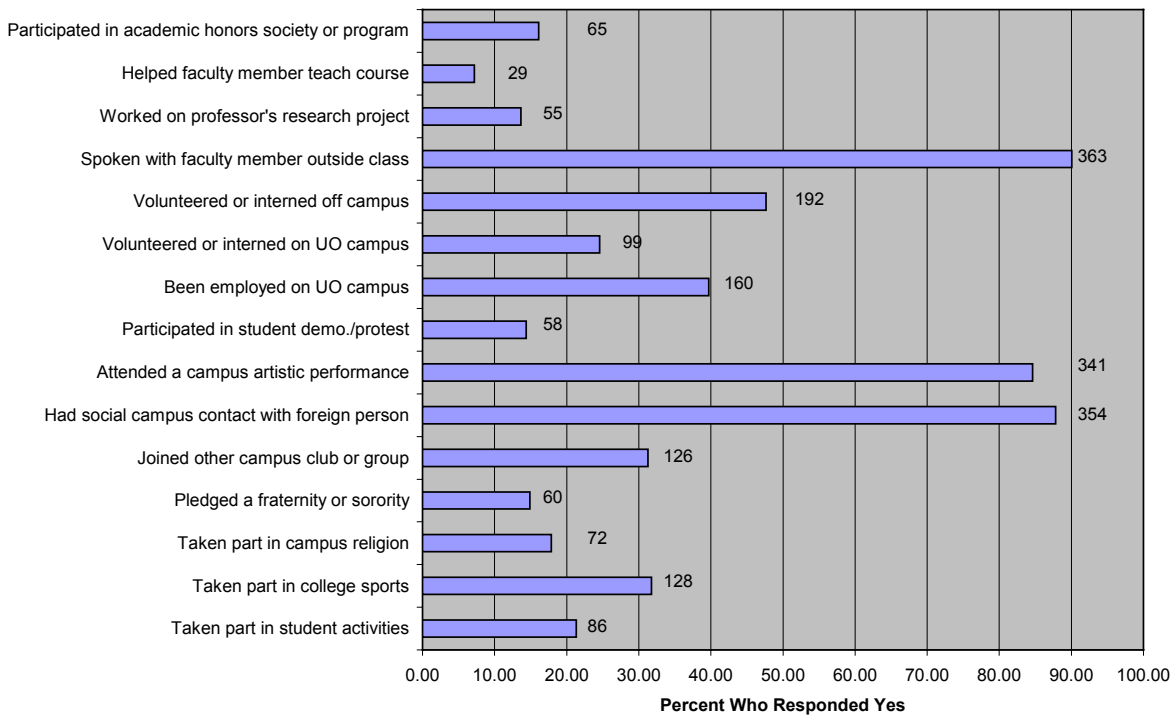
In evaluating the quality of tutoring and special help, 34% reported it improved their skills “a great deal,” 49% said “some,” 13% said “a little,” and 4% said “not at all.” Overall, 40% were “very satisfied” with the tutoring or remedial work they received, 57% “somewhat satisfied,” 4% were not very satisfied,” and zero were “not at all satisfied.”

Looking to the future, 24% of the entire sample said they would need some (or more) tutoring or special assistance while they are UO students. Those most likely to say they would need such help were Hispanics, Asians, mixed-race students, international students, freshmen and new arrivals, out-of-state students, those who had ever been an undeclared major, and students who are not connected with a faculty member. Of the 97 students who said they needed help 53 said they would need help in math/statistics, 24 foreign languages, 18 science, 12 English, 2 social sciences, 2 reading, and 17 mentioned other subjects.

5: STUDENTS’ PARTICIPATION IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Figure 5 summarizes the data for this section. A series of 15 questions reports student involvement in a wide array of campus activities. Such student involvement is important, for, as we have seen above, greater student involvement tends to be associated with greater student satisfaction and achievement. Overall, 6% say they are “very involved” in campus activities, 36% “somewhat involved,” 45% “not very involved,” and 12% “not at all involved.”

Figure 5: General Campus Activities - Have you ever ...



Fully 85% of students have attended a campus play, dance performance, musical event, art exhibit, or museum exhibit. Thirty-two percent have taken part in intramural sports activities or intercollegiate athletics. Twenty-one percent have taken part in campus-wide student activities, like Homecoming, Parents' Weekend, or University Day. Eighteen percent have taken part in religious activities or organizations on campus. Fifteen percent have pledged a fraternity or sorority (although just 3.5% live in a fraternity or sorority at the time of the survey). Thirty-one percent have joined other campus clubs or groups. Just 14% have participated in student demonstrations or protests. Fully 88% of students have had social contact with someone from another country on campus. Ninety percent have spoken with a professor outside of class.

Forty percent of students have been employed on the UO campus (although not necessarily employed by UO). One quarter have volunteered or interned on campus, and 48% have volunteered or interned off campus in the community. Fourteen percent of students have worked on a professor's research project, and 7% have helped a professor in teaching a class. Sixteen percent have been elected to an academic honors society or taken part in an honors program.

CONCLUSIONS

This survey provides a wealth of information concerning various facets of student satisfaction with UO, as well as their involvement in campus activities and their concerns and difficulties as students. In this report, we have paid particular attention to variation in the facets of student satisfaction, especially which types of students more often answer favorably and unfavorably. We have also provided some over-time comparisons in student satisfaction, which indicate slightly improved satisfaction over the past 4-5 years.

A great deal more can be done with these data in terms of planning to meet students needs, and even testing theoretically based hypotheses. Further, this is the fourth satisfaction survey OSRL has conducted at UO (three on students and one on alumni). It would be possible to begin to create a time-series data file to chart change over time, in particular change which can be attributed to particular innovations and policies (similar to what OSRL has created for the University Health Center's annual survey⁶).

Another useful strategy would be to rotate modules of related questions from one survey to the next (such as the group of questions on campus activities or computer use). The purpose of using question modules is to increase efficiency by asking some modules on a rotating schedule rather than every time the survey is conducted. This is particularly useful for exploring issues dealing with characteristics in the population that change slowly over time. It allows analysts to rotate in question modules on emergent or especially important issues. Given the bank of questions currently on file at OSRL, it would be fairly simple to begin to build salient modules from which to create a cross-sectional time series file. The results of

⁶ See: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl/hc98/frmh98.htm>

this endeavor would allow for greater efficiency and more accurate prediction of trends, resulting in more informed policy and program decisions.