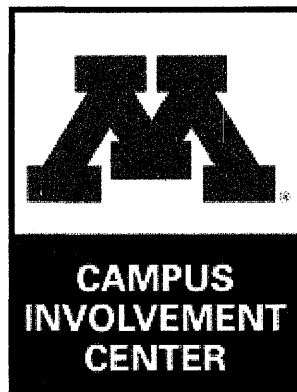


1999 Campus Involvement Center Survey Report

*A survey of student experiences
outside the classroom*



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A Survey of Student Experiences outside the Classroom

Prepared by
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for

Campus Involvement Center
University of Minnesota—Twin Cities

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

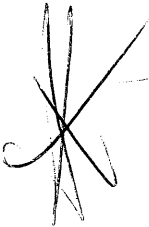
The purpose of this report was foremost to present the findings of the 1999 Campus Involvement Center (CIC) survey titled "Beyond the classroom: A survey of your experience outside the classroom." These findings are profitable for fine-tuning the service delivery of out-of-classroom options promoted by the University. Furthermore, the results of the report serve as a *base-line* since this study is to be replicated, and thereby measure the differences in student responses over time. To facilitate repetition of this survey project, a detailed list of the methods used was provided within the report. In addition, results from all of the questions were included within this document for future reference or comparison.

The sample pool consisted of 800 undergraduate students registered for six or more credits in the spring quarter 1999, and generated a return rate of 50% (n=403). Sampling error was inferred to be insignificant given that the demographic results from this survey appeared consistent with Official Registration Statistics.

The findings that illustrated responses to students' out-of-classroom experiences were presented in three forums: (1) findings from the overall pool of respondents, (2) requested cross-tabulations, and (3) written responses from open-ended questions.

FINDINGS FROM THE OVERALL POOL OF RESPONDENTS

Looking at findings from the overall pool of respondents, there were four questions demonstrating students' involvement and non-involvement: survey questions 16, 19, 21, and 38. Depending on the specificity of the questions, between 63% and 88% of the respondents were actively engaged in out-of-classroom groups and activities at the University. It may be helpful for CIC staff to consider that the difference between questions 16 and 19 indicates that 28% of the respondents had been involved in out-of-classroom activities or groups at some time, but were not active at the time of the survey. This finding indicates that over a quarter of undergraduate students with six plus credits may be interested and experienced in out-of-classroom activities, and could be inspired to become involved again.



The findings revealed that over 60% of undergraduate students enrolled in 6 or more believed that they would pursue graduate or professional education after completing their bachelor's degree. The implications of this result for formal education and out-of-classroom activities at the University could be dramatic as the demand for graduate and professional education grows.

The respondents also provided information as to which opportunities they personally believed were most important to have available during the course of their studies at the University (Q20). The four most popular were:

- Internship opportunities
- A variety of student groups from which I can choose to be involved
- Leadership opportunities
- Volunteering/service-learning

In comparison were findings that indicated a number of out-of-classroom activities respondents actually engaged in most often (Q22), including:

- Talking with peers outside of class
- Sports/fitness
- Social activities
- Future career preparation

Respondents were also asked to disclose the degree to which they had personally developed as a result of participation in non-classroom experience (Q23). The top five of these were:

- Developing friendships
- Self confidence
- Communication skills
- Sense of accomplishment
- Respect of others

Finally, among findings from the overall pool of respondents, we saw that 82.4% of the students were slightly satisfied to very satisfied with their experience at the University, and that only 17.6% were dissatisfied to any degree (Q33).

REQUESTED CROSS-TABULATIONS

Among the cross-tabulations requested by CIC staff, it was observed that several areas of personal development (Q23) were particularly responsive to greater levels of involvement in out-of-classroom activities (Q21):

- Self confidence
- Sense of accomplishment
- Group cooperation skills
- Communication skills
- Ability to create networks of people
- Decision-making skills

The top three in this list are also among the most effective forms of personal development illustrated in the overall findings (Q23).

A comparison between satisfaction (Q33) and involvement (Q19) demonstrated that greater levels of satisfaction could moderately be attributed to increased levels of participation in out-of-classroom groups/activities. It was much more obvious that increasing one's hours involved in such activities (Q16) was likely to induce a more satisfying experience at the University overall (Q33).

Next among the cross-tabulations were those associated with "*community*," the first of which was a comparison of commuter status (Q12), the importance of community on campus (Q30), and actually feeling that sense of community (Q31).¹ The survey results demonstrated that non-commuters considered experiencing community to be slightly more important than do commuters, and that they are somewhat more like to feel a sense of community.

Finally among the cross-tabulations, the respondents provided insight as to those activities (Q32) that could be inferred as most influential in creating a feeling of community (Q31), including:

- Attending class
- Interacting with faculty/students in the classroom
- Interacting with classmates outside of the class on class projects/ assignments
- Socializing with classmates outside of class

¹ The term "community" was not defined in the survey instrument.

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Among the written responses, or open-ended questions, it was demonstrated that the respondents primarily expressed two areas in which they had gained from their outside the classroom experiences (Q40): friendships and living independently.

The respondents were also given an opportunity to assess the University's efforts to provide out-of-classroom experiences and suggest improvements. Two areas were also most noticeable from these data:

- Better provision of information—not only information about campus activities, but the overall provision of information on campus
- Parking

SUMMARY

Most of the respondents had engaged regularly in out-of-classroom activities and groups, and gained positive experiences as a result. The majority of those who were uninvolved seemed to be either deeply involved in various activities outside of their academic endeavors (e.g., work, family, etc.), and/or had been involved in the past. The minority caucus of respondents included those who were completely uninterested in out-of-classroom activities; and those who were interested, would like to have been involved, but had difficulty finding information about activities or groups.

Another quality that emerges from the survey findings was that while some students appreciated the all-campus/large-scale events, others leaned slightly towards more personalized out-of-classroom activities. This phenomenon appeared to be especially noticeable among commuters.

It is possible to infer that students are receiving enough general information about campus events and activities. Nevertheless, survey data indicate that some students experienced difficulty in gathering more personalized advice with respect to interest in out-of-classroom participation and in negotiating the University information network.

Overall, these results can be used to assess the effectiveness of those out-of-classroom experiences included in the survey, and can serve as a reference for future research about this issue and its effect on the University community.

INTRODUCTION

The Campus Involvement Center (CIC) Survey was conducted during the spring quarter of 1999 for the purpose of collecting student opinions on their out-of-classroom experiences on campus, also known as co-curricular activities. With a return rate of 50%² (403 out of 800), the responding undergraduate students answered questions relating to general demographics, their interaction with out-of-classroom activities, and their sense of community on campus. This report seeks to summarize these data for the University of Minnesota community not only to further reflect on the information collected, but also to consider how the opinions of students can be used to reshape how CIC appears and serves its primary client group—Twin Cities campus students.

The goal of this report can be summarized in three main points:

1. To provide detailed findings that demonstrate the relationship between out-of-classroom experiences available at the University with the wants and needs of undergraduate students;
2. To supply information that can help to “fine tune” CIC services; and
3. To furnish base-line information (i.e., foundational data) that can be comparatively analyzed with the results of future CIC and other surveys.

² A return rate of more than 30% is satisfactory for survey research. See J.W. Creswell. (1994). *Research Design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

METHODOLOGY

CIC and Student Development research staff worked together to construct the initial draft of the survey during the winter of 1998-99. Their primary resource material in this process were the “CAS Standards” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education) on leadership programs and campus activities.³ Since the standards were written for the purpose of conducting an internal institutional assessment of existing program particular questions could not be gleaned from the standards. The researchers did use the material to develop definitions of quality leadership programs and campus activities, and then constructed questions that evaluated the University programs and services. Once the initial draft of the survey was completed, the CIC staff reviewing the questionnaire and providing suggestions for improvement. These ideas were used to create the finalized survey, which was printed before the beginning of spring quarter in March 1999.⁴

At the end of the second week of the spring quarter, a random sample was generated by Institutional Research and Reporting—University of Minnesota (IRR) of undergraduates enrolled in six (6) credits or more. The first 800 students from a random sample of the pre-sample pool were selected to be included in the survey and were reassigned code numbers 1–800.

Typically, one would proceed in this type of report by reviewing IRR’s comparison of the pre-sample population to the survey sample for the purpose of demonstrating that no sampling error was present. Unfortunately, these data were purged from University’s information systems when the software used to generate the sample was replaced. Nevertheless, a similar examination can be conducted by comparing the Official Registration Statistics and the demographic findings from the survey, which are included in Appendix I.

³ See Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (1998). *CAS Student Leadership Program Standards and Guidelines: Self-Assessment Guide*. Washington, DC: CAS. Also see Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (1998). *Campus Activities Program Standards and Guidelines: Self-Assessment Guide*. Washington, DC: CAS.

⁴ The draft survey was not pre-tested.

The surveys were mailed mid-April 1999 to the 800 students. Attached to each survey was a post card that was to be returned separately from the survey in order to track which students had returned the surveys.

One week after the surveys had been sent (April 26th), a contracted service began to call the students who had not yet returned the survey. The students were called a second time a week later (May 3rd), not including those who since had returned their surveys. The third phase of follow-up a week later (May 10th) was in the form of a letter reminding the participants to return the survey, used especially since the contracted firm had not been able to reach all of the remaining students by phone. Finally, a week later (May 17th) those who still had not responded were sent the entire survey packet again.

Since CIC staff is planning on replicating this survey approximately five years from now, Table 1 presents the schedule of administering the survey, specifically which week in the academic quarter these activities occurred. One factor that may influence future studies relates to the University's change from academic quarters to semesters in the fall of 1999. The pace needed to administer the survey may not need to be as hurried given the increased length of the academic term.

Analysis of the survey data was conducted using SPSS 10.0 during the winter of 2000–01, the interpretations of which are included in the next section of this report.⁵

⁵ Special thanks are offered to Neil Jordan (Ph.D. candidate, Public Health Administration, University of Minnesota) and Dr. Darwin Hendel (Professor, Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota) for their assistance with the analysis.

Table 1: CIC Survey Schedule

| Date | Event | Weeks into the Quarter |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|
| March 29 | Classes began | -- |
| April 12 | Pre-sample pool drawn and sample derived | 2 weeks |
| April 16 | Surveys mailed | 3 weeks |
| April 26 | Phone called those who had not yet responded as of this date | 4 weeks |
| May 3 | Phone called those who had not yet responded as of this date | 5 weeks |
| May 10 | Sent a letter to those who had not yet responded as of this date | 6 weeks |
| May 17 | Surveys sent a second time to those who had not yet responded as of this date | 7 weeks |
| June 4 | Last day of classes before finals week | 10 weeks |
| June 21 | Cut off date for receiving surveys Brought to IRR for optical scanning | -- |

FORMAT OF THE REPORT

To help readers of this report better understand the survey results, several technical issues must be addressed. The findings reported in this document are based on “valid” responses to the survey questions, unless otherwise noted. This signifies that all descriptive statistics represented in this report (e.g., percentages, and means) are based solely on data from those who responded to the corresponding question. Those who left a question blank, identified in SPSS as “missing” data, are not represented in these findings for any particular question, unless specifically mentioned. Furthermore, if the findings for a specific question amount to a count of less than 403 (the total number of respondents), the reader may assume that the remainder simply did not respond to the question.

Some of the results in this report are presented as prioritized mean scores, listed beginning with the highest rated item to the lowest. These findings cannot be inferred to be of greater or less importance if they are within .05 of each other, and should be inferred as being of equal notability in such cases. In addition, the percentages of these mean scores are presented in the appendices of the report, but cannot be reviewed comparatively since statistical tests of the data were not possible.⁶

The survey included a question regarding the respondents’ racial and ethnic identity. Unfortunately, the number of minority respondents was too few to provide accurate generalizations or comparisons between the various ethnic groups in the student population (Q8). Comparisons were possible between commuter and non-commuters (Q12).⁷ All other inferential statistical tests (i.e., cross-tabulations) were drawn by comparing survey questions that examined respondents’ opinions of their out-of-classroom experiences and their sense of community on campus. These corollary

⁶ SPSS allows for *combining similar variables* (i.e., columns of data in the SPSS table) to create a table that enables one to view the variables and their respective responses (e.g., poor, good, excellent). Unfortunately, SPSS is not equipped to test this particular form of cross-tabulation for statistical significance.

⁷ Statistical significance ($p \leq .05$) can be assumed for all of the findings based on correlation analysis. In lay terms, this means that the cross-tabulated results noted in this document could not have occurred by chance, and are indicative of the University of Minnesota—Twin Cities undergraduate student population registered for six credits or more.

examinations were made as instructed by the CIC staff. The list of these comparisons is provided in its entirety in Appendix II of which only those that proved to be statistically significant are included in the body of the report.

FINDINGS

In one way or another, data from all of the questions on the survey are detailed in this report, yet not necessarily as ordered in the questionnaire.⁸ The most notable findings are within the body of the report, while supplemental information can be found in the appendices. Included in this section of the report is:

1. A review of findings from the overall pool of respondents
 - The demographics
 - Percentages from key questions
 - Some of the most notable findings from the survey
 - Involvement in out-of-classroom activities
 - Sense of community
 - Student satisfaction
2. An inspection of cross-tabulated survey questions
3. A summary of findings from written response questions

FINDINGS FROM THE OVERALL SAMPLE

Demographics

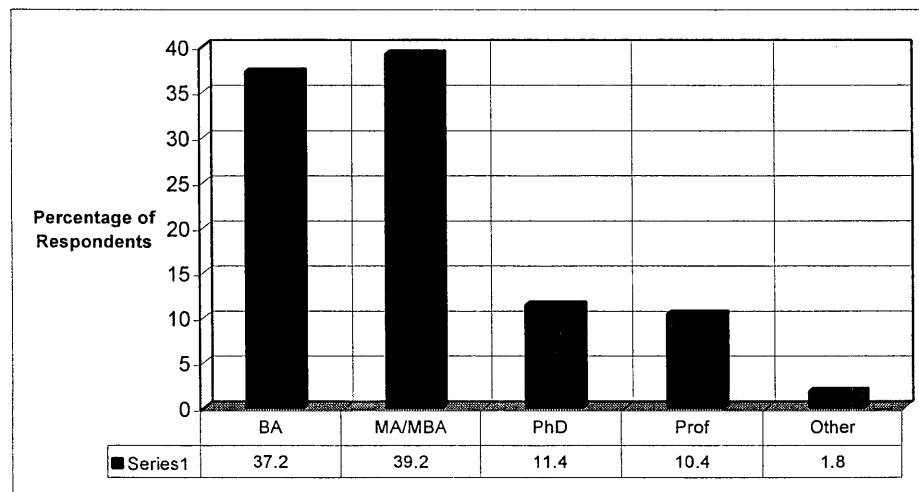
As a whole, the “background information” or demographic results from the CIC Survey produced no surprises, and are listed in Appendix I.⁹ These results were also consistent with Official Registration Statistics available from IIR, which demonstrated that sampling error was not a factor in this study. Therefore, frequencies from the survey questions and any cross-tabulations can be generalized for the student population (i.e., University undergraduate students enrolled in six or more credits during the spring quarter of 1999).

⁸ To locate the data from a particular survey question within this report, refer to the **Index of Survey Questions** at the end of this report.

⁹ Question 16 was within the “Background Information” section of the survey, but primarily addressed the issue of involvement in out-of-classroom activities. Therefore, it is reviewed in the next section of the report—Findings from Key Survey Questions.

One demographic finding was particularly striking, and may influence future planning in formal and non-formal instruction on campus. Figure 1 illustrates that over 60% of the undergraduate students enrolled in 6+ credits planned on pursuing some form of graduate or professional education. Along with the formal educational preparation, these students will most likely need various forms of out-of-classroom experiences that will help to prepare them for the personal and professional challenges present in such pursuits.

Figure 1: Ultimate Educational Degree Objective (Q3)



Findings from Key Survey Questions

Involvement

Several questions from the survey were of particular interest to the CIC staff, and will be reviewed individually before looking at them comparatively. Among the questions that generated the most interest were those that addressed the degree to which respondents expressed their **involvement and non-involvement** in out-of-classroom activities. In fact, four questions polled the respondents on this issue specifically:

- Q16—How many hours a week do you spend on out-of-classroom experiences?
- Q19—To what extent have you participated in out-of-classroom experiences?

- Q21—To what extent do you currently participate in and student organizations, groups, or activities on campus?
- Q38—Please indicate all of the following University-related activities in which you have been involved in, and the *one* you have participated in the most

Figure 2 illustrates the findings of a question asking respondents to detail the number of hours they were investing per week, at the time of the survey, in out-of-classroom activities—defined as “volunteering, student groups, church groups, etc.”¹⁰

Figure 2: Hours Per Week in Out-of-Classroom Activities (Q16)

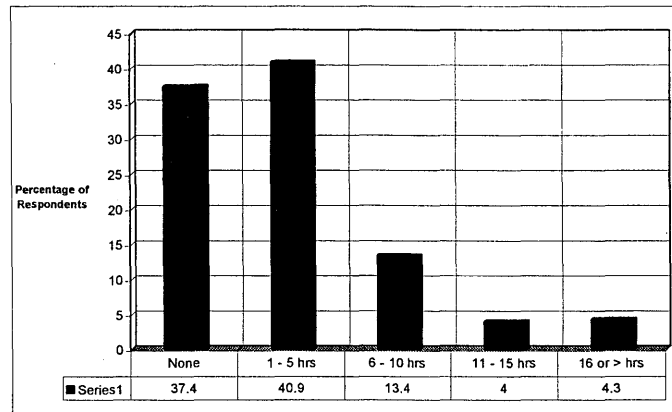
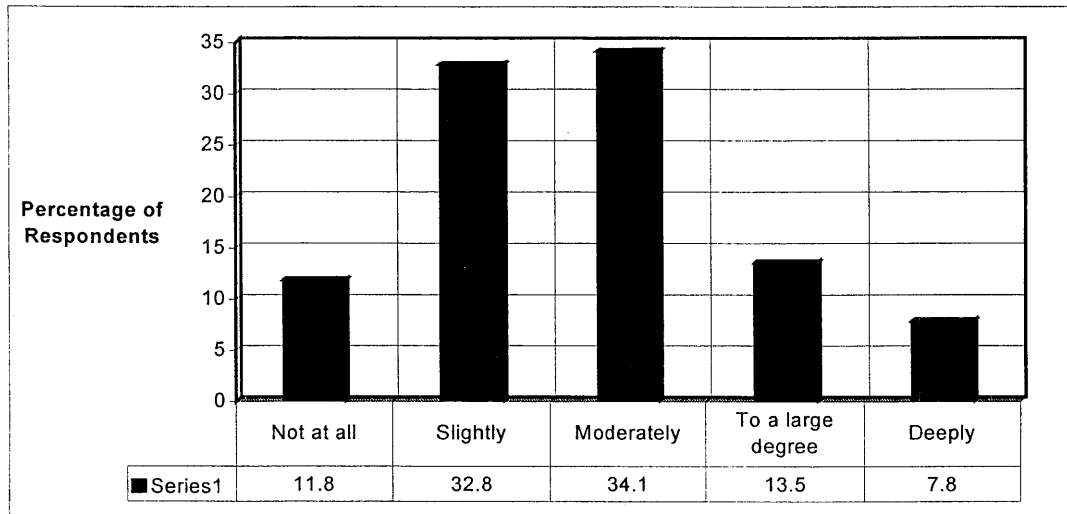


Figure 3 represent the degree to which the respondents had participated in out-of-classroom activities—defined in detail as “community or volunteer work, religious activities, tutoring, sports, clubs, etc., but does not include studying and daily living activities [sleeping, eating, personal care, household chores, travel to/from campus, etc.]”

¹⁰ It is the impression of this researcher that the results from Q16 may be somewhat biased toward less involvement because the question precedes a thorough definition of out-of-classroom activity, as in question 19. It is recommend that when this study is replicated, question 16 should follow question 19.

Figure 3: Have Participated in Out-of-Classroom Experiences (Q19)



Further analysis between these two questions reveals how 37.4% of the respondents could say that they were involved “zero hours per week” (Q16), while only 11.8% were said they were “not involved” (Q19). The former question refers to present involvement at the time of the survey, while the later illustrates past participation in out-of-classroom activities. We can infer from these two questions:

- 88% of undergraduate students with six or more credits had been involved in out-of-classroom activities at some time in their academic experience (Q19)
- While only about 62% of them were investing one (1) or more hours per week in such endeavors at the time of this survey (Q16)

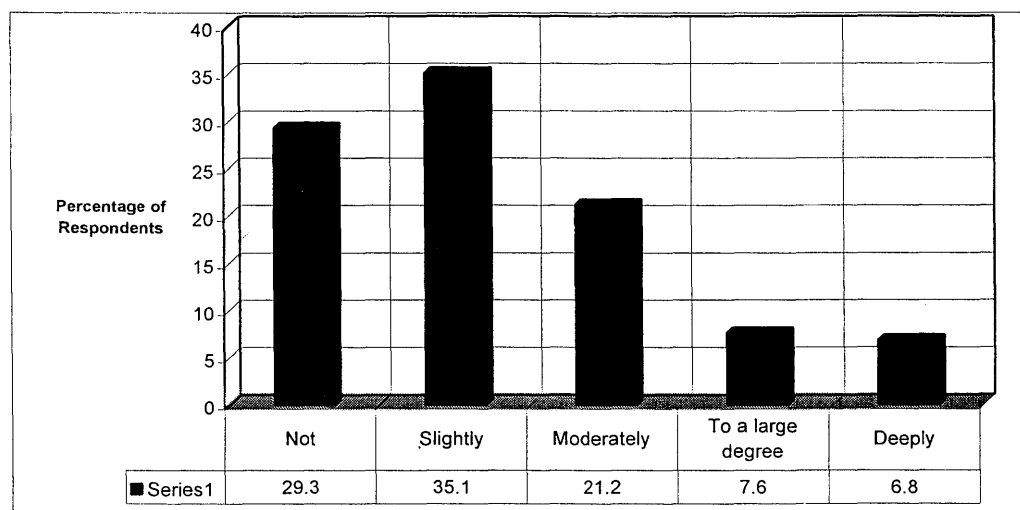
By comparing these two percentages, we can observe that approximately 26% of undergraduates at the University with six-plus credits were experienced in out-of-classroom activities (Q19), but not engaged at the time of the survey (Q16). This would appear to represent a sizable number of students who could potentially be incorporated into out-of-classroom experiences.

Similar assumptions can be made about questions 21 and 38, the results of which are presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5 respectively.

Figure 4 demonstrates a high percentage of respondents (29.3%) were *not* participating in “student organizations, groups, or activities on campus” (Q21). Nonetheless, by cross-tabulating the results of this question with those of Q16 (hours in activities), it is possible to determine how low activity levels corresponded to hours of

participation. Forty respondents (n=40)¹¹ marked that they were not participating in the specific student groups, etc. listed in Q21, but were engaged in out-of-classroom activities one hour or more per week (Q16). Therefore, the high degree of non-involvement for Q21 could be due to the specificity of the question (i.e., involvement in student groups and activities only).

Figure 4: Currently Participate in Student Groups/Activities on Campus (Q21)



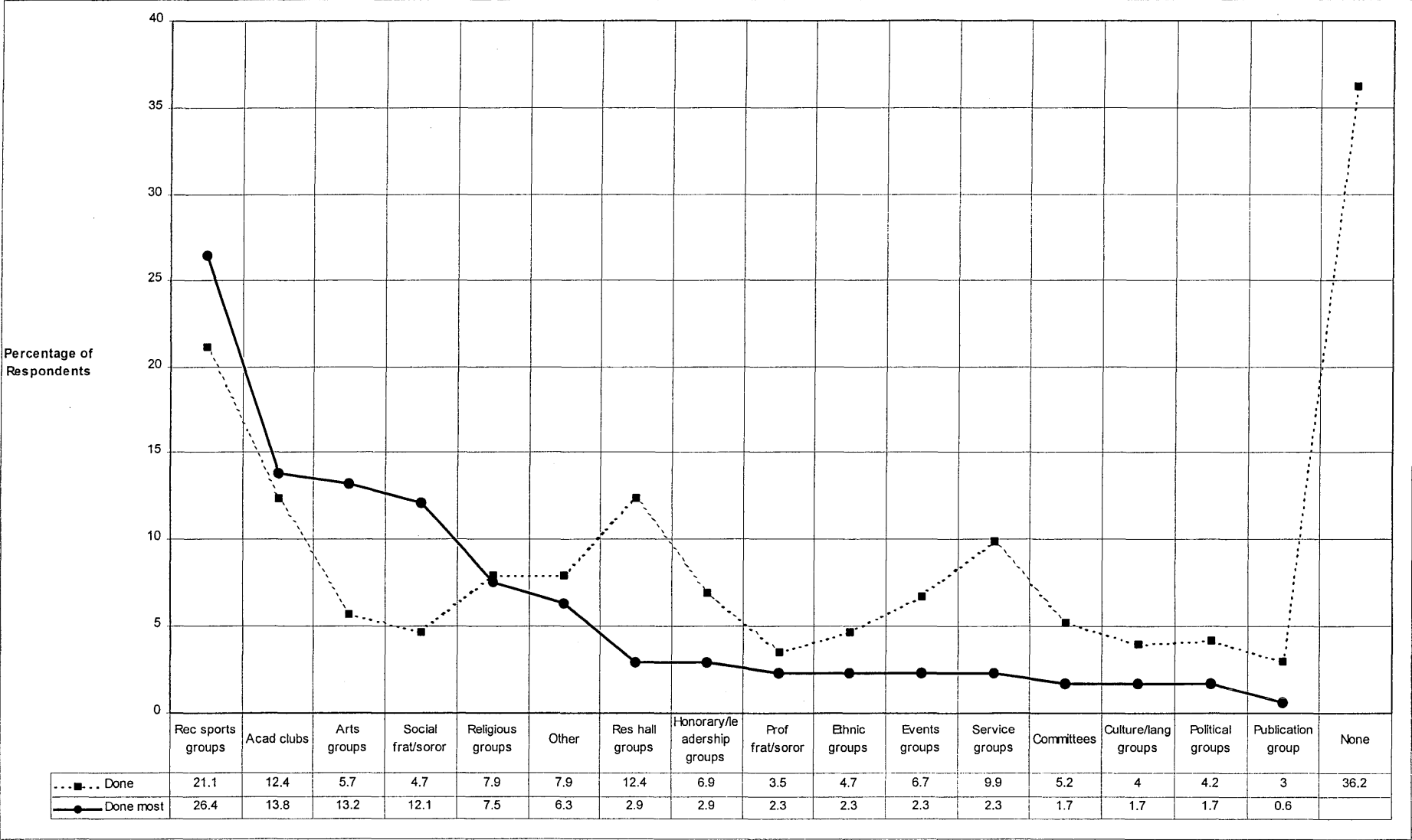
We see this phenomenon repeated, especially as survey questions increase in specificity of out-of-classroom activities. Figure 5 demonstrates the results of question 38 (Q38), which guided the respondents to:

1. Review an extensive list of University-related activities, etc.,
2. Select which ones they had engaged in, and
3. Pick one they had done most; or
4. Designate that they had not participated in any University-related activities.

In this case, over 36.2% of the respondents indicated that they had not been involved in any of the activities, groups, etc. listed. Nevertheless, as expressed earlier, this does not

¹¹ Forty respondents equal 10% of the entire pool of students who returned the surveys, and thereby can be inferred to represent 10% of the undergraduate student population with 6+ credits, Spring 1999.

Figure 5: Participation in Specific University-related Activities (Q38)



necessarily indicate that 36.2% of the undergraduate student body with six credits or more (6+) is uninterested in out-of-classroom activities. This question corresponds only to “University-related activities,” most of which are particular group activities.¹²

In summary, we see that the level of involvement differed between the questions that address involvement and non-involvement as listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Involvement and Non-involvement (Q16, 19, 21, 38)

| Question | Involvement | Non-involvement |
|----------|-------------|-----------------|
| Q16 | 62.6% | 37.4% |
| Q19 | 88.2 | 11.8 |
| Q21 | 70.7 | 29.3 |
| Q38 | 63.8 | 36.2 |

Question 26 (Q26) includes a broad range of out-of-classroom activities, and suggests a broader definition of student involvement, which recognizes that out-of-classroom activities are not limited to on-campus and/or group activities.

Table 3 illustrates the findings of this question, ordered according to their mean responses where 1 = “never done,” 2 = “participated in occasionally,” and 3 = “participated in frequently.” In fact, we see that “student groups” is the seventh in priority with respect to different types of out-of-classroom activities.

¹² An additional observation about the results from Q38: We would expect the those who had “done” a group activity to be higher than “done most” since the respondents could only mark one group activity for the later but as many as applied for the former. Nevertheless, the results for the first four selections in Figure 5 were to the contrary. A greater percentage of respondents indicated that these were the activities they had “Done most” than had indicated had “Done.” This may infer that these activities are particularly popular among those who participate in the group activities listed. “Religious groups” and “Professional fraternities/sororities” were also very close in their relationship between the percentage of respondents who had participated in these groups and those who had done so most.

Table 3: Out-of-Classroom Activities—Mean Scores (Q26)¹³

| <u>Rank & Activity</u> | <u>Mean Score</u> |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Talking with peers outside of class | 2.45 |
| 2. Sports/fitness | 2.31 |
| 3. Social activities | 2.30 |
| 4. Future career preparation | 2.10 |
| 5. Educational/cultural activities | 1.74 |
| 6. Leadership roles | 1.71 |
| 7. Student groups | 1.68 |
| 8. Volunteering/community service | 1.66 |
| 9. Religious activities | 1.60 |
| 10. Community involvement | 1.58 |
| 11. Tutoring | 1.28 |
| 12. Meeting with a mentor | 1.24 |
| 13. Being a mentor | 1.22 |

The most popular form of activity, based on the findings of Q26, is “talking with peers outside of class,” which repeatedly appears as one of the most popular and motivating qualities regarding out-of-classroom experiences. Similar results are found in questions 22, 23, 28, and 32 (Q22, Q23, Q28, Q32). Refer to Appendix III for the results from Q22, Q28, and Q32, as well as the percentages for each mean scores listed in Table 3 (Q 26).

Personal Development from Out-of-classroom Experience

The findings of Q23 illustrate the relationship between personal development and out-of-classroom experience (See Table 4). Similar to the results presented in Table 3, “developing friendships” produced the highest mean score. This result infers that out of all the options in Q23, undergraduates with 6+ credits believe that their involvement in out-of-classroom would result in developing friendships. The findings also revealed that “self confidence” and “communication skills,” were high among the types of personal

¹³ Mean scores differing less than .05 may not be inferred to be higher or lower in priority to each other.

development through out-of-classroom activities. The percentages detailing the range for each mean score in Table 4 are provided in Appendix IV.¹⁴

Table 4: Personal Development via Non-classroom Experiences—Means (Q23)

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Activities</u> | <u>Mean Score</u> ¹⁵ |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. | Developing friendships | 4.06 |
| 2. | Self confidence | 4.00 |
| 3. | Communication skills | 3.98 |
| 4. | Sense of accomplishment | 3.94 |
| 5. | Respect of others | 3.86 |
| 6. | Active listening | 3.84 |
| 7. | Adaptability | 3.84 |
| 8. | Decision making skills | 3.80 |
| 9. | Problem-solving skills | 3.80 |
| 10. | Working independently | 3.80 |
| 11. | Ability to share responsibility | 3.79 |
| 12. | Critical thinking | 3.79 |
| 13. | Group cooperation skills | 3.79 |
| 14. | Ability to create networks of people | 3.76 |
| 15. | Effective group membership skills | 3.76 |
| 16. | Thinking analytically | 3.75 |
| 17. | Feeling of belonging | 3.74 |
| 18. | Leadership skills | 3.74 |
| 19. | Creativity | 3.73 |
| 20. | Collaboration | 3.70 |
| 21. | Group problem solving skills | 3.68 |
| 22. | Conflict management | 3.66 |
| 23. | Multicultural awareness | 3.60 |
| 24. | Academic success | 3.55 |
| 25. | Risk taking | 3.54 |
| 26. | Becoming an informed citizen | 3.53 |
| 27. | Development of a global perspective | 3.50 |
| 28. | Ethical development | 3.45 |
| 29. | Time management skills | 3.42 |
| 30. | Program/event planning | 3.37 |
| 31. | Commitment to civic involvement | 3.34 |
| 32. | Study habits | 3.31 |
| 33. | Stress reduction | 3.10 |

¹⁴ Scientific inferences cannot be made from comparisons of the findings listed in Appendix IV because it was not possible to test for statistical significance between rows as explained in footnote five (5).

¹⁵ The mean scores for these findings were based on calculations where “strong negative effect” = 1, “some negative effect” = 2, “no effect” = 3, “some positive effect” = 4, and “strong positive effect” = 5.

Importance of Specific Activities

The respondents also had an opportunity to express their opinions on the importance of particular out-of-classroom activities (Q20). As listed in Table 5, respondents found internship opportunities to be among the most important experiences in which to engage.¹⁶ In addition, we can infer from the results that 6+ undergraduate students believe that having a “wide variety student groups” is important, as are leadership opportunities. On the opposite end of the scale is “all-campus events,” which tend to involve large groups of people.

It would appear that a theme may be emerging from these data. Undergraduate students enrolled for 6+ credits in the fall quarter of 1999 may have been more interested in activities that were tailored to their own personal wants and needs, and in experiences that were individual or small group in nature in contrast to large scale/large group activities. This potential theme does not infer that large scale/all-campus events or large group activities are unnecessary, but that they may appeal to a more select group of students interested in out-of-classroom events.¹⁷

Table 5: Importance of Certain Out-of-classroom Activities—Mean Scores (Q20)

| <u>Rank & Activity</u> | <u>Mean Score</u> |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. Internship opportunities | 3.55 |
| 2. A variety of student groups from which I can choose to be involved | 2.74 |
| 3. Leadership opportunities | 2.70 |
| 4. Volunteering/service-learning | 2.62 |
| 5. Opportunities to have a mentor | 2.57 |
| 6. Leadership development programs | 2.54 |
| 7. Opportunities to be a mentor | 2.44 |
| 8. Access to on-line events calendar | 2.43 |
| 9. All-campus events (i.e., Homecoming) | 2.22 |

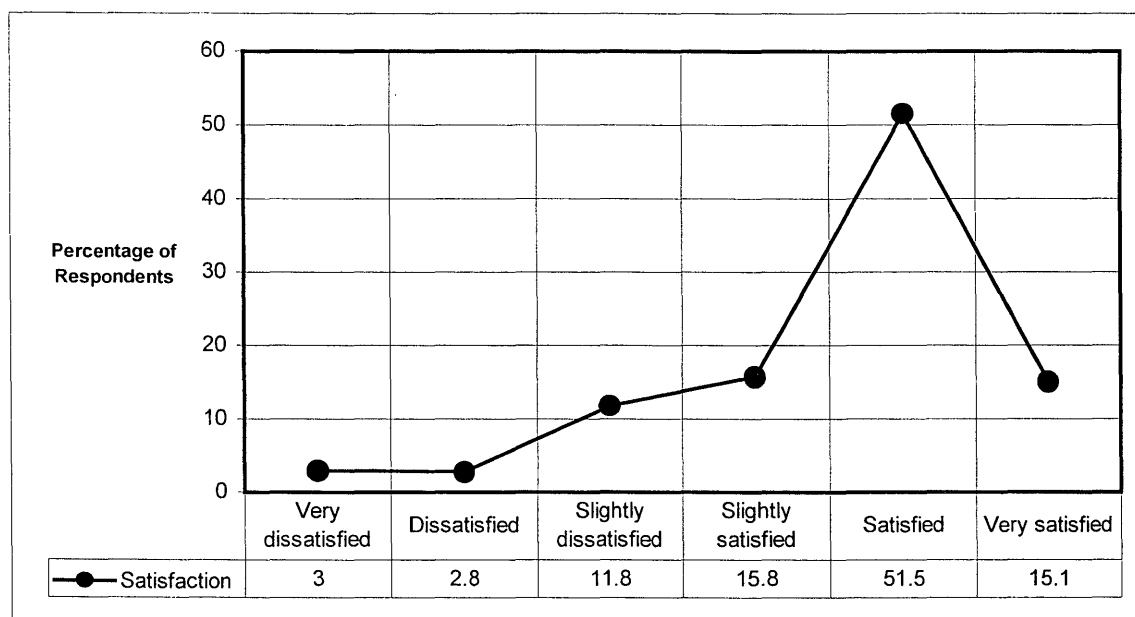
¹⁶ The mean scores for Table 5 were derived from calculating per the responses where “not important” = 1, “slightly important” = 2, “moderately important” = 3, and “very important” = 4. The frequencies for Q20 are listed in Appendix V.

¹⁷ The results from Q27 support those of Q20. While over 31% of students had participated in major campus events, three of the top four options were individual or small group in nature (See Appendix VI).

Satisfaction with the University

The final issue to be addressed before examining the cross-tabulations is that of satisfaction. Figure 6 presents the findings from question 33 dealing with this issue in which students ranked their experience at the University overall from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with Their University Experience (Q33)



The graph reveals that over 82% of the respondents were satisfied to a greater or lesser degree, and less than 18% expressed any form of dissatisfaction. These results from key survey questions set the foundation for correlation examinations included next in this report.¹⁸

¹⁸ The frequencies from those questions in the survey not previously mentioned (i.e., those in Part II—Outside Classroom Interests and Experiences, and Part III—The Twin Cities Campus as a Community) are detailed in Appendix VI.

REQUESTED CROSS-TABULATIONS

The CIC staff requested comparative analysis of various questions from the 1999 survey. Many of the results from these examinations did not produce findings that were statistically significant, or could not be tested comparatively using SPSS. Consequently, the findings from cross-tabulated analysis included in the report are only those that produced statistically significant findings. The list of all questions requested by CIC staff, including those that were not testable, are listed in Appendix II.

Involvement

Personal Development and Involvement (Q21)

CIC staff members were most interested in how students responded to the questions addressing involvement in out of classroom experiences as exemplified by the following question: “What is the relationship between certain types of personal development (Q23) and the degree of current involvement in student organizations and activities (Q21)?” The results from this comparative question demonstrated that nearly all of those who participated to a “large degree” or were “deeply involved” in student groups/ activities claimed that they had experienced “some positive effect” or a “strong positive effect” on their personal development. Logically speaking, those who marked that they were “not at all” involved or “only a slight degree” engaged in student groups and activities foremost experienced “no effect” on their personal development due to their participation.

Several forms of personal development were particularly responsive to more involvement:

- Self confidence
- Sense of accomplishment
- Group cooperation skills
- Communication skills
- Ability to create networks of people
- Decision-making skills

In other words, students who are more engaged in student groups/organizations/activities would most likely experience personal development in these areas.

The greatest number of personal development qualities were moderately responsive to more involvement including:

- Respect for others
- Leadership skills
- Problem solving skills
- Developing friendships
- Group problem solving skills
- Sharing responsibility
- Active listening
- Adaptability
- Conflict management

These results infer that students may experience growth in these areas if they are more engaged in student activities and groups.

Several aspects of personal development were particularly *unresponsive* to more involvement:

- Stress reduction
- Becoming an informed citizen
- Program/event planning
- Ethical development
- Commitment to civic involvement

Therefore, more involvement did *not* appear to create a greater degree of development in these areas.

There also were a number of qualities of personal development that were neutral in response to more involvement in student activities and groups:

- Academic development
- Time management skills
- Group membership skills
- Risk taking
- Collaboration

Those students who were more involved claimed to experience very little more personal development in these areas than those who were slightly or not at all involved.

Finally, a number of the comparisons produced results that were not statistically significant:

- Study habits
- Multicultural awareness

- Development of a global perspective
- Thinking analytically
- Working independently
- Critical thinking

Commuter Status and Involvement (Q27)

The CIC staff also requested to address the question, “Have commuters and non-commuters (Q12) participated in different activities (Q27)?” As one compares the data from the two questions, we see that for those that are involved in various types of student activities and groups, commuters were less likely to participate. Nevertheless, for those who are **not** involved in student activities/groups, we see that the percentage of non-commuters was almost equal to that of commuters.

The comparison between commuter status (Q12) and “involvement in student groups” (Q27g) exemplifies this generalization (See Table 6):

- Of those who participated in student groups, only 37.7% were commuters
- Of those who did *not* participate in student groups, 46.6% were non-commuters

Table 6: Commuters (Q12) and Participants in Student Groups (Q27)

| | | | Consider yourself a commuter | | Total |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| | | | Yes | No | |
| Participated in student groups | Yes | Count | 61 | 101 | 162 |
| | | Percent | 37.7% | 62.3% | 100% |
| | No | Count | 125 | 109 | 234 |
| | | Percent | 53.4% | 46.6% | 100% |
| Total Count | | 186 | 210 | | |

Inverse of the explanation above, these results demonstrate that while non-commuters were more likely to participate in student groups, they were approximately equally likely

to be among those who were not engaged in such activities. This phenomenon is found in all of the comparative data from this cross-tabulation including participation in:¹⁹

- Major campus events
- Leadership retreats/seminars
- Social fraternities/sororities
- Student government
- Student groups

Non-commuters active in out-of-classroom activities demonstrated a particular affinity for major campus events (77.4%) and social fraternities/sororities (72.4%), while engaged commuters responded best to student groups (37.7%) and to leadership retreats/seminars (30%).

Community

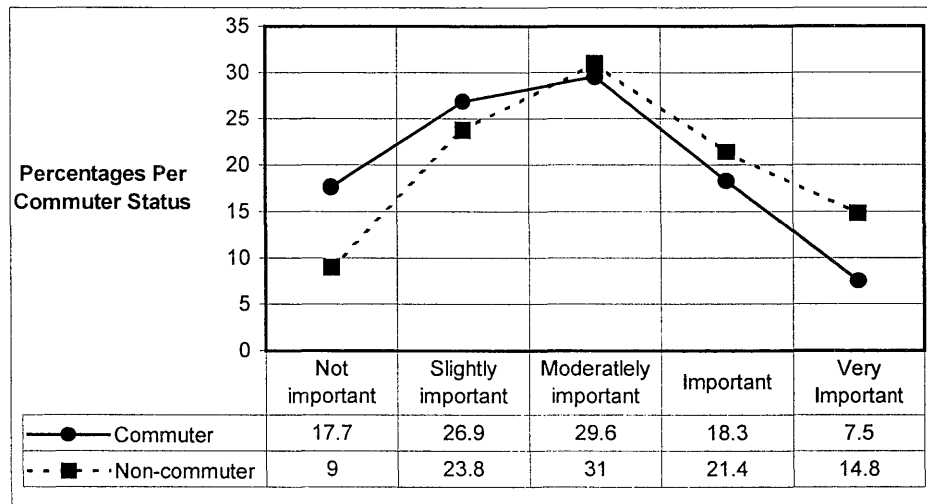
Commuter Status and Community

CIC staff were also interested in addressing a number of comparative questions involving the issue of “community,” which encompassed the third part of the survey. Their first question was “What is the difference between commuters and non-commuters (Q12) with regard to the importance of community (Q30), and experiencing a feeling of community (Q31)?” Before reviewing the findings, it is important to note that “community” was not defined in the survey instrument. Therefore, the respondents answered questions 30, 31, and 32 with their own definition of “community.”

Figure 7 presents the data for the first part of the question, which compares commuters’ and non-commuters’ to the **importance of community** on campus. The findings demonstrate that non-commuters rated such an experience slightly more important than did commuters.

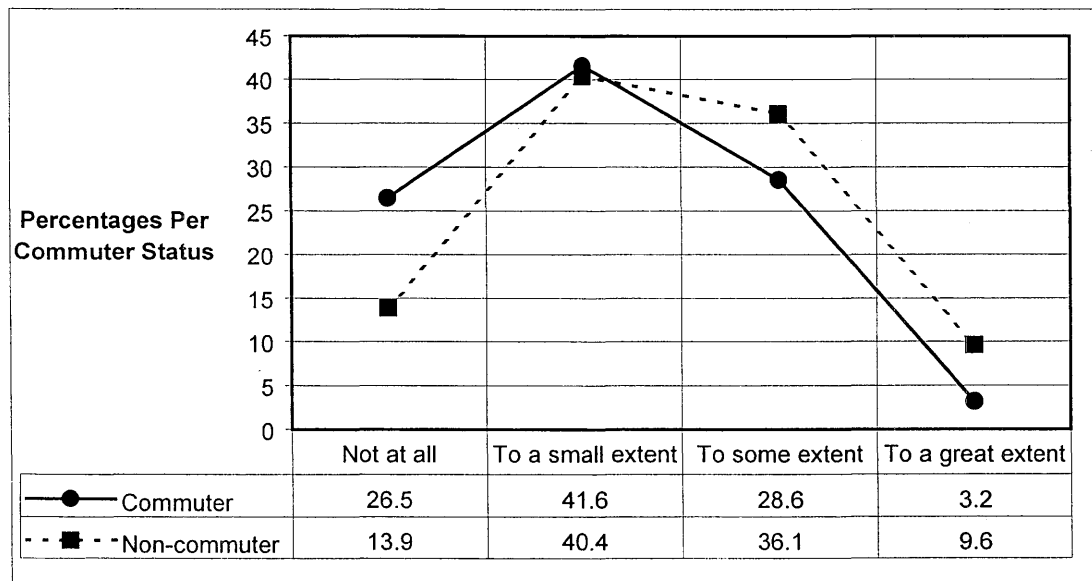
¹⁹ The data from *mentor programs* and *professional fraternities/sororities* in Q27 were not statistically significant.

Figure 7: Importance of Community (Q30) and Commuter Status (Q12)



The findings for the second half of the questions are similar to those listed above, and reveal that non-commuters are slightly more likely to **experience a feeling of community** at the University than commuters (See Figure 8). The emphasis in this analysis is “slightly,” which infers that commuters did not rate far behind non-commuters in this comparison.

Figure 8: Feeling of Community (Q31) and Commuter Status (Q12)





Activities that Generate a Feeling of Community

The next questions posed was, “To what extent do the respondents sense “community” (Q31) and what generates that sense (Q32)?” The findings from this comparison can be assigned to three categories—1) those activities that clearly related to creating a feeling of community on campus, 2) those that presented mixed results, and 3) those activities and services that did not appear to create a feeling of community.

Those activities that could be inferred to be most influential in creating a feeling of community were:

- Attending class
- Interacting with faculty/students in the classroom
- Interacting with classmates outside of the class on class projects/assignments
- Socializing with classmates outside of class

All of these items appeared to considerably influence a feeling of community on campus for the respondents. Furthermore, it is possible to infer that “attending class” and “interacting in the classroom” could even create a sense of community among those who did not otherwise experience such a feeling (as expressed in their responses to Q31). Overall, it appears that attending class and interacting with classmates had the greatest potential for creating a feeling of community on campus.

While somewhat less influential, the following activities also appeared to increase respondents’ feelings of community on campus:

- Interacting with instructors outside the classroom
- Interaction with advisors in academic department
- Gathering informally on campus
- Living in a residence hall

Two specific activities produced results that were somewhat unclear with respect to creating a feeling of community:

- Participation in activities closely related to your academic department
- Participating in the activities of student organizations or other groups on campus

Finally, there were a number of activities and services that did not appear to create a **feeling** of community at the University, including:

- Using Gopherville
- Having a job on campus
- Belonging to a fraternity/sorority
- Using the Gopher Guide
- Using the on-line Events Calendar web site
- Participating in campus-wide events such as Homecoming
- Participating in leadership development programs

A majority of respondents indicated the activities and services listed above did not contribute to their **feeling** a sense of community on campus (Q32) in spite of the fact that they did experience a feeling of community on campus (Q31). Therefore, it is *not* possible to attribute their experience of feeling “community” to these particular activities/services. Nevertheless, this finding does not infer that these activities are ineffective. The respondents might have been unfamiliar with these out-of-classroom experiences, or attributed their feeling of community to other types of campus events.

Satisfaction

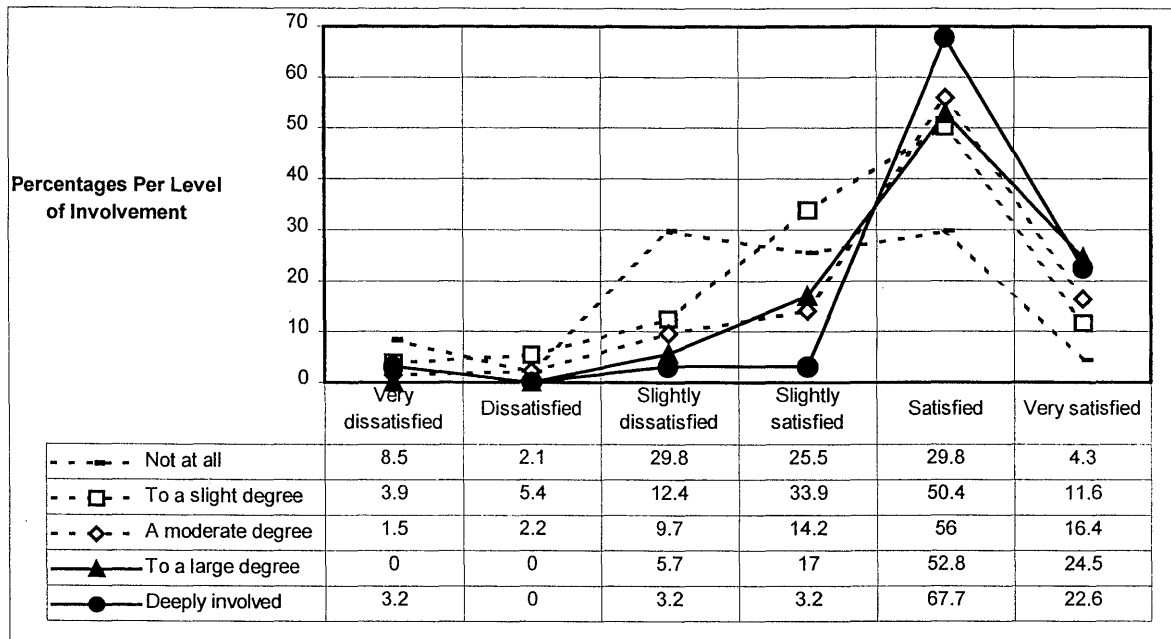
Finally, CIC staff wanted to investigate various cross-tabulations addressing student satisfaction in relation to involvement in out-of-classroom activities.

Satisfaction and Involvement (Q19)

By comparing satisfaction and involvement we can ask, “Are those who are more involved (Q19) also more satisfied with their University experience (Q33)?” As evidenced in Figure 9, the mode (i.e., highest percentage) for all levels of participation was among those who were “satisfied” with their experience at the University.²⁰ This could cause one to infer that the level of involvement in out-of-classroom activities and events (or lack thereof) may not greatly effect satisfaction.

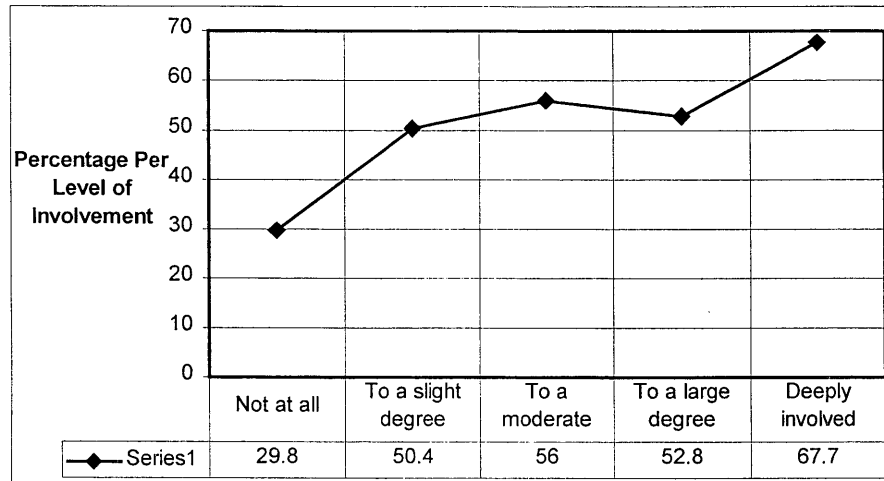
²⁰ The mode for those who marked that they were “not at all” involved in activities peaked identically at “satisfied” and “slightly dissatisfied.”

Figure 9: Comparison of Involvement (Q19) and Satisfaction (Q33)



Nevertheless, it is possible to find a slight degree a variation among those who were “satisfied.” The percentages in Figure 10 represent the number of respondents per level of participation who claimed to be “satisfied” with their University experience. For example, 29.8% of those who were “not at all” participating in student activities were satisfied with their experience at the University, while 67.7% who were deeply involved were satisfied. This graph infers that increasing levels of student participation in out-of-classroom activities could facilitate greater satisfaction with one’s University experience. Nonetheless, one may not insinuate from this particular finding that University students who were less involved in student groups and activities were also less satisfied with their overall experience on campus.

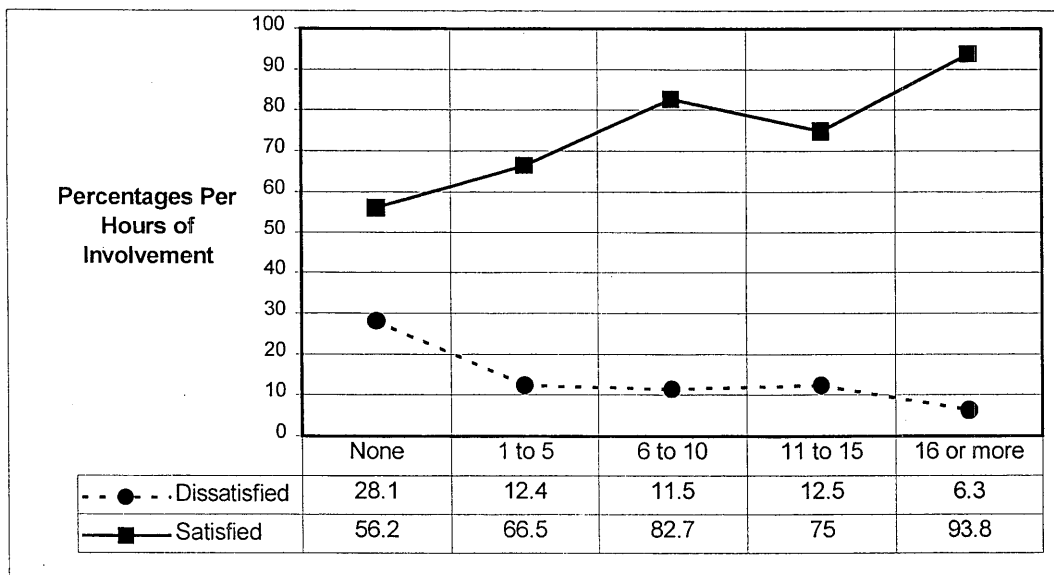
Figure 10: Percentage of “Satisfied” Respondents (Q33) Based on Involvement (Q19)



Hours of Involvement and Satisfaction

It is also possible to address the question of involvement and satisfaction by asking, “Are those who spend more time in out-of-classroom activities (Q16) more satisfied with their experience at the University (Q33)?” The results of this comparison are more conclusive than those reported earlier (See Figure 11).

Figure 11: Satisfaction (Q33) and Hours of Involvement (Q16)



These findings illustrate that respondents reported greater overall satisfaction at the University given more hours of involvement in out-of-classroom experiences.²¹ The inverse of this is also inferred to be correct since dissatisfaction appears to rise with fewer or no hours of involvement. One may be tempted to say that this later analysis (Q16 & 33) contradicts the former (Q19 & 33) when in fact the description above simply solidifies what was previously inferred in a more subtle manner.

WRITTEN RESPONSES FROM SURVEY DATA

The survey ended with two questions that allowed the respondents to provide extended written responses on what they had gained from out-of-classroom experiences, and how the University could improve in this area. Analysis of these data was conducted by first reading each statement and then assigning text to one of several short descriptive titles (e.g., career improvement, independent living, etc.), often referred to in qualitative research analysis as “themes.” Aside from the occasional unusual requests (e.g., “Allow pot smoking on the mall” or “Make tuition \$2”), the comments could be easily associated with a particular theme. This process was continued until a pattern began to emerge, and several themes appeared far more regularly than any others did:

- Two for question 41—“friendship” and “independent living”, and
- Two for question 42—“better provision of information” and “parking”

In Q41, respondents were asked, “What is the single most important thing you have gained from your outside the classroom experience?” The most popular response revealed that students highly valued the friendships they had developed through their out-of-classroom experiences. Most of the responses were short, even as simple as “Friends.” A number of respondents articulated that they had appreciated making friendships with people similar to themselves, while others enjoyed meeting people from a variety of backgrounds: “Meeting new and different people from various countries and

²¹ “Satisfied” percentages in this graph corresponds to those respondents who indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their University experience. The “dissatisfied” percentages in this graph represent the combined percentages of those who were “very dissatisfied,” “dissatisfied,” and “slightly dissatisfied.”

walks of life, or in other words gaining more respect for cultural diversity.” Others expressed how their friendships had affected them by creating a sense of belonging, stimulating an understanding that they had made life-long friends, or making the campus feel smaller: “My participation in the Marching Band in effect made campus smaller by developing a group of friends on campus.” Most of all, students used the development of friendships as a focal point for the positive experiences they had at the University:

I have met many people that I consider my friends. I have never had so many friends. I have met them at all different places ranging from class to the residence halls to New Student Weekend. I am having a great time here at the “U.”

The second most popular response to Q41 was that respondents appreciated the opportunity to experience living independently. Nevertheless, the new lifestyle often came as a double-edged sword. Some respondents claimed that their independence was accompanied by spending a significant amount of time alone, or by needing to comply to residence hall staff who were perceived to be more demanding than students’ parents. Overall, respondents commented about how their newfound independence had provided a sense of motivation to excel and create a life in which they were the primary decision-maker.

The second question (Q42) asked, “What could this university do to improve your outside the classroom experience?” Be forewarned that this question provided students a venue to lodge their complaints, some of whom did so vigorously. The most common response was that the University needed to put more effort into providing information to students. Many respondents were interested in more announcements on campus of events and activities through existing options (e.g., e-mail, the Daily, bulletin boards), and newly suggested ones such as an internship and volunteer newsletter. Others commented about how they were interested in assistance negotiating through the numerous options of student organizations:

The number one thing the U could do would be to have the advisers recommend and give at least [one] specific group or organization each student should participate in according to the classes that student may be taking or other interests. Plus there are so many [groups/organizations] advertised all over; [it’s] almost overwhelming as a freshman [without] any direction [e.g., guidance].

These qualitative findings support the results of Q34 that demonstrated respondents thought that the University was doing a good job at providing information about events, but may need to greatly improve the dissemination of information about involvement opportunities (See Table 31 and Table 32). The following comment demonstrates this dilemma exactly:

The University promotes a lot of these “experiences,” but when a student is really interested in pursuing them, no one can help you! I keep getting referred to different people or they say, “Maybe you can try this....” There is no concrete information. Getting info from an advisor is even worse! I would have gone to a smaller school where I would get more personal attention. I would not recommend this university to anyone! There are too many departments, [and] they don’t have any idea what each other is doing. I am told to bring a form to Dept. A, then A tells me [“no”], it’s B, and B sends me back to Dept. A. Maybe informing employees about things would be a great start! I often feel that I know more than they do.

Another response provided a criticism nearly identical to the one above:

Make it easier to get answers to questions—I find that I read about a program, then hunt for an office or phone number only to be forgotten in a voice mailbox, or to end up talking to someone who doesn’t have an answer to my question or even [suggests] as to where I should take my question next.

In summary, the University could improve the provision of information about events somewhat, but particularly needs to pay more attention to the dissemination of information about involvement opportunities since students appear to be getting caught in the “run around” when pursuing such out-of-classroom experiences.

The second most needed improvement based on respondents’ written comments was that of parking. Numerous respondents stated that the difficulty in finding parking on campus prohibits and de-motivates them from participating in out-of-classroom activities.

Provide better parking for off-campus students. It is very difficult to be involved in any activities when the only free parking is a mile away from campus. Returning to the U after I’ve already gone home for a study group etc. seems to be more of a chore rather than an opportunity.

I think parking is a hassle—Once I leave campus there’s not enough to motivate me to return.

Furthermore, while the University planning team may follow the policy of no free parking on campus, the comments based on this survey and those of similar projects²² would indicate that many students may not have the money to pay for the parking. Therefore, the University may be excluded some students with lesser means from some forms of out-of-classroom activities: “Parking—It is horribly cost prohibitive for a commuter student to drive to school to pay event parking to attend an event.”

Overall, the findings from questions 41 and 42 demonstrate that student are benefiting from their out-of-classroom experiences, which could be enhanced with assistance from the University through better provision of personalized information and parking.

²² See Gormley, K. (2000). *1998 Coffman Union Survey Report*. Minneapolis, MN: Twin Cities Student Unions, University of Minnesota—Twin Cities.

SUMMARY

As we attempt to take a birds-eye view of the findings within this report, it would seem that most of the respondents had engaged regularly in out-of-classroom activities & groups, and gained positive experiences as a result. The majority of those who are uninvolved seemed to be either deeply involved in various activities outside of their academic endeavors (e.g., work, family, etc.), and/or had been involved in the past. The minority caucus of respondents included those who were completely uninterested in out-of-classroom activities; and those who were interested, would like to have been involved, but had difficulty finding information about activities or groups.

Another quality emerges from the survey findings is that while some students appreciate the all-campus, large-scale events, there appears to be a slight lean towards more personalized out-of-classroom events and activities, especially among commuters.

Finally, it is possible to infer that students are receiving enough information about campus events & activities on campus. Nevertheless, both qualitative and quantitative data from the survey provide evidence indicating that gathering information and guidance about involvement opportunities may be a hindrance to students' out-of-classroom experiences and their opportunities as a student overall at the University.