



Results from the 2008 College Senior Survey: The Academic Experience

At the end of the 2007-2008 academic year, seniors were invited to complete the College Senior Survey (CSS). This survey asked students a series of questions about their educational experience at Case, their satisfaction with various aspects of their undergraduate education, their relationships with faculty, staff and peers, their future plans, their time management, and their political leanings. A total of 206 students replied, representing approximately 27% of graduating seniors. As in the general population of Case undergraduates, the majority of the sample (53%) was male, though the percentage of men in the sample was lower than the percentage of male graduates (58%). The sample is nearly identical to the population in terms of major. For example, 33% of the sample and 33% of graduating seniors were engineering or computer science majors.

This report covers results from survey items focusing on students' relationships with faculty, self-reported gains in academic and personal development, study habits, satisfaction with coursework, satisfaction with the academic support provided by Case, and their overall satisfaction with their undergraduate experience.

Gains in Academic and Personal Development

The vast majority of students reported gains in areas of academic and personal development. Between when they started at Case and when they took the CSS in the spring of their senior year, the majority of students said that they were "stronger" or "much stronger" in terms of their¹:

- General knowledge (96%)
- Analytic and problem-solving skills (95%)
- Knowledge of a particular field or discipline (99.5%)
- Ability to think critically (91%)
- Knowledge of people from different races/cultures (81%)
- Leadership abilities (82%)
- Interpersonal skills (85%)
- Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures (67%)
- Understanding of the problems facing their communities (75%)
- Understanding of social problems facing our nation (81%)
- Preparedness for employment after college (88%)
- Preparedness for graduate or advanced education (91%)
- Ability to manage their time effectively (79%)
- Understanding of global issues (75%)

¹ Possible responses: 1. Much weaker, 2. Weaker, 3. No change, 4. Stronger, 5. Much stronger.

Study Habits

The majority of students occasionally or frequently²:

- Worked on independent study projects (81%)
- Discussed course content with students outside of class (99%)
- Studied with other students (90%)
- Tutored another student (59%)
- Had instruction that supplemented course work (85%)

Only a minority of students said that they frequently:

- Came late to class (14%)
- Fell asleep in class (11%)
- Failed to complete homework on time (8%)
- Were bored in class (30%)

Experiential Learning

Students were asked to report whether they had participated in various types of experiential learning. The percentage saying “yes” is noted in parenthesis:

- Participated in an internship program (48%)
- Participated in a study abroad program (23%)
- Participated in a program to prepare for graduate school (13%)
- Participated in an undergraduate research program (e.g., MARC, MBRS, REU; 29%)
- Presented research at a conference (21%)
- Worked on a professor’s research project (48%)
- Participated in at least one of the above (83%)

Those who participated in at least one of the above forms of experiential learning reported significantly greater gains than their peers in terms of:

- Analytical and problem-solving skills
- Ability to think critically
- Preparedness for employment after college
- Preparedness for graduate or advanced education

Students who participated in experiential learning also reported having higher GPAs, both overall and within their major.

Relationships with Faculty

Students rate their professors positively. Most “agree” or “strongly agree³” that faculty:

- Are interested in students’ academic problems (84%)
- Are interested in students’ personal problems (56%)
- Feel that most students here are well-prepared academically (93%)

² Possible responses: 1. Never, 2. Occasionally, 3. Frequently.

³ Possible responses: 1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Agree, 4. Strongly agree.

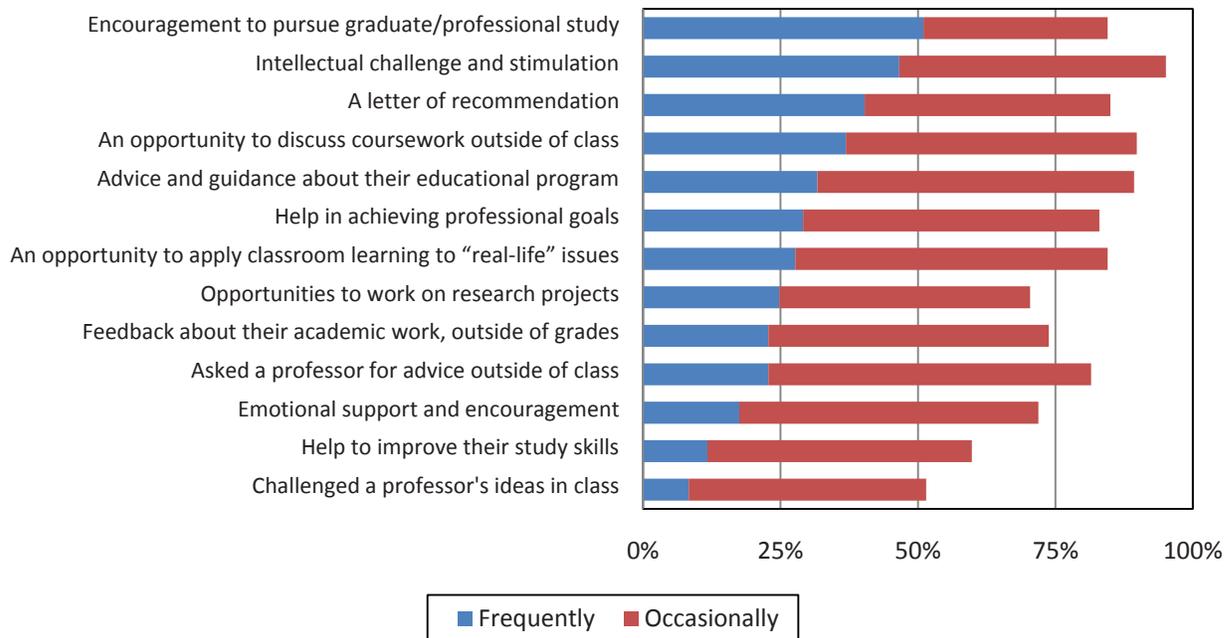
Likewise, the majority of students are “satisfied” or “very satisfied⁴” with the:

- Ability to find a faculty or staff mentor (69%)
- Amount of contact with faculty (75%)

Only a small percentage (6%) of students said that they “frequently” felt intimidated by their professors.

Students were asked, “How often have professors at your college provided you with:” followed by the list of items seen in Figure 1. Students could respond “not at all,” “occasionally,” or “frequently.”

Figure 1: How often have professors at your college provided you with:



Satisfaction with Coursework

Students generally rate their courses positively, with the majority saying that they are satisfied or very satisfied with:

- The overall quality of instruction at Case (81%)
- General education or core curriculum courses (80%)
- Science and mathematics courses (80%)
- Humanities courses (72%)
- Social science courses (71%)

Only 1% of students said that they frequently had difficulty getting the courses they needed, and more than half (61%) said that they never had difficulty.

⁴ Possible responses: 1. Very Dissatisfied, 2. Dissatisfied, 3. Neutral, 4. Satisfied, 5. Very Satisfied.

Academic Support

The majority of students were satisfied⁵ with Case's academic facilities and services. Specifically, the majority of students said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with:

- Lab facilities and equipment (81%)
- Library facilities (89%)
- Computer facilities and services (87%)
- Availability of internet access (96%)
- The quality of computer training/assistance (63%)
- Tutoring or other academic assistance (74%)

That said, only 45% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with academic advising. Though there were no differences by gender, differences did exist by major. Less than half of students majoring in engineering, humanities, social sciences or the arts were satisfied or very satisfied with academic advising; however, half or more of management, nursing, and math and natural science majors were satisfied or very satisfied

Overall Satisfaction

The majority of students said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall college experience at Case (80%). Additionally, most students said that, if they could start over and make their college choice again, they "probably" (47%) or "definitely" (31%) would still choose to enroll at Case.

Not surprisingly, those who definitely would still choose to enroll at Case were significantly more satisfied with many aspects of their undergraduate experience than were other students (including their interactions with other students, relationships with faculty, and the sense of community on campus). Somewhat less obviously, students who "definitely" would still choose to enroll at Case were significantly more likely to have:

- Studied with other students outside of class
- Met with a career advisor
- Interacted with a TA or graduate student
- Participated in supplemental instruction

Additionally, those who said that they definitely would choose Case again were those most concerned with social issues and community involvement. Specifically, they were more likely than their peers to say that, in the future, it would be important for them to:

- Influence social values
- Help others who are in difficulty
- Become involved in programs to clean up the environment
- Participate in a community action program
- Become a community leader

Finally, those who definitely would choose Case again were significantly more likely to believe that an individual can work to bring about change in society.

⁵ Possible Responses: 1. Very dissatisfied, 2. Dissatisfied, 3. Neutral, 4. Satisfied, 5. Very satisfied, 6. Can't rate/don't know. Percentages based on students who provided a valid response (scale items 1-5).