

Quality of the Academic Experience

2013 CWRU Senior Survey

In spring 2013, seniors at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) were asked to participate in the CWRU Senior Survey.¹ The survey covers a variety of topics related to students' experiences at CWRU. This report provides information about their academic experiences.

Satisfaction

When asked if they were satisfied with their undergraduate education, 81% of seniors said they were and 73% said they would remember their college years as “essentially happy ones” or “some of the most enjoyable times of my life so far.” Fewer, but still more than half, said they would probably/definitely encourage a high school senior (who is similar to them) to attend CWRU (68%) and would probably/definitely choose CWRU again, if given the chance to re-live their college experience (60%).



In addition to evaluating their overall satisfaction, students were asked about specific aspects of their academic experiences. In terms of faculty, students were most satisfied with out-of-class availability and least satisfied with their SAGES advisor. Compared to seniors in 2010, 2013 seniors were significantly more satisfied with student-faculty interactions (table 1).²

Table 1. Satisfaction with Faculty

| 2010 | 2013 | | 2010 | 2013 | |
|------|------|--------------------------------------|------|------|-------------------------------------|
| 89% | 91% | Out-of-class availability of faculty | 84% | 87% | Attitude of faculty toward students |
| 90% | 90% | Overall quality of instruction | 57% | 63% | SAGES Advisor |
| 85% | 90% | Student interaction with faculty* | | | |

In comparison to 2010 seniors, 2013 seniors were also significantly more satisfied with:

- academic integrity
- availability of desired courses
- opportunities to study abroad
- Career Center
- Registrar
- Undergraduate Studies

Satisfaction with classroom facilities was significantly lower in 2013 compared to responses from seniors in 2010 (table 2 and figure 1).

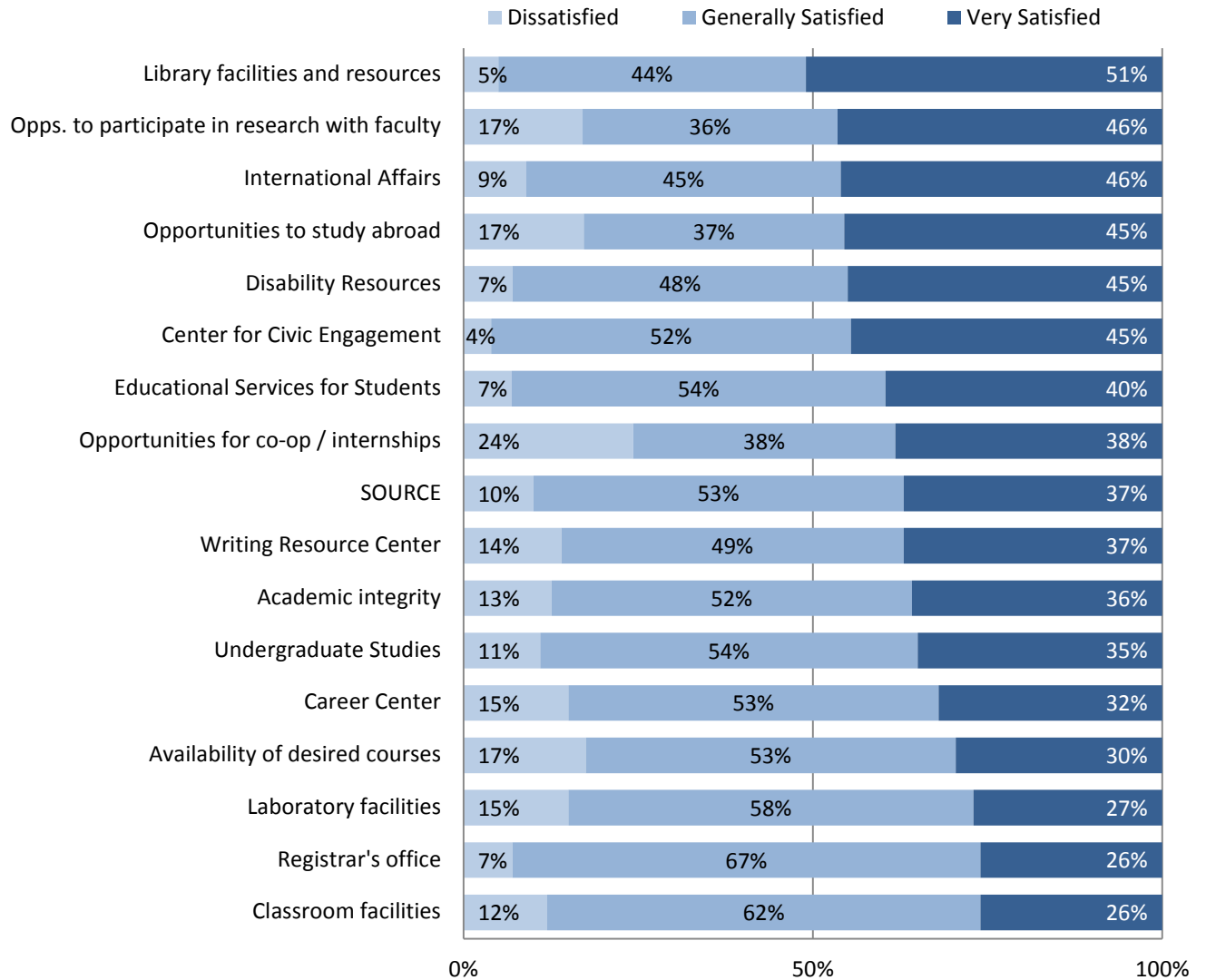
¹ Of the 978 seniors who received the survey, 44% (n=426) responded. Compared to their peers, women (49% vs. 39% men), Asian/White (47% vs. 33% underrepresented minorities), domestic (45% vs. 29% international students), and Engineering students (47% vs. 41% other students) responded to the survey at a significantly higher rate.

² Asterisk (*) indicates a significant difference from 2010 to 2013, $p < 0.05$

Table 2. Satisfaction with Other Aspects of the Academic Experience

| 2010 | 2013 | | 2010 | 2013 | |
|------|------|--|------|------|---|
| - | 96% | Center for Civic Engagement & Learning | 82% | 87% | Academic integrity* |
| 95% | 95% | Library facilities and resources | - | 86% | Writing Resource Center |
| 81% | 93% | Registrar's office* | 87% | 85% | Laboratory facilities |
| 90% | 93% | Educational Services for Students | 75% | 85% | Career Center* |
| - | 93% | Disability Resources | 79% | 83% | Availability of courses you wanted* |
| - | 91% | International Affairs | 72% | 83% | Opportunities to study abroad* |
| - | 90% | SOURCE | - | 82% | Opps. to participate in research with faculty |
| 93% | 89% | Classroom facilities* | 69% | 76% | Opportunities for co-op / internships |
| 78% | 89% | Undergraduate Studies* | | | |

Figure 1. Satisfaction with Other Aspects of the Academic Experience



Experiential Learning

A total of 414 students responded to questions about experiential learning. Overall, 94% of students participated in at least one form of experiential learning and 69% participated in two or more forms of experiential learning (table 3).

The largest percentage of students participated in research with a faculty member and internships in the United States. Approximately one in four seniors participated in performing arts, independent studies, and study abroad. Fewer seniors reported participating in a co-op or an off-campus study in the United States (table 4).

| | | |
|-----|-----|----------------------|
| 5% | 19 | 6 or more activities |
| 6% | 23 | 5 activities |
| 14% | 57 | 4 activities |
| 23% | 96 | 3 activities |
| 21% | 88 | 2 activities |
| 25% | 105 | 1 activity |
| 6% | 26 | No activities |

| | | |
|-----|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 51% | 219 | Research with a faculty member |
| 44% | 185 | Internship in the United States |
| 25% | 104 | Performing arts |
| 24% | 103 | Independent study |
| 22% | 94 | Study abroad |
| 13% | 55 | Co-op |
| 13% | 55 | Off-campus study in the United States |
| 4% | 16 | Internship outside the United States |

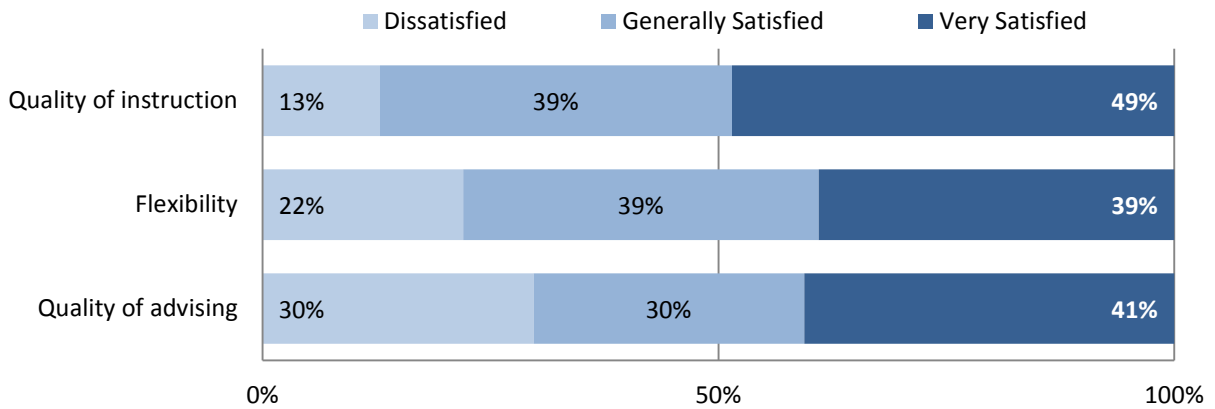
Students provided many thoughtful comments about their college experience. Below are two comments about experiential learning.

- Many of my experiences that led to my personal and professional growth were from student organizations on campus. I think this is one of the most important aspects of any college experience and Case Western does a very good job at promoting activity outside the classroom.
- Case has a lot to offer, and I absolutely loved that about my undergraduate career. I was able to get involved with so much (research through SPUR, volunteering through CCEL, tutoring and SI through ESS, etc). However, these opportunities, I believe, are only available to those who are actively looking. Organizations such as SOURCE, SPUR, CCEL, ESS, as well as thousands of student groups should be advertised better...For example, I did not know that CCEL was basically the foundation of volunteering opportunities available at and near Case until someone happened to tell me in passing during the end of my sophomore year.

Satisfaction with Majors

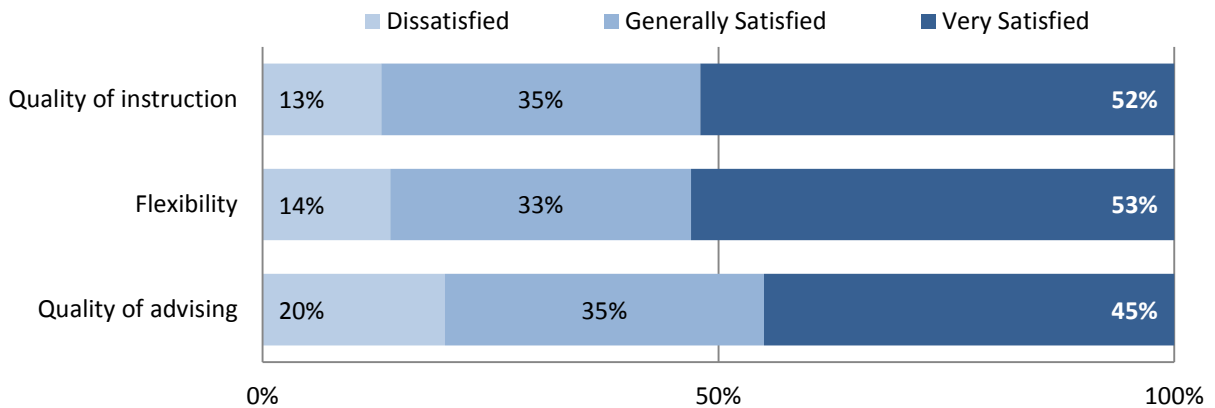
In terms of their primary major, most seniors were satisfied overall. The majority of seniors were also satisfied with specific aspects of their primary program, such as the quality of instruction and the flexibility of the program (i.e., time for electives). However, almost one-third of students were dissatisfied with the quality of advising in their primary major (figure 2).

Figure 2. Satisfaction with Primary Major (n=425)



Most students were also satisfied overall with their secondary major. Similar to their primary major, students were most satisfied with the quality of instruction in their secondary major, followed by flexibility and advising (figure 3).

Figure 3. Satisfaction with Secondary Major (n=86)

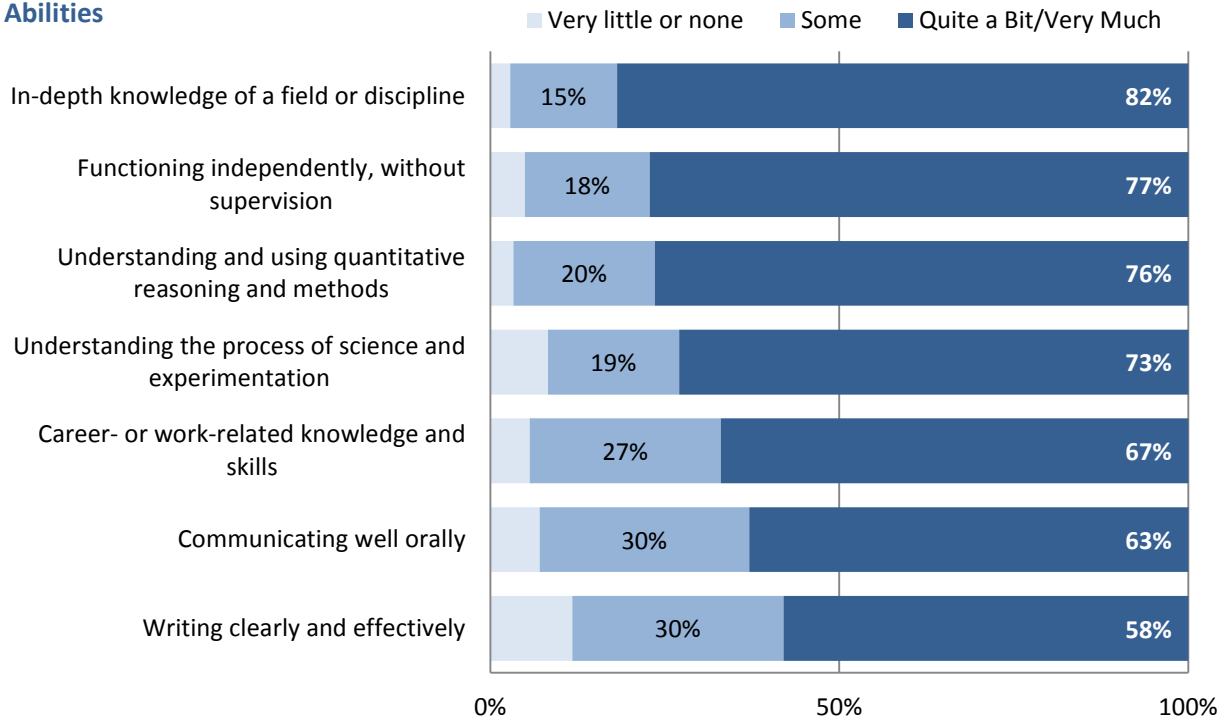


Learning Outcomes

Students were asked to describe the extent to which their experience at CWRU had contributed to development of their knowledge, skills, and abilities. In terms of professional development, almost all seniors said their experience contributed quite a bit/very much to (figure 4):

- In-depth knowledge of a field or discipline
- Functioning independently, without supervision
- Understanding quantitative reasoning and methods

Figure 4. Contribution of CWRU Experience: Professional Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

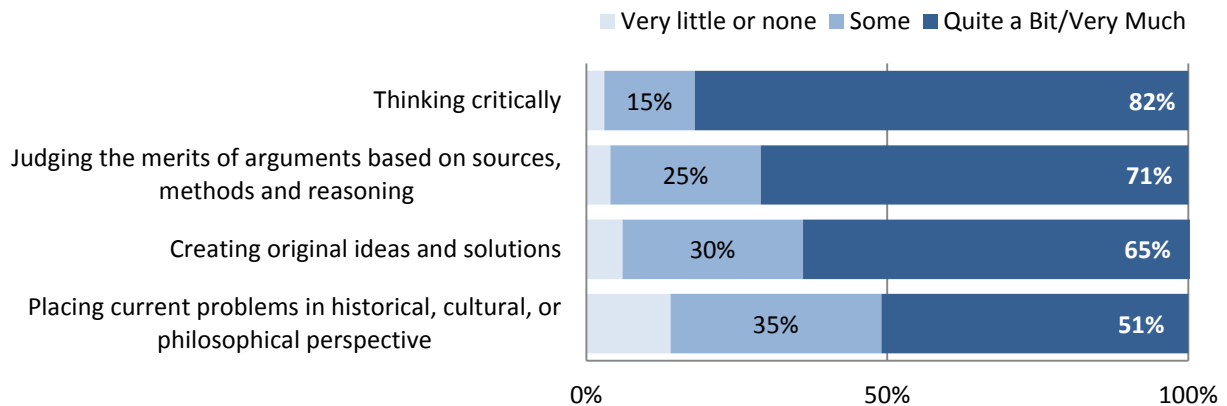


Additionally, almost all seniors said their experience contributed quite a bit/very much to:

- Critical thinking
- Judging the merits of arguments based on sources, methods and reasoning
- Creating original ideas and solutions

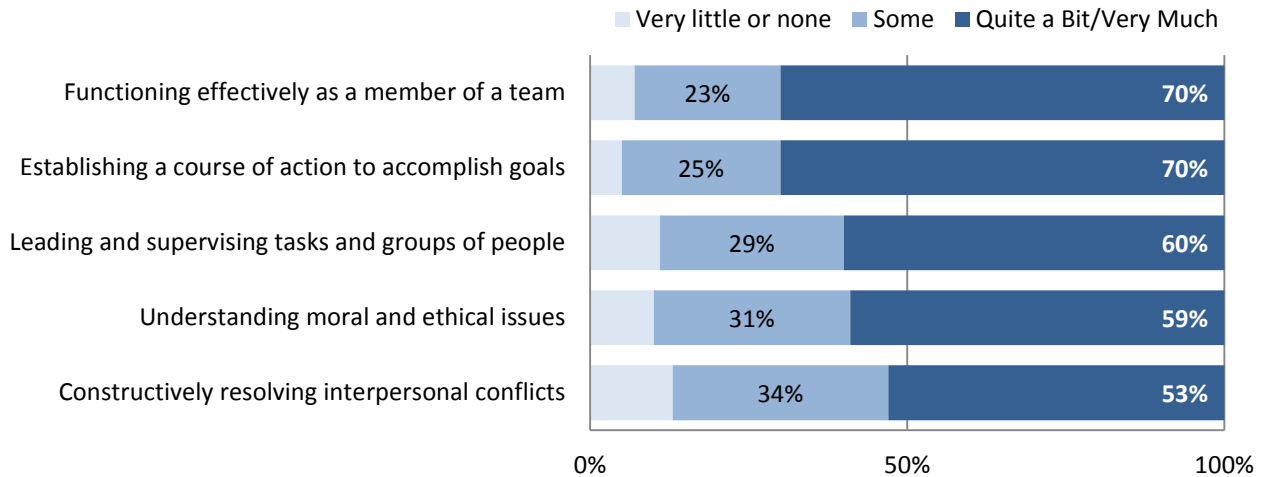
Fewer, but still more than half, said their experience contributed quite a bit/very much to placing current problems in historical, cultural, or philosophical perspective (figure 5).

Figure 5. Contribution of CWRU Experience Critical and Creative Thinking



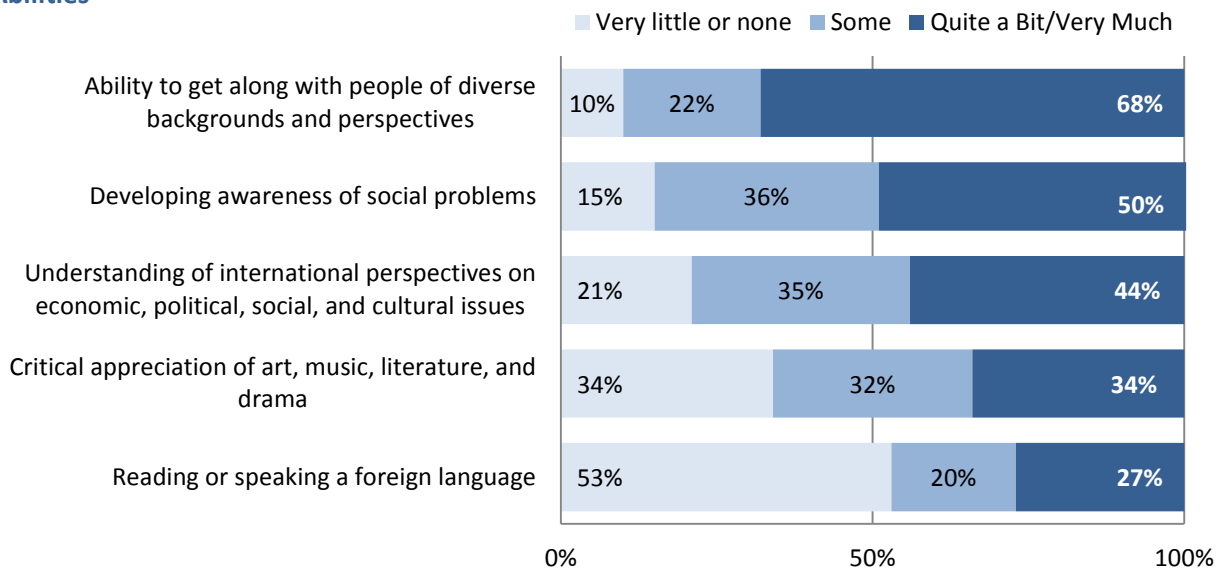
Most seniors said their experience contributed, at least some, to each of the five leadership and teamwork skills listed on the survey. More than 90% of seniors said their experience contributed to establishing a course of action to accomplish goals and functioning effectively as a team member (figure 6).

Figure 6. Contribution of CWRU Experience: Leadership and Teamwork



Students were also asked about their skills related to living and working in a diverse world. Ninety percent (90%) of students said their experience at CWRU contributed to getting along with people of diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and 86% said their experience contributed at least some to developing an awareness of social problems (figure 7).

Figure 7. Contribution of CWRU Experience: Pluralistic Knowledge, Skills and Abilities



Below are two comments students provided about what they learned as a result of attending CWRU.

- ... the most valuable thing that I feel I will take away from Case is the ability to adapt quickly to new environments, to learn independently when I need to, to be both a leader and a team player, and to make things work even when those in charge can't seem to. The real world is not perfect, and I am sure that everything, good and bad, that I have experienced as a student here has prepared me well to live my life as a highly capable, independent individual ...
- In short, it might not have been the "sexiest" school, but I think I learned a lot and am well-prepared for my future employment.

Additional Information

For additional information about this report, please contact Amanda Thomas at (216) 368-6119 or ast27@case.edu.