

STANDARD 1D: ALUMNI SURVEY

Introduction and Research Question

As part of our ongoing commitment to enhancing the student learning experience and in conjunction with our annual performance funding report, we administered a survey to undergraduate alumni from AY 2009-2010. Our main focus was to address student engagement issues as well as academic competencies from these alumni. In order to maintain some data consistency with other administrations, many of the questions were left unchanged from previous versions of the survey. However, several questions were added to address use and satisfaction with services and programs that align with our Top 25 Strategic Initiative as well as with our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). [Our QEP is titled Ready for the World and is focused on ensuring that all UT undergraduate students gain the international knowledge, perspective and skills necessary to succeed in today's complex, pluralistic world.]

Methodology

As stated above, our population was undergraduate students who graduated in AY 2009-2010. The UT Alumni Development Office was contacted to generate this population. In our proposal, we planned to utilize an online delivery method. However, after response rate discussions with the Alumni Development staff, it was determined that a traditional mailed paper and pencil survey would generate a better response (see Appendix A for the survey instrument). Additionally, given that many of the email addresses for the alumni were missing, it was going to be necessary to mail invitations for the survey anyway. Experience has indicated that unless you can provide a hot link embedded in an email invitation, the likelihood that the recipient will participate in an online survey is very low.

After an initial survey mailing, a post card was sent out to those who had not yet responded two weeks following as a reminder to participate. Two weeks after the post card reminder, a second survey mailing was sent out to those who still had yet to respond. Initially, our population of alumni was 3,988.

During the mailing process, several letter packets were returned undeliverable with no forwarding address. These were subsequently removed from the population. Ultimately, we were left with 3,787 viable survey invitees. Over the course of the mailing process we received a total of 630 completed surveys for a response rate of 16.6%.

Findings

Overall, the results of our survey were quite positive. Nearly all respondents (96%) indicated they were satisfied with their education experience at the University of Tennessee (UT). Eighty-eight percent reported they would start at UT again and roughly 95% would recommend UT to others.

Alumni were asked many questions about the frequency they participated in a variety of academically-related activities. Three of these activities were directly focused on our QEP. Alumni were asked how often they included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments. Roughly half of the respondents (50.8%) stated they did so often or very often. Another 50% reported they very often or often had serious conversations with students who differ with them in religious, political or personal beliefs. Finally, slightly less than half (48%) indicated they had serious conversations with students from different races or ethnicities.

New to the survey for this administration, students were asked to indicate their participation and satisfaction with 21 UT specific services/programs, many of which focused on our Top 25 Strategic Initiative as well as our QEP. Among those programs with the highest participation was academic advising (96.3% participation), summer school (57.9% participation), Welcome Week (56.4% participation) and service learning/internships/practicums/co-ops (41.7% participation). Of those who participated in these programs the respective respondent satisfactions with these services was 71.1%, 95.8%, 88.1% and 87.3%.

There were also many programs or services that had a low participation rate including; peer mentoring (17.2%), Student Success Center academic coaching (16.4%), Ignite (15.3%), Emerging Leaders (11.5%), First Year Studies 129 (7.1%), Student Support (7%) and UT LEAD (6.2%). While these programs are generally not targeted towards all students, satisfaction rates among those who participated were relatively high at 72% to 91%.

Two of the 21 programs dealt specifically with our QEP; the Life of the Mind Program (a common reading program for incoming freshmen) and study abroad. Among the respondents, 51.1% indicated they participated in the Life of the Mind Program while only 52.9% of those participants were satisfied with it. With regard to study abroad, only 18.2% participated yet 92.2% of those who participated reported they were satisfied with the program.

Conclusion

As is evident, the overall results for the survey were quite positive. However, with this being the first year for the revised survey instrument, we must curtail some of our enthusiasm. It behooves us to reserve specific judgment on some of these findings until we can gather additional information from other alumni cohorts. Nonetheless, we can certainly examine the program-specific participation and satisfaction questions with those specific offices in order to provide summative feedback as well as to prompt further inquiry. Additionally we can examine some of the previously used items and compare them to other similar instruments (NSSE, BCSSE) for emerging patterns.

Appendix A

SECTION 1 About the University of Tennessee

1. How satisfied are you with the overall educational experience you had at the University of Tennessee?

- ① *Very Dissatisfied* ② *Dissatisfied* ③ *Satisfied* ④ *Very Satisfied*

2. If you could start college again, would you enroll at the University of Tennessee?

- ① *Definitely Not* ② *Probably Not* ③ *Probably Yes* ④ *Definitely Yes*

3. Would you recommend the University of Tennessee to others?

- ① *Definitely Not* ② *Probably Not* ③ *Probably Yes* ④ *Definitely Yes*

SECTION 2 Academic Experiences

Thinking back to your experiences at the University of Tennessee, how often would you say that you did each of the following?

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
4. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	①	②	③	④
5. Made a class presentation	①	②	③	④
6. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.....	①	②	③	④
7. Worked on a paper that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	①	②	③	④
8. Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments	①	②	③	④
9. Came to a class without completing readings or assignments.....	①	②	③	④
10. Worked with other students on projects during class.....	①	②	③	④
11. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	①	②	③	④
12. Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions	①	②	③	④
13. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary).....	①	②	③	④
14. Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course.....	①	②	③	④
15. Used an electronic medium (listserv, chat group, Internet, instant messaging, etc.) to discuss or complete an assignment.....	①	②	③	④
16. Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	①	②	③	④
17. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.....	①	②	③	④
18. Talked about graduate/professional school plans with a faculty member or advisor.....	①	②	③	④
19. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor	①	②	③	④
20. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class.....	①	②	③	④
21. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral).....	①	②	③	④
22. Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	①	②	③	④
23. Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.).....	①	②	③	④
24. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.).....	①	②	③	④
25. Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own.....	①	②	③	④
26. Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values.....	①	②	③	④
27. Discussed my educational goals, degree plans or academic progress with an academic advisor	①	②	③	④
28. Used my academic advisor as a resource to connect me with curricular and co-curricular opportunities	①	②	③	④

Please indicate your satisfaction with the following services/offering while at the University of Tennessee.

	Did Not Use or Participate	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
29. Alternative Spring/Fall Break.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. Emerging Leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. Ignite	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. Life of the Mind (common reading program for first-year students)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. FYS 101 (one-credit course focused on integration into the academic community)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. FYS 129 (one-credit course taught by faculty members on various topics).....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. Learning community.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. Summer school.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
37. Academic advising	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. Supplemental instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. Tutoring.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. Peer mentoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
41. Student Counseling Center resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. Honors program(s) and/or classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. Undergraduate research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. Service learning / internship / practicum / co-op.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. Study abroad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. Student Success Center academic coaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
47. Student Support (974-HELP).....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. UT Lead program.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. Welcome Week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

50. Please describe your involvement on campus while at the University of Tennessee. If you received any awards or special recognition please include that in your response.

51. What was your major?

Thinking back to your experience at the University of Tennessee, how much did your coursework emphasize the following mental activities?

	Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
52. Memorizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form.....	①	②	③	④
53. Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components.....	①	②	③	④
54. Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships	①	②	③	④
55. Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions	①	②	③	④
56. Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	①	②	③	④

SECTION 5 Knowledge & Skills

To what extent did your experience at the University of Tennessee contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

	Little	Some	Quite a Bit	Very Much
57. Acquiring a broad general education	①	②	③	④
58. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	①	②	③	④
59. Writing clearly and effectively.....	①	②	③	④
60. Speaking clearly and effectively	①	②	③	④
61. Thinking clearly and effectively.....	①	②	③	④
62. Analyzing quantitative problems.....	①	②	③	④
63. Using computing and information technology	①	②	③	④
64. Working effectively with others	①	②	③	④
65. Learning effectively on your own.....	①	②	③	④
66. Understanding yourself.....	①	②	③	④
67. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	①	②	③	④
68. Acquiring knowledge about international cultures	①	②	③	④
69. Understanding intercultural communication concepts.....	①	②	③	④

SECTION 6 Future Preparations

70. How would you characterize the preparation you received at the University of Tennessee for further study at another college or university?

- ① *Poor* ② *Fair* ③ *Good* ④ *Excellent*

71. How would you characterize the preparation you received at the University of Tennessee for employment in your field?

- ① *Poor* ② *Fair* ③ *Good* ④ *Excellent*

SECTION 7 Background Information

72. What is your gender?

- ① *Female* ② *Male* ③ *Transgender* ④ *Other: _____* ⑤ *Prefer Not to Answer*

73. How old were you when you first began your education at the University of Tennessee?

- ① *Under 22* ② *22 to 24* ③ *25 to 30* ④ *31 to 45* ⑤ *46 to 60* ⑥ *Over 60*

74. What is your present age?

- ① Under 22 ② 22 to 24 ③ 25 to 30 ④ 31 to 45 ⑤ 46 to 60 ⑥ Over 60

75. What is your race/ethnic group?

- ① Alaskan Native ⑥ Hispanic
② American Indian ⑦ Multi
③ Asian ⑧ Other: _____
④ Black or African American ⑨ White or Caucasian
⑤ Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ⑩ I prefer not to answer

76. For the most part, were you a part-time or full-time student?

- ① Full-time ② Part-time

77. While attending the University of Tennessee, about how many hours did you work per week?

- ① Did not work ④ 20 to 29 hours
② Employed fewer than 10 hours ⑤ 30 to 40 hours
③ 10 to 19 hours ⑥ More than 40 hours

78. Which of the following best describes your present employment situation?

- ① Working full-time ② Working part-time ③ Self-employed ④ Not currently employed

79. How did you become aware of the opening that became your first job after graduating from college?

- ① I was already working in the job ④ Employment/placement agency
② Cooperative education project/faculty contact/service learning ⑤ Newspaper advertisement
③ College placement office ⑥ Contact through friend or relative
⑦ Other: _____

SECTION 8 Additional Comments

80. Do you have any additional thoughts about the University of Tennessee or about your time there?

Empty text box for additional comments.