2017 Senior Survey Panel

Moderator: Holden Thorp

The Senior Survey is conducted every two years. On the alternate years, all students are sent through the PULSE survey. Both surveys are very similar. Information is collected about student’s thoughts on their undergraduate experience and student life. Freeform comments are separated by positive and negative responses and then categorized by subject (i.e. financial aid, academic departments, Greek Life). The quantitative responses almost always align with the freeform comments. All information received is analyzed. The surveys provide a robust picture of student’s impressions and the responses are taken very seriously. Provost Thorp encouraged the students to take part in both surveys.

PANEL

SAM Fox SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND VISUAL ART

Georgia Binnington

When looking at the 2017 senior survey, as well as past surveys, Sam Fox found a number of student concerns and areas that needed improvement.

- School life balance
  There are buildings and studios where the lights are on 24 hours a day. Students cannot do their work in the library or other areas because they need the specialized equipment. This can cause a lot of stress for the students.

- Economic concerns
  The students pay for a lot of printing, as well as supplies and software for specialized program. All of this can be very expensive.

- Research opportunities.
  The school needs to help the students understand what research is. Everything the students do falls under research. They are constantly creating new things from nothing.

- Careers
  The school begins working with the students in this area even before they arrive on campus, particularly in the College of Art. What kind of a career is a painter going to have in the world that we live in now? Should they all go into communication and design? Should they go into advertising?

- Advising and academic program information
  Currently first year students have one of two advisors; Georgia Binninger or John Early. In
the second year they move on to a faculty advisor. The four-year advisor is Cris Baldwin, Assistant Dean and Registrar. Cris oversees all of the credit hours. John Early is in charge of advising and has been tasked with finding ways to train faculty to come up with new advising ideas. John has interviewed other WashU schools to learn about their advising methods, as well as attended advising conferences. The “high satisfaction” is currently at less than 10%. The current goal is to raise the response to over 30% or higher.

The issues mentioned previously would most likely improve as the student advising satisfaction rate increases. The advisors would be able to work with students about their work/life balance. They would be able to learn about the students’ economic problems and seek to solve those problems. They could talk with the students about their research and send them to the proper place for career advice.

Currently formal advising is only done right before registration which means that students meet with their faculty advisor twice a year; once in fall and once in spring. They may meet with Cris Baldwin at other times to talk about their credits.

Students go to Georgia with most other issues such as leaves of absence, academic difficulty, probation, illness issues and student finances.

Current initiatives either underway or in the planning process:
- Increased advisor/advisee meetings
- Group advisee meetings
- Alumni mentors
  Two alumni committees have been formed that meet via skype. They are working on ways for alumni to work with students.
- Town hall meetings about finances

Provost Thorp commended the Sam Fox School for conducting their own survey and posting the negative comments in word bubbles around the school.

OLIN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Paige LaRose
The Business School has a very active curriculum committee, composed of faculty, program office staff and two undergraduate students. The committee meets once every three weeks to tackle problems that are occurring in the classroom. They regularly conduct focus groups to understand what students are experiencing in their internships and in their business classes to ensure that they ready for their upper level electives, as well as being prepared for the market place.

Olin Vision: To provide world-changing business education, research, and impact.

The hope is that there will be an increase in overall general satisfaction by improving the four intertwining goals listed below.
Student engagement
Goal: Increase satisfaction of administration’s responsiveness to student concerns to 75% for very satisfied and generally satisfied
- Two student representatives on the curriculum committee
- Creation of Student Advisory Board
  Third year for the board. The group meets three times a semester to discuss a specific topic at each meeting.
- Student Group Open Forums
- TA Training
- Advisor & Faculty Engagement Activities
- Senior Class Monthly Engagement
- Creating a More Diverse & Inclusive Community

Goal: Increase very satisfied and generally satisfied with opportunities to learn & participate in faculty research to 80%
- Strategic planning on intentional and consistent engagement with young alumni
- Infusing research & research opportunities throughout the curriculum
  The school wants to help students understand the importance of research; what is research? Where are the opportunities?
- Design and implementation of yearly assessment on various elements of the student experience
- Partnership with Athletics

Student Support
Goals: Increase advising satisfaction to 80% & availability of academic assistance to 85%
- Olin Educational Opportunities Fund
  This fund is supported by gifts from donors. The school works with Student Financial Services to identify eligible students. The funds can be used for needs such as outside activities or purchasing professional clothing for internships and job interviews.
- Microeconomics Boot Camp
  The camp is a volunteer, two day program to prep those without Microeconomics in high school, particularly from under-resourced schools.
- Creation & Expansion of Olin Academic Mentor/Tutoring
  Upperclassmen are paid to tutor students.
Dean Kroeger asked Fiona Rendon, the Engineering Council President, to list a few key issues raised by students at a recent Engineering department meeting.

- Frustration with specific classes
- The need for accommodations for study abroad or co-op

The good news is that these topics are already being addressed by the Engineering School.

Engineering Undergraduate Education
Fundamental Issues of Focus
1. Quality of instruction
2. Relevance of curriculum
3. Flexibility within and beyond Engineering
   - Study abroad, co-ops, multiple majors, studying across the university
4. Career exposure and guidance
   - On horizon: enrollment availability of computer science
   - The popularity of computer science has grown dramatically not only at WashU but across the nation.

School Support to Improve Teaching Quality and Curriculum
A centralized department will be created within Engineering to focus just on undergraduate education. Course evaluations and other evaluation tools will be reviewed. Common courses will be centralized so that there can be more coordination across the first-year courses, looking at hands-on training that can be done with students and professors.

- Hire Director for Engineering Education Innovation (DEEI)
  - Hire Education Specialists (postdocs) reporting to the DEEI
- Create Division of Undergraduate Engineering, home to:
  - Engineering Education Center (led by DEEI)
  - First-year courses coordination
  - Problem-based learning and design coordination
  - Engineering-wide service courses
  - Engineering Communications Center
  - New degree programs
The belief is that by addressing “Quality of Natural Sciences and Mathematics” (particularly in the STEM courses) the three categories that follow will also improve.

In fall 2018, representatives from peer institutions with higher STEM satisfaction rates were invited to campus to review the WashU STEM curriculum.

These peer institutions have the same set of interests and investment in the foundational STEM courses.
2018 STEM Review: Key findings

- Foundational STEM sequences are significantly understaffed relative to peer institutions
- Course and sequence-based learning objectives must be reevaluated and aligned across departments
  - Volume of content higher than needed
- Students need more pathways to and through STEM courses
- Mandatory placement/diagnostic exams to enter foundational sequences
- Foundational course grades are over-reliant on high-stakes testing
- Bridge programming should be more robust, engage more students

2018 STEM Review: Proposed Response

1. Hire outstanding teaching faculty with discipline-based educational expertise in each STEM department
2. Hire additional teaching faculty as needed to address understaffing in foundational courses
3. Implement curricular recommendations (variable by department, many components)
4. Hold regular cross-departmental conversations for faculty in foundational courses to ensure communication and coordination

Additional remark:
- A&S voted to remove the policy that says students cannot get credit and pay for the same experience. The removal of this policy will help balance our international stance and will also help make the internships more accessible to students.

DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Lori White

Student Affairs will work with their partners across the university (students, faculty, staff and others) to find ways to positively impact areas outside of the classroom. Vice Provost White distributed the following information to the Council.

Washington University Senior Survey 2018
Selected Themes Related to the Out-of-Classroom Experience

Areas of High Satisfaction
- Recreational Facilities
- Food Service (though note comments under housing and dining section about the point system)
- Housing Facilities (though note comments under housing and dining section about housing)
- Library facilities and resources

Some Areas of Concern

Diversity
- Students rate the climate for ethnic and racial minority students less positively than do students at peer institutions.
- University is not diverse enough across broad categories (race and ethnicity; socio-economic; faculty and staff) and students feel experiences for students, dependent upon a students’ background, are inequitable.
- University does not really care about diversity (we just give lip service to diversity).
- More spaces to support students from diverse communities.
- Students feel that the university depends upon them to “do the diversity stuff” on campus.
- The WashU environment for students from diverse (minority) backgrounds negatively impacts their mental health.
- WashU is a bubble—students and the university need to engage more with the community.

Greek Life
- Concern with fraternities for those who are not in them, and concern from fraternities that the administration is not supportive of them.
- Lack of Social Life on campus outside of Greek Life.
- Disconnect between Greek Life and the Rest of the University.

Student Activities
- Questions/concerns about the Student Union (student government) and their funding allocation process.
- Concerns that so many student organizations and activities have a selection process.
- Comments that social life overall on campus is lacking.
- Students are so involved they are overworked and over stressed trying to balance academic and student organization involvement.
- More attention to student spiritual needs/life.

Career Services
- Perception that most career opportunities are for students in business.
- Concerns about career advising for particular majors and want more career advising for students in particular groups (e.g. first generation; engineering; non-business school students).
- Students wanting more focus on career “stuff” though also saying they did not always take advantage of what was available.

Housing and Dining
- Housing: Price, niceness (too nice); not enough room on the South 40 for students who want to live there; concerns with off-campus housing selection and safety; frustrations with the housing selection process.
- Dining: Point system does not work equally well for everyone (for some too many points for others not enough meal points); more healthy food options.

Additional area of concern: Student Health Services.
DISCUSSION

A question for Dean Smith: A fair share of the dissatisfaction percentage is tied to concerns about the quality of teaching; this is significantly correlated to receiving a bad grade. Has there been any differentiation between actual concerns within those dissatisfaction ratings and concerns related to lower grades?

In fall of 2017 A&S did a survey that asked about satisfaction with the different course sequences. They were able to go back and extract information like grades, preparation, AP classes and math SAT/ACT scores. They found that, in general, people who didn’t do as well or came to WashU with less solid STEM backgrounds were less satisfied. But there were also students the came to campus with stronger STEM backgrounds that were dissatisfied.

Did the peer institutions that were brought in have a different grading system?
No. From a grading standpoint WashU’s grading system is same as the peer institutions. What is different is that across the board all of our foundational sequences deliver more content than those of peer institutions. The reviewers say that we are “stuffing” too much content into the classes. WashU students are getting the same grades but they process a larger amount of information to get the grades. That can result in less retention and less feeling of having mastered the course content.

Did grading comparisons take into account how peer institutions curve their classes? It is different getting a 90 and receiving an A and getting a 60 and receiving an A. That can be demoralizing. – Fiona Rendon

With a couple of exceptions, the average means on exams are the same. Means in the 60’s and 70’s are normal on exams in high stakes classes.

Regarding the slide comment, “Foundational course grades are over-reliant on “high-stakes testing”; the grading and course structures between WashU schools is very different – not good or bad – just different. Does A&S evaluate grading and course structures (i.e., class participation) between schools?

We would like to do more of the interactive evaluations. A&S is working with much higher numbers of students in classrooms than the other schools. A&S needs to increase the number of faculty and staff per student to allow more “people time” which would allow for interactive grading. They are looking at initiatives to improve pedagogy and decreased class sizes.

We hope that the Council sees how serious administration takes the survey data results. If you have any questions or would like to speak with the administration about the survey data, we are happy to do so.

Take your Professor to Lunch or Coffee Program Marion Crain

Provost Thorp received a request from students to establish a take your professor to lunch program that many institutions have already established. The current name of the program is “Table Talk, meaning the desire is for faculty and undergraduates to have a conversation over a table involving coffee or lunch. The name is open for change. Please contact Vice Provost Crain if you have a better name suggestion.
This program is designed to enhance faculty-student relationships by promoting informal interchange between faculty and undergraduate students outside the classroom over lunch or coffee.

**How it will work:**

- The provost’s office will post a form on the provost office website that students will use to register for the program. Our office will screen for compliance with program requirements.
- Once approved, students (singly or in groups of up to 3) will invite a faculty member to lunch or coffee [not dinner, and no alcohol]. Students are responsible for scheduling the meal and choosing a restaurant from a list we will furnish on the website.
- The student picks up a Bear Bucks card from the provost’s office that is pre-loaded with an appropriate dollar limit and uses that to pay for the meal.
- The website will list sample conversation topics/questions for students who are worried about getting a conversation going with a faculty member in a social setting [e.g. why they came to teaching, why they are passionate about their subject, what kind of research they are doing, where they are from, where they have traveled, what their hobbies are, etc.—lots of examples to draw from on other schools’ websites]
- The program will begin in Fall 2019. We will publicize the program through articles in the Record, Student Life, social media, and other venues

**Program Requirements:**

- Student must be an undergraduate. One, two or three students may attend, with one faculty member.
- Limit of $15-20 per person for the meal including tip and tax.
- Limit of two meal initiations per student per semester, and a dollar limit per student per semester (likely $100 per student per semester)
- Faculty included under this program are those listed as instructor of record, regardless of status (tenure stream, professor of practice, contract, adjunct)
- Meal must occur between the first day of classes and the last day of classes—not during intersession, exam period or over the summer.

**DISCUSSION**

Questions posed to Council: How do we publicize this program to faculty and students? Faculty can be notified through department chairs and through announcements from the provosts.

Along with Student Life, what other ways can we get the word out to students?

- Is there a way to partner with Student Union?
  - Yes. Student Union sends a weekly newsletter. They also publicize in the underpass and student group outreach.
- Department chairs can ask faculty to relay the program to their students.
  - Some institutions mentioned that they require their faculty to put the notice on their syllabus.
- Publicize the program during orientation
- Ask RA’s to place fliers around the South Forty buildings and distribute them to students.
- Rob Wild and the First Year Center are ready to help with WUSA’s and others that work with first year students.
Will this replace Lunch by the Dozen?

No. This is targeted to one faculty member and no more than three students.

The time needed to take part in both Table Talk and Lunch by the Dozen may become a time-burden for some faculty.

We want to do everything possible to connect more faculty with students.

Department chairs should be encouraged to allow junior faculty to be involved in this program. Let them know that the university encourages this program.

That is a great point. Student satisfaction should go up with increased communication with faculty.

Often the distinction between a faculty member and staff member is not necessarily known by students. What happens if a student asks a staff member to lunch?

The program will be limited to instructors of record. The student will fill out a form and submit it to the provost’s office. If the name doesn’t qualify they will receive a very nice letter explaining why.

Many of our students of color feel that there is a lack of role models for them. They see our staff of color as mentors. This is something to keep in mind.

Suggestions, Concerns, Feedback?
Contact Vice Provost Marion Crain, mgcrain@wustl.edu

Student Life: “WU: In Focus” Sam Seekings and Chalaun Lomas

Provost Thorp noted that Student Life has done a great job of looking at diversity equity inclusions at Washington University and how it intersects with various areas. Sam and Chalaun, in particular have done a lot of great data journalism.
Phi Delta Theta violates suspension  PAGE VIEWS: 1.3M
Fraternity under WU investigation for hosting unlawful social events
Op-ed: ‘Not a threat’
WUPD discovers firearms in Phi Delt house, fraternity permanently suspended for violations of temporary suspension
WPA survey finds widespread sexual violence across WU fraternities
Op-ed: My heart sank because I understand
Op-ed: Consider this a warning

2018: BY THE HEADLINES

Student Life
9 months of planning
14 stories
50+ students, staff, and faculty interviewed
723 survey responses
14.4k total page views

PREVIOUS SPECIAL PROJECTS

WU: In Focus
An Overview

WHY DO A SPECIAL ISSUE?

Draws more attention to a specific topic
Encourages in-depth + creative reporting
Generates dialogue
Provides a blueprint for future staff

WHAT WE COVERED

OUR PROCESS

RESULTS

WU: In Focus vs. Regular Issue
Total Reach = Total Impressions

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<th>Total Reach</th>
<th>Total Impressions</th>
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<td>Regular Issue</td>
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DISCUSSION

Congratulations on this great work. You talked to a lot of people and edited a lot of stories. You are more familiar with this topic than many people. The University wants to continue to improve representation for people from the many diverse groups. What is something that the university should be doing that may surprise us?

1. In the survey responses, the most frequent comment was related to political diversity and how this university doesn’t have it. Students talked about how their professors just assumed they had a liberal political ideology which is not always the case.

Quite a few students who identified as conservatives said that they either had to conceal their political views or that they had to pretend to support trends. They weren’t sure how they would be perceived because people have such negative understanding of what it means to be conservative. The “WU: In Focus” conservative piece was one of the most shared on social media and one of the most commented on. There was even an op-ed published after the “WU: In Focus” which somewhat criticized students who tried to paint themselves marginalized. Political diversity is something that students feel like this institution does not foster in any way, shape or form.

2. Regarding the series, “Bands of Brothers”; when we talk about Greek Life we are only talking about it in terms of the Interfraternity Council organizations and the Women’s Panhellenic Association of WashU.

We are not talking about the National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations, which are also known as Black Greeks. That is a community that every other institution in St. Louis engages in because they are city-wide chapters. Often times when we say “Greek Life this” and Greek Life that’ we are not including the Black Greek community. When Chalaun talked with fraternity brothers, some said they would have considered joining Black Greeks if they had known about them. With Black Greeks, generally speaking, you are not a first generation Black Greek. You have a family member who is already engaged in the organization and knows about the system.

If we are trying to make the Greek community as accessible as possible then there is some responsibility for the university to make sure that people who are first generation Greek know about all of the communities that are available to them in that realm.

It would be interesting to know not only what people are interested in but also how they are interested in particular topics/issues. Is there way that you can gage your response rates overall with quantitative data?

It depends on the story. Often times there are no quick ways to summarize.
Would it be worthwhile to hire a graduate student to analyze the comments made in the social media sections?

There are not a lot of people that make comments on the social media sections.

Coming from a student that is not involved in Student Life and is not connected to that organization in anyway – The “In Focus” edition has been very special to so many students. Thank you, Chaluan and Sam.

Sam and Chaluan will take part in the “Day of Discovery Dialogue & Action 2019.

PULSE
Please send Undergraduate Council agenda ideas to jilledwards@wustl.edu.