

IMIR

Research Brief

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IUPUI Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey - 1993

Table of Contents

Introduction		Methodological Note	
General Satisfaction	Satisfaction with specific programs and services	Personal priorities	Interaction with faculty
Student Characteristics	Differences between Indianapolis and Columbus students	Exploratory Analysis of Other Group Differences	Grouping Characteristics
Overall satisfaction	Satisfaction with academics and academic support	Satisfaction with learning facilities	Satisfaction with course availability
Satisfaction with student support climate	Satisfaction with financial aid	Satisfaction with admissions	Implications

Displays

- [Figure 1. Student Satisfaction Ratings \(in order of highest to lowest levels of satisfaction\)](#)
- [Figure 2. Student Satisfaction Ratings \(in order of highest to lowest levels of dissatisfaction\)](#)
 - [Figure 3. Student Ratings of Importance](#)
 - [Figure 4. Student Ratings of Satisfaction AND Importance](#)
 - [Figure 5. Students' Personal Priorities](#)
 - [Figure 6. Interaction with Faculty](#)
 - [Figure 7. School Differences on Overall Satisfaction](#)
- [Figure 8. Group Differences on Academics and Academic Support Satisfaction Scale](#)
 - [Figure 9. School Differences on Learning Facilities Satisfaction Scale](#)
- [Figure 10. Age and Race Differences on Satisfaction with Student Support Climate](#)

Introduction

This edition of Research Brief summarizes the results from the IUPUI Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey, which was administered by mail during the Spring 1993 Semester to a sample of 1,700 undergraduate degree seeking students. Responses were obtained from 873 students for a 51.4% response rate. The sample was stratified to produce representative results both for Indianapolis and for

the Columbus Center.

Appendices to this report include an item-by-item analysis for the entire sample and the results of the planned comparison between Indianapolis and Columbus Center students. This report will first summarize the overall results, then present the results of further exploratory analyses of the survey data (This study was designed to produce statistically representative results for Indianapolis and Columbus Center undergraduate degree-seeking students. Analysis of other group differences are informative but more prone to statistical error).

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Methodological Note

The IUPUI Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey was commissioned by the Vice Chancellor for Planning and Institutional Improvement to provide a source of representative data regarding students' satisfaction with their experiences at IUPUI. The Office of Information Management and Institutional Research (IMIR) designed the survey with input from administrative and academic leaders throughout the university. To solicit input, an extensive list of potential survey sections and questions were distributed to over 30 individuals. Each person rated the importance of the sections for inclusion in the survey and provided comments on the specific items. The final survey instrument was constructed based on the collected suggestions, space limitations and survey design principles.

A stratified random sample of 1,500 Indianapolis and 200 Columbus Center undergraduate degree-seeking students was drawn from among actively enrolled students according to the university's computerized records. The IU Public Opinion Laboratory assembled the survey mailings and distributed them in the first week of April 1993. A follow-up postcard was sent to non-respondents in the second week, and a second questionnaire was distributed to non-respondents in the third week. Preliminary survey results were reviewed in late June.

The survey received a 51.4% response rate. This included a 56.0% response rate for sampled Columbus Center students and a 50.7% response rate for Indianapolis students. To derive overall IUPUI results, the Indianapolis and Columbus Center responses were weighted to restore correct population proportions.

The item-by-item analysis includes a comparison of sample respondents with the student population according to sex, ethnicity, school, age, degree sought, course load, and residency status. The only notable differences are that the sample includes a higher percentage of females (67%) than the population (60%) and a smaller proportion of traditional-aged students (33% 18-22 year old in sample, 40% in population). The sample was representative of the population with regard to ethnicity, school, course load, degree sought, and in-state residency status.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Survey Results: General satisfaction

The first section of the survey asked students for their general opinions about IUPUI. Nearly all respondents (99%) agree that IUPUI's broad array of programs is a benefit to Central Indiana and the vast majority (84%) recognize this as a personal benefit. Most respondents (95%) cite the combination of Indiana University and Purdue University programs as an asset of IUPUI, and over one-half (57%) say they personally benefit from this collaboration.

Students find out about IUPUI mostly through "word-of-mouth" sources. The most frequently mentioned sources are "friends who attended" (47%), "IUPUI students" (25%), and "family members who attended" (24%). These were followed in popularity by "high school teachers and counselors" (22%), "IUPUI representatives" (17%), and "news media" (15%).

Students report high levels of general satisfaction with their experiences at IUPUI. On average, respondents rank IUPUI higher than IU-Bloomington, Purdue, Ball State, and Indiana State for meeting their own educational needs. The vast majority (85.8%) report that they are satisfied (71.2%) or very satisfied (14.6%) with their overall experience at IUPUI. A smaller majority (62.1%) say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the sense of community at IUPUI.

While most students are happy with their experiences at IUPUI, just over one-third (34%) report that they would prefer to be attending another college or university. Two-fifths (40.2%) of this group say they would rather be at IU-Bloomington, and one-fifth (18.8%) cite Purdue University.

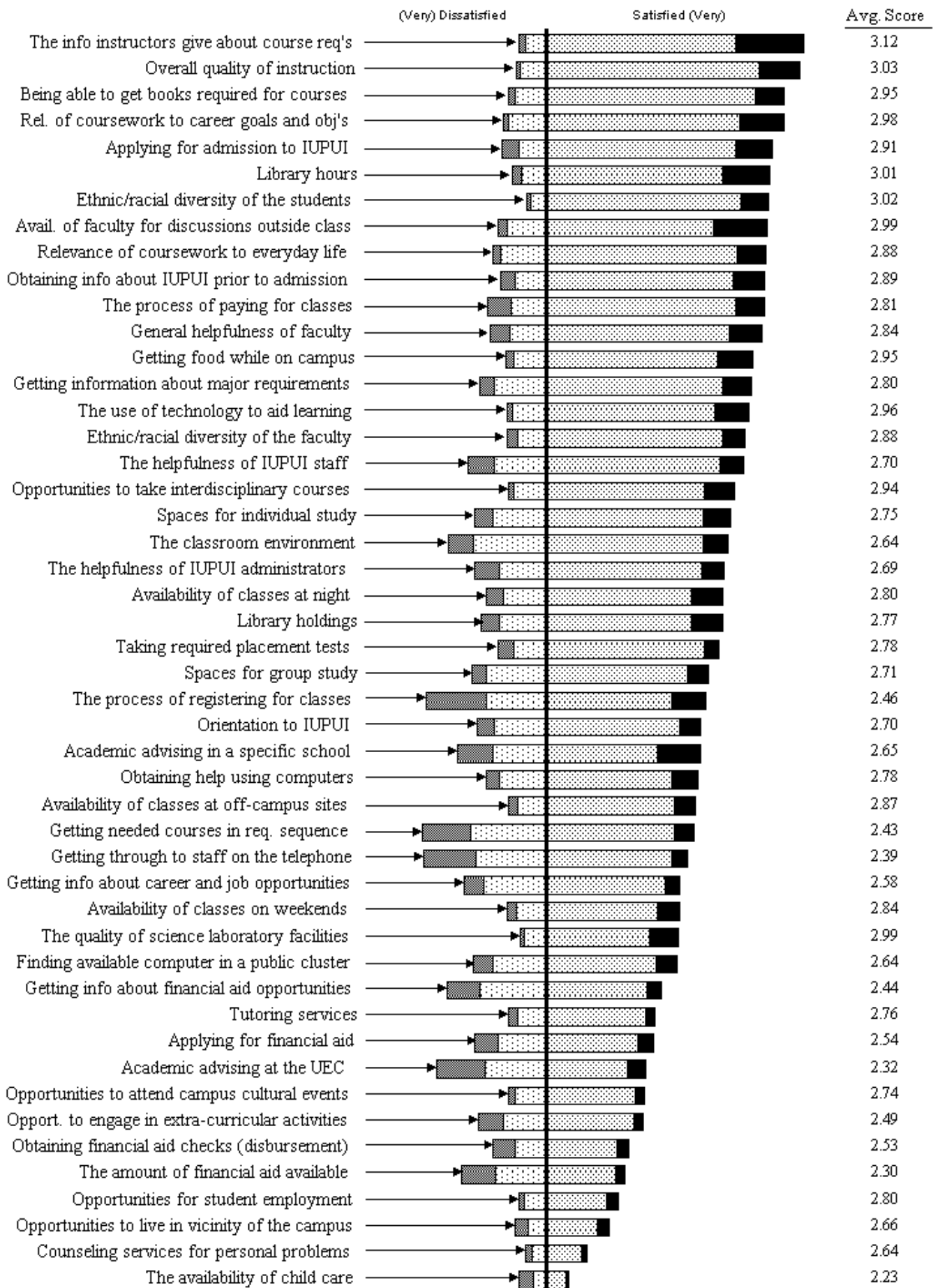
(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Survey Results: Satisfaction with specific programs and services.

In the second section of the survey, students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with 48 specific aspects of IUPUI. After providing their satisfaction ratings, students were instructed to review the list and pick which programs and services were most important to them. Figures 1 through 4 graphically summarize students' ratings of satisfaction and importance. Detailed item distributions are presented in the appendix.

Figure 1 shows the 48 rated items ranked according to the percentage of students who reported being satisfied or very satisfied. Each bar in the chart portrays the percentage distribution of responses across the categories, "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" on the left side of the center bar, and "satisfied" and "very satisfied" on the right side of the center bar. The differing length of the bars reflects the numbers of students who respond "not applicable" or do not answer each item. For example, only 1.6% of respondents did not rate their level of satisfaction with "the information instructors give about course requirements," while 83% did not rate "the availability of child care." The graph also includes the average satisfaction rating in the right margin (Averages were calculated by assigning a score of "1" for very dissatisfied, "2" for dissatisfied, "3" for satisfied" and "4" for very satisfied.). Some items may have a higher average score than items for which a larger percentage of students is satisfied or very satisfied. There are two reasons for this. First, items that relatively few people rate, such as those at the bottom of the list, can have a relatively high average score with low percentages of satisfaction. Second, if relatively more students are "very satisfied" compared to just "satisfied" then the average score can be higher. The third ("being able to get books...") and fourth ("rel. of coursework..") items demonstrate this phenomenon.

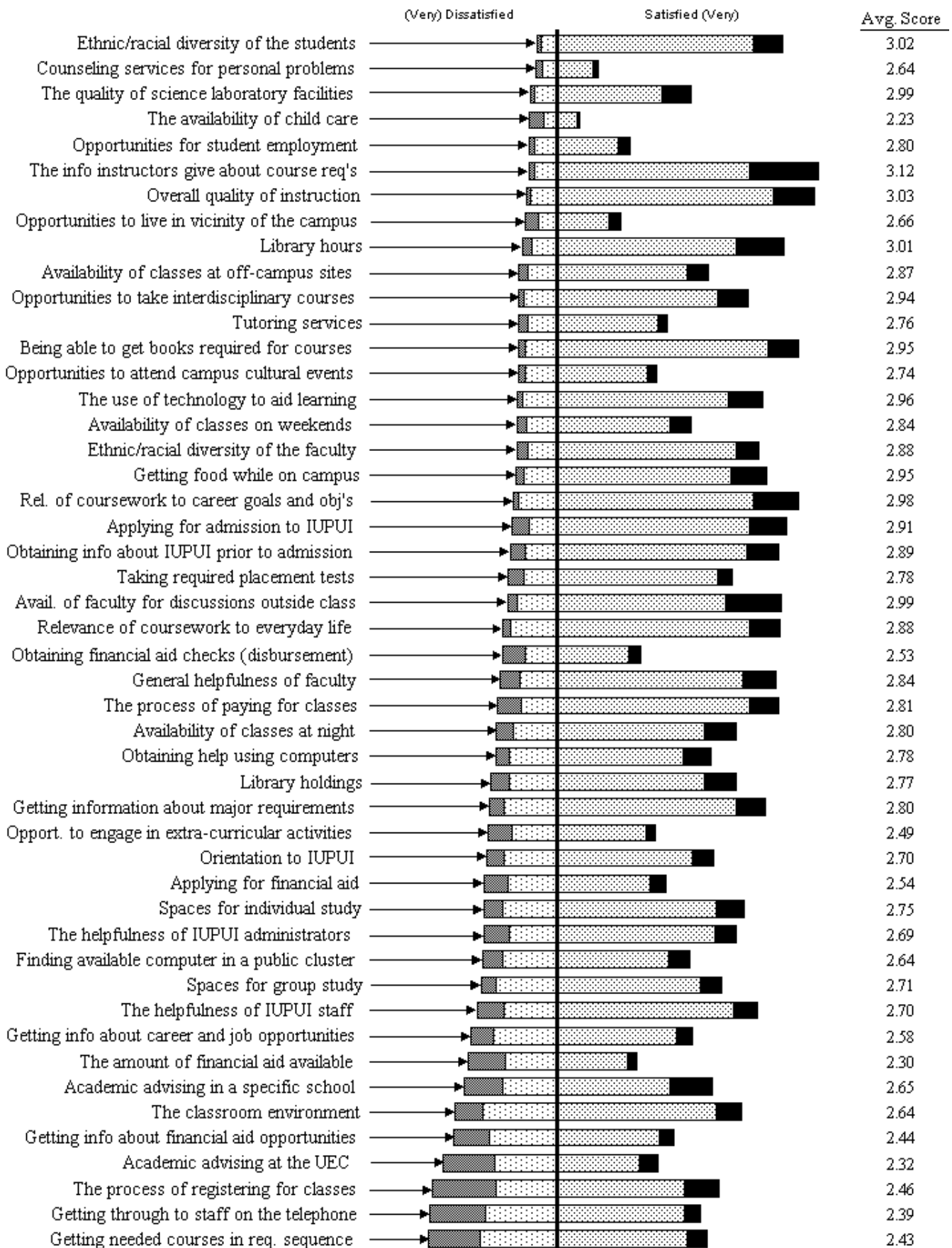
Figure 1. Student Satisfaction Ratings (*In order of highest to lowest levels of satisfaction*)



(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Since Figure 1 indicates both the level of satisfaction and the response rate, Figure 2 is provided to show the same items according to levels of dissatisfaction. As a result of low response rates, items at the bottom of Figure 1 move up the list on Figure 2. Generally, the top part of Figure 1 shows what satisfies students most, and the bottom portion of Figure 2 indicates the most notable areas of student dissatisfaction.

Figure 2. Student Satisfaction Ratings *(In order of lowest to highest levels of dissatisfaction)*



(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Figure 3 shows the same 48 items ordered according to students' ratings of how important each item is to them (Students were asked to pick five of the 48 items that were most important to them. They then distributed 100 points among these items to reflect priorities among the five chosen.). It is interesting that a highly rated item according to satisfaction--ethnic/racial diversity of the students--shows up as the bottom item in importance. As a group, students are very satisfied with the ethnic diversity of IUPUI students but this is not a very important issue for them. On the other hand, the overall quality of instruction is important to students and they are relatively highly satisfied with what they experience in the classroom.

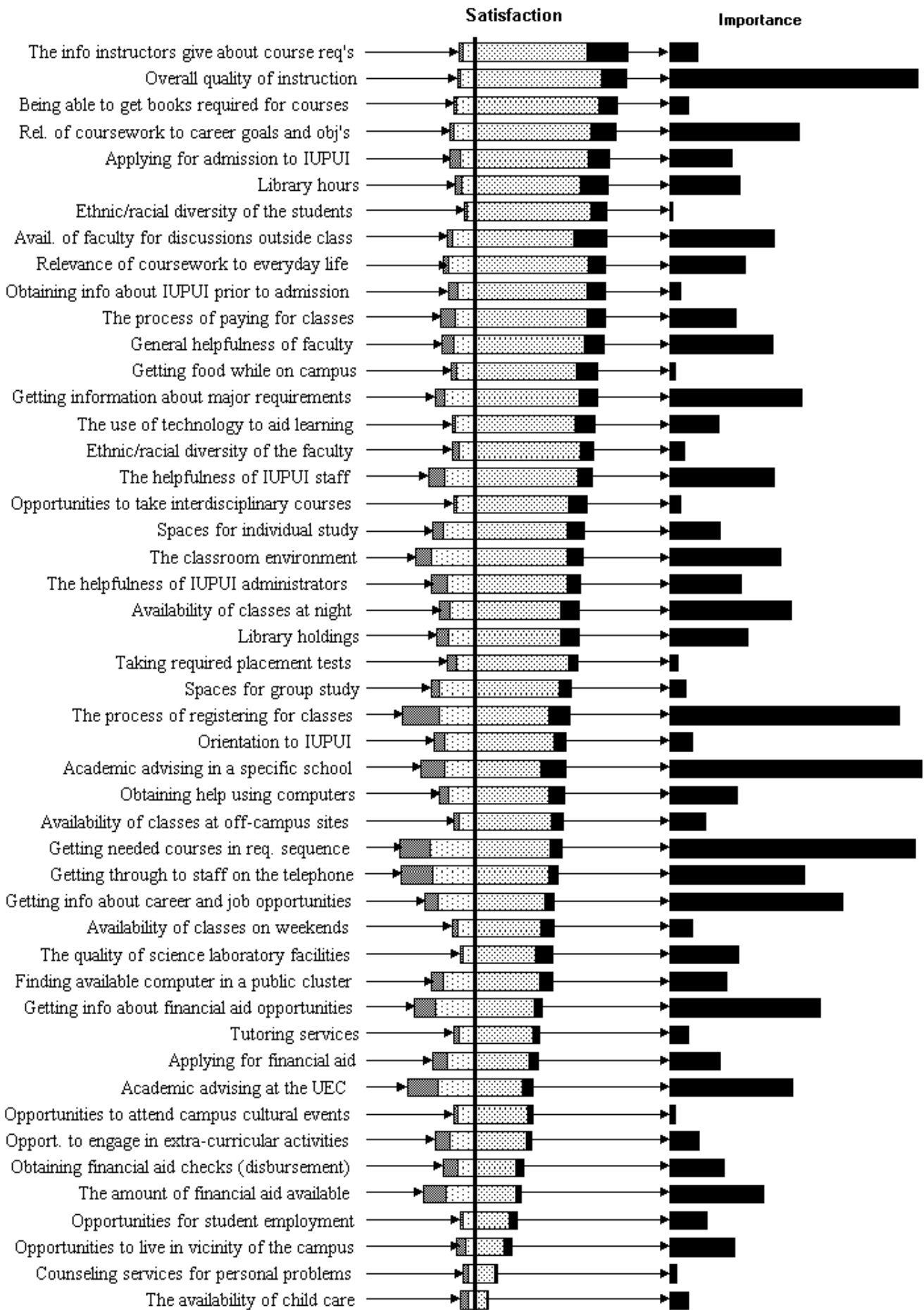
Figure 3. Student Ratings of Importance

	Total Points
Academic advising in a specific school	10842
Overall quality of instruction	10674
Getting needed courses in req. sequence	10561
The process of registering for classes	9861
Getting info about career and job opportunities	7420
Getting info about financial aid opportunities	6470
Getting through to staff on the telephone	5810
Getting information about major requirements	5692
Rel. of coursework to career goals and obj's	5578
Academic advising at the UEC	5279
Availability of classes at night	5209
The classroom environment	4766
The helpfulness of IUPUI staff	4498
Avail. of faculty for discussions outside class	4483
General helpfulness of faculty	4459
The amount of financial aid available	4060
Library holdings	3372
Relevance of coursework to everyday life	3248
The helpfulness of IUPUI administrators	3081
Library hours	3036
The quality of science laboratory facilities	2946
Obtaining help using computers	2895
The process of paying for classes	2857
Opportunities to live in vicinity of the campus	2771
Applying for admission to IUPUI	2665
Finding available computer in a public cluster	2432
Obtaining financial aid checks (disbursement)	2327
Applying for financial aid	2184
Spaces for individual study	2179
The use of technology to aid learning	2125
Opportunities for student employment	1613
Availability of classes at off-campus sites	1537
Opport. to engage in extra-curricular activities	1286
The info instructors give about course req's	1185
Orientation to IUPUI	981
Availability of classes on weekends	965
Being able to get books required for courses	819
Tutoring services	818
The availability of child care	794
Spaces for group study	701
Ethnic/racial diversity of the faculty	631
Opportunities to take interdisciplinary courses	483
Obtaining info about IUPUI prior to admission	468
Taking required placement tests	366
Counseling services for personal problems	290
Opportunities to attend campus cultural events	248
Getting food while on campus	223
Ethnic/racial diversity of the students	125

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Figure 4 shows the composite picture of satisfaction and importance. The most positive results are those where students are satisfied with aspects of their college experience that are important to them. In addition to quality of instruction, this applies to the relevance of course work to career goals and objectives. On the negative side, there are several aspects of the IUPUI experience that are important to students but receive relatively low ratings of satisfaction. Examples include "getting needed courses in required sequence," "getting through to staff on the telephone," and "academic advising in specific schools."

Figure 4. Student Ratings of Satisfaction AND Importance

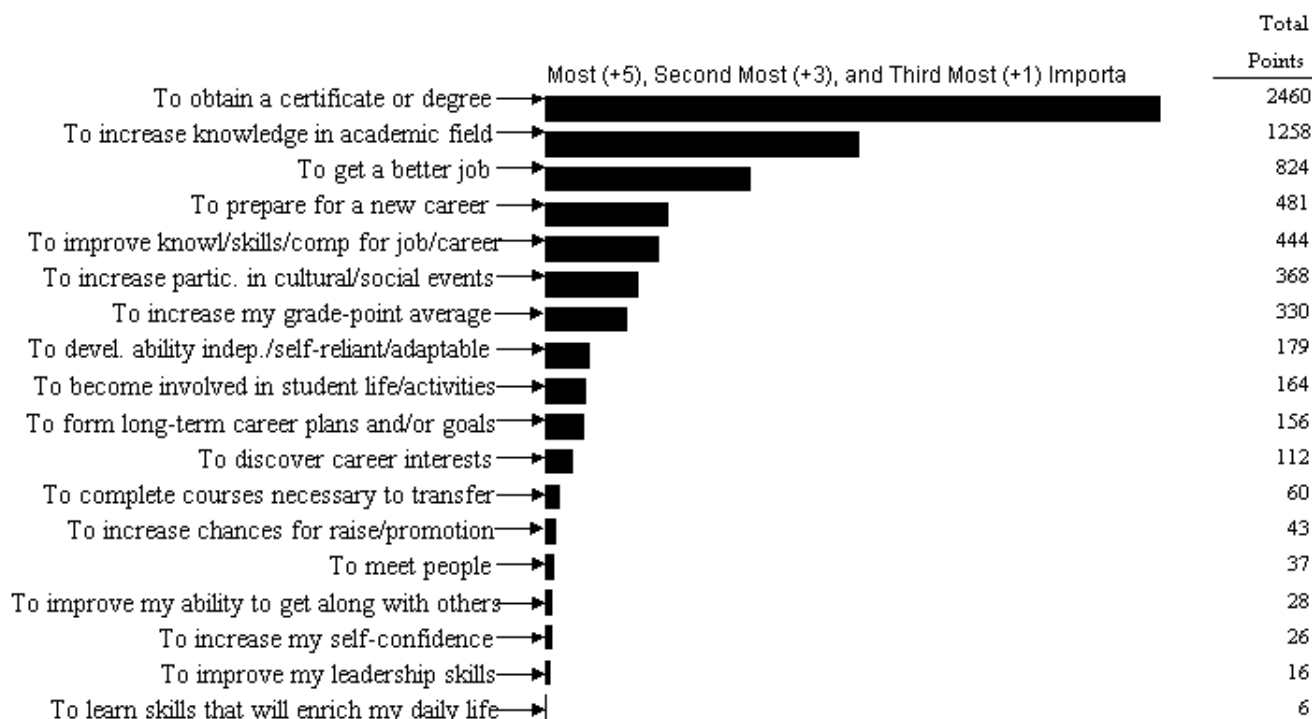


(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Survey Results: Personal priorities

The third section of the survey asked students about their reasons for attending college. Figure 5 summarizes the responses to these items. Students rated academic goals, including obtaining a degree and increasing knowledge in an academic field as most important. Career goals followed in importance. Students rated social- and cultural-participation goals as least important.

Figure 5. Students' Personal Priorities

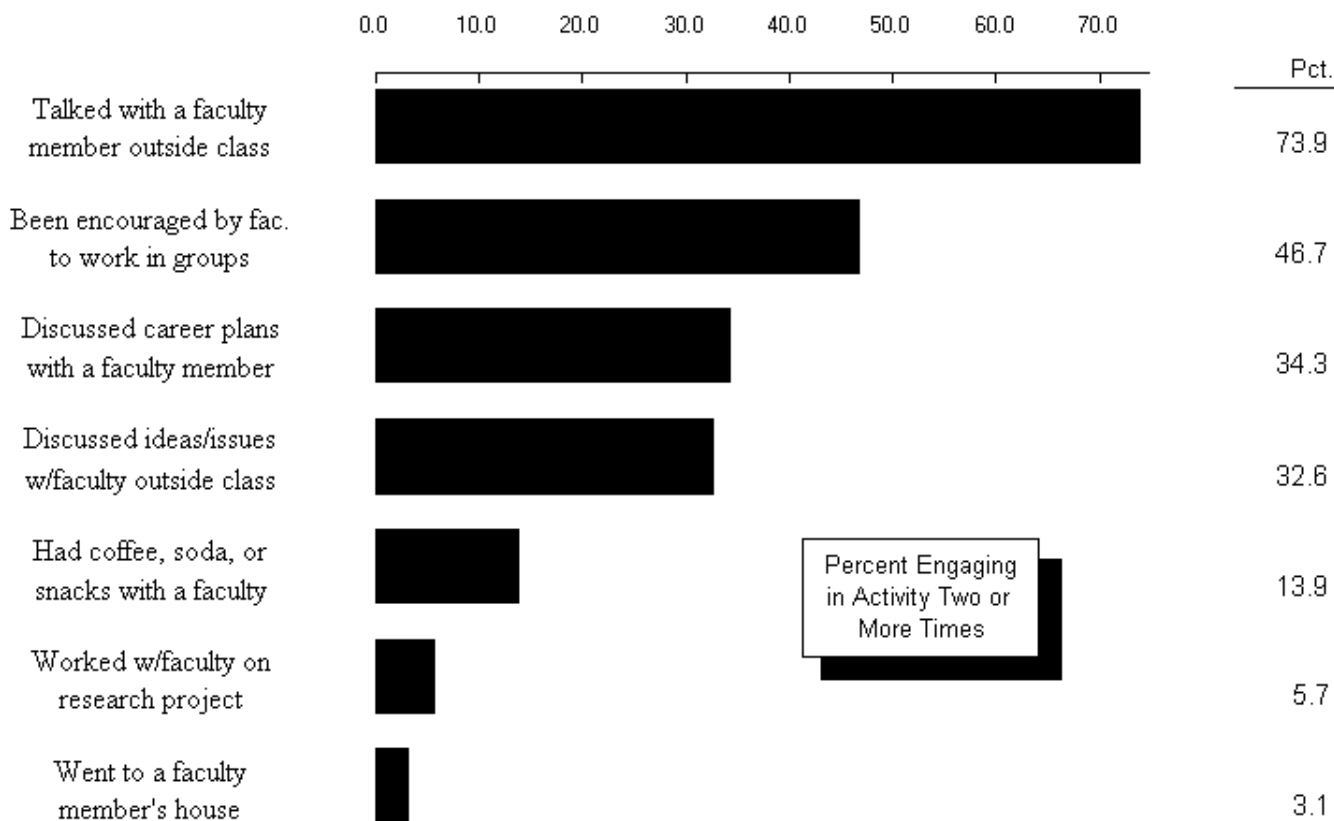


(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Survey Results: Interaction with faculty

Nearly three quarters (73.9%) of the respondents indicate they talked with a faculty member outside class two or more times during the year. One-third of the respondents indicate more in-depth interaction such as discussing career plans (34.3%) and intellectual issues and ideas (32.6%). Very few students (5.7%) reported having worked with a faculty member on a research project during the year. Figure 6 summarizes responses to the interaction with faculty items.

Figure 6. Interaction with Faculty



(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Survey Results: Student Characteristics

The last section of the survey asked students about their enrollment at IUPUI, their employment obligations, and their demographic characteristics. Responses to these items reveal the great diversity of IUPUI students. Many IUPUI undergraduate students attend part-time (56%), but a significant number (44%) maintain a full-time course load. Most respondents are pursuing a baccalaureate degree, although 17% report that they are pursuing an associate's degree. One-fifth of the respondents already have a college degree--two-thirds of this group have an associate's degree, and one-third a baccalaureate degree. Almost all respondents (92%) intend to complete their current degree work at IUPUI.

Four-fifths of the respondents work for pay while enrolled at IUPUI, working an average of 31 hours per week. Nearly one-half (48%) work full-time (more than 35 hours per week), and nearly one-fifth of the respondents (17%) work more than 40 hours per week while taking classes and nearly one-fifth (18%) hold down more than one job. More working students maintain "professional and technical jobs" (35%) compared to any other occupational category. Another 26% of working students work in "clerical and sales" positions. Two-thirds of the working students do not consider their current job to be a long-term career.

Respondents range in age from 16 to 61 years with over one-half age 25 or older. More than one-half (54%) have never married. Over one-third (36%) are currently married, but over two-fifths (44%) live with a spouse or partner. Nearly one-third of the respondents (32%) have children at home. The median distance from campus to home is 15 miles.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Differences Between Indianapolis and Columbus Students

The second appendix summarizes the results of the planned comparison between Indianapolis and Columbus Center students. Here is a summary of the differences between the two campuses.

- More Columbus students recognize the benefits of IUPUI's broad range of program offerings.
- Columbus students are less likely to hear about IUPUI from family members who attended or from H.S. teachers and counselors. They are more likely to have heard about IUPUI through the news media.
- Columbus students indicate higher levels of overall satisfaction with their IUPUI experiences and are less likely to prefer to be attending another college or university. At the same time, more Columbus students are taking courses in order to transfer to another institution at a later date.
- Columbus students are generally more satisfied with specific aspects of their IUPUI experiences. The most significant differences are in their satisfaction with administrative procedures (e.g., admissions and registration) and with the convenience of the center's location.
- Columbus students are notably less satisfied in two areas: the availability of classes on weekends, and the availability of food on campus.
- Indianapolis students attributed greater importance to career preparation goals, while Columbus students rated career advancement as more important. These results relate to greater proportions of older, full-time employed students in the Columbus sample.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Exploratory Analysis of Other Group Differences

Further analyses of the data were conducted to discover how students differ in their levels of satisfaction according to demographic and enrollment characteristics. To simplify the analyses, the 48 individual satisfaction items were transformed into six summative scales (Scale formation was guided by a factor analysis of the 48 items using the principal factor method with a varimax rotation. Items were assigned to scales as suggested by the factor loadings but unit weightings were employed in the calculation of scale scores.). These scales and their component items are listed below.

Satisfaction Scales (Cronbach's alpha is a measure of scale reliability)

1. **Academics and Academic Support** (Cronbach's alpha=0.84)

Items: overall quality of instruction; relevance of coursework to career goals and objectives; relevance of coursework to everyday life; information instructors give about course requirements; availability of faculty for discussion outside of class; academic advising in a specific school; the process of registering for courses; general helpfulness of faculty; getting information about major requirements; getting through to staff on the telephone; helpfulness of IUPUI staff; helpfulness of IUPUI administrators

2. **Learning Facilities** (Cronbach's alpha=0.73)

Items: Classroom environment; quality of science laboratories; the use of technology to aid learning; library hours; library holdings; spaces for individual study; spaces for group study; obtaining help using computers; finding an available computer in a public cluster.

3. **Course Availability** (Cronbach's alpha=0.74)

Items: Availability of classes at nights; availability of classes on weekends; availability of classes at off-campus locations.

4. **Student Support Climate** (Cronbach's alpha=0.69)

Items: Tutoring services; opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities; availability of child

care; counseling services for personal problems; opportunities to live in the vicinity of campus; opportunities for student employment; opportunities to attend campus cultural events; getting food while on campus; ethnic diversity of students; ethnic diversity of faculty.

5. **Financial Aid** (Cronbach's alpha=0.74)

Items: Getting information about financial aid opportunities; applying for financial aid; obtaining financial aid checks; the amount of financial aid available.

6. **Admissions** (Cronbach's alpha=0.75)

Items: Getting information about IUPUI prior to applying; applying for admission to IUPUI; orientation to IUPUI

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Grouping Characteristics

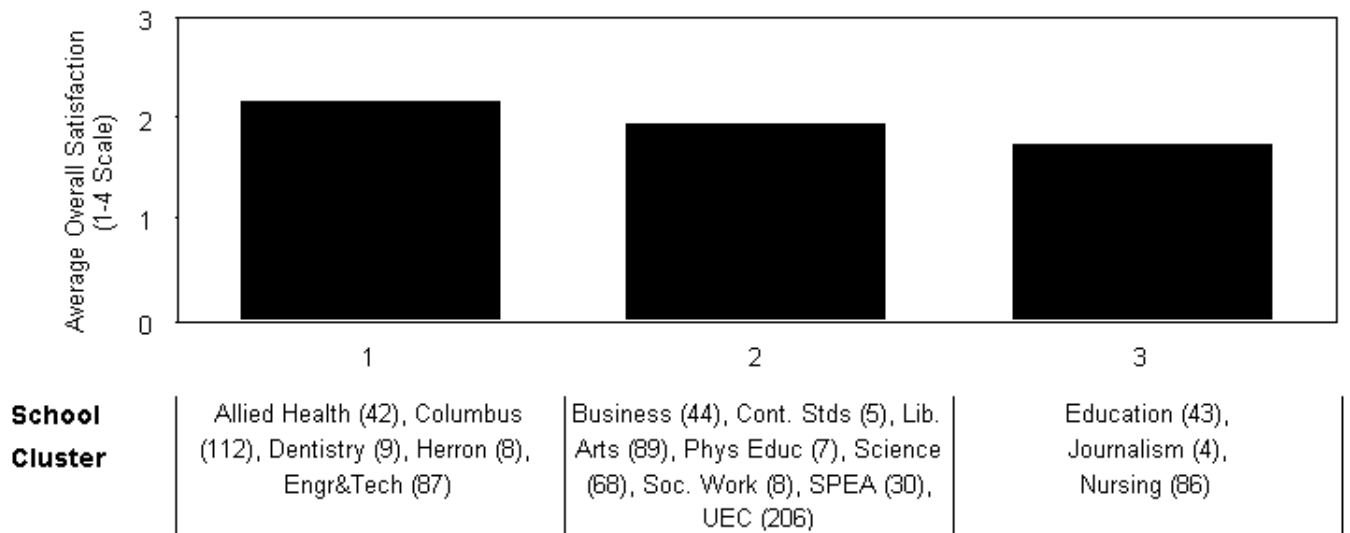
A Chi-Square Automatic Interaction Detection (CHAID) procedure was used to identify group differences according to students' school, course load, hours of employment, age, sex, ethnicity, class level, distance between home and IUPUI, and first generation status. The procedure identifies significant group differences and also clusters students within a grouping characteristic. For example, if school is identified as a significant source of difference, the 18 schools may be clustered into two or three groups. Students from schools within the same cluster indicate similar levels of satisfaction but they differ from students from schools of another cluster. Finally, the CHAID procedure identifies any significant subgroups according to other grouping characteristics. For example, women within a school cluster may be identified as significantly different from men within that school cluster. CHAID analyses were conducted for the six satisfaction scales as well as for the single item, overall satisfaction.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Group Differences: Overall satisfaction

School was the most significant source of student differences in overall satisfaction. Figure 7 shows the three clusters of schools that differ significantly from each other and the relative magnitude of those differences. The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of survey respondents representing each school (The average satisfaction level is not necessarily representative of all students in the school if the number of respondents is relatively low. This is one reason why these *post hoc* comparisons are more prone to statistical error.).

Figure 7. School Differences on Overall Satisfaction



(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#).)

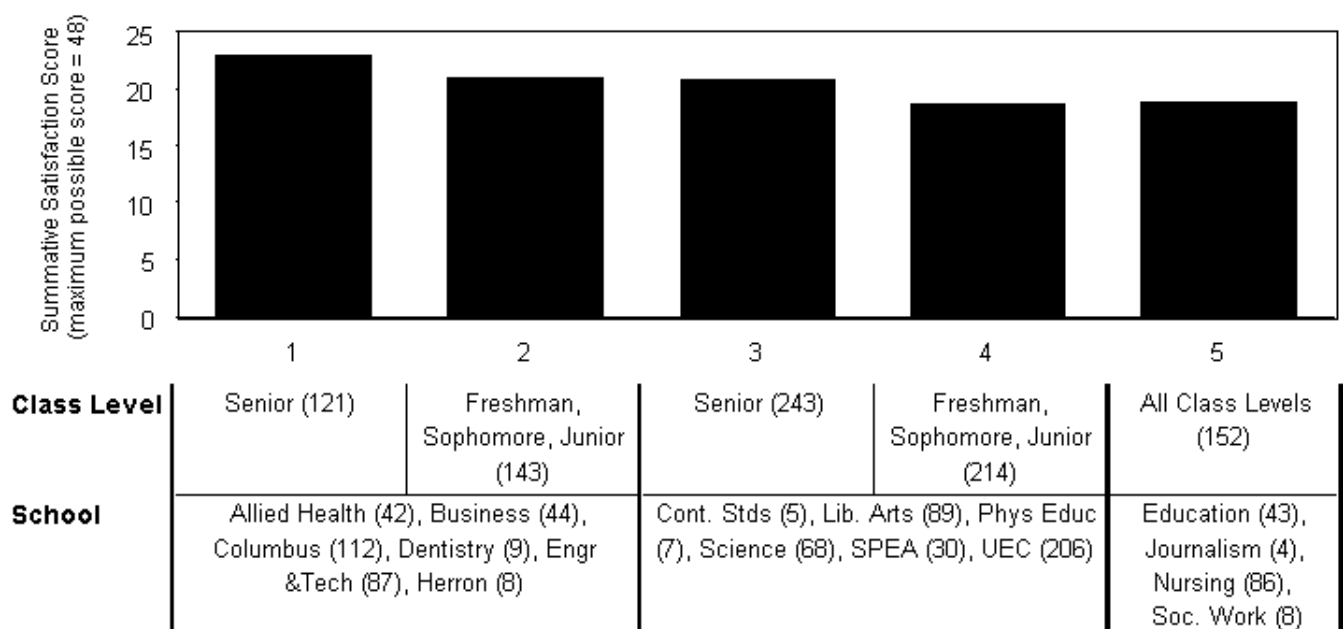
There were also significant differences in overall satisfaction according to marital status, but this difference interacted with miles between home and school. Students who have never been married and who live within 15 miles of IUPUI were more dissatisfied than all other students.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#).)

Group Differences: Satisfaction with academics and academic support

School was again the strongest source of differences among students in their levels of satisfaction as indicated on this scale. In this case, there were subgroup differences according to class level in two of the three group clusters. Specifically, senior-level students were more satisfied than students at all other class levels. The school groupings are almost the same as those identified in the analysis of overall satisfaction. Figure 8 graphically illustrates these differences.

Figure 8. Group Differences on Academics and Academic Support Satisfaction Scale

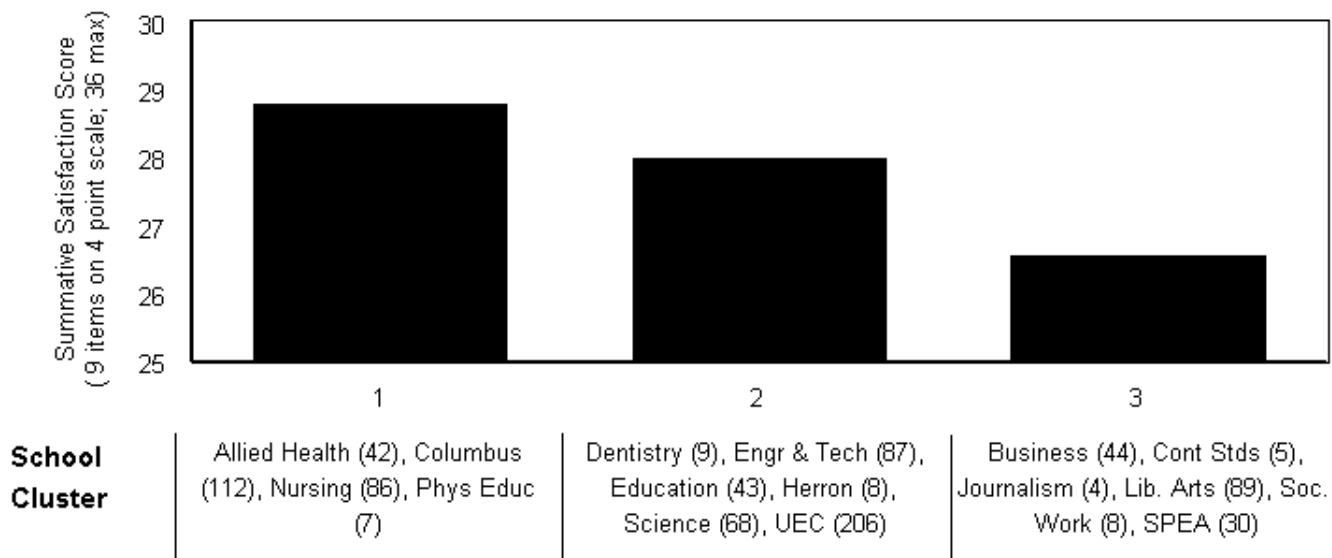


(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Group Differences: Satisfaction with learning facilities

School continues to account for the largest difference in this area of student satisfaction. However, the clustering of schools was quite different from that which occurred in the analysis of the overall satisfaction item and the academics and academic support satisfaction scale. Figure 9 illustrates the clusters of schools that yielded the largest group differences.

Figure 9. School Differences on Learning Facilities Satisfaction Scale



(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

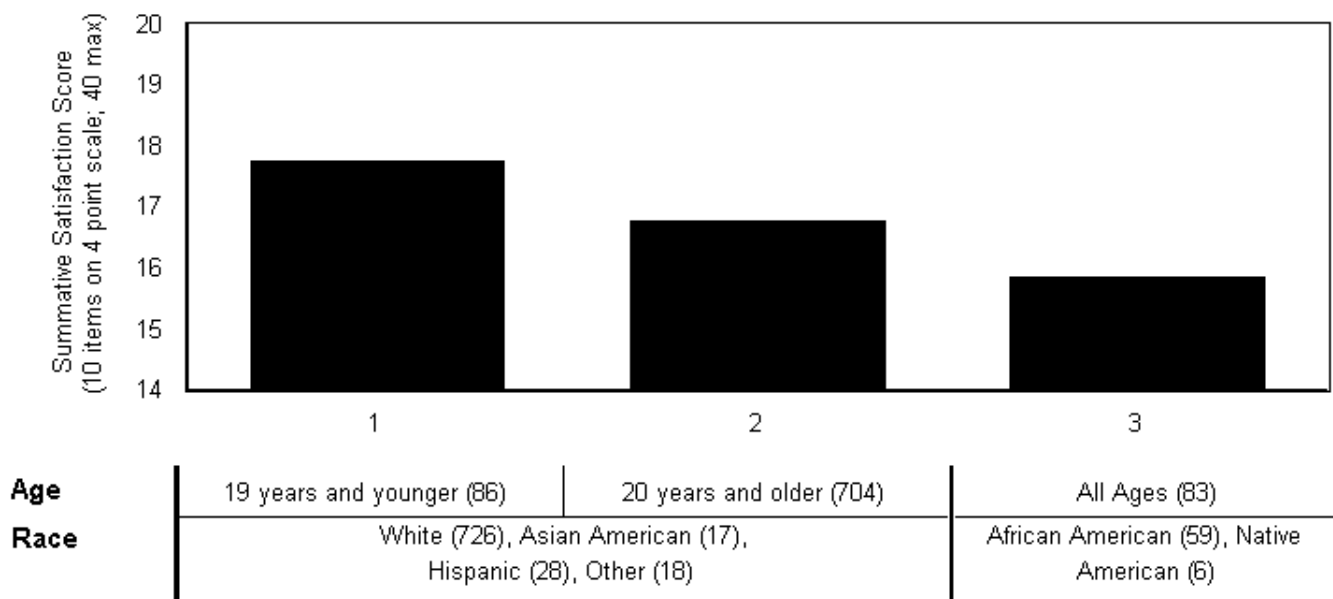
Group Differences: Satisfaction with course availability

Students who work more than 40 hours a week made up 17% of the total sample. These students were significantly less satisfied with the availability of courses on weeknights, weekdays, and at off-campus sites than students who worked up to 40 hours per week. Among students who work no more than 40 hours per week, those who have a parent with a college degree were more satisfied with course availability compared to first-generation college students. Satisfaction with course availability was also lower for sophomores and juniors than for freshman and seniors.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

Group Differences: Satisfaction with student support climate

Students differed in their satisfaction with the social support climate most significantly according to their occupational category. Clerical and sales workers were the least satisfied group, followed by professional technical workers and by all other categories, including students that don't work. As a group, African American and Native American students are less satisfied with this area than other minorities and non-minority students combined. Within the other minority and non-minority group, younger students (19 yrs. or younger) are the most satisfied. Figure 10 illustrates the differences in satisfaction with social climate according to race and age.

Figure 10. Age and Race Differences on Satisfaction with Student Support Climate

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#).)

Group Differences: Satisfaction with financial aid

Two clusters of students differed in level of satisfaction with financial aid. These clusters were determined by a combination of age, status as a parent, and gender. The more satisfied group included all students between the ages of 25 and 39 years who have children, as well as men without children in that same age group. The relatively less satisfied group included all students under 25 years and over 39 years old, as well as women without children in the 25-39 year age group.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#).)

Group Differences: Satisfaction with admissions

There were no significant group differences in satisfaction with admissions processes.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#).)

Implications

The Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey provides an overview of the undergraduates' perceptions of IUPUI programs and services. Since satisfaction ratings are relative measures and not absolute measures, interpretation must be made in relative terms. The present analysis relies on comparisons among items and among various subgroups of students. These reference points should be viewed with caution. For example, the satisfaction ratings for academic advising appear relatively low compared to other items in the survey but this is a fairly common finding among college and university satisfaction surveys. Group differences must also be viewed with caution because of the small numbers of respondents that represent some of these groups.

The results of this survey provide a baseline for interpreting the results of future student satisfaction

surveys. Similar items will also be included in surveys of entering students, non-continuing students, and alumni to establish a variety of comparative references.

The exploratory (*post hoc*) analysis of subgroup differences in the final section of this report should be interpreted cautiously because of the limited numbers of students in some groups. These differences suggest points of departure for further inquiry.

(Back to [Table of Contents](#), [List of Displays](#))

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Back to [Information Management and Institutional Research](#) Home Page.