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# Research Brief

Volume 2 Number 3, September 1994

## IUPUI Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey - 1994

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### Introduction

This edition of *Research Brief* summarizes the results of the latest IUPUI Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey which was administered to a random sample of degree seeking undergraduate students in the Spring of 1994. This marks the second year that the Vice-Chancellor for Planning and Institutional Improvement has commissioned a survey of IUPUI's undergraduate

student body in order to assess student satisfaction and priorities. (See [Research Brief Vol. 2 No. 1](#) regarding the purpose and results of the 1993 Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey.) This year's survey follows from last year's effort with a few notable differences. The sample size for the 1994 survey was increased from 1700 students to 3004 students. The larger sample size was used to permit individual school profiles to be drawn. (Individual profiles for larger schools and academic units -- 50+ majors appearing in the sample -- are distributed under separate cover.) In addition to increasing the sample size, the content of this year's survey is modified somewhat. Sections on [Personal Priorities for College Study](#) and [Interactions with Faculty](#) from last year's survey have been replaced with new sections on [Involvement in Learning](#), [Impact of IUPUI on Your Learning](#), and a section on student [Expectations and Attitudes](#). Also, several satisfaction items on the 1993 survey are replaced with new items for 1994. Twenty-seven satisfaction items remain the same on the two surveys.

The first part of this *Research Brief* will summarize the results of the survey beginning with the section on general satisfaction with programs and services. Part II examines changes in student satisfaction between 1993 and 1994. Item by item results for the entire sample appear in the Appendix. (The full Appendices are available through our office. Please contact us via telephone -- (317)278-2282 -- or through the [Information Request Form](#) portion of our web site.)

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## A Methodological Note

This year's Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey was a mailed survey administered by the Office of Information Management and Institutional Research during the Spring 1994 semester.

Three thousand four (3004) randomly sampled undergraduate students from both the Indianapolis and the Columbus campuses were selected to complete the survey questionnaire. Completed questionnaires were received from 1643 students for a response rate of 55%.

An analysis was done to determine whether the sample could be considered representative of the population on the following demographic and institutional variables: gender, ethnicity, age, campus, entry status, class level, grade point average and degree objective. No significant differences were found between the sample and the remainder of the population with regard to these variables. It can therefore reasonably be assumed that the sample is representative of the population.

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## Survey Results: General Satisfaction with Programs and Services

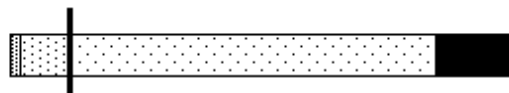
The first section of the survey asked students about their general satisfaction with their academic experiences, social experiences, physical environment, the quality of faculty, and the quality of academic programs at IUPUI.

Figure 1 shows that students are most satisfied with their academic experiences at IUPUI and least satisfied with their social experiences. Nine out of ten students are satisfied (72.4%) to very satisfied (16.4%) with their overall academic experience at IUPUI. Additionally, 86 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of IUPUI's academic programs. When asked about both the quality of faculty and the physical environment at IUPUI, 80 percent of students were equally satisfied with both of these aspects of their experience here. Less satisfying for students, however, are their social

experiences at IUPUI. Nearly one-third of all students responding to this year's survey report they are dissatisfied (21.9%) or very dissatisfied (10.3%) with their social experiences on campus .

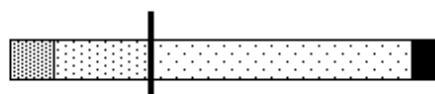
### Figure 1. Satisfaction with Programs and Services

Overall, how satisfied are you with your academic experiences at IUPUI?



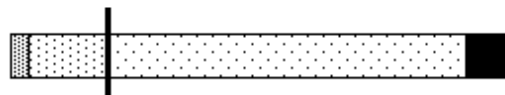
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
34      2.1%	147    9.0%	1177   72.4%	267    16.4%

How satisfied are you with your social experiences at IUPUI?



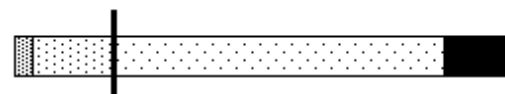
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
141    10.3%	301    21.9%	833    60.6%	100    7.3%

How satisfied are you with the physical environment at IUPUI?



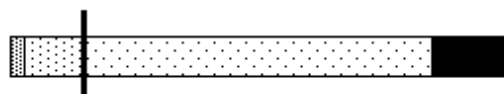
Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
59      3.7%	246    15.4%	1127   70.6%	164    10.3%

How satisfied are you with the quality of faculty at IUPUI?



Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
60      3.7%	251    15.6%	1053   65.4%	247    15.3%

How satisfied are you with the quality of the academic programs at IUPUI?



Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
42      2.6%	186    11.6%	1111   69.4%	263    16.4%

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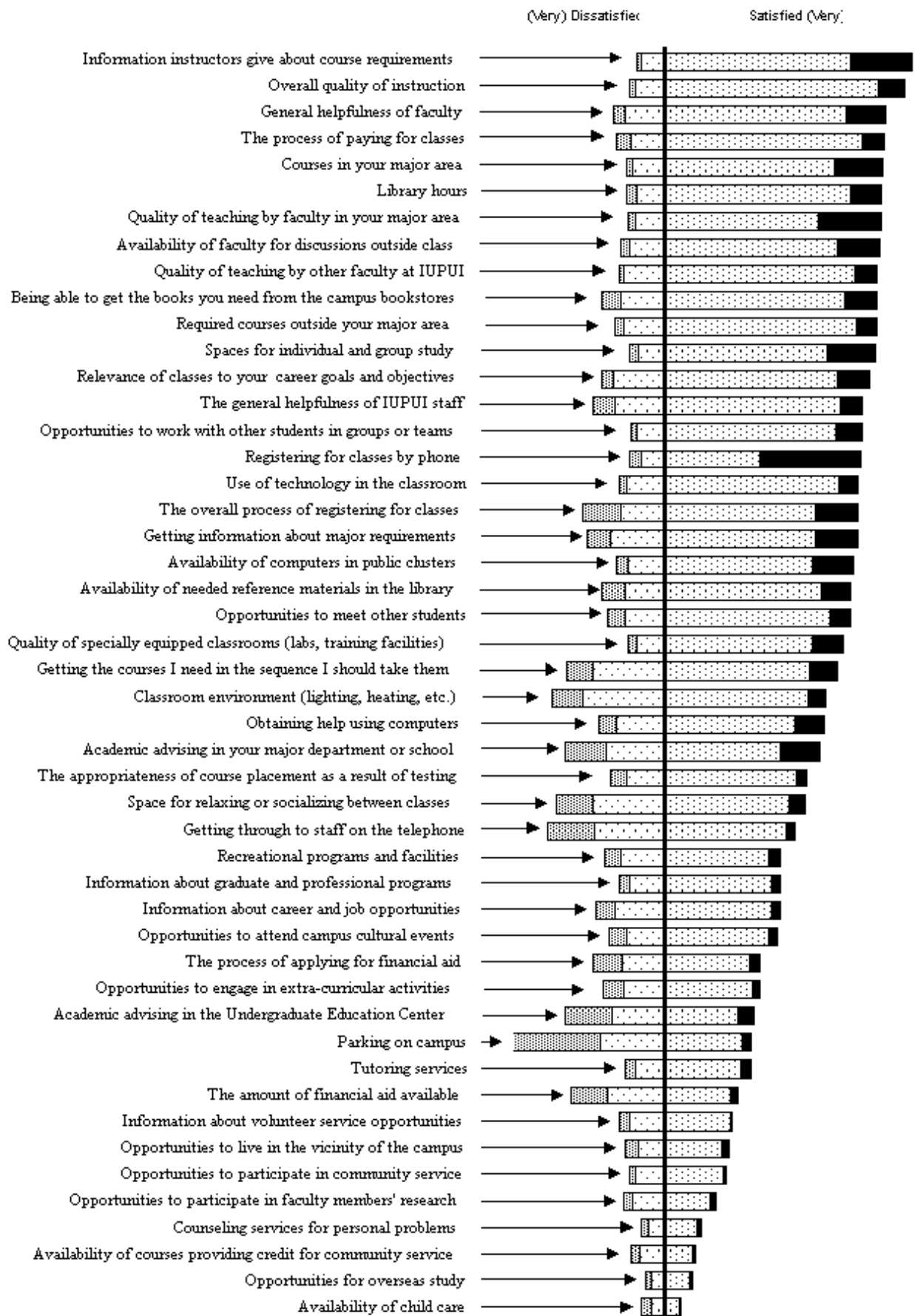
## Survey Results: Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of IUPUI

Students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with 48 specific aspects of their IUPUI experience covering instruction, academic support services, student services and campus life. In addition, students were asked to choose among the 48 items the five that were most important to them. Students were instructed to distribute 100 priority points among their top five choices.

Figures 2 through 5 show the 48 satisfaction items ranked by level of satisfaction, level of dissatisfaction, level of importance and level of satisfaction and importance combined. Figure 2 shows the 48 satisfaction items ordered from highest to lowest level of satisfaction. For satisfaction ratings, the solid vertical bar separates the satisfied and dissatisfied responses. The darker patterns of the bars represent the proportion of 'very satisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' responses.

The bars for the frequency distributions vary in length based on the numbers of non-responses for any particular item. The more non-responses the shorter the bars. Non-responses are made up of those not answering the item and mostly those indicating the item does not apply to them. For example, nearly all students responded to the item on "overall quality of instruction" but relatively few responded to the item on "availability of child care". The right-most column of Figure 2 displays the average (mean) scores for each of the 48 items. (In calculating the means for the satisfaction items very satisfied=4, satisfied=3, dissatisfied=2, and very dissatisfied=1.) Item ranking based on mean values differs somewhat from rankings based on percentage satisfied. For example, "registering for classes by phone" is the sixteenth highest ranked item based on percentage of students satisfied or very satisfied but the top ranked item in terms of its mean score of 3.24. In some cases, disparity occurs when relatively more students are very satisfied compared to satisfied with an item as in this case. More often, this occurs when few students respond to an item as illustrated at the bottom of the list.

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

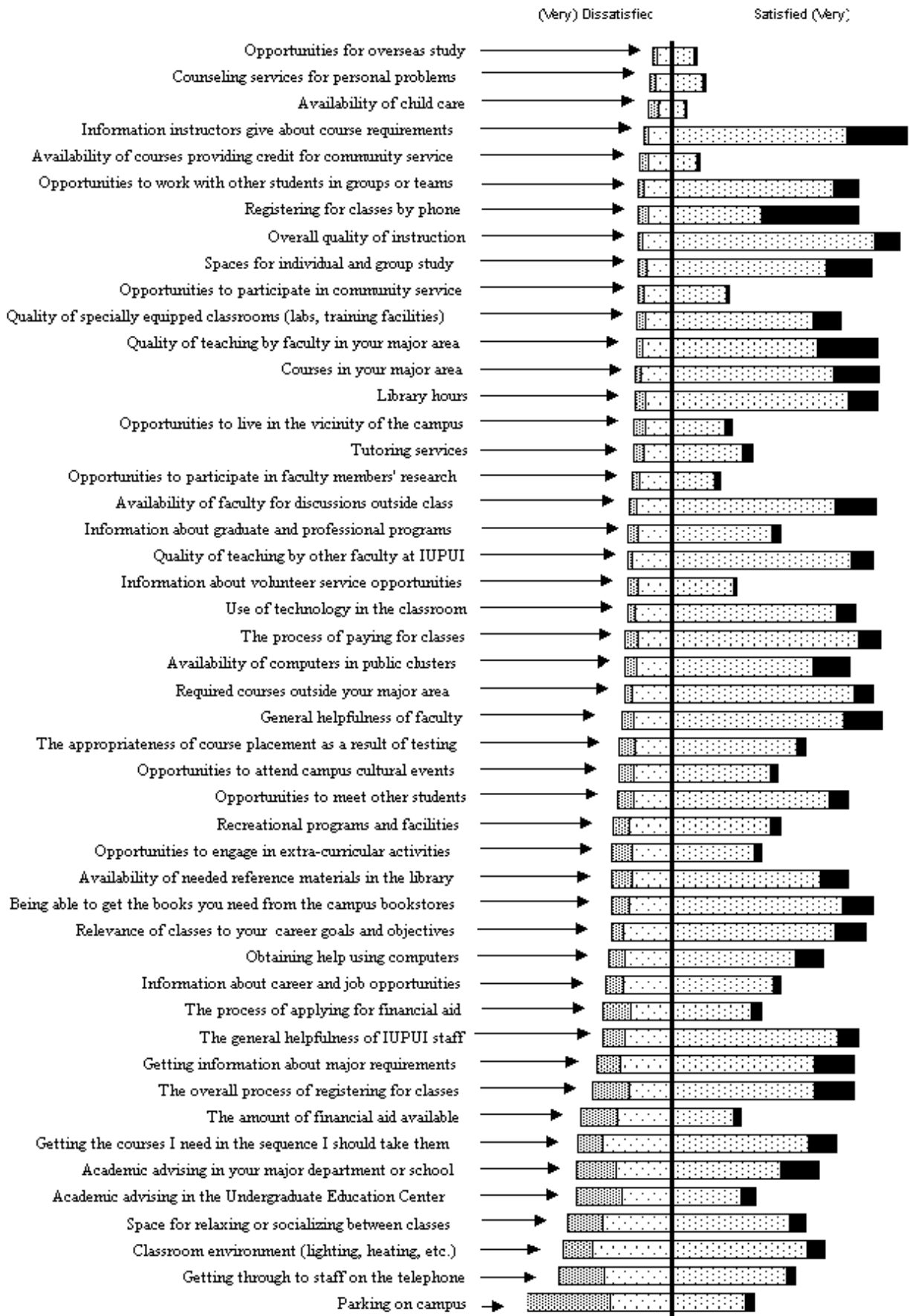


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The results displayed in Figure 2 indicate that IUPUI students are most satisfied with (1) the information they receive about course requirements, (2) the overall quality of instruction, (3) the general helpfulness of faculty, (4) the process of paying for classes, (5) courses in their major area, (6) library hours, (7) the quality of teaching by faculty in their major area, (8) the availability of faculty for discussions outside of class, (9) the quality of teaching by other faculty at IUPUI, and (10) being able to get the books they need from the campus bookstore.

Because of the different number of respondents, items ranked low on satisfaction are not necessarily high on dissatisfaction. For this reason, figure 3 shows the same 48 satisfaction items ranked by level of dissatisfaction from lowest to highest. As this figure reveals, students are most dissatisfied with (1) parking on campus, followed by (2) getting through to staff on the telephone, (3) the classroom environment (lighting, heating, etc.), (4) space for socializing and relaxing, and academic advising - both (5) in the Undergraduate Education Center and (6) in their major departments.

**Figure 3. Student Satisfaction Ratings** *(In order of lowest to highest level of dissatisfaction)*



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Two-thirds of the students responding to this year's survey are either dissatisfied (23%) or very dissatisfied (44%) with parking on campus. Accessing the campus by phone is frustrating for just over 40 percent (42%) of IUPUI students. One-quarter of the survey respondents were dissatisfied (25%) and one-sixth (17%) were very dissatisfied with their ability to reach staff by phone.

Figure 4 shows how students rate the 48 satisfaction items in terms of their importance to them. (Students were asked to list their top five items in importance and distribute 100 priority points among them. Items in figure 4 are ranked according to the sum of these priority points for all students.) The most important issue for IUPUI students is the "quality of teaching in your major area" followed by the "overall quality of instruction". These two items are followed in importance by "parking on campus", "relevance of classes to your career goals and objectives" and "academic advising in your major department or school". A cursory examination of Figure 4 and the previous two figures shows that satisfaction and importance do not always vary in the same direction. Figure 5 shows the combined results for satisfaction and importance for all 48 satisfaction items. Students are very satisfied with some things that are very important to them and dissatisfied with other important items. Figure 6 highlights students' ratings of satisfaction among their top five importance items, and the importance of their top 5 satisfaction and dissatisfaction items.

#### **Figure 4. Student Ratings of Importance**

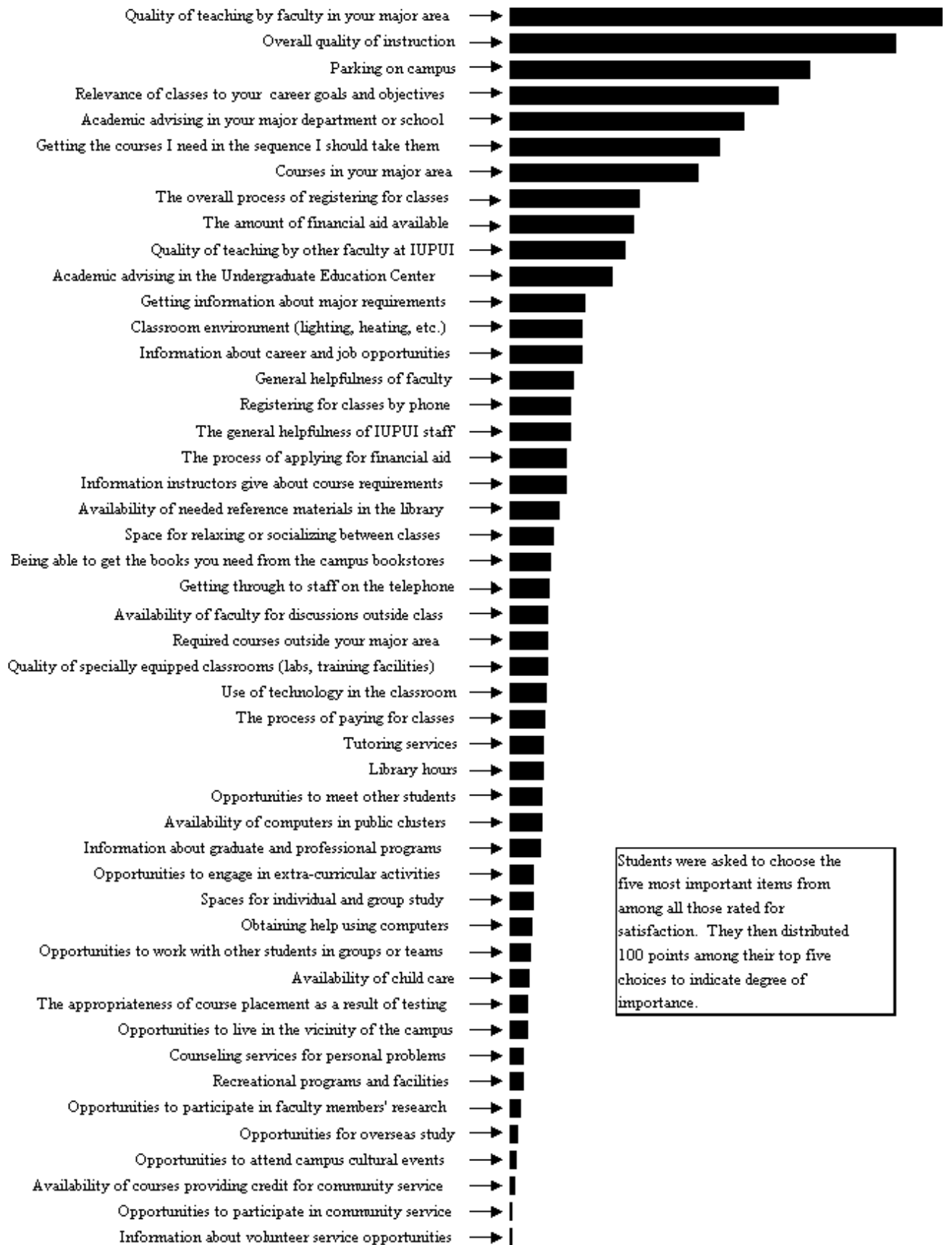


Figure 5. Student Ratings of Satisfaction AND Importance

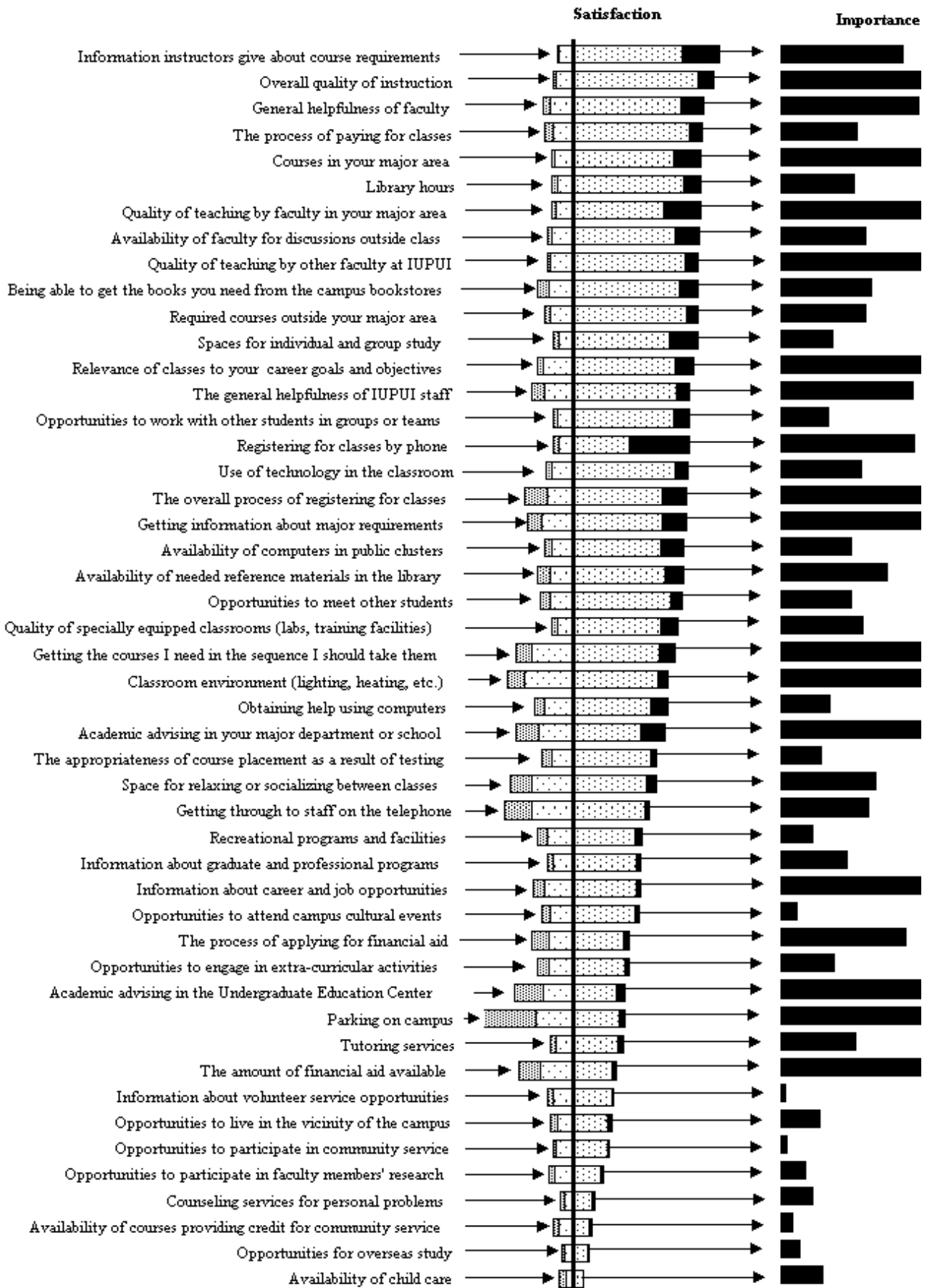
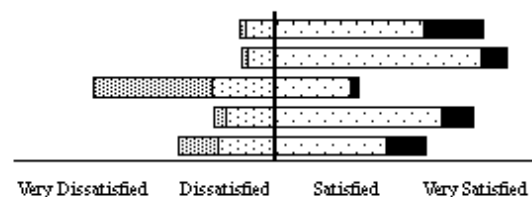


Figure 6. Top Five Importance, Satisfaction, and Dissatisfaction Items

**(A) Student Satisfaction with Top 5 Importance Items**

	Priority Pts
Quality of teaching by faculty in your major area	17678
Overall quality of instruction	15231
Parking on campus	11869
Relevance of classes to your career goals and objectives	10636
Academic advising in your major department or school	9273

**(B) Importance of Top 5 Student Satisfaction Items**

	% S & VS
Information instructors give about course requirements	89.1
Overall quality of instruction	86.4
General helpfulness of faculty	79.7
The process of paying for classes	79.2
Courses in your major area	78.5

**(C) Importance of Top 5 Student Dissatisfaction Items**

	% D & VD
Parking on campus	67.3
Getting through to staff on the telephone	42.3
Classroom environment (lighting, heating, etc.)	40.8
Space for relaxing or socializing between classes	39.1
Academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center	36.0



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Figure 6A focuses on students' satisfaction with their top five importance items. Ideally, the most desirable situation would be for students to be satisfied with those things they deem to be most important. This is the case with regard to students' academic experiences at IUPUI. In terms of what students say is most important to them, four out of the top five concerns relate to academics. The only non-academic concern of substantial importance to appear among the top five is parking. Figure 6B further confirms the view that what IUPUI students view as most important is a high quality academic experience and that is what they believe they are getting. Again four out of five of the highest rated items for satisfaction have to do with students' academic experiences. Also, a vast majority (79%) of students are satisfied with the "process of paying for classes" though this issue does not rate as high in importance as the other items among the top five in percentage of students satisfied.

Figure 6C focuses on the top five issues students are most dissatisfied with and the level of importance they assign to them. With the exception of "academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center" and "getting through to staff on the phone" these items have to do with the physical environment of the campus. Campus parking was far and away the most salient and frustrating issue for students. Seven out of ten students indicate they are dissatisfied with parking on campus. Not only did campus parking generate a lot of dissatisfaction, it also ranked number two in overall importance to students. Parking was not included in last year's student satisfaction survey. Therefore, it is not possible to tell whether the parking situation as perceived by students is deteriorating or getting better. Part II of this brief will examine changes in satisfaction levels among common items across the two years of surveys.

Two out of five students were dissatisfied with "getting through to staff on the phone". While not of the highest importance to students, ranking 23 out of 48 in importance, this concern remains virtually unchanged from last year when it showed up high in terms of student dissatisfaction.

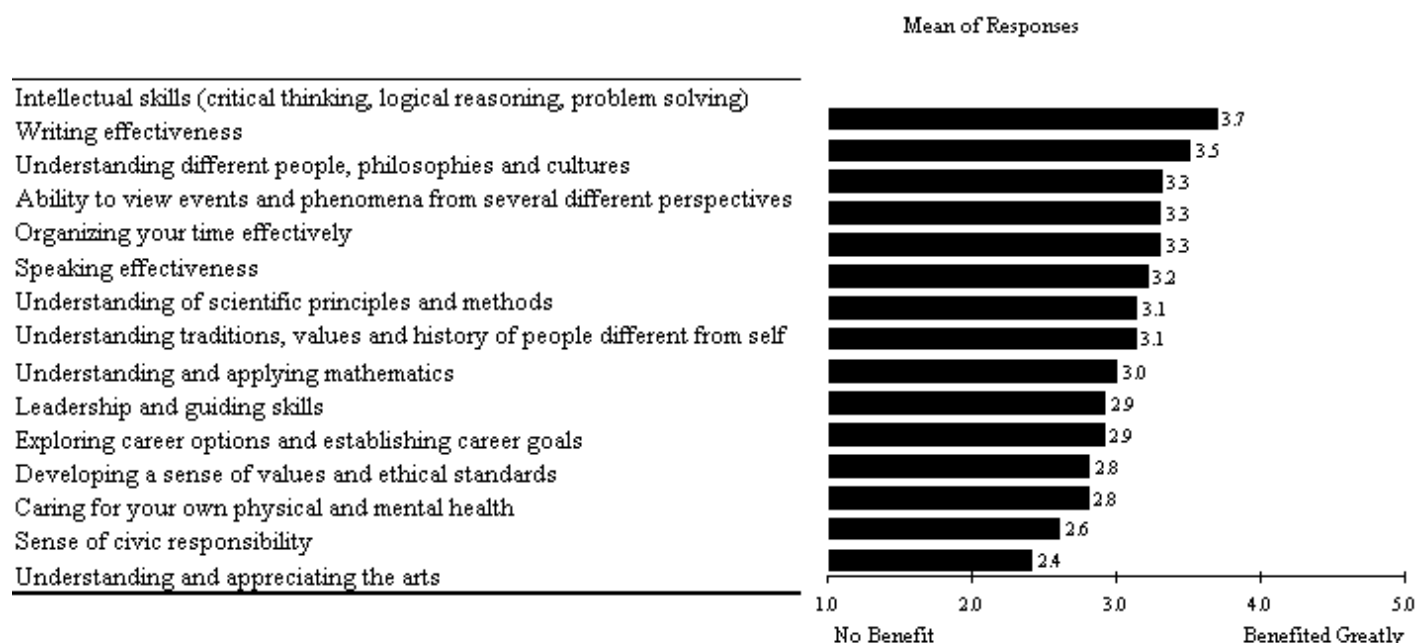
While the overwhelming majority of students seem satisfied with their academic experiences at IUPUI, there is an exception, most notably academic advising. In terms of what dissatisfies students most, academic advising ranked number five "in the Undergraduate Education Center" and number six when referring to "in your major department". Over one-third of students are dissatisfied (19%) or very dissatisfied (17%) with the advising they receive in the Undergraduate Education Center. Academic advising in the major department fares no better with one-third of students either dissatisfied (21%) or very dissatisfied (15%). Both academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center and in the major department rank in the top quartile in terms of importance to students.

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## Survey Results: Impact of IUPUI on Your Learning

Another new series of items on this year's survey asked students about IUPUI's impact on their learning. Specifically, students were asked to respond to the question "We would like to know how you think you may have benefited as a result of your education at IUPUI". (Students were asked to circle their response along a continuum where 1= no benefit to 5= benefited greatly for each of fifteen skills and knowledge items.) Figure 7 shows that students benefit most from their IUPUI education in the area of (1) intellectual skill development, (2) writing effectiveness, (3) understanding different people, philosophies and cultures, (4) the ability to view events and phenomena from several different perspectives, and (5) organizing their time effectively.

**Figure 7. Impact of IUPUI on your Learning**



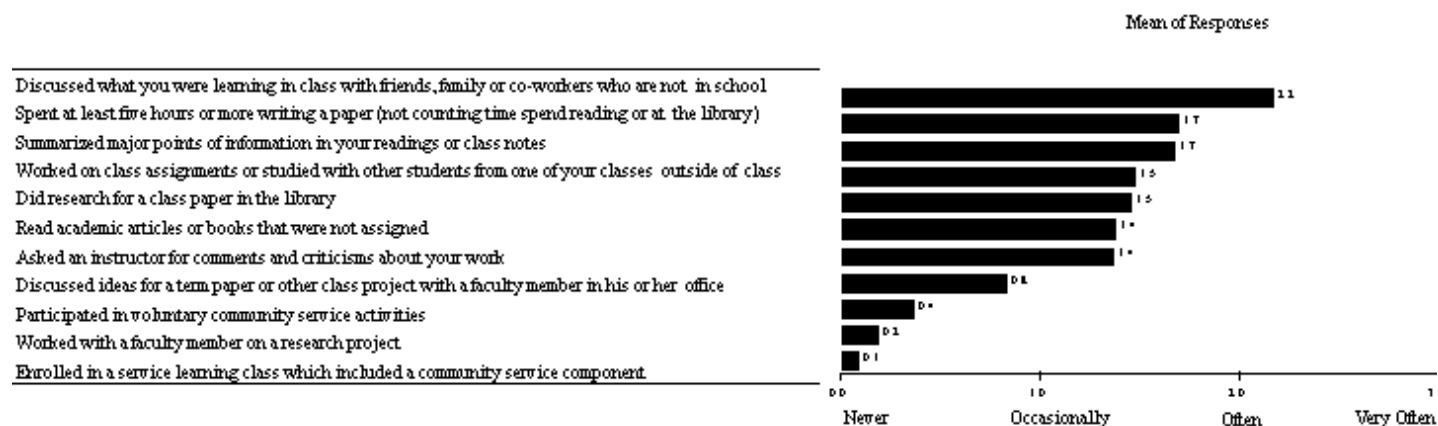
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## Survey Results: Involvement in Learning

A new section on this year's survey asked students about their involvement in learning. Students were asked how often they engaged in certain activities since the beginning of the school year. To

these items, students could respond either *never*, *seldom*, *occasionally*, *often* or *very often*. Figure 8 shows the average (mean) values for these eleven items. (In calculating the means for these items never= 0, occasionally= 1, often= 2, and very often= 3.) Students are most likely to have discussed their classroom learning with friends, family members or co-workers who are not in school and least likely to have enrolled in a service learning course with a community service component. The fact that few students report having enrolled in a service learning class is largely because few of these courses are currently available at IUPUI. Questionnaire items concerning community service were included on this year's survey in order to establish a base-line for future surveys.

**Figure 8. Involvement in Learning**



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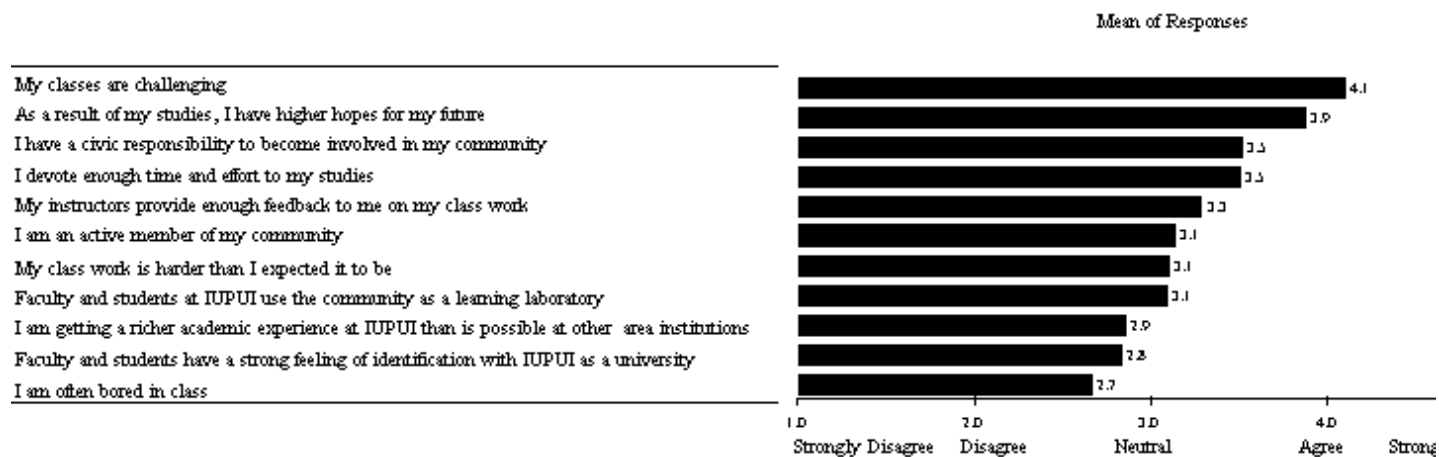
The results also show that, on average, students more than occasionally (mean=1.4 on a scale of 0-3) ask a faculty member for comments and criticisms of their work, but less frequently discuss ideas for a term paper or class project with them (mean=0.83). The results also reveal that very few undergraduate students work with faculty on a research project (mean=0.19).

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## Survey Results: Attitudes and Expectations

Also new in this year's survey were several items that measured students' attitudes and expectations on a range of topics. Figure 9 summarizes these results. Most students agree that their classes are challenging, disagree that they are bored in class, and have higher hopes for the future as a result of their IUPUI education. They disagree that faculty and students have a strong feeling of identification with IUPUI as a university, and that they are getting any richer academic experience here than they would at other area institutions.

**Figure 9. Expectations and Attitudes**



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## Survey Results: Student Background Characteristics

A final set of questions asked students about their enrollment and family status as well as their current employment. This year's survey results replicate last year's findings with regard to employment. Eight out of ten IUPUI students are currently working for pay and work on average 32 hours per week. One-half work full-time (35+ hours) while one-seventh (15%) hold more than one job. Three-quarters of IUPUI's working students do not consider their current job to be a career. One-fifth of students who work are receiving all (7%) or some (14%) reimbursement for their schooling from their employer. Finally, most working students are engaged in clerical and sales work (23%), followed by professional and technical work (16%) or more specifically as a health care provider (15%).

More than one half (54%) of undergraduates have never married. One-third (36%) are currently married, while nearly half (46%) are living with a spouse or partner. One-third have children at home. Nearly three-fifths (57%) of undergraduates at IUPUI are first generation college students.



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## Survey Results: The 1993 and 1994 Satisfaction Results Compared



Last year's Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey provides a baseline for this and future surveys. Though trends can't be established with only two years of data, it is worth noting significant increases or decreases that occurred between this year's and last year's results. The two surveys contained twenty-seven items in common. This comparison will be limited to changes in level of satisfaction over the last year. In the context of this analysis, change in the level of satisfaction is considered meaningful if the difference is statistically significant as well as substantively significant. Substantive significance here, as a rule of thumb, is defined as a .2 change in the mean value of the item. (In large samples like these, statistical significance can be achieved with very small differences. Therefore a mean difference of a certain size is established to draw attention to important findings.) Three meaningful changes occurred over the last year and are depicted in Figure 10.

**Figure 10. 1993 and 1994 Satisfaction Results Compared**

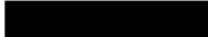

### Availability of computers in public clusters

	N	Mean		
1993	873	2.64	→	
1994	1402	2.91	→	

### Getting the courses I need in the sequence I should take them

	N	Mean		
1993	873	2.43	→	
1994	1601	2.65	→	

### The overall process of registering for classes

	N	Mean		
1993	873	2.46	→	
1994	1628	2.71	→	

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Students' level of satisfaction with the availability of computers in the public clusters increased. The average (mean) satisfaction score on this item increased from 2.6 to 2.9 on a scale of 1=very dissatisfied to 4=very satisfied. In percentage terms, nearly seventy percent (68%) of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the availability of computers in the public clusters this year compared to forty-five (45%) percent last year.

Also, as Figure 10 shows, more students were satisfied with "getting the courses I need in the sequence I should take them" as well as "the overall process of registering for classes". Getting courses in the required sequence ranked sixth in importance this year. Last year, more students were dissatisfied with this aspect of their experience here than any other. The average satisfaction score for this item increased from 2.4 to 2.7. Expressed in percentage terms, 62% were satisfied or very satisfied with their ability to get courses in the required sequence in 1994 compared to 1993 when only 51% were satisfied. Students' satisfaction with the overall process of registering for classes increased this year to 2.7 from 2.5 last year. This year seventy percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall registration process compared to just over one-half (55%) last year. No meaningful decreases in satisfaction occurred between 1993 and 1994.

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## Summary and Implications

This year's Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey suggests that undergraduate students are most concerned about their academic experiences at IUPUI. Academic concerns make up four of their top five and seven of their top ten priorities. Not only did students rank these issues most important, they also were most satisfied with them; the one exception being academic advising. On the other hand, non-academic issues - while not as important to students, came up short in terms of satisfaction. Specifically, students' overall social experience here, parking on campus, and getting through to staff on the phone were areas where students expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with their IUPUI experience.

Three changes in students' level of satisfaction between this year and last were discussed. With the exception of these three areas, no significant differences were noted from last year's baseline survey to this year.

IUPUI students are a diverse group, spanning a wide age range, with differing academic interests as well as differing lifestyles. This *Research Brief* provides an overall picture which, in some ways, masks this diversity. For this reason we have prepared school profiles that highlight some of the differences according to students' academic pursuits. In the future, we will report on research we are conducting to understand the implications of other student differences, like lifestyle and age, on students' satisfaction with their experiences at IUPUI.

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