

IMIR

# Research Brief

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## IUPUI Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey - 1995

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### Highlights

**General Satisfaction - Programs and Services:** Students this year, as last, are most satisfied with their academic experiences, the quality of academic programs, and the quality of faculty, and relatively least satisfied with their social experiences here.

**Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of IUPUI Experiences:** Students expressed the greatest level of satisfaction with registering for classes by phone, followed by information instructors give about course requirements, the quality of teaching by faculty in their major, spaces for individual and group study, and courses in their major area. This year's students were least satisfied with parking on campus, followed by the availability of child care, the availability of courses providing credit for community service, the amount of financial aid available and getting through to staff on the phone.

**Priorities:** Students' most important concerns again this year are the quality of teaching by faculty in their major (with which they are most satisfied), the overall quality of instruction, parking on campus (with which they are the most dissatisfied), the relevance of their classes, and the academic advising in their major, in that order. Students this year compared to last year increased the importance they assigned to parking on campus, the classroom physical environment (lighting, heating/cooling, cleanliness, etc.), and the availability of computers in public areas. Academic advising in the Undergraduate Learning Center and the overall process of registering for classes decreased in importance.

**Satisfaction - Alumni, Returning and Non-returning Students:** This year's survey provided the opportunity to compare the satisfaction of alumni and returning and non-returning Spring students. Ten common satisfaction items were examined across the three groups. Alumni as would be expected were most satisfied, followed by returning students. All three groups, however, ranked the satisfaction items similarly. All three groups were relatively most satisfied with quality of teaching in the major and courses in the major. Non-returning students differed from alumni and returning students in being significantly less satisfied with opportunities for community service and extra-curricular activities, academic advising in the major, and the general helpfulness of staff here.

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## Introduction

This edition of *Research Brief* summarizes the latest IUPUI *Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey*. This is the third consecutive year that the Vice Chancellor for Planning and Institutional Improvement has commissioned a survey of the IUPUI undergraduate student body. The purpose of this survey, like those that preceded it, is to provide student input into the institutional planning and assessment processes at IUPUI.

This year's survey was mailed to a stratified random sample of 3,460 continuing students enrolled at both the Indianapolis and Columbus campuses in the Spring of 1995. Completed surveys were received from 1,796 students yielding a response rate of 52%. The results reported throughout this brief were weighted to restore the proper population proportions.

This year's survey is essentially the same as last year's with just a few new, reworded, and rescaled items which are noted in the following survey results section. While these changes were made to strengthen this year's survey they make it somewhat more difficult to compare this year's results to those of the last two years. Therefore, the final section of this issue of the brief will focus on comparisons between students' satisfaction with their IUPUI experiences on this year's continuing student survey and comparable items on the recently released survey of 1993-94 alumni. A separate publication will be forthcoming that will deal with changes in continuing students' satisfaction over the last three years.

The next section of the *Research Brief* summarizes the results of the survey beginning with students' overall satisfaction with programs and services followed by a presentation of the results for the forty-eight items related to student satisfaction with specific aspects of their IUPUI experience.

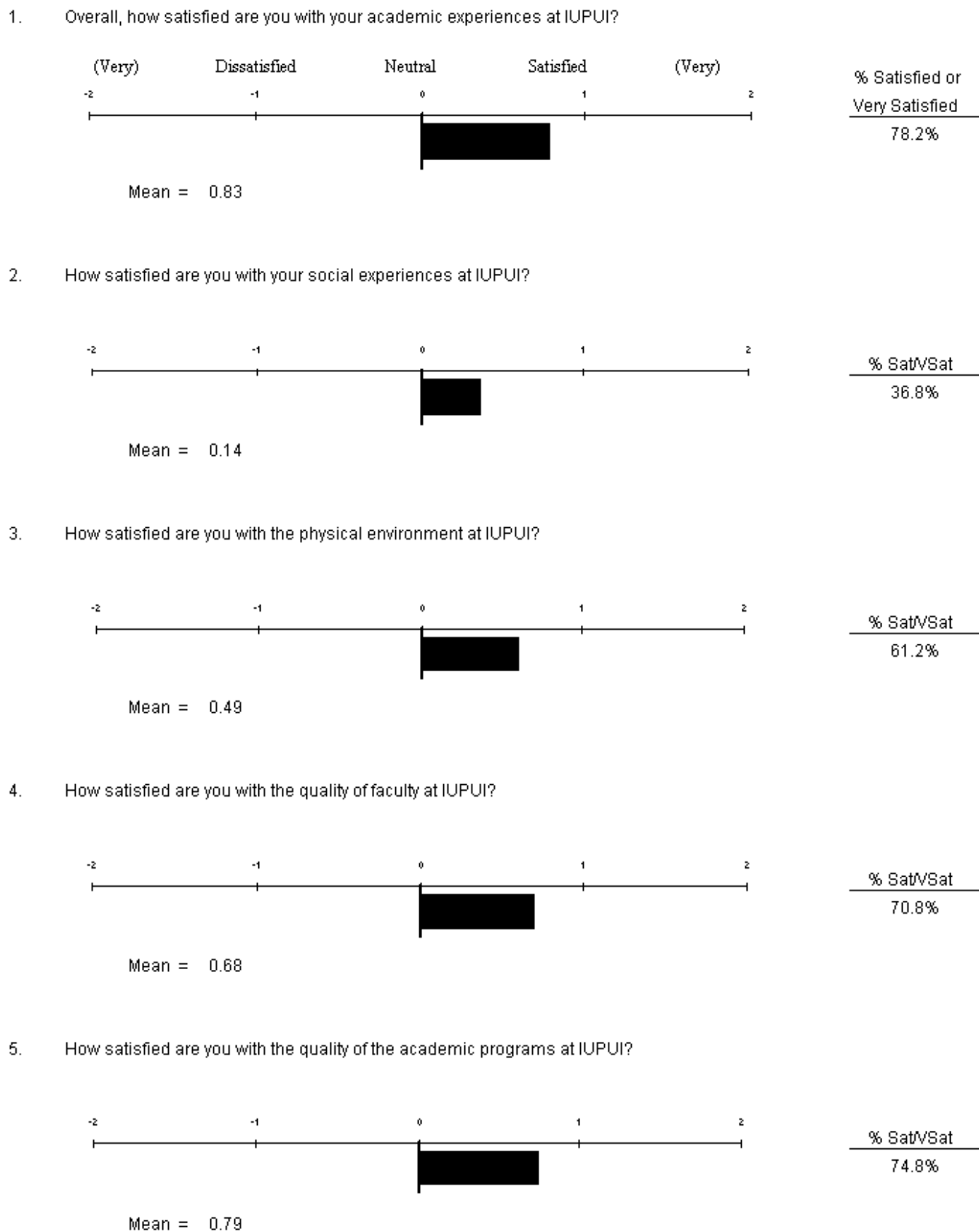
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## Survey Results

### General Satisfaction with Programs and Services

The first section of the survey asked students about their general satisfaction with their academic experiences, their social experiences, the physical environment, the quality of faculty, and the quality of academic programs at IUPUI. The response scale for all the satisfaction items in this year's survey was changed from a four point to a five point scale. The five point scale includes a neutral category with the previously used categories of very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied and very satisfied. In both years of the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to indicate not applicable to any of the items. This change was made in an effort to bring the satisfaction items on the *Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey* in line with the *'Recent Alumni' Survey* which uses the same five point scale for satisfaction.

**Figure 1. Satisfaction with Programs and Services**

\* Responses provided on a 5-point scale where -2=Very Dissatisfied, -1=Dissatisfied, 0=Neutral, 1=Satisfied

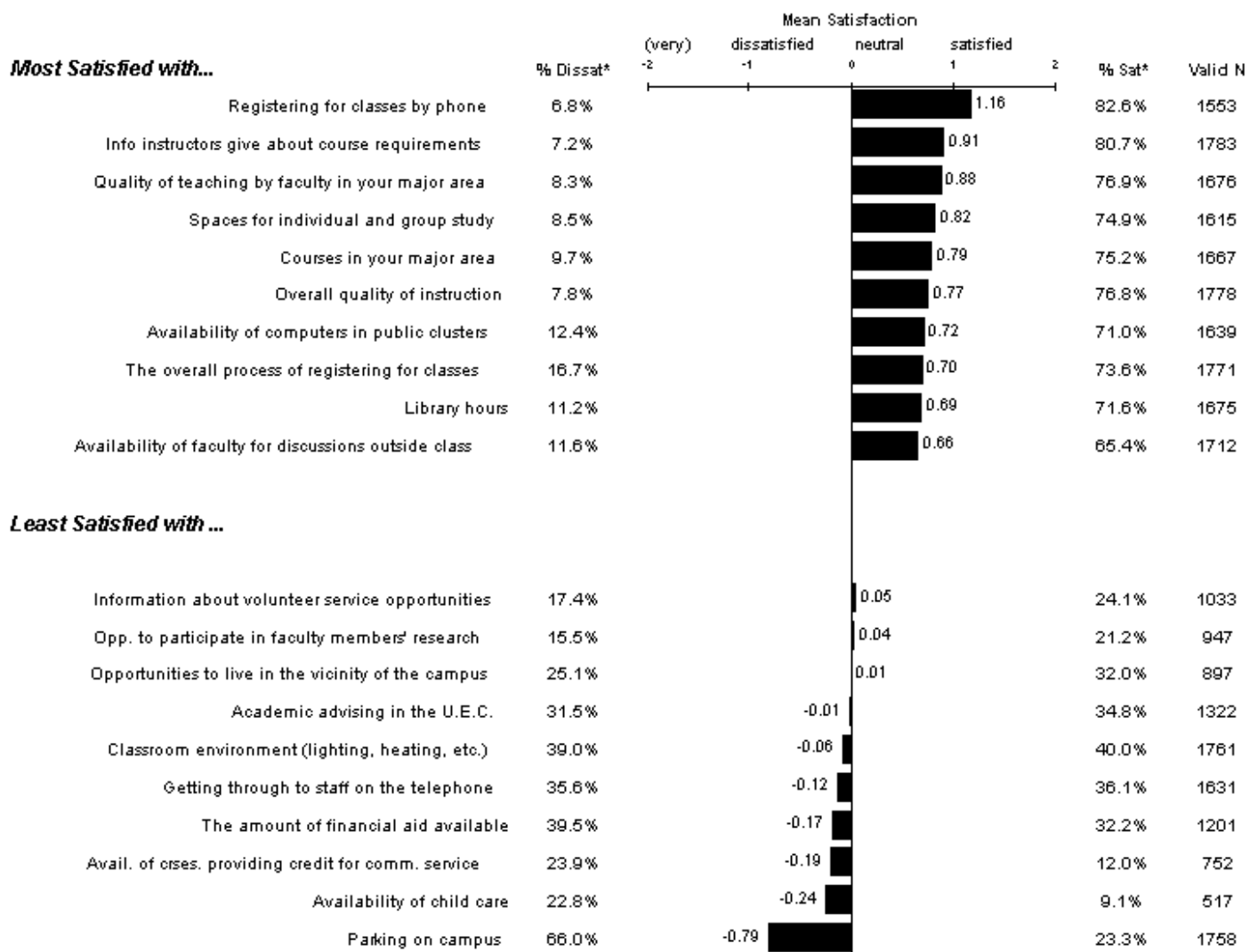
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Figure 1 shows the results of students' general satisfaction with programs and services as the mean of responses on five satisfaction scales which range from +2 to -2, where +2=very satisfied, +1 = satisfied, 0 = neutral, -1= dissatisfied, and -2 = very dissatisfied. Figure 1 shows that students are most satisfied with their academic experiences at IUPUI and least satisfied with their social experiences here. The highest mean satisfaction score occurred for overall satisfaction with academic experiences at IUPUI (mean = .83) which is closely followed by quality of academic programs (.79) and quality of faculty (.68). Students were less satisfied with the physical environment at IUPUI (.49) and their social experiences here (.14). Figure 1 also reports the results for these five items as the percent of students satisfied or very satisfied.

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### **Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of IUPUI**

Students were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with 48 specific aspects of their IUPUI experience including instruction, academic support services, student services and campus life. Figure 2 shows the 10 highest and lowest rated student satisfaction items ranked by mean satisfaction score. The same results for all 48 satisfaction with IUPUI experiences items are included in the addendum to this brief. The bars in the middle of Figure 2 depict the average (mean) level of satisfaction for each item. Figure 2 also shows the percent of students dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with these twenty items (left of bars) as well as the percent satisfied or very satisfied (right of bars). The furthest right hand column of the figure, labeled 'Valid N', reports the number of students who responded using one of the five evaluation categories, that is; they did not leave the item blank or answer "not applicable".

**Figure 2. Percent Satisfied, Dissatisfied with IUPUI Experiences***(In order of highest to lowest mean levels of satisfaction)*

\*Percentages do not add to 100%, the difference being those who endorsed 'neutral' which are not explicitly charted

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For the most part, mean satisfaction scores and the percent satisfied or very satisfied for each item produce comparable rankings of the items, but not entirely. Differences in mean rank compared to percentage rank result from the degree of extreme scores on either end of the scale for the mean. For example, 'overall quality of instruction' ranks sixth in terms of mean satisfaction score but fourth in terms of percentage satisfied or very satisfied. This occurs because the satisfied persons on the items above it are more very satisfied than satisfied. It also should be noted that Figure 2 does not display the percent of respondents answering neutral to the items so the percentages in the figure do not add to 100%. The addendum provides the percentage distribution of responses across all of the evaluation categories including neutral.

The results in Figure 2 reveal that students are most satisfied with the primary academic and academic support aspects of their IUPUI experiences. All of the highest ten satisfaction with IUPUI experiences items relate either to instruction or academic support services. The process of registering for classes in general, and by phone in particular, receives high marks from this year's continuing students. Quality of teaching in the major, and courses in the major, along with overall quality of instruction continue as last year to be among the highest rated items on satisfaction.

For the most part students continue to be relatively least satisfied with several aspects of their IUPUI experiences which are ancillary to their academic experience and relate to the campus or the broader educational environment. These campus environment issues include parking on campus, the availability of child care, getting through to staff on the phone, the physical condition of classrooms (lighting, heating, etc.) and opportunities to live in the vicinity of campus. Student dissatisfaction with the amount of financial aid available relates to conditions in the larger educational environment and most likely reflects the amount of national and state funding for financial aid in the face of continually increasing tuition.

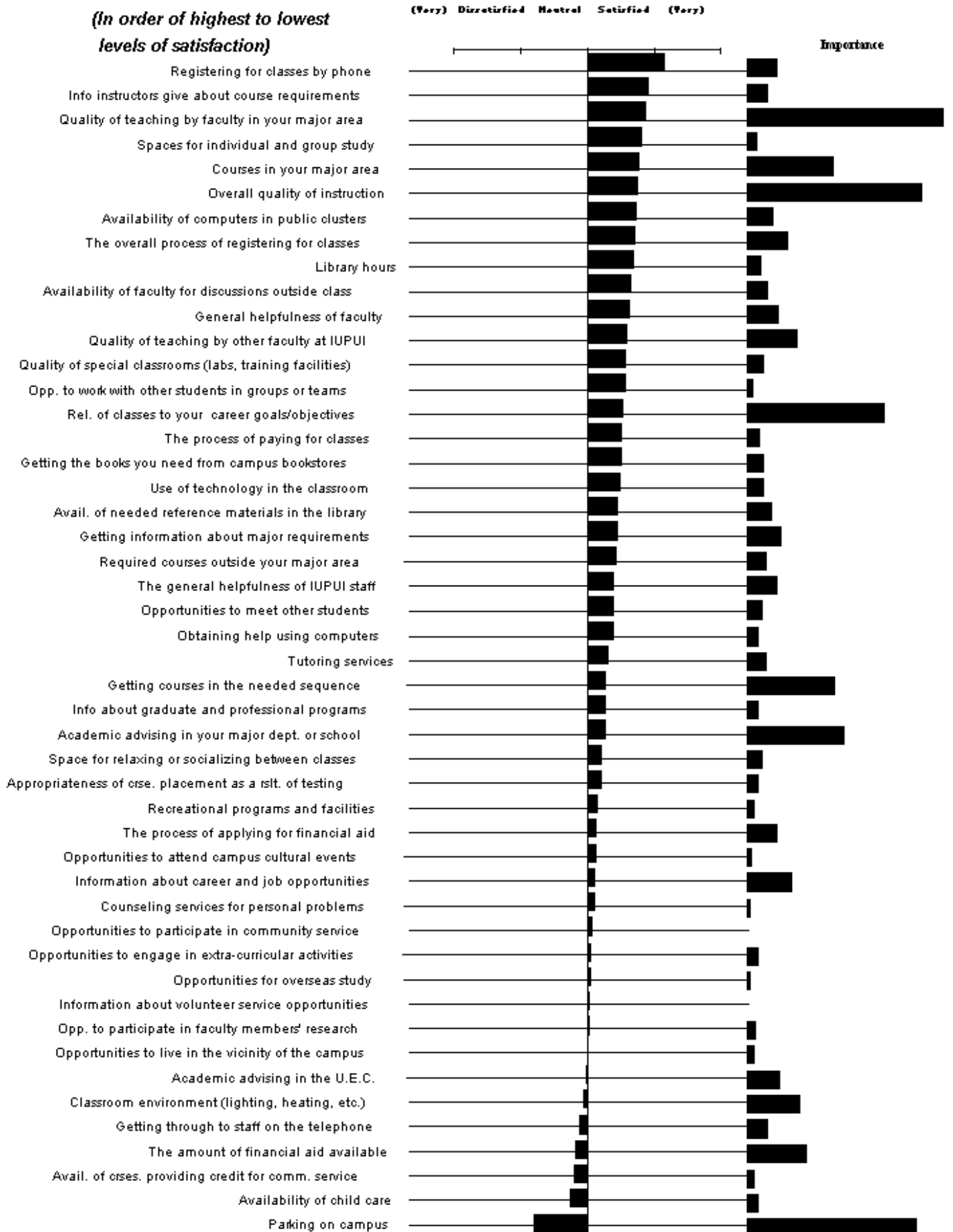
Figure 3 reveals what students consider are the most important aspects of their IUPUI experiences from among the 48 satisfaction items. Students were asked to choose from among the 48 items the five that were most important to them. They were then instructed to distribute 100 points among their top 5 choices. As Figure 3 shows, students' top concerns center around academic issues as well as parking, amount of financial aid available and the classroom environment (lighting, heating, cleanliness, etc.). Issues lowest in importance involve student support services like opportunities to participate in community service, information about volunteer service opportunities, counseling services for personal problems, opportunities for overseas study, and opportunities to attend campus cultural events, in that order.



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Since students' level of satisfaction with an item and the importance they assign to it are somewhat independent of each other, Figure 4 shows the combined results for satisfaction and importance for each of the 48 satisfaction items. As Figure 4 reveals, students are very satisfied with some of the things they find most important as well as with some of the things they find of lesser importance. Figure 4 also shows that students are less than satisfied with some things they consider of high importance. These differences are explained in more detail in the panels of Figure 5.

**Figure 4. Student Ratings of Satisfaction AND Importance**

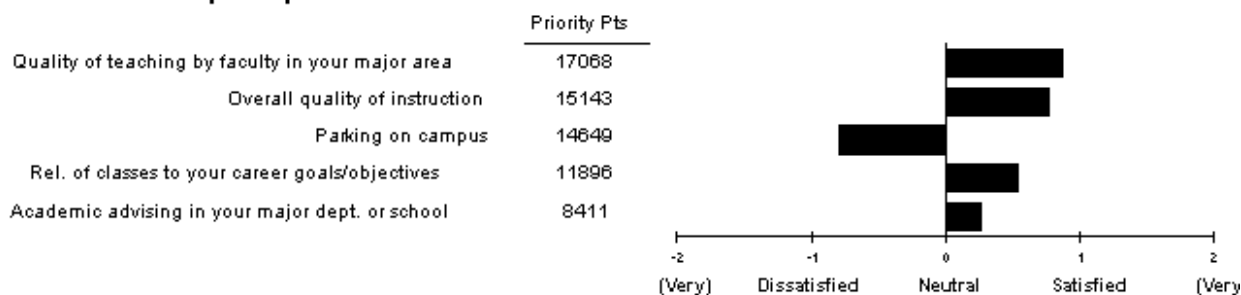


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Figure 5 looks at the relationship between satisfaction and importance in more detail for IUPUI continuing students. Figure 5A shows students' top five items based on the importance score they assigned, along with a side by side graphic that depicts their level of satisfaction with each item. This figure reveals that the quality of teaching by faculty in the major area is the aspect of their experience here they considered most important. It is also among the highest rated satisfaction items as shown in Figure 5B. Parking on campus, another high importance item, ranks low in terms of satisfaction, however. In fact, of all the issues surveyed, students continue to be most dissatisfied with their parking experiences as Figure 5C shows.

**Figure 5. Top Five Importance, Satisfaction, and Dissatisfaction Items**

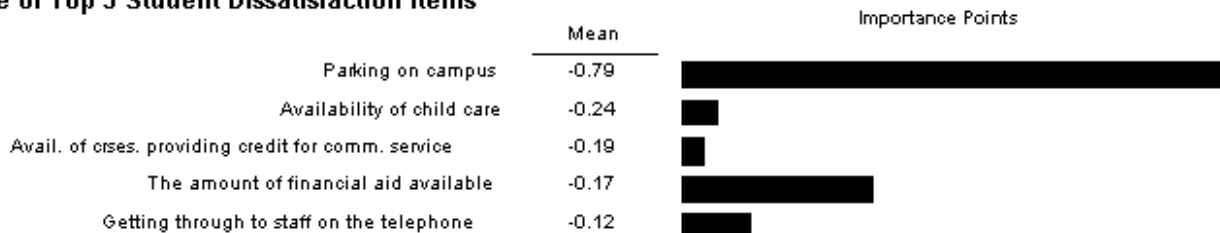
**(A) Student Satisfaction with Top 5 Importance Items**



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



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



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In addition to parking on campus -- a high importance concern, Figure 5C shows that students also report being dissatisfied with the amount of financial aid available, which they also view as relatively high in importance. And, although students are relatively dissatisfied with their ability to get through to staff on the telephone and the availability of child care, these are relatively less important to them in general than parking and financial aid.

The use of the mean has certain advantages and disadvantages when comparing student sentiment on these items. Because the mean is calculated on the bases of valid responses, those not answering or marking not-applicable to an item are excluded in the calculation of the satisfaction score. Still it is

important to recognize the significance of a deeply felt issue even if it is not pervasive as is the case with the availability of childcare. The presentation of the results in Figures 5A through 5C is one way to resolve this issue by showing both the mean satisfaction score (sensitive to small size) and the importance score (based on what the entire population views as important).

While we do not examine specific changes in mean level of satisfaction in this brief, some changes in importance among the satisfaction with IUPUI experiences items were observed between this year's and last year's respondents. Figure 6 shows that two academic support issues --the overall process of registering for classes and academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center -- decreased in importance while three campus infra-structure issues -- parking on campus, the classroom physical environment and the availability of computers in public learning centers --increased in importance. Decreases in importance assigned to registration and academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center may be related to increasing satisfaction. Direct comparisons of changes in satisfaction are not available yet, but registration items are higher in rank relative to last year as is academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center, though to a lesser degree. The condition of the classroom physical environment increased in importance this year at the same time that it fell in rank on satisfaction, suggesting that it has become a more salient concern for students. The availability of public computers moved up most in relative importance for students this year at the same time that it also increased in satisfaction rank. These findings would suggest an increasingly important need is being met.

**Figure 6. Changes in Importance between 1994 - 1995**

Item	1994*	94 Rank	1995*	95 Rank	Sig.
Parking on campus	8.19	3	9.65	3	0.01
Academic advising in the Undergraduate Education Center	2.81	11	1.88	14	0.01
Classroom environment (lighting, heating/cooling, cleanliness, etc.)	1.98	13	3.00	9	0.01
Availability of computers in public learning centers	0.89	31	1.49	19	0.01
The overall process of registering for classes	3.46	8	2.39	12	0.01

\*Figures are average importance points. Means are calculated based on respondents providing valid responses.

Scale: 0 to 100

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## Impact of IUPUI on Your Learning

This year's survey repeats a series of items which also appear on the 'Recent Alumni' Survey that ask students about the impact of IUPUI on their learning. 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?".

Figure 7 shows that students, considered as a whole, benefited most from their IUPUI education in the areas of (1) intellectual skills development (2) writing effectiveness (3) ability to view events and phenomena from several different perspectives (4) organizing time effectively and (5) speaking effectiveness. As was true among recent alumni, continuing students report differences in the impact IUPUI had on their learning across schools. For example, IUPUI had its greatest impact on students' writing effectiveness among Journalism majors followed by Liberal Arts and Social Work majors and the Undergraduate Education Center's preparatory program participants. Students in Engineering and Technology ranked highest, followed by Science majors, in terms of the impact IUPUI had on their understanding of scientific principles and methods. Besides differences in impact by school, other differences between schools were found for this year's continuing students. Because of the importance of these differences, and in keeping with previous practice, school level results are being distributed at the time of the release of this brief.

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

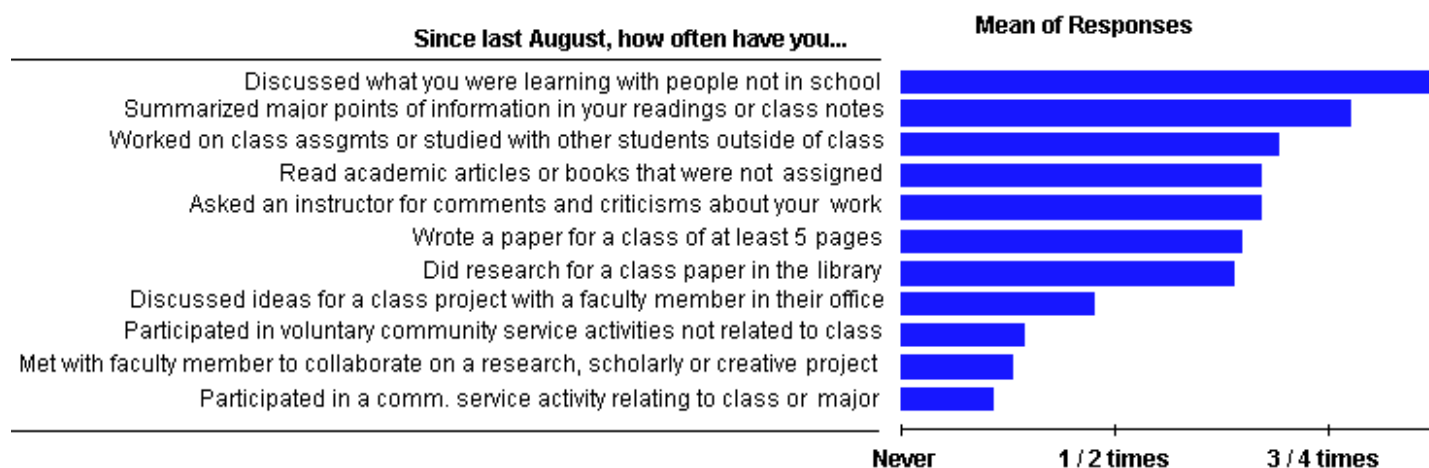
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## Involvement in Learning

This section of the survey explores the degree to which students have engaged in a set of learning-related behaviors since the beginning of the school year. This section was modified this year in an attempt to make the questions and responses more specific.

Last year, respondents were asked how often they engaged in a set of learning-related behaviors. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they engaged in the behavior very often, often, occasionally, or never. This year, respondents were asked how many times they engaged in the same set of behaviors and were instructed to respond either never, one or two times, three or four times, or five or more times. Some of the questions in this section were reworded in order to make them more specific and inclusive. For example, one item "worked with a faculty member on a research project" was modified to "met with a faculty member to collaborate on a research, scholarly or creative project". Students could respond never, one or two times, three or four times or five or more times.

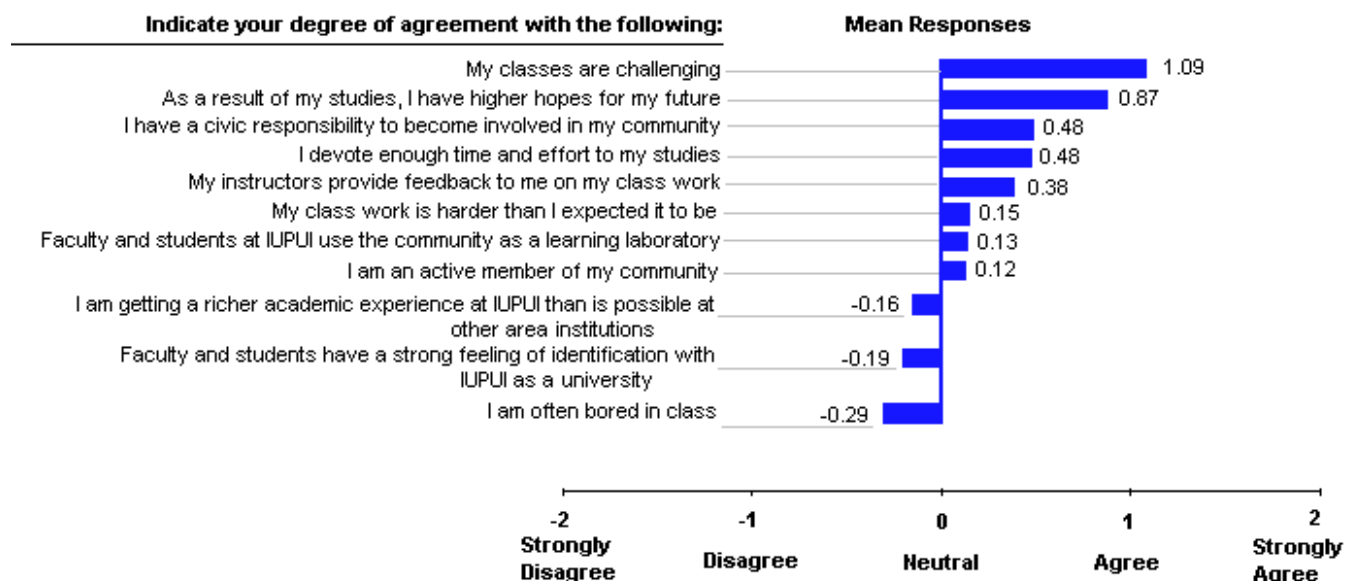
Figure 8 shows the 12 learning-related behaviors sorted from most to least frequently occurring. A closer examination of the results reveals roughly three clusters of behaviors ranging from high to low frequency. The two behaviors, out of the set of twelve, that students engage in most are related to classroom learning. Students report more moderate frequency with regard to efforts which involve taking personal initiative to learn (beyond class requirements) and around writing research papers. The least frequently engaged in learning-related behaviors involve the application of learning outside the classroom, like doing community service or working on a research, scholarly or creative project with a faculty member.

**Figure 8. Involvement in Learning**

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### Attitudes and Expectations

Students were also asked a series of questions regarding the degree to which they feel challenged and engaged by their studies. Students responded to these items on a five point scale where -2 = strongly disagree, -1 = disagree, 0 = neutral, +1 = agree and +2 = strongly agree. The results in Figure 9 show that continuing students are challenged by their classes, which is as they expected, and see the utility of their college studies to their future. On the other hand, students do not believe their academic experiences here are any richer than those at other area institutions and question somewhat the strength of student and faculty identification to IUPUI. Students this year did not differ from students last year with regard to their expectations and attitudes about their educational experiences here.

**Figure 9. Expectations and Attitudes**

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### Student Background Characteristics

The final section of the survey asked students a series of questions about enrollment and family status, as well as current employment. Consistent with the past year's survey results over eighty percent (83%) of students are currently working for pay. On average IUPUI students are working 32 hours a week. One-half report working full-time (35+ hours) this year.

In a new item this year 55% of continuing students say they primarily view themselves as students who are working, while 45% describe themselves as workers who are going to school. One-quarter of students who work report that their employers are reimbursing some or all of their tuition. Just over half (55%) report having never married, while one-third (36%) were married at the time of the survey. Nearly one-half (45%) are living with a partner or spouse. Almost three out of ten students (28%) have children at home. Almost three-fifths of students (57%) are first generation college students. Nine of ten students plan to complete their college degree at IUPUI and six of ten plan to enroll for a more advanced degree after they graduate.

Another new item on this year's survey provided a closer look at students' more immediate enrollment plans for the Fall of 1995. This year, students surveyed in the Spring of 1995 were asked if they planned to return in the Fall of 1995. At the time the survey was administered, eight of ten students believed they would re-enroll in the Fall or graduate by the end of Summer. Three percent indicated they would not graduate or re-enroll for the Fall. In order to evaluate the accuracy of students' plans for the Fall, their actual Fall enrollment experiences were examined. Eleven percent of those students who said they would return to campus failed to re-enroll in the Fall. Among those who said they would not return, 28% actually did re-enroll this Fall while 72% carried through with their plans to leave. These results corroborate previous findings on our non-returning students which suggest that for many students unexpected changes in work or family matters make enrollment plans unpredictable.

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## **Alumni and Continuing Students - Satisfaction with the IUPUI Experience**

The current survey provides the first opportunity to make comparisons between continuing students and alumni concerning their degree of satisfaction with their IUPUI experiences. Ten items from this year's *Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey* were included on the most recent survey of alumni -- those receiving their undergraduate degree during the 1993-94 academic year.

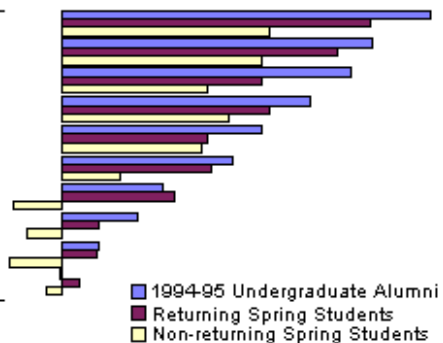
A preliminary analysis of these two populations showed alumni, as expected, to be significantly more satisfied with their IUPUI experiences compared to continuing students in general and especially to those who failed to complete or return to campus in the Fall. To explore this more fully, two types of respondents on the *Continuing Student Satisfaction and Priorities Survey* were distinguished: those who re-enrolled this Fall, and those who didn't return and had not graduated.

**Figure 10. Satisfaction with IUPUI Experiences Among Recent Alumni and Returning/Graduating and Non-Returning Students**

Items	Alumni	Retn/Grad	Non-returns	Sig.*
	(a)	(b)	(c)	
Quality of teaching by faculty in your major	1.11	0.93	0.63	abc
Courses in the major	0.94	0.83	0.60	abc
Opportunities to work with other students in groups or teams	0.87	0.60	0.44	abc
Quality of teaching by other faculty at IUPUI	0.75	0.62	0.50	ab, ac
Required courses outside major (general ed requirements)	0.60	0.44	0.42	ab, ac
General helpfulness of the IUPUI staff	0.51	0.45	0.17	ac, bc
Academic advising in the major department	0.30	0.34	-0.15	ac, bc
Opportunities to engage in community services	0.23	0.11	-0.11	abc
Opportunities to engage in extra-curricular activities	0.11	0.10	-0.16	ac, bc
Opportunities to engage in faculty member's research	-0.01	0.05	-0.05	n.s.

\*Letters indicate which groups are significantly different according to Bonferroni post-hoc contrasts: 'abc' indicates each group differs significantly from one another, 'ab', 'ac' indicates the first group differs from the second and third; and so on. 'n.s.' is 'not significant'.

Scale: mean scores range from -2=very dissatisfied, -1=dissatisfied, 0=neutral, +1=satisfied, +2=very satisfied.



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Figure 10 reports the mean scores for the satisfaction with IUPUI experiences items which were in common between both surveys across three groups of past and current students. An examination of Figure 10 reveals several interesting findings. First, recent alumni are our most satisfied constituency. Second, alumni and returning continuing students tend to be relatively most satisfied with the same aspects of their IUPUI experiences. Interestingly, even those students who failed to return concur with alumni and returning students in rating academic instruction as most satisfying among their experiences here. On the other hand, non-returning students have very different perceptions compared to students who continue or complete, particularly in four non-instructional areas -- extra-curricular activities, opportunities for community service, academic advising in the major and the general helpfulness of staff. These findings suggest, but do not confirm, that student concerns in areas other than academic instruction may play a significant role in the decision to re-enroll at this institution, at least among some of our students.

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## Conclusions and Implications

Like last year, this year's students continue to view academics as most important among their broader college experiences here. Furthermore, students again confirm that, relative to their other experiences here, they are most satisfied with their academics -- with the one notable exception being the academic advising they receive in their major department. Though mostly satisfied with academics here, students do not believe they are receiving any richer education here than they would receive at other local area colleges, however.

Students continue to be satisfied with academic support services, most notably registration in general and registration by phone in particular and with the availability of computers in public areas and study spaces in the library.

Key problem areas noted in the past continue to be voiced by this year's students. Principally these include parking on campus and the amount of financial aid available. In addition, students this year say the physical condition of classrooms is more of a concern to them. Students assigned more importance to this and decreased their satisfaction with it relative to last year.

This year's survey also revealed that the most frequent learning behavior among students is

classroom related. Students engage only moderately in personally initiated learning behavior outside of what is required in class and rarely have or take the opportunity to apply what they have learned in community service or research projects with faculty.

Finally, it should be kept in mind that the findings reported here apply at the campus level and many of these conclusions vary by school and department. Even more importantly in terms of evaluating these findings, we do not know how our students' experiences here compare to students' experiences at other comparable institutions. However, efforts to develop this type of comparative information are underway and will provide benchmarks for IUPUI student satisfaction in the future.

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