

2020-21 Graduating Student Survey (GSS) – Graduate & Professional Students

Executive Summary

Background

The Graduating Student Survey (GSS) is administered each summer, fall, and spring semester to all master's, doctoral, and professional-level students who have submitted a degree application for graduation. The goal of this survey is to gather exit information from graduating students about their experiences at the university. Respondents are asked about their perception of—and satisfaction with—their time at UofL, including academic preparation, experience in their unit and their program, advising, faculty, and their plans following graduation.

Methodology

A PeopleSoft query was used to provide a listing of all graduate students who submitted a degree application in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 for a total of 1,811 students. A total of 354 (19.55%) students responded to the survey; due to the low number of responses, caution should be used when attempting to generalize to the entire population of graduate/professional students.¹

Profile

Of the 354 students who responded to the survey, 52% are female, 74% are full-time students, 71% are White, 8% are African American, 8% are other races, 6% are Hispanic/Latino, 4% are Asian, and 2.5% are two or more races.

Data Highlights

Below are some findings that may be of interest to the university community.

Overall Experiences

- With UofL
 - **82%** were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their **overall experience** at UofL
 - **82%** would be “likely” or “extremely likely” to **enroll at UofL again** if they had the choice
 - **59%** indicated their overall impression of the **academic standards** at UofL was “very good,” or “excellent”
- With Program
 - **83%** were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the **quality of courses**
 - **75%** were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the **usefulness of texts and course materials**
 - **83%** were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the **relevance of the coursework to their expected career**
 - **86%** indicated their academic program was “**appropriately challenging**”
 - **69%** rated their overall experience with their **academic program** as “above average,” or “excellent”
- With Advising
 - **71%** rated their overall impression of the advising services provided by **faculty advisors** as “very good,” or “excellent”
- Faculty
 - **75%** rated their overall **impression of the faculty** as “above average,” or “excellent”

Level of Engagement

- **65%** spent at least 11 hours/week **preparing for class**
- **12%** spent at least 6 hours/week **participating in co-curricular activities**
- **57%** spent 0 hours/week **participating in co-curricular activities**

¹Sample size calculations were based on a degree applicant population of 1,811 graduate and professional students, and a 95% confidence level with a 3% margin of error (the range that the population's responses may deviate from the sample).

- High Impact Practices: Enriching educational experiences that require substantial time and effort (NSSE, 2015).
 - **94%** of students who participated in a **practicum, internship, field experience, or clinical assignment** rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **22%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **2%** didn’t know about it
 - **92%** of students who held a **formal leadership role** in a student organization/group rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **20%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **5%** didn’t know about it
 - **90%** of students who participated in **community-based or service learning** rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **25%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **9%** didn’t know about it
 - **85%** of students worked on a **research project with faculty** outside of course/program requirements rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **30%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **9%** didn’t know about it
 - **76%** of students who **Studied Abroad** rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **48%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **6%** didn’t know about it
 - **90%** of students who participated in a **capstone course, thesis, or comprehensive exam** rated their experience as “good” or “excellent”
 - **17%** didn’t have the opportunity to participate and **5%** didn’t know about it
- **12%** indicated they came to class “often,” or “very often” **without completing readings/assignments**
- **75%** indicated they **asked questions or contributed to course discussions** “often,” or “very often”
- **9%** indicated they **observed student dishonesty** “often,” or “very often” when completing assignments or exams

Financing Education

- **43%** primarily financed their education through financial aid, **9%** through scholarships, **8%** through personal income/savings, **8%** from support from parents/guardians/significant other, and **8%** from Graduate Assistantship (GA) (top 5 reasons)
- **46%** had no difficulty, **36%** had some difficulty, and **18%** had a great deal of difficulty financing their education

Top Reasons it Took Students Longer than They Anticipated to Graduate:

- Among students (n = 53) who indicated that it took them longer to graduate than they intended: **5%** work, **4%** family obligations/personal issues, **4%** other reason

Employment Plans after Graduation

- **85%** indicated that **paid employment** will be their primary employment plan upon graduation
- Of the **76%** that indicated they already **have a job offer or are currently employed**:
 - **54%** indicated the job is **located in Kentucky**.
 - **89%** stated that their job is **related to their academic program**

Continuing Education Plans after Graduation

- **17%** indicated that **immediately continuing education** will be their **primary continuing education plan** upon graduation
- Of the **11%** that indicated they are **planning to continue their education** at some point:
 - **52%** indicated they **will attend UofL**
 - **80%** stated that the **field will be related** to their **academic program**