



2006 Survey of Graduate and Professional Student Life FINAL REPORT

Conducted by the Task Force on Graduate and Professional Student Life

Sponsored by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Dean of the Graduate School

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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the substantial contributions of Mark Gunty, Assistant Director in the Office of Institutional Research, who conducted the survey, offered invaluable guidance, and advised the analysis process.

Sr. Mary Louise Gude, C.S.C., Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and Prof. Donald B. Pope-Davis, then Associate Dean of the Graduate School, served as co-chairs for the Task Force on Graduate and Professional Student Life for the 2005-2006 academic year and oversaw the creation of the survey.

The original members of the Task Force on Graduate and Professional Student Life who worked with Sr. Gude and Prof. Pope-Davis to draft the survey include:

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Sarah E. Christie, graduate student assistant in the Office of Student Affairs, assisted the Office of Institutional Research in compiling and presenting the results.

History and Background of the Survey

During the fall of 2005, Rev. Mark L. Poorman, C.S.C., Vice President for Student Affairs, and Prof. Jeffrey C. Kantor, then Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, called for the creation of a joint Task Force on Graduate and Professional Student Life. This task force was charged with identifying the needs of graduate and professional students.

The original task force was co-chaired by Sr. Mary Louise Gude, C.S.C., then Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and Donald B. Pope-Davis, Ph.D., then Associate Dean of the Graduate School, for the 2005-2006 academic year. Following Sr. Gude's retirement and Prof. Pope-Davis's promotion to Dean of the Graduate School during the summer of 2006, Sr. Susan Dunn, O.P., Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and Barbara M. Turpin, Ph.D., Associate Dean of the Graduate School, assumed leadership of the task force; Jennifer A. Monahan, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, joined the task force as well. In the spring of 2007, G. David Moss, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, and Jarren T. Gonzales, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of the Graduate School joined the group to assist with survey analysis and drafting the final reports from the Office of Student Affairs and the Graduate School, respectively.

In October of 2006, all¹ graduate and professional students (approximately 2,800 post-baccalaureate students) received an e-mail containing a link to a comprehensive on-line survey of graduate and professional student life. The overall response rate to the survey was 63.2% with some variation in participation among the schools and programs, described in detail in the section below titled "Population and Response Rates."

The steering committee was pleased by the response rate and is confident in the validity of the data. We hope this information will provide a helpful overview of student life issues that are important to graduate and professional students, as well as a base-line response from which we can measure progress and growth of student services in the future.

Overview

This survey was the most comprehensive ever given to graduate and professional students at the University of Notre Dame, and attempted to cover a range of issues in post-baccalaureate student life—from academics, to spirituality, to student services, to general quality of life. While the Office of Students Affairs and the Graduate School have worked closely together on all aspects of this survey, for the purpose of this report, the Office of Student Affairs has chosen to focus on issues directly related to student life and student services.

Twenty-five of the original 90 survey questions are specific to student services.

¹ Selected doctoral students in English, Chemical Engineering, and Physics did not participate in the survey because they were participants in a National Research Council (NRC) survey also being administered in the fall. Students in the Executive MBA program did not participate in this study because of the unique nature of their program (primarily off-site).

Survey Administration Mode

The Office of Institutional Research administered the Graduate and Professional Student Survey using a web-based survey tool called Perseus Survey Solutions Enterprise Edition. Three versions of the survey were developed in order to accommodate variation in the information needs of the Graduate, Law, and Business programs, respectively. The Graduate Student version was launched October 26, Law on October 28, and Business on November 2. All three versions were closed on November 9, although responses received by November 11 were included in the analyses.

The survey was administered in such a way that the software recognized individual respondents by virtue of their logon URL, which made it possible to match survey data with Registrar data. With that method, data on the student's major, degree program, ethnicity, sex, citizenship, birth date and matriculation date were linked to the survey data. Survey data were treated with complete confidentiality, and no individually identifiable data have been reported in any format.

To encourage participation in the survey, all those who completed the survey were credited for one meal on campus. In addition, they were entered into a drawing for one of 60 prizes, including computers, MP3 players, and gift certificates. Winners were randomly selected from completed surveys on November 13 and notified directly by Fr. Poorman and Dean Pope-Davis; all winners were listed in *The Observer* as well.

Analytic Methodology

References to differences between groups on the basis of demographic characteristics are based on T-tests of the statistical difference between group means. Differences are reported if the T-test reached the .05 level of significance, meaning that there was less than a 5% chance that the observed differences were due to chance rather than real differences between the groups.

Population and Response Rates

The survey was intended to be a census of the entire degree-seeking graduate and professional student body enrolled at Notre Dame in Fall 2006, including those studying off-site. In practicality, the definition of the population was adjusted for a variety of reasons and resulted in the following:

- Graduate School: All enrolled students, both master's and doctoral programs, excluding 77 students who had been selected to be participants in the National Research Council's study of graduate programs in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Physics, and English. The remaining students in those programs were included in the study. Students in the ACE program were included.
- Law School: All enrolled students, excluding LLM and SJD students. Although it was the intention to exclude LLM and SJD students, they were not removed from the invitation mailing list.

- Mendoza College of Business: All students enrolled in the Master of Accountancy, Master of Nonprofit Administration, and regular (two-year) and accelerated Master of Business Administration programs. Executive MBA programs were excluded. Due to a programming error, students in the MS Accountancy program were not presented questions 5 through 37. The Office of Institutional Research regrets and apologizes for the error.

The total sample for the survey numbered 2,837, of which 1,792 surveys were submitted for an overall response rate of 63.2%. US minorities, men, and students 38 years old and older were under-represented. By division, response rates were as follows: Law, 63.8%; Business, 58.3%; Engineering, 74.1%; Science, 68.8%; Humanities, 64.6%; and Social Science, 53.5%.

Overall, the survey population includes:

Ethnicity:

International students:	18.5%
African American students:	1.8%
Native American students:	.6%
Hispanic students:	5.5%
Asian American students:	3.8%
White students:	69.9%

For the purposes of this report, students were grouped as international, “underrepresented minorities” (African American, Hispanic, Native American, or other), Asian American, or white.

Age:

<=24:	23.9%
25-27:	34%
28-30:	22.6%
31-37:	14.3%
38+:	4.2%

Sex:

Women:	39.8%
Men:	60.2%

Religion:

Roman Catholic:	47%	Jewish:	1%
Other Christian:	26%	Muslim:	1%
Buddhist:	1%	None:	18%
Hindu:	3%	Other:	3%

For the purposes of survey analysis, students were grouped according to their religious affiliation into four groups: Catholic, Protestant, Other (Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, et al), or None.

Terminology

The term “post-baccalaureate” refers to the entire population of students surveyed, including those enrolled in the Graduate School (both master’s-level and doctoral programs), Law School, and Mendoza College of Business.

Student Life at the University of Notre Dame

In the spring of 2002, the Division of Student Affairs began the process of developing a strategic plan that would map the course for student life for the next ten years. The mission statement of Student Affairs attests:

Within the Catholic academic community of Notre Dame, it is the mission of Student Affairs to provide and integrate educational opportunities for all students to develop their full potential as individuals and future leaders in our Church, society, and world.

To further this mission, Student Affairs is committed to:

- offering students a learning environment in which they can integrate the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of their educational experience;
- providing students with the highest quality programs and services; and
- building strong collaborative links with other units of the University, particularly academic departments, centers and institutes, as well as with external constituencies.

Providing graduate and professional students with a rich, fulfilling, and vibrant experience of campus life is integral to the success of this mission. In recognition that the needs of post-baccalaureate students may differ significantly from those of undergraduates, the strategic plan for the Office of Student Affairs addresses the specific needs of graduate and professional students. The plan states:

Graduate students at Notre Dame require programs and services which differ, in many instances, from those required by undergraduate students. While undergraduates tend to identify most closely with their residence halls, graduate students often view their academic departments as their primary communities. On a campus which is highly residential, graduate students frequently perceive that they do not enjoy the same ready access to campus programs and services as undergraduates. Student Affairs has a critical role to play in terms of providing services to graduate students, and it is imperative that we enhance the quantity and quality of services we offer, particularly in the areas of placement assistance, student housing for both single and married students, counseling, health care and medical insurance needs. Recognition of the particular needs of graduate students, as distinct from those of undergraduates, is critical in providing these essential services. (<http://www.nd.edu/~stratgic/text/StudentAffairs.pdf>)

This survey will provide baseline data against which to measure change through future surveys. We look forward to working with the Graduate School, Law School, MBA, and MSAA Programs to improve the overall experiences of our post-baccalaureate students.

Results for Student Life Issues

A. General

Overall Notre Dame Experience (Questions 87, 88)

Eighty-one percent of graduate and professional students state that they are somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their Notre Dame graduate academic experience. Slight differentiations occur within subcategories: men responded positively more often than women to this question; Catholic and Protestant students responded more positively than those whose religion was “other or none”; business students responded more positively than law or graduate students. More noticeable differentiation occurs with regard to ethnicity; Asian American students were satisfied with their experience at a lesser rate (73%) than white students (82%) and than other U.S. minorities (81%). Asian American students also had the highest dissatisfaction rating of any of the subcategories (sex, religion, ethnicity, family status, or program); 19% of Asian American students say they are somewhat or very dissatisfied with their Notre Dame graduate academic experience.

Ninety-two percent of graduate and professional students say that they would recommend Notre Dame to someone considering their graduate or professional program. This response was consistently high regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity, family status, or program.

Quality of Life Comments (Question 89, *Free Response Section*)

Survey participants submitted almost 400 responses regarding their quality of life. General themes include:

- Health insurance continues to be an issue for post-baccalaureate students. The main areas of concern are the high cost of insurance, relative to stipends; lack of affordable coverage for spouses and dependent children; lack of dental and vision insurance; lack of coverage for birth control; and lack of coverage for maternity expenses. (32 comments)
- Many graduate and professional students say that they are treated as “second-class citizens” on a campus that is geared toward undergraduates in terms of many services and activities. Graduate students, in particular, perceive that they reside in a kind of no-man’s land, i.e., they have the responsibilities of both faculty and students, but the benefits of neither. They most frequently cite issues of parking, health insurance, and lack of access to away-game football tickets as examples of this status. (15 comments)
- Students express concern with the lack of diversity on campus, particularly with regard to religion and ethnicity. (15 comments)
- Stipends are perceived as inadequate, particularly among Arts and Letters graduate students. (14 comments)

- Students describe a lack of social life for graduate students; suggestions for improvement include support/social/networking groups that target women, Catholic singles, students with families, and spouses of graduate/professional students. (13 comments)

While some of these concerns require attention from the Graduate School or the University as a whole (i.e., health insurance and health care, parking, stipends), Student Affairs might begin to address the concerns about social opportunities. Student Activities, Campus Ministry, and the rector of Fischer O’Hara-Grace are all well-equipped to assist with some of these issues; the Office of Student Affairs should gather administrators from these areas to explore ways to improve social networking opportunities for graduate students.

B. Orientation

Orientation (Question 7)

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the orientation sessions sponsored by various student services departments (which were assessed separately from the academic orientation sessions).

Student Organizations (Graduate Student Union)

- 37% of students were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 19% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

University Village (student-family housing) *or Cripe Street Apartments* (married student housing)

- 34% of married students with no children were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 15% of married students with no children were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- 49% of students with children were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 21% of students with children were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Fischer O’Hara-Grace (post-baccalaureate student apartments and townhouses)

- 54% of students were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 16% of students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

International Student Services and Activities—Programming

- 80% of international students were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 11% of international students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

International Student Services and Activities—Immigration Services

- 77% of international students were satisfied or very satisfied.
- 9% of international students were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Overall, International Student Services and Activities appears to be very effective at orienting students to the University. Conversely, the student-family and graduate housing facilities might want to look more carefully at their orientation programs to find out specifically what kinds of information or events would be most appreciated by graduate and professional students. Finally, with regard to the student organizations, these results should be shared with the GSU so that it may determine whether its current orientation program needs attention.

Sources of Information (Question 6)

The survey asked students to indicate sources of information they received before arriving on campus. While most students note that they received information from the appropriate academic department, contact from other areas of the University was sporadic. For instance, only 43% of graduate and professional students say they received information about housing and only 49% say they received information about health services/health insurance. Although both issues (housing and health care) seem to be of significant importance to potential students, it is unclear whether students may have received the information but do not remember it. In both cases, law students appear to be better informed than students in MBA or graduate programs, with positive responses of 60% (housing information) and 65% (health services/insurance).

Only 45% of international students report that they received information from the Immigration Services Office prior to their arrival on campus. Again, a possible explanation for the level of this response could be that more students received information, but did not remember receiving it for the purposes of this survey.

One possible means to address these gaps would be for the Graduate School, Mendoza College of Business, and Law School to work directly with the relevant Student Affairs departments (Office of Residence Life and Housing, University Health Services, and International Student Services and Activities) to determine the best method for providing such information to students. With the availability of on-line resources, the answer may be as simple as providing a one-page summary of student services and their related web site addresses, or an e-mail that contains the same information.

Another option would be for the Vice President for Student Affairs to contact these students directly to offer information about relevant student services, similar to the letter and packet of information that the Undergraduate Admissions Office currently sends to admitted students on behalf of the Office of Student Affairs. In addition, a link could be added to the Student Affairs web page (Services for Graduate Students) that would direct these students to the appropriate department, depending on their information needs.

Finally, as a long-term solution, it might be helpful for all Student Affairs departments to have a section on their web sites devoted to addressing the specific needs and questions of graduate students.

Graduate and Professional Student Handbook (Question 11a)

Students were asked to rate the usefulness of the graduate and professional student handbook. Overall, 8% of graduate and professional students found the handbook very useful, 43% found it somewhat useful, 17% found it not at all useful, and 33% could not recall whether they had found it useful.

The current handbook is based largely on *duLac*, the undergraduate student handbook, but also contains additional information tailored specifically to the needs of graduate students. The publication in its current form was recently created (approximately three years ago) as a joint project by the Office of Student Affairs and the Graduate School. Given the less than enthusiastic response from graduate and professional students, it may be time to revise the document. We recommend that the Office of Student Affairs and the Graduate School work

8directly with graduate and professional students to update and edit the handbook so that it might be more helpful to students. A part of this collaborative effort would include the creation of communication methods that make this handbook more accessible to graduate and professional students, i.e. links to an online version; brochures focusing on the more relevant items in *duLac* for this population; etc.

C. Student Services / Campus Services

Preparedness to Achieve Career Goals (Question 36)

Note: Graduate and professional students have different resources for career services. Both the Law School and Mendoza College of Business offer career services for students in their programs (independent from the Career Center within the Division of Student Affairs). Graduate students may utilize the University's Career Center as well as working with faculty in their various departments, depending on the career path the students plan to pursue; i.e., a graduate student who plans to pursue a non-academic industry position would be most likely to utilize the Career Center; a graduate student who plans to pursue an academic career would be more likely to seek guidance from his or her department.

Seventy percent of business students report that they feel fairly well or very well prepared to achieve their career goals, while 30% say they feel somewhat prepared or not at all prepared. Among law students, 66% feel fairly well or very well prepared; 34% feel somewhat prepared or not at all prepared. Results from both these groups were significantly higher than from graduate students. Only 59% of graduate students believe they are fairly well or very well prepared; 41% report that they are somewhat prepared or not at all prepared.

The problem with comparing post-baccalaureate students in this area is that there are different proportions of each group who are close to finishing their programs. When controlling for year in the program (graduate students who are in their fourth year or beyond, law students in their third year or beyond, and business students in their second year or beyond), it was found that 62% percent of the graduate students, 62% of the law students, and 75% of the business students reported they feel fairly well or very well prepared to achieve their career goals.

Other interesting differences occur when comparing sex, religion, and ethnicity. Overall, women tend to feel less well-prepared than men; Catholics and Protestants feel better-prepared than those who describe their religious affiliation as Other or None; white students and underrepresented minority students feel better prepared than international students and Asian American students. Factors that might influence the feelings of international students are the complex issues of visas and immigration status, should the student wish to pursue a job in the United States. Another challenge might be the difficulty of conducting an international job search while living in the U.S.

Satisfaction with On-Campus Career Resources (Question 37)

This question offered students the opportunity to rate a host of on-campus career resources. The two areas that fall directly under the purview of Student Affairs are the Career Center and job fairs.

For the Career Center, 55% of those surveyed say that use of this resource is not applicable to them. Of those who did rate their satisfaction, 43% of students were somewhat or very satisfied; 11% of students were somewhat or very dissatisfied. The only significant difference in responses occurred between men and women, with women reporting a higher rate of satisfaction (50%) than men (39%).

With regard to job fairs, 59% of those surveyed say that use of this resource is not applicable to them. Of those who did rate their satisfaction, 31% of students were somewhat or very satisfied; 23% of students were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Statistically significant differences in responses were related to marital status, with single students reporting a higher rate of satisfaction (36%) than those who were married (22%) or married with children (25%).

The relatively high percentage of students who believe that these resources are not applicable to them may indicate an opportunity for increased collaboration between the Career Center and the Graduate School.

Department or Program Career Preparation (Question 38)

Students were also asked to rate their satisfaction with information from their academic departments about non-academic career options. Currently, 30% of students say that information from their departments about non-academic career options is not applicable. Of those who did rate their satisfaction, 35% of students were somewhat or very satisfied; 35% of students were somewhat or very dissatisfied. Given these mixed results, it appears as though graduate students could benefit from academic departments working with the Career Center's Assistant Director for Graduate Career Programs to improve access to resources in this area.

Services the University Should Offer (Question 57)

Students were asked to choose from a series of options which services they would like to see the University offer, and were given the option of suggesting other services as well.

In rank order, students chose the following services:

1. Infant care (for children under two years of age): 24% overall; demand was highest among students who are married with children (60%) and married with no children (38%).
2. Family-oriented events: 19% overall; demand was highest among students married with children (61%), married with no children (30%), and international students (30%).
3. Spouse/partner/family resource information: 18% overall; demand was highest among students married with children (50%), married with no children (36%), and international students (21%).
4. Discussion groups for spouses/partners: 13% overall; demand was highest among students married with children (31%) and married with no children (26%).

5. Eldercare for elder relatives of ND students: 4% overall; demand was highest among international students (8%) but relatively low in general.

The responses to this question highlight a perceived need for our post-baccalaureate population. Unlike undergraduates who typically do not have the responsibility of dependents, many graduate and professional students have additional concerns and obligations that naturally occur within the context of family units. With the coming reorganization of the Student Activities Office in the Division of Student Affairs, the Director of Student Activities for Programming has a great opportunity to work with graduate and professional students to develop programs and support services that will enhance the experience of these students within the context of diverse family connections.

Access Times and Experience of University Health Services (Question 81)

Students rated the access times at University Health Services positively, with 70% of respondents noting that the access time is good or excellent, 25% rating it fair, and only 5% rating it poor or very poor. No significant differences were apparent among responses based on gender, religion, ethnicity, family status, or program of study.

Similarly, students' experiences at the University Health Center were positive, with 65% rating their general experience good or excellent and 11% rating it poor or very poor. Again, few differences in perception occurred among the various groups (gender, religion, ethnicity, family status, or program of study).

Access Times at the University Counseling Center (Question 81)

Students also gave positive responses for access times at the University Counseling Center, with 67% of respondents noting that the access time is good or excellent, 26% rating it fair, and 8% rating it poor or very poor. Though some differences are apparent when examining responses from particular groups of students, the number of overall respondents (353) to this question was so small that the differences may appear skewed.

Students were not asked to rate their overall experience at the Counseling Center.

We recommend that University Health Services and the University Counseling Center continue to monitor patient/client satisfaction and concerns through the use of online surveys. Tracking this information will provide valuable insight for the staff as they continue to improve services.

Note: The next four questions were directed only to the post-baccalaureate international student population. The total number of students surveyed for these questions is 343.

Usefulness of International Students and Scholars Handbook (Question 84)

Of the 312 students who responded to this question, 73% found the handbook useful or very useful.

Timeliness and Efficiency of Immigration Services Office (Question 85)

Of the 308 students who responded, 96% believe that the Immigration Services Office has provided information and services in a timely and efficient manner.

International Student Services and Activities Programs (Question 86)

The following are the names of the activities programs, good to excellent percentage ratings and the percentage of those who checked the programs as not applicable.

Program Name	% good to excellent	% not applicable
American Culture through Music	12	76
Field Trips	17	71
Conversation Circles & Writing	14	77
Conversation Exchange Partners	19	71
ESL	20	69
Evenings of Prayer	13	80
Family Friendship	26	63
Food for Thought	15	76
International Coffee House	17	73
International Speakers Bureau	14	77
International Women's Club	16	77
Tax Assistance Program	74	26

With the notable exception of the Tax Assistance Program, approximately 70-75% of international students describe ISSA programs as “not applicable.” The apparently low participation rates may reflect any number of factors (i.e., ESL classes often serve spouses of post-baccalaureate students, while most of the students themselves already speak and write fluent English) and do not necessarily mean that these programs are irrelevant. It is our recommendation that ISSA perform outcome evaluations for its numerous programs to determine whether or not they are achieving the expected results for the selected population.

International Student Services and Activities Office Overall (Question 86)

Eighty percent of international students rate International Student Services and Activities as good or excellent.

Expansion or Improvement of Extracurricular Programs and Services (Question 82, *Free Response Section*)

A complete listing of students' comments is provided at the end of this report. General themes include:

- Students would like to see food services geared toward the graduate student population; specifically, they want affordable on-campus restaurants or cafes that include healthy, vegetarian, and ethnic food options (students acknowledge that these choices are available at the dining halls, but say that the meal plans are out of their price range). Students would also like to see more coffee shops (similar to Lula's) on campus. (39 comments)

- Regarding recreational facilities (which students overwhelmingly rate positively in the survey), students suggest that they would like to see more cardio equipment, additional gym space, an orientation geared toward graduate and professional students, and fitness class hours that better accommodate their schedules. (30 comments)
- A number of students used this opportunity to register their discontent with the health insurance available to graduate and professional students as well as to list some concerns about their personal experiences at the University Health Center; these comments were similar to the comments made in response to Question 89 (in section A of this report). (23 comments)
- Regarding Campus Ministry, students would like to see the office reach out specifically to graduate and professional students. They would like the Mass schedule in FOG to continue without interruption during breaks. Students of other (non-Catholic) religions sometimes feel alienated. They would like to see more information about services for those of other faiths. (19 comments)

It is apparent from some of the comments that post-baccalaureate students are unaware of services and opportunities that are already available; in some cases, the issues raised may be more a function of ineffective marketing of the University's services, rather than an actual lack of service. For example, students asked for a University-wide calendar of campus events, which already exists (agenda.nd.edu); another student requested that microwaves be available in LaFortune (they already are). It is important that the University and the Office of Student Affairs examine both the quality of services as well as how these services are marketed or communicated to graduate and professional students.

D. Support Networks

Approachability of Student Life Administrators (Question 55)

Students were asked to check the people and offices—such as friends, family, advisors, faculty, and other campus resources—that they would feel comfortable approaching if they needed help of some kind. Options that are under the purview of Student Affairs include: University Health Services (UHS), University Counseling Center (UCC), International Student Services and Activities (ISSA), Office of Residence Life and Housing (ORLH), and Campus Ministry (CM).

Students most frequently listed friends, family, and other students as those they would feel most comfortable approaching (at a rate of 70 – 80%). With regard to Student Affairs offices and administrators:

- UHS: 38% of students would feel comfortable approaching the University Health Center. Asian American students (29%) are less comfortable than white (40%), international (36%), or underrepresented minority students (34%). Business students are less comfortable (28%) than law (42%) and graduate (40%) students.

- UCC: 29% of students would feel comfortable approaching University Counseling Center. Women (34%) are more comfortable than men (26%). White (32%) and underrepresented minority students (27%) are more comfortable than international students (19%). Business students (21%) are less comfortable than graduate (31%) and law students (30%).
- ISSA: 10% of all students who responded would feel comfortable approaching International Student Services and Activities. Forty-four percent of international students say they would feel comfortable approaching ISSA.
- ORLH: 10% of students would feel comfortable approaching the Office of Residence Life and Housing. These numbers were fairly consistent regardless of sex, religion, ethnicity, family status, or program of study.
- CM: 19% of students would feel comfortable approaching Campus Ministry. Catholic students (30%) are more comfortable than Protestant (14%), Other (7%) or None (4%). Law students (25%) are more comfortable than graduate (19%) or business students (16%).

It is understandable and expected that students would be most comfortable approaching their family and friends for help. That said, each of these departments should review the responses above, giving some thought to determining the accuracy of this survey's reported level of student comfort in approaching various departments. It is recommended that this process include the formation of focus groups designed to delineate possible causes and solutions for low levels of student comfort in approaching various departments.

Graduate Student Union (GSU) Services, Representation, and Quality & Quantity of Events (Question 58)

Forty-five percent of the respondents rated the GSU as good or excellent in providing helpful services. There was a statistically significant difference between women and men in this category with a greater percentage of women (50%) versus men (41%) rating the GSU as good or excellent. This pattern was consistent throughout the remaining categories of this item: representing graduate students well; quality of social events; and quantity of social events. In each of these remaining categories, there was a statistically significant difference between the percentage of women and the percentage of men who responded good or excellent, with women responding significantly higher than men.

The results of the responses to this item provide two areas for further consideration. First, it would be important for the GSU to develop some type of outcome evaluation to further research the significantly higher ratings of GSU services by graduate women versus graduate men. Second, this outcome evaluation process could also attempt to address the various reasons a full third of respondents chose the "cannot rate/not applicable" response for each category: helpful services (35%); representing graduate students well (34%); quality of social events (32%); and quantity of social events (32%). Further consideration of these two areas will assist the GSU in providing services/programs that are of interest to both male and female graduate students as well as serving to increase the level of involvement of graduate students in GSU programs and

activities. Although a 30% “not applicable” response rate could be attributed to the academic rigor of our graduate programs or a function of the diverse population represented and served by the GSU, it would be advantageous for the GSU to determine the efficacy of its social programs/events while seeking to involve a greater number of graduate students.

Participation in GSU Social Events (Question 59)

Of the graduate students who responded to this item, 3% participated in SBA social events often, 27% occasionally, 37% once or twice and 33% indicated that they participate in GSU social events “not at all.” This low level of participation in GSU social events could be a direct reflection of the “not applicable” response selection discussed in the previous question.

Student Bar Association (SBA) Services, Representation, and Quality & Quantity of Events (Question 38, Law Survey) reviewing the services provided by the SBA to its constituency, it was found that 50% of the respondents rated the SBA as good or excellent in providing helpful services. Although there was a gender difference (men - 47%; women - 53%) in responding positively to this item, this difference was not statistically significant. There was, however, a statistically significant difference between women and men when considering the other three categories of this item: representing law students well (women - 57%; men - 55%); quality of social events (women - 68%; men - 58%); and quantity of social events (women - 72%; men - 63%).

As with the GSU, it would be important for the SBA to engage in some type of outcome evaluation to determine what aspects of their program are working well for women and attempt to mirror those successes for men in the law program.

Participation in SBA Social Events (Question 39, Law Survey)

By the response on this item, it is clear that the programming arm of the SBA has achieved a high level of success in providing programs that are of interest to its members. Of the law students who responded to this item, 25% of them participated in SBA social events often, 37% occasionally, and 28% once or twice. Only 10% indicated not attending these events at all.

Master of Science in Accountancy Association (MSAA) Services, Representation, and Quantity of Events (Question 58)

Eighty-two percent of the respondents rated the MSAA as good or excellent in providing helpful services. In the category of representing MSA students well, 71% of the respondents rated the MSAA as good or excellent. The quality of social programming was rated good or excellent by 74% of the respondents; 55% of them rated the quantity of social programming as good or excellent. There were no significant gender differences on this item.

Participation in MSAA Social Events (Question 39, MSA Survey)

Responses to this item indicate some success by the programming arm of the MSAA. Of the MSA students who responded to this item, 14% of them participated in MSAA social events often, 32% occasionally, 37% once or twice, and only 14% indicated not attending these events at all.

Experience With/Participation in Master of Business Administration Association (MBAA) Events (Question 38, MBA Survey)

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents rated the MBAA as good or excellent in providing helpful services. In the category of representing MBA students well, 65% of the respondents rated the MBAA as good or excellent. The quality of social programming was rated good or excellent by 69% of the respondents; 75% of them rated the quantity of social programming as good or excellent. There were no significant gender differences on this item.

Participation in MBAA Social Events (Question 39, MBA Survey)

Similar to the SBA, responses to this item indicate great success by the programming arm of the MBAA. Of the MBA students who responded to this item, 34% of them participated in MBAA social events often, 40% occasionally, 17% once or twice, and only 9% indicated not attending these events at all.

Given the superior results of the MBAA, MSAA and the SBA in meeting the programming needs of its members, it could be advantageous for the GSU to consider observing and adopting the best practices of these organizations as it attempts to meet the highly diverse needs of the graduate students it serves. This sharing of best practices would assist the GSU in creating a programming agenda for its members that is consistent, relevant, and community affirming.

E. Venues

Where Do You Live (Question 70)

Fischer O’Hara-Grace:	18%
Cripe St. Apartments:	1%
University Village:	3%
Other on campus:	3%
Apartment/house within one mile of campus:	18%
Apartment/house more than one mile from campus:	52%

Having over half the post-baccalaureate students live more than a mile from campus is a factor that should not be overlooked when student services departments assess how best to meet the needs of this population. Student Affairs should consider the ways in which we might be able to assist off-campus graduate and professional students. For instance, in the free-response section of this survey, a number of post-baccalaureate students mention the need for additional places on campus to eat or study, as well as their frustration with parking. These concerns make sense in light of the inconvenience of living off-campus. Student Affairs could also improve the types of information it provides graduate/professional students in this area. An example would be notifying students of the free city bus service provided to all members of the Notre Dame community.

Internet Connection (Question 43)

Ninety percent of the respondents are satisfied with Internet accessibility. No significant differences in satisfaction are apparent among the various constituencies.

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) should receive this information. It is our understanding that OIT continues to assess student satisfaction, and the results of this survey questions would likely be of interest to OIT.

Meal Plan (Question 71) and Eat On Campus (Question 72)

Although only 10% of the students surveyed purchased a University meal plan, a substantial number of them take full advantage of other campus food providers. The most popular locations for those surveyed were eateries located in LaFortune, with 70% of graduate students, 76% of law students, and 61% of business students having dined in one of those restaurants. Reckers was the next most popular site with 37% of graduate students, 58% of law students, and 41% of business students eating there. Third in popularity was Legends, with 28% of graduate students, 27% of law students, and 50% of business students making it their dining choice. It is interesting to note that for Reckers (58% of law students) and Legends (41% of business students), popularity might be related to the proximity of those restaurants to the respective departments of the students who dine there.

Relax On Campus (Question 73)

According to the students surveyed, the most popular places for them to relax include, in rank order:

1. Sports facilities (35%)
2. Other (31%)
3. Lafortune Student Center (30%)

Outside of these three locations, students typically relaxed in areas associated with their academic departments. Graduate students (36%) chose to relax in department lounges; law students (36%) found relaxation in the Irish Café; and business students (42%) were most likely to relax in the MBA Commons. Given the percentage of students that selected Other (31%) and None of the Above (20%) on this item, future surveys might want to be give students the opportunity to list the various places relaxation is sought. This information could allow us to focus on improving certain spaces, thus enhancing the usefulness of the space in meeting the needs of our graduate and professional students.

Quality of Athletic and Recreational Facilities, Availability of Places to Eat and Relax (Question 81)

Students are generally pleased with the University's athletic and other recreational facilities. Eighty-seven percent of graduate students, 77% of law students, and 77% of business students rated these facilities as good or excellent. The same holds true for the availability of places to

eat and relax, with 66% of graduate students, 61% of law students, and 70% of business students rating this aspect of campus life as good or excellent.

The strong positive results of this section of the survey support the notion that our food, recreation, and sport venues adequately meet the needs of our graduate and professional student population. Given the rigorous and sometimes unpredictable nature of life as a graduate or professional student, it makes intuitive sense that only 10% of the students surveyed actually purchased a University meal plan. It would seem that the flexibility offered by the other campus food venues allows students to meet their dining and social needs while catering to the constraints and commitments of graduate and professional programs.

F. Religious Activities

Catholic Affiliation of the University (Question 4)

Seventeen percent of graduate students responded that Notre Dame's Catholic affiliation was a very important factor that attracted them to the University, while 23% note that it was somewhat important and 59% note that this factor was not important. This item was not asked of professional students. Though the 40% of students who factor the University's religious affiliation into their decision to attend Notre Dame may be lower than hoped, it represents a significant minority among the graduate student population. Campus Ministry has a great opportunity to target this audience, and may want to think about designing programs specifically for graduate and professional students.

Within the 17% who ranked Catholic affiliation as very important, the correlating factors are students' own religious affiliation and ethnicity. Catholic students (37%) were more likely to list the University's Catholic affiliation as a factor than Protestants (4%) or Other (2%). Underrepresented minority students (28%) and Asian American students (27%) were more likely to do so than white students (20%), and significantly more likely to do so than international students (6%).

To put the Catholic affiliation question in context with other influencing factors, 56% of graduate students note that "the overall quality of the University" was a very important factor in their choice to attend Notre Dame. Both these questions (Catholic affiliation and overall quality of the University) were asked only of graduate students.

Participation in Religious Services (Question 74)

The survey asked students to assess how frequently they participated in campus religious services and activities. Overall, 20% of students respond that they frequently participate; 31% participate occasionally; 50% never participate. Religious affiliation is the most obvious factor that corresponds to varying rates of participation. Slight differences among ethnic groups and academic programs are also evident.

Among Catholic students, 38% participate frequently, 41% participate occasionally, and 21% never participate. Among other Christian students, 5% participate frequently, 29% participate occasionally, and 66% never participate. Among students who identified their religious affiliation as "other," 4% participate frequently, 19% participate occasionally, and 77% never

participate. Eighty-eight percent of students who marked their religious affiliation as “none” never participate in campus religious services; 12% participate occasionally.

With regard to ethnicity as a factor, underrepresented minority students (27%) participate most frequently, followed by white students (23%), Asian American students (15%), and international students (5%). Finally, in terms of academic or professional program, law students (26%) participate most frequently followed by graduate students (18%) and MBA students (16%).

Reasons for Non-Participation (Question 75)

Students who do not participate in campus religious activities were asked to identify any factors that contribute to their non-participation. In rank order, students cited the following reasons:

1. *Lack of interest:* 24% overall; this factor was highest among non-religious students (56%) and international students (32%).
2. *Lack of time:* 24% overall; this factor was highest among Asian American students (31%) and business students (27%).
3. *Religious affiliation:* 20% overall; this factor was highest among students whose faith is something other than Catholic or Protestant (48%), students who are married with children (33%), and Asian American students (31%).
4. *Preference for off-campus religious services:* 14% overall; this factor was highest among Protestants (33%), students who are married with children (30%), and students who are married with no children (21%).
5. *Unaware of their occurrence:* 6% overall, with fairly consistent responses across the various categories of sex, religion, ethnicity, marital status, and program of study.

Spiritual Life Now Compared With the Start of Graduate School (Question 76)

Students were asked to describe their spiritual lives now compared to the start of graduate school. Overall, 32% of students report that their spiritual lives are somewhat enhanced or strongly enhanced, while 18% say that their spiritual lives are somewhat diminished or strongly diminished.

Responses varied little based on sex or program of study. Catholic students responded more positively (40% say that their spiritual lives are somewhat enhanced or strongly enhanced) than Protestants (34%), students with other religious affiliations (26%) and students with no religious affiliation (14%). International students responded less positively (only 24% say that their spiritual lives are somewhat enhanced or strongly enhanced) than Asian American students (37%), underrepresented U.S. minority students (35%), and white students (34%). Family status also appeared to be a factor, with 42% of students who are married with children responding that their spiritual lives are somewhat enhanced or strongly enhanced, while 32% of students who are married with no children and 31% of single students indicated this response.

Opportunities for Worship and Spiritual Development (Question 81)

Overall, respondents appear satisfied with the opportunities for worship, with 86% rating these opportunities good or excellent. Among the respondents, perceptions varied based on religious affiliation. Satisfaction was highest among Catholics (with 93% rating the opportunities good or excellent) and Protestants (with 78% rating the opportunities good or excellent). Students whose religious affiliation is Other or None also say that opportunities for worship are good or excellent (63% and 66%, respectively).

With regard to ethnicity, international students were the least satisfied, with 67% noting that opportunities for worship are good or excellent. By contrast, underrepresented minority students responded positively at a rate of 93%, and Asian American and white students each approved at a rate of 89%.

Regarding other forms of spiritual development, 71% of respondents rated these opportunities good or excellent. Again, positive perceptions were highest among Catholics (79%) and Protestants (64%) and lower among None (60%) and Other (49%).

Campus Ministry Offerings and Information on Other Faiths (Question 81)

Students were asked to rate Campus Ministry's offerings and information on other faiths. The department did not fare well in this area, with 50% rating the offerings good or excellent and 26% rating them poor or very poor. The numbers are even less favorable when Catholics (67% of whom thought the offerings were good or excellent) are excluded from the results. Among the students directly affected by this issue, only 37% of Protestants and 34% of students whose religious affiliation is Other believe that the offerings and information for students from other faiths is good or excellent.

Based on these results, Campus Ministry is effectively meeting the needs of Catholic post-baccalaureate students. The Campus Ministry staff might want to examine the viability of developing its offerings for students of other faiths.

G. Insurance

Medical Insurance Participation (Question 77, Question 78)

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents participate in the medical insurance plan offered through the University. Graduate and professional students utilize the plan to varying degrees, with graduate students participating at a rate of 62%, while only 52% of law and 50% of MBA students participate in the University's health insurance.

The 42% of students who opt out of the plan cite the following reasons for their lack of participation:

- 48% are covered by a family policy; this response was more common for professional students (71% for law students; 58% for MBA students) than for graduate students (35%). Women also cited this reason at a higher rate (55%) than men (44%).

- 26% wanted a less costly policy; this response was most prevalent among international students (69%), students who are married with children (38%), and graduate students (33%).

11% wanted a more comprehensive policy. A slight difference existed here between men (9%) and women (15%); based on students' comments to the free-response section of the survey, one reason for the difference here may be that women expressed an interest in plans that covered contraception costs as well as maternity costs.

Experience of Medical Insurance (Question 79)

Sixty-seven percent of graduate and professional students believe they received information about the plan in a timely manner. Only 38% of graduate and professional students believe that the premium for the policy is reasonable.

Rate Insurance (Question 80)

The student medical insurance policy received mixed reviews, with about one-third of respondents rating it very poor or poor, one-third rating it fair, and one-third rating it good or excellent.

Among the various statistical breakdowns, international students and underrepresented minorities were more satisfied with the policy (about 35%) than Asian American students (only 18%) or white students (26%). Students who are married with children more often rated the policy good or excellent (35%) than single students or students married with no children (27% for both groups). Thirty-one percent of the graduate students gave the plan a positive rating, in contrast with 20% of law and 21% of MBA students.

Note: The University's current insurance plan is being assessed by Hewitt Associates, an external consultant, and is being funded by the Graduate School. The issue of health insurance is part of a larger issue regarding the stipends and compensation for graduate and professional students which is being addressed by the Provost and the Graduate School.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The University of Notre Dame is renowned for its commitment to the formation of undergraduates through the residential mission of the residence hall system. This survey was designed and administered to provide Student Affairs with a baseline of the post-baccalaureate student experience. Although Notre Dame has excelled on a number of fronts in providing valued student services to this population, consistency of communication with post-baccalaureate students continues to provide the institution with one of its greatest challenges. Whether it was information received prior to arriving on campus, information received during orientation, or the post-baccalaureate student handbook, there was great variation in the quality, quantity and utility of the information provided.

It is clear that the University is moving in the right direction when 81% of the respondents indicate that they are somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with their Notre Dame graduate experience. This survey has highlighted, however, a number of services and programs that need adjusting to better fit the needs of this population. This perspective was particularly evident in the relatively high percentage of students who felt that the Career Center and Job Fairs were of no use to them; the perceived lack of service to non-Catholics by Campus Ministry; and the desire by these individuals for more family oriented/driven programming.

Overall, this was a revealing and illustrative undertaking for the Office of Student Affairs and the Graduate School. From the 63.2% response rate to the high number of comments made in the Free Response section, this survey has become a source of excitement and hope that we can adequately meet the needs of our graduate and professional students. In sharing these results with other administrators and with post-baccalaureate students, our goal is to begin an ongoing dialogue that will result in the best possible experience for graduate and professional students at the University of Notre Dame. The end result of which would be Notre Dame gaining a reputation for services, programs, and activities that engage and inspire both undergraduate *and* post-baccalaureate students.

As a result of this report, the Task Force on Graduate and Professional Student Life would like to make the following recommendations:

1. That this report be distributed to the University President; the Provost; the Deans of the Graduate School, Law School, and Business School; senior staff and department directors in the Division of Student Affairs; and appropriate student leaders in the Graduate Student Union, Student Bar Association, Master of Business Administration Association and Master of Accountancy Association.
2. That this report be the subject of a Student Affairs department director meeting during the early part of the 2007-2008 academic year, with the intent of brainstorming ways in which the Division might begin to address the concerns of graduate and professional students. As part of this recommendation, a designated staff person in each department should be charged specifically with addressing the needs of graduate and professional students.
3. That a member of the senior staff of Student Affairs with responsibility for graduate and professional student life convene a series of meetings during the 2007-2008 academic year. These gatherings should include representatives from the GSU, SBA, MBAA, and MSAA; student services administrators from the Graduate School, Law School (when appropriate), and Mendoza College of Business (when appropriate), and the relevant department director from the Division of Student Affairs. The meetings would address a series of topics including: religious activities, career services, student activities, health services, counseling services, international student services, multicultural student services, residence life and housing, and security. Depending on the outcome of these conversations, Student Affairs department directors may elect to continue meeting with students and administrators to further develop programs, activities, and events specifically geared toward post-baccalaureate students.
4. That in conjunction with the above recommendation, it is suggested that Student Affairs help organize a "Best Practices" workshop that would involve those members of the

GSU, MBA, MSAA and Law programs responsible for programming activities. Such a gathering will allow each of these organizations to benefit from the collective knowledge of relevant, effective, and community-supportive programming.

5. That given the central nature of Campus Ministry to the mission of Student Affairs—and indeed, to the entire University—it is our recommendation that this department create a task force focused on the graduate and professional students’ spiritual experience at Notre Dame. Exploration of these issues might also include benchmarking trips to other institutions. It is conceivable that such trips could enhance the relevancy of our programmatic offerings in meeting the spiritual needs of our post-baccalaureate students.

A copy of the entire survey as well as demographics for both the post baccalaureate population and survey participants is included in this report. In addition, a detailed breakdown of the survey results which includes the free response section of the survey is available upon request.