Executive Summary

2006 Graduate Student Survey

A web based survey was administered to the UW Tacoma graduate students during the first week of September, 2006 measuring their general attitudes, expectations, and perceptions about UW Tacoma. Email was used to solicit responses from all registered graduate students with a UW Tacoma email address. In total 189 surveys were completed making the response rate for the survey 43% of the total 436 graduate students. Below are the key findings from the survey:

Nearly 90% of the surveyed graduate students made UW Tacoma their first choice for graduate school and 99% of those were accepted at UW Tacoma. 28% of the graduate students found out about the graduate programs at UW Tacoma from other UW Tacoma graduate students, with the UW Tacoma website providing 26% of our graduate students with information about graduate programs at Tacoma campus. 91% of the graduate students said that the overall reputation of the University of Washington was an important to very important reason why they decided to attend a UW Tacoma graduate program. The location of the UW Tacoma campus was important to very important for 88% and with 85% of the students commuting by themselves location is important. The graduate programs themselves were important to very important for 81% of those choosing a UW Tacoma graduate program and the academic reputation of UW Tacoma itself with 79% saying that it was important to very important to them in their decision to attend.

The primary reasons for attending graduate school by our students were: career development (35%), to make more money (21%), and personal development (20%). It is very important to essential for more than 90% of graduate students to become a better person as a result of attending graduate school. Nearly 78% of UW Tacoma graduate students have an above average to excellent understanding of what is required of them to graduate from their programs. Graduate students attending the UW Tacoma also bring with them strengths, such as 99% saying that they rate their ability to make a follow through on a commitment as an average to an above average ability. 70% of graduate students plan on completing their degrees within 2-3 years and 3 out of 4 UW Tacoma graduate students plan on staying in the Puget Sound area after graduating from their respective programs.

The first choice learning activity for graduate students are lectures (26%) followed by group discussion (24%) and independent research (12%). The top three concerns for UW Tacoma graduate students are: balancing studies and work (75%), balancing studies and home (73%), and financing their educations (70%). Slightly more than 60% of graduate students plan on spending more than 11 hours per week to study.

Most graduate students are paying for their education by themselves (77%), followed by student loans (40%), grants and scholarships (19%) and employer paid (19%). Of those receiving financial aid from UW Tacoma 45% were satisfied to very satisfied with their financial aid package while 21% were dissatisfied to very dissatisfied, and 33% did not apply for financial aid. Three out of four graduate students are working more than 20 hours per week and more than two thirds are homeowners.

More than half of the graduate students at the University of Washington, Tacoma have frequent interactions with people from various ethnicities and races, however only 2% plan on applying to any of the study abroad programs at UW Tacoma. Only 9% speak a language other than English in their homes.

Politically, 40% describe themselves as liberal to very liberal, 30% as moderate and 21% as conservative to very conservative. The remaining 9% did not identify their political standing or declared other as their political affiliation. 90% of the graduate students indicated that they are registered to vote with nearly
80% participating in the last election. Eight out of ten graduate students participate in some form of charity or volunteer work and regardless of political stripe 94% indicated that they agreed to strongly agree that one should stay informed about politics and national affairs and 93% said they agreed to strongly agree that it is important to vote. Most UW Tacoma graduate students get their news from TV (27%), the internet (26%) and the newspaper and radio tied at (20%).

The parents of UW Tacoma graduate students are educated as follows: 95% have a high school diploma, 12% have some college, 6% have a two year college degree, 18% have a bachelors’ degree, 6% have some post graduate work, while nearly 15% have a master’s degree and 6% a Ph.D. Hardly any of the graduate students have or had relatives attend a University of Washington campus with 7% had a parent attend a UW campus while 10% had a sibling attend a UW campus.

Survey Statistics

Detailed results of the survey are available by request to:

UW Tacoma
Office of Academic Affairs
Survey Administration