Winter Assessment of the Student Experience
Executive Summary

May 2011
Requests for additional or custom reporting of survey findings can be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs Survey Administration. Some findings and analysis is restricted to university personnel. All findings are subject to Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) reporting restrictions and requirements.
Overview

During the Winter Quarter of 2011, enrolled UW Tacoma students were invited to fill out a web-based survey of their opinions, attitudes, and general satisfaction levels with the facilities, resources, services, and academics at UW Tacoma. 367 students completed the survey.

Student Characteristics

Fifty-two percent of students responding indicated that neither of their parents or legal guardians has a college degree. They are, in effect, first generation college students. Of respondents, 13% have at least one parent or guardian who is not a native English speaker, and 72% are financially independent. Most student (60%), work for 15 hours or more per week while 29% are parents or care-givers of children who are under 18 living in their homes. Students reported their inclusion in the following racial and ethnic groups; Caucasian or white (non-Hispanic) (78%), Asian American or Asian (13%), Hispanic or Latino (9%), African-American (6%), Native American (6%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (3%).

A strong majority of respondents said that if they had not been accepted to UW Tacoma, they would have attended another four-year institution (80%). A majority stated that they hope to pursue graduate school after completing a Bachelor’s degree, either at the Master’s level (45%) or the Doctoral level (25%).

Fig. 1: Self reported race/ethnicity
Campus Facilities

In general, students who actively used the various campus facilities at UW Tacoma indicated fairly strong approval of them. A high degree of satisfaction was reported by 88% of those who had used the library facilities and 85% indicated that the library hours were adequate for their study and resource access needs. Similarly, 81% of those who have made use of the Diversity Resource Center, 77% of those who have used the Teaching and Learning Center, and 89% of those who have made use of the meeting, study, and Commons areas in Phillip Hall reported that they were very satisfied.

One notable exception was a reported 65% dissatisfaction rate among users of the Campus Fitness Center. It should be acknowledged, however, that a sizeable number of students reported that they had not used many of the available facilities. For example, 78% reported they had not used Student Health Services, 84% had not used the Recreation Center, and 88% had not used the Campus Fitness Center or the Outpost. For most of these facilities, more than half of the students who indicated they had not utilized them indicated that they may in the future. 58% of students responding thought there is a need for additional facilities to enhance campus life at UW Tacoma, such as a student union, more study space, and more student organization space.

Student Services

Most survey respondents indicated that the wide range of student services and resources available to UW Tacoma students generally meets their needs. Eighty-one percent of students who have used the Student Counseling Center were satisfied with the help they received, as were 82% of those that took advantage of the New Student Orientation program. Similarly, 93% of those using Health and Wellness Services, 82% of those using Computer Services, 80% of those using Multicultural Resources, and 91% of those using Veteran’s Services were very satisfied with the assistance available to them.

A significant majority of respondents who used Enrollment Services regarding registration or financial aid issues, found it to be satisfactory, with positive ratings from 78% of students who obtained assistance in person and 67% of those who obtained assistance by phone or email. A majority of respondents who indicated they had consulted the various web pages associated with Enrollment Services reported them to be somewhat or very helpful: Admissions (81%), Financial Aid and Scholarships (75%), Registration (77%), and Veterans Affairs (73%). Most of the students reported a positive experience with the Admissions process (78%) and the Registration process (75%) at UW Tacoma as well, indicating that both were easy to understand and navigate. 73% felt that Academic Advising has a positive impact on college success. However, a much lower percentage (39%) felt that Peer Advisors have a positive impact, with 55% reporting no opinion. This suggests that a sizeable number of students have not had any experience with this service.
Academics and Instruction

Overall, the respondents expressed high satisfaction with the quality of the faculty and instruction in general at UW Tacoma, with 72% rating it as either excellent or very good. Students evaluated the quality of the faculty within their major areas of study particularly high, with 90% rating them as good, very good, or excellent. Many respondents (86%) reported that their professors are either always available or at least available most of the time when they have needed assistance.

Seventy percent reported that their professors consistently provide prompt feedback on their academic work. About 86% felt that their professors treat students in an objective manner. In general, students indicated that they feel that their professors employ teaching methods that are effective for their learning styles and incorporate technology in ways that enhances student learning. The quality of required courses in the students’ majors also received high ratings. However, 16% reported that the availability of these courses was only fair, poor, or very poor.

Thirty-nine percent of students who responded indicated that the course work at UW Tacoma was more challenging than they had expected, with about 53% reporting that it was about the same as they had anticipated. The majority of students felt they were academically prepared for their courses, expressing the most confidence in their preparation in the areas of computers and technology and reading skills and the least confidence in research and library skills, study habits, and science.

A fair amount of interest was indicated in a range of new undergraduate majors or concentrations that are currently under consideration at UW Tacoma. Respondents reported that they are either interested or very interested in the following BA programs: Arts in the Community (23%), Environmental Engineering (22%), Hispanic Studies (15%), History (25%), Human Rights (29%), Non-Profit Management (28%), Nursing (20%), Sustainable Urban Development (23%), Writing (21%); and in the following concentrations: Pre-Medical, Pre-Veterinary, Pre-Dental, or Pre-Pharmacy (26%), Money and Banking (22%).

For those planning to attend graduate school at UW Tacoma, respondents reported that they are either interested or very interested in the following Master’s programs: Community and Metropolitan Studies (29%), Accounting (18%), Environmental Engineering (21%), Teacher Certification, Secondary Mathematics (21%); and in the following doctoral program: Ed.D. in Educational Leadership (25%).
Technology

Students reported their views on the relative importance (high, some, or no) of a range of technologies associated with instructional or advisory functions. Those rated with the highest levels of importance were online degree audit systems (high, 70%; some, 20%) and a learning and research commons with integrated resources, services and technology for individual and group research, production and instruction (high, 50%; some, 37%). Other technologies rated were hybrid instruction delivery options incorporating online lessons with class lectures (high, 39%; some 35%), online courses (high, 39%; some, 35%), online advising (high, 46%; some, 32%), and online comprehensive exams (high, 34%; some, 35%).

Campus Environment

In general, students gave the UW Tacoma environment high marks for the quality of the campus, with a large majority rating it as good, very good, or excellent: grounds and buildings (94%), classrooms (87%), and labs (89% of students who indicated that they had utilized them). However, a fair number of respondents expressed concern over the availability of places to study on campus, with 33% rating it as only fair, poor, or very poor.

Organizations and Campus Activities

A majority of students felt that extracurricular activities are important, with 75% agreeing that out-of-classroom experiences at UW Tacoma contribute to students’ personal, social, and ethical development. Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in remaining on campus or returning if various types of activities were offered. The highest level of interest was reported for professional performances by actors, musicians, comedians, with 50% indicating a definite “yes” and 40% “maybe.” Personal improvement activities such as health and wellness workshops, yoga and fitness classes also elicited substantial interest (yes, 43%; maybe, 39%).

Varying levels of interest were reported for other types of events: artistic events such as art exhibits or multimedia presentations (yes, 37%; maybe, 42%), scholarly events such as lectures or book readings (yes, 37%; maybe, 40%), community activities such as political debates, candidate forums, or block parties (yes, 34%; maybe, 41%), diversity programs (yes, 23%; maybe, 42%), leadership speakers and leadership training (yes, 31%; maybe, 40%), social activities such as dance functions, movies, clubs (yes, 27%; maybe, 37%), family-oriented activities that children may attend (yes, 27%; maybe, 27%), counseling services (yes, 25%; maybe, 34%), and service learning (yes, 21%; maybe, 45%).
The lowest levels of interest were indicated for Greek letter organizations (yes, 15%; maybe, 19%), with 65% reporting no interest, and for spiritual or religious events (yes, 9%; maybe, 34%).

Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they had attended programs offered by student organizations or the Division of Student Affairs, with 68% reporting that they chose to attend a particular program because it was related to his or her major, program, or career path. 68% of those who had not attended any student organization programs reported that the primary reason was that they do not have the time.