

2004 Student Experience Survey Report

In April 2004, the Office of Institutional Research and Planning administered the Student Experience Survey (SES). The SES consists of 67 questions covering various aspects of University life. The SES was completed by 2,708 students in selected classes from all UTA schools/colleges, representing 11% of the total spring 2004 student population.

The SES contains a subset of questions from the Comprehensive Student Survey first administered in 1973. Due to concerns about length, the Comprehensive Student Survey was split into the SES and the Student Affairs Survey for the 2004 administration. These student surveys have become an important tool in providing student behavioral and attitudinal data to supplement the demographic information normally collected as part of the application process. These data allow the formation of a more comprehensive picture of UTA's student population. This, in turn, allows the University to better respond to student needs. The SES also provides a long-term view of UTA's changing student population, with comparative data from the past 30 years.

Demographic comparisons showed the survey respondents to be fairly representative of the overall student population, with a few exceptions. The ethnic proportions of the respondent group closely paralleled the overall student population for Whites (53.5% vs. 51.5%), Hispanics (10.1% vs. 11.7%), and Blacks (11.2% vs. 12.2%). However, a considerably larger proportion of survey respondents reported their ethnicity as "Asian" (16% vs. 10%), while the proportion reporting "International" (4% vs. 12%) was smaller. It could be that Asian students with International visa status do not distinguish well between these two categories, causing discrepancies when compared to the "official" ethnicity recorded by the university. The respondent group had a slightly higher proportion of females (56% vs. 53%). Freshman were considerably under represented (4.0% vs. 14.3%) among the survey respondents while the Master's students were considerably over-represented (29.1% vs. 21.0%), an artifact of the classes chosen for survey administration.

Analyses of the 2,708 completed SES surveys indicate that currently enrolled students are generally quite satisfied with University programs and services. Aspects with which students expressed the greatest satisfaction include University Center Facilities, Financial Aid Services, Campus Bookstore, and the Bursar's Office.

Highlights from the 2004 SES are included below.

Student Demographics

- The percentage of students who work has decreased since 2001. In 2001, about 78% of the students were employed, whereas only 73% of the 2004 students were employed.
- Fewer students are working more than 20 hours per week. In 2001, half (50%) of the students worked more than 20 hours, whereas in 2004, the percentage decreased to 43%.
- The percentage of students relying on own full- or part-time employment as their main source of financial support has decreased from 34.6% in 2001 to 28.0% in 2004. Reliance on loans as the main source of financial support has increased from 11.0% to 14.1%. Likewise, reliance on parental/family aid has increased from 25.2% to 29.2%.
- Eighty percent of students have at least one parent who attended college, and 54% of students have at least one parent who obtained a 4-year degree. These figures have increased from the 2001 figures of 70% who attended college and 50% who obtained a 4-year degree.
- Almost three fourths (74%) of students are single, comparable to 2001 when 72% of students were single.
- Eighteen percent of students have children. This is slightly down from 2001 where 20% reported having children.

Student Educational Objectives

- Fifty-two percent of the 2004 respondents plan to obtain a master's degree at either UTA or another institution compared to 53% in 2001. Forty-two percent of the 2004 respondents plan to complete a master's degree at UTA.
- Those with aspirations to earn a PhD at either UTA or another institution increased from 28% in 2001 to 32% in 2004.

Student Behavior

- In 2004, 75% of respondents reported previous enrollment in another college/university compared to 71% in 2001.
- The percent of students commuting 25 miles or more to UTA rose slightly from 19% in 2001 to 21% in 2004. The percent of students residing outside Arlington city limits rose from 46.5% in 2001 to 50.3% in 2004.
- The top reasons for attending UTA are convenience (39%), cost (13%) and academic reputation (11%). These were also the top reasons in 2001: convenience (42%), cost (11%) and academic reputation (9%).
- Eighty-nine percent used a student computer account provided by the university during the spring semester compared to 63% in 2001. Ninety percent currently own a personal computer (84% in 2001), and 99% report having Internet access at home compared to 84% in 2001.
- Sixteen percent of respondents have taken a distance education course from UTA (not reported in 2001) and another 36% stated they were likely or very likely to enroll in a distance education course in the future compared to 52% in 2001 who stated they were likely or very likely to enroll in a distance education course.

Student Attitudes

- The top five areas in which students feel they need assistance are:
 - ✓ Stress management
 - ✓ Time management
 - ✓ Improving public speaking skills
 - ✓ Developing better study skills/habits
 - ✓ Wellness/fitness

Students were generally satisfied with University services in 2004. Students rated 14 items on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied).

- Out of 14 rated services, the top 5 UTA services/programs in student satisfaction include:
 - ✓ Financial Aid Services (mean=3.55)
 - ✓ University Center Facilities (mean=3.49)
 - ✓ Tutoring (mean=3.48)
 - ✓ Bursar's Office (mean=3.41)
 - ✓ Campus Bookstore (mean=3.38)
- Out of 14 rated services, the lowest 5 UTA services/programs in student satisfaction include:
 - ✓ Parking (mean=2.41)
 - ✓ Part-time employment services (mean=3.05)
 - ✓ University Apartments/House (mean=3.06)
 - ✓ University Residence Halls (mean=3.09)
 - ✓ International Office (mean=3.15)

Students' UTA Experience

Students were asked to provide responses to a series of statements concerning various experiences on the UTA campus using an Agreement scale: 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree; 5=no opinion or not applicable. Responses of "no opinion" were not included in the calculation of mean responses. Students were generally in agreement with the statements (i.e., Mean \geq 3.0).

- Out of 23 statements, the 5 with the highest agreement included:
 - ✓ I have found web-based registration to be efficient way (mean=3.37; 93.3% Agree/Strongly Agree).
 - ✓ I have found useful information available on the UTA web site (mean=3.26; 92.0% Agree/Strongly Agree).
 - ✓ My knowledge and understanding in my academic field has increased substantially (mean=3.18; 88.8% Agree/Strongly Agree).
 - ✓ I have found web-based tuition and fee payment to be efficient (mean=3.16; 84.9% Agree/Strongly Agree).
 - ✓ Faculty are available to students during regular, posted office hours (mean=3.08; 89.1% Agree/Strongly Agree).
- Out of 23 statements, the 5 with the least agreement included:
 - ✓ Adequate opportunities for internships exist (mean=2.38; 48.4% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - ✓ Often I am referred to several different people before someone can answer my questions (mean=2.51; 49.7% Agree/Strongly Agree) (*Note: disagreement on this question would be considered positive.*)
 - ✓ The cost of attending UTA is reasonable (mean=2.65; 63.8% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - ✓ Inquiries to university offices have been answered quickly, clearly and accurately (mean=2.85; 77.5% Agree/Strongly Agree)
 - ✓ University offices are open at convenient times for me (mean=2.89; 79.2% Agree/Strongly Agree)

2001 to 2004 Changes

- A few differences were observed from comparing the results of the 2001 student surveys to the 2004 results:
 - ✓ Fewer students in 2004 stated they were likely or very likely to enroll in a distance education course (46%) than did those in 2001 (52%).
 - ✓ Food services (Connection Café, University Center Café, food court) saw a large increase in satisfaction with 68% of the students reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied in 2004 compared to 54% in 2001.
 - ✓ Both campus housing and university apartments/houses saw their satisfaction rating increase from 2001 to 2004. Those reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with campus housing increased from 50% in 2001 to 70% in 2004. Those reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with campus apartments or houses increased from 47% in 2001 to 62% in 2004.
 - ✓ Those reporting satisfaction with the financial aid office and/or the financial aid process also increased from 2001 to 2004 61% to 76%.
 - ✓ The campus bookstore saw a drop in its satisfaction rating, going from 88% reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with the campus bookstore in 2001 to 75% satisfied/very satisfied in 2004.

Group Comparisons

- Undergraduate vs. Graduate Students:
 - ✓ Graduate students were more satisfied with parking than undergraduates (32% satisfied or very satisfied, versus 25%). Undergraduates were more satisfied with university residence halls and university apartments and houses.
 - ✓ Undergraduates use certain services more often than graduates: Tutoring in specific courses, personal counseling, food services, and financial aid services.
 - ✓ The majority of Graduate students (57%) do not feel there are adequate opportunities for internships.
 - ✓ More than twice as many undergraduate students felt that they need help improving their mathematical skills compared to graduate students (15.8% vs. 6.1%).
 - ✓ More than twice as many undergraduates students felt that they need help developing better study skills and habits (30.0% vs. 14.4%) and in improving their test-taking skills (28.1% vs. 13.4%) compared to graduate students.
 - ✓ More graduate students felt they need more help with improving their writing ability (20.4% vs. 14.3%) and in improving their decision-making skills (15.1% vs. 11.1%) than did undergraduate students.
- Students residing on-campus vs. students residing off-campus:
 - ✓ Students living on-campus are more likely to use part-time employment services, food services, and career counseling and placement services than are those students who live off-campus.
 - ✓ There is no significant difference in the response of those students who live on-campus to those who live off-campus when looking at degree of satisfaction with UTA's services or administrative offices.
- Comparison by ethnicity: White, minority students, and Asian/International Students
 - ✓ 28% of Asian/International students reported dissatisfaction with the Bursar's Office, while only 16% of minorities and 17% of White students found experiences at the office to be dissatisfying.
 - ✓ Minority students reported they used services for counseling and placement services more often than did Asian/International or White students -- 52% of minority students reported using counseling and placement services a few times a month to two or more times a month, compared to 42% for White students and 43% for Asian/International students.
 - ✓ Minority students reported they used tutoring services for specific courses more often than did Asian/International or White students -- 54% of minority students reported using tutoring services a few times a month to two or more times a month, compared to 41% for White students and 44% for Asian/International students.
 - ✓ Eighty-five percent of minority students reported using financial aid services a few times a month to two or more times a month, compared to 78% for White students and 69% for Asian/International students.
 - ✓ Eighty-five percent of white students stated they would recommend UTA to a friend or relative, 83% of minority students would recommend UTA to friends or family as would 72% of Asian/International students.
 - ✓ Thirty-three percent of Asian/International students felt adequate opportunities for internships exists. Forty-nine percent of minority students felt adequate opportunities exist, as did 52% of White students.
 - ✓ When asked if the student needed help in any areas, 44% of Asian/International students, 29% of minority students, and 17% of White students stated they need assistance in improving their public speaking skills.