

INTRODUCTION

The annual Graduating Senior Survey investigates graduating seniors' satisfaction with their academic experience and overall Marquette education, engagement in co-curricular learning experiences at Marquette, perceived impact of their education on institutional learning outcomes, experiences with key mission and identity objectives of the university, and plans for the immediate future.

The survey has been administered since the early 1990's and is currently conducted by the Office of the Provost. As the instrument was substantially revised in 2013, the results herein show comparisons to 2013 where applicable. The survey was administered online in April 2014. All graduating seniors were invited via email to complete the survey; 784 students responded, providing a response rate of 53%.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Satisfaction** remains high among graduating seniors with 94% satisfied with their undergraduate education, 90% rating the value of their undergraduate education as “excellent” or “good”, and 87% indicating they would choose Marquette if starting over again. These percentages are consistent with previous years.
- Seventy-eight percent of graduating seniors reported they would **choose the same major again** if starting over.
- Ninety percent of graduating seniors are **completing their degrees as quickly as they had planned**, similar to previous years. Among those not completing their degree as quickly as planned, the commonly cited reasons were: changed to major within a different college at Marquette (30%); required courses not available (28%); advisor misinformed me about degree requirements (27%); and pursued more than one major/degree (24%).
- Twenty-eight percent of graduating seniors indicated they had seriously **considered transferring**, similar to previous years. Students cited personal/social concerns (66%) and academic concerns (25%) as the primary reasons. Their primary reasons for staying at Marquette included involvement on campus (40%) and academic reasons (22%).
- Eighty-eight percent of graduating seniors were satisfied with the **quality of instruction** within their primary major, and 78% were satisfied with the quality of instruction within the Core of Common Studies.
- Eighty-one percent were satisfied with the **availability of courses** in their primary major, slightly lower than last year (86%); 80% were satisfied with the availability of courses in the Core of Common Studies, the same percentage as last year.
- Students' satisfaction with the **quality of academic advising** remains low at 66%.
- Students' **experiences with instructors** were similar to the previous year, with institutional strengths in instructors' availability outside of class time and potential areas for improvement in instructors providing useful feedback, effectively using technology to enhance learning, and providing timely feedback.
- Eighty-three percent participated in **community service** while at Marquette, down slightly from the previous year's 87%.
- Students who participated in co-ops; study abroad experiences; student teaching, field placement, practicum or clinical placement; or internships reported that their experiences **enhanced their learning** “a great deal” (89%, 87%, 82% and 79% respectively).
- As of April 2014, 66% **applied or had been interviewed for a full-time job**, the highest percentage in the 11 year data series, while 32% had **secured a full-time position** by April, the highest percentage since 2008.
- As of April 2014, 27% **applied to a graduate/professional degree program** and 20% had been accepted. These are some of the lowest percentages reported since 2004.
- As of April 2014, 15% applied for a **full-time post-graduation service position** (e.g. Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, JVC), one of the highest percentages since 2006. As of April, 8% had been formally accepted into a full-time service position, the highest level since the data series have been tracked.

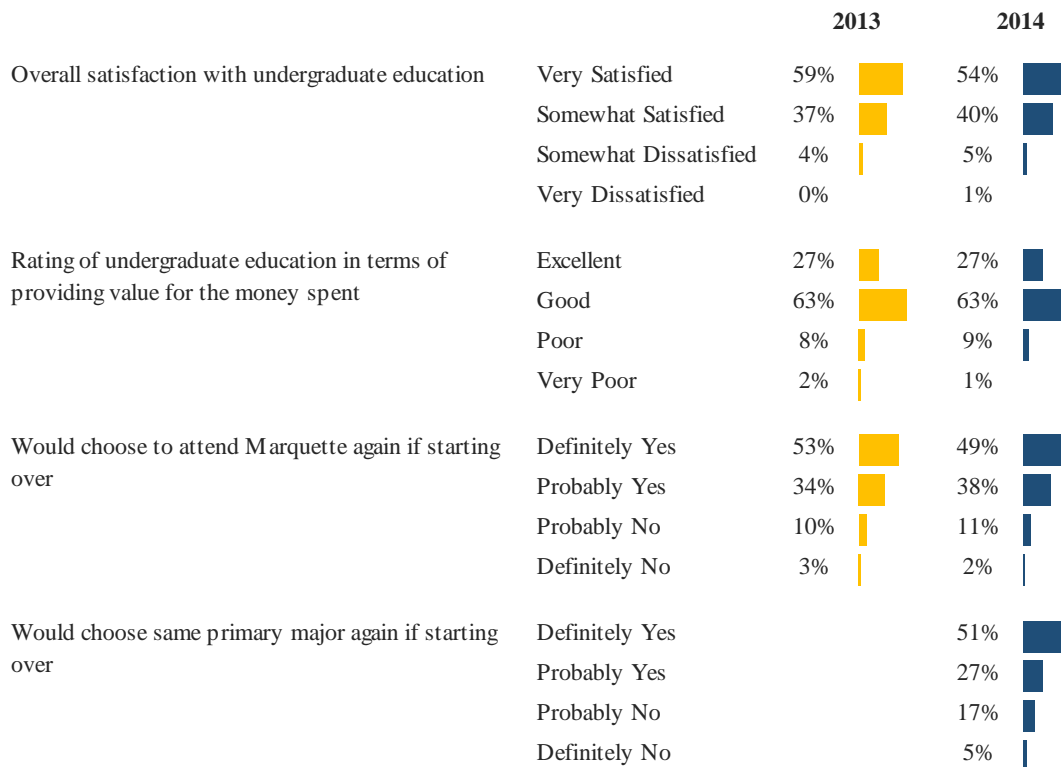
RESULTS

Results are reported in a number of areas that represent the major categories for the survey.

Overall Satisfaction

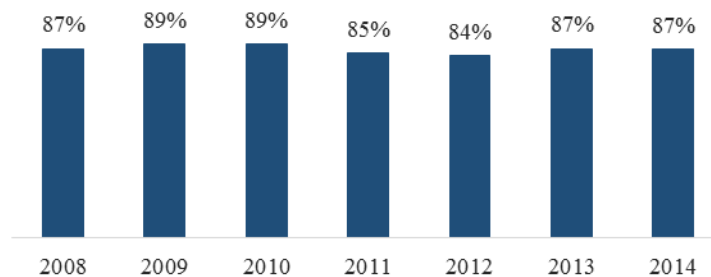
Graduating seniors were asked to report on their satisfaction with their Marquette experience and education. Ninety-four percent of students were satisfied with their undergraduate education, similar to the previous year. Ninety percent rated the value for the money spent to be “excellent” or “good”. Eighty-seven percent would choose to attend Marquette again.

This year, the survey also polled students about whether they would choose the same primary major if starting over again. Seventy-eight percent indicated they would choose the same primary major. Since this was the first time the item appeared on the survey, no comparative data is available.



Collapsing the responses for “definitely yes” and “probably” yes, the percentage of graduating seniors who would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over has remained extremely consistent over time.

Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Would Choose MU Again if Starting Over, by Graduating Class



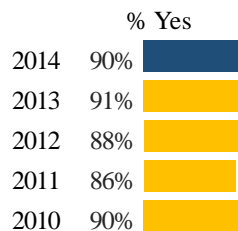
For those who indicated they would not choose to attend Marquette again if starting over, the survey asked why.

- Of the 13% of respondents (n=103) who indicated they would **not choose to attend Marquette again** if starting over, ninety-four respondents provided comments about why. The most commonly indicated reasons were:
 - Cost (cost of tuition, perceived value of education, family economic hardship) – 31%
 - Campus climate – 22%
 - Student diversity – 21%
 - Overall quality of education – 13%
 - Personal reasons – 13%

- Twenty-two percent of respondents (n=171) reported they would **not choose their primary major again if starting over**. One-hundred sixty respondents provided comments about why. The most commonly indicated reasons were:
 - Interests changed/Preferred something different – 55%
 - Quality of the academic program – 36%
 - Poor future prospects – 21%
 - Didn't enjoy major – 13%

Nine in ten graduating seniors reported that they were completing their Marquette degree as quickly as they had planned, similar to the previous year.

Are you completing your degree as quickly as you had planned?



- Among the 10% of respondents (n=71) who were not completing their degree as quickly as planned, the most commonly selected reasons were:
 - Changed to major within a different college at Marquette – 30%
 - Required courses not available – 28%
 - Advisor misinformed me about degree requirements – 27%
 - Pursued more than one major/degree – 24%

- 28% of graduating seniors reported they had seriously considered transferring (27% in 2013, 34% in 2012, 28% in 2011, and 30% in 2010).
 - When asked an open-ended question about what caused them to consider transferring, 192 students offered responses. The most frequently cited themes for responses included:
 - Personal/social concerns (problems fitting in/connecting, difficult adjustment to college, diversity of students – geographical, racial, etc., negative experiences with individuals, rules and dorms) – 66%
 - Academic concerns (problems with advising, unsupportive faculty, options for classes and Core of Common Studies, perceived quality) – 25%
 - Marquette's location, size and the city (location, distance from home, climate/weather, social opportunities in city) – 19%
 - Financial issues (cost of tuition, family economic hardship, perceived value of education, inadequate financial aid) – 14%

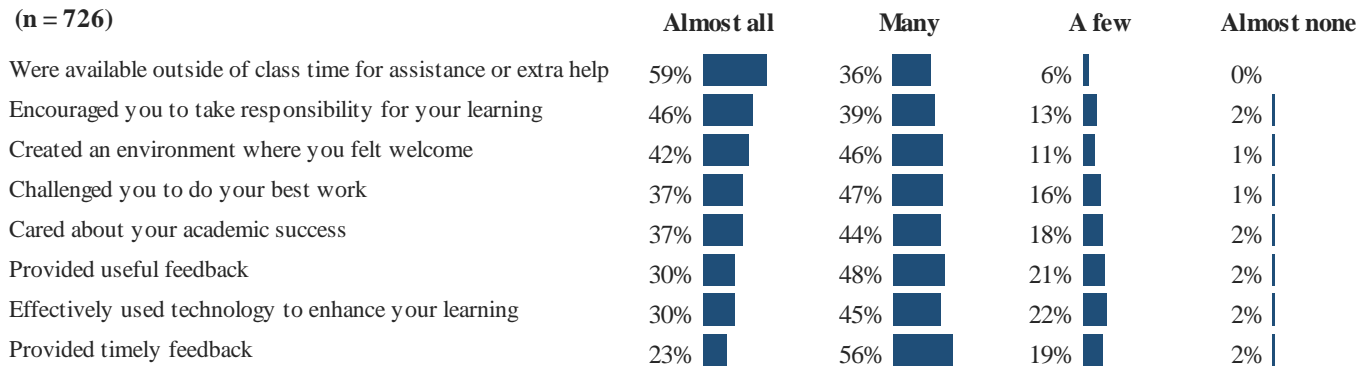
 - When asked an open-ended question about what caused them to decide to stay at Marquette instead of transferring, 193 students offered responses. The most frequently cited themes for responses included:
 - Involvement on campus (membership in student organization, joining a fraternity/sorority, friendships made, study abroad opportunities) – 40%
 - Difficulty of transferring (too late in academic career to transfer, credits wouldn't transfer, process deemed a "hassle") – 25%
 - Academic reasons (quality of education, MU reputation, relationship with faculty, switched majors) – 22%
 - Financial reasons (already invested in MU, received continued or additional financial aid) – 7%

Satisfaction with the Academic Experience

Graduating seniors were asked about their satisfaction with their academic experience, including their experiences with instructors, availability of courses, quality of instruction, and advising.

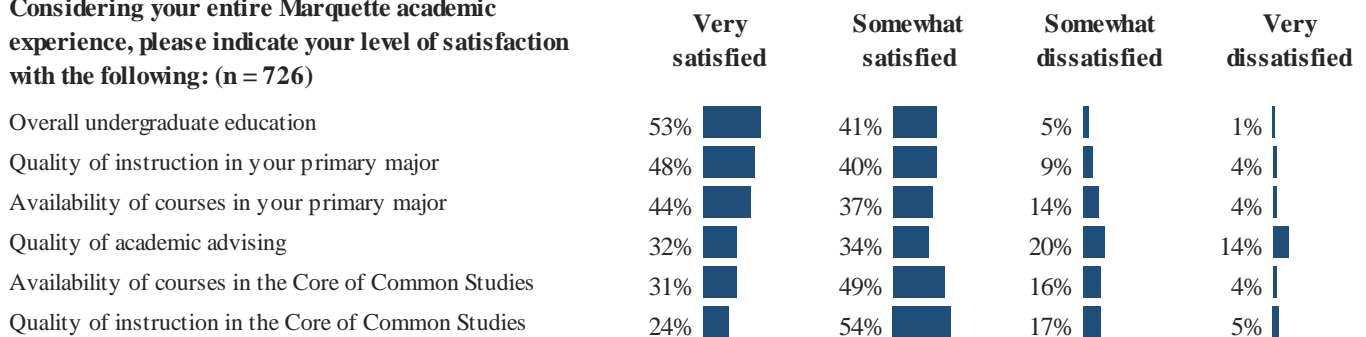
The following chart depicts students' experiences with instructors. These are similar to those reported in the previous year.

How many of your instructors did the following:



The chart below shows graduating seniors' responses to items that asked about their satisfaction with several aspects of their academic experience.

Considering your entire Marquette academic experience, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following: (n = 726)

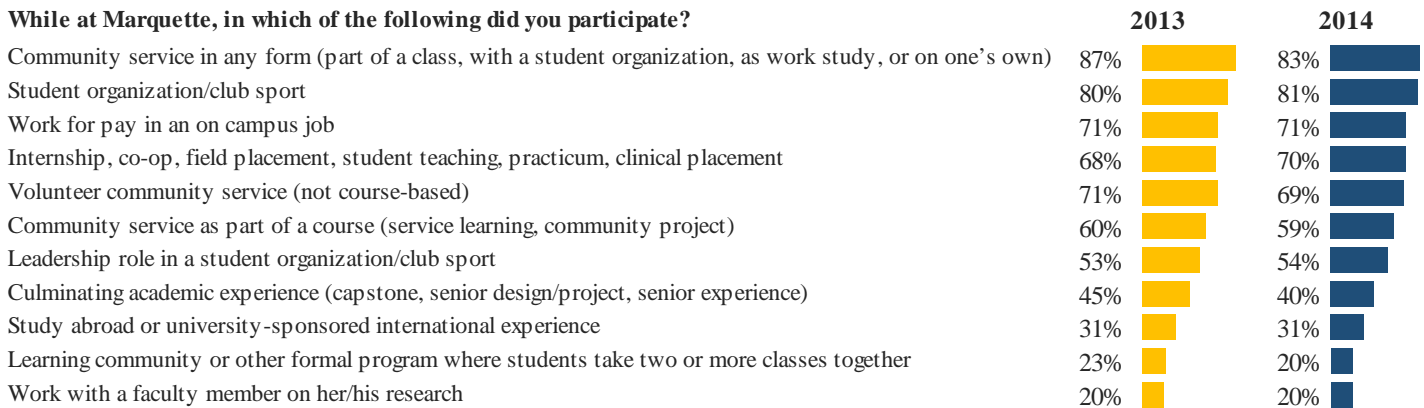


- Among the 18% of students (n=132) dissatisfied with availability of courses in their major, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
 - Variety of courses offered – 86% (compared to 78% in 2013)
 - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 52% (compared to 58% in 2013)
 - Days and times courses were offered – 42% (compared to 48% in 2013)

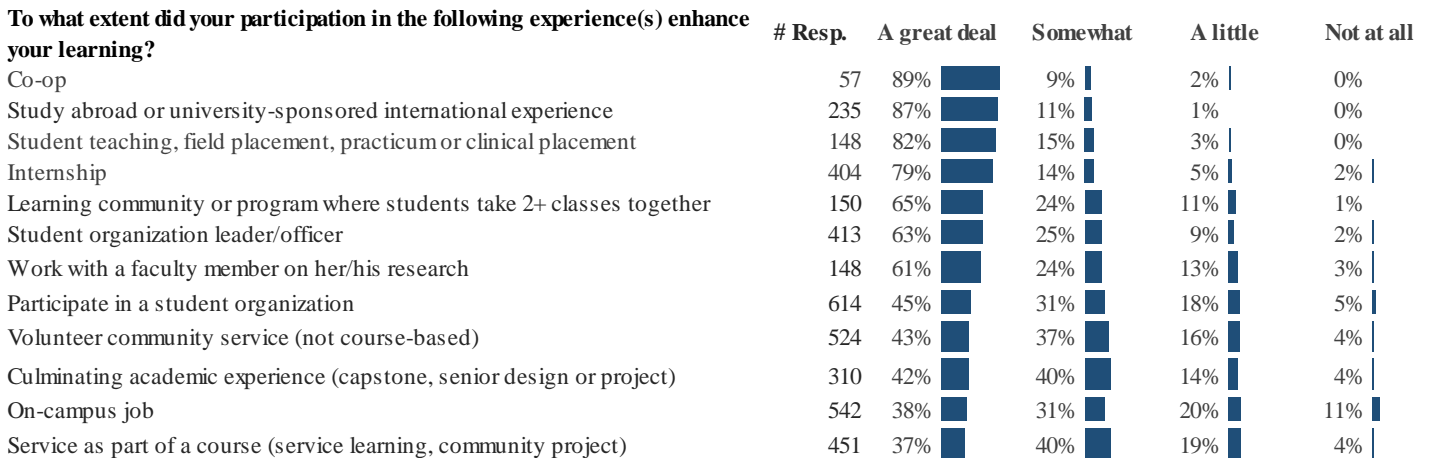
- Among the 20% of students (n=142) dissatisfied with availability of courses in the Core of Common Studies, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
 - Variety of courses offered – 80% (compared to 74% in 2013)
 - Conflicts with other non-elective courses – 63% (compared to 54% in 2013)
 - Days and times courses were offered – 53% (compared to 47% in 2013)
 - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 45% (compared to 47% in 2013)

Impact of Student Learning Opportunities

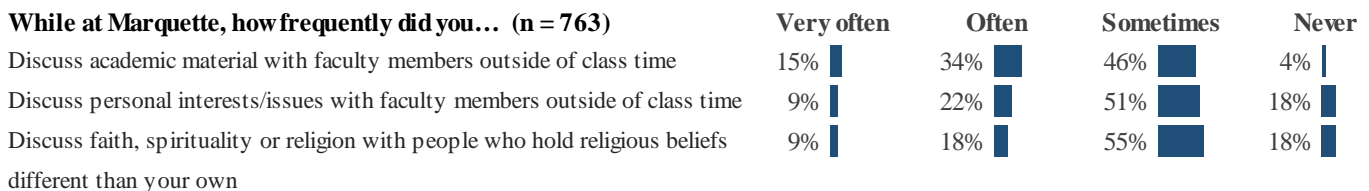
The chart below indicates frequency of participation in a variety of curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities that have been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success. Only 2% (n=17) of the 772 respondents to this question set did not participate in any of the activities listed.



The following chart illustrates the magnitude of each activity's impact on those students who participated. This year, the individual impact of co-ops; internships; student teaching, field placement, practicum or clinical placement was captured for the first time.



The chart below indicates the frequency of engagement with faculty and diverse others, which has also been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success.

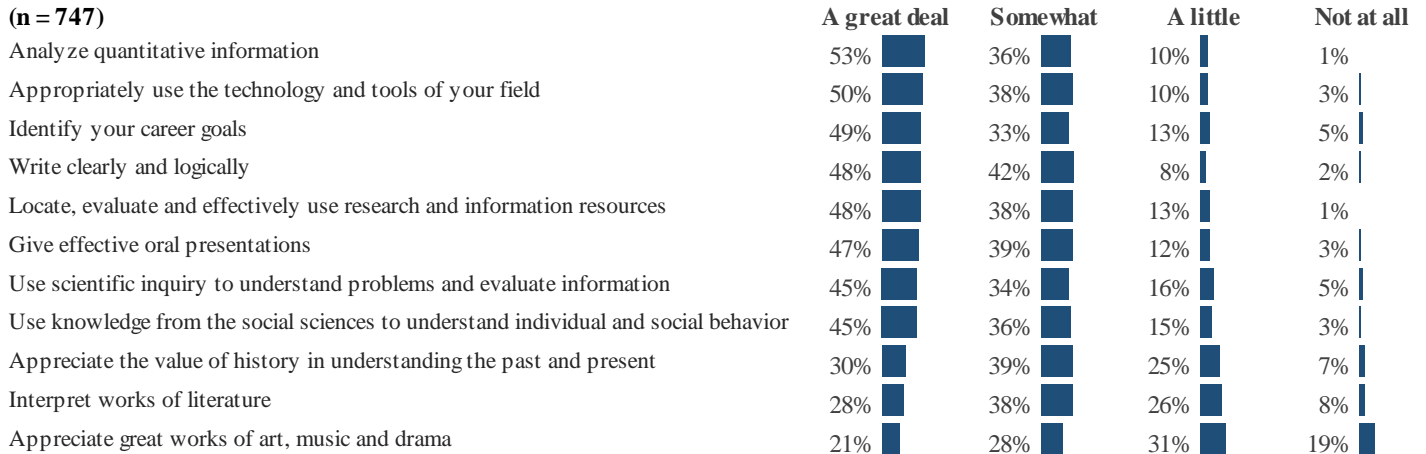


Development of Abilities

The chart below depicts graduating seniors' responses to items that asked how their Marquette education had contributed to their abilities in several domains.

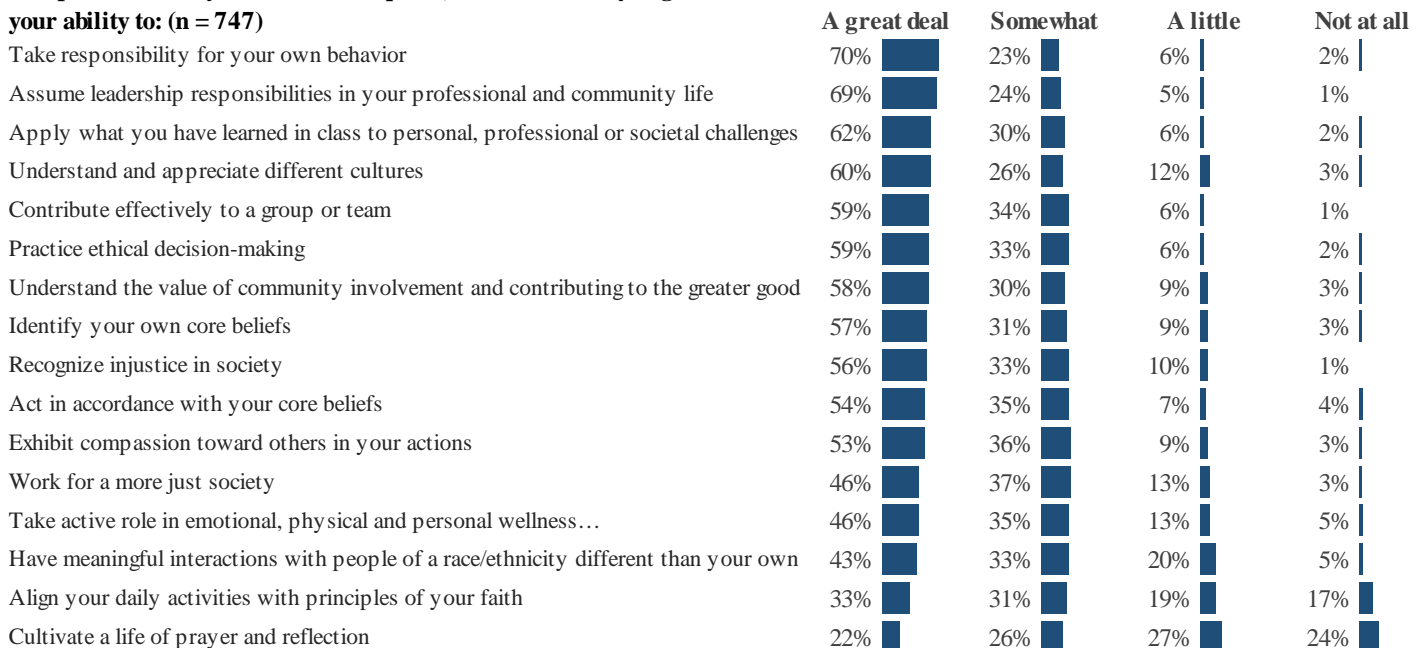
How much did your Marquette education contribute to your ability to:

(n = 747)



The chart below depicts graduating seniors' responses to items that asked how much they've grown compared to when they entered Marquette in their abilities in several areas.

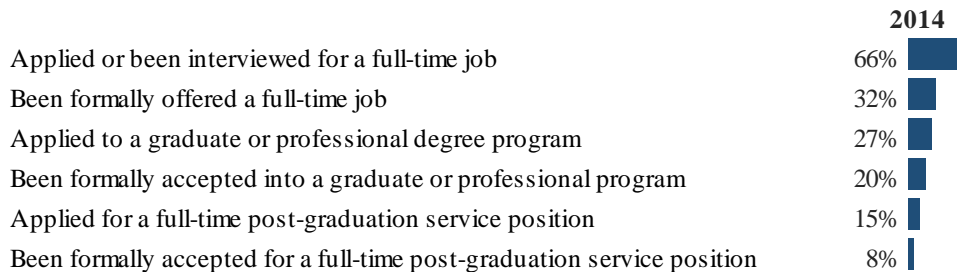
Compared to when you entered Marquette, how much have you grown in your ability to: (n = 747)



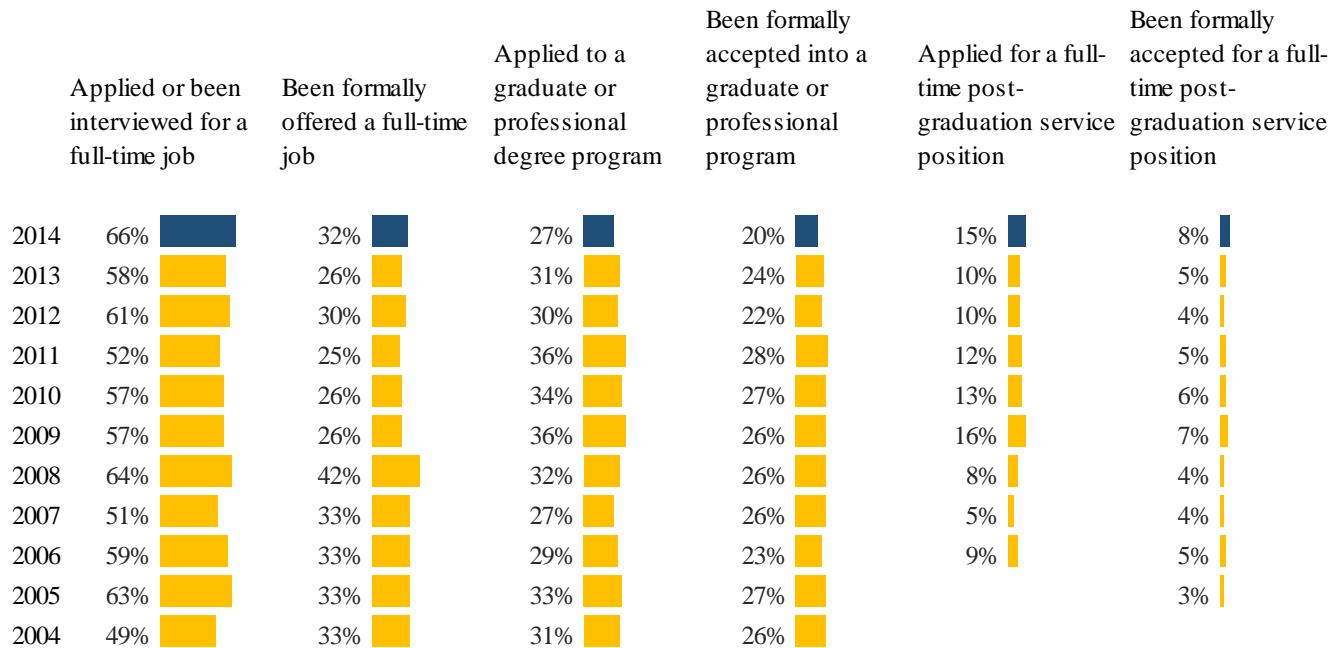
Future Plans for Graduating Seniors

A series of survey questions asked seniors to indicate their future plans after graduation. The chart below indicates the responses and plans at the time the survey was conducted (April). Post-graduation service includes organization such as the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Jesuit Volunteer Corps and Teach for America.

At present, have you...? (n = 713)



The chart below shows responses for these items from the Graduating Senior Survey dating back to 2004.



Open Response Items

Two questions on the survey invited respondents to summarize their feedback for the university as they prepared to graduate.

The first question asked graduating seniors to indicate at least one way the Marquette experience could be improved for future students. 566 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Improve academic advising (relationships, communication, knowledge) – 10%
- Address tuition, financial aid, and affordability issues – 10%
- Re-evaluate the courses in the Core of Common Studies (perceived inflexibility with course options, challenges for study abroad, intensive majors, etc.) – 9%
- Offer a wider variety of courses and times; increased availability – 8%
- Increase attention to post-graduation outcomes (help figuring out what to do after graduation, better assistance with job or graduate/professional school search, career services classes, etc.) – 8%

A second open-response item asked graduating seniors to identify the most valuable learning experience at Marquette. 592 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Specific academic experiences and courses (including capstones, major courses, particular programs, and specific influential courses) – 26%
- Internships, clinical experiences, field work, co-ops, and campus employment – 15%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 13%
- Leadership development and student organization experiences – 12%
- Semester away experiences (including study abroad and the Les Aspin program in Washington DC) – 12%
- Interactions with faculty and students (many respondents cited specific names of influential faculty) – 8%

DISCUSSION

Reports from these annual surveys are distributed to many campus constituency groups (including students, faculty, and administrators) for analysis and action. The surveys are repeated each April and questions are reviewed annually by the Institutional Survey Steering Committee, the University Assessment Committee, and the Division of Student Affairs Assessment Team.

This executive summary is available at <http://www.marquette.edu/dsa/assessment.shtml>.

Complete data tables for selected items by college can be found at <http://www.marquette.edu/oira/studentsurveys.shtml>.

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