

## INTRODUCTION

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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 and 2014 where applicable. The survey was administered online in April 2015. In 2015, the survey population was modified to include not only spring 2015 graduates but also those intending to graduate in summer and fall 2015. This ensures that the experiences of all graduating seniors are captured.

All graduating seniors were invited via email to complete the survey; 832 students responded, providing a response rate of 45%. The response rate is lower than the 2014 and 2013 rates (53% and 52%, respectively) but similar to 2012 and 2011 administrations (2012: 42%; 2011: 45%). The response rate for spring 2015 graduates was 48%, while for summer and fall 2015 graduates the response rate was 37%. A few survey results differed notably by the student's semester of graduation; these differences are noted below.

## KEY FINDINGS

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- **Satisfaction** remains high among graduating seniors with 95% satisfied with their undergraduate education, 91% rating the value of their undergraduate education as "excellent" or "good", and 86% indicating they would choose Marquette if starting over again. These percentages are consistent with previous years.
- Eighty-two percent of graduating seniors reported they would **choose the same major again** if starting over. This percentage increased slightly from 78% in 2014.
- Eighty-four percent of graduating seniors are **completing their degrees as quickly as they had planned**. For those graduating in spring 2015, this percentage was 92%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2015, the percentage was 52%. 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 (21%); and pursued more than one major/degree (22%).
- Thirty-two percent of graduating seniors indicated they had seriously **considered transferring**. For those graduating in spring 2015, this percentage was 29%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2015, the percentage was 42%. Students cited personal/social concerns (60%) and academic concerns (28%) as the primary reasons. Their primary reasons for staying at Marquette included involvement on campus (31%) and the difficulty of transferring (23%).
- Eighty-seven percent of graduating seniors were satisfied with the **quality of instruction** within their primary major, and 80% were satisfied with the quality of instruction within the Core of Common Studies.
- Eighty-four percent were satisfied with the **availability of courses** in their primary major, slightly higher than last year (81%); 81% were satisfied with the availability of courses in the Core of Common Studies, similar to previous years.
- Students' satisfaction with the **quality of academic advising** remains low at 66%, the same percentage as last year.
- 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-two percent participated in **community service** while at Marquette, similar to last year's 83%.
- 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" (85%, 86%, 86% and 82% respectively).

**RESULTS**

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

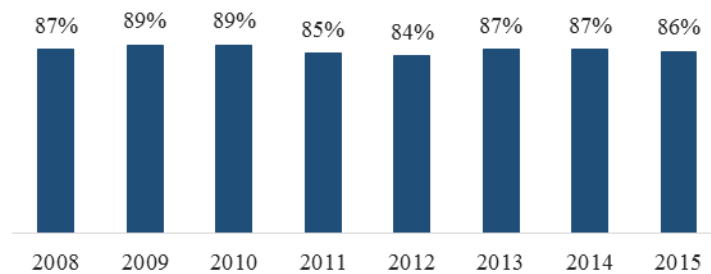
**Overall Satisfaction**

Graduating seniors were asked to report on their satisfaction with their Marquette experience and education. Ninety-five percent of students were satisfied with their undergraduate education, similar to the previous year. Ninety-one percent rated the value for the money spent to be “excellent” or “good”. Eighty-six percent would choose to attend Marquette again. Eighty-two percent indicated they would choose the same primary major, which is a slightly higher percentage than last year’s 78 percent.

		2013	2014	2015
Overall satisfaction with undergraduate education	Very Satisfied	59%	54%	57%
	Somewhat Satisfied	37%	40%	38%
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	4%	5%	5%
	Very Dissatisfied	0%	1%	0%
Rating of undergraduate education in terms of providing value for the money spent	Excellent	27%	27%	26%
	Good	63%	63%	65%
	Poor	8%	9%	8%
	Very Poor	2%	1%	1%
Would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over	Definitely Yes	53%	49%	49%
	Probably Yes	34%	38%	37%
	Probably No	10%	11%	12%
	Definitely No	3%	2%	3%
Would choose same primary major again if starting over	Definitely Yes		51%	55%
	Probably Yes		27%	27%
	Probably No		17%	14%
	Definitely No		5%	4%

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.

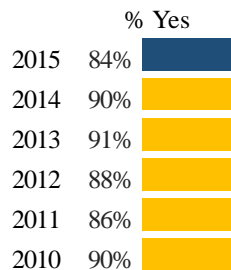
*Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Would Choose MU Again if Starting Over, by Graduating Class*



- Of the 15% of respondents (n=117) 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) – 24%
  - Student diversity – 24%
  - Location (too close/far from home, too small/large, concerns about city/state/weather) – 16%
  - Overall quality of education – 16%
- Eighteen percent of respondents (n=149) 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:
  - Poor future prospects – 33%
  - Quality of the academic program – 25%
  - Interests changed/Preferred something different – 15%
  - Didn't enjoy major – 13%

Eighty-four percent of graduating seniors reported that they were completing their Marquette degree as quickly as they had planned, which is slightly lower than last year's ninety percent. For those graduating in spring 2015, this percentage was 92%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2015, the percentage was 52%.

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



- Among the 16% of respondents (n=117) 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%
  - Personal issues, like health – 22%
  - Pursued more than one major/degree – 22%
- 32% of graduating seniors reported they had seriously considered transferring (28% in 2014, 27% in 2013, 34% in 2012, and 28% in 2011, 30% in 2010). For those graduating in spring 2015, this percentage was 29%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2015, the percentage was 42%.
  - When asked an open-ended question about what caused them to consider transferring, 228 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) – 60%
    - Academic concerns (problems with advising, unsupportive faculty, options for classes and Core of Common Studies, perceived quality) – 28%
    - Financial issues (cost of tuition, family economic hardship, perceived value of education, inadequate financial aid) – 17%
    - Marquette's location, size and the city (location, distance from home, climate/weather, social opportunities in city) – 10%
  - When asked an open-ended question about what caused them to decide to stay at Marquette instead of transferring, 226 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) – 31%
    - Difficulty of transferring (too late in academic career to transfer, credits wouldn't transfer, process deemed a "hassle") – 23%
    - Financial reasons (already invested in MU, received continued or additional financial aid) – 19%
    - Academic reasons (quality of education, MU reputation, relationship with faculty, switched majors) – 17%

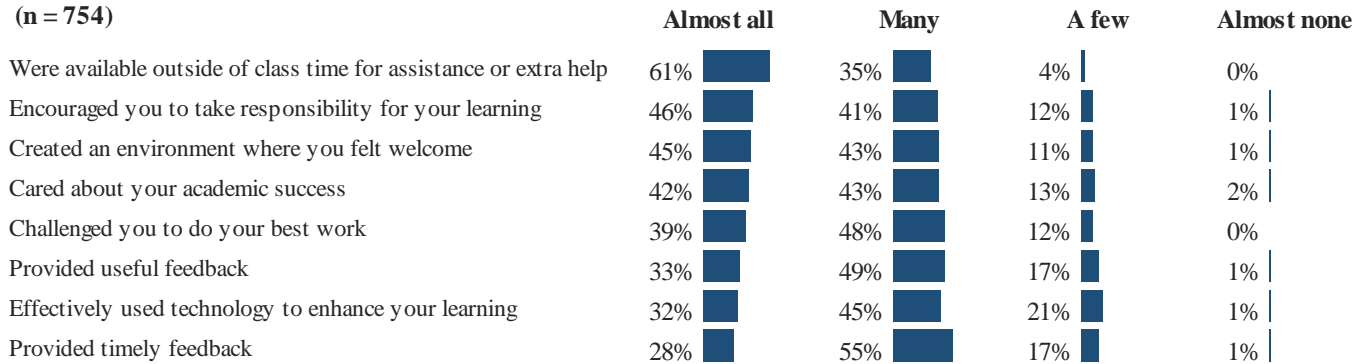
### Satisfaction with the Academic Experience

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.

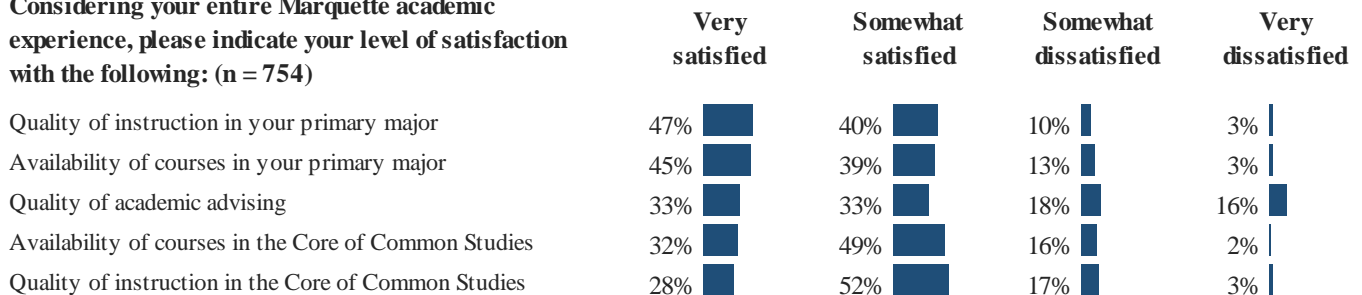
**How many of your instructors did the following:**

(n = 754)



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

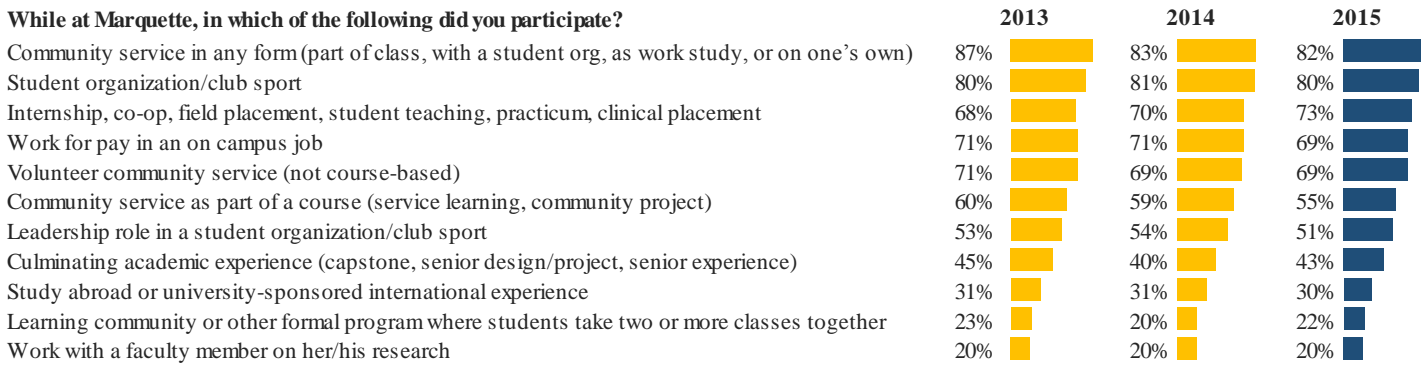
**Considering your entire Marquette academic experience, please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following: (n = 754)**



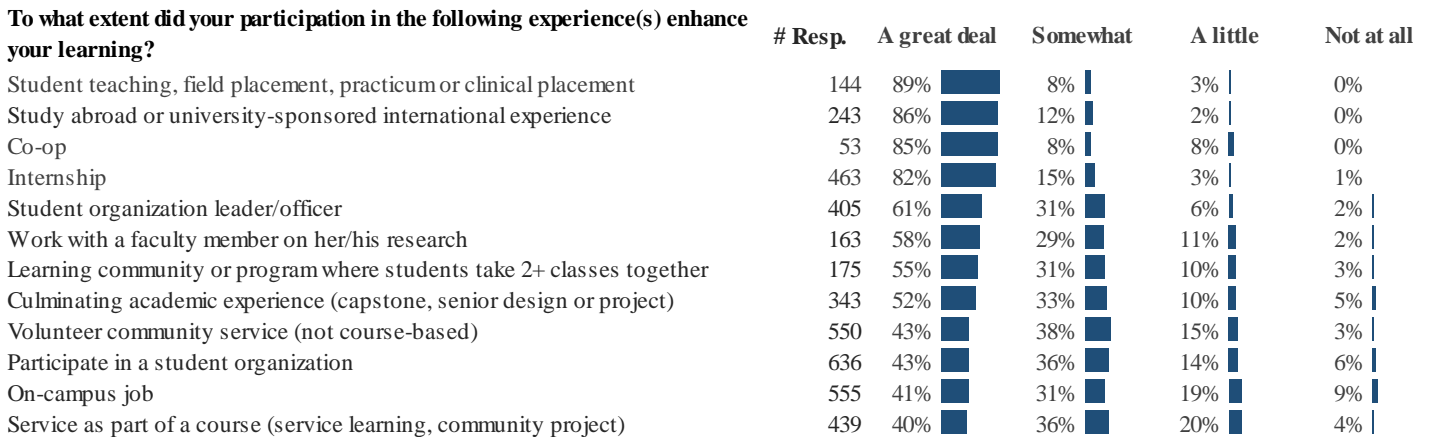
- Among the 16% of students (n=119) dissatisfied with the availability of courses in their major, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
  - Variety of courses offered – 81% (compared to 86% in 2014)
  - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 50% (compared to 52% in 2014)
  - Days and times courses were offered – 51% (compared to 42% in 2014)
- Among the 18% of students (n=139) dissatisfied with availability of courses in the Core of Common Studies, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
  - Variety of courses offered – 72% (compared to 80% in 2014)
  - Conflicts with other non-elective courses – 56% (compared to 63% in 2014)
  - Days and times courses were offered – 50% (compared to 53% in 2014)
  - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 37% (compared to 45% in 2014)

### Impact of Student Learning Opportunities

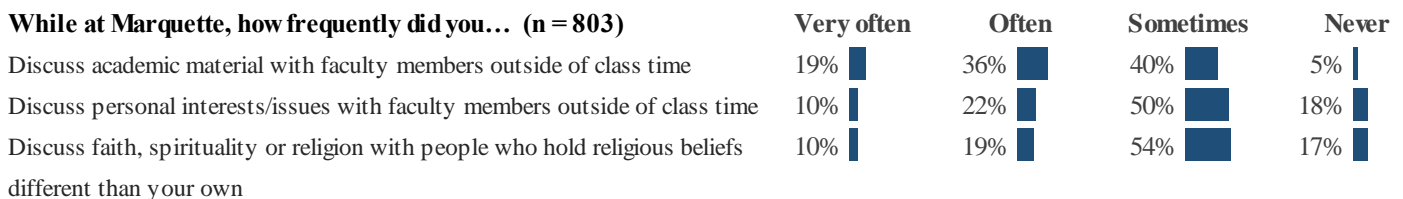
The chart below indicates frequency of participation in a variety of curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities that have been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success. Only 1% (n=8) of the 813 respondents to this question set did not participate in 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.

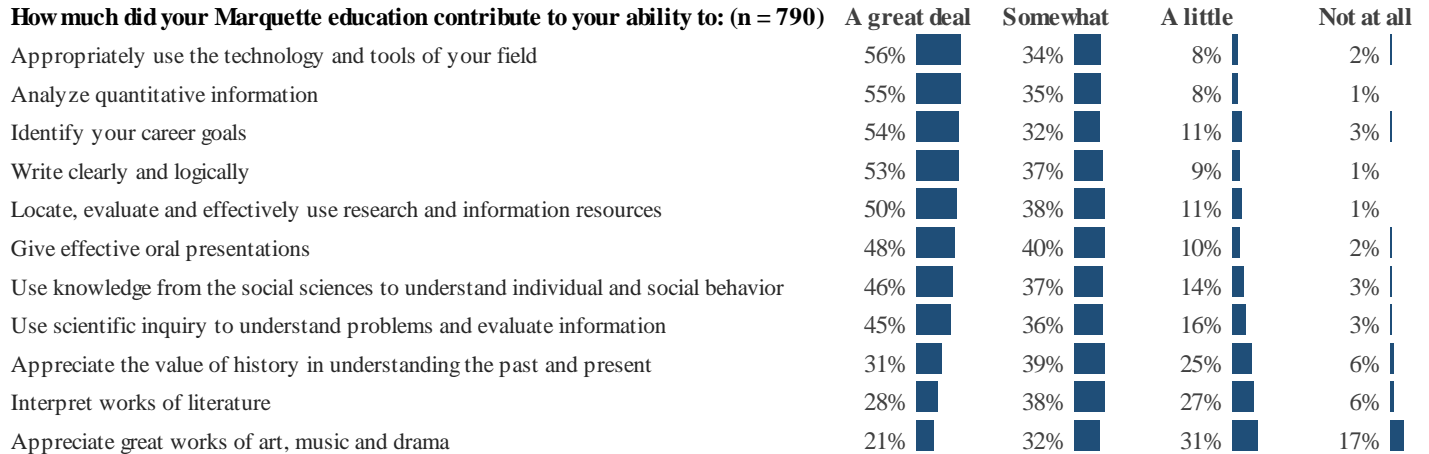


The chart below indicates the frequency of engagement with faculty and diverse others, which has also been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success.

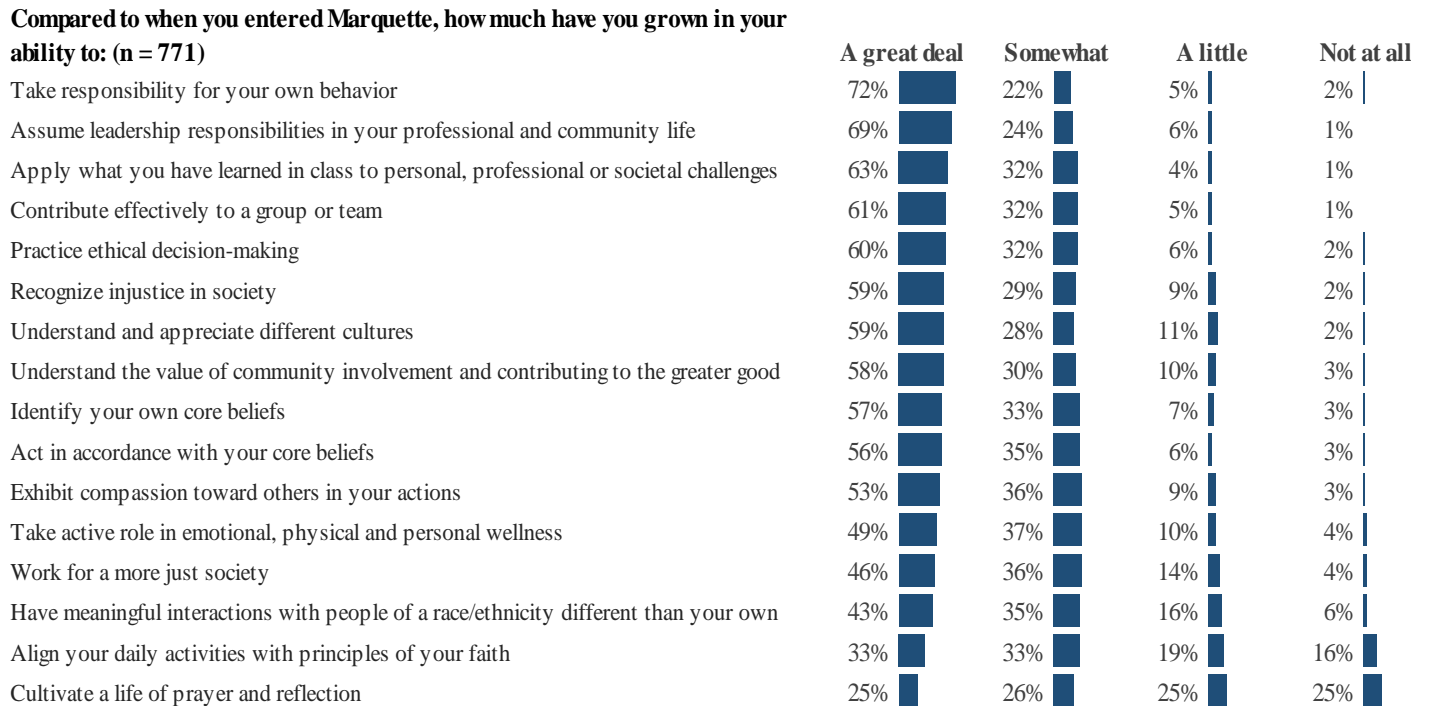


## Development of Abilities

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



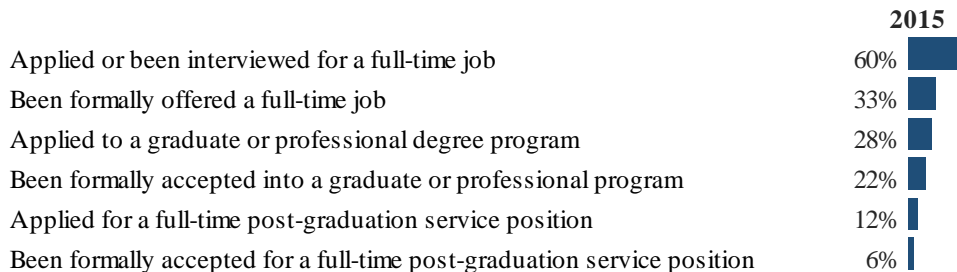
The chart below depicts graduating seniors' responses to items that asked how much they've grown compared to when they entered Marquette in their abilities in several areas.



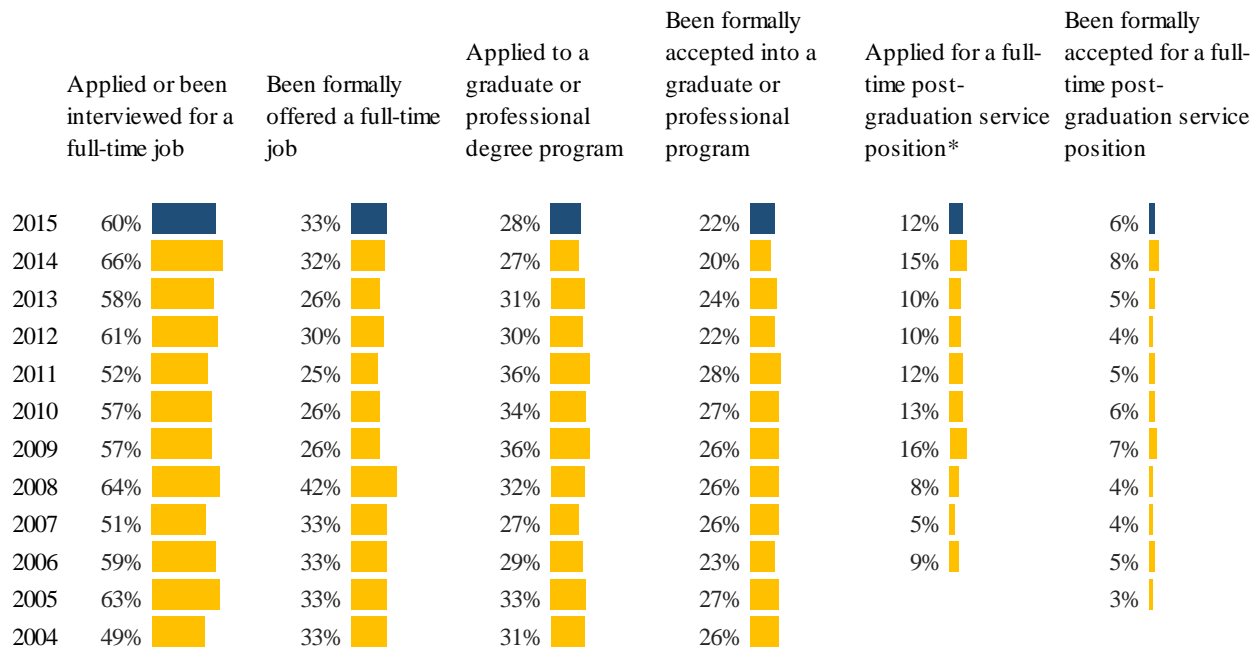
### Future Plans for Graduating Seniors

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 = 747)



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



\*Examples of post-graduation services organizations include Peace Corps, AmeriCorps, Jesuit Volunteer Corps, and Teach for America.

### Open Response Items

Several 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. 573 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Improve academic advising (relationships, communication, knowledge) – 16%
- Improve/increase campus diversity – 13%
- Offer a wider variety of courses and times; increased availability – 9%
- Address campus safety concerns; modify rules and regulations – 9%
- Campus Activities (quality, quantity, variety, communication)– 9%
- Improve food options/quality on and off campus; improve dorm quality or housing processes – 9%

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 – 19%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 11%
- Interactions with faculty and students (many respondents cited specific names of influential faculty) – 11%
- Semester away experiences (including study abroad and the Les Aspin program in Washington DC) – 11%
- Leadership development and student organization experiences – 7%

New in 2015, another open-ended question asked graduating seniors “Who is one faculty or staff member who had the greatest positive influence on your Marquette experience?” Students’ responses to this question can be viewed on the Faculty and Staff Kudos website: <http://marquette.edu/oira/faculty-and-staff-kudos.php>.

## DISCUSSION

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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>.

For additional information about the report, contact:

Dr. Jodi Blahnik, Psychologist and Director of Student Affairs Assessment, at [jodi.blahnik@marquette.edu](mailto:jodi.blahnik@marquette.edu),

Ms. Laura MacBride, Assistant Director, Institutional Research and Analysis, at [laura.macbride@marquette.edu](mailto:laura.macbride@marquette.edu),

Ms. Alix Riley, Director of Institutional Research and Analysis, at [alexandra.riley@marquette.edu](mailto:alexandra.riley@marquette.edu), or

Dr. Sharron Ronco, Director of Assessment, at [sharron.ronco@marquette.edu](mailto:sharron.ronco@marquette.edu).