

## 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 1990s 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, 2014, and 2015 where applicable. The survey was administered online in April 2016. In 2015, the survey population was modified to include not only spring graduates but also those intending to graduate in summer and fall of that year. This ensures that the experiences of all graduating senior students 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 the same as the 2015 rate (45%), lower than the 2014 and 2013 rates (2014: 53%, 2013: 52%), and similar to 2012 and 2011 administrations (2012: 42%; 2011: 45%). The response rate for spring 2016 graduates was 48%, while for summer and fall 2016 graduates the response rate was 33%. 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 94% satisfied with their undergraduate education, 90% rating the value of their undergraduate education as "excellent" or "good," and 85% indicating they would choose Marquette if starting over again. These percentages are consistent with previous years.
- Eighty percent of graduating seniors reported they would **choose the same major again** if starting over. This percentage decreased slightly from 82% in 2015.
- Eighty-seven percent of graduating seniors are **completing their degrees as quickly as they had planned**. For those graduating in spring 2016, this percentage was 92%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2015, the percentage was 57%. 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%); changed to major within the same college at Marquette (26%); required course(s) not available (26%); pursued more than one major/degree (24%); and personal issues, like health (21%).
- Thirty-two percent of graduating seniors indicated they had seriously **considered transferring**. Students cited personal/social concerns (59%), academic concerns (27%), and location (14%) as the primary reasons. Their primary reasons for staying at Marquette included friends on campus (25%), academic quality/reputation (24%), and involvement on campus (16%).
- Eighty-eight percent of graduating seniors were satisfied with the **quality of instruction** within their primary major.
- Eighty-three percent were satisfied with the **availability of courses** in their primary major, consistent with last year.
- 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 providing timely feedback, effectively using technology to enhance learning, and providing useful feedback.
- Eighty-five percent participated in **community service** while at Marquette, similar to last year's 82%.
- 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" (87%, 87%, 83% and 81% respectively).

**RESULTS**

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

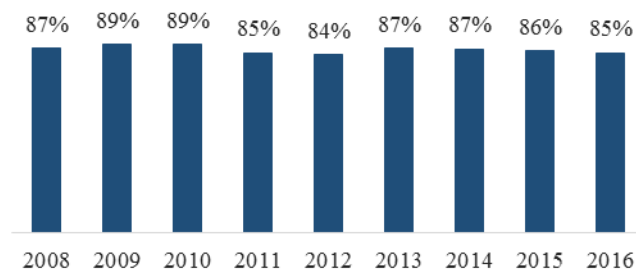
**Overall Satisfaction**

Graduating seniors were asked to report on their satisfaction with their Marquette experience and education. Ninety-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-five percent would choose to attend Marquette again. Eighty percent indicated they would choose the same primary major. For those graduating in the spring, 83% were satisfied with their primary major, while only 72% of those graduating in the summer and fall were satisfied with their primary major.

		2013	2014	2015	2016
Overall satisfaction with undergraduate education	Very Satisfied	59%	54%	57%	55%
	Somewhat Satisfied	37%	40%	38%	39%
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	4%	5%	5%	5%
	Very Dissatisfied	0%	1%	0%	1%
Rating of undergraduate education in terms of providing value for the money spent	Excellent	27%	27%	26%	31%
	Good	63%	63%	65%	59%
	Poor	8%	9%	8%	8%
	Very Poor	2%	1%	1%	2%
Would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over	Definitely Yes	53%	49%	49%	48%
	Probably Yes	34%	38%	37%	37%
	Probably No	10%	11%	12%	12%
	Definitely No	3%	2%	3%	3%
Would choose same primary major again if starting over	Definitely Yes		51%	55%	51%
	Probably Yes		27%	27%	29%
	Probably No		17%	14%	15%
	Definitely No		5%	4%	4%

Combining 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*

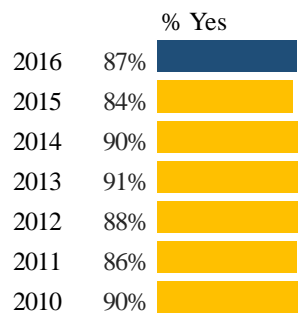


For those who indicated they would not choose to attend Marquette again if starting over, the survey asked why.

- Of the 15% of respondents (n=124) who indicated they would **not choose to attend Marquette again** if starting over, 116 respondents provided comments about why. The most commonly indicated reasons were:
  - Social (did not create lasting friendships, did not “fit in”) – 27%
  - Academic (quality of education, academic rigor, quality of educators) – 24%
  - Cost (cost of tuition, perceived value of education) – 23%
  - Location (too close/far from home, concerns about city/state/weather) – 23%
  - Student diversity – 19%
  
- Nineteen percent of respondents (n=160) reported they would **not choose their primary major again if starting over**. One-hundred fifty respondents provided comments about why. The most commonly indicated reasons were:
  - Interests changed/preferred something different – 49%
  - Academic (quality of educators/advisors, career prospects, academic rigor) – 43%

Eighty-seven percent of graduating seniors reported that they were completing their Marquette degree as quickly as they had planned, which is slightly higher than last year’s 84%. For those graduating in spring 2016, this percentage was 92%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2016, the percentage was 57%.

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



- Among the 13% of respondents (n=99) 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 – 26%
  - Changed majors within the same college – 26%
  - Pursued more than one major/degree – 24%
  
- Thirty-two percent of graduating seniors reported they had seriously considered transferring (32% in 2015, 28% in 2014, 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, 241 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) – 59%
    - Academic concerns (problems with advising, unsupportive faculty, academic rigor) – 31%
    - Marquette’s location (urban location, distance from home, climate/weather, safety) – 15%
    - Financial concerns (cost of tuition) – 11%
  - When asked an open-ended question about what caused them to decide to stay at Marquette instead of transferring, 241 students offered responses. The most frequently cited themes for responses included:
    - Friendships/relationships with people on campus – 25%
    - Academic reasons (quality of education, MU reputation, switched majors) – 24%
    - Involvement on campus (membership in student organization, joining a fraternity/sorority) – 16%
    - Difficulty of transferring (too late in academic career to transfer, credits wouldn’t transfer, process deemed a “hassle”) – 13%
    - Financial reasons (already invested in MU, cost of transferring, received additional aid) – 11%

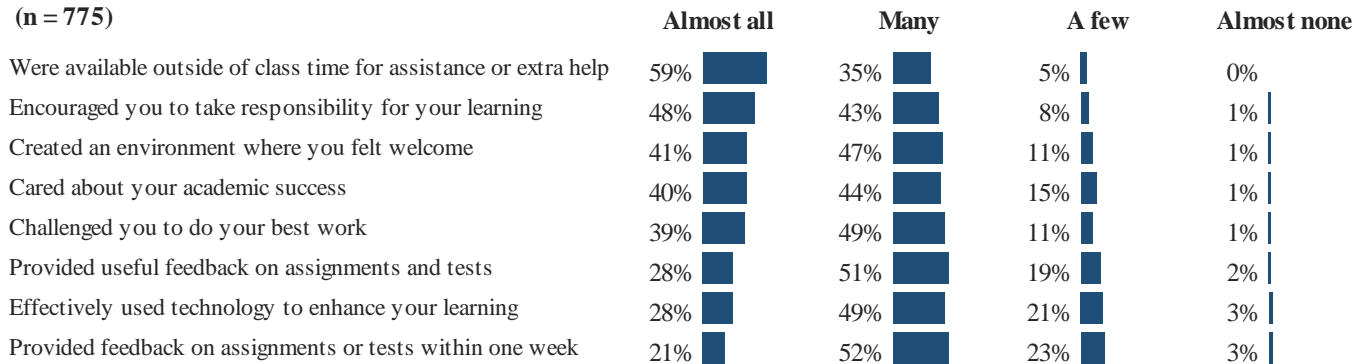
### Satisfaction with the Academic Experience

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 shows students' experiences with instructors. These are similar to those reported in the previous year.

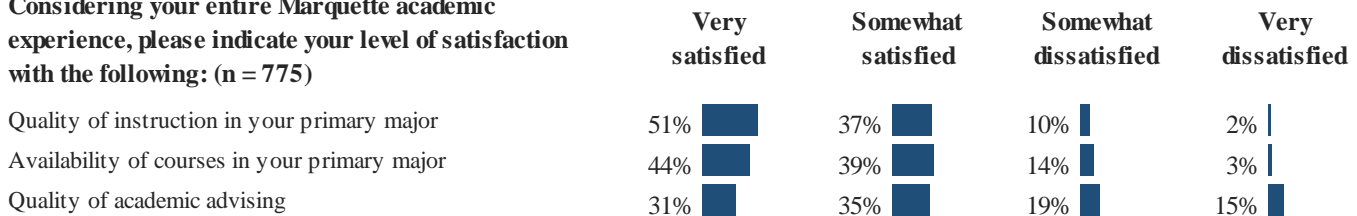
**How many of your instructors did the following:**

(n = 775)



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 = 775)**



- Among the 17% of students (n=128) dissatisfied with the availability of courses in their major, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
  - Variety of courses offered – 71% (compared to 81% in 2015)
  - Days and times courses were offered – 48% (compared to 51% in 2015)
  - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 47% (compared to 50% in 2015)

### 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. Less than 1% (n=4) of the 814 respondents to this question set did not participate in any of the activities listed.

While at Marquette, in which of the following did you participate?	2013	2014	2015	2016
Community service in any form (part of class, with a student org, as work study, or on one's own)	87%	83%	82%	85%
Student organization/club sport	80%	81%	80%	81%
Internship, co-op, field placement, student teaching, practicum, clinical placement	68%	70%	73%	76%
Work for pay in an on campus job	71%	71%	69%	73%
Volunteer community service (not course-based)	71%	69%	69%	70%
Community service as part of a course (service learning, community project)	60%	59%	55%	59%
Leadership role in a student organization/club sport	53%	54%	51%	57%
Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design/project, senior experience)	45%	40%	43%	43%
Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience	31%	31%	30%	29%
Learning community or other formal program where students take two or more classes together	23%	20%	22%	21%
Work with a faculty member on her/his research	20%	20%	20%	21%

Students who graduated in the spring semester had notably higher participation rates in the following activities:

- Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience -- 30% for spring graduates versus 19% for summer and fall graduates
- Volunteer community service (not course-based) -- 72% for spring graduates versus 60% for summer and fall graduates
- Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design/project, senior experience) -- 46% for spring graduates versus 31% for summer and fall graduates

The following chart illustrates the magnitude of each activity's impact on those students who participated.

To what extent did your participation in the following experience(s) enhance your learning?	# Resp.	A great deal	Somewhat	A little	Not at all
Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience	230	87%	12%	1%	0%
Co-op	77	87%	10%	1%	1%
Student teaching, field placement, practicum or clinical placement	169	83%	14%	3%	1%
Internship	460	81%	17%	3%	0%
Student organization leader/officer	459	63%	28%	7%	2%
Work with a faculty member on her/his research	170	63%	26%	9%	2%
Learning community or program where students take 2+ classes together	170	59%	33%	6%	2%
Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design or project)	353	44%	42%	12%	2%
Volunteer community service (not course-based)	568	44%	36%	16%	4%
Participate in a student organization	657	43%	36%	16%	5%
On-campus job	588	42%	29%	19%	10%
Service as part of a course (service learning, community project)	474	36%	42%	17%	5%

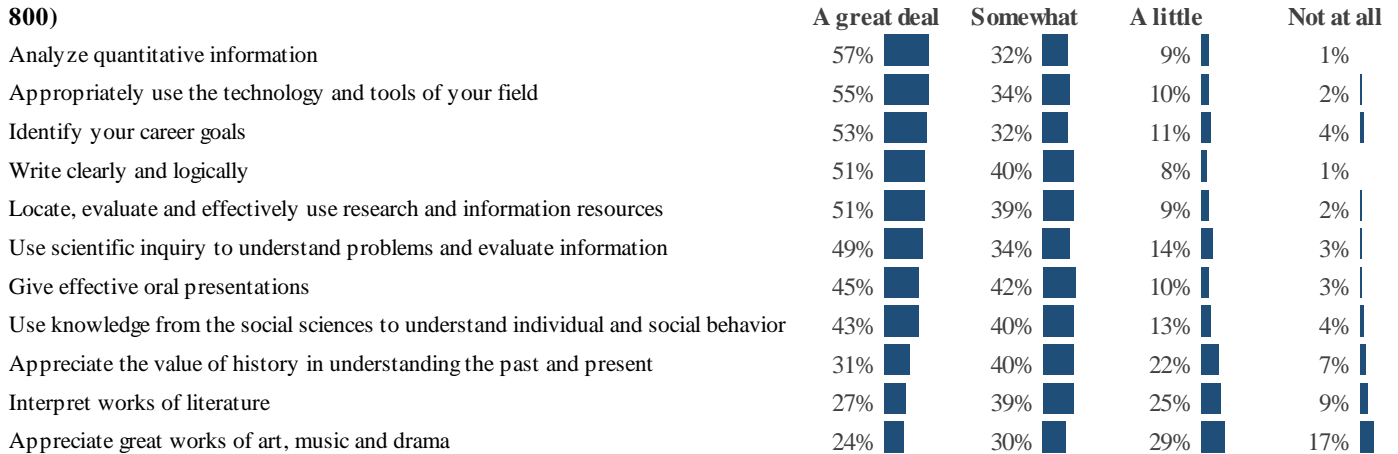
The chart below indicates the frequency of engagement with faculty and diverse others, which has also been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success.

While at Marquette, how frequently did you...	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Discuss academic material with faculty members outside of class time	17%	36%	44%	3%
Discuss faith, spirituality or religion with people who hold religious beliefs	10%	20%	57%	13%
Discuss personal interests/issues with faculty members outside of class time different than your own	8%	22%	50%	20%

## Development of Abilities

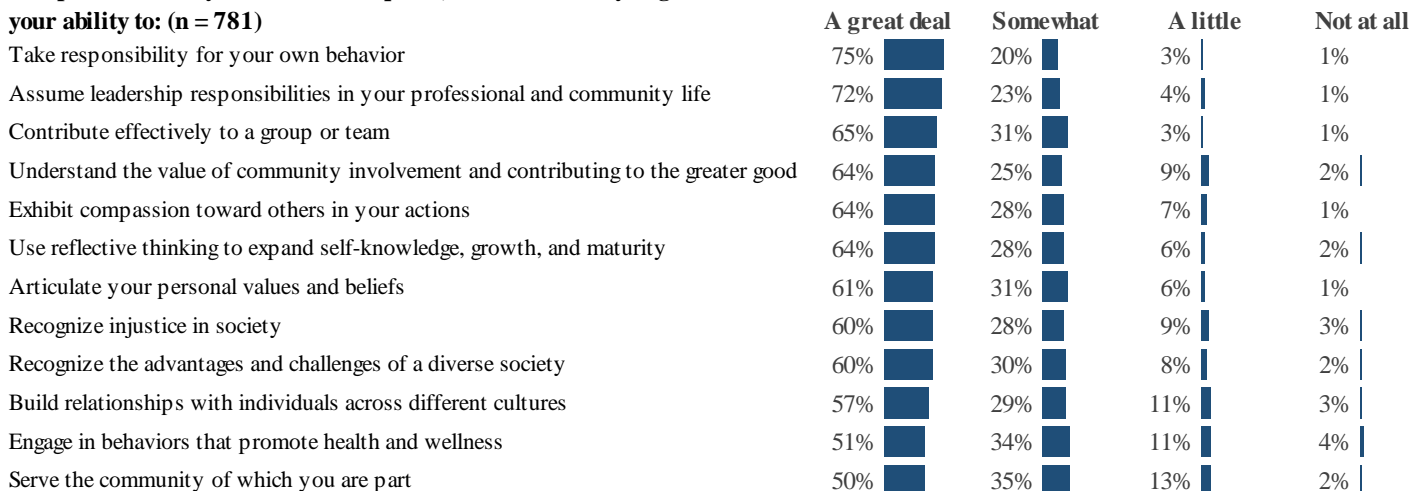
The chart below depicts graduating seniors' responses to items that asked how their Marquette education had contributed to their abilities in several domains.

### How much did your Marquette education contribute to your ability to: (n = 800)



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. Some notable differences in responses to this question set in 2016 compared to 2015 include the following: The percentage of students responding that they had grown "a great deal" in their ability to "understand the value of community involvement and contributing to the greater good" increased to 64% in 2016 from 58% in 2015. The percentage of students indicating that they have grown "a great deal" in their ability to "exhibit compassion toward others in [their] actions" increased by 11%, from 53% in 2015 to 64% in 2016.

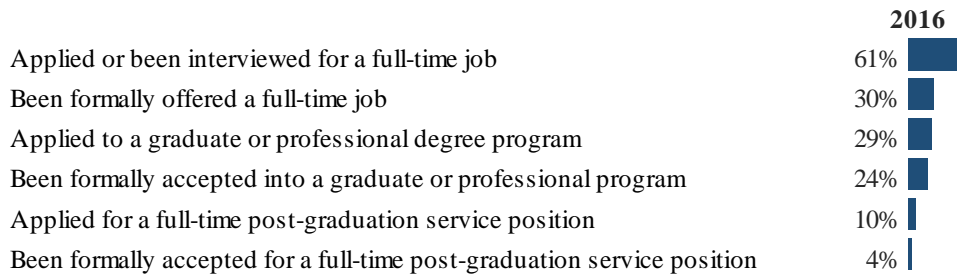
### Compared to when you entered Marquette, how much have you grown in your ability to: (n = 781)



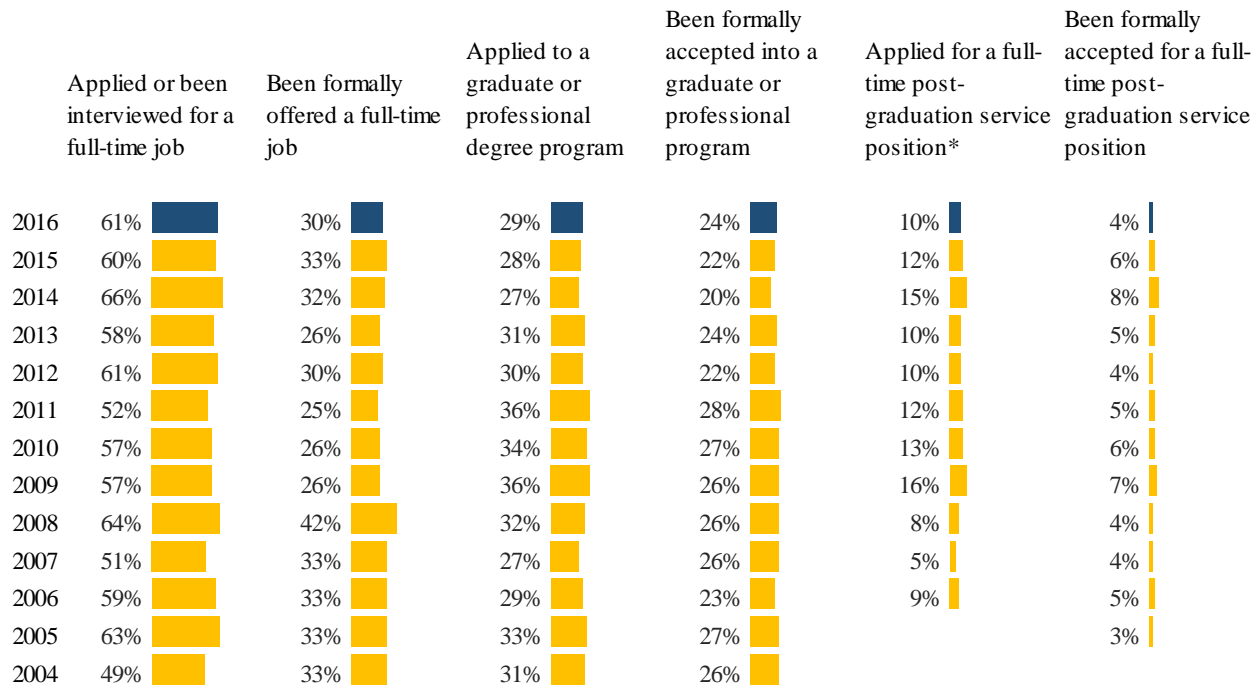
### Future Plans for Graduating Seniors

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 = 774)



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

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. In total, 572 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Improve dorm quality; improve food options/quality on and off campus; improve recreation center – 18%
- Improve/increase campus diversity – 13%
- Campus Activities (quality, quantity, variety, communication)– 12%
- Offer a wider variety of courses and times; increased availability; improve process for class registration – 11%
- Improve academic advising (relationships, communication, knowledge) – 10%
- Improve instructor quality – 10%

A second open-response item asked graduating seniors to identify the most valuable learning experience at Marquette. In total, 579 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Specific in-class academic experiences and courses (including capstones, major courses, particular programs, and specific influential courses) – 24%
- Out-of-class academic experiences (internships, clinical experiences, field work, co-ops, campus employment, and the Les Aspin program) – 23%
- Personal development/life lessons (e.g. learning the value of hard work, learning to make the best of a difficult situation)– 19%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 16%
- Study abroad – 9%
- Leadership development and student organization experiences – 9%

## 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.

An interactive data visualization for this survey is available at <http://www.marquette.edu/oira/gss-dash.shtml>

This executive summary and additional results for this and other surveys are available 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).