

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 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, 2015, and 2016 where applicable. The survey was administered online in April 2017. 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; 943 students responded, providing a response rate of 51%. The response rate is higher than the 2016 rate (45%) and the 2015 rate (45%) and lower than the 2014 and 2013 rates (2014: 53%, 2013: 52%), and higher than the 2012 and 2011 administrations (2012: 42%; 2011: 45%). The response rate for spring 2017 graduates was 55%, while for summer and fall 2017 graduates the response rate was 39%. A few survey results differed notably by the student's semester of graduation; these differences are noted below.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Satisfaction** remains high among graduating seniors with 95% satisfied with their undergraduate education, 93% rating the value of their undergraduate education as "excellent" or "good," and 89% indicating they would choose Marquette if starting over again. These percentages are slightly higher than previous years.
- Eighty-two percent of graduating seniors reported they would **choose the same major again** if starting over. This percentage increased slightly from 80% in 2016 and is the same as in 2017 (82%).
- Ninety percent of graduating seniors are **completing their degrees as quickly as they had planned**. For those graduating in spring 2017, this percentage was 95%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2017, the percentage was 68%. Among all those not completing their degree as quickly as planned, the commonly cited reasons were: changed to major within a different college at Marquette (26%); changed to major within the same college at Marquette (19%); required course(s) not available (22%); and pursued more than one major/degree (19%).
- Thirty-one percent of graduating seniors indicated they had seriously **considered transferring**. These students cited lack of a sense of belonging (59%) unwelcoming campus culture (43%), concerns about academics/coursework (31%), and financial reasons (31%) as the primary reasons. Their primary reasons for staying at Marquette included becoming involved on campus (45%), difficulty of transferring (42%), encouragement to stay from friends, relatives, or Marquette faculty or staff (40%), and strong relationships with Marquette friends (39%).
- Eighty-nine percent of graduating seniors were satisfied with the **quality of instruction** within their primary major.
- Eighty-seven percent were satisfied with the **availability of courses** in their primary major, consistent with last year.
- Students' satisfaction with the **quality of academic advising** has risen to 72% compared to the 2016 and 2015 rates of 66%.
- Students' **experiences with instructors** were similar to the previous year, with institutional strengths including 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-three percent participated in **community service** while at Marquette, similar to the 2016 and 2015 participation rates of 85% and 82%, respectively.
- Students who participated in co-ops; study abroad experiences; internships; or student teaching, field placement, practicum or clinical placement, reported that their experiences **enhanced their learning** "a great deal" (88%, 83%, 80% and 78% respectively).

RESULTS

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

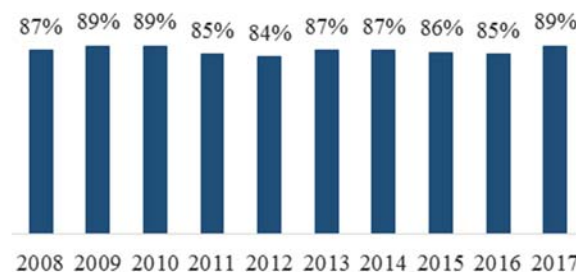
Overall Satisfaction

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-three percent rated the value for the money spent to be “excellent” or “good”. Eighty-nine percent would choose to attend Marquette again. Eighty-two percent indicated they would choose the same primary major.

		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Overall satisfaction with undergraduate education	Very Satisfied	59%	54%	57%	55%	58%
	Somewhat Satisfied	37%	40%	38%	39%	37%
	Somewhat Dissatisfied	4%	5%	5%	5%	4%
	Very Dissatisfied	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Rating of undergraduate education in terms of providing value for the money spent	Excellent	27%	27%	26%	31%	30%
	Good	63%	63%	65%	59%	63%
	Poor	8%	9%	8%	8%	6%
	Very Poor	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over	Definitely Yes	53%	49%	49%	48%	51%
	Probably Yes	34%	38%	37%	37%	38%
	Probably No	10%	11%	12%	12%	9%
	Definitely No	3%	2%	3%	3%	2%
Would choose same primary major again if starting over	Definitely Yes		51%	55%	51%	52%
	Probably Yes		27%	27%	29%	30%
	Probably No		17%	14%	15%	14%
	Definitely No		5%	4%	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



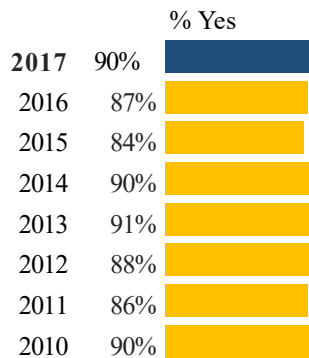
For those who indicated they would not choose to attend Marquette again if starting over, the survey asked why.

- Of the 11% of respondents (n=105) 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%

- Eighteen percent of respondents (n=176) 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%

Ninety 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 87%. For those graduating in spring 2017, this percentage was 95%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2017, the percentage was 68%.

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



- Among the 10% of respondents (n=89) 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 – 26%
 - Changed majors within the same college – 26%
 - Required courses not available – 22%
 - Pursued more than one major/degree – 19%
 - Personal issues, like health – 18%
 - Advisor misinformed me about degree requirements – 19%
- The most common reasons cited for summer and fall 2017 graduates differed slightly compared to spring 2017 graduates. These differences are below.
 - Pursued more than one major/degree - 24% (compared to 13% of spring 2017 graduates)
 - Personal issues, like health - 20% (compared to 15% of spring 2017 graduates)
 - Academic probation - 20% (compared to 5% of spring 2017 graduates)
 - Advisor misinformed me about degree requirements - 20% (compared to 15% of spring 2017 graduates)

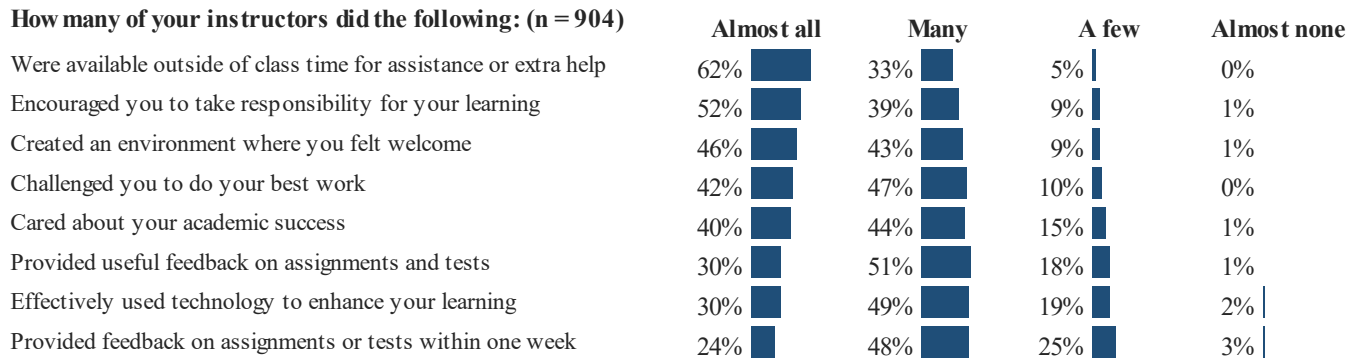
Thirty-one percent of graduating seniors reported they had seriously considered transferring (32% in 2016 and 2015, 28% in 2014, 27% in 2013, 34% in 2012, 28% in 2011, and 30% in 2010). For those graduating in spring 2017, this percentage was 30%. For those graduating in summer or fall 2017, the percentage was 36%.

- When asked what caused them to consider transferring, the most frequent responses included:
 - Lack of a sense of belonging – 59%
 - Unwelcoming campus culture – 43%
 - Academics/coursework (too difficult, too easy, courses I wanted to take were not available) – 31%
 - Financial reasons/cost of tuition – 31%
- When asked what caused them to decide to stay at Marquette instead of transferring, the most frequent responses included:
 - Becoming involved on campus (with student organizations/clubs, academic organizations, etc.) – 45%
 - Difficulty of transferring (credits wouldn’t transfer, transfer process was a hassle, etc.) – 42%
 - Encouragement to stay from friends, relatives, or Marquette faculty or staff – 40%
 - Strong relationships with Marquette friends – 39%

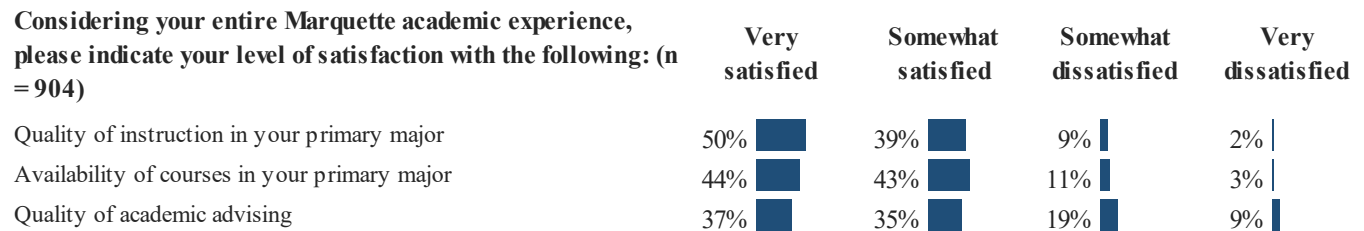
Satisfaction with the Academic Experience

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.

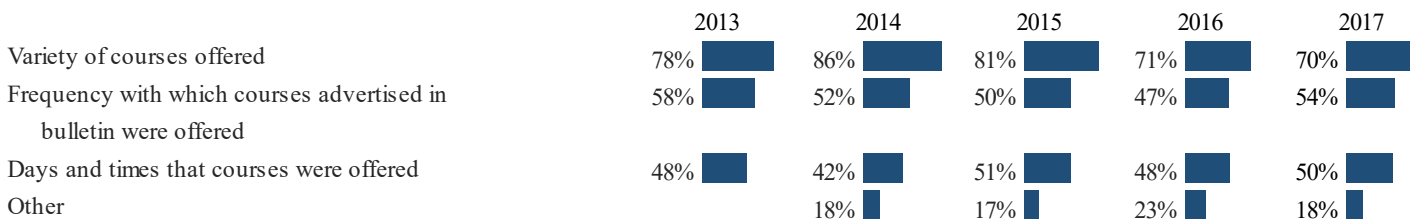


The chart below shows graduating seniors' responses to items that asked about their satisfaction with several aspects of their academic experience. These are similar to those reported in the previous year.



- Among the 14% of students (n=122) dissatisfied with the availability of courses in their major, the most frequently selected reasons for their dissatisfaction included:
 - Variety of courses offered – 70% (compared to 71% in 2016)
 - Frequency that courses advertised in the bulletin were offered – 54% (compared to 47% in 2016)
 - Days and times courses were offered – 50% (compared to 48% in 2016)

Please indicate why you were dissatisfied with the availability of courses in your major: (Check all that apply) (n = 122)



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=9) of the 933 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	2017
Community service in any form (part of class, with student org, or on one's own)	87%	83%	82%	85%	83%
Student organization/club sport	80%	81%	80%	81%	83%
Internship, co-op, field placement, student teaching, practicum, clinical placement	68%	70%	73%	76%	75%
Work for pay in an on campus job	71%	71%	69%	73%	70%
Volunteer community service (not course-based)	71%	69%	69%	70%	67%
Community service as part of a course (service learning, community project)	60%	59%	55%	59%	59%
Leadership role in a student organization/club sport	53%	54%	51%	57%	54%
Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design/project, senior experience)	45%	40%	43%	43%	40%
Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience	31%	31%	30%	29%	30%
Learning community/formal program where students take two or more classes together	23%	20%	22%	21%	21%
Work with a faculty member on her/his research	20%	20%	20%	21%	19%

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

- Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience -- 32% for spring 2017 graduates versus 24% for summer and fall 2017 graduates
- Volunteer community service (not course-based) -- 67% for spring 2017 graduates versus 63% for summer and fall 2017 graduates
- Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design/project, senior experience) -- 41% for spring 2017 graduates versus 35% for summer and fall 2017 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
Co-op	60	88%	10%	0%	2%
Study abroad or university-sponsored international experience	283	83%	13%	3%	0%
Internship	559	80%	17%	2%	1%
Student teaching, field placement, practicum or clinical placement	171	78%	17%	5%	1%
Work with a faculty member on her/his research	176	63%	26%	8%	3%
Student organization leader/officer	506	62%	29%	8%	1%
Learning community or program where students take 2+ classes together	191	57%	36%	6%	2%
Culminating academic experience (capstone, senior design or project)	373	48%	39%	10%	4%
Participate in a student organization	767	46%	34%	16%	4%
Volunteer community service (not course-based)	619	41%	38%	17%	4%
On-campus job	652	40%	33%	18%	9%
Service as part of a course (service learning, community project)	548	36%	39%	20%	5%

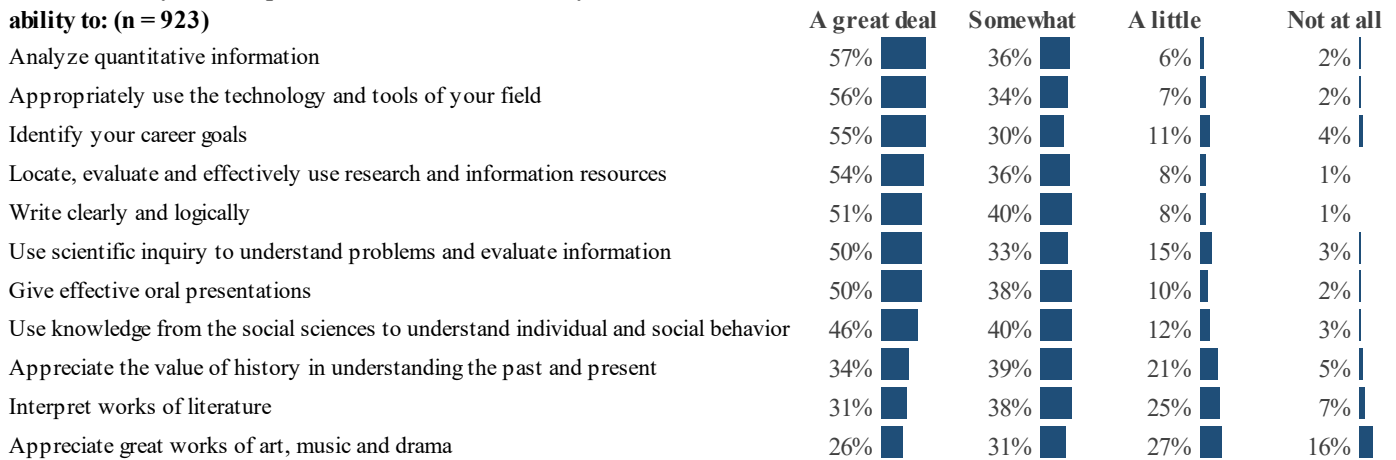
The chart below indicates the frequency of engagement with faculty and diverse others, which has also been demonstrated through national research to have a positive impact on student success.

While at Marquette, how frequently did you... (n = 929)	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Never
Discuss academic material with faculty members outside of class time	19%	29%	47%	5%
Discuss personal interests/issues with faculty members outside of class time	11%	17%	52%	20%
Discuss faith, spirituality or religion with people who hold religious beliefs different than your own	8%	18%	55%	19%

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 = 923)



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 2017 compared to 2016 include the following: The percentage of students responding that they had grown “a great deal” in their ability to “recognize injustice in society” increased to 63% in 2017 from 60% in 2016. The percentage of students indicating that they have grown “a great deal” in their ability to “recognize the advantages and challenges of a diverse society” increased by 5%, from 60% in 2016 to 65% in 2017.

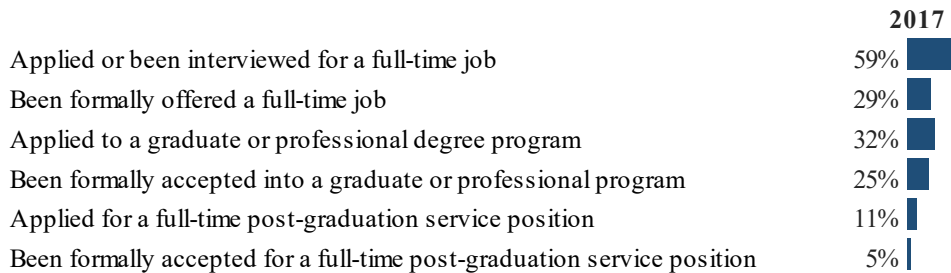
Compared to when you entered Marquette, how much have you grown in your ability to: (n = 912)



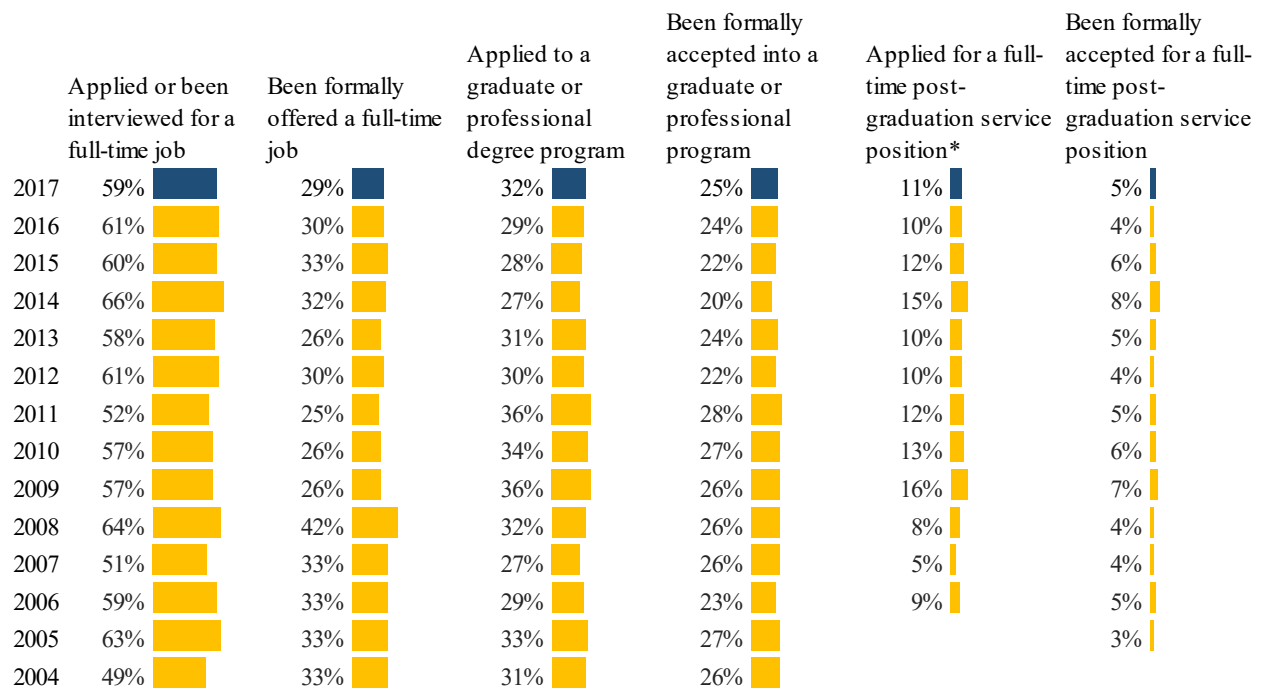
Future Plans for Graduating Seniors

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 = 901)



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

- Improve facilities including dorm quality, food options/quality on and off campus, recreation center – 22%
- Improve/increase campus diversity – 13%
- Campus Activities (quality, quantity, variety, communication)– 13%
- Offer more “Real World” experiences to prepare for life after graduation (career prep, interview, resume) – 10%
- Improve instructor quality – 9%
- Improve academic advising (relationships, communication, knowledge) –6%

A second open-response item asked graduating seniors to identify the most valuable learning experience at Marquette. In total, 681 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) –38%
- Out-of-class academic experiences (internships, clinical experiences, field work, co-ops, campus employment, and the Les Aspin program) – 28%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 19%
- Personal development/life lessons (e.g. learning the value of hard work, learning to make the best of a difficult situation)– 16%
- Leadership development and student organization experiences – 11%
- Study abroad – 10%

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.

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/student-surveys.shtml>.

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