

INTRODUCTION

The annual Graduating Senior Survey investigates graduating seniors’ engagement in co-curricular learning experiences at Marquette, institutional learning outcomes, plans for the immediate future, and overall satisfaction with their Marquette education. For the third year, a companion instrument was implemented with juniors to investigate students’ perceptions about the impact of the Core of Common Studies on their learning and development, understand student experiences with key mission and identity objectives of the university, and determine their progress toward completing their degree. Questions on both surveys were specially authored to allow for future comparison with surveys of new students and alumni. The surveys were administered by the Division of Student Affairs and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment in April and May 2011.

All graduating seniors were invited via email to complete the Graduating Senior Survey; 557 students responded, providing a response rate of 45.2%. A random sample of the junior population was invited to participate in the Junior Survey; 245 students responded, providing a response rate of 29.7%.

RESULTS

Results are reported in a number of areas that represent the major categories for the two surveys. Text, charts, and graphs indicate whether reported data for those particular items were drawn from the Junior or Graduating Senior surveys.

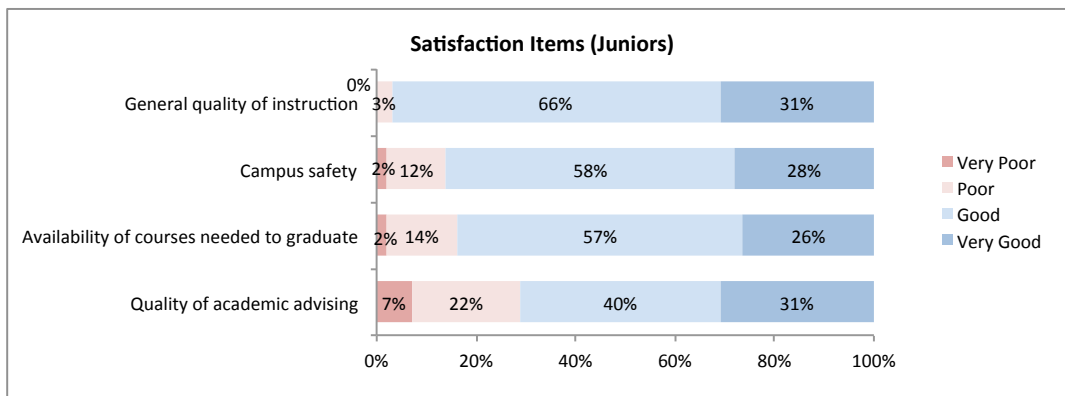
Satisfaction

A series of survey questions asked seniors to indicate their overall satisfaction with their Marquette experience. Students reported high rates of satisfaction with the University and with their chosen major.

	Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	No
Marquette education met my overall goals	63%	31%	4%	2%
Would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over	62%	23%	9%	6%
Would recommend major area of study to a new Marquette student	61%	25%	9%	5%

- The percentage of seniors reporting that they would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over remains high, although this figure is down slightly from previous years (85% in 2011, 89% in 2010, 89% in 2009, 87% 2008).
- 86% of graduating seniors reported that they were completing their Marquette degree as quickly as they had planned (down slightly from 90% the previous year); 7% indicated that Marquette had done something to significantly delay progress by 1-2 semesters; 7% indicated personal matters had delayed progress by 1-2 semesters.
- 18% of graduating seniors reported that they had seriously considered transferring during/following their first year; 7% during/following their second year; 3% during/following their third year. When asked an open-ended question on what caused them to consider transferring, 126 students offered responses with the following themes:
 - Academic concerns (problems with faculty, unhappy with programs or class requirements) – 37% of responses,
 - Financial issues (cost of tuition, value, financial aid or personal finance issues) – 14% of responses,
 - Social concerns (problems fitting in and making friends, discrimination and/or lack of diversity, homesickness/adjustment issues, and institution environment/atmosphere) – 37% of responses, and
 - Marquette’s location and the city – 12% of responses.

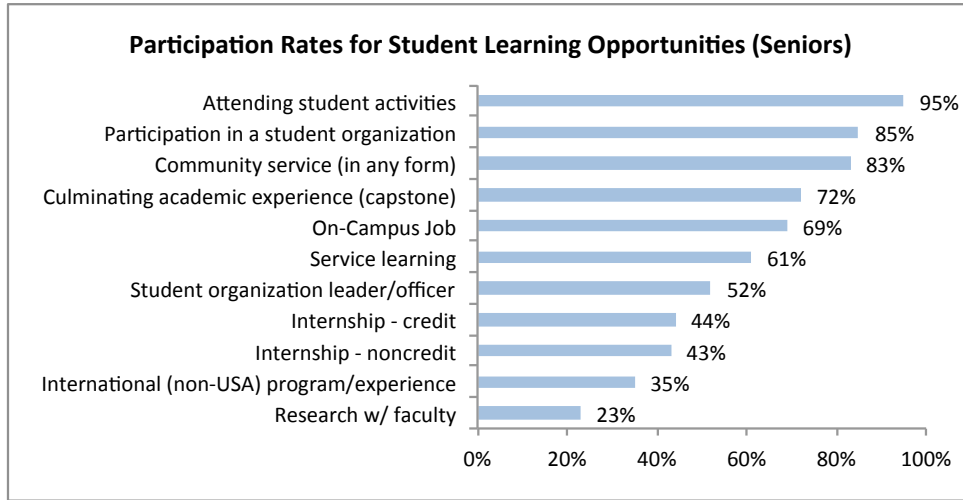
A series of survey questions asked juniors to indicate their satisfaction with particular aspects of their Marquette experience.



Responses to these items have remained fairly constant in the three years these questions have been asked of juniors, with the exception of campus safety, which has fallen slightly (86% “good” or “very good” in 2011, 97% in 2010, and 89% in 2009).

Impact of Student Learning Opportunities

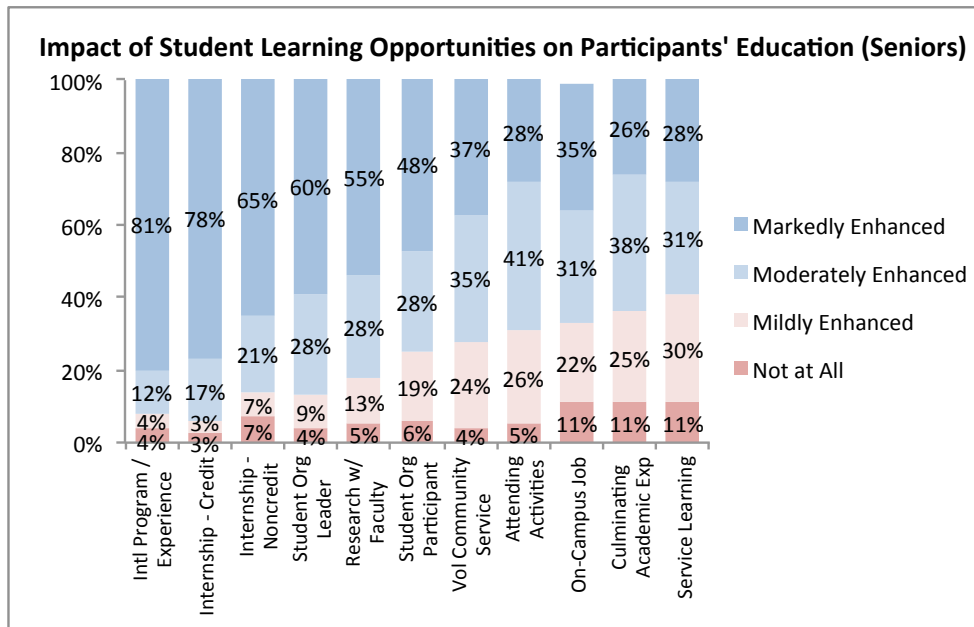
A series of survey questions asked seniors about their participation in a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities and the level of impact each of those forms of engagement had during the undergraduate experience of students. Frequency of engagement for activities listed in the survey is indicated in the chart below.



Participation rates for these activities have remained fairly constant in recent years, with slight *decreases* in the percentage of students completing internships (for-credit or non-credit), and *increases* in participation in student organizations, culminating academic experiences, and international programs or experiences (including study abroad).

83% of graduating seniors reported participating in community service in some form during college (as part of a class, as work study, through a student organization, or on their own). Marquette undergraduate students spend approximately 455,000 hours of service in the community each year.

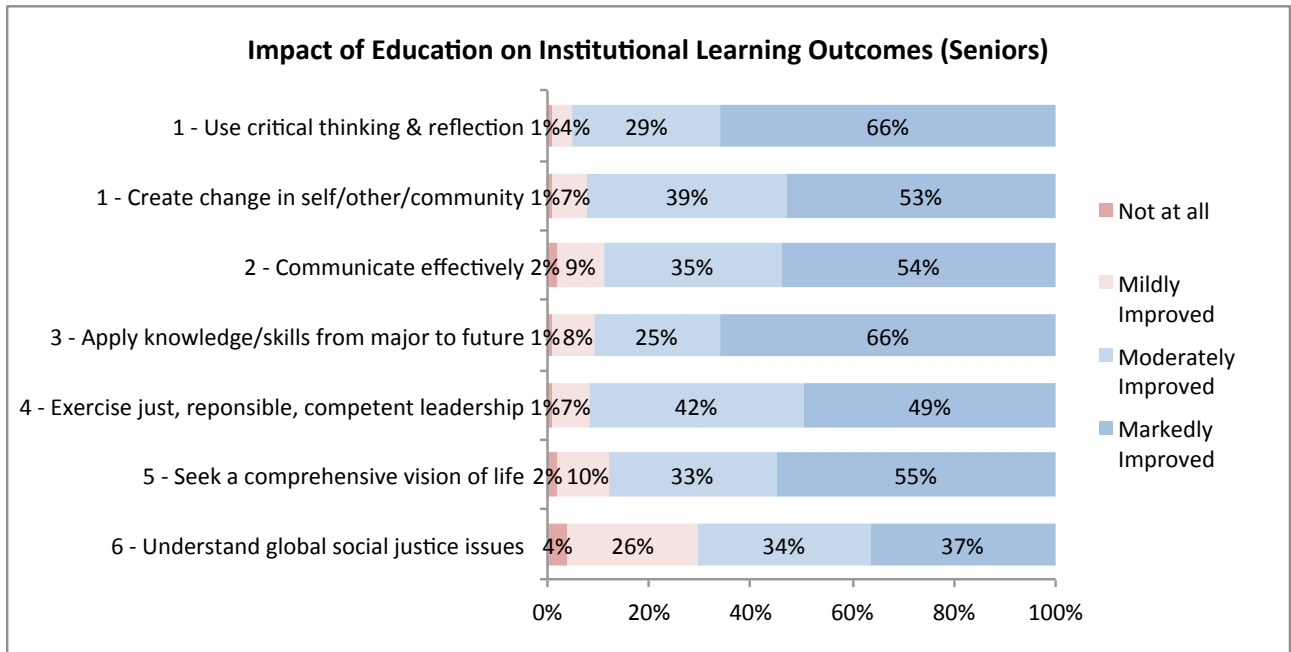
The same series of questions asked students to indicate the level of personal impact from the experience (marked, moderate, or mild). The following chart illustrates the magnitude of each activity’s impact on those students who participated.



Examining the impact of the student learning opportunities over the past three years, the percentage of students who indicated that the learning opportunity “markedly” or “moderately” enhanced their education increased for all but one of the measured opportunities in 2011 as compared to one or more previous years. The only exception is service learning (59% rated “marked” or “moderate” impact in 2011, 61% in 2010, and 64% in 2009).

Institutional Learning Outcomes

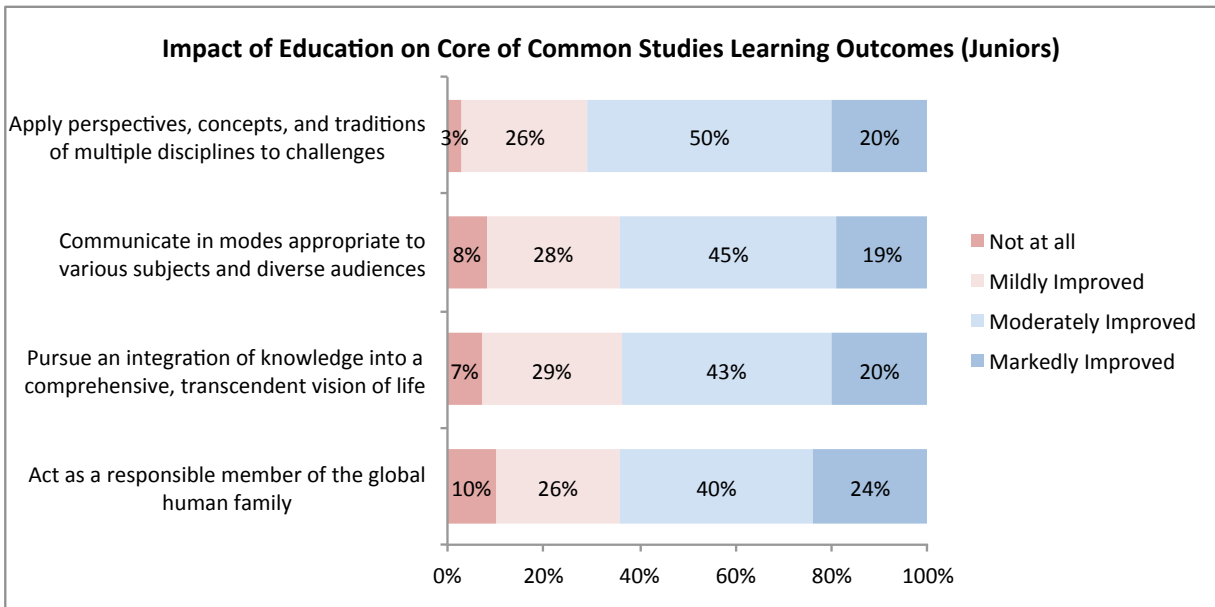
A series of survey questions asked seniors to indicate how their Marquette education had improved their abilities related to the University’s stated learning outcomes for students.



Responses to these questions have remained fairly constant over the three years that the questions have been asked of seniors, although there is variability in results based on the college of the respondent. (Results by college are available from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment website at <http://www.marquette.edu/oira/studentsurveys.shtml>.)

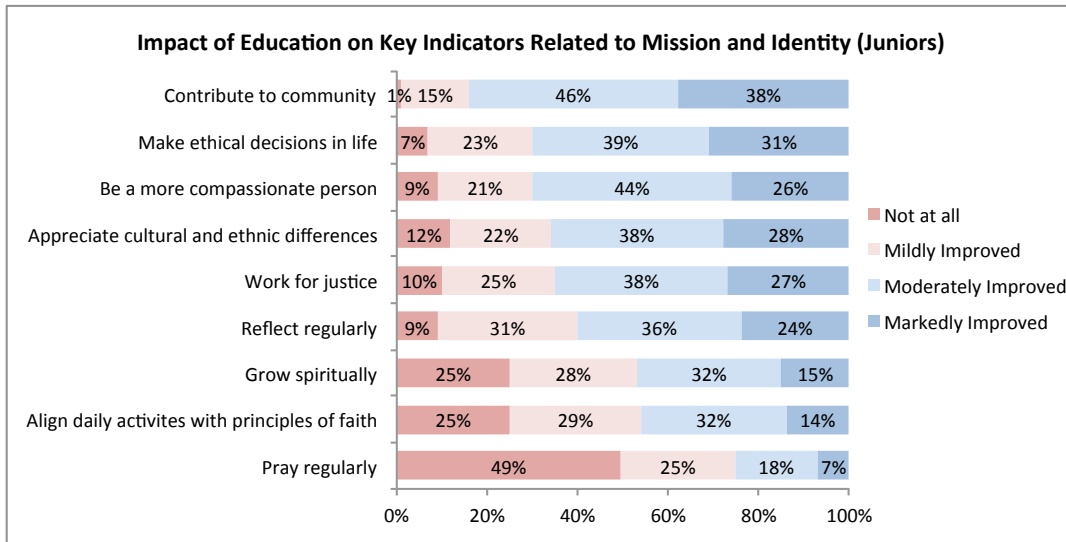
Core of Common Studies

The Junior Survey included a new series of survey questions asking respondents to indicate how completion of courses in the Marquette Core of Common Studies had improved their abilities related to the newly written goals of the Core.



Mission & Identity

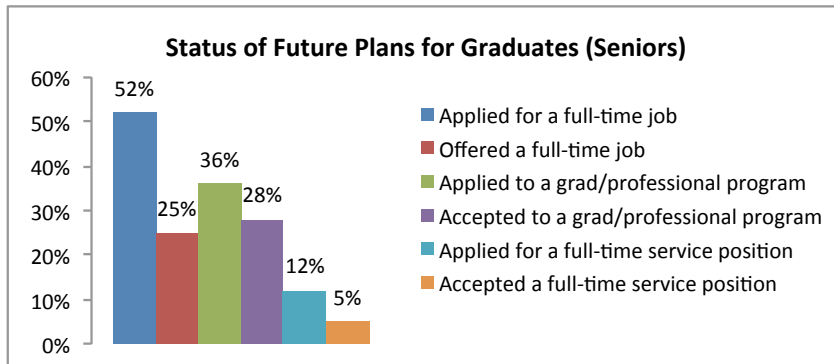
A series of survey questions asked juniors to indicate how their Marquette education had improved their abilities related to key indicators of the University’s mission and identity.



The greatest change results for these items over the past three years is the percentage of students who report that their Marquette education has improved their ability to contribute to community (84% in 2011, 71% in 2010, and 74% in 2009).

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 completed (April).



The rate of graduating seniors applying for full-time employment remains down from previous years (57% in 2010 and 2009 and 64% in 2008). The percentage of graduating seniors with full-time jobs at the time of graduation has also declined during that same time period (26% in 2010 and 2009 and 42% in 2008).

The rate of graduating senior applications to graduate or professional degree programs was roughly equivalent to the previous years (34% in 2010; 36% in 2009; 32% in 2008), and application rates for full-time service positions were also between where they had been in previous years (13% in 2010; 16% in 2009; and 8% in 2008).

Open Response items

Two questions on the Graduating Senior 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. 294 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Improve academic advising (relationships, communication, knowledge) – 14%
- Improve diversity (representation of students and improved relationships), especially race and sexual orientation – 7%
- Address tuition, financial aid, and affordability issues – 7%
- Offer a wider variety of courses and times – 6%
- Re-evaluate the courses in the Core of Common Studies – 4%
- Better/healthier/increased food options – 4%

The second open-response item asked graduating seniors to identify their most valuable learning experience during their educational career at Marquette. 320 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Courses (including capstones, major courses, and specific influential courses) – 17%
- Studying abroad – 16%
- Student organizations – 13%
- Internships and clinical experiences – 11%
- Interactions with faculty and students (many respondents cited specific names of influential faculty) – 8%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 7%

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 University Assessment Committee and the Division of Student Affairs Assessment Team.

Starting in Fall 2008, several of the questions on this survey have also been repeated in the annual Survey of First-Time Freshmen, with the intent that direct cohort comparisons will be made starting in Spring 2012.

This executive summary is available at <http://www.marquette.edu/dsa/assessment.shtml> and complete data tables by college can be found at <http://www.marquette.edu/oira/studentsurveys.shtml>. For additional information about the report, contact:

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