

**INTRODUCTION**

The annual Graduating Senior Survey investigates graduating seniors’ 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, plans for the immediate future, and overall satisfaction with their Marquette education. Questions on the survey were specially authored to allow for comparison with surveys administered to new students and alumni. The survey was administered by the Division of Student Affairs and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment in April 2012.

All graduating seniors were invited via email to complete the survey; 601 students responded, providing a response rate of 41.7%.

**RESULTS**

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

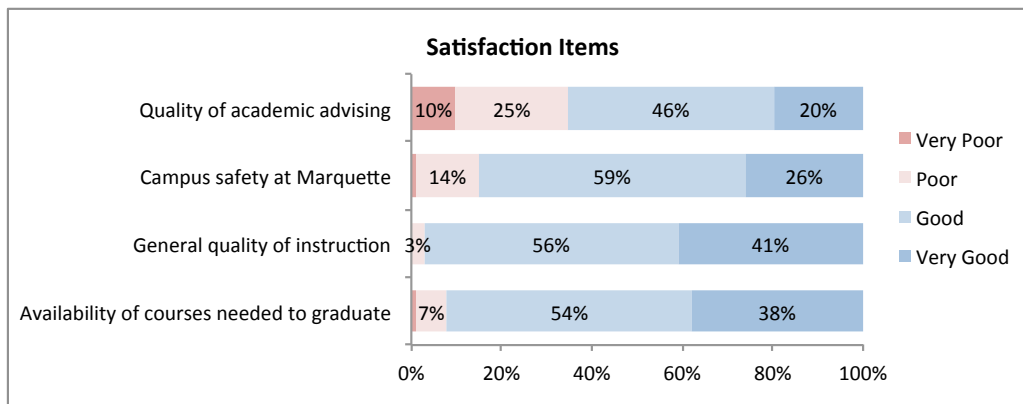
**Satisfaction**

Graduating seniors continue to report high rates of satisfaction with the University and with their chosen major. 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 (84% in 2012, 85% in 2011, 89% in 2010, 89% in 2009, 87% 2008).

	Yes	Probably Yes	Probably No	No
Marquette education met my overall goals	64%	31%	4%	2%
Would choose to attend Marquette again if starting over	61%	23%	11%	5%
Would recommend major area of study to a new Marquette student	65%	21%	9%	5%

- 88% of graduating seniors reported that they were completing their Marquette degree as quickly as they had planned (86% in 2011, 90% in 2010); 8% indicated that Marquette had done something to significantly delay progress by 1-2 semesters; 6% indicated personal matters had delayed progress by 1-2 semesters.
- 34% of graduating seniors reporting they had seriously considered transferring (28% in 2011, and 30% in 2010). 21% seriously considered doing so during/following their first year; 11% during/following their second year; 2% during/following their third year. When asked an open-ended question on what caused them to consider transferring, 189 students offered responses with the following themes:
  - Academic concerns (problems with faculty, unhappy with programs or class requirements) – 44%
  - Social concerns (problems fitting in and making friends, discrimination and/or lack of diversity, disliked “student culture,” homesickness/adjustment issues, issues with roommates, other residents, or RA’s, and institution environment/atmosphere) – 42%
  - Financial issues (cost of tuition, value, financial aid or personal finance issues, perceived lack of assistance from Financial Aid staff) – 17%
  - Marquette’s location and the city (location, distance from home, climate/weather) – 14%

Responses to items asking about satisfaction with particular aspects of graduating seniors’ experience were fairly consistent to previous data collected on a similar survey of juniors over the past three years, with two notable exceptions:



- Fewer students reported satisfaction with academic advising (66% “good” or “very good” among seniors in 2012, compared with 71% for juniors in 2011, 75% in 2010, and 75% in 2009)
- More students reported satisfaction with quality of instruction (97% “good” or “very good” among seniors in 2012, compared with 83% for juniors in 2011, 85% in 2010, and 81% in 2009).

### Impact of Student Learning Opportunities

The table 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.

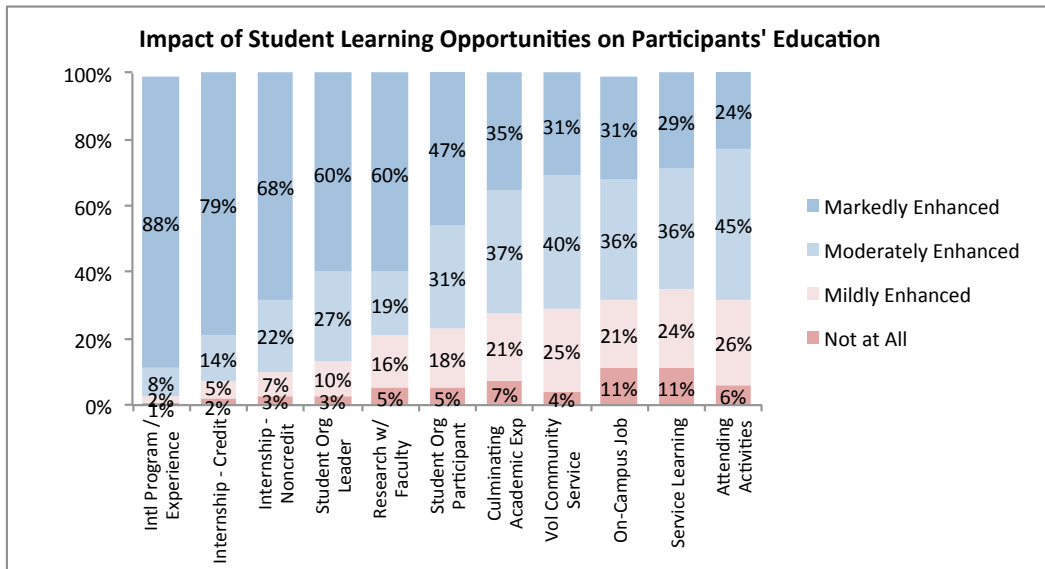
	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
Attend student activities on campus <sup>1</sup>	98%	97%	95%	96%
Participate in a student organization <sup>1</sup>	87%	85%	85%	88%
Community service (in any form) <sup>1</sup>	87%	82%	83%	84%
On-campus job <sup>1</sup>	–	–	69%	75%
Culminating academic experience (capstone) <sup>1</sup>	70%	79%	72%	72%
Service learning <sup>1</sup>	65%	63%	61%	63%
Student organization leader/officer <sup>1</sup>	55%	59%	52%	56%
Non-credit internship <sup>1</sup>	47%	46%	44%	48%
Internship for academic credit <sup>1</sup>	47%	48%	43%	46%
International program/experience <sup>1</sup>	35%	35%	35%	36%
Research with a faculty member (outside of class) <sup>1</sup>	–	22%	23%	25%
Engage in discussions with instructors outside of class <sup>2</sup>	–	–	49%	49%
Socialize with students whose backgrounds differ from yours <sup>2</sup>	–	–	65%	63%
Engage in discussions with students whose backgrounds differ from yours <sup>2</sup>	–	–	63%	63%

<sup>1</sup> percentage of respondents who indicated they participated in the experience while at Marquette

<sup>2</sup> collapsed responses for “often” or “very often”

- Participation rates for these activities have remained fairly constant in recent years, with slight increases in participation in student organizations, community service, and research with a faculty member (outside of class).
- 84% 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 422,000 hours of service in the community each year.

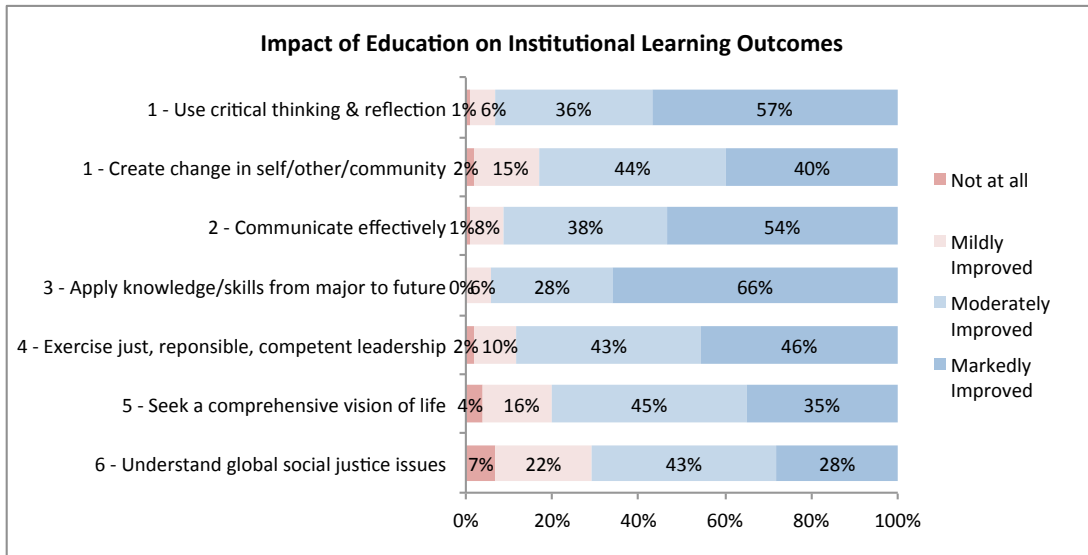
The following chart illustrates the magnitude of each activity’s impact on those students who participated.



Examining the impact of the student learning opportunities over the past four 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 2012 as compared to one or more previous years. The only exception is research with a faculty member outside of class (79% rated “marked” or “moderate” impact in 2012, 83% in 2011, and 82% in 2010).

### Institutional Learning Outcomes

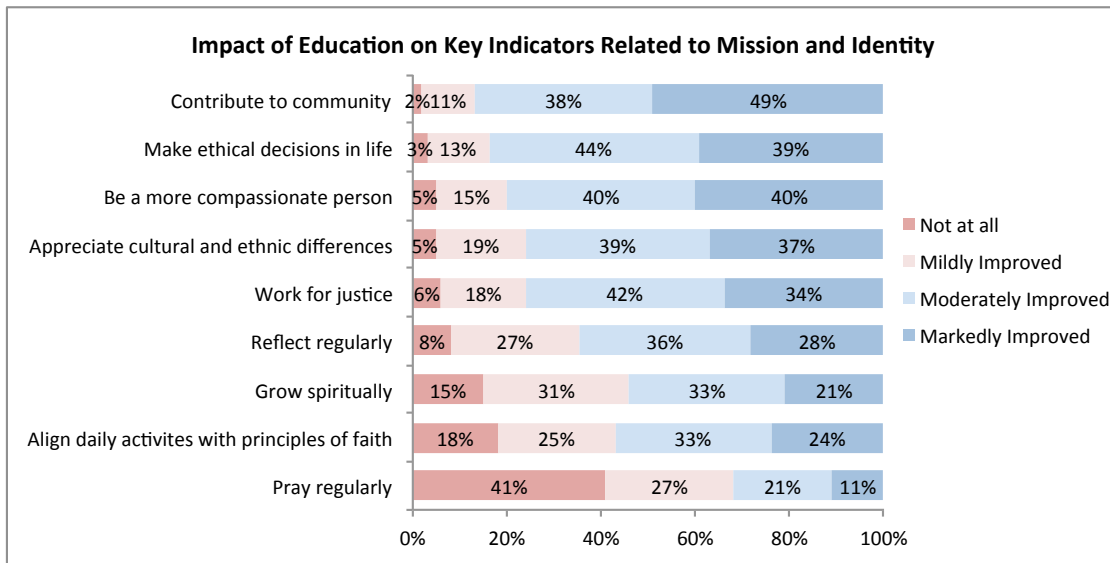
The charts below depict graduating seniors’ responses to items that asked how their Marquette education had improved their abilities related to the University’s stated learning outcomes for students.



Survey responses have remained fairly constant over the last four years with 80-95 percent of students identifying “moderate” or “marked” improvement across all categories with the exception of the ability to understand global social justice issues (70-75 percent of students). Further, in comparison to previous years, the 2012 graduating seniors were more likely to report ‘moderate’ rather than ‘marked’ improvement in three areas: Seek a comprehensive vision of life, create positive changes and understand global social justice issues.

### Mission & Identity

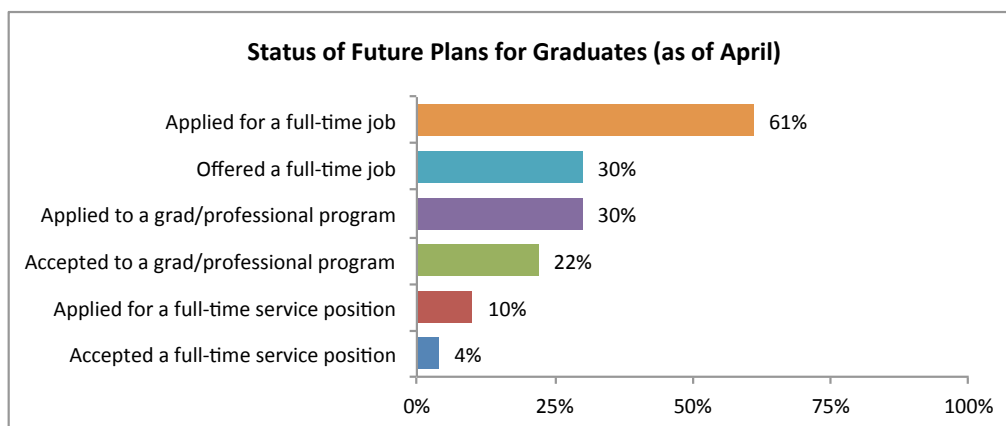
The following chart depicts graduating seniors’ responses to items that asked how their Marquette education had improved their abilities related to key indicators of the University’s mission and identity.



These questions were previously asked annually on surveys of juniors. It was noted that graduating seniors responded more positively to all of the items than the same cohort of junior respondents in 2011.

### 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).



Graduating seniors appear to be seeking full-time employment and applying to graduate/professional programs at rates that more closely approximate pre-recession levels. The table below shows responses for these items on Graduating Senior Surveys dating back to 2004.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Applied for full-time job	49%	63%	59%	51%	64%	57%	57%	52%	61%
Offered full-time job	33%	33%	33%	33%	42%	26%	26%	25%	30%
Applied to grad/professional program	31%	33%	29%	27%	32%	36%	34%	36%	30%
Accepted to grad/professional program	26%	27%	23%	26%	26%	26%	27%	28%	22%
Applied for full-time service	–	–	9%	5%	8%	16%	13%	12%	10%
Accepted full-time service	–	3%	5%	4%	4%	7%	6%	5%	4%

### 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. 464 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 – 10%
- Re-evaluate the courses in the Core of Common Studies – 8%
- Address tuition, financial aid, and affordability issues – 7%
- More/improved service learning and community service activities – 5%
- Offer a wider variety of courses and times; increased availability – 5%
- More career experiences within specific areas of study – 3%
- Better/healthier/increased food options – 3%

The second open-response item asked graduating seniors to identify their most valuable learning experience during their educational career at Marquette. 489 students responded; themes for the most commonly cited responses (in order of greatest frequency) were:

- Courses (including capstones, major courses, and specific influential courses) – 19%
- Internships, clinical experiences, field work, and co-ops – 16%
- Interactions with faculty and students (many respondents cited specific names of influential faculty) – 14%
- Studying abroad – 14%
- Volunteer community service or service learning – 8%
- Student organizations – 7%

## 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 Standing Committee, 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 and Alumni Survey for comparison purposes. This is the first year that direct cohort comparisons can be made for responses between the freshman and senior surveys.

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

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

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