



**REPORT OF THE
2009 GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY (GSS)
For St. John's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to obtain outcomes and contact information from as many of our graduating students as possible, in Spring 2009 a brief 15-item survey was incorporated into the online process used by students, excluding School of Law, to request Cap and Gown for commencement. A total of 2,485 students participated in the survey, representing 94% of students who registered for the Cap and Gown online, and accounting for 65% of the 2008-09 graduating population (71% undergraduates and 55% graduates). This very high level of participation and successful implementation of the survey resulted from the collaborative efforts of the Office of University Events, Information Technology, Institutional Research and other offices, an effort that will continue in the future.

For St. John's College, a total of 636 students participated in the survey, representing 95% of students who registered for the Cap and Gown online, and accounting for 67% of the 2008-09 graduating population (73% undergraduates and 55% graduates). Following are the highlights of the survey results for St. John's College.

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF SURVEY RESULTS

As shown in the table below, 90% of undergraduates and 91% of graduate students were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall St. John's experience (the total percentage may not be exactly equal to the sum of the two sub-categories due to rounding off).

| | Undergraduates | Graduates |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| Overall satisfaction with St. John's | 90% | 91% |
| Very satisfied | 24% | 28% |
| Satisfied | 66% | 64% |
| Quality of instruction | 81% | 87% |
| Excellent | 25% | 34% |
| Good | 57% | 52% |
| Tuition paid was a worthwhile investment | 68% | 85% |
| Strongly agree | 13% | 22% |
| Agree | 55% | 63% |
| Impact of Catholic and Vincentian experience | 74% | 60% |
| Very positive | 20% | 17% |
| Positive | 54% | 42% |

Regarding the quality of instruction, 81% of undergraduates and 87% of graduate students rated it as *good / excellent*. Over two-thirds of undergraduates and 85% of graduate students *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid was a worthwhile investment. Seventy-four percent of undergraduates and three-fifths of graduate students indicated that the Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their St. John's experience *positively / very positively*.

Student overall satisfaction had a strong positive correlation with their perception of the quality of instruction and tuition as a worthwhile investment. College GPA had a positive correlation with tuition paid as a worthwhile investment.

For undergraduates, 37% had internships. Of those students, 75% found their internships on their own, 24% through academic departments, and 14% through the Career Center; regarding the primary motivation for completing an internship, 92% indicated that it was for experience, 44% for academic credits, and 13% for financial reasons; as for their employment plans, 13% of respondents indicated that they had accepted a job offer (16% for those with internships and 11% for those without), 69% were still looking, and 18% had no plans.

For graduate students, 49% had internships. Of those students, 65% found their internships on their own, 42% through academic departments, and 5% through the Career Center; regarding the primary motivation for completing an internship, 80% indicated that it was for academic credits, 70% for experience, and 7% for financial reasons; as for their employment plans, 38% accepted a job offer (42% for those with internships and 33% for those without), 55% were still looking, and 7% had no plans.

III. DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

For this section, table numbers in parentheses relate to the tables provided in the appendix. Since *Internship* is an area of focus at the University, the analysis related to *Internships* is more comprehensive than for other items.

1. Student Overall Perceptions

The survey data indicate that 90% of undergraduates and 91% of graduate students were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience at St. John's, and 81% of undergraduates and 87% of graduates rated the quality of instruction as *good / excellent*. Regarding tuition as a worthwhile investment, 68% of undergraduates and 85% of graduates *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment (Table 1).

Student overall satisfaction had a strong positive correlation with their perception of the quality of instruction and tuition as a worthwhile investment (correlation coefficient = 0.6 for both UG and GR); and a moderately positive relationship with impact of mission, job preparation, and availability of internships (Table 2). Following are their correlation coefficients:

| Overall Satisfaction with | Undergraduates | Graduates |
|---|----------------|-----------|
| Quality of instruction | .56 | .58 |
| Tuition paid as a worthwhile investment | .62 | .58 |
| Impact of Mission | .49 | .51 |
| Job preparation / job placement | .44 | .29 |
| Availability of internships | .49 | .26 |

For undergraduates, students with a higher college GPA had a higher perception of tuition as a worthwhile investment: 77% of students with GPA of 3.5 – 4.0 *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment while the corresponding figures for students with GPA of 3.0 – 3.4 and below 3.0 were 67% and 60%. Students from the secondary market had a higher perception of the quality of instruction: 86% rated it as *good / excellent* as compared to 79% of students from the primary market. However, there was not much difference in overall satisfaction or in tuition paid as a worthwhile investment between students from the primary market and those from the secondary market. (Table 5)

Ratings by females were higher than by male students: 92% of female undergraduates were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience compared to 85% for males, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 93% vs. 86%. For the quality of instruction, 83% of female undergraduates rated it as *good / excellent* compared to 77% for males, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 88% vs. 82%. (Table 6)

Ratings on the quality of instruction by Asian students were not as high as by other ethnicities: 68% of Asian undergraduates rated it as *good / excellent* compared to 76% or higher for other ethnicities, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 78% vs. 87% or higher. (Table 6)

For undergraduates, 100% of students majoring in Speech and Physics were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience, followed by Psychology (98%). Regarding the quality of instruction, Speech was also on top: 94% rated it as *good / excellent*, followed by Art (93%) and Psychology (88%). For tuition as a worthwhile

investment, Physics was on top: 100% *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment, followed by Speech (91%). (Table 1)

For graduate students, 100% of the following five majors were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience: Theology, English, Government and Politics, Criminal Justice, and Speech.

Comments mirrored the ratings, with the majority of respondents indicating that they had a good / great and worthwhile experience at St. John's. The main concerns related to cost / value of tuition and financial aid. For detailed information on students' comments, please see the COMMENTS sheet in the appendix.

2. Undergraduate Students: Internships, Job Status, and Further Education

The majority of students, who did not have internships, did not respond to the question relating to satisfaction with the availability of internships: only 10% (N=28) of undergraduates and 1% of graduates (N=1) without internships responded as compared to 76% of undergraduates and 77% of graduates with internships. Similarly, the question relating to satisfaction with job preparation or placement also had a fairly low response rate: 39% for undergraduates and 34% for graduates who did not have internships compared to 77% of undergraduates and 85% of graduates with internships. (Table 4)

The data indicate that 37% of undergraduate students had internships. Of those students, 75% found their internships on their own, 24% through academic departments, and 14% through the Career Center. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item (Q7, Table 3).

When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 92% indicated that it was for experience, 44% for academic credits, and 13% for financial reasons. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item (Q6, Table 3).

When asked about their plan to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010, 70% were planning to do so, 72% for those with internships vs. 69% for those without internships. (Q1, Table 7).

When asked about their employment plans, 13% of respondents indicated that they had accepted a job offer (16% for those with internships and 11% for those without), 69% were still looking (74% for those with internships and 65% for those without), and 18% had no plans (11% for those with internships and 24% for those without). For students who planned to further their studies, 12% had accepted a job offer (14% for those with internships and 11% for those without). For those who had no plan for further

studies, 13% had accepted a job offer (17% for those with internships and 11% for those without). (Q4a, Q4b, Q4c, Table 7)

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the availability of internships at St. John's, students with internships were more satisfied than those without : 74% of students with internships were *satisfied / very satisfied* as compared to 21% of those without internships. (Q8, Table 7)

When asked how well St. John's did at providing job preparation or placement, ratings by students with internships were slightly higher than by those without internships: 46% of students with internships rated it as *Good / Excellent* as compared to 41% of those without internships. (Q9, Table 7)

Ratings on the quality of instruction at St. John's were slightly higher by students with internships than those without: 84% of students with internships rated it as *good / excellent* as compared to 79% for those without internships (Q10, Table 7).

There was not much difference between students with or without internships in their perceptions about overall satisfaction, tuition paid as a worthwhile investment, or the impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on student experience. (Q11, Q12, Q13, Table 7).

3. Graduate Students: Internships, Job Status, and Further Education

Of the 179 graduate students who participated in the survey, 88 had internships (49%). Of those students, 65% found their internships on their own, 42% through academic departments, and 5% through the Career Center. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item (Q7, Table 3).

The survey data reveal that 28% of graduate students were planning to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010, 20% for students with internships and 35% for those without. (Question 1, Table 8)

Regarding their employment plans, 38% accepted a job offer (42% for those with internships and 33% for those without), 55% were still looking (55% for those with or without internships), and 7% had no plans (3% for those with internships and 12% for those without). For students who planned to further their studies, 28% accepted a job offer (35% for those with internships and 22% for those without). For those who had no plan for further studies, this percentage was 14% higher, i.e., 42% (43% for those with internships and 40% for those without. (Q4a, Q4b, Q4c, Table 8)

When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 80% indicated that it was for academic credits, 70% for experience, and 7% for financial

reasons. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item. (Q6, Table 3)

There was not much difference between the students with internships and those without in the average ratings on the quality of instruction, or tuition paid as a worthwhile investment, or the overall satisfaction, or the impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on student experience. (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Table 8).

4. Impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on Student Experience

For undergraduates, 20% indicated that St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their experience very *positively*, 54% *positively*, 1% *negatively*, 1% very *negatively*, and *no impact* on the remaining 24% (Q13, Table 7); the corresponding figures for graduate students were 17%, 42%, 1%, 0%, and 39% (Q13, Table 8).

IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In general the results from this GSS survey are consistent with the findings from other surveys such as NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) and SSI (Student Satisfaction Inventory): student overall satisfaction is strongly related to the quality of instruction and with tuition paid as a worthwhile investment; ratings by female are higher than by male students; Asian students are less satisfied than their peers of other ethnicities.

Related literature indicates that internships involve students in the construction of knowledge by engaging them in authentic tasks of the workplace that create a context for creative decision making in uncertain situations, and internships also engage students in reflective practices that help them develop both personally and professionally. The 2008 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) survey data reveal that the percent of interns converted to full-time employees increased from 36% in 2001 to 51% in 2008. St. John's College's GSS data indicate that a larger proportion of students with internships landed a job than those without internships, 16% vs. 11% for undergraduates and 42% vs. 33% for graduate students. Therefore, collaborative efforts should be continued to help more students find internships, thus making them more competitive in the job market.

The results of this GSS survey are the perceptions of students who have successfully completed their programs at St. John's. The data are very useful for action plans and improvement purposes. Since this is the first administration of this particular survey, results can be used as baseline data against which to establish targets and initiatives and measure

future progress. Meanwhile, the survey data from students in their earlier stages of college life, including those who dropped, are also important, and they may help reveal a more comprehensive picture.