



REPORT OF THE 2009 GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY (GSS)

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 developed by the Office of Institutional Research with input from Senior Managers and incorporated into the online process used by students – excluding School of Law - to register for participation in commencement exercises. A total of 2,485 students participated, representing 94% of students who registered for 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 Institutional Research (IR), University Events, Information Technology, Career Center and other offices, an effort that will continue in the future. This report prepared by IR provides highlights of the survey results, followed by a more detailed analysis. Unless explicitly noted, findings are similar for undergraduates and graduate students. Results by gender, race/ethnicity, school/college and other characteristics were generally consistent with other surveys. Separate reports have been developed for each school/college and shared with the respective Deans.

HIGHLIGHTS

As shown in the table below, 9 in 10 students were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall St. John's experience and 8 in 10 felt that the quality of instruction was *good / excellent*.

	Undergraduates	Graduates
Overall satisfaction with St. John's	90%	92%
Very satisfied	22%	26%
Satisfied	68%	66%
Quality of instruction	79%	84%
Excellent	23%	32%
Good	56%	52%
Tuition paid was a worthwhile investment	68%	78%
Strongly agree	11%	17%
Agree	57%	61%
Impact of Catholic and Vincentian experience	69%	61%
Very positive	16%	14%
Positive	53%	47%

Two-thirds of undergraduates and three-fourths of graduate students *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid was a worthwhile investment. Sixty-nine percent of undergraduates and 61% of graduate students indicated that the Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their St. John's experience *positively / very positively*. Open-ended 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.

More than one-half of undergraduates and approximately one-quarter of graduate students are planning to pursue further study in the next academic year. Fifteen percent (15%) of undergraduates and 44% of graduate students have accepted job offers or are retaining their current jobs. The rest are still looking for jobs or have no employment plans. Responses regarding employment plans were similar whether students were planning to pursue further study or not. Approximately 44% of students had completed internships (UG: 45%; GR: 40%). The primary motivation was to gain experience. More than one-half found internships on their own; approximately 30% through their academic departments; and 20% through the Career Center. The percentages of students who accepted job offers were slightly higher for those who had completed internships (UG: 18% vs. 11%; GR: 48% vs. 40%).

We assume that students would not identify practicum (School of Education) or clinical rotation (College of Pharmacy) as internships. However, this cannot be verified so data relating to internships should be considered in that light. The majority of responses (86%) relating to satisfaction with internships available at St. John's, were from students who had completed an internship. Most of the other students did not respond or indicated that this was not applicable to them. Of the students who responded, 54% were *satisfied* and 23% were *very satisfied*. Only 40% of the students without internships who answered this question were satisfied / very satisfied; 37% was *dissatisfied* and 23% *very dissatisfied*. Fifty-nine percent of students (UG: 60%; GR: 57%) answered the question relating to how well St. John's did at providing job preparation / placement, with one-half of the respondents giving a *good* (40%) or *excellent* (12%) rating, and one-half a *fair* (33%) or *poor* (16%) rating. The absence of responses in these categories is interesting.

As noted earlier, the majority of our graduating students were satisfied both on an overall basis, and with specific aspects of their St. John's experience. Between 11-32% gave **top ratings** (*excellent, very satisfied, strongly agree, very positive*) to any of these survey items. These could be used as baselines against which to measure the impact of related initiatives. Correlation analysis revealed that students' overall satisfaction had a strong positive relationship with quality of instruction and tuition as a worthwhile investment, and a moderately positive relationship with job preparation, impact of mission and availability of internships. This suggests that continued focus on these areas should be positively reflected in students' experiences and perceptions.

DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

For the rest of the report, table numbers in parentheses relate to the tables provided in a separate Appendix. Because *Internships* is an area of focus at the University, the analysis related to *Internships* is more comprehensive than for other items. For ease of reference, the names of schools/colleges will be abbreviated.

1. Student Overall Perceptions

Nine out of 10 students were *satisfied* / *very satisfied* with their overall experience at St. John's, with one in four being *very satisfied*. Similarly, 8 out of 10 rated the quality of instruction as *good* / *excellent* with 23% of undergraduates and 32% of graduates giving it an *excellent* rating. Regarding tuition as a worthwhile investment, sixty-eight percent of undergraduates and 78% of graduates agreed / strongly agreed that tuition paid is worthwhile investment (Table 1). The percent that strongly agreed with this statement was 11% for undergraduates and 17% for graduates.

Overall Satisfaction with St. John's University: Significant Correlation Coefficients

	Undergraduates	Graduates
Quality of instruction	.59	.63
Tuition paid as a worthwhile investment	.58	.62
Impact of Mission	.45	.46
Job preparation / job placement	.41	.48
Availability of internships	.37	.42

As evident in the table above, student overall satisfaction had a strong positive correlation with perception of the quality of instruction and tuition as a worthwhile investment (correlation coefficient = 0.6 / 1.0 for both UG and GR); and a moderately positive relationship with impact of mission, job preparation and availability of internships.

For undergraduate students, perceptions of students from the primary market were slightly more positive than those from the secondary market: 91% of students from the primary market were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their overall experiences compared to 88% for the secondary market; 79% of students from the primary market perceived the quality of instruction as *good* or *excellent* compared to 77% for the secondary market and 69% rated tuition paid as a worthwhile investment compared to 65% for the secondary market (Table 5).

Ratings by females were higher than by male students: 92% of female undergraduates were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their overall experience compared to

87% for males. Corresponding figures for graduate students were 96% vs. 86%. Eighty-one percent of female undergraduates perceived the quality of instruction as *good* or *excellent* compared to 74% for males. The corresponding figures for graduate students were 91% vs. 82% (Table 6).

Ratings by Asian students were not as high as by other ethnicities: 87% of Asian undergraduates were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their overall experience compared to 91% or higher for other ethnicities, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 90% vs. 92% or higher. Similarly, only 68% of Asian undergraduates perceived the quality of instruction as *good* or *excellent* compared to 76% or higher for other ethnicities. The corresponding figures for graduate students were 72% vs. 84% or higher (Table 6).

For overall satisfaction and quality of instruction, ratings by Pharmacy students were lower than by students of other colleges: 85% of Pharmacy undergraduates were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* compared to a university average of 90%. The corresponding figures for graduate students were 87% vs. 92%. Regarding the quality of instruction, 64% of Pharmacy perceived the quality of instruction as *good* or *excellent* compared to an average of 79%; 71% of Pharmacy graduate students perceived the quality of instruction as *good* or *excellent* compared to an average of 84% (Table 1). Other comparative results by school/college can be found in the table as well as in other tables in the Appendix.

Ratings were generally higher by students on Staten Island campus than those on Queens campus, and results were consistent with findings from other surveys. For the quality of instruction, 88% of Staten Island undergraduates rated it as *good* or *excellent* compared to 78% for Queens, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 87% (Staten Island) and 83% (Queens). Regarding tuition as a worthwhile investment, 74% of Staten Island undergraduates *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that tuition paid is worthwhile investment as compared to 67% for Queens, and the corresponding figures for graduate students were 90% (Staten Island) and 77% (Queens). (Table 9)

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. About two-thirds of respondents provided their phone and or e-mail information to enable us to contact them after graduation. Contact information has been sent to appropriate departments. Information related to scholarships and fellowships for graduate study has already been sent to the provost and Enrollment Management.

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 9% (N=85) of undergraduates and 5% of graduates (N=27) without internships responded as compared to 81% of undergraduates and 71% of graduates with internships. Similarly, the question relating to satisfaction with job preparation or placement also had a fairly low response rate (60%): 42% for both undergraduates and graduates who did not have internships compared to 83% of undergraduates and 80% of graduates with internships.

The data indicate that 749 undergraduate students (45%) had internships. Of these students, 66% found their internships on their own, 28% through academic departments, and 21% 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, 91% indicated that it was for experience, 50% for academic credits, and 17% 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 to rate their satisfaction with the availability of internships at St. John's, students with internships were more satisfied than those without: 26% of students with internships were *very satisfied*, 56% *satisfied*, 13% *dissatisfied*, and 4% *very dissatisfied*; the corresponding figures for those without internships were 2%, 33%, 42%, and 22% (Q8, Table 7).

Fifty-nine percent of undergraduates were planning to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010. There was no difference in the percentage between those who had internships and those who didn't (Question 1, Table 7).

When asked about their employment plans, 15% of respondents indicated that they accepted a job offer (18% for those with internships and 11% for those without), 76% were still looking (75% for those with internships and 77% for those without), and 10% had no plans (7% for those with internships and 12% for those without). For students who planned to further their studies, 13% accepted a job offer (15% for those with internships and 11% for those without). For those who had no plan for further studies, 17% accepted a job offer (22% for those with internships and 12% for those without) (Q4a, Q4b, Q4c, 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: 11% of students with internships rated it as *excellent*, 40% as *good*, 35% as *fair*, and 14%

as *poor*. The corresponding figures for students without internships were 10%, 37%, 34%, and 19% (Q9, Table 7).

Ratings on the quality of instruction at St. John's were slightly higher by students with internships than those without: 24% of students with internships rated it as *excellent*, 57% as *good*, 18% as *fair* and 2% as *poor*, compared to 22%, 55%, 20%, and 2% for those without internships (Q10, Table 7).

Ratings on overall satisfaction were also slightly higher by students with internships than those without: 22% of students with internships were *very satisfied*, 70% *satisfied* (*very satisfied* and *satisfied*: 92%), 7% *dissatisfied*, and 1% *very dissatisfied* as compared to 23%, 65% (*very satisfied* and *satisfied*: 88%), 10%, and 1% for students without internships (Q12, Table 7).

There was no difference in student perceptions about tuition paid as a worthwhile investment between students with or without internships, and there was not much difference between these two groups in the impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on student experience (Q11 and Q13, Table 7).

At the university level, 45% of undergraduate had internships. The figures for individual colleges were: 52% for College of Professional Studies (CPS); 51% for Tobin College of Business (TCB); 37% for St. John's College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (SJC); 30% for The School of Education (EDU); and 22% for Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions (PHA) (Table 4).

At the college level, the ratings by students with internships were higher on the overall satisfaction than by those without internships, and that is true for all colleges except PHA (N = 11 with internships). The ratings by students with internships were also higher on the quality of instruction than by those without internships, and that is true for all colleges except EDU (N = 32 with internships) and PHA (N = 11). (Table 4)

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

Of the 833 graduate students who participated in the survey, 333 had internships (40%). The survey data reveal that 23% of graduate students were planning to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010, 25% for students with internship and 22% for those without (Question 1, Table 8).

When asked about their employment plans, 44% accepted a job offer (48% for those with internships and 40% for those without), 47% were still looking (45% for those with internships and 49% for those without), and 9% had no plans (7% for those with internships and 11% for those without). For students who planned to further their studies,

40% accepted a job offer (43% for those with internships and 38% for those without). For those who had no plan for further studies, this percentage was 5% higher, i.e., 45% - 49% for those with internships and 41% for those without (Q4a, Q4b, Q4c, Table 8).

When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 74% indicated that it was for experience, 63% for academic credits, and 12% 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 to rate their satisfaction with the availability of internships at St. John's, students with internships were more satisfied than those without: 25% of students with internships were very satisfied, 61% satisfied, 11% dissatisfied, and 4% very dissatisfied; the corresponding figures for those without internships were 7%, 30%, 37%, and 26% (Q8, Table 8).

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: 17% of students with internships rated it as *excellent*, 43% as *good*, 28% as *fair*, and 12% as *poor*; the corresponding figures for students without internships were 17%, 35%, 29%, and 19% (Q9, Table 8).

There was not much difference between the students with internships and those without in the ratings on the quality of instruction, or tuition paid as a worthwhile investment, or the overall satisfaction (Q10, Q11, Q12, Table 8).

4. Impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on student experience

For undergraduates, 16% indicated that St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their experience very *positively*, 53% *positively*, 1% *negatively*, 0% very *negatively*, and *no impact* on the remaining 30% (Q13, Table 7); the corresponding figures for graduate students were 14%, 47%, 1%, 0%, and 38% respectively (Q13, Tables 7 & 8).

In terms of the impact by college, undergraduates in School of Education had the most positive impact: 80% of EDU students perceived a *very positive* or *positive* impact as compared to 74% for SJC, 66% for CPS, 64% for TCB, and 61% for PHA; for graduate students, CPS (N = 17) had the most positive impact: 76% indicated a *very positive* or *positive* impact followed by EDU (69%), SJC (60%), TCB (59%), and PHA (52%) (Table 1).

5. 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), SSI (Student

Satisfaction Inventory), and YFCY (Your First College Year): 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. Ratings by Pharmacy students are lower than by students of other colleges, and they are consistent with findings from other surveys, too.

The GSS survey data indicate that 16% of St. John's graduating undergraduates (who applied for a job) got a job offer. This figure is 4% lower than the findings from the 2009 NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) Student Survey. The NACE data also reveal a downward trend in landing jobs by the time of graduation: over 50% for Class 2007, 26% for Class 2008, and 20% for Class 2009. The 2009 NACE Student Survey also reveals that of the students who did land jobs, 73% had completed an internship at some point in their college careers, 10 percentage points higher than for St. John's (63%).

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 engage students in reflective practices that help them develop both personally and professionally. The 2008 NACE survey data reveal that the percentage of interns converted to full-time employees increased from 35.6% in 2001 to 50.5% in 2008. St. John's GSS data indicate that a larger proportion of students with internships landed a job than those without internships, 18% vs. 11%. Therefore, collaborative efforts should be continued to help more students find internships, thus making them more competitive in the job market.

The data from this GSS survey revealed some of the factors that are positively related with students' overall satisfaction, and differences for subsets of our students. Separate reports have been prepared for each school / college and submitted to each Dean. Results are consistent with other surveys and studies. 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. Please share any initiatives you develop to respond to these results, with Dr. Yuxiang Liu in the Office of Institutional Research at LiuY@stjohns.edu.

Since this is the first administration of this particular survey, results can also be used as baseline data against which to establish targets and initiatives and measure future progress. We will continue to administer annually along with other student surveys in order to develop a more comprehensive picture of our students, and ways in which we can ensure success for all.



Summary of Survey Results

2009 Graduating Student Survey Items	Total		Undergraduate		Graduate	
	(N=2,485)		(N=1,652)		(N=833)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. If you are planning to pursue further study in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010, what degree level?						
Bachelor	72	2.9	72	4.4	n/a	n/a
Master's	746	30.1	699	42.4	47	5.6
Doctorate	134	5.4	20	1.2	114	13.7
Professional (MD, JD, etc.)	206	8.3	174	10.6	32	3.8
No plan/Don't know	1323	53.3	684	41.4	639	76.9
Total	2481	100	1649	100	832	100
No Response	4	0.001	3	0.001	1	0.001
4. What are your employment plans after graduation?						
Accepted an offer	517	24.3	210	14.8	307	43.6
Looking	1408	66.3	1075	75.7	333	47.3
No plan	199	9.4	135	9.5	64	9.1
Total	2124	100	1420	100	704	100
No Response	361	14.5	232	14	129	15.5
Completed Internship	1082	43.5	749	45.3	333	40.0
6. If you completed internship(s) while at St. John's University, what was your PRIMARY motivation for completing an internship? (Check ALL that apply)						
Academic credit	560	51.8	357	47.7	203	61.0
Experience	895	82.7	654	87.3	241	72.4
Financial	165	15.2	125	16.7	40	12.0
Total	1620	*	1136	*	484	*
* Check ALL that apply, Total percentages add up to more than 100%.						
7. How did you find your internship(s)? (Check ALL that apply)						
Career Center	190	17.5	155	20.7	35	10.5
Academic Department	304	28.1	204	27.2	100	30.0
On my own	654	60.4	479	64.0	175	52.6
Total	1148	*	838	*	310	*
* Check ALL that apply, Total percentages add up to more than 100%.						
8. Please rate your satisfaction with the internships available at St. John's.						
Very Satisfied	222	23.2	161	23.2	61	23.2
Satisfied	523	54.6	372	53.5	151	57.4
Dissatisfied	151	15.7	116	16.7	35	13.3
Very Dissatisfied	62	6.5	46	6.6	16	6.1
Total	958	100	695	100	263	100
No Response	1527	61.4	957	57.9	570	68.4
9. How well did St. John's do at providing job preparation/placement?						
Excellent	183	12.4	103	10.3	80	16.8
Good	576	39.1	388	38.9	188	39.5
Fair	481	32.7	346	34.8	135	28.4
Poor	233	15.8	160	16.0	73	15.3
Total	1473	100	997	100	476	100
No Response	1012	40.7	655	39.6	357	42.9

2009 Graduating Student Survey Items	Total		Undergraduate		Graduate	
	(N=2,485)		(N=1,652)		(N=833)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
10. How was the quality of instruction at St. John's?						
Excellent	532	25.9	313	23.0	219	31.6
Good	1126	54.8	764	56.3	362	52.2
Fair	362	17.6	257	18.9	105	15.1
Poor	33	1.7	25	1.8	8	1.1
Total	2053	100	1359	100	694	100
No Response	432	17.4	293	17.7	139	16.7
11. Tuition paid was a worthwhile investment.						
Strongly Agree	268	13.2	149	11.0	119	17.4
Agree	1184	58.2	768	56.8	416	60.9
Disagree	455	22.4	340	25.2	115	16.8
Strongly Disagree	128	6.2	95	7.0	33	4.9
Total	2035	100	1352	100	683	100
No Response	450	18.1	300	0.18	150	18.0
12. Please rate your overall satisfaction with St. John's						
Very Satisfied	484	23.7	302	22.5	182	26.2
Satisfied	1368	67.1	913	67.9	455	65.6
Dissatisfied	165	8.1	116	8.6	49	7.1
Very Dissatisfied	22	1.1	14	1.0	8	1.1
Total	2039	100	1345	100	694	100
No Response	446	17.9	307	0.18	139	16.7
13. How has the St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted your experience at St. John's?						
Very Positively	302	15.0	209	15.8	93	13.6
Positively	1018	50.7	699	52.7	319	46.7
Negatively	26	1.3	18	1.4	8	1.2
Very Negatively	9	0.4	6	0.5	3	0.4
Not at all	654	32.6	394	29.7	260	38.1
Total	2009	100	1326	100.1	683	100
No Response	476	19.1	326	0.2	150	18.0
Open-ended questions: Results will be provided separately.						
2. If you are planning to pursue further study, please give name of educational institution and program.						
3. If you are the recipient of a fellowship/scholarship to pursue further study, please indicate the name and provide any other information (Duration, Amount, etc.).						
5. If you accepted an offer, please give name of employer and position and let us know how well your position is aligned with your career interests.						
14. What is the best way to contact you after graduation? (Please enter your E-mail Address and/or Phone Number)						
15. Please share your comments/suggestions regarding your experience at St. John's/						