



Wisdom to make a difference.

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Findings from 2017 Graduating Senior Survey

As a portion of an online form required for participating in Commencement, Keene State College administers an annual satisfaction survey to its graduating seniors. Prior versions of this survey included items assessing overall satisfaction with the KSC experience along with items assessing participation in high-impact educational practices such as internships and presentations/exhibitions of work outside the classroom. The current version supplemented those items with a set of items assessing satisfaction with a wide range of individual offices, degree components, and experiences. In March 2017, 93% of the 771 graduates who completed the Commencement Registration Form provided usable responses to the Graduating Senior Survey. This report provides a summary of the survey’s findings.

Table of Contents

Key Findings..... 2
Recommended Actions..... 3
Detailed Findings 4
Overall Satisfaction with KSC Education..... 4
High-Impact Educational Practices 5
Satisfaction with Specific KSC Experience Areas 7
College-wide Experience Areas 7
Academic Affairs..... 10
Finance and Planning..... 15
Student Affairs 16
Keene State College Action Areas 26

Keene State College Office of Institutional Research

Report prepared by George Smeaton, Ph.D., Interim Director of Institutional Research and Assessment
May 2017

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment provides evidence to inform decision-making and leads the College’s efforts to assess student learning.

KEY FINDINGS

- Nine of ten graduating seniors reported feeling welcome at KSC. Over 80% also agreed that their academic program challenged them to do their best work, KSC provided the assistance needed to succeed academically, they would recommend KSC to others, and that they are satisfied with their education. Slightly fewer respondents (76%) agreed that KSC provides adequate social support. Each of these findings is consistent with prior year responses.
- Nearly all graduates (98%) participated in at least one high impact educational practice. Practices most frequently reported include senior seminar/capstone course (87%), internship, cooperative education, or practicum (56%), performing or exhibiting a creative work beyond the classroom (54%), community service that was not part of an academic course (48%), and attending a scholarly or professional conference (44%).
- Individual KSC Experience areas with the highest percentages of satisfied and extremely satisfied responses include the Mason Library (89%), courses in one's major (86%), quality of instruction (79%), Academic and Career Advising (78%), student activities and organizations (75%), and individual attention (73%).
- Very few graduates expressed dissatisfaction with any of the areas examined. High percentages of neutral responses (25% or more) obtained for areas with lower satisfied percentages suggests that graduates were more likely to be unfamiliar than unsatisfied with them.
- Six Keene State College Action Areas were identified that could guide College actions designed to boost student satisfaction and retention. Focusing on improving satisfaction with each of the following areas is likely to be the most cost-effective approach to increasing student satisfaction with the College as a whole:
 - Events
 - Career Preparation
 - Level of Individual Attention
 - Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities
 - Student Leadership Opportunities
 - Internship/CE/Practicum Opportunities

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- *Initiate a College-wide dialog on means by which faculty, staff, and administration can contribute to Action Area satisfaction.* All KSC employees have opportunities to boost satisfaction with one or more of the three areas with the greatest impact on overall satisfaction: Events, Career Preparation, and Individual Attention. Those involved in the remaining three areas should be encouraged to identify means of expanding and promoting these important student experiences.
- *Establish specific goals for improvement in both overall satisfaction and Action Area satisfaction in the coming year.* Setting a concrete target such as a 20% increase in the percentage of students selecting satisfied or extremely satisfied ratings will make the improvement objective clear and will establish clear evidence of the effectiveness of strategies taken to achieve this goal.
- *Collect follow-up data to obtain student recommendations for how best to increase Action Area satisfaction.* Qualitative data obtained from focus groups, individual interviews, and/or open-ended survey questions could provide guidance for how best to increase Action Area satisfaction.
- *Take steps to increase awareness of areas and services receiving high percentages of neutral satisfaction ratings.* Areas for which “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” account for 25% or more of the satisfaction ratings represent opportunities for increasing satisfaction by boosting awareness of beneficial programs and opportunities already available to students.
- *Continue to encourage students to participate in high-impact practices.* Data from the current survey, prior Graduating Senior Survey findings, as well as published research findings indicate that participating in such practices increases retention and graduation rates, and boosts student satisfaction.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction with KSC Education

The survey contained six global measures of satisfaction with a KSC education. Over 80% of graduates agreed or strongly agreed that they feel welcome at KSC, their academic program challenged them to do their best work, KSC provided the assistance they needed to succeed academically, would recommend KSC to friends or siblings, and that overall, they were satisfied with their KSC education (Table 1). Slightly fewer graduates (76%) agreed or strongly agreed that KSC provided the support needed to thrive socially. Each of these findings is consistent with findings from previous graduating classes.

Table 1: Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Agreed or Strongly Agreed with Each Statement Rating the Overall College Experience

Statement	% Agree or Strongly Agree	<i>n</i> *
I have felt welcome at KSC.	90%	716
My academic program has challenged me to do my very best work.	86%	714
KSC has provided the assistance I need to succeed academically.	82%	714
KSC has provided the support I need to thrive socially.	76%	712
I would recommend KSC to friends or siblings as a good place to go to college.	80%	713
Overall, I am satisfied with my Keene State College education	83%	710

*Number of participants responding to item.

High-Impact Educational Practices

Research by Kuh (2008) and others found that participating in high-impact educational practices (HIEPs) enhances student engagement, retention, and academic success. Specific examples of HIEPs include undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service learning experiences. The Graduating Senior Survey asked participants whether they had participated in each of a set of ten HIEPs. Kuh recommends encouraging all students to participate in at least two HIEPs during their undergraduate program. Nearly all graduates (92%) met this goal; 98% participated in at least one HIEP.

Practices most frequently reported include senior seminar/capstone course (87%), internship, cooperative education, or practicum (56%), performing or exhibiting a creative work beyond the classroom (54%), community service that was not part of an academic course (48%), and attending a scholarly or professional conference (44%) (Table 2). Practices reported by a third or fewer of the sample included service learning courses, working with a faculty member on a research project outside of class, student teaching, and studying away.

Findings from the 2013 Graduating Senior Survey indicated that participating in HIEPs was predictive of agreement with several of the global satisfaction items. Overall, this was not the case in 2017. Participating in an HIEP predicted responses to only one global satisfaction measure. Among participants who worked with a faculty member on a research project outside of class, 86% agreed or strongly agreed that KSC provided the support they needed to succeed academically, as compared with 79% who did not participate in this HIEP ($p < .05$).

Table 2: Percentage of Graduating Seniors Who Report Participating in Each High Impact Educational Practice

High Impact Practice	% Who Participated
Senior seminar/capstone course in your major	87%
Internship, cooperative education, or practicum	56%
Performed or exhibited a creative work beyond the classroom	54%
Community service that was not part of an academic course	48%
Attended a scholarly or professional conference (regional, national, etc.)	44%
Service learning course	34%
Worked with a faculty member on a research project beyond the classroom	33%
Student teaching	21%
Study away	17%
Presented at the Academic Excellence Conference	16%
Presented at a scholarly or professional conference (regional, national, etc.)	16%

Satisfaction with Specific KSC Experience Areas

Unlike previous versions of this survey, the current version supplemented the global measures of satisfaction with measures of satisfaction with 30 specific KSC experience areas spanning all three divisions of the College. This set of items serves two purposes. First, they provide baseline data points for assessing long-term changes in student satisfaction with each area. Offices, departments, and individuals involved in each area can use changes in satisfaction over time to assess the impact of new initiatives. Second, comparing correlations between area satisfaction scores with those from the global measures provides a means of identifying the areas most closely related to overall satisfaction. Strategically focusing resources on those specific areas may increase student satisfaction in an expedient and efficient manner.

Sources of the items included the KSC website and its organizational chart. The Provost, Vice President of Student Affairs, and Vice President of Finance and Planning provided suggestions for revisions of the initial list. The President's Cabinet reviewed and approved the final set of items.

Presented in the following subsections are the percentages of graduates indicating that they are satisfied or extremely satisfied with each experience area. Experience area findings are presented in alphabetic order by division. Bar graphs display the full set of response frequencies for those areas.

College-wide Experience Areas

Four of the experience areas span the entire college. Over half of participants reported being satisfied or extremely satisfied with Campus Administration, Campus Security, Diversity and Multiculturalism, and Level of Individual Attention (Table 3). Campus Security was included in this grouping because the item assessed satisfaction with campus security in general rather than with the Campus Safety Office. Although Diversity and Multiculturalism has the lowest satisfaction percentage of the three, the second most frequent response to that item was "Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied." By comparison, relatively few participants selected that choice for the other two. Thus, rather than expressing greater dissatisfaction, the findings suggest that fewer graduates have an opinion regarding Diversity and Multiculturalism than for the other three areas in this group.

Table 3: Percentages of Graduates Responding to each College-Wide Experience Area Satisfaction Item who Selected "Satisfied" or "Extremely Satisfied."

Experience Area	% Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied	n*
Campus Administration	62%	648
Campus Security	62%	672
Diversity and Multiculturalism	53%	533
Level of Individual Attention	73%	661

*Number of participants responding to item.

Figure 1

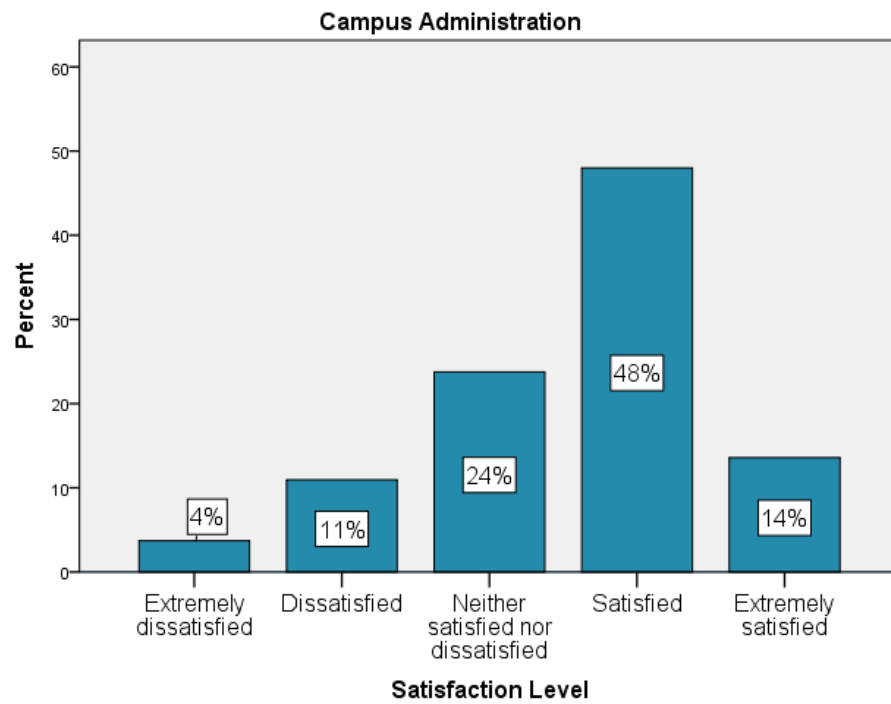


Figure 2

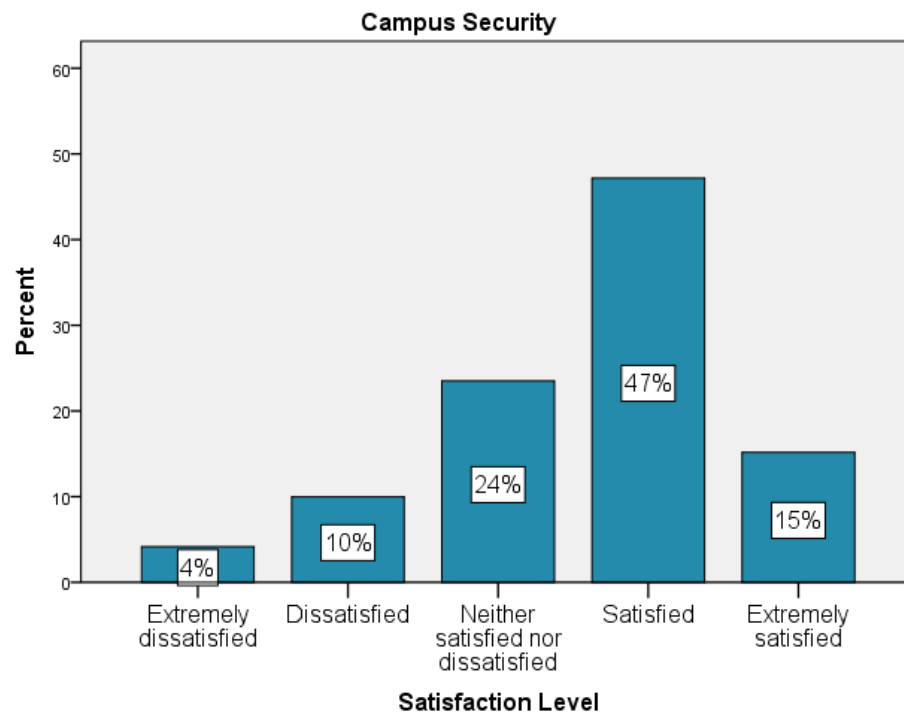


Figure 3

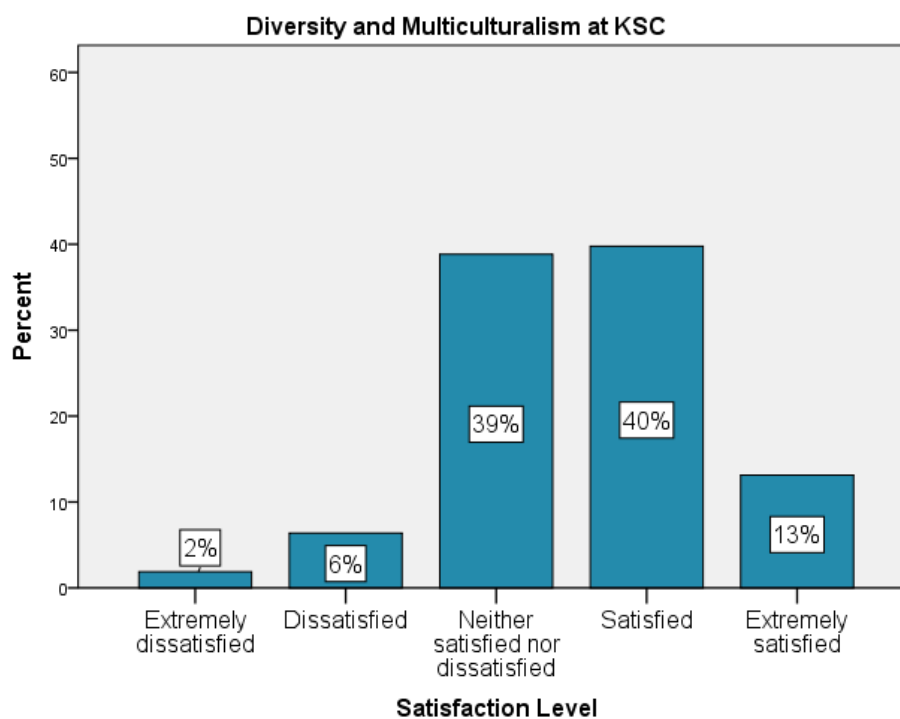
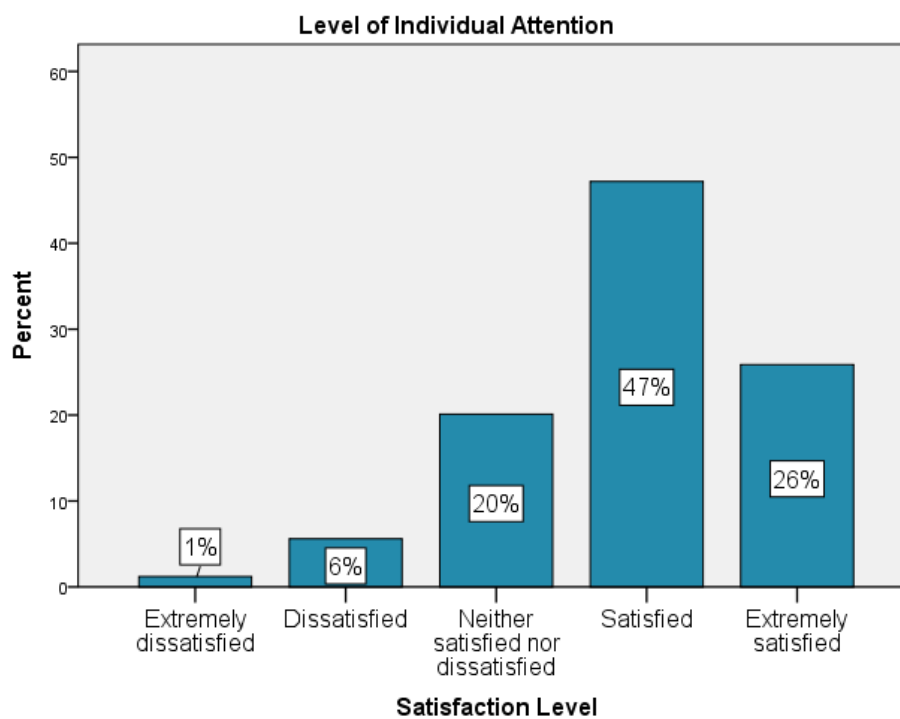


Figure 4



Academic Affairs

With “Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied” responses from 89% of graduating seniors, the Mason Library was the Academic Affairs experience area eliciting the greatest satisfaction (Table 4). Nearly as many reported that level of satisfaction for Courses in Major (86%), but fewer did so for Courses in Integrative Studies (64%). Across all courses, nearly 80% expressed satisfaction with Quality of Instruction. Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities (63%), Study Away/Abroad Opportunities and Honors Program (47%) received the fewest satisfied responses in this group, but each had much higher percentages of “Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied” responses than the other areas (see Figures 5-11). This suggests that the lower satisfaction percentages for these areas indicates a lack of familiarity rather than dissatisfaction.

Table 4: Percentages of Graduates Responding to each Academic Affairs Experience Area Satisfaction Item who Selected “Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.”

Experience Area	% Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied	<i>n</i>*
Courses in Integrative Studies Program	64%	627
Courses in Major	86%	682
Honors Program	47%	390
Library	89%	670
Quality of Instruction	79%	671
Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities	63%	542
Study Away/Abroad Opportunities	58%	403

*Number of participants responding to item.

Figure 5

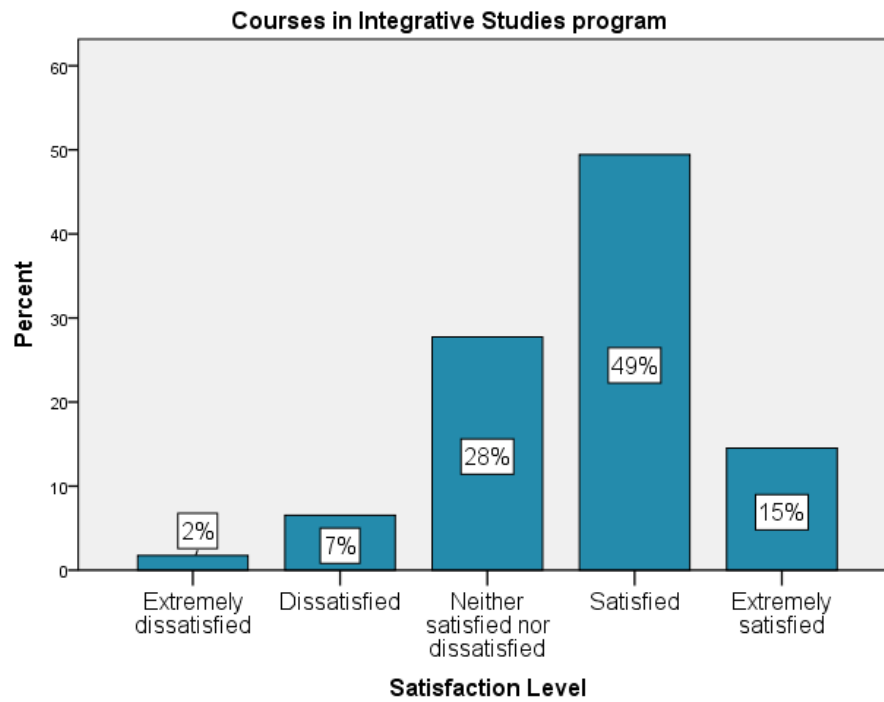


Figure 6

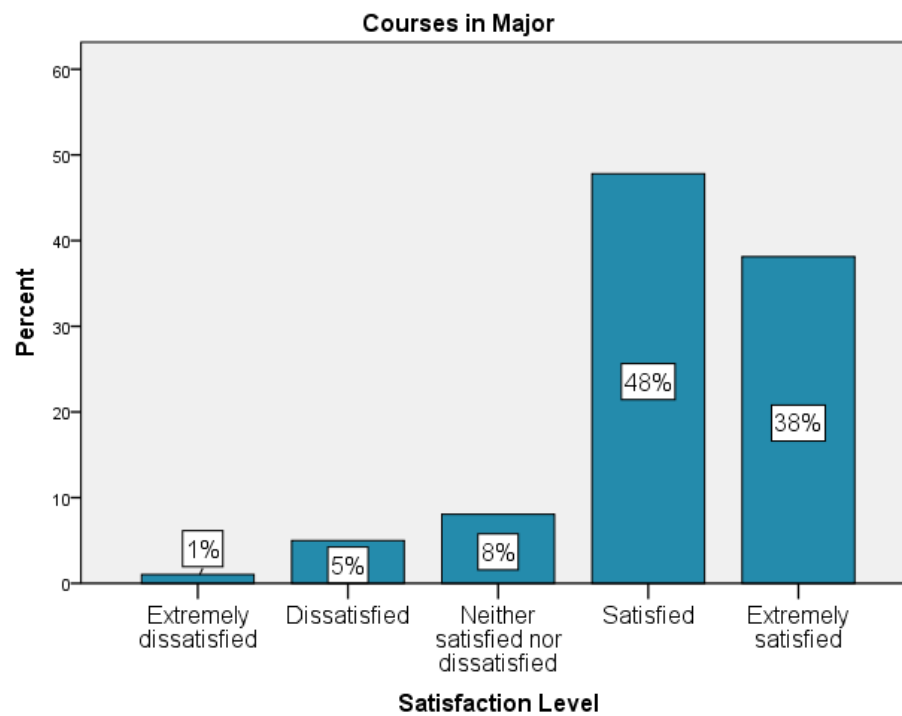


Figure 7

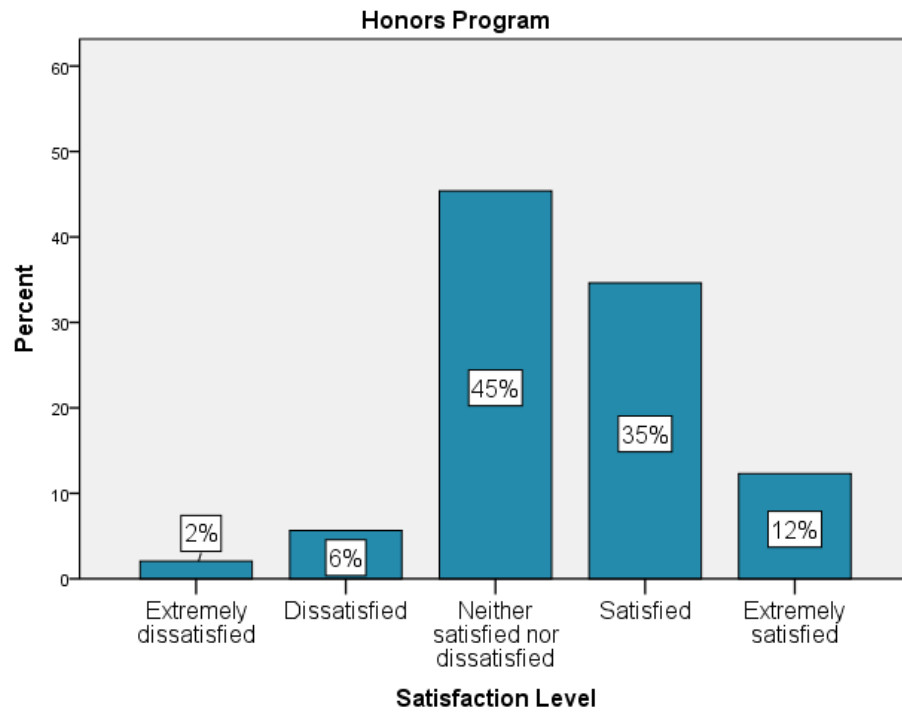


Figure 8

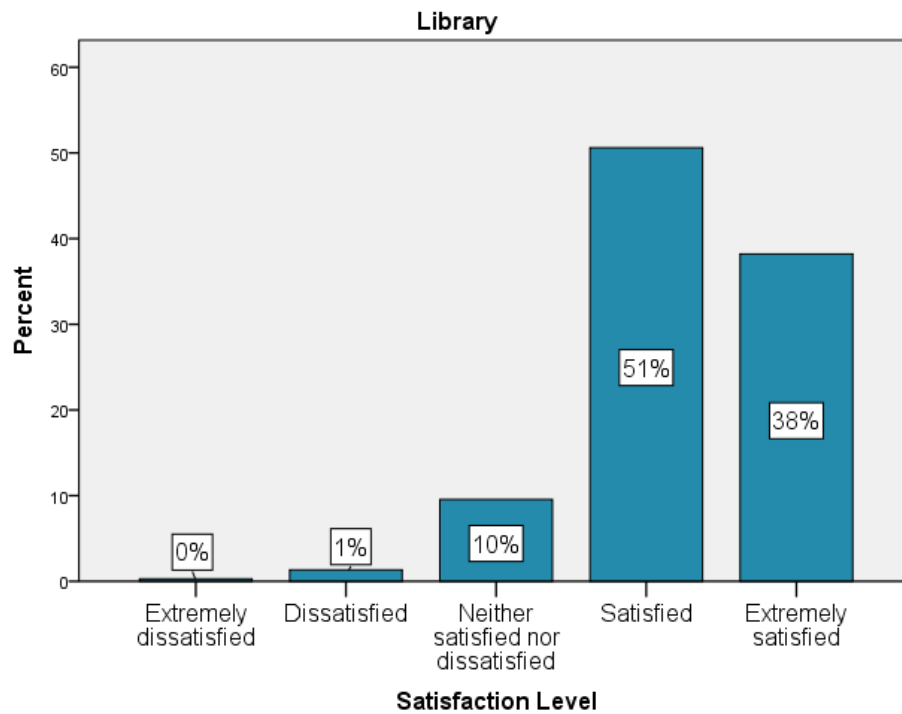


Figure 9

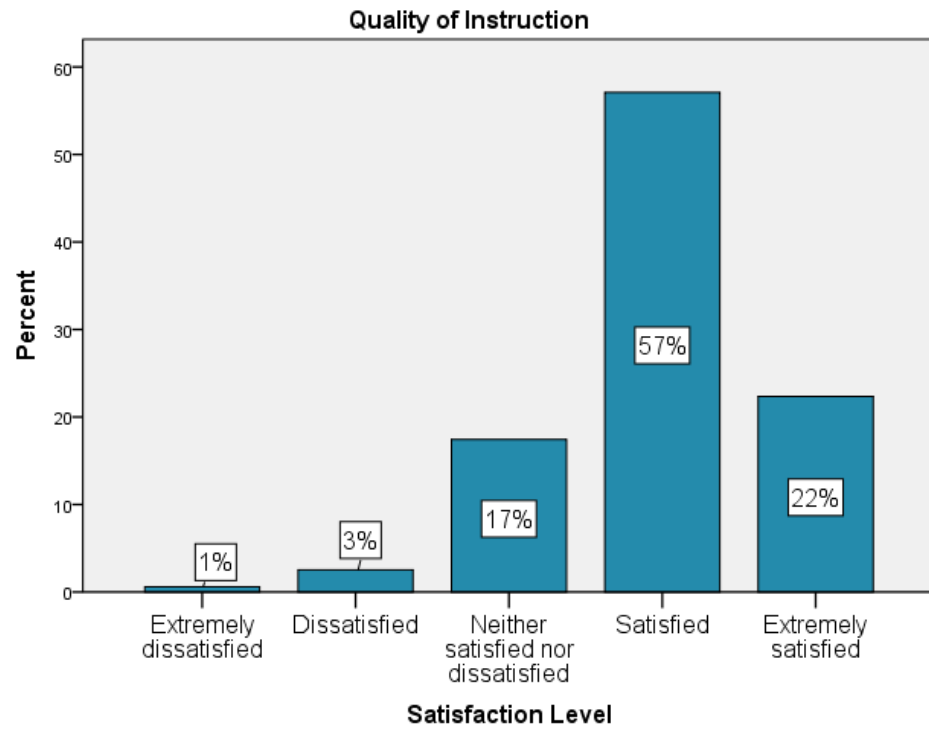


Figure 10

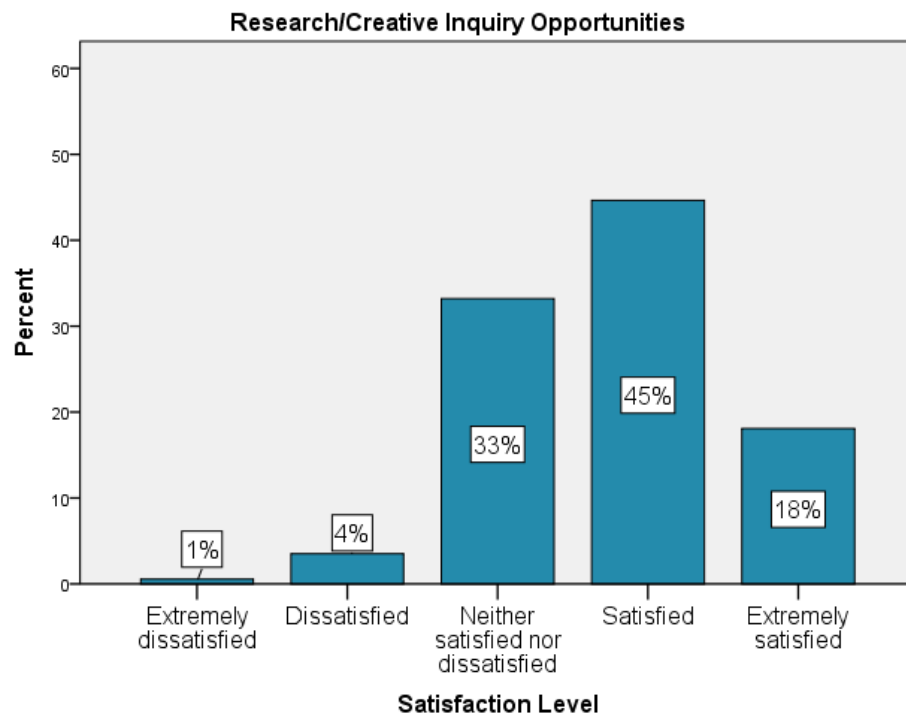
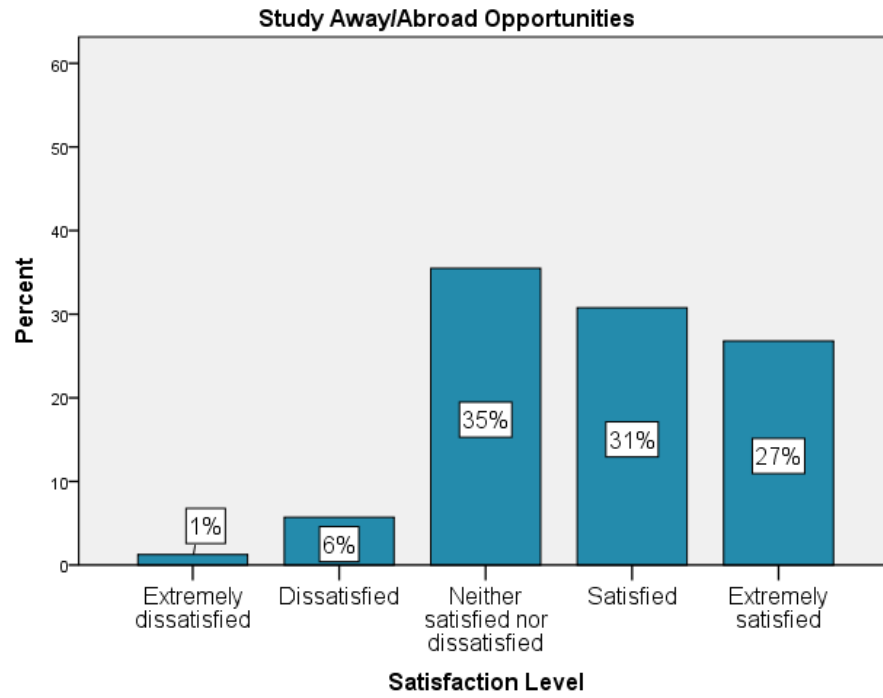


Figure 11



Finance and Planning

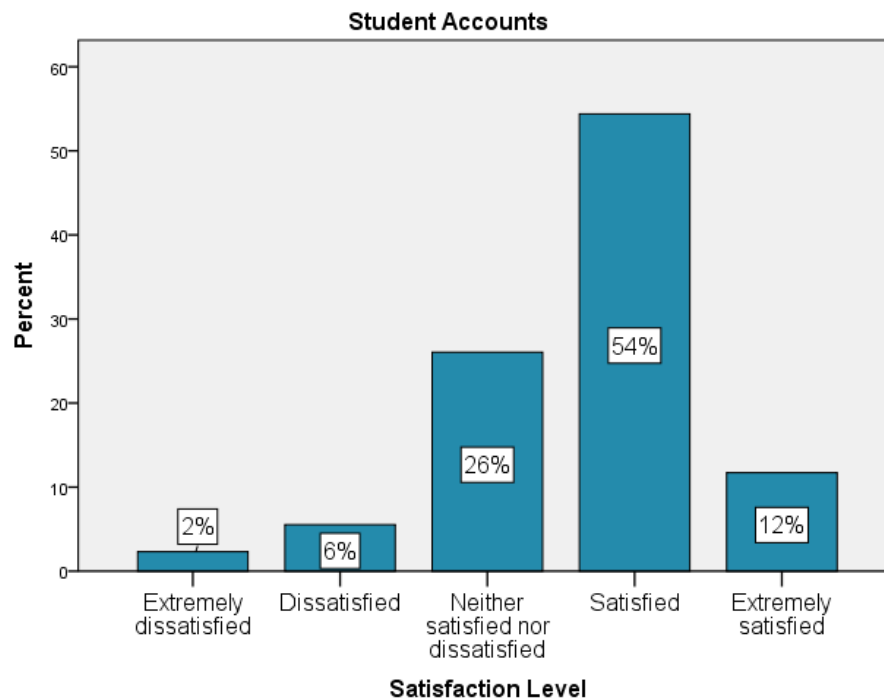
Over 60% of those who responded to the Student Accounts satisfaction item indicated they were satisfied or extremely satisfied (Table 5, Figure 12).

Table 5: Percentages of Graduates Responding to each Finance and Planning Experience Area Satisfaction Item who Selected “Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.”

Satisfaction Area	% Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied	n*
Student Accounts	66%	649

*Number of participants responding to item.

Figure 12



Student Affairs

Of the 17 experience areas affiliated with Student Affairs, Academic and Career Advising obtained the largest percentage of satisfied responses (78%--Table 6). In addition, Student Activities/Organizations (75%), Events (72%), Extra-/Co-Curricular Programming (70%), and Recreational Sports (70%), all obtained satisfied responses from at least 70% of those who rated those experience areas.

As was the case for the other divisions, experience areas with the lowest satisfaction percentages tend to have higher percentages of neutral responses rather than higher levels of dissatisfaction. Graduating seniors are more likely to be unfamiliar with these areas than dissatisfied. These include Fraternity/Sorority Life (33% satisfied; 45% neutral), Disability Services (50% satisfied; 45% neutral), and Athletics (57% satisfied; 39% neutral). Figures 13-29 display the full set of response frequencies for each Student Affairs area.

Table 6: Percentages of Graduates Responding to each Student Affairs Experience Area Satisfaction Item who Selected “Satisfied” or “Extremely Satisfied.”

Satisfaction Area	% Satisfied or Extremely Satisfied	n*
Academic and Career Advising	78%	658
Athletics—Men’s/Women’s Sports	57%	488
Campus Dining	60%	677
Career Preparation	63%	662
Center for Health and Wellness	56%	646
Civic Engagement/Community Service Opportunities	62%	547
Counseling Center	60%	501
Events	72%	645
Extra-/Co-Curricular Programming	70%	594
Disability Services	50%	378
Financial Aid	58%	622
Fraternity/Sorority Life	33%	384
Internship/Cooperative Education/Practicum Opportunities	60%	548
Recreational Sports	70%	473
Residence Halls	68%	637
Student Activities/Organizations	75%	597
Student Leadership Opportunities	67%	570

*Number of participants responding to item.

Figure 13

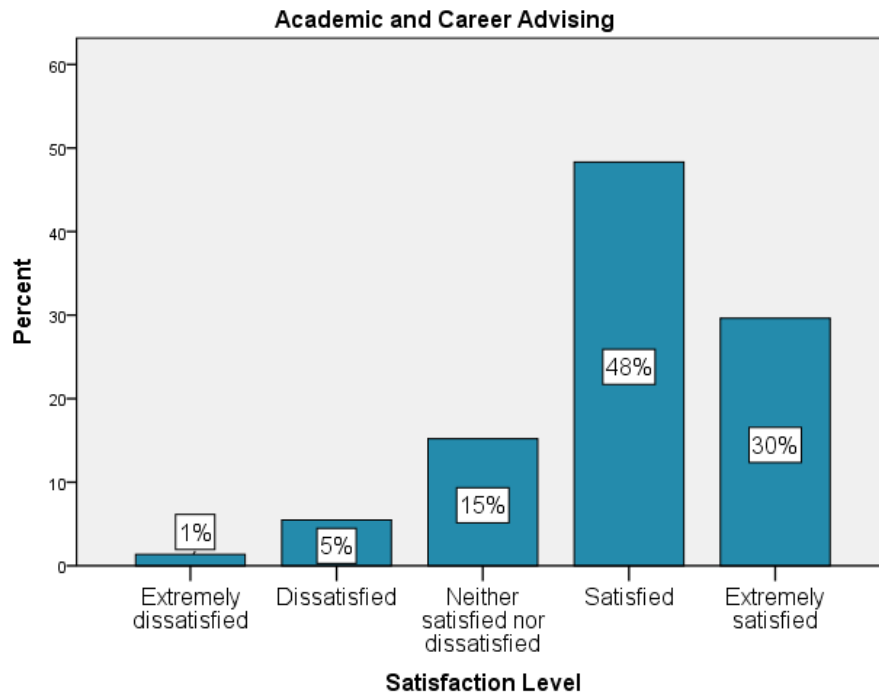


Figure 14

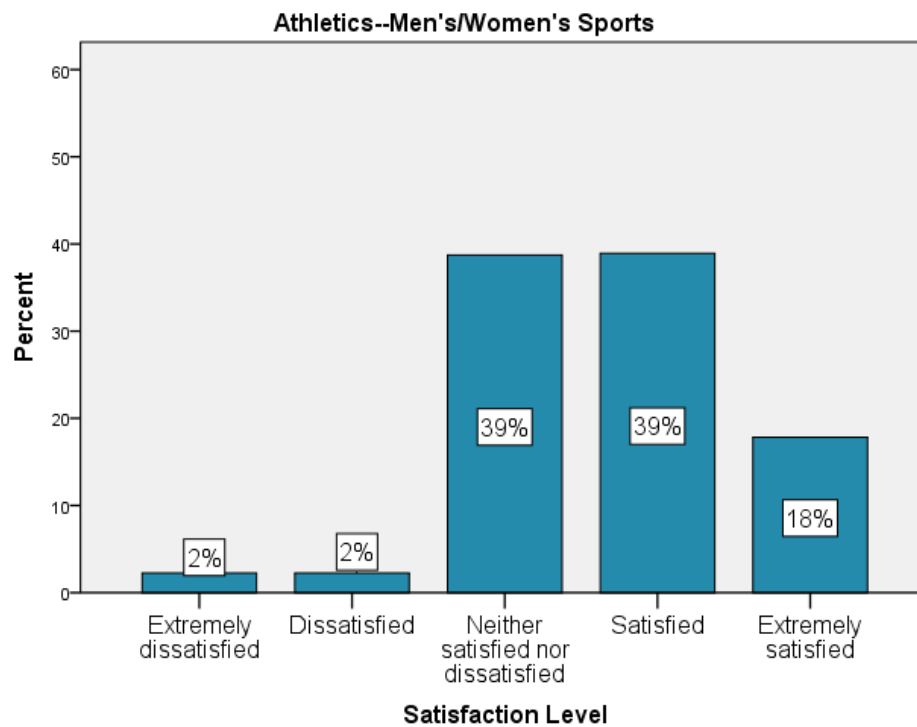


Figure 15

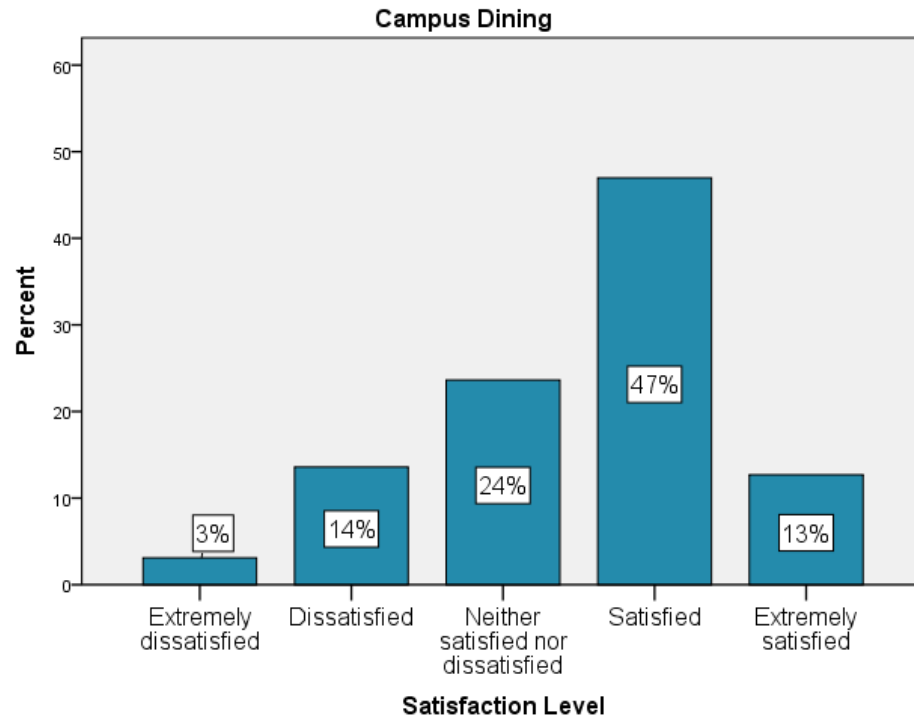


Figure 16

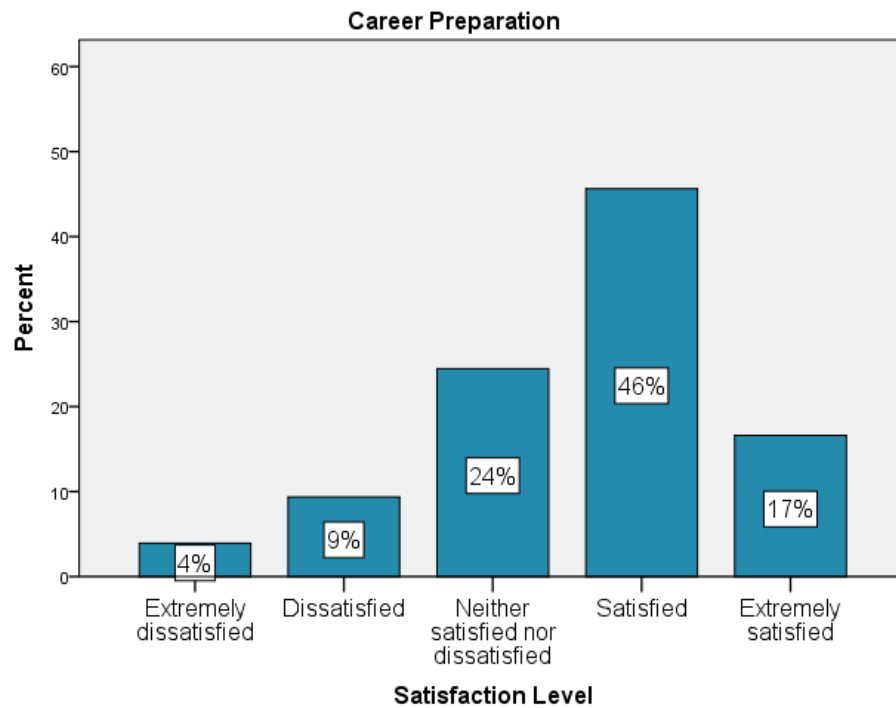


Figure 17

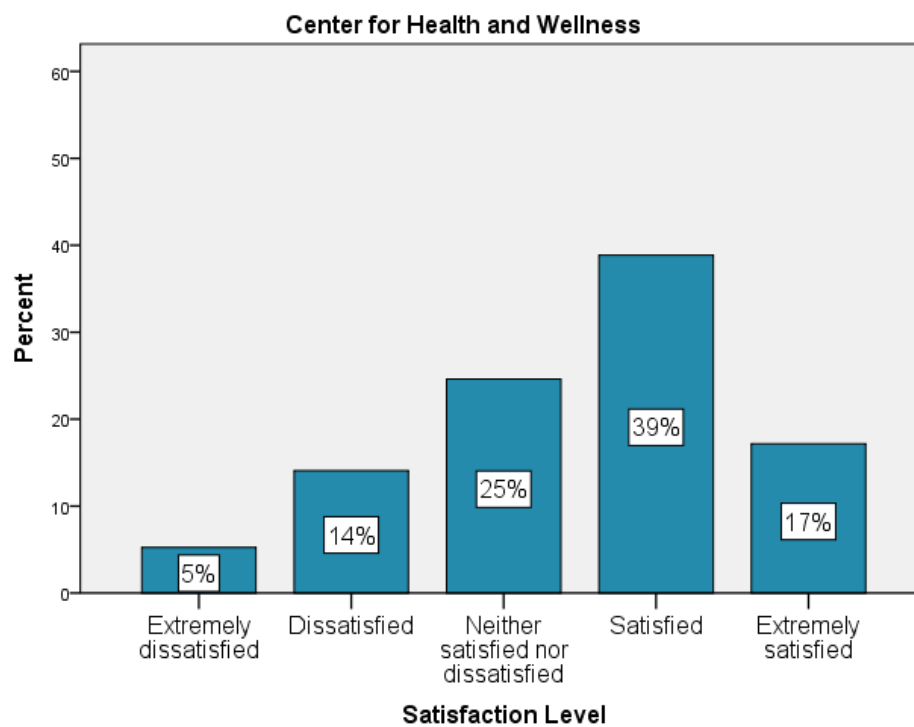


Figure 18

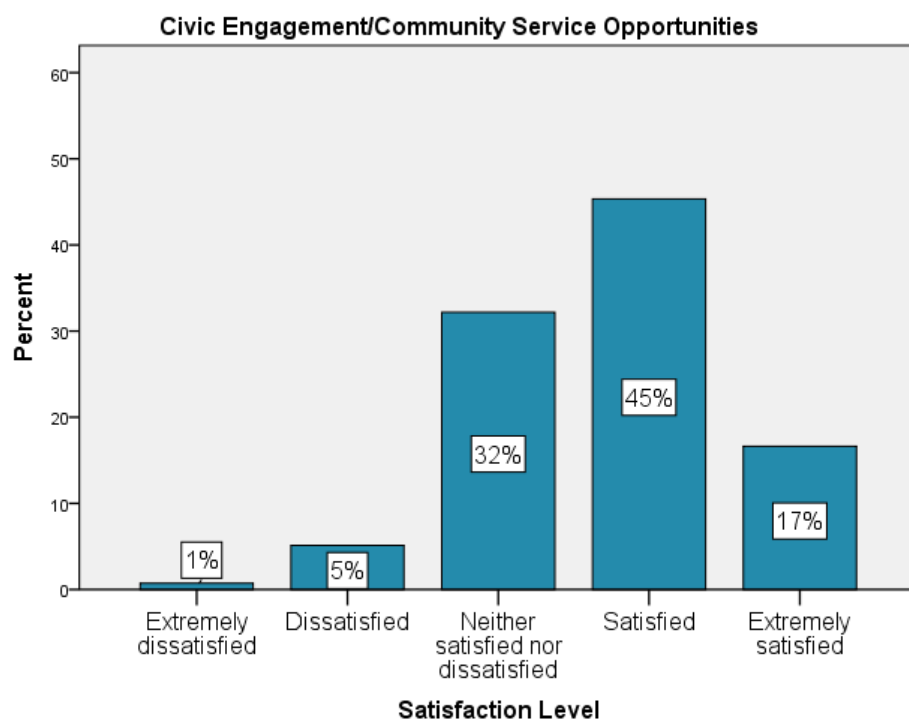


Figure 19

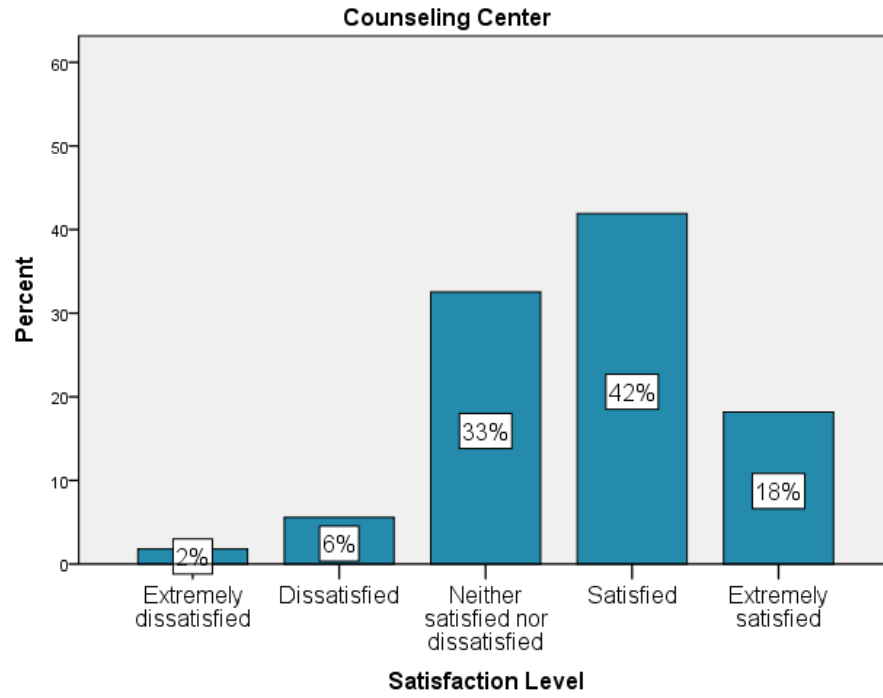


Figure 20

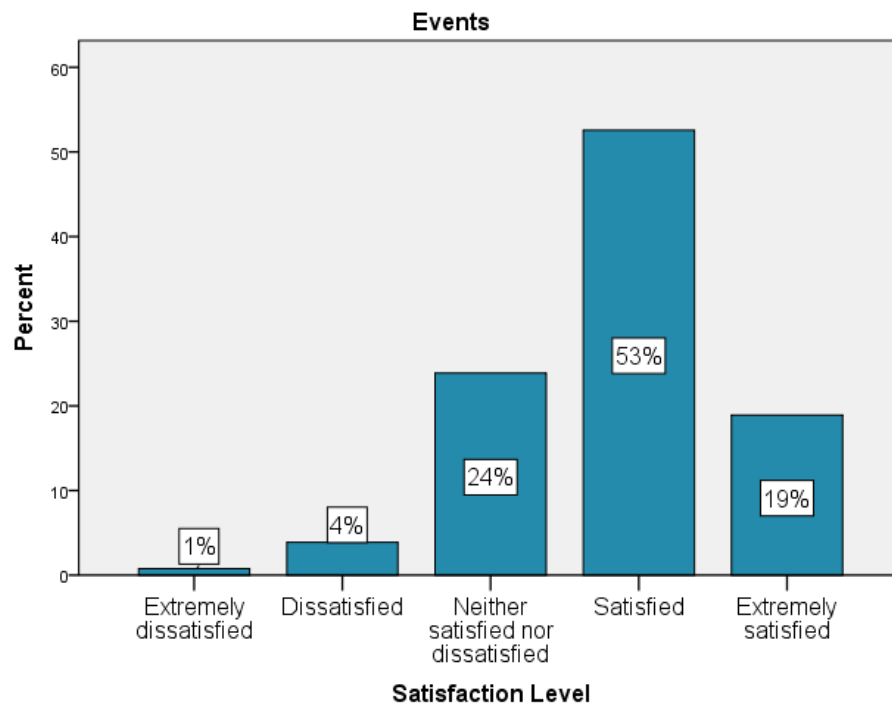


Figure 21

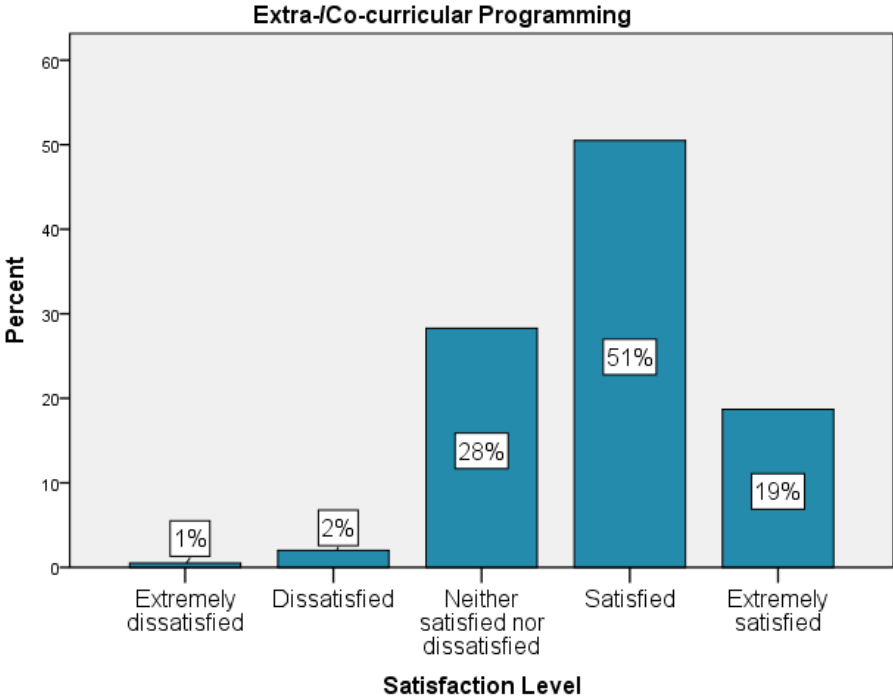


Figure 22

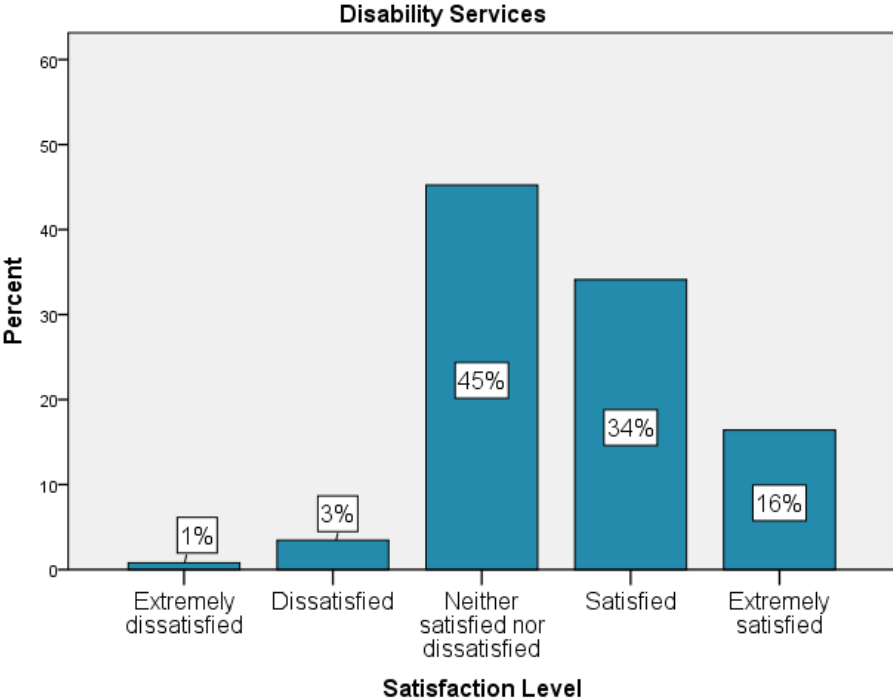


Figure 23

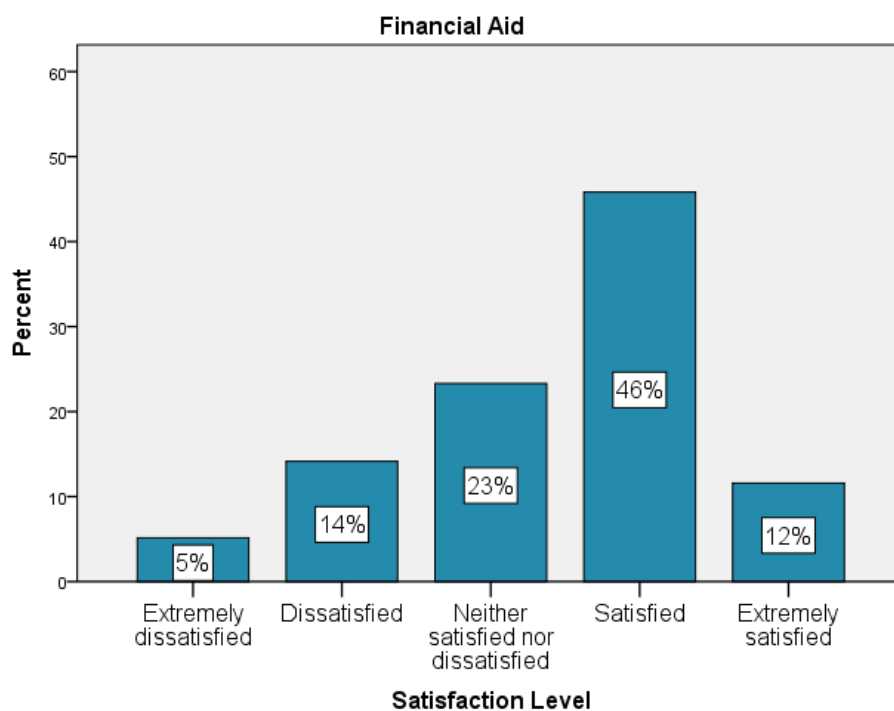


Figure 24

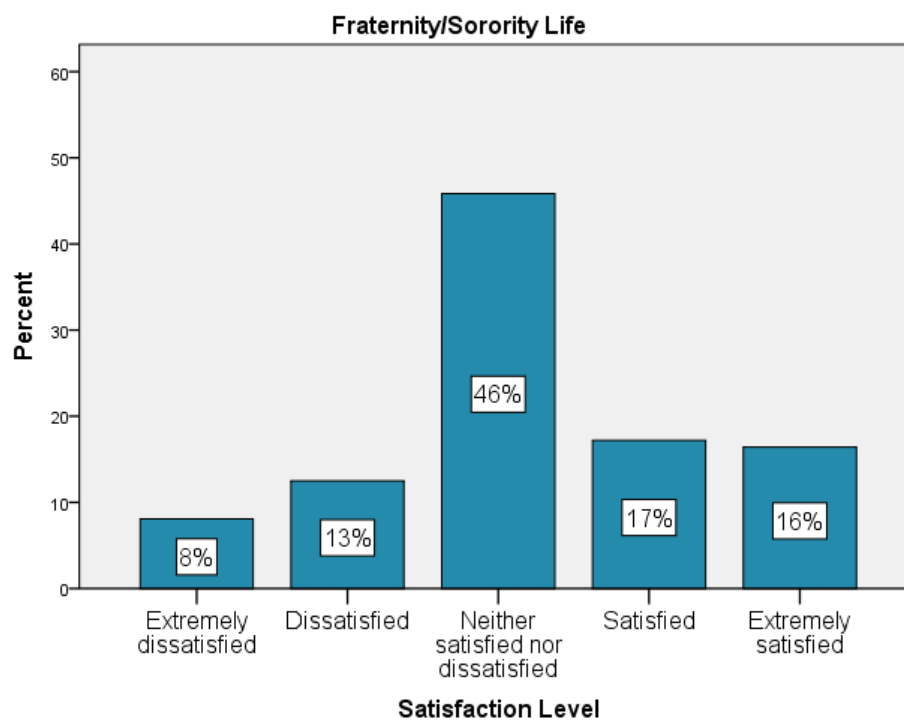


Figure 25

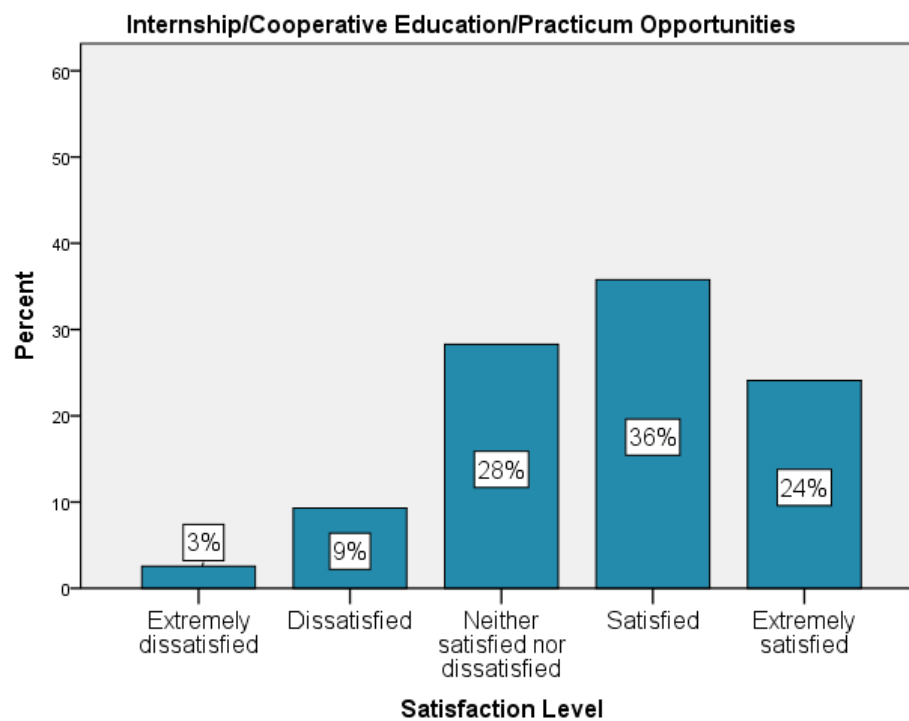


Figure 26

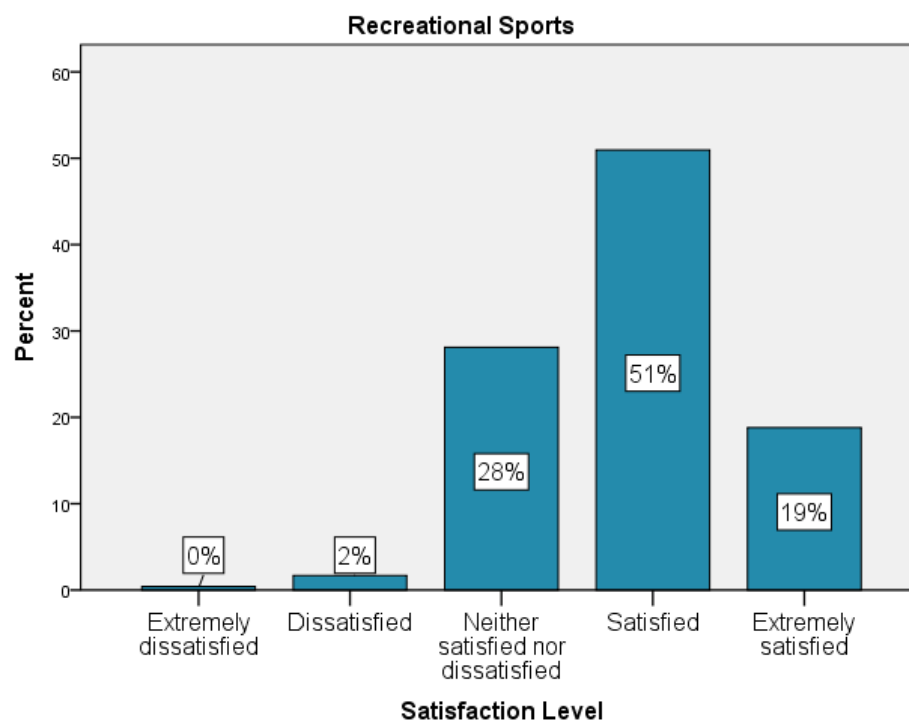


Figure 27

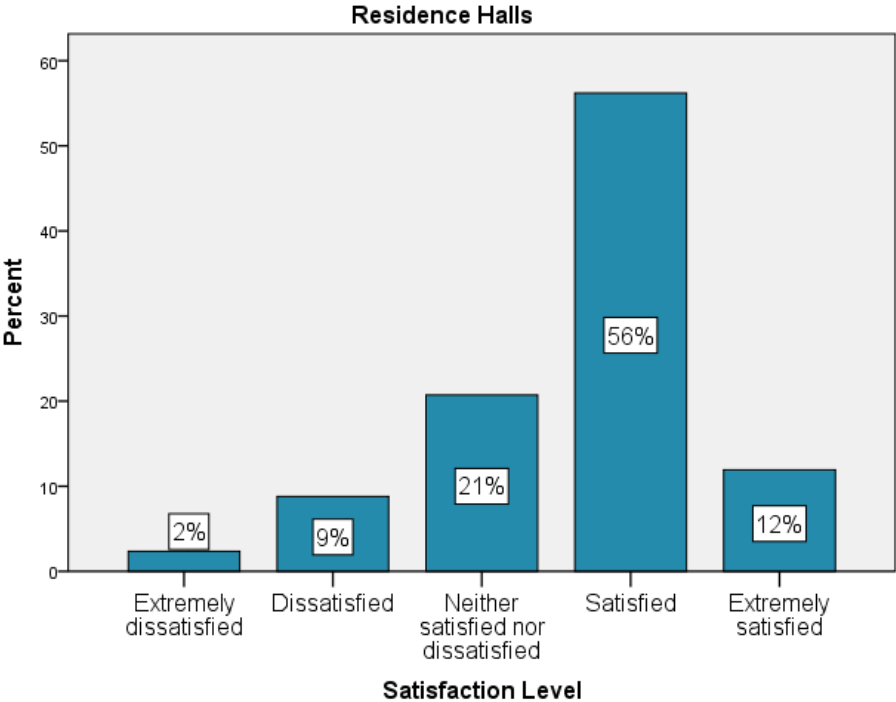


Figure 28

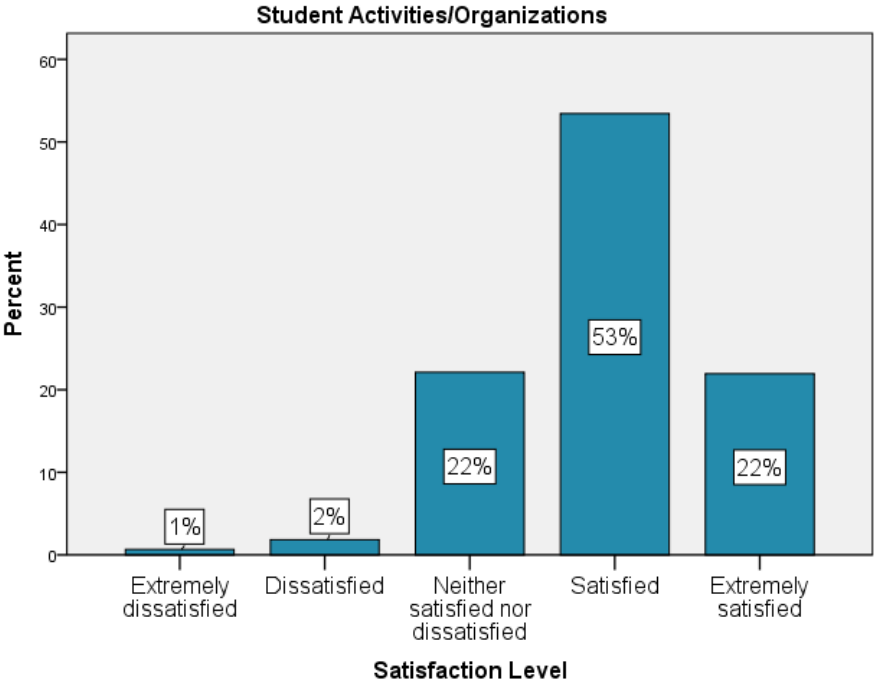
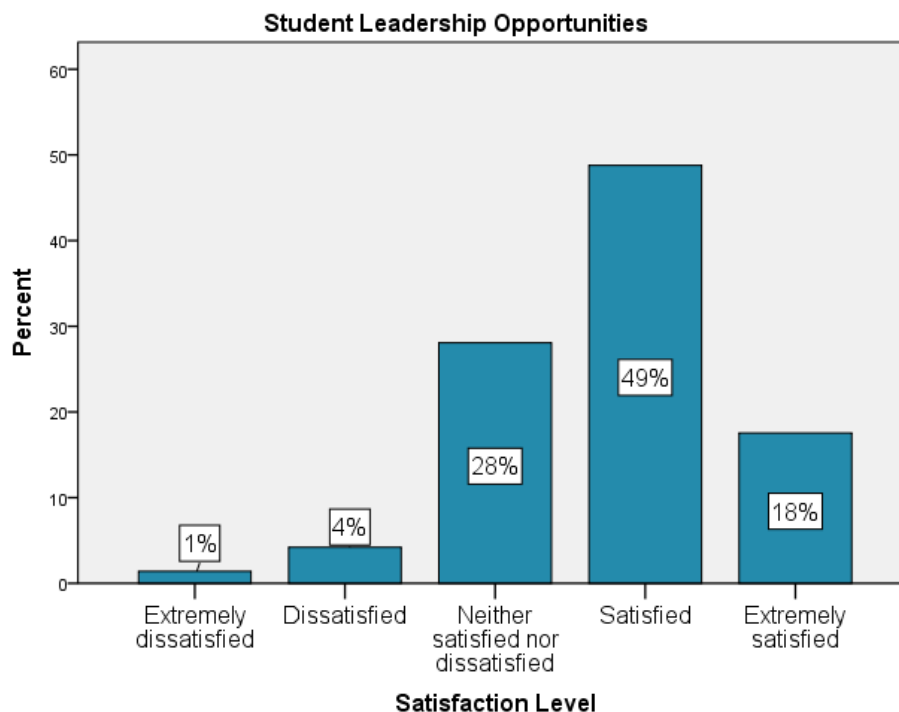


Figure 29



Keene State College Action Areas

A key reason for including items assessing individual experience areas is to identify a set of areas for which increases in satisfaction are feasible and, if achieved, would provide the greatest positive impact on overall student satisfaction. These areas must meet three criteria. First, their overall satisfaction level must not be so high that increasing it further is highly unlikely. Second, they must be significantly correlated with scores on each of the six global measures of satisfaction. Third, they must each independently account for a significant portion of the variance of at least one global satisfaction measure. Areas meeting these criteria can be labelled “Action Areas” because they represent the aspects of the KSC Experience that have the potential to make the largest independent impact on overall student satisfaction. As such, focusing on improving satisfaction with each of these areas represents the most cost-effective approach to increasing student satisfaction with the College as a whole.

Areas with Room for Satisfaction Improvement

It is difficult if not impossible to achieve meaningful increases in satisfaction in areas for which a sizable majority of students indicate that they are satisfied or extremely satisfied. For this reason, the initial pool of 19 potential Action Areas (Table 7) included only those aspects of the KSC experience that received neutral or dissatisfied responses by at least 25% of those who gave a satisfaction rating.

This criterion has two key justifications. First, it includes the full continuum of responses that fall outside of the satisfied range. In addition to those who are dissatisfied, it includes neutral respondents. For many of the areas, “Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,” was the most common satisfaction rating, and

among those who did not select a satisfied choice option, this group of students can be most easily shifted into the satisfied range. Second, when generalized to the full KSC student body, for each area there are 1,000 or more students who could shift into the satisfied range of the survey. Such large groups of students are likely to share common concerns that lend themselves to campus-wide remedies.

Areas Significantly Correlated with All Global Satisfaction Measures

Because assessing the correlations between 19 potential Action Areas and six global satisfaction measures requires conducting 114 separate statistical tests, there is a high probability that random fluctuations could result in one or more statistically significant correlations. For this reason, a Bonferroni adjustment reduced the acceptable level of significance from $p < .05$ to $p < .001$. All of the correlations reported in Table 7 achieved that level of significance. As a result, this requirement did not reduce the number of potential Action Areas.

Areas that Independently Account for a Significant Portion of the Variance of at least One Global Satisfaction Measure

In addition to being correlated with the six global satisfaction measures, many of the individual areas are likely to be highly correlated with one another. This indicates that the impact of many of the potential Action Areas on measures of overall satisfaction are redundant. Addressing only the set of areas that independently account for the greatest portion of variance in overall satisfaction maximizes the efficacy of human and capital resources. Multiple regression analyses provide a means of identifying this set of areas.

The outcome of six multiple regression analyses using the 19 potential Action Areas as predictors and each of the six global measures of student satisfaction as criteria are summarized in Table 8. This statistical procedure reduced the number of Action Areas to six: Events, Career Preparation, Level of Individual Attention, Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities, Student Leadership Opportunities, and Internship/CE/Practicum Opportunities.

When converted into percentages, the R^2 change and total R^2 values provided in Table 8 denote the percentage of the variance of a given global satisfaction measure accounted for by satisfaction with one or more of the Action Areas. Among the six Action Areas, only Events accounted for statistically significant portions of the variance of all six global measures, including 20% of Obtained Support needed to Thrive Socially. Career Preparation accounted for significant portions of the variance of all global measures except Challenged to do Very Best Work. This includes 18% of the Would Recommend KSC and 20% of Satisfied with KSC Education variance. Individual Attention accounted for significant portions of four of the global measures including 24% of Obtained Assistance Needed to Succeed Academically, and 14% of Challenged.

Although the remaining three Action Areas, Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities, Student Leadership Opportunities, and Internship/CE/Practicum Opportunities, accounted for comparatively smaller portions of global satisfaction measure variance, they are each areas with which substantial portions of the graduating class have little experience. Despite this limitation to the potential effect of these areas, each accounted for statistically significant portions of the variance in one or more global measures.

Together, the findings summarized in Table 8 provide data-based guidance for a comprehensive plan to boost KSC student satisfaction. Of all the individual aspect of the KSC Experience examined in the Graduating Senior Survey, increasing satisfaction with the six KSC Action Areas is likely to have the greatest impact in overall satisfaction. Further, among the six, the findings indicate that increasing satisfaction with Events, Career Preparation, and Individual Attention should be given the highest priority.

Table 7: Correlations between Measures of Overall Satisfaction and KSC Experience Areas Receiving Dissatisfied or Neutral Satisfaction Ratings

Aspect of KSC Experience Receiving Dissatisfied/Neutral Ratings from at least 25% of Respondents	Correlation between Experience Aspect and Measures of Overall Satisfaction					
	Felt Welcome	Challenged to do very best work	Obtained Assistance Needed to Succeed Academically	Obtained Support needed to Thrive Socially	Would Recommend KSC to Friends or Siblings	Satisfied with KSC education
Academic Support	.33	.26	.50	.36	.39	.42
Campus Administration	.25	.22	.35	.30	.37	.35
Campus Dining	.15	.13	.21	.22	.25	.22
Campus Security	.19	.16	.25	.25	.2	.21
Career Preparation	.30	.26	.40	.34	.42	.42
Civic Engagement/Community Service Opportunities	.30	.23	.36	.34	.34	.35
Counseling Center	.25	.23	.31	.31	.29	.29
Courses in Integrative Studies Program	.27	.30	.35	.32	.33	.33
Events	.36	.32	.41	.46	.42	.42
Extra-Co-Curricular Programming	.32	.28	.33	.41	.34	.38
Internship/Cooperative Education/Practicum Opportunities	.31	.34	.36	.26	.32	.38
Level of Individual Attention	.38	.34	.49	.39	.41	.44
Recreational Sports	.31	.22	.31	.36	.34	.32
Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities	.37	.33	.46	.40	.38	.41
Residence Halls	.27	.14	.29	.38	.30	.29
Student Accounts	.30	.24	.39	.36	.35	.37
Student Activities/Organizations	.32	.31	.38	.41	.35	.39
Student leadership Opportunities	.37	.31	.41	.45	.35	.38
Study Away/Abroad Opportunities	.19	.18	.30	.31	.23	.24

Note: all correlations are statistically significant at $p < .001$

Table 8: Variance in Overall Satisfaction Measures Independently Accounted for by Action Areas

Aspect of KSC Experience	R ² Change ¹ for Overall Satisfaction Measures					
	Felt Welcome	Challenged to do very best work	Obtained Assistance Needed to Succeed Academically	Obtained Support needed to Thrive Socially	Would Recommend KSC to Friends or Siblings	Satisfied with KSC education
Events	.03***	.02**	.01*	.20***	.02**	.06***
Career Preparation	.02**	n.s.	.05***	.03***	.18***	.20***
Level of Individual Attention	.15***	.14***	.24***	n.s.	.05***	n.s.
Research/Creative Inquiry Opportunities	n.s.	n.s.	.02**	.01*	n.s.	.02**
Student Leadership Opportunities	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	.05***	n.s.	n.s.
Internship/CE/Practicum Opportunities	n.s.	.04**	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Total R²	.20***	.20***	.32***	.29***	.25***	.28***

¹When converted into a percentage, R² values denote the percentage of variance in one measure accounted for by scores on another measure. For example, satisfaction with Events accounts for 20% of the variation across participants in agreement that they obtained the support they needed to thrive socially.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$