2012 Sophomore Satisfaction Survey

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Carmen Williams
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Office of Institutional Research
University of North Dakota
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As sophomores present a unique position in the student body of a university, the University of North Dakota’s Office of Institutional Research administers a Sophomore Satisfaction Survey (SSS) to garner the attitudes and opinions of these second year students. 2012 was the eighth administration of the SSS since its inception in 1993. One thousand sophomores were invited to participate in the web-based survey via e-mail invitation in January of 2012. A total of 243 completed the survey for a response rate of 24%.

Sophomore respondents are generally quite satisfied with their UND experiences to date. When asked to rate their overall experience, 86% report being either very satisfied or satisfied; 2012 reverses an upward trend in overall satisfaction that had been happening from 2005 through 2010. Eighty percent report being satisfied with their overall academic experience, while 75% report satisfaction with the overall social experience at UND.

Other highlights include:

- Large numbers of respondents indicate they spend minimal time on academic work; 78% of respondents report spending less than twenty hours per week preparing for class, with 13% reporting less than six hours per week.
- All sophomores responding indicate they are attending college to obtain a degree and increase their knowledge and understanding in an academic field. Career development goals are also high, with 95% indicating a goal of their college attendance is to improve knowledge for a career, and 93% to formulate long-term career goals.
- Sophomores responding report increasing satisfaction with the academic advising they are receiving. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of respondents are satisfied with their academic advising, while 70% are satisfied with the career advising received. For the first time, the 2012 survey asked sophomore satisfaction with the advising they receive in general education requirements, and 64% indicate they are satisfied or very satisfied.
- As in prior surveys, those service areas where high numbers of respondents report satisfaction include the Wellness Center, the Memorial Student Union, and the Chester Fritz Library. Also as indicated in prior surveys, the service areas with the lowest satisfaction ratings include the Parking Office, Campus Police, and the Housing Office.
- Text messaging and social network sites continue to be popular with sophomores – more so than administrators may be aware. Two-thirds of sophomore respondents indicate they use text messaging ten or more times daily. Ninety-seven percent of sophomore respondents indicate they use social networking sites, with Most (86%) using these sites daily..
UND has contributed very much to your personal growth:

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<tr>
<td>Learning on your own</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making informed choices</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizing your time effectively</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analyzing and solving problems</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persisting at difficult tasks</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participating in research w/ faculty</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding/appreciating arts</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding how choices made</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding &amp; applying math</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>Recognizing civic duties</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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Percent of sophomores satisfied or very satisfied

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<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>90%</td>
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Activities having been done very often or frequently

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<td>0%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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You have been satisfied or very satisfied with UND

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<td>Top 5 Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of program in major</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variety of courses in major</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Challenge of courses in major</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness of faculty in major</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal safety/security on campus</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Bottom 5 Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition cost</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purposes for which fees used</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>UND Pride Card</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing regulations</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student government</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>55%</td>
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How Sophomores Report Spending Their Time

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<td>0%</td>
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<td>75%</td>
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University of North Dakota Office of Institutional Research
2012 Sophomore Satisfaction Survey
9/24/2012
# Executive Summary

The Executive Summary provides an overview of the survey results and highlights key findings. It summarizes the methodology, response rate, data analysis, selected results, and conclusions of the survey. This section is crucial as it sets the context for the detailed analysis that follows.

## Graphical Summary

The Graphical Summary presents visual representations of the survey data, such as charts and graphs, to help illustrate trends and patterns observed in the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey.

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The Table of Contents lists all sections and subsections of the report, along with page numbers, making it easy for readers to navigate the document.

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I. Introduction

Sophomores present a unique position in the student body of a university. They are no longer freshmen, where multiple support programs exist to ease the transition to college life; neither are they well-established within a major as upperclassmen are. This survey aims to determine the views of sophomore students at the University of North Dakota, by asking about their college goals, their satisfaction with their college experience, and finding out how they spend their time.

II. Methodology & Response Rate

UND has administered a version of this particular survey to a sample of the sophomore class once every three years since 1993. The 2012 SSS represents the eighth time the survey has been administered. The current version of the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey can be seen in Appendix A.

On January 23rd, 2012, an invitation to participate was e-mailed to a random sample of 1000 UND sophomores. Three subsequent reminders were e-mailed throughout February 2012. Each mailing contained both a link to the SSS website and passcode unique to each participant. A total of 243 surveys were completed for a response rate of 24%. Figure 1 outlines the pattern of response.

Figure 1. Timeline of Response
For 2012 Sophomore Satisfaction Survey
1000 sophomores invited to participate
III. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics are used to evaluate this survey. Frequencies of response are reported, along with mean calculations when appropriate, to describe this study. Content analysis is used to identify prevailing themes from open-ended survey response. A complete compilation of survey data, along with historical comparison can be found in Appendix B at the end of this report.

IV. Selected Results

The following paragraphs highlight select results from each of the eleven sections of the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey. A detailed listing of survey results is included in Appendix B of this report.

A. Demographics

A general look at the survey-reported demographics indicate the pool of Sophomore Satisfaction respondents portray a fairly traditional second-year college student. Over one-half of the respondents (56%) were female. The majority of sophomore respondents (81%) report their age as being 19 or 20, with 3% being 18 and 5% being older than age 25. Nearly all respondents report being unmarried (96%) and nearly all respondents report their race as being white (94%).

When looking at the academic home of the respondents, the College of Arts & Sciences lead the way with 31% of respondents; 4% report being undecided in their major. Over half of respondents live on campus, either in a residence hall (41%) or in University apartments (11%); one-third of respondents (34%) live off campus in the Grand Forks area.

When asked to report the state in which they attended high school, nearly all students report either North Dakota (56%) or Minnesota (30%). No other state was the high school home of more than 5 respondents. Just one respondent attended high school outside the United States.

B. Entry Preparation & Educational Plans

Over one-half of respondents (55%) indicate they completed coursework for college credit during high school; this is the first time UND asked sophomores this question on the survey. Eighty-two percent of respondents entered UND as a freshman, while 18% transferred here from another institution.

Nearly all sophomores responding (98%) report their plan is to graduate from UND. Just 4 respondents say they plan to transfer to another college.

In 2008, George Kuh from the Association of American Colleges and Universities identified several high-impact educational practices that lead to gains in student outcomes. When sophomores are asked about several of these high-impact practices, UND respondents show varying levels of involvement or planned participation.
Community service and/or volunteer work is the most popular practice, with 62% of sophomores indicating they have done or plan to do this. Just over one-half of sophomore respondents (52%) indicate they plan to complete an internship or cooperative experience. Roughly one-quarter of respondents (27%) report plans to study abroad, while 11% indicate they are participating in Integrated studies. Very little change is seen when the 2012 numbers are compared to the 2010 survey.

C. How Time is Spent

Demands on college student time are ever changing. In an attempt to gauge how dedicated sophomores are to their studies, they are asked how much time they spend per week preparing for class, which includes activities such as studying, reading, writing, doing homework, working in labs, analyzing data, rehearsing, and other academic activities. Most sophomores (78%) replying to the survey spend less than twenty hours per week on academic work, with 13% reporting they spend less than six hours per week. As shown in Figure 2, the average amount of time sophomores report spending on studying has been on the increase since 2005.

Research shows that working more than 20 hours per week is detrimental to a student's academic progress, while working less than that amount can have a positive effect on academic outcomes. When sophomores at UND are asked how many hours they work per week, 18% state they work more than 20 hours, while one-half (50%) report spending less than 10 hours per week working.

![Figure 2. Amount of Time Sophomores Report on Activities](image)

When asked about the amount of time they spend watching television, 69% of respondents say they spend less than 10 hours per week; 9% respond they spend more than 20 hours watching
TV. As shown in Figure 2, the amount sophomores report watching TV has been declining since 1999.

Technology changes over the past decade are impacting sophomore habits. Beginning in the 2010 administration of the sophomore survey, respondents were asked to report the frequency they use both text messaging and online social networking. As seen in Figure 3, more students are doing both activities when compared to 2010. Virtually all respondents (97%) indicate they text message daily, while 86% indicate they use social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter daily.

**Figure 3. Amount of Time Sophomores Report Text Messaging and Online Networking**

*Mean Score: 1= Never, 2= Weekly, 3= 1-4 times daily, 4= 5-10 times daily, 5= More than 10 times daily*

![Bar chart showing text messaging and online networking usage from 2010 to 2012]

**D. College-Related Goals**

Sophomores are presented a list of sixteen goals that could be motivation for attending college. They are asked to indicate whether each of the sixteen items are a college-goal for themselves. Not surprisingly, all respondents indicate they have two of the sixteen college-related goals: *To increase my knowledge and understanding in an academic field* and *To obtain a degree*. Career development is also high on the list for survey respondents’ collegiate goals, as 95% indicate they have *To improve my knowledge, technical skill, and/or competencies for my job or career* as a goal, 93% indicate they have *To formulate long-term career plans and/or goals* as a goal, and 90% have *To prepare for a new career* as a goal of their college education.

The item sophomores are least likely to state as being a goal of their college experience is *To increase my participation in cultural and social events*, with 64% stating they have this goal. There is little change in the survey goals when the 2012 administration is compared to prior surveys.
E. Collaborative Learning Methods

Over one-half of sophomore respondents (53%) indicate they discuss class assignments with fellow students frequently or very often; one-fourth of respondents (24%) indicate they have these discussions rarely, with 5% indicating never and 19% indicating occasionally. As is seen in Figure 4, students are trending to be less likely to be discussing both schoolwork and current issues with fellow students over time.

Not surprisingly, sophomore respondents are less likely to indicate they have discussed their studies with their instructors. Just 14% report they discuss schoolwork with instructors frequently or very often, with a similar amount (15%) reporting they never discuss schoolwork with instructors. Four out of ten respondents (41%) say they discuss classwork with instructors occasionally. Little change is seen over the history of the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey with regard to these frequencies.

While students are somewhat likely to discuss their assignments with one another, they are less likely to report having studied with others rather than alone. One-quarter of respondents (24%) report they study with fellow students very often or frequently; 18% of respondents report never studying with fellow students.

![Figure 4. Frequency Sophomores Report Collaborating](image)

**Mean score:** 1= Never, 2= Occasionally, 3= Sometimes, 4= Frequently, 5= Very Often

F. Writing

Sophomores report short, 2- to 4-page papers as being the most frequent writing assignment they experience. This result is also seen in other surveys conducted at UND and spans all academic grades. As revealed in Figure 5, it appears sophomores are generally reporting decreasing frequency of writing assignments in general over time.
G. Teaching Methods Reported

While faculty attempt to incorporate more engaging learning techniques into their coursework, sophomores continue to report the most frequent teaching method they experience as being Lecture, with 97% reporting this occurs very often or frequently. Sophomores rank eleven teaching methods on a 5-point Likert scale, with 5 equating to “Very Often”, 4 “Frequently”, 3 “Sometimes”, 2 “Occasionally”, and 1 “Never”; mean scores are calculated for each item. These means are displayed in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Frequency of Selected Teaching Methods
Mean score: 1= Never, 2= Occasionally, 3= Sometimes, 4= Frequently, 5= Very Often
Responses show sophomores perceive an increase in question and answer, as well as internet and computer assisted learning. On the other hand, there is an overall decline in the amount of library research reported by sophomores.

H. Technology

When asked about technology, sophomores generally report they are more engaged in courses requiring them to use technology, with 56% indicating they agree they are more engaged, with 11% disagree.

When asked to explain their engagement response, 123 respondents provided a comment, with 77 responses being applicable or evaluable in the context asked. Those who indicate they are more engaged when technology is used indicate that technology makes coursework more easy to understand, and engages them in learning by being more hands on. The comments It helps to further understand the information and it helps with time constraints (online homework) is representative of those with a positive opinion on technology use. On the other hand, those who responded they were less engaged when technology was utilized reported they tended to learn better with hand-written notes and assignments. Respondents from both groups indicate online assignments require them to do their homework.

Roughly one-fifth of sophomore respondents (19%) indicate UND should provide them with additional assistance on the technology required to be used in coursework. When asked which aspects of technology require additional assistance, Blackboard is the application with the most comments, however just 7 indicate this. More comments indicated UND does a good job of providing instruction on technology required.

One-third of sophomore respondents indicate they have taken online courses at UND, either currently or in the past.

I. Academic Department Attitudes Toward Sophomores

Sophomores are asked to rate the importance their academic department places on each of seven items on a 5-point scale where 5 equates to Great Importance, 4 Much Importance, 3 Some Importance, 2 Little Importance and 1 No Importance. When mean scores are calculated for the seven items, they all fall close to the 3.5 range, indicating respondents generally feel departments place some importance on things such as encouraging thinking, concern for students, and the ability of students to get into courses.

Figure 7 shows the mean scores on these items over the history of the survey. As a general rule, sophomores are indicating academic departments show increasing levels of concern for their educational outcomes over the course of the survey.
J. Satisfaction with UND Offices

Presented a list of twenty-seven service offices on UND's campus, sophomores are asked to rate their satisfaction with the offices they have used, or indicate they had not used an office if applicable. Mean satisfaction scores were calculated on a 5-point scale, with 5 equating to Very satisfied, 4: Satisfied, 3: Neutral, 2: Dissatisfied, and 1: Very dissatisfied. Offices with the highest reported satisfaction include:

- **Wellness Center** (Mean of 4.47)
- **Memorial Student Union** (Mean of 4.19)
- **Library** (Mean of 4.16)
- **Student Health** (Mean of 4.00)

It is worth noting that these offices also report quite high usage, with over 90% of respondents indicating they have used the Wellness Center, Memorial Union, and Library, while 70% report having used the Library.

Offices recording the lowest levels of satisfaction include:

- **Parking Office** (Mean of 2.74)
- **Campus Police** (Mean of 3.19)
- **Student Financial Aid** (Mean of 3.40)
- **Housing Office** (Mean of 3.41)

These offices also have relatively high levels of usage, with an average of three-quarters of respondents indicating they have utilized the office.

Figure 8 shows those departments with the largest increases in satisfaction over time. These include Veteran Services, the Bookstore, American Indian Student Services, the Children's Center, and the Counseling Center. Figure 9 shows those with decreasing levels of reported
satisfaction, including the International Center, Learning Services Office, Registrar, Campus Shuttle, and ITSS.

**Figure 8. Offices With Increasing Satisfaction Over Time:**

*Mean score: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied*

![Figure 8](chart)

**Figure 9. Offices With Decreasing Satisfaction Over Time:**

*Mean score: 1 = Very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Satisfied, 5 = Very satisfied*

![Figure 9](chart)

K. **UND Education Contributes To Growth**

When sophomores are asked to evaluate how much their experiences at UND has contributed to their educational growth, two items linked to independent learning (Learning on
your own and Working independently) top the list scoring means of 2.54 and 2.51 on a 3-point scale. At the bottom of the list, Participating in research with a faculty member scores a mean of just 1.74 with nearly one-half of respondents (47%) indicting this activity has contributed very little to their personal growth. Figures 10 and 11 show the trends of those items showing the greatest increases and decreases in mean score over time.

Figure 11. Areas In Which UND Education Contributes Least to Personal Growth

Mean score: 1= Very little, 2= Somewhat, 3= Very much

L. Satisfaction with UND Education

When sophomores are asked to rate items related to their course selection, they are generally quite satisfied with courses within their major. As Figure 12 reveals, mean scores greater than 4.0 (Satisfied) are recorded for the quality of the major program and both the variety and challenge of courses within the sophomore’s major. On the other hand, students are showing decreasing satisfaction with the selection of courses for their general requirements (Essential Studies).

Figure 12. Satisfaction With Major and Course Options

Mean score: 1= Very dissatisfied, 2= Dissatisfied, 3= Neutral, 4= Satisfied, 5= Very satisfied
Campus climate from a sophomore perspective appears to be on the right track. There is a slight positive trend in sophomore respondent satisfaction with the helpfulness of faculty in their major and racial harmony. Their attitude toward non-teaching staff, while slightly lower in 2012 than the high mean of 3.93 in 2010, remains higher than levels reported in earlier surveys.

Classroom support structures appear to be holding steady, as sophomore respondents report flat satisfaction with the availability of their instructors outside of class as well as their level of interaction with faculty outside of class (Figure 14). Likewise, sophomores report a flat level of general satisfaction with the classroom facilities and equipment.
With regard to advising, sophomore respondents are increasingly satisfied with the adequacy of advising they are receiving at UND. Incoming freshmen surveys indicate that career preparation is becoming a bigger reason that students are attending college, and it looks like advisors are increasingly attempting to meet these needs. For the first time in 2012, sophomores were asked to rate their satisfaction with advising in general education requirements, and 64% of respondents indicated they were either satisfied or very satisfied.

This report shows a generally positive trend in items related to campus support activities, including housing regulations and their feeling safe on campus (Fig. 16). With regard to UND Student Government, sophomores currently report similar levels of satisfaction compared to prior survey administrations.
Sophomore respondents continue the trend of general satisfaction with the social experience at UND. Three-quarters of respondents (75%) are very satisfied or satisfied with their overall social experience, while just 6% report being dissatisfied. Likewise, roughly three quarters of respondents are satisfied with their level of interaction with other students (78%) and their opportunities for involvement (73%).

When evaluating aspects of UND tied to the business office, less than one-half of respondents tend to report being satisfied. When asked about the purposes for which student fees are used, 46% report being satisfied while 17% report being dissatisfied. While 40% report being satisfied with the cost of tuition, 26% report being dissatisfied. Sophomores appear to be acclimated to using Campus Connection, as 61% indicate they are satisfied with 12% reporting a level of dissatisfaction. Lastly, the 2012 administration of the survey asked about the UND Pride Card, and 48% of sophomore respondents indicated they were satisfied while 23% reported being dissatisfied with the Pride Card.
M. Overall Satisfaction

In general, the survey indicates sophomores by and large are satisfied with their UND experience, as 86% report being satisfied or very satisfied. When a mean score is calculated on the Likert-scale responses, however, 2012 shows lower overall satisfaction than the prior two survey administrations (Figure 19).

**Figure 19. In General, How Satisfied Are You With Your Experiences At UND?**

*Mean score: 1= Very dissatisfied, 2= Dissatisfied, 3= Neutral, 4= Satisfied, 5= Very satisfied*

V. Comments

When given the opportunity to provide a general comment, 60 sophomore respondents did such. A content analysis of these comments reveals. The largest category of comments (10 of them) were a general statement shedding a positive light on UND such as *My experience at UND has been amazing so far!* Seven comments related to an academic issue, typically issues with a particular course and/or program requirement. Six comments were critical of parking.

Sophomores were also asked to give some advice to incoming freshmen; 104 provided a response. Most of these centered around the theme of studying hard and getting involved on campus.

Comments can be read in the appendices of this report.

VI. Summary

As a general rule, UND sophomores responding to the Sophomore Satisfaction Survey are quite satisfied with their experiences here. Large majorities report being satisfied with their overall experience, as well as their academic experience and social experience.
While results are positive, there are still areas where improvement can be seen. Areas such as the Parking Office, Campus Police, Housing, and Student Financial Aid have chronically been at the bottom of the satisfaction list, however positive actions can still be found. For example, while reported satisfaction with the Housing Office has maintained relatively steady, there is an increasing satisfaction with housing regulations. Departments should continue to strive to provide student-friendly services, knowing that they may not see drastic changes in their satisfaction scores. Areas servicing specific populations, such as Native American Programs, Veterans Services, Disability Support Services and the Women’s Center may want to do more targeted surveying of their users to determine what levels of satisfaction they are truly providing as many sophomores have not utilized these offices.

Sophomores indicate they are generally happy with the advising they receive, with nearly three-quarters of respondents expressing they are satisfied with both their academic advising and career advising.

The survey trend tells us sophomores are increasing the amount of time they report spent on studying, while decreasing the amount of time they spend watching television. It does, however look like sophomores are reporting an increasing amount of time working. While working while attending school may help sophomores develop time management skills, this may also be an indicator of increased financial pressures with paying tuition. As always, UND should be conscious of cost increases felt by students in an attempt to keep education affordable.

The survey tells us sophomores communicate via text message and online networking sites frequently, more so than many in administration may realize. In the age of increasingly changing technologies, it will be important to develop new ways of communicating with students, as certain materials, including invitations to participate in a web-based survey such as this one, are not easily accessed via a mobile device / cell phone.

VII. Appendices

The table of contents outlines the contents of each appendix section. If not attached in this printed report, appendices can be accessed on the UND Office of Institutional Research website at: http://und.edu/research/institutional-research/