

Results of College Outcomes Survey
How Satisfied Are Graduates of Southern Utah University
September 7, 2006
Office of Institutional Research

Introduction

The COS is a perceptual study of SUU's graduates conducted in even numbered years to address the question: How satisfied are graduating students with their experiences at SUU and what value has been added to student's learning and campus experience? The ACT College Outcomes Survey (COS) was administered during Spring semester 2006 to determine student satisfaction and to compare results with national, four-year institutional norms. The national norms used in this year's COS are based on 32,062 student records from sixty 4-year postsecondary institutions that administered the survey between August 1, 2000 and July 31, 2005.

Approximately 715 surveys were distributed to students enrolled in senior-level (capstone) classes in each college or school. While the majority of respondents were seniors (approximately 62%) students of other classifications also completed surveys, including 13 freshmen. Within the survey period, 292 student responses were received, a response rate of 40.84%. This rate of response is down from 52.2% in 2004 when the survey was previously administered.

In addition to items included on the COS, the survey was supplemented with 30 locally developed questions. A tabulation of these questions and a compilation of respondent's comments are provided in Appendix A.

Results

Students responding to the COS were demographically representative of the overall student population at SUU. The majority of respondents were under 30 years of age (89.9%), female (55.6%), and white (94.6%). Additionally, COS respondents are under 30 years of age (81.7%), female (63.1%), and white (70.3%). Only 0.8% (7.3% nationally) were pursuing associate degrees while 94.7% (80.3% nationally) of the respondents were pursuing bachelor's degrees. Approximately 17.6% transferred zero credit hours toward their degrees; 39.5% transferred one credit hour or more and 42.9% transferred 45 credits or more. Regarding future education goals, 52.8% of the respondents indicated intent to pursue a master's degree while 21.0% indicated a desire to pursue a doctorate at some point in their lifetime.

In various survey "themes," ACT tabulated the top five and bottom five items for the University and for the national, four-years norm institutions that participated in the survey. Scale differences higher than the national norm reflected an item of greater importance, progress or satisfaction among SUU respondents. Similarly, scale differences lower than the national norm reflected an item of lesser importance, progress or satisfaction. Given sample size, ACT reports that statistical significance occurs at 0.2%. Hence, differences greater or less than 0.2% are considered significant to the University.

Table 1
Responsibilities and Time Allocations-Hours Per Week
(National Four-year Public University Norm*)

Hours per week	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	>31	Blank
Activity								
Course-related Activities	0.0% (4.2%)	8.2% (14.0%)	16.8% (17.6%)	13.0% (15.2%)	19.5% (17.6%)	23.3% (16.3%)	12.7% (11.4%)	6.5% (3.6%)
Internships and Practicum	34.2% (44.1%)	23.3% (20.8%)	14.7% (9.2%)	7.2% (5.6%)	5.1% (4.7%)	3.8% (3.1%)	2.4% (6.3%)	9.2% (6.2%)
Clubs and Organizations	36.0% (47.3%)	42.8% (31.8%)	9.2% (8.7%)	2.1% (3.3%)	0.7% (1.4%)	0.3% (0.7%)	0.3% (0.6%)	8.6% (6.1%)
College Sponsored Events (i.e. sports, plays)	42.1% (49.2%)	44.2% (34.9%)	1.7% (4.7%)	1.4% (1.6%)	1.4% (1.4%)	0.7% (1.0%)	1.0% (0.7%)	7.5% (6.3%)
On-campus Paid Employment Related to Major	81.8% (83.3%)	2.4% (2.6%)	1.0% (2.9%)	3.8% (2.0%)	1.4% (1.6%)	0.3% (0.6%)	0.3% (0.4%)	8.9% (6.6%)
On-campus Paid Employment Not Related to Major	75.3% (81.2%)	2.4% (2.8%)	5.1% (3.0%)	4.8% (2.5%)	1.4% (2.2%)	1.4% (0.9%)	0.3% (0.5%)	9.2% (6.8%)
Off-campus Paid Employment Related to Major	63.7% (69.7%)	3.4% (3.3%)	2.7% (2.5%)	3.4% (2.3%)	4.8% (3.5%)	5.8% (3.7%)	7.9% (8.7%)	8.2% (6.4%)
Off-campus Paid Employment Not Related to Major	57.9% (57.7%)	4.8% (3.8%)	4.1% (3.7%)	4.5% (4.7%)	3.8% (6.4%)	8.6% (7.6%)	7.2% (9.7%)	9.2% (6.5%)
Care of Family	35.3% (51.8%)	14.7% (11.3%)	6.8% (6.0%)	6.5% (4.0%)	4.8% (3.3%)	3.4% (2.9%)	18.8% (14.6%)	9.6% (6.2%)
Off-campus Community Service (e.g. religious, civic)	25.3% (47.1%)	51.7% (35.3%)	12.0% (7.2%)	1.7% (2.6%)	0.3% (1.2%)	0.7% (0.4%)	0.3% (0.4%)	7.9% (5.9%)
Off-campus Cultural Events	47.9% (48.1%)	41.4% (36.8%)	3.1% (6.1%)	0.0% (1.9%)	0.0% (0.8%)	0.0% (0.3%)	0.0% (0.3%)	7.5% (5.8%)

Table 1 summarizes the extent to which respondents were engaged in out-of-class activities, including academics, clubs and organizations, employment, family support, and cultural opportunities. Positive or negative differences greater than five percentage points are shaded for reading convenience.

The results in Table 1 highlight the importance of work, the demands of the academic program, the commitment of SUU students to service activities, and their dedication to family.

Table 2 provides an indication of the degree to which students are satisfied with various aspects of campus and academic life at SUU. Positive or negative differences greater than five percentage points are shaded for reading convenience. Class size, faculty respect for students, availability of faculty for office appointments, and student access to computer facilities and services were ranked highly with regard to student satisfaction.

Additionally, students rated SUU significantly higher than institutions attended by their peers in the quality of instruction, individual concern, informal contact with faculty, quality of their programs of study, sense of belonging, sense of personal safety, response to students with special needs. Other areas higher than the national norm included rules governing student conduct, campus atmosphere of ethnic, political and religious understanding, and opportunities for involvement in campus social activities. SUU students also reported being more satisfied with their college "in general" than their national peers.

Among the lowest rated aspects of campus life at SUU were the campus AIDS education program, personal counseling and mental health services, job placement services and practical work experiences in areas related to their majors. Other aspects ranked lower than the national norm group included the quality of academic advising, new student orientation services, and new student placement in reading/writing and math courses.

Table 3 compares the responses of students who completed the COS in 2004 to those responding to the 2006 survey. Students who completed the 2006 survey were more satisfied with SUU than their 2004 peers in the areas of the quality of their programs of study, class size, flexibility of degree requirements, campus atmosphere, and transfer of credits from other institutions. Students who completed the survey in 2006 were significantly less satisfied in the areas of response to non-traditional students, recreational and intramural programs, and financial aid services.

Figure 1 focuses on college outcomes that students deemed important. Generally SUU respondents and national peers considered similar outcomes important but SUU students consider the following of greater importance than their peers at national four-year institutions.

1. Acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career (Item 14)
2. Becoming competent in their majors (Item 15)
3. Learning to think and reason (Item 3)
4. Developing problem-solving skills (Item 2)
5. Drawing conclusions after weighing evidence/facts/ideas (Item 1)

SUU respondents ranked the following five outcomes as being of lesser importance than their peers at national four-year institutions:

1. Appreciating the fine arts/music/literature/humanities (Item 16)
2. Learning principles for conserving/improving the global environment (Item 23)
3. Understanding/applying math concepts/statistical reasoning (Item 26)
4. Learning about the role of science/technology in society (Item 25)
5. Applying scientific knowledge and skills (Item 22)

Table 2
Aspects of This College With Which
Respondents are “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied”

Item	SUU	National
Faculty respect for students	86.3%	75.9%
Quality of instruction	77.8%	74.6%
Availability of faculty for office appointments	79.5%	70.3%
Concern for me as an individual	74.3%	59.8%
Informal contact with faculty in non-academic setting	60.3%	55.0%
Quality of my program of study	81.5%	75.3%
Quality of academic advising	54.1%	60.0%
Sense of belonging on campus	64.0%	56.5%
Class size	90.0%	73.9%
Flexible degree requirements	54.8%	53.1%
Services for victims of crime and harassment	22.9%	23.9%
Student mental health services	20.2%	25.0%
Residence hall services and programs	22.6%	27.1%
Veterans services	13.3%	16.7%
Language development services for students whose first language is not English	13.7%	15.5%
Student health/wellness services	34.2%	42.8%
Campus AIDS education program	14.1%	18.1%
Freedom from harassment on campus	42.1%	40.2%
Personal security/safety on campus	62.7%	55.6%
Response to non-traditional students	42.5%	44.9%
Rules governing student conduct	60.2%	50.0%
Response to students with special needs	48.0%	38.9%
Campus atmosphere of ethnic, political and religious understanding	55.8%	48.9%
College social activities	51.8%	46.9%
Opportunities for involvement in campus activities	59.2%	52.8%
Recreational and intramural programs	50.7%	47.3%
Career planning services	40.8%	45.2%
Practical work experiences offered in areas related to my major	39.1%	42.4%
Job placement services	33.3%	34.2%
Personal counseling services	23.6%	27.9%
New student orientation services	37.0%	45.4%
Financial aid services	59.6%	47.5%
New student placement in reading/writing, math courses	28.1%	37.3%
Student access to computer facilities and services	82.2%	68.3%
Developmental, remedial, and tutorial services	52.1%	38.8%
Library services	79.1%	67.8%
Transfer of course credits from other colleges to this college	59.6%	46.5%
Variety of courses offered	62.0%	60.1%
This college in general	81.5%	72.5

Table 3
Comparison of Aspects of This College With Which
Respondents are “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” from 2004 to 2006

Item	2004	2006
Faculty respect for students	85.0%	86.3%
Quality of instruction	76.5%	77.8%
Availability of faculty for office appointments	77.4%	79.5%
Concern for me as an individual	76.1%	74.3%
Informal contact with faculty in non-academic setting	59.7%	60.3%
Quality of my program of study	76.4%	81.5%
Quality of academic advising	55.3%	54.1%
Sense of belonging on campus	60.1%	64.0%
Class size	84.7%	90.0%
Flexible degree requirements	45.7%	54.8%
Services for victims of crime and harassment	21.5%	22.9%
Student mental health services	24.6%	20.2%
Residence hall services and programs	20.1%	22.6%
Veterans services	15.3%	13.3%
Language development services for students whose first language is not English	14.3%	13.7%
Student health/wellness services	37.9%	34.2%
Campus AIDS education program	13.0%	14.1%
Freedom from harassment on campus	41.9%	42.1%
Personal security/safety on campus	62.1%	62.7%
Response to non-traditional students	47.8%	42.5%
Rules governing student conduct	56.7%	60.2%
Response to students with special needs	48.5%	48.0%
Campus atmosphere of ethnic, political and religious understanding	48.8%	55.8%
College social activities	56.7%	51.8%
Opportunities for involvement in campus activities	60.*%	59.2%
Recreational and intramural programs	56.0%	50.7%
Career planning services	41.6%	40.8%
Practical work experiences offered in areas related to my major	38.2%	39.1%
Job placement services	31.1%	33.3%
Personal counseling services	25.2%	23.6%
New student orientation services	39.2%	37.0%
Financial aid services	66.6%	59.6%
New student placement in reading/writing, math courses	25.6%	28.1%
Student access to computer facilities and services	84.3%	82.2%
Developmental, remedial, and tutorial services	49.8%	52.1%
Library services	79.5%	79.1%
Transfer of course credits from other colleges to this college	50.5%	59.6%
Variety of courses offered	59.4%	62.0%
This college in general	79.2%	81.5%

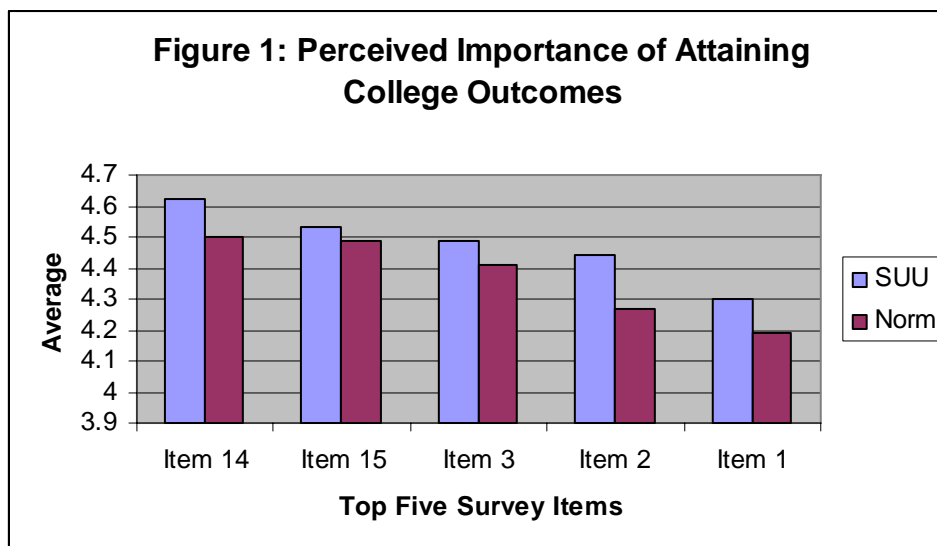


Figure 2 summarizes students' perceptions of the progress they made in attaining the outcomes addressed in Figure 1. The top five items in Figures 1 and 2 document through self-reporting "value added" for students at SUU. Of the items in Figure 1, respondents are reporting progress in those outcomes in Figure 2. Again, the top five items are comparable to national peers. Like their counterparts at other institutions, SUU students found that acquiring knowledge and skills needed for their careers (Item 14) and becoming competent in their majors (Item 15) were values added through progress toward degree completion at SUU. SUU students rated their progress in the areas of learning to think and reason (Item 3), developing problem-solving skills (Item 2), and drawing conclusions (Item 1) slightly lower than their peers at national institutions.

Figures 1 and 2 also highlight areas for institutional improvement. For example, SUU students perceive making the least progress in attaining outcomes related to learning principles for conserving/improving the global environment (Item 23). Also among the bottom five outcome (indicating little perceived progress) are appreciating the fine arts/music/literature/humanities (Item 16), understanding/applying math concepts/statistical reasoning (Item 26), reading with greater speed and better comprehension (Item 8), and discovering productive/rewarding uses of talents/leisure time (Item 18). Many of these outcomes are related to general education objectives.

Student perceptions of personal growth since entering SUU are addressed in Figure 3. Perceived areas of greatest growth included becoming academically competent (Item 25), setting long term or life goals (Item 28), taking responsibility for personal behavior (Item 17), increasing intellectual curiosity (Item 27) and developing a sense of purpose/value/meaning for their lives (Item 20). Areas where little personal growth was perceived to have occurred included participating in volunteer work (Item 7), preparing to participate in the electoral process (Item 11), gaining insight into human nature (Item 13), recognizing rights/responsibilities/privileges as a citizen (Item 14), and becoming a more effective member in a multi-cultural society (Item 35). SUU students were significantly lower than their national peers with regard to items recognizing rights/responsibilities/privileges as a citizen and becoming a more effective member in a multi-cultural society.

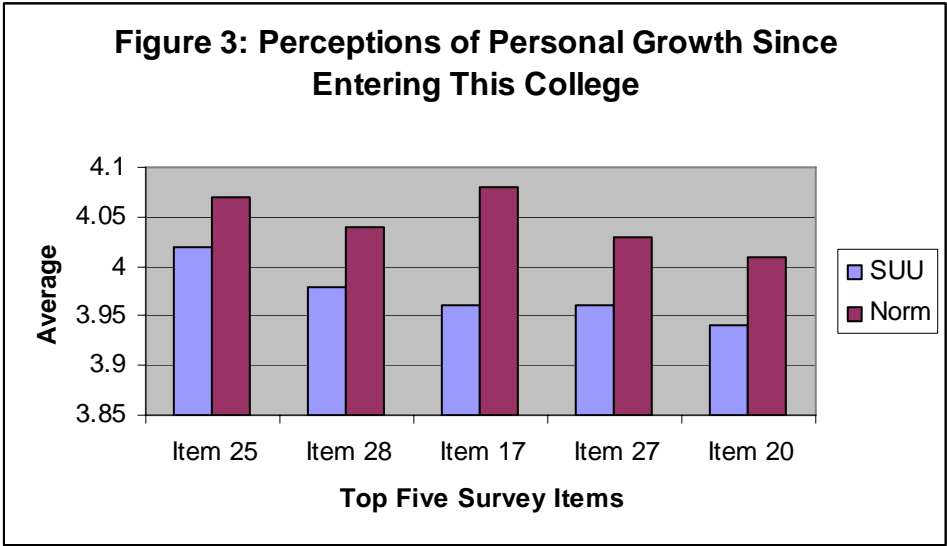
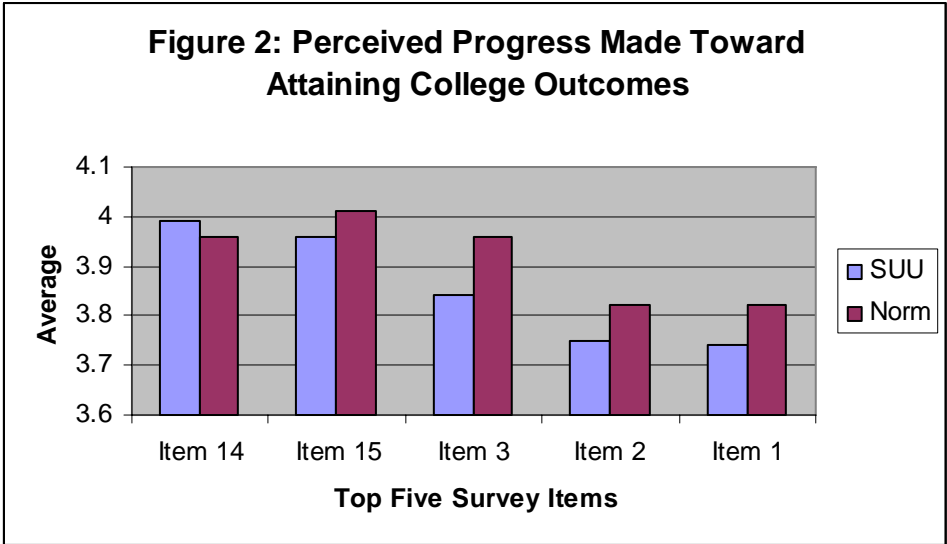


Figure 4 summarizes the perceived contribution of SUU toward student growth. Students perceived “becoming academically competent” (Item 25) to be the University’s greatest contribution toward their personal growth. Other highly ranked contributions included increasing intellectual curiosity (Item 27), acquiring a well-rounded general education (Item 36), becoming an effective team/group member (Item 1), and becoming more willing to change and learn new things (Item 32).

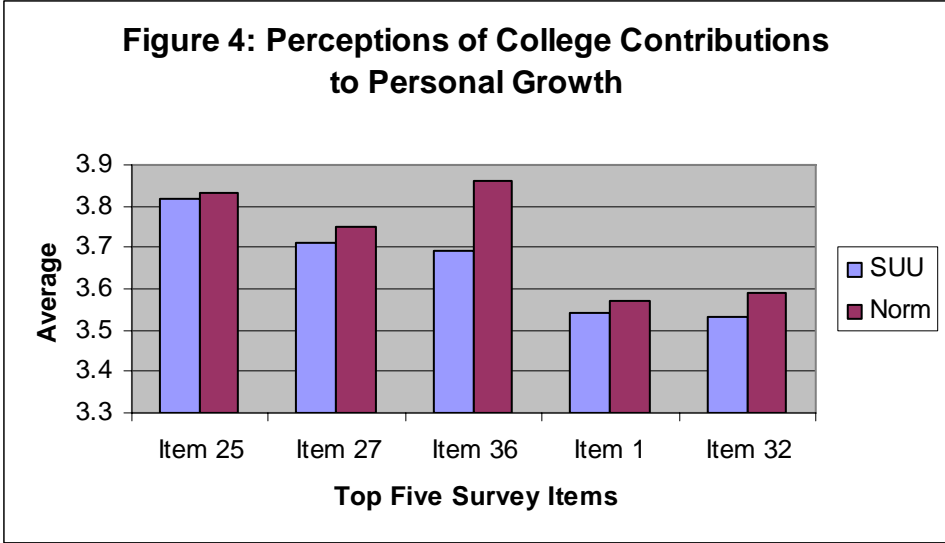
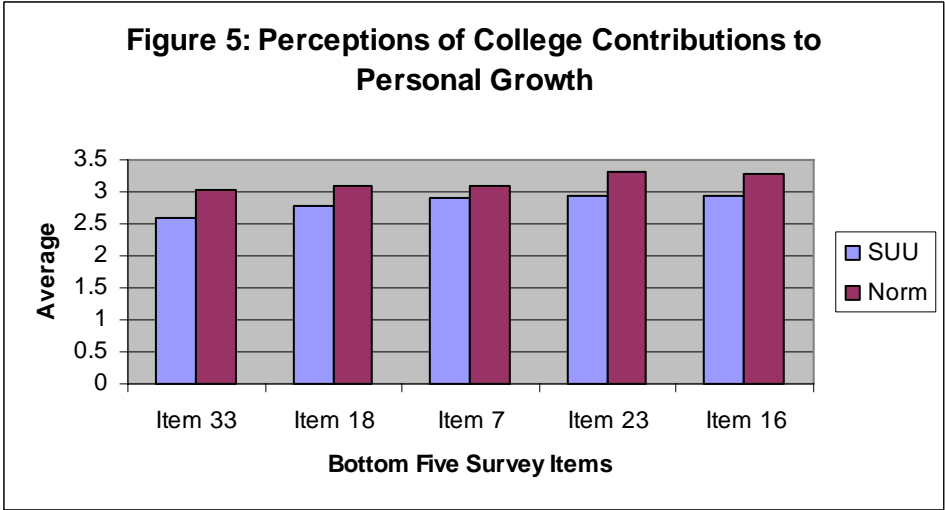


Figure 5 summarizes student perceptions regarding the bottom five areas of contribution to personal growth. Areas where SUU was perceived to have less of a contribution included developing religious values (Item 33) and learning how to become a more responsible family member (Item 18). Lesser contributions were also perceived in the areas of actively participating in volunteer work (Item 7), developing moral principles to guide actions/decisions (Item 23), and understanding religious values that differ from one's own (Item 16). SUU students rated the college's contributions to all five areas significantly lower than their national peers.



The degree to which students agreed with statements about SUU was another component of the study. Figure 6 and its accompanying table summarize statements of attitudinal satisfaction and compare the responses of SUU students to those of their national peers.

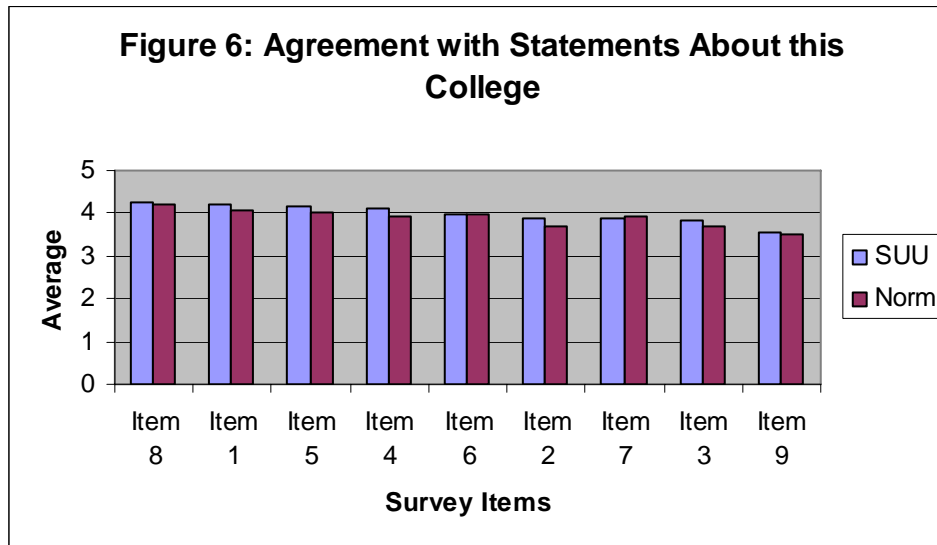


Table 4
Agreement with Statements about this College (Items in Figure 6)

Item	SUU	Norm
8. I am proud of my accomplishments at this college.	4.27	4.22
1. This college has helped me meet the goals I came here to achieve	4.21	4.05
5. This college is equally supportive of men and women.	4.17	4.01
4. I would recommend this college to others	4.10	3.91
6. My experiences here have helped motivate me to make something of my life.	3.98	3.97
2. If choosing a college again, I would choose this one.	3.89	3.69
7. This college is equally supportive of all racial/ethnic groups	3.89	3.93
3. My experiences here have equipped me to deal with possible career changes.	3.81	3.71
9. This college welcomes/uses feedback from students to improve the college.	3.53	3.51

Supplemental Questions

In addition to the items included in the standardized survey, ACT allowed up to 30 supplemental questions compiled by the SUU Office of Institutional Research to be included in the COS. Areas addressed by supplemental questions ranged from the availability of classes to what attracted students to SUU. A compilation of student responses to supplemental questions are included in the tables and graphs found in Appendix A.

Conclusions

Background information.

Demographically, SUU respondents are generally similar to COS respondents from other national four-year institutions. They differ from their peers in the amount of time spent working, caring for family, and rendering service. Their educational goals and values are very comparable to those of students at other institutions.

College outcomes.

Students give SUU high marks overall, would recommend the University to others, and if choosing a college or university again, would choose SUU. Self assessment of personal growth compares favorably with the national norm and students perceive that SUU contributes greatly to that growth. At the same time, SUU students were significantly lower than their national peers with regard to perceived growth in the areas of recognizing rights/responsibilities/privileges as a citizen and becoming a more effective member in a multi-cultural society.

Satisfaction with aspects of SUU.

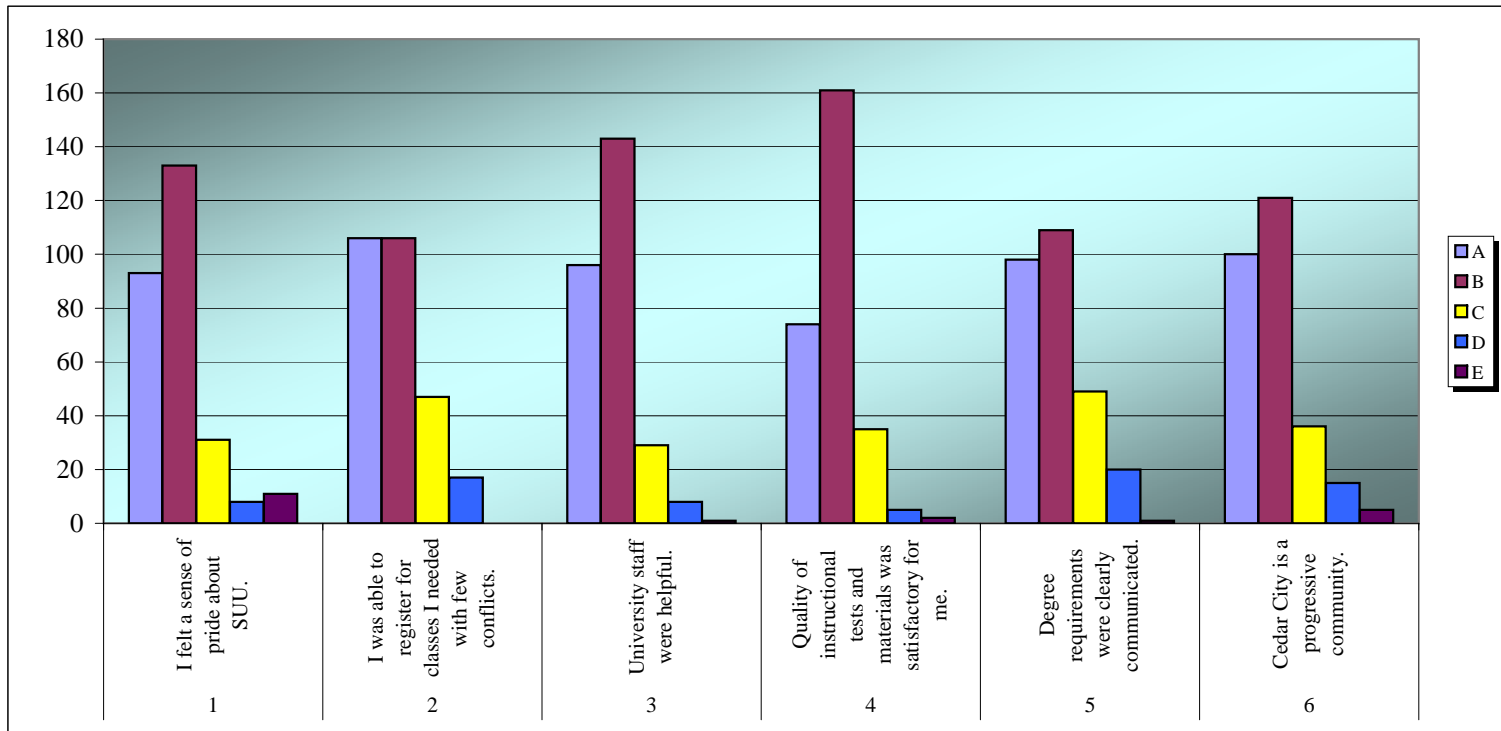
High marks are given for many aspects of the University, both in academics and student services. Some aspects are significantly higher than the national norm, indicating a high degree of satisfaction with these elements of the University. Conversely, SUU students were significantly less satisfied than their national peers in the areas of academic advising, orientation for new students, new student placement in reading/writing, math courses, and student health/wellness services. Changes already in place in these areas may be reflected in the next administration of the survey which will occur in Spring 2008.

APPENDIX A
College Outcomes Survey
Additional Questions

**College Outcomes Survey
Additional Questions
2005-2006**

A = Agree strongly
B = Agree somewhat
C = Disagree somewhat
D = Disagree strongly
E = Not applicable, no opinion

		A	B	C	D	E
1	I felt a sense of pride about SUU.	93	133	31	8	11
2	I was able to register for classes I needed with few conflicts.	106	106	47	17	0
3	University staff were helpful.	96	143	29	8	1
4	Quality of instructional tests and materials was satisfactory for me.	74	161	35	5	2
5	Degree requirements were clearly communicated.	98	109	49	20	1
6	Cedar City is a progressive community.	100	121	36	15	5



College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

A = Agree strongly

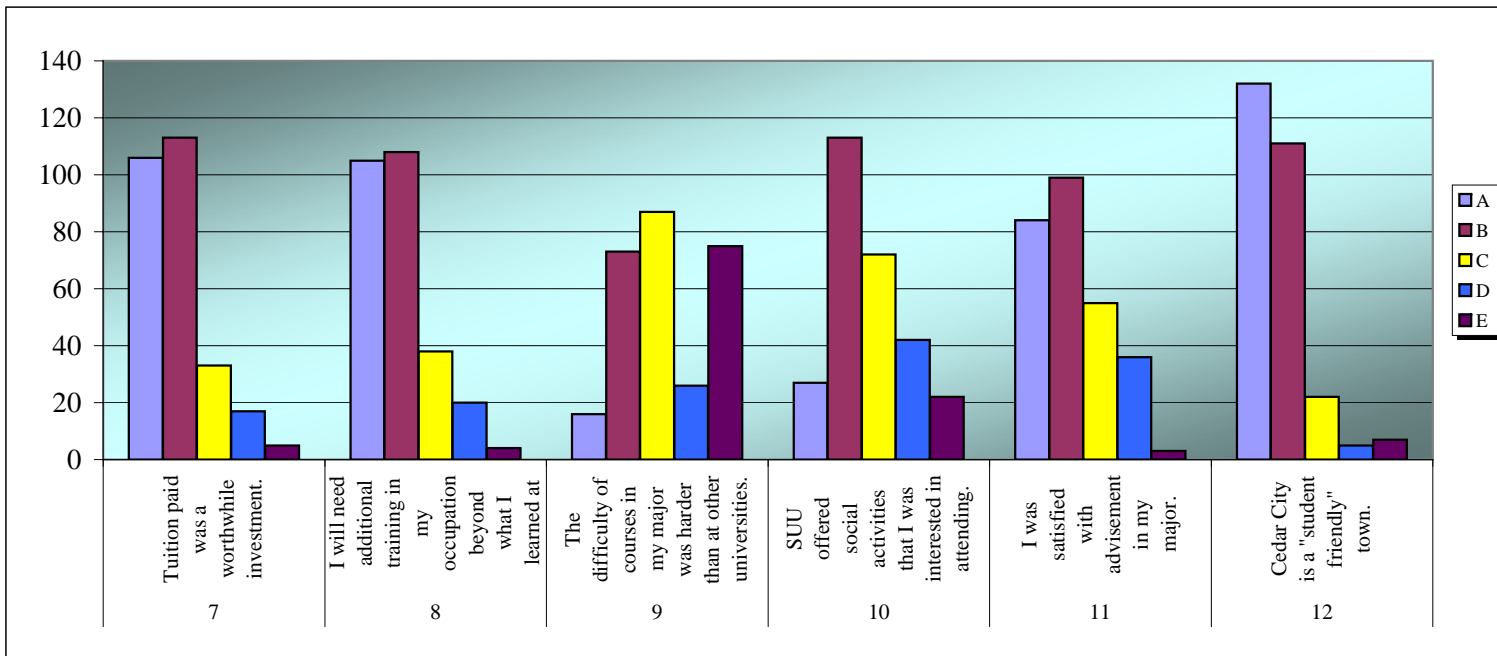
B = Agree somewhat

C = Disagree somewhat

D = Disagree strongly

E = Not applicable, no opinion

		A	B	C	D	E
7	Tuition paid was a worthwhile investment.	106	113	33	17	5
8	I will need additional training in my occupation beyond what I learned at SUU.	105	108	38	20	4
9	The difficulty of courses in my major was harder than at other universities.	16	73	87	26	75
10	SUU offered social activities that I was interested in attending.	27	113	72	42	22
11	I was satisfied with advisement in my major.	84	99	55	36	3
12	Cedar City is a "student friendly" town.	132	111	22	5	7



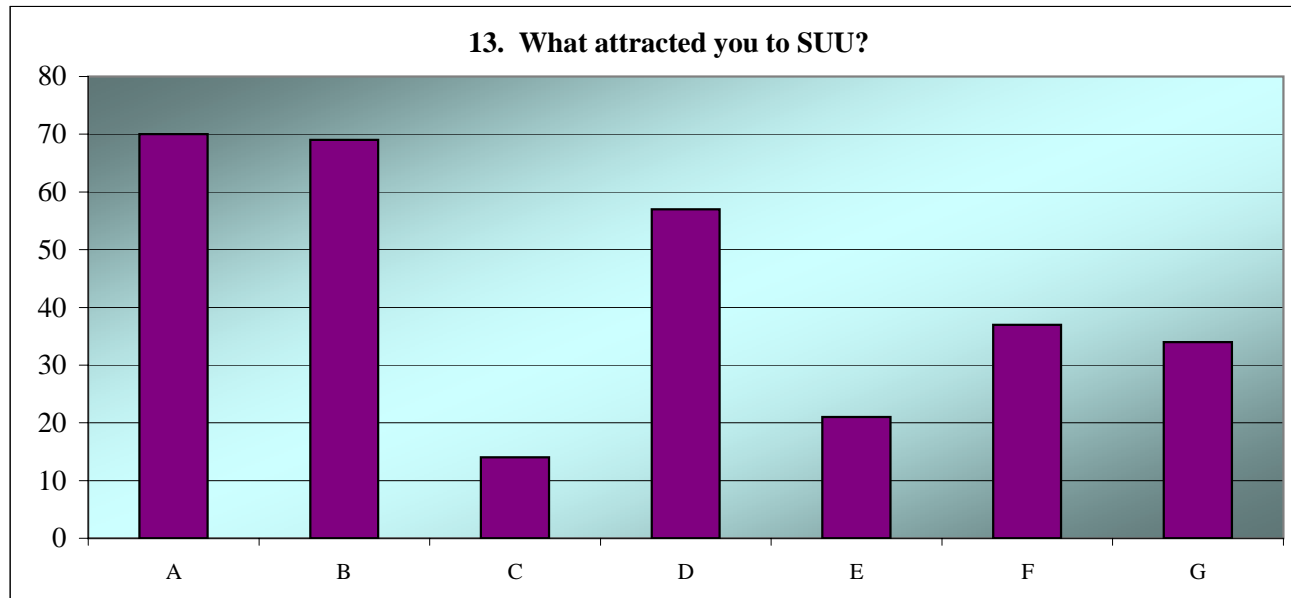
College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

- A = Academic program I wanted
- B = Close to home
- C = Away from home
- D = Offered a scholarship or financial aid
- E = Size of the campus
- F = Friends or family attended
- G = Other

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
13 What attracted you to SUU?	70	69	14	57	21	37	34



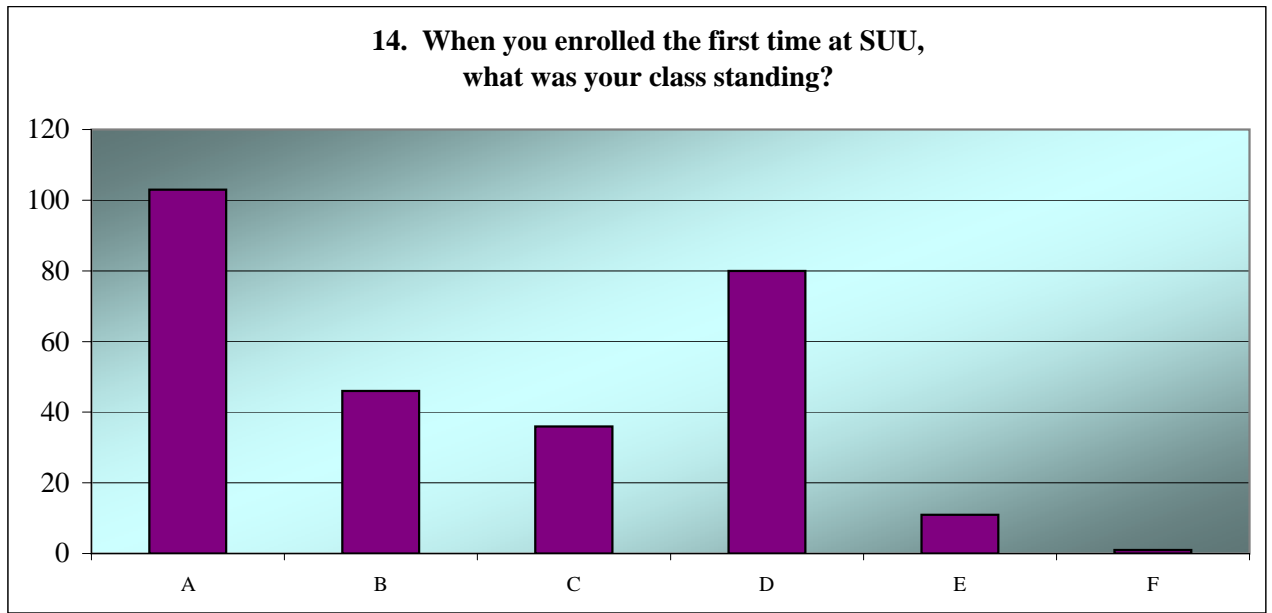
College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

- A = New freshman
- B = Advanced freshman
- C = Sophomore
- D = Junior
- E = Senior
- F = Graduate student

	A	B	C	D	E	F
14	103	46	36	80	11	1



College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

A = Less than four years

B = Four years

C = Five years

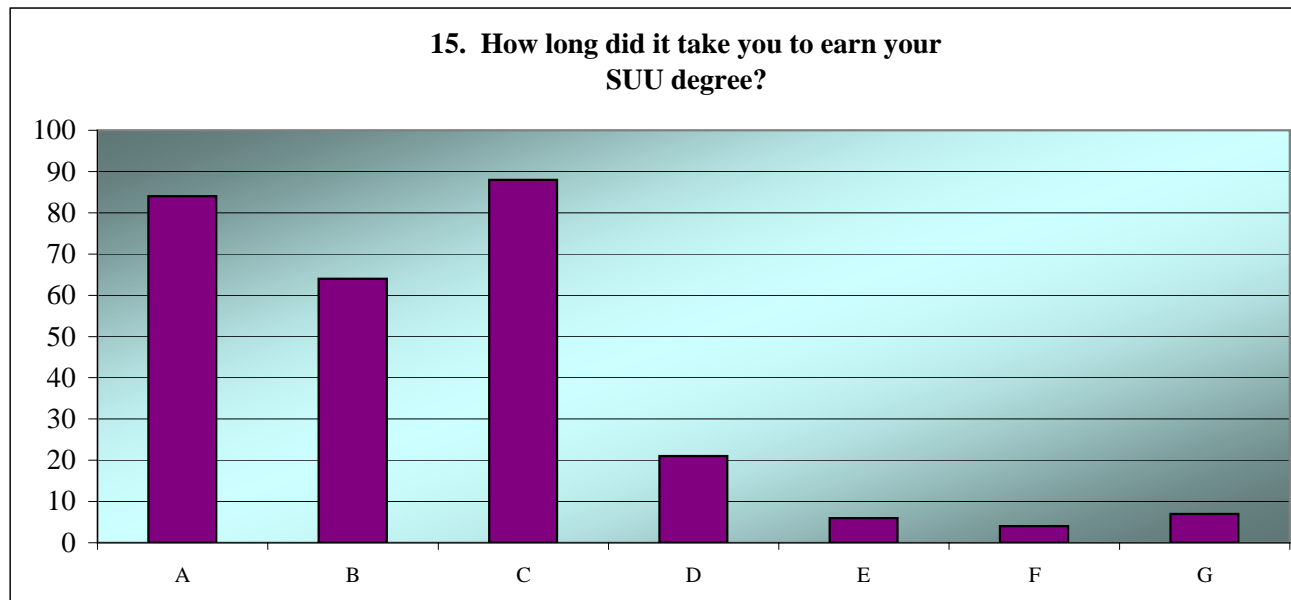
D = Six years

E = Seven years

F = Eight years

G = More than eight years

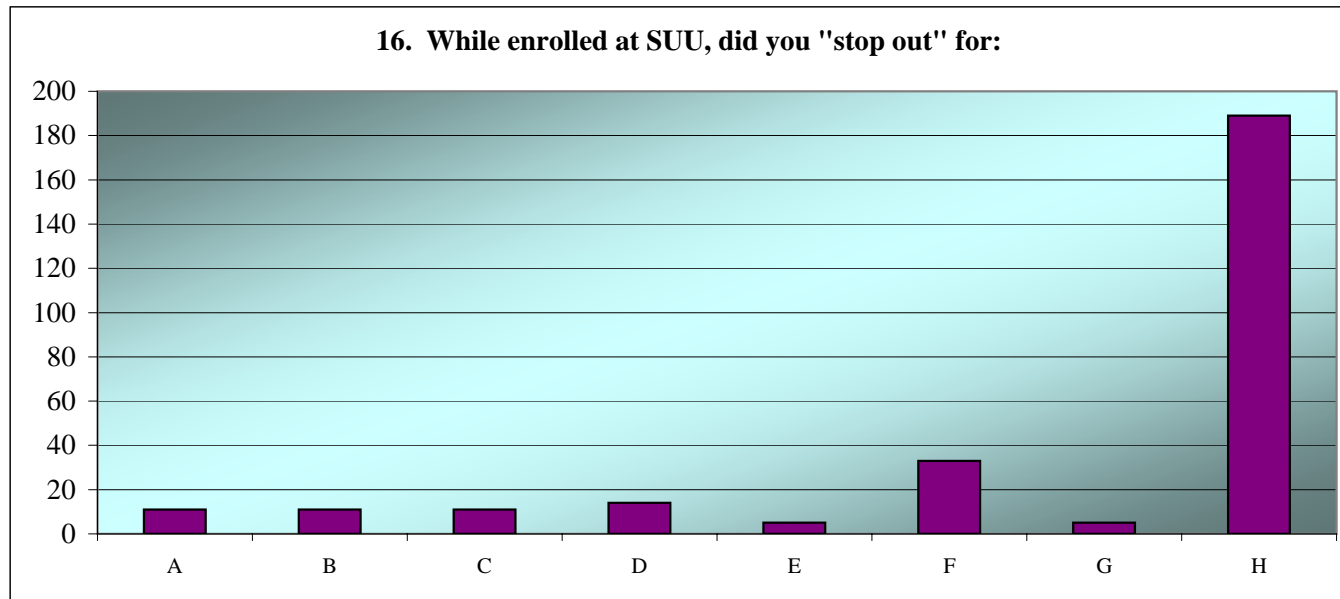
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
15	84	64	88	21	6	4	7



**College Outcomes Survey
Additional Questions
2005-2006**

- A = Financial reasons
- B = Marriage
- C = Employment
- D = Family reasons
- E = Health-related problems
- F = Mission or volunteer service
- G = A break from school
- H = Did not stop out

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
16	While enrolled at SUU, did you "stop out" for:	11	11	11	14	5	33	5	189



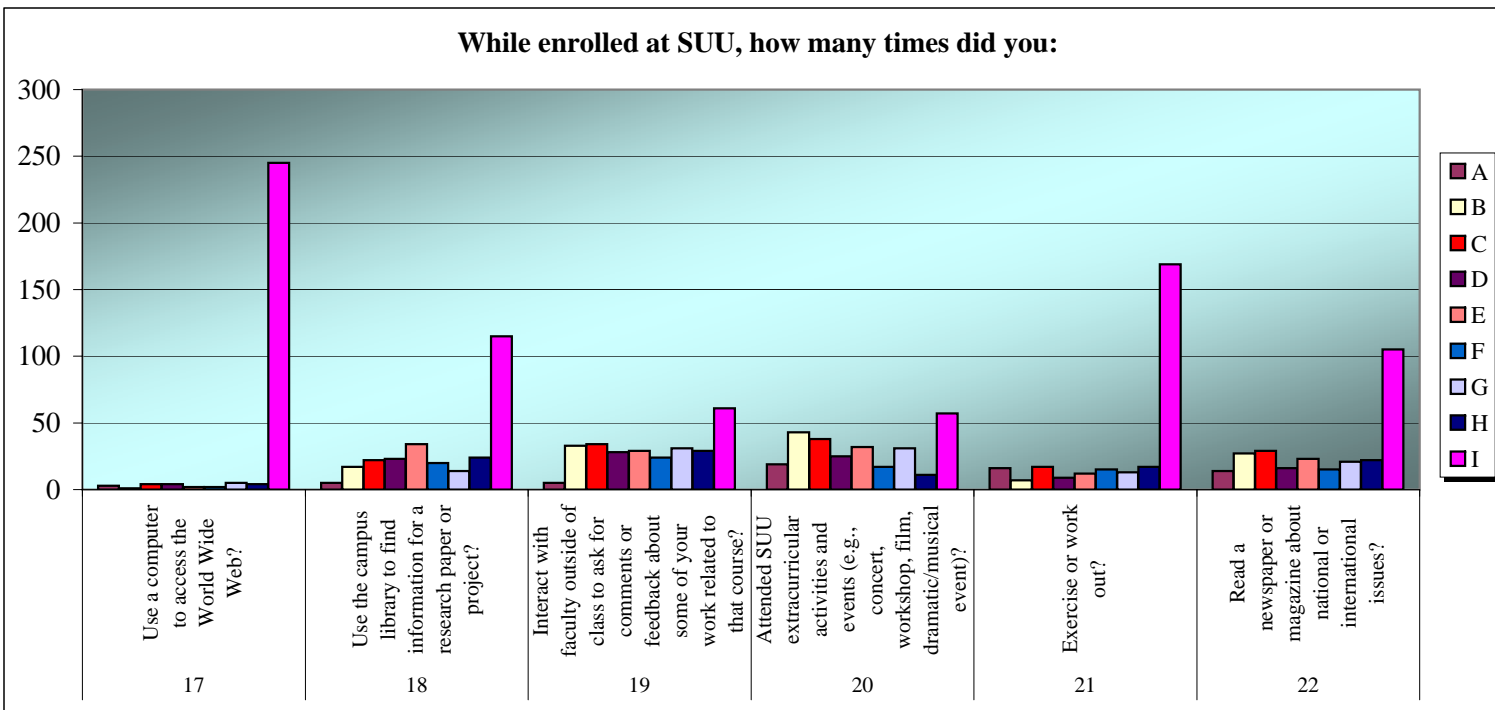
College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

A = 0 F = 12-14
 B = 1-3 G = 15-20
 C = 4-6 H = 20-30
 D = 6-8 I = 30+
 E = 9-11

While enrolled at SUU, how many times did you:		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
17	Use a computer to access the World Wide Web?	3	1	4	4	2	2	5	4	245
18	Use the campus library to find information for a research paper or project?	5	17	22	23	34	20	14	24	115
19	Interact with faculty outside of class to ask for comments or feedback about some of your work related to that course?	5	33	34	28	29	24	31	29	61
20	Attended SUU extracurricular activities and events (e.g., concert, workshop, film, dramatic/musical event)?	19	43	38	25	32	17	31	11	57
21	Exercise or work out?	16	7	17	9	12	15	13	17	169
22	Read a newspaper or magazine about national or international issues?	14	27	29	16	23	15	21	22	105



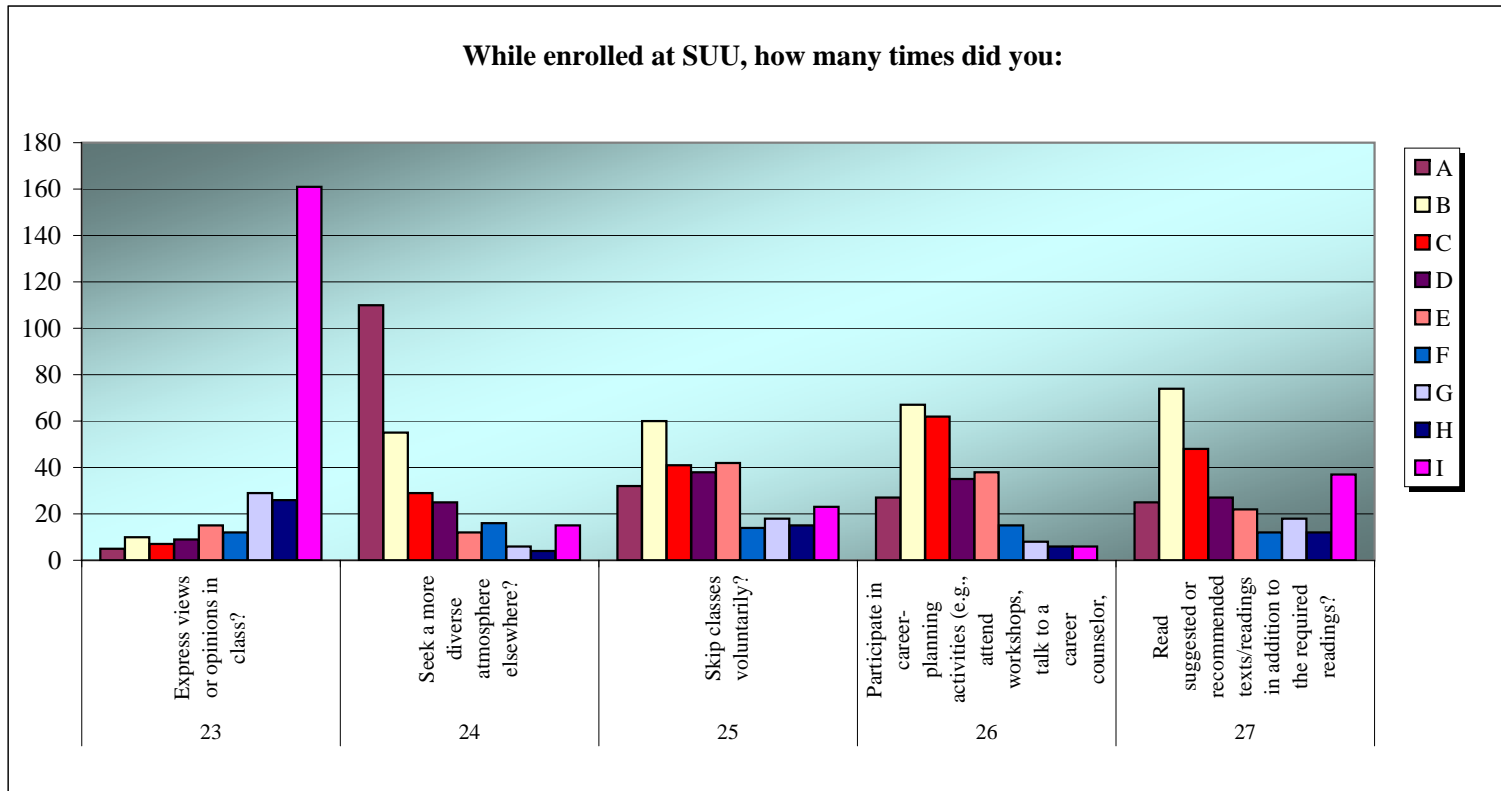
College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

A = 0 F = 12-14
 B = 1-3 G = 15-20
 C = 4-6 H = 20-30
 D = 6-8 I = 30+
 E = 9-11

While enrolled at SUU, how many times did you:		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
23	Express views or opinions in class?	5	10	7	9	15	12	29	26	161
24	Seek a more diverse atmosphere elsewhere?	110	55	29	25	12	16	6	4	15
25	Skip classes voluntarily?	32	60	41	38	42	14	18	15	23
26	Participate in career-planning activities (e.g., attend workshops, talk to a career counselor, write a resume, etc.)?	27	67	62	35	38	15	8	6	6
27	Read suggested or recommended texts/readings in addition to the required readings?	25	74	48	27	22	12	18	12	37



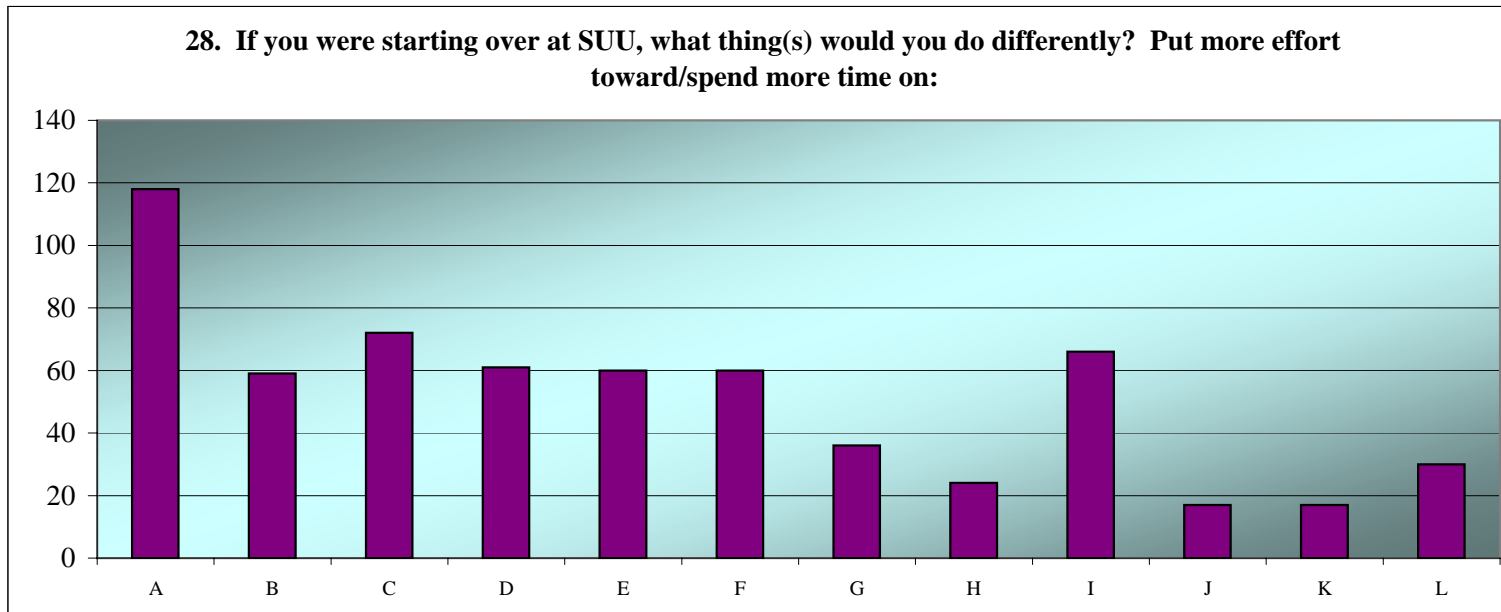
College Outcomes Survey

Additional Questions

2005-2006

- A = Academics/studying
- B = Interacting with faculty
- C = Social activities
- D = Course sequencing/selection
- E = Career advising
- F = Extracurricular clubs/activities
- G = Participating in campus-related research projects, applied experiences
- H = Using campus resources/services
- I = Graduating quicker
- J = Taking more courses/taking more time to graduate
- K = Attend a different college or university
- L = Nothing

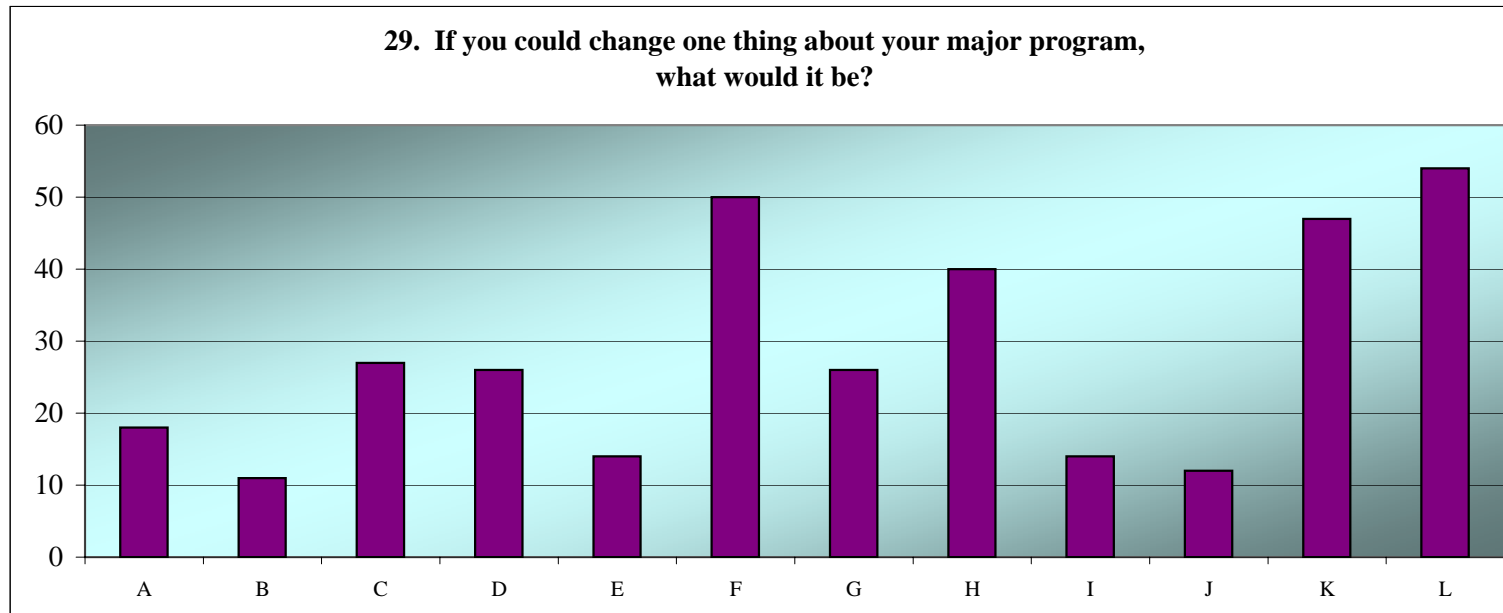
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
28	118	59	72	61	60	60	36	24	66	17	17	30



College Outcomes Survey
Additional Questions
2005-2006

- A = Interacting with faculty
- B = Tough classes
- C = Participation in campus-related research projects, internships, applied experiences
- D = Written assignments
- E = Verbal communication assignments
- F = Career placement help
- G = Faculty quality
- H = Course sequencing/selection
- I = Group assignments to build teamwork
- J = Grading standards
- K = Social activities
- L = Nothing

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
29 If you could change one thing about your major program, what would it be?	18	11	27	26	14	50	26	40	14	12	47	54



College Outcomes Survey
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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
30 What is the one best thing about your major program?	95	23	25	9	6	10	82	10	18	10	14	17

