

2017 Senior Exit Survey Results

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Project Description

In spring 2017, the NDSU Office of Institutional Research and Analysis administered the *Senior Exit Survey*, a questionnaire designed to identify the future plans of seniors graduating spring semester 2017. This survey is completed annually in compliance with requirements stipulated by the Voluntary System of Accountability with the first administration occurring in spring 2008. Previously, only one question was asked in this survey: “What is most likely to be your principal activity upon graduation from North Dakota State University?” Beginning spring 2017, additional questions were included to gain further insight into students’ experiences at NDSU.

Conclusions

1. Nearly seventy-five percent of respondents reported that they would be starting full-time, paid employment. Of those that didn’t have a job already, over three-quarters of those students were confident or very confident that they would find a job within one year of graduation.
2. When asked about availability of classes, availability of academic support, and quality of instruction and advising, over seventy percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied.
3. Over eighty percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend NDSU to others who were interested in their field of study.
4. Thirty-four percent of respondents said they were worried or very worried about educational debt and financial concerns.
5. Most suggestions for improvements at NDSU included: teaching, course availability, advising, and a commitment to being student-focused.

Method of Analysis

A random sample of 1,000 graduating seniors (spring 2017) were sent a brief survey via email (and follow-up emails) using Qualtrics survey software between March and May 2017 to identify future plans post-graduation and experiences at NDSU. Students who completed the survey were entered into a drawing for a chance to win a gift card. There were 319 respondents (31.9% response rate) for the 1,000 emails sent.

Results

Question 1: What is most likely to be your principal activity upon graduation from North Dakota State University?

Activity	% Respondents Indicating Activity
Employment, full-time paid	74.6%
Graduate or professional school, full-time	23.5%
Traveling	13.2%
Employment, part-time paid	11.9%
Starting or raising a family	10.0%
Graduate or professional school, part-time	5.6%
Volunteer activity	4.1%
Other	3.1%
Military service	2.8%
Completely undecided	2.5%
Additional undergraduate coursework	1.6%

*Some participants indicated more than one response. Therefore, percentages total more than 100%.

Question 2: How confident are you that you will find a job in your field within one year of graduation?

		Percent of Respondents
Already have a job		27.8%
Confidence that will find a job within 1 year	Not at all confident	2.3%
	Somewhat confident	21.1%
	Confident	32.6%
	Very Confident	44.0%

Question 3: How satisfied are you with each of the following as they relate to your primary major:

Satisfaction	Average Score*	Percent Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Availability of classes	3.93	78.7%
Overall quality of instruction	3.92	79.6%
Quality of academic advising	3.89	70.0%
Opportunities for experiences beyond the classroom	3.82	67.6%
Availability of academic support when you needed it	3.95	76.5%

*1 = Very Dissatisfied, 5 = Very Satisfied

Question 4: Indicate your level of agreement with each of the following:

Agreement	Average Score*	Percent Agree or Strongly Agree
I would recommend NDSU to others interested in my field of study	4.12	81.8%
I feel like I was valued as an individual at NDSU	3.81	72.4%
My experiences at NDSU helped my understanding of human diversity	3.78	65.5%
I feel like professors in my major cared about my success	4.07	79.3%

*1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Question 5: How worried are you about your educational debt (if any) or other financial concerns upon graduation?

Educational debt or financial concerns	Percent of Respondents
Not worried at all	27.5%
Somewhat worried	38.6%
Worried	16.1%
Very worried	17.8%

Question 6: Name one or two people who had a positive impact on you or made a real difference in your experience at NDSU? How did they help you?

The majority of those that were mentioned were faculty, instructors, or advisors. The full list of 235 names was published in the May 8th, 2017 edition of The Spectrum.

Question 7: What suggestions do you have for how NDSU could be improved?

Over 200 suggestions were given to this open-ended question; out of these responses, several themes emerged:

1. Teaching and learning – The majority of the responses suggested barriers existed and/or improvements were needed regarding teaching or learning. Examples included:
 - a. Hands-on/real-world applications: respondents indicated that they desired integration of hands-on approaches to teaching, creating more opportunities for field experiences, and/or practical applications of technology in their field of study. Some suggested more industry collaboration to gain experiences and to create partnerships with other businesses or institutions.
 - b. Evaluations: many students didn’t feel that their instructor evaluations had any impact on change or accountability of an instructor.
 - c. Language barriers of instructors were cited numerous times.
 - d. Some respondents cited teaching or instructor issues that applied specifically to their particular program or department.
2. Course availability/offerings – The second highest group of responses involved improving the types of courses offered (particularly electives in a program) and when these courses are offered (term or years of availability).
3. Student focused – Several respondents indicated they feel that NDSU needs to be more focused on students rather than research or athletics. Some cited the recent cuts to the Student Affairs division.

4. Advising – Additional improvements were suggested regarding advising. Many comments involved additional training needed and more support for those that change their major. One student suggested a mentorship program between upper class students and incoming freshman to help navigate through their college life to help assist with advising.
5. Accommodations or amenities – Suggestions included building additional tunnels, wellness options for off-campus and post-graduate students, additional leisure spaces, and equipment and facility improvements.
6. Other suggestions included: Additional library hours on the weekends, lowering tuition for online courses, better parking, lowering general education requirements, changes in bus routes, and a better recycling program.