Inquiry, Trends & Insights
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Please take a moment to complete the following questionnaire...

Have you ever received an e-mail that started with the phrase “please take a moment to complete…”? Perhaps the appropriate question is, have you had a day where you did NOT receive such an e-mail? Stakeholder surveys are ubiquitous and individuals are inundated with requests to give their opinion, thoughts, and feedback.

Have you ever wondered what happens to all those surveys? Appropriate use of the data is a critical part of the survey process and in this issue of Inquiry, Trends & Insights OAIR will share some results from selected student surveys. Student responses to surveys are used by faculty, staff, and administrators to develop services and programs most needed by students. Aggregated survey results are also reported to federal, state, and accrediting agencies. The information gathered through student surveys is enlightening and I hope you enjoy this quick look at what Tulane students are saying about their experience.

Katie Busby
Assistant Provost for Assessment and Institutional Research

Student Surveys

There is no shortage of surveys being administered on campus at any given time. Tulane students, undergraduates in particular, are most likely to experience survey fatigue.

Tulane participates in several nationally-administered student surveys each year. One advantage to participating in these surveys is the opportunity to obtain comparative or benchmarking data. These comparisons allow faculty, staff, and administrators to compare Tulane’s aggregated results with those from peer institutions. For example, in the 2014-15 academic year Tulane participated in the CIRP Freshman Survey, the National Collegiate Health Assessment, Multi-Institutional Survey of Leadership, and National Survey of Student Engagement.

In addition to these surveys, university departments create and administer their own surveys to gather information about products, services, and programs. The number of locally-developed surveys has increased in recent years due to the rising demand for data to inform decision making as well as improved access to user-friendly survey administration software.

Whether the surveys are nationally administered or locally developed, appropriate use of the results is paramount. Selected results are presented in this newsletter, and departments, school, and administrative units are welcome to contact OAIR for more information about using these or any survey results for planning and executing programs and services.
CIRP Freshman Survey

In Fall 2014, entering first-year students completed the CIRP Freshman Survey. The CIRP Freshman Survey is administered by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP), housed within the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA (http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php). Tulane has participated in CIRP Freshman Survey every year since its founding in 1966 except 1970, 2005, 2011, and 2012.

The CIRP survey asks students about their academic preparedness, expectations for college, interactions with peers and faculty, and opinions on political and social issues. The CIRP results are used by faculty and staff to better understand the experiences and opinions of Tulane freshmen and prepare programs and services that meet the needs of first-year students.

2014 Results

Incoming students were asked what factors were important to them in making their decision to attend Tulane. Students answered using a three-point scale of Very Important (3), Somewhat Important (2), Not Important (1) and Table 1 depicts those responses.

Table 1. Factors Most Important to Fall 2014 First-year Students in Deciding to Attend Tulane.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This college has a very good academic reputation</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college has a good reputation for its social activities</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A visit to this campus</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanted to go to a school about the size of this college</td>
<td>2.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This college's graduates get good jobs</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was offered financial assistance</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tulane freshman are more civically engaged than their peers. 38% indicate a high level of civic engagement compared to 29% of their peers, a statistically significant difference.

75% of Tulane freshman are over 500 miles from home

49% of freshman attending peer schools are over 500 miles from home
In Spring 2015, Tulane seniors and first-year students were invited to participate in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, pronounced “Nessie”). The NSSE survey began 15 years ago and is designed to measure the extent to which students engage in academic, co-curricular, and other educationally purposeful activities. The National Survey of Student Engagement is part of the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University Bloomington (http://nsse.iub.edu/).

The results of the NSSE survey will be used by faculty and staff to develop programs and services for undergraduates. Tulane University has participated in NSSE in alternating years since 2009 and those results have also been used in support of grant proposals and institutional accreditation.

### 2013 Results

NSSE measures student participation in many High-Impact Practices (HIPs) (http://nsse.iub.edu/html/high_impact_practices.cfm). High-Impact Practices are curricular and co-curricular activities that positively impact student learning and retention including first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative projects, undergraduate research, study abroad experiences, service learning, internships, and capstone courses (Kuh, 2008).

Tulane offers students many opportunities to engage in HIPs and the NSSE results indicate that Tulane students take advantage of these opportunities with greater frequency when compared to their peers. The figure to the left depicts the percentage of seniors at Tulane, other Association of American Universities (AAU) institutions, and other institutions with the very high research activity Carnegie classification who engage in HIPs. Tulane seniors report participating in all HIPs with greater frequency than their peers with the exception of participation in a learning community.

As part of the 2013 core curriculum Tulane required students to complete a two-tiered service learning requirement and a senior capstone or culminating experience.

Graduating Student Survey

Tulane University graduates are surveyed each year to ascertain their post-graduation plans. The Tulane Career Center administered the Graduating Student Survey prior to 2011. In 2011, the Career Center, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of Alumni Affairs collaborated to complete this project, and the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research assumed primary responsibility for administering the survey and analyzing the results. The collaboration between these offices proved successful and the results included a revised survey instrument and more robust survey administration. The collaboration between these offices continued for the deployment of the 2014 Graduating Student Survey.

Tulane graduates engage in many exciting pursuits following their time at Tulane. The full report can be found: http://tulane.edu/oair/assessment_results.cfm. So, what have the members of the Class of 2014 been doing since they graduated?

50% Employed or Maintained Job
26% Continuing Education
16% Seeking Employment
8% Military, Volunteer, & Other Pursuits

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