



## REPORT OF THE 2009 GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY (GSS) For College of Professional Studies

### I. INTRODUCTION

In an effort to obtain outcomes and contact information from as many of our graduating students as possible, in Spring 2009 a brief 15-item survey was incorporated into the online process used by students, excluding School of Law, to request Cap and Gown for commencement. A total of 2,485 students participated in the survey, representing 94% of students who registered for the Cap and Gown online, and accounting for 65% of the 2008-09 graduating population (71% undergraduates and 55% graduates). This very high level of participation and successful implementation of the survey resulted from the collaborative efforts of the Office of University Events, Information Technology, Institutional Research and other offices, an effort that will continue in the future.

For College of Professional Studies, a total of 662 students participated in the survey, representing 95% of students who registered for the Cap and Gown online, and accounting for 69% of the 2008-09 graduating population (69% undergraduates and 61% graduates). Following are the highlights of the survey results for College of Professional Studies.

### II. HIGHLIGHTS OF SURVEY RESULTS

As shown in the table below, nine in ten undergraduates and all graduate students were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall St. John's experience.

	Undergraduates	Graduates
<b>Overall satisfaction with St. John's</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Very satisfied	24%	35%
Satisfied	68%	65%
<b>Quality of instruction</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b>
Excellent	27%	41%
Good	55%	41%
<b>Tuition paid was a worthwhile investment</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>83%</b>
Strongly agree	10%	24%
Agree	59%	59%
<b>Impact of Catholic and Vincentian experience</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>76%</b>
Very positive	14%	29%
Positive	52%	47%

Regarding the quality of instruction, eight in ten of both undergraduate and graduate students rated it as *good / excellent*. Over two-thirds of undergraduates and four-fifths of graduate students *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid was a worthwhile investment. About two-thirds of undergraduates and seventy-six percent of graduate students indicated that the Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their St. John's experience *positively / very positively*.

Student overall satisfaction had a strong positive relationship with perception of the quality of instruction and with tuition as a worthwhile investment. College GPA had a positive correlation with student overall satisfaction and tuition paid as a worthwhile investment.

For undergraduates, 52% had internships; of those students, 70% found their internships on their own, 31% through academic departments, and 16% through the Career Center; regarding the primary motivation for completing an internship, 91% indicated that it was for experience, 66% for academic credits, and 8% for financial reasons.

Regarding their employment plans, 16% of undergraduates had accepted a job offer (16% for those with internships and the same for those without), 76% were still looking, and 8% had no plans.

When asked how well St. John's did at providing job preparation or placement, ratings by students with internships were fairly higher than by those without internships.

### III. DETAILED SURVEY RESULTS

For this section, table numbers in parentheses relate to the tables provided in the appendix. Since *Internship* is an area of focus at the University, the analysis related to *Internships* is more comprehensive than for other items.

#### 1. Student Overall Perceptions

The survey data indicate that 92% of undergraduates and 100% of graduate students were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience at St. John's, and 82% of both undergraduates and graduates rated the quality of instruction as *good / excellent*. Regarding tuition as a worthwhile investment, 69% of undergraduates and 82% of graduates *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment (Table 1).

Student overall satisfaction had a strong positive correlation with perception of the quality of instruction and with tuition as a worthwhile investment (correlation coefficient = 0.6 for UG and GR combined); and a moderately positive relationship with impact of

mission, job preparation, and availability of internships (correlation coefficient = 0.4 for UG and GR combined). (Table 2)

For undergraduates, students with a higher college GPA had a higher perception of tuition as a worthwhile investment: 79% of students with GPA of 3.5 – 4.0 *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment while the corresponding figures for students with GPA of 3.0 – 3.4 and below 3.0 were 64% and 60%. The data also reveal that the higher their GPA, the more satisfied they were: 94% of students with GPA of 3.5 – 4.0 were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience while the corresponding figures for students with GPA of 3.0 – 3.4 and below 3.0 were 92% and 88%. Students from the primary market gave higher ratings on the overall experience and on the quality of instruction: 93% rated their overall experience as *satisfied / very satisfied* as compared to 86% by students from the secondary market; 81% rated the quality of instruction as *good / excellent* as compared to 76% of students from the secondary market. However, there was not much difference in tuition paid as a worthwhile investment between students from the primary market and those from the secondary market. (Table 5)

For undergraduates, ratings by females were slightly higher than by male students: 93% of female undergraduates were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience compared to 90% for males; for the quality of instruction, 83% of females rated it as *good / excellent* compared to 80% for males. (Table 6)

For undergraduates, ratings on tuition as a worthwhile investment by Asian students were not as high as by other ethnicities: 53% of Asian undergraduates *agreed / strongly agreed* that tuition paid is a worthwhile investment while the corresponding figures for students of other ethnicities ranged from 67% to 75%. (Table 6)

For undergraduates, 100% of students majoring in the following majors were *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience: LST, ADS, TEL, HSC, and TVF. For graduate students, 100% of students majoring in CRL and SPM were also *satisfied / very satisfied* with their overall experience. (Table 1)

Comments mirrored the ratings, with the majority of respondents indicating that they had a good / great and worthwhile experience at St. John's. The main concerns related to cost / value of tuition and financial aid. For detailed information on students' comments, please see the COMMENTS sheet in the appendix.

## 2. Undergraduate Students: Internships, Job Status, and Further Education

The majority of students, who did not have internships, did not respond to the question relating to satisfaction with the availability of internships: only 9% (N=26) of undergraduates without internships responded as compared to 84% with internships. Similarly, the question relating to satisfaction with job preparation or placement also had a fairly low response rate: 36% for undergraduates without internships compared to 83% with internships. (Table 4)

The data indicate that 52% of undergraduate students had internships. Of those students, 70% found their internships on their own, 31% through academic departments, and 16% through the Career Center. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item (Q7, Table 3).

When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 91% indicated that it was for experience, 66% for academic credits, and 8% for financial reasons. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item (Q6, Table 3).

When asked about their plan to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010, 50% were planning to do so, 51% for those with internships vs. 49% for those without internships. (Q1, Table 7).

When asked about their employment plans, 16% of students indicated that they had accepted a job offer (16% for those with internships and the same for those without), 76% were still looking (77% for those with internships and 74% for those without), and 8% had no plans (7% for those with internships and 10% for those without). For students who planned to further their studies, 16% accepted a job offer (15% for those with internships and 18% for those without). For those who had no plan for further studies, 16% had accepted a job offer (18% for those with internships and 14% for those without). (Q4a, Q4b, Q4c, Table 7)

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the internships available at St. John's, 82% were *satisfied / very satisfied* (86% for those with internships and 35% for those without internships. (Q8, Table 7)

When asked how well St. John's did at providing job preparation or placement, ratings by students with internships were fairly higher than by those without internships: 52% of students with internships rated it as *Good / Excellent* as compared to 45% of those without internships. (Q9, Table 7)

There was not much difference between students with or without internships in their perceptions about quality of instruction, overall satisfaction, tuition paid as a

worthwhile investment, or the impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on student experience. (Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13, Table 7).

### 3. Graduate Students: Internships, Job Status, and Further Education

Of the 19 graduate students who participated in the survey, 7 had internships (37%). The survey data reveal that 42% of graduate students were planning to pursue further studies in Fall 2009 or Spring 2010. (Question 1, Table 8)

Regarding their employment plans, 18% accepted a job offer, 53% were still looking, and 29% had no plans. (Q4a, Table 8)

When asked about the primary motivation for completing an internship, 100% (N = 7) indicated that it was for experience, 57% (N = 4) for academic credits, and 14% (N = 1) for financial reasons. Percentages add up to more than 100% because this was a CHECK ALL THAT APPLY survey item. (Q6, Table 3)

Due to the small number of graduate student population, the comparison between those with and without internships is not always meaningful. Anyway, such comparative data are provided in Table 8. Please use caution when interpreting the data for graduate students.

### 4. Impact of St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission on Student Experience

For undergraduates, 14% indicated that St. John's Catholic and Vincentian Mission impacted their experience very *positively*, 52% *positively*, 1% *negatively*, 0% very *negatively*, and *no impact* on the remaining 33% (Q13, Table 7); the corresponding figures for graduate students were 29%, 47%, 0%, 0%, and 24% (Q13, Table 8).

## IV. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In general the results from this GSS survey are consistent with the findings from other surveys such as NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) and SSI (Student Satisfaction Inventory): student overall satisfaction is strongly related to the quality of instruction and with tuition paid as a worthwhile investment; ratings by female are slightly higher than by male students; Asian students are less satisfied than their peers of other ethnicities.

Related literature indicates that internships involve students in the construction of knowledge by engaging them in authentic tasks of the workplace that create a context for creative decision making in uncertain situations; and internships also engage students in reflective practices that help them develop both personally and professionally. The 2008

NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) survey data reveal that the percent of interns converted to full-time employees increased from 36% in 2001 to 51% in 2008. Therefore, collaborative efforts should be continued to help more students find internships, thus making them more competitive in the job market.

The results of this GSS survey are the perceptions of students who have successfully completed their programs at St. John's. The data are very useful for action plans and improvement purposes. Since this is the first administration of this particular survey, results can be used as baseline data against which to establish targets and initiatives and measure future progress. Meanwhile, the survey data from students in their earlier stages of college life, including those who dropped, are also important, and they may help reveal a more comprehensive picture.