StudentVoice Residential Experience survey

StudentVoice administered a survey of the residential life experience among college students. The results provide insight in a systematic way across a broad spectrum of university residence hall operations. The assessment was administered in a web format over the winter break to a sample of students living in residence. Alfred University had a 49% response rate (N=674) to our survey this year.

62% of our respondents were women and 38% were men. The majority of respondents (37%) were first year students; 28% sophomores, 20% juniors and 13% seniors. 30% reported being a member of an intercollegiate sports team and 71% reported being in at least one AU club or organization.

54% of our respondents said they had not had an alcoholic drink in the last 30 days, which includes 23% who have never done so.

Special interest house residents were most satisfied overall with their residential experience (93% satisfied), followed by students in first year halls, apartments, upperclass halls, and finally the suites (78% satisfied).

Programming
Students seemed to gravitate to certain types of programs more than others, as follows:
Civic engagement – 39% (said they attended, actively participate, or helped plan)
Community service – 49%
Diversity/multiculturalism – 49%
Community building – 50%
Health and wellness – 53%
Personal skills/life skills – 54%
Academic success – 61%
Recreation and sports – 68%
Social – 73%

When choosing their housing options, what is important to students?
Quality (3.44 out of 4)
Cost (3.35)
Ability to choose roommate (3.05)
Type of room available, e.g. singles, doubles (2.83)
Theme housing (1.92)

A sampling of scores, in response to the question “As a result of living on campus…”

- I have been able to meet people with different interests (4.42 out of 5)
- I have been able to meet people with similar interests (4.40)
- I have learned to connect with others (4.33)
- I feel part of the campus community (4.15)
• I have gained experience and skills relevant to my future career (3.88)
• My overall satisfaction with AU has been positively impacted (3.82)
• I have become aware of a campus resource of service with which I was unfamiliar (3.76)
• I have a greater appreciation for fine and performing arts (3.57)
• I have learned to balance academic with social interests (3.55)
• My self-confidence has increased (3.52)
• I am better able to manage conflict (3.52)
• I have become involved with additional campus activities (3.51)
• My stress management skills have improved (3.32)
• My academic achievement and grades have improved (3.24)
• I have a better sense of personal responsibility (3.21)
• I learned strategies to be physically healthy (2.70)
• I learned strategies to be mentally healthy (2.77)

Safety and community

As we’ve seen in previous years, students gave high ratings to safety-related factors. The highest scores across the instrument were:
• I trust the other students in my living area (3.90 out of 5)
• I feel safe in my room (3.79)
• I feel safe in the areas surrounding my residence (3.58)
• I feel that my possessions are secure in my room (3.53)

Diversity

Again this year, we are doing well with regard to issues of diversity and multiculturalism. 84% of students said that living on campus has increased their understanding of diverse perspectives. Students reported that living on campus has impacted their understanding of difference in the following ways:
• Races/ethnicities, and gender identity (both 2.85 out of 4)
• Sexual orientation (2.81)
• Religious beliefs (2.50)
• Political views (2.36)
• Ability/Disabilities (2.27)

Interestingly, the area of second greatest learning, sexual orientation, was also the area of greatest discomfort when it came to close relationships. 22 students said they were “not at all comfortable” with people of different sexual orientations, compared to much lower responses in every other category.

Satisfaction with related services

Students were able to rate their satisfaction with various services. By far, the most important to students was internet access (98% said it was extremely or very important), and that was also the lowest rated (41% satisfied). Other items of note in this section included:

• Cable TV selection – 85% satisfied
• Work order process – 83% satisfied
• Timeliness of repairs – 82% satisfied
• Laundry room – 66% satisfied
• Lounges and common areas – 66% satisfied
Vending – 64% satisfied
Cleanliness of residence hall – 60% satisfied
Temperature control – 60% satisfied

Last was a section on dining. As in previous years, the highest ratings were on friendliness of the dining staff, an outstanding 4.04 out of 5, followed closely by the comfort (3.59) and cleanliness (3.45) of the dining facilities. Unfortunately, value for price was the lowest ranked at 1.87. Other ranked items included:
Hours of operation – 3.14
Availability of healthy options – 2.53
Variety of food options – 2.39
Taste/quality of food – 2.20

It should be noted that this survey went out about two weeks after the campus was abuzz about the Princeton Review’s negative rating of dining services. This probably skewed the results this year, which had been steadily progressing upward for the past few years.