What are students learning at The University of Iowa?

Student Experience in the Research University (SERU)

Student Satisfaction and Interaction with Faculty

This SERU Brief provides a sample of responses to SERU survey questions on student satisfaction and interaction with faculty members. Other Briefs in this series present data on different dimensions of being a student at UI, including student perceptions of majors and how students report using their time.

The majority of students responded positively to questions that ask about faculty members (Figure One): 90% of students report being very satisfied, satisfied, or somewhat satisfied with the quality of faculty instruction, and 92% with the availability of faculty outside of class; 81% express these levels of satisfaction with the quality of instruction by graduate TAs.

The majority of students also responded positively to a series of yes/no questions on faculty responsiveness to students: 92% agreed that there are open channels of communication between faculty and students, and 91% agreed that students are treated equitably and fairly by faculty; 85% agreed that faculty provide prompt and useful feedback to students.

Figure Two shows the extent to which students feel they know faculty members well enough to ask for a letter of recommendation. At all class levels, approximately half of students report knowing either one or two faculty members that well. Among juniors, an additional 25% report knowing three, four, or more faculty members they could ask; among seniors, 40% reported knowing three, four, or more.

Figure One: Reported Levels of Satisfaction with Faculty Members and TAs
While reported levels of satisfaction and engagement are consistently high, reported frequency of student interaction with faculty is somewhat more variable:

When asked how often they had a class in which the professor knew or learned their name, 56% of students indicated often or very often; fewer than 10% responded rarely or never. (The remaining one-third of students fell in between, indicating occasionally or somewhat often, as shown in Figure Three.)

Similarly, when asked how often they interacted with faculty by email or in person, nearly 60% of students replied often or very often. Only 3% indicated rarely or never.

However, only 29% reported that they often or very often sought academic help from an instructor or a tutor when needed; almost as many (25%) reported rarely or never. Students reported similar levels of frequency in talking with an instructor outside of class time about concepts related to the course: 30% reported often or very often, while 25% reported rarely or never.

To take a closer look at student perceptions of faculty and explore how their perceptions relate to other student characteristics and outcomes, contact seru@uiowa.edu.

The full survey is online at uc.uiowa.edu/about-survey

To view student responses to other SERU questions, or to explore responses by college, major, class level, or other demographic variables, contact seru@uiowa.edu