

Parent Survey 2008

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Introduction	3
Method	3
Results	5
Analysis	32
Implications	34
Limitations	36
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Survey questions	38
Appendix 2: Comparing first-year parents who attended Orientation with first-year parents who did not attend	46
Appendix 3: Topics parents have discussed with their students	48
Appendix 4: Parent comments.....	51

Parent Survey

Spring 2008

Executive Summary

Based on the results of the 2008 survey of University of Minnesota parents, the family members of our undergraduate students are highly satisfied with the communications, programs, and services the University provides for them, and they feel strongly connected to the University's campus community.

This study marks the sixth time that parents of undergraduates have been surveyed since 1995. During that time, the University Parent Program has made significant changes to its programs and services, based on feedback from parents and University staff as well as on emerging practices nationally.

In this year's survey, 98.2 percent of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the University's communications for parents, and 97.1 percent said they were satisfied or very satisfied with programs and services provided to parents. When asked their level of agreement with the statement, "I feel that the University of Minnesota includes parents in the University community," 95.2 percent said they agreed or agreed strongly. These numbers, while very positive, reflect a slight decrease in satisfaction and connectedness rates since the last survey was conducted in 2006.

Survey results indicate strong correlations between parents' rate of satisfaction and connectedness and parents' usage of communications, programs, and services. Parents who attend Parent Orientation and Parents Weekend, for example, are more likely to be satisfied or very satisfied with the University and to feel more connected to the campus community. Those who are aware of and make use of communication tools such as online video and audio workshops, the online alcohol and finance courses for parents, and the biweekly parents e-mail listserv are among the most satisfied survey respondents.

The survey shows that parents' concerns evolve over the course of the students' academic career. During their student's freshman year, they are most concerned with issues of health and safety, followed by time management, academics, and personal relationships. During the student's later years, career planning moves to the forefront, and by senior year, more than 40.7 percent of parents cite career planning as their number one concern for their student.

Introduction

The University's parent program has its roots in the *University Parent* newsletter, which was introduced in 1993. The first survey of parents, conducted in 1995, was a readers' survey and focused on reactions to the newsletter. At the time, the University's parent services included a Parent Orientation program, managed by the New Student Orientation office, and the quarterly newsletter, produced by the Communications & Publications unit of the Office for Student Affairs. Reader responses indicated that while parents were satisfied with the newsletter, they wanted the University to provide additional services and programs for parents. Those early survey findings and respondents' comments led to the development of additional parent services and the growth of the University Parent Program, as well as a better understanding of family relations at the college level.

The purpose of this year's parent survey was both to continue tracking parent attitudes toward the University, to learn more about our current population of parents, as well as to assess parent knowledge of and satisfaction with services and programs offered by the University Parent Program. New questions were included this year to determine:

- Parents' age
- If time management is a significant concern for parents and for students

Method

The first three times the survey was conducted (in 1995, 1997, and 2002), a questionnaire was mailed to a random sampling of parent addresses, drawn from the newsletter mailing list. In an effort to conserve funds and to increase the total number of responses, in 2004 the survey was posted online for the first time, and an article printed in the *University Parent* newsletter directed parents to a Web link that would take them to the survey. The University's e-mail listserv also included reminders to take the survey. For those parents who preferred to fill out a paper copy of the survey, the newsletter included contact information that would allow them to request a copy of the survey by mail. In spring 2006 and 2008, the program followed the same method of inviting parents to fill out the survey. As an incentive in 2008 (and consistent with the method employed in 2004 and 2006), the University Parent Program provided incentives of prizes to be awarded in a drawing among all respondents (a hotel stay at the Radisson University Minneapolis, a hotel stay at the Holiday Inn Metrodome Minneapolis, University Bookstore gift certificates, and a copy of the Parent Program director's book for parents of college students). The spring 2008 newsletter was mailed to approximately 18,500 addresses.

The survey was designed to be simple and to take 15-20 minutes to complete (see Appendix 1 for a complete list of questions). Respondents self-selected from the entire population of parents receiving the newsletter. We received 1082 online responses and 8 paper responses, a response rate of 5.8 percent of *University Parent* recipients. This compared to 4.7 percent (872 out of 18,500 newsletter recipients) in 2006. While the earlier method of mailing the survey to a random sampling of newsletter recipients yielded a

greater rate of return (more than 50 percent of the 500 surveys mailed), the online surveys allowed the program to gather a larger number of total responses.

Only parents who read the *University Parent* newsletter or messages from the e-mail listserv are represented in the survey results; because survey respondents self-selected, we have not calculated statistical significance for the survey results. The *University Parent* newsletter is mailed primarily to parents of full-time, undergraduate students. Some parents of graduate students have asked to be added to the mailing list, but those numbers are very small. The listserv is an opt-in list, and parents who choose to receive the e-mail messages are likely to be more involved in their students' educational choices than those who choose not to receive the messages.

Although there may be a concern that parents who do not have Internet access are less likely to respond, previous (printed) surveys have found that nearly all parents of University of Minnesota students have Internet access, either at home, at work, or both.¹ In the last three surveys, we noted that there were no notable differences between responses gathered online or on paper.

¹ The 2006 parent survey found that 100 percent of the respondents—including those who completed a paper survey—had Internet access. Previous surveys have indicated that Internet access increased significantly each time we did a survey, with 94 percent of parents saying they had Internet access in 2002; in all cases, parents of our students were more likely than others in their demographic group to have access to and use e-mail and Web sites.

Results

Related to satisfaction and feelings of connection

Based on a four-point Lykert scale, parents of University students have leveled off in their satisfaction with the University's programming and communications this year. (Note: In the first surveys we conducted, the question asked for parents' satisfaction with programming and communications; in 2002, the question was split to ask for satisfaction with programming separate from satisfaction with communications.)

Table 1: Levels of satisfaction

1995 survey	1997 survey	2002 survey	2004 survey	2006 survey	2008 survey
2.8165	3.0270	Programming: 3.0178	Programming: 3.4462	Programming: 3.5041	Programming: 3.3575
		Communications: 2.9575	Communications: 3.5055	Communications: 3.6374	Communications: 3.6009

For parents who were dissatisfied with the University's parent programs and services in 2008, the most significant concerns centered on issues related to on-campus housing and to problems with academic advisers failing to help students choose appropriate courses. This reflects a change from previous surveys. In the 2004 and 2006 surveys, parents who were dissatisfied with the University's parent programs and services noted frustration due to lack of access to their students' academic and financial records. These restrictions are stipulated by FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) which requires that academic records belong to the student; in order for parents to have access, the student must grant their parents permission to see their records. The Parent Program has worked with the Office of the Registrar and General Counsel in recent years to better explain FERPA restrictions.

Each year we have conducted the survey, we have also asked parents whether the University includes parents in the campus community. This year, for the first time, we saw a slight drop in satisfaction rates and in parents' feelings of connection with the University.

Table 2: Feelings of connection

1995 survey	1997 survey	2002 survey	2004 survey	2006 survey	2008 survey
2.7934	2.9645	3.2174	3.2960	3.4477	3.2778

As in the past, there is a correlation between parental involvement and parents' levels of satisfaction and feelings of connectedness with the University. Parents who attended Parent Orientation or Parents Weekend, viewed the online workshops, and discussed topics

covered in the print or e-mail newsletters reported slightly higher levels of satisfaction and connectedness with the University than the response rate from the broad population of “all parents.”

The largest rates in satisfaction occurred among those who reported viewing or listening to the video or audio online workshops and then discussed content with their student. Workshops feature information on off-campus housing, study abroad, mental health, and FERPA. Regarding satisfaction with programming, the overall satisfaction level was 3.3575, while parents who viewed the workshops reported a 3.5835 satisfaction level. Related to satisfaction with communications, the overall rate was at 3.6009; parents who viewed the workshops reported a satisfaction rate of 3.7372 for satisfaction. The last gauge, feelings on connectedness, was only 3.2863 overall, but was 3.5269 for parents who viewed the workshops.

Table 3: Effect of parent participation on satisfaction/connectedness

	Satisfaction with programming	Satisfaction with communications	Feelings of connectedness
Attended Parent Orientation	3.3729	3.6339	3.3101
Attended Parents Weekend	3.4218	3.6508	3.3701
Discuss with student topics presented in University parent print or e-mail newsletter	3.3979	3.6488	3.3498
Viewed or listened to the video or audio online workshops and discussed content with student	3.5835	3.7372	3.5269

Related to communications

Parents and students are talking to each other on a regular basis. About two-thirds of parents, or 64.2 percent, report communicating with their student two or more times per week; indeed, 22.7 percent say they communicate with their student one or more times a day. Only 4.9 percent report communicating less than once a week—about half the percentage (9 percent) who reported communicating with their student less than once a week in 2002. A very small percentage of respondents, 0.3 percent, report communicating with their students less than once a month.

Technology continues to make student-parent communications instant and constant; the cell phone is the most common way in which parents communicate with their students, with 92.8 percent reporting that they frequently or very frequently use their student’s cell phone to communicate with them. E-mail is the second most popular method of communication, with 61.5 percent of parents using it frequently or very frequently to stay in touch with their students (down slightly from 65 percent in 2004). Parents communicate with their students in person, as well, with 20.3 percent reporting that they frequently or very frequently communicate with their students via this method (down from 28 percent in 2004). Frequent or very frequent regular mail usage has increased to 7.5 percent compared

to 6 percent in 2004 and 5 percent in 2006. In 2004, 22 percent of parents reported that they frequently or very frequently instant messaged their students. In 2006, only 16 percent of parents frequently or very frequently instant messaged their student—this percentage has fallen to 6.8 percent overall, with 6.5 percent of parents of seniors and 6.1 percent of freshmen reporting using this method. Starting with the 2008 survey, however, parents were also asked about their use of text messaging. High percentages of parents reported the use of text messaging, especially among parents of freshmen (32.9 percent) when compared to the rate for parents of seniors (15.3 percent). It is possible that the introduction of a question on text messaging clarified a distinction between texting and instant messaging, terminology that parents may not have understood in 2004 or 2006.

It is notable that although students and parents are talking to each other on cell phones, 94 percent of parents said that they rarely or never use a regular landline phone to communicate with their student, and only 3 percent said they frequently or very frequently use this method.

Parents seem to be coming to campus at slowly and steadily increasing rates, with 26.6 percent visiting once a month or more, as compared to 25.7 percent in 2006, 23.7 percent in 2004, and 19 percent in 2002.

We asked parents to compare their own involvement and communication with their college student to the involvement and communication their own parents demonstrated with them while they were in college, and the results were consistent with survey responses from 2004 and 2006. The majority of respondents—76.2 percent—described themselves as more involved or much more involved than their parents had been. More than 10 percent believed that their involvement was comparable to what their own parents’ had experienced. A few respondents, 3.6 percent, described themselves as less or much less involved than their own parents had been when they were in college. For 9.6 percent of the respondents, the question was not applicable (perhaps because they did not attend college or their parents were not around when they went to college).

Related to programs and services

Since 2006, there has been a decrease in parents’ awareness of programs and services for them. The following table shows the changes in parents’ knowledge of the following services:

Table 4: Question—Please indicate whether you are aware of the following programs and services for parents. (Percentage indicates those who answered yes.)

Program/service	Parent Survey 2002	Parent Survey 2004	Parent Survey 2006	Parent Survey 2008
University parent Web site	48%	90%	95%	90%
Parent Program director	27%	51%	60%	47%

Similarly, there was a slight decrease in parents' attendance at Parent Orientation since the 2006 survey. In this year's survey, 87.7 percent of respondents reported attending Orientation, in comparison to 90.5 percent in 2006, 83.7 percent in 2004, and 69 percent in 2002. According to data from the Orientation & First-Year Programs office, parent attendance at orientation has fluctuated in recent years: summer 2008 – 4031; 2007 – 3777; 2006 – 3495; 2005 – 3898.

Related to parent expectations

A significant trend seen in the past few surveys is that parents are growing less likely to expect their student to work long hours and to contribute heavily towards paying their own expenses. In 2002, 24 percent of respondents said that their student did not work at all; in 2004 that percentage grew to 35.6, and in 2006, the percentage of students who do not work was 36.7. This year, there was another increase, with 40.7 percent of respondents stating that their student does not work. Indeed, more than half the parents of freshmen, or 60.3 percent, said that their student does not work, up slightly from 57.7 percent in 2006. The percentage of seniors whose parents reported that they do not work was 18.6, which is almost equivalent to the percentage in 2006. On the other end of the spectrum, however, the percentage of parents responding that their student works 21-30 hours per week increased significantly over the academic years from 1.1 percent for freshmen to 13 percent for seniors. Another 2.5 percent of parents also report that their senior student works 31-40 hours per week. These percentages may be due to the fact that students have more expenses besides tuition as they near graduation, that they may have more time to work as they near completion of their coursework, or that career preparation requires more work hours as students close in on graduation.

Parents' expectations have leveled off regarding the percentage of educational expenses their student will contribute. In 2002, 51 percent expected their student to contribute 25 percent or less of their expenses; in 2004, 57.9 percent said their student would contribute a quarter or less of their expenses; and in 2006, the number rose to 59.4 percent who expected their student to contribute a quarter or less of their expenses. In the 2008 survey, the percentage remained relatively stable (59.7).

Perhaps related to expectations about their students working and contributing to educational expenses, parents are increasingly expecting their students to graduate in a shorter time. In 2002, 58 percent of survey respondents expected their students to graduate in four years or less. In 2004, that was the expectation for 76.3 percent of parents; in 2006, 78.6 percent of parents expected their

students to graduate in four years or less. For 2008, 81.8 percent of parents expect their students to graduate in four years or less, a slight increase from two years ago. Almost 99 percent believe that their student will graduate in five years or less (less than four years, 8.5 percent; four years, 73.3 percent; five years, 17.1 percent; and more than five years, 1.2 percent). While 9 percent of survey respondents six years ago expected their students to take more than five years to graduate, only 0.8 percent of 2006 respondents and 1.2 percent of this year's survey takers held that expectation. It should be noted that the University began a significant effort in the early part of this decade to promote to students and parents the benefits of graduating in four years, and messages about the importance of a four-year undergraduate education continue.

Almost three-quarters of parents, 72.5 percent up from 67.6 percent, say that it is very important for their student to graduate in four or five years; 20.5 said that it was somewhat important; 5.9 percent said that other factors are more important; and 1 percent said it is not at all important.

In a dramatic change from the 2006 survey, graduation expectations do not always correlate to negative attitudes about the University. The parents whose students are taking or are expected to take more than five years to graduate are just as satisfied with parent communications as parents whose students are taking or are expected to take five or less years to graduate. While in the 2006 survey, 28.6 percent of parents of students taking more than five years to graduate said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with parent communication, there was a striking development for 2008, as 100 percent of parents of students taking more than five years to graduate said they were satisfied or very satisfied with parent communication and agreed or strongly agreed with feeling connected to the University.

In regard to dissatisfaction with the University's programs and services for parents, 8.3 percent of parents whose students are taking or are expected to take more than five years reported dissatisfaction while only 1.8 percent of parents whose students are taking or are expected to take five or less years to graduate reported dissatisfaction. In comparison, in the 2006 survey, the dissatisfied/very dissatisfied rate among parents whose students are taking more than five years to graduate was much higher at 28.6 percent.

In terms of feeling connected to the University, 100 percent of parents whose students are taking or are expected to take *five or less* years to graduate agreed or strongly agreed—they feel connected to the University. For parents whose students are taking or are expected to take *five or more* years to graduate, the response was still at 95 percent. In 2006, when asked whether they agreed that the University includes parents in the campus community, 42.9 percent of parents of students taking more than five years to graduate disagreed or disagreed strongly that the University includes parents in the campus community.

These numbers indicate a strong shift in attitude among parents whose students are taking more than five year to graduate. Parents' comments indicate that the main reasons their students are taking longer to graduate is academic probation and suspension because of issues related to alcohol, personal relationships, lack of academic assistance, and depression.

About parent/student concerns

As in 2006, parents were asked for their greatest area of concern for their student. They also were asked which topics their student has most asked for parental assistance or advice. This year, a new category, time management, was added to the list of topics from which parents could select. Again, as in 2006, the topics of greatest concern for parents as well as for their students show changes during the course of the students' college careers. The table below indicates the greatest concerns for parents overall, in order of ranking, and a side-by-side breakdown for parents of freshmen and seniors:

Table 5: Question—This year, what has been your greatest concern regarding your student?

All parents	Freshmen	Seniors
Health and safety 21.8%	Health and safety 26.9%	Career planning 40.7%
Career planning 15%	Time management 16.6%	Health and safety 14.8%
Academics 12.7%	Academic 13.3%	Finances 14.2%
Finances 12.6%	Personal relationships 10.5%	Other 9.9%
Time management 10.6%	Finances 9.4%	None 7.4%
Other 9.7%	Other 7.2%	Academics 6.8%
None 7.7%	None 6.4%	Time management 4.9%
Personal relationships 7.4%	Career planning 5.5%	Involvement opportunities.6%
Involvement opportunities 2.6%	Involvement opportunities 4.2%	Personal relationships .6%

Issues of health and safety dominate respondents' concerns during their students' first years on campus. Health and safety is ranked the number one issue by 26.9 percent of the parents of freshmen, and remains the number one concern for 23.5 percent of the parents of sophomores. In the students' junior year, health and safety concerns remain important (17 percent), although it ranks third to career planning and finances for juniors. The number decreases again in the senior year as health and safety issues are the top concern for only 14.8 percent of parents.

Academics are another area of top concern for parents of freshmen. While this is cited as the greatest concern for 13.36 percent of parents of freshmen, this figure increases to 16.9 percent of parents of sophomores. By junior year, parents seem more comfortable

that their students have this area of their life handled. Only 10.4 percent of the parents of juniors and 6.8 percent of the parents of seniors cite academics as their top concern.

The topic of parental concern that changes most significantly during their students' college careers is career planning. Only 5.5 percent of parents of freshmen and 9.1 percent of parents of sophomores cite career planning as their top concern. By the students' junior year, this is the area of greatest concern for 20.8 percent of parents, and by the time students have reached their senior year, almost twice as many, 40.7 percent of parents, list career planning as their number one concern.

By adding the new category of time management, all other topics—health and safety, academics, career planning, personal relationships, and finances—saw a drop in percentages from what was reported in 2006. Parents of first-year students are particularly worried about their students' ability to manage time, with 16.6 percent of parents of freshmen indicating that time management was their greatest concern for their first-year student. This number is cut in half during the sophomore year, to 8.1 percent, and remains steady during the junior year, 8 percent. Another decrease is then reported during the senior year, with just 4.9 percent of parents reporting time management as a top concern.

As in 2006, parental concerns about finances seem to bounce around somewhat from year to year. Only 9.4 percent of parents of freshmen and 11.1 percent of parents of sophomores rank finances as their number one concern (compared to 11.3 percent of parents of freshmen and 13.5 percent of parents of sophomores in 2006). During the junior year, this number jumps to 18.9 percent, and then falls back to 14.2 percent of parents of seniors reporting finances as their top concern. It is notable that the University's Parent Orientation programming began addressing finances more comprehensively in the summer of 2005, including providing financial aid staff at orientation to review students' aid packages with parents and students. This may account for the decline in the percentage of parents of freshmen who ranked finances as their number one concern—from 18.3 percent in 2004 to 9.4 percent in 2008.

Although finances are not the top concern for parents, it is the issue on which students most often request their parents' assistance or advice.

Table 6: Question—This year, on what topic has your student most requested your assistance or advice?

All parents	Freshmen	Seniors
Finances 28.2%	Finances 26.7%	Career planning 34.6%
Career planning 18.6%	Academics 15.8%	Finances 32.1%
Academics 12.6%	Personal relationships 11.9%	None 11.7%
None 9.5%	Health and safety 10.8%	Academics 6.2%
Personal relationships 9.3%	Career planning 9.7%	Other 6.2 %
Health and safety 9%	None 9.7%	Health and safety 4.9%
Other 8.1%	Other 7.2%	Personal relationships 3.1%
Time management 2.5%	Involvement opportunities 5%	Time management 1.2%
Involvement opportunities 2.3%	Time management 3.1%	Involvement opportunities (none)

During freshman year, questions about finances are the top concern for more than a quarter, or 26.7 percent, of students, according to their parents. The number of parents reporting that finances are the number one topic of conversation for their students hits a peak of 33.6 percent in the junior year, up from the lowest number, 23.1 percent in the sophomore year. The senior year percentage, 32.1, is then similar to the junior year. A possible explanation for this rise may be the growing levels of student debt, particularly as debt compares to potential salary ranges for new graduates. When compared to 2006 data, the numbers are almost identical for freshmen (26.5 percent) and similar for juniors (29.5 percent) and seniors (30.4 percent). However, the number of parents reporting that finances are the number one topic of conversation for their sophomore student decreased significantly from 2006 (36.7 percent to 23.1 percent). While second-year students were seeking less advice on finances, they were increasingly asking for parent advice on health and safety concerns, academics, and career planning.

Parents report that during their students' college careers, requests for assistance with career planning grow steadily from year to year. During the freshman year, just 9.7 percent of parents consider career planning to be the most significant topic on which their students are seeking advice or assistance. Parents of sophomores report career planning is the top concern for almost twice as many, 18.5 percent of students, and for parents of juniors, the number rises to 20.9 percent. By their senior year, parents rate career planning as their student's top concern, at 34.6, but this number is below the parents' concern related to career planning at 40.7 percent.

Comparing Table 6 to Table 5, we can see that although parents and students share some concerns, such as an increasing emphasis on career planning from the freshman to the senior year, their concerns are not identical. While parents' foremost concern during the first year is for their students' health and safety, students are not asking for much advice or assistance in this area. Health and safety

questions for parents reach their peak early in the students' college careers, with 10.8 percent of parents of freshmen and 11.7 percent of sophomores reporting that this is the topic their students ask them about most. By senior year, that number has fallen to 4.9 percent.

Questions about personal relationships follow a similar trajectory. While 11.9 percent of parents of freshmen report that their students ask them most about personal relationships, by the time they are seniors, it is the most frequently discussed topic for only 3.1 percent.

At no stage during the students' college career is finding opportunities for involvement the top concern for many parents or students. The peak for both seems to be during the students' freshmen year, with only 4.2 percent of parents and 5 percent of students.

Time management during the freshmen year also shows a disconnect between parents' concerns and students request for assistance. While parents report time management as their second top concern at 16.6 percent, they report that this topic is the least requested for assistance with only 3.1 percent of parents noting that they have provided assistance or advice.

About demographics

As in 2006, Wisconsin parents are by far the most satisfied with the University of Minnesota's communication for parents and including parents in the community. Parents who are residents of other states (outside Minnesota and Wisconsin) rank among the most satisfied with programming and services for parents. Among all respondents, 65.4 percent indicated that they were *very satisfied* with communications for parents; 73.5 percent of Wisconsin residents reported that they were very satisfied. This compares to 59.6 percent of Twin Cities' residents, 56 percent of residents of Greater Minnesota, and 68.5 percent of resident from other states. Overall, 44.5 percent of parents were *very satisfied* with programs and services offered for parents; 48.3 percent of residents from other states reported that they were very satisfied, as compared to 47.7 percent of Wisconsin parents, 42.4 percent of Twin Cities' residents and 37.8 percent of Greater Minnesota residents. When asked if they agreed with the statement that the University includes parents in the campus community, 43.2 percent of parents *strongly agreed*; that number for Wisconsin parents was 51.1 percent, compared to 34.3 percent for Twin Cities' residents, 36.8 percent for Greater Minnesota residents, and 49.7 percent for residents of other states.

Table 7: Satisfaction rates by demographic group (tracking “very satisfied” responses)

	All respondents	Wisconsin residents	Twin Cities residents	Greater Minnesota residents	Other residents
Very satisfied with communications for parents	65.4%	73.5%	59.6%	56%	68.5%
Very satisfied with programs and services for parents	44.5%	47.7%	42.4%	37.8%	48.3%
Strongly agrees that the University includes parents in community	43.2%	51.1%	34.3%	36.8%	49.7%

Wisconsin parents and parents who are residents of other states also reported slightly lower rates of *dissatisfaction* with the University. While overall, 1.8 percent of respondents said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the U’s communications with parents, only 1.6 percent of Wisconsin residents and 1.2 percent of Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota residents reported feeling this dissatisfaction; 1.9 percent of Twin Cities’ residents and 2.6 percent of Greater Minnesota residents reported themselves dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with communications. Wisconsin residents reported one-fifth the dissatisfied/very dissatisfied rate (0.6 percent) with programs and services for parents than parents overall reported (2.9 percent). Residents of other states also reported a slightly lower dissatisfied/very dissatisfied rating than the average, 2.6 percent. The rate for Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota residents, however, was nearly double the rate for all parents, 4.7 percent and 4.8 percent respectively. When asked whether they agree with the statement that the University includes parents in the campus community, 4.9 percent of all parents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement; only 2.4 percent of Wisconsin residents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. Here, Twin Cities’ residents responded more similarly to parents from Greater Minnesota, with 6.8 and 7.3 percent of those two groups disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with that statement.

Table 8: Dissatisfaction rates by demographic group

	All respondents	Wisconsin residents	Twin Cities residents	Greater Minnesota residents	Other residents
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with communications for parents	1.8%	1.6%	1.9%	2.6%	1.2%
Dissatisfied/very dissatisfied with programs and services for parents	2.9%	0.6%	4.7%	4.8%	2.6%
Disagrees/strongly disagrees that the University includes parents in community	4.9%	2.4%	7.3%	6.8%	3.7%

Compared to 2004, University of Minnesota alumni reported significantly higher satisfaction with the University, but their level of satisfaction has decreased since 2006 (Chart 1). Additionally, in the 2008 survey, alumni continued to be more satisfied overall with the University's programs and services than respondents were as a whole (Chart 2).

As Chart 1 indicates, almost two-thirds, or 62.1 percent, of alumni reported themselves *very satisfied* with communications for parents, compared to only 46.7 percent in 2004. The number of alumni reporting themselves *very satisfied* with programs and services in 2008 is also higher—46.9 percent compared to 40 percent in 2004 but lower than 2006, at 57.7 percent. Only 39.1 percent, of alumni *strongly agreed* that the University includes parents in the campus community, an improvement over 23.3 percent in 2004 but a sharp decrease from 49.5 percent reported in 2006.

Chart 1: Changes in alumni satisfaction and feelings of connectedness, 2004-2008

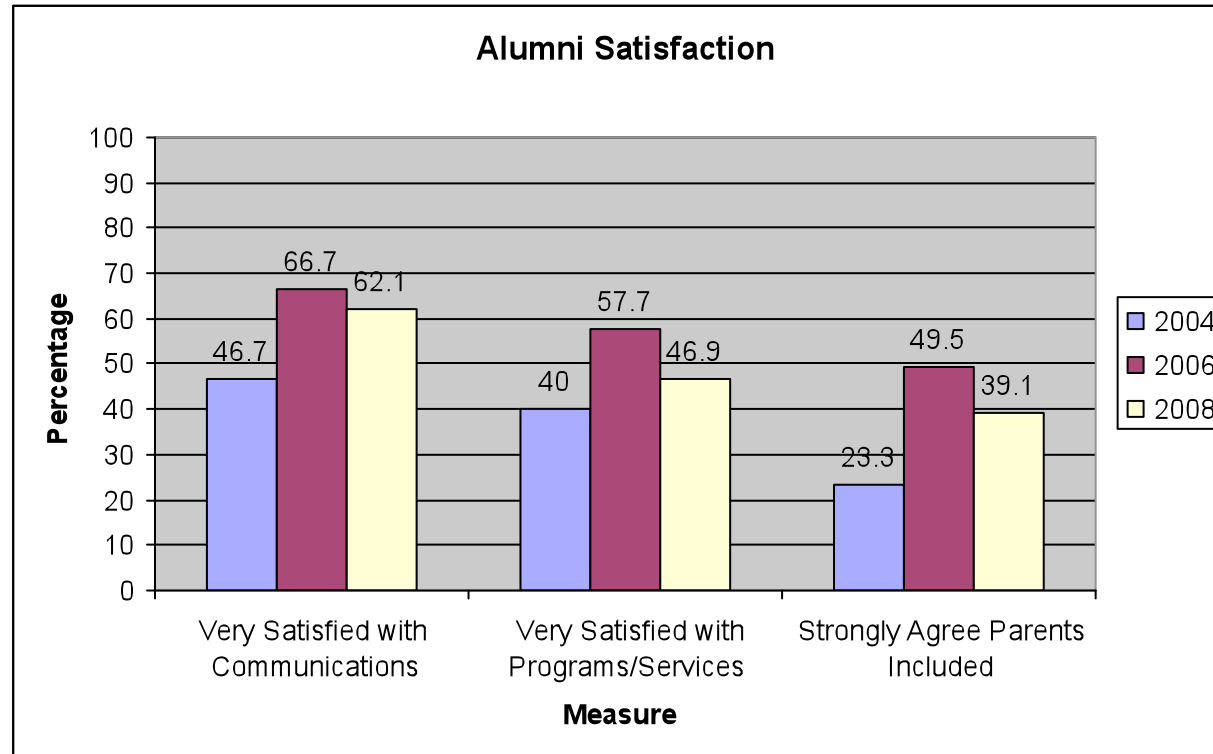
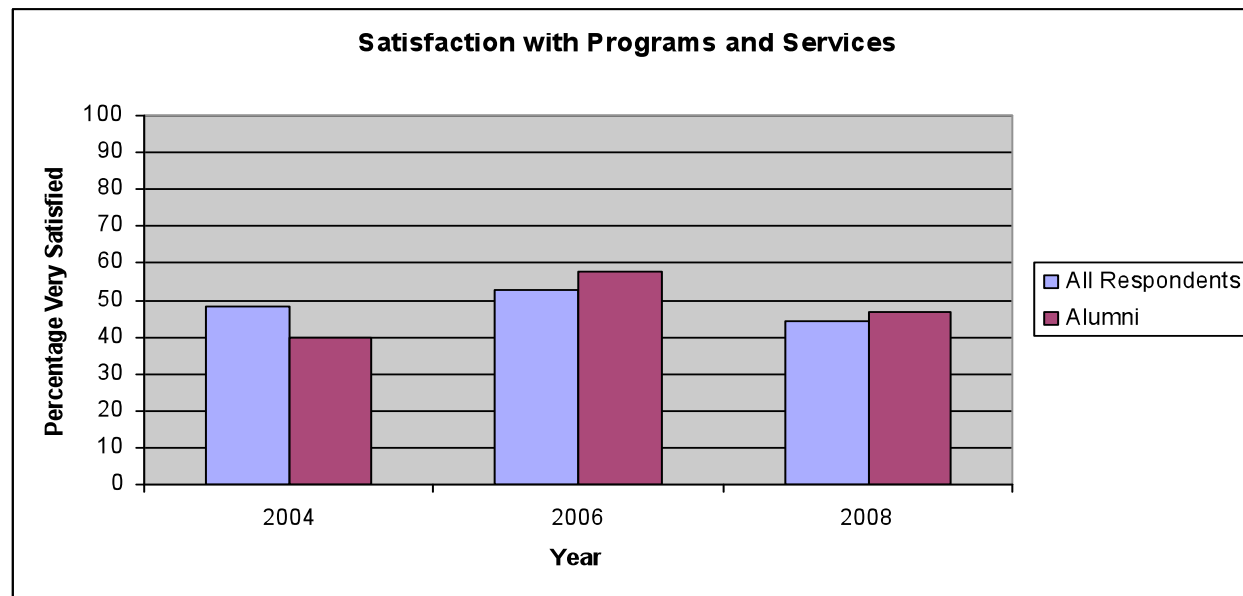


Chart 2 illustrates that the number of alumni reporting themselves *very satisfied* with the University’s programs and services is slightly higher than the percentage of all respondents reporting themselves very satisfied.

Chart 2: Satisfaction with programs and services by demographic group



University alumni and Twin Cities’ residents (groups that often overlap—65.1 percent of those who identified themselves as alumni live in the Twin Cities) continue to be less likely than other respondents to attend Parent Orientation. While 87.7 percent of all parents who responded to the survey said that they had attended Parent Orientation, only 82 percent of Twin Cities’ parents did (while only 77.5 percent of alumni attended Parent Orientation). None of the Twin Cities’ parents indicated that they chose not to attend because they already are familiar with the University. Instead, reasons cited ranged from “had to attend work,” to being unaware of orientation, to “just attended an IT orientation.” One parent also noted that she “didn’t want to ‘hover.’”

Although we may suspect that parents who don’t attend Parent Orientation are likely to feel less connected to the University, the data do not support this correlation. While 4.9 percent of all respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with feeling included, only 5.5 percent of parents who did not attend Parent Orientation also reported disagreement or strong disagreement with feeling included.

Parents' responses to the question about students' living arrangements indicate that we do not have a completely accurate survey sample, but the trends shown by the survey do reflect student trends. Survey responses confirm that on-campus housing is highest during the freshman year (95.6 percent of responses, although Housing & Residential Life reports about 80 percent of the freshman class lives on campus). On campus students drop to 42.7 percent during the sophomore year, reflecting a known drop for on-campus students the second year. During the junior year, parents said that 12.7 percent live on campus, and 7.5 percent of respondents said their student lives on campus during the senior year. These numbers are higher than would be expected based on housing reports, but parents may consider "near campus" housing to be "on campus."

At the same time, students living in non-University housing increase from 0.6 percent for freshmen to 45 percent for sophomores, 69.3 percent for juniors, and 80.1 percent for seniors. Freshmen have the lowest percentage of parents reporting that their students live at home (0.8 percent), with this figure topping out during the junior (5.2 percent) and senior (5 percent) years. Lastly, 5.5 percent report their student living in a fraternity or sorority, with 2.2 percent (freshmen) and 9.9 percent (juniors) indicating their student is in greek housing.

Related to generational differences

Although there is speculation that GenX parents bring new expectations to the college-parent relationship, questions remain that younger parents are significantly different from Baby Boomer parents. Given that there are inconsistent definitions of the start-date of GenX—some say the Baby Boomer generation spans 1946 to 1960, others say the upper range extends to 1962 or 1964—we have taken the earliest date as the starting point to investigate generational differences. The information that follows comes from separating responses from parents who report they are 47 or younger compared to responses from parents who are 48 to 61.

GenX parents are somewhat more likely than Baby Boomers to use the University's parent communications as talking points with their students (91.7 percent versus 87.6 percent). Younger parents also are more likely to consider the University Parent Web site an essential source of information (41 percent of GenXers compared to 32.7 percent of Boomers), although the ratings of differences among other information sources is not significant.

Younger parents are also in closer contact with their students; 28.1 percent are in touch one or more times a day compared to 21 percent. They are also the most likely to use text messaging, as 37.3 percent text with their students frequently or very frequently. Among Boomers, 23.5 percent are texting frequently or very frequently.

In terms of parents' concerns for their student, the significant differences lie in career planning and personal relationships. While all other categories are within a few points of one another, just 8.8 percent of GenX parents cite career planning as their greatest concern.

By comparison, 16.8 percent of Boomers cite career planning as their top concern. On the other hand, 10.5 percent of GenX parents are most concerned about their student's personal relationship compared to 6.6 percent of Boomer parents. There are no significant differences between students' requests for assistance based on parental generation.

Older parents may be in a better financial situation to support their student's education. Among Boomers, 40.9 percent say their student will contribute just 10 percent or less of their educational expenses, and just 18 percent say their student will contribute more than 50 percent. In comparison, 31 percent of GenXers expect their student to contribute 10 percent or less, while 26 percent say their student will contribute more than half.

Older parents are more likely to have higher levels of education, which makes sense. Those who had children when they were young probably had other responsibilities that interfered with higher education. Among GenXers, a third (34.3 percent) have less than a bachelor's degree, compared to 21.1 percent of Boomers. While 17.3 percent of GenXers say they have a master's or doctorate degree, 31.8 of Boomers fit this category. Although the relevance is not clear, younger respondents are more likely to be mothers (88.3 percent compared to 79.6 percent) and to be sending their daughters to the University (57.7 percent of GenXers' children are female compared to 51.8 percent of Boomers' students).

A very small number of parents (13) fit into the Silent Generation category, 62 and older when the survey was conducted in spring 2008. While the numbers do not allow for any degree of statistical significance, it is interesting to note their characteristics. They are seemingly less engaged with the University: just 61.5 percent read all of the e-mail newsletter for parents, compared to 80.6 percent of Boomer parents. Slightly more than half read all of the print newsletter (75.9 percent of Boomers). Fewer use the communications as talking points (69.2 percent compared to 87.6 percent of Boomers), and only 16.7 percent regard the Parent Web site as an essential source of information (32.7 percent of Boomers and 41 percent of GenXers). They are much less likely to be in daily contact with their student (15.4 percent) and much more likely to talk just once a week or less (69.2 percent compared to 37.1 percent of Boomers).

The oldest parents are not entirely technologically unskilled: 16.6 percent text their students frequently or very frequently (compared to 23.5 percent of Boomers), but they are the most likely to visit their student on campus: 23.1 percent of Silent Generation parents visit their student one or more times a month compared to 12.3 percent of Boomers and 11.3 percent of GenXers.

The older parents' concerns reflect the fact that their students tend to be older. None have first-year students; consequently health and safety concerns and academics are less likely to be their top concern, but career planning is high (23.1 percent compared to 16.8 percent of Boomers and 8.8 percent of GenXers). They also are more likely to worry about their student's time management (15.4 percent cited time management as their top concern compared to 10.3 percent of Boomers and 11.3 percent of GenXers). Just 7.7 percent listed academics as the top concern (12.7 percent of Boomers and 13 percent of GenXers).

The children of older parents are much more likely to ask their parents most frequently about health and safety (15.4 percent versus 9.3 percent of Boomers' children and 8 percent of GenXers' children), but not at all likely to turn to their parents for advice on time management, involvement opportunities, or personal relationships (compared to Boomers' students: time management 2.2 percent, involvement 2.3, and personal relationships 9.1 percent; GenXers' students: time management 3.8 percent, involvement 2.1 percent, and personal relationships 9.2 percent).

Financially, their students seem to be relatively well off; just one parent indicated that his/her student works more than 20 hours a week. The older parents are less concerned about their student's graduation schedule. Half said graduation in four years was very important, 25 percent said it is somewhat important, and another 25 percent said other factors are more important.

In terms of parental education, none of this group has a doctorate or equivalent; 38.5 percent (total of 5) have a master's degree, 30.8 percent have a bachelor's degree (4), 23.1 percent (3) have an associate's degree, and one has a high school diploma. This group seems themselves as the most involved with their student. Two-thirds (66.7 percent) say they are much more involved than their own parents were during their college years (Boomers: 49.4 percent; GenXers 46.4 percent).

Unlike any other breakout of populations, the older parents are most likely to be fathers (53.8 percent, compared to Boomers 20.3 percent fathers and GenXers 11.3 percent fathers) and to have sons at the University (53.8 percent, compared to Boomers 48.2 percent male and GenXers 42.3 percent male).

Again, however, it is important to note that the sample size is just 13 for this population.

Related to parents' educational levels

More obvious differences appear when comparing the responses of parents of first-generation college students to parents who have themselves attended college (including parents with "some college" and ranging up to those with doctorate degrees or the equivalent). Parents of first-generation students appear particularly hungry for information: 85.1 percent of first-gen parents read all of the print newsletter, compared to just 74.8 percent of college attendees. They are slightly more likely to use that information when they talk to their students (90.4 percent compared to 87.9 percent), and they are much more likely to consider the University Parent Web site and the Parent Newsletter as essential sources of information about the University (49.1 percent of first-gen parents consider the print newsletter essential compared to 37.5 percent of college-educated parents; 46.9 percent of first-gen parents consider the Web site essential compared to 33 percent of college-education parents). First-gen parents also are more likely to consider the University's One Stop Web site essential as a source of University information (60.2 percent compared to 53.8 percent of college-educated parents).

First-gen parents are in more frequent contact with their students: 71.9 percent are in touch more than once a week with nearly a third (32.4 percent) in touch with their student one or more times a day. This compares to 63.2 percent of college-educated parents who communicate with their student more than once a week, with less than 20 percent (21.5 percent) in daily contact.

Parents' concerns for their students are different, based on educational level. Those with no college experience were somewhat more likely to list health and safety as their greatest concern (25.7 percent compared to 21.3 percent) and much more likely to list finances as their greatest concern (21.2 percent versus 11.6 percent). They were half as likely to worry about time management (5.3 percent compared to 11.6 percent) and somewhat less likely to be concerned about career planning (11.5 percent compared to 15.4 percent). Moreover, first-generation students ask their parents for advice on different topics. If their parents did not attend college, students are less likely to ask for advice on health and safety issues (5.3 percent versus 9.5 percent), academics (8.3 percent versus 13.1 percent), but more likely to ask for advice or assistance on financial issues (36 percent compared to 27.3 percent).

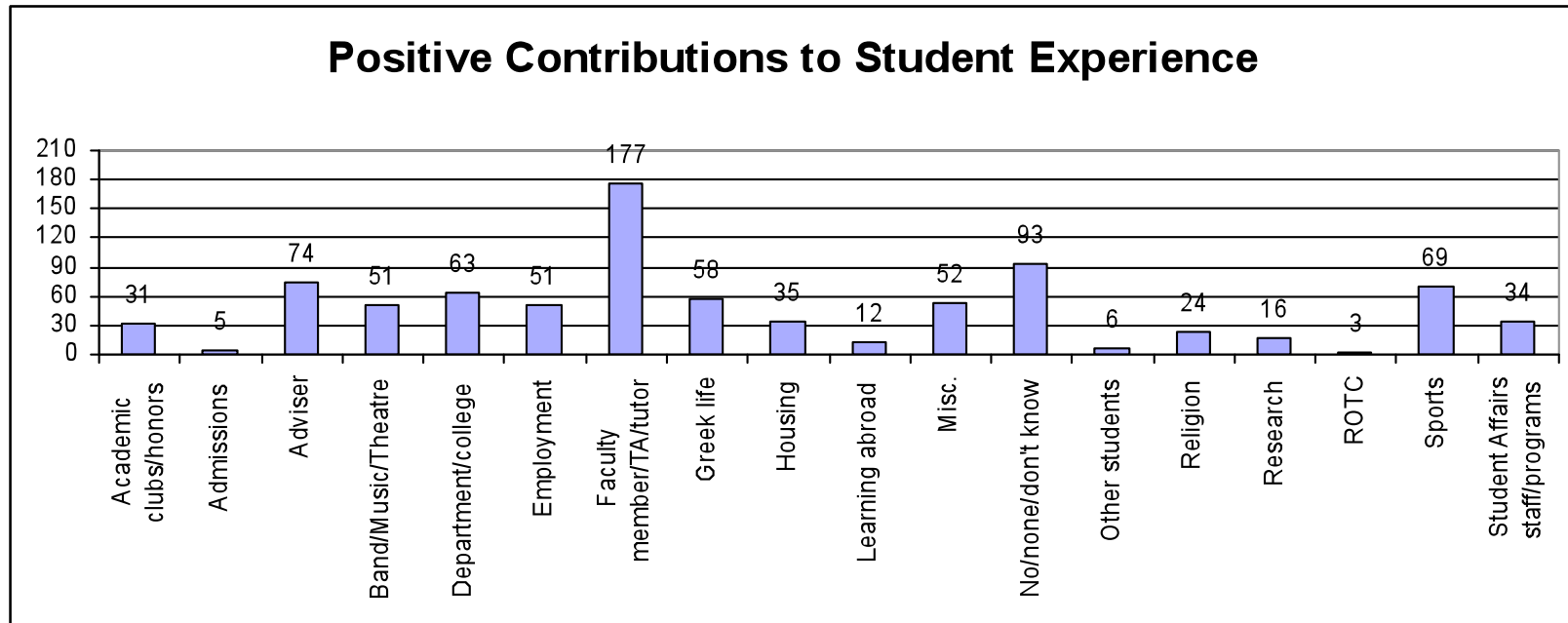
First-generation parents have higher expectations related to their student's contributions to their educational expenses and to their student's ability to work longer hours. The survey asked parents what percentage of their student's educational expenses the student was expected to contribute. Among first-gen students, 71.2 percent are expected to contribute more than 10 percent of their expenses, while 60.5 percent of students with college-educated parents are expected to contribute more than 10 percent. At the high end of the scale, 16.7 percent of first-gen students are expected to contribute more than three-fourths of their expenses. That compares to 8.8 percent of students whose parents attended college.

Related to positive influences on students

The 2008 survey asked parents whether there was a faculty member, staff member, activity, or organization that had made a particularly positive contribution to their students' experience at the University of Minnesota, and if so, asked them to describe that positive influence.

Nearly 700 parents responded to this question, and they offered a wide range of comments on faculty and staff members, activities, and organizations. The responses have been divided into 18 categories, which are represented on Chart 4 below, showing the number of responses that fit into each category. After the chart, the categories are further defined with parent comments to illustrate the type of response represented. The 18 categories can be broadly grouped into two predominant influences: classroom learning experiences and experiences outside the classroom. Responses about faculty members, advisers, academic clubs and departments, and learning abroad—academic or classroom experiences—totaled 376 comments. Responses citing involvement in arts and athletics, employment, student affairs programming, and greek life—learning experiences outside the classroom—totaled 333 comments (miscellaneous responses were not counted in either category, nor were “I don't know” or “not that I am aware of” responses).

Chart 3: People and organizations that made a positive contribution to respondents' students' experience



The category with the most responses is faculty member/TA/tutor; the 177 comments citing faculty members, TAs, or tutors as particularly positive influences total just over a quarter of the 692 parent comments at 25.6 percent. Parents did not always mention specific faculty names; comments such as

“She mostly talks about her theater/dance professors, as well as some of her child psychology professors”

“So far all of her instructors have been available and helpful when she seeks assistance”

“She has been thrilled with the quality of her ... T.A. in XXX's course.”

Other parents had more specific information about faculty and the ways in which they had contributed to their students (names have been removed):

"XXX - Instructor of Jamaican Water Quality Course. He was instrumental in instilling an enthusiasm for a career involving water quality."

"XXX, TA, in particular in regards to keeping my student on track for graduating."

Advisers are another frequently cited (74 comments or 10.7 percent) source of positive contributions to students' experiences, and are often mentioned as being especially helpful when students are making unexpected changes to their plans or their programs:

"Daughter's advisor helped her move to the School of Journalism as the "right fit" for her---and it was."

"My daughter's academic adviser, XXX in CFANS, has been fabulous in planning the course schedules."

Admissions staff was named by five respondents (less than one percent):

"XXX in admissions made use feel like we "counted" and that he knew of our son as opposed to being a number in a computer."

"XXX (Admissions) - she assisted my daughter in getting a partial freshman scholarship."

Some respondents (63 comments or 9.1 percent) praised their student's college or department, not identifying particular professors or activities as a single influence:

"General College!!! My son would not have thrived as he has at UMN without GC. We were SO sorry to see it dismantled."

"She has talked about how much she has appreciated and valued her meetings with her adviser in CBS. Each time she meets with him she talks about how there was something they discussed that she hadn't been aware of or something that helped her with a specific question she had. She also sounds wonderfully confident after these meetings about choices she is making."

"Staff at Carlson School of Management have been very helpful and especially those involved with the Honor's program."

Others (31 comments or 4.5 percent) have singled out academic clubs or honors programs as beneficial to their students:

"Mentor Program in clothing design."

"Solar car - a chance to apply his newly gained engineering skills in a team environment - helped him to get an internship as a sophomore."

Involvement in band, music, or theatre garnered 51 comments (7.4 percent):

"Campus Orchestra is a good creative outlet for my son, after a grueling day of honors I.T. classes."

"Steel Drumming."

"BFA Actor Training Program...all staff excellent. esp. XXX."

Learning abroad was named by 12 respondents (1.8 percent):

"Study Abroad. My daughter has done it twice and wants to do it again. It has made her much more independent and mature."

The positive experience of employment was mentioned by 51 parents, or 7.4 percent:

"Job on campus at the General Council Office. XXX is the woman who hired my daughter and has been wonderful for her to know as a talented and professional mentor. Student is learning a serious work relationship and the commitment it takes for success in the workplace with humor, understanding, patience, and professionalism."

"His boss at Williams Arena."

"My daughter works in the career center at Carlson. It has been a great experience for her."

Research opportunities were named by 16 respondents (2.3 percent):

"Dr. XXX, who is a professor in IT, brought my son on board as a research assistant and gave him a vision of what it means to conduct "real" research. It was an exciting time for my son."

"Our son has become involved with the Robotics Research Center. The graduate students there have been wonderful to our son; they have been good role models and are offering great encouragement to study and work hard."

"UROP work at the Diabetes Institute"

Several (35 comments or 5.1 percent) parents also mentioned that housing had made particularly strong contributions to their students' college experience:

"Living in the dorm his freshman year was a much more positive experience than he thought it would be, very good for the first year of college."

"Another aspect of the U which is wonderful is that there is a dining hall in the dorm! My daughter's eating habits, and therefore well being, were much better than her former university where there was a walk to a huge and unfriendly central dining facility."

"WISE and IT housing being on the same floor in Frontier last year started her off with her study group and group of friends. Very positive."

"Our child has relied on her CA for advice and is able to communicate any concerns with her."

Participation in sports, whether at the intercollegiate, club, or intramural level, or just as a spectator, was listed by many parents (69 comments or 10 percent) as making an important contribution to their students' experience:

"She joined the Vo Lam Kung Fu club her first semester and it has been a wonderful source of community for her."

"Our son is a student athlete. Coach XXX and Coach XXX have influenced him tremendously. The athletic department staff has been wonderful. He has matured into a wonderful young man. We are very proud of him and credit the University of Minnesota with his development."

"Reffing hockey, intramurals and the club baseball team."

Student affairs personnel and programs were also frequently (34 comments or 4.9 percent) mentioned by parents; the Parent Program director was mentioned specifically several times, as were student organizations:

"Marjorie Savage has been an exceptional element in the college experience from a parental perspective. She does a WONDERFUL job keeping parents informed of various aspects of college life."

"XXX from Special Needs area. My son has ADHD and she helped him with getting note takers etc."

"Boynton Health Clinic: my daughter has used their services and the staff was great. She has also used the Women's Health Center phone nurse was very helpful."

Greek life was also mentioned (58 comments or 8.4percent) as making positive contributions to students' experience of the University:

"She joined the Alpha Delta Gamma sorority and she loves it. A wonderful experience for her and she will live in the sorority house this fall."

"He rushed and joined Chi Psi as a freshman and that gave him an immediate group of friends (an older acquaintance who graduated from his high school really took a lot of time and talked to him and thought he would be a great addition to Chi Psi). This made a big difference in his adjustment to college life and being in a community that is the size of the U of M."

Religion, particularly Campus Crusade for Christ and Navigators, garnered several (24 comments or 3.5 percent) mentions:

"She has also attended the student group for agnostics/atheists regularly which has allowed her to get some other points of view on religion (I think that's been positive given the dogmatic Christian environment that's made her unhappy in the past)."

"Campus Crusade for Christ. My son has made some great friends who know how to have a good time without partying / using alcohol."

Three parents (less than one percent) mentioned the positive effect on their students of belonging to ROTC:

"New Navy ROTC command this year gave her a chance to explore more leadership opportunities."

Six (less than one percent) respondents listed another student as the most significant positive influence. And 93 parents (13.4 percent) either said there was no significant positive influence, or if there was, that they could not identify it:

"not aware of anything or anyone specific"

"All have been positive."

There were also 52 (7.5 percent) miscellaneous comments, relating to various aspects of campus:

"President Bruininks and his staff"

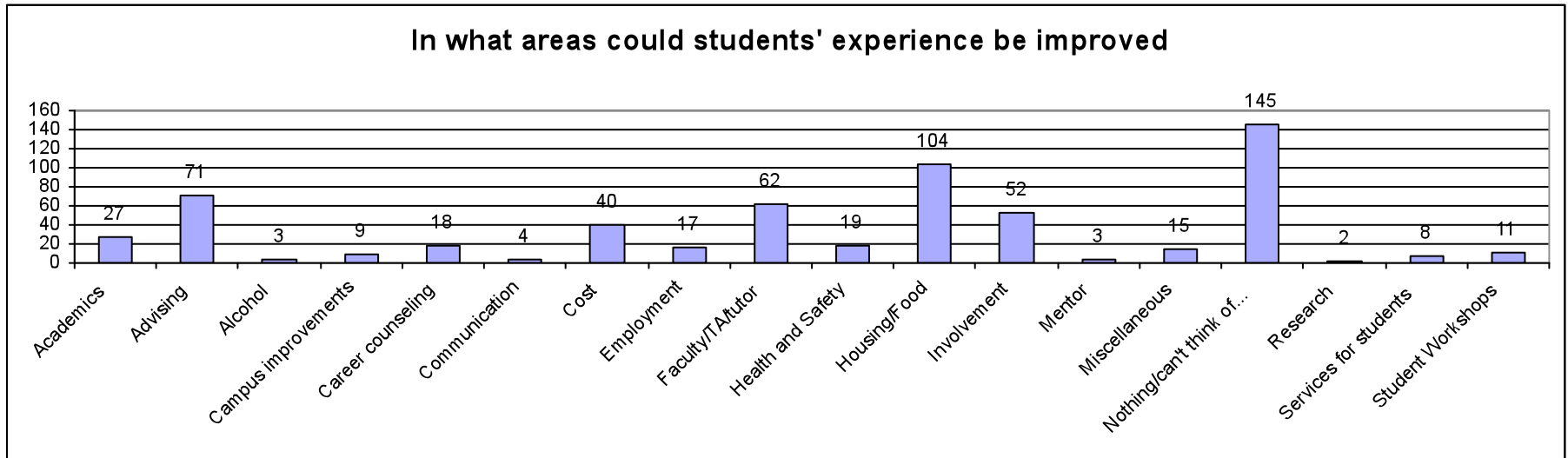
"The Dean of the Veterinary School took the time to see her after just a few weeks in when she felt swamped with her major of enrollment and was considering switching to pre-vet. This was a tremendous help to her stress since her advisor wouldn't see her because it wasn't her week to schedule."

Related to what could have improved their students' experience

The survey also asked parents whether there was something that would have improved their students' experience at the University of Minnesota, and, if so, asked them to describe it.

Nearly half of the survey respondents, or 581 parents, commented on this question. The comments have been divided into 18 categories, as represented on Chart 5 below. Below the chart the categories are defined for clarity, and representative quotes from each are printed.

Chart 4: How students' experiences of the University of Minnesota could have been improved



By far the largest number of responses (145) to the question indicated that the University could not do anything to improve upon the student's experience. Many indicated that their student's experience has been overwhelmingly positive; others noted that all the resources are available, and it is the individual student's responsibility to make use of them. Representative comments:

"You know, his experience so far has been very positive and I am very pleased with what has transpired so far. So far I feel U of M has provided a wonderful atmosphere for him and given him a chance to grow into a fine young adult."

"None. I am very impressed with the University, the opportunities, the staff, the academic rigor, and the outreach to parents."

Among areas in which improvement could be made, however, housing and dining were a top concern (104 responses). Problems with roommates and students finding it difficult to get mediation or a room change were mentioned several times. Parents also mentioned that the rooms were crowded and that the residence halls were noisy and difficult to study in. According to parents, students had difficulty getting to know people and making friends, especially freshmen placed in single rooms or in residence halls that had a lot of upperclassmen. The food choices offered to students were also cited by many parents. Some comments:

“Dorm having more activities for the students of the dorm to participate in and therefore meet more people.”

“A third person was placed in his dorm room his sophomore year-he was notified 2 weeks before school began. It was a double room-not a good experience. He had met someone freshman year and they had planned to be roommates sophomore year. This lasted an entire semester. Also, he is not one to ever complain about food, but the Comstock dorm food is incredibly bad. We have heard nothing but complaints from him. He has written multiple letters to housing asking for the same meal plan as Yudof but no replies are ever given. It seems unacceptable to me not to reply to complaints from students or parents.”

“Dining hall on the St. Paul campus needs to be open all day, every day once move in begins. These kids should not have to travel all the way to the Minneapolis campus just for food. I should not have to travel to the Minneapolis campus to get food the day I move my son in.”

Another recurring theme for parents (52 responses) was concern about their students’ lack of involvement in campus groups and activities, not only because they feel that the involvement would have been beneficial in its own right, but also because their students have not formed many close relationships at the University:

“More opportunities for structured but non-organization networking to connect people with common interests”

“She didn't feel it was very easy to find someone to talk to about her feelings of loneliness or fitting in with some of the girls in her residence hall.”

A few parents also suggested that their students’ experience could be improved by the University doing more to curb drinking on campus.

“Alcohol is a problem. My student finds that many students drink and he gets frustrated trying to find things to do with people who do not want to drink.”

Parents also made a number of suggestions (27 comments) related to their students’ academic programs, most of which are too specific to reproduce here, but general comments included the following:

“More rigor in class. He thought almost all the classes were too easy. Not challenged enough in most courses.”

“More help when registering for classes during registration. She registered for too many credits for the first semester of her freshman year.”

One of the most frequent comments was that students find nonnative speakers of English difficult to understand as teachers or teaching assistants. Of the 62 suggestions pertaining to faculty, most made this complaint. Other comments registered students’ and parents’ frustration with the students’ perceived lack of access to faculty members, TAs, or tutors, or failure to make a connection with them:

“He has a professor this semester that he has had a hard time learning from. He is majoring in electrical engineering. This professor does not explain things well, and makes him feel foolish when he asks questions. It has put much stress on him this semester. Professor is quite proud and arrogant. This has been disappointing.”

“Many of his professors are foreign and he can't understand them. This is inexcusable. They should be made to pass certain English standards.”

“Possibly more suggestions/interaction from faculty regarding involvement in the campus community, internships or other networking types of activities for our student”

“Tutoring more available for off-campus students. My son really needed help with Math and could not find it anywhere. More advanced students did not have the time or want to work with others who needed group help.”

Parents made 71 comments about advising, with most commenting that their students’ advisers could have offered more help or direction:

“More help from college advisors, my daughter got so much inconsistent information”

“Our son entered through CFANs but switched to CLA. I think he should have entered through CLA so he didn't have to switch schools and would have the same adviser. I know the U is huge but would like to see meetings with advisers automatically set up each semester (at least the first 2 years) so as a parent you don't have to be concerned as to whether or not they are making those appts.”

40 parents commented that lower tuition would have improved their students’ experience at the University:

“More scholarships. More help with classes. He came in with 48 AP credits which really haven't benefited him at all.”

“Questions she had with financial aid - kept getting confusing answers from One Stop.”

Health and safety was an issue for 19 parents Their concerns:

“Less crime during her freshman and sophomore year. The emails she would get that were for the purpose of reporting the crime to her were horrible. I felt like the school should have done more to protect the students. Maybe they did, as I don't see or hear as much about crime on campus.”

“He had his bike stolen the first day of school. I know this is unrealistic, but better campus security/video surveillance of bike lockup areas would be nice.”

Analysis

The most important reflection from these data is that services for parents do make a difference in overall satisfaction levels reported by parents. Moreover, when parents are actively engaged with parent communications, programming, and services, they feel a stronger affiliation with the institution and are most likely to support the University's messages by talking with their student about the topics we present.

In terms of specifics, one observation from the responses is that the satisfaction levels for communication and programming, and the feelings of connectedness are related to the reading of the e-mail newsletters. Of the respondents who read all or most of the e-mail newsletter, 99.5 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with University communication, and 98.2 percent are satisfied or very satisfied with University programming for parents. For respondents who read little or none, do not subscribe, or are not aware that the e-mail newsletter exists, the satisfaction rate for communication drops to 88 percent, and for programming, the rate drops to 88.4 percent. The largest gap, however, applies to parents feeling connected to the University. For those parents who read all or most of the e-mail newsletter, 97.6 percent are satisfied, in comparison to 76.7 percent for parents who read little or none, do not subscribe, or are not aware that the e-mail newsletter exists.

Compared to the 2006 survey, there is a slight decrease in satisfaction levels for communication and programming, and the feelings of connectedness when comparing parents who attended both Parents Weekend and Parent Orientation versus those who did not attend, and parents' awareness of the Parent Program Director. However, a much greater impact is seen when considering parents' awareness of the University Parent Web site. For parents who are aware of the Web site, they report a satisfaction level in communication at 98.9 percent, a satisfaction level in programming at 97.9 percent, and agreement in feelings of connectedness at 97 percent. For those parents who are not aware of the Web site, these figures decrease to 90.8 percent for communication, 87.9 percent for programming, and only 78.3 percent for feelings of connectedness. This last figure represents almost a twenty percent decrease in connection to the University.

Respondent comments about orientation are overwhelmingly positive, indicating that the program provides a good experience for parents. (More information about the impact of Parent Orientation can be found in Appendix 2.) Judging from their comments, the most common reason not to attend Parent Orientation was due to scheduling and time conflicts, reported by 13 parents. Two other common reasons were either that they were parents of a transfer or PSEO student, or that they had already attended a session, either because a previous child also attended the University or one had been given by another college within the University. This last instance is one that needs to be addressed, since sessions given by the colleges are not an orientation to the University, but are essentially admissions events and information sessions, designed to encourage students to apply for or confirm admission to the college.

Although only 51 respondents expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with feeling included in the University community, there are some common factors to note among this group:

- This group is much less likely to make use of or know about communications for parents—41.2 percent of these respondents are not even aware of the e-mail newsletter, compared to only 6 percent of all respondents. Only 39.2 percent of them read all or most of the e-mail newsletter, in contrast to 79.6 percent of all respondents; and only 56.9 percent have read all or most of the print newsletter, compared to 75.9 percent of all respondents. They are also less likely to have discussed the contents of the print or e-mail newsletter with their students—64.7 percent versus 87.8 percent of all respondents. Overall, only 6 percent are *very satisfied* with the University's communications while the very satisfied response rate from all participants was 65.4 percent.
- When asked if they were aware of services, just 57.1 percent noted that they were aware of the University Parent Web site, compared to 90.5 percent of all respondents. Awareness of the Parent Program Director goes from 10.2 percent for this group to 47 percent overall. When asked if they were aware of online workshops and guides, 86.7 percent responded that they were not aware, in contrast to 52.1 percent for all respondents. Lastly, only 2.3 percent of those unaware of online services are very satisfied with University programming and services for parents versus 44.5 percent for all respondents; for the dissatisfied rate, it is 36.4 percent for these parents compared to 2.7 percent overall.

The differences between responses based on parents' education levels suggest that greater attention should be given to parents of first-generation students. Family members who did not attend college have very different expectations, knowledge about parent services, and use of parent services than parents who did attend college. Their students are working more hours and contributing more financially to their own education, leading to the expectation that their students' experience is likely different than that of their peers whose parents have a college education.

Implications

Parents continue to be highly involved in their college students' lives. When asked what other services they would like to see, many of them are satisfied with the communications and services the University currently makes available to them. Still, many would like to receive more information that their students are receiving (housing guides, career planning, deadlines for registration, financial aid and graduation, e-mail alerts about crime and emergencies), more direct parent programming (workshops or programs focusing on financial aid and scholarships, parents weekends at other times during a student's academic career, lectures and educational seminars for parents on the weekends, and opportunities to connect with other parents in their own area), and increased opportunities to be involved in the University campus community (information on arts and athletic events, information on what to do when visiting their student). While a handful of parents stated that they believed their student needed to learn to navigate the University system themselves and that they—as parents—did not want to interfere, many indicated a desire for more basic information on how the University works and how they can help their students access the information and services they need. Providing more and better information to parents on student development throughout the college years and suggesting ways they can encourage their students to take on increasing responsibility for themselves may satisfy both parents' desire for more communications and programming as well as the goal of the Office for Student Affairs to provide ample opportunities for students to learn and succeed outside of the classroom.

The survey shows that students continue to turn to their parents for guidance on topics such as finances, career planning, and academics. In the areas of career development and academics, the University has staff members with the resources and expertise to serve as expert advice-givers to our undergraduates. University programming and communications can help make parents aware of these on-campus resources for their students and encourage parents to refer their students to the experts.

In planning for future parent programs and services, the survey indicates that we would benefit by promoting greater participation in Parent Orientation and Parents Weekend sessions. In addition, we should attempt to raise participation from groups with lower attendance rates, such as Twin Cities' residents, parents who previously attended the University, and parents of PSEO and transfer students. Communications with these groups might emphasize that even people who consider themselves to be very familiar with the University and its offerings will be surprised at how much they will learn. The parents undoubtedly will learn new information about the University and have many questions answered at these sessions, but participation also creates a sense of both student and parent belonging to the University community.

Generational characteristics bear watching, but at this point probably do not warrant specifically targeted parent services. It is important to note, though, that GenX parents rely on technology more than older parents, suggesting that a good Web site and use of new technologies (texting, online information) are important. Because GenX parents may have a different outlook toward career planning, we should continue to assess that area. It is possible that GenXers buy into the idea that students need "employment skills"

more than specific job skills. It is also possible, though, that their outlook on career services and their financial expectations reflect more on their current position in life than on their personal values—or that they may change these outlooks as they age.

We should also continue to urge parents to sign up for the parents e-mail newsletter and to participate in parent programs, courses, and events throughout their students' college years. As we consider new programming and services, special attention should be given to parents of first-generation college students.

Limitations

The geographic origin of some respondents does not reflect what we know about our students. Of the respondents to this survey, 30.1 percent were from the metropolitan Twin Cities area (compared to 53.6 percent of all undergraduates) and 36 percent were from Wisconsin (compared to 17.8 percent of all undergraduates). However, other respondent groups more closely mirror the campus population—18.1 percent were from Greater Minnesota (compared to 17.8 percent of all undergraduates); 4 percent were from the Dakotas (compared to 3.4 percent of all undergraduates); and 4.9 percent were from other states or countries (compared to 5.6 percent of all undergraduates).²

Only 2.8 percent of the respondents reported that their student is living at home. Close to half (48.9 percent) said their student lives on campus (we know that this is not accurate as the University does not have housing for half of its students); 95.6 percent of the parents of freshmen reported that their student lives on campus, but housing data shows that about 80 percent of freshmen actually live on campus; 5.5 percent said their student lives in a sorority or fraternity, although data show that about 4 percent of the student body lives in fraternities and sororities; 40.5 of respondents reported that their student lives in an apartment near campus.

Parents of younger students are overrepresented in the survey results. Whereas 34.1 percent of the survey respondents indicated that their student was a freshman, the freshman class for spring 2008 made up only 14.1 percent of the undergraduate student body. Similarly, 29.2 percent of respondents indicated their student was a sophomore, while only 21.1 percent of all spring 2008 students were sophomores; 20 percent said their student was a junior, while 24.6 percent of the spring 2008 student body were juniors; and only 15.3 percent said their student was a senior, while 40.2 percent of the spring 2008 student body were seniors.³ There are a couple of possible explanations for this discrepancy: First, parents with more than one student at the University were asked to respond to the survey based on their youngest child here. Second, parents are more likely to be engaged with their students and their students' college during the first years of college, and therefore are more likely to read the newsletter and respond to a survey.

Additionally, when parents were asked to identify their greatest concern, they could choose only one of the topics listed. This may have prevented us from gaining an accurate reflection of the relative importance of the topics mentioned. For instance, although the topic "Involvement Opportunities" was at the bottom of the list for all parents, and was also at the bottom at every stage in the students' career, involvement opportunities did emerge as a topic of interest for parents: When asked in a later question what factors had made positive contributions to their student's experience at the University, many mentioned involvement in student groups, band,

² Spring 2008 registration statistics provided by University of Minnesota Office of Institutional Research, Table 9 "Campus and Unit Enrollment by Level and Geographic Origin."

³ Spring 2008 registration statistics provided by University of Minnesota Office of Institutional Research, Table 3 "Campus and Unit Enrollment by Level and Class."

music, theatre, greek life, athletics, and participation in student affairs programming. In the related question on what could have been done to improve their students' experience at the University, many parents said they wished their student had become more involved in the activities available on campus. It seems possible that if parents had been able to rank from most to least important to them the topics of concern, rather than just identify one as their strongest concern, we might gain a more accurate picture of the relative weight of the concerns listed.

Appendix 1

Survey Questions

1. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities publishes an *e-mail* newsletter for parents and guardians and sends it electronically about every two weeks. Do you read...
☐ All or most of it
☐ Some of it
☐ Little or none of it
☐ I did not subscribe to the list
☐ Not aware of it
2. The University of Minnesota-Twin Cities publishes a *print* newsletter, *University Parent*, and mails it three times a year to parents and guardians at the of our students. Do you read...
☐ All or most of it
☐ Some of it
☐ Little or none of it
☐ Not aware of it
3. Have you discussed with your student any of the topics covered in either the e-mail or print newsletter?
☐ No
☐ Yes
If yes, please list any topics you recall discussing with your student. (open-ended, leave space for response)
4. Please rank each of the following as sources of information about the University.

Sources	Essential	Important	Unimportant	Not a Source
Your student				
Newspaper				
Radio/TV				
Parent e-mail newsletter				
Parent print newsletter				
University parent Web site				
University of Minnesota One Stop Web site				

5. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the University's *communications* for parents and guardians of University students.

☐ Very satisfied
☐ Satisfied
☐ Dissatisfied
☐ Very dissatisfied

6. How often do you typically communicate with your student?

☐ More than once a day
☐ Daily
☐ Two or three times a week
☐ About weekly
☐ Two or three times a month
☐ About once a month
☐ Less than once a month

7. How do you communicate with your student? Please indicate for each of the following how frequently you use the method.

Frequency	Very Frequently	Frequently	Less Frequently	Rarely	Don't use this method
In person					
Student's cell phone					
Student's landline phone					
E-mail					
Regular mail					
Text messaging					
Instant messaging					

8. How often do you visit campus?

☐ Rarely or not at all
☐ Once or twice a semester
☐ About once a month
☐ More than once a month
☐ Once a week or more

9. Did you attend Parent Orientation when your student first enrolled at the University?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not aware of it

10. If you answered yes to the last question, what was the most useful information you received? What was missing? If you answered no, why did you decide not to attend?

11. Have you ever attended Parents Weekend events?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not aware of it

12. If you answered yes to the last question, were you satisfied with the activities for parents at the event? If you answered no, why did you decide not to attend?

13. Please indicate whether you are aware of the following services for parents.

University Parent Web site

☐ Yes ☐ No

Parent Program Director to answer your questions

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. The University Parent Program provides a number of online workshops, guides, and courses for parents. Have you viewed any of the following online video and audio workshops on the University Parent Web site?

Housing Workshop

☐ Yes ☐ No

Mental Health and the College Student Workshop

☐ Yes ☐ No

Study Abroad Workshop

☐ Yes ☐ No

Online workshop, "Career Guide for Parents"

☐ Yes ☐ No

Online course, "Alcohol Use on Campus"

☐ Yes ☐ No

Online course, "Student Finances"

☐ Yes ☐ No

I am not aware of the workshops or courses mentioned

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. If you have viewed or listened to any of the workshops or courses mentioned above, have you talked with your student about the information presented?

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the University's *programs and services* for parents and guardians of University students.

☐ Very satisfied

☐ Satisfied

☐ Dissatisfied

☐ Very dissatisfied

19. What other services would you like to see for parents?

20. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "I feel that the University of Minnesota includes parents in the University community."

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

21. What year is your student now?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior
- ☐ Graduate student
- ☐ Unsure

22. This year, what has been your greatest concern regarding your student?

- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Finances
- ☐ Academics
- ☐ Time management
- ☐ Campus or community involvement opportunities
- ☐ Career planning
- ☐ Personal relationships
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other (please specify)

23. This year, on what topic has your student most requested your assistance or advice?
- ☐ Health and Safety
 - ☐ Finances
 - ☐ Academics
 - ☐ Time management
 - ☐ Campus or community involvement opportunities
 - ☐ Career planning
 - ☐ Personal relationships
 - ☐ None
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
24. What percentage of your student's college expenses do you expect him/her to contribute?
- ☐ 0 to 10 percent
 - ☐ 11 to 25 percent
 - ☐ 26 to 50 percent
 - ☐ 51 to 75 percent
 - ☐ 76 percent or more
25. How many hours per week does your student work?
- ☐ Student does not work
 - ☐ Fewer than 9 hours per week
 - ☐ 9 to 12 hours per week
 - ☐ 13 to 20 hours per week
 - ☐ 21 to 30 hours per week
 - ☐ 31 to 40 hours per week
 - ☐ More than 40 hours per week
26. Where does your student work?
- ☐ On campus
 - ☐ Off campus
 - ☐ Both on and off campus
 - ☐ Does not work

27. How many credit hours is your student currently taking?
- ☐ 8 or fewer
 - ☐ 9 to 12
 - ☐ 13 to 16
 - ☐ 17 or more
 - ☐ Don't know
28. How much time will it take/is it taking for your student to receive an undergraduate degree?
- ☐ Fewer than four years
 - ☐ Four years
 - ☐ Five years
 - ☐ Six years
 - ☐ Seven years or more
29. How important is it to you that your student graduates in four or five years?
- ☐ Very important
 - ☐ Somewhat important
 - ☐ Other factors are more important
 - ☐ Not at all important
30. Did your student start at the University as
- ☐ A freshman with no college credit
 - ☐ A first-year college student but with some college credits (i.e., PSEO or AP credits)
 - ☐ A transfer student from another college or university
31. Where does your student live?
- ☐ At home
 - ☐ On campus
 - ☐ Sorority/fraternity
 - ☐ Apartment/house near campus (non-University housing)
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
32. Please indicate where you live.
- ☐ Twin Cities area
 - ☐ Greater Minnesota
 - ☐ Wisconsin
 - ☐ Other (please specify) _____

33. What is your highest level of education?
- ☐ Less than high school diploma
 - ☐ High school graduate
 - ☐ Associate's degree
 - ☐ Bachelor's degree
 - ☐ Master's degree
 - ☐ Doctorate or equivalent degree
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
34. If you attended college, did you attend the University of Minnesota?
- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
35. If you attended college, how would you compare the level of your involvement/communication with your student to the involvement/communication your parents had with you during college?
- ☐ Much more involved
 - ☐ More involved
 - ☐ About the same
 - ☐ Less involved
 - ☐ Much less involved
 - ☐ Not applicable
36. Gender of student
- ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Transgender/other

37. How are you related to your student?
- ☐ Mother
 - ☐ Father
 - ☐ Grandmother
 - ☐ Grandfather
 - ☐ Aunt
 - ☐ Uncle
 - ☐ Foster mother
 - ☐ Foster father
 - ☐ Other
38. How old are you?
39. Is there a faculty member, staff member, activity, or organization that has made a particularly positive contribution to your student's experience at the University of Minnesota? If so, please describe:
40. Is there something you can identify that would have improved your student's experience at the University of Minnesota? Please describe:
41. If you would like to be entered in the drawing for a hotel stay at the Radisson University Minneapolis, a hotel stay at the Holiday Inn Metrodome Minneapolis, University Bookstore gift certificates, or a copy of *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me)* by Marjorie Savage, please include your mailing address or phone number.
42. We welcome your comments on any of the questions you've answered, or on other issues related to the University of Minnesota. If you would like a response or an answer to a question, please include your name and phone number or e-mail address along with your comments.

Appendix 2

Comparing first-year college parents who attended Parent Orientation with first-year parents who did not attend

	Attended Parent Orientation	Did not attend Parent Orientation
Have you discussed with your student Topics covered in e-mail listserv or <i>University Parent</i> ?	Yes 88%	83.3%
Satisfaction with U communications	Very satisfied 66.8%	Very satisfied 61.9%
Have you attended Parents Weekend?	Yes 29.7%	Yes 14.3%
Are you aware of the Parents Web site?	Yes 91.5%	Yes 83.3%
Satisfaction with parent programs/services	Very satisfied 43.7%	Very satisfied 37.5%
Feel U includes parents in campus community	Strongly agree 43.2% Disagree 5.7%	Strongly agree 39% Disagree 4.9%
Greatest concern regarding student this year	Health and safety 26.5% Academics 12.9% Finances 8.2% Personal relationships 10.7% Career planning 6% None 6.6% Involvement opportunities 3.8% Other 7.6% Time management 17.7%	Health and safety 28.6% Finances 19% Academics 16.7% Personal relationships 9.5% Career planning 2.4% Involvement opportunities 4.8% None 4.8% Other 4.8% Time management 9.5%
Topic for which student has most requested help this year	Finances 26.6% Academics 15.2% Career planning 10.1%	Academics 21.4% Finances 28.6% Personal relationships 11.9%

	Attended Parent Orientation	Did not attend Parent Orientation
Topic for which student has most requested help this year (continued)	None 9.8% Health and safety 10.4% Personal relationships 12% Involvement opportunities 5.4% Other 7.9% Time management 2.5%	Health and safety 14.3% Career planning 7.1% None 7.1% Involvement opportunities 2.4% Other 2.4% Time management 4.8%
Length of time expected to graduate	Four years or less 90.8%	Four years or less 95.3%
Importance of graduating in four or five years	Very important 73.7%	Very important 78.6%
Family residence	Twin Cities area 30.5% Greater Minnesota 19.7% Wisconsin 32.7% Other 17.7%	Twin Cities area 38.1% Greater Minnesota 24.1% Wisconsin 28.6% Other 11.9%
Student residence this year	Home 0.9% On Campus 95.3% Sorority/Fraternity 2.2% Apartment/house near campus 0.6%	Home (none) On Campus 97.6% Sorority/Fraternity 2.4% Apartment/house near campus (none)
Level of involvement (compared to own parents)	Much more 52.6%	Much more 61%
Grad of U of M	Yes 14%	Yes 26.8%

Appendix 3

Topics parents have discussed with their students

Have you discussed with your student any of the topics covered in either the e-mail or print newsletter?

Yes 87.8%

No 12.2%

Please list any topics you recall discussing with your student. (947 respondents; many listed multiple topics)

Topics	Number of Respondents
Room and board	
Housing (unspecified housing issues or on-campus housing issues)	145
Off-campus housing/apartments	57
Dining/meal plans	6
Financial issues	
Tuition, financial aid, loans, billing	48
Scholarships	54
Finances	31
Credit cards	6
Job/employment	25
University processes/facilities	
Deadlines/dates/schedules	42
One Stop	2
Parking/transportation (zip cars, winter, snow, bus)	34
Technology	3

Topics	Number of Respondents
Outside the classroom opportunities/services/student support	
Campus/area events, activities, involvement opportunities	89
New Student Weekend/Welcome Week	9
Parent Weekend	14
Homecoming	4
Volunteering	8
Research/UROP	4
Honor society/program	3
Career issues (job fairs, internships, mentorships, career counseling)	96
Counseling	5
Mental health/stress/depression	28
Campus/student jobs	27
Safety/security	
Safety/security/crime	355
Bike safety (theft, helmets)	9
Internet safety/identity theft	4
Bomb threat	3
Text-U (emergency/text alerts)	31
Health	
Alcohol/drugs	89
Cigarettes	1
Sex/rape	3
Health/Boynnton Health Services	27
Flu vaccinations	24
Transition/adjustment	
Student adjustment/breaks/first-year	17

Topics	Number of Respondents
Academics	
Graduation/Gradfest	40
Student services (advising, tutoring)	29
Contact with professor	2
Writing Center	1
Study abroad	52
Educational expectations (grades, studying, exams)	18
Classes/registration	21
Choosing/defining majors	6
Miscellaneous	
Storage companies	1
Gambling	1
Facebook/myspace	2
Virginia Tech	1
Republican Convention	1
Sleep	1
Care packages	1
Texting/cell phones	4
Weather	5
Bridge Collapse	1
Guns	1
Parent role/influence	1
Other	
Unsure/can't recall	47
Forward all or parts of newsletter	27

Appendix 4

Parent comments

Parents were given the opportunity to add any comments they wished. The following list categorizes comments we received.

Parent Program

- Glad to see welcome week has been expanded for new freshmen
- The parent email letter from M. Savage is wonderful!!! Such a great service for parents, it makes us feel connected and provides good information for me and info that I can pass along to my student.
- Also have a son who is a junior - both are having great college experience at the U. Lots to offer for activities, growth, new surroundings. Very pleased with everything....our children have said nothing negative about their schooling - except that their Spanish classes are hard!!! :) Thank you for all the efforts in sending information to the parents and making it available.
- Both my daughter and I are very satisfied with her experience and education at the U of M. . .Keep up the great work!!
- Both my wife and I really appreciate how the U of M keeps parents involved and informed. We have another child at a state university and there is little if any parental communication by the university.
- communication from the U is good
- Communication with parents is great!
- Excellent survey, easy to read and complete
- For orientation, we brought our family and stayed at a hotel for the entire weekend right up to the evening before classes. We were leaving our daughter far from home and thought we would need the weekend to set her up. We soon realized that we should have left after moving her in. The dramatic, tearful goodbye would have been the same- but she would have dealt with it quicker and would have gone on to attend the activities without worrying about entertaining us. We didn't know that there would be all of these activities planned for her that first weekend. We thought she would be alone and planned to stay with her until class time. It would have been nice to get one of your great parent newsletters in advance that explained how Orientation should go and suggesting that it is probably better to let them get situated alone. It is the only thing I would change- everything else has been a great experience and our daughter is now very happy to be a U of M student.
- For the most part I think Minnesota does a great job communicating with the parents. Our student has adjusted well and has taken advantage of many of the services provided by U of M. I am thankful for the heads up we are given and for the advice we have received from the U of M. Keep up the good work!

- FYI, we sometimes forward your email news to parents of college students elsewhere who don't receive the same high caliber of descriptive information about stages of student life from their students' smaller colleges. This could be a cash stream for the U to offer this service to smaller colleges.
- I am glad the website and parents letters give us information without intruding on our kids privacy. Sometimes my son means to give me all the info, he just doesn't have it or misses a key piece. This way I can stay in the loop a little better.
- I am pleased with the University in every way. It has come so far since I attended in the early 1970s. This is child #2 to attend the U and both have been very happy there.
- I appreciate all communications from the U of M. Read them and find them useful. Thank you!!
- I appreciate both the parent e-mails and the parent newsletter via the mail. Keep them coming. Thanks!
- I appreciate receiving the Parent Newsletters (both in electronic and paper forms) and updates, especially regarding student safety when the bomb threats were called in. Because I live in North Dakota and have other children, I'm not as involved in attending parent functions at the University so being able to log into the University Parent section to keep up to date on what's happening has been very beneficial to me and helps keep me connected! Thanks for doing a great job!!!!
- I appreciate the great communication of UMN with parents. Since my son is not very communicative, I learn so much from you all. Thank you.
- I appreciate the information provided. We try to let our son feel like he is grownup and make his own decisions. He knows we are there as resource and support, but not to manage his life...so it is comforting to find out news from you without badgering him.
- I appreciate this survey and more importantly, I appreciate all of the people who work at the University. My daughter is very happy being there and I know she is getting a quality education and meeting some really great people. Keep up the great work everyone!!!!!!
- I appreciate you doing this survey.
- I believe University of Minnesota does a wonderful job of orienting new students and parents. I am a college professor myself and I can say you really make students and parents feel welcome to your campus. I give you a "10" for being a University that cares about people.
- I especially enjoy the parent newsletter. Please continue to publish.
- I feel the University does a super job in communicating with parents and keeping us involved in what is happening on campus and off. I was nervous when my daughter decided she wanted to attend such a large school but I no longer feel that way.....thanks!!
- I greatly appreciate Marj Savage and her email responses to my specific questions. She was timely and thorough in her responses. Very good at keeping this helicopter parent from hovering too much. :-)
- I had a lot of trouble finding this survey from the listed website until Marjorie provided the needed link.
- I have appreciated the e newsletters. It does make a very big place feel a bit more intimate and welcoming

- I have appreciated all the parent communications from Marjorie Savage over the four years. The writing itself is friendly and inclusive, and the content informative.
- I have been impressed with the level of communication with parents, and the relevance of the newsletter topics. I'm originally from a small town, went to small schools, including college, and teach at a small elementary school. I was very nervous about having our son attend such a large university, but I have felt pretty comfortable about it since attending the Parent Orientation. It no longer seems so large and impersonal. Thanks!
- I have been so impressed by the University of Minnesota and particularly the parent program. I feel that I am constantly being advised/updated on what is going on there!! My daughter is a freshman and it was traumatic for me to send her 5 hours away. It was a little easier the first time around 2 years ago when I dropped my son off at a small Christian college 1 1/2 hours away. This time around it was a daughter, 5 hours away to a huge school. That's hard on a mom!! Thanks so much for taking some of the pain out of the situation!! She loves the U and so do we!!
- I have been SO pleased with my experience at the U. I'm hoping my other daughter will choose MN for school as well. I've heard horror stories from other parents about the lack of communication at other colleges -- thank you so much for keeping me in the loop - you've answered specific questions when I've written to you; you provide LOADS of information on-line about nearly any topic you can imagine. Thanks!
- I have been very happy with the Parent Communication, and with responses when I sent email questions. Thanks!
- I have been very impressed with the University of Minnesota -- with the support of and resources for both students and parents. Thank you!
- I have been very pleased with our entire experience with the U of M. I have always received prompt reply when I've emailed or called someone with a question. I have a strong sense that the school is concerned with and involved in making the college experience successful for my daughter. So far, the U of M has exceeded my expectations.
- I have enjoyed getting the parents' updates and look forward to continuing to receive them. Thank you
- I have greatly benefitted from reading the University Parent Newsletter online - living in Texas and being so far away, the newsletter has been an important connection for me vis-a-vis my son's experience at the U of M. THANKS!!
- I have had 2 students at the U. I really love the informative newsletter. I work at a high school and I have given the link to other University parents so that they could sign up to receive it. They were so grateful to have the connection to the happenings on campus and great information it contains also. Thanks
- I have two other children in college and by far U of MN has the best parents program. I never hear much from the Big 12 and Big East schools my other children attend. They call a lot looking for donations but that's about it.
- I looked forward to Marjorie's email every month. She was/is very in tune with the issues parents would be thinking about. My wife and I consider her a friend though we've never met her! Thanks Marjorie!
- I love getting Marge's emails. I feel like I know what's going on and it helps then to ask my student questions, give advice or just talk!

- I love Marjorie Savage and her updates. She seems to hit the nail on the head every time. She really knows what these kids are going through
- I mentioned in an early open-ended question that I am very pleased at the personal service. I have had the opportunity to talk with people in the scholarship department, housing department, and food service. Each time my questions were answered thoroughly and I was treated truly as an "honored guest". I am so very proud to have a son at the U of M. He plans on majoring in Biochemistry, minoring in French and completing all of his pre-medicine coursework. It would be a dream come true for him to advance to medical school at the U. Amazing professors...amazing staff. Good job, U!!
- I really appreciate the parent component that's available now at the U of M. Back when I was attended the U of M, there was no such thing. I am also very impressed when a call the U to get questions answered, I almost always get a real person right away, and everyone has been very helpful.
- I really did enjoy your newsletter e-mailed to us--pretty much our only link to what was going on. Thanks
- I really enjoy the Parent on-line Newsletter. Communication seems much better at Twin Cities campus than UMD where my other son goes.
- I so appreciate your efforts at reaching parents!
- I think Marjorie Savage does an excellent job keeping parents informed. This is our 3rd daughter to attend the U and we are so impressed with just about everything...except the rising tuition costs :O(Thank you!
- I think my mother would love to have had the regular mailings I now receive when she was a U mom!
- I think surveys are helpful so the U knows what they can improve on. I thank you for taking the time to ask the questions so parents have an opportunity to respond and let you know how they are feeling.
- I think the parent organization does a great job, thank you for the information you provide, and your willingness to answer questions.
- I think the U of M has been a great tool in our son learning to balance work, study, and social activity, living skills, etc. and being independent. All the tools are there for the students who choose to use them.
- I think the University of Minnesota does a superb job with communication compared to other colleges we have had experiences with.
- I think Twin Cities has the most beautiful campus. I like the area around the campus--everything is easy to walk to. I have recommended many people to tour your university when they ask about my son's school.
- I work in higher ed and have been very pleased with the U's parents program, and have shared the U's parent emails with my colleagues.
- I look forward to the parent E-mail. It lets me know what is going on without being overly intrusive. Someone said we don't have a newsletter that is hovering. Well I like knowing the weather and what students are up to. I like finding out what sources are on campus if my son needs extra help. My son would not go looking for help but I can let him know what is available. Thank you for making the time to write this each month.

- I'm very impressed with the services offered to students at U of M. I can compare it with U of Iowa, where my youngest daughter attends (and where I went to school). U of M is much better at communicating with parents and with offering new, valuable services to students (e.g. zipcar, van ride, web-based software for laundry machines)
- In general, UMN has given our daughter a wonderful education/experience. Thank you!
- It has been a pleasure to have our daughter attend the University of MN. She is very happy there and we don't have to worry about her. We enjoy our visits to your beautiful campus!
- It seems like a wonderful school. I would recommend it - wish I would have gone there.
- I've been employed at a University for 37 years and am very impressed with the Parent-related communications that come from UMN. I often pass along information I receive to our Recruitment and Enrollment offices as examples of things we should be doing. I LOVE the parent email newsletter from Marjorie.
- Our son has had an excellent freshman year at the U. of Minnesota. We've been very pleased with every aspect of the University experience, from moving in, to the housing and food, registration, etc. He's thriving, and very happy. Great job by all!
- Just want you to know how much I appreciate the e-mailed newsletters. I often share the information with my daughter/student. I also tell parents of prospective students about the great newsletter that really keeps parents informed and helps us to understand our students as they make their way through college. Thank you so much!
- Just want you to know that it has been a wonderful growth experience for my daughter
- I can not say enough positive things about the University of Minnesota and the Carlson school of mgmt.
- Keep up the great work. You are doing an outstanding job for such a large campus. I am really impressed!!
- Marjorie's email is perfect. Good reminders and good frequency!
- Marj has answered my email questions in detail - sometimes even the same day!
- Marjorie, the parents newsletter was so much appreciated this last 4 years, thank you for the wonderful job.
- Marjorie Savage does a great job on email communications. She makes a mass email sound very personal. Thank you!
- Marjorie Savage is a tremendous resource for UM parents. If she doesn't have the answer to your question, she will always find the answer and get back to you quickly. Thanks, Marjorie!!!!
- Marjorie Savage's biweekly parent newsletter has been extremely important to me during my son's time at the U. Not only is it well-written, it always covers the topics and questions that have been on my mind before I get around to asking them. Marjorie Savage is a treasure! Also, I strongly support the U's exploration of the student alcohol issue via the online parent course and other forums - although I didn't take the course, I feel it is a pioneering step for needed social change and have referred others, including officials at other universities, to it. Thank you for excellent communication with parents during my child's college career. It has meant a great deal to us.
- Marjorie: I like how you write about college students with a little bit of humor, that's how I see these young adults as well.

- My daughter came from attending very small schools for her entire life to the University. I was very concerned about its size and if she would be able to handle it. The University has been such a positive experience for her that I needn't have worried at all. I think the professors do an excellent job of including all students and making them feel part of the community and not just a face in the crowd.
- MY DAUGHTER HAS HAD FOR THE MOST PART A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY
- My daughter is having a very positive experience at the U. She has met fine young women in the dorm, is excited about her classes, is working in the library system and loves school. We are very pleased with her choice to attend the U of M.
- My daughter lets me know what is going on at the U. I also have one daughter that graduated last year and I have been very pleased with the u. both girls have had very positive experiences and have done very well academically at the U.
- My daughter loves the University. She is currently studying abroad and realizes how much she misses the U of M.
- I am proud to be a Gopher fan and that my son transferred to the U of Minnesota.
- My son attending the U of M was the right choice for him. I was concerned at first as it appeared so big, but he adjusted well and I sincerely thank you for that.
- My son loves the environment & community and is doing well, so that is all I need.
- My son started at U of M in 2001 and this year my daughter will graduate. Because we live in Wisconsin I have really appreciated the e-mails that keep us in the know about what is going on. I have told many people about the parent connection to the school and how valuable it is. We have gone through some minor crises with both kids at a distance but I have had encouragement along the way from the e-mails. The biggest crisis was right after my son started college on 9/11/2001. I really appreciated the support of the e-mail in keeping us informed of how things were going on the campus and what resources were available. You do a great service to a parent who can't be close when their "child" goes away to school. Thanks
- My student has overall had a wonderful experience his freshman year. He is very happy to be a Gopher and feels he made the right choice in picking the University of Minnesota.
- My wife and I especially enjoyed the session on generational differences in attitudes towards religion, etc during Parents Weekend last fall.
- Of course, we were as parents apprehensive of UMN mainly because of its size. But you break things down in manageable parts. The students always feel a sense of belonging to their dorm, their college, their extracurricular activities. You have not only created a home away from home but you have magnified opportunities for these kids. I commend you for keeping parents in the loop with your parent emails. I have been able to remind my son of upcoming opportunities, events because I read about it in your email. Marjorie Savage is someone who understands the relationship between parents, students and a successful college experience. I look forward to the email all the time. Way to go!!
- Our daughter absolutely loves it there and we can't be happier with the U of M!
- Our daughter graduated from University of St. Thomas in 2003. U of MN provided much more parental support. Thank you.
- Our daughter is in School of Pharmacy-so excellent

- Our son adores the U-my husband is a graduate. It's an awesome campus and we are very impressed with the education he is receiving. It's harder with a boy-I don't know as much of what is happening on a day-to-day basis, but that could be gender related...
- Our son has had the most wonderful experience a freshman could have. We could not be more pleased! Thank you all.
- Our son has not been as successful (GPA) at UM as we had hoped -- but I also realize that he is 100% responsible for his choices. UM certainly seems to offer excellent opportunities for students that reach out for them. We do appreciate the Parent Communications as a way of keeping in touch -- Good job & Thank you!
- Our son is 22 years old and we are proud of his accomplishments. The U has been a good university for him. We are happy to see him being responsible and making his own decisions.
- Our U of M student is our youngest child and the only person in our family to attend U of M. We are all University of Wisconsin grads and were disappointed she didn't choose UW, even though it was an option. We ended up more satisfied with the U of M than with recent experiences at UW, and the level of communication between U of M and parents was a major factor. Thank you.
- Overall, I am extremely satisfied with the U of MN. As a parent, I feel I have access to all the resources and information I need to support my daughter. My biggest concern was that the university was going to be "too big", but it really doesn't feel that way. My daughter seems very happy with her choice and is learning a lot about who she is and where she is going with her life. The size of the university has actually pushed her to become more assertive and to face some of her own insecurities which will serve her well as she transitions into adulthood. Keep up the good work!
- Overall, my daughter's freshman year has been a positive experience. For me, I like the convenience of having her so close to home.
- Overall, our son's experience, and ours as parents, at UMN could not have been better these past four years! Keep up the good work!
- Overall, we're very pleased. UMN communicated much more and much better than U of Wisconsin
- So far, so good!
- So happy my son decided to attend The U of M. He is getting a great education and is so happy with his choice of the university.
- Thank you for all of your encouragement to allow our students to be independent. Continue to keep the parent component separate from the student component at orientation. Giving information "behind the scenes" is valuable to parents, but allows students to maintain their autonomy. We really need to learn to butt out.
- Thank you for all your efforts toward parent communication. We have a student at UW-Madison and one at Michigan State. You definitely have the best parent communication of the three.
- Thank you for being interested in parents' opinions.

- Thank you for being "progressive" ! My son attends Concordia in Moorhead and there is a marked difference - no online service for billing, paying tuition, checking balances...just lots of long distance calls to make. I can always find answers to questions (even if it's a "who do I ask" question) at U of M.
- Thank you for conducting this survey!
- Thank you for doing such a nice job both for our daughter as a first year student and for us as parents. Her first year at the U has been a very positive experience.
- Thank you for inviting my participation.
- Thank you for the emails.
- Thank you for the great communication and parental involvement. It provides a concerted effort to support our student children.
- Thank you for the opportunity to comment!
- Thank you for the parent newsletters
- "Thank you for these past 8 years that my daughters have attended the U. Your newsletter has been wonderful.
- Do you offer anything for parents with students in your graduate program in Carlson...newsletter?
- Thank you for your efforts in keeping parents in the loop. We love the University of Minnesota!
- Thank you Marjorie and all of those involved with the parent program. You are a vital communications link that I grow to appreciate more and more with each passing year. Thanks for your tireless efforts and thanks for enabling us "long distance" parents to truly feel a part of the university community.
- Thanks for all the great work, and for the opportunity to provide feedback. Our son is really thriving at the U, and I believe the support system you are part of is a significant factor.
- Thanks for all the helpful information on the email newsletters. I read them the day I get them!
- Thanks for all you do! Our son is very pleased with his decision to attend U of M and we are too!
- Thanks for allowing us this opportunity. I have a niece who graduated from U of M two years ago and has stayed in the Twin Cities after graduation. She loves it there and seeing how much she grew from the experience I think to some degree inspired Matt to attend school there. As I said, it's a beautiful campus and I love how you have preserved that beauty and incorporated modern buildings and ideas into the beauty.
- Thanks for allowing us to take the survey. Honestly, you seem much better organized than our other college experiences.
- Thanks for doing the parent survey. When I tell other parents with kids not at the U about the parent newsletter, the alcohol course, etc, they are impressed and say, "we wish our child's college had that available."
- Thanks for giving us the opportunity to respond. We have been very pleased with our son's experience at Minnesota--he's loved it! Our experience mirrors his, as we've been so glad he's been so happy there!
- Thanks for helping my daughter grow!
- Thanks for providing ways to keep us connected to our student!

- Thanks for the excellent job you folks do!
- thanx for the online newsletter. I really appreciate the info you provide!
- The book 'You're on Your Own...' was & is a great help to me as a parent.
- The e-mails are a great service and a way for me to feel better connected with my son's college experience
- The Parent Email Newsletters were welcomed as some way of knowing a little bit about what is going on at the U.
- The parent emails have been wonderful since we don't see our student a lot. We have another child at another university and their communication to parents is almost non-existent. thanks!
- The Parent site and Info is outstanding! I attended UMN in the late '70s and my parents had none of this help. It really helps us stay connected to our students and helps with peace of mind.
- The University of Minnesota is very large. It is very difficult to try to answer some questions that you get from your student. We don't like to "micromanage". The student does have to seek answers on their own, which is not a bad thing. I am very pleased to have the University Parent segment associated with the University. All large campuses should do this. You can still feel somewhat connected and be as involved as you chose, even being far away. THANKS!
- Things are going well. I'm glad for all the opportunities my daughter has been given at the University. Thank you.
- This being our first college age child, my husband and I have been very impressed with the Univ. of Minn. overall and how easy it is to stay informed of goings on at the university even though we are hundreds of miles away.
- This is our second child to attend the "U"/Twin Cities. Our oldest graduated in 2007 and was very active in the marching band. We were thrilled to have both boys go to the "U". We both got our AA degrees from UMC in the mid 70's.
- This school is awesome overall.
- This was our 1st child entering college & we were a bit concerned about the BIG College experience. With the University of MN being as large as it is, we've been surprised at how much they take care of their freshmen class. The size of the school can be very overwhelming, but we have had a very positive 1st year & credit the university for their great email newsletters great orientation during the summer & their wonderful/informative website.
- U of M has been a learning, growing, positive experience for our son. Thank you for making us feel a part of it by keeping us informed.
- UMN goes way above the call of duty of keeping parents informed. I feel it is the duty of a University to help the student find their way, not the parents. My two older students attended Truman State University and University of Missouri-Columbia and both are smaller schools, but offered much less help to my students. MU actually has hampered my students rather than helped them.
- Very much appreciate the efforts by the University to keep parents connected through newsletters- especially like Marjorie Savage's tips. Trying not to hover! :-)
- We also have a daughter at Mankato - the involvement the "U" has is so much greater! For a big school, it appears very student friendly!

- We appreciate you and your staff's work helping our students adjust to the university!
- We are impressed with the parent info we have received over the years. We have 2 children at the U of M and are very proud to call it their school.
- We are very pleased with the job the U has done to keep parents informed and to work with making a good experience for the students. Our experience is as good as the private school our other child attends.
- We are very pleased with the University of Minnesota and our son's education experience
- We have a son who graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison and one attending the University of Hawaii. We feel that the University of Minnesota has done the best job of the three of communicating with parents. We really like the parent emails, newsletters, and booklets from the College of Biological Sciences.
- We have been extremely impressed with Marge Savage's work and contact with her and the staff. Marge and staff have been responsive to questions and are always willing to provide information. Keep up the good work!
- We have been pleased with U. of M. and our second child (a girl) will be a Freshman in the Fall in CBS. Our son, who is a Junior, is in IT (Physics).
- We have been VERY impressed with the communication between the school & parents. One Stop is terrific. Kudos to you all. Our other daughter went to a private school and it was not nearly as good.
- We have been very pleased with the communication we and our daughter has experienced through the University of Minnesota. The communication to parents and students has been helpful. Our oldest goes to UW and we all had to seek information. We were happy to hear they are modeling their program after yours--Thank you for all you do to keep the lines of communication open.
- We have sent both of our sons to the U of M and are pleased with their education. Thank you for the good job
- We highly recommend UM to parents.
- WE LOVE THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA!
- We were pleasantly surprised at the parent communication piece that we found at the U. It has been very informative and has answered many of our questions!
- We're having a great experience with the U!
- When I came to the U as a graduate student in 1976, it took me three days to register for my first quarter. There was no orientation, no parent newsletter, not much regard in general for whether or not I made it. My son has no idea how good he has it!
- When you have parent events on campus recognize some parents live too far away to attend. Make sure you promote these events as optional so that long distance parents don't feel like they are bad parents who don't care about their student.
- you do a wonderful job your site has been very useful, I have shared it with student affairs at Drake University where my other daughter attends and suggested they have something for their parents too.

- You have been so good to our daughter!!! We lived in the twin cities from when she was 3 until 12 and we always said she would attend the U. She applied as a 4.0 student, very driven, valedictorian of her class and got in. We knew it was the right choice even though we were close to 2000 miles away and she got into our two top schools in our state. She will graduate with the honors from the college of biological sciences with hope to pursue a medical career. We are still waiting to hear on medical school.
- your efforts have been great - and my son is having a great experience!
- Your focus on parent inclusion and involvement is wonderful!
- You've done an excellent job keeping us involved and informed. You've made a large, overwhelming campus seem small and welcoming.

Career Services/Major Selection

- All in all we've been very pleased with the communication and availability of career planning and personal advice.
- How would you rate your Career and Planning service for your students? How does a student feel about a younger student attempting to help an older student in this office? Does this office just have materials available for students to look at or does it counsel students about getting a job if one seeks it out. What about after the student graduates, what help is available? Is it only student help?
- My only concern was with the career counseling center. My daughter went there for assistance in choosing a career path, but they were more interested in personal counseling and didn't even know about a potential major that she asked about. She clarified with the counselor that she was there for career counseling and didn't go back after the first appointment.
- I realize that my son is now an adult who can make decisions/choices for himself. However, how do I coax him to visit his advisor and Career Planning office for suggestions/updates? He is a Jr. and believes he is on the right track with course selection, and isn't quite sure what the career planning office would possibly do for him.
- Is there a way to speak with a counselor about my son's academic record and his courses to see if the expert agrees with his track? In other words does it look like he is on the correct career path?

Academic Affairs

- My son had goals to transfer to the Carlson School of Management. He understood (or misunderstood) that his advisor would get him all the paperwork needed to make the transfer. That never happened and he missed the deadline. He is a freshman and maybe he was just not understanding. Can he go to the Carlson School and try to apply. He is very interested and sad that he made a mistake. His grades are 4.0 and his advisor said that would have been excellent for him to get in the school.
- I am not pleased with the fact that my son schedules appointments with his advisor and then the advisor doesn't get back to him until it is late making it more difficult to get the class time he may want. Also advisors in the College of Liberal Arts sometimes have no background in a field of study that your child may be in. Choosing classes is important, I don't believe the

guidance for my son was as good or personal as my daughter received. An example is when my son told me he had to drop out of the class he was in because he found out it was a Junior level course and he was a sophomore. If he had proper direction that would have not happened. Also when my daughter was emailing professors about possible research projects and internships many of the professors took weeks to respond or didn't respond at all.

- I had a great education at the U and now my daughter has experienced the same. She is an honor student and really grabbed the experience and ran with it. The quality of the courses was right up there where I expected it to be
- I think the University is well managed for such a large school and makes it feel more like a smaller community school, but with the advantages of a bigger school. The office is friendly and helpful. My biggest gripe is the TA's. There should be no language barrier. Just because a person has the credential in a subject, does not mean they are a good TEACHER. A teacher is able to communicate, enlighten, explain, nurture and encourage. Rattling off facts and figures in an almost-inaudible and unintelligible way, is NOT teaching.
- I would be most appreciative to find information for my son on improving study and note taking skills.
- I would like easier access to the student records, finances particularly. But I understand the strong confidentiality laws that are in force. It is just frustrating sometimes.
- IT college was quite late in announcing its graduation schedule compared to other colleges. What insanity to have graduation before final exams!
- Like any state school this survey appears to focus more on the in state student then the out of state that my student is. Unfortunately, the Carlson school is equally short-sighted. I could get into a list of issues, but I don't think this survey is going to impact the Carlson school
- Living in Lincoln, NE, we had at our disposal (with scholarship) the University of Nebraska. However, when my son was a sophomore in High School, UMN reached out to him and stayed in touch with him and impressed him with the academic opportunities much more so than Nebraska. I wish there would have been scholarship opportunities for him at UMN but he is having a great experience and we appreciate the Midwest Tuition Exchange.
- My daughter's best classes are her seminars and her outreach classes. Her core science classes are very rigid, from what I can see, and the use of grad students who do not seem to have adequate or flexible faculty oversight is causing serious problems. Grad students were one reason I did NOT want to send her to the U.
- I would like to hear what the U of M has to say about the issue of having instructors in place who can't speak English well enough to teach the material.
- My student is a young man of few words. Unfortunately, because he does not share much with us, we don't know how he is doing until grades come out. He has already failed two semesters, has been on academic probation, and suspended from the university and had to appeal to get back in. He is in his sixth year at umn, and is telling us that he has two semesters to go after this spring semester. We have no idea where he stands now, and what our options are as parents. We are very frustrated and concerned about his well-being. We encourage and support him as much as we can, and are visiting him more on a regular

basis. He loves umn and loves living in Minneapolis. He tells us he is in the field of study he wants as a career. He also tells us there is really ""no academic advisor"" in the upper division of IT. Who can we talk to about all this? I see there is a resource website for faculty if they notice any changes in students, but do they really pay any attention? He keeps repeating previously failed classes and, we found out, wasn't even attending classes last semester. Isn't that a rather good indicator of a student in distress? I realize the student needs to be proactive in his education and I'm not placing blame, but wouldn't someone notice that there might be a problem here? Thank you for any assistance.

- Overall, my son has done extremely well in the Electrical Engineering Program and is very satisfied with his experiences. He really needs no direction. He completed a highly successful internship last summer and will be traveling to Austin TX to participate in a different one this summer. What he has learned has proven to be very relevant to his work experience. He is mature and independent. However, I am amazed that he doesn't know his professors and that his professors don't know him. For example, he needed a couple of references for an upcoming scholarship. I asked him which profs he would ask for a reference and his response was that he was going to use references from last summer's internship because he didn't know any of the profs well enough to ask them. He has an approximately 3.9 GPA going through the honors EE program and doesn't know any of his professors on a level in which he could call on for a reference? That to me is amazing. The program is good and he is very satisfied with his education but college should be more. It was for me.
- Overall, communication to parents is pretty good, but still frustrates me that answers and solutions are so complicated. Especially annoying has been the study abroad experiences we have had. Both kids chose programs with direct exchange programs with Univ of MN in their major; both had problems with credits being applied and questions answered. Should not be this way with an established University program. No one takes responsibility, either in the Study Abroad center or the College.
- The biggest problem I have had with the University is getting any communication concerning my daughter's schedule, her grades, her study abroad program etc. due to the privacy act. She even signed something stating it was ok with her to discuss any of this. I needed information when she was studying abroad and was not able to get anything from the University. (even though she signed a form giving her permission.) I think many times the privacy issue is used as an excuse to get out of speaking with the parents.
- The Honors program has just been great for our son as well as the Middlebrook Hall experience.
- Upon our son entering the U as a freshman, we, as parents were apprehensive of such a large and far away place from home. He, and we, has found the school has appeared to become "smaller" as he has become involved with school, and school organizations. Also, he has had some WONDERFUL instructors, many who he stays in contact with even when they aren't his current instructors.
- We've been very pleased with the research opportunities our son has had at the U of M. Keep it up. Please try to make the new University Honors Program a lot like the IT Honors Program!

- Who could I contact on the grading system that has been implemented at the Carlson School of Business. This really needs to be reviewed and corrected.
- ting and it has been recorded at the U of M.
- Advisors are very helpful and informative
- We are all extremely impressed with the U of MN. At our first visit, Professor Tony Seykora came down, met with our daughter and me, spent an hour discussing the U and its animal science program, and offered to take us on a tour of the vet school buildings that afternoon. When we returned, advisor Bob Pagel took us on a tour. Our daughter was 'sold' on attending the U that day due to the kindness extended. Your outreach to parents and students is impressive.

Financial

- Are there any discounts if more than one child attends the University?
- College costs have gone way too high. I think evidence of this is the many little colleges springing up and trying to get in on the boon.
- How can my student explore financial aid opportunities?
- I'm a bit distressed that all that money is going into a major sports arena when academic programs and libraries should be the priority.
- If we need help next year with a job search, can you direct me better to a person and a timetable of when our son should apply....still in the summer?? The website was confusing as to students could apply early...so our son waited until he got to school...and it seemed to be a difficult pursuit for him....at least the first few weeks...that has been the most disappointing thing for him and us.... he will have to figure it out now financially, but it would have really helped if he could have understood the "getting a job" process better. I did speak with someone , but I think it was too late.... that is my only recommendation to make that a bit more clear. Otherwise, we have been immensely pleased at the communication between the University and us as parents.
- I really hope the University can get the funding to create a bio research campus. I'd also like to see that light-rail tunnel under Washington Av. I don't care about sports much but am glad the stadium is being built.
- I stated earlier that my daughter is looking for a summer internship in our area and not finding an adviser to help her with that need.
- I would appreciate any help with scholarships
- I would like for my daughter to have someone help her fill out scholarship applications, etc.
- Let's work to get the cost down... this is ridiculous to suffer as a family so much just to get a darn degree.
- More information on financial aid (easy step-by-step information to options)
- My main concern is that my daughter will be so in debt when/if she graduates. I have worried excessively about this. I put myself through college, it took 7 years, but my college loan was less than \$5,000, when I was done, in the '70s. She owes more

than that, after 1 semester. She doesn't seem concerned about this, says everyone is in debt, after college. Are there any workshops, etc. on college finances, for parents and/or students?

- Our only problem has been in paying the tuition. It seems to take a long time to show up as being paid. The first semester we thought we had sent the payment in on time, but we were charged a late fee. Part of the problem was it was over the Thanksgiving holiday. When I check the website to see if it has been credited, it always takes longer then I think it should (up to 14 days after I send the payment).
- Please encourage the colleges to send information regarding scholarships and registration deadlines to the parents. I realized there are restrictions on confidentiality of student information but most students, I believe, would be very willing to let the colleges send this kind of information to help remind parents to remind students to get application material and registration material completed in a timely manner. We have been very pleased with our son's experience at the University of Minnesota.
- The cost continues to skyrocket. Why do loans add interest now? Our son HAS to take loans and the interest is due quarterly. We have to pay that because he doesn't have the money. Interest should be deferred until graduation like it was when we went to college.
- The way you apply scholarship money should be explained. My son received a very small amount. This check was mailed to my son and made payable to the University. Apparently you divide it between the two semesters. I wanted it all to be used the first semester. I had to get a letter from the folks providing the scholarship to get it applied to the first semester and get the late fee removed from the bill. My son just received a bill for another late fee and I think your system may have deducted half the scholarship from the second semester bill and now he will have to get that fixed. Way too much stress for him when it is not his fault.
- This has been a perfect fit for our daughter. I just wish the cost of education (not blaming you) wasn't so high. These students come out so much in debt. She has had great classes and experiences at umn and we have seen her grow into a wonderful adult. We could not be happier. I have had friends who children went to Madison and did not get the care and attend our daughter has received. They are no longer attending Madison and have had very difficult experiences.
- Tuition is too high. Arranging loans is a nightmare with little help. Details of loans are scarce and hard to find. I paid a lower tuition at St. Catherine's in St. Paul with my 1st daughter than at the U!!! My third child will not go to the U.
- Why, at UMN, do Perkins Loans get distributed to freshman only first; then to others if available? My student had greater need than some of the freshmen awarded, but had to go on a waiting list (which never was gotten to) because he is a sophomore. We apply very early in February and I think it should go by need first.
- Would like more help/info on scholarship opportunities. Our daughter is a physics major/aerospace engineering major in IT and I would like to know what there might be for 2nd and 3rd year IT students.
- Your web site is a nightmare. As a parent paying for my child's education I am shut out of your web site. It never accepts my login info. I email for help and have never received any help. I call and get some kid who says there are two login systems used by the university. One for my child's info and one for billing. Does not matter I can't get into either one.

- I am hoping for more scholarship funds for my son to be able to continue at the UMN. He had a 4.0 GPA with 15 hours last semester and has not received any help from the university itself, only from the BFA Department. Expense for out of state students is very high and we have to borrow money which will be hard to pay back at my age.

Housing

- As parents of a freshman, we have had a positive first year experience up until recently when our son clicked his way into a binding apartment contract through university housing. While we realize students are responsible for reading through the material given to them, we feel the ease with which the University allows students to get themselves into a binding contract with a few clicks online needs to be changed. We have been working with Lisa Schulte to resolve this situation, but have not been released from the "accidental" commitment our son made for housing as of yet. This has caused great stress and anxiety in our family. Please re-evaluate your apartment application process so that other families do not have to experience this frustration.
- I would like a response to the food issue in Middlebrook Hall. How can it be improved with better selection for vegetarians?
- I would like to add, that when something came up while we were on campus, it was taken care of and we appreciate that. For example, we smelled gas outside his dorm room (by a meter) and left a message at the desk, and another time we observed wasps building a nest outside his dorm window - it was also taken care of.
- My husband has already mentioned the problem we had when our son moved into Yudof Hall last August. I had the same concern, but you have already corresponded with him. The move was filthy disgusting, but handled very well by the university staff.
- Provide healthier food in Cafeteria. Land line is unnecessary in dorm room, manage cost without cutting quality. If there are two or more students in one household, mail one newsletter to each address. Print in lower quality paper to save money.
- When beer is found in a room what is the protocol?
- When my daughter was a freshman living on campus, I did complain about some religious material that was on a bulletin board in the dorm...I got an immediate response and I appreciate it.
- Add dimensions for residence hall rooms (closets, etc.) to website.
- Dining Hall in the dorm – great. Hope the U never changes to large central dining halls - dining greatly affects a students well being and experience. My daughter's experience at her former college with a central dining hall was not good (too big, seemed unfriendly, noisy, students stopped going, would skip meals, not great for studying, students didn't go in bad weather, so much food it seemed unappetizing.)
- The large dorms are good with mail boxes, movies, games & vacuums for check out, and some planned activities. I think each dorm house having activities really helps students feel part of a community!
- The humidity is too high in the women's bathroom in the dorm and therefore there is mold growing - not enough fans and ventilation. Also one weekend they ran out of toilet paper in the women's bathroom - not nice.

Miscellaneous

- I am also very impressed with the university's current advertising campaign - it reflects well on the u, our students and our community!
- Boynton Health Services helpful.
- As on all university campus continued emphasis on controlling underage drinking as it what "everyone does" and so it limits friends, opportunities for those students who do not drink.
- The alcohol situation at frat houses is abominable. My daughter got a DUI driving to work after a frat party and it's been a nightmare. USLS helped her tremendously. I also spoke with a Campus Police Officer on the phone who was very supportive.
- I found Safe Sex Week, or whatever it was called, to be very offensive. An animated condom? I raised my son to have sexual morals. This week of "fun" was very contrary to what I've tried to teach him
- From what I could tell, I thought that the bridge collapse catastrophe fall out was handled very well at the U.
- I have been very pleased with my daughter's U of M experience with the exception of the Disability Services office. She qualifies for assistance but they have seemed very disorganized. One person promised her certain services and others said no such services existed. Phone calls were not returned or not returned promptly. Each individual that we talked to seem to have a different answer. No continuity. So far it's been a very frustrating experience.
- Do you have a procedure to attempt reimbursement from Delta Gamma for the costly expenses that we have to endure do to their wrong doings?
- I know our student has really enjoyed the late Saturday night activities for the students.
- Transfer House & related program - great program
- I very much appreciate that the Union sponsors so many activities for students on the weekends. My daughter liked such events as the multi-cultural night and decorating clear balls before xmas. Although she wouldn't mind if they started 30-60 minutes earlier.
- With students who have mental health issues, it would be helpful if the staff were willing to talk more to the parent, as well as be more directive in helping the student choose the right classes, learn study skills, etc. I felt quite put off by the staff, as if I were identified as a "helicopter mom" who needed to be gently separated from my daughter in order to let her reach her independence. We have a therapist who is helping her do that. On the campus, however, she needs a support structure that she hasn't had because I was not allowed to be involved in her choices and situations.
- As a whole I really like the university. I am always recommending it to other students. I think that Minnesota is a great place for minorities to grow and be treated as human beings and not just a color. We need more states such as Minnesota and the university to make sure that everybody gets a fair chance at life and all that it has to offer.
- I am also a PhD student at the U of MN this year; this explains the more frequent contact!

- I'm aware that cell phones have been described as modern day umbilical cords and that some feel the extended connectedness to parents delays a young adult's growing up. Our family's college students are VERY connected to others electronically (cell phone, Facebook, etc.) and I'm glad that I'm one of the people ours are connected to. I've told her that the level of phone contact we have is up to her. In other words, she initiates the phone calls about 95% of the time. We've made it clear that we're here when she needs us and wouldn't have it any other way.
- My daughter's years at Twin Cities has generally been a very positive experience. The main negativity was when the cleaning person at her sorority house stole her i-pod and diamond earrings, and nothing was done (the woman was fired, but nothing else).
- If you could only do something about the weather...
- One concern of my daughters is the fact that she occasionally attends events where speakers are invited and lunch is provided and she sees that students & street people come in to eat and then leave. She finds this very rude and wonders why this is allowed.
- Re: TXT-U I do not know about text messaging but my daughters do. I have heard that there is a growing problem with this form of communication receiving huge amounts of SPAM and that people are racking up enormous bills when they open up the messages. Does your alert system have an ID so that students can recognize it as an alert rather than SPAM?
- Unrelated to the survey, I find it terribly difficult to find mailing addresses or phone numbers (of the correct person) on the web site. I realize it is a big institution, but I spend a lot of time hunting for these things.
- We have very few students from our school of 500 students 9-12 that go to the university. The most common statement is that it is too big. When you do marketing programs try to emphasis there are ways to navigate big universities or emphasis the smaller individual programs.
- I am always frustrated by parking! \$9 event parking was only thing available in ramp on 3/9, and all I wanted to do was drop something off. .
- Also interested in finding out since I live so far away if the students get help in moving their things and furniture in the dorm to a storage center that we would rent for the summer. It is a 22 hour drive from where we live and he would need some help in storing his things for next year.
- We are very pleased with our son's accomplishments at the U. People often worry about the size of the University but that has never been a problem. He has met some new people to "hang out" with despite living close to his high school friends.
- As I earlier stated, the University seems to have a lot for parents of freshman. But transfer students parents could use some orientation as well. I think the needs are different, because most students have already had some college living, but issues such as housing are different at the University.
- I work at the U of M and have not been impressed with how detached everything is, especially for transfer/commuter students. No real sense of community. More should be done to provide housing for these students so they can have a better college experience.

Safety

- I am concerned about safety as students walk from place to place on campus particularly in the evening. It seems to have become more of a problem with each year that our daughter has been on campus. I hope that addressing this issue is a high priority. I also wonder if there are self-defense classes that are offered frequently.
- I wish that the U could get a better handle on the crime around campus. It bothers me greatly and I know people that have been victims at the U.
- I have been very concerned about the assaults that have occurred on and around campus. Also to the police depts., handling of the reports. My son's roommate was assaulted and we did not think it was handled well. With the students out studying late etc. I am concerned about their safety.
- I would like to see more campus police presence around the perimeter of the campus along with more on the campus
- Urban environment like the Twin Cities can be worrisome in terms of safety, especially as a parent of a young woman. Reading the newspapers from Minneapolis and St. Paul can be a bit nerve wracking as our small community has much less concerns. Is there enough focus on being street-wise and safe?
- NO excuse for the crime in the neighborhood--put pressure on the city to clean things up around there

One Stop

- I don't care for the one stop website at all. It is very difficult to navigate. Also, the different passwords etc required for me to pay my son's bills are very confusing because it is never clear which number is required and it is always difficult to tell which page to go to.
- My son and I are very disappointed in the personnel at One Stop. On more than one occasion when I called there asking for clarification of a matter regarding my son's bill or financial aid, I have been spoken to in a very demeaning manner and tone of voice. My son has had problems with their handling of his bill, (i.e. when he received another outside scholarship, they took more than the amount of the scholarship in other financial aid and then argued with him that everything they did was correct). He has had several times when he has been told one thing and then he is told something else days or even hours later. When I went to the Parent Orientation, we were told numerous times that One Stop could handle all our needs and they were the best and most friendly people to work with. That has been far from our experience.
- One Stop is confusing to me. When I log-on, I almost always end up clicking on something that dumps me off. It is not set up in a very user friendly (logical) mode.
- One Stop is absolutely wonderful. We have 2 sons at the U of MN and they both love it, as we do (the parents.) The only problem is paying for it!
- The One Stop phone answerers are wonderful. Every question I've had they have found the answer.

- Your One Stop website for student billing is very confusing and non-intuitive. The icons could be labeled better; it takes me 10 minutes each visit to figure out where the current billing information is posted. Frustrating.
- The One-Stop is such a GREAT idea. So far, they have answered most all of my questions right from the get-go.