



International Student & Scholar Services

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Analysis of Fall 2013 International Student Barometer Survey Data

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Introduction

In October 2012 and October 2013, International Student and Scholar Services invited all international students to participate in an online comprehensive survey called the International Student Barometer (ISB). The ISB is a survey conducted by i-graduate®, based in the United Kingdom, and utilized by universities across the globe which allows for the benefit of benchmarking.

The ISB used a mixed method research design to gauge student satisfaction surrounding different aspects of their experiences at the University of Illinois. The survey asked a variety of quantitative questions, allowing students to rank their opinions on either a 4 or 5 point scale. It also gave students the opportunity to provide qualitative feedback on 6 different topics throughout the survey. In 2013, approximately 2,700 out of approximately 9,400 students participated in the survey which is a response rate of about 29%.

Using the 2013 data, we were particularly interested in analyzing the differences in satisfaction between undergraduate and graduate students and comparing the two populations. There has been a significant increase in international undergraduate students in recent years, and currently the number of international graduate and undergraduate students on campus is almost equal. The increase in the undergraduate population brings new challenges and insights, and as the two populations deal with different issues and have different experiences, the two groups were analyzed separately this year.

The purpose of this report was to present an analysis of selected qualitative and quantitative portions of the data that remain most relevant to our campus.

Abstract

This report presents the results of the Fall 2013 ISB. The findings are analyzed separately by undergraduate and graduate students and then we compare undergraduate and graduate students. In each section, the results are divided into the six categories of the ISB: arrival, support, living, learning, advice, and recommendations. Overall, the quantitative results were positive. The first four categories: arrival, support, living and learning all scored above an 85% satisfaction rate. Graduate students were slightly more satisfied than undergraduate students in all of these areas. The lowest satisfaction was in the arrival category for both graduate students and undergraduates. Nearly 85% of undergraduate students and 87% of graduate students said they would recommend the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Many themes emerged in the qualitative comments, some of which were equally mentioned by both graduate and undergraduate students. Examples of those themes include: need for airport pickup, lack of sustainability, and the wealth of opportunities and resources available on campus. Certain themes were unique to only undergraduate or graduate students. For example, undergraduate students noted the importance of making friends from different cultures while graduate students were concerned with the importance of the academic advisor.

Methodology

For the qualitative portion of this data, we based our analysis on Creswell's (2007) phenomenological approach. According to Creswell, "The type of problem best suited for this research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon" (p. 60). We chose this approach for our qualitative analysis because we were interested in understanding how this population experienced the common phenomenon of being an international student at our University. The data was analyzed by hand and a coding process was utilized to identify the themes. Comments were directly transcribed, excluding the modification of capital letters to reflect the appropriate case.

In the quantitative section, we had a dataset of 370 variables and 2,722 observations. Most of the variables were categorical, such as levels of satisfaction and recommendation. Considering this fact, we based our analysis on descriptive statistics and data visualization. Descriptive statistics give summaries of the sample. Using data visualization, we can see the differences, trends, portions and attributes of certain groups. We utilized pie charts and bar charts to display the quantitative data, focusing on distribution of answers and satisfaction rates.

Limitations

The survey was divided into different sections (arrival, living, learning, recommendation, advice, and support) allowing participants to rate their satisfaction levels and offer any qualitative comments. It is important to note that the quantitative and qualitative results of the survey; generally supported one another, but were not entirely consistent. Based on the quantitative data alone, the overall results of the survey were positive, whereas the qualitative data reflected more dissatisfaction. One possible explanation for this is that when participants took the time to answer the qualitative questions, they were generally either very satisfied or very dissatisfied, not simply neutral. Additionally, the quantitative results were measured on a 4 point ordinal scale (1=very dissatisfied; 2=dissatisfied; 3=satisfied; 4=very satisfied), which provided no option for a neutral answer.

Findings: Undergraduate Students

Out of 4,978 international undergraduate students, including non-degree seeking exchange students, 1,145 participated in this survey. This is a response rate of approximately 23%.

Arrival to the University

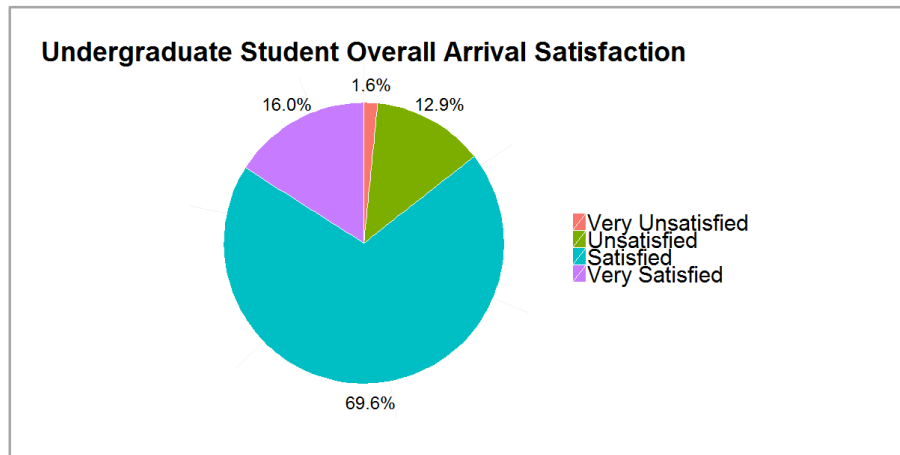


Figure 1. Overall Arrival Satisfaction for Undergraduate Students

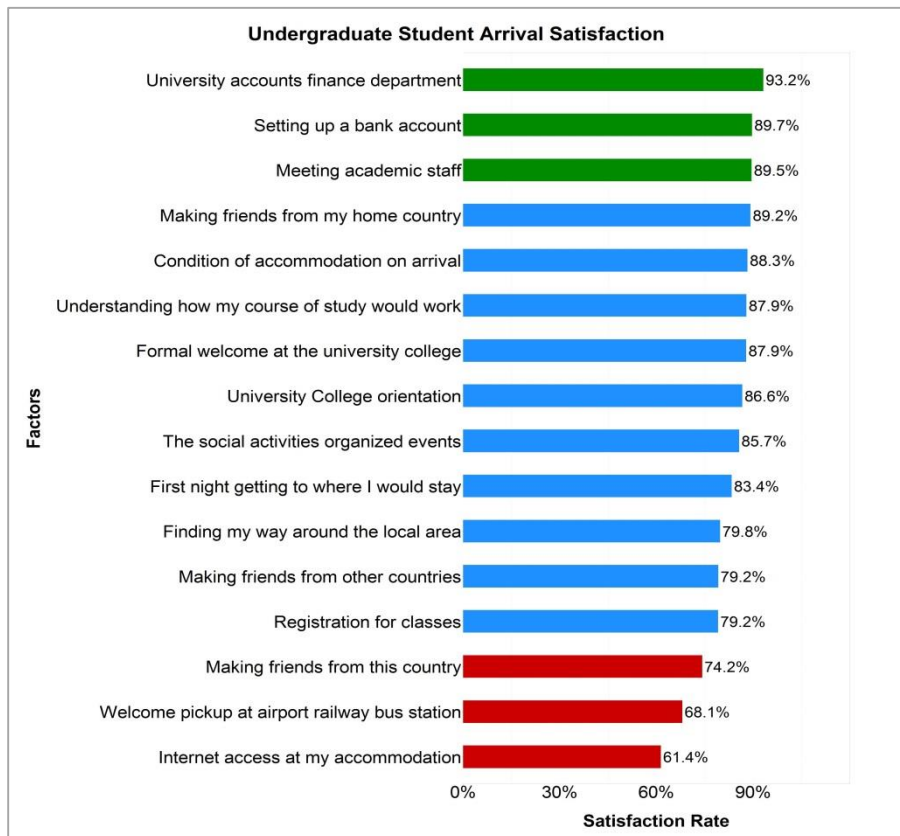


Figure 2. Satisfaction Rates of Factors Related to Arrival Experience

Qualitative Arrival Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Need for airport pickup

“There should be some on-campus shuttle bus provided for international students who have heavy luggage.”

“My friends here pick me up when I arrived here, otherwise I do not know where to go.”

“I'm not satisfied with welcome/pickup at airport etc at all, but I was pretty excited about studying at USA so it was fine.”

Lack of information received from the University

“Mostly received information from peers”

“I did not know of any tours to get to know the campus and I would have really liked to have one. When I first came here I had to rely on a map and try to learn where was everything, it would have been nice to have other students taking you around campus.”

“Future students would be very thankful if there were specific people who could answer any questions regarding ways to get here. Personally, when I was making a reservation for bus from O'Hare to here, the only time available was about an hour after my plane's approximate arrival time. I had no idea if I would be able to ride this bus because I didn't know how much it would take for me to get out of the plane, wait to be qualified for immigration, and take my luggage. Since this was the only option that I could think of, I chose to leave it to my luck. Eventually I was able to take the bus but I was worried for the entire time during my 15 hours of flight. All I am asking is that it would be very helpful if UIUC sends an e-mail to international students that there are people who can help with questions regarding transportation through an e-mail or phone calls.”

Support Services

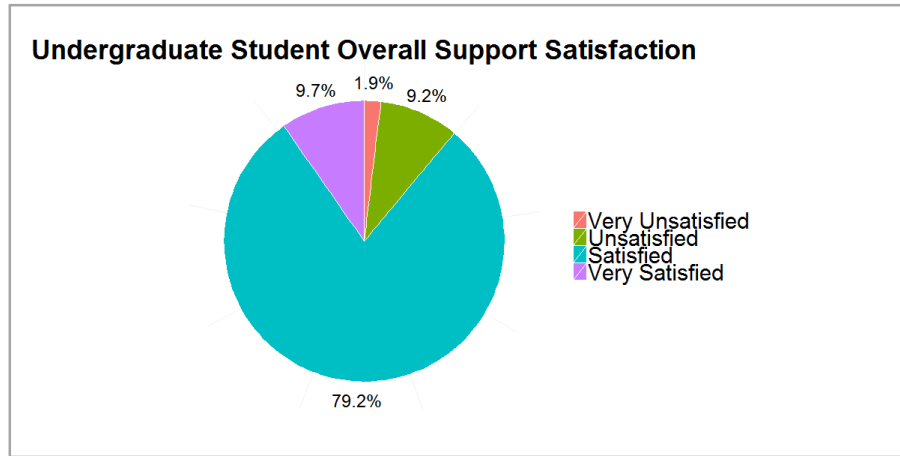


Figure 3. Overall Support Satisfaction for Undergraduate Students

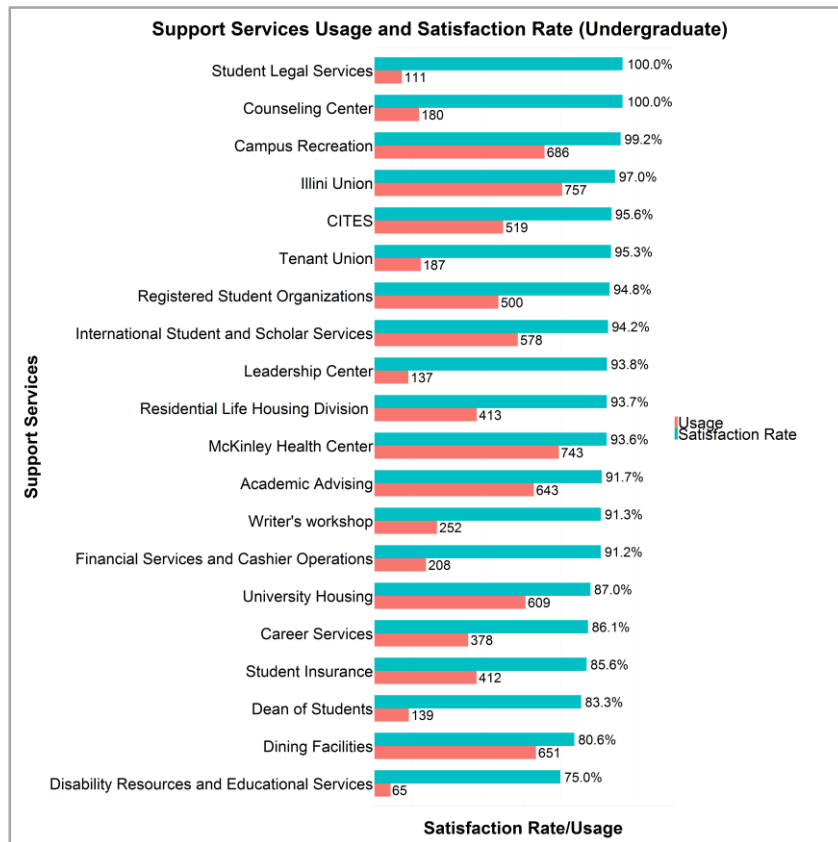


Figure 4. Satisfaction Rate and Usage of Support Services

Qualitative Support Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Improved food options in University dining halls

“I think the dining facilities should focus on making all food they provide healthier. More healthy options and less unhealthy options.”

“Add more variety of food in the dining halls”

“The food needs to be improved for the vegetarians. Some more Indian food is needed. There is so much for the Chinese and nothing for the Indians.”

Customer service

“ISSS: Would like to have staffs at the front desk who have attitude of respecting international students and understanding their struggles and difficulties adjusting to American Culture. Developing kindness and understanding for the staffs at ISSS”

“ISSS was very disappointing... I had an issue with my immigration status that I needed some help with, and received absolutely none from them.”

“I did not use ISSS a lot, but several times I went there and I had to wait for some person to take care of me for too long, and sometimes they did not show up even though there was no line, which made me come again after the lunch break.”

“The McKinley Health Center is very helpful to my mental issues and the doctors are very kind and patient. I really want to thank them for their help.”

“Mostly using McKinley Health Center requires so long time and I could not get any benefits from academic advising.”

“Hope the career service center could be more helpful in assisting international students to find internships and jobs”

“Tenant union seriously have to work on their behavior. I was treated very bad, was laughed at because of my foreign accent, my preferences with housing was neglected and I was met with arrogance and nonchalance”

“Counselling center treats everyone who goes there like someone with severe mental disorders...it makes the people who found the service very uncomfortable... offering more casual counselling services would help”

“Not good in English and not speaking much, I didn't receive much attention from my RA in my freshman dorm”

“A lot of the support services don't pick up their phones when I tried to call them (esp. housing)”

Living Satisfaction

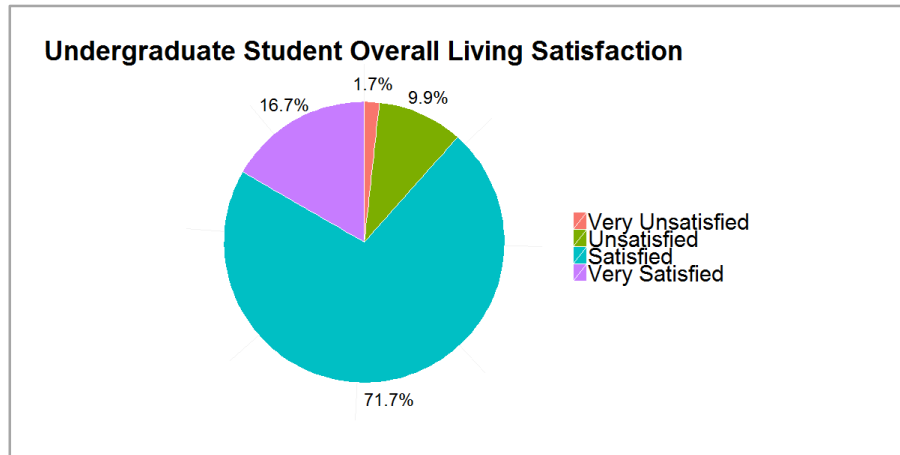


Figure 5. Overall Living Satisfaction for Undergraduate Students

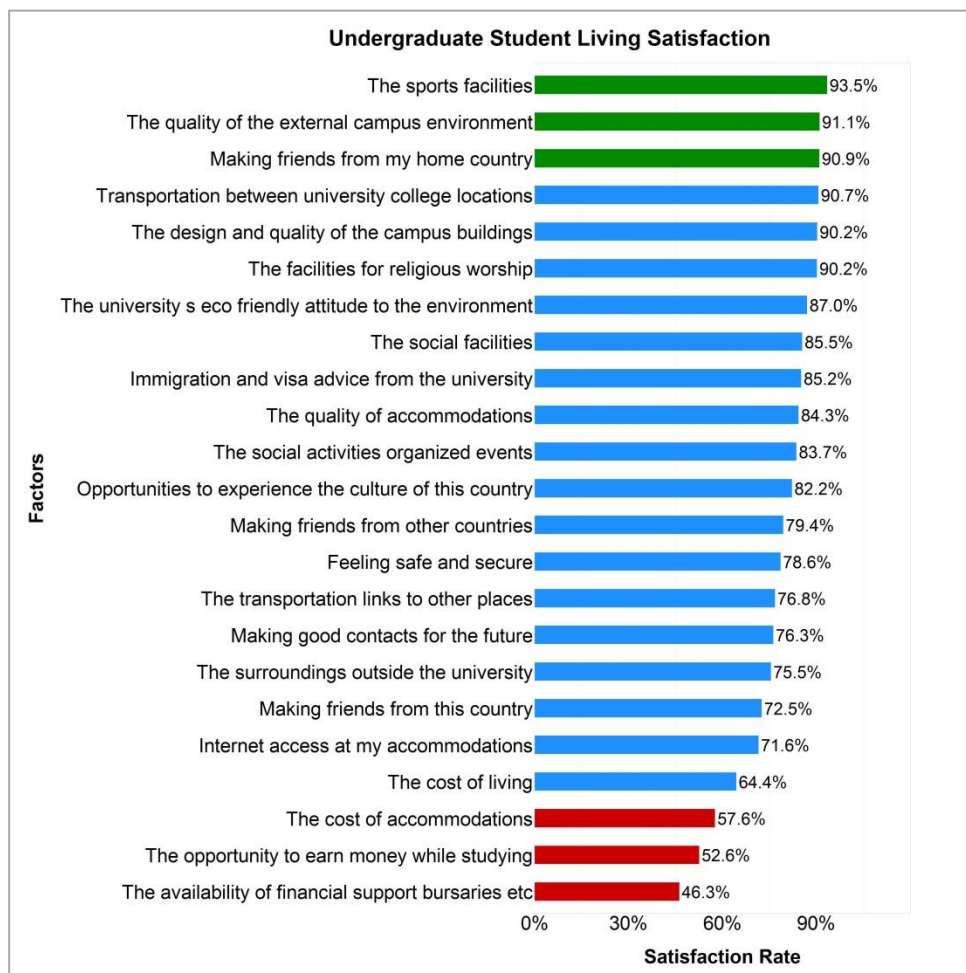


Figure 6. Satisfaction Rates of Factors Related to Living Experience

Qualitative Living Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Costly University housing

“It is a pretty good place to live but university housing is very expensive”

“Please reduce the living and accommodation expenses at least for this provided by university housing.”

“Dining hall fee is ridiculously overpriced.”

Unreliable internet service in University buildings

“The wireless Internet in the dorm is not very stable.”

“The internet in our resident hall is so slow that disturb me by doing assignment!”

“The wireless internet should be campus wide, it disconnects as you move buildings. This is 2013 and yet connecting to the internet on campus is still an issue.”

Lack of sustainability

“About recycling, I think that students are not even aware of that. My American roommate didn’t even know which bin was for recycling, and this is a bit of a shame.”

“Seeing the amount of food wasted in the dining halls took a bit of getting used to.”

“I want to recommend a recycling even in a dining hall.”

Safety concerns

“I don’t feel safe walking back to my apartment when it’s dark out.”

“I think that the university makes a big deal of security, and sometimes it’s too much. One of my friend was scared because of the university at the beginning of the semester. I think that was unnecessary.”

“The alert sent out at the beginning of the semester scared us a lot. It will be better if campus could enhance the safety around the campus, especially at night.”

Bus system

“The bus service literally dies out the second school closes for break. For more international students it’s an inconvenience.”

“Buses are not very convenient in Ashton Woods.”

Learning Satisfaction

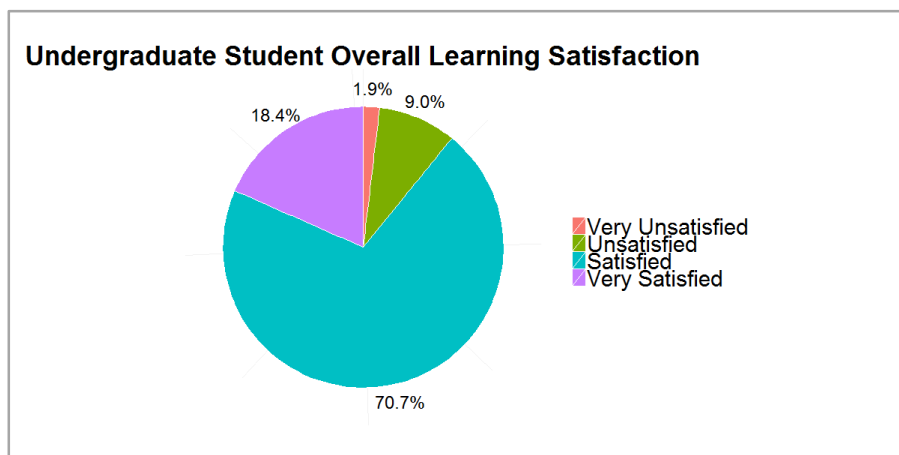


Figure 7. Overall Learning Satisfaction for Undergraduate Students

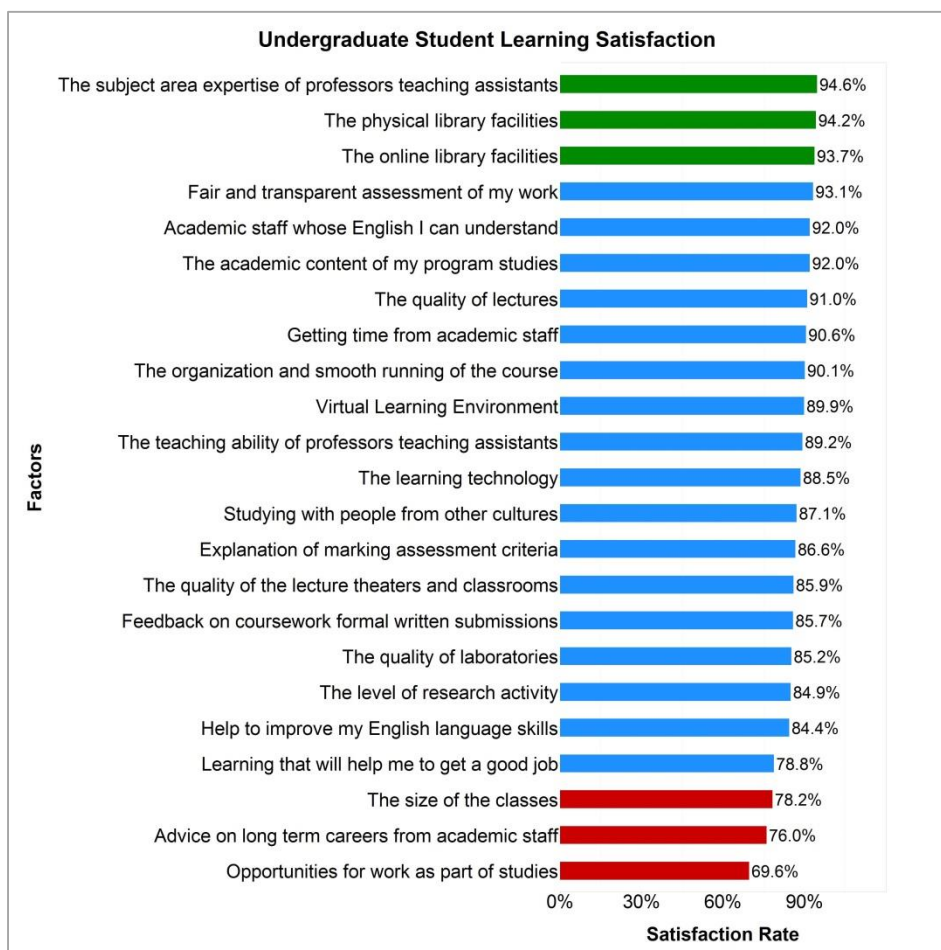


Figure 8. Satisfaction Rates for Factors related to Learning Experience

Qualitative Learning Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Teaching inconsistencies

“Teacher’s accent difficult to understand”

“Some courses much better than others, seems to depend heavily on the professors.”

“Every lecturer is different. Some good, some not so”

Need for facility improvements

“The seats and tables in classrooms wreak havoc on my back. Most of them cram you into some small asymmetric hunched over position that causes misalignment”

“I feel that in Gregory Hall 112, the atmosphere kind of dampens students' moods because it's so big and it's often dark in there. I suggest installing lights up there, just like in the theater in Lincoln Hall, so that the room won't be that dark. I had a class in Altgeld Hall, in one of the Room 300s, that place is also quite not conducive for students. I think because it's really cold in there, and I find it hard to focus in class. I suggest installing new insulation.”

“The lecture halls are too crowded”

“The lecture theaters are really bad compared to my home university. There is only small room to sit and a really small desk attached to a chair for your notes.”

Difficulties with learning platforms

“Virtual Learning Environment are really not good.”

“Every professor uses a different virtual learning environment, it makes it super hard to keep track.”

“Blackboard discussion board and enterprise system are so inconvenient. They often fail to upload newly written data or requires frequent refresh especially for enterprise system.”

“On one online class, the online resources never work. this has been an ongoing frustration for the entire class since the beginning. it has not been resolved and means work has been affected”

“Sometime too much material is covered within so little class time. And the Virtual Learning Environment can be confusing to use due to improper organization.”

Technical issues

“The linux systems crash in engineering during the year affected my grades a bit and really put pressure on my schedule.”

“Fix EWS now!!”

“Internet is really dreadful especially in Grainger and Undergraduate library”

Overall satisfaction

“It is a good school.”

“I am very satisfied with the learning experience here.”

“Im satisfied by the overall college experience at U of I”

“I love the college life in UIUC the facilities and staffs are very fine. Also the quality of my major professors are great!”

Student-to-Student Advice

Make friends from other cultural backgrounds

“Please be open minded and make friends with other cultural background students.”

“Be open to make friends, be open to opportunity when it comes if you are looking for it”

“Trying the best to reach out to local students and make friends with local students, professors, and other faculties although this is challenging.”

“Make friends from all kind of cultural backgrounds. It will benefit you greatly.”

“Try to make friends from other cultures too. It will help you to experience diversity and improve your English.”

Get involved

“Get involved, be more out-going and try to talk with people. Especially people from different countries. Join some groups, have fun!”

“Practice English and if you get involved into the society of the University, you will find the university is a paradise”

“Be open minded, try to actively participate in all the activities and engage yourself.”

“Always be more proactive. Frequently read emails, for you may get lost in the vast array of information. Get involved, early on because it gets harder and harder to melt into the community as years go on. Go visit advisers more often for they will help you plan out your academic path. Don't be afraid to try different things, and do not act without thinking of the consequence. However, once you have made up your mind, have faith in yourself, for risk is a given but fear is a choice.”

Importance of English

“If you are an international student who have graduated highschool in your home country, probably it will be better to study English constantly.”

“Learn English better, and you will survive better in a nice university.”

“For international students, make sure your listening oral English is well practiced before you study abroad. It is important during daily communication and your social life.”

Resources and opportunities

“There are a lot of resources on this campus available to students. Please be aware of what are there and use them.”

“Try to get as much information and use as much resources to help yourself out in this university.”

“There are certainly plenty of resources at a big university like this. The important thing is not which school you go to, but rather what you'll do during your time there. Only waste your time on things that worth your time.”

“Talk to professors, students and academic advisors asking for opportunities as early as possible.”

Propensity to Recommend the University

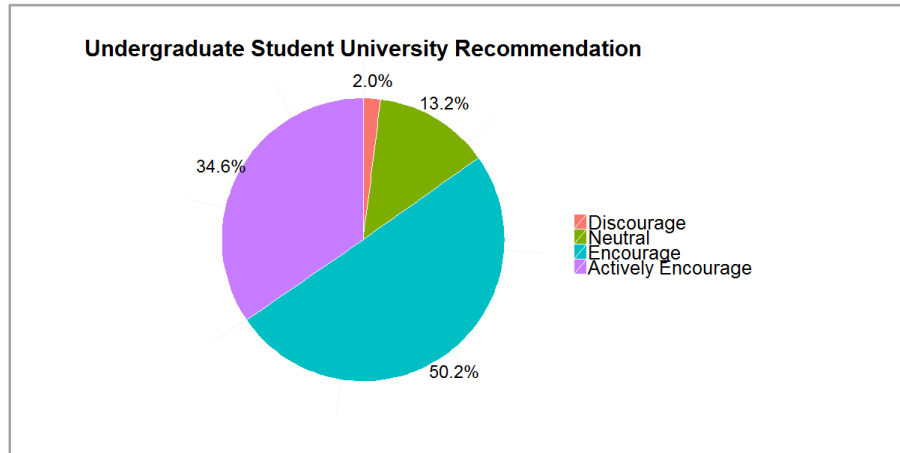


Figure 9. Undergraduate Students Recommendations

Qualitative Recommendation Themes and Relevant Quotes:

High quality academics

“Good university with comprehensive programs of study and high academic standards.”

“This university also offers quality education and fitting curriculums that truly enhances a student's interest and academic experience.”

“It is an academically stellar college”

Great library

“Also, our university has one of the best libraries in US and it is so easy to use.”

“Academic condition is great for students to study such as the big undergraduate library or the main library.”

“The library is amazing – there are great equipment available and others.”

Diversity is valued on campus

“The campus is internationalized and very open to diversity.”

“Indeed, this university is marked with the rich diversity of its student body, but it does not have great inclusive programs for the diverse students”

“The university celebrate the diversity of cultures and everyone get the chance to learn more about the other culture.”

Quality faculty

“Professors and students here are passionate about what they are doing.”

“Good campus and professors, just not in some departments”

“Professors are generally very willing to help and their teaching ability is high.”

Summary of Undergraduate Student Responses

Overall, the general satisfaction of the participating international undergraduate students is close to 91%. Arrival had the highest percentage of dissatisfied students at 14%, followed by living (12%), support (11.1%), and learning (10.9%). The main qualitative themes of the arrival experience are the need for airport pickup and more information provided by the University. The two qualitative themes for the support section include customer service and a desire for better food options in University dining halls. For the living section, the themes include: high cost of University housing, unreliable Internet services in University buildings, lack of sustainability, safety concerns, and the bus system. Finally, the following themes were identified in the learning section: teaching inconsistencies, need for facility improvements, technical issues, difficulties with learning platforms and overall learning satisfaction.

Based on the arrival concerns from last year’s report, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) launched an O’Hare-UIUC shuttle service to welcome incoming international students and families to Illinois. The initiative gathered over 900 signups. ISSS, in joint effort with Illinois’ Chinese Student and Scholar Association, was on-site at Chicago’s O’Hare International Airport to welcome and guide the students to their respective shuttles. In addition, welcome services were provided on campus by University Housing, the Illini Union, and Campus Recreation. The 2013 ISB was launched before the shuttle and welcome service were made available. We anticipate this concern will be reduced in the upcoming 2014 ISB.

Findings: Graduate Students

Out of 4,443 total international graduate students, 1,153 participated in this survey. This is a response rate of approximately 26%.

Arrival to the University

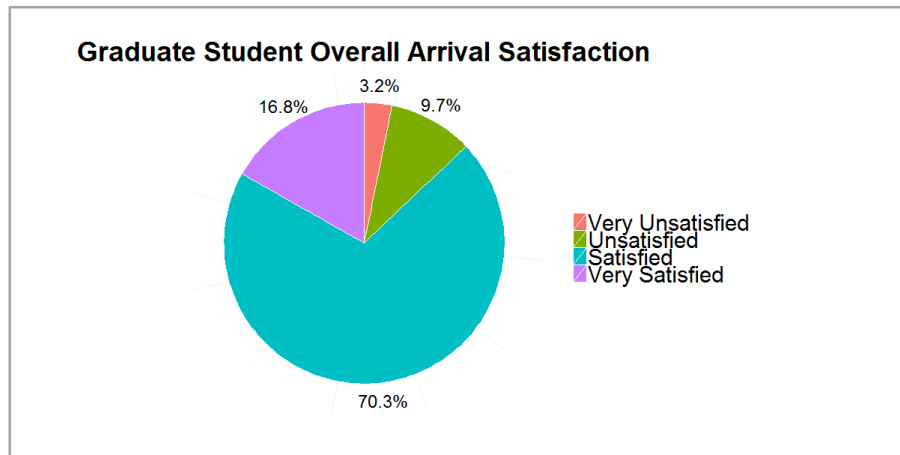


Figure 10. Overall Arrival Satisfaction for Graduate Students

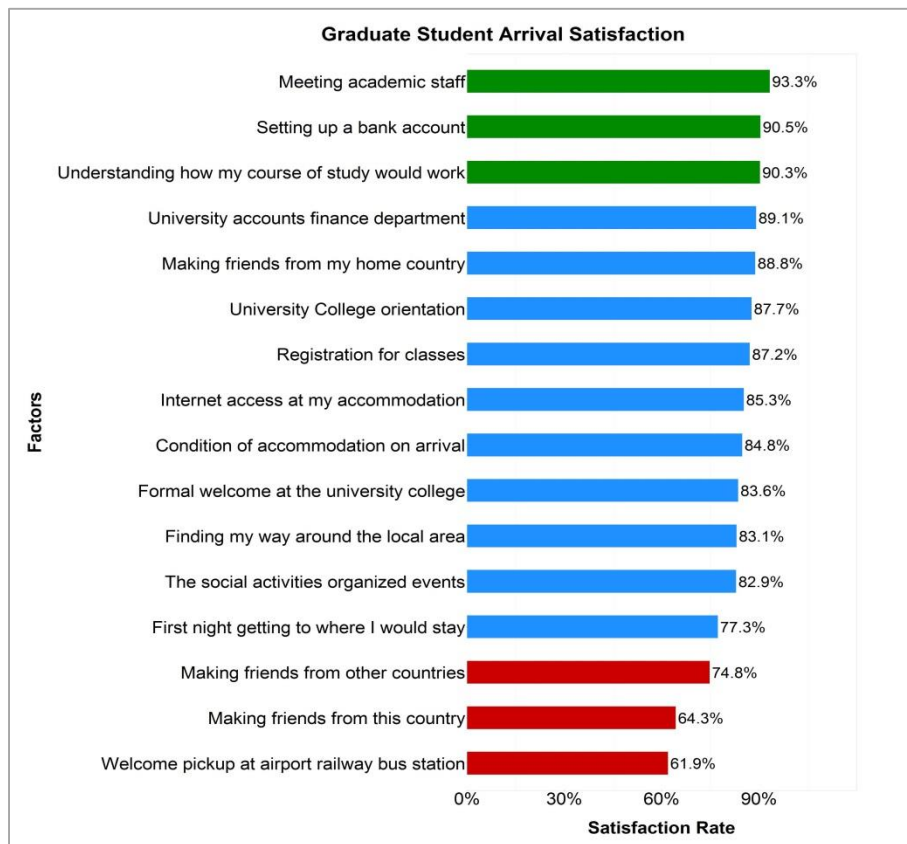


Figure 11. Satisfaction Rates for Factors related to Arrival Experience

Qualitative Arrival Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Need for airport pick-up

“The Indian Student Graduate association helped me with my arrival here. They also arranged to take me to Sherman Hall. There was no help from ISSS or any other University office.”

“No support on arrival. On the other hand I saw people from Purdue being received at O'Hare.”

“It was worst to see other people were going along with their respective university guides but from our universities nobody was there at ohare international airport . I Was there all night as my flight was delayed and it was night in a new country.”

Lack of information received from the University

“Some classmates from the second year of the MBA helped me when I arrived. Another thing I consider important is giving information for phone (cell phones) and grocery shopping...”

“Essentially, there was no support from the University, you just had to find your way to some office and ask specific questions, which is very hard when you are not sure of what you want to ask but need some help.”

“I could not get information about housing and other international students from my nation who would potentially help me in the university. I was told that I was the first student from my country to study here. However, later I found out that there were more than 20 students from my country studying here. Knowing their email id would have helped me a lot during first few days of my arrival.”

“It is better to provide some information about housing and commuting to new students.”

Orientation

“There was an interference between departmental and university-wide orientations so I had to miss my favorite university-wide orientations that I really needed because of my departmental orientations.”

“Not much facilities for grad students for orientation”

“There was barely anything for students coming in Spring. There was also no department level orientation. Hardly any information session.”

Support Services

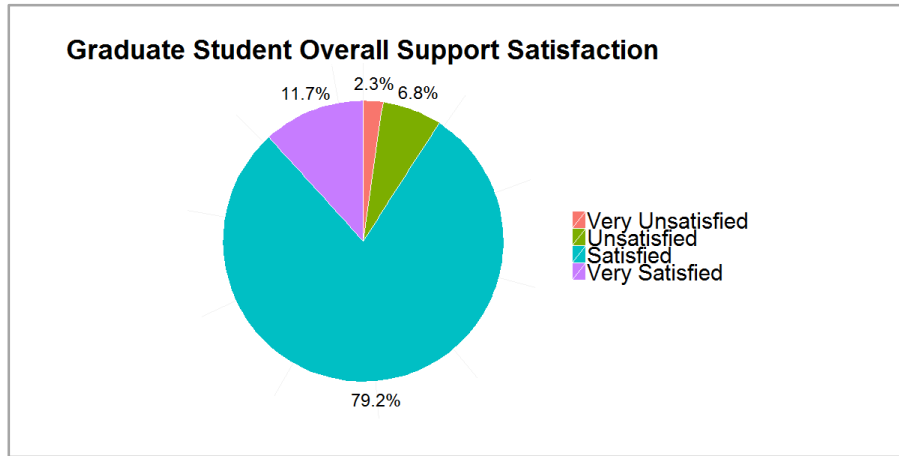


Figure 12. Overall Support Satisfaction for Graduate Students

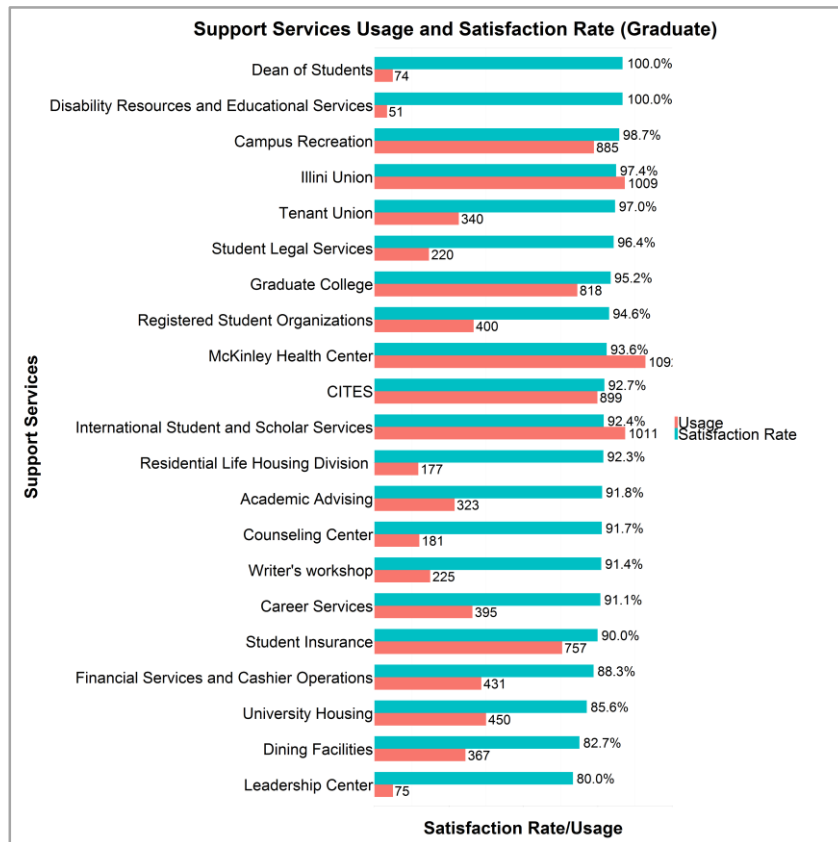


Figure 13. Usage and Satisfaction Rates for Support Services

Qualitative Support Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Customer service

“I’d say that I’m almost satisfied with immigration and visa advice from the university (ISSS), but I once met a really nice adviser there.”

“ISSS needs some people in the reception that are willing to work and not be looking like an enemy just arrived when a student shows up. University housing has a serious issue with noise. But the staff is great and always helpful. The dinning facilities are ok, they could improve with better chefs and more variety of food. The Campus Recreations is obviously amazing and very function”

“The staff in ISSS and McKinley are very very nice, always smiling, and give clear illustration about what we should do. I went to ISSS several times and all of the problems can be addressed, including the DMV issue that bothers me a lot. McKinley is also much more efficient than Carle, and the staff are more friendly as well. CRCE & ARC are probably the most frequently visited facilities for me in addition to the lab, and the equipment are very complete. Overall, I’m very satisfied with these facilities!”

“The reason why I said very dissatisfied to ARC is that, my friends and I have some unsatisfied experience that we were driven out from multipurpose room. We are legal to use this room to practice dancing together after reservation, however some staff (not volunteer student) considered us as no such privilege of using this room. That's ridiculous.”

“Student Insurance is not doing their job at all. I have very bad experience with them and I talked with my friends and they all agreed if they ever went there. All I know is whenever I met a problem with my insurance and talked with them, they will only keep saying Oh, I don't know,

“Most support services are excellent except Financial Services and Cashier Operations. This Sept, I asked to postpone to pay my monthly-tuition, one of our university staff refused to do so. However, he did it another day. Why?”

Living Satisfaction

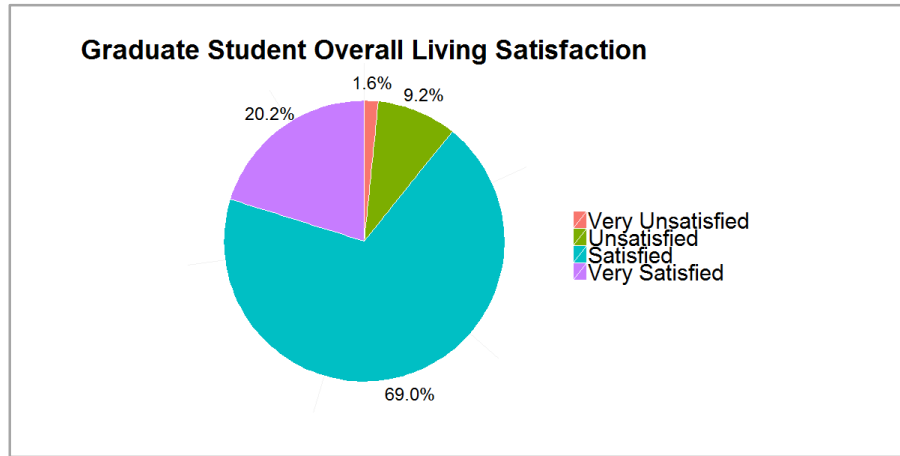


Figure 14. Overall Living Satisfaction for Graduate Students

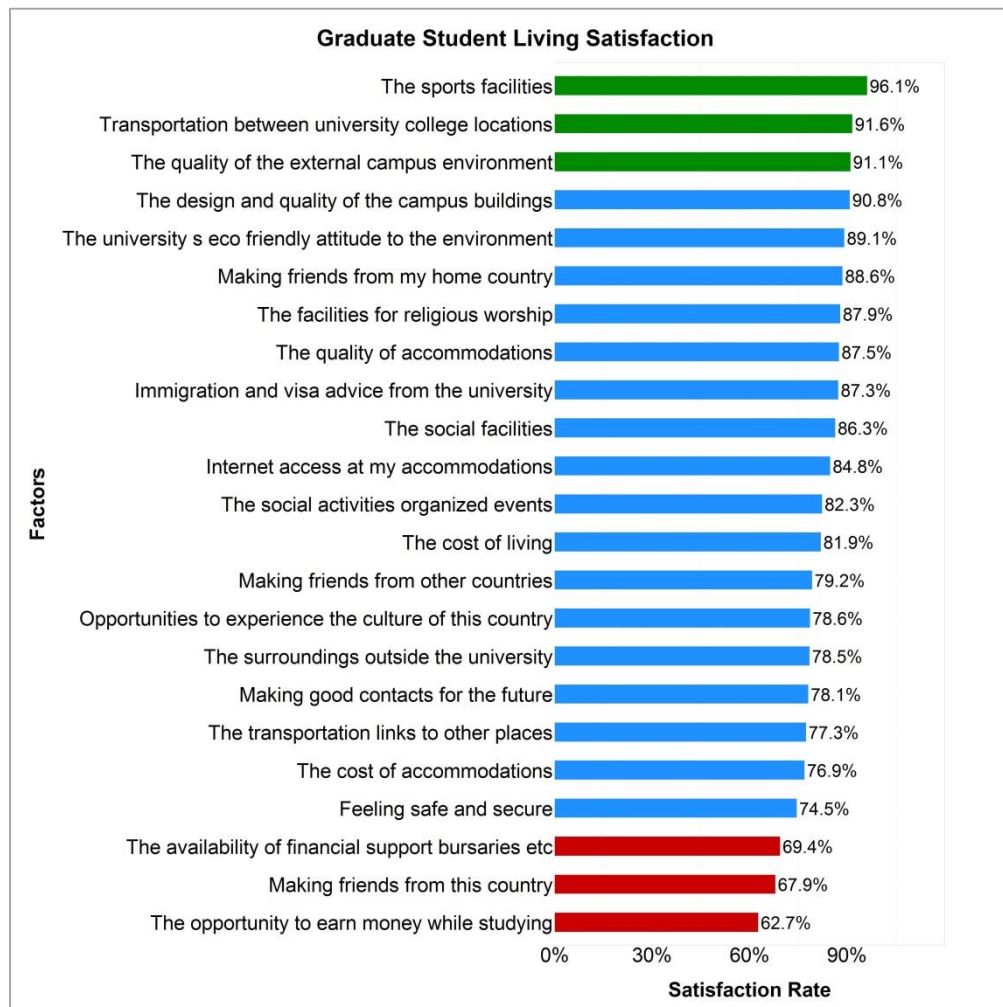


Figure 15. Satisfaction Rates for Factors related to Living Experience

Qualitative Living Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Lack of sustainability

“The recycling is a little deficient (e.g., glass and some categories of plastics and papers are not recycled).”

“We need much more recycling cans, better in every building. Especially the recycling for batteries, I only find them in CRCE.”

“I have never found any place to dispose used batteries here. As a result, I don’t know what to do with them.”

“There is no concept of sustainability applied to daily life at all. I think this American lifestyle of living comfortably but wasting a lot of energy.”

“Environmental Sustainability is a huge issue for me at UIUC – there’s a big difference with regards to availability of recycling/organic composting facilities compared to where I came from in Canada.”

Need for prayer rooms

“It would be very nice if there were designated prayer rooms in places of work.”

“Each college should have quiet or prayer room for students who intend to pray. this will be most helpful especially for Muslim students and graduate students who always spend the whole day on campus. without the quiet room, students have to go to end of the room, in between the book stacks, or sneak into empty classroom to pray/worship.”

“There is no praying room on campus for the large Muslim population who needs to pray 5 times a day”

Safety concerns

“The campus and surrounding areas are becoming dangerous.”

“I usually feel unsafe to be outside after 10pm, because I’ve heard many news about people being robbed and assaulted.”

“I just wish there were less criminal activities – but this is something that is hard to predict and control. Alerts that we receive through university (Illini-Alert) are helpful and tips on safety are useful.”

“Hearing through alert mails every now and then just make me feel unsafe about this place.”

“I am concerned about the occurrence of robberies in and near campus areas, so I have to use the Safe Rides service to return home.”

“As a female, I don’t feel safe to go out at night and I have been very careful when I am walking to my car in the dark parking lot around the city at night.”

Bus system

“All hail to the MTD. They are the best.”

“I use to utilize CMI airport but mainly on breaks but on breaks there is no CUMTD service to the airport! (should be a good one because many people travel those days...)”

“The bus system is not comprehensive, we depend on cars too much for shopping or going off campus.”

Learning Satisfaction

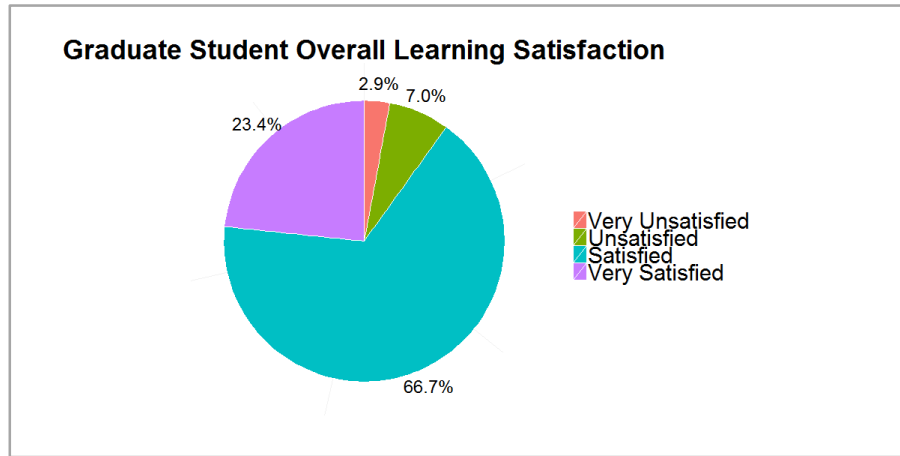


Figure 16. Overall Learning Satisfaction for Graduate Students

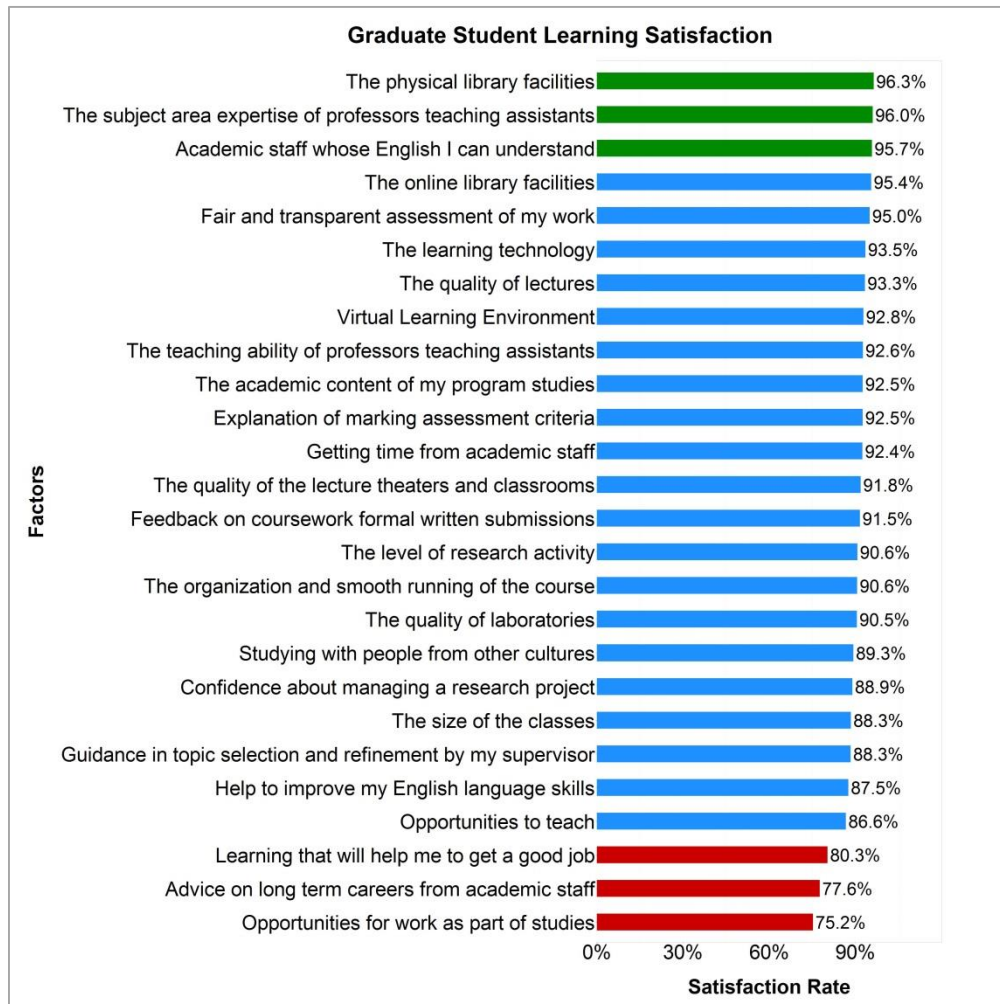


Figure 17. Satisfaction Rates for Factors related to Learning Experience

Qualitative Learning Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Teaching inconsistencies

“Some courses are not taught well by the professors although the professors are well-known with their research achievements.”

“The instructors might need to know more about how to teach effectively.”

“Some teachers should be more capable of making a vivid and attractive lecture”

“My learning experience vary depending on courses taken within my department and outside my department.”

“Some of the teachers did not pay much attention to the class, which made me feel helpless in learning.”

Need for facility improvements

“I find most of the classrooms in Physics Department absolutely impossible for studying: you have to sit bent and crooked, and I have terrible headaches immediately after I start writing something sitting in those uncomfortable seats, with impedes my thinking. I believe everybody should have a desk in front of him/her for proper learning. Besides constant headaches and neck nerves jam, once I had a jammed nerve in my arm after 3 hour exam, and I could not lift my arm for 6 months.”

“The table connected to the chair in the classroom is too small and uncomfortable for our neck, especially when we have a 3 hour final exam. That is really a disaster.”

Difficulty taking classes outside of academic program

“The course given for each semester is not quite predictable which is not good for planning study.”

“I wish the course registration policy could be less strict. Some really useful courses, say databases and analytical software, are only open to the business school students but I really want to take those courses (even if I could pay to get this chance)”

“Easier access to courses offered by other department”

Technical issues

“I have been having problem with the university internet since I came. I tried to fix it with IT people several times but it does not work for me.”

“Bad network connection in campus buildings esp. libraries”

“I am not satisfied with the EWS systems as they frequently crash”

Student-to-Student Advice

Importance of English

“Try to relate with people from other countries, and always try to improve their English skills”

“Everybody struggles, cries, and feel depressed, so don't worry when you feel like nothing is going well. It is very stressful not being able to communicate in our own language when many Chinese or Korean students are speaking in their own language. It seems unfair at first, but in the end, being forced to speak in English will tremendously improve your English, to the extent Chinese or Korean students may not be able to achieve.”

“Good oral English is a must!”

“Practice English harder, and learning the culture of U.S before come.”

Resources and opportunities

“When you come to the U of I, make sure you take advantage of all the resources available. Do not just focus on the academics only, but rather learn about the American society, culture and travel around the country. It is an experience of a life time with lots of learning experiences. When you are done, take the good experiences you learned, back to your home country.”

“Explore the university, and its surroundings with available opportunities and resources.”

“Studying at UIUC is the best choice because of the availability of most academic resources like laboratories, support of students' research and professional interests, and prominent academicians in the World. I say I am proud to be taught by Personalities who have excelled in their respective fields. And not only that, they are willing to transfer knowledge.”

“Every student should get involved and take advantage of resources and opportunities this university offer. UofI is a world class university and it could be a great experience.”

“Use resources to your full benefit (there are so many wonderful resources here). Take courses outside your department and participate in things you love (or once loved), you will never get these opportunities later.”

Importance of advisor

“For graduate students- Be prudent in choosing your advisor, because that affect your entire experience at the University.”

“Find a great advisor. Don't be afraid to ask those who know the faculty you are considering.

“Be very very very careful in choosing your advisor and be very very self reliant. Save as much money you can in the initial period so that you can relax later.”

“1.University has little resources and avenues to help students in Student-Advisor conflict situation, and none if you accept RA before joining the University. 2. Choose your advisor very carefully, he/she is key to everything.”

“Do not choose advisors that are miserable in their life (even if they get thousands of dollar of grants) which applies to 80% of them. Choose those who have fulfilled their life, and are proud to show they enjoy their life, travel, have fun and give fun to others.”

“To choose their degree based on the advisor they'd like to work with. I know from experience that have a wonderful advisor makes all the difference!”

Propensity to Recommend the University

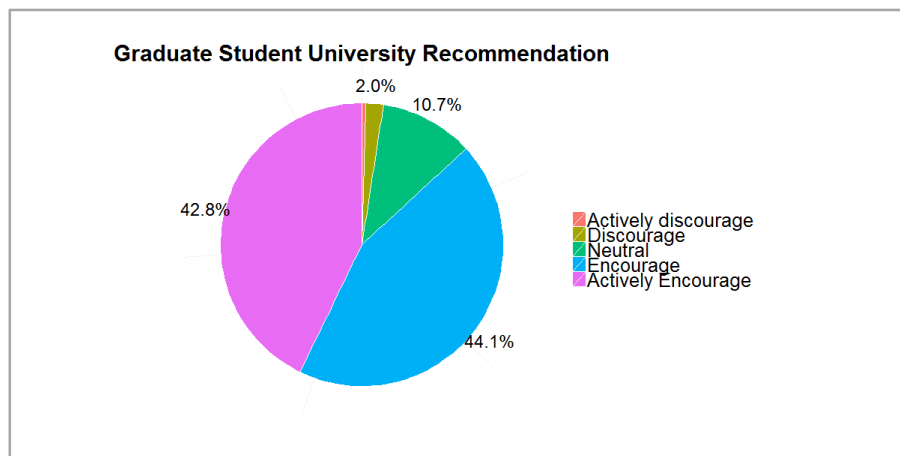


Figure 18. Graduate Student Recommendations

Qualitative Recommendation Themes and Relevant Quotes:

Research opportunities

“Various research opportunities. Many different research areas, interdisciplinary studies”

“UIUC provides a unique opportunities for young researchers. In addition, UIUC is great for interdisciplinary research because many departments are in top 3 in the country and actively encourage collaborations and joint grants applications.”

“Best place to do research, away from the hustle and bustle of metropolitan cities”

“It is a nice place to learn and carry out research with some of the very eminent professors.”

High quality academics

“Because it is a great university with high quality learning and great opportunities to grow individually – social and most of all academically.”

“...the academic excellence and courses are of of high standards.”

“The academic environment is stimulating, the curriculum up-to-date and the overall experience pretty good. It's a good place to come to for those looking for good education.”

“Professors are very engaged and highly recognized in my field.”

Great library

“We have the best library here!”

“The library is exceptionally good.”

“And I would recommend the university for its library facilities and an amazing engineering department (all my friends have said positive things from their experiences with faculty and labs). I personally love and found the libraries (UGL and Grainger) and the facilities (I-share) a blessing and the staff there is also very helpful.”

Summary of Graduate Student Responses

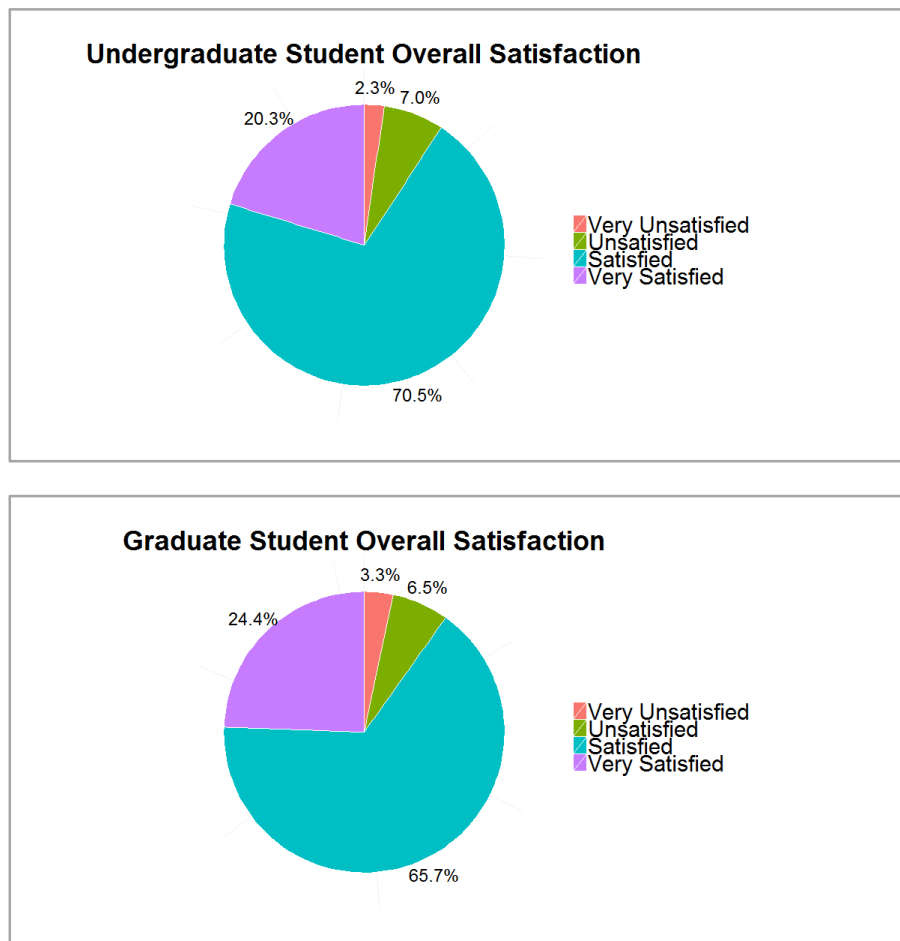
The overall graduate student satisfaction is at 90%. The assessed areas of their experience at University of Illinois include: arrival, support, living, and learning. Arrival had the highest percentage of dissatisfied students at 12.9%, followed by living (10.8%), learning (9.9%), and support (9.1%). Two of the main qualitative themes of the arrival experience for graduate students remain the same as undergraduate (need for airport pickup and lack of information received from the University). The third qualitative theme for the graduate student arrival experience was orientation. The graduate student' living experience had the second largest margin for improvement. Three themes were consistent with the undergraduate living themes: safety concerns, bus system, and lack of sustainability. A fourth theme that emerged in the living category was a need for prayer rooms. The following themes were mentioned in the learning section: teaching inconsistencies, need for facility improvements, technical issues, and difficulty taking classes outside of academic program. The qualitative support comments contained the overall theme of customer service. The graduate student advice column included two of the undergraduate themes, the importance of English and resources and opportunities. The third advice theme was the importance of advisor (theme for Ph.D. students only). Lastly, graduate recommendation comments mirrored the themes identified by undergraduates, yet also mentioned research opportunities as a strong point at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Comparison between Undergraduate and Graduate Students

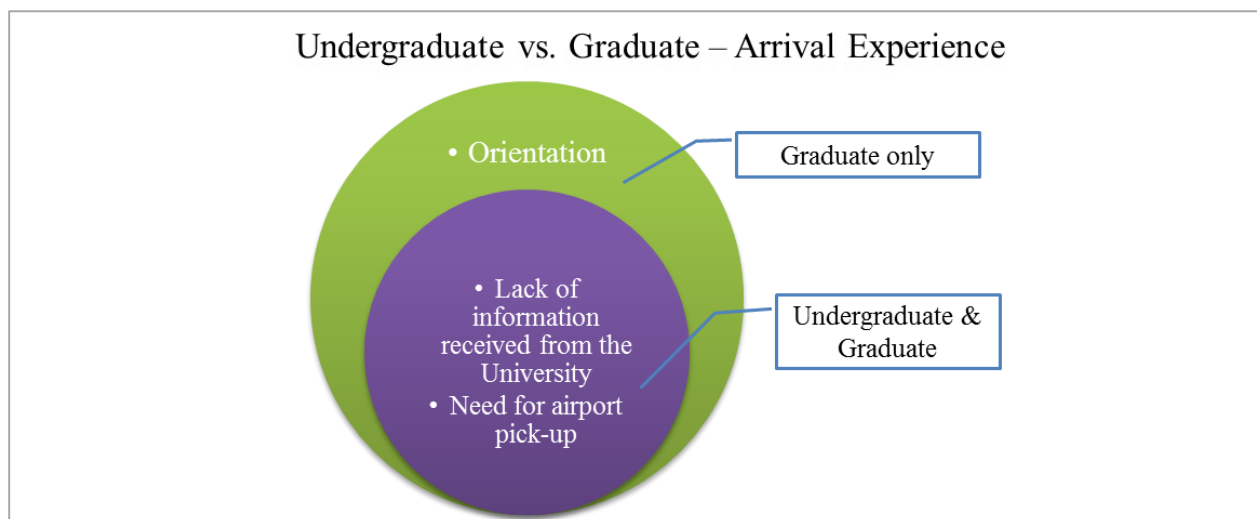
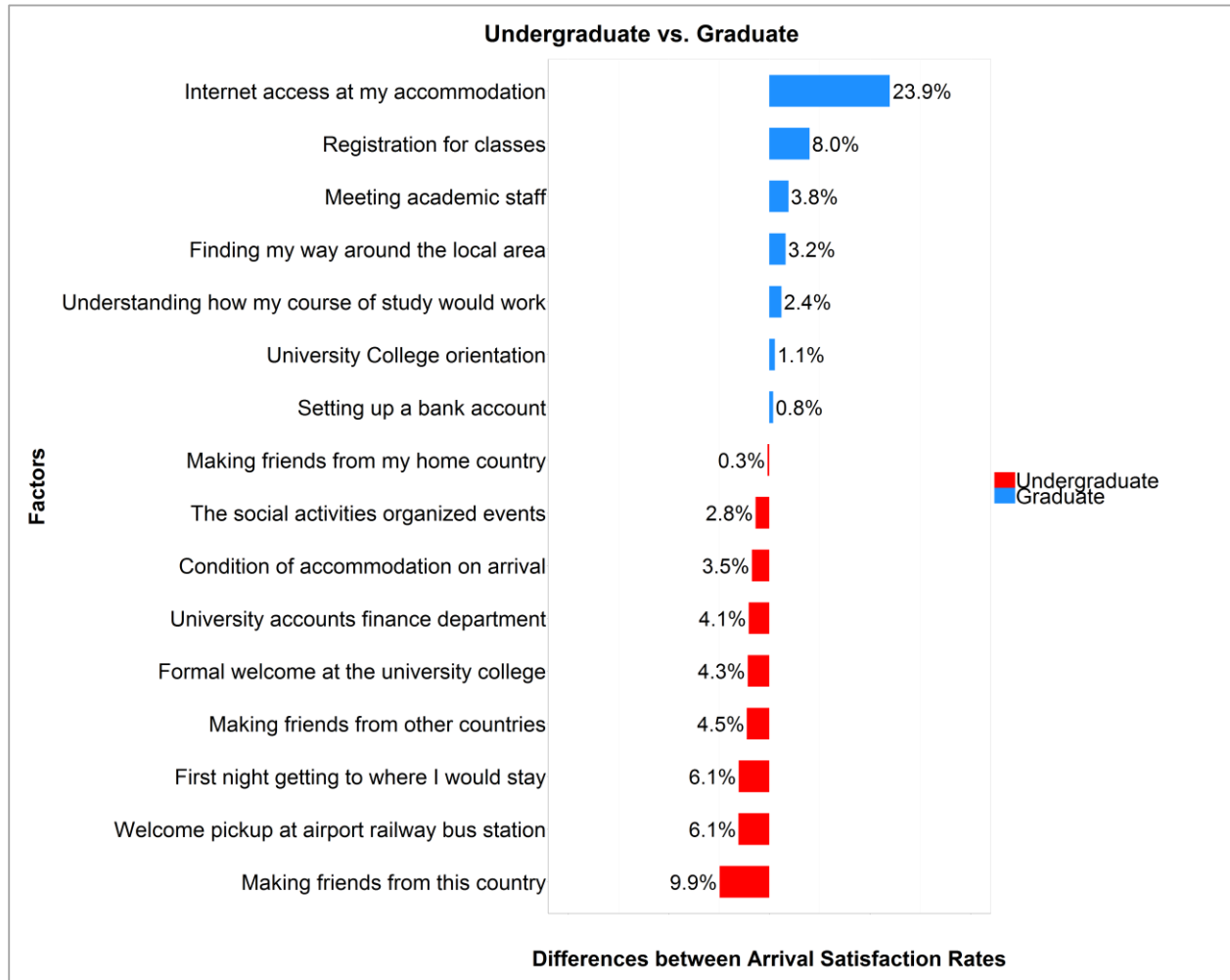
This section provides bar graphs and Venn diagrams demonstrating the comparison between undergraduate and graduate students for each of the six sections of the survey: arrival, support, living, learning, advice, and recommendations.

The bar graphs in each section compare satisfaction rates between undergraduate and graduate students. A bar to the left indicates that undergraduate students' satisfaction rate for this factor is higher than that of graduate students by the amount of the bar value. Similarly, a bar to the right means that graduate students have higher satisfaction rates than undergraduate students. The Venn diagram demonstrates the similarities and differences between undergraduate and graduate students found in the qualitative themes. The advice and recommendations categories only have a qualitative comparison.

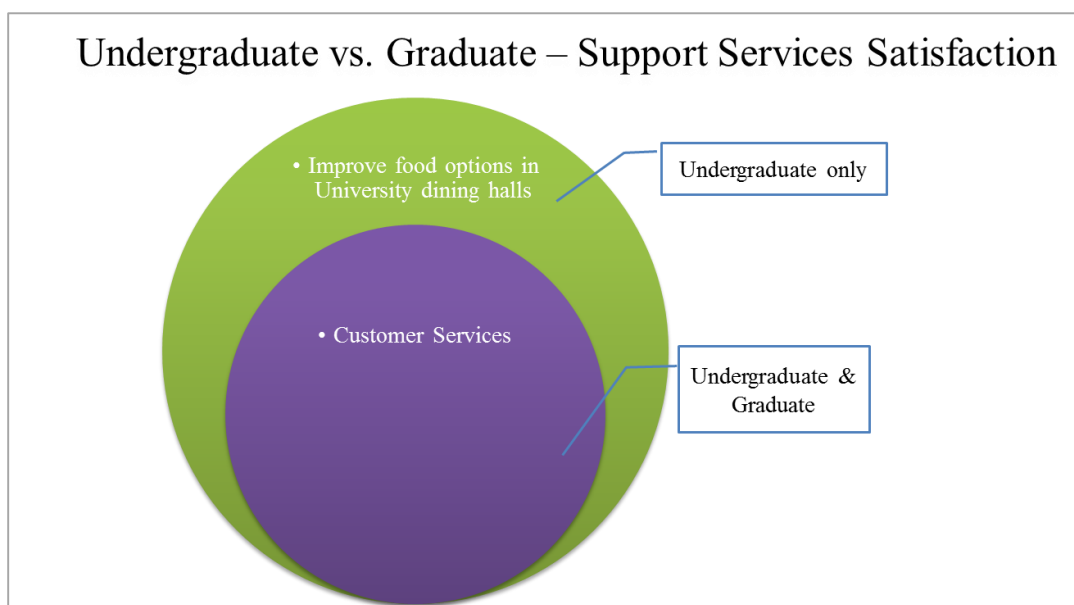
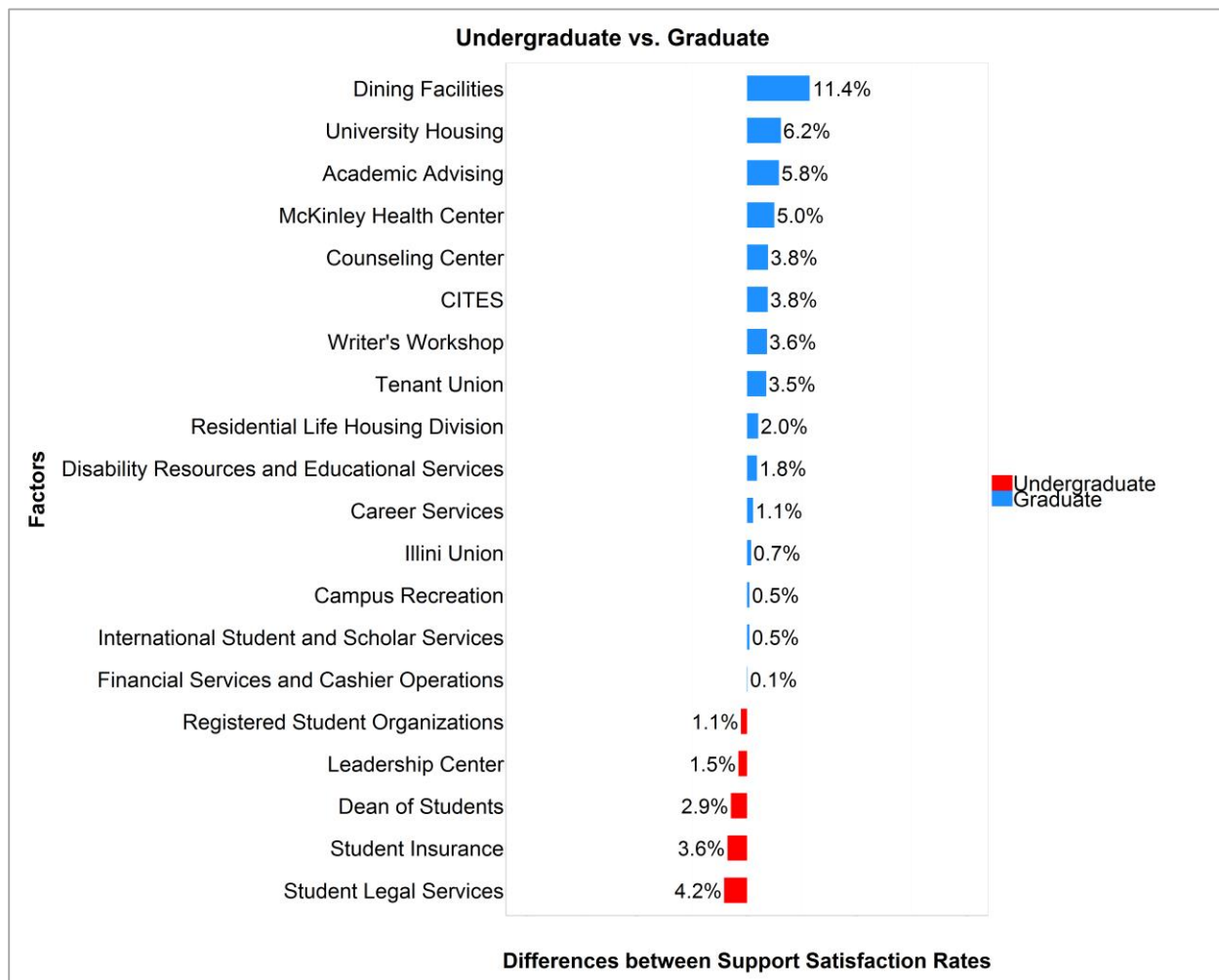
Overall Satisfaction



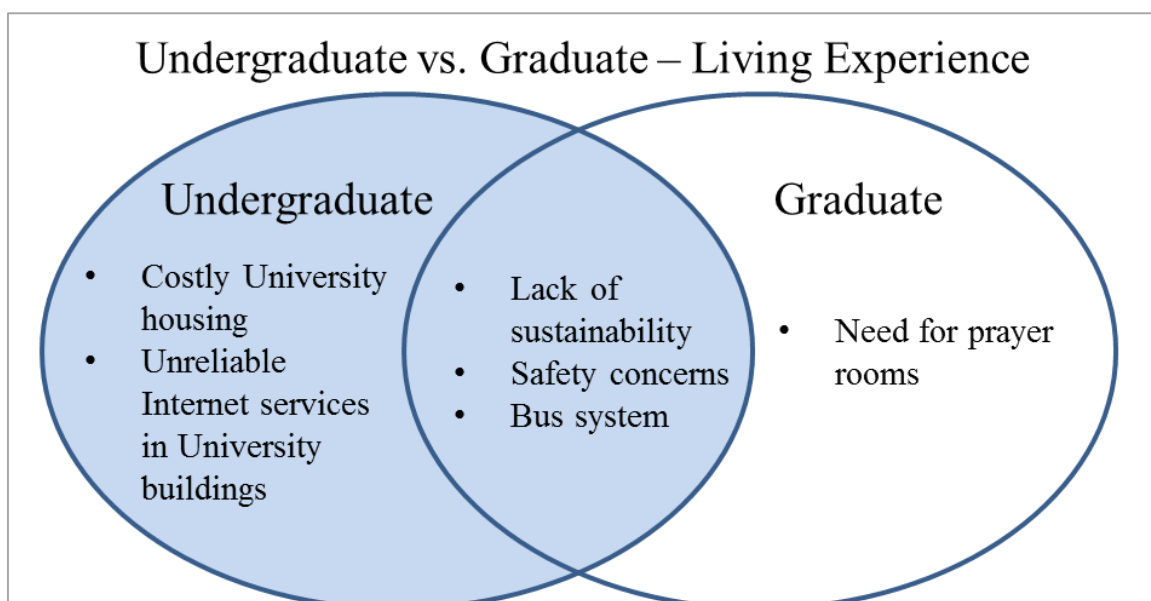
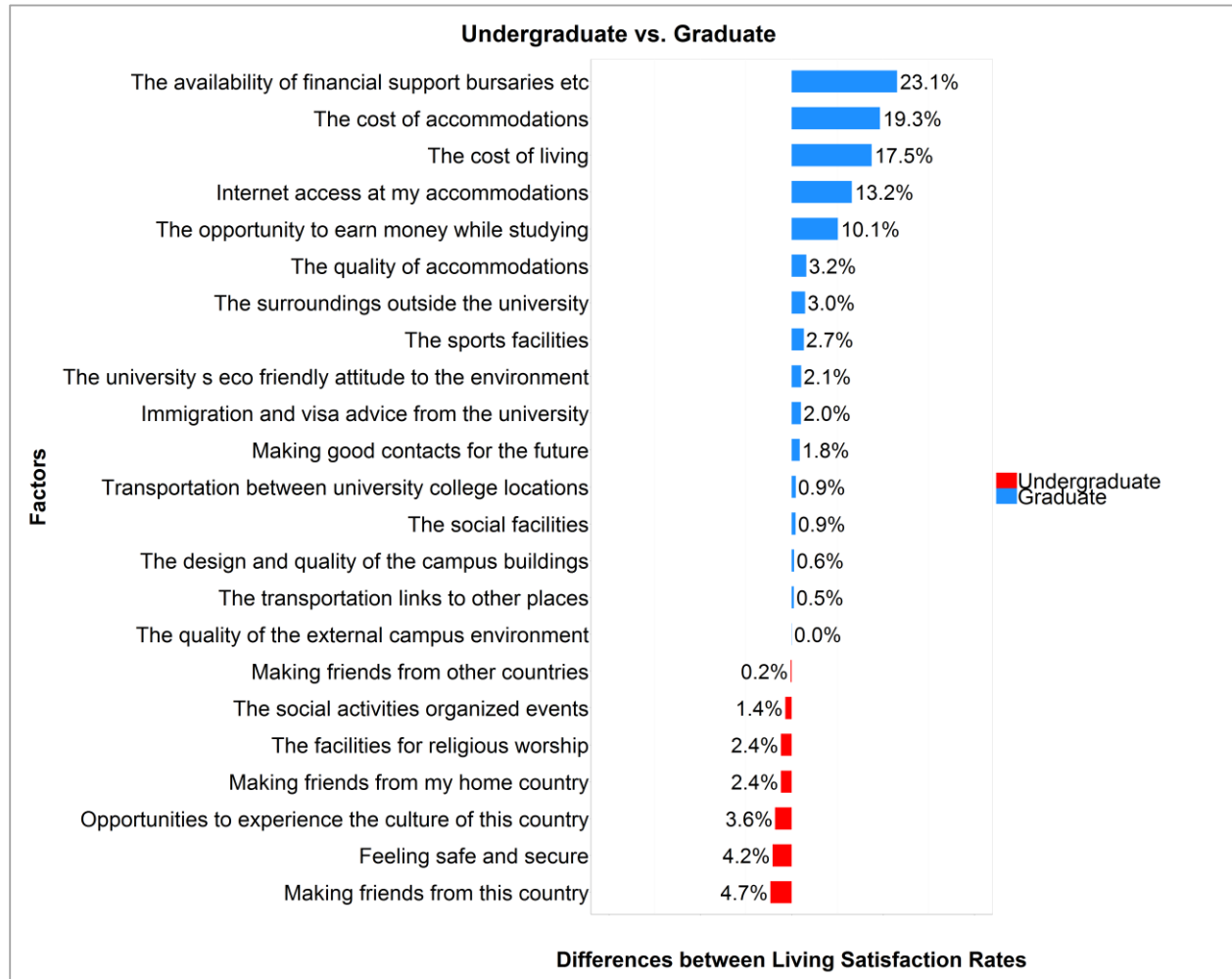
Arrival



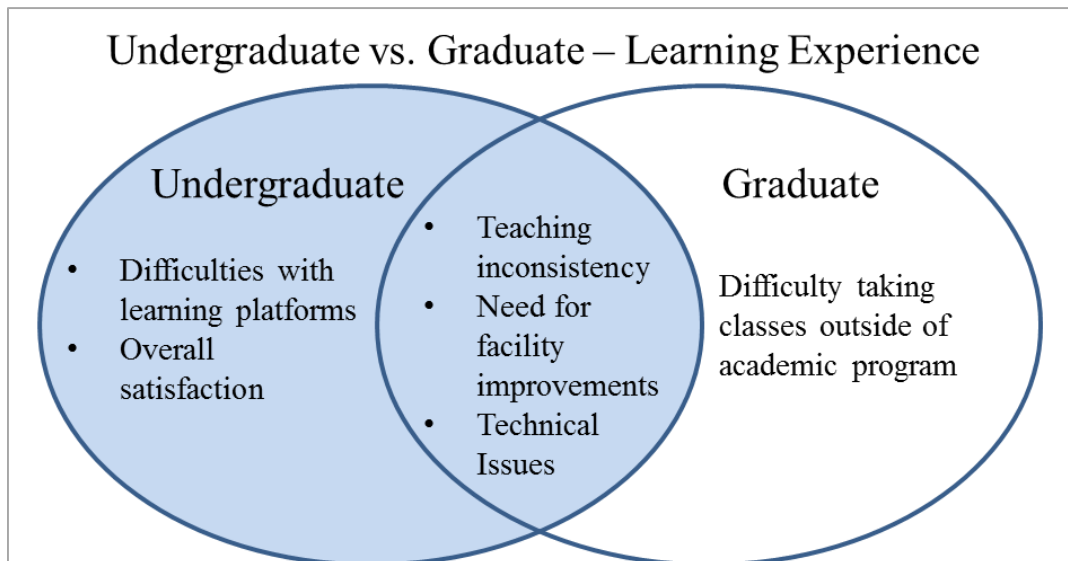
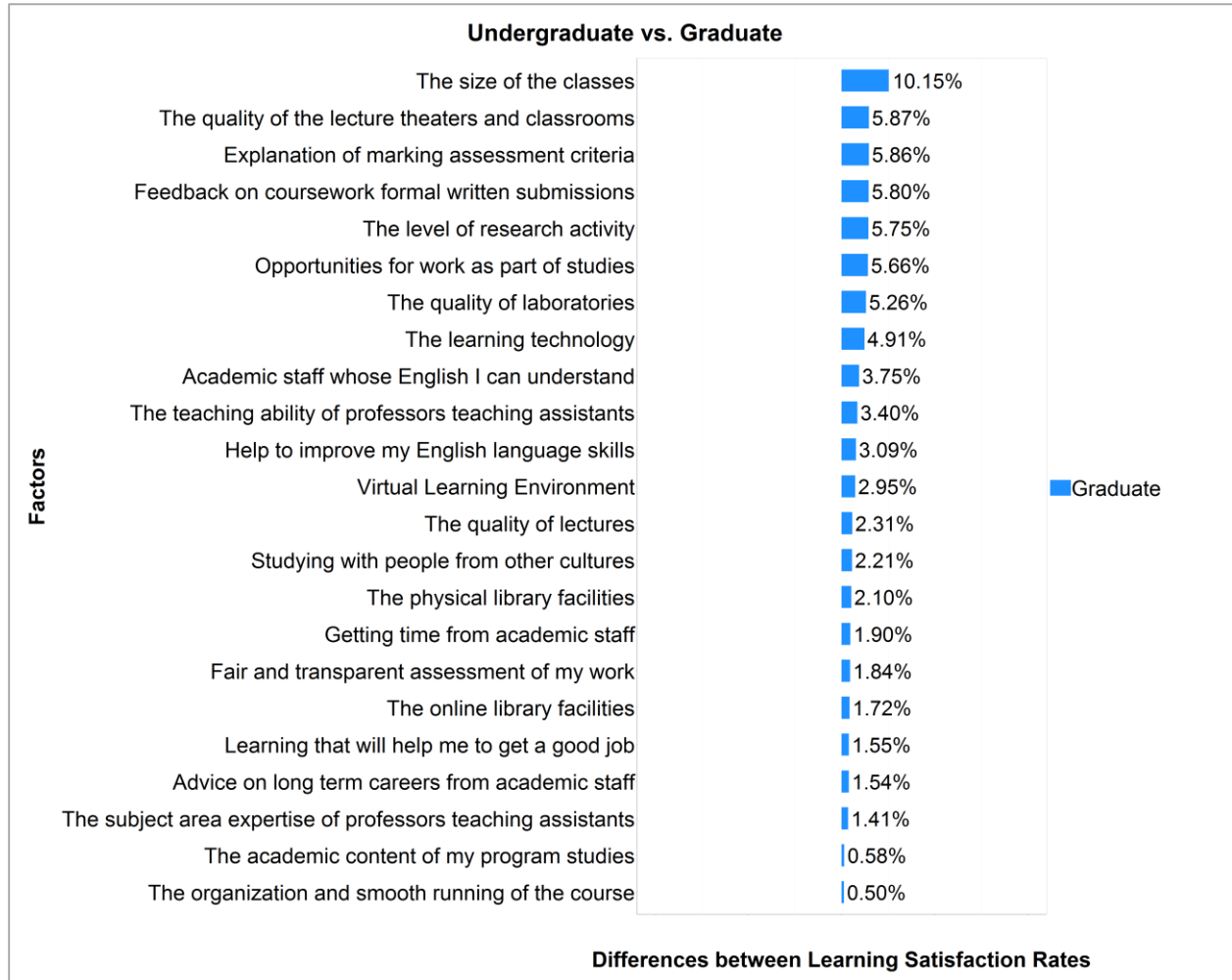
Support



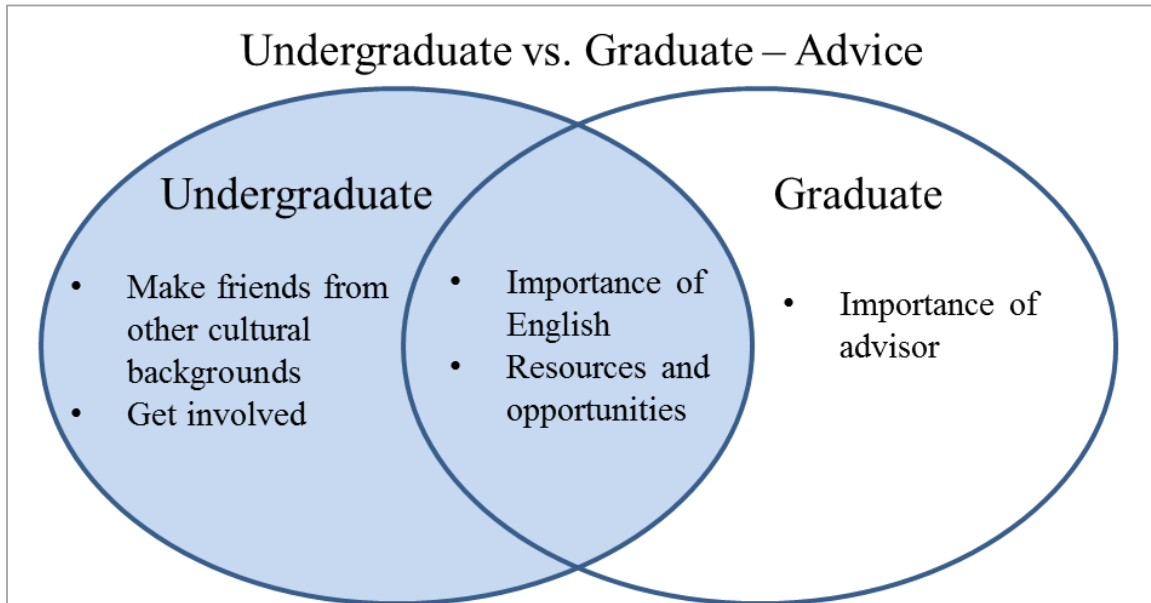
Living



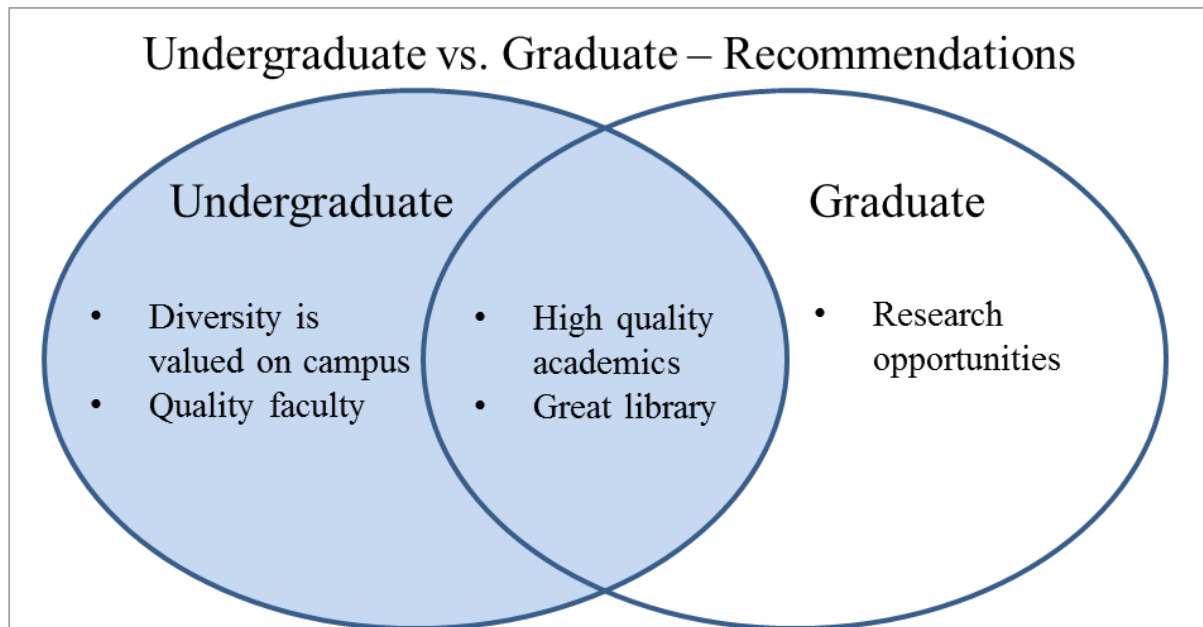
Learning



Advice



Recommendations



References

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.