

UW SOUL ~ Email Questions

*University of Washington Study of Undergraduate Learning
Office of Educational Assessment*

Winter 2000

Do you think your experience at the UW last quarter changed you in any way or not? If your answer is yes, in what ways were you changed and why?

Spring 2000

Thinking about what you expected when you came to the UW last fall, what, if anything, has surprised you the most?

Fall 2000

1. Looking back over your first year here, what was the most important thing that happened to you at the UW last year and why was it important?
2. Looking ahead to your second year here, what do you hope will happen to you at the UW this year, and why is that important to you?

Winter 2001

1. Are you in a major? If so, what major? If you are not yet in a major, what major(s) would you say you are heading for?
2. Thinking about the courses you have taken here at the UW, what can you say about the academic expectations (meaning: the level and quality of learning, thinking, and work, such as papers) that the instructors in your courses have communicated to you? Please explain your answer, giving me at least two examples from your courses.
3. What barriers or challenges do you feel you have overcome, if any, to meet academic expectations at the UW?

Spring 2001

1. Have there been faculty members or TAs in the last two years who have helped you feel connected to the UW and valued by it or not? If so, and without naming them, will you please describe what one or two of them did for you and why that was important to you? If not, tell me that, too.
2. And similarly, have there been non-teaching staff (advisers, librarians, counselors, residence hall directors, and other student service staff, for example) who have helped you feel connected to the UW and valued by it or not? If so, and without naming them, will you please describe what one or two of them did for you and why that was significant? If not, tell me that, too.

FALL 2001

1. In what two or three ways, IF ANY, are you different this year than you were two years ago when you first came to the UW?
2. What role has being a student at the UW played, IF ANY, in those changes?

WINTER 2002

To let me know that you are here this quarter, I need you to tell me what you mean when you say that time spent on a class was "valuable in advancing your education." Please read on for why we'd like to know about that.

The course evaluations that you fill out at the end of each quarter are widely used at the UW when faculty are considered for merit salary increases and for promotion. In a recent study of the student evaluations for almost 17,000 UW courses, six of the items on the course evaluation forms exhibited a particularly interesting connection. These six questions are:

- 1 The course as a whole was:
- 2 The course content was:
- 3 The instructor's contribution to the course was:
- 4 The instructor's effectiveness in teaching the subject matter was:
- 5 On average, how many hours per week have you spent on this course, including attending classes, doing readings, reviewing notes, writing papers and any other course related work?
- 6 From the total average of hours above, how many do you consider were valuable in advancing your education?

Looking at those 17,000 course evaluations, it was found that students' responses to question 6 divided by the responses to question 5 were correlated to the responses to questions 1-4. To help us understand this relationship, I would like you to address the following:

1. Help us with a definition of "valuable in advancing your education." What does that phrase mean to you? What kinds of course related work, assignments, activities, etc. do you do that makes the time you spend doing them valuable in advancing your education?
2. Give us two examples. Please describe two classes for me, focusing on the time you spent for each one (what you did/what you learned) that you considered "valuable in advancing your education" and the time you spent for each one that you deemed not valuable. Please be as specific as you can here.

Thank you so much for your careful thinking about these questions.

SPRING 2002

Results from the UW SOUL show that one of the biggest changes you experienced in your FIRST YEAR here was that you became more independent in many ways, including becoming responsible for your own learning, for your own clean underwear, for your own choices about how to spend your time, and for your own ethical decisions, to name a few ways. Results also suggest that in your SECOND YEAR at the UW, you became more self-confident, you felt that you were better adjusted to life at the UW, and you felt more focused or had a clearer sense of direction.

Looking back on your first two years at the UW, will you please comment on these two findings. Do they seem accurate to you? Do they capture something of your experience in your first and second years here? If so, please briefly explain how. If not, how WOULD you characterize your experience in your first and second years here?

FALL 2002

Welcome back to the U, and I hope that you are hoping to participate again in the UW SOUL. This looks like the last year of the study, and I want to keep each of you alive and active in the study, so that I have a record of your four years here (even if you plan to have 5!!!). The terms for participating are the same as before.

I need you to reply to this email by sending me your current UW address and phone number and responding to the two questions below within the next week. Also, if you are doing something exotic, such as studying in India, let me know that, as well. Now, the question.

As you may recall, you completed nearly identical surveys on diversity at the beginning of your first year at UW and at the end of your second year. In those surveys, you responded to these two multiple-choice type questions:

How much do you expect the diversity of students and faculty at the UW to contribute to your learning?

Overall, how much do you value the contribution that diversity makes to you learning at the UW?

As a group, your responses to these questions in the second year suggested that you had lower expectations for the contribution of student and faculty diversity to your learning and that you valued that contribution less than when you started the UW.

Will you please help us understand this change by answering the following two questions:

1. How, if in any way, have your EXPECTATIONS changed with regard to how the diversity of students and faculty at UW contributes to your learning and why have they changed in this way?
2. How, if in any way, have your VALUES changed with regard to the contribution that diversity makes to your learning at the UW and why have they changed in this way?

WINTER 2003

1. What kinds of quantitative reasoning (QR) are required by your major? (Quantitative reasoning, you'll remember, is the use of numbers and/or symbols to solve problems, make arguments, design or create something new, find answers, or analyze something.) In addition to describing the kinds of QR you do in your major, will you please give me an example?
2. How comfortable are you with your ability to do the QR necessary to be successful in your major? Please be completely honest and specific here about what you are comfortable with and what you are not.

SPRING 2003

1. What was the most significant learning experience that you had while at the UW? What taught you the most? This can be anything—a class, a single project, an extracurricular activity, a person--anything. And what did you learn from that experience? Again, this can be something academic, personal, or both—whatever stands out.
2. Were you disappointed in any aspect of your education? If so, please tell us about that.
3. Do you think that participating in the UW Study of Undergraduate Learning had any effect on your UW education? If you feel that participation had some effect, tell us about that and point to whatever aspects of the study that you feel affected you?

SENIORS ONLY (graduating prior to spring 2003):

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