

## 2023 Northwestern Enrolled Student Survey Highlights

All enrolled Evanston undergraduate students were invited to participate in the 2023 Northwestern Enrolled Student Survey (ESS) during week two of the Spring Quarter. After four progressive reminder emails from different university and school leaders were sent to students who had not yet responded, the survey closed at the end of week four of the quarter.

The survey received 2,251 responses for an overall response rate of 26%. Female students had a higher response rate (29%) than males (22%), a difference that is consistent with other student surveys at Northwestern. When reviewing responses by race/ethnicity, the response rate was highest for Asian students (28%) and lowest for Black/African American students (22%). By class year, first-year students had the highest response rate (30%) while Seniors had the lowest response rate (22%). This year, to engage students with the survey in ways beyond the traditional email invitations with reminders, students were also able to access the survey via a generic link that was posted on Canvas and promoted in multiple Student Affairs messages.

This year's survey asked students about their perceptions of Northwestern, health & well-being, campus community, activities, faculty interactions, background, and jobs. Below is a summary of results for selected questions at the aggregate level and at the sub-group level where notable.

Additional information about the ESS, including instruments, reports, and the complete results from 2013-2023 are available to be viewed [here](#).

### Evaluate Northwestern

This year 80% of Northwestern students indicated they were satisfied (19% *Very satisfied* and 61% *Generally satisfied*)<sup>1</sup> on a five-point scale in response to the first question asking, *Overall, how satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education so far?* Overall satisfaction had declined between 2015 and 2021, where satisfaction fell from 86% to 71%, before improving by nine points this year. Students were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a four-point scale with various aspects of their experience at Northwestern. The three highest rated items were: *Library facilities* (94% satisfied), *Opportunities for religious or spiritual engagement* (93% satisfied), and *Overall quality of instruction* (92% satisfied). There were three items with more than 40% dissatisfaction from students: *Administration's responsiveness to student concerns* (56% dissatisfied), *Psychological counseling services* (49% dissatisfied), and *Food services* (42% dissatisfied).

### Health & Well-Being

Most students (52%) indicated they were *satisfied with their ability to balance academics and other aspects of their life*. However, the level of satisfaction (39%) expressed by Black/African American students was at least ten points lower than every other racial/ethnic group. At least 51% of students in all six schools were satisfied. The biggest source of stress was *Concerns about your future plans*, where 42% of students indicated it was *Very stressful* (for seniors it was 50%). The other sources of stress that

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent discussion of satisfaction levels combines the *very satisfied* and *generally satisfied* responses into one overall *satisfied* response unless specified; additionally, the responses for *generally dissatisfied* and *very dissatisfied* are combined into *dissatisfied*.

received at least 30% *Very stressful* responses were *Managing the workload for your courses* (32%) and *Balancing multiple commitments* (30%).

### **Campus Community**

On a five-point scale most students either *Agree strongly* (28%) or *Agree* (54%) with the statement *I feel safe on this campus*. Women had a smaller percentage that responded *Strongly agree* than men (23% to 36%). For Black/African American students, the *Strongly agree* percentage was half (14%) as much as for the overall results while 62% responded *Agree*. While the *Strongly agree* percentage is essentially the same as in 2019 and 2021 the *Agree* percentages were lower in those years (49% in 2019 and 46% in 2021) for Black/African American students.

While 82% of respondents indicated some level of agreement about *feeling safe on campus*, 66% of respondents agreed they *feel like part of the community at Northwestern* and 58% agreed they *feel valued at Northwestern*. The differences are greater for Black/African American students, with 52% *feeling like part of the community* and 47% *feeling valued*.

Two statements related to freedom of speech were added to this year's survey. The first was *I feel comfortable voicing my true opinion on controversial topics without fear of being unfairly judged*. On a five-point scale, 43% of students agreed (9% *Agree strongly* and 34% *Agree*) and 33% disagreed (13% *Strongly disagree* and 20% *Disagree*) with the statement. The second statement was *Members of the Northwestern community engage in civil and respectful dialogue with one another on difficult topics*; 56% of students agreed (12% *Strongly agree* and 44% *Agree*) while 21% disagreed (6% *Strongly disagree* and 15% *Disagree*).

### **Your Northwestern Experience- Engagement**

The most popular activities for Northwestern students are having an internship (85% responded *Done or Plan to do*), holding a leadership role for an on or off-campus group (84% *Done or Plan to do*), *volunteer in the community* (59% *done or plan to do*), and *Conduct research with a faculty member* (58% *Done or Plan to do*).

### **Navigating College- Faculty Interactions**

Nearly all students either strongly agreed or agreed with the statements *Faculty members are willing to talk with me individually* (96%), *Faculty members treat me fairly* (95%), *Help with academic work is available to me* (91%), and *I can talk to my academic advisor when I need to* (90%). At the school level, the responses from McCormick students to the statement *I can talk with my academic advisor when I need* showed the most disagreement (16%).

Most students (64%) responded *Yes* to the question asking, *Is there at least one faculty member who has taken a personal interest in your success?* The share of *Yes* responses varied by school, from a high of 88% for Bienen students to a low of 57% for McCormick students. By class year, the *Yes* responses decrease from 62% for first-year students to 59% for sophomores before increasing to 72% for seniors. Another question asks how many faculty members a student knows well enough to provide a letter of recommendation; for seniors, 10% responded *Five or more* while only 8% responded *None*.

### **Your Background**

Overall, 65% of students described themselves as *Very liberal* or *Liberal*. In 2013 51% of students described themselves as *Very liberal* or *Liberal*. That share increased to 66% in 2021 before slightly falling this year. The share of students identifying as a gender other than male or female increased from 2% in 2021 to 4% this year. Also, the share of students indicating a sexual orientation other than *Heterosexual* has increased from 9% in 2013 to 32% this year; this includes *Bisexual* (13% in 2023), *Gay/Lesbian* (8%), *Queer or pansexual* (5%), *Questioning or unsure* (4%), and *Something else* (2%).

### **Jobs- Working as a Student**

Most students (59%) indicated they worked for pay during this year. This wasn't true for first-year students- only 34% said they worked. However, this rate increased to 62% for sophomores, 72% for juniors, and 70% for seniors. Women were more likely than men to have worked (62% to 53%). When breaking down results by race/ethnicity, Asian students had the highest percentage (63%) while international students had the lowest percentage (53%). At the school level, Medill had the highest percentage (69%) while McCormick and WCAS had the lowest percentage (56%).

### **Extracurriculars**

At least a third of respondents indicated they had actively participated in *Other student organizations or clubs* (64%), *Academic clubs or honor societies* (43%), or a *Cultural/ethnic organization* (33%). Recreation participation is also strong with 28% of students indicating they participate in *Intramural athletics* and 18% indicating they participate in *Club sports*.

These findings from the ESS allow the university to better understand key elements of the student experience. For further response analyses, please contact the Office of Institutional Research at [ir@northwestern.edu](mailto:ir@northwestern.edu).