

**THE 1998 DRAKE STUDENT SURVEY
A Summary Report of the Findings
by College/School of Enrollment and Year in School**

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Introduction	1
Respondent Characteristics.....	1
The Overall Drake Experience	2
Overall Items.....	2
The Best Parts of the Drake Experience	3
Most Difficult Adjustments.....	4
Complaints.....	4
Reflections of the Drake Environment.....	5
Perceptions of Diversity.....	5
The Academic Experience.....	6
Characteristics of a Good Class.....	6
Assessment of Faculty and Classes in the Major.....	7
Satisfaction with Academic Services and Offices	8
Academic Areas Needing Improvement	9
Academic and Personal Development.....	10
Changes in Skills and Knowledge while at Drake	10
Personal And Interpersonal Development	11
Social Life And Student Services	12
Social and Residential Services and Offices	12
Drake Business Offices.....	12
Student Activities	13
Most Needed Improvements Outside of Academics.....	13
Summary and Conclusions: The 1998 DSS Survey	14

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1:	Respondent Characteristics: Respondents from each College with Specified Characteristics - Percentages 1997.....	2
Table 2.	Overall Satisfaction with the Drake University Experience - Percentages-1998	3
Table 3.	The Three Best Parts of the Drake Experience - Percentages - 1998.....	3
Table 4.	Most Difficult Adjustments Faced in College: Percentages - 1998	4
Table 5.	Most Important Complaints About the Drake Experience: Percentages - 1998.....	4
Table 6.	Strongly Agree or Agree that Following Reflect the Drake Experience - Percentages-1998	5
Table 7.	Perceptions about Diversity-Percentages 1998.....	6

DSS 1998

Table 8:	Most Important Characteristics of a Good Class: Percentages - 1998	7
Table 9:	Strong Agreement or Agreement with Statements about Faculty - Percentages 1998	7
Table 10:	Strong Agreement or Agreement with Statements about Classes and Major- Percentages - 1998	8
Table 11:	Evaluation of Academic Services as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory "- Percentages- 1998	9
Table 12:	Three Most Important Things That Should Be Done To Improve The Drake Academic Experience Percentages - 1998	10
Table 13:	Specified Academic Skills & Knowledge are "Much Stronger" or "Stronger" Than When They Entered Drake - Percentages-1998	11
Table 14:	Personal and Interpersonal Skills are "Much Stronger" or "Stronger" Than When They Entered Drake - Percentages 1997	11
Table 15:	Evaluation of Social and Student Services as "Very Satis." or "Satisfactory "- Percentages-1998	12
Table 16:	Evaluation of Business Offices as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory "- Percentages-1998	12
Table 17:	Evaluation of Student Activities as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory " by College and Year- Percentages-1997	13
Table 18:	Three Most Important Things That Should Be Done To Improve The Drake Student Experience (Other than Academics): Percentages - 1998	13

INTRODUCTION

Each year, since 1991, Drake University students have been asked to complete "The Drake Student Survey", a questionnaire that ascertains student attitudes and perceptions about a variety of issues. The Drake Student Survey normally has been attached to the student preregistration forms in the spring. Since 1996-97, questionnaires also have been mailed to graduating seniors, both in the fall and in the spring.

One portion of the Drake Student Survey each year asks students to select three choices each reflecting their perceptions of the "best parts of your Drake experience," "most important characteristics of a good class," "most important steps needed to improve the Drake academic experience," outside of academics, the "most important things that should be done to improve the Drake student experience," "most difficult adjustments you have faced in college," and the "most important complaints about your experience at Drake." For each of these questions students are provided several options from which to select and the option of writing in responses. The options provided for each questions were derived from open-ended responses provided the first year of the survey. Each year options are revised, eliminating those that the previous year were selected by very few students and adding any that were written in by a large number of students. A footnote to each table based on these questions contains a summary of the most frequent write-in responses.

Many of the questions on the 1998 survey asked about the issues on which previous surveys have focused, including assessment of various aspects of their Drake experience and of their own development in various areas. However, this year's survey was designed to provide baseline information for assessment of the new Drake Curriculum and provides new variables with which to assess the responses.

This report provides a summary of responses analyzed by college/school of enrollment, by year in school, and where relevant, by gender. Additional reports will be issued that provide more extensive analysis of many of these responses.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 presents respondent characteristics by college or school. Eight hundred and seven students responded to the 1997-98 Drake Student Survey. While this is the lowest number of responses we have received, proportionately the response higher than in some previous years and the respondents are relatively representative of the 1997-98 undergraduate student body.

- The distribution of respondents fairly closely reflects the full-time undergraduate student body. Arts and Sciences is overrepresented by 4% while the other colleges are represented among respondents within one to two percent of their representation in the student body.
- The distribution across classification of Year in School is almost identical to the distribution of full-time undergraduate students. Sophomores and juniors are slightly overrepresented and seniors and unclassified students slightly underrepresented.
- Women are overrepresented and men underrepresented among the respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by College/School- Percentages 1998

Number of Cases	All Univ.	All Resp.	COLLEGE/SCHOOL ¹				
			A&S (342)	BPA (273)	Educ (53)	JMC (104)	PHS (128)
College							
All Respond.	--	--	43%	21%	7%	13%	16%
FT. Und.	--	--	39	23	6	17	15
Yr in School							
First Year (P1)	26%	26%	25%	22%	22%	22%	22%
Sophomore (P2)	21	23	34	21	22	26	17
Junior (P3)	20	22	18	25	27	24	18
Senior (P4 & P5)	29	26	23	32	30	28	45
Unclassified	5	2					
Gender							
Men	40%	34%	35%	51%	19%	25%	27%
Women	60	65	65	49	81	75	73
Not identified		1					
Living Arrangements							
Residence Halls		56%	63%	64%	50%	66%	56%
With Family		6	8	8	2	2	8
Greek Houses		8	7	9	18	12	4
Independently		23	23	20	30	19	40
Not reported		7					

THE OVERALL DRAKE EXPERIENCE

The overall satisfaction of students with the University environment is among the most important pieces of information available for assessment. While sometimes unable to pin down the exact sources of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, students know whether they are or are not happy with the general university environment. In general, students are highly satisfied with their Drake University experience.

Overall Items

The survey requested that students indicate their satisfaction with five aspects of the University. Three-quarters or more of the students indicated satisfaction with the quality of classes, experience with faculty, and the overall Drake experience, in all a higher level of satisfaction than in 1997. Sixty-nine and 55% respectively were satisfied with academic advising and Drake services. The percent indicating dissatisfaction with any of these items was 15% or lower.

Because it also is in some sense an "overall" measure, and because it has been an issue of campus focus for some time, the percentage agreeing with the statement that "Drake University is characterized by a sense of community" also is included in this table. While still low, the percentage agreeing with the statement in 1998 is up from the 1997 35% satisfaction, and up markedly since the 1994 and 1995 responses. The percentage disagreeing with the statement dropped from 36% in 1997 to 29% in 1998.

While there was little variation across the colleges and schools, students in the College of Arts and Sciences were most likely to be satisfied with each of the overall academic items. Students in the School of Education were by far the least satisfied with advising but most satisfied with Drake Services. Little variation in response occurred either across years in school or gender on the academic

¹ College affiliation was not reported by 7 students.

items. However agreement with the statement that Drake is characterized by a sense of community dropped steadily with year in school, perhaps reflecting the greater percentage of juniors and seniors who live off campus and thus unlikely to be as involved with university life.

Table 2. Overall Satisfaction with the Drake University Experience - Percentages-1998

Very Satis. or Satis.	All Resp.	College/School					Year In School				Gend.	
		AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr	M	F
Quality of Classes	79	82	74	79	78	82	81	80	78	80	77	81
Experience with Faculty	79	82	76	81	78	78	78	79	78	83	82	79
Overall Drake Experience	75	77	72	77	76	74	76	76	74	77	73	76
Academic Advising	69	74	71	45	72	60	66	74	69	67	73	67
Drake Services	55	56	48	72	57	49	61	57	49	56	52	56
Drake is characterized by a sense of community (% agree)	41	38	43	57	38	44	55	42	35	34	39	43

The Best Parts of the Drake Experience

As has been true each year, "academics" was selected most frequently as one of the Three Best Parts of the Drake Experience. Student choices of the "3 best parts" of the Drake experience were ranked in exactly the same order as in 1997, with "academics" "friends and relationships," and "personal freedom" being selected far more often than the other items.

Academics ranked first in all colleges/schools except the School of Education (from here "Education") and Journalism and Mass Communications (from here "Journalism"). Students in those schools ranked "friends and relationships" first. Friends and relationships ranked second overall and among students in the College of Business and Public Administration (from here "Business") and for Pharmacy and Health Sciences students (from here "Pharmacy"). Personal freedom was the second most frequently mentioned item for Arts and Sciences students (from here "A&S").

Identification of professors as one of the 3 best parts of the Drake Experience increased with year in school - from 20% of the first-year and 48% of the seniors, while the importance of Greek Life dropped off at the junior and seniors years.

Men (27%) were much more likely than women (17%) to select "extracurricular activities" as important, while women (57%) were more likely than men (51%) to select "personal freedom".

Table 3. The Three Best Parts of the Drake Experience - Percentages - 1998

Three Best Parts	All Resp	College/School					Year in School			
		AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Academics	74%	78%	73%	66%	64%	78%	67%	76%	78%	76%
Friends and Relationships	63	57	59	79	67	74	65	69	66	54
Personal freedom	55	60	54	43	50	51	63	50	55	53
Professors	32	36	26	32	32	30	20	27	31	48
People/atmosphere	26	26	26	21	28	29	35	17	23	28
Greek life	22	17	26	36	28	14	28	29	17	13
Extracurricular activities	20	18	26	13	25	18	17	27	19	17
Other*	6	6	6	9	5	4	5	3	7	8

*"Other" responses offered by more than one student included athletics (11), specific classes or class characteristics (8), study abroad (5), specific faculty and staff (5).

Most Difficult Adjustments

When asked about the three most difficult adjustments that they had made in college, "managing time" was the most frequently selected item for all categories [as has been true every year]. Either "adjusting to academics" or "balancing roles" rated second for every group. "Adjusting to academics" decreased in importance and "balancing roles" increased in importance from first to senior year. Men were much more likely to select "managing time" with 76% compared to 67% of the women. Women were more likely to report difficulty with "adjusting to academics," with 54% compared to 48% of the men, and "being away from home, with 36% compared to 30%, of the men.

Table 4. Most Difficult Adjustments Faced in College: Percentages - 1998

Adjustments	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		AS	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Managing time	69	70	70	77	71	68	73	69	69	68
Adjusting to academics	52	49	61	47	49	55	62	54	52	42
Balancing roles	49	50	52	53	44	43	30	46	58	59
Managing money	43	42	39	39	55	39	44	42	45	43
Being away from home	34	35	29	35	30	39	39	39	32	26
Living in res. hall	19	20	18	16	19	21	22	25	14	18
Making friends	18	18	17	8	21	20	19	14	17	19
Other	8	9	6	10	7	6	7	7	5	12

*All of the "other" adjustments noted had to do with social life, e.g., living with a roommate and living in a sorority house, or offered specific examples of one of the above adjustments.

Complaints

Seventy percent of the respondents identified "expense" as the most important complaint. The next most common responses, "emphasis on Greek life" and "student apathy," were selected by only 32% of the respondents. Pharmacy students were by far most likely to note expense as a complaint, perhaps due to the fact that they will spend one to two more years at Drake than do other students. There is a decrease in complaints about many of the areas among upper level students, suggesting that dissatisfied students either adapt to the Drake environment or leave the school. Complaints that were more common among upper class than first year students were "general attitudes" and "bureaucracy."

Table 5. Most Important Complaints About the Drake Experience: Percentages - 1998

Complaints	All Resp	College/School					Year in School			
		AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Expense	70	67	69	68	66	86	73	76	69	63
Emphasis on Greek life	32	33	29	26	38	33	34	35	32	29
Student apathy	32	30	30	32	43	33	25	35	34	37
General attitudes	29	27	28	45	30	33	24	27	31	38
Bureaucracy	27	27	28	21	35	21	13	30	30	37
Lack of activities	26	27	30	23	22	24	35	21	28	19
Neg. attitudes toward Greeks	22	19	27	28	25	17	25	24	22	16
Curriculum and classes	17	20	15	19	11	16	23	14	17	14
Residence halls	17	19	18	15	10	18	29	19	12	9
Other	13	17	14	9	7	11	8	13	13	19

"Other" responses mentioned by five or more students include specific services (13), faculty and advising (13), food and food services (12), lack of activities, or types of activities (12), specifics about academic programs and classes (10), lack of attention to non-traditional students (7), and computers and technology (5).

Opportunities and Preparation

When asked to agree or disagree with statements about the Drake experience, students were quite positive, with seventy-nine percent of the students agreeing with all but one of the statements. The highest agreement was with statements that Drake and their major are helping them prepare for a career. The highest level of agreement with these statements was among Education and Journalism students. The lowest level of agreement was among A&S students.

Juniors and seniors were less likely to agree that there is sufficient opportunity for involvement on campus, perhaps reflecting of the fact that they are more likely to live off campus. There also was a fairly steady drop off in agreement with items that relate to opportunities for interaction on campus and the sense of community on campus. Agreement that they were being prepared for a career increased from first to second year.

Table 6. Strongly Agree or Agree that Following Reflect the Drake Experience - Percentages- 1998

Agree that following has been Drake experience:	All Resp	College/School					Year in School			
		AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Drake helping prepare for career	87	80	88	100	96	91	84	90	88	87
My major provides necessary career knowledge	87	80	88	96	93	92	83	91	83	88
Drake provides opportunity for interaction with other students	85	86	77	94	92	82	86	86	85	84
I have opportunity to develop leadership skills	81	76	83	91	86	81	80	83	81	80
Drake preparing me for life-long learning	81	81	79	91	79	84	83	82	82	80
Drake fosters respect for intellectual honesty	81	84	73	81	82	83	84	82	81	77
Suff. opportunity for involvement in campus	79	78	77	83	84	79	81	82	74	74
Encouraged to do community service	56	56	53	58	54	59	54	63	52	55

Perceptions of Diversity

Over the years, efforts have been made to improve the climate for diversity at Drake University. Accordingly, the Drake Student Survey has assessed student perceptions of diversity and of their own changes in relation to several diversity issues since coming to Drake.

When asked about changes in their knowledge and attitudes since coming to Drake, 60% or more of the students indicated strengthening in acceptance of different beliefs, knowledge of people of other races and cultures, and relationships with persons from different races and cultures. Percentages were somewhat lower when asked about acceptance of disabilities. A relatively low percentage of respondents express satisfaction with the racial/ethnic diversity of the student body and faculty. Satisfaction with gender diversity of students faculty is somewhat higher (about 60%). No clear patterns emerged in responses across colleges/schools.

Table 7. Perceptions about Diversity-Percentages 1998

Diversity Perceptions	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Stronger or Much Stronger										
Acceptance of different beliefs	71	71	67	74	75	70	69	66	74	74
Knowledge of people of other races/cultures	67	64	65	79	72	65	67	65	67	68
Relationships with persons from different races and cultures	63	59	66	76	67	60	62	65	67	59
Awareness/acceptance of people with disabilities	46	46	39	60	60	40	40	44	54	50
Agree or Strongly Agree										
There is sufficient gender diversity among Drake students	63	62	68	66	59	58	61	61	62	66
Drake has achieved sufficient racial and ethnic diversity	38	36	46	39	20	47	44	42	32	33
Agree or Strongly Agree										
*There is sufficient gender diversity among faculty in my major	61	59	65	88	57	68	70	68	53	62
*There is sufficient racial/ethnic diversity among faculty in my major	47	43	49	39	26	66	56	51	36	42

*Responses by college include student who indicated either a first or second major in the college. Responses by year reflect students responding to their first listed major.

THE ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The central focus, the reason for being, of the University is academics. As indicated in Table 3, Academics is selected by more students than is any other items as "One of the Three Best Parts" of the Drake experience, and very few students put concerns about academics on their list of "Three Most Important Complaints." Despite the relatively high level of satisfaction, students offer many ideas about what the academic experience is and what it should be. To better understand student perceptions of the Drake academic environment, students were asked to provide information about, and assessment of, a variety of aspects of the academic experience.

Characteristics of a Good Class

The most commonly identified characteristic of a good class for all colleges/schools except A&S is having "relevant and interesting material," followed closely by "a knowledgeable professor." Undoubtedly reflecting its generally greater diversity, responses among A&S majors were more varied than in the other colleges. Having knowledgeable professors was selected most often in Arts and Sciences and was second in all of the other colleges. Having a caring professor, which ranked second in 1997, dropped to a distant third in 1998. Students in A&S and Journalism were much more interested than others in having a challenging class. Journalism students were by far the least concerned about fair evaluation techniques and Business and Pharmacy students were least interested in interaction and discussion.

There was a fairly steady decline with increase in year in school in selection of "relevant and interesting material" and "caring professors." On the other hand selection of "knowledgeable professors" and "challenging class" increased with year in school.

Table 8. Most Important Characteristics of a Good Class: Percentages - 1998

Characteristics of a Good Class	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		A&S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Material relevant and interesting	67	61	70	67	72	74	71	66	66	64
Knowledgeable professor	62	63	63	56	55	64	60	60	63	65
Caring professor	46	42	48	50	50	48	52	46	45	42
Class challenges students	37	41	27	25	47	33	32	37	38	40
Interaction and discussion	37	41	27	50	41	26	36	35	36	37
Fair eval. techniques	25	23	37	21	8	32	26	27	26	22
Small size	23	24	21	29	25	21	22	25	24	23
Other*	3	3	5	2	3	2	1	3	2	6

*Professor who knows how to teach and can get ideas across (9), other characteristics of professors (10)

Assessment of Faculty and Classes in the Major

In response to several statements about faculty, classes and majors students were asked to respond of (1) their first major, (2) their second major, minor or concentration, and (3) and other classes and faculty. They were asked to write in which major or minor they were evaluating in each of the first two columns. Tables 9 and 10, for each college or school, combine responses to part 1 and 2. Thus, for instance, A&S percentages include students who indicated that their first major was in A&S and those who indicate a second major, a minor or a concentration in A&S. Because there were no significant variations in responses to these items across year in school, information is presented only by college/school.

When asked to indicate their feelings about experiences with faculty, on a scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" respondents were quite positive (Table 9). Eighty to 90% of the respondents identified the faculty as approachable, enthusiastic, and caring, and indicated satisfaction with the opportunity for personal interaction with faculty. Some important variations across colleges did emerge. Education students were most approving of their major faculty, except in terms of advising. By far the lowest satisfaction with academic advisors was expressed by students in Education, followed by those in Pharmacy. Students from Business were least likely to agree that faculty were approachable or enthusiastic. Students from Pharmacy least often agreed that their faculty were caring or sensitive to student needs. Students from these two colleges were tied for being least likely to be satisfied with their opportunity for personal interaction with faculty.

Table 9. Strong Agreement or Agreement with Statements about Faculty - Percentages 1998

Faculty	Agree	All Resp.	College/School				
			A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS
Faculty are approachable		91	91	84	96	94	91
Professors are enthusiastic		88	89	82	96	90	84
I am satisfied with the opp. for personal interaction with faculty		83	87	75	91	85	75
Professors are caring		82	84	77	100	82	76
Faculty are sensitive to student needs		78	81	72	91	85	65
I am satisfied with my academic advisor		77	82	74	53	82	66

Students also were asked several questions about their perceptions of classes and major (Table 10). These showed no patterned variation across year in school, so are reported only by college/school. More than 80% of all respondents agreed that classes had been challenging and that they were satisfied with the quality of their major and with the education they were receiving in their major. A&S and Pharmacy students were most likely, and Education students least likely, to agree that their classes are

challenging. Education majors were most satisfied with the education they are receiving in their major and the quality of their major. Business students were most likely to agree that class size was too large and to want more opportunity for interaction in classes.

Table 10. Strong Agreement or Agreement with Statements about Classes and Major- Percentages 1998

Major and Classes	All Resp.	College/School				
		A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS
My classes have been challenging	89	93	87	76	79	94
I am satisfied with the quality of my major	85	85	79	94	85	83
I am satisfied with the education I am receiving	85	83	81	94	85	83
My classes provide opportunity for open exchange of ideas	78	81	69	93	86	65
There should be more opportunity for interaction in classes	40	36	61	40	37	52
The typical class size too large	15	13	60	17	10	31

Satisfaction with Academic Services and Offices

A variety of offices and services at Drake primarily support the academic mission. Student satisfaction with these academic services was lower than satisfaction with faculty and classes. Within the services, the highest level of satisfaction was expressed in relation to access to computers. While still receiving the highest approval, satisfaction with this area is lower than in 1997, while satisfaction with most service areas improved. The next highest satisfaction was expressed with the Dean's offices followed by the library staff services, study abroad program, registration process, and the Admissions and Registrar's offices.

Evaluation of some of the services and offices varied by college/school while others showed the most variation by year of enrollment. Education students were the most satisfied with almost all offices and services. The exceptions were the Career Center where Business Students were more satisfied, the MAC Hotline where almost all other colleges/schools were more satisfied, and the SDLC to which Education students indicated the lowest level of satisfaction.

Responses to several of the services and offices were related to year of enrollment. There is a definite pattern of declining satisfaction from first to junior/senior year with access to computers. This may be presumed to reflect that juniors and seniors are more likely to live off campus. Decline in satisfaction with availability of periodicals (somewhat with books), computer services, MAC Hotline, and career center also corresponded to increase in year of enrollment. In no case was there a steady increase in satisfaction with increase in year of enrollment.

Three of the offices evaluated, the Dean's, Provost's and President's offices very likely have a unique type of contact with the students. Certainly, most students are likely to have significant contact with the Dean's office only when they are having difficulty. Often this may be academic difficulty which cannot be resolved by that office, and which often results in negative action from the office. Similarly, for most students the only significant contact with the President's and Provost's offices is in relation to requests and problems which may be relatively unlikely to be resolved according to the student's wishes. Satisfaction with the Student Development and Learning Center was relatively low and was varied. First, 55% of the respondents indicated that the SDLC was not applicable. Among those who had experience only 44% reported satisfaction. Satisfaction was lowest among education students.

Table 11. Evaluation of Academic Services as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory" - Percentages-1998

Academic Services and Offices	*Not Applic	% of Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
			AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Access to Computers	1	77	76	75	89	81	73	90	82	66	67
My Dean's Office	13	68	62	76	87	58	71	69	66	69	68
Library Staff Services	5	67	68	60	82	69	62	66	57	67	74
Registration Process	2	64	65	66	70	62	57	62	66	67	63
Admissions Office	9	62	63	61	71	60	58	70	64	51	63
Registrar's Office	14	62	64	57	75	62	57	64	59	61	64
Periodical Availability in Library	10	55	56	56	60	53	52	68	56	51	49
Career Center	23	53	53	62	57	47	42	60	54	52	52
Computer Services (until 98 - "Dial Comp. Ctr")	8	53	53	51	61	50	54	65	55	49	40
Book Availability in Library	5	52	50	50	56	55	54	59	52	49	51
MAC Hotline	21	50	52	45	48	49	54	57	48	46	44
Study Abroad Program	55	65	68	64	82	62	46	64	67	56	72
Provost's Office	46	50	51	39	50	57	56	60	46	38	54
President's Office	49	47	46	45	50	56	44	48	43	45	48
SDLC	55	45	44	41	35	52	49	43	43	44	44

When asked to evaluate these offices and services, students were given the option of indicating no experience, or not applicable. The percentage of respondents who indicated no experience with each area is reported in the "Not Applic." column. Services and offices for which more than 1/3 of the students indicated no experience appear separately at the bottom of the table. All numbers reported in are percentages of those who evaluated each area.

Academic Areas Needing Improvement

Given the generally positive evaluations of the academic experience, it is not surprising that less than 50% of the respondents perceive a need for improvement in any specific area (Table 12). Support for various changes to improve the academic experience was in the same order as in 1997 with one exception; support of reduced class size and more student support services exchanged positions. As in previous years, developing more interesting courses is the most popular option for improving the academic experience. This item was most likely to draw agreement from Business majors and from first- and second-year students. Arts and Sciences students were most likely to express a need for more out of class experiences. Education students were most likely to want a variety of teaching methods and more interaction. Pharmacy students most often expressed a need for reduced class sizes.

Relatively little variation in areas identified as needing improvement emerged by year in school. However, first year students were more likely to identify a need for more interesting classes, more caring professors and reduced class size. Seniors were more interested in increased out-of-class experiences and a change in the general education requirements.

Table 12. Three Most Important Things That Should Be Done To Improve The Drake Academic Experience Percentages - 1998

Steps to Improve Drake Academic Exper.	All Rsp	College/School					Year in School			
		AS	BPA	Ed	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
More interesting courses	47	48	55	44	48	37	52	52	48	41
Variety teaching methods	44	42	45	50	45	41	44	41	44	43
More out-of-class opportunities	35	41	37	20	28	27	29	37	37	39
More interaction	35	33	34	46	34	38	36	38	34	31
Change gen ed requirements	32	37	26	36	36	24	30	33	32	37
Reduce class size	29	25	26	20	31	46	33	28	26	26
More student support services	28	26	29	32	25	29	31	24	24	30
More enthusiastic professors	21	18	19	26	26	23	22	19	22	18
More caring professors	14	11	18	10	14	18	17	14	16	11
Other *	9	9	8	10	12	10	4	8	11	14

By far the most common "other" steps related to scheduling more classes, classes at different times, more sections etc. (18). Also mentioned frequently were better advising (9) and better teaching (7).

ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Changes in Skills and Knowledge while at Drake

Each year students are asked to evaluate the extent to which a variety of areas of knowledge and skill had changed since coming to Drake University (Table 13). This year, these questions were expanded to cover all of the stated goals of the new Drake Curriculum. Thus, these data may provide some baselines for assessment of student perceptions of change under the new curriculum.

Students report perceptions of improvement in relation to most of these areas. Ninety percent or more of almost every category indicated that they were stronger or much stronger in general knowledge and major field knowledge. The only response groups below 90% on these two questions were Business students in response to both questions and first-year students in terms of gain in knowledge in their major field. Since most first-year students have little contact with their major field, or may not have firmly settled on a major field, lower percentages should be expected on this response category. Seventy-five percent or more of the respondents indicated that they had gained strength in ability to think critically, in analytical and problem solving skills, computer skills and understanding, and in their ability to work independently. The most dramatic differences across colleges/schools appear in relation to writing skills [40% difference from highest (JMC) to lowest (PHS)], historical awareness [37% difference from highest (A&S) to lowest (PHS)], knowledge of the arts [29% difference from highest (A&S) to lowest (BPA)], and mathematical skills [43% difference from highest (BPA) to lowest (JMC)].

As would be hoped, the percentage of students indicating increased strength is higher among upper level students on most items. In most areas the greatest increase in perceived improvement since coming to Drake occurs between the first and second years. The exceptions are computer skills and reading speed and comprehension, which stay fairly flat across years, and writing and mathematical skills for which a smaller percentage of seniors than first year students actually perceive improvement.

Table 13. Specified Academic Skills & Knowledge are "Much Stronger" or "Stronger" Than When They Entered Drake - Percentages-1998

Acad. Skills & Knowledge	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
General Knowledge	93	94	89	100	91	96	93	92	91	97
Knowledge of Major Field	93	93	86	96	97	95	81	93	98	99
Ability to Think Critically	88	89	87	91	92	86	80	88	89	95
Analytical/Prob Solving	79	79	83	74	74	79	70	81	81	85
Computer Skills and Understanding	78	72	84	74	85	81	76	78	80	79
Ability to Work Independently	75	75	72	76	80	73	77	71	76	76
Writing Skills	72	75	66	81	92	52	74	69	74	71
Prep. for Grad/Prof Schools	69	73	63	72	54	76	51	73	72	81
Ability to Work Cooperatively	69	64	72	72	74	72	54	64	78	78
Leadership Abilities	66	62	67	76	75	65	60	69	66	69
Scientific Understanding	59	60	46	45	48	89	55	64	57	61
Historical Awareness	52	65	40	57	57	28	47	56	56	54
Knowledge of the Arts	49	60	31	59	53	37	38	51	50	57
Reading Speed and Comprehension	48	52	41	45	51	46	45	46	54	47
Public Speaking Ability	48	41	54	64	50	52	32	40	56	63
Scientific Understanding	48	41	54	64	50	52	55	64	57	61
Mathematical Skills	43	40	62	38	10	53	43	44	44	41

Personal and Interpersonal Skills

Table 14 indicates the percentages of respondents who said that they perceived their own personal and interpersonal work and social skills as "much stronger" or "stronger" than when they entered Drake. Improvement was reported most often in ability to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and in their interpersonal skills. Journalism and Education students were most likely to perceive increased strength in the interpersonal skills. In most areas the responses were most positive among juniors and/or seniors.

Table 14. Personal and Interpersonal Skills are "Much Stronger" or "Stronger" Than When They Entered Drake - Percentages 1998

Personal and Interpersonal Skills	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Identify your strengths/ weaknesses	87	87	87	85	89	86	86	85	88	87
Interpersonal skills	80	79	76	87	86	81	77	77	82	84
Develop code of ethics	73	68	70	72	86	78	71	67	74	78
Define own value system	71	72	68	72	75	69	69	70	75	72
Understanding of indiv. identity	70	70	65	79	79	67	67	68	76	72
Skills resolving ethical dilemmas	56	56	54	57	67	52	51	51	63	61
Understanding your sexuality	42	42	36	57	54	38	36	44	42	49

SOCIAL LIFE AND STUDENT SERVICES

Social and Residential Services and Offices

Students were asked to evaluate services and offices that relate most directly to the social life and living experiences of students on the Drake campus. A relatively clear relationship emerges between year in school and evaluation of several of the social and student services. There is a fairly steady drop from first to senior year in satisfaction with the Bell Center, residence halls and religious organizations. It is likely that the drop in satisfaction reflects reduced access or relevance among students who have moved off campus. Other items display a drop in satisfaction from the junior to senior year. These include the Student Life Center, International Center, and campus security. By comparison, there is either a steady, or a senior year increase, in satisfaction with the Counseling Center, Olmsted food service, Hubbell dining hall, and the Health Service.

Table 15. Evaluation of Social and Residential Services as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory"
- Percentages-1998

Social and Residential Services and Offices	% not appl	% of Resp.	College/School					Year in School				Gender	
			A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr	Male	Fem
Bell Center	9	77	75	80	82	79	74	86	80	66	73	73	79
International Center	53	63	68	64	57	62	42	61	65	58	65	53	69
Student Life Center	17	61	60	60	67	68	59	61	60	58	62	53	66
Campus Security	7	59	62	53	67	56	60	72	56	53	54	54	62
Residence Halls	11	55	56	51	57	57	51	58	62	45	51	47	59
Residential Life Office	25	54	52	47	60	59	58	53	58	46	52	43	53
Dean of Students Off	40	53	51	48	56	55	59	48	43	49	65	45	57
Olmsted Food Service	6	48	50	43	52	40	52	55	47	42	44	43	50
Counseling Center	56	47	49	30	36	58	56	46	49	39	55	40	52
Health Service	18	47	48	44	46	39	60	56	49	40	44	48	47
Campus Religious Orgs	33	46	50	44	50	27	53	50	44	41	48	45	47
Disability Resource Ctr	67	42	42	42	25	54	37	35	40	39	55	39	45
Hubbell Dining Hall	9	40	44	32	40	31	49	48	37	29	38	36	42

Drake Business Offices

The level of satisfaction expressed in relation to Drake business offices is lower than for many other areas of campus life (Table 16). The highest satisfaction was with the Cashier's office and the lowest was with the computer store. No pattern emerges in relation to either college/school or year in school.

Table 16: Evaluation of Business Offices as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory" - Percentages-1998

Business Offices	Not Applic	% of Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
			A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Cashier's Office	4	65	70	63	71	56	61	71	62	69	59
Financial Aid Staff	19	49	52	39	60	49	52	53	43	43	55
Availability of Fin. Aid	6	47	52	35	52	53	45	55	43	41	51
Telecommunications Office	46	44	45	36	55	51	42	47	40	42	43
Computer Store	48	43	48	38	40	41	40	47	44	39	44

Student Activities

The last area of student life and social services about which respondents were asked were student activities. The highest satisfaction was expressed in relation to Fine Arts productions and intramural programs, with intercollegiate athletics and the Times-Delphic also seen as satisfactory by more than half of the respondents.

Table 17. Evaluation of Student Activities as "Very Satisfactory" or "Satisfactory" by College and Year- Percentages-1998

Student Activities	% not appl	% of Resp.	College/School					Year in School				Gender	
			A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr	Male	Fem
Fine Arts Productions	18	77	79	68	73	82	77	80	77	73	74	71	80
Intramural Program	33	71	67	73	76	73	73	73	70	70	66	68	73
Intercollegiate Athletics	31	51	45	52	69	60	48	57	52	44	48	49	52
Times-Delphic	7	51	51	47	53	55	53	66	54	45	37	41	56
Periphery	40	49	57	30	43	53	50	41	49	38	57	41	53
Drake Magazine	23	45	47	37	49	57	40	42	50	47	40	36	51
DUIN	36	42	47	28	35	50	39	42	42	40	42	38	44
Student Government	23	41	38	39	59	44	43	49	38	40	37	31	47
KDRK Radio	35	40	37	35	44	53	43	51	43	40	27	39	41
Drake Broadcasting	25	30	31	21	29	44	30	37	30	26	24	23	35

Most Needed Improvements Outside of Academics

When asked about the three most important things, outside of academics, that should be done to improve the Drake Student experience students focused on a variety of issues (Table 18). The most frequent responses were "build school spirit" and provide a "real student union". These items were frequently offered as written responses to this item in 1996 and received the highest support in 1997 as well. The support for the student union increases among upper level students. This is consistent with the long recognized concern with the need for community and for greater identity with the University. Emphasis on food and residence halls was highest among first year students who are most likely to be living on campus.

Table 18. Three Most Important Things That Should Be Done To Improve The Drake Student Experience (Other than Academics): Percentages - 1998

Steps to Improve Drake Experience (non-Academic)	All Resp.	College/School					Year in School			
		A & S	BPA	Educ	JMC	PHS	FY	So	Jun	Sr
Build school spirit	60	55	67	63	65	58	54	66	57	61
Real Student Union	55	52	48	67	65	58	47	55	59	58
More on-campus social options	46	48	46	41	45	44	46	41	52	46
Improve food	34	31	45	33	34	26	40	41	33	25
Improve res. halls	34	37	35	29	24	34	45	38	28	26
De-emphasize Greek life	32	34	26	28	33	33	29	29	31	35
Provide More activities	24	25	21	31	27	20	28	21	24	22
Other	11	12	10	6	5	18	7	8	13	17

"Other" responses to improve the Drake student experience were extensive. The most common responses were positive statements about Greek life (18) and appeals for various kinds of support and opportunities for non-traditional (14) and off campus (8) students. It should be noted that both of these

sets of comments have arisen on previous questionnaires, been included among the response options, but then been selected by less than 10% of the respondents in the next survey. Nonetheless, they are issues of high concern to a number of students. Also mentioned by several students each as "other" steps for improvement were improving and changing student activities (9), improving food and food service (7), improving computers and technology services and access (7), improving appearance of the campus (5).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS: The 1998 DSS SURVEY

Analysis of the Drake Student Survey results for the 1997-98 academic year suggest that students continue to have a relatively positive perception of their experience at Drake University. In summary:

- Respondents report a high level of satisfaction with the quality of classes, experience with faculty and with the overall Drake Experience.
- Students most often report academics to be the best part of the Drake experience. This is followed in frequency by reports of friends and relationships as the best part of the experience.
- Managing time, followed by adjusting to academics and balancing roles continue to be most frequently reported as difficult adjustments faced in college.
- As in previous years, "expense" is by far the most frequently reported complaint about the Drake experience.
- Seventy-five percent or more of the respondents agree with positive statements about how Drake and their major are helping them prepare for careers, about opportunities for interaction, development of leadership skills, preparation for life-long learning, fostering of respect for intellectual honesty, and involvement on campus.
- More than 60% of the respondents agree that they have gained in acceptance of different beliefs, knowledge of people of other races and cultures, and relationships with persons from different races and cultures since coming to Drake. They agree that there is sufficient gender diversity among Drake Students and faculty. They are less likely to agree that they have improved in their awareness and acceptance of people with disabilities or that there is sufficient racial and ethnic diversity among students and faculty.
- When asked about the characteristics of a good class, students most often selected relevant material and knowledgeable professors.
- When asked about faculty, more than three-quarters of the respondents agreed that faculty are approachable, enthusiastic, and caring, that they are satisfied with opportunity for personal interaction with faculty, that faculty are sensitive to student needs, and that they are satisfied with their academic advisor.
- More than 75% of the respondents agreed that their classes have been challenging, that they are satisfied with the quality of their major and with the education that they are receiving and that their classes provide opportunity for open exchange of ideas.
- More than 75% of the respondents expressed satisfaction with access to computers. Levels of satisfaction with other academic services were lower, ranging down to 45% satisfaction with the Student Development and Learning Center.
- When asked about what should be done to improve the Drake academic experience, the consensus was lower than for other items. Forty-seven percent of the students reported a need for more interesting courses, and 44% indicated a desire for more variety in teaching methods. Other items were selected by 35% or less of the respondents.

- More than 90% of the students indicated that their general knowledge and knowledge in their major field were stronger or much stronger than when they entered Drake. More than three-quarters of the respondents reported such gains in their ability to think critically, in analytical and problem solving skills, in computer skills and understanding, and in ability to work independently.
- Eighty percent or more of the students reported having gained strength in their ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses and in interpersonal skills.
- When asked about social and residential services, half or more of the students expressed satisfaction with the Bell Center, International Center, Student Life Center, Campus Security, residence halls, the Residential Life Office, with the Dean of Students Office.
- More than half of the respondent indicated satisfaction with the cashier's office.
- More than half of the respondents indicated satisfaction with Fine Arts productions, intramural programming, intercollegiate athletics, and the *Times-Delphic*.
- When asked about steps that would improve the non-academic aspects of the Drake experience, 60% percent of the respondents selected the need to "build school spirit" and 55% selected provide a "real student union".