

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

SUBMITTED TO
MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY
STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY
STONY BROOK ♦ NEW YORK ♦ 11794

FEBRUARY 5, 2004

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*Timeline
Themes*

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The topic that we have chosen as the focus of Stony Brook's self-study lies at the core of the institution's history over the last decade: **the student experience at Stony Brook**. The major objective of our self-study has been to study, understand and assess the student experience at Stony Brook and its relation to student learning outcomes, so that we can use this understanding to drive change in the direction of the goal of improving the student experience for all students, undergraduate and graduate. In this self-study, we identify what real progress we have made to date towards our goal, what the important gaps are, and what we need to develop or improve. The overarching goal of this self-study is to consolidate our future as a truly student-centered research university.

In choosing subtopics for this self study, we were acutely aware of the danger that in breaking the topic up into manageable pieces we might lose the essential relatedness of the whole. The five subtopics that we arrived at in the end divide the topic up thematically, along axes of both time and structure. On the time axis, we traced students' progress through their academic career, which covers most aspects of the student experience. Structurally, we examined the students' educational and social environment at the university, which should together foster growth of the complete person.

The themes of the self-study are as follows:

Theme 1: Transition to Stony Brook University

Who are our incoming students, how do we prepare them before they begin their education at Stony Brook, and how do we facilitate their transition to Stony Brook?

Theme 2: The Foundational Experience at Stony Brook University

How do the first and second years of our students prepare them for further success at Stony Brook?

Theme 3: Education and Scholarly Activities

How can we improve upon the integrated diverse education of Stony Brook students?

Theme 4: Stony Brook as a Community

How good is the Stony Brook community as an environment for intellectual growth?

Theme 5: Life Beyond Stony Brook

Are our students prepared for life beyond Stony Brook?

Professors Mark Aronoff and Petar Djuric were appointed to lead the reaccreditation process in the fall of 2001. Together, they selected a small group of faculty and staff, who arrived at the five themes, with a subcommittee devoted to each theme and each subcommittee co-chaired by two members of a steering committee made up by augmenting the original core group. The size of the steering committee was determined by the desire to represent the diversity of Stony Brook's campus, including representatives from throughout the academic and administrative sectors, while keeping the size within reason to be effective and efficient. Ten of these members also created and co-chaired thematic subcommittees and two co-chaired a research committee. The steering committee has met regularly since early April 2002.

The role of the steering committee has been to provide the principal guidance and coordination of the assessment processes carried out by the subcommittees. The steering committee co-chairs also met regularly with the President and Provost to ensure that the self-study was consonant with the mission and goals of the university. A major role of the subcommittees has been to provide direct links to the campus community and represent all areas of campus in making concrete suggestions. Subcommittee co-chairs were charged with two tasks: build the subcommittees and begin to formulate a set of questions around which their subcommittees could do their work. The subcommittees prepared questions that identified specific topics addressing core issues of the self-study with respect to the guidelines in *Characteristics of Excellence*.

The long-term goal of this self-study process is to foster a culture of constructive assessment followed by concrete actions that would lead to continuous improvements throughout the university. The efforts of the steering committee and subcommittees reflect this initiative. Most notable among these efforts are the session work at the Student/Faculty/Staff (SFS) Retreat and the design and implementation of a comprehensive student and faculty survey.

The primary goal of the SFS Retreat, which has met annually since 1985, is to provide a forum for interaction among students, faculty, and staff. In the fall of 2002, the Middle States steering committee directed the retreat, creating a series of breakout sessions in which to address the five themes and obtain feedback from the campus community. Over the two-day retreat 60 campus representatives brainstormed on ways to improve the student experience at Stony Brook. In the months following the retreat, several participants joined the subcommittees and a reunion in the spring of 2003 allowed the steering committee to assess the progress made on issues raised at the retreat.

The steering committee devised a survey designed to elicit opinions of Stony Brook University and the fulfillment of its mission, which was administered in the spring of 2002. The Stony Brook University Center for Survey Research conducted telephone interviews with Stony Brook University faculty members, graduate and undergraduate students, and alumni. Separate questionnaires were constructed and administered to each group. The results of this survey were instrumental in formulating the recommendations for improvement.

The self-study culminated in a set of recommendations from each of the subcommittees, which were discussed and refined by the full steering committee in consultation with the President, the Provost, and various university bodies, which are listed in Section 10 of this document. These recommendations will guide the university through the next decade.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION

Establish a structure for ensuring continuous improvement of the student experience.

- Create a standing committee on the student experience, reporting to the President, which will refine the recommendations of the Middle States Self-Study into a set of concrete implementable actions for the President's consideration, aligned with the institutional strategic plan.
- Charge specific administrative offices with implementing each recommendation within a designated time-frame.
- Evaluate progress annually and report it to the university community.
- Develop new recommendations on a regular strategic planning cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 1: THE TRANSITION TO STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

- 1. *Continue to enhance scholarship and financial aid opportunities for new students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.*** The number of first-year undergraduate students who received scholarships increased from 6.4% in 1999 to 15.8% in 2002. We must continue to expand these awards to compete for highly qualified students. Similarly, stipends for doctoral candidates should be brought into alignment with those of our peers. (pp. 27-30)
- 2. *Improve the availability of courses for incoming students.*** The academic progress of some of our undergraduates is adversely affected by lack of space in appropriate courses. Failure to provide all incoming students with needed courses has the potential to harm our reputation and, consequently, our ability to attract highly qualified applicants. For example, modifying the orientation process to allow students to register for courses further in advance would provide more accurate prediction of demand in gateway courses and might allow us to fill this demand more easily. (pp. 30-31)
- 3. *Raise further the external reputation of the institution.*** Stony Brook must do a better job of informing the public and prospective students of our successes. In addition to promoting our educational and research programs, we need to better monitor and promulgate the success of our alumni in gaining admittance to graduate and professional schools, obtaining jobs, passing professional licensing exams, and other outcome measures, since these measures are central to prospective students' decision to attend a particular institution. (p. 29)
- 4. *Improve the geographic diversity of the undergraduate student body.*** Our peers are national in their undergraduate enrollment and they conduct significant ongoing out-of-state undergraduate recruitment. Attracting a more geographically diverse student body will enhance our national reputation, increase selectivity, and improve campus life. (pp. 28-29)
- 5. *Improve registration and advising for new undergraduate students.*** We must take steps to make the summer registration days a more meaningful, engaging early socialization experience. Initial satisfaction might be improved by giving students more time with the orientation leaders during the registration day. Beginning in summer 2004, all students will be oriented within the context of their Undergraduate College assignment, which will provide them with a greater initial sense of connection. Stony Brook must also find ways to connect individual new students with advisors and mentors over the long term. The revamped college-based 101 and 102 seminars will also give students semester-long opportunities to establish close advising and mentoring relationships with both faculty and staff. (pp. 31-33)
- 6. *Initiate systematic assessment of orientations for graduate and international students.*** We need to assess the extent to which our programs meet the specific needs of graduate and international students. There is wide variability in the comprehensiveness of orientations offered by individual graduate programs. We will scrutinize the curricula of these programs to develop best practices to enrich the orientation experiences of all graduate students. (pp. 36-37)

7. ***Strengthen and expand coordination among orientation events.*** We must coordinate all university orientation efforts, including those of individual programs, departments, student organizations, and the Undergraduate Colleges. Orientation curricula should be evaluated to provide examples of effective practices and to eliminate duplication of effort and information. Moreover, fostering communication among various groups will allow optimal sharing of resources. (pp. 30-31, 37-38)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 2: THE FOUNDATIONAL EXPERIENCE

8. ***Improve first-year courses.*** Efforts to improve students' learning and experience in the classroom should be concentrated on large first-year gateway courses. The university should explore innovative ways of changing the large lecture course experience to make it more interactive and personal. The university should also find ways to decrease the size of first-year courses. In an effort to foster interdisciplinary cross-fertilization, faculty teaching large lecture courses in related disciplines should collaborate to develop common problem sets or learning skills exercises. Faculty should be rewarded for outstanding performance in these courses. (pp. 44, 48-51)
9. ***Simplify the array of courses available to first-year students.*** Freshmen are faced with the overwhelming task of putting together a schedule from the many available courses. While we do not advocate restricting course choice, first-year students should be given a simplified list of the courses that most freshmen take, along with sample schedule templates and popular course combination packages from which they can select, based on interest and need. (p. 44)
10. ***Improve the foundational experience.*** Virtually all academic programs offer courses that address broader needs of the campus community, such as freshman seminars, introductory survey courses, and courses designed to satisfy general education (DEC) requirements. In each case, the learning objectives and learning outcomes of the course should be explicitly stated and publicized. (pp. 46, 51-52)
11. ***Identify ways for transfer students to make a smoother transition to Stony Brook.*** We must better assess the skills and knowledge of transfer students and help those who fall short in specific areas. (pp. 44-45)
12. ***Continue to build a culture of constructive assessment as a tool for improvement throughout the university.*** Many members of the university community view assessment as an externally imposed burden, rather than a tool for improvement. The university is already committed to the SUNY-mandated assessment of general education. Stony Brook should create incentives for assessment and mechanisms for disseminating and encouraging best practices, while assuring that assessment will not be an empty exercise, but rather a generator of concrete actions for continuous improvement of the university. (pp. 46, 52-53)
13. ***Encourage students to make academic and career goals a priority.*** Stony Brook should find mechanisms to encourage students to assess their academic and career intentions regularly. These should include improved outreach to students and other ways to encourage students to select a major. (p. 45)

14. Provide mentoring opportunities for every student. Our surveys show a very strong demand among students for mentoring. Mentoring can have a significant impact on the satisfaction, success, and retention of undergraduate students, both as mentor and mentee. Further, the relationships established between the mentor and mentee are mutually beneficial. Because no single approach can sufficiently meet all needs, efforts should be made to both grow existing programs and develop new ones (including training programs). (pp. 47-48, 52)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 3: EDUCATION AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

15. Improve communication between teachers and learners. We intend to promote active learning by providing instructors with opportunities to improve their communication skills and hence their teaching effectiveness. Since communication is a two-way process, students should similarly be encouraged to use tools and resources that will permit them to excel (e.g. Blackboard, workshops, tutoring services). (pp. 58, 61)

16. Provide incentives to departments to improve TA training and performance. We must ensure that our TAs are appropriately trained to communicate with our student body. Associated with TA training is the strong need to ensure that best practices are made available to Stony Brook's community at large. For example, regular workshops could be arranged where TAs, instructors, and faculty who have been recognized for their excellence in teaching can meet within a common forum to exchange information about those practices that had an impact and those that did not. Web-based dissemination of successful practices might also be useful. (p. 59)

17. Evaluate curricular offerings regularly to ensure that they meet the needs and interests of our students. The academic enterprise lies within a changing world. Colleges, schools, and departments should therefore examine their courses and curricula on a regular cycle to ensure that they fit the needs of students and society, within the resources available. Curriculum and student demand should be important factors in hiring and planning at all levels. (p. 59)

18. Improve recognition and rewards for faculty, staff members, and graduate students who have demonstrated excellence in directing undergraduate research and creative academic projects. We must recognize and reward the effort that a faculty member, staff member, or graduate student devotes to directing undergraduate research and creative activities. This will both encourage their willingness to participate and enhance the overall quality of students' research and creative academic projects. (p. 61)

19. Increase the number of students who undertake independent research and creative activities. The incorporation of undergraduate students into the research and creative enterprise is highly desirable. Because such students are an extra load on the resources of the host, it is appropriate to create mechanisms whereby faculty and staff can access resources that will induce them to mentor more undergraduates. (pp. 60-63)

*frustrating
ways to
change*

20. Support further expansion of the electronic library. Surveys of university students demonstrate a strong preference for electronic content which they can search on the Internet and download to a disc or printer. The library's role is to acquire and display these resources and to instruct students on their use. The very accessibility of these resources makes them valuable, and costly. In its drive toward an excellent student experience, the university needs to support these high cost/high benefit resources. Use of these resources is not intuitive. Expanding the library's instruction program would help the university give students life-long information skills. (p. 65)

about ab

21. Improve library access. Even as more and more information is going online, student use of the library's reading rooms is increasing. The university will open a 24-hour-a-day study space in spring 2004, an important step toward the larger goal of an information commons staffed twenty-four hours a day. The type and quality of all facilities within the physical boundaries of the main library building needs to be kept in mind, as well. (p. 66)

22. Assess, update, and expand instructional facilities regularly. The quality of the educational process is directly related to the quality of the teaching environment. Classrooms and laboratories need to be assessed regularly and, where needed, upgraded and expanded to a common standard that facilitates the learning process. This leads to a more efficient setup and delivery of instructional materials by the instructor and a learning-friendly environment for the students. Because laboratories have specific needs that depend on the academic discipline (e.g., music vs. biology vs. engineering), considerable care is needed to ensure appropriate changes. The possible need for a broader range of classroom sizes should be studied. (p. 65-67)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 4: STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY AS A COMMUNITY

23. Provide regular timely information on community activities. Stony Brook has a wealth of activities and events but students, faculty, and staff perceive that it is more difficult than it should be to get information about these, despite the fact that the information is disseminated in a wide array of formats at considerable cost (web-based, e-mail, bulletin board, kiosks, university/student newspaper, television, radio, flyers). A mechanism should be found for disseminating information to both the university and the wider community in a timely and simple fashion. (pp. 74-75)

24. Encourage student community service. Students gain an appreciation of the value and relevance of their education and their potential as human beings through participation in community service activities, both inside and outside the university. Community service also improves students' perception of belonging and hence the health of the entire community. Although we have made progress in this direction, we need to find ways to reach a greater number of students. (p. 80)

25. Improve the integration of graduate and upper-level undergraduate students into the wider community. The survey data indicate that incoming students feel themselves to be more a part of the wider community than do upper-level and graduate students. Ways should be found to improve the engagement of these sectors of the university. We also need to look

carefully at our highest-achieving students, who appear to be less connected and to feel less sense of community. (pp. 78, 80)

26. *Institute ongoing assessment of the sense of community.* The sense of community is created through many factors, all of which have temporal components and reflect the evolving local culture. Mechanisms need to be established for assessing changes. A periodic assessment survey focused on community would enable us to find the specific factors that might improve the sense of community. (pp. 70, 78-79, 81-82)

27. *Promote community pride.* The focus groups and survey results confirmed the finding of the Boyer Report that pride in one's institution or the celebratory aspects of belonging are a vital aspect of the Stony Brook community. Undergraduate students in particular seem strongly influenced by celebratory events as a way of demonstrating and instilling pride in Stony Brook. (pp. 76-78)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 5: LIFE BEYOND STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY

28. *Increase opportunities for individual advising.* Means should be found to encourage students to meet regularly with faculty members and professional advisors who will listen to their concerns and talk with them about academic programs, course selection, internships, and career plans. These connections would help students reflect on their experiences and understand the transferability of their skills, especially in the liberal arts, to a variety of post-college options in graduate study, research, and employment. (pp. 87-88)

29. *Promote internships and other pre-professional work experience.* Students must be better informed about career and internship opportunities. This can be accomplished by better interaction with academic departments and the Career Center. Invited professionals from the community can provide career scenarios in specific majors (e.g., high school chemistry teacher). Corporate internship programs are the first source for hiring at the entry level, yet few non-Health Sciences Center students participate. Credit and non-credit internships should be tracked and opportunities promoted by departments. Alumni could help us identify internships within their organizations. (pp. 86-88, 90)

30. *Improve alumni record keeping and communication – especially post-graduation destination data.* Available alumni data are fragmented and often difficult to obtain. Stony Brook needs a campus-wide effort to assemble post-graduation destination data on a regular basis and report the results in a timely manner. Maintaining regular communication with alumni and getting them involved will strengthen their commitment to the university. (p. 90)

31. *Leverage existing models of success.* We should make a concerted effort to identify departments and schools whose alumni feel a greater sense of connection to Stony Brook. The striking satisfaction of HSC alumni, for example, should prompt us to examine what results in such great satisfaction. We benchmark with other institutions on a variety of measures. We now have an internal model, elements of which may be used to improve the

student experience for all areas of campus and result in greater attachment of alumni to the Stony Brook community over the long term. (pp. 87-89)

Three Villages" (2002 Experience Stony Brook Evaluation).

Participants in the 2002 Student/Faculty/Staff Retreat suggested that Experience Stony Brook could be made more personal. They also felt that the orientation did not adequately recognize the needs of different groups of students (commuter, transfer, graduate, and international) and that lack of coordination among various university-wide and departmental orientations made some events repetitive. Retreat participants suggested limiting orientation information to the most essential items to avoid overwhelming students. They also proposed extending the responsibility of orientation leaders to encompass mentoring students during their first year.

Graduate Student Orientation

The Graduate School holds a mandatory, day-long orientation program for new students. This program introduces students to the policies and rules of the Graduate School, offers tips for success in their graduate careers, and provides an introduction to campus services and organizations for graduate students. The day begins with breakfast and an opportunity for students to meet one another and staff of the Graduate School. It ends with a catered reception, typically with live music. Faculty, graduate school staff, and officers of the Graduate Student Organization mingle with students and continue discussions on an informal basis.

During the following week, all new doctoral students, as well as master's degree candidates with teaching assignments, participate in a teaching assistant (TA) orientation organized by the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT). Doctoral students who do not have teaching responsibilities in the first semester are still required to attend CELT orientation, since doctoral education at Stony Brook requires a supervised teaching experience. CELT sessions continue throughout the semester to provide support for TAs. Those students whose native language is not English take a mandatory test of spoken English. Students who score below a set minimum are not permitted to teach and are required to take courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) until they become sufficiently proficient. These graduate-level courses are geared toward students who will be TAs and include practice in lecturing in front of an audience and instruction in use of audiovisual materials in the classroom. The CELT and ESL programs are important components of ongoing graduate student orientation and preparation for effective teaching.

Respondents to the 2003 survey of graduate program directors indicated that all of their programs provide supplemental orientations for their enrollees. The duration of these programs varies greatly, ranging from a single, two-hour session to a series of meetings that continues throughout the first year. Topics covered include program-specific resources, policies, requirements, and expectations; registration and scheduling issues; research opportunities available within the program; teaching responsibilities; sexual harassment issues and dating policies; and training in laboratory safety. Most of the programs also include social events, such as barbeques, picnics, or mixers, as part of the orientation activities.

Graduate students were more positive about their university-wide orientation experience than were the undergraduates. Thirty-three percent were very satisfied, 48% were somewhat satisfied. Orientation provided by individual programs was quite well received, with 41% of students very satisfied and 35% somewhat satisfied (Student and Faculty Telephone Survey, Spring 2003).

International Student Orientation

International students attend a variety of orientation events tailored to their specific needs.

6. THEME 3: EDUCATION AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

FOCUS AND SCOPE

The topics addressed in this section include teaching and learning; curriculum; research and creative activities (the role of research in undergraduate education); and academic resources (libraries, laboratories, and instructional facilities).

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

Teaching and Learning

1. What sorts of learning outcomes do students and instructors value most when choosing a course and are these learning outcomes delivered? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
2. What specific types of instructional activities beyond the standard lecture take place in the classroom? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
3. Are the courses available that students need to complete their graduation requirements and are they available when students want to take them? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
4. How well prepared are students when they come to class? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
5. How do students and instructors interact outside the classroom? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
6. Are graduate students adequately prepared to act as instructors? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
7. Are students satisfied with the faculty advising they receive? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)

Curriculum Development

1. Who oversees the curriculum? (*Standards 7, 10, 11, 12*)
2. Does Stony Brook have any notable programs for fostering curriculum development? (*Standards 7, 10, 11, 12*)

Research and Creative Activities (the role of research in undergraduate education)

1. Has Stony Brook been successful in engaging undergraduate students in research, following the recommendation of the Boyer report? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
2. How do students who participate in research value the contribution of faculty? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
3. How does research affect the overall experience of undergraduates at Stony Brook? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
4. How often do individual faculty members serve as undergraduate research advisors? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
5. How do faculty feel about undergraduate participation in research? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)
6. Why do faculty sometimes refuse to supervise undergraduate research? (*Standards 10, 11, 12, 14*)

Academic Resources (libraries, laboratories, and instructional facilities)

1. What notable academic resources does Stony Brook have? (*Standards 9, 10, 11, 12, 13*)
2. How are academic resources used to advance education for both undergraduate and graduate students? (*Standards 9, 10, 11, 12, 13*)
3. How has the library kept up with developments in technology? (*Standards 9, 11*)
4. How much do students use the library as a resource? (*Standards 9, 11*)
5. Are students satisfied with access to computer laboratories? (*Standards 9, 11*)

In many of Stony Brook's laboratories, education takes place alongside top-notch research. High resolution DNA fluorescence detection for different applications; design of polymer thin film properties through precise control of interfacial structure; electromagnetic interactions with living cells, tissues and organisms; understanding the mechanism responsible for the growth, healing, and homeostasis of the skeletal system; applications of low-power lasers for precision measurements and diagnostics, detection and molecular analysis of cancer; synthesis and characterization of materials at high pressure are just a few examples of ongoing efforts in some of these laboratories.

Stony Brook libraries have a total of about two million bound volumes and four million publications in microformat. They also provide a large amount of electronic content that is easily accessible to the community by Internet from anywhere at any time. The libraries have adopted strategies to improve current offerings by concentrating its resources on electronic content. The mission of the libraries is "to provide a gateway to intellectual discovery." The main library building on the West Campus serves the fine arts, humanities, social sciences, engineering, biology, music, and geosciences. The Science Libraries including the Mathematics/Physics/Astronomy, Computer Science, Marine and Atmospheric Information Sciences Center are located in departmental buildings, and the Health Sciences Library is in the Health Sciences Center.

The university has a large number of computing facilities. Two divisions of information technology (one on each side of campus) manage computing and network services. The computing and networking environment is composed of an ever-changing array of hardware, software, and network devices. Most buildings on campus are networked with fiber optic cabling. General computing resources are available to students at various sites through the Office of Instructional Computing, where students can use personal computers or Unix based stations. Many departments offer to their students departmental computing and networking facilities.

As at most universities, Stony Brook's university bookstore has experienced difficulties in the last decade, partly because of competition from internet sales. Locally, the bookstore is also hampered by its isolated location and a tradition among some faculty members of placing their book orders off campus, both of which might lie behind students' relative dissatisfaction with the bookstore (Student Opinion Survey 2003). The availability of books has improved, though, in recent years, as the result of campus-wide efforts. We also hope to eventually build a more inviting bookstore in a more central new facility.

Survey Results on Academic Resources

The campus community is reasonably satisfied with the library (see Figs. 11 and 12), although there is somewhat greater satisfaction with the electronic collection among all groups. In all three groups, there was a small minority that never used the library, ranging from 7% of graduate students who never used the print collection to 12% of undergraduates who never used library electronic resources. The library received moderate use in undergraduate class assignments. Thirty-four percent of students reported having had an assignment that required the use of library resources very often or often in their classes last semester, whereas 21% did not have any classes that required library use.

34% UG used
21 UG never

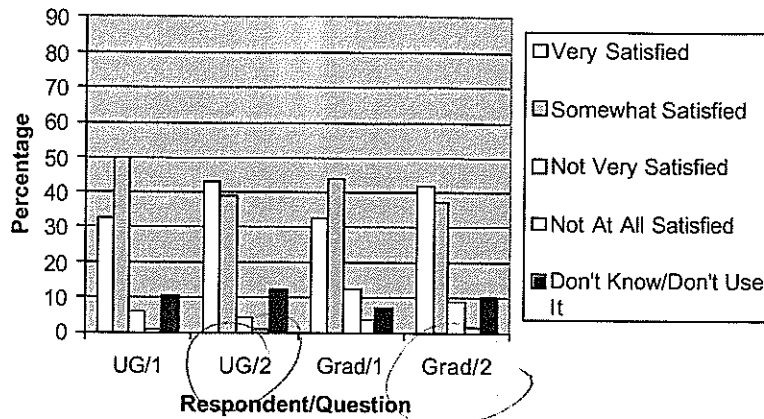


Figure 11: Library satisfaction (students)

1. How satisfied are you with the University Library's print collection?
2. How satisfied are you with the University Library's electronic collections, including access to on-line journals and databases?

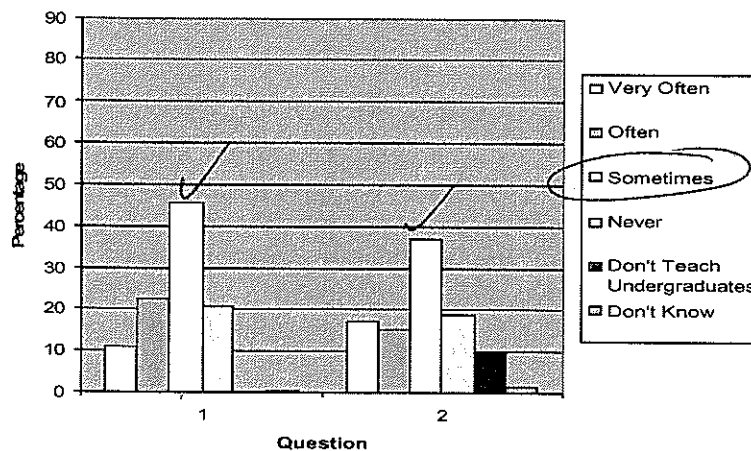


Figure 12: Assignments requiring use of library resources (instructors)

1. For undergraduate students: Thinking back to last semester's courses, how often did you have assignments that required you to use library resources such as on-line or physical journals, books or databases that were not part of your required course readings?
2. For instructors: Thinking back to your undergraduate courses, how often did you give your students assignments that required them to use library resources such as on-line or physical journals, books or databases that were not part of their required course readings?

Satisfaction with the library did not extend to the campus bookstore. Only 14% of faculty and graduate students and 16% of undergraduates reported being very satisfied with it; a sizeable minority of undergraduates were somewhat or very dissatisfied (37%). There was reasonable satisfaction with access to computer labs and other lab and performance spaces (e.g., science, language, or music). Figure 13 shows responses to questions about facilities.

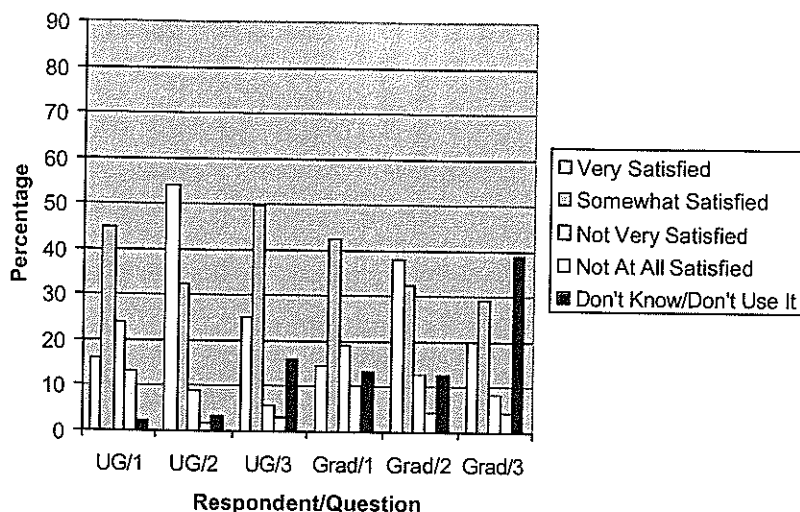


Figure 13: Satisfaction with facilities (students)

1. How satisfied are you with the University Bookstore?
2. How satisfied are you with the access you have to computer labs on campus?
3. Other than computer labs, how satisfied are you with the access you have to any laboratory or performance space you might need, such as science, language, or music labs?

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEME 3: EDUCATION AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

15. Improve communication between teachers and learners. We intend to promote active learning by providing instructors with opportunities to improve their communication skills and hence their teaching effectiveness. Since communication is a two-way process, students should similarly be encouraged to use tools and resources that will permit them to excel (e.g. Blackboard, workshops, tutoring services).

16. Provide incentives to departments to improve TA training and performance. We must ensure that our TAs are appropriately trained to communicate with our student body. Associated with TA training is the strong need to ensure that best practices are made available to Stony Brook's community at large. For example, regular workshops could be arranged where TAs, instructors, and faculty who have been recognized for their excellence in teaching can meet within a common forum to exchange information about those practices that had an impact and those that did not. Web-based dissemination of successful practices might also be useful.

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will both encourage their willingness to participate and enhance the overall quality of students' research and creative academic projects.

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20. Support further expansion of the electronic library. Surveys of university students demonstrate a strong preference for electronic content which they can search on the Internet and download to a disc or printer. The library's role is to acquire and display these resources and to instruct students on their use. The very accessibility of these resources makes them valuable, and costly. In its drive toward an excellent student experience, the university needs to support these high cost/high benefit resources. Use of these resources is not intuitive. Expanding the library's instruction program would help the university give students life-long information skills.

21. Improve library access. Even as more and more information is going online, student use of the library's reading rooms is increasing. The university will open a 24-hour-a-day study space in spring 2004, an important step toward the larger goal of an information commons staffed twenty-four hours a day. The type and quality of all facilities within the physical boundaries of the main library building needs to be kept in mind, as well.

22. Assess, update, and expand instructional facilities regularly. The quality of the educational process is directly related to the quality of the teaching environment. Classrooms and laboratories need to be assessed regularly and, where needed, upgraded and expanded to a common standard that facilitates the learning process. This leads to a more efficient setup and delivery of instructional materials by the instructor, and a learning-friendly environment for the students. Because laboratories have specific needs that depend on the academic discipline (e.g., music vs. biology vs. engineering), considerable care is needed to ensure appropriate changes. The possible need for a broader range of classroom sizes should be studied.