



Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey Results - Spring 2024 Executive Summary

Historically, the Division of Student Affairs distributed a Satisfaction Survey every two years. Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic and staff turnover, the survey had not been distributed in 2020 or 2022. To return to the biannual cycle of collecting satisfaction data, the survey was distributed in February 2024.

The 2024 Student Satisfaction Survey was distributed during the Spring 2024 semester to all enrolled graduate students (n=1424); 409 (29%) of graduate students responded. The survey included a variety of questions related to graduate students' experiences with campus services and the campus environment as a whole. Student Affairs staff also facilitated two focus groups with graduate students who indicated on the survey that they were interested in sharing more feedback. The feedback collected will be used to improve our services and guide our efforts to make Michigan Tech a welcoming community for all who attend.

Survey Instrument

The request to participate in the online survey was delivered to the students through their Michigan Tech email account, with the link to the survey included in the message. This online survey was developed using Qualtrics and responses were collected anonymously. Students were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction, agreement, or comfortability with various services on campus and about the climate overall. Basic demographics were also collected. Comments received on the open-ended questions are sorted by service and provided to the members of the Student Affairs Leadership Team. All comments are reported as entered by the respondent. Comments stating 'n/a' were removed.

Major Findings in Quantitative Data

All quantitative results can be found [here](#). Below is a summary of the results.

1. Graduate students overall are comfortable with the climate at Michigan Tech
 - 77% are comfortable with the overall climate
 - 82% are comfortable with the climate in their academic department
2. At least 75% of graduate respondents somewhat agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:
 - I am satisfied with my experience at Michigan Tech
 - I feel I belong (feel accepted/fit in) at Michigan Tech.



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- I am treated with respect at Michigan Tech
 - I am treated fairly and equitably at Michigan Tech.
 - My experience at Michigan Tech has had a positive influence on my growth.
3. 50% or more of the respondents were satisfied with or were neutral about the following campus resources
- Shuttle Services
 - On-Campus Jobs
 - Co-Op/Internship Opportunities
 - Research Opportunities
4. 75% or more of graduate students were somewhat satisfied or extremely satisfied with the Graduate School and at least 50 % were satisfied with International Programs and Services. Most respondents indicated they did not interact with or were neither satisfied or unsatisfied with the other departments in Student Affairs.

Major findings in Qualitative Responses

Several themes emerged from the qualitative responses such as concerns about inclusion, the academic experience, inclusion concerns, on-campus employment opportunities, and the shuttle experience.

1. Inclusion concerns: Multiple respondents commented on issues of inclusion. Some feel that the university promotes diversity efforts but doesn't have effective initiatives. Others highlight incidents of racism and discrimination on campus and shared concerns that students would leave Michigan Tech because of not feeling welcome.
 - “The emphasis on "diversity, equity and inclusion" is strong, but its way to narrow. Diversity is far more than gender and racial identity.”
 - “Michigan tech does NOT do enough to foster a campus climate of acceptance. I feel acceptance in my department, but feel like we are an outlier.”
2. Academic Experience and Support: Many respondents shared satisfaction with their academic experience, however there were numerous concerns about the lack of support for graduate students. Students shared specific concerns about financial support, mental health support and basic needs support.
 - “I don't overly feel like the grad students are highly valued by the institution as a whole, better offices more resources, more events aimed at connecting students working on similar projects etc would be nice”
 - “would not recommend to another grad student, based on the low stipend and health care policy”



3. Transportation including shuttle services: Many respondents commented positively about the expansion of the shuttle into Hancock but many commented they would like to see improvements such as more frequent shuttle times and more routes.

Focus Group feedback

Using the identified themes from the survey, questions were generated for focus groups. Two focus groups were held with graduate students who indicated through an external link on the survey that they were interested in participating. Twenty two graduate students were invited to participate in a focus group with a total of 15 students attending at least one meeting. Students were asked the following questions:

1. What does communication, transparency, and having a voice look like with the Administration?: Open forums, emails, what??
2. How can students share their voices?
3. Where are you getting information from? Where/How would you like to get information?
4. A lot of the feedback was focused on parking, dining, and academic concerns. When we have updates regarding these issues, who would you like to be informed by?
5. What were the topics you came into the room wanting to discuss?

Communication and student voice

- Empower GSG to have a voice, listen to their concerns
- More communication from advisors and the grad school about opportunities and jobs
- Many students don't know who to talk to about their problems

Parking and Dining Options

- Cost of parking is outrageous considering how low grad students are paid.
- Students feel parking is not a priority and they struggle to find places to park
- Students shared that they are here late at night and there are no affordable food options for students who do not use the dining hall.

Other issues of concern

- More on-campus jobs, international students in particular, are impacted by this.
- Worried about affording housing, insurance, and cost of living with limited resources
- Off-campus housing and insurance premiums were brought up consistently.

Next Steps

- Provide survey results and summary to campus including the graduate school staff.
- Add "Dean's Corner" to the Student Scoop with Admin contact information, open office hours, and important campus updates (with links).



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- Create a website where students can find updates on various campus subjects
 - Construction, parking, shuttles, administrative changes, initiatives coming up.
 - Tech myth busters: dispelling some common rumors
- Rebrand Student Commission to create more opportunities for students to share their concerns.
- Continue to meet with GSG to advocate for graduate students' needs.