Satisfaction, Things Learned, and Advising:
Local Questions from the 2007 Enrolled Student Survey

Office of Institutional Research
Dartmouth College

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sample Characteristics
1) Enrolled Student Survey was administered to 3,680 students who were in residence in Hanover during Spring 2007. Response rate was 33%.

2) 20 questions specific to Dartmouth were used in this report.

3) Fifty-eight percent of the respondents were women. Most respondents self identified as Caucasian (61%), Asian-American (13%), African-American (7%), Hispanic (6%), Unknown (6%), International (5%), and Native American (3%). Class year was almost equally represented (Figures 1 & 2).

Endorsement and Satisfaction
4) 61% of respondents would "Definitely" Recommend Dartmouth to a similar peer, 4% "Probably Would Not" and 2% "Definitely Would Not". 35% are "Very Satisfied" with their undergraduate experience, 46% are "Generally satisfied", 5% are "Generally Dissatisfied" and 4% are "Very Dissatisfied". (Figures 3 & 4).

5) No statistically significant gender difference in Endorsement and Satisfaction.

6) Greater percentages of Whites, International students, and Hispanics would "Definitely" Recommend Dartmouth. African-, Asian-, and Native-American students were less likely to "Definitely" Recommend Dartmouth (Figure 5). No statistically significant race/ethnicity/citizenship difference in Satisfaction.

7) 4th year students are more likely to Endorse Dartmouth than other class years. 1st years were more likely to Endorse Dartmouth than 2nd and 3rd years. More 1st years were "Very Satisfied" (Figure 6).

Correlates with Satisfaction and Willingness to Recommend Dartmouth
8) Fitting In. Students who found it easy to feel like they belonged at Dartmouth were more likely to Recommend Dartmouth (Figure 7b). Ease of finding similar people was associated with a greater Endorsement. Ease of "fitting in" factors were not strongly predictive of Satisfaction (Figure 7a).

9) Climate. Students rating the climate as supportive for females were more likely to Recommend Dartmouth (Figure 8b). Supportive climate ratings were not strongly related to Satisfaction (Figure 8a).

Significant Things Learned at Dartmouth
10) 45% of the students responded to the question, "Describe three significant things you've learned as a result of your overall Dartmouth experience". Five themes emerged from the comments: 1) learning about oneself/self confidence/being yourself; 2) learning academic and life skills; 3) understanding the importance of interaction with peers and making connections; 4) seeing the value of working hard and learning to balance academics and social life; and 5) learning to take advantage of the resources that Dartmouth offers.

Advisors
Students were asked to indicate who they had relied on during the 2006-07 academic year for advice. The eight advisor choices included: Faculty Advisor, Class Dean (First Year Office/Upper Class Office), "Other" Academic Advising Staff, their Undergraduate Advisor (UGA) in the Residence Hall, the Community Director in their Residence Hall, OPAL Staff (e.g., Advisors to Black, Latino, Native American, LGBT, and Asian and Asian American students), the Academic Skills Center Staff, and Accessibilities Service Staff.
Regardless of topic, students relied mostly upon Faculty Advisors (50%) for advice. They also used Undergraduate Advisors (28%), Other Academic Advising Staff (25%), and Class Deans (24%). Community Directors, OPAL staff and Accessibility Service Staff were used the least (Figure 9).

a. **Gender.** Compared to men, greater proportions of women went to Class Deans for Advice. There was no statistically significant gender differences in the use of the other 7 advisors.

b. **Race/ethnicity/citizenship.** Proportionally, more Native- and African-Americans relied on OPAL staff and the Academic Skills Center than white or Asian-Americans. Class Deans were used by all racial/ethnic groups, but more so by the students of color. (Figure 10).

c. **Class Year.** 1st year students used Faculty Advisors, UGAs, and Academic Skills Center Staff at greater rates than other classes. Advice seeking from the Class Dean was more even across classes (Figure 11).

### Advising Topics

Students were asked to indicate the topics of advising they sought. The five topics included: Courses, Academic Goals, Career goals, Personal Problems, or Financing Their Education.

Across all advisors, students sought advice about Courses and Academic Goals the most (62% and 57%). They also received advice on Career Goals (39%), Personal Problems (29%), and Financing One's Education (5%) (Figure 12).

a. **Gender.** Across all advisors, more women (34%) than men (22%) sought advice about Personal Problems. There were no other statistically significant gender differences in topics.

b. **Race/ethnicity/citizenship.** Across all advisors, more Native-, African-, Asian-American, and International students obtained advice about Career Goals than did White or Hispanic students. Greater proportions of Native- and African-American students obtained advice about Personal Problems, and more Native-, African-American, and Hispanic students received advice about Financing their Education (Figure 13).

c. **Class Year.** Almost twice as many 1st years received advice about Courses, Personal Problems, and Academic Goals compared to other class years. More 1st and 4th years received advice about Career Goals (Figure 14).

### Correlates of Advising

13) Grades

a. **Amount.** No statistically significant difference in levels of self reported grades (A, B, B- or lower) and different Amounts of Advice. The proportions of students within each grade level were similar across the increasing Amounts of Advice.

b. **Advisors.** Compared to their peers who reported grade levels in the A range, statistically significant greater proportions of students reporting their grade level as B- or lower received advice from the Class Deans, OPAL Staff, and the Academic Skills Center. No statistically significant differences emerged between grades and the other five advisors.

c. **Topics.** Greater proportions of students reporting their grade level as B- or lower received advice about Personal Problems and Financing Their Education, compared to those whose grades are in the A or B categories. No statistically significant differences between grades and the three other topics emerged.
Satisfaction, Things Learned, and Advising: The 2007 ESS Local Questions

14) Satisfaction and Endorsement
   a. **Satisfaction.** Students who received advisement about their courses, academics, and career goals during the academic year were more likely to be *Satisfied* with Dartmouth (compared to those who did not receive advice).

   b. **Endorsement.** Students receiving advisement about courses and academics were more likely to *Recommend* Dartmouth.

15) Fitting In and Supportive Climate
   a. In general, students who received advisement found it easier to feel like they belonged, make friends with people who were different than themselves, and find people who shared their background and experiences.

   a. Students who received advisement tended to rate the climate as more supportive for students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with different beliefs, women, and students of color.
A. **Background Information**

**Survey Method**
The Enrolled Student Survey was administered in conjunction with a consortium of highly selective, private institutions as a web survey to 3,680 undergraduates who were in residence in Hanover during Spring 2007. The response rate was 33% (n=1,200).

**Local Questionnaire Development**
Each of the participating schools was given the option of adding 20 questions that could be used to address issues specific to that school. The Dartmouth local questions were developed by the Office of Institutional Research with input from staff in the offices of the President, Provost, Dean of the College, Dean of the Faculty, and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid.

**Representativeness of Respondents**
In general, the 1,200 students who responded to the survey were representative of the population of students who were invited to participate (see Figure 1). The percentages between the total population and students responding to the survey are quite similar, with the exception of gender. More women responded to the survey than were in the total student population (58% vs. 49%). Although the race/ethnicity differences were not substantial, it is important to note that slightly more white students were survey respondents (61% vs. 58%). The class year differences were negligible. These results suggest that the findings in this survey are generally representative of the student population who were in Hanover during Spring 2007, even though the response rate was relatively low.

**Figure 1. Class Year, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship Percentages of Survey Respondents and Total Population.**

![Figure 1](image-url)

1 Chi-square tests of independence between proportions of respondents and non-respondents on gender, race/ethnicity, and class year were not statistically significant with the exception of gender.
Student Respondent Characteristics
Characteristics of the student respondents are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

► Survey respondents were largely female (58%).
► Most of the survey respondents were White (61%), followed by Asian-Americans (13%), African-Americans (7%), Hispanic and International (5%, each), Native-American (3%), and Unknown (6%).
► Class year was almost equally represented, with 1st & 4th years responding at slightly greater rates than 2nd & 3rd years.

Figure 2. Survey Respondent Characteristics.

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B. Endorsement and Satisfaction

Would you encourage a high-school senior who resembles you when you were a high school senior to attend Dartmouth?

A 5-point response scale was provided with response options including "Definitely Would NOT", "Probably Would NOT," "Maybe," "Probably Would," and "Definitely Would."

► 61% of responding students definitely would Recommend Dartmouth to a high school senior.
► 4% probably would Not and 2% definitely would Not Recommend Dartmouth to a similar high school senior.
How satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education this year?
A 5-point response scale was provided with response options including "Very Dissatisfied", "Generally Dissatisfied," "Ambivalent," "Generally Satisfied," and "Very Satisfied."

Figure 4. Satisfaction with Dartmouth Education

Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Class Year Differences in Satisfaction and Endorsement

Gender. There was no statistically significant gender difference in Satisfaction or Endorsement. Men and women were equally satisfied and willing to recommend Dartmouth to a high school senior like themselves.

Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship. There was no statistically significant race/ethnicity/citizenship difference in Satisfaction with Undergraduate Education. Students were equally satisfied with their Dartmouth experience. We did find a statistically significant race/ethnicity/citizenship difference in Willingness to Endorse Dartmouth.

Class Year. There was a statistically significant class year difference in Satisfaction and Willingness to Endorse Dartmouth.

► Seniors were more likely to Endorse Dartmouth (90%) than other class years. First years (84%) were also more likely to Endorse Dartmouth than 2nd and 3rd years.
More 1st year students were "Very Satisfied" with Dartmouth (45%) than other class years.

Figure 6. Class Year Differences in Willingness to Recommend Dartmouth and Satisfaction.

C. Correlates with Satisfaction and Willingness to Recommend Dartmouth

To gain a better understanding of student perceptions of the supportiveness and inclusiveness of Dartmouth, questions about "Fit" and "Climate" were included on the local questionnaire. "Fit" questions included responses to: How difficult or easy has it been for you to: *Find people who share my background and experiences; Make friends with people from a background different from my own; and Feel that I belonged here—that students treated me as a full member of the community.* In addition, students were asked: How often have you had interactions or experienced behavior from other Dartmouth students that has made you feel uncomfortable, excluded, marginalized, or discriminated against? *Fit* questions used a 4-point response scale ranging from very easy to very difficult.

“Climate” questions included student ratings of how supportive the current climate on campus has been for the following groups of people: Students of Color, Students with different religious or spiritual beliefs, LGBT student (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender), Female students, Students from outside the U.S., and Students of economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Climate questions used a 5-point response scale ranging from very unsupportive to very supportive.

Students who feel like they *Belong* here at Dartmouth are more likely to be very *Satisfied* with their Dartmouth education and to *Recommend* Dartmouth to a similar peer. Ease in *Finding People who Share their Background* (similar people) was also moderately related to willingness to *Recommend* Dartmouth.

To better depict the relationships between student perceptions of climate and fit and their *Satisfaction* and willingness to *Recommend* Dartmouth, we plotted the average score for the fit and climate questions by the correlation of those ratings with students' satisfaction and endorsement. Figures 7 and 8 on the next page show the results.
Ease of "fitting in" factors were not strongly predictive of *Satisfaction* with one's undergraduate education over the past year (Figure 7a). The largest "fit" driver of *Satisfaction* was Ease in Feeling like I Belong.

Students who found it easy to feel like they belonged at Dartmouth were more likely to *Recommend* Dartmouth to a high school senior like themselves (Figure 7b). Ease of finding people who share background and experiences was associated with a greater tendency to *Endorse* Dartmouth.

Ratings on the supportiveness of Dartmouth climate were not strongly related to *Satisfaction* (Figure 8a). Students rating the climate supportive for females were more likely to *Recommend* Dartmouth (Figure 8b).
D. Three significant things students learned from their overall experience at Dartmouth

Students were asked to describe three significant things they had learned as a result of their overall Dartmouth experience. Forty-five percent of the participants responded to this question. A content analysis of the responses yielded the following themes.

1) Learned more about myself
Many students indicated that they have learned more about themselves through Dartmouth.

Responses included:

- I am much stronger than I think that I am...and can handle much more than I would think.
- I can do what I want; I have to set up my own goals and try to achieve them.
- I'm not as independent as I thought I was in high school. I thrive when I have a group of close, supportive friends close by.

2) Be Yourself
Additionally, many students indicated learning the importance of accepting themselves and being comfortable with their real selves.

Comments included:

- Be myself. I've slowly learned that this is my place, and I can really act without worry about what others think of me. This was a huge change from high school.
- I've learned to be comfortable in my own skin.
- It's okay to be who you are. You are a unique combination of characteristics.

3) Self Confidence and Academic Confidence
Some students also felt that they have become more confident of themselves, and of their academic abilities.

Responses Included:

- I am a very strong, independent person, capable of accomplishing a lot for myself as well as doing a lot for others. I have a lot to contribute and Dartmouth has made me realize that.
- I can do a lot more than I thought I could. I'm smarter than I thought I was.

4) Skills and Knowledge
Many students also indicated that they have learned a wide array of academic and life skills.

Comments included:

- I've learned how to be a leader. I've learned how I act and make decisions under pressure and in difficult situations.
- To manage my time effectively, how to analyze various opinions to form my own.
- I've learned how to create and run a scientific study, speak Spanish at an incredible level given that I had not taken any before Dartmouth, and a great deal about Chemistry and its applications in science and society.

5) Future Plans and Goals
Students also indicated that they have learned what they want to pursue after Dartmouth.

Responses included:

- I discovered that I want to be a doctor.
- Education is a career that is as complex and intellectually rigorous as any other, and I should never feel ashamed of wanting to teach elementary school after graduation!
6) **Interaction with Peers**
Many students also indicated that they learned the importance of interacting and forming relationships with their peers, from whom they learn a lot.

Comments included:

- The people at Dartmouth are incredible, and it is from them that I have learned the most.
- The human connections that I've found here are far more valuable than whatever academic growth I have and haven't found.
- There are amazing people here with amazing stories. You will be surprised and impressed by the accomplishments of your peers. And they may have some excellent advice to give or lead you to explore an activity, interest, or opportunity that you might never have considered, or had access to before meeting them.

7) **Make Connections**
Some students also learned to network and note the value of these connections.

Comments include:

- Involvement in student organizations has taught me (to my disappointment) that personal connections prove more effective than any other criteria in achieving goals. From personal membership in a student organization, or the progress of an organization in the outside world, knowing someone on the "decision-making board" seems to be a must.
- I have learned the importance of the value of personal networking/connections.

8) **Working Hard**
Students responded that they learned the value of working hard in order to succeed at Dartmouth.

Comments included:

- Hard work pays off.
- That while being "smart" is a plus, dedication to your work can bring more success, even at an ivy League school.
- Academic success really boils down to commitment and hard work!

9) **Balancing Work and Social Life**
At the same time, students also indicated that they learned how to balance academics and social activities.

Responses included:

- On top of attending classes and going to practices, I had to learn how to organize my day in order to finish my homework, study and still have a social life.
- That it is important to spend time both on schoolwork and developing relationships.
- To balance work and fun.

10) **Use Resources and Opportunities**
Finally, many students also learned to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities Dartmouth had for them to learn and explore the world.

Responses included:

- The resources that Dartmouth offers and how to take advantage of them/fully use them!
- I feel like I have taken advantage of the academic opportunities in both of my majors to become very experienced in both.
- This is a wonderful school, with a heaven's worth of resources. They are here to be made use of, so don't be afraid to use them!
E. Advisors

Students were asked to indicate who they had relied on during the 2006-07 academic year for advice. They were allowed to mark all the advisors that applied. The advisors included: Faculty Advisor, Class Dean (First Year Office/Upper Class Office), "Other" Academic Advising Staff, their Undergraduate Advisor (UGA) in the Residence Hall, the Community Director in their Residence Hall, OPAL Staff (e.g., Advisors to Black, Latino, Native American, LGBT, and Asian and Asian American students), the Academic Skills Center Staff, and Accessibilities Service Staff. In this analysis, each of the advisors was treated as a separate category, so if the student received advice about more than one topic from an advisor, the advisor was counted only once. Figure 9 shows the results.

Figure 9. Percentages of Students Obtaining Advice From Different Advisors.

- Regardless of topic, Faculty Advisors were utilized the most by students².
- UGAs, Other Academic Advising staff, and Class Deans were also used.
- The Academic Skills Center Staff were used by 12% of the respondents.
- Accessibilities Service Staff were used the least by students (2%).

Gender, Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship, and Class Year Differences in Advisors Approached for Advice ⁴

We examined the utilization of advisors to ascertain if there were demographic differences in the patterns of usage for each advisor, regardless of topic. In this analysis, we looked at the proportions of students who utilized a particular advisor (vs. those who did not) by three factors: gender, race/ethnicity/citizenship, and class year.

Gender. No statistically significant differences in proportions of men and women utilizing advisors, except for Class Deans. Compared to men, greater proportions of women went to Class Deans for Advice (27% vs. 19%).

Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship. Across all topics, no statistically significant race/ethnicity/citizenship differences in utilization of Faculty Advisors, UGAs, Other Academic Advising Staff, Community Directors, and Accessibilities Staff. Differences that reached statistical significance are in Figure 10.

² This is comparable to the results (48%) on a similarly worded item (Academic advisor) in the standardized section of the survey, where the response rate to the survey is higher and more students provided answers to the question.
³ The % for this item from the local question is higher (25%) than an identical item occurring earlier in the survey (18%).
⁴ Based on Chi-square test of independence with significance at least p < .05.
Figure 10. Percentages of Students Obtaining Advice by Advisors and Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship.5.

Proportionally, more Native- and African-Americans relied on OPAL staff than white or Asian-American students.

Although overall use was low, proportionally more African- and Native Americans utilized the Academic Skills Center, compared to Asian-American or white students.

Class Deans were used for advice by all groups, but more so by the students of color.

Class Year. No statistically significant differences in class year proportions for students obtaining advice from Other Advising Staff, OPAL Staff, Community Directors, and Accessibilities Service Center Staff. Class year differences that reached statistical significance are in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Percentages of Students Obtaining Advice by Advisor and Class Year.6.

First-year students approached their Faculty Advisors, UGAs, and Academic Skills Center Staff for advice at greater rates than other classes.

Seeking advice from the Class Dean occurred at more even levels across the classes, although 1st year students still sought advice at a greater rate.

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5 Percentages are students in the racial/ethnic/citizenship group who received advice on any topic from the advisor.
6 Percentages are the students in that class year who received advice about any topic from the advisor.
F. Advising Topics

Students were asked to indicate the topics of advising they sought. They were allowed to mark all that applied. The five topics included: Courses, Academic Goals, Career goals, Personal Problems, or Financing Their Education. In this analysis, each of these topics was treated as a separate category, so if the student received advice about a topic from more than one advisor, the topic was counted only once. Figure 12 shows the results.

► Across all advisors, students sought advice about Courses and Academic Goals the most (62% and 57%).

► Students also received advice about Career Goals (39%) and Personal Problems (29%).

► Obtaining advice about Financing One's Education was the least popular topic (5%).

Gender, Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship, and Class Year Differences in Topics of Advice

We examined the different topics to determine if there were demographic differences in receiving advice on a particular topic, regardless of advisor. In the subsequent analysis, we looked at the proportions of students who indicated that they had asked for advice about a particular topic (vs. those who did not receive advice on that topic) by three demographic factors: gender, race/ethnicity/citizenship, and class year.

Gender. There were no statistically significant gender differences in proportions of men and women receiving advice about Courses, Academic Goals, Career Goals, or Financing One's Education. Across all advisors, greater proportions of women (34%) than men (22%) sought advice about Personal Problems.

Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship. We found no statistically significant race/ethnicity/citizenship differences in receiving advice about Courses or Academic Goals topics.

► Statistically significant greater proportions of Native-American and African-American (56% each), International (45%), and Asian-American (43%) students obtained advice about Career Goals than did White or Hispanic students (36% each), regardless of advisor.

► Greater proportions of Native-American (56%) and African-American (48%) students obtained advice about Personal Problems compared to White (26%), Asian-American (28%), or Hispanic (31%) students. These differences reached statistical significance.

► Although the overall percentage of students receiving advice about Financing One's Education was low, greater proportions of Native-American (25%), African-American (11%), and Hispanic (10%) students received advice about Financing their Education compared to Asian-American (5%) and White (3%) students (see Figure 13).

7 Based on Chi-square test of independence with significance at least $p < .05$. 
Class Year.
► We found class year differences in advice topics that reached statistical significance. Almost twice as many first year students received advice about Courses, Personal Problems, and Academic Goals compared to students in other class years. More 1st and 4th year students received advice about Career Goals (See Figure 14).
► There was no statistically significant difference in the proportions of students receiving advice about Financing Their Education and Class Year.

Figure 14. Percentages of Students Obtaining Advice by Topic and Class Year.

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8 Percentages are students in the racial/ethnic/citizenship group who received advice about that topic from any advisor.

9 Percentages are the students in that class year who received advice on the topic from any advisor.
G. Correlates of Advising

1) Advising and Grades

Amount of Advice
► No statistically significant difference in levels of self reported grades (A, B, B- or lower) and different Amounts of Advice. The proportions of students within each grade level were similar across the increasing Amounts of Advice.

Advisors
► Compared to their peers who reported grade levels in the A range, statistically significant greater proportions of students reporting their grade level as B- or lower received advice from the Class Deans (51% vs. 19%), OPAL Staff (11% vs. 4%), and the Academic Skills Center (32% vs. 7%).
► There was no statistically significant difference in the levels of self reported grades and percentages of students receiving advice from their Faculty Advisors, Other Academic Advising Staff, UGAs, Community Directors, or Accessibilities Service Staff.

Topics
► Statistically significant greater proportions of students reporting their grade level as B- or lower received advice about Personal Problems (53%), compared to those in the A (27%) or B (30%) grade categories who also received advice.
► Statistically significant greater proportions of students reporting their grade level as B- or lower received advice about Financing Their Education (13%), compared to those reporting grades at an A (3%) or B level (7%).
► No statistically significant difference in levels of self reported grades (A, B, B- or lower) and proportions of students obtaining advice about Courses, Academic Goals, and Career Goals.

2) Advising and Satisfaction/Endorsement

► Students who received advisement about their courses, academics, and career goals during the academic year were more likely to be Satisfied with Dartmouth (compared to those who did not receive advice).
► Students receiving advisement about courses and academics were more likely to Recommend Dartmouth to a senior that is similar to them.

3) Advising and "Fitting In"/Supportive Climate Rating

► In general, students who received advice found it easier to feel like they belonged, make friends with people who were different than themselves, and find people who shared their background and experiences.
► Students who received advisement tended to rate the climate as more supportive for students who were from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with different beliefs, women, and students of color.