

DARTMOUTH GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE SURVEY RESULTS 2009

Student Life Committee: Casey Murray (Chair), Annalies Vuong, Katie Kinnaird, Nimit Dhulekar, Vinoy Vijayan, Devin Schweppe, Amir Golnabi, Ashwini Bhandiwad, Dafina Pruthi, Raluca Hurubeanu, Jeremy Fitzpatrick, Tina Chang, Lola Thompson, Elizabeth Gillaspay, Jeremy Huckins, Laurel Symes

The Dartmouth Graduate Student Council Student Life Committee was created in the Fall of 2008 at Dartmouth College to address several issues regarding the well-being of graduate students on and around campus. The mission of the Student Life Committee was written to...

“Propose, organize, and oversee actions and advocacy measures in the interest of furthering the scholastic livelihood of graduate students” (Constitution & Bylaws: Bylaw I:6 ‘Duties of Executive Officers’).

Following the establishment of this committee, a survey was created to confront several long-standing issues that graduate students frequently cite as critical for their well-being. These issues, as a whole, are being called, **ADVOCACY**:

- Accommodations (housing & transportation)
- Dental & Vision Insurance
- Vitality (health & well-being)
- Outreach
- Curricular
- Activities & extracurricular
- Child care & Family
- Yearly income

The following are results on the information gathered using the Student Life survey, designed to measure graduate student quality of life. *(NB: Throughout the survey, no question was made mandatory, i.e. any survey responder could choose to omit a response to any particular question. Therefore, the total number of respondents for any particular question to follow may not necessarily equal the number of graduate students that completed the survey).*

Demographics of Respondents

Three hundred thirty-one students representing the Dartmouth Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Dartmouth Medical School (DMS), Thayer School of Engineering (Thayer), and Tuck School of Business (Tuck) partook in the Student Life survey. Of this, 182 were from Arts & Sciences, 70 were from DMS, 31 were from Thayer, and 51 were from Tuck.

Of the Arts & Sciences students, 182 represents 26.7% out of the 680 graduate students that this college spans. While 26.7% is far from comprehensive, it does represent a large amount of the opinions of graduate students. Furthermore, given the repeating issues that keep coming up (detailed in the sections to follow), it can be inferred that these are issues that concern much of the graduate class as a whole.

The survey had a retention rate of approximately 82%, as 273 of the 331 respondents followed through to the survey's completion.

Degree types fall into these classes:

17 MALS
48 MBA
49 MD
6 MD/PhDs
6 MEM
11 MPH
189 PhD

Enrollment status was:

322 Full-time
9 Part-time

Gender:

174 Female
157 Male

Relationship status:

106 Involved
78 Married
145 Single
1 Divorced
1 Separated

The average age of survey respondents was 27 years old, and respondents represent a wide range of 35 countries and at least 37 of the 50 states in America.

Accommodations (housing & transportation)

Do you live on campus/Dartmouth Property and where, if so?

213 Do not live on campus property
23 Sachem Village
18 North Park Apartments
6 Graduate Advisors (dormitories)
14 Other

How many people live in your household or apartment?

The average graduate student lives with 2.48 people.

Cost of Living (in dollars, per month):

866	Rent
163	Utilities
332	Food
129	Transportation
50	Books & Supplies
13	Laundry
41	Non-insurance health care costs
65	Loan repayment
132	Bills & Credit Card payment
207	Incidentals

1998 Total

How would you describe your monthly rent?

63 Good Deal
121 Fair
86 Too Much

How would you describe your financial situation as a whole?

28 Good Deal
167 Fair
78 Too Much

How do you get to school? (check all that apply)

85 Advance Transit
199 Automobile
51 Bicycle
33 Carpool

93 Walk
2 Stagecoach Services
1 Connecticut River Transit
1 Hitchhike

Where do you typically travel from to get to Dartmouth?

1 Barre
1 Bethel
1 Bradford
1 Brookfield
3 Claremont
1 Concord
4 Enfield
3 Etna
1 Grantham
96 Hanover
1 Hartford
2 Hartland
57 Lebanon
6 Lyme
20 Norwich
1 Orford
1 Quechee
1 Rochester, VT
1 Springfield, NH
1 Strafford
1 Sunapee
5 Thetford
37 West Lebanon
24 White River Junction
4 Wilder
2 Windsor

How often do you ride Advance Transit?

35 Everyday
45 Two-three times per week
108 Once a week or less
101 Never

Which line(s) do you use? (check all that apply)



- 58 Dartmouth Shuttle
- 119 Blue
- 16 Brown
- 38 Orange
- 19 Green
- 9 Red

On a scale of 1-5, how satisfied with the Advance Transit services are you? (5 = Happy as can be)

3.50

How likely would you be to use Advance Transit on the weekends if the buses operated then? (1-5 Scale; 5 = Very Likely)

2.93

Would earlier/later daily weekday hours of operation help you? (1-5 Scale; 5 =Yes)

3.72

If either earlier or later hours would help you, how early or late would you like to see Advance Transit operate?

(26) 5AM	(9) 7PM
(47) 6AM	(31) 8PM
(35) 7AM	(26) 9PM
(8) 8AM	(31) 10PM
	(26) 11PM
	(17) 12 Midnight
	(5) 1AM
	(1) 2AM
(1) 24 Hour Operation	

Do Advance Transit routes reasonably service where you live? If not, where approximately do you live?

162 Replied Yes

Answers that weren't provided as yes, follow. (Numbers in parentheses indicate how many people responded as such):

Bradford - there is daily service to Hanover, but not on my schedule.

Brook Hollow ('A' Lot)

(3) Claremont

(2) Concord

Cornish

(5) East Wheelock Street (toward Etna)

Enfield

(4) Etna

Grantham

(2) Hartland

(4) Lyme

(9) Norwich & north (toward Thetford, Route 5)

Orford

Quechee

Rochester, NH

(2) Sachem Circle

Springfield, NH

Sunapee

(3) Thetford

(2) Windsor

Dental & Vision Insurance

Do you currently have dental insurance or vision coverage?

214 No

68 Yes

If yes, how have you obtained this coverage? (e.g. out of pocket, family plan, etc...)

(7) Covered by outside employment

(1) COBRA

(2) Government Coverage

(11) Spouse's Plan

(32) Family Plan

(12) Out of pocket

(2) Universal coverage provided by home country

If no, would you be inclined to buy-in to such an insurance package if Dartmouth provided a subsidy for such? (1-7 Scale; 7 = Definitely yes)

5.71

When was the last time you had a dental check-up (in months)?

14.46 months

Is dental & vision insurance feasible given your income?

78 No

88 Maybe, if I restructured

116 Yes

Vitality (health & well-being)

Are you on the Dartmouth Student Group Health Plan (DSGHP)? If not, how do you have health insurance?

238 are on DSGHP

15 Family Plan

7 Work health insurance

3 Military Health Care (Tricare)

3 Universal Health Care from Home Country

2 Spouse's plan

2 Private Insurance (out of pocket)

1 COBRA

How satisfied are you with the DSGHP? (1-7 Point Scale; 7 = Completely Satisfied)

4.33

Outreach

No questions in the survey directly addressed outreach initiatives. While this will be an ongoing focal point for the Student Life committee, it is not covered by the scope of the Student Life Survey that graduate students were asked to complete.

Curricular

Does your program allow you to take classes outside its department for credit?

76 Don't Know

48 No

156 Yes

How interested are you, or would you be, to take courses from other departments for credit? (1-5 Scale; 5 = Very interested)

3.50

Are you satisfied with your program/department?

224 Yes

42 It's OK

14 No

If you're not satisfied, why not? (Please see appendices)

Activities & extracurricular

Are you satisfied with the frequency and/or types of extracurricular activities available in the Upper Valley?

71 No
204 Yes

If not, what do you think could be done to improve this? (Please see Appendices)

How do you keep up to date with events on campus and in the Upper Valley?

(143) Blitz Bulletins
(17) Community Listservs
(9) Dartmouth Daily Update
(47) The Dartmouth Student Newspaper
(83) Flyers in common areas
(122) GSC Emails
(38) Valley News
(199) Word of mouth
(1) UpperValleyScene emails
(2) VOX

Think back to when you first arrived to the Hanover, NH area. How adequate do you feel that the Dartmouth orientation was for you, as a graduate student? (1-7; 7 = Very good)

4.29

If it wasn't adequate, why not? (Please see appendices)

Do you think an Upper Valley guide would be of assistance to new graduate students? (1-7 scale; 7 = extremely helpful)

5.49

Was a campus tour offered to you? If not, would you have liked to have one upon arrival?

57 No, and don't care
89 No, but would have loved a tour
129 Yes

How often do you go to the Nugget Theater?

64 Never
132 Rarely

10 Once every two weeks
69 Once a week, or more

Would you go more often if you would benefit from a subsidized 'student priced' ticket that was \$4 instead of \$8?

244 Yes
31 No

How often do you eat on campus (FoodCourt, Homeplate, Thayer, etc.)?

94 Never
93 Rarely
28 Once a week
30 About 3 times per week
30 Everyday

How interested would you be in a meal plan for graduate students? (Scale of 1-5; 5 = extremely interested)

2.45

Were you aware of the student pricing that graduate students receive for Hopkins Center events?

57 No
218 Yes

How often do you attend events at the Hopkins Center?

67 Never
129 Occasionally
55 Monthly
24 Weekly

Students play a role in deciding the events to be held at the Hopkins Center. Do you think it worthwhile for the Graduate Student Council to push for a graduate student member on the Hopkins center events committee?

75 No
200 Yes

If so, what would you like to see changed? What could a graduate student representative on the Hopkins Center committee push for, for you as a graduate student? (Please see appendices)

Were you aware that Dartmouth athletic games are free to attend for graduate students?

82 No
193 Yes

How often do you attend Dartmouth athletics games?

128 Never
102 Occasionally
16 Monthly
29 Weekly

Which sporting events do you attend?

(4) Baseball
(53) Football
(22) Men's Basketball
(114) Men's Hockey
(2) Lacrosse
(2) Men's Rugby
(7) Women's Basketball
(38) Women's Hockey
(2) Track
(6) Soccer
(1) Skiing
(1) Volleyball

Do you have any suggestions to improve activities and extracurricular events at Dartmouth for the graduate student? (Please see appendices)

Which of these larger GSC events have you attended?

Fall BEMA Party - 123
GSC/DMS Halloween Party - 138
Winter Semiformal - 110
Summer BBQ & Pigroast - 86
Spring Garden Party (@ BEMA) - 48
Holiday Formal @ DOC House - 64
GSC/VLS Mixer - 18
Homebrew Competition - 40
GSC Monthly Meetings - 42

Are there any events you think the GSC should add? (Individual responses)

*2009 Groundhog Day Festival
*Multiculture party
*Anything with food
*Battle of the Bands
*Career Fair
*Chili cook-off
*Some kind of departmental athletic competition
*Family friendly events
*Fewer parties, more fun activities
*Free Boston trips
*Site seeing in the area
*Trip to Montreal

- *Grad ski/tubing night at Whaleback
- *I generally think the mixers with multiple schools are a mess. No place on campus is large enough to accommodate, and the one Fall BEMA formal was not fun.
- *I think it would be cool to have a Mardi Gras party in winter term and save the semiformal for spring.
- *Informal dinners/parties with students from the different grad programs
- *International night
- *Less formal events
- *Lots...
- *Marko The Magician Hypnosis Event
- *Maybe some sort of interdepartmental field day with fun competitions and beer
- *Mixers with other schools / departments
- *Monthly happy hour
- *More get togethers
- *More low-key monthly events
- *More mixers in general
- *More outdoors activities
- *More small group events
- *More social events involving all the grad schools including DMS
- *No!
- *Paintball would be fun.
- *Please no
- *Potluck dinners
- *Pub crawl
- *Restaurant week for small establishments
- *Ski day?
- *Ski race, soccer or hockey tournament
- *Small weekly notices of things going on
- *Some normal event would be good.
- *Spring BEMA
- *Theme parties
- *Volunteer Event
- *WAS there a holiday party?

Child care & Family

Do you think spouses of graduate students at Dartmouth should be allowed to have a Dartmouth ID card enabling them the use of facilities that students have (i.e. the gymnasium, DOC House rentals, etc.)?

37 No
16 Reduced Price
237 Yes

If you have a spouse, would you purchase a Dartmouth ID card for a reduced rate that enabled your spouse the use of facilities, if it were made available?

13 No
138 Yes
141 Not applicable

Do you have any children that you are responsible for caring for? If so, how many?

12 One child
8 Two children
3 Three children

If you have children, how are they cared for while you attend to coursework? Do you have any children that you are responsible for caring for? If so, how many?

2 Au paire/babysitter
1 Dartmouth College Child Care Center (DCCCC)
14 Family member
6 Private Day Care
3 School/After Care

Yearly income

What is your monthly income, before taxes? (Number of people in category in parentheses)

(44) <500
(10) 600
(4) 800
(20) 1000
(18) 1400
(18) 1600
(67) 1800
(74) 2000
(18) 2200
(14) 2400
(20) >2500

If you receive a Dartmouth Fellowship Stipend, do you think it is fair/competitive?

39 Competitive
55 Could be better
86 Fair

Is your income from Dartmouth the primary means of paying your monthly bills, or does another income (such as a spouse/parent/etc.) factor into this?

219 of 308 graduate students (76%) replied that their income from Dartmouth was their primary source for paying monthly bills. Of those 219 respondents, 205 said cited no other means for paying their monthly bills.

Does your department/program allow you to have outside employment?

76 respondents were unaware if they were allowed to hold an outside job.
148 claimed that there were Not allowed outside employment
80 said that outside employment was permitted.

How well do you feel that the Graduate Student Council currently does to advocates for you? (Scale of 1-5; 5 = Extremely well)

3.34