

# DARTMOUTH GRADUATE STUDENT LIFE SURVEY SUMMARY ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS 2009

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## *GSC Student Life Ideas...*

1. *Dental/Vision Insurance* – 76% of graduate students (214/282) do not currently have dental or vision insurance. Furthermore, the last dental check-up, on average for all graduate students was 14.5 months ago. Of the 68 graduate students that do have dental/vision insurance, 54 stated that they were covered under a spouse or family plan, or via coverage provided by an employer or their country of origin. Given that many graduate students are in programs that don't allow outside employment to supplement their income, that many are older (average age = 27) and single (76% are not married (258/331)), and thus can't benefit from parental or spousal coverage, it seems unreasonable to expect the average graduate student to pay for basic coverage out of pocket. 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. It is the recommendation here that the Graduate Student Council push for assistance from Dartmouth College in providing coverage of Dental/Vision insurance for graduate students.
2. *Advance Transit Schedule* – (a). The majority of AT riders make use of the Dartmouth Shuttle and the Blue Line. These users predominantly said that earlier and later hours would be of assistance to their routines (3.72 rating on a 5 point scale, with 5 = Very helpful). Given the overwhelming number of students that currently drive automobiles by themselves on a regular basis (199/465 = 0.43 percent), it is recommended that the GSC push for operating hour extensions of these service routes to extend operating hours beyond 7PM. The suggested closing time would be upward to 11PM, as 84% (123/146) of respondents who asked for longer hours would be accommodated, and perhaps be inclined to leave their automobiles at home. (b). Weekend schedule times were also requested, as many students don't have time throughout the week to do tasks, such as obtain groceries. With a little restructuring, it is possible that a few scheduled runs on the weekend

could accommodate for some of the popular weekend destinations (e.g. West Lebanon shopping centers).

3. *Advance Transit Routes* – Graduate students were generally well covered, in terms of Advance Transit service routes. The major areas that seemed to be missed were east on Wheelock street, toward Etna, and north on route 5, into upper Norwich, East Thetford & Lyme. A suggested solution would be to extend the Green Line service into Etna, and turn the Brown line into a loop that extends beyond the Dewey lot, CRREL, and Kendal, into Lyme, to the Park & Ride in East Thetford, and then down VT-5.
4. *Dartmouth ID's for spouses* – Nearly one quarter of respondents said they were married (78/331). 87% of those surveyed (253/290) agreed that some form of ID card for spouses of Dartmouth graduate students were fair, if offered for a nominal price, such as the activities fee. Such an ID card would grant access for spouses to facilities that are offered to graduate students normally, such as library services, the gymnasium, athletic events, etc. Therefore, the recommendation of the Student Life committee is to meet with the appropriate Dartmouth personnel to see if such an ID card is possible.
5. *Nugget Movie Theatre Tickets* – 26% of respondents (71/275) felt that the frequency and type of activities in the Upper Valley was not satisfactory. A common activity that can cater to the likes/interests/time availability of everyone is a trip to the movie theater. Several students have remarked that although they are graduate 'students', they don't benefit from student pricing at the local movie theater. Undergraduate movie ticket student pricing is subsidized by the activities fee. Therefore, it will be suggested that graduate student movie tickets be discounted, by subsidizing a portion of the ticket price. 89% of graduate students (244/275) replied that they would enjoy and frequent the local movie theatre more often if there was discount pricing.
6. *Student Life Survey* – Many graduate students expressed gratitude that this survey was administered, and that their complaints & concerns could be voiced. Therefore, the Student Life Committee will institute a yearly survey, in collaboration with the Academic Committee and Activities Committee with the help of the Dartmouth College Office of Institutional Research, to continuously monitor the needs and desires of graduate students. The addition of the Academic and Activities committees reflects the broad spectrum of issues of a graduate student that the survey aims to address, as is suggested in the ADVOCACY aims (specifically 'Activities & Extracurricular Events' and 'Curricular'). Suggestions regarding the format/ length/ usefulness of portions of the survey will be adapted to make for a better survey in years to come.
7. *Orientation/Activities Guide* – The Student Life committee will create an orientation guide for incoming graduate students that lists information about

local services, such as grocery stores, automobile mechanics, gas stations, etc... as well as activities, both well- and little-known sources of activities open to graduate students, and how to find and get involved with each.

8. *Orientation Scavenger Hunt/Tour* – Nearly a third of graduate students (32%; 89/275) remarked that they did not have a tour, but would have enjoyed the opportunity. Given the workload that individual tours would require, it is the recommendation of the Student Life committee that a means of acquainting the incoming graduate students with the campus be through an orientation scavenger hunt around campus that gets useful things accomplished (such as receiving ID cards, picking up packets at graduate studies, etc.), acquaints students with common facilities, resources (such as Advance Transit, the library, Dewey Field Lot, etc), and that terminates at a common point where a BBQ could be held.
9. *Hopkins Center Graduate Student Representative* – 73% of graduate students (200/275) believe that a graduate student representative on the Hopkins Center's planning board would be a good idea. As such, the Student Life Committee recommends advocating for such a representative.
10. *Activities List* – Many graduate students submitted thoughts for continued activities, or ideas for new ones (e.g. chili cook-off, battle of the bands, Spring BEMA party, social at Dartmouth athletic games, etc). A list of realistic additions/subtractions for the consideration of the Activities Committee of the Graduate Student Council will be created, and passed along to that committee for consideration. Along these lines, many graduate students from the different schools would like to see more intermingling between the programs (Tuck, Thayer, DMS & GSAS). The recent creation of the Dartmouth Graduate Student Senate will facilitate some of activities of this nature. Continued support of the Graduate Student Senate, and collaboration with the members of the Senate will be pursued to enable cross graduate/professional school interaction.