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SPECIAL EDITION!

Student Speak Survey Report

One year later, where are we now?

By **Karl Rybaltowski**
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



The big question when last year's Students Speak survey concluded was simple: "what now?" Would the university take note of the overwhelming turnout and the power of the responses, or would institutional inertia keep anyone from setting plans in motion? The unveiling of the results to the school's administration and all of its department heads was an experience loaded with uncertainty - the responses of the deans and directors could determine the long-term viability of the entire venture. Now that we've successfully completed a second round of Students Speak, it's clear this is no flash in the pan - the school does take it seriously, students want to speak out, and change does occur.

The response from the school has been overwhelming. Departments falling below the acceptable threshold of favorable ratings last year instituted major changes, starting with advisory boards incorporating students to determine and implement such changes. The results are palpable: late-night dining at Center Court, aggressive response policies from Financial Aid and Housing, the merging of Housing and Res Life, and 24/5 hours at Galvin are just a few of the impressive achievements, not to mention all the work departments have been doing behind the scenes.

This year, we decided to make the survey even bigger than the last. The big change? Academic departments. We wanted to see how, on top of your food, your dorms, and your interactions with staff, you felt about your professors and your programs. And the results have certainly been interesting.

What do this year's results show us about the student body? Well, contrary to what the Princeton Review might say, we, as students, don't hate our school. We think our professors are, on the whole, pretty good, but we'd love to see more mentoring and advising. We acknowledge that some of the poor performers from last year are improving, but we'd still like to see more. Surprisingly, we feel IIT is a safe campus. We feel generally respected by IIT's staff. And most of all, the picture of us that emerges is that we crave value. We know we're paying good money for school, and while lowering prices across the board might not be a viable option, making sure we get good service for what we do pay certainly is.

I had the honor of being a part of the committee this year and working with a group of motivated, enthusiastic people. I was able to witness the amount of hard work everyone put into this project, and the information inside represents a culmination of that work. Within

this special issue of TechNews you will find some basic background information on the survey, the executive summary, conclusions the team has drawn from the data collected, and charts - so very many charts.

We've condensed a great deal of information into the a simple, readable format, just to give readers an idea of the breadth and depth of the survey. You'll see both the results of quantitative analysis and our comment analysis, reflecting some of the deeper concerns students have about certain departments. Finally, we have our recommendations for departments that need to improve, and an interview with President Anderson and Provost Cramb on the survey results and their implications.

So, to echo the question of the past: what now? University departments are examining how they've done, preparing action plans to improve areas where they've been found lacking, and organizing student advisory boards. In a later issue of TechNews, we'll provide an update of where those departments stand and what they have planned. And hopefully, when fall rolls around and with it, another round of the survey, we can reflect upon how far IIT's culture of service has come, and work on making it still better.

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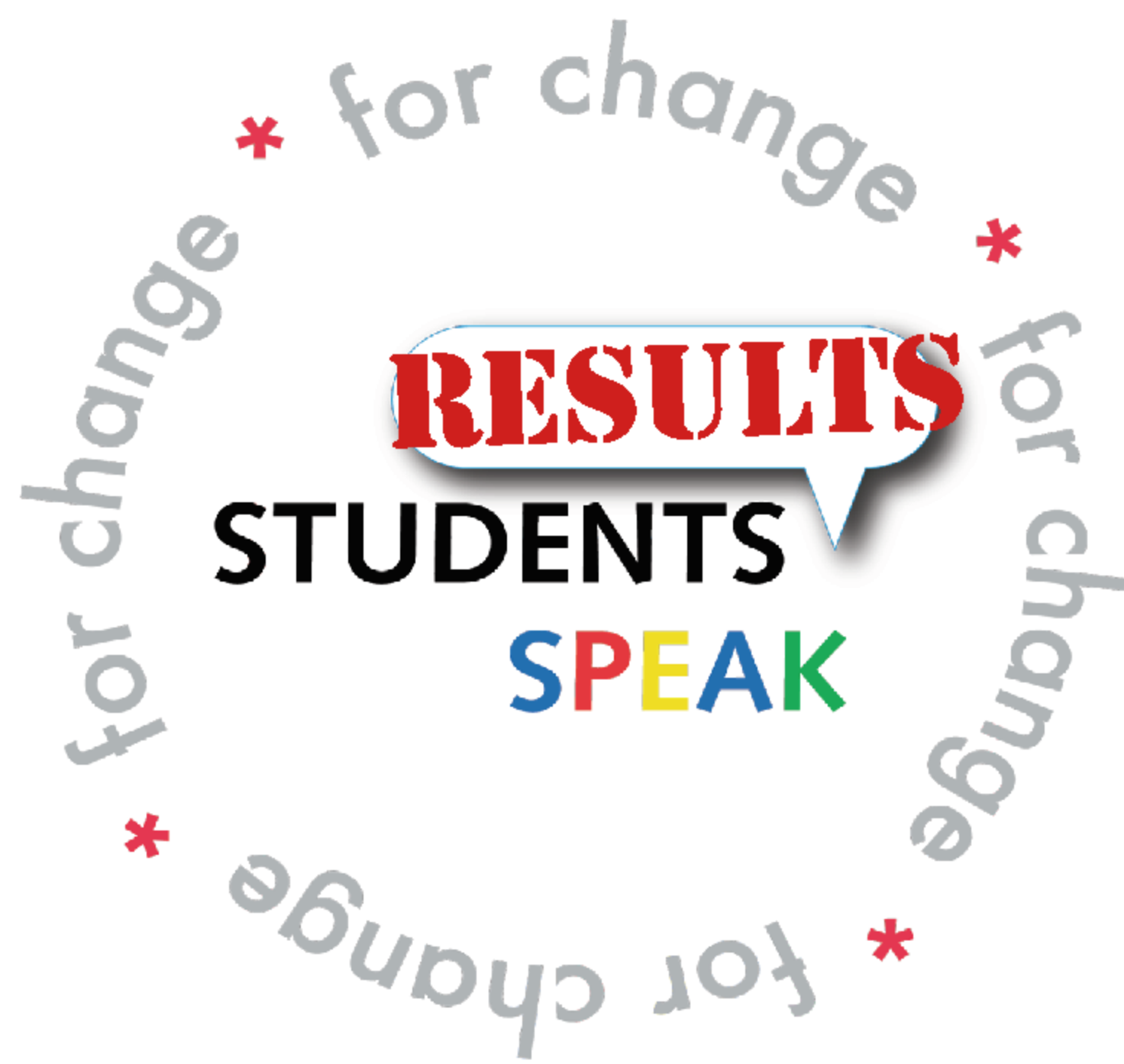
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The results are out. Now what?

Stay tuned for updates! Check out the Students Speak page at iit.edu/students_speak (or find it through myIIT).

And TechNews will be publishing one more special issue to see where all the departments are by the end of the semester. Don't miss it!



Introduction and background

The 2010 Students Speak survey was designed and conducted by students as part of an ongoing strategy to improve the quality of services provided to IIT students.

At the direction of the Students Speak committee, the on-line survey was administered by the Center for Research and Service to all IIT undergraduate and graduate students during the period of October 15 to November 2, 2010.

The survey included:

- 7 items reflecting students' overall experience at IIT
- 8 items allowing students to evaluate their service experience with their professors and the academic department that holds their major
- Evaluation of 14 departments based on their timeliness in responding to student needs, the extent to which students are treated with respect, degree to which students are provided with accurate information, and other select elements of their service to students
- A comments section for each department allowing students to describe what is done well and what needs improvement

This summary report is based on:

- Survey items that measure satisfaction with student services
- Analysis of write-in comments.
- Focus groups that targeted areas of concern identified through the survey

Response summary

This summary report is based on data from 2,859 students, which reflects a 36% response rate. The response rate is calculated by dividing the number of survey responses by the total number of survey invitations.

2010	Invitations	Responses	Response Rate
IIT Students Overall	7,899	2,859	36%
Graduate Students	5,153	1,774	34%
Undergraduate Students	2,628	1,051	40%

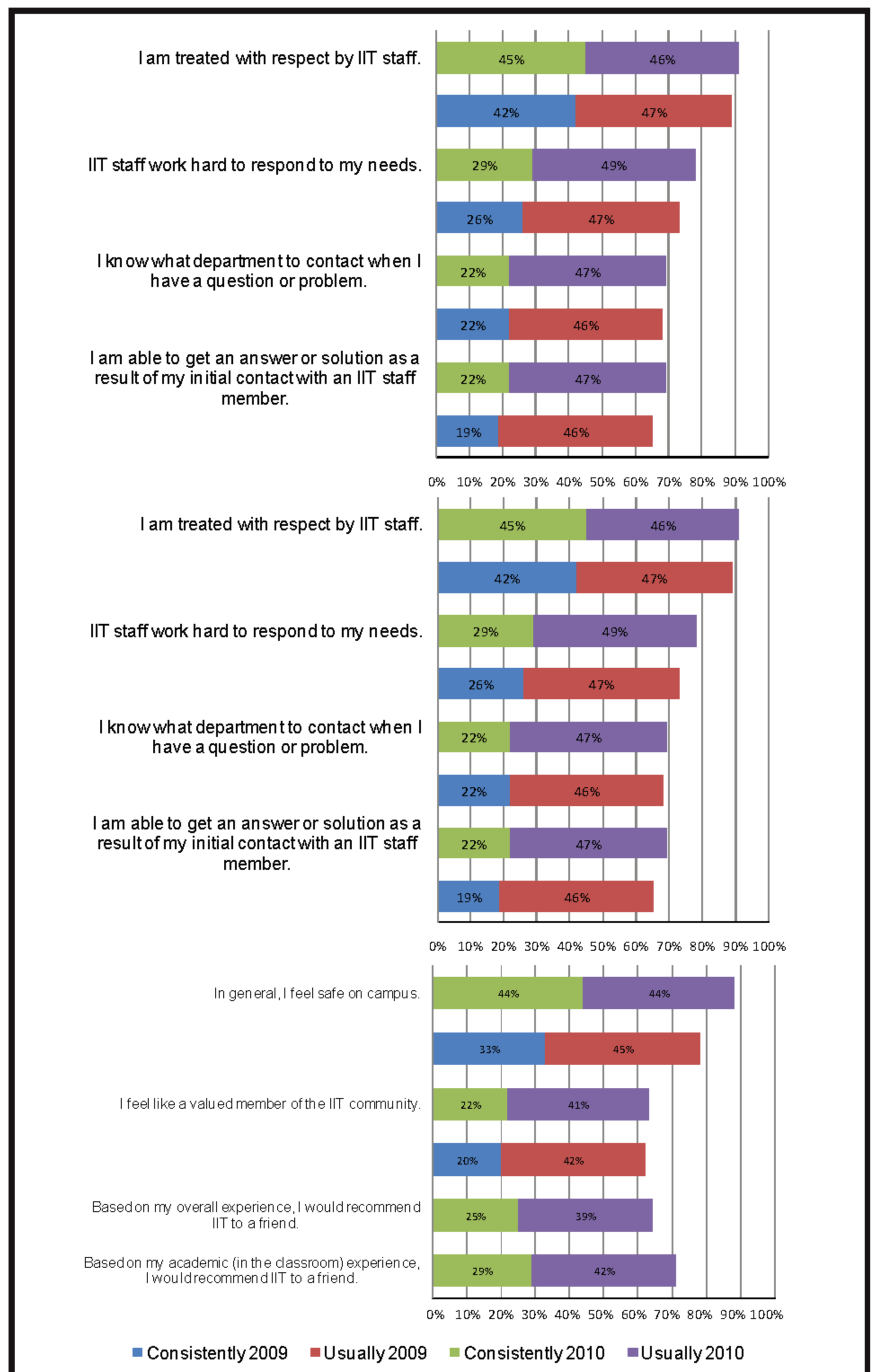
Responses are based on the following percentages of student survey respondents who reported they have used the student services within the past year:

Department	%
Bursar's Office	70%
7-Eleven	68%
Office of Financial Aid	49%
Keating Sports Center	44%
Graduate College	34%
Career Management Center	33%
Housing and Residential Services	24%

Department	%
Dining Services	24%
- Meal plan	15%
Student Life	22%
Campus and Conference Centers	18%
Spiritual Life	5%
Center for Diversity and Inclusion	5%
Center for Disability Resources	2%
Women's Center	1%

Overall experience at IIT

Percent of students who responded favorably. Indices rated 70% or above are considered strengths. Indices rated below 70% present opportunities for improvement.



Executive summary

Student satisfaction has improved

- The Students Speak process appears to be a catalyst for increased emphasis on and accountability for high quality student services
- For those areas targeted for improvement, satisfaction has generally improved as compared to the prior year
- Progress is being made in transforming IIT's culture to one that is directed toward student satisfaction

Faculty and academic department staff are perceived as accessible, approachable, and helpful

- Contrary to findings from the Princeton Review, student satisfaction with professor accessibility is relatively high for most academic departments
- There is considerable variance among majors regarding accessibility of professors; some departments/majors have significant opportunity for improvement
- Student advising is seen as generally strong, with the exception of advising related to research and internships

Most students would recommend IIT to a friend

Focus groups indicated that the primary reason for a positive recommendation is the quality of the education received

A sizable minority of students, however, would not recommend IIT to a friend

The primary reasons provided for a negative recommendation were limited to social life and excessive cost

IIT students demand value

- Many students perceive the cost of goods and services to be excessive
- While willing to pay these costs, they expect value
 - Timely repair of housing/facilities
 - Quality and variety of food
 - Excellent customer service when interacting with service providers

Several areas of the university should be targeted for improvement

- 7-11
- Housing and Residential Services
- Dining Services
- Career Management Center

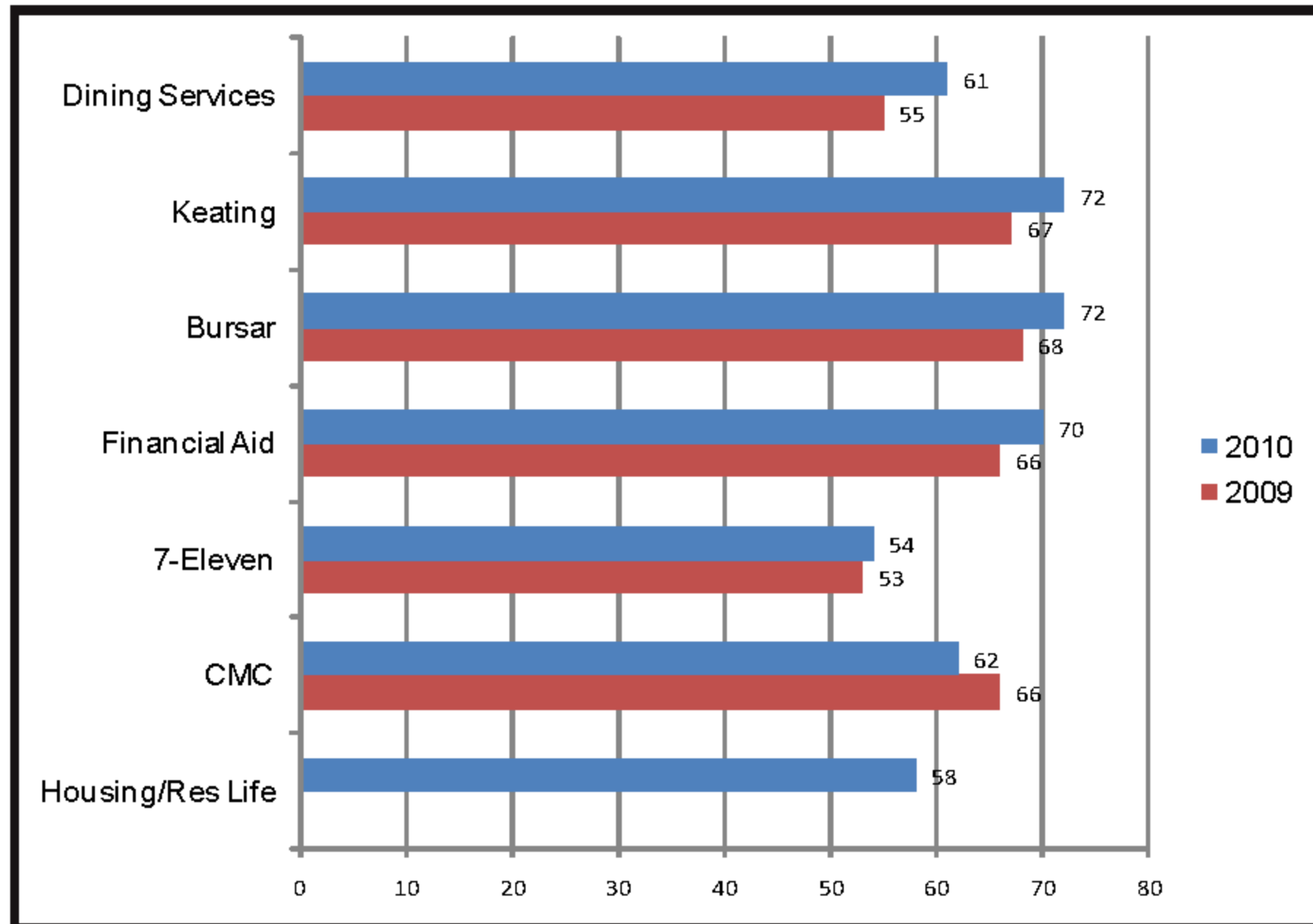
Poor value for the cost and a lack of timely response to requests were the most common criticisms presented by students.

Student service averages

Department

This chart represents the average ratings for all items for the departments that were included in the 2009 survey. Comparisons between 2009-2010 were not enabled for Housing/Residential Services due to their restructuring and lack of an appropriate 2009 benchmark for this area.

The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).

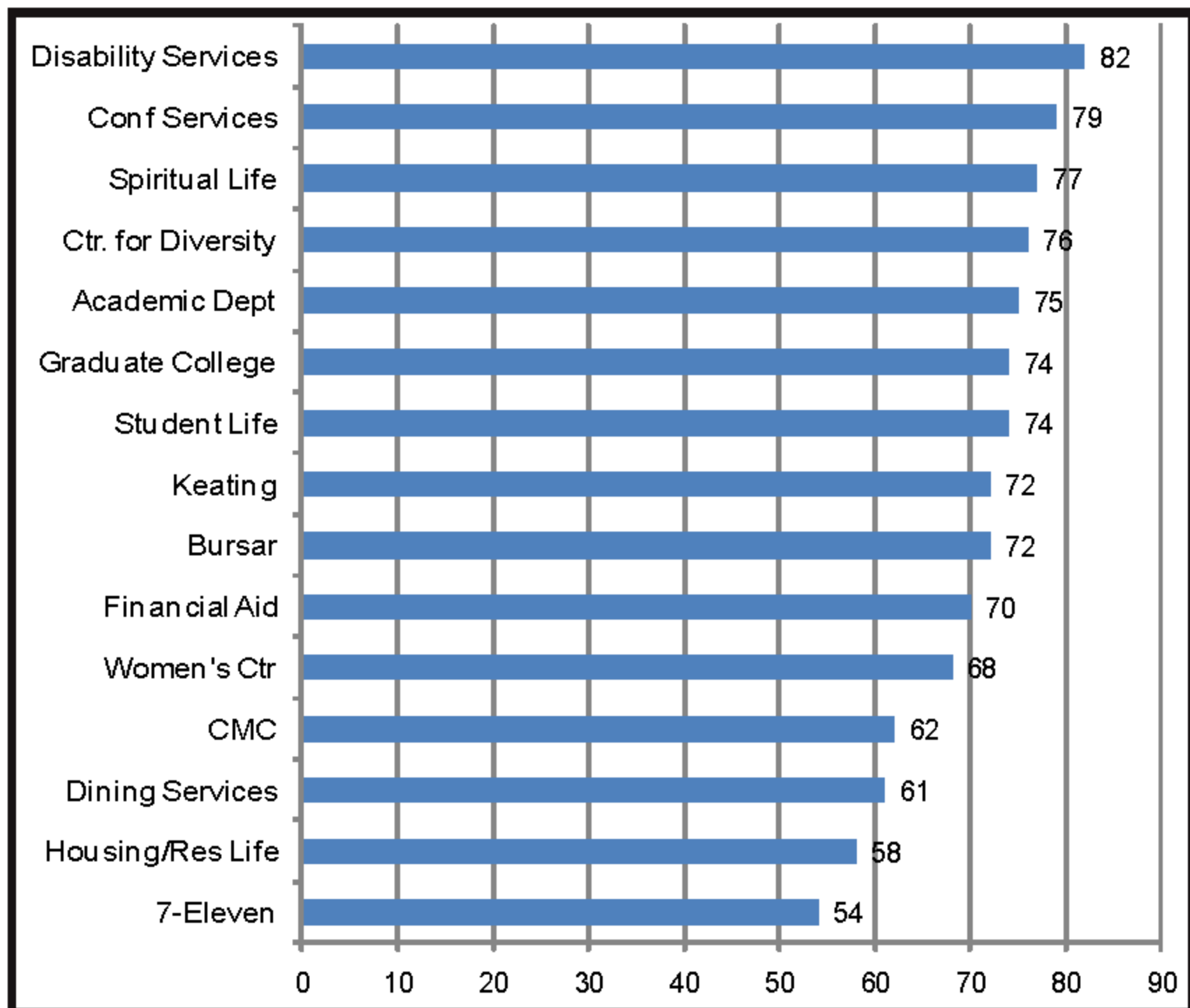


All items

This chart represents the average of all items included for each department. Since some departments have unique survey items, these comparisons across departments must be interpreted with caution.

The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).

Disability Services rates as a "Star Star," exceeding the 80% level for student satisfaction.

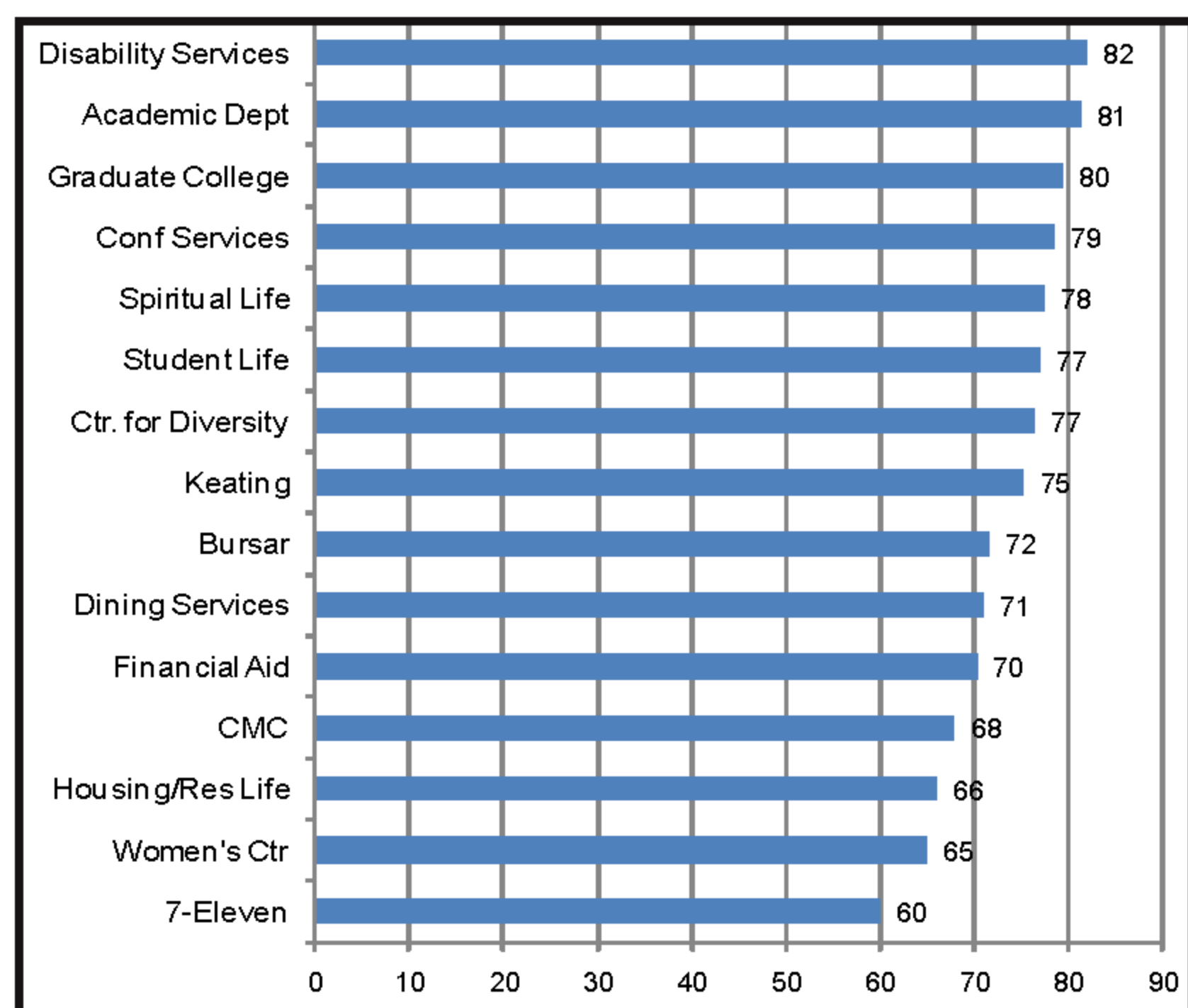


Core items only

This chart represents the average ratings for the core items included for each department. A focus on the core items allows standardized comparisons across departments. These core items include:

- Provided timely response to my questions and concerns,
- Treated me with respect
- Provided me with accurate information

The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).

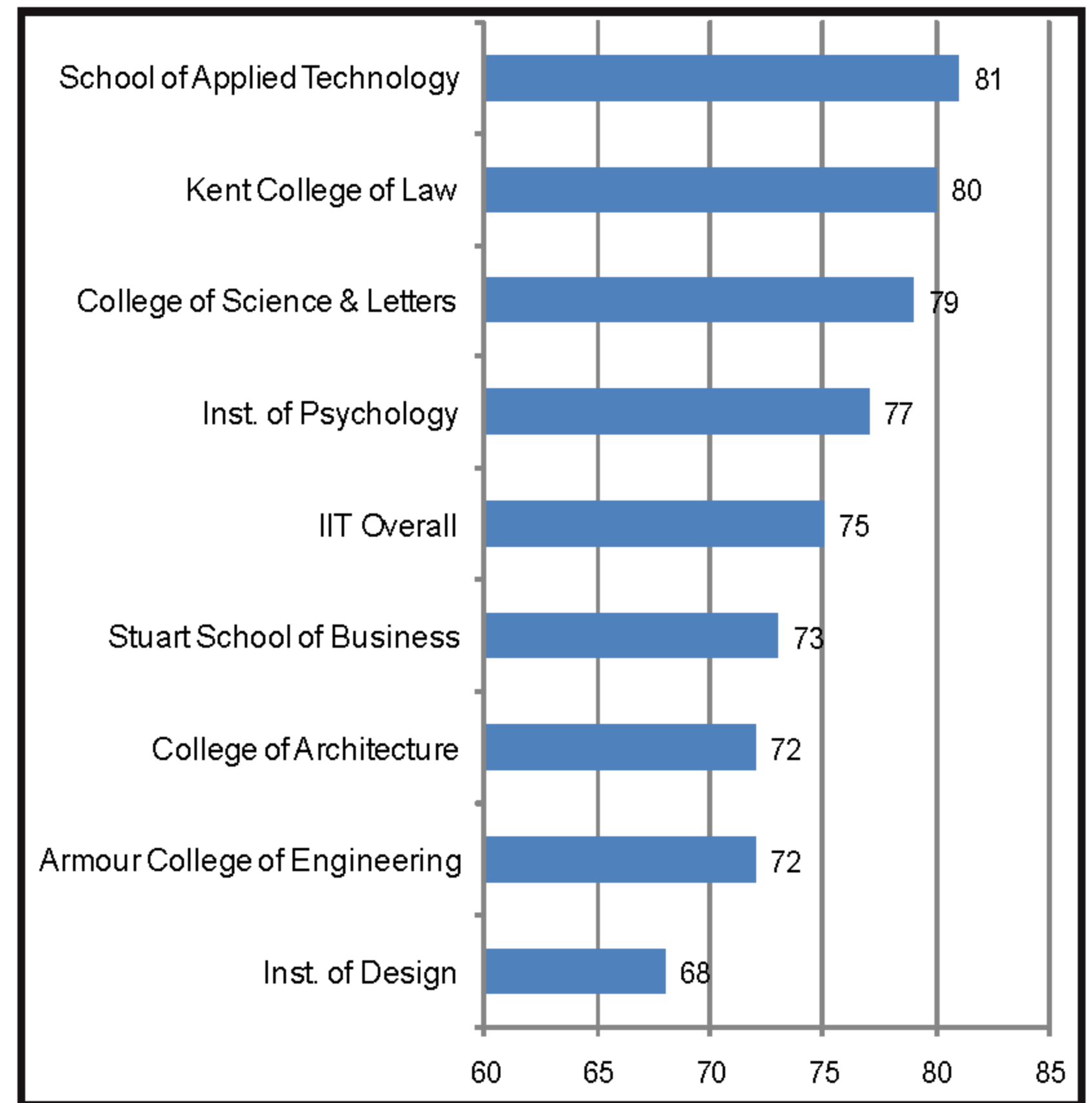


Academic department averages

Colleges

This chart represents the average ratings for the eight items included in the section assessing student satisfaction with their academic (major) department.

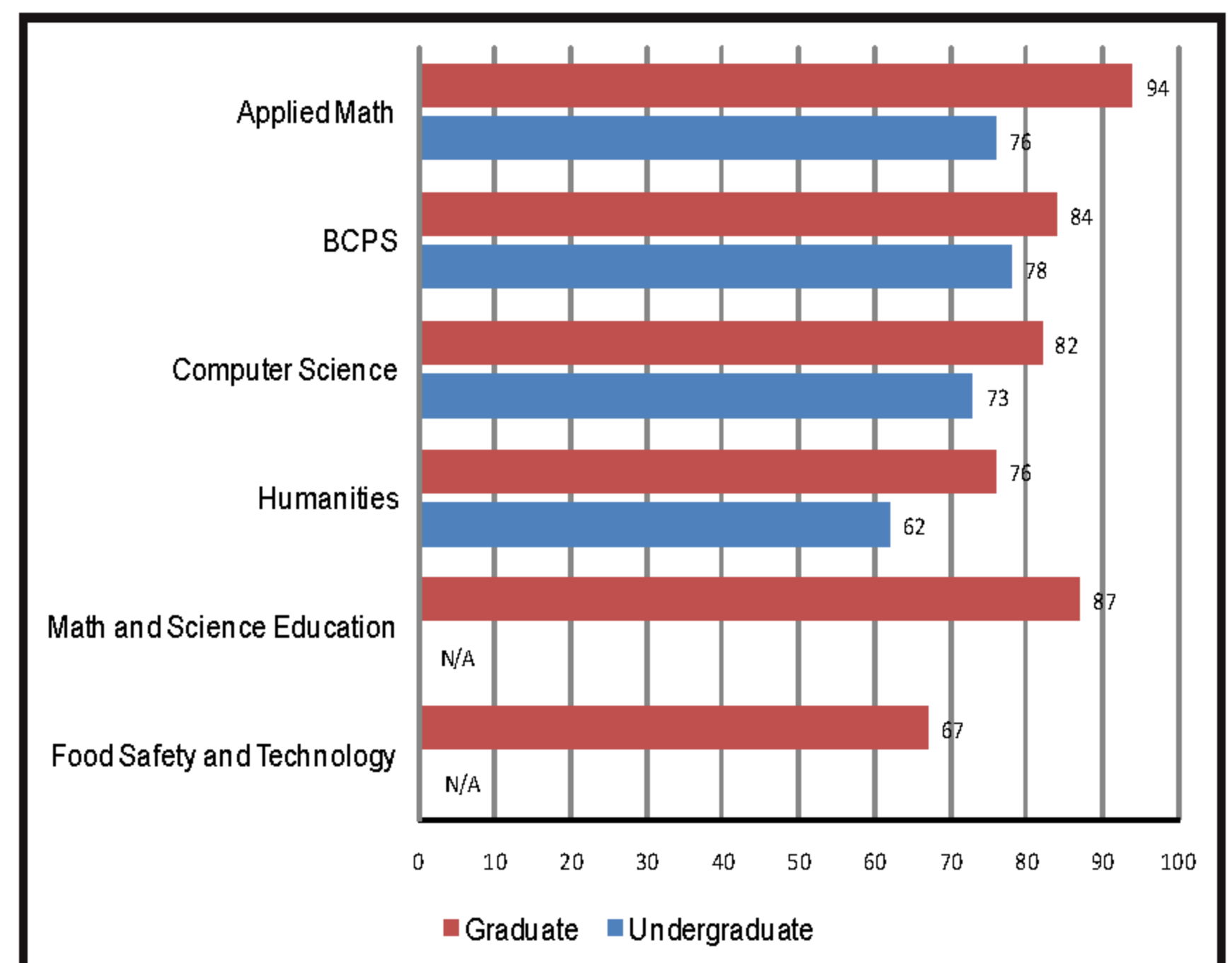
The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).



College of Science & Letters

This chart represents the average ratings for the eight items included in the section assessing student satisfaction with their academic (major) department. For CSL, graduate students show significantly higher levels of satisfaction as compared to undergraduates.

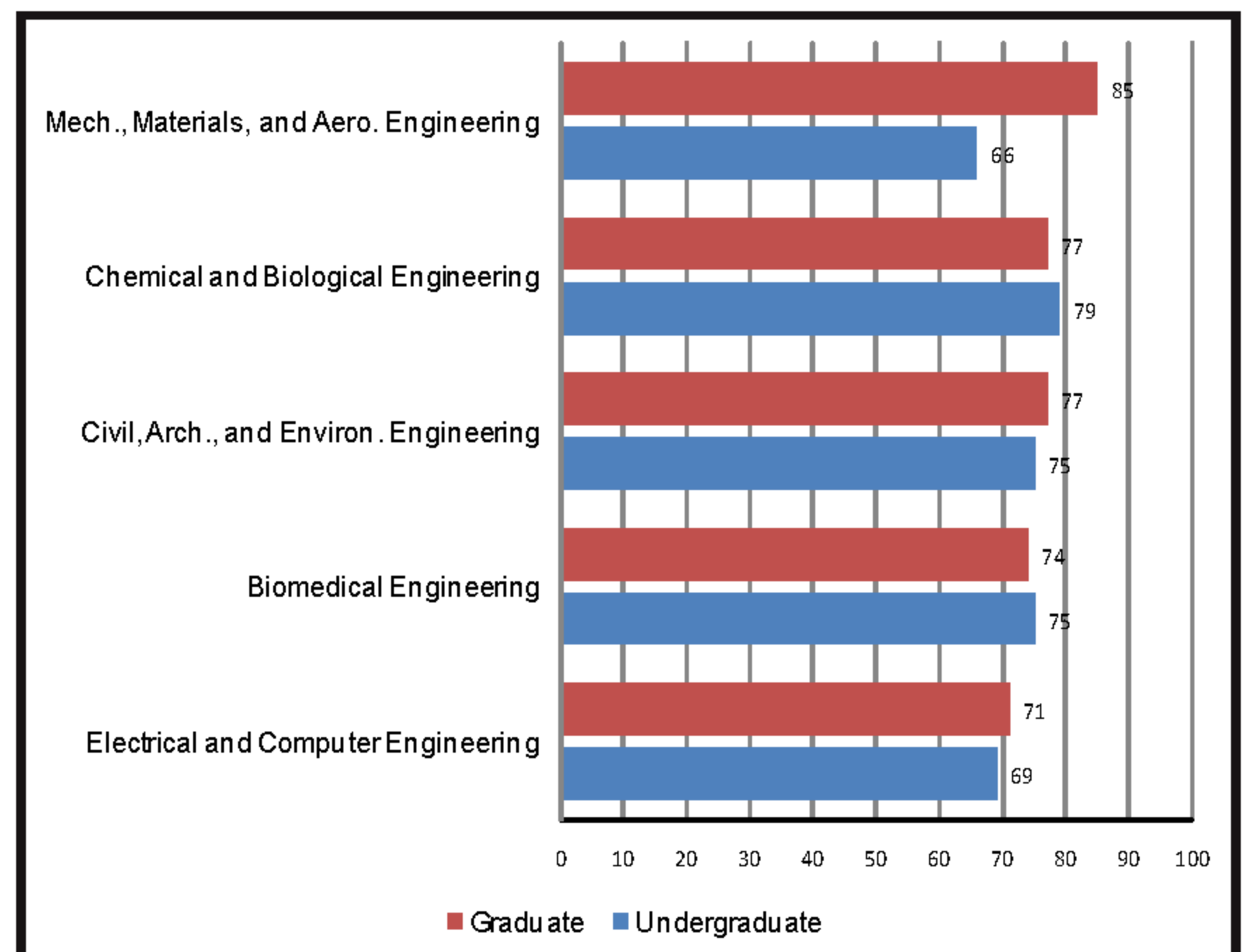
The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).



Armour College

This chart represents the average ratings for the eight items included in the section assessing student satisfaction with their academic (major) department.

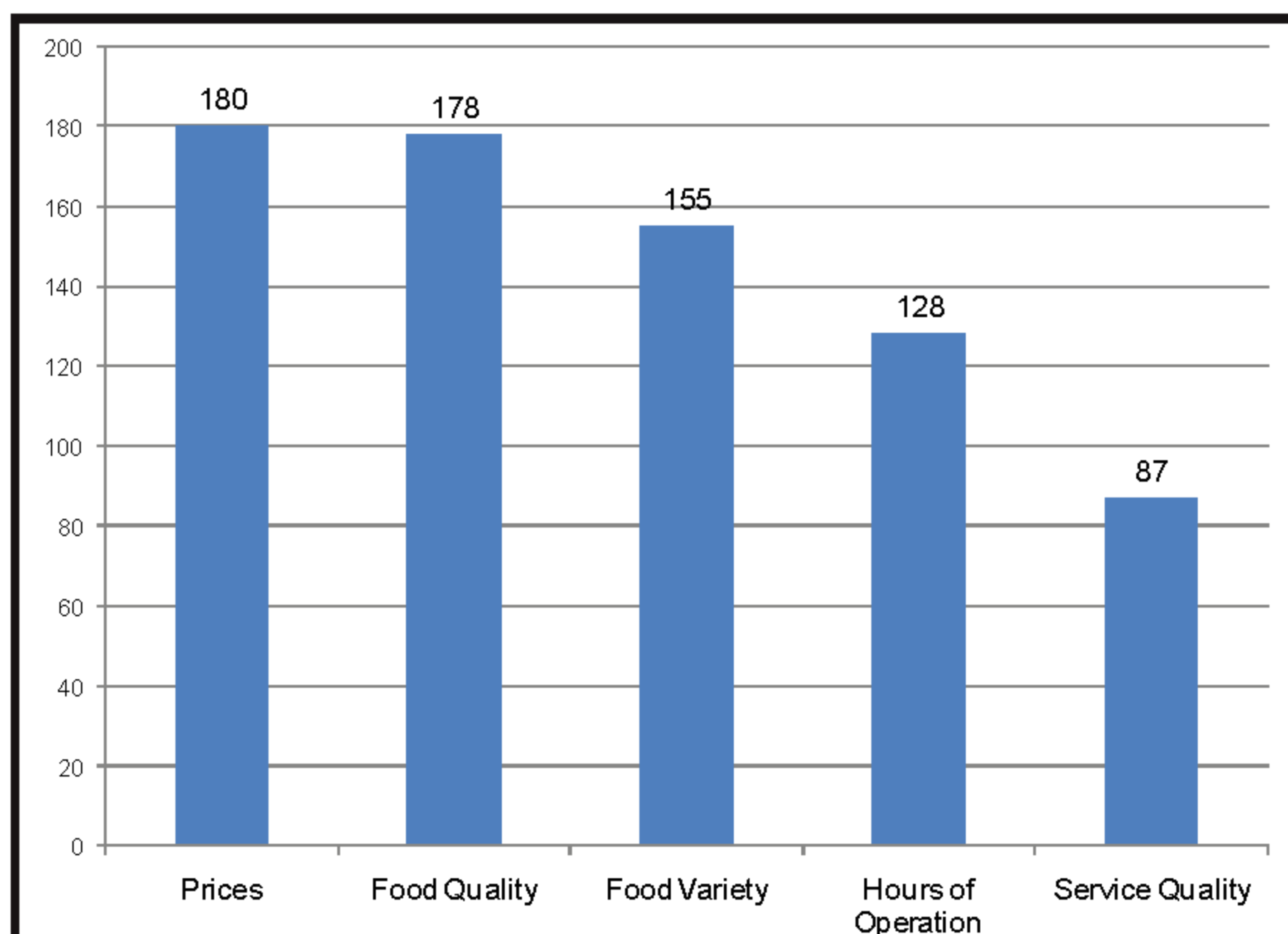
The percentages represent favorable responses (e.g., students responding very satisfied or satisfied to the survey items).



Comment analysis: Dining Services: overpriced, low quality



The graph below displays the most frequently identified themes in response to the open-ended question "What specifically does this area need to improve?"



Prices

"The food at the cafeteria is sometimes okay but sometimes bad. Also, the food is not good for the weekend. The meals are overpriced in my opinion as well."

Food Quality

"Needs more choice for healthy food for athletes and what not."
"The food is not always up to the mark. There are days when the food is excellent, but usually it is just all right...."

Food Variety

"Add a little more variety to what is served at the grill in the Commons."
"Not sufficiently catered to the different dietary needs like vegetarians and vegans."

Hours of Operation

"Einstein's is great, though I wish they had longer hours."
"Hours of operation: earlier on weekends especially."

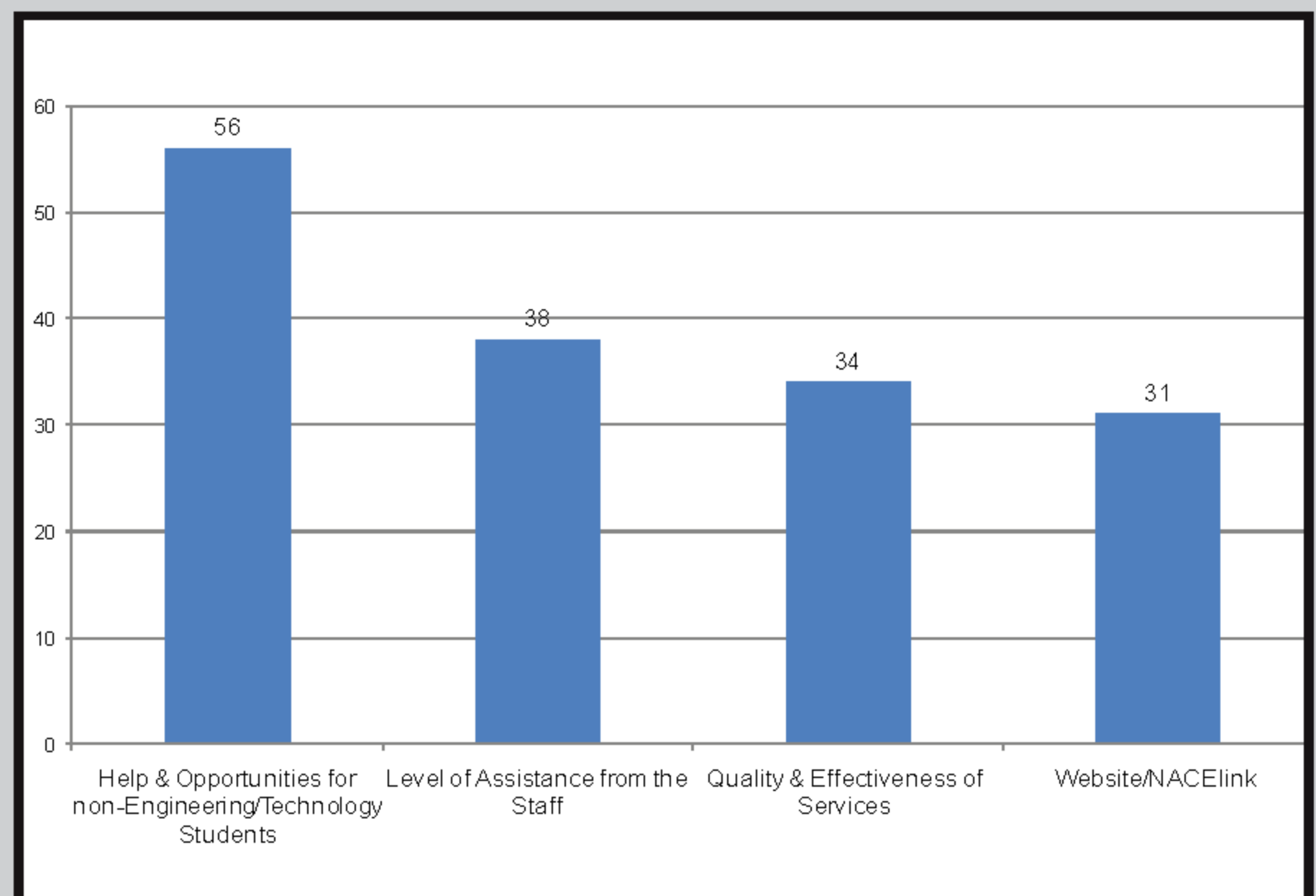
Service Quality

"People working especially at Commons and Center Court don't talk nicely and doesn't pay much attention to your questions or queries. They should also put smile on their face while serving students, would really help us feel good."



Comment analysis: CMC: assistance lacking

This graph displays the most frequently identified themes in response to the open-ended question "What specifically does this area need to improve?"



Help & Opportunities for Non-Engineering/Technology Students (e.g., different majors, years, international students)

"Make sure that there are opportunities for all majors. As a political science major I feel like they don't care about me, and that my job search is on my own.."

"Catering to part-time students. When holding a full-time job, it is difficult to attend any event that takes place before 5:30 or even 6:00."

Level of Assistance from the Staff (e.g., unavailable or not trained to help)

"I'd like to see more availability for walk-in career counseling or advice, or at the very least for doing this by appointment."

"...need more quality staff to better assist students with resume/cover letter services."

Quality & Effectiveness of Services (e.g., career fair, interviewing, workshops, etc.)

"The career fairs are a waste of time... most companies are not hiring and with the amount of people that show up, you get no face/quality time with anyone..."

"Career fair have to be better managed in terms of space and facility."

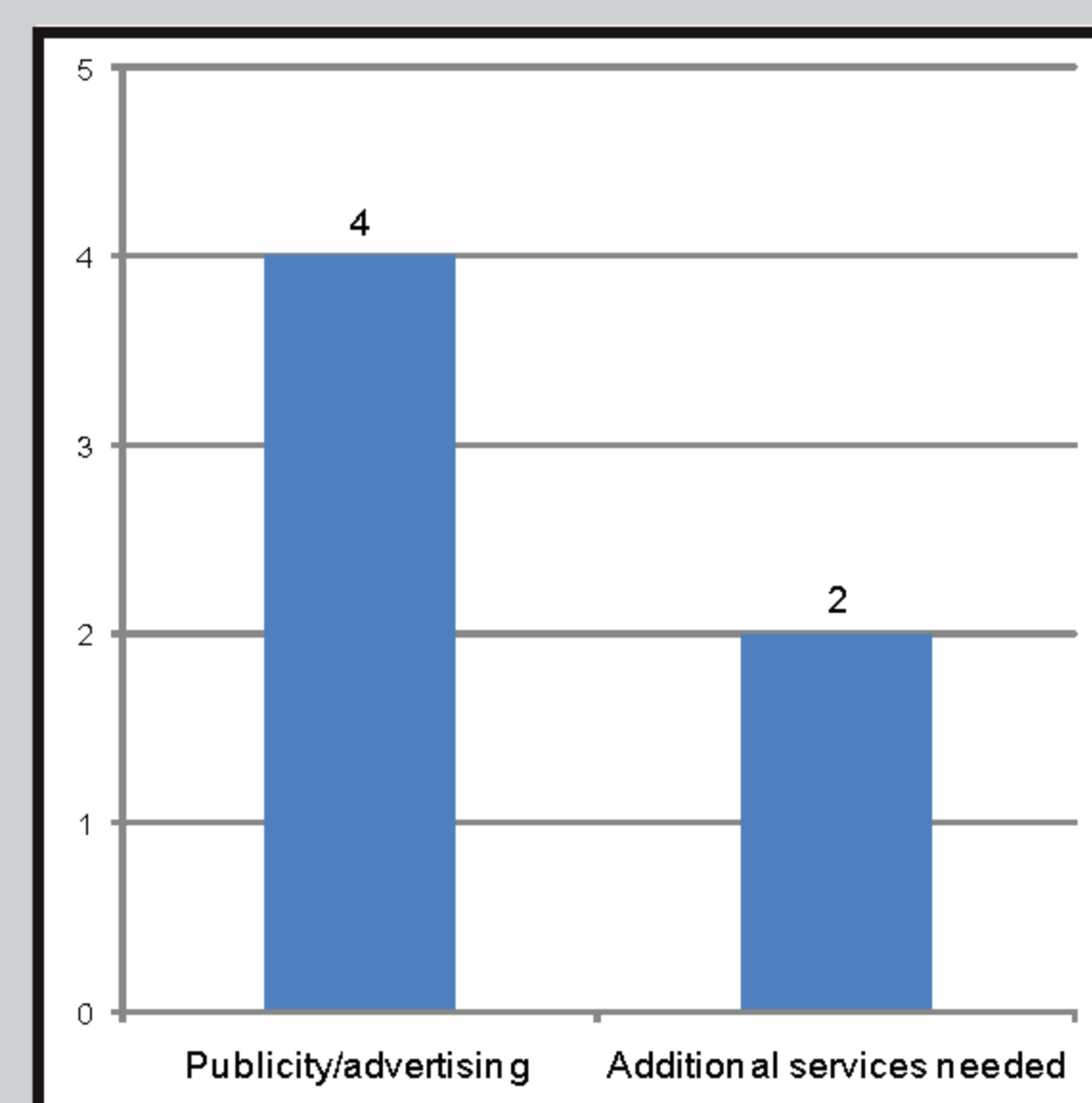
Website/NACELink

"When I tried to use this service, I found it overly complicated. To use a database I had to go to campus to sign some paperwork. I didn't have the time for that, but I'll try again next semester."

STUDENTS SPEAK

Comment analysis: Women's Center: unknown, lack of services

This graph displays the most frequently identified themes in response to the open-ended question "What specifically does this area need to improve?"



Publicity/advertising

"I'm not sure where this is located, but I think it is part of OMSS. More publicity, please!"

"I have not used this facility because I don't even know where it's located! If I knew more about it, I would definitely be interested in using this resource since I am girl.... :)"

Additional Services Needed

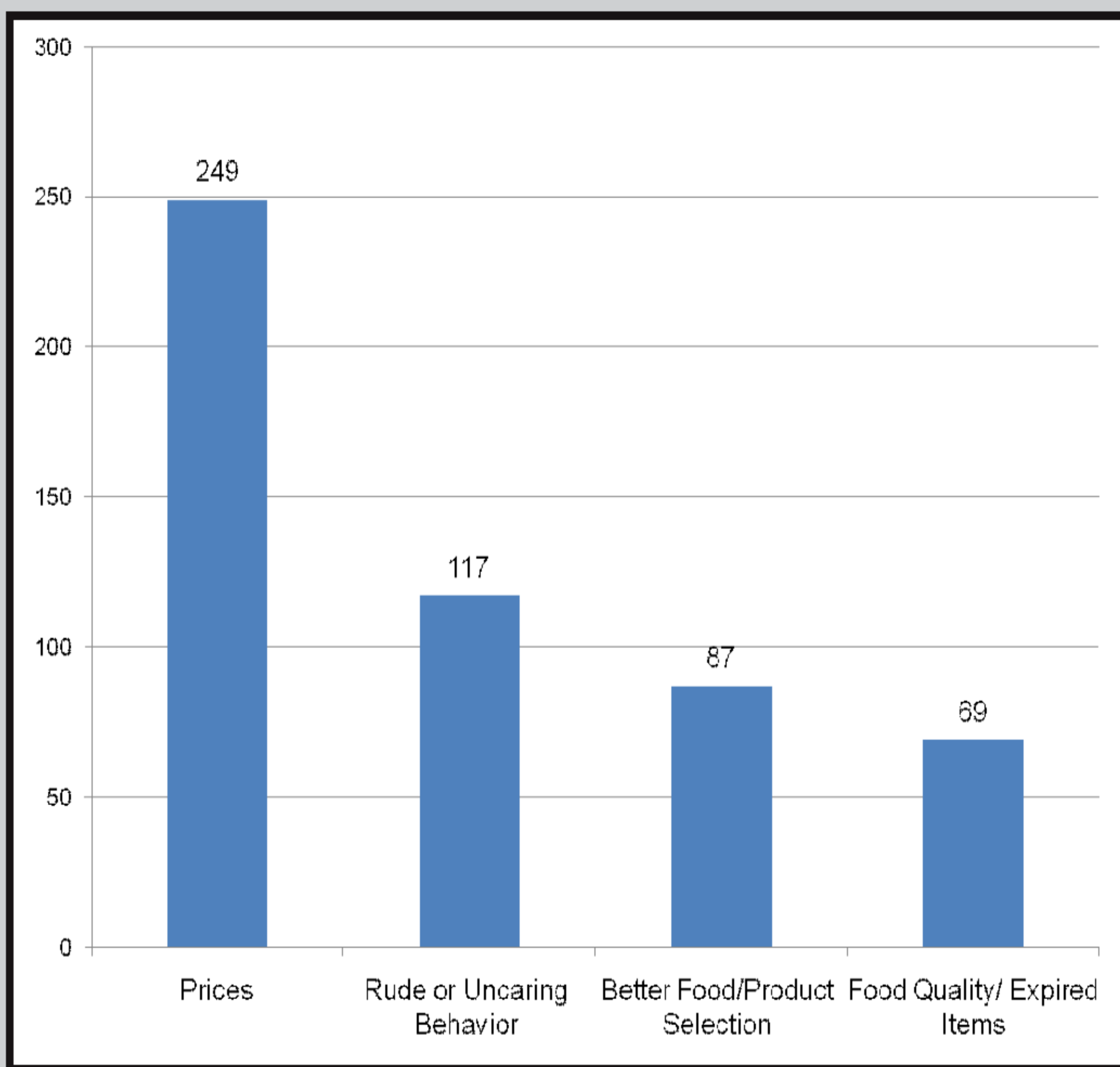
"Of what use is a nursing room for mothers if there is no day care on campus?! The only reason a mother would bring her child to campus with her is so she can attend class, but there is nowhere to keep the child during class so what is the point?"

"Not a negative comment for this office, just a comment: IIT needs to have a better system for handling cases of sexual assault. We don't have a set plan in place to help with this."

Comment analysis:
7-Eleven - poor customer service



The graph below displays the most frequently identified themes in response to the open-ended question "What specifically does this area need to improve?"



Prices

"All items are too costly. They sell at double the price of Jewel Osco."
"Excessively overpriced!"

Rude or Uncaring Behavior

"Employees don't really care about what they're doing."
"Customer service skills.."

Better Food/Product Selection

"Healthier options, kosher products."
"Even more entree type food."

Food Quality/Expired Items

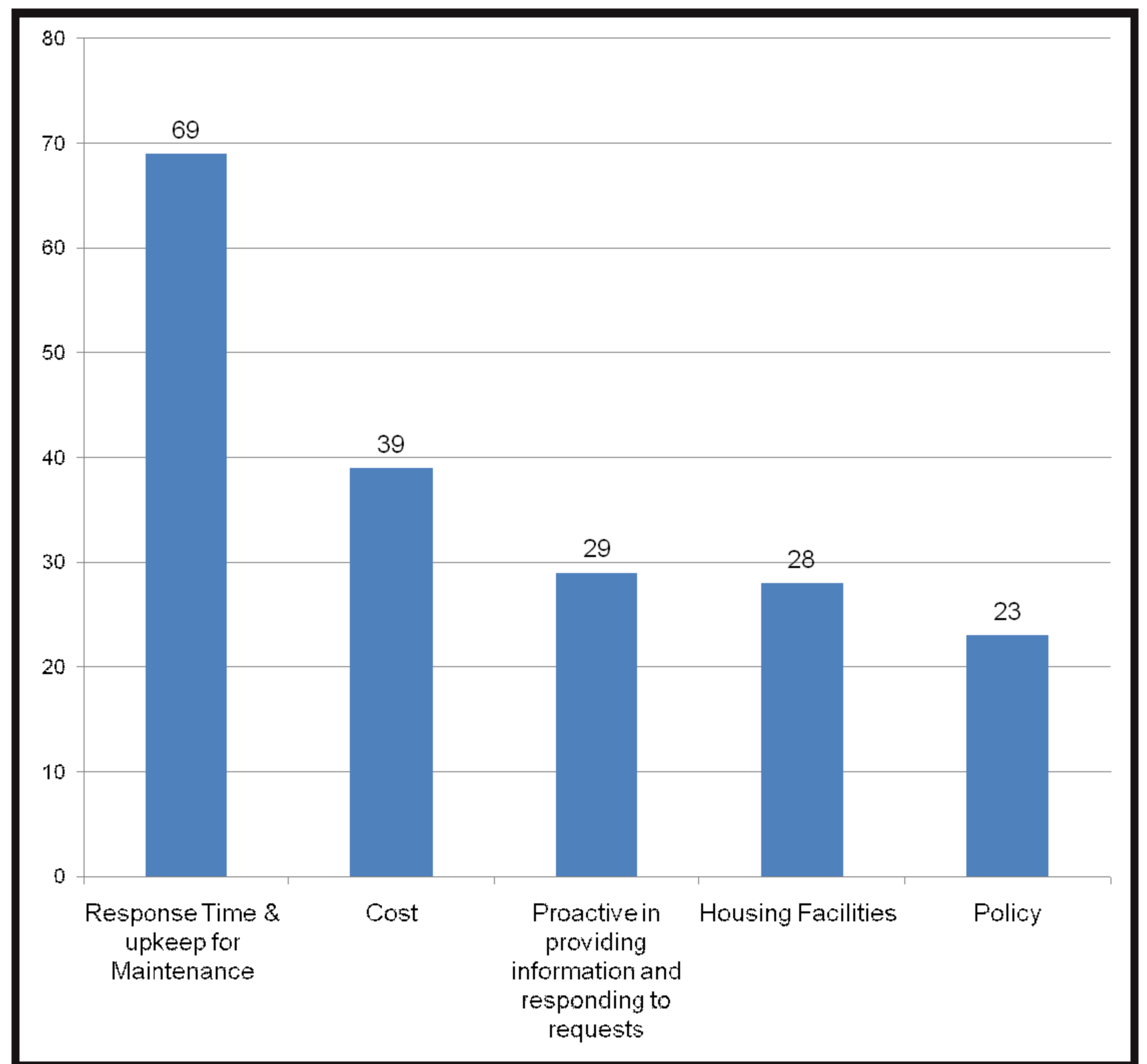
"They sell a food which has expired date!!"
"Quality of certain goods (like milk) is suspect. The milk almost always expires before the expiration date."



Comment analysis:
Housing/Res Life: slow response time



The graph below displays the most frequently identified themes in response to the open-ended question "What specifically does this area need to improve?"



Maintenance Response Time & Upkeep

"Heating periods and maintenance request response time"
"Needs to respond to housing repairs prior to new move-ins"

Cost

"Cost for housing is above average"
"The pricing for housing is too much for the value."

Proactive in providing information and responding to requests

"Timeliness. Response to needs is slow and sometimes lackluster"
"Need to work harder to respond to requests promptly"

Housing Facilities

"Would be better if all rooms had adjustable heat/air conditioning"
"Quality of the residences' rooms"

Policy

"Some rules need to be revised."
"The bonus point system should be able for conversion throughout the semester."



Overall improvements, favorability in departments

Most improved items

Dining Services showed the greatest improvements when compared to the baseline established by the 2009 survey. Financial Aid and Keating Sports Center also achieved significantly greater student satisfaction.

Department	Item	% Favorable
Dining Services	Provided adequate hours of operation	+12% (60%)
Financial Aid	Provided timely response to my questions or concerns	+7% (65%)
Keating Sports Center	Treated me with respect	+7% (81%)
Keating Sports Center	Provided adequate hours of operation	+7% (73%)
Financial Aid	Provided me with accurate information	+6% (67%)
Dining Services	Provided good value for food	+6% (40%)
Dining Services	Provided me with accurate information	+5% (73%)
Dining Services	Provided quality food	+5% (51%)
University - Overall	IIT staff work hard to respond to my needs	+5% (78%)

Most favorably rated items

The Center for Disability Resources is shown to excel. Student Life is also well represented among the most favorably rated items.

Department	Item	% Favorable
Center for Disability Resources	Treated me with respect	84%
Graduate College	Treated me with respect	83%
Campus and Conference Centers	Treated me with respect	82%
Spiritual Life	Treated me with respect	82%
Keating Sports Center	Treated me with respect	81%
Center for Disability Resources	Provided quality services	81%
Center for Disability Resources	Provided timely response to my questions or concerns	80%
Dining Services	Treated me with respect	80%
Student Life	Treated me with respect	80%
Student Life	Provided quality services and programming	80%

Least favorably rated items

7-11, Dining Services, and Housing/Residential Services were rated consistently low. Perceptions of poor value (e.g., cost versus quality) reflect consistent concerns across these areas.

Department	Item	% Favorable
Housing	Provided quality housing for the price	39%
Dining Services	Provided good value for food	40%
7-Eleven	Provided good value for products	41%
CMC	Hosted an effective career fair	44%
Dining Services	Provided quality food	51%
7-Eleven	Provided quality products	55%
Housing	Provided quality services and programming	56%
7-Eleven	Provided timely response to my questions or concerns	57%

Least improved items

The Career Management Center suffered declines in student satisfaction for every item in its survey section. 7-11 experienced a small decline in one item related to perceived value for products.

Department	Item	% Favorable
CMC	Provided me with accurate information	-7% (66%)
CMC	Provided timely response to my questions and concerns	-6% (66%)
CMC	Treated me with respect	-6% (72%)
CMC	Hosted an effective career fair	-2% (44%)
7-11	Provided good value for products	-2% (41%)
CMC	Provided me with quality service, training, and educational programs	-1% (61%)

Recommendations

Convene a Students Speak Summit (January 7, 2011)

- The President and/or Provost will introduce the session and convey the importance of the Students Speak process and the need for departments to be responsive to the feedback.
- VPs, Deans, and Directors of Service departments will attend; student leaders are also invited.
- Students Speak committee members will present the overall report and recommendations; the Center Director will facilitate a dialogue among students and University leadership.
- The President and Provost will convey expectations and guidelines for departmental action planning, a strategy for follow up on action plans, and plans for continuing to track Students Speak data as compared to baselines and goals.

Follow up with student feedback

- New, upgraded Students Speak website has been created and placed in the MyIIT portal.
- Summary report and survey data will be made available on the website for all students and staff to view.
- TechNews insert, including summary report and interviews with President and Provost.
- Departments will provide updates on plans and changes implemented for inclusion in future TechNews editions.

Leverage student advisory groups

- Encourage Dining Services, Housing/Residential Services, and Career Management Center to continue or accelerate their collaboration with advisory groups.
- Empower advisory groups with Students Speak data and recommendations.

7-Eleven

- Improve customer service
 - Students consistently reported that they are not greeted, receipts are not offered, thanks not provided; it is also reported that the store manager talks on his cell phone while serving customers.
- Respond to students' complaints of expired food
 - Evaluate refrigeration of milk to ensure it is kept fresh.
 - Conduct daily audit of perishable items.
 - Remove items that are out-of-date.

Housing and Residential Services

- Improve facilities and maintenance
 - Establish and evaluate response and resolution times for maintenance requests.
 - Increase transparency of construction plans so students can factor this into their housing reservations (e.g., Gunsaulus).
 - Schedule construction/remodeling during summer (e.g., Gunsaulus).
 - Improve facilities support over holidays.
 - Repair MSV windows.
- Develop CDA leadership
 - Seek and respond to feedback from CDAs re policies/practices.
 - Engage in more effective individual feedback, coaching and performance management and avoid blanket dictates (e.g., removing computer use privilege from all, rather than dealing with individuals who abused privilege).

Dining Services

- Increase hours
 - Open Global Grounds earlier on weekends.
- More healthy choices
 - Less salty, sweet, and fatty foods.
 - More vegetarian options.
 - More fish (not fried).
- More variety
 - Additional ethnic foods (e.g., Chinese, Indian).

Career Management Center

- Start Off Strong with Freshmen:
 - Reach out to freshmen to create awareness of procedures and programming. Promote student /professional orgs that have conferences and career services.
 - Meet & Greet session open to all students (e.g., Student Government Association General Assembly).
 - Create heightened awareness of on-campus jobs.
- Institute Response Time Policy (ala Financial Aid):
 - Encourage follow-up even if an issue is not yet resolved. Send confirmation emails to ensure a task was completed.
 - Improve NACELink (user friendliness, speed of approval process).
- Collaborate with Colleges
 - Deliver customized resume sessions for different colleges.
 - Assist colleges in developing and implementing "mini" career fairs.
- Improve QUALITY of Programming, not Quantity:
 - Resume sessions customized for beginner and advanced students.
 - Have students peer review and interact after being taught what to look for in a resume—not just lecture.
- Improve Accuracy of Information:
 - Create a Google Calendar to be shared with students; consistently update with information about events, deadlines, walk-in hours, etc.
 - Overhaul the website so that it is user friendly and information is easily accessible.
- Improve Career Fair:
 - Students register online, but also allow walk-ins. As an incentive to register, email students information including tips, map of tables, company profiles, etc.

Women's Services

- Increase awareness of Women's Service
 - Move office to MTCC so that it can be in proximity to other departments that serve student life.
 - Increase alignment with and support for student organizations that serve women, e.g., Feminists United (a student organization), sororities.
 - The identity of Women's Services appears too closely aligned with Center for Diversity and Inclusion; greater separation of these functions is advised to allow a clearer identity and focus for Women's Services.

President and Provost on Students Speak

By Utsav Gandhi & Karl Rybaltowski

CAMPUS EDITOR & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

John Anderson, President of the Illinois Institute of Technology, does not fear change. "I think you should take every opportunity to figure out what people think, what could be done better. But I think human nature is such that people don't like to be evaluated, especially by students." This is what makes the Students Speak survey so significant. It's certainly one of a very rare breed; a comprehensive, university-wide survey of students' impressions of IIT departments, organized and run by students.

TechNews had the opportunity to discuss the survey results, preliminary action plans, general impressions, and the future of the survey with the President and Provost, and following are some key points from our discussion.

What are you happiest about with the the survey? Any initial reactions?

President Anderson: I'm happy that it's a student-run initiative. I mean, we hired Dr. Fisher to hold it together because students have a full-time job of studying and all that, and we need somebody to work with the educational statistics and survey, but I think it's important that it's basically student-run. I want it to always stay that way.

Provost Cramb: I would add that I think it was 88% of the students felt safe on campus, and that's very good. It's an issue that everyone's safe, and I'm not quite sure you'd get 88% at DePaul in Lincoln Park, to be honest. I walk through the campus every day, I live around there. I think that's important, because it's a different view of our campus, and it's something that many people wouldn't know. People think anything on the South Side has to be terrible, and we're showing that's simply not true. So to me, that's what I thought was really important - that our students feel they're safe.

Within the academic [departments] specifically - how do you feel about how the different colleges did?

Provost Cramb: I thought it was interesting that the new School of Applied Technology has been treating their students really well. They have a widely dispersed student body: part-time, full-time, across campuses, and they

come out on top. So I think that's a message to everyone else, that you really have to be more student-focused. I also noticed that some of the bigger departments have more problems, and maybe you'd expect that, but that's the discussion that the faculty and undergraduate affairs people have been having - that we have to do better mentoring, better advising. It's all part of that. It's also interesting to compare to other surveys, that when you've got the academic side, that the issues of the university aren't with teaching, aren't with the faculty. I'm really happy that the results came out that we find our faculty are accessible. I thought there were a lot of positives.

You mentioned Princeton review. How does this compare to that?

Provost Cramb: There are some things in there that are serious. For example, we have a lot of students who would not recommend the university, and the majority of students would, but there's still a significant number, about 30%, that wouldn't. And if you look at that, that's a problem.

President Anderson: I think that number's not uncommon, because you only try one university. Typically students only go to one; you're in it, you see all the flaws, you see it's not delivering on everything, and so you think it must be better somewhere else. It's like family [laughs]; when you've just got the one, other families might look really good.

It seems one of the main reasons for that number is the high cost here. What reaction did you have to that?

Provost Cramb: We've had this discussion often. When we talk with students about cost, they don't look at total - you know, people say "I can share an apartment in Bridgeport, and it'd be much cheaper with six of us sharing a place." And when you say "what about getting three of you in a dorm here?" they recoil. But I can understand the mindset. I lived in student housing when I was a student, too, and I remember my expectations.

President Anderson: I think that tuition here is low. You know that, and you could publish it. I just went to a couple of websites over the weekend, looked up another engineering college - \$38,000 tuition, \$8,000 rooms. Our rooms are, what, \$6,500? And the dining cost was huge, too. And this is what Brian Kibbe



did a couple of years ago: you can go on the websites of private schools you think are comparable (not public - there you'll have a 25:1 student-faculty ratio, and here we're at 9:1), and you'll see that we're low on everything. And we're in the middle of a city, where costs are high. We still need good service, because for what you're paying, we need to demand that. There's no excuse for poor maintenance.

Was there any part of this survey you were surprised to see? Was there something you expected to do well that didn't, or vice versa?

President Anderson: I was very happy with the Bursar's Office. It's a real success story from the last survey to this one.

Provost Cramb: I was happy to see housing improve, but I was disappointed that it didn't improve more.

President Anderson: It's still pretty low, but that's something that we have to work on. We can't improve service overnight. It involves money, but it's also a process. I do get irritated when someone promises service overnight and nothing happens. If someone tells me "we'll get to this in three weeks," I can accept that. But if I don't get any feedback, I hate it. I'm on the side of the students with that.

Is there anywhere outside of our school where the survey is making a splash?

President Anderson: [University of] Michigan is very interested, and we have a few others. I have to say that I haven't seen a buzz, though. I think with this, it's going to be rejected by a lot of vice presidents at universities. They say "we do our own surveys." Well, their surveys don't get the same results that a student survey does.

Provost Cramb: This process gives up control of the survey to the students, and a lot of people are very uncomfortable with it.

President Anderson: I remember going to a staff function at the Bog the first year, and I got attacked by several staff. "Students are going to kill us, it's going to be a witch hunt!" But it's not that, it's not a witch hunt. I mean, I found out that we've got someone in the dining halls who's an angel.

Doris!

She's wonderful. You find out there are people who have these spectacular relation-

ships with the students.

Now that the results are out, what's going to happen? What are the priorities, what are we going to see happen in the coming semester or even beyond?

Provost Cramb: Well, I think that getting all the improvement plans from the different units is the next step. Then just following up with the improvement plans and making sure there's still improvement.

President Anderson: We've been thinking about next year's survey being a little different. If we just keep doing the same thing, it might get old. I don't want to hear about 7-11 again [laughs]. I think we want to follow up on some units and make sure they're still improving, but we're thinking about having three or four major issues discussed. The students are going to come up with these, but rather than questions clustered around specific offices, you'd have general functions.

Provost Cramb: I think the president had a really interesting idea, and that was giving students a few options and having them pick what they want to see. It would be good to have the student view of, for example, having better wireless across campus versus having a better hard-line connection in the dorms.

President Anderson: We have to make choices all the time. I call it "this or that." I was at a meeting a while ago with a professor from Princeton [University], and they were starting something like this. "Do you want this dining hall open more hours or this other thing? We can't do both."

Provost Cramb: It costs money either way, so what are the trade-offs on these things? That would be another option for Students Speak. I think questions like that would provide meaningful results, and it would be a very good lesson for students to be making those choices.

President Anderson: The suggestion for keeping the library open 24/5 was a great suggestion.

Provost Cramb: Significant cost implications, but students love it. If we're going to spend an extra \$150,000 a year, should it have been done there or somewhere else?

Anderson: I don't want students there [at Galvin] on Saturday night [laughs]. Lock the doors on Friday and Saturday nights - it's the weekend, have some fun.





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