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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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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!