



2019 HOLY NAMES UNIVERSITY GRADUATE EXPERIENCE SURVEY: SUMMARY & HIGHLIGHTS

Study Overview

The purpose of the *Holy Names University Graduate Experience Survey* was to support the institution's need to collect and examine data on a broad range of graduate student outcomes. Administered online to all members of the HNU Graduate community (N = 312) in spring 2019, the survey generated responses from 99 students, a 32% response rate. Representation across a variety of student demographics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) was mostly reflective of HNU's overall population of graduate students (See Appendix A for further information). This report highlights a condensed summary of key findings.

Survey Highlights %'s next to items indicate the percentage of respondents who selected that item on the survey.

ADMISSION TO GRADUATE PROGRAM

Respondents were prompted to give feedback regarding why they chose HNU for their graduate studies. **77%** of respondents indicated that they enrolled at HNU because they wanted to advance their careers. **62%** of respondents stated they required an advanced degree/certificate for their current job, and **60%** of the respondents indicated that they enrolled in their graduate program because they wanted to increase their income potential. **54%** of respondents enrolled at HNU for intellectual enrichment.

Given these reasons for attending HNU, respondents were also asked to indicate the most important factors in their decision to enroll at HNU. The top five items that were identified as "very" or "extremely important" factors in graduate students' decisions to enroll at HNU included:

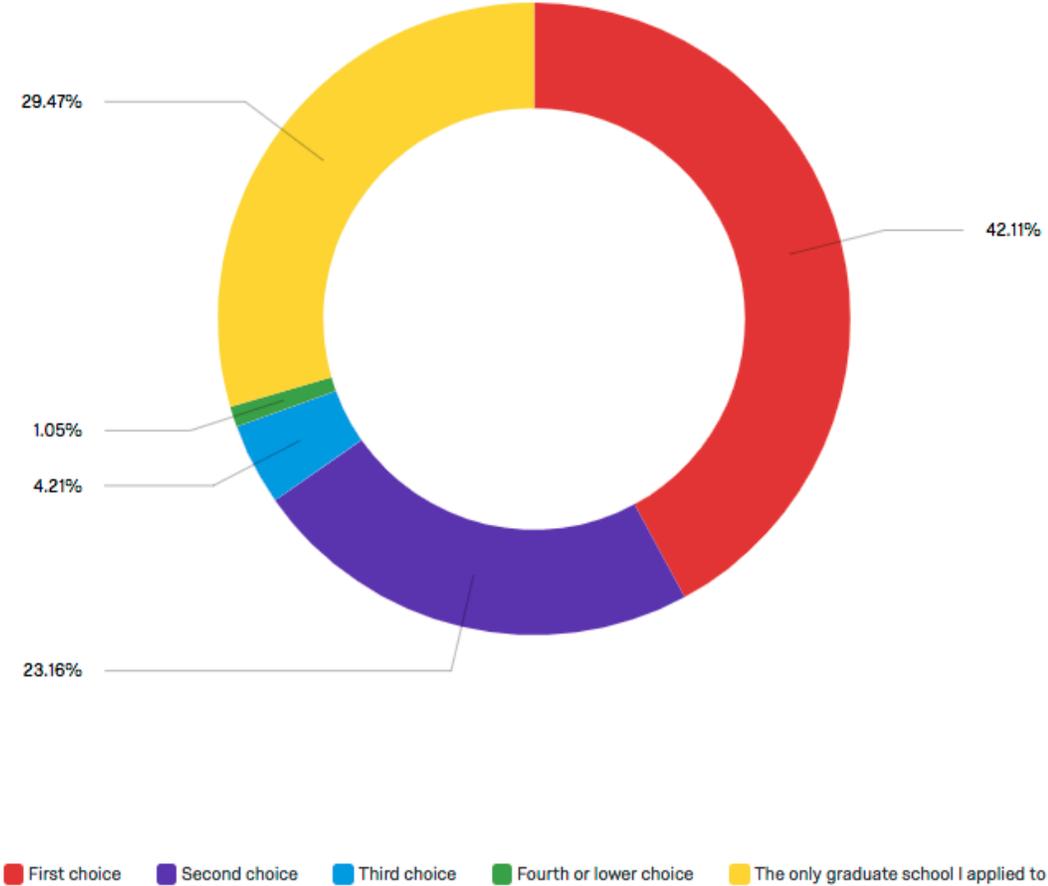
- Communications from program faculty (**82%**)
- Affordability of tuition (**74%**)
- Reputation of the academic program (**69%**)
- HNU's reputation (**61%**)
- Diversity of student body (**60%**)

Respondents were then asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements relating to their pre-admission experiences, and the extent they would recommend their graduate program to others. The results below indicate the cumulative percentage of students who indicated they agreed (on a scale of somewhat agree -> strongly agree) with the following statements:

- I received prompt communication regarding my application to campus (**85%**)
- I was able to easily find the information I needed about my HNU graduate program before applying (**80%**)
- I would recommend my graduate program to prospective students (**78%**)
- If I was to go back and make the decision again, I would still choose to attend HNU (**76%**)
- The value of HNU's graduate program was clearly conveyed to me before applying (**68%**)

When asked to characterize HNU among the graduate schools that respondents applied to, **42%** of respondents indicated HNU was their first choice. **29%** of respondents indicated HNU was the only school they applied to for admission. **23%** of respondents indicated HNU was their second choice, and a total of **5%** of respondents indicated HNU was the 3rd choice, or lower. A graphic depiction of the breakdown of this question is reported below:

Among the graduate schools that you applied to, HNU was your:



CAREER & JOB PREPARATION

Students were asked questions related to their career and job preparation at HNU, such as to characterize the type of employer they hoped to work for after graduation. The top five responses included (note, respondents were able to indicate more than one type of employer):

- Elementary, secondary, or special focus school (**39%**)
- Hospital or clinic (**32%**)
- Non-profit or foundation (**26%**)
- Governmental position (**22%**)
- Self-employed/private practice (**21%**)

Responses varied regarding the adequacy of resources for the job search process and career placement. While **85%** of respondents indicated they were confident in their prospects for employment after graduation, **57%** reported there were adequate career advising resources on campus. A summary of the student responses follows:

- I am confident in my prospects for employment after graduation:
 - **85%** Somewhat Agree -> Strongly Agree
 - **9%** Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - **6%** Somewhat Disagree -> Strongly Disagree
- My graduate program is adequately preparing me for a job in my future professional field:
 - **84%** Somewhat Agree -> Strongly Agree
 - **5%** Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - **11%** Somewhat Disagree -> Strongly Disagree
- There are adequate campus resources for CV and cover letter prep:
 - **67%** Somewhat Agree -> Strongly Agree
 - **25%** Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - **8%** Somewhat Disagree -> Strongly Disagree
- There are adequate career advising resources that prepare me for employment:
 - **58%** Somewhat Agree -> Strongly Agree
 - **28%** Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - **14%** Somewhat Disagree -> Strongly Disagree
- There are adequate campus resources for my job search process:
 - **57%** Somewhat Agree -> Strongly Agree
 - **25%** Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - **18%** Somewhat Disagree -> Strongly Disagree

GRADUATE PROGRAM CONNECTIONS AND INVOLVEMENT

A number of questions were asked about the type of community connections graduate students have made at HNU. The objectives of these questions were to identify the extent to which graduate students were connecting to one another, to faculty, and to identify how HNU could enhance the social experience for these respondents. The results of these findings are as follows:

- **89%** of respondents have made at least one meaningful connection with a peer in their academic program.
- **83%** of respondents have made at least one meaningful connection with a professor in their academic program.
- **70%** of respondents stated that there exist opportunities to interact with other HNU graduate students who have ideas that are different than their own.
- **49%** of respondents have made at least one meaningful connection with a peer in another HNU graduate program.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the extent they felt like they were a part of the HNU community. Results indicate that **58%** of graduate students feel they are valued by the campus community, and **38%** of graduate students say they feel connected to the social life of campus.

When asked to indicate what social activities respondents thought would enhance their campus experience, students most commonly suggested the five events/programs that are listed below, and noted they were most likely to attend these events either on weekends, or weekdays after 6pm:

- Career focused events (**52%**)
- Socializing with other graduate students (**44%**)
- Alumni networking (**43%**)
- Physical wellness events (**38%**)
- Socials with faculty and staff (**35%**)

By in large, email (cited by **91%** of respondents) was the most common way that graduate students were informed of opportunities for campus involvement. Peers (cited by **62%** of respondents) and faculty (cited by **55%** of respondents) followed as the most common ways campus involvement was communicated to respondents. Social media (cited by **16%** of respondents) was the least mentioned communication channel that respondents identified as a way they were informed about opportunities for involvement at HNU.

STUDENT RETENTION

A critical component of this student experience survey was to identify how HNU could better support graduate student retention, and enhance student success on campus. The following findings identify areas that impact the retention and academic success of graduate students, and deserve the attention of the institution.

33% of respondents (33 total students) indicated that they have considered leaving HNU during this previous academic year, but it is unclear at the time of this summary if any of these respondents have or plan to follow through with leaving the institution. The most pressing reasons why students have thought about leaving HNU in the current academic year were:

- Cost of attendance is prohibitive (**cited 10 times**)
- Not feeling academically challenge (**cited 9 times**)
- Personal/family issues (**cited 7 times**)
- Lack of staff friendliness (**cited 5 times**)
- Lack of course offerings (**cited 4 times**)

Participants were also asked to indicate what they felt were the biggest obstacles to their academic success, and students responded with the five items below as the most pressing barriers:

What are the biggest obstacles to your academic success?	% of Respondents who cited this obstacle	# of Respondents who cited this obstacle
Financing my education	61%	60
Work commitments	40%	40
A lack of course availability	35%	35
Cost of living	35%	35
Family obligations	19%	19

Respondents were also solicited in an open response question to indicate what suggestions they had to improve the graduate student experience at HNU. Common themes emerged that indicate a need to consistently and clearly communicate academic expectations (e.g., course requirements, academic advising, grading), and to increase use of technology in the classroom. Individual qualitative responses were aggregated, and are summarized below (listed in descending order from the number of times they were cited) as broad themes:

- Increase flexibility in course offerings/times of scheduled courses
- Expand office hours for evening students
- Clearer communication between administration/faculty and students
- Increase use of LMS and technology in class

- Foster closer relationships between faculty and students
- Reduce costs for attendance
- Offer more career services

A number of trends as they relate to student concerns about their HNU experience, and unfair treatment on campus were also quantitatively captured in this experience survey. I

- **13%** of respondents (13 students) indicated they had been treated unfairly at HNU in the past year because of their racial/ethnic identity.
- **4%** of respondents (4 students) indicated they had been treated unfairly at HNU in the past year because of their gender identity.

Student satisfaction of various resources and services were also gathered as part of this survey, and graduate students reported they were satisfied with services such as Library study space, Library resources, general lounge space, and the IRB submission process, but had higher levels of dissatisfaction with the following:

- Courses being offered at times that were conducive to their schedule (**24%**)
- Condition of classrooms (**20%**)
- Availability of campus dining (**24%**)
- Operating hours of campus offices (**18%**)

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHS

Finally, responses to the open-ended question “*What do you consider to be the greatest strength(s) of your academic program?*” were heavily geared toward the faculty, and the learning environment. Respondents most frequently indicated faculty were the greatest strength of their graduate program, followed by their peers, small class sizes, and the focus on diversity/social justice in the academic program.

Sample comments that detail institutional strengths include:

The greatest strength is the students and the experiences they bring to the classroom. Second are the few professors that are incredible and care deeply about us. These professors save the program.

The sense of community, availability and kindness of professor, open mindedness of instructors and empathy.

Close relationships with teachers and advisors, emphasis on culturally relevant material, adequate preparation for future jobs

The engagement between my peers and professors. The professors truly create a thought provoking environment where I can get excited about the lectures and lessons.

Appendix A: Institutional and Respondent Demographics

Demographic Item	Institution/Population %	Survey Respondent %
Gender		
Female	77%	83%
Male	23%	15%
Transgender	*	1%
Prefer not to state	0%	1%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian or Indigenous	0%	3%
Asian	16%	11%
Black or African American	32%	23%
Hispanic/Latino	15%	26%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pac Islander	2%	3%
White	30%	27%
Other	1%	3%
Did not report	3%	4%
Years Completed at HNU		
Less than one	*	38%
One	*	17%
Two	*	33%
Three	*	8%
Four	*	1%
Five or more	*	2%
Age		
Under 21	*	0%
21-23	*	14%
24-26	*	27%
27-29	*	8%
30-32	*	14%
33-35	*	8%
36-38	*	7%
39-41	*	5%
42-44	*	1%
45-47	*	2%
48-50	*	2%
51+	*	11%
Prefer not to state	*	1%

*Denotes misalignment between the way the institutional % is calculated and how the respondent % in the survey sample is calculated. Due to this inconsistency, the institutional % is not reported to avoid invalid comparison to respondent %.