

## University of Washington Parents Survey 2001

Gayle Garson  
January, 2002

### INTRODUCTION

The fourteenth annual Parents Phone Survey invited parents to express their views on "how things are going" for their daughters and sons. The survey is one part of a larger effort to assess the University's success in establishing and maintaining effective lines of communication with parents through such means as Freshman Convocation and UW News, a publication for parents of University undergraduates. The results of the survey are useful in the development and refinement of institutional services and programs.

### METHODOLOGY

Between November 26 and November 28, 2001, parents of current University of Washington (UW) freshmen were contacted for a phone survey. The *Parents Survey* was commissioned by the [Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs](#) and conducted by the UW Student Calling Program, a branch of the UW Office of Annual Giving. The survey asked parents for their impressions of how their son or daughter was doing in school. In addition, a few questions about Freshman Convocation were included. Participants were not prompted with any specific topics. Instead, they commented on a variety of topics and their impressions were coded into categories. The survey calling list included 1,100 randomly selected parents of freshmen, approximately 80 percent residing in the state of Washington and 20 percent residing out of state. A total of 858 parents participated in the survey.

### FINDINGS

#### Question 1: Student's Experience at the University of Washington

The first survey question asked respondents to describe their overall impression of how their son or daughter was doing at the UW. Responses to this question were encouraging. An overwhelming majority (87.0%) of the parents reported that their son or daughter was having a positive experience at the UW ([Figure 1](#)).

Many respondents offered further elaboration on their answer to this question. Their comments were categorized and rated as negative, neutral, or positive by the interviewer. Respondents commented upon Class Difficulty, Class Size, Class Registration, and Instructors more frequently than other aspects of the UW experience (Table 1).

**Table 1. Comments on the question "Overall, how is school going for your daughter/son?"**

	Negative		Neutral		Positive		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Class difficulty	69	27.9	52	21.1	126	51.0	247
Class size	54	31.6	52	30.4	65	38.0	171
Class registration	114	73.1	15	9.6	27	17.3	156
Instructors	33	32.7	12	11.9	56	55.4	101
Freshman Interest Groups	10	13.2	9	11.8	57	75.0	76
Academic advisors	22	44.0	9	18.0	19	38.0	50
Campus safety	6	16.7	7	19.4	23	63.9	36
Orientation	3	8.6	5	14.3	27	77.1	35
Parking	22	78.6	2	7.1	4	14.3	28
Intercollegiate athletics	3	12.5	1	4.2	20	83.3	24
Recreational sports	3	14.3	1	4.8	17	81.0	21
Financial aid	8	47.1	5	29.4	4	23.5	17
International instructors	8	61.5	4	30.8	1	7.7	13
Alcohol/drug abuse	6	54.5	3	27.3	2	18.2	11
<b>Total</b>		361		177		448	986

[Figure 2](#) displays the types of ratings (positive, neutral, or negative) given to each comment category by percentage for categories that received at least 20 responses. Intercollegiate Athletics, Recreational Sports, Orientation, and Freshman Interest Groups received the highest proportion of positive comments. Categories that received the highest proportion of negative comments were Parking, Class Registration, and Academic Advisors.

**Question 2: Does your daughter/son live in a Residence Hall, the Greek System or off campus?**

Just over half (54.1%) of the parents surveyed reported that their son or daughter lived in a residence hall ([Figure 3](#)). The remaining 45.9% said that their son or daughter lived in the Greek System (22.9%) or off campus (23.0%).

### Question 3: How is that going for them? (Greek System or Residence Halls only)

#### *Residence Halls*

Respondents were asked to elaborate on their son's or their daughter's experience living in a Residence Hall or the Greek System. Those commenting on the Residence Halls had the most praise for the overall accommodations (Table 2 and [Figure 4](#)). Food was targeted with criticism more frequently than other categories regarding the Residence Halls.

**Table 2. Comments about the residence halls**

	Negative		Neutral		Positive		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Overall accommodations	54	15.5	49	14.1	245	70.4	<b>348</b>
Social activities	24	17.9	8	6.0	102	76.1	<b>134</b>
Food	68	58.6	25	21.6	23	19.8	<b>116</b>
Noise	43	65.2	9	13.6	14	21.2	<b>66</b>
Other	50	75.8	3	4.5	13	19.7	<b>66</b>
Alcohol/drug use	16	72.7	2	9.1	4	18.2	<b>22</b>
Safety	9	40.9	4	18.2	9	40.9	<b>22</b>
Parent orientation/DAWGS	1	8.3	0	0.0	11	91.7	<b>12</b>
Billing	5	71.4	1	14.3	1	14.3	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>270</b>		<b>101</b>		<b>422</b>		<b>793</b>

#### *The Greek System*

Although fewer respondents had comments about the Greek System than about the residence halls, those comments tended to be positive, with the most praise for overall accommodations (Table 3). Noise was most frequently identified as a negative aspect of living in the Greek System.

**Table 3. Comments about the Greek System**

	Negative		Neutral		Positive		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Overall accommodations	7	5.0	8	5.7	126	89.4	<b>141</b>
Social activities	2	3.1	6	9.2	57	87.7	<b>65</b>
Noise	9	56.3	5	31.3	2	12.5	<b>16</b>
Food	3	20.0	4	26.7	8	53.3	<b>15</b>
Rush	7	50.0	3	21.4	4	28.6	<b>14</b>
Other	10	76.9	0	0.0	3	3.0	<b>13</b>
Alcohol/drug use	7	63.6	3	27.3	1	9.1	<b>11</b>
Safety	1	10.0	4	40.0	5	50.0	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>		<b>33</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>285</b>

**Question 4: Did you attend Freshman Convocation?**

When asked about Freshman Convocation, one fourth of those surveyed reported that they had attended ([Figure 5](#)). This is comparable to the rate of attendance reported on the 1998 survey (23.0%).

**Question 5: What was your overall impression (of Freshman Convocation)?**

[Figure 6](#) displays survey respondents' impression of Freshman Convocation. Of the survey respondents that attended Freshman Convocation, the majority (83.7%) had a positive impression.

**Question 6: Primary Reason for not attending Freshman Convocation**

Slightly less than one quarter (21.0%) of the respondents that gave an explanation for not attending Freshman Convocation cited another commitment as the main reason ([Figure 7](#)). Other frequently mentioned reasons for not attending were distance, lack of interest, and work conflicts.

**Question 7: Were you aware that Convocation was broadcast periodically on UWTV? (In-State Residents Only)**

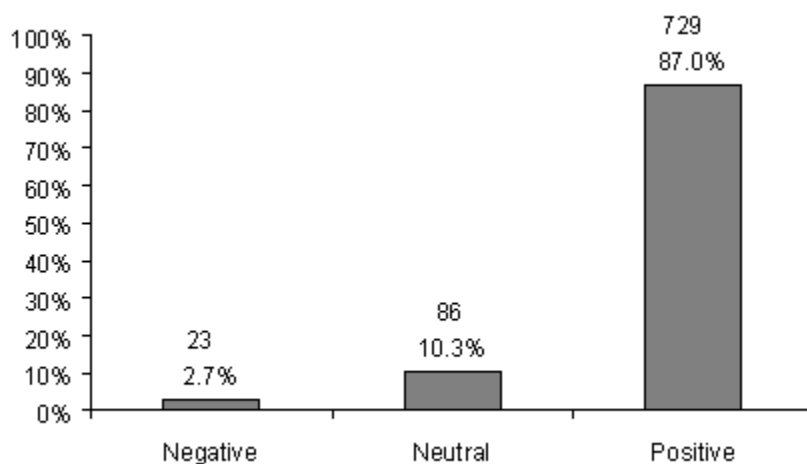
Of the 544 survey respondents that reside in Washington, only 12.9% indicated that they were aware of Convocation being broadcast on UWTV ([Figure 8](#)). This is similar to the rate of awareness (12.0%) reported on the 1998 survey.

## **CONCLUSION**

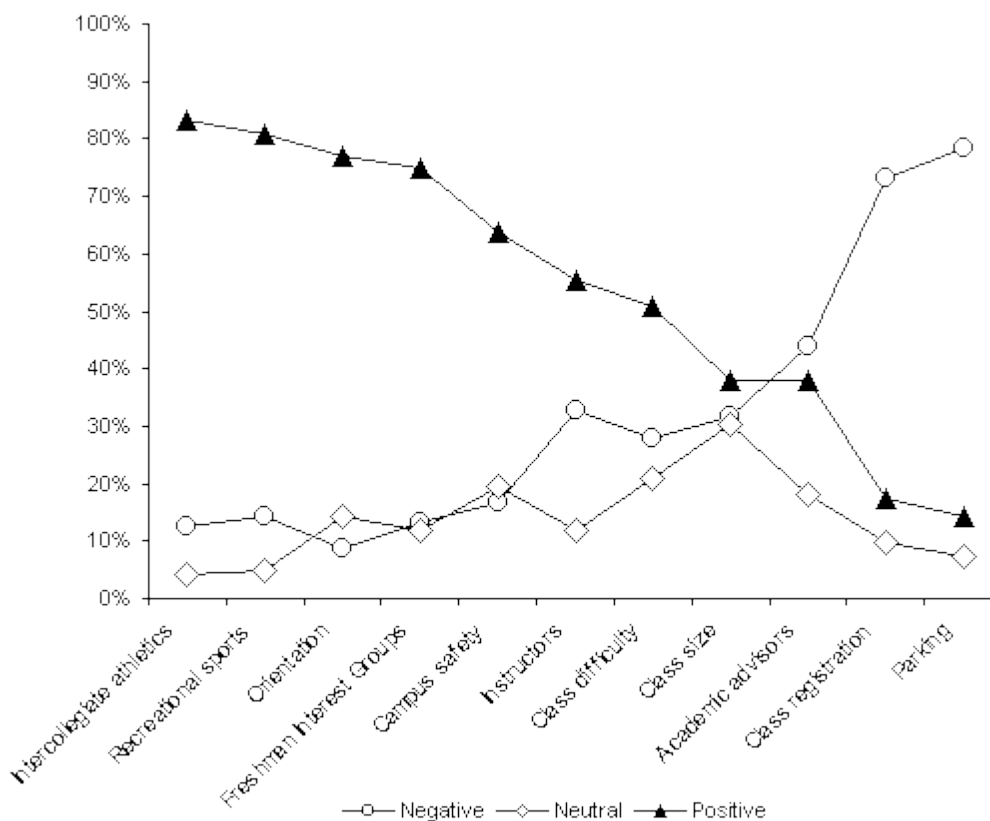
Overall, parents reported that their son or daughter was having a positive experience at the University of Washington. Parents were generally pleased with the overall accommodations and the social activities in both the residence halls and in the Greek System, although some parents expressed concern about the food in the residence halls. When asked about Freshman Convocation, most of those that attended had a positive impression of the experience.

## FIGURES

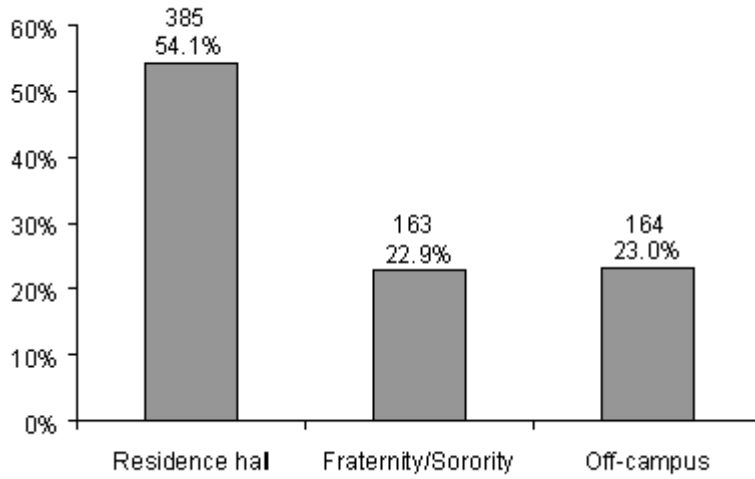
**Figure 1. "Overall, how is school going for your daughter/son?"**



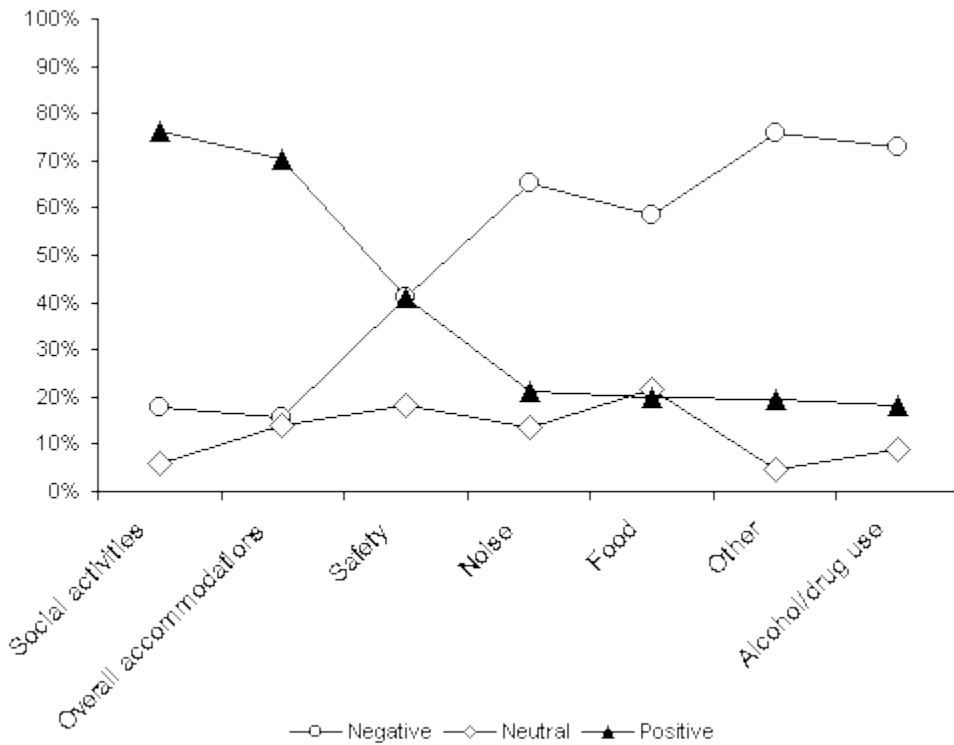
**Figure 2. Comments on the question "Overall, how is school going for your daughter/son?"**



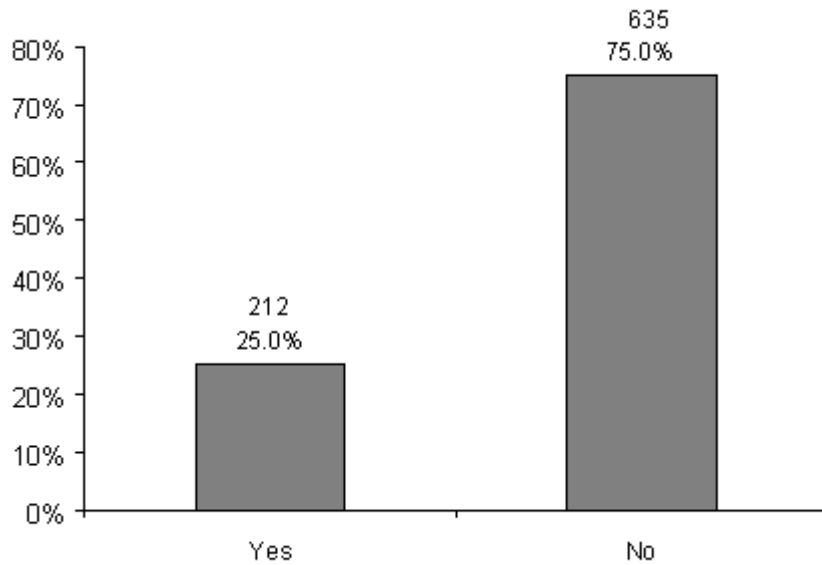
**Figure 3. Student Residence**



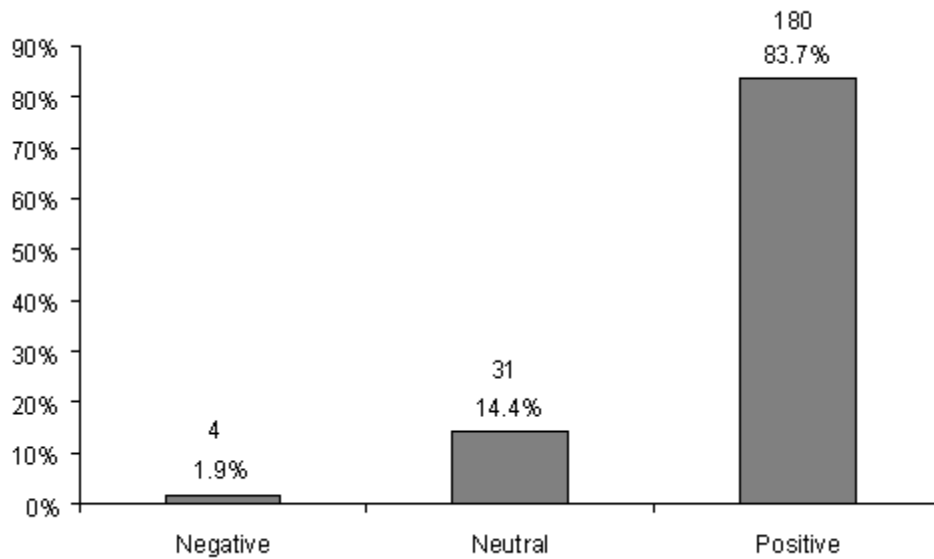
**Figure 4. Comments about the residence halls**  
*(Categories with at least 20 responses)*



**Figure 5. Were you able to attend Freshman Convocation?**

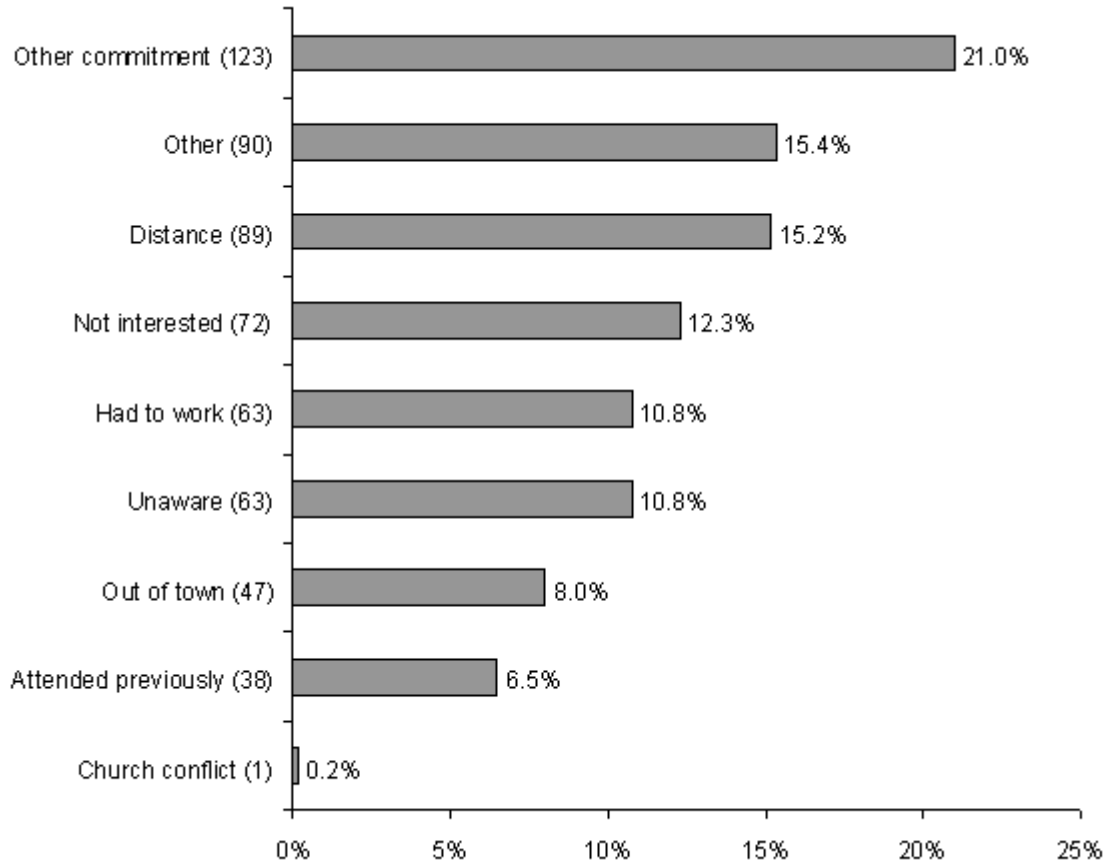


**Figure 6. What was your overall impression (of Freshman Convocation)?**





**Figure 7. What was your primary reason for not attending Freshman Convocation?**



**Figure 8. Were you aware that Convocation was broadcast periodically on UWTV?**

