



Student Survey: Department of Global Health

2014-2015: Catalyst Survey Results

Submitted to the University of Washington Graduate School: May 5, 2015

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) conducts program reviews of academic departments that coincide with the Graduate School's Program Review process. GPSS reviews are a vital component of the final Graduate School Program Report. The data collected and presented by the GPSS serve as a primary source of graduate and/or professional student feedback in the Graduate School's Program Review process.

For most program reviews, the GPSS conducts a two-part review of the academic unit that results in two separate reports. The first part is based on an electronically administered Catalyst survey requesting feedback from the graduate and/or professional students within the academic unit being reviewed. The survey results are largely quantitative. The second part of the GPSS-sponsored program review involves an in-house focus group session that is dedicated to further exploring the issues raised by the Catalyst survey. This activity collects largely qualitative information. The notes from the focus group are compiled as a second report. For the Department of Global Health, only a survey was done.

To best interpret the impact of this report, please refer to the survey questions. For more information about the GPSS Program Review process or for questions regarding this report, please contact gpssex@uw.edu.

Department of Global Health Graduate Program Review

Review, Scope and Purpose:

This review *does* contain a summary of graduate student opinions regarding their experiences in the School. This review *does not* seek to evaluate the School or give a general overview of the academic programs.

Summary of Findings

The Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) sponsored and administered a Catalyst survey to the graduate and/or professional students in the University of Washington Department of Global Health between January 14, 2015 and March 4, 2015. The purpose of this survey was to ensure the voices and opinions of the students within the Master's and Doctoral programs are included in the review process and thereby taken into account during the planning of the future direction of the School's programs. The results of this survey are discussed in this report, and the raw data are available from GPSS upon request.

The response rate was 30% (35/117). Of the 35 students who completed the survey, 29 were at full-time status, three at part-time and two were on leave. 29 were Master's students, one was a non-matriculated student and 5 were Doctoral students with one having advanced to candidate status.

Academic Program

Ratings for the academic quality of the Global Health program were positive. The majority of respondents (94%) rated 'integration of current developments in respondent's field' and 'program space and facilities' as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' and the remaining 6% rated them as 'fair'. Similar ratings were reported for academic standards and intellectual quality of fellow graduate students. A total 97% of respondents rated them both as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good' and 3% of respondents rated them as 'fair'.

100% of respondents felt that the intellectual quality of the Global Health faculty was as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good'. 6% of respondents had no opinion regarding the intellectual quality of faculty from other departments, 47% rated outside faculty as 'excellent', 41% indicated 'very good' and 6% indicated 'good'.

Although no respondents disagreed that the amount of coursework was appropriate to their degree, some noted that certain required courses do not apply to some students and suggested that having choices for required courses would be helpful. An additional comment stressed not only the importance of the high intellectual quality of fellow students but also the importance of a global mindset. Due to the high amount of expertise in the cohorts, respondents suggested that in addition to sharing their experiences in digital stories, short talks or presentations throughout the year would be great.

Most respondents agreed to some degree that the Department of Global Health fosters a sense of intellectual community, encourages collaboration and teamwork, provides opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work and that the amount of coursework is appropriate for their degree, supports their research or professional goals. However some disagreed. The responses are tabulated below in **Table 1**.

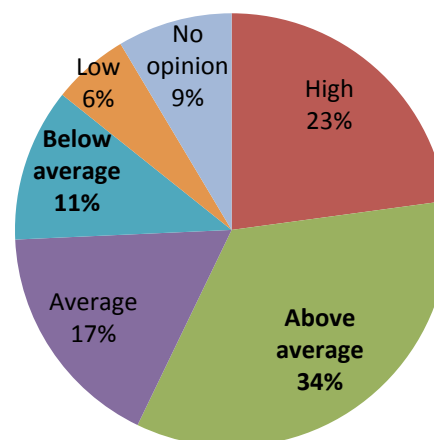
Table 1. Ratings of dimensions of the intellectual environment in the graduate program.

| | Program activities foster a sense of intellectual community | Program supports my research or professional goals | Program encourages collaboration and/or teamwork | Provides opportunities to take coursework outside department | Program provides opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary work | Amount of coursework required seems appropriate to the degree |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| Strongly agree | 35% | 43% | 49% | 46% | 40% | 34% |
| Agree | 56% | 46% | 31% | 40% | 40% | 57% |
| Neutral | 9% | 9% | 20% | 9% | 17% | 9% |
| Disagree | 0% | 3% | 0% | 3% | 3% | 0% |
| Strongly disagree | 0% | 0% | 0% | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| No opinion | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Research Experience

Students reports of their research experience in the Department of Global Health were mixed; 9% of respondents reported that the level of training they received before beginning their own work was ‘high’, 37% said it was ‘above average’, 43% said it was ‘average’, 6% responded that it was ‘below average’ and 6% had no opinion on the matter. 74% of respondents rated the availability and quality of opportunities for research in collaboration with one or more faculty members in their program as ‘average’, ‘above average’ or ‘high’ and a total of 17% rated it as ‘below average’ (11%), and ‘low’ (6%) and 9% had no opinion. Similar ratings were reported for the quality of faculty guidance they received in formulating a research topic. **Figure 1** shows the breakdown.

Figure 1: Did you receive adequate advice on thesis/dissertation draft?



Higher ratings were reported for the level of assistance received from support or technical staff in the Department of Global Health. 91% reported that the levels of assistance were at least average and 9% had no opinion on the matter. 26% of respondents answered that they have been assisted in writing a grant proposal and 74% said they had not been assisted. Respondents also noted there is need for a more structured process to mentoring and that mentors need to allocate more time to meet with mentees. Less than half of respondents (46%) have attended a professional conference and the 26% have presented a poster or paper at a conference. **Respondents commented that the department could improve linking**

students with ongoing research.

Career Counseling / Job Search

Nearly half (49%) of respondents reported feeling ‘somewhat satisfied’, ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the career counseling they had received, 9% reported that they were ‘dissatisfied’, 3% were ‘very disappointed’, 9% had no opinion, 3% said the program provides no counselling and 23% said they have never looked for career counselling from the department. **While at least 30% of respondents had no opinion regarding the quality of advice and/or assistance received regarding career counselling and job search, the remaining 70% had very mixed responses which are summarized in Table 2.**

Table 2: Ratings of the quality of advice and/or assistance received from advisor or other department faculty

| Answer | Teaching in higher education | Employment opportunities inside academia | Employment opportunities outside academia | How to search for a job | How to prepare a resume or curriculum vitae | How to prepare for an interview |
|---------------|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| High | 6% | 11% | 9% | 6% | 9% | 6% |
| Above average | 26% | 17% | 23% | 9% | 9% | 14% |
| Average | 14% | 14% | 20% | 20% | 26% | 17% |
| Below average | 0% | 9% | 9% | 20% | 17% | 14% |
| Low | 6% | 3% | 6% | 9% | 9% | 9% |
| No Opinion | 49% | 46% | 34% | 37% | 31% | 40% |

Some respondents added comments that the **Department of Global Health does not provide opportunities for career advice and employment opportunities**. Respondents also said that it would be beneficial for students if career and employment counseling were held during the first quarter.

Academic Advising

While 91% of respondents said that they were ‘somewhat satisfied’, ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the quality of advice in their program, 9% were ‘dissatisfied’. Similar results were noted for student satisfaction with the amount of communication that students have with their advisors, with 94% ‘somewhat satisfied’, ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the quality of advice of their program, and 6% responding that they were ‘dissatisfied’.

In applicable cases, the majority of respondents stated that they received adequate advice on preparing for oral and written examinations and final defense. With regards to developing a thesis/dissertation proposal and draft, selecting thesis/dissertation advisor, doing research, at least 60% of respondents said they received adequate help and at least 14% said they did not. 80% of respondents noted having been adequately advised about plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity.

Figure 2: Did you receive adequate advice on Intellectual property issues?

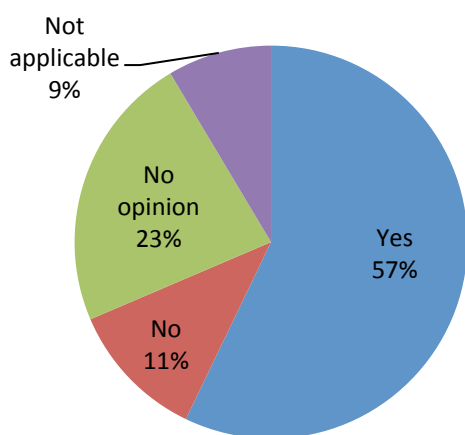
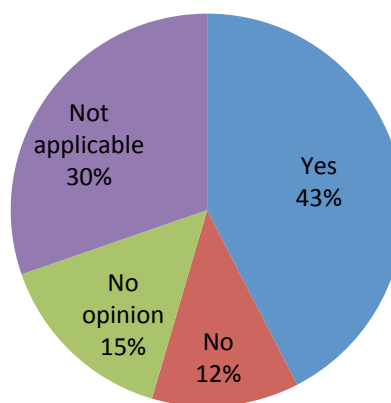


Figure 3: Did you receive adequate advice on thesis/dissertation draft?



Departmental Community

97% of respondents reported a sense of community that is either 'high', 'above average' or 'average' and 3% reported it as 'low'. 94% reported that the program's openness to diversity as well as the programs' commitment to attracting diverse students, as 'high', 'above average' or 'average'; and 3% reported that the levels were 'low' and another 3% had 'no opinion' on the matter. With regard to the program's level of support for the needs of diverse students, the program got mixed responses – 40% said it was 'high', 29% said 'above average', 11% said 3% said 'below average', another 3% said 'low' and 14% had 'no opinion'. **More than a quarter (31%) of respondents did not know or had no opinion about whether or not their program had a diversity committee.**

Funding

While 37% of respondents felt that the program did not provide sufficient funding, 29% felt that it did, 14% were unsure if funding provided was sufficient, and 20% had no opinion. With regards to whether the criteria for financial support in their program were clear and available, 41% said 'yes', 18% said "no", 29% were 'unsure' and 12% had 'no opinion'.

With the majority of respondents reporting that they were being funded by need-based financial aid or loans and personal funding; it is not surprising that only 29% of respondents anticipate completing their program with no debt. The remaining 71% of respondents will have some outstanding loans upon completion. **Some respondents commented that funding only seemed to be available for international students.**

The numbers from the respondents are in **Figure 4**.

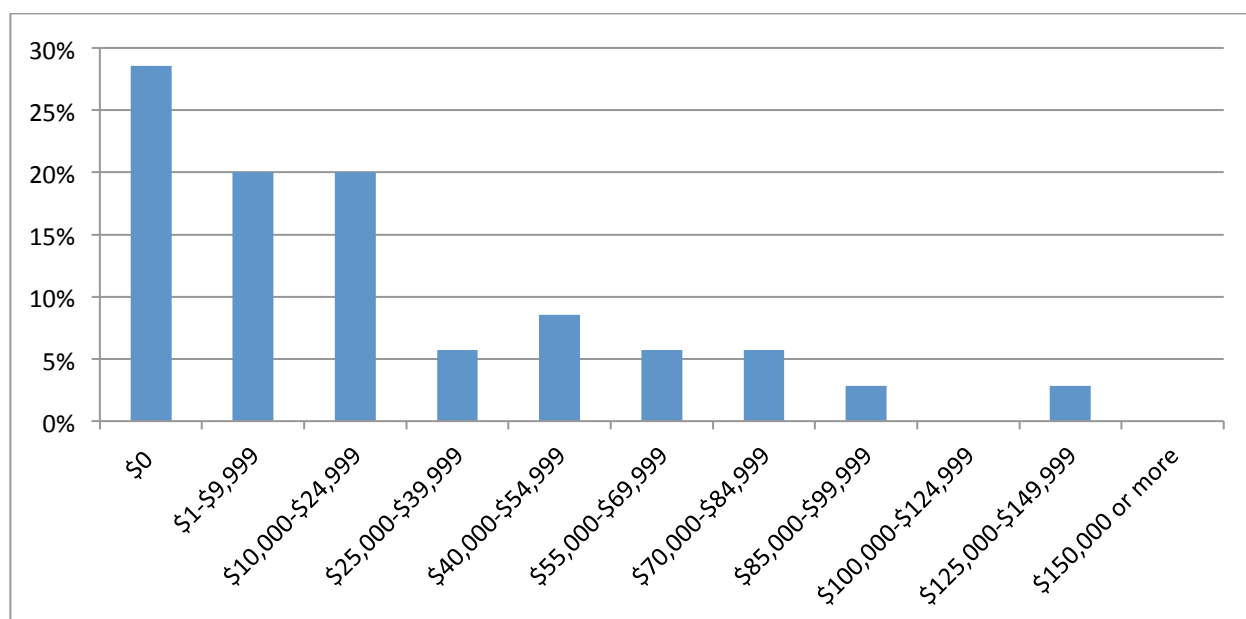


Figure 4. Estimated loans upon graduation

Almost one third (30%) of respondents were funded by teaching assistantships for at least one quarter and 44% were funded by research assistantships for at least 4-6 quarters. Respondents added that the Department of Global Health has a lot of qualified students and so the department should not take EPI students for research assistantships. Respondents also added that there are not enough research assistantship opportunities and that finding TAs or RAs has become harder since the start of the PhD program. **Only 30% of respondents have received at least one quarter of funding as a teaching assistant and a little under half (44%) have received funding through research assistantships.** 33% of respondents were funded through non-service fellowships and 21% were funded by a traineeship or grant for at least one quarter.

General Assessment

Overall ratings of the academic experience at UW were very high, with 37% of respondents rating their experience as ‘excellent’, 43% rating it as ‘very good’ and 20% rating it as ‘good’. Although the majority of respondents said that they would likely complete their degree objective, **3% of respondents reported that they are ‘very unlikely’ to complete.** Although 82% of respondents reported that they would definitely recommend this academic program to prospective students in their field, 9% reported that they would probably recommend it, and another 9% said they would definitely not recommend the program.

At least one respondent reported that program structure and/or requirements, family obligations, work/financial commitments, availability of faculty, program structure and/or requirements, dissertation topic/research, course scheduling and immigration laws or regulations were factors that have been a ‘major obstacle’ to their academic success and research. **Work/financial commitments as well as availability of faculty had at least 10% of respondents naming them as ‘major obstacles’ to academic success and research.** 29% of students reported that work /financial commitments, family obligations and availability of faculty were a ‘minor obstacle’. At least 20% of respondents reported that work/financial commitments (20%) and program structure and/or requirements (26%) were ‘somewhat of an obstacle’. **Figure 5** shows the responses.

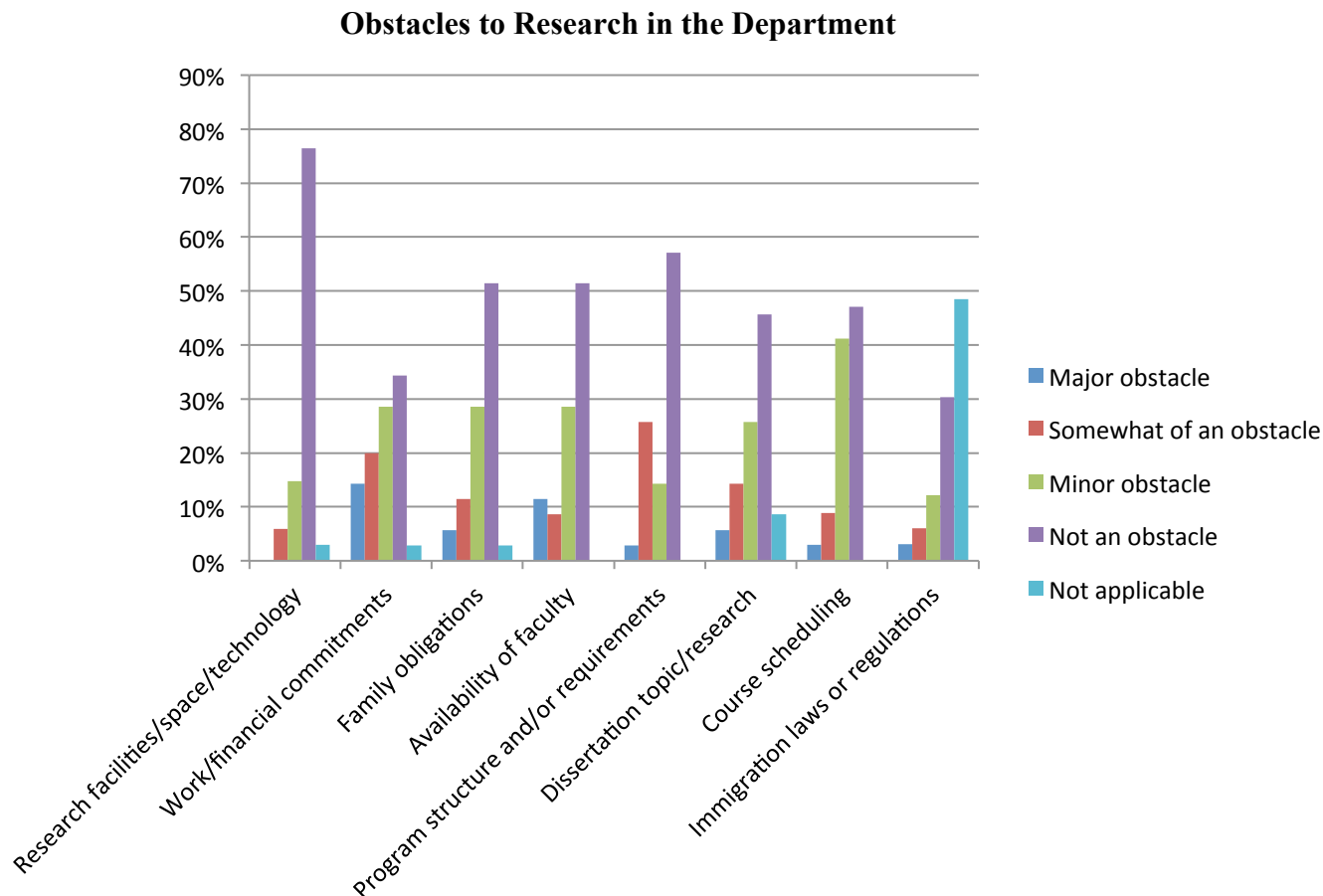


Figure 5. Obstacles to Research in the Department

Conclusion

For the most part, students appear to be satisfied with the quality of the Global Health programs and advising as well as career services. Funding for students continues to be an issue, as was shown by the greatest obstacle to research being reported as work/financial commitments. Some respondents added that they would like to get some advice at the beginning of the program about which courses to take and in what sequence. Also, respondents mentioned that there was a mismatch between what the website says and what students actually get once in the program.

Another issue the respondents commented on was that the **program is so focused on research that it lacks courses about practical and technical aspects of Public Health practitioners**, for example humanitarian emergencies. While students said that links to organizations like the Gates Foundation have been really helpful, they would like more opportunities to meet with people and learn about potential employment, fellowships, and internships. Respondents would also like more options to choose from for the core classes. The GlobalWACH program and the Department of Global Health as a whole were highly commended by respondents. Students noted that the **Global Health Department was particularly good at making the program both interdisciplinary and integrative.**

GPSS Graduate Program Review Student Survey: Department of Global Health

Below is a table with a list of other universities with competing programs that respondents had applied to for graduate school. The numbers show how many respondents listed that university:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Tulane University | 6 |
| John Hopkins University | 5 |
| George Washington University | 4 |
| Emory University | 3 |
| Harvard University | 3 |
| Columbia University | 2 |
| Yale University | 2 |
| University of North Carolina | 2 |
| American University | 1 |
| Brown University | 1 |
| Oregon State University | 1 |
| University of California – Berkeley | 1 |
| University of Colorado | 1 |
| University of Minnesota | 1 |
| University of South Carolina | 1 |