February 1, 2007

Teachers College Columbia University

Class 2006 Exit Survey

AUTHORED BY: OFFICE OF ACCREDITATION AND ASSESSMENT

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SURVEY ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUMENT

In May 2006, the Office of Accreditation and Assessment sent out the *May2006 Exit Survey* to 1,136 students who had filed for degrees to be awarded in February and May of 2006. An electronic mail with a link to the survey website was sent to the list of graduating students provided by the Registrar's Office; paper surveys were sent out to the same list a few days later. A follow-up post card and an e-mail message were sent a week later to increase the number of responses. A second postcard was sent two weeks after. We received 347 completed surveys—133 web surveys, and 214 mail surveys. The rate of return was 30.5%, an increase of 4% from the 2005 Exit Survey.

Several changes were made to the previous survey instrument. The number of subdomains remained the same at ten. The names of the three, however, were changed to better capture the essence of the modified items tied to them. *Courses and Curriculum* was re-named *Course Offerings*; *Instructional Practices* was re-named *Instruction; Advising and Guidance* was re-named *Academic Advisement.* Several items were re-worded to increase clarity. The response rating scale was changed from "poor-to-excellent" ratings to "strongly disagree-strongly agree" ratings. An "Importance" scale was added to each item in the questionnaire to assess its importance from students' perspective. The final questionnaire contained 65 items; each item had two four-point Likert scales—one for "Agreement" and one for "Importance," three open-ended items, and 12 demographic/background information questions.

The three open-ended questions (items 66-68) asked respondents to identify two specific strengths and weaknesses of their programs of study, and general comments regarding their student experience at Teachers College. Seven respondents sent in completed questionnaires after the deadline. These questionnaires were not included in the quantitative analysis, but responses to the open-ended questions were coded and analyzed. Of the 354 completed surveys, 328 provided answers to at least 1 out of the 3 open-ended questions. The codebook, developed for the 2005 Exit Survey, was used to analyze students' responses.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Department	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
Arts & Humanities	58	51	22.5	15.6
Biobehavioral Sciences	7	18	2.7	5.5
Counseling & Clinical Psychology	19	37	7.4	11.3
Curriculum & Teaching	28	31	10.9	9.5
Health & Behavior Studies	33	39	12.8	11.9
Human Development	13	14	5	4.3
International & Transcultural Studies	15	33	5.8	10.1
Mathematics, Science & Technology	21	30	8.1	9.2
Organization & Leadership	64	74	24.8	22.6
Total number of respondents	258	327	100%	100%
Missing	7	20		
Total	265	347		
Type of Program	**Number of Respondents**		**Percent of Total**	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
Teacher education	120	142	45.8	45.5
Non-teacher education	142	170	54.2	54.5
Total number of respondents	262	312	100%	100%
Missing	3	35		
Total	265	347		
Degree	**Number of Respondents**		**Percent of Total**	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
Master of Arts or Science	192	207	73.3	62.7
Master of Education	54	46	20.6	13.9
Doctor of Education	14	54	5.3	16.4
Doctor of Philosophy	2	23	0.8	7
Total number of respondents	262	330	100%	100%
Missing	3	17		
Total	265	347		
Gender	**Number of Respondents**		**Percent of Total**	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06

	204	265	77.9	80.8
Female	204	265	77.9	80.8
Male	58	63	22.1	19.2
Total number of respondents	262	328	100%	100%
Missing	3	19		
Total	265	347		

Age	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
20-25	58	84	22.6	25.5
26-30	91	102	35.4	31
31-35	54	68	21	20.7
36 and above	54	75	21	22.8
Total number of respondents	257	329	100%	100%
Missing	8	18		
Total	265	347		

Citizenship	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
U.S. citizen	222	302	84.7	91.8
not U.S. citizen	40	27	15.3	8.2
Total number of respondents	262	329	100%	100%
Missing	3	18		
Total	265	347		

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
African American	13	20	5	6.2
Native American	1	0	0.4	0
Asian Pacific American	46	45	17.6	14
European American	172		65.6	49.7
Latino or Hispanic American	8	21	3.1	6.5
Other	22	33	8.4	10.2
Prefer not to respond	n/a	43	n/a	13.4
Total number of respondents	262	322	100%	100%
Missing	3	25		
Total	265	347		

Financial Sources	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
Employment (May 2006: full-time, part-time, or none)	211	266	80.2	81.3
Loans	157	186	64.3	56.4
Grants	37	115	15.2	34.8
Scholarships/Fellowships	83		34	
Research Assistantships	14	34	5.7	10.3
Teaching Assistantships	22		9	
Savings	77	129	31.6	39.1
Spouse/Partner	-	48	-	14.5
Family/Friends	-	113	-	34.2
Other	38	71	15.6	21.5
General Career Plans	Number of Respondents		Percent of Total	
	May-05	May-06	May-05	May-06
To continue graduate study	41	32	15.6	9.8
To teach or work in a two- or four-year college	20	66	7.6	20.1
To work in a preK-12 school setting	111	117	42.4	35.7
To work in a non-school, non-university setting	-	75	-	22.9
Other	90	38	34.4	11.6
Total number of respondents	262	328	100%	100%
Missing	3	19		
Total	265	347		

2. ANALYSIS OF LIKERT-SCALE ITEMS AND TEN SUBDOMAINS

Frequencies. Frequencies of item responses and item means for the Agreement and Importance scales are presented in Table 2.1. The two items that yielded the highest percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed were "My program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent" (92%) and "My internship experience contributed to my academic development" (91%). The two items that yielded the lowest percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed were "Adequate financial aid was available for students in my program" (34%), and "My program monitored my progress towards my degree" (48%). With the exception of one item—"My program faculty used technology in their courses"—all statements were rated as important or very important by more than three-quarters of the respondents. Interestingly, the three items lowest on the respondents' priority list were related to technology (items 18, 31, and 65).

Gap Analysis. In addition to the Agreement rating, we borrowed Noel-Levitz Inc.'s idea of including an Importance rating for each item. The difference between the two ratings shows how well the college or program is meeting students' expectations. The difference, referred as the gap score further in this report, is calculated by subtracting the Agreement mean from the Importance mean. "A large performance gap indicates that the institution is not meeting student expectations; a smaller performance gap indicates that the institution is doing a relatively good job of meeting expectations. Negative performance gaps indicate that an institution is exceeding student expectations; negative gaps are rare and are more likely to be found on items of low importance to students" (Noel-Levitz, 2005, p. 5-A).[1]

Based on the gap analysis, the following are interpreted as strengths, that is, areas of high importance and high satisfaction (a gap score of less than 0.25):

- Class activities and assignments encouraged reflection and critical thinking.
- Class activities and assignments encouraged me to practice my research skills.
- My program faculty provided me timely feedback on assignments.
- My program faculty were fair and unbiased in assessing/grading student work.
- Students supported each other to meet the academic demands in my program.
- My fellow students demonstrated high academic abilities.
- My program had clear requirements.
- The student body reflected a diversity of background and experiences.
- My internship contributed to my academic development.
- Students of diverse backgrounds and different experiences were encouraged to participate in class.

The following are interpreted as challenges, that is, areas of high importance and low satisfaction (a gap score of more than 1.0):

- My program provided good academic advisement.
- Student support services and staff were helpful.
- Adequate financial aid was available for students in my program.

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[1] Noel-Levitz, Inc. (2005). National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report. Available online at: www.noellevitz.com

Table 2.1: Likert-scale Item and Subdomain Summary

Subdomain and Individual Items		Agreement Scale							Importance Scale							Gap Analysis	
Course Offerings (mean=3.0, Cronbach's alpha=0.74, N=316)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
1) A good variety of courses was offered by my program.	N	21	88	162	71	5	342	2.8	7	13	77	242	8	339	3.6	**0.81**	0.000
	%	6.1	25.7	47.4	20.8				2.1	3.8	22.7	71.4					
2) Courses were offered frequently enough that I was able to complete my degree requirements as planned.	N	19	57	125	133	13	334	3.1	10	10	71	244	12	335	3.6	**0.52**	0.000
	%	5.7	17.1	37.4	39.8				3	3	21.2	72.8					
3) I had the flexibility to choose courses based on my academic interests.	N	42	104	117	67	17	330	2.6	9	16	103	203	16	331	3.5	**0.89**	0.000
	%	12.7	31.5	35.5	20.3				2.7	4.8	31.3	61.3					
4) Course content provided me with a solid theoretical background in my discipline.	N	8	41	145	151	2	345	3.3	8	8	96	231	4	343	3.6	0.34	0.000
	%	2.3	11.9	42	43.8				2.3	2.3	28	67.3					
5) Course content was applicable to my anticipated work in the field.	N	14	56	147	126	4	343	3.1	8	6	59	267	7	340	3.7	**0.61**	0.000
	%	4.1	16.3	42.9	36.7				2.4	1.8	17.4	78.5					
6) Required courses were academically rigorous.	N	16	40	153	135	3	344	3.2	7	19	130	185	6	341	3.5	0.27	0.000
	%	4.7	11.6	44.5	39				2.1	5.6	38.1	54.3					
Instruction (mean=3.2, Cronbach's alpha=0.87, N=318)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
7) My program faculty had teaching styles that responded to my learning style and goals.	N	19	71	145	106	6	341	3	7	22	120	192	6	341	3.5	0.48	0.000
	%	5.6	20.8	42.5	31.1				2.1	6.5	35.2	56.3					
8) My program faculty used appropriate class activities and assignments to help me learn.	N	5	53	181	105	3	344	3.1	7	17	108	211	4	343	3.5	0.4	0.000
	%	1.5	15.4	52.6	30.5				2	5	31.5	61.5					
9) My program faculty used hands-on activities in their	N	15	94	146	84	8	339	2.9	17	50	141	128	11	336	3.1	0.26	0.000

		Disagree strongly / 1	2	3	Agree strongly / 4	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important / 1	2	3	Very important / 4	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
classes.	%	4.4	27.7	43.1	24.8				5.1	14.9	42	38.1					
10) Class activities/assignments encouraged reflection and critical thinking.	N	7	30	149	159	2	345	3.3	9	9	106	218	5	342	3.6	0.22	0.000
	%	2	8.7	43.2	46.1				2.6	2.6	31	63.7					
11) Class activities/assignments encouraged teamwork and collaboration.	N	11	46	155	133	2	345	3.2	23	60	143	115	6	341	3	**-0.17**	0.000
	%	3.2	13.3	44.9	38.6				6.7	17.6	41.9	33.7					
12) Class activities/assignments allowed me to practice my research skills.	N	23	78	135	104	7	340	3	21	42	124	150	10	337	3.2	0.25	0.000
	%	6.8	22.9	39.7	30.6				6.2	12.5	36.8	44.5					
13) My program faculty gave me helpful feedback on assignments.	N	20	71	147	106	3	344	3	6	11	88	236	6	341	3.6	**0.65**	0.000
	%	5.8	20.6	42.7	30.8				1.8	3.2	25.8	69.2					
14) My program faculty gave me timely feedback on assignments.	N	18	49	145	132	3	344	3.1	6	35	128	171	7	340	3.4	0.23	0.000
	%	5.2	14.2	42.2	38.4				1.8	10.3	37.6	50.3					
15) My program faculty used a variety of assessment methods (e.g., exams, papers, projects) to evaluate my performance.	N	11	41	152	141	3	344	3.2	10	39	137	154	7	340	3.3	0.05	0.315
	%	3.2	11.9	43.9	41				2.9	11.5	40.3	45.3					
16) My program faculty were fair and unbiased in assessing/grading student work.	N	13	21	117	184	12	335	3.4	8	13	70	248	8	339	3.7	0.24	0.000
	%	3.9	6.3	34.9	54.9				2.4	3.8	20.6	73.2					
17) My program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent.	N	7	21	116	199	4	343	3.5	5	6	51	278	7	340	3.8	0.3	0.000
	%	2	6.1	33.8	58				1.5	1.8	15	81.8					
18) My program faculty used technology in their courses.	N	22	99	156	66	4	343	2.8	31	86	134	90	6	341	2.8	0.06	0.277
	%	6.4	28.9	45.5	19.2				9.1	25.2	39.3	26.4					
Faculty Dispositions Towards Students (mean=3.1, Cronbach's alpha=0.87, N=315)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
19) There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.	N	37	87	125	93	5	342	2.8	7	10	108	217	5	342	3.6	**0.77**	0.000
	%	10.8	25.4	36.6	27.2				2	2.9	31.6	63.5					
20) My program faculty were accessible to students	N	12	74	140	107	14	333	3	5	20	110	197	15	332	3.5	0.48	0.000

		1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
outside the classroom.	%	3.6	22.2	42	32.1				1.5	6	33.1	59.3					
21) My program faculty cared about professional welfare and development of students.	N	29	73	114	117	14	333	3	6	9	89	229	14	333	3.6	0.67	0.000
	%	8.7	21.9	34.2	35.1				1.8	2.7	26.7	68.8					
22) My program faculty treated students with respect.	N	15	22	104	193	13	334	3.4	4	7	61	262	13	334	3.7	0.33	0.000
	%	4.5	6.6	31.3	57.8				1.2	2	18.3	78.4					
23) My program faculty treated all students fairly.	N	21	22	109	174	21	326	3.3	5	4	55	263	20	327	3.8	0.43	0.000
	%	6.4	6.7	33.4	53.4				1.5	1.2	16.8	80.4					
Learning Community (mean=3.0, Cronbach's alpha=0.81, N=294)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
24) My program faculty were open to discuss different scholarly points of view.	N	18	36	137	139	17	330	3.2	5	12	96	216	18	329	3.6	0.39	0.000
	%	5.5	10.9	41.5	42.1				1.5	3.6	29.2	65.7					
25) My program was an intellectually stimulating place.	N	16	45	112	163	11	336	3.3	6	11	60	250	20	327	3.7	0.45	0.000
	%	4.8	13.4	33.3	48.5				1.8	3.4	18.3	76.5					
26) My program was receptive to student input regarding curriculum or program improvement.	N	43	105	106	56	37	310	2.6	12	21	118	169	27	320	3.4	0.82	0.000
	%	13.9	33.9	34.2	18.1				3.8	6.6	36.9	52.8					
27) My program encouraged collaboration with faculty and/or other students.	N	28	83	127	92	17	330	2.9	7	36	139	146	19	328	3.3	0.46	0.000
	%	8.5	25.2	38.5	27.9				2.1	11	42.4	44.5					
28) Students supported each other to meet the academic demands of my program.	N	10	53	108	157	19	328	3.3	6	24	119	178	20	327	3.4	0.2	0.000
	%	3	16.2	32.9	47.9				1.8	7.3	36.4	54.4					
29) There was a sense of community in my program.	N	42	85	104	103	13	334	2.8	10	27	118	176	16	331	3.4	0.6	0.000
	%	12.6	25.4	31.3	30.8				3	8.2	35.6	53.2					
30) My fellow students demonstrated high academic abilities.	N	14	43	139	138	13	334	3.2	8	25	110	186	18	329	3.4	0.25	0.000
	%	4.2	12.9	41.6	41.3				2.4	7.6	33.4	56.5					

		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
31) My program provided opportunities to use technology that could be applied in a professional context.	N	40	127	88	72	20	327	2.6	15	65	128	119	20	327	3.1	**0.5**	0.000
	%	12.2	38.8	26.9	22				4.6	19.9	39.1	36.4					
Program Organization (mean=2.9, Cronbach's alpha=0.81, N=312)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
32) My program had a clear philosophy.	N	25	77	111	118	16	331	3	9	39	126	155	18	329	3.3	0.33	0.000
	%	7.6	23.3	33.5	35.6				2.7	11.9	38.3	47.1					
33) My program had clear requirements.	N	11	42	118	166	10	337	3.3	7	14	97	211	18	329	3.6	0.25	0.000
	%	3.3	12.5	35	49.3				2.1	4.3	29.5	64.1					
34) Program requirements were relevant to my anticipated work in the field.	N	17	53	148	116	13	334	3.1	6	5	91	227	18	329	3.6	**0.56**	0.000
	%	5.1	15.9	44.3	34.7				1.8	1.5	27.7	69					
35) My program provided a well-integrated set of courses.	N	20	76	150	88	13	334	2.9	9	9	96	214	19	328	3.6	**0.65**	0.000
	%	6	22.8	44.9	26.3				2.7	2.7	29.3	65.2					
36) Required courses were not repetitive.	N	30	75	116	114	12	335	2.9	6	14	118	192	17	330	3.5	**0.56**	0.000
	%	9	22.4	34.6	34				1.8	4.2	35.8	58.2					
37) My program monitored my progress towards my degree.	N	83	86	89	68	21	326	2.4	12	31	123	159	22	325	3.3	**0.9**	0.000
	%	25.5	26.4	27.3	20.9				3.7	9.5	37.8	48.9					
38) My program regularly assessed my professional knowledge and skills.	N	52	86	120	73	16	331	2.7	10	34	128	154	21	326	3.3	**0.66**	0.000
	%	15.7	26	36.3	22.1				3.1	10.4	39.3	47.2					
Academic Advisement (mean=3.0, Cronbach's alpha=0.90, N=308)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
39) I received accurate information about program and degree requirements.	N	41	65	109	118	14	333	2.9	9	8	73	237	20	327	3.7	**0.75**	0.000
	%	12.3	19.5	32.7	35.4				2.8	2.4	22.3	72.5					
40) Program and degree requirements were clearly	N	46	87	96	104	14	333	2.8	9	15	72	229	22	325	3.6	**0.84**	0.000

		1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
explained to me.	%	13.8	26.1	28.8	31.2				2.8	4.6	22.1	70.5					
41) I knew what I had to do to meet program and degree requirements.	N	25	33	117	144	14	333	3.1	12	7	69	238	21	326	3.6	**0.51**	0.000
	%	7.5	14.1	35.1	43.2				3.7	2.1	21.2	73					
42) My program provided good academic advisement.	N	73	89	90	80	15	332	2.5	8	9	70	240	20	327	3.7	**1.14**	0.000
	%	22	26.8	27.1	24.1				2.4	2.8	21.4	73.4					
43) My academic advisor was knowledgeable about program requirements.	N	31	55	89	142	30	317	3.1	9	11	58	244	25	322	3.7	**0.6**	0.000
	%	9.8	17.4	28.1	44.8				2.8	3.4	18	75.8					
44) My academic advisor was approachable.	N	33	41	82	163	28	319	3.2	6	4	64	249	24	323	3.7	**0.55**	0.000
	%	10.3	12.9	25.7	51.1				1.9	1.2	19.8	77.1					
45) My academic advisor helped me to complete my program as planned.	N	46	51	87	131	32	315	3	8	10	74	229	26	321	3.6	**0.68**	0.000
	%	14.6	16.2	27.6	41.6				2.5	3.1	23.1	71.3					
Diversity (mean=3.2, Cronbach's alpha=0.80, N=261)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
46) Faculty in my program reflected a diversity of background and experience, including members of minority groups and persons with disabilities.	N	60	57	94	109	27	320	2.8	25	35	99	159	29	318	3.2	**0.5**	0.000
	%	18.8	17.8	29.4	34.1				7.9	11	31.1	50					
47) The student body reflected a diversity of background and experience, including members of minority groups and persons with disabilities.	N	23	39	116	148	21	326	3.2	14	36	116	156	25	322	3.3	**0.12**	0.047
	%	7.1	12	35.6	45.4				4.3	11.2	36	48.4					
48) My program was free of discrimination with regard to gender, race, creed, national origin, age, disability status, sexual orientation, and marital status.	N	19	26	73	196	33	314	3.4	11	16	47	246	27	320	3.7	0.27	0.000
	%	6.1	8.3	23.2	62.4				3.4	5	14.7	76.9					
49) Students of diverse backgrounds and different experiences were encouraged to participate in class.	N	8	30	99	186	24	323	3.4	13	14	87	210	23	324	3.5	**0.12**	0.000
	%	2.5	9.3	30.7	57.6				4	4.3	26.9	64.8					
50) My program helped me to develop the ability to accept people with different values and beliefs.	N	27	37	87	153	43	304	3.2	14	32	69	193	39	308	3.4	0.27	0.000
	%	8.9	12.2	28.6	50.3				4.5	10.4	22.4	62.7					
51) My program prepared me to work with diverse	N	25	48	86	133	55	292	3.1	12	16	78	188	53	294	3.5	0.41	0.000

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		Disagree strongly / Scarcely important etc.														
children and/or adults.	%	8.6	16.4	29.5	45.5				4.1	5.4	26.5	63.9				

Resources (mean=2.6, Cronbach's alpha=0.72, N=207)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
52) Gottesman Libraries resources and services were adequate.	N	24	53	125	108	37	310	3	7	12	86	208	34	313	3.6	0.59	0.000
	%	7.7	17.1	40.3	34.8				2.2	3.8	27.5	66.5					
53) Specialized facilities and equipment were adequate (e.g. laboratories or studios; equipment needed for teaching and/or creative work in my field).	N	21	68	102	73	83	264	2.9	11	21	99	147	69	278	3.4	0.56	0.000
	%	8	25.8	38.6	27.7				4	7.6	35.6	52.9					
54) Classroom facilities were adequate.	N	63	98	125	46	15	332	2.5	5	28	135	162	17	330	3.4	0.92	0.000
	%	19	29.5	37.6	13.9				1.5	8.5	40.9	49.1					
55) Student support services and staff were helpful (e.g., Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office, Student Accounts Office, Office of Doctoral Studies).	N	52	84	122	64	25	322	2.6	7	14	85	218	23	324	3.6	1.02	0.000
	%	16.1	26.1	37.9	19.9				2.2	4.3	26.2	67.3					
56) Adequate financial aid was available for students in my program.	N	102	63	47	45	90	257	2.1	7	5	41	230	64	283	3.8	1.66	0.000
	%	39.7	24.5	18.3	17.5				2.5	1.8	14.5	81.3					
57) Technological resources were adequate.	N	20	70	138	81	38	309	2.9	8	32	119	157	31	316	3.3	0.48	0.000
	%	6.5	22.7	44.7	26.2				2.5	10.1	37.7	49.7					
Internship/Field Experiences (mean=3.3, Cronbach's alpha=0.90, N=143)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
59) My internship experience contributed to my academic development.	N	4	10	33	105	195	152	3.6	5	2	27	116	197	150	3.7	0.12	0.037
	%	2.6	6.6	21.7	69				3.3	1.3	18	77.3					
60) I got to apply what I learned in my courses to real-life situations during my internship.	N	7	16	34	93	197	150	3.4	2	2	28	116	199	148	3.7	0.31	0.000
	%	4.7	10.7	22.7	62				1.4	1.4	18.9	78.4					
61) I got to practice a variety of professional skills during my internship.	N	9	13	32	95	198	149	3.4	2	5	25	115	200	147	3.7	0.3	0.000
	%	6	8.7	21.5	63.8				1.4	3.4	17	78.2					

		1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	1	2	3	4	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
62) My supervisor(s) guided me during my internship.	N	17	24	43	62	201	146	3	1	7	35	100	204	143	3.6	**0.59**	0.000
	%	11.6	16.4	29.5	42.5				0.7	4.9	24.5	69.9					
63) My supervisor(s) regularly evaluated my performance during internship.	N	14	25	46	62	200	147	3.1	1	10	37	95	204	143	3.6	**0.53**	0.000
	%	9.5	17	31.3	42.2				0.7	7	25.9	66.4					
64) My internship/field placement site was conducive to my learning and professional development.	N	5	17	37	90	198	149	3.4	1	2	26	115	203	144	3.8	0.33	0.000
	%	3.4	11.4	24.8	60.4				0.7	1.4	18.1	79.9					
65) I had opportunities to use relevant technologies during internship.	N	21	33	35	48	210	137	2.8	6	26	40	62	213	134	3.2	0.38	0.000
	%	15.3	24.1	25.5	35				4.5	19.4	29.9	46.3					
Technology (mean=2.8, Cronbach's alpha=0.65, N=127)		Disagree strongly			Agree strongly	DK/NA	N	Mean 1	Scarcely important			Very important	DK/NA	N	Mean 2	Gap (Mean2-Mean1)	Sig.
		1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4					
18) My program faculty used technology in their courses.	N	22	99	156	66	4	343	2.8	31	86	134	90	6	341	2.8	0.06	0.277
	%	6.4	28.9	45.5	19.2				9.1	25.2	39.3	26.4					
31) My program provided opportunities to use technology that could be applied in a professional context.	N	40	127	88	72	20	327	2.6	15	65	128	119	20	327	3.1	0.5	0.000
	%	12.2	38.8	26.9	22				4.6	19.9	39.1	36.4					
57) Technological resources were adequate.	N	20	70	138	81	38	309	2.9	8	32	119	157	31	316	3.3	0.48	0.000
	%	6.5	22.7	44.7	26.2				2.5	10.1	37.7	49.7					
65) I had opportunities to use relevant technologies during internship.	N	21	33	35	48	210	137	2.8	6	26	40	62	213	134	3.2	0.38	0.000
	%	15.3	24.1	25.5	35				4.5	19.4	29.9	46.3					

In addition, there are 27 items that are of concern for respondents as indicated by gap scores of more than 0.5 (see Table 2.1). Only one item—"class activities and assignments encouraged teamwork and collaboration"—exceeded students' expectation with a negative gap of 0.17.

Composite Scores for Ten Subdomains. The item scores on the Agreement rating scale of each subdomain were added and averaged to obtain a subdomain composite score. Internship, Diversity, and Instruction have the highest composite scores. Resources, Technology, and Program Organization have the lowest scores. Except for Technology (alpha=0.65), all subdomains have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.70, indicating that the items 'hang together' moderately well for Technology, and very well for the other subscales. Table 2.2 below shows the descriptive statistics for each of the subdomains.

Table 2.2: Composite Scores for Ten Subdomains

Subdomains	Mean	Alpha	N
Course Offerings	3.0	0.74	316
Instruction	3.2	0.87	318
Faculty Dispositions Towards Students	3.1	0.87	315
Learning Community	3.0	0.81	294
Program Organization	2.9	0.81	312
Academic Advisement	3.0	0.90	308
Diversity	3.2	0.80	261
Resources	2.6	0.72	207
Internship/Field Experiences	3.3	0.90	143
Technology	2.8	0.65	127

Figure 2.1: Composite Scores for Ten Subdomains

Figure 2.1: Composite Scores for Ten Subdomains
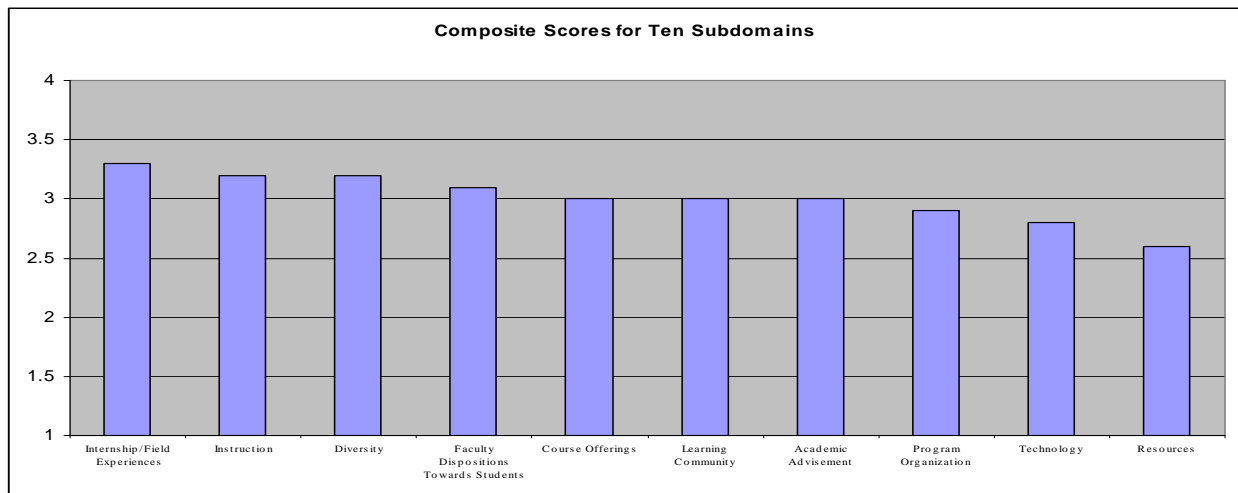
Composite Scores and Student Characteristics. The preliminary analysis comparing means for different subgroups (ANOVA) revealed several significant relationships:

- Female graduates tended to give Internship a more positive evaluation than male graduates.

- Older graduates, 36 years of age and above, and those with full-time employment tended to give Resources a more positive evaluation than did younger graduates, 20-30 years old, or those with part-time employment.

- European-American graduates tended to give Diversity a more positive evaluation than Non European-American graduates did.

- Doctoral graduates tended to give Course Offerings a more positive evaluation than Masters' graduates did.

Table 2.3: Composite Scores and Student Characteristics

Gender	Internship	
	mean	N
Female	3.4	123
Male	2.9	18
Age	**Resources**	
	mean	N
20-25	2.5	52
26-30	2.6	73
31-35	2.7	39
36 and above	2.9	40
Employment	**Resources**	
	mean	N
Part-time	2.5	89
Full-time	2.8	82
None	2.7	31
Ethnicity	**Diversity**	
	mean	N
non European-American	3.1	90
European-American	3.3	128
Degree	**Course Offerings**	
	mean	N
Masters	3.0	232
Doctorates	3.2	68

- Graduates from teacher education[2] programs tended to give more positive evaluations to Learning Community, Program Organization, Academic Advisement, and Resources than graduates from non-teacher education programs did.

Table 2.4: Composite Scores for Teacher Education and Non Teacher Education Respondents

Programs	Learning Community		Program Organization		Academic Advisement		Resources	
	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N	mean	N
Teacher Education	3.2	124	3.1	136	3.1	132	2.7	98
Non-Teacher Education	2.9	147	2.8	151	2.9	154	2.5	99

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[2] All masters and doctoral students from teacher education programs under the NCATE-review umbrella were coded as teacher education. These did not include education leadership, school counseling, and school psychology.

3. ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

The coding scheme developed for the May 2005 Exit Survey study was used to code the open-ended responses. Several new subcategories were added to accommodate new themes emerging from the current survey. This section is organized by the codebook categories: faculty, courses and curriculum, internship, instruction, technology, program organization, community and diversity, student support services, resources, politics, and general evaluation. The number of comments (strengths, weaknesses, and general comments combined) for each subcategory within the main category is provided in parentheses. A higher number may indicate the relative importance of certain subcategories, given that graduates were asked to identify only two strengths and two weaknesses. Please note that proportions in this section are based on the number of comments coded under the individual subcategories.

3.1. Faculty

The Faculty category comprises of all comments related to faculty, instructors, professors, and teachers, except for the comments about faculty retention and tenure. It has six subcategories:

- *Faculty dispositions toward students*—describes faculty dispositions toward students, or their relationships with students (65)

- *Faculty unspecified* —describes faculty in a general manner (59)

- *Specific faculty members*—includes comments which mention faculty names or refer to particular faculty members (56)

- *Faculty expertise*—refers to faculty knowledge, expertise, and scholarship (54)

- *Faculty attitudes*—describes faculty attitudes or dispositions towards work, teaching, subject matter; it does not include faculty dispositions to students (22)

- *Faculty practical experience*—refers to faculty practical experience in the field (13)

Faculty Dispositions toward Students and *Faculty Unspecified* received the highest number of comments, 65 and 59, respectively (i.e. close to 20% of 328 respondents). Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.1. *Faculty expertise* and *Faculty practical experiences* had the highest percentage of strengths, 89% and 85%, respectively. *Faculty Dispositions toward Students* and *Faculty Attitudes* received the highest percentage of weaknesses, 57% and 41%, respectively.

Many students admired faculty for their scholarship, exceptional knowledge, expertise, and practical experiences. Several respondents commented on faculty's dedication and passion for the field. Others described faculty as being caring, available, supportive, and approachable. Faculty had the "capacity to inspire and direct individual study that allowed students to excel and find their own niche in the academic world." However, about half of the respondents identified weaknesses in their programs with regards to students' relationship with the faculty, faculty's dispositions toward students, or faculty's attitude towards their teaching and academics. Negative comments included references to faculty's lack of interest in, concern for, respect of, and support in students' success. A few students felt faculty lacked professionalism and commitment to education.

Figure 3.1: Faculty—Strengths and Weaknesses

Faculty: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses
Based on Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories
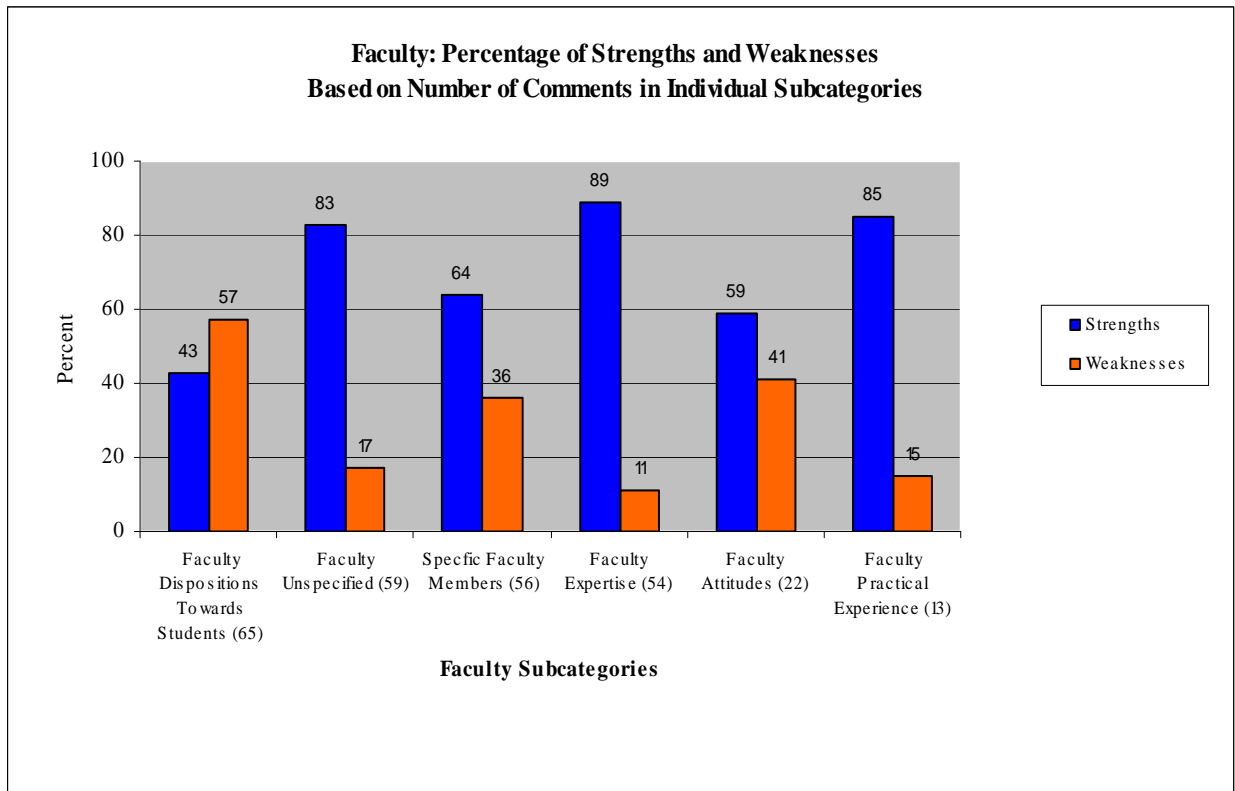
Example of Strengths

"Professors are incredibly talented."

"Active experience acquired by the professors. Contacts with leaders in the field."

"I love the TC faculty."

"My dissertation advisor went above and beyond the call of duty."

"Passionate faculty"

"I love my program and the professors within it; we are still in touch and it was the true epitome of a learning community."

Examples of Weaknesses

"In fact, other faculty members were found to be disinterested and even on occasion, misinformed on the general topic of their course."

"Half of all faculty do not maintain their knowledge and skills to current standards."

"I had expected more from this program, more from a Columbia name, and more from the faculty."

"The professors … don't seem to care about the program."

"… I found a disappointment with the culture of TC faculty, particularly in this programme. Overall, I walked the halls during that year and a half and found that the faculty disengaged themselves from students."

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3.2. Courses and Curriculum

The Courses and Curriculum category comprises of seven subcategories:

- *Academic value*—refers to depth, breadth, appropriateness, and currency of course content (72)

- *Practical value*—refers to relevance and applicability of courses or curriculum to future work; it also includes comments about a balance between theory and practice (56)

- *Variety and availability of courses*—as the name implies, to meet the needs of students to graduate in time (52)

- *Academic standards*—refers to academic standards, rigor and/or expectations (38)

- *Flexibility to pursue academic interests*—refers to program flexibility enabling students to choose courses of their interest, to plan their program of study, or to maintain full-time jobs (33)

- *Courses unspecified*—describes courses in a general manner (21)

- *Specific courses*—includes comments about specific courses (21)

Academic Value, Practical Value, and *Variety and Availability of Courses* received the highest number of comments, 72, 56 and 52, respectively (i.e. 16-20% of 328 respondents). Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.2. The comments about *Variety of Availability of Courses* tended to be among weaknesses while comments about *Flexibility to Pursue Academic Interests* tended to be among strengths. The remaining subcategories yielded about equal numbers of strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 3.2: Courses and Curriculum—Strengths and Weaknesses
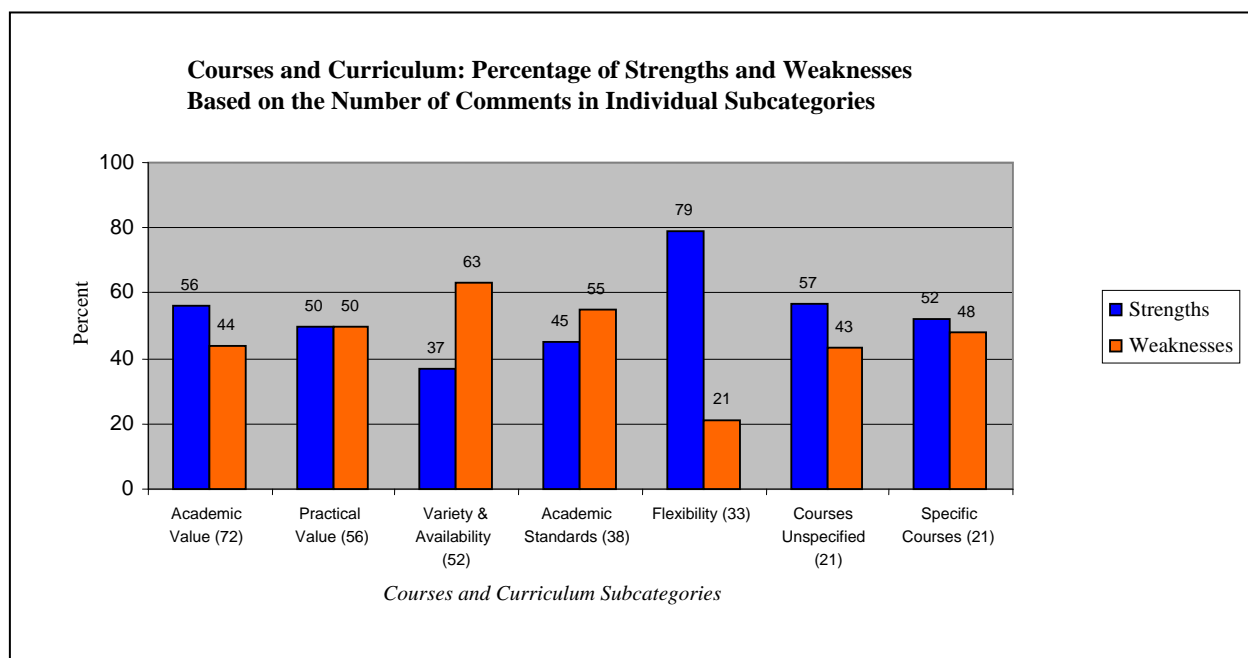
Academic Value. Respondents appreciated courses that provided excellent epistemological and methodological approaches to research, "well-rounded theoretical foundation," theories that were "cutting-edge," exposure to current educational trends and philosophies, and a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Repetitive course content was a major weakness. Courses often overlapped and students were given the same articles to read, talked about the same particular organization, and learned the same theories "over and over." Some respondents also found coursework to be "far too much irrelevant and academically weak," "pitifully out of date," and "lame."

Practical Value. Respondents appreciated courses that were relevant, practical and useful and courses that dealt with "world issues" and "real organizational issues and examples." They valued a curriculum that prepared them to teach, that provided "plenty of practical experience," that helped them to become "more multi-culturally competent," and that combined both "theoretical and professional perspectives." Conversely, respondents were disappointed when there was "too much theory" and "no practical application," when there was no focus on developing their capacity as researchers and scholarly writers, or when the curriculum focused on one aspect (multicultural issues) and left "everything else for student(s) to learn on (their) own." Some felt that the curricula did not reflect the real world.

Variety and Availability of Courses. Almost two-thirds of the comments about variety and availability of courses were described as weaknesses. Scheduling classes was particularly frustrating for part-time students because the courses they needed had overlapping time slots, were not offered frequently enough, or were not offered at convenient times.

Academic Standards. Being that "this is an Ivy League institution" and the cost of study is very high, respondents expected a rigorous and intellectually challenging program. About equal number of respondents commented on academic standards under strengths and under weaknesses. On the negative side, some felt faculty did not have high expectations for students, nor did faculty provide a challenging curriculum. Students felt they "got a better and more challenging education as an undergrad at a 2nd tier school," and also observed that their peers were not academically strong. One of the respondents commented that "TC will let just about anyone in who can pay for it." On the positive side, students' expectations were met when classes challenged them to think critically and when they "learned a lot."

Flexibility to Pursue Academic Interests. Comments in this subcategory were overwhelmingly positive. Respondents appreciated the ability to shape their course of study to meet academic and research needs through electives within and outside their program, to study in the summer and online, or to complete the program while working full-time.

Examples of Strengths

"My experience with many of the courses in my department was excellent."

"Fantastic courses of study that encouraged critical and meta-cognitive thinking."

"Rigorous program applied to the real world and real work experiences."

"Exposure to newest educational trends and philosophies. Through coursework, (I) became current in my field."

"Excellent training in theoretical, epistemological and methodological orientations and approaches to research in ___ education."

"The ability (and requirement) to take a course of study tailored to my professional and academic interests."

"I enjoyed the intellectual rigor and the high expectations."

Examples of Weaknesses

"I was fed up enough with the useless theoretical classes and the lack of practical interesting courses that I no longer work in the field."

"We repeatedly learned about the same things. It was as though the faculty never gathered together to cross-check their curriculum."

"Some of the classes were exactly the same (literally same professor and readings, with differing course titles)."

"Program had a hard time dealing with students of very different abilities. ...I felt that classes were TOO HARD for half the class and TOO EASY for the other half, with no one in the middle."

"The program was not nearly as academically and professionally challenging as it should have been given the reputation that TC maintains."

"For the amount of money that we spend on classes, we do not get the quality that is expected."

3.3. Instruction

The Instruction category comprises of comments related to how faculty organize and conduct their teaching. It has seven subcategories:

- *Teaching skills and styles*—describes faculty as teachers or refers to faculty teaching in general; it also includes comments about pedagogical methods or styles (33)

- *Research skills*—refers to opportunities provided to students to practice research skills or to engage in research projects (16)

- *Alternative viewpoints*—refers to faculty's willingness to present and discuss alternative viewpoints and encouragement of students to engage in such discussions (16)

- *Critical thinking and reflection*—refers to faculty's encouragement of, and creating opportunities for student's critical thinking and reflection (10)

- *Teamwork*—refers to teamwork and collaborative projects in the courses (8)

- *Assessment practices*—refers to quality and timeliness of feedback and quality of assessment practices (6)

- *Learning activities and opportunities*—refers to learning activities and assignments used by faculty including hands-on learning opportunities; it does not include comments on critical thinking, research, and technology skills (3)

Teaching Skills and Styles, Research Skills, Alternative Viewpoints, and *Critical Thinking and Reflection* received 33, 17, 16, and 10 comments respectively (i.e. 3-10% of 328 respondents). Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.3. The remaining three subcategories, *Teamwork*, *Assessment Practices,* and *Learning Activities and Opportunities,* were not included in Figure 3.3 because they received less than 10 comments each. *Teaching Skills and Styles* and *Alternative Viewpoints* were likely to be cited as

weaknesses; *Critical Thinking and Reflection* was more likely to be perceived as strength. The number of comments under *Research Skills* subcategory was equal for strengths and for weaknesses.

Figure 3.3: Instruction—Strengths and Weaknesses
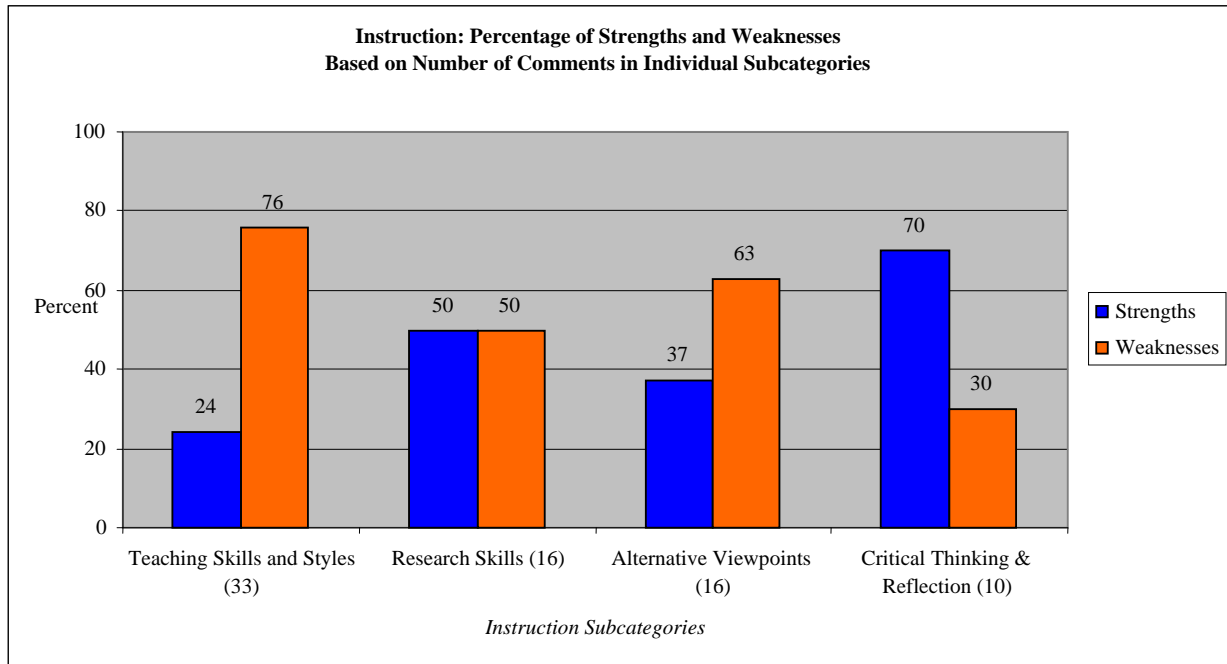
Teaching Skills and Styles. Three-quarters of the comments related to *Teaching Skills and Styles* were described as weaknesses. Respondents were disappointed that professors were consumed by personal research and consulting, and not in teaching, that professors did not use best practices in pedagogy, and that they were not open to students' suggestions and feedback. Conversely, students who were satisfied described their professors as excellent educators who provided "multifarious teachings."

Research Skills. Respondents appreciated opportunities to develop research skills and to participate in research, either with faculty or with fellow students. Some respondents noted the lack of a consistent programmatic focus to develop students' capacity as researchers, the lack of research methods classes related to their discipline, or the lack of experience in research. Others felt they were not prepared well to complete research projects.

Alternative Viewpoints. Respondents were disappointed when there was "no diversity or acceptance of other ideas," when "very specific 'theories' or pedagogical approaches (were) encouraged while others were not explored," when "dissension or disagreement was often misconstrued as anger and bullying," when their experience showed their program's viewpoint to be "antithetical to TC's philosophy—one which emphasizes cultural diversity and dialogue among differing perspectives." Conversely, respondents appreciated programs that encouraged them to acquire a broad view of their field, exposed them to different theoretical perspectives, had a multicultural focus, or were open to new ideas.

Critical Thinking and Reflection. Consistent with the quantitative findings, *Critical Thinking and Reflection* was perceived as strength across most programs. Students valued "courses that encouraged critical and meta-cognitive thinking" and reflection.

Examples of Strengths

"I felt the faculty was extremely knowledgeable yet did not dictate their opinions to us; rather they listened to us, debated, and helped us to construct our own knowledge. I felt accepted and appreciated for who I was. I didn't feel I had to change into a different person. This meant the world to me. I'll never forget that."

"The faculty members in the ___ department were for the most part thoughtful, caring, professionally active and accomplished people who teach well."

"Professors with a wide array of experiences and their ability to convey such in the classroom."

"Opportunities to get involved in research labs."

"The program exposed me to several theoretical perspectives and discussion fostered critical thinking."

Examples of Weaknesses

"The level of academic rigor and of probative conversation and inquiry were sorely lacking in my department. Conversations scratched the surface, no one read or cited the texts when talking, often teachers stopped or quelled sensitive topics about things like race/racism, homosexuality/ heteronormativity, social stratification, and the achievement gap—topics extremely pertinent when discussing urban education and education reform. In this regard I felt many of the faculty were unwilling or unable to facilitate such discourse or push students/classes to truly engage in constructive dialogue."

"Most faculty members with very poor teaching skills."

"Having attended an Ivy League undergrad, I was very disappointed with the quality of the teaching ..."

"...the failure to focus consistently and deeply on developing students' capacity as researchers and scholarly writers (although I developed these skills, it was through the individual support of my advisor and not the rest of the __ program)."

"Similar to my experience at an Ivy League undergraduate institution all too often I found myself to be the only minority male in many (almost all) of my classes. Having a different perspective was not always welcomed. Dissention or disagreement was often misconstrued as anger and bullying. Similarly, my faculty was brilliant scholars, extremely knowledgeable about their specific fields of interest. Having another perspective, one not shared and often in direct conflict with middle class white women at Teachers College, I found it difficult to complete a Masters Thesis focused on social conditions facing black male adolescents. Teachers College has so many resources, so many wonderful students and erudite. I look forward to watching TC become better able to support the learning of all students and truly work toward affecting equitable change in teaching and education."

3.4. Program Organization

The Program Organization category comprises of comments related to students' perceptions of their program. It has five subcategories:

- *Design and requirements*—refers to overall program structure, including cohort design, sequence of courses, and program requirements (109)

- *Instructional personnel practices*—refers to faculty workload and assignments, faculty-student ratio, class size, retention and tenure policies. (43)

- *Philosophy and focus*—refers to program philosophy, focus, or emphasis (42)

- *Consistency or hypocrisy*—refers to the connection between the stated philosophy/commitments and actual practice (6)

- *Receptivity to student input*—refers to faculty's/program's willingness to listen to and consider students' ideas and opinions (6)

Design and Requirements, Instructional Personnel Practices, Philosophy and Focus received 109, 43, and 42 comments, respectively (i.e. 13-33% of 328 respondents). Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.4. Almost all (98%) of the *Instructional Practices* comments were unfavorable. *Design and Requirements* comments were more likely to be cited as weaknesses, while those of *Philosophy and Focus* tended to be cited as strengths.

Figure 3.4: Program Organization—Strengths and Weaknesses
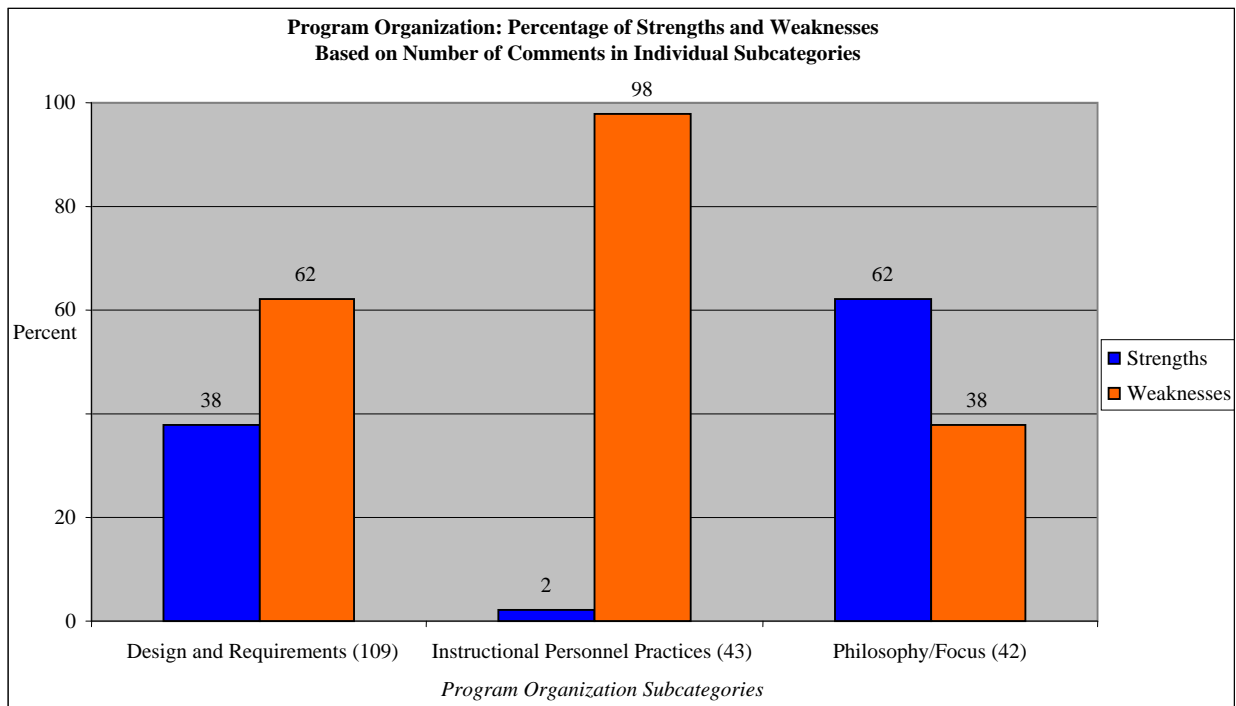
Design and Requirements. Design and requirements of the program were crucial for many students as evidenced by the proportion of respondents (33%) who made related comments. More than half of the comments were described as weaknesses. Respondents had expected "more from (their) program, more from a Columbia name, and more from the faculty." Many found "no coherence; no understandable order of courses; no flow" in their program of study. Respondents felt that more care should be given to the "creation of meaningful, deep and rich curricula for the programs." Many students found requirements "very disorganized" and information about requirements confusing; often there was either a lack of communication or there was no one in the college who could give students clear answers. Conversely, respondents appreciated innovative programs that had well-designed courses, clear expectations, and room

for student creativity. They liked well-linked classes, cohort system, ability to complete two Master's degrees simultaneously, and flexibility to "craft (their) own schedule/series of classes according to (their) needs/interests."

Instructional Personnel Practices. Out of 43 comments about instructional personnel practices, all but one described them as weaknesses. Respondents were disappointed that there were not enough tenured or full-time professors, that most of the Masters courses were taught by adjunct faculty without terminal degrees or education degrees, that there was too much reliance on teaching assistants, that classes were too large, and that the high turnover of professors made it hard to get to know faculty, as well as caused an inconsistency in the classes offered. Some respondents were disheartened when their "best" instructors and professors who were most interested in helping students were denied tenure. The only positive comment was "Class size was small and more personable."

Philosophy and Focus. Respondents appreciated emphases on multicultural and multiracial issues, on self-awareness, on diversity, on promoting collaboration, or on strong quantitative and qualitative research. Conversely, when program focus rationale for the core curriculum were not clear, or when program vision was not communicated, students were less satisfied. Respondents would like their programs to have a sense of direction and to clearly articulate its mission.

Examples of Strengths

"It is one of the best (program) that there is out there and has made me marketable."

"The class requirements were logical and well planned."

"I did however very much appreciate the flexibility of my program—I could craft my own schedule/series of classes according to my needs/interests. That was the best part of TC!"

"Department was well organized making it very user friendly."

"Integrity of program; innovative program."

"I was blessed by being able to work with some extraordinary people, but all of these people have left the college."

"The strong philosophy of the program."

"Emphasis on multi-cultural/diversity education."

Examples of Weaknesses

"I felt alone and like no one could ever give me any answers. The registering situation is horrible, always so last minute and classes are not offered at convenient times. I live in NJ and when I asked questions about certification & licensure, they acted like it was a foreign country."

"Very confusing to find information about degree requirements. Advisors not helpful."

"No coherence; no understandable order of courses; no "flow"—we were never asked to apply learning from one class to another—in fact I received that as a criticism from one professor when I did so, even when that would have made very good sense."

"Felt the requirements were too rigid and not all courses I had to take were useful professionally."

"Professors were stretched thin by coursework & other responsibilities. Core courses shouldn't be taught by other graduate students, there should be enough faculty to handle the course load."

"Weak adjunct professors."

"Professor ___ ended up deciding to not teach a class (Course X) that was a requirement for the degree and instead launched a class he was interested in (Course Y)). Despite being published and having had many students also pending graduation enroll in this required class (Course X), no other section of the required class was offered. Although I was offered the option of taking this alternative class (Course Y) in order to graduate on time, I actually was not interested in this class and felt like I missed out on practical information in the class (Course X) that should have been offered. But, had I not taken (the alternative Course Y), I would not have been able to graduate on time. These requirements should be a priority—rather than the whims of a professor."

3.5. Community and Diversity

The Community and Diversity category comprises of six subcategories:

- *Sense of community*—includes comments that describe relationships among students, between students and faculty as those that build camaraderie, collegiality, and collaboration (52)

- *Student qualities*—refers to academic, professional, and personal qualities of students (46)

- *Diversity of students*—refers to representation of students of multiple ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds (34)

- *Discrimination and bias*—refers to racism, sexism, favoritism, general bias; it also includes comments about bias against Masters students (22)

- *Diversity of faculty and staff*—refers to representation of faculty and staff of multiple ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds (16)

- *Networking*—refers to any comments about networking with either faculty, fellow students, and/or alumni (12)

Sense of Community and *Student Qualities* received 52 and 46 comments respectively (i.e., 14-16% of 328 respondents). Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.5. *Student Qualities, Diversity of Students,* and *Networking* were likely to be cited as strengths, while *Diversity of Faculty* and *Discrimination and Bias* were more likely to be cited as weaknesses. *Sense of Community* yielded approximately equal numbers of comments under strengths and under weaknesses.

Figure 3.5: Community and Diversity—Strengths and Weaknesses

Community and Diversity: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses Based on the Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories
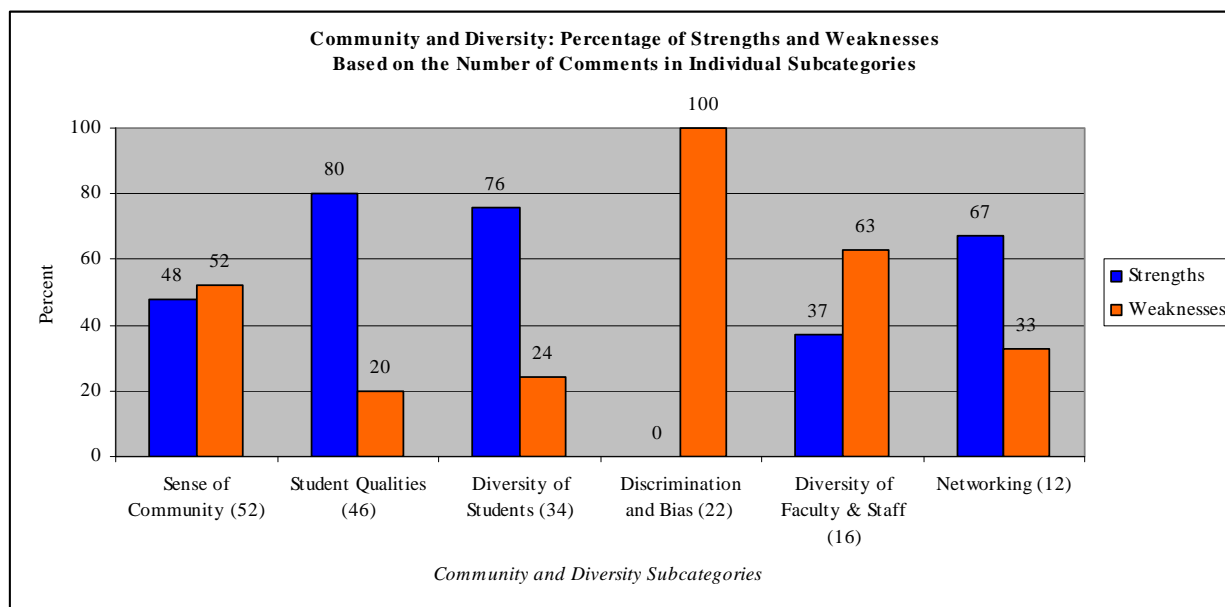
Sense of Community. Slightly over a half of the respondents found that "the atmosphere was at times tense and unwelcoming" and observed TC to be "a difficult place to establish deep friendships unless one takes the initiative to really get involved in the school community, i.e., via organizations, study groups." Program politics were detrimental to building a sense of community. Programs did not make an effort to encourage a sense of community and support among students, and between students and faculty. Competitiveness between students created "alienation" and "isolation." Part-time students were especially vulnerable; many commuter students found it difficult to feel they were a part of the TC community. Conversely, *Sense of Community* was a strength when students experienced a camaraderie among their program mates. They appreciated the cohort system that fostered collaboration and cooperation, which resulted in a sense of bonding among students. Students' sense of community was also enhanced when they felt supported by the faculty.

Student Qualities. Respondents were generally very positive about their peers describing them as "passionate," "intelligent," "supportive," "excellent," "outstanding," "well-qualified and highly motivated," "brilliant and hard working." A good number of respondents specifically credited their fellow students with the bulk, if not all, of their learning at TC. Professional expertise, "diverse experiences and insightful thinking" which students brought into class discussions enriched learning experience. Conversely, respondents who were disappointed commented that "not very bright" students lowered program quality; some suggested that unqualified students should not have been accepted. The intellectual abilities of students were inconsistent. Some were well-prepared, while others were at TC merely to obtain professional credentials with no intention of improving their practice.

Diversity of Students. Respondents appreciated diversity of their peers in terms of experiences, education, goals and interests—it made for "a wonderful chance to learn from each other." Others felt TC could benefit from admitting more students who were inner-city teachers, as well as those with working experience.

Diversity of Faculty and Staff. Respondents were generally less satisfied with diversity of the faculty and staff than with that of the student body. Some students wanted to see "more

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persons of color holding faculty positions." Others felt that their programs needed more female professors with families, and not just professors who had devoted their lives to their academic jobs.

Discrimination and Bias. Not surprisingly all the comments under this subcategory were described as weaknesses. Several respondents had experienced or observed discrimination against "whites, French, neurological handicaps," "white, conservative male," "Masters students" in favor of doctoral students, part-time students in favor of full-time students. Single women in certain programs felt their contributions were marginalized. One doctoral student felt that his/her advisor gave no support and had no interest in seeing him/her finish the program and that the advisor was "clearly biased either by gender or race."

Networking. The cohort model seemed to contribute to networking. Working collaboratively with fellow students helped to build "wonderfully supportive and deep friendships" and "meaningful relationships." All four negative comments were related to the disappointment of not receiving the benefits of networking despite having studied in "very expensive" programs and at Columbia University.

Examples of Strengths

"…forming collaborations with other students that last a long time."

"I love my program and the professors within it; we are still in touch and it was the true epitome of a learning community."

"I constantly felt surrounded by other intellectuals who truly enjoyed teaching kids and wanted to share their experiences with other people. I will always remember the sense of community and camaraderie we experienced because we were all juggling being students and teachers."

"Diversity of student body—in experiences, educations, goals, interests—it was a wonderful chance to learn from each other."

"I have made valuable lifetime professional and personal connections while at TC."

Examples of Weaknesses

"The lack of aid means that students have to work—which not only impedes student progress but prevents the development of a strong campus culture and peer network."

"This program had no sense of community. … I walked the halls during that year and a half and found that the faculty disengaged themselves from students. Office culture was individualistic, professors kept their doors closed, and faculty rarely even acknowledged us when passing in the hallways. As much as I heard about Dr. X's theories and read his articles and book, I found that the man himself kept a cold distance. The TC offices seemed quiet, cold, and stuck in the past. I only found energy when I went over to Columbia Business School and found professors who hardly knew me in a willing mode to chat about careers, their experiences, and networking. … I have a MA degree that seems to carry no content, just a label from Columbia University. That is my only hope to find value from the year and one half that was spent there. I walked out on my final evening of classes without any feelings of attachment or support."

"... I strongly felt that the classes were too easy and sometimes seemed "dumbed down" and that my peers just weren't that strong as students. Having attended an Ivy League undergrad, I was very disappointed with the quality of the teaching and the students."

"I do not feel that I received the kind of networking that should come with a degree from Columbia University. It was very expensive, and I hope that the name carries some weight when applying for jobs because I don't think that what I learned or who I met will help me."

"The failure to grant tenure to women or people of color for over 20 years in my program (particularly those in recent years who publish more and support more successful doctoral students than their tenured male colleagues). … TC should be ashamed to have such privilege and power and to use it in such a base way to reinforce social injustices of race, class, and gender."

3.6. College Support and Services

The College Support and Services comprises of three subcategories:

- *Advising and guidance*—refers to availability and quality of advising as provided by faculty, program, or College (57)

- *Administrative offices*—refers to availability and quality of administrative student services provided by TC offices, e.g., Registrar's, ODS, Financial Aid (44)

- *Career and employment*—refers to availability and quality of career counseling and job/employment search assistance (13)

As the bar chart of Figure 3.6 shows, most of the comments in the College Support and Services category were unfavorable. Respondents were disappointed with advisement at program and college levels. Advising was either poor or unavailable. Respondents described the staff of administrative offices and their experiences with these offices as "hostile," "RUDE," "horrible," "mean," "unhelpful," "incompetent," to list a few. Apart from a general positive comment that "administration cares" from one respondent, it appeared the only positive encounter regarding administrative matters was with Mr. Gary Ardan of the Office of Doctoral Studies. His name was mentioned three times in a positive light, and described as "great" and "helpful and friendly all the time." Career and employment guidance was also perceived as lacking.

Figure 3.6: College Support and Services—Strengths and Weaknesses

College Support and Services: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses Based on the Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories
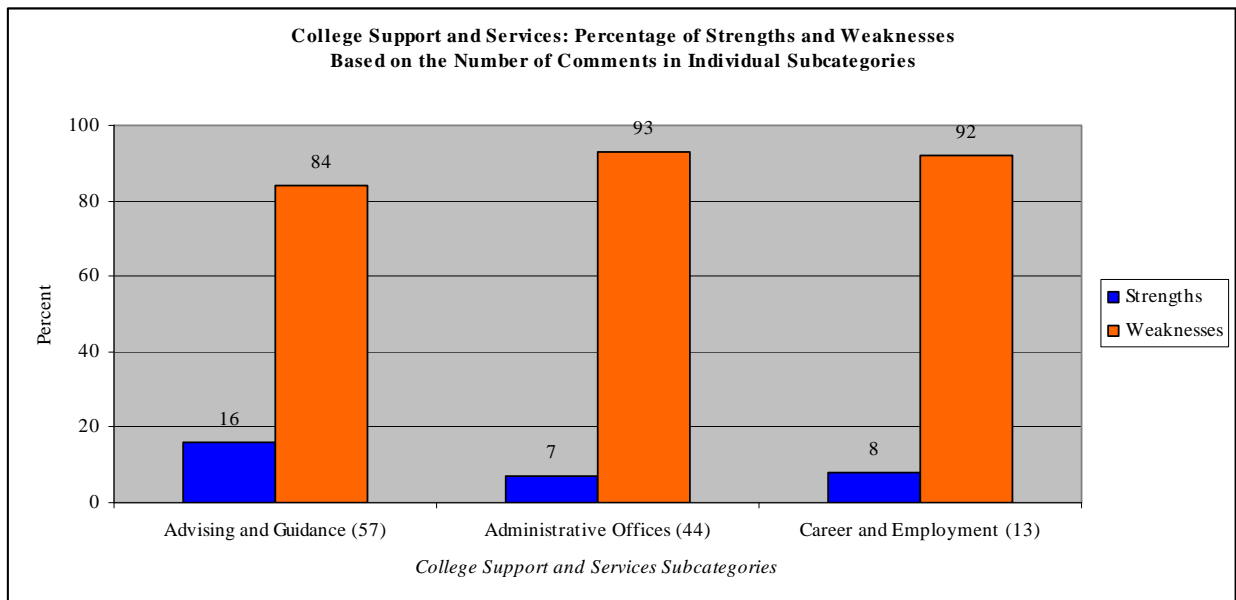
Examples of Strengths

"Very strong academic mentoring that caters to individual research interests of students."

"Faculty and staff were there when you needed them."

"Gary Ardan in ODS (Office of Doctoral Studies) is the greatest resource for doctoral students." (This is one of the three positive Administrative Offices comments.)

"Career center connections/ relationships with local employers."

Examples of Weaknesses

"I found that there were few people who were able to provide me with guidance about meeting the requirements of the EdM program I was enrolled in. My assigned advisor never was able to give me information because each time she responded to my e-mails she said she was home and did not have access to the EdM requirements there. As a result, I did not receive the information I needed to complete my Certification Exam until it was too late, and I ended up graduating a semester later than I should have. I found this very frustrating, and disappointing. Honestly, this was not a problem I anticipated having at a top rated school."

"TC/Columbia is a bureaucratic nightmare. Some support people, e.g., Registrar's Office, Office of Accounts were RUDE & unhelpful."

"I was disappointed with the lack of assistance from my department and career services in regards to networking events, etc. for job openings & placement."

3.7. Resources

The Resources category has six subcategories:

- *Financial aid—*refers to availability of financial aid to students and cost of studies at TC (51)

- *Space and facilities—*refers to overall quality and availability of space including classrooms and specialized facilities (37)

- *Library*—refers to library resources and services (13)

- *Housing*—refers to availability and quality of housing services and facilities (less than 10)

- *Events—*refers to extracurricular activities, such as lectures by guest speakers, book talks (less than 10)

- *Location—*refers to advantages of being part of Columbia University or being located in NYC (less than 10)

All, but one, of the respondents found the space and facilities "embarrassing," "uncomfortable," "disgusting," and "not conducive to a healthy learning environment." They expected an environment that was at par with the high cost of study. One student remarked that "there are community colleges with far better facilities." Commuter students, coming to TC after work, wished there were more accommodations for them to take a break before classes began. All who commented on the financial aid situation were unanimous that it was a weakness at TC. Most observed that the absence or severe lack of financial aid, combined with the high cost of study, placed an enormous burden on students. One student commented that if she had not had a fellowship, she "would have gone elsewhere." Another noted how Harvard, Penn, and Stanford

provided funding for their doctoral students, unlike TC. More than half (62%) of respondents who commented on the Library enjoyed the library facilities and gave "accolades" to the Library staff. The few who complained felt that the library needed more books.

Figure 3.7: Resources—Strengths and Weaknesses

Resources: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses Based on the Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories
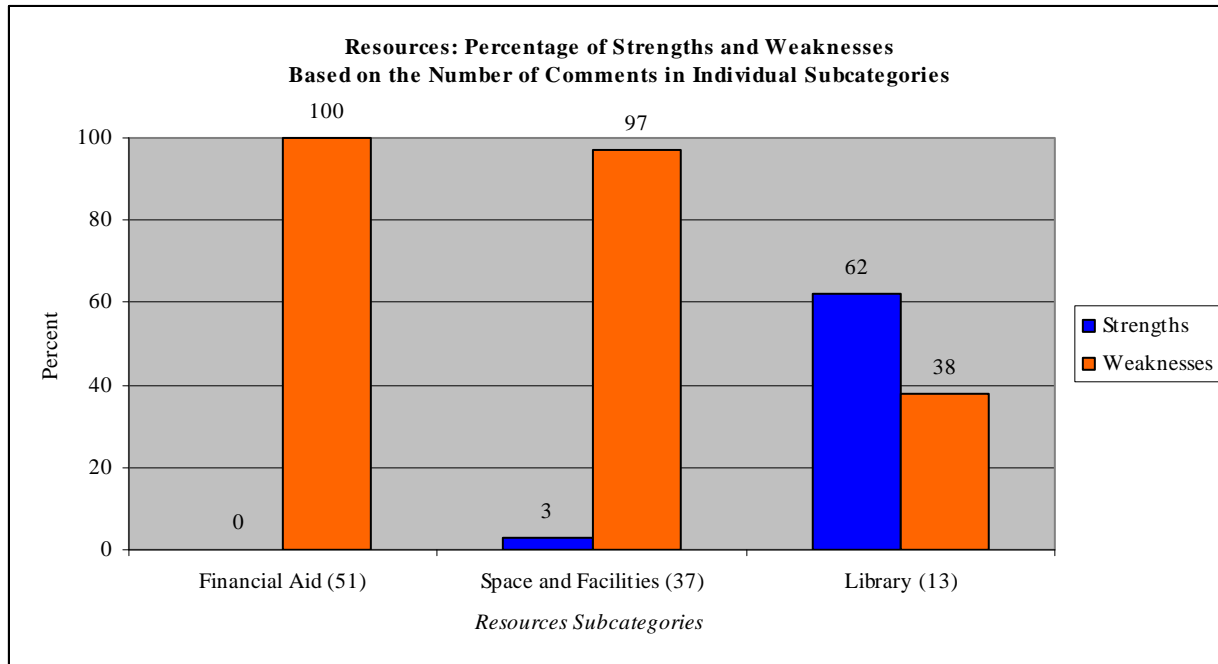
Examples of Strengths

"The upgrading of facilities (e.g. library, etc.) is impressive, and I hope it continues in all areas of the school."

"Really love the library facilities and technology available."

"The Library staff was especially helpful. I give them accolades."

Examples of Weaknesses

"Very challenging experience, had to take too many loans, disappointed in setting—paint chipping & falling, broken desks, poor bathroom facilities."

"The building is disgusting. You would never know you were in a very expensive ivy league school with the crap classrooms and gross buildings that accompany it."

"Some classrooms are in horrible shape—holes in the walls, uncontrollable climate. Makes studying difficult."

"Doctoral students should be fully funded by the department; emerging with a degree in education or a related field (with) thousands and thousands of dollars in debt is borderline impractical."

3.8. Internship

The Internship category encompasses all comments related to internship, student teaching, practica, and field experiences. It has no subcategories. There were 35 comments—more than half (57%) were strengths, and the rest (47%) were weaknesses (see Figure 3.8 for the

proportions of strengths and weaknesses). For those who described their internship as "strengths" the internships were "valuable learning experiences." For some students, the internship equipped them with more tools than two years of courses did. They appreciated that their programs made internships a requirement, and provided multiple placements. Those who described *Internship* as a "weakness" wanted "better placements"; they felt there was "not enough guided practice"; they wished faculty had been in the classrooms to provide more teaching practices; they felt the internship planning and placement needed to be better managed; and they wished they had the opportunity to work with more than one type of population. Some had "optional internships" but their program did not have courses that taught them practical skills. Others just wished their programs had internships.

Figure 3.8: Internship—Strengths and Weaknesses

Internship and Technology: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses Based on Number of Comments in Individual Categories
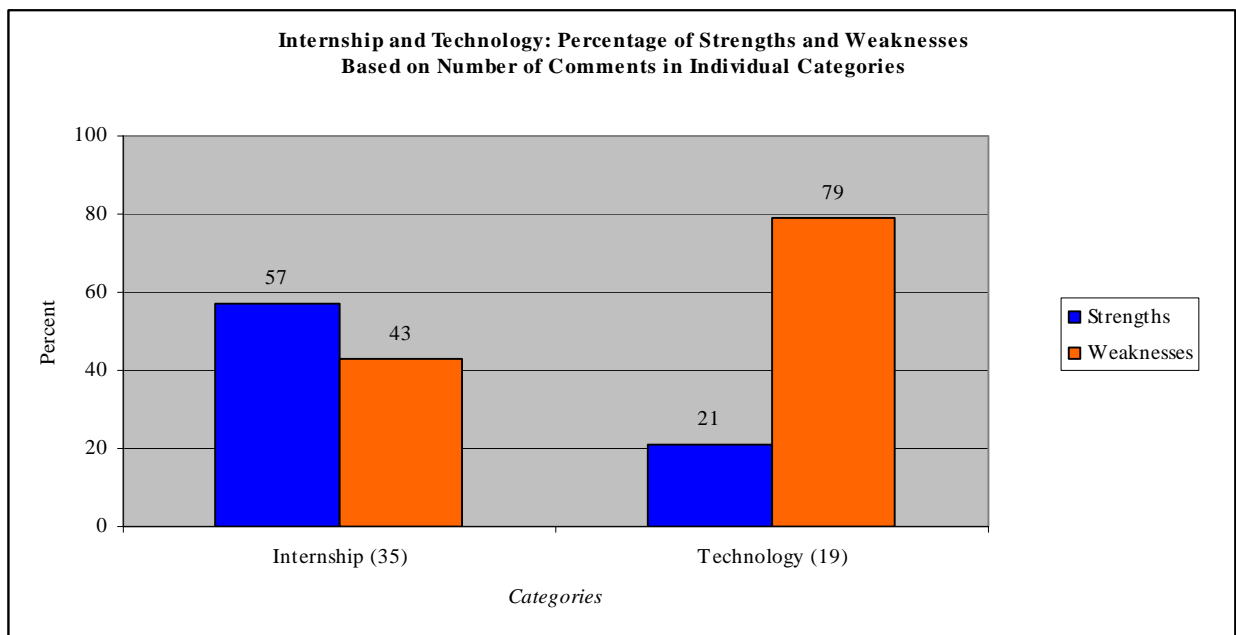
Examples of Strengths

 "There is a lot of hands-on fieldwork (practica and student teaching) with a diverse range of ages and populations."

"Student teaching placements allow for learning many teaching styles."

"My program was very demanding and required much time and effort in class and with my internships, but overall it is rewarding to finish and be knowledgeable in my study area."

Examples of Weaknesses

"The fact that we did not have an internship or practicum."

"Program is too theoretical—not practical enough. The optional internship was supposed to cover the practice of the field, but there were no classes that dealt with practice."

"Internship coordinator needs to work better with students for a more cooperative and supportive experience."

3.9. Technology

The Technology category encompasses all comments related to technology. It has no subcategories. There were 19 comments—more than three-quarters (79%) were weaknesses, and the rest (21%) were strengths (see Figure 3.8 above). Some students described the state of technology at TC as "PITIFUL." According to respondents, technology needed to be "embraced" by the college, improved, integrated, and incorporated into courses. In their program of study, respondents had little or no access to, or use of, technology. They recommended remodeling of facilities to include technology. Technology was listed as "strength" by a student who noted that her program "consistently remained up-to-date as far as technology was concerned." Another praised the technology available in the library.

Examples of Strengths

"Really love the library facilities & technology available."

"My advisor and the technology available to me."

Examples of Weaknesses

"The technology on campus is PITIFUL. Community colleges have better use of technology than this Ivy League affiliated college. It is a disgrace and embarrassment to the school."

"Very expensive program. Expect better classrooms, more access to technology ..."

"TC needs to embrace technology."

3.10. Politics

The Politics category comprises of three loosely-related subcategories:

- *Inter-program, inter-departmental, inter-campus collaboration—*refers to collaboration and communication between programs and departments at TC, between TC and other schools at Columbia and inter/nationally (26)

- *College/university reputation—*comments related to the prestige or reputation of TC or Columbia University; it also includes comments about TC education not being up to par with its reputation (21)

- *Program status within or outside TC—*refers to student's perceptions of how respected and/or valued their program is within or outside the College (less than 10 comments)

Inter-program, Inter-departmental, Inter-campus Collaboration and *College/University Reputation* yielded 26 and 21 comments respectively; both subcategories had a larger proportion of weaknesses than strengths (see Figure 3.10 below).

Figure 3.10: Politics—Strengths and Weaknesses

Politics: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses
Based on Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories
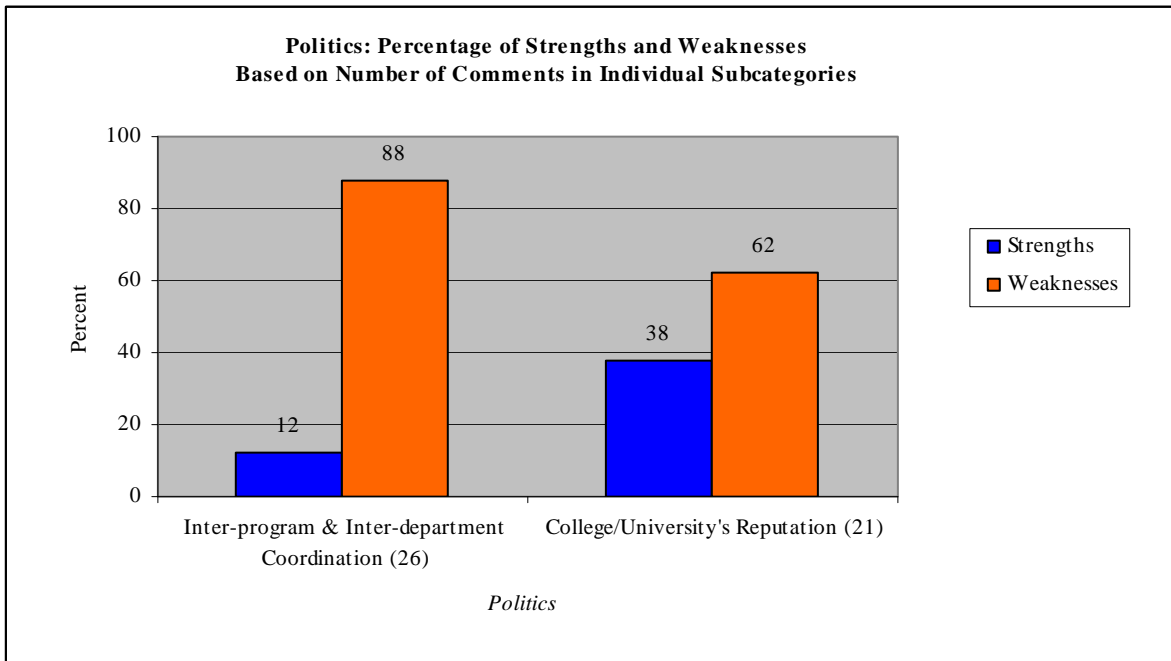
Inter-program, Inter-departmental, Inter-campus Collaboration. Many respondents wished there was a collaborative relationship between TC programs and departments and between schools and campuses in the Columbia University community. This would have allowed students to take advanced or relevant courses which were not available in their programs. When they tried, students often encountered administrative obstacles to taking classes outside the program they were enrolled in, especially classes on the Central campus of Columbia University. Some observed a "disconnect between faculty members." When students were encouraged to take courses outside their programs to meet academic and research interests, they saw this as a strength in their educational experience.

College/University Reputation. More than half (62%) of the respondents who made comments related to the reputation of TC described it as a weakness. Many were disappointed that the quality of education they received match neither the cost of study nor the College's reputation. Among respondents who cited TC's reputation as a strength, it was presented as the only positive aspect in an otherwise disappointing educational experience.

Examples of Strengths

"The program encouraged students to take courses in related field in many departments within TC."

"Our program allowed us to get to know each other through events hosted by the department."

"TC name, I guess."

"The affiliation with Columbia is about the only strength I can think of."

"The "Columbia University" in my diploma."

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Examples of Weaknesses

"Teachers College has a good reputation that it doesn't always live up to when it comes to students' actual experiences."

"Didn't disclose clearly that it was under TC, not Columbia."

"I had expected more from this program, more from a Columbia name, and more from the faculty."

"Lack of professional community among the professors."

"There needs to be more scholarship activity and leeway to take other classes in other departments."

"There needs to be stronger ties and connections to GSAS for the __ disciplines. We should be encouraged to take more content specific courses to develop these skills. I noticed that many of my fellow students were weak on these and wanted to take other courses but it was difficult to do so."

"It was very expensive, and I hope that the name carries some weight when applying for jobs because I don't think that what I learned or who I met will help me."

"I have a MA degree that seems to carry no content, just a label from Columbia University. That is my only hope to find value from the year and one half that was spent there."

3.11. General Evaluation

The General Evaluation category comprises of two subcategories:

- *Overall satisfaction*—refers to students' overall evaluation of their program of study and/or educational experiences at TC (141)

- *Quality of Preparation*—refers to the overall quality of academic or professional preparation; student's expression or sense of being well-prepared (36)

Comments in both subcategories were more likely to be identified as strengths than as weaknesses. Proportions of strengths and weaknesses in each subcategory are presented in Figure 3.11.

Of the 328 respondents who answered the open-ended questions about strengths and weaknesses of their programs or made general comments, 43% (141 responses) gave us an idea of how they felt overall about their educational experiences at TC. Students' impression of their time at TC ranged from one extreme to the other, and in-between (see examples of *General Evaluation* comments in the end of this section). Nearly three-quarters (71%) felt that, overall, they had a positive experience at TC. Students described their experience at TC as "wonderful," "great," "generally good," "intellectually stimulating," "ok," "unforgettably happy period with wonderful people," "enriching," "excellent," "illuminating," "outstanding," and "transformative." The rest (29%) described their overall experience at TC as "worst experience of my academic life," "unpleasant," "not good for older mid-career shift (students)," "pretty disappointing," "below expectations," "not great," "quite discouraging on a program level." Having supportive and knowledgeable faculty, receiving a rigorous training balanced with theory and practical skills, and being enrolled in a program that encouraged collaboration and cooperation among students, appeared to be crucial for a positive educational experience. Slightly more than half (58%) of the respondents felt their programs adequately prepared them

for professional life; the others (42%) felt they lacked essential tools and skills to work in the field.

Figure 3.11: General Evaluation—Strengths and Weaknesses

General Evaluation: Percentage of Strengths and Weaknesses Based on Number of Comments in Individual Subcategories

A bar chart with y-axis "Percent" ranging from 0 to 100. Two category groups on x-axis labeled "General Evaluation". For "Overall Satisfaction (141)": Strengths = 71, Weaknesses = 29. For "Quality of Preparation (36)": Strengths = 58, Weaknesses = 42. Legend: Strengths (blue), Weaknesses (orange).
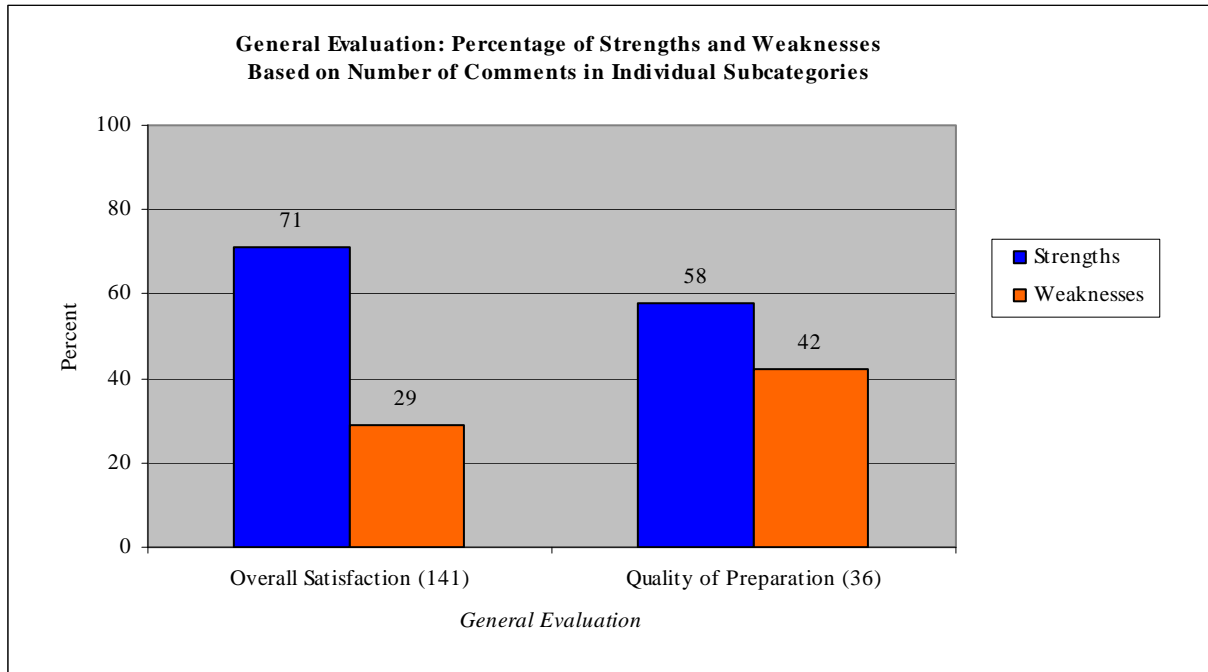
Examples of Strengths

"My experience at TC was positively life-changing. I deeply appreciated the camaraderie I felt w/ my classmates. I felt the faculty was extremely knowledgeable yet did not dictate their opinions to us; rather they listened to us, debated, and helped us construct our own knowledge. I felt accepted and appreciated for who I was. I didn't feel I had to change into a different person. This meant the world to me. I'll never forget that."

"TC was the most incredible academic experience I've encountered. I love my program and the professors within it; we are still in touch and it was the true epitome of a "learning community." Outside my program, however, I was disappointed with professors and the lack of professionalism or commitment to education exhibited."

"In general I valued all my classes at TC, enjoyed the intellectual exchange with very bright students particularly with those students not in my program. I can say that I loved all my classes at TC. This was a very special time in my life. I grew personally and intellectually during my years at TC."

"I have enjoyed my time at TC and hope to pursue my education further at TC. I was pleasantly surprised to see how much more knowledge and pleasure I received from my educational experience."

"Going to TC was the best decision I have ever done in my entire career."

Examples of Weaknesses

"Overall—very disappointing. Student welfare is clearly the lowest priority on the TC agenda. We are made to feel as if we are disposable & not valued. Basic information & support was never provided. I would never recommend TC to inquiring applicants."

"I'm not wasting my time listing them all since no changes will be made. I have offered suggestions for 2 years and no one listens. That's probably the biggest problem."

"Overall, it wasn't a great experience. I would not recommend this school or this program to others."

"The school is unbelievably disorganized and disinterested in the welfare of students, to the point where every student I know has a horror story about how they were screwed (please pardon the expression) in some way by TC. There was little financial aid, and we got the clear message we were just there to pay professor salaries and support the doctoral students. It was about the most impersonal and demoralizing academic experience I have ever had. I learned a lot in my program, but I am so grateful to be out. I have no warm feelings towards TC because of the way I and my peers were treated, and this will certainly affect my future giving—something the school might want to consider as it is ignoring student pleas."

"Overall, I was disappointed in my experience at TC. I came to this program relying heavily on the reputation of the institution as a sign that I would be getting my money's worth. I faced numerous issues with the financial aid and registrar's office either making administrative errors that cost me time and money, or not being able to adequately explain certain policies and procedures. I never once felt that TC as a whole made any effort to help individual students achieve their academic goals. I was also not impressed with the faculty in my program. With the exception of certain individual professors who should be named, such as __ and __, who went above and beyond the expectations for the passion and knowledge that faculty at an IVY LEAGUE school should have, the professors and advisors were not student-centered. In fact, other faculty members were found to be disinterested and even on occasion, misinformed on the general topic of their course. This was the subject of many conversations between students. I will always value my Masters Degree for the professional status it grants me, but I fully expect that my real education will come from professional work experience and that I could have been much better prepared for the future in another program."

Mixed

"I'm deeply ambivalent about my experience at TC. I attribute who I've become and where I am now in my career as a professor of education, but I also recognize that it was largely a bittersweet experience. I was blessed by being able to work with some extraordinary people, but all of these people have left the college. That I endured through my doctorate is a sign of my resilience, determination, and the support of my professors (who left TC but continued to support me professionally and academically and as mentors) but it is not because of the college as a whole. TC should be ashamed to have such privilege and power and to use it in such a base way to reinforce social injustices of race, class, and gender."

"It pushed me in ways I didn't expect and am thankful for, but left me with lots of gaps in preparation."

"In general, I was happy with the experience I had in my department, with my colleagues and the courses I attended. Unfortunately, I felt that the other areas of TC meant to support my studies (Financial Aid Office, Registrar's Office, etc.) were not only less than helpful—they seemed to fail to realize that their role was in fact to assist students. Myself and many others I

spoke with found these offices (generally) rude and uncaring. TC sets a poor example of how an educational institution should be run administratively. That's sad."

"It was good overall, but not because of the coursework or administrative support; the students and resources made it wonderful."

"My experience at the Klingenstein Center has been good. At greater TC, though, private university tuition for public university services."

SUMMARY OF QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ANALYSES

Completed questionnaires of the May 2006 Exit Survey from 347 graduating students[3] provided us with rich information about what worked and what did not work for them during their studies at Teachers College. Students' responses to the Likert-scale items and their thoughtful and candid comments to three open-ended questions painted a picture of what it is like to be a graduate student at Teachers College. The following are *some of the highlights* inferred from students' quantitative and qualitative responses.

1. Faculty expertise and relationships with students

It is widely acknowledged that the strength of an institution of higher learning is determined primarily by the quality of its faculty. By this measure, based on student perceptions, Teachers College enjoys a very strong position. This is supported by both the quantitative data and open-ended comments. Faculty knowledge, expertise, and faculty teaching earned our respondents' applause and admiration. Faculty-student relationships and communication, however, were somewhat of a let down.

Most of the respondents (92%) agreed that program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent. They admired faculty for their scholarship, professional experience, expertise, dedication, and passion in their respective fields.

More than two-thirds of the respondents were pleased with the quality of instruction. Those who were disappointed, however, explained that faculty were consumed by personal research and consulting, and not in teaching; that faculty did not use best practices in pedagogy, and that they were not open to students' suggestions and feedback. They were disappointed that there were not enough tenured or full-time professors, that most of the Masters courses were taught by adjunct faculty without terminal degrees or education degrees, that there was too much reliance on teaching assistants, or that classes were too large. High faculty turnover made it hard for students to get to know their professors, and it adversely affected the availability of class offerings.

Most respondents (87-89%) agreed that faculty treated all students fairly and with respect. Fewer students (64%) agreed that the communication between faculty and students was good, and 69% agreed that faculty cared about professional development and welfare of students. Gap analysis results suggested that respondents expected better communication between faculty and students, and wanted more faculty care and interest in student development. This was corroborated by 65 open-ended comments about faculty dispositions to students, which consisted of a slightly higher number of negative than positive comments. Positive comments referred to faculty as being caring, available, supportive, and approachable. Negative comments described faculty's lack of interest in, concern for, respect of, and support in students' success.

2. Academic and professional preparation

Our respondents were satisfied with the strong theoretical content and academic rigor of their coursework. Over 85% of the respondents agreed that course content provided them with a solid theoretical background in their discipline, and 84% agreed that required courses were academically rigorous. There was a higher number of positive than negative comments related to the academic value of courses. Positive comments described courses that provided excellent

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[3] 30% response rate

epistemological and methodological approaches to research, "well-rounded theoretical foundation," theories that were "cutting-edge," and exposure to current educational trends and philosophies.

Even though most respondents agreed that course content was applicable (80%), and program requirements were relevant (79%) to their anticipated work in the field, our gap analysis suggested that these aspects were more important to students than what their programs provided. Fifty-six comments about practical value of course content, showed that students valued relevant, practical and useful courses, and courses that dealt with "world issues" and "real organizational issues and examples." They valued a curriculum that prepared them to teach, that provided "plenty of practical experience," that helped them to become "more multi-culturally competent," and that combined both "theoretical and professional perspectives." Conversely, respondents were disappointed when there was "too much theory" and "no practical application," when there was no focus on developing their capacity as researchers and scholarly writers, or when the curriculum focused on one aspect (multicultural issues) and left "everything else for student(s) to learn on (their) own."

Internships were a major strength of TC programs. Overwhelmingly, our respondents felt that their internships contributed significantly to the quality of their professional training. Respondents valued the opportunity to apply knowledge and professional skills during internship. For some students, the internship equipped them with more tools than did two years of courses. Gap analysis showed that students wanted better supervision, guidance, and assessment during the internship. Students who commented on their internship as a "weakness" wanted "better placements"; they felt there was "not enough guided practice"; they wished faculty had been in the classrooms to provide more teaching practices; they felt the internship planning and placement needed to be better managed; and they wished they had an opportunity to work with more than one type of population. Others simply wished their programs had internships.

Among students who gave open-ended responses, a slightly larger number felt their programs adequately prepared them for professional life; while others felt they lacked essential tools and skills to work in the field. As one student noted, her program "pushed me in ways I didn't expect and am thankful for it, but left me with lots of gaps in preparation."

3. Critical thinking, research skills, and teamwork

Teaching students to be reflective and critical thinkers is one of the main goals of most, if not all, of the TC programs. According to our respondents, academic programs were successful in achieving this goal. Most respondents (89%) agreed that class activities and assignments encouraged critical thinking and reflection; and 70% agreed that class activities and assignments allowed them to practice research skills. This is corroborated by gap analysis results which showed a very small difference between how important these skills were to students and to their programs. Students' comments to the open-ended questions showed both critical thinking and reflection or research skills were perceived as program strengths by the majority of the respondents.

While 89% of the respondents agreed class activities and assignments encouraged teamwork and collaboration, students also felt teamwork was not as important to them as it was to their programs. This was the only item in the survey that students' rated lower in importance than what they received. The open-ended questions yielded only eight comments, which also indicated that teamwork and collaboration were relatively less important to students.

4. Program philosophy, curriculum and requirements

An academic program is more than just a collection of individual courses and our respondents' comments about program organization showed its relatively high importance for students. Program philosophy was generally perceived as program strength. About 69% agreed their programs had a clear philosophy. Respondents appreciated emphases on multicultural and multiracial issues, on self-awareness, on diversity, on promoting collaboration, and on strong quantitative and qualitative research.

Our respondents were less satisfied with program curricula. While many (69-71%) agreed that their program provided a well-integrated set of courses and courses that were not repetitive, gap analysis showed that students wanted faculty to do more in creating "meaningful, deep and rich curricula." Students had expected "more from (their) program, more from a Columbia name, and more from the faculty." Many found "no coherence; no understandable order of courses; no flow" in their program of study. Others commented that courses often overlapped, that students were given the same articles to read, that faculty talked about the same particular organization, and that students were made to learn the same theories "over and over." According to one student, "it was as though the faculty never gathered together to cross-check their curriculum."

5. Diversity and community

More than two-thirds of the respondents gave a positive evaluation of Diversity. Respondents, who identified themselves as European American, gave Diversity a more positive evaluation than other respondents. Since the former represents a majority of our respondents (and of the TC students in general), readers should bear in mind that this finding may not be representative of respondents from other ethnic or cultural groups. Open-ended comments related to students' experiences with bias and discrimination on campus showed that 22 respondents had either experienced or observed discrimination against certain groups of students.

Students' perceptions of Learning Community in their program was somewhat less positive that their perceptions of Diversity. In general, our respondents felt that their program was an intellectually stimulating place (82%), that faculty were open to discuss different scholarly points of view (84%), that students demonstrated high academic abilities (83%) and that students supported each other (8%). However, only 52% of the respondents agreed that their program was receptive to student input; 66% agreed that their program encouraged collaboration between faculty and students; and 62% felt that there was a sense of community in their program. Twenty-seven (of 52) students identified the lack of community among program weaknesses. According to the respondents, programs did not make an effort to encourage a sense of community and support among students, and between students and faculty. Part-time students were especially vulnerable; many commuter students found it difficult to feel they were a part of the TC community. Conversely, a sense of community was a strength when students experienced a camaraderie among their program mates. They appreciated the cohort system that fostered collaboration and cooperation, which resulted in a sense of bonding among students. Students' sense of community was also enhanced when they felt supported by the faculty.

6. Academic advising

Academic advising (or rather, the lack of it) is perceived as a major weakness by a large Academic advising (or, rather, the lack thereof) was perceived as a major weakness by a large proportion of the respondents. Only 51% agreed that their program provided good academic advisement. Further analysis showed a big difference between how important academic advising was to students and how little of it they received. The responses to the open-ended questions

corroborated the quantitative findings—84% of the comments about academic advising were identified as weaknesses. Students commented that advising was unavailable or poor.