



Exit Survey Highlights (Class of 2007)

Last May, we invited 1,756 students in the Class of 2007 to evaluate their TC experiences as they related to courses, instruction, faculty, community, diversity, program organization, academic advising, internship, technology, and resources. We asked students to identify two specific strengths and two specific weaknesses of their programs or the College in general. We received 523 completed surveys for a total response rate of 30%. Here are the main findings from our survey.

Teachers College's Strengths

The three top strengths which garnered over 90% of agreement from respondents were: the scholarly and professional competence of TC faculty, faculty's openness to discuss different scholarly points of view, and a free-of-discrimination environment.

Over 80% of respondents positively evaluated the quality of instruction in their programs. They agreed that faculty used appropriate class activities and assignments, which helped students learn, facilitated reflection and critical thinking, and encour-

aged teamwork and collaboration. Faculty treated all students fairly and with respect, and used unbiased methods of evaluating student performance.

Courses, which provided a solid theoretical background, were also a strength of academic programs. Internship was a major strength in those programs that required internship, practicum, or student teaching. Over 80% of respondents agreed that the internship experience contributed to their academic development, that the internship site was conducive to their learning

and professional development, that they got to apply what they learned in their courses to real-life situations, and that they got to practice a variety of professional skills during the internship.

Over 80% of respondents found TC and their academic programs to be an intellectually stimulating place where fellow students demonstrated high academic abilities and support for each other. Students from diverse backgrounds and with different experiences were encouraged to participate in class.

Areas for Improvement

Financial aid and classroom facilities topped the list of areas in need of improvement—they were found inadequate by 65% and 51% of respondents, respectively.

Over 40% of students reported that their programs did not monitor their progress toward the degree and did not regularly assess their professional knowledge and skills. These findings may be linked to poor academic advising and confusing program and degree requirements. Re-

spondents also felt that their programs were not responsive to student input regarding curriculum and program improvement.

More than 37% of respondents believed that course offerings were limited, that required courses were often repetitive, and that students did not have enough flexibility to choose courses based on their academic interests.

Three out of four statements related to technology were identi-

fied as areas for improvement. Over 40% of respondents did not have adequate opportunities to learn about relevant technologies in their classes or to use technology during their internships. Faculty did not use technology in their courses (note that this third point was relatively not important to students).

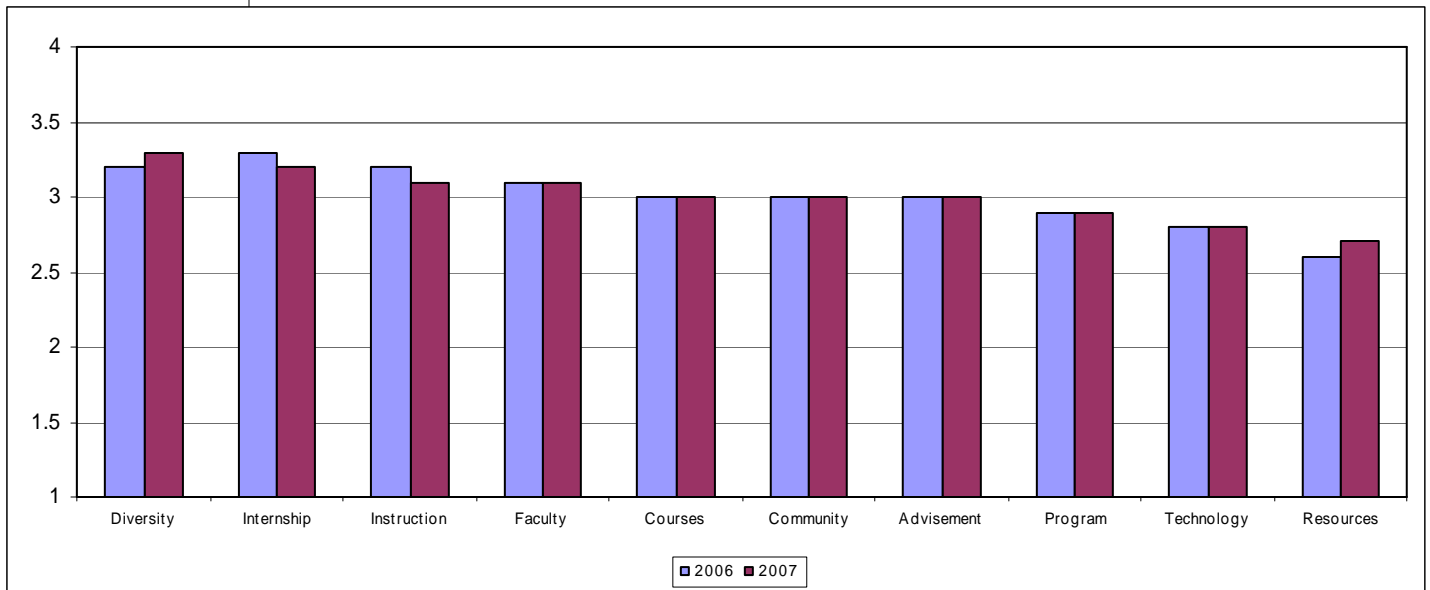
Last but not least, 42% of respondents did not find student support services and staff responsive to their needs.

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Composite Student Experience Ratings (1-low to 4-high)



“This was a thoroughly incredible experience for me and I will be grateful for the opportunity for the rest of my life. My peers and my teachers taught me in remarkable ways.”

Program Philosophy and Organization

More than 70% of respondents agreed that their academic programs had clear philosophies. Comments related to program philosophy were twice more likely to be strengths than weaknesses. Students appreciated their programs having a clear focus, philosophy of education, and identity. They saw emphases on diversity, experiential learning, collaboration, self-reflection, research, multiculturalism and social justice as program strengths.

Most respondents found program requirements clear (80%) and relevant to the anticipated work in the field (76%).

On the other hand, almost a third of respondents felt their programs did not provide a well-integrated set of courses, and almost 40% found the required courses repetitive. Many students perceived their programs to be unstructured, disorganized, and “poorly-run.” Respondents felt pro-

gram courses and curriculum should be “more standardized from year to year,” and that information about requirements should be available early in the semester.

Only half of the respondents agreed that their programs monitored their progress toward the completion of their degrees; and 57% agreed that the programs regularly assessed student professional knowledge and skills.

Curriculum and Course Offerings

More than three-fourths of the respondents agreed that TC courses provided them with a solid theoretical background in their chosen disciplines. Almost 80% agreed that courses were academically rigorous and that course content was applicable to the anticipated work in the field. Students appreciated courses that challenged them intellectually, merged theory and practice, and “prepared

graduates for the professional world.”

Fewer respondents were satisfied with the variety of course offerings (63%) and the flexibility to choose courses they were interested in (56%). Comments related to course variety and availability were three times more likely to be among program weaknesses than strengths. According to these comments the variety of course offerings

was “very limited,” and course schedules were difficult to work with. Masters students who planned to complete their programs within a year, found it difficult to do so when required courses were offered once every two years. When course selection and schedule were limited, students suggested that they be allowed to take more electives within as well as outside their programs.

Program Faculty and Instruction

Almost 90% of respondents agreed that program faculty were scholarly and professionally competent. In the open-ended comments, students admired faculty for their scholarship, exceptional knowledge, and for bringing “their expertise, dedication, and most of all, enthusiasm to their students.” Faculty were accessible to students outside the classroom (74%) and cared about the professional welfare and development of students (75%). Respondents appreciated faculty for being caring, understand-

ing, supportive, and “very involved with students not only on an academic level, but on a personal level as well.”

About 75% of respondents found faculty’s teaching styles to have met student learning needs. Faculty used appropriate class activities and assignments to help students learn (80%). Class activities and assignments encouraged reflection and critical thinking (89%), teamwork and collaboration (86%), and allowed for the practice of research skills (72%). Faculty gave students

helpful (72%) and timely (79%) feedback on assignments, used a variety of assessments (79%), and were fair and unbiased (86%) in evaluating student performance. On the other hand, a number of students identified specific weaknesses in program instruction. They were disappointed when faculty “do not teach as they instruct students to teach,” do not employ “differentiated instruction and student-centered classrooms,” and “do not inspire, encourage, or provide exciting new information.”

Community and Diversity

Almost 84% of respondents found their programs to be an intellectually stimulating place. Program faculty were open to discuss different scholarly points of view (90%) and fellow students demonstrated high academic abilities (81%) and support for each other (84%). Fewer respondents (71%) felt that there was a sense of community in their programs, or that programs encouraged collaboration between faculty

and students. Only 61% felt that their programs were receptive to student input regarding curriculum or program improvements.

About 90% of respondents agreed their programs were free of discrimination and that students of diverse backgrounds were encouraged to participate in class. The status of student diversity was perceived more positively than that of faculty diversity (74% vs. 63%). White stu-

dents, which constituted 61% of all respondents, tended to evaluate *Diversity, Course Offerings, Instruction, Faculty, and Learning Community* more positively than their non-White peers.

Respondents reported that their programs helped them to develop an ability to accept people with different values and beliefs (83%), and had prepared them to work with diverse children or adults (75%).

Academic Advising

Academic advising remains an area of concern for many TC students. Only 60% of respondents agreed that their programs provided good academic advisement. Of the 95 open-ended comments related to advisement and guidance, 86 were weaknesses. Many students reported not having anyone to advise or guide them. They felt “forced to figure out on their own” the many questions they had.

When students did receive advisement, the information was often inaccurate, unclear, unhelpful, or inadequate. Between 64% and 71% of respondents agreed that they received clear and accurate information about program and degree requirements.

The evaluations of academic advisors were slightly more positive. Approximately three-fourths of respondents

found their advisors to be approachable (79%) and knowledgeable about program requirements (74%). About 70% agreed that advisors helped them to complete their studies as planned. However, several comments referred to advisors being impersonal and unresponsive to student needs. Respondents also noted that faculty was overwhelmed by the many advisees they had.

“It was fine, not great, not terrible. Too expensive for an OK experience. I learned a lot, but I could have read all the assigned readings and never attended class, and learned just as much. The way in which most, not all, classes in my program were taught left little to be gained by being in attendance.”

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“Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn.” Benjamin Franklin

We are on the Web!
[http://www.tc.edu/
administration/oa/](http://www.tc.edu/administration/oa/)

If you would like to find out more about the Exit Survey or about the Office of Accreditation and Assessment, please contact us by mail, phone, or e-mail. We invite you to visit us on the web.

<http://www.tc.edu/administration/oa/>

If you are a current student and are planning to graduate in October 2007, February 2008, or May 2008, please consider taking a part in our next Exit Survey, which will be sent out the first week of May 2008.

As always, we appreciate any comments or suggestions.

Technology

While about 71% of respondents reported TC technological resources to be adequate, both quantitative findings and open-ended comments suggested that the use of technological resources in teaching and learning was inadequate.

Sixty percent of respondents agreed that

faculty used technology in their courses. Half of the respondents agreed that programs provided opportunities to use technology in a professional context. About 60% of respondents reported having opportunities to use relevant technologies during internship. Students would like current applications

used by professionals in the field to be made available in the computer labs and to be taught in program courses.