

NSSE 2009 Summary of Student Comments

Pros

Of the students who provided comments (n=269), 20.8% expressed that they enjoyed their overall experiences at Western Michigan University. First-year students and seniors agreed that interactions with peers and faculty, and the overall atmosphere of the university were beneficial and conducive to their personal growth and degree preparation. They also agreed that opportunities to participate in service-learning experiences, student organizations, and extra-curricular activities were part of what made WMU enjoyable. Students did say, however, that they would like to see more information disseminated.

Cons

First-year students and seniors also agreed on areas needing improvement. Of particular concern, were instructor expectations and attitudes (14.1%), and issues with advisors (11.9%).

Students stated that some instructors tended to overload students with assignments, weighted grades too heavily on tests, and required a large number of expensive books and materials. Students also stated that some instructors were difficult to understand, while others seem unprepared for class. Students also stated that faculty attitudes toward students were disparate between colleges and programs.

Students stated that they were frustrated with their advising experiences, commenting that advisors seemed unknowledgeable about their programs, unhelpful, and often unavailable. Some stated that different advisors, from the same program areas, would give different information.

Other areas students cited as in need of improvements include support and assistance for non-traditional students (including course availabilities), support and understanding for non-academic life situations, and parking costs and limitations.

NSSE 2008 Summary of Student Comments

Pros

Of the students who provided comments (n=190), 19.6% expressed that they enjoyed their overall experiences at Western Michigan University. First-year students and seniors agreed that social interaction, and the overall education expectations were exceeded. They also agreed that WMU was a good choice to begin their education, and that opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities were enjoyable. Seniors also commented positively on their programmatic experiences (11.3%).

Cons

Both first-year students and seniors cited areas needing improvement. Of particular concern to first-years were issues with residence hall life (12.0%). They commented on the attitudes of resident hall advisors, the quality and conditions of the buildings, and that the atmosphere is not conducive to studying. The majority of responses from seniors dealt with advising issues (13.4%), and an overall negative experience with the university (10.3%).

Seniors stated that they were frustrated with differing information, which caused additional them to take additional courses. Seniors also stated that some advising departments made it difficult to see the same advisor, or to see any advisor in a timely fashion.

Some seniors cited a group of frustrating conditions that lead to their overall negative experience with WMU. Among these conditions were parking places and fees, difficulties obtaining financial aid, the general conditions of the university, and the reputation of WMU as a "party school."

Other areas students cited as in need of improvements include support and understanding for non-academic life situations, and student conduct.