

OVERVIEW:

- The school-wide student survey, sponsored by Kennedy School Student Government, was an undertaking of considerable dimension. A student committee was convened for three months, working with the support of HKS Administration and in collaboration with faculty advisors.
- The survey was intended to be comprehensive and replicable: comprehensive to capture the concerns of a diverse HKS student body and also to replace several smaller surveys proposed by KSSG and other HKS organizations; replicable in order to build year-to-year continuity in addressing student issues.

STUDENT COMMITTEE:

- The Survey Committee consisted of 16 students from the MPA, MPP, MC/MPA and MPA/ID programs. The committee met seven times between December 2, 2008 and February 24, 2009. Sub-committees for promotion and response, technical production, and faculty feedback met separately. The week that the survey was conducted and the one preceding it consumed no less than hundreds of man-hours. These efforts resulted in an **85% school-wide response rate**.

FACULTY FEEDBACK:

- The following faculty provided valuable support to the process and feedback to the survey beta: Suzanne Cooper, Dan Levy, Richard Zeckhauser, Deb Hughes Hallett, Andy Zellecke, Robert Blendon, and Chris Avery.
- Dean McCarthy and Associate Director of Degree Programs Melssia Wojciechowski also reviewed the beta.

PROMOTIONS:

- An extensive promotions campaign began a week before the survey was conducted. The theme was "I AM HKS." There was an article in the Citizen, as well as promotional e-mails sent to the entire student body. One of these e-mails included a short video featuring Deans Ellwood and McCarthy as well as students promoting their individual issues.
- During the week the survey was "live" (February 17-20), the committee sported t-shirts, manned tables in the forum, and handed out stickers to those who had completed the survey. A class response competition was conducted as well, incentivized by a pizza/beer party for the winning class. Degree Programs contributed \$400 to the promotions campaign, KSSG paid for the pizza party as well as an iPhone for the winner of a lottery.

## SURVEY METHODS:

- The survey was created and disseminated on Survey Monkey, an online provider available for monthly memberships. The e-mail addresses of all HKS students were uploaded to Survey Monkey, and each student received an e-mail with an individual link to the survey. Each link could be used only once. Responses were aggregated instantly, to insure anonymity. Survey Monkey does maintain a list of participants who had completed the survey.
- There was a randomized subgroup (40 students per program) whose responses were collected separately. In the end, the high response rate made this extra data collection unnecessary, so the subgroup was aggregated into the general population.

## RESPONSE RATES:

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| OVERALL | 85% |
| MPP1    | 93% |
| MPP2    | 79% |
| MPA1    | 86% |
| MPA2    | 64% |
| MC/MP   | 95% |
| MPA/ID1 | 91% |
| MPA/ID2 | 80% |
| PhD     | 39% |

## RESULTS:

- The attached Results are not intended to be comprehensive, nor reflect a detailed analysis of the responses, neither generally nor across specific demographics. A survey this extensive could be analyzed endlessly. To that end, the raw data, original questions, and comment fields will be published on the KSSG website.
- The following analysis is intended to be a brief summary of those issues that are most timely or most statistically significant. They fall under 4 categories: commendations, student priorities, policy recommendations, “needs improvement,” and issues for further investigation.

## FOLLOW-THROUGH:

- KSSG will meet with the HKS administration to discuss survey results. All students, faculty, and administration are encouraged to use the results freely. KSSG encourages individual students or student groups to propose resolutions and recommendations based on survey results.
- Before the end of the current school year, a first-year student will be identified to ensure the perpetuation of the survey into next year.

# RESULTS

Analyzed by the Survey Committee and Compiled by Thor Steingraber

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## COMMENDATIONS

1. Recommending HKS to a Friend:  
71% responded they would recommend HKS to a friend with a rating of 8, 9 or 10 (on a scale of 10). The average score was 8.02.
2. Career Goals:  
89% of those responded that they agree or strongly agree that HKS has significantly improved their career goals, and 77% agree or strongly agree that course offerings prepare them for their career goals.
3. Exemplary Faculty:  
Dan Levy, Brian Mandell, Ron Heifetz, Deb Hughes Hallett, Ricardo Hausmann, Nolan Miller, Chris Robichaud, Jose Gomez Ibañez, Roger Porter, Brian Hehir, Joseph Nye, Erzo Luttmmer, Stephen Walt
4. Exemplary Advisors:  
Carol Finney, Eric Rosenbach, Dean Joe McCarthy, Jose Gomez Ibañez

## STUDENT PRIORITIES

1. Professionalism:  
92% of responses value professionalism as part of their student experience.
2. Diversity:  
92% of responses agree or strongly agree that the diversity of the student body has met their expectations, and 97% agree or strongly agree that the diversity of the student body is a strength.
3. Public Service:  
79% who responded intend to enter the public sector or work for nonprofits upon leaving HKS. 75% agree or strongly agree that HKS has met their expectations in its commitment to public service.

## SHORT-TERM POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Shopping Days:  
88% of responses disagree or strongly disagree that they would be comfortable eliminating shopping days. 78% indicated that they changed some, most, or all of their class decisions this year based on shopping days. Shopping days should be preserved.
2. Activities calendar:  
93% of those who responded agreed or strongly agreed that a comprehensive calendar would be useful. Now that the migration to Outlook is nearing completion, there is an opportunity for HKS to turn its attentions to creating an online, interactive scheduling platform.

## “NEEDS IMPROVEMENT”

### 1. Teaching and course offerings:

Amongst the options for “most needs improvement,” 2 of the highest rankings were academic in nature: 233 survey participants indicated that course offerings were 1 of 3 areas most needing improvement, and 270 indicated that the quality of teaching was on their list of the top 3. In both cases, that’s more than 30% of total responses. In contrast, majorities answered favorably in specific questions about teaching (see question 35). In any case, it is important to note that “quality education” and “faculty” were 2 of the top 3 factors in why students decide to attend HKS.

### 2. Financial aid:

319 responses indicated that financial aid was on their top 3 list for needing improvement. The “needs improvement” rating for financial aid was the highest because 174 responses chose it at their number one highest priority. Detailed results indicate that more transparency in the financial aid process is desired: 64% disagree or strongly disagree that they are aware of all financial aid opportunities for which they are eligible, and 93% believe that applicants should be informed of awards before being required to accept admittance.

### 3. Office of Career Advancement:

320 responses indicated that career support was on their list of 3 areas most needing improvement. “My interactions with the Office of Career Advancement have been productive and positive” received a wide spread in the responses, but only 59% agreed or strongly agreed. Acknowledging that the OCA has undergone rapid transformation recently, these numbers which appear low in comparison to other departments might actually represent improvements over time. Question 36 looks at some of these issues and suggests satisfaction in some dimensions, and dissatisfaction in 2 areas: for international students and in the categories pertaining to networking with fellow students and alumni. It would be useful to cross tab results by demographics and degree programs.

## ISSUES REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION:

### 1. Diversity:

It is clear that the HKS student body values diversity (3.6 on a scale of 4), whereas questions about ways in which diversity is promoted through teaching, course offerings, and course materials rate significantly lower (2.7 to 2.9). Additionally, half of the responses indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that they would know how to get help if they had a conflict with a professor or another student. The difference between priority and realization indicate the need for further investigation.

### 2. Facilities:

The lowest ranking amongst 12 choices for “HKS has met my expectations” was facilities. 70% of responses indicate that “somewhere to relax at HKS during the day” is an inadequate. Realizing that space is limited, HKS might explore other ways to maximize the use of the current facilities.