

## 2012 Senior Survey Highlights

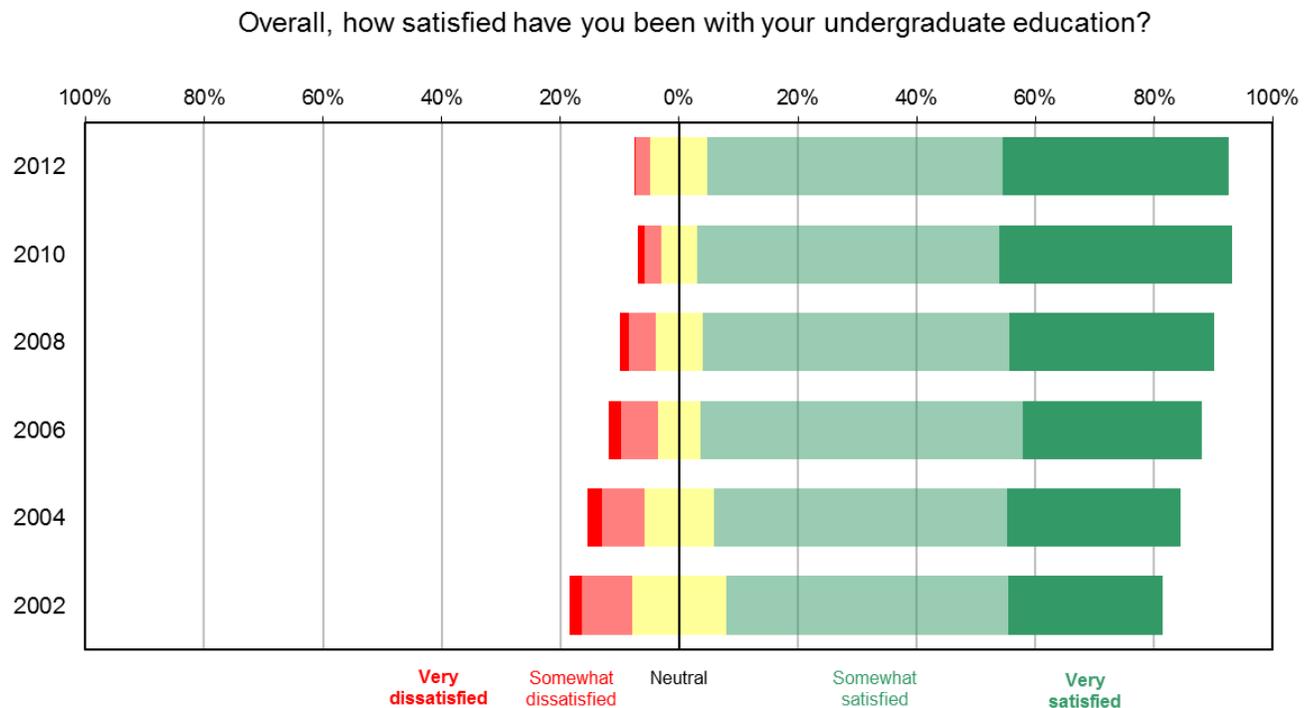
In late March 2012, MIT invited 1,047 fourth-year undergraduates (seniors) to participate in a survey that asked them about their satisfaction with various academic and non-academic experiences, perception of how their abilities changed while at MIT, and post-graduation plans. The survey closed in early May with a 73% response rate.

MIT conducts the Senior Survey every two years. This is the sixth administration. This particular survey is being administered simultaneously at a number of peer institutions.

Also available at <http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/senior.html> are overall frequencies for each question on the survey, along with summary charts. Below are some of the highlights.

### Satisfaction

- 88% of students reported being generally or very satisfied with their overall undergraduate education, slightly lower than in 2010. The chart below shows the results for this question by year.



- In terms of the quality of the academic experience, 92% of seniors said that they were satisfied with opportunities to participate in research with faculty, 90% were satisfied with the out-of-class availability of faculty, and 93% with the overall quality of instruction. Satisfaction with academic advising received the lowest ratings in this

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group of questions, with 56% reporting they are generally or very satisfied. Seniors reported higher satisfaction with the quality of advising within their majors: 69% said they were generally or very satisfied.

- 82% of seniors reported that they were generally or very satisfied with their major(s).
- When asked about the quality of campus services and facilities, 95% or more of students said that they were satisfied with athletic facilities, classrooms, library facilities and resources, and laboratory facilities and equipment. Students reported being least satisfied with food services (36% were generally or very satisfied), followed by the administration's responsiveness to student concerns (50% were generally or very satisfied).

### Campus Life

- When asked their level of satisfaction with various aspects of campus life, the three highest-rated categories were the level of intellectual excitement on campus (96% generally or very satisfied), the feeling of security on campus (96%), and the opportunities to participate in intramural and other recreational athletics (96%).
- The lowest-rated categories were student government (44% generally or very satisfied), the sense of community on campus (70%), and the social life on campus (81%).

### Skills and Abilities

- Students were asked to evaluate how much MIT had contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in a variety of areas. They responded on a four-point scale: Very little or none, Some, Quite a bit, and Very much. This is a different scale than was used in prior years.
- The five top-rated areas were: Understanding and using quantitative reasoning; Thinking critically; Thinking analytically and logically; Understanding yourself: abilities, interests, limitations, personality; and Ability to learn on your own.
- The five lowest-rated areas were: Reading or speaking a foreign language; Critical appreciation of art, music, literature, and drama; Placing current problems in historical/cultural/philosophical perspective; Writing clearly and effectively; and Constructively resolving interpersonal conflicts.

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- The following table shows how students rated each of the 32 items in 2012. The reported figures are a mean of responses, with 1=Very little or none 2=Some 3=Quite a bit and 4=Very much.

| Skill  | Mean | Skill   | Mean |
|--|------|---|------|
| Understanding and using quantitative reasoning   | 3.41 | Functioning effectively as a member of a team                             | 2.89 |
| Thinking critically  | 3.38 | Relating well to people of different races, nations, and religions        | 2.88 |
| Thinking analytically and logically  | 3.37 | Evaluating the role of science and technology in society                  | 2.87 |
| Understanding yourself: abilities, interests, limitations, personality                 | 3.33 | Acquiring broad knowledge across a number of fields                       | 2.85 |
| Ability to learn on your own   | 3.30 | Leadership skills   | 2.77 |
| In-depth knowledge of a field or discipline  | 3.24 | Understanding the complexity of social problems                           | 2.75 |
| Functioning independently, without supervision   | 3.23 | Communicating well orally   | 2.68 |
| Understanding the process of science and experimentation                               | 3.22 | Identifying moral and ethical issues                                      | 2.61 |
| Planning and executing complex projects  | 3.12 | Developing or clarifying a personal code of values or ethics              | 2.59 |
| Creating original ideas and solutions  | 3.09 | Developing self-esteem/self-confidence                                    | 2.51 |
| An ability to use the techniques, skills, and modern tools necessary for my profession | 3.07 | Developing global awareness   | 2.51 |
| Synthesizing and integrating ideas and information                                     | 3.05 | Constructively resolving interpersonal conflicts                          | 2.47 |
| Evaluating and choosing between alternative courses of action                          | 3.04 | Writing clearly and effectively   | 2.37 |
| Judging the merits of arguments based on their sources, methods and reasoning          | 2.99 | Placing current problems in historical/cultural/philosophical perspective | 2.34 |
| Career- or work-related knowledge and skills   | 2.94 | Critical appreciation of art, music, literature, and drama                | 2.09 |
| Conducting scholarly research  | 2.94 | Reading or speaking a foreign language                                    | 1.93 |

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### Post-Graduation Plans

- 47% of students indicated that they planned on working for pay full-time this fall, while 39% indicated full-time graduate or professional school (students could choose more than one activity).
- 57% of students anticipating full-time employment had accepted a position while an additional 14% were considering one or more specific offers.
- Of those who accepted a position, the top three industries were engineering (26%), computer science/technology (17%), and consulting (15%).
- Of those attending graduate or professional school in the fall, 94% have one or more acceptances.
- As the Senior Survey was administered in March, well in advance of graduation, post-graduation plans are more comprehensively captured by the Graduating Students Survey, sponsored by the Careers Office:  
<http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/gss.html>

### Activities

- 88% of seniors reported having done research with a faculty member during their time at MIT.
- 70% had an internship in the U.S. and 30% had an internship abroad.
- The most popular extracurricular activities were miscellaneous student organizations and clubs (64% reported participating), volunteer service (43%), and intramural athletics (39%). When asked if they held leadership roles in any of these extracurricular organizations, nearly half of seniors responded that they had held a leadership role in one of the many “other” student organizations or clubs.
- 75% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to find a balance between academic work and extracurricular activities, up from 72% in 2010.

### Finances

- 58% of seniors reported that they did not personally borrow any money to finance their undergraduate education, up from 46% in 2010.
- 37% of students indicated that paying for their education had a considerable or severe impact on their family, down from 39% in 2010.
- When asked which activities they had to pass on due to a lack of money, nearly half of the respondents said they had to forego non-paying research or internship opportunities.

### MIT-only Questions

- While the majority of the survey was part of a survey administered in concert with our peers, several questions at the end were MIT-specific questions and asked students about their sense of self, their aspirations, and more skills and abilities questions. A full list of these questions can be found at the end of the aforementioned overall results document.

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- Students agreed most strongly with the following statements: I have friends at MIT with whom I can talk to if something is bothering me; I am a capable student, at least on an equal plane with others; and I have a support network at home to whom I can talk if something is bothering me.
- The statements that received the lowest levels of agreement were: I measure success by my GPA; I measure my success by my leadership roles in extracurricular activities; and I measure my success by my ability to stand out among my peers.
- Students were asked how well their undergraduate experience prepared them to perform a variety of tasks on a scale of Very poorly to Very well. The task that received the highest ratings were: Deliver on all elements of a difficult job or project you agreed to do within the accepted time frame (67% saying More than adequately or Very well). The task with the lowest rating was Start a company (15% saying More than adequately or very well).