

**University of Washington Bothell
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs**

**Report on the Survey of Non-returning
Lower Division Students**

June 8, 2009

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Background and Objectives

In order to better understand attrition among lower division students, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Washington Bothell (UWB) conducted a telephone survey of students who enrolled as freshmen at UWB but who have since dropped out or not returned to the university (excluding dismissals). The survey was designed to assess these former students' opinions of and experiences with UWB. Survey results will be used in developing programs and services to better meet students' needs and to reduce attrition.

The information objectives of the survey included assessing former students' opinions and experiences in the following areas:

- Overall satisfaction with experiences at UWB;
- The importance of selected academic and personal or social considerations in the decisions to leave UWB, and students' opinions of what would have caused them to continue their studies at UWB;
- Contact with faculty and staff while a student at UWB;
- Where students currently attend college or university, and their major area of study, if they are in school;
- Students' first choice college or university when they enrolled at UWB.

This report describes the results of the survey of lower division students who have left or not returned to UWB. Research methods are discussed first, followed by results and key findings and conclusions. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey is included in the appendix.

Research Methods

According to UWB records, total of 79 students enrolled as freshmen in 2006, 2007, or 2008 and subsequently did not return to or dropped out of UWB. Interviewers at a professional research firm attempted to reach each of these students and completed interviews with 28 of them. The sample disposition and response rate are shown in the next table.

Total respondent base (students who have not returned or dropped out, excluding students who were dismissed)	79
Bad numbers (disconnected, wrong number)	15
Currently enrolled/graduated from UWB	2
Respondent not qualified (language barrier)	2
Total number of eligible respondents	60
Completed interviews	28
Respondent refused to participate	7
No answer, answering machine, busy signal (interviewers attempted calls at least 5 times between February 26 and March 10, 2009)	18
Moved, not available (no new number available)	7
Response rate (Completed interviews/Total number eligible)	46%

The telephone interviews were completed between February 26, 2009, and March 5, 2009.

The questionnaire used in the survey was developed with the input and approval of representatives of UWB Enrollment Management, the Center for University Studies and Programs (CUSP), and Academic Affairs. The questionnaire was designed to gather information about students' opinions of and experiences with UWB. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

Limitations

While interviews were completed with almost half of the eligible survey respondents, the total number of interviews completed was small. If the 28 survey participants comprised a random sample of all 77¹ students who have dropped out of or did not return to the UWB lower division program, the maximum margin of error in research results would be expected to be ± 14.8 percent at the 95 percent confidence level ($p < .05$).

This was not a random sample, however. While former students who participated and former students who did not participate in the survey did not differ significantly on

¹ This includes all students listed, even those with bad numbers except the two who said they were currently enrolled or had graduated.

several variables (race/ethnicity, gender, age, whether the student was a first generation college student, major requested at the time of application, SAT math and verbal scores, high school GPA, and UWB cumulative GPA),² there may be some systematic differences between these two groups of students and the margin of error may be larger than ± 14.8 on some items. Despite these limitations, the responses of the students who participated in the survey can provide some perspective and insight regarding the experiences of the lower division students who are no longer enrolled at UWB.

Results

Survey results were analyzed to see if there were differences based on students' gender, whether UWB was their first choice college or university when they enrolled, and whether students discussed the fact that they were considering leaving UWB with a faculty or staff member prior to leaving.³ While there were no differences based on gender, there were a few differences in responses based on whether UWB was a student's first choice and whether students spoke with faculty or staff prior to leaving.

The overall results of the UWB attrition survey are presented below for each of the information objectives of the survey. Then, differences based on whether UWB was a student's first choice and whether students spoke with faculty or staff prior to leaving are discussed.

The charts and tables that detail the results are based on the number of participants answering each question, which typically was all 28 students. The number of students answering each question is noted on the charts and tables (e.g., N=28).

Overall Satisfaction

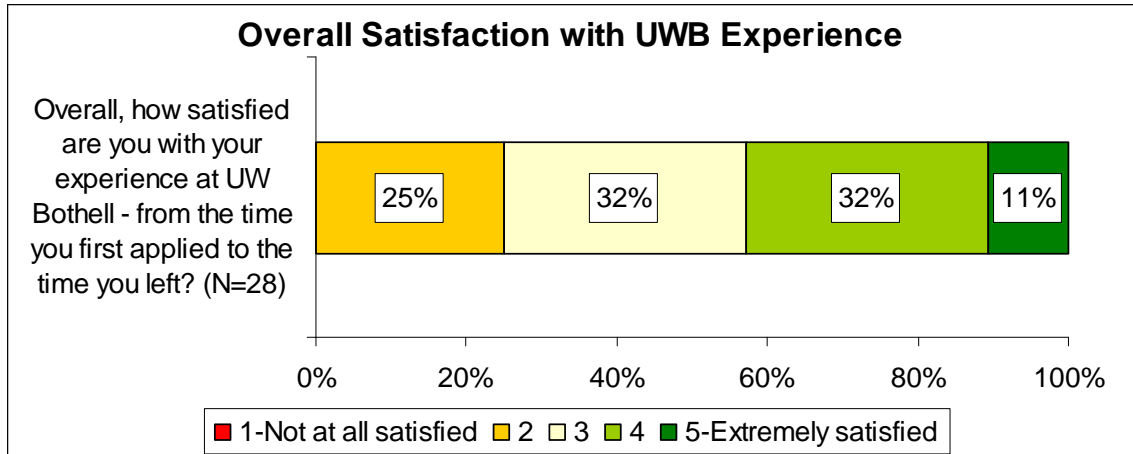
Three questions explored students' overall satisfaction with UWB:

- "Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at UW Bothell – from the time you first applied to the time you left?"
- "Would you recommend UW Bothell to a friend or family member?"
- "Why would/wouldn't you recommend UWB?"

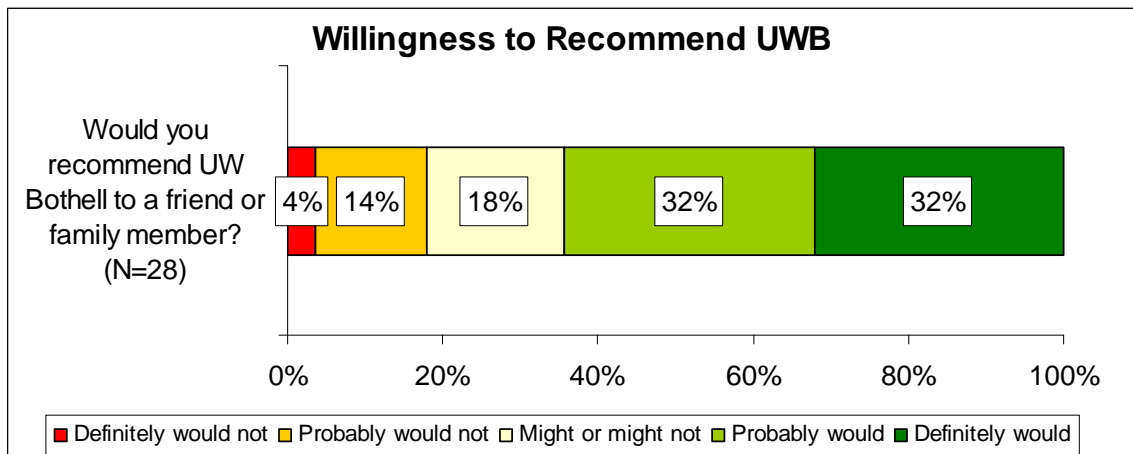
² This information was available in the student database for all students, which permitted comparison of survey participants with non-participants.

³ Differences were tested using chi-square tests and t-tests for independent samples (*SPSS 15.0. for Windows*, Release 15.0.1.1. 3 Jul 2007).

As the next chart shows, over 40 percent of the students participating in the survey said that they were “extremely satisfied” or “very satisfied,” with “your experience at UW Bothell – from the time you first applied to the time you left.” None of the students said that they were “not at all satisfied” with their experience at UWB.



Almost two-thirds (64%) of the students said that they “definitely” or “probably would” recommend UWB to a friend or family member. Only one student (4%) said that he or she “definitely would not” recommend UWB, as shown in the next chart.



Students who said that they “definitely would” or “probably would” recommend UWB to a friend or family member said that they would do so for a variety of reasons, including the positive experiences they had there, smaller class sizes, availability of teachers, and the quality of the education. Some students added that, they would recommend UWB if it “offered the major [their friend or family member] wanted.”

The five students who said that they “definitely would not” or “probably would not” recommend UWB also identified a variety of reasons for doing so. Several students mentioned majors, for example, difficulty in changing majors with the Discovery Core program and “not many majors offered other than business majors . . .”

Decision to Leave UWB

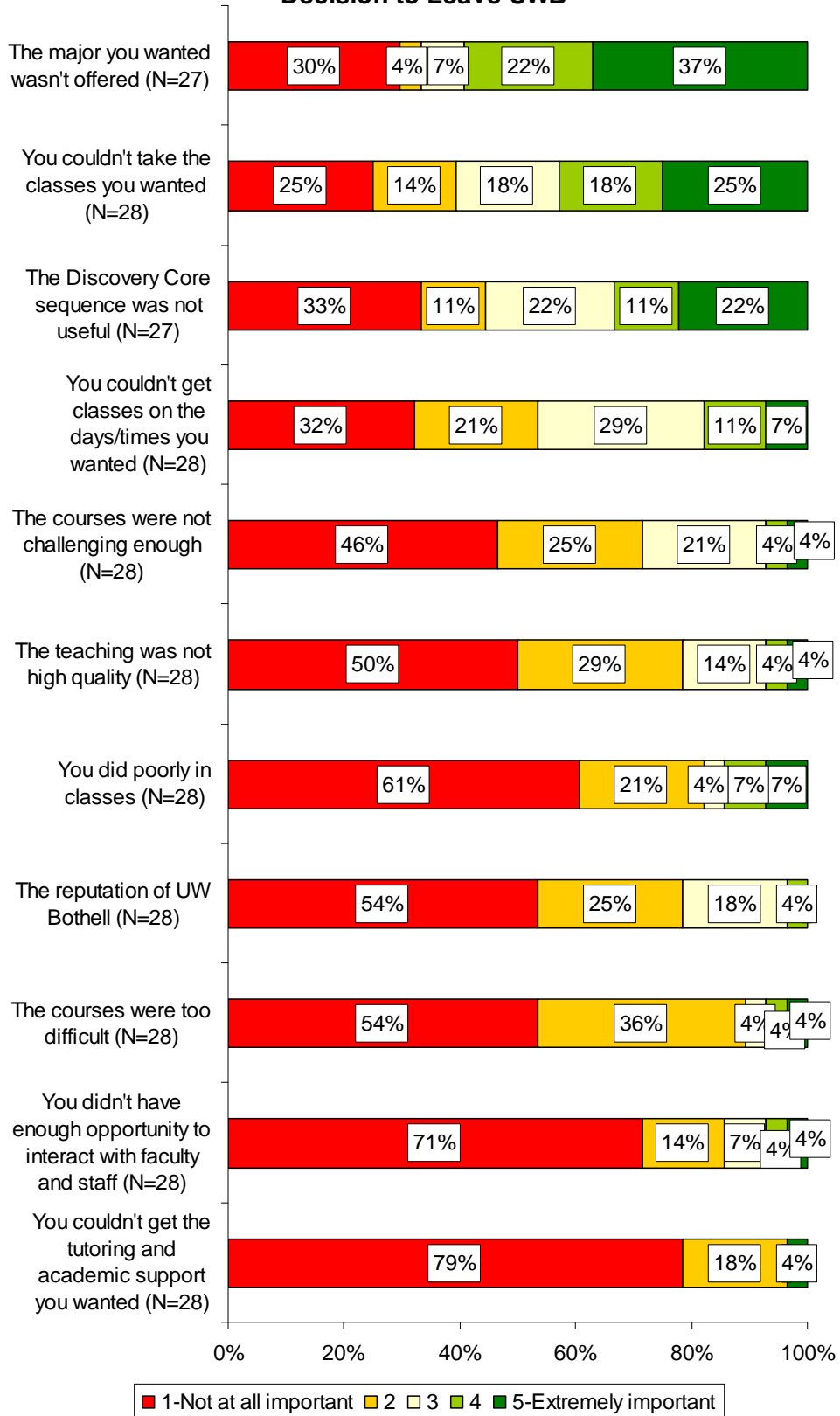
A series of questions examined the importance of selected academic and personal or social considerations in students' decisions to leave UWB. Ratings of the importance of these items are shown in the next two charts. Percentages do not always total 100 in these and subsequent charts due to rounding.

Academic Considerations. As the next chart shows, every academic consideration included was rated "not at all important" in the decision to leave UWB by at least seven students (25%) students. At the same time, all but one of the academic considerations was rated "extremely important" by at least one student (4%). No one rated the "Reputation of UW Bothell" as "extremely important."

Of the academic considerations included in the survey, "The major you wanted wasn't offered," was rated most important in the decision to leave UWB. Over half of the students (59%) rated this a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means "extremely important," and the average rating of this item was 3.33. "You couldn't take the classes you wanted," also had an average rating above 3 (3.04); this was rated a 4 or a 5 by 43 percent of the students.

The items rated least important in the decision to leave UWB were "You couldn't get the tutoring and academic support you wanted," and "You didn't have enough opportunity to interact with the faculty and staff." Over 70 percent of the students rated these "not at all important." The average ratings of these items were just 1.32 and 1.54, respectively.

Importance of Selected Academic Considerations in Decision to Leave UWB



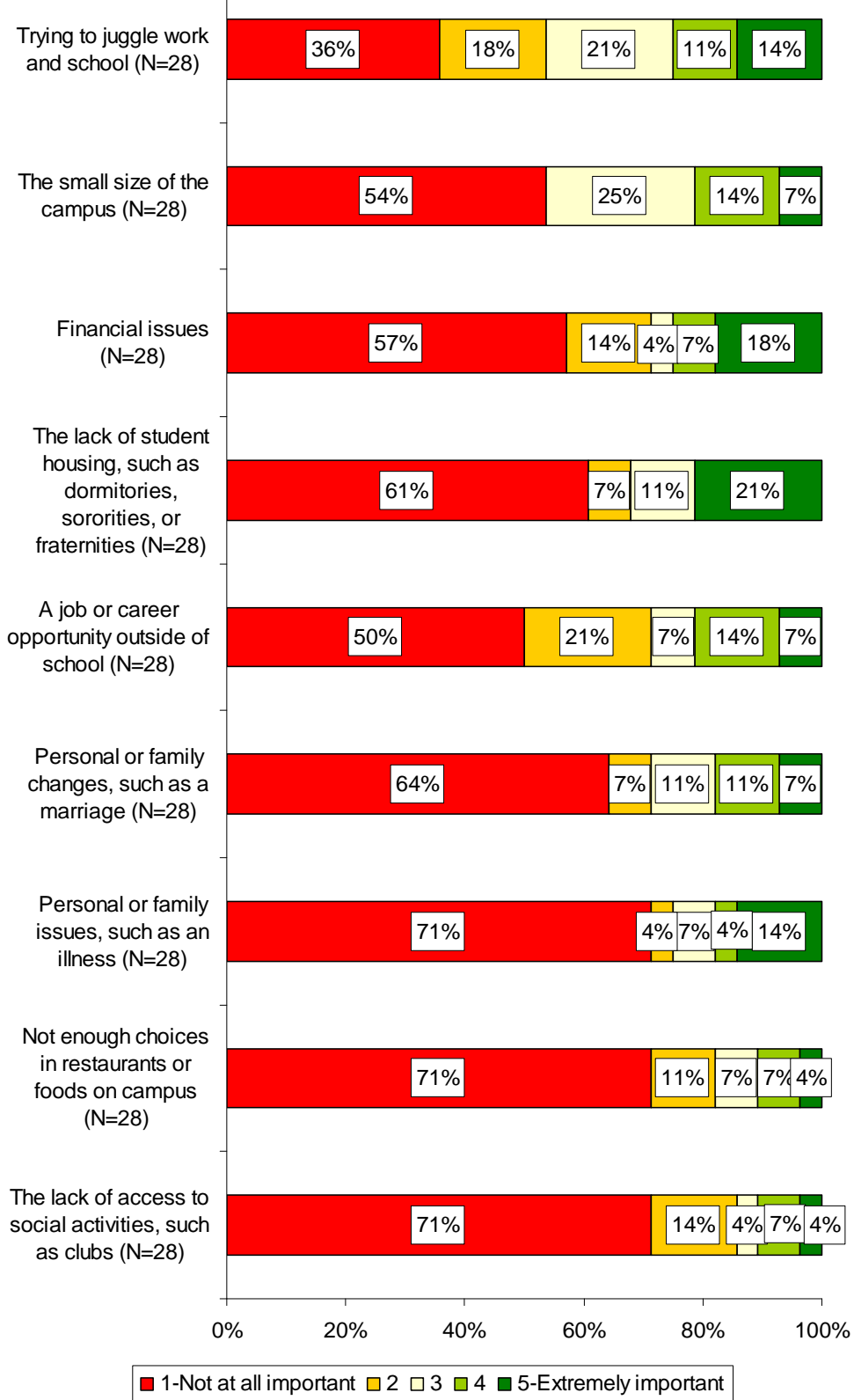
The 16 students who rated the consideration, “The major you wanted wasn’t offered,” a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely important” were asked, “What major did you want that wasn’t offered?” Students identified many different majors, including “architecture,” “art,” “BS in nursing,” “business entrepreneurship,” “earth and space sciences,” “mechanical engineering,” “English,” and “history.”

The 12 students who rated the consideration, “You couldn’t take the classes you wanted,” a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely important” were asked, “What classes did you want that you couldn’t take?” Students identified a wide range of classes, including “art and design,” “certain business classes,” “plain English; plain math basics,” and “science, nursing, and medical.”

Personal or Social Considerations. All of the personal or social considerations examined in the survey were rated “not at all important” in the decision to leave UWB by at least 10 students (36%), and “extremely important” by at least one student (4%). “Trying to juggle work and school,” was rated highest in importance, with 25 percent of the students rating it a 4 or a 5 on the five-point scale where 5 means “extremely important.” The average rating on this item was 2.50.

The two lowest-rated personal or social considerations in the decision to leave UWB were “The lack of access to social activities, such as clubs,” and “Not enough choices in restaurants or foods on campus.” These were rated “not at all important” by 71 percent of the students and “extremely important” by just one student (4%), as shown in the next chart. The average ratings of these items were 1.57 and 1.61, respectively.

Importance of Selected Personal or Social Considerations in Decision to Leave UWB



When asked, “What would have caused you to continue your studies at UWB,” the most common themes in students’ responses focused on their interest in additional or alternate majors and courses. Examples of these responses are as follows:

- *“If a few more interesting majors were offered at UW Bothell.”*
- *“More specific programs.”*
- *“More course choices in general. I had trouble finding any classes I had interest in, like art, a broader range.”*
- *“I changed my major and needed science classes that weren’t offered.”*

Some students mentioned personal or health considerations, such as the following:

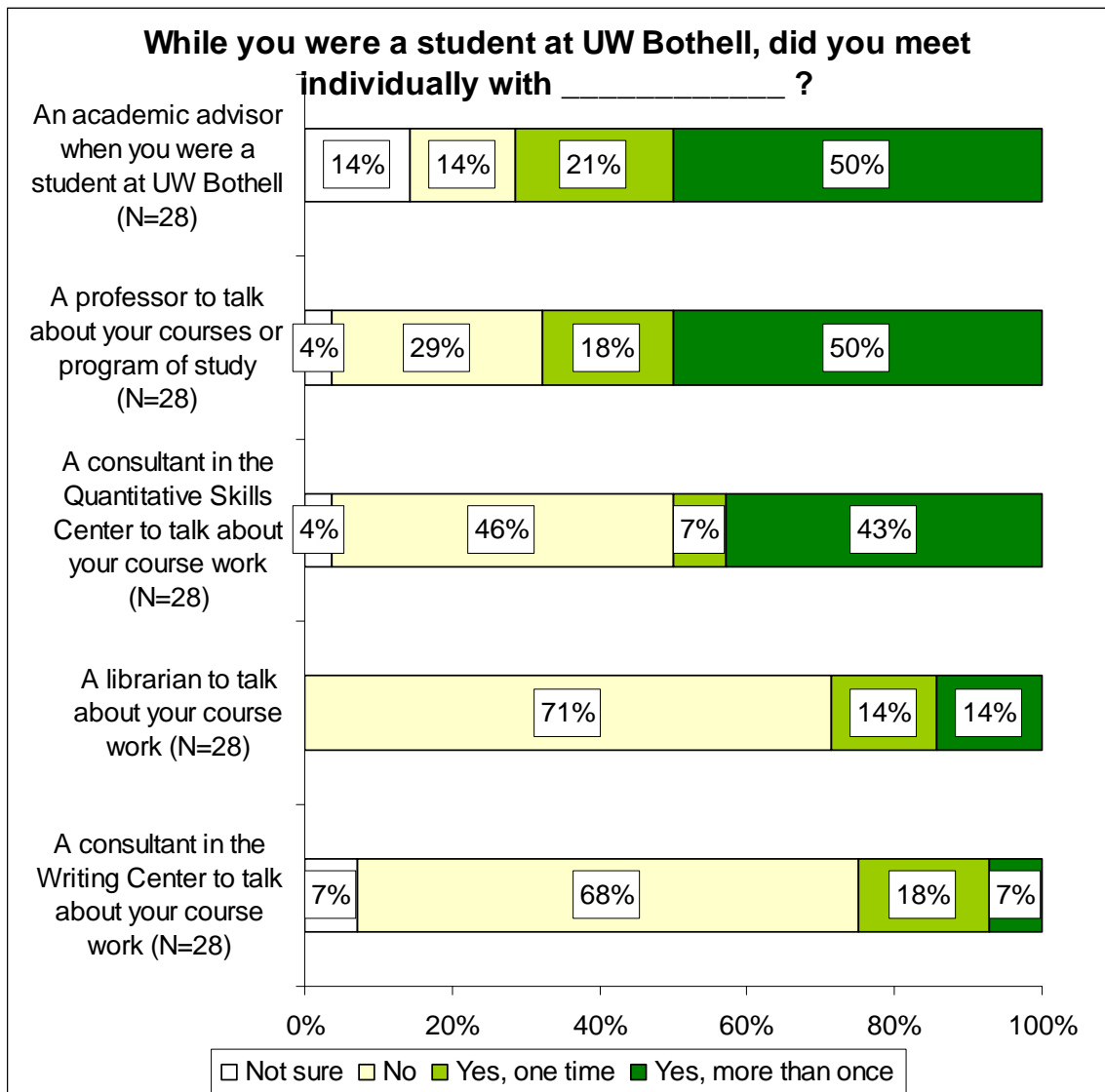
- *“If I was sure what I wanted with my life and studies at that time,” and*
- *“There was nothing I could do. I was moving out of state.”*

Other students mentioned convenience, as the following examples illustrate:

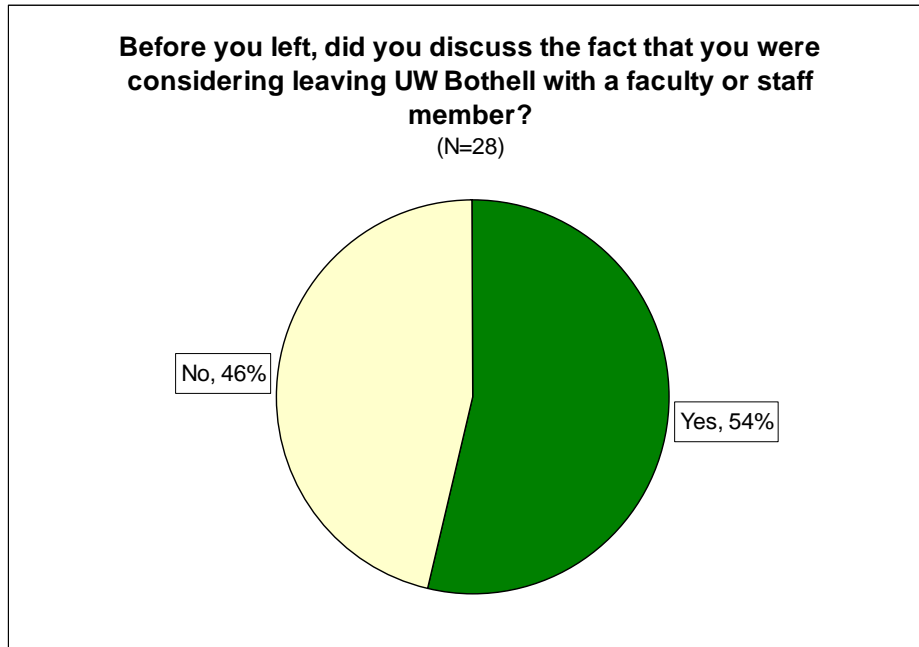
- *“If it was closer to my home. Very long commute,”*
- *“Classes offered at non-convenient times. I wanted evening classes.”*

Contact with Faculty and Staff at UWB

Several questions focused on students' contact with faculty and staff while they were enrolled at UWB. As the next chart shows, 71 percent of the students said that they met with an academic advisor at least once, and 68 percent met with "a professor to talk about your courses or program of study" at least once. Half of the students said that they met with a consultant in the Quantitative Skills Center, 28 percent with a librarian, and 25 percent with a consultant in the Writing Center at least once while they were students at UWB.

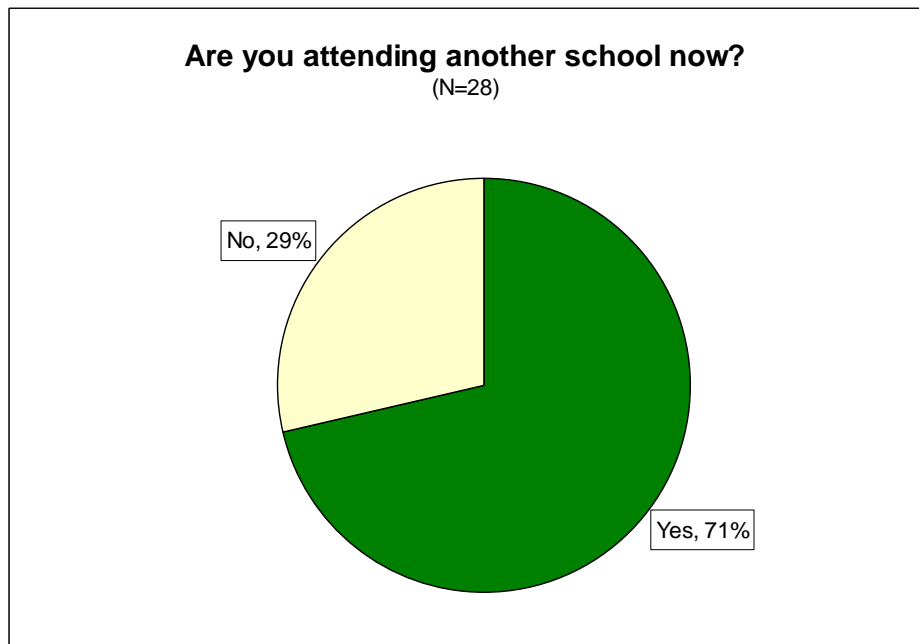


Before they left UWB, about half (54%) of the students said that they discussed the fact that they were considering leaving with a faculty or staff member, as shown in the next chart.



Current Studies

Seventy-one percent (20) of the students participating in the survey said that they were attending another school, as shown in the next chart.



Nineteen of the 20 students who were attending another school said that they attended school full time, and one said that she or he attended school part time.

Seventy percent (14 of 20) of the students who were attending another school said that they were attending community colleges. The following table shows the schools students said they were attending at the time of the survey.

College or University Students Attend Now
(N=20)

College or University	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Bellevue Community College	7	35%
Shoreline Community College	3	15%
Cascadia Community College	2	10%
Lake Washington Technical	2	10%
Western Washington University	2	10%
Central Washington University	1	5%
Eastern Washington University	1	5%
Liberty University	1	5%
University of Montana	1	5%

The next table shows students' answers to the question, "What is your major area of study at this school, or, if you haven't declared a major yet, what do you expect your major to be?" Business was the most frequently mentioned major, followed by engineering and nursing. Most of the majors were mentioned only once.

Current or Expected Major Area of Study
(N=20)

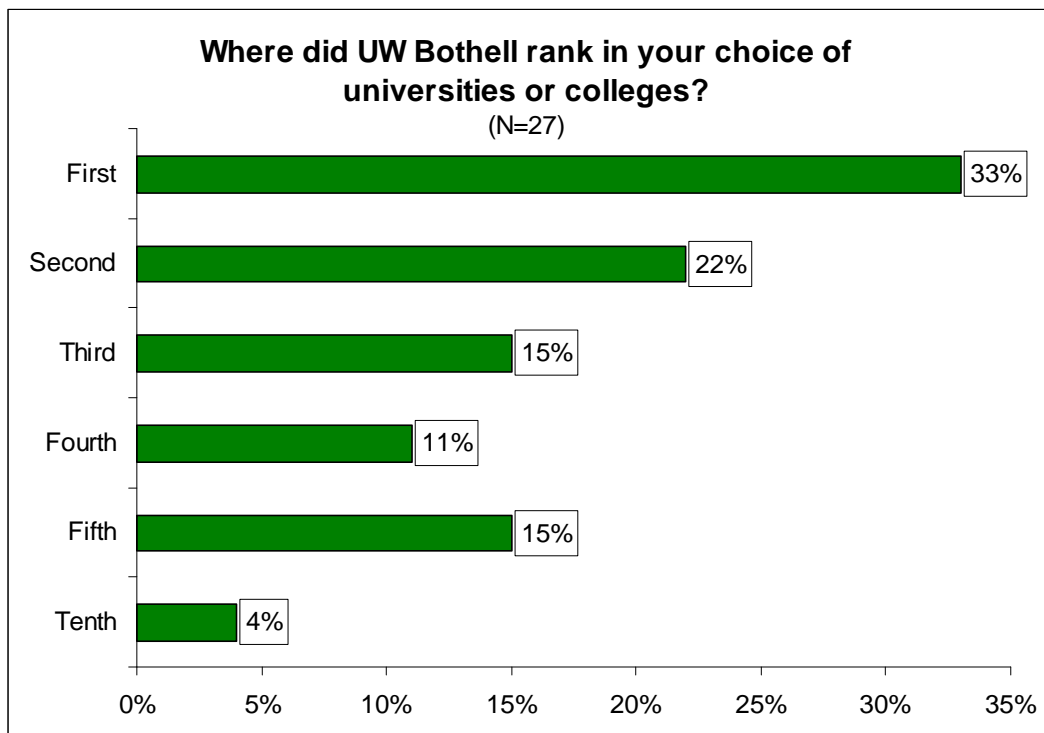
Major	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Business (including "entrepreneurship" and "marketing")	6	30%
Engineering (including "mathematics or mechanical engineering")	3	15%
Nursing ("Pre-nursing" and "early childhood education BSN program")	2	10%
Arts and Science AA Degree	1	5%
Computer Science	1	5%
Construction Management	1	5%
Dental	1	5%
Earth and Space Science	1	5%
Environmental Studies	1	5%
Interior Design	1	5%
Psychology	1	5%
Not sure – General studies right now	1	5%

Students' answers to the question, "What makes this school a better fit for you," raised some of the same themes that emerged in response to the question about what would have caused them to continue at UWB: Course options and convenience. Costs also were mentioned by several students. Examples of response to this question are as follows:

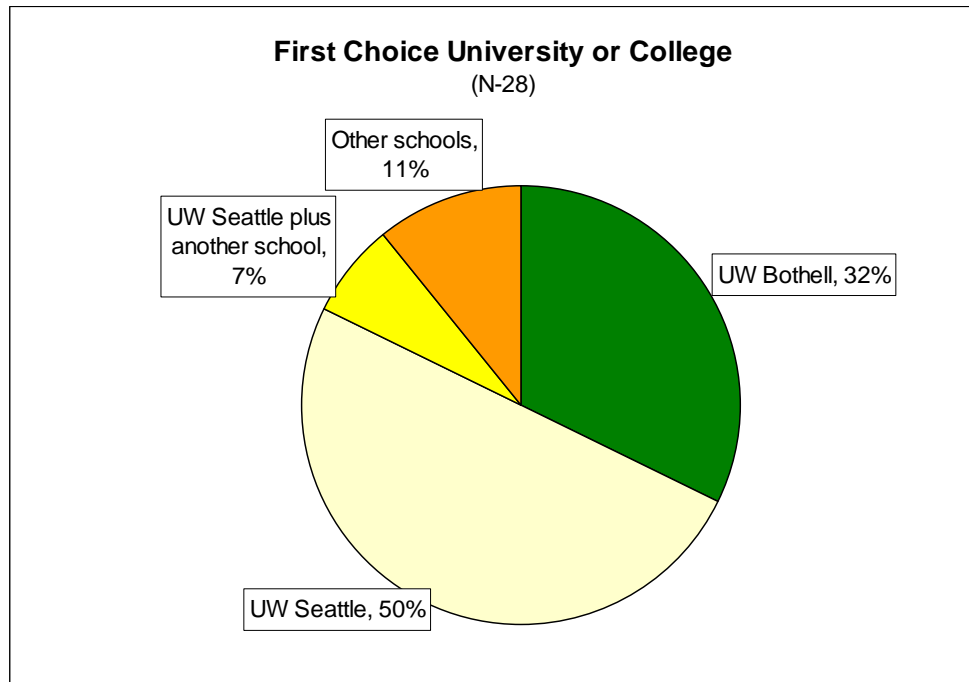
- *"The classes that are available – business."*
- *"The school offers scientific classes, more hands-on classes."*
- *"The broader range of classes, closer to my home, and cheaper."*
- *"Closer to my home, has more class options available."*
- *"It's closer and a bit cheaper and they have a lot of variety as far as course work classes. The teachers aren't as good."*
- *"It's cheaper and I have more friends here. It's more comfortable."*

First Choice University or College

Nine students (33% of the 27 who answered this question) said that UWB was their first choice university or college when they enrolled at UWB. UWB was the second choice for six students (22%), and it was ranked third or below by the remaining 12 students, as shown in the next chart.



The next chart shows the universities that said were their first choices. UW Seattle was most often mentioned as a first choice: Half (14) of the students named UW Seattle as their only first choice, and another two students (7%) named UW Seattle plus another school (University of Oregon or Washington State) as their first choice. About one-third (9) of the students said that UW Bothell was their first choice, as noted above. The remaining three students named other schools in Washington or Oregon as their first choices (Washington State University, Eastern or Western Washington University, and Oregon State University).⁴



Background Information

A few questions asked students for background information, including whether they work:

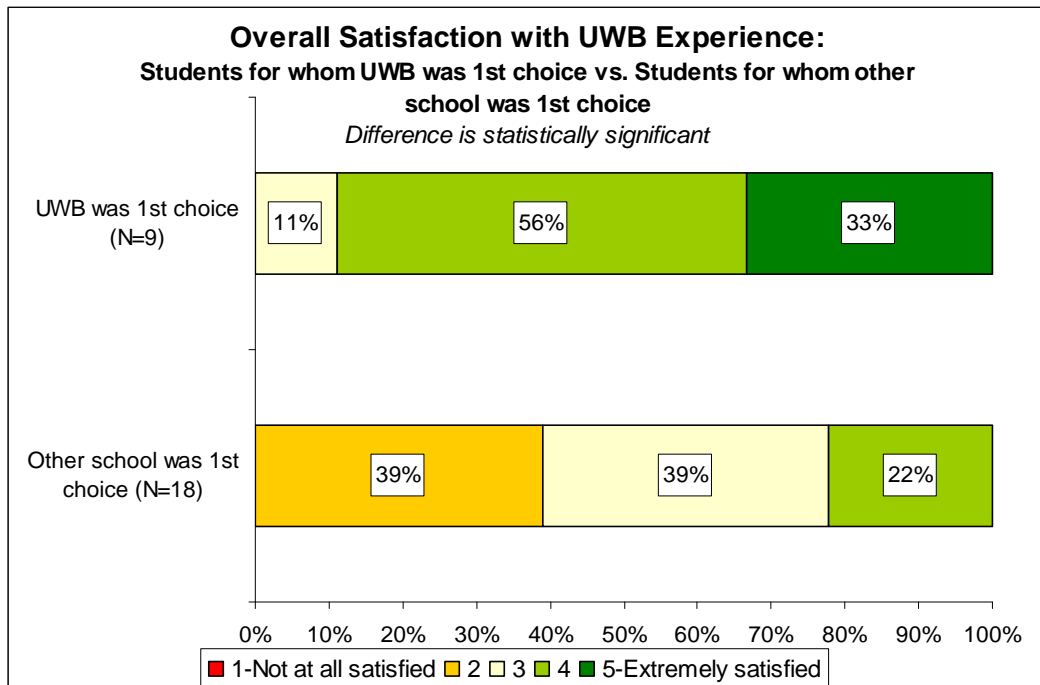
- Seven of the students who participated in the survey said that they work full time, and eleven said that they work part time. Nine students said that they do volunteer work part time.
- Twenty-seven (96%) of the survey respondents said that they decided not to return to UWB between quarters, and one (4%) dropped out during a quarter.
- Just over half (54%) of the 28 survey respondents were women, and less than half (46%) were men.

⁴ One student, who did not answer the question about whether UWB was the first choice, indicated a first choice here that was not UWB (“Eastern or Western Washington”). This student’s response is included in this chart.

Comparisons based on Whether UWB was First Choice and Whether Students Talked with Faculty/Staff about Leaving

There were several differences in students' responses based on whether UWB was students' first choice university or college and whether students talked with a faculty or staff member about leaving while they were still enrolled.

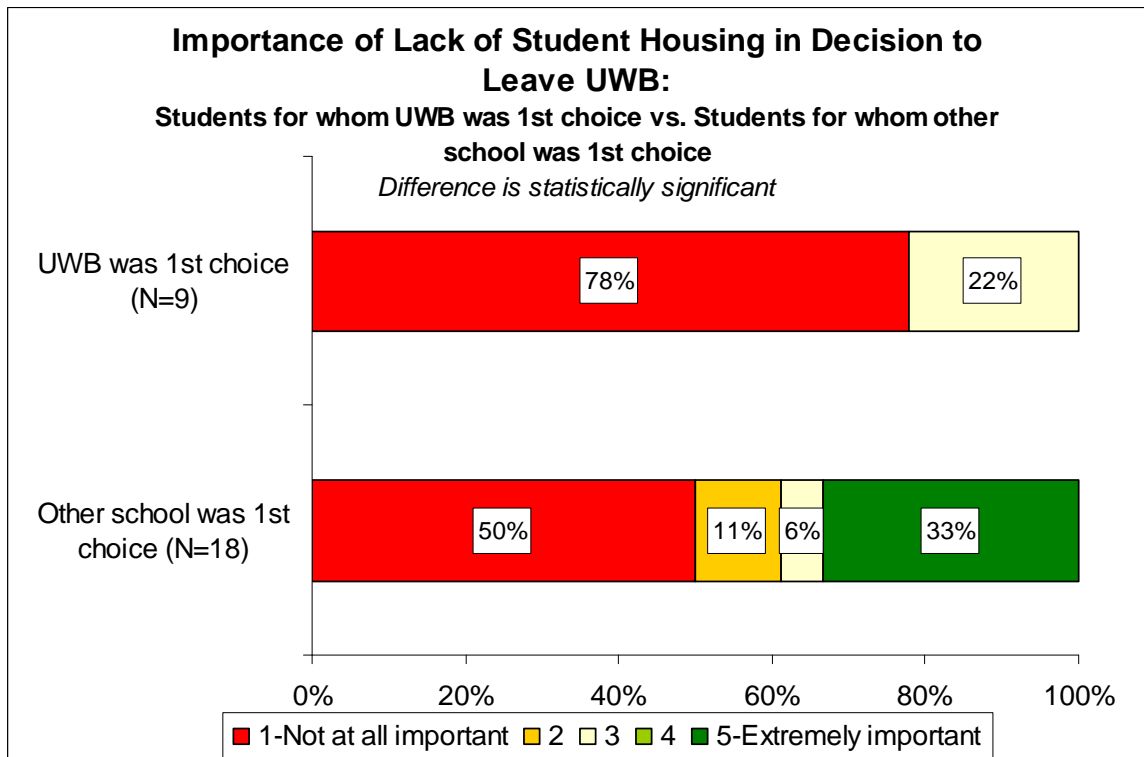
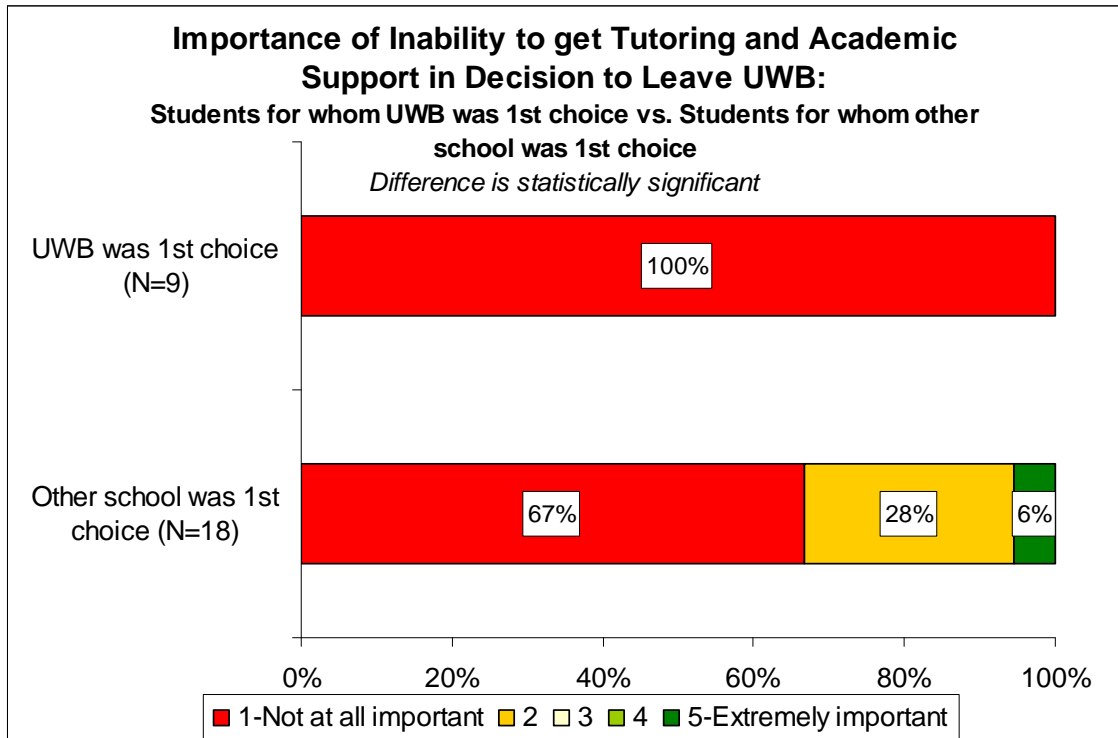
Students for whom UWB was their first choice university or college were significantly more satisfied with their experience at UWB than were students for whom another school was the first choice (average rating of 4.22 vs. 2.83). Students' responses to this question are detailed in the next chart.

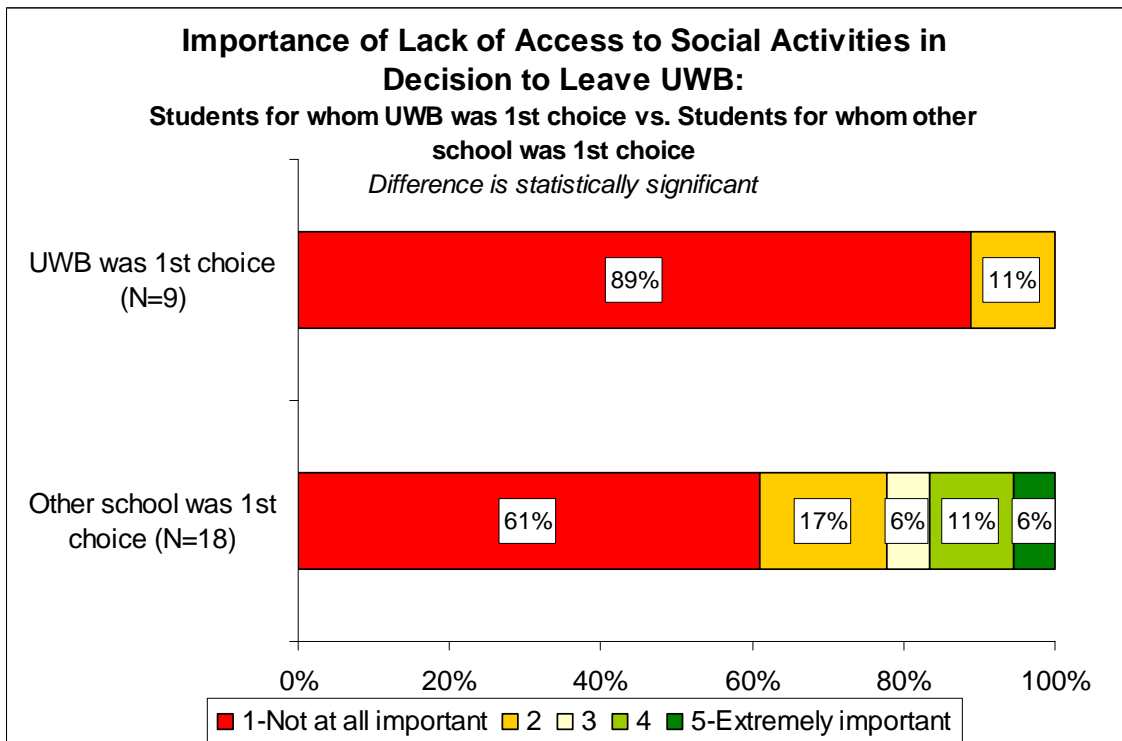
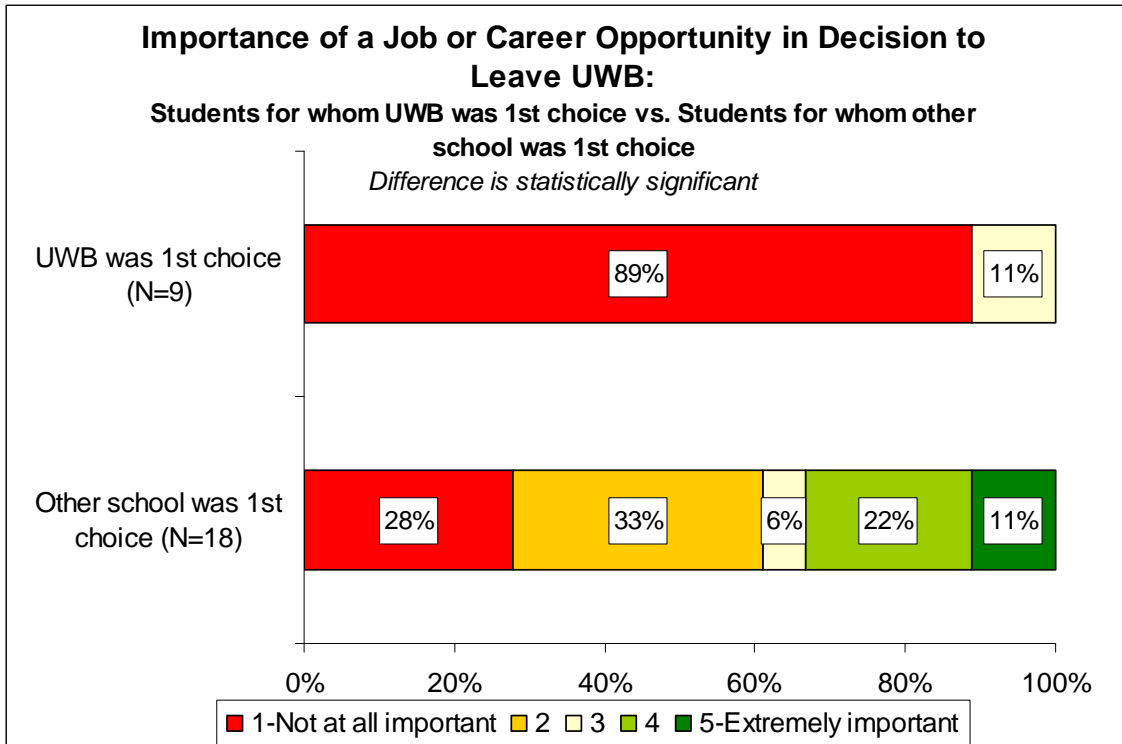


In addition, four academic and personal or social considerations were significantly less important to students for whom UWB was their first choice than to students for whom another school was their first choice:

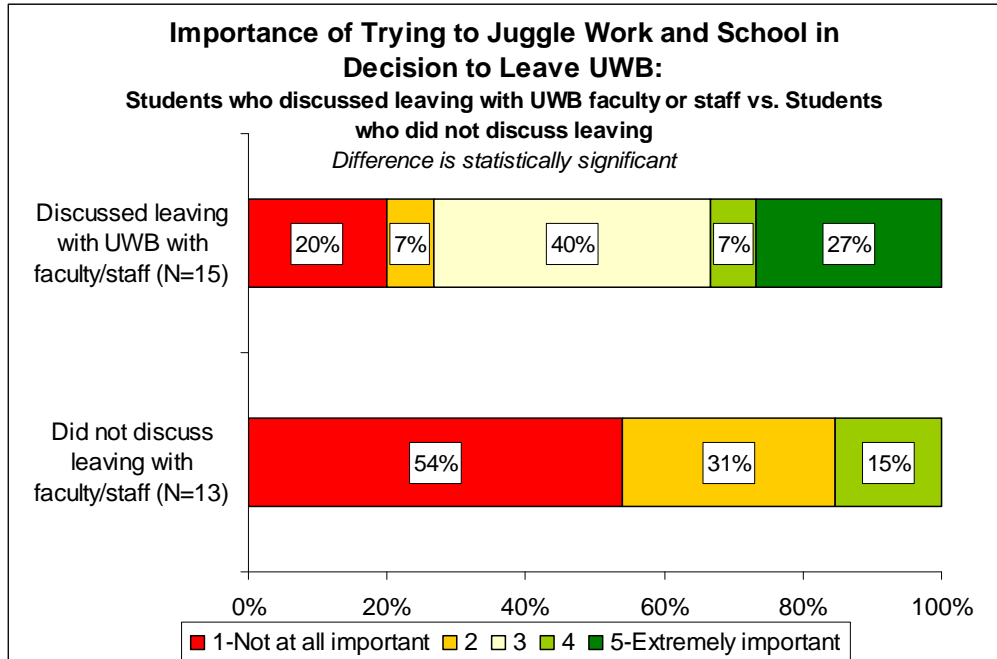
- “You couldn’t get the tutoring and academic support you wanted” (average rating of 1.00 vs. 1.50);
- “The lack of student housing, such as dormitories, sororities, and fraternities” (average rating of 1.44 vs. 2.56);
- “A job or career opportunity outside of school” (average rating of 1.22 vs. 2.56); and
- “The lack of access to social activities, such as clubs” (average rating of 1.11 vs. 1.83).

Ratings of importance on these items are shown in the next four charts.

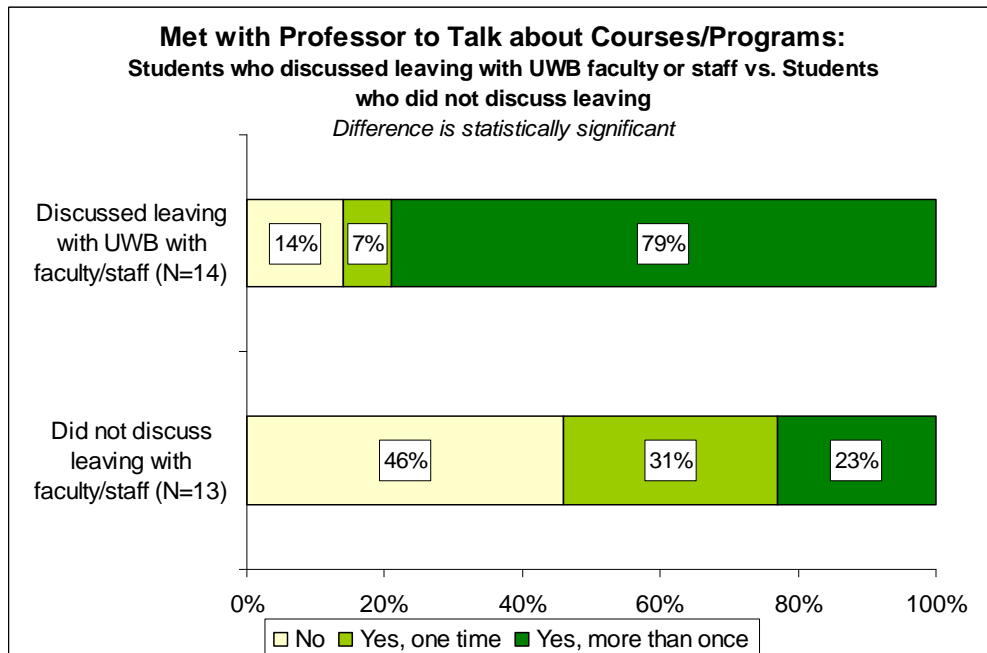




One personal or social consideration, “trying to juggle work and school,” was significantly more important to students who discussed leaving with a faculty or staff member than to students who did not discuss leaving (average rating of 3.13 vs. 1.77). The responses to this question are shown in the next chart.



Finally, as might be expected, significantly more of the students who discussed leaving with a faculty or staff member than students who did not discuss leaving said that they met with “a professor to talk about your courses or program of study” while they were students at UWB. These differences are shown in the next chart.



Key Findings and Conclusions

The survey of students who enrolled at UWB as freshmen but have since dropped out or not returned provides perspective on students' decisions to leave UWB. Faculty and staff can use these results to inform decisions about programs and services to better serve and retain students. The following discussion of key survey findings and conclusions are offered as a supplement to, not a substitute for, the careful review and analysis of results by faculty and staff.

- None of the lower division students who left UWB were “not at all satisfied” with their experience at UWB, and 43 percent rated their overall satisfaction a 4 or a 5 on a five-point scale where 5 means “extremely satisfied.” Furthermore, only one of the students surveyed said that he or she “definitely would not” recommend UWB to a friend or family member. Almost two thirds of the students surveyed said that they “definitely would” or “probably would” recommend UWB.
- The academic considerations rated most important in students' decisions to leave UWB were “The major you wanted wasn't offered,” and “You couldn't take the classes you wanted.” The social or personal consideration rated most important in decisions to leave UWB was “Trying to juggle work and school.”
- The academic considerations rated least important in decisions to leave UWB were “You couldn't get the tutoring and academic support you wanted,” and “You didn't have enough opportunity to interact with faculty and staff.” The personal or social considerations rated least important in decisions to leave UWB were “The lack of access to social activities, such as clubs,” and “not enough choices in restaurants or foods on campus.”
- A clear theme in students' responses to open ended questions about what would have caused them to continue at UWB, what makes their current school a better fit for them, and why they would (or would not) recommend UWB to a friend or family member was the view that UWB has limited choices in classes and majors.

These results suggest that UWB should continue to focus on expanding programs of study and course offerings, and that lower priority can be given to concerns such as increasing tutoring and academic support, restaurant or food choices, and social activities on campus.

Appendix

Questionnaire

ID# ____ _

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BOTHELL LOWER DIVISION STUDENT
SURVEY**

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Interviewer: _____+
Name: _____ Date: _____
Student #: _____

Hello, this is _____ with Consumer Opinion Services, a research firm in Seattle. I am calling on behalf of the University of Washington Bothell as part of a research study. For this study I need to speak with [READ NAME]. Would that be you?

CONTINUE -- Yes 1
ASK TO SPEAK TO PERSON/FOR TIME TO CALL BACK -- No 2
ASK TO SPEAK TO PERSON/FOR TIME TO CALL BACK -- DK/REF 3

[REPEAT FIRST PARAGRAPH IF NECESSARY.] I am calling on behalf of the University of Washington strictly for research purposes. Your answers will be completely confidential and will be used by UW Bothell in developing programs and services to better meet students' needs. This is not a sales call, and no sales calls or solicitations will result from this call. UW Bothell is very interested in insuring that it provides the best possible academic programs and student services.

1. First, to confirm, did you attend UW Bothell as a freshman and/or sophomore?

CONTINUE – Yes 1
THANK & TERMINATE – No 2
THANK & TERMINATE – DK/REF 3

2. Did you either drop out during an academic quarter or decide not to return to UW Bothell between quarters or school years?

CONTINUE – Yes, Dropped out during an academic quarter 1
CONTINUE – Yes, decided not to return between quarters/years 2
THANK & TERMINATE – No, currently enrolled at UWB 3
THANK & TERMINATE – DK/REF 4

3. How important was each of the following academic considerations in your decision to leave UW Bothell? Please rate each item using a 5-point scale, where 5 means “extremely important” and 1 means “not at all important.” First, how important [WAS/WAS IT THAT] _____ in your decision to leave UW Bothell? *READ AND ROTATE.*

	Not at all important			Extremely Important		DK/REF
	1	2	3	4	5	
a. The courses were too difficult	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. The courses were not challenging enough	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. The teaching was not high quality	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. The Discovery Core sequence was not useful	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. You couldn't get classes on the days/times you wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. You couldn't take the classes you wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. The major you wanted wasn't offered	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. The reputation of UW Bothell						
i. You did poorly in classes	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. You couldn't get the tutoring and academic support you wanted	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. You didn't have enough opportunity to interact with faculty and staff	1	2	3	4	5	6

IF RESPONDENT SAYS “4” OR “5” TO 3f (COULDN'T TAKE THE CLASSES YOU WANTED), ASK:

4. What classes did you want that you couldn't take?

DK/REF 99

IF RESPONDENT SAID “4” OR “5” TO 3g (THE MAJOR YOU WANTED WASN'T OFFERED), ASK:

5. What major did you want that wasn't offered?

DK/REF 99

6. How important was each of the following personal or social considerations in your decision to leave UW Bothell? Please use the same 5-point scale, where 5 means “extremely important” and 1 means “not at all important.” First, how important [WERE/WAS] _____ in your decision to leave UW Bothell? *READ AND ROTATE.*

	Not at all important			Extremely Important		DK/REF
	1	2	3	4	5	
Personal or family changes, such as a marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6
Personal or family issues, such as an illness	1	2	3	4	5	6
Financial issues	1	2	3	4	5	6
The lack of access to social activities, such as clubs	1	2	3	4	5	6
The small size of the campus	1	2	3	4	5	6
Not enough choices in restaurants or foods on campus	1	2	3	4	5	6
The lack of student housing, such as dormitories, sororities, or fraternities	1	2	3	4	5	6
A job or career opportunity outside of school	1	2	3	4	5	6
Trying to juggle work and school	1	2	3	4	5	6

7. While you were a student at UW Bothell, did you meet individually with
 ? *READ AND ROTATE.*

	Yes, more than once	Yes, one time	No	Not sure
An academic advisor when you were a student at UW Bothell (That is, an advisor in the Center for University Studies and Programs, or CUSP, on the first floor of UW2	1	2	3	4
A consultant in the Writing Center to talk about your course work	1	2	3	4
A consultant in the Quantitative Skills Center to talk about your course work	1	2	3	4
A librarian to talk about your course work	1	2	3	4
A professor to talk about your courses or program of study	1	2	3	4

8. Before you left, did you discuss the fact that you were considering leaving UW Bothell with a faculty or staff member? Yes 1
No 2
DK/REF 3

9. What would have caused you to continue your studies at UW Bothell? *Probe fully.*

10. Are you attending another school now? CONTINUE -- Yes 1
SKIP TO Q. 15 -- No 2
SKIP TO Q. 15 -- DK/REF 3

11. What is the name of the school? *Probe for exact name.*

DK/REF 99

12. What is your major area of study at this school, or, if you haven't declared a major yet, what do you expect your major to be?

DK/REF 99

13. Do you attend school full time or part time? School full time 1
Part time 2
DK/REF 3

14. What makes this school a better fit for you?

15. Are you working at a job full time or part time now? Work full time 1
Part time 2
DK/REF 3

16. Do you do volunteer work full time or part time now? Volunteer full time 1
Part time 2
DK/REF 3

17. Overall, how satisfied are you with your experience at UW Bothell – from the time you first applied to the time you left? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means “extremely satisfied” and 1 means “not at all satisfied,” how would you rate your satisfaction? _____ DK/REF 9

18. Would you recommend UW Bothell to a friend or family member? Would you say you Definitely would recommend UWB 5
Probably would 4
Might or might not 3
Probably would not 2
Definitely would not recommend UWB 1

19. Why [WOULD/WOULDN'T] you recommend UWB?

20. When you enrolled at UW Bothell, was it your first choice university or college? SKIP TO Q. 23 -- Yes 1
CONTINUE -- No 2
CONTINUE -- DK/REF 3

21. [IF NO TO QUESTION 18]: What was your first choice university or college?

22. Where did UW Bothell rank in your choice of universities or colleges? IF NECESSARY, ASK: Was it your second choice, your third choice, or what choice was it? ENTER NUMBER (2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc.) -- _____ DK/REF 9

23. Thank you very much for your time and opinions. Your input will be very helpful to the University of Washington Bothell as it works to provide the best possible academic programs and student services.

24. Record gender (DO NOT ASK): Male 1
Female 2