

Graduate Leadership Council

Presentation to the Student Affairs Division of the Board of Trustees

December 1, 2009



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- **About the Graduate Leadership Council/About the Survey Data**
 - *Theo Greene, Queer Pride Graduate Student Association & Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*
- **Why Northwestern? Admitted Student Survey Results**
- **Graduate Student Finances: Stipends and Cost of Living**
 - *Ryan Hobbs, Chicago Graduate Student Association & Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*
- **Healthcare: Insurance and Services**
 - *Alexandra Amick, Chicago Graduate Student Association*
- **Better Care: Dependent Health Insurance and Childcare**
 - *Patrick Ryan, Graduate Leadership Association*
- **Student Life**
 - **Community Perceptions:** *Azurii Collier, Black Graduate Student Association*
 - **Transportation and Career Services:** *Steven Greene, McCormick Graduate Leadership Council*
- **Upcoming GLC and TGS Initiatives**
 - *Theo Greene, Queer Pride Graduate Student Association/ Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*
 - *Ryan Hobbs, Chicago Graduate Student Association/Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*



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About the Graduate Leadership Council

Mission of the GLC

- To promote a **successful graduate educational experience**, and act as a **platform for voicing common graduate student concerns**
- To **facilitate communication and interaction** between the graduate students and University administration
- To assist The Graduate School and University administrators in **planning and implementing policies, events, and initiatives** that concern issues pertaining to graduate student life



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About the Graduate Leadership Council

Graduate Student Delegates to the GLC

- Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA)
- Chicago Graduate Student Association (CGSA)
- Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)
- Graduate Student Association
- Graduate Student Association for Latino and Spanish Activities (G-SALSA)
- McCormick Graduate Leadership Council (MGLC)
- Queer Pride Graduate Student Association (QPGSA)

Administrators

- The Graduate School
- Student Affairs
- University Career Services



Two Student Surveys

- Admitted Student Survey (The Graduate School)
 - Objectives:
 - ☐ Identify factors of importance for admitted graduate students
 - ☐ Determine the perceived strengths and weaknesses of NU compared to competing institutions
 - TGS annually sends out to all admitted graduate students via email
 - ☐ 3714 graduate students admitted to Northwestern from 2007-2009
 - ☐ 2392 respondents (64%)
- Graduate Student Survey (Graduate Leadership Council)
 - Objectives:
 - ☐ To assess the needs and concerns of graduate students
 - ☐ To obtain feedback on recent changes to policies and services which impact graduate student life
 - Annually sent out to all enrolled NU graduate students
 - ☐ 2009 survey was administered the last week of October
 - ☐ Sent to 4017 graduate students
 - ☐ 1,401 students (35%) responded to the 2009 survey
 - ☐ Survey comprised of 126 multiple-choice and open-ended questions
 - ☐ Comprehensive set of topics

Why Northwestern?

Admitted Student Survey Results

*Ryan Hobbs, Chicago Graduate Student Association &
Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*



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Admitted Student Survey (TGS)

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 - Objectives:
 - ☞ Identify factors of importance for admitted graduate students
 - ☞ Determine the perceived strengths and weaknesses of NU compared to competing institutions
 - TGS annually sends out to all **admitted** graduate students via email
 - ☞ 3714 graduate students admitted to Northwestern from 2007-2009
 - ☞ 2392 respondents (64%)

- Students asked :
 - To rate the importance of 40 decision factors
 - To compare these factors at NU to their second choice or enrolling schools

- Data able to be broken down by:
 - Decision to enroll at NU or not
 - Discipline (arts & humanities, social & behavioral sciences, life sciences, physical sciences)



Top 5 decision factors considered to be most important

NU enrolling students

- Opportunity to pursue specific research interests
- Quality of department
- Contact with faculty
- Quality of specific faculty
- Quality of research group

Non-enrolling students

- Quality of department
- Opportunity to pursue specific research interests
- Quality of research group
- Quality of specific faculty
- Contact with faculty

- **Non-enrolling students and NU enrolling students have similar values when it comes to determining where to enroll**



Non-enrolling students

- **Non-enrolling students ranked NU as being worse** than their enrolling school in these top five factors:
 - Weather
 - Opportunity to pursue specific research
 - National (media) ranking or reputation of institution/department
 - Opinion of faculty/advisr(s) at previous institution
 - Quality of specific faculty

- From 2007-2009, **non-enrolling students have placed increasing importance** on these top five decision factors:
 - Weather
 - Surroundings (Neighborhood, Town, or City)
 - Proximity to major urban area
 - Opportunity to be a teaching assistant
 - Post-admission recruitment package



Northwestern enrolling students

- **NU enrolling students felt that NU was better** than their second choice school **in all factors but three**:
 - Cost of living at institutions
 - Weather
 - On-campus housing availability

- **From 2007-2009, NU enrolling students have placed increasing importance** on these top five decision factors:
 - Weather
 - On-campus housing availability
 - Opportunity to be a research assistant
 - Dollar amount of funding package
 - Cost of living at institution

Graduate Student Finances: Stipends and Cost of Living

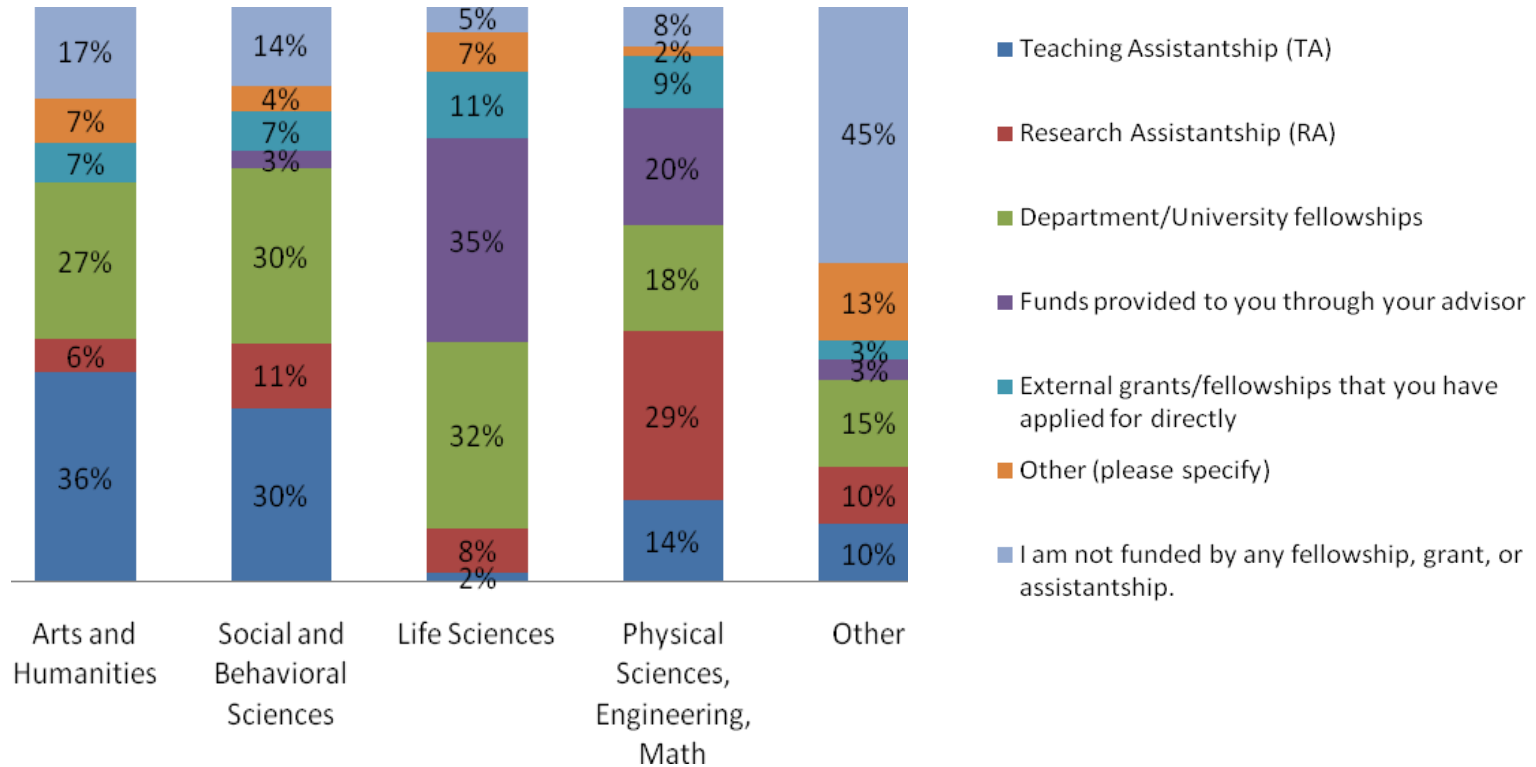
*Ryan Hobbs, Chicago Graduate Student Association &
Co-Chair, Graduate Leadership Council*



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Funding sources vary with discipline



- 2 out of 3 students in Arts & Humanities or Social & Behavioral Sciences are funded by TA's or departmental/University fellowships
- 2 out 3 students in Life Sciences or Physical Sciences are funded by their advisor, RA's, or departmental/University fellowships



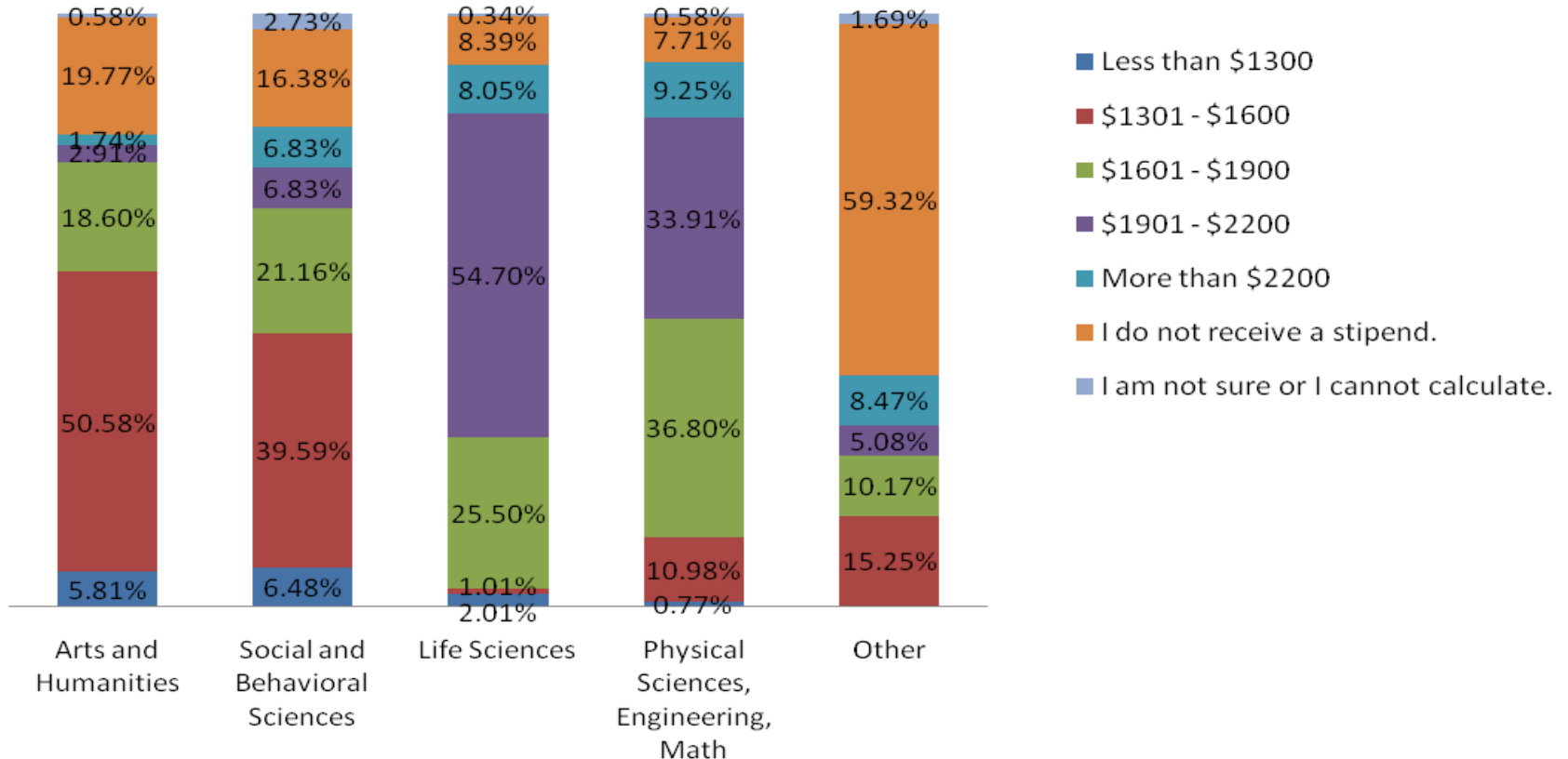
NU stipend level compared to other institutions

<u>University</u>	<u>RA stipend</u>	<u>TA stipend</u>	<u>Cost of living index*</u>	<u>Adjusted RA stipend</u>	<u>City</u>
Stanford	\$1,881.3	\$1,913.8	1.953	\$963.3	San Francisco, CA
MIT	\$1,630.3	\$1,591.3	1.365	\$1,194.3	Boston, MA
Northwestern	\$1,598.3	\$1,364.8	1.325	\$1,206.3	Chicago, IL
UIUC	\$1,418.6	\$1,307.2	0.94	\$1,509.1	Champaign, IL
Ohio State	\$1,285.5	\$1,173.1	0.995	\$1,292.0	Columbus, OH
Purdue	\$1,407.5	\$1,282.8	0.905	\$1,555.2	West Lafayette, IN

- Northwestern stipends are comparable to those at other institutions, regardless of location



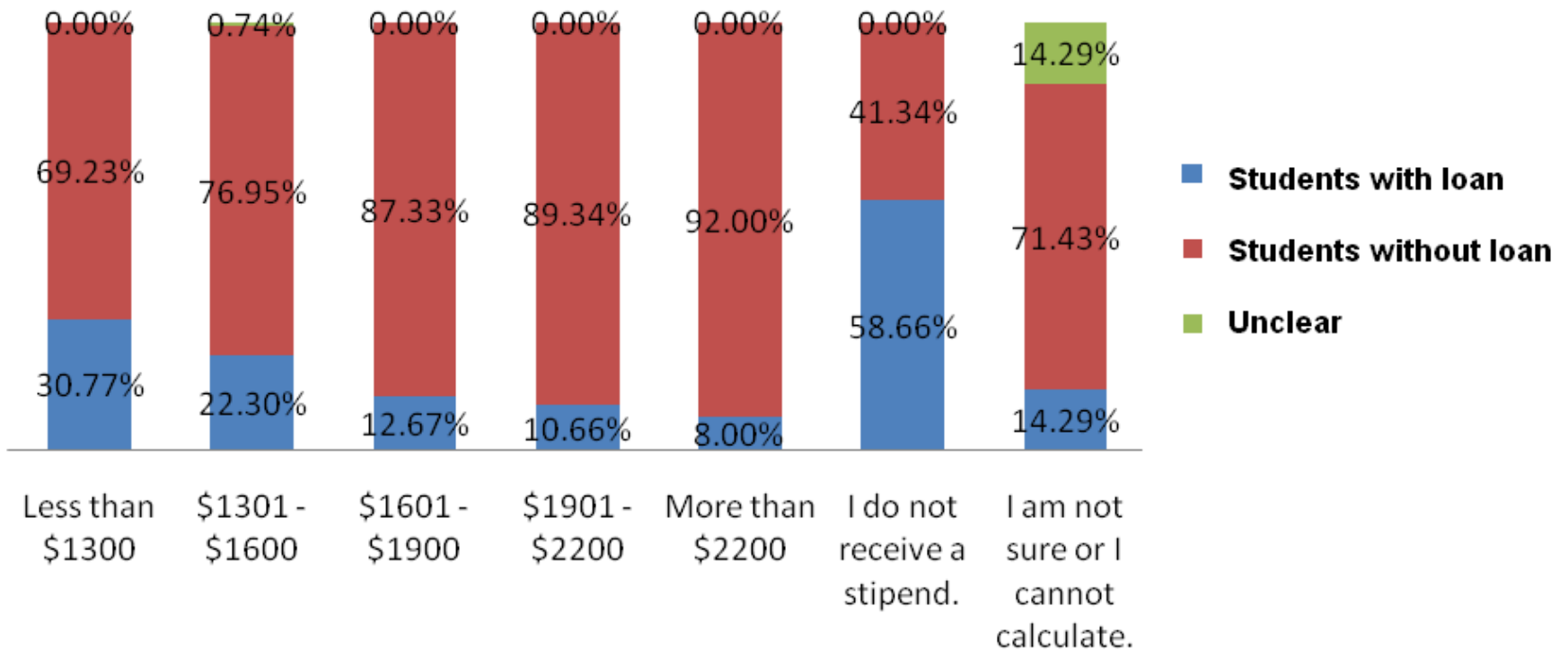
Take home pay varies with discipline



- Arts & Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences students take home less pay than Life Sciences and Physical Sciences students



Amount of money taken out in student loans correlates with stipend levels



- Students that take home less money take out more student loans



Housing Information and Living Expenses

- Rent and associated living expenses are the largest expenditures for graduate students, regardless of stipend level
 - 63% spend as much as \$1000/month
 - 84% spend up to \$1300/month

- Evanston campus students outnumber Chicago campus students 4:1, but the NU students living in Evanston compared to Chicago is 1:1
- 78% of respondents live in an apartment
 - 33% by themselves
 - 45% with at least one roommate
- 12% live in condo/house that they own
- 5% live in University housing

- Engelhart Hall ranges from \$700 to \$1250/month for a twin studio to a two bedroom

Healthcare: Insurance and Services

Alexandra Amick, Chicago Graduate Student Association



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Healthcare Overview

- Health Insurance
 - Northwestern Student Health Insurance Plan
 - Comparison among COFHE institutions
 - Vision and Dental coverage

- Health Services
 - Comparison between Evanston and Chicago campuses
 - NU Pharmacy (Evanston)



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NU Student Health Insurance Plan 2009-2010

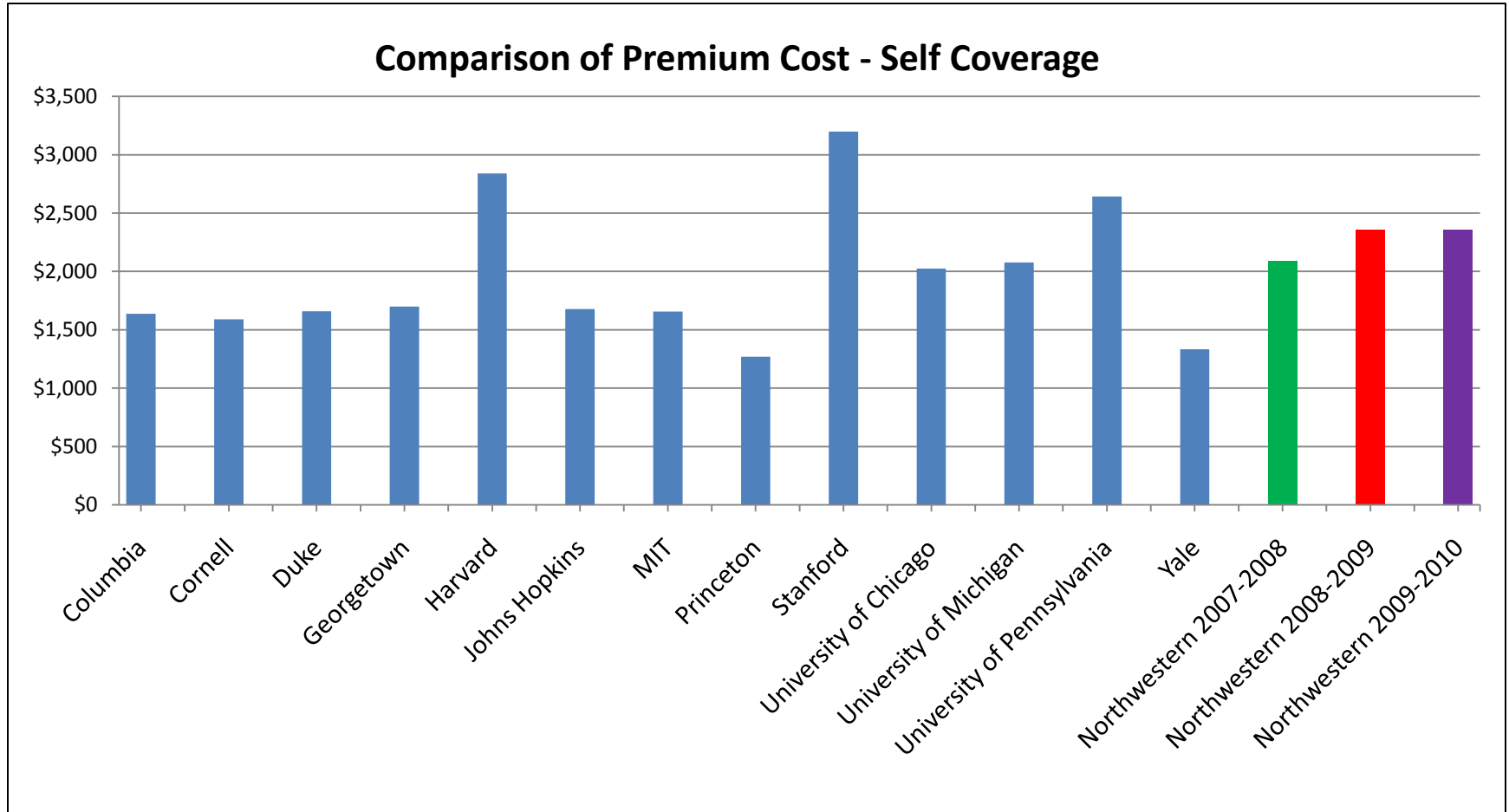
- Student Premium: \$2360
 - TGS subsidizes premium for all PhD and MFA students at 100%
 - Masters students are subsidized at 50% or 65% by TGS
 - McCormick engineering students are subsidized at either 100% by TGS (1st year students) or 65% (2nd through 5th year students)
 - Remaining amount is expected to be covered by the student's department, program, or advisor

- Spouse Premium: \$4720
- Child Premium: \$2952 per child

- Deductible: \$250
- Coverage: 80% (after deductible is paid)
- Out-of-pocket maximum: \$1250 (includes deductible)



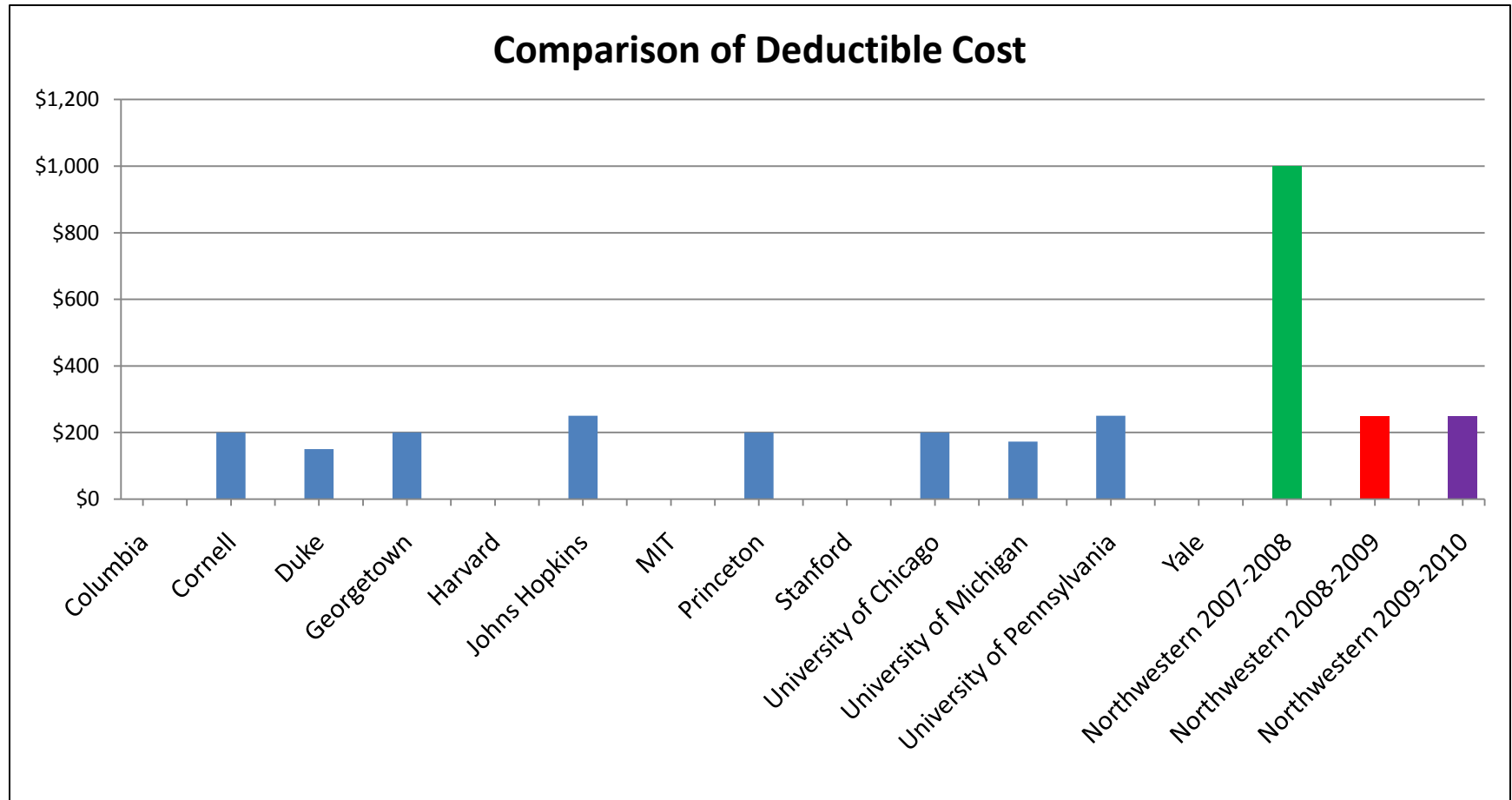
Comparison of Student Premium Cost



- The cost of the Northwestern student premium is in the top third



Comparison of Deductible Cost



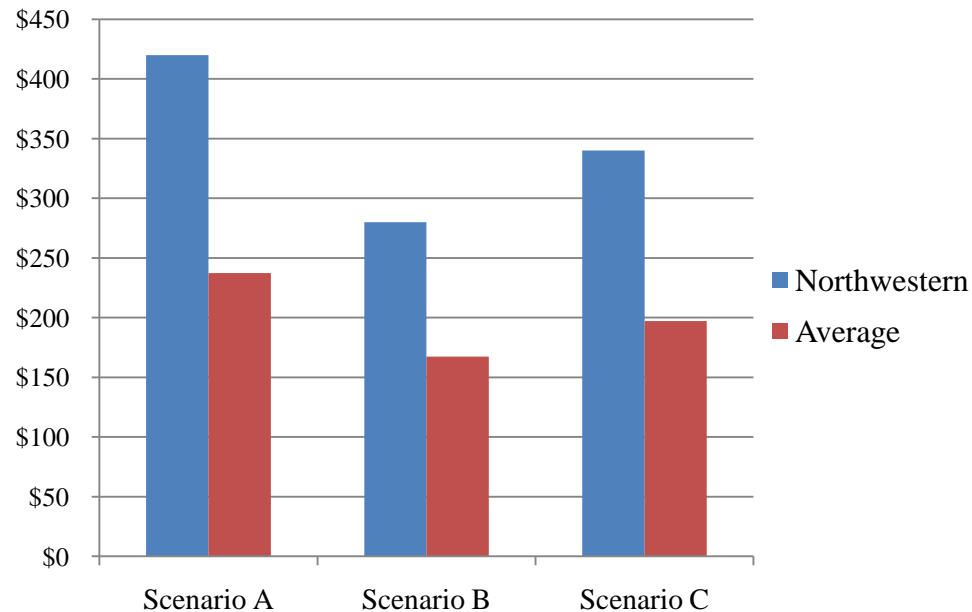
- The cost of the deductible at NU has decreased from 2007, but remains the highest compared to peer insitutions



Cost Burden to NU Students

- Scenario A: Student's final medical bill is \$1000 (i.e. surgery)
- Scenario B: Student's final medical bill is \$300 (i.e. allergy testing, x-rays)
- Scenario C: Student's final medical bill is \$600 (i.e. MRI, CT scan)

Cost Burden to NU Students: COFHE Comparison



- In all scenarios, the cost burden to NU students is higher than the average of our peer institutions



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Dental and Vision Coverage

■ Dental

- NU offers enrollment in plan for \$166/year
- 6 of 12 COFHE schools offer free dental coverage
- 5 of 12 COFHE schools offer optional enrollment at varying prices

■ Vision

- NU and most COFHE schools offer free enrollment in “Davis Vision Discount Program”
- \$5 discount off an eye exam, \$35 off glasses



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Survey Results about the Dental Plan

■ Dental

- 1 in 4 students did not know about the dental plan
- Of those enrolled, 42% are “satisfied” with plan
- Most are dissatisfied due to the low coverage percentage for common procedures (fillings, etc.)

“I am very unhappy with the dental plan and would like to have a PPO option. Northwestern employees have excellent PPO health and dental options. I don't understand why we as students are not eligible for these plans. “

--Survey Respondent



Survey Comments about the Vision Plan

■ Vision

- No questions on the survey were dedicated to vision coverage
- However, many comments were provided
 - Students were not knowledgeable about the Vision plan
 - Those that were seemed to not be satisfied.

“I am fairly happy with the NU health insurance, but I am on my partner's dental and vision plans. I think not providing dental and vision plans is a serious problem with the NU health insurance.”

--Survey Respondent



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Students lack knowledge of NU Health Insurance Plan

- Over 50% of students had limited knowledge of plan benefits:
 - Premium
 - Deductible
 - Out of pocket maximum
 - Coinsurance percentage

“I don't understand my health insurance well, and I don't know where to go for more information.”

--Survey Respondent

- GSA initiative: To provide students with easy online access to healthcare information



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Overall Health Plan Satisfaction

- 45% “satisfied” with health plan
- 20% “dissatisfied” with health plan
- In an increase from last year, 28% of students “failed to seek out or follow up on health care due to costs”

“[The] deductible is high enough to prevent me (on my limited Graduate Assistant budget) from seeking preventative care, or care for health issues that are not immediately pressing.”

--Survey Respondent



Healthcare Overview

- Health Insurance
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 - Vision and Dental coverage

- Health Services
 - Comparison between Evanston and Chicago campuses
 - NU Pharmacy (Evanston)



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Health Services: Comparison between Evanston and Chicago

- Two on-campus health services providers:
 - Evanston campus: Northwestern University Health Services (NUHS)
 - Chicago campus: Northwestern Memorial Faculty Foundation (NMFF)

- % of students are “satisfied” with the services received from either NUHS or NMFF

- Continual concern from students about inequity between the two health services locations
 - NMFF is more expensive than NUHS for several basic treatments (i.e. vaccines, x-rays, STD testing)
 - More difficult time getting appointments at NMFF than NUHS



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NU Pharmacy (Evanston)

- The NU Pharmacy is open Monday-Friday and is accessible to any NU student
- Considerable cost saving to students on some prescription items and OTC medications compared to outside pharmacies

Survey results

- 62% of students do not know about or use the Pharmacy
- Of these students, 52% would be likely to use the Pharmacy now that they have been informed about it
- Over 50% of students would be “unhappy” if the Pharmacy was to close

“Closing the pharmacy would hit us pretty seriously in the pocketbook -- please keep the pharmacy around.”

--Survey Respondent



Health Insurance

- University administration should shop around for a health plan that puts the cost of NU's premium and deductible in line with that offered at peer institutions
- A health plan that includes dental and vision coverage should be included in future student health plan studies

Health Services

- Keep the Northwestern pharmacy open
 - Increased visibility of pharmacy costs and services among the graduate student community may lead to an increase in usage and, subsequently, an increase in revenue.
- University needs to address the issues of inequity between NUHS on the Evanston campus and NMFF on the Chicago campus
 - Disparity in costs and services
 - Lack of accessible information

Better Care: Dependent Health Insurance & Childcare

Patrick Ryan, Graduate Student Association



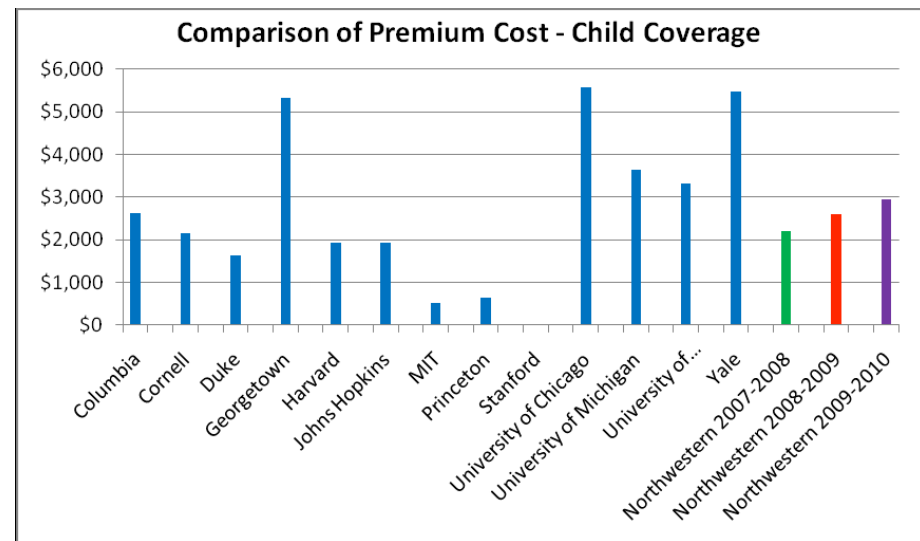
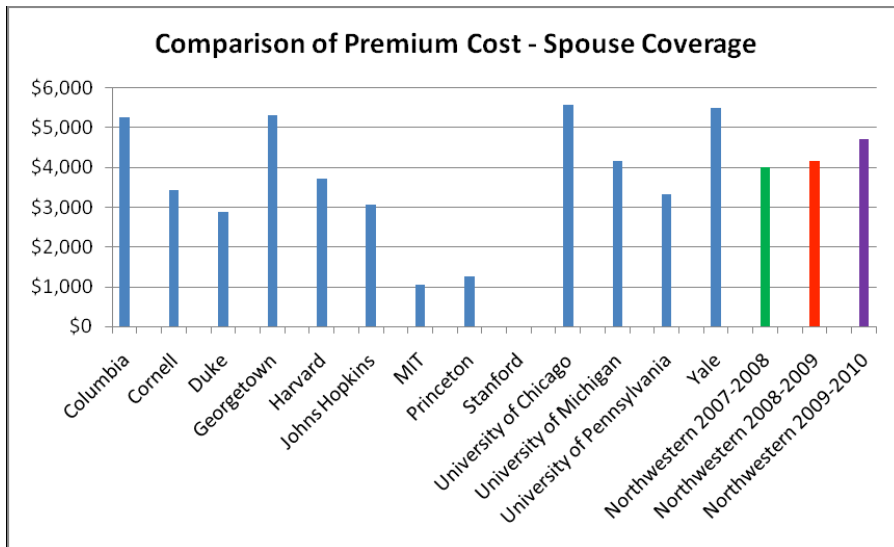
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Cost of Dependent Coverage

■ Health Insurance for Dependents

- \$4,720 per spouse per year
- \$2,952 per child per year
- No subsidies for dependents
- Incredibly large burden considering stipend levels





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Survey Comments about Dependent Health Insurance

“I'm very unhappy with the health insurance. I had a baby this past year and because it spanned two academic years I paid 2500 in fees. That is 10% of my income just on my bills alone. Also, the cost of dependent care is so high that I am using Illinois AllKids public insurance, which is cheaper and more comprehensive than the plan offered by NU.”

--Survey Respondent

“Please find a health care option for students that allows us to add dependents. I know the current one does allow it, but the cost per month is nearly 80% of my stipend. Many grad parents cannot afford health care, and live without it.”

--Survey Respondent

“I was lucky enough never to have chance using our insurance. However, I have a feeling that our insurance plan is expensive and non-transparent. What I know for sure that it is INCREDIBLY expensive for dependents - I don't think anybody can afford enrolling dependents! And now my wife doesn't have health insurance. :(”

--Survey Respondent



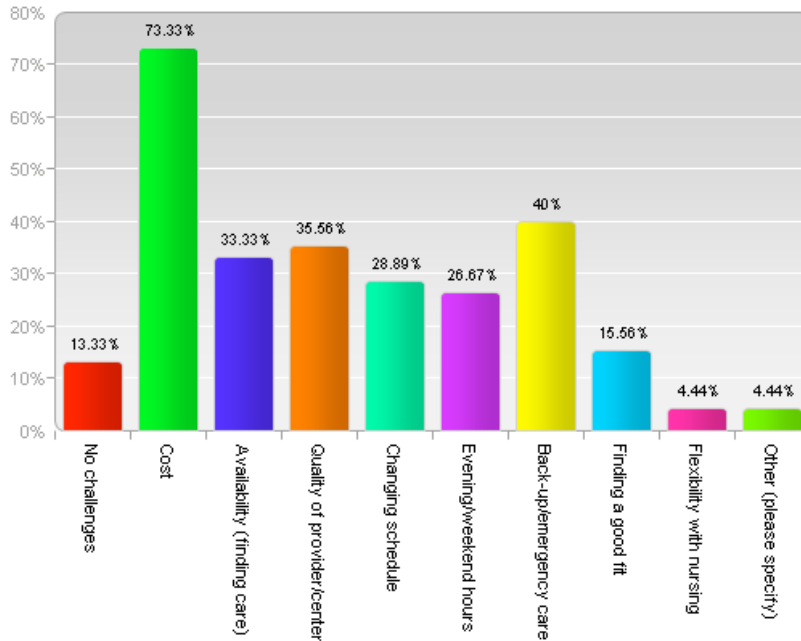
Childcare

- Almost 20% of graduate students plan on having children while in graduate school.
- Currently no on-campus childcare in Evanston or Chicago.
- Full-time day care is over \$1,200 per month at recommended facilities: KinderCare and McGaw YMCA.
- 77% of parents report being late to work/leaving early to care for children
- Productivity of students impacted; added stress.



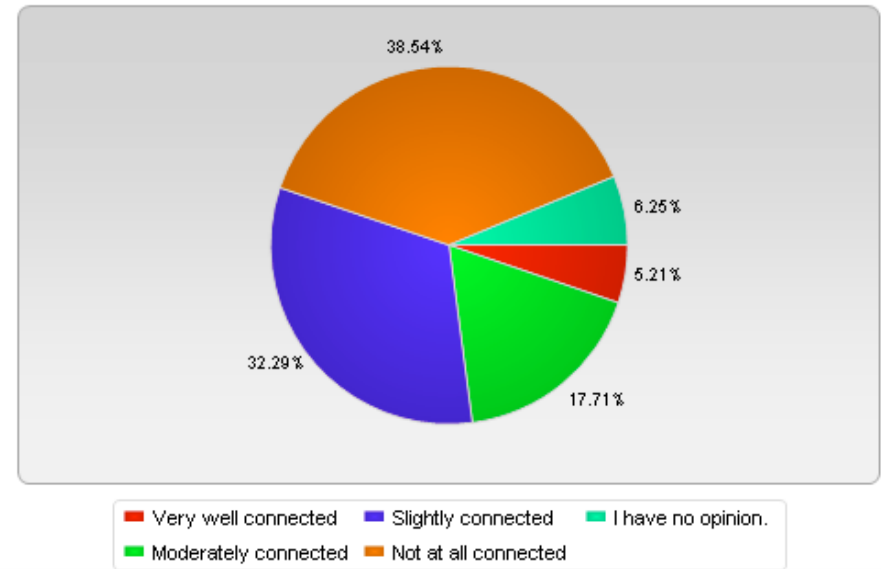
Childcare: Challenges and Community

Q68. What are your top child care challenges? (Check all that apply)



- Cost and back-up/emergency care are the top two childcare challenges amongst graduate student parents

Q73. How connected are you with other NU graduate students who are parents?



- Graduate student parents are not well-connected with other graduate student parents



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Childcare: Ongoing University Initiatives

- GSA wrote a community building grant to team with Graduate Women Across Northwestern (GWAN) Mother's group and hold informal gatherings of graduate student parents.
- Hope to build stronger relationships between parents and sponsor family-centered activities on campus
- Trying to address backup/emergency care
- Issue extends beyond graduate students to junior faculty.



Dependent Health Insurance

- Increase subsidies for dependent health insurance and/or negotiate lower rates with Aetna to make Northwestern a more family-friendly university.

Childcare

- Subsidize current childcare options with an eventual change to on-campus childcare (e.g., Roycemore in Evanston)
 - “Roycemore has announced plans to move to a larger site near downtown Evanston.”
 - Lease with Northwestern University is due to expire.
 - <http://www.roycemoreschool.org/growing.html>

Student Life: Community Perceptions

Azurii Collier, Black Graduate Student Association



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Why Focus on Community Perception?

- Survey questions gauged how and where graduate students interact with each other
- Definitions of diversity and perceptions of community vary widely

“It is sad that [my] department is mostly made up of white, upper middle class students, such as myself.”

While another respondent mentioned,

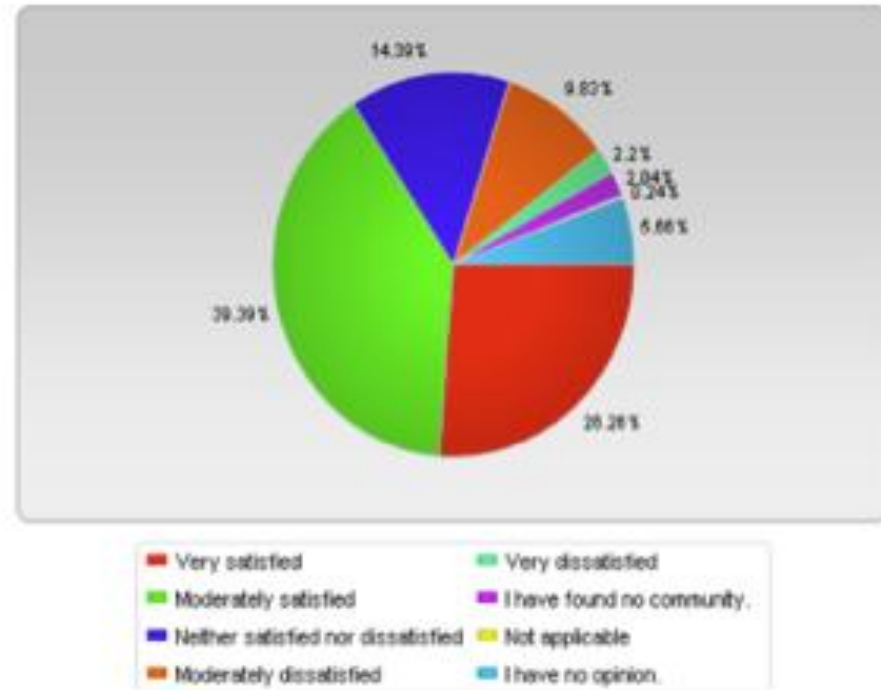
“I do not think that it is worthwhile to spend time and money researching how graduate students feel about “diversity.” Despite the fact that I am not white, I marked that I do not feel as though I am a member of an under-represented group. Diversity should come about naturally...”



Satisfaction with Community

- 65% of respondents are very or moderately satisfied with the degree of academic or social community
- The same trend exists with under-represented groups
- Of the 28% that are moderately or very dissatisfied, the main reasons are due to a lack of funds or lack of free time

1. How satisfied are you with the degree of academic or social community you have found at Northwes





Satisfaction with Diversity

■ Gender Diversity

■ Faculty

- 55% satisfied
- The majority of those unsatisfied were women respondents

■ Student

- 60% satisfied
- Trend most pronounced among women respondents

■ Racial/Ethnic Diversity

■ Faculty

- 60% of those who were very satisfied and 48% of those moderately satisfied were respondents that did not identify with a minority group
- Majority of those that were dissatisfied were racial/ethnic minorities

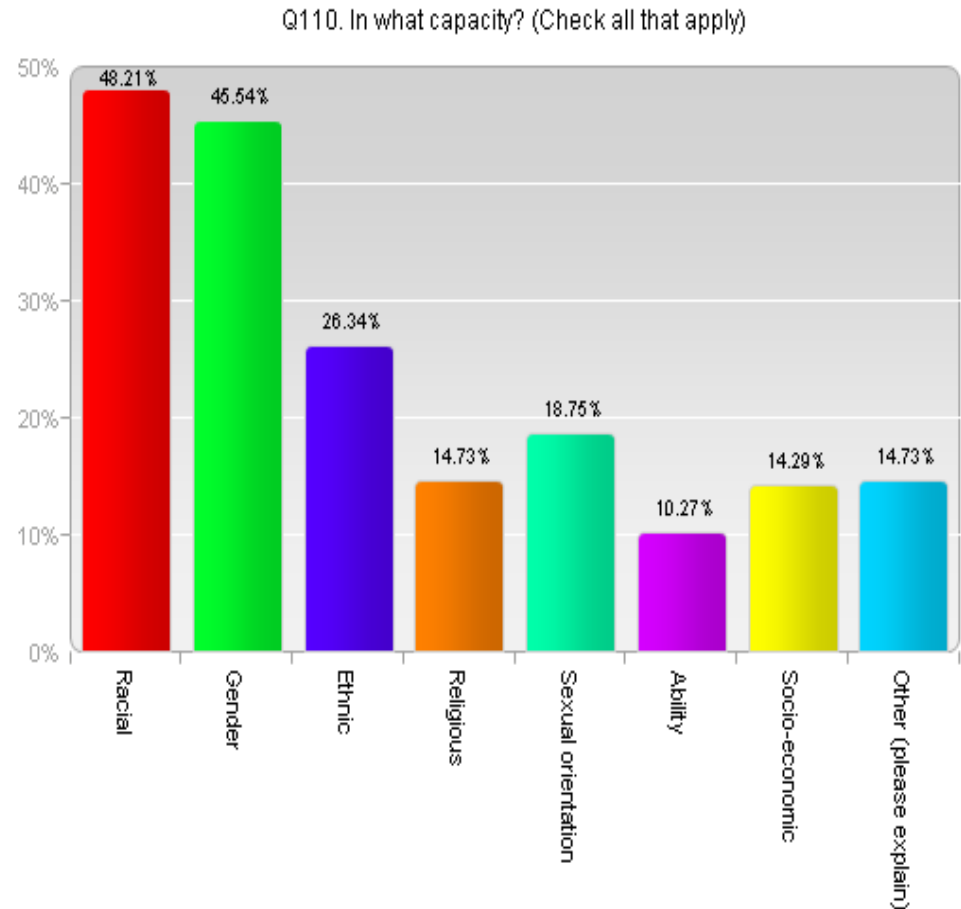
■ Student

- 58% of those very satisfied and 50% of those moderately satisfied were respondents that did not identify with a minority group
- Majority of those that were dissatisfied were racial/ethnic minorities



Experience with Discrimination

- 18% of respondents have witnessed or experienced discrimination at NU
 - Mostly related to race or gender
- Several members of a majority group mentioned they felt discriminated against due to their majority status





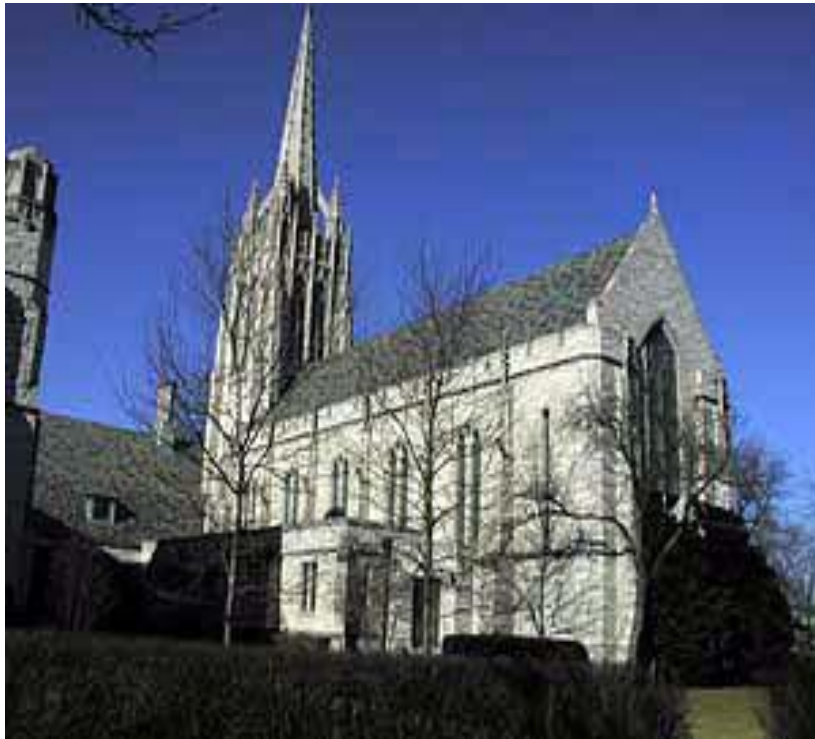
Where do students find community?

- Majority of respondents study and socialize within their own departments
 - Study
 - 59% feel there is adequate space on campus to study
 - Respondents generally study in their departments (34%), their department buildings (27%), or the library (18%)
 - Socialize
 - 83% socialize with graduate students in their own departments
 - This trend was also true for underrepresented groups
- Respondents seem to define the Northwestern community primarily by what they experience within their department



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Graduate Student Space



Seabury Seminary

- A multi-functional student space would encourage graduate student interaction and foster a greater sense of community
- Seabury Center, 2122 Sheridan Rd, has recently been acquired by NU
- Dean Wachtel lead a Town Hall Mtg on Nov 30th to discuss how to best utilize the space



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GLC Recommendations

- Set aside a designated, multi-functional student space for graduate students
 - Seabury Seminary is a likely possibility
- Promote broadly defined diversity and sell the value of diversity to groups that may not normally feel included in traditional diversity programming
- Future programming should focus on integrating people from diverse backgrounds into the fabric of NU's intellectual and social communities

Student Life: Transportation and Career Services

Steven Greene, McCormick Graduate Leadership Council

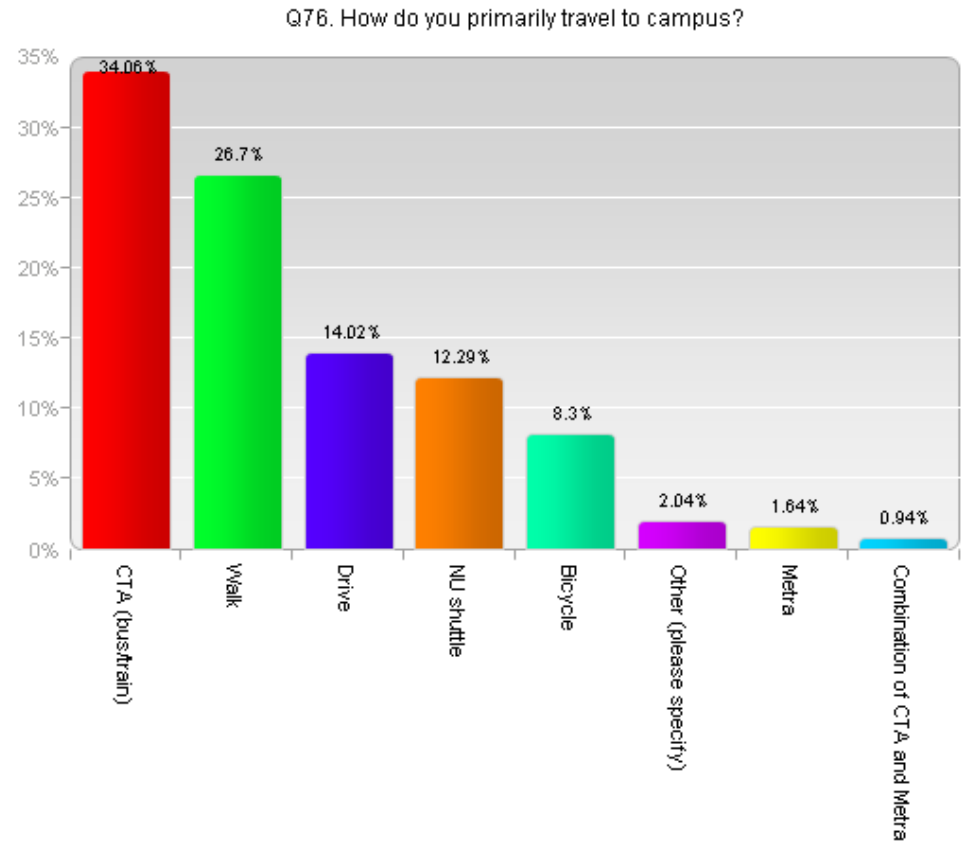


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Students use several modes of transportation to get to campus

- 34% of total students utilize the CTA for transportation to campus
 - 50% of Chicago campus students
 - 29% of Evanston campus students
- Evanston campus students are more likely than Chicago campus students to drive (15% to 11%), bike (10% to 3%), and ride the intercampus shuttle (14% to 7%)

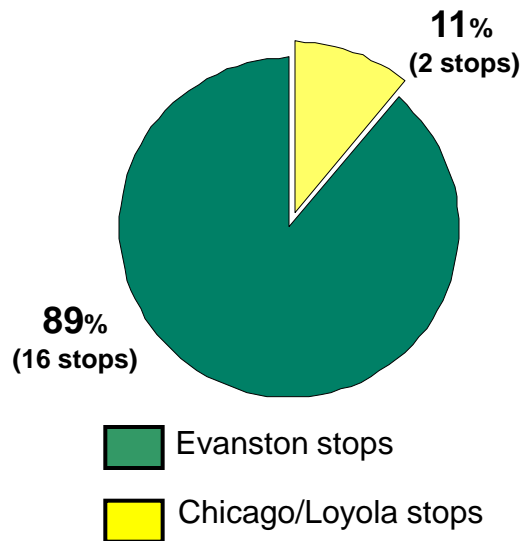




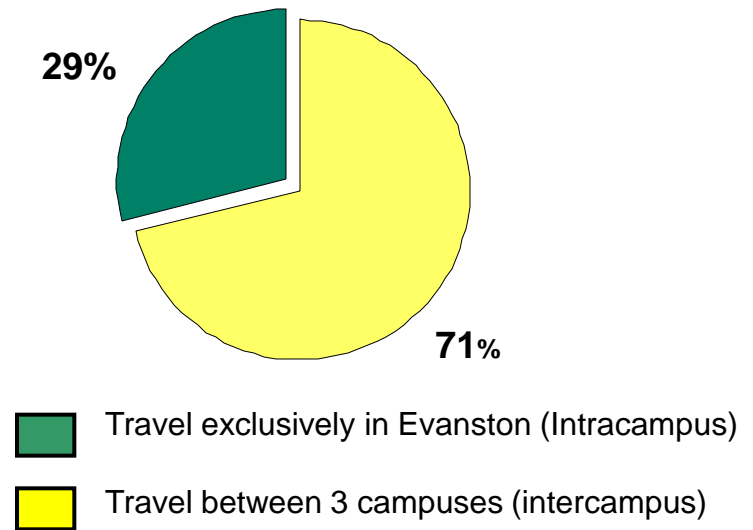
Intercampus Shuttle: Usage

- Shuttle usage is provided free of charge to anyone with a valid NU Wildcard
- Runs Monday-Friday from 6:00 AM to 11:00 PM

Intercampus Shuttle Stop Partition



Intercampus Shuttle Ridership



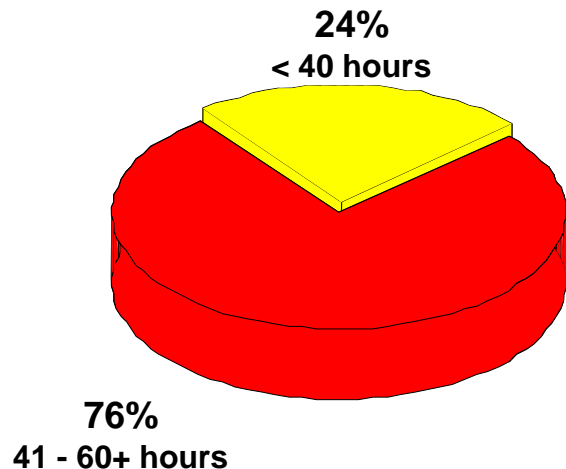
- 18 shuttle stops along the route
- Only 2 stops not in Evanston
 - Loyola Campus and Chicago campus
- Graduate student usage is overwhelmingly for travel between two or more campuses



Intercampus Shuttle: Weekend Service

- Currently, the only shuttle service offered on weekends runs on select Saturdays from Evanston to several stops in downtown Chicago
 - Does not stop at the Chicago campus
 - Does not run on Sundays

Student Work Hours/Week



- With graduate students working long hours, the intercampus shuttle may be the preferred means for weekend commuting
- CTA express trains do not run on weekends
- Leisure travel also available.



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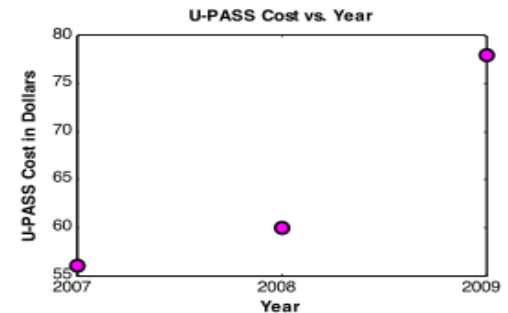
Intercampus Shuttle: GLC Recommendations

- Provide better balance of service between Evanston and Chicago to *decrease route time and be timely*
- Provide *full service* routes on the weekend runs that occur. That is, make all stops between campuses.



U-PASS: Costs, Usage, & Satisfaction

- Since 2007, all full-time graduate students are provided a U-PASS and required to pay an activity fee to cover the U-PASS cost
 - Cost in 2007 and 2008 was \$56/quarter
 - Cost in 2009 is now \$78/quarter
 - ☞ Increase due to CTA budget woes and expansion to 365 day coverage
- Based on survey responses, 37% of students do not use their U-PASS frequently enough to warrant paying for the \$78 activity fee
 - 41% of students working on the Evanston campus
 - 22% of students working on the Chicago campus
- 81% of respondents in favor of U-PASS program staying in place with no or minor changes
 - Primary suggestion for change is to include an opt in/out system so that only those students that wish to use the U-PASS will have to pay the mandatory activity fee





U-PASS: GLC Recommendations

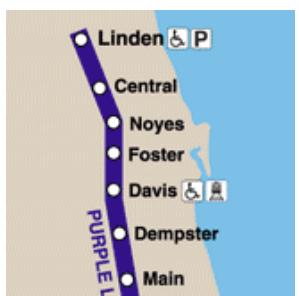
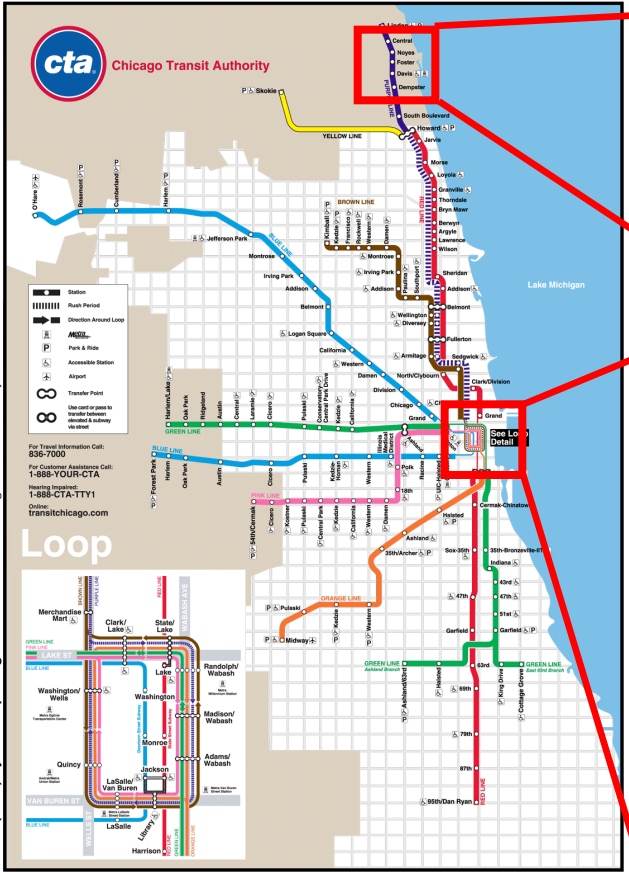
- The major reason for U-PASS dissatisfaction is that the fee is mandatory, even for those students that do not use the CTA enough to warrant having a U-PASS
 - TGS administration should re-visit the idea of an ‘opt-out’ program (i.e. through CAESAR)
 - Provide a deadline for students to choose not to pay for a U-PASS so that a total number can be provided to the CTA in advance of the start of the quarter

- If the cost of the U-PASS continues to rise, GLC believes there will be a ‘tipping point’ with the graduate student body.
 - An activity fee subsidy may prevent this ‘tipping point’

Remove this slide?

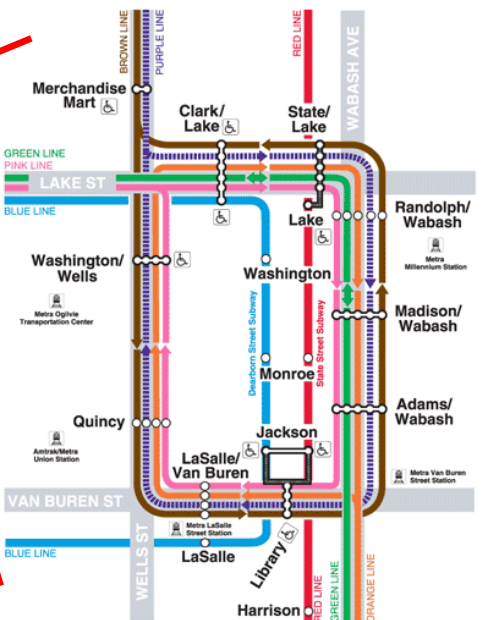
U-PASS: *GLC Recommendations*

- Enforce imbalance of cost between Evanston and Chicago to reflect imbalance of train service.



Evanston Campus CTA Service

- 41% not warranting expense
- 22% max usage
- 3 directly accessible trains



Chicago Campus CTA Service

- 22% not warranting expense
- 54% max usage
- 3 directly accessible trains



Career Perceptions

- From the 2009 survey, the percentage of students expecting to go in to academia are:
 - 84%, Arts & Humanities
 - 78%, Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - 69%, Life Sciences
 - 45%, Physical Sciences, Mathematics & Engineering

- The survey revealed a level of discomfort in the Arts & Humanities and Social & Behavioral Sciences regarding the job search outside of academia

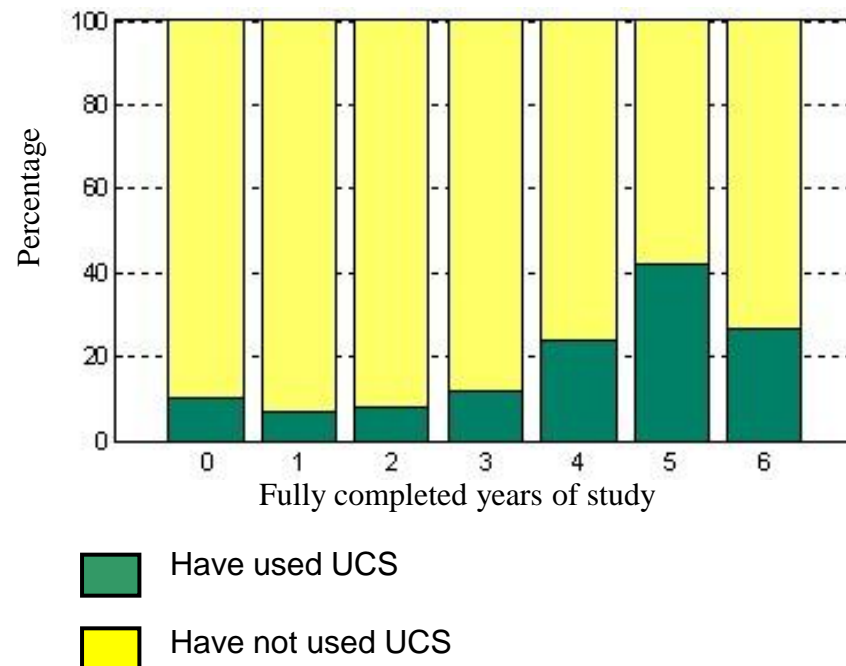
		Arts, Humanities	Social Sci.	Life Sci	Physical Sci
Do you feel comfortable	Yes	47%	50%	69%	76%
discussing alternative career	No	34%	32%	22%	14%
paths in your department?	Unknown	19%	18%	9%	10%

- All graduate students should be comfortable speaking with their mentors about life after graduation



University Career Services (UCS)

- Only 14% of survey respondents report ever utilizing services offered at UCS
 - Of those, 59% report benefiting from UCS
- 3% of respondents use UCS as their primary source of career advice
- Graduate students near the end of their tenure utilize UCS more than more junior students





- Create career services task-force
 - Members:
 - ▣ Graduate students from all four core disciplines
 - Arts & Humanities
 - Social & Behavioral Sciences
 - Life Sciences
 - Physical Science, Mathematics & Engineering
 - ▣ TGS administrators
 - ▣ UCS administrators
 - Objectives:
 - ▣ Increase appeal of UCS to graduate students
 - As a whole
 - Individual years of graduate students
 - ▣ Provide an outlet for alternative career discussions

GLC and TGS Initiatives

Theo Greene, Queer Pride Graduate Student Association
Ryan Hobbs, Chicago Graduate Student Association



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GLC and TGS Initiatives

- Building a Better Graduate Student: Expectations for Graduate Education
- Academic Life
 - Student-Mentor Relationship
 - Ombudsperson
- Graduate Student Space
 - Seabury Seminary for Evanston campus
- Community Building Grants
 - 24 groups funded for 2009-2010, 19 repeat groups from 2008-2009
 - All GSAs submitted CBG applications for 2009-2010
- GSA-NCDC (Northwestern Community Development Corps)
 - Graduate-Undergraduate Relationship
 - Teaming together to get out in the community



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