

Quality of Life Initiatives on behalf of Graduate Students at the University of Oklahoma

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GRADUATE COLLEGE

QUALITY *of* LIFE



Why Quality of Life?

- Universities are more accountable for standards of living as well as academic excellence.
- Graduate programs need to examine objective circumstances and subjective well-being.
- Support structures have improved, but the intrinsic values have changed.



OU's 2010 survey on Quality of Life for Graduate Students

- Presented by
Abigail Allums



The kind of information sought in excellent graduate surveys...

STANFORD

- Demographics
- Finances
- Housing
- Social Life
- Healthcare
- Childcare

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

- Demographics
- Campus climate
- Use of orientation programs
- Use of services (e.g. recreation, health center, dining, career, legal)
- Commute
- Student views on issues (e.g. stipends, discounts, daycare)



Analyzing OU's recent survey...

HANSEN'S MODEL on "INTEGRATIVE LIFE PLANNING":

- **LEARNING**
- **LOVING**
- **LIVING**
- **LEISURE**

[OU's SURVEY CATEGORIES]

- Background
- Childcare Options and Needs
- Living Situation (e.g. housing, commute, healthcare)
- Stressors and Pressures
- Financial Issues
- Extracurricular Activities and Social Events



Maximizing the data...

- To include:
 - Graduate population from all disciplines
 - Diversity variables
 - Masters and PhD students
 - International and domestic students



Understanding the infrastructure...

- Catalogue all graduate student relevant programs
- Conduct a SWOT analysis and comparative analysis
- Communicate with community and student life programs



Implementing action plans...

- Translate survey results into program initiatives
- Find cost-effective, practical, creative solutions
- Adapt existing infrastructure to promote quality of life



Q. If you have a spouse/partner, is he/she:

| | |
|-------|--|
| 32.9% | <i>A student (at OU, another institution)</i> |
| 5.6% | <i>A postdoctoral student or staff member (at OU, another institution)</i> |
| 1.4% | <i>A faculty member (at OU, another institution)</i> |
| 27.6% | <i>Employed in the private sector</i> |
| 18.8% | <i>Employed in the public sector</i> |
| 1.9% | <i>In the military</i> |
| 10.5% | <i>Other</i> |

Action: Look into more inclusive programming on campus- how we can get families and partners involved with OU as well as the students outside of their department

Q. To what extent did your spouse/partner or significant other find it easy or difficult to adjust to the Norman area?

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 17.4% | <i>Extremely easy</i> |
| 41% | <i>Easy</i> |
| 19.1% | <i>Neither easy nor difficult</i> |
| 13.3% | <i>Difficult</i> |
| 4.4% | <i>Extremely Difficult</i> |
| 4.4% | <i>Don't know</i> |

Action: Work with incoming students and families to help ease the moving transition - current recommendation would be a comprehensive guide to graduate life

Q. Rank your top three sources of stress from 1 (most stressful) to 3 (third most stressful).

- 1. Coursework*
- 2. Time management*
- 3. Finances*
- 4. Research*
- 5. Family issues*
- 6. Interaction with adviser*
- 7. Lack of emotional and/or social support*
- 8. Adapting to graduate school*
- 9. Health issues*
- 10. Dating*

Action: Create seminars focusing on time management, simple stress alleviators and creating healthy sleeping habits to suit the graduate life style

Q. How often does your department sponsor social events for graduate students?

| | |
|-------|---------------------|
| 3.8% | <i>Weekly</i> |
| 11.2% | <i>Monthly</i> |
| 64% | <i>Occasionally</i> |
| 18.5% | <i>Never</i> |

Action: Work with departments during program planning; work with graduate student services to improve graduate outreach and programming

Davidson's Initial Research on Quality of Life as a Graduate Student

- Presented by
Ebony Pope and
Tim Davidson, Ph.D.



Research questions...

GUIDING QUESTION:

- “What should be measured to determine quality of life for graduate students?”

OPENING QUESTION:

- “What does quality of life as a graduate student mean to you?”



“Solution-focused” or “strength-based” interview questions

- **Ideal Vision**
- **Obstacles/Solutions**
- **Opportunities**
- **Priorities**
- **Resources:**



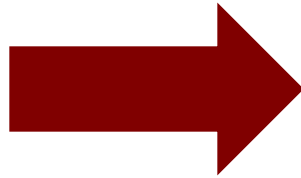
Interview questions to assess a “subjective sense of well-being”

- **Satisfaction/Happiness**
- **Expectations/Wants**
 - **Balance**
 - **Valence**
 - **Future**



Maslow- the link between satisfying needs and quality of life ...

HIGHER NEEDS



SELF-ACTUALIZATION

Fulfilling potential

SELF-ESTEEM

Mastery of tasks

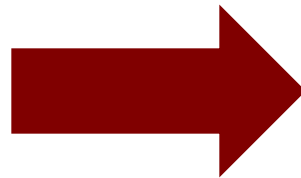
Status and recognition

SENSE OF BELONGING

Feeling welcomed

Connected and affirmed

BASIC NEEDS



SAFETY

Stability

Non-threatening environment

PHYSIOLOGICAL

Food

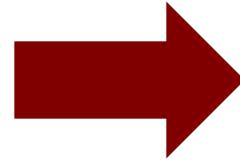
Shelter

Air



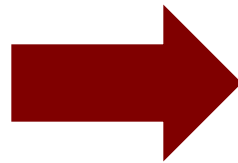
Herzberg– the dynamic between objective circumstances and personal drive...

HIGHER NEEDS



MOTIVATORS

BASIC NEEDS



**HYGIENES
or
DISSATISFIERS**



Higher Needs for Graduate Students...

McClelland's Model

- **ACHIEVEMENT**
- **POWER**
- **AFFILIATION**

Examples reported in Interviews and Focus Groups

- Access to the best academic product
- Cross-disciplinary exchanges
- Forums to present research
- Professional and intellectual development
- Real world immersion and application of knowledge
- Meaningful social impact
- Networking for the future
- More communication with advisors and professors



Michael Frisch's *"Quality of Life Inventory"*

BASIC CONDITIONS

- Health
- Money
- Home
- Neighborhood
- Community



PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Self-esteem
- Goals & Values
- Play
- Learning
- Creativity
- Overall satisfaction with life



RELATIONAL

- Helping
- Love
- Friends
- Children
- Relatives

World Health Organization

“Quality of Life-100”

- 1. Physical Health** [energy and fatigue; pain and discomfort; sleep and rest]
- 2. Psychological Wellness** [bodily image and appearance; negative feelings; positive feelings; self-esteem; thinking, learning, memory and concentration]
- 3. Level of Independence** [mobility; activities of daily living; dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids; work capacity]
- 4. Social Relations** [personal relationships; social support; sexual activity]
- 5. Environment** [financial resources; freedom, physical safety and security; health and social care (accessibility and quality); home environment; opportunities for acquiring new information and skills; participation in and opportunities for recreation/leisure; physical environment (pollution, noise, traffic, climate); transport]
- 6. Spirituality/ Religion** [personal beliefs]

Ed Diener's "*The Satisfaction with Life Scale*"

1. Whether life is close to *ideal*;
2. To what degree *conditions* in life are excellent;
3. Overall *sense of satisfaction* with life;
4. Whether *objectives* in life are being achieved;
5. If there is an absence of major *regrets* in life.

