

Macalester College

2009 HEDS Senior Survey Results

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INTRODUCTION

The HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) Senior Survey was administered via the web in April 2009 to currently enrolled seniors expecting to graduate in May or the following summer. This survey is part of the College's continuing assessment plan, and was also administered to seniors in 2006, 2001, and 1997. The survey asks about the kinds of experiences students have had in college and their satisfaction with their education. Seniors were invited via email to complete the survey on the web. Of the 420 seniors invited, 268 completed surveys for a response rate of 64%.

The seniors who responded to the survey were more likely to be female than the class of 2009 as a whole, but were otherwise quite representative of the class as a whole.

Profile of Respondents

	2009 Senior Survey ⁽¹⁾	Actual 2009 Seniors ⁽²⁾
Male	30%	40%
Female	70%	60%
US Students of Color	18%	18%
US White	72%	72%
International	11%	10%
N	268	420

(1) Percentages are based on students' Macalester records, not responses to survey questions.

(2) Excludes fall graduates not enrolled for the spring 2009 semester.

HI-LITES

- In the fall following graduation, 61% of the seniors were planning on either full-time or part-time employment as their primary activity, and 15% were planning on enrolling in graduate or professional school. 10% were still undecided.
- When choosing a career, seniors rated interesting daily work and the quality of colleagues and clients as the most important of twelve factors listed on the survey. The least important factors included limited working hours and social recognition or status. The percentage of seniors indicating a high income potential was “very important” or “essential” decreased from 35% in 2006 to 23% in 2009.
- The areas where seniors reported their greatest gains from their Macalester education were acquiring skills and knowledge on their own and in-depth knowledge of a subject. These traditionally remain the areas of greatest gains reported by Macalester seniors on the Senior Survey.
- During college, 61% of the seniors participated in a study abroad program and 55% participated in an off-campus internship. Participation in independent study and research decreased from 69% in 2001 to 51% in 2009.
- Satisfaction with campus facilities was generally high for the seniors. Almost all seniors (96%) stated they were “generally” or “very satisfied” with classroom and lab facilities. Satisfaction with our athletic facilities rose dramatically from 55% in 2006 to 96% in 2009 with the opening of the Leonard Center.
- The percentage of seniors who would attend Macalester again if they could relive their college experience decreased slightly from 83% in 2006 to 77% in 2009. The percentage of seniors who were "generally" or "very satisfied" with their Macalester education overall decreased very slightly from 95% in 2006 to 93% in 2009.

SATISFACTION WITH THE MACALESTER EXPERIENCE

The Senior Survey asks students how satisfied they have been with their Macalester experience in 39 specific areas of campus life, services, and academics. Some of the largest increases in satisfaction for the seniors from 2006 to 2009 were in athletic facilities, computer services, student voice in policies, and the climate for minority students. The overwhelming increase in satisfaction with the athletic facilities reflects the opening of the Leonard Center in August of 2008.

The following tables hi-light the top five increases and top five decreases in student satisfaction levels from 2006 to 2009. Survey results from 2001 are included to provide an additional long-term point of reference. The tables at the end of this report show complete results for student satisfaction in the 39 areas of campus life and activity for all four classes completing the Senior Survey between 1997 and 2009.

Top 5 Increases in Senior Satisfaction from 2006 to 2009

Percentages responding “generally” or “very” satisfied

	2001 Seniors	2006 Seniors	2009 Seniors	Change from 2006 to 2009
Recreation/athletics facilities	69%	55%	96%	+ 41 *
Computer services and support	68	59	78	+ 19 *
Student voice in policies	52	60	74	+ 14 *
Climate for minority students	61	65	76	+ 11
Student housing	76	67	78	+ 11

Top 5 Decreases in Senior Satisfaction from 2006 to 2009

Percentages responding “generally” or “very” satisfied

	2001 Seniors	2006 Seniors	2009 Seniors	Change from 2006 to 2009
Student health services	77%	70%	61%	- 9
Social life on campus	74	86	77	- 9
Instruction in humanities/fine arts	93	96	89	- 7
Availability of courses	88	91	84	- 7
First year advising	64	69	64	- 5

* Changes are statistically significant where 95% confidence intervals for the percentages from 2006 and 2009 do not overlap.

ABILITIES ENHANCED BY A MACALESTER EDUCATION

The Senior Survey asks students to evaluate the extent to which certain abilities were enhanced by their Macalester experience. A wide range of abilities are listed, from writing effectively to functioning as a member of a team.

Of the 26 different abilities listed on the survey, those most greatly enhanced for the seniors in 2009 were:

- the ability to acquire skills and knowledge on their own (95% reporting “moderately” or “greatly” enhanced),
- gaining in-depth knowledge in a subject (94%), and
- thinking analytically and logically (93%).

The abilities enhanced the least for the seniors in 2009 were:

- evaluating the role of science and technology in society (51% reporting “moderately” or “greatly” enhanced”),
- using quantitative skills (51%), and
- understanding the process of science (46%).

These areas of abilities tend to remain in the greatest and least enhanced categories over several years of administering the Senior Survey. All 26 areas of abilities with survey results from 1997 to 2009 are included at the end of this report.

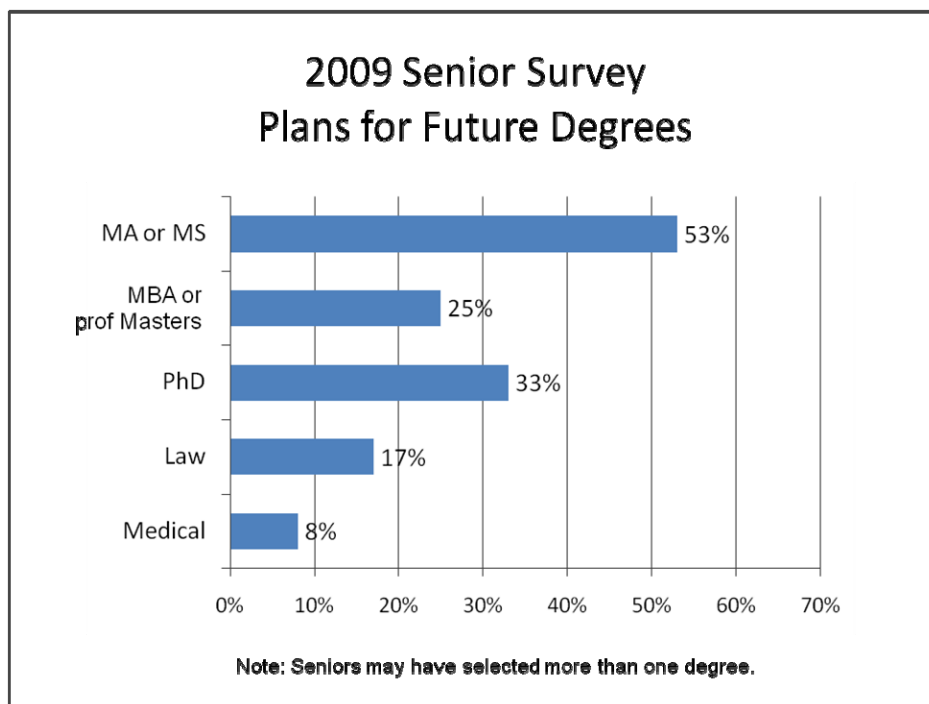
PLANS AFTER GRADUATION

After graduation, 61% of the seniors surveyed in 2009 planned to work full- or part-time. This is a decrease from 74% of seniors planning to work full time in 2001, but does more closely resemble the plans of the seniors in 1997. The percentage of seniors who were completely undecided about their primary activity in the fall rose from 3% in 2001 to 10% in 2009.

Primary Activities for Seniors in the Fall After Graduation

	1997	2001	2006	2009
Employment, full-time or part-time	65%	74%	67%	61%
Graduate or professional school, full-time or part-time	15%	14%	18%	15%
Undecided	4%	3%	5%	10%

While only 15% of the seniors completing the survey in 2009 were planning to enter graduate or professional school right away, 85% overall said they were planning some kind of future degree. The following graph shows the types of degrees planned in the future by the seniors.



TABLES OF SENIOR SURVEY RESULTS: 1997 to 2009

The following tables show results for questions on the HEDS Senior Survey from 1997 to 2009. The survey was revised between 1997 and 2001, so not all questions show results in all years.

<i>What do you expect to be your primary activity this fall?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- employment, full-time or part time	65	74.0	66.5	60.8
- graduate or professional school, full time or part time	15	14.2	17.9	14.6

<i>Do you plan to pursue any of the following degrees <u>in the future</u>?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- percentage planning to pursue a degree in the future		83.5	77.6	85.5
<i>Intended degrees, ONLY for those planning degrees <u>in the future</u> (multiple responses allowed)</i>				
- Master's degree (MA or MS)		48.0	45.9	53.3
- MBA or other prof Masters		21.7	26	24.9
- Law		7.2	17	16.6
- Medical		5.9	4.4	8.3
- PhD		36.2	33.4	32.8
- other degree		7.9	13.3	12.7

<i>How important are the following when considering a career?</i>				
Percentage responding "very important" or "essential"	1997	2001	2006	2009
- intellectual challenge	88	88.4	83.1	81.5
- work for social change	60	59.7	61.1	63.3
- high income potential	29	31.1	34.9	23.1
- social recognition or status	17	19.6	20.9	15.5
- stable, secure future	63	62.0	71.5	66.2
- quality of colleagues and clients	81	83.4	86.6	82.7
- creativity and initiative	90	85.6	81.3	79.9
- expression of personal values	79	79.3	72.1	75
- availability of jobs	49	49.2	44.2	51.4
- interesting daily work	92	94.4	88.9	94.2
- limited working hours		24.0	19.8	10.8
- leadership potential		51.4	50.8	48.9

<i>Indicate the extent to which each capacity or ability was enhanced by your undergraduate experiences.</i>				
Percentage responding "moderately" or "greatly"	1997	2001	2006	2009
- write effectively	87	90.1	91.9	91
- acquire skills and knowledge on my own	92	90.1	95.3	94.9
- think analytically and logically	89	89.5	95.9	93.3
- formulate ideas and solutions	83	81.1	87.8	89.9
- evaluate and choose courses of action	72	75.1	79.1	72.2
- plan and execute complex projects		80.6	84.3	81.6
- use quantitative skills	47	48.9	54.1	50.8
- use technology ("use computers" in 1997)	77	64.4	56.1	54.2
- gain in-depth knowledge in a subject area	88	95.0	95.9	94.1
- read or speak a foreign language	40	63.2	57.3	60.4
- appreciate art, literature, music, drama	57	69.8	57	54.9
- understand process of science, experimentation		46.2	42.1	45.5
- evaluate role of science/tech in society		47.3	54.9	51.3
- engage in pursuit of knowledge and truth		70.1	80.6	76.8
- relate to different races, nations, religions	72	80.6	84.9	82
- develop awareness of social problems		84.6	87.2	87.4
- put current problems in perspective	79	81.4	83.7	81.6
- understand moral and ethical issues	73	71.3	82.6	76
- function as a member of a team	64	68.2	71.5	71
- communicate well orally	78	75.3	82	75.2
- lead and supervise tasks and groups	57	61.1	61.6	61.4
- understand myself	87	87.4	91.8	92.5
- function independently	82	83.4	89.6	87.8
- establish a course of action to accomplish goals	62	75.8	85.5	77.6
- develop self esteem	65	66.5	75.4	69.4
- work under pressure		84.0	88.3	89.8

<i>Which of the following did you participate in during college?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- study abroad	52	61.0	53.4	60.8
- off campus internship	60	57.1	60.3	55.2
- honor society		28.0	38.5	22
- apply for a grant or fellowship		24.7	29.3	29.9
- leadership training		23.6	20.1	22.4
- residence hall assistantship		10.4	2.9	4.9
- summer paid internship		31.9	28.7	33.2
- independent study, research	76	68.7	55.2	51.1
- racial, cultural awareness program	32	30.2	15.5	13.1
- sexual harassment program	15	3.3	0.6	4.5
- gender studies program		22.5	6.3	8.6

<i>Did you actively participate in any of the following? (marked any of four years beginning in 2001)</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- student government	8	12.1	7.5	6.3
- religious group, organization (" <i>religious services</i> " in 1997)	27	20.9	23	16.4
- political club or organization		20.9	17.2	20.1
- performing arts		44.5	36.8	38.4
- intercollegiate athletics	32	35.2	27.6	28.4
- intramural, recreational activities		44.0	46	45.1
- student newspaper (" <i>newspaper or magazine</i> " in 1997)	19	14.8	16.7	8.2
- literary or other magazine		12.6	12.6	7.5
- campus media (TV, radio)		11.0	9.2	14.9
- social action, issues group		37.9	28.2	26.5
- cultural, ethnic group or organization		31.3	23.6	22.4
- volunteer service	67	68.7	59.8	63.8
- work on faculty research		26.4	25.9	22.4

<i>How often have you engaged in each of the following?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
Percentage responding "often" or "very often"				
- been a guest in faculty home		11.1	11.1	8.6
- class presentations		79.2	71.1	77.9
- group project assignments		63.2	60.7	61.3
- make multimedia presentations		22.7	37.8	46.5
- organized demonstrations		7.9	7.6	6.4
- religious services		12.0	9.8	8.3
- cultural events, concerts, or art exhibits		70.9	57.2	61.1
- discussions with students with different beliefs		74.2	61.3	57.9
- discussions with students about "academic" topics		91.2	86.6	90.2

<i>How satisfied are you with each of the following services or aspects of your college?</i>				
Percentage responding "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" (excludes those responding "not relevant")				
ACADEMICS:	1997	2001	2006	2009
- first year advising		63.7	69	63.9
- major advising		82.8	84.3	83.6
- faculty availability outside class	97	95.0	97.7	97.2
- student interaction with faculty		96.1	97.7	94
- availability of courses	88	87.8	90.7	83.6
- independent study	96	95.6	92.7	90.8
- internships or study abroad		92.1	92	89.4
- tutorial help or other academic assistance		89.3	84.4	87.3
INSTRUCTION:	1997	2001	2006	2009
- humanities and fine arts	94	92.8	96	88.8
- science and math	90	84.2	89.9	85.9
- social sciences	95	96.5	91.8	89.9

<i>How satisfied are you with each of the following services or aspects of your college?</i>				
Percentage responding "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" (excludes those responding "not relevant")				
SERVICES & FACILITIES:	1997	2001	2006	2009
- Classroom, lab facilities		95.5	97.6	95.5
- Computer facilities and resources		77.3	88.4	94.3
- Computer services and support		67.8	59.2	78
- Library facilities and resources	86	95.6	96.5	93.9
- Library services		97.8	97.6	94.7
- Career services	74	70.7	71.5	80
- Counseling services	64	79.6	71.5	72.2
- Financial Aid Office	82	85.7	93.6	88.8
- Financial aid package		73.3	85.5	82
- Food services	36	64.7	75	85.1
- Student center/union facilities		66.8	87.8	96.5
- Student center/union programs		63.7	86.5	90.7
- Student health services	69	76.7	70.4	60.8
- Student housing		75.7	67.2	78.1
- Financial services (Student Accounts, etc.)	96	91.1	95.5	92.6
- Recreation/athletics programs		89.5	84.9	90.8
- Recreation/athletics facilities		68.6	55.1	95.9
- Registrar's Office		91.7	94.3	96.7
CAMPUS LIFE:	1997	2001	2006	2009
- Student voice in policies	45	52.2	60.4	74
- Student government	44	59.3	58.9	65.2
- Social life on campus	75	74.0	85.5	76.5
- Cultural/fine arts programming		89.0	92.5	88.7
- Lectures and speakers		90.3	95.2	94.1
- Religious, spiritual life		60.6	79.7	85.5
- Campus safety		90.4	70.8	79.1
- Ethnic, racial diversity		68.7	68.6	72.4
- Climate for minority students	64	60.7	65	76.2
- Sense of community on campus		62.0	75.2	82.4

<i>If you had the chance to relive your college experience, would you attend the same institution again?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- percentage responding "probably" or "definitely"	76	73.0	82.6	77

<i>Overall, how satisfied have you been with your undergraduate education at this institution?</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- percentage responding "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied"	91	90.0	94.8	92.5

<i>Area of undergraduate major (multiple responses allowed):</i>	1997	2001	2006	2009
- Arts and Humanities	40	38.5	36.6	35.4
- Business	4	2.7	1.7	0
- Education	3	0.5	0	2.7
- Engineering	2	0.0	1.2	0
- Natural Sciences	28	22.5	21.5	21.2
- Social Sciences	42	37.9	46.5	41.9
- Interdisciplinary	8	12.6	8.1	13.5
- Other field	10	3.3	1.2	17.7

	1997	2001	2006	2009
Number of Surveys Received:	235	182	174	268
Response Rate:	57%	47%	46%	64%