Student VOICE Survey #3:
Campus Intellectual Environment

Division of Student Life
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview

The purpose of the Student VOICE Project was to identify student recommendations for their **V**ision **O**f the **I**deal **C**ollege **E**nvironment. This is part of the development of a new master plan for Indiana University, headed by President Michael McRobbie. The project has a Web site at IUPUI: http://www.iupui.edu/~sldweb/dos/voice.html. In addition, an Oncourse site was created to host articles and discussion forums for the project.

President McRobbie launched the project at IUPUI on November 1, 2007. At that time, students were organized into five sub-committees addressing the intellectual, social, and campus-living environments, as well as the off-campus student experience and support services for students. Discussions within each sub-committee were intended to be broad-ranging and to allow members of the committee to offer specific recommendations to President McRobbie.

This project is a small-scale qualitative research study. Qualitative research focuses on depth of exploration into a topic through a variety of sources. This report provides data on just one source of information, namely an informal survey administered online. Through the survey data, committee discussions, focus groups, and other in-house data sources like NSSE and the Student Satisfaction and Priorities survey, a descriptive view of the Student VOICE will emerge.

The pages that follow contain results from the survey used for assessing the campus intellectual environment at IUPUI (53 respondents). It was administered online via SurveyMonkey.com, and it was promoted through word of mouth, listservs, JagNews, and JagTV.

Question 1

"The ideal intellectual environment at IUPUI inspires highly effective learning. This is accomplished through a balance of theory and application, and an inclusive approach to teaching and learning that continuously improves to keep up with a changing world. What else would you add to this definition of the ideal intellectual environment?"

All 53 survey respondents answered this open-ended question; thirteen indicated they would not add anything to this definition.
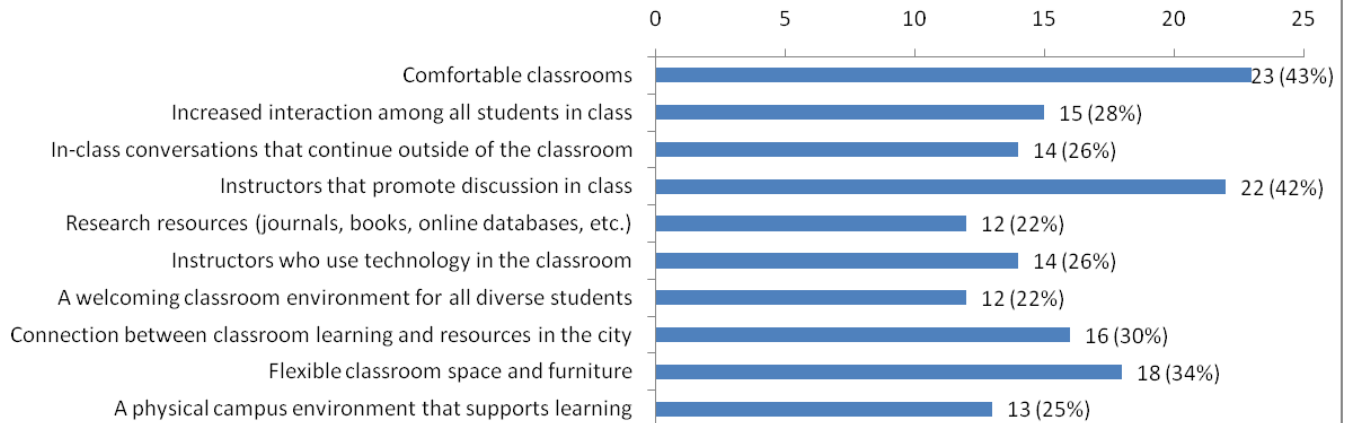
Of the 40 who made suggestions, the central themes of the responses discussed issues of an increase in open dialogue among fellow students and professors both in and outside of class, more opportunities for involvement with research, and an increase in academic challenge. Many students offered edits to the given definition or suggested entirely new definitions altogether. The highlights appear below, and the full list of responses in their entirety can be found in Appendix A of this document. Spelling and grammar were not corrected in either list of quotations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- An ideal intellectual environment fosters and support intelligent discourse and research in all areas, whether economic, social, environmental, health related, etc. that affect communities and society as a whole. I feel, through an intellectual environment, we need to strive towards constant improvement in all areas affecting communities and society.
- Something needs to be added to make this statement specific and unique to IUPUI. As it stands now, this statemenet, "...accomplished through a balance of theory and..." could be applied to any instituion of higher learning.
- An environment in which students feel free and encouraged to discuss academic ideas and topics with one another and one which is generally conducive to learning and studying.
- a comfortable learning environment, combined with engaged interaction between students and teachers, and intelligent teachers who don't just ramble.
- Evaluation should not be snapshots of what one has memorized. Learning should be iterative. Back and forth. Discussions, not spitting back what is fed.
- The importance of engaging students is a critical element of the intellectual environment on campus. When students become active in the course material being taught, they have the opportunity to get excited about subjects and pass the discussion on to other students and friends.
- An ideal intellectual environment would challenge and stimulate every student to reach their most extreme intellectual potential, and would not simply "set the bar" at a lower standard to accommodate lesser able students.

Question 2

2. Of the items listed below, select the THREE that are of most importance to you in an ideal intellectual environment.

Comfortable classrooms	23 (43%)
Increased interaction among all students in class	15 (28%)
In-class conversations that continue outside of the classroom	14 (26%)
Instructors that promote discussion in class	22 (42%)
Research resources (journals, books, online databases, etc.)	12 (22%)
Instructors who use technology in the classroom	14 (26%)
A welcoming classroom environment for all diverse students	12 (22%)
Connection between classroom learning and resources in the city	16 (30%)
Flexible classroom space and furniture	18 (34%)
A physical campus environment that supports learning	13 (25%)

All 53 respondents answered this question. Note: they were asked to select three items of greatest importance, so the percentages noted here will not add up to 100%.

The top three responses were comfortable classrooms (43%), instructors that promote discussion in class (42%) and flexible classroom space and furniture (34%). The connection between the physical environment and the learning experience appears to be important among respondents to this survey. In addition they appear to be looking for more peer-to-peer interaction and more connections to "the real world," via their classes.

Question 3

"What should IUPUI do to achieve this ideal intellectual environment?

There were 53 responses to this open-ended question. Similar to Question 2, many respondents shared their needs for more comfortable classrooms and study spaces, more interpersonal dialogue, faculty members who engage the students to communicate, and a higher amount of intellectual challenge. Also, several respondents expressed interest in higher awareness of diversity and greater use of technology in the classroom. Some of the highlights appear immediately below, and then the full list of responses can be found in Appendix B of this report.

- Promote more dialogue amongst professors, politicians, students, and community leaders to address problems and issues and determine solutions. Implement focus groups and/or committees?
- Continue to host guest speakers on the campus. Have faculty members talk about their research. Give the campus a more "traditional" feeling.
- Take credit for the wonderful things it already does!!! have the chancellor write a weekly email to campus and community personalizing the greatness for the week. Scott Cowen does this at Tulane and is very effective in building the intellectual credit earned on campus- can link to highlighted research or news.
- More comfortable classrooms with updated desks, more teachers that encourage students to interact with each other, more research projects that encourage students to get involved in the community.
- I would suggest the leaders on campus go into some of the classrooms in each of the buildings and see the kind of seating and see if they believe the desks, chairs, table & chairs are comfortable for learning.

Appendix A: Full List of Responses to Question 1

- Free printing would be great....I sometimes do not print copies of assigned readings for class because there is a charge?
- Students who want to learn and don't always mess around.
- Making sure that every student is aware of their resources to gain greater intelligence
- research
- The ideal intellectual environment at IUPUI inspires high communication skills.
- better communication from instructor or Professor with the students
- An ideal intellectual environment fosters and support intelligent discourse and research in all areas, whether economic, social, environmental, health related, etc. that affect communities and society as a whole. I feel, through an intellectual environment, we need to strive towards constant improvement in all areas affecting communities and society.
- Less lecture, more cooperative and hands on activities.
- Something needs to be added to make this statement specific and unique to IUPUI. As it stands now, this statemenet, "...accomplished through a balance of theory and..." could be applied to any instituion of higher learning.
- An environment in which students feel free and encouraged to discuss academic ideas and topics with one another and one which is generally conducive to learning and studying.
- a stimulus to bind campus community and the world it affects
- based in the current research
- Provides forums/mediums for open dialouge and discussion.
- a comfortable learning environment, combined with engaged interaction between students and teachers, and intelligent teachers who don't just ramble.
- Students need more academic challenges.
- application through use of modern technology and ideas
- communication, diversity
- weeding out those that restrict the flow of knowledge
- We need more events that help with the application of what we are learning! We also need more conferences, guest lectures, seminars and lunchens etc. to help us expand our education beyond the classroom.
- Teachers who actively engage their students and teach them how to articulate their own ideas
- Reword: This is accomplished through a balance of theory and application, and an inclusive approach to life-long learning and teaching that continusouly adapts with our changing world.
- I would also add that IUPUI's rigor or intensity of coursework challenges students to reach new heights of intellect and learning.
- Collaborative work/teaching (both student-student and student-professor)
- I would add something alluding to the affect of classroom set-up (furniature, space, lighting, etc.).
- Something about opportunites to experience new cultures or environments. For example study abroad and diversity
- Evaluation should not be snapshots of what one has memorized. Learning should be iterative. Back and forth. Discussions, not spitting back what is fed.
- The intellectual environment is fostered by student discussions outside of the classroom.
- Instructors present information in a variety of ways and, at times, in varying environments, in order to appeal to and appease the wide range of learning styles represented by the diverse campus community.

- The importance of engaging students is a critical element of the intellectual environment on campus. When students become active in the course material being taught, they have the opportunity to get excited about subjects and pass the discussion on to other students and friends.
- an intellectual environment also stimulates conversations and questioning outside the classroom.
- An ideal intellectual environment would challenge and stimulate every student to reach their most extreme intellectual potential, and would not simply "set the bar" at a lower standard to accommodate lesser able students.
- I would like to see classroom environments that encourage a free exchange of ideas, even if those ideas aren't popular.
- open minds
- It should include an ongoing effort for personal excellence in achievement at every level.
- Encourages students to find out more about the world and other's views of it.
- More friendly faculty and staff, and leaders of the campus.
- More student life oppurtunities.
- No attendance policies or group work. Let people be responsible for their own learning.
- Meaningful research that incorporates student involvement

Appendix B: Full List of Responses to Question 3

- Again, Free Printing
- More professors who see as if they care.
- Keep all teachers up to date with how to use new technology
- emphasize communication with industry and extend communication beyond the classroom to improve the learning environment beyond the formal class setting.
- Make students aware
- Comfortable desks and chairs. It is such pain sitting in a classroom trying to concentrate when you're not comfortable.
- honors program. mentoring program
- They should add more social events and chances for students and employees to interact with each other.
- more comfortable place to study like the tv lounge and the quiet lounge in Campus Center
- Promote more dialogue amongst professors, politicians, students, and community leaders to address problems and issues and determine solutions. Implement focus groups and/or committees?
- Network with business owners/boards throughout the city to create internship opportunities. Continue to provide good librarian support. And, last but not least, provide diversity training to all faculty.
- Take some classes from the School of Ed.
- It all sounds great, but this is an extrememly open ended question. I am not sure what you are exactly looking for. Many of the classrooms on campus (especially in Nursing, Cavanaugh, and the lecture hall) still have a dark and dingy look and feel.
- Continue to host guest speakers on the campus. Have faculty members talk about their research. Give the campus a more "traditional" feeling.
- take credit for the wonderful things it already does!!! have the chancellor write a weekly email to campus and community personalizing the greatness for the week. Scott Cowen does this at Tulane and is very effective in building the intellectual credit earned on campus- can link to highlighted research or news.
- All classrooms should be smart classrooms and the furniture should be portable. This seems to be happening in many places. oncourse should be made more user friendly, the method for turning in work is strange. Try looking at Blackboard.
- I'm not sure that the options in #2 really would succeed at this.
- hire highly skilled teachers who make the materical interesting and encourage class participation in and out of class.
- Students need to be challenged more. I feel that so many required courses have wasted so much of my time because all I'm assigned is busy work.
- increase use of modern technology
- more fieldtrips
- Provide seating that allows one to be comfortable in the classroom, to allow for the temperature within the room to be conducive to learning and to allow for a stream of knowledge based around a specific topic to flow into the students with a use of technology and an accurate grading system.
- see number 1
- Make the desks and classrooms more comfortable.
- workshops so that professors can be exposed to diferent teaching styles

- Facilitate more discussion of required readings and assignments, rather than instructor-led lecture.
- Recruit more minority students and non-traditional students (it seems as if IUPUI is moving away from the non-traditional student focus).
- Hire or confirm that competent and knowledgeable staff is actually in the classrooms who are in tune with the current world and research.
- Some of the classrooms are ovecrowded with desks which makes it difficult to manuver around the room. I believe that professors should make better use of the technology supplied to them through IUPUI. For example all teachers should use Oncourse because it keeps everyone updated on class meetings.
- I think that the level of coursework could be bumped up somewhat so that students feel more challenged and will embrace learning more. I feel that the students may be a level above the difficulty they are faced with and are therefore left unchallenged and unmotivated to seek further learning experiences.
- Some classes are held in rooms that do not fit the purpose of the course.
- Get rid of the desks in all the classrooms and instead put in tables with chairs (as some classrooms already have). That way it is much easier to do group work and to interact with classmates as permitted by the instructor.
- There are some buildings on campus that promote learning within the class room more than others. For example, CA rooms have been renovated and updated with furniature. The Science buildings however (ET,SL,LD) have not. We still sit at mismatched desks, most of which are broken. Improving on classroom space and furniature throughout campus would help IUPUI achieve this.
- An idea would be to mandate more service learning opportunities or activities like it.
- Schools and even majors are too exclusive of each other. Cross-school classes and/or information sessions (stations in student center?) would help freshmen and sophomores, especially, be exposed to majors or classes they might like to pursue. By the time a student figures out the whole scope of the campus (if ever) and how that applies to the greater business community, it's often too late in the academic career to change. As mentioned in Q1 I have found that those instructors who go beyond the traditional teaching style by incorporating a number of different types of activities and environments for learning help students process the material more effectively. An example is David Craig who used lecturing, debate, open conversation, and pre-class discussion question prep in his Religions, Ethics and Healthcare class. Lisa Ehrmann, of Psychology Dept. is using a variety of methods in her Psychology as a Biological Science class--Automated ""Breeze"" presentations that supplement the lectures, which also have PowerPoint slides; along with labs where hands-on and collaborative activities are performed. There is a consistent pattern to the classes, as far as what type of activity to expect, but the content of the components change. What is not recommended is going too far down the ""instructors that promote discussion in class"" road. When class time is devoted too heavily to this activity, especially when students are expressing opinions, rather than helping others (and through expression, themselves) understand the material, it is a disaster. The teacher doesn't do enough ""teaching, but instead ends up a discussion proctor. Use of technology is great when it is used well (Kristy Sheeler, COMM, L. Ehrmann), but is not when it is used simply for its own sake (e.g., taking role and administering quizzes using a remote control--especially when the technology itself is new/shaky--time waster). Hope this is helpful to you!" Religion Dept.

- Encourage professors to engage their students and promote discussions in class. Becoming active and excited about an academic topic is very difficult when students are not given the opportunity to discuss topics and provide their input. Professors who simply lecture and provide no opportunity for questions or feedback are hindering the learning process.
- Support the teachers who already do this - physical spaces and furniture don't create an intellectual environment. People create the intellectual environment.
- Put more fun,relaxing, things to do in the campus center (like a game room with televisions),,that will loosen things up and people will be more likely to interact.
- Academic standards are far too low at IUPUI. Students are able to slip through the system without so much as a single independent thought. This is very disheartening to students who must put up with their peers' inanity.
- Is there a format, online, to receive comments and feedback? Waiting until the end of a semester to fill out a survey, lessens the chance of receiving a "clear picture" of what is going on day to day.
- ask students more and give more opportunities for free speech
- I would find policy/intellectual debates betwen known speakers to be interesting.
- We should have more role models or leaders in the intellectual world visit/lecture so that we may learn or be inspired by example.
- Promote real-world partnerships, continue to fund retention and recognition efforts, reward responsive faculty
- More comfortable classrooms with updated desks, more teachers that encourage students to interact with each other, more research projects that encourage students to get involved in the community.
- Designate certain sitting areas in various buildings as quiet zones. Too many people needlessly loiter in these areas.
- promote education for all by giving out more grants to unfortunate families. Also have instructors take a mandatory speech class that will help them communicate their lessons better.
- I would suggest the leaders on campus go into some of the classrooms in each of the buildings and see the kind of seating and see if they believe the desks, chairs, table & chairs are comfortable for learning.
- Better in and out of classroom furniture, and utiliztion of the city's resources.
- Get rid of bad professors instead of giving them tenure.
- Stress application - real world meaning. Address concerns raised via student-instructor evaluations.