

**Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey
University of Maryland Baltimore County
Spring 2000**

Executive Summary

A total of 398 students responded to the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey administered to UMBC's graduate student population in Spring 2000, for a response rate of 37 percent. Survey respondents were fairly representative of the graduate population in terms of full-time/ part-time status, but over-represented women, whites, Maryland residents, and students in the Social Sciences. Students in Science & Engineering programs were somewhat under-represented.

In general, most graduate students were satisfied with their entire educational experience (76.8%), with part-time students significantly more satisfied than their full-time counterparts. Most students (71.6%) would recommend UMBC to a friend or relative.

Academic Experience

- Almost 85 percent of respondents described the level of challenge encountered in their courses as just right, with non-resident students more likely to report the challenge as too easy compared to Maryland resident students.
- Almost 80 percent of respondents were satisfied with quality of instruction by full-time faculty.
- Over 70 percent of respondents were satisfied with the quality of their academic program, class sizes, and the accessibility of faculty outside of class.
- Fewer than 58 percent of respondents were satisfied with the availability of courses at times they wanted them.
- International students, significantly concentrated in Science & Engineering, were less satisfied than U.S. resident students with the quality of instruction, quality of academic program, class sizes, course availability, and information provided with regard to course requirements and objectives.
- Full-time students were significantly less satisfied than their part-time counterparts (and more likely to be neutral) for all seven of the academic experience indicators.
- Those students in Science & Engineering were generally less satisfied with their academic experience compared to those in other program areas.

Professional Development

- For all the professional development variables, 30% to 49% of respondents reported feeling neutral, suggesting a lack of concern or understanding of the importance for this part of the graduate education experience.
- For all variables except teaching opportunities for graduate students in their departments, where satisfaction was greater, roughly 20 percent or more reported some level of dissatisfaction.

- While those students in Science & Engineering majors were less satisfied in terms of academic experience, they demonstrated the highest levels of satisfaction for the professional development variables.

Campus Climate

- Overall, respondents were equally likely to agree or disagree that there is a sense of campus community at UMBC, with nearly 45 percent feeling neutral.
- Nearly 50 percent of respondents were neutral about wanting to be involved in the campus community.
- Students were more likely to feel a sense of camaraderie with their fellow graduate students within their department than they perceived campus-wide.

Service/ Facilities Use & Satisfaction

- Use of many services and facilities by graduate students was relatively low, especially among the campus life and group-targeted services.
- The frequency of neutral responses when rating satisfaction with services indicates that a good number of services offered to UMBC graduate students are not used or necessarily wanted by respondents.
- For the most part, respondents were satisfied with the services and facilities utilized except for those involving student finances, housing, and parking.

Other Activities & Responsibilities

- On average, respondents reported that the greatest number of hours in other activities were spent working in a paid job off campus (21.1 hours per week) and studying outside of class (13.8 hours per week).
- Full-time students spent an average of 11.2 hours per week working on campus compared to 2.1 hours for part-time students. In contrast, those students attending part-time reported working an average of 32.3 hours per week off campus, compared to only 7.2 hours for full-time respondents.
- Full-time students spent more time, on average, studying outside of class compared to part-time students (17.3 vs. 11.1 hours per week).
- Nearly one-fourth of respondents reported having child care responsibilities at home; just six percent reported having similar elder care responsibilities.

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
BALTIMORE COUNTY**

**Graduate Student
Satisfaction Survey**

**Conducted
Spring 2000**

UMBC Office of Institutional Research

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1999, a committee was formed to develop a survey intended to gauge student satisfaction among UMBC students. The committee consisted of representatives from Institutional Research, Institutional Advancement, the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Engineering, Undergraduate Enrollment Management, as well as both graduate and undergraduate student representatives. In addition, feedback was solicited during the survey development from Student Affairs, the current Task Force Chairs, the Provost's Office, and the Graduate School. It was decided that two separate surveys be developed, one for undergraduate and one for graduate students. The surveys were administered in Spring 2000 by the Office of Institutional Research. This report focuses on the Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey.

The Survey Respondents

Surveys were mailed to the 1,484 graduate students enrolled at UMBC in Spring 2000. Two mailings, an original mailing based on viable addresses supplemented by a second mailing to non-respondents, yielded a total of 398 students, for a response rate of 37 percent.

A comparison of survey respondents to the overall population, summarized in [Table 1](#), reveals that the sample over-represents women, whites, and Maryland residents. It does, however, represent fairly accurately the graduate student population in terms of full-time/part-time status. The sample and population are somewhat similar by program area. Although the percentage of students in the Arts & Humanities in the sample is double that in the population, the percentage is very small for both groups. The sample slightly over-represents the Social Science areas, while the Science & Engineering majors are somewhat under-represented. Important to note is the significant correlation between program area and international status, with 69 percent of international respondents concentrated in Science & Engineering disciplines, accounting for nearly 33 percent of all students majoring in this area. This finding should be taken into account when considering results presented by program area.

The Survey

The survey measures six major areas of student satisfaction: academic experience, professional development, campus climate, student services, facilities, and other responsibilities or activities. (See Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire). Within the academic experience section, students were first asked to rate the overall level of challenge they experienced in their courses. Additional questions asked respondents to rate the quality of instruction by faculty, accessibility of faculty, the quality of their academic program, class size, course availability. Respondents were also asked to assess the relevance of courses to their intended career, information provided about course requirements and objectives, degree requirements, and the quality and timeliness of feedback from professors.

An important part of graduate education is the professional development of the student in preparation for a career in the field of their choice. To gauge the extent to which UMBC provides such support to its graduate students, respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with graduate student orientation services, teaching opportunities in their department, procedures for awarding graduate assistantships, pay scales for graduate assistants, and training provided for new graduate assistants. Students were also asked to rate departmental support for attendance at professional meetings, as well as opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research projects, professional presentations, and professional publications.

Several aspects of student perception of campus climate were measured. Students were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of community at UMBC, and if they feel safe when on campus. To assess the social atmosphere on campus, students were asked to rate their overall feelings concerning interactions between faculty, staff and students; campus treatment of diversity; and gender equality at UMBC. Several questions were posed to determine the extent to which students feel a part of the campus community and have the opportunity to get involved if desired. Finally, respondents were asked to assess the sense of camaraderie among graduate students in their department and campus-wide.

Evaluation of student-related services was divided into four major areas. Within each area, students were asked to indicate their use of each service and their level of satisfaction with the service if they had used it. Administrative services included such items as registration, billing and paying, financial aid, and admissions. Campus life services included those services intended to enhance student life at UMBC. Among those included in the survey were personal counseling, campus ministry, child care, health care coverage, food services, recreational programs, volunteer opportunities, student government organizations, cultural and social events, and shuttle bus services. Group-targeted services included those directed specifically at female, minority, international, commuting, evening, and graduate students, as well as those students with disabilities. Finally, Information and Other services included such items as library and bookstore services, the campus radio station and newspaper, as well as the technology-based campus homepage and internet and computer resources.

Student satisfaction with the facilities offered at UMBC was also examined. Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the physical classroom environment, science labs, engineering labs, Visual and Performing Arts studios, language labs, and computer labs, the upkeep and cleanliness of campus grounds, and athletic and recreation facilities. In addition satisfaction with space for relaxing and socializing, space for studying, housing on and in the vicinity of campus, parking on campus, library facilities, and dining facilities was also assessed.

Finally, the survey attempted to identify other responsibilities students might face while attending UMBC. Included among these items were working for pay on and off campus, serving as a volunteer on or off campus, studying outside of class, and participating in organizations and activities both on and off campus. Responsibility for the care of dependent children or elderly relatives at home was also measured.

RESULTS

Findings for this survey are presented for the overall sample, with statistically significant results discussed for various group comparisons where applicable. Groups identified for these analyses were based on **gender, race, full-time/part-time status, Maryland residency, international student status, and program area**. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to identify significant differences between the groups' responses.

In general, most graduate students appear to be satisfied with UMBC, with almost 77 percent indicating that they are satisfied with their entire educational experience at UMBC. Part-time students were found to be significantly more satisfied compared to their full-time counterparts ([Figure 1](#)), possibly because part-time students may have lower expectations because their lives are not as fully engaged in the graduate student experience (e.g. they may not need as many of the services used by their full-time counterparts). [Figure 2](#) reveals that most (71.6%) respondents would recommend UMBC to a friend or relative.

Academic Experience

[Figure 3](#) indicates that almost 84 percent of survey respondents would describe the level of challenge encountered in their courses as just right, while six percent perceived it as too hard and just over ten percent felt it was too easy/not challenging enough. Further analysis revealed that non-resident students were more likely to report the level of challenge as too easy compared to Maryland resident students (24.4% vs. 8.1%).

Satisfaction with a variety of academic experience variables is demonstrated in [Figures 4a](#) and [4b](#). Group comparisons on academic experience variables found a number of significant differences by international status, full/ part-time status, and program area. These differences are shown in [Figures 5, 6 and 7](#). Additional group differences are discussed in the text where appropriate.

[Figure 4a](#) reveals that most respondents (79.6%) were satisfied with the quality of instruction by full-time faculty, with somewhat fewer being satisfied with the instruction by part-time faculty (72.5%). Over 70 percent of respondents were satisfied with the accessibility of faculty outside of class, the quality of their academic program, and class sizes. Additional analysis revealed that those respondents with a year or more of graduate study reported higher levels of dissatisfaction with the quality of their academic program compared to those with less than one year (17.5% vs. 4.9%). Also, Maryland residents were more likely to be satisfied with the size of classes compared to non-Maryland residents (83.9% vs. 51.1%). [Figure 4b](#) indicates that the lowest level of satisfaction (and greatest level of dissatisfaction) is found for the availability of courses, with just fewer than 58 percent satisfied. In contrast, over 70 percent of respondents were satisfied with the relevance of courses to their intended career, information provided about course and degree requirements, and the quality and timeliness of feedback from professors. Group comparisons showed that those with a year or more of graduate study indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction with the relevance of courses to their intended career compared to those with less than one year of study (16.1% vs. 7.0%). Mean levels of satisfaction for the

academic experience indicators are found in [Table 2](#). These findings reveal that respondents were most satisfied with the information provided by instructors with regard to course requirements and objectives (mean=4.12), followed by the quality of instruction by full-time faculty (mean=4.08). Students were least satisfied with the availability of courses at the time wanted (mean=3.49).

Comparisons of international and non-international students on the academic experience variables can be found in [Figures 5a and 5b](#). [Figure 5a](#) indicates that international students are less likely to be satisfied with the quality of instruction by both full-time and part-time faculty. In addition, this group indicated lower satisfaction with the quality of their academic program compared to non-international students. International students were also significantly less satisfied with class size relative to their needs, course availability, and information provided by instructors with regard to course requirements and objectives. It should also be noted that on all the academic experience variables, greater percentages of international than non-international students indicated feeling neutral.

Full-time students were also found to have significantly different levels of satisfaction compared to their part-time counterparts, as revealed in [Figures 6a and 6b](#). For all seven academic experience variables included in these figures, full-time respondents were found to be less satisfied when compared to those attending UMBC on a part-time basis.

[Figures 7a, 7b, 7c, and 7d](#) demonstrate the significant differences found by program area for the academic experience variables. To reiterate, it is important to consider the high concentration of Science & Engineering majors among international students, and the extent to which this factor might affect results found for this program area. Those students in Science & Engineering majors were less satisfied with but much more neutral toward the quality of instruction by full-time faculty. Science & Engineering students revealed much greater dissatisfaction than others with the quality of instruction by part-time faculty ([Figure 7a](#)). These respondents were also less satisfied with (but more neutral toward) the quality of their academic program and the availability of courses when wanted, followed by those in the Social Sciences for both of these variables. Course availability appears to be a particularly critical issue for those in Science & Engineering, with almost 34 percent reporting some level of dissatisfaction and another 26 percent indicating they felt neutral. [Figure 7c](#) reveals that those students in the Arts & Humanities were the least satisfied with the relevance of courses to their intended careers (65.2%), followed by those in Science & Engineering (69.9%), Social Science (73.6%), and Other (EHS, LLC, and non-degree seeking) (91.2%). However, because of variation in the percent neutral, those in Science & Engineering also expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with the relevance of courses to their intended major (16.1%). Those in the Arts & Humanities were, however, the most satisfied with the information provided regarding course requirements and objectives. Finally, [Figure 7d](#) indicates that those in Science & Engineering were least satisfied with information provided about degree requirements. Science & Engineering students were at least twice as likely as the others to be neutral about the quality and timeliness of feedback from professors.

Professional Development

Mean satisfaction scores for the professional development indicators, found in [Table 2](#), reveal that respondents were most satisfied with the teaching opportunities for graduate students, they were least satisfied with the pay scales for graduate assistants. A comparison of the means for professional development with those found for academic experience also indicates that students are less satisfied with the professional development aspect of their UMBC experience. However, it should also be noted that across the board a fewer percentage of respondents actually rated the professional development measures.

[Figures 8a and 8b](#) also examine satisfaction with professional development. It is interesting to note that across all these variables, almost one-third of respondents reported feeling neutral, perhaps indicating apathy or lack of understanding about the importance of this portion of the graduate education experience. However, for all variables except teaching opportunities for graduate students in their department, roughly 20 percent or more reported some level of dissatisfaction, indicating that for some, expectations are not being met.

Group comparisons for professional development found that full-time students were somewhat more likely to be satisfied with procedures for awarding graduate assistantships compared to part-time students (56.1% vs. 44.4%). In addition, international students, when compared to non-international respondents, were found to be more satisfied with both student orientation (66.1% vs. 39.5%) and teaching opportunities (72.4% vs. 49.8%). However, when considering the procedures for awarding graduate assistantships, roughly 24 percent of international students were dissatisfied, compared to only 15.3% of non-international students.

Finally, comparisons by program area ([Figure 8c](#)) indicate that while those in Science & Engineering may be least satisfied with the academic experience variables, they are most satisfied for all of the professional development variables. For example, 67 percent of these students were satisfied with departmental support for attending professional meetings, compared to 58 percent of those in the Arts & Humanities, 48 percent of those in Other majors, and just 37 percent of those in the Social Sciences. Students in Science & Engineering and the Arts & Humanities were also most satisfied with graduate student orientation, with approximately 70 percent of both groups being satisfied.

Campus Climate

When asked the extent to which they agree or disagree that there is a strong sense of campus community, nearly 45 percent of respondents reported feeling neutral, with the rest divided evenly between agreeing and disagreeing ([Figure 9a](#)). Most respondents either agreed or felt neutral about feeling safe and secure on campus, as well as the variables measuring the degree of sensitivity and respect for diversity on campus. [Figure 9b](#) examines additional campus climate variables, specifically those gauging students' sense of involvement in the campus community. Here, respondents again revealed high levels of neutrality, indicating that a sense of community may not be a high priority for graduate

students. Of course, results may also be interpreted to mean that many graduate students, while not dissatisfied with the sense of community, are also not impressed. However, the high level of neutral responses on the variable “I want to be involved in the campus community” (49.2%) would appear to support the former rather than the latter argument. The last two variables in [Figure 9b](#) do indicate, however, that respondents were much more likely to feel a sense of camaraderie with their fellow graduate students within their department than they perceived campus-wide.

Mean levels of agreement, found in [Table 3](#), reveal that respondents had the highest agreement levels about the interactions among students, faculty and staff being positive in nature. The lowest levels of agreement were found for the more campus-wide measures of a sense of campus community and a sense of camaraderie among graduate students. Camaraderie among students at the department level, however, did attain a higher average level of agreement.

Group comparisons for campus climate reveal that international students were more likely to want to be involved in the campus community compared to their non-international counterparts (63.5% vs. 28.9%). International students, less likely to have family and friends in the area, may be more dependent upon the campus community to fulfill their need for social interaction. These students were also more likely to agree that there exists a sense of camaraderie among students campus-wide (29.6% vs. 10.6%). By program area, those students in the Arts & Humanities were most likely to want to be involved in the campus community (52.2%), followed by Science & Engineering respondents (42.0%). Those students in Science & Engineering were more likely to agree that there exists a campus-wide sense of camaraderie (19.2%), while those in the Social Sciences were least likely (5.5%).

[Figure 9c](#) demonstrates that, not surprisingly, part-time students are generally more likely to feel neutral about campus climate and involvement in the campus community. Just over 25 percent of full-time respondents agreed that there is a strong sense of community at UMBC, while almost 46 percent indicated that they desired to be involved. These findings indicate, perhaps, that at least for some full-time graduate students, expectations for the more social aspects of the graduate school experience are not being met.

Service Use and Satisfaction

Administrative Services

[Figures 10a and 10b](#) examine the use of and satisfaction with administrative services. Most respondents reported using student billing and paying and registration services, as would be expected. Rates of use were lower for financial aid services, as well as those provided by the Deans’ offices. Not surprisingly, the lowest levels of satisfaction were found in the financial areas—student billing and paying and financial aid. Here, students may have been gauging their satisfaction not in terms of the service being provided, but by the outcomes of

that service—i.e. the amount of payments made and aid received. These findings are further supported by the mean levels of satisfaction with administrative services found in [Table 2](#), where financial aid services and student billing and paying have the lowest average scores.

Group comparisons indicated that full-time respondents were more likely to use on-line registration compared to those attending part-time (88.8% vs. 64.0%). Full-time students were also more likely to report using financial aid services (49.4% vs. 24.9%). International students were also more likely to use on-line registration (96.8% compared to 70.6% for non-international students). Compared to non-international students, international respondents were also more likely to be satisfied with financial aid services (73.9% vs. 31.9%).

Campus Life Services

[Figure 11a](#) reveals that for graduate students, the most used services are food services, health care coverage, and shuttle bus services. Less than 15 percent of respondents were found to use services promoting social and cultural interaction on campus, including student government, recreational programs, and campus sponsored events. Additional analysis found that full-time students were significantly more likely to use many of these services compared to those attending part-time. Specifically, they were more likely to use recreational programs (25.3% vs. 6.6%), student government organizations (21.4% vs. 6.1%), campus-sponsored cultural (20.4% vs. 8.5%) and social events (17.7% vs. 6.1%), as well as shuttle bus services (44.3% vs. 5.2%).

Consistent with earlier findings regarding a sense of camaraderie on campus, international respondents were more likely to use recreational programs (42.9% vs. 9.3% for non-international), campus-sponsored cultural events (24.2% vs. 11.1%), and campus-sponsored social events (20.6% vs. 8.7%). In addition, international students were more likely than non-international students to use personal counseling, health care coverage, and shuttle bus services.

[Figure 11b](#) indicates that levels of satisfaction with campus life services vary, with most being either satisfied or neutral towards these services. The highest levels of dissatisfaction were found for food services (31.9%), health care coverage (27.9%), and child care services (30.0%), although it should be pointed out that for this last service, the number rating the service is very low (n=10).

Group-Targeted Services

Use of group-targeted services was relatively low among sample respondents, as seen in [Figure 12a](#). The highest level of use was found for those services directed at graduate students (46.7%), followed by those for commuting students (24.9%), and evening students

(21.4%). Part-time students were more likely to report using services for evening students compared to their full-time counterparts (27.7% vs. 16.4%). International students were more likely to use services directed at graduate students compared to non-international students (67.7% vs. 44.4%). And although only 17 percent of respondents used services directed at international students, 75 percent of international students were found to use these services. Finally, although 61 percent of the respondents were women, only eight percent were found to use services directed at women students.

Satisfaction with group-targeted services, outlined in [Figure 12b](#), appears to be lowest for those services directed at commuting students. Large percentages of graduate students who used the targeted services were neutral toward services targeting women, minorities, and students with disabilities. (These were also the least used of the targeted services). For those services directed at graduate students, most (86.4%) were satisfied or felt neutral. No significant differences by comparison group were found for group-targeted services.

Information & Other Services

Four-fifths or more of respondents reported using library services, the campus bookstore, the campus homepage, and internet and computer resources. Use of campus media services was much lower, with only 44 percent using the campus newspaper and just under ten percent using the campus radio station (Figure 13a). Group comparisons revealed that international students, when compared to non-international students, were more likely to use the campus newspaper (72.6% vs. 40.2%) and internet and computer resources (96.8% vs. 80.8%).

Satisfaction with information and other services followed similar patterns to service use, with the majority being satisfied with library services, the campus bookstore, the campus homepage, and internet and computer resources ([Figure 13b](#)). International students were found, however to be less satisfied with the campus bookstore compared to their non-international counterparts (62.1% vs. 78.8%). Considerably more respondents were satisfied with the campus newspaper compared to the campus radio station. Among the 10 percent who reported using the radio station, 40 percent reported being dissatisfied, while another 40 percent were neutral. Mean satisfaction with information and other services, shown in [Table 2](#), further illuminates these findings, with the campus radio station having a mean of 2.71 compared to 4.16 for library services.

Facilities Use and Satisfaction

The mean levels of satisfaction with facilities at UMBC are found in [Table 2](#), which reveals that respondents were most satisfied with the upkeep and cleanliness of campus grounds and library facilities, both with a mean score of 4.06. Parking on campus generated the lowest levels of satisfaction, with a mean score of 2.50.

[Figures 14a and 14b](#) also examine use and satisfaction with facilities at UMBC. While most respondents (85.5%) were satisfied with the upkeep and cleanliness of campus grounds, only 46 percent were satisfied with the physical classroom environment, with 35 percent

being dissatisfied. For facilities targeted more at specific groups, such as engineering and language labs, much fewer students rated the facilities, but among those that did, most were satisfied or felt neutral. Ninety-four percent of those using athletic and recreation facilities reported feeling satisfied or neutral.

Approximately 70 percent of respondents were satisfied or neutral toward space for relaxing or socializing on campus, and nearly 80 percent felt the same about space for studying. Housing, however, appears to be more of an issue for graduate students. Half of those students rating housing on campus reported feeling dissatisfied, indicating that a possible need is not being met. And, nearly one-third of those students rating housing within the vicinity of campus reported feeling dissatisfied. Not surprisingly, parking on campus was found to be problematic, with only about 45 percent of respondents feeling satisfied or neutral and over half being dissatisfied. Full-time students were more likely to express dissatisfaction with parking on campus compared to part-time students (63.7% vs. 49.4%). Library facilities, however, were very positively rated, with 92 percent of respondents feeling satisfied or neutral in this area.

Other Activities & Responsibilities

[Figure 15](#) demonstrates the average number of hours graduate students spend in other activities while attending UMBC. Respondents reported spending the greatest number of hours working in a paid job off campus and studying outside of class. Volunteer activities and participation in organizations and activities on campus appear to consume the least amount of time for graduate students, on average. Nearly one-quarter of respondents also reported having child care responsibilities at home, while only six percent reported having such responsibilities for elderly relatives.

Group comparisons in this area revealed that full-time respondents worked an average of 11.5 hours per week on campus, compared to only 2.1 hours for part-time students. Off-campus, however, part-time students worked an average of 32.3 hours compared to only 7.2 hours for their full-time counterparts. Full-time students also spend more time than part-time students, on average, studying outside of class (17.3 vs. 11.1 hours per week). International students were found to work on campus for more hours per week, on average, compared to non-international students (12.7 vs. 4.9 hours), but worked less off campus -- 2.2 vs. 24.8 average hours for international and non-international students, respectively. Finally, international students reported spending a greater average number of hours studying outside of class per week compared to non-international students (18.8 vs. 12.8 hours).

CONCLUSIONS

In general, findings from this survey indicate that most respondents are satisfied with their graduate student experience at UMBC, with part-time students appearing to enjoy somewhat greater satisfaction compared to their full-time counterparts. In terms of academic experience, course availability appears to be the only factor generating a sizeable amount of dissatisfaction. Students do not appear to be as satisfied with professional development, although, as pointed out earlier, there does appear to be a significant amount

of neutrality in this area, perhaps indicating that students are not as concerned with this aspect of their education.

Survey results do not support the contention that there is a strong sense of community at UMBC, but also indicate that this is not a priority for most graduate students. And, most respondents do appear to agree that the social atmosphere at UMBC is one that appreciates and respects diversity among its students, faculty and staff. In addition, while few students agreed that there is a sense of camaraderie among graduate students campus-wide, a substantially greater number agreed that such an atmosphere exists within their department.

Overall, students utilizing services and facilities at UMBC are satisfied for the most part. The high level of neutral responses indicates that a good number of the services are not used or desired greatly by graduate students. But, for those services that are used, most students appear to be satisfied. Exceptions were found for those services involving student finances, as well as housing and parking, indicating areas that might merit closer scrutiny by university administrators.

Results indicate that students do spend a significant amount of time engaged in other activities and meeting other responsibilities. Further research could examine the ways in which students balance these activities with their studies, and the extent to which these other activities may interfere with or enhance the graduate education experience.

Findings from this survey indicate that there are significant differences between various groups identified on campus. First, as stated above, those attending UMBC on a part-time basis appear to be more satisfied, overall. Is it possible that those attending part-time are at a different life cycle compared to full-time students, one that provides greater life satisfaction overall? Are their expectations perhaps more realistic? Part-time students are more likely to work off campus—does such employment provide some sort of benefit to the educational experience? Or do students attending part-time feel generally less burdened because they carry a smaller coursework load? Further analysis of these groups could answer these and other questions generated by this survey.

Interesting results were also found regarding international versus non-international students. While international students appeared to be less satisfied with the academic aspects of their experience at UMBC, they were found to be more satisfied in terms of campus climate and a sense of community among graduate students. These students were also more likely to use the more social-type services and activities offered on campus. So, it appears that while UMBC does an adequate job of meeting the social needs of international students, more focus needs to be placed on meeting their expectations in terms of the academic experience.

Finally, in terms of program area, those in the Science & Engineering programs (which enroll a high percentage of international students) were also found to be less satisfied with their academic experience compared to students in other areas. Interestingly, however, these students indicated that they were more satisfied with the professional development of graduate students when compared to those students in other program areas. At least two

possible explanations exist for this finding. First, students in Science & Engineering may receive better opportunities for professional development compared to those in other program areas. Or, it may just be that those students in the other program areas have expectations that exceed the level of professional development they are receiving. Further and more focused investigation into this finding is needed to determine what factors are influencing satisfaction with professional development for graduate students.

Survey results prepared by:

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APPENDIX A: TABLES & FIGURES

TABLE 1: Comparison of Respondents and Overall Population		
Characteristic	Respondents (n=398)	Population (n=1,484)
Race		
Asian	6%	7%
Black	8%	11%
Foreign	17%	20%
White	67%	59%
Other/ Unknown	2%	3%
Gender		
Male	39%	46%
Female	61%	54%
Residency		
Maryland Resident	87%	82%
Non-Resident	13%	18%
Full/Part-Time Status		
Full-Time	43%	43%
Part-Time	57%	57%
Program Area		
Arts & Humanities	6%	3%
Social Science	42%	39%
Science & Engineering	35%	40%
Other*	18%	18%

* Other includes EHS, LLC, UNKN

Source: Spring 2000 Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey; EIS files.

TABLE 2: Mean Satisfaction Levels*			
Satisfaction with:	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Academic Experience			
Quality of instruction by full-time faculty	364	4.08	0.89
Quality of instruction by part-time faculty	262	3.94	0.98
Accessibility of faculty outside of class	376	3.91	1.00
Quality of your academic program	387	3.94	0.95
Size of classes relative to your needs	383	4.06	0.98
Availability of courses at the times you want them	382	3.49	1.17
Relevance of courses to your intended career	390	3.93	0.99
Information provided by instructors with regard to course requirements and objectives	385	4.12	0.85
Information provided about degree requirements	385	3.86	1.06
Quality and timeliness of feedback from professors	389	3.91	0.99
Professional Development			
Graduate student orientation services	292	3.28	1.14
Teaching opportunities for graduate students in your dept.	251	3.57	0.97
Procedures for awarding graduate assistantships in your dept.	241	3.38	1.05
Pay scales for graduate assistants	186	2.87	1.05
Training provided for new graduate research and teaching assistants	169	3.01	0.92
Departmental support for attendance at professional meetings	196	3.23	1.03
Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research projects	226	3.50	1.09
Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on professional presentations	200	3.32	1.11
Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on professional publications	195	3.30	1.07

TABLE 2: Continued			
Satisfaction with:	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Administrative Services			
Student billing and paying	350	3.37	1.20
On-line registration	294	4.35	0.96
Telephone registration	319	4.15	0.93
Other registration services	98	3.67	1.05
Financial aid services	136	2.93	1.28
Admissions services	255	3.61	1.08
Dean's office services: Arts & Sciences	31	3.58	1.06
Dean's office services: College of Engineering	24	3.92	0.93
Dean's office services: Graduate School	133	3.70	1.07
Campus Life Services			
Personal counseling services	21	3.67	1.35
Campus ministry	14	3.71	0.73
Child care services	10	3.00	1.25
Health care coverage	111	3.14	1.15
Food services	160	3.08	1.11
Recreational programs	60	3.57	0.89
Volunteer opportunities for students	36	3.67	1.15
Graduate student government organizations	50	3.50	1.13
Campus-sponsored cultural events	53	3.79	0.99
Campus-sponsored social events	45	3.60	0.96
Shuttle bus services	89	3.40	1.03
Group-Targeted Services			
Women students	32	3.34	0.87
Minority students	28	3.57	1.07
International students	68	3.78	1.12
Commuting students	99	3.18	1.17
Evening students	84	3.51	1.15
Students with disabilities	16	3.44	1.21
Graduate students	184	3.54	1.04

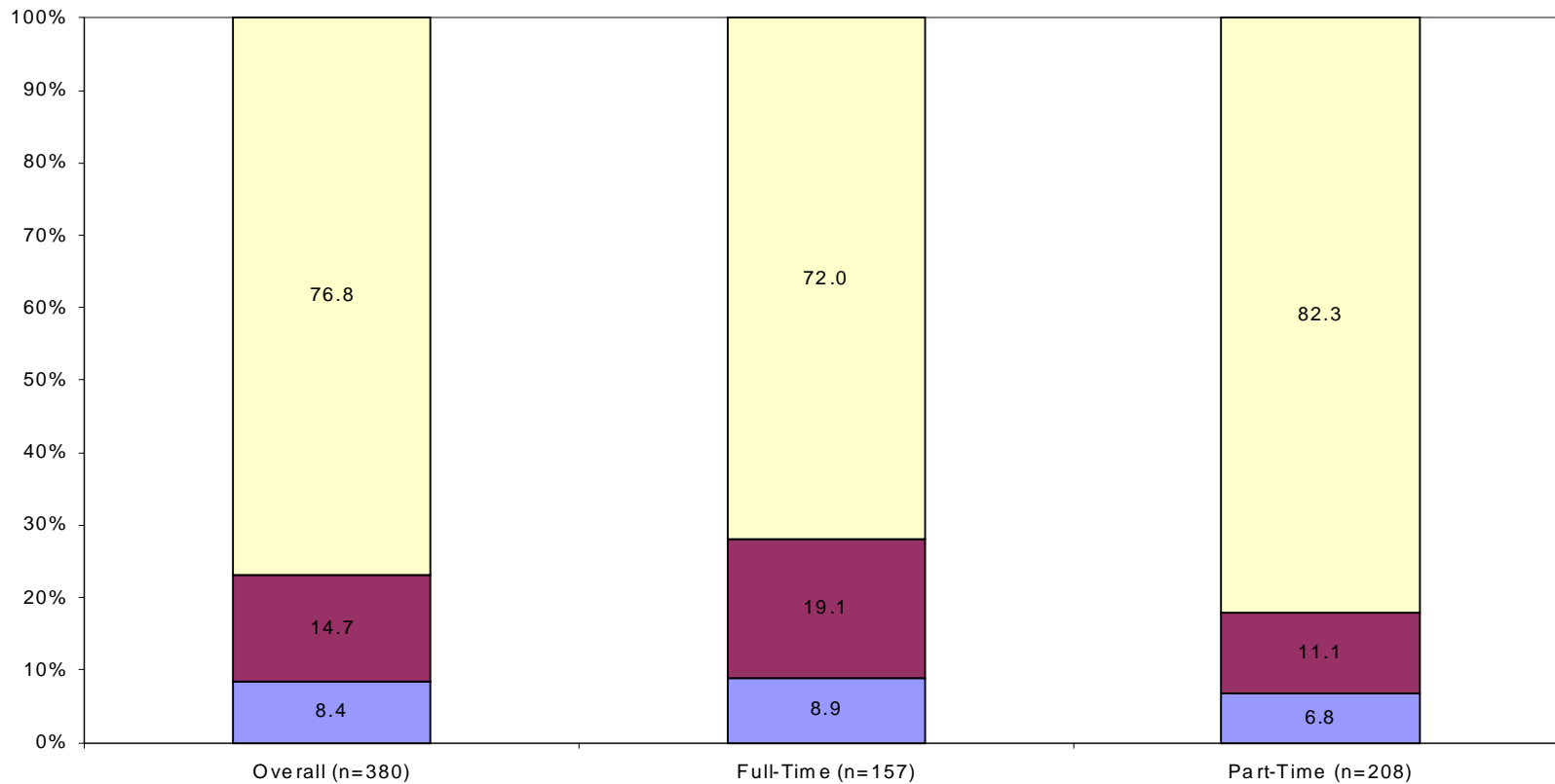
TABLE 2: Continued			
Satisfaction with:	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
Information and Other Services			
Library services	339	4.16	0.90
Campus bookstore	351	3.89	0.87
Campus homepage	337	4.08	0.86
Internet and computer resources	321	4.02	0.89
Campus newspaper	179	3.54	0.89
Campus radio station	45	2.71	1.22
Facilities			
Physical classroom environment	358	3.11	1.16
Science labs	87	3.46	0.85
Engineering labs	61	3.46	0.79
Visual Arts & Performance studios	40	3.30	0.88
Language labs	70	3.61	0.91
Computer labs	255	3.58	1.04
Upkeep and cleanliness of campus grounds	351	4.06	0.85
Athletic and recreation facilities	199	3.93	0.90
Space for relaxing and socializing	294	3.12	1.17
Space for studying	305	3.47	1.07
Housing on campus	52	2.35	1.06
Housing in the vicinity of campus	113	3.03	1.18
Parking on campus	333	2.50	1.22
Library facilities	349	4.06	0.91
Resident hall dining facilities	50	3.18	1.06
Other dining facilities	202	2.98	1.10
* Based on scale of 1=Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Satisfied, 5=Very Satisfied.			

TABLE 3: Mean Agreement Levels*

Agreement with:	n	Mean	Std. Dev.
"There is a strong sense of community at UMBC"	374	2.99	0.94
"I feel safe and secure when on campus"	378	3.95	0.76
"In general, the interactions among students, faculty, and staff are positive in nature"	378	3.98	0.69
"There is a high degree of sensitivity to and respect for individuals of different backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles at UMBC"	379	3.83	0.88
"Male and female students are treated equally by faculty and staff"	378	3.88	0.87
"I feel as if I am an important part of the campus community"	377	3.04	0.98
"I want to be involved in the UMBC campus community"	374	3.23	0.87
"There are ample opportunities to get involved in the campus community"	369	3.33	0.79
"There is a sense of camaraderie among graduate students in my department"	376	3.68	0.97
"There is a sense of camaraderie among graduate students campus-wide"	374	2.72	0.91

*Based on scale of 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

FIGURE 1 - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Group Comparisons on Question:
"How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at UMBC?"



Full-time and part-time student comparison:
Pearson's Chi-Square=27.3 (p<.01)

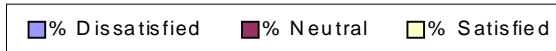


FIGURE 2 - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Responses to:
"Would you recommend UMBC to a friend or relative?"

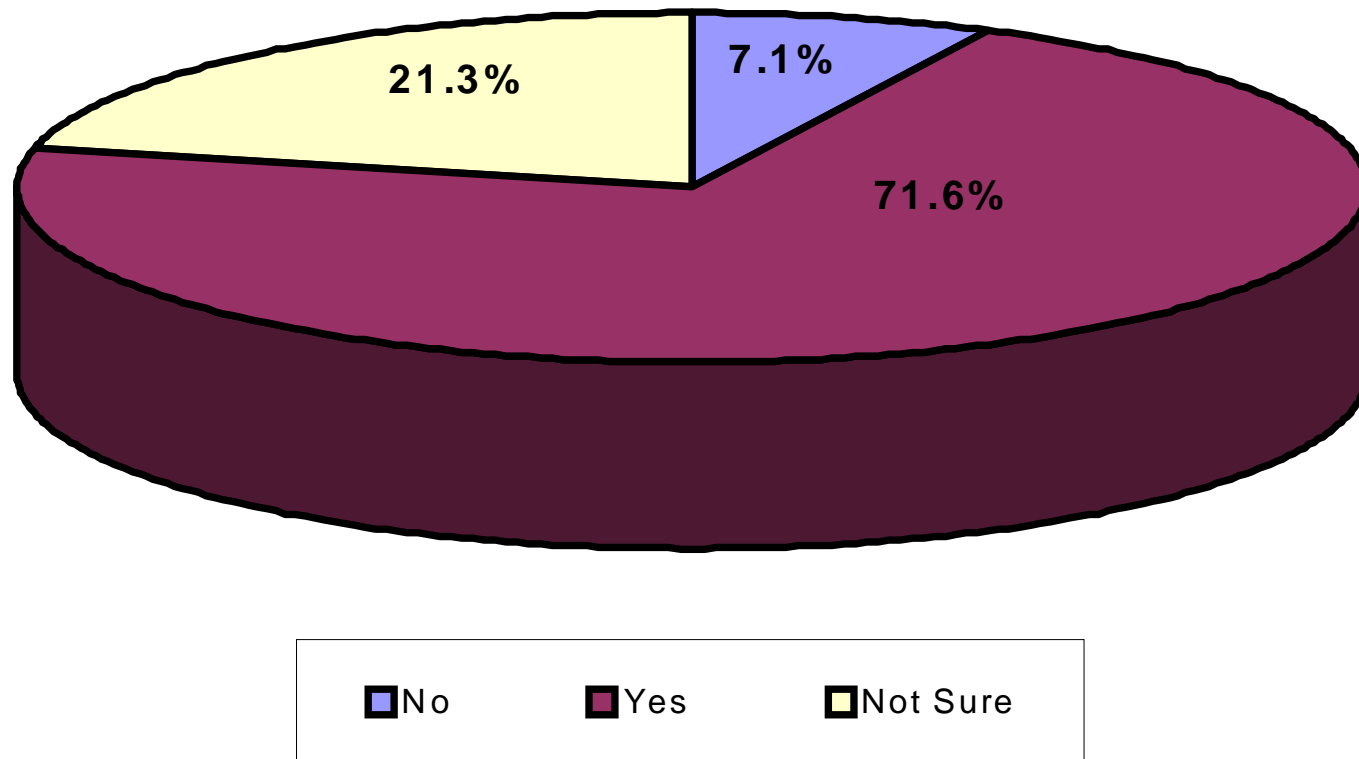


FIGURE 3 - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000 Responses to: In general, how would you describe the level of challenge you have encountered in your courses at UMBC?

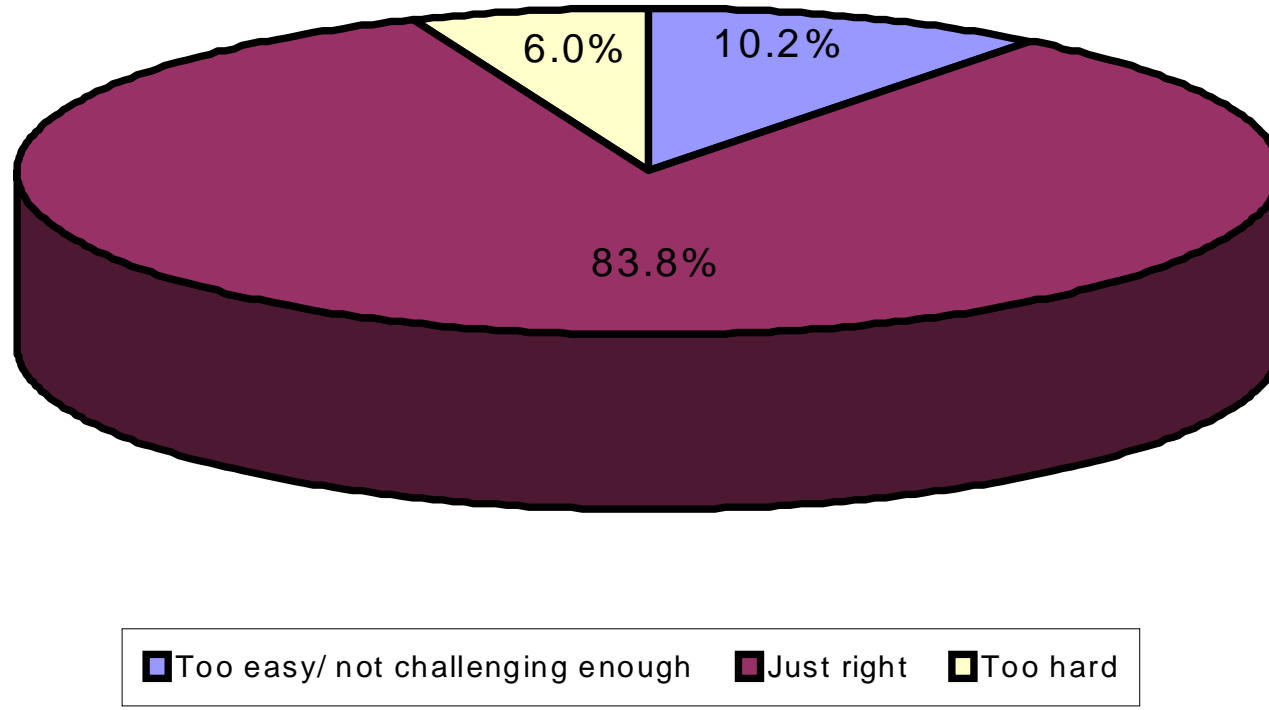


FIGURE 4a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Academic Experience Variables- Group 1

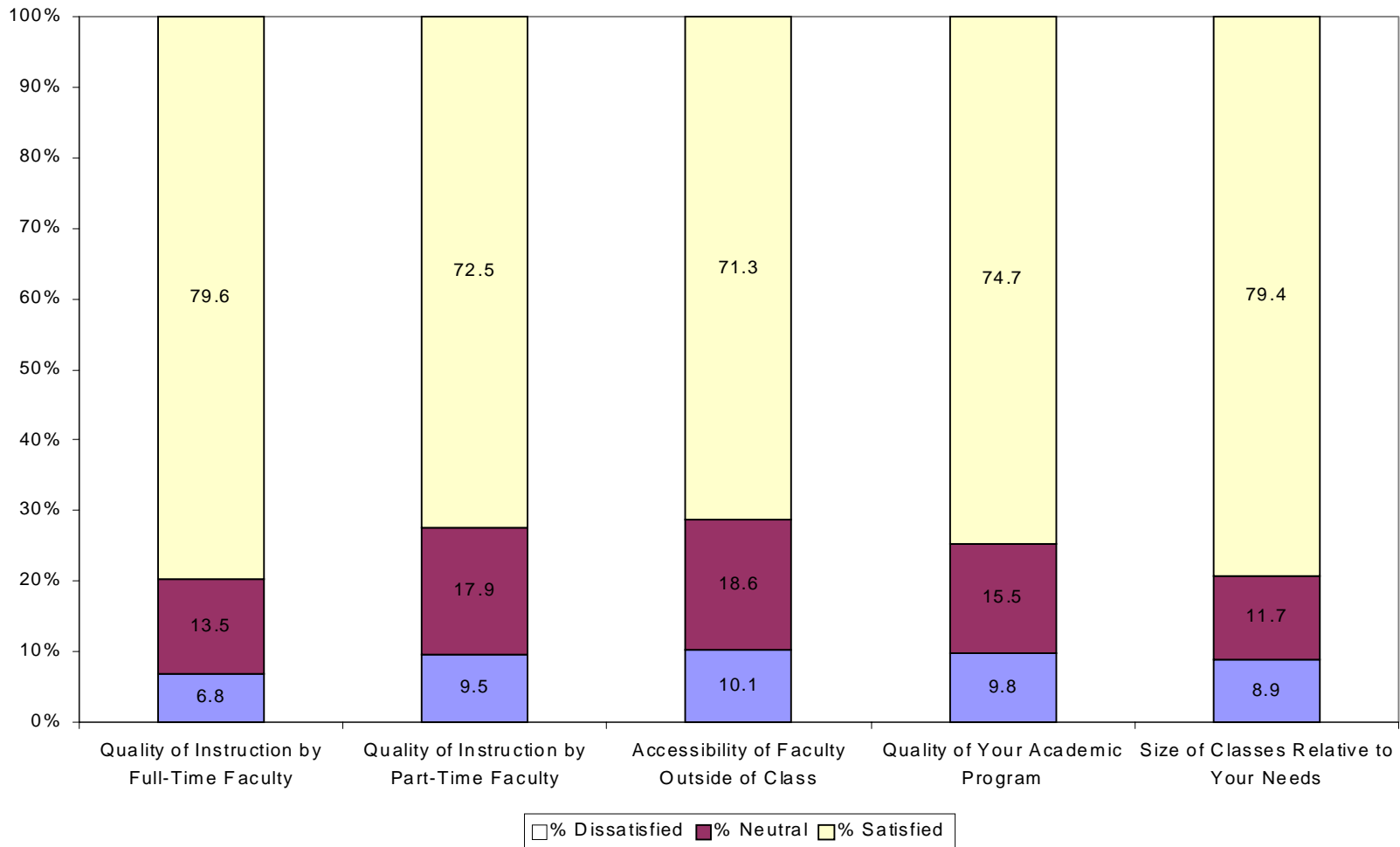


FIGURE 4b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Academic Experience Variables- Group 2

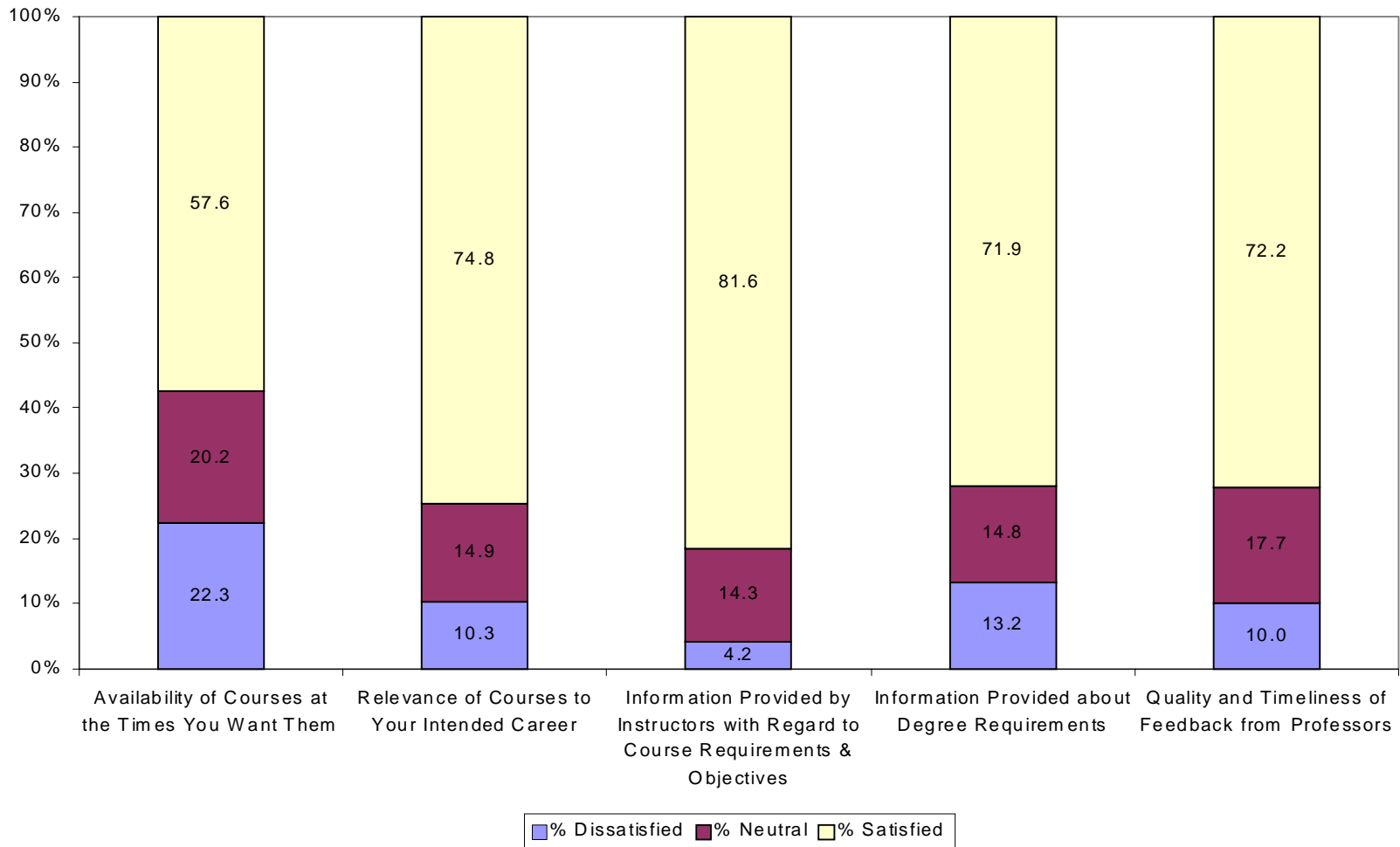


FIGURE 5a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 1-
Comparison of International and Non-International Students

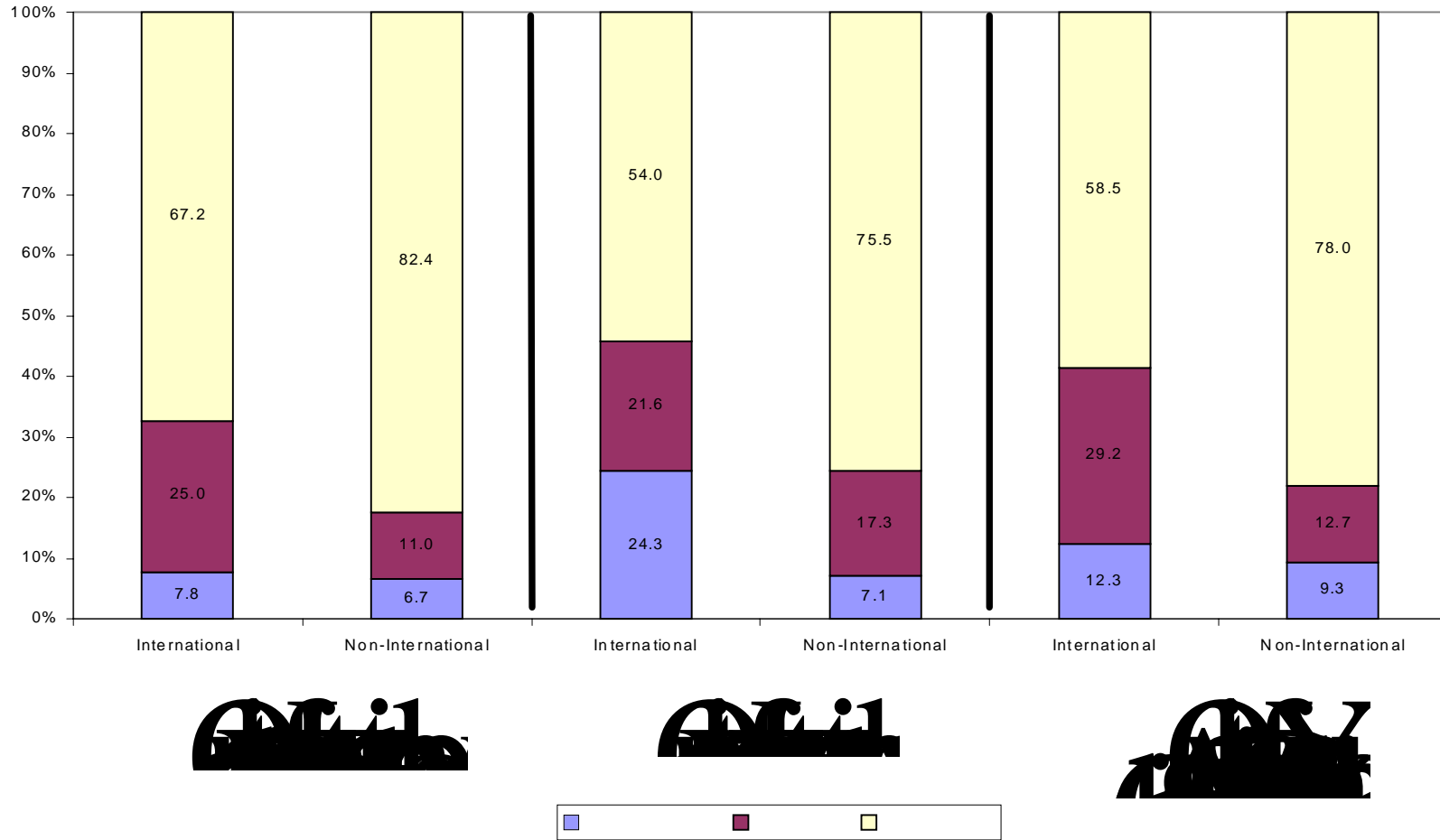


FIGURE 5b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 2-
Comparison of International and Non-International Students

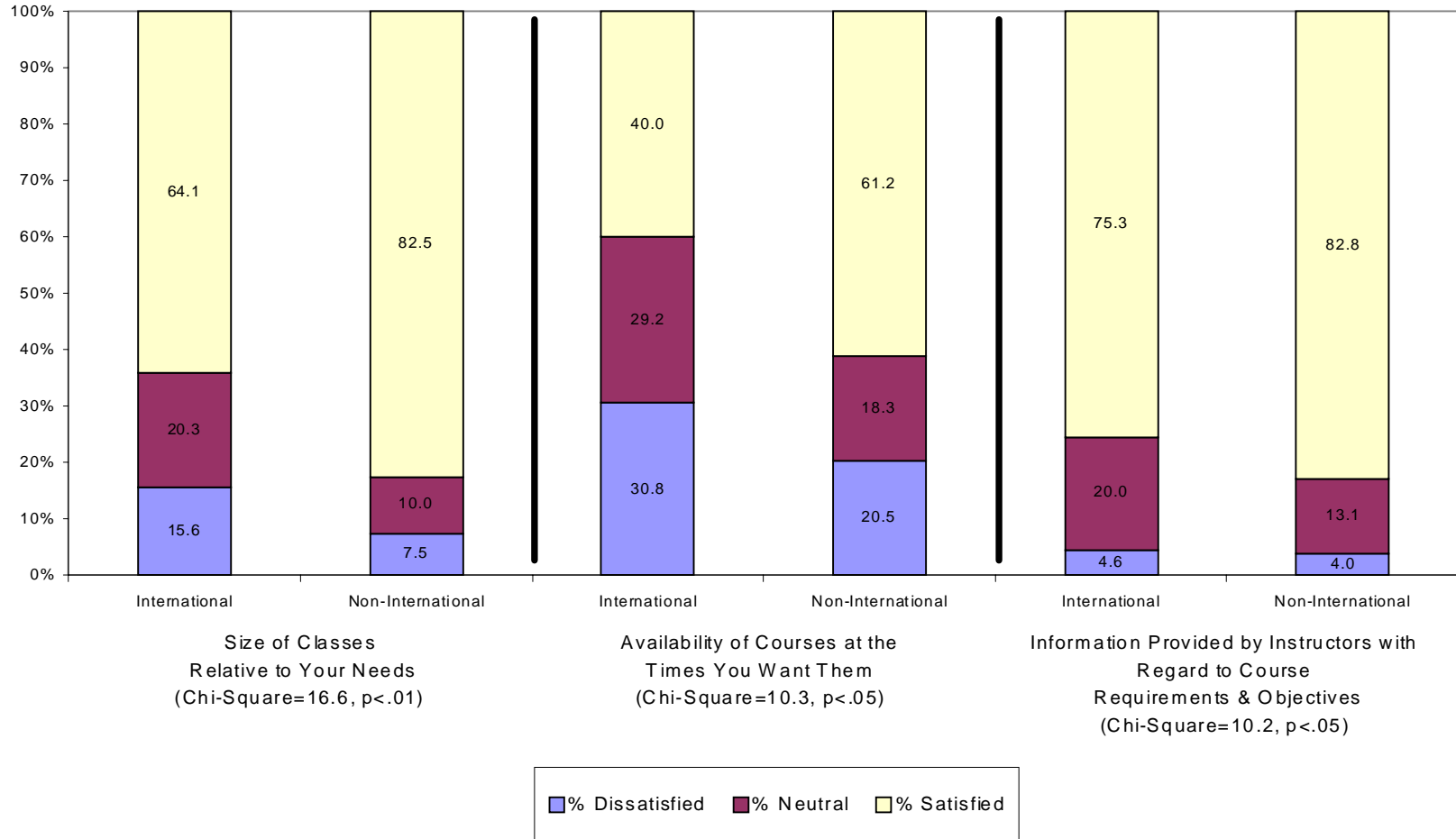


FIGURE 6a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 1-
Comparison of Full-Time & Part-Time Students

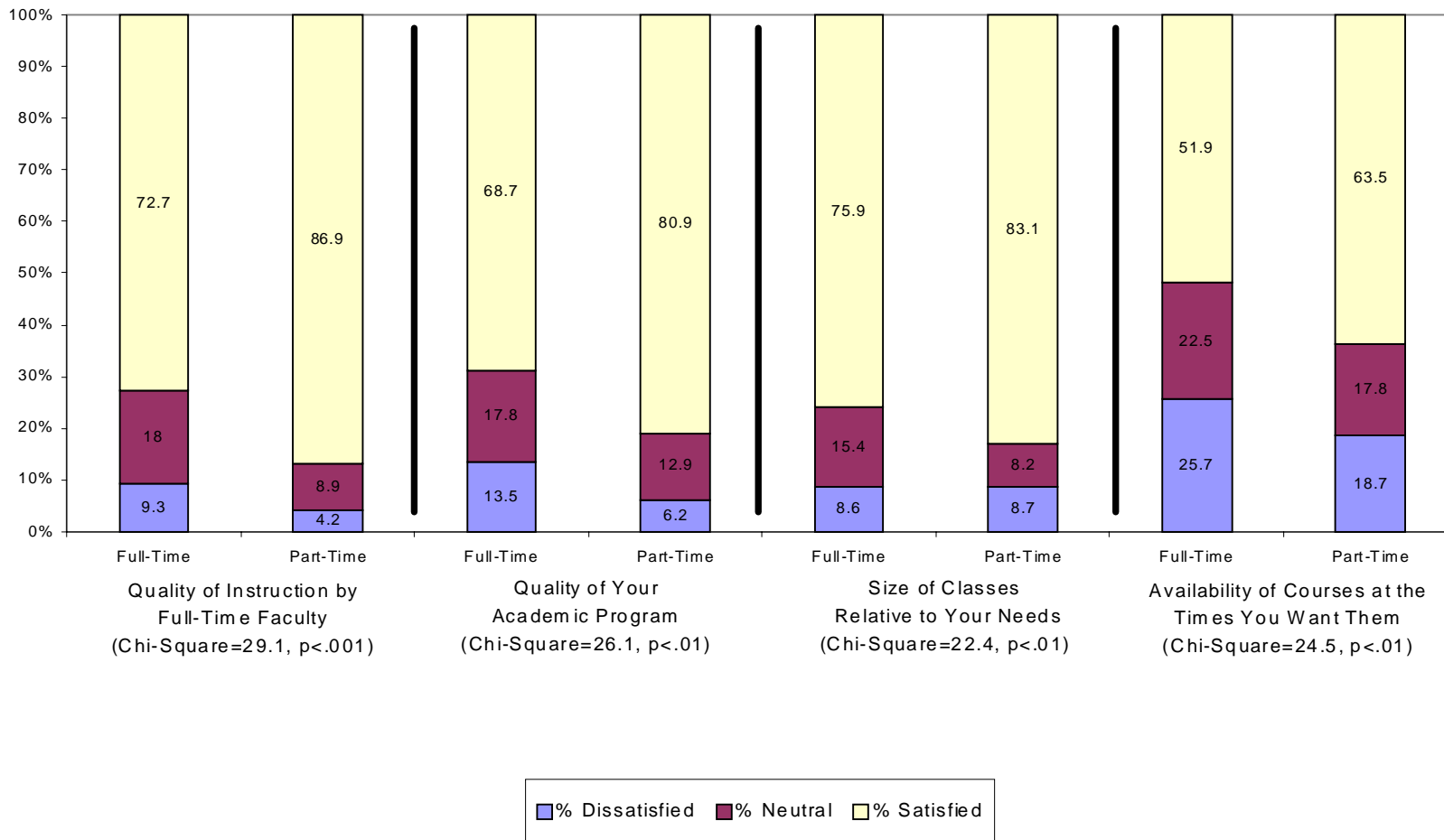


FIGURE 6b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 2-
Comparison of Full-Time & Part-Time Students

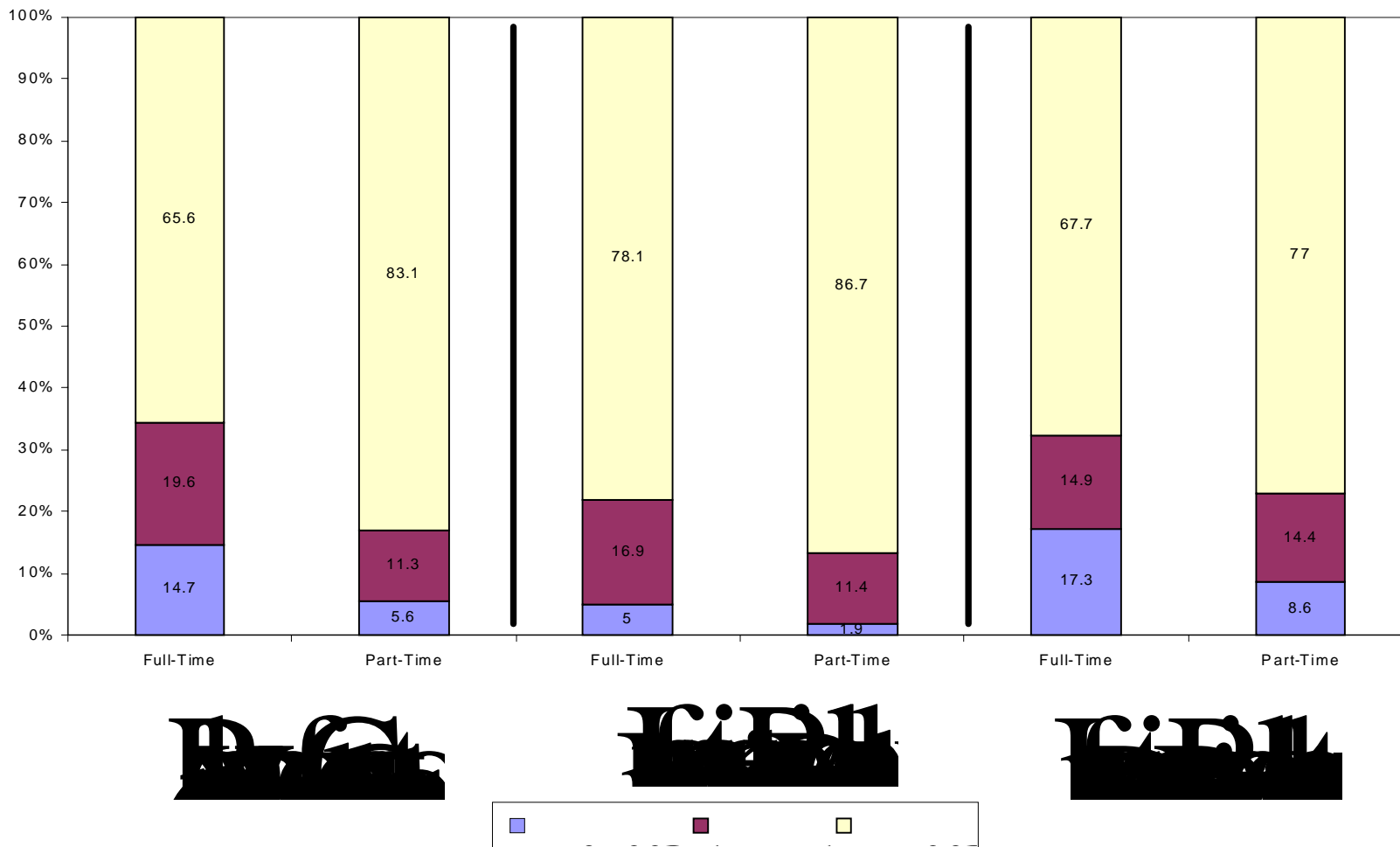


FIGURE 7a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 1-
Comparisons by Program Area

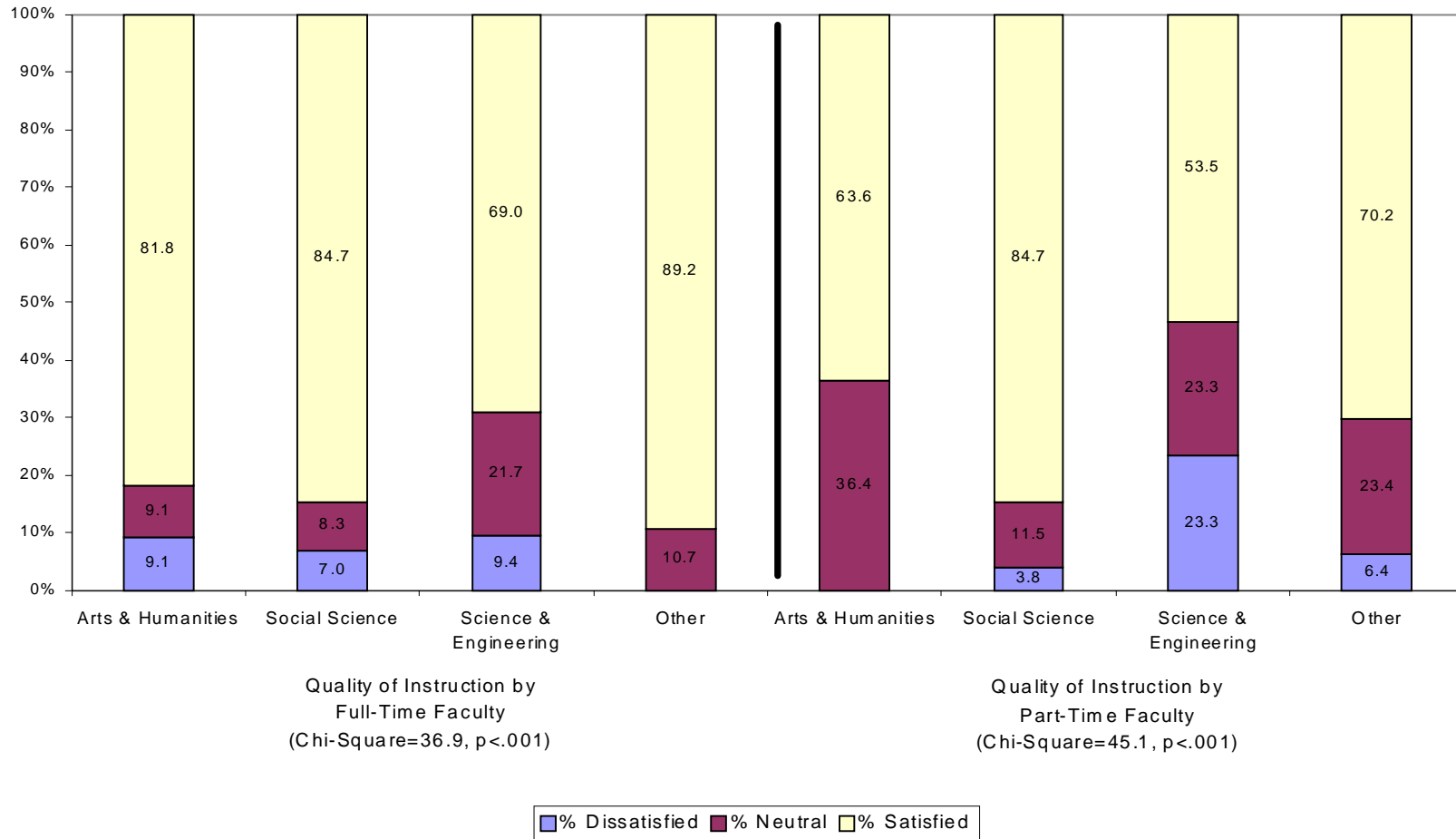


FIGURE 7b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 2-
Comparisons by Program Area

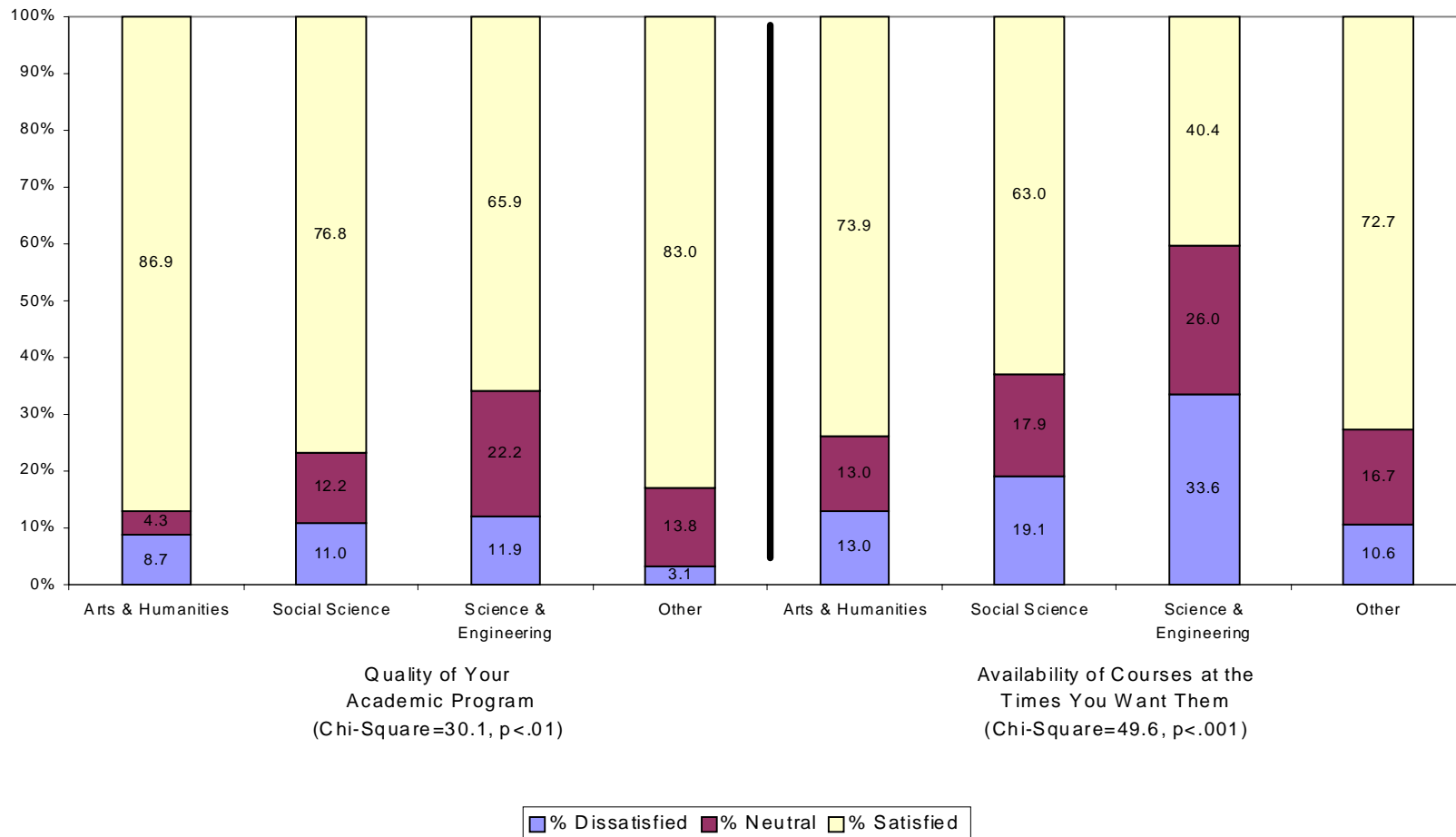


FIGURE 7c - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 3-
Comparisons by Program Area

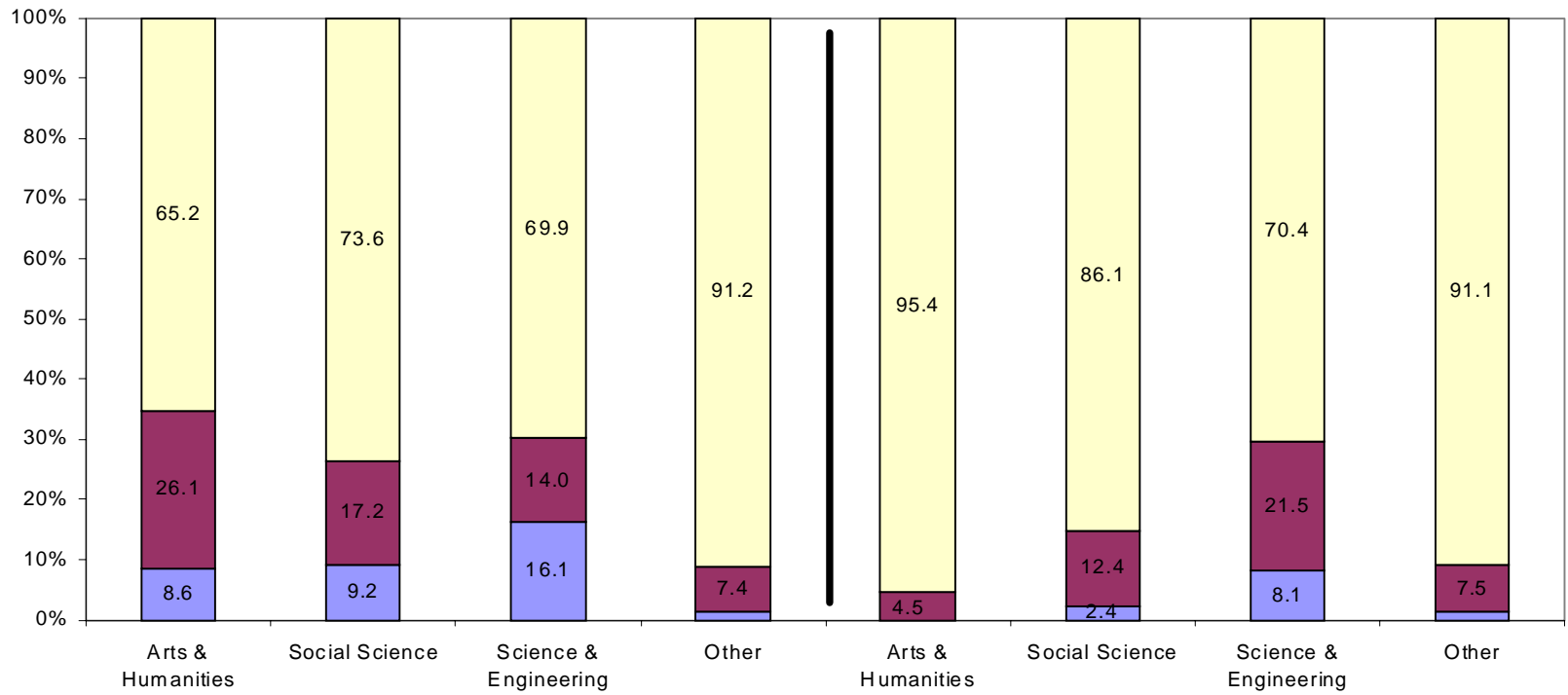
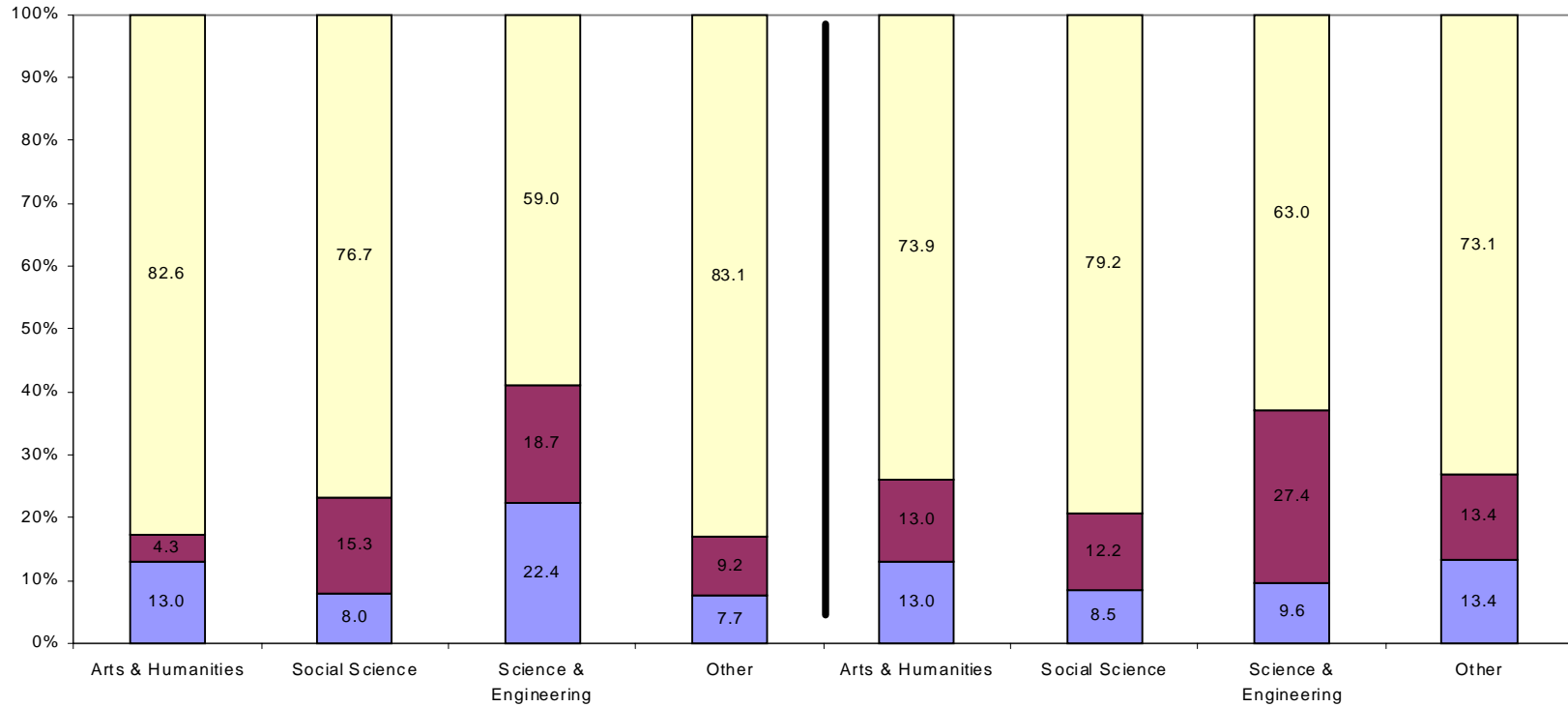


FIGURE 7d - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Academic Experience Variables Group 4-
Comparisons by Program Area



Information Provided about Degree Requirements
 (Chi-Square=27.3 p<.01)

Quality & Timeliness of Feedback from Professors
 (Chi-Square=34.3, p<.001)

■ % Dissatisfied ■ % Neutral ■ % Satisfied

**FIGURE 8a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Professional Development - Group1**

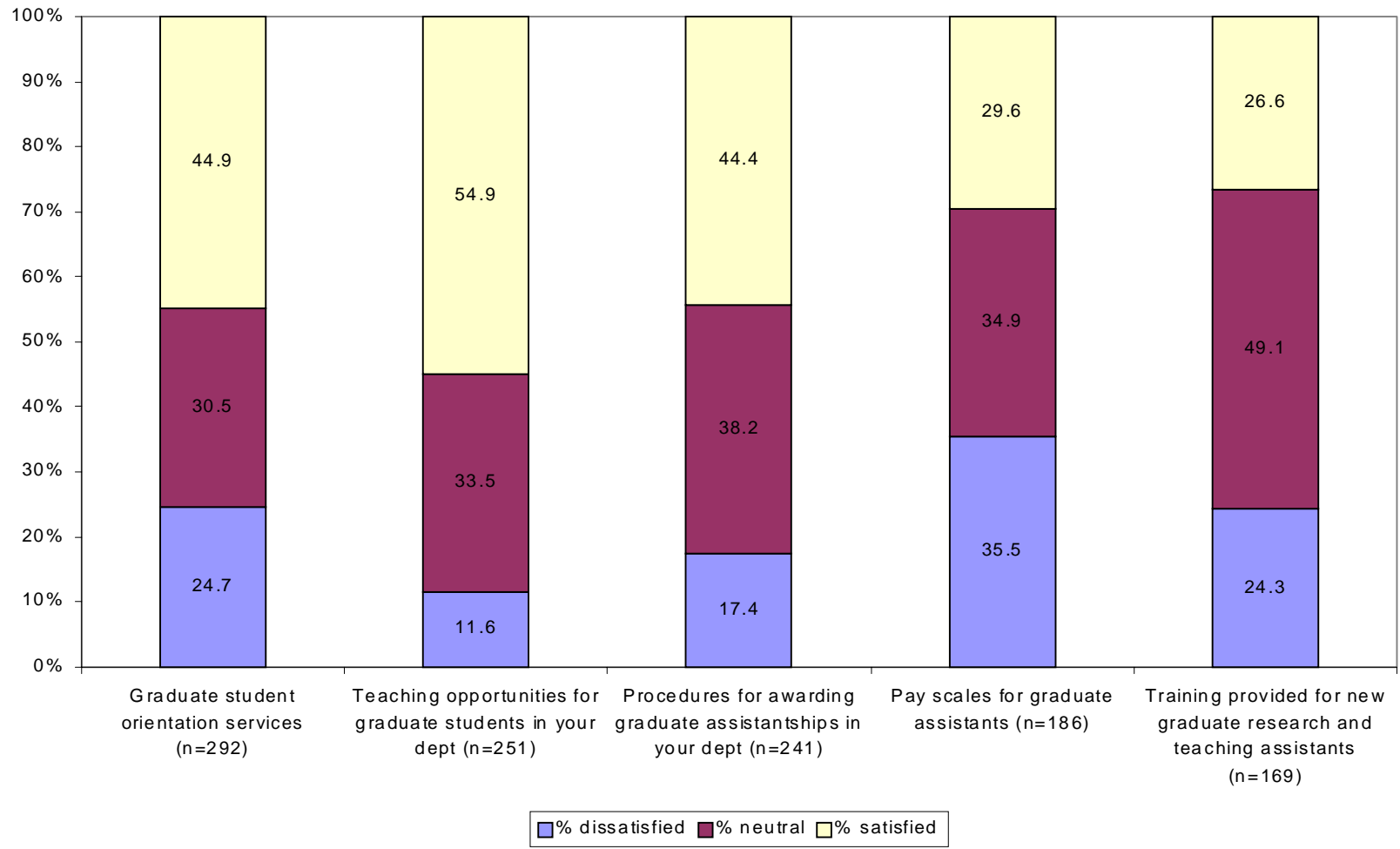
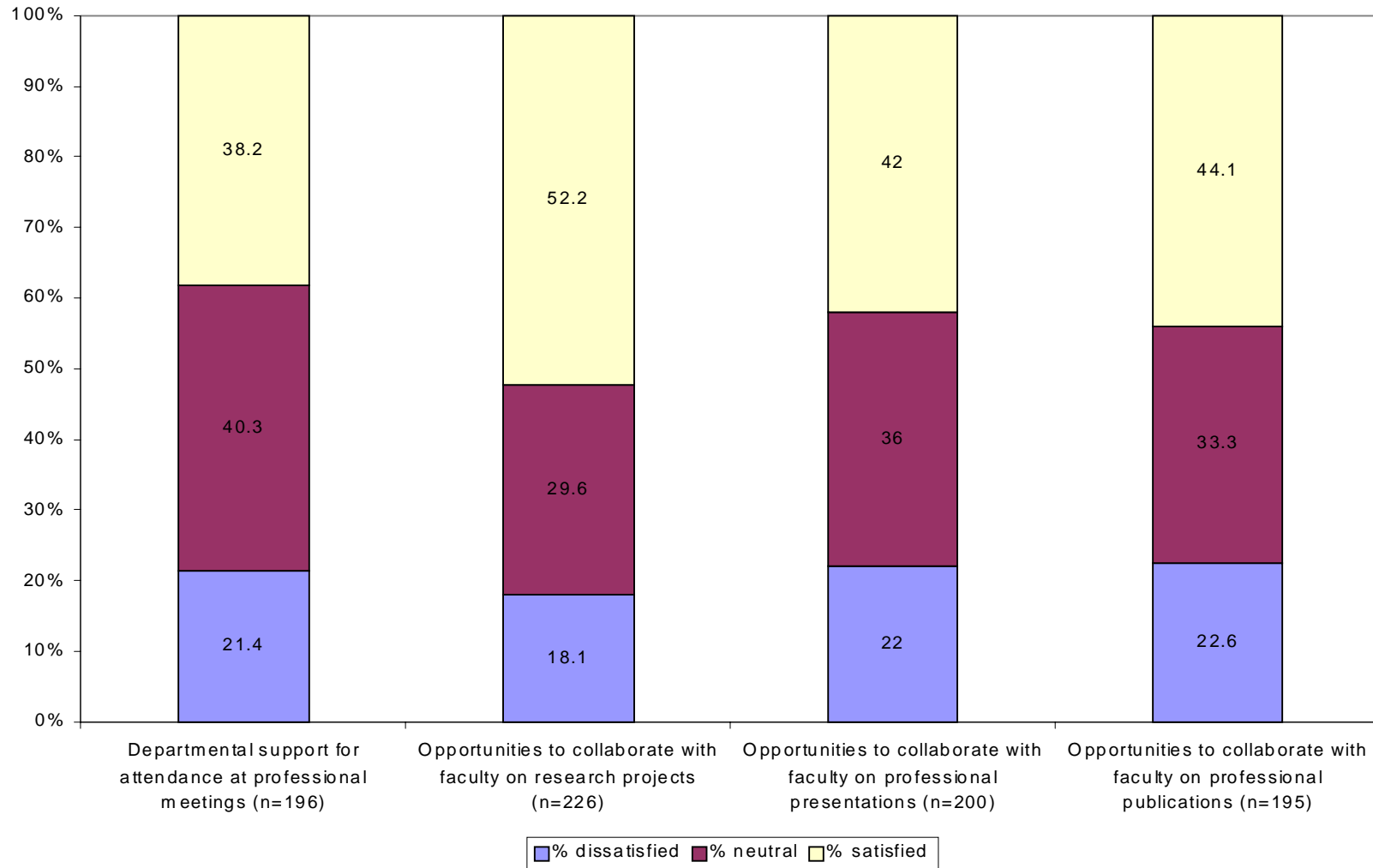


FIGURE 8b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Professional Development - Group2



**FIGURE 8c- Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Professional Development Variables by Program Area**

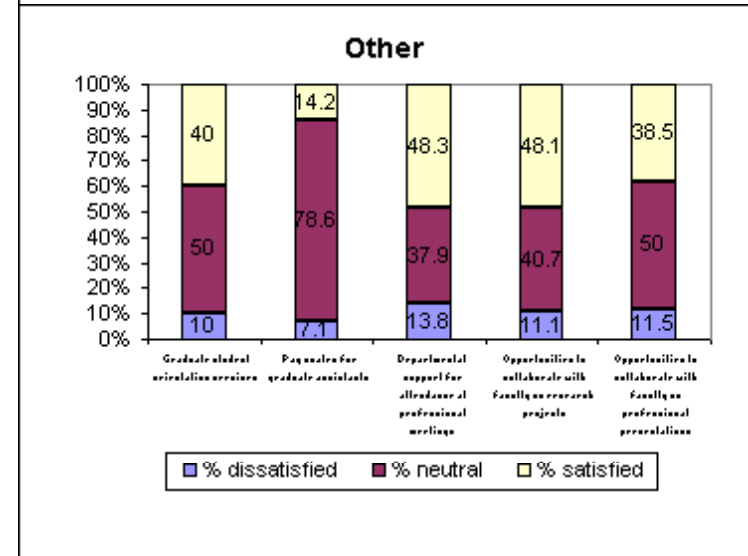
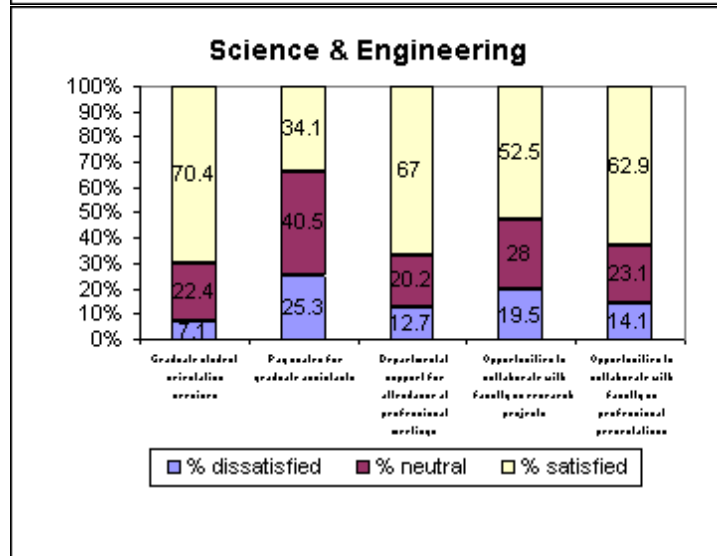
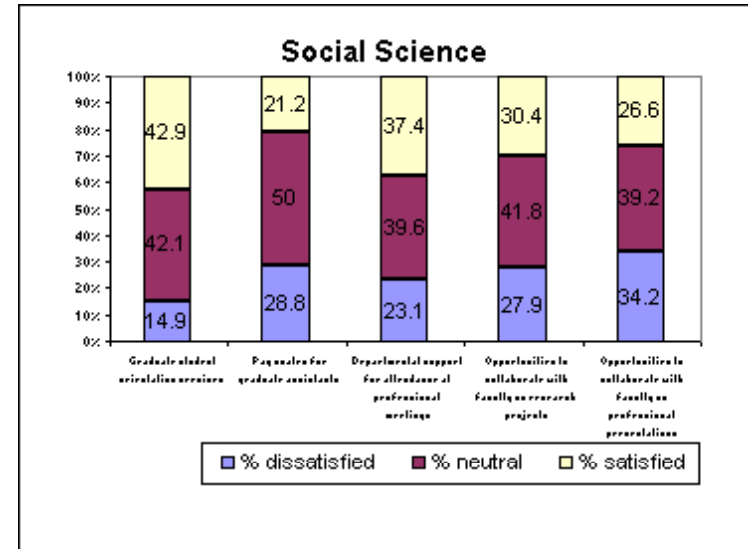
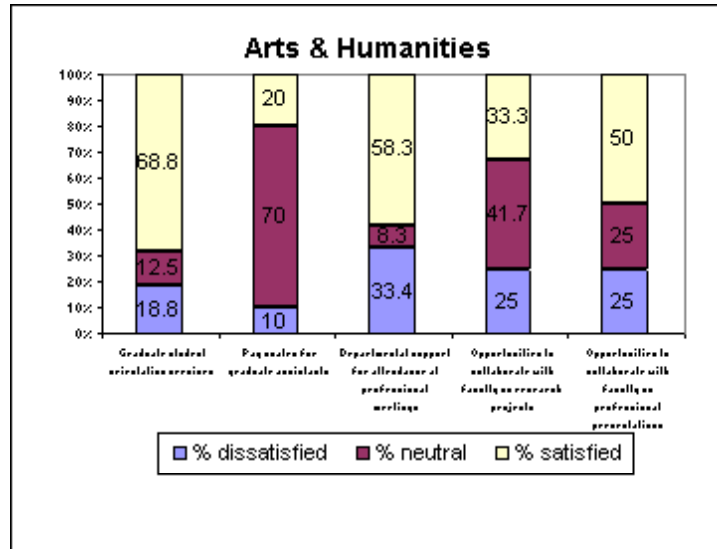


Figure 8C (continued)

Teaching opportunities for graduate students in your dept - Chi-Square=49.7 (p<.001)

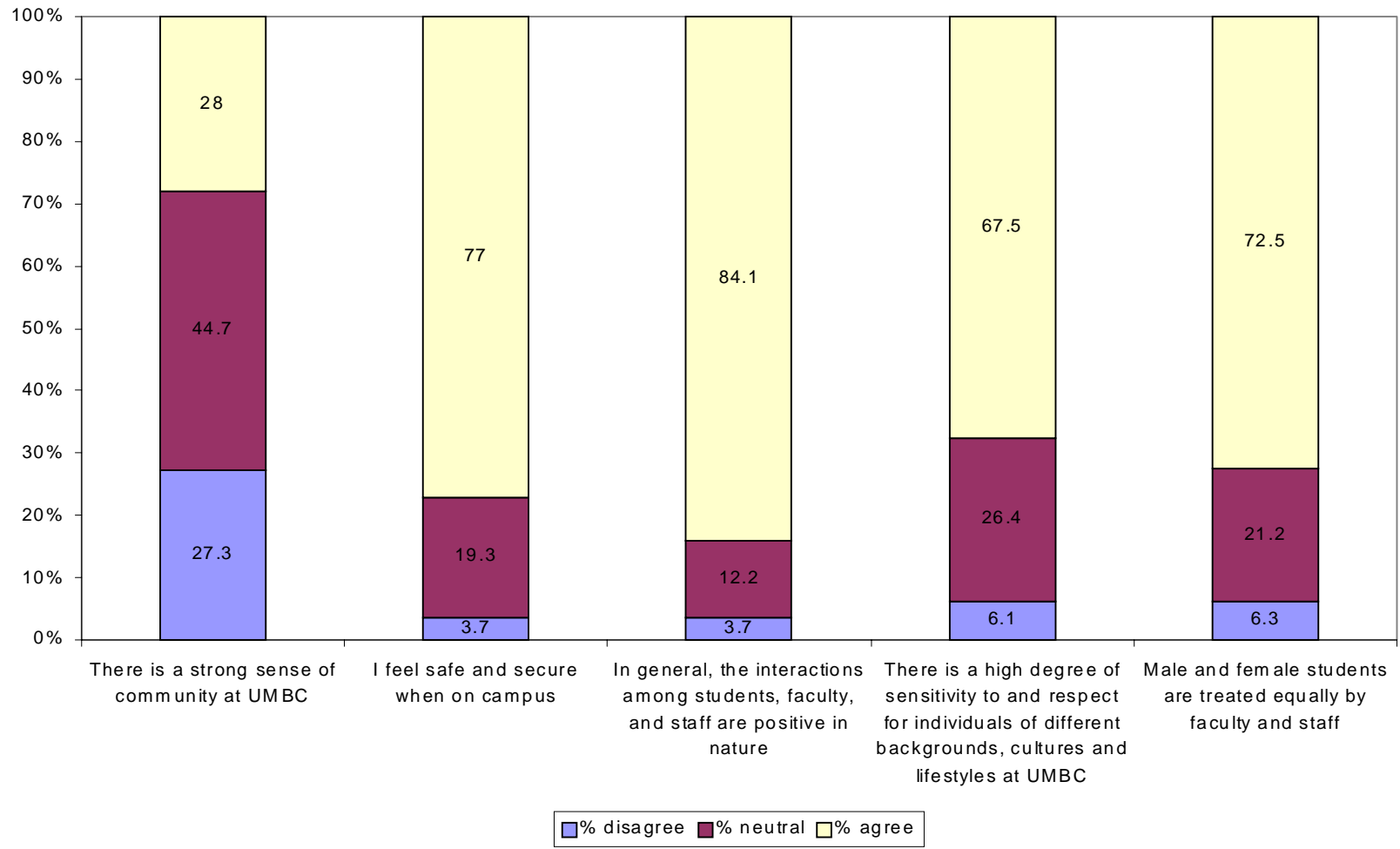
Training provided for new graduate research and teaching assistants - Chi-Square=28.1 (p<.01)

Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on research projects - Chi-Square=26.7 (p<.01)

Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on professional presentations - Chi-Square=21.6 (p<.05)

Opportunities to collaborate with faculty on professional publications - Chi-Square=33.5 (p<.001)

FIGURE 9a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Campus Climate Variables - Group1



**FIGURE 9b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Campus Climate Variables - Group2**

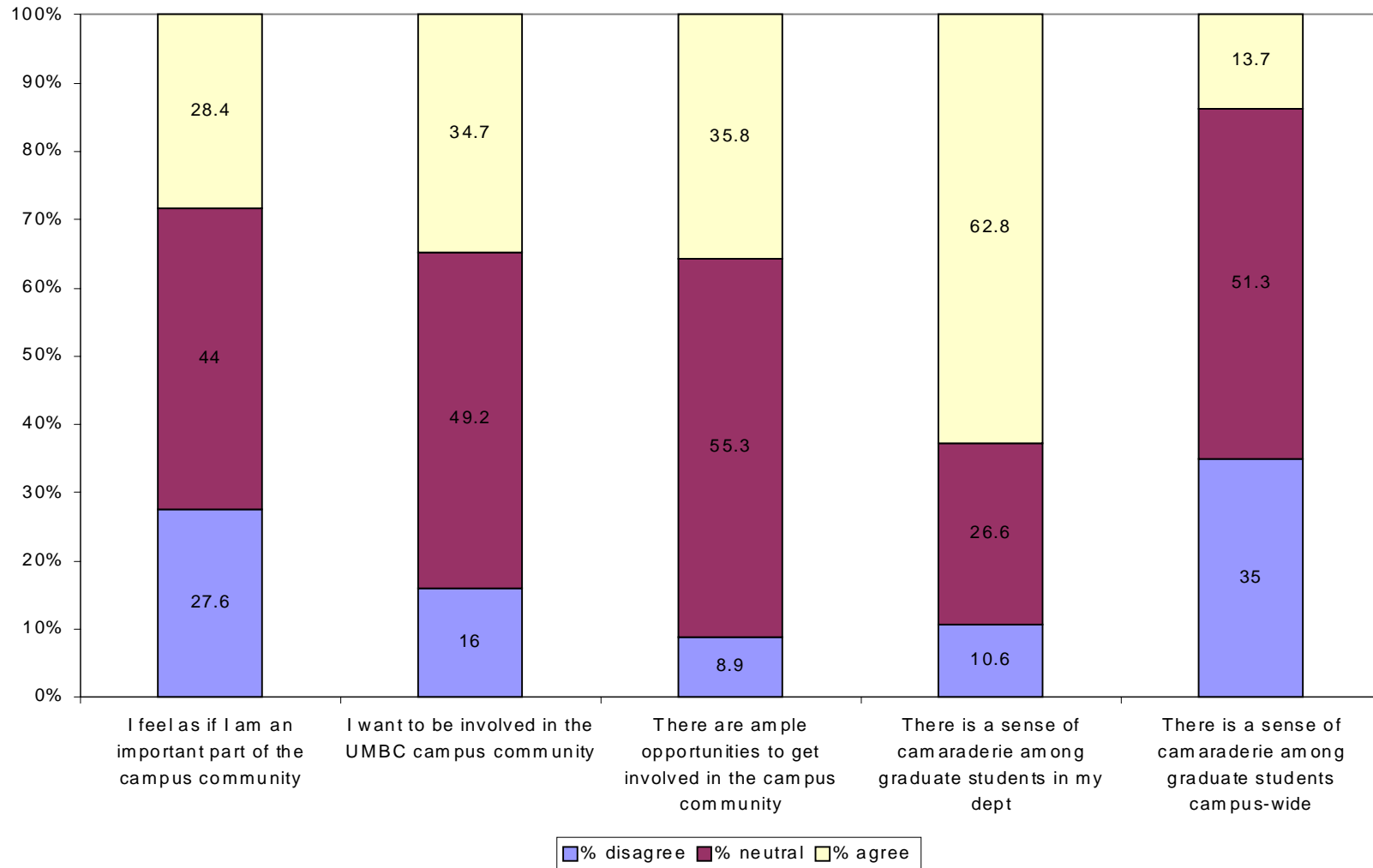
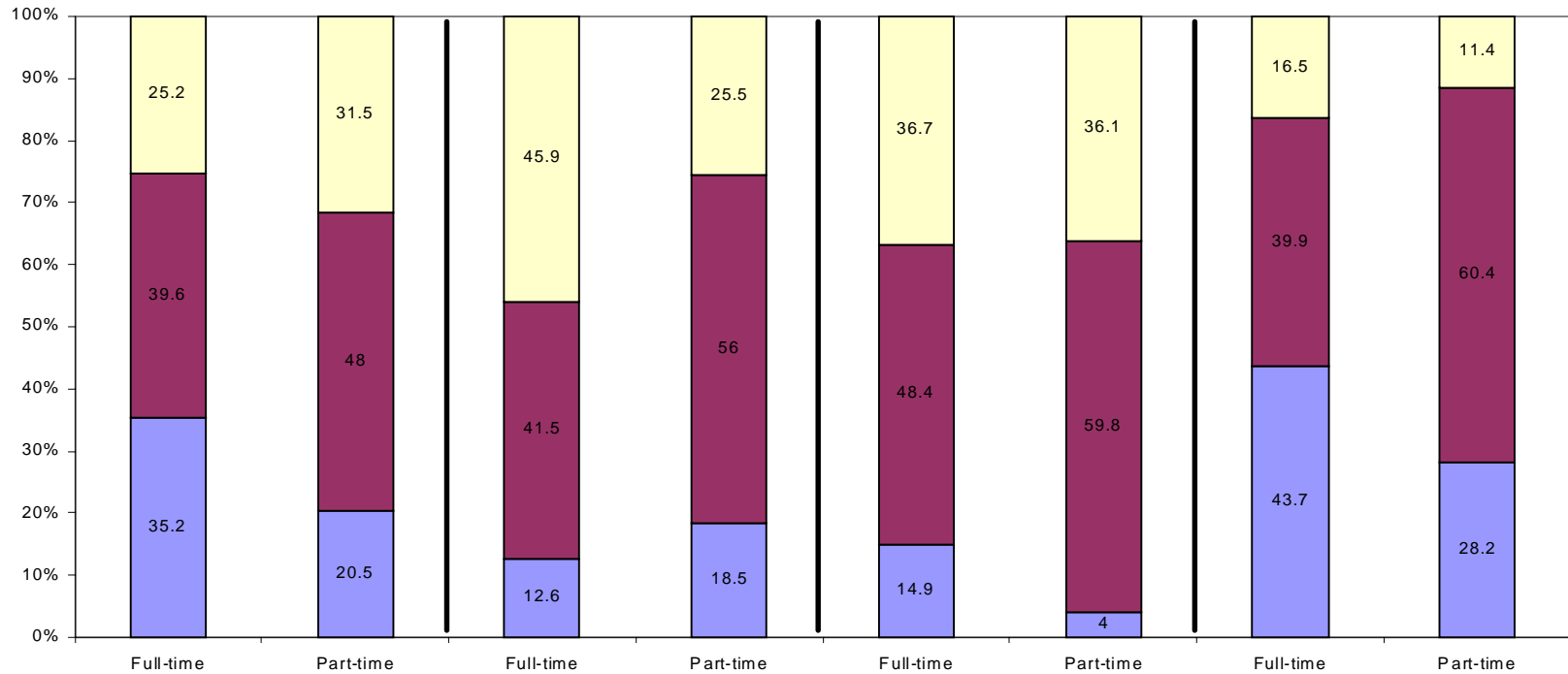


FIGURE 9c - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Campus Climate Variables by Full-Time/ Part-Time Status



There is a strong sense of community at UMBC
 (Chi-Square=18.4, p<.05)

I want to be involved in the UMBC campus community
 (Chi-Square=20.2, p<.01)

There are ample opportunities to get involved in the campus community
 (Chi-Square=17.0, p<.05)

There is a sense of camaraderie among graduate students campus-wide
 (Chi-Square=21.9, p<.01)

■ % disagree ■ % neutral ■ % agree

FIGURE 10a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Use of Administrative Services

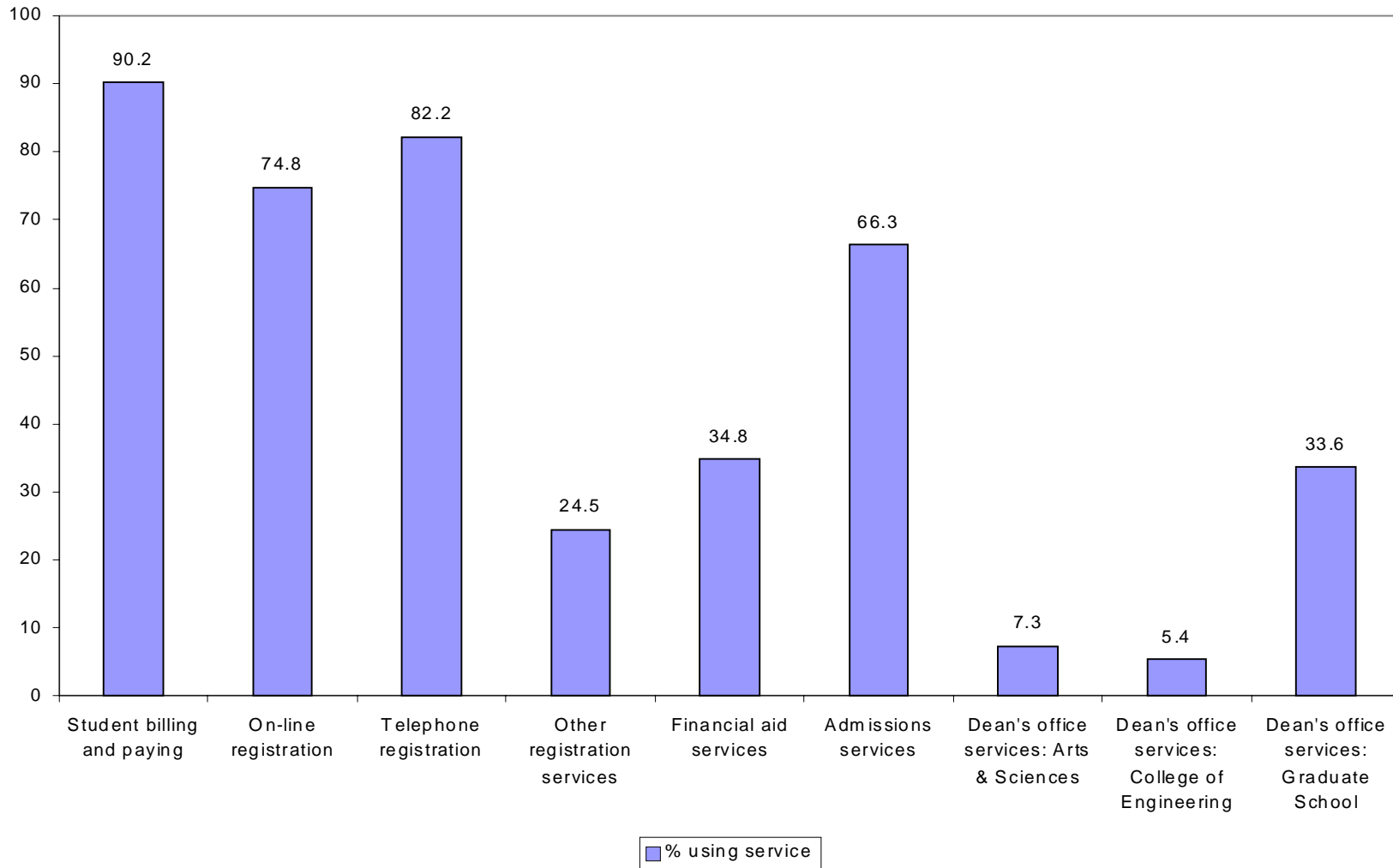


FIGURE 10b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Administrative Services

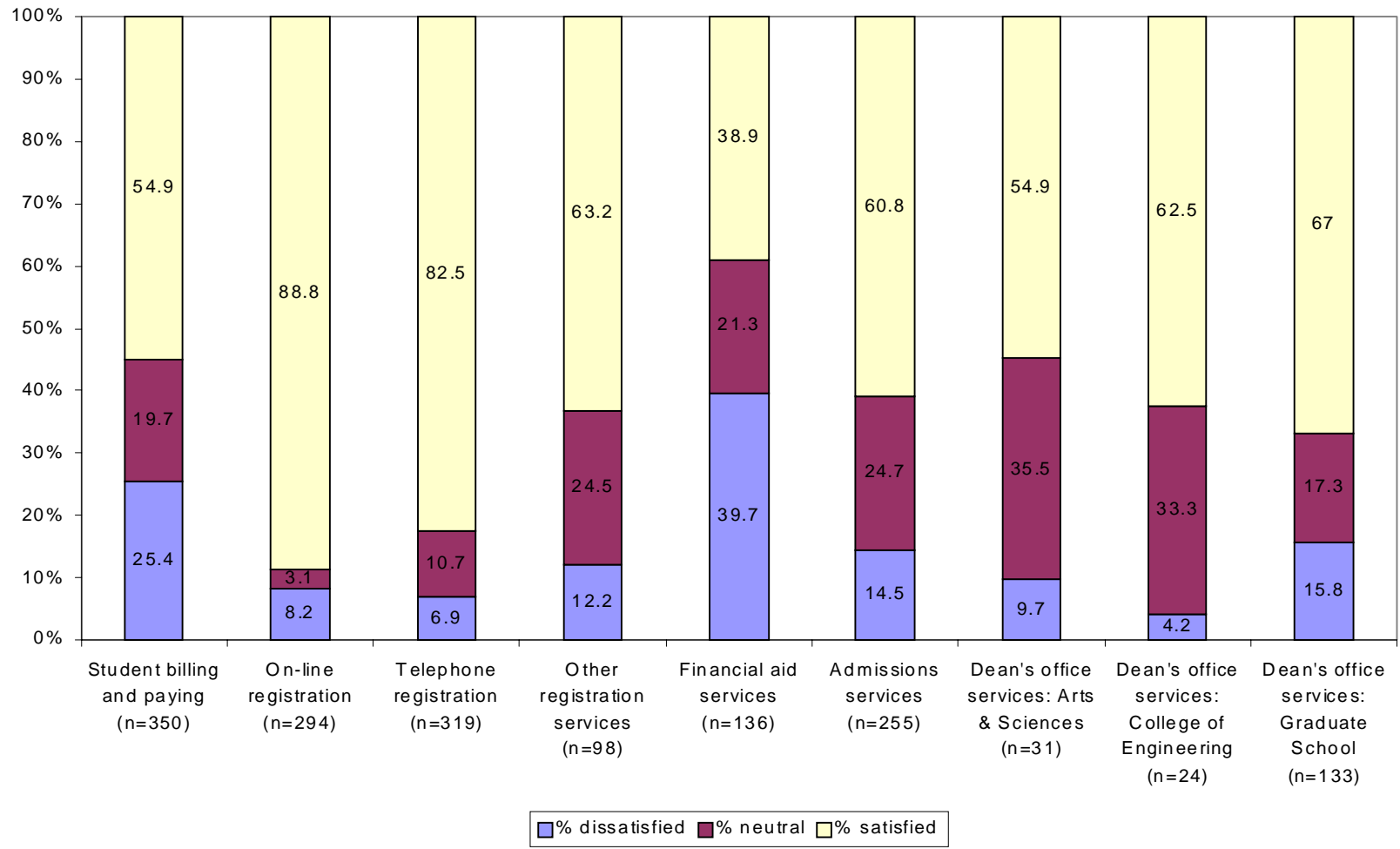


FIGURE 11a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Use of Campus Life Services

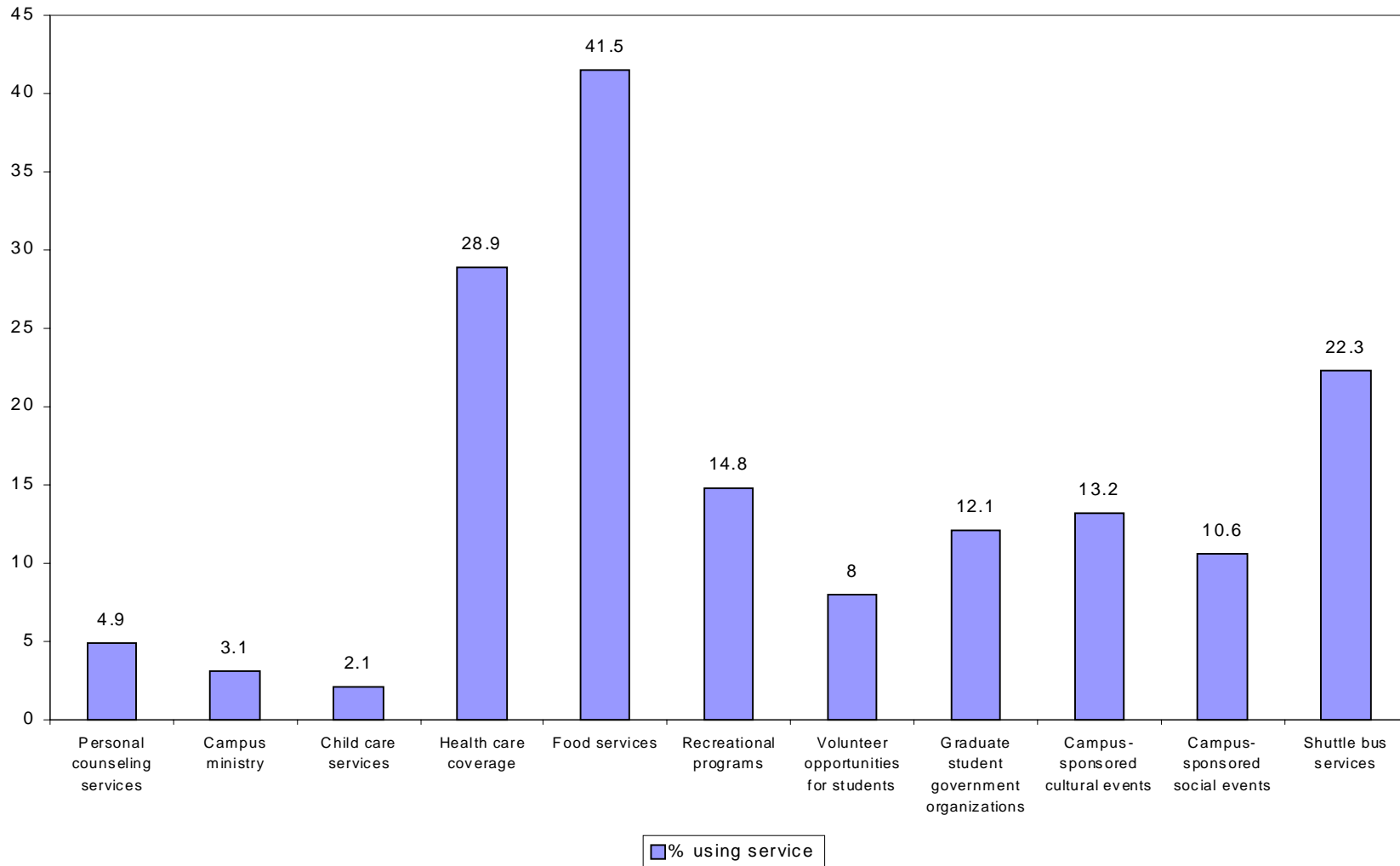


FIGURE 11b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Campus Life Services

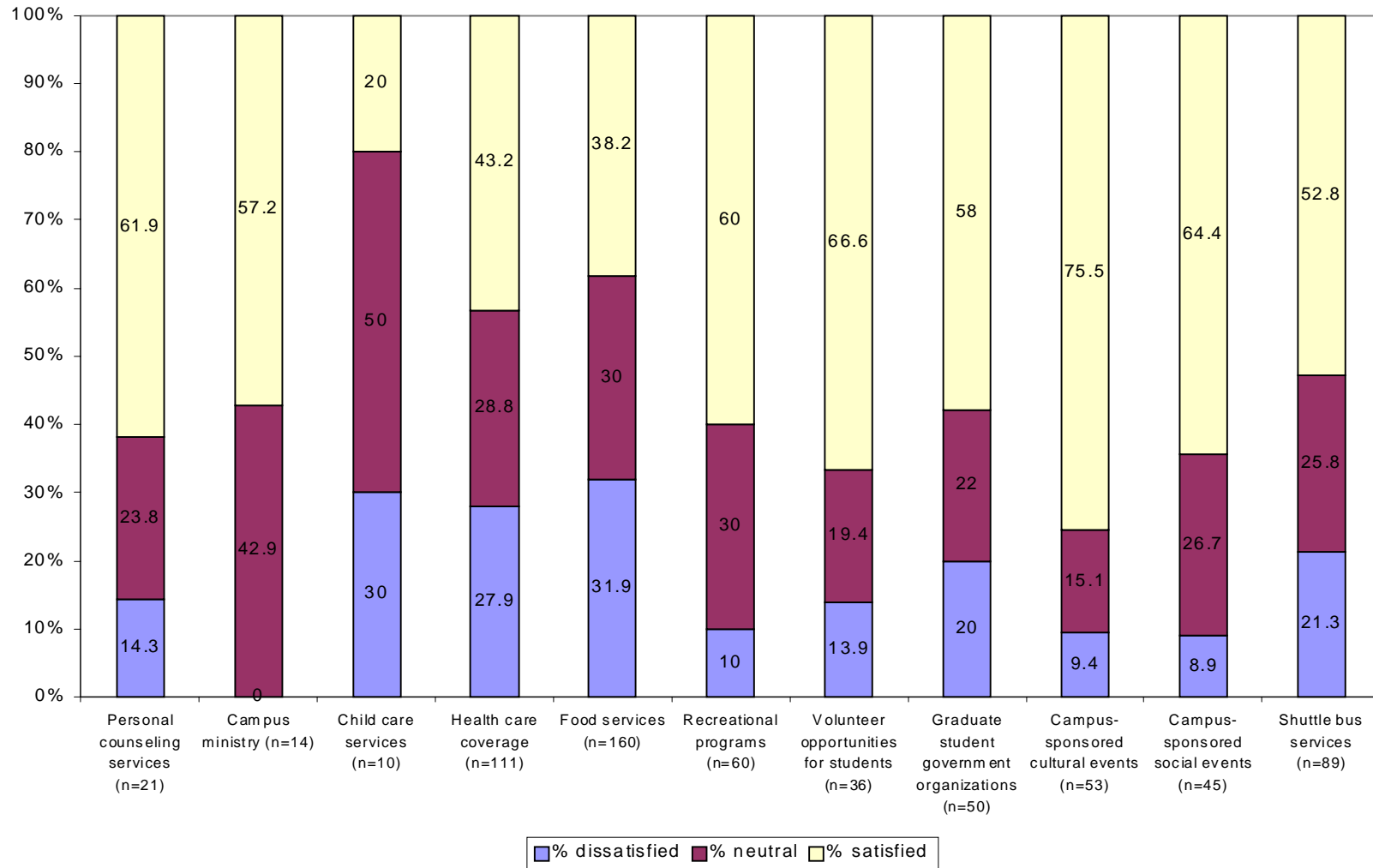


FIGURE 12a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Use of Group-Targeted Services

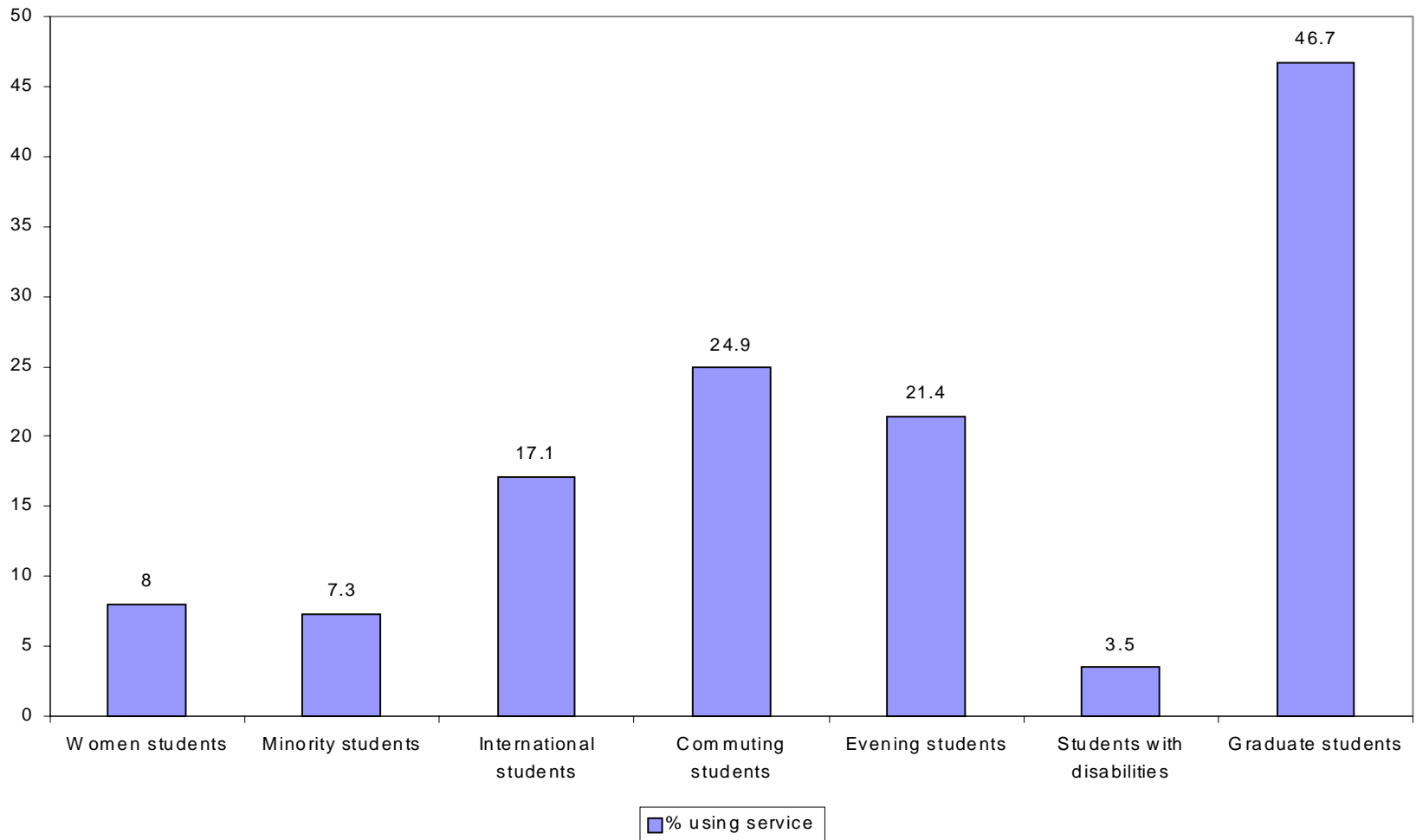


FIGURE 12b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Group-Targeted Services

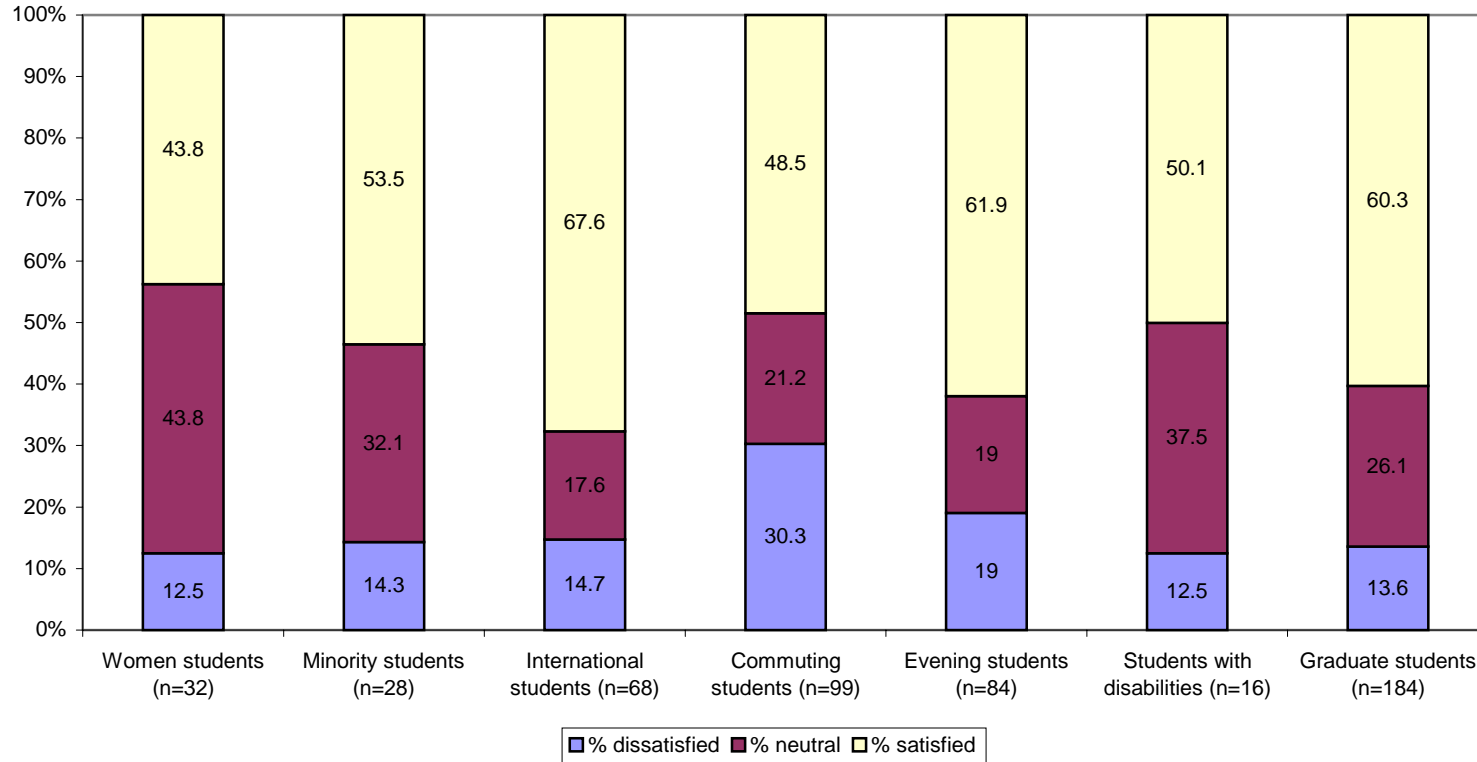


FIGURE 13a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Use of Information & Other Services

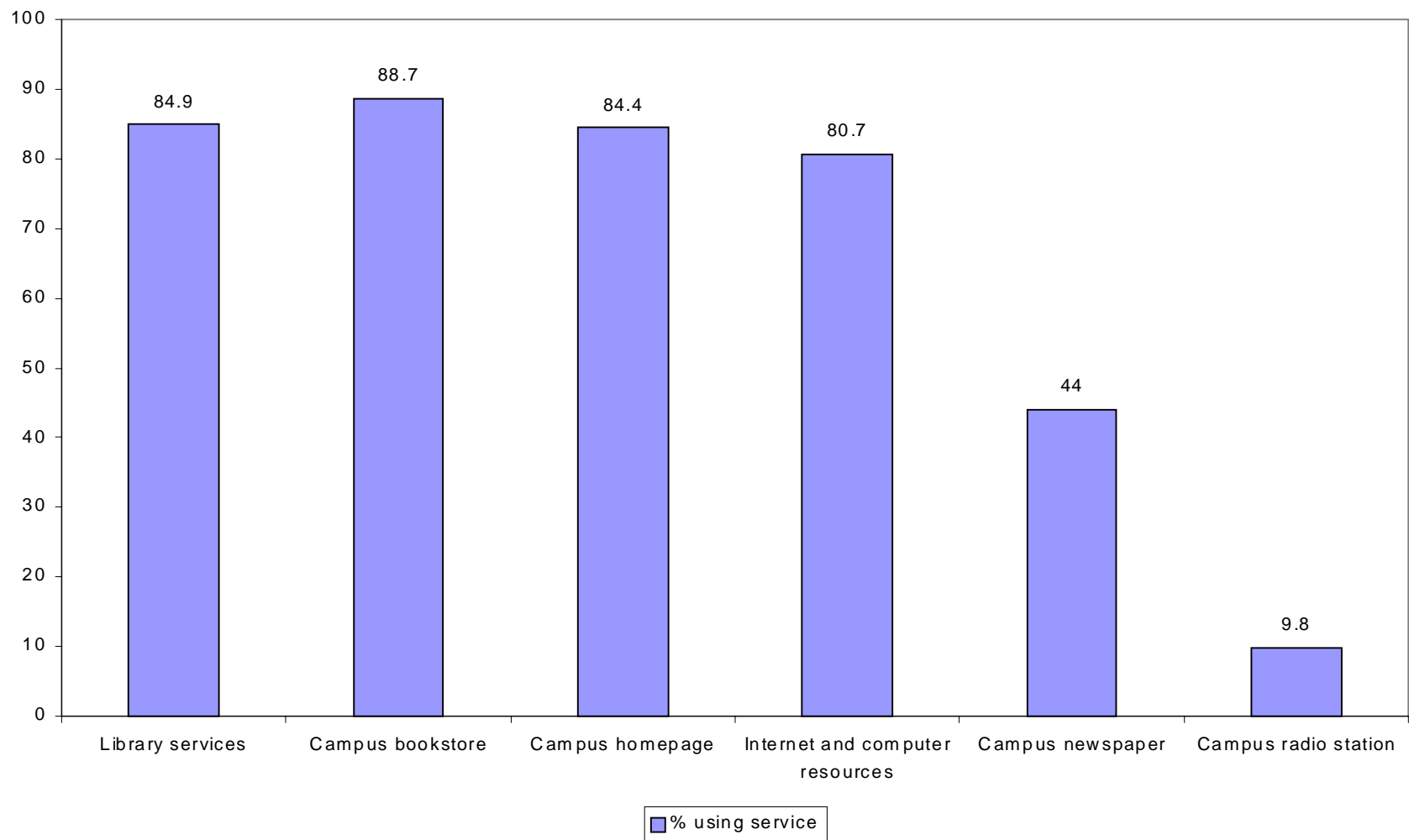


FIGURE 13b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Information & Other Services

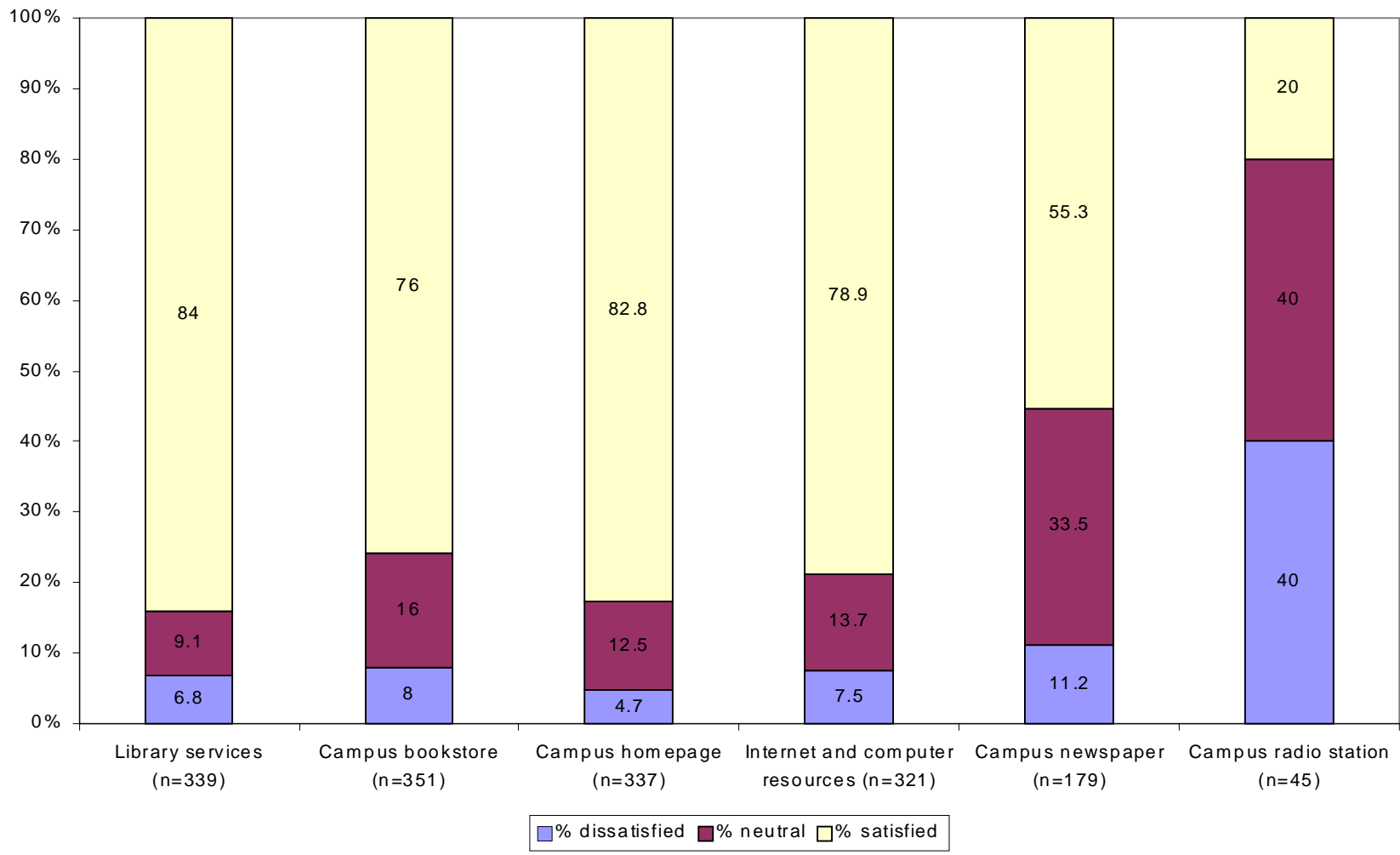


FIGURE 14a - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Facilities - Group1

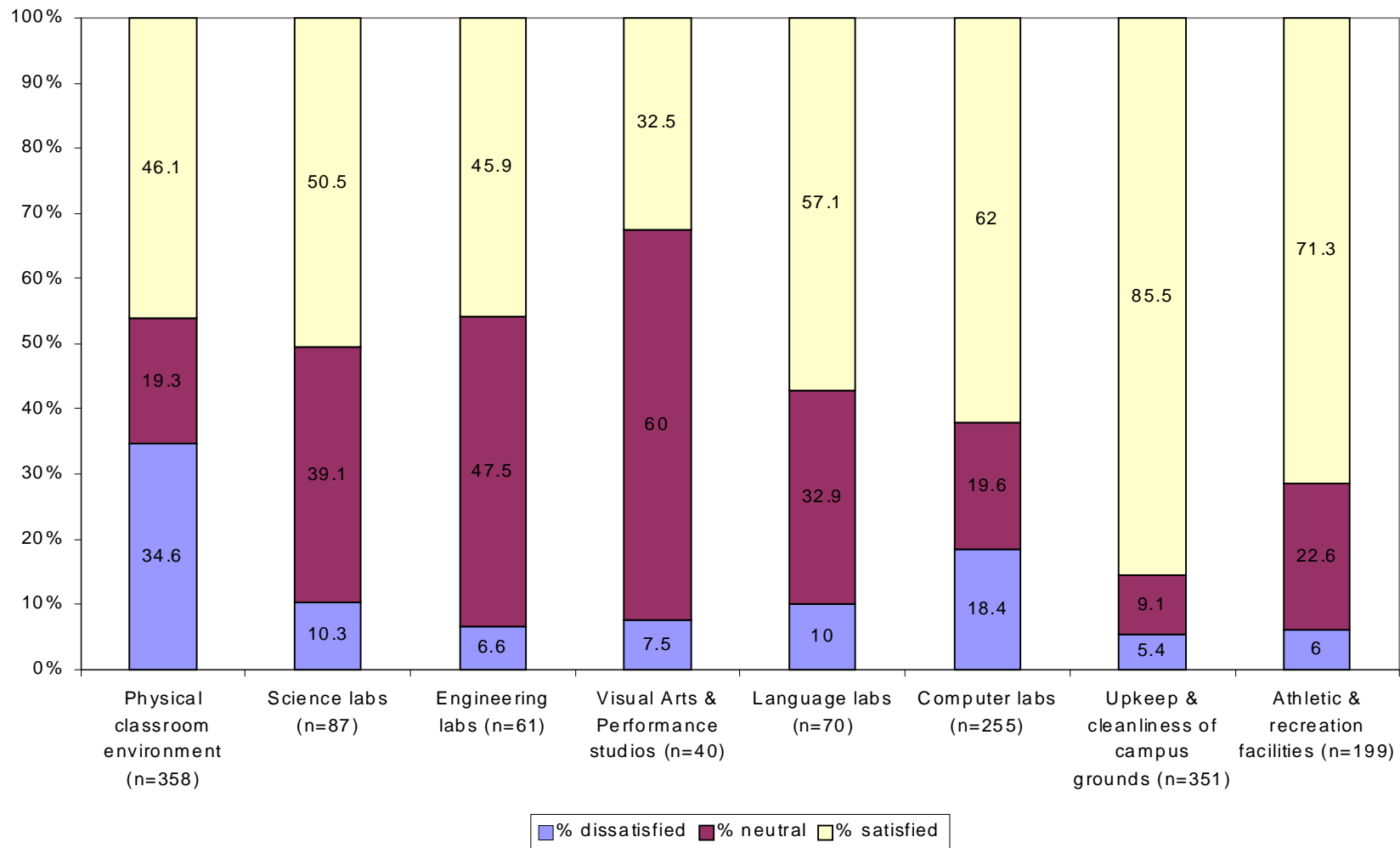


FIGURE 14b - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Satisfaction with Facilities - Group2

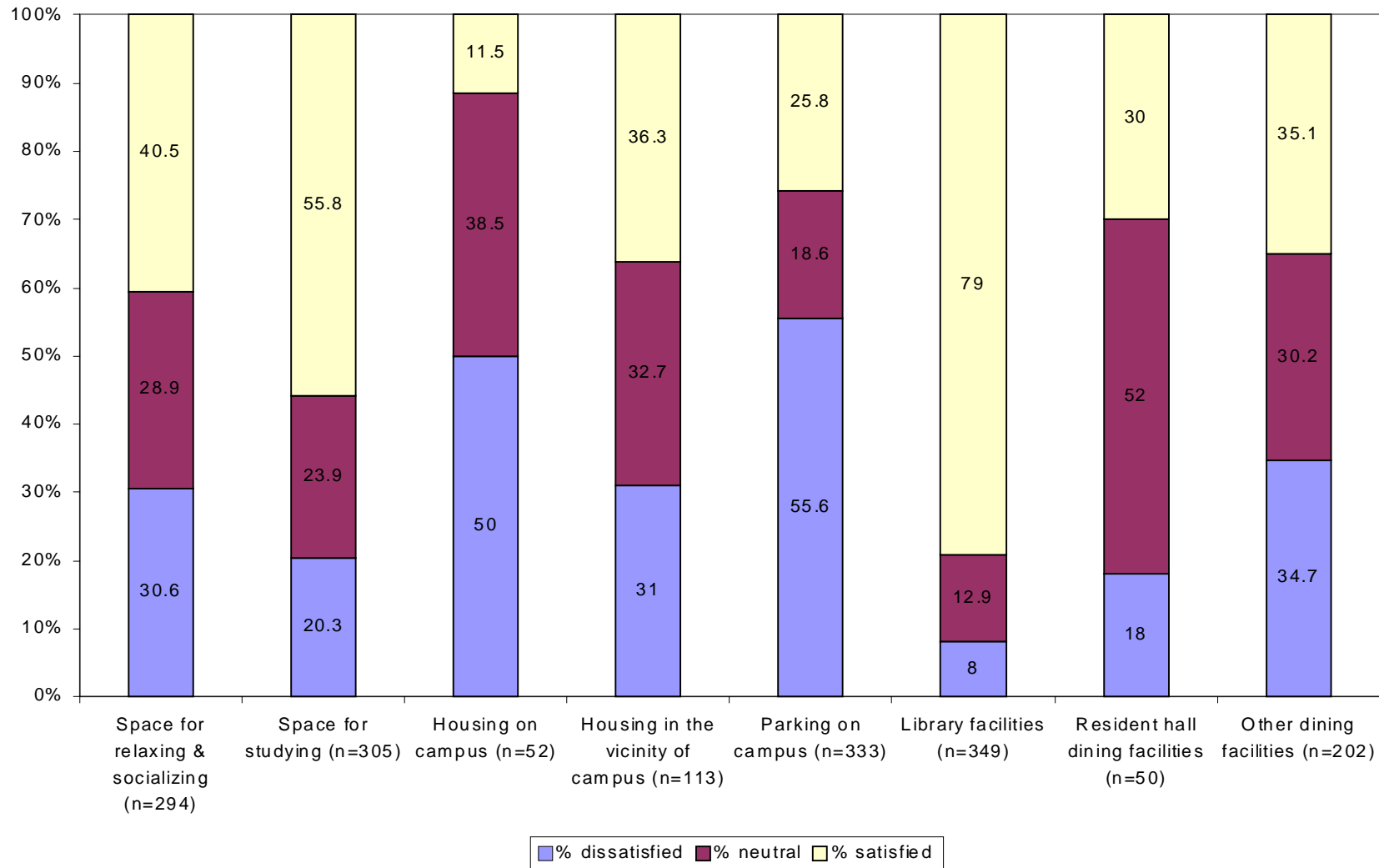


FIGURE 15 - Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2000
Average Time Spent in Other Activities

