

Executive Summary

2009-2010 Homewood Community Engagement Survey

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JHU Center for Social Concern

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Background

From December 2009 to May 2010, the Center for Social Concern, with the support of its Student Advocacy Board, administered a community engagement survey for undergraduate and graduate students of the Johns Hopkins Homewood campus. The goals of the survey were to measure the number of students involved in community service in and around Hopkins and the Baltimore community, to measure feelings about community involvement, and to gauge perceptions of barriers to involvement. Community involvement was defined to include community service, but also community-based internships and projects, community-based Federal Work Study, community-based research, and social enterprises.

The survey was available online and participation was solicited through list-serves of various student life entities (Office of Student Activities, Pre-professional advising, Today's Announcements, Greek Life, Student Athletics Council and others). Hard copies of the survey were made available through tabling in front of Levering Hall, at major campus events, and in various academic classrooms. The survey closed with 1,064 students (966 undergraduates, 98 graduate students) having taken the survey. A majority of participants identified as female (64.1%), while 35.5% identified as male, and 0.7% identified as transgender.

Results

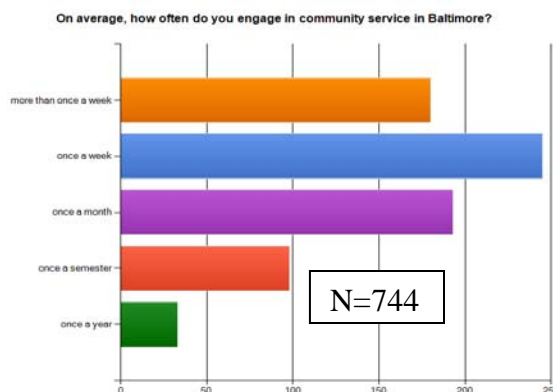
I. Levels of Community Involvement

Section two of the survey focused on students' current level of involvement and their desire to increase or decrease that involvement.

Highlights:

- A majority of respondents (71.6%) said that they participate in service to the Baltimore community, compared to 28.4% that said "no." (N=1,016).
- 71.6% of those who responded to the question, "I want to ____ my involvement in the community" answered "increase" (N=1,016).
- 58.5% of those who participate in service are involved through a Hopkins student group; Groups varied from community service organizations (ex. APO, Project Health, JHU Tutorial Project) to Greek organizations (ex. Kappa Kappa Gamma, Beta Theta Pi, Pi Kappa Alpha), and interfaith groups.
- The amount of time students spend in the community varies (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Time Engaged in Service in the Community



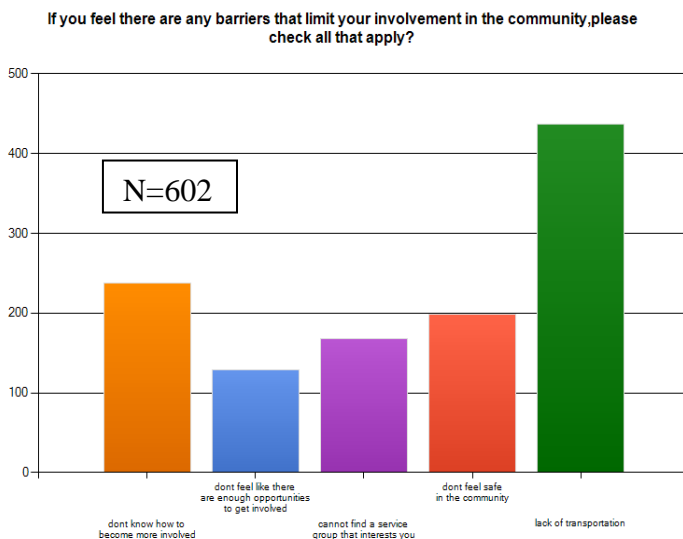
II. Barriers to Community Involvement

Students were asked whether or not they felt there were barriers to getting involved in the community; they were also asked to define what barriers they felt existed.

Highlights:

- 56% of those responding to the question, “Do you feel there are any barriers to participating in community engagement activities and community service?” answered “yes” (N=1,009).
- 72% of those who identified barriers to community involvement felt that a lack of transportation was a barrier (Figure 2); 138 people responding to this same question commented that time (including managing course loads, work, and athletic practices) was a major barrier.

Figure 2. Barriers to Community Involvement



“Timing is a huge factor. Many students just assume that 9AM-5PM, they are going to have classes, and often, when one has class 3 times a day with two hours of break in between, it isn't enough free time to commit to community service. I feel like if service opportunities publicized their flexibility in scheduling, availability of night/weekends, etc, there could be more interest or willingness to commit.”

III. Community Involvement Activities

The last section of the survey asked students what programming they may want to see in the future and what types of activities interest them. They were also asked about their current involvement with the Center for Social Concern.

Highlights:

- In response to the question, “would you be interested in taking a class for academic credit that combines academic content with hands on community involvement?”, 81% responded “yes” (N=978).

Highlights (con't)

“I would love to see more active engagement in social entrepreneurship and its exposure to the campus. I also think that more FWS jobs based in the community would be an excellent way for students to get experience in the city (off-campus). I really like this idea because employment often limits the amount of time students have available to become engaged in the community... doing both with the same experience is great!”

- In response to the question, “Have you ever visited the Center for Social Concern or used any of its resources?” 54.1% selected “no” (N=978).
- Students are interested in a wide-range of opportunities, with opportunities during academic breaks being one of the most popular.
- Students are also interested in learning more about service opportunities and community organizations (Figure 3).
- Most students were most interested in tutoring and mentoring youth (69.1%) and health-related opportunities (68.6%) (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Future Community Involvement Activities

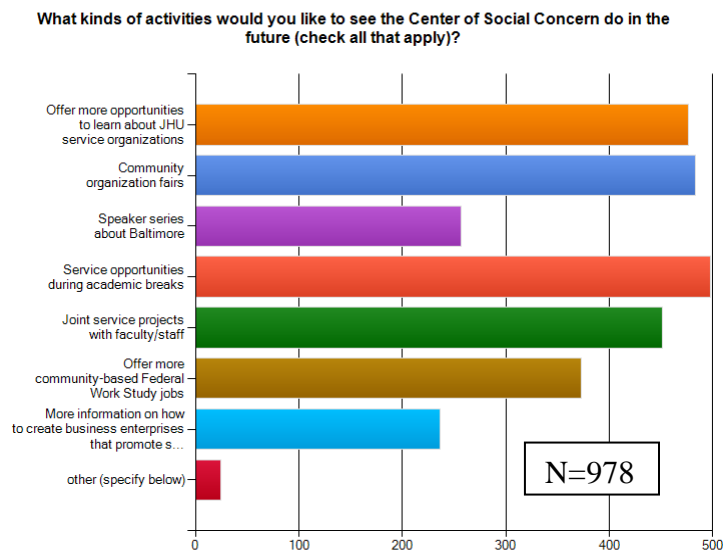
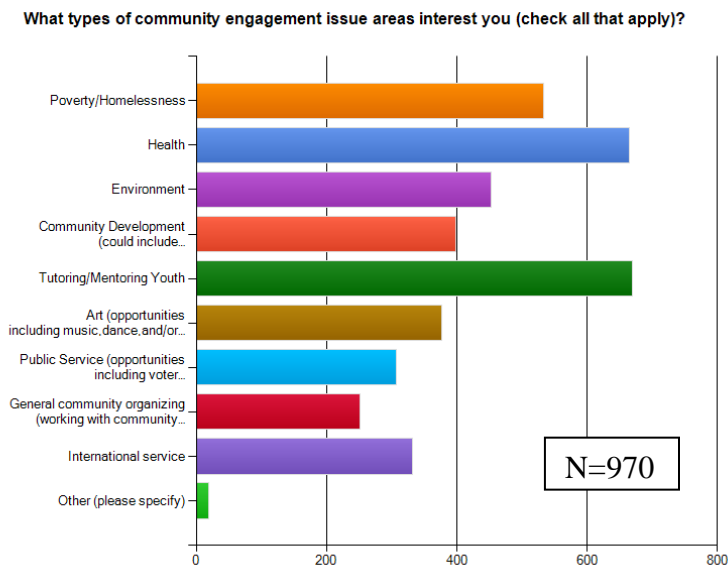


Figure 4. Community Engagement Areas of Interest



Recommendations

- Provide more community involvement fairs and other events for students to learn about community involvement opportunities.
- Explore ways of increasing transportation options to student groups and individual students who wish to serve off campus.
- Increase the number of Community-based Learning courses offered, while instituting faculty incentives and resources to assist in course development and management processes. Offering courses that might count toward humanities and social science requirements may add an incentive for student enrollment.
- Provide more flexible, lower commitment opportunities for students with heavy work and academic schedules, including weekend service opportunities and more days of service.
- Increase the number of community-based Federal Work Study offerings; add non-FWS community-based employment opportunities if possible.
- Expand current Alternative Spring Break programming and increase involvement opportunities for students during Intersession and summer sessions.
- Raise the visibility of the Center for Social Concern through increased marketing during Orientation week and the academic year and through program collaborations with other campus offices.
- Enhance programming and assistance for students interested in health related opportunities.
- Develop opportunities for tutoring/mentoring youth that can be tailored to individual time schedules.
- Provide more opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to work together on volunteer projects and other community-based initiatives.