

End of 2011/Beginning of 2012 Boston University Graduate Student Organization Survey

This survey had 2 main goals:

- 1) Gather feedback about health plans and health care costs
- 2) Get a better idea of what students want from the GSO

NOTE: for all tables besides the departmental response rate table, percentages are percentage of survey respondents, regardless of how many people answered the question

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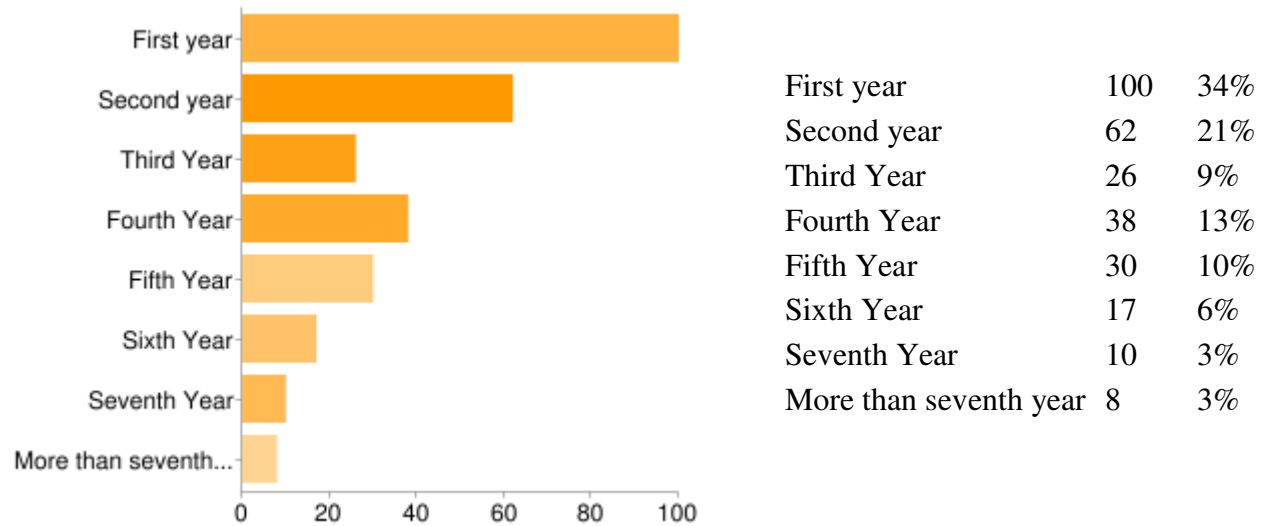
I. Demographics

What department are you in?

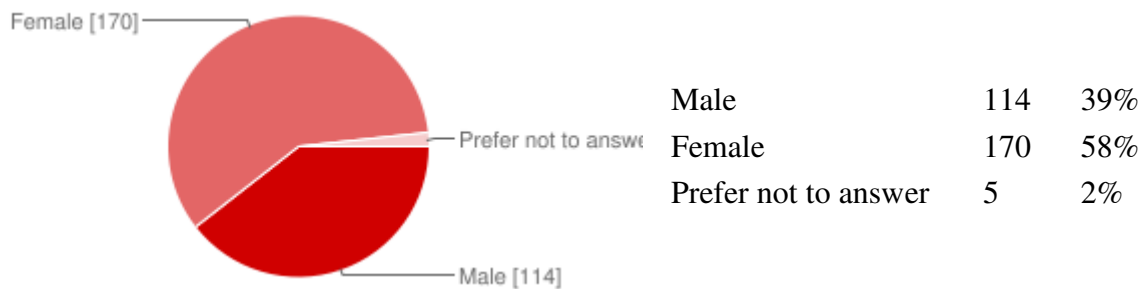
Department	# responding	% of survey respondents	% of department
African American Studies	0	0%	0%
American & New England Studies	6	2%	10%
Anthropology	5	2%	14%
Applied Linguistics	4	1%	20%
Archaeology	9	3%	14%
Astronomy	11	4%	27%
Biology	21	7%	24%
Biostatistics	5	2%	8%
Chemistry	14	5%	11%
Classical Studies	4	1%	19%
Cognitive and Neural Systems	0	0%	0%
Computer Science	20	7%	32%
Earth Sciences	8	3%	29%
Economics	27	9%	9%
Editorial Studies	2	1%	11%
Energy & Environmental Studies	4	1%	13%
English	13	4%	16%
Geography	15	5%	34%
History	5	2%	10%
History of Art and Architecture	9	3%	15%
International Relations	14	5%	13%
Mathematics and Statistics	11	4%	19%
Molecular Biology, Cell Biology, & Biochemistry	5	2%	11%
Music	4	1%	20%
Neuroscience	1	0%	9%
Philosophy	11	4%	22%
Physics	12	4%	11%
Political Science	4	1%	7%
Psychology	20	7%	15%
Religious and Theological Studies	10	3%	12%
Romance Studies	8	3%	16%
Sociology	5	2%	15%
Sociology and Social Work	4	1%	17%

Total: 291 probably distinct responses (see Explanatory Appendix), or 14.4% of 2027 people enrolled in GRS. 314 total responses total, but removed any after the first response for identifiable duplicates (identified using raffle entry email). All percentages in tables are from total responding to the survey, not total responding to the question.

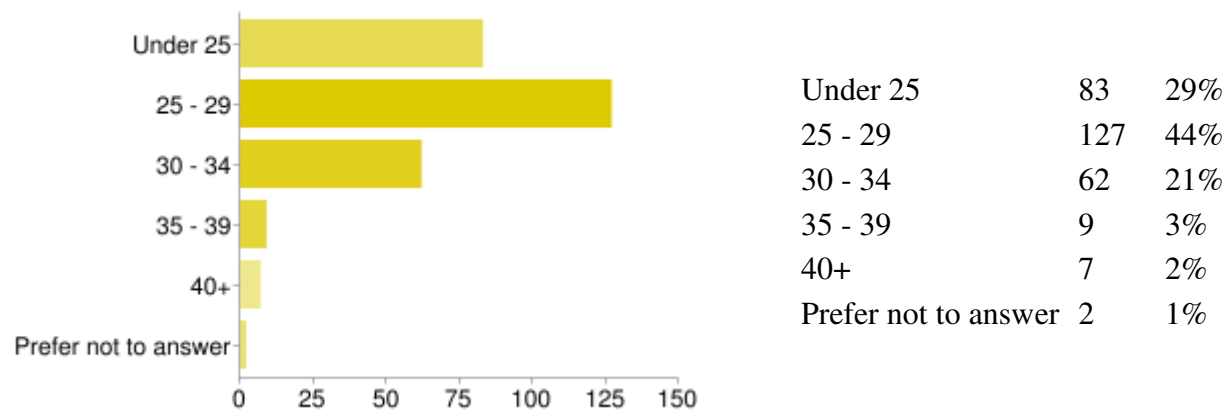
What year of study are in as a Boston University graduate student?



Are you male or female?

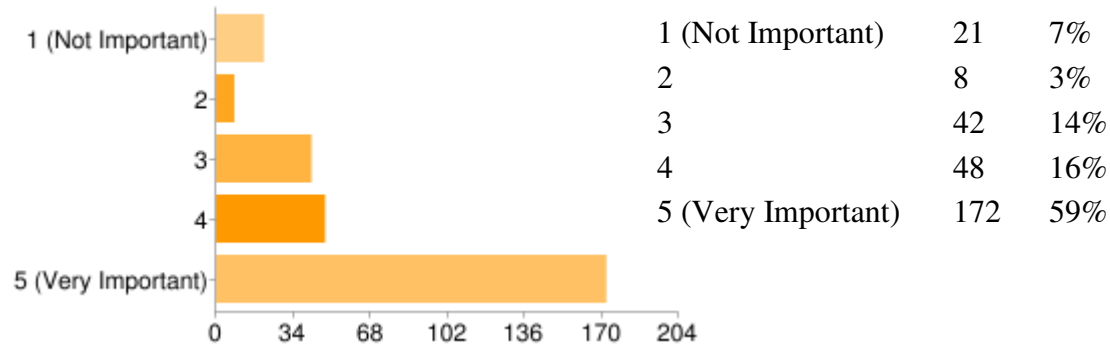


How old are you?



II. Health Insurance and Health Care – No Analysis

7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Increasing Health Insurance Coverage



Healthcare

The following questions are specifically related to the student healthcare plans provided by through Boston University. As part of the renewal process for the 2012-2013 plan year, BU will be accepting bids from the existing health insurance plan provider (and potential new providers) in order to ensure that the plan remains competitive and is properly designed to meet the needs of BU students, so your feedback can be especially influential during this time. This information will be used to help the administration figure out what graduate students want most from their healthcare plan.

9. What kind of health insurance plan(s) do you have?

BU Basic Plan	201	69%
BU Student Plus Plan	22	8%
Spouse's health insurance	15	5%
Parent/guardian's health insurance	43	15%
BU Dental Student Plan (care provided by student clinic)	22	8%
Other Dental Plan	14	5%
Vision Coverage	4	1%
State-sponsored health insurance	5	2%
Other	15	5%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Written in answers to Other:

government

BCBS of MA

Network Blue New England

BMC Preferred

iso

ISO Insurance

ISO

isoa

BU Staff Health/Dental Plan

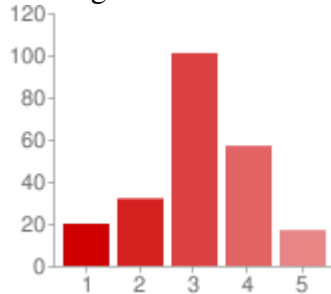
BU Employees Health and Dental Plan

BU health and dental for staff

I have insurance through non-BU work

insurance through my job (amazing that this isn't a choice, do grad student not have jobs?)

10. If you are on a BU Health Insurance plan (Basic or Plus), how satisfied are you with your coverage?

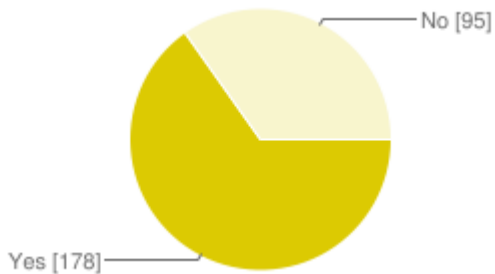


1 - Not Satisfied	20	7%
2	32	11%
3	101	35%
4	57	20%
5 - Complete Satisfied	17	6%

Not Satisfied

Completely Satisfied

11. Is your health insurance plan being paid for by BU or a grant?



Yes	178	61%
No	95	33%

12. If you have had health insurance questions, who have you contacted for guidance?

BU Health Insurance Coordinator (available at http://www.bu.edu/shs/staff/goyette.shtml)	55	24%
SHS website (available at http://www.bu.edu/shs/)	105	45%
GSO website (available at http://www.bu.edu/gso/)	9	4%
Health Insurance company (representative) (the representatives for students on the BU plan are available at http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/stu_conn/customer_service.aspx)	62	24%
Health Insurance company (documents) (available at http://www.aetnastudenthealth.com/stu_conn/student_connection.aspx?groupID=711110)	70	30%
Department administrators/faculty	12	5%
Family or Friends	57	24%
Independent research	46	20%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

13. Would you be willing to upgrade and pay a higher premium to have any of the components below added to your BU health insurance?

Yes, dental coverage	162	61%
Yes, vision coverage	109	41%
No, nothing	80	30%
Other	20	8%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

“Other” answers:

a higher cap. 500k is insufficient for a truly devastating illness or accident.

More preventative care

yes dental coverage, but not the bu learning plan. My roommate is going through very stressful and expensive experience with them, and she has the coverage.

No, dental / vision should be included

Hormone Replacement Therapy

Sadly, cannot afford anything currently, but if I could, I'd opt for dental and vision.

Last time I checked, my eyes and teeth are part of my body. The university ought to pay for dental and vision coverage.

Father works in insurance industry. I'm well covered and have no reason to change anything.

N/A

better prescription drug plan

Do not use BU coverage

not paying, but would like the extra coverage

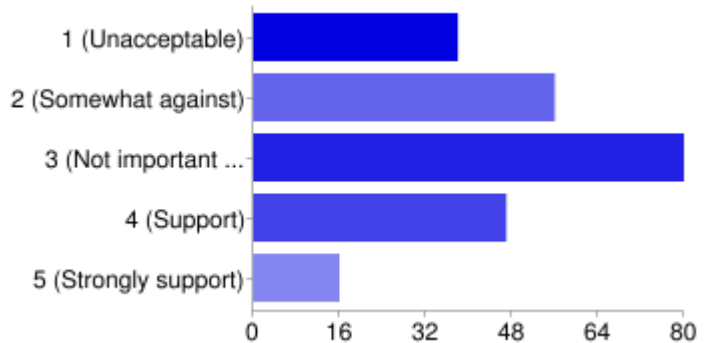
Your opinions on potential changes outlined below will help the administration understand your feelings as they re-negotiate our health insurance coverage.

All of these questions are referring to BASIC coverage ONLY. What follows are some definitions, in case you are unfamiliar with the jargon: Preferred Care refers to service within Aetna's network and non-preferred care refers to services not in Aetna's network. Check with

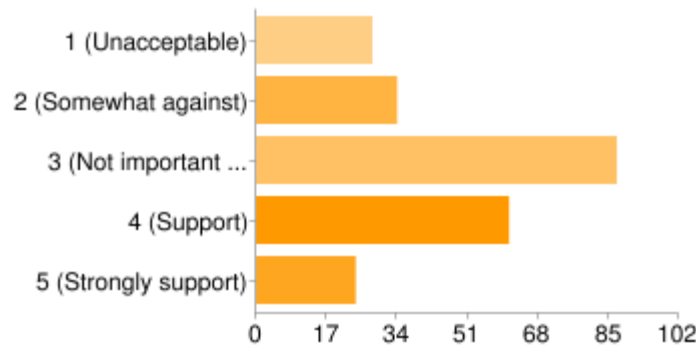
Aetna or the service provider to find out which they are. A Premium is the amount you pay per year. The upgrade from BASIC to PLUS is an increase in premium cost. A Deductible is the amount you have to pay out-of-pocket before the health insurance covers anything. Presently both BASIC and PLUS have a \$250 deductible for non-preferred care and no deductible for preferred care. Co-pay is the amount that you pay out-of-pocket for particular service (appointment or prescription). For example, the current co-pay for a generic prescription for a preferred care pharmacy is \$10 (mail order is \$20 for 3 months' supply).

14 .Related to costs of care, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Add a preferred care deductible, but keep the non-preferred care deductible low

1 (Unacceptable)	38	13%
2 (Somewhat against)	56	19%
3 (Not important to me)	80	27%
4 (Support)	47	16%
5 (Strongly support)	16	5%

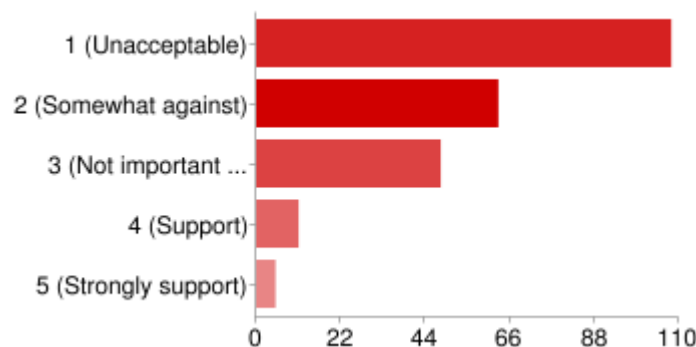


14 .Related to costs of care, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Increase deductible for non-preferred care, but keep no deductible for preferred care



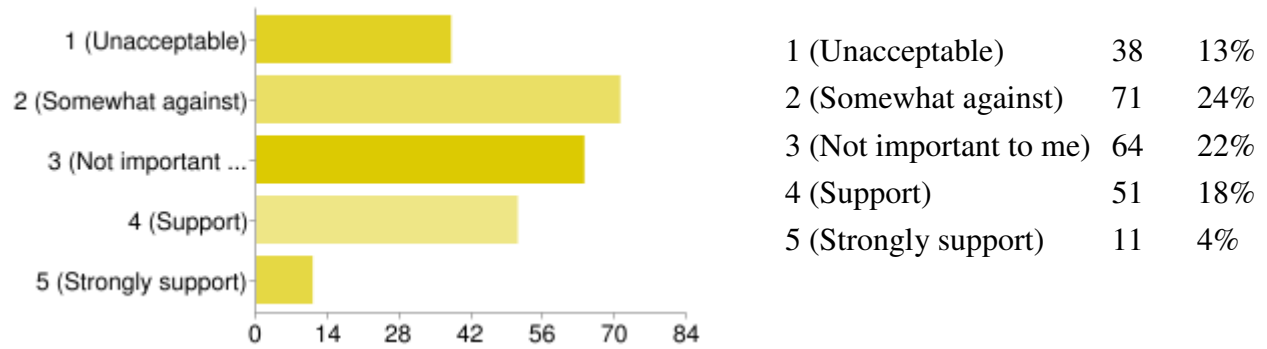
1 (Unacceptable)	28	10%
2 (Somewhat against)	34	12%
3 (Not important to me)	87	30%
4 (Support)	61	21%
5 (Strongly support)	24	8%

14 .Related to costs of care, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Increase co-pay amounts by up to 50% of current rates

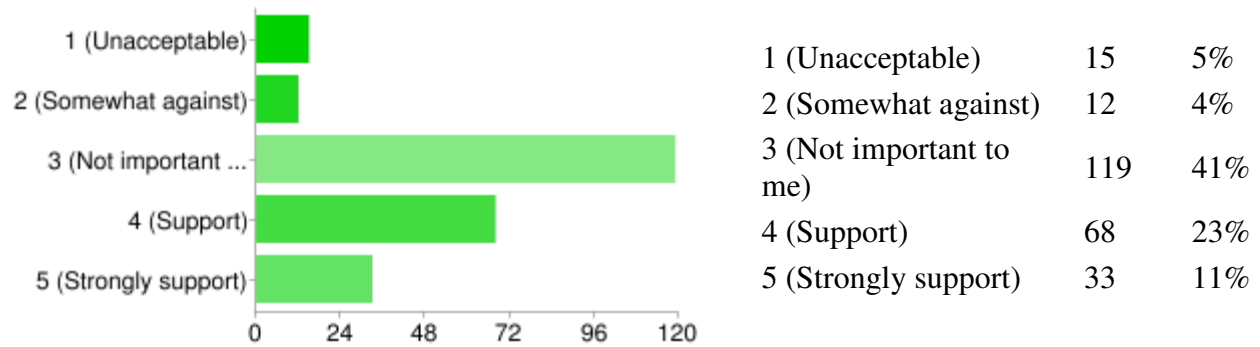


1 (Unacceptable)	108	37%
2 (Somewhat against)	63	22%
3 (Not important to me)	48	16%
4 (Support)	11	4%
5 (Strongly support)	5	2%

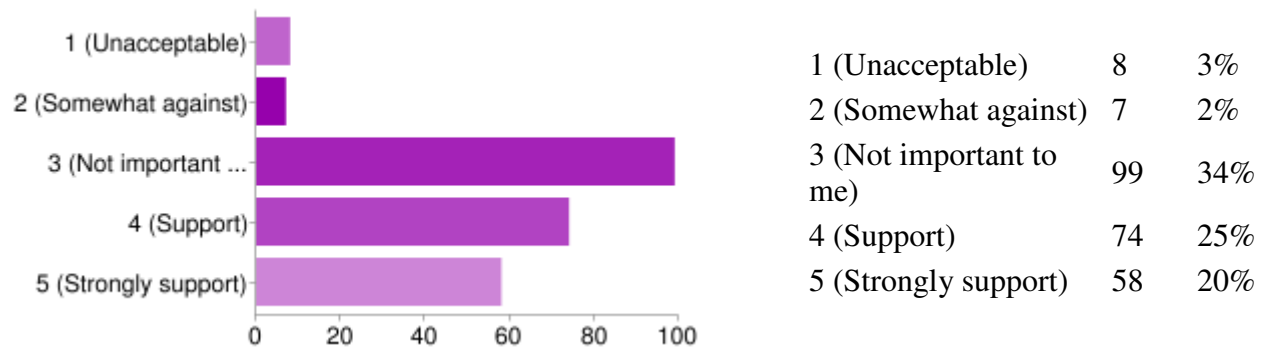
14 .Related to costs of care, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Raise the premium in order to keep other costs (e.g. deductibles, co-pays) low



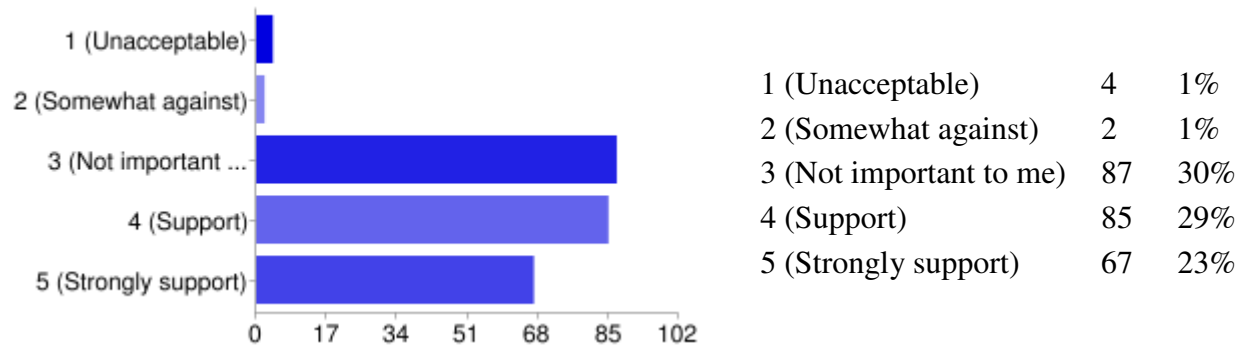
15. Related to coverages, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Increase coverage for STD testing, which is presently only covered at Student Health Services



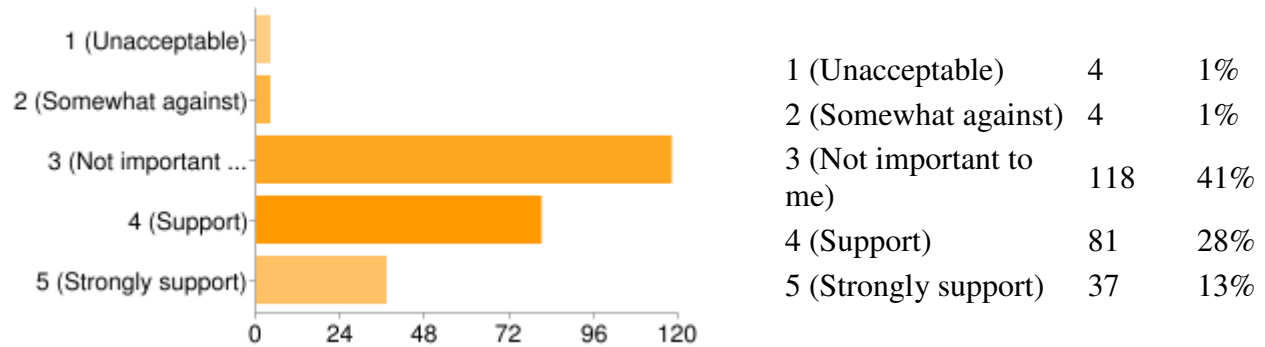
15. Related to coverages, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Increase coverage for physicals performed by outside providers (not Student Health Services)



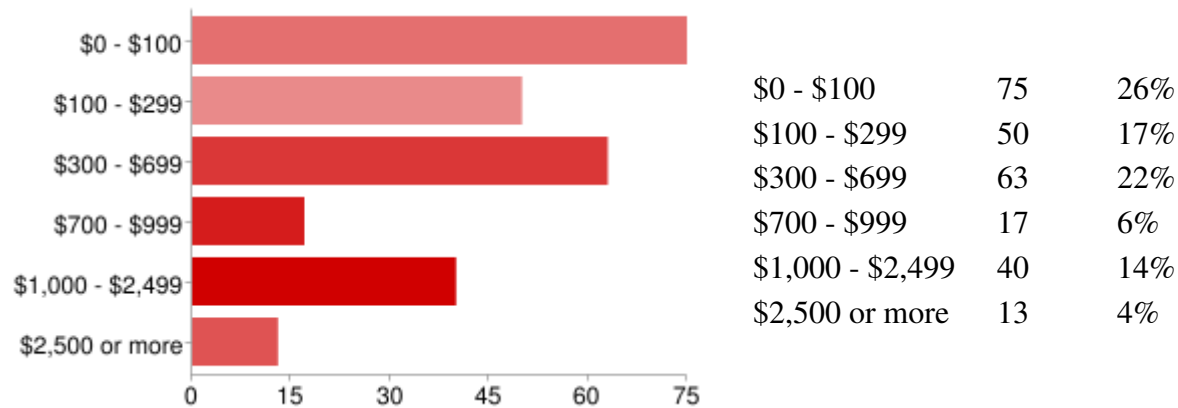
15. Related to coverages, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Increase coverage for multiple physicals for men under 40, which are presently only covered once per college career (men over 40 and women covered every year)



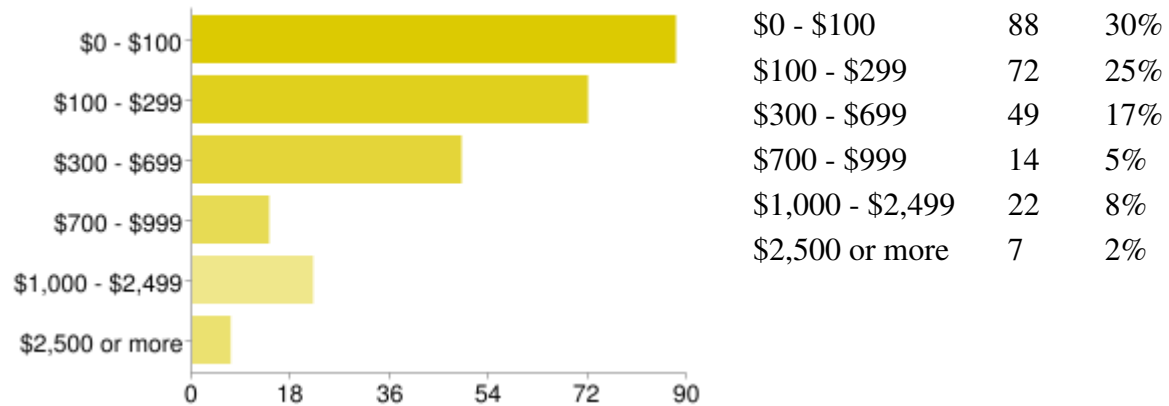
15. Related to coverages, please specify how you feel about these potential changes. - Allow spouses and dependents to upgrade to PLUS plan (or equivalent)



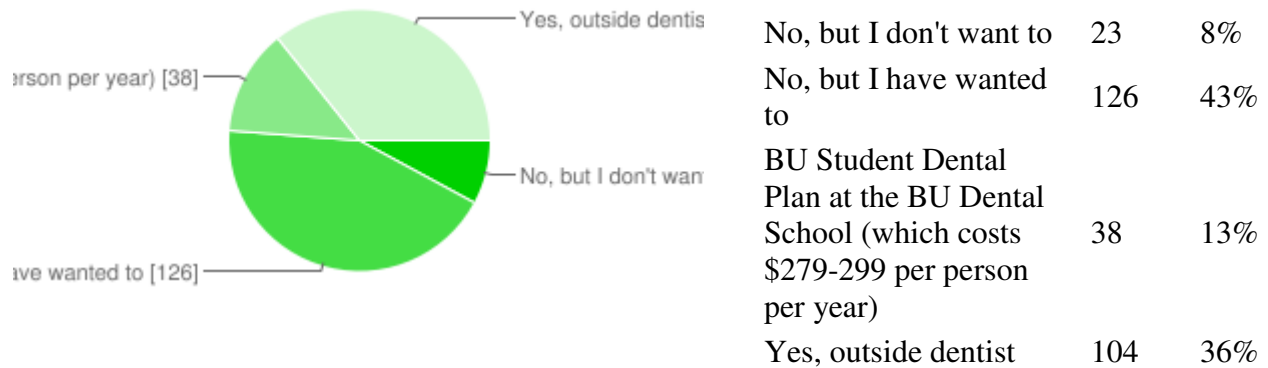
16. What is the maximum amount you have had to pay for health care in a year (excluding dental and the cost of your plan)?



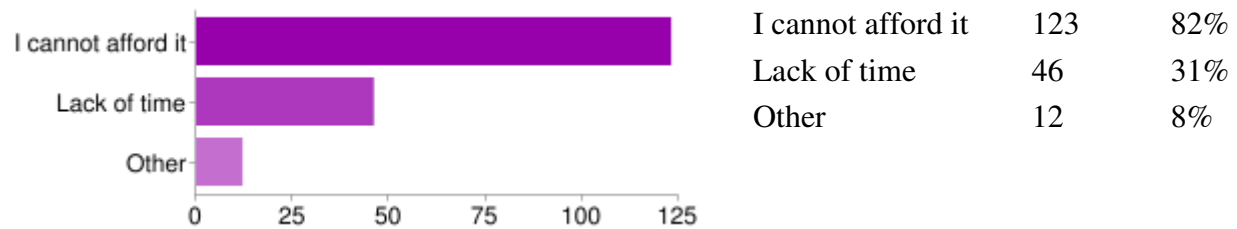
17. Since you've been at BU, what's the average amount that you've paid for health care per year (excluding dental and the cost of your plan)?



18. Have you been seeing a dentist regularly, and if so, where?

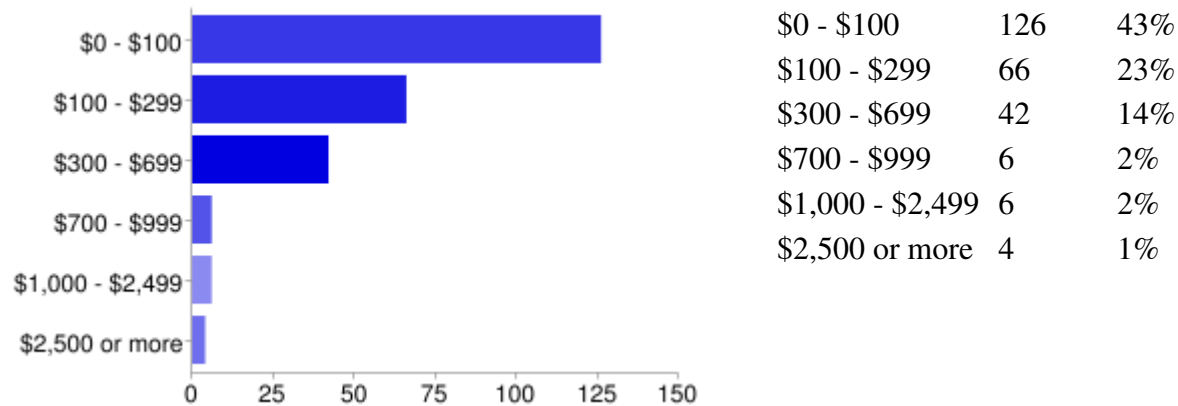


19. If you don't see a dentist regularly but want to, why haven't you?

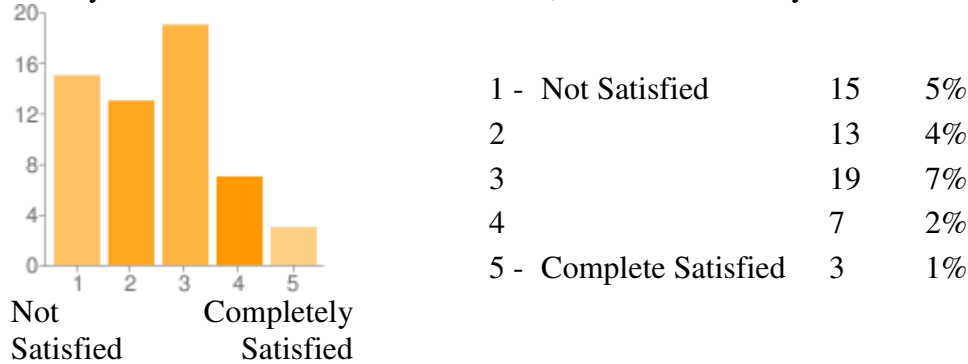


People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

20. In an average year, how much do you spend on dental care in excess of any plan rate or, if you do not have a dental plan, how much in total?



21. If you use the BU Student Dental Plan, how satisfied are you with the care you receive?



22. If you were NOT satisfied with the BU Student Dental Plan, what are the main reasons?

Price is too high	30	41%
Quality of service is inadequate	28	38%
Did not cover what I needed	15	18%
Student dentist difficult to reach/schedule with	21	29%
Student Dentist made mistakes that had negative impact on oral health	17	23%
Other	25	34%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Written in answers to Other:

The dental school won't accept the BU Student Aetna plan because, to quote them "it's terrible insurance that won't cover even the most basic procedures." This is unacceptable; we need to demand that BU provide health care that isn't a joke to its own institutions (much less other doctors, health care providers, etc.).

Dental school care is extremely time-consuming since every part of the process needs to be checked with a professor.

too many appointments for too little progress

the supervisors there were reactive and unhelpful when I requested information and/or had complaints

I've been there 4 times and only got a cleanning. They made me go 3 times only for them to practice stuff like taking x-rays, which didn't improve the health of my mouth. When we finally got to my cavities the semester was over so I would have had to pay for another semester in order to may be in turn tke care of them.

big time sink (appointments take a long time)

student dentist did not polish my teeth as part of my cleaning because the polisher wasn't working. She told me that polishing didn't really matter. I was scheduled to have a wisdom tooth extracted, and the oral surgeon who had consulted on my case told me it couldn't be done that day because it was a surgical extraction, and I had been scheduled for a non-surgical extraction. Very upsetting and inconvenient.

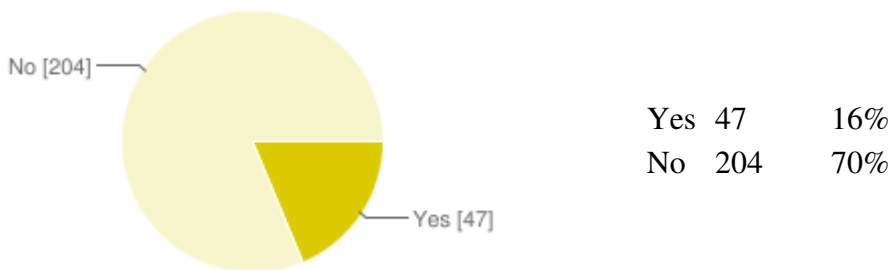
did not want to have student dentists as my only option for care, prefer to have kept my previous private dentist

did not cover prenatal care

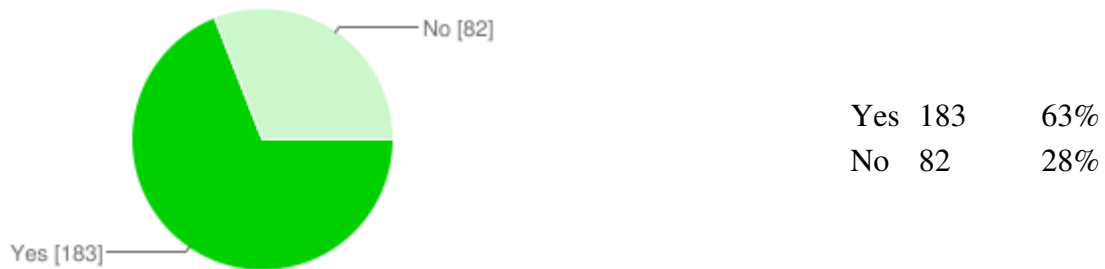
takes too long-- too many visits required before they actually do what you need done

didn't joing b/c too much time to play gineau pig for students

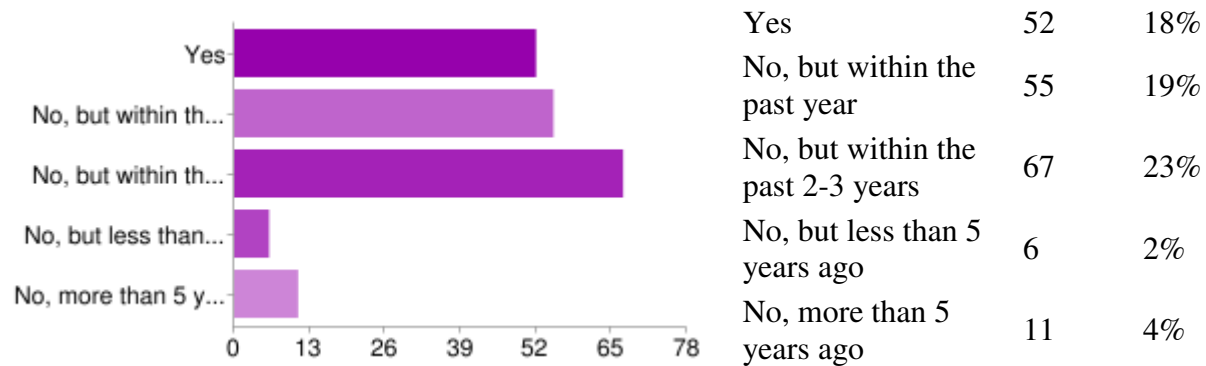
23. Are you aware that the BU PLUS plan provides some eye care coverage?



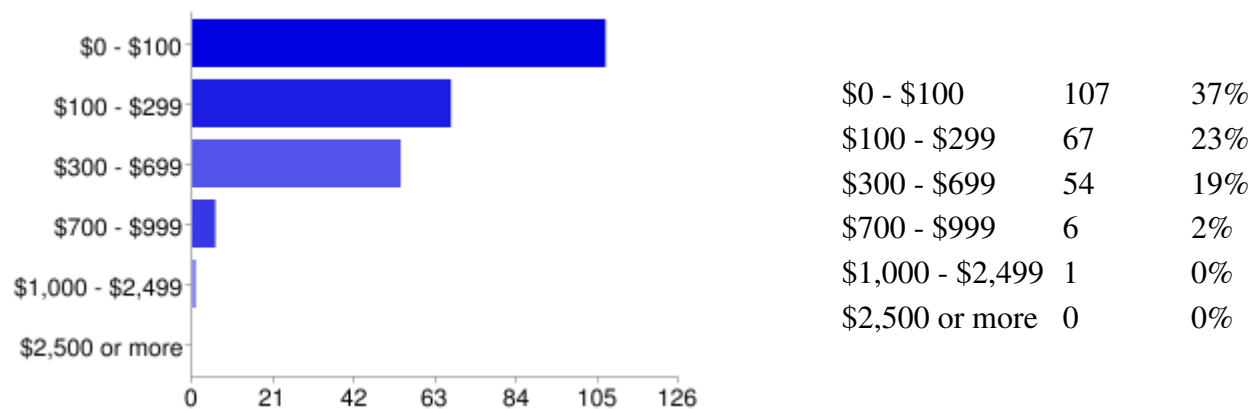
24. Do you wear corrective lenses or have other vision problems that make seeing an eye doctor regularly a good idea?



25. If you answered yes to the previous question: do you see an eye care specialist regularly? If not, when was the last time you had an eye exam?



26. In an average year, how much do you spend on eye care in excess of any plan rate or, if you do not have a vision plan, how much in total?



Questions 8, 5, and 27 were questions that allowed for respondents to give short written answers. The full listing of answers for all 3 questions appear in other sections (sections VII, V, and IX, respectively), but below are the answers pertaining to health insurance or health care.

8. Are there any other issues that you would like the GSO to pursue?

- Dental Insurance
- Dental insurance
- dental and optical with extra fee
- Dental coverage
- Dental / Vision Insurance!
- Dental Insurance
- Dental insurance included in base package
- dental insurance! and vision.
- Detal care coverage, more social events
- FREE BIRTH CONTROL and/or lower cost of prescription drugs. But particularly birth control since it is a monthly cost undertaken by probably about half of the BU grad students.
- Health insurance coverage for spouse
- Spouse's health insurance
- definitely increasing healthcare coverage!
- Healthcare off-campus -- getting referrals is a major pain.
- More transparency in pay and flexibility in healthcare

5. If you would like to see more professional development events or "other" events, what specific events would be beneficial to you?

I would like to see more advocacy and events which pushed for changes in student benefits (dental, etc)

It would be great to have a "How to Use Your Insurance" session. I *hate* dealing with the school to figure out what is and is not paid for with my insurance.

27. Do you have any other general comments about the GSO or about any of your other responses to questions?

Yes- please look at the BU health care plan's coverage of childbirth related costs (have someone who has actually had a baby do this). A newborn is covered under the mother's plan for 30 days, but this 30 days currently does not include any well child visits (of which there are several in the first few months)- this is really unacceptable.

If you are looking at different insurance plans, Aetna's prescription drug coverage is not very good. \$45 a month for certain prescriptions is very hard to manage on a graduate student stipend.

the insurance is too high for me and my classmates.

The Mental Health Portion of the Graduate Plan needs expanding to cover visits for a full year, currently it only covers enough visits for the number of academics weeks in the calendar. As BU SHS Mental Health requires you to seek outside help, we need an expansion to help preserve the mental health of Graduate Students throughout the year.

You guys do a great job. Thank you! All I would like to see is dental coverage included in the basic plan. I know vision is probably out of the question but visits are rare enough that I don't mind paying that out of pocket. Boston is just such an absurdly expensive city to live in that dental coverage would be an extremely nice relief.

I would strongly support having a dental plan that allows students to visit dentists outside BU.

A dental plan would be very much appreciated. The BU dental students don't seem experienced enough to handle anything other than routine cleaning, yet it's still expensive. Right now the only way I can afford dental care is by using introductory (one visit only) lower-cost offers at various dentists' offices in the area.

Regarding question 18, I feel really strongly about getting affordable, high quality dental coverage for graduate students. Without coverage, we simply do not make enough on a stipend alone to cover any unforeseen issues. Case in point, I cracked a tooth over the holidays and had to pay \$2500--more than 1/8 of my yearly stipend--out of pocket for an unexpected root canal and crown.

Also, I think we should ask for at least partial spouse coverage. Every year, after not being paid during the summer (4 months) I am desperately looking for money to pay for health insurance for my husband. "

I have heard terrible things about the BU Student Dental Plan and would never sign up for it, but if there was an option to sign up for an outside dental plan (Delta Dental, etc.) even at an additional cost I would strongly consider it.

I feel very strongly that dental coverage is completely inadequate. We should have the right to use fully certified dentists of our own choosing."

Since Student Health Services (and the Boston Medical Center) are quite comprehensive in their offerings, our insurance should focus on having no copays for preferred provider care, even if this requires raising premiums or increasing the non-preferred copay. Most graduate students just don't have much money laying around to pay unexpected copays for routine care.

Aetna's billing system is so confusing I am never able to know what, how much or why I am paying. They keep sending you huge bills until you get scared and pay only for them to stop. I've had to go speak to Ms. Goyotte at SHS 100 times.

I didn't even know there was a GSO website. In general I have been pretty dissatisfied with the information dissemination at BU. Some of that is department specific but I'm hoping that the GSO website aggregates useful information about health insurance, travel grants, etc. When I had a question about health insurance, it took me forever just to find the right person to answer my question!

I appreciate that the GSO is making the effort to get students' feedback about the insurance at BU. Thanks for your hard work!

Adding a spouse to the student plan is much too expensive.

Department stipends should include the BU Dental plan, or should subsidize it. Many/most graduate students I know don't receive routine preventative dental care because they do not have money to pay for insurance. Indeed, I only signed up for dental insurance because I had a dental emergency that required treatment.

Have used BU Dental School in the past because it is affordable, but the service is a nightmare.

BU needs to improve their healthcare coverage! Specifically to include dental coverage (and possibly vision, too).

Thanks!

BU should strongly consider incorporating eye exam coverage into the Basic insurance, even if this requires a somewhat higher premium. It is not cost-effective for most graduate students to pay for the plus insurance if all the additional coverage that we require is basic vision coverage.

Please note I answered Student Dental Plan questions because I have used the service in the past. I find scheduling to be the most inconvenient aspect followed by the duration of sessions.

The eye care plan literature is confusing -- sounds like an ad, not real information. Can't you tailor it for BU and Boston users?

Co-pay for non-generic prescription drugs is outrageous. SHS provides quality care for basic issues but falls short for less routine problems. Cost of covering a non-student spouse is prohibitive since AETNA student plan does not meet Massachusetts standards for acceptable health insurance.

I would love to be able to see a real gynecologist rather than one at SHS without needing a referral.

I am aware that graduate students at the medical school have the Student Plus completely covered by the university or a grant. Additionally, they don't need a BU health center referral so see an outside physician.

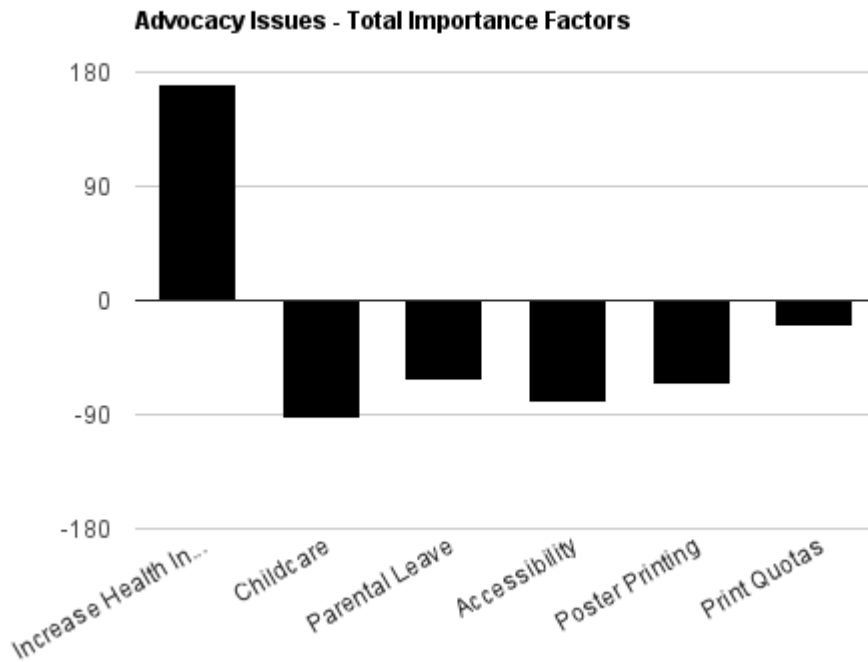
I think this benefit should be made available to all graduate students.

I felt unable to really answer the poll regarding changes in deductibles and premiums without more information (for example, since BU pays my premium, sure, go ahead and raise it to keep other costs low! But how would this negatively impact BU?) I would love to see an affordable dental plan that allows students to go to outside dentists, or at least see regular dentists at the BU Dental School rather than students (unless my understanding of the current plan is incorrect). And I have recently spoken with other female graduate students, and the consensus seems to be that there are no clear guidelines for parental leave for grad students--it would be great to see that laid out. Affordable, available childcare is badly needed as well.

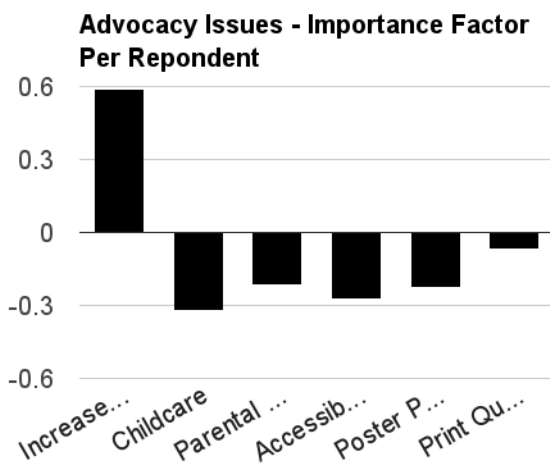
III. Analysis of health insurance and health care

This section and other Analysis sections for questions that had ratings will use “enjoyment factors,” “overall satisfaction,” and/or “importance factors.” Please see the Explanatory Appendix for the details on how these measures were reached. Also: errors are poorly constrained; assume that importance factors that are very close in value could easily be switched for the graduate population as a whole.

How important is Increasing Health Insurance coverage to the graduate students?



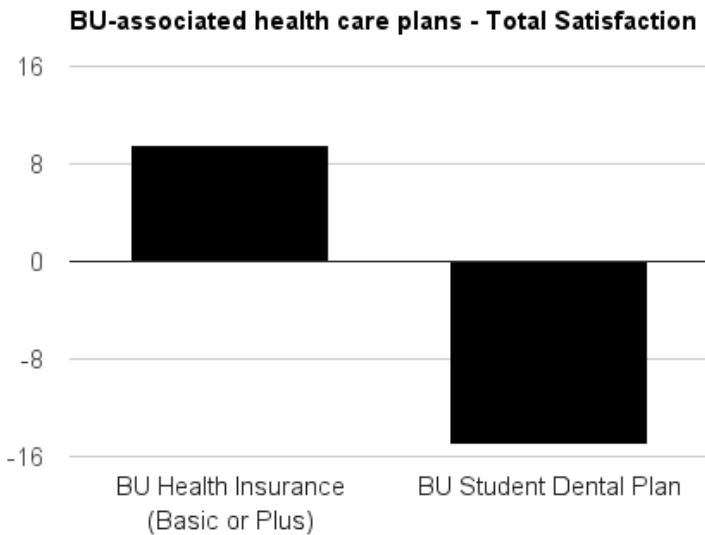
Increasing health insurance coverage is the most important advocacy issue to the people who completed this survey, by a long shot. As shown in the chart of Importance factor per respondent, the average responder found this issue between “somewhat important” and “very important.”



This is clearly the issue we should be concentrating the bulk of our efforts on.

How important is the quality of the BU-arranged health insurance to the graduate student body, and how well do we like it right now? Over 75% of graduate students have BU health insurance, either the Plus or the Basic plan. Other health insurance plans account for up to a total of 27% (assuming that Parent/guardian’s, spouse’s, State-sponsored, and all “other” types of health insurance are all health insurance, which is likely inaccurate.) Since around three

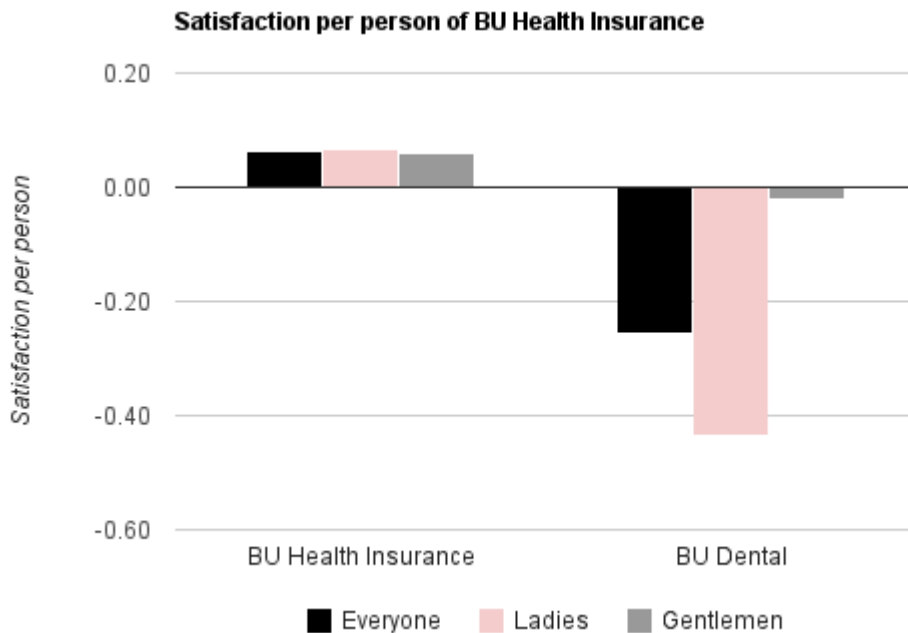
quarter of the graduate students make use of the BU plan as opposed to other plans, it has a very important role in terms of health care coverage for the graduate student body.



The total satisfaction score is positive for the current BU Health insurance, which is information for everyone surveyed – people for whom the coverage is paid for by BU as well as people paying for coverage themselves, and both Basic and Plus enrollees. By comparison, the BU student dental plan looks pretty bad.

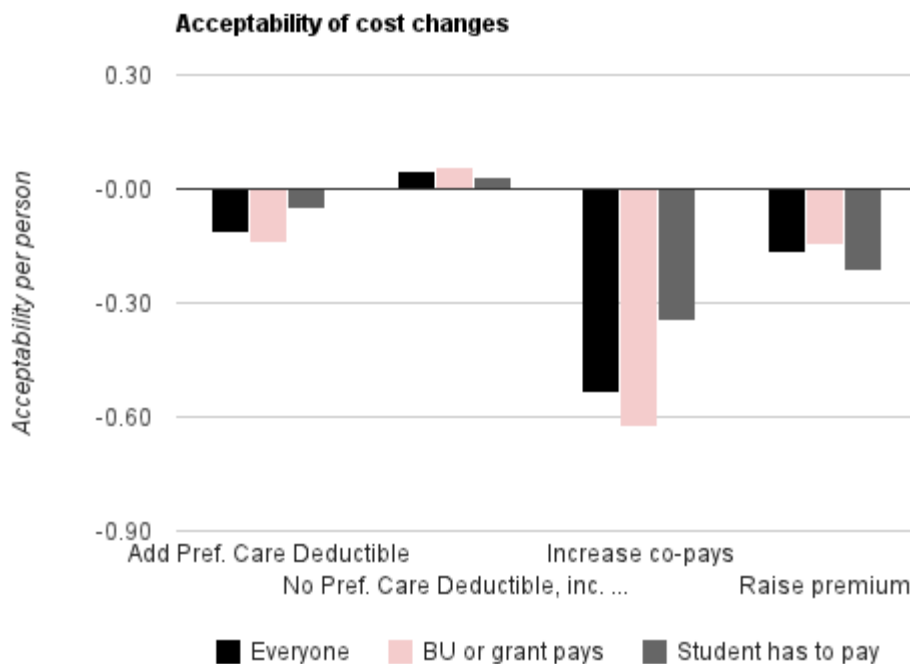
Now, satisfaction per person is not looking so rosy for either plan: the health insurance scores around 0.1, which is much closer to a score of “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” (0) per person

than it is to 0.5 (somewhat satisfied) per person. Still, it isn’t negative. The BU student dental plan is nearly centered between “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” and “somewhat dissatisfied” for the average person taking this survey. Interestingly, females were far more dissatisfied with the BU Student Dental plan per person than the males. The Aetna health insurance was rated similarly by everyone, both genders, and whether the student was paying for it or BU/a grant was paying for them.

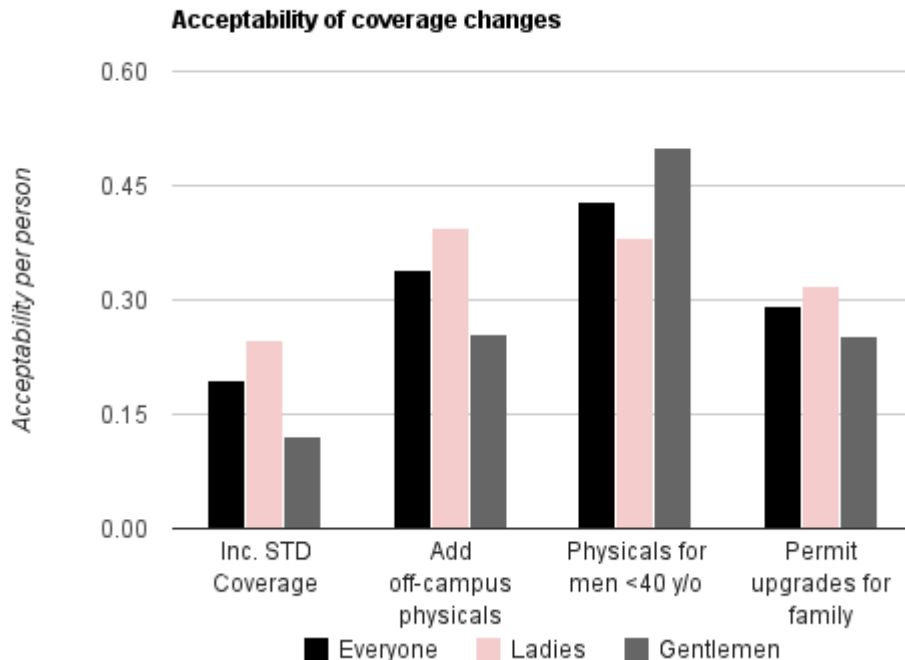


What are the most important things in terms of what can change for the health insurance? We tried to address that with questions 14 and 15.

As expected, no one found any increases to cost highly favorable. The total number of people responding to each category of question 14 (how they felt about each individual cost increase) was approximately the same (around 233 people rated each cost change), so it is not very useful to display the total acceptability of cost changes in addition to the acceptability per person. Increasing the non-preferred care deductible would be very slightly acceptable, increasing co-pay amounts by up to 50% would be the thing the grad students would hate the most, and raising the premium or adding a preferred care deductible would be nearly equally disliked. When comparing the people whose insurance BU or a grant paid for vs. people whom neither BU nor a grant paid for, the differences were that people who had to pay themselves were more strongly opposed to increasing the premium and less strongly opposed to an increase in co-pays, more strongly opposed to increasing the non-preferred care deductible and less strongly opposed to adding a preferred care deductible. The rankings from most-to-least acceptable (increasing the non-preferred care deductible, followed by adding a preferred care deductible, raising the premium, and increasing co-pays) were the same for both categories of respondents. When comparing by gender, there is no strong difference, so the chart is omitted here.



Also unsurprising (moving on to question 15): per person (again, the total number of people responding to each category was approximately the same, around 245 total respondents to these categories) all additions to coverage would be on the acceptable side. The most desired change for the graduate body as a whole seems to be adding coverage for yearly physicals for men under the age of 40, followed by adding coverage for physicals at places other than Student Health. When comparing who pays for the health insurance, those paid for by BU or a grant vs. those who had to pay themselves responded remarkably similarly, the only difference being that increasing STD coverage was more preferred by the students who have to pay than by the students whom grants or BU pay for. When comparing by gender, however, we see that women would prefer to add coverage for off-campus physicals slightly more than their below-40 male



counterparts getting covered once per year instead of once per college career. (Only up to 3% of survey respondents were over 40.) To be fair, they did only very slightly prefer the off-campus physicals. Other than that the order of preference was preserved between the 2 genders, though women had a stronger want for increasing STD coverage and allowing for spouses or dependents to upgrade to PLUS coverage.

Questions 16 and 17 say how much each graduate student estimates they pay in excess of plan rates per year. In answer to question 16, 4% of people claimed to have paid more than \$2500 in the year they spent the most. In answer to question 17: 2% of respondents claim to have averaged more than \$2,500 per year on health care. For students on teaching fellowships or research assistantships, this means that they are spending around 10% of their annual income from the stipend, possibly more than.

Questions 18-22 address dental care. Over 40% of graduate students responding indicated that they have not been seeing a dentist regularly but would like to. This number seems too high. 82% of the people answering why they don't go to a dentist regularly state that they can't afford it. The second major problem is lack of time. A problem is that the dental plan that BU points students to is, as stated earlier, largely unsatisfactory to the average person replying to this survey. There are a number of remarks in the text-entry answers about the dental plan. A common complaint mentioned in those remarks is that it takes a long time to get any issues resolved (additionally, one illuminating answer to question 22 is that student dentists are difficult to schedule with, even before that point), which does not help the people who don't see a dentist regularly due to lack of time (31%).

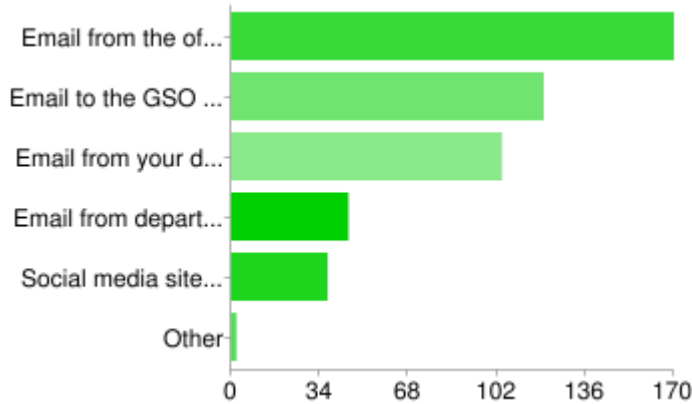
Questions 23-26 are about vision care: 70% of survey respondents were not aware that the current BU Plus program provided some eye care coverage. That should probably be better

advertised, since in question 13, 41% of people said that they would be willing to pay a higher premium to get eye care coverage. On the other hand, the average yearly cost for eye care appears to be lower than it is for dental costs, with only 2% of people responding that they pay more than \$700, which was approximately the upgrade amount for Basic to Plus this past year, over the cost of their plan. 63% of people have vision problems; it wouldn't hurt to have some vision coverage in the Basic plan, too. There is also the Aetna vision discount plan, which perhaps should also be better publicized, which is available to all Aetna plan enrollees.

The long form results seem to indicate that people really would like dental and optical coverage, would really value the opportunity to find out how to help push for better coverage or how to use the coverage they have (perhaps a seminar on it?), and many more things that are very interesting to peruse. Question 13 also reflects that people would like increased dental and optical coverage – even to the point where nearly 2/3 of respondents would be willing to pay a higher premium to have dental coverage and over 2/5 of respondents would be willing to pay a higher premium in order to have vision coverage.

IV. Communication from the GSO – No Analysis

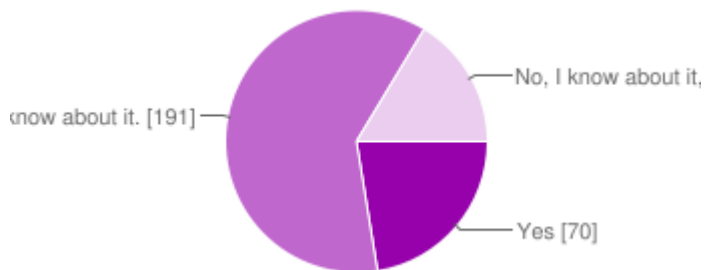
1. Which methods of communication would you prefer the GSO to use when trying to contact you about upcoming events, advocacy campaigns, etc?



Email from the office of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GRS)	170	60%
Email to the GSO info list	120	42%
Email from your department's GSO representative	104	36%
Email from department administrator/chair	45	16%
Social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	37	13%
Other	2	1%

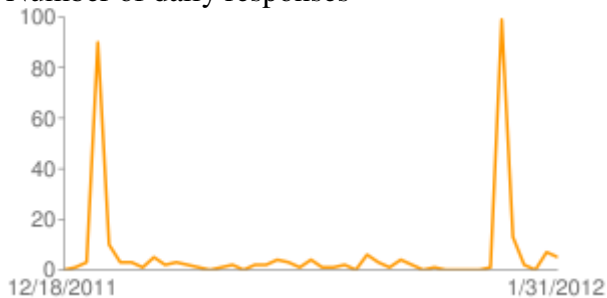
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

2. Are you a member of the GSO Facebook group?



Yes	64	22%
No, I didn't know about it.	180	62%
No, I know about it, but do not want to join.	45	15%

Number of daily responses



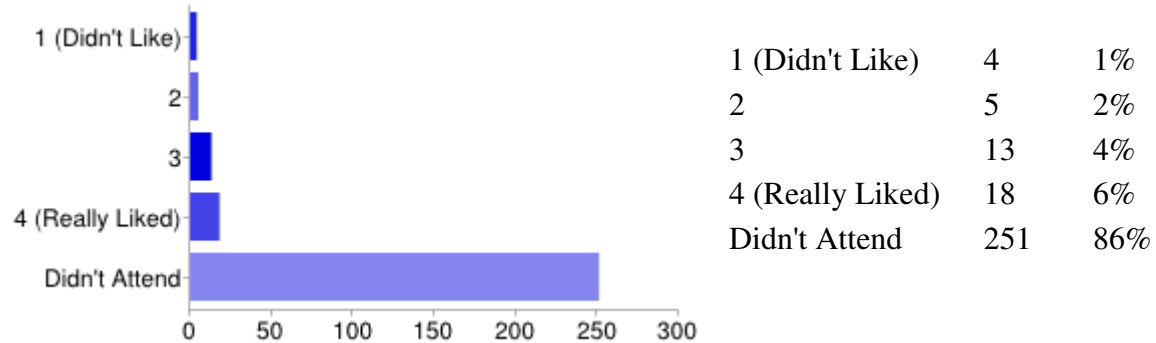
V. Analysis of Communication from the GSO

A link was posted on the GSO website to the survey on December 19. A link was posted to the facebook page on December 20. On those two days we had 1 response and then 3 more, respectively. The two spikes in daily responses correspond to the dates the GRS-wide emails went out. The GSO Info list got an email on January 14. The GSO rep list got an email asking them to remind their departments to respond to the survey on the January 15. It seems as though announcements are best sent out to the GRS-wide email, though posting the information on the website and/or on facebook no doubt allows for easier future retrieval of information once the announcement has been made. There is some rise in the response rate around the 14th and 15th of January, though not very dramatic. To be fair: this was right at the beginning of the semester and people were likely busy.

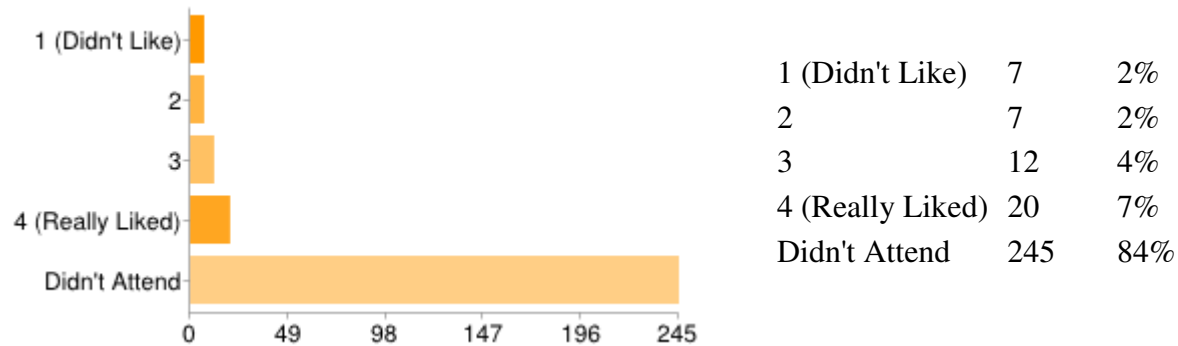
Somewhat related editorializing: From the text-entry responses (in a later section) it seems as though at least some people were offended that the only response from the graduate school regarding September 2011's stipend payment hullabaloo was to accept the GSO sending out a statement of what had happened but not to send one out directly to the students itself. While the GSO is a useful tool to approach the administration on behalf of the students, perhaps in the future the GSO should request that the administration makes any school-wide policy announcements directly to the students and then allow the GSO to make its own response separately.

VI. GSO Events – No Analysis

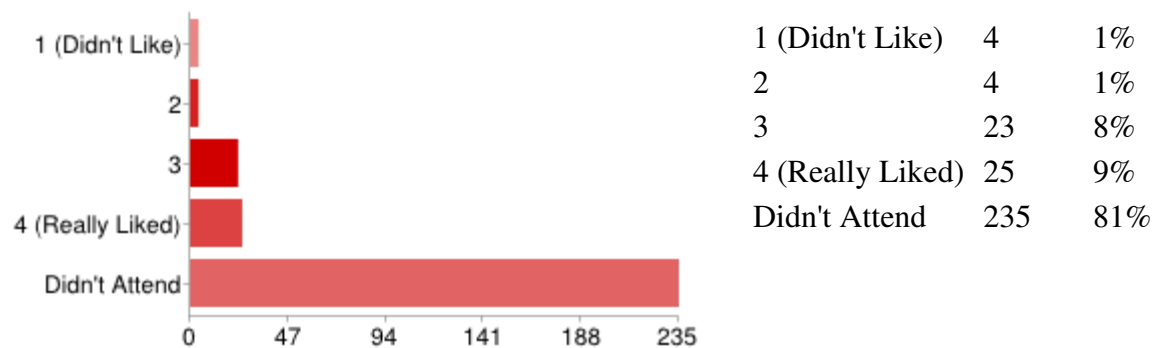
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - Goodbye to Winter Reception



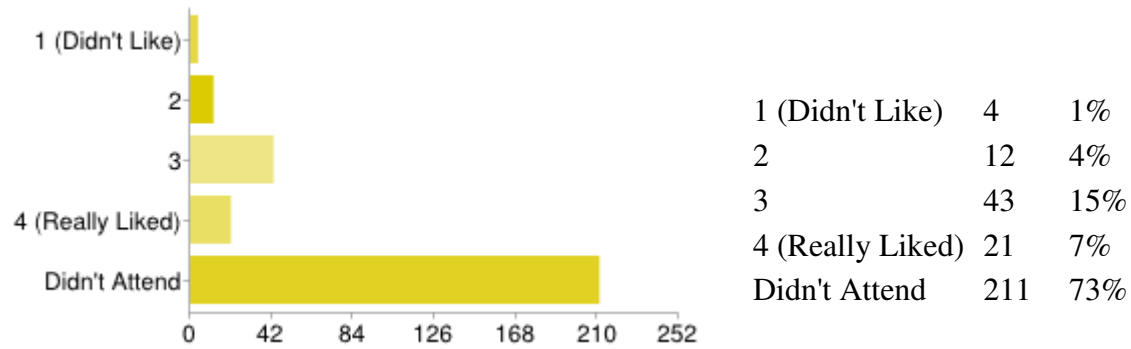
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - Summer BBQ



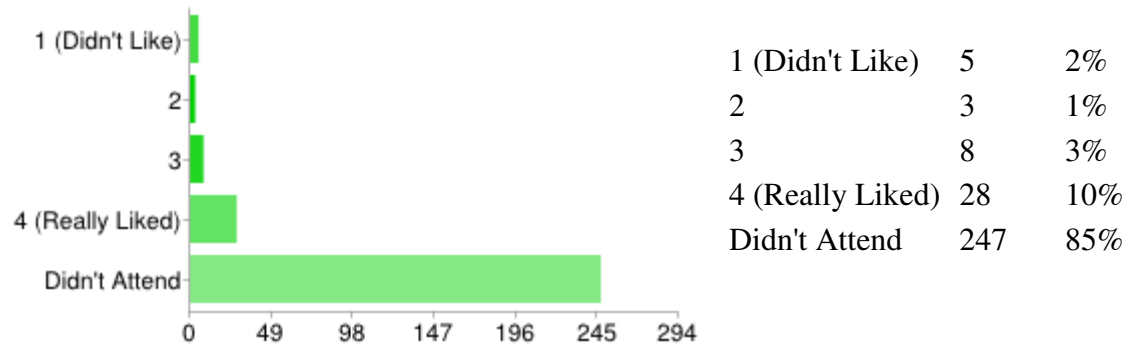
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - Welcome Back (Fall) BBQ



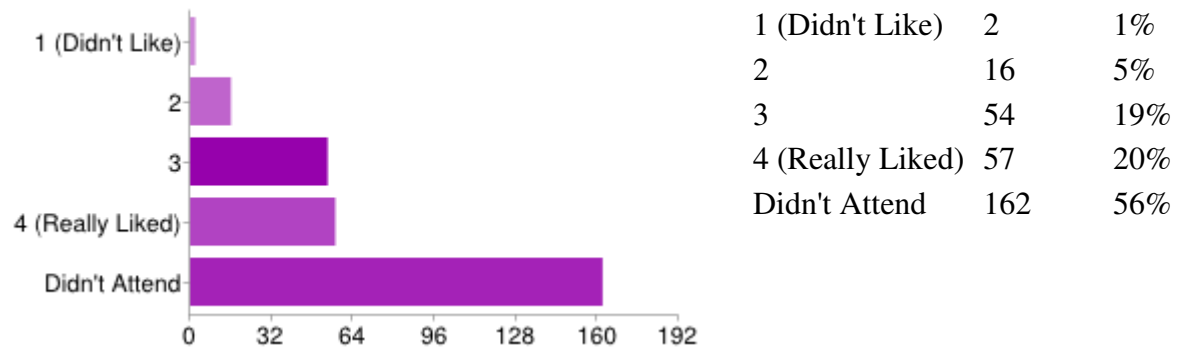
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - New Graduate Student Orientation



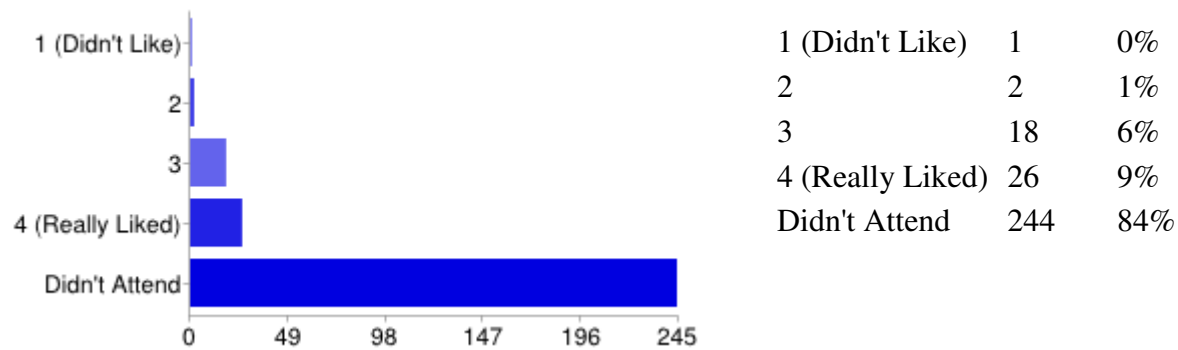
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - PhD Comics Movie Presentation



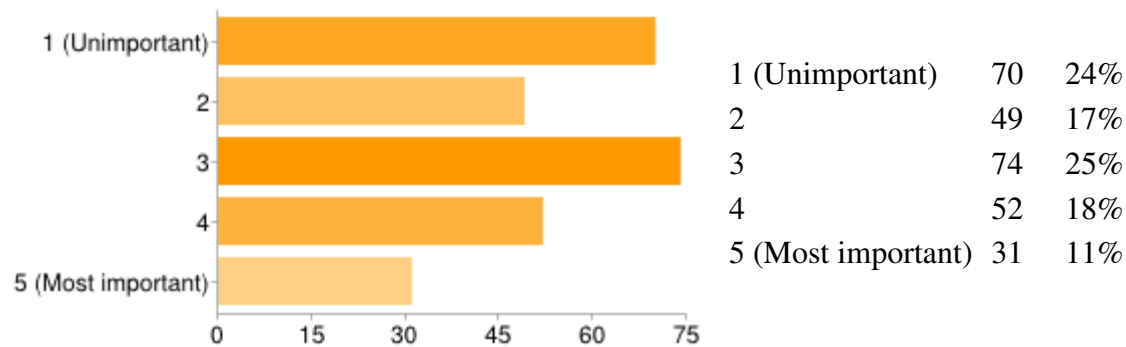
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - Any Pub Night



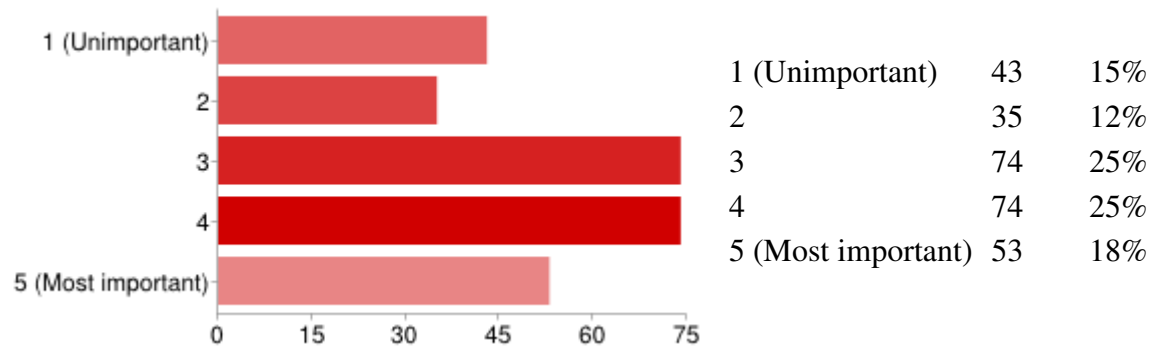
3. Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? - Any Co-Sponsored Events (e.g. African Studies Conference, Musicology Conference)



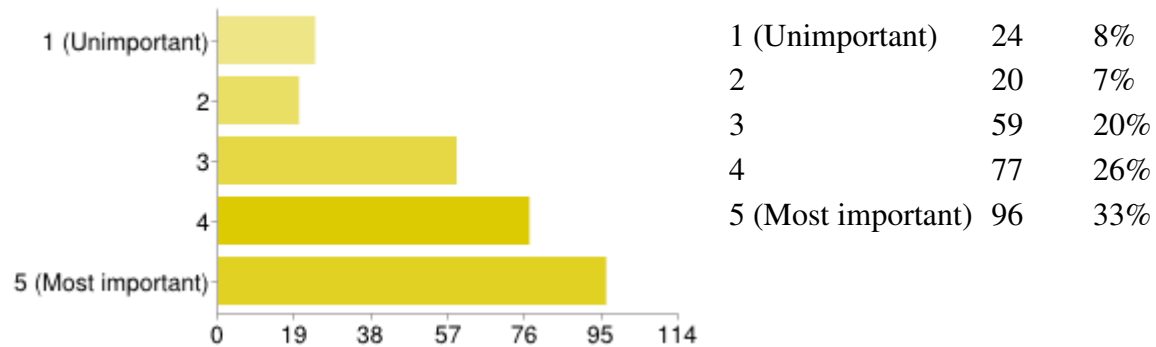
4. Please rank the types of events that most appeal to you. - Big Parties (e.g. Goodbye to Winter Reception)



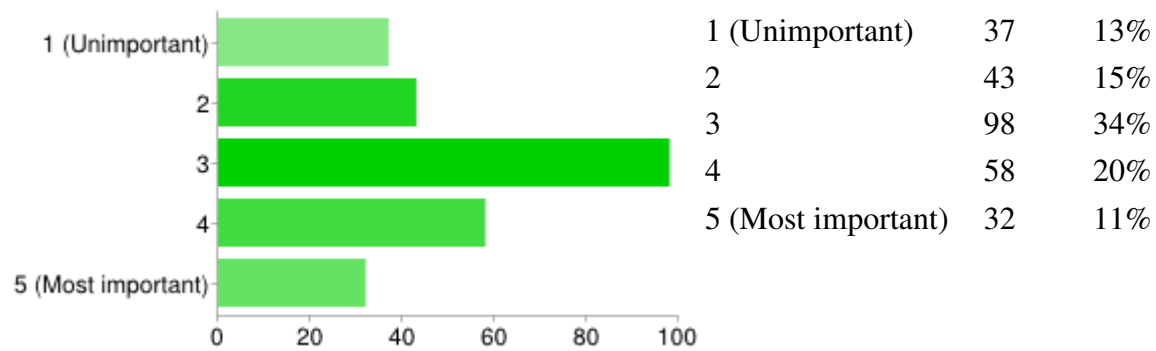
4. Please rank the types of events that most appeal to you. - Small Parties (e.g. Pub Night)



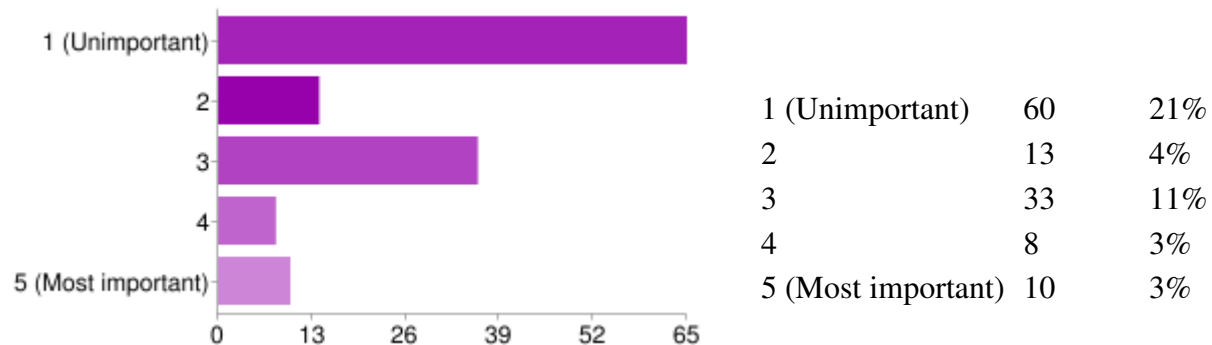
4. Please rank the types of events that most appeal to you. - Professional Development Events



4. Please rank the types of events that most appeal to you. - Co-Sponsored Events



4. Please rank the types of events that most appeal to you. - Other! Please note in the next question



5. If you would like to see more professional development events or "other" events, what specific events would be beneficial to you?

There needs to be a more effective and centralized system for making suggestions for improvements to my department and to the Boston University as a whole. I can think of about 20 things this year alone that have made my employment as a graduate student here disappointing. Isn't the GSO supposed to be an advocate for the grad students? I'm sorry, I'm just frustrated.

I would like to see more advocacy and events which pushed for changes in student benefits (dental, etc)

It would be great to have a "How to Use Your Insurance" session. I *hate* dealing with the school to figure out what is and is not paid for with my insurance.

some experts talk about finance

Having large consulting firms come to hire, like Booze Allen and McKinsley

Job fairs where companies come to interview job candidates would be great.

It would be great if they could set up events where employers who have open positions are available to talk to.

career developments. job hunting workshops, successful alumni

Career fairs, hear about experiences of other students in a related field..

CV Development

Career events, job fairs, industry jobs, cv and grant writing, networking

I have no interest in social events with other graduate students. Give me a break. You guys are supposed to be an advocacy group, not a social club.

Career Fairs

Networking Events

Tips for teaching, job-searching advice, networking events with alumni

Workshops about professionalization; graduate conferences

Workshops for job hunting and job application.

Workshops on writing fellowship applications, workshops on C.V.s, teaching philosophies, cover letters, job search.

Advice from current professors of different ages on the process of preparing oneself for academia during grad school.

career services for academics

Non-academic jobs (think tanks, private sector, government) development events

Panel on careers outside academia for people with PhDs in the Humanities

Professional Development, job market, preparing for jobs

resume workshop, networking workshop, continuing education (other than graduate degrees)

Job fairs specific to industry (i.e. pharmaceutical)

job search

career consulting related events

Career opportunities and Resume and Cover letter workshops

Career Orientation

How to do grant applications, job interviews, job searches, improve your resume, etc.

How to negotiate a starting package (etc.) particularly gear towards women.

How to publish or something about giving presentations.

Less spending of money on pub nights, more professional development, or more numerous travel grants.

Networking

Role-play for interviewing

I would like to see more, and better advertised, professional development events. Anything that might assist graduate students get a job or finish their dissertation would be very welcome.

Interviewing skills, how to write resumes, how to apply for fellowships/grants, networking with professionals

Professional Development, navigating the university paperwork, community service, unionizing...

Professional related topics that most the attendents can share with, like brain storm. In this case, people can comunicate with strangers on share topics.

Resume and Cover Letter Workshops, Movie Nights with fellow Grad Students

Events about resumes, interviewing, preparing manuscripts for publication, the defense process, communicating with advisors and committee members, putting together writing groups. I live out of state and would be grateful if the events were taped or meeting outlines were mailed out to members.

I would attend professional development workshops on publishing tips, interviewing/job application process, grant writing, teaching tips.

I would be interested to participate in a professional development event related to going on the job market as an LGBT person.

I think it would be useful to the graduate community to organize a graduate student presentation series at which students can test out their research on an audience of their peers. This could also nurture more contact between disciplines in the graduate community by giving us an opportunity to see what people are up to in other departments.

Developing teaching portfolio/documenting professional development and accomplishment.

A technology and classroom expo and funding resources for study abroad.

As a doctoral candidate, I would like the professional development events to provide information on felowship oppurtunities and summer research oppurtunities.

Funding-related

talks about grant opportunities- or on how best to navigate all the programs/ opportunities open to grad students at BU in general

Grant Writing Seminars

Luncheons might be useful, especially one that you can network.

interdepartmental lectures

Distinguished faculty seminars

nobel prize owners' lectures

I think the GSO should invite the two authors of the book Professor Mommy to campus. This is a book by one junior and one senior faculty member in the Econ dept. at Bowdoin (so, pretty local), who have recently written a book on navigating academia as a mother or would-be mother- it was an excellent book that takes into account many scholarly studies of women in academia and their rates of getting tenure, staying in their fields, etc. Perhaps the BU Women's Guild would be interested in co-sponsoring the event. Link to book:

http://www.amazon.com/Professor-Mommy-Finding-Work-Family-Academia/dp/1442208589/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1324497958&sr=1-1

I don't drink or eat meat/dairy so pub/BBQs do not appeal."

I really missed the BU, MIT, Harvard etc. mixer. The one a year ago was fantastic and I was disappointed to not see it on the roster this year.

Multicultural event - sharing traditional food of each country

It would be cool to have some sort of graduate school sport league similar to intramurals.

More social events that are outdoor (when the weather is nice) or in areas larger than the BU pub would be nice.

I'd like to see other types of small parties. Game nights, perhaps? Prof dev: Opportunities to present research to others not in the field or in related fields, networking events, workshops on transcending academia and joining the "real world."

The PhD comics movie was a great idea; I was bummed I couldn't make it.

I thought the PhD Comics Movie Presentation was a great idea. Other things with some draw like this.

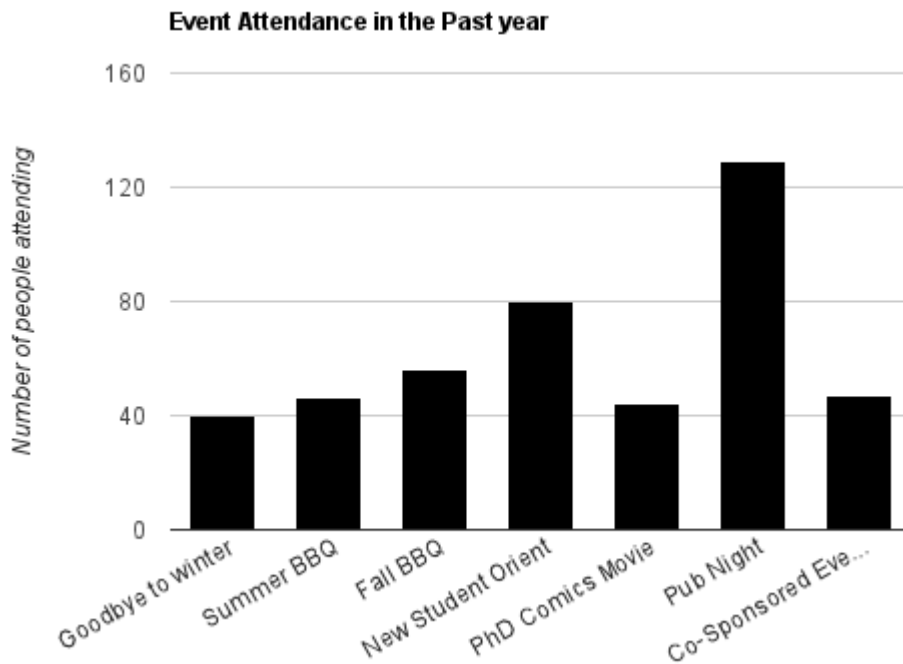
Volunteer (Soup kitchens/community cleanup, etc), off-campus socials

...
n/a

VII. Analysis of GSO events

As an organization our goal for events, social or otherwise, are for them to be attended and appreciated by as much of our constituency as possible. As we wanted to keep the survey rather short we are not asking what people enjoyed about each event, merely if they attended and how well they enjoyed the events, as well as what events they would most like to see offered in the future. This section of analysis will again consider “enjoyment factors”/”desirability factors”, so if you have not already perused the Explanatory Appendix at the end of this document, please head there to see where I come up with these numbers. As with the health care analysis: please keep in mind that the errors from the overall enrollment are not well constrained, so if events are close in interest to one another, they could easily be the same or even swapped for the total population.

Question 3: Which of the following GSO events have you attended in the past year and what did you think of them? This was one of the required questions to answer, so 100% of respondents



either rated the event or indicated that they did not attend the event.

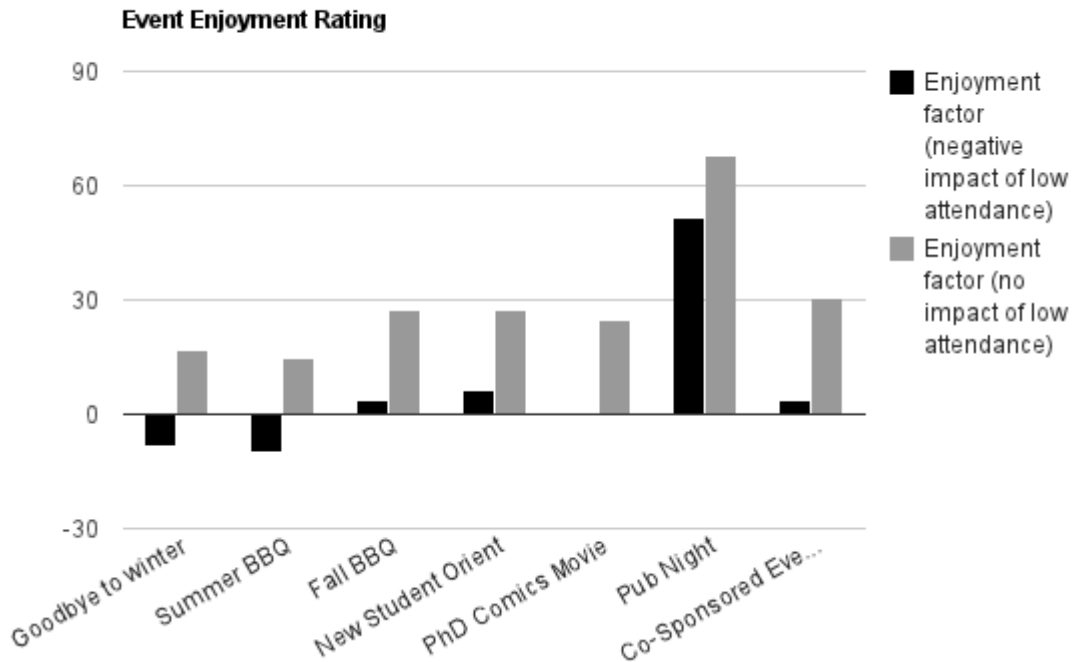
From just attendance we can say that the pub nights are the most popular events. (It probably helps that most semesters the GSO sponsors 3-4 pub nights, as opposed to the once-per-year frequency of the other events.)

Were they the best events, though?

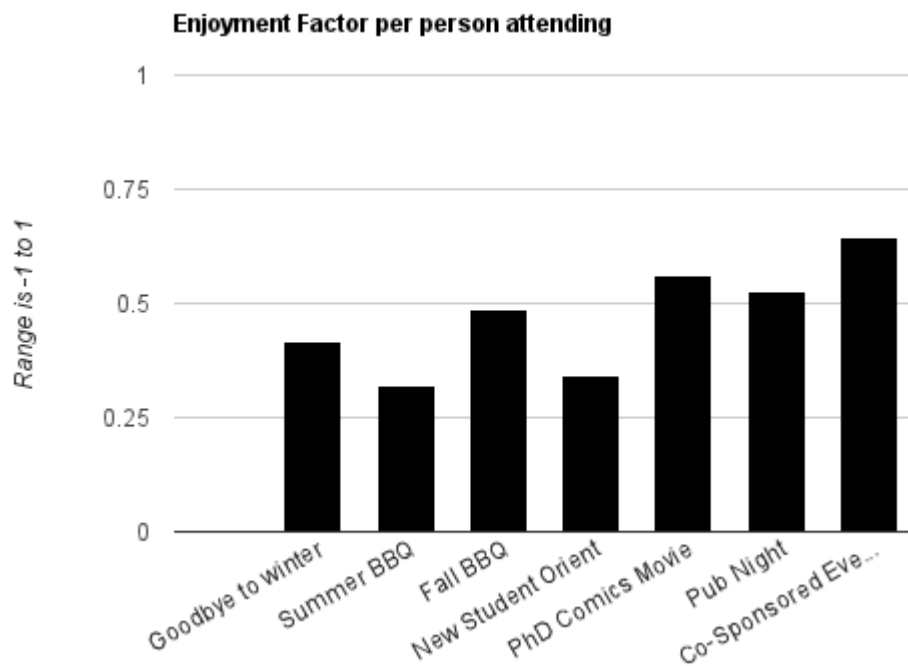
The enjoyment

factors (both with no negative impact of attendance and with negative impact of attendance appear on the next page. Pub nights are definitely still the winner, but they are helped by the number of people attending. If we consider the enjoyment factor per person (also shown on the next page) we see that pub nights no longer reign supreme!

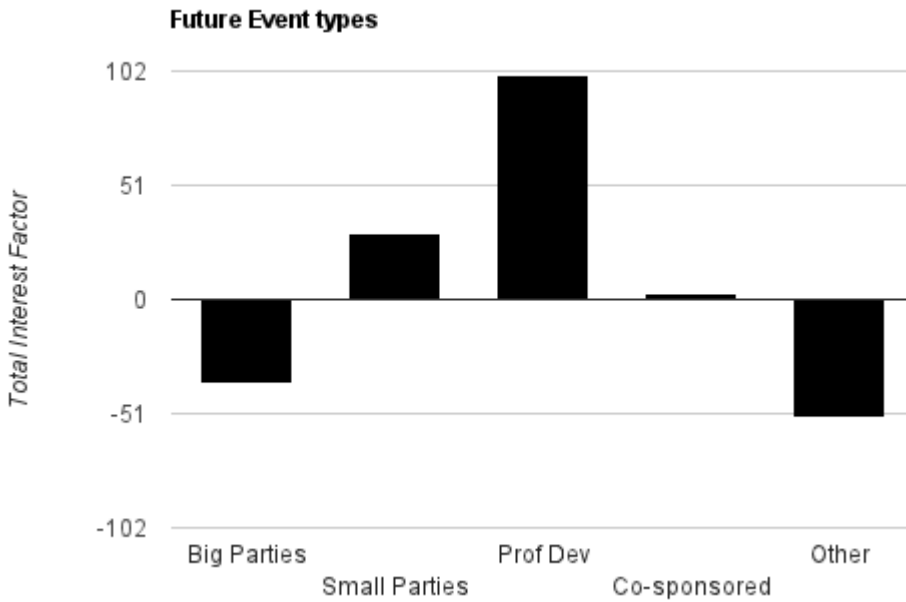
For everything else, the respondents as a whole most enjoyed Co-Sponsored events followed by the Fall BBQ and New Student Orientation about equally. The PhD comics movie was next, followed by the Goodbye to Winter Reception and then the Summer BBQ. Clearly, the Fall BBQ wins over the Summer BBQ, especially when considering the effect of low attendance: for which the Summer BBQ has the lowest result, followed by Goodbye to Winter Reception, the PhD Comics movie, the Fall BBQ and Co-Sponsored Events, New Student Orientation in increasing order.



But it's important to consider how well each person who did attend liked the event as well as how well the total group enjoyed it. Displayed before: the enjoyment factor per person: Co-Sponsored events win! Clearly, we should be trying to have the GSO organize more events that are as awesome as the ones we co-sponsor. Next is the PhD Comics movie, followed by Pub Nights, the Fall BBQ, the Goodbye to Winter Reception, the New Student Orientation, and the Summer BBQ. Again: the decision to switch from the summer to the fall for the BBQ was probably a good decision.

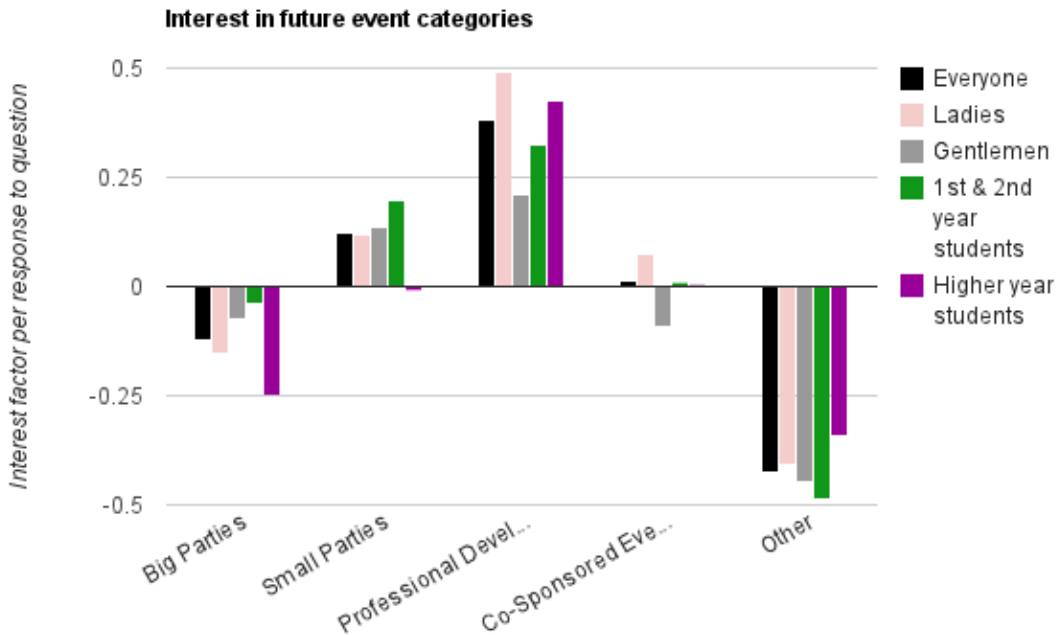


Looking forward, what would most people prefer to attend? Total interest factors for the proposed event types are shown below.



Professional development, which is an event type we haven't been providing in recent years, is the most interesting to the people taking our survey. Small parties (like pub nights) are next, followed by co-sponsored events, big parties, and, finally, "other." Not all questions were required to be answered, but

approximately the same number of people rated all but "other", and the order of interest per person is still the same. It is, however, interesting to note that when separated by gender, women were more interested in professional development and co-sponsored events, per person, than men were and men were more interested in the party events and "other." First and second year graduate students preferred parties significantly more than graduate students that had been around longer, though both groups preferred smaller parties to larger.

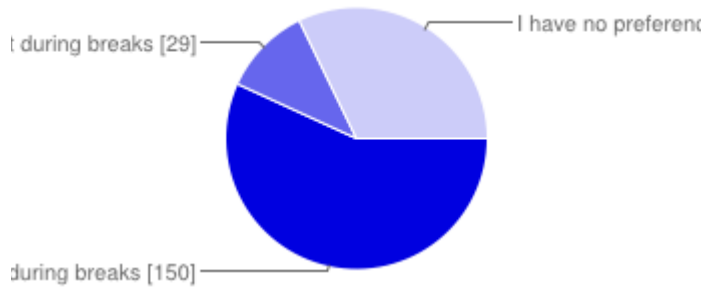


Still, we should probably keep having small party social events, keep supporting co-sponsored events, perhaps re-consider the format of the large parties, and focus a lot more on professional development events. While we do not have a lot of experience planning and holding these

events, we did get a rather long list of suggestions for professional development events, which is included at the end of the previous section.

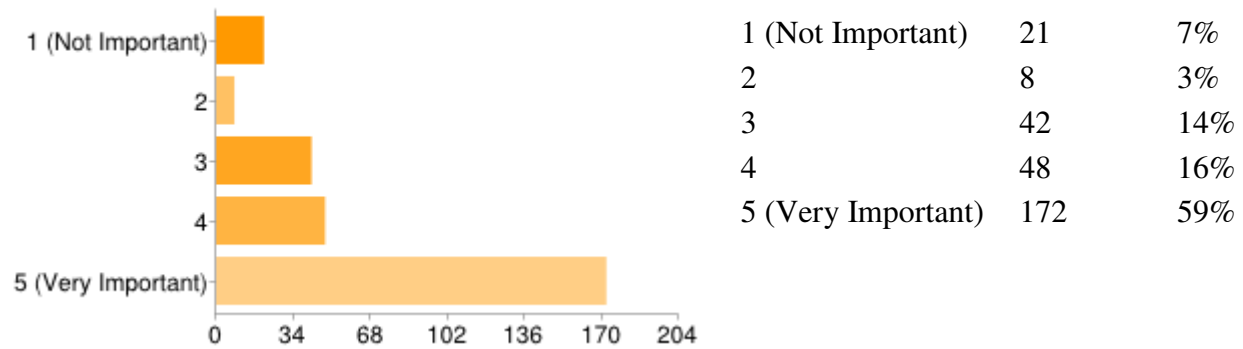
VIII. Other issues – No Analysis

6. If you are paid through a stipend, how would you prefer to be paid?

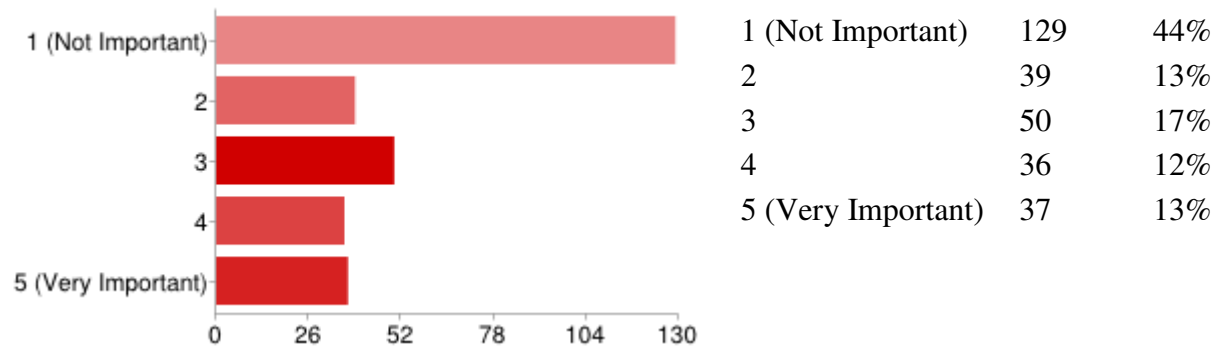


A maximum number of number of weeks per year, even during breaks	150	52%
Only when school is in session, not during breaks	29	10%
I have no preference.	85	29%

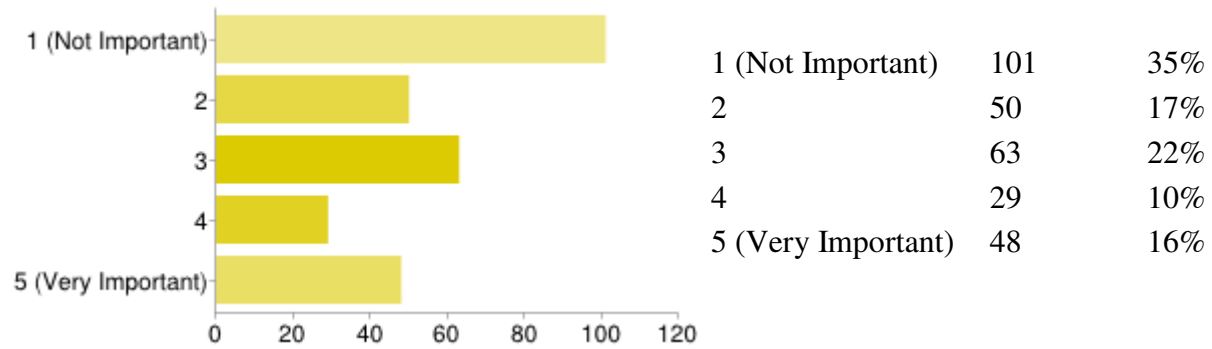
7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Increasing Health Insurance Coverage



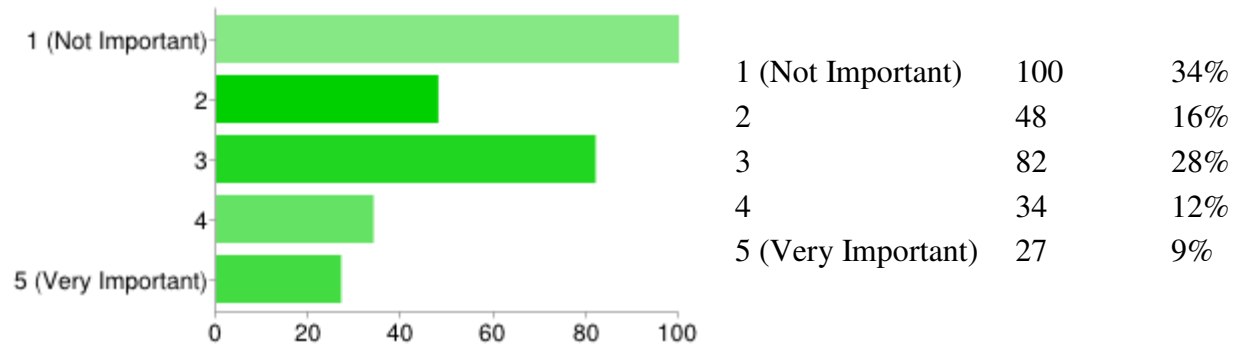
7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - On-campus/Subsidized Childcare



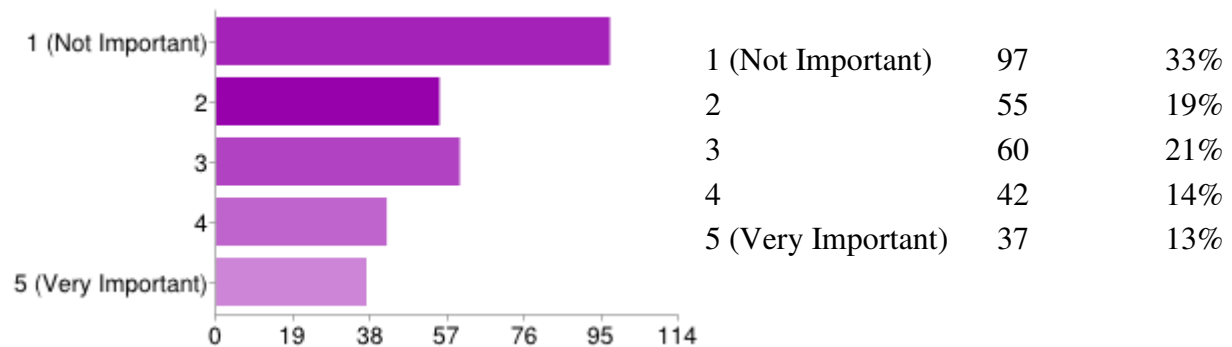
7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Parental Leave Policy



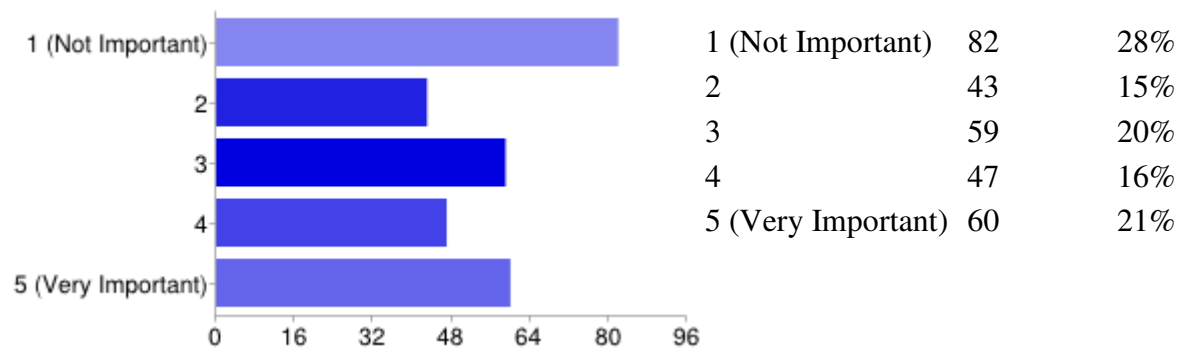
7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Accessible entrances/other disability issues



7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Poster Printing



7. Below are some issues that we might pursue. How important is each issue to you? - Print quotas



8. Are there any other issues that you would like the GSO to pursue?

- Dental Insurance
- Dental insurance
- dental and optical with extra fee
- Dental coverage
- Dental / Vision Insurance!
- Dental Insurance
- Dental insurance included in base package
- dental insurance! and vision.
- Detal care coverage, more social events
- FREE BIRTH CONTROL and/or lower cost of prescription drugs. But particularly birth control since it is a monthly cost undertaken by probably about half of the BU grad students.
- Health insurance coverage for spouse
- Spouse's health insurance
- definitely increasing healthcare coverage!
- Healthcare off-campus -- getting referrals is a major pain.
- More transparency in pay and flexibility in healthcare
- Clinical psychology graduate students are required to pay a continuing student fee during the last year of graduate studies, in which we are mandated to complete a clinical internship off-site. This is a significant financial hardship for many students and it does not make sense that we should have to pay such an exorbitant fee for this required off-campus year.
- Tenure policy
- Better policing of hours worked for pay for student graders (not TFs).
- Increased summer funding
- Better, more consistent stipends across departments
- More research/grant money
- Funding opportunities for grad students to develop their own programs
- Higher stipends
- Paying us monthly again
- protesting the fact of the 2 week pay cut is much more important than the actual frequency of paychecks.
- The paycheck debacle that left us without a paycheck the first week of September, right as first month's rent/security deposits/book payments/etc etc were all due.
- Be paid monthly!! not weekly or at least every other week
- being able to pay monthly for parking (like faculty and staff)

Graduate Parking permits! The cost is the same as faculty/staff but we are required to get student permits that only allow parking far away!

Parking. I commute and the MBTA is killing me but parking spots are too scarce.

personal property insurance (i.e. laptop)

Continuing student fees and better funding for graduate programs

Unionizing the graduate students

see answer to 5 [which was:] I am less interested in social and networking events and more interested in professional development (job placement, publication, pedagogy, current events in the academe, etc.) and in efforts to advocate the rights of graduate students within the BU community.

Environmental sustainability

Electronic (pdf) thesis submission! This is 2012, not 1912.

Library Carrel Access, lack of journals and books available library

Print quotas!!!!

A graduate space in the library, the undergrads are loud

Office supply allowance

professional training

Professional development

Career search assistance

Allocating more money for travel grants

support student conferences

Funding for Conferences

Increased travel funding

No

No

No

No

No

No

No.

No

No

No

None

Nope!

...

More cowbell

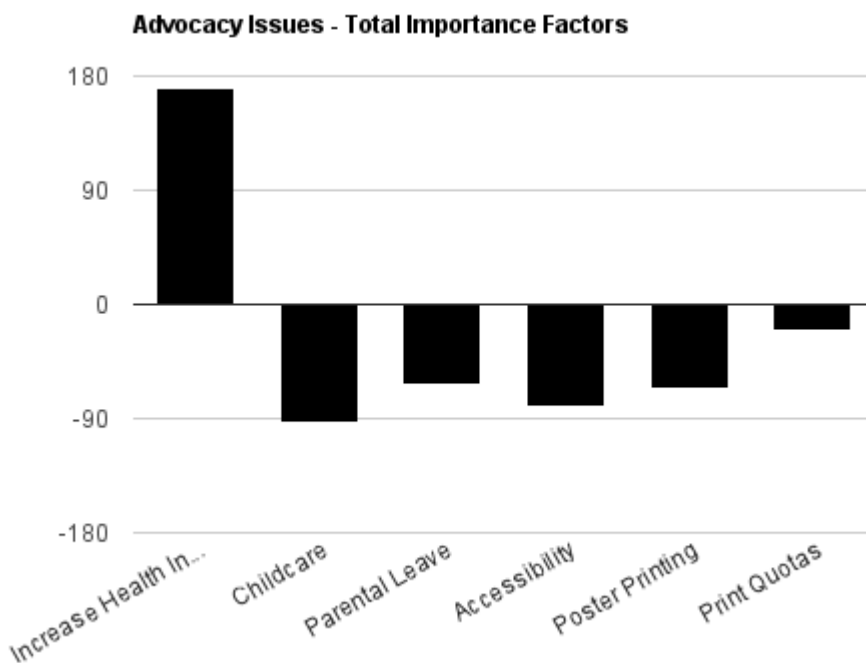
Forget Childcare.

IX. Analysis of other issues

This section pertains to pay schedule and GSO pursuit of policy issues. Please see the Explanatory Appendix for details about what “importance factors” are and how I calculated them. Also, keep in mind that for the close importance factors: I don’t know about errors and biases. Close together importance factors from this survey could easily be in a different order from what they may be for the total population.

Question 6 seems to indicate that the department administrators, when asked the same question, got it right: grad students would prefer to be paid a lower rate for more weeks, resulting in more post-paid payments for teaching fellows, than a higher rate during only school term weeks.

This chart also appears in section III:

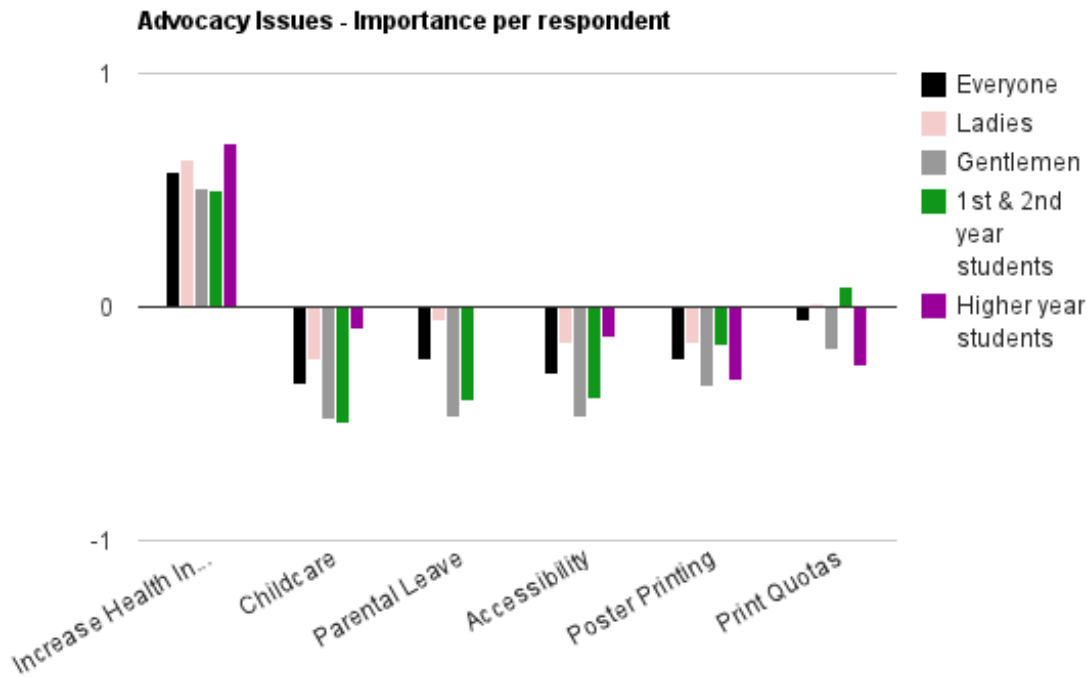


As concluded in section III, the most important policy issue the graduate student body would like the GSO to pursue is to increase health insurance coverage. It is good, then, that our Health Care Committee Chair, Jonathan Deschere, has been actively pursuing improvements to the health insurance and trying to get the

graduate student perspective included as much as possible for health insurance negotiations. The next most important was print quotas, followed by parental leave, poster printing, accessibility, and child care. In the current setup of the GSO, however, it is not the squeaky wheel that gets the grease but the squeaky wheel that has time to put in effort that gets the grease. Still, it seems as though we should try to pursue those issues in that order if anyone has the time to volunteer to better organize those efforts. It is also interesting to consider the responses by gender of the respondents.

Though we did set up some guidelines for the rankings, it seemed as though most people ignored those and set as many “most important” and “moderately important” answers as they felt like. Regardless, as shown above, we did end up seeing some ranking rather than hearing that everyone really wants everything taken care of, which is good to hear. By gender, however, it seems that men had less interest in advocacy overall, with the order being increasing health insurance coverage, looking at printing quotas, poster printing, and then accessibility, parental leave, and child care all being rather equally unimportant to the gender as a whole. Women, on

the other hand, felt parental leave was more important than poster printing. The divide between newer grad students and those that have been around longer is even more striking – everyone remains in agreement that the health insurance coverage should be better, but older grad students actually find parental leave is the next most important issue, followed by child care, accessibility issues, print quotas, and then finally poster printing. Younger grad students feel child care is least important, followed by parental leave, accessibility, poster printing, print quotas, and then health insurance being most important. It would be very interesting in future years to see if these change (meaning that the people who are now first and second years will continue to see child care, parental leave, and accessibility as the least important issues) or if the order of importance of these issues changes by length of time in the program.



In the long form responses, it hearkens back to the health care issues: Dental and vision insurance, more/better coverage for what is actually covered, and coverage for more than the student. These are followed by professional development services, cost and schedule for payment of parking, transparency for pay and pay schedule changes, reasonableness in hours worked and fees paid, and funding opportunities. We certainly could make an attempt at better publicizing grant opportunities, via a bulletin board or similar, though I'm not certain of other ways that graduate students could increase funding opportunities. Other issues mentioned are also well worth considering. If you are interested in helping organize advocacy with the GSO, let us know by either emailing gso@bu.edu or attending our meetings (schedule posted at <http://www.bu.edu/gso>)

X. Final survey question – other comments

27. Do you have any other general comments about the GSO or about any of your other responses to questions?

Yes- please look at the BU health care plan's coverage of childbirth related costs (have someone who has actually had a baby do this). A newborn is covered under the mother's plan for 30 days, but this 30 days currently does not include any well child visits (of which there are several in the first few months)- this is really unacceptable.

If you are looking at different insurance plans, Aetna's prescription drug coverage is not very good. \$45 a month for certain prescriptions is very hard to manage on a graduate student stipend.

The insurance is too high for me and my classmates.

The Mental Health Portion of the Graduate Plan needs expanding to cover visits for a full year, currently it only covers enough visits for the number of academic weeks in the calendar. As BU SHS Mental Health requires you to seek outside help, we need an expansion to help preserve the mental health of Graduate Students throughout the year.

You guys do a great job. Thank you! All I would like to see is dental coverage included in the basic plan. I know vision is probably out of the question but visits are rare enough that I don't mind paying that out of pocket. Boston is just such an absurdly expensive city to live in that dental coverage would be an extremely nice relief.

I would strongly support having a dental plan that allows students to visit dentists outside BU.

A dental plan would be very much appreciated. The BU dental students don't seem experienced enough to handle anything other than routine cleaning, yet it's still expensive. Right now the only way I can afford dental care is by using introductory (one visit only) lower-cost offers at various dentists' offices in the area.

Regarding question 18, I feel really strongly about getting affordable, high quality dental coverage for graduate students. Without coverage, we simply do not make enough on a stipend alone to cover any unforeseen issues. Case in point, I cracked a tooth over the holidays and had to pay \$2500--more than 1/8 of my yearly stipend--out of pocket for an unexpected root canal and crown.

Also, I think we should ask for at least partial spouse coverage. Every year, after not being paid during the summer (4 months) I am desperately looking for money to pay for health insurance for my husband. "

I have heard terrible things about the BU Student Dental Plan and would never sign up for it, but if there was an option to sign up for an outside dental plan (Delta Dental, etc.) even at an additional cost I would strongly consider it.

I feel very strongly that dental coverage is completely inadequate. We should have the right to use fully certified dentists of our own choosing."

Since Student Health Services (and the Boston Medical Center) are quite comprehensive in their offerings, our insurance should focus on having no copays for preferred provider care, even if this requires raising premiums or increasing the non-preferred copay. Most graduate students just don't have much money laying around to pay unexpected copays for routine care.

Aetna's billing system is so confusing I am never able to know what, how much or why I am paying. They keep sending you huge bills until you get scared and pay only for them to stop. I've had to go speak to Ms. Goyotte at SHS 100 times.

I didn't even know there was a GSO website. In general I have been pretty dissatisfied with the information dissemination at BU. Some of that is department specific but I'm hoping that the GSO website aggregates useful information about health insurance, travel grants, etc. When I had a question about health insurance, it took me forever just to find the right person to answer my question!

I appreciate that the GSO is making the effort to get students' feedback about the insurance at BU. Thanks for your hard work!

Adding a spouse to the student plan is much too expensive.

Department stipends should include the BU Dental plan, or should subsidize it. Many/most graduate students I know don't receive routine preventative dental care because they do not have money to pay for insurance. Indeed, I only signed up for dental insurance because I had a dental emergency that required treatment.

Have used BU Dental School in the past because it is affordable, but the service is a nightmare.

BU needs to improve their healthcare coverage! Specifically to include dental coverage (and possibly vision, too).

Thanks!

BU should strongly consider incorporating eye exam coverage into the Basic insurance, even if this requires a somewhat higher premium. It is not cost-effective for most graduate students to pay for the plus insurance if all the additional coverage that we require is basic vision coverage.

Please note I answered Student Dental Plan questions because I have used the service in the past. I find scheduling to be the most inconvenient aspect followed by the duration of sessions.

The eye care plan literature is confusing -- sounds like an ad, not real information. Can't you tailor it for BU and Boston users?

Co-pay for non-generic prescription drugs is outrageous. SHS provides quality care for basic issues but falls short for less routine problems. Cost of covering a non-student spouse is prohibitive since AETNA student plan does not meet Massachusetts standards for acceptable health insurance.

I would love to be able to see a real gynecologist rather than one at SHS without needing a referral.

I am aware that graduate students at the medical school have the Student Plus completely covered by the university or a grant. Additionally, they don't need a BU health center referral so see an outside physician.

I think this benefit should be made available to all graduate students.

I felt unable to really answer the poll regarding changes in deductibles and premiums without more information (for example, since BU pays my premium, sure, go ahead and raise it to keep other costs low! But how would this negatively impact BU?) I would love to see an affordable dental plan that allows students to go to outside dentists, or at least see regular dentists at the BU Dental School rather than students (unless my understanding of the current plan is incorrect). And I have recently spoken with other female graduate students, and the consensus seems to be that there are no clear guidelines for parental leave for grad students--it would be great to see that laid out. Affordable, available childcare is badly needed as well.

Student employment information easy to reach

Could we have a sliding tuition scale for grads at the BU child care center with some priority slots?"

Parental leave is the most important issue that I would like to see addressed.

What's the deal with parental leave policies?

Good job you guys. Questions looked pretty good except for that awful health care question. The social events that GSO organizes are great to have on this campus.

as before, the GSO seems to be remiss in it's responsibility as a graduate student advocate, rather than providing substantive information or expressing student concern it merely recapped the administrations position RE the paycheck confusion in the fall of 2011. Objecting to the fact of the 2 week pay cut is much more important than the actual frequency of paychecks.

As previously stated, this is the time when first/last month's rent and security deposits are due for those that move on the 9/1 moving day, it is when we all are purchasing books, and it is when there are numerous other expenses incurred as school starts. It is unacceptable that it happened once, and we deserve an explanation and to be reassured that it will not happen again next year."

BU's GSO should spend less money on pub nights and more effort on organizing students into a leverage to get demands out of the university (acting like a graduate student union)

I'd like the GSO to fight for going back to a monthly salary

PLEASE get back to all of the grad students about the paycheck problem that occurred in September 2011. It is unacceptable (1) not to get a paycheck for a week without prior warning (2) to not respond to the students as a whole for the reason behind it and (3) not to let us know if it is going to happen again.

I heard a rumor that fees for advanced grads may be reduced or eliminated. Please ask/advocate in your meeting with the Deans to make it so. Thanks for all you do.

Unionization may be an extreme action, but the contrast with NYU's pro-active student body is striking."

The survey question above does not include information or answer choices that account for the differences in taxes withheld or possible interest earnings when paychecks are distributed every week vs. only when school is in session. I am mostly interested in maximizing overall earnings. I do not need BU to help me manage my money by distributing an "allowance" every week. I would prefer to be responsible for putting money aside each week so I have enough to cover my expenses during the summer months.

Different departments do not interact enough at GSO-sponsored events. The GSO should consider designing events that will foster more interdepartmental socializing.

My department wasn't listed in the drop-down menu. I'm actually in the Bioinformatics Dept.

If you have N/A option for each question, it would be helpful.

Please have more career development events and less party events.

It forced me to answer the GSO events attended question, but I've only ever been to pub night once and nothing else.

There wasn't any feedback provided after the last survey taken; the only reason I'm filling this out again is to be entered into the drawing. [Note: this was submitted by someone filling out the survey a second time. Perhaps they thought it was a separate survey?]

No.

No

None

Nope!

...

XI. Explanatory Appendix

If you find any mistakes or have any questions, please point them out/ask them! Email gso@bu.edu

Duplicate Responses

We were able to get some measure of duplicate responses from the email addresses people entered for the raffle entries. Of the 218 unique raffle emails, 21 people answered the survey twice and one person answered it twice. I saved the long, text-entry responses people returned separately from the information about who responded in that manner. In a copy of the form I then went through and removed all of the identifiable second- and third-responses. The ~10% rate of duplication may also have occurred among the anonymous responses, but I had no good way of removing them.

Representation of the current population:

Even if there were no duplicates among the anonymous responses, are the responses we got really true for the graduate school's whole population? Looking at the percentages responding from the various departments, it looks like only a few departments were vastly over-represented (over the 14% response rate from the college as a whole), with most departments having response rates between 10% and 20%. There were a few that were significantly lower, but I did not take the time to try to piece out trending by department or even departmental area ("arts"/"social sciences"/"physical sciences"). I do not have current information on the gender ratio or number of students enrolled by year (or age) in the program to compare with, so I cannot make any concrete statements about over- or under-representation in those arenas. It is probably good to keep track of for future surveys to compare with, though. I am not putting error bars on any of my numbers because I am a bad statistician and because I'm not rightly sure how bad the errors are.

"Enjoyment factor"/"Desirability factor"

Enjoyment was calculated as follows: for everyone who attended the event, each response of 1 (didn't like) counted as (-1) towards enjoyment, responses of 2 counted as -1/3 of enjoyment, responses of 3 counted as +1/3 towards enjoyment, and responses of 4 (really liked) counted as +1 towards enjoyment.

Then there were three variations on distorting this "enjoyment factor":

1) Negative impact of low attendance - Since people not attending presumably found the event incompatible with their interests, all non-attending responses counted as -1/10 towards enjoyment. This value can be as high as the total number of people attending the event minus 1/10th the number of people who did not attend this event.

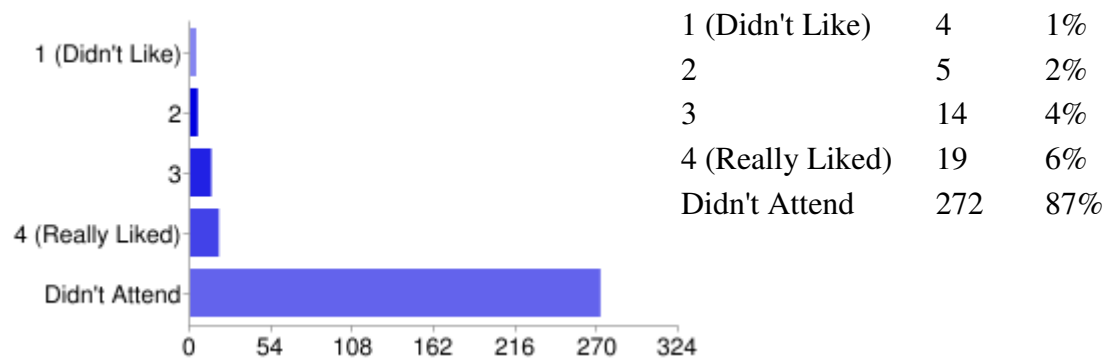
2) No impact of low attendance - Alternatively, people may not have heard about the event prior to it happening or may have simply been too busy, hence non-attendees counted as zero towards the enjoyment score. The range of this number is the total number of people attending either fully liking it (+1 times the number of attendees) to everyone attending fully disliking it (a negative score equal to the number of attendees.)

3) Enjoyment per attendee - Finally, while we aim to foster events for the graduate student body as a whole, it would be good to examine what people who are actually attending events like the most. So the final enjoyment factor that I considered was the enjoyment factor for each event

divided by the number of people attending. The range of these scores is -1 to 1. If everyone who attended really liked it, the score would be 1. If everyone who attended really disliked it, the score would be -1.

The best analysis of these scores is to compare them to the other events rather than considering the scores on their own.

Example: Goodbye to Winter Reception –



Enjoyment factor with negative impact of low attendance:

$$(-1*4) + (-.3333*5) + (.3333*14) + (1*19) + (-.1*272) = -9.2$$

Enjoyment factor with no impact of low attendance:

$$(-1*4) + (-.3333*5) + (.3333*14) + (1*19) + (0*272) = 18$$

Enjoyment factor per attendee:

$$((-1*4) + (-.3333*5) + (.3333*14) + (1*19) + (0*272)) / (4+5+14+19) = 18 / 42 = 0.42$$

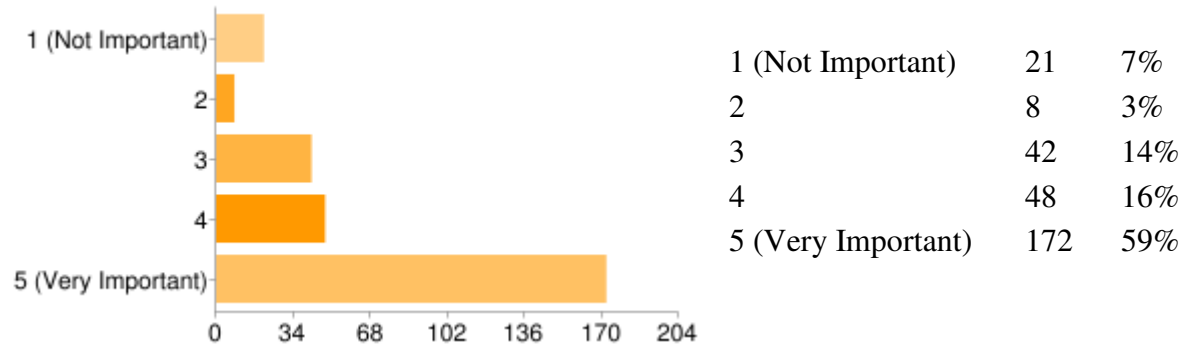
Then we can compare these factors against the other events the GSO has sponsored. We want to see high numbers for everything! We hope not to see any negative numbers, with the possible exception of when there is a negative impact of low attendance.

Similar scaling was done for desirability of future events, pursuit of dealing with issues, satisfaction with health insurance and the BU student dental plan, and importance of health care changes – all of which people were asked to rate individually between 1 and 5. A response of 1 decreased the desirability score by 1, a response of 2 decreased desirability score by 1/2, responses of 3 did not impact the score, responses of 4 added 1/2 to the desirability score, and each response of 5 increased the desirability score by 1. I considered three methods of distorting the data:

- 1) Total importance factor – The higher the number, the more people really desire this issue to be pursued/this change to happen/really like the insurance. The lower the number, the more people really dislike this issue/don't want the change to happen/really hate the insurance.
- 2) Importance factor per person responding – similar to the enjoyment factor per attendee, but most of these questions were not required to be answered, so my assumption was that everyone who responded cared, and everyone who did not respond did not care.
- 3) Importance factor per person who cares – then I remembered that the people who responded “3” are saying “I don't mind either way.” So this number is found by taking the total importance factor and dividing it by the total number of people who responded with a 1, 2, 4, or 5.

But then I realized that that is unfair to the people who said “I don’t mind”, because they did still take the time to answer the question. The effect also is minimal, since unlike attendance’s effect on enjoyment: most people who responded about the importance of one thing in a particular question responded about everything for that question. So while it shows up in the example below, I did not include this measure in the analysis sections.

Example: Increasing Health Insurance coverage -



Total importance factor:

$$(-1*21) + (-0.5*8) + (0*42) + (0.5*48) + (1*172) = 171$$

Importance factor per person responding to this question:

$$((-1*21) + (-0.5*8) + (0*42) + (0.5*48) + (1*172)) / (21 + 8 + 42 + 48 + 172) = 171 / 291 = 0.59$$

Importance factor per person who felt more strongly than “no opinion”:

$$((-1*21) + (-0.5*8) + (0.5*48) + (1*172)) / (21 + 8 + 48 + 172) = 171 / 249 = 0.69$$

Again, these are best analyzed against the other parts of the question rather than just taken by themselves. It would be great if no issues were very important to the student body, because that would hopefully mean everything was perfect! The GSO would like to make progress on the issues that do have high importance, but in order for any progress to be made on any issues we need people willing to put in the work to make good cases for why the issues ought to be changed.

When there are scores by gender, age, or insurance status the same work was done but with the numbers for the group specified, which I am not including in this document directly because it’s already long enough as it is.

Speaking of concerned graduate students, where should you go with questions or to find out how to get involved?

If you would like to join (or leave) either or both of the GSO informational or GSO representative mailing lists, please go to <http://www.bu.edu/gso/join-our-mailing-list/> If you want to get involved in planning future events, building background so we can better advocate on the issues, helping out with fixing these analyses, or just want to get more involved with the GSO in any way you can, please email gso@bu.edu and ask about the best way to get involved. Or just show up to the next GSO meeting! If the President and Vice President aren’t sure of how to answer, they will either forward your email on to the correct party or hopefully have the time to schedule it into an upcoming meeting.

The people who put in the work for planning, organizing, administering, and analyzing this survey are:

2011-2012 GSO Health Care Committee Chair Jonathan Deschere

2011 GSO President Eliza Wallace

2011 GSO Vice President Lauren Cashman

2012 GSO President Leslie Lemire

2011-2012 GSO Health Care Committee Member Carol Carveth