



Division of Governmental Studies and Services

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

WSU Community Engagement Survey

Final Report, October 23, 2020

Introduction

In the Spring of 2020, the WSU Center for Civic Engagement contacted the Division of Governmental Studies and Services to conduct and analyze a survey of WSU community partners to understand perceptions of working with WSU students, faculty and staff in community engagement. Prior to the 2020 survey, the Center for Civic Engagement had surveyed their community partners biennially, with the last survey conducted in 2017 in collaboration with other WSU community engagement offices and campuses. As part of preparing for the 2020 survey, DGSS researchers were asked to update the 2017 survey in collaboration with the Center for Civic Engagement and various WSU campuses and community engagement offices, including the WSU Tri-Cities Office of Advancement and Community Engagement, WSU Vancouver Office of Strategic Partnerships in the Chancellor's Office, WSU Health Sciences Spokane Office of Community engagement and Service Learning, the WSU Everett Office of Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships, and WSU Extension.

Methods

To better understand perceptions of community engagement partner organizations on working with WSU and WSU students, an online survey using Qualtrics software was conducted in the summer of 2020 of organizations that have worked with WSU in community engagement in the past three years. The survey was developed in cooperation with the community engagement offices on each WSU campus and personnel with the Center for Civic Engagement on the Pullman campus. Non-probability sampling was utilized to allow all organizations that have worked with the various WSU campuses in community engagement in the past three years the opportunity to participate.

Community Engagement is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people to achieve long-term and sustainable solutions that improve the health and well-being of the community. At Washington State University, community engagement includes service learning, internships, student research, student leadership opportunities, and/or industry partnerships.

The Center for Civic Engagement provided a list of 2,048 emails for partner organizations. Of these 2,048 contacts, 8 were undeliverable and 65 declined to complete the survey due to not working with WSU in the past three years, the personnel who worked with WSU and WSU students are no longer working at the organization, or do not work with WSU students. A total of 220 organizations completed the survey for a response rate of 11.1%.

Analysis

Organization Demographics

The majority of organizations that completed the survey were local non-profit organizations (52.7%), served children/youth (53.6%, 118) worked with 1 to 5 students per year (54.5%, 120), and the highest percentage reported working in social services and/or education/literacy (34.1%, 75).

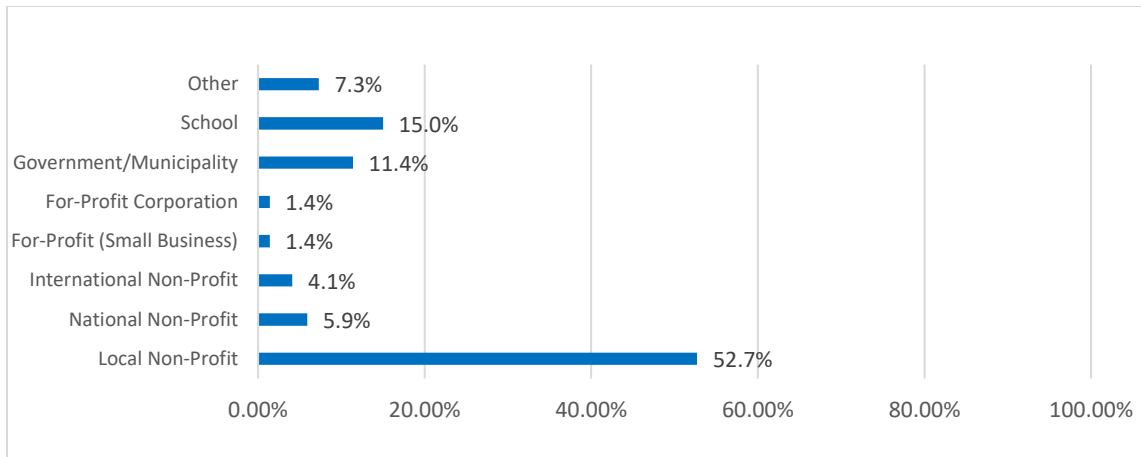


Figure 1: Organization Type

Evaluation of WSU Students

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with several statements about WSU students. Over three quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed

with three statements: *WSU students are prepared for responsibilities in the community* (75%, 165), *The quality of work done by WSU students meets our organization's expectations* (83.6%, 183), and *the quality of WSU student interaction with others in our organization's environment*

meets our expectations (79.8%, 174). Fewer respondents, though still a majority, agreed or strongly agreed that *WSU students from academic learning courses communicate their learning goals* (55.7%, 121).

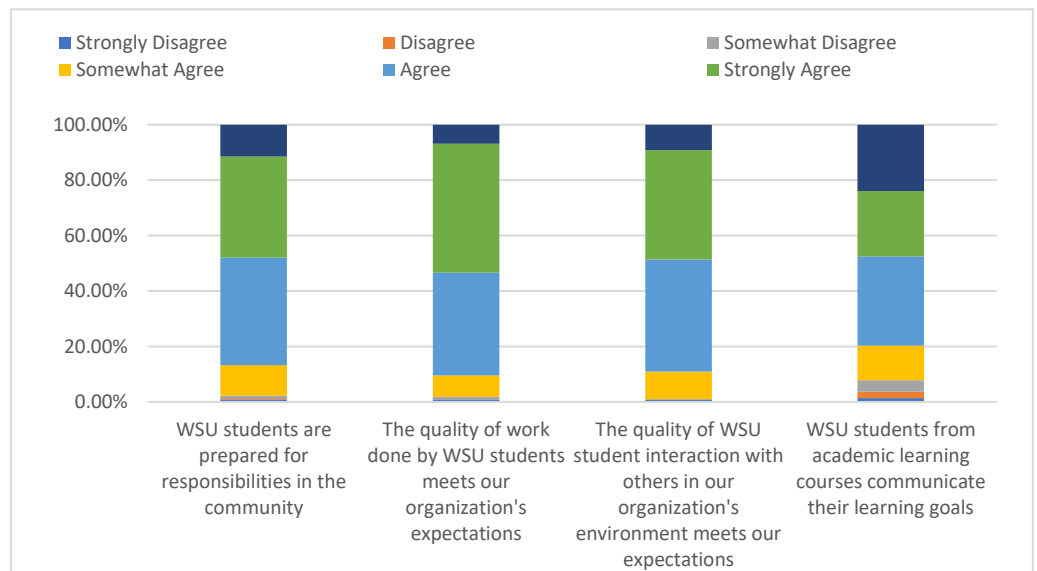


Figure 2: WSU Student Evaluation

Impact of WSU Student Community Engagement on Organization

Respondents were next asked to evaluate the impact of WSU student community engagement on their organization.

Respondents were given 9 statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement with each. Three quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *working with WSU students*

has enhanced Programs/Services (75.6%, 165).

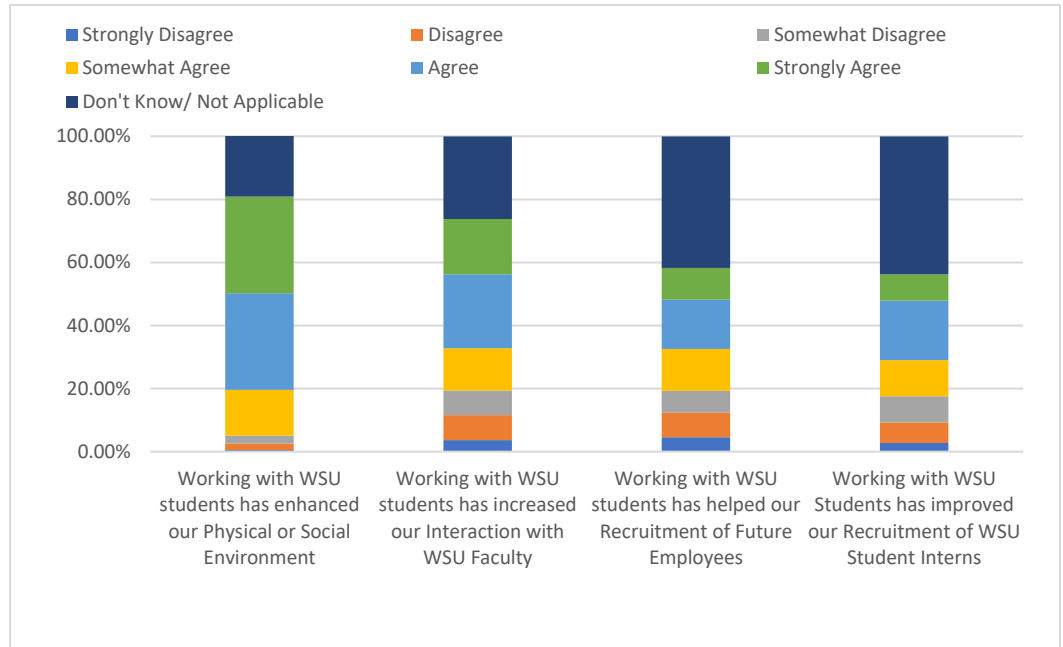


Figure 3: Impact of WSU Students

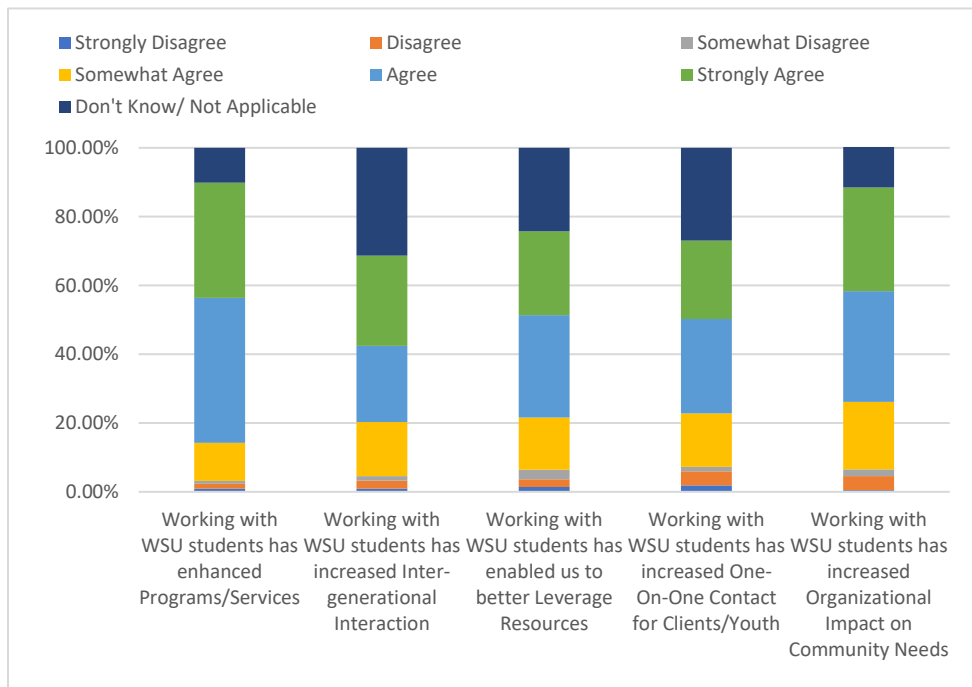


Figure 4: Impact of WSU Students (Continued)

In contrast, less than a third of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *working with WSU students has helped our Recruitment of Future Employees (25.7%, 56)*, or *working with WSU Students has improved our Recruitment of WSU Student Interns (27.2%, 59)*. It should be noted that over 40% of

respondents answered ‘don’t know/not applicable’ to these last two statements. There are many possible explanations for this result, for example it could be that respondents are not aware of hiring practices, or that their organization does not seek interns generally.

Following these questions, respondents were asked via an open-ended question, to elaborate on other

“The power of the students to help us move forward our initiatives has been our saving grace.”

“Without the WSU College of Nursing, Pharmacy & Medicine, we would not be able to offer some critical services...”

“The students are the only reason we are able to have our group.”

ways WSU student community engagement has impacted their organization. Of the 220 survey participants, 95 responded to this question. It is important to note that 20 of these respondents indicated they have not worked with students for several years or did not work with enough students to assess, while some respondents (5) specifically critiqued WSU student involvement or internship programs. For instance, one respondent stated that, “the students are here for such a short time and the recruitment website is hard to

navigate”, while another stated “Unfortunately, most student’s goal is to meet their minimum volunteer hours rather than a commitment to our children and teachers.”

However, most respondents were positive in their comments on student impact (75). Dominant themes identified across responses included general positive compliments (16), helping fulfill mission and goals (15), and inspiring and diversifying participation in programs (15). Some of the more positive comments regarding WSU student involvement, included “it has been great to have

“WSU students have helped students feel connected and part of the community.”

“We have been able to produce alongside WSU well-rounded education students”

“We absolutely love having volunteers from WSU”

WSU students in our classrooms”, “it was a positive, uplifting experience” and “we absolutely love having volunteers from WSU.” Some respondents (11) also listed specific tasks that WSU students fulfilled within their organization, such as re-building gardens, assisting with youth programs, packing boxes, and some highlighted how completing these tasks allowed their staff to focus on other needs. For instance, one respondent stated, “this allows staff to dedicate more time to community outreach...”.

Thus, for many organizations, WSU students are key to fulfilling their missions and community outreach in a variety of ways, some of which includes allowing staff to focus on other activities.

Impact on Student Learning

Respondents were next asked to indicate their level of agreement with each of the five statements (depicted in the graph below), regarding their organization’s impact on student learning. A majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with all five statements, with the highest level of agreement supporting the statement that *Community engagement increases WSU students' awareness of issues in the community* (84.6%, 186).

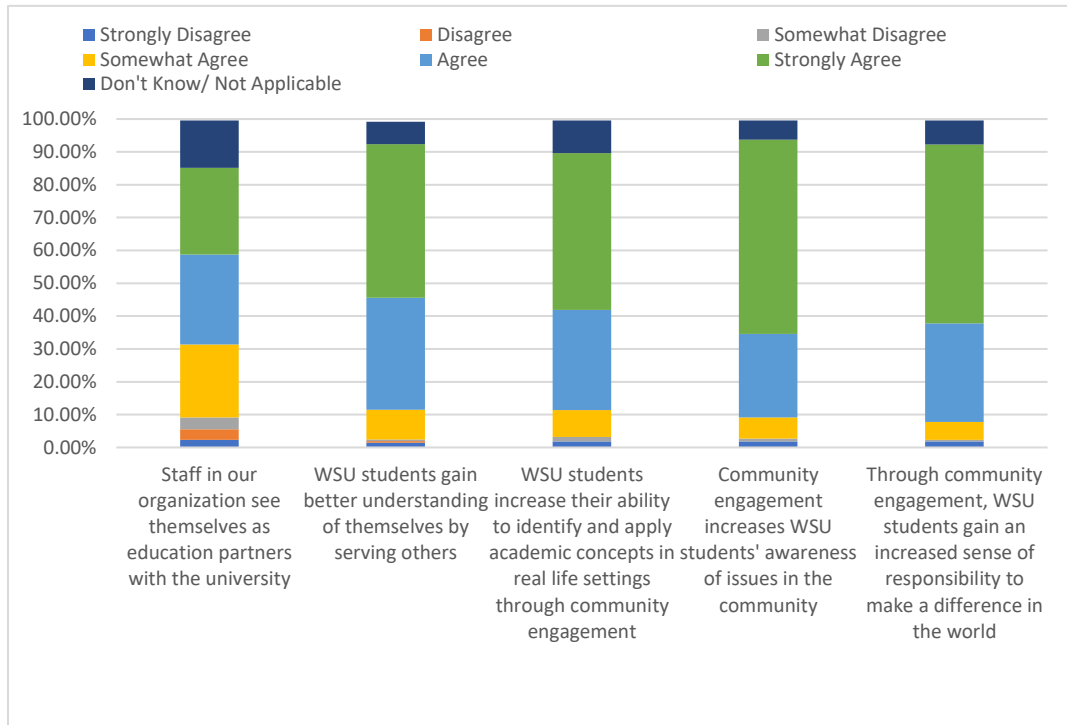


Figure 5: Impact on Student Learning

Services Utilized

Respondents were asked to indicate any of the following WSU services and opportunities their organization had utilized in the past three years. The service most frequently used by respondents was *meeting with a WSU faculty or staff member* (42.3%, 93), followed by *tabled at an on-campus service fair* (25.9%, 57).

Services Utilized	Count	Percentage
<i>Tabled at an on-campus service fair</i>	57	25.9%
<i>Attended a GivePulse Workshop</i>	33	15%
<i>Attended a Campus Community Forum</i>	35	15.9%
<i>Met with WSU Faculty or Staff member</i>	93	42.3%
<i>Participated in a Service-Learning Course Presentation/Orientation</i>	35	15.9%
<i>Attended a final Service-Learning Course Presentation</i>	15	6.8%
<i>Nominated a student for the LEAD Awards</i>	6	2.7%
<i>Partnered with the Center for Civic Engagement for a National Day of Service</i>	23	10.5%
<i>Participated in a WSU committee</i>	20	9.1%

GivePulse Usage and Impressions

Respondents were then asked about their use of the GivePulse online system in the last three years and their level of satisfaction with that system. Over thirty-nine percent of respondents (87) indicated that they had used the system in the last 3 years. Respondents who use the system were then asked their overall impression with GivePulse and technical assistance from WSU. Overall, respondents were satisfied with a majority of respondents indicating they were satisfied or highly satisfied in their overall impression and technical assistance.

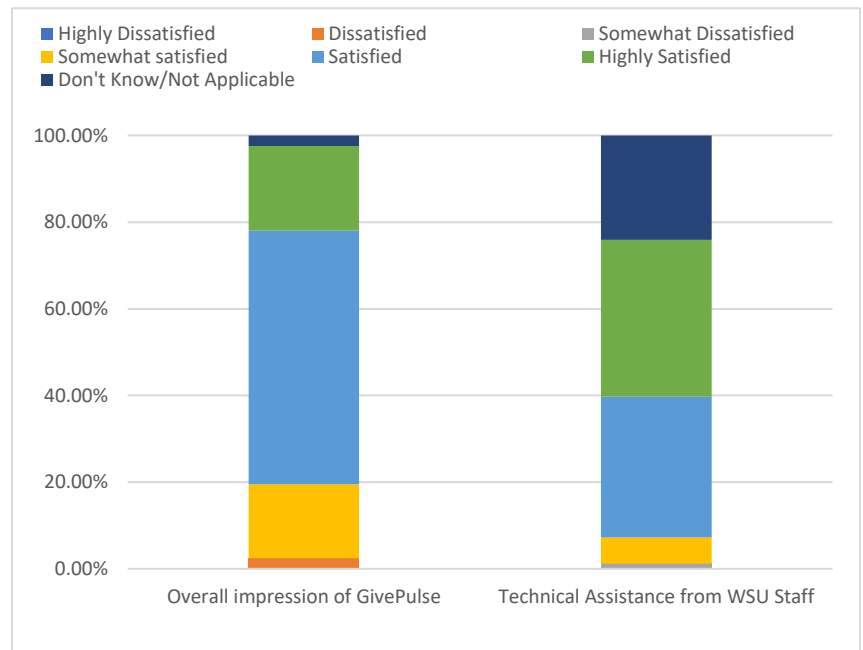


Figure 6: GivePulse

GivePulse Suggestions

In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the features of GivePulse they enjoy and any changes/suggestions they would like to see. For the first question, 25 respondents provided feedback on features they enjoy. Most of these comments focus on the ease of use (10), while others mention that it is quick (5) and helps with tracking (5). In terms of recommended changes, 15 respondents provided further feedback. These included making GivePulse more user-friendly (5), while a few respondents mentioned a better interface, and that posting opportunities and making changes to events can be difficult.

“So much easier than the old system...”

“That students submit the hours saving us staff time”

“It’s not always the most friendly or self-explanatory...”

“Make it easier to navigate...”

WSU Community Engagement

Respondents were next asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of WSU’s community engagement. The first question asked was: *to what extent do you view WSU as an institution engaged, in partnership, with your community?* Most respondents rated WSU as engaged, or highly engaged in their community (61.7%, 132).

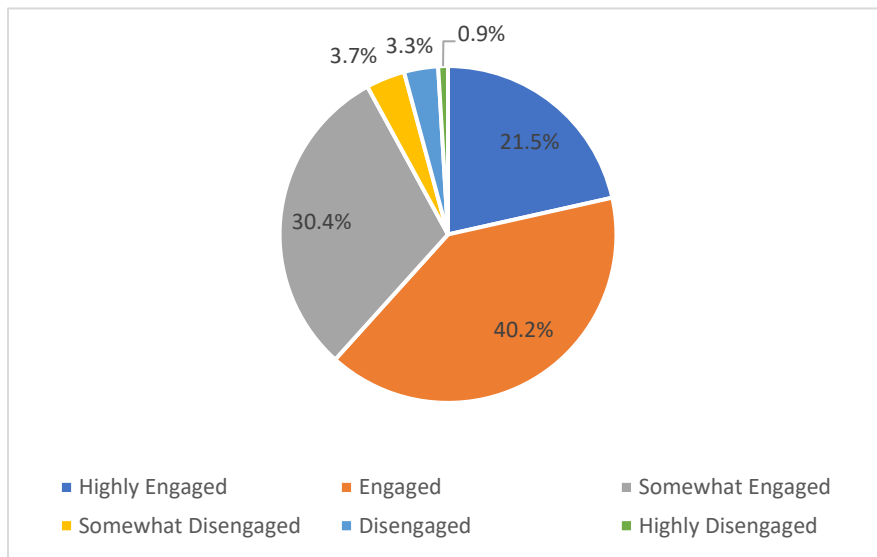


Figure 7: WSU Community Engagement

Next, respondents were asked their level of agreement with the following statements: *Community partners are recognized by WSU, Community partners are valued by WSU, WSU communicates effectively with our organization, WSU provides effective support for our organization, WSU partners with stakeholders to solve critical issues facing Washington State, and our partnership with WSU has improved lives in our community.* Over half of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with each statement, with the exception of the statement: *WSU partners with stakeholders to solve critical issues facing Washington State, to which just over thirty-four percent (75) indicated those levels of agreement.*

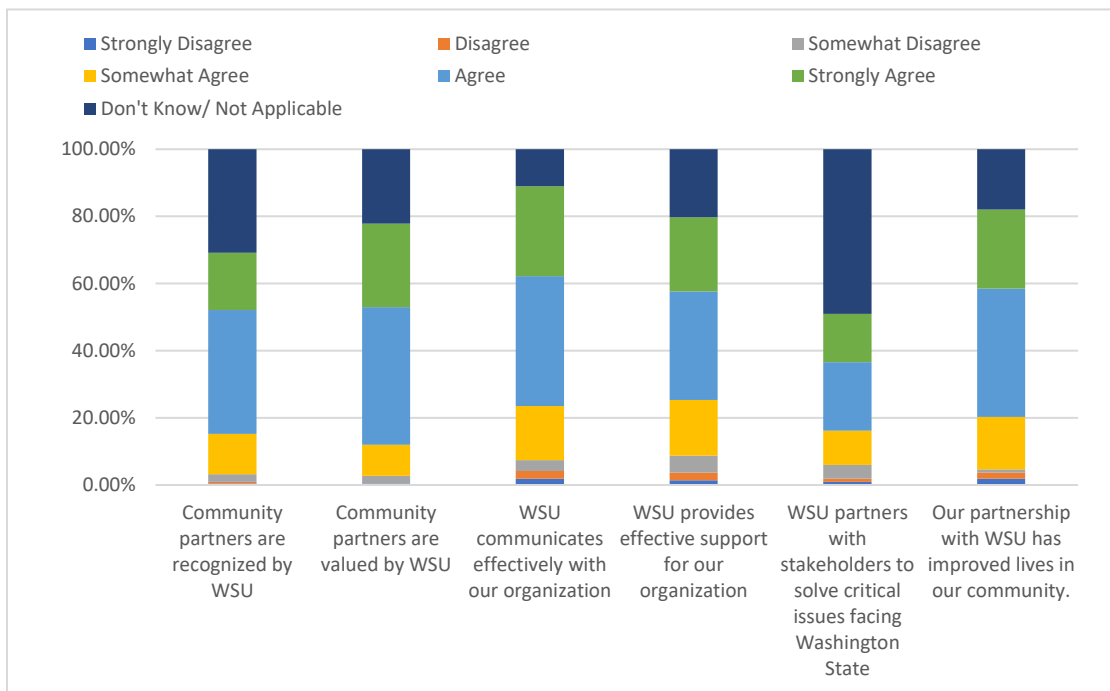


Figure 8: WSU as a Community Partner

Fall Plans

As indicated in the graph below, survey participants were also asked to respond to three questions about their plans for the Fall semester. Over 40% of respondents are undecided on what opportunities they will be providing

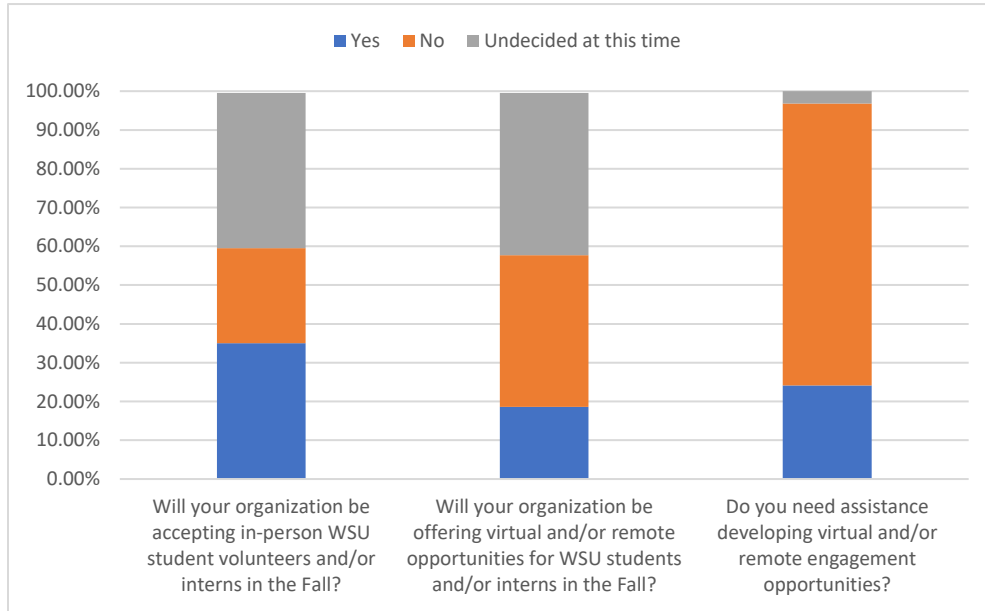


Figure 9: Fall Plans for Students

for student volunteers and interns this fall. It should be noted that nearly 40% of respondents are not planning to provide online opportunities for student engagement in the fall (39.1%, 86).

WSU Community Partnerships

Lastly, the survey focused on understanding respondent's perceptions about community engagement offices at each campus. Respondents were

asked which community engagement offices and/or campuses they have worked with on student/community engagement in the last three years. The survey included follow up questions relevant to the locations indicated. , Nearly half of those who responded to this question had worked with the

Office Affiliation	Count	Perc.
The Office of Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships/WSU Everett	12	5.5
The Center for Civic Engagement/WSU Pullman	107	48.6
The Office of Community Engagement and Service Learning/WSU Health Sciences Spokane	31	14.1
The Office of Advancement and Community Engagement/WSU Tri-Cities	4	1.8
The Office of Strategic Partnerships in the Chancellor's Office/WSU Vancouver	15	6.8
WSU Extension	60	27.3

Center for Civic Engagement/WSU Pullman within the last three years (48.6%, 107), while 27.3% (60) indicated that they have worked with WSU Extension.

Length of Partnership

Several follow up questions were included asking respondents for information specific to office locations with which they have worked. In response to the question asking about how long they had worked with a location, the greatest number of respondents indicated that they had been a partner for one to four years.

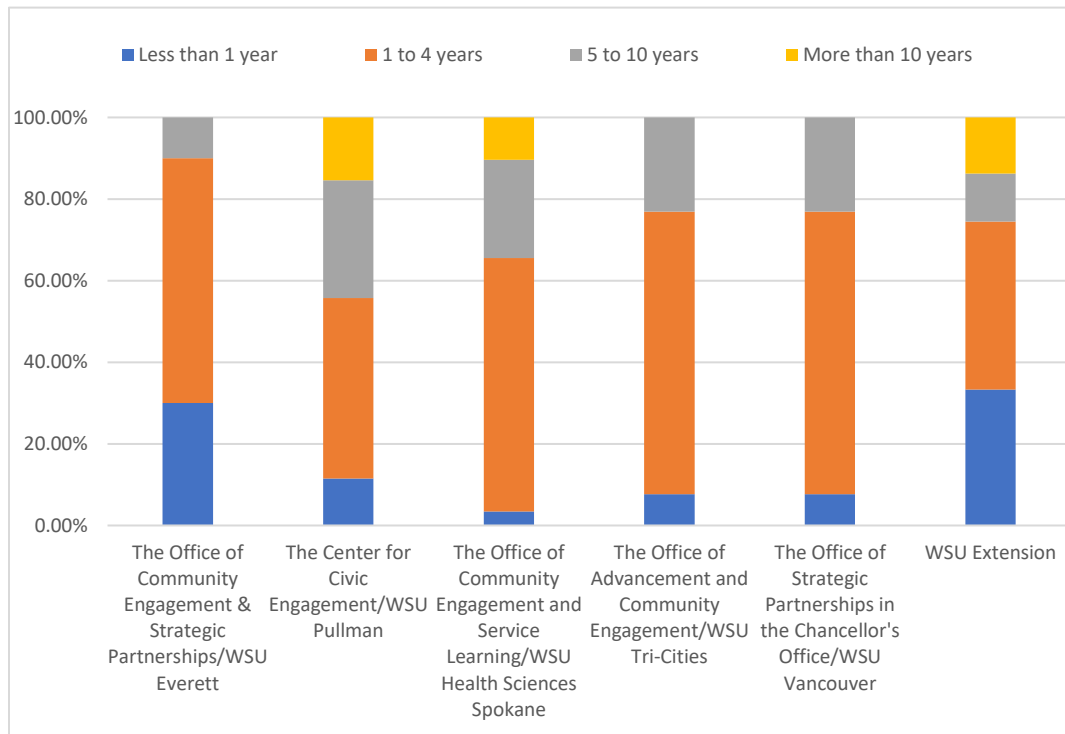


Figure 10: Length of Partnership with Offices/Campuses

Satisfaction with Services of Each Campus

Respondents who had partnered with an office were then asked to *rate their level of satisfaction with the programs and services provided by the office/campus*. Respondents were given six areas in which they could rate their satisfaction from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied. Those who indicated they had worked with the Center for Civic Engagement/WSU Pullman were given four additional areas to rate. The results for each office/campus are presented separately below.

Satisfaction with WSU Pullman Center for Civic Engagement (CCE)

Nearly half of all respondents to the survey (107) indicated they had worked with the Center for Civic Engagement over the last three years. Overall, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with programs and services provided by the Center for Civic Engagement. For instance, over 80% of respondents to this question were satisfied or highly satisfied with their communication with CCE staff (80.6%, 83), and in their overall impression of CCE (81.2%, 82). For several statements, (*student recognition through the WSU Leadership and Engagement Awards and providing professional development/leadership opportunities for community partners, CCE E-Newsletter, CCE Website, and On-site Project Leadership through CCE-led One Time Service Projects*) most respondents selected don't know/not applicable:.

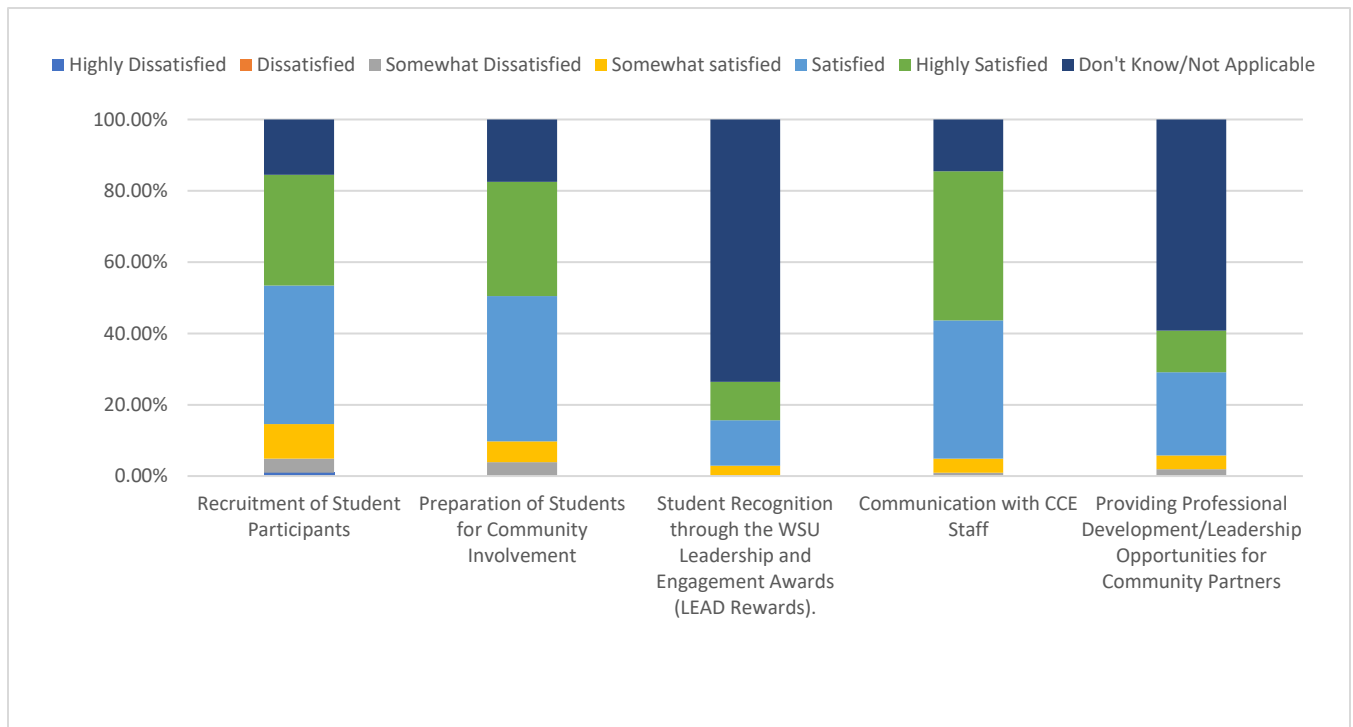


Figure 11: Satisfaction with the Center for Civic Engagement

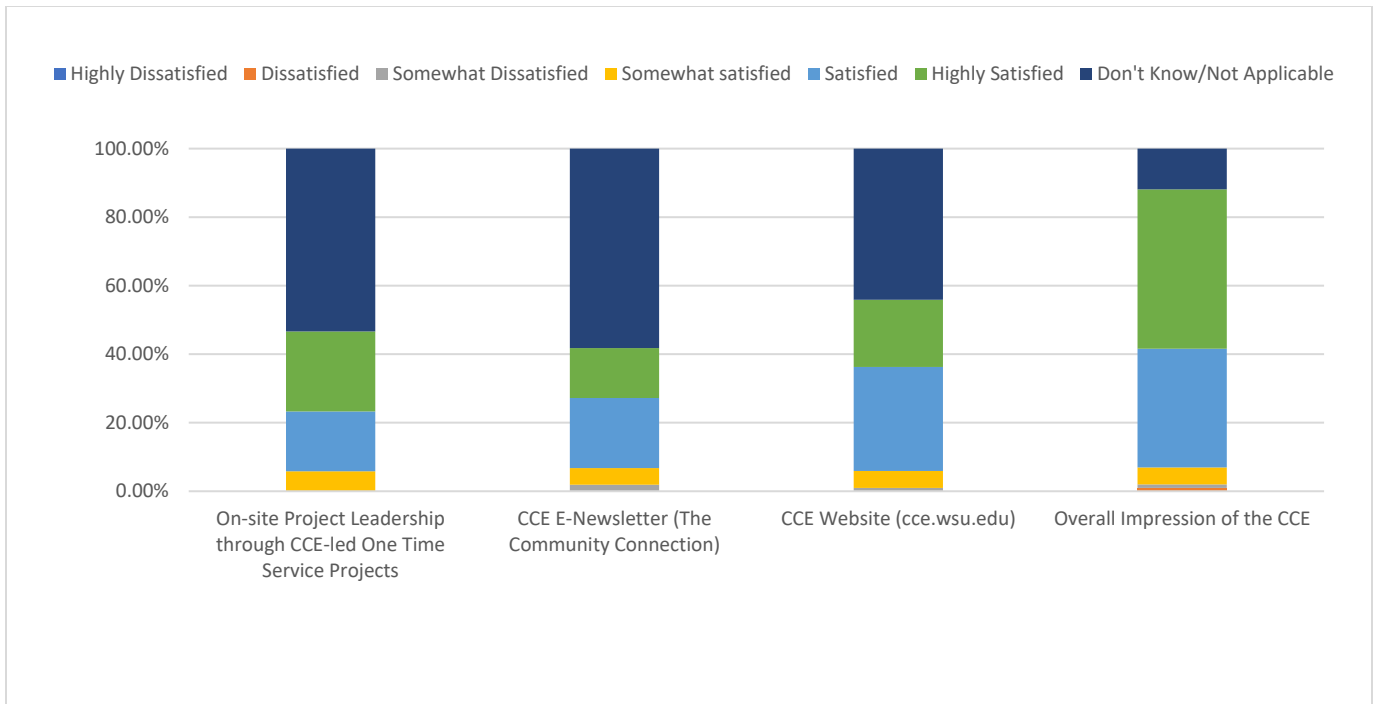


Figure 12: Satisfaction with the Center for Civic Engagement (Continued)

WSU Center for Civic Engagement and Engaging Students

Respondents who have worked with CCE in the past 3 years, were also asked the following open-ended question:

“I wish there was a better structure for continued engagement. All of our volunteer opportunities feel like one-off events and we do not really connect with students nor do they really understand why and what we do to help our community”

“Stronger advertising of our opportunities, and encouraging students to become more involved...”

How could the CCE assist you in engaging students to address community needs? Of the 107 respondents, 22 provided feedback. Six of these respondents focused on COVID19 and their inability to provide internships at this time, or the need for assistance to allow for direct volunteering due to COVID19. One respondent asked whether WSU would provide students with training on safety procedures for COVID and commented that “questions need to be answered prior to commitment to face-to-face volunteers, but we do need them”. A few respondents (3) mentioned the need for a better structure for continued engagement rather than “one-off events.” One respondent mentioned that transportation is an issue for students to engage in their projects. While based

on limited feedback, these responses, in combination with other responses in the survey and during the survey administration process, may indicate the need to focus on sustained engagement opportunities. Many respondents and potential respondents (via email) indicated they had not worked with WSU students for some time, which suggests that cultivating long-term relationships with community organizations could be a priority for CCE.

Satisfaction with WSU Everett Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

A total of 12 respondents indicated they had worked with the Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships in the past three years. Of these respondents, satisfaction with services provided at WSU Everett to community engagement organizations was generally high. No respondents were highly dissatisfied or dissatisfied with any of the listed services. Most respondents were either satisfied or highly satisfied with recruitment of student participants, preparation of students for community involvement, and support from staff. Over half of the respondents reported some level of satisfaction for their overall impression of the Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships. Most respondents selected don't know/not applicable for providing professional development/leadership opportunities for community partners.

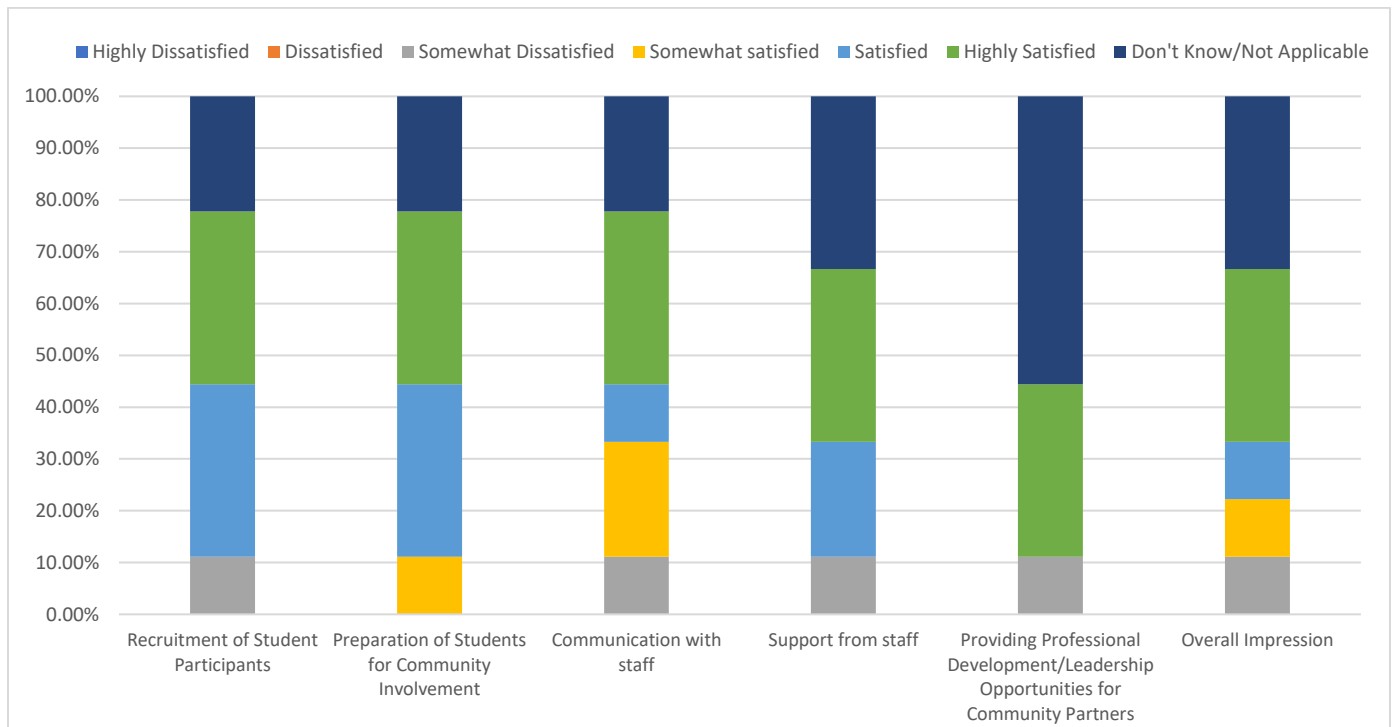


Figure 13: Satisfaction with the Office of Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

Satisfaction with WSU Health Sciences Spokane Office of Community Engagement and Service Learning

A total of 31 respondents reported working with the Office of Community Engagement and Service Learning at WSU Health Sciences Spokane in the past three years. Of these respondents, most respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied with most services provided, including recruitment of student participants, preparation of students for community involvement, communication with office staff, support from the office, and overall impression of the office. Like other campus offices, a slight majority of respondents indicated don't know/not applicable for professional development/leadership opportunities for community partners.

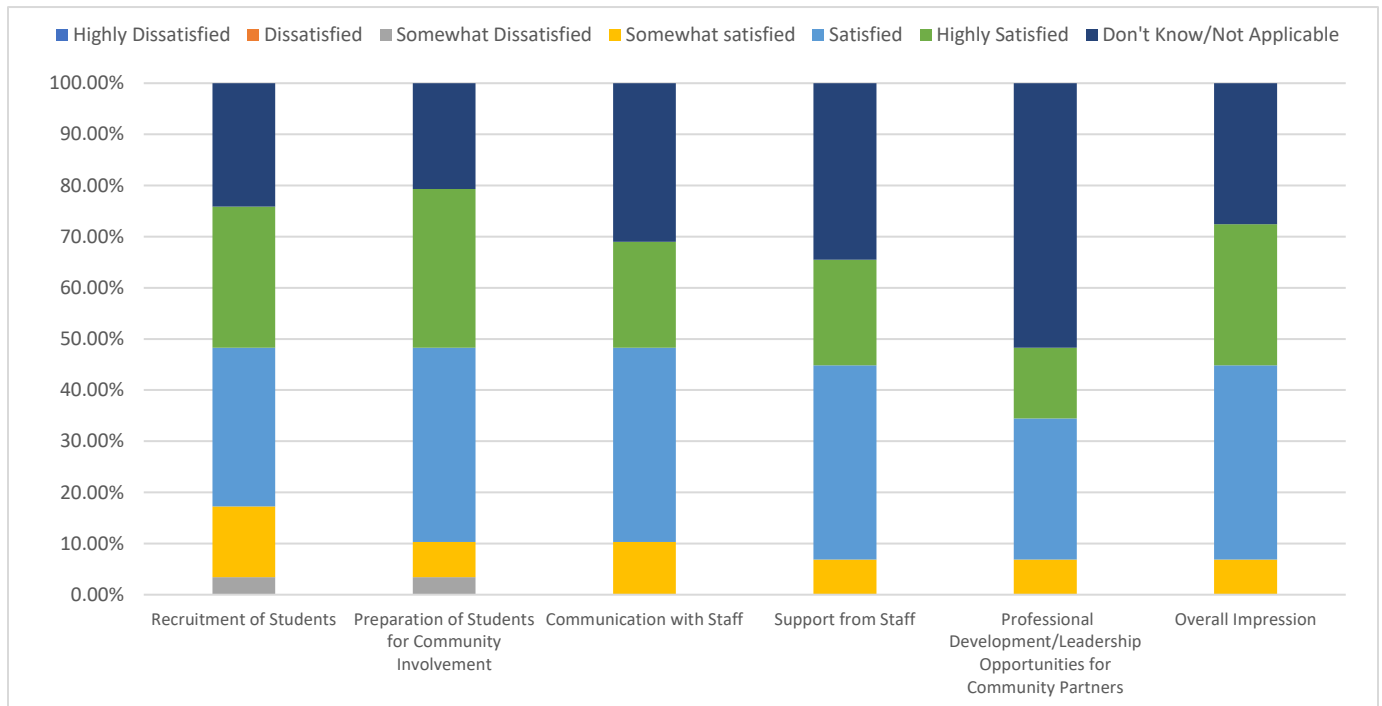


Figure 14: Satisfaction with the Office of Community Engagement and Service Learning

Satisfaction with WSU Tri-Cities Office of Advancement and Community Engagement

Only four respondents reported working with the Office of Advancement and Community Engagement in the last three years. Of these respondents, 3 (75%) were satisfied or highly satisfied with recruitment of student participants, the preparation of students for community involvement, communication with staff, support from staff and overall impression of the office.

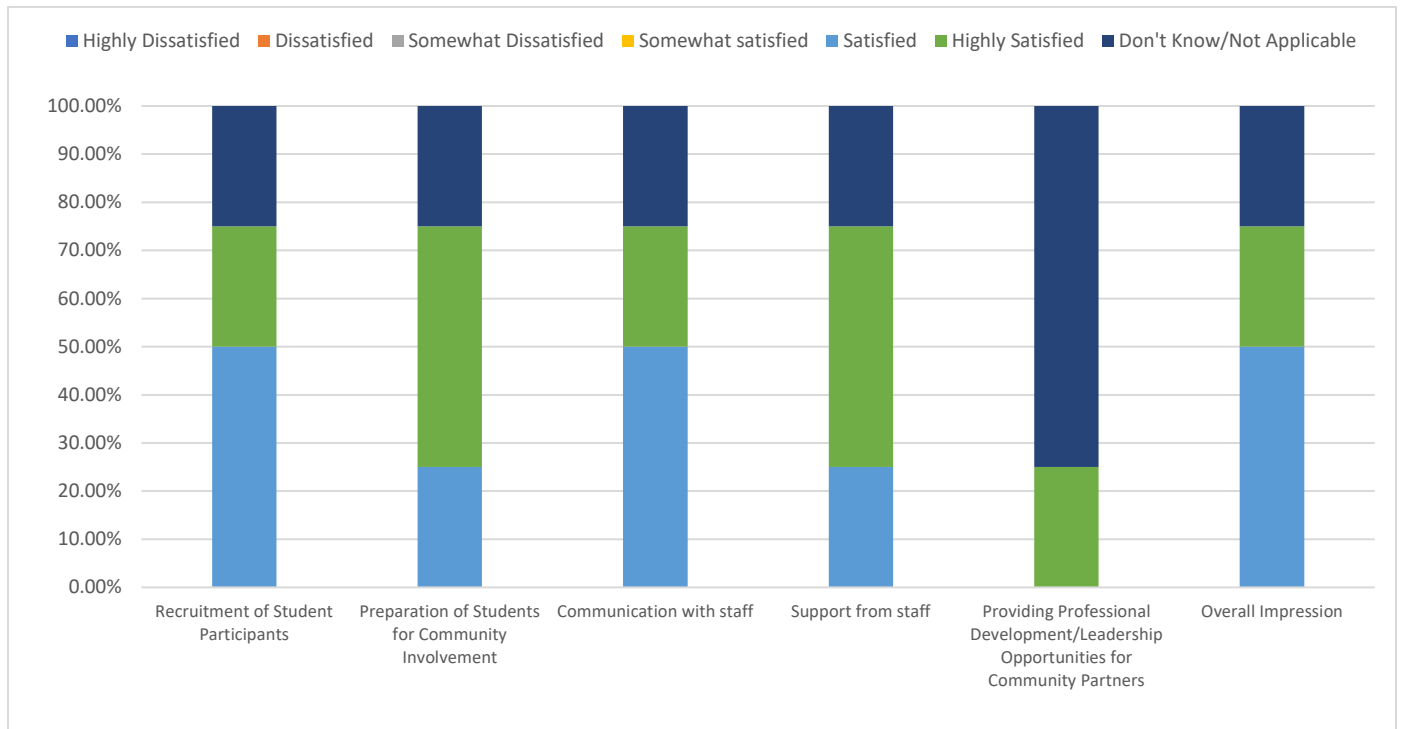


Figure 15: Satisfaction with the Office of Advancement and Community Engagement

Satisfaction with WSU Vancouver Office of Strategic Partnerships in the Chancellor's Office

A total of 15 respondents indicated they have worked with WSU Vancouver Office of Strategic Partnerships in the Chancellor's Office in the past three years. Slightly less than half of the respondents indicated they were either satisfied or highly satisfied with all services and programs, including recruitment of student participants, preparation of students for community involvement, communication with staff, support from staff, and providing professional development/leadership opportunities for community partners. A slight majority of respondents indicated they were either somewhat satisfied, satisfied or highly satisfied with their overall impression of the office.

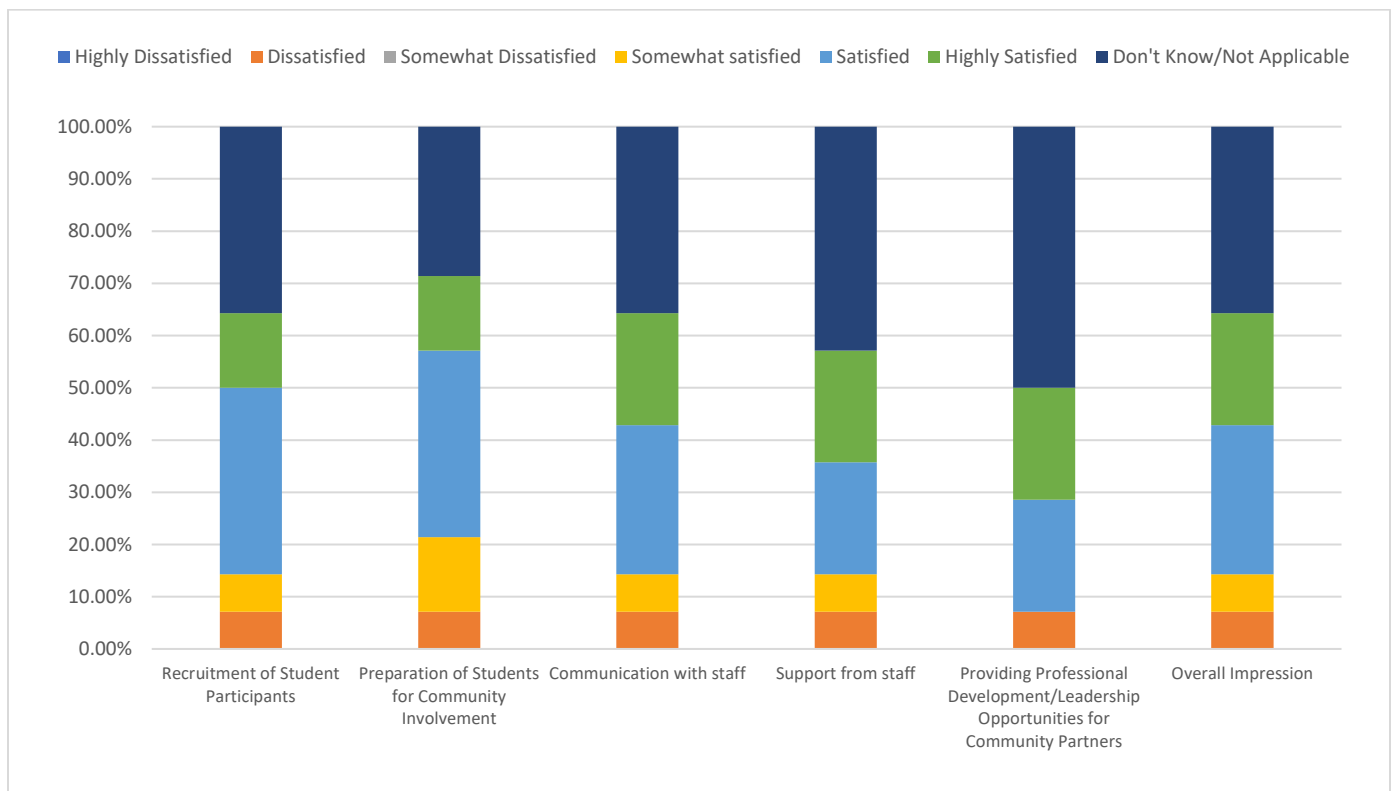


Figure 16: Satisfaction with the Office of Strategic Partnerships

Satisfaction with Programs and Services of WSU Extension

A total of 60 respondents indicated they had worked with WSU Extension in the last three years. Most respondents indicated some level of satisfaction (somewhat satisfied, satisfied or highly satisfied) with all services and programs asked. Most also reported satisfaction with their overall impression of WSU Extension.

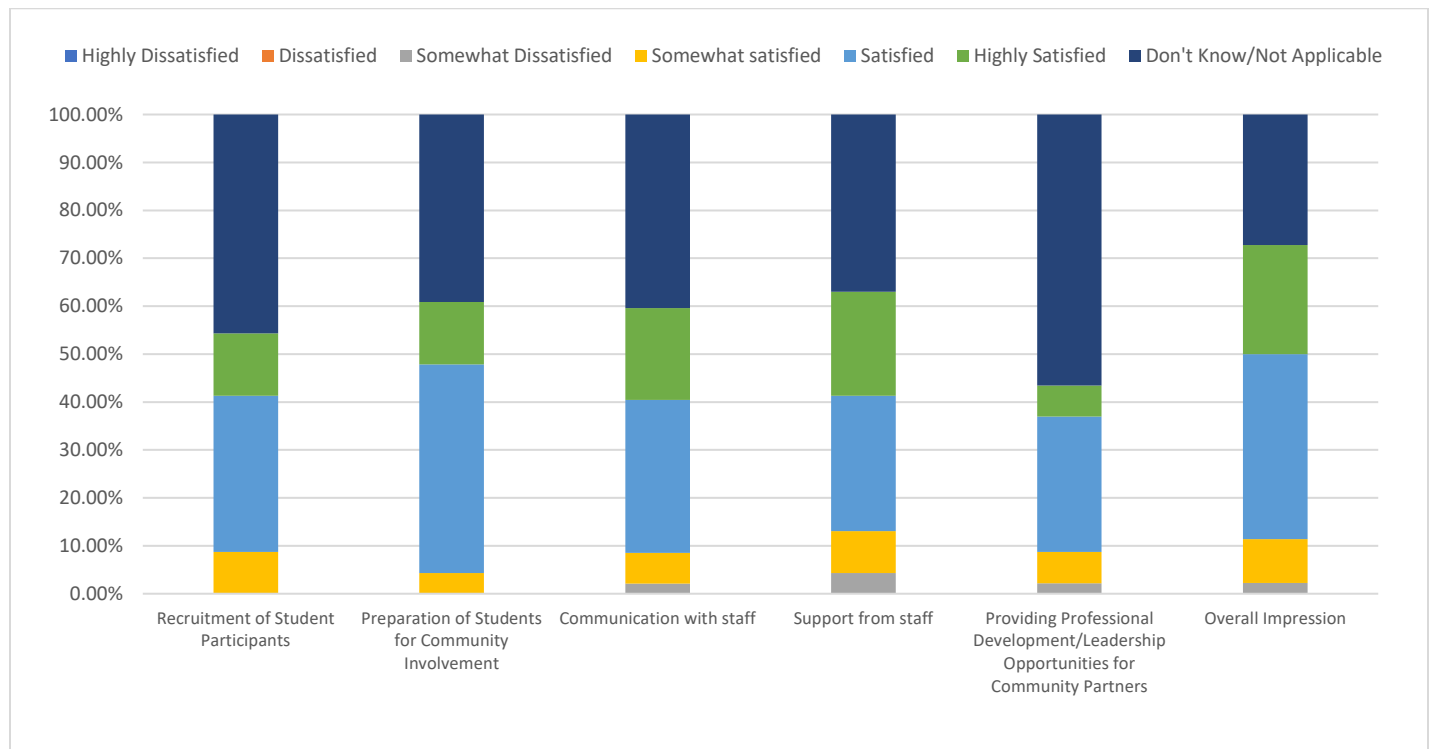


Figure 17: Satisfaction with WSU Extension

Conclusions

Overall, respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with WSU community engagement services and interaction with WSU students. Responses indicate that WSU students are prepared, perform quality work, and that working with WSU students enhances their programs and services. Respondents also believe that their involvement with WSU students enhances student learning, including increasing awareness of community issues, and increasing students' sense of responsibility.

Respondents overall view WSU as an engaged community partner that recognizes and values its community partners. Respondents also indicate that WSU communicates effectively, provides effective support, and their partnership with WSU improves lives in their community. While responses were overwhelmingly positive concerning WSU, WSU services, and WSU students, nearly half of respondents did not know whether WSU partners with stakeholders to solve critical issues facing Washington State. This could indicate the need for better communication of WSU community engagement activities in critical issues.

In terms of services utilized, most respondents reported not utilizing these services in the past three years, including tabling at an on-campus event, attending a campus community forum, and participating in a service-learning course presentation. While nearly half of respondents indicated their organization had met with a WSU faculty or staff member, the lack of respondents utilizing several services may indicate the need to better communicate the services available, or the need for a communication and recruitment plan that enables more organizations to participate in these services.

In terms of community engagement offices across WSU campuses, responses indicate a high-level of satisfaction with their services. While several offices had few respondents who worked with the organization in the past three years, results indicate that respondents overall are satisfied with recruitment of students, preparation of students, communication with staff, support with staff and their overall impression of each office. The only item where most respondents indicated don't know/not applicable was *providing professional development/leadership opportunities for community partners*. This could reflect that many respondents were located too far from WSU campuses or community engagement offices to participate in these activities, the need to provide more leadership opportunities for their community partners, or the need to better communicate these activities.

It should also be noted that responses to some survey questions as well as feedback during survey administration from several individuals via email, may indicate the need to consider how best to maintain community

partnerships over time. Several previous partners who received a survey invitation indicated that their organization had not worked with WSU students in several years and/or indicated that the specific individual who was invited to complete the survey is no longer with the organization. Additionally, some respondents who completed the survey also indicated they had not worked with WSU students or any of the WSU offices for many years. This, in combination with some open-ended comments suggesting that long-term community engagement relationships with WSU were difficult to maintain, points to the need to consider options for improving processes to build and maintain these relationships in order to develop a stronger, more sustainable community engagement network over time.

Future Survey Recommendations

- Many respondents may not know which offices they routinely engage with in their activities. Several respondents indicated some level of confusion about which office to select in responding to the follow up questions, which were specific to location. Future survey iterations should include an “I don’t know” option, enabling WSU community engagement offices to track how many respondents do not know which office they work with routinely (thus, suggesting a potential need to better communicate with partner organizations).
- Information garnered via the survey and email correspondence indicates that some community partners did not work with WSU students, but were still involved in WSU community engagement activities. This is particularly true of Extension. Future survey iterations should include an option that guides those responding organizations who do not work with WSU students to other sections of the survey.
- WSU Extension questions will likely need to be updated in future iterations to better capture the community engagement activities of Extension programs and services.