



**Northeastern**  
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY PLANNING  
AND RESEARCH



## Summer Semester Survey

During the fall 2004 semester, the Office of University Planning and Research conducted a survey of upperclass full-time undergraduates who were enrolled in classes during the summer term. The survey was accessed via link on the myNEU portal and was available to only those students who were enrolled during the summer term. Limitations of the data include nonrandomization and response bias. The purpose of the study was to benchmark students' reactions and opinions on the summer calendar, consisting of two seven-week sessions, and/or one fourteen-week session and the Summer Program activities. Of the 4,973 upperclass students in classes for the summer sessions, 653 completed the survey, consisting of 13% of the population.

### Executive Summary

Results show that most students who were enrolled in the summer were adhering to their division schedule. Almost all students were attempting to fulfill major requirements and less than half were able to enroll in courses they wanted. Student opinion was divided evenly between those who thought the summer pace was too fast and those who thought it was reasonable. The majority of students indicated that less material was covered in "minimesters" than semesters. Almost half of the students felt that the advantages of the minimester do not outweigh the disadvantages, however, close to half also would keep the current format over the other options presented in the survey. Significant differences occurred when variables were examined by college. Students indicated that they were limited in the information and availability on Summer Program activities. Overall, 38.9% of students were very or somewhat satisfied, and 40.4% were very or somewhat dissatisfied.

### Respondent Characteristics

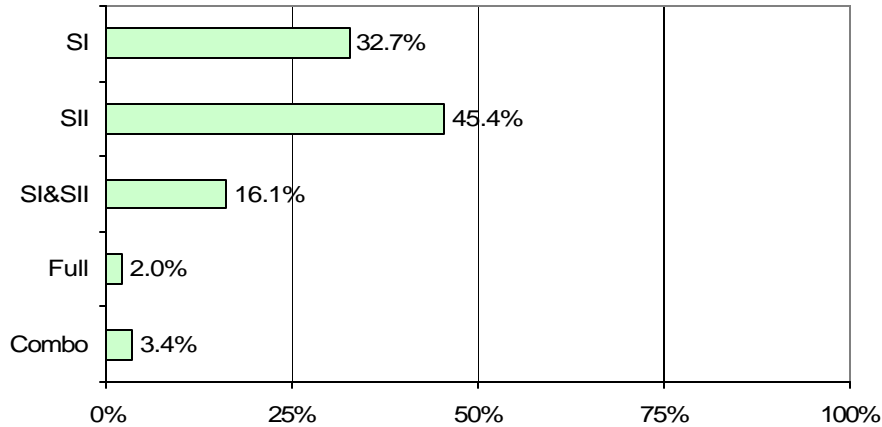
Major Area	n	%	Class Year in Fall	n	%	Residence	n	%
Business	164	25.1 %	Senior	173	26.5 %	On-campus	257	39.4 %
Engineering	83	12.7	Junior	274	42.0	Near campus	234	35.8
Social Sciences	73	11.2	Middler	179	27.4	Commuter	162	24.8
Health Sciences	71	10.9	Sophomore	27	4.1		653	100 %
Arts	68	10.4		653	100 %			
Criminal Justice	61	9.3						
Science/Math	46	7.0	<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Humanities	45	6.9	Female	343	60 %			
Comp Science	33	5.1	Male	224	40			
Engineering Tech	9	1.4	(unknown=86)	567	100 %			
General Studies	0	0						
	653	100 %						

# I. Schedule

## Summer Session Enrollments

Students were asked in which summer term they were enrolled. Almost 33% of students were enrolled in Summer I only, and 45% were enrolled in Summer II only. The remainder were enrolled in both Summer I and Summer II, a full semester course, or a combination of short and full semester courses.

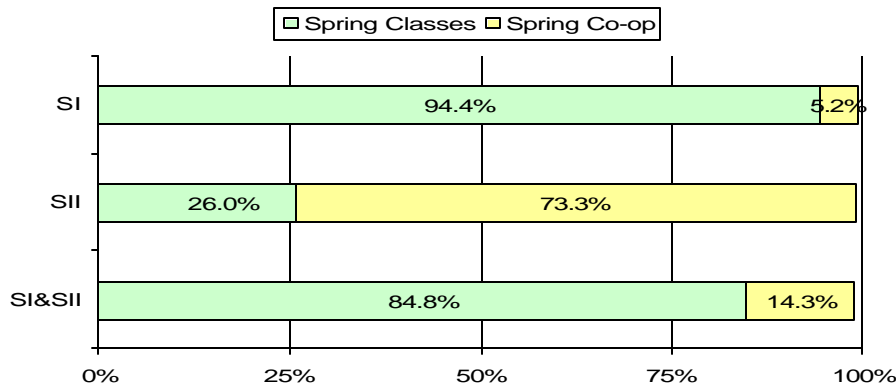
Figure 1. Summer Session Enrollments (n=653)



## Spring versus Summer Status

Ninety-four percent of students in Summer I were in classes during the spring, and 73% who were in Summer II were on co-op during the spring. Eighty-five percent of students who were in both summer sessions were in classes in the spring also. (Full and Combinations not pictured).

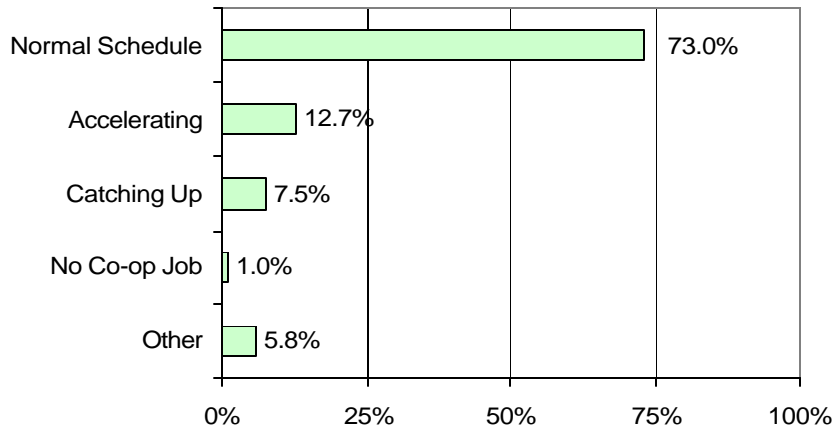
Figure 2. Student Enrollment Status for Spring and Summer Terms. (n=653)



### *Reason for Summer Classes*

The majority of students (73%), who enrolled in summer courses were following their assigned division. A combined 20% used the summer semester to catch-up or to accelerate and graduate early, while less than 1% enrolled in class because they could not find a co-op job. Most students who indicated “Other” were transfer or double-major students trying to also catch-up or taking a heavier annual load.

Figure 3. Reasons for Enrolling in Summer Session(s) (n=653)

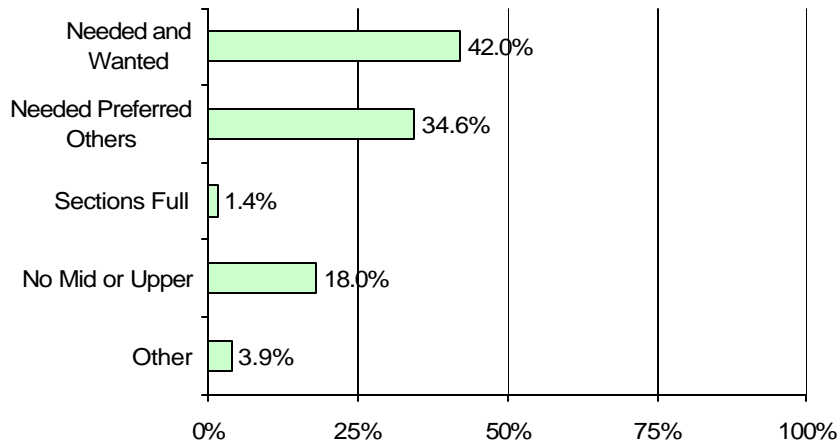


## II. Course Availability

### *Major Requirements*

The findings show that almost 95% of students were expecting to enroll in courses that would fulfill major requirements or major electives, and less than half (42%) were able to do so satisfactorily. Thirty-five percent indicated that they were able to enroll in major courses, but that they would have preferred other options, while 18% were not able to enroll in major courses because there were not enough mid- or upper-level courses scheduled. Most of those indicating “Other” noted that the selection was too limited. When comparing Summer I to Summer II, students enrolled in Summer II responded at a slightly higher rate that they were able to enroll in courses but would have preferred other options.

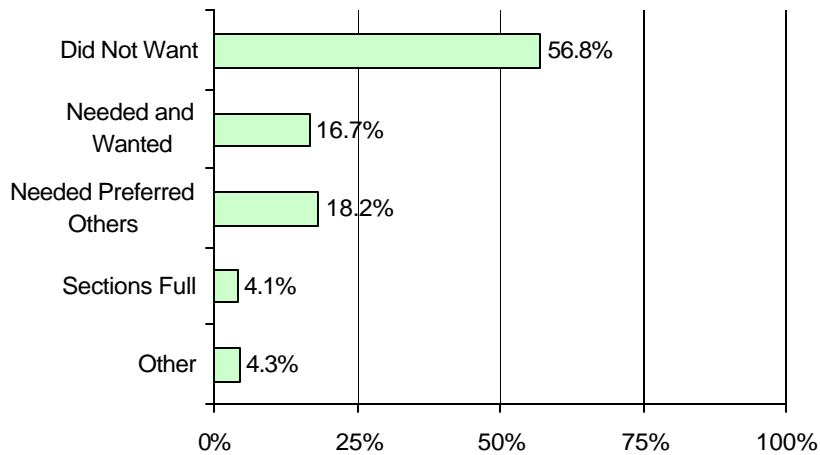
Figure 4. Availability of Courses to Complete Major Requirements (n=653)



### *Core Curriculum Requirements*

Less than 50% of students were expecting to enroll in courses that would fulfill non-major core requirements, such as Middler Year Writing. Those intending to take core courses were divided (16.7% - 18.2%) between those who indicated there were enough courses offered and those who would have preferred other options. Students responding “Other” indicated that that there were not enough sections or that course times were conflicting. When comparing Summer I to Summer II, students enrolled in Summer II responded at a slightly higher rate that they were able to enroll in courses that they needed and wanted, or that they were able to enroll but would have preferred other options.

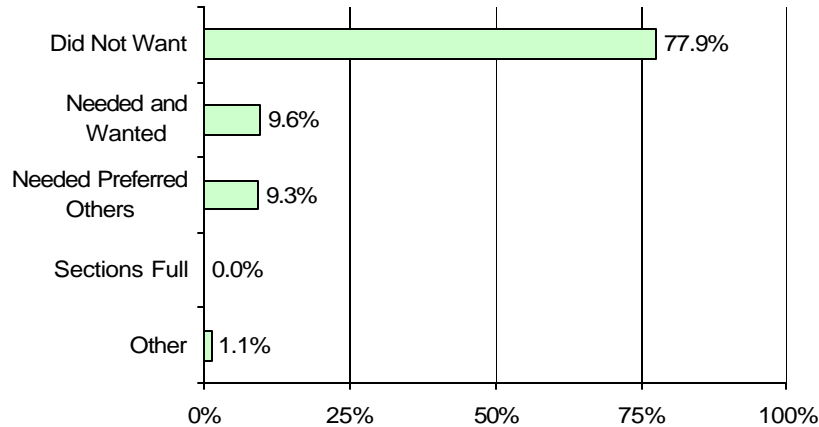
Figure 5. Availability of Courses to Complete Core Requirements (n=653)



### Open Electives

Only 22% of students intended to take open electives during the summer. Of those who did want open electives, respondents were divided evenly (9.6% - 9.3%) between those who were able to enroll in the courses they wanted and those who would have preferred other options. There was no significant difference between those attending in Summer I and/or Summer II.

Figure 6. Availability of Courses to Complete Open Electives (n=653)

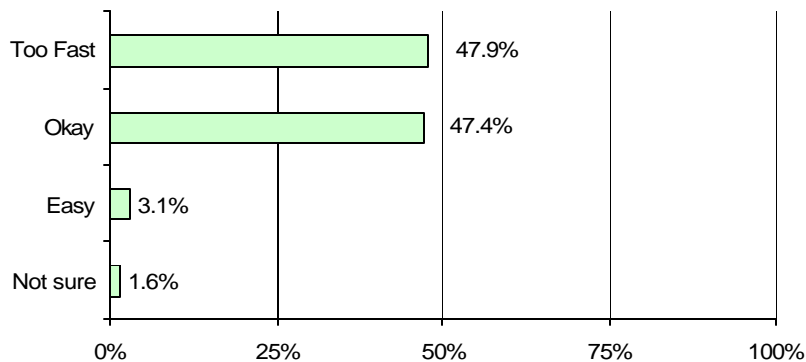


## III. Courseload

### Course Pace

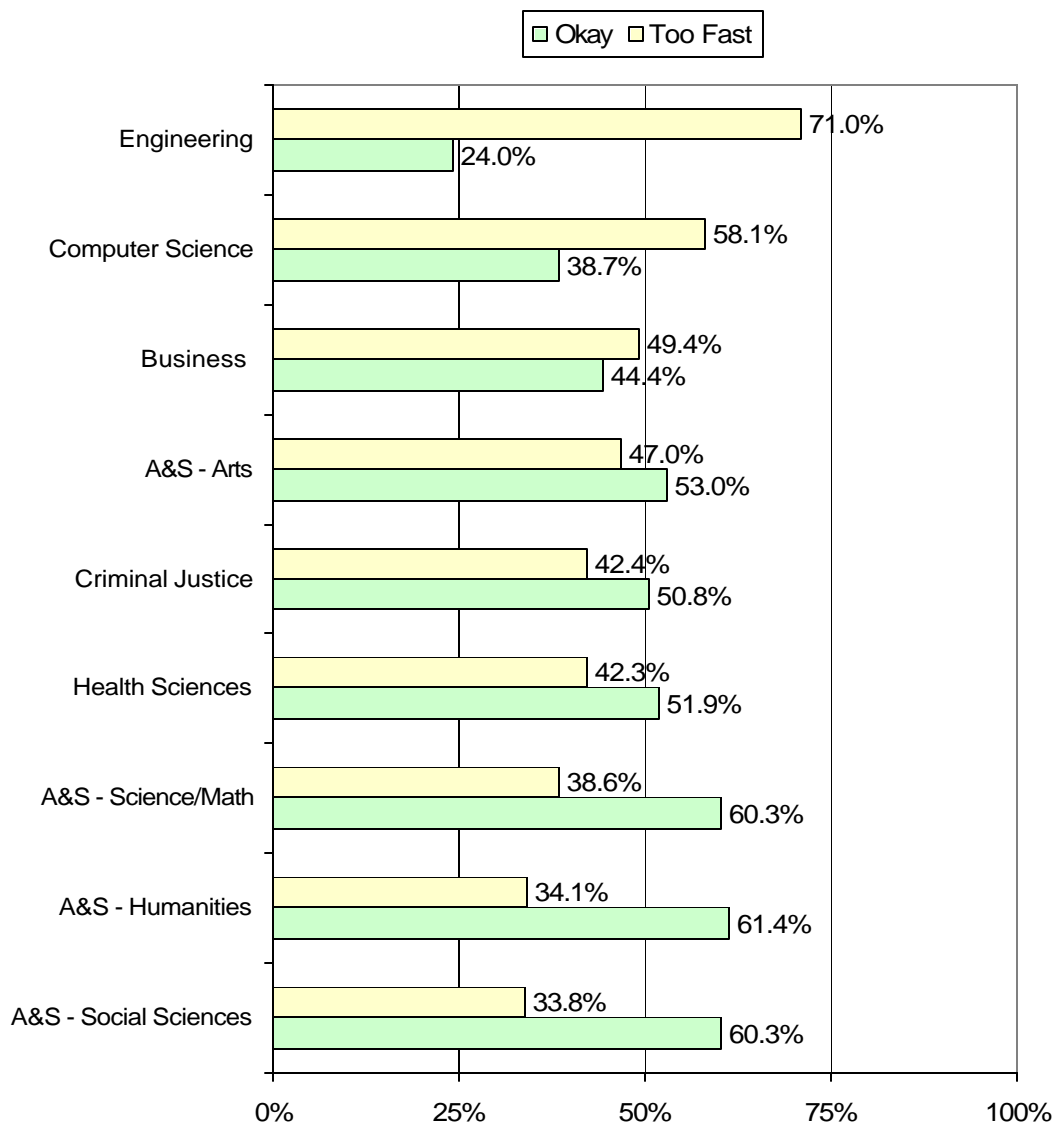
Students were asked to rate the pace of the new summer courses. Of those who were enrolled in Summer I and/or Summer II, students were divided evenly (47.9% - 47.4%) between those who felt the courses went too fast and those who felt the pace was reasonable.

Figure 7. Course Pace – All Students in Summer I and/or Summer II (n=614)



When student opinion on the pace of courses was examined by college, the breakdown shifted, most significantly between Arts & Sciences and Engineering. (Easy and Not Sure not pictured).

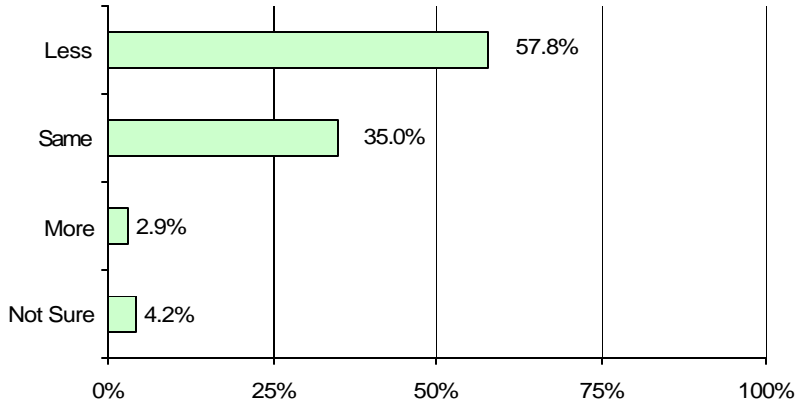
Figure 8. Course Pace by Area of Study (n=614)



### Course Material

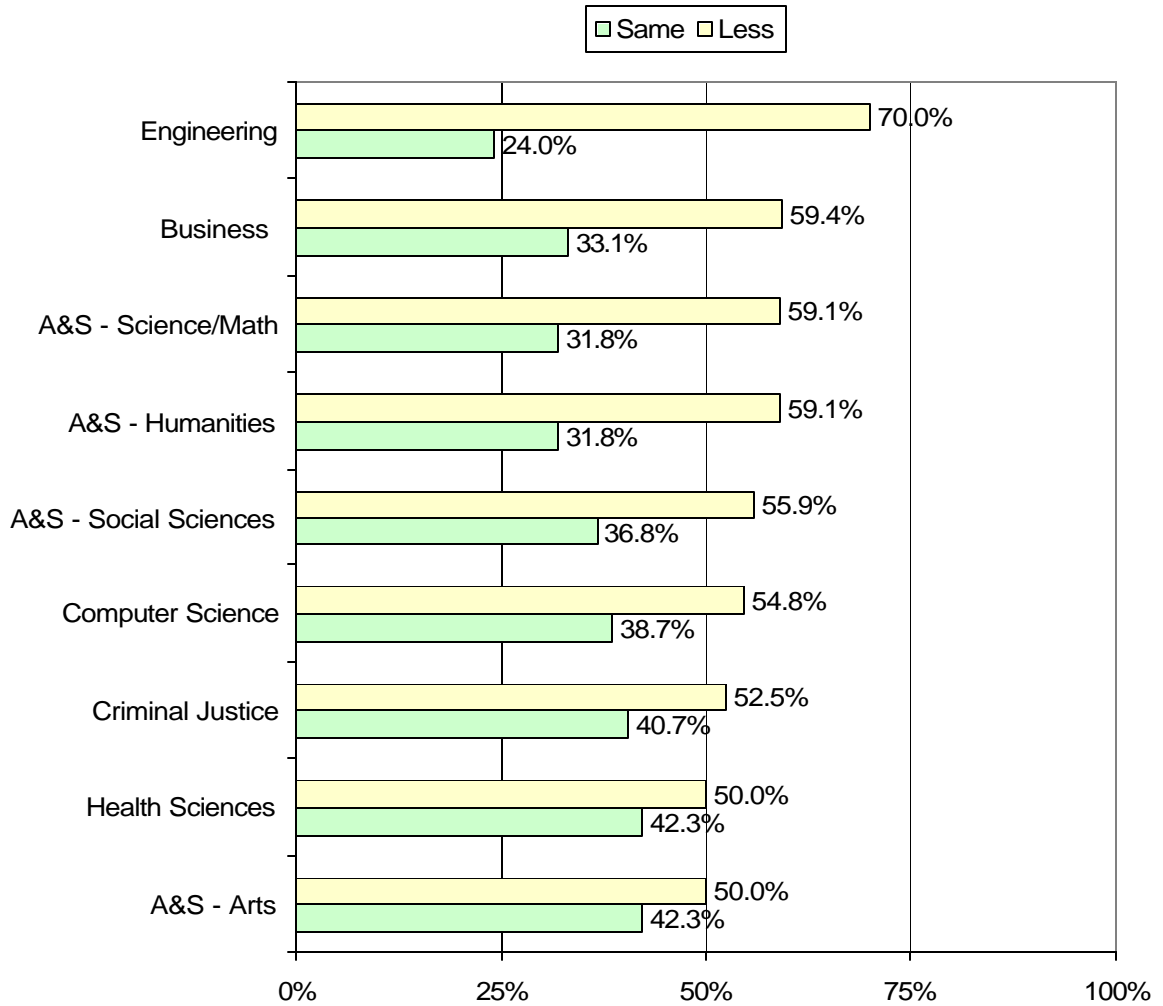
Students were then asked to rate the coverage of course materials in the summer sessions compared to a full semester. Of those who were enrolled in Summer I and/or Summer II, the majority of students (58%) felt that the summer courses covered less material than in a regular semester. Thirty-five percent felt it was about the same. Two percent felt it covered more material, and four percent were not sure.

Figure 9. Coverage of Course Materials Compared to Semester (n=614)



When student opinion on the coverage of course materials was examined by college, the breakdown shifted, most significantly between Arts & Sciences and Engineering. (More and Not Sure not pictured).

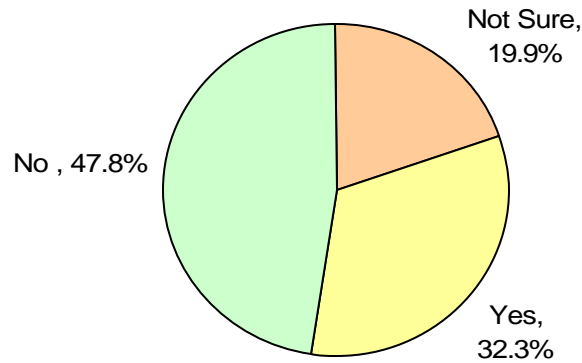
Figure 10. Coverage of Course Materials Compared to Semester by Area of Study (n=614)



### Scheduling Options

All students were asked whether the advantages of the intense summer format outweigh the disadvantages. Almost half indicated that they do not. Thirty-two percent of students indicated that they do, and 20% were not sure.

Figure 11. Advantages versus Disadvantages



When asked whether students would prefer to maintain the existing summer format or to alter it, such as adding overloads or reducing the number of co-ops, 46% of students responded that they would prefer to keep the current format, and a combined 39% chose another format (see figure 12). However, when adjusting for students' responses to whether they feel the advantages of the format outweigh the disadvantages, the responses shifted (see figure 13). Most of the students (66%) who do not feel that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages would prefer to take overloads or reduce co-ops.

Figure 12. Scheduling Options

<i>If given the option, which would you prefer?</i>	n	%
To take prescribed courses in the existing summer format, complete the prescribed number of co-op opportunities for my program, and stay on time for graduation.	303	46.4%
To take one-course overloads as necessary during the regular semesters, complete the prescribed number of co-op opportunities for my program, avoid summer courses, and stay on time for graduation.	144	22.1%
To participate in fewer co-op opportunities, enroll only in semester classes, and stay on time for graduation.	80	12.3%
To do the prescribed number of co-op placements for my program, enroll in only semester classes, and delay my graduation.	30	4.6%
Not Sure	96	14.7%
TOTAL	653	100%

Figure 13. Scheduling Options By Advantage or Disadvantage Response  
(Students indicating preference)

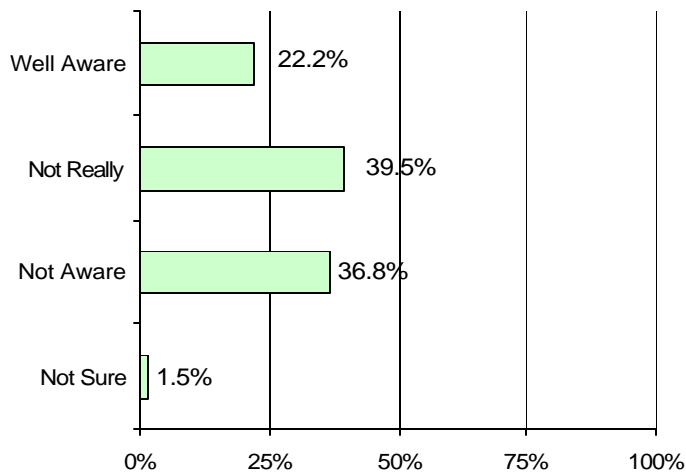
<i>If given the option, which would you prefer?</i>	Advantages Outweigh Disadvantages		Advantages Do Not Outweigh Disadvantages	
	n	%	n	%
To take prescribed courses in the existing summer format, complete the prescribed number of co-op opportunities for my program, and stay on time for graduation.	137	74%	90	34%
To take one-course overloads as necessary during the regular semesters, complete the prescribed number of co-op opportunities for my program, avoid summer courses, and stay on time for graduation.	21	11	102	38
To participate in fewer co-op opportunities, enroll only in semester classes, and stay on time for graduation.	25	14	50	19
To do the prescribed number of co-op placements for my program, enroll in only semester classes, and delay my graduation.	2	<1	24	9
TOTAL	185	100%	266	100%

## IV. Summester Program

### *Student Activities*

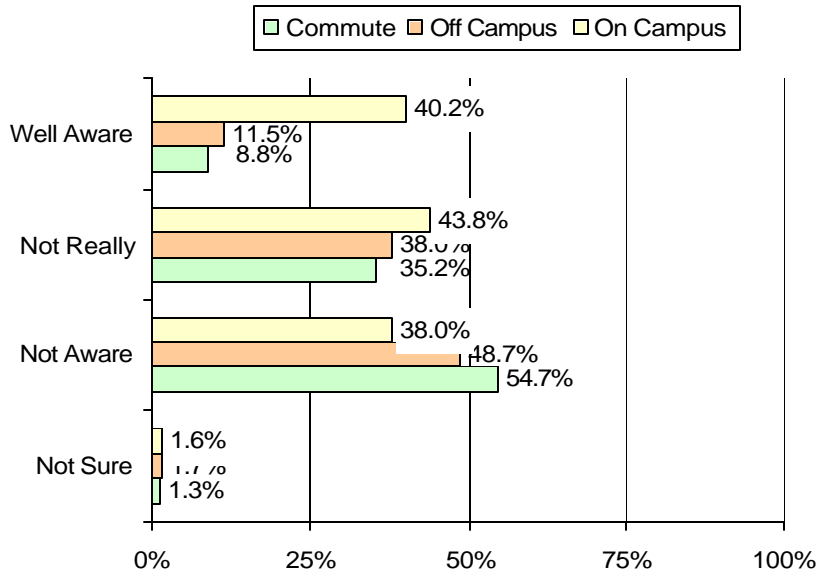
The students were asked whether or not they were aware of campus activities offered through the Summester Program. Only 22% were well aware of the activities.

Figure 14. Awareness of Summester Activities (n=653)



Students who live on campus were more aware of the Summester Program activities than off-campus or commuter students. Almost 90% of commuter students indicated that they weren't really informed or were unaware.

Figure 15. Awareness of Summester Activities by Residence (n=653)



Students were also asked to list any Summester Program activities in which they participated. Students who did participate in activities most often listed movies, ice cream socials, and day trips. However, more frequently, students noted that they did not find out about the activities until it was too late, and the activity was over. Also noted was the small amount of tickets available. Some students stated that they were too busy with classes in the shortened term to participate in any Summester activities.

Students were then invited to make suggestions for the Summester Program. Students used this space to again ask for more advertising and more available tickets (especially Red Sox). Students were concerned that there were not enough activities planned on the weekends so that students on co-op could participate. Other suggestions included more sporting activities (attending and playing), more barbeques, beach activities, and concerts.

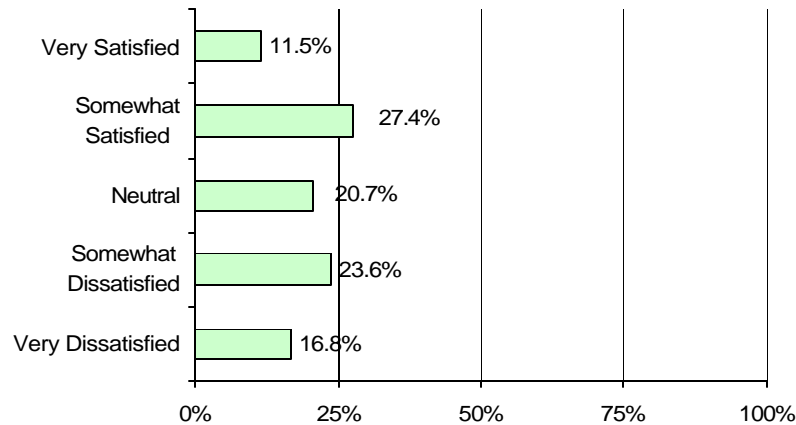
## V. Additional Comments

Over 260 students provided additional comments that were quite extensive. Due to the extent and the multiple-themed content of the comments, responses were not delimited for coding. Major themes from the content analysis support the data finding of this study. Students commented that the minimesters are too short, major requirements could not be filled, class selection was limited, courses filled up too quickly, and professors appeared rushed.

## VI. Conclusion

For the final question, students were asked to rank their overall satisfaction with the summer format. Thirty-nine percent responded positively, and 40% responded negatively.

Figure 16. Overall Satisfaction (n=653)



Overall, students were looking to use the summer semester to satisfy major requirements and less than half were able to do so satisfactorily. Offering more major courses over core or electives may increase student satisfaction with availability. Students indicated that they did not receive the same level of course quality because the pace was accelerated. Further evaluation of curricula is needed.

Most students were not aware of Summer Program activities being offered, or were not able to acquire tickets to events. Increasing marketing and availability next summer, especially for off-campus students, could increase participation and student satisfaction.