

2015-2016 Viewing A Wider World Survey

**Office of Institutional Analysis
New Mexico State University, Las Cruces**

SPRING 2016

2015-16 Viewing a Wider World Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Viewing a Wider World (VWW) Survey, initiated by The Associated Students of New Mexico State University (ASNMSU), in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, was designed to capture student experiences with and attitudes towards the NMSU, Las Cruces Viewing a Wider World requirements. The two required Viewing a Wider World courses are aimed at broadening critical thinking and intelligent inquiry, encouraging an appreciation of the arts, increasing awareness of multicultural issues, and challenging students to evaluate their values and beliefs. As such, this survey asked students to assess the degree to which VWW courses challenged them academically, influenced their global outlook, and satisfied their collegiate course load.
- Survey questions focused on the extent to which VWW courses influenced the student's intellectual and cultural growth, the perceived rigor of the VWW courses, preference for eliminating one course from the degree plan, and overall satisfaction with the VWW courses. Demographic questions were limited to the number of VWW courses taken by the student, their completed credit hours, and their college. The survey was administered at the end of the fall 2015 semester through the first two weeks of the spring 2016 semester to the Las Cruces Campus undergraduate degree-seeking student population.
- Of the 1,845 undergraduate students who responded to at least one question on the survey, 67% reported either having taken or were currently taking a VWW course (Figure 1). Of those who had taken a VWW course, 39% successfully completed one course, 43% completed two courses, and 18% completed 3 or more courses (Figure 2).
- The distribution of respondents to student population by credit hours earned was slightly skewed towards those students with more credits, as expected of an upper division course requirement (Table 1). There were fewer respondents in the 1 to 28 credit range (10% compared to 15% in population), and more in the 63 to 94 credit range (24% to 20%). On the other hand, the distribution of respondents by college closely mirrored the undergraduate population as percentages were within 1% for all colleges (Table 2).
- Respondents overwhelmingly agreed their VWW course(s) contributed positively in substantive areas of their academic and personal growth (Tables 3a and 3b). At least half of the respondents agreed their VWW course(s) had done a better job at increasing their awareness of international and multicultural issues, and contributed to their personal growth while at NMSU (Tables 4a and 4b).
- Over half of the respondents (54%) stated their VWW courses were just as challenging as other courses taken at NMSU, and an additional 16% said the VWW courses were more or much more challenging (Figure 7). The higher the level of satisfaction with VWW courses, the more likely students stated these courses were challenging (Figure 9). More than 50% of students from the College of Engineering stated their VWW courses were less challenging, while less than 30% of students from all other colleges said their VWW courses were less challenging (Figure 10).
- A majority (54%) of respondents considered a second VWW course as 'somewhat necessary' or 'absolutely necessary' to realize the purpose of the VWW program (Table 6). More than 60% of students (n=211) who have taken at least three VWW courses agreed the second VWW course was somewhat to absolutely necessary, while half of students who had taken two courses felt this same way (Figure 12). Nearly one in four students in the College of Business and the College of Arts & Sciences, who responded stated the second VWW was absolutely necessary; this dropped to 11% for of Engineering majors (Figure 13). Less than half of Engineering students say the second VWW course is necessary.
- When asked which type of course they would prefer to eliminate from their degree plan, 30% of respondents chose a general education course, while 28% chose a VWW course (Figure 14). Students who had taken only one VWW course were more likely to choose a VWW course to eliminate (31% for VWW compared to 28% for general education). In contrast, only 17% of students who had taken at least three VWW preferred to eliminate a VWW course, and 32% chose the general education course (Figure 15). Not surprisingly, students who were least satisfied with their VWW courses strongly preferred to eliminate the VWW course (78%, N=77) and those students who were very satisfied with their VWW courses wanted to eliminate any other course rather than a VWW course. There was a strong relationship of preference for eliminating the VWW course and decreasing satisfaction with the VWW courses (Figure 16). Engineering students were most likely to want to eliminate the VWW courses (38%) while Education students were least likely (18%) (Figure 17).

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- Overall satisfaction with the VWW courses was high with 40% of respondents saying they were satisfied with NMSU's VWW courses, and another 21% saying they were very satisfied (Figure 18). Satisfaction tended to increase along with the number of VWW courses taken, with satisfied to very satisfied growing from 56% of those who had taken one course to 68% for those who had taken three or more (Figure 19). Engineering majors expressed the lowest level of satisfaction (22% dissatisfied to very dissatisfied, and 22% neutral) while approximately two out of every three respondents from the Colleges of Health & Social Service, Business, and Education were satisfied to very satisfied (Figure 20).
- To summarize, the responding students agreed the VWW courses added to their educational preparation at NMSU, and they found the courses challenging and satisfactory. The students who took more VWW courses tended to like them more. Students in the College of Engineering were least likely to support the VWW courses.

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Section I - Who responded to the 2015-16 Viewing a Wider World survey?

The 2015-16 Viewing the Wider World Survey was administered as a web survey through a personalized link via an email message. All degree-seeking Las Cruces campus undergraduate students enrolled in Fall 2015, and then in Spring 2016 were sent the email. The first email was sent on December 15, and followup emails were sent to non-responders in January before closing the survey on January 29, 2016. No incentives were offered for taking the survey, and limited advertising occurred.

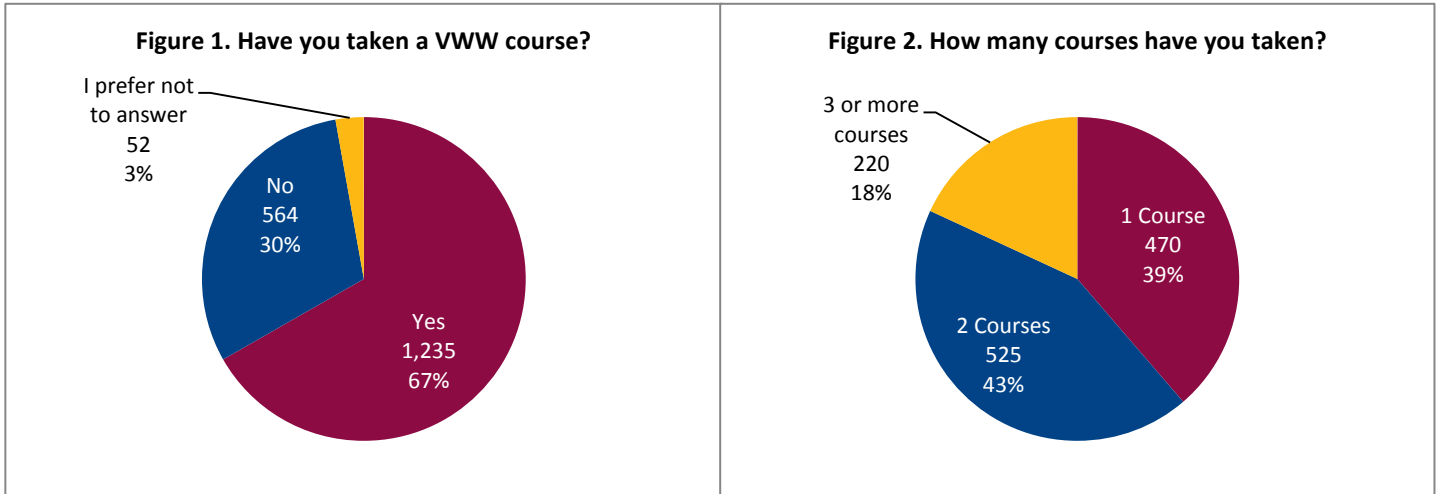


Table 1. Comparison of Earned Credit Hours for Respondents versus Fall 2015 Undergraduates

Credit Hours	Survey Respondents		Fall 2015 Undergraduates*	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
1 - 28	176	10%	1,735	15%
29 - 62	311	17%	1,945	16%
63 - 94	438	24%	2,379	20%
95 - 120	386	21%	2,212	19%
121 - 144	322	17%	1,893	16%
145 or more	212	11%	1,625	14%
Total	1,845	100%	11,789	100%

*Fall 2015 end of semester cumulative hours based on Las Cruces campus degree-seeking undergraduates only who had enrolled on the Las Cruces campus for at least one credit

Table 2. Comparison of College Major for Respondents versus Fall 2015 Undergraduates

College	Survey Respondents		Fall 2015 Undergraduates*	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Ag., Consumer, & Environ. Sci.	261	14%	1,489	13%
Arts & Sciences	615	33%	3,937	33%
Business	216	12%	1,547	13%
Education	230	12%	1,386	12%
Engineering	330	18%	1,986	17%
Health & Social Services	180	10%	1,113	9%
Undeclared/Undecided	11	1%	400	3%
Total	1,843	100%	11,858	100%

*Fall 2015 end of semester primary college, Las Cruces campus degree-seeking undergraduates only who had enrolled on the Las Cruces campus for at least one credit

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Section II - Contribution of Viewing the Wider World Courses to Student Learning Outcomes

Table 3a. VWW Courses Have (Frequencies):

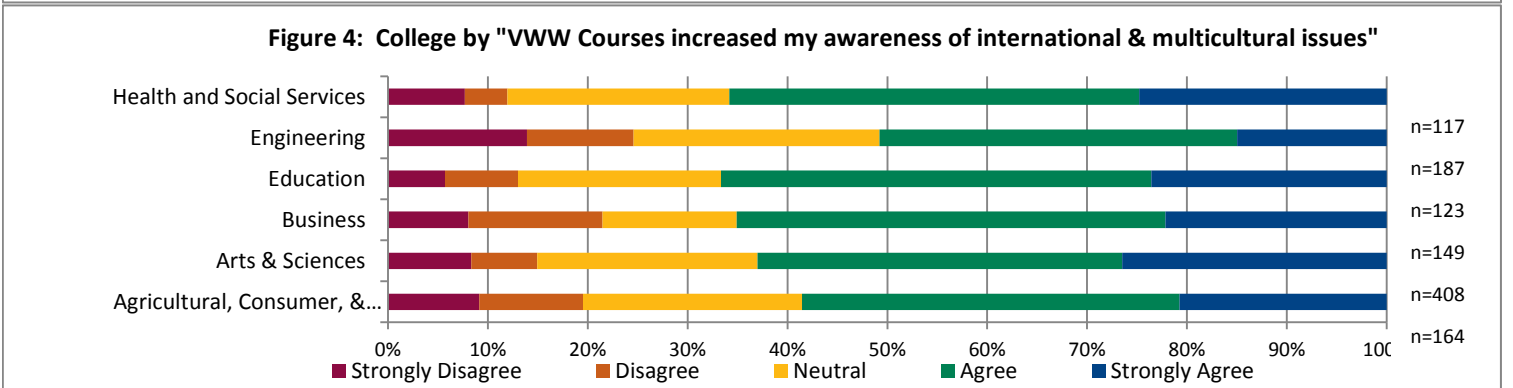
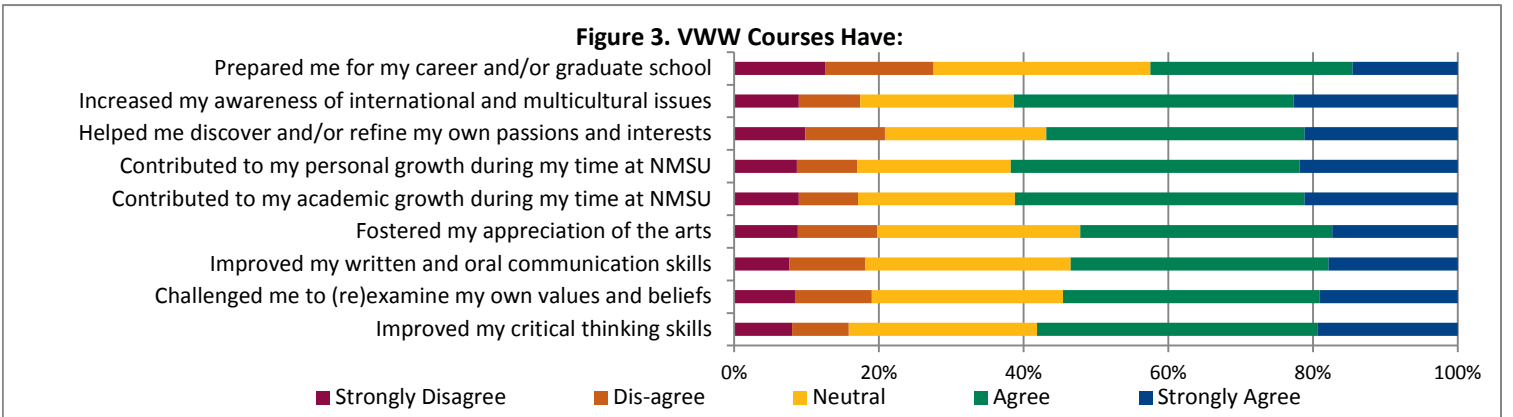
Category	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Number of Responses	Mean	Std. Dev.
Improved my critical thinking skills	93	91	303	452	225	1,164	3.54	1.13
Challenged me to (re)examine my own values and beliefs	97	123	306	411	221	1,158	3.46	1.16
Improved my written and oral communication skills	89	122	330	414	208	1,163	3.46	1.13
Fostered my appreciation of the arts	102	127	325	403	201	1,158	3.41	1.16
Contributed to my academic growth during my time at NMSU	103	95	251	463	245	1,157	3.56	1.17
Contributed to my personal growth during my time at NMSU	100	96	245	461	252	1,154	3.58	1.17
Helped me discover and/or refine my own passions and interests	113	127	257	411	244	1,152	3.47	1.22
Increased my awareness of international and multicultural issues	103	98	245	446	262	1,154	3.58	1.19
Prepared me for my career and/or graduate school	145	173	346	322	168	1,154	3.17	1.22

Note: Mean value is based on 1 for Strongly Disagree to 5 for Strongly Agree; higher mean values indicate greater satisfaction.

Table 3b. VWW Courses Have (Percentages):

Category	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree*
Improved my critical thinking skills	8%	8%	26%	39%	19%	58%
Challenged me to (re)examine my own values and beliefs	8%	11%	26%	35%	19%	55%
Improved my written and oral communication skills	8%	10%	28%	36%	18%	53%
Fostered my appreciation of the arts	9%	11%	28%	35%	17%	52%
Contributed to my academic growth during my time at NMSU	9%	8%	22%	40%	21%	61%
Contributed to my personal growth during my time at NMSU	9%	8%	21%	40%	22%	62%
Helped me discover and/or refine my own passions and interests	10%	11%	22%	36%	21%	57%
Increased my awareness of international and multicultural issues	9%	8%	21%	39%	23%	61%
Prepared me for my career and/or graduate school	13%	15%	30%	28%	15%	42%

*Percentage of respondents who reported they either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree.'



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Section III - Comparison of VWW Courses to All Other Courses

Table 4a: Compared to all other courses I've taken at NMSU, VWW course have done a better job at (Frequencies):

Category	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Number of Responses	Mean	Std. Dev.
Improved my critical thinking skills	121	196	405	318	124	1,164	3.11	1.13
Challenged me to (re)examine my own values and beliefs	108	169	365	363	147	1,152	3.24	1.14
Improved my written and oral communication skills	109	183	398	339	122	1,151	3.16	1.11
Fostered my appreciation of the arts	117	149	380	351	149	1,146	3.23	1.15
Contributed to my academic growth during my time at NMSU	122	145	340	406	139	1,152	3.26	1.15
Contributed to my personal growth during my time at NMSU	112	133	331	420	153	1,149	3.32	1.14
Helped me discover and/or refine my own passions and interests	120	150	325	385	168	1,148	3.29	1.18
Increased my awareness of international and multicultural issues	113	123	321	418	174	1,149	3.36	1.16
Prepared me for my career and/or graduate school	153	193	389	293	118	1,146	3.03	1.17

Notes: Mean values range from 1-5, whereby higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.

Table 4b: Compared to all other courses I've taken at NMSU, VWW course have done a better job at (Percentages):

Category	Strongly Disagree	Dis-agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree*
Improved my critical thinking skills	10%	17%	35%	27%	11%	38%
Challenged me to (re)examine my own values and beliefs	9%	15%	32%	32%	13%	44%
Improved my written and oral communication skills	9%	16%	35%	29%	11%	40%
Fostered my appreciation of the arts	10%	13%	33%	31%	13%	44%
Contributed to my academic growth during my time at NMSU	11%	13%	30%	35%	12%	47%
Contributed to my personal growth during my time at NMSU	10%	12%	29%	37%	13%	50%
Helped me discover and/or refine my own passions and interests	10%	13%	28%	34%	15%	48%
Increased my awareness of international and multicultural issues	10%	11%	28%	36%	15%	52%
Prepared me for my career and/or graduate school	13%	17%	34%	26%	10%	36%

*Percentage of respondents who reported they either 'Agree' or 'Strongly Agree.'

Figure 5: Compared to other NMSU courses, VWW course have better:

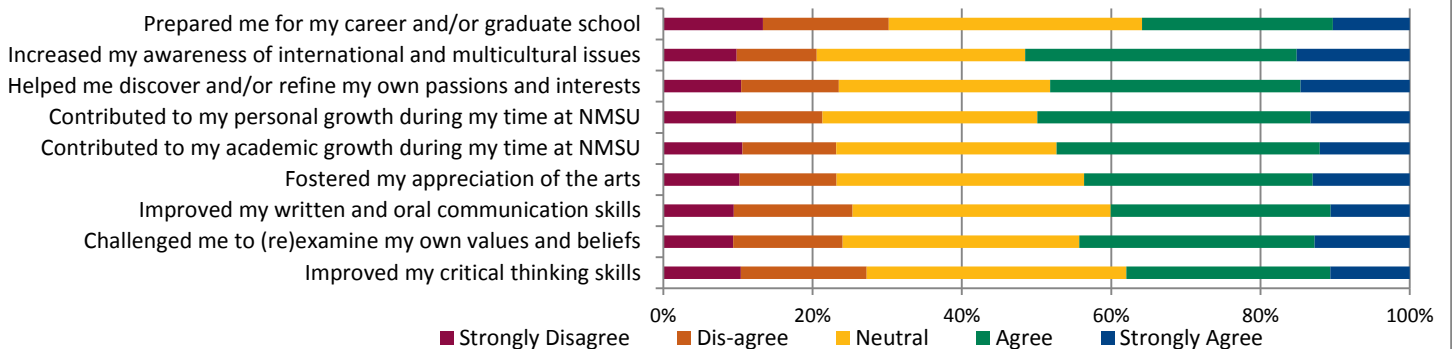
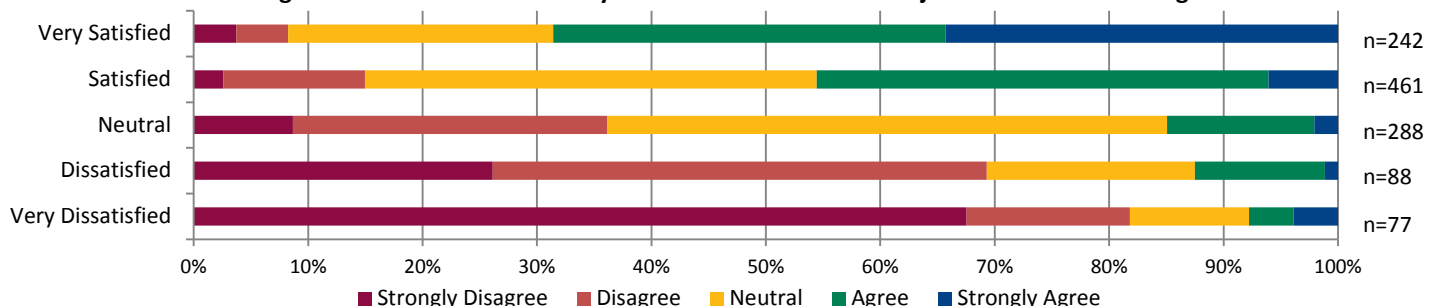
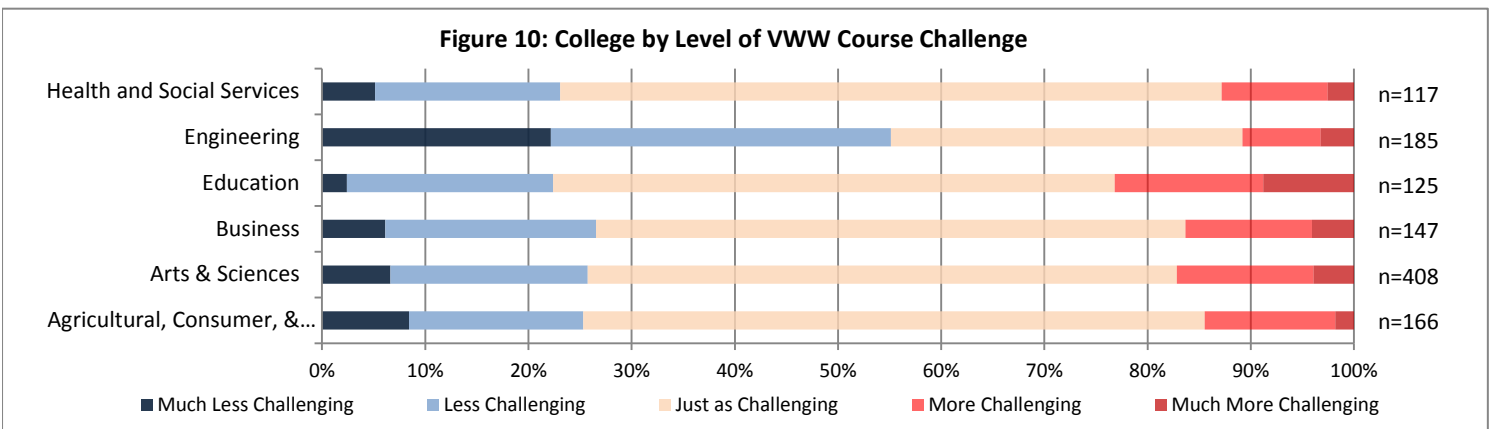
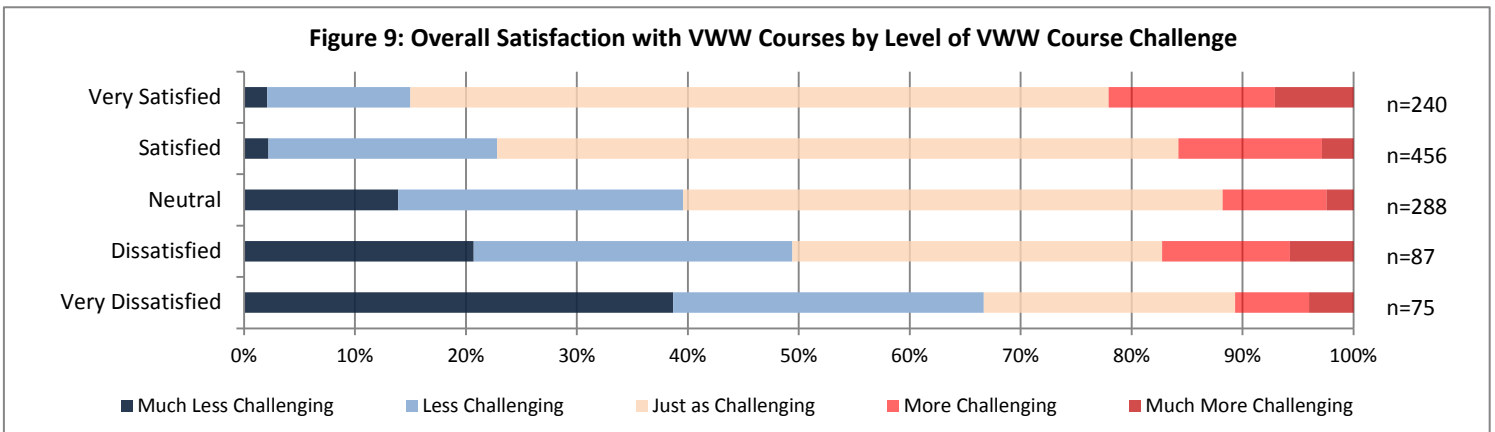
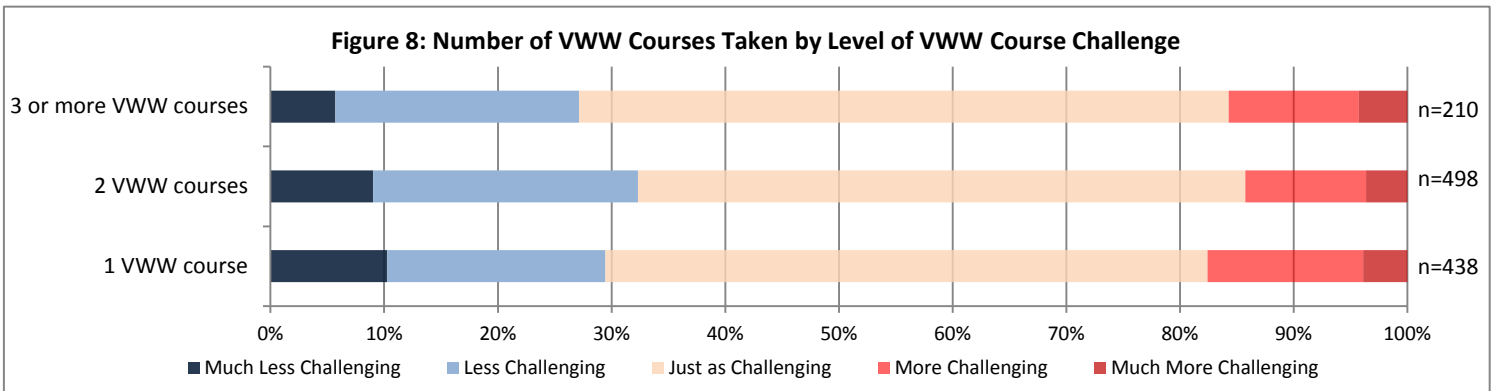
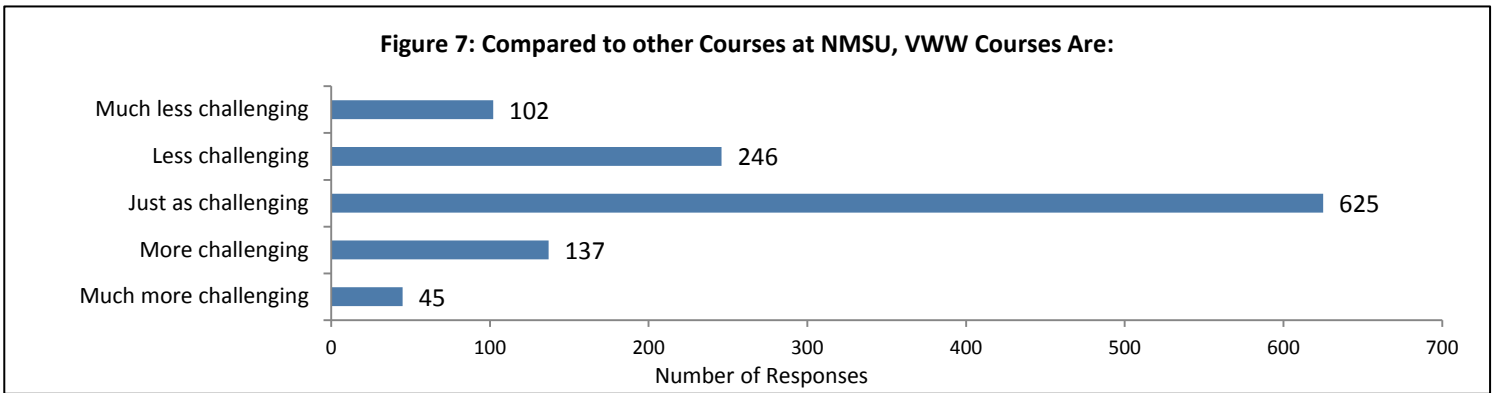


Figure 6: Overall Satisfaction by "VWW Courses do a better job with critical thinking"



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Section IV - Compared to Other Courses, How Challenging Are The VWW Courses?

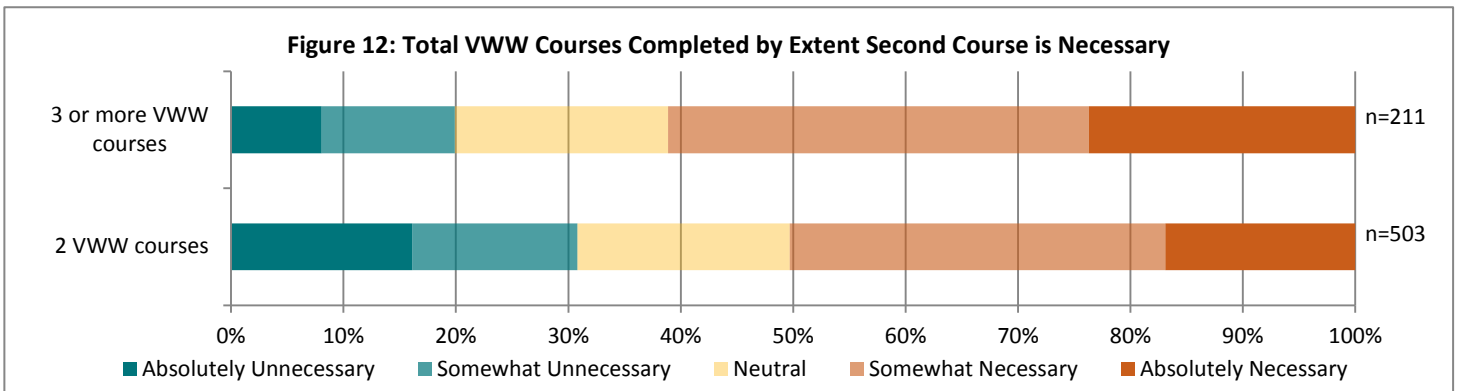
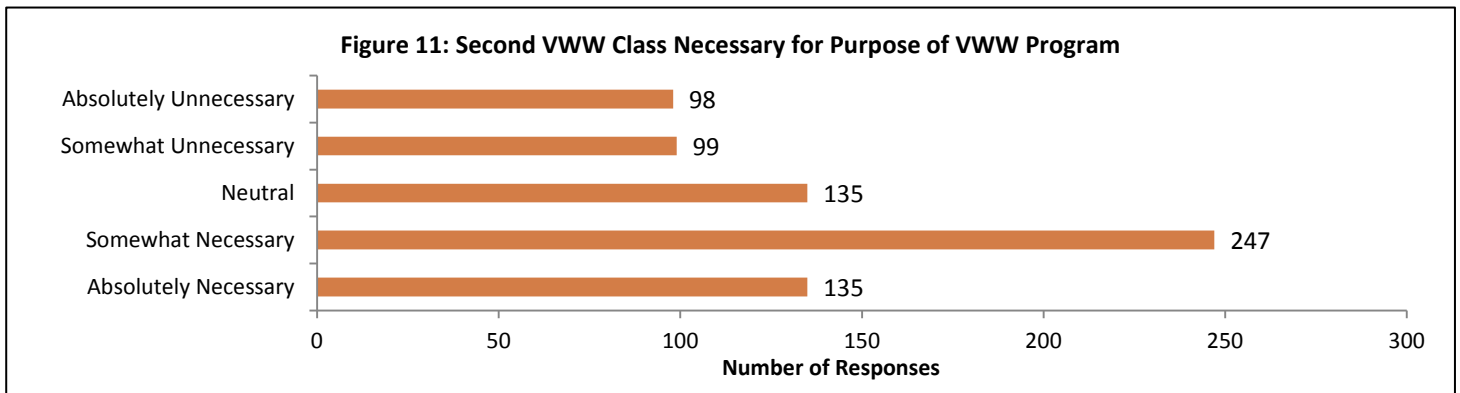


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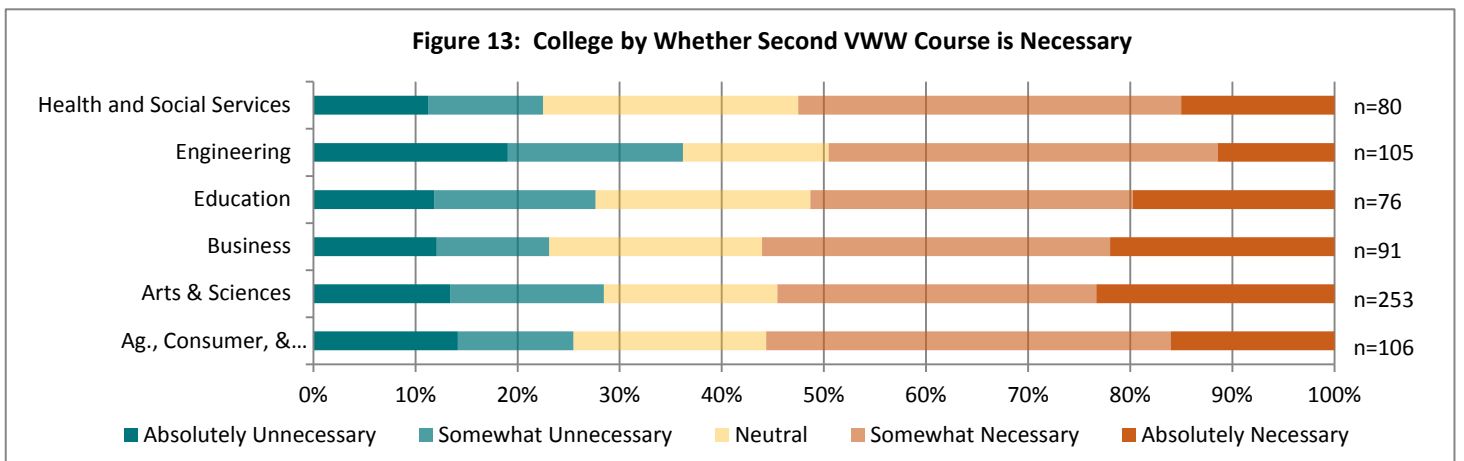
Section VII - Is a Second VWW Course Necessary?

Table 6: To What Extent do you think taking a second VWW class is necessary for students to adequately realize the intended purpose of the VWW program?

Category	Response	% of Total
Absolutely Necessary	135	19%
Somewhat Necessary	247	35%
Neutral	135	19%
Somewhat Unnecessary	99	14%
Absolutely Unnecessary	98	14%
Grand Total	714	100%

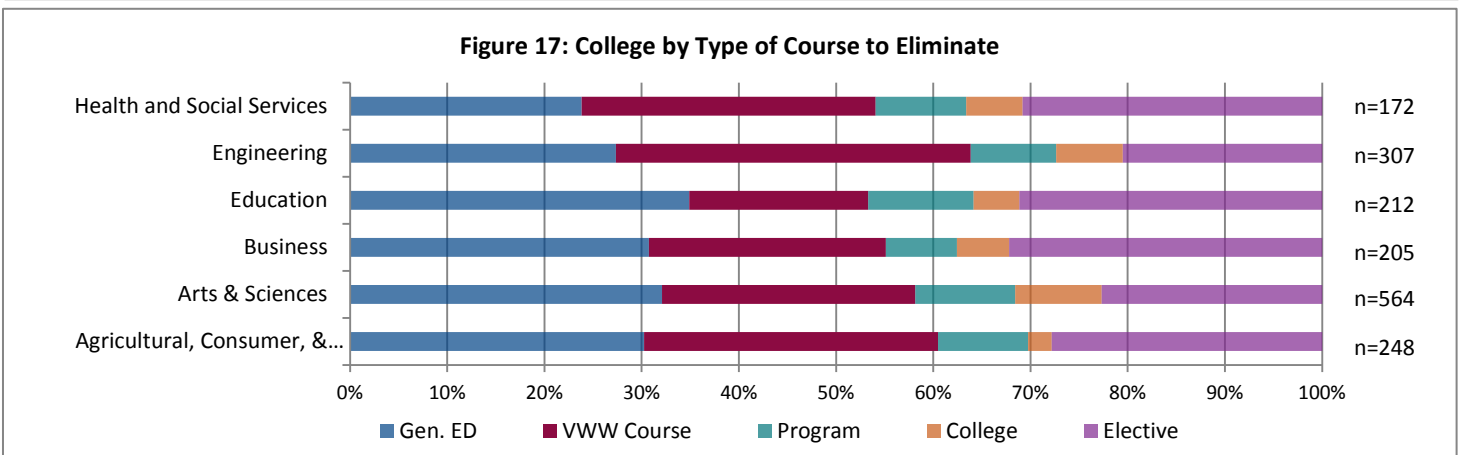
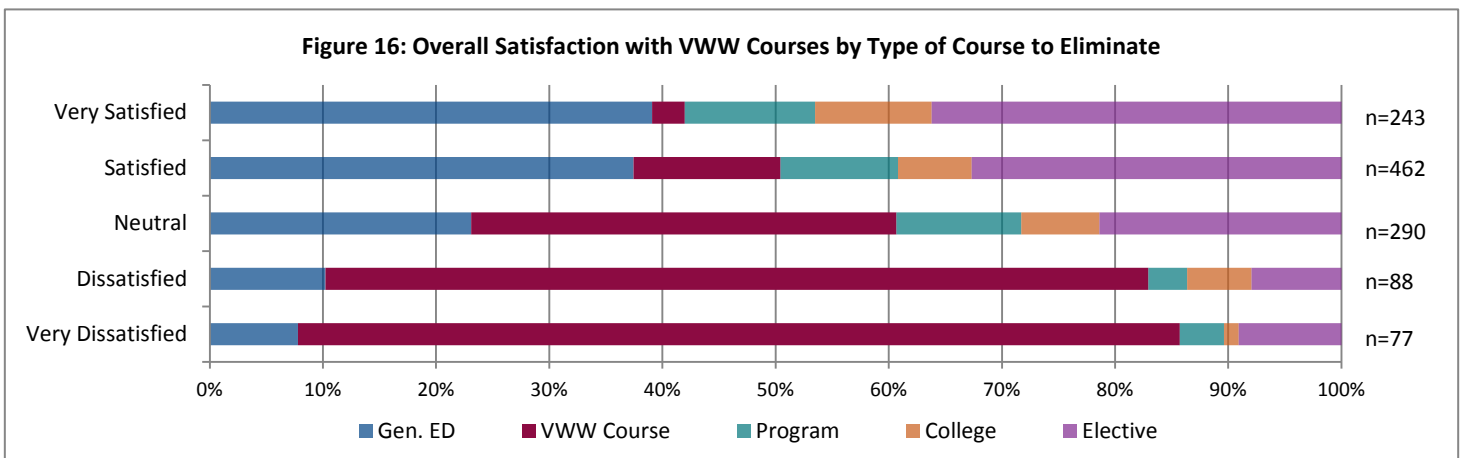
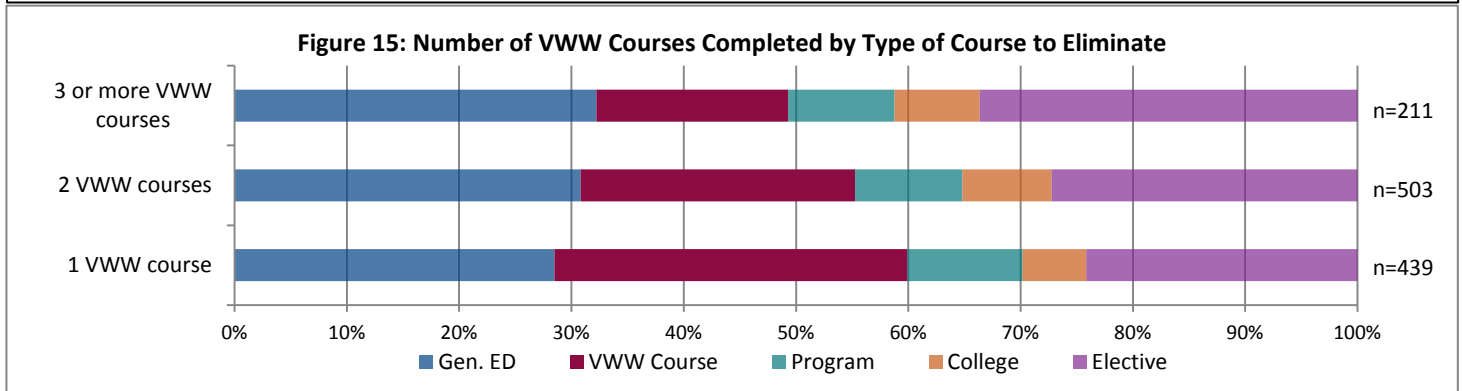
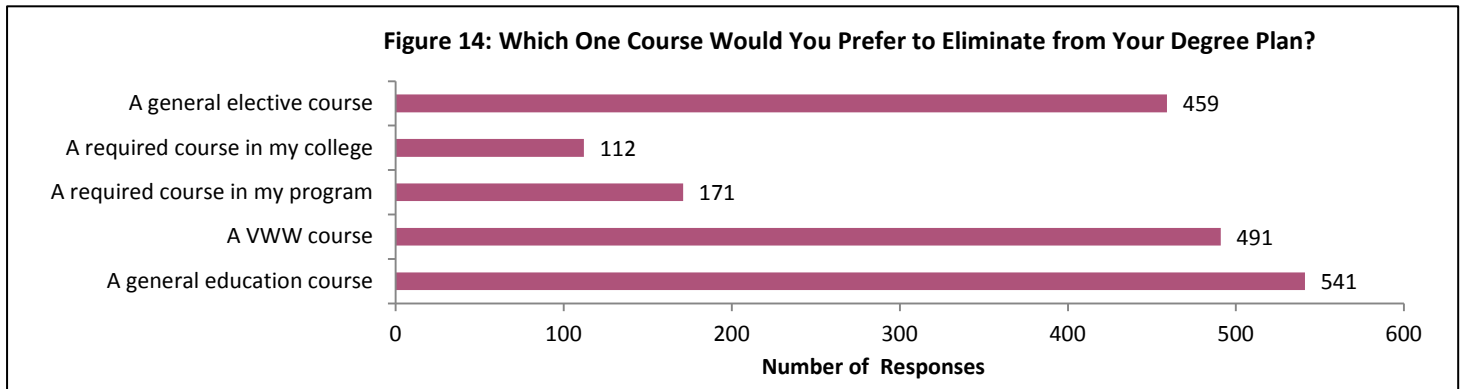


Note: students had to select "2" or "3" courses to be given this question on the survey



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Section VI - Which Type of Course Could Be Eliminated From The Degree Plan?



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Section V - Overall Satisfaction with VWW Courses

