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GENERATION Y SEEKS CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

National Survey Finds Students Want a More Interactive, High-tech Experience

PHOENIX — Generation Y, which boasts the largest population of college students in U.S. history, has a message for academia: Adapt to my high-tech world. That's the finding from a national survey conducted by University of Phoenix and The Segmentation Company (TSC), a division of Yankelovich, Inc.

In the most comprehensive study of Generation Y students, who are between the ages of 18 and 27, respondents said they want their colleges and universities to embrace technology in a bigger way. Among the ways colleges can do this are with Web sites dedicated to each course, according to 72 percent of respondents. About half (52 percent) of the survey respondents want video-streamed lectures and more online course offerings, and nearly 40 percent want course chat rooms.

“Academia is facing a paradigm shift,” said Brian Lindquist, the University’s dean and associate vice president of academic affairs. “Quite simply, these influential students want their colleges to change the way content is delivered.”

The online survey, conducted last November and which carries a margin of error of +/- 1.6 percent, asked 3,000 Gen Y students how they expect to learn and which attributes of the college experience will make them most successful. The survey paid special attention to campus vs. online learning and included both traditional students, who attend classes full-time during the day, and non-traditional students, who attend part-time or at night.

Gen Y, for whom cyberspace has always existed, differs from previous generations in terms of mindset, according to Lindquist. “This generation is accustomed to having a say. Their personal choice influences everything from designing their own shoes to voting for the next

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'American Idol,'" he said. Nearly 9 out of 10 Gen Y students (87 percent) believe the Internet is essential to success in college. Gen Y students are online an average of five hours per day for mostly functional, rather than social, purposes. A majority of Gen Y are married and heads of household at a younger age than either Gen X or Baby Boomers were when they were the same age. Nearly 70 percent of Gen Y students work while they go to school; 30 percent work more than 30 hours per week.

Positive view of online education

Gen Y students' busy lifestyles and technology prowess also are reflected in how they view online education. A third of all Gen Y students in this survey, and half of the non-traditional students, take an online class. Almost half (46 percent) are very satisfied with their online classes. For non-traditional students, the satisfaction rate was even higher than traditional students, with 49 percent reporting that they are very satisfied with their online class.

More than half (57 percent) of non-traditional students said that they want colleges to provide more classes online, and 41 percent said they want chat rooms for all classes. More than half (56 percent) of all respondents reported that flexibility is the most important advantage of online education.

Two-thirds of Gen Y students not currently taking online classes would consider them in the future. More than three quarters (78 percent) of non-traditional students and more than half (61 percent) of traditional students are likely to consider taking an online class.

"These statistics show that this generation is increasingly comfortable with online learning," said Hal E. Quinley, Ph.D., vice president of Yankelovich. "But Gen Y students still want personal support."

More personal attention

Gen Y students are seeking more personal attention from faculty, academic counselors and financial advisers. Faculty availability and academic advising are the top factors influencing their success in college, according to 67 and 65 percent of respondents, respectively. However, only a little over a third (43 and 36 percent) reported being very satisfied with these services. Financial aid counseling was rated very important by a majority of Gen Y students, yet only 28 percent report being very satisfied with it. About half (48%) of respondents reported that they are getting all of the support they need to be successful in college.

Career Opportunities

Gen Y students expect that a college education is a passport to a better job and more money. The personal enrichment factor of attending college, long a staple of the traditional

college experience, is giving way to a more practical approach to education. Nearly all (92 percent) of respondents said that “getting a good job/having a career” is an extremely/very important goal of college education. Non-traditional students are even more likely to place high value on earning power.

About University of Phoenix

University of Phoenix, working in the service of the nation for 30 years, has a mission to provide access to higher education opportunities that enable students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their professional goals, improve the productivity of their organizations, and provide leadership and service to their communities. The University currently has more than 180 campuses and learning centers in North America and Europe.

The University is the largest private accredited university in North America and is owned by parent company Apollo Group, Inc. As of May 31, 2006, 323,133 students attend Apollo Group, Inc., institutions. The University’s focus on small interactive classes, highly personalized teaching and comprehensive academic accountability systems has won praise and recognition by noteworthy academic and business leaders. The University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association.

About Yankelovich, Inc.

The Segmentation Company (TSC), a division of Yankelovich, is a full-service custom research division conducting research for business, the media, associations, and government. We specialize in studies conducted for media release as well as in segmentation research, positioning studies, brand equity, and market sizing.

Yankelovich, Inc. (www.yankelovich.com) delivers measurable breakthroughs in marketing productivity for its clients. For more than 30 years, the Yankelovich MONITOR has tracked and forecasted consumer value and lifestyle trends. Yankelovich is headquartered in Chapel Hill, NC.

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