

Results of the GPSA Pay & Benefits Committee 2005 Survey

July 31, 2005

1 Background on the GPSA and its Pay & Benefits Committee

The current system of Cornell University campus governance is based upon five committees: the Employee Assembly, the Faculty Senate, the undergraduate Student Assembly, the University Assembly, and the Graduate and Professional Student Assembly (GPSA). In addition to appointing graduate and professional students to university committees, the GPSA brings together representatives from all graduate and professional fields to address non-academic concerns. The GPSA is actively engaged in a productive dialogue with the university administration and its constituency in order to improve the quality of life for all graduate and professional students. Such dialogues have produced campus-wide social events (such as the Graduate and Professional Student Ball), the funding of student organizations, and this Pay and Benefits survey.

In March 2003, the Pay and Benefits Committee was established as a standing committee by the GPSA. This committee was charged with investigating the diverse needs and desires of graduate and professional students with regards to pay and benefits. This includes – but is not limited to – stipend levels, tuition support, health insurance coverage, and family-related issues. The Pay and Benefits Committee is dedicated to working in concert with the GPSA, the Cornell administration, and other interested parties in order to fulfill these needs and desires of graduate and professional students.

2 Acknowledgements

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The Graduate School

Cornell University's International Students and Scholars Office

The GPSA

The Pay and Benefits Committee
Anne Poduska, 2004-2005 Chair
Elise Furlan, 2004-2005 Vice-Chair
Jeffrey Sullivan, 2005-2006 Chair

3 Introduction

In August 2004, the Pay and Benefits Committee was charged with creating a survey to collect data on graduate and professional student priorities in the following areas: health insurance (including dental and vision), housing, domestic partner/spouse-related issues, childcare, and stipend levels.¹ Although this is just a small sampling of many concerns, this data is essential for focusing the committee's efforts, both in identifying the diverse needs on campus and in working towards improving pay and benefits. The committee will administer similar surveys every 3 years to keep abreast of student concerns.

The 2004-2005 Pay and Benefits survey was created with the financial and intellectual support of the GPSA, Dean Alison Power, Director of Graduate Student Life Victoria Blodgett, Students with Families, and the International Students and Scholars Office. The web programming and survey administration was carried out by the Survey Research Institute (SRI) at Cornell University, and analysis was performed by the Pay and Benefits Committee.

On February 25th and March 4th 2005, announcements outlining the survey's purpose were emailed from Dean Power to the graduate and professional students, respectively. On February 28th and March 7th 2005, survey links were emailed to the graduate and professional students. The participation window was three weeks, and non-respondents were sent a weekly reminder email.

¹Survey questions are attached to this report in Appendix 7.2.

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Table 1: Student Demographics ⁴

DESCRIPTON	FREQUENCY ¹	PERCENT
GENDER		
Male	1345	54.0
Female	1145	46.0
GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL		
Graduate ²	1780	71.9
Professional ³	694	28.1
NATIONALITY		
Domestic (US citizen)	1571	63.1
International (non-US citizen)	919	36.9
AREAS OF STUDY		
College of Arts and Sciences	680	27.3
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	547	22.0
College of Engineering	525	21.1
Johnson Graduate School of Management	180	7.2
College of Veterinary Medicine	125	5.0
College of Architecture, Art and Planning	117	4.7
Law School	106	4.3
College of Human Ecology	98	3.9
School of Labor and Industrial Relations	76	3.1
School of Hotel Administration	36	1.4
TOTAL	2490	100.0%

4 Sample Description

- The overall response for this survey was 40.6% (2490 out of 6383 students).
- 53.8% of all graduate students responded, while 25.4% of all professional students responded.

Students from the School of Hotel Administration, the Johnson Graduate School of Management, and the Law School are the most underrepresented, whereas students from the College of Arts and Sciences and College of Agriculture and Life Sciences are the most overrepresented.

A demographic profile of the sample is presented in Table 1.

5 Survey Results

5.1 Student Ranking of Priorities

The respondents were asked to rank, from one to seven (with one being the most important and seven the least important) which areas they think need the greatest improvement, both for the themselves and their families, and also for the Cornell community. These rankings can be found in Table 2; the mean value was obtained by calculating a weighted sum of all responses. Please note that a low-valued mean indicates more need for improvement than a higher-valued mean.

Stipend and health insurance are the first and second priorities, respectively, whether considering themselves or community needs. In fact, 46.6% of respondents ranked stipend as the number one choice for improvement for the student and 49.2% of respondents felt that stipends needed most improvement for the Cornell community. Data analysis shows that these two issues remain top priorities, irregardless of gender, nationality, and family size.

¹Numbers may not total to 2490 due to missing or unreported data

²Graduate students are those enrolled in J.S.D., LL.M., M.A., Ph.D., M.S., M.A. in Teaching, M.F.A./Ph.D. programs.

³Professional students are those enrolled in all non-graduate programs (such as D.V.M., M.B.A., M.F.A., and M.Eng.).

⁴The total number of survey respondents was 2565, but 75 did not consent to have their personal information included. These students will not be included in the discussion whenever this information is used.

Table 2: Summary of Student Rankings. The column titled “#1 choice” indicates the number of respondents who ranked that category as of primary importance for improvement.

For the Respondent and Family

	N	mean	std. dev.	#1 choice
stipend	2225	2.53	1.88	1067
health insurance	2264	2.87	1.51	453
dental insurance	2199	3.49	1.59	280
housing	2159	3.71	1.80	257
vision insurance	2119	4.36	1.61	92
domestic partner/spouse benefits	1781	4.78	1.80	105
childcare	1694	5.59	1.86	103

For the Cornell Community

	N	mean	std. dev.	#1 choice
stipend	2085	2.57	2.00	1055
health insurance	2095	3.05	1.64	376
housing	2046	3.85	1.93	270
dental insurance	2048	3.86	1.72	199
domestic partner/spouse benefits	1836	4.44	1.78	122
childcare	1810	4.75	1.97	125
vision insurance	1992	4.82	1.73	72

Childcare, domestic partner/spouse benefits, and vision insurance seem to be the lowest priorities. However, out of the 199 people who reported having children living with them in Ithaca, 103 (51.8%) responded that childcare is of primary importance.

These rankings were broken down into the categories shown in Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 and discussed in the following sections. T-tests were performed to detect significant differences in responses.

5.1.1 Graduate and Professional Students

Graduate and professional students agree that domestic partner/spouse benefits, childcare, and vision are of lowest priority. (Table 3) Professional students, however, believe that health insurance is the top priority and stipend is of secondary importance (which could be reflective of the fact that many professional students do not receive stipends). (Section 5.6) In fact, professional students find health insurance and housing to be significantly more important than do graduate students. Dental insurance and stipend, on the other hand, are significantly less important to professional students.

5.1.2 International and Domestic Students

Although both international and domestic students essentially agree on the same rankings (except for a switch in dental and housing priorities for themselves), there is a significant difference in the weightings. (Table 4)

For both the respondent and the Cornell community, international students rank housing as a significantly higher priority than domestic students. For themselves, international students felt that health, dental, and vision insurance is significantly less important than domestic students. For the Cornell community, international students felt that vision insurance and childcare are significantly less important than domestic students.

5.1.3 Students With a Domestic Partner/Spouse

There is a significant difference in prioritizing childcare and spousal benefits when comparing responses between those with and without a domestic partner/spouse. (Table 5) Those with a domestic partner/spouse find partner benefits to be the third priority for both themselves and the Cornell community, whereas those without a domestic partner/spouse rank it sixth in both cases. Those with a domestic partner/spouse also rank childcare as being significantly more important, both for family and for the community.

Table 3: Priority rankings are summarized by status (graduate or professional student). Differences in prioritization between graduate and professional students are emphasized with italics.

Professional Student: Respondent		Graduate Student: Respondent	
	mean		mean
<i>health insurance</i>	2.67	<i>stipend</i>	2.42
<i>stipend</i>	2.85	<i>health insurance</i>	2.95
<i>housing</i>	3.07	<i>dental</i>	3.39
<i>dental</i>	3.75	<i>housing</i>	3.95
vision	4.44	vision	4.33
domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.96	domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.73
childcare	5.7	childcare	5.56
Professional Student: Community		Graduate Student: Community	
	mean		mean
<i>health insurance</i>	2.82	<i>stipend</i>	2.43
<i>stipend</i>	2.96	<i>health insurance</i>	3.14
<i>housing</i>	3.23	<i>dental</i>	3.82
<i>dental</i>	3.99	<i>housing</i>	4.08
domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.53	domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.42
<i>vision</i>	4.75	<i>childcare</i>	4.63
<i>childcare</i>	5.09	<i>vision</i>	4.84

Table 4: Priority rankings are summarized by citizenship. Items of disagreement between domestic and international students are emphasized with italics.

International Student: Respondent		Domestic Student: Respondent	
	mean		mean
<i>stipend</i>	2.45	<i>stipend</i>	2.58
<i>health insurance</i>	3.01	<i>health insurance</i>	2.79
<i>housing</i>	3.38	<i>dental</i>	3.35
<i>dental</i>	3.72	<i>housing</i>	3.91
vision	4.62	vision	4.2
domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.7	domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.84
childcare	5.52	childcare	5.64
International Student: Community		Domestic Student: Community	
	mean		mean
<i>stipend</i>	2.51	<i>stipend</i>	2.6
<i>health insurance</i>	3.1	<i>health insurance</i>	3.02
<i>housing</i>	3.48	<i>housing</i>	3.48
<i>dental</i>	3.92	<i>dental</i>	3.91
domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.5	domestic partner/spouse benefits	4.5
childcare	4.88	childcare	4.68
vision	4.9	vision	4.77

Table 5: Priority Rankings by Students With and Without a Domestic Partner/Spouse

Student With Domestic Partner/Spouse: Respondent		Student Without Domestic Partner/Spouse: Respondent	
	mean		mean
stipend	2.67	stipend	2.47
health insurance	3.02	health insurance	2.81
<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	3.81	<i>dental</i>	3.33
<i>dental</i>	3.84	<i>housing</i>	3.46
<i>housing</i>	4.3	<i>vision</i>	4.18
<i>vision</i>	4.77	<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	5.35
childcare	4.99	childcare	5.91

Student With Domestic Partner/Spouse: Community		Student Without Domestic Partner/Spouse: Community	
	mean		mean
stipend	2.67	stipend	2.53
health insurance	3.21	health insurance	2.98
<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	3.8	<i>dental</i>	3.71
<i>housing</i>	4.15	<i>housing</i>	3.72
<i>dental</i>	4.19	<i>vision</i>	4.65
<i>childcare</i>	4.3	<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	4.78
<i>vision</i>	5.19	<i>childcare</i>	4.97

Table 6: Priority Rankings by Students With and Without Children

Student With Children: Respondent		Student Without Children: Respondent	
	mean		mean
stipend	2.69	stipend	2.52
health insurance	3.1	health insurance	2.85
<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	3.72	<i>dental</i>	3.42
<i>childcare</i>	3.78	<i>housing</i>	3.64
<i>dental</i>	4.22	<i>vision</i>	4.27
<i>housing</i>	4.54	<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	4.89
<i>vision</i>	5.32	<i>childcare</i>	5.8

Student With Children: Community		Student Without Children: Community	
	mean		mean
stipend	2.71	stipend	2.56
health insurance	3.29	health insurance	3.04
<i>childcare</i>	3.75	<i>dental</i>	3.81
<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	3.78	<i>housing</i>	3.84
<i>housing</i>	4.02	<i>domestic partner/spouse benefits</i>	4.5
<i>dental</i>	4.36	<i>vision</i>	4.75
<i>vision</i>	5.53	<i>childcare</i>	4.85

5.1.4 Students With Children

Both for themselves and for the Cornell community, those with children rank spousal benefits and childcare significantly higher than those without children. (Table 6) People without children rank dental and vision insurance as significantly more important than do those with children.

5.1.5 Stipend Levels

By correlating stipend level with the importance of each of the issues, respondents with higher stipend levels find dental insurance and spousal benefits to be significantly more important than those with lower stipend levels. Also, those with lower stipends think that stipend levels and housing are significantly more important than those with higher levels.

For the Cornell community, those with higher stipends find that spousal benefits and childcare are significantly more important, whereas health insurance and housing are significantly less important.

5.1.6 Income Levels

Income levels, gathered only for students who did not receive stipends, were also correlated with the importance of each of the issues. Those with higher incomes think that spousal benefits and childcare are significantly more important for themselves. For the Cornell community, those with higher incomes think that childcare is significantly more important.

Table 7: Source of Insurance for Students Not Enrolled in SHIP

Frequency	Percentage of Non-SHIP students	Source of Insurance
66	30.6%	other
63	29.2%	covered by my parent's insurance plan
47	21.8%	covered under domestic partner/spouse's plan
31	14.4%	covered by a non-Cornell employer
9	4.2%	I do not have any health insurance

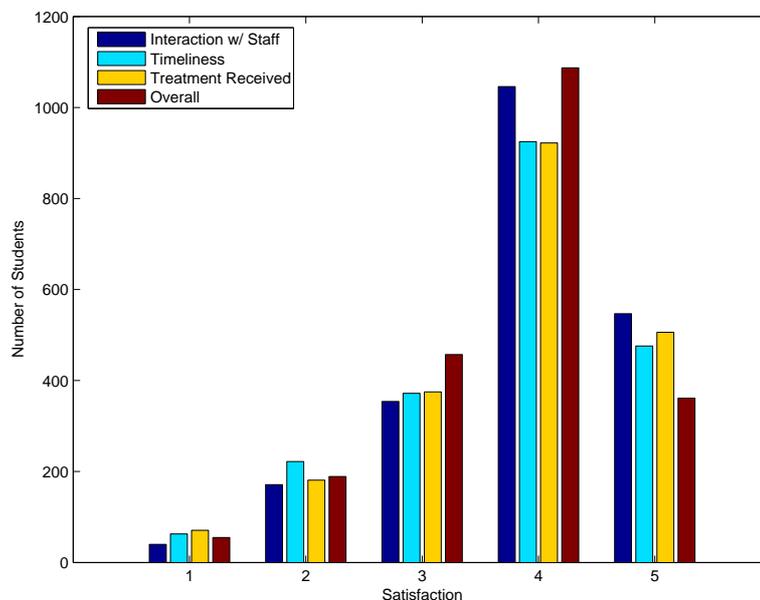


Figure 1: Students rated numerous aspects of their health care service on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied).

5.2 Health Insurance

Students were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of health, dental, and vision insurance offered at Cornell, both for themselves and for their families. Respondents also provided information about the factors behind their decision about enrolling in these insurance plans.

5.2.1 Student Health Insurance Plan: Student

- Most respondents (91.8%) are covered under the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP).
- Those who don't have SHIP are mainly covered under a parent or domestic partner/spouse's plan, or some other source of insurance. (Table 7)

Interestingly, nine people reported not having health insurance, which is supposedly impossible since proof of insurance is required to enroll at Cornell.

5.2.2 Satisfaction With SHIP, Gannett, and Aetna

Satisfied or Very Satisfied Over 60% of students report being satisfied or very satisfied with interaction with the Gannett staff, the timeliness of getting appointments and/or treatments, the treatments received at Gannett, and the Gannett services overall. (Figure 1)

Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied Students tended to be more dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with prescription coverage and the information provided by both Gannett and Aetna regarding services and coverage. (Figure 2)

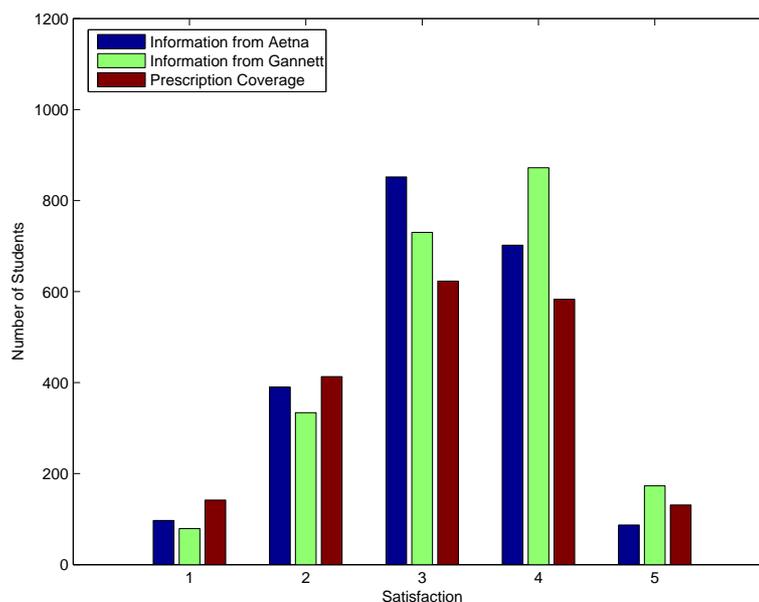


Figure 2: Students rated numerous aspects of their health care service on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied).

Open-Ended Comments

General Comments Many respondents said they have barely used services under SHIP, so they could not offer opinions on service satisfaction.

Gannett services Among people who have used Gannett services, it seems that their satisfaction depended on who they saw there. While some nurses, nurse practitioners, and doctors seem to be knowledgeable and helpful, others were seen as incompetent and poor communicators. Many students also expressed concerns that Gannett does not have enough personnel to take the time for each student’s health concerns. Some felt this is because Gannett is more geared towards undergraduates and that graduate students in general are not treated as adults, but as unruly teenagers.

Some students wish to have an assigned primary care physician instead of seeing a new person for each visit. A few of the respondents were concerned that they were only able to see a nurse or nurse practitioner at Gannett; they felt that they did not get proper care and diagnosis. Some required multiple visits to get proper treatment, and in a few cases conditions became aggravated instead of cured.

Prescription Coverage and Charges for Services Some of the graduate and professional students expressed their deep dissatisfaction with the prescription coverage; they felt the limit was too low, especially for people with chronic conditions (who reach the maximum fairly soon), and that co-pays and drug prices are very high. A few students complained about the high cost of birth-control pills.²

Information The Aetna office is apparently slow in dealing with reimbursements, and it often provides wrong or self-contradictory information. A large number of respondents expressed their desire to have much clearer information on their health insurance plan, especially regarding coverage and out-of-pocket expenses. Students would like to be informed beforehand about the costs of services, such as lab tests or seeing a specialist.

Some international students would like an introduction of how the American health care system works.

Other Concerns A lot of respondents felt the plan did not cover much; they conceded that it is a good accident/sickness plan, but not tailored to the needs of an older student population, as graduate students often are.

²Current prices are available at <http://www.gannett.cornell.edu/pharmacy/gyn-care-contraceptives.html> and start at \$12 a month.

Table 8: Why Students Are Not Enrolled in Concordia Flex Dental Plan

Frequency	Percent of Non-Enrolled	Reason for Declining
644	32.7%	too expensive for the services it offered
428	21.7%	could not afford the plan
302	15.3%	already have a different dental plan
197	10.0 %	Other
176	8.9 %	don't want dental insurance
123	6.2%	missed the deadline for enrollment
79	4.0 %	dental work needed was not covered by this plan
23	1.2 %	had the plan last year and was dissatisfied

Students pointed out that other universities seem to offer much better health insurance plans. Many people think preventative care should be included. A few respondents wished the student health insurance plan was more flexible, especially regarding starting dates and choice of primary care provider.

5.2.3 Student Health Insurance Plan: Domestic Partner/Spouse

Most respondents' domestic partners/spouses have health insurance: 82.2% of domestic partners/spouses have insurance, 16.6% do not, and the rest were unsure or did not respond.³ The percentage of domestic partners/spouses without insurance (16.6%) is much higher than that for respondents without insurance (4.2%).

Moreover, this value of 16.6% is slightly higher than the national average. According to the National Center for Health Statistics' Early Release National Health Interview Survey, the percentage of uninsured people in 2004 was 14.7% [1].

Most domestic partners/spouses who have insurance are not enrolled in SHIP: only 37.4% are enrolled, as compared to the 61.0% not enrolled.

Open-Ended Comments Numerous students remarked that spousal and dependent premiums are financially taxing for graduate students.⁴ Others mentioned that his/her domestic partner/spouse was insured by his/her employer.

Many respondents pointed out that domestic partners of different sexes are not recognized by Cornell, making them ineligible for the insurance plans.

5.2.4 Student Health Insurance Plan: Children

Most students' children are not enrolled in SHIP. 34.9% of respondents' children are enrolled in SHIP, whereas 64.6% are not enrolled.⁵

Open-Ended Comments Most respondents mentioned that their children are covered by some other plan, such as Family Health Plus or Medicaid. A few respondents mentioned that there should be more information given to parents about the government sponsored Child Health Plus and Healthy Families plans.

5.2.5 Concordia Flex Dental Plan: Student

Enrollment Only 10.5% of respondents are enrolled in the Concordia Flex dental plan. For the 86% of respondents who did not enroll, many believed that the plan was too expensive for the services it offered or that they couldn't afford the plan. (Table 8) According to the 1995 National Health Interview Survey, 44% of Americans have private dental insurance (most with limited coverage and with high copayments), whereas 11% have either public or some other dental insurance, and 45% go uninsured.[2]

³Answers to the question "If your domestic partner/spouse or children are not enrolled in SHIP, why not?" were lost due to a survey programming error.

⁴In academic year 2004-2005, the cost for the student is \$1,202 per year, while the cost of adding a spouse or same-sex partner is \$2,728 per year.

⁵Answers to the question "If your domestic partner/spouse or children are not enrolled in SHIP, why not?" were lost due to a survey programming error.

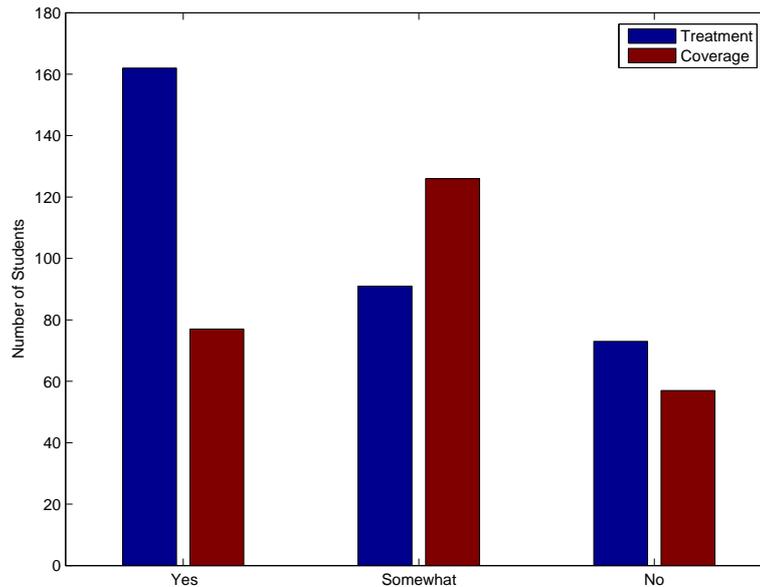


Figure 3: Respondents answered whether they were satisfied with the treatment and covered of the optional dental plan.

Satisfaction For those who had or have Concordia Flex dental insurance, most appeared to be satisfied with the treatment but not the plan coverage. (Figure 3)

Expenses For those who had to spend money on dental work not covered by the plan, most spent under \$200 for the additional services. (Figure 4)

For those without dental insurance, most spent nothing on dental costs in the past 12 months, whereas 36.4% spent between \$1-\$500. (Figure 5) Dental costs, regardless of whether the student has dental insurance, appear to be a small percentage of student stipends, as at least 95% of students pay 5% or less of their stipend/income towards dental costs. (Figures 6, 7, 9, 10)

Open-Ended Comments The majority of comments came from people who have not heard about this plan; others felt uninformed about services and the enrollment process. Many noted that the plan is too expensive for the services it offered and that the plan should be expanded in terms of providers, services, and to areas beyond Ithaca. Students wished that root canals, crowns, wisdom tooth extraction, and non-amalgam fillings were covered by the plan.

A number of people preferred to keep seeing their current dentist, who usually is not covered under the plan offered by Cornell. Many international students pointed out that dental services are less expensive in other countries, so they take care of dental needs when visiting home. Several students felt that the cost of the dental services they needed did not warrant the purchase of insurance; some expressed their intent to purchase insurance every other year.

In some of the open-ended comments, students mentioned that they could not afford more expensive dental procedures and therefore did not get them.

5.2.6 Concordia Flex Dental Plan: Domestic Partner/Spouse and Children

Only 2.1% percent of domestic partner/spouses and 3.6% of respondents' children are enrolled in the Concordia Flex dental plan. ⁶

Open-Ended Comments Most respondents mentioned one of the following reasons for why they didn't enroll: they didn't know about the plan, the domestic partner/spouse didn't qualify for the plan since the student wasn't

⁶ Answers to the question "If your domestic partner/spouse or children are not enrolled in the Concordia Flex dental plan, why not?" were lost due to a survey programming error.

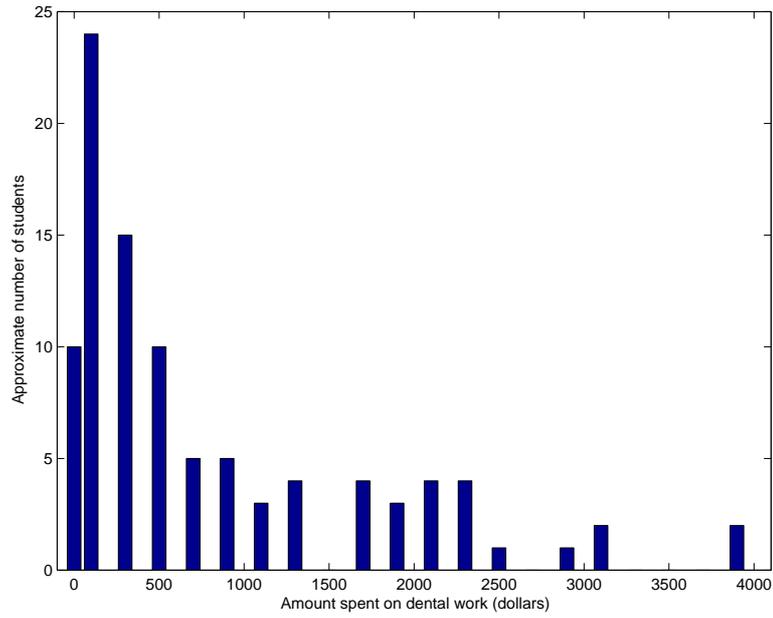


Figure 4: Money spend on uncovered dental expenses in the year prior to the survey by students who enrolled in the optional dental plan. In addition to the graph, two students spent more than \$4,000. The original survey question only concerned the previous six months (the dental plan was in its first year), so responses were doubled to approximate yearly expenses.

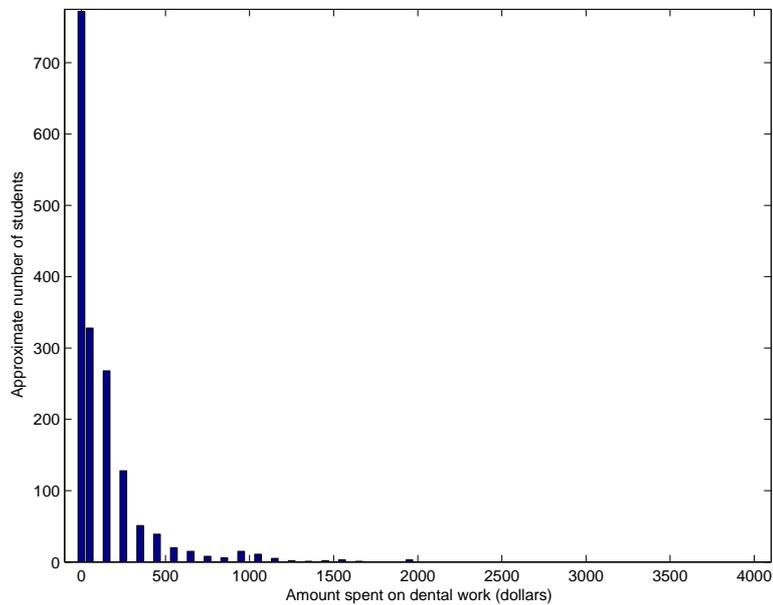


Figure 5: Money spent on dental expenses in the year prior to the survey. In addition to the graph, twenty-one uncovered students spent more than \$2,000.

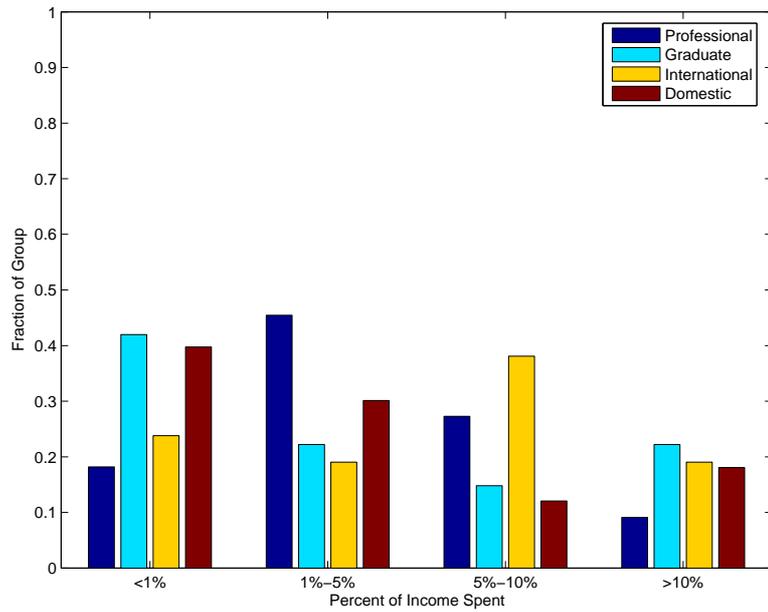


Figure 6: The fraction of students in each group who spent a certain percentage of their annual income on dental expenses. This is for students who chose to enroll in the dental plan.

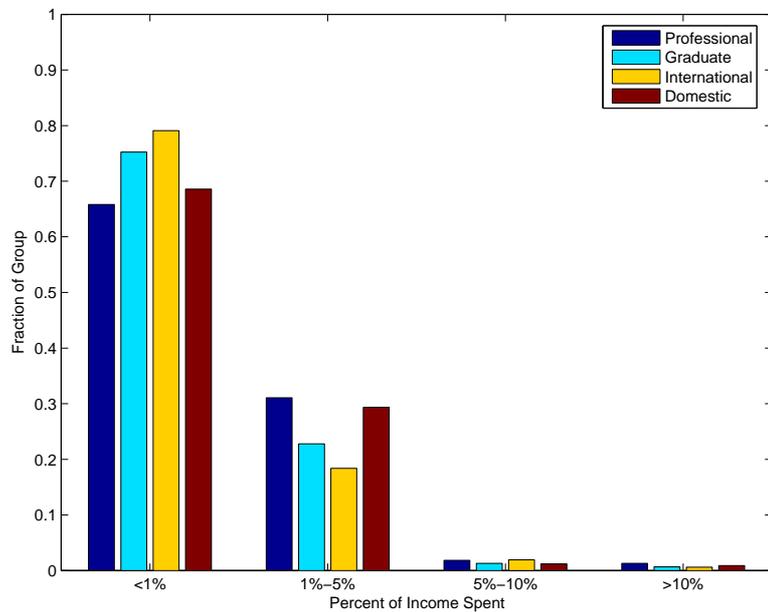


Figure 7: The fraction of students in each group who spent a certain percentage of their annual income on dental expenses. This is for students who chose not to enroll in the dental plan.

Table 9: Why Students Are Not Enrolled in Davis Vision Plan

Frequency	Percent of Non-Enrolled	Reason for Declining
580	27.8%	don't want vision insurance
525	25.1%	too expensive for services offered
381	18.2%	could not afford the plan
248	11.9%	Other
213	10.2%	have a different vision plan
96	4.6%	missed the deadline for enrollment
37	1.8%	vision services needed are not covered
10	0.5%	had the plan last year and were dissatisfied

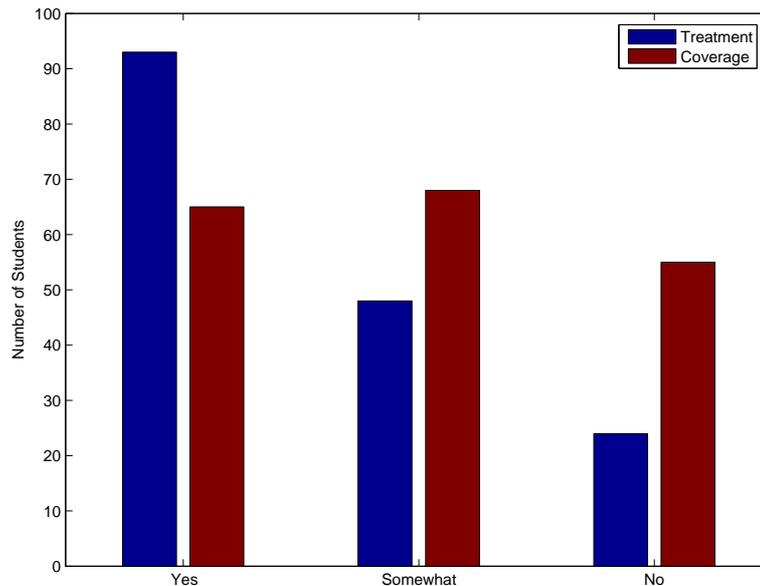


Figure 8: Respondents answered whether they were satisfied with the treatment and coverage of the optional vision plan.

enrolled in the dental plan, they have a heterosexual domestic partnership, or the plan was too expensive. Children were not enrolled because they didn't have teeth yet or else they receive coverage from the Healthy Families or Child Health Plus plans.

5.2.7 Davis Vision Plan: Student

Enrollment Even fewer numbers of students enrolled in the vision plan as compared to the dental plan. 5.8% of respondents currently have the Davis Vision plan, 91.7% do not, and the rest were unsure.

For the 91.7% of students who did not enroll, many responded that they didn't want vision insurance or they thought the plan was too expensive for the services it offered. (Table 9)

Satisfaction For those who had or have had the Davis Vision plan, most were satisfied with the treatment, and fewer were satisfied with the plan's coverage. (Figure 8)

Expenses For those who had to spend money on vision services not covered by the plan, most spent under \$100 for the additional services. (Figure 11)

For those without vision insurance, most spent nothing on vision costs in the past 12 months, whereas 43.0% spent between \$1-500. (Figure 12) Vision costs, regardless of whether the student has vision insurance, appear to be a small percentage of student stipends, as at least 95% of students pay 5% or less of their stipend/income towards vision costs. (Figures 9 and 10)

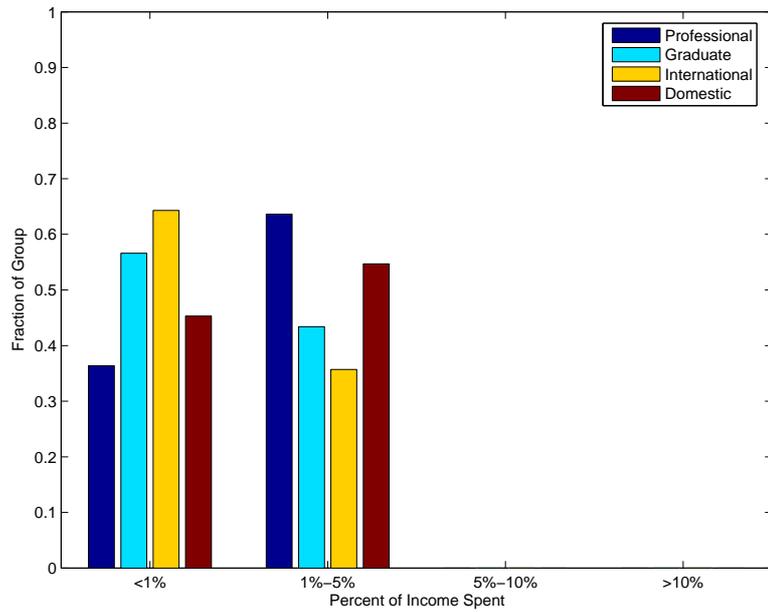


Figure 9: The fraction of students in each group who spent a certain percentage of their annual income on vision expenses. This is for students who chose to enroll in the vision plan.

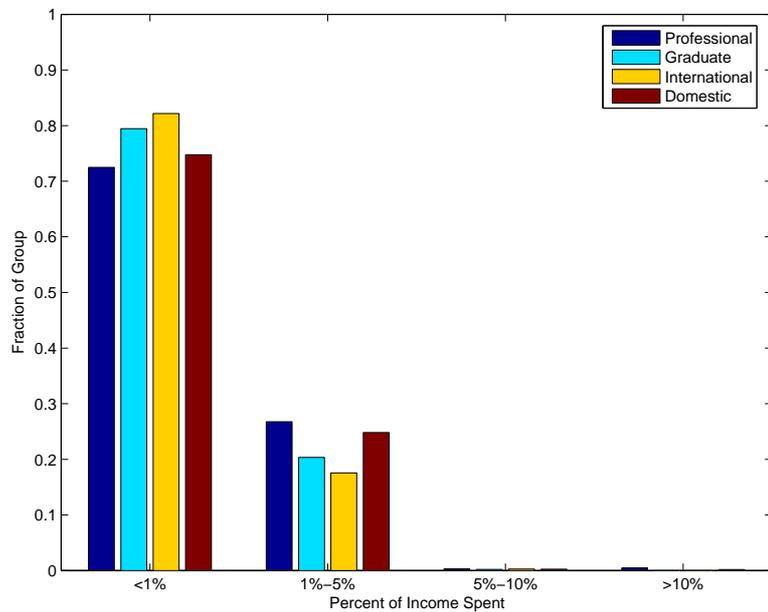


Figure 10: The fraction of students in each group who spent a certain percentage of their annual income on vision expenses. This is for students who chose not to enroll in the vision plan.

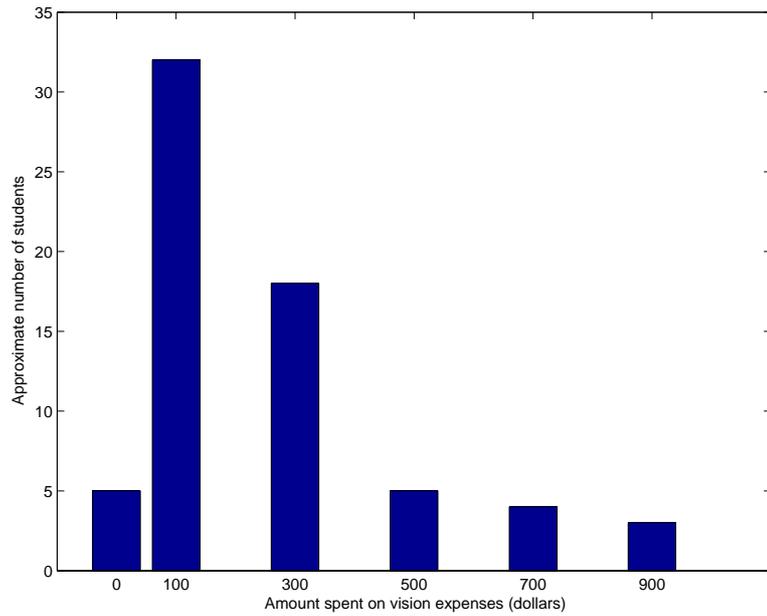


Figure 11: Students participating in the vision plan spent approximately this much money on vision expenses not covered by the plan in the year before the survey. In addition to the graph, four students spent more than \$1,00 and three were not sure. Since the plan had only be available for six months at the time of the survey, respondents reported expenditures for the previous six months and these numbers were then doubled for an estimate of yearly expenses.

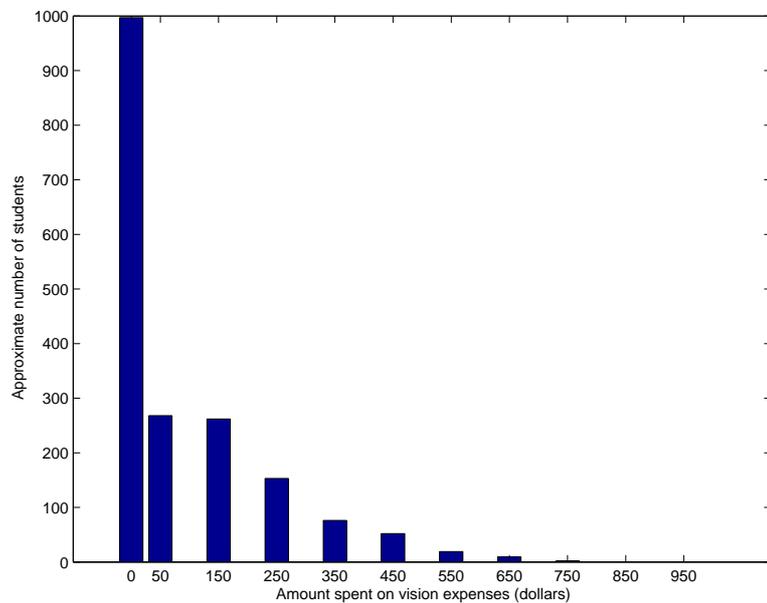


Figure 12: Summary of how much students without vision insurance paid for vision work in the year before the survey. In addition to the graph, twelve students spent more than \$1000 on eye care and 33 were not sure.

Open-Ended Comments Regarding the vision insurance, many responded they did not need it since they did not have any vision problems. Others noted that the plan should be expanded in terms of providers and services.

5.2.8 Davis Vision Plan: Domestic Partner/Spouse and Children

Only 3.8% percent of domestic partner/spouses and 0% of respondents' children are enrolled in the vision plan.⁷

Open-Ended Comments When explaining why they did not enroll their domestic partners/spouses in the plan, most respondents noted that they didn't know about the plan, the domestic partner/spouse didn't qualify for the plan since the student wasn't enrolled, they had a heterosexual domestic partnership, or that the plan was too expensive. Children were not enrolled because they were too young, the student didn't know about it, or they receive coverage from other plans.

⁷Answers to the question "If your domestic partner/spouse or children are not enrolled in the Davis Vision plan, why not?" were lost due to a survey programming error.

Table 10: These tables show the breakdown of difficulty when it comes to domestic partners/spouses obtaining jobs.

(a) Professional vs. Graduate				(b) International vs. Domestic			
	Difficult	Not Difficult	Total		Difficult	Not Difficult	Total
Professional	59	18	77	International	97	26	123
Graduate	263	85	348	Domestic	226	77	303
Total	322	103	425	Total	323	103	426

Table 11: Students whose domestic partners/spouses easily found jobs were asked which Cornell resources were helpful and which were not. Students who reported difficulty on behalf of their domestic partners/spouses were asked which resources would have been helpful.

Item	Was Helpful	Was Not Helpful	Would Have Been Helpful	Would Not Have Been Helpful
Career Services Office	2.9%	97.1%	50.8%	49.2%
Websites	25.0%	75.0%	30.0%	70.3%
Reading Material Offered by Cornell	5.8%	94.2%	18.7%	81.3%
Cornell Networking	23.1%	76.9%	56.9%	43.1%
Training by Cornell	2.9%	97.1%	25.7%	74.3%
Nothing	41.3%	58.7%	24.8%	75.2%

5.3 Domestic Partner/Spouse Issues

- 30.5% of respondents have a domestic partner/spouse living with them in Ithaca.
- 44.6% reported that it was difficult for their domestic partners/spouses to find jobs, whereas 14.2% said it was not difficult. The remaining respondents said they were unsure or that their domestic partner/spouse was not looking for a job.

Respondents answered questions relating to the job-finding process for their domestic partners/spouses and provided open-ended comments on other issues.

5.3.1 Cornell Assistance With Employment

Regardless of whether it was easy or difficult for their domestic partners/spouses to find jobs, 77.3% of students with domestic partners/spouses (579 respondents) believe that Cornell should help domestic partners/spouses find employment.

T-tests on domestic, international, graduate, and professional student responses show no significant difference in opinion as to the usefulness of the following resources: Cornell career counseling office, websites, reading material offered by Cornell, Cornell networking, and training offered by Cornell.

International students believe more strongly than domestic students that Cornell should help their domestic partners/spouses find jobs.

5.3.2 Not Difficult to Find a Job

For those who said it was not difficult for their domestic partners/spouses to find jobs, it appears that Cornell networking and websites were most helpful (apart from “Nothing”).(Table 11) Many commented that a Cornell degree made it much easier for to find a job in the Ithaca area.

5.3.3 Difficult to Find a Job

Those who said it was difficult for their domestic partners/spouses to find jobs noted that the most helpful factors would have been Cornell networking and assistance from the Cornell Career Services Office. Respondents believed that more websites, reading material offered by Cornell, and training by Cornell would have been least helpful in finding a job.

5.3.4 Open-Ended Comments

Students mentioned that the Cornell job market seems to be closed to outsiders (e.g. jobs given to internal candidates or Cornell affiliates). Domestic partners/spouses with advanced degrees found it difficult to get professional jobs. Others also mentioned that there is a shortage of jobs in the Ithaca area and that Ithaca suffers from “overqualified spouse syndrome.” Also, international students voiced frustrations over visa restrictions and language barriers.

Students were also concerned that domestic partners/spouses are not given equal assistance at by Cornell compared to Cornell students. Some suggested that Cornell could give class discounts for additional training, orientation sessions for employment at Cornell or in the community, and social networking opportunities.

Many respondents wished that Cornell would equally recognize long-term same-sex and opposite-sex partnerships. Some noted that this lack of recognition led to increased stress and financial burdens because of reduced access to Cornell services (e.g. health care, fitness facilities, and on-campus housing).

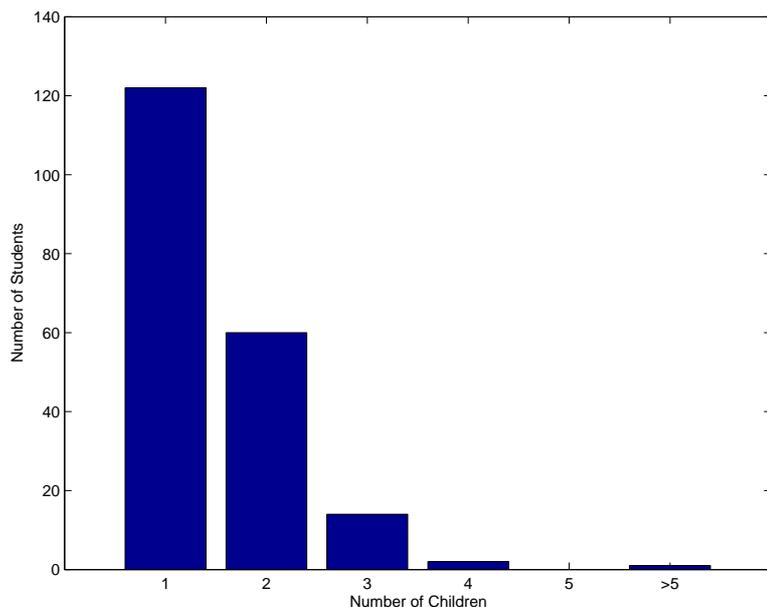


Figure 13: How many children of yours or your domestic partner’s/spouse’s do you have living with you here in Ithaca?

Table 12: The influence of childcare on university and job-related decisions.

(a) Did the availability of childcare options influence your choice of university?

Yes	Somewhat	No
20	33	143
10.2%	16.8%	73.0%

(b) Did the cost of childcare influence your domestic partner’s/spouse’s decision regarding his/her type of job and working hours?

Yes	No	Not applicable
85	70	41
43.4%	35.7%	20.9%

5.4 Childcare

- 8% of respondents reported that children are part of their Ithaca household.
- 23.6% of respondents with a domestic partner/spouse have children and 20 respondents are single parents.
- This sample represents at least 298 children, and most students with children have one child (Figure 13)

Students were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of childcare in the Ithaca area, as well as their interest in having on-campus daycare facilities.

The availability of childcare did not influence most students’ university choice (Table 12(a)). Childcare costs, however, did influence the domestic partner/spouse’s decision regarding his/her job type and working hours (Table 12(b)).

5.4.1 Student Satisfaction With Daycare

Very few people said that they were satisfied with the available daycare in the Ithaca area. (Table 13) Respondents who had experience with daycare in the Ithaca area are satisfied or very satisfied with locations, drop off and pick up times, days and times daycare is available, and the quality of daycare. (Figure 14) However, many respondents expressed that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the rates, availability of daycare for certain age ranges, and the waiting period for enrollment. (Figure 15)

Open-Ended Comments Respondents mentioned that they are especially concerned with infant/toddler daycare, as there appears to be a shortage of people in the area who give this kind of care. People also noted that it is difficult

Table 13: Are you satisfied with the available daycare in the Ithaca area? This question was asked only of students with children.

Yes	Somewhat	No	No Opinion
18	44	56	78
9.2%	22.4%	28.6%	39.8%

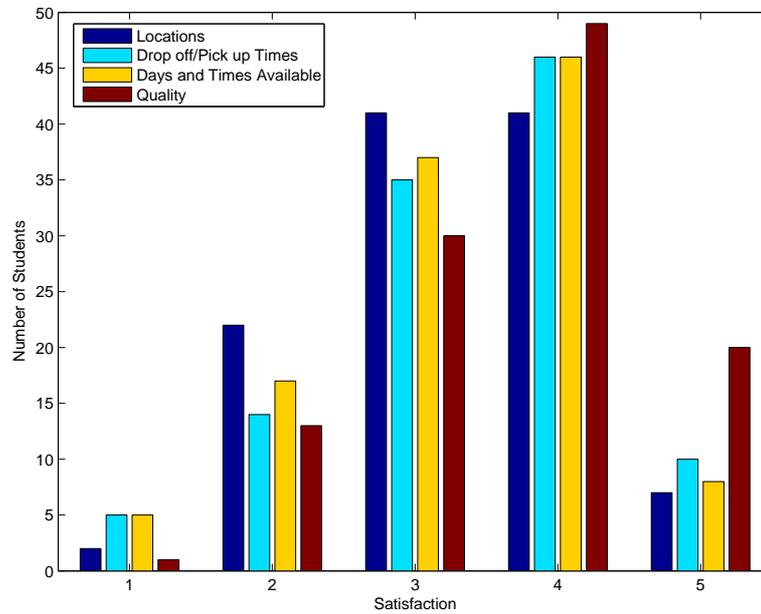


Figure 14: Students with children were asked to rate numerous aspects of Ithaca-area childcare on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied).

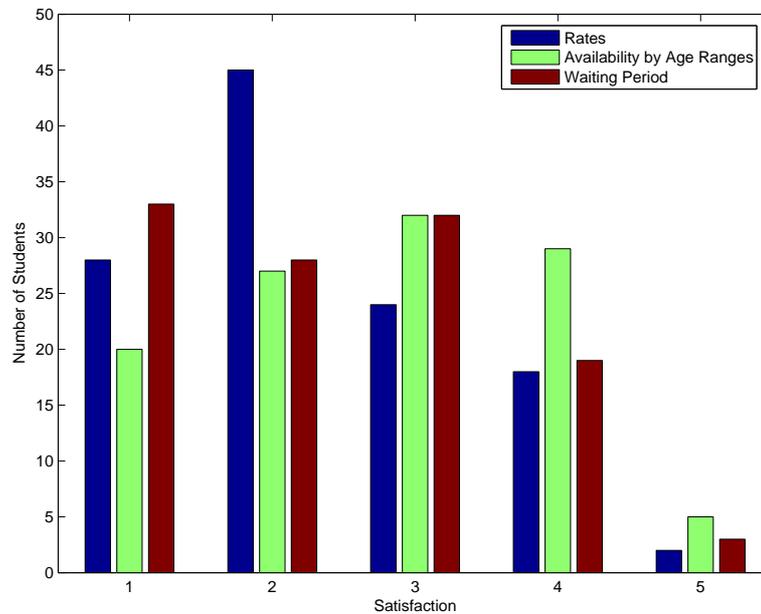


Figure 15: Students with children were asked to rate numerous aspects of Ithaca-area childcare on a scale of 1 (Very Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied).

Table 14: Would you use on campus day care? Only students with children answered.

	Yes	No	Maybe
Number	89	53	42
Percentage	48.4%	28.8%	22.8%

Table 15: Breakdown of On-Campus Daycare Interest. Please see the appendix for definitions of the college codes.

College	Yes	No	Maybe	Address	Yes	No	Maybe
A&LS	32	19	16	Other	26	10	12
ARTS	18	9	12	Fall Creek	12	2	5
GM	7	2	2	On-campus	11	8	4
AAP	7	2	1	North Campus	7	3	4
ENGR	6	9	3	West Hill	5	1	1
I&LR	5	1	0	East Hill	4	2	1
LA	4	1	0	Lansing	4	4	0
HUMEC	3	3	4	Belle Sherman	3	4	1
VM	2	0	0	Eastern Heights	2	1	0
CGSM	2	2	0	South Hill	2	1	1
LAW	1	0	0	Triphammer Mall Area	2	2	2
GR	1	2	0	Downtown	2	2	3
VET	1	2	2	Buttermilk Falls	1	0	0
HOTEL	0	1	0	Cayuga Heights	1	1	4
				West Shore	0	1	0
TOTAL	89	53	40	TOTAL	89	53	40

to find quality, affordable, flexible daycare. Some respondents mentioned that the childcare grant is a step in the right direction to improving childcare options, but there is still much room for improvement.

5.4.2 On-Campus Daycare

Most students with children responded positively about using an on-campus daycare facility. (Table 14) In fact, many students voiced their disappointment with the lack of on-campus daycare facilities, mentioning that other universities of Cornell's size do have daycare facilities and that it is difficult to follow drop-off and pick-up hours with a typical student schedule.⁸

Most students who indicated they would use on-campus daycare are part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences or the College of Arts and Sciences. Also, most students who would use on-campus daycare are living outside of Ithaca, in on-campus housing, or in Fall Creek. (Table 15) This might indicate that on-campus daycare facilities might be most convenient if they are located on North Campus.

5.4.3 Additional Considerations: On-Campus Daycare

Most students with children live outside of Ithaca, with the next three popular locations being on-campus housing, Fall Creek, and Northeast Ithaca. (Table 16)

Interestingly, there is a large difference between where international and domestic students with families live: many international students with children live on campus (22.4%). This is in contrast with a small portion (5.8%) of domestic students with children who live on campus; they mostly live outside of Ithaca (33.1%). Thus, if there was a daycare geared especially for international students, it appears that an on-campus location might be most beneficial.

5.4.4 Other Issues

Several students expressed concern that there was not a formal parental leave policy, which left the student at the mercy of the advisor in terms of funding and academic support. Others stressed that childcare can be expensive with inflexible hours and desired on-campus daycare.

⁸Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Dartmouth, and Yale all support or run daycare facilities on or near campus.

Table 16: Where do people live when they have children?

Location	Frequency	Percent of Total
Other	51	25.9%
On-campus	24	12.2%
Fall Creek	20	10.2%
Northeast	20	10.2%
North Campus	15	7.6%
Lansing	10	5.1%
Belle Sherman	9	4.6%
Triphammer Mall	8	4.1%
West Hill	8	4.1%
Downtown	7	3.6%
East Hill	7	3.6%
Cayuga Hieghts	6	3.0%
South Hill	6	3.0%
Eastern Heights	3	1.5%
Buttermilk Falls	1	0.5%
East Shore	1	0.5%
West Shore	1	0.5%

Many students also noted that Cornell does not appear to give sufficient support to students with families. Some said that family-related issues sometimes affect a student's decision to enroll or drop out of Cornell. Others mentioned that international families might have more financial constraints if one domestic partner/spouse cannot work due to visa issues.

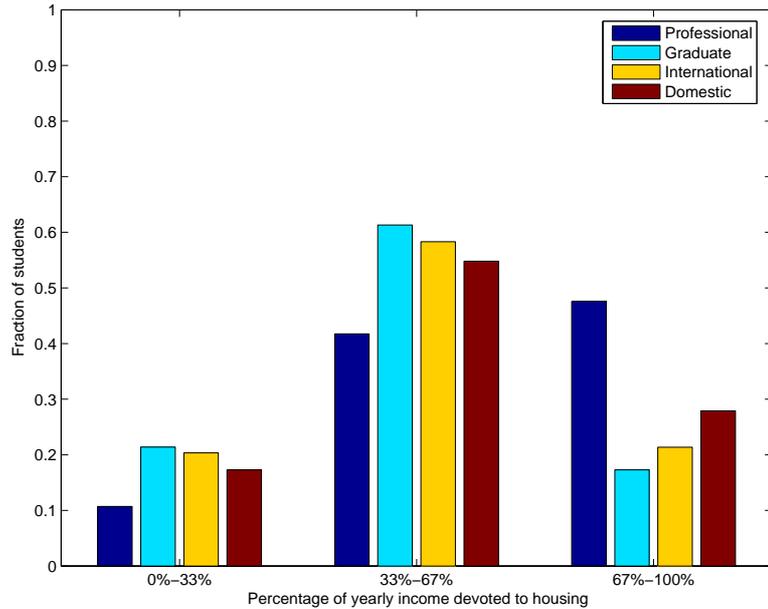


Figure 16: This approximates the percentage of student income devoted to housing (rent plus utilities and fees) for different categories. Since both housing cost and income were represented as ranges, the midpoints of each category were used in calculations.

Table 17: Students Preference for Living On-Campus

Yes	No	No Opinion
391	1636	186
17.7%	73.9%	8.4%

5.5 Housing and Transportation

- “Other” was the most popular housing location for every group except for professional students, who slightly prefer living in Collegetown.
- 47.6% of professional students spend more than two thirds of their income on housing.
- Compared to other groups, international students are the least likely to drive to campus, at 14.4%.

5.5.1 Comparison to Fair Market Price

According to the Alternatives Federal Credit Union Living Wage Study, the fair market value of a one bedroom apartment (utilities included) for the Ithaca area is \$602 per month [6]. 53.1% of all students pay more than this every month. Professional students stand out as paying much more for housing than other students. (Figure 16) Cornell Housing offers a range of options below and above \$602 per month, with Hughes Hall and Schuyler House being the most affordable options starting at \$513 and \$425 per month for academic year 2005-2006, respectively.

As shown in Tables 17 and 18, 17.7% of students would like to move from off-campus housing to on-campus housing, but a majority of them believe that it would be too expensive.

Table 18: Reasons for Not Living On-Campus

Frequency	Percent	Reason
219	57.0%	housing is too expensive
60	15.6%	Other
56	14.6%	apartments/rooms are too small
49	12.8%	all on-campus spots were full

Table 19: How do you get to campus? Top three answers.

Mode of Transport	Professional	Graduate	International	Domestic	All
Walk	41.1%	33.2%	38.3%	34.0%	35.8%
Take the bus	29.1%	35.8%	41.1%	29.6%	34.3%
Drive	20.9%	20.7%	14.4%	24.5	20.7%

5.5.2 Getting to Campus

Driving to campus is not a popular option among any of the groups examined, always ranking third behind taking the bus and walking. (Table 19) Carpooling and bicycling are even less popular than driving. If reducing the number of graduate and professional students who drive to campus is of concern, then improving transportation services for outlying areas should be the focus, since 36.9% of students who drive to school do not live in the areas listed in the survey and had to mark “Other.”

5.5.3 Distributions by College

Most colleges did not show any distinct pattern in where their students live, but three have over 30% of students living in a particular area. 33.3% of Law School graduate students live in Collegetown and 35.1% of Graduate School students chose “Other” along with 41.4% of Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students. The Law School graduate students likely live in Collegetown for proximity, but more precise data about the Graduate School and Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students is not available. All that “Other” signifies in this case is that they live outside the areas listed in Table 16 (16.7% of all students chose “Other” in the survey).

5.5.4 Open-Ended Comments

Housing The primary focus of the open-ended housing comments was affordability. Many respondents said that rent is too high, both on and off campus, while others focused on the high price of services at on-campus housing (parking, ResNet, even laundry). A few students think that Cornell should take a greater role in providing affordable off-campus housing through subsidies, advocating for rent controls, or linking stipend increases with rent increases.

Transportation Transportation concerns centered around the bus system and parking. A number of students pointed out that the bus hours don’t accommodate students’ extended hours. Also, since the graduate and professional student housing pattern (and hence commuting pattern) is closer to that of faculty or staff than undergraduates, many believe that graduate and professional students should get discounted or free bus passes.

Parking fees are too high, according to most students. While parking is generally a problem all around campus, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine students are essentially forced to buy expensive parking permits because they need to be on-call at the Veterinary School. One idea that came up was reserving a certain number of spots for graduate students in lots closer to their places of work. The large distance between offices, labs, and the cheaper parking lots makes commuting unsafe for those students that stay late into the night. Closer parking could alleviate this concern, but so could safer walkways or extended campus bus service.

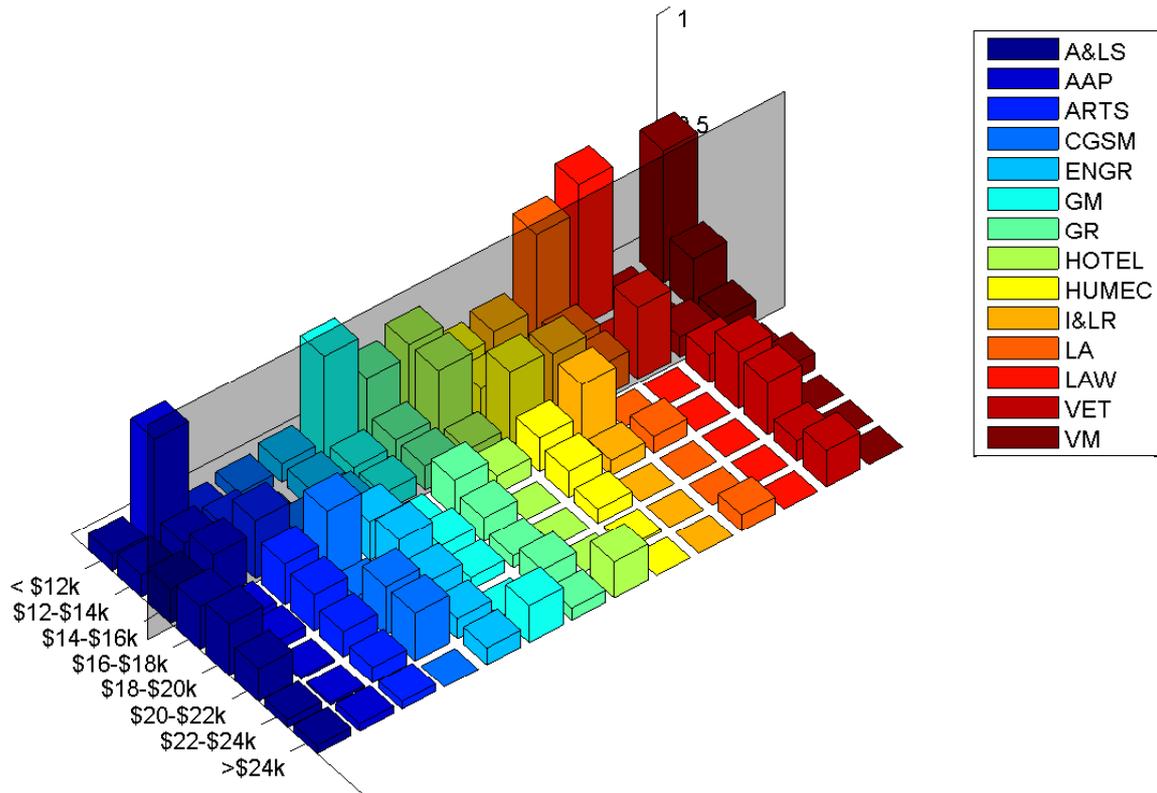


Figure 17: Summary of student stipends by college after taxes. Each bar represents the fraction of students in that college receiving a stipend at that level. The transparent plane divides the population into those making a living wage and those making less than a living wage.

5.6 Stipend and Income

- Among survey participants receiving a stipend, the average was approximately \$14,300 after taxes.
- The official minimum 12-month stipend was \$21,333 for 2004-2005 [4].
- At the extremes, 21.2% of respondents did not receive a stipend or fellowship in 2004-2005, while 3.9% received more than \$24,000.
- 86.1% of graduate students received a stipend in 2004-2005 while only 33.6% of professional students received a stipend for the same period.

Student income was recorded in two different ways in the survey. Those students who reported earning a stipend were asked for their twelve-month, post-tax earnings from that stipend alone. Students who reported receiving no stipend were asked for their total yearly income after taxes. This means that student stipend income may be lower than the yearly income for students with stipends, but this section is conservative and assumes that students with stipends receive no outside income.

5.6.1 Differences in Support Across Colleges and Programs

Figure 17 shows the breakdown of stipends across colleges and amounts. Figure 19 is a stipend comparison between professional and graduate students. In the sample, 1696 out of the 1780 graduate students received stipends while only 235 of the 694 professional students did. As the figures show, student stipend levels are heavily influenced by college and status. For respondents that received no stipend or fellowship, an annual income was obtained, which can be seen in Figures 20 and 18..

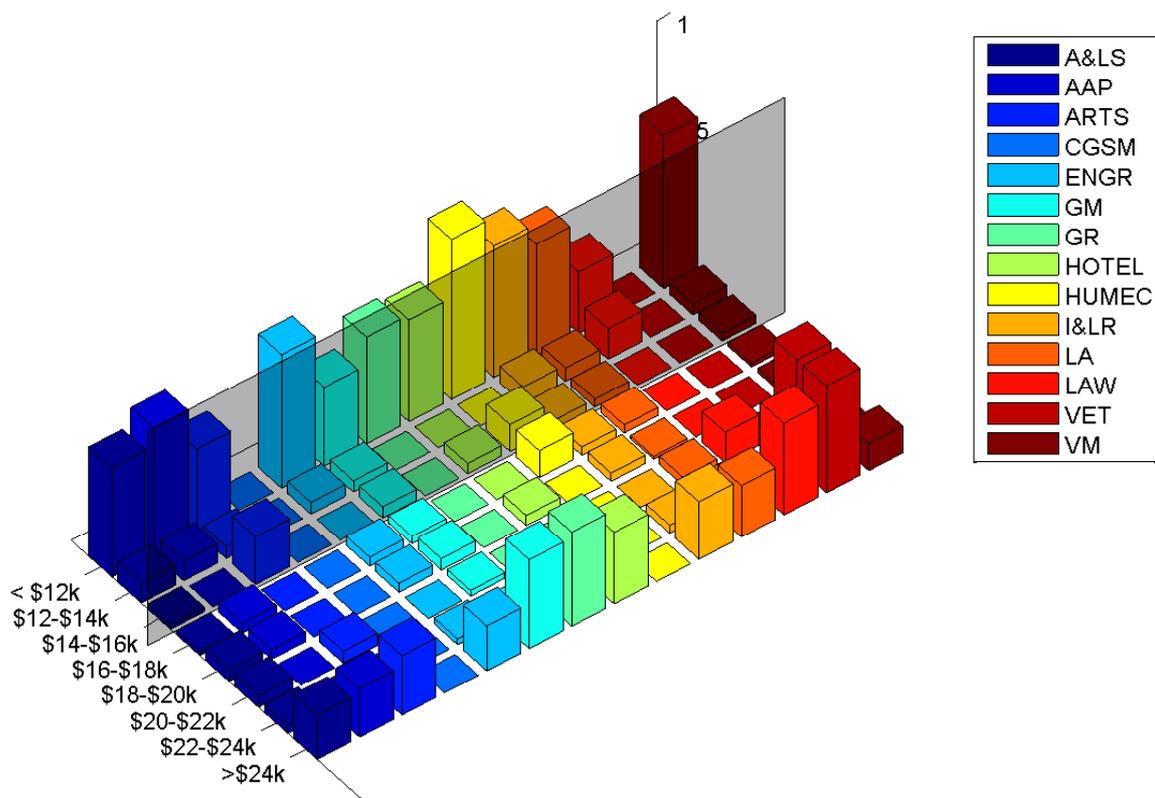


Figure 18: Summary of student income after taxes for students not receiving a stipend broken down by college. Each bar represents the fraction of students receiving an income at that level. The transparent plane divides the population into those who make a living wage and those who do not.

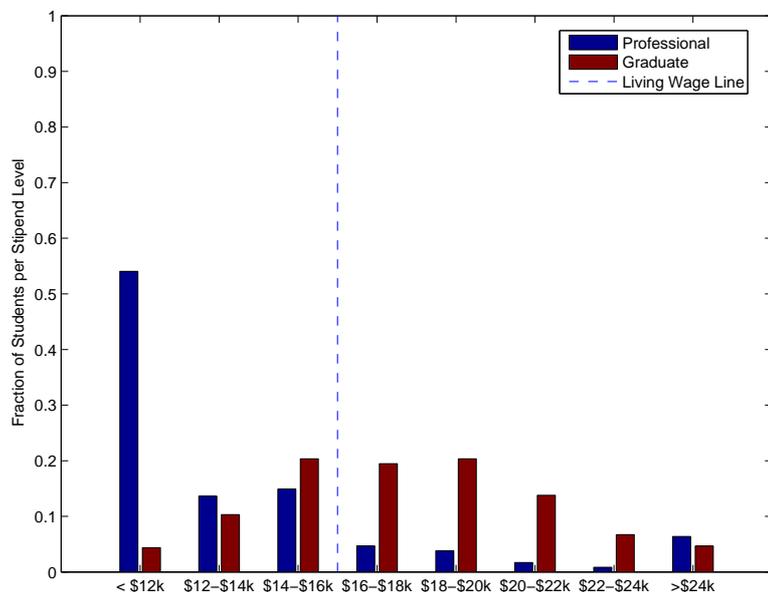


Figure 19: For students receiving stipends, each bar represents the fraction of students who reported a post-tax stipend at that level. The dotted line separates those making a living wage (those on the right) from those making less than a living wage (those on the left). This is a best-case estimate as it assumes all respondents are single, which is not actually the case.

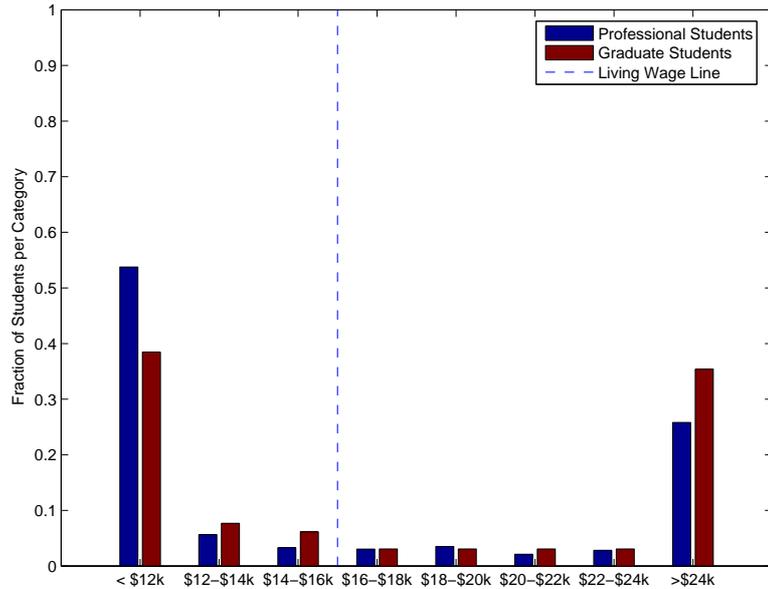


Figure 20: For students not receiving stipends, each bar represents the fraction of students who reported post-tax income at that level. The dotted line separates those making a living wage (those on the right) from those making less than a living wage (those on the left). This is a best-case estimate as it assumes all respondents are single, which is not actually the case.

The stipend levels for graduate students seem normally distributed, but a majority of professional students, regardless of the source of their income, earn less than \$12,000 a year. It is interesting to note that students with outside income tend towards the extremes of the scale.

5.6.2 Living Wage Comparison

According to the Alternatives Federal Credit Union, the living wage for a single individual in Tompkins County in 2005 is \$15,945.76 after taxes. This assumes employer-assisted health insurance and \$1,215.12 in uncovered health expenses [6].⁹ Examining the data behind Figures 17 and 18 or Figures 19 and 20 shows that 43.7% of all students receive less than a living wage, assuming no students have any dependents (8% of respondents have children and 30% have domestic partners/spouses).

5.6.3 Major Expenditures

While detailed budget information was not gathered in the survey, data on money that students spend on dental care, vision care, and child care was obtained. To identify significant health care expenditures, a threshold of more than twenty percent of students spending more than five percent of their income was set.¹⁰ Uncovered dental expenses are a significant portion of yearly expenditures for groups who already have the dental insurance plan (Figures 6 and 7).

Child care expenditures should average \$6,750 a year for one infant or toddler and \$4,749.96 for one preschool child, according to averages reported by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies [3]. These expenses are not included in the living wage calculations. Approximately 35% of students with children spend more than this percentage, except for graduate students who do not receive stipends. This group spends very little on childcare.

The other main expenditure examined in the survey is housing costs. One rule of thumb is that one third of household income should be spent on housing (either mortgage or rent) [5]. A majority of students spend more than a third of their incomes on housing. (Figure 16)

⁹This figure is possibly a bit too high for the average graduate student, but not unreasonable.

¹⁰This guideline was based on the Living Wage Coalition breakdown, which identified health care expenditures as approximately six percent of annual costs for the living wage.

5.6.4 Open-Ended Comments

Respondents noted that having guaranteed funding for the typical time-to-degree period is more important than the amount in terms of stress levels and productivity. Students also noted that there is variability among departments in terms of tuition and stipend support and wished for uniform support.

A few respondents noted that, under their TAing duties, they have additional miscellaneous costs, such as photocopying, that should be reflected in their stipend amount. Others also remarked that they would appreciate more clarity in terms of their TA contract and a more reasonable estimate of working hours per week.

6 Action Agenda

6.1 GPSA

While some of the survey results reported above can be acted upon, a number of issues have presented themselves as requiring further exploration and additional information. The recommendations in this section focus on actions that the GPSA can take to gather more data about these issues.

Establishing a regular schedule of surveys would be instrumental in helping the GPSA determine student needs and desires. It would also enable the GPSA to track trends and evaluate the impact of implemented changes.

6.1.1 Health Care

The GPSA should gather more information about the utility of the dental and vision options to the student health insurance plan. With so few students enrolling, and those that do enroll still spending significant portions of their incomes on related expenses, more questions must be asked about the plan designs and their relevance to graduate and professional students.

6.1.2 Child care

Since obtaining an on-campus day care facility is a long-term goal, the GPSA can gather information about community day care facilities and make it available to students who need day care now. Working with Students With Families and the Graduate School, an online resource center should be established and maintained. The Graduate School already has an online resource at <http://www.gradschool.cornell.edu/index.php?p=106> and Students With Families has a similar list of links at <http://www.rso.cornell.edu/families/CUresources.html> but neither directly references the other. Consolidation or at least direct interaction between the two should be straightforward.

6.1.3 Stipend and Income

One discrepancy that this survey has pointed out is that the minimum stipend set by the Graduate School seems, even after taxes, to be above the minimum stipend reported by students. The Pay & Benefits Committee will examine the stipend and income data more closely to determine possible causes. If students are somehow earning less than the minimum stipend, this will be brought to the attention of the Graduate School for further study and, hopefully, a way to remedy the situation.

Another issue deserving of further study is that of guaranteed funding as related to the time to completion for various degrees. Some questions were asked of students regarding the amount of funding promised to them, but many departments seem to operate on word of mouth to convey that students will receive additional funding under certain circumstances. In addition, a number of students reported that offers of funding were not upheld after enrollment. The GPSA should investigate these issues as well as the ease of addressing them through appropriate channels. The feeling that students should do nothing because they cannot afford to transfer seems to be widespread, but no student should be compelled to uphold one end of a broken contract.

6.2 Cornell Community

In the following sections a number of recommendations are outlined for improving various aspects of graduate & professional student life at Cornell. These recommendations focus on the pay and benefits that Cornell regularly provides to students, but come without emphasis on priority. In order to understand what students want and need the most, please refer to Section 5.1 or the summary in Section 6.2.1.

6.2.1 Student Priorities

It is clear that the best thing that Cornell can do to improve the pay and benefits situation for graduate students is to increase stipend levels. Since so many professional students do not receive stipends at all (76.4%), improving health benefits is their main priority.

6.2.2 Health Care

One of the least satisfactory aspects of both Gannett and Aetna is the amount and accuracy of information provided to students. Conveying accurate information to the Cornell community should be the first priority when attempting to improve health care services both at Gannett itself and through Aetna. To this end, we hope to work on the following issues:

1. Does Gannett use a system of primary care providers? If it does, how can we work together to ensure that all students as well as Gannett staff are aware of this policy? If primary care providers are not currently implemented, can they be?
2. International students in particular may need extra help in navigating the American health care system. The Cornell International Students and Scholars Office offers some information to this end, but mainly refers students to Gannett. The Gannett webpage offers several pages of information for international students, but apparently this is either not enough or not widely publicized. The GPSA would like to facilitate cooperation between Gannett and the ISSO so that health care information offered by ISSO is always up to date. In addition, the feasibility of a periodic workshop on health care issues for international students should be investigated.
3. Many students feel that the information they receive from Gannett often contradicts the information received from Aetna. The GPSA would like to encourage a more unified voice for student health care information. Regardless of whether these inconsistencies are real or perceived, they make students wary of taking full advantage of their health care resources. Students need more information on their treatment options so that they know what they can and should ask for when obtaining help through Gannett.

6.2.3 Domestic Partners/Spouses

Recommendations for dealing with domestic partners/spouses are limited in that the survey focused primarily on access to health care and jobs. While Cornell cannot directly influence the job market in the greater Ithaca area, it does have resources that it could open up to domestic partners/spouses.

1. There exists a large discrepancy in how Cornell views who qualifies for domestic partner/spouse benefits and who does not. Currently, married couples and same-sex couples are offered the same benefits while different-sex couples receive no benefits. This is frustrating to many couples who desire access to family housing or health care for their partners. Companies such as Claritas, Inc. (located in the Business and Technology Park) offer partner benefits to any unmarried couple willing to sign a statement of commitment. Implementing a similar policy at Cornell would be straightforward and alleviate much stress for unmarried, heterosexual couples.
2. More than any other group, international students feel that Cornell should provide job placement assistance for their domestic partners/spouses. While no one should expect Cornell to create jobs in order to help students, the GPSA would like to encourage the International Students and Scholars Office to work with Cornell Career Services to provide visa and other information for their domestic partners/spouses. In particular, providing information to individuals with limited English skills would be most welcome.

6.2.4 Childcare

While a small percentage of graduate and professional students have children (8% of respondents), the existence of on-campus daycare would likely be welcome to staff, postdoctoral scholars, and faculty. The GPSA hopes to facilitate interaction between Students with Families and other potential stakeholders in exploring this issue further.

6.2.5 Housing and Transportation

Housing and transportation are items not completely under Cornell's control, but certainly under Cornell's influence.

1. While parking fees will remain high as long as the demand for parking spaces outweighs the supply, Cornell could lessen the impact of high fees by allowing students to pay on a monthly instead of a yearly basis. Even if students are required to commit to an annual pass, being able to pay in installments would be a great convenience to those on tight budgets.
2. Of all students who want to move on campus, but do not, affordability is the primary concern of more than half. The GPSA would like to work with the Cornell Housing Office as well as the Graduate School to establish guidelines relating student stipends to on-campus housing prices as well as transportation costs. To this end a more detailed analysis of the data behind Figure 16 will be conducted.

6.2.6 Stipend and Income

This study supports the Graduate School concentration on raising stipends as priority number one over the past few years.

One issue that needs to be addressed is the difference between the expectations on a student receiving a nine-month stipend and those on a student receiving a twelve-month stipend. Students who are not funded during the summer should not be expected to make degree progress during that time, as they need to support themselves in some other way. However, most requirements are written in terms of semesters at Cornell, which do not include the summers. For example, the A-exam must be completed before finishing the seventh semester, but it is unclear whether this was written with twelve-month students or nine-month students in mind. Since one of the best ways to earn extra income is by taking a summer job or internship, this gives a significant advantage to twelve-month students.

7 Appendix

7.1 Label Key

A&LS Agriculture and Life Sciences

AAP Architecture, Art, and Planning

ARTS Arts and Sciences

CGSM Cornell Graduate School of Management

ENGR Engineering

GM Master of Business Administration

GR Graduate School

HOTEL Hotel School

HUMEC Human Ecology

I&LR Industrial and Labor Relations

LA Juris Doctorate

LAW Law School Graduate Degrees

VET Veterinary Medicine (Graduate)

VM Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

7.2 Survey Questions

The Pay and Benefits Committee is a committee of Cornell University's Graduate and Professional Student Association. As fellow graduate and professional students, we are requesting this information so that we can best advocate the specific needs of the graduate and professional student population. The purpose of the following survey is to gather information regarding graduate and professional students' needs and preferences for: health, dental, and vision insurance, housing, domestic partner/spouse benefits, childcare, and stipend issues. We also ask some questions regarding your financial situation to find out what percentage of your income goes towards health, housing, and, if applicable, childcare expenses, so we can determine the financial demands of graduate and professional student life.

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, discontinue at any time, or skip any questions. The questionnaire should take about 10-15 minutes to answer. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. Respondents' names will not be attached to the survey results. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Elise Furlan, Anne Poduska, or Rafael Escalona Reynoso at gpsa@cornell.edu.

This survey has been produced with the support of Dean Alison Power and Victoria Blodgett from the Graduate School, as well as the International Students and Scholars Office, the GPSA/COR, and Students With Families. Data from this study will be compiled and presented to the Cornell University administration at the end of the semester.

When filling out this survey, it is possible for us to automatically collect several pieces of personal information: your age, gender, degree program and college/school, country of origin, and visa type. None of this information can be traced to you or any of your responses and will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. We are interested in visa types only for the purpose of helping the International Students and Scholars Office with meeting the needs of students that have special considerations.

Do you consent to having this information included in the survey results? Yes No

Insurance

1. Are you currently enrolled under the Cornell Student Health Insurance Plan, SHIP?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure

2. If not, what health insurance plan do you have?
 - a. I am covered under my domestic partner/spouse's plan.

- b. I am covered by my parent's insurance plan
 - c. I am covered by a non-Cornell employer
 - d. I do not have any health insurance
 - e. Other: _____
3. If you are using SHIP, please indicate your general level of satisfaction with SHIP for each of the following on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied:
- a. My interaction with the Gannett staff
 - b. The information provided by Aetna regarding services and coverage
 - c. The information provided by Gannett regarding services and coverage
 - d. My interaction with the Aetna office
 - e. The prescription coverage
 - f. The timeliness of getting appointments and/or treatment
 - g. The treatment(s) I received at Gannett
 - h. The Gannett services overall

Dental Insurance

1. Do you currently have the Concordia Flex dental plan offered by Cornell? This plan is separate from SHIP and you would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.
- i. yes
 - j. no
 - k. don't know
2. If not, why not?
- a. I already have a different dental plan
 - b. I could not afford the plan
 - c. I felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
 - d. I don't want dental insurance
 - e. The dental work I needed was not covered by this plan
 - f. I missed the deadline for enrollment
 - g. I had the plan last year and was dissatisfied with the services and/or coverage
 - h. Other: _____

3. If you have or had this plan, are you satisfied with:

The treatment you received yes somewhat no no opinion

The amount of coverage yes somewhat no no opinion

4. If you do have the Concordia Flex dental plan and you had dental work done in the past 6 months that was not fully covered by the plan, how much did the dental work cost?

- a. \$1-100
- b. \$101-200
- c. \$201-300
- d. \$301-400
- e. \$401-500
- f. \$501-600
- g. \$601-700
- h. \$701-800
- i. \$801-900
- j. \$901-1000
- k. \$1001-1100
- l. \$1101-1200
- m. \$1201-1300
- n. \$1301-1400
- o. \$1401-1500
- p. \$1501-1600
- q. \$1601-1700
- r. \$1701-1800
- s. \$1801-1900
- t. 1901-2000
- u. More than \$2000
- v. Not Sure

5. If you don't have dental insurance, how much did you spend on dental costs in the past 12 months?

- a. \$1-100
- b. \$101-200
- c. \$201-300
- d. \$301-400

- e. \$401-500
- f. \$501-600
- g. \$601-700
- h. \$701-800
- i. \$801-900
- j. \$901-1000
- k. \$1001-1100
- l. \$1101-1200
- m. \$1201-1300
- n. \$1301-1400
- o. \$1401-1500
- p. \$1501-1600
- q. \$1601-1700
- r. \$1701-1800
- s. \$1801-1900
- t. 1901-2000
- u. More than \$2000
- v. Not Sure

Vision Insurance

1. Do you currently have the vision plan , Davis Vision, which is offered through Cornell? This plan is separate from SHIP and you would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

2. If not, why not?
 - a. I already have a different vision plan
 - b. I could not afford the plan
 - c. I felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
 - d. I don't want vision insurance
 - e. The vision services I needed was not covered by this plan
 - f. I missed the deadline for enrollment
 - g. I had the plan last year and was dissatisfied with the services and/or coverage
 - h. other: _____

3. If you have or had this plan, are you satisfied with:

The treatment you received yes somewhat no no opinion

The amount of coverage yes somewhat no no opinion

4. If you do have the Davis Vision vision plan and you needed treatment or corrective lenses in the past 6 months that were not fully covered by the plan, how much did it cost?

- a. \$1-100
- b. \$101-200
- c. \$201-300
- d. \$301-400
- e. \$401-500
- f. more than \$500
- g. don't know

5. If you don't have insurance, how much did you spend on vision costs (including visits and corrective lenses) in the past 12 months?

- a. \$1-100
- b. \$101-200
- c. \$201-300
- d. \$301-400
- e. \$401-500
- f. \$501-600
- g. \$601-700
- h. \$701-800
- i. \$801-900
- j. \$901-1000
- k. more than \$1000
- l. don't know

6. How much money did you spend on dental, health, and vision bills in the past year? (Bills refer to all out-of-pocket expenses, such as co-pays, doctor visits, etc)

- a. \$0-200
- b. \$201-400
- c. \$401-600

- d. \$601-800
- e. \$801-1000
- f. \$1001-1200
- g. \$1201-1400
- h. \$1401-1600
- i. \$1601-1800
- j. \$1800-2000
- k. \$2001-2200
- l. \$2201-2400
- m. \$2401-2600
- n. \$2601-2800
- o. \$2801-3000
- p. \$3001-3200
- q. \$3201-3400
- r. \$3401-3600
- s. \$3601-3800
- t. \$3801-4000
- u. more than \$4000
- v. don't know

Housing

- 1. Where do you live?
 - a. Belle Sherman
 - b. Buttermilk Falls area
 - c. Cayuga Heights
 - d. Collegetown
 - e. Downtown
 - f. East Hill
 - g. East Shore
 - h. Eastern Heights
 - i. Fall Creek
 - j. Forrest Home
 - k. Lansing
 - l. Lansing/Triphammer Mall area

- m. Lower Collegetown
- n. North Campus
- o. Northeast
- p. On-campus housing
- q. South Hill
- r. Southeast
- s. The Commons
- t. West Campus
- u. West Hill
- v. West Shore
- w. Other: _____

2. How do you get to campus most often?
- a. Walk
 - b. Bicycle
 - c. Take the bus
 - d. Drive
 - e. Carpool/get rides from my domestic partner/spouse
 - f. Other: _____
3. If you do not currently live on campus, would you like to live on campus?
- a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. no opinion
4. If you answered yes, why are you not living on campus?
- a. On-campus housing is too expensive
 - b. The apartment/room is too small
 - c. I applied for on-campus housing but all spots were filled
 - d. Other: _____
5. How much money do you spend on housing for yourself per month (including utilities, parking, trash, internet)?
- a. \$1-100
 - b. \$101-200
 - c. \$201-300

- d. \$301-400
- e. \$401-500
- f. \$501-600
- g. \$601-700
- h. \$701-800
- i. \$801-900
- j. \$901-1000
- k. \$1001-1100
- l. \$1101-1200
- m. \$1201-1300
- n. \$1301-1400
- o. \$1401-1500
- p. \$1501-1600
- q. \$1601-1700
- r. \$1701-1800
- s. \$1801-1900
- t. 1901-2000
- u. More than \$2000
- v. Not Sure

Domestic Partner/Spouse Benefits

1. Do you have a domestic partner or spouse living with you in Ithaca?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If you just answered no, please skip to the next section

2. If your domestic partner/spouse is or was looking for a job, was it difficult to find a job?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. not sure
 - d. not applicable

3. If your answer to question (2) was (b), what was helpful or not helpful in finding a job?
 - a. Cornell career counseling office
 - b. Websites
 - c. Reading material offered by Cornell
 - d. Cornell networking
 - e. Training offered by Cornell
 - f. Nothing

4. If your answer to question (2) was (a), what would have been helpful or unhelpful in finding a job?
 - a. Cornell career counseling office
 - b. More websites
 - c. Reading material offered by Cornell
 - d. Cornell networking
 - e. More training offered by Cornell
 - f. Nothing

5. Do you think Cornell should help domestic partners/spouses find employment?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. No opinion

6. Does your domestic partner/spouse have health insurance?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Don't know

7. Is your domestic partner/spouse on the Student Health Insurance Plan, SHIP?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

8. If not, why not?
 - a. She/he could not afford the plan
 - b. She/he has healthcare through his/her employer
 - c. She/he has healthcare from parents
 - d. She/he felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
 - e. Other: _____

9. Does your domestic partner/spouse currently have the Concordia Flex dental plan offered by Cornell? This plan is separate from SHIP and you would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

10. If not, why not?
 - a. She/he already has a different dental plan
 - b. She/he could not afford the plan
 - c. She/he felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
 - d. She/he doesn't want dental insurance
 - e. The dental services she/he needed was not covered by this plan
 - f. She/he missed the deadline for enrollment
 - g. She/he had the plan last year and was dissatisfied with the services and/or coverage
 - h. other: _____

11. Does your domestic partner/spouse have the vision plan, Davis Vision, which is offered through Cornell? This plan is separate from SHIP and she/he would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

12. If not, why not?
 - a. She/he already has a different dental plan
 - b. She/he could not afford the plan
 - c. She/he felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered

- d. She/he doesn't want dental insurance
- e. The dental services she/he needed was not covered by this plan
- f. She/he missed the deadline for enrollment
- g. She/he had the plan last year and was dissatisfied with the services and/or coverage
- h. other: _____

Childcare

If you do not have any children living with you here in Ithaca, please skip to the next section.

1. How many children of you or your domestic partner/spouse do you have living with you here in Ithaca?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
 - f. more than 5

2. Did the availability of childcare options influence your choice of university?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. no

3. Did the cost of childcare influence your domestic partner's/spouse's decision regarding his/her type of job and working hours?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. not applicable

4. Are you satisfied with the available daycare in the Ithaca area?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. no
 - d. no opinion

5. If you have experience with daycare in the Ithaca area, please rate on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied:
 - a. locations
 - b. rates
 - c. drop off and pick up times
 - d. days and times daycare is available
 - e. quality of daycare
 - f. availability of daycare for the certain age ranges
 - g. waiting period for enrollment

6. Would you use on-campus daycare?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. maybe

7. Are your children (or domestic partner/spouse's children) on the Student Health Insurance Plan, SHIP?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

8. If not, why not?
 - a. I or my domestic partner/spouse could not afford the plan.
 - b. They have healthcare from my domestic partner/spouse's plan.
 - c. I or my domestic partner/spouse felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
 - d. They are covered by my parent's insurance plan
 - e. They do not have any health insurance
 - f. Other: _____

9. Are your children (or domestic partner/spouse's children) on the Concordia Flex dental plan? This plan is separate from SHIP and you would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know

10. If not, why not?

- a. I or my domestic partner/spouse could not afford the plan.
- b. They have dental insurance from my domestic partner/spouse's plan.
- c. I or my domestic partner/spouse felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
- d. They are covered by my parent's insurance plan
- e. They do not have any dental insurance
- f. Other: _____

11. Are your children (or domestic partner/spouse's children) on the vision plan, Davis Vision, which is offered by Cornell?
This plan is separate from SHIP and you would have purchased it separately at the beginning of the academic year.

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. don't know

12. If not, why not?

- a. I or my domestic partner/spouse could not afford the plan.
- b. They have vision insurance from my domestic partner/spouse's plan.
- c. I or my domestic partner/spouse felt that it was too expensive for the services it offered
- d. They are covered by my parent's insurance plan
- e. They do not have any vision insurance
- f. Other: _____

13. How much money do you spend on childcare per month?

- a. \$1-100
- b. \$101-200
- c. \$201-300
- d. \$301-400
- e. \$401-500
- f. \$501-600
- g. \$601-700
- h. \$701-800
- i. \$801-900
- j. \$901-1000
- k. \$1001-1100

- l. \$1101-1200
- m. \$1201-1300
- n. \$1301-1400
- o. \$1401-1500
- p. \$1501-1600
- q. \$1601-1700
- r. \$1701-1800
- s. \$1801-1900
- t. \$1901-2000
- u. \$2001-2100
- v. \$2101-2200
- w. \$2201-2300
- x. \$2301-2400
- y. \$2401-2500
- z. More than \$2500
- aa. Not Sure

Stipend

1. How much will you receive from your stipend or fellowship (either from Cornell or other sources, not including tuition) for the 2004-2005 academic year after taxes?
 - a. I do not receive a stipend or fellowship.
 - b. less than \$12,000
 - c. \$12,000-\$14,000
 - d. \$14,001-\$16,000
 - e. \$16,001-\$18,000
 - f. \$18,001-\$20,000
 - g. \$20,001-\$22,000
 - h. \$22,001-\$24,000
 - i. more than \$24,000

2. If you answered (a) for question 1, how much income do you have for the 2004-2005 academic year after taxes? (This income could come from loans, domestic partner/spouse's salary, money from parents, investments, savings, off-campus work, etc.)

- a. less than \$12,000
- b. \$12,000-\$14,000
- c. \$14,001-\$16,000
- d. \$16,001-\$18,000
- e. \$18,001-\$20,000
- f. \$20,001-\$22,000
- g. \$22,001-\$24,000
- h. more than \$24,000

3. How many years of full or partial tuition funding were you guaranteed in your acceptance letter?

- a. less than 1
- b. 1-2
- c. 2-3
- d. 3-4
- e. 4-5
- f. 5-6
- g. more than 6
- h. This was not mentioned in my acceptance letter
- i. Other: _____

4. Does the number of guaranteed full or partial tuition funding years match the typical time-to-degree of your program?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. don't know
- d. not applicable

5. How many years of stipend funding were you guaranteed in your acceptance letter?

- j. less than 1
- k. 1-2
- l. 2-3
- m. 3-4
- n. 4-5
- o. 5-6
- p. more than 6
- q. This was not mentioned in my acceptance letter

r. Other: _____

6. Does the number of guaranteed stipend funding years match the typical time-to-degree of your program?
 - a. yes
 - b. no
 - c. don't know
 - d. not applicable

7. Are you concerned about not having enough funding (which includes tuition and/or stipend) to finish your degree?
 - a. yes
 - b. no

8. If you answered yes to question 7, how do you anticipate paying for finishing your degree? Please check the following that apply:
 - a. off-campus work
 - b. Teaching Assistantship (TA)
 - c. Loans
 - d. Savings
 - e. scholarships
 - f. parents
 - g. domestic partner/spouse's salary
 - h. don't know

9. Do you derive your income from or supplement your income with these sources of funds? Please check the following that apply:
 - a. Part-time job on-campus
 - b. Part-time job off-campus (such as babysitting, waiting tables, tutoring, etc.)
 - c. your spouse/domestic partner's salary
 - d. parents
 - e. investments/savings
 - f. loans

Final questions

1. Please rank from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important, which area you think needs the greatest improvement to benefit you and your family's situation:
 - Health Insurance
 - Dental Insurance
 - Vision Insurance
 - Housing
 - Domestic Partner/Spouse Benefits
 - Childcare
 - Stipend

2. From the Cornell graduate and professional community perspective, which area do you think needs the greatest improvement to benefit the situation of graduate and professional students? Please rank from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most important and 7 being the least important.
 - Health Insurance
 - Dental Insurance
 - Vision Insurance
 - Housing
 - Domestic Partner/Spouse Benefits
 - Childcare
 - Stipend

3. Are there any other issues that you think should be addressed? If so, what are they?

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