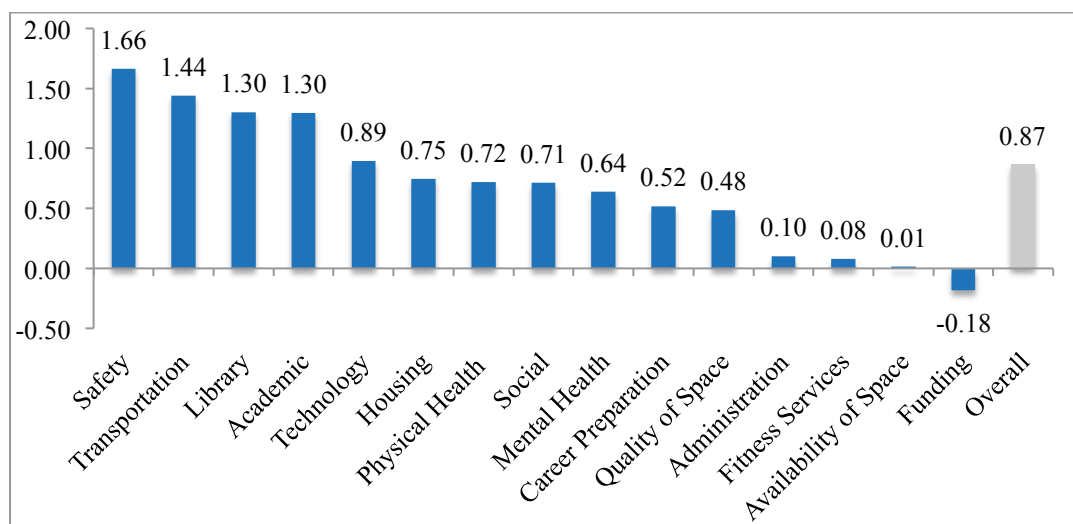


## Quality of Life Report Preview – February 28, 2014

### Executive Summary



The Student Quality of Life (QoL) initiative is a biennial University-wide survey that aims to better understand and enhance the student experience at Columbia. Incepted in 2012 by SAC Co-Chair Adil Ahamed (Business '12), QoL has three main goals: to establish a barometer that measures the effect of policy changes on student satisfaction, to inform the future policy agenda of SAC, and to preserve institutional knowledge among student Senators year after year. SAC envisions that the QoL will enhance the Committee's ability to achieve a far greater and a more relevant impact.

Columbia students experienced an overall satisfaction with .87. This was relatively consistent across undergraduate, non-PhD graduate students, and PhD track graduate students. Nevertheless, certain areas such as Libraries and Safety consistently ranked higher across all populations than other sectors such as Funding and Space. A graph detailing each category's overall satisfaction is included above.

Major areas of concern for students were the availability of space, career preparation and the administration. Importantly, the discontent with the administration seemed to focus on the level of bureaucracy and the lack of clear vision.

Besides broad considerations, the survey's sub-questions also revealed specific areas of policy to examine. For example, while Technology received an above-average satisfaction, students on the Morningside Campus expressed dissatisfaction with printing and innovation. Even though students were satisfied with the quality of spaces on campus, there was an alarming dissatisfaction with the availability of space on campus, especially group study space.

Specific demographic results from the survey can also inform further investigation and policy recommendations. Trans\* identified students were less satisfied across each category (4.2 overall) and with their overall Columbia experience than students identifying as male or female, which had similar satisfaction levels at 4.86 and 4.87 respectively. Additionally, while across all

demographics, there was high satisfaction with safety, Asians and Pacific Islanders were less satisfied with their personal interactions with Public Safety.

### Space (quality and availability)

#### *Undergraduates*

Description	n	Mean	Median
Space Quality Satisfaction	2857	4.63	5
Space Availability Satisfaction	2857	4	4

Overall Space Quality satisfaction was 4.63 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 2857 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.5. The median satisfaction value was 5.

Overall Space Availability satisfaction was 4 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 2857 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.62. The median satisfaction value was 4.

#### *Non-PhD graduate students*

Description	n	Mean	Median
Space Quality Satisfaction	2910	4.42	4
Space Availability Satisfaction	2910	4.1	4

Overall Space Quality satisfaction was 4.42 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 2910 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.55. The median satisfaction value was 4.

Overall Space Availability satisfaction was 4.1 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 2910 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.6. The median satisfaction value was 4.

#### *PhD-track graduate students*

Description	n	Mean	Median
Space Quality Satisfaction	886	4.29	4
Space Availability Satisfaction	886	3.83	4

Overall Space Quality satisfaction was 4.29 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 886 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.63. The median satisfaction value was 4.

Overall satisfaction was 3.83 on a 7 point scale (1 being “very dissatisfied,” 4 being “neutral,” and 7 being “very satisfied”) based on 886 respondents. The standard deviation (S.D.) was 1.1.63. The median satisfaction value was 4.

Select qualitative responses

Create more places like Joe (in NWC Building) where you can sit down with food and also have a lot of light, not constrained to a library.

– GS BA 2013

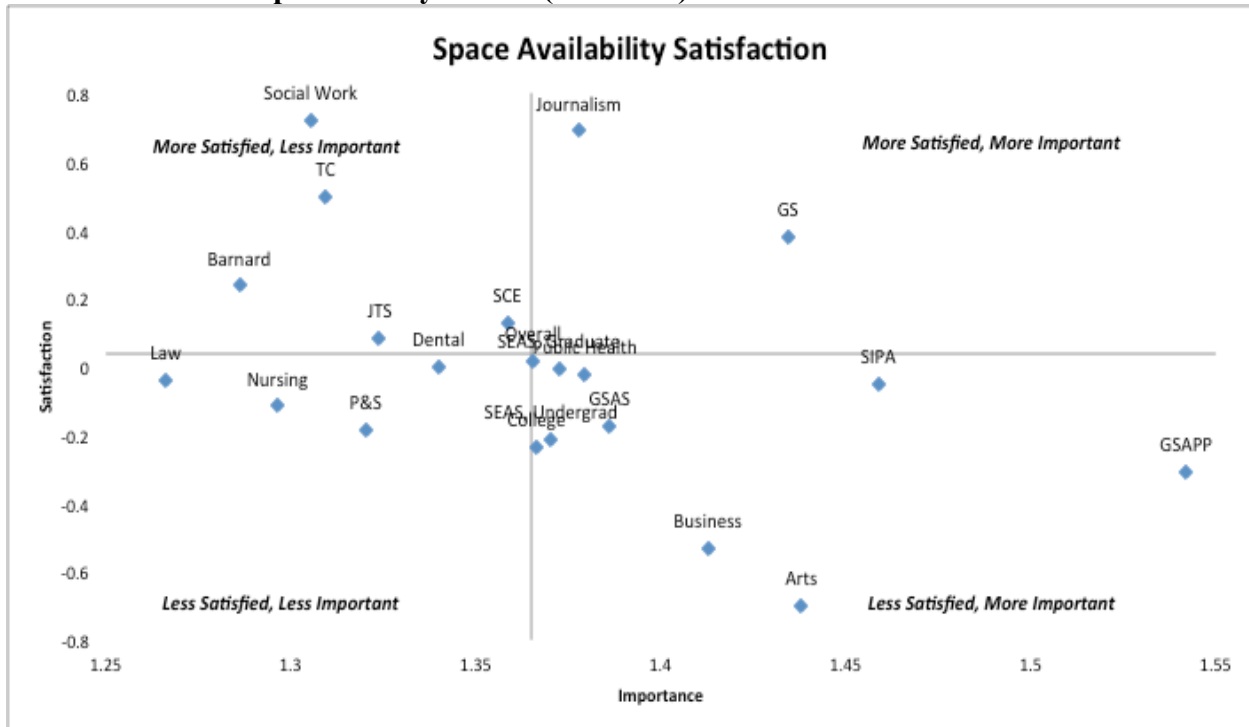
More office spaces for PhD students and general meeting/study/work areas (including lounges specifically for grad/phd students). The outdoor areas at the north-end of campus should be improved (outdoor seating, tables/chairs in front of NWC building).

– SEAS MS 2012 [report author]

We need larger meeting spaces that are able to be reserved during weekdays, and as always more study space and/or longer library hours around midterm and finals times.

– CC BA 2013

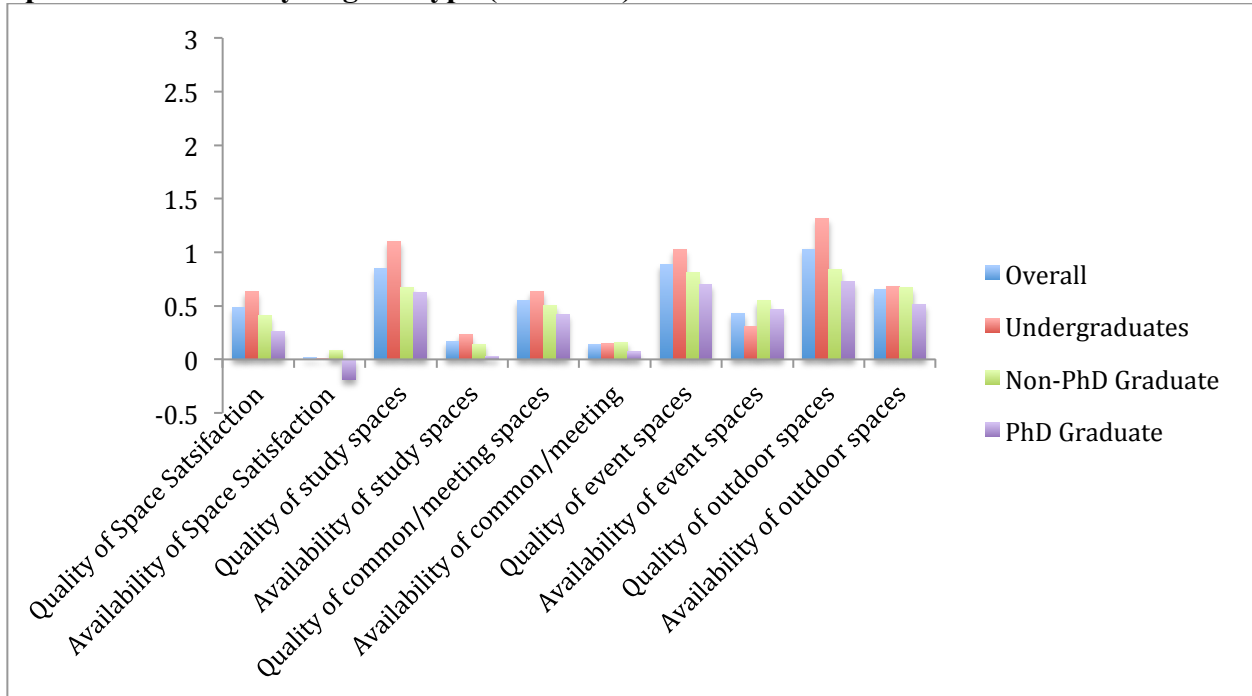
Satisfaction and Importance by School (Exhibit 1)



This scatterplot depicts space satisfaction of students from different schools, as well as how important they deem space to their quality of life. Importance is on a scale of 0 to 2 (for “not important,” “somewhat important,” and “very important”), and satisfaction is on a scale of -3 to 3 (with -3 being “very dissatisfied,” 0 being “neutral,” and 3 being “very satisfied.”). The center point of the graph is average importance by overall space satisfaction, and each school’s space

satisfaction and importance is plotted relative to that point. In the lower right quadrant, we see schools whose students feel that space is more important, but who are nevertheless less satisfied. Conceptually, resources should be distributed such that schools that deem space important and an area of dissatisfaction receive support.

**Space Satisfaction by Degree Type (Exhibit 2)**



Satisfaction is on a scale of -3 to 3, with -3 being “very dissatisfied,” 0 being “neutral,” and 3 being “very satisfied.”

The following analysis observes the impact of the subquestions of space satisfaction on overall space satisfaction. The analysis isolates the effect of individual variables, revealing statistically significant correlations, stated in descending order of magnitude:

*Space Sub-questions (Availability)*

- After controlling for schools, the strongest factor of influence within Space is satisfaction with the Availability of Study Spaces.
- Satisfaction with the Availability of Common Meeting Spaces is second in importance.
- Another strong factor is satisfaction with Availability of Event Spaces.

*Space Sub-questions (Quality)*

- After controlling for schools, the strongest factor of influence within Space is satisfaction with the Quality of Study Spaces.
- Satisfaction with the Quality Event Spaces is second in importance.
- Another strong factor is satisfaction with the Quality of Common Meeting Spaces

The following analysis observes the correlation between other dimensions and space satisfaction. “Other Dimensions” includes other satisfaction dimensions and demographic variables:

#### *Other Dimensions (Space Availability)*

- The strongest dimension that influences space availability satisfaction is satisfaction with Space Quality.
- The second strongest dimension that influences space availability satisfaction is satisfaction with Administration.
- Satisfaction with Physical Health comes in third.
- Identifying as a Parent is strongly correlated with satisfaction with space availability.

#### *Other Dimensions (Space Quality)*

- The strongest dimension that influences space quality satisfaction is satisfaction with Space Availability.
- The second strongest dimension that influences space quality satisfaction is satisfaction with Technology.
- Satisfaction with Libraries comes in third.
- Satisfaction with Safety comes in a close fourth.

Other variables are statistically insignificant at the p-value = 0.05 cutoff.<sup>1</sup> In simple terms, this means that the isolated effects of other variables have a greater than 5% chance of being random statistical noise.

#### Recommendations

To alleviate the space crunch in the short term and relieve the pressure on the Libraries, the University should open more study spaces, especially in areas that can serve as group study spaces. On the Morningside campus, one option is to make classrooms in buildings such as Hamilton or Kent available for reserve after group booking hours. Additional lounge space in student-centric areas should also be provided. Moreover, the University should open more graduate student collaboration and office hour space.

In the long term, the University must incorporate sizeable group study space and informal meeting areas in its upcoming Manhattanville buildings.

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<sup>1</sup> We used Stata's robust standard errors option to obtain conservative estimates of significance.