Distance Learning and Communication Survey of Texas Tech University’s Fall 2005 Distance and Off-Campus Students Administrative Report

February 2007
Kristyn Rose, M.Ed.
Valerie Osland Paton, Ph.D.
Introduction

Texas Tech serves students throughout Texas, the United States and the world. In order to increase access to Tech’s academic resources and expertise, faculty members have begun to alter their methods of instructional delivery to include students who cannot travel to the main campus in Lubbock, Texas. In 2005-06, almost 4% of Tech’s state-funded student credit hours were generated by electronic delivery of courses, and approximately 7% of all graduate student credit hours were delivered electronically. From 2001-02 to 2005-06, the number of Tech course sections offered electronically doubled and the number of students enrolled in distance offerings increased by 322%.

Texas Tech faculty members who teach using electronic methods are entrepreneurial and aggressive in improving teaching and learning. As such, they are innovative and use many different resources in the electronic delivery of instruction, including online instructional software, Tech video conferencing networks, asynchronous instructional materials (DVD’s, streaming videos, audio recordings, etc.), and communication tools that are readily available to students with internet access (e-mail, chat, blogs, wikis, etc.). Their students are also entrepreneurial in their search for accessible and high quality educational opportunities. This partnership between faculty and students generates learning interactions and environments that demand investigation.

This survey was conducted in order to gather data about: 1) the demographic characteristics of Texas Tech students who enrolled in a Fall 2005 course that was 50% or more electronically delivered, and 2) students’ preferred interaction tools, sense of community and satisfaction with online, video conferencing and print-based learning experiences. It was the researchers’ intent that these data would provide an initial overview of Texas Tech students who enrolled in one or more electronically delivered course during the Fall 2005 term, their levels of satisfaction with different delivery methods, willingness to enroll in future classes, and willingness to recommend Texas Tech distance courses and programs to other students. The researchers also sought to identify preferred means of communication between students and faculty.

We anticipate that this information will be useful to faculty and administrators as they plan future courses and offerings in order to ensure that these learning opportunities meet the needs of Texas Tech distance students.

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Executive Summary
Distance Learning and Communication Survey

- Response Rate

  1063 entries in Fall 2005 query of distance and off-campus students
  628 unduplicated students with working e-mail addresses
  231 respondents
  36.8% response rate for Fall 2005 distance and off-campus students with working e-mail addresses.

- Respondent Demographics (n=231)

  64% were female
  81.4% had zip codes in Texas
  62.6% were married
  85.5% were 25 or older
  75.3% were employed full-time outside the home
  38.8% of the female respondents and 59.7% of the male respondents had incomes greater than $45,000
  82% reported their ethnicity as “white”
  41.3% reported that they had individuals under the age of 18 living at home
  5.5% reported that they were a caregiver for parents or other adults in their homes
  11% agreed or strongly agreed that “relocation to attend on-campus classes was an option for their education”
  27.4% of the respondents said they were eligible for a Pell Grant or Stafford Loan in the 2005 academic year
  43.5% of the respondents said that they “did not apply” for a Pell Grant or Stafford Loan in the 2005 academic year
  70.6% said their preferred level of enrollment was 6 credit hours or fewer per term
  82% reported having taken 4 or more distance courses
  45% reported having taken 10 or more distance courses
  74% reported that they were studying at the master’s or certificate, or doctoral level
**Methodology**

The survey population was generated from a Tech Report query (FFR 320b) of Fall 2005 students who did not attend classes on-campus in Lubbock; the data was extracted and warehoused on October 6, 2005. A second query was generated on June 23, 2006 in order to update e-mail addresses. Fall 2005 Extended Bachelor of General Studies student information was extracted from C2K, the Division of Outreach and Distance Education student information platform.

The survey questions were developed from several different sources. Demographic Questions (1-15) were developed by the researchers or were taken from U.S. Census Bureau questions utilized in Texas in the 2000 Census, *The Third Shift Women Learning Online* (AAUW Educational Foundation, 2001) survey questions, or Texas Tech demographics collected for state and federal reports. Educational History Questions (16-21) were developed by the researchers or from national, longitudinal research on student satisfaction. Communication Questions (28-42) were piloted in Kristyn Rose’s Master’s project *Building Online Learner Communities: Survey Summary* (September 2004) and were utilized here with the researcher’s permission.

On August 7, 2006, the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects approved the researchers’ claim for an exemption for the proposed “Distance Learning and Communication Survey.”

The survey was administered via the subscription service, SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey software that provides an external online site for the development and delivery of survey notifications and the instrument. Respondents return their online surveys to SurveyMonkey.com and data is warehoused at this site. Secured access to the data is available to the researchers via password. Using SurveyMonkey.com, on August 8, 2006 a pre-survey notice was sent to all students in the query with email addresses and undeliverable messages were utilized to remove names. One week later, the survey was emailed to 628 Fall 2005 distance learners. 231 Fall 2005 students responded by the September 9, 2006 deadline, yielding a 36.8% response rate from those who had deliverable email addresses. The response rate for undergraduate students was 25.2%, and the rate for graduate students was 43.4%.

Descriptive analysis of the data was conducted in the Fall of 2006 and inferential statistical analysis began in the Spring of 2007.
Demographic Questions

(Questions 1–15)
Question 1: You are: (n=231)

Male
Female

[Pie chart showing 64% Female and 36% Male]
# Gender Comparison Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Fall 2005 TTU Undergraduate Students (n=22,984)</th>
<th>Fall 2006 TTU Graduate Students (n=4,285)</th>
<th>Survey Population Undergraduate Students (n=232)</th>
<th>Survey Population Graduate Students (n=396)</th>
<th>Survey Respondent Undergraduate Students (n=59)</th>
<th>Survey Respondent Graduate Students (n=172)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Undergraduate Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2005 TTU Undergraduate Students (n=22,984)</th>
<th>Survey Population Undergraduate Students (n=232)</th>
<th>Survey Respondent Undergraduate Students (n=59)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Graduate Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2006 TTU Graduate Students (n=4,285)</th>
<th>Survey Population Graduate Students (n=396)</th>
<th>Survey Respondent Graduate Students (n=172)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 2: Please enter your zip code (n=226)
Question 3: Your age is: (n=231)

- Under 18 years old: 5
- 18 years old: 0
- 19-24 years old: 21
- 25-29 years old: 32
- 30-34 years old: 32
- 35-39 years old: 23
- 40-45 years old: 21
- 46-49 years old: 25
- 50-54 years old: 24
- 55-59 years old: 16
- 60 years old and over: 7

Total:
- Male:
  - Under 18: 0
  - 18: 0
  - 19-24: 11
  - 25-29: 11
  - 30-34: 10
  - 35-39: 7
  - 40-45: 8
  - 46-49: 7
  - 50-54: 6
  - 55-59: 2
  - 60 & over: 1

- Female:
  - Under 18: 0
  - 18: 0
  - 19-24: 19
  - 25-29: 21
  - 30-34: 22
  - 35-39: 16
  - 40-45: 17
  - 46-49: 17
  - 50-54: 10
  - 55-59: 4
  - 60 & over: 0
Question 4: You are: (n=230)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with partner</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married/remarried</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 230
Question 5: Are you employed? (n=231)

Part-time outside the home
Full-time outside the home
Not employed
Part-time from home
Full-time from home
Other (please specify)
Question 6: Your income (rounded to the nearest thousand) is: (n=227)
Less than $10,000
$10,000-$14,999
$15,000-$19,999
$20,000-$24,999
$25,000-$29,999
$30,000-$39,999
$40,000-$44,999
$45,000-$49,999
$50,000-$59,999
$60,000-$74,999
$75,000-$99,999
$100,000-$124,999
$125,000-$149,999
$150,000-$199,999
$200,000 or more
Question 7: Your ethnicity is: (n=227)

- White: 82%
- Hispanic: 9%
- Black: 3%
- American Indian: 0%
- Asian: 2%
- Non-resident Alien: 1%
- No response: 3%
Question 8: Do you have individuals under the age of 18 living in your home? (n=230)

Yes
No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 9: Are you a caregiver for parents or other adults in your home? (n=218)

Yes
No
Question 10: Relocation to attend on-campus classes is an option for my education. (n=230)

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

![Pie chart showing responses to the question. 55% strongly disagree, 24% disagree, 10% neither agree nor disagree, 9% agree, and 2% strongly agree.]
Question 10: Relocation to attend on-campus classes is an option for my education. (n=230)
Question 11: Were you eligible for a Pell Grant or Stafford Loan in the 2005 academic year? (n=230)

Yes
No
Did not apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Male %</th>
<th>Female %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not apply</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 12: What is your preferred level of enrollment at any given time? (n=228)

- 1-3 credit hours
- 4-6 credit hours
- 7-8 credit hours
- 9-12 credit hours
- 13-15 credit hours
- 16 or more credit hours

![Bar chart showing the distribution of preferred enrollment levels among males and females.](chart.png)
Question 13: How many distance courses (print and online courses) have you taken, including any in which you are currently enrolled? (n=231)

- 1-3: 45%
- 4-6: 20%
- 7-9: 17%
- 10 or more: 18%
Question 14: In what degree or certificate program are you enrolled? (n=231)

- B.G.S. General Studies
- B.S. Horticulture
- M. Agr. Agriculture
- M.A. Technical Communication
- M.Ed. Educational Leadership
- M.Ed. Instructional Technology
- M.Ed. Language Literacy Education
- M.Ed. Special Education
- M.Engr. Engineering
- M.S. Computer Science
- M.S. Crop Science
- M.S. Horticulture
- M.S. Multidisciplinary Science
- M.S. Restaurant, Hotel, and Institutional Management
- M. Engineering
- M.S. Computer Science
- M.S. Crop Science
- M.S. Horticulture
- M.S. Restaurant, Hotel & Institutional Management
- M.S. Software Engineering
- M.S.S.E.M. Systems and Engineering Management
- Ed.D. Agricultural Education w/ Texas A&M University, College Station
- Ph.D. Technical Communication and Rhetoric
- Educational Diagnostician
- Generic Special Education
- Gerontology
- K-12 Principal Preparation
- K-12 Superintendent Preparation
- Master Reading Teacher Preparation
- Orientation and Mobility
- Post-baccalaureate Secondary Education Teacher Preparation
- M.S. Human Development and Family Studies, Gerontology Specialization
- Visual Impairment
- Other (please specify)
Question 15: At what level are you studying? (n=231)

- Undergraduate: 26%
- Master’s or certificate: 59%
- Doctoral: 15%
EDUCATIONAL HISTORY AND PLANS

(Questions 16-21)
Question 15: Undergraduate Respondents (n=59)

Question 16: Which phrase best describes your educational background prior to enrolling at TTU? (n=57)

- All previous undergraduate work completed at TTU: 23%
- Transferred to TTU from a community college: 4%
- Transferred to TTU from another university: 21%
- Transferred work from several institutions to TTU: 21%
- Completed a previous undergraduate degree (currently pursuing second undergraduate degree): 31%
Question 15: Undergraduate Respondents (n=59)

Question 17: What plans do you have for further education after completing your TTU undergraduate degree? (n=57)

- No plans for further education
- Plan to pursue Master’s degree or certificate via a face-to-face program
- Plan to pursue Master’s degree or certificate via an online program
- Plan to pursue a second undergraduate degree via a face-to-face program
- Plan to pursue a second undergraduate degree via an online program

![Pie chart showing the distribution of plans for further education among TTU undergraduate respondents.]

- No plans for further education: 28%
- Plan to pursue Master’s degree or certificate via a face-to-face program: 33%
- Plan to pursue Master’s degree or certificate via an online program: 37%
- Plan to pursue a second undergraduate degree via a face-to-face program: 2%
- Plan to pursue a second undergraduate degree via an online program: 0%
Question 15: Master's or Certificate Respondents (n=137)

Question 18: Which phrase best describes your educational background prior to enrolling at TTU? (n=136)

All previous undergraduate work completed at TTU
Undergraduate degree received from another university
Completed a previous Master's degree or certificate (currently pursuing second Master's degree or certificate)
Question 15: Master’s or Certificate Respondents (n=137)

Question 19: What plans do you have for further education after completing your TTU Master’s degree or certificate? (n=136)

- No plans for further education
- Plan to pursue doctoral degree via a face-to-face program
- Plan to pursue doctoral degree via an online program
- Plan to pursue an additional Master’s degree via a face-to-face program
- Plan to pursue an additional Master’s degree via an online program

- No plans for further education: 44%
- Plan to pursue doctoral degree via a face-to-face program: 15%
- Plan to pursue doctoral degree via an online program: 8%
- Plan to pursue an additional Master’s degree via a face-to-face program: 26%
- Plan to pursue an additional Master’s degree via an online program: 7%
Question 15: Doctoral Respondents (n=35)

Question 20: Which phrase best describes your educational background prior to enrolling at TTU? (n=35)

- Master’s degree completed at TTU
- Master’s degree received from another university
- Completed a previous doctoral degree (pursuing a second doctoral degree)

- Master's degree completed at TTU: 23%
- Master's degree received from another university: 74%
- Completed a previous doctoral degree (pursuing a second doctoral degree): 3%
Question 21: What plans do you have for further education after completing your TTU doctoral degree? (n=35)

- 86% No plans for further education
- 11% Plan to pursue an additional degree or certificate via a face-to-face program
- 3% Plan to pursue an additional degree or certificate via an online program
SATISFACTION QUESTIONS

(Questions 22-27)
Question 22: What was your primary reason for enrolling in your current degree program? (n=227)

- Degree completion: 28.20%
- Job-related training or preparation: 15.40%
- Career change or advancement: 42.70%
- Self-improvement: 11.50%
- Other (please specify): 2.20%
- Other: 0.00%
Question 23: Rate your satisfaction with your experience in your current TTU degree or certificate program. (n=227)

Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Neutral
Somewhat dissatisfied
Not satisfied

- Very Satisfied: 59%
- Somewhat satisfied: 25.10%
- Neutral: 7%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 8.40%
- Not satisfied: 0.40%
Question 24: Would you recommend this program to another student? (n=227)

Yes 65%
Probably yes 24%
Neutral 6%
Probably not 4%
No 1%
Question 25: Rate your satisfaction with print-based courses.
(n=227; 125 responded with satisfaction ratings; 102 responded “Did not take any print-based courses”)

Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Neutral
Somewhat dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Did not take any print-based courses

Pie chart showing the distribution of responses:
- Very satisfied: 34%
- Somewhat satisfied: 21%
- Neutral: 6%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 2%
- Dissatisfied: 37%
- Did not take any print-based courses: 34%
Question 26: Rate your satisfaction with online courses. (n=227; 200 responded with satisfaction ratings; 27 responded “Did not take any online courses”)

Very satisfied
Somewhat satisfied
Neutral
Somewhat dissatisfied
Dissatisfied
Did not take any online courses

![Pie chart showing satisfaction ratings]
Question 27: Rate your satisfaction with IVC (video conferencing) courses. (n=227; 75 responded with satisfaction ratings; 152 responded “Did not take any IVC courses”)

- Very satisfied: 41%
- Somewhat satisfied: 31%
- Neutral: 17%
- Somewhat dissatisfied: 8%
- Dissatisfied: 3%
- Did not take any IVC courses: 68%

[Pie chart showing the distribution of satisfaction levels]
COMMUNICATION QUESTIONS

(Questions 28-42)
Question 28: My online class uses Internet tools like email, instant messages, message boards, chat rooms, video conferencing, etc. for communications between students or between students and the instructor. (n=200)

Yes
No

90%
10%
Question 29: Please select the Internet tools you use(d) in ASSIGNMENTS (meaning required communications) in your online classes (select as many as needed). (n=200)

Email  
Instant Messages  
Discussion/Message Boards  
Whiteboards  
Chat Rooms  
Video conferencing/Web cams  
I did not use Internet communication tools in assignments  
Other (please specify)
Question 30: Please select the Internet tools you use(d) for PERSONAL communications (meaning contact not required in an assignment) with fellow students and/or instructors (pick as many as needed). (n=200)

Email
Instant Messages
Discussion/Message Boards
Whiteboards
Chat Rooms
Video conferencing/Web cams
I did not use Internet communication tools for personal communications
Other (please specify)
Preferred Communication Tools
(Combined data from Questions 29 and 30)

- Email
- Discussion Boards
- Chat Rooms
- Did not use

Required for assignments
Chosen for personal communication
Question 31: Online communications with my INSTRUCTOR helped with the learning process in online courses. (n=182)
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Did not communicate with my instructor online

Question 32: Online communications with my CLASSMATES helped with the learning process in online courses. (n=182)
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Did not communicate with my classmates online

Female responses to Questions 31 (n=118) and 32 (n=118):
Male responses to Questions 31 (n=63) and 32 (n=63):

- Strongly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly disagree

With instructor

With classmates
Question 33: I felt like I was part of a community with my classmates in my online courses. (n=182)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Female responses</th>
<th>Male responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not communicate</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female responses to Question 33 (n =118):

Male responses to Question 33 (n=63):
Question 34: Using online communications tools helped me feel a sense of a community with my classmates. (n=182)

- Strongly agree: 26%
- Agree: 35%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly disagree: 4%
- Did not communicate with my classmates online: 14%
Question 35: Collaborative lessons (or group activities) help me feel a sense of community with my classmates. (n=182)

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Did not experience any collaborative lessons

- Strongly agree: 18%
- Agree: 24%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 6%
- Disagree: 3%
- Strongly disagree: 3%
- Did not experience any collaborative lessons: 19%
Question 36: Online classes that do not use communications between students make me feel isolated from my classmates and/or alone. (n=182)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Have not experienced such a course

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question.]

- Strongly agree: 15%
- Agree: 23%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 10%
- Disagree: 24%
- Strongly disagree: 13%
- Have not experienced such a course: 13%
Female responses to Question 36 (n=118):

- Strongly agree: 17%
- Agree: 22%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Disagree: 14%
- Strongly disagree: 12%
- Have not experienced this: 15%

Male responses to Question 36 (n=63):

- Strongly agree: 11%
- Agree: 28%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 27%
- Disagree: 17%
- Strongly disagree: 8%
- Have not experienced this: 9%
Question 37: Online classes without collaborative (group) activities make me feel isolated from my classmates and/or alone. (n=182)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Have not experienced such a course

[Pie chart showing the distribution of responses with percentages:]
- Strongly agree: 7%
- Agree: 16%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 25%
- Disagree: 27%
- Strongly disagree: 13%
- Have not experienced such a course: 12%
Question 38: The connections or relationships I make in one online class carry over to other online classes. (n=181)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Have not experienced such connections

Female responses to Question 38 (n=117):

- Strongly agree: 18%
- Agree: 48%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13%
- Disagree: 4%
- Strongly disagree: 3%
- Have not experienced this: 14%

Male responses to Question 38 (n=64):

- Strongly agree: 14%
- Agree: 43%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 16%
- Disagree: 5%
- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Have not experienced this: 20%
Question 39: I communicate online with my classmates even when the assignment does not require it. (n=181)

Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
I do not have any contact with my classmates
Question 40: I will keep in contact with some of my classmates when my course/degree is finished. (n=181)
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
I do not have any contact with my classmates

Female responses to Question 40 (n=117):

- Strongly agree: 14%
- Agree: 32%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 20%
- Disagree: 16%
- Strongly disagree: 3%
- I do not have any contact: 15%

Male responses to Question 40 (n=64):

- Strongly agree: 11%
- Agree: 32%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 13%
- Disagree: 14%
- Strongly disagree: 5%
- I do not have any contact: 25%
Question 41: A sense of community among online students is important to their satisfaction and success. (n=181)

- Strongly agree: 19%
- Agree: 37%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 29%
- Disagree: 7%
- Strongly disagree: 8%

The pie chart visually represents the distribution of responses.
Female responses to Question 41 (n=117):

- Strongly agree: 23%
- Agree: 37%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 27%
- Disagree: 6%
- Strongly disagree: 7%

Male responses to Question 41 (n=64):

- Strongly agree: 13%
- Agree: 36%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 33%
- Disagree: 9%
- Strongly disagree: 9%
Question 42: Please rank the following online communications tools, according to your sense of their importance in building a sense of community among online students. (n=181)

Email
Instant Messages
Discussion/Message Boards
Video conferencing/Web cams
Whiteboards
Chat Rooms

![Bar chart showing rankings of online communications tools.](chart.png)
Question 43: Please add comments on this topic or about the survey that you feel are helpful. Comments have been coded by the respondents’ degree or certificate programs and are available for the respective program coordinator’s use upon request.
**Conclusion**

This survey was the first to be administered to Texas Tech students who were identified as “distance” students for all courses in an entire term. Within the survey population, some students had completed their entire work in a face-to-face context at Texas Tech, but were completing final work at a distance during one term. There was a second group of students who were enrolled in degree and certificate programs that were approved for face-to-face delivery, but included distance courses, creating the opportunity for students to enroll entirely at a distance for one term. A third group, the majority of the survey respondents, were enrolled in programs and certificates that were approved for and delivered at a distance and off-campus. These divisions in students’ distance or off-campus instructional experiences indicate a need for tailored questions for these three groups in future survey activity.

The demographics questions (1-15) yielded the following results.  
**Question 1:** Females were represented in the survey population and respondents at a higher rate than in the total Fall 2005 Texas Tech undergraduate and graduate student population; 61% of the survey population was female and 64% of the survey respondents were female, while only 45.6% of the total Fall 2005 undergraduate and graduate students were female (IRIM Data Warehouse).

**Question 2:** While 81.4% of the respondents had zip codes in Texas, respondents listed zip codes for 23 additional states.

**Question 3:** 85.4% the respondents listed their age as 25 and over, while the Fall 2005 age distribution for all Texas Tech students indicated that only 17.9% were 25 and over (IRIM Fall 2005 Student Profile).

**Question 4:** 62.6% of the respondents reported that they were married or remarried.

**Question 5:** 75.3% of the respondents were employed full-time outside of their homes.

**Question 6:** 38.8% of the female respondents and 59.7% of the male respondents said they had incomes greater than $45,000.

**Question 7:** 82% or the respondents reported their ethnicity as “white” as compared to 77.4% of all Fall 2005 Texas Tech students (IRIM 2005 Fact Book).

**Question 8:** 41.3% reported that they had “individuals under the age of 18 living at home.”

**Question 9:** 5.5% reported that they were a caregiver for parents or other adults in their homes.

**Question 10:** Only 2% strongly agreed that “relocation to attend on-campus classes is an option for my education,” and another 9% agreed with this statement. 79% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, indicating that they would not relocate to attend on-campus classes. The responses to this question address the concern that, if distance and off-campus options were not available, these students might attend face-to-face classes in Lubbock.

**Question 11:** 43.5% of the respondents indicated that they did not apply for a Pell Grant or Safford Loan.

**Question 12:** 70.6% of the respondents said that their preferred level of enrollment was “6 credit hours or fewer per term,” far exceeding the 43% of the total Tech graduate student population in Fall 2005 who enrolled in 8 or fewer credits (Texas Tech Common Data Set, Fall 2005).

**Question 13:** 45% of the respondents stated that they had taken “10 or more” distance courses.
Question 14: The largest respondent groups came from the following programs (in order of the number of respondents):

- M.Ed. Special Education (22)
- Special Education certification areas (21 total)
  - Visual Impairment (12)
  - Educational Diagnostician (4)
  - Generic Special Education (4)
  - Orientation and Mobility (1)
- B.G.S. General Studies (35)
- M.Ed. Instructional Technology (28)
- M.A. Technical Communication (14)
- Ed.D. in Agricultural Education (10)
- M.S. in Software Engineering (7)
- M.Ed. in Educational Leadership (7)
- Ph.D. in Technical communication and Rhetoric (6)
- M.S. in Computer Science (6)
- M.S. in Horticulture (6)
- M. Agriculture (5)

Question 15: 26% of the respondents indicated that they were studying at the undergraduate level, 59% at the master’s level and 15% at the doctoral level. Taken together, the master’s and doctoral respondents represented 74% of the respondent population, compared to 17.8% graduate and professional students in the Fall 2005 population (Texas Tech Common Data Set, Fall 2005).

Question 16: Only 23% of the undergraduate respondents reported that they had taken all of their undergraduate work at Texas Tech.

Question 17: 70% of the respondents indicated that they had plans for further education after completing their Texas Tech degree. 33% indicated that they planned to pursue a master’s degree or certificate via a face-to-face program while 37% indicated that they would pursue an online master’s degree or certificate program.

Question 18: Only 21% of the graduate respondents reported that they had received their undergraduate degree from Texas Tech. 18% reported that they were pursuing a second master’s degree or certificate program.

Question 19: 26% of the master’s or certificate respondents stated that they planned to pursue a doctoral degree via an online program. 15% indicated that they planned to pursue an additional Master’s degree or certificate program via a face-to-face program. 44% reported they had not plans for further education.

Question 20: 74% of the doctoral respondents indicated that they had received a master’s degree from another university other than TTU. 23% reported that they had completed at Texas Tech master’s degree, and 3% reported that they were pursuing a second doctoral degree.

Question 21: 86% of the doctoral student respondents indicated that they had no plans for further education, however, 11% indicated that they planned to pursue an additional degree or certificate via an online program.

Question 22: 42.7% of the respondents indicated that their primary reason for enrolling in their current degree program was “career change or advancement.” Another 28.2% indicated that the primary reason was “degree completion.” 15.4% indicated “job-related training or preparation” as their primary reason for enrolling in their current degree program.
**Question 23:** 59% of the respondents reported that they were “very satisfied” with their experience in their Texas Tech degree or certificate program and another 25.10% reported that they were “somewhat satisfied.” Only 8.4% reported that they were “somewhat dissatisfied” and less than one-half of one percent that reported that they were “not satisfied.”

**Question 24:** When asked “Would you recommend this program to another student?” 65% of the respondents said “yes” and another 24% said “probably yes.”

**Question 25:** Respondents rated their satisfaction with print-based courses as 34% “very satisfied” and 37% “somewhat satisfied.”

**Question 26:** Respondents rated their satisfaction with online courses as 63% “very satisfied” and 21% “somewhat satisfied.”

**Question 27:** Respondents rated their satisfaction with IVC courses as 41% “very satisfied” and 31% “somewhat satisfied.”

**Question 28:** This question marks the beginning of items concerning communication in online courses. The respondents in this section indicated earlier in the survey that they had taken at least one online course. 90% of respondents indicated that their online course used Internet tools, such as email, instant messages, message boards, chat rooms, and/or video conferencing, to communicate between students or student-to-instructor.

**Question 29:** This item focused on the use of Internet tools as part of online course assignments. More women than men reported utilizing each type of online communication tool. More men than women reported that they did not use communication tools in their online assignments.

**Question 30:** This item focused on the use of Internet tools in personal communications with other students and/or instructors, outside of course requirements. Again, more women than men indicated that they chose to engage in voluntary online communication with classmates and instructors. As in Question 29, more men responded that they did not use online communication tools in this manner. When comparing Questions 29 and 30, women reported an increase in the use of email and instant messages in personal communications, rather than for their online course. They also showed a slight increase in the number of women who did not engage in personal communications online. When comparing the responses from men for these two questions, men showed a decrease in the use of each online tool for personal communication and an increase in those who did not engage in online communications.

**Question 31:** This item focused on the perceived impact that communication with instructors had on the students’ learning process. The majority of the respondents agreed that communicating with their instructor aided the learning process. The only notable difference is that all women respondents indicated they had communicated with their instructor online. Some men reported not communicating with their instructor.

**Question 32:** This item focused on the perceived impact of communication with classmates had on the students’ learning process. Again, the majority of respondents agreed that communicating with their fellow students aided their learning process.

**Question 33:** This item focused on the students’ perception of community with their online classmates. Among the female respondents, 65% agreed that they felt a part of a community with their classmates. 52% of the men agreed that they felt the same. In both populations, 11% of the respondents disagreed to feeling part of a community. 13% of women reported not communicating with their classmates, while 17% of men reported the same.

**Question 34:** This item focused on the perceived contribution that online communication tools made to the sense of community among the online students. Overall, 61% of the respondents agreed that online communication tools helped them feel this sense of community. 11% disagreed, while 14% reported not communicating online with classmates.

**Question 35:** This item focused on the perceived contribution that collaborative assignments (or group activities) made to the sense of community. Compared to Question 34, a lower percentage of students agreed that collaborative assignments helped with the sense of community, at 48%. 9% disagreed, while 24% did not experience collaborative assignments.
Question 36: This item focused on the feeling of isolation that can be experienced by students in courses that do not use communications between students. Isolation has traditionally been considered a major stumbling block for distance students. Overall, 39% agreed that lack of student-to-student communications results in a feeling of isolation. 25% disagreed. 13% had not experienced such a course.

Question 37: This item focused on the feeling of isolation that can be experienced by students in courses that do not use collaborative assignments. When comparing this question to Question 36, we see a reversal of the distribution of responses. Just 23% agreed that a lack of collaborative assignments makes them feel isolated. 39% disagreed, while 13% had not experienced this. Student opinion seems to support the idea that student-to-student communication is perceived to do more for online communities than collaborative learning.

Question 38: This item focused on the perceived longevity of the relationships these students formed among their online peers. 66% of women respondents agreed that the relationships they made in one online class carried over to other online classes, while 7% disagreed and 14% hadn't experienced this. 57% of men agreed to the same statement, while 7% disagreed and 20% had not experienced this.

Question 39: This item asked if the students communicated with their classmates even when the assignment did not require it. 46% of the respondents agreed that they did, while 21% disagreed and 19% did not have contact with their classmates.

Question 40: This item asked students if they intended to keep in contact with classmates after the course or degree program is finished. 46% of women agreed that they would, while 19% disagreed. 43% of men agreed, and 19% also disagreed.

Question 41: When asked if a sense of community is important to the satisfaction and success of online students, 56% of respondents agreed that it was important. 15% of respondents disagreed. When analyzed by gender, 60% of women agreed community was important, with 13% disagreeing. 49% of men agreed, with 18% disagreeing.

Question 42: In this item, respondents were asked to rank different communication tools according to their perceived important in building community online. The majority said email was the most important tool for building community, followed by instant messages, discussion/message boards, and chat rooms, with video conferencing/web cams and whiteboards competing for least important.

Question 43: Responses have been grouped according to respondents’ degree or certificate programs and are available to the respective program coordinators upon request.

Comparison of online communication tools used in required assignments reveals that asynchronous email and discussion board tools dominate, but synchronous tools are still frequently used for course-related student-to-student interaction. Respondents expressed that communications with their instructor aided the learning process more than communications with their classmates. However, the majority also reported that the sense of community among their classmates is significant to their satisfaction and success. Providing tools and resources for these students to communicate gives support to the student community and, therefore, helps maximize their satisfaction with and subsequent success in their online experience.