# XFactor Marketing

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to better understand Greensboro College (GC) from the viewpoint of students, XFactor Marketing (XFactor) conducted a student-based survey to find out what they (the students) thought of the campus. The study looks to capture the perceptions of Greensboro College students in a way presentable to interested staff members. XFactor wants Greensboro College to capitalize off of its pros and fix its cons so as to draw more people to our school and keep them here.

The following are Key Points of the study:

- Gather information from the student body regarding their opinions towards the college
- Determine what aspect of the college most students are concerned with regarding physical and visual attractiveness

**Questionnaire**

The questions asked in the study allowed for XFactor to see year or gender influenced their answer choices. This was important for further dissecting the survey results to help account for any potential bias/discrimination. They were further asked for year classification and wheriter they were planning on transferring or graduating here so that the results could show if one class(es)/future intent had an impact on the responses. The remaining questions asked about aspects of the college concluding with an open ended question response area were they gave an overall rating and an explanation behind the rating.

**Sampling Method**

To collect a sample size with a minimum of 30 respondents, XFactor sent out an email containing a link to a survey created through SurveyMonkey. The recipients were current students attending Greensboro College. Students were randomly chosen based on if their email popped up when typing in the addresses. In total, 67 students participated in the study.

**Research Design**

When creating this study, XFactor wanted to develop a plan that could become a stepping stone used to promote certain aspects of the college and help improve others. To decide what aspects of the college to focus on in the study, XFactor asked what aspects were viewed in a positive light versus what was not favorably viewed. From there XFactor began to outline the survey questions and responses.

**Procedural Aspects**

After creating the outline, XFactor finalized the questions and sent out emails to students containing a link to the survey. A short description of the purpose of the study was for and what was being conducted was included in the body of the email. Those who chose to participate, clicked on the link in the email and completed the survey. Their responses were recorded and organized by SurveyMonkey, a data collection software.

**Statement of Key Findings**

XFactor conducted a study at a private, liberal arts college, to better understand the students and how they view their campus. The goal of the study is to find out what aspects of the college were attractive to current and potential students as well as find areas to improve in/upon. By picking certain key aspects of the typical college life to evaluate, XFactor was able to develop a questionnaire that would sufficiently evaluate these aspects. Students of Greensboro College received a link to their survey in their email which most completed in an average of three minutes and six seconds.

Figures one-four are all background questions to better understand our respondent. Figure five asks the responder “What Attracted You...?”, the top results being Athletics (48%), Scholarships (22%). This question addressed what caught the student’s attentions enough to give GC an edge over other schools. This is where the marketing center of Greensboro College should focus on and promote. Per figure six, the two most important issues at GC are, Parking Lot Issues, with 37/67 of the votes (55%), and Tuition with 28/67 votes (42%). Figure seven shows

the majority of students in the neutral to negative range with how well certain aspects of the college met their expectations. The category “Did Not Meet Expectations’ appeared in almost all of the areas in a larger percent overall than did the category “Meets All Expectations”, this is not good. This highlights an area where GC can work harder or direct more money towards in an attempt to attract and satisfy customers. The study enables the reader to see what aspects the college can fix to bring it to what the students standards are at instead of just hypothesizing. Figure eight asks specifically about parking/roads. The data shows that “Does Not Meet Expectations” is the most used response with the Availability rate at 40%, Smoothness at 64% and Size at 53%. Looking at the Food aspect, “Food Quality’s” highest response rate was 31% voting that it “Does Not Meet Expectations”, “amount of Food Choices had 36 % of votes saying “Meet Some Expectations” and “Cleanliness” had 29% of its respondents say that it “Meet Expectations”. This shows students and staff  need to work more with the cafeteria staff to better communicate what food/tastes they want/expect.

XFactor recommends that Greensboro College promotes its athletic programs and scholarship possibilities to increase awareness for the college and increase student enrollment. XFactor also recommends that aspects such as parking and food quality need to be reevaluated to see where improvements can be made. In regard to parking, filling the potholes with a permanent solution could be a start to renovations that could range from smoothing out the speed bumps to increasing parking spot availability. It is also recommended that a food committee should be organized with both teachers and students on it so that all voices from the college are equally voiced and heard.

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In today's competitive market for students, colleges and universities are striving to attract students by appealing to their desire for strong academics, vibrant community, varied opportunities for recreation and leisure, and top-notch student services. Students at four-year colleges and universities feel justified in demanding outstanding resources such as comfortable residence halls, multiple choices for dining, and ample space dedicated to student recreation and fellowship. Students across the nation have begun to express their higher expectations of responsive planning from their institutions; students are seeking the best ways to gain the ear of administrators. For students at GC, it seems as though singular voices are not being heard by the college in regards to certain issues on campus. To put GC at the leading edge of the student to administration conversation, XFactor designed a survey to address several pressing student concerns. The team researched what current students think about cafeteria food, residential life, parking, tuition, and the student coffee shop project. By gathering this information from a large sample of students, the response will carry greater weight; this survey will also enable administration to have a clear understanding of student satisfaction, as well as student concerns. This research study uses current Greensboro College students. The team's belief is that this survey and its findings will help the college leadership to address concerns for students, both current and potential, and thus will lead to increased enrollment, increased retention rates, and improved GC student culture as a whole, goals shared by administrators, students, and alumni alike.

Recently, Greensboro College has experienced a decrease in enrollment as well as a decrease in its student retention rate. This study was conducted to find out what elements are satisfactory about the school, what elements are considered excellent or outstanding, and what aspects could be improved upon. The questions posed by the survey range from beautification to physical projects that the college would have to undertake. GC is a beloved institution, and students and alumni wish to see it at its peak in all aspects. The hypothesis at the outset of this

project was that current GC students would likely have the most negative response towards to current state of roads and parking on campus. It was also believed that given the recent upgrade to the dining halls, opinions on this topic would be relatively positive. Questions were chosen to provide beneficial feedback on key areas of student satisfaction.

**Research Objectives**

- Gather information from the student body regarding their opinions towards the college
- Determine what aspect of the college most students are concerned with regarding physical and visual attractiveness

**Limitations of the Study**

Because this project was for a class, there was no budget and a somewhat short time frame to work within. Due to this short time frame, questions were limited in scope, and some concerns were not covered in the detail perhaps warranted. For instance, the free version of the online survey generating website (SurveyMonkey) only allows ten questions in questionnaires, which necessarily limited the inquiries. If this team did have a budget and a larger time frame to work with for this project, the team would have likely conducted some focus groups both on the GC campus and other local college campuses to compare and contrast the varying opinions about what is important on a college campus. With a budget for this project, XFactor would also have spent money to have a full Survey Monkey account so that our questionnaire could have been more than ten questions.

# METHODOLOGY

**Define Population**

The purpose of this study was to examine aspects of Greensboro College and how they affect currently enrolled students. Given this purpose, the population of this study only includes the currently enrolled students at GC, which is 950 students (Registrar's Office).

**Sample Plan and Sample Size**

To get an accurate representation of what all students feel about the Greensboro College campus, it was important to get responses from freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The sample size included 67 respondents: 14 freshmen, 15 sophomores, 21 juniors, and 16 seniors. The sampling units used in this study were individual college students and probability sampling was employed. The number of respondents were fairly similar grade to grade, but the descriptions seen are accounted for in the data sets provided further along in the report.

**Development of the Questionnaire**

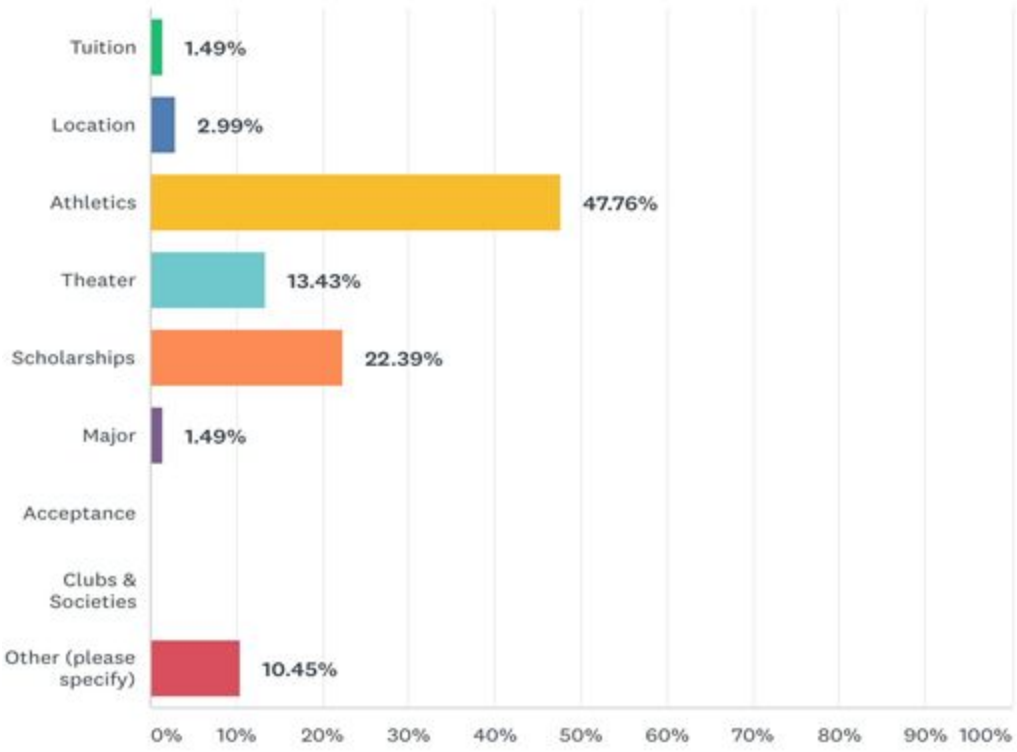
The questionnaire used in this study was a collaborative creation by XFactor. As students of GC, XFactor is uniquely qualified to know which issues all students are most likely interested in, and the questionnaire was developed accordingly. The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions about general features and projects on our campus. These questions covered multiple topics, including student opinions on the dining hall, to the current state of campus roads and parking.

**Data Collection Method**

Since all members of this research group are students at GC, and the population of the study focused on are also students at GC, the researchers used a convenience sampling method. The data was collected by SurveyMonkey and then sorted into tables and graphs to make the responses easier to understand and elaborate on.

# FINDINGS

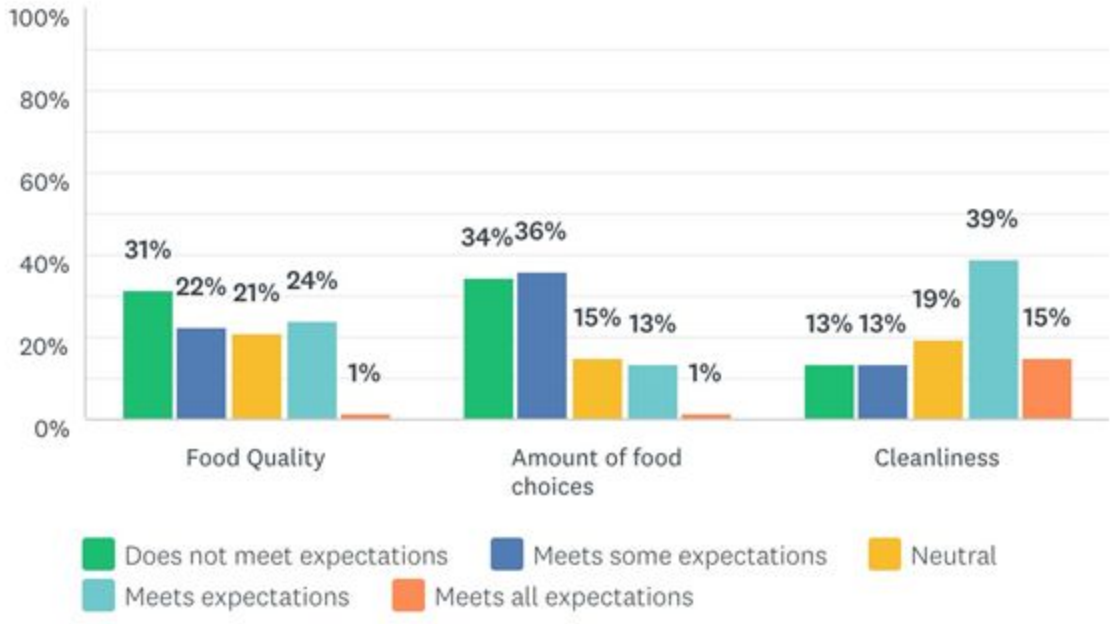
The primary focus of the study conducted by XFactor focused on determining current student perception of the school and how well it meet their expectations. XFactor attempted to get a wide base of respondents throughout the school including screening questions such as: gender, year and whether they live on or off campus. The survey was sent to all students (athletes, theatre, and purely academic based students). The majority of student respondents tended to be athletes.




XFactor was not surprised by this as around 50% of the student population at GC, comes to the school purely to compete in their respective sport. Knowing the main reason as to why students pick Greensboro College helps the school to understand its best assets as well as what it needs to work on in order to attract students that are interested in athletics. It is imperative for GC to identify what the key issues of the school are and how/what the students ranked issues based on importance of the current issues. There were 67 respondents to the survey. Of the respondents, 64% were females and 36% were males. The school has a fairly balanced population of around 50% of each gender representing the full population, whereas our

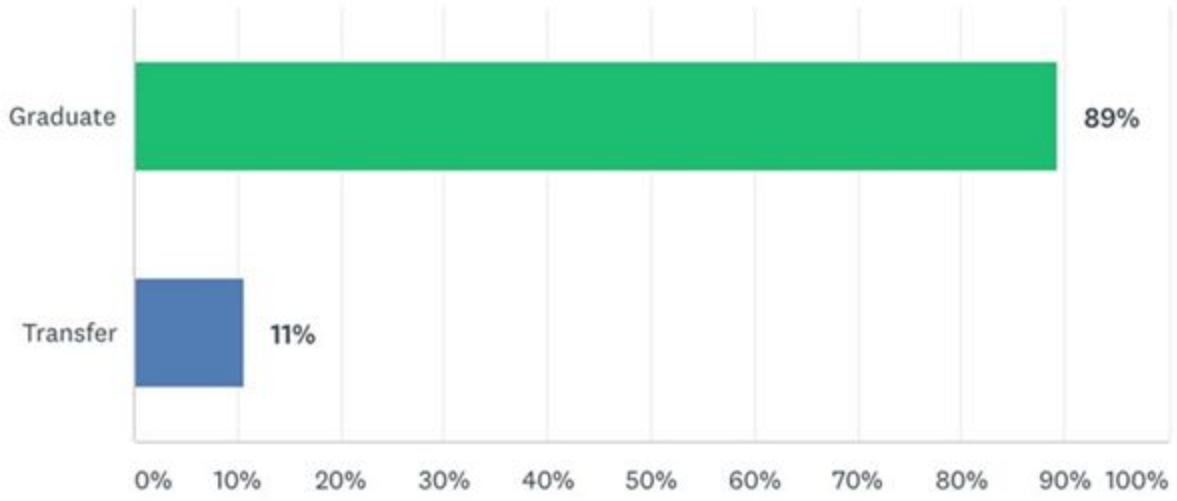
respondents are 66% of females and 33% being males. The gap in respondent gender is not of major importance because of the nature of the survey, but the results of the survey are.

Greensboro College has a high dropout rate. This means that for every year of enrollment, the number of students declines as the class year increases. Surprisingly the spread of participants was similar between classes, XFactor expected that seniors would represent the lowest of the participants as they have the lowest population of all the classes. The response division was thus: 21% freshman, 23% sophomores, 32% juniors and 24% seniors. This is a nice spread as it gave XFactor a variety of students who have seen/interacted with the surveyed issues. Greensboro College has recently been undergoing changes to rectify issues previously highlighted by students. The cafeteria is one of the areas that has always been a hot debate between students at the school, and this past summer the cafeteria was updated, and a new company was appointed to provide food. This means that the cafeteria has been improved meaning that the food quality and quantity of choices, as well as cleanliness should have been positively impacted. However, as the graph below shows, people are still not as greatly satisfied by the cafeteria as XFactor expected.

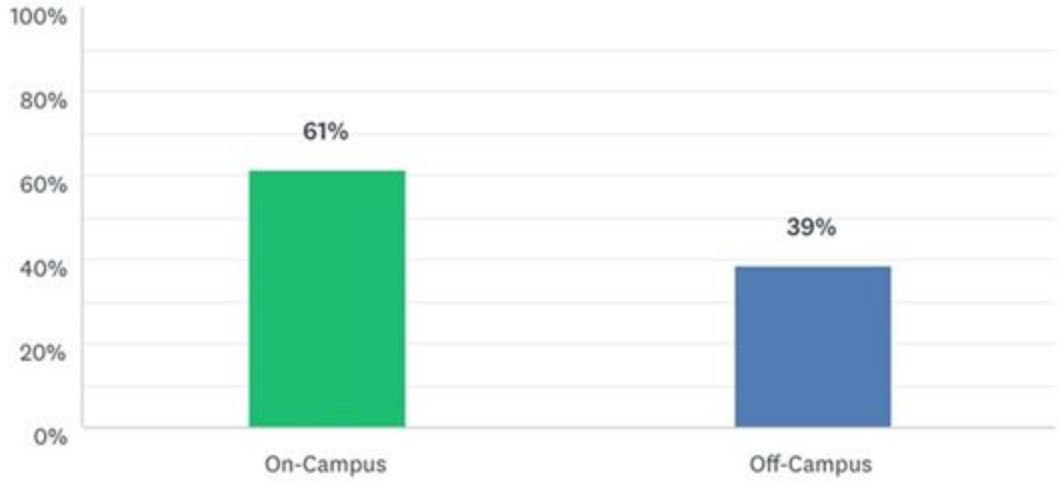


Only 25% of the respondents answered that the cafeteria meets expectations or meets all expectations. It seems that respondents' main issue was with the amount of food choices that the cafeteria provides for the students with a total of 34% claiming that it does not meet their expectations and 36% claiming that it only meets some expectations. The cleanliness is good 46% of respondents claiming that it meets their expectations.

As the graph below shows, roughly 9 of 10 respondents indicated that they intend to graduate from Greensboro College and the rest wish to transfer before graduating.

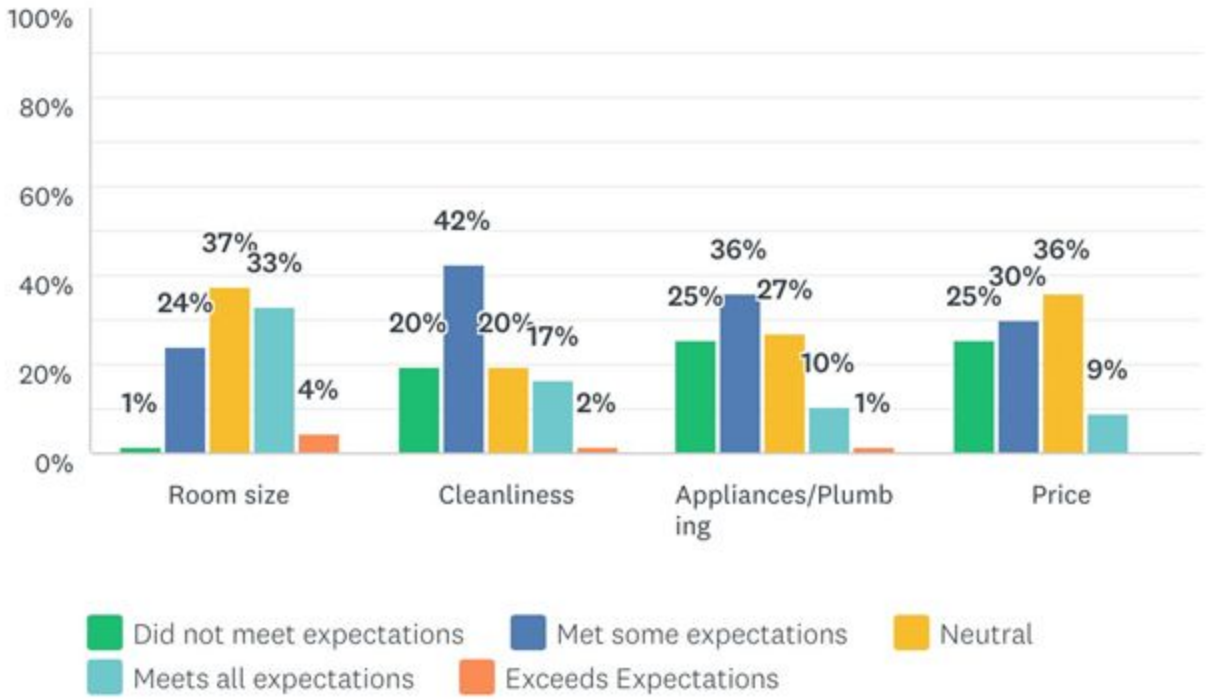



This indicates that although these are issues that many of the respondents attending the school are dissatisfied with, they are not the issues forcing a huge number of students to leave before graduating. However, the transfer rate is a little more than 1 out of every 10 students, which shows the school still has room for improvement in terms of student satisfaction. The survey left space at the end for people to add comments and to rate the school, of the 67 responses only 61 left a rating/response. The average rating of these responses was 6.33. This is not a very high rating, however with 31% of the votes at a seven, the mode has a more positive reading. On the other hand, there were two respondents that rated the school the lowest with a three, while at the other end of the spectrum, only two people gave GC a rating of 10. This indicates that Greensboro College is doing an average job of making improvements based off student opinion.



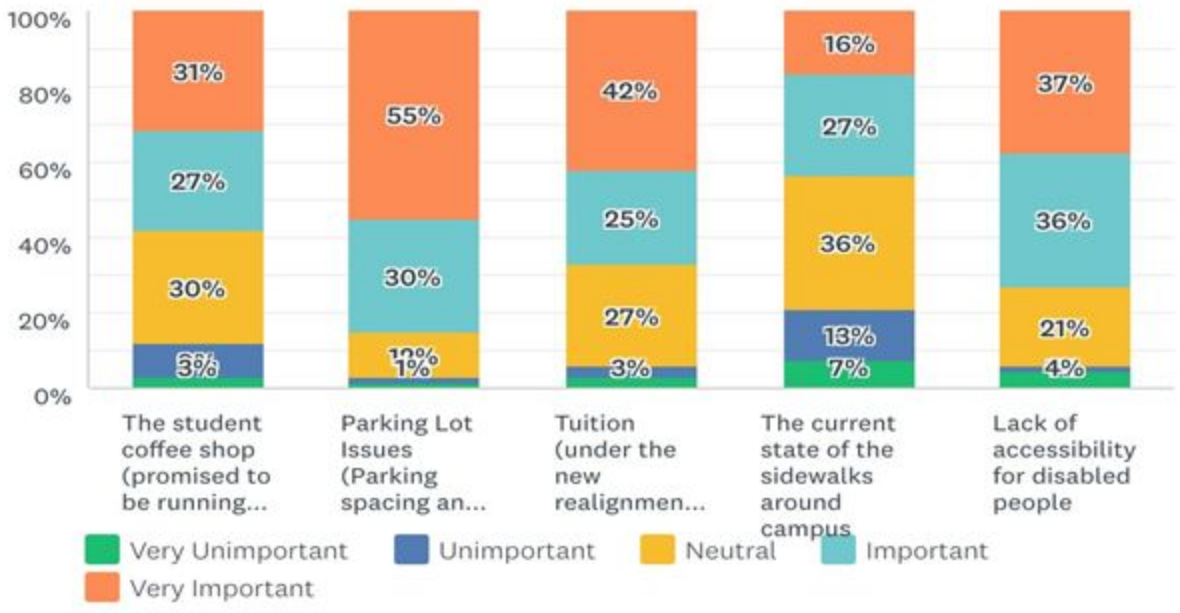

As the graph above shows, of the total respondents, 61% live on campus and 39% live off campus. This is mentioned because of the increased awareness of someone who lives on campus has versus someone who commutes. Students on campus may be more aware of some of the issues that are present within the school, especially with residential life. Students that are off campus are still included in the study because they commute as well as having most likely lived on campus for at least one year at GC. A limitation on this aspect comes from that of time, the respondent may not have been in the dormitories since their freshman year. This could cause a distorted view of the issues that are in the residential spaces.

In terms of residential life at Greensboro College, students seem to be most unhappy with the state of appliances/plumbing and the price of room and board. Both of these problems recorded 25% answers as “Did Not Meet Expectations”, the highest in its category. On a positive note, room size seemed to be the most appreciated aspect of residential life with 33% of respondents choosing “Meets All Expectations” as their answer. However, it seems GC is not doing anything that exceeds many of their students’ expectations as only 5% of people answered so for room size, 1% for cleanliness and appliances/plumbing, and 0% for price.




After surveying how the cafeteria met expectations, students were overall most pleased with cleanliness. 38% of the respondents ranked cleanliness as "Meeting All Expectations", which was the highest percentage of any answer. However, students were not happy about the amount of food choices as 34% stated they "Did Not Meet Expectations". The only problem with this question is that some off-campus students might not have purchased any "swipes", and so would not have access to the cafeteria. This could have contributed to a skewing of the information for this problem which might indicate why the results were relatively flat and not very revealing.

Whether a student lives on GC's campus or commutes, all have seen/experienced GC's parking lot first hand. Parking lot and roads are a huge issue for the students who must use them. 55% of respondents claimed that this is was a "Very Important" issue for them. Another 30% claimed that it was "Important". This brings the total to 85% of the respondents citing this as an important aspect of the college. The graph below further explains the feelings/responses towards the topic.




When asked how the road conditions of Greensboro College met students' expectations, students were not impressed. More than half the students recorded answers of "Does Not Meet Expectations" for smoothness of roads (64%) and size of parking lots and roads (53%). This indicates Greensboro College should invest in road construction that will help them even out their roads. GC should also consider investing in area for another parking lot or possibly expanding to allow for more spaces.

On top of the porous parking lots, access for disabled people, as well as tuition realignment, recorded high responses of "Very Important" with 37% and 42%, respectively. This indicates that the school is actively doing some things to make the school more available to student's financial moves, but it shows a lack of knowledge of what the student body wants to have fixed. Parking lot issues and accessibility for disabled people remain unimproved via student responses and show no sign of doing so.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After distributing the survey, relevant information was collected from the target audience at Greensboro College. Most of the student respondents intend to graduate from GC. Therefore, XFactor will recommend changes to be made to ensure the college student experience is as good as possible, and why these changes will bring a positive environment that would encourage higher enrolment and retention levels.

As mentioned, 48% of respondents came to Greensboro College for athletic purposes. When analyzing the results, it was seen that 54% of respondents opted that the quality of food in the cafeteria either “Met Some Expectations” or “Did Not Meet Expectations”. Athletes often are on a specific diet or look for healthy food options. By having a variety of fruit at every meal and freshly cooked vegetables, the cafeteria would automatically have more healthy options. This would encourage more athletes or anyone health conscious to attend GC. It is highly likely that an improvement of food services could encourage current students to stay.

A second recommendation would be to investigate current parking lot issues, such as spaces, potholes and uneven paving. Over half of the respondents thought that this was a very important issue that needs to be addressed. XFactor recommends that the school begins by fixing this aspect by repaving the parking lots over the summer months when there are not as many students on campus. Listening to the student wants and needs is the main way to increase student enrolment and retention. One of the first things new students will notice when arriving at Greensboro College is the sidewalks around campus because it is what perspective and current student walk on, especially while on the campus tour. It is imperative that new students have an excellent first impression of the college. XFactor suggests that budgeting for beautifying and making the necessary adjustments to facilitate this need. Many of the bricks on the sidewalks are loose. This is a major tripping hazard and students, faculty, staff or visitors could easily get injured. By fixing the sidewalks, it reduces this risk.

XFactor recommends that the dorm rooms are thoroughly cleaned at the beginning of each new school year and that all appliances are checked to ensure they are working as they should. Some respondents indicated a poor level of cleaning upon first entering their room. Student dorms are priced at a high cost and for this reason the students should be receiving a high standard room. Students have suggested by decreasing the cost of living, retention rates would increase as they believe they are not getting what they are paying for. Re-modeling the dorm rooms should also be considered for the near future.

As previously mentioned, there was an equal range of respondents, giving well rounded responses. Overall, students at Greensboro College are not completely satisfied with the standard of living at the school. Not only does the appearance and odor of certain issues discourage students from coming here, but XFactor believes some aspects are dangerous and hazardous to the students. The team wants Greensboro College to be aware of the problems and act. XFactor believes that a rearrangement of budgeting plans and some simple updates that students vote on or that are address within is what Greensboro College needs to improve the overall student experience.

# APPENDIXES

Table 1 (Question 1)

| ANSWER CHOICES | | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Female | | 64.18% | 43 |
| Male | | 35.82% | 24 |
| Other (please specify) | Responses | 0.00% | 0 |
| TOTAL | | | 67 |

Table 2 (Question 2)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Freshman | 21.21% | 14 |
| Sophomore | 22.73% | 15 |
| Junior | 31.82% | 21 |
| Senior | 24.24% | 16 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

Table 3 (Question 3)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| Graduate | 89.39% | 59 |
| Transfer | 10.61% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | 66 |

Table 4 (Question 4)

| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|
| On-Campus | 61.19% | 41 |
| Off-Campus | 38.81% | 26 |
| TOTAL | | 67 |

Table 5 (Question 5)

| ANSWER CHOICES | | RESPONSES | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tuition | | 1.49% | 1 |
| Location | | 2.99% | 2 |
| Athletics | | 47.76% | 32 |
| Theater | | 13.43% | 9 |
| Scholarships | | 22.39% | 15 |
| Major | | 1.49% | 1 |
| Acceptance | | 0.00% | 0 |
| Clubs & Societies | | 0.00% | 0 |
| Other (please specify) | Responses | 10.45% | 7 |
| TOTAL | | | 67 |

Table 6 (Question 6)

| | VERY UNIMPORTANT (1) | UNIMPORTANT (2) | NEUTRAL (3) | IMPORTANT (4) | VERY IMPORTANT (5) | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The student coffee shop (promised to be running by the Fall of 2018) | 3%<br>2 | 9%<br>6 | 30%<br>20 | 27%<br>18 | 31%<br>21 | 67 | 3.75 |
| Parking Lot Issues (Parking spacing and uneven paving/potholes) | 1%<br>1 | 1%<br>1 | 12%<br>8 | 30%<br>20 | 55%<br>37 | 67 | 4.36 |
| Tuition (under the new realignment, some are paying more than they were before the realignment) | 3%<br>2 | 3%<br>2 | 27%<br>18 | 25%<br>17 | 42%<br>28 | 67 | 4.00 |
| The current state of the sidewalks around campus | 7%<br>5 | 13%<br>9 | 36%<br>24 | 27%<br>18 | 16%<br>11 | 67 | 3.31 |
| Lack of accessibility for disabled people | 4%<br>3 | 1%<br>1 | 21%<br>14 | 36%<br>24 | 37%<br>25 | 67 | 4.00 |

Table 7 (Question 7)

| | DID NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS (1) | MET SOME EXPECTATIONS (2) | NEUTRAL (3) | MEETS ALL EXPECTATIONS (4) | EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (5) | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Room size | 1.49%<br>1 | 23.88%<br>16 | 37.31%<br>25 | 32.84%<br>22 | 4.48%<br>3 | 67 | 3.15 |
| Cleanliness | 19.70%<br>13 | 42.42%<br>28 | 19.70%<br>13 | 16.67%<br>11 | 1.52%<br>1 | 66 | 2.38 |
| Appliances/Plumbing | 25.37%<br>17 | 35.82%<br>24 | 26.87%<br>18 | 10.45%<br>7 | 1.49%<br>1 | 67 | 2.27 |
| Price | 25.37%<br>17 | 29.85%<br>20 | 35.82%<br>24 | 8.96%<br>6 | 0.00%<br>0 | 67 | 2.28 |

Table 8 (Question 8)

| | DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS | MEETS SOME EXPECTATIONS | NEUTRAL | MEETS ALL EXPECTATIONS | EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Availability of parking | 39.39%<br>26 | 24.24%<br>16 | 28.79%<br>19 | 7.58%<br>5 | 0.00%<br>0 | 66 | 2.05 |
| Smoothness of roads | 63.64%<br>42 | 16.67%<br>11 | 15.15%<br>10 | 4.55%<br>3 | 0.00%<br>0 | 66 | 1.61 |
| Size of parking lots and roads | 53.03%<br>35 | 28.79%<br>19 | 15.15%<br>10 | 3.03%<br>2 | 0.00%<br>0 | 66 | 1.68 |

Table 9 (Question 9)

| | DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS | MEETS SOME EXPECTATIONS | NEUTRAL | MEETS EXPECTATIONS | MEETS ALL EXPECTATIONS | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Food Quality | 31.34%<br>21 | 22.39%<br>15 | 20.90%<br>14 | 23.88%<br>16 | 1.49%<br>1 | 67 | 2.42 |
| Amount of food choices | 34.33%<br>23 | 35.82%<br>24 | 14.93%<br>10 | 13.43%<br>9 | 1.49%<br>1 | 67 | 2.12 |
| Cleanliness | 13.43%<br>9 | 13.43%<br>9 | 19.40%<br>13 | 38.81%<br>26 | 14.93%<br>10 | 67 | 3.28 |