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Generation Next UTEP Student Body Survey

Daniel J. Quiñones

University of Texas at El Paso, djquinones@utep.edu

Dennis L. Soden

University of Texas at El Paso, desoden@utep.edu

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Generation Next UTEP Student Body Survey

For: The City of El Paso

Daniel J. Quiñones
and
Dennis L. Soden

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Institute for Policy and Economic Development
University of Texas at El Paso
El Paso, TX 79968-0703
915.747.7974 Fax 915.747.7948
iped.utep.edu



Introduction

In 2007, the Institute for Policy and Economic Development (IPED) at the University of Texas at El Paso was contracted by the City of El Paso to conduct a survey of UTEP student attitudes and perceptions pertaining to the city's future and general quality of life issues in El Paso. Specific to the goals of the survey was to determine areas of focus for targeting improvements in the quality of life for the survey population in order to retain more UTEP graduates.

The results reported here indicate great consensus among the student body as it relates to downtown revitalization and urban design. The city does have a variety of issues which will warrant greater attention. The data reported places a set of issues in front of the elected officials and businesses of the City of El Paso. As a result, these findings also provide a set of opportunities to collectively cater to recent graduates.

Methodology

The survey project began with a focus group of young professionals in April 2007. Group members were asked what they wanted El Paso to be in 10 years. Requirements of group members included having obtained a bachelor's degree, not having children, and being under age 30. The purpose of such requirements was to create a group of people who, if they wanted, could probably leave El Paso for another city if they wished so, but have *chosen* to stay in El Paso. The group discussed topics on a local scale, such as transportation, the job market, urban planning, and downtown revitalization.

The survey was conducted throughout May and June 2007. The entire UTEP student body was sent a link to an online survey on 3 occasions over the two-month span. In total, 2,595 surveys were completed.

FINDINGS

Will They Stay or Go?

Table 1
Do you see yourself living in El Paso in 10 years?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Definitely	625	23.8
Probably	995	37.8
Probably Not	604	23.0
Definitely Not	199	7.6
Unsure	207	7.9

- *The majority of respondents (3/5) see themselves either “probably” or “definitely” living in El Paso in 10 years.*
- *At least one-half of respondents in all majors, except Information Technology and those who had not yet declared a major, see themselves either “definitely” or “probably” living in El Paso in 10 years.*
- *Education and Interdisciplinary Studies majors were most likely to see themselves either “definitely” or “probably” living in El Paso in 10 years (78.1% and 84.6%, respectively).*

Table 2
What would draw you out of El Paso?

Rank	Response	Frequency	Percent
1	Job opportunity	1,669	64.5
2	Better quality of life	912	35.2
3	Personal reasons (family, spouse, etc)	885	34.2
4	Other	208	8.0

- *Respondents were allowed to select more than one option; hence percentages do not add up to 100%.*

Table 3

Do you think you will be able to find a job you want in El Paso when you graduate?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,270	49.2
No	651	25.2
Unsure	704	27.3

- *Nearly one-half of respondents think they will find a job in El Paso when they graduate.*
- *Respondents who didn't think or were unsure that they would find a job in El Paso also tended to probably/definitely not see themselves living in El Paso in 10 years.*
- *Nearly 7 out of 10 education majors think they will be able to find a job when they graduate. This may be due to the projected growth of the Socorro and El Paso Independent School Districts.*
- *In contrast, the same proportion of fine arts majors did not think or were unsure if they would be able to find a job they want when they graduate.*

Table 4

If you answered no to question 3, why don't you think you will be able to find a job you want in El Paso?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Availability of jobs in my area of interest	672	68.3
Not enough pay	427	43.4
No opportunity for advancement	255	25.9
Other	91	9.3

- *Nearly one-quarter of respondents in the top three categories were liberal arts majors.*
- *"Other" responses included inability to speak Spanish and not knowing the right people.*

Desired Retail, Dining, Recreation, and Entertainment Options

Table 5
Would you like to see more retail (food, clothing, other) options in the UTEP area?

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1,484	57.5
No	559	21.7
Unsure	598	23.2

Table 6
Name up to 3 retailers you would like to see in the El Paso area.

Rank	Response	Frequency
1	Nordstrom	67
2	Outlet Malls	65
3	Nike	55
4	Armani Exchange	52

Table 7
Name up to 3 restaurants you would like to see in the El Paso area.

Rank	Response	Frequency
1	The Cheesecake Factory	151
2	Ruby Tuesday	126
3	In & Out Burger	117
4	Joe’s Crab Shack	101

Table 8
What additional types of entertainment and/or recreation would you like to see in El Paso?

Rank	Response	Frequency
1	Amusement park (excl. Six Flags)	325
2	Six Flags	201
3	Concerts	104
4	Parks	70

Table 9
Where would you like to see more nightlife opportunities in El Paso?

Rank	Response	Frequency
1	Downtown	151
2	East Side	126
3	Westside/Central	117
4	Northeast	101

Table 10
What do you think about Downtown revitalization?

Response	Frequency	Percent
For	1,831	77.4
Against	161	6.8
Neither	375	15.8

- *Many respondents in favor of revitalizing Downtown expressed negative views of the current state of Downtown and consider revitalization necessary to make El Paso a “great city.”*
- *Some respondents indicated a negative view of how the Downtown planning process has occurred and expressed concern for local business owners currently Downtown.*

Table 11
What type of housing will you be most likely to choose when you graduate?

Response	Frequency	Percent
A house	1,769	69.6
An apartment in a complex	414	16.3
A townhouse/condo	299	11.8
A downtown loft	206	8.1
An apartment in a high-rise	173	6.8
Other	97	3.8

➤ *The relatively low number of responses for “A downtown loft” and “An apartment in a high-rise” may be due to a perceived lack of such housing in El Paso.*

Table 12
Which tagline do you like best for El Paso?

Response	Frequency	Percent
The Star of the Southwest	929	36.6
Explore the Other Side of Texas	790	31.2
El Paso, Texas-You Have No Idea	383	15.1
Other	309	12.2
Do El Paso Different	136	5.4
Entirely Unexpected	132	5.2