

Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire, 1998

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 1998 administration of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) to new main campus freshmen. The BFYSQ is designed to collect enrollment management-related data, demographic data not otherwise collected as a result of BGSU's admission and registration processes, and data on students expectations, values, and self-ratings. Its use supports both assessment and enrollment management activities. Results are used in this report to provide a descriptive profile of the freshman class (serving as a companion report to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions Freshman Class Profile). BFYSQ data are also maintained in databases within the Office of Institutional Research and are studied as predictors of outcomes such as retention, GPA's and graduation rates. This report includes a summary and conclusions as well as eight pages of detailed tabular responses.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The need for assessment and enrollment management-related information about Bowling Green State University's first year students prompted the development of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) in 1997. The literature on college student learning, development, and persistence clearly shows that students pre-college characteristics, aspirations, expectations, and values play a crucial role in outcomes such as retention, grades, graduation, and educational and personal gains. Since no single commercially-available questionnaire would provide the data specifically needed by BGSU in a timely and cost effective manner, the BFYSQ was developed by the Office of Institutional Research. The results of the BFYSQ are comparable to those of the ACE/UCLA "Freshman Survey" administered at BGSU between 1973 and 1979 and between 1990 and 1995, and the "BGSU Freshman Survey" administered between 1980 and 1989. The Office of Institutional Research plans to administer the BFYSQ to new freshmen each summer before they matriculate.

The BFYSQ was mailed to all new first year students registered for BGSU's Orientation and Registration Program. A total of 2,397 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 73% response rate from among the 3,296 students attending Orientation and Registration in July. BFYSQ results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who provided various responses to each questionnaire item. Results were compared with those of previous similar questionnaires. The following pages highlight these findings.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT-RELATED INFORMATION

How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply to?

	1990	1997	1998
None	26%	30%	31%
1	24%	25%	25%
2	24%	23%	22%
Three or More	26%	22%	22%

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	1990	1997	1998
None	NA	35%	39%
One	NA	27%	31%
Two	NA	22%	17%
Three or More	NA	16%	13%

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	1990	1997	1998
First Choice	82%	82%	84%
Second Choice	15%	16%	14%
Less Than Second Choice	3%	2%	2%

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend college in general? (Percent "Very Important")

	1990	1997	1998
To Prepare for a Professional Career	NA	93%	93%
To Get a Better Job	80%	82%	83%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	66%	70%	74%
To Be Able to Make More Money	69%	67%	69%
To Gain a General Education	55%	60%	64%

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend BGSU? (Percent "Very Important")

	1990	1997	1998
BGSU graduates get good jobs	37%	61%	63%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	NA	49%	55%
BGSU's academic reputation	54%	49%	53%
BGSU offers unique educational programs	16%	47%	52%

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

	1990	1997	1998
10 miles or Less	2%	3%	3%
11 to 50 miles	22%	26%	23%
51 to 100 miles	18%	18%	18%
101 to 500 miles	56%	51%	54%
Over 500 miles	2%	2%	2%

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

	1990	1997	1998
Less than \$30,000	18%	11%	10%
\$30,000-\$49,999	35%	24%	20%
\$50,000-\$74,999	32%	34%	36%
\$75,000-\$99,999	7%	18%	19%
\$100,000 or More	7%	13%	15%

How much of your first year's educational expenses do you expect to cover from each of the sources listed below? (Percent \$1,500 and Over)

	1990	1997	1998
Parents	68%	NA	74%
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	11%	NA	28%
Other College Grant/Scholarship	6%	NA	24%
Other College Loan	2%	NA	24%
Savings From Summer Work	12%	NA	21%

Other Savings	8%	NA	15%
Other Loan	3%	NA	13%
Pell Grant	2%	NA	9%
College Work Study	1%	NA	6%
Other Source	1%	NA	6%
Perkins Loan	1%	NA	6%
Other Private Grant	2%	NA	6%
Part-Time Job On Campus	1%	NA	4%
Part-Time Job Off Campus	0%	NA	3%
Ohio Instructional Grant	2%	NA	3%

How concerned are you about your ability to finance your college education?

	1990	1997	1998
Not at All	NA	28%	28%
Somewhat	NA	56%	58%
Very	NA	16%	14%

How many hours per week during the school year do you plan to be employed?

	1990	1997	1998
None	NA	27%	28%
1 to 9	NA	19%	20%
10 to 19	NA	42%	42%
20 to 39	NA	11%	10%
40 or More	NA	1%	0%

What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?

	Father	Mother
High school graduate	28%	42%
Some college	20%	23%
College degree	31%	19%
Graduate degree	11%	5%

Mother and father high school or less: 16%
 At least one parent a college graduate: 47%
 Both parents college graduates: 13%

Your Father's Occupation (10% or More Than 10% of Respondents):

	1990	1997	1998
Business	30%	30%	28%
Other	23%	16%	17%
Skilled Trades	10%	10%	11%

Your Mother's Occupation(10% or More Than 10% of Respondents):

	1990	1997	1998
Other	23%	20%	23%
Business	21%	23%	21%
Teacher	15%	16%	13%

Your Probable Occupation (10% or More Than 10% of Respondents):

	1990	1997	1998
Teacher or administrator	18%	20%	18%
Undecided	11%	17%	17%
Business	14%	12%	12%
Other	10%	10%	11%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?

	1990	1997	1998
Bachelor's	31%	NA	8%
Master's	47%	NA	70%
Doctorate	12%	NA	11%
Professional	7%	NA	10%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain at BGSU?

	1990	1997	1998
Bachelor's	73%	78%	75%
Master's	19%	19%	22%
Doctorate	2%	2%	1%

The vast majority of respondents reported that English is their native language and that both of their parents are alive and living together.

EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION

What is your estimate of the chance that you will . . . (Percent "Very Good")

	1990	1997	1998
get a Bachelor's Degree	81%	82%	82%
find a job in my major after graduation	71%	73%	74%
be satisfied with BGSU	52%	66%	65%
get a job to help pay for college	46%	59%	57%
make at least a B average	44%	52%	54%

What is your estimate of the chance that you will . . . (Percent "None")

	1990	1997	1998
drop out of college permanently	NA	90%	90%
drop out of college temporarily	NA	74%	74%
get married while in college	NA	46%	45%
fail one or more courses	NA	44%	46%
work full-time while attending	NA	41%	41%

How do you rate yourself on each of the following? (Percent "Above Average" or "Highest 10%")

	1990	1997	1998
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Honesty	NA	NA	94%
Understanding of Others	69%	NA	94%
Drive to Achieve	70%	NA	91%
Cooperativeness	77%	NA	90%
Leadership Ability	49%	NA	90%
Academic Ability	70%	NA	86%
Physical Health	54%	NA	86%
Emotional Health	54%	NA	84%
Competitiveness	52%	NA	82%
Physical Appearance	NA	NA	82%
Social Self-Confidence	36%	NA	80%
Creativity	NA	NA	78%
Mathematical Ability	38%	NA	77%
Stubbornness	NA	NA	75%
Popularity	37%	NA	72%
Writing Ability	45%	NA	71%
Intellectual Self-Confidence	48%	NA	68%
Public Speaking Ability	28%	NA	65%
Artistic Ability	25%	NA	63%

How important are each of the following to you? (Percent "Essential" or "Very Important")

	1990	1997	1998
raising a family	73%	80%	80%
being very well off financially	64%	78%	77%
helping others in difficulty	61%	74%	73%
becoming an authority in my field	63%	64%	64%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	NA	54%	53%
influencing social values	41%	52%	53%
developing a meaningful philosophy of life	37%	48%	51%

How important are each of the following to you? (Percent "Not Important")

	1990	1997	1998
becoming accomplished in the arts	NA	61%	58%
writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	NA	58%	54%
creating artistic works	NA	58%	54%
making a contribution to science	NA	46%	44%
influencing the political structure	NA	36%	37%
becoming a community leader	NA	25%	25%
becoming successful in a business of my own	NA	24%	23%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report continues a more than twenty year history of "freshman survey" results at BGSU. It serves as one component of a comprehensive program of assessment and enrollment management research activities carried out by the Office of Institutional Research.

The results of the current study are similar to those of prior "freshman survey" administrations. BGSU students continue to be pragmatic and vocationally oriented. Freshmen apply and are admitted to few other institutions. BGSU is their overwhelming first choice. Their reasons for attending college are primarily vocational and secondarily educational. The perceived career and graduate school success of our graduates coupled with academic reputation and unique educational programs are the principal reasons students choose BGSU. A pleasant and friendly campus visit was also seen as an important reason. Freshmen are mostly in-state and middle class. Their most frequent academic goal is a Bachelor's Degree in education,

business, "undecided," or "other." Parents are clearly the greatest source of financial support for college. The respondents are very positive about their chances of earning a Bachelor's Degree, finding a job in their major after graduation, and being satisfied with BGSU. Nearly none estimate that they will drop out of college temporarily or permanently. They rate themselves highly on nearly all attributes listed; this contrasts with 1990 results. Raising a family and being very well off financially are among their most important goals.

The Office of Institutional Research welcomes feedback concerning this and other studies and how they can continue to be improved.