

Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire, 1999

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 1999 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 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 distributed to all new first year students registered for BGSU's Orientation and Registration Program. A total of 3,207 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 93% response rate from among the 3,445 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	1998	1999
None	26%	31%	28%
1	24%	25%	26%
2	24%	22%	25%
Three or More	26%	22%	21%

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	1990	1998	1999
None	NA	39%	32%
One	NA	31%	30%

Two	NA	17%	23%
Three or More	NA	13%	15%

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	1990	1998	1999
First Choice	82%	84%	84%
Second Choice	15%	14%	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	1998	1999
To Prepare for a Professional Career	NA	93%	89%
To Get a Better Job	80%	83%	77%
To Be Able to Make More Money	69%	69%	66%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	66%	74%	63%
To Gain a General Education	55%	64%	52%
To Make Me a More Cultured Person	34%	43%	31%
To Improve My Reading and Study Skills	34%	35%	29%
To Learn More About Other People	NA	33%	25%

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

	1990	1998	1999
BGSU graduates get good jobs	37%	63%	53%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	NA	55%	42%
BGSU's academic reputation	54%	53%	42%
BGSU offers unique educational programs	16%	52%	41%

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

	1990	1998	1999
10 miles or Less	2%	3%	4%
11 to 50 miles	22%	23%	23%
51 to 100 miles	18%	18%	19%
101 to 500 miles	56%	54%	53%
Over 500 miles	2%	2%	2%

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

	1990	1998	1999
Less than \$30,000	18%	10%	9%
\$30,000-\$49,999	35%	20%	20%
\$50,000-\$74,999	32%	36%	34%

\$75,000-\$99,999	7%	19%	20%
\$100,000 or More	7%	15%	18%

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	1998	1999
Parents	68%	74%	75%
Other College Loan	2%	24%	32%
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	11%	28%	27%
Other College Grant/Scholarship	6%	24%	26%
Savings From Summer Work	12%	21%	21%
Other Savings	8%	15%	16%
Other Loan	3%	13%	15%
Pell Grant	2%	9%	11%
Perkins Loan	1%	6%	7%
Other Source	1%	6%	8%
College Work Study	1%	6%	5%
Part-Time Job On Campus	1%	4%	5%
Other Private Grant	2%	6%	4%
Part-Time Job Off Campus	0%	3%	4%
Ohio Instructional Grant	2%	3%	2%

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

	1990	1998	1999
Not at All	NA	28%	32%
Somewhat	NA	58%	55%
Very	NA	14%	13%

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

	1990	1998	1999
None	NA	28%	30%
1 to 9	NA	20%	23%
10 to 19	NA	42%	37%
20 to 39	NA	10%	10%
40 or More	NA	0%	0%

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

	Father	Mother
High school graduate	29%	34%
Some college	19%	20%
College degree	29%	25%
Graduate degree	14%	11%

Mother and father high school or less: 18%
 At least one parent a college graduate: 57%

Both parents college graduates: 26%

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

	1990	1998	1999
Business	30%	28%	32%
Other	23%	17%	17%
Skilled Trades	10%	11%	12%

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

	1990	1998	1999
Business	21%	21%	26%
Other	23%	23%	20%
Teacher	15%	13%	14%

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

	1990	1998	1999
Teacher or administrator	18%	18%	21%
Undecided	11%	17%	20%
Business	14%	12%	14%
Other	10%	11%	11%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?

	1990	1998	1999
Bachelor's	31%	8%	11%
Master's	47%	70%	69%
Doctorate	12%	11%	9%
Professional	7%	10%	11%

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

	1990	1998	1999
Bachelor's	73%	75%	77%
Master's	19%	22%	21%
Doctorate	2%	1%	1%

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

Do you feel that you will need any special tutoring or remedial work in any of the following subjects?

	1990	1998	1999
English	NA	NA	5%
Reading	NA	NA	2%
Mathematics	NA	NA	24%
Social Studies	NA	NA	2%

Science	NA	NA	6%
Foreign Language	NA	NA	7%

Mathematics is the only subject where a sizeable percentage of freshmen are concerned about their academic preparation for college work.

EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION

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

	1990	1998	1999
get a Bachelor's Degree	81%	82%	75%
find a job in my major after graduation	71%	74%	69%
be satisfied with BGSU	52%	65%	58%
get a job to help pay for college	46%	57%	51%
make at least a B average	44%	54%	46%

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

	1990	1998	1999
drop out of college permanently	NA	90%	87%
drop out of college temporarily	NA	74%	73%
get married while in college	NA	45%	48%
fail one or more courses	NA	46%	41%
work full-time while attending	NA	41%	38%

The percentage of freshmen who estimated the chances as very good that they will make at least a B average, be satisfied with BGSU, get a Bachelor's Degree, and find a job after graduation declined between 1998 and 1999. At the same period of time the percentage of students who estimate no chance that they will fail one or more courses also decreased.

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

	1990	1998	1999
Honesty	NA	94%	78%
Cooperativeness	77%	90%	73%
Understanding of Others	69%	94%	68%
Drive to Achieve	70%	91%	68%
Emotional Health	54%	84%	61%
Leadership Ability	49%	90%	60%
Academic Ability	70%	86%	56%
Creativity	NA	78%	56%
Physical Health	54%	86%	54%
Competitiveness	52%	82%	54%
Social Self-Confidence	36%	80%	52%
Intellectual Self-Confidence	48%	68%	52%

Physical Appearance	NA	82%	44%
Popularity	37%	72%	40%
Stubbornness	NA	75%	37%
Mathematical Ability	38%	77%	36%
Public Speaking Ability	28%	65%	35%
Writing Ability	45%	71%	34%
Artistic Ability	25%	63%	29%

The 1999 freshmen rated themselves less highly on nearly all attributes listed above as contrasted with the 1998 results.

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

	1990	1998	1999
being very well off financially	64%	77%	81%
raising a family	73%	80%	79%
helping others in difficulty	61%	73%	69%
becoming an authority in my field	63%	64%	65%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	NA	53%	57%
influencing social values	41%	53%	53%

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

	1990	1998	1999
becoming accomplished in the arts	NA	58%	56%
writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	NA	54%	53%
creating artistic works	NA	54%	52%
making a contribution to science	NA	44%	42%
influencing the political structure	NA	37%	30%
becoming successful in a business of my own	NA	23%	21%
becoming a community leader	NA	25%	19%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report continues a more than twenty-five 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 vocational and educational. The perceived career success of our graduates coupled with academic reputation, unique educational programs and a pleasant and friendly campus visit are the principal reasons students choose BGSU. Freshmen are mostly in-state and middle class. Their most frequent academic goal is a Bachelor's Degree in education, business, or "undecided." Parents are clearly the greatest source of financial support for college. Most of 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. Mathematics is the sole area where a sizeable percentage of freshmen (24%) are concerned about their academic preparation for college work. The majority of freshmen rate themselves highly on honesty, cooperativeness, understanding of others, drive to achieve, emotional health and leadership ability. Being very well off financially and raising a family are

among their most important goals.

Comparisons between years revealed some interesting findings. Of particular concern may be the findings that: (1) the percentage of freshmen who estimate a very good chance that they will make at least a B average, be satisfied with BGSU, get a Bachelor's Degree, and find a job after graduation declined at least 5% between 1998 and 1999. At the same period of time the percentage of freshmen who estimate no chance that they will fail one or more courses also decreased 5%. (2) the 1999 freshman rated themselves less highly than those in 1998 on nearly all attributes listed.

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