

Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire, 2003

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2003 administration of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) to new main campus first year students. 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' values and expectations. 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 year before they matriculate.

All admitted 2003 first time first year freshmen were asked to fill out BFYSQ online. A total of 1,163 questionnaires were received, which represented about 33% of the first time first year freshman class. This rate is much lower than last year's response rate (70%, paper survey). As a result, the questionnaire will return to a printed format for 2004.

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire first year first time freshman class, the demographic characteristics of the 1163 survey respondents were compared to all entering 2003 first year first time freshmen. There is a high degree of race, college, and residential status similarity between the respondents and the population. Female respondents, however, are over represented (71% in survey vs. 58% in population). This limitation and the low response rate require that all results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

BFYSQ results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who provided various responses to each questionnaire item. Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to rounding. Results were also 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?

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
None	29%	25%	27%
1	18%	24%	24%

2	23%	25%	22%
Three or More	31%	26%	27%

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
None	NA	31%	28%
One	NA	30%	30%
Two	NA	21%	20%
Three or More	NA	19%	22%

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
First Choice	76%	77%	82%
Second Choice	19%	20%	16%
Less Than Second Choice	5%	4%	3%

2003 respondents seemed more likely than the freshmen in 1992 and 2002 to report that BGSU was their first choice to attend.

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
To Prepare for a Professional Career	NA	86%	92%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	66%	61%	80%
To Gain a General Education and Appreciation of Ideas	54%	47%	71%
To Be Able to Get a Better Job	80%	71%	68%
To Learn More About Other People	NA	27%	60%
To Be Able to Make More Money	70%	68%	55%
To Make Me a More Cultured Person	32%	32%	46%
I Wanted to Get Away from Home	20%	30%	37%
To Improve My Reading and Study Skills	32%	24%	36%
My Parents Wanted Me to Go	32%	26%	26%
A Mentor/Role Model Encouraged Me to Go	10%	13%	18%

Compared with the freshmen in 2002 and 1992, 2003 freshmen were less likely to claim that being able to make more money as well as to get a better job were the very important reasons for them to attend college in general. They were, however, more likely than the 2002 and 1992 freshmen to report that preparing for a professional career, learning more about interesting things and other people, gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas, making them a more cultured person, getting away from home, improving their reading and study skills, and a mentor/role model encouraged them to go were the very important reasons for them to attend college in general.

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
BGSU graduates get good jobs	37%	48%	72%

BGSU offers unique educational programs	NA	36%	65%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	NA	43%	65%
BGSU's academic reputation	53%	37%	63%
BGSU's Student Facilities	NA	NA	62%
BGSU takes student safety seriously	NA	27%	57%
BGSU is in a small and safe community	NA	32%	56%
BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional school	15%	34%	53%
BGSU has an attractive campus	NA	32%	53%
the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students	NA	29%	48%
BGSU's social reputation	28%	31%	44%
I wanted to attend a school of BGSU's size	37%	35%	43%
BGSU's Computer Facilities	NA	NA	43%
cost of tuition at BGSU	35%	20%	35%

"BGSU graduates get good jobs", "BGSU offers unique education programs", "my BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly", "BGSU's academic reputation" are the very important reasons for students to choose BGSU. 2003 freshmen were more likely than the 2002 freshmen to consider each item on the table above as the very important reasons to attend BGSU.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
10 miles or Less	3%	3%	4%
11 to 50 miles	22%	20%	19%
51 to 100 miles	18%	22%	23%
101 to 500 miles	54%	51%	49%
Over 500 miles	3%	4%	5%

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Less than \$30,000	20%	7%	17%
\$30,000-\$49,999	31%	20%	21%
\$50,000-\$74,999	32%	32%	30%
\$75,000-\$99,999	10%	20%	15%
\$100,000 or More	7%	21%	16%

The percentage of students whose estimated parental income was \$75,000 or more increased from 17% in 1992 to 41% in 2002, but decreased to 31% between 2002 and 2003.

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)

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Parents, relatives, friends	70%	74%	61%
Other College Loan	3%	25%	23%
Savings From Summer Work	12%	23%	22%
Other College Grant/Scholarship	6%	21%	25%

Other Loan	4%	16%	15%
Other Savings	9%	17%	16%
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	NA	11%	16%
College Work Study	3%	10%	13%
Pell Grant	3%	9%	11%
Other Source	1%	8%	8%
Part-Time Job On Campus	3%	7%	8%
Perkins Loan	1%	6%	6%
Part-Time Job Off Campus	1%	5%	8%
Ohio Instructional Grant	NA	4%	7%
Other Private Grant	2%	3%	3%

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Not at All	27%	28%	21%
Somewhat	56%	54%	54%
Very	17%	18%	25%

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
None	NA	23%	20%
1 to 9	NA	20%	17%
10 to 19	NA	44%	42%
20 to 39	NA	13%	19%
40 or More	NA	1%	2%

Families were still the major finance source for majority of 2003 freshmen. However, only 61% of 2003 freshman expected their parents, relatives, and friends will pay \$1,500 or more of their first year expense, compared with 74% of last year's freshmen. 2003 freshmen were more concerned about their ability to finance their college education than were freshmen in 2002 and in 1992. They were also more likely to work longer hours in order to support themselves.

For each of the following items, please indicate the number of years you participated while in 9th-12th grade (Percent "Two Years or More"):

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Religious organization	NA	NA	91%
Athletics	NA	NA	90%
Community service	NA	NA	88%
Part-time job	NA	NA	86%
Band or orchestra	NA	NA	79%
Academic honor society	NA	NA	79%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	NA	75%
Theatre	NA	NA	73%
ROTC	NA	NA	58%
Student council	NA	NA	57%
Class officer	NA	NA	50%

Yearbook	NA	NA	49%
Newspaper	NA	NA	49%
Debate	NA	NA	36%

For each of the following items, please indicate your level of involvement while in 9th-12th grade (Percent "Highly Involved"):

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Part-time job	NA	55%	61%
Athletics	NA	65%	56%
Community service	NA	26%	43%
Religious organization	NA	22%	34%
Band or orchestra	NA	22%	31%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	19%	27%
Theatre	NA	16%	24%
Academic honor society	NA	11%	19%
Yearbook	NA	10%	17%
Class officer	NA	10%	15%
Student council	NA	12%	14%
Newspaper	NA	7%	12%
Debate	NA	3%	5%
ROTC	NA	1%	2%

Fifty percent or more of the 2003 freshmen spent two or more years participating in most of the activities listed on the survey during their high school years, and they seemed more likely to be highly involved with all the activities other than athletics when compared them with 2002 freshmen.

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

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
High school graduate	31%	29%
Some college	17%	19%
College degree	27%	28%
Graduate degree	14%	13%

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Mother and father high school or less:	NA	17%	19%
At least one parent a college graduate:	NA	60%	60%
Both parents college graduates:	NA	30%	27%

Your Father's Occupation:

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Business	29%	31%	28%
Other	24%	23%	29%
Skilled trades	NA	4%	8%
Engineer	9%	2%	7%

Your Mother's Occupation:

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Other	24%	26%	32%
Business	22%	13%	17%
Teacher or administrator	12%	4%	14%
Nurse	11%	0%	10%

Your Probable Occupation:

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Teacher or administrator	16%	9%	28%
Other	10%	15%	13%
Business	13%	15%	11%
Undecided	13%	17%	9%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Bachelor's	39%	13%	29%
Master's	43%	66%	52%
Doctorate	9%	9%	13%
Professional	6%	10%	7%

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
Bachelor's	NA	78%	71%
Master's	NA	19%	26%
Doctorate	NA	2%	3%

Although the percentage of students who would like to obtain a Master's degree at BGSU increased between 2002 and 2003, their most frequent academic goal at BGSU remains a Bachelor's degree.

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
English	NA	14%	16%
Reading	NA	4%	7%
Mathematics	NA	42%	37%
Social Studies	NA	3%	5%
Science	NA	12%	20%
Foreign Language	NA	13%	22%

Compared with the 2002 freshman, 2003 freshman were more concerned about their academic preparation in five out of six subjects listed on survey, especially in the area of foreign language and science. The percentage of students who felt they would need remedial work in mathematics decreased from last year.

EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
get a Bachelor's Degree	77%	74%	90%
find a job in my major after graduation	63%	70%	76%
be satisfied with BGSU	53%	56%	70%
get a job to help pay for college expenses	47%	49%	62%
make at least a "B" average	48%	41%	56%
join a social club, fraternity, or sorority	11%	21%	26%
participate in volunteer or community service work	16%	18%	33%
change your major	17%	17%	11%
play varsity intercollegiate athletics	8%	13%	12%
change your career choice	17%	14%	9%
graduate with honors	12%	9%	20%
join a student professional/government organization	NA	8%	13%
need extra time to complete your degree	15%	6%	6%
work full time while attending college	1%	5%	6%
participate in student protests/demonstrations	7%	5%	7%
transfer to another college before graduation	6%	5%	2%
get married while in college	4%	4%	3%
be elected to an academic honor society	6%	4%	9%
be elected to a student office	1%	2%	3%
fail one or more courses	1%	1%	1%
drop out of college permanently	0%	1%	0%
drop out of college temporarily	1%	0%	0%

Compared with the freshmen in 1992 and 2002, 2003 freshmen had higher expectations in their likelihood of obtaining a Bachelor's degree, finding a job in their major after graduation, getting a job to help pay for their college expenses, making at least a "B" average for their courses, and graduating with honors. They were less likely to report that they will change their major and career choice, but more likely to say that they will participate in volunteer or community service work, join a social club/fraternity/sorority or a student professional/government organization, and be satisfied with BGSU.

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>
raising a family	71%	81%	80%
being very well off financially	68%	84%	77%
helping others who are in difficulty	61%	66%	73%
becoming an authority in my field	66%	61%	65%
developing a meaningful philosophy of life	40%	43%	62%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	54%	56%	52%
influencing social values	39%	47%	51%
helping to promote racial understanding	39%	33%	49%
having administrative responsibility for the work of others	37%	44%	45%
becoming successful in a business of my own	34%	46%	38%
keeping up to date with political affairs	39%	34%	36%
participating in a community action program	23%	26%	36%
becoming a community leader	28%	31%	32%
influencing the political structure	16%	23%	26%
creating artistic works	12%	23%	26%

writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	12%	19%	24%
becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	32%	25%	21%
becoming accomplished in the performing arts	11%	23%	18%
making a contribution to science	11%	17%	17%

Raising a family, being very well off financially, helping others who are in difficulty, and becoming an authority in their fields are essential or very important to students' life. 2003 freshman seemed less money/business when compared with 2002 freshman, but more interested in helping others in difficulty, helping to promote racial understanding, participating in a community action program, and developing a meaningful philosophy of their life.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report continues a thirty 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.

Most of the 2003 freshman participated in most of the activities listed on the survey during their high school years and more than half of them were highly involved with athletics and a part-time job. They apply and are admitted to few other institutions. BGSU is their overwhelming first choice. The perceived career success of our graduates coupled with a pleasant campus visit as well as academic reputation and unique educational programs are the principal reasons that students choose BGSU.

2003 Freshmen are mostly from in-state and from middle class families. Families are the greatest source of financial support for college. Since the percentage of students who had a family income \$75,000 or more decreased between 2002 and 2003, only 61% of 2003 freshman expected their parents will pay \$1,500 or more of their first year expenses compared with 74% of last year's freshmen. The incoming freshman were more concerned about their ability to finance their college education than were the freshmen in 2002, and they were also more likely to work more hours per week to support themselves.

Despite the difficult financial situation most of them may face, the majority of 2003 freshmen seemed to be very positive about their chances of earning a Bachelor's Degree, finding a job in their field after graduation, and being satisfied with BGSU. Ninety-nine percent of them predict that they will not fail one or more courses and none of them predict they will drop out college temporarily or permanently. Compared with 2002 freshmen, they seemed to have higher confidence on their ability to make at least a "B" average for their courses and to graduate with honors, and yet they were also more concerned about their academic preparation for college work in five out of six subjects listed on the survey.

The most frequent academic goal for majority of 2003 freshman at BGSU is a Bachelor's Degree in "teacher or administrator", "other", "business", or "undecided". Raising a family, being very well off financially, and helping others who are in difficulty are among their most important life goals.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (33%) for the questionnaire and the under-representation of males. These limitations require that the results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

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