

Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire, 2004

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2004 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

This report continues a more than thirty year history of "freshman survey" results at BGSU. 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 in 1997. 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.

The 2004 BFYSQ was distributed to all new first year students registered for BGSU's Orientation and Registration Program during the months of June and July. A total of 2,480 questionnaires were returned, which represented 64% of the 2004 new first year freshman class. This rate is much higher than last year's response rate (33%, online survey) but lower than the one in 2002 (70%, paper survey).

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire first year first time freshman class, the demographic characteristics of the 2480 survey respondents were compared to all entering 2004 first year first time freshmen. There is a high degree of gender, college, and residential status similarity between the respondents and the population. European-American respondents, however, are over represented (87% in survey vs. 83% in population).

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. Due to the low response rate of last year's BFYSQ, 2002 and 1994 results are used for comparison. The following pages highlight these findings.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT-RELATED INFORMATION

How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply to?

	1994	2002	2004
None	29%	25%	27%
1	23%	24%	25%
2	23%	25%	25%

Three or More 25% 26% 23%

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
None	NA	31%	31%
One	NA	30%	29%
Two	NA	21%	22%
Three or More	NA	19%	18%

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
First Choice	83%	77%	84%
Second Choice	15%	20%	14%
Less Than Second Choice	2%	4%	2%

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
To Prepare for a Professional Career	NA	86%	89%
To Be Able to Get a Better Job	85%	71%	73%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	75%	61%	65%
To Be Able to Make More Money	75%	68%	64%
To Gain a General Education and Appreciation of Ideas	55%	47%	53%
To Learn More About Other People	NA	27%	27%
To Make Me a More Cultured Person	34%	32%	34%
I Wanted to Get Away from Home	20%	30%	24%
To Improve My Reading and Study Skills	34%	24%	29%
My Parents Wanted Me to Go	30%	26%	30%
A Mentor/Role Model Encouraged Me to Go	10%	13%	12%

"To prepare for a professional career", "to be able to get a better Job", "to learn more about things that interest me", "to be able to make more money" and "to gain a general education and appreciation of ideas" were the very important reasons for most offfreshmen to attend college in general. 2004 freshmen, however, were less likely than 1994 freshmen to cite being able to get a better job or make more money and learning more about things that interest them as the main reasons to go to college in general.

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
BGSU graduates get good jobs	43%	48%	54%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	NA	43%	50%
BGSU offers unique educational programs	NA	36%	44%
BGSU's academic reputation	54%	37%	41%
BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	17%	34%	41%
BGSU is in a small and safe community	NA	32%	38%

I wanted to attend a school of BGSU's size	40%	35%	35%
the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students	NA	29%	33%
BGSU takes student safety seriously	NA	27%	31%
BGSU has an attractive campus	NA	32%	31%
BGSU's social reputation	25%	31%	29%
cost of tuition at BGSU	32%	20%	23%

"BGSU graduates get good jobs", "my BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly", "BGSU offers unique education programs", "BGSU's academic reputation", and "BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools" were more likely to be the important reasons for 2002 and 2004 freshmen to attend BGSU. Compared with the freshmen in 1994, 2004 freshmen were more likely to consider "BGSU graduates get good jobs", "BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional school", and "BGSU's social reputation" as the important factors for them to choose BGSU, but less likely to consider BGSU's academic reputation, it's size and cost of tuition as the important reasons to attend.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
10 miles or Less	3%	3%	4%
11 to 50 miles	22%	20%	23%
51 to 100 miles	20%	22%	19%
101 to 500 miles	53%	51%	51%
Over 500 miles	3%	4%	3%

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Less than \$30,000	15%	7%	10%
\$30,000-\$49,999	26%	20%	17%
\$50,000-\$74,999	37%	32%	29%
\$75,000-\$99,999	12%	20%	20%
\$100,000 or More	10%	21%	25%

The percentage of students whose estimated parental income was \$75,000 or more increased from 22% in 1994 to 45% in 2004.

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>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Parents, relatives, friends	68%	74%	69%
Other College Grant/Scholarship	6%	21%	41%
Other College Loan	5%	25%	39%
Stafford/Guaranteed Student Loan	25%	NA	NA
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	NA	11%	23%
Other Loan	5%	16%	22%
Savings From Summer Work	14%	23%	21%
Other Savings	11%	17%	18%

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

Families were still the major finance source for the majority of BGSU freshmen. Freshmen in 2002 and 2004, however, were more likely than freshmen in 1994 to depend on multiple sources of support for their college education.

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Not at All	28%	28%	27%
Somewhat	56%	54%	56%
Very	17%	18%	17%

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
None	NA	23%	25%
1 to 9	NA	20%	16%
10 to 19	NA	44%	43%
20 to 39	NA	13%	15%
40 or More	NA	1%	1%

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>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Athletics	NA	NA	91%
Religious organization	NA	NA	90%
Part-time job	NA	NA	84%
Community service	NA	NA	83%
Band or orchestra	NA	NA	82%
Academic honor society	NA	NA	76%
ROTC	NA	NA	74%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	NA	69%
Theatre	NA	NA	69%
Student council	NA	NA	62%
Class officer	NA	NA	61%
Debate	NA	NA	54%
Yearbook	NA	NA	43%
Newspaper	NA	NA	42%

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Athletics	NA	65%	64%
Part-time job	NA	55%	53%
Community service	NA	26%	32%
Band or orchestra	NA	22%	24%
Religious organization	NA	22%	23%
Theatre	NA	16%	20%
Academic honor society	NA	11%	18%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	19%	18%
Yearbook	NA	10%	15%
Class officer	NA	10%	13%
Student council	NA	12%	13%
Newspaper	NA	7%	8%
Debate	NA	3%	3%
ROTC	NA	1%	1%

Fifty percent or more of the 2004 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 activities such as athletics and part-time jobs than other activities listed on the survey.

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

	<u>1994</u>		<u>2002</u>		<u>2004</u>	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Some high school or less	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%
High school graduate	31%	37%	27%	31%	29%	30%
Post secondary school other than college	5%	7%	5%	5%	3%	3%
Some college	17%	18%	17%	17%	17%	19%
College degree	26%	23%	30%	29%	31%	32%
Some graduate school	3%	4%	2%	4%	2%	3%
Graduate degree	15%	9%	17%	14%	15%	11%

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Mother and father high school or less:	NA	17%	16%
At least one parent a college graduate:	NA	60%	63%
Both parents college graduates:	NA	30%	30%

Your Father's Occupation (top four):

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Business	32%	31%	28%
Other	20%	23%	21%
Semi-skilled worker	5%	7%	12%
Computer programmer or analyst	NA	8%	8%

Your Mother's Occupation (top four):

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Other	20%	26%	25%
Business	27%	13%	13%
Lawyer/attorney/judge	0%	10%	10%
Actor, artist, or musician	1%	0%	10%

Your Probable Occupation (top four):

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Undecided	16%	17%	17%
Business	12%	15%	14%
Other	8%	15%	13%
Teacher or administrator	16%	9%	12%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Bachelor's	36%	13%	11%
Master's	45%	66%	64%
Doctorate	11%	9%	12%
Professional	7%	10%	12%

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
Bachelor's	74%	78%	78%
Master's	20%	19%	20%
Doctorate	2%	2%	1%

The most frequent academic goal of entering freshmen at BGSU is 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>2004</u>
Mathematics	NA	42%	28%
English	NA	14%	7%
Foreign Language	NA	13%	7%
Science	NA	12%	7%
Reading	NA	4%	2%
Social Studies	NA	3%	2%

Compared with the 2002 freshman, 2004 freshman were less concerned about their academic preparation. Mathematics remains the subject where a sizeable percentage of freshmen may need tutoring or remedial work.

EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION

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

	<u>1992</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
get a Bachelor's Degree	82%	74%	83%
find a job in my major after graduation	63%	70%	71%
be satisfied with BGSU	61%	56%	65%
get a job to help pay for college expenses	57%	49%	55%
make at least a "B" average	52%	41%	51%
join a social club, fraternity, or sorority	17%	21%	20%
participate in volunteer or community service work	17%	18%	19%
change your major	14%	17%	15%
graduate with honors	13%	9%	14%
play varsity intercollegiate athletics	12%	13%	13%
change your career choice	13%	14%	12%
join a student professional/government organization	NA	8%	7%
be elected to an academic honor society	7%	4%	6%
participate in student protests/demonstrations	4%	5%	6%
need extra time to complete your degree	7%	6%	4%
work full time while attending college	4%	5%	4%
transfer to another college before graduation	3%	5%	3%
get married while in college	3%	4%	1%
be elected to a student office	2%	2%	1%
fail one or more courses	1%	1%	1%
drop out of college permanently	0%	1%	0%
drop out of college temporarily	0%	0%	0%

Compared with the freshmen in 2002, 2004 freshmen had higher expectations for their likelihood of obtaining a Bachelor's degree, getting a job to help pay for their college expenses, making at least a "B" average for their courses, and being satisfied with BGSU.

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

	<u>1994</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2004</u>
being very well off financially	74%	84%	81%
raising a family	75%	81%	80%
helping others who are in difficulty	65%	66%	71%
becoming an authority in my field	66%	61%	62%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	55%	56%	55%
influencing social values	42%	47%	50%
developing a meaningful philosophy of life	43%	43%	48%
becoming successful in a business of my own	34%	46%	44%
having administrative responsibility for the work of others	38%	44%	42%
helping to promote racial understanding	32%	33%	37%
keeping up to date with political affairs	32%	34%	36%
becoming a community leader	28%	31%	30%
participating in a community action program	20%	26%	28%
becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	23%	25%	25%
influencing the political structure	14%	23%	21%
creating artistic works	12%	23%	21%

becoming accomplished in the performing arts	11%	23%	20%
writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	10%	19%	18%
making a contribution to science	10%	17%	17%

Being very well off financially, raising a family, helping others who are in difficulty, becoming an authority in their fields, and obtaining recognition from their colleagues for their contributions continued to be the important life goals for most of BGSU freshmen.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Responses to the 2004 BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) were generally similar to those of previous BFYSQs.

2004 Freshmen are mostly from in-state and from middle class families. Parents/relatives/friends were the greatest source of financial support for college. Compared with the freshmen ten years ago, a greater portion of 2004 freshmen expected to get support from loans, grants/scholarships, savings, and summer work. More than 70% of them have some concerns about their ability to finance their college education.

Like the freshmen in previous years, 2004 freshmen apply and are admitted to few other institutions. BGSU is their overwhelming first choice. They are very pragmatic about their general reasons for going to college --- the most common reason cited was to prepare for a professional career, followed by to get a better job, to learn more about things that interest them, and to be able to make more money. 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 incoming freshmen choose BGSU. Compared with the freshmen in 1994, however, 2004 freshmen were less likely to consider BGSU's academic reputation, it's size and cost of tuition as the important reasons to attend, but more likely to consider "BGSU graduates get good jobs", "BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional school ", and "BGSU's social reputation" as the important factors for them to choose BGSU.

More than half of the 2004 freshman indicated that they were highly involved with athletics and part-time jobs during their high school years and the majority of them still wanted to be employed during their college years. Their most frequent academic goal at BGSU is a Bachelor's Degree in "undecided" or "business." Raising a family, being very well off financially, and helping others who are in difficulty are among their most important life goals.

The 2004 freshman seemed to be very positive about their chances of making at least a "B" average for their courses, earning a Bachelor's Degree, finding a job after graduation, and being satisfied with BGSU. The majority of them predict that chances are none or very little for them to fail one or more courses, take extra time to complete their degree, and drop out college temporarily or permanently. Mathematics, however, remains the area where a sizeable percentage of freshmen are concerned about their academic preparation for college work.

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