

Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire, 2006

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2006 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.

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 2006 BFYSQ was distributed to all new first year students who registered for BGSU's Orientation and Registration Program during the months of June and July. A total of 2,049 questionnaires were returned, which represented 57% of the 2006 main campus new first year freshman class. This rate is lower than the response rate of 2005 (66%) and 2004 (64%).

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire first year first time freshman class, the demographic characteristics of the 1399 survey respondents who provided valid social security numbers were compared to all entering 2006 first year first time freshmen. There is a high degree of gender, race, college, and residential status similarity between the respondents and the 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. The following pages highlight these findings.

ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT-RELATED INFORMATION

How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply to?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
None	30%	29%	29%
1	25%	24%	24%
2	23%	24%	23%
Three or More	22%	23%	24%

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
None	35%	32%	32%
One	27%	28%	28%

Two	22%	21%	21%
Three or More	16%	19%	19%

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
First Choice	82%	84%	83%
Second Choice	16%	14%	14%
Less Than Second Choice	2%	2%	3%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
To Prepare for a Professional Career	93%	89%	89%
To Be Able to Get a Better Job	82%	70%	72%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	70%	64%	67%
To Be Able to Make More Money	67%	63%	66%
To Gain a General Education and Appreciation of Ideas	60%	53%	56%
To Make Me a More Cultured Person	38%	32%	35%
My Parents Wanted Me to Go	27%	30%	33%
To Improve My Reading and Study Skills	35%	29%	31%
To Learn More About Other People	NA	27%	26%
I Wanted to Get Away from Home	19%	24%	26%
A Mentor/Role Model Encouraged Me to Go	11%	13%	14%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
BGSU graduates get good jobs	61%	51%	54%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	49%	48%	50%
BGSU offers unique educational programs	47%	41%	46%
BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	51%	39%	43%
BGSU's academic reputation	49%	39%	41%
BGSU is in a small and safe community	42%	37%	39%
I wanted to attend a school of BGSU's size	38%	37%	37%
BGSU takes student safety seriously	37%	31%	34%
the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students	42%	31%	33%
BGSU has an attractive campus	34%	31%	33%
I was offered financial assistance	20%	26%	30%
BGSU's social reputation	31%	29%	29%
cost of tuition at BGSU	32%	24%	27%
BGSU's rankings in national magazines	19%	20%	20%
I wanted to live near home	17%	12%	14%
A friend suggested attending	8%	11%	10%
My relatives wanted me to come here	6%	7%	7%
A teacher advised me	5%	5%	7%

"BGSU graduates get good jobs", "my BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly", and "BGSU offers unique education programs" were more likely to be the important reasons for freshmen to attend BGSU. Compared with the freshmen in 1997, 2006 freshmen were more likely to consider "I was offered financial assistance" as the important factor for them to choose BGSU, but less likely to consider "BGSU graduates get good jobs", "BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools", "BGSU's

academic reputation"and "the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students" as the important reasons to attend this school.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
10 miles or Less	3%	4%	4%
11 to 50 miles	26%	24%	24%
51 to 100 miles	18%	19%	21%
101 to 500 miles	51%	51%	49%
Over 500 miles	2%	3%	3%

Is English your native language?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Yes	99%	99%	98%
No	1%	1%	2%

Are your parents?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
both alive and living with each other	78%	69%	68%
both alive, divorced or living apart	19%	28%	29%
one or both deceased		3%	3%

2006 freshman were more likely have parents who are both alive, but divorced or living apart than were freshmen in 1997.

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Less than \$30,000	11%	10%	10%
\$30,000-\$49,999	24%	17%	18%
\$50,000-\$74,999	34%	26%	24%
\$75,000-\$99,999	18%	23%	22%
\$100,000 or More	13%	24%	26%

The percentage of students whose estimated parental income was \$75,000 or more increased from 31% in 1997 to 48% in 2006.

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>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Parents, relatives, friends	NA	69%	64%
Other College Grant/Scholarship	NA	47%	49%
Other College Loan	NA	42%	49%
Other Loan	NA	25%	22%
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	NA	24%	25%
Savings From Summer Work	NA	17%	17%
Other Savings	NA	17%	16%
Pell Grant	NA	16%	16%
College Work Study	NA	15%	16%
Perkins Loan	NA	12%	12%
Other Source	NA	9%	12%

Part-Time Job On Campus	NA	8%	9%
Ohio Instructional Grant	NA	7%	6%
Other Private Grant	NA	6%	6%
Part-Time Job Off Campus	NA	5%	5%

Families were still the major source of finance for the majority of BGSU freshmen.

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Not at All	28%	29%	25%
Somewhat	56%	55%	57%
Very	16%	16%	18%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
None	27%	26%	26%
1 to 9	19%	17%	16%
10 to 19	42%	42%	43%
20 to 39	11%	15%	16%
40 or More	1%	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>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Athletics	NA	91%	92%
Religious organization	NA	90%	89%
Community service	NA	85%	88%
Part-time job	NA	82%	82%
Band or orchestra	NA	81%	83%
Academic honor society	NA	81%	81%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	72%	71%
Theatre	NA	70%	72%
Student council	NA	64%	66%
Class officer	NA	56%	61%
ROTC	NA	75%	55%
Debate	NA	54%	42%
Yearbook	NA	43%	41%
Newspaper	NA	37%	41%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Athletics	NA	62%	64%
Part-time job	NA	52%	56%
Community service	NA	33%	34%
Band or orchestra	NA	25%	25%
Religious organization	NA	22%	24%
Theatre	NA	18%	22%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	20%	21%
Academic honor society	NA	20%	19%
Class officer	NA	12%	15%

Student council	NA	15%	14%
Yearbook	NA	13%	13%
Newspaper	NA	9%	9%
Debate	NA	4%	3%
ROTC	NA	2%	1%

Fifty percent or more of the 2006 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 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>1997</u>		<u>2005</u>		
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father
Some high school or less	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%
High school graduate	28%	33%	30%	29%	33%
Post secondary school other than college	5%	7%	3%	4%	4%
Some college	19%	19%	18%	19%	16%
College degree	29%	26%	28%	31%	28%
Some graduate school	3%	4%	2%	3%	2%
Graduate degree	14%	10%	15%	13%	14%

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Mother and father high school or less:	NA	17%	18%
At least one parent a college graduate:	NA	63%	58%
Both parents college graduates:	NA	30%	27%

Your Father's Occupation (top four):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Business	30%	27%	25%
Other	16%	21%	22%
Semi-skilled worker	10%	12%	11%
Computer programmer or analyst	NA	8%	6%

Your Mother's Occupation (top four):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Other	20%	25%	24%
Business	23%	15%	12%
Lawyer/attorney/judge	NA	10%	9%
Therapist	NA	8%	8%

Your Probable Occupation (top four):

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Undecided	17%	18%	15%
Business	12%	15%	14%
Other	10%	14%	14%
Teacher or administrator	20%	12%	11%

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Bachelor's	NA	9%	11%

Master's	NA	65%	63%
Doctorate	NA	11%	14%
Professional	NA	13%	11%
Other	NA	1%	1%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Bachelor's	78%	78%	77%
Master's	19%	19%	19%
Doctorate	2%	2%	2%
Professional	NA	0%	1%
Other	NA	1%	1%

The most frequent academic goals of entering freshmen are a Bachelor's degree at BGSU and a Master's anywhere.

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Mathematics	22%	27%	31%
English	5%	8%	8%
Foreign Language	7%	7%	9%
Science	8%	7%	10%
Reading	3%	2%	3%
Social Studies	2%	2%	2%

Mathematics remains the subject where a sizeable percentage of freshmen may need tutoring or remedial work. 2006 entering freshmen were also more concerned about their mathematics and science preparation than were the freshmen in 2005 and in 1997.

EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
get a Bachelor's Degree	82%	82%	84%
find a job in my major after graduation	73%	70%	74%
be satisfied with BGSU	66%	66%	68%
get a job to help pay for college expenses	59%	53%	57%
make at least a "B" average	52%	52%	55%
participate in volunteer or community service work	20%	21%	23%
join a social club, fraternity, or sorority	22%	19%	22%
graduate with honors	14%	16%	17%
change your major	15%	15%	15%
play varsity intercollegiate athletics	14%	13%	14%
change your career choice	14%	12%	13%
join a student professional/government organization	9%	8%	9%
be elected to an academic honor society	9%	6%	8%
participate in student protests/demonstrations	4%	5%	7%
work full time while attending college	3%	4%	5%
need extra time to complete your degree	7%	4%	4%
transfer to another college before graduation	3%	3%	3%
get married while in college	2%	2%	3%

be elected to a student office	3%	2%	3%
fail one or more courses	0%	1%	1%
drop out of college permanently	0%	0%	0%
drop out of college temporarily	0%	0%	0%

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

	<u>1997</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
being very well off financially	78%	82%	85%
raising a family	80%	82%	81%
helping others who are in difficulty	74%	74%	74%
becoming an authority in my field	64%	63%	63%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	54%	56%	55%
influencing social values	52%	50%	52%
developing a meaningful philosophy of life	48%	49%	48%
becoming successful in a business of my own	42%	47%	46%
having administrative responsibility for the work of others	45%	37%	45%
helping to promote racial understanding	36%	37%	38%
keeping up to date with political affairs	33%	36%	38%
becoming a community leader	25%	33%	36%
participating in a community action program	31%	28%	32%
becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	28%	26%	27%
creating artistic works	18%	22%	20%
influencing the political structure	18%	21%	20%
becoming accomplished in the performing arts	17%	21%	20%
writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	16%	20%	19%
making a contribution to science	15%	19%	19%

Being very well off financially, raising a family, helping others who are in difficulty, becoming an authority in their fields, obtaining recognition from their colleagues for their contributions, and influencing social values continued to be the important life goals for most of BGSU freshmen. Compared with the freshmen in 1997, 2006 freshmen were more likely to claim that being very well off financially and becoming a community leader are very important to them.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Responses to the 2006 BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) were generally similar to those of last year's BFYSQ.

2006 Freshmen are mostly from in-state and from middle class families. Parents/relatives/friends were the greatest source of financial support for college. 2006 freshmen also expected to get support from various loans, grants/scholarships, and savings. Seventy five percent of them have some concerns about their ability to finance their college education.

Like the freshmen in previous years, 2006 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 and BGSU's academic reputation/program remained the principal reasons that incoming freshmen choose BGSU. Compared with the freshmen in 1997, however, 2006 entering freshmen were less likely to consider "BGSU graduates get good jobs", "BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools", "BGSU's academic reputation" and "the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students" as the important reasons to attend, but more likely to consider "I was offered financial assistance" as the important factor for them to choose BGSU.

More than half of the 2006 entering 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." Being very well off financially, raising a family, helping others who are in difficulty, and becoming an authority in their field of study are among their most important life goals.

The 2006 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 in their field after graduation, get a job to help pay for their college expenses, 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.