

# **REPORT OF THE RESULTS OF THE BGSU FIRST YEAR STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE, 2009**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This report describes the results of the Summer 2009 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. The results of the survey 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 maintained in databases within the Office of Institutional Research and are studied as predictors of outcomes such as retention, GPAs, and graduation rates.

## **BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**

BGSU has conducted "freshman survey" for more than thirty years. 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 BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (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 2009 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 1,726 questionnaires were returned, which represented about 55% of the 2009 main campus new first year freshman. This rate is lower than the one in 2008 (75%) and in 2007(64%).

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire first year first time freshman class, the demographic characteristics of the 1232 survey respondents who provided

valid social security numbers were compared to all entering 2009 first year first time freshmen. Survey respondent in general mirrors population (see table below).

	<b>Survey Respondents</b>	<b>2009 First Time First Year Freshman</b>
<b>Gender:</b>		
Female	58%	55%
Male	42%	45%
<b>Race:</b>		
Minorities	15%	17%
European-American	83%	78%
Other/Unknown	3%	4%
<b>College:</b>		
Arts and Sciences	27%	28%
Business Administration	10%	11%
Education and Human Development	24%	21%
Health and Human Services	11%	10%
Musical Arts	3%	3%
Technology	6%	6%
Academic Enhancement	19%	21%
<b>Residential Status:</b>		
In State Students	90%	87%
Out of State Students	10%	12%
International Students	0%	2%

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. This report highlights these findings.

## ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT-RELATED INFORMATION

### How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply for admission this year?

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
None	28%	28%	27%	25%
1	26%	24%	25%	24%
2	25%	24%	23%	23%
Three or More	21%	24%	25%	28%

### How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
None	32%	33%	32%	29%
One	30%	28%	29%	29%
Two	23%	20%	19%	21%
Three or More	15%	19%	20%	21%

### Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
First Choice	82%	81%	82%	82%
Second Choice	15%	17%	16%	16%
Less Than Second Choice	3%	3%	2%	2%

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
To Prepare for a Professional Career	89%	90%	92%	91%
To Be Able to Get a Better Job	77%	74%	74%	73%
To Learn More about Things That Interest me	73%	70%	69%	71%
To Be Able to Make More Money	66%	67%	71%	68%
To Gain a General Education and Appreciation of Ideas	52%	56%	55%	56%
My Parents Wanted Me to Go	25%	34%	31%	35%
To Make Me a More Cultured Person	31%	38%	36%	34%
To Improve My Reading and Study Skills	29%	32%	30%	31%
To Learn More About Other People	25%	29%	25%	26%
I Wanted to Get Away from Home	19%	26%	25%	24%
A Mentor/Role Model Encouraged Me to Go	10%	15%	13%	14%

Compared with the freshmen in 1999, incoming freshmen were more likely to cite “my parents wanted me to go” as a very important factor for them to attend college.

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
BGSU graduates get good jobs	53%	55%	58%	60%
My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly	42%	50%	55%	56%
BGSU offers unique educational programs	41%	46%	49%	49%
BGSU's academic reputation	42%	43%	49%	48%
BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools	39%	43%	45%	47%
BGSU is in a small and safe community	36%	42%	44%	43%
I wanted to attend a school of BGSU's size	34%	39%	41%	38%
BGSU takes student safety seriously	29%	36%	40%	38%
BGSU has an attractive campus	29%	34%	38%	37%
the reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff, and students	30%	36%	35%	37%
cost of tuition at BGSU	23%	28%	31%	35%
I was offered financial assistance	16%	29%	30%	34%
BGSU's social reputation	29%	31%	34%	32%
BGSU's rankings in national magazines	17%	23%	21%	19%
I wanted to live near home	12%	16%	14%	15%
A friend suggested attending	8%	12%	10%	11%
My relatives wanted me to come here	6%	9%	8%	8%
A teacher advised me	4%	8%	7%	7%

"BGSU graduates get good jobs" and "my BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly" remain the top two reasons most students choose BGSU. Compared with the freshmen in 1999, 2009 freshmen were more likely to indicate that the 'cost of tuition at BGSU' and 'I was offered financial assistance' were the very important reasons for them to attend BGSU.

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
10 miles or Less	4%	5%	4%	4%
11 to 50 miles	23%	25%	24%	26%
51 to 100 miles	19%	21%	21%	21%
101 to 500 miles	53%	47%	49%	47%
Over 500 miles	2%	3%	2%	3%

**Is English your native language?**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Yes	99%	99%	99%	99%
No	1%	1%	1%	1%

**Are your parents**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
both alive and living with each other	76%	67%	66%	68%
both alive, divorced or living apart	21%	30%	30%	29%
one or both deceased	3%	3%	4%	4%

**What is your best estimate of your parents' income?**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Less than \$30,000	9%	11%	12%	11%
\$30,000-\$49,999	20%	17%	15%	16%
\$50,000-\$74,999	34%	26%	26%	26%
\$75,000-\$99,999	20%	20%	20%	22%
\$100,000 or More	18%	26%	28%	26%

**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>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Other College Grant/Scholarship	26%	49%	52%	64%
Parents, relatives, friends	75%	63%	62%	61%
Other College Loan	32%	49%	52%	45%
Ford Direct Subsidized Loan	27%	27%	30%	44%
Pell Grant	11%	17%	21%	26%
Other Loan	15%	23%	25%	24%
Savings From Summer Work	21%	19%	20%	15%
Other Savings	16%	17%	20%	15%
College Work Study	5%	18%	20%	12%
Other Source	8%	11%	15%	12%
Part-Time Job On Campus	5%	10%	13%	10%
Perkins Loan	7%	11%	8%	9%
Ohio Instructional Grant	2%	6%	6%	9%
Other Private Grant	4%	5%	6%	9%
Part-Time Job Off Campus	4%	7%	6%	5%

For the first time in thirty years, college grant/scholarship has exceeded parents/relatives/friends as the greatest financial source that most incoming freshmen depended on. Compared with the freshmen in 1999, 2009 freshmen were also more likely to depend on loans to cover their college expenses.

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
None	30%	25%	22%	23%
1 to 9	23%	17%	19%	18%
10 to 19	37%	43%	43%	44%
20 to 39	10%	15%	15%	15%
40 or More	0%	1%	1%	1%

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Not at All	32%	25%	22%	20%
Somewhat	55%	58%	61%	61%
Very	13%	17%	17%	19%

Eighty percent of incoming freshmen had some level of concerns about their ability to finance college education.

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Athletics	NA	65%	65%	63%
Part-time job	NA	55%	52%	53%
Community service	NA	33%	34%	33%
Band or orchestra	NA	24%	27%	27%
Theatre	NA	23%	20%	21%
Choir or vocal ensemble	NA	21%	20%	21%
Religious organization	NA	24%	23%	19%
Academic honor society	NA	19%	17%	16%
Class officer	NA	14%	14%	12%
Student council	NA	13%	14%	12%
Yearbook	NA	14%	14%	12%
Newspaper	NA	11%	9%	8%
Debate	NA	5%	4%	3%
ROTC	NA	1%	1%	1%

BGSU freshmen were more likely to be involved with athletics and part-time jobs than other activities listed on the survey while they were in high school.

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

	<u>1999</u>		<u>2007</u>		<u>2008</u>		<u>2009</u>	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Some high school or less	3%	1%	4%	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
High school graduate	29%	34%	31%	28%	32%	27%	30%	25%
Post sec. sch. other than college	4%	5%	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%
Some college	19%	20%	17%	20%	18%	19%	16%	19%
College degree	29%	25%	30%	32%	29%	33%	31%	34%
Some graduate school	2%	4%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Graduate degree	14%	11%	12%	11%	12%	12%	14%	13%

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Mother and father high school or less:	18%	17%	16%	16%
At least one parent a college graduate:	57%	57%	63%	65%
Both parents college graduates:	26%	28%	27%	32%

**Your Father's Occupation (top four in 2009):**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Business	32%	24%	25%	26%
Other	17%	20%	22%	21%
Skilled trades	12%	3%	3%	10%
Engineer	7%	1%	1%	8%

**Your Mother's Occupation (top four in 2009):**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Other	20%	25%	23%	24%
Business	26%	13%	13%	23%
Teacher or administrator	14%	4%	5%	12%
Nurse	9%	0%	1%	9%

**Your Probable Occupation (top four in 2009):**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Teacher or administrator	21%	10%	12%	20%
Undecided	20%	16%	14%	16%
Other	11%	15%	14%	14%
Business	14%	12%	13%	10%

**What is the highest degree you plan to obtain anywhere?**

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Bachelor's	11%	12%	11%	8%
Master's	69%	63%	64%	62%
Doctorate	9%	10%	12%	16%

Professional	11%	13%	11%	13%
Other	0%	1%	1%	1%

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Bachelor's	77%	77%	78%	76%
Master's	21%	19%	18%	21%
Doctorate	1%	2%	2%	2%
Professional	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other	0%	1%	1%	1%

The most likely academic goal of entering freshmen is 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>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Mathematics	24%	31%	32%	36%
Science	6%	9%	10%	14%
English	5%	8%	8%	13%
Foreign Language	7%	9%	10%	10%
Reading	2%	2%	3%	6%
Social Studies	2%	2%	2%	4%

Mathematics remains the subject that sizeable freshmen feel they may need tutoring or remedial work. Compared with the 1999 freshmen, incoming freshmen were also more likely to look for help in other areas listed on the survey.

## **EXPECTATIONS AND VALUES INFORMATION**

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
get a Bachelor's Degree	75%	85%	85%	85%
find a job in my major after graduation	69%	74%	75%	74%
be satisfied with BGSU	58%	67%	69%	70%
get a job to help pay for college expenses	51%	57%	59%	58%
make at least a "B" average	46%	55%	52%	55%
participate in volunteer or community service work	18%	23%	23%	26%
join a social club, fraternity, or sorority	19%	21%	23%	24%
graduate with honors	10%	16%	13%	14%
play varsity intercollegiate athletics	12%	13%	13%	13%
change your major	19%	15%	14%	12%



change your career choice	16%	12%	13%	11%
join a student professional/government organization	9%	9%	8%	10%
be elected to an academic honor society	7%	7%	5%	6%
participate in student protests/demonstrations	5%	7%	7%	6%
work full time while attending college	4%	5%	5%	4%
need extra time to complete your degree	6%	4%	4%	4%
transfer to another college before graduation	3%	3%	4%	3%
be elected to a student office	3%	3%	3%	2%
get married while in college	2%	2%	2%	2%
fail one or more courses	1%	0%	0%	0%
drop out of college permanently	0%	0%	0%	0%
drop out of college temporarily	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

	<u>1999</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
being very well off financially	82%	84%	85%	85%
raising a family	79%	80%	80%	78%
helping others who are in difficulty	69%	74%	73%	73%
becoming an authority in my field	64%	61%	66%	60%
obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions	57%	58%	57%	56%
influencing social values	52%	53%	53%	51%
developing a meaningful philosophy of life	49%	50%	53%	50%
becoming successful in a business of my own	46%	47%	44%	42%
having administrative responsibility for the work of others	45%	43%	44%	42%
keeping up to date with political affairs	33%	37%	39%	35%
helping to promote racial understanding	37%	38%	35%	36%
becoming a community leader	33%	34%	35%	32%
participating in a community action program	30%	34%	35%	33%
becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment	28%	32%	34%	34%
creating artistic works	21%	23%	24%	22%
influencing the political structure	21%	21%	19%	20%
becoming accomplished in the performing arts	19%	20%	19%	22%
making a contribution to science	17%	22%	18%	19%
writing original works (poems, novels, etc.)	17%	21%	18%	19%

Being very well off financially, raising a family, helping others who are in difficulty, and becoming an authority in their fields continues to be the important life goals for the majority of BGSU freshmen.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Like the new freshmen in previous years, the 2009 freshmen applied and were admitted to few other institutions. BGSU is their overwhelming first choice. They are very pragmatic about their college education --- preparing for a professional career, getting a better job, being able to make more money, and learning more about things that interest them were important reasons for most of incoming freshmen to attend college. The perceived career success of our graduates coupled with a pleasant campus visit and BGSU's academic reputation and programs remain the principal reasons that incoming freshmen chose BGSU.

The 2009 freshmen are mostly from in-state and from middle class families. For the first time in thirty years college grants and scholarships has exceeded parents, relatives, and friends as the greatest source of financial support that incoming freshmen depend on. Eighty percent of them expressed some level of concerns about their ability to finance their college education. Two thirds of them want to be employed while pursuing a Bachelor's Degree at BGSU. 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.

More than half of the entering freshman indicated that they were highly involved with athletics and had a part-time job when they were in high school. They are very optimistic about their chances of making at least a "B" average for the college class, earning a Bachelor's Degree, finding a job in their major after graduation paying for college expenses, and being satisfied with BGSU. The majority of them predict that it is unlikely for them to fail one or more courses, take extra time to complete their degree, or drop out college temporarily or permanently. Mathematics, however, remains the area where sizeable 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.