

Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire, 2004

ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2003, Fall 2003, and Spring 2004 administrations of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ). The BGSQ is designed to collect data on graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU, their perceptions of the institution, their educational and personal gains, and their satisfaction with the programs and services provided by BGSU. Additional information such as graduates' college expenses, years of enrollment at BGSU, and their further education plans are also collected. The results of this report may be used to evaluate and improve the quality of BGSU's undergraduate education as well as the social and academic environment of the institution.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The need for information about graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU, their perceptions of the institution, educational and personal gains, satisfaction with programs and services, and their further education plans, prompted the development of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ) in Spring 2000. The literature on college student learning, development, and persistence clearly shows that these traits play a crucial role in student outcomes. Since no single commercially-available questionnaire would provide the data specifically needed by BGSU in a timely and cost effective manner, the BGSQ was developed by the Office of Institutional Research and reviewed by a wide audience.

All seniors who registered for 2003-2004 graduation were asked to fill out the BGSQ on-line before they left BGSU, and 1143 of them completed the survey, resulting in a 37% (1143/3063) response rate. This rate is higher than the one in 2002-2003 (21%) and in 2001-2002 (32%).

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire graduating class, the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents were compared to all Summer 2003, Fall 2003, and Spring 2004 graduating seniors. As shown on the table below there was a high degree of race and college similarity between the respondents and the population. The largest difference was the under-representation of students who graduated from BGSU in more than 4 years. Sixty-one percent of the participants reported that they graduated from BGSU in four or fewer years. This rate is much higher than the average Baccalaureate degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which was 33.4% for 1999-2003, 30.0% for 1998-2002, and 33.3% for 1997-2001. The proportion of women respondents (65%) was also higher than in the population (60%). These limitations and the low response rate require that all results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

	Survey Respondents	2003-04 Graduating Seniors
Gender:		
Female	65%	60%
Male	35%	40%
Race:		
Minorities	7%	7%
European-American	93%	93%
College:		

Arts and Sciences	39%	37%
Business Administration	14%	14%
Education and Human Development	29%	31%
Health and Human Services	8%	9%
Musical Arts	2%	2%
Technology	8%	8%

BGSQ 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. The following pages highlight these results. In addition, group differences in 2003-2004 (female vs. male, minority graduates vs. European-American graduates, and college vs. college) were investigated and significant differences are noted where they occurred.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

How many years will you have been enrolled at BGSU by the time you graduate?

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
less than four	17%	22%	24%
four	46%	34%	37%
between four and five	29%	35%	31%
more than five	8%	9%	8%

If it has taken you more than four years to graduate, please indicate whether the following were reasons for extending your enrollment. (Percent Responding "Major" Reason)

	2001-2002 %	2002-2003 %	2003-2004 %
I changed majors	32	33	34
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	18	19	25
I worked while enrolled	25	24	22
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	15	18	22
My major takes more than four years to complete	12	14	20
I received poor academic advising	13	14	16
I was undecided about a major when I started	16	11	15
I was involved in coop/internships	15	17	15
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	9	10	12
I had family responsibilities while enrolled	9	9	11
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	10	12	10
I attended part-time	8	10	8
I had problems with the academic requirements for my	5	9	8

major			
I commuted while enrolled	7	7	8
I had a double major	10	8	8
I had financial problems	5	6	8
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	7	5	6
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	6	7	6
I wanted to have some free time	4	5	4
I did not spend enough time studying	2	4	3
I had to take developmental classes	1	2	2

Like the respondents in previous years, more than half of the respondents in 2003-2004 reported that they graduated from BGSU in four or fewer than four years. This rate is much higher than the average baccalaureate degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which is 33.0% for 1998-2002 and 33.4% for 1999-2003. "I changed majors" remains the major reason that was most often cited by those who took more than four years to graduate. 2003-2004 respondents, however, were more likely than the respondents in previous two years to indicate that "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them ", "my major takes more than four years to complete" and "I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses" were the major reasons for them to extend their college education.

Females were more likely than males to report that they graduated from BGSU in four years or fewer. "I was involved in coop/internships" and "I wanted to have some free time" were more often cited by males than females as the reasons to take them more than four years to graduate.

Minority respondents were more likely than European-American respondents to cite "I had family responsibilities", "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them", and "I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction" as the major reasons to extend their undergraduate study.

Among the students in the six colleges, Technology students were least likely to report that they earned their bachelor's degree in four years or fewer , and they were mostly likely to cite "I was involved in coop/internships", "my major takes more than four years to complete" and "I worked while enrolled" as the reasons for them to extend their undergraduate education. Technology students, as well as the students in the College of Musical Arts were also more likely than the students in other colleges to report that "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them" was the reason for them to extend their college education.

Other factors that were more often reported by students in one college than others as an important reason to take them more than four years to graduate were: "I had a double major" (for Business Administrations students); "I had problems with the academic requirements" (for Health and Human Development students); "I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest" (for Arts and Sciences students).

ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

During your enrollment at BGSU, about how many years did you ...

	1 Year or more	None
live in a campus residence hall or house	77%	23%
live in an apartment or house near campus	78%	22%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU & commute	33%	67%

The majority of the 2003-2004 survey respondents indicated that they were living on campus or near campus during their college years. While minority graduates were more likely than European-American graduates to spend three or more years living on campus, European-American graduates were more likely to spend three or more years living in an apartment or house near campus.

How many times have you changed your major?

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
None	51%	50%	54%
1	34%	34%	33%
2	10%	8%	8%
3 or more	6%	8%	5%

Forty six percent of the 2003-2004 survey respondents changed their major at least once during their BGSU years. Musical Arts graduates were least likely to change their major among the graduates in the six colleges.

While enrolled at BGSU, did you ever ... (Percent Responding "Yes")

	2001- 2002 %	2002- 2003 %	2003- 2004 %
work at a job off campus	73	72	75
participate in volunteer/service work	71	65	65
participate in an internship or co-op	54	55	53
work at a job on campus	57	56	53
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	55	54	50
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity/sorority	38	34	31
participate in a professional or student government organization	26	23	21
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	17	15	12

Like the graduates in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003, most of the 2003-2004 graduates worked at a job either on or off campus while they studied at BGSU. They were more likely to be involved with volunteer/service work, an internship or co-op, and a social club/fraternity/sorority than to participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics and in a professional or student government organization.

Female graduates were more likely than males to participate in volunteer/service work. While European-American graduates were more likely to work at a job off campus, minority graduates were more likely to work on a job on campus.

Among the graduates in the six colleges, Technology graduates were most likely to participate in an internship or co-op. Graduates in the Colleges of Technology and Musical Arts were more likely than the graduates in other colleges to work at a job off campus. Technology and Business Administration graduates were less likely to participate in volunteer or service work than were graduates in other colleges.

On average, per year, how much of your educational expenses did you cover from each of the sources listed below ? (Percent \$1,500 and Over)

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
	%	%	%
Parents, relatives, friends	57	57	59
Other college loan	23	30	32
Savings from summer work	24	25	26
Ford Direct Loan	25	22	25
Other college grants/scholarships	24	26	24
Off campus jobs	16	19	17
Other savings	11	12	14
Perkins Loan	11	14	13
Other loan	9	11	11
Pell Grant	8	11	10
On campus jobs	6	8	7
Other than listed	6	6	6
Ohio Instructional Grant	3	7	5
Other private grant	4	4	2

Family, other college loans, savings from summer work, the Ford Direct Loan and other college grants/scholarships were the sources of financial support most often cited by BGSU graduates. Females and European-American graduates were more likely than males and minority graduates to report that they received over \$3000 in support from their families . While minority graduates were more likely than European-American graduates to get support from the Pell Grant, Ohio Instructional Grant, and other college grants/scholarships, European-American graduates were more likely to get an off campus job to cover their college expenses.

How much will you owe in student loans when you graduate?

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Nothing	39%	36%	33%
Less than \$5,000	6%	7%	4%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	7%	8%	10%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	12%	15%	13%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	14%	16%	15%
\$20,000 or more	22%	18%	26%

Over sixty percent of the respondents owe some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INSTITUTION

Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, to what extent would you agree with the following? (Percent Responding "Agree" or "Strongly Agree")

	2001- 02 %	2002- 03 %	2003- 04 %
--	------------------	------------------	------------------

I have participated in class discussions	97	97	97
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	95	95	96
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	95	96	94
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	94	95	94
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	92	92	92
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	87	86	88
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	87	86	89
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	89	88	87
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	82	83	87
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty or staff member	87	87	86
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	72	76	75
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	73	72	75
I have participated in study groups	74	77	74
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	69	71	72
I have become involved with activities on campus	70	68	66
I have become involved with student organizations	64	62	58
I have attended cultural events on campus	58	60	55
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	45	46	49

The majority of the respondents over the past three years agreed or strongly agreed with most of the items listed in the survey. Minority graduates were more likely than European-American graduates to participate cultural events on campus. Musical Arts graduates tended to be most actively involved with campus activities and cultural events among the graduates in the six colleges. They were also most likely to agree that they have talked about their career plans as well as personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member. Graduates in the College of Health and Human Services were most likely to agree that most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful.

EDUCATIONAL AND PERSONAL GAINS

For each of the following items, please indicate how much you feel you have gained as a result of your BGSU education? (Percent Responding "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit")

	2001- 2002 %	2002- 2003 %	2003- 2004 %
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	75	73	75

being open to new ideas	72	77	75
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	73	74	73
thinking critically	70	71	73
making connections between the classes I have taken	71	74	72
making informed judgments	71	72	72
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	69	71	72
developing a better understanding of my career goals	67	67	72
relating to others	70	71	70
writing effectively	69	69	68
speaking effectively	65	67	67
using computers	69	67	64
solving problems	65	62	63
being prepared for further education	58	59	61
understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	53	54	60

Most of the respondents in the past three years felt that they made gains towards various educational and personal goals. Compared with respondents in the previous two years, 5% or more of the respondents in 2003-2004 reported that they gained quite a bit or very much in developing a better understanding of their career goals, as well as understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career.

Minority graduates were more likely than European-American graduates to indicate that they gained very much or quite a bit in making connections between the classes they have taken and connections between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life. They were also more likely than European-American graduates to state that they gained a lot in understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career.

Respondents in the College of Business Administration and the College of Technology were more likely than the respondents in the other four colleges to report that they gained quite a bit or very much in using computers. Respondents in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Health and Human Services were more likely than the respondents in the other colleges to indicate that they gained a lot in understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career. Respondents in the College of Health and Human Services were also most likely to claim that they gained a lot in writing effectively, understanding their own abilities, interests, and value, and developing a better understanding of their career goals. While respondents in Musical Arts were most likely to report that they gained a lot in developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career, they were least likely to say that they gained a lot in thinking critically and being open to new ideas. Technology respondents were least likely to report that they gained quite a bit or very much in making connections between the classes they have taken and being prepared for further education.

SATISFACTION WITH BGSU

Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, how satisfied were you with ... (Percent Responding "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied")

	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
library resources	95	94	96
the overall quality of instruction	94	93	94
ease of access to instructors	93	92	94
class size	91	93	94
BGSU overall	94	92	93
feedback on assignments	86	87	89
places to study	86	87	88
computer resources	87	85	87
residence halls	88	87	86
the condition of buildings	83	83	84
racial and ethnic diversity	79	77	84
financial aid	81	76	79
career services	72	75	79
concern for me as an individual	68	71	71
campus dining services	69	73	70
helpfulness in preparing for further education	68	68	68
the overall quality of academic advising	62	60	64
the availability of classes at times I needed them	63	60	62
helpfulness in preparing for employment	61	60	62
service to commuters	60	59	56

The majority of BGSU graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with all of the aspects of their educational and social experiences listed in the questionnaire. Improvement occurred in the areas of career services as well as racial and ethnic diversity over the past three years. Students' satisfaction with the service to commuters, however, declined during the same period of time.

Compared with European-American graduates, minority graduates were more satisfied with computer resources, but less satisfied with racial and ethnic diversity of BGSU. Females were more satisfied than males with campus dining services.

Among the graduates in the six colleges, Health and Human Services graduates were most satisfied with the overall quality of academic advising. Technology graduates were least satisfied with career services. Graduates in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Health and Human Services were more satisfied with "concern for me as an individual". Graduates in the College of Technology as well as the College of Arts and Sciences were less satisfied with helpfulness in preparing them for employment.

EMPHASIS

For each of the following items, please indicate how much emphasis you feel BGSU should place in each area?

About the Right Emphasis				Need to Emphasize More		
2001-02	2002-03	2003-04		2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
%	%	%		%	%	%
56	49	56	developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	43	51	44
55	54	57	being prepared for further education	44	46	42
56	53	58	developing a better understanding of my career goals	43	47	41
56	55	59	making connections between the classes I have taken	43	44	40
57	58	61	making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	42	41	38
57	57	62	speaking effectively	42	42	37
62	59	64	writing effectively	37	39	34
59	59	66	using computers	40	39	32
61	62	68	thinking critically	38	36	30
69	64	70	making informed judgements	31	35	29
66	62	71	being open to new ideas	32	36	27
57	56	65	understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	34	34	26
67	70	75	solving problems	32	30	25
72	74	76	understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	26	24	22
77	74	78	relating to others	21	24	20

More than fifty percent of the 2003-2004 respondents felt that BGSU had given the right emphasis in all the areas listed on the table above. Helping students to prepare for their career as well as their further education remain the areas that BGSU may emphasize more in the future.

European-American graduates were more likely than minority graduates to report that BGSU should more heavily emphasize making connections between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life. Minority graduates, on the other hand, were more likely than European-American graduates to say that BGSU needs to emphasize more being open to new ideas, relating to others, and understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career. Male respondents were more likely than females to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more thinking critically, solving problems, making informed judgments, and relating to others.

Compared with graduates in the other colleges, Technology and Arts and Sciences graduates were more likely to cite "solving problems" as well as "making informed judgments" as the areas BGSU could emphasize more. Graduates in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business Administration,

and the College of Technology were more likely to say that BGSU should emphasize more relating to others. Arts and Sciences and Musical Arts graduates were more likely than the graduates in other colleges to report that BGSU should emphasize more being open to new ideas. Arts and Sciences and Education and Human Development graduates were also more likely than graduates in the other colleges to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more preparing them for further education. Musical Arts graduates were least likely to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more "understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career" among the graduates in six colleges.

FURTHER EDUCATION PLANS

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

	2001- 2002	2002- 2003	2003- 2004
plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	56%	57%	57%
unsure of future education plans	24%	22%	20%
no plans for further college-level education	11%	12%	14%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	5%	5%	5%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	3%	3%	2%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%	2%	1%

More than sixty percent of the respondents planned to earn a higher degree other than a bachelors after they graduated from BGSU. Females and respondents in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Education and Human Development were more likely than males and respondents in other colleges to plan to pursue a Master's or doctoral degree in the future.

COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Some students wrote comments and suggestions on the survey. The results are shown below.

SUBJECT
Good Experience:
the experience at BGSU was a good/great/wonderful one. Go Falcons! Thank you, BGSU.
good faculties/staff members
good academic programs
enjoyed classes
enjoyed campus activities and programs
good services
Areas That Need To Be Improved:
classes (availability, subject, quality, usefulness in real life, connections between clas
faculty/staff/TA
advising

parking
disappointed or dissatisfied with my experience at BGSU
degree or major requirements
focus more on students instead of their money
career services
co-op program/office
helping in finding job after graduation
services, classes for non-traditional students
more support for certain academic programs
diversity on campus
Financial Aid Office
meal plans/price
some buildings
Bursar's Office
lack of scholarships and financial aid
dining service
Student Affairs
roommate selection
tuition
more trainings in computer and writing skills
student activities
more pay phones on campus
communication between offices
the way the University treats transfer students
the relationship between faculty and students
alcohol problems among students
the new Off Campus Center
services for students with disabilities
increasing the amount of computer access to off-campus students
increasing pay rate for on campus job
custodial worker
study environment
Additional Comments Related to Specific College:
College of Education and Human Development
College of Business Administration
College of Technology
College of Arts and Sciences
College of Musical Arts

Other Comments in:
core/school values
the way the University spends money
tenure system
freshman should not be allowed to bring cars to campus

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ) was designed to gather information about graduating seniors' undergraduate experiences at BGSU. The 2003-2004 survey results indicate that the majority of graduating seniors who responded to the questionnaire lived on campus or near campus during their college years and most of them worked while they enrolled at BGSU. Besides studying and working, 65% of them reported that they participated in volunteer or service work and over half of them participated in an internship or co-op and in a social club, fraternity or sorority. Like the graduates in past two years, over 60% of the 2003-2004 responding graduates plan to earn a Master's degree or higher after graduation.

Family, other college loans/grants/scholarships, savings from summer work, and the Ford Direct Loan were the sources of financial support most often cited by BGSU graduates for the past three years. More than 60% of the graduating seniors had some amount of student debt by the time they graduated.

Forty-six percent of the 2003-2004 graduates who responded to the questionnaire changed their major at least once at BGSU. "I changed my major", "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them", "I worked while enrolled", "I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses", and "my major takes more than four years to complete" were the most often given reasons for them to take more than four years to graduate. Moreover, the percentage of students who cite "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them", "I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses", and "my major takes more than four years to complete" as the major factors that extended their college education have increased for the past three years.

Most of the 2003-2004 responding graduates had good perceptions of BGSU, and felt that they gained very much or quite a bit on all the items of students' educational and personal development listed in the questionnaire. In addition, 2003-2004 graduates were more likely than the graduates in 2002-2003 and in 2001-2002 to claim that they gained a lot in developing a better understanding of their career goals as well as understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career. "I had a good/great/wonderful experience at BGSU" is the comment that was mentioned by the largest number of 2003-2004 responding graduates.

The majority of the BGSU graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with all of the aspects of their educational and social experiences listed in the survey, especially with library resources, the overall quality of instruction, class size, ease of access to instructors, and BGSU overall. Improvements were seen in the areas of career services and racial /ethnic diversity for the past three years. Students' satisfaction with the service to commuters, however, declined during the same period of time. Based upon the questionnaire findings, more efforts are needed to help students in preparing for employment and further education.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (37%) for the questionnaire and the under-representation of males and respondents who graduated from BGSU in more than four years. 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.