

Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire, 2012

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2011, Fall 2011, and Spring 2012 BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ). The main purpose of the survey is to seek feedback regarding graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU. Additional information such as sources of financial support, years of enrollment, and further plans after graduation are also collected. The survey results may be used to evaluate and improve the quality of BGSU's undergraduate education as well as the social and academic environment of the University.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The need for information about graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU, perception of the institution, educational and personal gains, satisfaction with various programs and services, and future plans after graduation prompted the development of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ) in Spring 2000. 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 (IR) and has been reviewed by a wide audience. IR has conducted the survey annually ever since.

All seniors who scheduled for Summer 2011, Fall 2011, or Spring 2012 graduation were asked to complete the online version of BGSQ before they left the campus. Seven hundred and ninety-six

students answered the survey, which represents 29.3% of the 2011-2012 graduating senior class. The response rate is lower than the ones in 2010-2011 (32.4%) and in 2009-2010 (39%).

Out of the total 796 respondents, 617 of them provided valid ID number, which allows us to compare their demographic characteristics with all 2011-2012 graduating seniors. As shown in the table below, the survey respondents, in general, mirror the population in terms of race and college. Female respondents, however, were over-represented.

	Survey Respondents	2011-2012 Graduating Seniors
Gender:		
Female	67.6%	55.7%
Male	32.4%	44.3%
Ethnicity:		
Minorities	12.5%	12.7%
European-American	85.1%	83.1%
Other/Unknown	2.4%	4.2%
College:		
Arts and Sciences	36.2%	35.7%
Business Administration	12.0%	10.9%
Education and Human	31.2%	30.7%
Health and Human Services	11.0%	11.5%
Musical Arts	2.6%	2.3%
Technology	6.5%	8.7%
Multi colleges	0.5%	0.2%

The BGSQ results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who chose a certain response to each questionnaire item. Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to rounding. The following sections highlight these results. Group differences (female vs. male, minority graduates vs. European-American graduates, and college vs. college) were not shown in this report but will be investigated upon request.

RESULTS

1. Reasons for Extending Enrollment

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

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Less than four years	20%	22%	22%
Four years	43%	37%	40%
Between four and five years	29%	32%	29%
More than five years	9%	10%	8%

Sixty-two percent of the 2011-2012 survey respondents reported that they graduated from BGSU in four year or less. This rate is much higher than the actual baccalaureate degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which was between 34% and 36% in the past few years (<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/factbook/student/graduation.xls>).

If it has taken you more than four years to graduate, please indicate whether the following were reasons for extending your enrollment.

	Major Reasons			Minor Reasons
	09-10	10-11	11-12	11-12
I changed majors	38%	40%	38%	21%
I worked while enrolled	20%	25%	18%	31%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	17%	16%	16%	33%
My major takes more than four years to complete	18%	13%	16%	18%
I was involved in coop/internships	17%	17%	15%	11%
I was undecided about a major when I started	14%	19%	13%	16%
I received poor academic advising	16%	18%	12%	24%
I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	11%	9%	11%	18%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	7%	7%	11%	18%

I had family responsibilities while enrolled	11%	12%	9%	11%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	11%	10%	9%	25%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	7%	10%	8%	10%
I had a double major	7%	7%	8%	6%
I commuted while enrolled	7%	8%	6%	16%
I did not spend enough time studying	5%	5%	7%	21%
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	11%	7%	6%	25%
I attended part-time	6%	8%	5%	10%
I had financial problems	7%	5%	5%	14%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	6%	4%	5%	6%
I wanted to have some free time	3%	3%	3%	18%
I had to take developmental classes	3%	2%	2%	8%

How many times have you changed your major?

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
None	57%	54%	57%
1	29%	33%	33%
2	9%	9%	7%
3 or more	5%	4%	4%

“I changed majors” remains the most often cited reason for 2011-2012 graduates who took more than four years to get a Bachelor’s degree, followed by “I worked while enrolled” and “The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them”. One third of the survey respondents also mentioned that they have extended their BGSU education because they think their major takes more than four years to completed, they have received poor academic advising, and they dropped one or more classes because they dissatisfied with the quality of instruction.

2. Living Arrangement and Financial Support

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

	1 Year or more			None		
	09-10	10-11	11-12	09-10	10-11	11-12
live in a campus residence hall or house	78%	73%	73%	22%	27%	27%
live in an apartment or house near campus	81%	78%	77%	19%	22%	23%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU and commute	32%	36%	34%	68%	64%	66%

On average, per year, how much of your educational expenses did you cover from each of the sources listed below? (Percentage of participants who picked up \$1,500 and over)

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Parents, relatives, friends	46%	43%	47%
Other college grants or scholarships	39%	36%	41%
Other college loan	42%	43%	39%
Pell Grant	19%	21%	25%
Savings from summer work	22%	21%	24%
Ford Direct Loan	17%	20%	23%
Off campus jobs	16%	16%	18%
Other loan	19%	18%	17%
Other savings	15%	12%	15%
Perkins Loan	10%	14%	14%
Ohio College Opportunity Grant (formal Ohio Instructional Grant)	10%	8%	12%
On campus jobs	9%	8%	8%
Other private grant	9%	6%	8%

Other than above	7%	8%	7%
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How much will you owe in student loans when you graduate?

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Nothing	27%	27%	25%
Less than \$5,000	4%	4%	4%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	7%	5%	5%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8%	7%	8%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	10%	9%	9%
\$20,000 or more	44%	47%	48%

The majority of the BGSU graduating seniors were living on campus or near campus while they studied at BGSU. Like the graduates in the last two years, the 2011-2012 graduates were most likely to cite family (parents, relatives, and friends) and other college loans/grants/scholarships as the primary sources of financial support for their education. Seventy five percent of them claimed that they owed some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU. The percentage of students who reported to owe \$20,000 or more in student loans increased from 44% to 48% between 2009/2010 and 2011/2012.

3. Enrichment / Extracurricular Activities

While enrolled at BGSU, did you ever ... (Percentage of participants who answered "Yes")

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
participate in volunteer/service work	68%	67%	67%
work at a job off campus	67%	69%	67%
participate in an internship or co-op	57%	60%	55%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	52%	53%	55%
work at a job on campus	52%	47%	49%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity /sorority	34%	34%	35%
participate in a professional or student government org.	21%	21%	21%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	16%	12%	13%

The majority of the survey respondents indicated that they participated in volunteer/service work and worked at a job while they were at BGSU. They were more likely to do an internship or co-op, or join a social club/fraternity/sorority than to participate in athletic activities or join a professional/student government organization.

4. Perceptions of the Institution

Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, to what extent would you agree or strongly agree with the following?

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
I have participated in class discussions	92%	93%	93%
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	88%	88%	91%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	90%	88%	89%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	88%	86%	88%
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	82%	82%	85%
I am able to get into the courses required for my degree program	82%	82%	84%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty/staff member	81%	79%	83%
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	79%	78%	83%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	78%	78%	78%
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	76%	75%	78%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	76%	75%	76%
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	72%	73%	74%
I have participated in study groups	72%	71%	70%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to	67%	68%	70%

my future			
I have become involved with activities on campus	68%	64%	69%
I have become involved with student organizations	65%	61%	66%
The information that I received from my adviser was accurate	60%	60%	64%
My adviser showed concern for my academic needs	56%	56%	59%
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	53%	54%	56%
My adviser helped me explore and clarify my educational goals	51%	49%	55%
I have attended cultural events on campus	55%	52%	53%
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	47%	47%	49%

The majority of 2011-2012 survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with almost all the items that were listed in the survey except “I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member.”

5. 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 "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit")

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
making connections between the classes I have taken	76%	77%	80%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	74%	78%	79%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	74%	76%	78%
thinking critically	74%	76%	76%
making informed judgments	74%	76%	75%
being open to new ideas	74%	73%	74%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	72%	74%	73%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	69%	70%	71%

writing effectively	68%	70%	71%
solving problems	64%	68%	70%
relating to others	67%	68%	68%
speaking effectively	65%	70%	66%
being prepared for further education	63%	63%	64%
understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	63%	63%	64%
using computers	60%	64%	61%

The majority of the 2010-2011 graduates reported that they have gained quite a bit or very much on all the items listed in the survey as a result of their BGSU education.

6. Satisfaction with BGSU

Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, how satisfied were you with...

	Satisfied or Very Satisfied			Neutral	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied
	09-10	10-11	11-12	11-12	11-12
the overall quality of instruction	84%	83%	89%	8%	4%
BGSU overall	81%	81%	84%	12%	4%
ease of access to instructors	81%	80%	84%	13%	3%
class size	84%	85%	83%	14%	3%
library resources	84%	82%	83%	14%	2%
computer resources	81%	77%	79%	15%	7%
feedback on assignments	73%	75%	73%	21%	6%
places to study	72%	69%	73%	20%	7%
racial and ethnic diversity	64%	64%	65%	30%	5%
concern for me as an individual	52%	53%	59%	30%	12%

the availability of classes at times I needed them	57%	61%	58%	22%	20%
the overall quality of academic advising	51%	53%	57%	21%	22%
career services	51%	50%	52%	35%	12%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	48%	48%	51%	35%	14%
financial aid	52%	53%	49%	32%	19%
the condition of buildings	44%	45%	49%	32%	20%
Residence halls	44%	48%	48%	39%	13%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	45%	45%	47%	32%	21%
campus dining services	40%	42%	41%	36%	24%
service to commuters	34%	30%	36%	41%	23%

More than half of the recent graduating seniors were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the aspects of their educational and social experiences at BGSU, especially with the quality of instruction, easy access to instructors, BGSU overall, class size, library and computer resources. Improvement were shown in the areas of the overall quality of instructions and advising, concern for student as an individual, and the condition of buildings in the past a few years.

7. 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		
09-10	10-11	11-12		09-10	10-11	11-12
59%	56%	58%	developing a better understanding of my career goals	40%	43%	41%
59%	56%	60%	being prepared for further education	40%	42%	39%
57%	57%	59%	developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	42%	41%	41%

63%	62%	63%	speaking effectively	36%	38%	36%
64%	64%	68%	making connections between the classes I have taken	35%	34%	31%
66%	65%	66%	making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	33%	34%	32%
66%	64%	65%	writing effectively	33%	34%	33%
72%	71%	71%	making informed judgements	28%	29%	29%
73%	70%	69%	thinking critically	26%	29%	30%
70%	70%	71%	using computers	27%	27%	26%
71%	69%	70%	being open to new ideas	26%	27%	27%
65%	64%	69%	understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	24%	27%	24%
75%	76%	74%	solving problems	25%	24%	25%
75%	76%	73%	understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	21%	23%	24%
75%	75%	76%	relating to others	22%	22%	21%

About 60% or more survey respondents felt that BGSU has given an appropriate emphasis to all the areas listed on the table above. Career and future education preparation remains the area that BGSU could emphasize more in the future.

8. Future Plans

What is most likely to be your principal activity upon graduation?

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Employment, full-time paid	62%	64%	63%
Graduate or professional school, full-time	22%	17%	20%
Employment, part-time paid	6%	10%	9%
Other	5%	4%	7%
Military service	2%	1%	1%

Volunteer activity	2%	1%	1%
Starting or raising a family	1%	1%	0%

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	59%	53%	54%
unsure of future education plans	21%	25%	23%
no plans for further college-level education	13%	14%	14%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	4%	4%	4%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	2%	3%	3%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%	1%	1%

The majority of BGSU graduates would like to be employed upon graduation and earn a Master’s or doctoral or professional degree in the future.

9. Comments

Two hundred and sixty-one students filled out the “comments” section of the survey. They are cataloged as below.

Subject	Total counts
Good Experience with:	
BGSU Overall	96
Faculty members/staffs/students	28
Nice campus, facilities, buildings	4
Academic/degree programs and classes	4
BG community	4

Career preparation	2
diversity	1
Student service	1
Areas that need to be improved:	
Academic area (courses, majors, tests, departments; respecting student's opinions; emphasis more in writing and critical thinking)	43
Academic/major advising; Advisors	37
Faculty/staff/TA (need to care and spend more time with students; unfair grading; improving teaching skills; updating their own knowledge; respecting students' political opinion)	33
Helping with career/job hunting; earlier emphasis on career preparation	18
Parking	16
Improving services to students	15
Facilities	12
Services to commuters	12
BGSU should care more students' needs	10
Pay more attention to non-traditional students, transfer students, students that are not affiliated through Greek life, and students with a disability	10
tuition is too high/students debt is high	9
diversity	8
Poor use of funds/money	6
increasing enrollment standard	6
Survey	4
advertising the University/ better school spirit	4
Film/Greek/women community need more support	3
Disappointed with BGSU	2
More on campus job/scholarships for students	2

BGSU has become too conservative	1
crime rate is rising	1
RA's workload is too heavy and income is low	1

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the 2011-2012 graduating seniors were traditional students. They lived on or near campus while they enrolled at BGSU. Although family remains the greatest source of financial support, more and more students were depending on grants/scholarships/loans to complete their degree. Other than study, most of recent graduates have worked at a job to support their college education. Seventy five percent of them indicated that they owed some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU.

The 2011-2012 graduates have positive perception of BGSU. The majority of them agreed that most faculty members at BGSU are good teachers, most staff members/students here are friendly and helpful, and most of classes they have taken seemed relevant and applicable to their future. Eighty percent or more of them indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of instruction, easy access to instructors, class size, library resources, and BGSU overall. Two thirds of them reported that they have become involved with extracurricular activities such as volunteer/service work, student organizations, and campus activities. More than 60% of them felt that they have gained very much or quite a bit on all the survey items that relate to educational and personal development. More than half of them claimed that they were most likely to obtain a full-time paid job upon graduation, and that they will pursue a Master degree or higher in the future.

Forty-four percent of the recent graduates reported that they have changed their major at least once at BGSU. "I changed my major" was the most often given reason for BGSU students who have taken more than four years to graduate, followed by "I worked while enrolled", and "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them". Major/academic/career advising and class/financial aid availability might be the areas that we could focus more in the future which might lead to timely degree completion. The other areas that we could pay more attention to are service to commuters, campus dining services, and developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career and for further education.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (29%) for the questionnaire and the under-representation of males and respondents who took more than four years to graduate from BGSU. These limitations require that the results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

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