

# **Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire, 2013**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This report describes the results of the Summer 2012, Fall 2012, and Spring 2013 BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ). The BGSQ is designed to study graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU, perception of the institution, satisfaction level with various programs and services provided by the University, as well as how much they have gained through their education at BGSU. Additional information such as sources of financial support, years of enrollment, and further plans after graduation 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 perception of the institution, educational and personal gains, satisfaction with programs and services, and their plans after graduation prompted the development of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ) in Spring 2000. The literature on college students' learning, development, and persistence clearly shows that these traits play a crucial role in students' 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 has been reviewed by a wide audience. It has been used to collect graduating seniors' data ever since.

All seniors scheduled for Summer 2012, Fall 2012, or Spring 2013 graduation were asked to complete the online BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire before they left the campus. Eight hundred and fifteen students completed the survey, which represents 29.3% of the 2012-2013 graduating senior class. The response rate is the same as that of 2011-2012 but lower than that of 2009-2010 (39%).

Out of the total 815 respondents, 633 of them provided valid ID number, which allows us to compare their demographic characteristics with all 2012-2013 graduating seniors. As shown in the table below, the survey respondents, in general, mirror the population in terms of race. However, males and the students in the College of Health and Human Services were less represented.

	<b>Survey Respondents</b>	<b>2012-2013 Graduating Seniors</b>
<b>Gender:</b>		
Female	67.3%	58.3%
Male	32.7%	41.7%
<b>Ethnicity:</b>		
Minorities	11.6%	13.1%
European-American	85.6%	83.2%
Other/Unknown	2.8%	3.7%
<b>College:</b>		
Arts and Sciences	36.5%	35.5%
Business Administration	9.8%	9.3%
Education and Human	35.5%	33.4%
Health and Human Services	7.7%	12.1%
Musical Arts	1.9%	1.7%
Technology	8.5%	8.0%

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 among 2012-2013 survey respondents (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	2012-2013
Less than four years	20%	22%	22%	26%
Four years	43%	37%	40%	35%
Between four and five years	29%	32%	29%	29%
More than five years	9%	10%	8%	10%

Sixty-one percent of the 2012-2013 survey respondents reported that they graduated from BGSU in four years or less. This rate is much higher than the actual baccalaureate degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which was 36% in the last two years.

**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	12-13	12-13
I changed majors	38%	40%	38%	37%	20%
I worked while enrolled	20%	25%	18%	25%	29%
I was involved in coop/internships	17%	17%	15%	17%	27%
I received poor academic advising	16%	18%	12%	17%	17%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	17%	16%	16%	16%	22%
My major takes more than four years to complete	18%	13%	16%	16%	15%
I had family responsibilities while enrolled	11%	12%	9%	15%	10%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	7%	10%	8%	13%	7%
I was undecided about a major when I started	14%	19%	13%	11%	17%

I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	11%	9%	11%	10%	17%
I had financial problems	7%	5%	5%	10%	12%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	11%	10%	9%	10%	19%
I commuted while enrolled	7%	8%	6%	9%	11%
I attended part-time	6%	8%	5%	9%	9%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	7%	7%	11%	8%	16%
I had a double major	7%	7%	8%	6%	5%
I did not spend enough time studying	5%	5%	7%	6%	21%
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	11%	7%	6%	5%	22%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	6%	4%	5%	4%	8%
I wanted to have some free time	3%	3%	3%	3%	17%
I had to take developmental classes	3%	2%	2%	2%	7%

### **How many times have you changed your major?**

	<b>2009-10</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>2011-12</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
None	57%	54%	57%	57%
1	29%	33%	33%	31%
2	9%	9%	7%	9%
3 or more	5%	4%	4%	4%

"I changed majors" and "I worked while enrolled" remain the top two major reasons for 2012-2013 graduates who took more than four years to get a Bachelor's degree. The other reasons (major and minor) include "I was involved in coop/internships", "I received poor academic advising", "The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them" and "My major takes more than four years to complete". Also, "I had financial problems" as a major reason amplified to 10% among the 2012-2013 graduates.

## 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	12-13	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
live in a campus residence hall or house	78%	73%	73%	71%	22%	27%	27%	29%
live in an apartment or house near campus	81%	78%	77%	75%	19%	22%	23%	25%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU and commute	32%	36%	34%	37%	68%	64%	66%	63%

**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)**

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Parents, relatives, friends	46%	43%	47%	46%
Other college grants or scholarships	39%	36%	41%	39%
Other college loan	42%	43%	39%	37%
Pell Grant	19%	21%	25%	30%
Savings from summer work	22%	21%	24%	22%
Ford Direct Loan	17%	20%	23%	21%
Off campus jobs	16%	16%	18%	17%
Other loan	19%	18%	17%	17%
Other savings	15%	12%	15%	14%
Perkins Loan	10%	14%	14%	16%
Ohio College Opportunity Grant	10%	8%	12%	13%
On campus jobs	9%	8%	8%	10%
Other private grant	9%	6%	8%	8.1
Other than above	7%	8%	7%	8%

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

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Nothing	27%	27%	25%	24%
Less than \$5,000	4%	4%	4%	4%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	7%	5%	5%	6%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8%	7%	8%	8%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	10%	9%	9%	10%
\$20,000 or more	44%	47%	48%	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 2012-2013 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. Students whose educational expenses were catered for by the Pell Grant rose from 19% to 30% in the last four years. Seventy-six percent of the recent graduates claimed that they owed some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU with 48% of them owing \$20,000 or more.

**3. Enrichment / Extracurricular Activities**

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

	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
participate in volunteer/service work	68%	67%	67%	68%
work at a job off campus	67%	69%	67%	68%
participate in an internship or co-op	57%	60%	55%	56%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	52%	53%	55%	51%
work at a job on campus	52%	47%	49%	47%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity /sorority	34%	34%	35%	33%
participate in a professional or student government org.	21%	21%	21%	20%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	16%	12%	13%	14%

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?**

	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
I have participated in class discussions	92%	93%	93%	92%
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	88%	88%	91%	89%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	90%	88%	89%	88%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	88%	86%	88%	87%
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	82%	82%	85%	82%
I am able to get into the courses required for my degree program	82%	82%	84%	84%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty/staff member	81%	79%	83%	82%
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	79%	78%	83%	79%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	78%	78%	78%	78%
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	76%	75%	78%	76%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	76%	75%	76%	76%
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	72%	73%	74%	75%
I have participated in study groups	72%	71%	70%	72%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	67%	68%	70%	67%
I have become involved with activities on campus	68%	64%	69%	68%
I have become involved with student organizations	65%	61%	66%	62%

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

The majority of 2012-2013 survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with almost all the items that were listed in the survey including "I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member" which was never strongly agreed to in the past surveys. Another improvement came in the area of student advisory. All items pertaining to "Student advising" recorded a growth in percentages.

## 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")**

	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13
making connections between the classes I have taken	76%	77%	80%	77%
making informed judgments	74%	76%	75%	77%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	74%	78%	79%	76%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	74%	76%	78%	76%
thinking critically	74%	76%	76%	76%
being open to new ideas	74%	73%	74%	76%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	72%	74%	73%	75%
writing effectively	68%	70%	71%	71%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	69%	70%	71%	70%



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

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	12-13	12-13	12-13
the overall quality of instruction	84%	83%	89%	87%	10%	3%
BGSU overall	81%	81%	84%	82%	12%	6%
ease of access to instructors	81%	80%	84%	81%	16%	3%
class size	84%	85%	83%	82%	15%	3%
library resources	84%	82%	83%	83%	15%	2%
computer resources	81%	77%	79%	78%	16%	6%
feedback on assignments	73%	75%	73%	74%	20%	7%
places to study	72%	69%	73%	73%	20%	8%
racial and ethnic diversity	64%	64%	65%	65%	30%	5%
concern for me as an individual	52%	53%	59%	57%	29%	14%

the availability of classes at times I needed them	57%	61%	58%	62%	23%	16%
the overall quality of academic advising	51%	53%	57%	60%	19%	21%
career services	51%	50%	52%	51%	39%	10%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	48%	48%	51%	52%	35%	14%
financial aid	52%	53%	49%	51%	32%	17%
the condition of buildings	44%	45%	49%	53%	31%	16%
Residence halls	44%	48%	48%	51%	39%	11%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	45%	45%	47%	47%	32%	21%
campus dining services	40%	42%	41%	43%	33%	24%
service to commuters	34%	30%	36%	36%	43%	21%

More than half of the recent graduating seniors were satisfied or very satisfied with most aspects of their educational and social experiences at BGSU, especially with the quality of instruction, BGSU overall, easy access to instructors, class size, library and computer resources. Continuous improvements were found in the areas of the student advisory, the conditions of buildings, and residence halls in the past a few years. One out of five students, however, were dissatisfied with campus dining services, services to commuters, helpfulness in preparing for student employment, and the overall quality of academic advising.

## 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		
10-11	11-12	12-13		10-11	11-12	12-13
56%	58%	62%	developing a better understanding of my career goals	43%	41%	37%
57%	59%	62%	developing knowledge & skills applicable to a career	41%	41%	37%
62%	63%	62%	speaking effectively	38%	36%	36%
56%	60%	64%	being prepared for further education	42%	39%	35%
65%	66%	66%	making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	34%	32%	33%
64%	68%	67%	making connections between the classes I have taken	34%	31%	32%
64%	65%	65%	writing effectively	34%	33%	32%
71%	71%	72%	making informed judgments	29%	29%	28%
70%	69%	72%	thinking critically	29%	30%	28%
64%	69%	65%	understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	27%	24%	26%
76%	74%	73%	solving problems	24%	25%	26%
69%	70%	74%	being open to new ideas	27%	27%	25%
76%	73%	74%	understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	23%	24%	24%
70%	71%	74%	using computers	27%	26%	23%
75%	76%	76%	relating to others	22%	21%	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	2012-2013
Employment, full-time paid	62%	64%	63%	65%
Graduate or professional school, full-time	22%	17%	20%	16%
Employment, part-time paid	6%	10%	9%	10%
Other	5%	4%	7%	8%
Military service	2%	1%	1%	1%
Volunteer activity	2%	1%	1%	1%
Starting or raising a family	1%	1%	0%	1%

**Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?**

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	59%	53%	54%	52%
unsure of future education plans	21%	25%	23%	24%
no plans for further college-level education	13%	14%	14%	16%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	4%	4%	4%	4%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	2%	3%	3%	3%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%	1%	1%	2%

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.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The majority of the 2012-2013 graduating seniors were traditional students. They lived on or near campus while they enrolled at BGSU and most of them also worked at a job after class. Although family remains the greatest source of financial support, more and more students were depending on grants/scholarships/loans to complete their degrees. Seventy-six percent of the recent graduates indicated that they owed some amount of student loans with 48% owing \$20,000 or more.

The 2012-2013 graduates have a 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. About 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 sixty-percent 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. Academic advising (including major advising) and class/financial aid availability are the areas that we could focus more in the future which might lead to timely degree completion. Other areas we could pay more consideration to are career and further education preparations, service to commuters, and campus dining services,.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (29.3%) 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.