

Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire, 2014

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2013, Fall 2013, and Spring 2014 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, and 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 student's 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 2013, Fall 2013, or Spring 2014 graduation were asked to complete the online BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire before they left the campus. Nine hundred and eighty-two students completed the survey, which represents 33.2% of the 2013-2014 graduating senior class. The response rate is higher than the ones in 2012-2013 and 2011-2012 (29.3%).

Out of the total 982 respondents, 840 of them provided valid ID number, which allows us to compare their demographic characteristics with all 2013-2014 graduating seniors. As shown in the table below, the survey respondents, in general, mirror the population in terms of race and college. Male respondents were less represented.

	Survey Respondents	2012-2013 Graduating Seniors
Gender:		
Female	67.7%	59.4%
Male	32.3%	40.6%
Ethnicity:		
Minorities	9.5%	13.6%
European-American	85.1%	80.9%
Other/Unknown	5.4%	5.5%
College:		
Arts and Sciences	34.5%	37.1%
Business Administration	11.0%	9.7%
Education and Human	34.0%	31.7%
Health and Human Services	11.8%	12.8%
Musical Arts	2.6%	2.0%
Technology	6.1%	6.7%

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 2013-2014 survey respondents (female vs. male, minority graduates vs. European-American graduates, and college vs. college) were not reported in this study 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?

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Less than four years	22%	26 %	26%
Four years	40%	35%	44%
Between four and five years	29%	29%	23%
More than five years	8%	10%	7%

Seventy percent of the 2013-2014 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% or less in the past several 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
	11-12	12-13	13-14	13-14
I changed majors	38%	37%	41%	18%
I worked while enrolled	18%	25%	24%	28%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	16%	16%	20%	26%
My major takes more than four years to complete	16%	16%	12%	17%
I was involved in coop/internships	15%	17%	15%	12%
I was undecided about a major when I started	13%	11%	16%	12%
I received poor academic advising	12%	17%	14%	23%
I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	11%	10%	11%	19%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	11%	8%	9%	25%

I had family responsibilities while enrolled	9%	15%	10%	11%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	9%	10%	10%	20%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	8%	13%	10%	7%
I had a double major	8%	6%	7%	3%
I commuted while enrolled	6%	9%	4%	12%
I did not spend enough time studying	7%	6%	7%	19%
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	6%	5%	5%	27%
I attended part-time	5%	9%	8%	8%
I had financial problems	5%	10%	8%	9%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	5%	4%	6%	6%
I wanted to have some free time	3%	3%	3%	19%
I had to take developmental classes	2%	2%	2%	5%

How many times have you changed your major?

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
None	57%	57%	58%
1	33%	31%	29%
2	7%	9%	7%
3 or more	4%	4%	5%

More than 40% of the survey respondents indicated that they have changed their major at least once. “I changed majors” remains the top reason for 2013-2014 graduates who took more than four years to get a Bachelor’s degree. “I worked while enrolled” and class availability are the other two major reasons for sizable students to extend their college education. It is worth to mention that “The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them” as a major reason raised from 16% last year to 20% this year.

2. Living Arrangement and Financial Support

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

	1 Year or more			None
	11-12	12-13	13-14	13-14
live in a campus residence hall or house	73%	71%	72%	28%
live in an apartment or house near campus	77%	75%	77%	23%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU and commute	34%	37%	32%	68%

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)

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Parents, relatives, friends	47%	46%	51%
Other college grants or scholarships	41%	39%	42%
Other college loan	39%	37%	36%
Pell Grant	25%	30%	26%
Savings from summer work	24%	22%	22%
Ford Direct Loan	23%	21%	18%
Off campus jobs	18%	17%	16%
Other loan	17%	17%	16%
Other savings	15%	14%	14%
Perkins Loan	14%	16%	13%
Ohio College Opportunity Grant	12%	13%	9%
On campus jobs	8%	10%	9%
Other private grant	8%	8%	6%
Other than above	7%	8%	7%

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

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Nothing	25%	24%	28%
Less than \$5,000	4%	4%	4%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	5%	6%	8%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	8%	8%	10%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	9%	10%	8%
\$20,000 or more	48%	48%	43%

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 2013-2014 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. More than seventy percent of them claimed that they owed some amount of student loans. However, the percentage of students who reported to owe \$15,000 or more in student loans decreased from 58% in 2012/2013 to 51% in 2013/2014.

3. Enrichment / Extracurricular Activities

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

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
participate in volunteer/service work	67%	68%	67%
work at a job off campus	67%	68%	66%
participate in an internship or co-op	55%	56%	60%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	55%	51%	57%
work at a job on campus	49%	47%	48%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity /sorority	35%	33%	37%
participate in a professional or student government org.	21%	20%	20%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	13%	14%	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?

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
I have participated in class discussions	93%	92%	93%
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	91%	89%	89%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	89%	88%	88%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	88%	87%	86%
Most faculty/staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	85%	82%	83%
I am able to get into the courses required for my degree program	84%	84%	83%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty/staff member	83%	82%	83%
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	83%	79%	81%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	78%	78%	80%
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	78%	76%	75%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	76%	76%	75%
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	74%	75%	76%
I have participated in study groups	70%	72%	73%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	70%	67%	67%
I have become involved with activities on campus	69%	68%	70%
I have become involved with student organizations	66%	62%	67%
The information that I received from my adviser was accurate	64%	68%	65%

My adviser showed concern for my academic needs	59%	64%	61%
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	56%	56%	54%
My adviser helped me explore and clarify my educational goals	55%	60%	56%
I have attended cultural events on campus	53%	52%	55%
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	49%	52%	50%

Most of the 2013-2014 survey respondents had a good perception of the University. More than seventy percent of them indicated a positive relationship with faculty members, staffs, and other students; Sixty percent or more of them have involved with student organizations or campus activities; More than half of them seemed happy with the experience with their advisors.

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")

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
making connections between the classes I have taken	80%	77%	73%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	79%	77%	74%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	78%	76%	75%
thinking critically	76%	76%	76%
making informed judgments	75%	76%	71%
being open to new ideas	74%	76%	73%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	73%	75%	73%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	71%	71%	70%
writing effectively	71%	70%	69%
solving problems	70%	70%	69%
relating to others	68%	70%	65%
speaking effectively	66%	70%	66%

being prepared for further education	64%	65%	62%
understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	64%	64%	64%
using computers	61%	64%	59%

The majority of the 2013-2014 graduates reported that they have gained quite a bit or very much on all the items listed on the table above 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
	11-12	12-13	13-14	13-14	13-14
the overall quality of instruction	89%	87%	85%	10%	15%
BGSU overall	84%	82%	81%	13%	16%
ease of access to instructors	84%	81%	81%	15%	4%
class size	83%	82%	79%	16%	5%
library resources	83%	83%	84%	14%	2%
computer resources	79%	78%	80%	16%	4%
feedback on assignments	73%	74%	72%	22%	6%
places to study	73%	73%	74%	19%	7%
racial and ethnic diversity	65%	65%	64%	29%	7%
concern for me as an individual	59%	57%	57%	29%	14%
the availability of classes at times I needed them	58%	62%	56%	24%	20%
the overall quality of academic advising	57%	60%	58%	21%	21%

career services	52%	51%	57%	32%	11%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	51%	52%	52%	32%	16%
financial aid	49%	51%	50%	32%	18%
the condition of buildings	49%	53%	54%	28%	18%
Residence halls	48%	51%	52%	36%	12%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	47%	47%	50%	30%	20%
campus dining services	41%	43%	47%	31%	22%
service to commuters	36%	36%	37%	44%	19%

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, library and computer resources, and BGSU overall. Improvements were found in the areas of career services, helpfulness in preparing for employment, the condition of buildings, residence halls, and campus dining services in the past two or three years. The percentage of students who reported satisfying with the quality of instruction, class size, and the availability of classes at times students need them, however, declined 4%-6% during the same period of time.

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		
11-12	12-13	13-14		11-12	12-13	13-14
58%	62%	57%	developing a better understanding of my career goals	41%	37%	41%
60%	62%	58%	being prepared for further education	39%	37%	41%
59%	62%	60%	developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	41%	36%	39%

63%	64%	62%	speaking effectively	36%	35%	36%
68%	66%	63%	making connections between the classes I have taken	31%	33%	36%
66%	67%	63%	making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	32%	32%	36%
65%	65%	67%	writing effectively	33%	32%	30%
71%	72%	70%	making informed judgments	29%	28%	29%
69%	72%	68%	thinking critically	30%	28%	30%
71%	65%	70%	using computers	26%	26%	26%
70%	73%	72%	being open to new ideas	27%	26%	25%
69%	74%	64%	understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	24%	25%	26%
74%	74%	72%	solving problems	25%	24%	27%
73%	74%	71%	understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	24%	23%	27%
76%	76%	76%	relating to others	21%	21%	21%

The majority of 2013-2014 survey respondents felt that BGSU has given an appropriate emphasis to all the areas listed on the table above. Career and further education preparation remain the areas that BGSU could emphasize more in the future.

8. Future Plans

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

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Employment, full-time paid	63%	65%	62%
Graduate or professional school, full-time	20%	16%	21%
Employment, part-time paid	9%	10%	8%
Other	7%	8%	6%
Military service	1%	1%	1%

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

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	54%	52%	56%
unsure of future education plans	23%	24%	24%
no plans for further college-level education	14%	16%	12%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	4%	4%	5%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	3%	3%	3%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%	2%	1%

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

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the 2013-2014 graduating seniors were traditional students. They lived on or near campus while they enrolled at BGSU. Family remains the greatest source of financial support for most recent graduates, followed by grants/scholarships/loans and earnings from work. More than seventy percent of them indicated that they owed in student loans when they graduated from BGSU.

The 2013-2014 graduates had positive perception of BGSU. The majority of them agreed that most faculty members at BGSU are good teachers and most staff members and fellow students are friendly and helpful. They also pointed out that most of classes they have taken at BGSU 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, computer and library resources, and BGSU overall. Other than study, most of them also have been involved with extracurricular activities such as volunteer/service work, student organizations, and campus activities. Fifty-nine percent or more 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. The most like principal activity for BGSU graduates is obtaining a full-time job. More than sixty percent of them might pursue a Master degree or higher in the future.

More than forty percent of the recent graduates changed their major at least once while they enrolled at BGSU. "I changed my major" was the most often given reason for BGSU students to take 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". Improvement in academic/major advising, course availability, and financial aid might lead to timely degree completion. The other areas that BGSU could pay more attention to are service to commuters, helping students to figure out their career goals as well as to build up knowledge and skills applicable to a career or further education.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (33.2%) for the questionnaire and the under-representation of males and respondents who took more than four years to receive a Bachelor's degree. 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.