

Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire

*Office of Institutional Research
August, 2000*

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Abstract

This report describes the results from 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 graduate's 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). 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. The Office of Institutional Research plans to administer the BGSQ to all graduating seniors each spring, summer, and fall before they graduate from BGSU.

Registration and Records staff mailed approximately 1500 BGSQs out this spring to all seniors who registered for Spring 2000 graduation. Four hundred and five of the surveys were returned, resulting in a 27 % response rate.

To examine how representative the survey respondents were of the entire graduating class, the demographic characteristics of the 405 survey respondents were compared to all Spring 2000 graduating seniors ($N=1,485$). There was a high degree of similarity between the respondents and the population of graduates in terms of race and college. The largest difference was the underrepresentation of students who graduated from BGSU in more than 4 years. Sixty-seven percent of the participants reported that they graduated from BGSU in four or less than four years. This rate is much higher than the average Baccalaureate Degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which is about 29%. The proportion of men respondents (27.4%) was also somewhat low compared with those in the population of graduates (36.6%). These limitations and the low response rate require that all results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

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 (female vs. male, minority graduates vs. European-American graduates, and graduates by colleges) were investigated and significant differences are noted where they occurred. A complete listing of all questionnaire responses is provided at the end of this report.

Enrollment Information

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

less than four	14%
four	53%
between four and five	28%
more than five	5%

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

	Major Reason	Minor Reason
I changed majors	40%	19%
I worked while enrolled	26%	28%
I received poor academic advising	15%	22%
I was undecided about a major when I started	21%	15%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	11%	23%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	10%	20%
My major takes more than four years to complete	12%	16%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	4%	23%
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	4%	20%
I did not spend enough time studying	4%	19%
I commuted while enrolled	6%	15%
I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	6%	15%
I had a double major	15%	5%
I wanted to have some free time	4%	15%
I had family responsibilities while enrolled	11%	7%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	12%	5%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	11%	6%
I had financial problems	9%	8%
I was involved in coop/internships	10%	6%
I attended part-time	10%	5%
I had to take developmental classes	1%	7%

Sixty seven percent of the respondents reported that they graduated from BGSU in four or less than four years. This rate is much higher than the average Baccalaureate degree four-year Graduation rate at BGSU, which is 29.4% for 1995-1999, 28.4% for 1994-1998, and 27.9% for 1993-1997. Among those who took more than 4 years to graduate, more than 50% of them indicated that "I changed majors" and "I worked while enrolled" were the reasons to extend their enrollment.

Differences Between Groups. Respondents in Colleges of Musical Arts and Education &

Human Development tended to spend more years to get their Bachelors Degrees than did the respondents in other colleges. And one out of two of them reported that "I worked while enrolled," "I changed my majors," and "my major takes more than four years to complete" were the reasons to extend their undergraduate study. Minority respondents had a lower four-year graduation rate than did the European-American respondents (54% vs. 67%).

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	81%	19%
live in an apartment or house near campus	79%	21%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU & commute	25%	75%

The majority of the respondents indicated that they were living on campus or near campus during their college years. Graduates in Colleges of Technology and Health & Human Services were more likely to live at least 5 miles away from BGSU and commute than were the graduates in other colleges.

How many times have you changed your major?

None	54%
1	29%
2	11%
3 or more	7%

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

participate in volunteer/service work	77%
work at a job off campus	71%
work at a job on campus	65%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	62%
participate in an internship or co-op	51%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity/sorority	42%
participate in a professional or student government organization	29%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	16%

Forty-six percent of the respondents changed their major at least once at BGSU. Most of them worked at a job while they studied. More than 60% of them participated in volunteer/service work and a social club/fraternity/sorority. While graduates in Colleges of Technology and Business Administration were more likely to participate in an internship or co-op, Musical Arts graduates were more likely to involve with a professional or student government organization. Comparing with the European-American graduates, minority graduates were more likely to participate in a social club/fraternity/sorority, but less likely to involve with a professional or student government organization.

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)

Parents, relatives, friends	52%
Ford Direct Loan	32%
Savings from summer work	26%
Other college grants/scholarships	22%
Other college loan	21%
Off campus jobs	13%
Other savings	11%
Perkins Loan	11%
Pell Grant	8%
On campus jobs	7%
Other loan	7%
Other than listed	5%
Ohio Instructional Grant	4%
Other private grant	2%

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

Nothing	38%
Less than \$5,000	5%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	10%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	15%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	13%
\$20,000 or more	18%

Support from family, the Ford Direct Loan, savings from summer work, other college grants/scholarships, and other college loans were the sources of financial support most often cited by graduates.

Musical Arts graduates were more likely to receive support from other college grants/scholarships and Pell Grant. Technology graduates were more likely to work off campus jobs to support themselves. While minority graduates were more likely to get support from other college grants/scholarship, European-American graduates were more likely to get support from their family.

Sixty-two percent of the respondents owe some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU. Graduates in Colleges of Health & Human Services and Musical Arts were more likely to owe some amount of student loans than were the graduates in other colleges. Technology graduates were least likely to own any amount of student loans.

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")

I have participated in class discussions.	97%
Most faculties at BGSU are friendly and helpful.	95%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	94%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	93%
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	91%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	88%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty or staff member	86%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	85%
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	84%
Most faculties at BGSU are good teachers	84%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	77%
I have participated in study groups	72%
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	70%
I have become involved with activities on campus	70%
I have become involved with student organizations	65%
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	65%
I have attended cultural events on campus	61%
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	43%

The only item that less than half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with was "I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member".

Differences Between Groups. Female respondents were more likely to agree that most faculty were good teachers, most students were friendly and helpful and had values similar to their own, and most of their classes seem relevant and applicable to their future. They were more likely to be involved with student organizations than were the male respondents.

While European-American graduates were more likely to agree that "most students at BGSU have values similar to my own", minority graduates were more likely to agree that "most of classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future". Minority graduates were also more likely to be involved with activities and cultural events on campus than were the European-American graduates.

Musical Arts graduates were more likely to agree that "I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU," and "I have talked about my personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member". They were more likely to attend cultural events on campus, but less likely to participate in study groups.

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? (Percent Responding "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit")

developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	73%
using computers	71%
being open to new ideas	71%
thinking critically	69%
writing effectively	67%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	67%
making informed judgements	64%
making connections between the classes I have taken	64%
relating to others	64%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	62%
solving problems	61%
being prepared for further education	61%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	60%
speaking effectively	55%
understanding cultural racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	52%

Most of the respondents felt that they made gains towards various educational and personal goals, especially on developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career, using computers, being open to new ideas, thinking critically, writing effectively, and understanding their own abilities, interests, and values.

Differences Between Groups. Female graduates were more likely to report that they gained very much or quite a bit in making connections between the classes, being open to new ideas, developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career, and understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to themselves, their field of study, and their future career.

European-American graduates were more likely to report that they gained very much or quite a bit in speaking and writing effectively, using computers, and making connections between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life.

Respondents in College of Technology were most likely to report that they gained very much or quite a bit in solving problems, making informed judgements and using computers. But they were least likely to indicate that they gained a lot in understanding their own abilities/interests/values and being prepared for further education. Musical Arts respondents were most likely to reported that they gained very much or quite a bit in speaking effectively, but least likely to indicate that they gained a lot in making connections between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life. Respondents in Colleges of Education & Human Development and Health & Human Services were more likely than were the respondents in other colleges to indicate that

they gained very much or quite a bit in developing a better understanding of their career goals, and developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career.

Satisfaction with BGSU

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

the overall quality of instruction	93%
BGSU overall	93%
ease of access to instructors	92%
class size	91%
library resources	91%
feedback on assignments	86%
residence halls	84%
computer resources	81%
places to study	80%
the condition of buildings	79%
career services	78%
financial aid	76%
racial and ethnic diversity	74%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	70%
the availability of classes at times I needed them	69%
campus dining services	69%
concern for me as an individual	68%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	65%
services to commuters	61%
the overall quality of academic advising	58%

Most of the graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with all of the aspects of their educational and social experiences listed in the survey.

Differences Between Groups. Female respondents were more satisfied than were male respondents with the overall quality of academic advising, computer resources, "concern for me as an individual", campus career and dining services, residence halls, services to commuters, and BGSU overall. While minority graduates were more satisfied with services to commuters, European-American graduates were more satisfied with financial aid. Respondents in College of Technology were more satisfied with the overall quality of academic advising and the condition of buildings, but they were less satisfied than graduates of other colleges with the overall quality of instruction, the availability of classes at times they needed them, helpfulness in preparing for employment, and career services. Comparing with the respondents in other colleges, respondents in Colleges of Business Administration and Musical Arts were more satisfied with the helpfulness in preparing for further education. Respondents in Colleges of Musical Arts and Technology were more satisfied with the racial and ethnic diversity of BGSU, but less satisfied with the services to commuters.

Emphasis

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

	Need to Emphasize More	About the Right Emphasis
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	49%	49%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	47%	52%
speaking effectively	46%	53%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	46%	52%
being prepared for further education	46%	51%
making connections between the classes I have taken	45%	52%
using computers	44%	53%
thinking critically	43%	57%
understanding cultural, racial, gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, my future career	42%	44%
solving problems	39%	61%
making informed judgements	39%	60%
being open to new ideas	39%	57%
writing effectively	36%	61%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	32%	66%
relating to others	30%	68%

About half of the respondents felt that BGSU had given the right emphasis in each of the survey items. Helping students to prepare for their career and further education, and to make connections between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life seem to be the areas BGSU could emphasize more in the future.

Differences Between Groups. Male respondents were more likely to report that BGSU should emphasize more solving problems, thinking critically, and writing effectively. Female respondents were more likely to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more making connections between the classes, and understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to themselves, their field of study, and their future career.

European-American graduates were more likely to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more career preparation and making connections between the classes. Minority graduates were more likely to report that BGSU should emphasize more solving problems, thinking critically, writing effectively, being prepared for further education, and understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to themselves/their field of study/their future career.

Technology graduates were more likely to indicate that BGSU should emphasize more solving problems, writing effectively, using computers, and developing a better understanding of their career goals than were the graduates in other colleges.

Further Education Plans

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	57%
unsure of future education plans	24%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	7%
no plans for further college-level education	7%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	4%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%

Seven out of ten of BGSU graduates had plans for their further education. Sixty-four percent of them planned to earn a higher degree other than Bachelor's after they graduated from BGSU. Female graduates, minority graduates, and graduates in College of Musical Arts were more likely to pursue a Master's degrees or higher in the future. Technology graduates were least likely to pursue a higher degree in the future comparing with the graduates in other colleges.

Summary and Conclusions

The BGSQ was designed to gather information about graduating seniors' undergraduate experiences at BGSU. The use of BGSQ represents one of several steps in an ongoing process conducted by the Office of Institutional Research. Together with the First Year Student Questionnaire, the New Student Transition Questionnaire, the National Survey of Student Engagement, and the Short-Term and Long-Term Alumni Questionnaires, they provide information for BGSU's assessment and enrollment management efforts.

The results from the first use of BGSQ indicate that most of graduating seniors worked while they studied, and most of them owed some amount of student loans by the time they graduated. Besides studying and working, the majority of them participated in volunteer or service work. Changing majors and working while enrolled were the most often given reasons for taking more than four years to graduate.

The majority of the graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with the education and services they received at BGSU, especially with the overall quality of instruction, BGSU overall, ease of access to instructors, class size, and library resources. Most of them had good perceptions of BGSU, and felt they gained very much or quite a bit on almost all the aspects of student's educational and personal development listed in the survey. The majority of them had plans for their further education.

Areas in which BGSU could emphasize more in the future are:

- the overall quality of academic advising,
- services to commuters,
- helping students to prepare for their career and further education,
- making connections between things student have learned in class and other

experiences in students' life.

The major limitations of this study were the low (27%) response rate for the questionnaire and the under-representation of respondents who graduated from BGSU in more than 4 years. The survey results may represent the opinions of those who graduated in 4 years or less more than those who graduated in more than 4 years.

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

BGSQ Item Responses

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

less than four	14%
four	53%
between four and five	28%
more than five	5%

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

	Major Reason	Minor Reason	Not a Reason
I worked while enrolled	26%	28%	46%
I changed majors	40%	19%	41%
I was undecided about a major when I started	21%	15%	64%
I had family responsibilities while enrolled	11%	7%	82%
I commuted while enrolled	6%	15%	79%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	11%	6%	83%
I attended part-time	10%	5%	85%
I had to take developmental classes	1%	7%	92%
I received poor academic advising	15%	22%	63%
I did not spend enough time studying	4%	19%	77%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	12%	5%	83%
I had financial problems	9%	8%	83%
I had a double major	15%	5%	80%
My major takes more than four years to complete	12%	16%	71%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	4%	23%	73%
I wanted to have some free time	4%	15%	81%
I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	6%	15%	80%

I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	4%	20%	76%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	10%	20%	70%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	11%	23%	66%
I was involved in coop/internships	10%	6%	84%

How many times have you changed your major?

None	54%
1	29%
2	11%
3 or more	7%

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

	None	One	Two	Three	Four or more
live in a campus residence hall or house	19%	14%	43%	14%	10%
live in an apartment or house near campus	21%	17%	37%	19%	6%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU & commute	75%	10%	5%	4%	6%

While enrolled at BGSU, did you ever ...

	Yes	No
work at a job on campus	65%	36%
work at a job off campus	71%	29%
participate in an internship or co-op	51%	49%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	62%	38%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity/sorority	42%	58%
participate in volunteer/service work	77%	23%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	16%	84%
participate in a professional or student government organization	29%	71%

On average, per year, how much of your educational expenses did you cover from each of the sources listed below?

	None	\$1-499	\$500-\$1499	\$1500-\$3000	Over \$3000
Parents, relatives, friends	17%	15%	15%	13%	39%

Savings from summer work	18%	28%	29%	19%	7%
Other savings	56%	20%	13%	7%	4%
On campus jobs	51%	26%	16%	5%	2%
Off campus jobs	44%	24%	19%	9%	4%
Pell Grant	76%	6%	11%	5%	3%
Ohio Instructional Grant	82%	7%	7%	3%	1%
Other college grants/scholarships	52%	14%	13%	10%	12%
Other private grant	94%	2%	2%	0%	2%
Ford Direct Loan	63%	1%	4%	14%	18%
Perkins Loan	80%	2%	7%	8%	3%
Other college loan	75%	1%	3%	8%	13%
Other loan	90%	1%	2%	3%	4%
Other than above	92%	3%	1%	2%	3%

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

Nothing	38%
Less than \$5,000	5%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	10%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	15%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	13%
\$20,000 or more	18%

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

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	35%	35%	24%	5%
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	19%	76%	5%	0%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	13%	72%	13%	3%
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	11%	73%	15%	1%
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	10%	74%	15%	1%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	11%	66%	21%	2%

I have participated in class discussions	43%	54%	3%	0%
I have participated in study groups	25%	47%	23%	5%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work	38%	56%	5%	1%
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	17%	26%	35%	23%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty or staff member	30%	56%	11%	3%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	60%	33%	6%	1%
I have become involved with activities on campus	33%	37%	25%	5%
I have attended cultural events on campus	18%	43%	29%	11%
I have become involved with student organizations	29%	36%	28%	7%
Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	25%	66%	8%	1%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	35%	53%	12%	1%
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	13%	52%	26%	9%

For each of the following items, please indicate how much you feel you have gained as a result of your BGSU?

	Very Much	Quite a Bit	Some	Very Little
solving problems	19%	42%	35%	3%
thinking critically	26%	43%	27%	5%
making informed judgements	20%	44%	32%	5%
making connections between the classes I have taken	22%	42%	32%	4%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	22%	38%	37%	4%
speaking effectively	17%	38%	37%	8%
writing effectively	26%	41%	28%	6%

using computers	32%	39%	22%	8%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	26%	41%	27%	7%
relating to others	23%	41%	31%	5%
being open to new ideas	30%	41%	23%	5%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	30%	43%	22%	5%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	25%	37%	28%	10%
being prepared for further education	22%	39%	28%	11%
understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me/my field of study/my future career	17%	35%	35%	14%

**Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, how satisfied were you with ...
(Please do not mark items which do not apply to you.)**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The overall quality of instruction	12%	81%	6%	1%
The overall quality of academic advising	12%	46%	29%	12%
ease of access to instructors	17%	75%	7%	1%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	13%	52%	29%	7%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	8%	62%	24%	6%
concern for me as an individual	7%	61%	25%	7%
the availability of classes at times I needed them	10%	59%	25%	7%
class size	14%	77%	8%	1%
feedback on assignments	9%	77%	14%	1%
racial and ethnic diversity	10%	64%	21%	5%
the condition of buildings	6%	73%	20%	2%
campus dining services	7%	62%	23%	8%
places to study	9%	71%	18%	2%
computer resources	17%	64%	16%	4%
library resources	20%	71%	9%	1%
career services	17%	61%	18%	5%
financial aid	15%	61%	16%	8%
residence halls	8%	76%	13%	3%
services to commuters	2%	59%	26%	12%
BGSU overall	17%	76%	5%	1%

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

	Need to Emphasize More	About the Right Emphasis	Need to Emphasize Less
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	49%	49%	1%
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	47%	52%	1%
speaking effectively	46%	53%	1%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	46%	52%	2%
being prepared for further education	46%	51%	2%
making connections between the classes I have taken	45%	52%	2%
using computers	44%	53%	3%
thinking critically	43%	57%	1%
understanding cultural, racial, gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, my future career	42%	44%	14%
solving problems	39%	61%	1%
making informed judgements	39%	60%	1%
being open to new ideas	39%	57%	4%
writing effectively	36%	61%	3%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	32%	66%	2%
relating to others	30%	68%	2%

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

- plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree
- unsure of future education plans
- plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree
- no plans for further college-level education
- plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree
- plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree