

Report of the Results of the BGSU Undergraduate Experiences Questionnaire

**Office of Institutional Research
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BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The need for information about Bowling Green State University's undergraduates' academic and social integration into college life, their perceptions of the institution, educational and personal gains, and satisfaction with programs and services, prompted the development and the systematic administration of the BGSU Undergraduate Experiences Questionnaire (BUEQ). The literature on college student learning, development, and persistence clearly shows that these traits play a crucial role in student outcomes such as retention, graduation, and educational and personal gains. The BUEQ was developed by the Office of Institutional Research using ideas borrowed from other instruments and was reviewed by a wide audience and pilot-tested prior to its first extensive use. Items from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire were adapted for use in the BUEQ with permission of the copyright holder and a fee was paid. The Office of Institutional Research plans to administer the BUEQ to new first year students each spring and to a cross section of all undergraduates every two years, allowing for changes to be measured over time. Comparisons with normative information are also provided where possible.

The BUEQ was administered to all residential first and second year students, to all commuter first year students, and to students in a randomly-selected set of upper-division classes in February 1998. A total of 6,272 questionnaires were given to students and 1,567 were returned, resulting in an overall 25% response rate. The response rate for students in the residence halls was 16% (14% for first year students and 19% for second year students). It was 5% for first year commuter students to whom the questionnaire was mailed. It was 45% among students in 300- and 400- level classes (55 classes were asked to participate and 44 did so).

A large number of questionnaires (4,895) were given to first and second year students in anticipation of using the results to develop a list of "attrition at risk" students as was done

last year. Unfortunately the low response rate prevented the results from being able to be used for that purpose. Alternative strategies for questionnaire administration other than through the residence halls and through a mailing to commuter first year students, perhaps through an in-class administration, must be developed for the future.

Respondents to the 1,567 completed questionnaires did, however, closely match the profile of all BGSU undergraduates in terms of ethnicity, ACT scores, college, and grade point averages. As is often the case in questionnaire research with college students, women were somewhat over-represented among the questionnaire respondents (64% vs. 57% for the entire population). This profile of respondent characteristics allows the questionnaire results to be able to be generalized to all undergraduates at BGSU.

Questionnaire results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who provided various responses to each questionnaire item. In circumstances where individual items may be summed into scales, means were calculated. In addition, group (gender, ethnicity, ACT score) differences were investigated and are noted where they occurred. Results are provided for all undergraduate respondents and separately for first year students; the later are comparable with the results of last year's administration of the BUEQ with first year students. Comparisons with norms from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire obtained from students at doctoral universities are additionally provided where appropriate. The following pages highlight these results. A complete listing of all questionnaire responses is provided at the end of this report.

ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INTERGRATION

The first portion of the BUEQ includes items concerning the extent to which respondents have become integrated into academic and social life at BGSU. Due to the importance of the first few questions, which were borrowed from Ohio University's Student Involvement Study, they are repeated below in their entirety. Respondents report that they spend most weekends on campus and that they spend a substantial amount of time studying. The majority of first year students are not employed, but 55% of all undergraduates are employed and 14% work 20 hours per week or more. The majority consider it very important or extremely important to graduate from college (at BGSU or elsewhere). Respondents spend a substantial amount of time going out with friends. The majority felt they made the right choice in attending BGSU and plan to return next fall.

How many weekends per month do you spend on campus?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
0	5%	6%	12%
1	8%	8%	7%
2	18%	18%	14%
3	34%	32%	30%
4	27%	28%	29%
5	7%	8%	8%

How many hours per week outside of class do you spend studying?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
0	1%	1%	1%
1 to 9	39%	40%	39%
10 to 19	42%	39%	40%
20 to 29	16%	16%	16%
30 or more	3%	4%	4%

How many hours per week do you spend working at a job?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
0	68%	66%	45%
1 to 9	14%	15%	16%
10 to 19	15%	15%	25%
20 to 29	3%	2%	10%
30 or more	1%	2%	4%

How important to you is it that you graduate from BGSU?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
Not at all	7%	6%	5%
Somewhat	20%	21%	14%
Very Important	25%	23%	23%
Extremely Important	48%	50%	58%

How important to you is it that you graduate from any university?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
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Not at all	2%	2%	4%
Somewhat	5%	4%	4%
Very Important	10%	13%	13%
Extremely Important	84%	81%	79%

How many times per month do you go out with your friends?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
0	2%	1%	1%
1 to 5	24%	27%	34%
6 to 10	32%	32%	36%
11 to 20	30%	26%	22%
More than 20	11%	14%	7%

How sure are you that you made the right choice in attending BGSU?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
Not at all	5%	3%	4%
Somewhat	29%	28%	27%
Very Sure	44%	45%	44%
Extremely Sure	22%	24%	25%

Will you return to BGSU next fall?

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
No, I'm Graduating	0%	0%	12%
Definitely will not	3%	1%	1%
Probably will not	5%	7%	3%
Probably will	26%	22%	15%
Definitely will	66%	70%	69%

Male respondents, on average, spent more hours per week working than did female respondents. European-American students tended to spend more time going out with friends. Students with higher ACT scores were more inclined to view graduating (from any institution) as important, but less inclined to view graduating from BGSU as very important. Of perhaps greatest concern is the fact that only 44% of students of color, as compared with 71% of European-American students, felt very or extremely sure that they had made the right choice in attending BGSU.

The remainder of the questionnaire items dealing with academic and social integration consisted of a series of scales entitled Experiences in Class, Experiences with Faculty and Staff, Experiences with Writing and Learning Resources, Conversations with Other

Students, Experiences with Other Students, and Experiences with Student Organizations. The full set of responses is provided at the end of this report. The range of possible scores for each of these scales along with the mean for 1997 first year students, 1998 first year students, all 1998 respondents, and national norms from the comparable College Student Experiences Questionnaire for undergraduate students at doctoral-granting universities are given below.

	Score Range	1997 First Year Mean	1998 First Year Mean	1998 All Undgr Mean	Doctoral University Norms Mean
Experiences in Class	10 to 40	31	31	31	28
Experiences with Faculty and Staff	10 to 40	20	21	21	20
Experi. with Writing & Learning Resources	10 to 40	28	27	24	25
Conversations with Other Students	16 to 64	40	40	41	37
Experiences with Other Students	10 to 40	26	25	23	25
Experiences with Student Organizations	10 to 40	19	20	20	19

Female students tended to report higher levels of involvement in class experiences, with writing and learning resources, and in student organizations. Males showed higher levels of involvement in conversations with other students. Students with lower ACT scores showed more involvement with faculty, with writing and learning resources, and in interactions with other students.

PERCEPTIONS OF BGSU

Another portion of the BUEQ asked respondents to indicate their perceptions of the institution. Specifically, students were asked about 1) the extent to which they perceived that several aspects of students' development are emphasized by the University, 2) the nature of their relationships with groups on and off campus, and 3) the extent of their agreement with a series of items encompassing an "institutional cynicism scale" developed by Dr. Steven Rogelberg of BGSU's Psychology Department. Results of these items are summarized below. No statistically group (ACT score, ethnicity, gender) differences were found for items in this section of the questionnaire.

Perceived BGSU Emphases

(Percent Responding "Quite a Bit, Very Much, or Extremely")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr	Doct. Univ. Norms
the development of academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities	75%	76%	73%	78%
the development of critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities	63%	55%	59%	70%
the development of the ability to work in a group toward a common goal	63%	65%	60%	
the development of esthetic, expressive, and creative qualities	57%	52%	52%	53%
the development of vocational and occupational competence	51%	59%	52%	57%

the personal relevance and practical value of your courses	51%	63%	63%	58%
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Relationships with . . .

(Percent Responding "Somewhat Friendly, Friendly, or Very Friendly")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr	Doct. Univ. Norms
other students	91%	90%	90%	73%
faculty members	72%	78%	76%	68%
the city of Bowling Green	50%	59%	54%	
administrative offices and staff	49%	55%	50%	41%

Institutional Cynicism Scale

(Percent Responding "Agree or Strongly Agree")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr
I believe things can improve at BGSU.	78%	75%	82%
It's easy for me to be hopeful about my future at BGSU.	55%	53%	58%
BGSU truly cares about its students.	43%	60%	56%
I think problems at BGSU will get better instead of worse.	48%	53%	50%
There are major fixable problems at BGSU.	53%	35%	42%
BGSU is honest in its dealings with students.	37%	49%	42%
Students suggestions for improvement at BGSU are ignored.	31%	45%	34%
Student initiative counts for a lot at BGSU.	44%	27%	32%
Programs designed to improve BGSU will definitely work.	28%	40%	29%
I have ideas for the improvement of BGSU.	36%	36%	28%
BGSU recognizes student efforts towards improvement.	33%	29%	25%
Suggestions for improving BGSU are implemented.	25%	29%	20%
You can count on BGSU's leaders to do everything in their power to make this a top university.	35%	38%	30%

GAINS

The degree to which students felt they had made gains or progress towards various educational and personal goals was queried in another portion of the BUEQ. Summary results are provided below. Students of color showed greater humanities-related gains than did European-American students. Students with lower ACT scores reported greater analytical and humanities-related gains.

Percent Indicating "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" of Gain

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr	Doct. Univ. Norms
taking responsibility for your own progress	81%	83%	85%	
acquiring familiarity with the use of computers	65%	70%	71%	52%
ability to function as a team member	58%	59%	67%	57%
writing clearly and effectively	67%	72%	66%	57%
ability to think analytically and logically	55%	60%	65%	61%
developing your own values and ethical standards	58%	57%	64%	62%
solving problems	56%	60%	63%	
speaking clearly and effectively	47%	47%	56%	
developing good health habits and physical fitness	49%	50%	50%	42%
understanding yourself - your abilities, interests, and personality	69%	68%	73%	70%
ability to learn on your own, pursue ideas, and find information you need	66%	69%	75%	72%
gaining a range of information that may be relevant to a career	49%	54%	67%	66%
gaining a broad general education about different fields of knowledge	57%	56%	59%	64%
becoming aware of different philosophies, cultures and ways of life	47%	53%	53%	48%
quantitative thinking - understanding probabilities, proportions, etc.	38%	43%	47%	44%
developing an understanding and enjoyment of art, music, drama	36%	40%	37%	28%
broadening your acquaintance and enjoyment of literature	28%	29%	33%	29%

professional training-acquiring knowledge and skills applicable to a specific job or type of work	31%	38%	58%	56%
acquiring background and specialization for further edu. in some professional, scientific, or scholarly field	36%	41%	58%	56%
seeing the importance of history for understanding the present as well as the past	38%	40%	45%	46%
ability to put ideas together, see relationships, similarities, and differences between ideas	57%	62%	68%	65%
understanding other people and the ability to get along with different kinds of people	72%	73%	74%	70%
gaining knowledge about other parts of the world - Asia, Africa, South America, etc.	27%	28%	26%	29%

SATISFACTION

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with a variety of aspects of the University. Students were asked about general satisfaction, satisfaction regarding being treated in a friendly way and as an individual, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information. Results are highlighted below.

Satisfaction with . . .

(Percent "Satisfied or Very Satisfied")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr
BGSU in general	67%	70%	65%
fire safety conditions on campus		68%	65%
fire safety conditions in residential buildings		67%	64%
safety and health conditions for student employees		63%	61%
the condition of laboratories	57%	61%	57%
the out-of-class availability of your instructors	53%	56%	55%
the condition of classrooms	54%	57%	54%
the quality of instruction	51%	54%	52%
course material presented through a variety of methods	46%	54%	49%
campus safety and security	60%	52%	47%
the condition of residence halls	42%	54%	47%
the availability of classes at the times I want them	44%	45%	39%

the timeliness of financial aid awards	35%	41%	39%
the availability of parking	12%	15%	11%

Satisfaction with Being Treated in a Friendly Way and as an Individual by . . .
(Percent "Satisfied or Very Satisfied")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undergraduates
my professors	67%	69%	68%
Recreational Sports staff	66%	66%	64%
University Bookstore staff	64%	66%	63%
Health Services staff	62%	63%	62%
my faculty academic advisor	59%	60%	59%
Residence Life staff	58%	63%	59%
Career Services staff	57%	58%	58%
Orientation leaders	62%	63%	58%
Counseling Center staff	58%	58%	58%
Library staff	58%	56%	58%
Dining Services staff	57%	62%	57%
Registration & Records staff	58%	60%	57%
University Union staff	60%	61%	57%
my college academic	57%	57%	55%
Computer Services staff	58%	54%	54%
Off-Campus Student Center staff	55%	50%	52%
Financial Aid staff	52%	52%	51%
residence hall computer staff	59%	51%	49%
Bursar's Office staff	54%	55%	48%
Parking and Traffic staff	40%	44%	33%

Satisfaction with Receiving Helpful, Complete, and Accurate Information . . .
(Percent "Satisfied or Very Satisfied")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1998 All Undgr
about recreational & intramural programs & facilities	62%	64%	62%
when using University Libraries	60%	58%	59%

when visiting computer labs and Computer Services offices	60%	59%	58%
about dealing with health problems	62%	57%	57%
from my faculty academic advisor	57%	59%	56%
from my college staff academic advisor	56%	60%	55%
about dealing with personal problems	58%	57%	54%
when visiting the Career Services office	57%	55%	54%
from the Off-Campus Student Center staff	52%	52%	53%
from the Office of Residence Life	58%	57%	53%
about University Union services and activities	56%	58%	52%
when registering for classes	54%	54%	50%
about when and how to pay fees	54%	52%	49%
from residence hall computer staff	59%	52%	49%
about buying textbooks and other materials	53%	54%	48%
about campus dining services	52%	53%	48%
about applying for financial aid	49%	48%	47%
about parking services, facilities, and regulations	37%	39%	30%

Students with higher ACT scores were more satisfied than students with low ACT scores with the availability of classes at desired times, fire safety conditions on campus, being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Dining Services staff and residence hall computer staff, and receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from Off-Campus Student Center staff, campus dining services staff, and about parking services, facilities, and regulations.

Male students were more satisfied than female students with the condition of classrooms and with campus safety and security. Females were more satisfied than males with the condition of residence halls, the out-of-class availability of instructors, BGSU in general, with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Residence Life staff, Health Services staff, Counseling Center staff, orientation leaders, Recreational Sports staff, University Bookstore staff, Dining Services staff, Parking and Traffic staff, and Off-Campus Student Center staff, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from Career Services, the Office of Residence Life, the Off-Campus Student Center, about dealing with personal problems, about orientation to the University, about University Union services and activities, when buying textbooks and other materials, and about parking services, facilities, and regulations.

Students of color were more satisfied than European-American students with the conditions of laboratories, the availability of parking, the timeliness of financial aid awards, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about University Union services and activities and about parking services, facilities, and regulations.

European-American undergraduates were more satisfied than undergraduate students of color with the condition of residence halls, the out-of-class availability of instructors, fire safety on campus, fire safety in the residence halls, BGSU in general, with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Bursar's Office staff, University Bookstore staff, and Off-Campus Student center staff, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from the Office of Residence Life, about when and how to pay fees, and about orientation to the University.

Given that the BUEQ also asked respondents about the importance of a variety of aspects of the University, it is possible to compare the differences between the importance students ascribe to various items and their satisfaction with those items. The results of such an analysis are reported on the following page, where items are listed in terms of the difference between perceived importance and satisfaction on the part of all undergraduate respondents.

Differences between Satisfaction and Importance

Difference	Important or Very Important		Satisfied or Very Satisfied
70%	81%	the availability of parking	11%
56%	95%	the availability of classes at the times I want them	39%
52%	82%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about parking services, facilities, and regulations	30%
44%	91%	campus safety and security	47%
44%	96%	the quality of instruction	52%
43%	93%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for classes	50%
40%	79%	the timeliness of financial aid awards	39%
39%	88%	course material presented through a variety of methods	49%
39%	95%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my faculty academic advisor	56%
38%	87%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about how and when to pay fees	49%
37%	92%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my college staff academic advisor	55%
37%	85%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about buying textbooks and other materials	48%
36%	69%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Parking and Traffic Office staff	33%
35%	82%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when applying for financial aid	47%
35%	82%	the condition of residence halls	47%
33%	92%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my	59%

		faculty academic advisor	
33%	88%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my college staff academic advisor	55%
33%	81%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Bursar's Office staff	48%

Differences between Satisfaction and Importance

Difference	Important or Very Important		Satisfied or Very Satisfied
70%	81%	the availability of parking	11%
56%	95%	the availability of classes at the times I want them	39%
52%	82%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about parking services, facilities, and regulations	30%
44%	91%	campus safety and security	47%
44%	96%	the quality of instruction	52%
43%	93%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for classes	50%
40%	79%	the timeliness of financial aid awards	39%
39%	88%	course material presented through a variety of methods	49%
39%	95%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my faculty academic advisor	56%
38%	87%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about how and when to pay fees	49%
37%	92%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my college staff academic advisor	55%
37%	85%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about buying textbooks and other materials	48%
36%	69%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Parking and Traffic Office staff	33%
35%	82%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when applying for financial aid	47%
35%	82%	the condition of residence halls	47%
33%	92%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my faculty academic advisor	59%
33%	88%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my college staff academic advisor	55%
33%	81%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Bursar's Office staff	48%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This report provides the results of the first administration of the BGSU Undergraduate Experiences Questionnaire (BUEQ) to a sample of all undergraduates at the main campus. The BUEQ was developed in 1996-97 in order to provide information for BGSU's assessment and enrollment management efforts. It was first administered one year ago to first year students only. This year's broader sample allows the results to be compared between this year's and last year's first year students and (in several sections) between all undergraduates and national norms at doctoral universities. While the sample of 1,567 closely matched the profile of all undergraduates, the low response rate (14%) among first year students did not allow for the results to be used to develop a list of students at risk of attrition as was done last year. Alternative administration strategies (other than in the residence halls) must be developed for next year to improve the response rate for first year students.

Fifty-five percent of all undergraduates were found to be employed and 14% stated that they work twenty or more hours per week. Students with higher ACT scores were more inclined to view graduating (from any institution) as important, but less inclined to view graduating from BGSU as very important. A disturbing finding was that only 44% of undergraduate students of color, as compared with 71% of European-American undergraduates, felt very or extremely sure that they had made the right choice in attending BGSU; a similar result was noted last year.

Mean scores for undergraduates on the Experiences in Class, Experiences with Faculty and Staff, Experiences with Writing and Learning Resources, Conversations with Other Students, Experiences with Other Students, and Experiences with Student Organizations scales developed from the questionnaire results were similar to those of all students at doctoral universities who completed the comparable College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ). While similarity to the norms for these student involvement measures may be viewed as a positive outcome, these results do not distinguish BGSU as the premiere learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation.

The percentage of undergraduates who felt that BGSU emphasizes a scholarly and vocationally relevant environment was generally lower than for other students at doctoral universities in the CSEQ norms. Conversely, the percentage of BGSU undergraduates who stated that their relationships with other students, faculty, and offices/staff were friendly, helpful, and understanding was higher than the norms. Results of the "Institutional Cynicism Scale" included in the BUEQ suggested that undergraduates had positive perceptions of the University in general, but they had concerns about how students are treated and about students' ability (or inability) to influence institutional practice and policy.

The majority of undergraduates indicated that they had made substantial gains toward a variety of educational and personal goals articulated in the BUEQ. In most cases they indicated greater gains than did students in the CSEQ norms. The absence of benchmarks for these results from institutions recognized as premier learning communities, however,

limits their consideration in the context of BGSU's institutional vision statement. The Office of Institutional Research is continuing to work toward the development of a more meaningful set of peer and aspirational key performance indicators for this and other studies.

As was the case last year, the majority of the BUEQ respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the services and aspects of the University environment listed. Parking remained the area with which students expressed the least satisfaction. The areas of greatest difference between perceived importance and satisfaction were parking and the availability of classes at desired times. Numerous differences were found in satisfaction on the basis of students' ACT scores, gender, and ethnicity. Of particular concern may be the findings that females were significantly less satisfied than males with campus safety and security and that undergraduate students of color were significantly less satisfied than European-American undergraduates with the out-of-class availability of their instructors, BGSU in general, and orientation to the University.

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