

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. Under an arrangement with the College Student Experiences Questionnaire (CSEQ) program at Indiana University, many items and scales from the CSEQ were incorporated into this version of the BUEQ.

The BUEQ was adapted for administration via the World Wide Web during 1998-99. The WWW-based version of the BUEQ was made available for completion during February 1999 to the target audience of all new main campus first year students. A total of 558 complete responses was received from the population of 3,612, resulting in a 15% response rate. Alternative strategies for improving response rates in future years, including revising and shortening the BUEQ and using different questionnaires, are currently being considered.

Respondents to the 558 completed questionnaires did, however, closely match the profile of all BGSU new first year students in terms of ethnicity, ACT scores, and grade point averages. As is often the case in questionnaire research with college students, women were somewhat over-represented among the questionnaire respondents (71% vs. 59% for the entire population). Students in Academic Enhancement are under-represented (14% for the questionnaire respondents vs. 21% for the entire population).

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, college, and program) differences were investigated and are noted where they occurred. Results are comparable with the results of the last two year's administration of the BUEQ with first year students. 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. First year students report that they spend most weekends on campus and that they spend a substantial amount of time studying. The majority of the respondents are not employed. The majorities consider it very important or extremely important to graduate from BGSU and plan to return next fall.

Comparing with the results in 1997 and 1998, new first year students in 1999 spend a substantially less amount of time going out with friends. Of perhaps greatest concern is the fact that only 55% of the respondents in 1999 felt they made the right choice in attending BGSU, as compared with 66% of the respondents in 1997 and 69% in 1998. *While the data support these results, the profound differences from previous years' administrations of the BUEQ nevertheless call them into question. Readers are cautioned against making overly-broad generalizations based upon these results. The Office of Institutional Research will closely monitor future results in order to determine whether those of this year represent the start of a new trend or simply an aberration.*

How many weekends per month do you spend on campus?

	1997	1998	1999
	First Year	First Year	First Year
0	5%	6%	8%
1	8%	8%	6%
2	18%	18%	18%
3	34%	32%	36%
4	27%	28%	25%
5	7%	8%	7%

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

	1997	1998	1999
	First Year	First Year	First Year
0	1%	1%	1%

1 to 9	39%	40%	44%
10 to 19	42%	39%	42%
20 to 29	16%	16%	12%
30 or more	3%	4%	2%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
0	68%	66%	64%
1 to 9	14%	15%	14%
10 to 19	15%	15%	18%
20 to 29	3%	2%	3%
30 or more	1%	2%	1%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
Not at all	7%	6%	2%
Somewhat	20%	21%	33%
Very Important	25%	23%	36%
Extremely Important	48%	50%	29%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
Not at all	2%	2%	20%
Somewhat	5%	4%	53%
Very Important	10%	13%	24%
Extremely Important	84%	81%	3%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
0	2%	1%	44%
1 to 5	24%	27%	48%
6 to 10	32%	32%	5%
11 to 20	30%	26%	1%
More than 20	11%	14%	1%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
Not at all	5%	3%	13%

Somewhat	29%	28%	33%
Very Sure	44%	45%	41%
Extremely Sure	22%	24%	14%

Will you return to BGSU next fall?

	1997	1998	1999
	First Year	First Year	First Year
Definitely will not	3%	1%	2%
Probably will not	5%	7%	4%
Probably will	26%	22%	22%
Definitely will	66%	70%	72%

First year students in the College of Technology and the Chapman Learning Community tended to spend more weekends on campus. Respondents in the Colleges of Health and Human Services, Music, and Technology tended to spend more hours per week outside of class studying than did respondents in other colleges. Students in the Honors Program were more inclined to view graduating from any institution as important and they spent more hours studying outside of class. Students in the University Program for Academic Success reported fewer hours per week studying outside of class. Students with higher ACT scores were more inclined to view graduating from any institution as important and they went out with friends more frequently than did students with lower ACT scores. Students in the College of Musical Arts reported going out with friends more frequently than did students in other colleges. Sixty-five percent of the respondents in the College of Business Administration felt very or extremely sure that they had made the right choice in attending BGSU, as compared with the 55% of all first year students.

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, 1998 and 1999 first year students are given below.

Scale	Score Range	1997 First Year Mean	1998 First Year Mean	1999 First Year Mean
Experiences in Class	10 to 40	31	31	26
Experiences with Faculty and Staff	10 to 40	20	21	20
Experi. with Writing & Learning Resources	10 to 40	28	27	25
Conversations with Other Students	16 to 64	40	40	37
Experiences with Student Organizations	10 to 40	19	20	18

Mean scores for the respondents on the Experiences in Class, Experiences with Writing

and Learning Resources, and Conversations with Other Students were lower in 1999 than in 1997 and 1998. Female students tended to report higher levels of involvement with Writing and Learning Resources than did male students. Students of color showed higher levels of involvement in Conversations with Other Students than did European-American students.

Students with lower ACT scores and students in Springboard, the Chapman Learning Community, and the University Program for Academic Success had a higher level involvement in Experiences with Faculty and Staff. Students in the Chapman Learning Community had a higher level of involvement in Experiences with Student Organizations. Students in the University Program for Academic Success were more involved in Class Experiences.

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.

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
the development of academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities	75%	76%	79%
the development of critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities	63%	55%	70%
the development of the ability to work in a group toward a common goal	63%	65%	66%
the development of esthetic, expressive, and creative qualities	57%	52%	55%
the development of vocational and occupational competence	51%	59%	55%
the personal relevance and practical value of your courses	51%	63%	54%

Students in the Chapman Learning Community and the Honors Program perceived a greater emphasis in terms of the development of critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities at BGSU. Students in the Colleges of Music and Technology more often felt that the development of vocational and occupational competence is emphasized at BGSU. In terms of the development of esthetic, expressive, and creative qualities, students in the College of Music more often felt that it has been emphasized at BGSU, but students in the Academic Enhancement perceived less emphasis.

Relationships with . . .

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
other students	91%	90%	90%
faculty members	72%	78%	76%
the city of Bowling Green	50%	59%	51%
administrative offices and staff	49%	55%	49%

Springboard students reported more positive relationships with the city of Bowling Green. Students of color tended to have a less positive view of their relationships with faculty members, administrative offices and staff, and the city of Bowling Green than did European-American students.

Institutional Cynicism Scale

(Percent Responding "Agree or Strongly Agree")

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
I believe things can improve at BGSU.	78%	75%	69%
It's easy for me to be hopeful about my future at BGSU.	55%	53%	64%
I think problems at BGSU will get better instead of worse.	48%	53%	56%
Student initiative counts for a lot at BGSU.	44%	27%	55%
BGSU truly cares about its students.	43%	60%	49%
BGSU recognizes student efforts towards improvement.	33%	29%	46%
You can count on BGSU's leaders to do everything in their power to make this a top university.	35%	38%	45%
There are major fixable problems at BGSU.	53%	35%	44%
BGSU is honest in its dealings with students.	37%	49%	41%
Programs designed to improve BGSU will definitely work.	28%	40%	35%
I have ideas for the improvement of BGSU.	36%	36%	30%
Suggestions for improving BGSU are implemented.	25%	29%	24%
Students suggestions for improvement at BGSU are ignored.	31%	45%	21%

Students in Springboard and the Chapman Learning Community and males tended to agree more often with items in the cynicism scale.

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.

Percent Indicating "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" of Gain	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
taking responsibility for your own progress	81%	83%	82%
ability to learn on your own, pursue ideas, and find information you need	66%	69%	78%
understanding yourself - your abilities, interests, and personality	69%	68%	71%
acquiring familiarity with the use of computers	65%	70%	71%
understanding other people and the ability to get along with different kinds of people	72%	73%	70%
ability to put ideas together, see relationships, similarities, and differences between ideas	57%	62%	69%
solving problems	56%	60%	68%
writing clearly and effectively	67%	72%	68%
gaining a broad general education about different fields of knowledge	57%	56%	62%
ability to think analytically and logically	55%	60%	61%
developing your own values and ethical standards	58%	57%	61%
becoming aware of different philosophies, cultures and ways of life	47%	53%	56%
ability to function as a team member	58%	59%	55%
gaining a range of information that may be relevant to a career	49%	54%	53%
developing good health habits and physical fitness	49%	50%	48%
speaking clearly and effectively	47%	47%	47%
seeing the importance of history for understanding the present as well as the past	38%	40%	44%
acquiring background and specialization for further edu. in some professional, scientific, or scholarly field	36%	41%	41%
professional training-acquiring knowledge and skills applicable to a specific job or type of work	31%	38%	39%
developing an understanding and enjoyment of art, music, drama	36%	40%	38%
quantitative thinking - understanding probabilities, proportions, etc.	38%	43%	35%
broadening your acquaintance and enjoyment of literature	28%	29%	24%
gaining knowledge about other parts of the world - Asia, Africa, South America, etc.	27%	28%	19%

Students in the Chapman Learning Community showed greater gains

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	1999 First Year
BGSU in general	67%	70%	75%
campus safety and security	60%	52%	69%
fire safety conditions on campus		68%	68%
fire safety conditions in residential buildings		67%	66%
safety and health conditions for student employees		63%	61%
the out-of-class availability of your instructors	53%	56%	60%
the condition of laboratories	57%	61%	57%
the condition of classrooms	54%	57%	53%
the quality of instruction	51%	54%	52%
course material presented through a variety of methods	46%	54%	51%
the condition of residence halls	42%	54%	46%
the availability of classes at the times I want them	44%	45%	39%
the timeliness of financial aid awards	35%	41%	37%
the availability of parking	12%	15%	16%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
my professors	67%	69%	74%
Recreational Sports staff	66%	66%	70%
University Bookstore staff	64%	66%	70%
Orientation leaders	62%	63%	66%
Health Services staff	62%	63%	65%
my faculty academic advisor	59%	60%	62%
Residence Life staff	58%	63%	62%

Library staff	58%	56%	62%
Dining Services staff	57%	62%	62%
Registration & Records staff	58%	60%	62%
Counseling Center staff	58%	58%	61%
University Union staff	60%	61%	61%
my college academic advisor	57%	57%	61%
residence hall computer staff	59%	51%	61%
Career Services staff	57%	58%	58%
Computer Services staff	58%	54%	57%
Off-Campus Student Center staff	55%	50%	56%
Bursar's Office staff	54%	55%	56%
Financial Aid staff	52%	52%	50%
Parking and Traffic staff	40%	44%	42%

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

	1997 First Year	1998 First Year	1999 First Year
when using University Libraries	60%	58%	67%
about recreational and intramural programs and facilities	62%	64%	66%
from the Office of Residence Life	58%	57%	63%
from my faculty academic advisor	57%	59%	62%
from my college staff academic advisor	56%	60%	62%
about dealing with health problems	62%	57%	59%
when visiting the Career Services office	57%	55%	59%
when visiting computer labs and Computer Services offices	60%	59%	58%
about dealing with personal problems	58%	57%	58%
from residence hall computer staff	59%	52%	58%
from the Off-Campus Student Center staff	52%	52%	56%
about buying textbooks and other materials	53%	54%	56%
about campus dining services	52%	53%	55%
about University Union services and activities	56%	58%	55%
about when and how to pay fees	54%	52%	54%
when registering for classes	54%	54%	51%
about applying for financial aid	49%	48%	47%

about parking services, facilities, and regulations	37%	39%	36%
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The majority of the first year students were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the services and aspects of the University environment listed in BUEQ. Numerous differences were found in satisfaction on the basis of college, program, gender, and ethnicity.

Students in the Colleges of Technology, Health and Human Services, and Business Administration were more satisfied than did the students in other college in terms of being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Career services staff. Students in Academic Enhancement were less satisfied with receiving helpful, accurate information about parking services, facilities, and regulations than did the students in other colleges. Students with higher ACT scores were more satisfied with the condition of residence halls and fire safety conditions in residential buildings than did the students with lower ACT scores.

Students in the Chapman Learning Community were more satisfied with the quality of instruction, the condition of laboratories, safety and health conditions for student employees, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for courses. They were less satisfied with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Information Technology Services staff and University Union staff.

Students in the Honors Program were more satisfied with the availability of classes at the times they want them, the condition of residence halls, BGSU in general, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for courses. They were less satisfied with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Parking and Traffic staff.

Students in Springboard were less satisfied with fire safety conditions in residential buildings, with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by their faculty academic advisor, Registration and Records staff, Residence Life staff, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from their faculty academic advisor, their college staff member academic advisor, and residence hall computer staff.

Students in the University Program for Academic Success were less satisfied with the timeliness of financial aid awards, with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by University Bookstore staff, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about dealing with health problems, and about campus dining services.

Students in the Health Sciences Residential Community were less satisfied with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by their college staff academic advisor, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from their faculty academic advisor, and from their college staff member academic advisor.

Male students were more satisfied than female students with the quality of instruction, the condition of classrooms, the availability of parking, campus safety and security, fire safety conditions in residential buildings, the timeliness of financial aid awards; with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Information Technology Services staff, Registration and Records staff, Financial Aid staff, Bursar's Office staff, Recreational Sports staff; and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when using University Libraries, registering for courses, visiting computer labs and Information Technology Services offices, and about applying for financial aid. Female students were more satisfied than male students with the course material presented through a variety of methods, and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when visiting the Career Services office.

Students of color were more satisfied than European-American students with the conditions of residence halls; with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by their faculty academic advisor, Career Services staff, Financial Aid staff, Counseling Center staff, University Union staff, Off-Campus Student Center staff; and with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when visiting computer labs and Information Technology Services offices, about applying for financial aid, and about University Union services and activities. European-American students were more satisfied than students of color with the timeliness of financial aid awards.

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 below, where items are listed in terms of the difference between perceived importance and satisfaction on all respondents.

Differences between Satisfaction and Importance

Difference	Important or Very Important		Satisfied or Very Satisfied
56%	95%	the availability of classes at the times I want them	39%
55%	71%	the availability of parking	16%
46%	92%	the condition of residence halls	46%
44%	96%	the quality of instruction	52%
42%	93%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for classes	51%
41%	78%	the timeliness of financial aid awards	37%
37%	88%	course material presented through a variety of methods	51%
31%	67%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about parking services, facilities, and regulations	36%
28%	90%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my faculty academic advisor	62%
28%	78%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by Financial Aid staff	50%
28%	75%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information	47%

		when applying for financial aid	
27%	89%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my faculty academic advisor	62%
27%	83%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Bursar's Office staff	56%
26%	87%	being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my college staff academic advisor	61%
24%	78%	receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about how and when to pay fees	54%

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The BUEQ was developed in 1996-97 in order to provide information for BGSU's assessment and enrollment management efforts. It was first administered to first year students in 1997 and continued in 1998 and 1999. While this year's sample of 558 closely matched the profile of all first year students in terms of ethnicity, ACT scores, and grade point averages, the low response rate (15%) is a concern. Various alternatives for improving the response rate for future questionnaires are being explored.

Comparisons between years revealed some interesting findings. Perhaps the most disturbing findings were: (1) Only 55% of the first year students in 1999 felt that they made the right choice in attending BGSU, as compared with 66% in 1997 and 69% in 1998. (2) Sixty-five percent of the respondents in 1999 viewed graduating from BGSU as very/extremely important, an 8% decline from 1997 and 1998; In terms of graduating from any university, only 27% of respondents in 1999 viewed as very/ extremely important, as compared with more than 90% in 1997 and 1998. (3) Mean scores for respondents on the Experiences in Class, with Writing and Learning Resources, and Conversations with Other Students were lower in 1999 than in 1997 and 1998. *While the data support these results, the profound differences from previous years' administrations of the BUEQ nevertheless call them into question. Readers are cautioned against making overly-broad generalizations based upon these results. The Office of Institutional Research will closely monitor future results in order to determine whether those of this year represent the start of a new trend or simply an aberration.*

As was the case in 1997 and 1998, most of the first year students felt that BGSU strongly emphasizes each of the aspects of students' educational and personal development listed in the survey, and the majority characterized their relationships with faculty and other students as friendly, helpful, and understanding. There was no significant improvement on the relationships between students and administrative staff, and the city of Bowling Green for the past three years. Students of color were less involved with faculty members, administrative staff, and the city of Bowling Green than European-American students in 1999. Results of the "Institutional Cynicism Scale" included in the BUEQ suggested that first year students had positive perceptions of the University in general, but they had concern about whether things can improve at BGSU. Male students more often agreed with the items in the cynicism scale.

The majority of the first year students indicated that they had made substantial gains toward a variety of educational and personal goals articulated in the BUEQ -- a similar result was found in 1997 and 1998. They were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the services and aspects of the University environment listed. The availability of classes at desired times and parking remained the areas where greatest difference were existed between perceived importance and satisfaction. Numerous differences were found in satisfaction on the basis of students' gender, ethnicity, ACT scores, and the college or program they were in. Of particular concern may be the finding that female students were less satisfied than male students with the campus safety, the availability of parking, the timeliness of financial aid awards, and the quality of instruction.

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