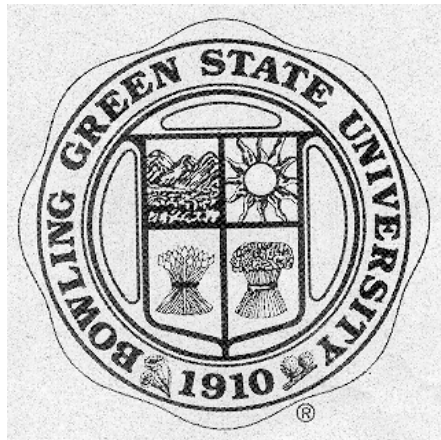


Report of the Results of the
BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire



Office of Institutional Research

September 1997

Abstract

TITLE: Report of the Results of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire

SUBJECT: This report describes the results of the Summer 1997 administration of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ) to new main campus freshmen. The BFYSQ is designed to collect enrollment management-related data, demographic data not otherwise collected as a result of BGSU's admission and registration processes, and data on students' expectations and values. Its use supports both assessment and enrollment management activities. Results are used in this report to provide a descriptive profile of the freshman class (serving as a companion report to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions' Freshman Class Profile). BFYSQ data are also maintained in databases within the Office of Institutional Research and are studied as predictors of outcomes such as retention, GPA's, and graduation rates. This report includes a summary and conclusions as well as six pages of detailed tabular responses.

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Background and Methodology

The need for assessment and enrollment management-related information about Bowling Green State University's first year students prompted the development of the BGSU First Year Student Questionnaire (BFYSQ). The literature on college student learning, development, and persistence clearly shows that students' pre-college characteristics, aspirations, expectations, and values play a crucial role in outcomes such as retention, grades, graduation, and educational and personal gains. Since no single commercially-available questionnaire would provide the data specifically needed by BGSU in a timely and cost effective manner, the BFYSQ was developed by the Office of Institutional Research. The results of the BFYSQ are comparable to those of the ACE/UCLA "Freshman Survey" administered at BGSU between 1973 and 1979 and between 1990 and 1995, and the "BGSU Freshman Survey" administered between 1980 and 1989. The Office of Institutional Research plans to administer the BFYSQ to new freshmen each summer before they matriculate.

The BFYSQ was mailed to all new first year students registered for BGSU's Orientation and Registration Program. A total of 1,915 questionnaires were returned. This represents a 67% response rate from among the 2,857 students attending Orientation and Registration in July. Mean ACT scores were 22 for both the questionnaire respondents and the total population. Students of color represented 6% of both groups. About 60% of both groups were comprised of women.

BFYSQ results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who provided various responses to each questionnaire item. Results were compared with those of previous similar questionnaires. Group (gender, ethnicity, ACT score) differences in the results were investigated and are noted where they occurred. The following pages highlight these findings. A complete listing of all questionnaire responses is provided at the end of this report.

Enrollment Management-Related Information

How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply to?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| None | 34% | 26% | 33% | 30% |
| 1 | 26% | 24% | 23% | 25% |
| 2 | 22% | 24% | 21% | 23% |
| 3 or More | 18% | 26% | 23% | 22% |

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| None | 39% | NA | 10% | 35% |
| One | 29% | NA | 37% | 27% |
| Two | 19% | NA | 28% | 22% |
| Three or More | 13% | NA | 25% | 16% |

Among colleges to attend, was BGSU your . . .

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| First Choice | 81% | 82% | 81% | 82% |
| Second Choice | 16% | 15% | 16% | 16% |
| Less Than Second Choice | 3% | 3% | 3% | 2% |

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend college in general?
(Percent “Very Important”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| To Prepare for a Professional Career | NA | NA | NA | 93% |
| To Get a Better Job | 84% | 80% | 83% | 82% |
| To Learn More About Things That Interest Me | 71% | 66% | 77% | 70% |
| To Make More Money | 61% | 69% | 74% | 67% |
| To Gain a General Education | 64% | 55% | 60% | 60% |

Females and students of color more often cited preparation for a professional career as a very important reason. Males and students of color more often cited making more money. Gaining a general education was a more important reason for females and for students with higher ACT scores.

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend BGSU?
(Percent “Very Important”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| BGSU graduates get good jobs | NA | 37% | 43% | 61% |
| BGSU graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools | NA | 15% | 18% | 51% |
| BGSU’s academic reputation | 65% | 54% | 52% | 49% |
| My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly | NA | NA | NA | 49% |
| BGSU offers unique educational programs | 22% | 16% | 17% | 47% |

BGSU graduates obtaining good jobs was more often cited as an important reason for choosing BGSU by females, student of color, and students with higher ACT scores. BGSU graduates going onto top graduate schools was more often cited by females. Academic reputation was a more important reason for females. Females and students with higher ACT scores more frequently noted their campus visit and BGSU’s unique educational programs as important reasons for matriculation.

Demographic Information

How many miles from BGSU is your permanent home?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
| 10 or Less | NA | 2% | 3% | 3% |
| 11 to 50 | NA | 22% | 23% | 26% |
| 51 to 100 | NA | 18% | 19% | 18% |
| 101 to 500 | NA | 56% | 54% | 51% |
| Over 500 | NA | 2% | 1% | 2% |

How many hours per week during the school year do you plan to be employed?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
| None | NA | NA | NA | 27% |
| 1 to 9 | NA | NA | NA | 19% |
| 10 to 19 | NA | NA | NA | 42% |
| 20 to 39 | NA | NA | NA | 11% |
| 40 or More | NA | NA | NA | 1% |

Students of color expected to be working a greater number of hours per week.

Do you feel that you will need any special tutoring or remedial work in any of the following subjects? (Percent “Yes”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|------------------|------|------|------|------|
| English | 14% | NA | 4% | 5% |
| Reading | 9% | NA | 2% | 3% |
| Mathematics | 37% | NA | 19% | 22% |
| Social Studies | 3% | NA | 2% | 2% |
| Science | 15% | NA | 6% | 8% |
| Foreign Language | 13% | NA | 7% | 7% |

What is the highest degree you plan to obtain at BGSU?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
| Bachelor’s | 71% | 73% | 74% | 78% |
| Master’s | 19% | 19% | 22% | 19% |
| Doctorate | 3% | 2% | 2% | 2% |

The vast majority of respondents reported that English is their native language and that both of their parents are alive and living together.

The most frequently reported educational levels of respondents’ parents were high school graduate, college (Bachelor’s degree) graduate, and some college. Viewed differently, *29% of the respondents may be considered to be first generation students when first generation is defined as the highest educational level achieved by both one’s father and mother as high school graduation or less.* Sixty-six percent of the respondents could be classified as first generation following the more liberal definition of the highest educational level of both one’s father and mother being enrolling in college but not receiving degrees.

What is your best estimate of your parents’ income?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Less than \$30,000 | NA | 18% | 14% | 11% |
| \$30,000-\$49,999 | NA | 35% | 24% | 24% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999 | NA | 32% | 34% | 34% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999 | NA | 7% | 16% | 18% |
| \$100,000 or More | NA | 7% | 12% | 13% |

Males reported higher family income levels while student of color reported lower.

Your Probable Occupation
(More Than 10% of Respondents)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| Teacher | NA | 18% | 18% | 20% |
| Undecided | NA | 11% | 17% | 17% |
| Business | NA | 14% | 12% | 12% |
| Other | NA | 10% | 9% | 10% |

Females more frequently planned careers in education, while more males expected to be working in business.

Your Father's Occupation
(More Than 10% of Respondents)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|
| Business | NA | 30% | 34% | 30% |
| Other | NA | 23% | 20% | 16% |
| Skilled Trades | NA | 10% | 12% | 10% |

Students of color more frequently reported their fathers' occupations as "other" and less often as business.

Your Mother's Occupation
(More Than 10% of Respondents)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|
| Business | NA | 21% | 28% | 23% |
| Other | NA | 23% | 21% | 20% |
| Teacher | NA | 15% | 15% | 16% |
| Homemaker | NA | 16% | 12% | 12% |

Expectations and Values Information

How concerned are you about your ability to finance your college education?

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|
| Not at All | 25% | NA | 27% | 28% |
| Somewhat | 58% | NA | 56% | 56% |
| Very | 17% | NA | 17% | 16% |

Females, students of color, and those with higher ACT scores were more concerned about their ability to finance their college education.

What is your estimate of the chance that you will . . .
(Percent “Very Good”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|---|------|------|------|------|
| get a Bachelor’s Degree | NA | 81% | 82% | 82% |
| find a job in my major after graduation | NA | 71% | 77% | 73% |
| be satisfied with BGSU | NA | 52% | 60% | 66% |
| get a job to help pay for college | NA | 46% | 57% | 59% |
| make at least a B average | NA | 44% | 54% | 52% |

What is your estimate of the chance that you will . . .
(Percent “None”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| drop out of college permanently | NA | NA | NA | 90% |
| drop out of college temporarily | NA | NA | NA | 74% |
| get married while in college | NA | NA | NA | 46% |
| fail one or more courses | NA | NA | NA | 44% |
| work full-time while attending | NA | NA | NA | 41% |

Females felt that they were more likely to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree, find jobs in their major fields after graduation, be satisfied with BGSU, get a job to help pay for college, and make at least a “B” average. Males reported greater chances of dropping out permanently or temporarily and of failing one or more courses. Students of color stated that they were more likely to get a job to help pay for college and to get married while in college and less likely to make at least a “B” average. Students with higher ACT scores predicted that they were more likely to obtain a Bachelor’s Degree and to make at least a “B” average; those with lower ACT scores felt they were more prone to fail one or more courses.

How important are each of the following to you?
 (Percent “Essential” or “Very Important”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| raising a family | 69% | 73% | 77% | 80% |
| being very well off financially | 69% | 64% | 74% | 78% |
| helping others in difficulty | 63% | 61% | 64% | 74% |
| becoming an authority in my field | 80% | 63% | 66% | 64% |
| obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions | 56% | 51% | 54% | 54% |
| influencing social values | 32% | 41% | 40% | 52% |
| developing a meaningful philosophy of life | 40% | 37% | 43% | 48% |

How important are each of the following to you?
 (Percent “Not Important”)

| | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1997 |
|--|------|------|------|------|
| becoming accomplished in the arts | NA | NA | NA | 61% |
| creating artistic works | NA | NA | NA | 58% |
| writing original works (poems, novels, etc.) | NA | NA | NA | 58% |
| making a contribution to science | NA | NA | NA | 46% |
| influencing the political structure | NA | NA | NA | 36% |
| becoming a community leader | NA | NA | NA | 25% |
| becoming successful in a business of my own | NA | NA | NA | 24% |

Females were more likely to cite raising a family, helping others in difficulty, and influencing social values as essential goals, while males more often cited becoming authorities in their fields, influencing the political structure, and becoming successful in businesses of their own as important. Students of color more frequently stated that being very well off financially, influencing the political structure, and becoming successful in businesses of their own were essential goals. Those with higher ACT scores were more prone to view being very well off financially, influencing the political structure, and becoming successful in businesses of their own as important.

Summary and Conclusions

This report continues a more than twenty year history of “freshman survey” results at BGSU. It serves as one component of a comprehensive program of assessment and enrollment management research activities carried out by the Office of Institutional Research.

The results of the current study are similar to those of prior “freshman survey” administrations. BGSU students continue to be pragmatic and vocationally oriented. Freshmen apply and are admitted to few other institutions. BGSU is their overwhelming first choice. Their reasons for attending college are primarily vocational and secondarily educational. The perceived career and graduate school success of our graduates coupled with academic reputation and unique educational programs are the principal reasons students choose BGSU. A pleasant and friendly campus visit was also seen as an important reason. Freshmen are majority female and Caucasian and largely in-state and middle class. Their most frequent academic goal is a Bachelor’s Degree in education, business, “undecided,” or “other.” The respondents are very positive about their chances of earning a Bachelor’s Degree, finding a job in their major after graduation, and being satisfied with BGSU. Nearly none estimate that they will drop out of college temporarily or permanently. Mathematics is the sole area where a sizeable percentage of freshmen (22%) are concerned about their academic preparation for college work. Raising a family and being very well off financially are among their most important goals.

Responses to the 1997 BFYSQ were generally similar to those of previous similar surveys. BGSU graduates getting good jobs and gaining admission to top graduate/professional schools and the fact that BGSU offers unique educational programs were viewed by 1997 first year students as more important reasons for matriculating than these same reasons were for earlier cohorts of students. Helping others in difficulty and influencing social values were seen as important goals by higher percentages of freshmen this year than in 1985, 1990, or 1995. Differences on the basis of gender, ethnicity, and ACT scores were noted in many sections of the questionnaire results.

The major limitation of this study was the 67% response rate for the questionnaire. Even though the profile of the respondents paralleled that of all first year students, improved methods of generating a higher response rate must be found for subsequent administrations of the BFYSQ. The Office of Institutional Research welcomes feedback concerning this and other studies and how they can continue to be improved

BFYSQ Item Responses

Summer 1997

How many other colleges besides BGSU did you apply to?

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| None | 30% |
| One Other | 25% |
| Two Other | 23% |
| Three or More Other | 22% |

How many other colleges besides BGSU admitted you this year?

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| None | 35% |
| One Other | 27% |
| Two Other | 22% |
| Three or More Other | 16% |

Among colleges to attend, is BGSU your...

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| First Choice | 82% |
| Second Choice | 16% |
| Less than Second Choice | 2% |

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend college in general?

| | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|---|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| My parents wanted me to go | 27% | 44% | 29% |
| I wanted to get away from home | 18% | 51% | 31% |
| To be able to get a better job | 82% | 14% | 4% |
| To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas | 60% | 36% | 4% |
| To improve my reading and study skills | 30% | 53% | 17% |
| To make me a more cultured person | 35% | 48% | 17% |
| To be able to make more money | 67% | 28% | 5% |
| To learn more about things that interest me | 70% | 28% | 2% |
| A mentor/role model encouraged me to go | 10% | 33% | 57% |
| To learn more about other people | 26% | 54% | 20% |
| To prepare for a professional career | 93% | 6% | 1% |

How important were each of the following in your decision to attend BGSU?

| | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|--|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| My relatives wanted me to come here | 6% | 26% | 68% |
| A teacher advised me | 5% | 26% | 69% |
| A friend suggested attending | 8% | 41% | 51% |
| I wanted to live near home | 17% | 36% | 47% |
| I was offered financial assistance | 20% | 24% | 56% |
| Cost of tuition at BGSU | 32% | 52% | 16% |
| I wanted to attend a school of BGSU's size | 38% | 47% | 15% |
| My BGSU visit was pleasant and friendly | 49% | 38% | 13% |
| BGSU's academic reputation | 49% | 43% | 8% |
| BGSU's social reputation | 31% | 52% | 17% |
| BGSU has an attractive campus | 34% | 52% | 14% |
| BGSU takes student safety seriously | 37% | 46% | 17% |
| BGSU offers unique educational programs | 47% | 42% | 11% |
| BGSU's graduates get good jobs | 61% | 31% | 8% |
| BGSU's rankings in national magazines | 19% | 48% | 33% |
| BGSU is in a small and safe community | 42% | 46% | 12% |
| The reputation of BGSU's faculty, staff and students | 42% | 47% | 11% |
| BGSU's graduates gain admission to top graduate/professional schools | 51% | 42% | 7% |

How many miles form BGSU is your permanent home?

| | |
|------------|-----|
| 10 or less | 3% |
| 11 to 50 | 26% |
| 51 to 100 | 18% |
| 101 to 500 | 51% |
| Over 500 | 2% |

How many hours per week during the school year do you plan to be employed?

| | |
|------------|-----|
| None | 27% |
| 1 to 9 | 19% |
| 10 to 19 | 42% |
| 20 to 39 | 11% |
| 40 or more | 1% |

Do you feel that you will need any special tutoring or remedial work in any of the following subjects? (Percent “Yes”)

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| English | 5% |
| Reading | 3% |
| Mathematics | 22% |
| Social Studies | 2% |
| Science | 8% |
| Foreign Language | 7% |

What is the highest academic degree you plan to obtain at BGSU?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| Bachelor's degree (B.A., B.S., etc.) | 78% |
| Master's degree (M.A., M.S., etc.) | 19% |
| Ph.D., or Ed.D. | 2% |
| M.D., D.D.S., D.M.V. (Doctor) | 1% |
| LL.B. or J.D. (Law) | 0% |
| Other | 0% |

Is English your native language?

| | |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | 99% |
| No | 1% |

Are your parents:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Both alive and living with each other | 78% |
| Both alive, divorced or living apart | 19% |
| One or both deceased | 3% |

What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents?

| | Father | Mother |
|---|--------|--------|
| Elementary school | 0% | 0% |
| Some high school | 2% | 1% |
| High school graduate | 28% | 33% |
| Postsecondary school other than college | 5% | 7% |
| Some college | 19% | 19% |
| College degree | 29% | 26% |
| Some graduate school | 3% | 4% |
| Graduate degree | 14% | 10% |

What is your best estimate of your parents' income?

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Less than \$30,000 | 11% |
| \$30,000 to \$49,000 | 24% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 34% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 18% |
| \$100,000 or more | 13% |

Please indicate...

| | Your Probable Occupation | Your Father's Occupation | Your Mother's Occupation |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Accountant | 3% | 2% | 2% |
| Actor, Artist, or Musician | 5% | 0% | 1% |
| Architect or urban planner | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Business | 12% | 30% | 23% |
| Clinical psychologist | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Computer programmer or analyst | 3% | 2% | 1% |
| Engineer | 1% | 6% | 0% |
| Farmer or Forester | 0% | 2% | 0% |
| Homemaker (full-time) | 0% | 0% | 12% |
| Laborer (unskilled) | 1% | 6% | 3% |
| Law enforcement officer | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| Lawyer (attorney) or judge | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Nurse | 2% | 0% | 8% |
| Physician | 3% | 1% | 0% |
| Scientific researcher | 2% | 1% | 0% |
| Semi-skilled worker | 0% | 4% | 2% |
| Skilled trades | 0% | 10% | 2% |
| Social, welfare, or recreation worker | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| Therapist (physical, occ., speech) | 4% | 0% | 1% |
| Teacher or administrator | 20% | 6% | 16% |
| Writer or journalist | 3% | 0% | 0% |
| Other | 10% | 16% | 20% |
| Undecided | 17% | 1% | 0% |
| Unemployed | 0% | 2% | 4% |

How concerned are you about your ability to finance your college education?

| | |
|---|-----|
| None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds) | 28% |
| Some (but I will probably have sufficient funds) | 56% |
| Major (not sure I will have sufficient funds to complete college) | 16% |

What is your estimate of the chances that you will...

| | Very Good | Some | Very Little | None |
|--|-----------|------|-------------|------|
| Change your major | 15% | 36% | 38% | 11% |
| Change your career choice | 14% | 41% | 35% | 10% |
| Fail one or more courses | 0% | 8% | 48% | 44% |
| Graduate with honors | 14% | 47% | 31% | 8% |
| Be elected to a student office | 3% | 21% | 50% | 26% |
| Get a job to help pay for college expenses | 59% | 27% | 9% | 5% |
| Work full-time while attending college | 3% | 15% | 41% | 41% |
| Join a social club, fraternity, or sorority | 22% | 36% | 28% | 14% |
| Play varsity/intercollegiate athletics | 14% | 20% | 32% | 34% |
| Be elected to an academic honor society | 9% | 31% | 41% | 19% |
| Make at least a "B" average | 52% | 43% | 5% | 0% |
| Need extra time to complete your degree | 7% | 33% | 49% | 11% |
| Get a Bachelor's Degree | 82% | 14% | 3% | 1% |
| Participate in student protests/demonstrations | 4% | 21% | 49% | 26% |
| Drop out of college temporarily | 0% | 1% | 25% | 74% |
| Drop out of college permanently | 0% | 1% | 9% | 90% |
| Transfer to another college before graduation | 3% | 17% | 49% | 31% |
| Be satisfied with BGSU | 66% | 32% | 2% | 0% |
| Get married while in college | 2% | 12% | 40% | 46% |
| Participate in volunteer/community service work | 20% | 47% | 27% | 6% |
| Find a job in your major field after graduation | 73% | 25% | 2% | 0% |
| Join a student professional or student government organization | 9% | 30% | 44% | 17% |

How important are each of the following to you?

| | Essential | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Important |
|--|-----------|----------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Becoming an authority in my field | 21% | 43% | 31% | 5% |
| Influencing the political structure | 4% | 14% | 46% | 36% |
| Influencing social values | 13% | 39% | 39% | 9% |
| Raising a family | 47% | 33% | 14% | 6% |
| Being very well off financially | 40% | 38% | 20% | 2% |
| Helping others who are in difficulty | 26% | 48% | 25% | 1% |
| Making a contribution to science | 6% | 9% | 39% | 46% |
| Creating artistic work (painting, etc.) | 8% | 10% | 24% | 58% |
| Becoming a community leader | 7% | 23% | 45% | 25% |
| Helping to promote racial understanding | 9% | 27% | 49% | 15% |
| Keeping up to date with political affairs | 7% | 26% | 48% | 19% |
| Writing original works (poems, novels, etc.) | 5% | 10% | 27% | 58% |
| Developing a meaningful philosophy of life | 19% | 29% | 36% | 16% |
| Participating in a community action program | 6% | 25% | 52% | 17% |
| Becoming accomplished in the performing arts (acting, dancing, etc.) | 8% | 9% | 22% | 61% |
| Obtaining recognition from my colleagues for my contributions | 16% | 38% | 38% | 8% |
| Having administrative responsibility for the work of others | 12% | 33% | 43% | 12% |
| Becoming successful in a business of my own | 16% | 26% | 34% | 24% |
| Becoming involved in programs to clean up the environment | 6% | 22% | 54% | 18% |