

Report of the Results of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire, 2009

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of the Summer 2008, Fall 2008, and Spring 2009 administrations of the BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire (BGSQ). The BGSQ is designed to study graduating seniors' academic and social experiences at BGSU, perception of the institution, satisfaction level with various programs and services provided by the University, and how much they have gained through their BGSU education. Additional information such as graduates' college expenses, years of enrollment, and 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 perception 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) in Spring 2000. The literature on college student's 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 has been reviewed by a wide audience. It has been used to collect graduating seniors' data ever since.

All seniors scheduled for Summer 2008, Fall 2008 or Spring 2009 graduation were asked to complete the online BGSU Graduating Senior Questionnaire before they left the campus. One thousand one hundred and fifty-eight students completed the survey, which represents 36% of the 2008-2009 graduation class. The response rate is slightly lower than the one last year (38%), but much lower than the one in 2005-2006 (45%) and 2004-2005 (48%).

Out of the total 1,158 respondents, 888 of them provided valid PID number, which allows us to compare their demographic characteristics with all 2008-2009 graduating seniors. As shown in the table below, the survey respondents, in general, mirror the population in terms of race and college. Female respondents, however, were over-represented.

	Survey Respondents	2007-08 Graduating Seniors
Gender:		
Female	63.5%	56.9%
Male	36.5%	43.1%
Race:		
Minorities	8.7%	10.3%
European-American	89.3%	85.4%
Other/Unknown	2.0%	4.2%
College:		
Arts and Sciences	37.4%	35.4%
Business Administration	14.8%	12.9%
Education and Human	31.6%	32.7%
Health and Human Services	8.8%	9.4%
Musical Arts	1.6%	1.7%
Technology	5.9%	7.9%

The 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 sections highlight these results. In addition, group differences among 2008-2009 survey respondents were investigated (female vs. male, minority graduates vs. European-American graduates, and college vs. college), and significant differences are noted where they occurred.

ACADEMIC, SOCIAL, AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

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

	<u>1 Year or more</u>	<u>None</u>
live in a campus residence hall or house	78%	22%
live in an apartment or house near campus	81%	19%
live at least 5 miles away from BGSU and commute	32%	68%

The majority of the 2008-2009 graduating seniors were living on campus or near campus while they studied at BGSU. Minority students were more likely to live on campus for three years or more than were European-American students. Male students were more likely than female students to spend more years living in an apartment or house near campus. Among the respondents in the six colleges Musical Arts students were least likely to commute.

How many times have you changed your major?

	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
None	55%	53%	53%
1	31%	31%	34%
2	9%	9%	9%
3 or more	5%	6%	5%

Forty-eight percent of the 2008-2009 survey respondents reported that they have changed major at least once during their BGSU years. Respondents in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Technology were less likely to change their major than were the respondents over the other four colleges.

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

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
work at a job off campus	72%	74%	71%
participate in volunteer/service work	65%	65%	65%
participate in an internship or co-op	58%	58%	57%
work at a job on campus	49%	52%	49%
participate in a social club, fraternity, or sorority	49%	52%	52%
serve as an officer in a social club, fraternity/sorority	29%	33%	32%
participate in a professional or student government org.	23%	20%	19%
participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics	14%	15%	15%

The majority of the survey respondents reported that have worked while they enrolled at BGSU. BGSU graduates were more likely to be involved with activities or organizations such as volunteer/service work, an internship or co-op, or a social club/fraternity/sorority than to participate in varsity/intercollegiate athletics or a professional/student government organization.

Males were more likely than females to be part of varsity/intercollegiate athletics. Females, on the other hand, were more likely than males to be a member or officer of a social club or Greek Life. They were also more likely to participate in volunteer/service work than were males. Like female respondents, minority respondents were more likely to indicate that they have participated in a social club, fraternity or sorority than did European American respondents.

Compared with the respondents in the four other colleges, respondents in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Business Administrations were more likely to claim that they have joined a professional or student government organization. While Technology students were most likely to participate in an internship or co-op they were least likely to attend a volunteer/service work.

On average, per year, how much of your educational expenses did you cover from each of the sources listed below? (Percentage of participants who picked up \$1,500 and Over)

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Parents, relatives, friends	54%	54%	51%
Other college loan	37%	39%	42%
Other college grants or scholarships	25%	34%	32%
Savings from summer work	23%	25%	23%
Ford Direct Loan	20%	19%	17%
Off campus jobs	17%	18%	18%
Other loan	15%	16%	19%
Perkins Loan	15%	14%	10%
Other savings	15%	15%	15%
Pell Grant	14%	15%	15%
On campus jobs	6%	8%	8%
Ohio Instructional Grant	8%	7%	7%
Other than listed	8%	5%	7%
Other private grant	5%	6%	6%

Family and other college loans/grants/scholarships were the sources of financial support most often cited by BGSU graduates.

Compared with male and European American students, female and minority students were more likely to cite other college grants and scholarships as one of their important finance sources, but less likely to say savings from a summer job is the one. Minority students were also more likely than their counterpart to receive support from Pell Grant. Among the graduates in the six colleges, Technology students were most likely to get support from off campus jobs and other college loan; Business Administrations graduates were most likely to get help from family members and friends. Graduates in these two colleges were also more likely to earn \$1500 or more from their summer job to cover their college expenses.

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

	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Nothing	32%	31%	28%
Less than \$5,000	5%	4%	4%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	6%	6%	7%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	10%	10%	10%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	13%	12%	11%
\$20,000 or more	35%	38%	40%

About seventy percent of the respondents claimed that they owed some amount of student loans by the time they graduated from BGSU. The percentage of students who owe \$20,000 or more in student loans increased from 18% in 2002-2003 to 35% in 2006-2007 and 40% in 2008-2009.

ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

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

	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2008-09</u>
Less than four years	23%	18%	18%
Four years	36%	47%	42%
Between four and five years	32%	26%	31%
More than five years	9%	9%	9%

Sixty percent of the survey respondents reported that they graduated from BGSU in four or fewer than four years. This rate is much higher than the average baccalaureate degree four-year graduation rate at BGSU, which was around 34% for the past five years. Female respondents as well as respondents in the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Business Administrations were more likely than their counterparts to report that they graduated from BGSU in four years or less.

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

	06-07	07-08	08-09
I changed majors	32%	39%	37%
I worked while enrolled	22%	22%	25%
The classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them	21%	22%	19%
I received poor academic advising	18%	22%	19%
I was involved in coop/internships	23%	16%	15%
I was undecided about a major when I started	17%	13%	15%
My major takes more than four years to complete	15%	13%	13%
I had family responsibilities while enrolled	9%	13%	13%
I chose not to enroll for one or more semesters	10%	11%	13%
I had problems with the academic requirements for my major	8%	8%	10%
I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction	11%	9%	9%
I had financial problems	7%	8%	9%
I took classes unrelated to my major due to personal interest	7%	8%	8%
I attended part-time	7%	7%	8%
I commuted while enrolled	7%	9%	7%
I had a double major	6%	6%	6%
I did not spend enough time studying	6%	6%	6%
I wanted to maintain or improve my grades	6%	7%	5%
I transferred to BGSU and needed different courses	5%	5%	4%
I wanted to have some free time	3%	4%	3%
I had to take developmental classes	3%	3%	3%

Changing major remains the most often cited reason for 2008-2009 graduates to take more than four years to graduate, followed by working while enrolled, necessary classes were unavailable

when interested, and poor academic advising (see the table above).

Female respondents were more likely to cite changing major as the major reason for them to take more than four years to graduate while male respondents were more likely to cite “I was undecided about a major when I started”, “I was involved in coop/internships”, and "I dropped one or more classes because I was dissatisfied with the quality of instruction" as the major causes for their extended enrollment. Compared with European American students, minority students were more likely to say “I did not spend enough time studying” as an important reason for them to take longer time to graduate.

Factor(s) that were more often reported by respondents in one/some college(s) than the others as an important reason for taking five years or longer to get a Bachelor’s degree were:

- “I changed majors”, “I received poor academic advising” – for students in the College of Arts and Sciences;
- “I was undecided about a major when I started – for students in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business Administrations;
- "I was involved in coop/internships" - for Technology students;
- "I had a double major" - for students in the College of Musical Arts;
- "My major takes more than four years to complete" - for students in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Technology.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE INSTITUTION

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

	06-07	07-08	08-09
I have participated in class discussions	93%	93%	94%
I have met with a faculty member outside of class to talk about questions/concerns over my class work.	91%	90%	89%
I have developed close personal relationships with other students at BGSU	90%	90%	88%
Most faculty at BGSU are friendly and helpful	88%	88%	88%
Most faculty and staff at BGSU seem generally interested in students	83%	81%	82%
I have talked about my career plans with a BGSU faculty/staff member	82%	81%	81%

Most other students at BGSU are friendly and helpful	80%	79%	79%
Most offices and staff at BGSU are friendly and helpful	N/A	81%	77%
I am able to get into the courses required for my degree program	79%	80%	77%
It has been easy for me to get to know other students	78%	77%	76%
Most faculty at BGSU are good teachers	75%	74%	75%
I have participated in study groups	73%	72%	73%
I have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU	62%	71%	72%
Most of my classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to my future	69%	67%	64%
I have become involved with activities on campus	61%	63%	64%
I have become involved with student organizations	59%	60%	59%
The information that I received from my adviser was accurate	57%	59%	58%
My adviser showed concern for my academic needs	53%	54%	54%
I have attended cultural events on campus	52%	53%	54%
Most students at BGSU have values similar to my own	53%	56%	52%
My adviser helped me explore and clarify my educational goals	46%	48%	46%
I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member	46%	50%	45%

More than half of the 2008-2009 survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with almost all the items listed in the survey except “My adviser helped me explore and clarify my educational goals” and “I have talked about personal problems with a BGSU faculty or staff member.”

Females and minorities were more likely than males and European-Americans to report that they have become involved with student organizations and attended cultural events on campus. Females, however, were less likely than males to point out that their adviser showed concern for their academic needs and helped them explore and clarify their educational goals.

Compared with respondents in other colleges, respondents in the College of Education and Human Development and the College of Musical Arts were more likely to agree that most of the classes at BGSU seem relevant and applicable to their future; respondents in the College of Health and Human Services and the College of Musical Arts were more likely to agree that they

were able to get into the courses required for their degree program; Musical Arts students were also most likely to point out that they have developed a close personal relationship with at least one faculty or staff member at BGSU and talked about personal problems with them as well. While Technology respondents were most likely to be happy with their advisor they were least likely to have attended activities and culture events on campus.

EDUCATIONAL AND PERSONAL GAINS

For each of the following items, please indicate how much you feel you have gained as a result of your BGSU education? (Percent "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit")

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	75%	75%	76%
making connections between the classes I have taken	77%	76%	74%
being open to new ideas	73%	75%	74%
thinking critically	73%	75%	74%
making informed judgments	73%	75%	73%
making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	76%	74%	73%
understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	74%	73%	72%
writing effectively	69%	70%	71%
developing a better understanding of my career goals	69%	70%	71%
relating to others	68%	68%	67%
speaking effectively	66%	67%	67%
solving problems	64%	66%	64%
using computers	66%	64%	65%
being prepared for further education	63%	64%	62%
understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	60%	62%	61%

More than sixty percent of the 2008-2009 graduates reported that they have gained quite a bit or very much towards various educational and personal goals as a result of their BGSU education (see table above).

Female respondents were more likely than males to indicate that they have gained quite a bit or very much in making connection between the classes they have taken as well as between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life. They were also more likely than males to report that they have gained a lot in understanding cultural, racial, and gender differences and how they relate to themselves, their field of study, and their future career. Among the respondents in the six colleges, Musical Arts students were least likely to claim that they have learned a great deal of computer skills, and Arts & Sciences students were least likely to say that they have gained a lot in terms of making connections between the things they learned in class and other experiences in their life, as well as setting up a career goal and developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career.

EMPHASIS

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

About the Right Emphasis				Need to Emphasize More		
06-07	07-08	08-09		06-07	07-08	08-09
61%	58%	58%	developing knowledge and skills applicable to a career	38%	41%	41%
62%	57%	59%	developing a better understanding of my career goals	38%	42%	40%
61%	59%	59%	being prepared for further education	37%	39%	40%
65%	62%	64%	speaking effectively	34%	37%	36%
66%	63%	63%	making connections between things I have learned in class and other experiences in my life	33%	36%	36%
66%	63%	66%	making connections between the classes I have taken	33%	36%	33%
67%	65%	67%	writing effectively	31%	33%	32%
74%	72%	69%	making informed judgements	25%	28%	30%
70%	69%	68%	being open to new ideas	26%	27%	30%

72%	70%	70%	thinking critically	26%	28%	28%
71%	70%	71%	using computers	26%	27%	27%
67%	64%	66%	understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to me, my field of study, and my future career	24%	25%	25%
77%	75%	74%	solving problems	22%	24%	25%
76%	74%	73%	understanding my own abilities, interests, and values	21%	24%	25%
76%	74%	76%	relating to others	21%	23%	22%

About two-thirds of the 2008-2009 respondents felt that BGSU has given the right emphasis to all the areas listed on the table above. Career and future education preparation remains the area that BGSU could emphasize more in the future.

Female and minority respondents were more likely than their counterparts to indicate that BGSU could focus more understanding cultural/racial/gender differences and how they relate to them, their field of study, and their future career. Minority respondents were also more likely than European American respondents to say that BGSU should stress more in the areas of critical thinking, relating to others, being open to new ideas, making connections between the classes they have taken, and between things they have learned in class and other experiences in their life.

Among the respondents in the six colleges, respondents in the College of Musical Arts, the College of Technology, and the College of Business Administrations would like BGSU focus more in problem solving and critical thinking; the respondents in the College of Healthy and Human Services, the College of Musical Arts, and the College of Technology would like BGSU pay more attention in “relating to others”; Arts and Sciences respondents would like BGSU emphasize more in “developing a better understanding of career goals”, and “developing knowledge/skills applicable to a career”.

SATISFACTION WITH BGSU

Looking back at your overall experience at BGSU, how satisfied were you with ...*

	Satisfied or Very Satisfied		Neutral	Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied
	07-08	08-09	08-09	08-09
library resources	83%	85%	13%	3%

the overall quality of instruction	83%	84%	12%	4%
class size	82%	82%	16%	3%
BGSU overall	83%	81%	13%	6%
ease of access to instructors	81%	79%	17%	5%
computer resources	76%	77%	14%	9%
feedback on assignments	76%	73%	21%	6%
places to study	71%	73%	19%	7%
racial and ethnic diversity	63%	64%	29%	7%
the availability of classes at times I needed them	55%	53%	24%	23%
financial aid	51%	52%	32%	16%
career services	55%	51%	37%	12%
concern for me as an individual	54%	51%	33%	17%
the overall quality of academic advising	52%	47%	23%	29%
residence halls	51%	47%	37%	16%
helpfulness in preparing for further education	48%	46%	40%	15%
helpfulness in preparing for employment	47%	44%	33%	23%
the condition of buildings	49%	43%	31%	26%
campus dining services	48%	41%	35%	25%
service to commuters	35%	32%	45%	23%

More than half of the 2008-2009 graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the aspects of their educational and social experiences(see the table above), especially with the quality of instruction, class size, easy access to instructors, library/computer resources, and BGSU overall. More than twenty percent of the recent graduates expressed their dissatisfaction with the overall quality of academic advising, the availability of classes at the time they need them, helpfulness in preparing for employment, campus dining services, service to commuters, and the condition of buildings.

European American respondents were more likely to be satisfied with the racial and ethnic diversity of BGSU than were minority respondents. Among the respondents in the six colleges,

- Respondents in the Business Administrations and the College of Education and Human Development were more likely to be satisfied with the career services than were the respondents in other colleges;
- Musical Arts respondents were most likely to be happy with financial aid, but least likely to be satisfied with computer resources, campus dining services, and services to commuters.
- Technology respondents were most likely to be satisfied with the overall quality of academic advising;
- Arts and Sciences respondents were least likely to be happy with concerning for them as an individual, and helpfulness in preparing for employment and further education.

FURTHER PLANS

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

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Employment, full-time paid	NA	NA	64%
Employment, part-time paid	NA	NA	6%
Graduate or professional school, full-time	NA	NA	18%
Graduate or professional school, part-time	NA	NA	2%
Additional undergraduate coursework	NA	NA	1%
Military service	NA	NA	1%
Volunteer activity	NA	NA	1%
Starting or raising a family	NA	NA	1%
Other (combination of activities above; job hunting; internship; traveling/vacation; unemployment; don't know/find out what I want to do)	NA	NA	6%

The mass majority of BGSU graduates would like to be employed or head to a graduate/professional school upon their graduation. Compared with the graduates in the other colleges, students in the College of Business Administrations, the College of Education and

Human Development, and the College of Technology were more likely to say they have landed a full-time paid job upon graduation.

Which best describes your plans for further education after graduation?

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2007-2008
plan to earn a Master's or doctoral degree	55%	53%	56%
unsure of future education plans	24%	22%	24%
no plans for further college-level education	15%	16%	12%
plan to earn a medical, law, or other professional degree	4%	5%	6%
plan to complete more courses, but not towards a degree	2%	3%	2%
plan to earn another Bachelor's Degree	1%	2%	1%

More than 60% percent of the recent graduates had planed to earn an advanced degree after they graduate from BGSU. Female graduates and graduates in the College of Musical Arts and the College of Education and Human Development seemed more likely than their counterparts to pursue a Master's degree or higher in the future.

COMMENTS

Two hundred and seventy-nine students expressed their feelings freely at comments section of the survey. A lot of students indicated that their overall BGSU experience was a good one, some of the academic programs are outstanding, and some of the faculty and staff members were very helpful. Quite a few students, however, were disappointed with some of their BGSU experiences, such as academic/career advising, some academic programs/polices, some instructors or teaching assistants, parking, some old buildings, the cost, the distribution of school money, service to students, and decreased admission/academic standards.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the 2008-09 graduating seniors lived on campus or near campus during their college years and most of them worked while they enrolled at BGSU. Besides studying and working, 65% of them participated in volunteer or service work, and over half of them participated in an internship or co-op. More than 60% of them would like to be employed full time upon graduation and earn a graduate degree in the future.

Family remains the greatest source of financial support for BGSU graduates, followed by other college loans/grants/scholarships, and savings from summer work. About two thirds of the 2008-09 graduating seniors owe some amount of loans, and the percentage of graduates who reported having a debt of \$20,000 or more increased steadily during the past several years, from 18% in 2002-2003 to 33% in 2005-2006, 38% last year, and 40% this year.

Forty-seven percent of the recent graduates reported that they have changed their major at least once at BGSU. "I changed my major" (37%), "I worked while enrolled" (25%), "the classes that I needed were not offered when I needed to take them" (19%), and "I received poor academic advising" (19%) were the most often given reasons for them to take more than four years to get a Bachelor's Degree.

The 2008-2009 graduates had good perceptions of BGSU. The majority of them agreed that most faculty members at BGSU are good teachers, and most staff members and students here are friendly and helpful. Eighty percent or more of them indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the overall quality of instruction, class size, library resources, and BGSU overall. Two thirds of them pointed out that they were able to get into the courses required for their degree program and that most of classes at BGSU seemed relevant and applicable to their future. About sixty percent or more of them felt that BGSU has placed the right emphasis on all the items of students educational and personal development listed in the questionnaire, and that they have gained very much or quite a bit in these areas as well.

Academic advising, career and further education preparation are the areas that BGSU could emphasize more in the future. Some students also expressed their concerns with service to commuters (includes parking), the conditions of buildings, and campus dining services.

The major limitations of this study were the low response rate (36%) for the questionnaire and the under-representation of males and respondents who graduated from BGSU in more than four years. These limitations require that the results from this survey be interpreted with some caution.

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