

# **Report of the Results of the BGSU Undergraduate Experiences Questionnaire**

**Office of Institutional Research  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This report describes the results of the Spring 1997 administration of the BGSU Undergraduate Experiences Questionnaire (BUEQ) to first year residential students. The BUEQ is designed to collect data on students' academic and social integration into college life at BGSU, their perceptions of the institution, educational and personal gains, and satisfaction with programs and services. Its use supports both assessment and enrollment management activities; results were used to develop a listing of "at-risk" students on whose behalf intervention activities have taken place. This report includes a summary and conclusions as well as detailed tabular responses.

## **BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**

The need for information about Bowling Green State University 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 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. Since no single commercially-available questionnaire would provide much of the data important for BGSU's assessment and enrollment management efforts, and in order to take advantage of substantial cost and time savings, the BUEQ was developed by the Office of Institutional Research using ideas borrowed from other instruments, including those used at Ohio University. The BUEQ 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 freshmen each spring and to a cross section of junior and senior students every two years, allowing for changes to be measured over time.

The BUEQ was administered to all residential new first year students in February 1997. Student Housing and Residence Programs (SHARP) staff distributed and collected the questionnaires. A total of 2,359 questionnaires were given to students and 1,174 were returned, resulting in a 50% response rate. Mean ACT scores were 22 for both the questionnaire respondents and the total population. Students of color represented 6% of both groups. Women were somewhat over-represented among the questionnaire respondents (71% vs. 61% for the entire population).

Questionnaire data were used to develop a list of "attrition at risk" students. Item responses were summed (with some items weighted more heavily) into an involvement scale and students (N=358) with the lowest 1/3 of the involvement scores were designated as at risk. Subsequent analyses relating the questionnaire data to actual student enrollment behaviors will improve the precision of this methodology for future years. The list of "attrition at risk" students was shared with the SHARP staff and others so that intervention activities could take place.

BUEQ results were analyzed by noting the percentages of participants who provided various responses to each questionnaire item. In addition, group (gender, ethnicity, ACT score) differences were investigated and are noted where they occurred. 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 student respondents report that they spend most weekends on campus and that they spend a substantial amount of time studying. Most are not employed. The majority consider it very important or extremely important to graduate from college (at BGSU or elsewhere); the differences in the responses between these two items suggests that a fair portion of the respondents may be considering transferring to another university. 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?**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| 0 | 5%  |
| 1 | 8%  |
| 2 | 18% |
| 3 | 34% |
| 4 | 27% |
| 5 | 7%  |

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

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| 1          | 1%  |
| 1 to 9     | 39% |
| 10 to 19   | 42% |
| 20 to 29   | 16% |
| 30 or more | 3%  |

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

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| 0          | 68% |
| 1 to 9     | 14% |
| 10 to 19   | 15% |
| 20 to 29   | 3%  |
| 30 or more | 1%  |

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

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Not at all          | 7%  |
| Somewhat            | 20% |
| Very Important      | 25% |
| Extremely Important | 48% |

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

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Not at all          | 2%  |
| Somewhat            | 5%  |
| Very Important      | 10% |
| Extremely Important | 84% |

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

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| 0            | 2%  |
| 1 to 5       | 24% |
| 6 to 10      | 32% |
| 11 to 20     | 30% |
| More than 20 | 11% |

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

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Not at all     | 5%  |
| Somewhat       | 29% |
| Very Sure      | 44% |
| Extremely Sure | 22% |

**Will you return to BGSU next fall?**

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Definitely will not | 3%  |
| Probably will not   | 5%  |
| Probably will       | 26% |
| Definitely will     | 66% |

Female respondents, on average, spent more hours per week studying and more hours per week working than did male respondents. Students of color who responded to the BUEQ tended to spend more hours per week working than did majority students (13% worked more than 20 hours per week compared with 4% of White respondents). Of greater concern is the fact that only 47% of non-White respondents, as compared with 67% of White respondents, 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. Responses spanned all given categories from once or twice a week to never. The range of possible scores for each of these scales along with the mean for the respondents is given below.

| <b>Scale</b>                                    | <b>Score Range</b> | <b>Respondent Mean</b> |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|
| Experiences in Class                            | 14 to 56           | 42                     |
| Experiences with Faculty and Staff              | 12 to 48           | 24                     |
| Experiences with Writing and Learning Resources | 12 to 48           | 32                     |
| Conversations with Other Students               | 16 to 64           | 40                     |
| Experiences with Other Students                 | 10 to 40           | 26                     |
| Experiences with Student Organizations          | 12 to 48           | 22                     |

Male students tended to report higher levels of involvement in conversations with other students, with student organizations, and with writing and learning resources than did female students. Students of color, on average, reported greater involvement with faculty, other students, student organizations, and in conversations with other students. Students with lower ACT scores showed more involvement with writing and learning resources.

## 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 several aspects of students' development are emphasized, 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)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| the development of academic, scholarly, and intellectual qualities     | 75% |
| the development of critical, evaluative, and analytical qualities      | 63% |
| the development of the ability to work in a group toward a common goal | 63% |
| the development of esthetic, expressive, and creative qualities        | 57% |
| the development of vocational and occupational competence              | 51% |
| the personal relevance and practical value of your courses             | 51% |

### Relationships with . . .

#### (% Responding Somewhat Friendly, Friendly, or Very Friendly)

|                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| other students                   | 91% |
| faculty members                  | 72% |
| the city of Bowling Green        | 50% |
| administrative offices and staff | 49% |

### Institutional Cynicism Scale

#### (Percent Responding Agree or Strongly Agree)

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| I believe things can improve at BGSU.  | 78% |
| It's easy for me to be hopeful about my future at BGSU.  | 55% |
| There are major fixable problems at BGSU.  | 53% |
| I think problems at BGSU will get better instead of worse.                                     | 48% |
| Student initiative counts for a lot at BGSU.   | 44% |
| BGSU truly cares about its students.   | 43% |
| BGSU is honest in its dealings with students.  | 37% |
| I have ideas for the improvement of BGSU.  | 36% |
| You can count on BGSU's leaders to do everything in their power to make this a top university. | 35% |
| BGSU recognizes student efforts towards improvement.   | 33% |
| Students suggestions for improvement at BGSU are ignored.                                      | 31% |
| Programs designed to improve BGSU will definitely work.  | 28% |
| Suggestions for improving BGSU are implemented.  | 25% |

Students of color generally agreed with the above statements more often than did majority students.

## 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. While answers to these questions are perhaps more meaningful for upper-division students who have been in college for a longer period of time, results are extracted on the next page for items where the majority of first year students reported quite a bit of progress or very much progress. Female respondents, on average, reported more gains in the career-related items, while males showed greater gains in the items related to general education and personal development.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| taking responsibility for your own progress   | 81% |
| understanding other people and the ability to get along with different kinds of people        | 72% |
| understanding yourself - your abilities, interests, and personality                           | 69% |
| writing clearly and effectively   | 67% |
| ability to learn on your own, pursue ideas, and find information you need                     | 66% |
| acquiring familiarity with the use of computers   | 65% |
| ability to function as a team member  | 58% |
| developing your own values and ethical standards  | 58% |
| ability to put ideas together, see relationships, similarities, and differences between ideas | 57% |
| gaining a broad general education about different fields of knowledge                         | 57% |
| solving problems  | 56% |
| ability to think analytically and logically   | 55% |

## 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)**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| BGSU in general  | 67% |
| campus safety and security                             | 60% |
| the condition of laboratories                          | 57% |
| the condition of classrooms                            | 54% |
| the out-of-class availability of your instructors      | 53% |
| the quality of instruction                             | 51% |
| course material presented through a variety of methods | 46% |
| the availability of classes at the times I want them   | 44% |
| condition of residence halls                           | 42% |
| the timeliness of financial aid awards                 | 35% |

the availability of parking 12%

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

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| my professors                                | 67% |
| Recreational Sports staff                    | 66% |
| University Bookstore staff                   | 64% |
| Health Services staff                        | 62% |
| Orientation leaders                          | 62% |
| University Union staff                       | 60% |
| my faculty academic advisor                  | 59% |
| residence hall computer staff                | 59% |
| Computer Services staff                      | 58% |
| Counseling Center staff                      | 58% |
| Library staff                                | 58% |
| Registration & Records staff                 | 58% |
| Student Housing and Residence Programs staff | 58% |
| Career Services staff                        | 57% |
| my college academic advisor                  | 57% |
| Dining Services staff                        | 57% |
| Off-Campus Student Center staff              | 55% |
| Bursar's Office staff                        | 54% |
| Financial Aid staff                          | 52% |
| Parking and Traffic staff                    | 40% |

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

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

Male students were generally more satisfied with the quality of instruction, the condition of residence halls, the availability of parking, and the timeliness of financial aid awards than female students. Females were more satisfied with the out-of-class availability of their instructors.

Females, on average, were more satisfied with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Parking and Traffic staff and the Recreational Sports staff. Male students were more satisfied with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by orientation leaders. White students were more satisfied than students of color with being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Recreational Sports staff.

Female respondents tended to be more satisfied than male students with receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when visiting Career Services, the Off-Campus Student Center, when participating in recreational programs, and when dealing with personal problems.

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.

### **Differences between Satisfaction and Importance**

| <b>Difference</b> | <b>Important or Very Important</b> |   | <b>Satisfied or Very Satisfied</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 65%               | 77%                                | the availability of parking   | 12%                                |
| 51%               | 93%                                | the condition of residence halls  | 42%                                |
| 49%               | 93%                                | the availability of classes at the times I want them  | 44%                                |
| 45%               | 80%                                | the timeliness of financial aid awards  | 35%                                |
| 42%               | 79%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about parking services, facilities, and regulations | 37%                                |
| 39%               | 93%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when registering for classes                        | 54%                                |
| 37%               | 86%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information when applying for financial aid                     | 49%                                |
| 36%               | 90%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about how and when to pay fees                      | 54%                                |
| 35%               | 92%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my faculty academic advisor                    | 57%                                |
| 34%               | 90%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information from my college staff academic advisor              | 56%                                |
| 34%               | 87%                                | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about buying textbooks and other materials          | 53%                                |

|     |     |  |     |
|-----|-----|--|-----|
| 30% | 82% | receiving helpful, complete, and accurate information about campus dining services             | 52% |
| 29% | 88% | being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my faculty academic advisor            | 59% |
| 29% | 86% | being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by my college staff academic advisor      | 57% |
| 29% | 83% | being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Bursar's Office staff              | 54% |
| 27% | 79% | being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Student Financial Aid Office staff | 52% |
| 26% | 66% | being treated in a friendly way and as an individual by the Parking and Traffic Office staff   | 40% |

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Use of the BUEQ represents a first step in an ongoing process on the part of the Office of Institutional Research of providing information for BGSU's assessment and enrollment management efforts. Results contained in this report provide a benchmark for future studies.

Perhaps the most important use of the questionnaire results was in the construction of the "attrition at risk" list of students, which, in turn, prompted intervention activities geared toward at risk students before they leave the University at the end of the semester. Comparison of BUEQ results with records of students who actually re-enrolled for next fall will allow for increased predictive validity of the at risk list for next year.

Descriptive analysis of the questionnaire results also revealed some interesting findings. Perhaps the most disturbing of these is the fact that a significantly lower percentage of students of color (47%) than majority students (67%) felt very sure or extremely sure that they had made the right choice in attending BGSU. Inter-institutional comparisons of the results of the academic and social integration items for first year students have proved difficult to obtain. However, the result indicating that respondent means tend to fall at about only the halfway point along the scale ranges suggests that BGSU is currently falling short of its goal of being the premiere learning community in Ohio and one of the best in the nation.

Most of respondents 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 other students and faculty as friendly, helpful, and understanding. However, only about one-half characterized their relationships with administrative offices and with the city of Bowling Green as friendly, helpful, and understanding. Less than one-half agreed or strongly agreed with most of the items in the institutional cynicism scale.

The majority of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with most of the services and aspects of the University environment listed in the questionnaire. In general, parking and financial aid were the items with which students expressed the least satisfaction.

The major limitation of this study was the 50% response rate for the questionnaire on the part of first year residential students. Even though the profile of the respondents generally paralleled that of all first year residential students, improved methods of generating a higher response rate must be found for subsequent administrations of the BUEQ. The Office of Institutional Research welcomes feedback concerning this and other studies and how they can continue to be improved.