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ABSTRACT

A survey of 1,210 Boise State University (BSU) alumni sought to discover if BSU graduates were successful and how well their courses of study had met their needs. Graduates from 1994-95 and 1995-96 were asked to rate several areas related to their major, provide information concerning their employment and other demographic factors, and offer suggestions on how BSU's academic programs might be improved. Highlights included: about 80 percent of graduates were employed within three months of graduation; most (61 percent) respondents said they used the knowledge acquired at BSU frequently; one-fifth of respondents were employed and also continuing their education and 4.1 percent were continuing their education without working; nearly 60 percent planned to obtain a graduate degree; most (82.5 percent) felt they were adequately, more than adequately, or exceptionally well prepared for graduate work; most (91 percent) felt that faculty and BSU were interested in students, and 87 percent felt faculty were outstanding teachers; and the skill rated most important university-wide was oral communication, with written communication and problem solving in second and third places. Twenty tables detail the study's findings. The survey form is appended. (DB)

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THE ACADEMIC JOURNEY: INSIGHTS FROM 1994 - 95 AND 1995 - 96 GRADUATES

RESEARCH REPORT 98-01

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BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

THE ACADEMIC JOURNEY: INSIGHTS FROM 1994 - 95 AND 1995 - 96 GRADUATES

This report is the result of a survey of nearly 3,500 Boise State University Alumni. The survey sought to discover if BSU graduates were successful once they left the university and how well their course of study met their needs. Graduates from 1994-95 and 1995-96 were asked to rate several areas related to their major as well as provide responses to employment questions. Other information ranged from general demographics to comments from graduates on how they felt their academic programs might be improved. About 35% of graduates returned the survey.

Highlights included:

- Almost 80% of graduates were employed within three months of graduation. Only 11.2% said it took over six months to find a job after graduation.
- Most recent graduates (61%) said they used the knowledge they acquired at BSU frequently.
- One-fifth of recent graduates were employed and already continuing their education. Only a few graduates (4.1%) were continuing their education without working, too.
- Nearly 60 percent (59.1) planned to obtain a graduate degree.
- Almost half (43.1%) felt they were adequately prepared for graduate work, while 39.4% felt they were more than adequately or exceptionally well prepared.
- A majority of students, 91%, felt that faculty were interested in students and 87% felt faculty were outstanding teachers.
- The skill rated as most important university-wide was oral communication, with written communication second and problem solving third. Yet responses varied by degree. Graduate students rated effective written skills, bachelor's students rated oral communication, and associates and certificated students rated developing skills employers need as the most important.

Tables and figures included in the report can be used to compare departmental results with those university-wide.

THE ACADEMIC JOURNEY: INSIGHTS FROM 1994 - 95 AND 1995 - 96 GRADUATES

“Thanks for asking!” one student scrawled in thick black letters across the bottom of their survey. Another student wrote their name and phone number along with a brief note, “If you have any other questions I can be reached at...” These students, along with nearly 1,200 others, took the time to respond to BSU’s most recent alumni survey (a response rate of about 35%). Besides providing general data on demographics, the survey also gave students the opportunity to voice their opinion. And in general, respondents did so enthusiastically.

This report is based on a survey of graduates who completed their degrees in 1994-95 and 1995-96. Several of the survey items asked graduates to provide employment information such as were the graduates employed; how long did it take for them to find a job; what was their salary; and were they continuing their education. Graduates also were asked to rate skills and asked how well their program met the needs of their employment. Some of the items asked graduates to respond to questions related to their major. Further information on the survey as well as the survey itself can be found in Appendix A.

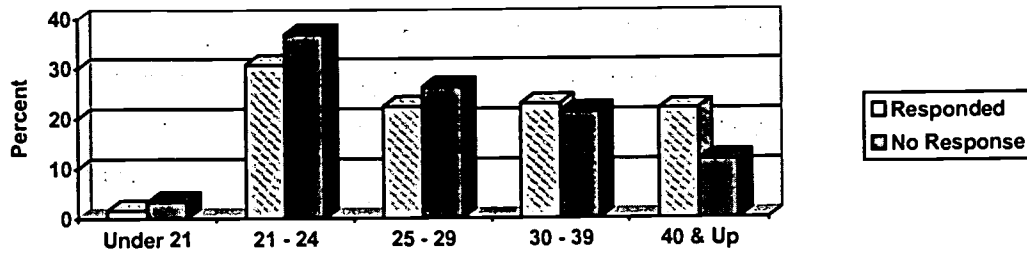
WHO ARE OUR GRADUATES

A total of 3,445 graduates from 1994-95 and 1995-96 received the survey. Most (2,404 or 70%) were bachelor’s degree recipients, while 632 (18%) were recipients of associate degrees or certificates. The remaining 12% received master’s degrees. (Students who received more than one degree during this time period were counted only once for the highest degree.) In general, the percentage of bachelor’s degree recipients who responded was reflective of the entire group. However, vocational/technical graduates tended not to respond proportionately while master’s students over-responded compared to the other groups. See Table 1 for details.

The ages of graduates ranged from 18 to 69, with a mean age of 29.6 and a median age of 26. Master’s degree recipients were the oldest, while bachelor’s recipients were the youngest. (See Table 2 for further details.) Data on demographics showed that nontraditional graduates were more likely to respond to the survey than traditional students. Nearly seventy percent of those graduates responding were age 25 or older (67.43%) while less than two percent of the

respondents were under the age of 21. Thirty percent of the respondents were age 21-24. (see Figure 1 and Table 3).

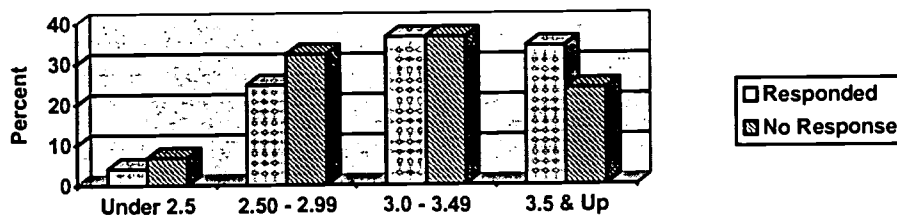
Figure 1. Age of Respondents and Non-respondents



About 85% of graduates reported that they were white non-Hispanics. They were slightly more likely to respond to their surveys (see Table 4). Females, who comprised 58% of the graduates, also were more likely to respond than their male counterparts (see Table 5).

Most students graduated with fairly high grade point averages. In fact, about 65% had GPAs above 3.0. And these graduates were more likely to respond to the survey (see Table 6 and Figure 2 below). The highest GPAs were given to master’s degree recipients, who had a median GPA of 3.70. However, bachelor’s recipients had a median GPA of 3.12, indicating not all high GPAs were earned at the graduate level (see Table 7).

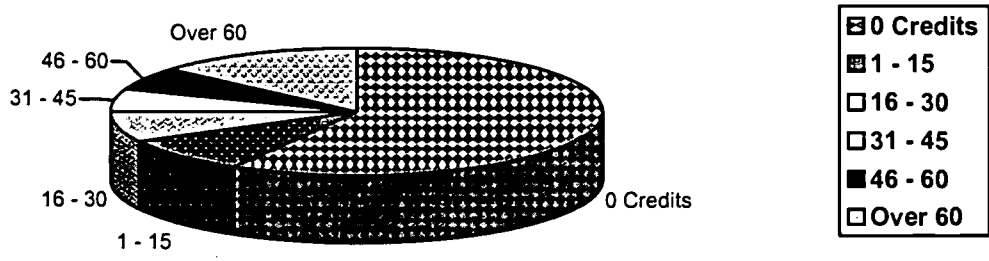
Figure 2. Cumulative GPA of Respondents and Non-respondents



Over half of the graduates indicated they were transfer students, and 43% received some credit for their prior coursework. As shown by figure 3, the majority of these transfer graduates (14% of the total) had over 60 credits transferred to BSU. Another 11% had 31 to 60 credits

transferred. Those who transferred to BSU were just as likely to respond to the survey as those who began their college careers at BSU (see Table 8).

Figure 3. Transfer Credit of Graduates

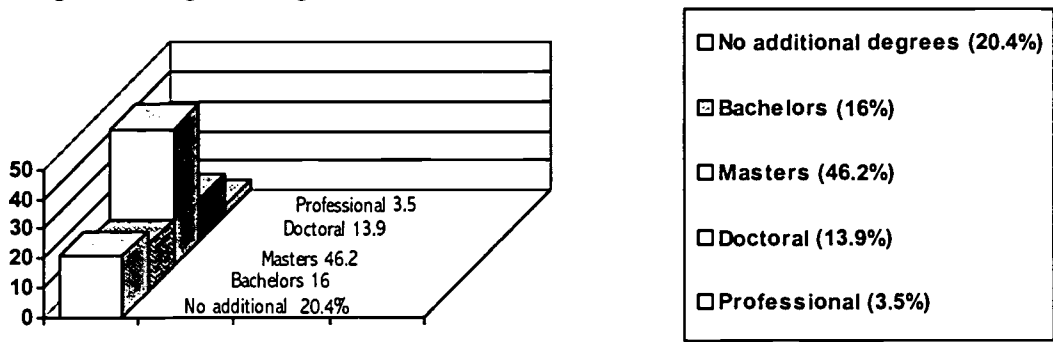


CURRENT ACTIVITIES: JOBS AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

Most (80%) of students went to work after graduation; 59% reported they were working full-time exclusively and an additional 20% were employed and continuing their education. Very few graduates (2.3%) reported they were unemployed and seeking work. Only 4% of graduates were continuing their education without working. (See Table 9)

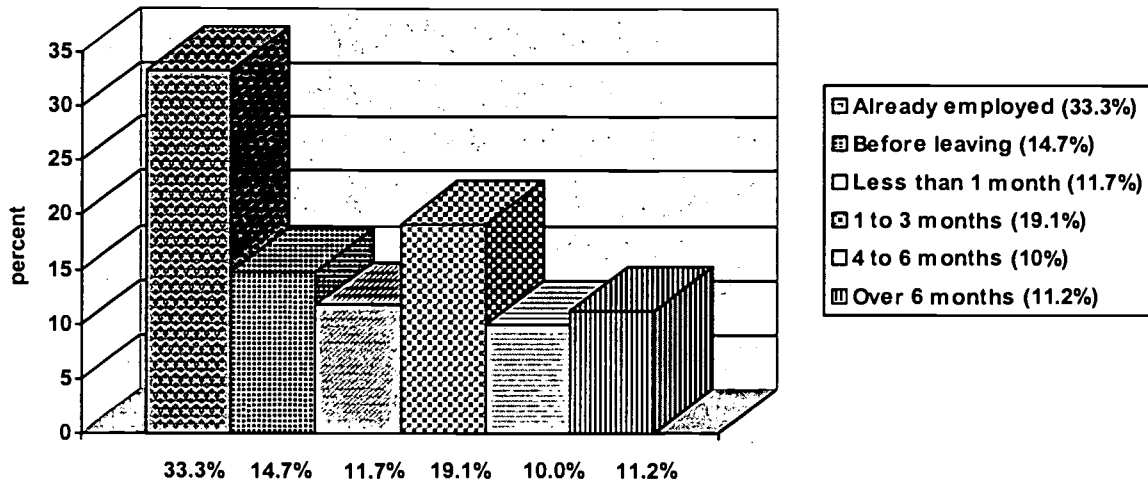
Of the graduates who thought the question was applicable, almost all (93%) felt they were adequately prepared for graduate work, with over 10% responding that they were exceptionally well-prepared (see Table 10). Most graduates (80%) planned to obtain further education at some time. Over 60% said they would obtain a master's degree while nearly 15% said they planned to obtain a doctorate. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4. Highest Degree Graduates Plan to Obtain



Almost 80% were employed within three months of graduating. Many (15%) obtained a job prior to leaving the university, and a third were already employed while attending the university. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. How long to first job after graduation



Over half (51.3%) had annual salaries within the \$20,000.00 to \$34,999.00 range. Salaries above \$50,000 were rare, with only 6% of graduates responding salaries in that range. See Table 11 for further details.

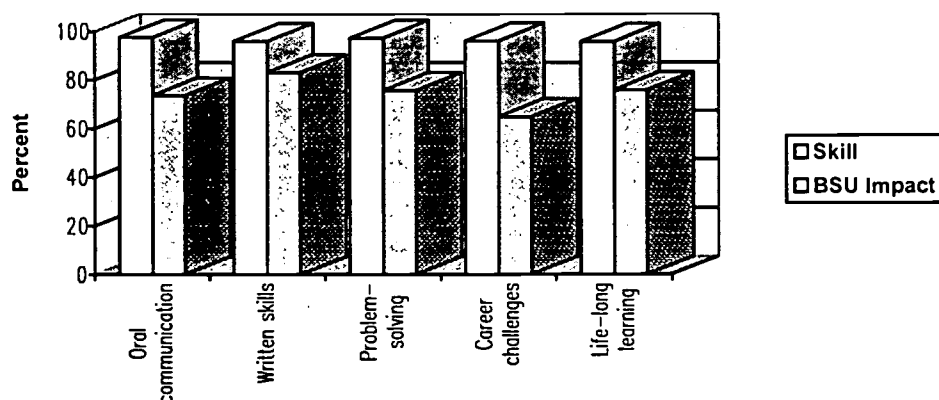
The majority of graduates (88.3%) were using knowledge they had acquired at BSU in their job frequently or occasionally. Only 5.7% said they used it almost never, and 5.9% said they used it not at all. See Table 12.

Skills GRADUATES VALUED AND IMPACT BSU HAD ON THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Based on mean ratings of importance, graduates university-wide rated effective oral communication as the most important skill. This was followed closely by written communication skills, problem-solving, meeting career challenges, and committing to life-long learning (see Figure 6 and Table 13). However, less than three-quarters felt that BSU had made a major or moderate impact on oral communication skills. Written skills were rated as the area graduates felt the most impact with 83% of graduates saying that BSU had made a major or

moderate impact in this area. Graduates also rated problem solving, committing to life-long learning, and meeting career challenges as important skills. Of the top five skills in importance, graduates felt the least impact had been made in meeting career challenges (65%).

Figure 6. University-wide Skills Most Valued by Graduates/BSU Impact

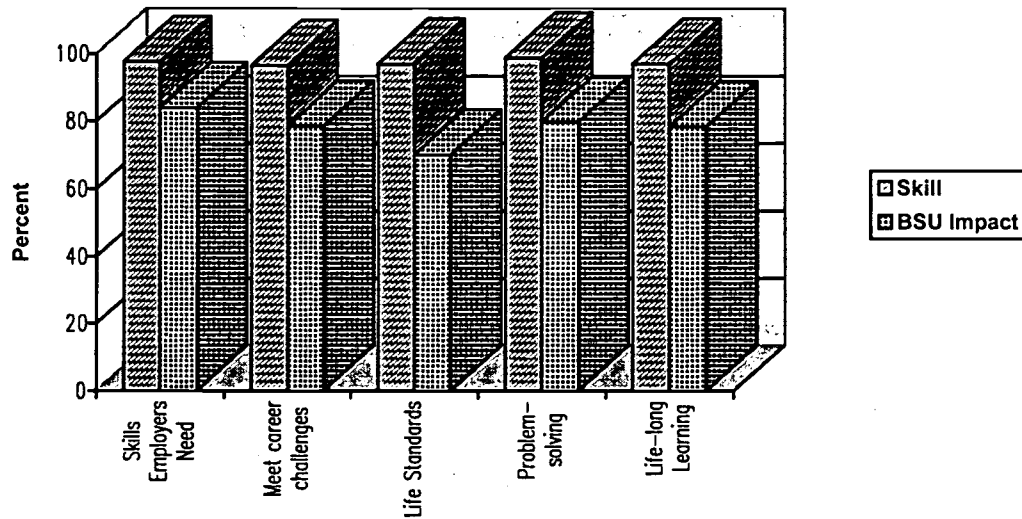


A closer look revealed that responses varied by degree. Since a master's student may be attending the university to earn a promotion or update their knowledge, and a certificate program student may be attending the university to acquire specific job skills, it is easy to see why graduates would rate the importance of certain abilities differently depending on their degree and career goals. Thus, respondents often placed the greatest importance on skills that may be required within a specific job area and that could influence their success once they left the university with their degrees.

This also was true of those skills graduates thought to be of least importance. Both associates/certificated graduates and bachelor's graduates felt that understanding international issues and understanding humans and environment were the least important skills, while master's graduates rated learning about career options as the least important followed by understanding international issues. Further details can be found in Table 14 (Associate/Certificate responses), Table 15 (Bachelor's responses), and Table 16 (Master's responses). Again, however, those skills found to be the most important were more diverse depending on the program. Associates and certificated graduates rated developing the skills employers need as the most important skill

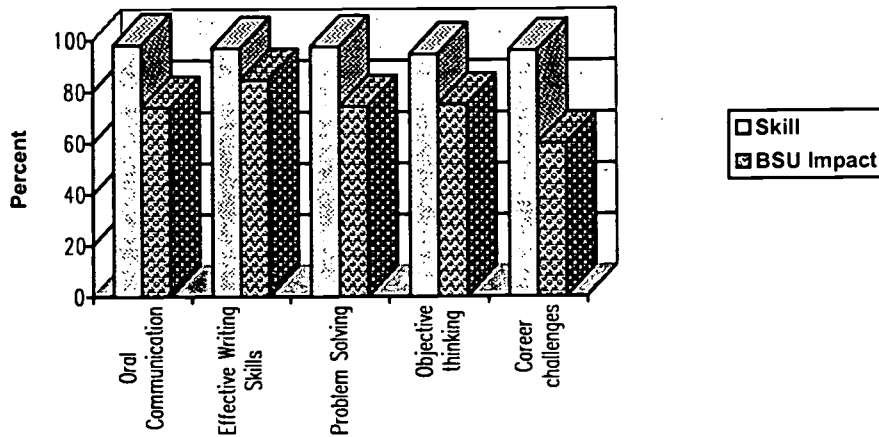
to acquire, followed by meeting career challenges and developing standards for their lives. Their top five were rounded out by problem-solving and committing to life-long learning. Note that neither oral or written communication skills fell in their top five. Of the top five, they felt BSU had the greatest impact on developing skills employers need (84%) and least in developing standards for their lives (70%).

Figure 7. Associates/Certificated Graduates Skills Most Valued and BSU Impact



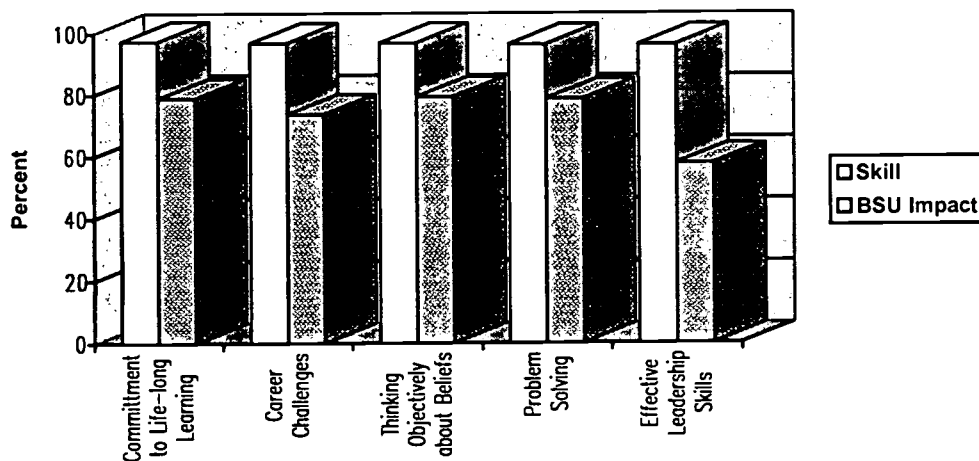
Although associates/certificated graduates agreed with other graduates by ranking understanding international issues and understanding humans and environment as least important skills, they also rated learning about career options as being relatively less important. Since most associates and certificate programs lead to jobs in specific areas and they enter the university typically knowing what they want to do, it is understandable that these graduates would not consider learning about career options as an important skill. Also, although developing original ideas and drawing conclusions from data were rated among the least important skills, nearly 90% agreed that these skills were somewhat important and that BSU had a major or moderate impact (60-67%) in these areas. (See Table 14 for further details.)

Figure 8. Bachelor's Graduates Skills Most Valued and BSU Impact



Bachelor's graduates rated oral communication as the most important skill with written skills and problem-solving rated second and third. Perhaps this is due to the fact that these skills are important to succeeding in the academic world and are, therefore, of greater importance to those completing a four-year degree. Meeting career challenges and thinking objectively rounded out the top five. Graduates felt BSU had the most impact in the area of written skills (85% thought the impact was major or moderate) and the least in meeting career challenges (60%). Bachelor's graduates also felt understanding international issues, understanding humans and environment, and learning about career options were the least important skills. (See figure 8 and Table 15 for further details.)

Figure 9. Master's Graduates Skills Most Valued and BSU Impact



Master's graduates rated effective written skills as the most important skill to acquire followed by committing to life-long learning and meeting career challenges. Of these top three skills, graduates thought BSU had the most impact on their development of effective written skills (83%) and least impact on meeting the challenges of their career (74%).

Also, master's graduates agreed with bachelor's and associate's graduates that understanding international issues and understanding humans and environment were less important skills. And although learning about career options was rated the least important skill (63.1%), many master's graduates commented that they were already employed and pursuing skills necessary for promotion. This may explain why learning about career options was not considered a necessary skill. (See Figure 9 and Table 16 for further details.)

QUESTIONS RELATED TO MAJOR

Graduates typically were pleased with faculty in their programs. Most students agreed that faculty were interested in students (91%) and that faculty were outstanding teachers (87%). They also were pleased with their major with most graduates indicating they would enroll in their major again (78% agreement) and advise a friend with similar interests into the same major (86% agreement). They were less pleased with their opportunities for interactions. About three-fourths thought they had peer interactions which motivated them and 60% were satisfied with their opportunities for out-of-class interactions with faculty. A strong minority of graduates thought many of their courses weren't offered at the right time (45%) and that a number of courses were redundant (35%). See Table 14 for details.

Results were fairly consistent, whatever the degree received. Only two questions showed differences of more than ten percentage points. While 49% of bachelor's recipients agreed that many courses were not offered at the right times for them, only 37% of master's graduates agreed. Associate's and certificated graduates fell in the middle at 42%. On the other hand, 70% of bachelor's recipients agreed that many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty, while only 58% of master's graduates agreed. While it is unclear why these differences occurred, one might speculate that master's students have more classes at night since that is convenient for them because of their jobs. However, that may mean

they are less likely to leave their jobs during the day to visit with faculty or to remain after class for conversations because of the late hour. Full details can be found in Tables 18, 19, and 20.

ADVICE TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Written comments are often the heart of any survey. Respondents are given the opportunity to elaborate on their bubbled answers, adding color and emotion to black and white responses, and thereby painting a truer picture for the researcher. BSU asked alumni what advice they would give their department to improve the quality of education offered, and graduates were eager to offer it.

The comments were scored for positive and negative characteristics and given area designations. And although many of the comments were somewhat negative (42% of total compared to 18% positive and 31% neutral), that is to be expected since the question asked about improvements. The designations were:

Administration (001): Any comments that referred to administration, such as parking, registration, transcript evaluation, facilities, cost, etc. (46 or 2.4% of all coded responses)

Faculty (002): Any comments that mentioned specific faculty or comments about faculty in general (500 or 25.7% of all coded responses)

Advising (003): Any comments that referred to departmental advising, faculty advising, or advising from the advising center (107 or 5.5% of all coded responses)

Curriculum (004): Any comments that referred to specific courses, coursework, or courses in general (456 or 23.4% of all coded responses)

Scheduling (005): Any comments that referred to course schedules such as day/evening classes or when classes were scheduled to interfere with one another (69 or 3.5% of all coded responses)

Career Planning (006): Any comments that referred to job assistance or career planning assistance or the need for career planning and employment assistance (146 or 7.5% of all coded responses)

Academic Programs (007): Any comments that referred to the general quality of the programs without mention to any specific courses, faculty, or other areas (371 or 19.1% of all responses)

Student Teaching/Secondary Education (008): For programs within the education department, these comments referred to the student teaching program. For programs outside the education department, these comments referred to secondary education programs (116 or 6.0% of all responses)

Graduate Programs (009): Any comments that referred specifically to graduate programs at BSU, graduate programs at other universities, and preparation for graduate programs (67 or 3.4% of all coded comments)

No Comment (000): 26.7% of respondents chose not to answer this question

A single written comment might be coded as covering more than one area. About two-thirds of comments were about faculty, curriculum, or academic programs. Discussions of the comments will revolve around the top five areas of concern university-wide and for each college based on percentage of negative or strongly negative responses and top three areas of excellence based on percentage of positive or strongly positive comments.

University-wide Advice

Faculty, the curriculum, and the academic program were the top three areas of concern as well as the top three positive areas according to graduates. Faculty was the greatest area of concern with 30% of all negative and strong negative responses. The number of responses varied greatly from department to department, but there were still a number of similarities within the comments themselves. Graduates suggested that faculty keep up-to-date with trends and technology and be

enthusiastic in their teaching. They also wanted instructors who were caring and compassionate and genuinely concerned about student success.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ¹	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ²
Faculty	30%	Faculty	38%
Curriculum	23%	Academic Program	38%
Academic Program	16%	Curriculum	9%
Advising	10%	-----	-----
Career Planning	8%	-----	-----

However, faculty also was the area ranked most positive with 38% of all positive and strong positive comments. These graduates felt that their instructors went out of their way to make the students' academic experience a success. Graduates also said that these instructors made themselves available to students and were helpful when students had difficulty with coursework or during advising. Many of these graduates said that the instructors got to know the students and their individual needs and were willing to work with them to help them accomplish their goals.

Curriculum was the second greatest area of concern with 23% of those responses. The most common complaint, university-wide, was that the curriculum and the technology were often outdated. Graduates also suggested more hands-on teaching and that more real-world experience be integrated into the coursework. Many graduates recommended more internships and practicums and visiting lecturers from the working world.

However, curriculum ranked third in positive areas with 9% of those comments. These graduates felt the curriculum in the program prepared them well for their careers. Many were grateful for the well-rounded education they received and felt their educational experience had opened their minds to new ways of thinking.

¹ Based on 822 negative comments out of 1947.

² Based on 355 positive comments out of 1947.

The third greatest area of concern was academic program. Graduates who responded to this area often recommended that programs eliminate redundancies and decrease the bureaucracy. Those graduates who were transfer students wanted the transition from one university to the other to be made easier. Secondary education graduates wanted more communication between departments.

Yet academic program ranked second in positive areas with 38% of the positive comments. Many graduates felt their programs did an excellent job of providing them with an education. They often said they were doing very well in their careers and felt the quality education they received at BSU was a key factor in their success.

Advising was the fourth greatest area of concern for students university-wide with 10% of the negative and strong negative comments. Complaints centered on the difficulty students had in getting the correct information and on advisors who did not know the requirements or were not aware of changes in the requirements. Graduates said they were often given the wrong information by peer, academic, and faculty advisors and some graduates said this had delayed their graduation. Other graduates felt that their advisors were merely “signing off” on their registrations rather than advising. They also said it was difficult finding a time when the advisor was available and working the meeting into their schedule.

The fifth greatest area of concern was career planning. Graduates often felt that more should be done to help students find employment once they left the university. This was especially true for students in the liberal arts. Many graduates felt that coursework on career planning should be added to the curriculum and that career centers within each college would be helpful.

Surprisingly, scheduling and administration received relatively few comments, perhaps due to the nature of the questions. However, for those students who did respond to these areas, the greatest number of complaints were about parking, registration, and financial aid. Graduates also wanted more night and weekend courses as well as a greater variety of courses during the summer.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Responses within the College of Arts and Sciences were generally positive. Graduates were satisfied with faculty, with more positive than negative faculty comments, yet they were less satisfied with curriculum and career planning than some of the other colleges.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ³	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ⁴
Faculty	30%	Faculty	48%
Curriculum	20%	Academic Program	36%
Academic Program	18%	Graduate Program	8%
Advising	11%	-----	-----
Career Planning	11%	-----	-----

Faculty ranked first in the positive areas with 48% of all positive and strongly positive comments. Many graduates felt that their faculty were excellent, although this was truer of some departments than of others. Some graduates said that faculty were highly influential and had taught them to be open-minded and to think about global issues.

"I am pleased with my education at BSU. I has, without a doubt, given me job skills and taught me to be a "thinker". I am especially grateful to my professors in the English Department who obviously enjoy what they do and excel both in their field and teaching. Thanks"

They felt that they had received a well-rounded education and gained a better understanding of

"Professors are there to help students learn. They should never control and manipulate students for their own power pleasure. Professors should relate to their students and try to understand their problems so that together they can learn in a positive environment."

the world around them. Graduates also felt that faculty were genuinely concerned about students and went out of their way to offer appropriate advising. And again, as with other colleges, positive faculty comments

often referred to specific instructors and even classes.

³ Based on 107 negative comments out of 285 comments made.

⁴ Based on 50 positive comments out of 285 comments made.

However, faculty ranked as the first area of concern among graduates with 30% of the negative and strong negative comments. Many graduates were dissatisfied with their interactions with faculty and other department staff. Some respondents felt that faculty were closed to new ideas and were often unsupportive. They also felt that faculty were not always available when a student needed help and that office hours were inconsistent. Some felt that faculty failed to keep up-to-date on requirements and were poor advisors. Others cited teaching styles as being a problem for students with most complaints focusing on out-dated material and lecture only formats. Respondents questioned the value of tenure and some felt that adjunct faculty did a better job of teaching because they could not rely on tenure to keep them employed. Yet other graduates felt that the university relied too much on adjunct faculty and that adjuncts needed to be better trained as teachers. These graduates also felt that the university relied too much on untrained graduate students who received teaching assistantships.

“Offer more diversified classes on subjects pertaining to potential job markets (i.e., environmental, oil and gas). I know this is difficult, but would prepare students for real worlds. Writing and oral skills are very important.”

The curriculum ranked second in areas of concern with 30% of all negative and strong negative comments. Many graduates asked for a greater variety of coursework and fewer core requirements. They felt that students should have the opportunity to experience a broad

range of subject matter that’s tailored to their specific career needs and interests. However, most understood the need for some requirements and felt that writing courses, specifically, should not only be required, but also stressed.

Graduates also recommended that more classes be made available that were specific to a career. Many felt that not enough was being done to help students develop degrees that would lead to employment, and others felt the

“Offer ideas of employment besides being employed in Public Schools! There are very few jobs openings locally in Art Ed--talk about other options including self-employment...”

only choice they had for a career was in the field of education. They suggested coursework

“I am not employed in my major!”

would lead to self-employment and business courses that would help

them market themselves and maintain records. They also wanted assistance in developing portfolios and information on to get published, how to get into graduate school, and how to find nontraditional jobs within their field. In fact, these graduates also were more likely to say that they had not found employment within their major.

Furthermore, they also were more likely to say they had taken courses to prepare them for graduate school. A number of students also suggested that their departments develop graduate programs. Many of these

respondents felt that graduate programs would benefit the university, by

“My biggest disappointment is the knowledge that I cannot pursue adequate graduate study in fine arts in Boise. I’ve always intended to get an MFA but hesitate about leaving the area...”

increasing the number of students enrolled in the university, as well as the students. This was especially true for those graduates who expressed a desire or felt it necessary to remain in the Boise area.

“I appreciate the BSU Biology and Chemistry departments for their support in helping me make my medical school dreams a reality.”

Also, some graduates also suggested that existing undergraduate programs be expanded. This was especially true for the smaller programs that have few faculty and offer few course choices or electives.

However, these graduates also seemed more satisfied with their programs in general. They said they felt close to their professors and other members of the department staff and had a great deal of one-on-one.

Yet not all graduates felt that expanding programs was necessarily a good idea. Academic programs ranked third in areas of concern with 18% of all negative and strong negative comments.

Many of these graduates commented that university funds were being spread to thin to the detriment of the

“I worry that BSU will forget the arts and humanities in its quest for big engineering dollars. Humanities departments that exist mostly for providing core programs to science and business majors weakens the true spine of a well-rounded education.”

liberal arts college. They cited the new engineering program and the expanding business

program as being the biggest culprits and the areas they felt would be receiving the majority of funds in the future. They felt that this funneling of funds into other colleges would greatly hurt Arts and Sciences majors since there would be less money for faculty and materials.

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

College of Business graduates were most concerned about the curriculum. Over one-third of the negative and strong negative responses (35%) were from students who felt the curriculum needed revising.

“Keep the classes and assignments current and as timely as possible, especially if they anything to do with using computers...”

Many suggested that the department find or develop materials that reflect new trends in business, rather than reusing outdated materials, and that technology be kept current. Students were frustrated when they entered the workforce and found they were unprepared because of a lack of up-to-date instruction. They also suggested more time working with computer applications and more hands-on instruction.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ⁵	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ⁶
Curriculum	35%	Faculty	56%
Faculty	34%	Academic Program	27%
Advising	11%	Career Planning	14%
Administration	8%	-----	-----
Academic Program	5%	-----	-----

“Education from books is important but most important is real world/life experience. Students need to know what its like on the outside--get them into more internships, on-site company visits. Interaction with the community, etc.”

Graduates also felt that assignments in the curriculum that reflected “real-life” job tasks would help them once they made the transition from academia to “real-world.” Many suggested their departments provide more internships and many of those who participated in internships

⁵ Based on 108 negative comments out of 245 total.

⁶ Based on 40 positive comments out of 245 total.

had high praise for the program. They found the experience invaluable and a few graduates recommended that internships be required for all business majors.

Business graduates also were concerned about faculty with 34% of the strong negative and negative responses falling into this category. However, nearly 56% of the positive and strong positive comments also were about faculty. Obviously students had very strong feelings, both positive and negative, about their instructors. Many of the negative responses dealt with teaching styles with students asking for more hands-on and less lecture. They also recommended consistent grading and less favoritism.

On the positive side, many students said faculty were caring and concerned. They often found faculty to be helpful and enthusiastic and willing to work with the students.

Many of the positive comments mentioned specific instructors with students wanting to personally thank the faculty member for a job well

“I liked it when the instructors asked the students what they liked and disliked about the course content, grading, and difficulty at the end of the semester. I found the discussion format best so the instructor could ask clarifying questions and objectively take the feedback.”

done. Yet there also were many general comments with students listing their instructional preferences as well as how they felt about the tools the faculty offer to enhance learning, such as study guides and groups and multi-media presentations. Other faculty suggestions ranged from getting rid of tenure to finding ways to keep good faculty. Yet many of the comments were anecdotal and often reflected the impact faculty interaction had on student academic success.

Advising ranked third as an area of concern with 11% of the total negative and strong negative responses. Graduates often felt that advisors were unaware of requirements and were sometimes inconsistent or unconcerned when helping students plan their course of study. Some graduates also felt that peer advisors were inadequately trained and did not have the knowledge or expertise to properly assist students. Yet other graduates were happy with their advisors, who were often faculty members who took the time to ensure

“Advisors should have access to transcripts. They should have some training so they can actually help students, not just sign them off.”

that the student's schedule fit the student's needs. These advisors also seemed to be genuinely concerned about the student's overall well being.

Business graduates also were concerned about administration with 8% of the total number of negative and strong negative responses falling into this category. These comments focused on the need for more parking, improvements in the registration process, and better service in the financial aid office. Graduates felt that there was too much bureaucracy involved in getting their degrees and that much of it amounted to nothing more than a series of hoops they had to jump through.

"I think the greatest weakness is the staff in financial aid, registration, etc. who do not understand the goals of the university or the needs of the students."

Five percent of the negative and strong negative comments were about the programs in general. However, 27% of the positive comments also were about academic programs.

Graduates often had high praise for their programs and the university as a whole. Many of these graduates felt that they had received an excellent education and had

benefited greatly from the experience, personally as well as career-wise.

"My overall experience at BSU was outstanding. I learned so much that enabled me to improve my life and make choices that had a positive influence for me... Thank you for all BSU has done for me!"

Career planning also was important to these graduates with 14% of the total positive and strong positive comments falling into this category. Many of these graduates felt that the department was very helpful in helping them find a position. However, several of these graduates also felt that the College of Business should create its own placement center.

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

Since this survey covered only 1994-95 and 1995-96, the only majors in the College of Engineering were Construction Management and Instructional Performance & Technology (IPT).

"Teach updated material and use new books. Many books used by the construction management program are 10 plus years old."

These graduates were most concerned with the curriculum with 31% of the total negative and strong negative responses falling into this category. Many of those graduates felt that the curriculum needed to be updated to reflect trends within the industry. They also felt that state of the art technology was lacking in the college, and this was a problem for many of the graduates once they entered the workforce. They also wanted more hands-on experience and more opportunity to complete real world projects within the community.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ⁷	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ⁸
Curriculum	31%	Academic Program	64%
Academic Program	30%	Faculty	27%
Faculty	23%	Graduate Program	9%
Graduate Program	8%	-----	-----
Advising	8%	-----	-----

Academic programs ranked second in the areas of concern with 30% of the total negative and

“Develop core classes that meet the university criteria but relate to construction and business. If I wanted a well-rounded education I would still be there.”

strong negative responses. Many students felt that the programs needed to revise the requirements and that redundancies and outdated coursework be eliminated. Others felt that the list of electives should be expanded and that there should be a greater variety of

coursework offered. Some students felt that many of the requirements from other colleges were unnecessary and that the programs should focus more on coursework that would help the student become successful in the workplace.

Yet 64% of the total positive and strong positive comments also were about the programs, with many students offering their departments high praise for a job well done. These students felt their programs

“...the department did a terrific job, especially considering all the changes in the development of the program and growth challenges with computer technology.”

⁷ Based on 13 negative comments out of 48 total.

⁸ Based on 12 positive comments out of 48 total.

“...I could never have asked for more prepared, knowledgeable, concerned instructors. Thanks BSU!”

were excellent and they learned what they needed to be successful in the “real world.”

Faculty also received praise with 27% of the total positive and strong positive responses. Often, as with other colleges, these students mentioned specific instructors and many felt faculty went beyond the call of duty to help ensure students’ academic success.

Yet these students also shared some concern about faculty with 23% of the total negative and

“I would suggest better discretion when selecting faculty. Also, faculty should study/review the curriculum and match it with a realistic working environment...”

strong negative responses falling into this category. Some students felt that the faculty should become more involved with helping students make decisions regarding their

academic progress as they work toward their career goals, rather than just teaching the necessary coursework. Students also felt that faculty should know the current methods and technology being used in the workplace and that only well trained instructors be used.

Another concern for these students was that the new engineering program was going to take funds from established programs. They wanted assurances that funds would

“I am very concerned that the CM program is being set aside for the new engineering program....”

be equitably spent. They also felt that the new program could be detrimental if faculty and course selections for current programs were to be cut to make additional faculty and courses available for the engineering program students.

Graduates praised the Distance Learning option available for IPT students although there were some suggestions on ways to improve how the courses are taught and delivered. Yet in general, these students

“Distance learning needs to be handled differently than classroom. Immediate feedback is critical; team exercises are difficult; explanations must be clearer.”

seemed very satisfied with their experience.

College of Health Sciences

College of Health Science graduates felt most strongly about faculty. Faculty was ranked first as the area of most concern with 46% of the negative and strongly negative comments. Many graduates felt that faculty needed to be more aware of

“When an instructor continues to get poor reviews from students, follow through with either replacing them or figure out another way to solve the problem.”

“real world” issues and that they should try to keep their curriculum current. Others felt that faculty should be more open-minded and more conducive to teaching alternative healing methods. They also wanted flexibility, fairness, and more consistent grading practices. Graduates also wanted better communication between faculty and student.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ⁹	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ¹⁰
Faculty	46%	Faculty	41%
Curriculum	20%	Academic Program	21%
Academic Program	13%	Curriculum	12%
Administration	8%	-----	-----
Advising	5%	-----	-----

“Some instructors were outstanding. Their support and encouragement kept me going when others questioned whether I should become a nurse.”

However, faculty also were ranked first as the most positive area with 41% of all positive and strong positive comments. Graduates felt that many of the instructors were very caring and concerned. As with comments about faculty from other colleges, these comments were most often about specific faculty members. Oftentimes, these graduates wanted to add their personal “thank you” to a faculty member who went out of their way to make the student’s educational experience the most rewarding possible.

⁹ Based on 77 negative responses out of 179 total.

¹⁰ Based on 49 positive responses out of 179 total.

Curriculum was ranked second in the areas of concern with 20% of all negative and strong negative comments. These graduates

recommended that coursework be kept up-to-date and that instructors use less lecture and more class discussion.

They also suggested that instructors rethink their current

“Let go of some of the structure and allow more creativity for independent study.”

teaching methods. Many noted that health care is a rapidly changing field and that students must learn a great deal in a relatively short period of time. Graduates felt that the curriculum and modes of instruction should reflect this. Graduates also wanted more clinical time and earlier in their degree, and many also suggested professors provide less theory and offer more hands-on instruction. Graduates also asked for more internships and a greater emphasis on coursework that was more specific to their careers. Some expressed frustration over coursework that was too general and suggested more courses that were similar to those offered in vocational technology programs.

The academic programs ranked third on the list of areas of concern with 13% of the comments falling into this category. Yet 21% of the positive comments also were about the general quality

“Don't put so much emphasis on paperwork and jumping through the right hoops—but focus on the practical application of the knowledge required and how it will be applied in the workforce.”

of the programs. Many of those graduates who had concerns felt that the some of the programs needed restructuring. They suggested changes in the coursework that would allow more clinical time throughout

the program and changes in when students should take certain courses in their program.

Graduates also were concerned about the increasing bureaucracy and departmental politics.

Many felt their programs could be improved if the “hoops” were lessened and the departmental staff was more cohesive. Some graduates suggested their programs be lengthened.

Graduates who commented positively about their programs often felt that the career path that had chosen was a very rewarding one. They were grateful that their programs provided them with the coursework they needed to fulfill their career aspirations and felt confident in entering the workforce.

College of Social Science and Public Affairs

Graduates from the College of Social Science and Public Affairs ranked faculty as the number one area of concern with 33% of the negative and strong negative responses. Many students felt that some faculty could be unbending and narrow in their beliefs. Some graduates also were concerned about the appearance of department infighting. Graduates also wanted better communication between faculty and students and faculty who were enthusiastic about teaching.

“For the teachers to treat the students with respect and for the teachers to communicate effectively with students, especially when decisions have direct impact on your education.”

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ¹¹	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ¹²
Faculty	33%	Faculty	43%
Curriculum	20%	Academic Program	43%
Academic Program	13%	Curriculum	9%
Career Planning	12%	-----	-----
Advising	9%	-----	-----

“Very satisfied with the education, faculty/student interaction. Faculty can make or break a student’s motivation to strive for more.”

Yet faculty also received 43% of all positive and strong positive comments. Often graduates praised instructors by name and wanted to say thanks for all the assistance. Many graduates also felt that faculty were concerned, compassionate, and dedicated. They also found faculty

to be interested in social issues and very vocal and passionate. Some graduates felt faculty encouraged students to reach out to others and to discover greater understanding of the world around them.

¹¹ Based on 226 negative responses out of 557 total.

¹² Based on 104 positive responses out of 557 total.

Curriculum ranked as the second area of concern with 20% of the negative and strong negative comments. Many graduates felt that there were redundancies in the curriculum and several were unhappy with taking core requirements they didn't find pertinent to their degrees. Other graduates wanted more course selection. This was especially true for smaller departments where faculty and class selection are limited. Graduates also had suggestions for specific courses that they would like to see added to the curriculum. These courses often were those that would help graduates in finding a career and were highly specific to a job area.

“A lot of required courses are unnecessary and a waste of time. Requirements should be made individually for student's career plans.”

“The program, as I experienced it, was painfully inadequate in preparing students for clinical work.”

Academic program was ranked third area of concern with 13% of the total negative and strong negative comments. Graduates felt that the many of the programs were underfunded and that there were too few faculty for the number of students enrolled. Graduates also felt that many of the programs failed to provide students with the skills they needed to enter the workforce. They were disillusioned, and some found their educational experience to be worthless in the real world.

However, academic programs ranked second as a positive area with 43% of the positive and strong positive comments. These graduates felt well prepared for the workforce and found their educational experience to be an excellent one. Many of the graduates were grateful to staff and faculty and had found rewarding careers once they left the university.

“I am proud of my BSU diploma. Thanks!”

Career planning was ranked fourth as an area of concern with 12% of the negative and strong negative comments falling into this category. These graduates had had difficulty finding employment within their major. This was especially true for graduates whose degrees were non-specific to a career. Many of these graduates asked for better career counseling and coursework that would help them find a job once they left the university.

“Restructure career center so it actually helps students plan for and work into jobs/career that will be productive and even pay the bills. I was very disappointed in the lack of career counseling and help... I received.”

Advising was the fifth area of concern with 9% of all negative and strong negative comments. Graduates felt that advising was often inadequate and that many of the advisors lacked the knowledge necessary to assist students

“Get rid of peer advising—they know less than I did about what I needed and often directed me in the wrong direction. The professors were the best advisors because they knew what I needed for my education and graduation.”

in academic planning. Graduates said they had received the wrong information, which threatened to, or did, delay their graduation. Some graduates said they were very frustrated with the process adding that it was often difficult to schedule an appointment with their advisor in time for registration. They also felt that many advisors didn’t care about the students or whether or not they were giving the correct information. According to some graduates, advisors just “signed-off” on registration materials and never actually advised students.

College of Education

Faculty was the number one area of concern for education graduates. Nearly one-quarter (24%) of all negative and strong negative comments were about faculty. Many of these comments dealt with teaching styles, redundancies, and politics within the department. Some graduates felt that faculty should meet and discuss the curriculum and weed out those classes that were unnecessary or duplicates or other classes. Also, many of these graduates (secondary education majors) dealt with professors who taught methods courses in other departments. Graduates were often frustrated at the lack of communication between departments and felt it was difficult to get the information they needed during advising.

“Professors need to be more accessible to students. I found certain professors very difficult to meet with, even during their posted office hours. Some did not return phone calls. It was very frustrating at times.”

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ¹³	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ¹⁴
Faculty	24%	Academic Program	49%
Academic Program	21%	Faculty	17%
Curriculum	21%	Curriculum	13%
Student Teaching	12%	-----	-----
Advising	12%	-----	-----

However, not all the comments were negative. Faculty was ranked second in positive areas with

For the most part, I had a great experience with the Elementary Ed. Department. I loved a lot of the teachers...

17% of all positive and strong positive responses. Some graduates felt their instructors were exceptional educators and that the education program, itself, was excellent.

Specific faculty and courses often were singled out and some students praised the faculty advising they had received. Graduates felt that faculty were conscientious and caring and were enthusiastic about teaching.

Academic program ranked second in areas of concern with 21% of the negative and strong negative comments. These responses often reflected the students' frustration with trying to meet department and university requirements. Graduates complained of the "hoops" they were asked to jump

Make information (academic and general) more readily available and easy to access. Too frequently I had to find the essentials by "accident." I didn't even know what questions to ask.

through and they felt that the bureaucracy was sometimes overwhelming. They also felt that the

"Eliminate the EQE. While I did pass this test, these requirements really should be assessed in a different way."

program had too many redundancies and it was difficult to find out about endorsements. Several students felt that the writing (EQE) and mathematics tests required by the

education department should be eliminated. Many felt the tests were unrealistic and unfair for some students. Others felt the criteria for the writing exam were vague and the grading

¹³ Based on 211 negative comments out of 426 total.

¹⁴ Based on 46 positive comments out of 426 total.

subjective. These graduates felt that the tests did not measure what they were supposed to measure and that they were not a fair assessment of a student's teaching ability.

However, academic program ranked first in positive areas with 49%. Many graduates felt the program trained them well and their degrees were valuable. Relatively few felt that their degree did not help them find employment, although there is a perceived over-saturation of teachers in the area. Yet the majority of the responses praised the program and felt that their degrees had helped them find rewarding employment.

Curriculum ranked third in areas of concern with 21% of the responses. Many graduates were dissatisfied with their student teaching experience (12%) and believed students

“Get teachers into the classroom all through their education. Get them hands-on training/experience.”

should spend more time in the in secondary and

“The entire program was very beneficial and a great educational experience!”

elementary classrooms prior to graduation. They suggested this could be done through internships, practicums, or by expanding the student teaching course to a full semester or possibly a year.

Many students also felt that changes in the curriculum were necessary to ensure students received more hands-on, real-world experience. They also asked for fewer redundancies and more classroom management. They wanted courses on how to deal with legal issues in education and how to cope with special needs children. Many of these graduates felt overwhelmed once they left the education classrooms for a classroom all their own and suggested more emphasis be placed on how to successfully make that transition.

“I think the advisors REALLY need to do a better job. My advisor told me one thing and then on the next visit changed what he told me. He was very relaxed about everything when my education and/or graduation date was VERY important.”

Advising received 12% of the responses and was the fifth area of concern. Graduates felt that peer advising had been unsuccessful and that advisors were often unsure of the requirements. The advising bureaucracy and the inability to get accurate information also frustrated graduates. Many of these graduates

had difficulty, especially transfer students, with continuity in advising and often felt that advisors were unconcerned about students and whether or not they received the correct information.

“I think that it would be significant to education students if there were a short course offered which helps orient students towards seeking a job. Application and interview procedures, talking with people who are teaching and using their degrees in various ways would be helpful.”

However, these students were generally satisfied with career planning assistance and course scheduling with few responses in either of those categories.

However, those students who did respond to career planning some suggested that a class on how to get a job would be helpful. For those students responding to course scheduling, the majority suggested that core start later in the summer for those teachers who are just finishing the spring term and that more evening classes be offered.

College of Technology

College of Technology ranked faculty as the number one concern with 40% of all negative and strong negative comments. Many of these graduates wanted faculty who were qualified and had current

“Hire qualified teachers with updated knowledge.”

knowledge. Some felt that faculty failed to update the curriculum and were unconcerned about the success of students. Others felt that faculty did not communicate well with each other or with the students and that department politics sometimes made it difficult for students.

Top Five Areas of Concern	Percent ¹⁵	Top Three Positive Areas	Percent ¹⁶
Faculty	40%	Academic Program	33%
Academic Program	28%	Faculty	26%
Curriculum	17%	Career Planning	23%
Administration	5%	-----	-----
Career Planning	5%	-----	-----

¹⁵ Based on 39 negative comments out of 138 total.

¹⁶ Based on 40 positive comments out of 138 total.

However, faculty ranked second in positive areas with 33% of all positive and strong positive comments. Graduates felt instructors were conscientious and concerned for students. They also felt that many of their instructors were dedicated and knowledgeable and went out of their way to assist students.

“Instructors were excellent and showed genuine concern for the well being and success of all students.”

Academic program ranked as the second area of concern with 28% of the negative and strong negative comments. Many of these graduates felt their programs should be expanded and that vocational credits should transfer to the academic side of the university. Some graduates felt that the university undervalued their vocational degrees and that a greater emphasis should be placed on helping these students continue their education.

“The tech side of the university is still looked on as the ugly step-child. Tech instructors were great. Academic side instructors were a little intolerant of tech students.”

However, academic programs ranked first in positive areas with 33% of all positive and strong positive comments. These graduates felt that they received an excellent education and were satisfied with their degrees. Many said they found employment soon after graduation and were proud of their BSU degree. They also hoped to continue their coursework at some point in the future, although for many, this depended on the ability to transfer credits from the vocational side.

“If at all possible, try to make the programs longer so that so much information isn’t (taught) in so little time. Also, make some of the classes transferable.”

Curriculum ranked as the third greatest area of concern with 17% of all negative and strong negative comments. Graduates suggested more “hands-on” coursework. Many also felt that the curriculum could be improved by conferring with businesses about necessary skills. Others felt their programs should be lengthened and that this additional time would allow students to truly absorb the material. They noted that the courses were often fast-paced and intensive and that it was sometimes difficult to master concepts within the short time frame.

Administration ranked fourth as an area of concern with 5% of all negative and strong negative comments. Again, many of these graduates felt that their vocational education credits should have some value on the academic side of the university.

“...Although I have worked my way up, a degree in business would better suit my promotion opportunities. Since credits at Vo-Tech do not transfer, I have had to take additional courses. To get my BBA I would have 128 credits plus all credits taken at Vo-Tech side.”

Career planning was the fifth area of concern (5%), but also ranked third in positive areas with 23% of all positive and strong positive comments. Most of these graduates felt that their program did a good job of helping them plan a career and felt their coursework was very valuable in preparing them for employment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Generally graduates seem to be pleased with their experience at BSU. Most found employment within three months after leaving the university and many are continuing their education. And those who are working on graduate degrees feel well-prepared to do so. Also, most graduates said that BSU faculty were outstanding educators and concerned about their students. A majority of graduates said they would enroll in their program again and recommend their major to a friend.

Yet graduates also found areas for improvement. They suggested that coursework be kept up-to-date, that faculty remain open and receptive to new ideas, and that department instructors and other staff develop an amicable working relationship within their program, as well as with other departments, administrators, and students.

“I loved my time at BSU,” one graduates wrote. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything.” Perhaps by taking into consideration the recommendations made by other alumni who completed this survey, BSU can make earning a degree at the university just as rewarding and positive for all students.

Table 1. Highest Degree Received¹

Degree	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Associate or Certificate	185	15.25	632	18.36
Bachelors	830	68.43	2404	69.82
Masters	198	16.32	407	11.82
Total	1213	100.00	3443	100.00

Table 2. Age Based upon Degree Received

Group	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median
Associate/Certificate	627	30.04	9.27	28
Bachelors	2367	28.38	7.46	25
Masters	345	36.88	8.51	36
Total	3339	2.57	8.34	26

Table 3. Age of Respondents and Total Group²

Age	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 21	21	1.78	94	2.82
21-24	364	30.80	1162	34.80
25-29	265	22.42	833	24.95
30-39	272	23.01	735	22.01
40 & up	260	22.00	515	15.42
Total	1182	100.00	3339	100.00

Table 4. Ethnicity of Respondents and Total Group³

Ethnicity	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Minority	71	6.01	252	7.55
White non-Hispanic	1033	87.39	2854	85.47
Not reported	78	6.60	233	6.98
Total	1182	100.00	3339	100.00

¹ $\chi^2 = 42.47, p = .001$ ² $\chi^2 = 72.21, p = .001$ ³ $\chi^2 = 6.92, p = .031$

Table 5. Gender of Respondents and Total Group⁴

Gender	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female	766	64.81	1951	58.43
Male	416	35.19	1388	41.57
Total	1182	100.00	3339	100.00

Table 6. Cumulative GPAs of Respondents and Non-Respondents

Cumulative GPA	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 2.5	48	4.06	196	5.87
2.50-2.99	293	24.79	992	29.71
3.0-3.49	434	36.72	1226	36.72
3.5 and higher	407	34.43	925	27.70
Total	1182	100.00	3339	100.00

Table 7. Cumulative GPA by Degree Received

Group	Number	Mean	Std. Dev.	Median
Associate/Certificate	627	3.15	0.56	3.20
Bachelors	2367	3.13	0.42	3.12
Masters	345	3.61	0.34	3.70
Total	3339	3.18	0.46	3.19

Table 8. Transfer Status of Respondents and Total Group

Transfer Status	Survey Respondents		Total Group	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Native	569	48.14	1613	48.31
Transfer	613	51.86	1726	51.69
Total	1182	100.00	3339	100.00

⁴ $\chi^2 = 30.6, p=.001$

Table 9. Current Activities of Graduates

Current activities	Frequency	Percent
Continuing education, not employed	49	4.1
Employed and continuing education	238	19.8
Employed full-time	703	58.6
Employed part-time	67	5.6
Self-employed	45	3.8
In military	7	0.6
Caring for home and family	37	3.1
Unemployed and seeking work	28	2.3
Other	26	2.2

Table 10. Preparation for Graduate Work

How well prepared for graduate work:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
Exceptionally well	122	10.1	10.1
More than adequately	354	29.3	39.3
Adequately	521	43.1	82.4
Less than adequately	63	5.2	87.6
Very poorly	11	0.9	88.5
Not applicable	139	11.5	100.0

Table 11. Current Annual Salaries of 1994-95 and 1995-96 Graduates

Salary Range	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
Less than \$15,000	94	10.1	10.1
\$15,000-\$19,999	131	14.1	24.1
\$20,000-\$24,999	208	22.3	46.5
\$25,000-\$29,999	148	15.9	62.3
\$30,000-\$34,999	122	13.1	75.4
\$35,000-\$39,999	79	8.5	83.9
\$40,000-\$44,999	58	6.2	90.1
\$45,000-\$49,999	34	3.6	93.8
\$50,000 or more	58	6.2	100.0

Table 12. Use of Knowledge Acquired at BSU on the Job

Response	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
Yes, frequently	579	61.4	61.4
Yes, occasionally	254	26.9	88.3
Almost never	54	5.7	94.1
No	56	5.9	100.00

Table 13. Importance of Skills and Impact BSU Had
Sorted by Mean Importance
University-wide Results

Skill	Number Responding	Mean Importance	Agree Important	Mean Impact	Agree Impacted
Recognizing and using effective oral communication skills	1181	3.72	97.6%	2.98	73.6%
Using effective written skills	1180	3.68	96.2%	3.21	83.3%
Defining and solving problems	1180	3.67	97.5%	2.99	75.9%
Meeting the challenges in my career field of choice	1179	3.66	96.3%	2.80	65.0%
Committing to lifelong learning	1180	3.65	96.1%	3.04	76.0%
Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values	1180	3.64	95.1%	3.00	74.4%
Developing standards for my personal and professional life	1178	3.61	94.7%	2.73	60.5%
Developing skills that employers need	1179	3.58	94.4%	2.78	63.0%
Getting along with people from various cultures, races, backgrounds, etc	1177	3.55	92.3%	2.67	56.7%
Working cooperatively in groups; working as a team member	1179	3.49	92.7%	3.02	73.4%
Developing and using effective leadership skills	1182	3.48	93.0%	2.63	55.0%
Developing original ideas and/or products	1182	3.45	91.7%	2.77	65.3%
Acquiring a well-rounded general education	1179	3.44	90.3%	3.14	81.5%
Analyzing and drawing conclusions from various types of data	1180	3.35	88.0%	2.95	70.7%
Understanding the interaction of human beings and the environment	1179	3.12	77.9%	2.59	53.4%
Learning about existing and emerging career options	1177	3.09	77.3%	2.31	38.8%
Understanding international issues (political, economic, etc.)	1183	2.88	68.6%	2.33	40.2%

Table 14. Importance of Skills and Impact BSU Had
Sorted by Mean Importance
Associate and Certificate Results

Skill	Number Responding	Mean Importance	Agree Important	Mean Impact	Agree Impacted
Developing skills that employers need	174	3.71	97.7%	3.27	84.0%
Meeting the challenges in my career field of choice	175	3.7	96.6%	3.11	78.6%
Developing standards for my personal and professional life	175	3.69	97.1%	2.94	70.1%
Defining and solving problems	174	3.68	98.9%	3.10	79.8%
Committing to lifelong learning	175	3.67	97.1%	3.12	78.4%
Recognizing and using effective oral communication skills	171	3.64	98.2%	3.02	76.9%
Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values	175	3.58	95.4%	2.89	66.5%
Working cooperatively in groups; working as a team member	174	3.58	95.4%	3.05	73.7%
Getting along with people from various cultures, races, backgrounds, etc	173	3.56	93.1%	2.76	59.2%
Using effective written skills	174	3.53	94.3%	3.09	77.1%
Acquiring a well-rounded general education	174	3.52	93.7%	3.09	76.6%
Developing and using effective leadership skills	174	3.49	93.7%	2.67	56.9%
Analyzing and drawing conclusions from various types of data	174	3.41	89.7%	2.90	67.4%
Developing original ideas and/or products	175	3.27	88.6%	2.72	60.2%
Learning about existing and emerging career options	175	3.26	84.6%	2.69	59.4%
Understanding the interaction of human beings and the environment	174	3.2	80.5%	2.58	51.4%
Understanding international issues (political, economic, etc.)	173	2.68	56.6%	2.16	35.1%

Table 15. Importance of Skills and Impact BSU Had
Sorted by Mean Importance
Bachelor's Results

Skill	Number Responding	Mean Importance	Agree Important	Mean Impact	Agree Impacted
Recognizing and using effective oral communication skills	814	3.76	98.2%	3.00	73.9%
Using effective written skills	811	3.7	97.0%	3.23	84.7%
Defining and solving problems	812	3.67	97.5%	2.95	74.3%
Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values	811	3.65	94.6%	3.00	74.9%
Meeting the challenges in my career field of choice	810	3.64	96.0%	2.68	59.9%
Committing to lifelong learning	810	3.63	95.6%	3.00	74.8%
Developing standards for my personal and professional life	810	3.6	94.7%	2.67	57.8%
Developing skills that employers need	812	3.56	94.3%	2.67	57.6%
Getting along with people from various cultures, races, backgrounds, etc	809	3.56	92.3%	2.68	57.0%
Working cooperatively in groups; working as a team member	813	3.5	92.6%	3.04	73.9%
Developing and using effective leadership skills	812	3.47	92.0%	2.60	53.8%
Developing original ideas and/or products	812	3.46	91.6%	2.75	64.3%
Acquiring a well-rounded general education	812	3.46	91.5%	3.20	84.7%
Analyzing and drawing conclusions from various types of data	812	3.33	87.6%	2.94	70.6%
Learning about existing and emerging career options	807	3.12	79.2%	2.25	35.1%
Understanding the interaction of human beings and the environment	812	3.1	77.8%	2.59	53.7%
Understanding international issues (political, economic, etc.)	815	2.93	71.9%	2.37	40.3%

Table 16. Importance of Skills and Impact BSU Had
Sorted by Mean Importance
Master's Results

Skill	Number Responding	Mean Importance	Agree Important	Mean Impact	Agree Impacted
Recognizing and using effective oral communication skills	195	3.7	94.4%	3.25	82.9%
Committing to lifelong learning	195	3.69	97.4%	3.11	78.9%
Meeting the challenges in my career field of choice	194	3.67	96.9%	2.98	73.7%
Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values	194	3.64	96.9%	3.08	79.4%
Defining and solving problems	194	3.64	96.4%	3.08	78.8%
Using effective oral communication	196	3.64	94.9%	2.87	69.7%
Developing standards for my personal and professional life	193	3.56	92.7%	2.76	63.2%
Developing original ideas and/or products	195	3.54	94.9%	2.89	74.0%
Developing and using effective leadership skills	196	3.52	96.4%	2.69	57.9%
Developing skills that employers need	193	3.51	91.7%	2.83	66.5%
etc.	195	3.49	91.3%	2.56	53.3%
Working cooperatively in groups; working as a team member	192	3.39	90.6%	2.92	70.6%
Analyzing and drawing conclusions from various types of data	194	3.37	88.1%	3.03	74.0%
Acquiring a well-rounded general education	193	3.31	82.4%	2.94	72.5%
Understanding the interaction of human beings and the environment	193	3.16	75.6%	2.58	53.6%
Understanding international issues (political, economic, etc.)	195	2.85	65.1%	2.33	44.0%
Learning about existing and emerging career options	195	2.83	63.1%	2.23	35.2%

Table 17. Graduate Responses to Questions Related to Their Major
University-wide Results

Question	Number Responding	Agree		Disagree	
		Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students	1193	45%	45%	7%	3%
I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major	1196	51%	35%	10%	5%
Many department/program courses were <i>not</i> offered at the right times for me	1187	18%	27%	36%	18%
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant	1187	10%	25%	44%	22%
If starting over, I would enroll in same major/program again	1188	47%	31%	12%	9%
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns	1191	31%	42%	19%	9%
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty	1179	23%	37%	27%	13%
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support	1185	41%	36%	16%	7%
Faculty were outstanding teachers	1186	33%	54%	11%	3%

Table 18. Graduate Responses to Questions Related to Their Major Associate/Certificate Results

Question	Number Responding	Agree		Disagree	
		Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students	178	44%	44%	8%	4%
I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major	179	54%	31%	10%	5%
Many department/program courses were <i>not</i> offered at the right times for me	176	20%	22%	31%	28%
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant	177	10%	20%	45%	25%
If starting over, I would enroll in same major/program again	178	49%	26%	13%	11%
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns	176	38%	35%	19%	8%
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty	177	24%	40%	25%	11%
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support	176	42%	39%	13%	6%
Faculty were outstanding teachers	176	37%	48%	11%	4%

Table 19. Graduate Responses to Questions Related to Their Major Bachelor's Results

Question	Number Responding		Agree		Disagree	
	Strongly	Strongly	Strongly	Strongly	Strongly	Strongly
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students	820	43%	46%	7%	3%	
I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major	822	47%	37%	10%	6%	
Many department/program courses were <i>not</i> offered at the right times for me	819	21%	28%	35%	16%	
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant	818	9%	27%	44%	20%	
If starting over, I would enroll in same major/program again	817	45%	32%	13%	10%	
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns	821	28%	43%	19%	9%	
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty	809	24%	36%	27%	13%	
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support	816	41%	35%	17%	7%	
Faculty were outstanding teachers	816	30%	56%	11%	2%	

Table 20. Graduate Responses to Questions Related to Their Major Master's Degree Results

Question	Number Responding	Agree		Disagree	
		Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Strongly
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students	195	58%	37%	4%	1%
I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major	195	61%	29%	7%	3%
Many department/program courses were <i>not</i> offered at the right times for me	192	6%	31%	42%	22%
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant	192	9%	21%	41%	28%
If starting over, I would enroll in same major/program again	193	55%	28%	10%	6%
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns	194	37%	43%	14%	6%
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty	193	21%	37%	26%	15%
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support	193	41%	38%	15%	6%
Faculty were outstanding teachers	194	39%	48%	10%	3%

Appendix A

SURVEY Methodology

This year, graduates from 1994-95 and 1995-96 were surveyed, a process which takes place every other year. The process was implemented to provide information to departments, colleges, and university administrators on the success of BSU graduates and their perceptions of their BSU experience.

The process began in March, and several surveys which were already available were reviewed. A draft survey was then developed and distributed to Deans and Associate Deans. By the end of April, a finalized survey was ready for printing and mailing. Departments also were given the option of developing an individual survey to be included with the alumni survey mailing.

The survey was mailed the first week of May along with cover letters from faculty from each department or program, using addresses from files maintained by the Alumni Affairs office. In early July, a follow-up postcard was sent from the Coordinator of Institutional Assessment. This was followed by another postcard several weeks later. As shown below, based on the number of correct addresses, the response rate was 36%.

<i>Number of Surveys Mailed:</i>	3,445
<i>Number returned due to Incorrect Information:</i>	53
<i>Number of Surveys Returned:</i>	1,210
<i>Percentage of Delivered Surveys Returned:</i>	35.6%

SURVEY OF BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI

Directions: This survey is part of an effort to improve educational programs and services. Please use a #2 pencil or a pen with blue or black ink to respond, filling the response area completely. Then return it in the prepaid envelope provided. If you have questions or comments, please write the Office of Institutional Assessment, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, B-319, Boise, Idaho 83725 or call (208) 385-1575.

1. Which one of the following best describes what you are currently doing?

- ① Continuing my education, not employed outside the home
- ② Employed and continuing my education
- ③ Employed full-time
- ④ Employed part-time
- ⑤ Self-employed (farm or business owner, etc.)
- ⑥ Serving in the Armed Forces/Military
- ⑦ Caring for a home/family (not employed outside the home, not continuing education)
- ⑧ Unemployed and seeking employment
- ⑨ Other (Please specify)

2. Have you taken any licensing or certification examinations related to your major or area of study at BSU?

- ① Yes, I have taken and passed such an exam
- ② Yes, I have taken such an exam but do not yet know the results
- ③ Yes, I have taken such an exam but did not pass
- ④ No, I have not taken any such exams but plan to do so
- ⑤ No, and I have no plans to take any such exams
- ⑥ Not applicable

3. Since graduating from BSU, have you taken additional course work?

- ① No
- ② Yes

4. How well did BSU prepare you to continue your education?

- ① Exceptionally well
- ② More than adequately
- ③ Adequately
- ④ Less than adequately
- ⑤ Very poorly
- ⑥ Not applicable

5. What is the highest degree you plan to obtain?

- ① I do not plan to obtain any additional degrees
- ② Bachelor's degree
- ③ Master's degree
- ④ Doctoral degree
- ⑤ Professional degree

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IF YOU ARE WORKING FULL-TIME.

6. When did you obtain your first full-time job after graduating from BSU?

- ① I was already employed and continued in that job
- ② Obtained the job prior to leaving BSU
- ③ Less than one month after leaving BSU
- ④ 1 to 3 months after leaving BSU
- ⑤ 4 to 6 months after leaving BSU
- ⑥ over 6 months after leaving BSU

7. If you were already employed, have you received a promotion or additional responsibilities as a result of the training you received?

- ① No
- ② Yes
- ③ Not Applicable

8. Are you using skills and knowledge acquired at BSU in your job?

- ① Yes, frequently
- ② Yes, occasionally
- ③ Almost never
- ④ No

9. Are you working at a job where you are using the special certifications or endorsements you received at BSU?

- ① No
- ② Yes
- ③ Not Applicable

10. What is your current job?

11. Who do you work for? (Name of Company)

12. What is your current annual salary?

- ① Less than \$15,000
- ② \$15,000 - \$19,999
- ③ \$20,000 - \$24,999
- ④ \$25,000 - \$29,999
- ⑤ \$30,000 - \$34,999
- ⑥ \$35,000 - \$39,999
- ⑦ \$40,000 - \$44,999
- ⑧ \$45,000 - \$49,999
- ⑨ \$50,000 or more

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



A-2

Below is a list of abilities or skills one might expect to develop while pursuing a postsecondary education. To the *left*, indicate your opinion of the importance of the skill in an individual's efforts to be personally/professionally successful in today's world. To the *right*, indicate the impact of your experience at this university on your attainment of each skill.

IMPORTANCE TO YOU					IMPACT OF UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCES			
Major Importance	Moderate Importance	Minor Importance	No Importance		Major Impact	Moderate Impact	Minor Impact	No Impact
↓	↓	↓	↓		↓	↓	↓	↓
4	3	2	1	13. Developing original ideas and/or products	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	14. Thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	15. Making and exercising a lifelong commitment to learning	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	16. Developing standards for my personal and professional life	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	17. Defining and solving problems	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	18. Developing skills that employers need	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	19. Meeting the challenges in my career field of choice	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	20. Getting along with people from various cultures, races, backgrounds, etc.	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	21. Recognizing and using effective oral communication skills	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	22. Developing and using effective leadership skills	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	23. Learning about existing and emerging career options	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	24. Understanding the interaction of human beings and the environment	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	25. Analyzing and drawing conclusions from various types of data	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	26. Recognizing and using effective written communication skills	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	27. Acquiring a well-rounded general education	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	28. Working cooperatively in groups; working as a team member	4	3	2	1
4	3	2	1	29. Understanding international issues (political, economic, etc.)	4	3	2	1

In general, the courses I took to fulfill the University Core requirements in areas I, II, and III.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
30. Provided me with good introductions to the subject areas	5	4	3	2	1
31. Helped me understand assumptions made and methods used in the various disciplines	5	4	3	2	1
32. Developed my critical thinking skills	5	4	3	2	1
33. Helped me understand different approaches to knowledge	5	4	3	2	1
34. Prepared me to learn independently	5	4	3	2	1
35. Provided skills and perspectives that help me to live my life better	5	4	3	2	1
36. Helped me recognize and tolerate diverse perspectives and opinions	5	4	3	2	1
37. Made me more comfortable with change and how to adapt to it	5	4	3	2	1
38. Helped me recognize the choices and responsibilities of involved citizenship	5	4	3	2	1
39. Were valuable beyond college	5	4	3	2	1

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your major program or department?

Disagree Strongly
↓
Disagree With Reservations
↓
Agree With Reservations
↓
Agree Strongly

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 40. Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 41. I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 42. Many department/program courses were <i>not</i> offered at the right times for me. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 43. A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 44. If starting over, I would enroll in the same major/program again. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 45. There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 46. Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 47. The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |
| 48. Faculty were outstanding teachers. | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) |

Most Recent Degree from BSU

Year Graduated

Major

Minor

Endorsement Area Certification or Training

What advice would you give to your department to improve the quality of education offered?

What was the best course you took at BSU?

What course did you find least helpful?

OTHER COMMENTS:

IF APPLICABLE, PLEASE USE THIS SECTION TO RESPOND TO ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS INCLUDED WITH YOUR SURVEY.

1.	A	B	C	D	E
2.	A	B	C	D	E
3.	A	B	C	D	E
4.	A	B	C	D	E
5.	A	B	C	D	E
6.	A	B	C	D	E
7.	A	B	C	D	E
8.	A	B	C	D	E
9.	A	B	C	D	E
10.	A	B	C	D	E

11.	A	B	C	D	E
12.	A	B	C	D	E
13.	A	B	C	D	E
14.	A	B	C	D	E
15.	A	B	C	D	E
16.	A	B	C	D	E
17.	A	B	C	D	E
18.	A	B	C	D	E
19.	A	B	C	D	E
20.	A	B	C	D	E

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!

I.

II.

III.

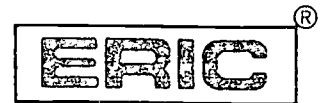
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