

Senior Survey, 2000: Methodology and Response Frequencies

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a first look at the Office of Educational Assessment's (OEA) annual survey of University of Washington, Seattle campus (UW) seniors regarding their university experiences. The 2000 survey was expanded from the previous year to re-include items that had been left off in 1999. The purpose of the expansion was to gather data comparable with that of surveys of UW alumni being conducted summer through fall of 2000. This report describes the methodology used for the 2000 Senior survey and provides tables of response frequencies and comparisons of male and female student respondents.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Seniors were defined as those undergraduates who had earned at least 135 credits toward graduation. Initially, 1500 seniors enrolled at the Seattle campus during spring quarter, 2000 were randomly selected from the entire population of 8548 seniors. At first mailing, however, it was determined that eight of the addresses were unusable; thus the initial sample was reduced to 1492, or 17.5%, of the population of seniors.

Survey mailings

Questionnaires were mailed the first week of May 2000. Accompanying each questionnaire was a cover letter, a business reply envelope in which to return the survey, and a UW Husky sticker. The stickers were included as incentives, in an attempt to increase response rate. In mid-May, a follow-up mailing (consisting of a new cover letter, another copy of the questionnaire, and a return envelope) was sent out to the entire sample. A total of 524 students returned surveys by the final cutoff date. No questionnaires were returned undeliverable. This year, students were also offered the choice to complete the survey by either filling out the paper questionnaire or completing a Web (online) version. The content of the online version was identical in every way to the paper version, save that students were asked to fill in their student identification number. As they were informed in both the cover letter and at the website, the ID number was necessary only to insure that the student was eligible to complete the survey; following verification, it was not retained with the student's data. Thirty-two students completed the online version. In sum, the final sample size was 556 (including $n = 211$ men and $n = 333$ women) and the response rate 41.6%. Thus, of the 8548 eligible seniors, 7.2% participated in the survey.

Survey Instrument

The two-page, double-sided questionnaire included items relating to several aspects of students' academic and social experiences at the UW. Students were asked about self-perceptions of their skills, their level of satisfaction with various facets of their UW education, the extent to which they felt the UW prepared them for post-college life, and how connected they felt with the UW community. The survey also included questions about paid employment, volunteer activities, and computer usage. Except for an invitation to make any comments the participant wished, all questions were closed-ended, forced-choice items. The questionnaire can be viewed here:

[Senior Student Questionnaire](#)

RESULTS

Because participants were asked to indicate their gender, the distributions or mean responses of female and male students could be compared. All significant differences between the two groups (at $p < .01$), as well as the overall response frequencies for all of the items on the Senior Survey, are provided in PDF format:

[Response frequency tables](#)