

## Senior Survey 2002: Descriptive Statistics and Gender Differences

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### INTRODUCTION

This report documents the year 2002 survey of University of Washington (UW) seniors regarding their university experiences. This report describes the methodology used for the 2002 Senior Survey and provides item descriptives and differences in responses of male and female students.

### METHOD

#### Participants

The sample was drawn from the UW Student Database (SDB). The initial population consisted of all 8664 Seattle campus seniors (undergraduates who had completed at least 135 credits). However, several other surveys were being conducted during the same timeframe, so students who had been recruited previously for any of those studies were excluded from the pool. From that reduced pool of 7114 seniors, 1500 were randomly selected.

During the 5th week of spring quarter (May 2), the Director of OEA sent an email to all eligible students informing them of the survey, inviting them to participate, and directing them to its online location. Approximately one week later students received a letter and paper version of the survey instrument. The third and final reminder (sent via email) followed 10 days later.

A total of 389 students completed the survey by the cutoff date in early June; 72% completed the survey online. The final sample included 242 women and 144 men, and the response rate was 25.9%.

#### Survey Instrument

The *Senior Survey* is a multi-part questionnaire that includes sections on computer use, volunteer activities, paid employment, satisfaction with various aspects of the UW experience, self-ratings of academic skills, and frequency and sufficiency of exposure to educational opportunities. Students who completed the survey online were required to verify their eligibility by entering their UW NetID and password. Except for questions about transfer credits and hours worked, all items were forced-choice.

## RESULTS

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

### [Descriptives and Gender Differences](#)

Here are some findings that may be of interest:

- Eighty percent of respondents worked for pay during their junior or senior years; the mean number of hours worked was 15. Women reported more hours of work than men during every year save senior year.
- In general, seniors appear to have been satisfied with their UW education. Specifically, 80% indicated that they were "mostly" or "very" satisfied with the quality of instruction in their major field, and 78% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have found my experience to be positive."
- However, a much smaller number (64%) indicated that they would choose the UW if they had to make their college choice over again. Only 60% of the respondents said they were "mostly" or "very" satisfied with the quality of instruction *outside* their major field, and only 44% were satisfied with their interactions with faculty outside the classroom.
- When asked about the sufficiency of their exposure to various educational opportunities, most seniors (66%) felt their exposure to writing opportunities was "just right" or "more than enough". Similar results were observed for exposure to math or other quantitative analyses (70%) and opportunities to think critically about knowledge (70%).
- Seniors were also asked about their satisfaction with the UW's contribution to their development in the areas of writing effectively, understanding and applying quantitative principles or methods, and critically analyzing written information. The percentages who said they were "mostly" or "very" satisfied were lower (58%, 52%, 60%, respectively) than those obtained for the sufficiency measures described above .
- Seniors showed a high level of comfort with computing. Residential access was high, with 76% owning or having access during their first year of college and increasing to 90% by senior year. The vast majority (85%) used a residential computer at least 2-3 times per week to do coursework, 94% used the Internet daily or nearly every day, 95% used email daily, and 71% reported frequent (or greater) exposure to computer opportunities through the UW.
- Turning to life post-graduation, 51% of seniors responded that their UW experience had well-prepared them for their future careers. Approximately half (45%) of the sample was satisfied only "a little" or "not at all" with assistance in finding employment, and 43% of respondents indicated that they were not satisfied with assistance by faculty in pursuing a career.