

2013 GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, the Office of Analysis, Assessment, and Accreditation surveys graduating baccalaureate students to determine attitudes and perceptions of their experiences at Utah State University. The survey includes questions on: advising, faculty/departmental experiences, general education, libraries/technology, campus climate, future plans, use and evaluation of other services and activities, overall USU experiences, and student demographics. The results of this work are complemented by the freshman/sophomore survey also conducted by the Office each year, which provides an opportunity to measure changes in attitudes and perceptions over the course of students' academic careers.

The Graduating Student Survey is distributed as part of the graduation application packet. Students are asked to complete it as part of the requirements for graduation. The results reported here are based on responses by students who made application for graduation from May 2012 to May 2013. Only those students receiving bachelor's degrees were included in the data analysis. A total of 3,557 graduated with bachelor's degrees and 1,669 usable surveys were returned, for a return rate of 47%.

Approximately 86.4% of the respondents were between the ages 21 and 30. Fifty-five percent of the respondents were female, and 7.9% of the respondents were minority students. Five percent of the respondents were international students. Among the important findings of the survey are the following (Note: percentages for the following will not add up to 100% because neutral responses are not included):

Overall Perceptions of USU

- 92.5% of the respondents said they were satisfied with the education they received at USU; 1.7% were dissatisfied.
- 83.3% said if they had to make the decision again, they would still come to USU; 4.7% said they would not.
- 71.3% said that the tuition they paid at USU was a worthwhile investment; 7.8% indicated it was not a worthwhile investment.

General Education

- 41.7% of the respondents said General Education was a useful part of their university experience, 27% indicated it was not.
- 27.6% of the respondents had difficulty scheduling general education courses; 51.2% did not have difficulty scheduling courses.
- 39.3% of the respondents said that general education courses were well taught; 24.1% said general education courses were not well taught.

Faculty/Department Experiences

- 85.9% of the respondents were satisfied with the quality of teaching in their department; 3.8% were dissatisfied.
- 89.1% of the respondents were satisfied with their department; 2.5% were not.
- 91.3% said faculty were usually available after class and during office hours; 1.4% indicated they were not available.

Libraries/Technology

- 78.9% of the respondents said USU libraries had the books, journals, and materials they needed; 3.5% said materials were not available.
- 75.2% of the respondents indicated library staff were available and helpful; 3.9% said they were not.
- 77.9% said their teachers used technology effectively in the classroom; while 4.9% disagreed.

Campus Climate

- 96.5% of the respondents said they felt safe on the USU campus; 0.7% did not feel safe.
- 9.8% of the respondents said USU does not provide enough activities for students; 62.9% disagreed.
- 79.8% said faculty care about students; 3.7% said they did not care about students.

Future Plans

- Of those respondents who plan to further their education (30.9%), 61.8% plan to continue their educations full-time.
- Of those respondents continuing their educations (full or part time), 81.8% will be seeking master's degrees.
- Of those respondents who have already secured employment after graduation (19.2%), 65% will be employed full-time.
- 4.4% of the respondents plan on staying at home with their children the year following graduation.

2013 GRADUATING STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

Utah State University's assessment program surveys three groups of students on a regular basis – freshmen/sophomores, candidates for graduation (bachelorette), and the School of Graduate Studies students. The Graduating Student Survey allows evaluation of how student opinion may have changed during the undergraduate years. The freshman/sophomore survey captures the perspectives of students as they begin their university experience, and the School of Graduate Studies survey captures the perspectives of graduate students in relationship to their experiences at USU. Similar sets of questions appear on the Graduating Student Survey and the Freshman/Sophomore Student Survey to facilitate basic comparisons of student's experiences over time.

This report focuses on the results of the 2013 Graduating Student Survey. The primary objectives were to assess the attitudes and opinions of graduating students with respect to:

- Advising
- Faculty/Department Experiences
- General Education/University Studies
- Libraries/Technology
- Campus Climate
- Future Plans
- Use and Evaluation of Other Services and Activities
- Overall USU Experiences

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Development of the Survey Instrument - Researchers reviewed previous iterations of the survey over the years, lead discussions with representatives from colleges and non-academic departments, and refined survey questions to sharpen the focus and get a clearer picture of students' experiences with different segments of the university.

Sample Selection and Survey Administration – An attempt was made to survey all of the undergraduate, graduating population. The Graduating Student Survey was distributed as part of the graduation application packet. All students were instructed to fill out the survey and return it with their graduation application materials. Surveys were collected by the Registrar's Office.

Data Analysis – Surveys were scanned and only students receiving bachelor's degrees were included in the data analysis. A total of 3,557 graduated with bachelor's degrees and 1,669 usable surveys were

returned, for a return rate of 47%. Cross-tabulations are available in the tables presented online by selecting college and/or department in the menu provided. The narrative, however, is based on the total sample.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In considering the college breakdowns shown below, it is important to note that 43 respondents (2.6%) indicated “Other” and 17 respondents (1%) did not indicate a college. The numbers of respondents by college are as follows:

Agriculture	102
Arts	25
Business	392
Education & Human Services	567
Engineering	63
Humanities & Social Sciences	305
Natural Resources	54
Science	101
Other	43
No Response	17

Eighty-six percent of the respondents were between the ages of 21 and 30. There were more women (55.2%) than men (44.8%). Forty-five percent of the respondents were married. Nineteen percent of the respondents had one or more children. Eight percent of the respondents classified themselves as minorities.

Twenty-two percent of the respondents came from outside of Utah, but within the USA, while 21.5% came from Cache Valley and 52% came from Utah, but outside Cache Valley. Five percent of the respondents indicated that their permanent residence before starting school at USU was outside the United States.

Forty-one percent of the respondents reported they had lived in student housing one or more semesters while attending USU. A plurality of respondents (32.4%) had been enrolled at USU for 7 or 8 semesters. Eighty-eight percent of respondents had taken the majority of their college classes on USU’s Logan Campus. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents had interrupted their educations. The most frequent period of interruption reported was one to two years. The most important reason for the interruption was church service.

FINDINGS: SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

Students were asked to indicate the percent of their financial support for school (tuition, books, housing, food, etc.) that came from each of the following sources. The mean percent for each source follows:

19.8%	Parents or other relative
2.3%	Spouse
10.1%	Personal Savings
11.2%	Employment
19.5%	Scholarships
16.6%	Loans
17.4%	Grants
1.2%	Other

Fifty-four percent of respondent’s total financial support came from public or donated funds in the form of scholarships, loans, or grants. Scholarships and Parents or other relatives were the most important sources of funds. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents worked half-time or more while taking courses at USU. Only 12.5% of the respondents did not work at all.

FINDINGS: ADVISING

The survey included several questions about academic advising at USU. It should be noted that respondents have the option of marking "Not Applicable" on items asking for ratings. "Not Applicable" responses have been removed, to ensure that the ratings reflect only those who had relevant experiences at USU.

When students were asked about the most important sources of information used for their academic planning, 54% said their *advisor* was the most important source. Another 30.6% said the *major requirement sheets* were their most important source of information. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents met with their advisor once a semester during the past school year. Seven percent had never met with their advisor during the past school year. The most frequently mentioned reasons for not meeting with advisors were: "Got the needed information in one appointment (30.8%)", "Got the needed information from other sources" (30.8%) or "Communicated with advisor by email or telephone" (23.5%).

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor gave them good advice, while 7.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if their advisors cared about them as an individual, 70.2% agreed or strongly agreed that they did, and 10.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their advisor was an effective mentor who provided useful and supportive guidance. Twelve percent of the respondents did not think that their advisor was an effective mentor. Twenty percent of the respondents said they had difficulty getting an appointment with an advisor.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their advisor, while 8.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if "Overall I am satisfied with the advising system at USU", 67.3% agreed or strongly agreed, while 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Neutral responses to the advising questions ranged from 13.6% to 20%. The data suggest that students are fairly satisfied with advising at USU, but the lack of overwhelming agreement as indicated by the neutral responses show likely room for improvement.

FINDINGS: FACULTY/DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES

Several questions in the survey were included to determine how students perceived their faculty and department experiences and interactions. Responses by students marking "Not Applicable" were removed in order to represent only those who had the various experiences or interactions.

When responding to the statement "I am satisfied with the quality of teaching in my department", 85.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Four percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. When students were asked if they were treated fairly by their department, 90.5% agreed or strongly agreed that they were. Two percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. When rating the availability of faculty after class and during office hours, 91.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed they were available, while 1.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When responding to the statement, "I received timely feedback on my coursework" 83% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they did. Three percent of the respondents reported that they did not receive timely feed on their coursework. When asked if they were satisfied with the amount of interaction they had with faculty, 81.3% said they did, while 4.6% said they did not. When responding to the statement, "I was satisfied with the quality of feedback that faculty gave me on my work" 77.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed while 5.5% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Students were then asked if they would like to have received better feedback on their academic progress. Thirty-four percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would have liked better feedback, while 33.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if faculty created an atmosphere of helpfulness, 83.9% of the respondents said they did, while 3.2% of the respondents said they did not. When asked if the requirements for their majors were clear and reasonable, 80.5% agreed or strongly agreed, and 7.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Students were then asked if there was at least one

faculty member that they considered a friend. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that there was, while 12.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if their department had adequately prepared them for their future career, 72.3% agreed or strongly agreed, while 5.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with their department. Only 2.5% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were satisfied with their department.

Neutral responses ranged from 7.3% to 32.5%. Agreement ratings suggest that overall the respondents were satisfied with their faculty and departmental experiences.

FINDINGS: GENERAL EDUCATION/UNIVERSITY STUDIES

General education courses are designed to enhance students' skills in communication, mathematics, and computer literacy; they are also designed to give them the needed background in the humanities and in the social, life and physical sciences. With this in mind students were asked to respond to the statement, "General Education was a useful part of my university experience." Forty-two percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Only 39.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that General Education courses were well taught, while 36.7% of respondents were neutral, and 24.1% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

When asked if students had difficulty scheduling General Education courses, 27.6% agreed or strongly agreed, while 51.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Students were asked if "General education requirements were confusing"; 27.6% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 46.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Students were asked to evaluate their writing and computer skills; 76% said they were good writers, and 81.6% said they had good computer skills. When asked "I have the skills that I need in mathematics", 76.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Seven percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Neutral responses on all of these questions ranged from 14.7% to 36.7%.

FINDINGS: LIBRARIES/TECHNOLOGY

The Libraries/Technology questions related to students' experiences with library materials, staff, online courses, and classroom technology. When asked if USU libraries had the books, journals, and materials needed, 78.9% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Four percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents said that the libraries had the electronic book, journals, and materials they needed. Four percent of the respondents disagreed. Seventy percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to access electronic library resources from off campus, while 11.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if they were able to get materials through interlibrary loan in a timely fashion, 54% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed they could get materials in a timely fashion. Twenty percent of the respondents indicated that they had difficulty locating materials in USU's libraries, while 48% did not. Seventy-five percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that USU library staff was available and helpful, 3.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When asked if USU should offer more online courses, 40.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed. Seventeen percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed there should be more online courses. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents said their teachers used technology effectively in the classroom, while 4.9% said they did not. Neutral responses on all of these questions ranged from 17.2% to 42.5%.

Responses suggest that graduating students are generally happy with USU libraries and technology, but that additional attention might be paid to the timeliness of getting materials through interlibrary loan, and helping students identify needed materials in USU's libraries.

FINDINGS: CAMPUS CLIMATE

These questions deal with student opinion regarding safety issues, tolerance of different points of view, diversity, and a sense of being cared about in their interactions at Utah State University.

An overwhelming majority of respondents (96.5%) felt safe on the USU campus. Only 0.7% of the respondents did not feel safe. A majority of the respondents (81.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that professors at USU were tolerant of different points of view, while 5.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents felt that students' at USU were tolerant of different points of view, while 11.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Eighty percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that faculty at USU care about students, while 3.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Seventy-three percent of the respondents felt staff at USU care about students, while 5.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Ten percent of the respondents felt that USU did not provide enough activities for its students, while 62.9% did think there were enough activities. Sixty-six percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they got to know students from other countries and of other races, 14.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Neutral responses on these questions ranged from 2.9% to 27.3%. Overall a majority of respondents saw USU as a safe, tolerant and caring place to be.

FINDINGS: USE AND EVALUATION OF OTHER SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Students were asked: "During your time at USU, how often did you use or participate in each of the following and how satisfied were you with each?" Making a list of all services and activities provided to students is not practicable. The survey includes a selection of the most common services and activities for students, as well as ones that may be important to special groups of students. The results presented in this section are divided into the following categories: Experiential Learning Programs, Help with Classes, Technology, Placement Services, Academic Support Services, Psychological and Health Services, Non-Academic Support Services, and Activities. Both the use of the services and student evaluation of the services appear in the graphs. Because many of the services were not frequently utilized, in reporting the evaluation data, responses by those who did not use the service were omitted in order to reflect only the views of those respondents who had experience with the service. Satisfaction ratings mentioned in the narrative include those respondents answering both satisfied and very satisfied.

Services: Experiential Learning Program

Fifty-two percent of the respondents had one or more Practicum/Internship experiences, and an overwhelming majority of those respondents (94.9%) were satisfied with their experience. Only 10.1% of the respondents participated in Study Abroad, but a majority (88.1%) of those who participated were satisfied.

Services: Help with Classes

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents used Supplemental Instruction one or more times, and 85.8% of those respondents were satisfied with this service. The Math/Stat Tutoring Center was used by 40% of the respondents, 81.2% of those that used it were satisfied. Over half of the respondents (61.4%) used the English Writing Lab, and 86.7% were satisfied with the lab. Individual Study Strategies Instruction was used by only 7.3% of the respondents, and 83% of the respondents that used it were satisfied. Only 8.1% of the respondents used the Disability Resource Center, and 82.1% of those who used this service were satisfied with it. The Access and Diversity Center was used by 9% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 86%.

Services: Technology

Almost all of the respondents (93.1%) use the Computer Labs at some time or another, 97.7% were satisfied with the computer labs. The Computer Help Desk was used by 52.2% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 90.5%. Over half of the respondents (66.3%) had taken online courses, and 83.5% of those respondents were satisfied with their online courses. Fifteen percent of the respondents had taken other Independent Study Courses, of those who had taken them, 84.1% were satisfied. Aggiemail was used by 78.3% of the respondents, and 90.1% of those who used it were satisfied with it. Relatively all of the respondents (99.4%) used Blackboard/VISTA. Ninety percent of the respondents who used Blackboard/VISTA were satisfied with it.

Almost all of the respondents (99.7%) had used Online Registration, and 80.9% were satisfied with it. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents used the USU Homepage, and of those who used it, 94.1% were satisfied with it.

Services: Career/Student Employment Services

The Career Services Office was used by 45% of the respondents. The office had a satisfaction rating of 86.7%. The Student Employment Office was used by 30.5% of the respondents, who gave it a satisfaction rating of 84.6%.

Services: Academic Support Service

The Registration Office was used by 94% of the respondents, and 89.3% were satisfied with it. The Cashier's Office was used by 67.4% of the respondents, with a satisfaction rating of 90.8%. The Financial Aid Office was used by 75.4% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 88%. The Bookstore was used by 96.9% of the respondents, and 84.8% of those respondents were satisfied with it.

Services: Psychological and Health Services

Counseling & Psychological Services – TSC 306 was used by only 13.4% of the respondents, with a satisfaction rating of 80.7%. A few of years ago the title of the service was changed in the survey to avoid confusion with academic advising or other mental health services offered by the Psychology Community Clinic in the Psychology Department, and the Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic in the Department of Family, Consumer, and Human Development. The location of the service (TSC 306) was added, to provide further clarification. The survey usage data should now be more in line with the usage data kept internally by the Office of Counseling and Psychological Services.

The Student Health and Wellness Center was used by 55.3% of the respondents, who gave it a satisfaction rating of 86%. Student Health Insurance was used by 10.1% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 77%.

Services: Non-Academic Support Services

The Parking Services Office was used by 62.6% of the respondents. Of those who used the service, 70.5% were satisfied with it. It should be noted that students were asked to rate the office and not parking per se. This was done because available parking is always limited and the service of the office was the focus of this evaluation. The Shuttle Bus was used by 79.5% of the respondents, with a satisfaction rating of 94.7%.

Food Services were evaluated by each of the major eating areas on campus. The Quad Side Café was used by 59.6% of the respondents, 90.2% of the respondents were satisfied with it. The Aggie Marketplace was used by 60.4% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 90.6%. The HUB was used by 67.9% of the respondents, with a satisfaction rating of 90.6%. The Junction was used by 39.8% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 80.9%. Luke's Café and the Artist's Block Café were not on the paper version of this survey but were on the electronic version of the survey, so usage numbers will be far lower

than actual usage of these cafés. That said, 35.3% of the respondents used Luke's Café. Eighty-three percent were satisfied with it. The Artist's Block Café was used by 35.3% of the respondents and 83.3% were satisfied with it. Next year all forms will be electronic.

The Statesman was read by 68.4% of the respondents. Eighty-three percent of the respondents who read the Statesman were satisfied with the newspaper.

Services: Activities

Seventy-two percent of the respondents attended ASUSU Activities, and 86.7% of those respondents were satisfied with the events. The Arts and Lectures Series were attended by 33.5% of the respondents, with a satisfaction level of 92.7%. The Val R. Christensen Service Center was used by only 16.8% of the respondents with a satisfaction rating of 89.6%.

Seventeen percent of the respondents participated in Club Sports. The satisfaction rating for Club Sports was 83.4%. Thirty percent of the respondents participated in Intramurals, and 89.1% of those who participated were satisfied. The HPER was used by 70.9% of the respondents, with satisfaction at 93.4%. The Fieldhouse was used by 73.2% of the respondents, with a satisfaction level of 87.9%. Outdoor Recreation equipment rental was used by 29.4% of the respondents, with a satisfaction rating of 91.7%.

FINDINGS: FUTURE PLANS

This set of questions was included to get a better understanding of what students planned to do after graduation. In the past, telephone employment surveys, conducted a year or two after student graduation, have been used to measure post-graduation plans. However, it was only possible to survey a sample of graduates using this method, and response rates were uneven across departments and colleges. Asking the questions as part of the Graduating Student Survey allows researchers to capture information from students applying for graduation and determine what their plans are for the year following graduation.

Students were asked, "After you graduate from USU, what are your plans for the next year?" Students were asked to mark all answer sets that applied. A majority of respondents (54.7%) planned on being employed, Thirty-one percent of the respondents wanted additional education. Four percent planned on staying at home with their children, 1.3% planned on military service, 6.4% planned on volunteer service, and 2.3% said "other".

When students were asked if they were currently looking for employment, 48% said yes, 34% said no, and 18% indicated that they were continuing in their current employment. Of those respondents who were looking for employment, 82.1% were looking for full-time employment and 17.9% were looking for part-time employment.

Students were then asked if they had already secured employment after graduation. Only 19.2% had already secured employment after graduation. When asked if that employment was full or part-time, 65% of those who had already secured employment would be working full-time, the remainder would be working part-time. When asked if their employment was related to their degree, 48.7% said yes, 20.4% said somewhat related, and 30.9% said that their employment was not related to their degree. When asked what sector they will be working in, 46.7% of those already employed said business or industry, 25.2% said education (public or private), 12.8% said local, state or federal government, 3.8% said a non-profit organization, and 11.6% marked "Other". Students were then asked if their employment was located in Utah; 75.5% of the respondents said they would be working in Utah. When asked what their expected salary would be, 32.8% of the respondents said less than \$30,000, 16.7% said between \$30,000 and \$34,000 a year.

When students were asked if they planned to further their education after graduation, 68.8% said yes. When asked if they would attend school full-time or part-time, of those respondents who indicated they would be attending school, 61.8% planned on attending school full-time. Keep in mind that this answer

differs from the first future plans question in that there is no time limit (the next year, as in the first question) to their desire for further education. Student were then asked what degree they would be seeking, of those who would be attending school, 81.8% would be seeking a Master's degree, 8.8% a Professional degree (medical, dental, law. Etc.), 6.4% a Doctoral degree, and 3% would be seeking a second Bachelor's degree.

FINDINGS: OVERALL USU EXPERIENCES

There were several questions in the survey that focused on the student's general perceptions of their overall experience at USU. When students were asked if they were satisfied with the education they received at USU, 92.5% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied. Only 1.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

When responding to the question, "My career opportunities have improved significantly as a result of completing my degree at USU", 79.7% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed. Four percent of the respondent disagreed or strongly disagreed that their career opportunities had significantly improved.

In evaluating whether tuition was a worthwhile investment for students, 71.3% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that was a worthwhile investment. Eight percent of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that tuition was a worthwhile investment for them.

Eighty-three percent of the respondents said that if they had to make the decision again they would still come to USU. Five percent of the respondents said they would not come if they had to make the decision again.

When students were asked what they would tell a graduating high school student about Utah State University, four responses were available: (1) It's great, come here to school, (2) Mostly positive things, (3) Mostly negative things, (4) It's not great, don't come here to school. An overwhelming majority of respondents (97.5%) said USU was great, or at least said mostly positive things about the university. Only 2.5% said mostly negative things, or told high school student not to come to USU.

Responses to these questions suggest that the vast majority of respondents were satisfied with their USU experience. It should be noted that this survey does not account for the views of students who did not return to USU. Previous research, however, suggests that non-returning students leave for personal, financial, or family reasons, not dissatisfaction with the University.