

Recent Graduate Survey (2007-08 Graduates)

Executive Summary

Introduction:

The purpose of the Recent Graduate Survey was to determine the academic level of preparedness and satisfaction with Penn State Berks programs and services. Specifically, the Recent Graduate Survey ascertained:

- the reasons graduates chose Penn State Berks,
- preparedness in field of study and in the seven general education areas,
- satisfaction levels of the programs and services available on campus.
- future plans of graduates including job placement and continuing education aspirations, and
- career services used while a student at Penn State Berks.

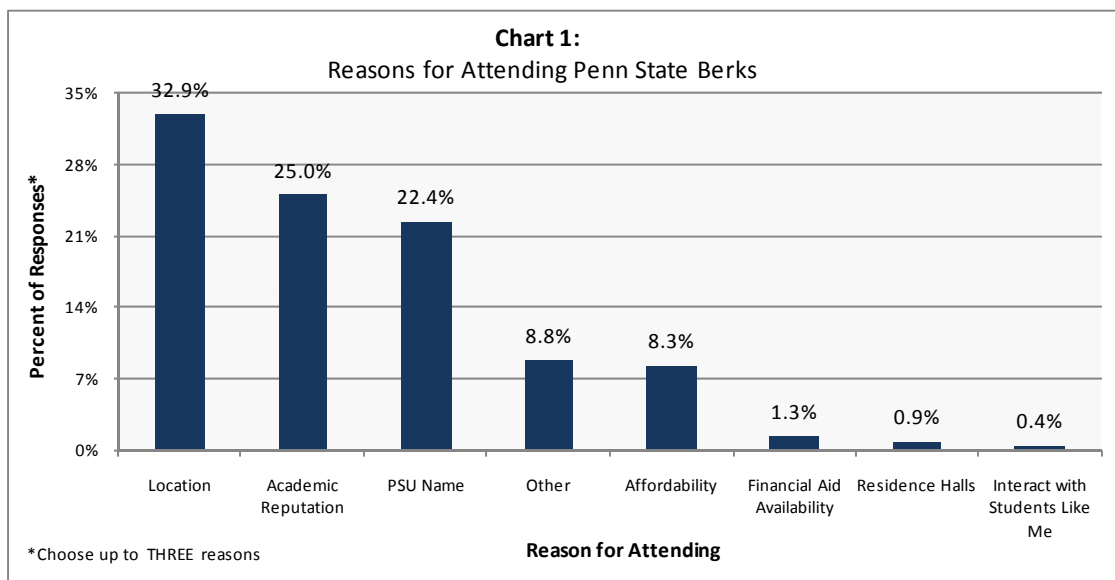
The Recent Graduate Survey was administered in-person to all spring 2008 graduates who attended commencement. In addition, the survey was mailed to all fall 2007 graduates and spring 2008 graduates that did not attend commencement in May 2008. A follow-up mailing was made to non-respondents.

Approximately sixty (60.7%) of all the graduates completed the survey. Fifty-three (52.9%) of the associate degree recipients and sixty-four (63.6%) of those who were conferred baccalaureate degrees participated in the survey.

Results:

Reasons for Choosing Penn State Berks

One third (32.9%) of the graduate respondents indicated that he/she chose Penn State Berks because of its location. Another twenty-five percent (25.0%) chose Penn State Berks because of its academic reputation. The reasons for choosing Penn State Berks and corresponding proportion of responses are shown in Chart 1.



Academic Programs & General Education

The percent of graduate respondents who responded very/somewhat prepared for the following areas is shown in Table 1. Also shown are the number responding and the mean rating for that item.

Table 1: General Education & Major Competency Means & Percent Very/Somewhat Satisfied

General Education Competencies	# Responded	Mean	Percent Very/Somewhat Prepared
Oral communication skills	157	3.53	96.8%
Written communication skills	157	3.56	98.7%
Problem solving skills	157	3.46	98.1%
Reason quantitatively	157	3.54	96.2%
Reason inductively & deductively	157	3.50	96.8%
Computer skills/literacy	157	3.45	91.1%
Relate <u>natural science fields</u> to my major	156	3.19	84.6%
Relate <u>art disciplines</u> to my major	156	3.06	78.8%
Relate <u>social & behavioral sciences</u> to my major	156	3.38	92.3%
Relate <u>humanities</u> to fields to my major	157	3.41	93.6%
Engage in healthful living	157	3.45	92.4%
Appreciation of cultural diversity	157	3.49	94.3%
Ability to work with a group/team environment	157	3.72	96.2%
Leadership ability	157	3.61	96.8%

Major Program of Study	# Responded	Mean	Percent Very/Somewhat Prepared
Courses in my major relevant to employment	157	3.55	93.6%
Courses in my major relevant to further educational opportunities	158	3.58	93.7%
Variety of courses in major	158	3.39	93.0%
Selection of <i>advanced</i> courses/topics	158	3.26	89.2%
Ability to do research	158	3.48	90.5%
Ability to do independent projects	156	3.53	91.7%
Technological resources available for class assignments	157	3.49	94.3%
Other resources available for class assignments	157	3.42	93.0%

As seen in Table 1, the graduate respondents rated their academic experience favorably. Working in a team environment ($M = 3.72$) and leadership ability ($M = 3.61$) had the largest mean preparedness rating. The arts & natural science general education competency areas posted the smallest mean preparedness ratings ($M = 3.06$ and $M = 3.19$ respectively).

Almost all of the graduate respondents (93.7%) stated that he/she were very or somewhat prepared for their career. Similarly, almost all of the graduate respondents (95.5%) stated that he/she were very or somewhat prepared for future education endeavors.

Courses

When asked about course work, course variety, and course resources, graduate respondents rated available technological course resources most favorably ($M = 3.49$). The graduate respondents were also pleased with the selection of courses in the major ($M = 3.39$). However, they were less likely to rate the availability of advanced courses favorably ($M = 3.29$).

Faculty & Academic Support Services

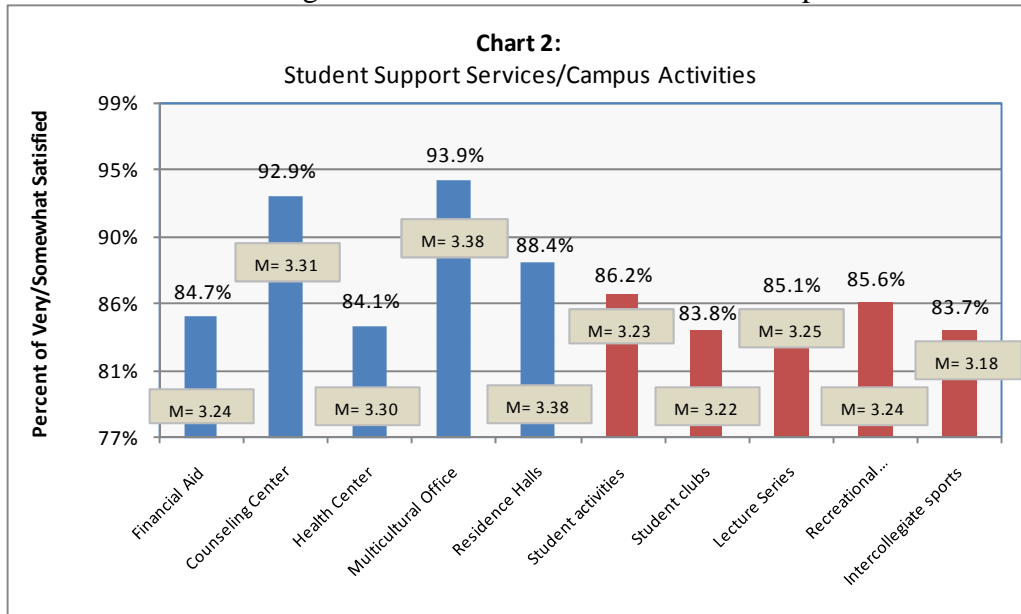
The graduate respondents overwhelmingly ($M = 3.72$) indicated that the faculty were knowledgeable in their field. On the other hand, the graduates were less satisfied with faculty advising ($M = 3.35$).

In parallel, Academic Advising and Career Services posted the smallest mean satisfaction ratings ($M = 3.31$ and $M = 3.29$). That said, over four-fifths (84.0% and 83.3% respectively) of the

graduate respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with these two academic support services. The academic support services that received the largest mean satisfaction ratings were the Thun Library (M = 3.45) and the Disability Services (M = 3.38). However, caution is warranted regarding the Disability Service ratings. Almost three-fifths of the graduate respondents (58.2%) rated Disability Services. This is inconsistent with the typical proportion of students who use or consult with Disability Services annually. The Learning Center garnered the third largest mean satisfaction ratings (M = 3.37).

Student Services & Campus Activities

The mean satisfaction ratings for several student services and campus activities are listed in Chart 2.



The student support services that received the largest mean satisfaction ratings were Multicultural Office (M = 3.38) and the residence halls (M = 3.38). Ratings for campus activities are similar with the Lecture Services (M = 3.25) and Recreational Activities (M = 3.24) posting slightly larger mean ratings than the other campus activities listed in Chart 1.

Computers/ Laboratories

Graduate respondents were generally favorable about the computer and laboratory facilities on campus. However, only three-fourths (74.3%) of the graduate respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with computer workstation availability (M = 3.05). Over eighty (81.6%) percent of the graduate respondents were satisfied with the availability of software (M = 3.16). Laboratory equipment and laboratory availability posted the largest mean satisfaction ratings (M = 3.22 and M = 3.17 respectively).

Career Services

Of the services in the Career Center, eighty-five (84.8%) percent of the graduate respondents stated he/she used University Park campus recruitment and eighty-three (82.9%) percent used the available Postings/Bindings in the Career Center. The career services listed in the Recent Graduate Survey and corresponding response information are listed in Appendix 1.

Over one-third (35.7%) of the graduate respondents indicated that he/she would work in Berks County. However, ninety-six (95.5%) percent of the graduate respondents said he/she would work in Pennsylvania after graduation.

Limitations:

Note that not all of the 2007-08 graduates were asked to participate in the Recent Graduate Survey. Particularly, the Summer 2008 graduates had not been identified at the time of the survey administration. In addition, the Fall 2007 graduates did not have the opportunity to complete the survey in-person prior to commencement. Only the spring 2008 graduates were asked to complete the survey in-person prior to commencement.

Recommendations:

- Continue administering the Recent Graduate Survey in-person prior to commencement. For spring 2008, the survey garnered a ninety-four (94.2%) percent return rate. That is, almost all the graduates that attended spring 2008 commencement completed the survey. Also, in-person administration reduces the cost of mailing the survey or creating an online instrument.
- Comparisons of the 2008-09 Recent Graduate Survey results and subsequent Recent Graduate Survey results should be undertaken to: (a) ascertain if these results are part and partial of the quality programming at Penn State Berks and (b) if the information is consistent across graduate cohorts.
- The results have also been compiled for each program with at least four graduate respondents. Comparisons of these program results to the overall results may help identify specific areas to improve.
- Graduates should be asked about their job and educational aspirations one year after graduation. At the time of the survey, several graduates indicated he/she were still seeking employment or waiting for confirmation of employment.

Summary

Arguably, the graduates of Penn State Berks are in the best position to rate the campus programming and facilities. These students are not only successful but have had the opportunity to use and reuse a variety of campus programming and facilities. Hence, the graduates are potentially the harshest critics of the College's programs and services.

The Penn State Berks graduates rated the academic programming, student services, faculty, and facilities very favorably. In particular, the faculty are perceived as qualified and knowledgeable. The graduate respondents attest to critical workforce skills such as problem solving, leadership, appreciation for diversity, and the ability to work in teams. Importantly, graduate respondents are confident in their level of preparedness for both future career and educational aspirations.

A commitment to quality academic programming and the continued evaluation of academic and student support services will ensure that Penn State Berks remains as one of the best regional colleges and premier Penn State college campus.

Appendix 1: Career Services Used

Service Used	Overall		
	Count	Response Percent*	Percent of Graduate Respondents (n = 158)
Other	148	15.9%	93.7%
University Park Campus Recruitment	134	14.4%	84.8%
Postings/Binders in Career Services	131	14.0%	82.9%
Berks Campus Recruitment	118	12.6%	74.7%
Academic Department/Faculty	116	12.4%	73.4%
Internship with Current Employer	103	11.0%	65.2%
Career Fairs	96	10.3%	60.8%
Internet/Company Web Page	87	9.3%	55.1%
TOTAL	933	100.0%	--

* Multiple Responses

Other Responses	Overall Count
BLANK	78
Nittany Lion Recruiting	2
PSU Career Services Website	1
None	1
Newspaper	1
Info from Professor	1
Career Center, Learning Center	1
Career Builder/Monster	1
Alumni	1