GRADUATING SENIOR SURVEY
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI’I AT HILO
SPRING 1999
SPRING 2000
FALL 2000
KEY FINDINGS

About our graduating seniors:

- 62% plan to attend graduate school, but only 20% have applied and accepted by the time the complete the graduating student survey shortly before graduating.
- Seven out of ten expect to work in the state of Hawai‘i.
- Graduating seniors feel their education at UH Hilo has been most effective in developing critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills, and least effective in improving mathematical ability and improving the ability to use computers.
- They are most satisfied with the overall quality of instruction in their majors and least satisfied with the adequacy of the library collection and laboratory facilities related to their major and the availability of courses in their major.
- Least satisfied with the adequacy of the library collection related to their majors were nursing and natural science majors.
- Nearly nine out of ten feel the value of their degree at UH Hilo was worth the cost of their investment in it, but only three out of ten feel the quality of their baccalaureate degree from UH Hilo is “Above Average.”
- However, more than nine out of ten have had their expectations met by their academic program at UH Hilo, and nearly nine out of ten feel the quality of their overall undergraduate experience is either excellent or good.
- Excellent or good ratings may have something to do with the fact that more than three-fourths of our graduating seniors have gotten to know three or more UH Hilo faculty well.
- Ratings of “Excellent” for overall academic experience increased by nearly nine percentage points between Spring 1999 and Spring 2000.
- Four out of ten of our graduating seniors have transferred into UH Hilo from some other institution and nearly two thirds of these transfer students have encountered barriers trying to transfer credits to this campus.
- More than two-thirds of graduating seniors feel the cost of tuition at UH Hilo is right and reasonable.
INTRODUCTION

Since the spring of 1999, a survey of graduating seniors has been conducted at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. The assessment instrument is a questionnaire consisting of 47 items in nine sections. It was designed to 1) gather information on the thoughts, experiences, activities, post-graduation plans, and background of graduating seniors; and 2) elicit candid responses about their undergraduate experiences and recommendations for changes at UH Hilo.

This report compiles the responses of 412 baccalaureate degree candidates: those who were to graduate in Spring 1999, Spring 2000 and Fall 2000. Unfortunately, the researcher was unable to obtain responses from students who were to graduate in Fall 1999 because the data file and survey forms were misplaced. However, where subgroups are large enough, this survey report can still be viewed as a reasonable reflection of prevailing thoughts, experiences, plans, perceptions, activities, and characteristics of graduating seniors.

When subgroups or cell sizes are too small, however, such as those of students in some majors, information, though perhaps useful in a qualitative sense, does not hold up statistically—especially as the observations from Fall 1999 are missing. In this report, small group differences are reported on items that show significance across the cross-tabulation. Readers should keep in mind, however, that the inferential value of cells with small numbers may still be compromised.

The report is structured according to the order of the questionnaire items. Full tables of all items are provided in the appendix (a separate electronic document).
PART 1: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR OVERALL UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE AT HILO

What Graduates Gained From Their College Experience at Hilo

- Preparation for a job: 79.6%
- Increased ability to be independent, self-reliant and adaptable: 60.7%
- Increased self-confidence: 58.7%
- Increased involvement in cultural and artistic activities: 52.2%
- Increased knowledge in an academic field: 51.0%
- Increased leadership skills: 58.5%
- Increased understanding of other people and their points of view: 47.3%
- Skills and attitudes that enrich life and foster self-development: 35.2%
- A meaningful philosophy of life: 33.5%
- Preparation for graduate or professional study: 29.4%
- Increased awareness of and involvement in community issues: 7.3%
When asked what they gained from their overall experience at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, graduating seniors were most likely to select preparation for a job (79.6%), an increased ability to be independent, self-reliant and adaptable (60.7%), and increased self-confidence.

Least likely to be selected as gains from their undergraduate education were an increased awareness and involvement in community issues (7%), preparation for graduate or professional study (30%), and gaining a meaningful philosophy of life (34%).

When asked to select the most important thing they had gained from their experience at Hilo, the largest percentage of graduating seniors said it was increased knowledge in an academic field (29%), followed by an increased ability to be independent, self-reliant and adaptable (16%), preparation for a job (12%) and preparation for graduate or professional study (11%).

PART II: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR POST-GRADUATION PLANS

When asked if they were planning to attend graduate school, 62% of graduating seniors answered in the affirmative.
However, only 20% of those who said they planned to attend graduate school had already applied and been accepted.

Graduating students differed by major (p = .002) in their plans whether or not to attend graduate school. 71% of those who majored in the Social Sciences planned to attend graduate school, compared to 64% of those majoring in the Humanities and 60% of those majoring in the Natural Sciences.

However, 50% of Humanities majors listed preparation for graduate school as one of the gains they had received from their education at UHH, compared to 38% of Social Science majors and only 17% of Natural Science majors.

The largest percentages of students who planned to attend graduate school planned to go into education (16%), the social sciences (13%) or business administration (13%).

42% of the graduating seniors planning graduate study said they planned to attend graduate school at a mainland university, 25% said they planned to attend UH Manoa, and 16% said they planned to attend UH Hilo.

Of those graduating seniors who were planning to seek employment or had already been offered a job, 70% said they expected to work in the state of Hawai‘i, 26% said they expected to work on the mainland, and 7% said they expected to work outside of the U.S.
PART III: PLEASE SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON TUITION

More than two-thirds of graduating seniors (70.5%) said they felt tuition at UH Hilo was about right (fair and reasonable), compared to 28% who said it was too high and 1.5% who said tuition was too low.

Only 33% of the graduating seniors said they had taken a heavier credit load than preferred because of the cost of tuition, and only 12% agreed that tuition should be charged per credit, rather than as a flat rate for 12 or more credits.
Nearly nine out of ten of the responding graduating seniors said the value of their degree at UH Hilo was worth the cost of their investment in it.
PART IV: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

- 42.4% of responding graduating seniors had transferred credits to UHH from another institution: 26.5% from a UH community college, 29.7% from a college outside of Hawai‘i, and 1.4% from a Hawai‘i private college.

- Nearly two-thirds of these students (64.9%), said they had encountered barriers when transferring credits to this campus: 19.6% said the barriers were major and 35.1% reported them as being minor.

- Only 34.8% of those graduating seniors who had transferred to UH Hilo said they were able to transfer all of the courses they expected to transfer; 55.2% said they were successful in transferring some of the courses, and 10% said they were unable to transfer any of the courses they had expected to to UH Hilo.

- Transferring students were split in thirds when it came to their perception of the helpfulness of the advising/transfer information provided by their previous campuses: 31% said it was helpful, 35.6% said it was somewhat helpful, and 33.2% said it was not helpful.
When it came to the advising information provided by UH Hilo, more than three-fourths (77.6%) of the graduating seniors who had transferred felt it was at least somewhat helpful: 33.2% thought it was helpful, 44.4% thought it was somewhat helpful, and 22.4% felt it was not helpful.

PART V: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR GENERAL EDUCATION CORE EXPERIENCE

Please Rate the Extent to Which General Education Courses Contributed to Your Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of diversity in cultures, philosophies and lifestyles</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to gather information and learn on my own</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of other countries, peoples, cultures</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication skills</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Ability</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical and logical thinking</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to put ideas together</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of study skills/learning strategies to learn new concepts</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use computers</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of science and experimental methods</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of history in understanding the present and the past</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and enjoyment of literature</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to express ideas using numbers and symbols</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and enjoyment of music, art, and drama</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
366 graduating seniors responded to the section on their general education core experience.

- More than seven out of ten graduating seniors (72.4%) said they had taken most of their general education courses at UH Hilo: 13.1% said they had taken most of these courses at a UH community college, 11.2% said they had taken them at another higher education institution, and 3.3% said they had taken them at Manoa.

- The 265 graduating seniors who said they had taken most of their general education courses at UH Hilo found those courses to be most helpful in contributing to:
  
  - An awareness of diversity in cultures, philosophies and lifestyles
  - The ability to gather information and learn on one’s own
  - Knowledge of other countries, peoples, cultures
  - Oral communication skills, and
  - Writing ability

- And least helpful in contributing to:
  
  - Knowledge and enjoyment of literature
  - The ability to express ideas using numbers and symbols
  - Knowledge and enjoyment of music, art, and drama

(See preceding graph for percentages – There was no significant differences between graduating seniors who had taken most of their general education courses at UH Hilo and those who had taken them somewhere else.)

- Considering the general education courses they had been exposed to at UH Hilo, graduating seniors were most satisfied with the usefulness of courses, the knowledge gained through general education courses, and the overall quality of general education courses.
They were least satisfied with the preparation general education courses gave them for work in their majors and the use of teaching assistants in general education courses (see following table for percentages).

Overall Satisfaction with Aspects of General Education
Aspects of general education with which the highest percentage of graduating seniors said they were **not satisfied** include:

- Use of teaching assistants in general education courses (28.5%),
- Variety of general education courses offered (17.4%),
- Relevance of general education requirements to one's life (16.3%), and
- Preparation by general education courses for work in one's major (15.4%).

(See appendix for other percentages.)

![Satisfaction with CORE Experience as it Relates to the Major](chart.png)
Graduating seniors were most satisfied with the overall quality of instruction in their majors (82.1% said they were either very satisfied or satisfied), and least satisfied with the adequacy of the library collection related to their major (50.6%), the adequacy of laboratory facilities related to their major (53.1%), and the availability of courses in their major (53.2%).

When looking specifically at those areas with the highest percentage of students who indicated they were not satisfied, aspects with which students were least satisfied included the adequacy of the library collection related to majors (21.4%), the adequacy of laboratory facilities related to majors (21.4%), and the availability of courses in the majors (14.5% -- see appendix for these and other percentages).

Graduating seniors differed significantly by major in their rating of two aspects of their educational experience: adequacy of the library collection related to the major (p = .006) and overall quality of instruction in the major (p = .051). When looking specifically at students' ratings of the adequacy of the library collection related to their major, Hawaiian Studies majors (at 100% very satisfied or satisfied) were the happiest with the library collection related to their major (However, only three of the graduating seniors responding to this question declared Hawaiian studies as their major). Agriculture and Humanities majors were the next most satisfied with the library collection (73.8% of Humanities majors and 73.3% of Agriculture majors were very satisfied or satisfied). Least satisfied with the adequacy of the library collection related to their majors were Natural Science majors (only 36.7% very satisfied or satisfied) and Nursing majors (28.6%--but only seven Nursing majors are included in the sample). Looking at the overall quality of instruction in the major, Agriculture and Hawaiian Studies majors were 100% very satisfied or satisfied; 85% to 88% of Humanities, Natural Science, Nursing and Social Science majors were very satisfied or satisfied; 77.3% of Business majors and 57.1% of Education majors were very satisfied or satisfied.

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1 Cell sizes for some majors were very small. Respondents per major were Humanities (32), Natural Sciences (47), Social Sciences (85), Business (47), Education (15), Agriculture (15), Nursing (7), Hawaiian Studies (3), and Other (24).
Satisfaction with Library Collection as Related to Major and Overall Quality of Instruction in Major -- by Major

- Hawaiian Studies
- Nursing
- Agriculture
- Education
- Business
- Social Sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Humanities

0.0%  20.0%  40.0%  60.0%  80.0%  100.0%

Adequacy of the library collection
Overall quality of instruction in my major
PART VI: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR OVERALL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of their educational experience as it pertains to various student learning outcomes: writing, reading, oral communication, listening skills, critical thinking ability, mathematical ability, the ability to use computers, increasing knowledge about other cultures/world affairs, increasing appreciation of literature and the arts, increasing the ability to gather information/learn on one’s own, and increasing study skills and learning strategies.

- Looking at ratings of excellent to good and fair to poor, graduating seniors feel their education at UH Hilo has been most effective in developing critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills. Ratings of excellent to good were given by 84.2% of the students for critical thinking, by 82.2 % for writing and by 81.7 for oral communication skills.

- Respondents gave the most “excellent” ratings to improving oral communication skills (34.8%), improving critical thinking ability (33.8%) and improving writing (31.2%).

- Looking at the excellent to good ratings, graduating seniors appear to feel their education at UH Hilo has been least effective in developing their mathematical abilities, an appreciation of literature and the arts, and increasing their ability to use computers. An excellent to good rating was given to developing mathematical abilities by 60.1% of the respondents, developing an appreciation of literature and the arts by 66.9% of the respondents, and to increasing the ability to use computers by 70% of the students.

- Ratings of fair to poor were most often given to improving mathematical ability (40%), improving the ability to use computers (29.1%), and improving reading skills (24.4% --See appendix for more information on these measures).
Impact of UH Hilo Education on General Education Outcomes

- Increase study skills and learning strategies
- Increase ability to gather information on own
- Increase appreciation of literature and the arts
- Increase knowledge about other cultures/world affairs
- Ability to use computers
- Mathematical ability
- Critical thinking
- Listening skills
- Oral communication
- Reading skills
- Writing ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Excellent to Good</th>
<th>Fair to Poor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing ability</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading skills</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical ability</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to use computer</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase knowledge</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase appreciation</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase ability to gather</td>
<td>79.4%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase study skills</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduating seniors differed significantly by major on three of these measures: increasing knowledge about other cultures/world affairs ($p = .005$), increasing the appreciation of literature and the arts ($p = .002$), and improving oral communication skills ($p = .04$).

Looking at College of Arts and Sciences graduates’ perception of the effect their education on their development in these three areas, humanities and social science majors perceived their educations at UH Hilo to have had more positive effects than did majors in the Natural Sciences and Business:

- Nearly 100% of humanities majors (97.7%) felt the quality of their educational experience as it pertains to developing oral communication skills was excellent or good. This compares to 81.2% of the social science majors, 78.7% of the business majors, and only 66.7% of the natural science majors.
- Again, nearly 100% of humanities majors (97.7%) felt the quality of their educational experience as it pertains to increasing their knowledge about other cultures/world affairs was excellent or good, compared to 84.7% of social science majors, 67.4% of business majors, and 62.5% of natural science majors.
- When it comes to increasing their appreciation of literature and the arts, 77.4% of social science majors and 75.6% of humanities gave the quality of their education excellent or good ratings, compared to 58.3% of natural science majors and only 45.7% of business majors.
Excellent and Good Ratings of the Quality of the Educational Experience as it Pertains to Increasing Knowledge About Other Cultures, Appreciating the Arts, and Improving Oral Communication - by Major

- Hawaiian Studies: 66.7% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 85.7% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Nursing: 71.4% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 85.7% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Agriculture: 76.5% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 82.4% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Education: 81.3% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 86.7% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Business: 45.7% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 67.4% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 78.7% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Social Sciences: 68.3% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 62.5% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 81.2% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Natural Sciences: 66.7% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 82.5% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
- Humanities: 75.6% (Increase knowledge about other cultures/world), 97.7% (Increase appreciation of literature and the arts), 100.0% (Improve oral communication skills)
Please Tell Us About the Quality of Your Overall Academic Experience

- Nearly nine out of ten graduating seniors said they thought the quality of their overall undergraduate experience was either excellent (27.2%) or good (62%). Moreover…
There was nearly a nine-point increase in excellent ratings between Spring of 1999 and Spring of 2000.
Only a third of the responding graduating seniors said they felt the quality of their baccalaureate degree from Hilo was “Above Average;” 60.2% felt it was “Average” and only 5.3% said they thought it was “Below Average.”

More than nine out of ten graduating seniors had their expectations met by their academic program at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo: 27.7% said the academic programs at Hilo were “Better than expected,” and 65.9% said they were “About What Expected.” Only 6.4% or 22 students said the quality of academic programs was “Worse Than Expected.”
When asked, “How many Hilo faculty have you gotten to know well?” more than three-fourths of the graduating seniors (75.7%) said they had gotten to know three or more UH Hilo faculty well.

Graduating seniors did not differ significantly by major in their perception of the quality of academic programs at Hilo or in the number of faculty they had gotten to know well. However, there was a significant group difference (p = .051) in their perception of the quality of their baccalaureate degree from Hilo.

- 50% of humanities majors rated the quality of their baccalaureate degree from Hilo “Above Average,” compared to 36.5% of natural science majors, 34.1% of social science majors and 29.8 of business majors.
PART VI: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

- 86.5% of the graduating seniors responding to the survey had their expectations met by the quality of campus life at Hilo:
  - 24.3% said the quality of campus life was “Better Than Expected,” 62.2% said it was “About What Expected,” and 13.5% said it was “Worse Than Expected.”

- By the time the responding students were seniors, only 12.9% of them lived in on-campus housing: 49.7% lived in off-campus housing, and 32.2% lived at home.
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the responding graduating seniors spent at least 11 hours per week on campus outside of classes: 26.8% spent between 11 and 20 hours per week, 17.1% spent 21 to 30 hours per week, and 20.1% spent thirty-one or more hours a week on campus outside of classes.
Use of and Satisfaction with Co-curricular Programs

- I used it and was satisfied
- I used it and was dissatisfied
- I knew about this but did not use it
- I did not know about this
Co-curricular services, functions and activities used most often at UH Hilo by graduating seniors were food services, financial aid and counseling, testing and career planning services. 71% of the respondents had used food services, 64.5% had used financial aid, and 50.8% used counseling, testing and career planning.

Services, functions and activities used least often by graduating seniors were tutoring services (used by 37%) and recreation and athletic programs (used by 37.3%).

At least nine out of ten graduating seniors knew about all services, functions and activities except for career placement services (20% of the respondents said they did not know about this service), and social, cultural and artistic programs (11.2% said they did not know about them).

Of the users of these services, functions and activities, at least seven out of ten were satisfied with student organizations and clubs (79%), social, cultural and artistic programs (77.6%), tutoring services (72.2%) and recreation and athletic programs (70.2%).

Lowest levels of satisfaction among users were with career placement services (51.5%) and counseling, testing, and career planning services (50.8% - see appendix for more information on the ratings in this section.).
PART VIII: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

- Survey respondents were 61.5% female and 38.5% male.
- Nine out of ten (90.8%) were over the age of 21, about half (49.1%) between the ages of 22 and 24.
- The largest ethnic group represented was Caucasian/Portuguese (28.5%), followed by Japanese (21.1%) and Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian (15.8%).
- Over half the respondents (52.9%) had attended Hawaiian public schools, 11.7% had attended Hawaiian private schools, 24.3% had attended mainland public schools and 3.7% came from mainland private schools.

Respondents who took more than four years to graduate from UH Hilo were asked to give the three most important reasons. Compiling multiple responses into one table indicated that…

- The most frequently listed reasons for taking more than four years to graduate were work (selected by 38.3% of the respondents), changing one’s major (37%), availability of courses (36.5%), and family and personal commitments (31.7%).

- Looking only at the “most important” reasons respondents gave for not completing their undergraduate study in four years, the most often reason chosen was work (by 22.3% of the respondents), changing one’s major (16.4%), and availability of courses (12.3%).

Availability of Courses as a Reason for Taking More Than 4 Years to Graduate

- Spring 1999: 38.5%, One of Top Three Reasons; 16.8%, Most Important Reason
- Spring 2000: 28.8%, One of Top Three Reasons; 12.3%, Most Important Reason
- Fall 2000: 44.4%, One of Top Three Reasons; 5.9%, Most Important Reason
Availability of classes as a reason for taking more than four years to graduate declined between Spring 1999 and Spring 2000 by about 10% (from being mentioned by 38.5% of the respondents to being mentioned by only 28.8% of the respondents). However, in Fall of 2000 it was selected as one of the top three reasons by 44.4% of the respondents.

- As the “most important” reason for graduating later, class availability seems to be on the decline, mentioned by 15.8% of the graduating seniors in Spring 1999, 12.3% in Spring 2000, and only 5.9% in Fall of 2000.

- Additional personal information given by survey respondents included their majors, their cumulative UH Hilo GPA, and information about working.

  - The largest percentage of respondents were social science majors (28.7%), followed by natural science majors (18.1%), business majors (14.2%) and humanities majors (13.3%).
  - 5.7% of the respondents were education majors, but all but two of them in the sample graduated in the spring of 1999 (17).
  - 96.2% of the respondents reported cumulative UH Hilo GPAs of over 2.4: 25.7% reported GPAs between 2.5 and 2.9, 38.4% reported GPAs in the range of 3.0 to 3.4, and 32.1% said their GPAs were between 3.5 and 4.0.
More than three-quarters of the responding graduating seniors (75.9%) worked while attending UH Hilo.

Of those who said they worked, 36.4% said they had an on-campus job.

86.3% of the working respondents said they worked more less than 36 hours per week: 19.8% said they worked between 21 and 35 hours, 38.2% said they worked 16 to 20 hours, 16.4% said they worked 11 to 15 hours, and 11.8 said they worked one to ten hours.