



Institutional Research



**2016 Survey of
2014-2015 Undergraduate Alumni:
Full Report**

April 2017

Study Overview

Survey Description

This survey was conducted by the Office of Institutional Research in October 2016. The goal of this web survey was to collect information and opinions from students who graduated from WSU in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 with an undergraduate degree. This survey assesses the achievement of student objectives, employment, attitudes about the undergraduate experience, and how well the university is meeting the goals of its strategic plan.

Methodology

The survey population consisted of all students who graduated with an undergraduate degree in fiscal years 2014 and 2015. If a student who completed multiple degrees was selected more than once, that student was only included in the sample once. These respondents were asked to complete the survey based on the degree they considered to be primary.

Respondents were first contacted by mail via postcard to let them know they would be receiving an invitation to the survey. An invitation email was sent containing the survey link, followed by two reminder emails. Emails were initially sent to their WSU accounts, but after getting a very low response rate, preferred emails were extracted to attempt to get more responses. It is important to note that it was difficult to extract the most recent preferred emails because of the 2015 rule change for using WSU emails only.

The total population consisted of 12,597 alumni, and the random sample consisted of 4,947 alumni. The completed sample was 316 alumni, or a response rate of 6.4%. Table 1 compares the respondents to the alumni population of 2014-15 graduates. Despite the small sample size, the sample was fairly representative by gender and ethnic minority status.

Table 1: Demographics of Alumni Survey Respondents, 2014-15

Demographic	Subcategory	Survey Respondents		All Graduates from 2014-15	
		#	%	#	%
Gender	Female	171	54.1	6,744	53.5
	Male	145	45.9	5,853	46.5
Ethnicity	Minority	67	21.2	2,521	20
	Not Minority	249	78.8	10,076	80

Satisfaction

Respondents were first asked if they would still choose to attend WSU if presented with the opportunity again (figure 1). Overall, the responses were positive; over 90 percent of respondents indicated they would definitely or probably still choose to attend WSU. 60 percent of respondents reported “definitely yes.” Most alumni also indicated that their educational investment was worthwhile; 87 percent of respondents indicated their educational investment was somewhat or very worthwhile (figure 2). Similarly, 91 percent of respondents would recommend WSU to a qualified friend or family member.

For those who indicated they would still choose WSU, they were asked about important factors for this decision (figure 3). The most popular responses were departments or majors (37%), sense of community (32%), and quality of teaching (29%). The least popular responses were service learning (6%), fraternities/sororities (8%) and preparation for graduate studies (9%).

Figure 1: Would you still choose WSU?

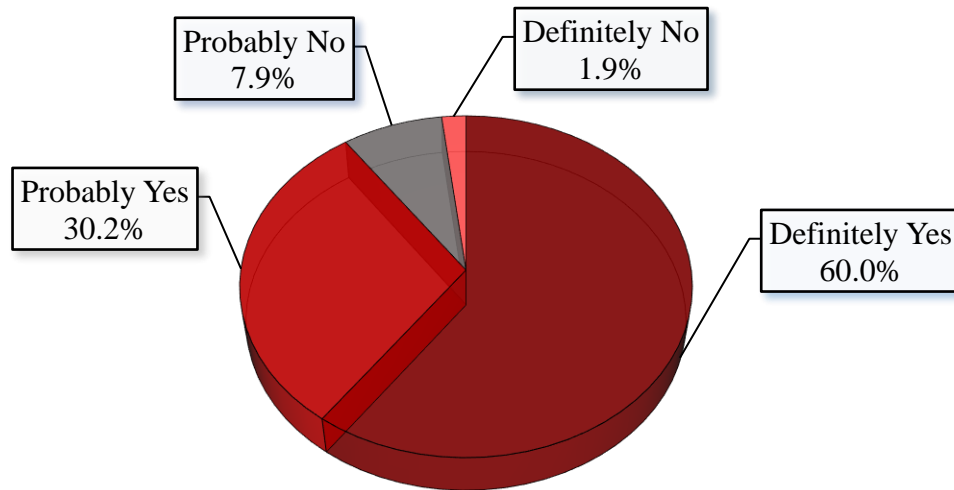


Figure 2: Given the costs, how worthwhile do you consider this educational investment to be?

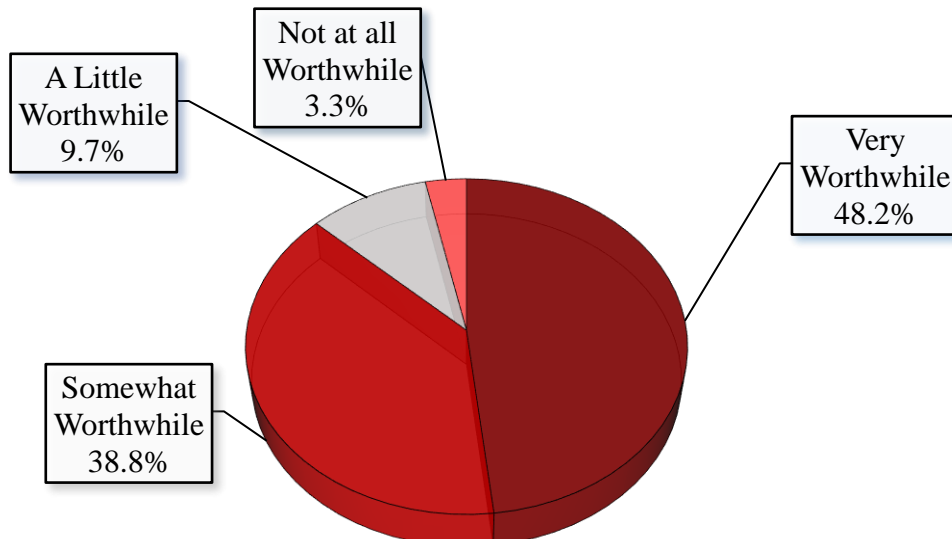
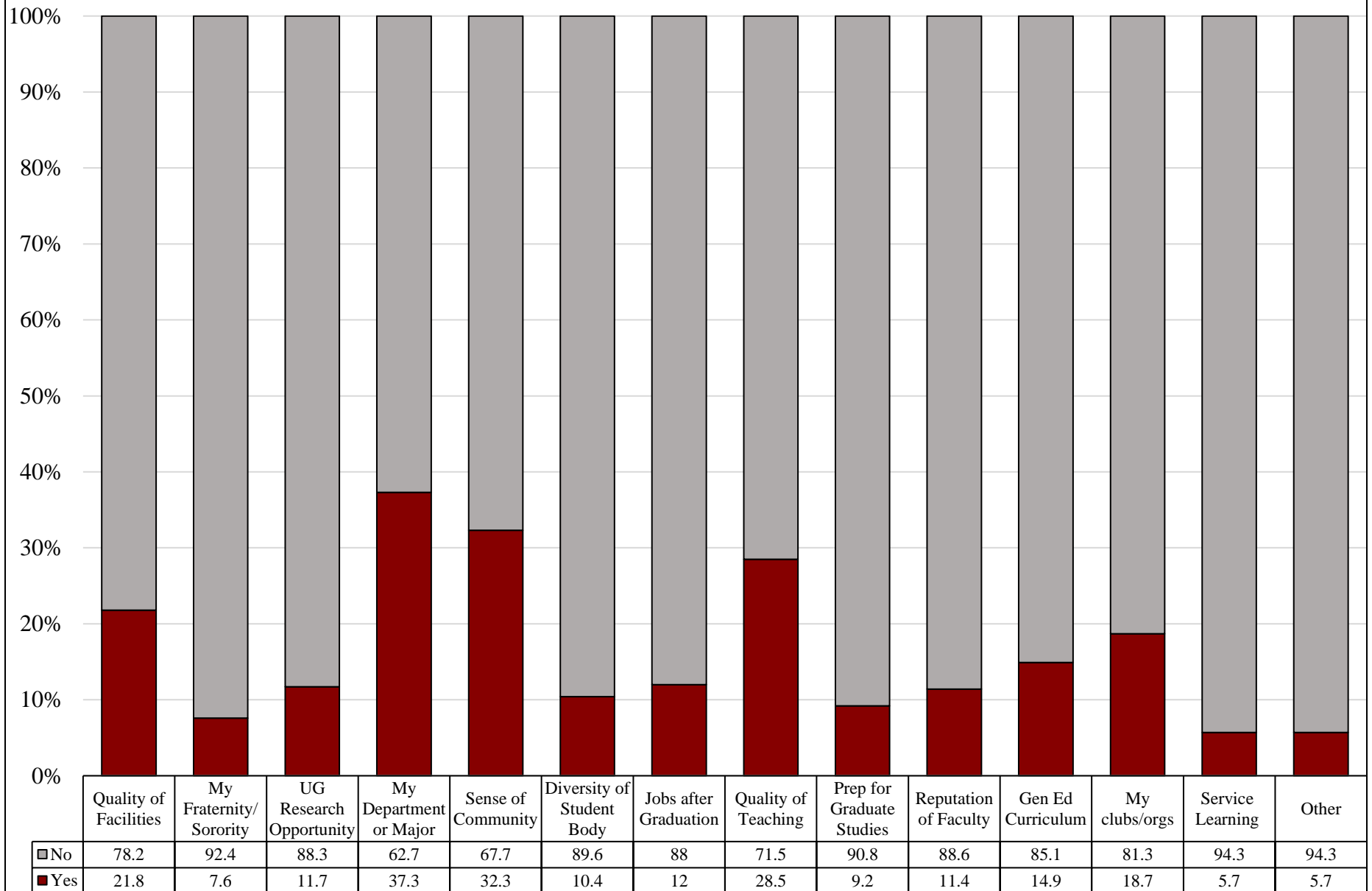


Figure 3: Important Factors for Attending WSU Again



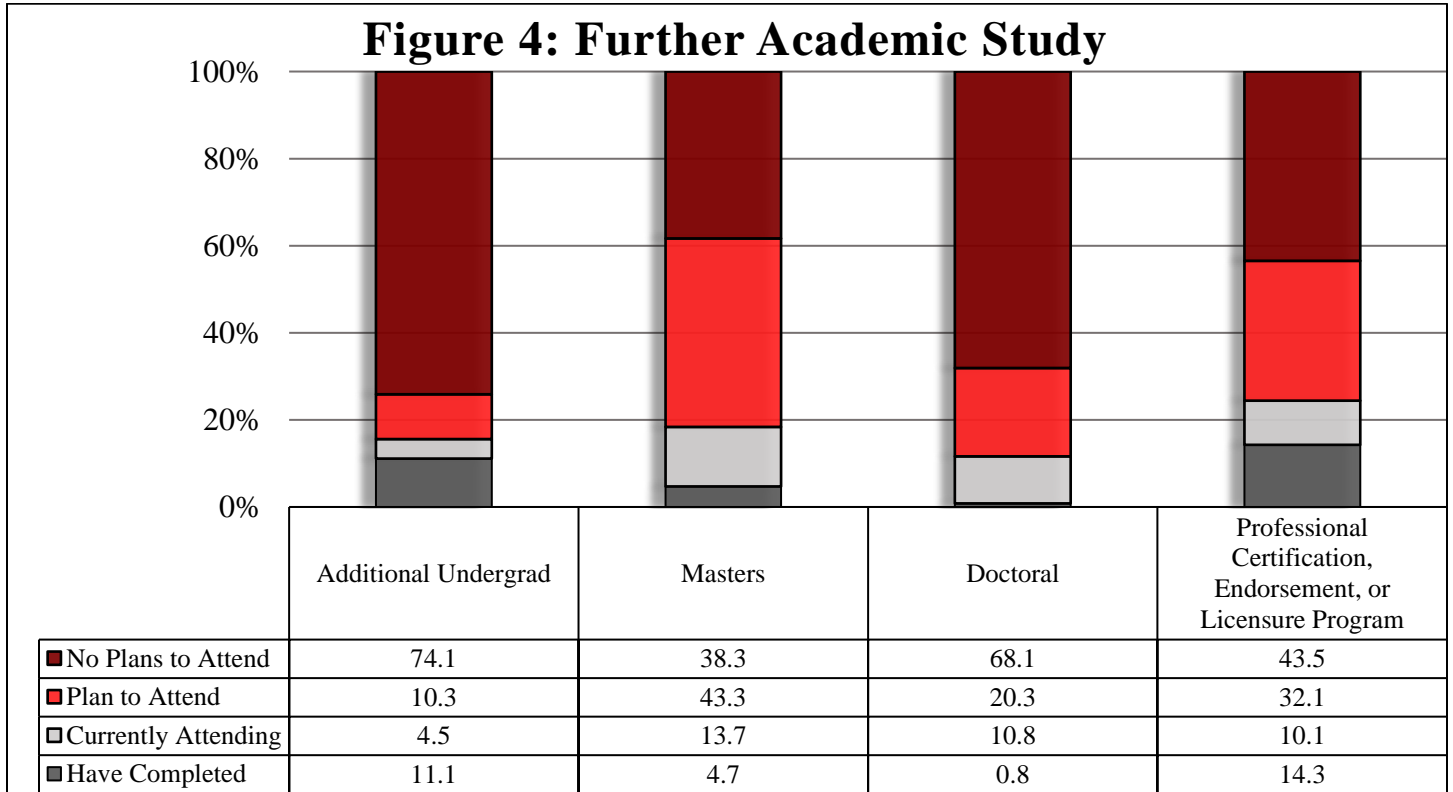
Respondents were also asked about their level of satisfaction with WSU's contribution to their personal growth in various skill areas (table 2). Respondents were the most satisfied with learning independently, defining and solving problems, and understanding and applying scientific principles and methods. Respondents were the least satisfied with readiness for a career, understanding and appreciating the arts, and understanding the interaction of society and the environment.

Table 2: WSU's Contribution to Growth

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Writing Effectively	35.5	57.4	6.1	1
Speaking Effectively	37.3	50.7	9.7	2.3
Critically Analyzing Written Information	42.9	51.7	3.7	1.7
Learning Independently	48.2	47.1	3.7	1
Understanding and Applying Scientific Principles and Methods	45.3	46.3	7.4	1
Understanding and Applying Quantitative Principles	32.1	57.8	8.1	2
Defining and Solving Problems	48	47.6	2.7	1.7
Using Management or Leadership Skills	38.5	49.3	10.2	2
Readiness for Advanced Education	40.5	42.2	12.9	4.4
Readiness for a Career	31.6	42.8	20.2	5.4
Working Cooperatively in a Group	42.3	49.6	6.4	1.7
Understanding Differing Philosophies and Cultures and Their Interactions	35.5	52.4	9.4	2.7
Understanding and Appreciating the Arts	19.7	56.6	18.3	5.4
Understanding the Interaction of Society and the Environment	31.9	56.4	9.7	2
Recognizing your responsibilities, rights and privileges as a citizen	30.9	52.7	13.1	3.3

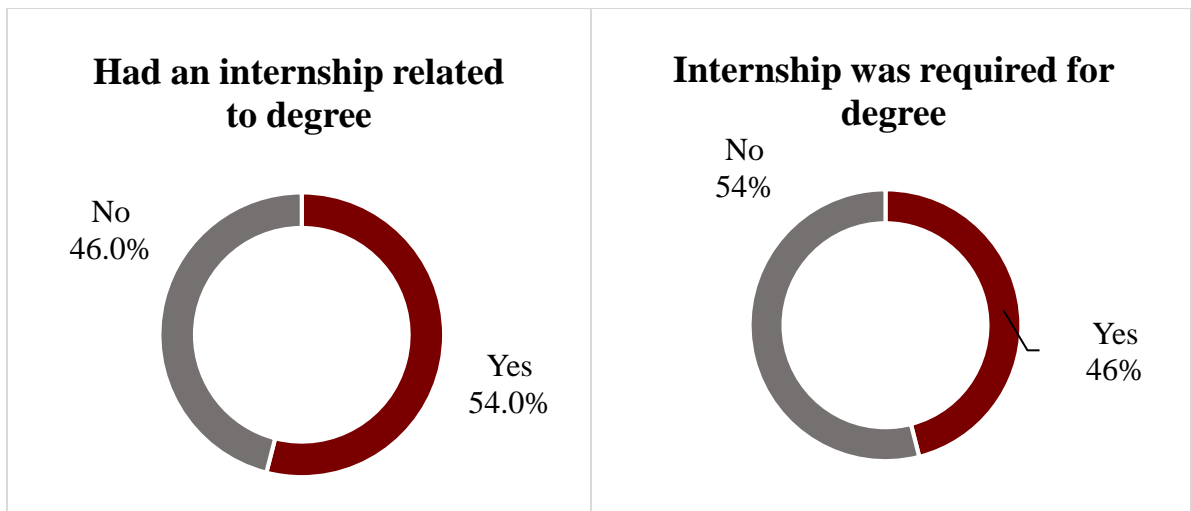
Further Academic Study and Internships

Over half of alumni plan to attend graduate school by either a masters or doctoral program, while over 20 percent of alumni are currently attending graduate school (figure 4). 14 percent of alumni have completed professional certification of some kind, followed by additional undergraduate education (11%).



Over half of alumni completed an internship related to their degree, and this was a degree requirement for about half of the respondents (figure 5).

Figure 5: Internships



Employment

About 85 percent of respondents reported they are currently employed, and there are no gender differences in employment (figure 6). Despite this, there is gender and racial disparity in salaries; both minority and women who are not minorities had lower medium incomes than men and non-minority men (table 3). Minority women have the highest employment rate (94%), but also have the lowest medium income. Overall, minority alumni have median incomes that are \$6,500 less than non-minority alumni.

Overall, most respondents have jobs related to their degrees; over 80 percent of respondents indicated their primary employment is either somewhat or closely related to their degrees (figure 7).

Figure 6: Employment by Gender

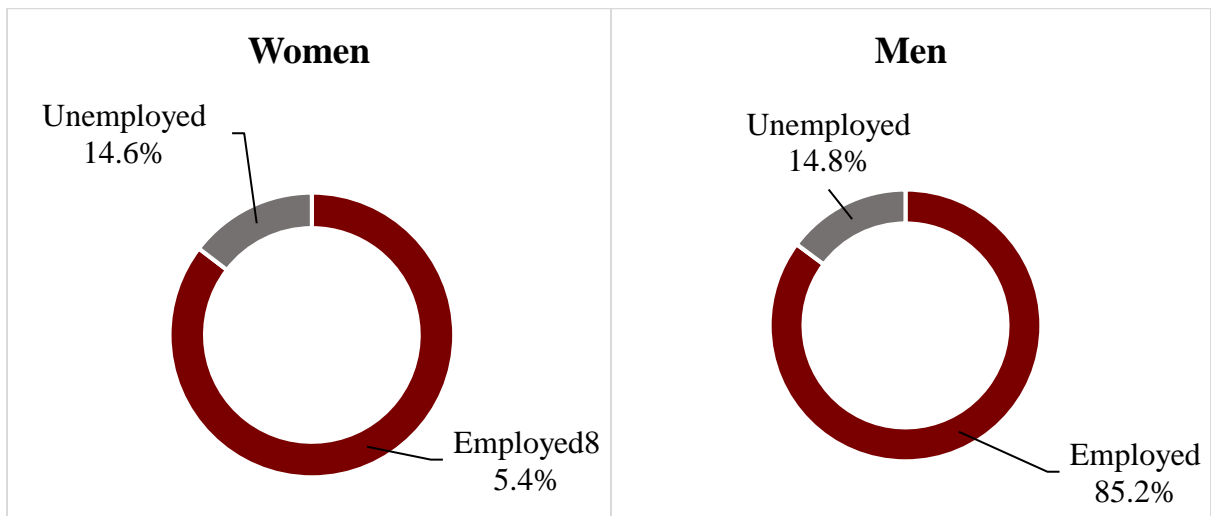
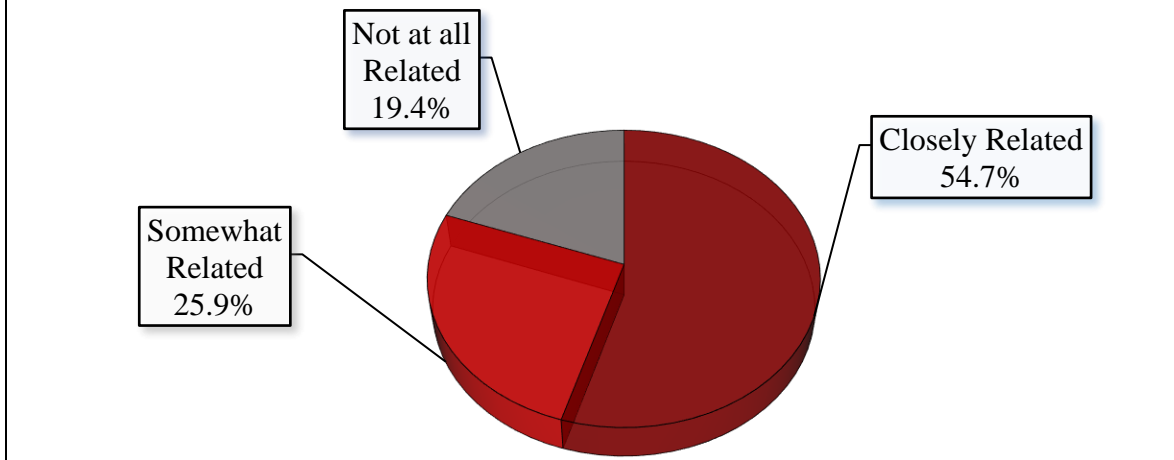


Table 3: Employment and Median Income by Minority Status and Gender

Ethnicity	Employed		Median Income
	#	%	
Minority			\$33,500
F	31	93.9	\$31,000
M	25	86.2	\$50,000
Not Minority			\$40,000
F	103	83.1	\$36,000
M	90	84.9	\$45,000

Figure 7: How is your primary employment related to your undergraduate degree(s)?



Open-Ended Responses

Many alumni found their WSU education to be valuable. As depicted by the word cloud, students found WSU’s sense of community, programs, and professors to be highly valuable. Example responses include the following:

“My time at WSU Vancouver not only broadened my worldview and knowledge base; it fostered a love of learning and the curiosity to continue my education every day of my life.”

“The culture at WSU was exceptional. The people there were fantastic (staff and students)... I learned about the world, I was encouraged to develop skills that helped me communicate with others, and I became myself with the help of Washington State University.”

“Quality education with an indescribable sense of community. The student, facility, community support system is something special.”

Value of WSU Undergraduate Education



Alumni also had advice for improving WSU. This advice was broad, ranging from having cheaper tuition and more financial support to placing more emphasis on job placement and internship opportunities. Other students were concerned with diversity in ideas (e.g., there needs to be more conservative thought) and the underrepresentation of minority students, faculty, and staff. Example responses are below:

“Lower tuition, especially fees. Students shouldn't be paying mandatory fees for things like Athletics that should be self-sustaining.”

“Promote and encourage students to be more involved with the industries that could hire them upon completion of their degree.”

“You have a real problem with racial diversity. Your faculty should be more representative of the diverse student body WSU serves.”

Please indicate how WSU could improve the value of its undergraduate education.

