

7-1-1997

Profile of Alumni from the Class of 1992, part one: Three to Four Years in the Workplace

George Cvetkovich
Western Washington University

Joseph E. Trimble
Western Washington University

Gary (Gary Russell) McKinney
Western Washington University

Richard Frye
Western Washington University

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cvetkovich, George; Trimble, Joseph E.; McKinney, Gary (Gary Russell); and Frye, Richard, "Profile of Alumni from the Class of 1992, part one: Three to Four Years in the Workplace" (1997). *Office of Survey Research*. 462.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/surveyresearch_docs/462

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Institutes, Centers, and Offices at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Office of Survey Research by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.



Profile of Alumni from the Class of 1992

Part One: Three to Four Years in the Workplace

Prepared by George Cvetkovich, Gary R. McKinney,
Joseph E. Trimble, and Richard Frye

Introduction

A survey of Western Washington University alumni from the class of 1992 (fall quarter, 1991, through summer quarter, 1992) was conducted over the course of two quarters, winter through spring, 1996. The amount of time passed between an alumni's graduation and participation in the survey was a minimum of three years and two quarters and a maximum of four years and two quarters. Previous alumni surveys done at Western followed the Higher Education Coordinating Board's standard of one year to eighteen months from graduation. (Results from these surveys--four have been completed to date--are available through the Office of Survey Research.)

Assessment researchers at Western were familiar enough with alumni survey literature to believe that a more complete analysis of alumni sat-

isfaction should also include findings from alumni further from graduation than a year to eighteen months. This survey of alumni three to four years from graduation was conducted to complement and enrich Western's alumni survey research series.

The survey was conducted through the mail and administered by the Office of Survey Research. The first mailing on January 12, 1996, was to the entire 1992 graduating class of 1,917 students. The first reminder was mailed February 8; the second reminder (including a new survey form) was mailed April 19; and the last reminder was mailed May 10. Ultimately, 843 alumni from the class of 1992 responded to the

survey. The 44.0% participation rate, though respectable, was not as strong as in other alumni survey administrations. The probable causes for this include the longer period since graduation, and slightly more lengthy survey form. Overall, however, the total number of returned questionnaires was satisfactory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SATISFACTION WITH WESTERN	PAGE 2
JOBS AND INCOMES	PAGE 3
JOB SATISFACTION/HOURS WORKED	PAGE 4
JOB IN MAJOR	PAGE 5
CONTINUING EDUCATION	PAGE 6
INCOME COMPARISONS	PAGE 7
EFFECTS ON INCOME	BACK PAGE



FINDINGS

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH WESTERN RAN HIGH, WITH 84.7% OF RESPONDENTS REPORTING THEY WERE VERY OR MOSTLY SATISFIED WITH THE EDUCATION THEY RECEIVED.

A majority of the 1992 alumni survey respondents had entered Western as freshmen (54.5%). About a third had entered as transfers with Associate of Arts degrees (33.2%), while the remaining respondents had transferred without an AA degree (12.4%). ☺

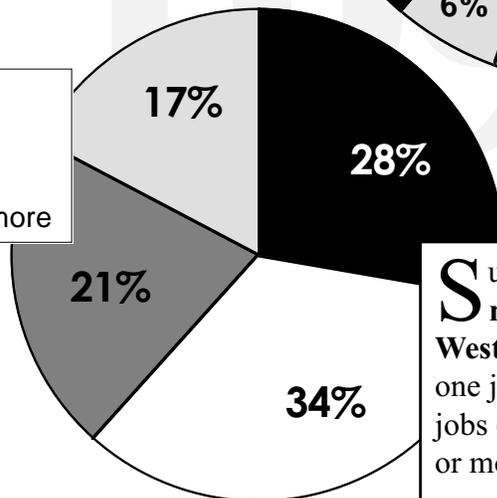
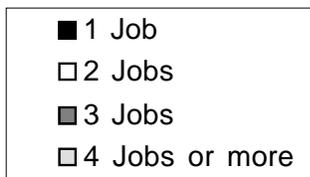
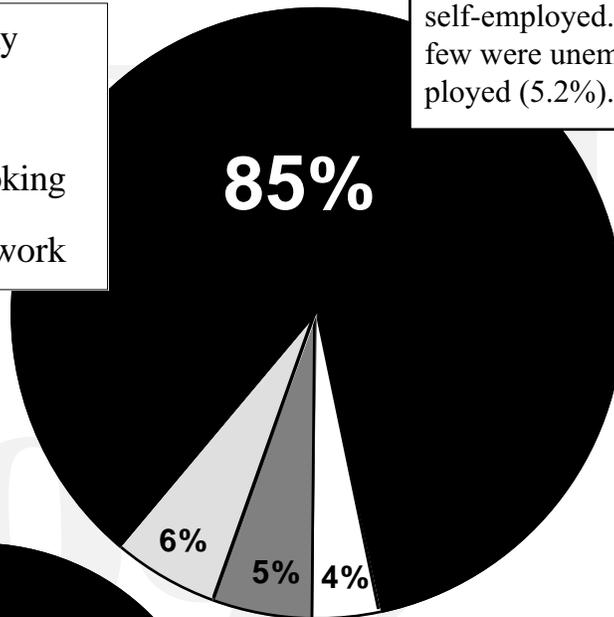
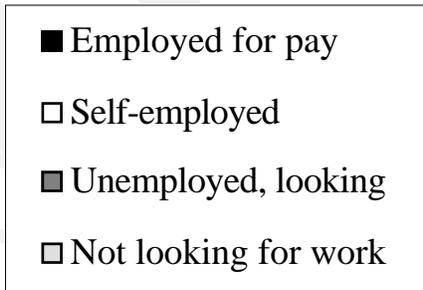
Besides *overall* satisfaction, sixteen other areas of satisfaction were polled. In all but three areas, a majority of respondents were satisfied with Western's contribution to their growth. Some areas (learning independently, 83.5%; working cooperatively in a group, 81.8%; and defining and solving problems, 77.3%) received high percentages. One response in particular--being ready for a career--received a rather low percentage (47.8%). This finding would appear critical, and may suggest some further investigation. Also, an analysis of satisfaction with being ready for graduate school appears on page six of this report. ☺

Table 1: "Please indicate how satisfied you are with Western's contribution to your growth in each of the following areas:"

Very/Mostly Satisfied	
83.5	Learning independently
81.8	Working cooperatively in a group
77.3	Defining and solving problems
68.9	Understanding differing philosophies and cultures
67.7	Critically analyzing written information
66.2	Understanding the interaction of society and the environment
64.4	Writing effectively
63.0	Understanding and applying quantitative principles and methods
55.4	Speaking effectively
53.9	Understanding and appreciating the arts
52.9	Understanding and applying scientific principles and methods
51.7	Being able to develop a satisfying meaning for life
50.8	Being able to cope with life changes and stress
49.0	Recognizing your rights, responsibilities, & privileges as a citizen
47.8	Being ready for a career

The average annual income reported by 1992 alumni three to four years after graduation was \$25,800. The average annual income reported by 1992 alumni one year to eighteen months after graduation (non-teaching) was \$21,500. Though this comparison is not longitudinal--the latter figure was taken from the Career Services Center's 1993 survey, while the former is taken from this report's 1996 survey--the figures do represent an increase in salary as both surveys include many of the same individuals. ☺

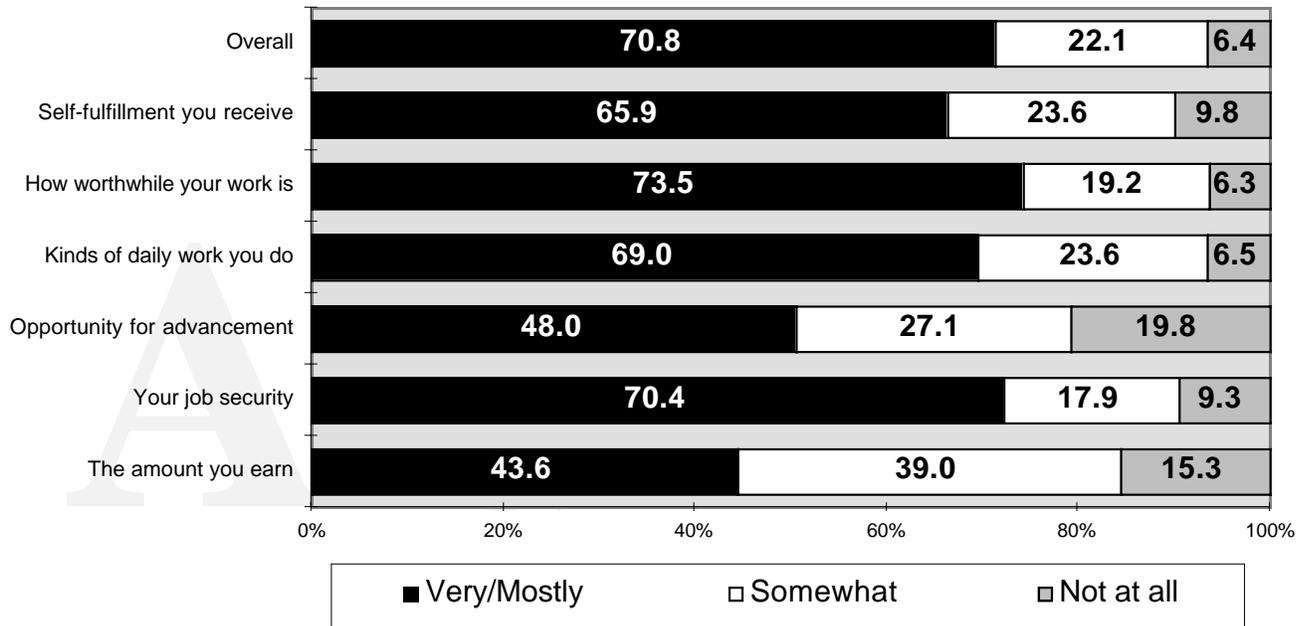
Alumni were asked which situation best described their current employment situation: employed for pay, self-employed, unemployed and looking for work, or unemployed and not looking for work. Most (89.3%) were employed for pay or self-employed. Very few were unemployed (5.2%). ☺



Survey respondents were asked **how many jobs they had held since leaving Western**. Less than a third had held only one job (27.7%). Most had held two or three jobs (55.0%). Quite a few had held four jobs or more (17.3%). ☺

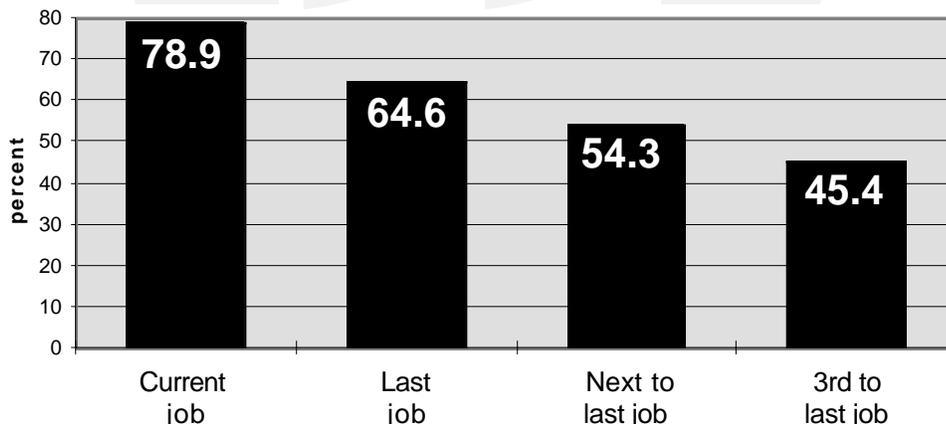
◆ **Most** 1992 Western alumni were satisfied with their jobs overall (70.8%), as well as were satisfied with how important and worthwhile their jobs were (73.5%). Respondents were far less satisfied with the amount they earned (43.6%), or with their opportunities for advancement (48.0%).

How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of current/last job



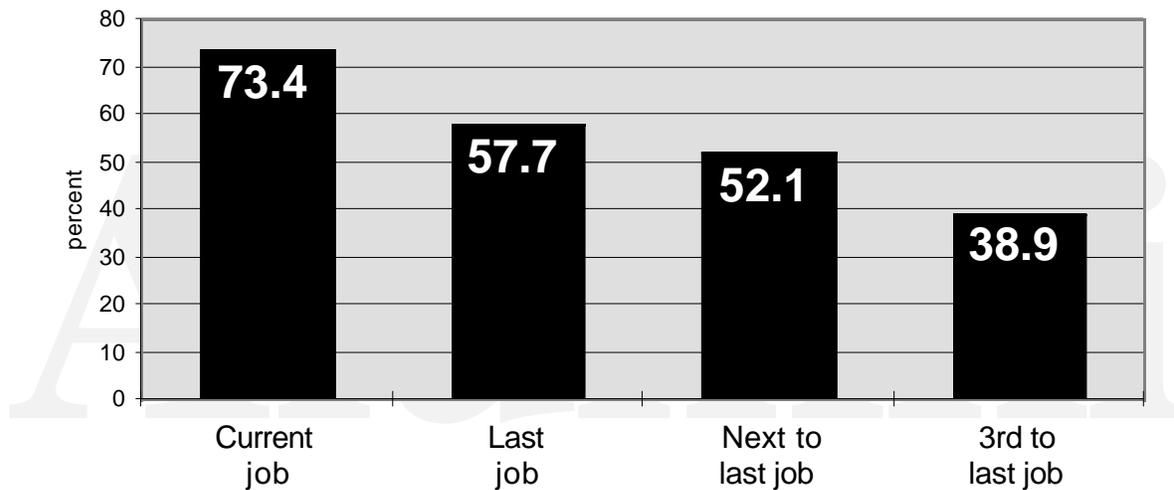
◆ **Findings** indicated that as 1992 alumni moved through the workforce, they began with jobs that required them to work less than full time. While over three-quarters of respondents (78.9%) currently worked jobs requiring 40 hour weeks, less than half (45.4%) worked full time at their third to last jobs—in other words, at jobs they held closer to their quarter of graduation from Western.

Percent of Respondents who worked 40 hours a week or more



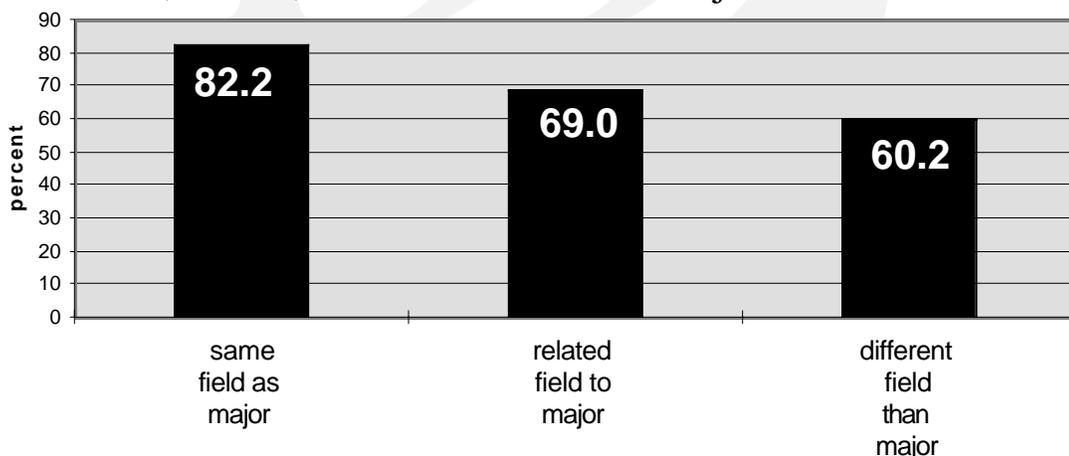
◆ A trend of interest was noted when 1992 alumni were asked which of their jobs was in the same or related field as their undergraduate major. For the third-to-last job respondents held, 38.9% indicated that it was related to their major. That figure rose to 52.1% for their next-to-last job, then jumped to 73.4% for their current job. Also of interest was the finding that having a job within one's major was unaffected by what that major was, nor was it affected by gender, or Western gpa.

Job is/was in the same or related field as respondent's major at WWU

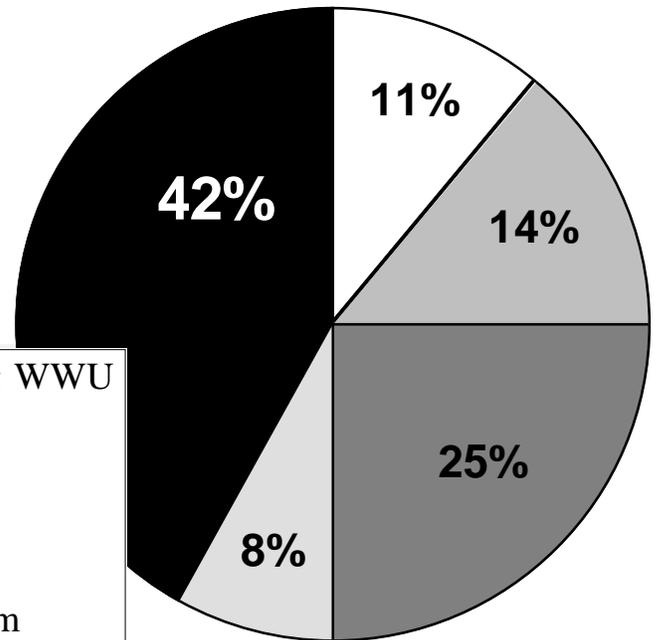


◆ **Findings** were quite clear that alumni job satisfaction was affected by the opportunity to work at a job within the same field as their college major. For 1992 graduates working at jobs in the same field as their major, 82.2% indicated they were very or mostly satisfied with their jobs overall. This figure fell to 69.0% for graduates working at jobs in fields related to their majors, and fell further to 60.2% for graduates working at jobs in fields different than their majors.

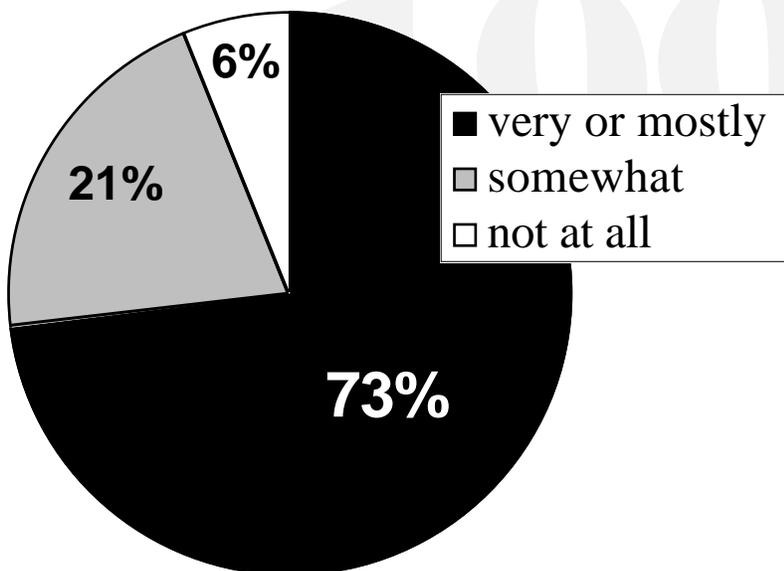
Overall, very or mostly satisfied with current job by same, related, or different field than major



Alumni were asked which situation best described any further educational accomplishments and/or educational plans for the foreseeable future. Some had already completed a college or university program since leaving Western (10.8%), while some were currently enrolled in such a program (14.5%). About a quarter (24.6%) had plans to enter a college or university program within five years. Most respondents, however, had no plans to enroll in a college or university program, or were uncertain whether they would enroll in such programs (42.5%). ☺



- ☐ Finished college program since leaving WWU
- ☐ Currently enrolled in college program
- ☐ Plan to enter college within 5 years
- ☐ Plan to enter college after 5 years
- Do not plan to enroll in college program



Nearly three-quarters (72.5%) of those respondents who had completed or were currently enrolled in a college or university program felt that Western had prepared them well for that program. A scant number felt not at all prepared (6.5%). This finding explains the low percentage of students indicating satisfaction with how Western had prepared them for graduate school (38.6%). That finding was for *all* survey participants, as opposed to *only those who had actually attended or were attending a college program since leaving Western.* ☺

Native students were earning more than their transfer counterparts-- on average \$2500 more per year. This finding was statistically significant, though native/transfer status explained only a very small proportion of the observed income variation. Further investigation of this result suggests that **graduates who spent less than two years at Western had incomes, on average, some \$5300 less than graduates who spent more than two years at Western.** Again, although this result was significant statistically, it also accounts for only a small proportion of the observed income variation. Nevertheless, it is a puzzling result. It is not associated with differences in gender, hours employed, major, gpa, current employment status, or whether an AA degree had been earned. ☺

MALE GRADUATES WERE EARNING MORE THAN THEIR FEMALE COUNTERPARTS, WITH MEN EARNING ON AVERAGE \$27,400 A YEAR COMPARED TO \$24,850 FOR WOMEN. MALE GRADUATES ALSO HAD MORE COLLEGE DEBT THAN FEMALES, WITH MEN HAVING ACCUMULATED \$6,400 OF COLLEGE DEBT COMPARED TO \$4,700 FOR FEMALES.

STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED IN BUSINESS, EDUCATION, MATH, SCIENCE, SOCIAL SCIENCE, AND OTHER APPLIED FIELDS HAD AVERAGE INCOMES SOME \$3400 HIGHER THAN STUDENTS IN HUMANITIES, LANGUAGES, ARTS, FAIRHAVEN, AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THERE WAS A WIDE VARIATION AROUND THESE AVERAGES, SO RESULTS MUST BE VIEWED WITH CONSIDERABLE CAUTION.

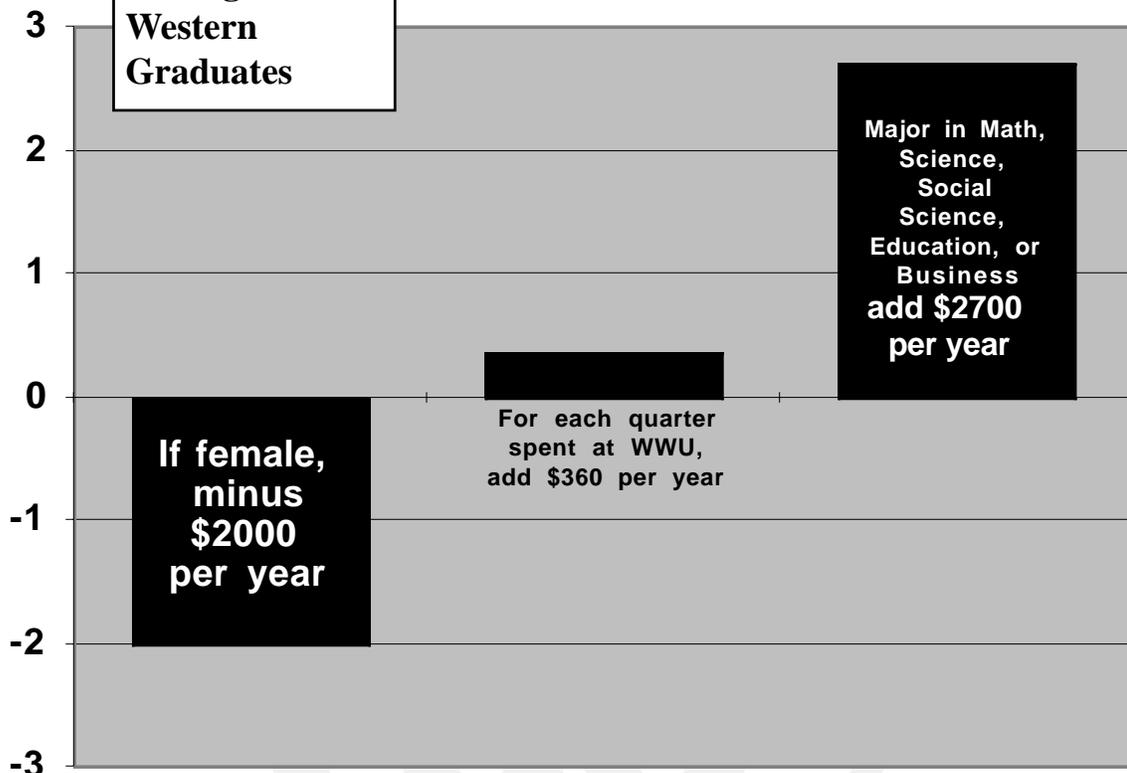
The best predictor of income is the number of quarters at Western. **These data fits a linear model suggesting that each additional quarter at Western is worth about \$360 per year.** This trend holds for alumni who took up to six years to graduate, then falls somewhat. The result was significant, and explains more of the observed variation in income (about 10%) than any other variable. This effect can be explained, in part, by the fact that some majors associated with higher incomes require significantly more time to complete; for instance, math/science majors averaged 12.7 quarters, compared to the overall average of 11.6. On the other end of the scale, low income earners include graduates from Fairhaven (10.2 quarters), and arts (10.6 quarters). Counter to this trend, however, were business majors, who averaged 11.5 quarters, about the same as the overall average, and who were also high earners. ☺

SURVEY OF 1992 WESTERN ALUMNI

BACK PAGE

Variation in income explains a significant proportion of variation in every measure of job satisfaction--for instance, job security, opportunity for advancement, self fulfillment, etc. **In every case, an increase in income is associated with an increased sense of satisfaction with the job.** ☺

Contributions of Selected Factors to the Explanation of Average Income Among 1992 Western Graduates



Each whole number = \$1000 per year
(Unstandardized Regression Coefficients)

published by:

Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing
Dr. Joseph E. Trimble, Director

For copies of Office of Institutional Assessment and Testing (OIAT) technical reports, Focus Research Summaries, or InfoFacts, please contact Gary McKinney, Western Washington University, MS: 9010, Bellingham, WA 98225. Or call, FAX, or e-mail at: telephone (360) 650-3409; FAX (360) 650-6893; email garyr@Nessie.cc.wvu.edu. Expanded executive summaries of OIAT reports can be found on our World Wide Web page. To access our page use the following address:

<http://www.wvu.edu/~assess/>