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1997 Survey of Former Students

Western Washington University. Office of Survey Research

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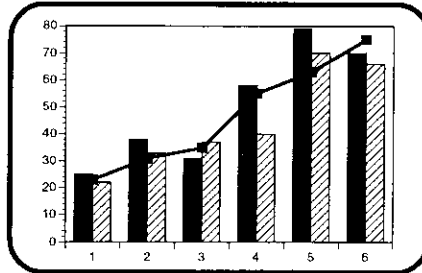
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WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

1997 SURVEY OF FORMER STUDENTS



**Office of Survey Research
Western Washington University
Bellingham, Washington 98225-9081**



Thank you for your assistance with this important project. The information you provide will be used to improve education and student life at Western.

Your participation is extremely important to the validity of this study. We very much appreciate your prompt reply.

All questionnaires are guaranteed complete confidentiality.

To return your questionnaire, fold it in half and insert it in the postage-paid return envelope provided. Thanks!

For most questions in this survey, please circle the number next to or under the answer you choose. Please answer every question unless you are directed to skip particular questions.

However, some questions may not fit your experience, because we are contacting people with very different experiences. If any questions do not apply to you, just circle the number beside "not applic." or leave the question blank.

Thank you.

To return this questionnaire, use the self-addressed,
postage-paid envelope provided or send to:

**OFFICE OF SURVEY RESEARCH
WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225-9081**

1. While you were enrolled at Western, were you working toward a degree, or primarily taking some courses for other purposes?

1. Working toward a degree 2. Other: job related 3. Other: personal interest

2. Please indicate whether each factor below was a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason why you left Western.

| | <u>MAJOR</u> | <u>MINOR</u> | <u>NOT</u> |
|---|--------------|--------------|------------|
| a. Found a good work opportunity | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| b. Achieved my goals and felt no more need to attend | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| c. Decided to transfer to another college | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| d. Realized I was not interested in college | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| e. Was not performing well enough in school | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| f. Had financial problems | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| g. Wanted time away from school to decide on my goals | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| h. Lacked friends or a good social life at Western | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| i. Was dissatisfied with professors or courses | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| j. Felt too little concern from faculty | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| k. Courses or programs I wanted did not exist at Western | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| l. Courses or programs I wanted were too hard to get into | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| m. Family obligations, personal or medical reasons | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| n. Environment at Western was not culturally diverse | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| o. Lacked direction in my life | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| p. Felt I didn't fit in at Western | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| q. Disappointed by the large classes I had to take | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Other reason(s): _____

3. Since you left Western, have you attended another college or university?

1. No, never --> **Skip to Question 6, top of next page**
2. Yes, in the past but not at present --> **Continue with Question 4**
3. Yes, enrolled at present --> **Continue with Question 4**

4. How likely is it that you will earn a bachelors degree within the next five years?

0. Already earned a bachelors 1. Definitely 2. Probably 3. Probably not 4. Definitely not

5. Did you enter another school within a six month period after leaving Western?

1. No 2. Yes -- What school? _____

6. How likely is it that you will return to Western to continue your education?
 1. Definitely 2. Probably 3. Undecided 4. Probably Not 5. Definitely Not

7. What is the highest degree you ever plan to complete?
 1. None 2. Vocational certificate 3. Associate (AA or equivalent)
 4. Bachelors (B.A., B.S., etc.) 5. Masters (M.A., M.S., etc.) 6. Post-Masters

Now we have some questions about the time you spent at Western.

8. Did you enter Western as a freshman or as a transfer from another college?
 1. As a freshman 2. As a transfer with an A.A. 3. As a transfer without an A.A.

9. Please indicate whether or not you participated in each of the following orientation activities as a new student at Western.

- a. Summer Start (Summer orientation for the next Fall) 1. No 2. Yes
 b. New student orientation held the week before classes began 1. No 2. Yes
 c. Social gatherings held during orientation week 1. No 2. Yes

10. Please indicate whether you found each of the following aspects of your transition to Western easy or difficult.

| | <u>VERY DIFFICULT</u> | <u>SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT</u> | <u>EASY</u> | <u>NOT APPLICABLE</u> |
|---|---------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| a. Managing administrative matters such as getting registered and getting financial aid | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| b. Learning about academic issues such as note taking and professors' expectations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| c. Learning what courses you needed to take | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |
| d. Getting into the courses you needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 9 |

11. For each pair of opposed educational goals listed below, please circle the number (1-3) that best indicates the relative importance you placed on each goal while you were attending Western.

| | | <u>Relative Importance:</u> | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------|--|
| | | <u>more</u> | <u>equal</u> | <u>more</u> | | |
| a. | To obtain a degree | 1 | 2 | 3 | | To learn a great deal |
| b. | To get training preparing me for a specific occupation | 1 | 2 | 3 | | To get a well-rounded education preparing me for life as a whole |

12. About how many hours per week did you typically study, during your first year (or partial year) at Western?

| | | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------------|
| <u>0-4</u> | <u>5-9</u> | <u>10-14</u> | <u>15-19</u> | <u>20-24</u> | <u>25-29</u> | <u>30-34</u> | <u>35+</u> | <u>Don't Recall</u> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

13. While enrolled at Western, how much of the time did you . . .

| | <u>ALL</u> | <u>MOST</u> | <u>HALF</u> | <u>SOME</u> | <u>NONE</u> |
|--|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| a. Receive financial aid of any type (grants, loans, work study) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Work for pay 10 or more hours per week (include work study) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Work for pay 20 or more hours per week | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

14. While you were at Western, approximately what percent, if any, of the cost of your education did you provide by working during school and summers? _____ %

15. Please indicate whether you experienced each of the problems below while at Western by circling the number of the most appropriate response.

Never experienced this problem

Had this problem, but did not seek assistance

Had this problem but received unsatisfactory assistance

Had this problem and received satisfactory assistance

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | a. Feeling lonely or homesick |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | b. Serious confusion over life meaning or spirituality |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | c. Feeling overwhelmed by all you had to do |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | d. Inability to make important life decisions such as career choice |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | e. A serious shortage of money |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | f. Feeling Depressed |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | g. Missing too many classes or not completing homework |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | h. A clear case of unfair grading by a professor |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | i. Drinking or using drugs more than you wanted to |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | j. Theft of your personal property |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | k. Forced sexual intercourse (by anyone, acquaintance or other) |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | l. Unwanted verbal or physical sexual behavior by a member of the faculty or staff, that made you feel intimidated or unsafe |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | m. Harassing actions by students, that made you feel intimidated or unsafe, including harassment of a religious, sexual, or racial nature. |

Other serious problem(s) you had: _____

16. If one or more of the problems above were major reasons why you left Western, please indicate which ones by writing in the appropriate letters (a through m or other) here: _____

17. When your first entered Western, did you have a major field of study in mind?

1. No 2. Yes, tentatively 3. Yes, definitely

18. When you left Western, did you have a major field of study in mind?

1. No --> Skip to Question 20

2. Yes, tentatively

3. Yes, definitely What Field: _____

19. When you left Western, how many of the required courses for the major had you completed?

1. All 2. Most 3. Half 4. Some 5. None 9. Don't know

20. Looking back, please rate your satisfaction with Western on each aspect of campus life listed below.

| | Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Can't Say/ No Experience |
|---|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| a. The orientation you received as a new student | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Opportunities to discuss coursework outside of class with professors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. Opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. Sense of community on campus | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. The availability of courses <u>in</u> your major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. Quality of instruction <u>in</u> your major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. The availability of courses <u>outside</u> the major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| h. Overall quality of instruction in <u>all courses</u> you took | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| i. Students at Western | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| j. Relevance of coursework to everyday life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| k. Library facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| l. Computer facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| m. Tutorial help or other academic assistance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| n. Academic advising | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| o. Financial aid services | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| p. Amount of contact with faculty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| q. Class size | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| r. Ability to find a faculty or staff mentor | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| s. Institutional support of racial/cultural differences | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| t. Bellingham as a place to live | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| u. The quality of your social life at Western | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| v. How fairly & accurately Western professors graded | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| w. <u>Overall</u> college experience | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

21. If you could go back in time and repeat your college education knowing what you know now, please indicate what major changes, if any, you would make.

22. While you were attending Western, how much, if at all, did each of the following factors hinder you from making the progress you wanted to make?

| | <u>A GREAT DEAL</u> | <u>QUITE A BIT</u> | <u>SOME- WHAT</u> | <u>NOT AT ALL</u> | <u>CANT SAY/ NOT APPLIC.</u> |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| a. Scheduling conflicts made courses unavailable to me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| b. Courses I needed were filled by the time I registered | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| c. I was uncertain about my educational goals and took some courses I didn't need | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| d. I took courses I did not need while I waited for access into courses required by my major | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| e. Poor grades forced me to retake courses | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| f. I received poor advising or a lack of adequate advising | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |
| g. I lacked support and direction when making the transition to Western | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 9 |

For the next questions, please circle the number that best indicates whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

23. Western does too little to encourage students' creativity.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

24. While I was at Western, social life and "getting through" mattered more to me than studying and learning.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

25. I often needed more or better advising than I was able to get at Western.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

26. The chief benefit of a college education is that it increases one's earning power.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

27. New students should be given suggested sequences or combinations of courses.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

28. A lot of courses at Western are too demanding for many of the students enrolled in them.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

29. If every student had at least one small class during the first quarter at Western, adjustment to school would be a lot better.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

30. I took courses from some Western faculty who were so outstanding that they have had a special impact on my life.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

31. I took courses from some Western faculty who were such poor instructors that they spoiled the entire experience.

1. strongly agree 2. agree 3. undecided 4. disagree 5. strongly disagree

32. What proportion of your courses at Western would you say challenged you to do your very best work?

1. all 2. most 3. about half 4. some 5. none 9. Don't know

33. If you could make your college choice over, would you still choose to enroll at Western?

1. definitely yes 2. probably I would 3. probably not 4. definitely not 9. Don't know

Now we have a few questions about yourself at present

34. Indicate the importance of each of the following to you, personally.

| | <u>Essential</u> | <u>Very Important</u> | <u>Somewhat Important</u> | <u>Not Important</u> |
|--|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Raising a family | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. Developing a meaningful philosophy of life | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. Having administrative responsibility for the work of others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. Being very well off financially | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. Helping others who are in difficulty | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| f. Influencing the political structure | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| g. Writing original works (poems, novels, short stories, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| h. Participating in a community action program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| i. Helping to promote racial understanding | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

35. Compared with yourself four years ago, how would you now describe your:

| | <u>Much Stronger</u> | <u>Stronger</u> | <u>No Change</u> | <u>Weaker</u> | <u>Much Weaker</u> |
|--|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| a. General knowledge | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. Analytical and problem solving skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. Ability to think critically | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. Knowledge of people from different races/cultures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e. Leadership abilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f. Ability to work independently | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g. Cultural awareness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h. Commitment to serving your community | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i. Ability to work cooperatively | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j. Preparation for future career | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

36. Which of the following best describes your current employment situation?

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time
3. Unemployed, looking for work -> skip to question 38
4. Not employed & not looking for work -> skip to question 38

37. How likely are you to stay in the same type of work for the next ten years?

- 1 . Definitely 2 . Probably 3 . Probably Not 4 . Definitely Not 9 . Can't say

38. What was your approximate high school grade point average?

- | | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| 1. Below C | 3. B- | 5. B+ | 7. A |
| 2. C to C+ | 4. B | 6. A- | 8. Don't recall |

39. How would you characterize your political views?

1. Far left 2. Liberal 3. Middle-of-the-road 4. Conservative 5. Far right

Thank you for completing this survey.

We also have an optional request. We would appreciate your responses to either or both of the questions below. We'll be pleased to receive your survey without these final questions completed, but your thoughts would be useful.

Optional Question A. What change(s), if any, would have made it possible and desirable for you to remain at Western to complete your degree?

Optional Question B. What was the best thing about the time you spent at Western?

Again, thank you for helping with this important project!

To return your questionnaire, fold it in half and use the postage-paid envelope provided.

If you misplace the return envelope, you can send the questionnaire to:

**Office of Survey Research
Western Washington University
Bellingham, WA 98225-9081**

Mailing Sequence Number: _____

(This number is essential for our record of mailings and does not in any way compromise the confidentiality of your questionnaire.)