

A Special Alumni Survey: Collegiate Results Instrument Project

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Overview

George Mason University was one of 80 institutions that participated in the Institute for Research on Higher Education (IRHE) Collegiate Results Instrument (CRI) project which surveyed bachelor's graduates (total N = 38,206) five years after graduation. The CRI shows the percent of students who have high scores (self-perceptions) in four areas --- Personal Values, Abilities, Work Skills and Lifelong Learning. The CRI also provides information about Post-Baccalaureate Educational Experiences and Occupations. The profile allows comparisons with other CRI institutions using Carnegie (research, doctoral, comprehensive, liberal arts, engineering school) and market segment (medallion, name brand, good buy, user friendly) classifications. Based on these classifications, this report compares George Mason alumni with current peers (CRI doctoral, good buy institutions [defined as having a 5-year graduation rate of 35% - 60%]) and aspiration peers (CRI research, name brand institutions [defined as having a 5-year graduation rate of 65% - 75%]). Due to rounding some totals may not equal 100%. A copy of the CRI and more detailed information about the CRI can be obtained from the Office of Institutional Assessment.

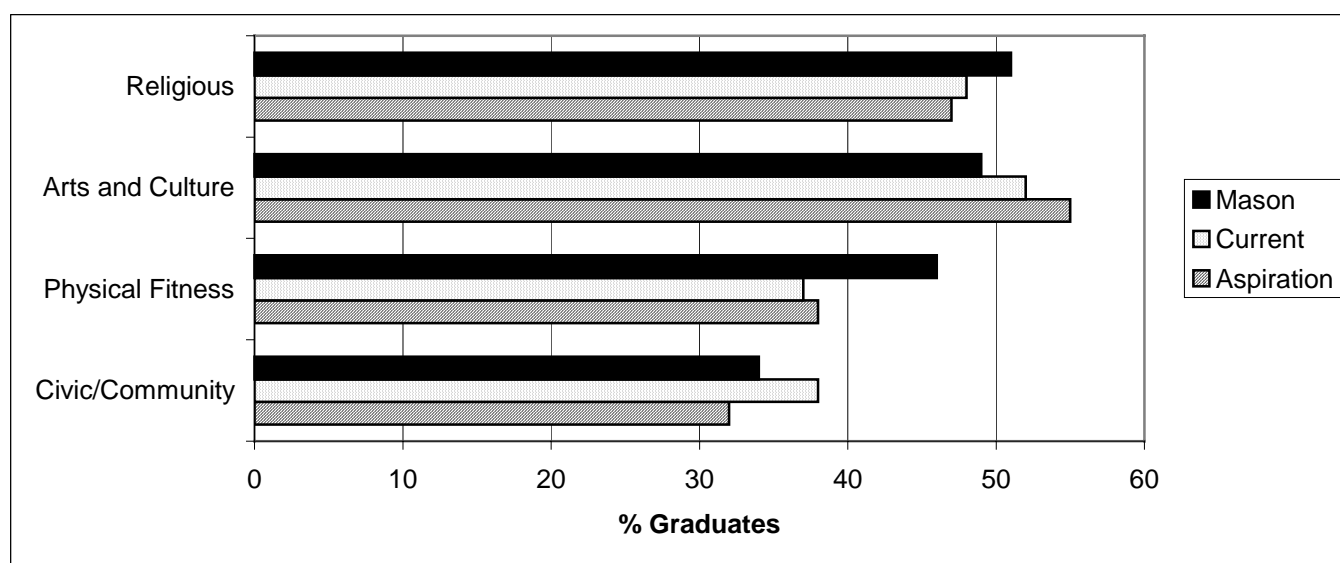
Sample

George Mason University provided the names of all baccalaureate graduates between 1992 - 1993 to the IRHE. The total number of Mason graduates for this time period was 2,756. In October 1999, 2,409 Mason alumni (alumni with available addresses) were mailed the CRI and in January 2000 they received a follow-up mailing. A total of 639 alumni (total unweighted sample) completed the survey for a total response rate of 27%. Of this number, 615 graduated during the target timeframe for a "core sample" response rate of 26%. During the data analysis stage, a "core weighted sample" was developed to correct for known response biases (e.g., appropriate proportions based on gender, ethnicity, age, citizenship status) in the GMU core sample.

Personal Values

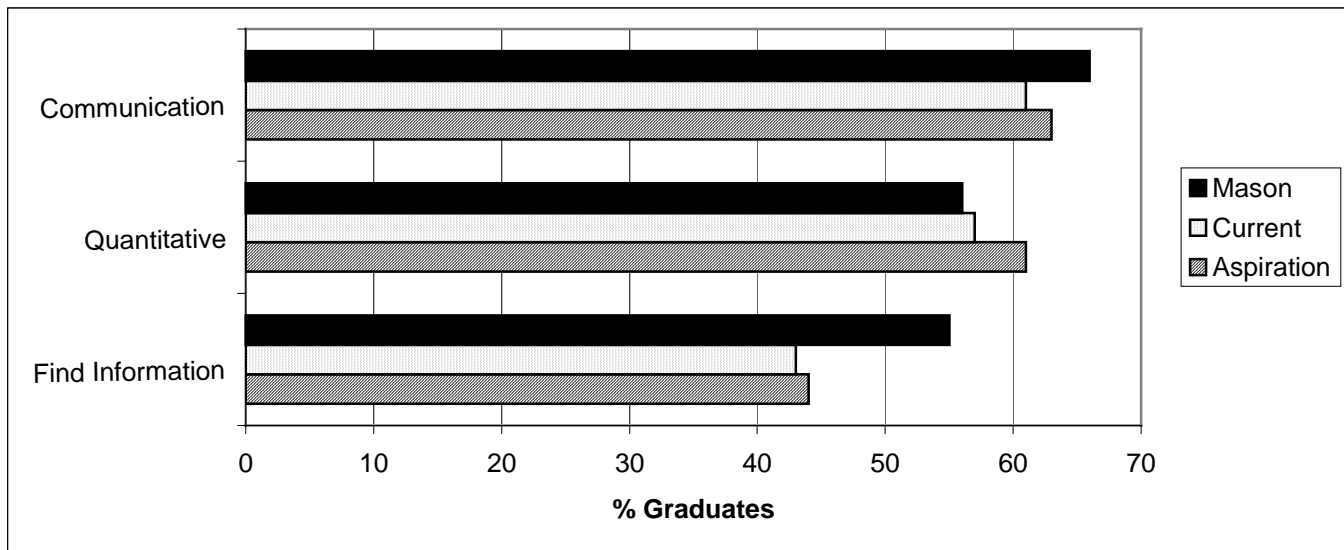
Mason alumni rated the importance of values (1 = not at all important, 5 = very important) and the frequency of activities (never, occasionally, regularly) for Arts and Culture, Religious, Civic/Community Involvement and Physical Fitness. Graph 1 shows those who rated these activities as “very important” and done “regularly” --- Religious 51%, Arts and Culture 49%, Physical Fitness 46%, and Civic/Community 34%. A higher percent of Mason graduates compared to Current and Aspiration peer graduates rated “Physical Fitness” and “Religious” as “very important,” while a lower percent rated “Arts and Culture” as “very important.” More Mason alumni compared to Aspiration peer alumni, but fewer compared to Current peer alumni, rated the “Civic/Community” value as “very important”.

Graph 1: Percent Mason, Current and Aspiration Peer Institution Graduates for Whom Values Are “Very Important” and done “Regularly”



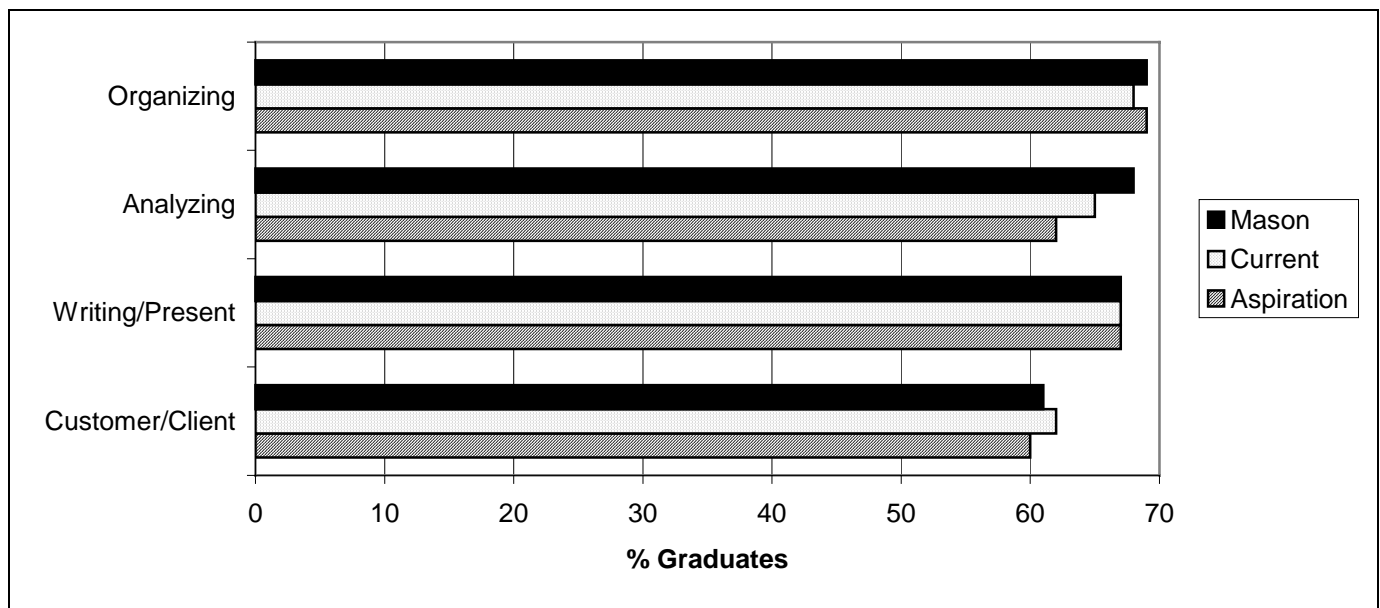
Abilities

Graph 2 shows that a large number of Mason alumni rate themselves as “well-prepared” to solve problems related to three abilities --- “Communicate/Organize” (66%), “Quantitative” (56%), and “Find Information” (55%). A higher percent of Mason vs. Current and Aspiration institution alumni rate themselves “well-prepared” to solve problems related to “Communicate/Organize” and “Find Information” abilities, while a smaller percent report being “well-prepared” to solve problems related to their “Quantitative” ability.

Graph 2: Percent Mason, Current, Aspiration Peer Graduates Well Prepared for Abilities

Work Skills

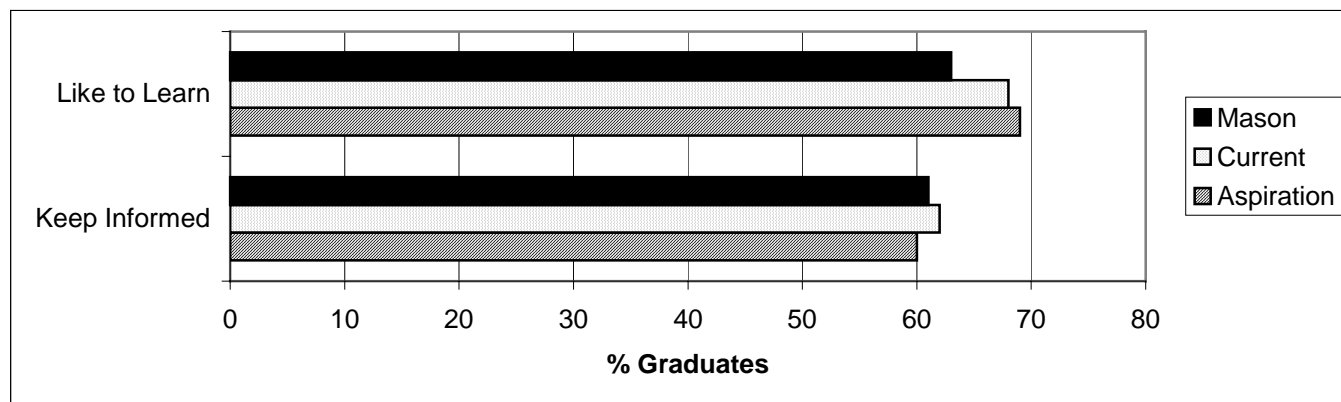
Graph 3 shows that more than 60% of Mason graduates report that they regularly use each of four work skills --- “Organizing” (69%), “Analyzing” (68%), “Writing/Presenting” (67%), and “Customer/Client” (61%) skills. More Mason graduates compared to Current and Aspiration peer graduates report that they regularly use “Analyzing” and roughly comparable numbers report they regularly use “Organizing,” “Writing/Presenting” and “Customer/Client” work skills.

Graph 3: Percent George Mason Alumni Who Regularly Use Work Skills

Lifelong Learning

Graph 4 shows that 63% of Mason graduates indicate that they “Like to Learn” and 61% report that they regularly “Keep Informed.” Fewer Mason vs. Current and Aspiration institution graduates indicate that they “Like to Learn.” Approximately the same percentage of Mason graduates as Current and Aspiration peer alumni indicate that they “Keep Informed.”

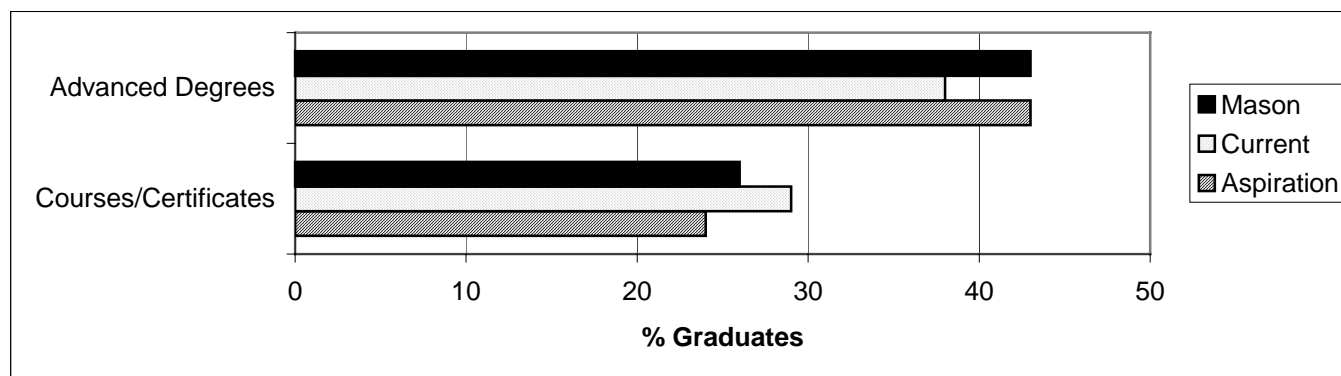
Graph 4: Percent Mason, Current and Aspiration Alumni Who Like to Learn and Keep Informed



Post-Baccalaureate Education

Since graduation, 26% of Mason graduates have completed a “Course/Certificate/Credential” and 43% have completed an “Advanced Degree”, shown in Graph 5. Mason graduates completed more “Advanced Degrees” than our Current peer institution graduates and the same percentage as our Aspiration peer institution graduates. Also more Mason graduates vs. Aspiration peers but fewer than our Current peers completed post-baccalaureate “Courses/Certificates/Credentials.”

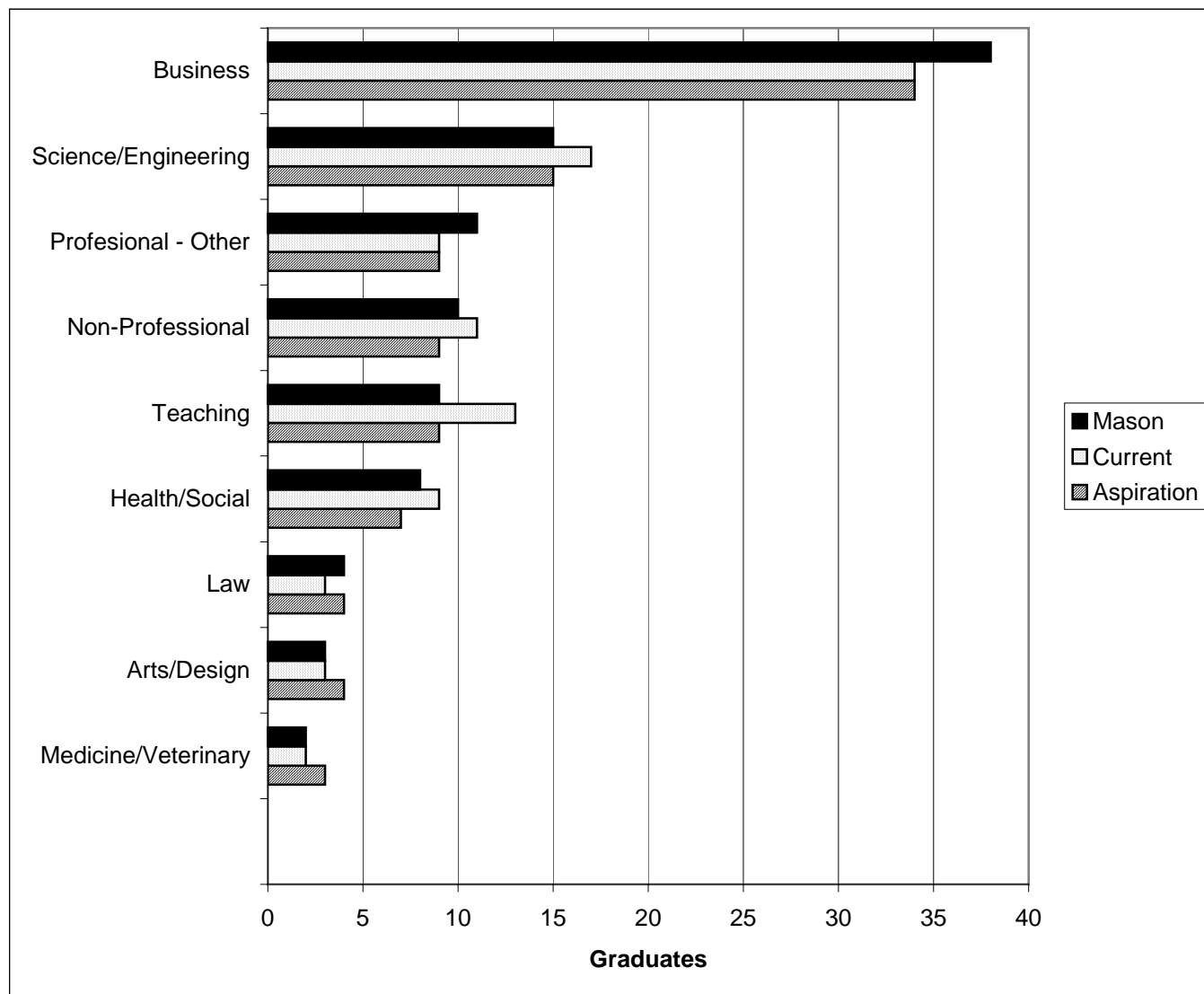
Graph 5: Percent Mason, Current and Aspiration Alumni Who Have Completed Courses/Certificates/Credentials or Advanced Degrees



Occupations

Graph 6 shows the percent of graduates in the CRI occupational categories for graduates who have been in the workforce since the receipt of the bachelor's degree. The largest percent of Mason alumni report working in Business (38%), Science/Engineering (15%) and Professional – Other (11%). Mason, Current and Aspiration peer institutions have similar proportions of graduates in each of the CRI occupational categories in that no difference is greater than five percent.

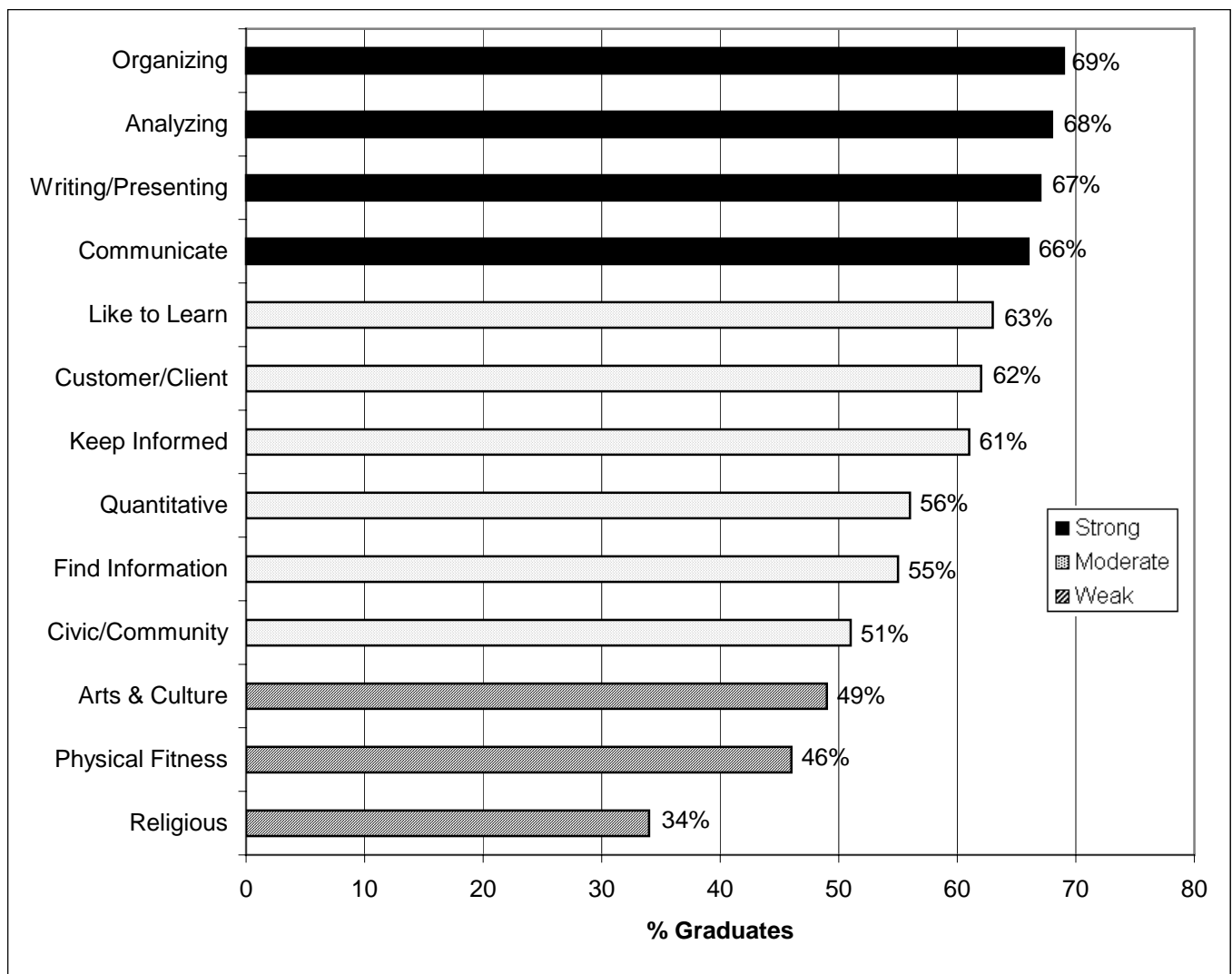
Graph 6: Occupations for Mason, Current and Aspiration Peer Graduates



Summary

IRHE suggests developing an institutional profile based on the percent of graduates with high scores in each category --- strong areas (black - 66% or more have high scores), moderate areas (light gray - 50% - 65% have high scores), weak areas (striped - less than 50% of graduates have high scores). Using these categories, Graph 7 shows George Mason University's profile. Strong areas for Mason are the three Work Skills – Organizing, Analyzing, and Writing/Presenting and the Ability to Communicate. Moderate areas of strength are Lifelong Learning - Like to Learn, Work Skill – Customer/Client, Lifelong Learning - Keep Informed, Abilities – Quantitative and Find Information, and Personal Values – Civic-Community. Weak areas are Personal Values --- Arts and Culture, Physical Fitness and Religious.

Graph 7: George Mason University Institutional Profile



Summary of CRI Findings

The CRI provides comparisons among 1992 – 1993 alumni from Mason and its Current (CRI doctoral, good buy institutions) and Aspiration (CRI research, name brand) peer institutions. There are substantial differences (i.e., 5% or more) among Mason and its Current and Aspiration peer alumni on only 3 of the 15 CRI measures. More specifically, a larger percent of Mason vs. Current and Aspiration peer institution graduates report that they 1) value and regularly undertake Physical Fitness, 2) are well prepared to solve problems related to “Find Information,” and 3) regularly use “Analyzing” as a work skill (only Aspiration peers). There are no substantial differences among the three groups on the remaining 12 CRI measures --- “Religious,” “Arts & Culture,” and “Civic/ Community” values; “Organizing,” “Writing/Presenting,” and “Customer/Client” work skills; “Like to Learn” and “Keep Informed” lifelong learning attitudes; and attained post-Baccalaureate “Advanced Degrees” or “Courses/Certificates.”

Perhaps the most valuable CRI information is the George Mason University profile that reflects areas of institutional strengths and weaknesses based on the values and beliefs reported by Mason alumni. Strong areas for Mason are “Organizing,” “Analyzing,” and “Writing/Presenting” work skills and “Communication” ability. Moderate areas are “Like to Learn” and “Keep Informed” lifelong learning attitudes; “Customer/Client,” “Quantitative,” and “Find Information” work skills, and valuing and regularly participating in the “Civic/Community” area. Areas of institutional weakness are values and regular participation in “Arts & Culture,” “Physical Fitness,” and “Religious” areas.