

Graduating Senior Survey Report 2000 – 2001

*Graduates from Summer 2000,
Fall 2000 and Spring 2001*

June 2002

George Mason University

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***Part One:
University Report***



I. Data Summary Table

All Respondents

N = 2,410

Satisfaction At Mason		
Very Satisfied	Satisfied	
37%	58%	Education in general
51%	43%	Education in major field
31%	45%	Advising in major field
15%	48%	Sense of belonging to Mason community
28%	62%	Overall Mason experience
26%	59%	Out-of-class access to faculty
Faculty and Curriculum		
Excellent	Good	
50%	41%	Quality of faculty in major field
Always	Usually	
25%	66%	How often courses were intellectually challenging
Computer Skills – extent to which each application was incorporated into “10 or more Mason classes”		
75%		Word processing
55%		E-mail
55%		Internet/www
5%		Electronic meeting rooms (e.g., town hall)
Educational Plans – proportion planning to enroll in graduate/professional school		
39%		Full-time
14%		Part-time
Employment		
51%		Percent in a position related to their major or career (of those employed at graduation)
88%		Percent working during senior year

II. Graduating Senior Survey Highlights, 2000-2001

Satisfaction with Mason

- Satisfaction (“Very Satisfied” and “Satisfied”) is quite similar to last year’s figures. Over 90% of graduating seniors are satisfied with their education in general, their education in their major field, opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds and with their overall Mason experience.
- If they were to do it all over again, 32% of graduating seniors “Definitely” would attend Mason; 50% “Probably” would.

Faculty and the Curriculum

- Half of faculty in the major field are rated “Excellent;” 41% are rated “Good.”
- 66% said their Mason courses were “Usually” intellectually challenging; 25% said they were “Always” challenging.

General Education Goals

- Those areas where over half of responding seniors feel that Mason has “Very Much” contributed to their growth are: critical thinking and analysis, written communication, and problem solving.

Campus Emphasis

- Four areas of institutional emphasis have been tracked on the Graduating Senior Survey: academic and scholarly activities, aesthetic and creative activities, critical and analytical activities, and vocational and occupational competence. Both the aesthetic and vocational emphases have increased 20 percentage points since 1992.

Computer Skills and Knowledge

- The use of computer technologies in courses continues to increase. Fifty-five percent say they have used e-mail and the Internet in 10 or more courses.

Writing Experiences

- The number of students saying that they had 5 or more courses in which they were required to revise a written paper or assignment is at an all time high of 47%.

Use of Time and Employment

- The average number of hours spent studying has increased to 19.1 hours per week while time spent in classes and labs remains constant at 13.9 hours.
- The average number of hours spent studying per hour of class time is 1.4 hours, a slight increase from the last two years.
- Working for pay has decreased to 25.4 hours per week for seniors, but more seniors worked during their senior year than last year (88% currently compared to 83% in 1999-2000).

Post Graduation Educational Debt

- The percentage of students who owe more than \$20,000 at graduation has increased from 7% in 1998 and 1999 to 11% in 2001.

Post Graduation Educational Plans

- The percent of students who plan to enroll full-time in graduate school is at an all-time high—39%.
- In the past four years, since 1997, the percent that did not plan to be enrolled in course work fluctuated between 43% and 49%. Only 24% of this year's graduates do not have plans for additional course work.

Demographics for All Graduates

- The average age of all seniors at graduation is 27.
- The average GPA is 3.13.
- 60% began as transfers at Mason.
- 60% are women.
- 43% are not white Americans.
- During most of their time at Mason, just under 15% lived on campus.

III. Survey Process and Response Rates

Since 1992, the Office of Institutional Assessment has been surveying graduating seniors. Some questions have been repeated; others are introduced as university needs arise. The 2000 - 2001 Graduating Senior Survey includes questions based on the new general education curriculum goals. These questions will be repeated four, five and six years from now.

The survey this year also includes questions about institutional emphases and new questions about faculty and the curriculum. Satisfaction, use of time, writing and computer experiences, and future plans are covered as well.

Seniors who graduated in summer 2000, fall 2000, and spring 2001 were directed to complete the Graduating Senior Survey as they completed their online graduation application. Most students complete the survey online; students who do not are sent postcard reminders and then paper versions of the survey. This year, of the 2,800 students who graduated, 2,410 completed the survey for a response rate of 86%, the highest rate ever achieved on this survey.

A detailed comparison of survey respondents and all graduates is available on the Institutional Assessment website: <http://assessment.gmu.edu>. Also on the website are college and program level results and verbatim comments.

Feedback from readers is appreciated. We can be contacted at assessmt@gmu.edu.

Throughout this report, numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

<p>Visit http://assessment.gmu.edu for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed comparison of survey respondents• college and program level results• verbatim comments

IV. Satisfaction at Mason

In the 2001 Graduating Senior Survey, the response options for the satisfaction questions were changed from previous years and now set a higher standard. “Somewhat Satisfied” is now simply “Satisfied.” When either response is combined with “Very Satisfied” responses, the percentages between 2000 and 2001 are quite similar. (The exceptions to this are the two counseling questions that now include a “Not Applicable” and “Don’t Know” response.) While the combined percentage is similar, what has happened is that in the 2001 survey, students are now more likely to select the “Satisfied” category than “Very Satisfied” as they often did in the past.

For example, in 2000, 53% of students said they were “Very Satisfied” and 42% were “Somewhat Satisfied” with the education they received; in 2001, 37% were “Very Satisfied” and 58% were “Satisfied.” Combined, 95% of students in both years expressed satisfaction with their education in general. Given the limited choice prior to 2001 of being “Very Satisfied” or “Somewhat Satisfied,” students tended to select the former.

As has been typical in the past few years, the 2001 graduates were most likely to express the highest levels of satisfaction with the education in their major and with the opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds. “Sense of belonging” continues to see low levels of “Very Satisfied” students, although nearly half say they are “Satisfied.” This question has shown fairly steady improvement since it was first asked in 1996. Indeed, the few reasonably comparable surveys external to George Mason that are accessible suggest that 50-60% of students expressing satisfaction with community on campus is a fairly typical range. However, because two of these surveys allowed for a response of “Neutral,” it is more difficult to determine whether the 37% who expressed dissatisfaction with Mason might have selected “Neutral” if it had been available. (See Table 1.)

“Education in the major field” and “Opportunities to interact with student from diverse backgrounds” receive the largest percentage of “Very Satisfied” responses from graduating seniors.

Satisfaction in most categories is approximately the same as the previous year. The exception to this is “Career counseling” and “Counseling for personal reasons.”

“Campus intellectual life” does not receive many “Very Satisfied” responses. Yet, 91% say their courses are “Intellectually challenging” “Usually” or “Always.” Apparently students distinguish between specific courses and a broader intellectual climate.

The new questions added in 2001, as seen in Table 2, will be repeated and the answers tracked. While over half express some level of satisfaction with life in the residence halls, it should be kept in mind, that those students who lived in on-campus housing most likely have not done so in recent years since management changes were made.

**Table 1. 1996 - 2001
Six-Year Satisfaction Ratings**

Satisfaction	% Very Satisfied and Satisfied **					Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Mean*
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2001		
Education in general	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%	37%	58%	3.3
Education in major field	89%	94%	93%	93%	94%	51%	43%	3.4
Advising in major ⁺	62%	69%	74%	78%	76%	31%	45%	3.0
Sense of belonging to Mason community	39%	51%	60%	63%	63%	15%	48%	2.6
Overall Mason experience	78%	91%	90%	90%	91%	28%	62%	3.2
Out-of-class access to faculty	--	--	88%	89%	85%	26%	59%	3.1
Opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds	--	--	94%	94%	92%	43%	50%	3.3
Career counseling ⁺⁺	--	--	75%	79%	72%	19%	53%	2.8
Counseling for personal concerns ⁺⁺	--	--	76%	81%	71%	21%	50%	2.8

*Scale from 1-4; 4 = "Very Satisfied" **Prior to 2001 the second choice was "Somewhat Satisfied"

⁺Prior to 1998 the question read "department support services (e.g. advising)" ⁺⁺Percentages exclude "Don't Know" for all years and "Not Applicable" for 2001, the first time "NA" was used

**Table 2. 2001
New Satisfaction Questions in 2001**

Satisfaction -- New Questions in 2001	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Mean*
Academic courses	26%	66%	3.2
Campus intellectual life	13%	58%	2.8
Preparation for a technological world	19%	58%	2.9
Preparation for work	22%	61%	3.0
Preparation for post-Baccalaureate study	22%	61%	3.0
Campus climate for the broad diversity of students at Mason	26%	59%	3.1
Life in the Mason residence halls	15%	46%	2.6

* Scale from 1-4; 4 = "Very Satisfied"

Table 3 demonstrates that there has been little change since 1995 in response to the question, "If you had it to do all over again, would you attend George Mason University." About 80% say "Yes" in both years. Comparable data exists in the 2000 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in which George Mason participated. (See <http://assessment.gmu.edu> and click on "NSSE: Results.") In that survey, 27% of a sample of Mason seniors said "Definitely Yes" they would go to Mason again compared to 29% of seniors at Doctoral I and II institutions. About the same proportion of freshmen in this same survey said "Definitely Yes" - twenty six percent of Mason freshmen and 32% of Doctoral I and II institution freshmen said "Definitely Yes" on the NSSE 2000.

Table 3. 1995 and 2001

If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason?*

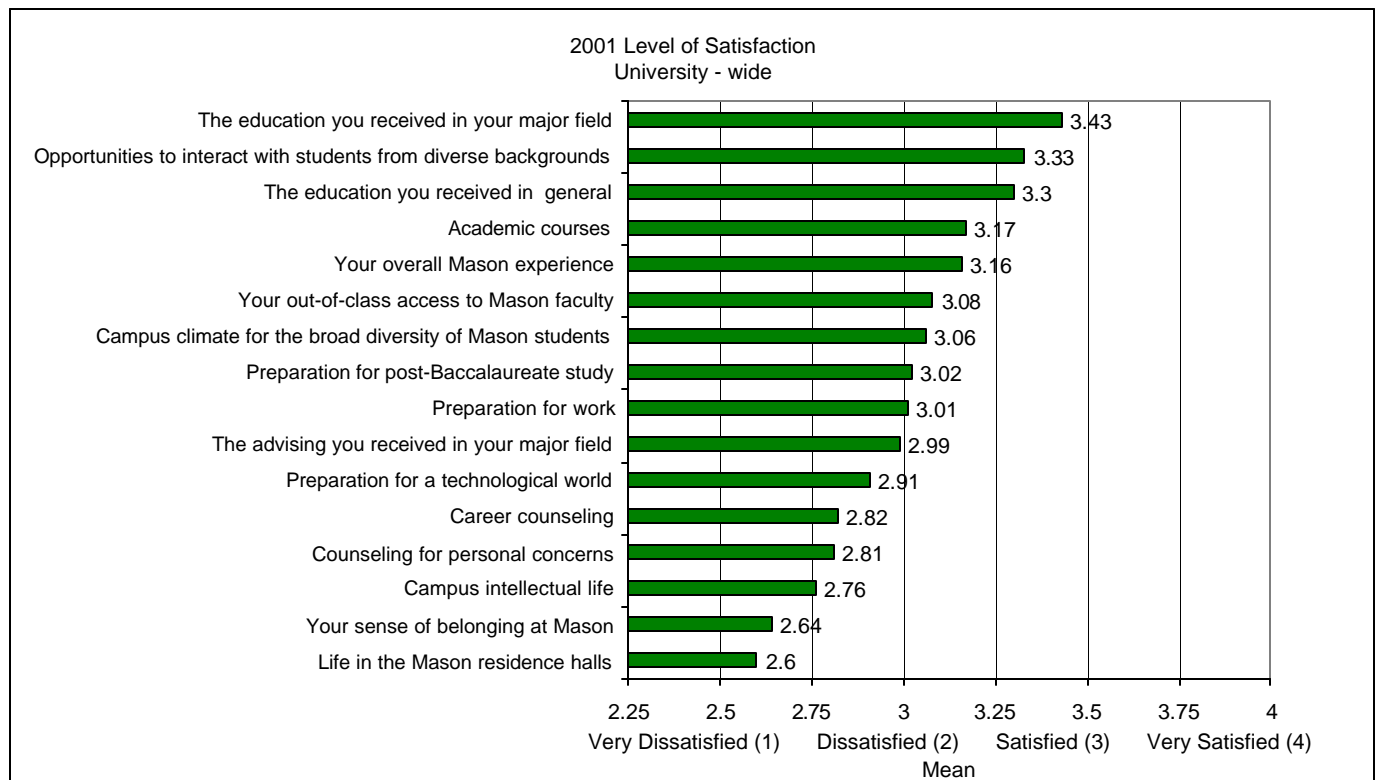
	1995	2001
Definitely Yes	34%	32%
Probably Yes	46%	50%
Probably No	16%	14%
Definitely No	4%	5%

*Numbers do not add to 100 due to rounding.

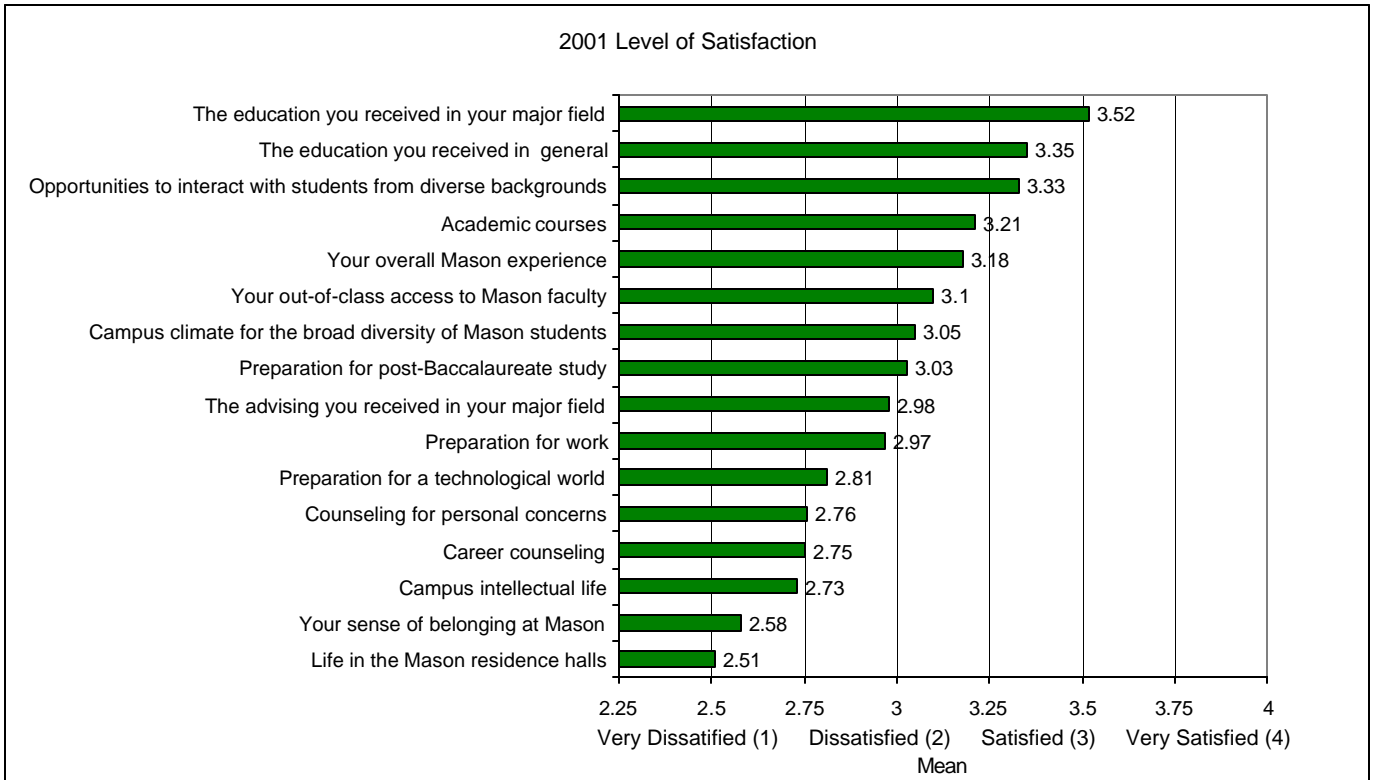
2001 Mean Levels of Satisfaction by School/College

All schools rank "Education received in major field," Opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds," and "Education received in general" among their top 4 choices.

Figure 1. 2001 University - wide



**Figure 2. 2001
College of Arts and Sciences**



**Figure 3. 2001
College of Nursing and Health Science**

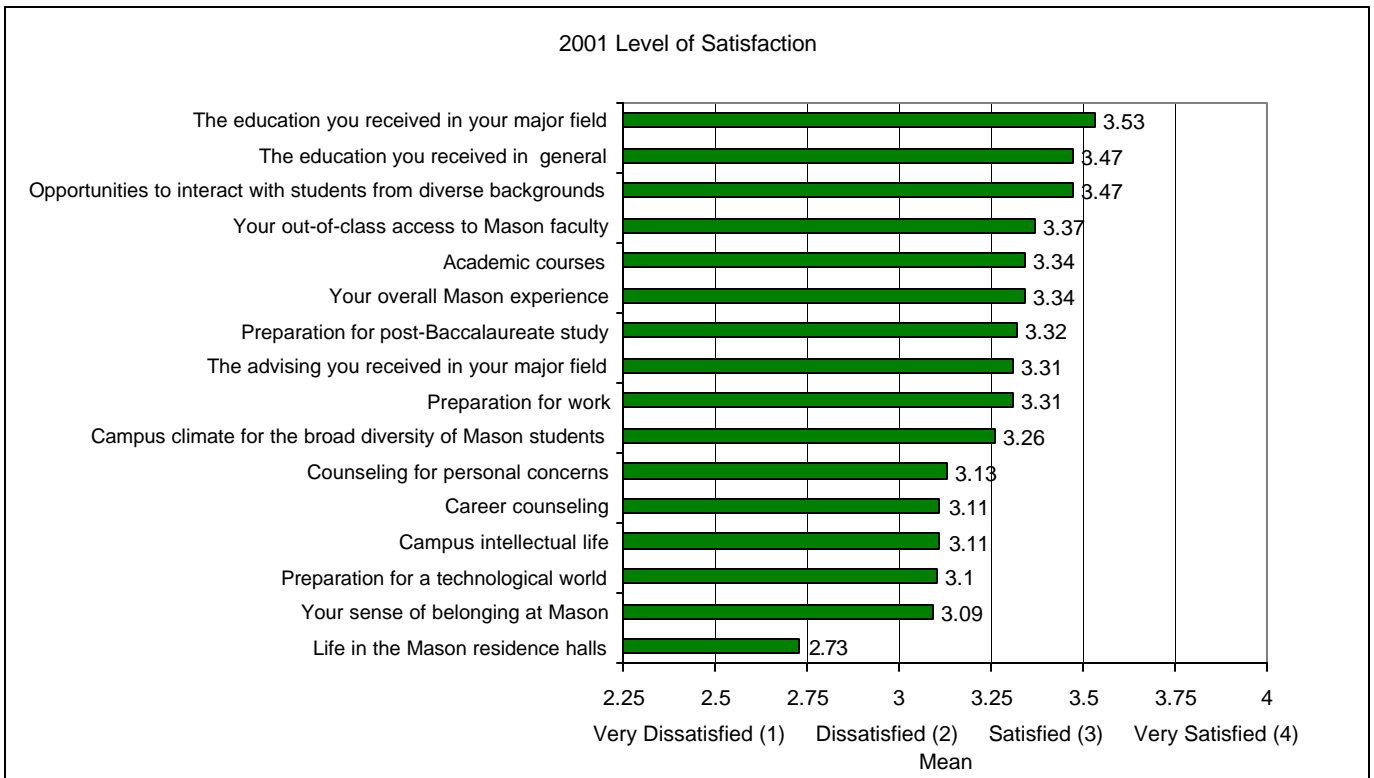


Figure 4. 2001
Graduate School of Education

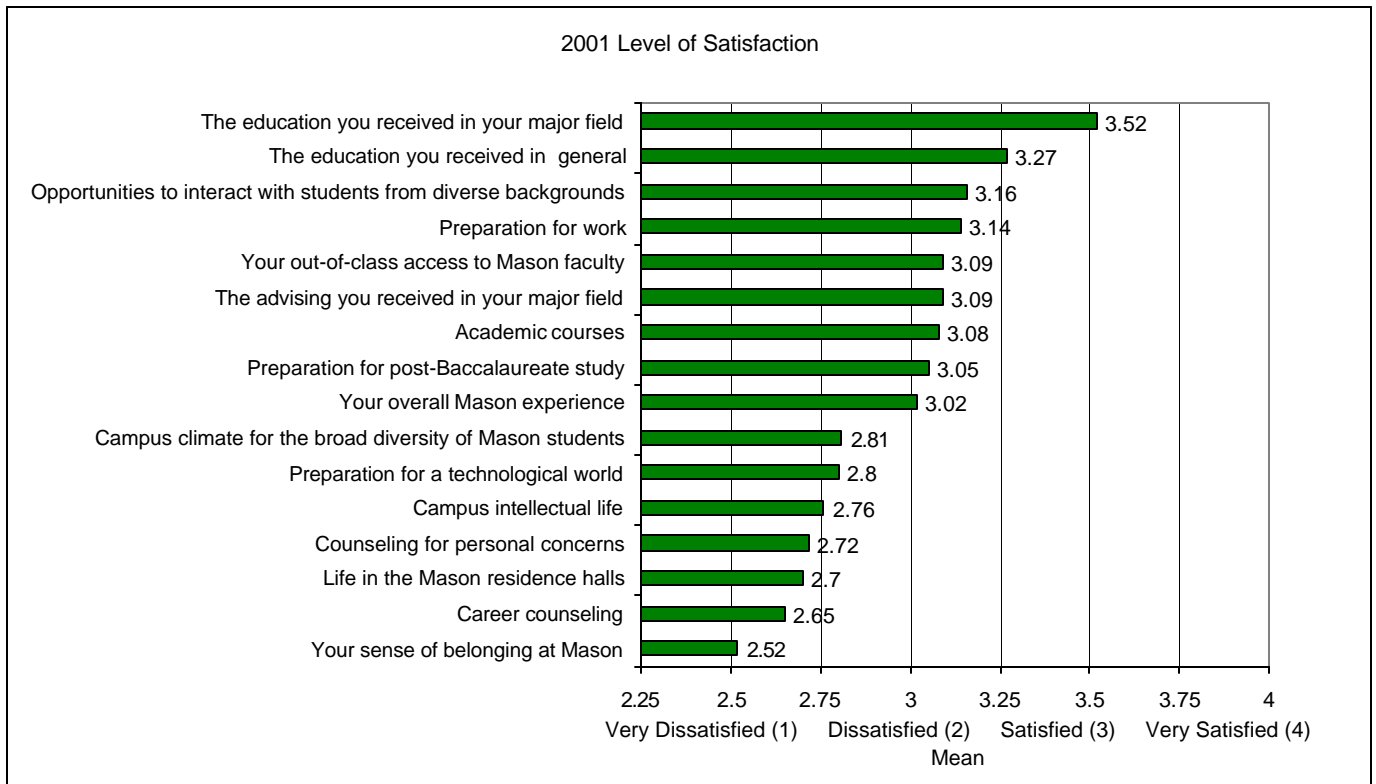


Figure 5. 2001
Institute of the Arts (now the College of Visual and Performing Arts)

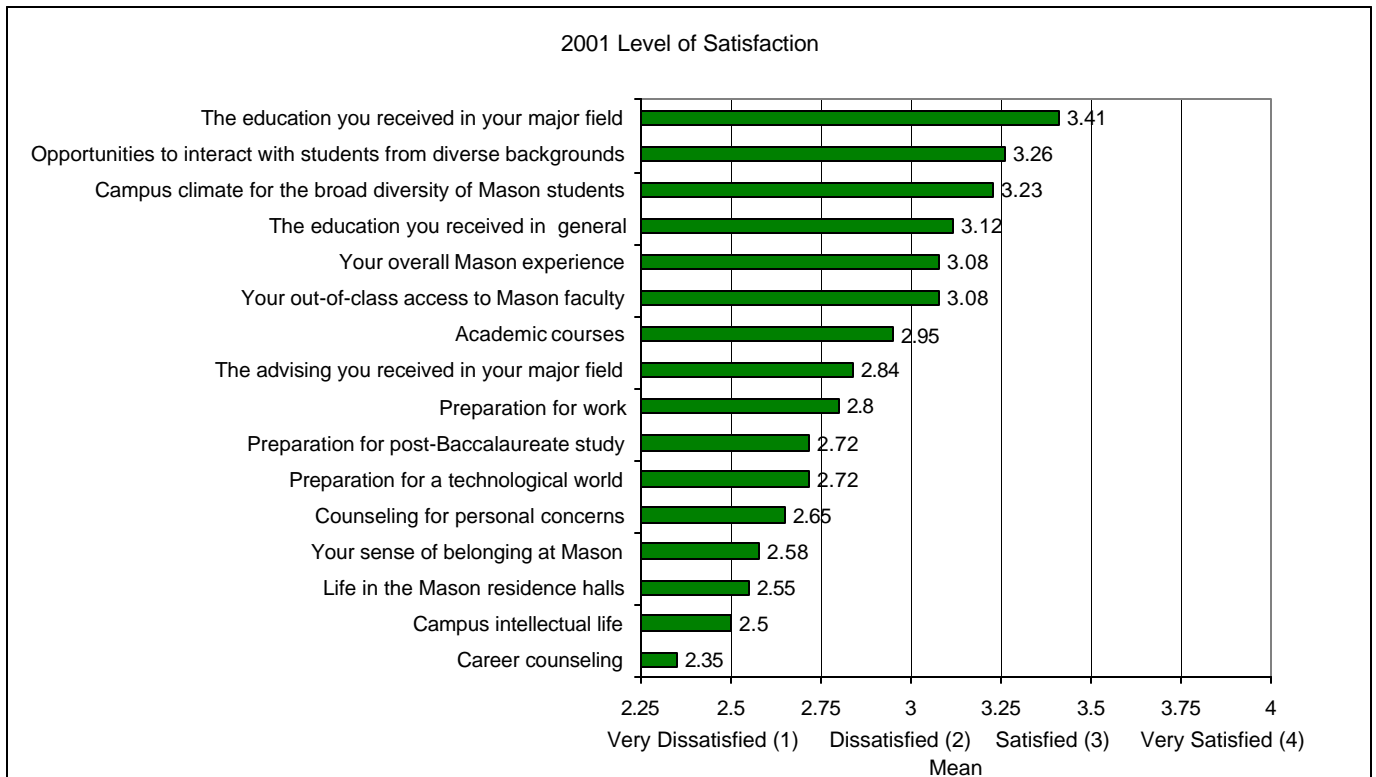


Figure 6. 2001
School of Information Technology and Engineering

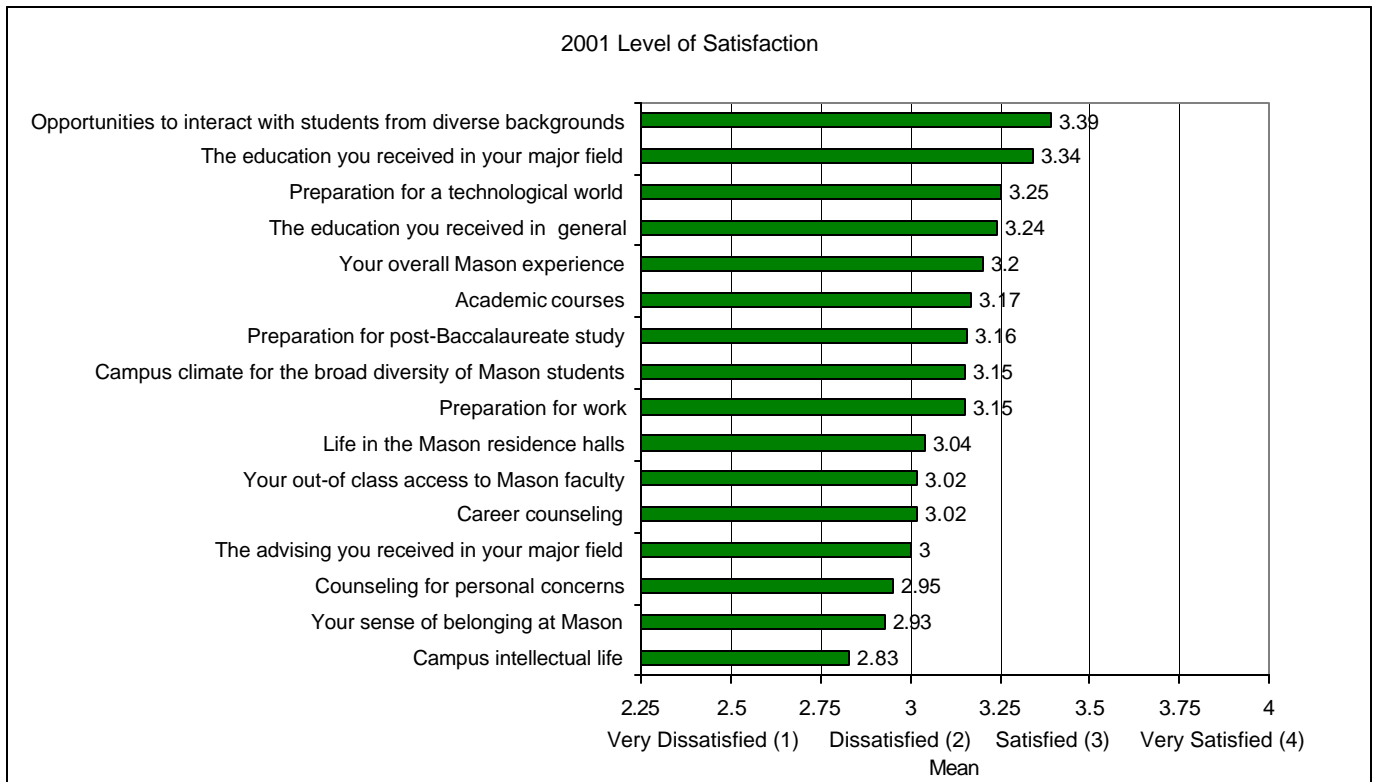


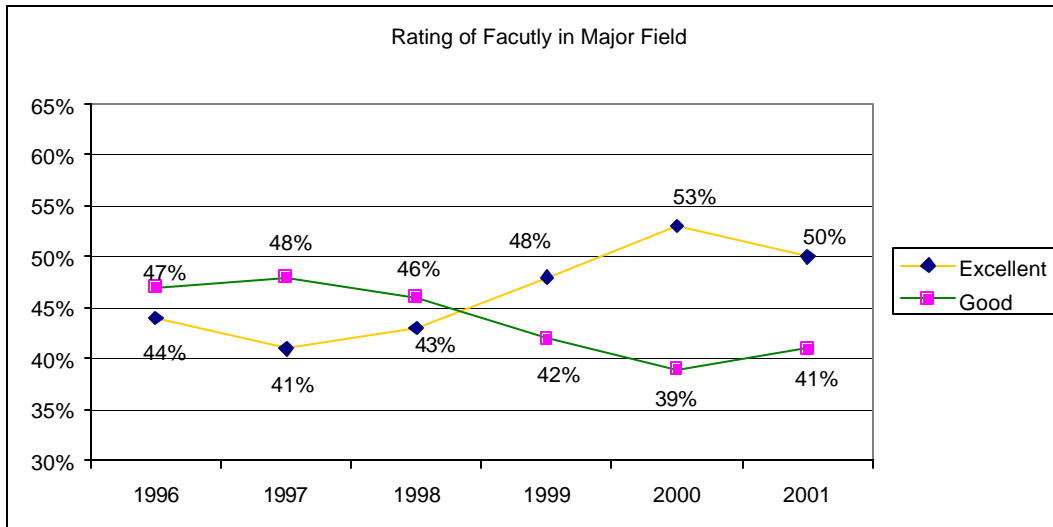
Figure 7. 2001
School of Management



V. Faculty and the Curriculum

Students rate faculty in their major quite differently than they do instructors outside their discipline. Many courses taken outside the major are required courses and students may be expressing their unhappiness with course material in which they are less interested. It also may be that as seniors they are now invested in their major choice and enjoy a closer relationship with their major instructors and thus rate them higher than those with whom they have little contact.

**Figure 8. 1996 - 2001
Faculty in major field rated as excellent/good**



**Figure 9. 2001
Rating of Mason faculty**

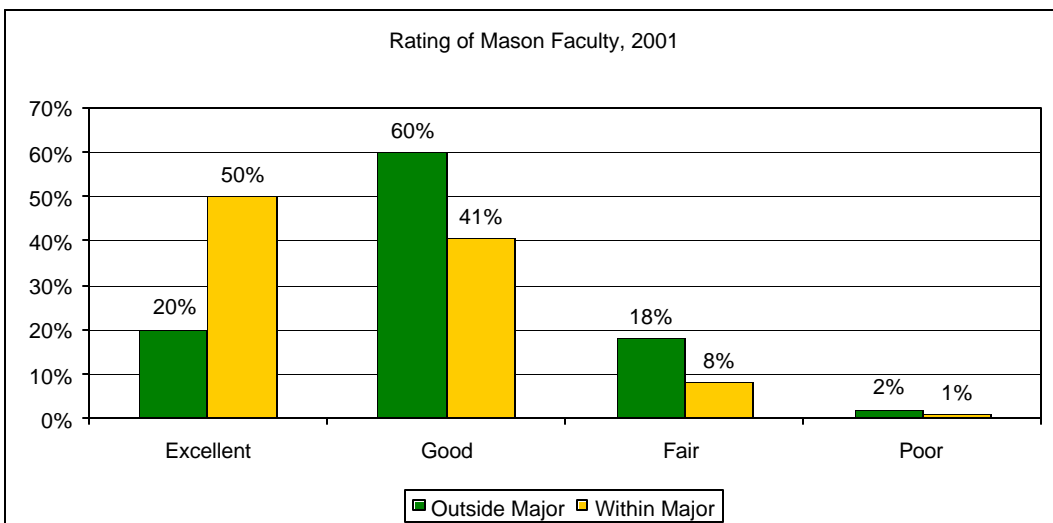


Table 4 asks six questions that are based on *Bloom's Taxonomy*, a classification of levels of thinking behaviors. (See <http://assessment.gmu.edu/AcadProgEval/guide/shtml>.) The Taxonomy ranks six levels of thinking from the simplest, "Knowledge," to the most sophisticated, "Evaluation." Knowledge suggests remembering, listing, defining bits of information while evaluation is concerned with comparing and

discriminating between ideas, making choices based on argument, and verifying the value of evidence. At each level, at least 85% of seniors say that their classes “Frequently” or “Very Frequently” require them to use these thinking skills. Asked how often their courses are intellectually challenging, 91% say “Usually” or “Always.” (See Figure 10.)

Table 4. 2001

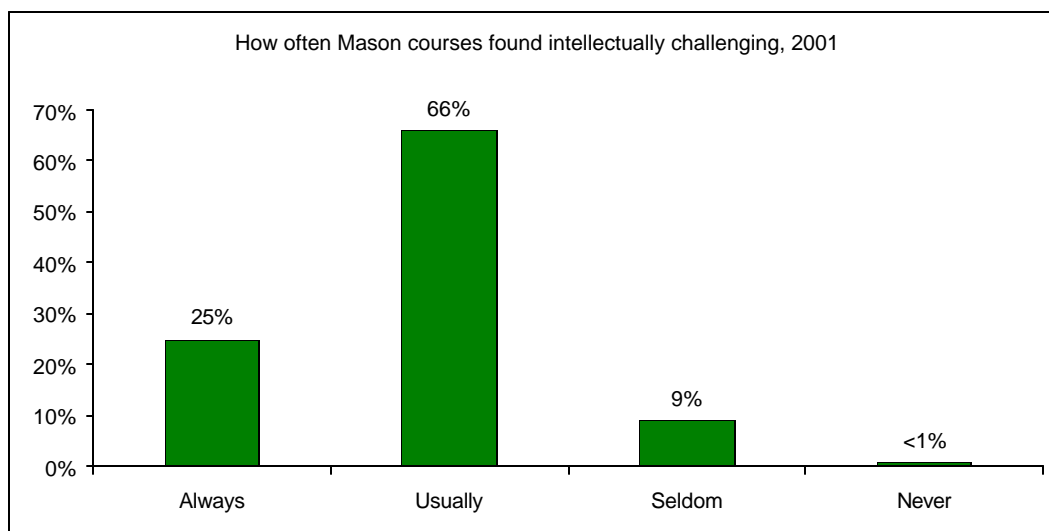
How frequently your Mason classes required you to:

	2001				Mean*
	Very Frequently	Frequently	Infrequently	Never	
Remember an extensive number of facts and concepts (Knowledge)	36%	51%	13%	<1%	3.2
Understand the meaning of concepts (Comprehension)	54%	42%	3%	<1%	3.5
Apply the concepts in class to new situations (Applications)	38%	48%	13%	1%	3.2
Break information down in order to identify assumptions and relationships (Analysis)	31%	55%	13%	1%	3.2
Synthesize information from different sources (Synthesis)	34%	55%	10%	1%	3.2
Use criteria to judge the value and quality of ideas (Evaluation)	32%	53%	14%	1%	3.2

*Scale from 1-4; 4 = “Very Frequently”

Figure 10. 2001

How often were your Mason courses intellectually challenging?



This year, questions in Table 5 were added to measure student perceptions of faculty using the “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). (Similar questions were asked in previous years, but were designed to tap the effective use of technology.) While the majority of students say that faculty “Always” or “Usually” engage in these seven practices, the lowest mean of any of the seven items was “encourage student-faculty interaction out-of-class”. Forty-four percent say that this happens “Seldom” or “Never.” Related questions were asked on the 2000 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) cited above. Of the five scales generated from the NSSE survey, “Student interactions with faculty members” ranked lowest for both seniors and freshmen.

Table 5.**How often did Mason faculty:**

	2001				
	Always	Usually	Seldom	Never	Mean*
Set high expectations for your learning	31%	60%	8%	1%	3.2
Encourage you to be actively involved in learning	36%	55%	9%	1%	3.3
Encourage student-faculty interaction <u>in</u> class	34%	56%	10%	1%	3.2
Encourage student-faculty interaction <u>out-of</u> -class	16%	39%	39%	5%	2.7
Give frequent and prompt feedback	22%	63%	14%	1%	3.1
Encourage learning through cooperative activities among students	27%	52%	20%	1%	3.1
Incorporate diverse views and learning styles into learning experiences	26%	51%	21%	2%	3.0

*Scale from 1-4; 4 = "Always"

Chickering, Arthur and Gamson, Zelda. (1987) "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." "The Wingspread Journal," Vol. 9, No. 2.

VI. General Education Goals/Educational Outcomes

Table 6 reflects the goals of the new general education curriculum and provides baseline data to be compared with student perceptions in the future. It is important to note that while these educational outcomes are identified as general education goals, the question asked of students refers to their “Educational experience,” not the general education program. It is highly likely that students respond to this question in terms of their major.

Some items were on graduating senior surveys in the past and those data are provided beginning with 1997 (See Figure 11); otherwise data are available only for 2001. Response categories were “Very Much,” “Somewhat,” “A Little,” and “Not At All.”

Over half of graduating seniors in 2001 feel that Mason contributed “Very Much” to their growth in “Critical Thinking,” “Problem Solving, and “Written Communication.” Not shown is that another third of these students said that Mason

Growth in critical thinking, written communication, problem solving and oral communication skills are rated at 3.0 or above for graduating students in each school/college.

contributed “Somewhat” to growth in these three skills. Nearly half (47%) of the 2000 – 2001 graduates say that Mason contributed “Very Much” to their growth in “Oral communication.” Figure 12 ranks the general education goals by means for the entire graduating senior class.

Table 6. 1997 - 2001

The extent to which Mason contributed “Very Much” to your growth in:

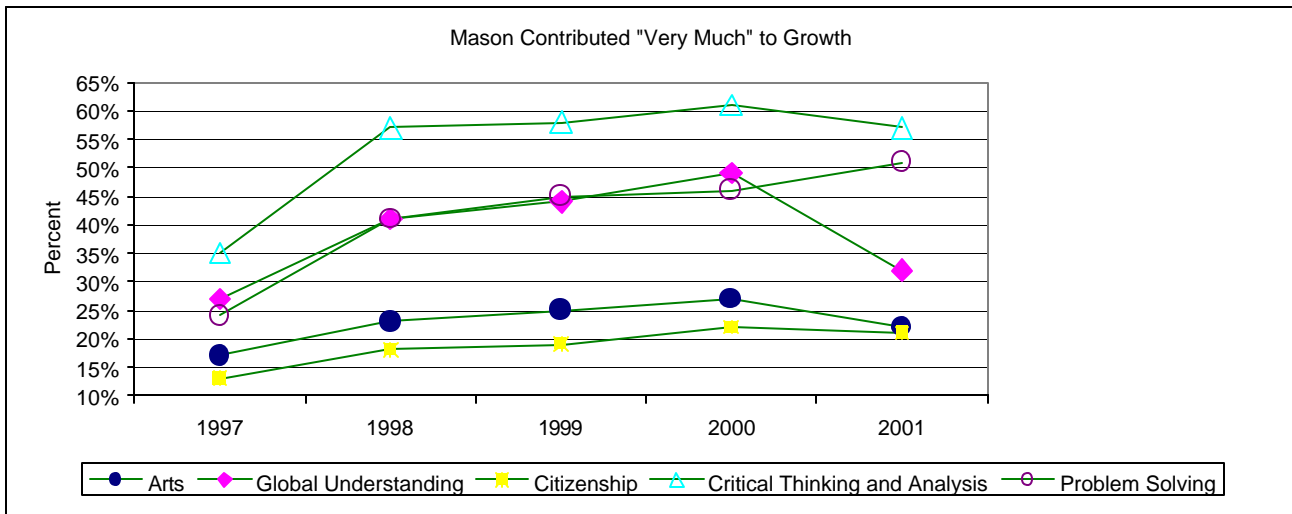
	Very Much					Mean*
	1997	1998**	1999	2000	2001	2001
Critical Thinking and Analysis	35%	57%	58%	61%	57%	3.5
Written Communication	24%	41%	45%	46%	54%	3.4
Problem Solving	--	--	--	--	51%	3.4
Oral Communication	--	--	--	--	47%	3.3
Information Technology	--	--	--	--	42%	3.1
Literature	--	--	--	--	35%	3.1
Social & Behavioral Sciences	--	--	--	--	38%	3.0
Global Understanding	27%	41%	44%	49%	32%	2.9
Scientific Process	--	--	--	--	30%	2.9
Synthesis	--	--	--	--	30%	2.9
Quantitative Reasoning	--	--	--	--	27%	2.9
Natural Sciences	--	--	--	--	27%	2.8
Understand ethical uses of IT	--	--	--	--	28%	2.8
Citizenship	13%	18%	19%	22%	21%	2.6
Arts	17%	23%	25%	27%	22%	2.5
Western Civilization	--	--	--	--	19%	2.5
US History	--	--	--	--	17%	2.4

*Scale 1-4; 4 = “Very Much”

**In 1998 a new response form was created

-- Not asked in 1997, 98, 99 or 2000

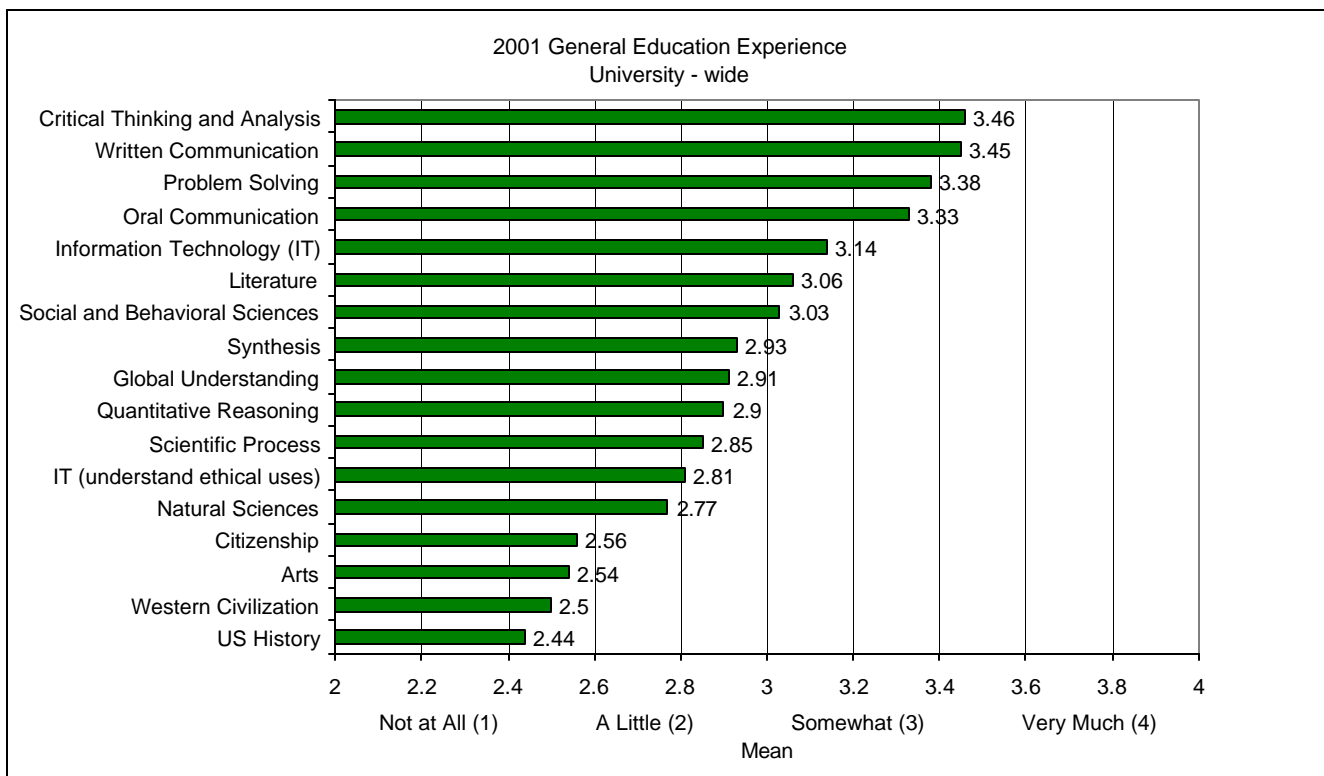
Figure 11. 1997 - 2001
Extent to which Mason contributed "Very Much" to growth:



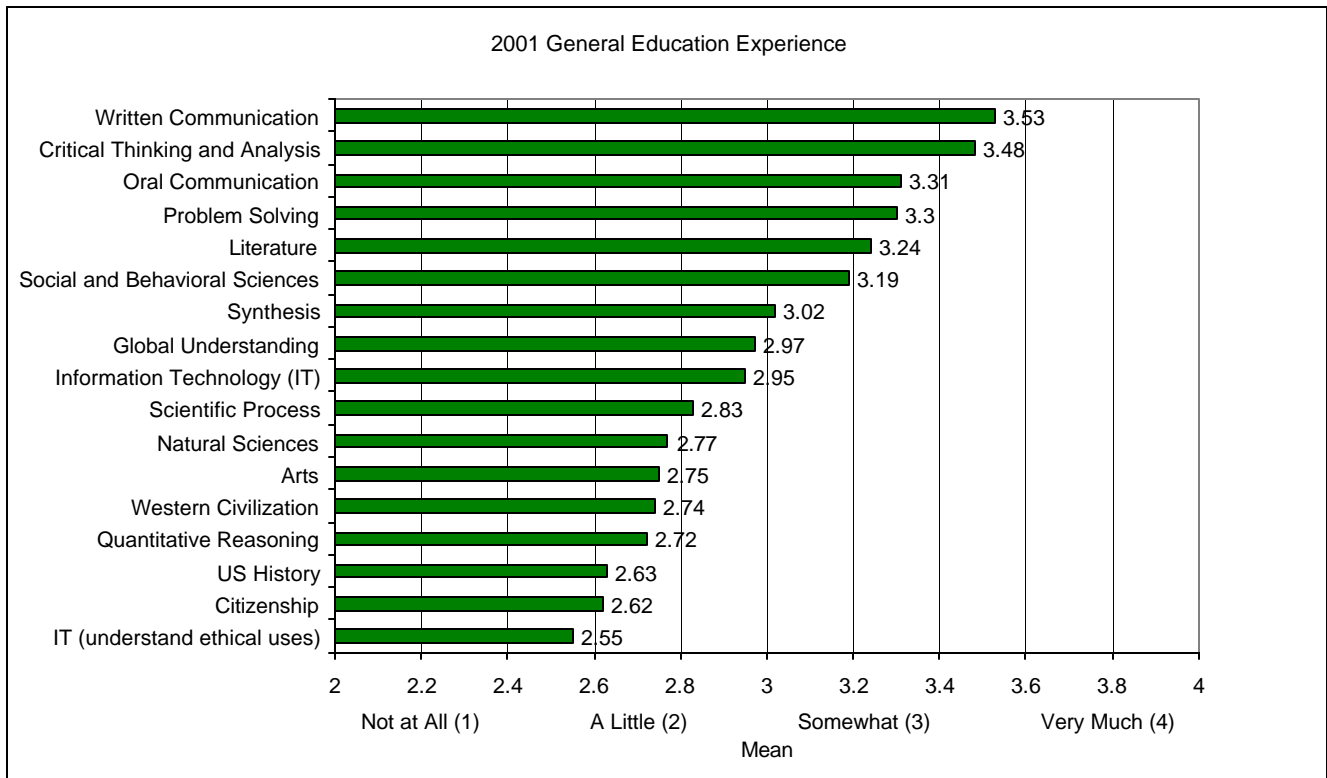
General Education Experience

These rankings vary considerably by college, many in expected ways. For instance, understanding ethical issues in IT is ranked 3rd by IT&E and 7th by SOM; no other school ranks IT ethics above 11. IOA ranks the Arts as number 1; all others rank the arts as third or second to the last. Critical Thinking, on the other hand, ranks among the top four for each unit.

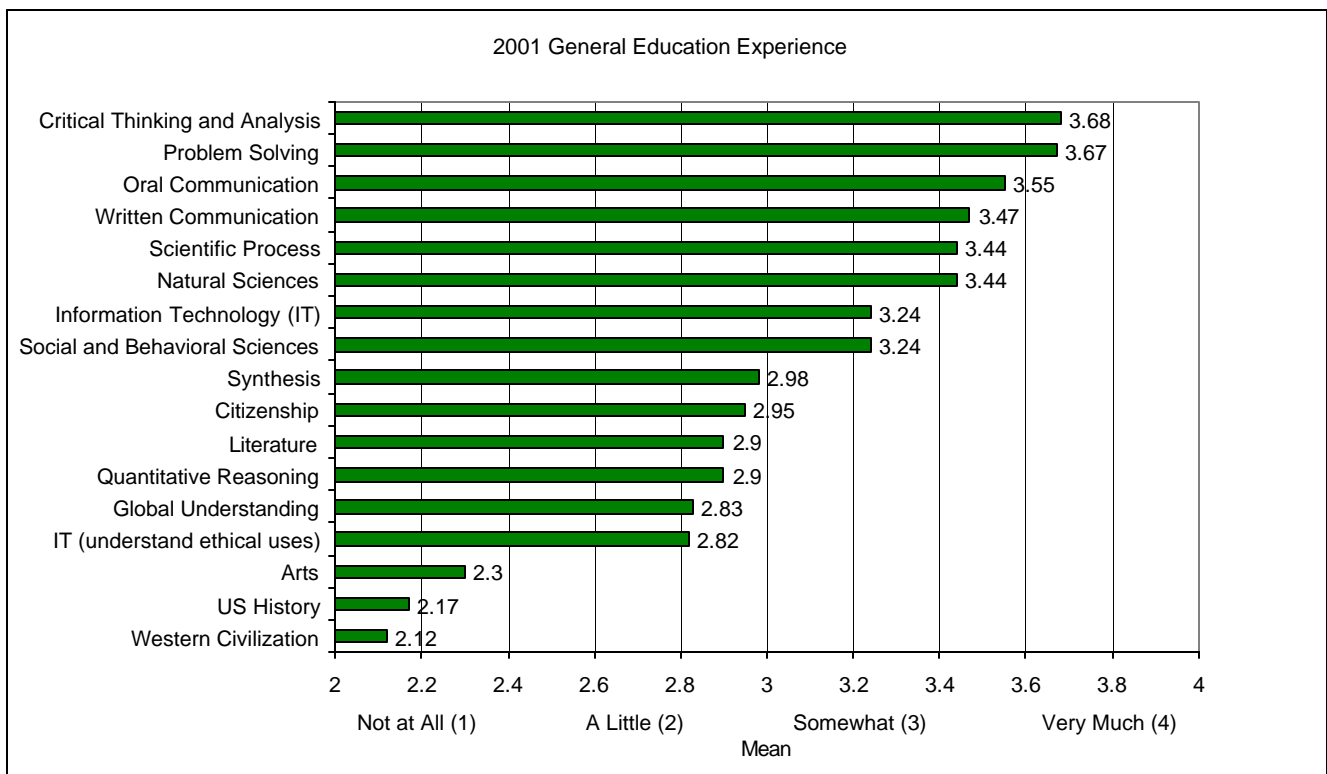
Figure 12. 2001
University - wide



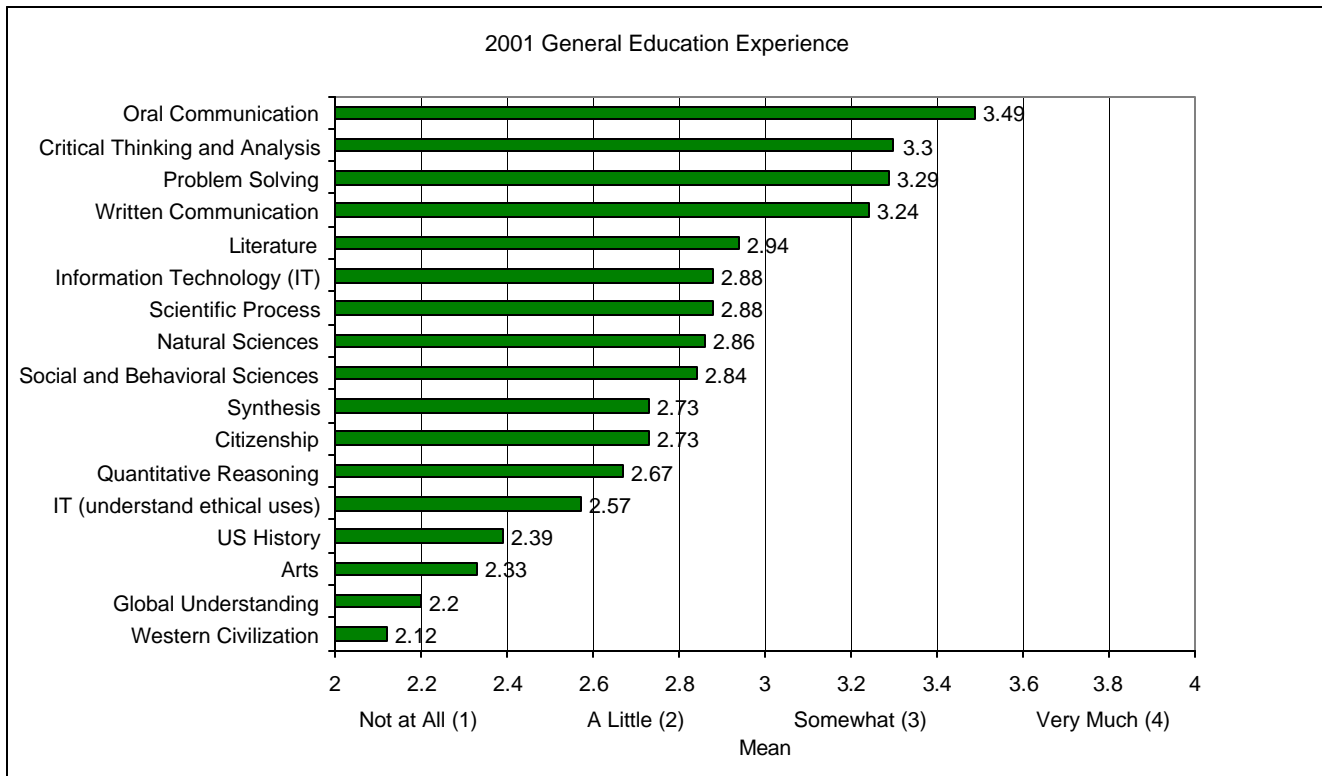
**Figure 13. 2001
College of Arts and Sciences**



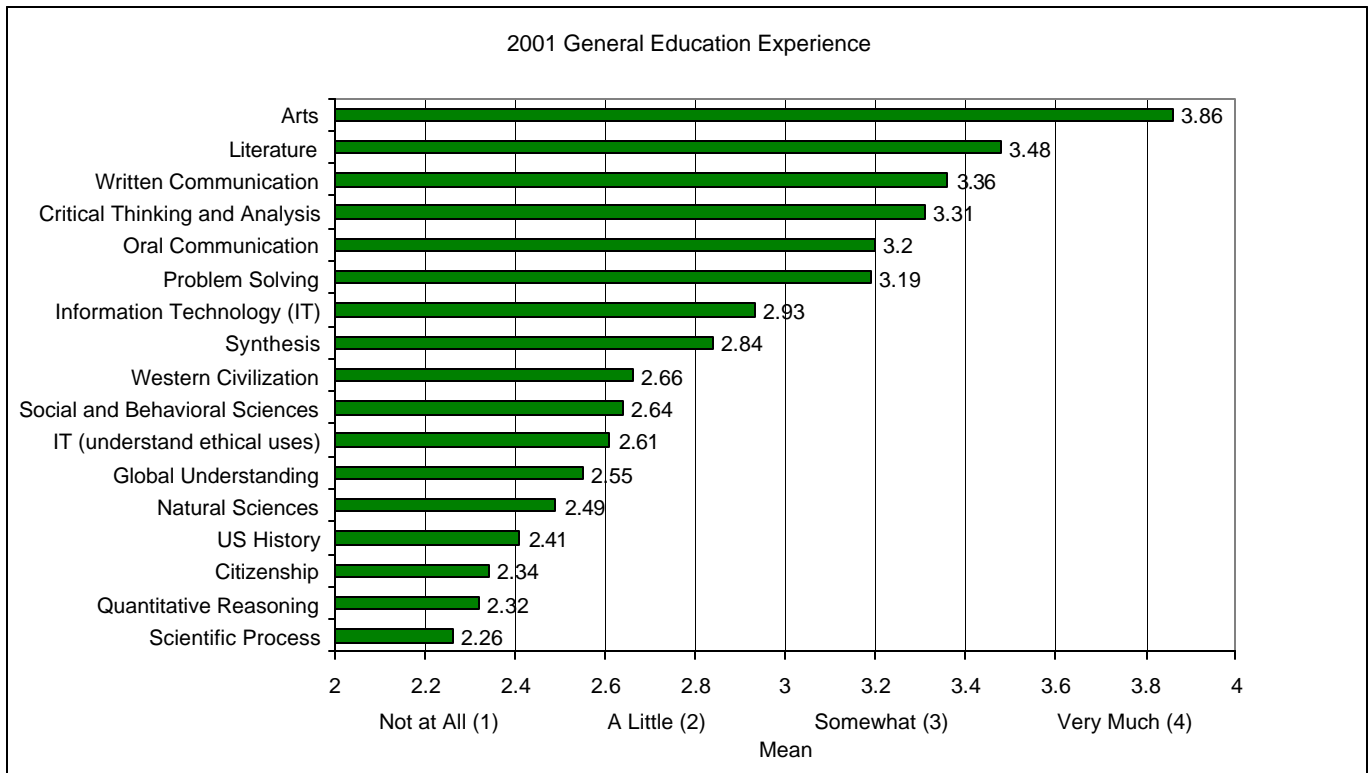
**Figure 14. 2001
College of Nursing and Health Science**



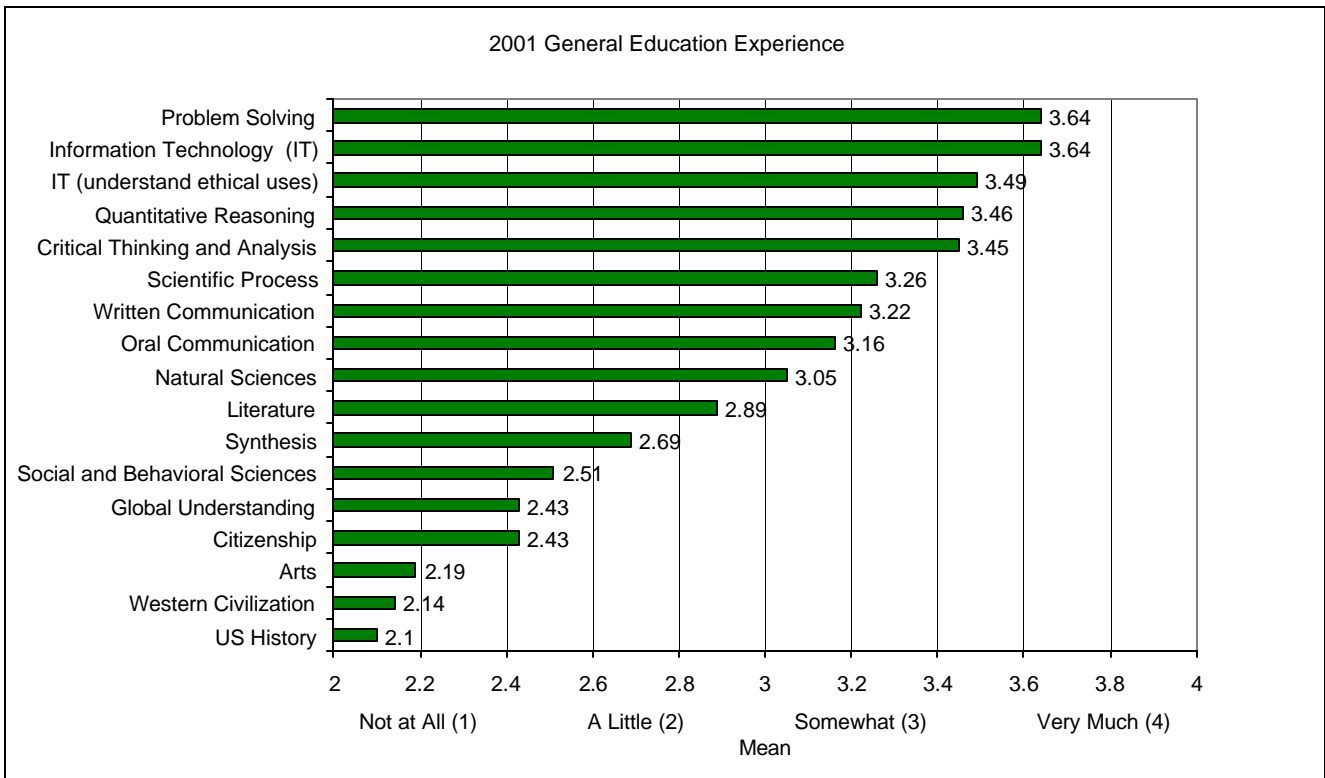
**Figure 15. 2001
Graduate School of Education**



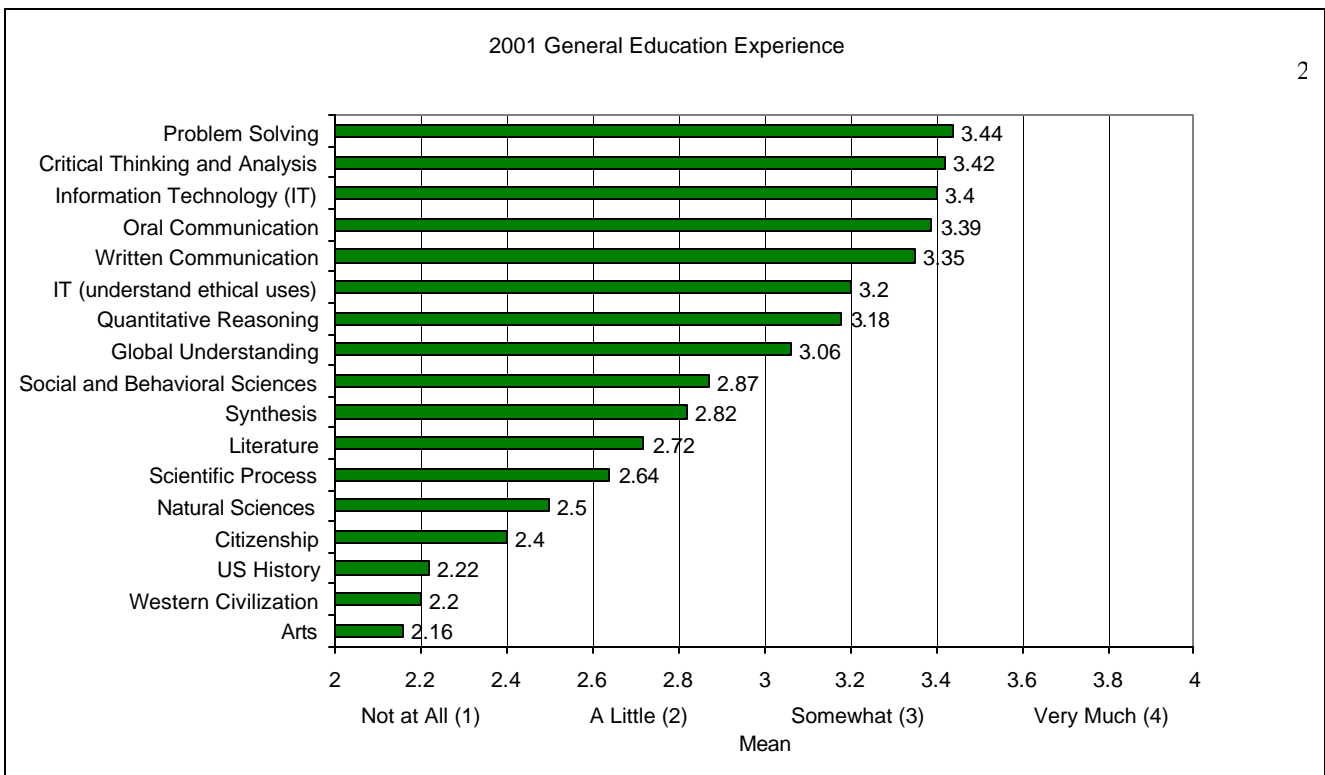
**Figure 16. 2001
Institute of the Arts (now the College of Visual and Performing Arts)**



**Figure 17. 2001
School of Information Technology and Engineering**



**Figure 18. 2001
School of Management**

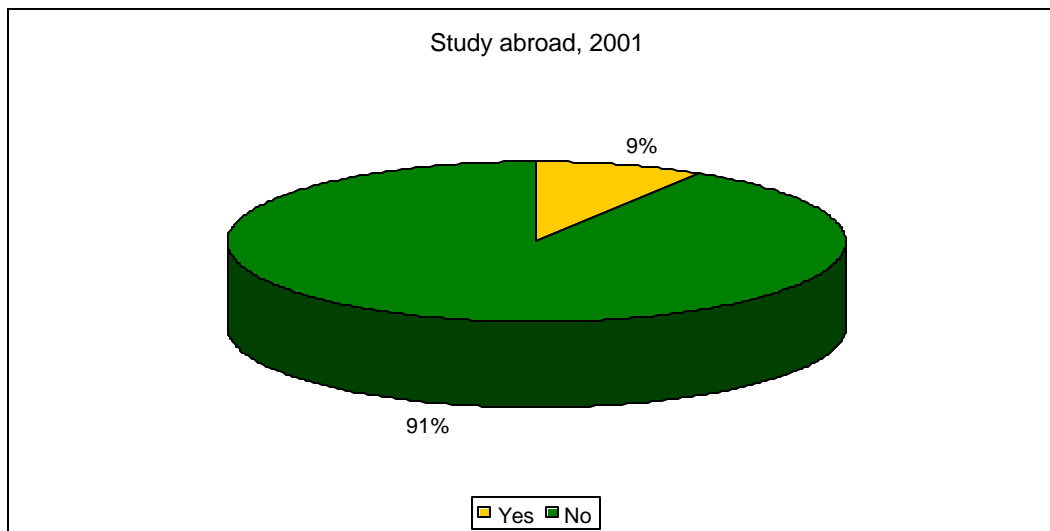


2

Study abroad programs are another way for an institution to encourage educational growth. George Mason's program has been expanding over the last few years and among the graduates of 2001, 9% said they participated in the study abroad program.

Figure 19. 2001

Did you participate in a study-abroad program while at Mason?



VII. Campus Emphasis

Beginning in 1992, graduating seniors were asked about the areas that George Mason emphasizes. Table 7 shows that, over time, at least 80% of graduating students perceive that “academic, scholarly and intellectual activities” along with “Critical, evaluative and analytical activities” are emphasized at George Mason. Compared to the early 1990s, seniors now experience a greater emphasis on “Aesthetic, expressive and creative activities” and “Vocational and occupational competence.”

Table 7. 1992, 1993, 1994 and 2001
Extent to which George Mason “Very Strongly” and “Somewhat Strongly” emphasizes:

	1992	1993	1994	2001
Academic/intellectual	85%	87%	85%	83%
Aesthetic/creative	48%	54%	53%	69%
Critical/analytical	83%	85%	82%	80%
Vocational/occupational	48%	49%	48%	68%

* Prior to 2001, the response categories were “Very Strongly,” “Strongly,” “Not Very Strongly,” “Not at All”

In addition to the areas of emphasis described in Table 8, two additional areas (*shaded*) were added in 2001, both of which are seen as being emphasized “Very Strongly” by more students than any other area. These are “Understanding and appreciation of human diversity” and “Technology and information literacy skills.”

Table 8. 2001
Extent to which George Mason University emphasizes:

2001				
George Mason emphasizes	Very Strongly	Somewhat Strongly	Somewhat Weakly	Very Weakly
Academic, scholarly and intellectual activities	32%	51%	15%	2%
Aesthetic, expressive and creative activities	19%	50%	27%	5%
Critical, evaluative and analytical activities	28%	52%	17%	3%
Vocational and occupational competence	19%	49%	28%	5%
Understanding and appreciation of human diversity	42%	41%	13%	3%
Technology and information literacy skills	38%	47%	13%	2%

VIII. Computer Skills and Knowledge

For the first time since 1998, a smaller percentage of seniors compared to the year before report that technology “Very Much” enhanced their learning and their computer skills. On the other hand, those who said that technology “Somewhat” enhanced their learning and computer skills increased over the year before.

Table 9. 1998 - 2001
Extent to which the use of technology enhanced your computer skills

	% Very Much				% Somewhat			
	1998	1999	2000	2001	1998	1999	2000	2001
Learning	49%	51%	53%	46%	38%	35%	34%	38%
Computer skills	44%	51%	52%	45%	33%	33%	35%	37%

The use of computer technologies in Mason classes increased to the highest levels ever. Use of the Internet and E-mail, in particular, have increased dramatically since 1996.

Table 10. 1996 - 2001
Use of Computer technologies in 10 or more Mason classes

Technology used in 10+ courses	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Word processing	56%	64%	70%	68%	69%	75%
E-mail	9%	19%	34%	42%	49%	55%
Internet	4%	16%	37%	35%	43%	55%
Electronic meeting rooms (e.g., town hall)*	--	--	--	2%	3%	5%

*Not asked in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

IX. Writing Experiences

Increasingly, students are taking more courses in which revision of written papers, projects or assignments is required. Nearly half of graduating seniors indicate that they have taken five or more courses in their major where revision was required. Nearly three-fourths have taken three or more such courses in the major. Considering all their coursework, in 2001 fifty-eight percent of seniors say they “frequently” revised written work. (See Table 12.)

Table 11. 1997 - 2001

How many courses in your major required you to revise a written paper, project or assignment?

Number of Courses	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
None	8%	7%	10%	10%	7%
1-2 courses	20%	28%	27%	24%	22%
3-4 courses	26%	22%	24%	23%	25%
5+ courses	46%	44%	40%	43%	47%

Figure 20. 1997 - 2001

Students required to revise 3 or more written papers, projects, or assignments in their major courses

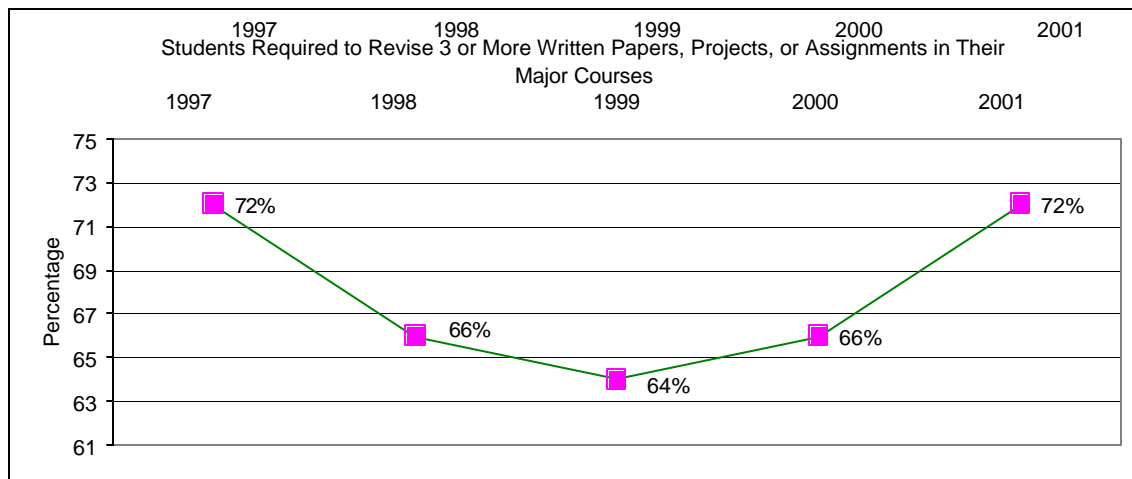


Table 12. 1999 - 2001

How often did you revise written work before completing it?

Frequency	1999	2000	2001
Never	2%	2%	2%
A little	13%	13%	12%
Sometimes	23%	25%	27%
Frequently	62%	61%	58%

X. Use of Time and Employment

The number of hours students spent in any of the activities listed in Table 13 are estimates, at best. Nonetheless, these estimates have been fairly stable over the last three years, giving us some confidence that they are approximately how students use their time. Without overstating the changes in 2001, it is still worth taking note that the number of hours working for pay has decreased by 1.7 hours while the

Compared with graduating seniors in 1999, the 2001 graduates studied more hours and worked fewer.

number of hours studying has increased slightly. Increased studying has resulted in a change in the ratio of hours studying per hour in class. In 1999 and 2000, the number of hours studying for every hour in class was 1.3 hours; in 2001, it was 1.4 hours, a modest but positive increase in the right direction.

Table 13. 1999 - 2001

How many hours did you spend each day, during a typical week doing:

Hours spent in a typical week during last semester at Mason	Hour Averages		
	1999	2000	2001
Classes/labs	13.4	13.9	13.9
Studying/homework	18.0	18.7	19.1
Working for pay	27.7	27.2	25.4
Care for/interaction with family	24.4	24.7	24.1

Table 14. 1999 - 2001

Average number of hours spent studying per hour of class time

1999	2000	2001
1.3	1.3	1.4

During their senior year, 88% of graduating students worked, over half in a field related to their major or career. Looking at their entire career at Mason, only 14% never worked while 55% worked each semester. A substantial majority of students who worked said that it was “very important” to work “to pay personal expenses” and “to pay living expenses.”

Table 15. 1999 - 2001

Students who worked for pay during their last year at Mason

1999	2000	2001
83%	83%	88%

Table 16. 2001

Relationship of current, senior-year employment to major or career

2001	
Related	57%
Unrelated	43%

Table 17. 2001**While at Mason, I was employed for pay:**

2001	
Not at all	14%
Only a few semesters	13%
During most semesters	18%
During each semester	55%

Table 18. 2001**During your employment while at Mason, how important were each of the following reasons for working:**

2001				
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant
To pay college expenses (tuition, fees, books)	44%	24%	14%	18%
To pay living expenses (rent/dorm, food, utilities, etc.)	61%	17%	11%	10%
To pay personal expenses (car, travel, clothes)	73%	20%	4%	3%
To reduce post-graduation debt	24%	21%	19%	36%
To enhance learning	28%	29%	20%	24%

XI. Post Graduation—Debt and Educational Plans

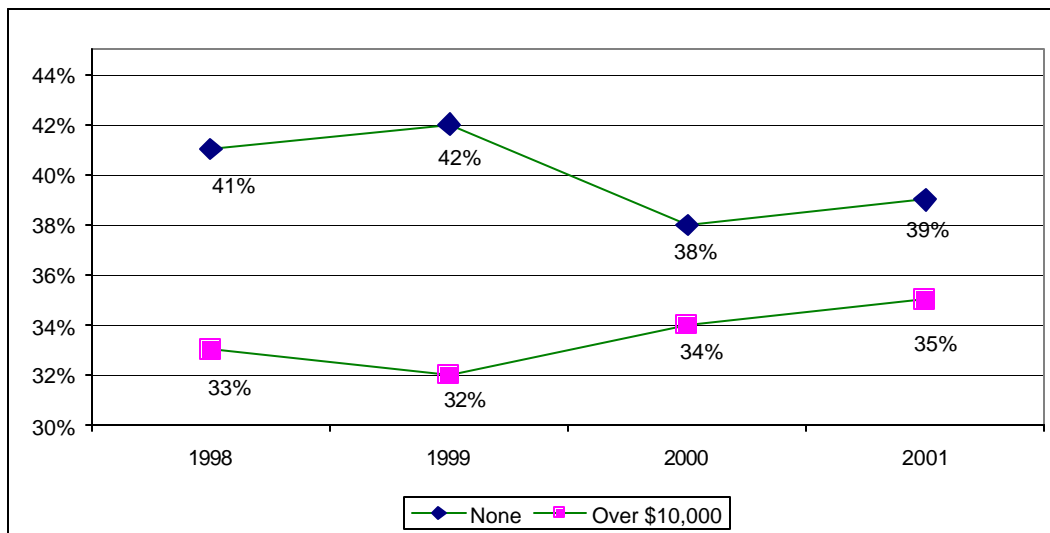
The Center for Policy Analysis at the American Council on Education (*Student Borrowing in the 1990's*: (<http://www.acenet.edu/resources>) reports that “In 1999 - 2000, more than 60 percent of all bachelor’s degree recipients graduated with some federal student loan debt, and the median amount they borrowed was \$15,375 at public institutions...” (p.2). Assuming non-federal-loan debt, including state and private loans, the percentage of students nationally with at least some debt is undoubtedly higher than 60%. Among George Mason seniors, 61% indicate that they will graduate with some debt from whatever source. It seems likely that the percentage of George Mason students graduating with some debt may be somewhat lower than national figures.

Educational Debt

**Table 19. 1998 - 2001
Level of Educational Debt at Graduation**

Debt at Graduation	1998	1999	2000	2001
None	41%	42%	38%	39%
\$1-\$10,000	26%	26%	27%	26%
\$10,001-\$20,000	26%	25%	26%	24%
More than \$20,000	7%	7%	8%	11%

**Figure 21. 1998 - 2001
“No debt” and “Debt over \$10,000” at Time of Graduation**



The percentage of students planning to attend graduate school full-time, has doubled since the year before.

Record percentages of students plan to enroll full-time in graduate/professional school or in courses leading to a certificate/professional license. Typically, the percent planning to attend graduate school full-time is around 20%; this year, 39% plan to enroll full-time, virtually double what it has been in previous years.

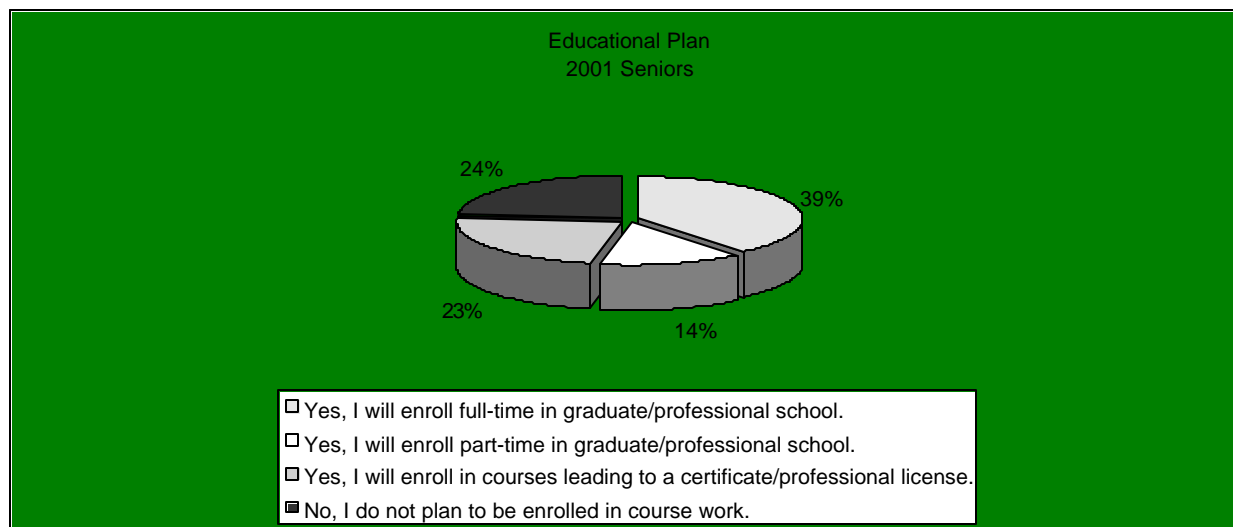
Table 20. 1997 - 2001

Do you plan to pursue additional education within the next year?

Educational Plans Within a Year of Graduation:	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Yes, I will enroll <u>full-time</u> in graduate/professional school.	24%	18%	21%	19%	39%
Yes, I will enroll <u>part-time</u> in graduate/professional school.	27%	26%	26%	26%	14%
Yes, I will enroll in courses leading to a certificate/professional license.	7%	7%	9%	12%	23%
No, I do not plan to be enrolled in course work.	43%	49%	44%	43%	24%

Figure 22. 2001

Educational plans of 2001 seniors



XII. Demographics

Table 21. 2001

What is the highest level of education completed by either your father or your mother?

2001	
Baccalaureate or Graduate Degree	58%
Some College	20%
High School diploma or less	22%

Table 22. 2001

Where did you live during most of your time at Mason?

2001	
Off Campus	86%
Off Campus with spouse/children	21%
Off Campus With parents/other relatives	39%
Off Campus Alone	7%
Off Campus With roommates not Mason students/grads	9%
Off Campus With roommates who are Mason students/grads	10%
On Campus	<15%
On Campus 1-2 Semesters	<1%
On Campus 3-4 Semesters	5%
On Campus 5+ Semesters	9%

Table 23. 2001

What are the best things about Mason*

2001	
Faculty/Staff	28%
Diversity	18%
Courses/good school	13%

2001	
Parking	26%
Campus Life/School Spirit	17%
Curriculum (adding programs, courses, links to work world, etc.)	10%

*To see the full list of categories and read the verbatim comments, go to <http://assessment.gmu.edu/gss2001>.

Table 24. 2001

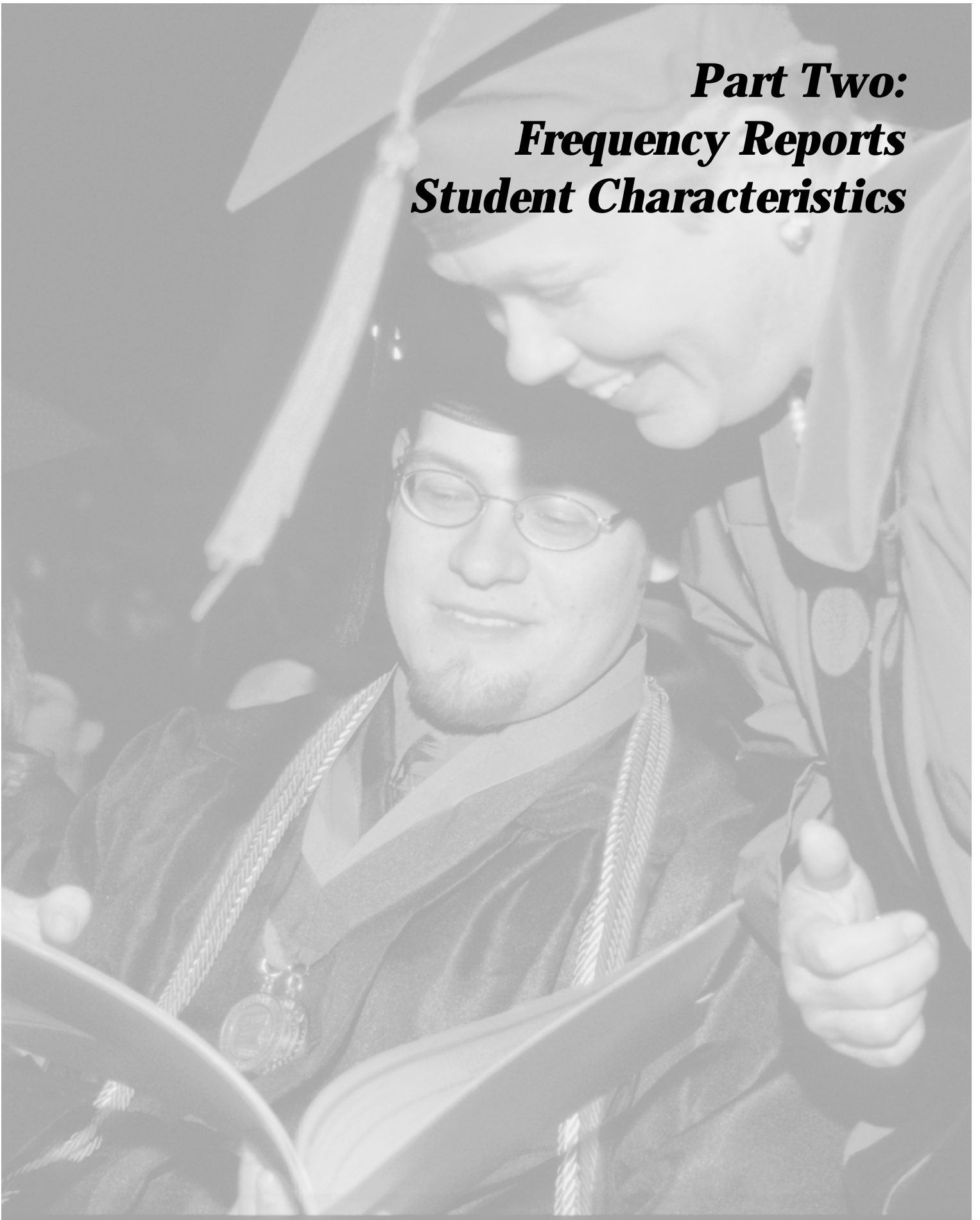
What would you change about Mason*

**Table 25. 2001
Comparison of Survey Respondents
and All Graduating Seniors**

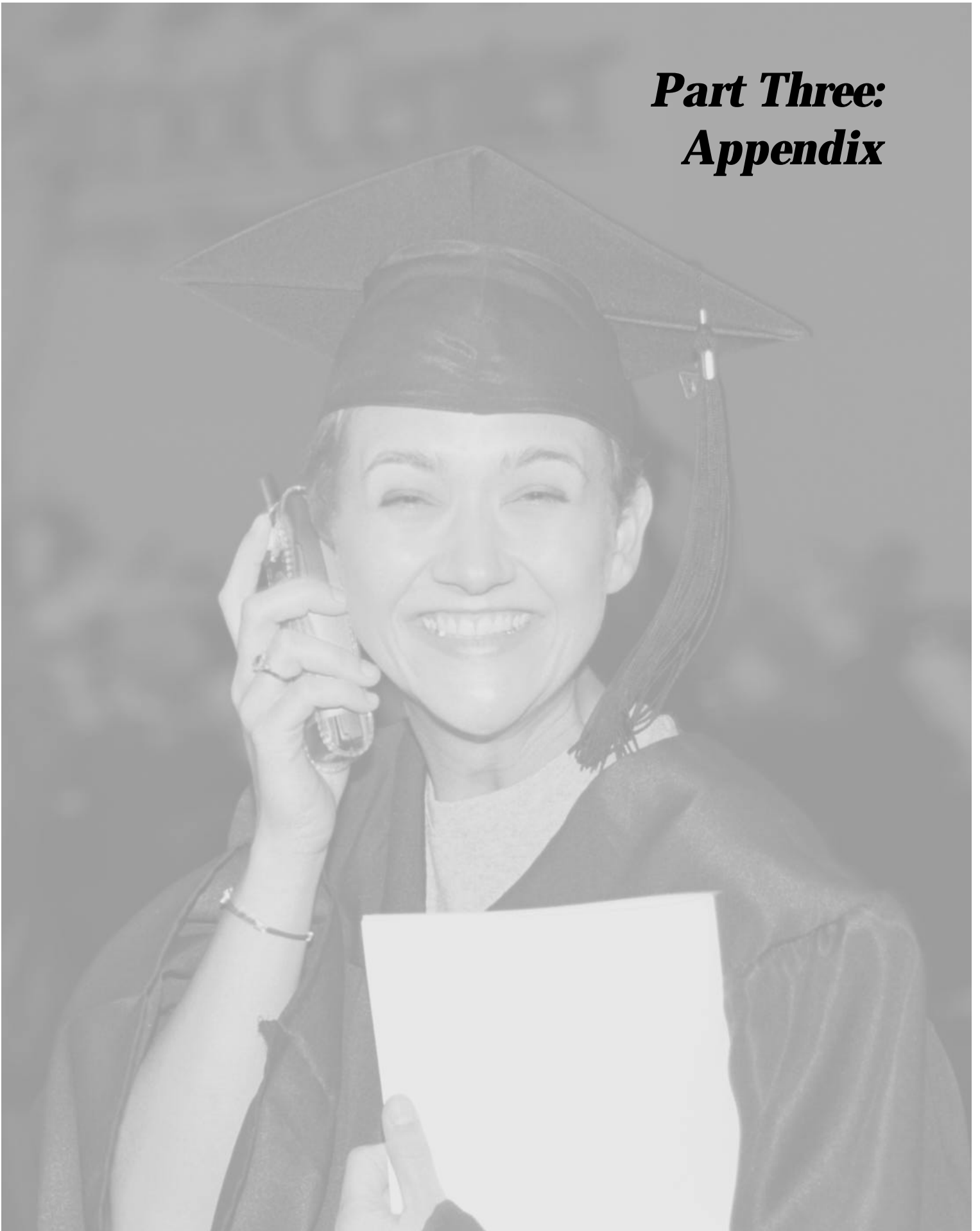
	2001	
	Survey Respondents	All Graduates
Mean age at graduation	27.3 years	27.4 years
Domicile (VA)	93%	93%
Final mean GPA	3.14	3.13
Transferred into George Mason	62%	60%
Percent White American	58%	57%
Graduated with high or highest distinction	9%	8%
Percent female	61%	60%

**To review the results of this survey for each college and each academic program,
please go to <http://assessment.gmu.edu/gss2001>.**

***Part Two:
Frequency Reports
Student Characteristics***



***Part Three:
Appendix***



Summer and Fall 2000, Spring 2001 Graduating Senior Survey

Office of Institutional Assessment, MS 3D2, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA 22030-4444

Congratulations on your impending graduation from George Mason University. Your satisfaction with, and reactions to, your educational and student life experiences at Mason are important to us, and will be used in educational planning. Please complete and return this survey in the enclosed business reply envelope. No postage is necessary.

Survey Directions: Circle, mark, or write in the most appropriate response.

If you prefer, complete this survey on-line at: <http://assessment.gmu.edu>.

Click on "Survey Forms," then "On-line Graduation Survey."

I. Educational Experience

1. Indicate the extent to which George Mason University contributed to your growth in each of the following:

Very Much	Some-what	A Little	Not At All	
4	3	2	1	Written Communication (use writing to discover and express ideas)
4	3	2	1	Oral Communication (use speaking to think, learn, and share ideas)
4	3	2	1	Information Technology (IT) (use IT to communicate and to conduct research)
4	3	2	1	IT (understand ethical uses of computers and IT)
4	3	2	1	Quantitative Reasoning (use and evaluate numerical information)
4	3	2	1	Literature (use critical analysis to understand the aesthetic and intellectual components of literature)
4	3	2	1	Arts (use critical analysis to understand the aesthetic and intellectual components of the arts)
4	3	2	1	US History (understand US institutions, philosophies, values, and history)
4	3	2	1	Western Civilization (understand Western institutions, traditions, and values)
4	3	2	1	Global Understanding (understand non-US institutions, traditions, and values)
4	3	2	1	Social and Behavioral Sciences (understand the social science approach to the study of human behavior)
4	3	2	1	Synthesis (understand the connections among different disciplines)
4	3	2	1	Natural Sciences (use the natural sciences to understand the scientific process and to evaluate scientific information)
4	3	2	1	Citizenship (involved and responsible in community)
4	3	2	1	Scientific Process (ability to use and understand the scientific process)
4	3	2	1	Critical Thinking and Analysis (judge the consistency, adequacy, and relevance of data, points of view, or arguments)
4	3	2	1	Problem Solving (identify problems and solve them)

II. Thinking about Mason Courses and Faculty

2. Revision or rewriting is often a common part of the writing process. When undertaking a written assignment at Mason, how often did you revise written work before completing it or handing it in to be graded?

___ Frequently ___ Sometimes ___ A Little ___ Never

3. How many courses in your major required you to revise a written paper, project, or assignment?

___ Five or more ___ Four ___ Three ___ Two ___ One ___ None

4. How would you rate the quality of the faculty members in your major field?

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor

5. How would you rate the quality of the Mason faculty members not in your major field?

___ Excellent ___ Good ___ Fair ___ Poor ___ Don't know

6. How often did Mason faculty:

Always Usually Seldom Never

4	3	2	1	set high expectations for your learning
4	3	2	1	encourage you to be actively involved in learning
4	3	2	1	encourage student-faculty interaction in class
4	3	2	1	encourage student-faculty interaction out of class
4	3	2	1	give frequent and prompt feedback
4	3	2	1	encourage learning through cooperative activities among students
4	3	2	1	incorporate diverse views and learning styles into learning experiences

7. Indicate how frequently your Mason classes required you to:

Very Frequently Frequently Infrequently Never

4	3	2	1	remember an extensive number of facts and concepts
4	3	2	1	understand the meaning of concepts
4	3	2	1	apply the concepts learned in class to new situations
4	3	2	1	break information down in order to identify assumptions and relationships
4	3	2	1	synthesize information from different sources
4	3	2	1	use criteria to judge the value and quality of ideas

8. How often were your Mason courses intellectually challenging?

___Always ___Usually ___Seldom ___Never

III. Computer Technology

9. How many classes at Mason incorporated each of the following computer applications?

10+	6-9	1-5	0	word processing
10+	6-9	1-5	0	e-mail
10+	6-9	1-5	0	internet/WWW
10+	6-9	1-5	0	electronic meeting rooms (e.g., town hall)

10. Overall to what extent did the use of technology at Mason enhance your computer skills?

___Very Much ___Somewhat ___A Little ___Not At All

11. Overall, to what extent did the use of technology at Mason enhance your learning?

___Very Much ___Somewhat ___A Little ___Not At All

IV. Schedule, Employment, and Future Plans

12. At graduation, how much money will you owe for tuition, books, and other educational expenses?

___None ___\$5,000 or less ___\$5,001-10,000 ___\$10,001-15,000
___\$15,001-20,000 ___\$20,001 or more

13. Do you plan to pursue additional education within the next year?

___Yes, I will enroll full-time in graduate/professional school.
___Yes, I will enroll part-time in graduate/professional school.
___Yes, I will enroll in courses leading to certificate/professional license.
___No, I do not plan to be enrolled in course work.

14. During your last year at Mason, how many hours did you spend during a typical week doing each of the following activities?

(Consider a typical week to be Sunday-Saturday in which a maximum of 168 hours is available for all activities, including sleep.)

___ classes/labs ___ study/homework ___ working for pay ___ care for or interaction with family
(hours per week) (hours per week) (hours per week) (hours per week)

15. While at Mason, I was employed for pay:

- During each semester
 During most semesters
 Only for a few semesters
 Not at all (*If Not at all, go to question 18*)

16. During your employment while at Mason, how important were each of the following reasons for working?

Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	
4	3	2	1	to pay college expenses (tuition, fees, books)
4	3	2	1	to pay living expenses (rent/dorm fees, food, utilities, childcare, family expenses)
4	3	2	1	to pay personal expenses (car, travel, clothes)
4	3	2	1	to reduce post-graduation debt
4	3	2	1	to enhance learning
4	3	2	1	Other: Specify _____

17. If you are currently employed, how would you describe your employment?

- I am in a position related to my major or career.
 I am in a position that is unrelated to my major or career.
 I am not currently employed.

V. Campus Experience

18. To what extent does George Mason University emphasize the following:

Very Strongly	Somewhat Strongly	Somewhat weakly	Very weakly	
4	3	2	1	academic, scholarly, and intellectual activities
4	3	2	1	aesthetic, expressive, and creative activities
4	3	2	1	critical, evaluative, and analytical activities
4	3	2	1	understanding and appreciation of human diversity
4	3	2	1	vocational and occupational competence
4	3	2	1	technology and information literacy skills

19. Did you participate in a study abroad program while at Mason? Yes No

VI. Satisfaction

20. How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your education at Mason?

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	
4	3	2	1	the education you received in general
4	3	2	1	the education you received in your major field
4	3	2	1	advising you received in your major field
4	3	2	1	your overall Mason experience
4	3	2	1	your out-of-class access to Mason faculty
4	3	2	1	opportunities to interact with students from diverse backgrounds
4	3	2	1	academic courses
4	3	2	1	campus intellectual life
4	3	2	1	your sense of belonging at Mason
4	3	2	1	preparation for a technological world

Please continue to page 4. *Thank you.*



How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your education at Mason?(continued)

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Applicable/ Don't Know	
4	3	2	1	NA	preparation for work
4	3	2	1	NA	preparation for post-Baccalaureate study
4	3	2	1	NA	campus climate for the broad diversity of students at Mason
4	3	2	1	NA	life in the Mason residence halls
4	3	2	1	NA	career counseling
4	3	2	1	NA	counseling for personal concerns

21. If you were to do it all over again, would you attend George Mason?

Definitely yes Probably yes Probably No Definitely No

Why/why not? _____

VII. Demographics and Comments

22. What is the highest educational level completed by either your father or your mother?

High school diploma or less Some college Bachelors or graduate degree

23. Where did you live during most of your time at Mason?

- On campus, how many semesters? 1-2 3-4 5 or more
- Off campus with roommates including Mason students or graduates
- Off campus with roommates not including Mason students or graduates
- Off campus by myself
- With my parents, siblings, or relatives
- With a spouse/children

24. Did you transfer to Mason from another university/college?

No (If No, go to Question 26.) Yes

25. If yes, how many hours did you transfer?

30 or less 31-59 60-89 90 or more

26. What was the best thing about George Mason University?

27. What one thing would you change about George Mason University?

28. Your student i.d.# _____ - _____ - _____

(Your student identification number is requested to assist with the analysis of this survey and in order to release your Mason diploma upon graduation. Your responses are confidential. No report will identify you.) Thank you.

Office of Institutional Assessment

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