



ALUMNI REPORT : 2010 GRADUATES

Survey issued Fall 2011 by the Department of Institutional Research

Introduction

Montclair State University's primary goal is to provide our students a well-rounded education in order to prepare them for gainful employment upon graduation. We ask our alumni to rate many facets of the institution in general terms. Please note that this is not a "complete" representation of student attitudes, because not all have responded to this survey. However, it is representative of those who did respond, and their responses are worth examining. The Office of Institutional Research issues this survey annually in anticipation that administration will use this data to enhance our future alumni's experience at the University, and in order to give us insight on the alumni experience and its transition over the years.

Data Collection

We mailed surveys to our undergraduate and graduate alumni in the fall of 2011. The total amount sent was 3,733. Two hundred one surveys were completed and received by our office. The completion rate for our surveys was 5.4%. Below are the responses for our undergraduate and graduate alumni, which we decided to evaluate separately.

Analysis

In lieu of taking an average assessment of the responses, we have used a top two¹ approach, focusing on responses that answered in the affirmative for "better" or "much better" or "good" and "excellent" when rating the University's services and their education. We believe this methodology offers a more authentic representation of our alumni attitudes and can only help to determine the needs of students.

What's New

This year, we have decided to examine the alumni responses over the years to evaluate trends. While the number of respondents is markedly lower than the amount of surveys we send out, we want to take into account the value of the responses we get from our alumni. We have created graphs to show how their opinions of our services and the quality of education have changed over time.

¹ A [NET](#) of the highest two categories of a [Rating Scale](#). For example, if the scale is: Strongly Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Agree and Strongly Agree, then the combined category of Somewhat Agree and Strongly Agree is referred to as the *Top Two Box Score*. Bock, T. (2013, January 1). Top 2 Box Score.

Undergraduate Alumni Responses

The total of undergraduates who responded was 139. Sixty-nine percent of the total responses were from undergraduates. Of the undergraduate respondents, 71% reported full-time employment. Fourteen percent were unemployed. As in past surveys, more than one-third of employed respondents are teachers (35%). Ninety-four percent of employed respondents reported they work in New Jersey.

Sixty-six percent of our undergraduate respondents reported that their job was “directly related” to their degree. More than half reported at least a \$40,000 salary or more annually. Thirty-six percent of undergraduate respondents answered they are currently enrolled in school, and of those 36%, 74% are working towards a graduate degree.

We asked the following questions of both undergraduates and graduates: “Compared to other graduates from other colleges with whom you now associate, how would you rate your MSU education?” Forty-six percent of our undergraduate respondents believe they received a better education than their peers, but a higher percentage (58%) responded in kind to our question of in-depth knowledge of their major. With respect to communication skills, more than half of our respondents (55%) believe they write effectively better and much better than their peers. Another 52% responded in the same manner regarding speaking effectively (See Tables 1-7² below).

When asked about their ability to think critically and solve problems, more than half (55%) of undergraduate respondents answered they believed they were “better” or “much better” than their counterparts.

A slightly lower amount believed their ability to use current technologies was “better” or “much better” than their counterparts (45%). More than two thirds responded positively (“good” and “excellent”) to students services (68%).

The other self-assessment question we asked of our alumni was: “Please rate the following aspects of your education while attending MSU.” When it comes to quality of instruction, 90% of our undergraduate respondents rated it as “excellent” and “good” (37% and 53%, respectively). The University should take note that a lower percentage of our undergraduate respondents replied positively to the question of career preparation (57%), academic advising (60%), and probability for upward mobility (47%). When asked about the quality of their overall education, 78% of undergraduate respondents indicated it was “excellent” and “good.” (See Tables 8-12² below).

² All tables show aggregated responses from students in percentages.

Evaluating 2007-2010 Undergraduate Alumni Response Trends

We evaluated the undergraduate responses with regard to these services going back to our 2007 undergraduate alumni. The areas that have increased over the past few years are areas such as General Education, In-depth knowledge in your major, Writing and Speaking Effectively, Thinking Critically and Solving Problems, Probability for Upward Mobility and Using Current Technologies.

However, the trend shows a declining number of students who evaluated their **overall** education as “better” and “much better” (78%). Academic advising (60%), career preparation (57%), and student services (68%) are higher than last year’s survey. While this is not a full representation of student attitudes, it is worth noting. It would be wise to reexamine these areas in order to provide students with a more positive experience.

While the chart shows a trend of a declining assessment from our alumni respondents over the years, it’s also important to note that our response rates have also decreased over the years. Still, the results suggest reconsidering the quality of service we offer to students.

Graduate Alumni Responses

Because the expectations and needs of our graduates are markedly different from those of our undergraduates, we chose to keep their responses separate.

The total number of graduates who responded to our survey was 62. Given the amount of graduate alumni in 2010 (869), 7% of our alumni responded, a much lower amount than the prior year. Of the respondents, 81% reported they were employed full-time. Only 5% were unemployed and seeking employment. As with undergraduates, the majority of respondents are employed as teachers (43%). This is no surprise, as 22% of our graduate students obtained an M.A. in Teaching. Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated they work in New Jersey, contributing to our economy.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of our graduate respondents reported that their job was “directly related” to their degree. This may be due to their advanced degree, in comparison to our undergraduates, or it may be due to more work experience obtained in the years before and while they attended graduate school. Sixty-five percent reported a salary at least \$50,000 or more annually. A smaller amount of respondents reported they are enrolled in school (10%), and 72%

reported not being enrolled in school and not planning to enroll, indicating a master's degree will be their terminal degree.

While many students responded positively to having more in-depth knowledge of their major (64%), 48% responded they believed their education to be better or much better than their peers.

Writing effectively (55%) and speaking effectively (47%) numbers were about the same as undergraduates, but the question of Thinking Critically And Solving Problems was slightly higher response rate in the "better" and "much better" rating (57%). Graduate respondents rated using current technologies as "better" and "much better" was 55%, higher than last year's response at 46%.

With the questions regarding the Quality of Instruction, 93% of our graduate respondents rated it as "good" and "excellent" (49% and 44%, respectively). Academic Advising received a higher rating from graduate students (71%) and Career Preparation (73%), as well as Student Services (65%), while Probability for Upward Mobility was lower (44%).

The question of the Quality of Overall Education received a better response from graduate students with a total of 87% marking it as "good" and "excellent."

Employment

Figures 3.0-5.0 explore the employment rates of both undergraduates and graduates. It is important to note that Figure 5.0 is merely an estimate based on information we gathered from the US Census Bureau and is subject to a margin of error. We merely chose to include the data to show an average salary for the New Jerseyans versus the salaries reported by our respondents to create a point of reference.

Conclusion

Our findings show promising employment rates for our alumni respondents, both undergraduate and graduate. The results indicate a \$10,000 increase in overall starting salary for graduate student respondents. In addition, many of our graduate students who responded are not returning to school after obtaining a master's degree. Finally, while we saw increases in the areas of Student Services, Career Preparation, Academic Advising and Quality of Instruction, curiously enough, we did not witness the same in Quality of Instruction. While the number of responses to this survey has declined over the years, we are also seeing a steady decline in their rating of our Quality of Overall Education and Career Preparation. It is worth researching what causes the respondents to rate the question in this manner.

Tables from Alumni Survey

Undergraduates and Graduate Responses

Table 1.0

General Education		
	Undergraduates (%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	16.4	15
Better	29.9	33.3
Same	48.5	48.3
Worse	4.5	3.3
Much Worse	0.7	0
Total	100	100

Table 2.0

In-depth knowledge in your major		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	25.6	24.6
Better	32.3	39.3
Same	36.1	31.1
Worse	6	3.3
Much Worse	0	1.6
Total	100	100

Table 3.0

Writing effectively		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	19.8	25
Better	35.1	30
Same	38.9	45
Worse	5.3	
Much Worse	0.8	
Total	100	100

Table 4.0

Speaking effectively		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	17.3	26.2
Better	34.6	21.3
Same	42.1	52.5
Worse	5.3	
Much Worse	0.8	
Total	100	100

Table 5.0

Thinking critically and solving problems		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	16.5	25
Better	37.6	31.7
Same	37.6	41.7
Worse	6.0	1.7
Much Worse	2.3	
Total	100.0	100

Table 6.0

Using current technologies		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	18.2	28.3
Better	27.3	26.7
Same	47.0	41.7
Worse	6.1	3.3
Much Worse	1.5	
Total	100.0	100

Table 7.0

Probability for upward mobility		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Much Better	16.7	24.6
Better	30.3	19.7
Same	43.2	50.8
Worse	8.3	4.9
Much Worse	1.5	
Total	100.0	100

Table 8.0

Quality of instruction		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Excellent	37.0	49.2
Good	52.9	44.3
Fair	8.7	6.6
Poor	1.4	
Total	100.0	100

Table 9.0

Academic advising		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Excellent	29.7	30.6
Good	29.7	40.3
Fair	21.0	22.6
Poor	19.6	6.5
Total	100.0	100

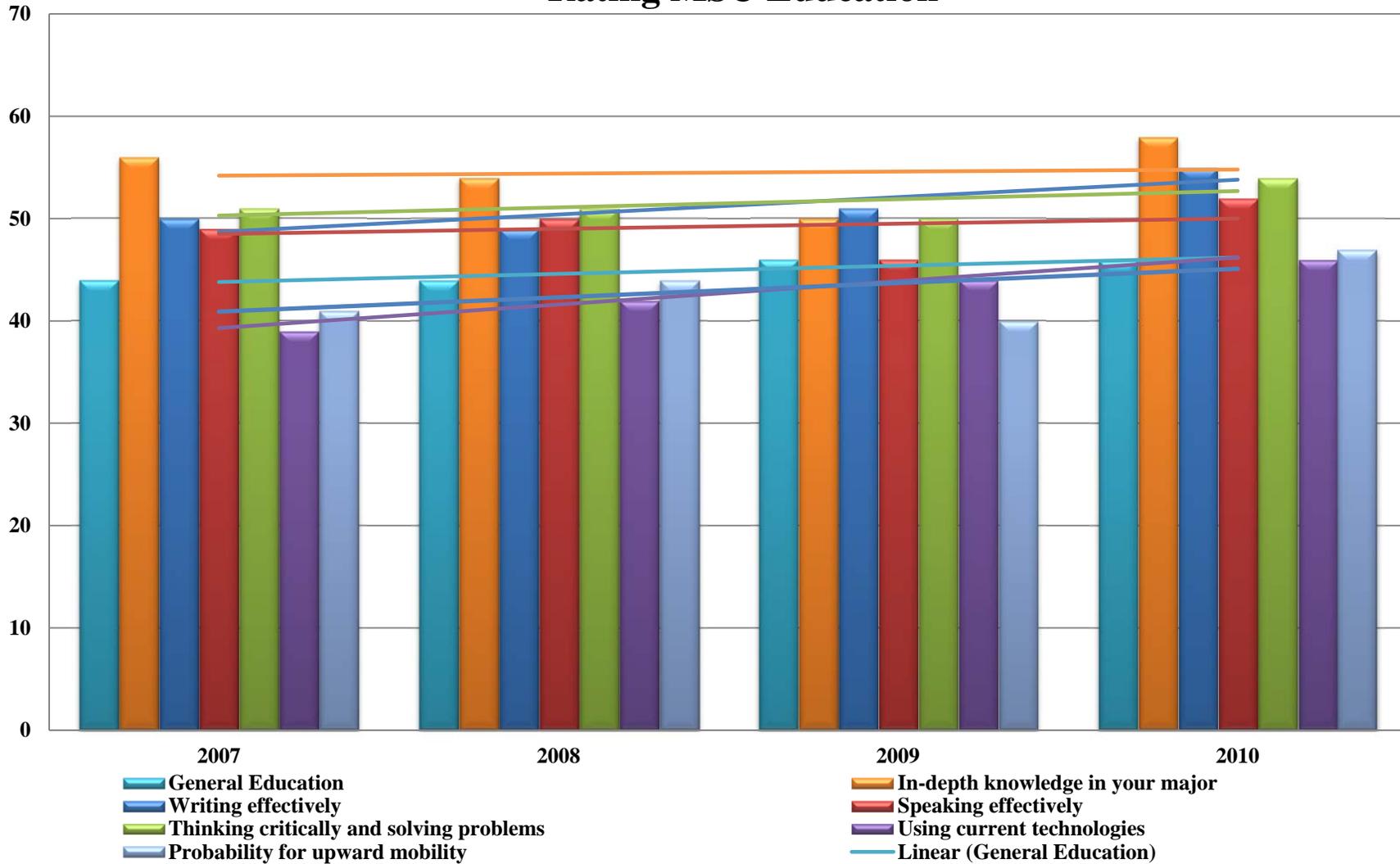
Table 10.0		
Career preparation		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Excellent	26.3	33.9
Good	30.7	38.7
Fair	27.0	21.0
Poor	16.1	6.5
Total	100.0	100

Table 11.0		
Student services		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Excellent	22.8	14.5
Good	44.9	50.0
Fair	23.5	27.4
Poor	8.8	8.1
Total	100.0	100

Table 12.0		
Quality of overall education		
	Undergraduates(%)	Graduates(%)
Excellent	26.8	31.1
Good	50.7	55.7
Fair	13.0	9.8
Poor	9.4	3.3
Total	100.0	100

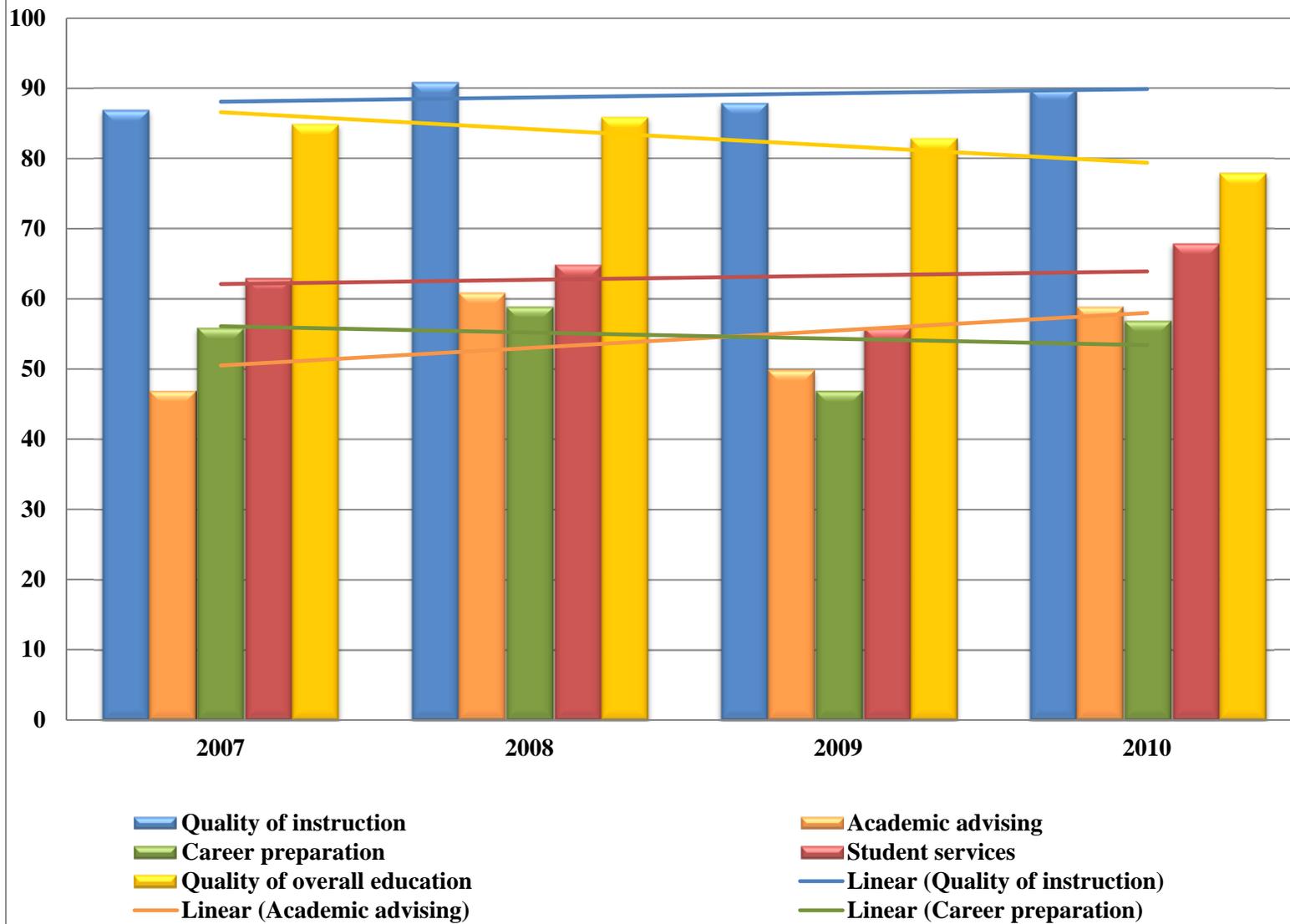
Graphs

Figure 1.0
Rating MSU Education*



*Please note these are based solely on the results of the undergraduate respondents over the past four years.

Figure 2.0
Rate Aspects of Education*



*Please note these are based solely on the results of the undergraduate respondents over the past four years.

Figure 3.0
Salaries of Undergraduate vs. Graduate Alumni

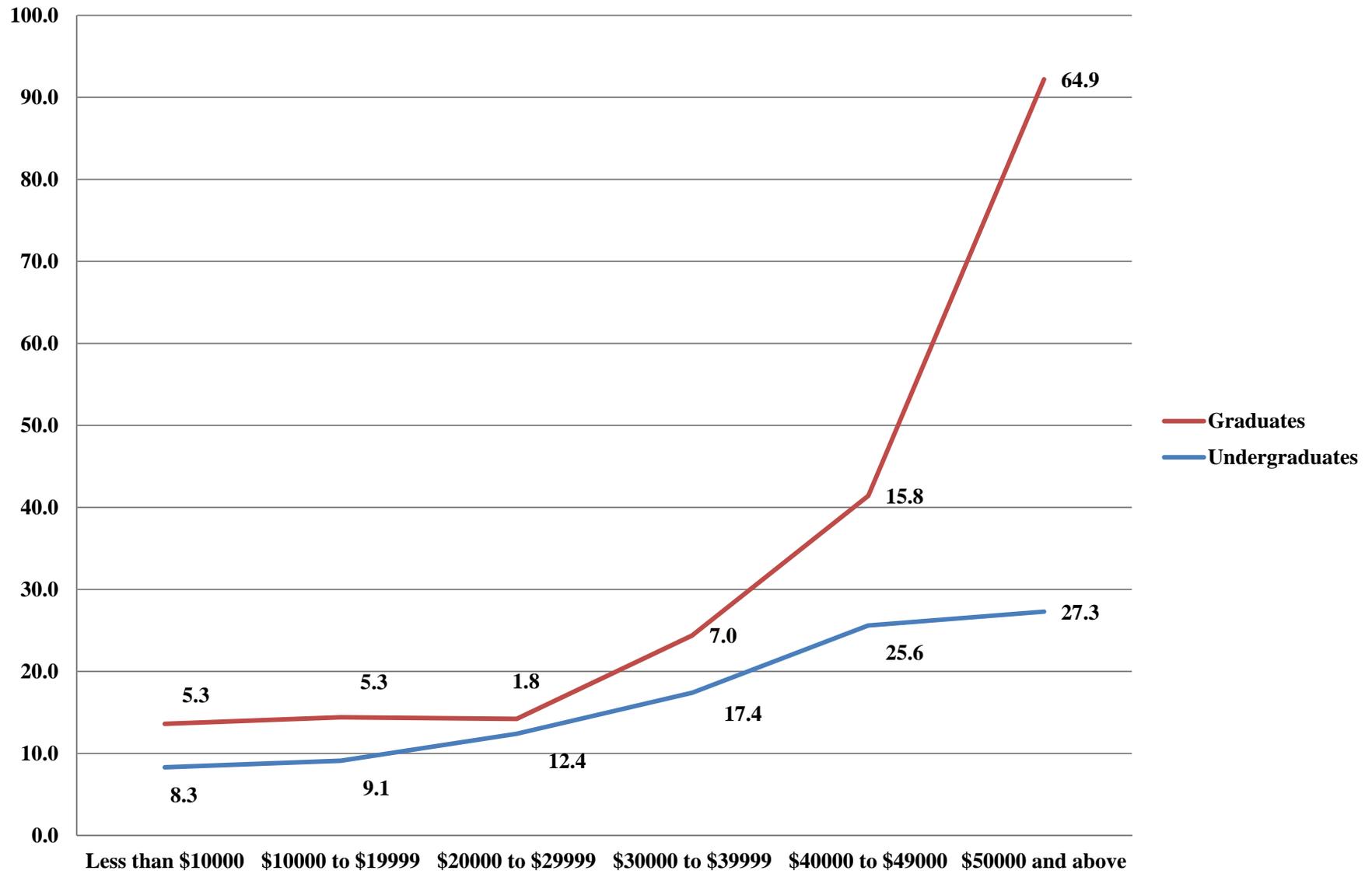
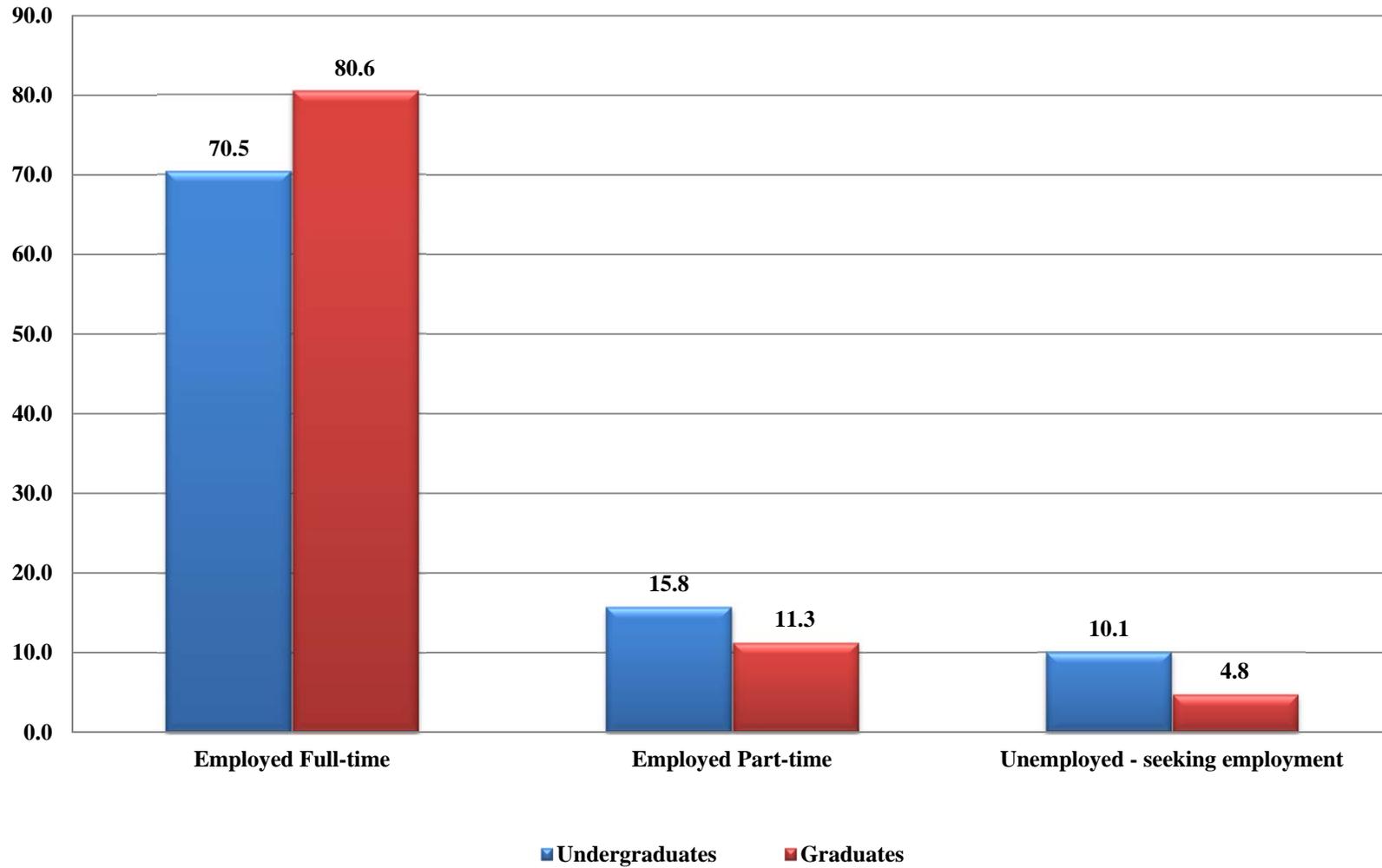
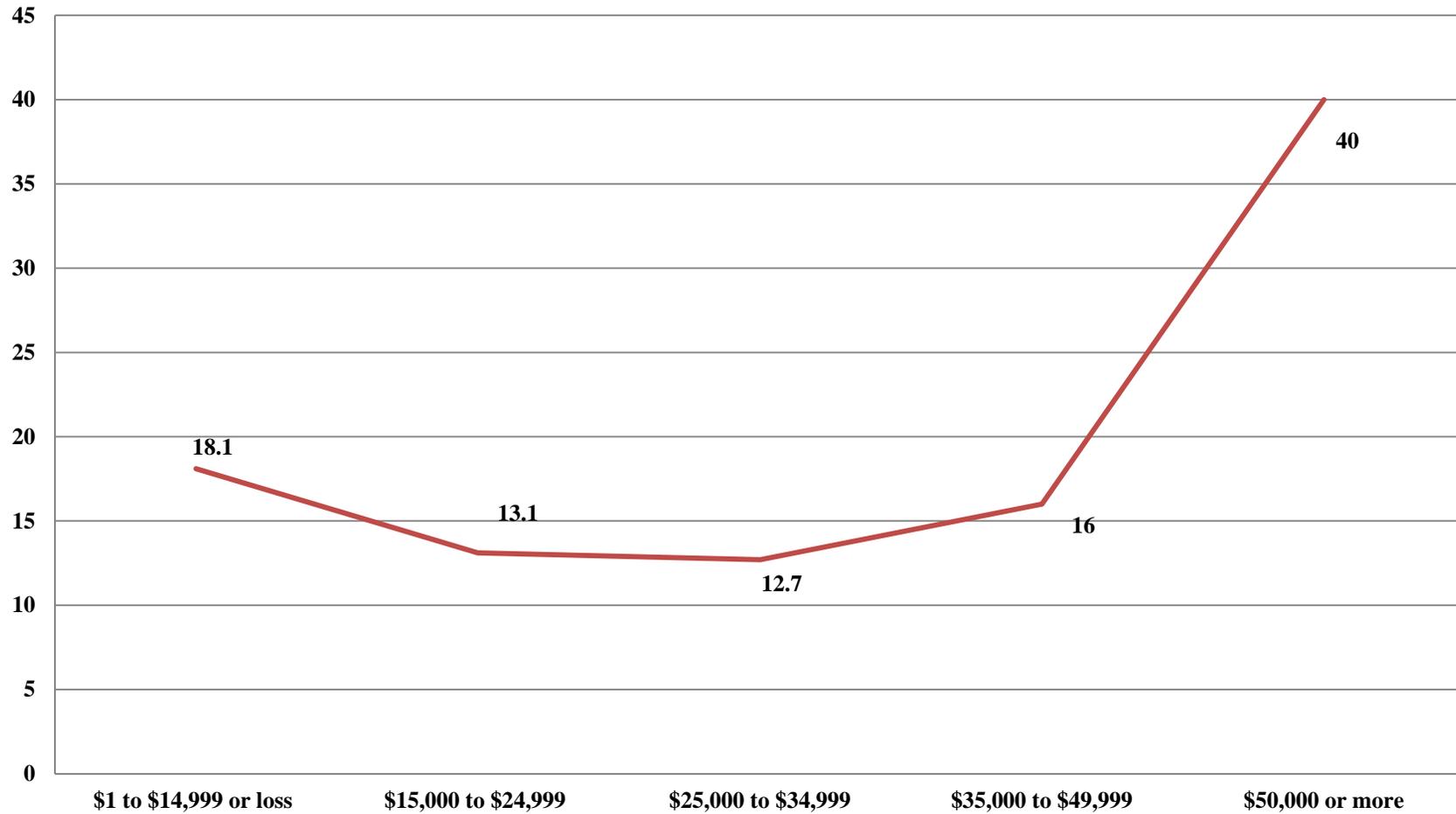


Figure 4.0
Employment Rates of Respondents

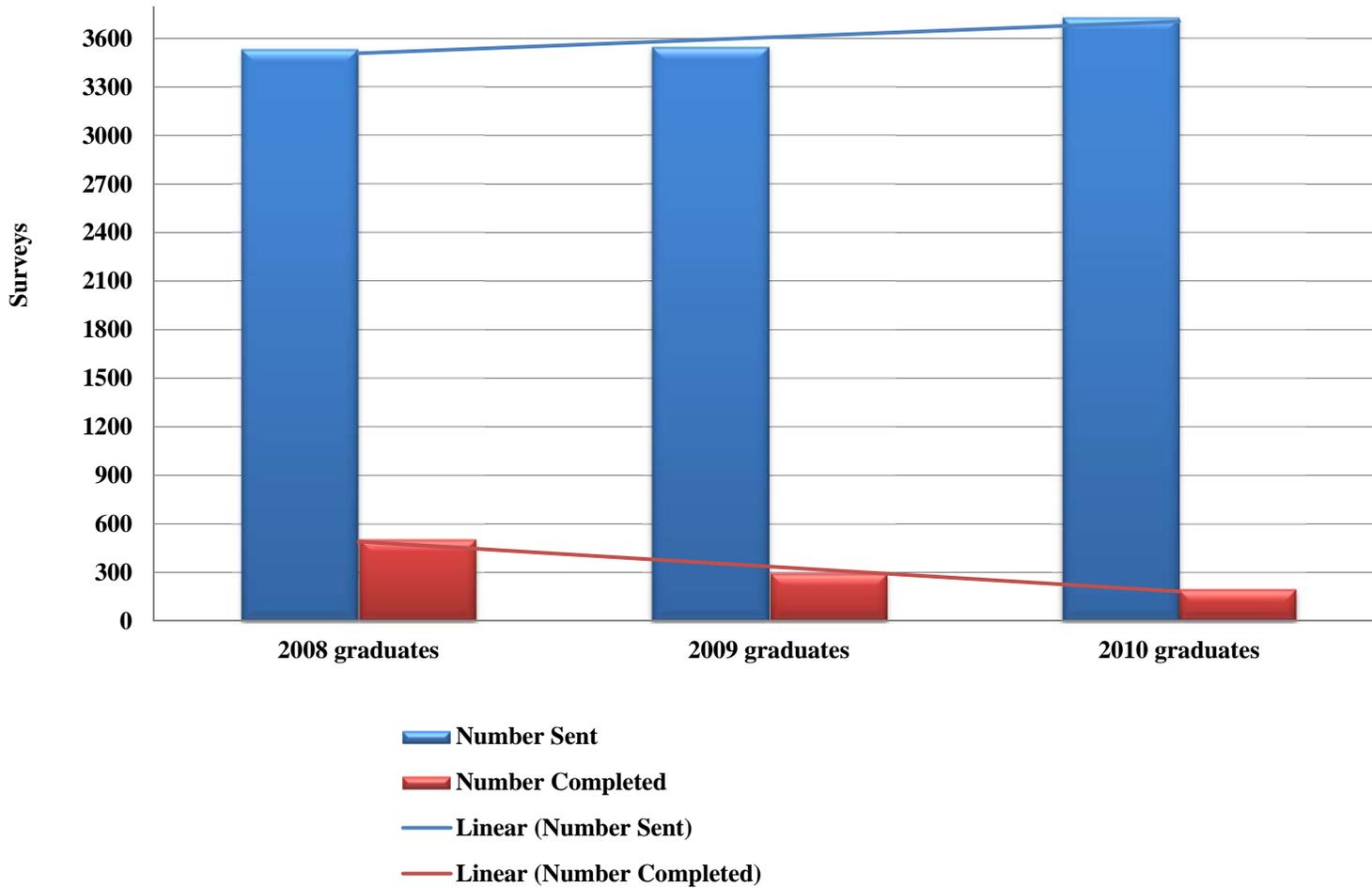


**Figure 5.0
NJ Salaries**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey
The EEO Tabulation is sponsored by four Federal agencies consisting of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Employment Litigation Section of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) at the Department of Labor, and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Figure 6.0
Completion of Surveys from 2009-2011*



*Surveys collected data from 2007-2010 graduates.