



## **UNDERGRADUATE CLASS OF 2005 – 2006 ALUMNI SURVEY**

### **Introduction**

The alumni survey originated from the idea that we can assess the needs of our current students from the experiences of our alumni. In addition, we could track their employment, obtain information on how to improve our services, and provide current students with the skills necessary to succeed in the working world. Graduates leave Montclair State University with a collegiate experience, invaluable skills, and knowledge which will benefit them in their careers and future endeavors. As we strive to provide our students with a viable education, we also believe we should maintain our roles as academic leaders and mentors and ensure our graduates optimize their undergraduate education and apply that knowledge to their work and academic vocations. Encouraged by the invaluable information we could ascertain from learning about their academic experience, we created the alumni survey, which asks information of students who graduated one year prior to the survey distribution. In the effort to collect essential data, we changed the abbreviated the survey.

### **Methodology**

In 2006, the Office of Institutional Research teamed with Academic Affairs and Career Development to devise a survey intended to follow-up with students who earned a degree or certificate from Montclair State University during the 2005-2006 academic year. We were also sentient of our upcoming assessment from the Middle States accreditation team in 2007. The Office of Career Development wanted to assess how MSU graduates were faring in the difficult job market and in pursuing their post-baccalaureate educational goals.

The Office of Institutional Research decided to modify the question to target specific aspects of our graduates' careers. For this reason, we wanted to ensure that we asked pertinent questions, and reduced the size of the survey from seventeen questions to fifteen. A copy of the survey is attached at the end of this report. Trimming the survey was an attempt to streamline data collection, since the advent of electronic surveys has shadowed our ability to receive an adequate response rate by mail. We also made an electronic version of the survey available via the Internet.

The "scannable" paper surveys were designed to be used with Remark OMR software. The data from the web surveys was then converged with the data from the paper surveys. The following information is a report of our findings.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, Montclair State University awarded 2,492 undergraduates with baccalaureate degrees. The MSU Alumni Office graciously supplied the database with updated addresses for these graduates. For the purpose of this study, students who resided outside of the USA were excluded from the mailing. Therefore, in all 2,467 graduates were mailed a complete set of the survey, including a cover letter, a survey and a pre-paid business reply envelope.

Since free transcripts proved to be an effective incentive for completing the survey in the past, a coupon for a free transcript was given to students who completed the survey. After three mailings, the Office of Institutional research received a total of 261 completed surveys. Excluding undeliverable addresses which our surveys did not reach, a moderate response rate of 12% was achieved. Among those who responded, 63% of responses were completed on paper and 37% were completed on the web.

The results were analyzed using the SPSS-PC software and the results of the same are as discussed below. The open-ended questions were manually coded and were analyzed as well.

## **Sample**

Table 1.0 provides comparative information about the number of students who graduated from MSU based by college. In order to gain an appropriate representation for the alumni population from the 2006 graduating class, we calculated the population of students who graduated from each college and compared them to the respondents who answered the survey and the college from which they graduated. We found that the respondents were a fair representation of the graduating class, with the following colleges accounting for a percentage of the population: College of Education and Human Services (18%), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (31%), College of Science and Math (14%), School of Arts (12%), and the School of Business (25%). The highest response rates for majors awarding 10 or more degrees were achieved by graduates in Business Administration (23%), Psychology (13%), Family and Child Studies (13%), Justice Studies (5%), and Biology (5%).

Of the 2006 Alumni class, 66% were female and 34% male. Our respondents show a slightly higher number of females represented than those of our graduating class, namely 74%, with 26% of the respondents being male.

Based on the foregoing, it may be ascertained that the results from the survey may be generalized to represent the population, as the characteristics of the graduates and the respondents were fairly similar.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Alumni Activities**

Preparing students for a productive work experience is important to students and faculty alike. The respondents for the CIRP survey (a survey for incoming freshmen) in the fall of 2007, 59% of students indicated they attended MSU because of their good academic reputation, 46% believed the college's graduates get good jobs, and 26% indicated interest in graduate school. This is a strong basis for why we examine the employment and post-baccalaureate educational activities of our graduates.

The 2005-2006 survey of our one-year-out graduates inquired about the activities of the graduates since they graduated from Montclair State University. Graduates had the option to select as many activities that they were engaged in, i.e., employed full- or part-time, unemployed and either seeking employment or not seeking employment. Seventy-seven percent (199) of the respondents were employed full-time, nearly 15% were employed part-time, and 8% were unemployed at the time.

Teacher certification is a popular program offered at Montclair State University. The program enables our students to work as teachers at various levels in schools. We asked alumni if they had obtained a teacher certification while studying at MSU. Thirty-six percent of respondents who indicated they obtained teacher's certification obtained their certificate prior to graduating from MSU. The largest percentage of certificates was obtained by respondents from the College of Education and Human Services (73%), who cleared their certification while at MSU.

### **Overview and Employment Activities**

Ninety two percent of the respondents were employed at the time when they completed the survey. Among those who provided information regarding the location of their employment, 87% indicated that they worked in New Jersey and over 9% were employed in New York.

### **Employment Resources and Relation to program of study**

Graduates, who responded to the survey, were asked to cite sources through which they found their current job. Departmental internships, help from faculty, and Career Fair were cited by most graduates, as the sources through which graduates were aware of the jobs that helped them get into their current positions. Some of the other sources that were helpful in obtaining their jobs were: co-op education and career counseling, postings on web sites/internet, and job advertisements in newspapers.

Graduates were asked to rate if their jobs were related to their majors that they pursued at MSU. They were asked to rate the relatedness of the job on a scale of 1 to 5 where *1 = Directly related*; *2 = Somewhat related* *3 = Not related*. Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that their jobs were "*Directly related*" or "*Somewhat related*" to their major.

### **Type of Companies/Industries**

Employed graduates were also asked to classify their jobs according to various industries. Graduates represented in almost every category, but a large proportion of the responding graduates indicated they were employed in the school system (26%), while most others were employed in Accounting Firm/Bank/Finance companies and Merchandising/Retail Store/Sales (11% each).

Table 2.0 provides college information regarding industries that our graduates are employed in with respect to their majors at Montclair State University. Notably, 58% of those employed in the school system were responding graduates from College of Education and Human Services. Similarly, 90% of respondents employed in industries related to Accounting firms, bank or finance are from the School of Business. This is not surprising, especially, when we look at the large number of students who are enroll in and graduate with degrees in programs related to education and business.

Another question that is of importance to the institution is the salary of the alumni. This indirectly indicates if the skills of the alumni are appropriately compensated for. Additionally, the starting salary and the currently earned salary provide a hint about how well our alumni are faring on various jobs.

Within approximately the first year of employment a number of alumni experienced salary changes. Table 3.0 indicates that 18% who responded to the survey earned less than \$30,000 per annum as their starting salary. Interestingly enough, the number of respondents in the same salary range increased to 25% when showing the current annual salary. The total number of respondents who

answered this question also declined. The majority of salary earners remained in the below \$50,000 a year category (See Table 4.0).

### **Alumni Job Satisfaction**

It is important to know if our alumni are satisfied with their employment. Graduates were also asked to rate their satisfaction with their jobs on a scale of 1 to 5 where, *1 = very satisfied, 2 = Satisfied, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Unsatisfied and 5 = Very unsatisfied*. It is encouraging to note that over 77% of the students were either very satisfied or satisfied with their jobs. This trend was the similar for alumni from all five colleges and schools (Table 5.0).

### **Post-Baccalaureate Educational Activities**

Of the alumni who answered the questions regarding the current educational status, 30% (72), were enrolled in a graduate school pursuing post-baccalaureate studies. Forty-five percent continue to study in state and almost 14% re-enrolled at Montclair State University. Among the students who enrolled in out-of-state colleges/universities, a large proportion of students were enrolled in various higher education institutions in New York.

### **Type of Degrees Pursued**

MSU graduates, responding to the study, indicated that they were pursuing various types of degrees after completing their baccalaureate study at MSU. In addition, most of the respondents who are pursuing post-baccalaureate degrees were enrolled in a master's level program (78%), i.e., MA, MS, MAT, MPA, MED, MSW, and MBA. Four percent were enrolled in specialized certification programs, while over 12% indicated that they were enrolled in a doctoral program, i.e., PHD, JD, DMD etc.

### **Majors at Post-Baccalaureate Institutions**

Table 6.0 provides a list of the majors that respondents are pursuing in their graduate studies. A majority of the students were seeking post-baccalaureate education in the fields of law, education and health professions.

Additionally, students were also asked if they intended to pursue their education further. Among those who responded, over 56% indicated that they plan to pursue their education.

### **Growth in Skills and Abilities**

Alumni were provided with a list of 8 abilities or skills that one might expect to develop while pursuing a college education and asked to assess themselves on these skills. They were asked to rate these skills on a 5 point scale where, *1 = much better, 2 = better, 3 = same, 4 = worse, and 5 = much worse*. Forty percent of the respondents indicated improvement in these skills since entering MSU.

Sixty-seven percent of people who responded to the question, "How well did MSU prepare you for your current job?" responded with an "excellent" or "good" answer. When asked if they believed MSU prepared them for additional, college-level coursework, 72% answered with an affirmative response of "excellent" or "good."

## Summary and Conclusion

One of the major objectives of a college for students, parents and faculty alike, is preparing students for a career. One way of finding out how well graduates are progressing in their career pursuits is by doing a post-graduate assessment. This particular survey looked at alumni early on in their careers; those who recently graduated in academic year 2005. A large number of the survey's questions gathered work history information, e.g., type of professions, salary ranges, type of industries, work satisfaction, etc. The survey results showed over 91% of our alumni are working full or part-time, most of them contribute to New Jersey by working here in the Garden State.

Today, post-baccalaureate education is often factored into career plans. Several survey questions asked alumni if they were pursuing a graduate education. Thirty percent (72) of the graduates who responded to the survey were pursuing post-baccalaureate studies. Alumni were enrolled in various types of degrees, but most were in masters programs (MA, MSW, MIS, MBA, etc.). Of those respondents who have continued their studies, forty-five percent continue to study in state and almost 14% re-enrolled at Montclair State University. Among the students who enrolled in out-of-state colleges/universities, a large proportion of students were enrolled in various higher education institutions in New York.

Finally, the number of alumni who mentioned in their comments the usefulness of participating in internships, co-operative education experiences and volunteer work in finding employment demonstrates the wisdom gained by alumni since graduating from MSU and experiencing the workplace.

**TABLES**

**Table 1.0 – Respondents by College**

<b>College</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of population</b>
CEH	48	18.4
CHS	81	31.0
CSM	36	13.8
SAR	30	11.5
SBU	65	24.9
Total	261	100.0

**Table 2.0 - Careers of respondents by College**

<b>Career Field</b>	<b>CEH</b>	<b>CHS</b>	<b>CSM</b>	<b>SAR</b>	<b>SBU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Accounting Firm / Bank / Finance	0	0	1	1	19	21
Computer / Information Systems	0	2	2	0	2	6
Chemical / Energy / Science Lab	0	0	6	0	0	6
School System Elementary Secondary Post-Secondary	30	10	8	3	1	52
Government Agency	0	14	0	0	1	15
Health Care Provider / Hospital	4	9	2	2	2	19
Law / Insurance Company	0	2	0	0	3	5
Merchandising / Retail Store / Sales	0	6	0	5	10	22
Telecommunications	0	0	1	0	0	1
Other	3	14	6	11	16	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>197</b>

**Table 3.0 – Starting annual salary for respondents by college**

Starting annual salary	CEH	CHS	CSM	SAR	SBU	Total
Less than \$20,000	6	10	2	5	4	27
\$20,000 to \$24,999	4	3	2	1	0	10
\$25,000 to \$29,999	3	7	1	1	4	17
\$30,000 to \$34,999	4	7	4	4	6	25
\$35,000 to \$39,999	2	7	5	4	12	30
\$40,000 to \$44,999	7	5	2	2	13	29
\$45,000 to \$49,999	5	2	1	1	3	12
\$50,000 to \$54,999	0	3	3	0	6	12
\$55,000 to \$59,999	1	0	1	0	0	2
\$65,000 to \$69,999	0	0	0	1	1	2
\$70,000 to \$74,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$75,000 to \$79,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$80,000 and above	0	1	0	1	1	3
Total	74	98	24	36	65	298

**Table 4.0 – Current annual salary for respondents by college**

Current annual salary	CEH	CHS	CSM	SAR	SBU	Total
Less than \$20,000	3	9	2	5	2	21
\$20,000 to \$24,999	6	2	1	0	0	9
\$25,000 to \$29,999	2	10	1	0	1	15
\$30,000 to \$34,999	5	7	1	2	3	18
\$35,000 to \$39,999	1	5	5	2	5	18
\$40,000 to \$44,999	6	4	4	3	14	31
\$45,000 to \$49,999	9	7	6	2	5	29
\$50,000 to \$54,999	0	5	2	1	7	15
\$55,000 to \$59,999	1	2	0	0	4	7
\$60,000 TO \$64,999	0	0	1	3	5	9
\$65,000 to \$69,999	0	1	0	0	1	2
\$70,000 to \$74,999	0	0	1	0	0	1
\$75,000 to \$79,999	0	0	0	0	0	0
\$80,000 and above	0	1	0	1	4	6
Total	33	53	24	19	51	181

**Table 5.0 – Respondents' Job satisfaction by college**

	<b>CEH</b>	<b>CHS</b>	<b>CSM</b>	<b>SAR</b>	<b>SBU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Very satisfied	17	20	12	13	21	83
Satisfied	21	28	12	9	29	99
Neutral	5	14	0	3	12	35
Unsatisfied	4	4	4	1	2	15
Very satisfied	0	2	1	1	0	4
Total	47	68	29	27	64	236

**Table 6.0 – Post-baccalaureate degrees sought by respondents by college**

	<b>CEH</b>	<b>CHS</b>	<b>CSM</b>	<b>SAR</b>	<b>SBU</b>	<b>Total</b>
Accounting	0	0	0	0	1	1
Biology	0	0	3	0	0	3
Business	0	0	0	0	1	1
Cosmetology	0	1	0	0	0	1
Counseling/Psychology	1	5	0	0	0	6
Dentistry	0	0	1	0	0	1
Education	3	2	0	3	0	8
English	0	3	0	1	0	4
Health and Exercise Science	5	1	1	0	0	7
Fashion Journalism	0	0	0	0	1	1
Graphic Design	0	0	0	0	1	1
Healthcare Management	0	0	0	0	2	2
Human Resource Mgmt.	0	0	0	0	1	1
Law	0	4	0	0	0	4
Leadership	1	0	0	0	0	1
Marketing	0	0	0	1	1	2
Medicine	0	0	2	0	0	2
Music	0	0	0	1	0	1
Neuroscience	0	1	0	0	0	1
Nursing	1	0	1	0	0	2
Optometry	0	0	1	0	0	1
Osteopathic Medicine	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pharmaceutical Management	0	0	0	0	1	1
Photography	0	0	0	1	0	1
Political Science	0	1	0	0	0	1
Public Health and Administration	0	3	0	0	1	4
Social Work	0	3	0	0	0	3
Special Education	3	0	0	0	0	3
Theatre	0	0	0	1	0	1
Chemistry	0	0	1	0	0	1
Statistics	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>68</b>