

The University of Connecticut

Report on the Alumni Survey - 1999 Graduating Class

Every year since 1979 the Office of Institutional Research has surveyed recent graduates. This survey is one of the few outcome measures the University of Connecticut has for our educational process. While the questionnaire focuses primarily on the academic experience of graduates, it also allows them to report their current activities. During the past twenty years, the survey results have yielded valuable information pertinent to both the graduates' experience at the University and their post-graduate activities.

The present report is an overview of the 1999 responses in the context of the previous 20 years. It is also available at web site <http://vm.uconn.edu/~wwwoir/alumni99.html>. Separate reports will also be generated for each school and for larger departments.

1. Number of Respondents and Response Rates

In Fall 1999, 2,816 questionnaires were sent to graduates who received a bachelor's degree from June 1998 through May of 1999 concerning their academic experience at the University of Connecticut and their post-graduate activities. A follow-up letter was sent to those who did not respond within two months of the initial survey mailing. (There were 2,852 actual degrees conferred from June 1998 through May 1999, but some of these may be of students receiving dual degrees.)

Completed questionnaires were returned by 1,180 graduates, for a total response rate of 42%. Over the past several years, the response rate has been in the range of 40% to 45%.

The majority of respondents to the survey are female (60%), as were the majority of all graduates in the 1999 class (53%). Thus, female graduates responded at a higher rate (43%) than males (35%), as has been the case in all previous alumni surveys.

In terms of age distribution, the respondents did not differ from the graduating class, as measured in the broad categories used in the survey. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of respondents by age group. Three fourths of respondents are between 21 and 24 years old.

Table 1.1: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group.

<u>Age Group [years]</u>	<u>Percentage of Respondents</u>
18 to 20	<1%
21 to 24	74%
25 to 34	18%
35 to 49	7%
Over 50	<1%
Not specified	<1%

In terms of ethnic background, the majority of respondents to the survey are white (82%), as were the majority of all graduates of the 1999 class (87%). The percentage of respondents belonging to minority groups (10%) is similar to the percentage of all 1999 graduates belonging to minority groups (13%).

Response rate by school/college is given in Table 1.2. The School of Allied Health and The College of Continuing Studies (General Studies) have the highest response rate (both 47%); Fine Arts has the lowest rate (38%).

Table 1.2: Response Rates, Ranked Within-School/College Percentage.

School/College	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Allied Health	116	55	47%
General Studies	217	102	47%
Family Studies	154	71	46%
Engineering	146	64	44%
Education	173	75	43%
Nursing	86	36	42%
Business	458	191	42%
Agriculture	147	59	40%
Pharmacy	138	54	39%
Liberal Arts and Sciences	1,137	443	39%
Fine Arts	80	30	38%
Overall	2,852	1,180	42%

In summary, the respondents to the alumni survey represent a sample that is similar to the population of 1999 graduates both in terms of age and ethnic background, broadly speaking. Based on relatively high response rates, the sample slightly over represents female students. The response rate looks relatively evenly distributed among the schools and colleges.

2. General Questions

2.1. Freshman Entrance Rate

Overall, 69% of respondents entered UConn as freshmen; 31% entered as transfer students. Table 2.1 concerns within-school freshman entrance rates, given as percentages and ranked.

Table 2.1: Freshman Entrance Rate, Ranked Within-School/College Percentages.

School/College	Within-School Percentage
Business	81%
Pharmacy	78%
Education	76%
Arts & Sciences	75%
Engineering	69%
Nursing	67%
Allied Health	67%
Family Studies	65%
Fine Arts	63%
Agriculture	59%
General Studies	20%

Business has the highest freshman entrance rate (81%), followed by Pharmacy (78%).

The low freshman entrance rate for General Studies (20%) is consistent with age data. In General Studies, the age category with the largest number of respondents (58%) is 35-49 years; within all other schools, the most common age category is 21-24 years.

2.2. Residence Hall Habitation Rate

Overall, 75% of respondents lived in a residence hall on campus at some point during their time at UConn; 25% did not. Table 2.2 concerns residence hall habitation rates for respondents who entered UConn as freshmen and graduated in exactly four years (*four-year respondents*).

Table 2.2: Semesters Lived in Residence Halls for Four-Year Respondents.

Semesters:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Respondents:	18	7	16	22	93	25	59	17	126
Percentage:	5%	2%	4%	6%	24%	7%	15%	4%	33%

For the four-year respondents, 33% lived in a residence hall for the entire eight semesters; 5% did not live in a residence hall at any point.

A large group of four-year respondents (24%) lived in a residence hall exactly 4 semesters. Assuming these students entered residence halls when they arrived on campus, they then decided to change their living situations after their first two years at UConn.

2.3. Point at which Major Decided

Table 2.3 concerns the point at which students decide their major; both overall and within-school/college percentages are given for the time categories.

Table 2.3: Point at which Major Decided, Overall and Within-School Percentages.

	Before College	As a Freshman	As a Sophomore	As a Junior	As a Senior	Do Not Remember	No Response
Overall	31%	10%	30%	23%	2%	4%	1%
Agriculture	32%	7%	31%	24%	3%	2%	2%
Allied Health	55%	15%	20%	7%	0%	4%	0%
Arts & Sciences	21%	12%	35%	28%	2%	3%	1%
Business	28%	7%	37%	24%	1%	2%	1%
Education	41%	11%	31%	15%	1%	1%	0%
Engineering	59%	14%	14%	11%	0%	2%	0%
Family Studies	7%	11%	48%	32%	1%	0%	0%
Fine Arts	47%	17%	23%	7%	0%	3%	3%
General Studies	14%	5%	15%	34%	10%	17%	6%
Nursing	64%	17%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pharmacy	72%	7%	7%	6%	4%	4%	0%

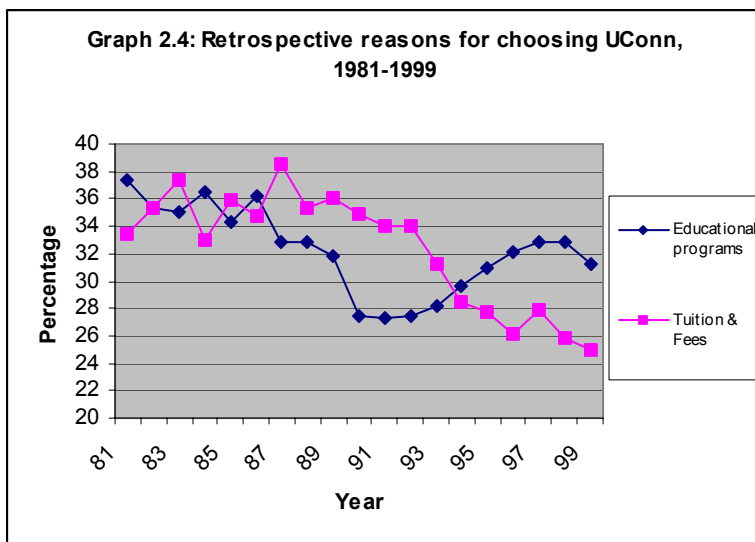
Overall, one third of respondents decided their major before entering college; another third decided as a sophomore. Within each school, except for General Studies, respondents who decided their majors either before college or as sophomores form a majority.

For Agriculture, Allied Health, Education, Engineering, Fine Arts, Nursing, and Pharmacy, the highest within-school percentage of respondents decided their major before college. Pharmacy (72%) and Nursing (64%) especially stand out in this respect. For Arts and Sciences, Business, and Family Studies, the highest within-school percentage of respondents decided their major as a sophomore. For General Studies, respondents generally decided their majors later than in other schools, with 34% deciding as a junior (a large group (17%) did not remember).

2.4. Retrospective Reasons for Choosing UConn

Respondents were asked to take into account their experience at UConn and indicate what they felt should have been the single major reason for attending UConn. Overall, 35% of the respondents indicated reasons relating to educational programs, either (i) variety of programs, (ii) the quality of programs, or (iii) specific programs offered. On the other hand, 25% indicated the low level of tuition and fees as the single major reason for attending UConn. Graph 2.4 concerns the trend of these responses over previous 18 years.

Graph 2.4: Retrospective reasons for choosing UConn, 1980-1999.



Retrospective indication of reasons for attending UConn related to educational programs oscillates with a slight downward trend from 1980 to 1988. Toward the end of the 1980's, the percentage decreases sharply, dropping from 36% to 27%. In the 1990's, the percentage increases from 27% to 32%.

Retrospective indication of tuition and fees as the single major reason for attending UConn oscillates with a slight upward trend from 1980 to 1988. After 1988 to the present, the percentage decreases from 36% to 25% linearly at 1% per year. Table 2.4 concerns within-school indication rates, given as percentages and ranked.

Table 2.4: Retrospective Reasons for Attending UConn, Ranked Within-School Percentages.

Educational Programs	
Allied Health	60%
Pharmacy	59%
Nursing	44%
Family Studies	38%
General Studies	37%
Fine Arts	37%
Education	36%
Agriculture	36%
Business	26%
Engineering	25%

Tuition and Fees	
Business	35%
Engineering	30%
Arts & Sciences	28%
Education	27%
Fine Arts	23%
Family Studies	23%
Agriculture	19%
Nursing	17%
Allied Health	15%
Pharmacy	13%

Arts & Sciences	22%
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General Studies	8%
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For retrospective indication of reasons for attending UConn related to educational programs, Allied Health (60%) and Pharmacy (59%) rank highest. For retrospective indication of tuition and fees, Business (35%) ranks highest.

3. Evaluation of Academic Experience

3.1. Helpfulness of UConn

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 21 potential benefits of a college education and the extent to which they believed that UConn had helped to provide each benefit. Table 3.1 gives both rating averages and also ranks for both benefit importance and perceived helpfulness of UConn. Relative helpfulness, average perceived helpfulness rating minus average benefit importance rating, is also given and ranked.

Table 3.1: Benefit Importance, Perceived Helpfulness of UConn, and Relative Helpfulness, Rating Averages and Ranks.

Benefit	Perceived Importance 1 = Not Important 7 = Very Important		Helpfulness of UConn 1 = Not Helpful 7 = Very Helpful		Relative UConn Helpfulness (Helped - Importance)	
	Rating	Rank	Rating	Rank	Rating	Rank
a. Obtain career training -- knowledge and skills applicable to specific job/work	6.27	3	4.66	14	-1.61	21
b. Acquire background for further education in a professional, scientific or scholarly field	5.86	12	4.91	10	-.095	8
c. Gain a range of information that might be relevant to a career	6.21	6	5.10	5	-1.11	16
d. Develop an understanding and enjoyment of literature, art, and drama	4.98	21	4.61	19	-.036	1
e. Write clearly and effectively	6.20	7	5.19	3	-1.01	11
f. Become fluent in the computing of your discipline	5.84	13	4.82	11	-1.02	14
g. Obtain a general foundation in computing regardless of your discipline	5.65	14	4.63	18	-1.02	13
h. Become aware of different philosophies, cultures, and ways of life	5.50	15	5.05	6	-.044	3
i. Develop your own values and ethical standards	6.05	9	4.65	16	-1.40	20
j. Understand yourself, your abilities, your interests and personality	6.28	2	4.98	8	-1.30	17
k. Understand and be able to get along with different kinds of people	6.24	5	5.25	2	-1.00	10
l. Understand the nature of science and experimentation	5.03	20	4.64	17	-0.39	2
m. Understand new scientific and technical developments	5.20	18	4.44	20	-0.76	6

n.	Become aware of consequences of new applications in science and technology	5.07	19	4.26	21	-0.81	7
o.	Think analytically and logically	6.09	8	5.11	4	-0.97	9
p.	Think in quantitative terms, understand probabilities, proportions, etc.	5.38	16	4.78	12	-0.60	4
q.	Learn on your own, pursue ideas, and find information you need	6.37	1	5.36	1	-1.02	12
r.	See the importance of history for understanding the present as well as the past	5.35	17	4.71	13	-0.64	5
s.	Know how to speak before groups, actively participate in group discussions	6.04	10	5.01	7	-1.03	15
t.	Know how to lead and supervise groups of people	6.02	11	4.66	15	-1.36	19
u.	Formulate creative and original ideas	6.25	4	4.92	9	-1.33	18

Based on relative UConn helpfulness, the most highly ranked benefits are (d) "develop an understanding and enjoyment of literature, art, and drama" and (l) "understand the nature of science and experimentation". Note, however, that these benefits rank at the bottom with respect to perceived importance: (d) is ranked 21 and (l) is ranked 20.

Based on perceived importance, the most highly ranked benefits are (q) "learn on your own, pursue ideas and find information you need", (j) "understand yourself, your abilities, your interests and personality", (a) "obtain career training", and (u) "formulate creative and original ideas".

Benefit (a) "obtain career training" is the lowest ranked based on relative UConn helpfulness. However, the relative UConn helpfulness ratings vary across schools to a statistically significant degree. Table 3.2 ranks the average relative UConn helpfulness ratings by school. The ratings for Allied Health, Nursing, and Education are significantly higher than those for Family Studies, General Studies, Fine Arts, and Arts and Sciences.

Table 3.2: Relative UConn Helpfulness for Obtaining Career Training, Average Rating by School (1 = Not Helpful; 7 = Very Helpful).

	Helpfulness of UConn
Allied Health	6.07
Nursing	5.58
Education	5.56
Pharmacy	5.35
Agriculture	4.93
Business	4.88
Engineering	4.81
Family Studies	4.69
General Studies	4.37
Fine Arts	4.17
Arts & Sciences	4.12

3.2. Satisfaction Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate their overall UConn experience in the areas of general education requirements, required courses outside of their major field, and required courses in their major field. Table 3.3 summarizes the average ratings by school; ratings in each are ranked.

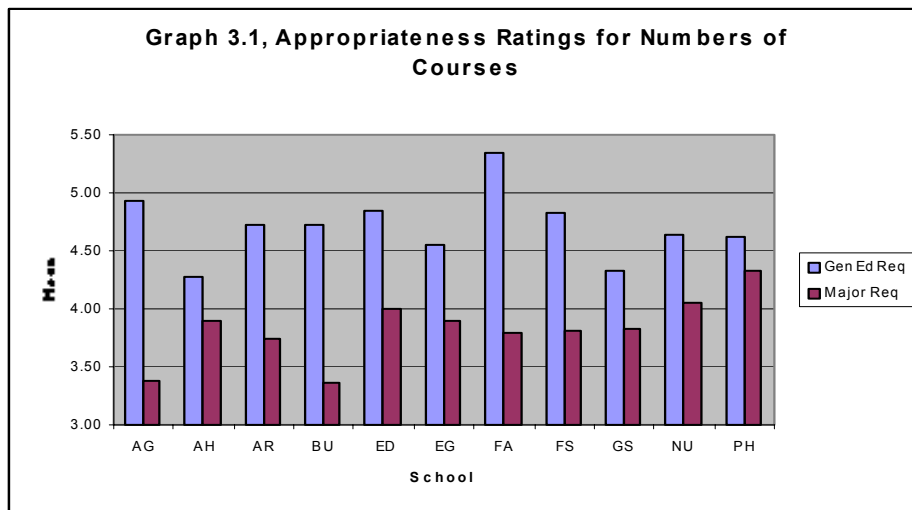
Table 3.3: Average Satisfaction Ratings
(1 = Extremely Dissatisfied; 7 = Extremely Satisfied).

(a) General Education Requirement		(b) Courses Outside Major Field		(c) Courses Within Major Field	
General Studies	5.44	General Studies	5.46	Family Studies	5.96
Allied Health	5.24	Family Studies	5.06	Allied Health	5.93
Nursing	5.00	Allied Health	5.05	General Studies	5.89
Pharmacy	4.96	Education	4.85	Agriculture	5.71
Business	4.82	Arts & Sciences	4.84	Arts & Sciences	5.66
Engineering	4.78	Business	4.81	Engineering	5.63
Arts & Sciences	4.74	Nursing	4.75	Business	5.52
Family Studies	4.73	Engineering	4.73	Fine Arts	5.50
Education	4.68	Pharmacy	4.70	Education	5.44
Agriculture	4.68	Agriculture	4.63	Nursing	5.37
Fine Arts	4.67	Fine Arts	4.53	Pharmacy	5.35

For each school, the highest average rating appears in column (c) for courses within the respondents' major field.

Respondents were also asked to rate the appropriateness of the number of required courses. Graph 3.1 represents average appropriateness ratings for number of courses as general education requirements and as major field requirements.

Graph 3.1: Appropriateness Ratings for Number of Courses. (1 = Too few, 7 = Too many)



Appropriateness ratings for the majority of schools indicates an average perception of too few courses as major field requirements (overall mean 3.74) and too many courses as general education requirements (overall mean 4.69).

Recall from section 3.1 that based on relative UConn helpfulness "obtain career training" is the lowest ranked potential benefit. Presumably, this low ranking is related to the perception of too few courses as major field requirements.

Ratings for Fine Arts indicate too many courses for General Education Requirements, and ratings for Pharmacy indicate too many courses as both major field and general education requirements.

3.3. Recommendation Rates

Overall, 88% of the respondents would recommend UConn to friends or relatives. Table 3.3 summarizes the UConn recommendation rates by school.

Table 3.3: Recommendation Rate, Ranked Within-School Percentage

Allied Health	98%
Family Studies	93%
Pharmacy	93%
Engineering	92%
Business	90%
Education	88%
General Studies	88%
Nursing	86%
Arts & Sciences	85%
Fine Arts	83%
Agriculture	81%

Recommendation rates do not vary across schools to a statistically significant degree. The overall rate has been approximately 90% for the past two decades.

4. Post-Graduate Experience

4.1. Employment Rates

Overall, 83% of respondents are employed either full-time or part-time, 12% are in graduate school either full-time or part-time; 95% are either employed or have entered graduate school. Only 5% of respondents are either unemployed and not in graduate school, or did not answer this question. Table 4.1 ranks percentages by school in each of these three categories.

Table 4.1: Employment and Graduate School Rates by School/College.

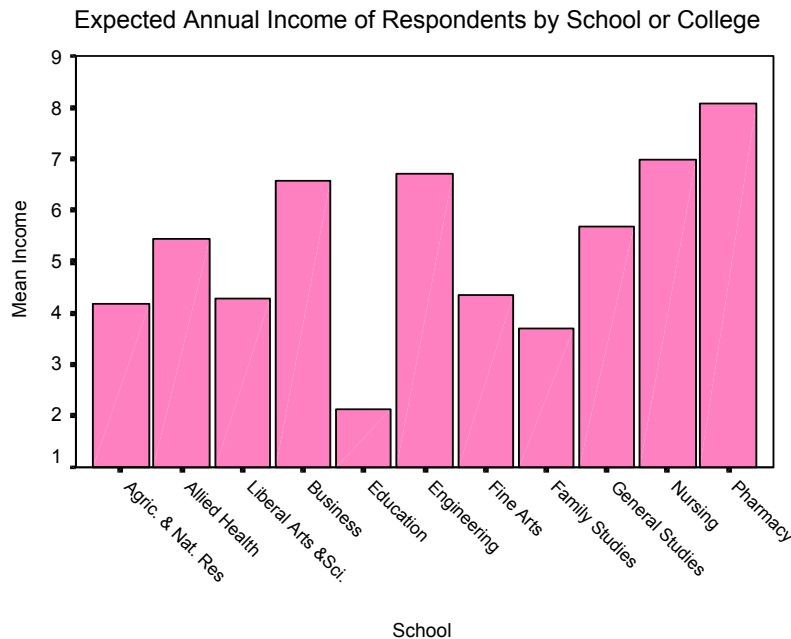
(a) Full- and Part-time Employment		(b) F/P Employment or Graduate School		(c) Unemployed and not in graduate School, or no response	
Nursing	100%	Nursing	100%	General Studies	11%
Business	94%	Pharmacy	98%	Fine Arts	10%
Engineering	91%	Allied Health	98%	Family Studies	7%
Allied Health	85%	Engineering	97%	Arts & Sciences	5%
Pharmacy	83%	Education	97%	Agriculture	3%
Agriculture	83%	Business	97%	Business	3%
General Studies	82%	Agriculture	97%	Education	3%
Family Studies	82%	Arts & Sciences	95%	Engineering	3%
Arts & Sciences	82%	Family Studies	93%	Allied Health	2%
Fine Arts	80%	Fine Arts	90%	Pharmacy	2%
Education	47%	General Studies	89%	Nursing	0%

For the full-time or part-time employment rate in column (a), all schools except Education are above 80%. For the employment or graduate school rate in column (b), all schools except General Studies are 90% or above. Education does not stand out in column (b), with a rate of 97%.

Overall, 63% of the respondents felt their degree was helpful when applying for their current job, and 61% considered their job career related. Graph 4.1 shows the expected annual income of respondents by school or college.

Graph 4.1: Expected Annual Income of Respondents by School or College

(1=Less than \$10,000; 2=\$10,001-15,000; 3=\$15,001-20,000; 4=\$20,001-25,000; 5=\$25,001-30,000; 6=\$30,001-35,000; 7=\$35,001-40,000; 8=\$40,000-50,000; 9=More than \$50,000.)



Based on Graph 4.1, graduates from the School of Pharmacy expect the highest annual income (\$40,001 - \$50,000). Business, Engineering, and Nursing expect an annual income between \$30,001 and \$40,000. Education graduates show the lowest expected annual income (\$10,001 - \$15,000). Table 4.1(a) shows Education respondents as having an employment rate of 47%. Table 4.1(b), 97% of Education respondents are either employed or in graduate school. This would indicate that many Education respondents have entered graduate school, and have not started full-time employment, thus the lower expected annual income.

4.2. Use of UConn Career Services

Respondents are asked if they had used UConn Career Services when seeking job information. Overall, 41% of respondents have used Career Services; 59% have not.

Table 4.2 shows that Business (72%) and Engineering (70%) have the highest percentages of using the service; Allied Health has the lowest percentage of using the service (9%).

Table 4.2: Use of Career Services

Business	72%
Engineering	70%
Agriculture	48%
Family Studies	44%
Arts & Sciences	42%
Nursing	31%
Fine Arts	23%
Pharmacy	13%
General Studies	12%
Education	12%
Allied Health	9%

4.3. Type of Employment

Respondents were questioned about their current employment; they were asked to either choose from a list of eleven general types of employer or specify some other type. Table 4.3 ranks the results for 1998 and 1999 for respondents who were employed full-time. The results are generally stable across the two years.

The largest number of respondents (32%) held a position in business, followed by the health industry (14%) and education (10%). Other types of employers identified by respondents include real estate agency, casino, and childcare facility.

Table 4.3: Employment Rate, Ranked by General Type of Employer

Type of Employer	1998	1999
a. Business	33%	32%
b. Health Industry	16%	14%
c. Education	10%	10%
d. State/Local Gov.	5%	4%
e. Factory/Industry	5%	3%
f. Non-profit	4%	4%
g. Self-employed	2%	3%
h. Media	2%	2%
i. Military Service	1%	0%
j. Federal Government	1%	1%
k. Agriculture	1%	1%
l. Other	22%	27%
Total	100%	100%

5. For Further Elaboration

Recent Alumni Survey data are virtually the only source of information about UConn's graduates and their opinions on various aspects of UConn. We would be happy to extend our analysis upon request. Besides completing the questionnaire, many respondents commented on various aspects of University life. Due to the variety of the topics covered, the comments are not summarized here. They are files in the Office of Institutional Research. Appropriate departments and offices are welcome to look at these comments.