



Educational Experiences and Perceptions of USA Alumni, 2011

Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment

October 21, 2011

Table of Contents

I. Executive Summary..... 3

II. Results..... 4

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of USA Alumni Participants, 2011. 4

Table 2. Graduation Year of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 5

Table 3. Current Location of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011..... 6

Table 4. Reported Majors by College/School of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 7

Table 5. Employment Status and Entering Salary Range of USA Alumni Participants, 2011..... 8

Table 6. Reported Job Title of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 9

Table 8. Evaluations of Quality of Education Received by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 10

Figure 1. Perceptions of Academic Advising by Graduating Seniors, 2010-11 and USA Alumni, 2011. 10

Table 9. Perceptions of Academic Choices USA by Alumni Respondents, 2011..... 11

Figure 2. Comparison of Graduating Senior Survey Participants, 2010-11 and Alumni Participants, 2011 Responses: “If you had to do it over again, would you attend USA?” 11

Table 10. Evaluation of the Importance of Academic Skills to Their Life Since Graduation by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 12

Figure 3. Academic Preparation of Graduating Seniors, 2010-2011 and Importance of Academic Skills to Alumni , 2011..... 13

Table 11. Reports of Service to the Community by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 13

Over 75% agreed they felt a sense of pride in USA while 56% felt connected to the University. Table 13. Involvement with the University since Graduation of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011. 14

III. Conclusions..... 14

I. Executive Summary

An alumni survey was conducted using email addresses obtained from Alumni Relations. A total of 465 alumni completed the survey. A response rate is not calculable as many of the email addresses were invalid. IRPA is working with academic departments and the Office of Alumni Relations to capture alternative email addresses of graduating seniors for future administrations of the alumni survey.

Highlights from the survey include:

- Nearly one-third of respondents reported being employed upon graduation and 25% were employed within a year of graduation in their field of study.
- Starting salaries were reported in the range of \$25,000 to \$70,000 by approximately 70% of respondents.
- Alumni felt prepared for their current job and/or graduate/professional school.
- Nearly 60% felt the quality of instruction by faculty in their major areas was “excellent.”
- Over 90% evaluated their overall educational experiences as “good” or “excellent.”
- Approximately 86% reported they “definitely would” or “probably would” attend USA if they had it to do over again.
- The majority of USA alumni responding reported to “frequently” or “occasionally” donate money to a human-service or community services organization.

II. Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of USA Alumni Participants, 2011.

Demographic Characteristic	#	%
Gender (n=459)		
Male	162	35.3
Female	297	64.7
Race/Ethnicity (n=460)		
African American/Black	71	15.4
American Indian or Alaskan Native	20	4.3
Asian	26	5.7
White	338	73.5
Two or more races	5	1.1
Hispanic/Latino (n=415)		
Yes	14	3.1
No	436	96.9
Personal Status (n=415)		
Married	213	51.3
Living with a partner	59	14.2
Divorced	26	6.3
Separated	7	1.7
Widowed	2	0.5
Refused	108	26.0
Age (n=449)	Mean = 31.7, Std. Dev = 9.1, Min =22, Max=64	
Enrollment Status (n=454)		
First time student	245	54.0
Transfer student	209	46.0

As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were female (65%), white (73.5%) and married (51.3%). More than half of the respondents (54%) had first enrolled at USA as a first-time student.

Table 2. Graduation Year of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

Year	#	%
1976	1	.2
1982	1	.2
1989	1	.2
1993	1	.2
1994	2	.5
1996	1	.2
1997	2	.5
1998	1	.2
1999	1	.2
2000	1	.2
2001	1	.2
2002	3	.7
2003	7	1.6
2004	11	2.6
2005	16	3.7
2006	13	3.0
2007	99	23.1
2008	126	29.4
2009	135	31.5
2010	5	1.2
Total	428	100.0

Most of the survey participants graduated in 2007, 2008 and 2009 (84%) with an additional 12% graduating between the years 1999 and 2007.

Table 3. Current Location of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

State/Country	#	%
Alabama	283	60.8
Mississippi	37	7.9
Florida	22	4.7
Louisiana	21	4.5
Georgia	20	4.2
Texas	15	3.2
Virginia	8	1.8
California	6	1.3
Oregon	4	.8
Maryland	4	.8
South Carolina	4	.8
North Carolina	3	.6
Tennessee	3	.6
Germany	2	.4
Illinois	2	.4
Kansas	2	.4
Kentucky	2	.4
Pennsylvania	2	.4
Washington	2	.4
Aichi, Japan	1	.2
Arizona	1	.2
Arkansas	1	.2
Colorado	1	.2
Indiana	1	.2
Iowa	1	.2
Nebraska	1	.2
Nevada	1	.2
New Jersey	1	.2
New York	1	.2
Ohio	1	.2
Oklahoma	1	.2
Turkey	1	.2
United Kingdom	1	.2
Utah	1	.2
Washington D.C.	1	.2
West Virginia	1	.2
Wisconsin	1	.2
Other	1	.2
Total	461	100.0

After graduation, the majority of respondents continued to live in Alabama (61%) and in the southeast (85%). Five respondents reporting living outside the United States.

Table 4. Reported Majors by College/School of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

College	Major	#	%
College of Arts and Science	Communications/Journalism/PR	30	7.0
	Biology/Marine biology	19	4.4
	Psychology	19	4.4
	English/Creative writing	15	3.5
	Criminal Justice	13	3.0
	Meteorology/Geography/Geology	13	3.0
	Sociology	6	1.4
	Chemistry	5	1.2
	Music	5	1.2
	Foreign Language/International studies	4	0.9
	History	4	0.9
	Political science	4	0.9
	Anthropology	3	0.7
	Art	3	0.7
	Mathematics	2	0.5
	Philosophy	2	0.5
	Social work	2	0.5
	Graphic design	1	0.2
	Total	150	34.9
CoN	Nursing	65	15.1
MCOB	Business/Finance/Management	41	9.5
	Accounting	12	2.8
	Economics	2	0.5
	Human resources	9	2.1
	Total	64	14.9
CoEd	Teacher Education	43	10.0
	Leisure studies	5	1.2
	Exercise science	2	0.5
	Total	50	11.7
CoEG	Electrical Engineering	14	3.2
	Civil Engineering	9	2.1
	Mechanical engineering	7	1.6
	Computer Engineering	5	1.2
	Chemical engineering	3	0.7
	Total	38	8.8
CCAHP	Biomedical sciences	14	3.2
	Pre-professional health professions	9	2.1
	Speech and Hearing Sciences	7	1.6
	Cardiorespiratory Care	3	0.7
	Total	33	7.6
SCESP	Adult Interdisciplinary	20	4.6
SCIS	Computer information sciences	11	2.6

In Table 4, the College/School of alumni is reported. Approximately one-third of respondents reported majors within the College of Arts and Sciences. The percent of respondents reporting majors for both the College of Nursing and Mitchell College of Business was 15%.

Table 5. Employment Status and Entering Salary Range of USA Alumni Participants, 2011.

Length of time to find employment in field following graduation	#	%
6 months	96	20.6
7-12 months	24	5.2
More than a year	71	15.3
Already employed when graduated	141	30.3
Pursuing another degree	24	5.2
Working but not in my field	21	4.5
Not working but looking for work	78	16.8
Not working and not looking for work	10	2.2
Total	465	100.0
Entering Salary Range	#	%
under \$25,000	74	21.0
\$25,000-\$39,999	122	34.7
\$40,000-\$54,999	84	23.9
\$55,000-\$70,000	37	10.5
above \$70,000	35	9.9
Total	352	100.0

Approximately 30% of alumni surveyed were employed at graduation and 25% were employed within a year of graduation (See Table 5). Less than 5% were not employed in their field. Also presented in Table 5 is information on starting salaries of graduates. Nearly 60% of survey respondents reported starting salaries ranging from \$25,000 to \$54,999.

Table 6. Reported Job Title of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

Job Title	#	%
Nurse	55	15.2
Teacher	51	14.0
Manager/Supervisor	33	9.1
Director/Assistant Director/Coordinator	26	7.2
Research	25	6.9
Assistant/Technician/Specialist/Analyst	23	6.3
Customer service/sales	22	6.1
Law Enforcement/Military	22	6.1
Engineer	20	5.5
Mental health/social services	19	5.2
Accounting/Finance	18	4.9
Occupational Therapy/Physician Asst./Physical Therapist	13	3.6
Computer Science	12	3.3
Administrative assistant	11	3.0
News/Publication	5	1.4
Environmental scientist	4	1.1
Physician	4	1.1
Total	363	100.0

Survey respondents reported a variety of job titles with the top five being: Nurse, Teacher, Manager, Director and Researcher. These are listed in Table 6.

Table 7. Preparation for Employment and Graduate School of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

To what extent did your undergraduate major prepare you for:	Not at all		A little		Somewhat		Very much		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
your current job?	30	6.5	34	7.3	124	26.7	153	32.9	465	100
graduate or professional school when you compare yourself with others in your program?	18	4.5	28	7.0	142	35.7	210	52.8	398	85.6

Approximately one-third of graduates felt very prepared for their current job and over half reported they were very prepared for graduate or professional school (see Table 7).

Table 8. Evaluations of Quality of Education Received by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

How would you evaluate the following:	Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Quality of instruction by faculty in your major area	.9	4	5.0	23	35.8	166	58.4	271	100.0	464
Quality of academic advising received at this institution	9.1	42	19.2	89	32.8	152	38.9	180	100.0	463
Overall educational experience experienced at this institution	2.2	10	7.1	33	43.4	201	47.3	219	100.0	463

Over 90% reported the quality of instruction by faculty in their major and their overall educational experience as “good” or “excellent” with approximately 72% stating the quality of their academic advising was “good” or “excellent” (see Table 8). Results from the Graduating Senior survey, 2010-2011 report similar advising experiences, as presented in Figure 1.

Perceptions of Academic Advising by Graduating Seniors 2010-11 and Alumni, 2011

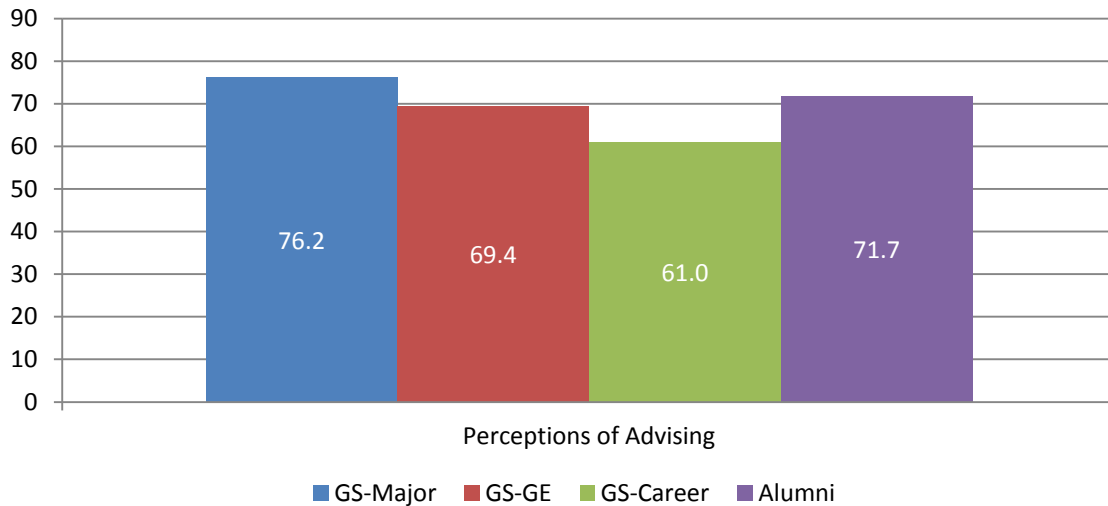


Figure 1. Perceptions of Academic Advising by Graduating Seniors, 2010-11 and USA Alumni, 2011.

Table 9. Perceptions of Academic Choices USA by Alumni Respondents, 2011.

If you had it to do over again would you:	Definitely would not		Probably would not		Probably would		Definitely would		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Attend USA?	23	5.0	41	8.9	168	36.3	231	49.9	463	100.0
Major in the same field?	41	8.9	77	16.7	129	28.0	214	46.4	461	100.0
Encourage a current high school senior to attend USA?	25	5.4	39	8.5	146	31.7	250	54.3	460	100.0

When asked if they would attend USA, major in the same field and encourage someone to attend USA, an overwhelming major of survey respondents reported they “probably would” or “definitely would.” However, approximately one-fourth stated they “probably would not” or “definitely would not” major in the same field.

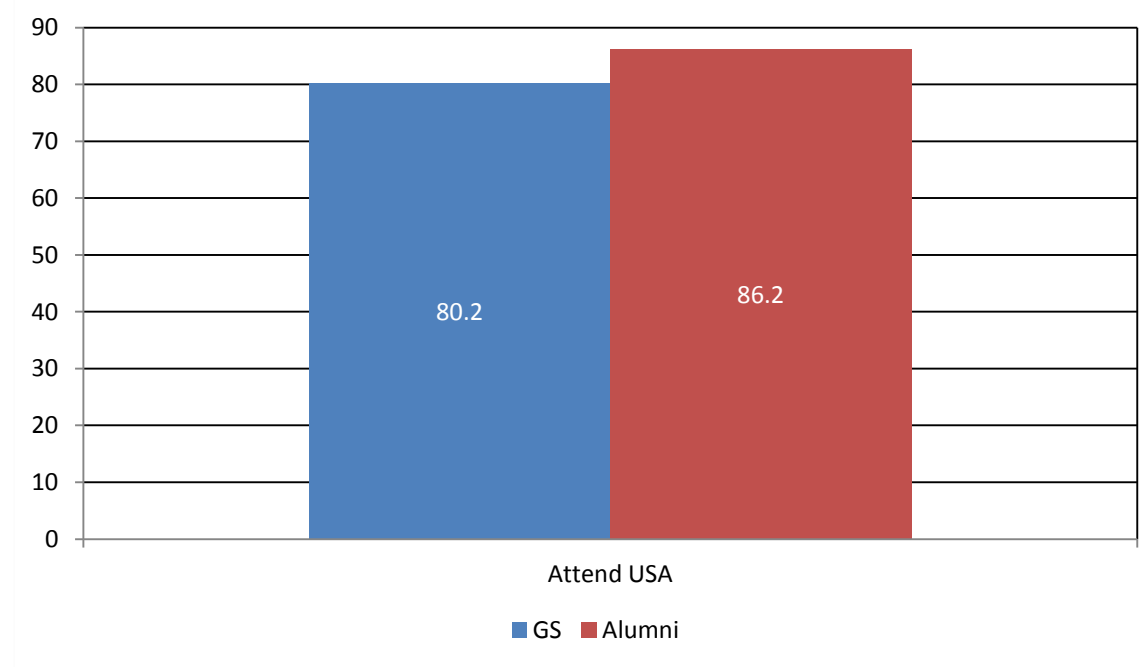


Figure 2. Comparison of Graduating Senior Survey Participants, 2010-11 and Alumni Participants, 2011 Responses: “If you had to do it over again, would you attend USA?”

A similar percentage of graduating seniors and alumni stated they “probably would” or “definitely would” attend USA if they had to do it over again (See Figure 2).

Table 10. Evaluation of the Importance of Academic Skills to Their Life Since Graduation by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

	Not important		Somewhat important		Important		Very important		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Write clearly and effectively	1	0.2	24	5.2	94	20.3	344	74.3	463	100.0
Speaking clearly and effectively	1	0.2	12	2.6	86	18.6	363	78.6	462	100.0
Acquire new skills and knowledge on my own	1	0.2	8	1.7	91	19.7	363	78.4	463	100.0
Formulate creative/original ideas and solutions	4	0.9	26	5.6	131	28.4	301	65.2	462	100.0
Working effectively with others	1	0.2	7	1.5	79	17.1	374	81.1	461	100.0
Use computing and information technology	4	0.9	27	5.9	113	24.5	317	68.8	461	100.0
Quantitative abilities	3	0.7	44	9.6	176	38.4	235	51.3	458	100.0
Synthesize and integrate ideas and information	4	0.9	22	4.8	144	31.3	290	63.0	460	100.0
Relating well to people of all different races, nations, and religions	11	2.4	20	4.4	92	20.2	333	73.0	456	100.0
Having a broad general education background	8	1.7	34	7.4	127	27.7	289	63.1	458	100.0
Contributing to the welfare of your community	18	3.9	62	13.6	155	34.0	221	48.5	456	100.0

The items presented in Table 10 reflect the General Education Competencies developed by the General Education Committee. The majority of alumni report that these academic skills are “important” or “very important” in their life after graduation. The most important academic skills was “working effectively with others” in which 98.2% of alumni stated this was “important” or “very important” to their life since graduation. A rank ordering of academic skills by alumni based on importance (very important + important) is presented below:

- Working effectively with others
- Acquire new skills and knowledge on my own
- Speaking clearly and effectively
- Write clearly and effectively
- Synthesize and integrate ideas and information
- Formulate creative/original ideas and solutions
- Use computing and information technology
- Relating well to people of all different races, nations, and religions
- Having a broad general education background
- Quantitative abilities
- Contributing to the welfare of your community

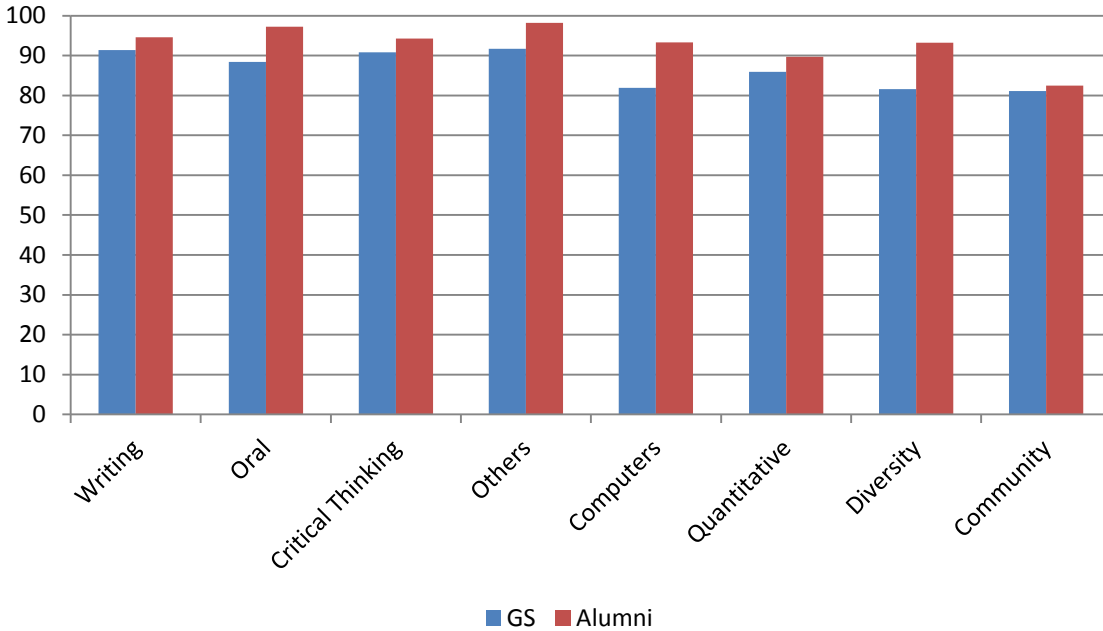


Figure 3. Academic Preparation of Graduating Seniors, 2010-2011 and Importance of Academic Skills to Alumni, 2011.

Graduating seniors are asked to evaluate their academic preparation along the dimensions listed in the Figure and alumni evaluate the importance of each area in their life since graduating from USA. Comparison reveal that the level of preparation and importance is similar (less than 5% difference) in the areas of writing, critical thinking, quantitative abilities and contributing to the community. For the remaining areas: oral communication skills, working effectively with others, using computing and information technology and issues of diversity, there is a gap between level of preparation and the importance of the area to the alumni since graduation. (See Figure 3).

Table 11. Reports of Service to the Community by USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

During the past year, how often have you:	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Donated money to a human-service or community services organization	69	15.0	98	21.3	211	45.9	82	17.8	460	100.0
Donated professional services without compensation	115	25.1	107	23.4	158	34.5	78	17.0	458	100.0
Worked with a person or group to solve a problem in the community where you live	131	28.7	141	30.9	122	26.7	63	13.8	457	100.0

USA Alumni are also asked about their service to the community. Of the areas listed above, USA alumni more frequently donate money to a human-service or community services organization (17.8%)

Table 12. Connection to the University of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

As a graduate:	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neither		Agree		Strongly agree		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
I feel a sense of pride in USA.	41	8.8	8	1.7	66	14.2	179	38.6	170	36.6	464	99.9
I feel connected to USA.	44	9.5	54	11.7	108	23.3	152	32.8	105	22.7	463	100.0

Over 75% agreed they felt a sense of pride in USA while 56% felt connected to the University.

Table 13. Involvement with the University since Graduation of USA Alumni Respondents, 2011.

Are you still in contact with	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
USA students/alumni	7.6	35	19.1	88	35.2	162	38.0	175	98.9	460
Members of a USA organization	39.8	182	27.4	125	16.6	76	16.2	74	98.3	457
Alumni Association	51.0	233	31.5	144	12.5	57	5.0	23	98.3	457

Slightly more than half of survey respondents were not in contact with USA’s Alumni Association and nearly 40% were not in contact with members of a USA organization. USA graduations were most likely to be in contact with other students and/or alumni of the University with 38% reporting they are in frequent contact.

III. Conclusions

The results of the survey will be shared with Alumni Relations and academic administrators and faculty. The results indicate that USA alumni are positive about their experiences at USA. However, alumni indicate there is a need for improvement in advising. In addition, over 25% of alumni indicate they might have selected a different major if they had to do it over again. The results lend support to concerns expressed by graduating seniors in regard to advising for their career. Alumni also report little involvement with the Alumni Association with less than 20% “frequently” or “occasionally” involved with the Association.