FALL 2015 GRADUATE SURVEY

Office of Institutional Effectiveness

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Fall 2015 Graduate Survey

Executive Summary

Students graduating at the end of the Fall 2015 semester were sent a survey asking about their experience at University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu (UHWO) and their plans after graduation. Beginning in November 2015, the Graduate Survey was sent to 239 students who were scheduled to graduate. There was a response rate of 65.7 percent, or 157 students. Findings of this survey include the following:

- Students reported receiving a lot of support from family, faculty, and peers while the most beneficial sources of support were family and faculty.
- 92.4 percent of students were somewhat satisfied to very satisfied with their educational experience at UHWO. Over half of the students (56.7 percent) said they were very satisfied.
- Approximately 63 percent of students said they are very likely to recommend UHWO as well as their major to others interested in attending college. Another third said they are somewhat likely to recommend UHWO and their major.
- 75.1 percent of students felt the quality of their major courses was above average to very high quality. Slightly less than half reported the quality of their general education courses to be of the same quality. More students reported that in-person courses to be of above average to very high quality as compared to online courses.
- Nearly half the students reported that life changes or working more than 20 hours per week were factors in delaying their graduation. Class availability and finances were factors for about a third of students.
- After graduation, 26 percent of students plan to start graduate or professional school, the majority of which will do so at UH-Manoa.
- The majority of students (61.1 percent) will be employed full-time with another 15 percent employed part-time or on contract. A third of students will be employed by the government or public sector and a quarter in the private sector. Another 18 percent are still seeking work.
- 75 percent of students said that their job will be in the field or program that they got their degree in. Over half (55 percent) of students said their degree will lead to a career change, and over a third (38 percent) expect to receive an increase in salary because of their degree.

Student Respondents

Of the graduates that answered the survey, only 12 percent or 18 students began their university career at UHWO as freshmen. The remaining 88 percent were transfer students, a third of which transferred from Leeward Community College (LCC). Overall most of the 129 transfers who identified where they transferred from attended community colleges in the UH system (see Figure 1). About 17 percent attended schools out of the state, including one student who transferred from American Samoa Community College. Also, 10 percent of students completed their degree as a distance education student on a neighbor island (not shown).
Figure 1. Percentage of students who transferred from the identified institutions (n=129)

About 30 percent of survey respondents graduated with degrees in public administration and another 29 percent in business (see Figure 2). There were two respondents that graduated with certificates in Applied Forensic Anthropology or Health Care Administration. The distribution of degrees for the respondents is representative of all Fall 2015 graduates.

Figure 2. Percentage of students by degree/certificate (n=156)
**Student Support**

Students reported receiving a lot of support from family (62 percent), faculty (43 percent), and peers (40 percent). A few students commented that they did not require or seek support from some sources, such as financial aid, and so would have received more support if they sought it. About 18 percent of students said they received no support from financial aid. Two students commented that financial aid could be more organized and easier to access help and communication.

*Figure 3. Percentage of students reporting level of support received from various sources (n=156)*

Not surprisingly, students reported that family and faculty support were very beneficial to them while at UHWO. Just over a third of students found that family and support from professors were most beneficial and an additional 42 percent reported that support from professors was very beneficial. About 15 percent of students felt that financial aid was not beneficial to them while at UHWO.

*Figure 4. Percentage of students reporting the benefit of various sources (n=157)*
Educational Experience
Over half of the students (57 percent) said they were very satisfied with their educational experience at UHWO. Another third were somewhat satisfied with their educational experience (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage of students reporting level of satisfaction with their UHWO educational experience (n=157)

A majority of students also reported they would very likely recommend UHWO as well as their major to others interested in attending college (see Figure 6). Students were slightly more likely to recommend just their majors to those interested in attending college as compared to recommending the university as a whole with more than 5 percent of students somewhat unlikely or not likely at all to recommend UHWO. A few students commented that they would recommend UHWO to their friends if the majors they were interested in were offered. One student has already recommended UHWO to coworkers because of the possibility of online degrees.

Figure 6. Percentage of students reporting likelihood of recommending UHWO and their major to those interested in attending college (n=157)
Students said that they would recommend UHWO because of an educational experience conducive to non-traditional learners and distance learners as well as its location, small class sizes, supportive staff, and stress free campus. In the final comments section, students reported again that positive aspects of their UHWO experience were the ability to take courses online, friendly and quality faculty, small classroom size, nice facilities, and helpful staff and advisors. A couple students noted that with the increase of student activities the campus culture has improved and students are enjoying themselves.

Figure 7 breaks down the educational experience into general education courses, major courses, online courses, and in-person courses. Over three-quarters of students felt the quality of their major courses was above average to very high quality. Slightly less than half reported the quality of their general education courses to be of the same quality. More students reported that in-person courses to be of above average to very high quality as compared to online courses. Almost 5 percent of students found the online courses to be below average quality, and this is reflected in comments that a few students made where they found online courses to be less rigorous and relevant, especially if the professors did not post lectures.

Other comments and suggestions about students’ educational experiences include:

- **Provide training and support for faculty:**
  - Help professionals who teach business courses so they improve their teaching
  - Train faculty on Laulima or standardize their use of it
  - Provide training and support for faculty to learn about and utilize all resources available to them. Resources for Hawaiian Pacific studies, for example, are underutilized.

- **Improve the quality of courses:**
  - Improve the quality of the finance courses
  - Improve the quality of online courses
  - Ensure healthcare administration students are educated on current regulations in the field so they graduate knowing government requirements
- Provide more courses to support the growing student population
  - Try to offer an online and in-person option for each course
  - Offer more in-person classes
  - Need more teachers for health administration classes
  - Add nursing as a major

About a quarter of students reported that they graduated on time and nothing delayed finishing their degrees (see Figure 8). However, almost half of the students who answered the survey reported that life changes or working more than 20 hours per week were factors in delaying their graduation. Class availability and finances were factors for about a third of students. Eight students said their graduation was delayed because they changed majors or were unsure of which major to study. Two students mentioned it took them longer because they transferred and some courses did not transfer over. Four students commented on the lack of guidance and how they were unaware of additional classes requirements or the 15 to Finish initiative so it took longer to graduate.

Figure 8. Percentage of students reporting reasons for delaying graduation (n=154)

Students also offered suggestions and comments about their overall experience at UHWO regarding student support systems, facilities, and even graduation. See below:

Student support:
- Provide support for transfer students to make the transition to UHWO and learn of available services
- Provide more assistance in job placement for graduating students
- Instead of just students, have teachers also come to tutoring centers to provide in depth knowledge and help
• Communication and collaboration amongst different offices could be better organized so students aren’t sent back and forth between offices
• Speed up processing time for financial aid so students don’t have to pay out of pocket when qualified to receive financial aid
• Only charge tuition and fees for services/amenities actually available at UHWO
• Offer graduate degrees
• Decrease the lag time between graduation and degree conferment

Facilities:
• Bring more food vendors with cheaper prices
• Create more outdoor study spaces such as providing benches or tables, and increase individual study/quiet spaces in the library
• Improve parking and pave the overflow lot
• Offer free printing in the library

Graduation
• Recognize those graduating Summa or Magna Cum Laude and acknowledging honor students by having them sit in the front rows or some other way.
• Allow for more speeches from graduating students rather than alumni

Staff development:
• Train advisors to be more knowledgeable and deliver accurate information. One example was not to advise to take classes at other institutions if the courses will not transfer back to UHWO
• Provide more training for student workers on campus so they are more knowledgeable instead of having to ask somewhat else which takes time

**Plans after Graduation**
A third of students will be employed by the government or public sector and a quarter in business or the private sector in industries such as education, healthcare, emergency management, accounting, and tourism to name a few (see Figure 9 on the next page). Another 26 percent plan to go to graduate or professional school. About half of the 36 students who reported which institution they will attend will go to UH-Manoa. Students plan on studying psychology and counseling, business, law, public health, social work, library sciences, history, divinity, and comparative literature. A few students commented that they remain unsure of their plans after graduation and one stated they will be the primary caregiver for family members.

Of the students who said they will not be attending grad school, 61 percent will be employed full-time and another 15 percent will be employed part-time or on a contract basis. Another 18 percent are still seeking work (see Figure 10 on the next page). Just over half of the students said that their degree will lead to a career change (see Figure 11).

Of 107 students who answered the question, 38 percent expect to receive an increase in salary because of their degree but most are unsure to what extent it will increase (not shown).
Figure 9. Percentage of students reporting various plans after graduation (n=154)

- Government/Public Sector employment: 33.8%
- Business/Private Sector employment: 26.6%
- Self-employment: 4.5%
- Family employment: 1.3%
- Graduate or professional school: 26.0%
- Other: 7.8%

Figure 10. Percentage of students reporting employment plans after graduation (n=113)

- Employed full-time: 61.1%
- Employed part-time or on a contract basis: 15.0%
- Enrolled in a full-time degree program: 2.7%
- Not employed--start date is deferred: 0.9%
- Not employed--seeking work/paid position: 17.7%
- Not employed and not seeking work/paid position: 2.7%

Figure 11. Percentage of students reporting their degree will lead to a career change (n=154)

- Yes: 55.4%
- No: 26.1%
- Not applicable / No job or career previously: 18.5%
Additionally, 75 percent of students reported that their job will be in the field or program that they got their degree in. Others are not working in the field they studied (12 percent), will not be employed (7 percent), or are still looking for work (6 percent).

Figure 12. Percentage of students reporting whether their employment aligns with their major field of study (n=112)

Students learned about their positions in a variety of ways. While a quarter will remain with their current employer, 16 percent were referred to the opportunity by friend, relative, or school personnel, 12 percent initiated contact themselves, 9 percent found out about through job postings, and another 8 percent through a temp agency.

Figure 13. Percentage of students reporting how they heard about their position (n=112)