



What are graduates saying about their experiences at Boise State?

Results of the 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey

Abstract

Every fall and spring graduating students are asked to take a survey that asks about their perceived growth in academic and student development areas at the undergraduate level, their perceptions of faculty and their departments, their overall satisfaction, and their activities while at Boise State. Undergraduate students reported making the greatest gains in the area of critical inquiry for the five general learning outcomes, actively engaging in their community and having friendships with people who are different from them for student development outcomes, and in knowledge of cultural differences and in the use of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and institutions for subject matter outcomes.

Graduating students generally were pleased with their experiences with faculty. A large majority thought that faculty members were interested in student welfare (86% of undergraduates, 95% of graduate students) and were outstanding teachers (83% of undergraduates, 88% of graduate students). In addition, 76% of undergraduates and 88% of graduate students thought they had received sound academic advice. Overall, 21% of undergraduates and 7% of graduates reported that they had to delay graduation due to course availability.

For undergraduates, satisfaction with their major and with the university in general was primarily related to the relationships that students had with faculty and only secondarily to their perceived growth while at the institution. The top three items for explaining undergraduate satisfaction using stepwise regression were: (1) sound academic advice, (2) genuine interest by faculty in the welfare of students, and (3) good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs. At the graduate student level the top three items were: (1) outstanding teachers, (2) sound academic advice, and (3) good communication between faculty and students.

In addition to the quantitative results, students were invited to discuss their experiences at a variety of places on the survey including why they would not enroll in the same major again and/or recommend it to a friend, what out-of-class experiences helped or hindered their progress, experiences with the transfer process, and reasons why they would or would not recommend Boise State to others. The comments have been distributed to departments for their review. Students were most likely to mention student organizations, internships and clinical experiences, and service-learning as especially helpful to their progress. Students mentioned work and financial difficulties as the top hindrance in progressing to graduation followed by poor advising. In addition, a number of students reported difficulties in transferring credits to Boise State University.

Overview

For almost twenty years, all students who are scheduled to graduate in fall or spring are asked by the Office of Institutional Research to complete a survey about their perceptions of their Boise State experience. The survey asks undergraduate students to compare their skill level on a series of learning outcomes at the beginning of their time at Boise State and again at the end. Graduates are asked about their perceptions of faculty, of their courses, and of their department. They indicate which in a series of activities they took part in, whether they transferred courses and if they had difficulty in doing so. Finally, graduates are asked about their satisfaction with their academic experience at Boise State University.

This is a report on the findings from the 2013-14 survey. The survey was completed by 50% of graduating students, so it provides a fairly good view of graduates' perceptions. The study will address the following questions:

- How much growth in learning outcomes did bachelors' graduates experience? In what areas did they report growing the most?
- What were graduates' perceptions of faculty and their department? Have ratings changed?
- How satisfied were graduates with their program and with Boise State? What were the reasons graduates gave for not enrolling in the same major or recommending it to others?
- What were the major factors predicting satisfaction?
- Were the activities that undergraduates engaged in related to their satisfaction?
- How did students who transferred credits to Boise State describe the transfer experience?
- What did student comments reveal about the experiences that helped and hindered progress toward a degree?

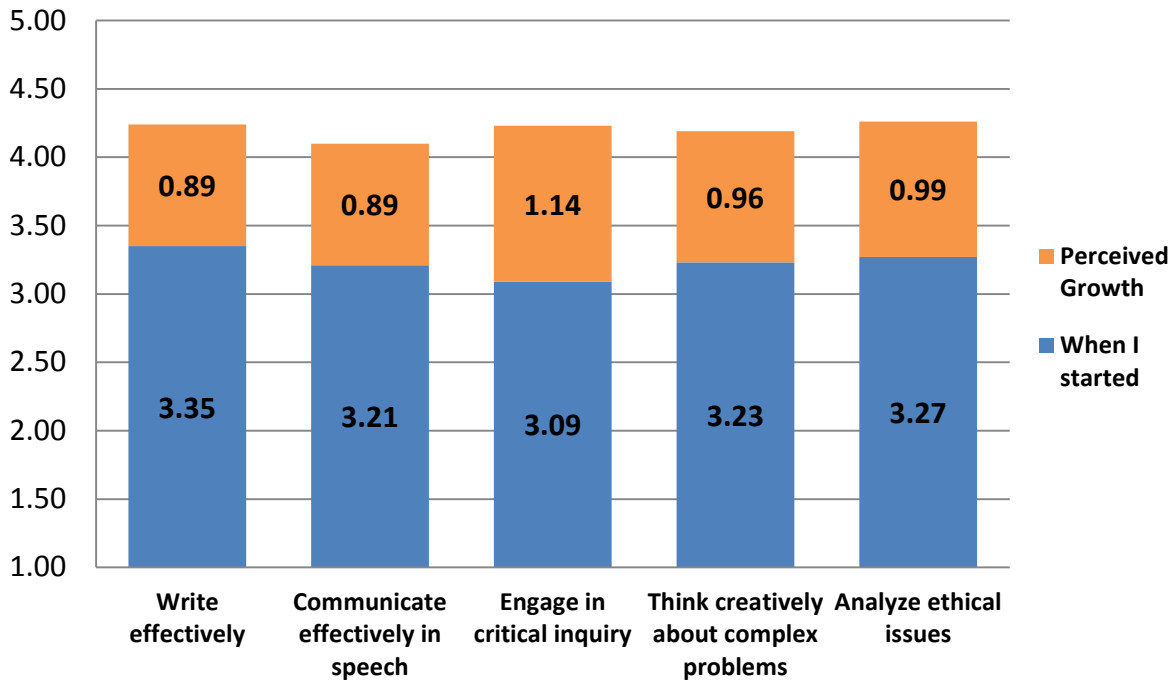
Results

How much growth did undergraduates experience?

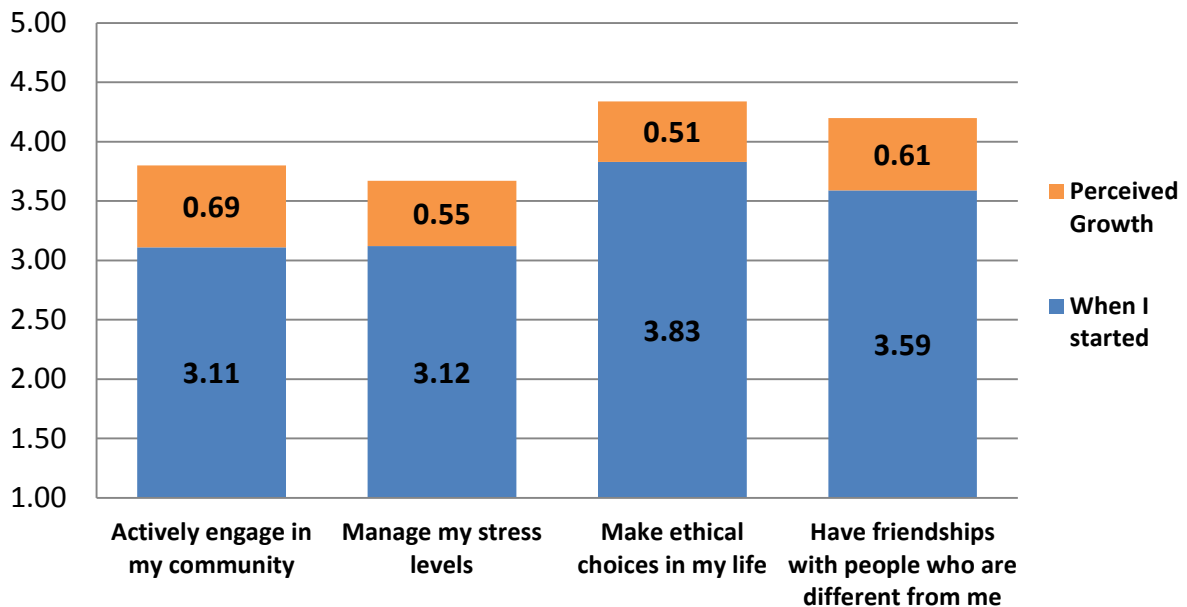
Students obtaining an undergraduate degree were asked to rate themselves on a series of 15 outcomes both on their perceived level of proficiency when they arrived at Boise State and again at the point of graduation. Figure 1 displays the results for five general academic competencies. At entry, undergraduate students rated themselves highest in their ability to write effectively and lowest in their ability to engage in critical inquiry. At the point of graduation, students made the greatest gains in the area of critical inquiry.

The survey also asked undergraduates to rate their level of proficiency in a number of areas of student development (see Figure 2). Upon entry, undergraduates rated themselves lowest for the areas of actively engaging with the community and managing stress levels and highest in the area of making ethical choices in their lives. At the point of graduation, students reported the greatest growth in actively engaging in their community and having friendships with people who are different from them.

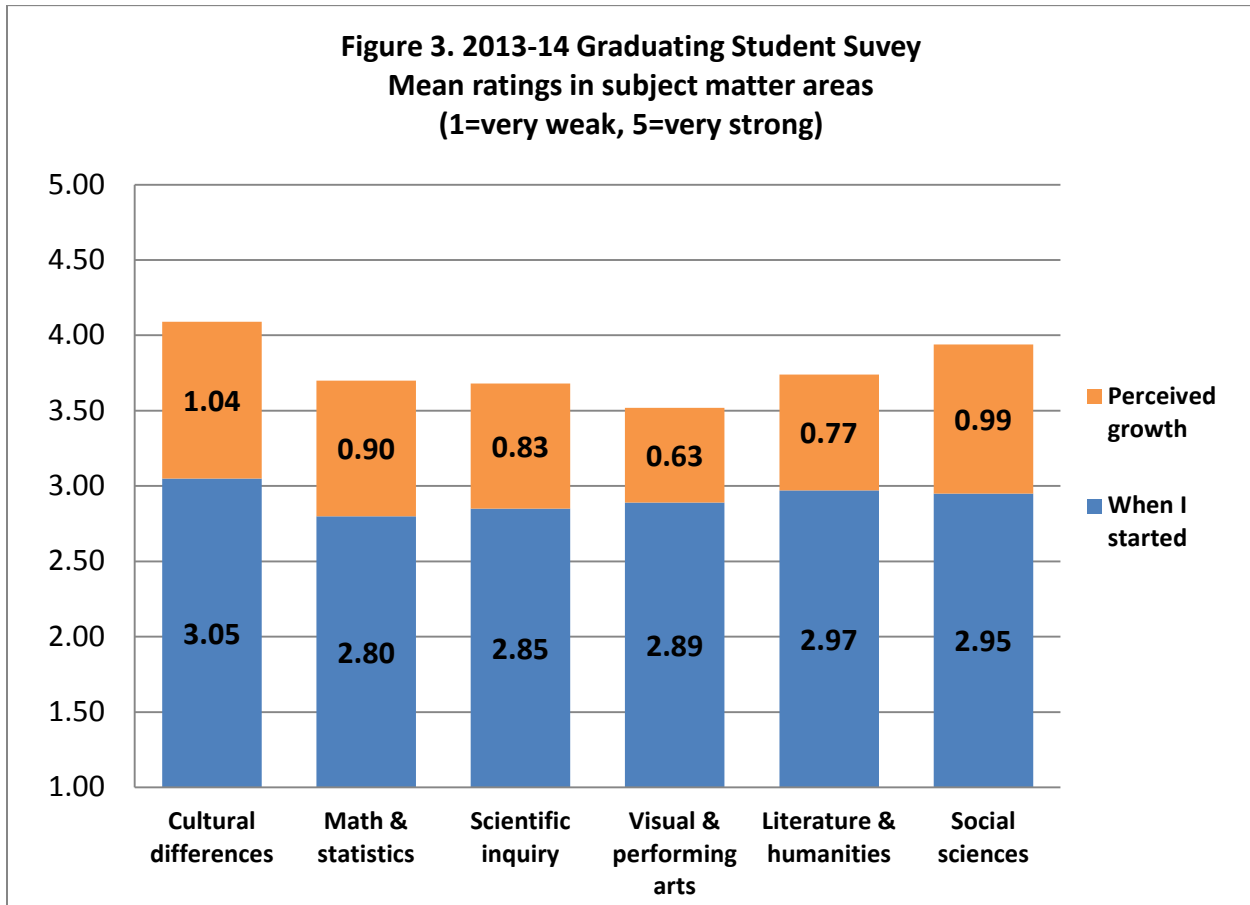
**Figure 1. 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey
Self-rated growth in five general areas of academic learning
(1=very weak, 5=very strong)**



**Figure 2. 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey
Mean ratings in areas of student development
(1=very weak, 5=very strong)**



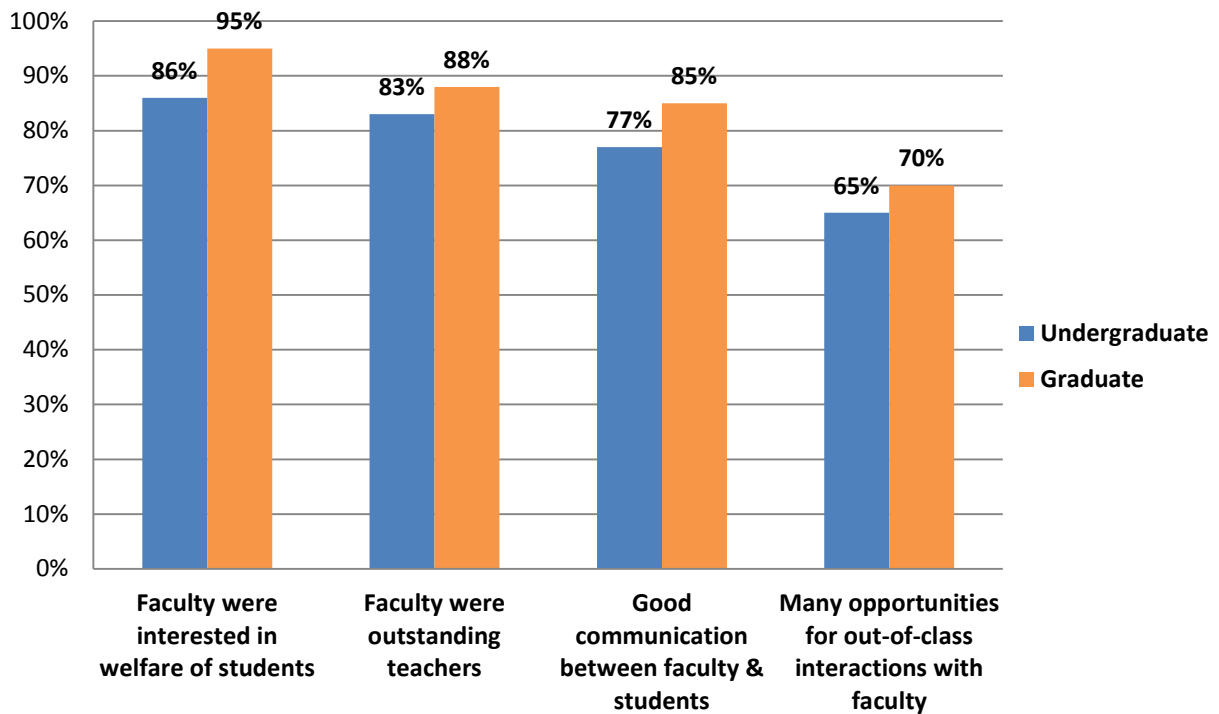
Finally, undergraduates were asked to rate their proficiency levels in six subject matter areas when they began and again at the point of graduation. As shown by Figure 3, students felt that they were weakest in math and statistics, scientific inquiry, and visual and performing arts both when they began and when they graduated. They felt they were strongest in the area of their knowledge of cultural differences at both points in time. The most growth was shown in their knowledge of cultural differences and in the use of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and institutions.



What were graduates’ perceptions of faculty members and their department? Have ratings changed?

Both graduate students and undergraduates were asked about their perceptions of faculty, their peers, and their departments. Figure 4 below shows the percent that agreed or strongly agreed with the four items related to faculty. Overall, graduate students had more positive perceptions of faculty members compared to undergraduates. The most positive ratings were found for (1) a genuine interest in the welfare of students and (2) outstanding teaching. The weakest agreement was found for out-of-class opportunities to interact with faculty (65% agreement at the undergraduate level and 70% agreement at the graduate level).

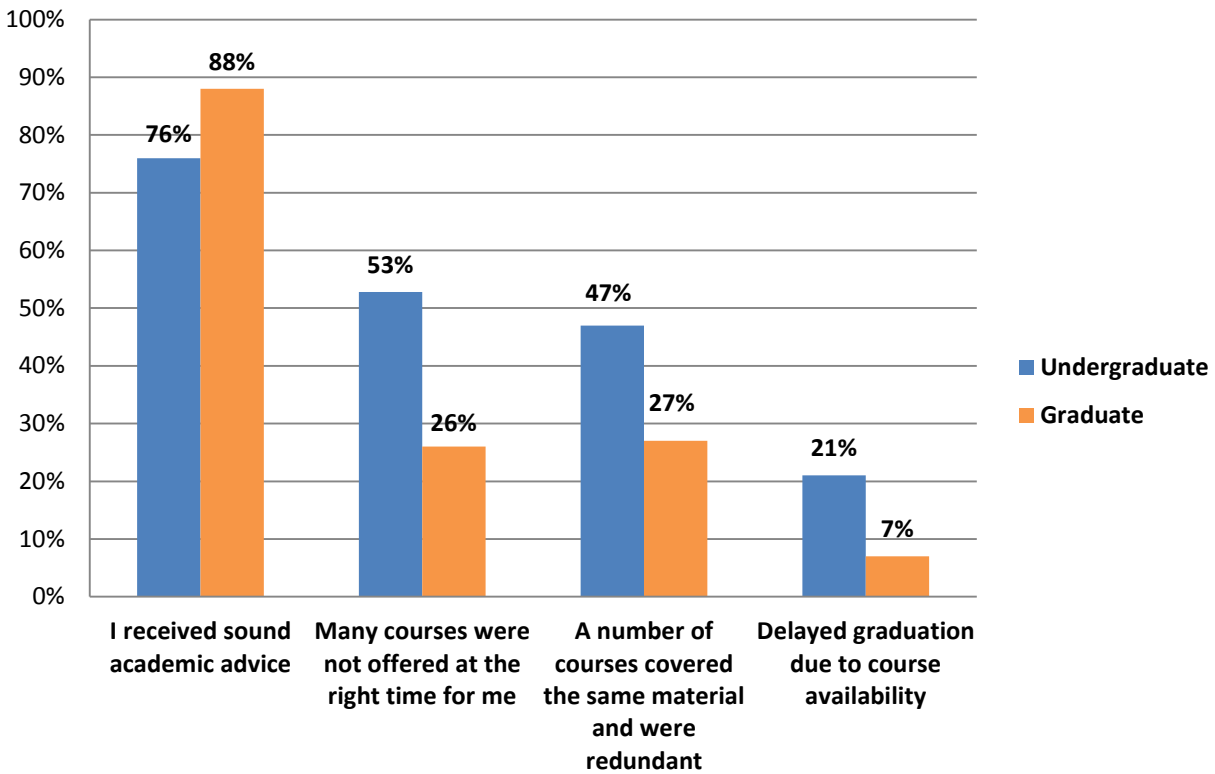
**Figure 4. 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey Results
Percent Agreement on Items related to Perceptions of Faculty**



Graduates were also asked about some departmental processes including advising, course scheduling, and course content (see Figure 5). Over 75% of undergraduates and almost 90% of graduate students felt they had received sound academic advising. Course scheduling was an issue particularly at the undergraduate level, with over half of undergraduates agreeing that many courses were not offered at the right time for them. In addition, almost half (47%) of undergraduates felt that a number of their courses were redundant.

This set of items has been asked of graduates for a number of years. In general, results over the last five years have been quite stable. No differences were found at the undergraduate level. At the graduate level, the only significant difference found was for the item on offering courses at the right time for them. Based on the results, it appears that departments are doing a better job of offering courses at the right times for students obtaining graduate degrees in 2013-14 compared to 2011-12. Note that this item is worded in the negative—many department courses were *not* offered at the right time for me—so that a mean closer to 1 is a more positive outcome when 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree. In 2013-14 the mean rating for graduate students was 2.02 vs. 2.12 in 2011-12.

**Figure 5. 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey Results
Percent Agreement on items Related to Department Processes**



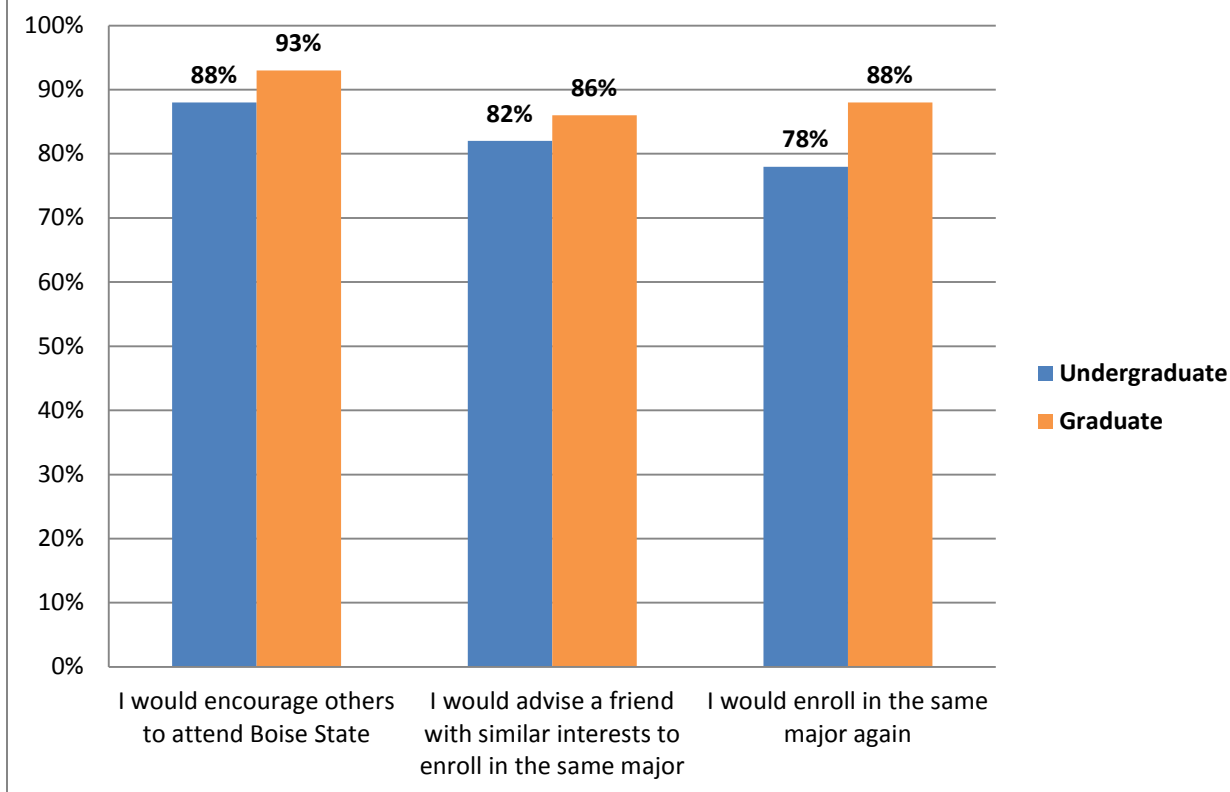
How satisfied were graduates with their program and with Boise State?

The graduating student survey includes three items on student satisfaction with their educational experience:

- I would enroll in the same major again
- I would advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in the same major
- I would encourage others to attend Boise State

As shown by Figure 6, most students appear to be satisfied with their Boise State experience, with graduate students again providing higher ratings compared to undergraduates. A look at these three items over time again showed stable ratings. The one exception was that students at the graduate level were less likely in 2013-14 to recommend their major to friends with similar interests compared to graduate students in 2011-12 (mean of 3.38 in 2013-14 vs. 3.48 in 2011-12 on a four-point scale).

**Figure 6. 2013-14 Graduating Student Survey
Percent Agreement on Items Related to Satisfaction**



Students who would not enroll in the same major again or who would not advise a friend with similar interests to enroll in that major were invited to comment on their reasons and 309 chose to do so. The comments were analyzed by reading the comments and assigning them to a set of categories. The reasons students gave for not selecting their major again or recommending their major to others fell into four main categories: issues with the program or curriculum (25%), issues with faculty (21%), employment opportunities for that major (21%), and being so far down the path for completing the major before realizing their interests lay elsewhere that it didn't seem worthwhile to switch (21%).

Students who made comments related to the program or the curriculum discussed issues such as disorganization within the program, the level of standards required by the program, the course content, and when courses were offered. The following comments provide a sample:

- (_____) was an extremely unorganized program. The faculty didn't communicate with one another and prerequisites were never clear. Many professors didn't even know the prerequisites required for their own courses.... There don't seem to be any clear goals of what we're supposed to know when we graduate from this program.
- I do not believe the curriculum or areas of study were consistently at a high enough level for a master's program.
- Irrelevant material, too difficult to succeed.
- More in-depth courses and better resources can be found in other programs
- It is very difficult to find classes that fit a working student's schedule. There is very little variation of classes offered at night. If you are working then classes are limited and teachers are all the same.

- I found the program to be dysfunctional and frustrating. There was so much negativity within the department in general and the stress and discord filtered down to the students, both graduate and undergraduate alike.

Comments related to faculty were seldom about the knowledge that faculty possessed. Rather, comments focused on faculty members' lack of caring for students or for the courses they were teaching. Example comments include:

- Communication in the department was lacking, relationships were extremely political. You cannot express frustration without the fear of being shunned from the faculty.... There is little to no respect for students within this department.
- Faculty were not interested in the success of their students. Had a better experience in other courses unrelated to _____.
- I felt that some of the professors were there just to be there not because they had a true passion for the subject.

Employment comments generally related to the ability to get a job with the degree that was in-hand. Comments included:

- A (_____) degree does not stand apart from any other degrees in terms of getting hired in your field of choice. The degree has not given me enough marketable skills to pursue other employment opportunities.
- Based on the amount of opportunity after my education in the job market, I wouldn't recommend anyone be (_____) major unless further schooling beyond a bachelors is their plan.

A number of students indicated that they would have chosen a different major if they had recognized their lack of passion for their current major. Most stayed with their major for pragmatic reasons. They commented:

- After completing several courses I realized (_____) was not my passion. However, I didn't want to change majors. That would have made me be in school longer and cost me more time and money.
- Ended up enjoying a different major more, but was too far into my degree to justify the change.
- I fell into it after dropping (______). I went down the path I had the most progress toward. If I could start over, I would choose something that interests me more and would be more relevant in the job-world.

In addition, after students indicated how likely they would be to encourage others to come to Boise State, an open-ended question invited them to provide reasons for their ratings. A total of 597 students made comments. Most of the comments covered multiple categories but comments usually focused on the learning environment, the location, and/or the cost of attendance. A majority of comments were positive. Comments on this and other open-ended items have been provided to departments for review.

What were the major factors predicting satisfaction?

Students who are more satisfied with their experience are also more likely to be retained and to graduate. They are also more likely to contribute as alumni and to encourage others to enroll at the institution. Therefore, it is helpful to know the factors most related to student satisfaction. Is it the academic growth that students experience? Is it their perceptions of and interactions with faculty? Is it the processes that help move them toward graduation such as advising and course registration?

To discover the factors most highly related to student satisfaction, a satisfaction score was calculated for graduates that summed their responses to the three satisfaction items. At the undergraduate level, to look at the effects of perceived student growth, a difference score between the proficiency score that students gave themselves at entry and again at the point of graduation was calculated for the five general academic and four personal outcomes. (Those related to subject matter were excluded due to the differing effects of the major.) To look at their academic experience, the eight items related to faculty and to the department were included. This set of variables was then analyzed using stepwise regression in SPSS. The results showing the variables included based on order of selection and the final model are displayed in Table 1. Descriptive statistics and correlations are in Appendix A for undergraduates.

Table 1. Stepwise regression model for predicting undergraduate student satisfaction

Final Model (at Step 9)	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	R ² at each step
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	3.641	.393		
1: I received sound academic advice.	.606	.078	.234	.298
2: Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students.	.610	.104	.193	.384
3: There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns.	.455	.088	.155	.410
4: Think creatively about complex problems in order to implement innovative solutions (now vs. then)	.173	.062	.068	.419
5: Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty.	.197	.069	.074	.424
6: Faculty were outstanding teachers.	.276	.095	.093	.428
7: Many department/program courses were not offered at the right time for me.	-.131	.057	-.055	.432
8: Manage my stress levels (Now vs. then)	.105	.043	.059	.434
9: A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant.	-.156	.067	-.057	.436

Note: Variables are displayed based on order of selection at each step of the model.

The first variable selected in a stepwise regression model is always the one that is most highly correlated with satisfaction. In this case, ratings on the level of agreement that the student received sound academic advice was most highly correlated with satisfaction and so comprised the first step of the regression model. Note that 29.8% of the variability in satisfaction ratings could be accounted for by responses to the sound academic advice item.

The next two variables selected for inclusion were related to perceptions of faculty. Adding the variable “faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students” raised the amount of variability in satisfaction scores accounted for by the set of items to 38.4%. The variability accounted for increased to 41.0% when the communication-between-faculty-and-students ratings were added at the third step.

At the fourth step we see an academic growth variable selected for inclusion in the model: Changes in students’ ability to “think creatively about complex problems in order to implement innovative solutions” improved the R² by another percentage point to 41.9%. The only other growth variable in the model was an improved ability to handle stress (entered at step 8).

Two other items related to faculty enter the model at step 5—many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty--and again at step 6--faculty were outstanding teachers. Two other department process items were selected toward the end of the item selection process. Both had a negative relationship with satisfaction. The variables were “Many courses were not offered at the right time for me” (step 7) and “a number of courses covered the same material and were redundant” (step 9).

A similar approach was followed at the graduate level with the exception that the model was based solely on the eight faculty and department perception items. (Outcomes questions are not asked on the survey due to the specific academic focus of graduate level programs compared to the focus on a general education component at the undergraduate level.) The results are shown in Table 2 below. Correlations and descriptive statistics for the graduate student analysis can be found in Appendix B.

Table 2. Stepwise regression model for predicting graduate student satisfaction

Final Model at Step 5	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	R ² at each step
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	2.776	.551		
1. Faculty were outstanding teachers.	.916	.152	.305	.386
2. I received sound academic advice.	.614	.156	.211	.463
3. There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns.	.645	.141	.228	.492
4. 4. Many department/program courses were not offered at the right time for me.	-.363	.097	-.144	.513
5. The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support.	.365	.104	.139	.529

Outstanding instruction from faculty showed the strongest relationship with satisfaction for graduate students, followed by receiving sound academic advice. Similar to the undergraduate results, communication between faculty and students was also important along with offering courses at the right times. Relationships with peers also was included in the graduate model but not for the undergraduate one. Overall, 53% of the variability in satisfaction could be predicted at the graduate student level compared to 44% at the undergraduate level.

To what extent did graduates engage in activities and did that engagement relate to satisfaction?

At the end of the survey, students are asked if they had been a part of some academic, co-curricular, or personal activities that might influence their time to degree and satisfaction. The results can be found in Table 3. Note that more than half of undergraduates and close to two-thirds of graduate students worked full-time at some point during their time at Boise State. At least one-third had children. More than half of undergraduate and almost half of graduate students met annually with their advisor.

Table 3. Percentage of students who engaged in academic, co-curricular, and personal activities

While a student at Boise State, did you....	Undergraduate students	Graduate students
Participate in community service through the university	47%	22%
Participate in student activities (clubs, student government, etc.)	41%	24%
Work with faculty on a research, service or creative project	28%	36%
Have responsibilities for children	32%	36%
Work full-time while attending school	51%	65%
Take a year or more off to fulfill a military obligation	1%	1%
Take a year or more off for a religious or service mission	2%	0%
Work on-campus	28%	24%
Live on-campus for at least a year	25%	7%
Meet with an advisor at least every year	57%	47%

In general, students who reported engaging in each of these activities had similar satisfaction levels compared to those who did not engage in the activity. The one exception was that undergraduate students who reported participating in student activities had higher satisfaction levels compared to those who did not participate in student activities (mean of 9.7 vs. 9.3). Surprisingly, at the graduate level, the effect was the opposite (9.6 vs. 10.3). In addition, at the graduate level only, students who worked on-campus had lower satisfaction levels compared to those who did not (mean of 9.6 vs. 10.3).

How did students who transferred describe the experience?

About two-thirds of undergraduate respondents indicated that they transferred at least some credits, and 44% transferred more than 15 credits. Students who indicated that they had transferred credits were invited to comment on the experience and 92% did so. After eliminating the 4% of comments that did not directly address the question, 57% indicated that their transfer experience was smooth and easy. An additional 20% thought it had some bumps in the process, but it was ultimately fine. However, 23% thought the process was “horrible” or “a nightmare” or used other words that described a very difficult transfer process. Students who were unhappy generally thought the process was opaque and convoluted. Many mentioned that those who advised them did not seem to understand the process themselves and that the process needed standardization at the very least. Students pointed to math and science courses as causing the most difficulty. A number of students were so grateful to have guidance to get through the process that they mentioned individuals by name. These names are included on the Honor Roll in Appendix C.

What out-of-class experiences did students say helped or hindered their progress toward graduation?

Toward the end of the survey, students were invited to comment on any out-of-class experiences that helped or hindered their progress, and 439 students chose to do so. A majority of comments (56%) were positive and discussed experiences that helped progress toward graduation, while 38% discussed experiences that were negative, and 6% were neutral in tone. An Honor Roll of specific people mentioned as especially helpful to students is in appendix C.

As shown by Table 4, the largest number of positive comments dealt with student organizations (26% of all positive comments). The remaining top categories included internships and clinical experiences (19%), other academic experiences (13%), and service-learning (10%).

Table 4. Coding of helpful comments to the question “Please describe any out-of-class experiences that helped or hindered your progress toward your degree” (n=269 comments)

Description of code content	N of comments	Example comments
Clubs and organizations	71	Getting involved in out-of-the class activities has been the most rewarding adventure while attending Boise State. I have gained invaluable insights and learning experiences. I cannot thank enough the division of Student Affairs, and the Student Life department in particular, for the amazing work they do and for the personal growth and development I was able to achieve because of all the events, activities, leadership opportunities and mentorship facilitated and promoted by staff and students.
Impact of internships or clinical experiences. (Excludes service-learning and non-academic activities)	50	I was able to complete at least 5 projects in real-world settings. This allowed us to see how the theories, concepts, and methods can be applied in actual settings. This type of education is invaluable. It makes the right kinds of connects and shows how or education can have an impact in our work and life.
Other academic experience that doesn't fall in any of the other academic categories	36	Many professors went out of their way to answer my questions and meet with me outside of office hours. It was a great experience for me, and I see the world and education differently than I did before. Thank you.
Comment specifically mentions service-learning	28	I was required to participate in a service learning project as a course requirement. This opportunity was tremendous in shaping me in my degree and a contributing member of my community.
Impact of hours worked or working on-campus or financial issues related to work	22	on-campus jobs were huge in my success
Specific faculty member or department that helped or hindered	21	Department of _____ is GREAT Department! Teachers are very professional but at the same very Helpful. Each class in a wonderful training. Thank you very much!
Other comment	39	Whoever gave money towards the 'anonymous' scholarship will be a hero in my book forever. That was a humbling experience and I cannot wait to pay that forward someday.

Students mentioned work and financial difficulties as the top hindrance in progressing to graduation (25% of all negative comments). Advising experiences were mentioned negatively in 20% of the comments, and difficulties with administrative offices in 12% of the “hindrance” comments. A summary of the top categories with example comments can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Coding of comments to the that described hindrances to obtaining a degree (n=180)

Description of code content	N of comments	Example comments:
Impact of hours worked or working on-campus or financial issues related to work	45	Working part-time definitely made school harder, but at the same time I would not have been able to attend if I did not work.
Advising experience	36	Advisement needs dramatic improvement. One should leave feeling prepared and confident with a sound plan. The experience is the opposite. Different advice, unprepared advisors, confusion.
Mentions any administrative services that students deal with (e.g., registrar, financial aid, parking)	21	Parking was an ongoing issue as reflected by parking tickets. BSU absolutely needs an in-house LEAN project, which could very well evolve into a long-term department of its own. It's literally the most confusing, unhelpful bureaucracy I have ever encountered--and I work in a large healthcare organization.
Other academic experience that doesn't fall in any of the other academic categories	15	limited class availability and professors not willing to work with you when you need help.
Personal issue that was independent of the academic experience (e.g., pregnancy, illness, etc.)	14	Being a single mother going to college can often be a challenge. Child care was difficult for evening classes, and often the classes I needed were only held during the evening. Therefore, having evening childcare for children under age 13 would have been helpful.
Other	47	Nothing, but guns on campus is nuts

Summary and Conclusions

Graduates provide a perspective on Boise State that cannot be obtained in any other way. For this reason, every fall and spring graduating students are asked to take a survey that covers their perceived growth in academic areas at the undergraduate level, their perception of faculty and their departments, and their activities while at Boise State. The survey was completed by 50% of graduating students.

Student Growth:

Boise State has five university-level learning outcomes that cover writing, speaking, engaging in critical inquiry, thinking creatively about problems, and analyzing ethical issues. At the point of graduation, students reporting making the greatest gains in the area of critical inquiry.

Because fostering student development is also important to the Boise State experience, the survey asks about four outcomes related to student development: engaging with the community, managing stress, making ethical choices, and having friendships with others who are different from them. At the point of graduation, students reported the greatest growth in actively engaging in their community and having friendships with people who are different from them.

A well-rounded student has also had experiences across disciplines so six outcomes cover knowledge and application of cultural differences, math and statistics, scientific inquiry, the visual and performing arts, literature and the humanities, and the social sciences. Undergraduates felt that they had grown most in their knowledge of cultural differences and in the use of the social sciences to explain and evaluate human behavior and institutions.

Perceptions of faculty and their departments:

Graduates generally were pleased with their experiences with faculty. A large majority thought that faculty members were interested in student welfare (86% of undergraduates, 95% of graduate students) and were outstanding teachers (83% of undergraduates, 88% of graduate students). Fewer felt that many opportunities for out-of-class interactions with faculty existed (65% of undergraduates, 70% of graduate students). In addition, 76% of undergraduates and 88% of graduate students thought they had received sound academic advice. Overall, 21% of undergraduates and 7% of graduates reported that they had to delay graduation due to course availability. Results for these items have stable over the past five years.

Satisfaction:

Three items assessed student satisfaction. Results showed that most graduates would enroll in the same major again (78% of undergraduates, 88% of graduate students), advise a friend with similar interests to take their major (82% of undergraduates, 86% of graduates) and definitely or probably encourage others to attend Boise State (88% of undergraduates, 93% of graduates). Again, results for these items have generally been stable over the past five years.

The three satisfaction items were summed to form a satisfaction scale for further analysis of the factors most related to satisfaction. At the undergraduate level, satisfaction was most heavily related to the relationships that students had with faculty and only secondarily to their perceived growth while at the institution. The top three items for explaining satisfaction scores using stepwise regression were: (1) receiving sound academic advice, (2) genuine interest by faculty in the welfare of students, and (3) good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs. Growth areas selected as part of the prediction equation included the ability to think creatively about complex problems and managing stress levels. At the graduate level the top three items were: (1)

faculty as outstanding teachers, (2) receiving sound academic advice, and (3) good communication between faculty and students. Information on learning outcomes is not asked on the survey at the graduate level due to the specific subject matter focus.

Students who were dissatisfied with their major as evidenced by indicating that they would not enroll in the same major again or recommend it to their friends were asked for their reasons. The main reasons students gave fell into four main categories: problems with the program or curriculum (25%), problems with faculty (21%), employment opportunities for that major (21%), and being so far down the path for completing the major before realizing their interests lay elsewhere that it didn't seem worthwhile to switch (21%).

Helps and Hindrances:

Toward the end of the survey, students were invited to comment on any out-of-class experiences that helped or hindered their progress. A majority of comments (56%) were positive, while 38% discussed experiences that were negative, and 6% were neutral in tone. The largest number of positive comments dealt with student organizations (26% of all positive comments). The remaining top categories included internships and clinical experiences (19%), other academic experiences (13%), and service-learning (10%). The importance of student organizations as a positive factor in students' lives was reinforced by the finding that students who reported participating in student activities had significantly higher satisfaction scores.

Students mentioned work and financial difficulties as the top hindrance in progressing to graduation (25% of all negative comments). Advising experiences were mentioned negatively in 20% of the comments, and difficulties with administrative offices in 12% of the "hindrance" comments. In addition, a number of students reported difficulties in transferring credits to Boise State University. Although

A majority (57%) indicated that their transfer experience was smooth and easy, 20% experienced some bumps in the process, and 23% thought the process was "horrible" or "a nightmare" or used other words that described a very difficult transfer process. Students who were unhappy generally thought the process was opaque and convoluted.

Taken as a whole, results show that most students reported strong positive perceptions of their experiences at Boise State. Graduates were generally pleased with their experiences with faculty and reported growth on all learning outcomes. Good advising was a key to satisfaction.

APPENDIX A. Descriptive Statistics and Inter-item correlations for undergraduates

Table A. Descriptive Statistics for items included in the undergraduate model to predict satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Write effectively (Now vs. Then)	.88	.79	1078
Communicate effectively in speech (Now vs. Then)	.88	.83	1078
Engage in critical inquiry by defining problems, gathering evidence, and determining its adequacy (Now vs. then)	1.15	.85	1078
Think creatively about complex problems in order to implement innovative solutions (now vs. then)	.96	.81	1078
Analyze ethical issues in personal, professional, and civic life (Now vs. then)	1.00	.89	1078
Actively engage in my community (Now vs then)	.69	1.05	1078
Manage my stress levels (Now vs. then)	.55	1.16	1078
Make ethical choices in my daily life (Now vs then)	.51	.81	1078
Have friendships with people who are different from me (Now vs then)	.61	.96	1078
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students.	3.10	.65	1078
Many department/program courses were not offered at the right time for me.	2.64	.87	1078
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant.	2.54	.75	1078
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns.	2.92	.70	1078
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty.	2.76	.77	1078
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support.	2.92	.80	1078
Faculty were outstanding teachers.	3.04	.69	1078
I received sound academic advice.	2.93	.80	1078
Satisfaction measure	9.50	2.06	1078

Table B. Correlations among learning outcome growth items and satisfaction for undergraduates (N=1078)

Outcome:	Communicate	Engage	Think creatively	Analyze ethical issues	Engage in community	Manage stress	Make ethical choices	Have friendships	Satisfaction
Write effectively	.504**	.427**	.384**	.358**	.309**	.252**	.352**	.252**	.192**
Communicate effectively in speech	1	.421**	.379**	.346**	.332**	.319**	.356**	.321**	.129**
Engage in critical inquiry		1	.566**	.460**	.299**	.294**	.358**	.246**	.195**
Think creatively about problems			1	.482**	.351**	.291**	.392**	.303**	.226**
Analyze ethical issues				1	.375**	.280**	.462**	.365**	.111**
Engage in my community					1	.375**	.444**	.400**	.147**
Manage my stress levels						1	.414**	.370**	.240**
Make ethical choices							1	.489**	.123**
Have friendships with people who are different								1	.171**

Table C. Correlations among items related to perceptions of faculty and department and satisfaction for undergraduates (N=1078)

	Faculty genuine	Courses not at right time	Courses redundant	Communication between faculty & students	Interactions with faculty out of class	Interactions with peers	Faculty were outstanding teachers.	I received sound academic advice.	Satisfaction
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students.	1	-.206**	-.208**	.575**	.381**	.317**	.640**	.540**	.543**
Many courses were not offered at right time		1	.249**	-.183**	-.119**	-.109**	-.160**	-.260**	-.235**
A number of courses were redundant			1	-.252**	-.149**	-.075*	-.204**	-.244**	-.249**
There was good communication between faculty and students				1	.392**	.246**	.516**	.500**	.509**
Many opportunities existed outside of class for faculty interactions					1	.263**	.369**	.366**	.361**
The interactions with my peers were a major source of support.						1	.331**	.348**	.373**
Faculty were outstanding teachers.							1	.545**	.496**
I received sound academic advice.								1	.547**

Notes:

Correlations of .30 or higher are highlighted in yellow.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

None of the items in Table B and Table C had correlations that reached the .30 level.

APPENDIX B. Descriptive statistics and inter-item correlations for graduate respondents

Table D. Descriptive Statistics for items included in the graduate level model to predict satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students.	3.44	.60	333
Many department/program courses were not offered at the right time for me.	2.08	.82	333
A number of courses covered the same material and were redundant.	2.15	.78	333
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs/concerns.	3.16	.73	333
Many opportunities existed outside of class for interactions between students and faculty.	2.87	.83	333
The interactions and discussions with my peers in the department were a major source of motivation and support.	3.13	.78	333
Faculty were outstanding teachers.	3.22	.68	333
I received sound academic advice.	3.18	.71	333
Satisfaction (Enroll in same major, Recommend major, Encourage others to attend Boise State)	10.10	2.05	333

Table E. Correlations among items related to perceptions of faculty and department and satisfaction for graduate students (N=333)

	Faculty genuine	Courses not at right time	Courses redundant	Communication between faculty & students	Interactions with faculty out of class	Interactions with peers	Faculty were outstanding teachers.	I received sound academic advice.	Satisfaction
Faculty members were genuinely interested in the welfare of students.	1	-.116*	-.167**	.559**	.266**	.237**	.633**	.508**	.525**
Many courses were not offered at right time		1	.302**	-.149**	-.016	-.101	-.183**	-.177**	-.286**
A number of courses were redundant			1	-.218**	-.128*	-.116*	-.248**	-.262**	-.273**
There was good communication between faculty and students				1	.290**	.191**	.561**	.613**	.577**
Many opportunities existed outside of class for faculty interactions					1	.379**	.322**	.339**	.346**
The interactions with my peers were a major source of support.						1	.224**	.301**	.329**
Faculty were outstanding teachers.							1	.620**	.621**
I received sound academic advice.								1	.607**

Notes:

Correlations of .30 or higher are highlighted in yellow.

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Appendix C. Honor Roll of Individuals Mentioned as Especially Helpful

From “Help and Hindrance” Comments:

<p>I worked on a research project with Dr. B for 4 years in the math department and it was quite possibly the best thing I ever did to better myself and advance myself academically. Without this project I doubt I would even be considering graduate school whereas now it is my future option of choice.</p>
<p>Working as a peer tutor in the Writing Center, under the supervision of Melissa Keith, and an internship on "Melville's Marginalia" with Professor Olsen-Smith ('Doc Olsen-Smith'), were two endeavors that gave me great learning opportunities. Frankly, they made my heart and mind SING. Again, it comes back to the dedication and passion of these teachers.</p>
<p>VA services worked their asses off for my and I loved it. I've noticed their office as upgraded a few times since my time here. They definitely deserve any new offices that they require or may need, those guys and gals were a huge help for me. Also, my department's academic advising as well as the chair of the Criminal Justice department Jeremy Ball. I had some issues with a professor my junior year and he did a very good job just mediating between us and resolving our issues.</p>
<p>Clay Cox in biology academic advising should get a raise. His work is indispensable to students. He was a huge help to me.</p>
<p>Dr. David Walker has helped me beyond measure.</p>
<p>I did not feel that my adviser guided me in a timely manner to complete graduation paperwork. I had to meet with him several times before I understood what I needed to do in order to get the appropriate credits transferred, and even then it was because I communicated with Greg Gaskill. He was very helpful and easy to communicate with via email. Everything seems to be working out as planned, so at this point, I am happy!</p>
<p>I participated in an internship with the Idaho state legislature that taught me quite a bit about Idaho environmental law and policy. I was only able to secure this internship because of Dr. Madsen-Brooks.</p>
<p>What was a great experience though was the lab monitor Shawna Hanel. She is an amazing woman, takes time out of her schedule to help me with my processes in photography, and even allowed me to work with her one on one with other things. She truly cares about us learning photography and being able to do things ourselves when we graduate.</p>
<p>I think the veteran's service department is top-notch and provided outstanding service. I expect this level of service to continue as I progress towards completion of my graduate degree. I would also like to specifically mention Jo Ann Fenner, who is probably one of the best academic advisors I have worked with. She has made my experience at Boise State mostly painless and she always replies promptly.</p>
<p>I wish the instructors were required to hold online class discussions that are optional. The best experiences I had were watching the webinars for the portfolios by Prof Snelson.... and one instructor met with us weekly to discuss our course work expectations. (she was a former VLACS instructor)</p>
<p>I would like to thank Dr. Stephanie Witt, Dr. Leslie Alm, and adjunct Steven Wilson for excellent instruction as well as fostering a sense of community within the MPA program.</p>
<p>Life time recreation Living Learning Community- Learned a lot about responsibility this year as a Program Assistant.</p>
<p>Civic Leadership Living Learning Community- Met people that will always be friends and met Dr. Tyler Johnson who is the educator that has made the biggest impact in my life.</p>

<p>Matt Hansen's service learning for Shakespeare was the first time in four years that I felt connected to BSU, my community, and fostered real relationships with fellow classmates. Before being involved in this class my experience at BSU was basically sterile.</p>
<p>Matt Hansen's Shake It Up After School program was a largely out of class experience. Though it helped me in personal growth, the time needed during the week diverted attention away from other classes.</p>
<p>My last few semesters at BSU I met with my advisor, Dr. Smith, and the chair advisor, Clay Cox, many times. They were both always happy to help and easy to meet with. Clay Cox helped me a lot in figuring out the last few semesters as I needed special attention.</p>
<p>My participation in Dr. Matt Hansen's Shake It Up After School really allowed me to feel passionate about a project and become engaged in my community. I also forged life long friendships with the other participants in the program and it really made the rest of my time at Boise State more enjoyable.</p>
<p>Practicum was such a valuable experience- one that couldn't be replaced by classroom education. Stefanie Gilbert was terrific especially last fall when she had to cover all the cohort alone. So appreciative of the agencies willing to take part (keeping in mind that they get 500 hours of free labor, too!)</p>
<p>Spent more time on unnecessary classes than classes that would actually help me in the future. Student advisors were no help. The only help I had was from Dr. Woods. He was great!</p>
<p>student involvement and leadership center was by far my most positive experience at BSU. Jeremiah Shinn and Angela Baugher were amazing influences on my life and they changed how I experienced BSU.</p>
<p>The RN-BSN program advisors are excellent. The program has everything lined out for students on the requirements for the degree. I also appreciate the great communication I received from Maura Rasmussen during my time in the program.</p>
<p>The professors in the kinesiology department were tremendous at helping me finish my degree via distance learning after I had moved from Boise to Hawaii. They granted me many independent study courses which were not in their job description and I really appreciate the time Dr. Shelley Lucas put in helping me with all of my questions in an always prompt manner.</p>
<p>The library staff saved my paper many a time when a professor refused to help me or clarify their expectations. Especially helpful were Ellie Dworak, Memo & Maurilia. Very caring, knowledgeable, and committed to helping students.</p> <p>Modern language department - wonderful people, excellent instruction. enjoyed Sandra Marcotte especially.</p> <p>Marty Most - a most excellent professor, communicator and adviser. Helped clear up some of the misinformation I received from the student advising dept. and several professors.</p>
<p>Dr. Belfy was incredible and I learned the most from this professor and felt my experience with her was a true college level experience.</p>
<p>Mr. Brown was also on this same level. I found that my knowledge of music theory grew the most with Dr. Saunders and truly appreciated these professors teachings and guidance.</p>
<p>Towards the last two semesters I grew an interest in Geoscience after taking Sam Matson's class. I think I would have really enjoyed more classes in the field of science.</p>
<p>There were only two professors that seemed to really care about both students and the area of study. Much respect to Dr. Burkhart, specifically.</p>

From comments about transfer:

<p>A problem arose due to the amount of credits I had vs. the number I was allowed. BSU came through for me and allowed me to finish my degree. Special thanks to the Sociology Department Administration, for her tireless efforts in ensuring my ability to graduate on time, in addition I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Ore, Thanks a million YOU ROCK.</p>
<p>I am not sure how many credits I transferred. I transferred with an ASN. It was an easy process and went smoothly. Maura Rasmussen made the process hassle free.</p>
<p>I had previously received my Associate's from BSU, so the process was straightforward and the transition was easy. Maura Rasmussen is a great advisor and be recognized for her understanding, guidance, patience, and always keeping her advisees on track!</p>
<p>I transferred 127 credits to BSU and it was a relatively stress free experience for me. I got a lot of help from my advisor Vicki Budd and the initial advisor I went to when looking into enrolling at BSU.</p>
<p>The ONE good experience in regards to transferring credits was that of Dr. Gundy Kaupins. He was kind, thoughtful, and was willing to work with my transfer situation. It deeply saddened me that the other Department was so unwilling to hear of my situation, yet Dr. Kaupins was helpful and provided great customer service; exactly what this College intended to teach us. Elaine Lacaille in the Registrar's Office was a huge asset throughout this process and was patient through all of the emails, calls, etc.</p>
<p>It is people like Elaine and Dr. Kaupins which lead me to have hope for the future of this institution.</p>
<p>It went well except when I applied to graduate. Boise State first denied me of graduation saying I was a class short. So I had to go through all of my records and transcripts to see that they failed to include an upper division course I transferred over from another university. Fortunately, I took the time to figure it out and a transcript evaluator/ graduation advisor helped me get back into my set graduation term. I appreciate Sarah Jones' help and the time she took to re-evaluate my graduation status.</p>
<p>Jill Heney in the English department helped me with making sure ALL of my credits transferred as I needed them. If I hadn't had this help from English advising, I wouldn't be graduating on time!</p>
<p>maura rasmussen was awesome</p>
<p>My advisor at the time Dr. Petranek worked hard to get academic adjustments where possible, and my former school University of Utah faxed documents, class syllabus, etc which she then reviewed and processed.</p>
<p>The transfer process was okay. It was a success due to the hard work of an academic advisor (Jamie Jensen) who made sure each transfer class was credited correctly. There was some confusion with the transfer because the school that I transferred from was a new school.</p>

From comments on encouraging others to come to Boise State:

Advisor Maura R. made things easy!
Dr. Bahruth was particularly excellent. His passion, caring and high expectations motivated his students to be strong teachers with an eye toward social justice. He rocks!
I would especially like to thank Maura Rassmussen for all her help and guidance!!!
My adviser Maura was FANTASTIC, she responded to emails in a timely manner and was very helpful throughout my education at BSU.
I especially enjoyed my courses with Drs. Bostaph, Marsh, and Walsh.
The people and professors are what made it such a great experience. Specifically Dr. Tyler Johnson , the best educator at the university. And Carolyn Loffer also a great educator.
Also, kudos to Dr. Lowenthal and Dr. Hall! These two instructors were fablous and I learned a great deal of information and gained practical skills in their classes that I could apply to my work setting immediately. They were both supportive and encouraging but also kept high standards, which is not an easy thing to do.
Dr. Bieter does an astounding job of guiding students down the right path.
The only reason I would suggest BSU to othes is because of the great faculty here such as Dr. Bechard, Robertson, Emma Wilson)
... Dr. Smith, Dr. Novak, Dr. Marcello [are great] but some are not as great.
give props to Eric Booth, Jim Browning, and Dr. Barney-Smith. They genuinely wanted to help the students.
I had very few Professors who challenged and inspired me, one of the only ones being Professor Scarritt.
Poor instructors (a few exceptions exist-e.g. Scott Lowe).
I did have a few outstanding biology professors, they were: Troy Rhon, Kristen Mitchell, Steve Novak. Judy Lonsdale
While, yes, there were moments where I had exceptional teachers, such as: Amanda Willoughby, Matt Wilkerson, Todd Sawyer and Prof. Kipps , the vast majority of my educational experience at this niversity has been overwhelmingly negative.
I learned the most out of John McClellan's class - a 3 week summer class, than I did in all of my other classes.
Clay Cox has been my advisor for the last year and I cn't recommend him highly enough. He's always been available, approachable, accurate, encouraging, and has worked harder to enable me to graduate on time than any advisor in the past.
Some faculty were exceptional such as Shallat, Woods, Bieter, and Klein.
My experience ... was terrible, until I was able to talk with Dr. Pfeiffer who was able to help me out.

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Prepared by: **Marcia Belcheir, Ph.D. and Mckay Vella**
Office of Institutional Research