

**1998 SURVEYS OF  
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
STUDENTS AND ALUMNI**

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**UNIVERSITY OF  
FLORIDA**

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## 1998 SURVEYS OF STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

### Overview

The following summary is based on the results of three opinion surveys conducted by telephone for the University of Florida in 1998:

1. 1360 University of Florida graduating seniors who received a bachelor's degree in May 1998. The Office of the University Registrar provided the list of 3680 baccalaureate students who applied to graduate in May 1998. Ten attempts were made to reach each student in the population. Students who indicated they were not going to graduate in May were not interviewed.
2. 3528 University of Florida graduates who received a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree between 1988 and 1996. Respondents were randomly selected from a list of all 1988-1996 alumni with valid phone numbers provided by the Office of the Development and Alumni Affairs. In the report, this group will be called *alumni*.
3. 606 University of Florida alumni who received a professional degree between 1988 and 1996. Respondents were randomly selected from a list of all 1988-1996 professional alumni with valid phone numbers provided by the Office of the Development and Alumni Affairs. In the report, this group will be called *professionals*.

When appropriate, results from a survey of 1993 Spring Graduating Seniors (n=335) are reported.

These samples are weighted by college (and degree for alumni sample) to ensure that the data are representative of the true populations. The sampling error for each of the following groups is based on a 95 percent confidence level: 1998 graduating seniors—plus or minus two percentage points (+/- 2%); alumni —+/- 2%; professionals—+/- 4%; 1993 graduating seniors—+/- 5%.

Summary tables, detailed crosstabular reports, and questionnaires with the total sample results are provided as appendices. Percentages in tables often may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding into whole percentage points. Similarly, subtotals may not agree with their components. For example, 8% “excellent” and 42% “good” may add up to different positive scores such as 49%, 50%, or 51%.

## KEY FINDINGS

### General Satisfaction

- Virtually all University of Florida alumni (96% excellent or good), professionals (94%), and graduating seniors (94%) are pleased with their overall college experience, with about three out of five alumni and just under one-half of seniors rating it excellent.
- Students and alumni are overwhelmingly likely to recommend UF to a friend or family member considering college. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of alumni, 96% of professionals, and 96% of seniors say they would recommend the university to others.
- When asked if they had to do it all over again, 90% of alumni and professionals say they would choose to get their degree from UF. Seven percent (7%) of alumni and 6% of professionals indicate they would attend another school. Very few said they would choose not to get their degree again (1% of alumni and less than 1% of professionals), including just 3% of doctoral alumni.
- The vast majority of bachelor's (94%), master's (93%), doctoral (93%), and professional (95%) alumni feel they have benefited enough from their UF education and training to justify the time and money spent.

### Academic Experience

- Nearly nine in ten seniors rate their academic experience as excellent (32%) or good (56%). Those who have been out of school awhile are even more upbeat: alumni (94% positive, 48% excellent) and professionals (95% and 55%, respectively). Professionals in health-related fields give high marks to their clinical education or training—96% rate it favorably, with two-thirds describing it as excellent. Classroom coursework among professionals is also highly rated (92% positive; 33% excellent), especially among health professionals (96% and 43%, respectively).
- A majority of employed alumni (56%) and professionals (53%) believe their UF education and training is better than that received by their coworkers educated at other schools. Just under two-fifths of either group feel their UF education and training is about the same as others, while only 2% think their education and training is comparatively worse.
- While at UF, the vast majority of alumni and professionals feel they were challenged to do their best *most* of the time (86% and 75%, respectively). Three-fifths (60%) of seniors say they were challenged *most* of the time, while one-third (33%) indicate they were challenged *some* of the time. Very few seniors (6%), alumni (3%) or professionals (1%) say they were *seldom* challenged and virtually none feel they were *never* challenged (1% of seniors and less than 1% of professionals or alumni).
- A majority of alumni (54%) and professionals (54%) rate UF's responsiveness to student academic problems as good or excellent. While one-fourth of each group has an unfavorable impression (fair or poor), few give UF the lowest rating (6-7% poor). 1998 seniors are more divided (47% positive, 10% excellent; 43% negative, 10% poor), but this is greatly improved from five years ago when a majority of 1993 seniors rated UF's responsiveness to academic problems as fair (43%) or poor (11%).

- The quality of the UF faculty is rated highly by alumni (95% positive, 45% excellent) and professionals (93% and 49%, respectively). Graduating seniors are also quite satisfied with UF faculty—32% excellent, 46% good, 12% fair, 1% poor. In addition, most alumni and students consider their professors to be very accessible. Nine in ten seniors (90%) indicate it was easy to see faculty outside of class; slightly fewer alumni (84%) and professionals (82%) feel this way. Only 2% of each group say it was very difficult to see their professors outside of class.
- Bachelor's alumni are most likely to have a positive opinion toward the quality of UF undergraduates (91% excellent or good), followed by graduating seniors (80%). Only 6% of alumni and 13% of seniors have a negative impression, with hardly any describing the quality of undergraduates as poor. A significant number of graduate student alumni cannot rate UF undergraduates (25-30% no opinion); among those who can, the favorable ratings far outweigh the unfavorable ratings (66% positive vs. 9% negative among master's and 59% vs. 10% among doctoral).
- Nearly all doctoral (94%) and master's (93%) alumni have a favorable opinion toward the quality of UF graduate students. Master's alumni, however, are much more likely to rate graduate students as excellent (44% vs. 29% among doctoral alumni). Seniors (63% positive, 7% negative) and bachelor's alumni (59% positive, 3% negative) are also quite satisfied with the quality of UF's graduate students. Professional alumni were asked to rate just professional students, giving their peers high marks—45% excellent and 47% good.
- Ninety-two percent (92%) of UF's 1998 seniors rate their degree program's academic reputation as strong. Nearly all professionals (97%) believe their degree program has a strong reputation today, while somewhat fewer alumni (88%) feel this way. Among those who graduated at least five years ago, almost one-half feel the current program's reputation is better than it was when they attended, about one-fourth feel it remains unchanged, and very few (3-5%) say the program's reputation has worsened.
- Bachelor's alumni are somewhat more likely than seniors to feel that the general education required courses were available most of the time (58% and 50%, respectively), and few in either group indicate they were hardly ever available (3% among alumni and 6% among seniors). Both alumni and seniors are much more likely to believe that courses required for their major were available most of the time (79% and 75%, respectively). About nine in ten alumni and seniors feel there was a good range of courses offered in their major.
- About one-half of seniors (49%) and slightly fewer alumni (45%) participated in an internship or practicum while at UF. Both groups are very enthusiastic about their experience, with the ratio of positive to negative ratings at 10:1 among alumni and 9:1 among seniors. Moreover, two-thirds of UF seniors who had secured employment upon graduation feel their internship was *very* important to their getting the position, while an additional 21% believe it was *somewhat* important.

### **Facilities and Services**

- Among the various facilities and services offered on campus, UF libraries receive the highest marks—94% of alumni and professionals and 91% of seniors rate the libraries as excellent or good.
- In stark contrast to five years ago, registration-related systems and processes are now perceived to be one of the university's greatest strengths. TeleGator, UF's phone registration system implemented in 1996, receives a 91% positive rating from seniors, with 50% rating it excellent. ISIS, the newer and more comprehensive online system, is less widely used by this group—45% never used compared to only 1% never used TeleGator—but the ratio of positive to negative scores (nearly 6 to 1) is very

good. In comparison, 1993 seniors were much more likely to dislike the “registration process” (63% total negative rating) than like it (36% positive); just 5% rated the registration process as excellent and more than one-fourth (27% poor) gave it the lowest rating.

- Student’s opinions toward the Drop/Add process have also improved tremendously since 1993. More than two-thirds rate Drop/Add as good (42%) or excellent (26%) compared to a total positive score of 10% five years ago. Few seniors (4%) rate Drop/Add as poor, whereas a majority (52%) gave this rating in 1993. Further, due to the improved registration process, Drop/Add is less often used today (12% never used vs. 5% in 1993).
- 1998 seniors are much more likely to rate student financial aid positively (54%, 22% excellent) than were their 1993 counterparts (31% and 8%, respectively). Less than one-fifth of 1998 seniors (18%) have a negative opinion of student loans, grants and scholarships compared to nearly two-fifths of 1993 seniors (39%).
- A majority of UF seniors rate the academic advising in their college or department as good (34%) or excellent (27%)—and most agree that these advisors are helpful (88% agree), spend a sufficient amount of time with them (86%), and are available when needed (75%). Two in seven seniors have a negative impression of advising, with most rating it fair (20%) rather than poor (9%). Overall, academic advising receives lower marks from professionals (27% positive vs. 15% negative) and alumni (42% vs. 24%), with many indicating they never used these services while at UF (56% of professionals and 34% of alumni).
- Although rated positively by a majority of UF’s 1998 seniors, computer support and labs at UF receives lower marks today (60% positive vs. 31% negative rating) than in 1993 (72% vs. 17%). (Note: This survey was conducted around the time UF announced a new policy requiring entering freshmen and current juniors to purchase a computer.) A majority of alumni (59%) give computer support an excellent or good rating (vs. 14% negative), with more than one-fourth (27%) saying they never used this service. Computer services usage is much lower among professionals (48% never used) but among those who did use them, positive ratings outweigh the negative ratings by a nearly 5:1 margin (42% and 9%, respectively).
- A majority of seniors (60%), alumni (60%) and professionals (53%) say they have never used the career advising services offered through the university, their department or college. Among those who can rate these services, the positive to negative ratio is roughly 2:1.
- Among alumni, laboratory facilities are rated highest by doctoral graduates (51% positive vs. 11% negative), followed by bachelor’s (47% vs. 10%) and master’s (37% vs. 9%) alumni. Professionals from health-related fields are very upbeat about clinical teaching facilities (66% positive vs. 7% negative), while those with a law degree are less positive (44% vs. 8%).

## **Personal Growth**

- Alumni and seniors were asked how much UF contributed to their personal growth in several areas. In nearly every instance, bachelor’s alumni—regardless of how long ago they graduated—are more likely than are seniors to give UF top credit. Overall, the rankings of these dozen or so areas are very similar among both groups. A solid majority indicate UF contributed *very* much to their personal growth in: working and learning independently (70% alumni, 64% seniors); valuing education and learning (66%, 60%); defining and solving problems (60%, 55%); thinking logically (58%, 54%); and, gaining a broad, general education about different fields of knowledge (58%, 51%). Students and alumni are least likely to give UF credit for their personal growth in the following areas:

understanding and appreciating the arts (36% very much among alumni, 28% among seniors); speaking effectively (36%, 39%), and writing effectively (42%, 35%).

### Continuing Education

- A majority of seniors plan to work after graduation (53%), but two in five say they plan to continue their education (41%) and most were already accepted into graduate school prior to graduation. Only 10% of *all* seniors indicate they will definitely not continue their education now or in the future and 6% are unsure.
- UF alumni often do continue their education, particularly as time goes on—33% of 1988-92 graduates have received an additional advanced degree compared to 17% of 1993-96 graduates. Further, 12% of recent graduates (1993-96 alumni) and 2% of 1988-93 alumni are currently full-time students. More than one-fourth (27%) of bachelor's alumni have an advanced degree (usually a master's) and about one in ten master's alumni have a doctorate (10%) or professional (2%) degree. Among professionals, 39% of those in dentistry, medicine or veterinary medicine have completed formal post doctoral training.
- Alumni who have completed an advanced degree give UF high marks on how well it prepared them for their studies—58% excellent rating, 32% good. Those currently continuing their studies also rate UF very favorably (44% excellent, 36% good).

### Employment

- Among those seniors who planned to work upon graduation, two-thirds had a definite commitment for employment (41%) or were negotiating with one or more employers at the time of the survey (26%). Sixty-five percent (65%) of those with a definite job reported a starting salary of at least \$30,000 and 75% feel their degree was *very* important to their getting the position.
- The belief that a college degree is valuable is also often found among those who have been out of school awhile—58% of employed alumni say their degree was *very* important to obtaining their current position and 26% believe it was *somewhat* important. Most rate the job UF did in preparing them for their current position as excellent (39%) or good (43%), as do a similar number of employed professionals (38% and 46%, respectively).
- One-third of alumni (34%) and nearly all professionals (92%) have taken certification or licensure exams. Among those who have, about seven in ten indicate they were well prepared by their degree program for the material covered on the exam. And, roughly one-fourth say they were somewhat prepared.
- In the area of professionalism and ethics, a plurality of alumni (47%) and a majority of professionals (55%) say they were well prepared by UF to face these issues in the workplace. Very few feel they were not at all prepared (9% of alumni and 5% of professionals).
- Unemployment rates for UF alumni are very low—bachelor's (1% unemployed and looking for work), master's (1%), and doctoral (2%). Most baccalaureate alumni are employed in private industry (63%), followed by government agencies or public school systems (19%), universities or four-year colleges (7%), or non-profit organizations (6%). For master's alumni, the top three employers are private industry (45%), government (19%), and university (14%). Nearly one-half of doctoral alumni work at a university or four-year college (47%), with an additional two-fifths working in the private (27%) or government (15%) sectors.

- Less than one percent of professionals are unemployed and looking for work. Virtually all in the health-related fields (99%) are working as a professional with the degree they received from UF, while 88% of those with a law degree are employed as attorneys. Of those working in their profession, 71% are in private practice and just under one-half (48%) have ownership in the practice.
- Overall, three-fifths of UF alumni report an annual salary of less than \$50,000 and 36% report a salary of \$50,000 or more. But, this is highly dependent on the type of degree received (60% over \$50,000 among doctoral alumni vs. 34% among bachelor's) and the length of time since graduation (45% over \$50,000 among 1988-93 graduates vs. 25% among 1993-96 alumni). Roughly two-thirds of professionals earn more than \$50,000 annually in their primary occupation.
- Graduate alumni are highly likely to be working in jobs related to their field, with 69% of master's and 66% of doctoral alumni indicating their job is *very* closely related. Very few (6% of doctoral and 11% of master's) are working in jobs not at all related to their degree field. Three-fourths of bachelor's alumni say they are in a job either closely (46%) or somewhat (29%) related to their degree.
- Nearly all doctoral alumni (94%)—regardless of discipline or year of graduation—say they are employed in a position that requires the skills and knowledge obtained during their Ph.D. or Ed.D. training.
- Among those doctoral alumni working at a university or four-year college, a solid majority (66%) hold tenured or tenure-track positions. The remainder is typically permanent non-tenured faculty (18%) or temporary postdoctoral employees (10%). Three in five doctoral alumni are working at institutions that offer a Ph.D. or Ed.D. in their field, while an additional one in five are working where the highest degree offered in their field is a master's.
- Job satisfaction is high among all UF graduates—a majority of professionals (59%) and alumni (53%) say their current job is an excellent position and about one-third describe it as a good position (31% professionals, 36% alumni). Few professionals (3%) and alumni (4%)—including just 5% of doctoral graduates—say they only took the job on a temporary basis and will definitely seek other employment.