



Graduate Students' Career Services Needs Spring 2005

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this survey is on graduate students' needs related to career services and professional development. Included in the survey are also questions concerning students' knowledge and use of Career Services. This survey, conducted by Student Affairs Research and Assessment, was administered by phone and also by Web¹ at the request of Penn State's Career Services and the Graduate School.

In total, 1,114 graduate students responded to the survey (including students at University Park and at Hershey). By phone, 614 responded for a 40.9% response rate and, of those contacted, 69.7% participated. By Web, 500 responded for a 37.2% response rate. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.6%.

Of the respondents, 50.6% are male; 25.9% are 23 and younger, 37.2% are between 24 and 26 years old, 17.8% are between 27 and 29 years old, and 19.1% are 30 or older; and 62.4% are White/Caucasian and 20.8% are international students. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

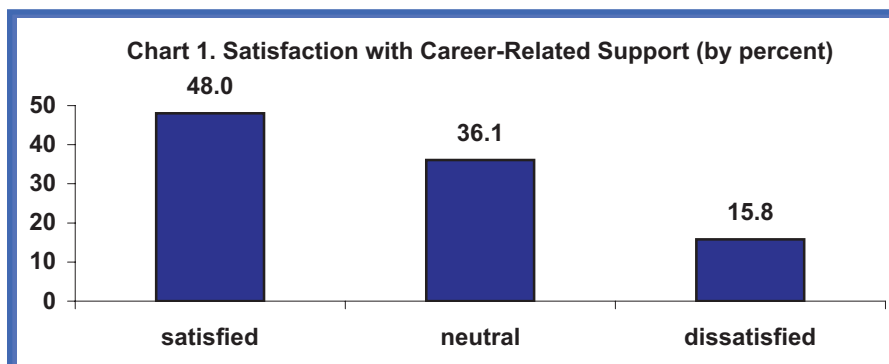
FINDINGS

Overall Satisfaction

Graduate students were asked about their satisfaction with the career-related support they have received, their professional development, and the experiential opportunities Penn State has provided.

- Almost half of the respondents were satisfied with the career-related support they have received (see Chart 1).
- Approximately three-quarters (74.8%) were satisfied with their professional development, and the same percentage were satisfied with the experiential opportunities Penn State has provided (data not shown).

This project examines graduate students' career services needs.



For more information please visit Student Affairs Research and Assessment at <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara>

¹ The Web survey administration is utilized in order to account for students for whom local phone information was unavailable



Comfort with Academic and Career Plans

Students were asked about their level of comfort with their academic plan, their career goals, the progress they were making toward their career goals, and their marketability.

- Approximately 73% of students indicated they were either substantially or extremely comfortable with their current academic plans and with their career goals (see Table 1).
- In comparison, students were less comfortable with their progress toward their career goals and their marketability than they were with their academic plans and career goals (see Table 1).
- White students were significantly more comfortable with their academic and career plans than were students of color and international students (data not shown).

Table 1: Comfort Level with Academic and Career Plans

To what extent are you comfortable with your:	percent²
Current academic plan	72.6
Career goals	72.2
Progress toward career goals	63.9
Marketability for employment/ future graduate work	67.7

Career Services Needs

Another section of the survey focuses on students' career services needs. These needs generally fall into two categories (or factors): Career Related Needs and Job Search Preparation Needs (see Tables 2 and 3). In addition, several other questions were asked regarding students' needs.

- Students most frequently expressed a need for assistance in developing job search strategies followed by assistance identifying career options outside of higher education.
- International students and students of color expressed a significantly higher need for these services than did white students (data not shown).
- In addition, 41.7% indicated a strong need for assistance with obtaining internships and other relevant work experience (for an average score of 3.11), and
- 34.1% expressed a strong need for assistance in identifying additional graduate/professional educational options (for an average score of 2.89) (data not shown).

Table 2: Career Related Needs

To what extent do you feel you need assistance with:	percent³	average
Developing job search strategies	47.0	3.29
Identifying career options outside of the academy	43.2	3.19
Identifying career options within the academy	34.2	2.95
Understanding your career interests & careers that best suit your personality & strengths	30.2	2.74
Overall Average for Career Related Needs		2.96

Scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = extremely

Table 3: Job Search Preparation Needs

To what extent do you feel you need assistance with:	percent³	average
Interviewing skills	38.3	3.09
Curriculum vita preparation	32.3	2.93
Resume preparation	27.2	2.73
Overall Average for Job Search Preparation Needs		2.92

Scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = extremely

Professional Development Needs

A series of questions were also asked regarding students' need for assistance in improving professional competencies.

- Almost 60% (58.8%) expressed a strong need for assistance improving their grant-writing skills (average of 3.61), and 56.6% indicated a strong need for assistance improving their ability to publish or become published (average of 3.59) (see Chart 2).
- Approximately a third of students also indicated a strong need for assistance improving teaching skills, management skills, communication skills, and improving their ability to balance the demands of work and life (see Table 4).
- International students and students of color expressed greater needs in these areas than did white students (data not shown).

² Percent represents students who responded "substantially" or "extremely." In addition, over 20% responded "moderately."

³ Percent represents students who responded "substantially" or "extremely."

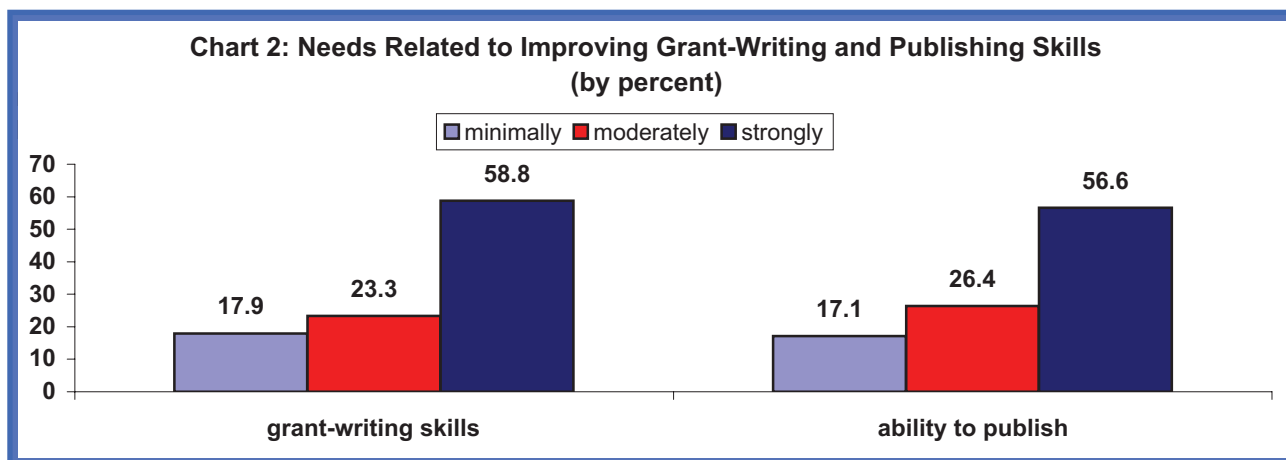


Table 4: Competency Improvement Needs

To what extent do you feel you need assistance with:	percent ³	average
Improving teaching skills	37.4	3.07
Improving management skills	34.5	2.99
Improving communication skills	31.3	2.88
Improving your ability to balance the demands of work and life	33.5	2.86
Clarifying your professional ethics	11.4	2.03
Overall Average for Competency Improvement Needs		2.76

Scale: 1 = not at all; 5 = extremely

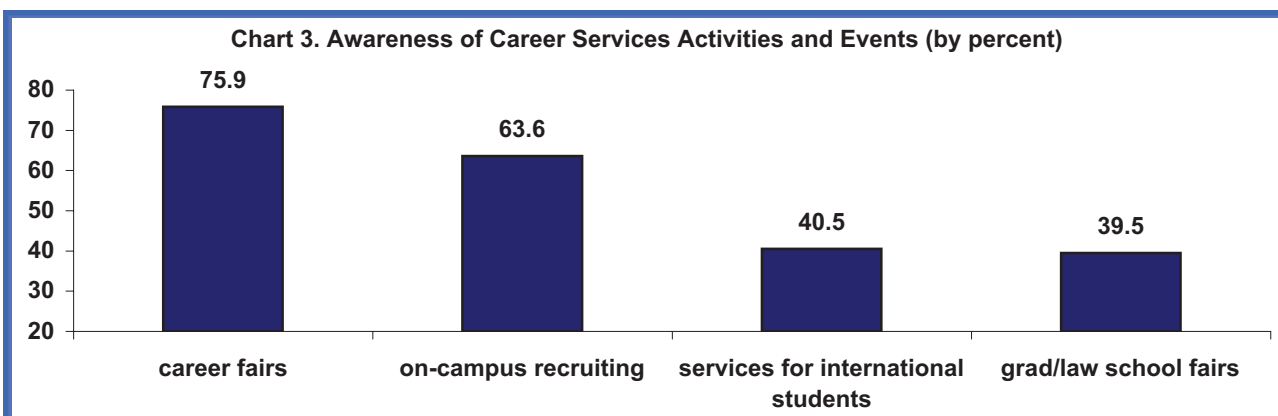
Use of Penn State's Career Services Department

Students were asked about their awareness, use, and likelihood of using Career Services.

- Students reported most frequently using the Career Services Web site (28.7%), attending workshops (26.2%), and utilizing the career days/fairs (see Table 5).
- In addition, 75.9% of students were aware of the career fairs sponsored by Career Services; 63.6% were aware of the on-campus recruiting services; 40.5% were aware of the services for international students; and 39.5% were aware of the graduate school and law school fairs (see Chart 3).

Table 5: Students' Use of Career Services

Service or program	percent
Career Services Web site	28.7
Workshops	26.2
Career days/fairs	25.7
<i>Career Guide for Graduate Students</i> handbook	22.6
Information library	22.5
Career counseling	9.8
Mock interviews	7.5
Career assessment/interests tests	5.3
Credentialing services	1.6



³ Percent represents students who responded "substantially" or "extremely."

- A majority of respondents indicated they would be likely to visit Career Services if they wanted to discuss the job search process (60.8%), cover letter or resume preparation (57.5%), the interview process (54.6%), and career options (53.9%) (see Table 6).
- International students and students of color reported using Career Services (and being likely to use Career Service) more frequently than did white students (data not shown).
- Students were most likely to have heard about Career Services activities and events through college listservs and newswires (66.4%) and posters, flyers, or banners (65%) (see Table 7).

Table 6: Likelihood of Visiting Career Services

Those who were likely to visit Career Services if they wanted to discuss:	percent
Job search process/researching employers	60.8
Cover letter/resume (or vita) development	57.5
Interview process associated with a job search	54.6
Career options	53.9
Options for internships/co-op programs	48.3
Clarification of interests, personality factors, and skill sets related to career choice	34.6
How to research/apply to grad/professional school	28.3

Table 7: Hearing about Career Services

Those who had heard about Career Services activities and events through:	percent
College listserv and newswires	66.4
Poster, flyer, or banner	65.0
<i>The Daily Collegian</i>	54.9
Other students	54.3
A faculty or staff member	50.1
Other Web calendars or Web sites	40.4
A prospective employer	17.8