



Career Services & Personal Counseling Needs

April 2005

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this survey is on the needs and experiences of students at the Commonwealth campuses related to career services and personal counseling. Included in the survey are questions concerning students' use of and satisfaction with a variety of career services programs and services as well as their previous and current experiences with psychological services. This survey, conducted by Student Affairs Research and Assessment, was administered by phone and also by Web¹ at the request of Career Services and the Student Services Enhancement Task Force.

In total, 1,453 undergraduate students responded to the survey. By phone, 980 responded for a 33.8% response rate and, of those contacted, 73.7% participated. By Web, 473 responded for a 7.6% response rate. The confidence interval for the total sample is +/-2.48%.²

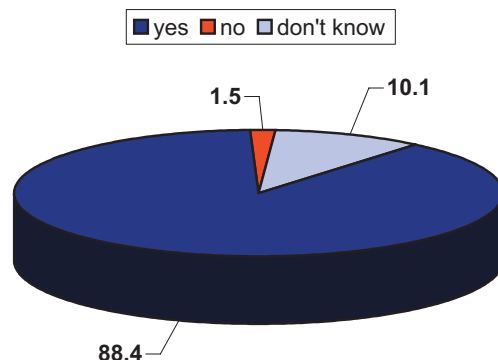
Of the respondents, 52.2% are male; 59.7% are 20 and younger, 25.6% are between 21 and 23 years of age, and 14.7% are 24 or older; 64.8% are first- or second-year students, and 78.4% are White/Caucasian. For additional information on the Pulse methodology, please visit <http://www.sa.psu.edu/sara/qa.shtml>.

FINDINGS

Awareness of Career Services

When asked if a Career Services department was available on their campus, 88.4% of students responded positively, with 10.1% unsure (see Chart 1).

Chart 1. Students' Awareness of Career Services on their Campus (by percent)



This survey focuses on students' needs and experiences related to career services and personal counseling at the Commonwealth campuses.

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.

² A limitation of this survey is in the over/under-representation of some campuses. Every effort was made to minimize the non-response error.



Career Services Needs

Students were asked a series of questions about their career planning needs. In general, students expressed greater needs for career services related to acquiring experiences related to their career goals and developing self-marketing skills than for increasing their self-awareness or exploring career options (see Table 1).

- Half of the respondents indicated needing assistance with obtaining internships and other relevant work experience.
- Approximately 40% felt a strong need for assistance developing job search strategies and with job placement.
- On average, students expressed a “moderate” need for assistance with their career planning.
- Women, students of color, traditional-aged students (18-23), and first- and second-year students expressed significantly greater needs related to career services than did their respective counterparts (data not shown).

Table 1: Career Services Needs

| To what extent do you feel you need assistance with: | percent³ | average |
|---|----------------------------|----------------|
| Obtaining internships and other relevant work experience | 49.9 | 3.37 |
| Job placement | 40.3 | 3.14 |
| Identifying graduate/professional educational options | 37.5 | 3.10 |
| Developing job search strategies | 38.1 | 3.07 |
| Cover letter/resume preparation | 34.9 | 2.94 |
| Identifying career options | 33.4 | 2.92 |
| Interviewing skills | 30.9 | 2.87 |
| Putting together your current academic plan | 23.8 | 2.74 |
| Understanding your career interests and careers that best suit your personality and strengths | 23.1 | 2.57 |
| Overall Career Services Needs | | 2.97 |

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=extremely

Use of and Satisfaction with Career Services

Students were also asked about their use of a variety of career services and, if they had used a service, their satisfaction with the service (see Table 2).⁴

- Approximately 42% of students had received career counseling and had attended career days or fairs, with 76.5% and 71.0% (respectively) being satisfied.
- In addition, 29.3% had attended workshops or classes on topics such as job search strategies and preparing your resume, with 79.3% of these students being satisfied with their experience.
- While only 3.2% of students at the Commonwealth campuses had taken advantage of on-campus recruiting opportunities at University Park, 79.1% expressed satisfaction with these services.

Table 2: Use of and Satisfaction with Career Services

| | percent “yes” | percent satisfied |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Career counseling | 41.7 | 76.5 |
| Career days/fairs | 40.6 | 71.0 |
| Workshops/classes | 29.3 | 79.3 |
| Career assessment/interest tests | 18.1 | 60.9 |
| Career information library | 16.7 | 78.9 |
| On-campus recruiting services at their campus | 12.5 | 60.9 |
| College Central (job placement software) | 11.1 | 58.2 |
| Discover or eDiscover | 10.1 | 57.4 |
| Nittany Lion JobLink | 8.4 | 59.3 |
| On-campus recruiting at University Park | 3.2 | 79.1 |

Likelihood of Using Career Services

Another aspect in determining priorities for services is an understanding of the likelihood of students visiting Career Services for assistance in a variety of areas (see Table 3).

- Corresponding to students’ greatest needs, 73.7% of students were likely to visit Career Services to discuss options for internships or co-op programs, and 68.2% to discuss the job search process or researching employers.
- In addition, 68.0% were likely to use Career Services to discuss career options, and 63.8% to discuss how to research or apply to graduate or professional school.

³ Percent who indicated “substantially” or “extremely”

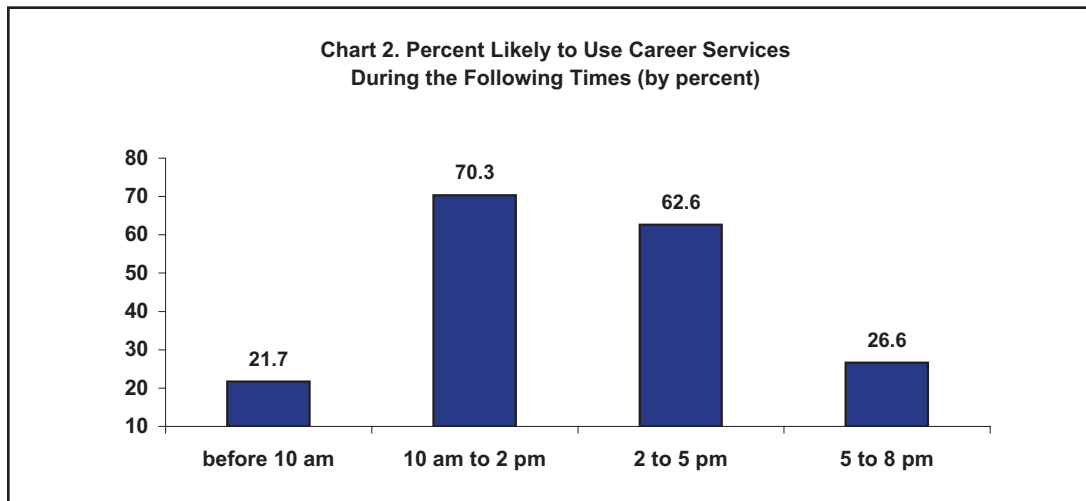
⁴ Not all campuses provide each of these services, which, therefore, will be reflected in the usage numbers.

- Women, traditional-aged students (18-23), and first- and second-year students were significantly more likely to use Career Services than were their respective counterparts. These differences are consistent with the differences in students' needs, with the exception of students of color who expressed greater need but similar likelihood of use than did white students (data not shown).
- Most frequently, students indicated they were likely to use Career Services between 10 am and 2 pm (70.3%), followed by 2 pm to 5 pm (62.6%) (see Chart 2).

Table 3: Likelihood of Using Career Services

| How likely would you be to visit your campus Career Services department if you wanted to discuss: | percent | average |
|---|---------|-------------|
| Options for internships/ co-op programs | 73.7 | 3.96 |
| Job search process/ researching employers | 68.2 | 3.77 |
| Career options | 68.0 | 3.77 |
| How to research/ apply to grad/ professional school | 63.8 | 3.68 |
| Choice of major | 58.9 | 3.48 |
| Cover letter/ resume development | 56.9 | 3.47 |
| Interview process associated with a job search | 56.7 | 3.47 |
| Clarification of your interests, personality factors, and skill sets related to career choice | 45.0 | 3.19 |
| Overall Likelihood of Using Career Services | | 3.48 |

Scale: 1=very unlikely; 5=very likely

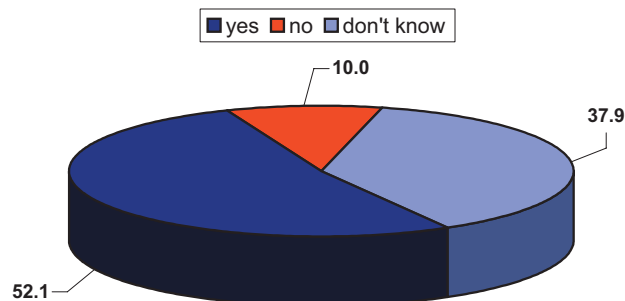


Awareness of Personal/Psychological Counseling Services

When asked if personal/psychological counseling was available on their campus, 52.1% responded positively and 37.9% were unsure (see Chart 3).

Students were also asked about their use of counseling and psychiatric services prior to coming to Penn State and their use at the time the survey was being administered (see Tables 4 and 5).

Chart 3. Students' Awareness of Personal/Psychological Counseling on their Campus (by percent)



- Approximately 21% of students indicated they had received counseling prior to coming to Penn State. The percentage is similar to what was found at University Park in the fall of 2004 (Pulse Survey #128).
- A total of 4.3% were receiving counseling at the time of the survey (2.0% on campus and 3.0% off campus with several students receiving counseling both on and off campus).
- While 5.0% of students were currently taking psychiatric medicine, 9.1% had taken it prior to coming to Penn State.
- Furthermore, of the 67 students taking psychiatric medicine, an on-campus health provider or psychiatrist prescribed the medicine for 13.4%, and an off-campus health provider or psychiatrist prescribed the medicine for 88.1% (with one student responding positively to both) (data not shown).
- Seventy-four percent of students responded positively when asked if they would utilize on-campus counseling and psychological services if the need arose (see Chart 4).

Table 4: Use of Counseling and Psychiatric Services Prior to Coming to Penn State

| Students who had ever: | percent "yes" |
|--|---------------|
| Received counseling | 20.7 |
| Been prescribed psychiatric medicine | 9.1 |
| Been hospitalized for psychiatric concerns | 2.6 |

Table 5: Current Use of Counseling and Psychiatric Services

| Students who are currently: | percent "yes" |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Receiving counseling on campus | 2.0 |
| Receiving counseling off campus | 3.0 |
| Taking psychiatric medicine | 5.0 |

Chart 4. Students who would utilize On-campus Counseling and Psychological Services

