

1999 ALUMNI'S
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCES
(FIVE YEARS AFTER GRADUATION)

SUMMARY RESULTS FROM THE
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

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This report is a descriptive summary of the 66 Alumni from the class of 1999 who completed the Valdosta State University Alumni Questionnaire. This is the first year of web-based survey administration. One hundred twenty valid email addresses were provided by the VSU Alumni Office for 1999 alumni. The paper survey used in previous years asked alumni to repond to ninety questions. The 2004 revised web survey eliminated over fifty questions, leaving a total of thirty-eight. Email links to the shortened survey were sent out April 2, 2004. Responses were collected through June 7, 2004, creating an increased return rate of fifty-five percent. Since Summer 1998 was the last quarter term at VSU, some of the respondents graduated under the quarter system, the remainder graduated under the semester system. It is anticipated that these results will be used by colleges and departments as one indicator of the effectiveness of the University's programs and services.

Angela Henderson, Institutional Research Analyst, designed the survey and coordinated the collection of data. Angela Henderson and Tamara Edrington, Graduate Assistant, proofread the report for accuracy. The report was analyzed and prepared by Linda Gooden, Research Associate, with the assistance of Allison Parris, Graduate Assistant, under the guidance of the Interim Director of Institutional Research, Ruth Salter. Appreciation is extended to the VSU Alumni Office who furnished the email addresses for this follow-up study. The report is organized as follows:

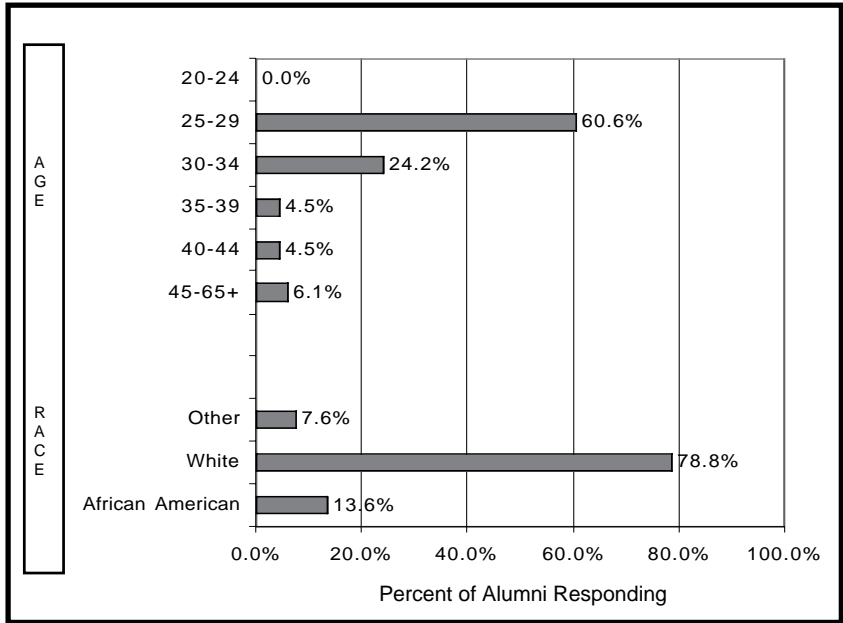
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Description of The Responding Alumni**

In order for Valdosta State University to maintain its quality of educational programs and services and assess its strengths and weaknesses, the shorter web-based Alumni Questionnaire was developed to evaluate alumni's overall experiences at Valdosta State University. The background characteristics of the alumni responding to the questionnaire are described below:

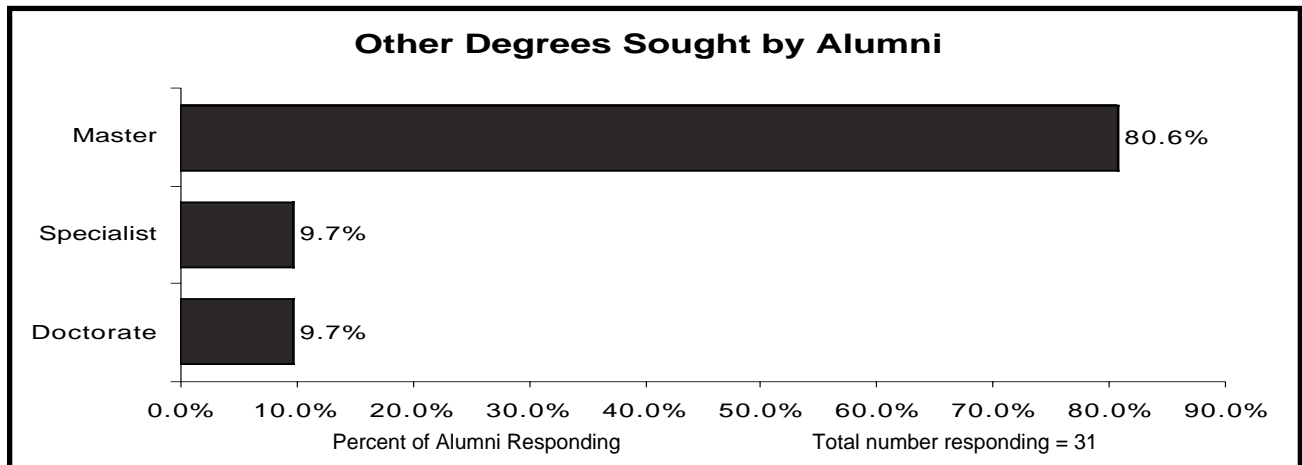
Background Characteristics

Of the 66 alumni responding to this questionnaire, sixty-one percent of the 1999 alumni reported being less than thirty years of age. Twenty-four percent were 30-34 years of age; five percent were 35-39 years of age; five percent were 40-44 years of age and the remaining six percent ranged in age from 45 to over 65. Female alumni represented sixty-two percent of the sample with the remaining thirty-eight percent representing male alumni. Distributions for race revealed that seventy-nine percent of the alumni responding were Caucasian and fourteen percent were African American; and the remaining respondents classified themselves as Multi-Racial or Asian.



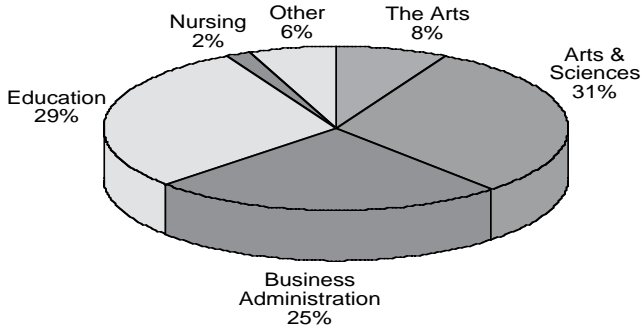
Degrees Beyond VSU

Fifty-two percent of the 1999 alumni reported seeking further education beyond the Baccalaureate earned at Valdosta State University. Of those seeking another degree, eighty-one percent sought Master's degrees, ten percent worked towards Specialist degrees and ten percent sought Doctoral degrees.



**Note: Percentages do not always sum to one hundred percent due to rounding.

Alumni's Membership in VSU Colleges



Membership in VSU Colleges

Twenty-five percent of the 1999 alumni identified their college as Business Administration, with another thirty-one percent identifying their college as Arts and Sciences. Twenty-nine percent reported that their college was Education. The remaining alumni were distributed among The Colleges of The Arts, Nursing, and Other (Social Work and Library and Information Science) as displayed in the circle graph to the left.

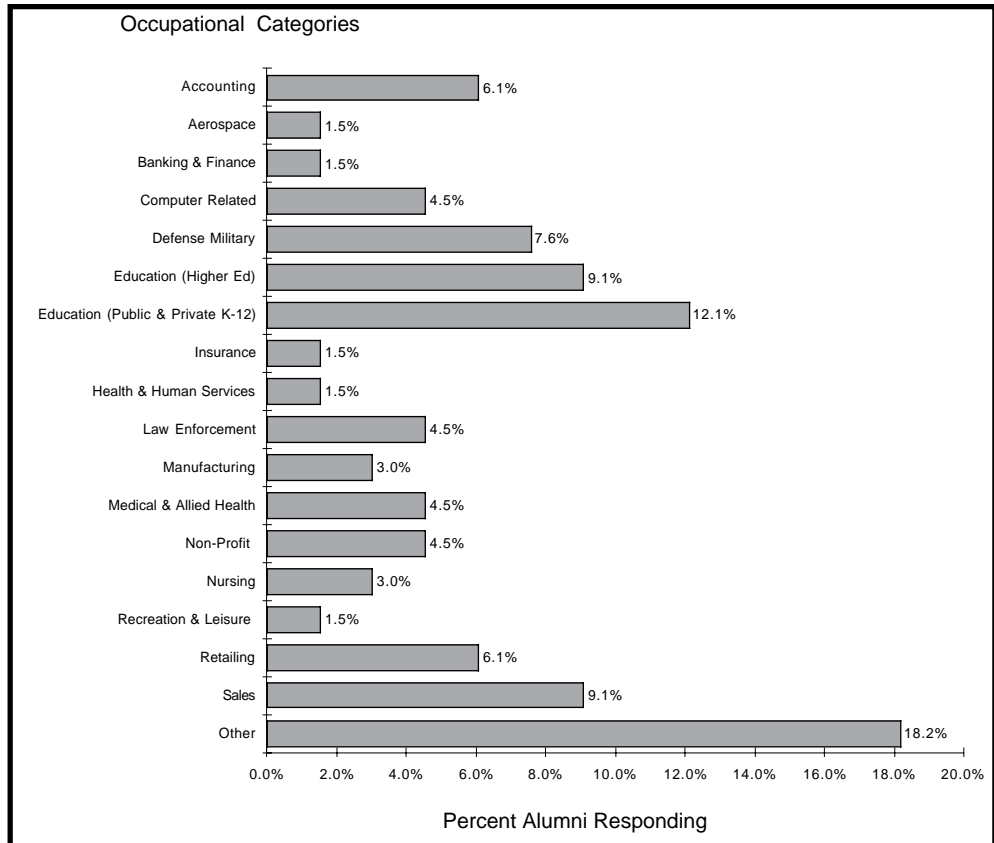
Preparation for Future Education

Two indicators of Valdosta State University's success in preparing graduates for life after

college are found in the Alumni Questionnaire. The first indicator is how well courses in the respondents' major field of study prepared alumni for further education. As a measure of whether or not courses in the respondents' major field of study were helpful in gaining admission to a professional school, fifty-three percent answered definitely yes; thirty-eight percent responded probably yes, and nine percent answered probably or definitely no. Along the same line, twenty-eight percent reported that overall Valdosta State University was excellent preparation for additional University work; forty-four percent reported their VSU experiences as good preparation and twenty-eight percent felt VSU provided adequate preparation.

Preparation for Employment

The second indicator is how well prepared for employment alumni consider themselves. Sixty-eight percent of the 1999 alumni reported courses in their major field of study were definitely to probably helpful in obtaining employment; thirty-two percent felt their major courses probably or definitely had not helped in gaining employment. Sixty-seven percent felt VSU had been good to excellent preparation for employment. At the



time of the survey, ninety-one percent of alumni were employed full-time and five percent were employed part-time.

Employment in First Job

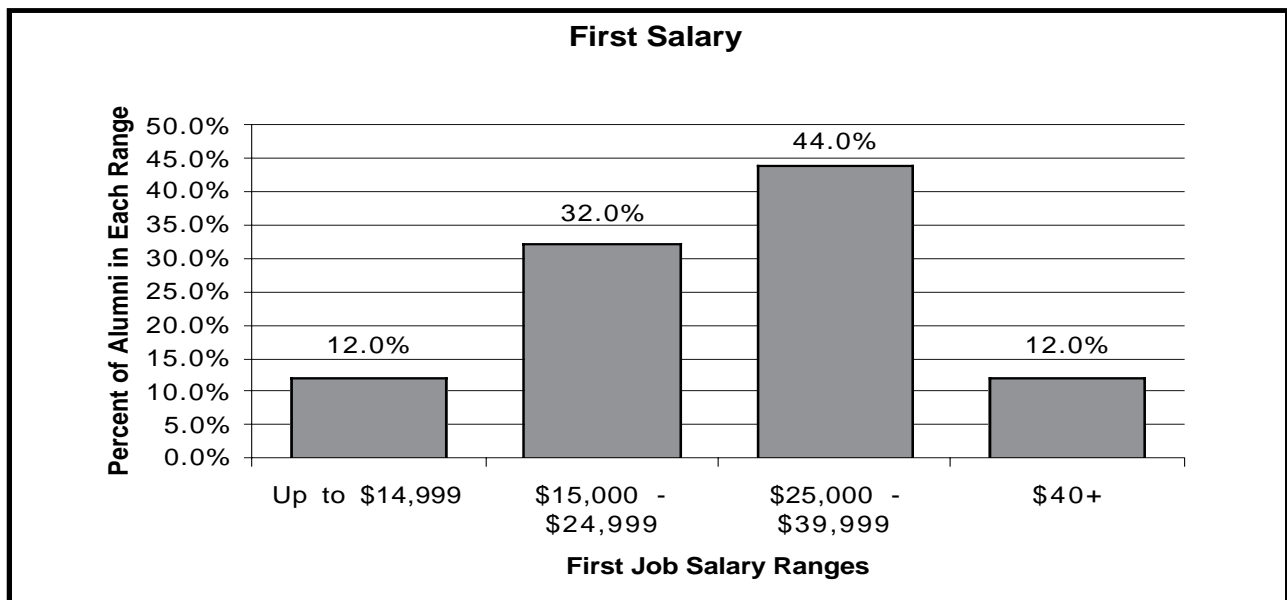
Of those employed, only twenty-six percent are still working at their first job since graduating from VSU. Thirty-three percent of alumni were employed prior to graduating VSU, thirty-six percent found their first job within one to three months of graduation, nineteen percent found their first job within four to six months of graduation, eleven percent took six months or more to find a job, and two percent are unemployed and still looking. When searching for their first job, alumni used a variety of sources to help them find employment. Thirty-one percent found their job through a direct personal application, twenty-five percent found their job through a friend or family member, six percent were contacted by their employer, three percent used the VSU Placement Office, and the remaining thirty-five percent used other means to find their job.

Employment-Occupational Categories

One of the objectives of the Alumni Questionnaire was to identify the occupational areas in which Valdosta State University alumni respondents are currently employed. As shown by the graph on the bottom of page four, twenty-one percent of the 1999 alumni are employed by public or private school systems grades K through 12 or in higher education. Nine percent of the alumni are employed in health related fields, eight percent reported employment in the business sector (accounting, banking and finance), fifteen percent are employed in sales and retailing related fields, and eight percent are employed in the defense/military field. The remaining alumni are distributed among various other occupational areas.

Annual Salary History

The 1999 alumni were asked to identify the salary range of their first jobs. Twelve percent of the respondents earned less than \$15,000 when first employed. Thirty-three percent earned between \$15,000 and \$24,999. Forty-four percent earned between \$25,000 and \$39,999. Twelve percent earned \$40,000 or more in their first job after college.



Alumni's Rating of Their Academic Experiences in the Major Field of Study and Alumni's Rating of Their Atmosphere for Learning

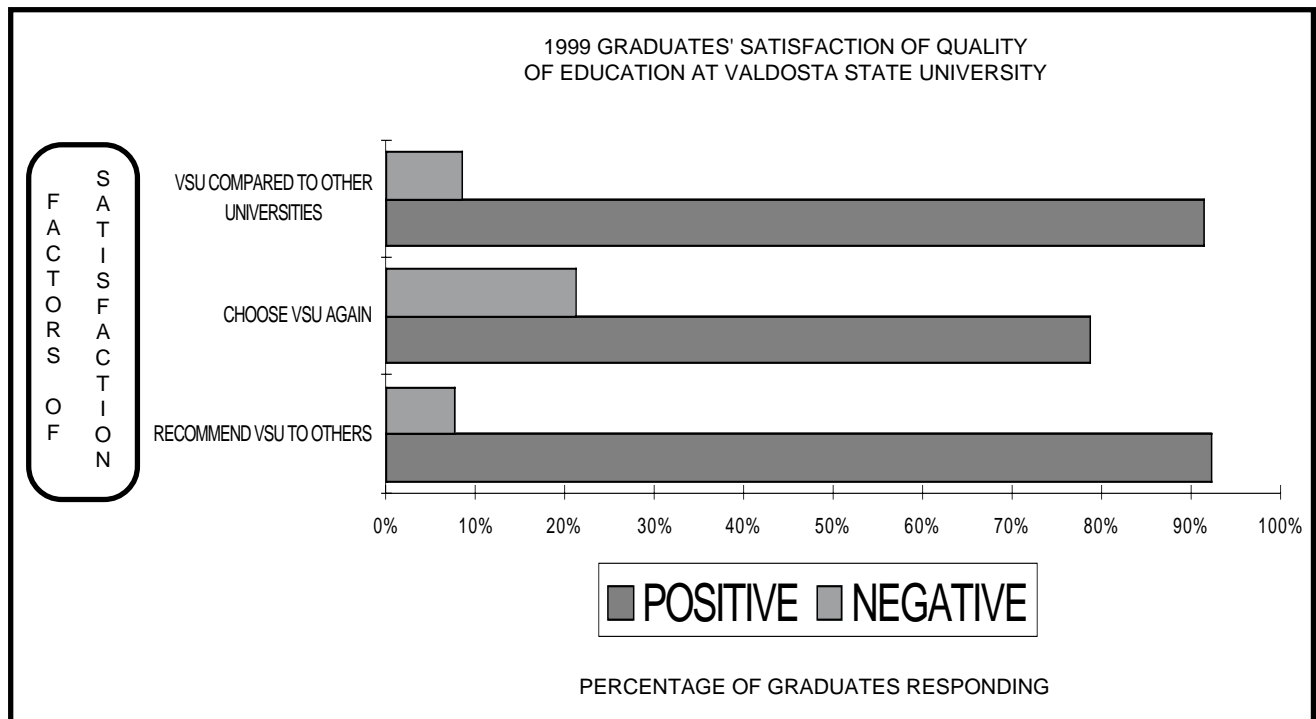
Academic Program Experiences Major Field of Study -- All Alumni	N	Mean	SD	Quality of Service			
				Excel(4)	Good(3)	Fair(2)	Poor(1)
1. Quality of VSU Undergraduate Catalog/Bulletin	57	3.16	0.62	28.1%	59.6%	12.3%	0.0%
2. Quality of Career Planning Services	32	2.31	0.74	0.0%	46.9%	37.5%	15.6%
3. Quality of Job Placement Services	24	2.00	0.83	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%
4. Quality of Veterans' Services	9	2.89	1.05	33.3%	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%
5. Quality of Public Safety	56	2.88	0.74	14.3%	66.1%	12.5%	7.1%
6. Quality of Bookstore	63	2.94	0.74	19.0%	60.3%	15.9%	4.8%
7. Quality of Registrars' Office	60	2.88	0.74	18.3%	55.0%	23.3%	3.3%
8. Quality of Continuing Ed. Office	14	3.21	0.98	50.0%	28.6%	14.3%	7.1%
9. Quality of Alumni Office	39	3.15	0.67	28.2%	61.5%	7.7%	2.6%
10. Courses as preparation for employment	63	3.17	0.69	33.3%	50.8%	15.9%	0.0%
11. Courses as preparation for graduate school	44	3.09	0.80	34.1%	43.2%	20.5%	2.3%
12. Practicum or internship experiences	39	3.15	0.90	41.0%	41.0%	10.3%	7.7%
13. Library facilities (as relate to major)	63	3.16	0.63	27.0%	63.5%	7.9%	1.6%
14. Overall quality of faculty	64	3.34	0.65	43.8%	46.9%	9.4%	0.0%
Atmosphere for Learning	N	Mean	SD	Agreement With Statement			
				DY (4)	PY (3)	PN (2)	DN (1)
15. If I began my college experience again, I would choose to attend VSU	66	3.24	0.82	47.0%	31.8%	19.7%	1.5%
16. I would recommend VSU to others	65	3.55	0.69	64.6%	27.7%	6.2%	1.5%
	N	Mean	SD	Comparison of Quality			
				Better (3)	Same (2)	Worse (1)	
17. How would you perceive the quality of education provided by VSU compared with that of other universities/colleges?	59	2.15	0.55	23.7%	67.8%	8.5%	

NOTE: N = the number of alumni responding to the item. Mean = mean of the ratings with Excellent = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, and Poor = 1 OR DY = Definitely Yes (4), PY = Probably Yes (3), PN = Probably Not (2) and DN = Definitely Not (1). SD = standard deviation of the mean. Percents have been rounded to the nearest whole number; therefore may not total 100.

How Satisfied are the Graduates with the Overall Quality of Their Education at Valdosta State University?

One indicator of an effective University program is whether or not the graduates are satisfied with the quality of their education. The graduates of the Valdosta State University class of 1999 were asked to indicate their preferences on three factors which are related to overall satisfaction with the University program.

The results showing the percentages of graduates who responded to these three factors are graphically displayed below. First, the graduates were asked to indicate if they would recommend Valdosta State University to others. Ninety-two percent of the 1999 graduates said yes. Second, the graduates were asked if they would choose to attend VSU if they were to begin college over again. For the students who graduated five years ago, seventy-nine percent said yes. Third, the graduates were asked to compare the quality of education provided by Valdosta State University with that of other Universities. For those graduates who had an opinion, ninety-two percent of the graduates said that they perceived the quality of education provided by VSU as better or the same when compared to other Universities.



Summary Highlights From 1999 VSU Alumni

■ The three Services/Facilities with the highest quality of service rating were:

- Continuing Education Office
- VSU Undergraduate Catalog/Bulletin
- Alumni Office

■ The two top-rated academic experiences for the were:

- Overall quality of the faculty
- Library facilities

■ The Annual Salary for First Job

- 12% earning \$40,000 or more
- 44% earning \$25,000-\$39,999
- 32% earning \$15,000-\$24,999
- 12% earning below \$15,000

■ Satisfaction with VSU was indicated by:

- 79% would choose to attend VSU again
- 92% would recommend VSU to others