

2002 ALUMNI'S  
PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR  
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCES  
(ONE TO TWO YEARS AFTER GRADUATION)

SUMMARY RESULTS FROM THE  
VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY  
ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

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This report is a descriptive summary of the 26 VSU Alumni who graduated during the 2002 calendar year and completed the Valdosta State University Alumni Questionnaire. This is the first year of web-based survey administration. Ninety-four valid email addresses were provided by the VSU Alumni Office for 2002 alumni. The paper survey used in previous years asked alumni to respond 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 twenty-eight percent. 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:

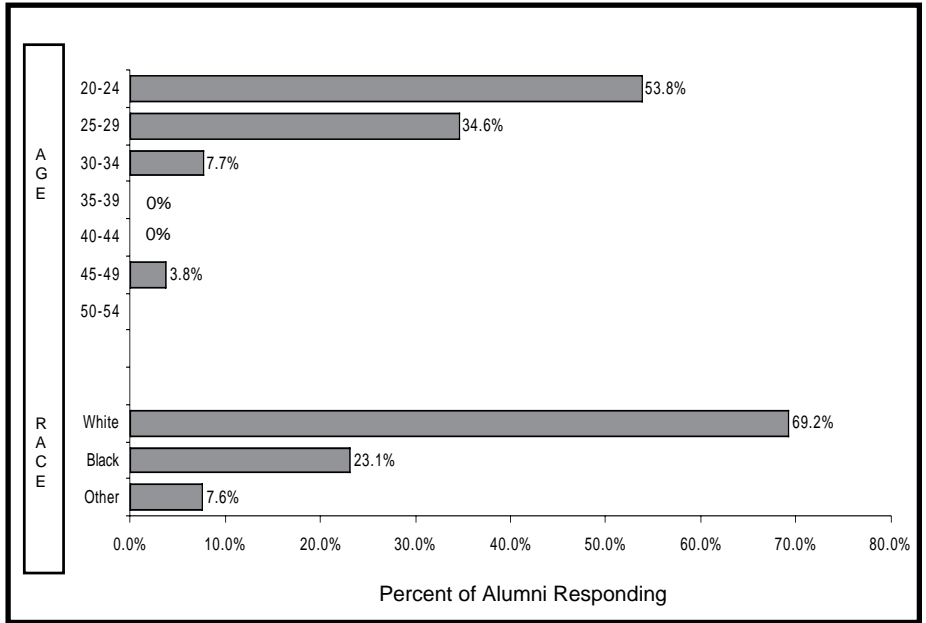
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### Description of The Responding Alumni

In order for Valdosta State University to maintain its quality of educational programs and services and assess its strengths and weaknesses, this 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.

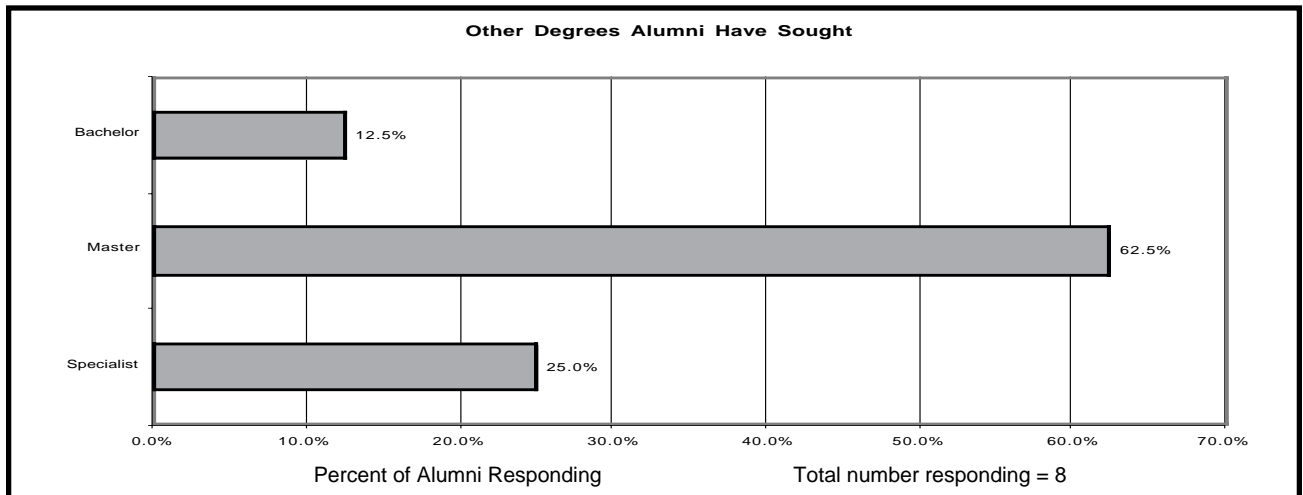
#### Background Characteristics

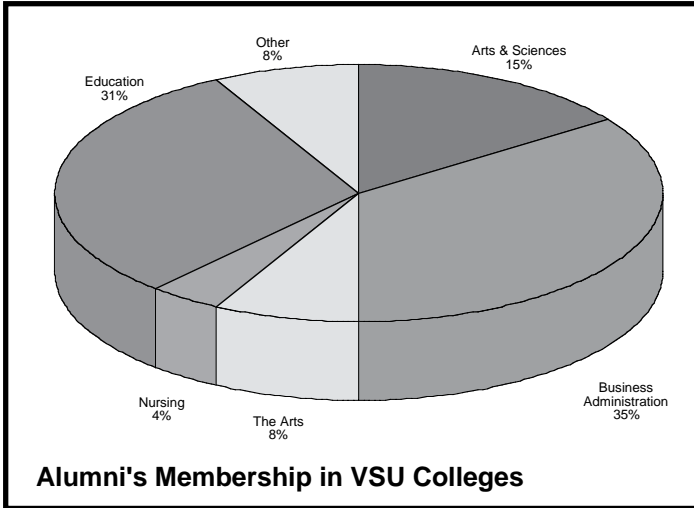
Of the 26 alumni responding to this question, fifty-four percent of the 2002 alumni reported being 20-24 years of age. Thirty-five percent were 25-29 years of age; eight percent were 30-34 years of age; and the remaining four percent were over 45 years of age. Female alumni represented eighty-one percent of the sample with the remaining nineteen percent representing male alumni. Distributions for race revealed that sixty-nine percent of the alumni who chose to respond were Caucasian; twenty-three percent were African American; and the remaining respondents classified themselves as Multi-Racial or Asian.



#### Degrees Beyond VSU

Twenty-two percent of the 2002 alumni responding reported seeking further education beyond the Baccalaureate earned at Valdosta State University. Of those seeking another degree, thirteen percent sought an additional Bachelor's degree; sixty-three percent sought Master's degrees and twenty-five percent were enrolled in Specialist programs.





**Membership in VSU Colleges**

Thirty-one percent of the 2002 alumni identified their college as Education, with another fifteen percent identifying their college as Arts and Sciences. Thirty-five percent of the alumni reported majoring in the College of Business Administration. The remaining alumni were distributed between the Colleges of Nursing, The Arts and Other as displayed in the circle graph to the left.

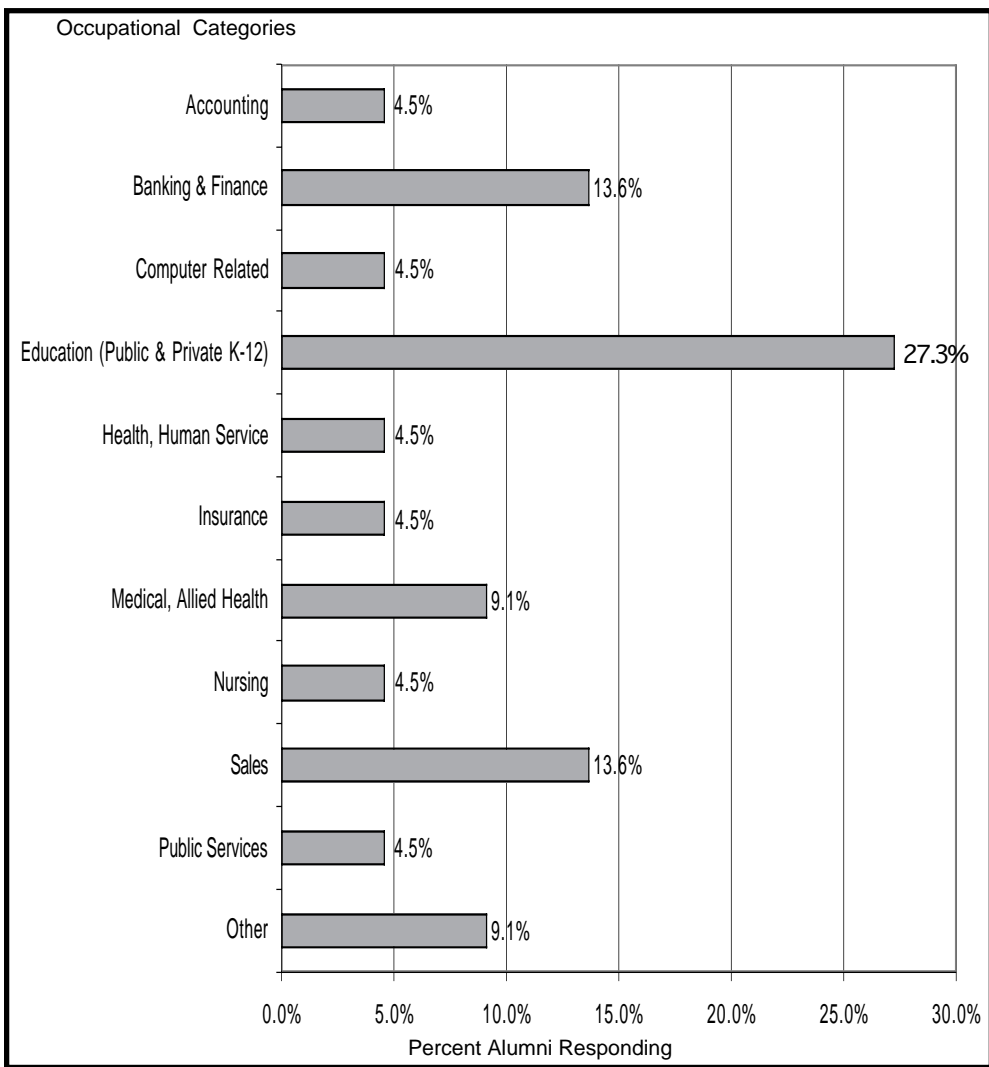
**Preparation for Future Education**

Two indicators of how well Valdosta State University has prepared its graduates after leaving the institution are found in the Alumni Questionnaire.

One indicator is how courses in the respondents' major field of study adequately prepared them 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, thirty-eight percent of the alumni answered definitely yes and sixty-three percent responded definitely no. Along the same line, thirty-eight percent reported that overall Valdosta State University was excellent preparation for additional University work; thirty-eight percent felt VSU provided good preparation; and twenty-five percent of the alumni reported that Valdosta State University was adequate preparation for additional University work.

**Preparation for Employment**

The second indicator is how well Valdosta State University has prepared graduates for employment. Forty-five percent of the 2002 alumni responding reported courses in their major field of study were definitely helpful in obtaining employment, while fifty-five percent reported courses in their major were definitely not helpful in gaining employment. Seventy-three percent felt VSU had been good to excellent



preparation for employment. At the time of the survey, eighty-three percent of alumni were employed full-time and eight percent were employed part-time.

**Employment in First Job**

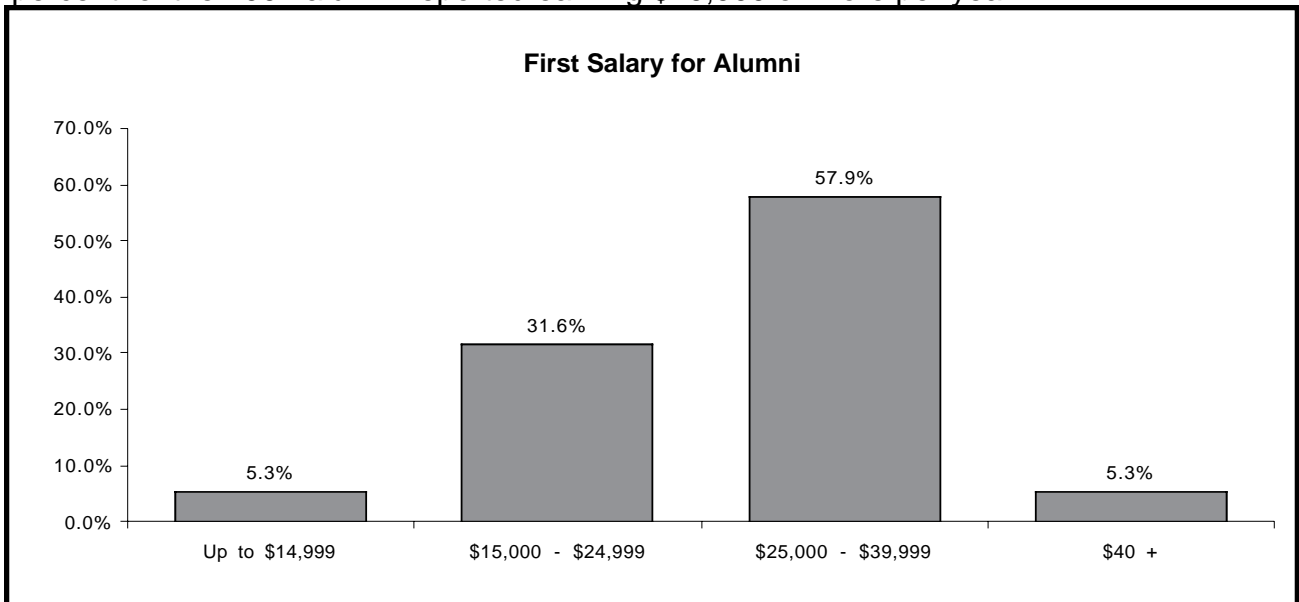
Of those employed, seventy-seven percent are still working at their first job since graduating from VSU. Forty-one percent of alumni were employed prior to graduating VSU, fifty percent found their first job within one to three months of graduation, five percent found their first job within four to six months of graduation, and five percent took six months or more to find a job. When searching for their first job, alumni used a variety of sources to help them find employment. Thirty-six percent found their job through a direct personal application, nine percent found their job through a friend or family member, nine percent got help from faculty, nine percent found their job through an ad, and the remaining thirty-six 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-seven percent of the 2002 alumni responding to the survey are employed by public school systems grades K through 12. Eighteen percent of the alumni are employed in health related fields, and eighteen percent are employed in accounting, banking and other business related fields. Fourteen percent of the alumni are employed in sales and the remaining alumni are distributed among the other occupational areas listed.

**Annual Salary History**

The 2002 alumni were asked the salary range of their first job. Five percent of the respondents reported a range below \$15,000; thirty-two percent reported a range of \$15,000 to \$24,999. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported earning \$25,000-\$39,999 and five percent of the 2002 alumni reported earning \$40,000 or more per year.



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

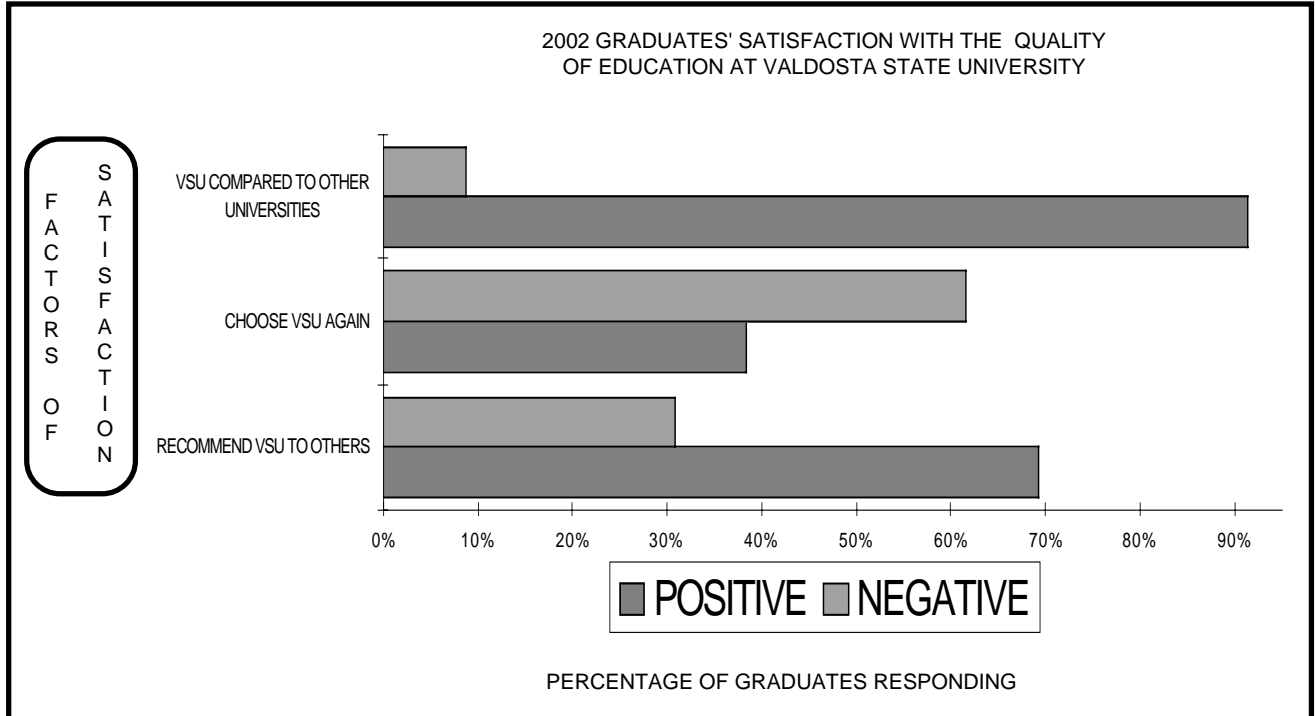
Academic Program Experiences Major Field of Study -- All Alumni	N	Mean	SD	Quality of Service			
				Excel(4)	Good(3)	Fair(2)	Poor(1)
1. Quality of VSU Undergraduate Catalog/Bulletin	25	3.44	0.58	48.0%	48.0%	4.0%	0.0%
2. Quality of Career Planning Services	18	2.67	0.84	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	11.1%
3. Quality of Job Placement Services	12	2.42	0.79	0.0%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%
4. Quality of Veterans' Services	4	3.25	0.96	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
5. Quality of Public Safety	22	2.82	0.59	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	0.0%
6. Quality of Bookstore	25	2.96	0.54	12.0%	72.0%	16.0%	0.0%
7. Quality of Registrars' Office	25	3.08	0.70	28.0%	52.0%	20.0%	0.0%
8. Quality of Continuing Ed. Office	8	3.13	0.64	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%
9. Quality of Alumni Office	8	3.13	0.64	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	0.0%
10. Courses as preparation for employment	26	3.12	0.82	34.6%	46.2%	15.4%	3.8%
11. Courses as preparation for graduate school	15	3.33	0.62	40.0%	53.3%	6.7%	0.0%
12. Practicum or internship experiences	15	3.13	0.83	33.3%	53.3%	6.7%	6.7%
13. Library facilities (as relate to major)	25	3.20	0.65	32.0%	56.0%	12.0%	0.0%
14. Overall quality of faculty	26	3.54	0.51	53.8%	46.2%	0.0%	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	26	2.12	1.45	34.6%	3.8%	0.0%	61.5%
16. I would recommend VSU to others	26	3.08	1.41	69.2%	0.0%	0.0%	30.8%
	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?	23	2.35	0.65	43.5%	47.8%	8.7%	

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 2002 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 the three factors are graphically displayed below. First, the graduates were asked to indicate if they would recommend Valdosta State University to others. Sixty-nine percent of the 2002 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 one to two years ago, thirty-eight percent said yes. This result is much more negative than last year's one to two year out alumni, eighty-four percent of whom said yes they would choose to attend VSU if they were to begin college over again. 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-one 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 2002 VSU Alumni

- The four Services/Facilities with the highest quality of service rating were:
  - VSU Undergraduate Catalog/Bulletin
  - Veterans' Services
  - Continuing Education Office
  - Alumni Office
  
- The two top-rated academic experiences for the were:
  - Overall quality of the faculty
  - Major courses as preparation for graduate/professional school
  
- The Annual Salary for First Job
  - 5% earning \$40,000 or more
  - 58% earning \$25,000-\$39,999
  - 32% earning \$15,000-\$24,999
  - 5% earning below \$15,000
  
- Satisfaction with VSU was indicated by:
  - 38% would choose to attend VSU again
  - 69% would recommend VSU to others