

More Survey Results

At the end of May 2008, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences invited more than 12,000 alumni to participate in an online survey. Once we discounted bounced and bad email addresses and survey monkey refusals, we had more than 2,000 responses and a respectable response rate of 20%.

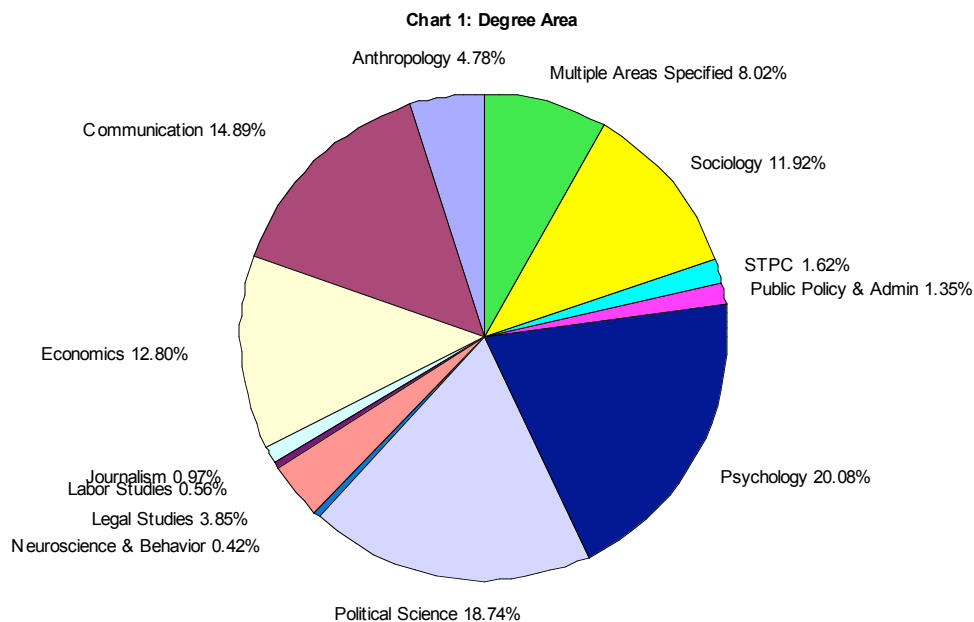
The survey collected basic data on alumni. In addition to degree information, we asked questions about their student experience, what their department did that was unique, and what they would change (see [last month's posting](#) for details on that information). We also asked for advice on how we might do a better job of connecting with alumni and if they might be interested in helping current UMass Amherst students.

Several respondents provided us with updated contact information, including their current work situation and how their degree relates to that position. A preliminary report on the results follows.

Degrees

We gave respondents the option of telling us about each degree they received at UMass Amherst. Not all degrees reported were received in SBS.

- 12% received two degrees
- 1% received three degrees
- One respondent received four degrees at UMass Amherst
- 97% of first degrees reported were bachelors degrees and the rest were masters
- Master's degrees accounted for 42% of the second degree reported, close to 4% were EdDs and the rest were second bachelors degrees
- Of third degrees (25 were reported), 3 were bachelors, 17 were masters and 5 were doctorates.



Not surprisingly, because this survey was web-based with an email invitation, more than two-thirds of all respondents received their first degree after 1980. Despite this concentration of responses among recent graduates, there was a wide range of degree years. The earliest degree reported was received in 1942 and the median year of first degree was 1989. Distribution of respondent degrees among SBS departments (see Chart 1 on the following page) was comparable to the distribution of degrees granted (see Table Two on page 15), with more responses from Anthropology and Political Science alumni than might have been expected and fewer responses from Communication and Psychology alumni.

The Student Experience

For the question, “What was the best part of your student experience at UMass Amherst, survey participants were given the following list of choices (percent response reported):

- Academic Classes 29.4%
- Residence Hall Life 20.3%
- Student Group Participation 10.0%
- Study Abroad 6.7%
- Fraternity or Sorority 6.0%
- Internship 4.0%
- Sports 3.0%
- Other 20.5%

There were some significant differences in alumni responses about the best part of their experience based on degree area.

Academic Classes as “Best Part”

- Anthropology (41%), Labor Studies (58%), Legal Studies (35%), Public Policy (50%) and STPEC (38.24%) alumni were more likely than average to select this response.
- Sociology (27%), Communication (25%), and Journalism (9.5%) alumni were less likely than average to report academic classes as the best part.

Residence Hall Life as “Best Part”

- Communication (26.4%) and Neuroscience (66.7%) alumni were more likely than average to select this response as the best part of their UMass Amherst experience.
- Anthropology (10%), Journalism (14.3%), Legal Studies (16.46%), Political Science (17.19%), and STPEC (8.82%) alumni were less likely to report residence hall life as the best part of their experience.

Student Group Participation as “Best Part”

- Journalism (14.3%) and STPEC (14.7%) alumni were more likely to give this response.
- Anthropology (8%) alumni were less likely to select this response.

Study Abroad as “Best Part”

- Legal Studies (1.3%) alumni were less likely to list study abroad as the best part.
- Alumni in Anthropology (11%), Journalism (14.29%), and STPEC (11.76%) alumni were more likely to list study abroad.

Alumni opinions regarding what they reported as the best part of their UMass Amherst experience also varied by degree year. Although there are fewer responses from earlier degree years, general patterns are apparent in how students felt about study abroad programs, student group participation, Greek life, and academic classes.

- Students completing degrees prior to 1990 were more likely to report academic classes as the best part of their UMass Amherst experience.
- A higher percentage of students receiving degrees before 1970 identified Greek life as the best part of their college experience.
- Participation in study abroad programs and student groups were more likely to be cited as the best part by students receiving degrees between 1995 and 2008.

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