

Collegiate Results Instrument (CRI)
Alumni Survey Results for Skidmore College - 2000
The Knight Collaborative & the Institute for Higher Education at Univ. of Penn.

Rationale & Methods

The intention of the Collegiate Results Instrument (CRI) is to provide an alternative to US News & World Report College Rankings. The primary goal of the CRI is to help high school students identify the best possible fit in a college. The concept stems from the stated belief that different people have different needs for different types of quality, and that it is in everyone's interest to have a better-informed consumer.

Eighty-three institutions participated in the survey and 24 were liberal arts colleges. The survey targeted graduates who completed degree programs 5 years ago. All Skidmore Class of 1993 graduates (August 1992 and May 1993 graduates) received a survey and a follow-up survey, if necessary, during the Fall 1999 and Spring 2000 semesters. Participants were also given the option to complete the survey on the web. Of 483 reachable students in the Class of 1993, 203 returned a survey for a 42% response rate.

Target Scoring & Overall Indices - Skidmore & Other Institutions

Twenty-four items were used to measure student-institutional fit in 5 arenas: work skills, abilities, lifelong learning, personal values, and occupations. The 24 items, with the exception of occupations, were created using factor analyses to identify similar questions that tended to load together. A threshold score was typically identified by setting the scores to 1 for each item in an index and summing them. Responses were collapsed into 3-point scales. Using this method, each item in the index had equal weight. Since students were given a score of 0, 1, or 2 on each item, only students who exceeded the threshold score were included in the reported percentages. This allowed for greater variation in the data and rewarded for consistency plus (e.g., reporting a 1 on every item in the index is not enough to exceed the threshold --- the graduate would need to report a 2 on at least one item and 1's for the rest). This method also provided a clearer picture of the number of graduates really engaged in a particular activity. Averages were not used since they tended to move toward the mean and provided little variation across such a homogenous group.

The percentage of the respondents exceeding the threshold scores is presented in the following chart (see Table I). Skidmore did fairly well on most items. For many measures, 50 to 70 percent of alumni exceeded the threshold scores. However, many of the findings for Skidmore and liberal arts schools in general could have been predicted.

When considering personal values, Skidmore graduates tended to be very interested in the arts. They scored lower on items categorized as "religious," but did not differ greatly from other graduates in their physical fitness and civic/community activities. Academically, alumni tended to report they were generally effective communicators and organizers. Quantitative and information retrieval skills of Skidmore alumni did not differ greatly when compared to alumni of all liberal arts schools participating. Four-fifths of Skidmore graduates reported they like to learn, but only 58% reported they like to keep informed. Skidmore alumni also tended to report high ratings on writing and presentation skills. However, Skidmore graduates reported less confidence when interpreting data, diagnosing problems, working with technical equipment, etc. than graduates of other schools (see Work Skills - Analyzing Index).

The percentage of Skidmore graduates pursuing post-baccalaureate study did not differ greatly from the response group. Skidmore graduates were more likely than the norm to report working in creative arts and design and less likely to be involved in science and engineering fields. Overall, the most popular occupation for Skidmore graduates was business.

Table I: Percent of Respondents Exceeding the Index Threshold Value

Category	Item	Skidmore	Liberal Arts Colleges	All Institutions
		<i>N=203</i>	<i>24 colleges N=6278</i>	<i>83 colleges N=33022</i>
PERSONAL VALUES	Arts and Culture	68***	50**	40*
	Civic/Community	57**	56**	49*
	Physical Fitness	56**	54**	53**
	Religious	14*	30*	34*
ABILITIES	Communicate/Organize	69***	69***	63**
	Quantitative	63**	61**	61**
	Find Information	62**	61**	47*
WORK SKILLS	Writing/Presenting	67***	74***	68***
	Organizing	65**	69***	68***
	Customer/Client	61**	62**	60**
	Analyzing	52**	62**	63**
LIFELONG LEARNING	Like to Learn	80***	70***	65**
	Keep Informed	58**	62**	59**
OCCUPATION	Business	33**	34**	33**
	Professional (Other)	17***	12***	10***
	Teaching/Counseling	13**	13**	13**
	Creative Arts/Design	11***	5**	4*
	Health/Social Services	8*	5*	8*
	Law	6***	6***	4**
	Non-Professional	6*	8*	9*
	Science/Engineering	5*	12*	17**
	Medicine/Dentistry/ Veterinary Medicine	3**	4***	3**
POST-BACCALAUREATE EDUCATION	Advanced Degrees	55***	54***	45**
	Courses/Certificates/ Credentials	24*	23*	26**

Key:			
	*	**	***
Personal Values, Abilities, Work Skills, & Lifelong Learning	Less than half of the respondents exceeded the threshold for a given index	Half to under two-thirds of respondents exceeded the threshold	At least two-thirds of the respondents exceeded the threshold
Occupations & Post-Baccalaureate Education	The percentage of respondents is below the national norm	The percentage of respondents is above the national norm, but not 50% above the norm	The percentage of respondents is at least 50% above the national norm

Occupations, Education, & Activities

Three-quarters of respondents reported they were working full-time and nearly one-fifth said they were attending school (see Table II). Relatively few graduates were seeking employment. Forty-two percent of Skidmore alumni completed a graduate degree in the 5 years since graduating and 17% were currently enrolled in a graduate program. A total of 55% of Skidmore alumni reported completion of a graduate degree and/or current enrollment in a graduate degree program. One-quarter of graduates noted they had completed a Master's degree with another 9% still enrolled in a Master's program (see Table III). Many students pursued non-degree courses and certificates as well. The most popular occupations of Skidmore graduates were managerial or administrative positions (see Table IV). Forty-one percent of graduates noted that their current job/position was directly related to their major field of study at Skidmore. Thirty-eight percent said they were working in positions indirectly related to their major, while 17% said their positions were not related at all. Table V indicates whether students draw from certain subjects in their current positions, and whether they took a course in the discipline. Nearly half of all alumni indicated they earned between \$30000 and \$50000 in 1999 (see Table VI). Part-time workers tended to earn less than full-time employees.

Table II: Employment, Educational Pursuits, and Other Activities of Skidmore Alumnae

Work full-time only	75%
Keep house	21%
Work as a volunteer	17%
Attending school part-time	9%
Attending school full-time	8%
Work full-time and part-time at more than one job	8%
Looking for work	5%
Work part-time only	4%
Work part-time at more than one job	4%
Child or elder care	4%

Table III: Additional Schooling Since Attending Skidmore

	Completed	Enrolled In
Non-Degree Courses	30%	3%
Master's	28%	9%
Certificate or Diploma	8%	1%
Professional Degree	8%	3%
MBA	5%	3%
Doctorate	4%	3%
Additional Bachelor's	3%	1%

Table IV: Most Popular Occupations of Skidmore Alumnae

Managerial & Administrative (executive, director, etc.)	18%
Teacher & Counselor	13%
Other Professional	10%
Writer, Artist, & Entertainer	9%
Management Support (accountant, analyst, etc)	6%
Lawyer & Judicial Professional	6%
Social Scientist	4%

Table V: Use of Academic Content Areas in the Workplace by Skidmore Graduates

	Use subject in current job/position	Took at least one course in discipline in college
Composition/Writing	85%	90%
Communications	79%	19%
Math/Statistics	66%	60%
Business	64%	36%
Computer Science	61%	21%
Humanities	50%	75%
Social Sciences	50%	70%
Visual/Performing/Design Arts	45%	71%
Education	43%	26%
Foreign Languages	31%	88%
Social Work/Services	31%	33%
Health Sciences	30%	40%
Natural/Physical Sciences	28%	79%
Engineering	7%	3%

Table VI: Annual Earnings of Alumni/ea Five Years After Graduation (1999) by Employment Status

1999 Earnings	All Alumni (N=201)	Work FT, One Job (N=153)	Work PT, One Job (N=9)	Work FT & PT, More than One Job (N=16)	Work PT, More than One Job (N=9)
<= \$30000	22%	14%	78%	18%	56%
\$30001 - \$50000	49%	49%	22%	81%	33%
>= \$50001	29%	37%	0%	0%	11%

FT=Full- Time & PT=Part-Time

Skills in the Work Place

Respondents were asked to report whether they used the following skills (see Table VII) in their jobs either regularly, occasionally, or never. Many Skidmore graduates reported using higher-level thinking skills and appear to be self-directed. Very few respondents worked with the elderly, wrote for publication, or performed statistical analyses.

Table VII: Skills & Activities Used in Current Job/Position - Skidmore Graduates		
	% Regularly	% Never
Retrieve information	82%	1%
Set priorities among competing tasks	79%	4%
Work with clients/customers/patients	67%	12%
Diagnose problems	56%	10%
Plan projects/events	54%	12%
Manage/supervise people	53%	11%
Interpret data	50%	17%
Read professional journals/periodicals	49%	7%
Work with technical equipment	42%	22%
Write reports/manuals	38%	16%
Make presentations	38%	14%
Work with budgets/financial records/accounts	31%	34%
Design products/procedures/performances	26%	37%
Set an agenda for meetings	24%	31%
Work with children	23%	63%
Sell products/services	23%	57%
Perform in public	21%	57%
Perform statistical analyses	15%	56%
Write for publication	13%	64%
Work with the elderly	7%	77%

Personal Preferences

Alumni were also asked to report how important each of the items in Table VIII was to their personal well-being. Using a scale ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), Alumni provided a rating for each item. Friendships and family were found to be extremely important to life satisfaction of graduates. Religious observance and working for social causes were much less important.

Graduates were also asked about their participation in select activities during the past year (see Table IV). Respondents were again given the option to choose the frequency of their participation (never, occasionally, or regularly). Using the Internet and exercising were fairly frequent activities of many alumni. Graduates were much less likely to participate in political or religious activities.

Table VIII: Personal Values of Skidmore Alumni by Importance

	Mean
Forming/retaining friendships	4.66
Time with family	4.50
Being financially secure	4.24
Artistic experiences	3.97
Physically fit	3.97
Informed about politics	3.21
Achieving personal wealth	3.15
Volunteering	2.99
Participating in sports	2.95
Current on science	2.91
Working for social/political cause	2.88
Engaging in religious observance	2.20

Table IV: Participation in Select Activities During the Past Year

	Regularly	Never
Use internet	70%	4%
Exercise	65%	4%
Host social event	56%	0%
Read novels	53%	9%
Movies	44%	2%
Arts & crafts	26%	25%
Concerts/theater	24%	4%
Read about int'l events	24%	11%
Read about economy	23%	28%
Took courses	20%	47%
Read about science	20%	30%
Personal interest organization	16%	31%
Volunteer work	15%	37%
Museums/galleries	13%	18%
Team sports	12%	58%
Attend religious service	11%	45%
Read religious works	6%	75%
Worked on political campaign	1%	96%

Conclusion

Despite the good intentions of the CRI Alumni Survey in potentially offering an alternative to “rankings-mania,” the information tended to be less useful internally at the institutional level. Many of the findings were consistent with other sources of information about Skidmore students and graduates (e.g., Senior Survey, Career Services Alumni Survey, etc.). Nevertheless, the results offered an interesting portrait of Skidmore alumni five years after graduation.

Joe Stankovich
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