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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 1994 Alumni Outcomes Survey represents a continuing effort to conduct student educational assessment at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. This activity is one of a variety of University assessment programs/activities. Others are reported separately in an annual summary to the Office of the President.

This is the third campus-wide survey of UH-Mānoa baccalaureate alumni (1989, 1991, 1994). It is intended to measure educational outcomes at the college level. The results provide a wealth of data and comparative information on the activities in which UH-Mānoa alumni are currently engaged and their retrospective assessment of their undergraduate experience. This report also provides useful insights and suggests areas for further research and action.

The survey was mailed to 1,315 alumni who earned their baccalaureate degrees from UH-Mānoa in the spring, summer, or fall term of 1989; 419 or 32% responded. A response rate in the 30% range is considered average for surveys of this type.

Alumni rated their overall undergraduate experience at Mānoa as good or excellent (78%), and were satisfied or very satisfied with their academic preparation (89%). Increased academic knowledge, understanding of people, self-confidence, and job preparation were the most frequently cited gains from the UHM collegiate experience. Establishing personal independence and preparing for a job were identified by the largest number of respondents as the most important gain of their UHM experience. When asked to rate the extent of help received in skill areas, alumni felt their undergraduate education at UH-Mānoa helped them a great deal with gaining desirable employment and acquiring self-study, group-work, and problem-solving skills. Alumni placed great importance on the need for their undergraduate education to help them develop as a person and learn how to write effectively.

The majority (72%) perceive a baccalaureate degree from UH-Mānoa as being of average quality, and believe others’ perception of it to be slightly lower. Over 22% thought their degree was above average in quality. Most alumni (69%) reported taking five or more years to complete their baccalaureate programs.

More than 93% reported being employed. Of those employed, 78% are employed on O‘ahu and 91% are employed full-time. The largest numbers are employed in private industry (39%) and state government (30%). Most 1989 alumni (78%) earn over $25,000 per year; the largest group (44%) earns $25,000 to $34,999. Nursing and engineering graduates were among those commanding the highest earnings. On average, alumni have primary jobs that are directly related to their major, are satisfied with their employment and career orientation, and feel that they received adequate preparation for employment.

Alumni continue to develop new skills and interests after graduation, and over 42% indicated they pursued further higher education beyond their first bachelor’s degree at Mānoa. Of those completing additional higher education, the largest proportion (76%) have done so at UH-Mānoa; 18% have completed further higher education at a mainland institution. Of those currently pursuing higher education, the largest proportion
(42%) are pursuing a master’s degree; about a fourth are taking courses but not a degree program, 9% a first professional degree, and 9% a doctoral degree.

The most popular post-baccalaureate fields of study are education (10%) and business administration (5%). The most frequently given reasons for not attending UH-Mānoa for post-baccalaureate work were lack of an available program (34%), personal reasons (24%), and pursuit of a better program elsewhere (19%).

Most alumni named instructors, campus life and departments/programs as the campus factors that contributed most to their educational gains while at UH-Mānoa. At the same time, instructors, parking and facilities were the most frequently cited areas of disappointment. As in the previous surveys (1989 and 1991), the student-teacher relationship continued to be a critical factor affecting the overall quality of the undergraduate experience. The most common recommendations were to review and change college requirements and standards, provide better advisors and guidance, and improve the quality of professors.

Survey respondents were generally representative of 1989 UHM baccalaureate graduates in terms of gender, ethnicity, and field of study. Noting that women, Engineering and Nursing students are slightly over represented, the results of this survey can be taken as a reasonable reflection of the alumni as a whole.
INTRODUCTION

In spring 1994, the Office of Planning and Policy conducted a campus-wide survey to measure the educational outcomes of University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa baccalaureate alumni who had graduated in the spring, summer, or fall term of 1989. The assessment instrument, a questionnaire consisting of fifty-one items in four sections, was designed to gather information about the current activities of alumni and elicit candid responses about their undergraduate experiences and recommendations for changes at UH-Mānoa.

This is the third campus-wide survey of UH-Mānoa baccalaureate alumni. The initial survey was administered in spring 1989 to alumni who had earned their baccalaureate degrees from the Mānoa campus between the spring semester of 1983 and the fall semester of 1984, inclusive. The second survey was administered in spring 1991 to alumni who had earned UHM baccalaureate degrees in the spring, summer or fall term of 1986. This report provides an analysis of 1994 responses, and compares responses with previous surveys—primarily 1991—to determine trends and if significant changes have occurred over the five-year period.

Mailing addresses for the alumni were obtained from the University of Hawai‘i Foundation Office. Questionnaires were mailed to 1,315 alumni; 97 questionnaires (7.4%) were returned as undeliverable. Completed surveys were received from 419 respondents, representing a 32% rate of return. Response rates in the 30% range are considered average for surveys of this type. With this sample size, a difference of five percentage points is considered significant.

The survey procedure presented a couple of concerns. Alumni who are sedentary are much easier to track than those who change their address frequently. Thus, one might anticipate a sampling bias in favor of permanent Hawai‘i residents. Those who do not move around are more likely to keep in touch with the alma mater if they had a positive undergraduate experience or if they continue to perceive a close relationship between their academic experience and their evolving personal or professional identity. Therefore, one might conclude that the survey results will be more favorable toward the University than those obtained from a completely unbiased sample.

For some data displays (especially the college-level data included in the Appendix), the number of responses may be too small to permit definitive conclusions. Females and engineering/nursing majors are slightly overrepresented in the respondent group. These warnings should be kept in mind when using or commenting on the survey results.

This report highlights information thought to be especially interesting. Resources permitting, the Office of Planning and Policy intends to periodically administer a UHM campus-wide alumni survey as an ongoing assessment activity. When taken as a whole, the spring 1994 alumni survey report can be viewed as a reasonable reflection of previous (1989, 1991) and prevailing alumni attitudes and accomplishments.
Between 62% and 82% of the alumni selected academic knowledge, independence, understanding of people, self-confidence, and job preparation as areas where they had gained experience during their undergraduate years of study at Mānoa.

As in the 1991 survey, these results continue to suggest that the undergraduate experience at Mānoa is perceived by students to benefit their cognitive skills, affective growth and development, and employment potential.

Survey results indicate that establishing personal independence and preparing for a job continue to be perceived as the foremost benefits of an undergraduate education at Mānoa.

Over 78% of the respondents rated their overall undergraduate experience at Mānoa as being either Good or Excellent.
Alumni felt their undergraduate education at Mānoa helped them a great deal with gaining desirable employment (44.7%) and acquiring self-study, group-work and problem-solving skills (34.5% to 38.0%).

A relatively high percentage of alumni indicated that their undergraduate education at Mānoa did not help them at all in understanding relationships between technology and the natural environment (18.3%), adjusting to new job demands (15.8%) and using mathematics in everyday life and work (14.3%).

Most alumni felt it was important that their undergraduate education at Mānoa help them develop as a person (89.8%) and learn how to write effectively (89.6%).

Compared to previous alumni outcomes surveys, steady increases were noted in the percentage of alumni who felt that their undergraduate education helped them a great deal with writing effectively (21.2% in 1988, 27.6% in 1991, 30.5% in 1994).

Although 79% of the respondents felt it was important that their undergraduate education help them in adjusting to new job demands, almost half (49.8%) indicated that Mānoa provided little to no help.

Over 89% were Satisfied or Very Satisfied with their academic preparation and only 1.2% were Very Dissatisfied. 1989, 1991, and 1994 survey findings are very similar for this variable.
The majority (72%) perceived their degree from Mānoa as being of *Average* quality, and perceived others as rating the UHM degree lower than they do themselves. Over 22% thought their degree was *Above Average*. Alumni reported similar perceptions in the 1991 survey.

42% of UH-Mānoa graduates who earned their bachelor's degree in 1989 have pursued further higher education. Compared to the previous survey (1991) of those who earned their bachelor's degree in 1986, there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of alumni who pursued post-baccalaureate study (from 52.0% to 42.4%).

Of those seeking further higher education beyond their first Bachelor's degree, about a third have completed, and over 41% are pursuing, a *Master's* degree.

A similar proportion (39.7%) have completed courses but not a specific degree.

There was a noticeable increase, compared with 1991, in the percentage of alumni that either completed a *Professional Diploma (Education)* (+9.2%) or are pursuing a *Master's* degree (+9.3%).
The largest—and growing (+17.0%)—proportion of respondents pursued or completed further higher education at UH-Mānoa. 18% to 30% have advanced their higher education on the mainland. Of interest is the relatively large decrease in the percentage of alumni who reported completing their post-baccalaureate study on the mainland—28.1% in 1991 and 18.3% in 1994.

We know separately that between 1990 and 1993, there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of graduating seniors (-6.3%) who planned to advance their higher education on the mainland.

A vast majority (94%) of respondents indicated that they felt adequately or more than adequately prepared for post-baccalaureate study.

For fields of study with 15 or more responses, most Arts and Humanities and Education majors reported being Moderately Well to Very Well prepared for post-baccalaureate study.

Program Unavailability (34%) was the most frequently cited reason for not attending UH-Mānoa for post-baccalaureate studies.

Personal Reasons (24%), such as moved to the mainland, and pursuit of a Better Program Elsewhere (19%) were also given as important factors for not attending UH-Mānoa for post-baccalaureate studies.
As in the previous survey (1991), *Education* and *Business Administration* continue to be the most frequently chosen post-baccalaureate fields of study by alumni.
Noting that multiple responses were permitted, more than 93% of the alumni reported being employed, while over 10% said they were enrolled in a college or university.

Of those employed, 91% reported being employed full time (at least 35 hours per week).

Architecture, Dental Hygiene, Education, Health Sciences, and Social Work graduates reported full employment.

A relatively high percentage of respondents in Natural Sciences (50%) are pursuing additional education.

The two largest sectors for employment were Private Industry, at over 39%, and State Government, at over 29%.

Dental Hygiene, Architecture, Business Administration, and Engineering majors have the highest proportion of employment in Private Industry.

As expected, Education majors are concentrated in State Government and Travel Industry Management graduates are concentrated in the Tourist sector.

Over 78% reported being employed on O’ahu, with the Mainland U.S. as the second most frequently mentioned location of employment.

All majors are well-represented on O’ahu.

For majors with 20 or more responses, Tropical Agriculture & Human Resources and Arts & Humanities majors showed the highest proportions employed on the U.S. Mainland.

Employment on the Neighbor Islands is concentrated among Education and Engineering majors.
Most alumni (over 78%) are earning over $25,000 per year, with the largest proportion (44%) falling in the $25,000 to $34,999 range.

Between 1991 and 1994, there was a significant decrease in the percentage of alumni who reported earning $20,000 to $24,999 (-10.1%) and a noticeable increase in those earning over $30,000.

Graduates in Nursing (49%) and Engineering (33%) were among those commanding the highest earnings ($45,000 or more).

Over 81% of the alumni responding plan to continue their career in the field in which they are currently employed.

Nearly 91% indicated that they were adequately to well prepared by UH-Mānoa for their current primary job.
Nearly 60% have primary jobs that are directly related to their major field of undergraduate study.

Between 1991 and 1994, increasing job interest, rather than Better Pay, became the main reason for selecting a current non-major-related primary job.

There was a significant decrease, compared with 1991, in the percentage of alumni (-7.7%) who selected a non-major-related primary job because of Better Pay. Conversely, there was a noticeable increase in alumni who made this selection because they did not feel sufficiently qualified for a job in their major (+7.5%).
With respect to gender, males were slightly underrepresented (-7.7%) and conversely females were slightly over represented (+7.8%) when compared to UH-Mānoa graduates who earned their baccalaureate degrees during the spring, summer or fall term of 1989.

In terms of ethnic background, the respondents were generally representative of UH-Mānoa graduates who earned their baccalaureate degrees in 1989.
In terms of field of study, Social Science and Business Administration students were underrepresented and Engineering and Nursing students were overrepresented among survey respondents.

Most respondents were under age 30 (72%) and took five or more years to complete their programs (over 69%).
Slightly over 56% of the survey respondents provided comments about what campus factors contributed most to their educational gains while at UH-Mānoa.

Of those providing comments, Instructors, Campus Life, and Departments/Programs were most frequently mentioned as factors contributing to their educational gains.

Compared to 1991, there was a noticeable decrease in the percentage of alumni who mentioned items relating to the general nature of collegiate life as the most rewarding aspects of their experience at Mānoa—for example Personal Growth (-12%), Personal Relationships (-10.7%), and Well-Rounded Curriculum (-14.1%).

Of the 58% providing comments about the most disappointing aspect of their experience at Mānoa, most were negative and dissatisfied with Instructors, Parking, and Facilities. Generally, they felt instructors: tended to be "cold"; were more interested in their research projects than their students' academic welfare; and were not giving their students sufficient priority.

Conversely, alumni also identified Instructors as a factor that contributed most to their educational gain while at Mānoa—thus the student-teacher relationship emerges as a critical factor in affecting the quality of undergraduate experience.
Of the 48% that responded, the most common recommendations were to Review and Change College Requirements and Standards, Provide Better Guidance/Advisors, and Improve the Quality of Professors.

Lack of Practical Job Experience and More Classes (frequency of offerings/number of sections) were other areas where alumni felt changes were needed.