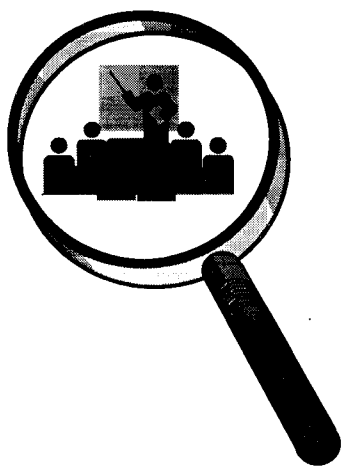


**Graduating Senior  
Survey**  
for  
**December 1998/  
May 1999**



OFFICE OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Robert Wyatt, Interim Director  
Ian Hubrig, Student Research Assistant  
Emily Jungling, Student Research Assistant

242 Gilchrist  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa 50614-0029

January 2000

**Introduction:**

This document presents an analysis of the **Graduating Senior Survey**, given December 19, 1998 and May 8, 1999 prior to Graduation Exercises. Usable responses were obtained from 1,674 students (548 December, 1998 and 1126 May, 1999). Each student was asked to respond to the 48 questions on the survey. In addition, students were asked to provide information about employment plans, their future address and to identify members of the faculty and staff whose efforts especially contributed to their success.

The **Graduating Senior Survey** was originally developed for use at the Spring 1997 Graduation and has since been used for the December 1997, Spring 1998, December 1998 and May 1999 Graduations. Only minor format changes have been made. The original survey was developed by :

Reinhold Bubser	Professor and Associate Dean, Modern Languages
Cindy Carlson	Administrative Assistant, Executive Assistant to the President
Pat Geadelmann	Executive Assistant, Director of External Relations
Bob Kramer	Associate Director, Center of Social and Behavioral Research
Gene Lutz	Director, Center of Social and Behavioral Research
Mike Mixsell	Academic Administrative Services Coordinator
Robert Wyatt	Interim Director of Information Management & Analysis

**Methodology:**

Data from the December 1998 and May 1999 graduations were combined into a single data base for purposes of analysis. Demographic information was then obtained from Information Technology Services and matched with the file containing student responses to the survey. Data were then analyzed to show patterns of response by various groups. These included: College of major, Transfer status and Ethnicity. Each Group was then subdivided to contrast male/female response. Table II presents summary data for December 1998 and May 1999 to aid in profiling trends.

**Cautionary Note:**

The student responses presented in this analysis should be considered to be indicative of potential issues rather than definitive statements. As such, all the responses and the comments presented should be examined in the total context of individual Colleges and Departments. Limitations inherent in the mode of data collection should also be noted. Nonetheless, it is the hope of the authors of the study that others will perform additional research on the issues raised in order to improve the total educational experience of students at the University of Northern Iowa.

**Results:**

Table I provides some general observations on the survey. These observations are intended to stimulate further examination and thought. Table II presents a summary of average responses to individual items for the five times the survey has been used. Both the average response and the percent responding Good/Excellent or Agree/Strongly Agree are presented.

Table III presents a commentary on **differences** in average responses found within various groups from the combined data of the December 1998 and May 1999 graduations. This commentary is intended to draw the reader's attention to various patterns but is not meant to exclude the presence of other patterns or relationships. Items with relatively large differences in agreement were cited but were typically limited to three or less observations per item. The number of individuals in the sub-groups was considered but an absolute standard was not used. Thus the comments in this Table should be considered a starting point rather than definitive. Please note also that the level of average responses, as well as differences in average response, may indicate issues for further analysis.

Finally, a detailed analysis of each of the 48 items on the survey is presented. Differences in the average responses of Males and Females are highlighted, as are differences in the average responses found within categories.

## Table I General Impressions

Please note that all relationships mentioned in Table I are drawn from the detailed analysis of individual survey items. The values cited are averages of student responses on the survey instrument with 1 indicating the lowest level of agreement and 5 the highest. The percent rating the item *Good/Excellent* or *Agree/Strongly Agree* is also shown.

The best general view of survey results is found in Table II, which summarizes average responses obtained on this survey in the five times it has been used. Figures cited below are based on the average responses for December 1998 and May 1999.

**1) Students perceive that their communication skills have been enhanced at UNI.**

*Item 1. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for speaking effectively. Avg= 3.92; G&E 77.68%.*

*Item 2. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for communicating through writing. Avg=3.93; G&E 76.35%.*

*Item 3. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for understanding written information. Avg=4.16; G&E 87.64%.*

*Item 4. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for listening effectively. Avg=4.09; G&E 83.12%.*

While averages are relative high, agreement varies by College of Major.

**2) Students' perception of their basic computer skills and basic computational skills is mixed.**

*Item 5. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using basic computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.) 3.84; G&E 68.03%. Note: The percent expressing agreement on this item was 60.1% in May 1997.*

*Item 6. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for making basic calculations and computations. Avg=3.88; G&E 69.88%*

Average responses in this area vary greatly by College of Major.

**3) Students do not perceive UNI as a strong contributor to preparing to use a foreign language.**

*Item 7. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using foreign language skills. Avg=2.91; G&E 33.16%.*

**4) Students perceive that UNI has enhanced their problem solving skills.**

*Item 10. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for solving problems. Avg=4.08; G&E 83.19%.*

*Item 11. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for learning new things. Avg=4.26; G&E 89.05%.*

*Item 12. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for thinking creatively. Avg=4.13; G&E 81.97%.*

Averages are relatively high in this area.

**5) Students perceive that UNI has contributed to their professional development.**

*Item 15. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for conducting yourself in a professional manner. Avg=4.08; G&E 83.19%.*

*Item 18. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working under pressure. Avg=4.31; G&E 88.35%.*

*Item 20. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working independently. Avg=4.24; G&E 87.38%.*

*Item 21. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working with people of diverse backgrounds. Avg=3.95; G&E 73.74%.*

*Item 22. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working as a team member. Avg=4.28; G&E 86.69%.*

*Item 23. Rate how well UNI has prepared you for leading others. Avg=4.09; G&E 80.65%.*

Responses in this area are quite uniform and relatively high.

**6) Students perceive UNI's Teaching and Learning Environment as positive but have questions about the purpose and quality of the General Education Program.**

*Item 24. Most of the courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding. Avg=3.97; A/SA 87.86%.*

*Item 25. Most of my instructors were intellectually stimulating. Avg=3.87; A/SA 83.76%.*

*Item 28. My academic experience at UNI made me want to be a lifelong learner. Avg=4.08; A/SA 87.10%.*

*Item 30. The overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent. Avg=4.05; A/SA 88.07%.*

*Item 31. The overall quality of most General Education courses is excellent. Avg=3.34; A/SA 52.06%.*

*Item 32. The purposes of most General Education courses are very clear. Avg=3.32; A/SA 52.64%.*

Once again, instructors of general education courses may want to consider a clear statement of purpose, or linkage to the student's overall educational experience, as part of the introduction to the course.

**7) Students perceive that they had positive relationships with faculty and other students at UNI and that UNI has a good academic and social climate.**

*Item 35. The faculty I had contact with were very committed to advancing student learning. Avg=4.14; A/SA 92.23%.*

*Item 36. At least one faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals. Avg=4.34; A/SA 94.16%.*

*Item 37. I developed close relationships with other students. Avg=4.30; A/SA 94.80%.*

*Item 38. I often engaged in social activities with other students off campus. Avg=4.14; A/SA 87.66%.*

*Item 39. I often participated in University or student sponsored activities on campus. Avg=3.48; A/SA 61.96%.*

*Item 40. Alcohol abuse is a major problem among students at UNI. Avg= 3.08; A/SA 38.42%.*

*Item 42. Sexual harassment is a problem at UNI. Avg=2.61; A/SA 18.08%.*

The overall tenor of this section continues to reflect well on UNI's efforts to foster a sense of community. Individual items do, however, reflect varying opinions and show that UNI is not immune to problems found elsewhere in society.

**8) Students perceive that they received a quality education at UNI and would recommend UNI to others.**

*Item 46. I believe I have received a high quality education from UNI. 4.23; A/SA 94.15%.*

*Item 47. I would recommend my major to a prospective student. Avg=4.22; A/SA 90.75%.*

*Item 48. I would recommend UNI to a prospective student. Avg=4.32; A/SA 94.47%.*

While students express concerns in various areas, they value the education they have received at UNI and, in general, would recommend UNI to prospective students. .

### **Introduction to Table II**

Table II presents summary information from the five times (May 1997, December 1997, May 1998, December 1998, and May 1999) the survey has been used. The average response to items and the percent responding Good/Excellent or Agree/Strongly Agree are given. The results are remarkably similar. It may be useful to focus on the percent responding Good/Excellent or Agree/Strongly Agree. Whether the percentage achieved is satisfactorily high (or low) is left to the reader, but there is room for movement on several of the items.

**THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY BLANK**

**Table II Summary of Responses**

	MAY 97 AVG % G&E	DEC 97 AVG % G&E	MAY 98 AVG % G&E	DEC 98 AVG % G&E	MAY 99 AVG % G&E
1= POOR; 2= FAIR; 3= AVERAGE 4= GOOD; 5= EXCELLENT					
Average and Percent responding Good or Excellent					
# 1 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for speaking effectively.	3.89 75.6%	3.85 73.1%	3.88 74.0%	3.97 79.6%	3.90 76.8%
# 2 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for communicating through writing.	3.92 74.6%	3.88 73.4%	3.93 74.2%	3.98 77.4%	3.90 75.8%
# 3 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for understanding understanding written information.	4.12 85.5%	4.09 85.0%	4.15 85.9%	4.20 89.5%	4.15 86.7%
# 4 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for listening effectively.	4.04 79.9%	4.01 80.0%	4.09 80.5%	4.14 85.1%	4.06 82.2%
# 5 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using basic computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.).	3.69 60.1%	3.70 62.1%	3.77 66.1%	3.82 65.7%	3.85 69.1%
# 6 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for making basic calculations and computations.	3.86 67.8%	3.73 63.8%	3.89 70.0%	3.83 68.4%	3.90 70.6%
# 7 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using foreign language skills.	2.88 31.1%	3.04 36.6%	2.85 31.4%	2.97 33.2%	2.88 33.1%
# 8 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for planning projects.	4.03 77.3%	4.02 77.4%	3.96 75.5%	4.09 80.7%	3.97 75.6%
# 9 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for defining problems.	4.05 80.5%	3.94 77.4%	3.99 78.1%	4.02 80.6%	3.96 76.1%
# 10 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for solving problems.	4.14 83.9%	4.01 77.7%	4.13 84.2%	4.09 84.4%	4.07 82.6%
# 11 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for learning new things.	4.32 90.4%	4.22 87.1%	4.30 89.2%	4.33 91.2%	4.23 88.0%
# 12 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for thinking creatively.	4.14 80.8%	4.11 81.4%	4.15 83.8%	4.20 85.1%	4.10 80.4%
# 13 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for bringing information/ideas from different areas together.	4.07 79.0%	4.05 80.3%	4.12 82.3%	4.11 83.3%	4.03 79.6%
# 14 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using research skills.	4.01 74.4%	4.00 75.4%	4.06 78.9%	4.07 78.6%	4.01 77.2%
# 15 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for conducting yourself in a professional manner.	4.27 85.7%	4.18 84.1%	4.30 87.5%	4.30 88.0%	4.25 86.6%
# 16 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for upholding ethical standards.	4.12 82.4%	4.08 80.1%	4.14 80.5%	4.17 83.0%	4.12 81.9%
# 17 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for adapting to change.	4.19 84.7%	4.12 82.9%	4.21 84.5%	4.24 86.6%	4.14 83.3%
# 18 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working under pressure.	4.32 88.0%	4.25 86.0%	4.34 89.0%	4.37 90.7%	4.28 87.2%
# 19 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for making decisions.	4.21 86.3%	4.18 86.4%	4.23 87.5%	4.24 89.4%	4.16 85.4%
# 20 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working independently.	4.28 88.3%	4.20 86.7%	4.32 89.2%	4.32 89.2%	4.20 86.5%
# 21 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working with people of diverse backgrounds.	3.98 74.1%	4.02 77.1%	3.95 71.8%	4.07 77.4%	3.89 72.0%
# 22 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working as a team member.	4.30 86.2%	4.27 86.0%	4.30 87.1%	4.33 88.8%	4.25 85.6%
# 23 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for leading others.	4.12 80.0%	4.07 79.6%	4.11 80.0%	4.14 81.5%	4.07 80.2%



TABLE II - CONTINUED

	MAY 97	DEC 97	MAY 98	DEC 98	MAY 99
	AVG % G&E	AVG % G&E	AVG % G&E	AVG % G&E	AVG % G&E
1=STRONGLY DISAGREE;2= DISAGREE;3= NOT SURE; 4= AGREE;5=STRONGLY AGREE Average and Percent responding Agree or Strongly Agree					
# 24 Most of the courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding.	3.92 86.1%	3.89 85.4%	3.97 88.4%	4.02 91.7%	3.90 86.0%
# 25 Most of my instructors were intellectually stimulating.	3.86 81.4%	3.83 81.8%	3.85 80.5%	3.97 88.8%	3.83 81.4%
# 26 Most of my courses required integration of subject matter from several academic areas.	3.89 82.0%	3.86 82.0%	3.86 81.6%	3.94 84.0%	3.88 83.4%
# 27 My learning experience was cumulative over a series of courses.	4.15 93.9%	4.06 89.9%	4.17 94.4%	4.19 96.3%	4.12 93.4%
# 28 My academic experience at UNI made me want to be a lifelong learner.	4.10 87.4%	3.99 82.4%	4.08 85.9%	4.13 89.2%	4.05 86.1%
# 29 Most of my student peers valued high academic achievement.	3.88 78.1%	3.90 80.0%	3.91 80.9%	3.95 82.6%	3.95 83.7%
# 30 The overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent.	4.03 87.2%	4.02 87.1%	4.03 86.2%	4.11 89.9%	4.02 87.2%
# 31 The overall quality of most General Education courses is excellent.	3.28 50.2%	3.31 48.9%	3.30 49.7%	3.39 53.7%	3.31 51.3%
# 32 The purposes of most General Education courses are very clear.	3.23 49.4%	3.27 48.7%	3.29 51.9%	3.34 53.1%	3.31 52.4%
# 33 Most of the General Education courses were readily available when I wanted to take them.	3.52 66.3%	3.43 62.5%	3.57 67.6%	3.57 66.5%	3.52 66.0%
# 34 Most of the courses in my major were readily available when I wanted to take them.	3.77 76.7%	3.68 74.4%	3.80 78.7%	3.80 79.1%	3.77 77.4%
# 35 The faculty I had contact with were very committed to advancing student learning.	4.12 90.6%	4.08 89.4%	4.13 90.1%	4.20 93.6%	4.11 91.6%
# 36 At least one faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals.	4.39 93.5%	4.25 91.2%	4.36 93.2%	4.36 94.6%	4.34 94.0%
# 37 I developed close relationships with other students.	4.28 91.6%	4.23 91.2%	4.29 92.5%	4.36 95.7%	4.27 94.4%
# 38 I often engaged in social activities with other students off campus.	4.16 87.0%	4.05 84.4%	4.12 85.5%	4.13 88.9%	4.14 87.1%
# 39 I often participated in University or student sponsored activities on campus.	3.51 63.7%	3.36 58.8%	3.45 60.2%	3.45 61.1%	3.50 62.4%
# 40 Alcohol abuse is a major problem among students at UNI.	3.12 39.6%	3.24 46.0%	3.19 44.4%	3.12 40.2%	3.07 37.6%
# 41 Most UNI students are tolerant of people whose lifestyles are different than their own.	3.62 69.8%	3.61 69.0%	3.58 68.9%	3.71 75.5%	3.60 69.4%
# 42 Sexual harassment is a problem at UNI.	2.72 18.7%	2.70 18.7%	2.67 20.1%	2.66 21.1%	2.59 16.7%
# 43 The UNI community values excellence in all of its endeavors.	3.91 81.8%	3.93 82.8%	3.90 83.1%	4.00 87.7%	3.92 84.7%
# 44 The UNI community values intellectual vitality.	3.96 84.0%	3.96 85.7%	3.96 86.0%	4.05 90.3%	3.97 87.1%
# 45 The UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas.	3.78 75.4%	3.84 77.8%	3.78 75.9%	3.85 80.3%	3.80 77.4%
# 46 I believe I have received a high quality education from UNI.	4.21 94.6%	4.17 92.3%	4.21 93.3%	4.28 95.3%	4.20 93.6%
# 47 I would recommend my major to a prospective student.	4.22 89.6%	4.14 87.9%	4.21 89.0%	4.23 89.8%	4.22 91.2%
# 48 I would recommend UNI to a prospective student.	4.31 93.9%	4.28 93.2%	4.29 92.9%	4.37 94.9%	4.30 94.3%

### Table III Differences in Average Responses

Higher mean values indicate greater agreement with statements. The percent responding Good/Excellent or Agree/Strongly Agree is expressed as **(BOLD PERCENT)**. Differences in mean responses are the focus of the following comments. (Note: The symbol > should be read as **-mean response of \_\_\_\_\_ ##% greater than mean response of \_\_\_\_\_**) See the analysis of individual items in the survey for full details.

**1 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for speaking effectively. (77.68%)**

Humanities & Fine Arts Majors 8.82% > Natural Science majors.

**2 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for communicating through writing. (76.35%)**

Humanities & fine Arts majors 8.374% > Business Science majors.

**3 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for understanding written information.**

**(87.64%)** Uniform level of response.

**4 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for listening effectively. (83.12%)**

Uniform level of response.

**5 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using basic computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets, etc.). (68.03%)** The percent expressing agreement has increased from 60.1% in May 1997. Business majors 17.51% > Social & Behavioral Science majors; Natural Science majors 8.78% > Social & Behavioral Science majors; Social & Behavioral Science Men 5.67% > Social & Behavioral Science Women.

**6 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for making basic calculations and computations.**

**(69.88%)** Business majors 19.03% > Humanities & Fine Arts majors; Natural Science majors 14.60% > Humanities & Fine Arts majors.

**7 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using foreign language skills. (33.16%)**

Humanities & fine Arts majors 15.12% > Natural Science majors; Business women 12.63% > Business men.

**8 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for planning projects. (77.27%)** Education

majors 17.90% > General Science majors.

**9 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for defining problems. (77.57%)** Education

majors 13.04% > General majors.

**10 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for solving problems. (83.19%)** Education

majors 11.43% > General majors.

**11 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for learning new things. (89.05%)** Women

3.67% > Men. It is interesting to note that the average responses for Women were higher than those for Men in all subcategories.

- 12 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for thinking creatively. (81.97%)** Education majors 12.87% > General majors; Business majors 1.36% > General majors.
- 13 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for bringing information/ideas together from different areas. (80.78%)** Education majors 10.64% > General majors.
- 14 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for using research skills. (77.69%)** Social & Behavioral Science majors 11.51% > General majors.
- 15 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for conducting yourself in a professional manner. (87.06%)** Education majors 10.88% > General majors; Natural Science majors 1.15% > General majors.
- 16 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for upholding ethical standards. (82.26%)** Education majors 11.84% > General majors; Natural Science majors 1.11% > General majors.
- 17 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for adapting to change. (84.38%)** Uniform level of response.
- 18 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working under pressure. (88.35%)** Uniform level of response.
- 19 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for making decisions. (86.68%)** Uniform level of response.
- 20 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working independently. (87.38%)** Natural Science women 7.73% > Natural Science men.
- 21 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working with people of diverse backgrounds. (73.74%)** Education majors 10.68% > General majors.
- 22 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for working as a team member. (86.69%)** Education majors 10.77% > General majors; Natural Science majors 0.50% > General majors.
- 23 Rate how well UNI has prepared you for leading others. (80.65%)** Women 4.05% > Men.
- 24 Most of the courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding. (87.86%)** Uniform level of response.
- 25 Most of my instructors were intellectually stimulating. (83.76%)** Uniform level of response.
- 26 Most of my courses required integration of subject matter from several academic areas. (83.60%)** Education majors 7.20% > Natural Science majors.

- 27 My learning experience was cumulative over a series of courses. (94.36%)** Uniform level of response.
- 28 My academic experience at UNI made me want to be a lifelong learner. (87.10%)** Education majors 10.33% > General majors; Business majors 0.28% > General majors.
- 29 Most of my student peers valued high academic achievement. (83.33%)** Education majors 9.90% > General majors.
- 30 The overall quality of teaching at UNI is excellent. (88.07%)** Education majors 7.66% > Natural Science majors.
- 31 The overall quality of most General Education courses is excellent. (52.06%)** General majors 7.98% > Humanities & Fine Arts majors.
- 32 The purposes of most General Education courses are very clear. (52.64%)** Uniform level of response.
- 33 Most of the General Education courses were readily available when I wanted to take them. (66.17%)** Uniform level of response.
- 34 Most of the courses in my major were readily available when I wanted to take them. (77.94%)** Business majors 6.74% > Humanities & Fine Arts.
- 35 The faculty I had contact with were very committed to advancing student learning. (92.23%)** Uniform level of response.
- 36 At least one faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals. (94.16%)** Humanities & Fine Arts majors 8.03% > General majors.
- 37 I developed close relationships with other students. (94.80%)** Humanities & Fine Arts majors 7.95% > General majors.
- 38 I often engaged in social activities with other students off campus. (87.66%)** Uniform level of response.
- 39 I often participated in University or student sponsored activities on campus. (61.96%)** Education majors 9.30% > Social & Behavioral Science majors.
- 40 Alcohol abuse is a major problem among students at UNI. (38.42%)** Other Ethnic 13.78% > White Non-Hispanic; Humanities and Fine Arts majors 10.10% > Business majors.
- 41 Most UNI students are tolerant of people whose lifestyles are different than their own. (71.38%)** Education majors 7.85% > Humanities & Fine Arts.
- 42 Sexual harassment is a problem at UNI. (18.08%)** General majors 17.41% > Natural Science majors; Humanities & Fine Arts majors 11.27% > Natural Science majors; Other Ethnic 12.95% > White Non-Hispanic; Other Ethnic women 19.95% > Other Ethnic men.

**43 The UNI community values excellence in all of its endeavors. (85.69%)** Education majors 5.46% > Natural Science majors.

**44 The UNI community values intellectual vitality. (88.12%)** Uniform level of response.

**45 The UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas. (78.32%)** Humanities & Fine Arts women 10.55% > Humanities & Fine Arts men.

**46 I believe I have received a high quality education from UNI. (94.15%)** Education majors 8.27% > General majors.

**47 I would recommend my major to a prospective student. (90.75%)** Education majors 9.02% > Social & Behavioral Science majors.

**48 I would recommend UNI to a prospective student. (94.47%)** Education majors 9.69% > General majors.