



**University of
Northern Iowa**

Reflections of a Graduate Student

2013-2014 Academic Year

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Graduate Student Report

Abstract

The University of Northern Iowa Graduate Program Survey was used by the University of Northern Iowa to gain constructive feedback from graduate students at the time of commencement. The overall purpose of this study was to allow the university to see the social and academic experiences graduate students were wanting and achieving in their experience at the graduate level. This survey supplies the university with feedback to provide a better graduate experience for future students, if necessary, and informs the university with where graduate students are being placed in employment or taking advantage of other options after graduate. This survey focused on two main areas in the students' lives: academic and social activity. Questions in this survey ranged from the preparation of the program for future goals to the overall satisfaction of the graduate program.

This survey was given at the December and May commencement ceremonies, allowing the students to look back upon their time at the university before walking across the stage at commencement. For the 2013-2014 academic year, 282 graduate students completed the survey out of the 354 students who attended graduation, with a total response rate of 79.7%.

Graduate Student Report

Survey Highlights

- 89.8% of graduate students proceeded into full-time, paid employment after the commencement ceremony.
 - This included: 100% of CBA graduate students, 91.6% of COE graduate students, 87.9% of CHAS graduate students, and 84% of CSBS graduate students.
- No graduate students responded that they were proceeding to the military service, starting or raising a family, or volunteering after graduation.
- The majority of individuals from each college were not furthering their education with only 17.2% of students accepted to programs in higher education after graduation.
- Learning new skills for a career (59.9%), personal growth (59.5%), an advancement or promotion (55.1%), and a new career (50.2%) were noted as the top reasons for going into the graduate program.
- The majority of students were highly satisfied of their program in the areas of personal growth (65.5%), learning new skills for their career (63.7%), intellectual stimulation (61.0%), and advancement or promotion (54.4%).
- Graduate students also felt that their skill development or preparation for a future career was excellent throughout their program, especially in the areas of learning new things (93.9%), working independently (93.0%), conducting oneself professionally (92.6%), and working as a team (92.2%).
- Academically and socially, students felt the faculty was committed to advancing student learning (95.7%), the faculty was interested in the student's academic goals (95.2%), student courses were intellectually stimulating (94.8%), and that they had a cumulative learning experience across courses (93.4%).
- By the time of commencement, graduate students felt that they had strong academic and social environment during their time as a graduate student at the University of Northern Iowa.

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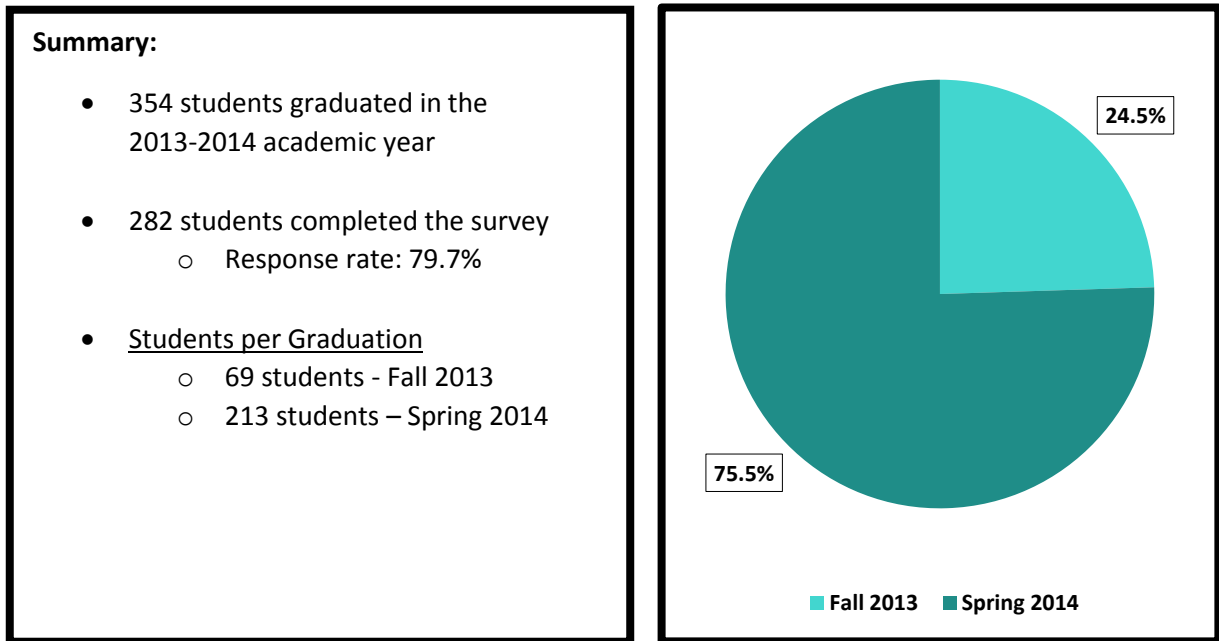


Figure 1.1 – Respondents per graduation

Demographics

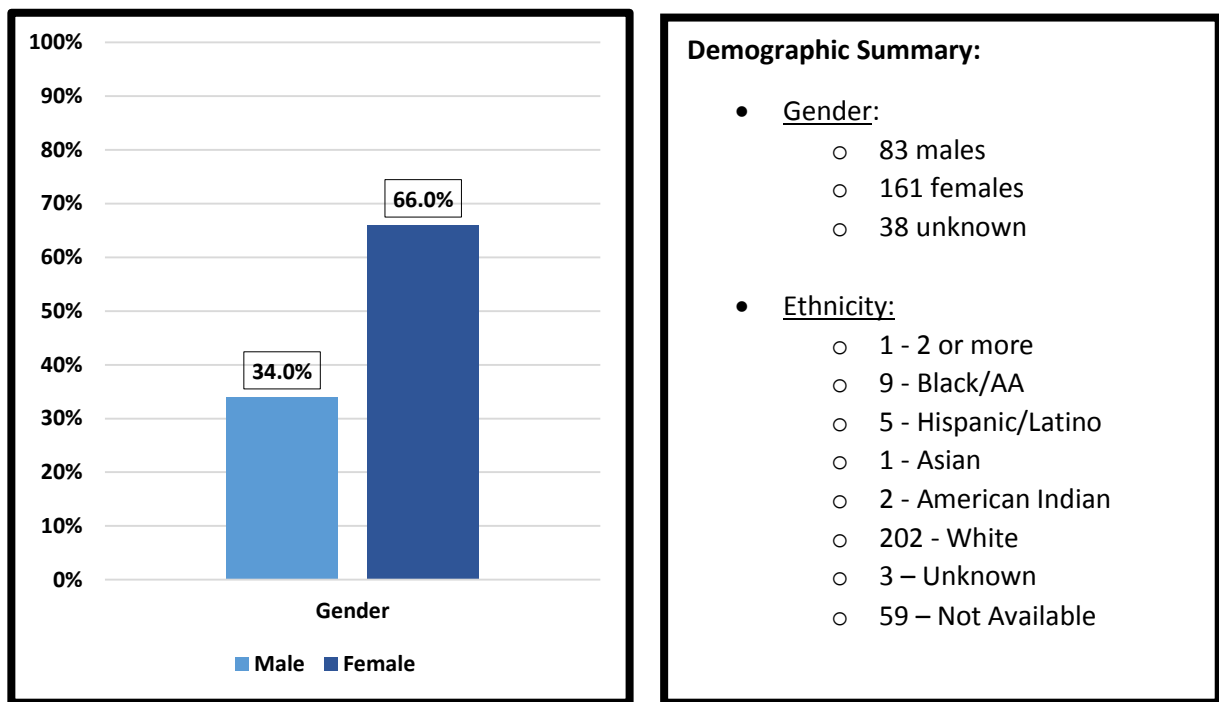


Figure 1.2 – Respondents per gender

Graduate Student Report

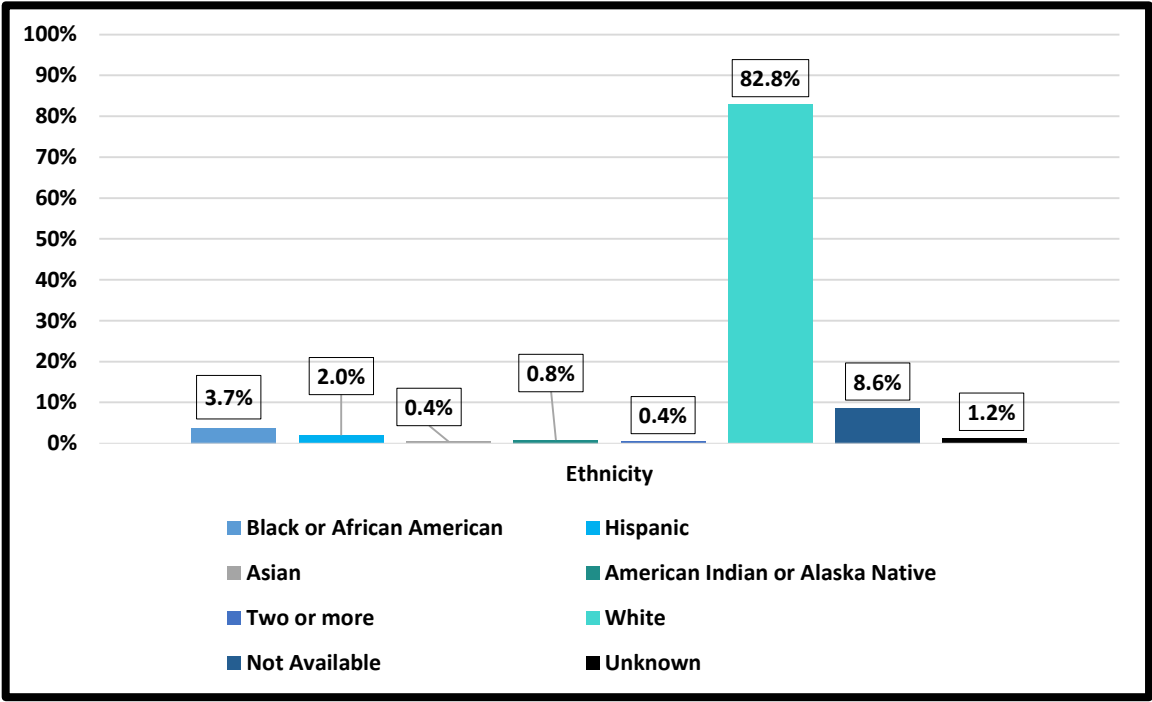


Figure 1.3 – Respondents per ethnicity

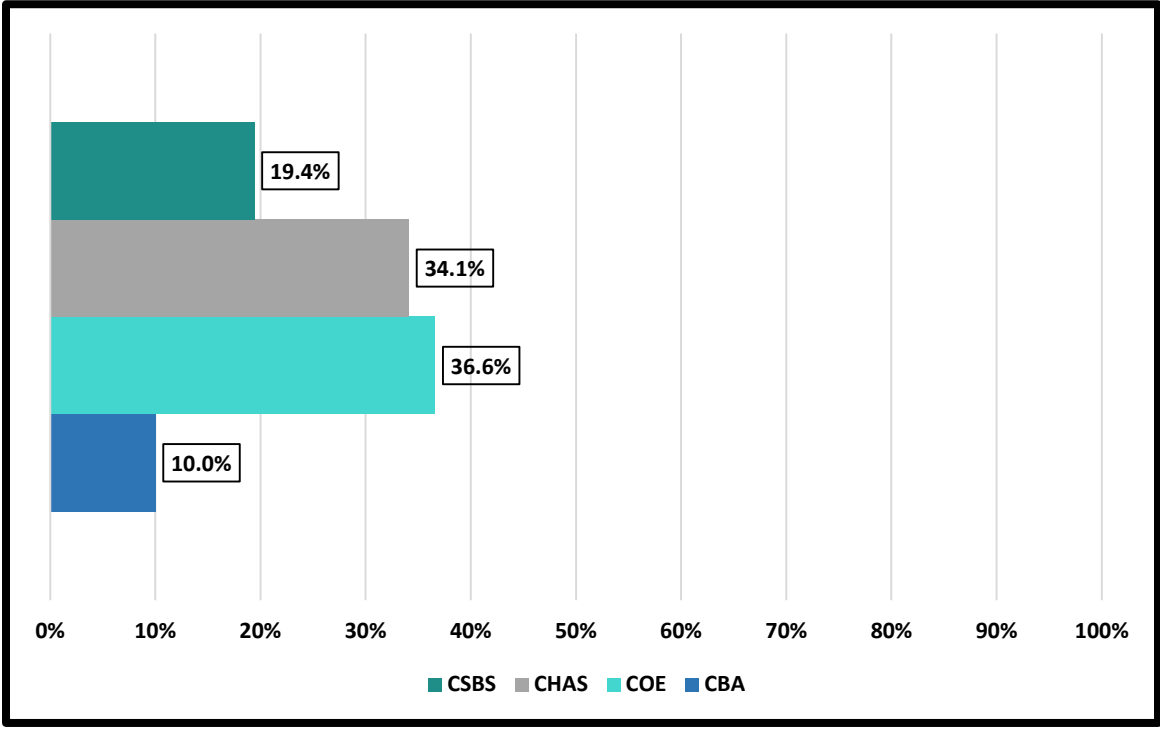


Figure 1.4 – Respondents per college

Graduate Student Report

Principal Activity after Graduation

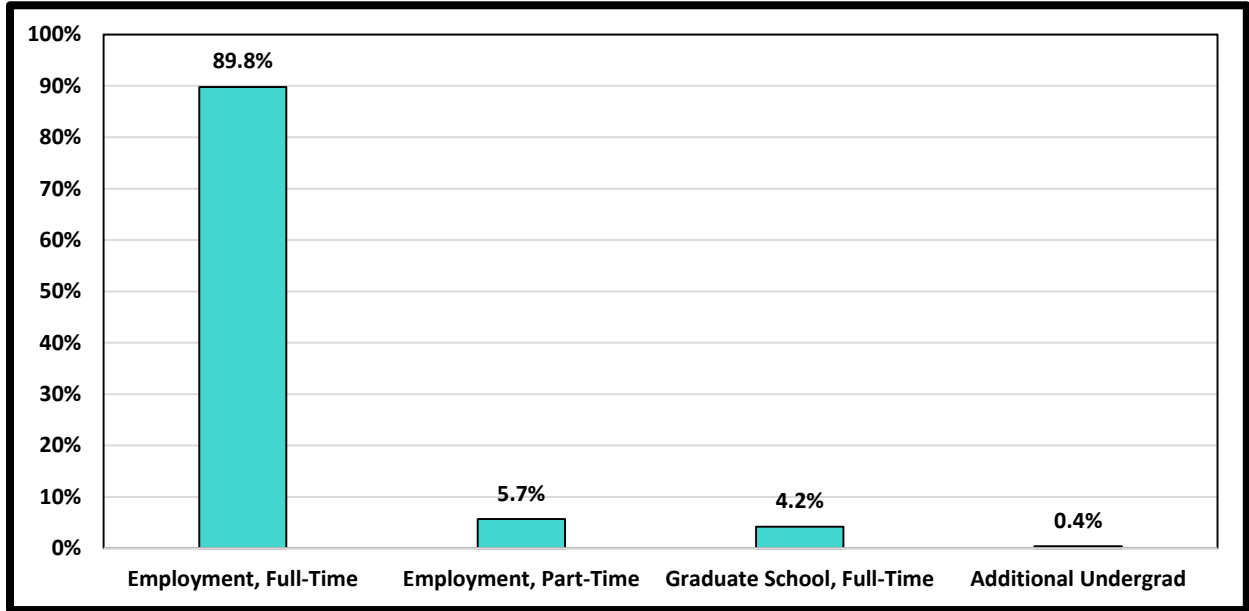


Figure 1.5 – Respondents’ principal activity after graduation

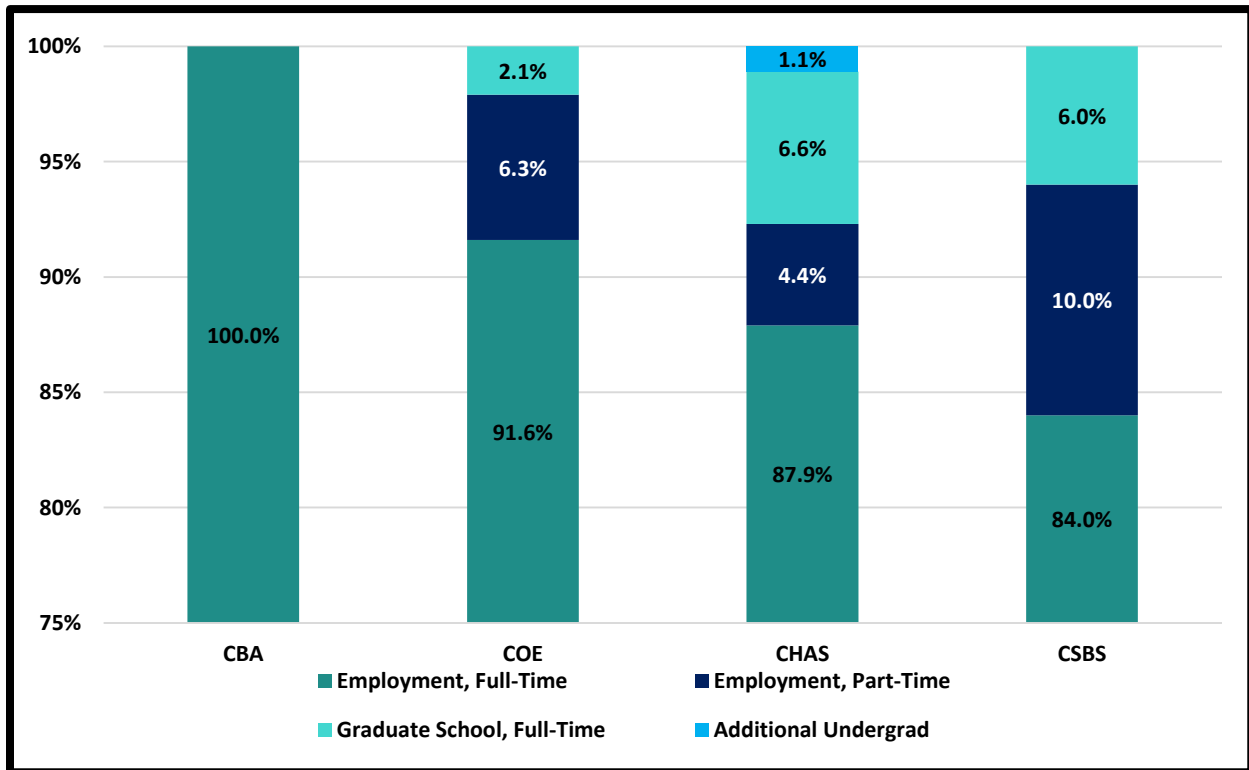
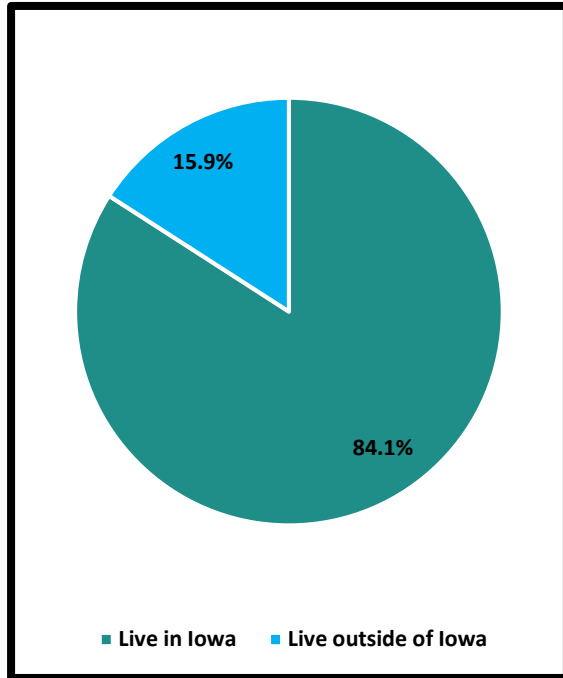


Figure 1.6 – Respondents’ principal activity after graduation per college

Graduate Student Report

Location



Students were asked the location of their occupation:

- 143 students (84.1%) said they will remain in Iowa
- 27 students (15.9%) said they will be living outside of Iowa

Out of the 27 students who are living outside of Iowa, 80.6% of them said they would return to Iowa in the future, if given the chance.

Figure 1.7 – Respondents' location after graduation

Participation in Scholarly & Academic Activities

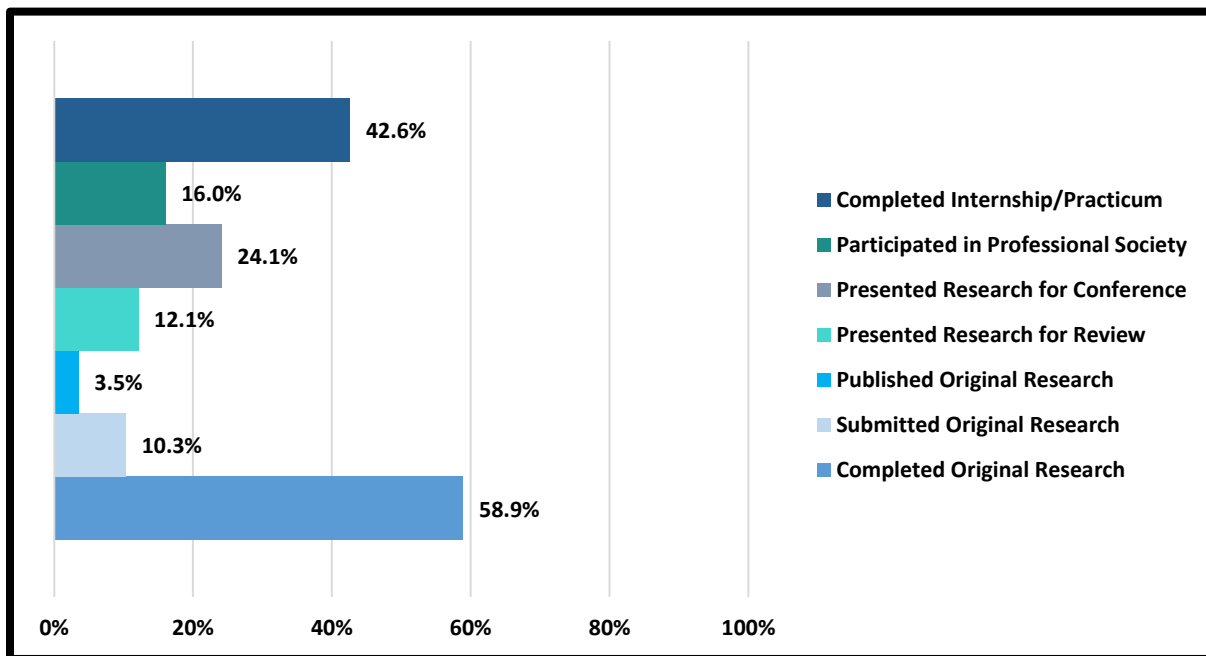


Figure 1.8 – Respondents' participation in scholarly & academic activities

Graduate Student Report

Continuing Education Plans

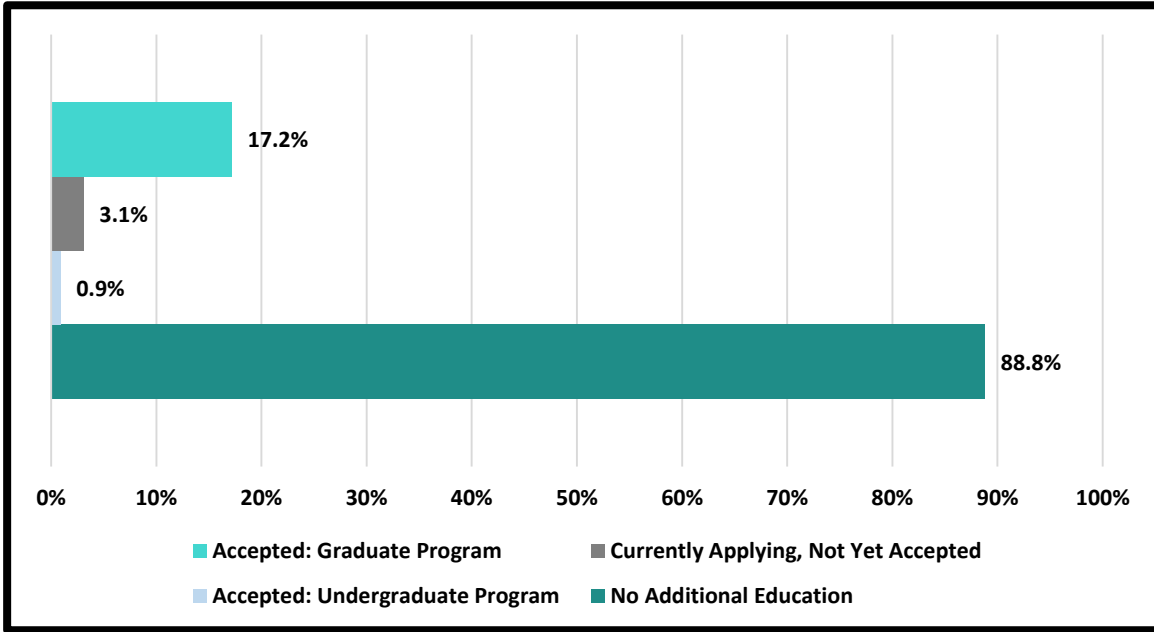


Figure 1.9 – Respondents’ continuing education plans

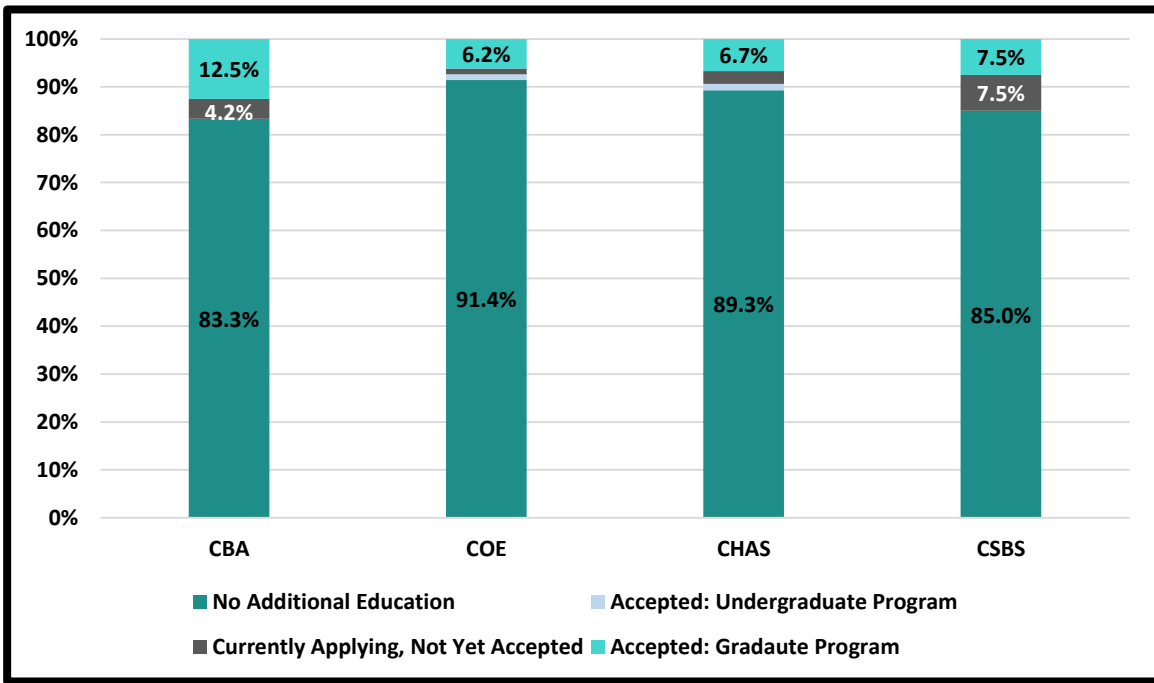


Figure 1.10 – Respondents’ continuing education plans per college

Graduate Student Report

Importance of Program

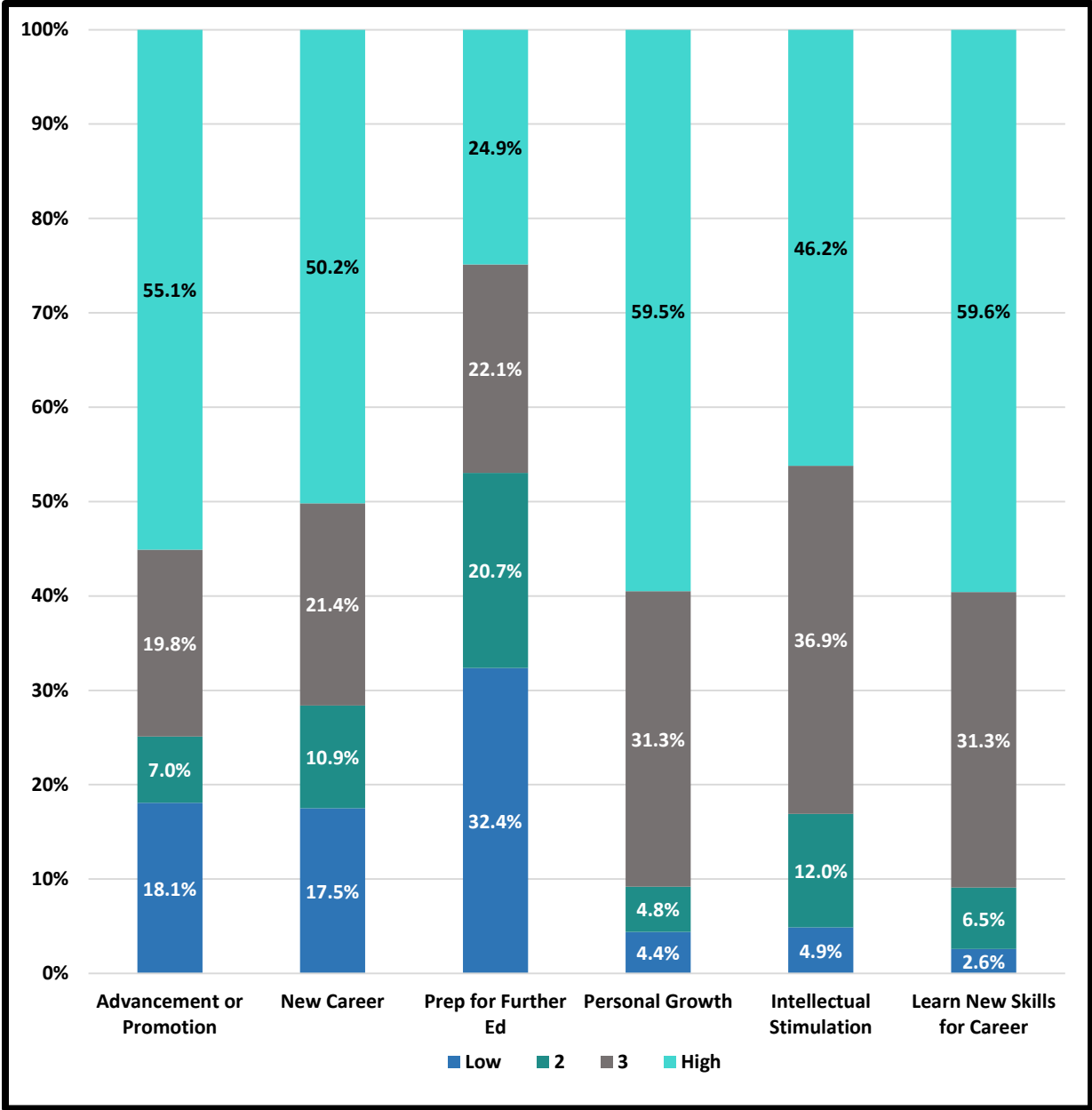


Figure 1.11 – Respondents’ reasons of importance for attending graduate school

- The two most important reasons students attended graduate school in the 2013-2014 academic school year was to learn new skills for their career (59.9%) and to fulfill their personal growth (59.5%).
- The least important reason students attended graduate school in the 2013-2014 academic year was to preparation for further or higher education (24.9%).

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Satisfaction of Program

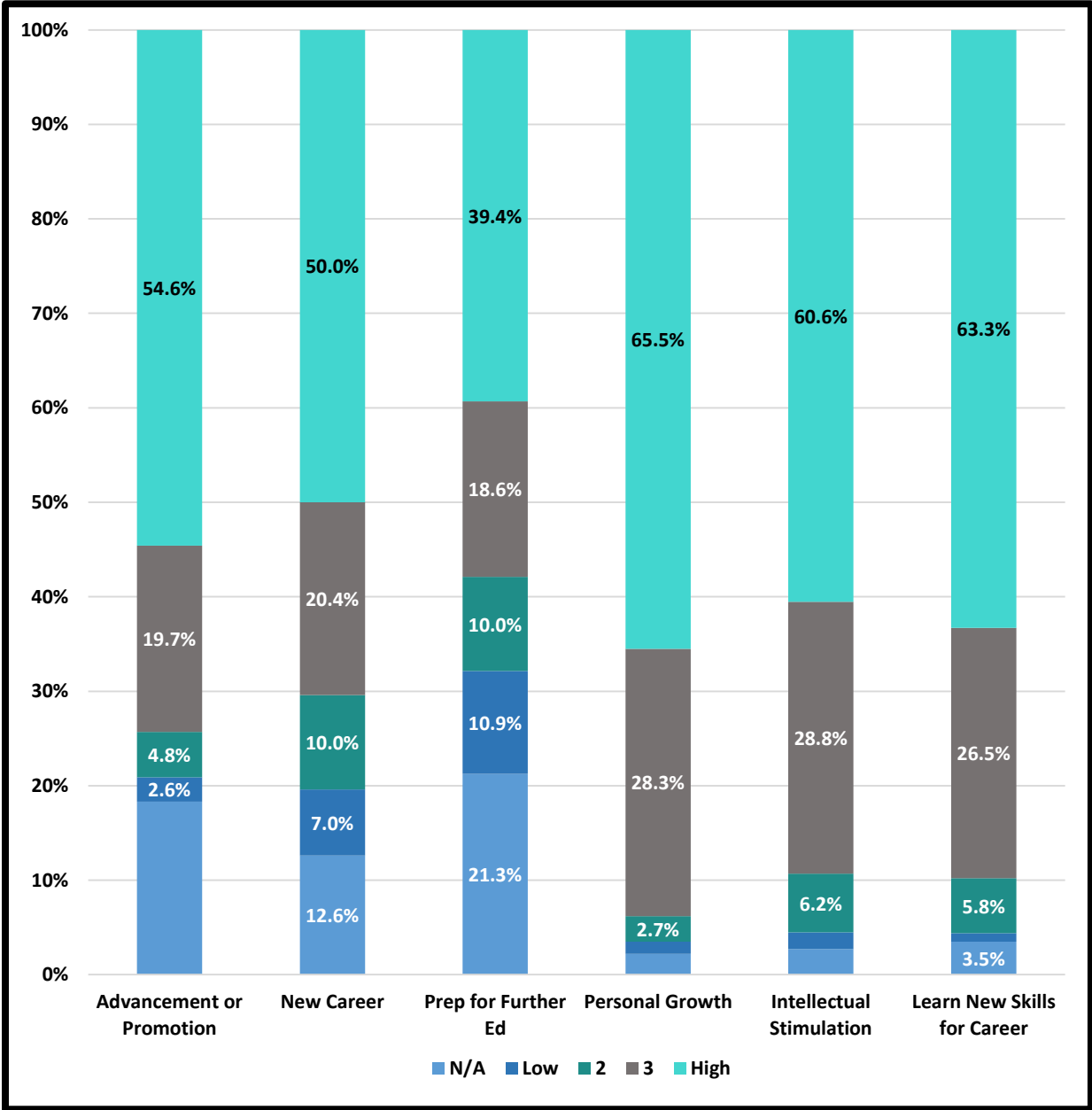


Figure 1.12 – Respondents’ rating of satisfaction for the importance for the program

- Overall, respondents felt most satisfied in personal growth (65.5%), learning new skills for their career (63.7%), and intellectual stimulation (61.0%).
- Respondents were least satisfied in the preparation for further or higher education (39.4%).

Graduate Student Report

Preparation for Future Career Skills

	<u>N</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Cannot Evaluate (0)</u>	<u>Poor (1)</u>	<u>Fair (2)</u>	<u>Average (3)</u>	<u>Good (4)</u>	<u>Excellent (5)</u>
Planning projects	234	4.35	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	8.5%	38.0%	50.9%
Defining problems	235	4.41	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	8.9%	37.4%	52.8%
Solving problems	235	4.48	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	7.7%	34.5%	57.0%
Learning new things	235	4.52	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.7%	31.9%	62.1%
Thinking creatively	235	4.45	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.8%	35.3%	54.9%
Bringing ideas and information together	233	4.45	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%	7.3%	37.3%	54.5%
Using research skills	234	4.45	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	9.4%	33.8%	56.0%
Conducting self professionally	234	4.55	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	6.0%	26.9%	65.8%
Upholding ethical standards	233	4.51	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	6.9%	31.3%	60.9%
Adapting to change	233	4.49	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	31.8%	58.8%
Working under pressure	233	4.47	0.9%	0.0%	0.9%	8.2%	30.0%	60.1%
Making decisions	233	4.49	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%	34.3%	57.5%
Working independently	233	4.56	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	6.4%	30.0%	63.1%
Working with diverse backgrounds	233	4.45	0.0%	0.4%	0.9%	10.3%	30.5%	57.9%
Working as a team	232	4.46	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%	8.2%	25.4%	63.4%
Identifying volunteering & community service opportunities	232	3.89	4.7%	2.6%	5.2%	17.2%	26.7%	43.5%

Figure 1.13 – Respondents’ skill development

Graduate Student Report

Academic & Social Environment

	<u>N</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Not Sure</u> <u>(0)</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u> <u>(1)</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>(2)</u>	<u>Agree</u> <u>(3)</u>	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u> <u>(4)</u>
Instructors were intellectually demanding	234	3.35	0.4%	0.9%	6.8%	47.4%	44.4%
Instructors were intellectually stimulating	234	3.46	0.4%	0.4%	4.3%	42.3%	52.6%
Cumulative learning experience across courses	230	3.42	0.9%	0.4%	5.2%	42.6%	50.9%
Excellent quality of teaching	233	3.38	2.6%	0.9%	5.2%	38.6%	52.8%
Faculty committed to advancing learning	231	3.59	0.9%	0.4%	3.0%	30.3%	65.4%
Faculty interested in student's academic goals	233	3.66	1.3%	0.4%	3.0%	21.9%	73.4%
Courses were readily available	233	3.47	1.3%	2.1%	6.4%	28.3%	61.8%
Community encourages diverse and controversial ideas	233	3.31	4.7%	0.9%	3.4%	40.8%	50.2%
High quality education was received	233	3.49	3.0%	0.4%	3.9%	30.0%	62.7%
Recommend the graduate program to students	233	3.44	2.6%	2.1%	5.6%	27.9%	61.8%
Intend to be involved in volunteer service	231	2.69	16.5%	3.0%	11.3%	33.3%	35.9%

Figure 1.14 – Respondents' academic & social environment

CONGRATULATIONS on your graduation! Your responses to this survey will be used for program improvement and will not be linked in any way to your records. Individual responses to this survey will be confidential. Survey findings will be reported in aggregate only. Please complete all six sections.

Please fill in the response circle completely. Use only black or blue ink or dark pencil to complete the survey.

Section 1: Background Information

Student ID Number					
0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9

Section 2: Plans Following Graduation

What is **MOST LIKELY** to be your **PRINCIPAL** activity upon graduation?

- ① Employment, full-time paid
- ② Employment, part-time paid
- ③ Graduate or professional school, full-time
- ④ Graduate or professional school, part-time
- ⑤ Additional undergraduate coursework
- ⑥ Military service
- ⑦ Volunteer activity (e.g., Peace Corps)
- ⑧ Starting or raising a family
- ⑨ Other, please specify:

If employed, please provide the following

details: (individual responses will be kept confidential)

Job Title	
Name of Employing Organization	
City	
State	
Annual Salary (\$)	
Start Date	
Is this job in the state of Iowa?	If not, would you return to Iowa in the future if given the chance?
① Yes	① Yes
② No	② No

Section 3: Plans for Further Education

What are your continuing education plans?

- ① Accepted to another graduate/professional program
- ② Currently applying to programs, not yet accepted
- ③ Accepted to an undergraduate program
- ④ None

Will you be attending:

- ① Full-time
- ② Part-time

If pursuing further education, please provide the following details:

Institution Name _____
 City _____
 State _____
 Area of study _____
 Intended Degree _____
 Start Date _____

Section 4: Scholarly and Academic Activities at UNI

Please mark each of the following activities that you experienced or participated in during your graduate education at UNI.

- ① Completed original research
- ② Submitted original research for publication
- ③ Published original research
- ④ Creative work presented/performed for professional review
- ⑤ Presented research at a professional conference
- ⑥ Participated in other ways in regional or national professional society
- ⑦ Completed a practicum or internship in a professional setting

Below are some reasons for going to graduate school. Shade in the appropriate circle for **how important** that reason was to you.

Low				High	
①	②	③	④	Advancement or promotion in a career you had already begun	
①	②	③	④	Entry into a new career	
①	②	③	④	Preparation for further graduate education	
①	②	③	④	Personal growth/fulfillment	
①	②	③	④	Intellectual stimulation	
①	②	③	④	To learn new intellectual/technical skills relevant to my career	

Using the same reasons, shade in the appropriate circle for **how satisfied you feel** about achieving that goal through your graduate experience at UNI.

Low				High	NA	
①	②	③	④	①	①	Advancement or promotion in a career you had already begun
①	②	③	④	①	①	Entry into a new career
①	②	③	④	①	①	Preparation for further graduate education
①	②	③	④	①	①	Personal growth/fulfillment
①	②	③	④	①	①	Intellectual stimulation
①	②	③	④	①	①	To learn new intellectual/technical skills relevant to my career

Section 5: Educational Experiences and Skills

Think about your future/career goals. Using the scale on the left, please rate how well UNI has prepared you for....

	Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent	Cannot Evaluate
Planning projects	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Defining problems	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Solving problems	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Learning new things	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Thinking creatively	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Bringing information/ideas together from different areas	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Using research skills	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Conducting yourself in a professional manner	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Upholding ethical standards	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Adapting to change	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Working under pressure	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Making decisions	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Working independently	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Working with people of diverse backgrounds	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Working as a team	①	②	③	④	⑤	①
Identifying opportunities for volunteering and community service	①	②	③	④	⑤	①

Section 6: Academic and Social Environment

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
Most of the graduate courses I took at UNI were intellectually demanding.	①	②	③	④	①
Most of my graduate instructors were intellectually stimulating.	①	②	③	④	①
My graduate learning experience was cumulative over a series of courses in my program.	①	②	③	④	①
The overall quality of graduate teaching at UNI is excellent.	①	②	③	④	①
The graduate faculty I had contact with were committed to advancing student learning.	①	②	③	④	①
At least one graduate faculty member showed an active interest in my educational/career goals.	①	②	③	④	①
Most of the courses in my graduate program were readily available when I wanted to take them.	①	②	③	④	①
The UNI community encourages the examination of diverse and controversial ideas in its graduate programs.	①	②	③	④	①
I believe I have received a high quality graduate education from UNI.	①	②	③	④	①
I would recommend my graduate program to a prospective graduate student.	①	②	③	④	①
Because of my experiences at UNI, I intend to be involved in volunteer service after graduation.	①	②	③	④	①

Section 7: Faculty and Staff Recognition

Please list the name(s) of any faculty who have had a positive influence on your development as a student at UNI.

Please list the name(s) of any staff members who have had a positive influence on your development as a student at UNI.

Faculty Name(s)

Staff name(s)