

# TRENDS FROM GSOS 1992, 1997, AND 2001

## CHAPTER ONE:

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the Study**

Gathering information directly from students regarding their college experiences and opinions is an integral component in the ongoing evaluation of undergraduate education at Rutgers University. Student perceptions of their tenure at the university as undergraduates, their evaluations and satisfaction with their academic studies, and their goals and expectations for the future provide valuable information to faculty and administrators in maintaining and enhancing the quality of undergraduate education at this institution. This report presents the results undertaken by The Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning of the most recent survey in the *Graduating Student Opinion Survey (GSOS)* series, based on data collected from students receiving baccalaureate degrees in Spring 2001. This study provides information that assesses the success of Rutgers as an institution in delivering a quality education to its undergraduates.

A variety of mechanisms are in place at Rutgers that ensure the high standards of undergraduate education that students, faculty, parents, and others expect. In the academic realm, these processes include university-wide math and verbal skills testing and placement, periodic external peer review of academic units overseen by the university-wide faculty Committee on Standards and Priorities in Academic Development, institutional support programs, such as those sponsored by the Learning Resource and Teaching Excellence Centers, and the university requirement of academic units to provide annual accountability reports. Surveys provide an additional mechanism to ascertain the development of broad academic and nonacademic skills that undergraduates are expected to possess by the end of their studies at the university. Many of these outcomes are best measured through the administration of surveys such as the 1992, 1997, and the 2001 *Graduating Student Opinion Surveys*. These surveys are designed to capture information from Rutgers undergraduates – their academic experiences while at Rutgers, their reasons for attending the university, their evaluation of student services (both academic and nonacademic), their goals and expectations, and their employment activities. The 2003 *Graduating Student Opinion Survey* has been fielded. Beginning in 2004, this series of surveys administered to graduating students will alternate annually with the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE). The NSSE focuses in greater detail on students' interaction with faculty, staff, and other students and assessment of the academic effort put forth by these students. It also fills out the assessment plan by offering comparisons to several other participating American Association of University schools that are our peers.

The information gathered from surveying students using the GSOS series also provides benchmarks that can be used to inform university policy in undergraduate education. These benchmarks are used to compare changes in undergraduate experiences, opinions, and attitudes over time. Data from the 2001 survey of graduating students can be compared to similar data collected from earlier classes of graduating students to determine what changes have occurred among graduating students at Rutgers. Information from the *2001 Graduating Student Opinion Survey* also provides the opportunity to look at how specific groups of students compare in their experience, opinions, and attitudes.

The 2001 survey of graduating students is one effort to meet these needs. Specifically, this survey was designed to elicit student opinion on the various departments, operations, and services available and used by graduating students at the university. Respondents were asked to indicate their use of and satisfaction with these various areas. The survey also included questions that asked students to evaluate their experiences at Rutgers, both academic and nonacademic, and to provide information about extent and type of faculty contact and student employment. The *2001 Graduating Student Opinion Survey* also sought to determine students' short- and long-range academic and career goals, and the extent to which attending Rutgers contributed to their attainment of academic, career, social, and personal goals.

## **Organization**

Chapter Two introduces the survey methodology used in the current study and describes the characteristics of graduating students that responded to the survey and compares these characteristics to those of the population of graduating students. Descriptions of the goals that respondents set and the achievement of these goals while at Rutgers are presented in Chapter Three. The setting and attainment of goals by the 2001 respondents are compared to the responses provided by graduating students in similar 1992 and 1997 surveys. Chapter Four documents the experiences of the 2001 graduating students. Students evaluate their overall academic experience at Rutgers as well as their experience within their particular department. Students specifically evaluate areas relating to faculty interaction, academic major area advising, course availability, student life, and the typical activities engaged in by students during their tenure at Rutgers. These evaluations are compared to previous classes.

Chapter Five is devoted to students' use of and satisfaction with academic support services and resources, on-campus resources, and administrative and computing services. Many new services are evaluated in the 2001 survey in addition to comparisons made with services that were in place in 1997 and 1992. A new section measures frequency of online contact with friends, faculty, family and other students and the use of the internet reflecting technological advances that have increasingly affected student life over the past five years. The future academic and career plans of 2001 respondents are presented in Chapter Six comparing their expectations with respondents from the earlier studies. Students also are asked to speculate on how well they think Rutgers has prepared them for the job

market. The chapter concludes with a special section that evaluates students' use of and satisfaction with Career Services.

LINKS: APPENDIX A: ONLINE SURVEY

APPENDIX B: REPORT TABLES

APPENDIX C: ONLINE FREQUENCIES BY CAMPUS

## **CHAPTER TWO:**

### *SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND STUDENT PROFILES*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodology used to survey the 2001 graduating class and the characteristics of the respondents to the survey. Discussion specifically focuses on a description of the target population, how the survey was administered and its associated rate of response, the contents of the questionnaire used for the survey, the representativeness of the respondents to the survey, and several self-reported characteristics of students responding to the survey.

#### **Survey Methodology**

##### ***Target Population***

On April 13, 2001, the GSOS was sent to all students expected to graduate in May inviting them to go online to complete the *Graduating Student Opinion Survey*. The students had been selected during the fall of 2000 from the Student Records Data Base if they were currently enrolled at the university and if they had earned a sufficient number of credits to anticipate a May 2001 graduation. A total of 6,414 surveys were sent in the first mailing, each accompanied by a letter from President Francis L. Lawrence and a stamped self-addressed return envelope. The option of completing the survey online was also offered and each student was given a unique password to ensure that only the student contacted could complete the online survey. Paper surveys were sent to each student's campus mailbox or to their home when there was no campus mailbox available. Seven days later a post card reminder was sent to the same address. After three weeks a second mailing, including a second copy of the survey, a letter from President Lawrence, and a return envelope was sent to those students who had not responded to previous mailings. An email reminder was sent the next week. Finally, a third mailing was sent to the home addresses of non-responding students on June 23, 2001, with the hope that students who had been too busy to return surveys during the days surrounding examinations and graduation would return them during the summer. A series of mailings began on June 16<sup>th</sup> to students home addresses targeting nonresponders who had not picked up surveys from their campus mailboxes. Surveys continued to come in throughout the summer, with a few returned as late as September 21, 2001.

After graduation, we confirmed eligibility for the population (May 2001 graduates) and restricted usable returns to those eligible. Approximately eight percent (n=346) had not been approached and 1,886 of those eligible among graduating students we had attempted to contact (n=4,622) returned useable surveys for an overall response rate of forty-one percent. In 1992 and 1997 no attempt was made after the data collection period to eliminate respondents who did not actually graduate. Web surveys and pen-and-paper surveys were approximately equally distributed with 841 completing surveys online and 1,045 mailing back their completed paper questionnaire.

### **Questionnaire Descriptives**

The 2001 questionnaire was similar in design to the one administered to the classes of 1992 and 1997, in part because of our desire to compare responses over time. All questionnaires contained items on the attainment of student goals, satisfaction with student services, ratings of various aspects of the student experience, faculty contact, employment during the undergraduate years, and plans for future employment and further education. In 2001, the focus of student goal attainment was to specifically determine how instrumental Rutgers was in helping the student to attain each of these goals, rather than focusing on how important each goal was at the time of graduation and if the student felt he or she was achieving or had achieved each goal. Although broad goal categories remained the same (academic, career preparation/career improvement, social and cultural participation, personal development and enrichment goals), several items were added that are asked of first year students as they begin their studies to allow for comparisons where student responses could be linked over time.<sup>1</sup> The 2001 GSOS also asked graduating students to indicate their most important goals after evaluating each separately.

All GSOS surveys requested background information on race/ethnicity, marital status, disabilities, and residence during enrollment at Rutgers. The 1997 and 2001 surveys also requested information on the educational and income levels of parents. With the technological advances occurring over the period since 1997, questions about computing services, use of the web for registration and information delivery, and frequency of online communication received increased attention in 2001. Career Services again received expanded attention in the current survey, reflecting the need for the evaluation of these services given the tighter job market these recent graduates face compared to five years prior. A specific question about how well Rutgers prepared the student for the job market was added.

### **Survey Administration and Response Rates**

Table 2.1 shows the number of eligible students, the number of surveys mailed to graduating students, the number returned, and the response rate overall and by gender, race/ethnicity, age, residency, citizenship status, and campus/college. Overall 1,886 mailed surveys were returned (or completed online) for a response rate of forty-one percent. The response rate was higher for women (43%) compared to men (37%). Response rates varied somewhat across race/ethnic groups with African Americans (31%) and Latinos (35%) on the low side compared with Asians, whites, and "others" achieving rates over forty percent. Younger graduates (22 or younger) were more likely to respond (45%) than were older (38%) graduates. Response did not differ across categories of NJ residency nor citizenship status. The New Brunswick campus response rate matches the rate across all campuses (41%) reflecting the large number of students attending this campus. For this reason, overall rates will not be used for the rest of this report as the opinions of New Brunswick students would heavily influence the results and conclusions. Response was lowest from Camden (32%) seniors and highest among Newark graduates (47%).

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<sup>1</sup> A separate report has been completed that compares first year and senior responses. *Goal Achievement at Rutgers*  
Graduating Student Opinion Survey

## RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

### *Representativeness of Respondents*

In order to gauge the representativeness of the responding students, the background characteristics of the respondents were compared to those of the target population. This analysis was also conducted for the 1992 and 1997 surveys and the results from all three years are included in Table 2.2. Please note that the 1992 and 1997 respondents include a number of students who had enough credits to graduate, but who did not actually graduate. However, the population distributions of background variables reflect the actual graduating classes of 1992 and 1997. This year we restricted analysis of completed surveys to the specific target population: students who received their baccalaureate degree in May 2001. Respondents and populations are remarkably similar across background variables and campuses with one notable exception – age. Approximately sixty percent of the population in 1997 was older than 22, an increase from the 50/50 split that was found in 1992. In each of these years, approximately sixty percent of respondents fell into the older category. While the 2001 survey was completed by as many younger as older respondents; the actual population of graduating seniors is older (55% are older than 22).

Gender differences in the population have remained constant since 1992; approximately sixty percent of graduating students are women. Women respondents comprised approximately the same proportion of returns in each of the three study periods. The racial/ethnic group of the respondents closely reflects the trend toward a more diverse population over the past decade. In 1992 three-in-four graduates were white. This proportion dropped to sixty-five percent in 1997 and fell below sixty percent in 2001. The most dramatic increase in degree recipients was among Asian students who comprised nine percent of the population in 1992 and has doubled by 2001. Latinos have also contributed a larger share of graduates over the decade, increasing from six percent of the population to nine percent. The racial/ethnic distribution of respondents mirrors closely the distribution in the target population of this year's graduates. This also was the case in 1997 and 1992.

Some information on citizenship and New Jersey residency was not available for 1992 respondents or population, but in 1997 and 2001 the respondents were virtually identical to the population on these dimensions. Approximately ninety percent of graduating students are New Jersey residents and eighty-five percent or more are U. S. citizens. There is a slight increase in the proportion of graduates who are not citizens over the decade - from eight percent to fifteen percent.

Restricting analysis in 2001 to responding students who actually graduated resulted in a nearly identical distribution to the target population of colleges and schools as well as the overall total for each campus. The Camden distribution of respondents was close to the population in 1997, but Newark respondents were over-represented and New Brunswick respondents under-represented in that study

year. In 1992, New Brunswick was under-represented and both Newark and Camden were over-represented.

### ***Personal Characteristics***

Table 2.3 shows some self-reported characteristics of respondents in the three survey years. In each year, the vast majority (approximately 85%) were not married. Less than five percent of the respondents reported that they had one or more disabilities. Questions on parental education and income were not asked in 1992, but were included in the 1997 and 2001 surveys. Reported annual incomes were slightly higher in the current study in the \$75,000 to \$199,999 categories (30% for 2001; 22% for 1997) and lower in the under \$75,000 categories in 2001 ( 51%) compared to 1997 (60%). Parental education has advanced slightly over the prior five years. In 1997, four-in-ten mothers (42%) and one-third of fathers (33%) reported they had limited their education to the eighth grade or high school. Corresponding levels of education were thirty-two percent for mothers and twenty-seven percent for fathers in 2001. Currently, three-in-ten (29%) mothers have graduated college (24% in 1997) and another fourteen percent have received a post-graduate degree as they did in 1997. One-half (51%) of fathers have completed college or received an advanced degree from a college or professional school compared to forty-seven percent in 1997.

### ***College Residency***

In all three study years, students were asked to indicate the number of semesters spent in five different types of residences during their years at Rutgers. The results, which are also broken down by campus, are presented in Table 2.4.

Residence arrangements seem to be roughly comparable over the decade, with a slightly lower tendency for long-term stays in the residence halls for New Brunswick students between 1992 and 1997 and remaining at this lower level in 2001. While in 1992, twenty-seven percent of graduating students had spent eight or more semesters in a residence hall, by 1997 (and in 2001) only one-in-five of the students had done so. Living with parents throughout college was quite common for Newark students (more than one-third did so in 1992 and 1997), though this percent declined on both campuses in 2001 (29% and 19% respectfully) and for Camden students (more than one-quarter in 1992 and 1997). Less than 10 percent of New Brunswick students lived with their parents throughout their time at college, a finding that applies to all study years. The most recent survey shows that a large number of Newark and Camden students indicated that they did not live with parents at all while at college (48% and 56%, respectively). Full-time off-campus living in a primary residence was also more frequent for Newark and Camden students than for New Brunswick students. New Brunswick students seemed more likely to enjoy a variety of residential experiences, with individual students living some semesters with parents, some in a residence hall, some in a rented off-campus apartment, and perhaps some in a fraternity or sorority.

### ***Work Experience***

The vast majority (eight-in-ten) of Rutgers graduates reported working during the school year in each of the study years, as shown in Table 2.5. More than one-third worked more than 20 hours a week in 2001 and more than half worked 20 or more hours a week in 1997 and 1992. The categories are slightly different in the most recent survey, but the distributions are not markedly different from the 1997 and 1992 studies. Not only are students spending many hours employed; more than one-third indicated they had experience with an internship, externship, or co-op work, similar to the finding in 1992 and down from nearly fifty percent with this kind of experience reported in 1997. Approximately three-fourths with this kind of experience had learned about these opportunities on their own or through their academic department, although the department is less likely to be cited as their information source in 2001 than was the case in prior years.

### **SUMMARY**

The 2001 GSOS was returned by approximately forty-one percent of the eligible graduating seniors to whom it was sent. Response rates were higher for Newark (47% overall) and lower for Camden graduates (32%) than for those graduating from New Brunswick schools and colleges (41%). Respondents closely resembled the target populations in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, New Jersey residency, citizenship, and mean cumulative GPA. In addition to the slight over-representation among Newark graduates and under-representation among Camden graduates, younger students responded at a slightly greater proportion than they are found in the population.

The demographic characteristics of the graduating senior population have remained fairly constant across study years in terms of gender, age, New Jersey residency, and citizenship status. However, the most dramatic increase in degree recipients was among Asian students who comprised nine percent of the graduating seniors in 1992 and has doubled by 2001. Latinos have also contributed a larger share of graduates over the decade which the studies span.

Rutgers could strengthen students' academic exposure to both Western and non-Western cultures and institutions and be more helpful in their goal of gaining a better appreciation of literature and the arts. When it comes to career goals, graduating seniors would like Rutgers to be more helpful in training students for a specific career and in giving them guidance on how to improve their chances for a raise or promotion. Finally, less than half of the respondents credit Rutgers as being helpful in their becoming active in student life or in campus activities.

## **CHAPTER THREE:**

### ***STUDENT GOALS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENT AT RUTGERS***

#### **Introduction**

Respondents to all three *Graduating Student Opinion Surveys* were asked to consider a set of goals that are commonly held by college students. In 1992 and 1997, they were asked to determine, first, if each goal was important to them while they attended Rutgers and second, if they had achieved each goal due to their attendance at Rutgers. The current survey focused directly on Rutgers role in helping students achieve their goals by asking graduating seniors to evaluate the degree to which Rutgers had helped them achieve each goal. Students were then asked to pick their own three most important goals. Goals were grouped under the following headings: Academic, Career Preparation/Career Improvement, Social and Cultural Participation, and Personal Development and Enrichment. The 1992 survey presented a total of 20 goals while the 1997 survey presented four additional goals. In 2001, 27 goals were presented. The results are shown in Table 3.1 for the total group of respondents for each of the three study years.

#### **Academic Goals**

The first 15 goals on the survey, the academic goals, are sorted in Table 3.1 by the “Helpfulness Indicator” (within each of the broad categories) which is calculated for the 2001 GSOS. This measure is a function of dividing the number of respondents who indicated that Rutgers was helpful in achieving each goal by the number who did not believe Rutgers was helpful in achieving that goal. The indicator can be interpreted as the number who believe Rutgers to be helpful for every one respondent who does not. For example, respondents indicate by a ratio of 6 to 1 that Rutgers was helpful in their gaining a “general education and appreciation of ideas.” Furthermore, nearly half (48%) indicated Rutgers to be “Very Helpful” in achieving this goal. The primary goal, academic or not, where graduating students claim Rutgers to be helpful is “Increased my knowledge in an academic field” where 17 students found Rutgers to be helpful for every one who did not. Eight-in-ten respondents (79%) cited this as an important goal in 1997; up from sixty-six percent in 1992. Two-thirds of the 2001 respondents indicated that Rutgers was “Very Helpful” in achieving this goal. More than forty percent of respondents indicated that Rutgers was “Very Helpful” in achieving several other academic goals: Improved ability for critical thinking (44%), Increased communication skills (42%), Learned more about personal interests (42%), Pursued a particular interest or developed a particular talent (43%), and Became a more cultured person (43%).

The “Helpfulness Indicator” shows that although more respondents credited Rutgers as being helpful than not in the achievement of all the academic goals listed, 2001 seniors were almost as likely to respond that Rutgers was “not very” or “not at all helpful” in helping them understand either Western or non-western cultures and institutions. Respondents were also evenly split on the role Rutgers played in helping them gain a better appreciation of literature and the arts.

### **Career Preparation/Career Improvement Goals**

Three-fourths of respondents in 1997 indicated that improved chances of getting a good job was an important goal. More than four-in-ten (44%) 2001 respondents indicated Rutgers was very helpful in achieving this goal. Discovering career interests is an area that a larger group of students deemed important in 1997 than was the case in 1992 (63% vs. 54%, respectively). Two-thirds of respondents in 1997 also said that important goals included formulating long-term career plans and/or goals and improving knowledge, technical skills, and/or competence in work related areas. One-third of Rutgers 2001 degree recipients believed Rutgers to be very helpful in these three areas. Furthermore, although one-in-four indicate Rutgers is very helpful in improving chances for a raise and/or promotion and delivering training for a specific career, these are two areas where the Helpfulness Indicator is very close to one. This indicates that almost half of the respondents do not believe Rutgers has been helpful in these areas.

### **Social and Cultural Participation Goals**

Social and cultural participation goals are another area where increased numbers of students indicated these as important goals in the period between 1992 and 1997. Two-thirds of the 1997 graduating students (67%) felt that the goal of meeting people and making friends was important, and seventy-eight percent believed that they had attained this goal. In contrast, only fifty-one percent of students graduating in 1992 believed that this goal was important, although seventy-six percent of those who did believe the goal to be important had achieved it. In 1997, more than half (54%) of the survey respondents sought to have an active social life, and sixty-seven percent achieved this goal while at Rutgers. Four-in-ten of the 1997 graduates wished to become active in student life and campus activities, and fifty-nine percent of them believed they had achieved this goal. By comparison, only twenty-five percent of students in 1992 set this as a goal – although actual participation levels remained high with sixty-one percent reporting that they were actively involved in student life and activities. In 2001, nearly half of the respondents (47%) indicate that Rutgers is very helpful when it comes to meeting people and making friends. Students agree two to one that they had an active social life while at Rutgers. A sizable minority (21%) found Rutgers very helpful in becoming active in student life and campus activities; however, most students (54%) indicated that Rutgers was only slightly or not at all helpful in this area.

## **Personal Development and Enrichment Goals**

The majority of 1997 graduating students considered several personal development and enrichment goals to be important, and most felt that they had attained these goals while at Rutgers. Improving self-confidence and leadership skills were considered to be important by at least half of respondents in 1992 and 1997. In 1997, graduates were more likely to indicate they had achieved these goals while at Rutgers compared to the 1992 graduates. Half reported their attainment of leadership skills in 1992 and two-thirds indicated their leadership skills were improved in the 1997 GSOS. In 2001, at least one-third of the respondents noted that Rutgers was “very helpful” in improving their self-confidence, ability to get along with others, and their leadership skills.

## **The Most Important Goals, Overall and by Subgroup**

An analysis of goal importance for various student groups including gender, race/ethnicity, age and campus revealed that three goals are consistently named as one of the three most important regardless of the school or college the student is graduating from or the various background characteristics of the respondents. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 provide percentages where at least twenty percent of each subgroup named a particular goal as one of their top three choices. For most subgroups, at least one-in-five cited goals of increased knowledge in an academic field, improved ability for critical thinking, and improved chances of getting a good job. Meeting people and making friends was important to many of the younger graduates, men, Asians, those who were not residents of New Jersey, non-citizens and those enrolled in Cook College, Rutgers College, and the Engineering School. Improving leadership skills was particularly important to Asians and Douglass College graduates. Latinos also set goals of becoming a more cultured person and gaining a general education and appreciation of ideas. Students graduating from the College of Nursing and School of Pharmacy stressed career preparation and career improvement goals. MGSA graduates noted improved self-confidence as a top goal. Many MGSA graduates also named increased communication skills, reading and study skills, and pursuing a particular interest or developing a talent as the top goals sought in addition to improving knowledge, technical skills, or competence that are work related and receiving training for a specific career.

## **Summary**

Student goals and the role Rutgers plays in achieving these goals are important topics in the assessment of undergraduate education. Overall, the goals most frequently cited as those being most important to current graduates include: knowledge in an academic field, improved critical thinking, improved chances for getting a good job, meeting people and making friends, and enhanced communication skills. More than forty percent of graduating students credit Rutgers as being “Very Helpful” in attaining a wide range of academic goals, including those listed by students as most important: general education and appreciation of ideas, increasing knowledge in an academic field, improved ability for critical thinking, and increased communication.

Students give similar levels of credit to Rutgers in helping them to learn more about personal interests, how to pursue these interests or develop a particular talent, and in their becoming a more cultured person. Graduating students also report that Rutgers is particularly helpful in achieving important career related goals such as: discovering their career interests, improving their chances for getting a good job, and formulating long-term career goals. The importance of social and cultural participation has become more important to students over the last fifteen years. Most graduating seniors report that Rutgers aided in their efforts to meet people and make friends and acknowledge their participation in many of the varied opportunities for social and cultural activities offered by Rutgers. Rutgers is also credited by current graduates as being helpful in improving their self-confidence, ability to get along with others, and improving their leadership skills.

According to respondents, Rutgers could strengthen students' academic exposure to both Western and non-Western cultures and institutions and be more helpful in their goal of gaining a better appreciation of literature and the arts. When it comes to career goals, graduating seniors would like Rutgers to be more helpful in training students for a specific career and in giving them guidance on how to improve their chances for a raise or promotion. Finally, less than half of the respondents credit Rutgers as being helpful in their becoming active in student life or in campus activities while they were at Rutgers.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### ***RUTGERS EXPERIENCE***

#### **Overall Academic Experience**

The 2001 Rutgers graduates are, in general, pleased with their overall academic experience at the university and are somewhat more likely to rate their experience as “Excellent” compared to those graduating in 1997 or 1992. While twenty-eight percent in 2001 and twenty-five percent in 1997 of the respondents gave their academic experience an “Excellent” rating, only nineteen percent of those who responded in 1992 did so. Consistently across the surveys spanning this decade, the odds are at least five-to-one that students rated their academic experience favorably (see Table 4.1).

There were a few notable differences in ratings by race/ethnicity. African Americans were somewhat less likely than whites to give their academic experience an “Excellent” rating, a finding consistent over the three study periods. However, their ratings have improved from only fourteen percent giving an “Excellent” rating to their academic experience in 1992, to twenty percent in 1997, and now standing at twenty-five percent in 2001. The academic experience has also improved for Latinos. While only ten percent of Latino graduates in 1992 considered their academic experience “Excellent,” twenty-seven percent of the 1997 graduates and thirty-one percent of the current graduates believed that it was. Asian students, on the other hand, gave less positive ratings to their academic experience at Rutgers in all three study years with approximately fifteen percent offering a rating of “Excellent.”

Older and younger respondents in 2001 have maintained the gains made between 1997 and 1992 with higher percentages rating their experience as “Excellent.” The 2001 results were broken out for residency and citizenship for the first time. One-third of those who are not residents of New Jersey indicated their experience as an undergraduate at Rutgers was “Excellent.” Although the number of respondents who are at the university on a temporary visa is small, these graduates are the most enthusiastic about their experience here with forty-three percent giving an “Excellent” rating. Less than half as many (20%) permanent residents offer this strong a rating.

There were some substantial differences in ratings for students by campus and by college. In general, Camden colleges appeared to be very satisfied with their academic experience, and in each Camden college the percentage of students who awarded “Excellent” ratings was substantially higher than it had been among 1997 students continuing an upward trend from 1992. Currently, twice as many (42%) of Camden graduates rate their academic experience as “Excellent” compared to thirty-two percent in 1997 and twenty percent in 1992. University College students at each of the three campuses were

more likely to give top ratings than were their counterparts. Nearly half (47%) of Camden's University College students gave an "Excellent" rating as did thirty-eight percent of New Brunswick's University College Students and thirty percent of Newark's. Nursing students in Newark continue to be less enthusiastic about their academic experience with the percent giving an "Excellent" rating continuing to drop in 2001 where only eleven percent gave this high rating compared to fourteen percent in 1997, down from twenty-six percent in 1992. Newark's College of Arts and Sciences, Cook College, and Douglass College have maintained gains achieved between 1992 and 1997. The upward trend of percent rating their experience as "Excellent," continued to climb for students graduating from Camden Arts and Sciences, Camden's Business School, the Engineering School, Livingston College, Mason Gross School of the Arts, and the School of Pharmacy.

Additional measures were added to the 2001 GSOS to capture the overall perceptions of graduating students about Rutgers and their departments. Eighty-three percent agree that they would choose Rutgers again if they were starting college over and eighty-seven percent would recommend Rutgers to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college. Approximately one-third strongly agreed that they would choose Rutgers again if they were starting college over and the same proportion would recommend Rutgers to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college (see Table 4.2). Although this finding did not vary for gender or age and only varied slightly based on New Jersey residency status or citizenship, some differences were found among the different racial/ethnic groups. Latinos were most positive with forty-four percent strongly agreeing they would choose Rutgers again and forty-six percent strongly agreeing they would recommend Rutgers to siblings or friends. Asians were least likely to agree with these two statements (although at least one-fourth did strongly agree with each) and African Americans and white students fell in the middle. One-in-five graduating seniors indicated that Rutgers and their departments have given them excellent preparation for the future. Camden students are the most positive with half strongly agreeing that they would choose Rutgers again if starting over and the same proportion strongly agreeing they would recommend Rutgers. Six-in-ten (59%) of Camden's Business School students strongly agree that they would choose Rutgers again. One-third of Newark students and New Brunswick students strongly agree that Rutgers would be their choice as well. More than four-in-ten University College students from each of the three campuses strongly agree that if starting over they would choose Rutgers. One-third of Camden graduates indicated their department gave them excellent preparation for the future, compared to approximately one-in-five students from Newark or New Brunswick.

Table 4.3 presents information about students' evaluations of their major area of study. Over eighty percent (83%) give a positive rating to their program with more than one-third (37%) rating their academic experience within their major as "Excellent," and four-in-ten strongly agreeing they would choose the same major area of study at Rutgers if starting over. Asians are the least likely to rate their academic experience in their major as "Excellent" (24%) and Latinos are the most positive about their departments with forty-four percent giving an "Excellent" rating to their academic experience within their

major. Between two and three graduates would choose the same major area of study again for every one who would not. Findings are fairly consistent across demographic groups in their strong agreement that they would choose the same major area of study. Whites (44%) and Latinos (41%) strongly agree that this is the case compared to one-third of African Americans (33%) and slightly fewer Asians (31%). Those least happy with their major area of study are those with a citizenship status of permanent resident. Only twenty-eight percent would rate their academic experience within their major as “Excellent” or strongly agreeing they would choose the same major again.

Half of the students graduating from the Camden campus rate their academic experience in their major as “Excellent” and strongly agree they would choose the same major areas of study again. Six-in-ten Camden University students gave excellent ratings and strongly agreed they would choose the same major. Many Newark students (43%) strongly agree they would choose the same major, and three-in-ten would rate their academic experience within their major as “Excellent.”

More than one-third of New Brunswick students rate their major as “Excellent” and strongly agree that if they started over, they would choose the same major. From the New Brunswick campus, Douglass College women are especially likely to give an “Excellent” rating to their academic experience within their major (46%). Among Douglass College graduates, only thirty-seven percent strongly agree they would choose the same major area of study if they had it to do over. Four-in-ten Cook College students and University College students at New Brunswick campus awarded an “Excellent” rating to their academic experience in their major area of study. The same proportion of New Brunswick graduates (38%) strongly agree they would choose the same major area of study again. Approximately half of engineering, pharmacy, and MGSA students would choose the same area of study again. However, only one-third of engineering and MGSA students and one-fourth of pharmacy students rate their academic experience in their department as “Excellent.”

### **Faculty Interaction**

In 2001 and 1997 the *Graduating Student Opinion Survey* asked students to indicate the amount of contact they had with Rutgers faculty in 11 different situations, ranging from talking to a faculty member after class to helping a faculty member carry out his or her research. Table 4.4 presents the responses of graduating students for both years. Response categories were changed between 1997 and 2001, therefore percentages are not strictly comparable. However, areas of faculty contact receiving the highest rates of interaction with faculty (i.e., “very much” or “much” in 1997; “frequently” or “occasionally” in 2001) have a similar pattern. The most interaction with faculty was while discussing class-related issues, at the end of class, while discussing the student's future job or career, and while discussing the student's further education. In 2001, two other types of contact were reported by more than fifty percent of students who indicated they had faculty contact frequently or occasionally: talking with faculty outside of class and meeting a faculty member during office hours. More than three-fourths of the 2001

respondents to the GSOS indicated they had been intellectually stimulated by a faculty member either occasionally (45%) or frequently (33%). Respondents reported no contact with faculty at high rates in the areas of: helping a faculty member carry out his or her research (70% in 1997; 64% in 2001), discussing personal issues (52% and 50%, respectively), discussing a faculty member's research (52% and 47%), meeting with faculty members in another location such as a committee meeting (50%; 39%), and discussing an independent study project (47%; 43%).

### **Major Area Advising and Course Availability (2001)**

A new section was added to the GSOS in 2001 to explore students' perceptions of academic advising within their major and to determine if courses required for their degree were available when they were needed. Responders indicate that academic advisement needs improvement. Only one-fourth (26%) report they received "some" or "a great deal" of guidance from faculty or staff in selecting their major. While two-thirds (63%) were satisfied with the academic advising they received from their major area advisor, thirty-eight percent indicated that their academic advisor was "not at all helpful" once they had chosen their major. Scheduling of classes is another area that could be improved. One-in-five report that courses for their degree were not available when they needed them. Table 4.5 presents results on these topics broken out by campus/school. Nearly half (47%) of respondents from Camden indicate they are "very satisfied" with the academic advising in their major. This applies to more than half for Camden Arts and Sciences students and for University College students at Camden. However, only one-fourth of the Camden Business School students offered the highest rating to academic advising in their major. The "Satisfaction Indicator" for this group was 1.1 indicating that as many were dissatisfied as were satisfied with advising. A similar pattern of satisfaction was found among Newark Arts and Sciences and Newark University College students who expressed greater satisfaction with academic advising than did students graduating from the College of Nursing. However, the overall proportion of Newark graduates who were "Very Satisfied" was at a lower level (30%). Satisfaction was even lower among New Brunswick students, with the exception of MGSA students where nearly half (47%) were "Very Satisfied" with advising in the major. Students of Pharmacy (17%), Engineering (24%), Rutgers College (24%), and Livingston College (22%) also had lower proportions who were "Very Satisfied" with the academic advising they had received in their major. More students were dissatisfied than satisfied with advising in Pharmacy and Nursing.

The helpfulness of academic advisors after a major is chosen presents an area where most schools are experiencing difficulty. However, University College students at Camden received fairly high marks with nearly half (47%) indicating their advisor was "very helpful" and two-to-one respondents indicating their advisor was more helpful than not. Other schools were about evenly split on helpful vs. less than helpful ratings: Camden and Newark Schools of Arts and Sciences, Cook College, and MGSA fell in this group. All other schools and colleges had more students indicating that their academic advisors were less than helpful once the major had been chosen.

Most schools and colleges are able to provide courses required for the degree when they are needed according to 2001 GSOS graduating students. MGSA students agreed that courses were available (95%) as did at least eighty percent of respondents from Douglass College, Rutgers College, Livingston College, Camden Arts and Sciences, and Camden University College. Fewer students from Camden School of Business (63%) and University College in Newark (58%) agreed that courses were available when needed.

## **PERCEPTIONS OF RUTGERS (2001, 1997, 1992)**

Students in each of the three graduating classes were asked to rate certain aspects of the Rutgers student experience by responding to a set of experience questions. Table 4.6 shows the percentages of students who “Strongly Agree” with each statement ordered by an “Index” calculated by dividing those who agree “strongly” or “somewhat” by those who disagree “strongly” or “somewhat” within several broad categories: General Perceptions, Academic Experience, Social Activities, and Campus Climate. Note that an Index value of 9 or higher indicates that at least ninety percent of the respondents agreed with the statement. Ranks are presented for each year based on the combined percentages of those who indicated they agreed at any level. Ranks across years are not comparable because the total number of questions and as well as the content of the individual questions was revised between the 1997 and 2001 surveys.

### **General Perceptions**

Students agree overwhelmingly that “The cost of attending Rutgers was reasonable” (92%) and that “Rutgers has high quality academic programs” (91%). The percent who “Agree Strongly” that the cost of attending Rutgers is reasonable has expanded from twenty-one percent in 1992, to thirty percent in 1997, and has grown still further to forty-seven percent by the 2001 survey. Overall, in 2001, agreement on the reasonableness of cost is greater than ninety percent among Asian and white students, slightly lower (89%) among Latinos and eighty-two percent among African American students. On a less positive note, students remain evenly split in 2001, as they were in 1997, when it comes to their perceptions that “Rutgers’ staff cares about individual students.” However, this is a slight improvement from 1992 where less than half of the respondents (45%) indicated their agreement that the Rutgers staff cares about students.

### **Academic Experience**

More than one-third of the graduating seniors strongly agreed in 2001 (as they did in 1997) that “Rutgers has high quality academic programs” and, more specifically, “Rutgers has a high-quality program in my major area of study” reflecting slight improvement from 1992 GSOS findings. According to respondents to the 2001 GSOS, Rutgers provides an open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs

(91%). Furthermore, there was a slight increase in the strongly held perception that “Students must be above average to be admitted to Rutgers.” In 2001, eighteen percent strongly agreed that this was the case, compared to thirteen percent in 1997 and twelve percent in 1992. The perception of the “quality” of Rutgers students varies by the ethnic/racial group of the respondent. Although the majority (approximately 60%) of the respondents representing any ethnic/racial group report that they agree that students must be above average to be admitted to Rutgers; the large percentage (40%) of students who do not believe this to be true would appear to be in contradiction to the expected desired student perception of a research institution of the highest quality.

In all three study years, students were more likely than not to agree that “Rutgers’ faculty cares about individual students.” However, a sizeable minority (36%) of respondents does not agree that this is the case. Faculty, like the Rutgers staff noted above, need to improve the quality of their interactions with students. Given the extensive efforts made by the various schools and colleges at Rutgers to improve student’s integration into the smaller communities within the larger Rutgers’ umbrella, it is surprising that students retain the perception that faculty and staff are indifferent to their needs.

In all three years, many students indicated they had been able to participate in a research project during their tenure as undergraduates at Rutgers. Recent gains have been made in this area over the past decade: fifty-seven percent reported participation in 2001 and sixty percent in 1997 compared with less than half (43%) in 1992.

## **Social Activities**

On the positive side, more than ninety percent of respondents agreed in each of the three study years that “Rutgers has many activities and organizations for students.” In 2001, nearly half (48%) strongly agreed, compared to thirty-nine percent in 1997 and thirty-eight percent in 1992. This statement ranked either first or second in each of the study years indicating that students continue to have a strong awareness of social activities at Rutgers. This is especially true for African American, Asian, and Latino students who agree at greater than ninety percent. Only two-thirds of white students (65%), in comparison, agree that Rutgers has many activities and organizations for students.

On the less positive side, one-third or more respondents in each survey year strongly agree that “Many students at RU use alcohol and/or drugs.” Approximately eighty-five percent of Asian students and white students believe that many students at Rutgers use alcohol and/or drugs, a belief held by seventy percent of African Americans and seventy-six percent of Latinos as well. Additionally, more of the recent graduates agreed than disagreed with the statement: “Many students at Rutgers are more interested in having fun than studying.” The perception among members of the different ethnic/racial groups differs when it comes to assessing the commitment to scholarship on the part of Rutgers students. Two-thirds of

Asian and white students indicate that many students at Rutgers are more interested in having fun than studying, while forty-four percent of Latinos and thirty-four percent of African Americans believe this is so.

In addition to the “party” image of Rutgers’s students held by many graduating students, concern is expressed that cheating is a widespread problem at Rutgers. In the two most recent surveys, students were slightly more likely to agree that cheating is not a widespread problem at Rutgers University, a reversal of the 1992 finding. This is especially true among Asian students among whom only forty-four percent indicate cheating is NOT a widespread problem. Between sixty percent and two-thirds of the non-Asian students say cheating is not a problem, still leaving one-third or more of all students concerned about cheating at Rutgers.

### **Campus Climate**

Student responses to statements concerning campus climate generally point to a somewhat more comfortable climate for the 2001 graduates than for 1997 or 1992 graduates. Increases were found in the percentages of students who strongly agreed with positive statements related to gender and racial/ethnic diversity in those questions asked in all three survey years. This year’s respondents universally agree that promotion of a multicultural environment is important (91%). Fully fifty percent of the 2001 respondents indicated that they “Strongly Agreed” that “It is important for Rutgers to provide a multicultural environment” compared to forty percent in 1997 and thirty-six percent in 1992. As expected, the highest agreement with this statement comes from Asian (99%), African American (97%), and Latino students (93%). Even so, fully eighty-eight percent of white students also stress the importance of a multicultural environment.

In spite of the consensus among respondents concerning its importance, the multicultural climate of Rutgers University is not a primary motivation for enrolling at Rutgers for many students. When asked if diversity was one reason they chose Rutgers, more than half disagreed. However, a sizeable number of all students, regardless of racial/ethnic group, did consider this factor. Among Asian students fifty-eight percent cited diversity as one of the reasons they chose Rutgers, as did fifty-one percent of African Americans. Many Latinos (44%) were attracted by the diversity of Rutgers, as were approximately one-third (32%) of white students.

Current graduates acknowledge that Rutgers promotes a multicultural environment (84%), respect for diversity (91% agree and 37% agree strongly) and is committed to the success of different racial groups (91%). Agreement among African Americans is slightly lower on these statements than it is for other racial/ethnic groups. Approximately three-fourths of blacks agree that Rutgers promotes a multicultural environment compared to eighty-five percent or more agreement among Asian, Latino, or white students. Although at a higher level of agreement, the same pattern is found when it comes to assessment of Rutgers commitment to diversity and commitment to the success of different racial/ethnic

groups. The agreement level is just under eighty-five percent among African American students compared to approximately ninety percent for each of the other groups.

Interaction in the classroom and among minorities and men and women are important indicators of the success of efforts at Rutgers to promote a equitable environment for all students. The consensus is that minority students are afforded the same treatment as other students in the classroom (90%). Again, African Americans are slightly less in agreement (79%) compared to others (approximately 90%) and are slightly less likely (78%) to indicate that minorities get along well at Rutgers than are other racial/ethnic groups (approximately 85%). Men and women are afforded the same treatment in the classroom and male and female students generally respect one another according to ninety-five percent of the respondents. More than ninety percent agree with these statements, regardless of gender or racial/ethnic group membership. Approximately one-third of the graduating seniors in 2001 agreed strongly that “Male and female students generally respect one another” (32%), and “Women are afforded the same treatment as men in the classroom” (36%)

### **Activities**

Most students engage in a wide variety of activities during a typical week while school is in session. Typically, a student attends classes or labs for 11-15 hours; spends 6-10 hours studying or pursuing other academic activities outside of classes or labs. Two-thirds of the students (64%) work for pay, interns, or volunteers for between 6 and 30 hours - only 12% do not engage in these activities. Students also participate in sports, athletic activities, or other forms of exercising for 1-5 hours (although 21% do not participate in these physical activities); A student typically spends 1-5 hours socializing or on the telephone or using email; engages for 1-5 hours in leisure activities (entertainment, TV, theatre, shopping, hobbies, recreation, computers, clubs, reading for fun); and spends a similar amount of time commuting to and from job, school, or classes.

### **Summary**

The 2001 Rutgers graduates are, in general, pleased with their overall academic experience at the university and are somewhat more likely to rate their experience as “Excellent” compared to those graduating in 1997 or 1992. This was especially true among those who are not New Jersey residents where one-third rate their undergraduate experience as excellent. Even greater positive evaluations come from students who are studying here on temporary visas where forty-three percent rate their experience this highly. Ratings of “excellent” for their overall academic experience have improved over the decade among African Americans and Latinos, although not achieving the level indicated by white students. Asians, on the other hand, continue to offer slightly less positive ratings than the other racial/ethnic groups. University College students on all three campuses are most likely to rate their experience as excellent. Nursing students the least likely.

Additional measures on the 2001 GSOS captured the overall perceptions of graduating students about the university and their departments. Eighty-three percent agree that they would choose Rutgers again if they were starting college over and eighty-seven percent would recommend Rutgers to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college. Over eighty percent (83%) give a positive rating to their program with more than one-third (37%) rating their academic experience within their major as “Excellent,” and four-in-ten strongly agree they would choose the same major area of study at Rutgers if starting over. Latinos are the most positive and Asians the least positive when it comes to evaluations of their departments.

In 2001, as in 1997, interaction with faculty tends to be higher in areas directly related to class work (e.g., talking with a faculty member at the end of class or outside of class, and talking about class-related issues) than in less formal intellectual exchange such as discussions about a faculty member’s research. Most graduating seniors also report having discussed their future education or career plans with faculty members.

Only one-fourth (26%) report they received “some” or “a great deal” of guidance from faculty or staff in deciding their major. Academic advising in the student’s major area was a new topic on the 2001 GSOS. This is an area where improvement is needed. While two-thirds (63%) were satisfied with the academic advising they received from their major area advisor, thirty-eight percent indicated that their academic advisor was “not at all helpful” once they had chosen their major. Responses to the GSOS also indicate that scheduling of classes is another academic service area that could be improved. One-in-five report that courses for their degree were not available when they needed them.

Students agree overwhelmingly that “The cost of attending Rutgers was reasonable” (92%) and that “Rutgers has high quality academic programs” (91%). The percent who “Agree Strongly” that the cost is reasonable has expanded from twenty-one percent in 1992, to thirty percent in 1997, and has grown still further to forty-seven percent by the 2001 survey. Respondents universally agree that promotion of a multicultural environment is important (91%) and that Rutgers promotes respect for diversity (91%). Furthermore, graduating students agree that minority students are afforded the same treatment as other students in the classroom (90%); Rutgers provides an open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs (91%); men and women are afforded the same treatment in the classroom and generally respect one another (95%).

Although not a primary reason for attending Rutgers, diversity is one of the reasons considered by more than half of Asian and Black students. Almost half of Latinos and one-third of white students cite diversity as a consideration in their decision to attend Rutgers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### ***RUTGERS SERVICES – UTILIZATION AND SATISFACTION***

Services used by respondents were evaluated for three major areas: academic support services and resources, on-campus resources, and administrative and computing services (with several questions added to this last section since the 1997 and 1992 surveys were conducted). A new section to the GSOS series was added that asks respondents about their online communication patterns with friends, family, and faculty and their use of the internet for both academic and non-academic pursuits.

#### **Utilization of Services**

Table 5.1 displays information about students' use of services for each of the survey years. Several services in the 2001 GSOS instrument were listed using more precise terminology or with added examples and are presented in the tables accompanying this chapter.

#### **Academic Support Services and Resources**

This year "Undergraduate Catalogues" tops the list of services most used among those listed in the Academic Support Services and Resources section of the 2001 survey. A nearly identical number of respondents used Rutgers libraries, the services most used in the 1997 and 1992 surveys. Both of these services were used by ninety-four percent of the 2001 graduating students. Three-fourths of the current graduates sought academic advising and half sought improvement for reading, writing, math, and study skills. Skills improvement in these areas show remarkable growth in utilization of services at Rutgers over the three study periods: from sixteen percent in 1992, to forty-one percent in 1997, to fifty-one percent in 2001.

#### **On-Campus Resources**

Use of on-campus resources in 2001 illustrates the major differences in the population from previous years. In 1992 and 1997, students with enough credits to graduate who did not actually graduate were included in the presentation of results. It is clear that the earlier years had a bias toward students who spent less time on campus. Ten to twenty point increases in utilization of on-campus resources are found in the 2001 survey, including use of housing, transportation, recreational centers, college cultural events, and campus security. High level use of other on-campus services remained fairly constant: Rutgers bookstores (95%), parking (89%), student centers (88%), dining services (78%), student health services/centers (66%), and career planning/services (60%).

## **Administrative and Computing Services**

Administrative and computing services have evolved technologically over the decade between the first and most recent *Graduating Student Opinion Surveys*. New questions were added to the 2001 survey to reflect these changes. Three questions have comparable data from 1997 and/or 1992. Touch-tone telephone registration was used by more than nine-in-ten respondents in 1997 and 2001. Web course registration was used by two-thirds of graduating seniors 2001. Registration (prior to web capabilities) was evaluated by approximately ninety-five percent of respondents in 1992 and 1997 (we assume that all actually used this service). Accessing the University's Schedule of Classes on-line was accomplished by eighty-four percent of 2001 graduates and (prior to the web version) the paper schedule of classes was evaluated by more than ninety-five percent of 1992 and 1997 graduates. Approximately nine-in-ten of the 2001 graduates have gone on-line to look up grades, transcripts, or class schedules or accessed the Rutgers website/homepage. On-line syllabi for classes have been viewed by two-thirds of the graduating class of 2001 and more than half evaluated term bill processing. Four-in-ten have used "InterviewTrak" to search for jobs or internships.

## **Satisfaction with Services**

### **Academic Support Services**

In general, students remain satisfied with the services they used while at Rutgers. Table 5.2 shows that high levels of satisfaction (approximately 80% or more who are satisfied) have remained stable over the decade spanned by the three studies in the Academic Support Services and Resource areas including: Rutgers Libraries; undergraduate catalogues; the Educational Opportunity Fund Program; International Student Services; and reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement. The gains in satisfaction with Financial Aid services found in 1997 among graduates have been maintained through 2001 with more than seventy percent indicating their satisfaction. Academic advising has shown a modest improvement in each of the study years since 1992. Sixty-three percent of students graduating in 2001 are satisfied with the academic advising they received, in general (28% indicate they are "Very Satisfied"). However, recall that although a similar positive evaluation was given to advising in their major area, a sizable minority of respondents (38%) indicated their advisor was "not at all helpful" once they had chosen their major.

### **On-Campus Resources**

Many on-campus resources have maintained a high level of satisfaction as well. More than nine-in-ten students in each of the study years expressed satisfaction with recreation/fitness centers and student centers. Psychological Counseling Services (used by 17% of the 2001 graduates and 12-13% of the students graduating in 1992 and 1997, respectively) received satisfactory ratings from at least two-thirds of the users of this service in each of the study years, as did Career Services and the Student Health Centers. Campus security maintained the improvement achieved in 1997 from 1992 with

approximately eighty percent expressing satisfaction in the two most recent studies compared to sixty-three percent in 1992. Three areas of on-campus services have experienced a decline in student satisfaction over the decade covered by the three studies: Rutgers bookstores, housing, and dining services. Satisfaction with Rutgers bookstores declined from eighty-five percent in 1992 to eighty-two percent in 1997 and stands at seventy-six percent in 2001. Satisfaction with housing quality (specifically indicating dormitories in 2001) fell from seventy-eight percent satisfied in 1992 to seventy-two percent in 1997 and continued to decline to sixty-six percent in 2001. Dining services experienced a decline from 1992 from sixty-seven percent satisfied to fifty-six percent in 1997 and remains at that level in 2001. Transportation has remained stable, but as many are dissatisfied with this service as are satisfied in each of the study years. Parking is the one area where more graduates expressed dissatisfaction with the service than indicated they were satisfied in each of the study years. In addition, only sixteen percent of 2001 graduates were satisfied with parking, down from the one-in-four who were satisfied in 1997 and 1992.

### **Administrative and Computing Services**

Administrative and computing services receive high satisfaction scores in general. On-line registration and schedules of classes receive higher ratings in 2001 than did their counterparts in the previous studies. These two web services and online grades, transcripts, and class schedules achieve satisfactory marks by at least ninety-six percent of the students in 2001. This is a dramatic improvement from where just over half of the 1992 respondents were satisfied with registration and class schedules. A corresponding drop in the satisfaction with touch-tone telephone registration occurred between 1997 and 2001 as the capability of registering on-line was implemented. However, only two-thirds were satisfied with this service in 2001, down from close to ninety percent.

Several services based on new technology were assessed in the 2001 GSOS. Satisfaction with these services ranged from two-thirds for term bill processing to ninety percent or better for online syllabi for classes and the Rutgers website homepage. Term bill processing was evaluated by just over half of the 2001 graduates (53%). This service received a "Satisfied" rating from two-thirds of the respondents; with one-in-four indicating they were "Very Satisfied."

Several other services targeted selected students. Although use of these services is low (data for these services are not shown but includes Web Financial Aid (16%), RU-TV Network (15%), Web Graduate School Applications (9%), ARTSYS (8%), and Virtual Tours of the Campuses (8%)); satisfaction is high. Nearly half (47%) of the graduates are "Very Satisfied" with Financial Aid on the web and forty percent indicate this high level of satisfaction with the RU-TV Network. Approximately one-third of the respondents are "Very Satisfied" with the remaining "low use" administrative and computing services: Web Graduate School Applications, ARTSYS (transfer students), and virtual tours of the campuses.

## **Improvement in Rutgers Computing Facilities**

A question was added to the most recent survey that was designed to provide an overall measure of improvement of Rutgers computing facilities: "How would you describe the changes in Rutgers computing facilities over the years that you have been enrolled at Rutgers?" As shown in Table 5.3, only two percent indicated that the computing facilities have gotten worse and seventeen percent believed there has been no change. Eight-in-ten felt there has been improvement with one-third indicating that the computing facilities have "improved a lot."

## **On-Line Communication**

On-line communication is quite popular among recent graduates. According to those responding to the 2001 GSOS, two-thirds use this method of communication "several times a week" with friends and acquaintances who are not students, fifty-eight percent contact students here at Rutgers this frequently, while students at other colleges and the respondent's family are contacted several times a week by forty-two percent of the 2001 graduates (see Table 5.4). Only ten percent never go online to contact faculty; and one-in-five (19%) communicate with faculty several times a week. More than one-in-four (28%) participate in class discussions online and more than half use the internet several times a week for research or homework. All but two percent use the internet for nonacademic reasons with more than three-fourths (78%) doing so several times a week.

## **Summary**

Academic support services, on-campus resources, and administrative computing services are widely used by graduating seniors. In particular, the proportion of students who participate in skills improvement (reading, writing, math, and study skills) has increased steadily over the past ten years. Students remain satisfied with the services they used while at Rutgers. Many on-campus resources have maintained a high level of satisfaction as well. Three areas of on-campus services have experienced a decline in student satisfaction over the decade covered by the three studies: Rutgers bookstores, housing, and dining services. Transportation and parking remain services with which students express the greatest dissatisfaction. Administrative and computing services receive high satisfaction scores in general. Eight-in-ten respondents felt there has been an improvement in Rutgers computing facilities over the years they were enrolled at Rutgers, with one-third indicating that the facilities have "improved a lot." This result is undoubtedly due to the investment of the university in information technology over the last five years through projects such as RUNet 2000. Also, on-line communication is quite popular with students. They frequently use this service to contact other students (here and at other colleges), family, and friends. Most also report using the internet several times a week for research or homework. All but two percent use the internet for nonacademic reasons.

## **CHAPTER SIX:**

### ***FUTURE PLANS***

#### **Introduction**

The 2001 GSOS, for the third time, asked respondents about their plans for further academic study and employment. Results from the three study years are presented below.

#### **Academic Plans (2001, 1997, 1992)**

More than three-quarters of graduates in each of the study years indicate that they plan to continue their education, and many of these students were admitted to programs in graduate and professional schools by the time they graduated. Since surveys were returned over a period of several months starting in April of the semester they graduated, the students who responded post-graduation were generally more certain of their plans than were those who responded right after the survey was sent out. Therefore, the number of students who went immediately on to graduate school may be underestimated by the results reported here.

#### **Plans to Attend Graduate or Professional School**

Several questions on the GSOS pertained to plans to attend graduate or professional school. In 1992 and 1997, the first question did not specify a time frame but simply asked if the student was planning to attend. The 2001 survey asked if the respondent planned to attend in the next academic year. Table 6.1 combines information to produce comparable data across all three study years, reporting expected attendance for the academic year post graduation. The slight drop in expected attendance between 1992 and 1997 was regained in 2001. In each year, women are slightly more likely than men to plan to attend graduate or professional school without a break in their studies. Latinos are most likely to immediately continue their education in 2001 as they were in 1992 (93% in each study year). However, African Americans (88%) now are more like whites (87%) in their expectation to go right on to graduate or professional school and have not regained the high of ninety-three percent having this expectation in 1992. With the exception of graduates of University College in Camden where ninety-four percent of the respondents to both of the 2001 and 1997 surveys indicated their intentions to attend graduate or professional school (up from 79% in 1992) and the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy<sup>2</sup> in New Brunswick where fewer graduates (65% in 2001, 68% in 1997, and 64% in 1992) expect to further their education, each of the other schools and colleges graduated students in 2001 who are more likely to go on for

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<sup>2</sup> Because students enrolled in the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy are seeking a First Professional Degree, the relative low rates among pharmacy students in their intention to pursue further education is not unexpected.

advanced degrees than they were in 1997. Douglass College women, those graduating from the Camden School Of Business, and from the School of Nursing in Newark all have at least nine-in-ten graduates who intend to pursue more advanced degrees. United States citizens are less likely to continue their post-graduate education (87%) compared to foreign students who have become residents (94%) and those here on temporary visas (98%).

### **Time Frame for Attending Graduate or Professional School**

In 2001, more than one-half (56%) of the women and one-fourth of the men who expect to continue their education, intend to do so within the next academic year (see Table 6.2). In previous study years, one-third (35%) of the women anticipated continuing their education without a gap. However, the proportion of men continuing in the next year has dropped from thirty-seven percent in 1992 to twenty-nine percent in 1997 and stands at twenty-four percent in 2001. In 2001, among the various racial/ethnic groups who expect to further their education, African Americans (53%) are most likely to continue in the next year and Asians the least likely (27%) with Latinos (39%) and Whites (31%) falling in the middle. Citizens are less likely to continue in the next year (31%) than are foreign students among whom at least four-in-ten will not take a break from their studies. Graduates of colleges on the New Brunswick campus are the least likely to express their intention to continue within the next year (30%) compared to respondents from Camden (39%) or Newark (42%). The individual schools and colleges vary widely in sending their graduates right on to pursue advanced degrees, however, many of the numbers of students who plan to pursue advanced degrees are small in many of these schools and colleges.

### **Highest Degree Planned**

As in previous years, most students intend to pursue a masters degree. By 2001, half or more indicated this intention – an increase of at least ten percent over the previous decade. Findings displayed in Table 6.3 show that more than half of both men and women expect to achieve a Masters degree. In all study years and for both men and women, those expecting to attain professional degrees falls between sixteen and twenty percent. In 2001, graduating women (25%) are more likely than men (19%) to express their expectation that they will attain a doctoral degree. In 2001 (as in 1997) Latinos are more likely to pursue a Masters degree (41%) than they were in 1992 (34%) and less likely (20% in 2001) to go into the professions (30% in 1992). Masters degrees are slightly more likely to be pursued by older (over 22 years) graduates than their younger counterparts who are more likely to pursue professional degrees than their older fellow graduates.

Similar proportions of graduates intend to pursue a doctorate, regardless of age (from 21% to 25% over the three study periods). Camden graduates were most likely to pursue a masters (61%), followed by Newark (56%), and New Brunswick (50%) and approximately one-fourth of the graduates from each of the campuses intend to pursue a doctorate.

### **Preparation for the job market**

A question was added to the 2001 GSOS to directly assess the graduates' perception of how well Rutgers had prepared them for the job market. Table 6.4 shows that approximately eighty percent of the men and women who answered this question feel prepared. Men are slightly more likely to indicate they are "Very Well Prepared" (26%) compared to women (22%), as are African Americans (33%) and Latinos (29%) compared to other groups. Only fifteen percent of Asians indicate they are "Very Well Prepared" for the job market by Rutgers. Four in ten Camden graduates (39%) are more likely to credit Rutgers to this degree compared to Newark (27%) or New Brunswick (21%) graduates.

### **Employment Status**

Table 6.5 shows the employment status of graduates for 2001 and 1997. Question wording varied over the two surveys and the more recent survey included additional questions for those still in the process of seeking a job. The 2001 GSOS asked respondents if they would continue or start a job after graduation; more than half indicated they would (45% full-time and 10% part-time). A similar proportion (58%) gave a job location for their current or expected employers. In 1997, two-thirds of these jobs were located in New Jersey; only fifty-seven percent report New Jersey locations for their employers in 2001.

The proportion currently seeking employment (even if they already had a job) remained constant over the two time periods; forty-two percent in 1997 and thirty-nine percent in 2001. The length of their job search was slightly lower in 2001 with fifty-seven percent looking for one to two months compared to sixty-four percent having searched for this long in 1997. This result may be due to the longer data gathering period in the more recent study.

### **Career Services: 2001**

Table 6.6 shows the use and satisfaction with career services among graduating seniors in 2001. Half of the respondents used JOBTRAK for job listings (51%) or attended a career day (50%). Four in ten used the career center website and one-third met with a career counselor (37%) or read the "Careers" insert in the Daily Targum (32%). Approximately one-fourth participated in a campus interview (25%), attended a career seminar or workshop (24%), or attended an employer information session (22%). Satisfaction was highest among those attending an employer information session (eight checking satisfied for every one who checked dissatisfied). Campus interviews and career seminars/workshops received satisfaction ratings of six to one. These three activities also received "very satisfied" ratings by one-third or more of the participants, as did those who participated in a mock interview, attended a career day, opened a credentials file, or used JOBTRAK for job listings.

## Summary

More than three-quarters of graduates in each of the study years indicate that they plan to continue their education, and many of these students were admitted to programs in graduate and professional schools by the time they graduated. One-third of women and one-fourth of the men who expect to continue their education, intend to do so within the next academic year. The proportion of women has remained the same over the decade bracketed by the surveys. However, the proportion of men continuing their education into the next year has dropped from thirty-seven percent in 1992 to twenty-nine percent in 1997 and stands at twenty-four percent in 2001. As in previous years, many expect to achieve a Master's degree. By 2001, half or more indicate this intention – an increase of at least ten percent over the previous decade. According to responses to the 2001 GSOS, one-fourth of the graduates from each of the campuses intend to pursue a doctorate.

Approximately eighty percent of the current graduates indicate that Rutgers has prepared them for the job market. More than half of these graduates will continue or start a job after graduation (45% full-time and 10% part-time). A similar proportion (58%) gave a job location for their current or expected employers. In 1997, more than two-thirds of these jobs were located in New Jersey; only fifty-seven percent reported New Jersey locations for their employers in 2001.