

1997 Graduating Student Opinion Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

This report presents the results of the 1997 *Graduating Student Opinion Survey (GSOS)*, conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The survey was designed to elicit information and student opinion on the various departments, operations, and services at the university; and graduating students' evaluation of their academic and nonacademic experiences at Rutgers, including extracurricular activities, extent and type of faculty contact, and student employment. The survey also sought to determine students' short- and long-range academic and career goals, and the extent to which Rutgers contributed to their attainment of such goals. The results of the survey provide valuable information to faculty and administrators in maintaining and enhancing the quality of undergraduate education at Rutgers.

SURVEY DESCRIPTION AND METHODOLOGY

The *GSOS* was sent to graduating seniors on April 7, 1997. Two follow-up mailings were conducted through early summer of 1997. Of the 7,229 surveys originally sent to students, 105 were returned as undeliverable, 58 students refused to participate, and 3,332 students returned usable and valid surveys, for a response rate of 46 percent. The response rate was higher for females (51%) than for males (40%), and was higher for Newark seniors (55%) than for New Brunswick (47%) and Camden seniors (32%). Response rates were comparable across all racial/ethnic groups.

The 1997 *GSOS* was similar in design and content to a survey administered to the graduating class of 1992 to enable comparison of the responses from the two classes. For example, both surveys included items on the attainment of student goals, satisfaction with student services, ratings of various aspects of the student experience, involvement in extracurricular activities, faculty contact, employment during the undergraduate years, and plans for future employment and further education. There were also similarities in the student demographic background information obtained from both surveys.

RESPONDENT AND TARGET POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

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 survey. In both years, female students were more likely to respond to the survey than were male students. In addition, students from the Newark campus were somewhat over-represented and students from Camden somewhat under-represented on the 1997 survey. Responding students were quite similar to the target population on mean measures of achievement, such as mean GPA and SAT scores. Comparison of the population characteristics for the two years shows that Rutgers is becoming more ethnically diverse and increasingly includes a large number of students over the traditional age of 22.

In both survey years, the majority of respondents (84% in 1997 and 86% in 1992) were not married. Three percent and four percent of students in 1997 and 1992, respectively, declared they have one or more disabilities. Questions about parental education and income asked on the 1997 survey revealed a wide spectrum of parental education levels, ranging from less than an eighth grade education to a graduate or professional school degree. Parental income ranged from less than \$6,000 to more than \$200,000 per year.

Students' residence arrangements were comparable in 1997 and 1992, with perhaps a slightly lower tendency for long-term stays in the residence halls for New Brunswick students. While in 1992, 27 percent of graduating students had spent eight or more semesters in a residence hall, by 1997 only 20 percent of students had done so. Newark and Camden students lived with parents or lived off-campus full-time more so than New Brunswick students. The vast majority of 1997 and 1992 Rutgers graduates (both 82%) worked during the school year, spending anywhere from one to ten hours (21%) to more than 40 hours per week (13%) at their jobs. Nearly half of the 1997 respondents (47%), but only 34 percent of the 1992 respondents reported an experience with an internship, externship or co-op work. Students learned about these opportunities on their own (43%) or through an academic department (31%).

STUDENT GOALS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENT AT RUTGERS

Respondents to both the 1997 and 1992 *GSOS* were asked to consider a set of goals that are commonly held by college students, and 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. Goals were grouped under the headings: Academic, Career Preparation/Career Improvement, Social and Cultural Participation, and Personal Development and Enrichment.

The most important academic goal among 1997 and 1992 graduates was to obtain a degree or certification, the next most important was to increase knowledge in an academic field. The most important career preparation goal overall was to improve one's chance of getting a good job, followed by improving one's knowledge, technical skills, and/or competence in work-related areas, discovering career interests, and formulating long-term career plans. In both survey years, respondents chose the goal of meeting people and making friends as the most important social and cultural participation goal, yet this goal was more important in 1997 than in 1992. The most commonly held personal development and enrichment goal in both survey years was to become more independent, self-reliant, and adaptable.

Overall, a higher percentage of 1997 respondents indicated that each academic, career preparation, social, and personal development goal was important to them than did 1992 respondents when asked about the same goals.

RUTGERS EXPERIENCE

Overall Experience. The 1997 and 1992 Rutgers graduates were generally pleased with their overall academic experience. One-quarter of the 1997 respondents gave their academic experience an "Excellent" rating, compared to 19 percent of the 1992 respondents. In addition, 61 percent of the 1997 graduates (64% in 1992) rated their overall experience as "Good," 13 percent (15% in 1992) rated it "Fair," and one percent in both years rated it "Poor." There were no substantial differences in the ratings of females and males, but there were some notable differences in ratings by race/ethnicity and by campus among the 1997 respondents. For example, African Americans were somewhat less likely than whites to give their academic experience an "Excellent" rating, and Newark students tended not to be as satisfied with their academic experience as were Camden and New Brunswick students.

Faculty Interaction. The 1997 *GSOS* 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. An index of overall contact was created for each respondent and categorized as "frequent," "occasional," "rare," or "never." For both 1992 and 1997 respondents, female students were roughly comparable to male students in terms of the amount of faculty

interaction they achieved while at Rutgers. Also, there were no substantial differences between students over age 22 and younger students. However, there were some notable differences among students by race/ethnicity, with Asian students reporting less interaction than students of other ethnic groups in both 1992 and 1997. A relationship was found between students' frequency of faculty interaction and their overall evaluation of their academic experience at Rutgers. Students in colleges with a high level of faculty interaction tended to rate their academic experience as "Excellent" or "Good."

Perceptions of Rutgers. Graduating students in both 1997 and 1992 were asked to respond to 30 opinion questions dealing with their general experiences at Rutgers, their academic experiences, their perceptions of campus climate, and their experiences with social activities. The statement "Rutgers has high quality academic programs" achieved the highest overall rank of any of the 30 statements among both 1997 and 1992 respondents. Respondents in 1992 and 1997 also agreed that: Rutgers had a high quality program in their major, faculty cared about individual students, students must be above average to be admitted to Rutgers, and there are opportunities to participate in a research project. Virtually all respondents agreed that Rutgers had many activities and organizations for students, and that there were excellent recreational facilities for student use.

In the "General" category, students agreed overwhelmingly that the cost of attending Rutgers was reasonable, and also agreed that the computer facilities were good, and that the residence halls were comfortable. In regard to campus climate, student responses pointed to a somewhat more comfortable climate in 1997 than in 1992, but indicated a positive climate in both years by agreeing in high numbers to statements such as: "male and female students generally respected one another," "women are afforded the same treatment as men in the classroom," and "minority students are afforded the same treatment as others in the classroom." Most respondents in both years also agreed that it was important for Rutgers to provide a multicultural environment, and that students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds get along well.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Among the responding seniors in 1997 and 1992, 68 and 69 percent, respectively, indicated that they had participated in some type of extracurricular activity. The most popular type of activity was membership in academic and professional organizations. In both survey years, 29 percent of respondents indicated their participation in three or more different types of extracurricular activities.

RUTGERS SERVICES AND STUDENT LIFE

Survey respondents were presented with 33 services available at the university and were asked to rate their awareness, utilization, and satisfaction with each service. In both 1997 and 1992, graduating seniors indicated awareness of most of the services listed on the survey. Services with less than an 80 percent awareness rating cater primarily to specific groups of students, e.g., the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) and psychological counseling. In both survey years, most of the services with high awareness ratings were also utilized by the majority of students, and in general, students were satisfied with the services that they used. In 1997, only two services satisfied fewer than half of the students who used them -- transportation and parking.

FUTURE PLANS

The 1997 GSOS asked respondents about their plans for future academic study and employment. More than three-quarters of the 1997 graduates indicated their plan to continue their education, and many of these students have been admitted to programs in graduate and professional schools. Female students were somewhat

more likely than males to plan to attend graduate school, and white students were less likely to plan to attend than were students of other ethnic groups. Younger students were more likely than older students, and Camden students more likely than Newark or New Brunswick students, to indicate their plan to pursue further education. Of the students indicating their plans to attend graduate school, most planned to start within five years, and most believe that their highest degree will be a Masters degree. More than half of these students applied to a public institution as their first preference, and the majority were accepted by their first-choice institution.

EMPLOYMENT

Forty-two percent of all respondents to the *1997 GSOS* stated that they were currently seeking employment, with 64 percent of these students having started their job search within one to two months of receiving the survey. Students relied on both career services and self-initiated efforts to find employment. Most respondents stated that their jobs are located in New Jersey, while some indicated that their location of employment is somewhere in the Northeast.

CONCLUSION

Comparison of the *1992* and *1997 GSOS* responses reveals that there has been an overall improvement in the opinions and attitudes of undergraduates toward the university. Undergraduates appear to have become more academically serious, with higher rates of respondents in 1997 selecting academic goals as important and indicating achievement of these goals compared to 1992 survey respondents. Positive responses by undergraduates about student academic experience, opinions regarding campus climate, and many university services also increased between 1992 and 1997.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The gathering of information from students regarding their college experiences and opinions is an important function of any institution of higher education. The perception by students of their tenure 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 an institution. The Office of Institutional Research and Academic Planning at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey has been actively involved in this information-gathering role through its administration of a systematic series of undergraduate student surveys.¹ This report presents the results of one such survey, the *1997 Graduating Student Opinion Survey*, which consisted of the distribution of a questionnaire to undergraduates that were expected to receive their baccalaureate degrees in Spring 1997.

A wide array of factors influence the decision to conduct a survey of students at the end of their undergraduate careers. One fundamental factor relates to the unique situation graduating students have among the general undergraduate student body. These students most often have had the longest tenure of all undergraduates at the university, having the most widespread experiences and the most seasoned opinions and attitudes among all students. In addition, the intellectual and social development of graduating students contributes to their distinct status.² Whether this position of graduating students at Rutgers is the direct result of attending the university or the more likely result of a complex interactive process of student growth and change within the Rutgers' community, an indisputable fact is that the goals, experiences, attitudes, and opinions of these soon-to-graduate students is the culmination of an intellectual and social journey during their tenure at Rutgers. Thus, feedback from members of the 1997 graduating class provides an important and unique source of information about undergraduate education at Rutgers.

A second factor contributing to the decision to undertake a survey of graduating students follows from the first: such a study provides information with which to assess the success of Rutgers as an institution in providing 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 basic 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 also provide a 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 student outcomes are best measured through the administration of surveys such as the *1992 Graduating Student Opinion Survey* and the *1997 Graduating Student Opinion Survey*. 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 extracurricular and employment activities.

The information gathered from surveying students 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 1997 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 *1997 Graduating Student Opinion Survey* also provides the opportunity to look at how specific groups of students compare in their experiences, opinions, and attitudes.

Thus in an effort to meet these needs the 1997 survey of graduating students was administered. 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 knowledge, use, and satisfaction of 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 extracurricular activities, extent and type of faculty contact, and student employment. The *1997 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 2 introduces the survey methodology used in the study and describes the characteristics of the graduating students that responded to the survey. Descriptions of the goals that respondents set and the attainment of these goals while at Rutgers are presented in Chapter 3. The setting and attainment of goals by the 1997 respondents are compared to the responses provided by graduating students in a similar 1992 survey. Chapter 4 documents the experiences of the 1997 graduating students and their evaluations of student services. Their responses are also compared to those of the 1992 graduating class. The future academic and career plans of the 1997 respondents are presented in Chapter 5, along with a comparison of plans developed by students that graduated in 1992. A summary of the results on the *1997 GSOS* is found in Chapter 6. Appendix A contains a copy of the *1997 GSOS* questionnaire used in the study and Appendix B presents a description and some

illustrative comments made by students. Detailed tables for Chapters 2, 3, 4, and 5 can be found in Appendices C, D, E, and F, respectively.

Endnotes, Chapter 1

¹Reports in this series include the *1992 Graduating Student Opinion Survey*, *The Attrition Survey Report*, and *The Continuing Student Opinion Report*.

²For discussions of the effect of college on the academic and social development of undergraduates, see Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), Astin (1977), Bowen (1977), and Feldman and Newman (1969).

CHAPTER TWO: *SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND STUDENT PROFILES*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the method used to survey the 1997 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 self-reported characteristics of students responding to the survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Target Population

On April 7, 1997 the *GSOS* was sent to all graduating seniors. The students had been selected during the fall of 1996 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 1997 graduation. A total of 7,229 surveys were sent in the first mailing, each accompanied by a letter from President Lawrence and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. Surveys were sent to each student's campus mailbox or to their home when there was no campus mailbox available. One week later a post card reminder was sent to the same address. After two 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 yet responded to previous mailings. As graduation day approached, phone calls were made to non-responding students, and a notice was posted on the Rutgers home page on the Internet to encourage seniors to return their surveys. Finally, a third mailing was sent to the home addresses of non-responding students in June 1997, 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. Surveys continued to come in throughout the summer, with a few returned as late as October.

Of the 7,229 original mailed survey packets, 105 were returned as undeliverable, 46 students refused to participate, and 3,332 students returned usable surveys, for an overall response rate of 46 percent. Of the 3,332 responding students, 20 percent returned their surveys within the first week, and 83 percent returned their surveys by the end of May. The remaining 17 percent returned their surveys between June 1 and October 21.

Questionnaire Descriptives

The 1997 questionnaire was similar in design to the one administered to the class of 1992, in part because of our desire to compare responses from the two classes. Both questionnaires contained items on the attainment of student goals, satisfaction with student services, ratings of various aspects of the student experience, involve-

**Table 2.1
Response Rates**

GROUP	Total Mailed N	Total Returned N	Response Rate %
OVERALL	7,229	3,332	46.1
GENDER			
Female	3,887	1,987	51.1
Male	3,341	1,345	40.3
RACE			
African American	676	284	42.0
Asian	1,120	488	43.6
Latino	595	274	46.1
White	4,518	2,140	47.4
Other	213	95	44.6
CAMPUS			
Camden			
<i>Total</i>	931	300	32.2
Arts and Sciences	632	203	32.1
Business	205	65	31.7
University College	94	32	34.0
Newark			
<i>Total</i>	1,176	643	54.7
Arts and Sciences	873	467	53.5
Nursing	78	48	61.5
University College	225	128	56.9
New Brunswick			
<i>Total</i>	5,121	2,389	46.7
Cook	651	294	45.2
Douglass	636	329	51.7
Engineering	463	212	45.8
Livingston	617	226	36.6
Mason Gross	91	30	33.0
Pharmacy	133	38	28.6
Rutgers College	2,085	1,004	48.2
University College	445	256	57.5

ment in extracurricular activities, faculty contact, employment during the undergraduate years, and plans for future employment and further education. Both the 1992 and the 1997 surveys requested background information on race/ethnicity, marital status, disabilities, and residence during enrollment at Rutgers. The 1997 survey also requested information on the educational and income levels of parents, and requested more detailed information on graduate or professional school plans, including the names of up to four graduate or professional schools, the program of study and whether or not the student was accepted, planned to attend, and had been offered a scholarship, assistantship, or grant award. A copy of the 1997 GSOS is presented in Appendix A. Finally, both

questionnaires provided room for student comments, which were categorized for the 1997 questionnaire. Descriptions and some examples of student comments are included in Appendix B.

Survey Administration and Response Rates

Table 2.1 shows the number of surveys mailed, the number returned, and the response rate overall and by gender, race/ethnicity and campus/college. Overall, 3,332 mailed surveys were returned for an overall response rate of 46 percent. The response rate was higher for females (51%) than for males (40%). Response rates were roughly comparable across racial/ethnic groups with 42 percent of African Americans, 44 percent of Asians, 46 percent of Latinos, 47 percent of whites, and 45 percent of students of the “other” category responding. There were, however, some differences in response rates among the three Rutgers campuses. While 55 percent of Newark seniors and 47 percent of New Brunswick seniors responded, only 32 percent of the seniors from the Camden campus returned their surveys. By individual college, the response rates ranged from a low of 29 percent for students from the College of Pharmacy to a high of 62 percent for students from the College of Nursing-Newark.

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 survey, and the results for both 1997 and 1992 are included in Table 2.2. Female students were somewhat more likely to respond to the survey than were male students. In 1997, about 54 percent of the graduating class were female, but nearly 60 percent of the students who returned surveys were female. Similarly, in 1992, 54 percent of the graduating class were female, but 59 percent of those who returned surveys were female.

It is obvious that Rutgers has become more ethnically diverse over the five year period between surveys. While white students comprised 73 percent of the graduating class of 1992, they comprised only 63 percent of the 1997 graduating class. Representation of Asian students has increased from nine percent in 1992 to 16 percent in 1997, while representation of Latino students has grown from five percent to eight percent. The racial/ethnic distribution of respondents in 1997 mirrors closely the distribution in the target population of 1997 graduates. This was also the case in 1992.

The graduating student population at Rutgers increasingly includes a large number of students over the traditional age of 22. In 1997 more than two-thirds of the graduating students were older than 22, yet younger students were slightly more likely to return their questionnaires, since 37 percent of the survey respondents were

Table 2.2
Comparison of Respondents and Population, 1997 and 1992

GROUP	1997		1992	
	Respondents (N=3,332) %	Target Population (N=7,229) %	Respondents (N=4,045) %	Target Population (N=6,812) %
GENDER				
Female	59.6	53.8	59.2	54.0
Male	40.4	46.2	40.8	46.0
RACE				
African American	8.7	9.5	8.0	9.0
Asian	14.9	15.7	9.4	9.0
Latino	8.4	8.4	4.8	5.0
White	65.2	63.4	74.9	73.0
Other	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0
AGE				
< = 22	36.7	32.9	41.0	na
> 22	63.3	67.1	59.0	na
RESIDENCY				
N.J. Resident	92.5	92.2	na	na
Non-N.J. Resident	7.5	7.8	na	na
CITIZEN				
U.S. Citizen	86.1	85.7	na	na
Non-U.S. Citizen	14.0	14.3	na	na
CAMPUS/SCHOOL				
Camden				
Total	9.0	12.8	14.6	10.0
Arts & Sciences	6.1	8.7	9.3	na
Business	2.0	1.3	4.6	na
University College	1.0	2.8	0.7	na
Newark				
Total	19.3	16.3	17.6	13.0
Arts & Sciences	14.0	12.1	14.1	na
Nursing	1.4	1.1	1.4	na
University College	3.8	3.1	2.1	na
New Brunswick				
Total	71.7	70.9	67.7	76.0
Cook	8.8	9.0	8.7	na
Douglass	9.9	8.8	11.7	na
Engineering	6.4	6.4	5.3	na
Livingston	6.8	8.5	8.1	na
Mason Gross	0.9	1.3	0.7	na
Pharmacy	1.1	1.8	1.2	na
Rutgers College	30.1	28.8	24.6	na
University College	7.7	6.2	7.4	na
Mean GPA	3.11	3.03	na	na
Mean SAT-VERBAL (recentered scores)	570	560	na	na
Mean SAT-MATH (recentered scores)	570	570	na	na

age 22 or less while only 33 percent of the students in the target population were that age. In 1992, 41 percent of the respondents were 22 years of age or younger.

Information on citizenship and New Jersey residency was not available for 1992, but in 1997 the respondents were quite similar to the target population on those dimensions. Roughly 86 percent of both respondents and the target population were U.S. citizens.

In the 1997 survey, Camden students were slightly under-represented while Newark students were over-represented by three percentage points. While about 13 percent of graduating students were from the Camden campus, only nine percent of the respondents were from Camden. By contrast, 16 percent of graduating students were from the Newark campus, but 19 percent of the respondents were from Newark. Finally, 71 percent of graduating students were from the New Brunswick campus, and 72 percent of the respondents were from New Brunswick. Individual schools that were slightly under-represented included Camden Arts and Sciences and University College-Camden, along with Livingston, Mason Gross, and the College of Pharmacy. Slightly over-represented schools include the Newark schools, the Camden School of Business, University College-New Brunswick, and Douglass and Rutgers Colleges.

Responding students were quite similar to the target population on mean measures of achievement. While the mean cumulative grade point average among all graduating students in 1997 was 3.03, the respondents had a mean GPA of 3.11. The mean SAT-Verbal and SAT-Math scores were 560 and 570, respectively, for the target population, and 570 on both tests for the survey respondents.

Overall, the responding students were quite similar to those in the target population on virtually all of the dimensions examined, however, the reader should be aware of a slight over-representation of female students and Newark students, and a slight under-representation of Camden students.

Personal

Table 2.3 shows some self-reported characteristics of respondents in both survey years. In both years the vast majority (84% in 1997 and 86% in 1992) were not married. About three percent of students in 1997 and four percent in 1992 stated that they had one or more disabilities. Questions on parental education and income were not asked in 1992 but were asked in 1997. Parents of Rutgers graduates span the educational spectrum; seven percent of both mothers and fathers have an eighth grade education or less, while 14 percent of mothers and 22 percent of fathers have attended graduate or professional school. Parents are no less diverse on the dimension of income. While three percent of students had parents with income of less than \$6,000 per year, another three percent indicated that their parents earned more than \$200,000 per year. The remaining students are fairly evenly distributed among the income categories within these two extremes.

Appendix C, Table 2.3 shows self-reported characteristics of students in separate gender and racial/ethnic groups and by college and campus. While overall the vast majority of Rutgers students are unmarried, this

Table 2.3
Self-reported Characteristics of Respondents
1997 and 1992

GROUP	1997	1992
	Respondents (N=3,332) %	Respondents (N=4,045) %
MARITAL STATUS		
Single	84	86
Married	11	11
Separated/Divorced/Widowed	2	3
No response	3	0
DISABILITY STATUS		
No disabilities	94	92
One or more disabilities	3	4
No response	3	4
INCOME		
Less than \$6,000	3	na
\$6,000 - \$9,999	3	na
\$10,000 - \$14,999	3	na
\$15,000 - \$19,999	4	na
\$20,000 - \$24,999	4	na
\$25,000 - \$29,999	5	na
\$30,000 - \$39,999	8	na
\$40,000 - \$49,999	8	na
\$50,000 - \$59,999	9	na
\$60,000 - \$74,999	13	na
\$75,000 - \$99,999	10	na
\$100,000 - \$149,999	10	na
\$150,000 - \$199,999	2	na
\$200,000 - \$250,000	1	na
\$250,000 or more	2	na
No response	15	na
MOTHER'S EDUCATION		
Eighth grade or less	7	na
High school	35	na
Some college	17	na
College Graduate	24	na
Graduate or prof. school	14	na
No response	2	na
FATHER'S EDUCATION		
Eighth grade or less	7	na
High school	26	na
Some college	16	na
College Graduate	25	na
Graduate or prof. school	22	na
No response	4	na

Table 2.4
Comparison of Residence Experience, 1997 and 1992

LOCATION	NUMBER OF SEMESTERS								STUDENT RESPONDENTS	
	None		1 - 4		5 - 7		8 or More		1997	1992
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	N	N
RESIDENCE HALL	48	49	26	22	10	10	15	19	3,290	4,044
New Brunswick	32	29	34	29	14	15	20	27	2,362	2,798
Newark	87	93	8	6	2	0	2	0	633	656
Camden	90	93	7	6	2	0	2	1	295	590
PARENTS' HOUSE	68	67	12	11	6	8	14	14	3,290	4,044
New Brunswick	78	79	12	11	4	5	7	5	2,362	2,798
Newark	46	38	11	11	10	14	33	38	633	656
Camden	42	43	14	12	16	20	28	25	295	590
OFF-CAMPUS (RENTED)	70	77	24	19	5	4	1	1	3,290	4,044
New Brunswick	60	68	33	26	6	5	1	1	2,362	2,798
Newark	95	97	3	1	1	1	1	0	633	656
Camden	94	95	2	4	2	0	1	1	295	590
OFF-CAMPUS (PRIM. RES.)	79	79	8	8	4	5	9	7	3,290	4,044
New Brunswick	83	82	7	8	4	4	6	5	2,362	2,798
Newark	70	75	9	7	5	7	16	11	633	656
Camden	62	69	13	11	5	7	20	13	295	590
FRATERNITY/SORORITY	96	97	3	2	1	0	0	0	3,290	4,044
New Brunswick	95	96	4	3	1	0	0	0	2,362	2,798
Newark	99	98	1	1	0	0	0	0	633	656
Camden	100	98	0	1	0	0	0	0	295	590

percentage varies by college. Students on the Camden and Newark campuses and in New Brunswick's University College were more likely to be married than were students in the other colleges. The variability in parental income and parental education is maintained within each racial/ethnic group and in each college, although parental education levels tend to be somewhat higher for students in the New Brunswick colleges than for their counterparts in Camden and Newark. More than two-thirds of the Camden and Newark respondents appear to be first-generation college graduates.

College Residency

On both the 1992 and 1997 questionnaires, 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 2.4.¹

Residence arrangements seem to be roughly comparable in 1997 and 1992, with perhaps a slightly lower tendency for long-term stays in the residence halls for New Brunswick students. While in 1992, 27 percent of graduating students had spent eight or more semesters in a residence hall, by 1997 only 20 percent of students had done so. Living with parents throughout college was quite common for students in Newark (33%) and Camden (28%) but less so for New Brunswick (7%) students. 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 (82%) of 1997 Rutgers graduates worked during the school year, as shown in Table 2.5. This percentage was identical to the percentage of 1992 graduates who indicated that they had worked during their time at the university. The hours per week worked by students ranged from one to ten hours (21% of the respondents) to more than 40 hours per week (13% of the respondents); the majority of students worked between 11 and 39 hours per week. The distribution of hours worked was roughly comparable to that reported by the 1992 graduates. When asked whether they had experience with an internship, externship, or co-op work, 47 percent of the 1997 graduates but only 34 percent of the 1992 graduates indicated that they had such an experience. Most of the internship, externship, or co-op students had learned about these opportunities on their own (43%) or through an academic department (31%).

In Appendix C, Table 2.5 information on work experience is displayed for each gender and racial/ethnic group and for each of the Rutgers campuses and colleges. At the time of the survey, a higher percentage of African American and Latino students (both 88%) worked than did white (83%) or Asian (70%) students. Roughly 27 percent of African American students reported that they worked 40 or more hours per week, while this was the case for 13 percent of the Latino students, 12 percent of the white students, and 4 percent of the Asian students. Not surprisingly, the students who attended the University Colleges on each campus were more likely to work (Camden-UC 90%, Newark-UC 91% and New Brunswick-UC 84%) than were students in schools comprised of primarily younger students (Mason Gross 70%, Engineering 72%, and Rutgers College 79%).

Roughly half of female respondents (49%) said that they had obtained an internship, externship, or co-op work experience while at Rutgers, while only 43 percent of males had done so. These work experiences were most common for students in Cook College (68%), Douglass College (62%), Engineering (62%), and Camden School of Business (59%).

**Table 2.5
Comparison of Work Experience in 1997 and 1992**

	1997 %	1992 %
WORKED DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR		
Yes	82	82
No	18	18
Total N	3,250	4,013
AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK		
1 - 10 hours	21	22
11 - 19 hours	24	23
20 - 25 hours	28	29
26 - 39 hours	15	13
40 or more hours	13	14
Total N	2,645	3,254
EXPERIENCE WITH AN INTERNSHIP, EXTERNSHIP OR CO-OP WORK		
Yes	47	34
No	53	66
Total N	3,227	4,019
INFORMATION FOR INTERNSHIP, EXTERNSHIP OR CO-OP WORK*		
On own	43	44
Academic Department	31	37
Career Services	17	14
Other	16	18
Total N	1,516	1,375

* Students could list more than one source of information, therefore, the total is greater than 100%.

SUMMARY

The 1997 *GSOS* was returned by approximately 46 percent of the 1997 graduating seniors to whom it was sent. The response rate for Newark students was higher (55% overall) and for Camden students lower (32%) than for students on the New Brunswick campus (47%). Respondents closely resembled the target population in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, age, New Jersey residency, citizenship, mean cumulative GPA, and mean SAT scores. Aside from a slight under-representation of Camden students and a slight over-representation of Newark students, the distribution of respondents by school was quite similar to the distribution in the target population. A comparison of the 1997 target population with that of the 1992 survey shows that recent Rutgers graduates were more ethnically diverse (in particular, the representation of Asian students has risen from 9% to 16% and the representation of Latino students from 5% to 8%). In addition, the percentage of respondents who

were older than 22 had risen from 59 percent to 63 percent among 1997 respondents. The majority of these respondents tended to be unmarried (84%) and report no disabilities (94%). Parental income ran the gamut, with three percent of the respondents reporting incomes less than \$6,000 and another three percent reporting incomes greater than \$200,000. The education level of mothers and fathers was also variable, with seven percent of both mothers and fathers having an eighth grade education or less, and 14 percent of mothers and 22 percent of fathers having attended graduate or professional school. On the Newark and Camden campuses at least two-thirds of the graduates appear to have the distinction of being the first in their families to graduate from college. Students lived in a variety of residences during their time at Rutgers. Full-time residency in a dormitory was reported by 20 percent of New Brunswick students and only two percent of Camden and Newark students. Full-time residency with parents was common for Newark (33%) and Camden students (28%), but less so for New Brunswick students (7%). About 40 percent of New Brunswick students spent time living in an off-campus apartment. Nearly all students (82%) worked during their years at Rutgers, and nearly half (47%) have had an experience with an internship, externship, or co-op work. Student work hours ranged from light (21% reported working 10 hours a week or less) to heavy (13% reported working 40 or more hours), with the majority having worked somewhere in between these two extremes.

ENDNOTES, CHAPTER 2

¹ Appendix C, Table 2.4 contains gender and race/ethnicity breakouts of these data.

CHAPTER THREE: *STUDENT GOALS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENT AT RUTGERS*

INTRODUCTION

Respondents to both the 1997 and 1992 *Graduating Student Opinion Surveys* were asked to consider a set of goals that are commonly held by college students. 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. 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. The results are shown in Table 3.1 for the total group of respondents and in Appendix D for students grouped by gender, race/ethnicity, campus, and college.

ACADEMIC GOALS

The first 11 goals on the survey, the academic goals, are sorted in Table 3.1 by the percentage of respondents who considered them to be important. The most important goal among the 1997 graduates was to obtain a degree or certification, marked as important by 85 percent of these respondents and achieved by 90 percent. Second among academic goals was that of increasing personal knowledge in an academic field, cited as important by 79 percent of respondents and achieved by 86 percent. Improving the ability for critical thinking and increasing communications skills was considered important by 70 percent of the respondents, and was achieved by 79 percent and 76 percent, respectively. More than half of the respondents also indicated the importance of learning as much as they could in different areas (61%) and pursuing a particular interest or developing a talent (58%). The following goals were marked as important by fewer than half the respondents: understanding scientific concepts and methods of analysis (49%), developing an ability to assess values and make moral decisions (48%), appreciating literature and the arts (42%), gaining a better understanding of Western cultures and institutions (29%), and gaining a better understanding of non-Western cultures and institutions (29%). However, even among the goals that were less commonly held, more than 60 percent of the students who held those goals were able to achieve them while at Rutgers. In general, a higher percentage of 1997 graduates indicated that each goal was important to them as compared to 1992 graduates (note that two goals from the 1997 survey did not appear on the 1992 survey).

Among 1997 graduating students, male students were quite similar to female students in terms of the percentages marking each academic goal as important, as well as the percentages marking each important goal achieved (see Appendix D, Table 3.1). In general, slightly higher percentages of white students marked each

**Table 3.1
Student Goals**

	1997		1992	
	Goals Important At This Time	Goals Achieving or Achieved	Goals Important At This Time	Goals Achieving or Achieved
ACADEMIC GOALS				
- To obtain a degree or certification	85%	90%	66%	82%
- To increase my knowledge in an academic field	79	86	66	74
- To improve my ability for critical thinking	70	79	64	70
- To increase my communications skills	70	76	65	64
- To learn as much as I could in different areas	61	68	*	*
- To pursue a particular interest or develop a talent	58	70	*	*
- To develop my ability to assess values and make moral decisions	48	61	48	69
- To understand scientific concepts and methods of analysis	49	77	42	60
- To appreciate literature and the arts	42	69	44	59
- To better understand Western cultures and institutions	29	65	29	54
- To better understand non-Western cultures and institutions	29	61	29	54
CAREER-PREPARATION/CAREER-IMPROVEMENT GOALS				
- To improve my chances of getting a good job	77	65	*	*
- To improve my knowledge, technical skills, and/or competence in work-related areas	67	68	69	48
- To formulate long-term career plans and/or goals	67	55	67	40
- To discover career interests	63	63	54	49
- To improve my chances for a raise and/or promotion	45	51	53	37
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION GOALS				
- To meet people and make friends	67	78	51	76
- To have an active social life	54	67	*	*
- To become more active in student life and campus activities	40	59	25	61
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENRICHMENT GOALS				
- To become more independent, self-reliant, and adaptable	68	80	60	68
- To improve my self-confidence	59	67	58	61
- To enrich my daily life or make me a more complete person	57	72	57	61
- To improve my leadership skills	54	64	56	51
- To improve my ability to get along with others	45	72	41	71

* Question was not asked on the 1992 survey.

academic goal as important and each important goal as achieved than did students who are African American, Asian, Latino, or “other.” There were some differences in the importance and achievement of academic goals for students by college, however. While obtaining a degree and increasing knowledge in an academic field were the top goals for students in each college, there were some college-specific fluctuations in the importance placed on other specific goals. For example, understanding Western cultures and institutions was important to 38 percent of Mason Gross students but to only 17 percent of Engineering students. In general, Douglass College had the highest percentage of students holding each academic goal as important, as well as the highest percentage of students stating that they had achieved each academic goal that was important to them.

CAREER PREPARATION/CAREER IMPROVEMENT GOALS

As in their academic goals, 1997 graduating students were quite pragmatic in the career preparation goals that they considered important. The most important goal overall was that of improving one's chances of getting a good job, marked by 77 percent of the graduates and achieved by 65 percent at the time of the survey. About two-thirds of the graduates also considered improving their knowledge, technical skills and/or competence in work-related areas, discovering career interests, and formulating long-term career plans and/or goals as important goals. Only 45 percent of the 1997 graduates considered the goal of improving their chances for a raise and/or promotion to be important, although 51 percent of those who did consider this goal important believed they had achieved it because of their studies at Rutgers. The percentages of students achieving career goals that were important to them were somewhat higher for the 1997 graduates than they were for graduates in 1992. For example, 68 percent of the 1997 graduates believed that they had improved their knowledge, technical skills, and competence in work-related areas, while only 48 percent of the 1992 graduates indicated they had done so. More than half (55%) of the 1997 graduates claimed to have formulated long-term career plans, compared to only 40 percent of the 1992 graduates. In addition, while 63 percent of 1997 graduates said they had discovered career interests, only 49 percent of the 1992 graduates said they had done so, and while 51 percent of the 1997 graduates believed they had improved chances for a raise or promotion, only 37 percent of the 1992 graduates said they had achieved this goal.

There were few differences between male and female students in terms of the importance and achievement of career goals. There were also few differences by race/ethnicity, except that a lower percentage of Asian students (34%) were able to improve the chances of a raise or promotion than were African American students (47%), Latino students (52%), white students (54%), or "other" students (48%). Not surprisingly, the importance of career goals was higher for students in colleges that are more immediately career-oriented or cater to career-minded individuals, such as the Camden Business School, the College of Engineering, and the three University Colleges. In addition, it is encouraging to note that the majority of students with career preparation and improvement goals were able to achieve them through their studies at Rutgers.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION GOALS

Two-thirds of the 1997 graduating students (67%) felt that the goal of meeting people and making friends was important, and 78 percent believed that they had attained this goal. In contrast, only 51 percent of students graduating in 1992 believed that this goal was important, although 76 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 67 percent achieved this goal while at Rutgers (this item was not present on the 1992 survey). Finally, 40 percent of the 1997 graduates wished to become active in student life and campus activities, and 59

percent of them believed they had achieved this goal. By comparison, only 25 percent of students in 1992 set this goal, and 61 percent were able to achieve it.

Male students did not differ greatly from female students in the importance or the accomplishment of social and cultural participation goals. There were some differences among students by race/ethnicity, however. In general, somewhat lower percentages of African Americans both held these goals important and achieved them than did students from other racial/ethnic groups. For example, only 56 percent of African Americans indicated that it was important to meet people and make friends and only 65 percent of those who did have this goal believed that they had achieved it. In contrast, 73 percent of Asian students considered the goal of meeting people and making friends important, and 80 percent believed that they had achieved this goal during their studies at Rutgers. In general, the social and cultural participation goals were more important to students on the New Brunswick campus than they were for students on the Camden and Newark campuses. When students were compared by college, Douglass College students had the largest percentage considering the goal of meeting people and making friends to be important (74%) and the largest percentage believing they had achieved this goal (80%). In contrast, only 38 percent of University College-Newark students held this goal, with only 55 percent of those who did hold this goal indicating that they had achieved it.

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. The most commonly held goal was to become more independent, self-reliant, and adaptable, marked as important by 68 percent of the 1997 students and achieved by 80 percent of those who considered it important. In 1992 a slightly smaller percentage of students (60%) listed this goal as important, and only 68 percent believed that they had achieved it. The following goals were also listed as important by more than half of the 1997 graduates: improving self-confidence, learning skills that enrich daily life, and improving leadership skills. The ability to get along with others was marked as important by 45 percent of the respondents. In each case two-thirds or more of the students who had indicated that these skills were important had also indicated that they had achieved them.

The tables in Appendix D show that female students were slightly more likely to consider each personal development and enrichment goal important and also to believe that they had achieved each goal than male students. There were virtually no differences noted by race/ethnicity. When students are grouped by campus the New Brunswick students were more likely to consider personal development and enrichment goals important than were students on the Newark or Camden campuses. Mason Gross students seemed to be particularly interested in these goals, while the goals were less important to students at the University Colleges or at the Camden Business School.

THE MOST IMPORTANT GOALS, OVERALL AND BY SUBGROUP

An analysis of goal importance for various student groupings including gender, race/ethnicity, age, and campus revealed that the goal of obtaining a degree was most important for the various student groups except the 94 students in the “other” racial/ethnic group; 76 percent of these students believed that increasing their knowledge in an academic field was important, while obtaining a degree ranked second. The second most important goal across student groups was to increase knowledge in an academic field, with the exception of Asian students who selected the goal of improving the chances of getting a good job. The third most important goal overall was to improve the chances of getting a good job, although students who were 22 years or younger when they graduated ranked meeting people and making friends third most important. Finally, the fourth most important goal in general was to improve the ability for critical thinking, although meeting people and making friends ranked fourth for Asians and students on the New Brunswick campus, and increasing communications skills was the fourth most important goal to both Latinos and students on the Camden campus.

SUMMARY

Students responding to the *1997 GSOS* were generally very pragmatic in their goals. Obtaining a degree was of paramount importance to all students, with the broader academic interest of increasing personal knowledge in an academic field a close second. Students were also very interested in improving their chances of getting a good job, and the more idealistic goals for personal enrichment and social participation tended to rank somewhat lower on most students’ lists of priorities. Nonetheless, more than two-thirds of responding students felt that such goals as increasing their communications skills, meeting people and making friends, and becoming more independent, self-reliant, and adaptable were important to them. Moreover, the majority of students who held each goal were successful in achieving that goal. Generally between two-thirds and three-quarters of students were able to attain each of the goals that were important to them; the only notable though unsurprising exceptions were in the career preparation area, where only 51 percent of students who wished to improve their chances for a raise or promotion were able to do so and only 55 percent of students who sought to formulate long-term career goals succeeded in that task.

Comparing responses regarding academic goals of graduating students from the 1997 and 1992 surveys reveals that undergraduates have enhanced and sharpened their academic focus during the 1990s. In general, 1997 respondents selected most of the academic goals in question as important at higher rates than 1992 respondents. In some cases, these increases were quite substantial. Moreover, not only did the 1997 respondents attribute more importance to academic goals compared to respondents to the 1992 survey, but the 1997 respondents also indicated that they were more likely to have achieved these goals while at Rutgers than the 1992 respondents. Both of these positive changes point to a deepening of academic seriousness among Rutgers’ undergraduates.

CHAPTER FOUR: *RUTGERS EXPERIENCE*

OVERALL ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

The 1997 Rutgers graduates were, in general, pleased with their overall academic experience at the university and were somewhat more likely to rate their experience as “Excellent” than were those who responded to the 1992 survey (see Table 4.1). While 25 percent of the 1997 respondents gave the academic experience an “Excellent” rating, only 19 percent of those who responded in 1992 did so. In addition, 61 percent of the 1997 respondents (compared to 64% of the 1992 respondents) rated their academic experience as “Good,” 13 percent (15% in 1992) rated it “Fair,” and one percent (1% in 1992) rated it “Poor.” While males tended to be slightly less positive in their ratings than were females, there were no substantial differences in ratings by gender.

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, but in general their ratings have improved over those in 1992 (for example, while only 14 percent of African Americans in 1992 gave an “Excellent” rating, 20 percent of the 1997 African American graduates did so; conversely, while 3 percent of the 1992 graduates considered their academic experience “Poor,” none of the 1997 graduates did so). The academic experience at Rutgers also improved for Latino students. While only 10 percent of Latino graduates in 1992 considered their academic experience “Excellent,” 27 percent of the 1997 graduates believed that it was. In addition, while 27 percent of Latinos in 1992 rated their experience as “Fair” or “Poor,” only 15 percent of Latinos graduating in 1997 did so. Asian students, on the other hand, gave less positive ratings to Rutgers in both 1997 and 1992 than did their fellow graduates. Only 15 percent of Asian students in 1997 believed that their academic experience was “Excellent,” and 21 percent believed that it was “Fair” or “Poor.”

In general, younger students (those age 22 or younger at graduation) gave higher academic ratings than did older students. This was true for both the 1997 and 1992 graduating classes.

There were some substantial differences in ratings for students by campus and by college. In general, students at the 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 the 1992 graduates. For example, while only 18 percent of the Camden School of Business students in 1992 considered their academic experience to be “Excellent,” 39 percent of those who graduated in 1997 believed that it was. It should be noted that the response rate for Camden was higher in 1992 than it was in 1997; it is therefore possible that the 1997 graduates of Camden colleges who responded to the survey tended to be those who were most satisfied. Conversely, students from the Newark colleges did not tend to be as satisfied with their academic experiences as were graduates from Camden and New Brunswick. This was true in 1992 as well, and the response rates for the two years are roughly comparable. Newark Nursing students in particular appeared to

**Table 4.1
Rating of Academic Experience**

GROUP	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 N	1992 N
TOTAL	25	19	61	64	13	15	1	1	3,237	4,016
GENDER										
Female	26	19	61	65	12	15	1	1	1,937	2,374
Male	24	20	60	63	15	15	2	2	1,300	1,641
RACE										
African American	20	14	62	64	18	20	0	3	275	322
Asian	15	15	63	68	19	16	2	2	475	377
Latino	27	10	57	63	14	24	1	3	270	193
White	28	20	60	58	11	21	1	2	2,071	3,007
Other	22	21	59	64	19	14	0	1	91	117
AGE										
< = 22	27	21	62	66	11	12	1	1	1,186	1,650
> 22	24	18	60	63	15	17	1	1	2,050	2,367
CAMPUS										
Camden										
Total	32	20	56	66	12	13	1	1	292	587
Arts & Sciences	30	22	57	64	12	13	1	0	197	372
School of Business	39	18	56	71	5	11	0	1	64	187
University College	32	14	41	61	26	18	0	7	31	28
Newark										
Total	19	14	64	68	16	17	1	1	626	652
Arts & Sciences	19	13	65	70	15	15	1	1	458	566
Nursing	14	26	71	63	16	11	0	0	44	57
University College	23	17	59	56	18	26	0	1	124	85
New Brunswick										
Total	26	20	60	63	13	16	1	1	2,319	2,776
Cook College	24	17	61	66	15	16	0	1	287	350
Douglass College	30	24	58	64	11	12	1	0	318	469
Engineering	20	21	60	55	16	21	4	2	209	213
Livingston College	23	15	60	67	15	17	2	1	222	325
Mason Gross	23	20	69	67	8	13	0	0	26	30
Pharmacy	16	27	68	61	14	12	3	0	37	49
Rutgers College	27	21	60	62	12	15	1	2	970	988
University College	26	20	62	61	10	18	2	1	250	296

be somewhat less satisfied with their academic experience than were Nursing students in 1992. In general, New Brunswick students gave somewhat higher ratings in 1997 than they did in 1992. Douglass College, Rutgers College, and University College students were more likely to award “Excellent” ratings in 1997 than in 1992.

Table 4.2.A
Types of Faculty Interaction

Type of Faculty Contact	Very Much	Much	Some	A Little	None	Student Respondents
	%	%	%	%	%	
Talked with a faculty member at end of class	12.3	19.4	40.1	23.6	4.6	3,243
Talked with a faculty member outside of class	9.9	14.8	36.7	28.8	9.9	3,245
Met with a faculty member (e.g., during office hours)	8.6	17.4	43.4	23.8	6.7	3,239
Met with a faculty member in another location	3.3	5.6	17.5	24.1	49.5	3,221
Discussed class-related issues	12.7	27.3	35.4	17.1	7.5	3,230
Discussed an independent study project	10.5	12.4	16.6	13.8	46.8	3,220
Discussed a faculty member's research	5.1	7.4	15.0	20.3	52.3	3,219
Helped a faculty member carry out his/her research	6.9	6.3	7.9	8.5	70.4	3,203
Discussed your future education	11.9	17.0	28.9	20.2	22.0	3,230
Discussed your future job or career	12.1	17.7	29.5	20.6	20.1	3,231
Discussed personal issues	4.4	5.8	16.9	20.6	52.4	3,227

FACULTY INTERACTION

The *1997 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 4.2.A presents the responses of the 1997 graduating students. The extent of contact graduating students reported in the *1997 GSOS* varies according to type of faculty contact. Areas of faculty contact receiving the highest rates of interaction (i.e., "very much" or "much") reported by respondents include contact with faculty: while discussing class-related issues (40%), at the end of class (32%), while discussing the student's future job or career (30%), and while discussing the student's future education (29%). Respondents reported no contact with faculty at high rates in the areas of: helping a faculty member carry out his or her research (70%), discussing a faculty member's research or discussing personal issues (both at 52%), meeting with faculty members in another location such as a committee meeting (50%), and discussing an independent study project (47%).

Table 4.2.B
Faculty Interaction by Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Age, Campus, and College

GROUP	Frequent		Occasional		Rare		Never		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
TOTAL	18	16	48	42	29	34	5	8	3,236	4,029
GENDER										
Female	19	16	48	42	28	34	5	8	1,934	2,386
Male	17	15	48	41	30	35	5	9	1,302	1,642
RACE										
African American	17	14	53	45	25	32	5	9	275	324
Asian	13	11	45	41	35	39	8	8	477	377
Latino	20	17	49	45	27	29	4	9	265	194
White	19	16	48	41	29	35	4	8	2,079	3,017
Other	27	26	50	37	20	26	3	10	90	117
AGE										
< = 22	18	17	47	42	30	34	4	6	1,194	1,656
> 22	18	14	49	41	29	34	5	10	2,041	2,373
CAMPUS										
Camden										
Total	32	15	46	45	20	31	3	10	289	584
Arts & Sciences	33	18	49	50	17	25	2	7	198	370
School of Business	26	11	46	36	21	41	7	12	61	186
University College	37	0	27	39	37	32	0	29	30	28
Newark										
Total	16	15	51	39	27	36	5	10	621	653
Arts & Sciences	17	16	50	40	28	36	5	8	451	567
Nursing	32	16	59	46	7	30	2	9	44	57
University College	8	5	52	34	33	37	8	25	126	85
New Brunswick										
Total	17	16	48	42	31	35	5	8	2,326	2,791
Cook College	25	23	50	43	22	30	3	4	287	352
Douglass College	17	15	49	44	29	34	5	7	325	471
Engineering	18	21	50	39	29	32	4	8	205	215
Livingston College	14	10	51	47	28	34	7	9	222	326
Mason Gross	46	47	42	37	12	13	0	3	26	30
Pharmacy	8	14	32	43	51	39	8	4	37	49
Rutgers College	15	15	47	41	33	37	6	8	975	993
University College	14	12	45	37	38	39	3	12	249	298

In addition, an index of overall contact was created for each person and categorized as “Frequent,” “Occasional,” “Rare,” or “Never” so that comparisons with responses from the 1992 *GSOS* could be made. The results are presented in Table 4.2.B. In general, there has been an increase in the frequency of faculty contact

among undergraduates between 1992 and 1997. This is true university-wide for both “Frequent” (16% vs. 18%) and “Occasional” (42% vs. 48%) faculty-student contact. Various student groupings have also experienced increases in faculty-student contact, with the changes at Camden being perhaps the most impressive.¹ Female students were roughly comparable to male students in terms of the amount of faculty interaction they achieved while at Rutgers. In addition, there were no substantial differences between older students (those over 22) and younger students. However, there were some notable differences among students by race/ethnicity. Asian students appeared to have achieved less interaction with faculty than did students of other ethnic groups. For example, only 13 percent of Asian students but 19 percent of white students had frequent contact with faculty members. Conversely, eight percent of Asians but only four percent of white students believed that they “Never” had contact with a faculty member outside the classroom.

When the faculty interaction ratings in Table 4.2.B are compared to the overall academic ratings in Table 4.1, there appears to be a relationship between the two measures when student opinions are presented by college. In other words, the students in colleges with a high level of faculty interaction also tended to rate their academic experience as “Excellent” or “Good.” This is apparent in the Camden colleges, where 32 percent of students claimed to have had frequent interaction with faculty and 46 percent of students claimed to have had occasional interaction; as a point of comparison, 32 percent of Camden’s graduates rated their academic experience “Excellent” and 56 percent rated it “Good.” In New Brunswick, colleges with high faculty interaction ratings, such as Cook and Mason Gross, also had strong ratings of academic experience. By contrast, only 16 percent of Newark students overall had frequent faculty interaction, and only 19 percent of Newark students considered their academic experience to be “Excellent.”

PERCEPTIONS OF RUTGERS

Students in both the 1997 and 1992 graduating classes were asked to rate certain aspects of the Rutgers student experience by responding to 30 opinion questions. Table 4.3 shows the percentages of students who “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” or “Strongly Disagree” with each statement, ordered by level of agreement of each statement, which was obtained by summing the percentages who “Strongly Agree” and “Agree.” The statements were divided into the following categories for analysis: “General,” those having to do with “Academic Experience,” those having to do with “Campus Climate,” and those pertaining to “Social Activities.”

General

Students agreed overwhelmingly that “The cost of attending Rutgers was reasonable,” with 30 percent of the respondents strongly agreeing (as compared to only 21% in 1992) and 56 percent agreeing (also 56% in 1992) with this statement. Student comments at the end of the survey also frequently included statements such

**Table 4.3
Overview of Rutgers Experience**

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Overall Rank*		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992	1997	1992
GENERAL												
Cost of attending Rutgers was reasonable	30	21	56	56	10	17	2	5	8	14	3,236	4,015
There were good computer facilities at Rutgers	21	15	58	63	13	18	8	5	11	13	3,173	3,873
There were comfortable residence halls at Rutgers	7	8	64	71	23	18	7	4	14	12	2,661	3,265
Rutgers' staff cared about individual students	6	4	44	41	37	40	13	15	26	28	3,129	3,941
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE												
Rutgers had high quality academic programs	36	27	55	65	5	7	1	1	1	2	3,217	4,010
Rutgers had a high-quality program in my major	35	29	49	51	12	14	4	5	9	5	3,204	4,007
Rutgers' faculty cared about individual students	10	8	53	52	28	30	10	10	16	23	3,167	4,007
Students must be above average to be admitted to Rutgers	13	12	49	55	33	29	5	4	18	19	3,138	3,923
I was able to participate in a research project(s)	19	16	41	27	31	41	9	16	21	16	3,113	3,742
CLIMATE												
Male and female students generally respected one another	24	17	67	68	8	13	2	2	3	8	3,190	3,989
Women were afforded the same treatment as men in the classroom	31	25	60	61	8	11	2	2	4	6	3,177	3,951
Minority students were afforded same treatment as others in the classroom	33	30	55	55	8	10	4	5	5	7	3,120	3,902
It was important for Rutgers to provide a multicultural environment	40	36	47	52	9	9	4	3	6	3	3,174	3,970
Students at Rutgers were friendly	9	9	72	77	17	13	3	1	10	5	3,152	3,968
Many students at Rutgers use alcohol and/or other drugs	33	38	44	43	21	17	3	2	12	9	3,047	3,847
Students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds got along well at Rutgers	12	6	61	60	23	27	4	6	13	18	3,105	3,861
My identification with my college played a positive role in my college experience	18	17	49	50	26	26	7	6	15	17	3,111	3,931
Rutgers should continue its efforts in recruiting minority students, faculty & staff	23	21	41	40	26	28	10	11	17	21	3,116	3,855
Cheating was not a widespread problem at Rutgers	10	4	51	35	28	38	11	23	19	22	3,169	3,942
I had close ties and identification with my college	15	14	45	46	31	31	9	8	20	24	3,214	4,005
I seldom felt "lost" or "alone" at Rutgers	11	10	47	52	33	31	9	8	22	20	3,167	3,965
The values at Rutgers reflected my values	6	5	49	47	35	38	9	10	23	26	3,083	3,995
I was an integral part of the university community	11	11	39	39	40	42	9	9	25	27	3,180	3,986
Many students at Rutgers were more interested in having fun than studying	11	12	39	45	45	40	5	3	27	25	3,083	3,885
I didn't have as many friends as I would have liked at Rutgers	7	6	28	26	46	48	18	20	28	17	3,142	3,940
I found it hard to make friends at Rutgers	4	2	16	12	51	51	29	36	29	4	3,176	3,997
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES												
Rutgers had many activities and organizations for students	39	38	52	55	7	6	1	1	2	1	3,199	3,980
There were excellent recreational facilities for student use	27	26	60	54	12	17	2	3	7	10	3,127	3,877
Rutgers had a strong intercollegiate athletic program	7	11	46	58	35	26	12	5	24	15	2,955	3,889
Intercollegiate athletics were important to me as a part of my college experience	5	5	14	15	49	50	33	30	30	30	3,113	3,609

* Rank is based on the percentage who strongly agree or agree.

as, “A Rutgers education is a great value for the money.” Students also generally agreed (21% strongly and 58% simply agreeing) that “There were good computer facilities at Rutgers.” In addition, students generally agreed (7% strongly and 64% simply agreeing) that “There were comfortable residence halls at Rutgers.” The statement “Rutgers’ staff cared about individual students” obtained a lower level of agreement, with 50 percent agreeing (6% strongly). The overall ranks of each statement were roughly comparable to the ranks of the same statements for the 1992 graduating students.

Academic Experience

The statement “Rutgers had high quality academic programs” achieved the highest overall rank of any of the 30 statements, with 36 percent of the respondents strongly agreeing (as compared to only 27% in 1992) and with 55 percent simply agreeing. Students also agreed with the statement “Rutgers had a high quality program in my major” (35% strongly agreeing and 49% agreeing), with the percentage strongly agreeing again being higher than in 1992. More than half of the respondents also agreed with the following statements: “Rutgers’ faculty cared about individual students” (10% strongly agreeing, 53% simply agreeing), “Students must be above average to be admitted to Rutgers” (13% strongly agreeing, 49% simply agreeing), and “I was able to participate in a research project(s)” (19% strongly agreeing and 41% agreeing).

Campus Climate

Student responses to statements on campus climate generally pointed to a somewhat more comfortable climate for the 1997 graduates than for the 1992 graduates. For example, 24 percent of the 1997 graduates but only 17 percent of the 1992 graduates strongly agreed to the statement “Male and female students generally respected one another.” The percentage who simply agreed to this statement is comparable in the two surveys (67% in 1997 and 68% in 1992). The vast majority of students (91%) also agreed or strongly agreed that “Women were afforded the same treatment as men in the classroom.” In addition, 88 percent agreed (33% strongly) that “Minority students were afforded the same treatment as others in the classroom.” Finally, 87 percent of the 1997 respondents agreed (40 percent strongly) that “It was important to Rutgers to provide a multicultural environment.” On each of the issues relating to gender and ethnic relations, the percentage of students strongly agreeing with positive statements was slightly higher than in 1992.

The vast majority (81%) of respondents agreed that “Students at Rutgers are friendly,” although on a less positive note, 77 percent agree (33% strongly) that “Many students at Rutgers use alcohol and/or other drugs.” On the issue of ethnic diversity, 73 percent of the 1997 students agreed that “Students from various racial and ethnic backgrounds get along well at Rutgers.” About two thirds (67%) of students believed that “My identification with my college played a positive role in my college experience,” and 64 percent believed that “Rutgers should continue to increase its efforts in recruiting minority students, faculty and staff.” Although 61 percent of students believed that “Cheating is not a widespread problem at Rutgers,” 39 percent believe that it is a problem. While 60 percent of students agreed that they had “Close ties and identification with my college,” this attitude was more prevalent among Douglass students than in the other colleges. About half of the students agreed with the following statements: “I seldom felt ‘lost’ or ‘alone’ at Rutgers,” “The values of Rutgers reflected my values,” and “I was an integral part of the university community.” One negative statement, “Many students at Rutgers were more interested in having fun than in studying” attracted agreement from half of the respondents. However, only 35

Table 4.4
Participation in Extracurricular Activities

	1997 %	1992 %
PARTICIPATION		
Yes	68	69
No	32	31
Total N	(3,234)	(3,996)
ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATED IN		
Academic and professional	31	29
Community service	22	19
Honor societies	21	21
Intramurals	17	20
Ethnic organizations	14	12
Greek life	11	12
Event programming	9	11
Religious	8	6
Student government	7	9
Intercollegiate athletics	7	8
Campus media	5	7
Music	5	6
Theatre	2	3
ROTC	1	1
Other	5	11
Total N	(3,323)	(4,405)
SUMMARY OF ACTIVITES PARTICIPATED IN		
None	36	32
1	18	19
2	18	20
3 or more	29	29
Total N	(3,323)	(4,045)

percent agreed that “I didn’t have as many friends as I would have liked at Rutgers” and only 20 percent agreed with the statement “I found it hard to make friends at Rutgers.”

Social Activities

Virtually all of the respondents (91%) agreed that Rutgers had many activities and organizations for students. This statement placed second in positive response, immediately after the statement affirming high quality academic programs. The vast majority of students (87%) also agreed with the statement: “There were excellent recreational facilities for student use.” The statement, “Rutgers had a strong intercollegiate athletic program” elicited agreement from 53 percent of the respondents, a decline from the 69 percent who agreed with this statement in 1992.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students participate in a broad range of extracurricular activities at Rutgers. Among graduating seniors in 1997, 68 percent indicated that they had participated in some type of extracurricular activity, which is essentially the same as the 69 percent who indicated participation in 1992.

Broad Categories of Activities

Table 4.4 summarizes the percentages of respondents who indicated participation in 15 categories of extracurricular activities. Most popular among 1997 respondents, as among 1992 respondents, were academic and professional activities, which attracted 31 percent of the 1997 graduating seniors who responded to the survey. The percentage of students participating in community service was slightly higher in 1997 (22%) than in 1992 (19%), while 21 percent of students participated in honor societies in both graduating classes. Two types of organizations that showed increased participation were ethnic organizations (from 12% in 1992 to 14% in 1997) and religious organizations (from 6% in 1992 to 8% in 1997). The remaining organizations attracted about as many participants in the class of 1997 as in the class of 1992.

Specific Organizations

Graduating seniors were asked to write in specific organizations to which they belonged. Several hundred different organizations were coded. More than 25 students belonged to each of the following organizations or activities: Golden Key Honor Society (146 respondents), Intramural Sports (35 respondents), Field Hockey (33 respondents), Psychology Club (32 respondents), Sophia (32 respondents), Accounting Society (31 respondents), Beta Alpha Psi (31 respondents), Mason Gross Graduates Association (27 respondents), Chabad House (28 respondents), Tutoring (27 respondents), and the Catholic Center (27 respondents).

Summary of Activities

Students may participate in several different types of activities, or in several organizations of the same type. Table 4.4 shows the number of different types of activities in which a student participated. Thirty-six percent of the respondents listed no extracurricular activities, even though only 32 percent had responded 'No' to the question about involvement in activities. In 1992, 32 percent of the respondents did not list any activities. In both years 29 percent of the respondents marked three or more different types of extracurricular activities.

RUTGERS SERVICES AND STUDENT LIFE

Question three of the *Graduating Student Opinion Survey* presented students with 33 services available at the University and asked for ratings of awareness, utilization, and satisfaction with these services. Table 4.5 summarizes student responses about awareness, utilization, and satisfaction with each of the 33 services.

Table 4.5
Awareness, Utilization, and Satisfaction with Services

SERVICE	Did not know about this service		Knew about the service but did not use it		Used the service and was satisfied		Used the service and was not satisfied		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
Academic advising	2	3	27	25	42	39	29	33	3,228	3,982
Admissions	4	4	22	21	63	63	11	11	3,141	3,887
Bookstore	0	0	2	1	81	84	18	15	3,245	3,989
Campus security	2	3	59	54	31	27	8	16	3,218	3,947
Career planning and services	3	3	35	40	44	38	18	18	3,232	3,969
College cultural programs	17	23	57	52	23	21	4	4	3,197	3,937
Computer services	2	4	10	23	70	59	19	14	3,231	3,979
Dining services	2	2	25	21	41	51	32	25	3,236	3,973
Disabled Student Concerns	37	*	60	*	2	*	1	*	3,193	*
Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)	26	27	64	61	8	9	2	2	3,206	3,963
Financial Aid	2	3	38	51	43	30	16	17	3,221	3,967
First year student orientation	10	12	25	28	51	48	13	12	3,182	3,935
Health services	2	3	29	33	50	42	20	22	3,230	3,992
Housing	2	2	41	43	41	42	16	12	3,223	3,987
Intercollegiate athletics programs	8	7	72	73	16	18	4	2	3,211	3,974
International student services	29	34	65	60	5	5	1	1	3,196	3,957
Language labs	1	*	3	*	89	*	8	*	3,249	*
Library	0	0	2	2	90	91	8	7	3,250	4,004
Minority affairs	31	29	60	64	6	5	3	2	3,194	3,949
Parking	1	1	12	15	21	21	66	63	3,240	3,993
Psychological counseling	28	26	59	62	9	9	4	3	3,217	3,978
Reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement	5	23	53	61	35	13	7	3	3,231	3,981
Recreational services	10	13	32	35	55	49	4	3	3,228	3,981
Registration	0	1	2	2	79	51	19	46	3,234	3,986
Schedules of classes	1	0	1	1	75	56	24	42	3,231	3,987
Student accounting/bursar/cashier	5	5	10	11	65	63	20	21	3,218	3,965
Student affairs	0	*	2	*	79	*	19	*	3,234	*
Student Center	2	1	9	7	83	84	6	8	3,222	3,985
Student employment	11	15	57	56	24	20	7	9	3,214	3,963
Touch-tone registration	0	*	1	*	88	*	11	*	3,251	*
Transportation (if applicable)	10	13	24	25	32	33	29	30	2,876	3,434
Tutoring	9	14	66	70	21	12	4	3	3,200	3,970
Undergraduate catalogs	3	5	7	10	85	79	6	6	3,205	3,956

* Question was not asked on 1992 Senior Survey

Responses for the graduating class of 1997 are compared to those for 1992 graduates, although there were four fewer items on the 1992 survey. Table 4.6 focuses on awareness of services, while Table 4.7 focuses on user satisfaction.

Table 4.6
Awareness of Rutgers Services

Service	Awareness Percentage		Total N	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
Touch-tone registration	100	*	3,251	*
Registration	100	99	3,234	3,986
Library	99	99	3,250	4,004
Bookstore	99	99	3,245	3,989
Parking	99	99	3,240	3,993
Schedules of classes	99	99	3,231	3,987
Dining services	98	98	3,236	3,973
Computer services	98	96	3,231	3,979
Health services	98	97	3,230	3,992
Academic advising	98	97	3,228	3,982
Housing	98	98	3,223	3,987
Student Center	98	99	3,222	3,985
Financial Aid	98	97	3,221	3,967
Campus security	98	97	3,218	3,947
Language labs	97	*	3,249	*
Career planning and services	97	97	3,232	3,969
Student accounting/bursar/cashier	96	95	3,218	3,965
Admissions	96	96	3,141	3,887
Reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement	94	77	3,231	3,981
Undergraduate catalogs	93	95	3,205	3,956
Intercollegiate athletics programs	92	93	3,211	3,974
Tutoring	91	86	3,200	3,970
Recreational services	90	87	3,228	3,981
First year student orientation	90	88	3,182	3,935
Transportation (if applicable)	90	87	2,876	3,434
Student employment	89	85	3,214	3,963
College cultural programs	83	77	3,197	3,937
Student affairs	80	*	3,176	*
Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)	74	73	3,206	3,963
Psychological counseling	72	74	3,217	3,978
International student services	71	66	3,196	3,957
Minority affairs	69	71	3,194	3,949
Disabled Student Concerns	63	*	3,193	*

Awareness of Services

Respondents were aware of many services listed on the questionnaire, as can be seen in Table 4.6. All of the 1997 graduates were aware of touch-tone telephone registration and regular registration, and more than 90 percent of students were aware of 23 additional services. Awareness ratings were quite similar for the 1992 graduating seniors, although there has been an increase in awareness about Learning Resource Centers for reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement, since only 77 percent of respondents were aware of this service in 1992, but 94 percent were aware in 1997. Services with less than an 80 percent awareness rating

Table 4.7
User Satisfaction with Rutgers Services

Service	Satisfaction Percentage		Total N	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
Recreational services	94	94	3,228	3,981
Student Center	94	91	3,222	3,985
Undergraduate catalogs	94	93	3,205	3,956
Library	92	93	3,250	4,004
Touch-tone registration	89	*	3,251	*
Student affairs	86	*	3,176	*
College cultural programs	85	84	3,197	3,937
Admissions	85	85	3,141	3,887
Reading, writing, math, and study skills improvement	84	81	3,231	3,981
Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF)	83	82	3,206	3,963
Tutoring	83	80	3,200	3,970
Language labs	82	*	3,249	*
Bookstore	82	85	3,245	3,989
Intercollegiate athletics programs	81	90	3,211	3,974
International student services	81	83	3,196	3,957
Registration	80	53	3,234	3,986
Campus security	80	63	3,218	3,947
First year student orientation	80	80	3,182	3,935
Computer services	79	81	3,231	3,979
Student employment	77	69	3,214	3,963
Schedules of classes	76	57	3,321	3,987
Student accounting/bursar/cashier	76	75	3,218	3,965
Financial Aid	73	64	3,221	3,967
Psychological counseling	73	75	3,217	3,978
Health services	72	66	3,230	3,992
Housing	72	78	3,223	3,987
Career planning and services	70	67	3,232	3,969
Disabled Student Concerns	70	*	3,193	*
Minority affairs	67	71	3,194	3,949
Academic advising	59	54	3,228	3,982
Dining services	56	67	3,236	3,973
Transportation (if applicable)	49	52	2,143	3,434
Parking	24	25	3,240	3,993

catered primarily to specific groups of students, for example, the Educational Opportunity Fund (74% awareness), psychological counseling (72%), international student services (71%), minority affairs (69%), and disabled student concerns (63%).

Utilization of Services

Most of the services with high awareness ratings were also utilized by the majority of students, as shown in Table 4.5. Services with the highest utilization included the bookstore (99%), schedules of classes (99%), touch-tone registration (99%), student affairs (98%), the library (98%), registration (98%), language labs (96%),

undergraduate catalogues (91%), and computer services (89%) . Services with low utilization included disabled student concerns (3%), international student services (6%), minority affairs (9%), Educational Opportunity Fund (10%), psychological counseling (13%), intercollegiate athletic programs (20%), and college cultural programs (27%).

Satisfaction with Services

In general, students were satisfied with the services that they used at Rutgers. The services with which the most students were satisfied (94%) were recreational services, student centers, and undergraduate catalogues. Twenty-five other services also satisfied 70 percent or more of the students who used them, and several services gained in satisfaction since 1992. Most notable was registration, which satisfied only 53 percent of its users in 1992 but which satisfied 80 percent in 1997. In addition, the satisfaction rating for campus security increased from 63 percent to 80 percent, the rating for schedules of classes increased from 57 percent to 76 percent, and the rating for financial aid increased from 64 percent to 73 percent. The only services that declined noticeably in rating were intercollegiate athletic programs (from 90% to 81%) and dining services (from 67% to 56%).

Only two services satisfied fewer than half of the students who used them. These were transportation (satisfying 49% of its users from the class of 1997 and 52% in 1992) and parking (satisfying 24% in 1997 and 25% in 1992). Obviously, parking is one of the biggest complaints of Rutgers students; several wrote comments about this issue in open-ended survey items.

SUMMARY

In general, respondents to the *1997 Graduating Student Opinion Survey* were pleased with their experience at Rutgers, from their overall academic experience to their interaction with faculty, their perceptions of campus life, their involvement in extracurricular activities, and their utilization of student services.

In 1997, 25 percent of the respondents rated their overall academic experience “Excellent” and 61 percent rated it “Good.” While there were no substantial differences in rating by gender, there was a tendency for Asian undergraduates and students on the Newark campus to be less satisfied with their academic experience than were other students. It is interesting to note that faculty interaction also tended to be lower for these two groups of students than it was for others. Overall, students responded very positively to such statements as “Rutgers had high quality academic programs” and “Rutgers had a high quality program in my major.” Faculty contact tended to be higher in areas involving class work (e.g., talking with a faculty member at the end of class or outside of class, and talking about class-related issues), but this faculty-student contact is low when the discussion is about a faculty member’s own research or when the area is helping faculty carry out their research.

Students found the campus climate to be comfortable, welcoming, and accepting of students of both genders, all racial/ethnic groups, and all ages. Moreover, respondents tended to be even more positive in 1997 than they had been in 1992 regarding the campus climate at Rutgers, especially in the area of gender and racial/ethnic relations. Eighty-seven percent of responding students in 1997 agreed that it was important for Rutgers to provide a multicultural environment.

More than two-thirds of 1997 responding students had participated in extracurricular activities, with the most popular activities being academic and professional. Nearly a third of the respondents participated in activities of three or more types.

Services at Rutgers are generally well-utilized and appreciated. The *1997 GSOS* had satisfaction ratings that are very high for such services as recreation and student centers, and almost all services satisfied at least 70 percent of the students who responded. Only parking and transportation satisfied fewer than half of the students who used them in 1997.

ENDNOTES, CHAPTER 4

¹Because the 1997 numbers are based on a constructed index, these comparisons with the 1992 survey responses should be approached cautiously.

CHAPTER FIVE: *FUTURE PLANS*

INTRODUCTION

The 1997 GSOS asked respondents about their plans for further academic study and employment. Results from this section of the questionnaire are presented below.

ACADEMIC PLANS

More than three-quarters of the 1997 Rutgers graduates indicated that they plan to continue their education, and many of these students have been admitted to programs in graduate and professional schools. Since surveys were received over a period of several months starting in April 1997, the students who responded post-graduation were generally more certain of their plans than were those who responded right after the survey was mailed. Therefore, the number of students presently attending graduate or professional school may be underestimated by the survey.

Plans to Attend Graduate or Professional School

Several questions on the GSOS pertained to plans to attend graduate or professional school. The first question did not specify a time frame but simply asked if the student was planning to attend. Overall, 78 percent of the 1997 graduates indicated that they did plan to attend a graduate or professional school, which is somewhat lower than the 85 percent who responded affirmatively in 1992. Table 5.1 shows that female students were somewhat more likely than males to plan to attend graduate or professional school, both in 1997 and in 1992. In addition, white students were less likely to plan to attend (75% in 1997 and 83% in 1992) than were students of other racial/ethnic groups, more than 80 percent of whom indicated such plans. Not surprisingly, younger students (age 22 or less at graduation) were more likely than older students to plan attending graduate school.

Students on the Camden campus were more likely to plan to attend graduate school (84%) than were students on the Newark (80%) or New Brunswick (77%) campuses. There was great variability among the three University Colleges, with 94 percent of the UC-Camden, 81 percent of the UC-Newark and 72 percent of the UC-New Brunswick students planning to attend graduate school. On the New Brunswick campus, graduates of schools that seem most likely to yield immediate, lucrative employment (i.e., Engineering and Pharmacy) were less likely to indicate plans for graduate school, although about two-thirds of the students graduating from these schools did respond affirmatively to the graduate school question. The highest percentage of prospective graduate students from the New Brunswick campus was shown by Douglass College students, 82 percent of whom indicated plans to attend.

**Table 5.1
Plans for Graduate or Professional School**

GROUP	Plan to Attend		Do Not Plan to Attend		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
OVERALL	78	85	22	15	3,212	3,985
GENDER						
Female	80	87	20	13	1,922	2,362
Male	75	82	25	18	1,290	1,623
RACE						
African American	86	93	14	7	274	321
Asian	80	85	20	15	477	376
Latino	84	93	16	17	268	194
White	75	83	25	17	2,054	2,976
Other	83	89	17	11	91	118
AGE						
< = 22	79	87	21	13	1,180	1,640
> 22	77	83	23	17	2,031	2,345
CAMPUS						
Camden						
Total	84	82	16	18	289	581
Arts & Sciences	83	85	17	15	196	370
School of Business	81	75	19	25	62	183
University College	94	79	6	21	31	28
Newark						
Total	80	87	20	13	623	696
Arts & Sciences	78	86	22	14	455	557
Nursing	89	95	11	5	44	56
University College	81	86	19	14	124	83
New Brunswick						
Total	77	85	23	15	2,239	2,708
Cook College	76	88	24	12	219	350
Douglass College	82	90	18	10	320	469
Engineering	66	83	34	17	205	214
Livingston College	77	81	23	19	219	323
Mason Gross	67	77	33	23	27	30
Pharmacy	68	64	32	37	37	49
Rutgers College	80	86	20	14	965	985
University College	72	77	28	23	247	288

Time Frame for Attending Graduate or Professional School

One-third of the students who answered the question about their time frame for attending graduate school planned to start within one year of their graduation from Rutgers (see Table 5.2). Nearly half (49%) planned to start in two to five years, and 18 percent planned to start “sometime in the future.” In 1992, 36 percent of respondents indicated plans for attending graduate or professional school immediately, 43 percent within two to five years, and 21 percent “sometime in the future.” A higher percentage of female students (35%) than male

Table 5.2
Time Frame for Attending Graduate or Professional School

GROUP	Next Year		In 2 to 5 Years		Sometime in future		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
OVERALL	33	36	49	43	18	21	2,149	3,367
GENDER								
Female	35	35	48	44	17	21	1,311	2,039
Male	29	37	51	42	20	22	838	1,327
RACE								
African American	49	53	39	35	12	12	181	298
Asian	29	41	57	43	14	16	336	322
Latino	40	42	42	42	18	16	187	180
White	30	33	50	44	20	23	1,349	2,464
Other	53	40	35	36	13	24	55	103
AGE								
< = 22	31	40	51	42	18	19	723	1,425
> 22	34	33	48	44	18	23	1,425	1,942
CAMPUS								
Camden								
Total	35	33	51	42	15	24	205	471
Arts & Sciences	34	37	52	43	15	21	130	312
School of Business	25	26	58	42	17	32	52	139
University College	61	35	30	35	9	30	23	20
Newark								
Total	42	40	41	37	17	23	447	600
Arts & Sciences	41	39	42	38	16	23	314	476
Nursing	32	21	49	71	20	8	41	52
University College	49	43	34	36	17	21	92	72
New Brunswick								
Total	30	36	51	44	19	20	1,497	2,371
Cook College	31	38	45	44	24	18	182	350
Douglass College	28	36	54	47	18	17	194	417
Engineering	17	34	65	37	18	29	145	214
Livingston College	39	34	45	43	16	23	156	259
Mason Gross	22	22	30	57	48	22	22	23
Pharmacy	33	26	56	52	11	23	27	31
Rutgers College	32	37	50	43	18	19	615	852
University College	26	32	55	43	19	25	156	225

students (29%) planned to begin graduate school within a year. There were also some differences in projected starting dates for students when grouped by race/ethnicity. Nearly half of the African American students (49%) who were planning to attend graduate school planned to begin within a year, whereas only 29 percent of Asian students and 30 percent of white students with graduate school plans intended to begin this soon. Graduates of colleges on the Newark and Camden campuses were more likely to anticipate a starting date within the next year

**Table 5.3
Highest Degree Planned**

	Bachelor		Master		Professional		Doctoral		Other		Student Respondents	
	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997 %	1992 %	1997	1992
OVERALL	11	13	49	42	17	18	21	23	1	3	3,196	3,986
GENDER												
Female	9	11	51	43	16	17	22	24	2	5	1,903	2,362
Male	14	15	47	41	19	20	19	23	1	1	1,293	1,623
RACE												
African American	10	6	42	39	22	21	26	31	1	3	275	321
Asian	9	11	52	40	22	20	15	26	2	4	478	376
Latino	7	5	42	34	23	30	26	29	2	3	186	194
White	12	14	51	43	15	17	21	22	1	3	2,073	2,977
Other	17	11	43	37	16	18	22	30	2	4	82	117
AGE												
< = 22	8	10	47	39	22	23	22	25	1	3	1,172	1,640
> 22	13	15	51	44	14	15	21	22	1	3	2,023	2,346
CAMPUS												
Camden												
Total	7	16	55	49	14	11	23	1	1	5	286	581
Arts & Sciences	7	13	49	44	15	11	29	1	1	6	193	370
School of Business	13	20	73	58	8	14	5	2	2	3	63	183
University College	0	22	53	56	23	22	22	0	0	0	30	28
Newark												
Total	13	11	48	43	18	20	19	22	2	4	625	696
Arts & Sciences	14	11	44	41	20	22	20	23	2	3	456	557
Nursing	0	2	64	45	11	9	11	21	0	0	45	56
University College	11	13	59	54	13	16	13	17	2	0	124	83
New Brunswick												
Total	11	12	49	40	17	19	21	25	1	3	2,285	2,708
Cook College	13	10	48	39	16	21	23	28	1	3	279	350
Douglass College	9	9	56	43	13	17	21	27	2	5	311	469
Engineering	7	12	60	49	8	12	23	27	2	1	206	214
Livingston College	14	15	51	44	15	21	19	17	1	3	216	323
Mason Gross	12	14	73	76	0	0	15	10	0	0	26	30
Pharmacy	14	29	32	19	27	25	14	17	14	10	37	49
Rutgers College	10	11	44	35	23	24	22	29	1	3	963	985
University College	19	22	50	46	11	11	19	19	1	2	247	288

than were students on the New Brunswick campus. Graduates of the College of Engineering were least likely to anticipate graduate school within the next year (only 17% indicated such plans).

Highest Degree Planned

Nearly half (49%) of the 1997 graduates believed that their highest degree would be a Masters degree. This was an increase of eight percent from 1992. Table 5.3 shows that an additional 17 percent planned to obtain a professional degree and that 21 percent planned to obtain a doctoral degree. These latter percentages were very

Table 5.4
Characteristics of Graduate/Professional Schools Applied To, 1997

	First Preference 1997 %	Second Preference 1997 %	Third Preference 1997 %
TYPE OF INSTITUTION			
Public	59	51	50
AAU	80	58	56
Research I	83	65	60
Research II	5	12	21
Doctoral I	1	3	2
Doctoral II	1	2	5
Other	10	18	12
Private	41	49	50
AAU	49	43	43
Research I	49	48	49
Research II	8	8	5
Doctoral I	11	10	14
Doctoral II	3	6	5
Other	30	29	28
Student Respondents	631	365	263
ACCEPTED			
Yes	61	53	46
No	14	24	28
Don't know yet/NA	25	24	26
ATTENDING			
Yes	54	14	11
No	16	53	52
Don't know yet/NA	31	33	37
PROGRAM TYPE			
Law school	17	24	26
Medical, dental, veterinary	18	17	15
Social Sciences	19	20	20
Bio. & Health Science	12	14	13
Phys. Sci. & Math	6	6	8
Humanities	7	7	6
Education	11	5	5
Business	5	4	4
Engineering	4	4	4
AID OFFERED			
Scholarship	12	9	11
Assistantship	14	8	11
Grant	9	4	4

similar to the 1992 respondents (18% and 23%, respectively). Responses for male and female students were similar, although a slightly higher percentage of female graduates planned to obtain a doctoral degree while a slightly higher percentage of male students aspired to a professional degree. African American and Latino students were more likely to have aspirations beyond the Bachelors and Masters degree levels than were white students. Younger graduates (those 22 or younger at the time of graduation) were more likely than older students to have plans for a professional degree. In addition, approximately one-quarter of the graduates of the College of Pharmacy and of Rutgers College planned to obtain professional degrees.

Table 5.5
Current Employment Status of 1997 Survey Respondents

Current Employment Status	Number	Percent
Currently seeking a job		
for 1 - 2 months	870	64
for 3 - 6 months	393	29
for 7 months or more	90	6
Total	1,353	42
Have not started job search	379	12
Entering Military Service	33	1
Plan to do volunteer work	70	2
Plan to take some time off	199	6

Table 5.6
How Present Job was Obtained

	Number	Percent
THROUGH CAREER SERVICES		
On-campus recruitment	216	7
Rutgers job binders	47	1
Rutgers career days	102	3
Rutgers resume referral system	58	2
Rutgers Alumni resource bank	3	0
Other career services method (e.g., campus organizations, Rutgers departments)	35	1
SELF-INITIATED METHODS		
Personal reference	434	13
Newspaper/journal ad	266	8
Applied directly to company	315	9
Employment agency	86	3
Continuing at same job	287	9
Other self-initiated method (e.g., friends, internet, university leads)	163	5
OTHER METHODS		
Internship	146	4
Externship	13	0
Co-op	28	1

Table 5.7
Type of Employer and Location and Salary of Job

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent
EMPLOYER TYPE			LOCATION		
University or College	64	5	Northeast	398	21
Federal Government	34	3	Southeast	38	2
State Government	20	2	Midwest	13	1
Local or County Government	53	4	Northwest	25	1
Elementary or Secondary School	42	3	Southwest	25	1
Computer Firms	64	5	Other Country	9	1
Engineering Firms	72	5	New Jersey	1,367	73
Accountants	124	9	Atlantic County	4	0
Pharmaceuticals	61	5	Bergen County	103	10
Laboratories & Research	50	4	Burlington County	48	5
Banks	91	7	Camden County	63	6
Insurance Firms	61	5	Cape May County	1	0
Law Firms	38	3	Cumberland County	4	0
Non-Profit Firms	10	1	Essex County	127	13
Museums & the Arts	11	1	Gloucester County	9	1
Social Services	21	2	Hudson County	42	4
Hospitals	56	4	Hunterdon County	11	1
Other Health and Dental	65	5	Mercer County	38	4
Retail and Sales	115	9	Middlesex County	275	27
Manufacturing	84	6	Monmouth County	46	5
The Media	41	3	Morris County	67	7
Nurseries, Farms, Outdoors	8	1	Ocean County	16	2
Hotels	26	2	Passaic County	23	2
Self-Employed	139	10	Salem County	1	0
			Somerset County	75	7
SALARY			Sussex County	7	1
Under \$10,000	187	11	Union County	49	5
\$10,000-\$14,999	108	6	Warren County	2	0
\$15,000-\$19,999	102	6			
\$20,000-\$24,999	253	15			
\$25,000-\$29,999	300	18			
\$30,000-\$34,999	257	15			
\$35,000-\$39,999	183	11			
\$40,000-\$44,999	127	8			
\$45,000-\$49,999	58	3			
\$50,000 and above	109	7			

Characteristics of Graduate and Professional Schools

Table 5.4 shows that 59 percent of students listing a graduate or professional school that they applied to indicated a public institution as their first preference, with 83 percent of these students listing a Research I and 80 percent listing an AAU institution as their first choice. A majority (61%) of respondents who applied to a graduate or professional school were accepted by their first-choice institution. Since surveys were returned starting in April 1997, many students did not yet know the outcome of their applications; however, overall 54 percent of the accepted students planned to attend their first-choice school.

EMPLOYMENT¹

Forty-two percent of all respondents stated that they were currently seeking employment, with 64 percent of these students having started their job search within one to two months of receiving the questionnaire (Table 5.5). Table 5.6 presents information about how students obtained their present job and reveals that students rely on both career services and self-initiated efforts. Graduating students indicated that they work or will be employed in a variety of occupations. Table 5.7 lists those occupations cited the most frequently by the 1997 graduating class. Most respondents stated that their jobs are located in New Jersey (73%), while another 21 percent said that their location of employment is in the Northeast.

SUMMARY

Seventy-eight percent of respondents to the 1997 *GSOS* indicated their intention to attend a graduate or professional school sometime in the future. This figure is lower than what it was for respondents to the 1992 *GSOS*. Although only speculative, this decline probably can be partially explained by the improved economic climate and job prospects in 1997 compared to 1992.² Almost half of the 1997 respondents believed that their eventual highest degree would be a Masters degree. Minority students, especially African American and Latino students, had higher levels of aspirations than white students. Moreover, younger graduates were more likely to have plans for attaining a professional degree than older graduates. Sixty-one percent of 1997 graduates who applied to graduate or professional school were accepted by their first choice. Forty-two percent of all respondents stated that they were currently seeking employment, and of the respondents who have or will have a job, 73 percent indicated that it is located in New Jersey.

Endnotes, Chapter 5

¹ Because this section of the 1997 *GSOS* was extensively revised, no comparisons were made to the results presented in the 1992 *GSOS* report.

² Hughes and Seneca (1997) provide data documenting that the last periodic economic downturn in New Jersey's post-war history was ending just at the time that the 1992 senior class was graduating. The authors also note that since May 1992 New Jersey has experienced a period of steady economic growth.

CHAPTER SIX: *REVIEW OF FINDINGS*

INTRODUCTION

A student opinion survey was administered to graduating students during the Spring 1997 semester. Respondents answered questions on many different aspects of being an undergraduate at Rutgers that included student goals, academic and nonacademic experiences, evaluations of student services and student life, and future plans.

REVIEW OF THE FINDINGS FROM THE 1997 GSOS

Some of the major findings from the *1997 GSOS* follow.

Characteristics of the Respondents

Forty-six percent of the 1997 graduating class that were surveyed returned usable questionnaires. Sixty percent of the 3,332 respondents were female, 35 percent were nonwhite students, 63 percent were over the age of 22, 92 percent were New Jersey residents, and 14 percent were non-U.S. citizens. Respondents closely resembled the target population of graduating students on basic demographic and academic qualities, although there was a slight under-representation of students from the Camden campus and a slight over-representation of students from the Newark campus. A comparison of populations and respondents for both the *1997 GSOS* and the *1992 GSOS* revealed that the 1997 students were more demographically heterogeneous, reflecting the growing diversity of the Rutgers' student body during the 1990s.

On self-reported information, 84 percent of the *1997 GSOS* respondents were single and three percent reported having some kind of disability. The distribution of parental income among survey respondents was quite varied, with 30 percent reporting a parental income of less than \$40,000, another 30 percent reporting parental income between \$40,000 and \$75,000, and 25 percent indicating parental income of \$75,000 or more. Thirty-eight percent of all respondents indicated that their mother was a college graduate and 47 percent stated that their father graduated from college.

Twenty percent of all New Brunswick graduates reported living in a dormitory full-time, while only two percent of Camden and Newark respondents indicated that they lived full-time in on-campus residence halls. Full-time residence with parents was more common for Camden (28%) and Newark (33%) graduating students than for graduating students on the New Brunswick campus (7%). New Brunswick graduating students indicated much higher rates of living off-campus for at least one semester than Camden or Newark respondents. Only five percent

of New Brunswick students and one percent of both Camden and Newark students stated that they lived in a fraternity or sorority house at any time during their tenure at Rutgers.

Eight out of ten students worked during their years at the university, and nearly half of all students had experience with an internship, externship, or co-op work. Thirteen percent of respondents indicated working full-time (i.e., 40 or more hours) during their studies at the university.

Student Goals and Their Achievement

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance and achievement of goals. The most important academic goal cited by respondents was to obtain a degree or certification (85%) and the second most important academic goal cited was increasing knowledge in an academic field (79%). The least cited academic goals were to gain a better understanding of Western and non-Western cultures and institutions (both at 29%). Regardless of the extent to which a particular academic goal was selected as important, over 50 percent of respondents cited that they had achieved each academic goal if they had selected it as important. Compared to 1992 respondents, the 1997 graduating class had higher percentages of respondents indicating that each academic goal was important to them. Moreover, 1997 respondents generally indicated that they achieved their academic goals while at Rutgers at higher rates than the 1992 respondents.

Almost eight out of ten students indicated that the goal of improving one's chances of getting a good job was important to them (77%). Sixty-five percent of these respondents felt that they had achieved this goal while attending Rutgers. The percentage of 1997 respondents holding the goal of meeting and making new friends increased to 67 percent, which was an increase from 51 percent in 1992. However, nearly the same percentage of respondents holding this goal as important in 1997 felt they had achieved this goal during their studies at Rutgers compared to respondents to the 1992 *GSOS* (78% compared to 76%). Among personal development and enrichment goals, the desire to become more independent, self-reliant, and adaptable was cited at the highest rate by 1997 *GSOS* respondents (68%). This increased from the 60 percent cited by respondents to the 1992 *GSOS* survey. In addition, 80 percent of 1997 respondents stated that they have achieved this goal, up from the 68 percent cited in the 1992 *GSOS* study.

Finally, the academic goal of obtaining a degree was cited as the most important goal for most of the student groups considered. Only the racial/ethnic group categorized as "other" did not select this as their most important goal.

Rutgers Experience

Respondents were asked about their overall academic experience while at Rutgers, the type and extent of interaction they had with faculty, perceptions of the university on a variety of dimensions, extracurricular

activities, and evaluation of student services and student life at Rutgers. The following findings were among those presented in the report:

- There has been improvement in the overall academic rating of the university between 1992 and 1997. Twenty-five percent of 1997 respondents gave Rutgers an “Excellent” academic rating compared to 19 percent in the 1992 survey, while 86 percent of the 1997 *GSOS* respondents rated the university as “Excellent” or “Good” compared to 83 percent of the 1992 *GSOS* respondents.
- The amount of interaction that graduating students indicated to have had with faculty was modest, with variations in the extent of this contact among different student classifications and types of student-faculty interaction.
- In general, students found the campus climate to be comfortable, welcoming, and accepting of students of both genders, all racial/ethnic groups, and all ages. On issues relating to gender and ethnic relations, respondents were more positive in 1997 than they had been in 1992.
- More than two-thirds of 1997 responding graduating students had participated in extracurricular activities, with the most popular activities being academic and professional. Nearly a third of the respondents participated in activities of three or more types.
- Rutgers University Services are generally well-utilized and appreciated. Satisfaction ratings were very high for such services as recreation and student centers, and almost all services satisfied at least 70 percent of the students who responded. Only parking and transportation satisfied fewer than half of the students who used them.

Future Plans

Seventy-eight percent of respondents to the 1997 *GSOS* indicated their intention to attend a graduate or professional school sometime in the future. Almost half of the 1997 respondents believed that their eventual highest degree would be a Masters degree. Younger graduates were more likely to have plans for attaining a professional degree than older graduates. Sixty-two percent of 1997 graduates who applied to graduate or professional school was accepted by their first choice. Forty-two percent of all respondents stated that they were currently seeking employment. Seventy-three percent of respondents knowing the location of their job indicated that it is located within New Jersey.

CONCLUSION

Comparison of the 1992 and 1997 *GSOS* responses reveals that there has been an overall improvement in the opinions and attitudes of undergraduates toward the university. Undergraduates appear to have become more academically focused, with higher rates of respondents in 1997 selecting academic goals as important and indicating achievement of these goals compared to 1992 survey respondents. Positive responses by undergraduates to their student academic experience also slightly increased over the five year period that covered the administration of the two surveys. With regard to campus climate, respondents in 1997 were more positive than in 1992, with many students finding the university to be a congenial place for student interaction. And finally, most university services were well known and utilized in 1997 as they were in 1992, with some services, such as registration, campus security, class scheduling, and financial aid, experiencing major gains in student satisfaction.

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