



# What Graduating Students Said

CLASS OF 2013

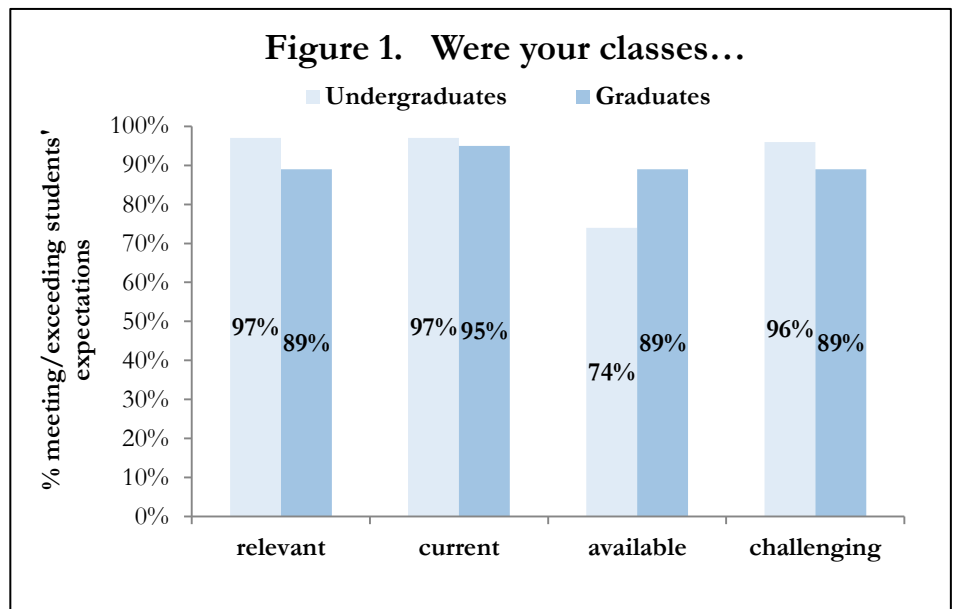
A brief survey was administered to students who applied for graduation in spring 2013. Both undergraduate and graduate students were asked about 1) their educational experiences at Fresno State, 2) the extent to which they worked for pay while taking classes, 3) their post-graduation plans, 4) when they decided to go to college, 5) whether anyone at Fresno State was a positive influence on their success, and 6) what Fresno State should do to help students succeed. Overall, 761 undergraduates and 37 graduates responded to the survey (29% response rate for undergraduates and 5% for graduates). The results from last year's survey can be found in "[What Our Graduating Students Said \(Spring 2012\)](#)."

## EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT FRESNO STATE

As in the previous year's results, most undergraduates and graduates rated their classes as meeting or exceeding their expectations for relevance, currency and challenge (Figure 1). However, only 74% of undergraduates said the courses met their expectations of availability.

Most undergraduates rate their faculty and classroom facilities/lab equipment as meeting or exceeding their expectations (similar to the previous year's survey [results](#)). The majority of graduates also rate their

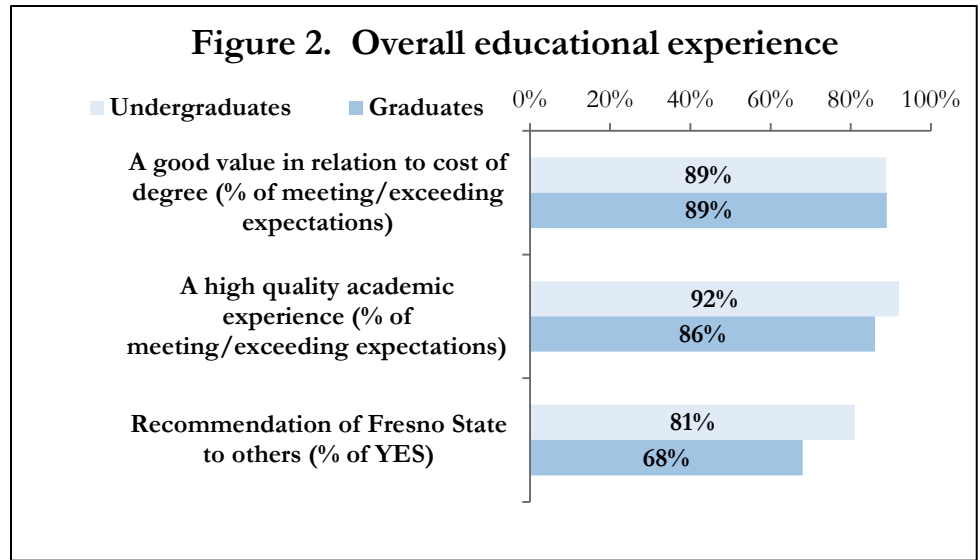
faculty and classroom facilities/lab equipment as meeting or exceeding their expectations (Table 1).



**Table 1. Percentages of Meeting/Exceeding Students' Expectation**

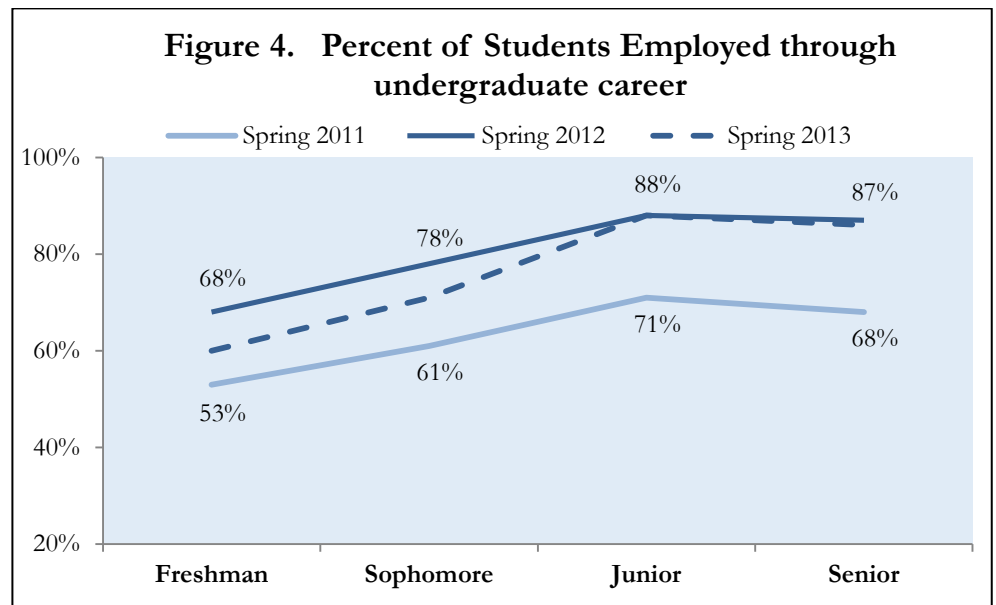
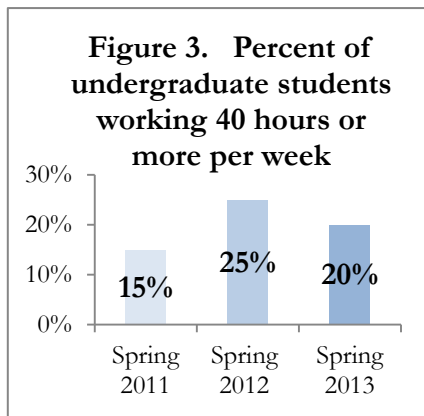
		Undergraduates	Graduates
Were your program faculty...	Knowledgeable about degree requirements/deadlines	95%	76%
	Helpful in planning your coursework	92%	78%
	Committed to your undergraduate success	92%	86%
	Timely in their feedback of your work	93%	84%
	Available for thesis/project/exam advising	N/A	92%
Were the classroom facilities and/or lab equipment...	Reliable	93%	89%
	Up-to-date	89%	86%

The educational experience at Fresno State met or exceeded most students' expectations (Figure 2). While the majority would recommend Fresno State to others, this percentage is considerably lower than ratings of quality and value, particularly for graduate students. (These results are similar to the [Spring 2012 survey](#).)



### OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT WHILE ENROLLED (UNDERGRADUATE ONLY)

The majority of students (76%) were employed off-campus while enrolled, which is a 2 percentage point increase from last year (76% vs 74%). Twenty percent of students worked 40 hours or more per week, which is a 5 percentage point decrease from last year (20% vs 25%) (Figure 3). Compared to lower division status, students are more likely to be employed when they reach upper division status (Figure 4).



### PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY AFTER GRADUATION

For undergraduates, 50% plan to work after graduation and 39% plan to attend graduate or professional school (compared to 53% and 37%, respectively, in the [Spring 2012 survey](#)). As for graduating graduate students, 89% plan to work.

### WHEN STUDENTS DECIDED TO GO TO COLLEGE (UNDERGRADUATES ONLY)

As to when it was decided to go to college, 68% of undergraduate students said they always knew they would attend college; 18% decided during high school; 9% decided as an adult; and 5% during grade school or middle school.

## THE MOST NOTABLE ASPECT OF UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE EDUCATION



Students were asked to indicate the most notable or influential factors upon their success at Fresno State. For undergraduate and graduate students combined, 44% indicated faculty as the most notable aspect: 195 students (179 out of 416 undergraduates and 16 out of 25 graduates) cited their faculty/teachers as knowledgeable, experienced and passionate about the subject they were teaching and dedicated to helping students; 86 students (82 undergraduates and 4 graduates) rated the academic classes and programs offered as the most notable aspect of their education at Fresno

State. In terms of enriched educational experiences (EEE), which have been shown in the research literature to be influential on students' success (Bergen-Cico & Viscomi, 2013), 81 students indicated this to be the most notable aspect to them (75 undergraduates and 6 graduates). The EEEs cited included joining student organizations, course projects, research, internships, study abroad, service learning and other extracurricular activities.

## WHAT FRESNO STATE CAN DO TO HELP STUDENTS SUCCEED

232 undergraduates responded to this open-ended question. Students cited three top issues that would help student success: classes, academic advising, and student support services. Among undergraduates, 77 said enhance class availability, flexibility, or variety to help them enroll and graduate on time. Furthermore, 68 undergraduates cited the need for more and better academic advising. This included statements such as needing better advisors, more advising from their professors, needing mandatory advising meetings regularly, and better advising on their educational plan toward a degree, major change, and preparation for graduate school/future career. Additionally, 62 undergraduates cited the need for more and better student support services. This included items such as keeping the library open for more hours, more advertising of available school services to help students in need, and more tutoring services.

Among graduate school students, 15 students responded that more communication or advising on processes and requirements is what can help student success. Ten graduates elaborated on this, citing the need for better communication/advising to keep them informed and on track. This included streamlining information regarding deadlines and forms that need to be submitted, reducing the complicity of the admissions/graduation process, and reducing the forms to fill out and places to go for signatures.



## WHY STUDENTS DECIDED TO GO TO GRADUATE SCHOOL (GRADUATES ONLY)

Graduates students responded to another open-ended question regarding their decision to pursue a graduate degree. Career consideration is the dominant reason to go to graduate school, which is cited by 22 out of 26 respondents. The cited reasons include starting a new career, having more career options, meeting job requirements, becoming more competitive/viable, for promotion and pay raise, or to do better work with new knowledge/skills. Five graduates cited personal interests as their major reasons to go to graduate school.

### References

Bergen-Cico, D., & Viscomi, J. (2013). Exploring the Association between Campus Co-Curricular Involvement and Academic Achievement. *Journal Of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 14(3), 329-343.