2008 Senior Survey results

Prepared by
The Office of Academic Assessment
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Undergraduate students intending to graduate in May 2008 or summer 2008, as identified by their departments, were asked to complete a web-based survey soliciting their opinions regarding aspects of their experience at Virginia Tech. After an initial contact and a follow-up from a departmental representative and another follow-up from the Office of Academic Assessment, 1548 of 3652 students across the University returned completed surveys, resulting in a response rate of 42.4%.

As you review the attached information, note that the quality of these data are dependent on the number of students responding, the response rate, and the particular wording of each question. The survey provides only an overview of student perceptions and does not allow for in-depth probing that would lead to explanations behind those perceptions. Results, however, may indicate areas for further examination.

Some section highlights among responses to the 53 items of the survey include the following:

From my experiences at Virginia Tech, I have improved my

- Critical thinking skills (97%)
- Ability to retrieve information & resources to help solve a problem (94%)
- Oral communication skills (93%)
- Ability to solve problems creatively (92%)
- Quantitative reasoning and problem solving skills (91%)
- Ability to lead people effectively (91%)
- Understanding of ethical behavior (88%)
- Writing skills (88%)
- Understanding of the relationship between society & art (65%)
- Knowledge of classic works of fine and applied arts (59%)

The coursework in my department

- "increased my understanding of my field" (97%)
- "required me to think critically" (96%)
- "was intellectually challenging" (96%)
- "helped me synthesize information from different sources" (93%)
- "applied concepts learned in class to new situations" (92%)

The faculty in my department

- "set high standards for my learning" (95%)
- "were accessible outside of class" (94%)
- "were concerned about student learning & development" (93%)
- "encouraged active learning" (92%)
- "knew me as a person" (72%)

Participation

- Internship, field experience, co-op, or practicum (67%)
- Community service or volunteer work outside of any course requirements (64%)
- Attended a professional or scholarly meeting or conference (49%)
- Community service or volunteer work as part of a course (28%)
- Research project with a faculty member as part of a course/program requirements (26%)
- Gave a talk or exhibited work at a professional, scholarly, cultural, or artistic conference or meeting (21%)
- Research project with a faculty member outside of course/program requirements (19%)
- Study abroad (19%)

Demographic characteristics

- 65% intend to pursue a Master's degree; 13%, a professional degree; and 13% a doctorate.
- 59% did not change their major; 31% changed their major once; 8%, twice.
- When students needed academic advising, they often used multiple sources, most often using their official academic advisor (63%), other students (59%), and/or a faculty member in their major department (44%)
- 81% were 22 years old or younger; 83% were white (non-Hispanic); 50% were female.
- 95% indicated that, if they were to do it all over again, they would attend Virginia Tech.

    If you have questions regarding the results or the survey process, contact Dr. Steve Culver, Assistant Director, Office of Academic Assessment, sculver@vt.edu, 231-4581.

The course work in my major department…

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
1. was intellectually challenging	5 (.3%)	50 (3%)	810 (52%)	683 (44%)	**3.40 (.57)**
2. required me to think critically	7 (.5%)	42 (3%)	750 (48%)	745 (48%)	**3.45 (.57)**
3. increased my understanding of my field	9 (.6%)	29 (2%)	559 (36%)	948 (61%)	**3.58 (.56)**
4. helped me become a better writer	52 (3%)	300 (19%)	786 (51%)	408 (26%)	**3.00 (.77)**
5. helped me synthesize information from different sources	8 (.5%)	96 (6%)	959 (62%)	484 (31%)	**3.24 (.58)**
6. presented me with alternate points of view	15 (1%)	171 (11%)	872 (56%)	487 (31%)	**3.19 (.66)**

The course work in my major department…(Continued)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
7. applied concepts learned in class to new situations	9 (.6%)	114 (7%)	913 (59%)	512 (33%)	**3.25 (.60)**
8. increased my understanding of ethical behavior	27 (2%)	241 (16%)	867 (56%)	409 (26%)	**3.07 (.70)**
9. incorporated technology that enhanced my learning	39 (3%)	228 (15%)	811 (52%)	465 (30%)	**3.10 (.74)**
10. increased my knowledge of technology	49 (3%)	282 (18%)	765 (49%)	446 (29%)	**3.04 (.77)**

The faculty in my major department…

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
11. set high standards for my learning	12 (.8%)	69 (5%)	876 (57%)	590 (38%)	**3.32 (.60)**
12. encouraged active learning	13 (.8%)	97 (6%)	842 (54%)	588 (38%)	**3.30 (.62)**
13. encouraged student-faculty interaction outside the classroom	55 (4%)	309 (20%)	744 (48%)	436 (28%)	**3.01 (.79)**
14. provided opportunities for students to learn cooperatively	13 (.8%)	101 (7%)	883 (57%)	549 (35%)	**3.27 (.62)**
15. were concerned about student learning and development	17 (1%)	91 (6%)	893 (58%)	542 (35%)	**3.27 (.62)**
16. were accessible outside of class	10 (.6%)	76 (5%)	887 (57%)	568 (37%)	**3.31 (.59)**
17. knew me as a person	77 (5%)	368 (24%)	705 (46%)	396 (26%)	**2.92 (.83)**

18. When you had a question or needed clarification regarding an academic problem (e.g., what courses to take, graduation requirements, etc.) from which of the following resources were you more likely to seek an answer? (check all that apply)

	University Frequency (%)
My official academic advisor	**976 (63%)**
College or department professional advisor	**524 (34%)**
College Academic Programs office	**71 (5%)**
A faculty member in my major department	**674 (44%)**
A faculty member outside of my major department	**98 (6%)**
A staff member	**171 (11%)**
University catalog	**511 (33%)**
Departmental materials	**551 (36%)**
Other students	**917 (59%)**

From my experiences at Virginia Tech, I have improved my...

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
22. writing skills	21 (1%)	159 (10%)	846 (55%)	517 (33%)	**3.20 (.67)**
23. oral communication skills	10 (.6%)	95 (6%)	801 (52%)	636 (41%)	**3.34 (.62)**
24. critical thinking skills	3 (.2%)	37 (2%)	807 (52%)	695 (45%)	**3.42 (.55)**
25. computer skills	19 (1%)	195 (13%)	835 (54%)	494 (32%)	**3.17 (.68)**
26. understanding of ethical behavior	18 (1%)	158 (10%)	943 (61%)	423 (27%)	**3.15 (.63)**
27. ability to retrieve information and resources to help solve a problem	10 (.6%)	72 (5%)	899 (58%)	561 (36%)	**3.30 (.59)**

From my experiences at Virginia Tech, I have improved my…(Continued)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
28. understanding of the cultural traditions that have shaped Western experience	66 (4%)	354 (23%)	803 (52%)	322 (21%)	**2.89 (.77)**
29. knowledge of the interaction between tradition and innovation	31 (2%)	279 (18%)	935 (60%)	295 (19%)	**2.97 (.67)**
30. ability to compare alternative theories about human society, culture, and behavior	28 (2%)	235 (15%)	917 (59%)	362 (23%)	**3.05 (.68)**
31. understanding of patterns and processes that affect the relationship between the individual and society	31 (2%)	208 (13%)	928 (60%)	374 (24%)	**3.07 (.67)**
32. ability to evaluate the credibility of, use and misuse of scientific information	16 (1%)	174 (11%)	939 (60%)	410 (27%)	**3.13 (.64)**

From my experiences at Virginia Tech, I have improved my…(Continued)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
33. ability to describe methods of inquiry that lead to scientific knowledge	18 (1%)	207 (13%)	960 (62%)	346 (22%)	**3.07 (.64)**
34. quantitative reasoning and problem solving skills	17 (1%)	107 (7%)	913 (59%)	492 (32%)	**3.23 (.62)**
35. understanding of fundamental principles of reasoning involved in mathematics or logic	39 (3%)	243 (26%)	839 (54%)	412 (27%)	**3.06 (.73)**
36. understanding of the relationship between art and society	97 (6%)	434 (28%)	743 (48%)	255 (17%)	**2.76 (.80)**
37. knowledge of classic works of fine and applied arts	118 (8%)	492 (32%)	696 (45%)	224 (14%)	**2.67 (.82)**

From my experiences at Virginia Tech, I have improved my…(Continued)

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly Agree (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
38. knowledge of different cultures and lifestyles	61 (4%)	244 (16%)	872 (56%)	354 (23%)	**2.99 (.74)**
39. knowledge of environmental issues	44 (3%)	243 (16%)	848 (55%)	394 (25%)	**3.04 (.73)**
40. ability to solve problems creatively	11 (.7%)	93 (6%)	945 (61%)	479 (31%)	**3.24 (.59)**
41. ability to lead people effectively	14 (.9%)	108 (7%)	843 (54%)	566 (37%)	**3.28 (.63)**
42. knowledge of global issues	31 (2%)	194 (13%)	896 (58%)	410 (27%)	**3.10 (.68)**

43. Which of the following have you participated in while at Virginia Tech? (check all that apply)

	University Frequency (%)
Internship, field experience, co-op, or practicum	**1038 (67%)**
Community service or volunteer work AS PART OF A COURSE	**438 (28%)**
Community service or volunteer work OUTSIDE OF ANY COURSE REQUIREMENTS	**992 (64%)**
University learning community	**134 (9%)**

43. Which of the following have you participated in while at Virginia Tech? (check all that apply)   (Continued)

	University Frequency (%)
Research project with a faculty member AS PART OF A COURSE/PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	**399 (26%)**
Research project with a faculty member OUTSIDE OF ANY PROGRAM/COURSE REQUIREMENTS	**291 (19%)**
Study abroad	**294 (19%)**
Attended a professional or scholarly meeting or conference	**751 (49%)**
Gave a talk or exhibited your work at a professional, scholarly, cultural, or artistic conference or meeting	**328 (21%)**

44. What is your graduation date?

	University Frequency (%)
Summer 2008	**93 (6%)**
May 2008	**1374 (89%)**
December 2007	**8 (.5%)**
Summer 2007	**2 (.1%)**
Other	**71 (5%)**

45. What year did you first enter Virginia Tech?

	University Frequency (%)
2006 or later	68 (4%)
2005	138 (9%)
2004	1049 (68%)
2003	228 (15%)
2002	30 (2%)
2001 or before	34 (2%)

46. How many times did you change your major?

	University Frequency (%)
0	907 (59%)
1	480 (31%)
2	116 (8%)
3	36 (2%)
4 or more	8 (.5%)

47. If you changed your major at least once, please indicate the most important reason why you did so?

	University Frequency (%)
I did not change my major	**670 (43%)**
Academic difficulties in my previous major	**44 (3%)**
Lack of interest in my previous major	**138 (9%)**
More interest in subject matter of my new major	**221 (14%)**
My new major was easier for me	**7 (.5%)**
My new major better fit my career goals	**134 (9%)**
I can earn more money with a degree in my new major	**8 (.5%)**
Faculty reputation in my new major	**6 (.4%)**

48. If it took you longer than 8 semesters (not including summers) to complete your degree, please indicate which of the following were factors? (check all that apply)

	University Frequency (%)
I finished my degree in 8 semesters or less	**952 (61%)**
Changed major	**158 (10%)**
Repeated courses for better grades	**97 (6%)**
Internship, practicum, student teaching, co-op	**76 (5%)**
Study abroad	**22 (1%)**
Too few hours to improve my GPA	**20 (1%)**
Courses not always available	**98 (6%)**

48. If it took you longer than 8 semesters (not including summers) to complete your degree, please indicate which of the following were factors? (check all that apply) (Continued)

	University Frequency (%)
Poor advising	**71 (5%)**
Lost credits from transfer	**43 (3%)**
Degree program took longer than 8 semesters	**55 (4%)**
Academic suspension	**38 (3%)**
Double major	**65 (4%)**
Had to work while enrolled	**84 (5%)**
Family responsibilities	**37 (2%)**

49. Your current age?

	University Frequency (%)
22 or younger	1258 (81%)
23-24	225 (15%)
25-27	39 (3%)
28-30	12 (.8%)
31-35	9 (.6%)
36 or older	3 (.2%)

50. What is your racial or ethnic background?

	University Frequency (%)
African American	36 (2%)
Asian/Pacific Islander	93 (6%)
Hispanic/Latino	20 (1%)
Native American	5 (.3%)
White (non-Hispanic)	1328 (86%)
Multi-racial	43 (3%)
None of the above categories	13 (.8%)

51. Your gender?

	University Frequency (%)
Female	**775 (50%)**
Male	**765 (49%)**

52. Do you intend to pursue any of the following degrees in the future? (check all that apply)

	University Frequency (%)
Another bachelor's degree	**59 (4%)**
Master's degree	**1014 (65%)**
Professional degree (e.g., Law-JD, Medicine - MD/DO, Dentistry - DDS, Veterinary Medicine - DVM)	**205 (13%)**
Doctorate (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D., DBA)	**204 (13%)**

53. If you were to do it all over again…

	Definitely no (1)	Probably no (2)	Probably yes (3)	Definitely yes (4)	*University Mean (SD)*
would you attend Virginia Tech again?	19 (1%)	64 (4%)	305 (20%)	1157 (75%)	**3.68 (.61)**