

A FOLLOW-UP OF AGRICULTURAL
COMMUNICATIONS GRADUATES AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY,
FALL 1992 - SUMMER 1997

By

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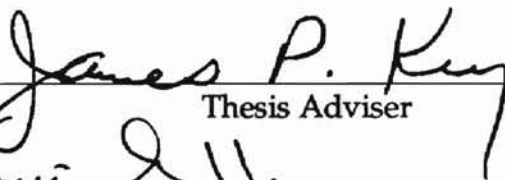
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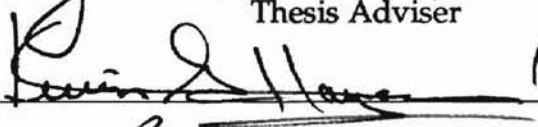
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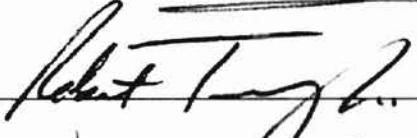
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Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser







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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Follow-up studies are one of the most commonly used measures in evaluating programs (Cheek & McGhee, 1990). Evaluation is necessary for recruitment and retention purposes to accurately monitor the occupational status of graduates in a department, college and/or degree field. Also, in higher education, there appears to be a negative perception among students concerning employment opportunities in agriculture (Hoover & Scalon, 1991). Therefore, it is necessary to gain positive feedback from university graduates concerning their career status and success in order to continue to show the positive career opportunities in agriculture.

Positive feedback from university graduates about their career status and success can be utilized as a public relations vehicle for college recruiting, as well as by employers seeking qualified candidates (Jackson, 1984). This public relations vehicle is the key to the success of any academic program and this study provided the data necessary for the agricultural communications program to maintain a solid reputation among employers and potential students.

Curriculum evaluation is also important in order to constantly meet the demands of changing occupational requirements. Information from graduates is the only real means by which curriculum can be evaluated based on industry needs. Effective evaluation is vital for improving educational programs because it provides information that can be used to determine the merit of existing programs or the need for revision of existing programs (Cheek & McGhee, 1987). It is vital that those responsible for degree programs such as agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University evaluate their alumni to ensure they are keeping pace with industry changes and needs.

On the other end of the spectrum, recruitment is an important part of the success of a program. It becomes important that potential students understand the value of extracurricular activities and leadership roles available at a university or through a degree program. It is also important to understand the value of these programs to the overall degree experience. Jackson (1984) said, "the faculty need to communicate with graduates of the program." As technology advances in the realm of communications, it is vital that degree programs such as agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University continue to gather the perceptions and opinions of recent graduates to determine instruction effectiveness and a direction for the future.

Purpose

This study evaluated perceptions of alumni of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University who graduated

between the fall semester of 1992 and the summer semester of 1997. The study was conducted to evaluate their perceptions regarding the educational and extracurricular programs provided at the university and determined the occupational status and pay scale for graduates of the program.

Objectives

Answers to the following questions were sought in order to accomplish the purpose of the study.

1. What were the occupational status and personal characteristics of graduates from the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University, Fall 1992 - Summer 1997?
2. What were the graduates' perceptions of their educational experience in the agricultural communications program while attending Oklahoma State University?
3. What were the graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum offered while they were a student in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?
4. What were the graduates' perceptions of the value of student organizations in the agricultural communications program?
5. What were the graduates' perceptions of their academic advisement in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?

6. What skills were most needed in industry for graduates of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?
7. What were the graduates' perceptions of the value of internships to professional development?

Assumptions

1. Respondents to the self-administered survey instrument followed proper procedures.
2. Respondents answered honestly, without feelings of pressure or personal threat.
3. Missing survey responses occurred at random and will not represent a particular segment of the population.

Limitations

This study was limited to the accuracy of the addresses which were provided by the graduates of the agricultural communications degree program.

Significance of the Study

This study was conducted to help provide recruitment and retention statistics for the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University. Results of this study are being used to determine if the agricultural

communications program needs to make improvements in the educational experience for students.

Definition of Terms

Alumni - Graduates of the agricultural communications degree program at Oklahoma State University from fall 1992 - summer 1997.

General Education - Refers to courses which are taught outside of the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources and are a requirement on most all matriculation sheets.

Graduate - Alumni of the agricultural communications degree program at Oklahoma State University from fall 1992 - summer 1997.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this examination of literature is to determine the need for follow-up studies of college graduates. In trying to determine this need, this review focused on several key topic areas which include: career patterns of graduates, distribution of employment opportunities, educational experience, curriculum requirements and extracurricular activities.

A study by Major (1988) Texas Tech University determined the occupational status of alumnae of the College of Agricultural Sciences who graduated between 1971 and 1986. The study also obtained information from the graduates about their perceptions concerning their educational needs.

Major's recommendations were: (1) the College should be responsible for coordinating surveys of all College alumni; (2) a continuous systematic follow-up of graduates' occupational status and educational needs will help develop strong curriculum programs for the College; (3) better placement programs for graduates which will provide a quality college environment for the prospective student; and (4) efficient student advisement.

In a follow-up to the above study, Wrye (1992) cited a recommendation that students should be encouraged to be involved in extracurricular activities since a majority of the respondents in the study felt students should be involved in extracurricular activities because they will help them to: (a) understand agriculture, (b) build leadership, (c) build responsibility, (d) work as a team, (e) build occupational skills, and (f) get a job.

A study by Cheek and McGhee (1990) showed follow-up studies provide evidence regarding the career patterns of graduates. Many students do not know about the numerous available career opportunities in agriculture. Therefore, it is necessary to inform students of the various opportunities available in agricultural related fields. Major noted follow-up studies are a key tool for advisers so they can stay abreast of the latest job opportunities in agriculture and in their field of study. Follow-up studies can also help advisers to relay the importance of involvement in student organizations.

Career Patterns of Graduates

The field of agriculture has a positive future for job placement (Arrington, 1986; Coulter, Goecker, & Stanton, 1990). Arrington stated that over half of the respondents in his study were involved in a occupation related to agriculture within one year of their graduation. A study by Cooper and Bowen (1988) explored the types of positions held by graduates of The Ohio State University agricultural communications program. The study also assessed salaries and level of job satisfaction. The researchers determined graduates tended to be satisfied

with their employment positions. They also concluded that most graduates' salaries appear to be dependent upon the type of employment, age, and gender.

A study by Jackson (1984) looked at the career status of graduates of the University of Houston in University Park. He determined that graduates' perception of their education and their success in the work place can be used to determine the institution's effectiveness as a whole. The study pointed toward a need to assess graduates' attitudes toward their educational experiences and determine their career status and success by continually monitoring achievements.

To determine occupational status, personal success must be determined (Anderson, 1985). Anderson stated that success is hard to define and may be labeled as experiences in the workplace or noted as personal satisfactions.

Hoover and Scanlon (1991) assert that there seems to be a problem of biased opinions about agricultural careers and opportunities for recruitment in secondary agriculture programs. The public has a preconceived notion about agriculture which needs to be focused on during recruiting according to Hoover and Scanlon (1991). They also stated that knowing the career status of graduates will help improve the opinion of agricultural careers by showing the diversity of opportunities for a person in the workplace. Therefore, it is necessary to know the career status of graduates of a degree program to continually improve the recruitment of students in the field of agricultural communications.

Anderson (1985) stated that colleges play an important role in the routing of students into different occupational levels by altering goals and values. A

study by Arrington researched the attitudes of graduates about their experiences in agriculture and if their attitudes were related to their current occupational status. She concluded that many times students who are employed have a more positive opinion of the value of their educational experiences.

Distribution of Employment Opportunities in Agriculture

According to a study by Coulter, Goecker, and Stanton (1990) the distribution of employment opportunities for food and agricultural sciences majors were: (a) 32.4 percent employed in marketing, merchandising, or sales; (b) more than 28 percent scientists, engineers, or related specialists; (c) 14 percent managers or financial specialists; (d) 9.7 percent as social services specialists; (e) 7.8 percent as communications or education specialists; and (f) 7.5 percent as agricultural production specialists.

Bowen and Cooper (1988) concluded that communications graduates were employed in a wide range of fields including 3 percent broadcast media, 17 percent business, 11 percent education, 14 percent public relations and 11 percent in writing/editing. The study reported that 22 percent of graduates earned less than \$15,000 per year, 17 percent earn between \$15,000 - \$19,999, 17 percent earn between \$20,000 - \$24,999, and 13 percent earn \$50,000 or more per year.

Educational Experience

Anderson (1985) reported that students' educational experience affected their career goals. This study further revealed that universities need to consider

how comfortable the students feel. If the students experienced a sense of belonging, their occupational goals would be higher. The study also stated that a student's sense of belonging affects the possibility of "dropping out." It is necessary, for advisement purposes, to understand the importance relating to students and to give them the encouragement and motivation necessary to maintain high occupational goals (Major, 1988).

A study by Cooper and Bowen (1989) indicated that agricultural communications graduates of The Ohio State University are very satisfied with their undergraduate courses in agriculture, journalism, and communications and less satisfied with their basic education requirement courses. The study also concluded that for future agricultural communicators the graduates perceived courses in journalism and communications to be more important than agriculture or basic education courses.

Efforts should be made to maintain the quality standards of advisement which students receive in their department (Cheek and McGhee, 1990). This study showed that students perceive advisement to be an integral and important part of the educational process.

Paret (1991) stated one way to view a graduates' opinions of their educational experience is to determine if they would again attend the same university. In a study of females graduates of the college of agriculture at Oklahoma State University, she found that 67.71 percent of the respondents would choose the same major a second time. This suggests some of the expectations of the graduates regarding their degree field were not met. They

were not happy for some unknown reason. Wrye (1992) showed that a vast majority of respondents would enroll in the college of agricultural sciences at Texas Tech University especially in the department of agricultural education and communications.

Curriculum Requirements

There is a constant change in occupational requirements of graduates. To keep pace with the constant changes, a university needs to monitor its alumni (Major, 1988). This study expressed a need to continually update curriculum. Major added a continuous systematic follow-up of graduates' occupational status and educational needs will help to develop strong curriculum programs.

Communication skills are more important than subject-area knowledge (Sprecker & Rudd, 1998). In their study, practitioners said that students must be versatile in many communication areas and learn interpersonal networking skills. They also showed that desktop publishing and internships are essential to a program. They concluded curriculum planners should consider these views when making agricultural communications curriculum decisions.

Terry, Lockaby & Bailey-Evans (1995) recommend that academic advisers in agricultural communications use their concluded model to determine if the courses and other experiences offered through programs are providing students with competencies necessary to be best prepared for careers in this field.

To build efficient curricula that will attract and retain students, agricultural communications faculty and administrators must identify students' needs and

interests (Tucker & Paulson, 1988). The study findings indicated that students had high levels of interest in both agricultural and mass communications subjects. However, these students are more likely to prefer agricultural classes, internships, and club affiliations over those offered in mainstream communications.

Tucker and Paulson's (1988) research showed that if agricultural communications options were not available more than half of the students would find another major in the College of Agricultural Sciences. The study stated that this and other information will help build the agricultural communications curriculum.

Paret (1991) showed that efforts should be taken to further evaluate degree programs to determine what changes might be needed in order to better serve the students. Kroupa and Evans (1976) showed that agricultural communicators indicated that professionals believe that the most important academic areas for agricultural communicators are communication skills, communication systems, and human relations. Specifically, professional communication specialists recommended training in news writing, feature writing, editing, and photography for most careers in agricultural communications (Kroupa and Evans, 1973).

Graduates should be contributing members of society and productive members of their industries (Neal, Hammond, and Kreps, 1991). The researchers stated that a graduate should be well-versed in general education courses and technical agricultural courses in order to be successful in both

avenues of life. It is necessary to update courses by doing follow-ups so universities can offer the best possible education for students.

Schiflett and Thomas (1987) stated universities need to examine and revise curricula to provide more practical courses and to emphasize practical applications within existing courses. Universities should place more emphasis on cooperative education and internship education opportunities in order to offer a more balanced and practical approach to education. This will better prepare students for the workplace. Follow-ups provide universities with the knowledge needed to provide a variety of high quality educational alternatives with ample occupational and career opportunities.

Cooper & Bowen (1989) stated that internships, career exposure, and advising and counseling experiences rated most important for future agricultural communicators.

Extracurricular Activities

In the McGhee and Cheek (1990) study, graduates' perceptions of student organizations were evaluated and then used to determine the benefits of involvement in extracurricular organizations. This study concluded that many graduates at the University of Florida were in organizations when they were students and this participation and involvement helped them to work well with people as they graduated and moved into the workforce. Major (1988) stated that it is imperative students realize the importance of extracurricular activities when they are being advised through the educational process.

Cooper and Bowen (1988) said the best indicators of job satisfaction of the graduates of The Ohio State University were Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow membership and annual salaries earned by the graduates. Frequently used recruitment practices such as involvement in agriculturally related organizations like FFA was researched by Hoover and Scanlon (1991). They reported a correlation indicating that students involved in extracurricular activities, such as FFA, were better students.

In Wrye's (1992) study, most of the graduates said students should be involved in extracurricular activities and more than half of the graduates indicated that being in an organization helped them understand agriculture, build leadership, build responsibility, work as a team, build occupational skills and get a job.

In Major's (1988) study, graduates reported that clubs and organizations were very important in networking for employment opportunities. Student socialization has a positive effect on occupational goals for graduates from certain universities (Anderson, 1985). In Cooper & Bowen's (1989) study, it was shown that graduates of The Ohio State University were satisfied with selected academic experiences. The most satisfying experiences involved student groups and organizations such as the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow.

Summary

Through the review of the articles relevant to this study, it became evident that there is a great need for continual assessment of graduates. The

literature served as a basis showing the need for periodic follow-ups in order to keep pace with changing occupational needs and to effectively advise students of the important curriculum and extracurricular experiences available at the university. The literature above served as the basis for continuing research of the graduates of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Design

The research method employed for this study was a descriptive survey. The purpose was to determine the occupational status of alumni from the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University and to evaluate their opinions concerning educational and extracurricular activities while attending the University.

Population

This study was a census of the population which consisted of 79 graduates of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University from Fall 1992 through Summer 1997.

Instrument Development

The ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey was utilized as the primary instrument with several program specific response items included with the survey. The design of the program specific questions were based on suggestions from the author's advisory committee and from research.

The main section of the instrument was the Alumni Outcomes Survey. This survey was developed by the ACT Evaluation/Survey Service which was established to help educational institutions and agencies investigate the opinions, attitudes, goals, and impressions of students pursuing their secondary and postsecondary education. The ACT Evaluation/Survey Service indicates their main purpose is to assist educational institutions and agencies in conducting evaluation studies for such purposes as institutional planning, accreditation research, evaluation, and self-study.

The items for each of the 17 ESS instruments have been written at a general rather than diagnostic level, based on the assumption that institutions must first identify and document areas of concern at a general level before more specific evaluation can occur.

The ESS instruments were developed after a thorough review of the pertinent literature and after consultation with expert practitioners in the relevant fields. Many of the items used on the instruments were selected from instruments used previously in large-scale ACT research studies and services while other questions were suggested by literature and professional educators. Preliminary versions of each instrument were reviewed by educators at a number of institutions and each instrument was examined for clarity and accuracy by a small sample of enrolled students.

Following each of the reviews, a pilot version of the instrument was administered to several hundred students at a number of institutions across the country. A total of 15,000 took part in the pilot tests of the seventeen

instruments. Data from these pilot administrations were then analyzed to determine response patterns within and between institutions and to determine which items and sections appeared to confuse students. Inter-item relationships were also carefully examined. Following these analyses, the final forms of the instruments were developed. The steps undertaken in the development of the instruments are listed below:

- 1) Extensive review of relevant literature.
- 2) Review of similar survey instruments.
- 3) Preparation of preliminary items and scales.
- 4) Internal review of these items for content clarity.
- 5) Preparation of a draft instrument.
- 6) Review of the draft instrument by school administrators, content experts, and other interested persons.
- 7) Preparation of pilot instrument.
- 8) Review of the pilot instrument by a sample of students.
- 9) Pilot administration of the instrument.
- 10) Analysis of pilot data.
- 11) Preparation of final ESS instrument.

The Alumni Outcomes survey consisted of seven sections: (1) background information; (2) employment history and experiences; (3) educational outcomes; (4) educational experiences; (5) activities and organizations; (6) mailing addresses; and (7) additional questions.

The survey format consisted of several different forms of questioning. Most questions on the survey were single response items with questions asking for a ranking on a Likert-type scale.

The questions developed by the researcher were in a multiple choice format. These were pilot tested with a graduate class in the department of agricultural education at Oklahoma State University. The pilot test was used to determine content validity and clarity.

Validity Evidence

The validity of the ESS instruments have been monitored over the years through studies conducted at both the local and national levels. The most direct evidence of the face and content validity of the instrument lies in the items themselves. Developed through the process of thorough literature review, extensive consultation with content experts, pilot testing, and ACT's experience in design and construction of instruments, each item is easy to read and relates to the institutions.

The validity of several aspects regarding the use of ESS instruments for various research purposes have been investigated by ACT and other researchers. The evidence provided by these studies demonstrate the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of ESS instruments in collecting information for intended purposes and usage's in a variety of educational institutions.

Data Gathering Method

Data was collected using the Alumni Outcomes Survey and questions developed by the researcher. A letter of introduction was sent to each of the graduates in the population prior to the survey disbursement. The letter was dated Nov. 4, 1997, and informed participants of the purpose of the study and how the collected data would be used. The questionnaire was then sent to participants with a postage paid return envelope on Nov. 14, 1997 by the Office of University Assessment at Oklahoma State University. This office then sent a follow-up post card dated Nov. 28, 1997, to the graduates who had not responded. The data collection period ended Jan. 5, 1997. There were 35 useable questionnaires returned. Of the returned responses, all were in useable form thus giving a response rate of 44.3 percent.

Following the calculation of the response rate, a follow-up phone survey was done to account for non-response error. More than 18 percent of the non-respondents participated in the phone survey. Chi Square tests on all data items showed no significant differences in the responses of the original respondents and non-respondents. Since no significant difference existed between respondents and non-respondents, the assumption was made that all responses would represent the attitudes, beliefs and background of the population thus allowing a generalization to be made about the data representing all agricultural communications graduates at Oklahoma State University,

Data Analysis/Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used for reporting the personal and situational characteristics of the graduates. Calculation of frequencies and percentages for selected variables was done based on the population characteristics of the study. These frequencies and percentages were used to develop a profile for the graduates of the agricultural communications program.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate perceptions of alumni of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University who graduated between the fall semester of 1992 and the summer semester of 1997. Specifically, the study evaluated their perceptions regarding the educational and extracurricular programs provided at the University and determined the occupational status and pay scale for graduates of the program.

Seven objectives were developed as a means of accomplishing the stated purpose. The first objective was to identify the occupational status and personal characteristics of graduates. The second objective was to determine graduates' perceptions of their educational experience. The third objective was to identify graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University. Objective four was to determine graduates' opinion regarding the value of student organizations. Objective five sought graduates' perceptions on their academic advisement. Objective six was to determine what skills are most needed in industry for graduates and objective seven was to analyze the perceptions of graduates concerning internships.

Findings Related to Objective 1

Objective one was to identify the occupational status and personal characteristics of graduates. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

Gender

The respondents in this study were 60.0 percent female and 40.0 percent male (Figure 1). This compares with the population breakdown of 68.4 percent females and 31.6 percent males and current enrollment of 72.5 percent females and 27.5 percent males (department of agricultural communications, spring 1998).

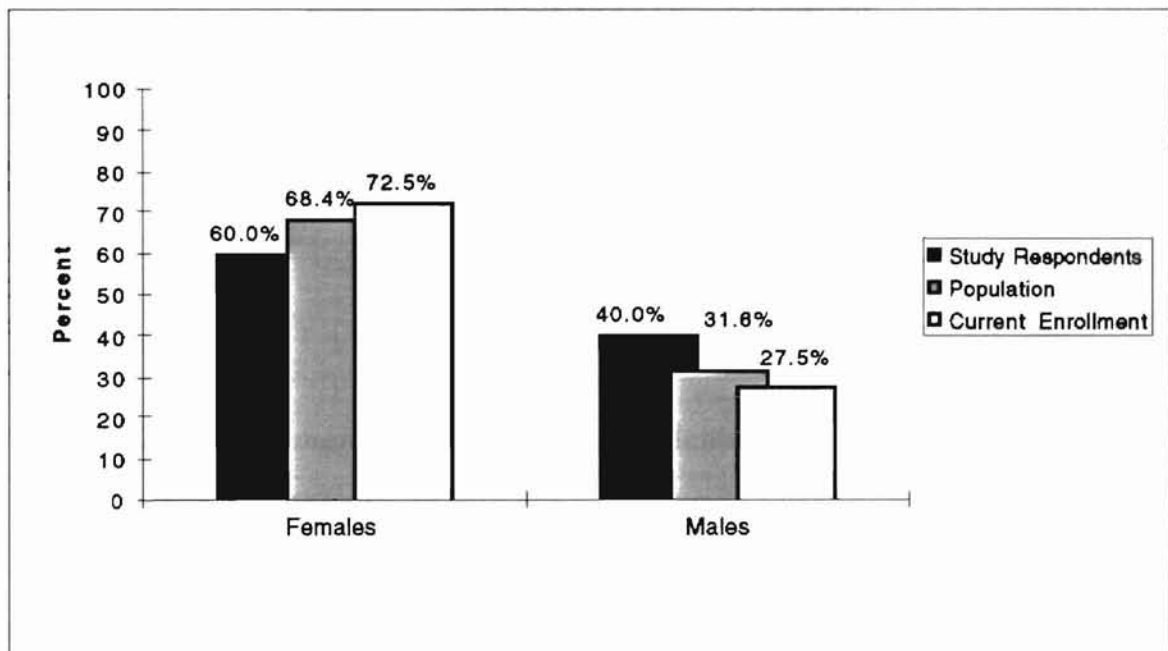


FIGURE 1 - Gender of Respondents, Population and Current Enrollment

Occupational Status of All Respondents

The occupational status varied among respondents of this survey but 80.0 percent of respondents indicated they are working full-time. Employed part-time or continuing education part-time and working part-time was reported by 2.9 percent of graduates. Of the remaining respondents, 8.6 percent were continuing education on a full-time basis and 5.7 percent were unemployed but actively seeking employment (Figure 2).

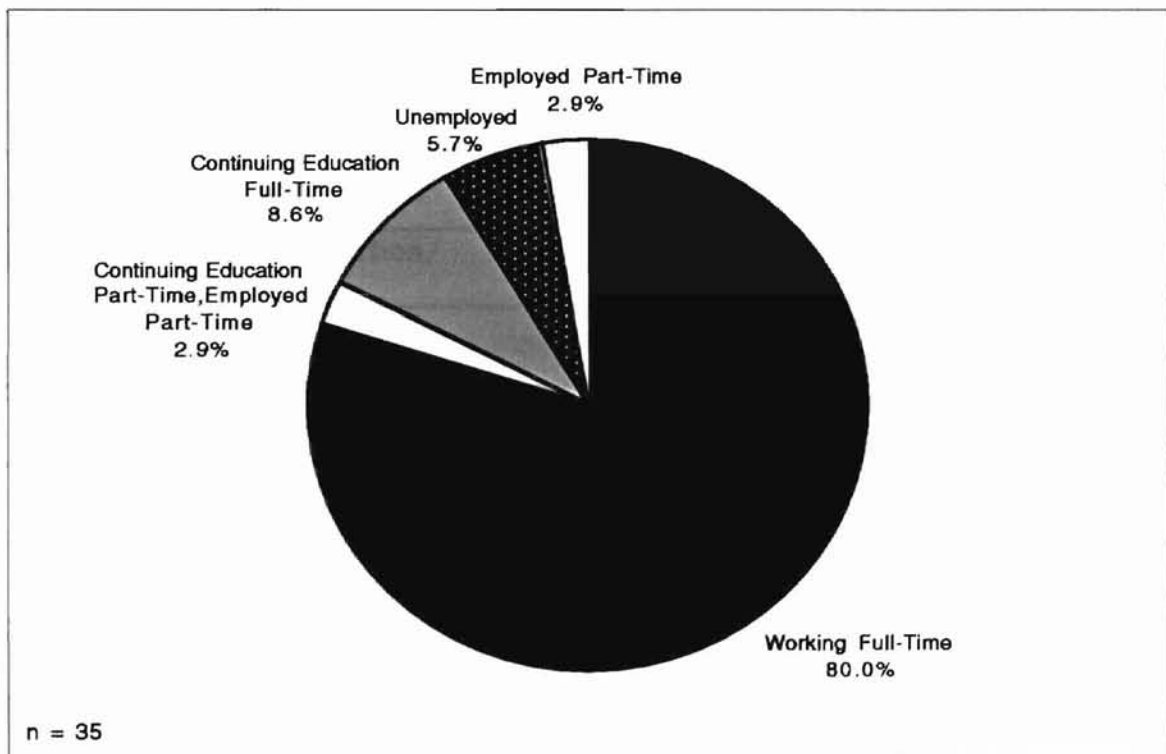


FIGURE 2 - Employment Status of All Respondents

In terms of the areas of employment, the largest percentage of respondents (14.3 percent) were employed in public relations (Table 1).

TABLE 1 - Occupational Status of All Respondents (n = 35)

Employment	No. of Students	Percentage
Public Relations	5	14.3
Insurance and Risk Management	3	8.6
Full-Time Student	3	8.6
Agricultural Business	2	5.7
General Agriculture and Agricultural Technologies	2	5.7
Animal Science	2	5.7
Agricultural Education, Communications, and 4-H Youth Development	2	5.7
Unemployed	2	5.7
Agricultural Production/ Technology	1	2.9
Banking and Finance	1	2.9
Contract Management and Procurement/ Purchasing	1	2.9
Marketing Management and Research	1	2.9
General Business and Office	1	2.9
General Communications and Communications Technologies	1	2.9
Graphic and Printing Communications	1	2.9
Radio/Television Production and Technology	1	2.9
Data Processing	1	2.9
General Education	1	2.9
Computer Technology	1	2.9

Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology	1	2.9
Education Administration	1	2.9
Secondary Education	1	2.9

Insurance and risk management was the next area with 8.6 percent. Agricultural business; general agriculture and agricultural technologies; animal science; agricultural education, communication, and 4-H youth development; and unemployed followed with 5.7 percent of respondents. There was one respondent (2.9 percent) working in each of the following areas: agricultural production/technology, agricultural education, communications and 4-H youth development, banking and finance, contract management & procurement/purchasing, marketing management and research, general business and office, general communications and communications technologies, graphic and printing communications, radio/television production and technology, data processing, general education, education administration, secondary education, agricultural education, computer technology and atmospheric sciences and meteorology. The remaining 14.3 percent were either unemployed and seeking full-time employment (5.7 percent) or a full-time student pursuing a graduate degree (8.6 percent).

Annual Gross Income

One characteristic used to describe the graduates' occupational status was annual gross income. The largest number of respondents in the study (28.6

percent) reported that they made \$30,000 - \$39,999 (Figure 3) The remainder of the respondents ranked as follows: 22.9 percent made \$25,000 - \$29,999; 17.1 percent made \$15,000 - \$19,999; 8.6 percent made \$14,999 or less; 5.7 percent made \$20,000 - \$24,999; 2.9 percent made \$60,000 - \$69,999; and, 14.2 percent made \$0 because they were either unemployed or a full-time student.

Starting Salary

Another important area to learn about graduates was the salary level they received for their first jobs upon graduation. The largest number of respondents (37.1 percent) made \$15,000 - \$19,999 (Figure 3). Approximately one-fifth (20.0 percent) of the respondents reported an entry level salary of \$14,999 or less while 17.1 percent earned \$20,000 - \$24,999. The remaining respondents included 11.4 percent ranging from \$25,000 - \$29,999, 5.7 percent making from \$30,000 - \$39,999, and 5.7 percent did not respond to this question.

Student Loan Debt

The largest portion of respondents (51.4 percent) indicated they had student loan debts of \$2,500 or less (Figure 4). No student loan debt was indicated by 2.9 percent of respondents. The remaining respondents indicated the following: \$2,501 - \$5,000, 5.7 percent; \$5,001 - \$7,500, 5.7 percent; \$7,501 - \$10,000, 5.7 percent; \$15,001 - \$20,000, 11.4 percent; \$20,001 - \$25,000, 8.6 percent; and \$25,001 - \$30,000, 8.6 percent.

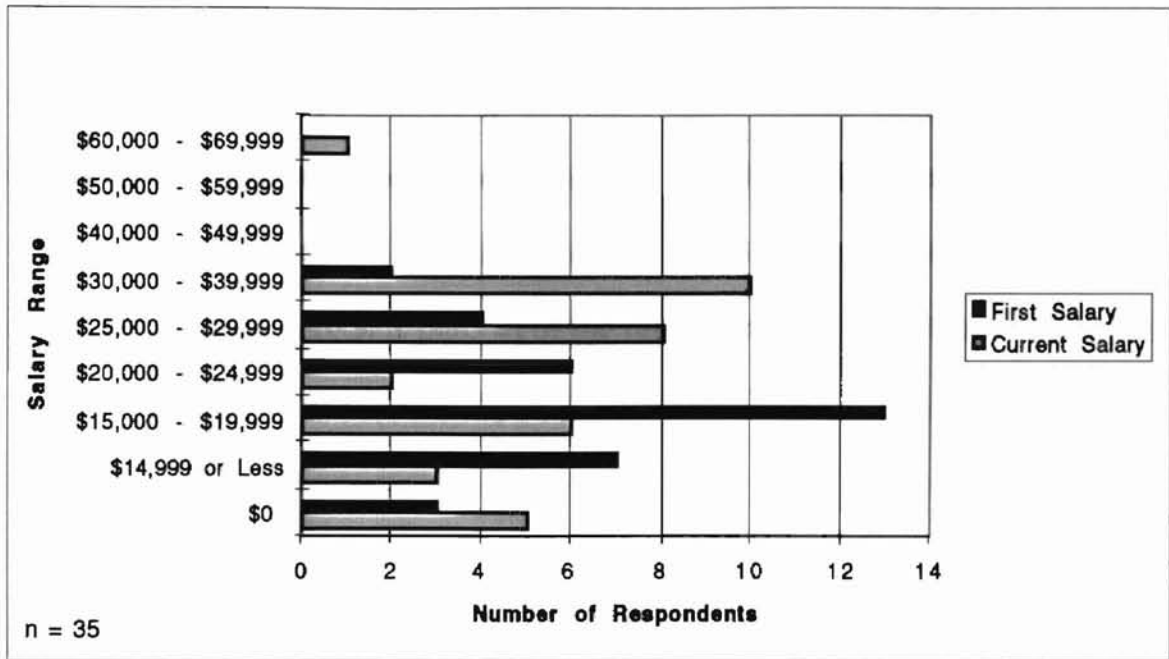


FIGURE 3 - Current and First Salary for All Respondents

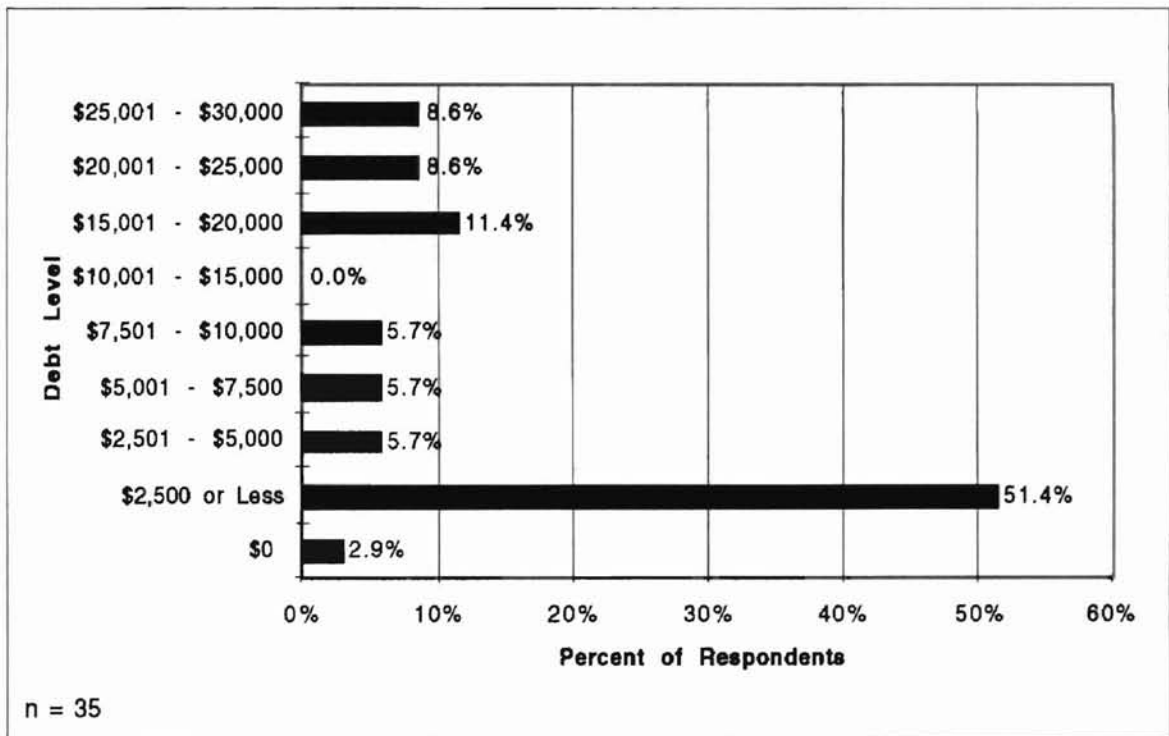


FIGURE 4 - Total Student Loan Debts of All Respondents

Overall Grade Point Average

Overall grade point average at Oklahoma State University varied among respondents. The grade point was measured on a 4.00 scale. One respondent (2.9 percent) had a grade point average between 3.50 and 4.00 (Figure 5). There were 37.1 percent of the respondents ranging from 3.00 - 3.49, 42.9 percent from 2.50 - 2.99, and 17.1 percent from 2.00 - 2.49.

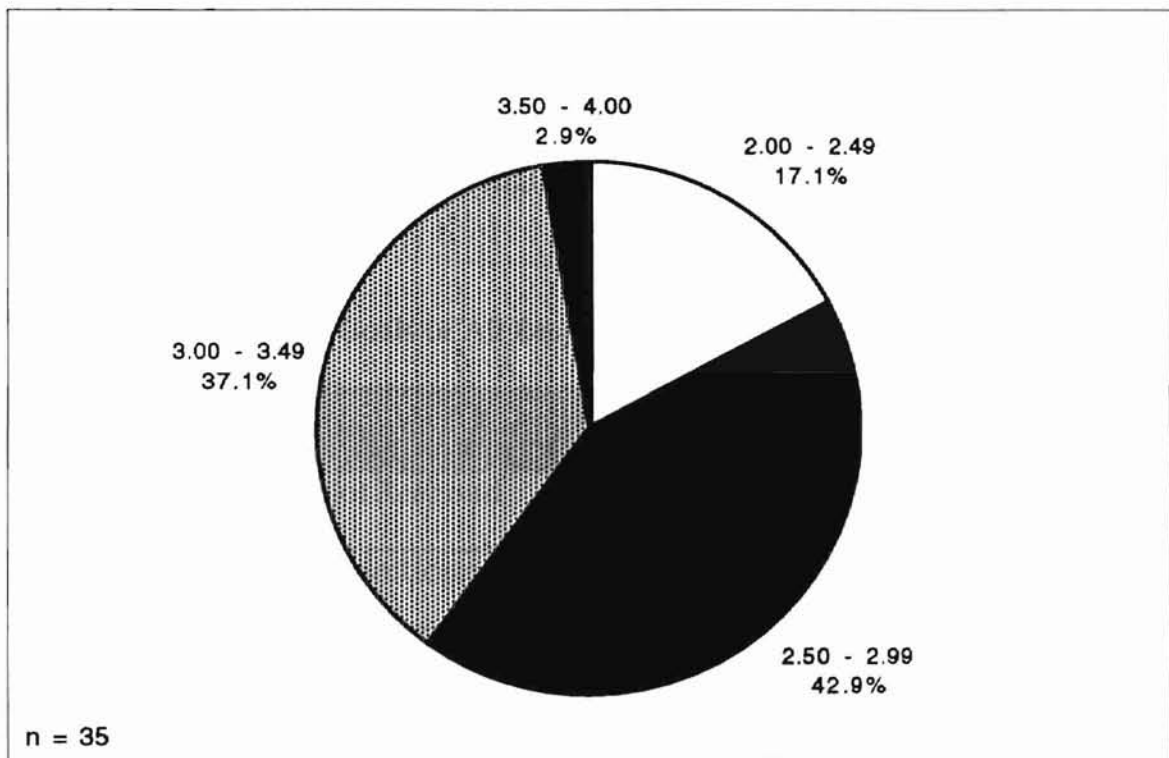


FIGURE 5 - Grade Point Averages of All Respondents

Educational Goals

The current educational goal of the largest number of respondents (42.9 percent) included pursuing a master's or other five year degree (Table 2). Nearly 20 percent were happy with a bachelor's or four year degree, 17.1 percent hoped

to complete a doctorate, 11.4 percent wanted to complete a specialist or other six-year degree and 5.7 percent desired to obtain a professional degree. A small percentage (2.9 percent) did not respond to this question.

When asked about their educational goals after high school, 60 percent of the respondents indicated they only wanted to attain a bachelor's or other four-year degree (Table 2). Several respondents (14.3 percent) intended to attain a master's degree or other five-year degree and 8.6 percent were focusing on a doctorate. Plans for a specialist or six-year degree or a professional degree was indicated by 2.9 percent of respondents and 11.4 percent indicated they had no clear goal upon graduation from high school.

TABLE 2 - Educational Goals of All Respondents

Educational Goal	Currently	After High School Graduation
No Clear Goal/Did Not Respond	2.9%	11.4%
Vocational/Technical Certificate or Diploma	0%	0%
Associate or other two-year degree	0%	0%
Bachelor's or other four-year degree	20%	60%
Master's or other five-year degree	42.9%	14.3%
Specialist or other six-year degree	11.4%	2.9%
Doctorate (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.)	17.1%	8.6%
Professional (MD, JD, etc.)	5.7%	2.9%

Educational Status

Nearly 37.0 percent of respondents were pursuing a higher degree while the remaining 63.0 percent were currently not enrolled in a graduate program (Figure 6). Of those pursuing an advanced degree, 38.4 percent were pursuing a degree in agricultural education, 15.4 percent in animal science, 15.4 percent in general agriculture and agricultural technologies (Figure 7). Approximately 31.0 percent (7.7 percent in each area) were seeking degrees in each of the following areas: communications and communications technologies, English, atmospheric science and meteorology and political science/government.

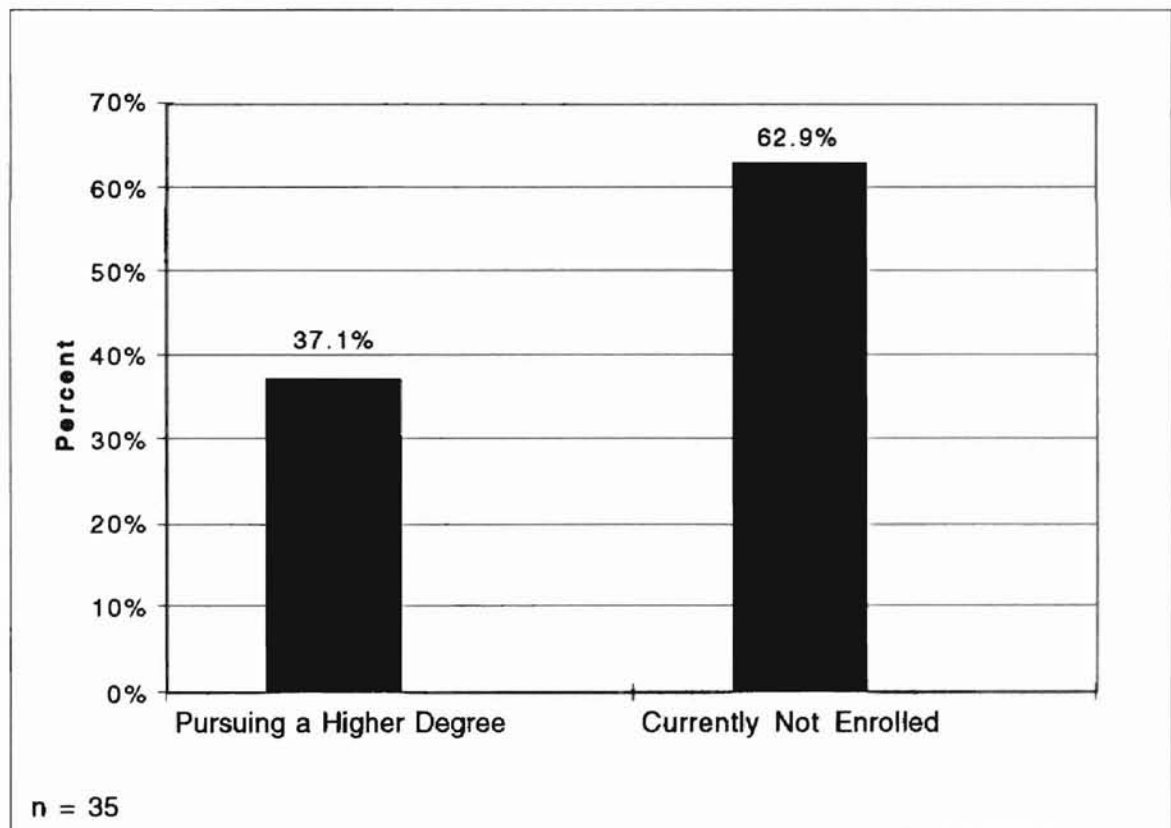


FIGURE 6 - Percentage of Respondents Continuing Their Education

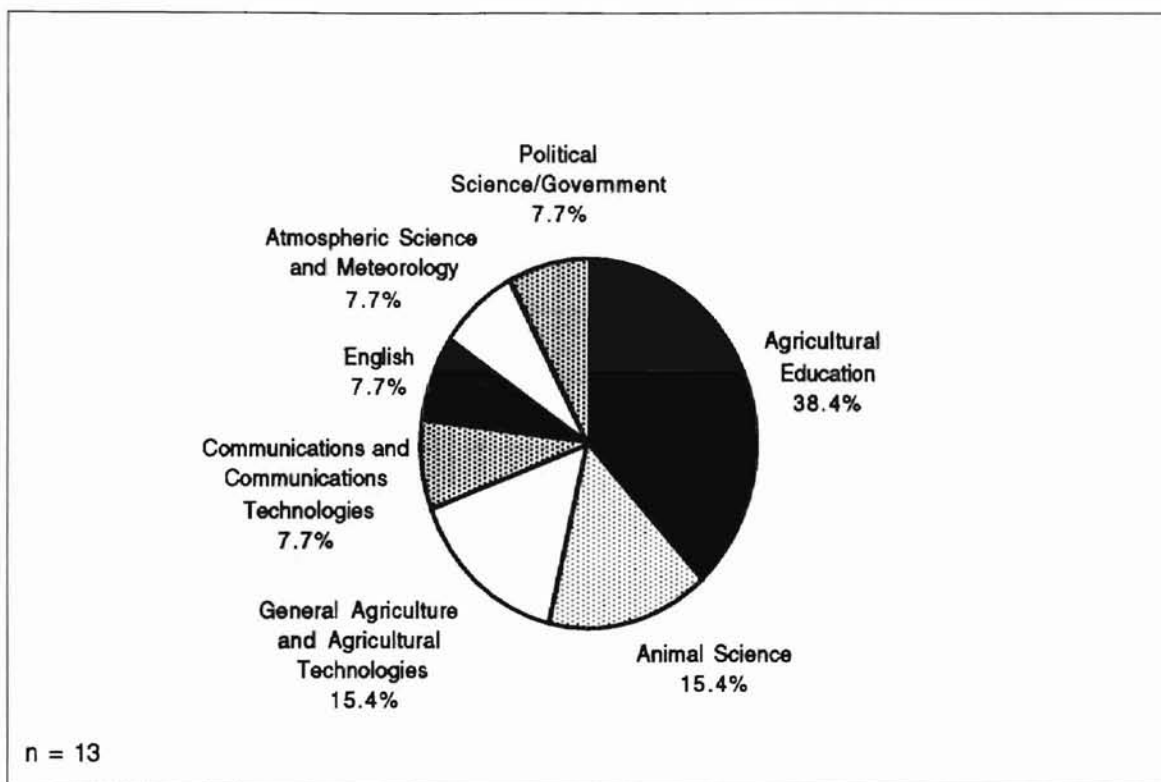


FIGURE 7 - Respondents Graduate Degree Areas

Findings Related to Objective 2

Objective two was to identify the graduates' perceptions of their educational experience at Oklahoma State University. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

Several questions were asked to obtain information to meet this objective. The first question asked simply if you could begin again, would you attend school at Oklahoma State University. "Definitely Yes" was the response from 71.4 percent of the respondents and 22.9 percent of the respondents indicated

“Probably Yes” (Figure 8). Of the remaining respondents, 2.9 percent indicated they were “Uncertain” and 2.9 percent marked “Probably No.”

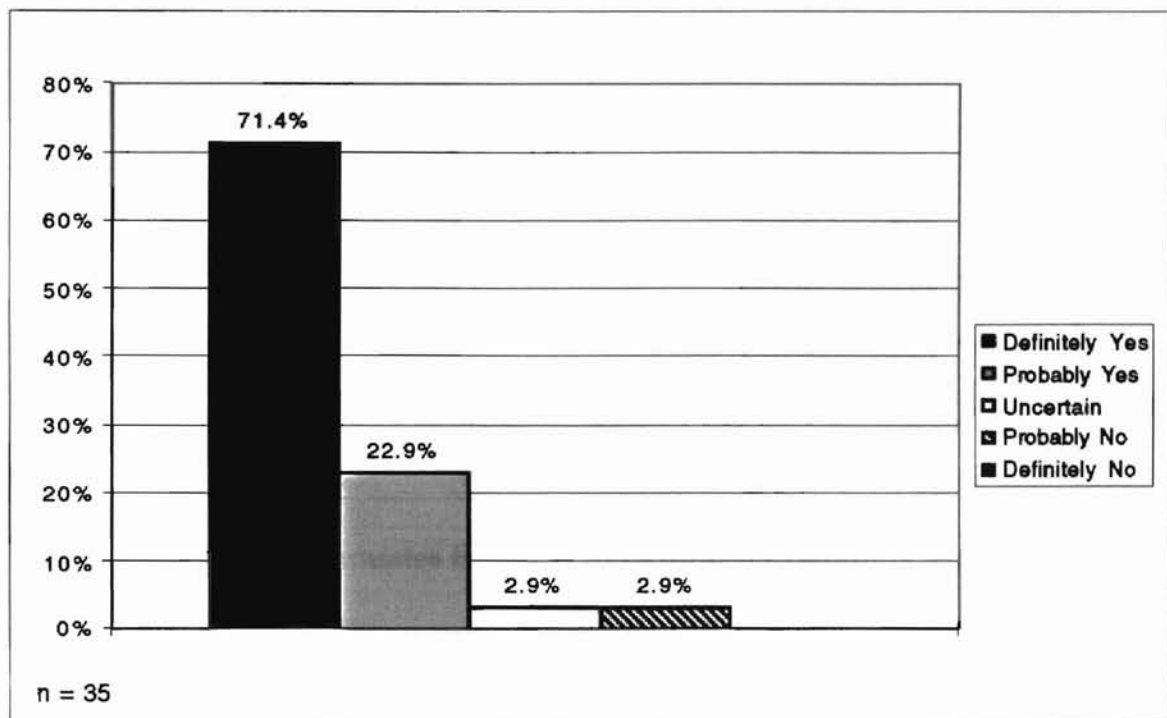


FIGURE 8 - Would the Graduate Attend the University Again?

The next question asked “if you were to start college again, would you enroll in agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University.” “Yes” was the response from 65.7 percent of the respondents and 34.3 percent indicated “No” (Figure 9).

Respondents were asked to rate the school overall on a scale ranging from “Excellent” to “Poor”. “Excellent” was indicated by 57.1 percent of the respondents (Figure 10). “Good” was selected by 37.1 percent of respondents while 5.7 percent of graduates indicated “Average.”

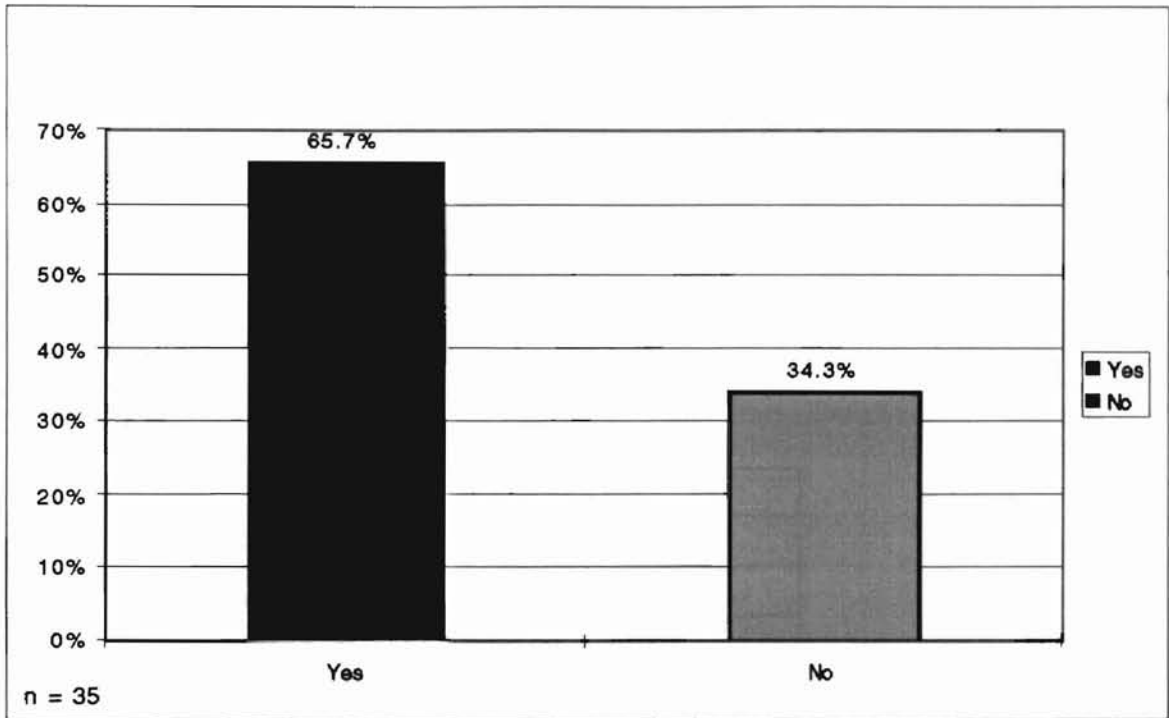


FIGURE 9 - Would Graduates Enroll in Agricultural Communications Again?

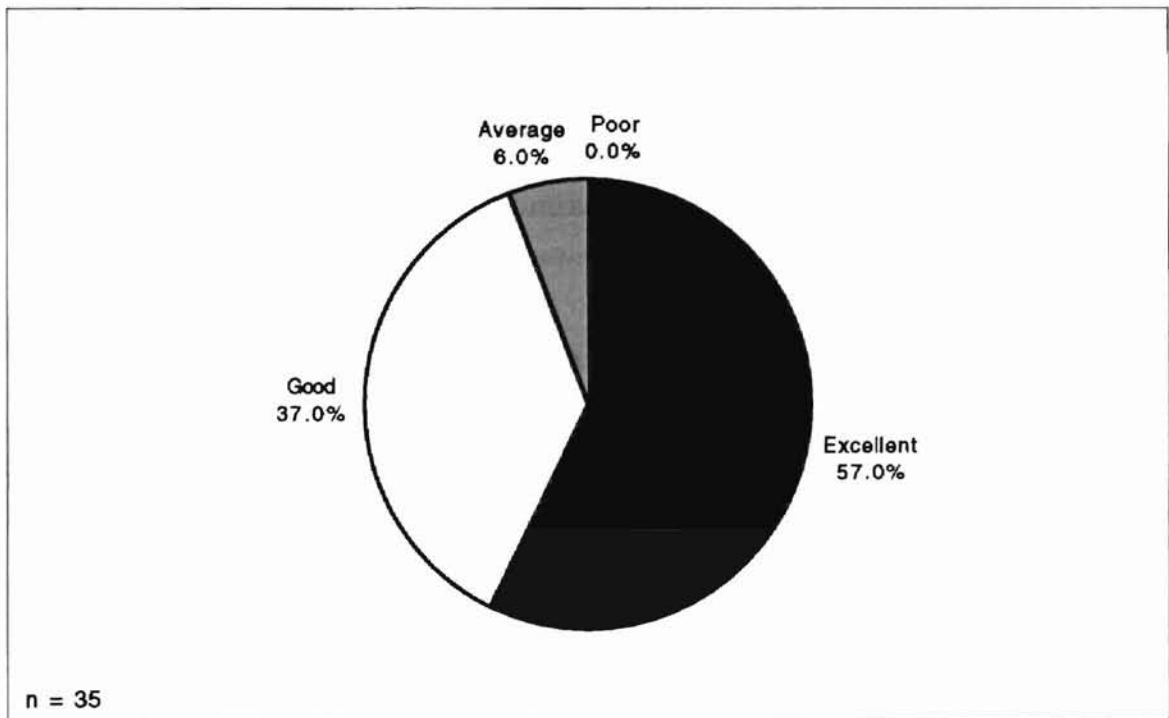


FIGURE 10 - OSU Rating by Respondents

Respondents were also asked if they would recommend Oklahoma State University to a friend or an acquaintance who asked their opinion. "Yes, without reservation" was the response by 82.9 percent of respondents and 17.1 percent indicated "Yes, with some reservations" (Figure 11).

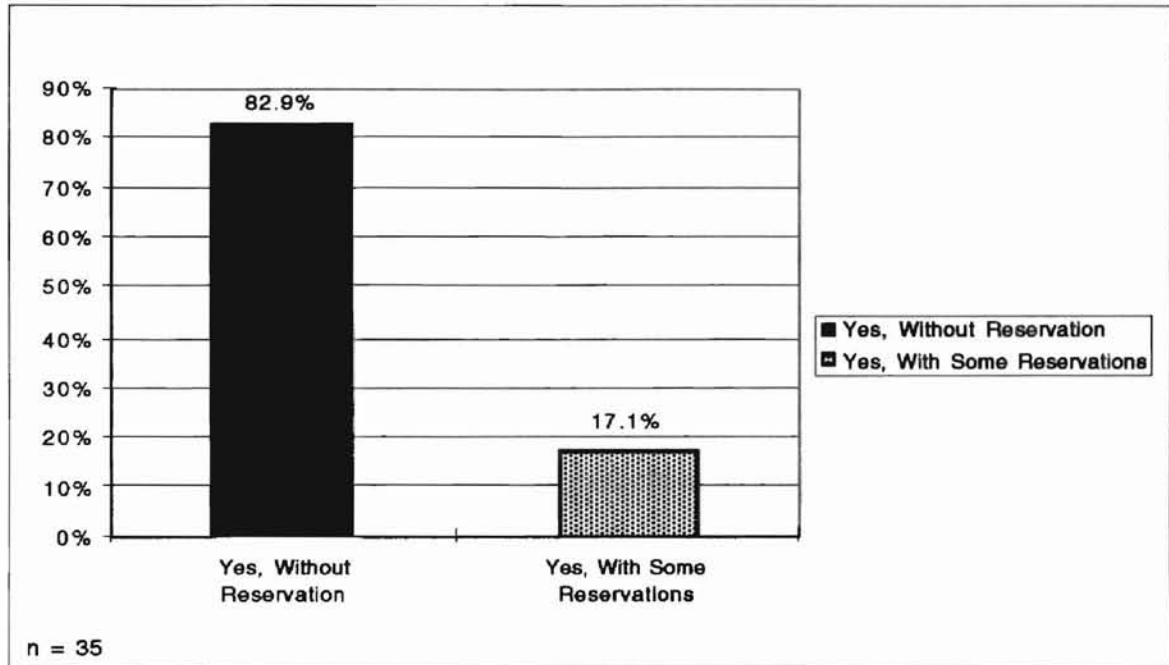


FIGURE 11 - Would Graduates Recommend OSU to a Friend?

Findings Related to Objective 3

Objective three was to identify the graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum offered in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

There were six questions in this section designed to meet this objective. The first question was which area in journalism was most beneficial in preparing the graduates for their career field. "Writing" was the most important factor according to 40 percent of respondents (Table 3). "Public Relations" and "Graphic Design and Layout" followed with 22.9 percent each. "Broadcasting" and "Advertising" were each the most beneficial to 5.7 percent of respondents and 2.9 percent of respondents selected "Photography."

The least beneficial area in journalism was "Broadcasting" with 42.9 percent of respondents followed by the "Other" category with 22.9 percent (Table 3). "Public Relations" was the least beneficial to 11.4 percent and 8.6 percent selected "Graphic Design and Layout". Of the remaining respondents, 5.7 percent selected "Advertising," 5.7 percent selected "Photography" and 2.9 percent chose "Writing."

Table 3 - Rating of Journalism Courses (n = 35)

Journalism Courses	Most Beneficial (Percent)	Least Beneficial (Percent)
Advertising	5.7%	5.7%
Broadcasting	5.7%	42.9%
Editing	0%	0%
Graphic Design and Layout	22.9%	8.6%
Other	0%	22.9%
Photography	2.9%	5.7%

Public Relations	22.9%	11.4%
Writing	40%	2.9%

The next set of questions explored the most beneficial and least beneficial areas in general agriculture courses. The first question looked at the most beneficial area and 68.6 percent selected "Agricultural Communications" (Table 4). "Agricultural Economics" was selected by 14.3 percent and 11.4 percent chose "Other." The remaining 5.7 percent selected "Animal Science."

On the other side, 37.1 percent said "Entomology" was their least beneficial course (Table 4). Agronomy was indicated by 22.9 percent of respondents. "Agricultural Economics" and "Agricultural Education" were each selected by 11.4 percent. The "Other" category was selected by 5.7 percent and "Animal Science," "Horticulture," and "Agricultural Communications" were each selected by 2.9 percent. The remaining 2.9 percent did not respond.

Table 4 - Rating of Agricultural Courses (n = 35)

Agriculture Courses	Most Beneficial (Percent)	Least Beneficial (Percent)
Agricultural Communications	68.6%	2.9%
Agricultural Economics	14.3%	11.4%
Agricultural Education	0%	11.4%
Agronomy	0%	22.9%
Animal Science	5.7%	2.9%

Entomology	0%	37.1%
Horticulture	0%	2.9%
Other	11.4%	5.7%

General education was the focus of the next series of questions. The first question explored the most beneficial area of general education for agricultural communications graduates. "Speech" was selected as most beneficial by 31.5 percent of respondents and 25.7 percent selected "English" (Table 5). "Other" was selected by 17.1 percent of respondents and "Physical Sciences," "Biological Sciences," "Humanities," and "Social Sciences" were each selected by 5.7 percent of respondents. The remaining 2.9 percent selected "American Government."

At the other end of the spectrum, 28.6 percent indicated "Mathematics" was the least beneficial area in general education and 17.1 percent selected "Biological Sciences" (Table 5). "Humanities" was selected by 14.3 percent "American History" and "Social Science" were each selected by 11.4 percent and 8.6 percent chose "Other." "Physical Sciences" was selected by 5.7 percent of respondents and 2.9 percent selected "American Government."

Findings Related to Objective 4

Objective four was to identify the graduates perceptions of the value of student organizations in the agricultural communications program. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

College/Departmental Involvement

A majority of the respondents (91.4 percent) were members of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow during college (Figure 12).

Respondents were also asked if they were members of other college clubs. The majority (68.6 percent) said "Yes" while 31.4 percent indicated "No" (Figure 12). Of those respondents not in ACT, all were involved in other college or departmental clubs and organizations. All of the respondents indicated that they would recommend that students take part in extra curricular activities (Figure 12).

Table 5 - Rating of General Education Courses (n = 35)

General Education Courses	Most Beneficial (Percent)	Least Beneficial (Percent)
American Government	2.9%	2.9%
American History	0.0%	11.4%
Biological Sciences	5.7%	17.1%
English	25.7%	0.0%
Humanities	5.7%	14.3%
Mathematics	0.0%	28.6%
Other	17.1%	8.6%
Physical Science	5.7%	5.7%
Social Sciences	5.7%	11.4%
Speech	31.5%	0.0%

Respondents were asked to indicate the value of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow in professional development. The largest group of respondents (31.5 percent) indicated it was "Very Valuable" while 25.7 percent indicated the group was "Somewhat Valuable" (Figure 13). The remaining respondents indicated the value as follows: 14.3 percent, "Mostly Valuable;" 14.3 percent, "Not Valuable;" and 14.3 percent, "Not Applicable."

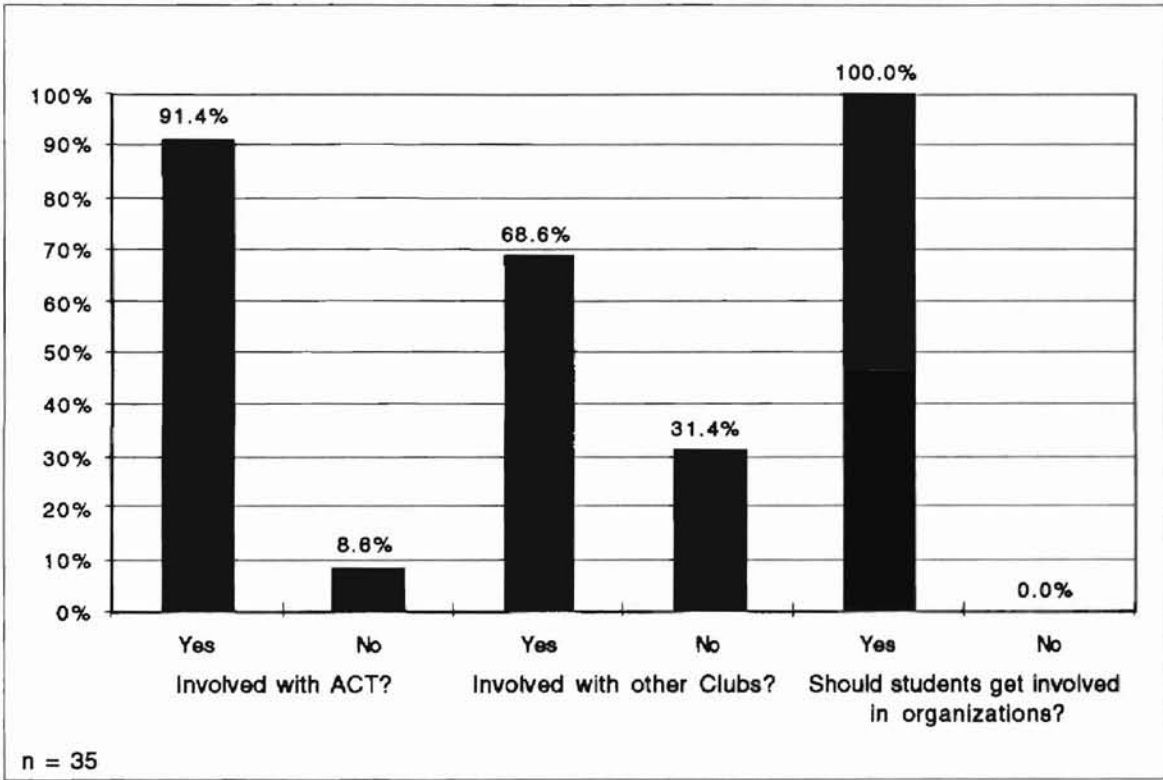


FIGURE 12 - Involvement of Respondents in Student Organizations

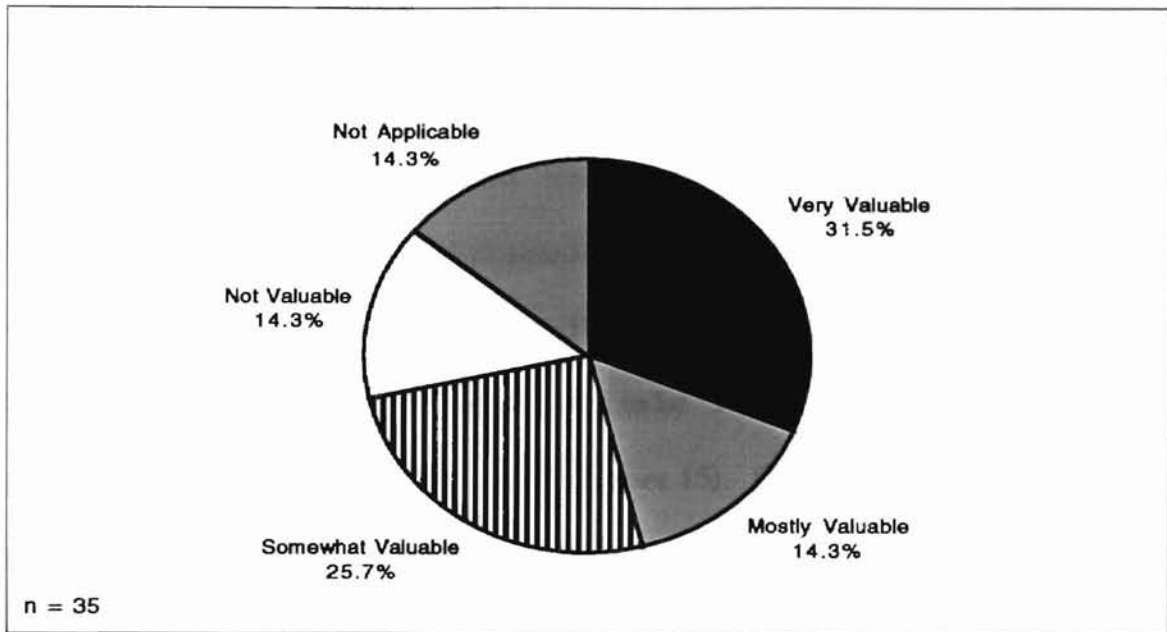


FIGURE 13 - Value of ACT in Professional Development

Findings Related to Objective 5

Objective five was to identify the graduates' perceptions of their academic advisement in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

Academic Advising

Respondents were asked to rate their academic advisement on a 7-point Likert type scale with response options of "Very Dissatisfied," "Dissatisfied," "Neutral," "Satisfied," "Very Satisfied," and "No Opinion/No Experience with Service/Program." The largest percentage of respondents (45.7 percent) indicated they were "Very Satisfied" with academic advisement while 25.7

percent were "Satisfied" (Figure 14). The remainder of respondents indicated their level of satisfaction as follows: 2.9 percent were "Neutral," 20 percent were "Dissatisfied," and 5.7 percent were "Very Dissatisfied."

Respondents were asked to rate their academic advisement by circling either "Excellent," "Good," "Fair," or "Poor." Again, the largest percentage (45.7 percent) indicated their academic advising to be "Excellent" while 22.9 percent perceived their advisement as "Good" (Figure 15). Of the remaining respondents, 20 percent ranked their academic advisement as "Fair" and 11.4 percent indicated their academic advisement was "Poor".

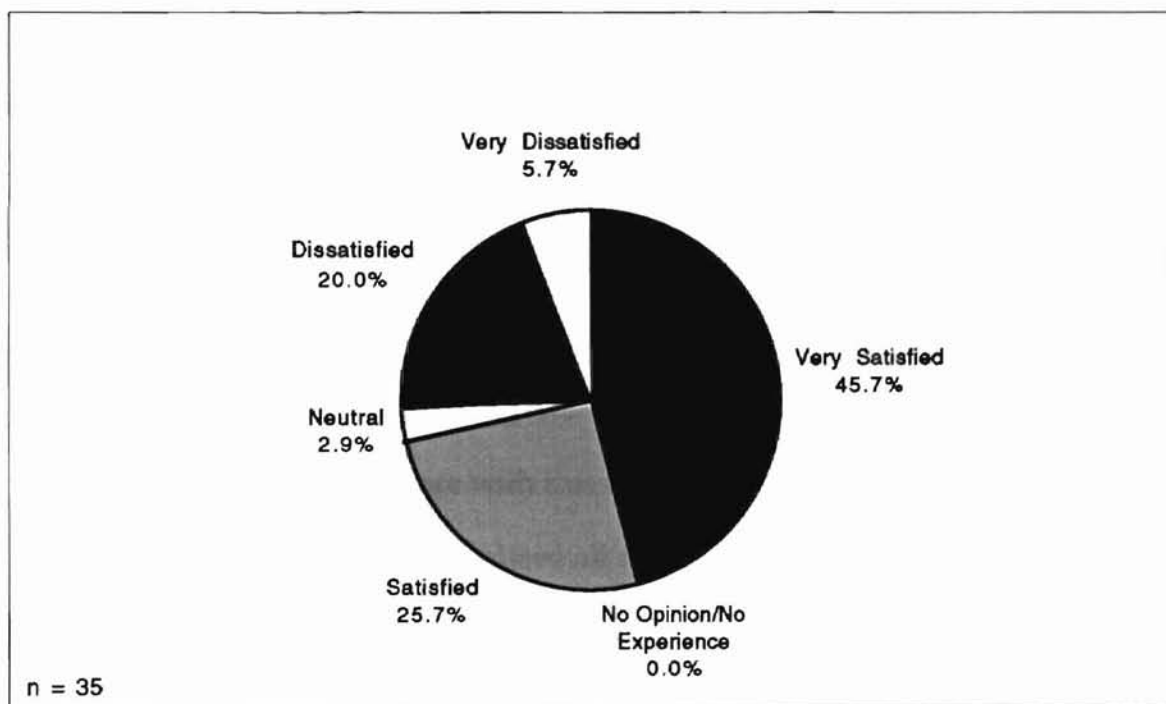


FIGURE 14 - Respondents Satisfaction with Academic Advisement

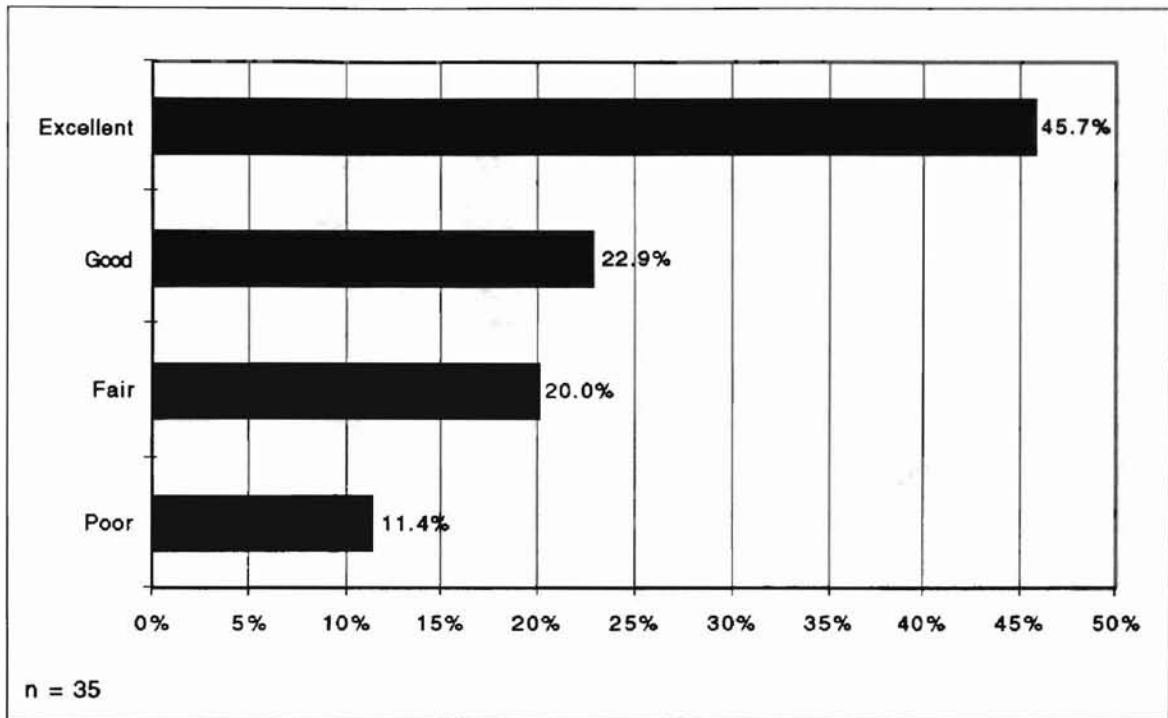


FIGURE 15 - Respondents Ranking of Academic Advisement

Central Advising Units

Respondents were asked to give their perception of the utilization of a central advising unit for those freshman who do not have a declared major. On a scale from "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neutral," "Disagree," "Strongly Disagree," and "No Experience with this topic or service," respondents were asked to indicate whether they believe all new freshman without majors should be assigned to a central advising unit. The largest majority (22.9 percent) indicated they were "Agree" and 22.9 percent were "Neutral" (Figure 16). Of the remaining respondents, 20 percent indicated they "Strongly Agree," 17.1 percent had "No Experience with this topic or service," 8.6 percent "Strongly Disagree," 5.7 percent "Disagree" and 2.9 percent did not respond to the question.

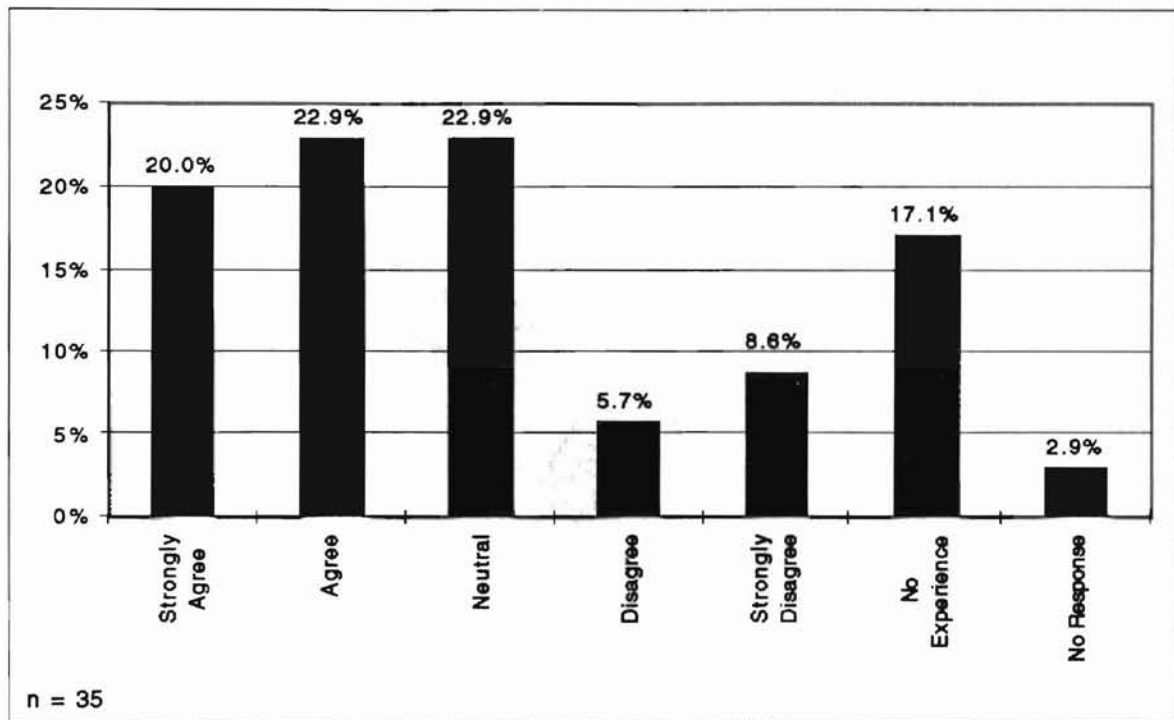


FIGURE 16 - Should There be a Central Advising Unit?

Findings Related to Objective 6

Objective six was to identify the perceptions of graduates concerning valuable coursework areas necessary for performance in industry. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

Respondents were asked to indicate one area of study in which they wished they could have received more experience while attending Oklahoma State University. "Journalism" was selected by 51.4 percent followed by "Agriculture" with 28.6 percent (Figure 17). "General Education" was selected by 5.8 percent and 14.3 percent selected "None."

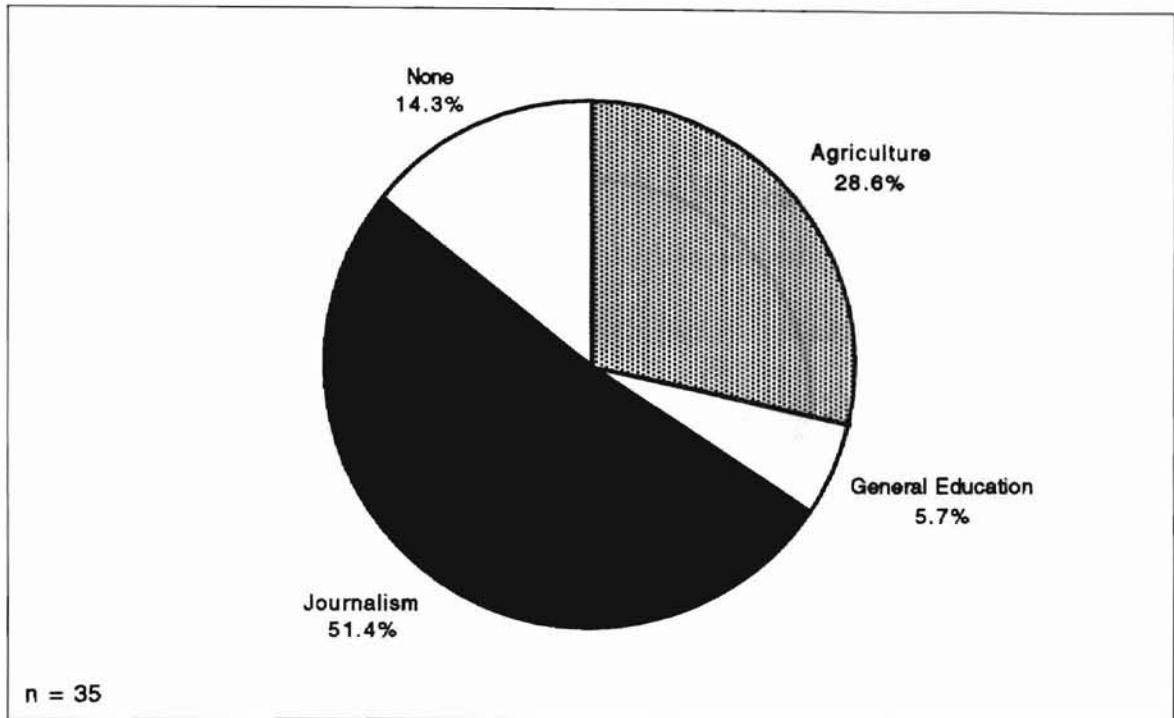


FIGURE 17 - Area Which Graduates Wish They Had Gained More Experience

When asked what skill was developed at Oklahoma State University that is most used in their job today, 31.4 percent selected "Leadership," 25.7 percent selected "Computer Knowledge," 25.7 percent chose "Writing," 8.6 percent marked "Editing" while "Photography," "Design and Layout," and "Other" were each selected by 2.9 percent of respondents (Figure 18).

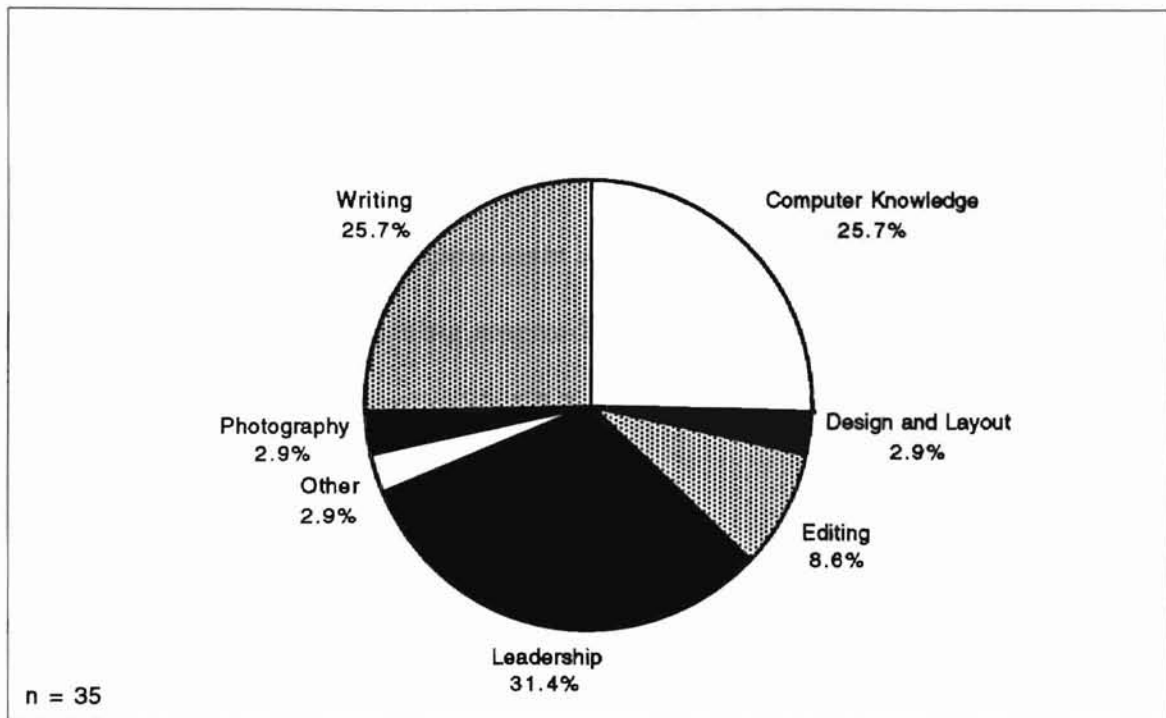


FIGURE 18 - Skill Developed At OSU That Is Used Most In The Workplace

Findings Related to Objective 7

Objective seven was to identify the graduates' perceptions of their internship opportunities at Oklahoma State University. These data are presented in the tables, figures and text that follow.

This objective was measured using four questions on the survey. The first question sought the number of internships that respondents had during their time at Oklahoma State University. The largest number of respondents (42.9 percent) completed two internships while 20 percent completed four or more (Figure 19). Of the remaining respondents, 17.1 percent performed one internship, 11.4 percent performed 3 internships and 8.6 percent did not perform an internship.

The second question asked respondents to indicate the occupational area which provided them with their most significant internship. "Print Journalism" was indicated by 25.7 percent of respondents (Figure 20). "Public Relations" was indicated by 20 percent of respondents and 11.4 percent selected "Broadcast Journalism." Of the remaining respondents, 22.9 percent chose "Other," 8.6 percent indicated "Not Applicable," 5.7 percent selected "Photography," and 2.9 percent chose "Advertising."

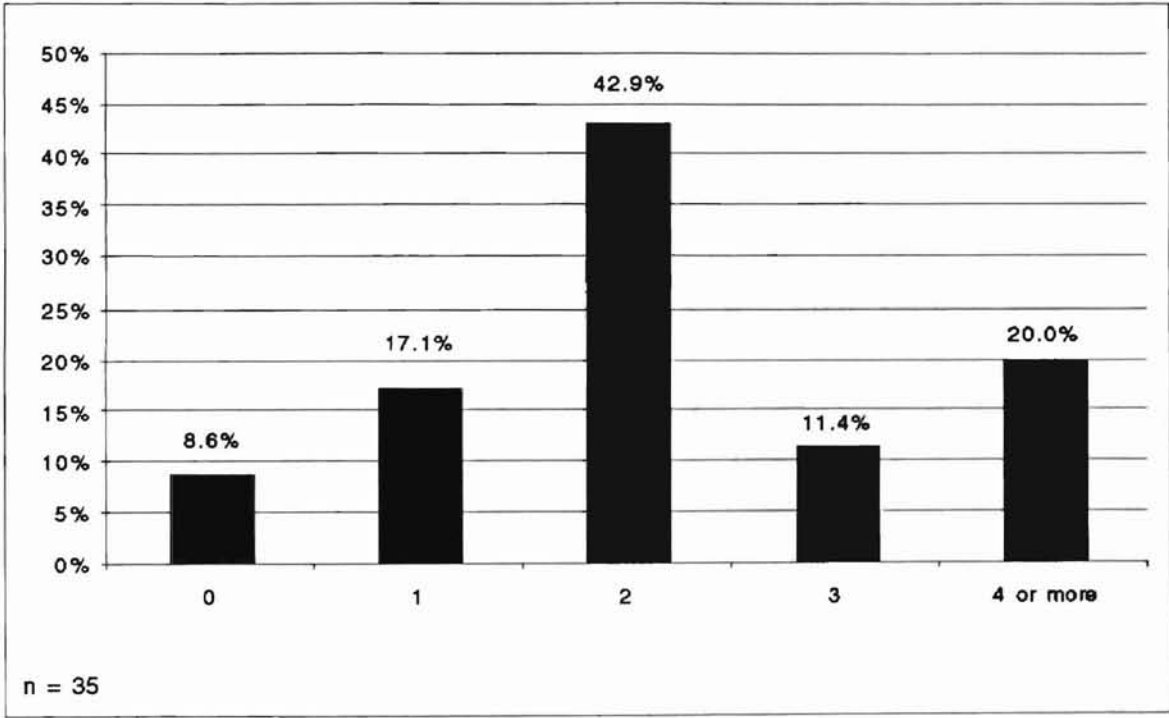


FIGURE 19 - Number Of Completed Internships By Respondents

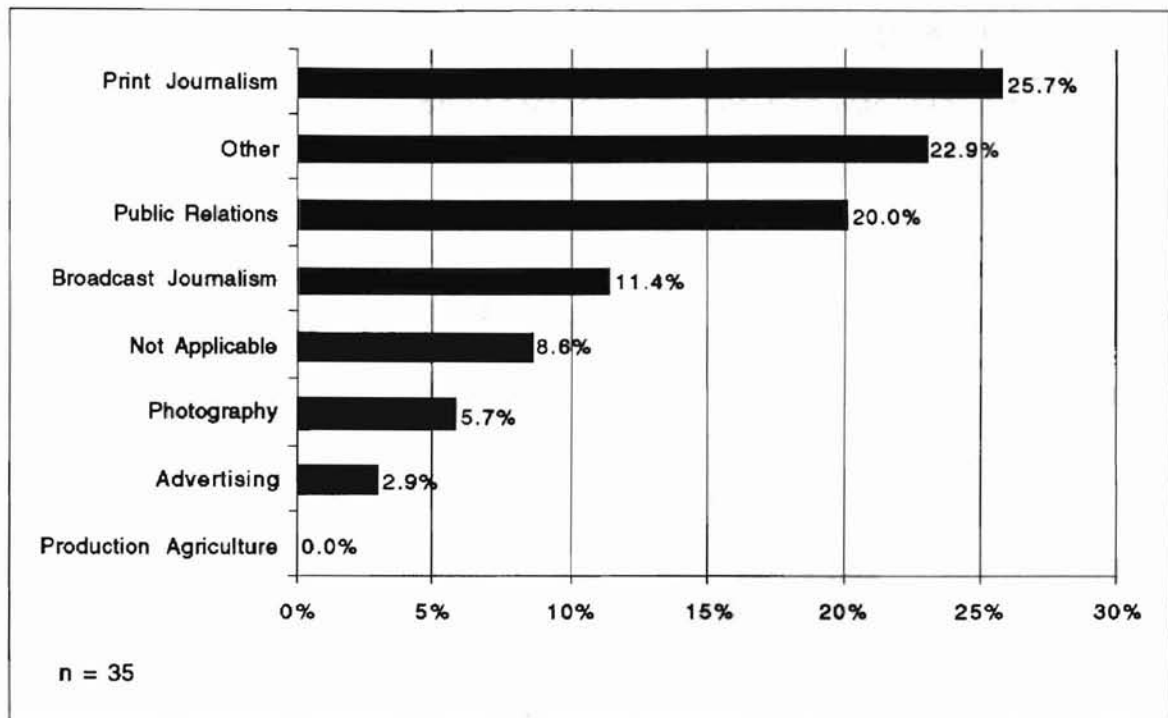


FIGURE 20 - Respondents Area Of Most Significant Internship

The third question asked respondents to indicate if their internship was agriculturally related. The largest portion of respondents (80 percent) indicated "Yes" (Figure 21). Of the remaining respondents, 11.4 percent answered "No" and 8.6 percent indicated that the question was "Not Applicable."

The final question asked respondents to rate their internship experiences as a learning tool. This question allowed respondents to mark responses ranging from "Very Valuable," "Mostly Valuable," "Somewhat Valuable," "Not Valuable," and "Not Applicable." The largest number of respondents (62.9 percent) indicated the experience was "Very Valuable" (Figure 22). "Mostly Valuable" was indicated by 20 percent of the respondents, "Somewhat Valuable"

was indicated by 5.7 percent and 2.9 percent indicated the experience was "Not Valuable." The remaining respondents said the question was "Not Applicable."

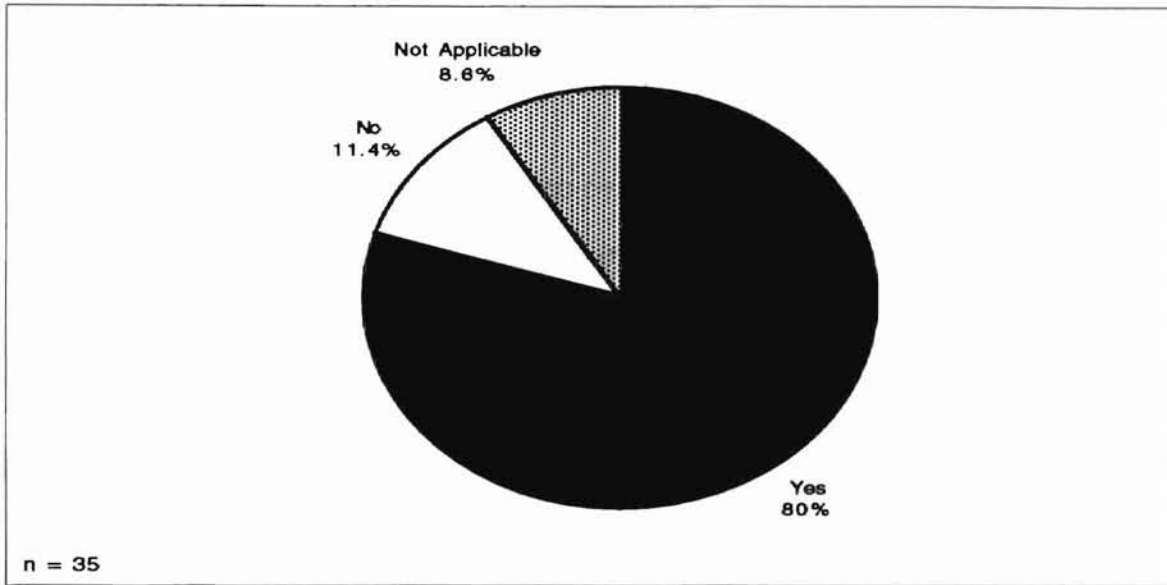


FIGURE 21 - Was Respondents Internship Agriculturally Related?

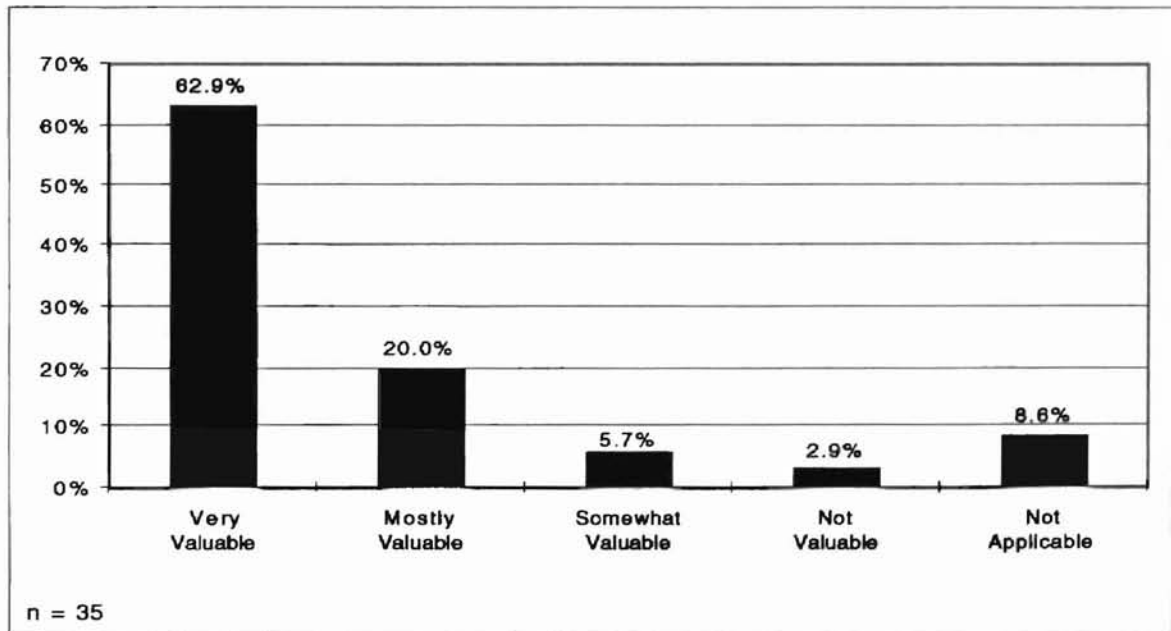


FIGURE 22 - Value Of Internship As A Learning Tool

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate perceptions of alumni of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University who graduated between the fall semester of 1992 and the summer semester of 1997. The study evaluated their perceptions regarding the educational and extracurricular programs provided at the University and determined the occupational status and pay scale for graduates of the program. The study objectives were as follows:

1. What are the occupational status and personal characteristics of graduates from the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University, Fall 1992 - Summer 1997?
2. What were the graduates' perceptions of their educational experience in the agricultural communications program while attending Oklahoma State University?
3. What are the graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum offered while they were a student in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?

4. What are the graduates' perceptions of the value of student organizations in the agricultural communications program?
5. What are the graduates' perceptions of their academic advisement in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?
6. What skills are most needed in industry for graduates of the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?
7. What are the graduates' perceptions of the value of internships to professional development?

This study was conducted by having the alumni in the sample complete the Alumni Outcomes Survey. There were 79 graduates during the study period and all were sent a copy of the survey. The administration of the survey began in November 1997. The total number of alumni responding was 35 (44%).

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 1

The findings related to the first objective of this study consisted of the personal characteristics and occupational status of graduates of the department of agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University. A description of the population based responses is given in this section.

The majority of respondents to the survey were females (60 percent) while the males accounted for 40 percent. This was relative to the population percentages of 68 percent females and 32 percent males.

The majority of respondents (80 percent) were employed full-time with only about 6 percent unemployed and the remainder pursuing a higher level of education while working.

The number of graduates employed in public relations was just over 14 percent. Just under 9 percent were involved with insurance and risk management and slightly under 6 percent were involved in one of the following categories: agricultural business; general agriculture and agricultural technologies; animal science; agricultural education, communication, and 4-H youth development; or unemployed. The remaining respondents covering a wide area of occupational situations with one respondent working in each of the following categories: agricultural production/technology, banking and finance, contract management and procurement/purchasing, marketing management and research, general business and office, general communications and communications technologies, graphic and printing communications, radio/television production and technology, data processing, general education, secondary education, administrative education, computer technology, atmospheric sciences and meteorology or a full-time student.

Most of the respondents (28.6 percent) have a current salary of \$30,000 - \$39,000. Approximately 23 percent were making \$25,000 - \$29,999. One respondent was making \$60,000 - \$69,999. Most of the respondents (57.1

percent) were making \$19,999 or less as a starting salary for their first job after college.

Overall, 54.3 percent of respondents reported having student loan debt of less than \$2,500. Also, 80 percent of respondents reported graduating from college with a grade point average of 2.5 - 3.49.

Over 40 percent of respondents want to achieve an education level of master's or other five-year degree but after high school graduation 60 percent of the respondents only wanted to attain a bachelor's or other four-year degree. Currently, 37 percent of the respondents are enrolled and pursuing a higher degree.

Conclusions Related to Objective 1

1. Most of the graduates in agricultural communications were females working full-time in public relations, insurance and risk management, agricultural business, general agriculture and agricultural technologies or animal science therefore it is concluded that a majority of agricultural communications professional and graduates are females.
2. The largest percentage of respondents were making \$25,000 - \$39,999 within five years of graduation. The largest percentage of graduates were making \$19,999 or less as a starting salary in their first job after college. Also, a large majority of graduates reported their student debt to be less than \$2,500. Therefore, it is concluded that a majority of graduates in agricultural

communications will receive an initial salary less than \$19,999 but within five years will be making more than \$30,000.

3. The largest percentage of respondents had a grade point average of 2.50 - 3.49 and more than one-third of the respondents were seeking an advanced degree. Of those pursuing an advanced degree, nearly 70 percent are enrolled in an agriculturally related degree option. Therefore, it is concluded most students in agricultural communications perform adequately in the classroom and that a significant percentage will seek an advanced degree in an agriculturally related field.

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 2

Objective two was to identify the graduates' perceptions of their educational experience while attending Oklahoma State University.

Most of the respondents (94.3 percent) indicated "Definitely Yes" or "Probably Yes" that they would enroll at Oklahoma State University if they were able to do it all over again. More than 65 percent indicated they would enroll in agricultural communications again while more than 34 percent indicated they would choose another option. More than 57 percent of graduates indicated that Oklahoma State University was an Excellent school and more than 82 percent marked that they would recommend the school to a friend without any reservations.

Conclusions Related to Objective 2

The following conclusions are based upon the graduates' perceptions of their educational experience while attending the agricultural communications department at Oklahoma State University.

1. Based on the findings, it is concluded that an overwhelming majority of the graduates would enroll at Oklahoma State University if they were to begin again.
2. About two-thirds of the graduates would pursue an agricultural communications degree at Oklahoma State University if they had to begin again. Therefore, it is concluded that the agricultural communications degree field is a positive experience for graduates but it does need to improve in order to meet the needs of the remaining third who would not pursue the degree option.
3. Overall, a large portion of the graduates indicated that Oklahoma State University was an "Excellent" school and they would recommend it to a friend without reservation. Oklahoma State University provided a positive experience for graduates.

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 3

Objective three was to identify graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum offered in the agricultural communications degree program at Oklahoma State University. The following conclusions are based upon the perceptions of the respondents.

The most beneficial courses in Journalism focused on writing according to 40 percent of the respondents while graphics design/layout and public relations where each indicated by 22.9 percent. The least beneficial courses in journalism were in broadcasting according to 42.9 percent of respondents.

The most beneficial courses in agriculture focused on agricultural communications according to 68.6 percent of the respondents. The least beneficial courses in agriculture were those focusing on entomology according to 37.1 percent of graduates and 22.9 percent indicated agronomy.

The final questions looked at the courses in general education. The most beneficial courses in general education focused on speech according to 31.5 percent of the respondents while 25.7 percent indicated English. The least beneficial courses in general education were those covering mathematics according to 28.6 percent of respondents and 17.1 percent selected biological sciences.

Conclusions Related to Objective 3

The following conclusions are based upon the graduates' perceptions regarding the curriculum taken in agricultural communications while they were attending Oklahoma State University.

1. Based on the findings, it is concluded that writing was the most important area of study in journalism for graduates. Public relations and graphics design/layout are also important.
2. The results conclude that the least beneficial area of study in journalism for alumni was broadcasting.
3. The results indicate that the most beneficial area of study in agriculture for graduates was agricultural communications.
4. Based on the findings, the least beneficial areas of study in agriculture for alumni was Entomology and Agronomy.
5. The findings indicate that the most beneficial area of study in general education for alumni was speech. English was also important.
6. Based on the results, the least beneficial area of study in general education for agricultural communications graduates is mathematics. Biological sciences, humanities and American history are also important.

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 4

Objective four was to identify graduates' perceptions of the value of student organizations in agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University.

All of the respondents (100 percent) indicated they would recommend that students take part in extra curricular activities while at Oklahoma State University.

More than 90 percent of respondents were involved in Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow, the departmental student group for agricultural communications students. More than 30 percent of respondents indicated that their involvement in Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow was "Very Valuable" in professional development. "Somewhat Valuable" was indicated by 25.7 percent and 14.3 percent indicated "Mostly Valuable."

Conclusions Related to Objective 4

The following conclusions are based upon the graduates' opinion of involvement in student organizations in agricultural communications while they were attending Oklahoma State University.

1. All graduates believe that students should be involved in extracurricular activities.

2. A large majority of alumni were members of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow.
3. The findings indicate that Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow was valuable for professional development according to alumni.

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 5

Objective five was to identify graduates' perceptions of their academic advisement while they were a part of the department of agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University.

More than 45 percent considered their academic advisement as "Excellent" or they were "Very Satisfied". "Fair" or "Poor" was the response given by more than 32 percent of graduates and "Dissatisfied" or "Very Dissatisfied" was indicated by more than 25 percent of graduates.

A strong majority of graduates (42.9 percent) indicated that a central advising unit would be useful for freshman without a declared major.

Conclusions Related to Objective 5

The following conclusions are based upon the perceptions of graduates on their academic advisement.

1. Based on the findings it is concluded that academic advisement is meeting the needs of a portion of the responding graduates. However, academic advisement was poor for a significant number of alumni.
2. The finding indicate that a central advising unit would be beneficial for freshman without a declared major.

Summary of Findings Related to Objective 6

Objective six was to identify the perceptions of graduates' about necessary skills for performance in industry that were not met during their studies at Oklahoma State University.

More than 50 percent of the graduates indicated they wished they could have received more experience in journalism. Agriculture was an area which 28 percent wanted to receive more experience.

Approximately 31 percent of graduates indicated that leadership was the one skill they use in industry which was developed at Oklahoma State University. Computer knowledge and writing were each indicated by 25.7 percent.

Conclusions Related to Objective 6

1. Based on the findings of this study, alumni indicated more training in journalism and agriculture related courses would be beneficial.

2. Graduates gained excellent leadership skills, computer knowledge and writing skills at Oklahoma State University which were beneficial in the workplace.

Summary of Finding Related to Objective 7

Objective 7 was used to determine graduates perceptions regarding internships.

A majority of graduates (91.4 percent) performed an internship during their undergraduate studies at Oklahoma State University. A large percentage (45.7 percent) completed their internship in Print Journalism or Public Relations and 80 percent of all internships were agriculturally related.

The largest majority of respondents (82.9 percent) indicated that an internship was "Very Valuable" or "Mostly Valuable".

Conclusions Related to Objective 7

1. A majority of the alumni of the department of agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University found it beneficial to perform at least one internship.
2. A majority of internships done by graduates were in public relations or print journalism.
3. Internships are a valuable learning tool according to departmental alumni.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made based upon the results of this study.

1. The academic program in agricultural communications needs to continue the current activities that were rated high in this study.
2. The academic program in agricultural communications should conduct further research to determine why approximately one-third of graduates would not want to enroll in the program if offered a chance to start over.
3. The academic program in agricultural communications should conduct further research to determine why approximately a quarter of graduates were not happy with their academic advisement.
4. Students should be advised to participate in extracurricular activities since 100 percent of the respondents in this study felt it was vital that students be involved.
5. The program should continue to do a follow-up study every five years to measure perceptions of graduates and get some key demographical information for recruitment and retention purposes.
6. Students should be advised to successfully complete at least one internship since a majority of the respondents indicated they are valuable in professional development.
7. The program should do more research in the area of curriculum to ensure that the program stays abreast of current industry demands and meets the learning needs of the student.

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APPENDIXES

**APPENDIX A
INITIAL LETTER**

November 3, 1997

Dear Agricultural Communications Graduate:

We are currently conducting a follow up study of the academic program of the department of agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University. It is necessary for the department to constantly monitor graduates in order to properly educate students for the changing occupational needs of the industry.

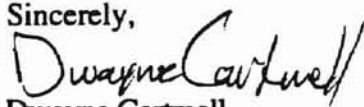
You, the graduate, are the only one who can provide us with the detailed information we need concerning the effectiveness of the educational tools you learned at Oklahoma State University. In order for the department to remain one of the best agricultural communications programs in the country it is imperative we determine graduates perceptions. Therefore, it is vital that you take a short time to fill out the questionnaire you will be receiving in the mail soon.


The questionnaire is being done through the assessment office here on campus. You should receive it within the next couple of weeks. Please take a minute and return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

We would gladly answer any questions you may have about this study. Please give us a call at (405) 744-3690 or send us e-mail at cartmel@okway.okstate.edu.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Dwayne Cartmell
Graduate Assistant


Shelly Sitton
Academic Adviser/Professor

**APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER AND SURVEY**



Office of Academic Affairs
101 Whitehurst
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-1011
405-744-5627, Fax 405-744-5495

November 10, 1997

Dear OSU Graduate:

Oklahoma State University needs a few minutes of your time to complete the attached Alumni Outcomes Survey. It is important to learn your perception of your education at OSU. Your experiences with instruction, student services, and the campus environment will help us reach our goal of continued improvement in the quality of an OSU education. Information about your experiences in the workplace will tell the administration, and department in which you earned your degree, what is needed to prepare our graduates for the twenty-first century.

All information requested will be kept completely confidential. The numbers printed on the questionnaire and personal information requested are for tracking purposes only. If you choose not to answer a question, you may leave that response space blank. **Please return the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided no later than Friday, December 5.** No postage is necessary.

This is an exciting time at Oklahoma State University. Please accept our thanks for being a part of it by giving us the benefit of your experiences as an OSU graduate.

Best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marvin S. Keener".

Marvin S. Keener
Executive Vice President

MSK:kw

The Campaign for OSU



INSTRUCTIONS

FOR COMPLETING *THE ALUMNI OUTCOMES SURVEY*

Because the *Alumni Outcomes Survey* is being customized for certain academic departments at Oklahoma State University, please note the following changes:

1. For **Section I--G only**, use the following three-digit major code numbers to show the degree program\department in which you earned your undergraduate degree:

451----Accounting
412----Agricultural Economics
423----Agricultural Education, Communications & 4-H Youth Development
416----Animal Science
785----Apparel Design and Merchandising
781----Child Development
667----Construction Management Technology
852----Economics and Legal Studies
789----Family Relations
452----Finance
420----Forestry
453----General Business Administration
839----Geology
601----Health, Physical Education and Leisure Sciences
456----Hotel and Restaurant Management
788----Interior Design
458----Management
462----Management Science & Information Systems
464----Marketing
810----Mathematics
600----Music/Music Education
787----Nutritional Sciences
822----Philosophy
858----Political Sciences
590----Teacher Education (other than Music Education)

2. **For all other sections requiring a major code, please use the yellow insert sheet labeled "List of College Majors and Occupational Choices."**
3. Additional questions designed to improve the quality of education at Oklahoma State University are included on one or more insert sheets. Please mark your responses to these questions in **Section VII--Additional Questions**. Everyone will receive questions 1-10. Questions numbered 11 and above, if included in your packet, solicit information useful to the department in which you earned your undergraduate degree.

List of College Majors and Occupational Choices

Since we could not list all possible occupations and programs of study, you may not be able to find an exact description of the one that applies to you. If that is the case, you should select a general area—for example, 410 (Agricultural Fields), 620 (Engineering Fields), 920 (Visual and Performing Arts). If you are completely undecided about your answer, mark 400.

- 400 Undecided
- 410 **AGRICULTURE & AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGIES**, General
 411 Agricultural Business
 412 Agricultural Economics
 413 Agricultural Mechanics
 414 Agricultural Production/Technology
 415 Agronomy (e.g., field crop management, soils)
 416 Animal Sciences (e.g., animal breeding, dairy, poultry)
 417 Farm and Ranch Management
 418 Fish, Game, and Wildlife Management
 419 Food Sciences/Technology
 420 Forestry (pre-forestry) and Related Sciences
 421 Horticulture/Ornamental Horticulture
 422 Natural Resources (air, water, soil, etc.) Management
- 430 **ARCHITECTURE & ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN**, General
 431 Architectural Drafting
 432 Architecture (pre-architecture)
 433 Building Construction/Construction Science
 434 City, Community, and Regional Planning
 435 Environmental Design
 436 Interior Design
 437 Landscape Architecture
- 450 **BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT**, General
 451 Accounting
 452 Banking and Finance
 453 Business Administration and Management
 454 Business Economics
 455 Contract Management & Procurement/Purchasing
 456 Hotel/Motel/Restaurant Management
 457 Human Resources Development/Training
 458 Institutional Management
 459 Insurance and Risk Management
 460 International Business/Management
 461 Labor/Industrial Relations
 462 Management Information Systems
 463 Management Science
 464 Marketing Management and Research
 465 Organizational Behavior
 466 Personnel Management
 467 Real Estate
 468 Small Business Management/Ownership
 469 Trade and Industrial Supervision and Management
 470 Transportation Management
- 480 **BUSINESS AND OFFICE**, General
 481 Bookkeeping
 482 Business Data Processing/Computer Operation
 483 Court Reporting
 484 Office Supervision and Management
 485 Secretarial (including executive, legal, medical)
 486 Typing and General Office
 487 Word Processing
- 510 **MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION**, General
 511 Fashion Merchandising
 512 Retailing and Sales
 513 Travel Services and Tourism
- 520 **COMMUNICATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS TECH.**, General
 521 Advertising
 522 Commercial Art
 523 Graphic and Printing Communications
 524 Journalism
 525 Photographic/Motion Picture Technology
 526 Public Relations
 527 Radio/Television Broadcasting
 528 Radio/Television Production and Technology
- 540 **COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL SERVICES**, General
 541 Corrections
 542 Cosmetology/Barbering
 543 Criminal Justice/Criminology
- 544 Fire Protection/Fire Control & Safety Technology
 545 Funeral Services/Mortuary Science
 546 Law Enforcement and Administration
 547 Library Science/Library Assisting
 548 Military Science/Technology
 549 Parks and Recreation
 550 Public Administration
 551 Public Affairs
 552 Social Work
- 560 **COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCES**, General
 561 Computer Programming
 562 Computer Science
 563 Data Processing
 564 Information Sciences and Systems
 565 Math/Computer Science
- 570 **CROSS-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES**, General
 571 Area and Ethnic Studies (e.g., Latin American studies, Afro-American studies)
 572 Liberal/General Studies
 573 Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies (e.g., peace studies, women's studies)
- 580 **EDUCATION**, General
 581 Adult and Continuing Education
 582 Education Administration
 583 Elementary Education
 584 Junior High/Middle School Education
 585 Pre-elementary (early childhood) Education
 586 Secondary Education
 587 Student Counseling
 588 Teacher Aide
- 590 **TEACHER EDUCATION**, General
 591 Agricultural Education
 592 Art Education
 593 Business Education
 594 English Education
 595 Foreign Languages Education
 596 Health Education
 597 Home Economics Education
 598 Industrial Arts Education
 599 Mathematics Education
 600 Music Education
 601 Physical Education
 602 Science Education
 603 Social Studies/Social Sciences Education
 604 Special Education (e.g., learning disabled, gifted)
 605 Speech Correction Education
 606 Teaching English as a Second Language
 607 Technical/Trade and Industrial Education
 608 Education, Other Subject Area
- 620 **ENGINEERING (PRE-ENGINEERING)**, General
 621 Aerospace, Aeronautical & Astronautical Engineering
 622 Agricultural Engineering
 623 Architectural Engineering
 624 Bioengineering and Biomedical Engineering
 625 Ceramic Engineering
 626 Chemical Engineering
 627 Civil Engineering
 628 Computer Engineering
 629 Construction Engineering/Construction Management
 630 Electrical, Electronics & Communications Engineering
 631 Engineering Management
 632 Engineering Physics
 633 Engineering Science
 634 Environmental Health Engineering
 635 Geological and Geophysical Engineering
 636 Industrial Engineering
 637 Materials Engineering
 638 Mechanical Engineering

(continued on reverse side)

- 639 Metallurgical Engineering
640 Mining and Mineral Engineering
641 Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering
642 Nuclear Engineering
643 Ocean Engineering
644 Petroleum Engineering
645 Systems Engineering
- 660 **ENGINEERING-RELATED TECHNOLOGIES, General**
661 Aeronautical Technology
662 Air Conditioning, Heating & Refrigeration Tech.
663 Architectural Design
664 Biomedical Equipment Technology
665 Civil Technology
666 Computer Technology
667 Construction Technology
668 Drafting and Design Technology
669 Electrical Technology
670 Electronic Technology
671 Electromechanical Instrumentation & Maintenance Tech.
672 Environmental Control Technology
673 Industrial Production Technology
674 Laser Electro-Optic Technology
675 Manufacturing Technology
676 Mechanical Design Technology
677 Mining and Petroleum Technology
678 Occupational Safety & Health Technology
679 Surveying and Mapping Technology
680 Engineering-Related Technologies, Other
- 720 **FOREIGN LANGUAGES, General**
721 Asiatic Languages (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
722 Classical Languages (e.g., Greek, Latin)
723 French
724 German
725 Italian
726 Middle Eastern Languages (e.g., Arabic, Hebrew)
727 Russian
728 Spanish
729 Foreign Languages, Other
- 740 **HEALTH SCIENCES & ALLIED HEALTH FIELDS, General**
741 Chiropractic (pre-chiropractic)
742 Dental Assisting
743 Dental Hygiene
744 Dental Laboratory/Technology
745 Dentistry (pre-dentistry)
746 Emergency Medical Technology-Ambulance/Paramedic
747 Health Care Administration
748 Medical/Surgical Assisting
749 Medical Laboratory/Technology
750 Medical Records Administration/Technology
751 Medicine (pre-medicine)
752 Mental Health & Human Services/Technology
753 Nuclear Medical Technology
754 Nursing (practical nursing)
755 Nursing (registered/BSN)
756 Occupational Therapy/Assisting
757 Optometry (pre-optometry)
758 Pharmacy (pre-pharmacy)
759 Physician Assisting
760 Physical Therapy/Assisting
761 Radiology/Radiologic Technology
762 Recreational/Art/Music Therapy
763 Respiratory Therapy/Technology
764 Speech Pathology/Audiology
765 Veterinarian Assisting
766 Veterinary Medicine (pre-veterinary medicine)
- 780 **HOME ECONOMICS, General**
781 Child Development, Care, and Guidance
782 Child Care Aide/Assisting
783 Culinary Arts (chef/cook)
784 Family/Consumer Resource Management
785 Fashion Design
786 Food Production, Management, and Services
787 Food Sciences & Human Nutrition/Dietetics
788 Human Environment and Housing
789 Individual and Family Development
790 Textiles and Clothing
- 800 **LETTERS, General**
801 Classics
802 Comparative Literature
803 Creative Writing
804 English, General
805 Linguistics
806 Literature, English/American
807 Speech, Debate, and Forensics
- 810 **MATHEMATICS, General**
811 Actuarial Sciences
812 Applied Mathematics
813 Statistics
- 820 **PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, & THEOLOGY, General**
821 Bible Studies
822 Philosophy
823 Religion
824 Religious Education
825 Religious Music
826 Theology
- 830 **SCIENCES (BIOLOGICAL & PHYSICAL), General**
831 Astronomy
832 Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology
833 Biochemistry and Biophysics
834 Biology
835 Botany
836 Chemistry
837 Earth Science
838 Ecology
839 Geology
840 Microbiology
841 Oceanography
842 Physics
843 Zoology
- 850 **SOCIAL SCIENCES, General**
851 Anthropology
852 Economics
853 Geography
854 History
855 International Relations
856 Law (pre-law)
857 Paralegal/Legal Assisting
858 Political Science/Government
859 Psychology
860 Sociology
861 Urban Studies
- 870 **TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL, General**
871 Aircraft Mechanics
872 Airplane Piloting and Navigation
873 Automotive Body Repair
874 Automotive Mechanics and Technology
875 Aviation Management
876 Computer Electronics/Repair
877 Construction Trades and Carpentry
878 Diesel Engine Mechanics and Technology
879 Drafting
880 Electrical & Electronics Equipment Repair
881 Heating, Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Mechanics
882 Machine Tool Operation/Machine Shop
883 Mechanical Drafting
884 Welding and Welding Technology
- 920 **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS, General**
921 Applied Design/Crafts (e.g., ceramics, glass, jewelry, weaving)
922 Art (e.g., painting, drawing, sculpture)
923 Art History and Appreciation
924 Cinematography/Film/Video
925 Dance
926 Design, General
927 Dramatic Arts
928 Fine Arts, General
929 Graphic Arts Technology
930 Graphic Design
931 Music (liberal arts)
932 Music Performance
933 Music Theory and Composition
934 Photography

Please mark your responses to these questions in the space labeled "Section VII—Additional Questions":

For questions 1-10, please use this scale:

a = strongly agree

b = agree

c = neutral

d = disagree

e = strongly disagree

f = no experience with this topic or service

1. I found the academic environment and expectations at Oklahoma State University more demanding than I expected as a new student.
2. My high school mathematics classes adequately prepared me for mathematics courses at Oklahoma State University.
3. My high school writing experiences adequately prepared me for writing in classes at Oklahoma State University.
4. More emphasis on writing in classes at Oklahoma State University would have better prepared me for the work place.
5. Training in oral communications should be required of all undergraduate students at Oklahoma State University.
6. I believe summer enrollment clinics at Oklahoma State University should be more than one day long to cover all the information a new freshman needs to be successful there.
7. I believe all new freshmen without majors should be assigned to a central advising unit.
8. As a freshman at Oklahoma State University, I had adequate preparation and information for choosing a major.
9. I wish the summer enrollment clinic and orientation had included more information about how to do my best in my classes.
10. I believe no student at Oklahoma State University should choose a major before he or she begins the sophomore year.

Additional questions starting with number 11 may follow on the next page. These will be from the academic department at OSU in which you earned your degree. Please take time to answer these questions. Your insight and experience are very important in improving degree programs offered by your department.

Questions for Graduates of Agricultural Journalism and Agricultural Communications.
Please remember to mark only ONE answer per question.

- 11) How many internships did you complete as an Oklahoma State University student?
a) 0
b) 1
c) 2
d) 3
e) 4 or more
- 12) What area provided your most significant internship?
a) Public Relations
b) Advertising
c) Broadcast Journalism
d) Print Journalism
e) Photography
f) Production Agriculture
g) Other
h) Not Applicable
- 13) Was your internship agriculturally related?
a) Yes
b) No
c) Not Applicable
- 14) How valuable was your internship experience as a learning tool?
a) Very Valuable
b) Mostly Valuable
c) Somewhat Valuable
d) Not Valuable
e) Not Applicable
- 15) Were you a member of Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow?
a) Yes
b) No
- 16) Were you a member of other college clubs?
a) Yes
b) No
- 17) How valuable was ACT in your professional development?
a) Very Valuable
b) Mostly Valuable
c) Somewhat Valuable
d) Not Valuable
e) Not Applicable
- 18) Do you recommend students take part in extra curricular activities?
a) Yes
b) No
- 19) Which subject area in journalism was most beneficial for your career field?
a) Public Relations
b) Writing
c) Graphic Design & Layout
d) Photography
e) Broadcasting
f) Advertising
g) Editing
h) Other
- 20) Which subject area in agriculture was most beneficial for your career field?
a) Animal Science
b) Agronomy
c) Agricultural Economics
d) Agricultural Education
e) Agricultural Communications
f) Horticulture
g) Entomology
h) Other

- 21) Which subject area in general education was most beneficial for your career field?
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| a) Physical Sciences | f) American Government |
| b) Biological Sciences | g) Mathematics |
| c) English | h) Humanities |
| d) Speech | i) Social Sciences (Sociology, Psychology) |
| e) American History | j) Other |
- 22) Which subject area in journalism was least beneficial for your career field?
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| a) Public Relations | e) Broadcasting |
| b) Writing | f) Advertising |
| c) Graphic Design & Layout | g) Editing |
| d) Photography | h) Other |
- 23) Which subject area in agriculture was least beneficial for your career field?
- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a) Animal Science | e) Agricultural Communications |
| b) Agronomy | f) Horticulture |
| c) Agricultural Economics | g) Entomology |
| d) Agricultural Education | h) Other |
- 24) Which subject area in general education was least beneficial for your career field?
- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| a) Physical Sciences | f) American Government |
| b) Biological Sciences | g) Mathematics |
| c) English | h) Humanities |
| d) Speech | i) Social Sciences (Sociology, Psychology) |
| e) American History | j) Other |
- 25) In which one area of study do you most wish you could have received more experience while attending Oklahoma State University?
- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| a) Agriculture | c) General Education |
| b) Journalism | d) None |
- 26) Which skill did you develop at the university that is the most important in your job today?
- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| a) Writing | e) Editing |
| b) Photography | f) Leadership |
| c) Computer Knowledge | g) Other |
| d) Design and Layout | |
- 27) How would you rate your academic advisement while attending Oklahoma State University?
- | | |
|--------------|---------|
| a) Excellent | c) Fair |
| b) Good | d) Poor |
- 28) If you were starting college again, would you enroll in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?
- | | |
|--------|-------|
| a) Yes | b) No |
|--------|-------|

Please answer the following open-ended question in section VIII — Comments & Suggestions.

What are your recommendations for change in the agricultural communications program at Oklahoma State University?

**APPENDIX C
FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD**

Dear OSU Student,

If you have returned the *Alumni Outcomes Survey* we mailed you in November, **THANK YOU!** If you have not, please complete and return it as soon as possible. No postage is necessary. Your evaluation of your OSU experience is truly valuable. Your comments will be used to improve the program in which you earned your degree and the overall quality of an OSU education.

If you have misplaced your copy of the survey, please e-mail wardem@okway.okstate.edu or call (405) 744-6687.

Again, thank you.

Mary Jane Warde
Mary Jane Warde
Manager, University Assessment

APPENDIX D
IRB APPROVAL FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: March 9, 1998

IRB #: AG-98-034

Proposal Title: A FOLLOW-UP OF THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS GRADUATES AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL 1992-SUMMER 1997

Principal Investigator(s): James Key, David Dwayne Cartmell, II

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

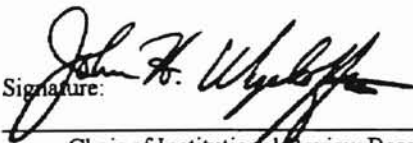
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT
NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE
APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR
PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE
SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:



Chair of Institutional Review Board

cc: David Dwayne Cartmell, II

Date: March 10, 1998

2

VITA

David Dwayne Cartmell II

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A FOLLOW-UP OF AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS
GRADUATES AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL 1992 -
SUMMER 1997

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, on August 1, 1970, the son
of David and Judy Cartmell.

Education: Graduated from Pawnee High School, Pawnee, Oklahoma, in
May 1988; received a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural
Economics and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural
Communications from Oklahoma State University at Stillwater,
Oklahoma, in July 1993 and May 1994, respectively. Completed the
requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in
Agricultural Education and emphasis in Agricultural
Communications at Oklahoma State University in May 1998.

Experience: Raised on a farm near Pawnee, Oklahoma; employed as a
farm laborer during the summers; employed in various jobs during
my undergraduate at Oklahoma State University; employed as
associate broadcaster, Quinstar Communications Network, 1995 -
1996; employed as editor, Rancher-Farmer News, 1996 - 1997;
employed as a graduate research assistant/editor, Office of
University Research Services, and graduate teaching assistant,
Department of Agricultural Education, Communications and 4-H
Youth Development, 1997 to present.

Professional Memberships: National Agricultural Communicators of
Tomorrow; Kappa Kappa Psi