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## *A Survey of Graduating Graduate Students\* at Mason*

### *How Satisfied are They?*

*\*Note.* Law students were included in the survey but represent less than 1% of respondents. See section IV. of this report for more information on respondents.

## I. Introduction

Working cooperatively with academic deans, The Office of Institutional Assessment (OIA) surveyed George Mason's 1997-'98 graduating law and graduate students. Students either completed the survey on-line, as part of their graduation process, or received copies of the questionnaire from their academic departments. This survey represents a first campus-wide attempt to understand the experiences of graduate and law students and Institutional Assessment welcomes comments and suggestions for future surveys.

## II. Satisfaction With Mason

### Departmental Experiences

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with four aspects of their educational experience in their major department. Ninety-three percent indicated they were "somewhat" or "very" satisfied with educational quality. Over four-fifths were satisfied with course availability (81%) and advising (81%), while 72% were satisfied with mentoring.

## III. Educational Experiences At Mason

Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement ("strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") with the following statements regarding their educational experience at Mason. Large proportions, in some cases, 90% or more, of students "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with a list of nine positive statements about their education at Mason. However, in all cases, fewer than 50% of students "strongly agreed" with any statement. Students were least likely to "strongly agree" that they were satisfied with the library holdings in their field/area of study (20%) and that their advisor met with them at appropriate intervals to discuss their work (24%).

Statements Regarding Graduate Education at Mason	<i>Strongly Agree</i> (%)	<i>Agree</i> (%)	<i>Total</i> (%)
My department provided an intellectually stimulating atmosphere.	48	45	93%
Faculty assigned to graduate courses were well qualified to teach these courses.	45	46	91%
I would recommend my department/ grad. program to prospective students.	46	45	91%
Faculty members in my department were interested in the welfare and professional development of graduate students.	42	49	91%

I believe that my program provided me with satisfactory preparation for my future career.	40	50	90%
There was satisfactory communication between faculty and graduate students in my department.	32	50	82%
I am satisfied with the computer facilities available to graduate students.	29	45	74%
I am satisfied with the library holdings for my field/area of study.	20	54	74%
My advisor and I met at appropriate intervals to discuss my work.	24	38	62%

#### IV. Who Responded to This Survey?

Law students comprised only 1% of respondents but earned 8% of the graduate and professional degrees conferred at Mason in 1997-98. Survey respondents earning Master's degrees (89%) are close to their proportions in the graduating population (86%). Respondents earning doctoral degrees represent 9% of respondents (8% Ph.D.'s and 1% D.A.'s); they represent 5% of the graduates.

#### V. Survey Process and Response Rate

The response rate for the survey is very low and the results should be interpreted with caution. A total of 476 post-baccalaureate students responded to the survey-- 23% of the fall 1997, spring and summer 1998 graduates (n=2,054). Due to the low response rate among law students (n=5), however, these results are more reflective of masters' and doctoral students than all post-baccalaureate students. We anticipate a much higher response rate with the 1998-99 graduating class as these graduates are required to complete the survey in order to receive their diploma.

#### VI. What Choice Was Mason?

Mason's post-baccalaureate students are more likely than Mason's undergraduate students to say that Mason was their first choice among the schools they considered attending. While approximately 50% of freshmen say Mason was a first choice, 80% of post-baccalaureate students report this.

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