

Graduating Senior Survey 2014: Selected Results on Scholarly and Creative Activities

Office of Institutional Assessment – George Mason University

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The Graduating Senior Survey (GSS) was administered to 4,883 seniors in the 2014 academic year (summer and fall 2013, spring 2014), with a response rate of 42%. This document presents selected results related to scholarly and creative activities. The full GSS 2014 Report will soon be available on the Office of Institutional Assessment website: assessment.gmu.edu.

Awareness of Students as Scholars

Survey results reveal improvement in student awareness of the *Students as Scholars* initiative over time: 21% of the 2014 respondents reported being very familiar with or having heard of the initiative compared to 14% of the 2012 cohort (Table 1).

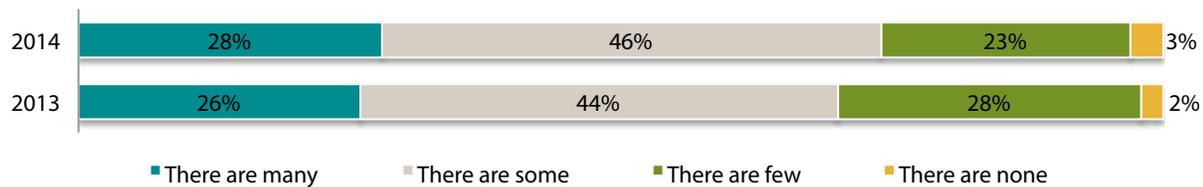
Table 1. Student Familiarity with *Students as Scholars*, 2012 – 2014

<i>Have you heard of Mason’s Students as Scholars: Fostering a culture of student scholarship?</i>	Yes, I am very familiar with it	Yes, I have heard of it	Maybe, I am not sure	No, I haven’t heard of it
2012	3%	11%	13%	73%
2013	3%	9%	11%	77%
2014	6%	15%	18%	60%

Opportunities for Research or Creative Activities

Student perceptions of research opportunities improved in 2014 compared to the previous year: 74% of the 2014 respondents reported there are many or some opportunities for them to participate in research or creative activities/projects outside regular course assignments compared to 70% in 2013 (Figure 1).

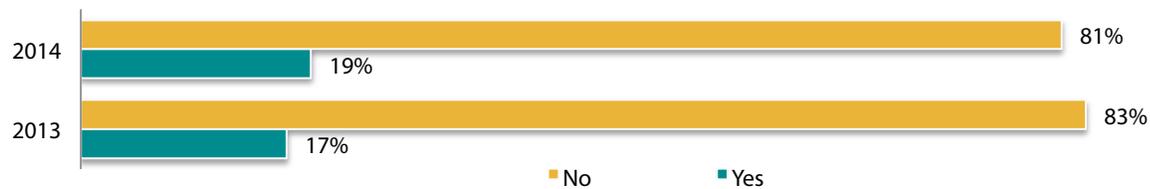
Figure 1. Perceived Research Opportunities for Undergraduate Students Outside of Course Requirements



Doing Research or Creative Projects

A larger percentage of respondents in 2014 reported having done or planning to do research with a faculty member outside of course assignments than their 2013 peers: 19% vs. 17% (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Students Doing Research with Faculty Outside of Course Requirements



Sharing Research or Creative Projects

For those who shared their research or creative products, the most frequently cited format was presenting a paper or poster at a Mason event (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondents Sharing Research Results Outside of Class, 2013-2014

<i>While at Mason, did you share your research or creative project outside of class in the following ways? ¹</i>	2013 (n=1,223) ²	2014 (n=2,050)
I presented a paper or poster at a Mason event	11%	12%
I presented a paper or poster at an off-campus conference	5%	6%
I participated in a recital or performance	6%	4%
I participated in an event that showcased my artwork or design project	5%	5%
I participated in an event that exhibited or demonstrated my invention or engineering project	2%	2%
Other	5%	4%
I did not present anything outside of class	72%	72%

¹Students could select multiple categories so percentages may total more than 100

²Based only on spring 2013 data

Participation in Undergraduate Research and Self-Report Competence

Seniors who had done or planned to do research or creative activity/projects with a Mason faculty member reported a significantly higher level of contribution of the major to their competence in five of the eight areas measured on the survey (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean Comparison of Self-Reported Competence Contributed by the Major and Participation in Research

<i>Self-Reported Competence Contributed by the Major</i>	<i>Have done or plan to do research or a creative activity/project with Mason faculty</i>			
	Yes (n=390)	No (n=1,617)	Sig.	E.S.
Critical thinking and analysis	3.52	3.46		
Connecting concepts across disciplines	3.35	3.28		
Conducting research within your field/major	3.43	3.17	***	0.32
Writing within your field/major	3.47	3.31	***	0.22
Identifying, locating, evaluating, & managing info. resources within your field/major	3.38	3.24	**	0.18
Applying the ideas of your field/major outside of the classroom	3.32	3.22	*	0.13
Applying ethics within your field/major	3.17	3.19		
Identifying and assessing the validity of assumptions within your field/major	3.35	3.24	*	0.15

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, *t*-test (two-tailed), *E.S.*=Effect Size, small: 0.20, medium: 0.50, large: 0.80 (criteria for *t*-test, Cohen, 1988)

Student Satisfaction

Student satisfaction is related to participation in undergraduate research. Seniors who had done or planned to do research or creative work with a Mason faculty member reported a significantly higher level of satisfaction on all four measures than those who had not done or didn't plan to do these activities (Table 4).

Table 4. Satisfaction in Relation to Participation in Research Activity

<i>How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your education at Mason? ¹</i>	<i>Have done or plan to do research or a creative activity/project with Mason faculty</i>			
	Yes (n=385)	No (n=1,607)	Sig.	E.S.
Sense of Belonging	3.1	2.9	*	.14
Overall Satisfaction	3.2	3.1	**	.20
Education Received in the Major	3.4	3.3	*	.10
Involvement in Campus Activities	2.9	2.7	***	.29

¹Means are based on the responses "very satisfied" and "satisfied" combined.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, *t*-test (two-tailed), *E.S.*=Effect Size, small: 0.20, medium: 0.50, large: 0.80 (criteria for *t*-test, Cohen, 1988)