

1999 Earlham College Alumni Survey of the Classes of 1993 and 1994

Each year, Earlham College Alumni are requested to participate in a multi-dimensional survey. The 1999 survey was distributed to a total of 653 alumni, 333 from the class of 1993 and 320 from the class of 1994. The following tables and discussions reflect the views of the 134 surveys that were returned (sixty-two '93 graduates, sixty-seven '94 graduates and 5 with an unknown graduation year). The distribution of majors completing the survey was consistent with the percentages usually graduating in each major. No majors were under or over-represented. This report focuses specifically on current graduate school and employment information, as well as attitudes toward Earlham College and their Earlham library experiences.

Table 1. Percentages of alumni working or attending graduate school.

Current Situation	%
Working Full-Time (35+ hours)	59
Attending Graduate School Full-Time	17
Graduate School and Working	17
Working Part-Time	3
Attending Graduate School Part-Time	1
Other	3

Clearly, five to six years after graduation, more alumni are working full-time than attending graduate school. More specifically, 59% of alumni reported full-time working status, while a total of 18% reported either part time or full-time enrollment in graduate school. Seventeen percent of alumni are attending graduate programs and working in addition to school. Only 3% of graduates are not working or attending graduate school ("other" category).

Part One: Graduate School Information

Table 2. Percentages of alumni who have received or are currently working toward a graduate degree.

First Degree	Second Degree	Third Degree
73	21	1.5

An impressive number of alumni have been awarded or are working on obtaining graduate degrees. Seventy-three percent of alumni have received or are currently working toward obtaining a graduate degree. Another 21% are working toward (or have received) a second degree. A total of 129 degrees have been awarded (or are currently in progress) to the respondents of the survey. One and one half percent of the graduates are working toward a third advanced degree.

Of the alumni who have not yet received a graduate degree (or of those who have already obtained one and are planning a second), a large majority have plans to get a degree in the future (80%). Nineteen percent do not have plans to get an advanced degree.

Table 3. Subject areas of degrees awarded or in progress (in percentages).

Subject Area	%
Natural/Physical Sciences	17
Law	11
Education	10
English	9
Psychology	9
History/Politics	9
Health Administration/Nursing	9
Library and Information Sciences	7
Religion/Theology	6
Finance/Economics	4
Languages	4
Other	6

Of all the degrees awarded or in progress, the most frequently studied subject areas are the natural and physical sciences. This category includes (but is not limited to) individuals working on ecology and evolutionary biology, cell biology, molecular genetics and geology. Also popular are graduate programs in law, English, education, psychology, history/politics and health administration or nursing. Studies in library and information sciences also received moderate enrollment.

Table 4. Percentages of alumni who attended a graduate school of their top three choices and received financial aid for graduate study.

Question	Yes	No
Are you attending/did you attend a school that was one of your top three choices?	91	8
Are you receiving/did you receive financial aid for graduate study?	76	24

Most of the alumni who have attended graduate school were admitted to one of their top three choice schools (91%). Similarly, a substantial portion (76%) of graduates received financial aid for graduate study.

Part Two: Employment Information

Table 5. Breakdown of alumni salaries (in percentages).

Income	%
Less than \$15,000	10
\$15,000-\$19,999	4
\$20,000-\$24,999	8
\$25,000-\$29,999	13
\$30,000-\$34,999	13
\$35,000-\$39,999	12
\$40,000-\$44,999	5
\$45,000-\$49,999	2
\$50,000-\$54,999	2
\$55,000-\$59,999	2
Over \$60,000	9

Overall, most graduates are earning an annual salary between \$20,000 and \$40,000. A moderate percentage of alumni reported incomes of less than \$15,000. Only small percentages of the groups reported incomes between \$45,000 and \$60,000 per year, with a slight increase in salary reporting of \$60,000 or more.

Table 6. Response percentages and mean* ratings of current job satisfaction (6 = Very Positive and 1 = Very Negative).

6	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
18	38	20	5	1	0	4.83

* The mean value was calculated for each item using the following numerical range: Very Positive=6 to Very Negative=1. "No responses" were not included in the mean calculations.

Most alumni reported moderate to high job satisfaction. Seventy-six percent of graduates indicated that they were satisfied with their jobs (responses of 4, 5 and 6 on the scale). Only 6% of alumni reported any level of dissatisfaction (responses of 3, 2 and 1 on the scale). Mean satisfaction ratings substantiate this trend toward high satisfaction.

Part Three: Attitudes Toward Earlham College

Table 7. Percent responses and mean* ratings of current, general attitudes toward Earlham College today (6 = Very Positive and 1 = Very Negative).

6	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
51	37	11	0	1	0	5.38

* The mean value was calculated for each item using the following numerical range: Very Positive=6 to Very Negative=1. "No responses" were not included in the mean calculations.

Overwhelmingly, most graduates rated their current attitudes toward Earlham as positive. Fifty-one percent of alumni rated their current attitude toward the college as "very positive." Nearly all graduates had an overall positive attitude toward the college (responses of 4, 5 and 6 on the scale). Only 1% percent of alumni reported negative feelings toward the college (response category 2). The mean ratings of current attitudes, accordingly, lean toward "very positive."

Table 8. Percent responses and mean* ratings of how well Earlham experiences met alumni needs (6 = Very Well and 1 = Very Poorly).

Area	6	5	4	3	2	1	Mean
Intellectual Growth	66	29	3	1	0	0	5.62
Personal Growth	63	31	6	0	0	0	5.57
Preparation for Graduate Study	45	28	15	3	2	0	5.21
Preparation for Career	24	22	28	17	5	2	4.38

* Mean values were calculated for each item using the following numerical range: Very Well=6 to Very Poorly=1. "No responses" were not included in the mean calculations.

In general, alumni reported that their Earlham College experiences met their needs well in several areas. For example, a majority of the alumni reported that Earlham met their intellectual growth needs "very well" (66%). Most alumni responded similarly concerning their personal growth needs, with 63% responding "very well." Ratings of how well prepared alumni felt for graduate study and careers were slightly lower. Forty-five percent of graduates reported feeling very prepared for graduate study. Alumni offered mixed responses about how well they felt prepared for their careers. Only 24% of graduates felt Earlham had prepared them "very well" for their careers. Small percentages of alumni actually reported feeling poorly to very poorly prepared for their careers.

Mean ratings lean strongly toward "very well" in response to the question of how well Earlham met their intellectual and personal growth needs. The means were slightly lower for how prepared alumni felt for graduate study. Lower ratings were also recorded for career preparation.

Table 9. Percentages of times alumni were in contact with other Earlham alumni and Earlham faculty.

Condition	None	1-5 times	6-10 times	11-20 times	21+ times
Social	2	19	13	11	53
Business Related	46	37	5	2	6
Earlham-Sponsored Activity	46	40	7	2	2
Earlham Faculty	11	54	24	5	6

These results indicate that most alumni maintain some contact with other Earlham alumni, especially in a social context. Over 50% of alumni kept in fairly frequent contact with other alumni (21+ times). Other alumni reported occasional interaction, and only 2% of the graduates reported no social interaction with other alumni. In a business setting, most alumni had little to no contact (less than 5 times in the past year) with other graduates (83% total). Only a handful of individuals reported regular or frequent interaction with other Earlham alumni in the context of work. Similarly, few alumni had extensive contact with other alumni at Earlham-sponsored activities, but about half for each group reported some contact through these activities. Forty-six percent of the graduates reported having no contact with other alumni at Earlham-sponsored activities.

In terms of how frequently alumni have been in contact with Earlham faculty members, most alumni reported contact with between 1 and 5 times (54%). Approximately one-quarter of alumni reported contact between 6-10 times. Only six percent of graduates have been in contact with Earlham faculty more than 21 times. Eleven percent reported no contact with faculty members.

Part Four: Attitudes Toward Library Experiences

Table 10. Percentages of reported times alumni used a library at a place of work/study or in the local community for recreational/personal purposes, in the past year.

Purpose	None	1-5 times	6-10 times	11-20 times	21+ times
Work/Study	15	19	7	13	40
Recreation/Personal	16	28	16	10	28

Overall, the largest percentages of alumni used a library over 21+ times in the past year for work or study. Reported library use for recreational and personal purposes was lower, at 28%. The second highest percentage of reported use was between 1-5 times. As for whether alumni use the library more at their place of work/study or for personal purposes, a general trend toward use at work/study is evident.

Table 11. Percent and mean satisfaction ratings for various aspects of the Earlham library experience.*

Aspect	% Very Satisfied	% Satisfied	% Not Satisfied	Mean**
The ability of the libraries' collections to meet your academic needs.	48	47	3	3.46
The ability of the libraries' collections to meet your general information needs.	54	43	1	3.55
The help provided by individual staff members during your use of the library.	66	29	2	3.66
The <u>quality</u> of formal instruction you received about using information resources.	55	36	7	3.49
The <u>quantity</u> of formal instruction you received about using information resources.	51	37	9	3.43
The formal instruction in your major you received about using information resources.	48	37	13	3.36
The preparation the Earlham program provided for doing library research in graduate school.	46	29	7	3.48
The preparation the Earlham program provided for the information gathering you do in your work.	46	38	5	3.47

* Note: A category for "Very Dissatisfied" was included on the original survey. Since no individual checked this response category for any aspect of their library experience, it was excluded from this table.

** The mean value was calculated for each item using the following numerical scale: Very Satisfied=4, Satisfied=3, Not Satisfied=2, Very Dissatisfied=1, No response=0. "No responses" were not included in the mean calculations.

In general, Earlham alumni were either satisfied or very satisfied with their library experiences. Only small percentages of dissatisfaction were reported, and not a single person was very dissatisfied in either year. The highest ratings reflected satisfaction with the help received from library staff members (66%). Dissatisfaction ratings were highest for the formal instruction from one's major for using information resources (13%). However, high overall satisfaction with all aspects of Earlham library experiences is evident.

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