

The University of Connecticut

Report on the Alumni Survey - 2003 Graduating Class

Every year since 1979 the Office of Institutional Research has surveyed recent graduates. This survey is one of the few outcome measures the University of Connecticut has for our educational process. While the questionnaire focuses primarily on the academic experience of graduates, it also allows them to report their current activities. For over twenty years, the survey results have yielded valuable information pertinent to both the graduates' experience at the University and their post-graduate activities.

The present report is an overview of the 2003 responses. It is also available at web site <http://www.oir.uconn.edu/alum03.pdf>. Separate reports will also be generated for each school and for larger departments.

1. Number of Respondents and Response Rates

In Fall 2003, 3,477 questionnaires were sent to graduates who received a bachelor's degree from July 2002 through June 2003. A follow-up letter was sent to those who did not respond within two months of the initial survey mailing. (There were 3,477 actual degrees conferred, including dual degrees, from July 2002 through June 2003).

1,295 completed questionnaires were returned, for a total response rate of 40%¹. Over the past several years, the response rate has been in the range of 40% to 45%. Table 1.1 shows the response rate by school for the 2003 survey. Family Studies has the highest response rate (46%) while Pharmacy has the lowest rate (29%). Compared to the previous year, the response rate of graduates from Fine Arts, Family Studies, and Agriculture & Natural Resources has increased by 5% or more while the same has decreased by 5% or more for graduates from Engineering and Nursing.

Table 1.1: Response Rates, Ranked Within-School/College Percentage

School/College	Number of Graduates	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Family Studies	250	116	46%
Allied Health	71	32	45%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	139	63	45%
Continuing Studies	292	125	43%
Education	161	67	42%
Nursing	81	32	40%
Business	553	212	38%
Fine Arts	136	52	38%
Engineering	205	68	33%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	1,519	508	33%
Pharmacy	70	20	29%

The majority of respondents to the survey are female (67%), as were the majority of all graduates in the 2003 class (58%). The number of female graduates returning the completed surveys is 863 while the number of male graduates returning the completed surveys is 429. Female graduates responded at a higher rate (42%) than males (29%), as has been the case in previous alumni surveys.

¹ Calculation of response rate excludes 231 mailed surveys that were undeliverable.

Table 1.2 shows the distribution of respondents by age group. Over three-fourths of respondents are in the age category 21-24 years; the same being true for the 2003 graduate (bachelors degree recipients) population. The percentage of respondents who are 21 to 24 years increased by 5% while of those who are 25 years or more has remained about the same as in the previous year. In terms of school or college, Continuing Studies (General Studies majors) has the largest number of respondents (61%) 35 years or above in age; within all other schools, the most common age category is 21-24 years. Over a quarter of all respondents in Engineering, Nursing, and Pharmacy are 25 years or above in age.

Table 1.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group (rounded to the nearest decimal)

Age group (years)	Percent Respondents
18 to 20	<1%
21 to 24	82%
25 to 34	10%
35 to 49	5%
Over 50	3%

In terms of ethnic background, the majority of respondents to the survey are white (83%). The percentage of respondents belonging to American minority groups (12%) is similar to the percentage of all 2002 graduates belonging to American minority groups (15%).

In summary, the sample of respondents is fairly representative of the 2003 graduating population in terms of gender, age, and ethnicity.

2. General Questions

2.1. Freshman Entrance Rate

Overall, 76% of respondents, an increase of about 7% from the previous year, entered UConn as freshmen. Table 2.1.1 shows the within-school freshman entrance rates, ranked in descending order.

Table 2.1.1: Freshman Entrance Rate, Ranked Within-School/College Percentages

School/College	Within-School Percentage
Education	93%
Fine Arts	90%
Family Studies	86%
Business	84%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	83%
Engineering	81%
Allied Health	78%
Pharmacy	75%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	70%
Nursing	63%
Continuing Studies	15%

Education has the highest freshman entrance rate (93%), followed by Fine Arts (90%) and Family Studies (86%). The low freshman entrance rate for Continuing Studies (General Studies majors) is consistent with the nature of the program (junior-senior level program).

2.2. Residence Hall Habitation Rate

Overall, 77% of respondents lived in a residence hall on campus at some point during their time at UConn. Table 2.2.1 shows the residence hall habitation rates for respondents who entered UConn as freshmen and graduated in exactly four years (*four-year respondents*).

Table 2.2.1: Semesters Lived in Residence Halls for Four-Year Respondents

Semesters	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Respondents	46	7	29	13	183	22	130	28	147
Percentage	8%	1%	5%	5%	30%	4%	21%	5%	24%

For the four-year respondents, 24% lived in a residence hall for all eight semesters; 8% did not live in a residence hall at any point. A large percentage of four-year respondents (30%) lived in a residence hall for exactly four semesters and another large percentage of four-year respondents (21%) lived in a residence hall for six semesters.

2.3. Point at which Major Decided

Table 2.3.1 concerns the point at which students decide their major; both overall and within-school/college percentages are given for the time categories.

Table 2.3.1: Point at which Major Decided, Overall and Within-School Percentages

	Before College	As a freshman	As a sophomore	As a junior	As a senior	I don't remember
Agriculture & Natural Resources	48%	10%	21%	13%	2%	8%
Allied Health	47%	9%	28%	16%	0%	0%
Business	28%	10%	37%	21%	1%	2%
Continuing Studies	24%	6%	6%	28%	9%	27%
Education	45%	12%	32%	11%	0%	0%
Engineering	66%	10%	19%	3%	0%	1%
Family Studies	16%	15%	49%	18%	0%	3%
Fine Arts	60%	19%	13%	6%	2%	0%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	20%	14%	35%	28%	2%	2%
Nursing	56%	22%	13%	6%	0%	3%
Pharmacy	65%	10%	15%	5%	0%	5%
Overall (Total)	30%	12%	30%	21%	2%	5%

Overall, 30% of all respondents decided their major before entering college and another 30% of all respondents decided their major as sophomores. Percentage of respondents who decided their major before college decreased by 3% compared to the previous year.

75% or more respondents within each school or college, except Continuing Studies (36%) and Liberal Arts & Sciences (69%), decided their major before or during their sophomore year. Nearly half of all respondents from Family Studies (49%) and more than one-third of all respondents from Business (37%) and Liberal Arts & Sciences (35%) decided their major during their sophomore year.

Engineering (66%), followed by Pharmacy (65%) and Nursing (56%), had the highest within-school percent respondents who decided their major before college. Compared to the previous year, this percent is higher by 4% for Engineering but lower by 8% for Pharmacy and by 10% for Nursing.

2.4. Reasons for Choosing UConn

Respondents were asked their single most important reason for attending UConn. The three top reasons, in terms of percent respondents selecting those reasons, are listed below:

Level of tuition and fees (24%); Location (18%); Quality of educational programs and specific program offered (10%)

Respondents were also asked what they thought, in retrospect, should have been their single most important reason for attending UConn. The top three reasons, in terms of percent respondents selecting those reasons, are listed below:

Quality of education (44%); Specific programs offered and variety of programs offered (13%); Level of tuition and fees (11%).

Compared to the original reasons for selecting UConn, educational programs gain prominence in students' retrospective reasons for selecting UConn. Charts below show the 10-year trend of reasons, selected by respondents (originally & in retrospect), for attending UConn.

Chart 2.4.1: Original reason for selecting UConn

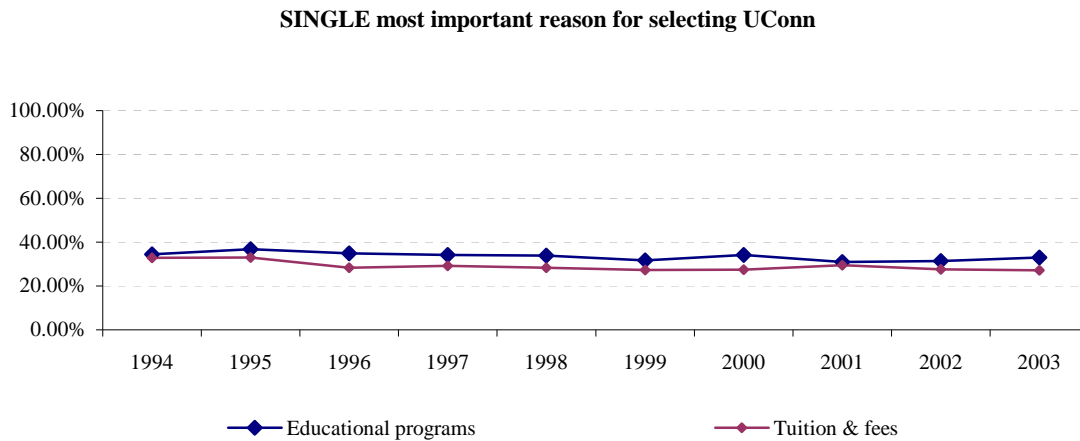
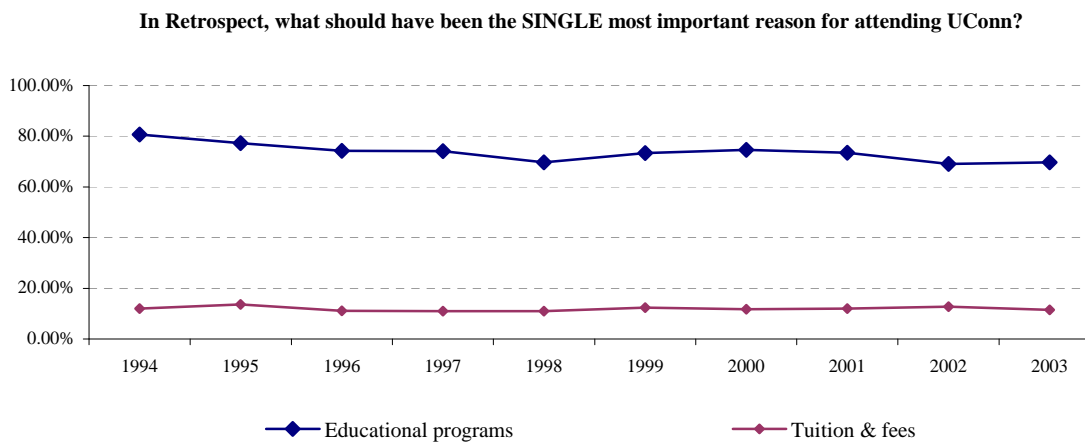


Chart 2.4.2: Retrospective reason for selecting UConn



Note:

In the charts above, the categories *Variety of educational programs offered*, *quality of educational programs* and *the specific programs offered* are collapsed into *Educational Programs*.

Tables 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 below show the percentage of respondents by school who chose *Educational programs* and *Tuition & Fees* as the original and retrospective reasons for selecting UConn. The categories *Variety of educational programs offered*, *quality of educational programs* and the *specific programs offered* are collapsed into *Educational Programs*.

Table 2.4.1: **Original** reason for attending UConn (by school or college)

School or college	Educational programs	School or college	Tuition & fees
Allied Health	60.0%	Engineering	43.3%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	58.2%	Business	35.6%
Pharmacy	56.3%	Fine Arts	34.7%
Continuing Studies	55.1%	Education	29.2%
Education	46.2%	Nursing	29.0%
Fine Arts	30.6%	Liberal Arts & Sciences	28.7%
Family Studies	30.0%	Family Studies	22.0%
Nursing	29.0%	Pharmacy	18.8%
Business	26.6%	Allied Health	16.0%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	25.6%	Agriculture & Natural Resources	12.7%
Engineering	25.0%	Continuing Studies	5.1%

Table 2.4.2: **Retrospective** Reason for Attending UConn (by school or college)

School or college	Educational programs	School or college	Tuition & fees
Family Studies	84.4%	Nursing	25.8%
Pharmacy	84.2%	Engineering	23.1%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	83.6%	Fine Arts	15.7%
Continuing Studies	79.3%	Education	15.4%
Business	76.3%	Business	15.2%
Allied Health	74.2%	Allied Health	12.9%
Education	72.3%	Liberal Arts & Sciences	12.9%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	69.9%	Pharmacy	10.5%
Fine Arts	68.6%	Agriculture & Natural Resources	6.6%
Nursing	64.5%	Family Studies	4.6%
Engineering	58.5%	Continuing Studies	0.0%

For each school, percentage of respondents retrospectively selecting *Educational programs* as the reason for attending UConn is much higher than those who prospectively (originally) selected *Educational programs* as a reason for attending UConn.

In contrast, for each school, percentage of respondents retrospectively selecting *Tuition & fees* as the reason for attending UConn is lower than those who prospectively (originally) selected *Tuition & fees* as the reason for attending UConn.

3. Evaluation of Academic Experience

3.1. Helpfulness of UConn

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 23 potential benefits of a college education and the extent to which they believed UConn helped to provide each benefit. Table 3.1.1 gives rating averages and ranks for, both, benefit importance and perceived helpfulness of UConn. Relative helpfulness (*average perceived helpfulness rating minus average benefit importance rating*) is also given and ranked.

Table 3.1.1: Benefit Importance, Perceived Helpfulness of UConn, and Relative Helpfulness, Rating Averages and Ranks.

	Perceived Importance		Helpfulness of UConn		Relative UConn Helpfulness*	
	1: Not Important	7: Very Important	1: Not helpful	7: Very Helpful	(Mean _{Helpfulness} - Mean _{Importance})	
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	(Importance - Helpfulness)	Rank
Obtain career training - knowledge and skills applicable to specific job/work	6.27	3	4.49	20	-1.78	23
Acquire background and specialization for further education in a professional, scientific or scholarly field	5.94	12	4.84	10	-1.10	17
Gain a range of information that might be relevant to a career	6.23	6	5.01	6	-1.22	18
Develop an understanding and enjoyment of literature, art, music and drama	4.90	22	4.57	19	-0.33	1
Develop an understanding of diversity and cultural differences	5.22	18	4.57	17	-0.64	6.5
Write clearly and effectively	6.17	7	5.09	4	-1.08	16
Become fluent in the computing of your discipline	5.82	13	4.82	11	-1.00	13
Obtain a general foundation in computing regardless of your discipline	5.58	14	4.68	15	-0.90	10
Become aware of different philosophies, cultures and ways of life	5.42	15	4.88	9	-0.54	3
Develop your own values and ethical standards	6.05	10	4.69	14	-1.36	22
Understand yourself, your abilities, your interests and personality	6.32	1	4.99	7	-1.33	21
Understand and be able to get along with different kinds of people	6.23	5	5.16	2	-1.07	15
Understand the nature of science and experimentation	4.92	21	4.57	18	-0.34	2
Understand new scientific and technical developments	5.03	20	4.39	21	-0.64	6.5
Become aware of the consequences (benefits/hazards) of new applications	4.88	23	4.18	23	-0.70	8
Learn and apply information technology	5.21	19	4.39	22	-0.82	9
Think analytically and logically	6.02	11	5.08	5	-0.93	11
Think in quantitative terms, understand probabilities, proportions, etc.	5.24	17	4.67	16	-0.57	4
Learn on your own, pursue ideas and find information you need	6.31	2	5.27	1	-1.04	14
See the importance of history for understanding the present as well	5.35	16	4.76	13	-0.59	5
Know how to speak before groups, actively participate in group discussion, function as a team manager	6.09	8	5.14	3	-0.95	12
Know how to lead and supervise groups of people	6.06	9	4.76	12	-1.30	20
Formulate creative and original ideas	6.25	4	4.97	8	-1.28	19

* Difference between UConn's helpfulness in providing this benefit and the perceived importance of this benefit

The most highly rated potential benefit, based on perceived importance, is *‘Understand yourself, your abilities, your interests and personality’*. This benefit ranks seventh in rating for UConn’s helpfulness in providing this benefit. In 2001 and in 2002, this item was ranked second in terms of perceived importance and was ranked 8 and 6.5, respectively, for perceived helpfulness. Based on relative helpfulness, the item ranks 21 in 2003 but was ranked 22 in 2002.

The second most highly rated potential benefit, based on perceived importance, is *‘Learn on your own, pursue ideas and find information you need’*. This benefit is ranked at the top for UConn’s helpfulness in providing this benefit. Based on relative helpfulness, however, this benefit ranks 14th. In terms of perceived importance, the above item was ranked at the top in 2002.

The third most highly rated potential benefit, based on perceived importance, is *‘Obtain career training – knowledge and skills applicable to specific job/work’*. This benefit ranks among the lowest (20th) in rating for UConn’s helpfulness in providing this benefit. It ranked lowest (23rd) on the relative helpfulness scale. The perceived importance of this item has remained the same in 2003 as in 2002.

The three most highly rated potential benefits of UConn education, in terms of UConn’s helpfulness in providing them, are:

- *Learn on your own, pursue ideas and find information you need*
- *Understand and be able to get along with different kinds of people*
- *Know how to speak before groups, actively participate in group discussion, function as a team manager*

Table 3.1.2 shows the overall (all benefits) mean rating for UConn’s helpfulness by school. Allied Health has the highest mean rating while Fine Arts has the lowest.

Table 3.1.2: Mean UConn’s helpfulness in providing potential benefits of education (by school or college)

School or college	Mean UConn helpfulness
Allied Health	5.19
Nursing	5.04
Agriculture & Natural Resources	4.89
Engineering	4.87
Continuing Studies	4.86
Family Studies	4.83
Business	4.81
Education	4.76
Liberal Arts & Sciences	4.72
Pharmacy	4.57
Fine Arts	4.41

Scale: 1 – Not helpful 7 – Very helpful

3.2 Satisfaction Ratings

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction in the areas of general education requirements, required courses outside of their major field, and required courses in their major field. Table 3.2.1 summarizes the average ratings by school in order of their rank.

For each school, *‘Overall experience with courses in your major field’* received the highest average rating among the three items. In 2003, as in 2002, Continuing Studies received the highest average satisfaction rating for general education requirements and for courses outside the major field and Family Studies received the highest average satisfaction rating for courses in the major field.

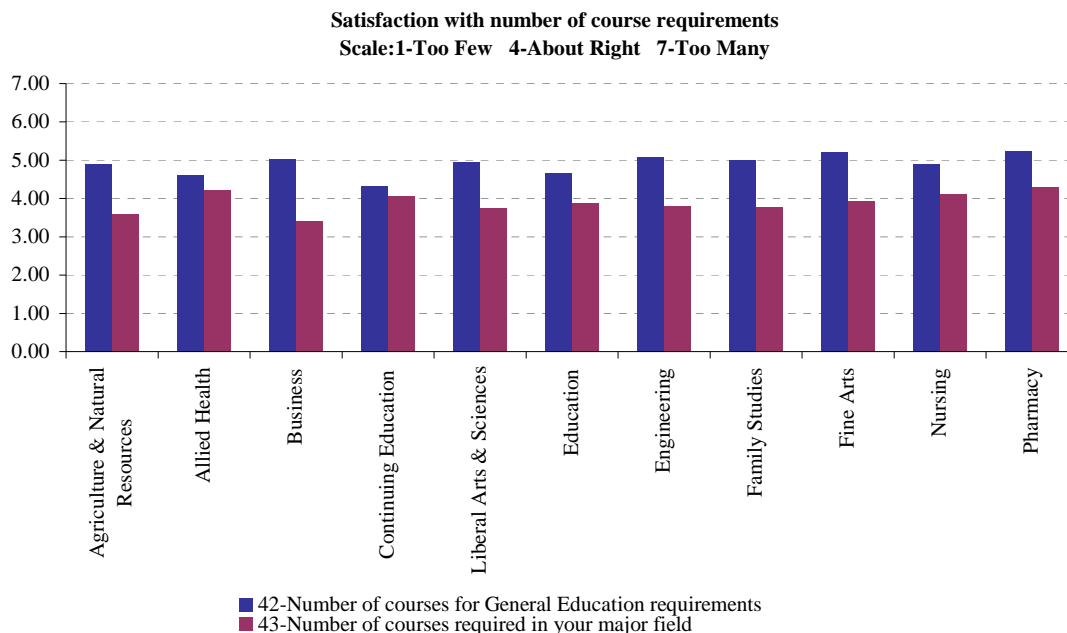
Table 3.2.1: Mean satisfaction with UConn experience (by school or college)

Overall experience with general education requirements		Overall experience with required school/college courses outside your major		Overall experience with courses in your major field	
	Mean		Mean		Mean
Continuing Studies	5.47	Continuing Studies	5.30	Family Studies	6.14
Agriculture & Natural Resources	4.86	Family Studies	5.00	Agriculture & Natural Resources	6.10
Business	4.75	Agriculture & Natural Resources	4.87	Allied Health	5.94
Engineering	4.74	Business	4.80	Business	5.83
Allied Health	4.69	Liberal Arts & Sciences	4.57	Continuing Studies	5.69
Liberal Arts & Sciences	4.60	Education	4.53	Liberal Arts & Sciences	5.66
Family Studies	4.58	Allied Health	4.50	Engineering	5.65
Education	4.56	Nursing	4.45	Pharmacy	5.40
Pharmacy	4.55	Pharmacy	4.45	Fine Arts	5.37
Nursing	4.41	Engineering	4.31	Nursing	5.28
Fine Arts	4.25	Fine Arts	4.27	Education	5.25

Scale: 1 – Extremely Dissatisfied 7 – Extremely Satisfied

Respondents were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the number of course requirements in general education and in their major field. Chart 3.2.1 shows the mean satisfaction with number of course requirements within each school or college.

Chart 3.2.1: Mean satisfaction with number of course requirements



The ratings suggest an average perception toward right number of courses for major field requirements (overall mean 3.77) and toward too many courses for general education requirements (overall mean 4.91).

Among schools and colleges, on average, respondents from Business and Agriculture & Natural Resources felt they had fewer courses as major field requirements. On average, respondents from Pharmacy and Fine Arts felt they had too many courses as general education requirements. Overall, all schools or colleges have an average perception of too many courses as general education requirements.

3.3 Recommendation Rates

Overall, 94% of the respondents would recommend UConn to friends or relatives. Table 3.3.1 summarizes the UConn recommendation rates by school in order of their rank.

Table 3.3.1: Percent respondents who would recommend UConn (by school or college)

School or college	% who would recommend UConn
Allied Health	100.0%
Continuing Studies	99.2%
Education	96.9%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	96.7%
Engineering	95.5%
Family Studies	94.7%
Business	94.2%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	92.6%
Nursing	90.3%
Pharmacy	90.0%
Fine Arts	81.3%

4. Post-Graduate Experiences

4.1 Employment Rates

Overall, 82% of respondents are employed either full-time or part-time, 30% are in graduate school either full-time or part-time; 94% are either employed or have entered graduate school; 6% of respondents are, both, unemployed and not in graduate school. The percentages above are based on valid responses only. Table 4.4.1 shows the cross-tabulated table of graduate school enrollment vs. employment status.

Table 4.4.1: Employment and/or Graduate/Professional school

Graduate school	Employment		
	Full-time	Part-time	Not employed
Full-time	60	109	137
Part-time	62	13	5
Not in graduate school	697	103	81

Table 4.4.2, on the next page, is a summary of the employment and graduate school characteristics by school or college.

97% of Nursing graduates are employed, followed by Engineering graduates (92%) and Business graduates (91%). While 69% of Allied Health graduates are employed, all Allied Health graduates are either employed or in graduate school.

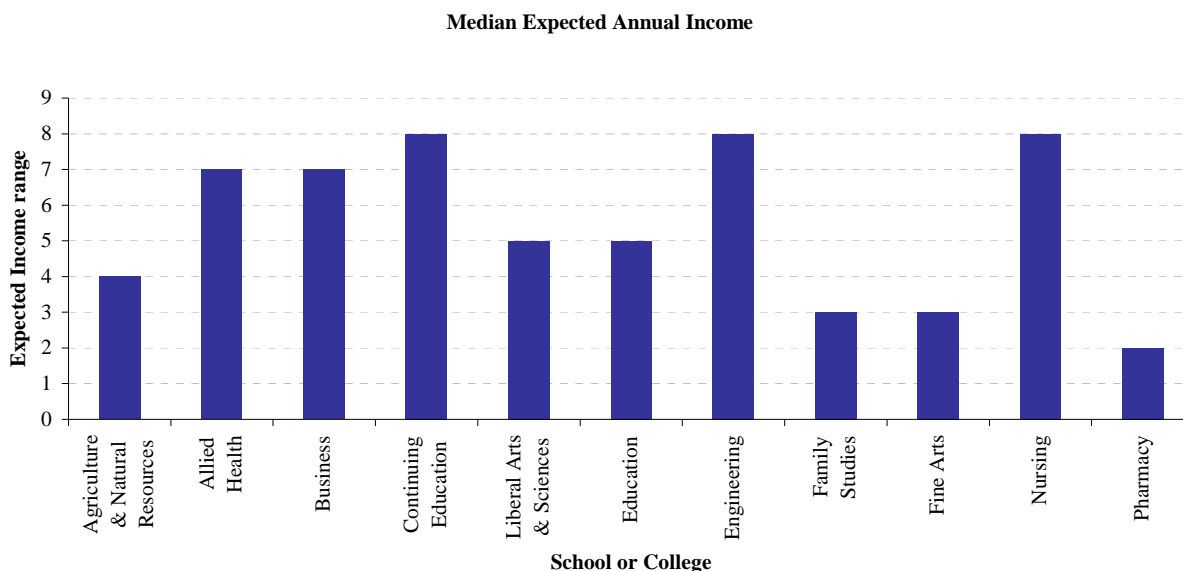
All Allied Health and Pharmacy graduates are either employed or in graduate school; data supports the integrated undergraduate-graduate nature of some or all of the programs offered by these schools. The percentage of respondents who are either employed or in graduate school ranges from 90 to 97 among other schools and colleges. On the other hand, the percent graduates who are neither employed nor in graduate school is high for Agriculture & Natural Resources (10%), followed by Liberal Arts & Sciences (8%).

Table 4.4.2: Employment and Graduate School Rates (by School or college)

% Respondents employed Full-time or Part-time		% Respondents either employed or in graduate school		% Respondents neither employed nor in graduate school	
Nursing	97	Allied Health	100	Agriculture & Natural Resources	10
Engineering	92	Pharmacy	100	Liberal Arts & Sciences	8
Business	91	Education	97	Continuing Education	7
Continuing Studies	88	Nursing	97	Fine Arts	6
Fine Arts	87	Engineering	96	Family Studies	5
Liberal Arts & Sciences	80	Business	95	Business	5
Family Studies	80	Family Studies	95	Engineering	4
Agriculture & Natural	79	Fine Arts	94	Nursing	3
Pharmacy	79	Continuing Education	93	Education	3
Allied Health	77	Liberal Arts & Sciences	92	Allied Health	0
Education	50	Agriculture & Natural Resources	90	Pharmacy	0

Overall, 71% of the respondents felt their degree was helpful when applying for their current job, and 69% considered their job career related. Chart 4.4.1 below shows the median expected annual income of respondents who are employed full-time (by school or college).

Chart 4.4.1: Median expected annual income of respondents employed full time



Expected annual income range:

(1=Less than \$10,000; 2=\$10,001-15,000; 3=\$15,001-20,000; 4=\$20,001-25,000; 5=\$25,001-30,000; 6=\$30,001-35,000; 7=\$35,001-40,000; 8=\$40,001-50,000; 9=More than \$50,000)

Continuing Studies, Engineering, and Nursing graduates have the highest median expected annual income range (\$40,001-50,000). Family Studies and Fine Arts graduates have the second lowest median expected annual income (\$15,001-20,000). The chart shows Pharmacy graduates as having the lowest expected income range (\$10,001-15,000). All 2003 Pharmacy graduates continued their studies towards the Pharm.D. Degree at the University and are employed part-time, which explains the low median expected annual income.

4.2 Use of UConn Career Services

39% of all respondents have used Career Services (41% employed and 30% unemployed respondents). Table 4.2.1 shows that Business (69%) and Engineering (66%) have the highest percentages and Continuing Studies (10%) has the lowest percentage of using the service. The relatively low percent usage of career services by Education, Allied Health, Nursing, and Pharmacy graduates may be attributed, at least in part, to the integrated undergraduate-graduate nature of all or some of their programs.

Table 4.2.1: Percent usage of career services (by school or college)

School or college	% Respondents who used career services
Business	69%
Engineering	66%
Liberal Arts & Sciences	41%
Family Studies	34%
Agriculture & Natural Resources	24%
Allied Health	23%
Pharmacy	21%
Nursing	19%
Education	19%
Fine Arts	17%
Continuing Education	10%

4.3 Type of Employment

Respondents either chose from a list of eleven general types of employer or specified an employer type. Table 4.3.1 shows the percentage of respondents who are employed full-time in each employer type for the last three years. The percentage of respondents employed in Business, Education, and Health Industry has increased in 2003 compared to the previous year. Results across other specific employer types remained stable in 2003 compared to 2002.

Table 4.3.1: Percent employed by type of employer

Type of Employer	2001	2002	2003
Business	42%	31%	40%
Education	12%	15%	17%
Health Industry	14%	15%	16%
Non-profit	6%	5%	5%
Factory/Industry	3%	4%	4%
State/Local Government	3%	4%	3%
Media	3%	4%	2%
Self-employed	2%	2%	2%
Federal Government	1%	1%	1%
Military Service	1%	1%	1%
Agriculture	1%	1%	1%
Other	14%	17%	6%

Note: Beginning 2003, in calculating the percentages, non-specific employer types have been grouped with the appropriate employer types from list if possible, otherwise the former are grouped with 'Others'.

5. Further Elaboration

Recent Alumni Survey data are the only source of information about UConn's graduates and their opinions on various aspects of UConn. Further analysis of the survey responses, or details of other comments made by respondents on various aspects of UConn, are available upon request from the Office of Institutional Research.