NPS ALUMNI SURVEY REPORT 2008

INTRODUCTION

In August 2008, NPS added to its series of student surveys — which includes new, mid-term and graduating student surveys — by issuing the first online Alumni Survey for 1998, 2003, and 2006 graduates who have valid email addresses. 1,576 alumni were invited to take the survey; 505 responded, marking a 32% response rate.

In Table 1, respondents are ranked according to graduating year and the School each attended.

NPS Schools are noted as follows:

- Graduate School of Business and Public Policy (GSBPP)
- Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (GSEAS)
- Graduate School of Operational and Information Sciences (GSOIS)
- School of International Graduate Studies (SIGS)

PROFILE OF STUDENT RESPONDENTS

The first survey question asked for the student’s branch of service while enrolled at NPS. (Table 2)

Responses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch of Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States Navy</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Army</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Marine Corps</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Air Force</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Coast Guard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Non-Military Service</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages varied by School:

- 75% of respondents in GSEAS were in the United States Navy
- 45% of respondents in SIGS were in the United States Army
- 32% of respondents were in the United States Air Force

Active duty and retired officers were asked their current or highest rank. (Table 3)

The 1998 alumni had the highest percentage in Rank 6 (18%) and Rank 5 (71%) throughout all of the Schools. 2003 alumni had the second highest percentage in Rank 5 (30%) and the highest percentage in Rank 4 (61%). For 2006, respondents percentages were the most varied: Rank 5 (20%), Rank 4 (51%), and Rank 3 (23%).
Of the 25 retired alumni respondents, 64% retired from Rank 5 and 36% from Rank 4.

A large majority (82%) of respondents indicated that they **did not have a post-baccalaureate degree prior to attending NPS**. When asked what their **average grade was in their undergraduate college compared to their NPS average**, 74% had an A or A- average at NPS, compared to only 31% in their undergraduate education.

When asked if students were **in-resident or part of a Distributed Learning (DL) program**, 82% of the respondents were resident students, 13% were Distributed Learning students, and 5% of respondents were a combination of both. (Table 4)

NPS did not track the number of Distributed Learning (DL) students until 2006, even though the institution educated DL students dating back to 1998; however, for 1998 alumni, two respondents from both GSEAS and GSOIS and one respondent from SIGS responded to the question.

For 2003 alumni, 15 (28%) of GSEAS alumni responded to the question, and for 2006 alumni, 22 (39%) from GSEAS and 24 (32%) from GSBPP responded to the question.

A detailed representation of how the demographics of the respondents mirror the overall gender and ethnicity of the current enrollment is shown in Table 5.

Alumni were asked to choose their **primary curricula/degree**. (Table 6)
- GSEAS: In 1998 and 2003, MS in Aeronautical Engineering
- GSEAS: In 2006, a MS in Systems Engineering

The top degree from the other three Schools remained the same for all three years:
- GSBPP: MBA
- GSOIS: MS in Information Technology Management
- SIGS: MA in National Security Affairs

**SUMMARY FINDINGS**

Survey findings are organized into six sections by School and/or year where appropriate, supported by referenced Tables and Charts in the Appendix.

1. Adjustments to NPS and professional interactions.
2. The time graduates spent on their studies and other activities (Table 7a) plus frequency of use of services and facilities. (Table 7b)
3. Thesis-related questions. (Table 8)
4. Quality and importance of instruction, service and advising. (Table 9)
5. NPS effect on abilities and skills. (Table 10)
6. NPS value to the graduate. (Table 11a, 11b, and 11c)
ADJUSTMENT TO NPS AND PROFESSIONAL INTERACTION

Ratings of transition and professional relationships were overwhelmingly positive across all four Schools.

- 96% said that it was relatively easy to transition “socially” to NPS.
- 75% said that it was relatively easy to transition “academically to NPS.
- 95% said that the amount of coursework was appropriate to their degree.
- 94% judged their coursework to have a high or moderate relevance to their military career.
- 87% rated faculty-to-student relationships as warm.
- 96% had a satisfactory relationship with their Program Officer.
- 90% of the Ph.D. students found their advisors to be helpful or very helpful.

TIME SPENT

Graduates were asked the number of hours spent on selected activities as well as the frequencies of use. When asked how many hours in a typical week of about 100 active hours student spent on outside employment, 89% cited 10 or less hours; however, 94% of respondents spent the same number on community service. (Table 7a)

The graduates were asked with what frequency they had used facilities and services on campus. (Table 7b)

**GSBPP**

- 50% used the library at least once a day
- 41% used a computer lab at least once a day
- 50% never used laboratories

**GSEAS**

- 40% used the library at least once a day
- 53% used a computer lab at least once a day
- 49% never used academic counseling

**GSOIS**

- 44% used the library at least once a day
- 66% used a computer lab at least once a day
- 41% never used academic counseling

**SIGS**

- 73% used the library at least once a day
- 42% used a computer lab at least once a day
- 82% never used laboratories
THESIS

Graduates were asked **four questions about their thesis or dissertation.** (Table 8)

Respondents from all four Schools said their thesis/dissertation had a 40-44% relevance to their future careers, but rated the helpfulness of their thesis advisors from 76% to 95%. Of the 32 recipients of a NPS doctorate, between 90-100% rated their advisors as helpful.

When asked about **whether the respondents had attended a thesis-related workshop:**

- GSBPP: 57% did not
- GSEAS: 69% did not
- GSOIS: 56% did
- SIGS: 55% did

QUALITY AND IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTION, SERVICE, AND ADVISING

Alumni were asked **to rank the quality of the NPS facilities/services and content/instruction on a scale of "Adequate", "Less than adequate", and "More than adequate".** (Table 9)

- Alumni from the four Schools rated the general categories of content and instruction higher than facilities or services.
- SIGS alumni gave the highest ratings for all.
- The Dudley Knox Library received the highest ratings of the facilities from all four Schools.
- GSOIS gave the lowest ratings on facilities but the highest ratings second to SIGS on content and instruction.
- All four Schools rated their “Overall experience” the highest.

NPS EFFECT ON ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Alumni were asked **to rank the “importance” of 7 skills or abilities and then rank how NPS had “enhanced” those skills and abilities.** (Table 10)

The entire set of skills or abilities were considered important by all four Schools, but the average “enhancement” scores were lower in all but “research” across all four Schools. SIGS included “writing” in that same category.

NPS VALUE TO ALUMNI

Alumni were **asked if they would recommend NPS to their peers,** and 99% said that they would. (Table 11a)

For all three graduating years, all GSOIS respondents answered “Yes” to this question.

Alumni were also given the opportunity to tell **what they valued most and least about NPS, as well as changes they would recommend.** (Table 11b)
Almost all of the respondents — 490 (97%) answered the least/most value question. The highest number of alumni from all three graduation years valued faculty the most, including the quality of faculty and their relationships with faculty. The quality of the NPS education, the academic atmosphere, the opportunity to “become smart again” and having the “time” to pursue an advanced education were among the top comments for all three years.

Curriculum or instruction, mandatory lectures and Secretary of the Navy Guest Lectures were valued the lowest by respondents for all three years.

Only 27 (55%) of respondents recommended changes, primarily from the 2006 graduates. (Table 11c), but no common themes prevailed. Overall, curriculum/instruction — with detailed advice on how to make improvements — and advice on how to improve thesis selection were most noted.

**CONCLUSION**

The first online Alumni Survey for 1998, 2003, and 2006 graduates who have valid email addresses was issued; 1,576 alumni were invited to take the survey; 32%, or 505 alumni responded.

The largest number of respondents represented the United States Navy, followed by the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard. Rank 5 was the current or highest rank of the 1998 and 2003 respondents, and for the 25 retired alumni; Rank 3 was the highest rank reached for the 2006 respondents.

For the graduates from GSEAS, a ME in Aeronautical Engineering (1998 and 2003) and a ME in Systems Engineering (2006) was the degree earned most; for all three years, in GSOIS: Information Technology Management, in SIGS: National Security Affairs, and a Master’s in Business Administration in GSBPP were the degrees earned most by respondents.

Respondents gave the ease of transition to NPS and professional relationships from 87% - 96% satisfaction rate. Slightly under half to three-quarters of the alumni used the library — ranked as the highest facility by all four Schools — at least once a day, and slightly under half to two-thirds of respondents used a computer lab at least once a day.

The helpfulness of thesis advisors was ranked between 70% - 95% and for all 32 Ph.D. alumni; satisfaction with thesis advisors was ranked between 90% - 100%. The Secretary of the Navy Guest Lectures, other mandated lectures, and some aspects of curriculum, instruction and thesis selection were valued least.

The quality of NPS faculty and relationships with faculty were valued the most, as well as the opportunity to receive an advanced degree from NPS. 99% of all respondents — 100% of respondents from SIGS — would recommended NPS to their peers, reflecting an overall consensus that NPS provided a valuable service to its 1998, 2003 and 2006 alumni.