EXIT SURVEY

2012 – 2013

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UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTHERN COLORADO
Graduate School and
International Admissions

Contents

Introduction and Demographics

OVERVIEW

The Graduate Student Exit Survey was completed by UNC's master, specialist, and doctoral students who graduated in FY 2012-2013. The survey assesses students' opinions and experiences at the University. Questions focused on general satisfaction, satisfaction with program faculty, mentoring, the thesis and dissertation process where applicable, career services and employment. The results will guide improvements in Graduate School services. The spring 2013 Exit Survey included employer and salary questions as well.

METHODS

The Exit Survey was developed by the Graduate School and International Admissions Office. While most data contained in this report were based on student responses to the survey, some data such as degree obtained were

	SUMMER 2012	*FALL 2012*	*SPRING 2013*
Total # of Graduates	*327*	*197*	*263*
Total # of Respondents	*98*	*103*	*140*
Overall Response Rate	*30.0%*	*52.3%*	*53.2%*

retrieved from our institutional data system (Banner). Graduates received an invitation to participate about two weeks after graduation and a link to the Qualtrics survey. Three reminder e-mails were sent to increase the response rate. In addition, all participants had the opportunity to enter into a raffle for a chance to win one of the five Graduate School gift baskets. Of the 787 individuals who received an Exit Survey in FY 2012-2013, 341 graduate students completed the survey for an average response rate of 43.3%.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The majority of respondents were White (66.3%, see Figure 1), female (75.4%), earned a Master's degree (78.9%) and had a cumulative GPA above 3.5 (87.1%). Seventeen percent of the graduates received a license in addition to their degree (19.4% of Master/Specialist students; 3.8% of Doctoral students) and 22.7% of the doctoral students received a minor. The average age of the respondent was 34 years old (*SD*=9.75). Furthermore, the majority of survey respondents attended classes on the Greeley campus (64.5%).
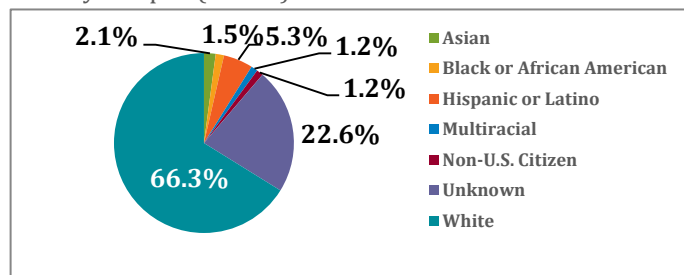
DEGREES AWARDED	N	%
Master's	**269**	**78.9**
Specialist	**19**	**5.6**
Doctoral	**53**	**15.5**
College	***n***	**%**
EBS	**207**	**60.7**
HSS	**16**	**4.7**
MCB	**4**	**1.2**
NHS	**90**	**26.4**
PVA	**23**	**6.7**
Top 5 Programs awarded*	***n***	**%**
MAT: Education - Elementary Education with License	**24**	**7.0**
MA: School Counseling	**21**	**6.2**
MS: Sport Administration	**19**	**5.6**
MA: Special Education - Generalist	**18**	**5.3**
MA: Speech Language Pathology	**17**	**5.0**

Figure 1. Ethnicity Respondents.

* Degrees in 72 different graduate programs were awarded in 2012-2013.
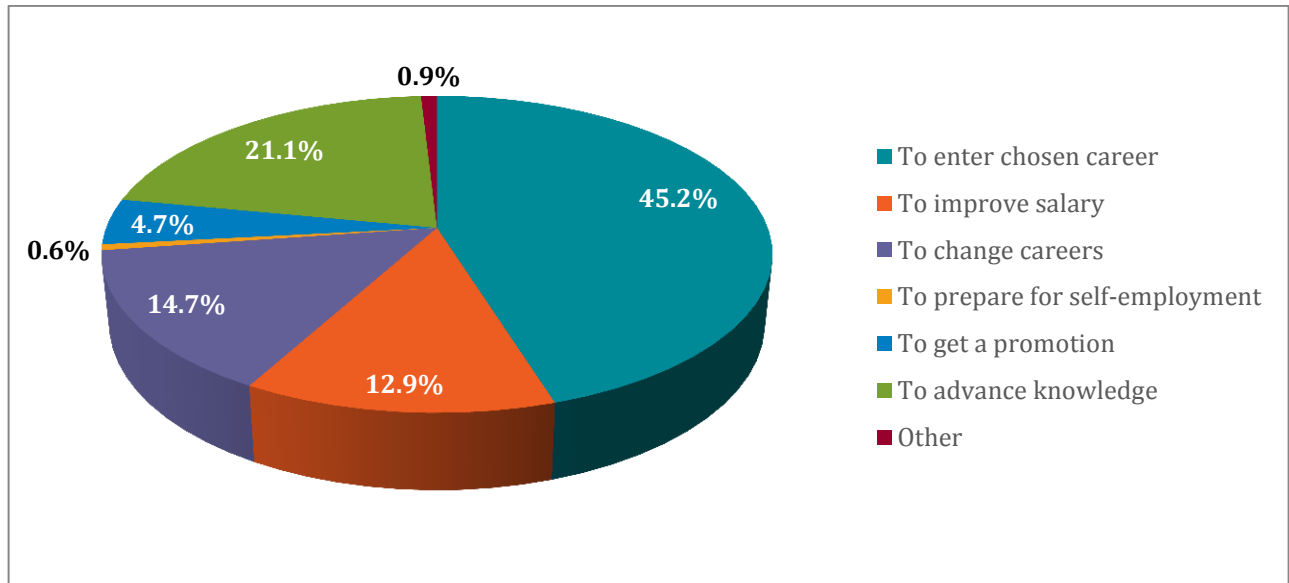
Purpose for Pursuing a Graduate Degree

Figure 2. Purpose for Pursuing a Graduate Degree.

PURPOSE FOR PURSUING A GRADUATE DEGREE BY DEGREE	Master/Specialist (n=288)	Doctoral (n=53)
To enter my chosen career	**44.4%**	**49.1%**
To improve salary	14.6%	3.8%
To change careers	14.9%	13.2%
To prepare for self-employment	.7%	
To get a promotion	4.9%	3.8%
To advance my own knowledge	19.4%	30.2%
Other	1.0%	

Key Fact: *Almost half of the Master/Specialist and Doctoral graduates pursued a graduate degree to **enter their chosen career**.*

Overall Satisfaction and Program Difficulty

> "*Difficult but I think that's important in any program you choose. We need to be challenged in order to make it a more enriching experience*" (Graduate, 2012-13)
>
> "*Program was very challenging, really pushed me to grow. I appreciated the faculty support and encouragement*" Graduate, 2012-13)

OVERALL SATISFACTION

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with different items. They had five possible options: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, or very satisfied. The majority of respondents (**84.1%**) indicated that they were satisfied at some level (satisfied or very satisfied) with their overall graduate experience at UNC, **85.9%** reported they were satisfied at some level with the academic rigor of their graduate program, **81.5%** of respondents were satisfied at some level with their program faculty and **84.7%** of responding graduates were satisfied at some level with university staff. Of the students who indicated they took the majority of their classes online, **83.9%** was satisfied at some level with the quality of online instruction (see figure 3).
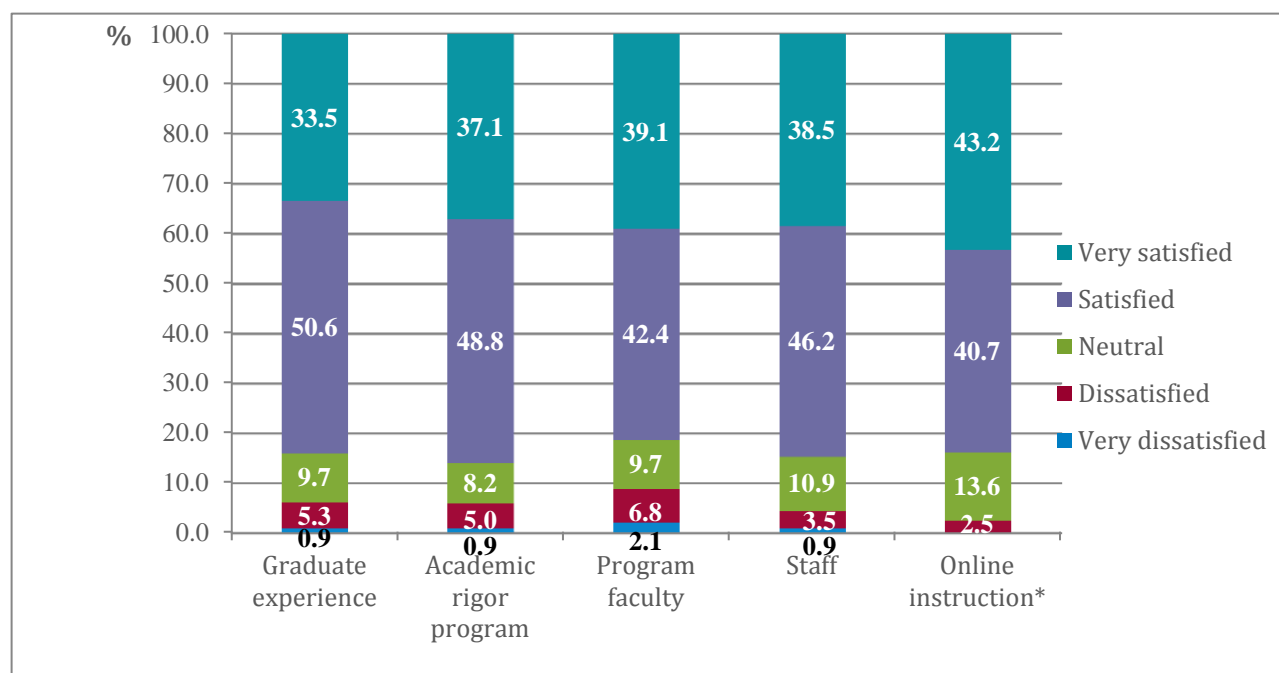

Figure 3. Overall Satisfaction with Graduate Experience, Academic Rigor Program, Program Faculty, Staff and Online Instruction.

Note: * Students who took the majority of their classes online (*n*=82).

PROGRAM DIFFICULTY

Respondents were also asked to rate the collective difficulty of their program on a 5-point scale (1 = too easy, 5 = too difficult). The majority of graduates (56.5%) rated their coursework as difficult (see Figure 4).

> "*I would do it over again in a heartbeat. I loved getting my doctorate at UNC. HARD work, but definitely worth it*" (Graduate, 2012-13)
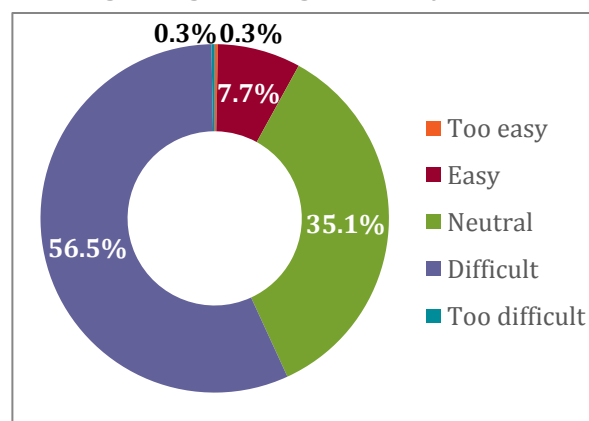

Figure 4. Collective Difficulty of the Program.

Reselection and Factors that Contributed to Ability to Complete Degree

RESELECT UNC AND PROGRAM

Graduates were asked if they would select UNC again if they were to start their graduate program again and if they would select the same program.

RESELECT UNC AND PROGRAM			
	YES	MAYBE	NO
If I was to start my graduate program again, I would select UNC.	63.0%	27.3%	9.7%
If I was to start my graduate career again, I would select the same program.	69.2%	22.3%	8.5%

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ABILITY TO COMPLETE DEGREE

Graduates were also asked which factors contributed to their ability to complete their degree. They could check all answers that applied. Graduates listed financial support (51.2%), family support (50.6%), program delivery (39.4%), classes offered at convenient times (35.9%), and program quality (35.0%) as the top five reasons they were able to complete their degrees at UNC (see Figure 5). Two percent of the respondents chose "Other". Responses for this category included: "1 year completion time frame," "fastest way to get my degree of choice," "God," "mentorship from my supervisor at work," "personal commitment" and "personal savings."
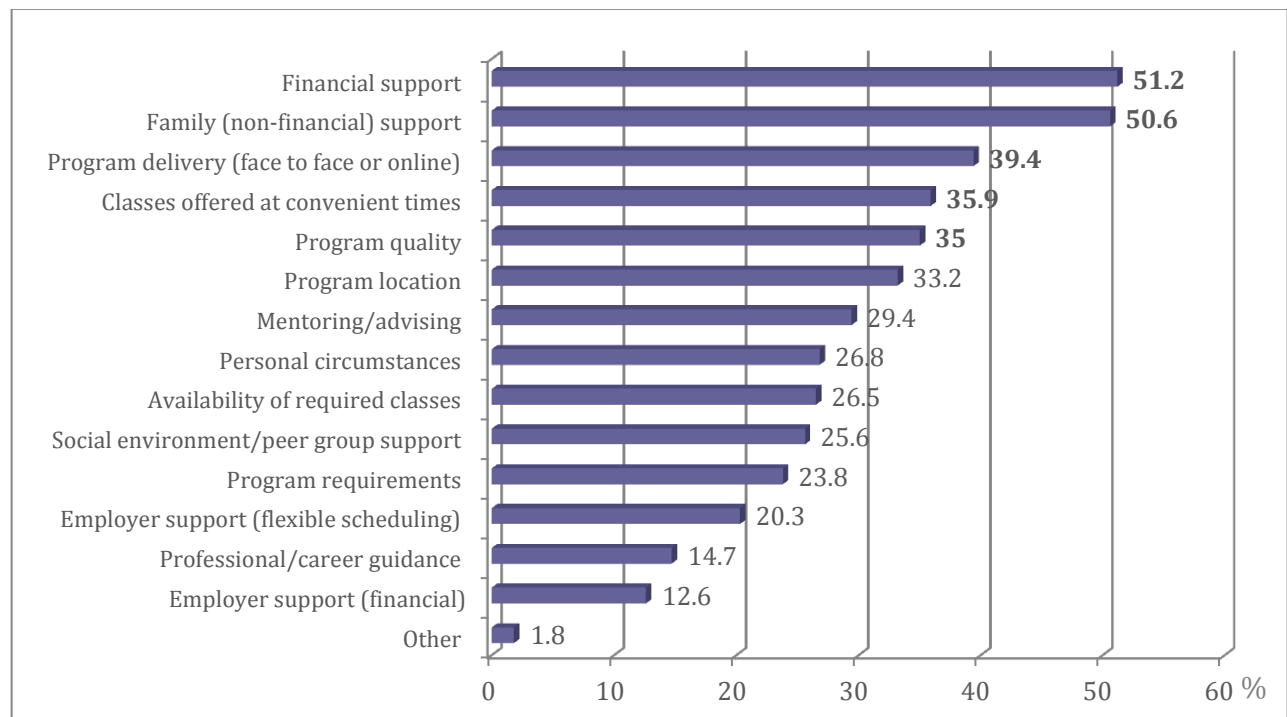

Figure 5. Factors that Contributed to the Ability to Complete Degree.

Reselection and Factors that Contributed to Ability to Complete Degree (Continued)

TOP 5 FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO ABILITY TO COMPLETE DEGREE BY COLLEGE

Education & Behavioral Sciences (n=206)
Family (non-financial) support: 51.9%
Financial support: 51.0%
Program delivery (face to face or online): 44.7%
Classes offered at convenient times: 37.9%
Program location: 37.9%

Natural & Health Sciences (n=90)
Family (non-financial) support: 48.9%
Financial support: 48.9%
Program quality: 42.2%
Mentoring/advising: 35.6%
Classes offered at convenient times: 34.4%

Humanities & Social Sciences (n=16)
Family (non-financial) support: 50.0%
Financial support: 50.0%
Mentoring/advising: 50.0%
Classes offered at convenient times: 43.8%
Program quality: 37.5%

Performing & Visual Arts (n=23)
Financial support: 60.9%
Mentoring/advising: 56.5%
Family (non-financial) support: 52.2%
Program quality: 47.8%
Program requirements: 43.5%
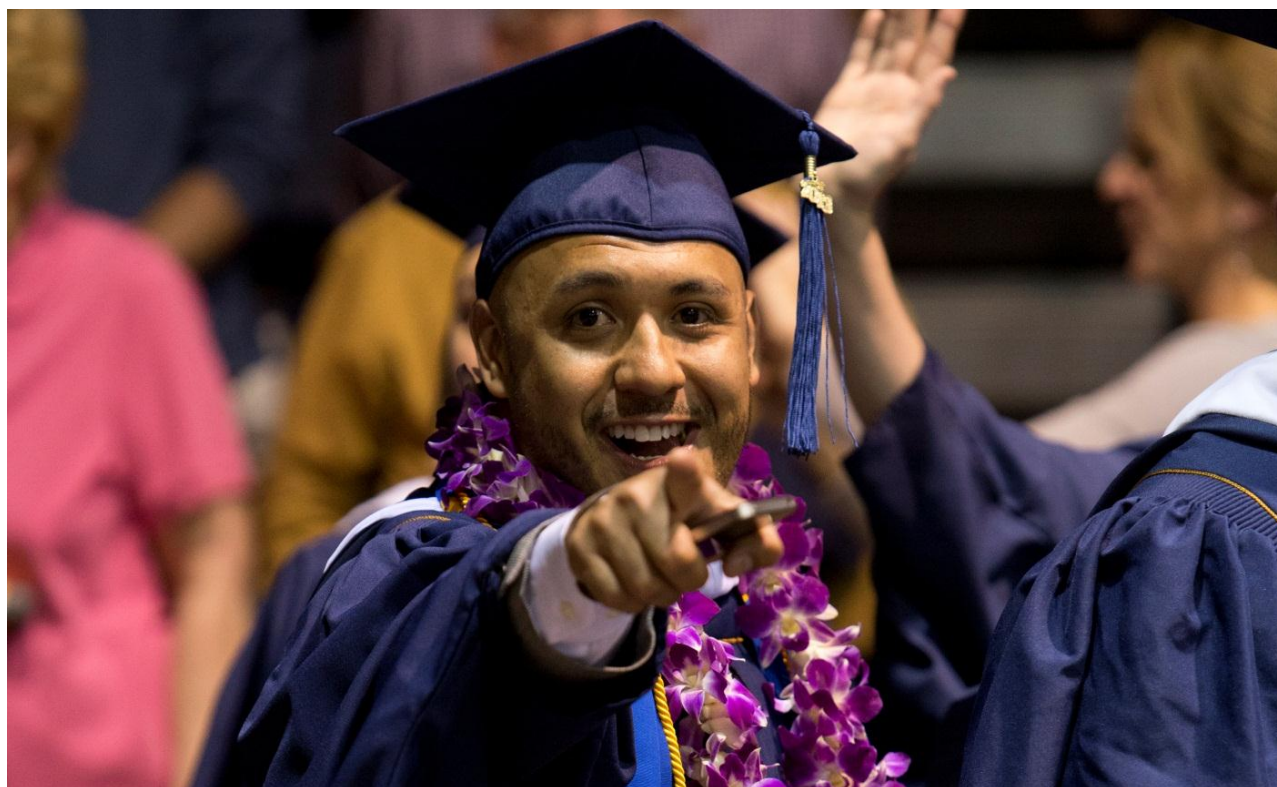
Monfort College of Business (n=4)
Financial support: 50.0%
Professional/career guidance: 50.0%
Mentoring/advising: 50.0%
Social environment/peer group support: 50.0%
Personal circumstances: 50.0%

Program Faculty & Advisor

PROGRAM FACULTY

Four satisfaction questions focused on program faculty's guidance. **Eighty-five percent** of the respondents were satisfied at some level with the **teaching/pedagogy guidance** they received; 73.3% were satisfied at some level with the guidance they received pertaining to their research; 74.2% indicated some level of satisfaction with career and professional guidance received from faculty; 75.8% of respondents were satisfied at some level with the scholarly writing guidance they received from program faculty; 76.4% of the graduates indicated some level of satisfaction with the feedback they received from program faculty regarding academic progress; and, **80.8%** of respondents were satisfied at some level with the **quality of relationship** they had with program faculty (see Figure 6).

> "*I loved the one-on-one attention and the care that each faculty member took to see me succeed*" (Graduate, 2012-13)
>
> "*I consider them [faculty] friends and true mentors. I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with all of them, and believe I am much better for it*" (Graduate, 2012-2013)
>
> "*Very caring and inspiring faculty – could not ask for better support*" (Graduate 2012-13)
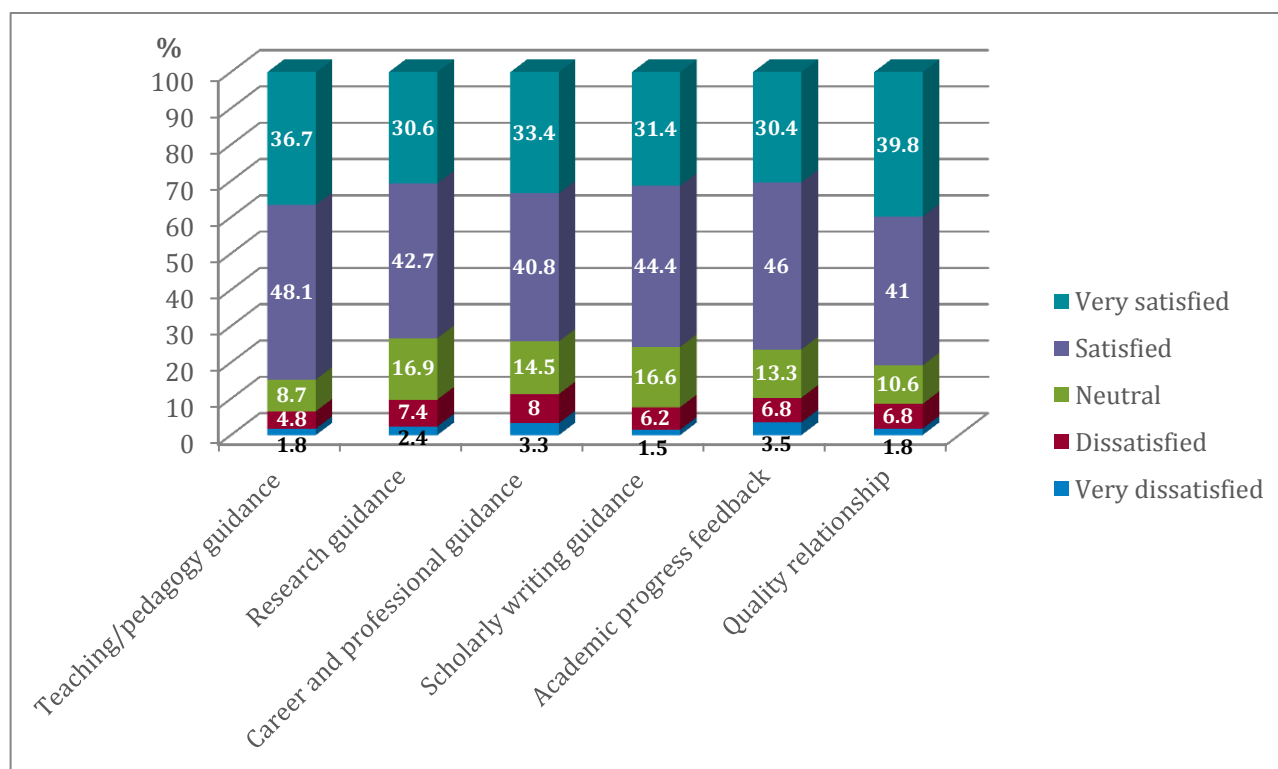

Figure 6. Satisfaction with Program Faculty.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Graduates were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the relationship they had with their academic advisor and any feedback they received throughout their program. The majority of respondents (69.0%) were satisfied at some level with the feedback they received regarding their academic progress. In addition, 71.9% rated the quality of their relationship with their advisor as satisfying at some level.

> "*My advisor was great. We built a great relationship; she cared for me and my career and was always willing to mentor me*" (Graduate, 2012-13)

Mentor

Students who had mentors were asked to indicate ways to improve their mentor relationship. More time with mentors (50.9%) and career/professional guidance (35.8%) were the two main areas of improvement expressed by the graduates who completed this question. Five percent of the respondents chose "Other". Examples of responses for this category included: "getting back to me on time," "none loved her," "to be more diplomatic," "family atmosphere," "I only had one mentor I really trusted, and that is the problem," "guidance with classes," "online courses so not a lot of 'face time' with mentor," and "funding" (see Figure 7).

> **Key Fact:** *77.3% of the graduates indicated they had someone in their program they considered a **mentor,** and of those graduates, 89.7% had a satisfactory or very satisfactory relationship with their mentor.*
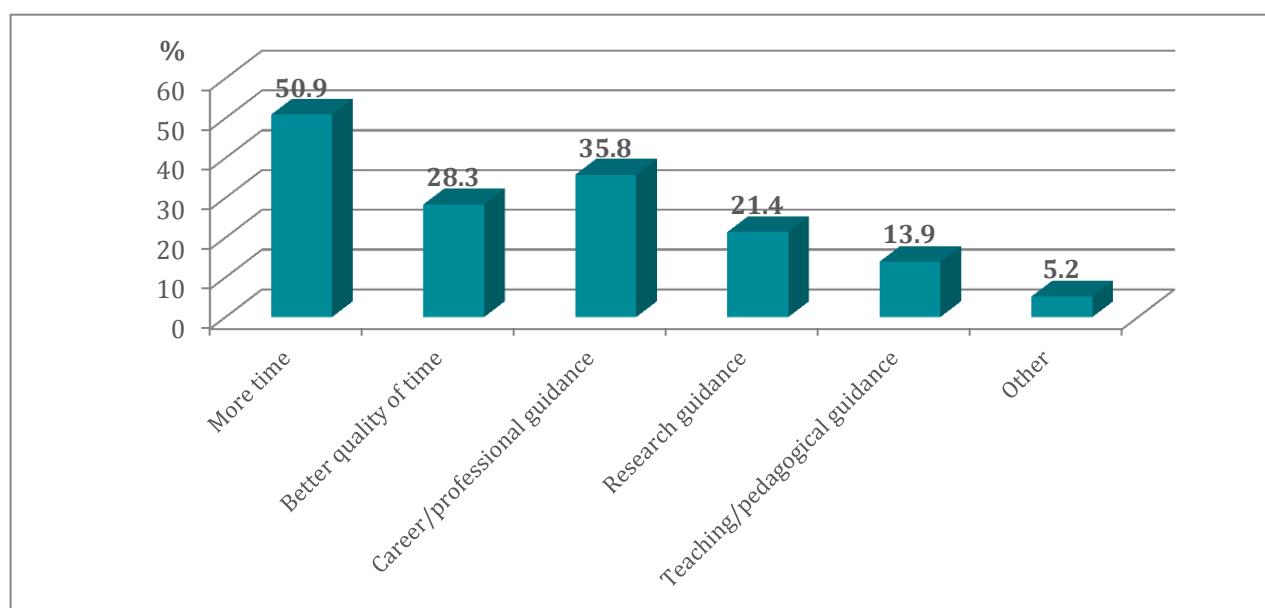

Figure 7. Ways to Improve Mentor Relationship.

2013 Spring Dean's Citation of Excellence

"*My mentor was a faculty member who was not required to take me under her wing. She was an excellent mentor and made my graduate experience worth something. She is truly one of the reasons that I graduated*" (Graduate, 2012-13)

"*The thing that could most increase my satisfaction with my advisor and mentor would be more time, as I felt like I always had to catch them in the fly.*" (Graduate, 2012-13)

Thesis, Capstone, or Dissertation

Fifty two percent of the respondents (*n*=176) graduated from a program that required a thesis, capstone, or dissertation. Graduates were asked whether they agreed with seven statements about their chair. Eighty percent of the respondents agreed at some level that their chair was accessible, 79.3% agreed at some level that their chair performed the role well, 78.3% indicated that their chair was interested in their research/project, 66.2% indicated that their chair discussed their research/project on a consistent basis, 71.8% agreed at some level that their chair critiqued their work in ways that helped their work progress, 79.9% indicated that their chair returned their work in a timely manner and 65.1% indicated that their chair helped them with picking a topic (see Figure 8).
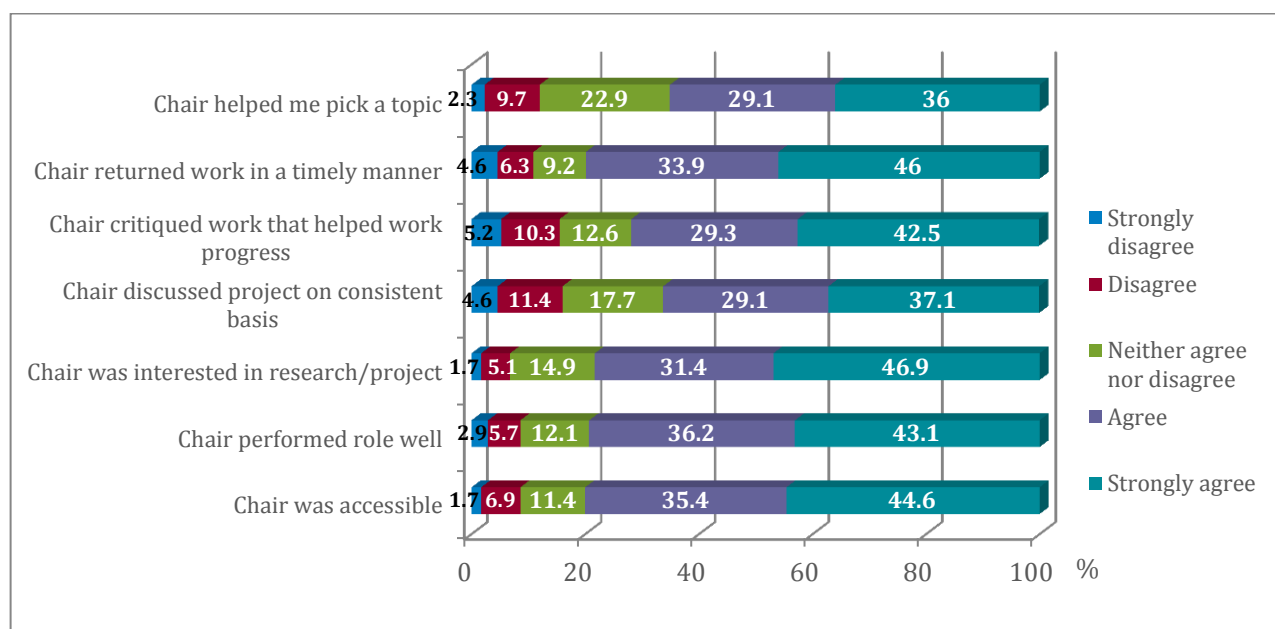

Figure 8. Satisfaction with Program Chair.

2013 Spring Dean's Citation of Excellence

Thesis, Capstone, or Dissertation (Continued)

The 51.9% of graduates (*n*=176) in this survey who completed a thesis, capstone, or dissertation were asked how satisfied they were with relevant resources for completing their writing projects. These resources were: "Thesis/Capstone/dissertation manual posted on the Graduate School website," "other resources listed on the Graduate School website such as formatting examples, schedule of deadlines, et.," "Writing Center," "Dissertation Workshops," "Research Consulting Lab," "Institutional Review Board", and "Typists." Results are displayed by degree level in Figure 9 and 10.
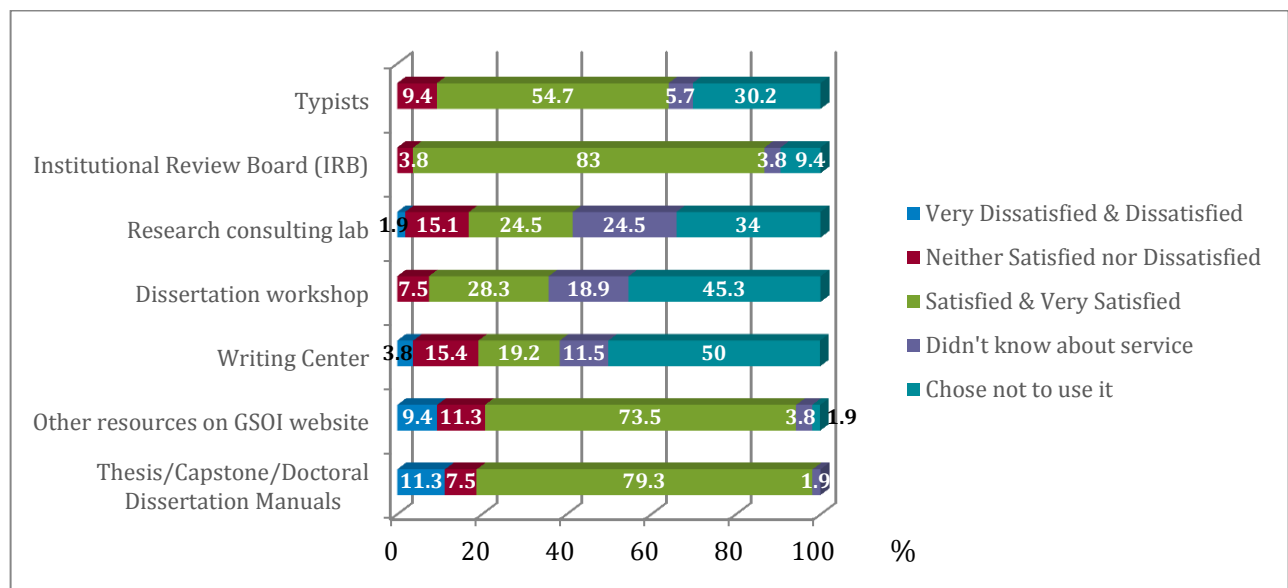

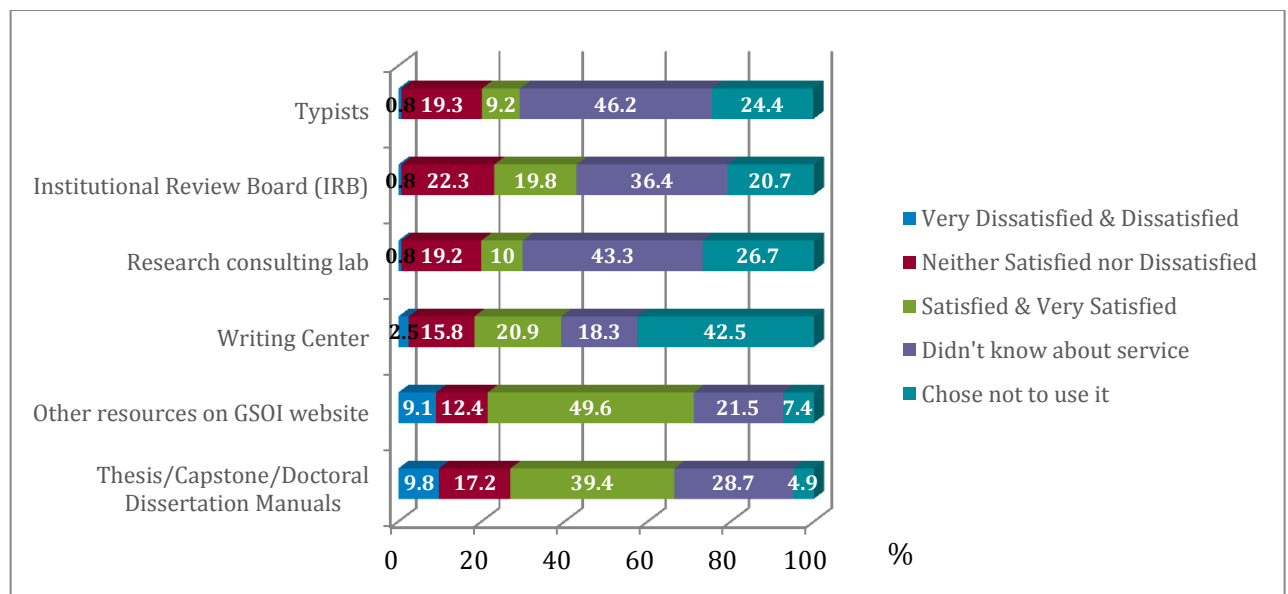*Figure 9.* Satisfaction with Thesis, Capstone, or Dissertation Services (Doctoral, *n*=53).

Figure 10. Satisfaction with Thesis, Capstone, or Dissertation Services (Master and Specialist, *n*=123).

Employment

Sixty-four percent of the respondents were employed; 24.8% were continuing with their current employment, 10.0% received a promotion as a result of their graduate degree and 28.9% accepted a job offer. Another 3.6% of the respondents were: negotiating job offers (.6%), considering several job offers (2.1%), in consideration

> **Key Fact:** *More than half of the graduates (55.8%) who have employment plans (accepted job offers, currently negotiating job offer(s), considering several job offers, seeking employment but have no specific employment plans), are pursuing a new career field.*
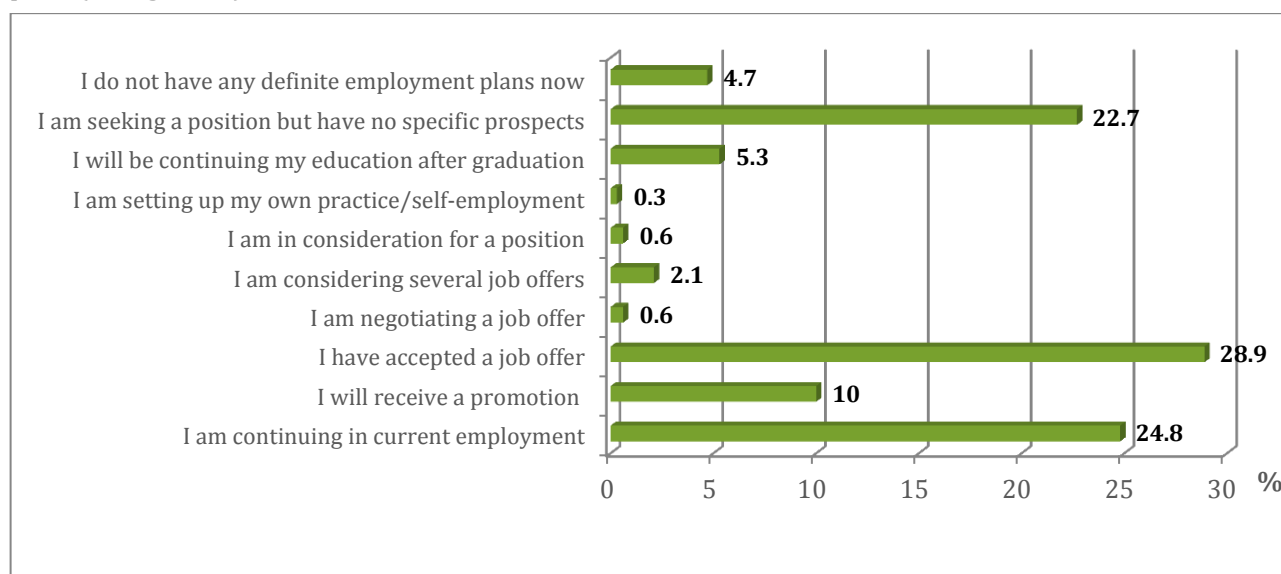
for a position (.6%) or setting up their private practice/establishing self-employment (.3%). Five percent of the graduates chose to continue their education after graduation. Twenty-three percent of the respondents were seeking a position but did not have any specific job prospects, and 4.7% did not have any employment plans (see figure 11).

Figure 11. Employment Expectations.

EMPLOYMENT BY COLLEGE	
Education & Behavioral Sciences (n=206)	**Natural & Health Sciences (n=89)**
Employed: 68.0%	Employed: 59.5%
Considering/negotiating a job: 2.0%	Considering/negotiating a job: 6.7%**
Continuing in education: 1.9%	Continuing in education: 6.7%
Seeking a position: 23.8%	Seeking a position: 24.7%
No employment plans now: 4.4%	No employment plans now: 2.2%
Humanities & Social Sciences (n=16)	**Performing & Visual Arts (n=23)**
Employed: 56.3%	Employed: 47.8%
Considering/negotiating a job: 12.6%	Considering/negotiating a job:
Continuing in education: 12.5%	Continuing in education: 21.7%
Seeking a position: 12.5%	Seeking a position: 13.0%
No employment plans now: 6.3%	No employment plans now: 17.4%
Monfort College of Business (n=4)	
Employed: 50.0%	
Considering/negotiating a job:	
Continuing in education: 25.0%	
Seeking a position: 25.0%	
No employment plans now:	
**includes setting up own business	

Employment (Continued)

Specific employment questions were added to the spring 2013 Exit Survey. Graduates who indicated they were employed at the time of survey administration were asked specific questions about their employer. Of the spring 2013 graduates, 77 graduates were employed. Of those 77 graduates, 56 graduates completed hours worked and salary information. Of the graduates who completed those questions, 82.1 % (n=46) were employed full-time and 17.9 % (n=10) were employed part-time. The majority of the graduates (82.6%, n=38) who were employed full-time at the time of survey administration, are working in Colorado.
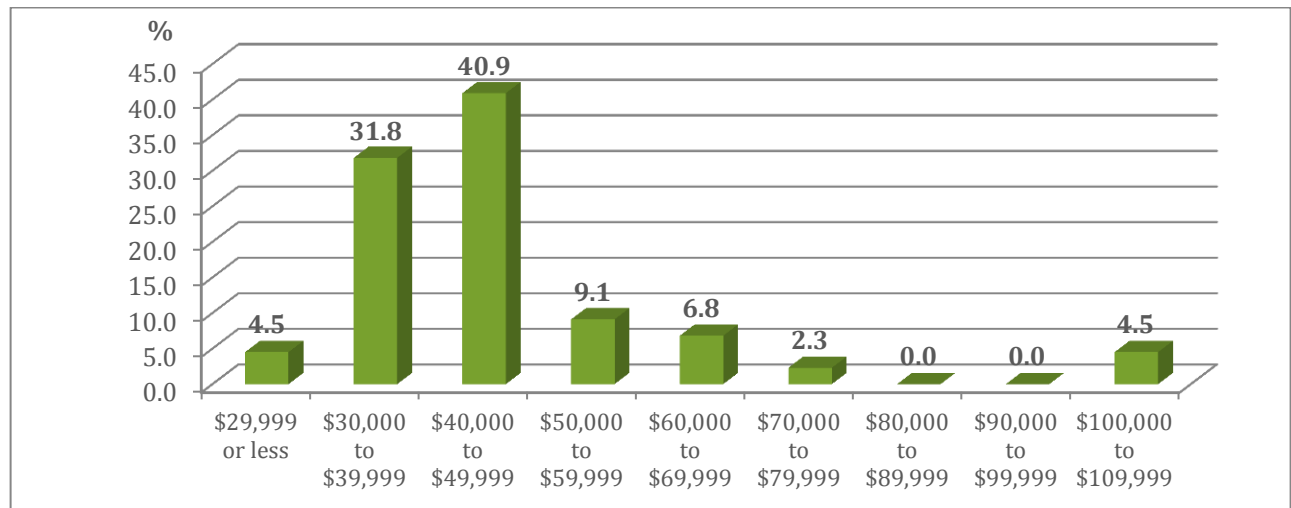

Figure 12. Pre-Tax Annual Salary for Spring 2013 Graduates who were Employed Full-Time (> 36 Hours per Week).

MODE SALARY CATEGORY FOR FULL-TIME STUDENTS BY COLLEGE

All Graduates (n=44): $40,000 to $49,999

College of Education & Behavioral Sciences (n=33): $40,000 to $49,999

College of Humanities & Social Sciences (n=2): $30,000 to $39,999

Monfort College of Business: no salary data available

College of Natural & Health Sciences (n=7): $40,000 to $49,999 & $50,000 to $59,999

College of Performing & Visual Arts (n=2): $40,000 to $49,999

EMPLOYERS (ALL GRADUATES WHO WERE EMPLOYED FULL-TIME AT THE TIME OF SURVEY DISTRIBUTION)

Adams 12 School District	Julesburg School District RE-1	Roaring Fork School District
Aurora Medical Center	Kaiser Permanente	Sale Lake Community College
Bayfield School District	Lakewood	St. Vrain Valley School District
Boulder Community Hospital	Legend High School	State of Colorado
ChildSafe	Morgan County School District Re-3	PA office of vocational rehab.
Denver Ear Associates	National American University	University of North Florida
Denver Public Schools	New Vision Charter School	University of Northern Colorado
Department of Justice	Oklahoma State University	University Schools
Douglas County School Distr.	Otis R-3 School District	Weld County School District 6
Greeley School District 6	Palmer Ridge High School	Weld re4 school district
Imagine Firestone	Poudre School District	Winona State University

Learning Objectives and Career Services

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Graduates were asked to share their level of satisfaction with the degree to which their academic programs met stated program objectives. The majority of students were satisfied at some level with the degree the program met its stated learning outcomes (88.2%) and with the degree the faculty provided opportunities to learn (86.4%). About three quarter of the graduates (73.3%) were satisfied at some level with the way program faculty prepared them for future career or educational pursuits.

CAREER SERVICES

Graduates were asked whether they made use of the Career Services while at UNC. Only 10.6% of the respondents used Career Services. The majority of graduates who used Career Services rated the services they received as helpful (41.7%) or very helpful (19.4%).
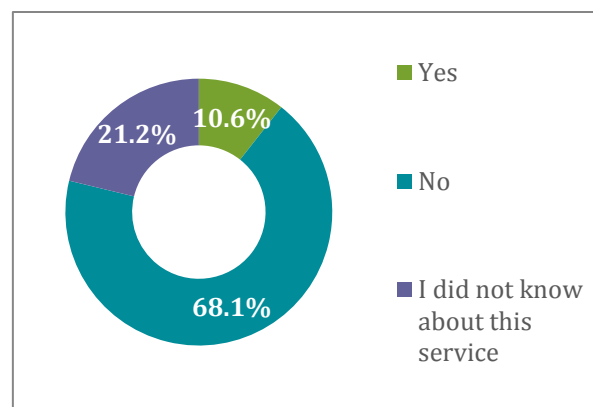

Figure 13. Use of Career Services.

"I would have also appreciated to have more guidance from faculty and investment in us as students being successful post-graduation. What I mean by this is helping to find and give resources for jobs, career options, internship sites, etc. It was difficult to get this information" (Graduate 2012-13)

"More career guidance [from advisor]" (Graduate 2012-13)

Campus Culture

Graduates were asked to indicate whether they felt respected by UNC staff, faculty and students as well as the Greeley community in general. Responses were measured on a scale of strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The following percentages represent those graduates who agreed or strongly agreed that they felt respected by staff (92.4%), faculty (85.4%), other students (92.2%), and the Greeley community (52.4%).
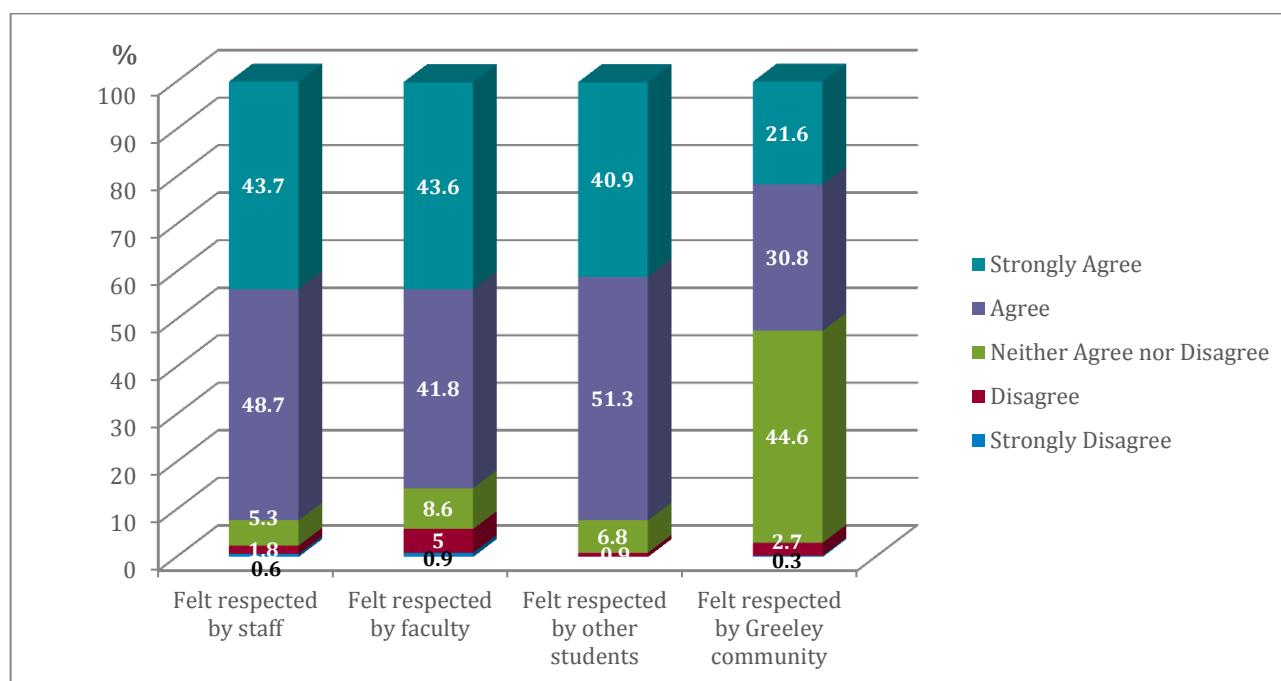

Figure 14. Respect.

Eighty seven percent of graduates were satisfied at some level with the degree to which faculty promoted inclusiveness in the classroom with respect to diverse ideas and perspectives, and 86.7% of graduates felt their peers demonstrated inclusiveness and provided diverse ideas at some level. Though 54.0% of respondents were satisfied at some level with the programs for students with their interests on campus, and 49.2% agreed at some level that they felt comfortable participating in campus-wide programs, events, or activities. Both questions had a large amount of responses in the neutral category (41.5% and 44.7% respectively), indicating that the meaning of both questions may have been unclear to graduates.

Closing Remarks

We are pleased to report that overall the majority of 2012-2013 graduates were satisfied with their graduate experience, the academic rigor of the program, program faculty and staff. In addition, 77.3% of respondents indicated they had a mentor and 89.7% had a satisfactory or very satisfactory relationship with their mentor. These findings reflect the efforts of the graduate faculty, staff, and the Graduate School. In the 2013-2014 AY The Graduate School will work with deans and faculty on academic advising and will improve the graduate school website and resources for thesis and dissertation.

For more information about this report, please contact Sonja Rizzolo at sonja.rizzolo@unco.edu.