

2011 Psychology Alumni Survey Results Executive Summary

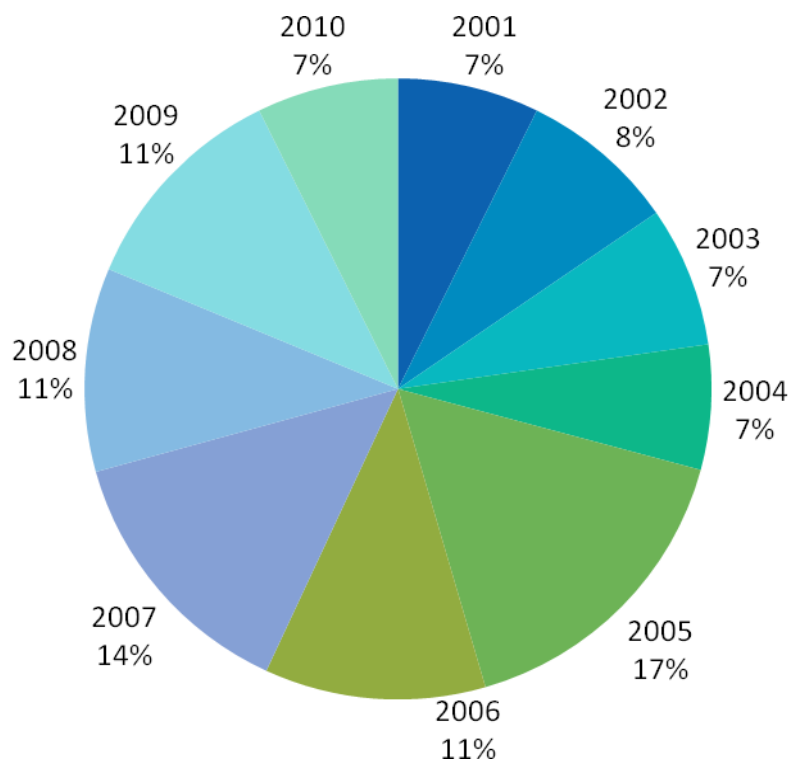
The Psychology Division sponsored a survey of Alumni graduating between 2001 and 2010. The goals of the survey were to:

- track demographic variables of psychology students to inform recruitment efforts
- assess student involvement in psychology related activities
- determine satisfaction of Alumni with various aspects of the psychology program
- assess student development of Psychology Division objectives and WOU institutional aspirations for learning
- ascertain graduate school and career paths for Alumni

As part of the Psychology Division's commitment to provide meaningful and practical research experiences for undergraduates, two psychology students have been very involved all aspects of this assessment. These students have been involved in preparing the mailing as well as entering and analyzing the data. As a result of their involvement, these students presented some of these results at the 2011 Western Psychological Association (WPA) conference.

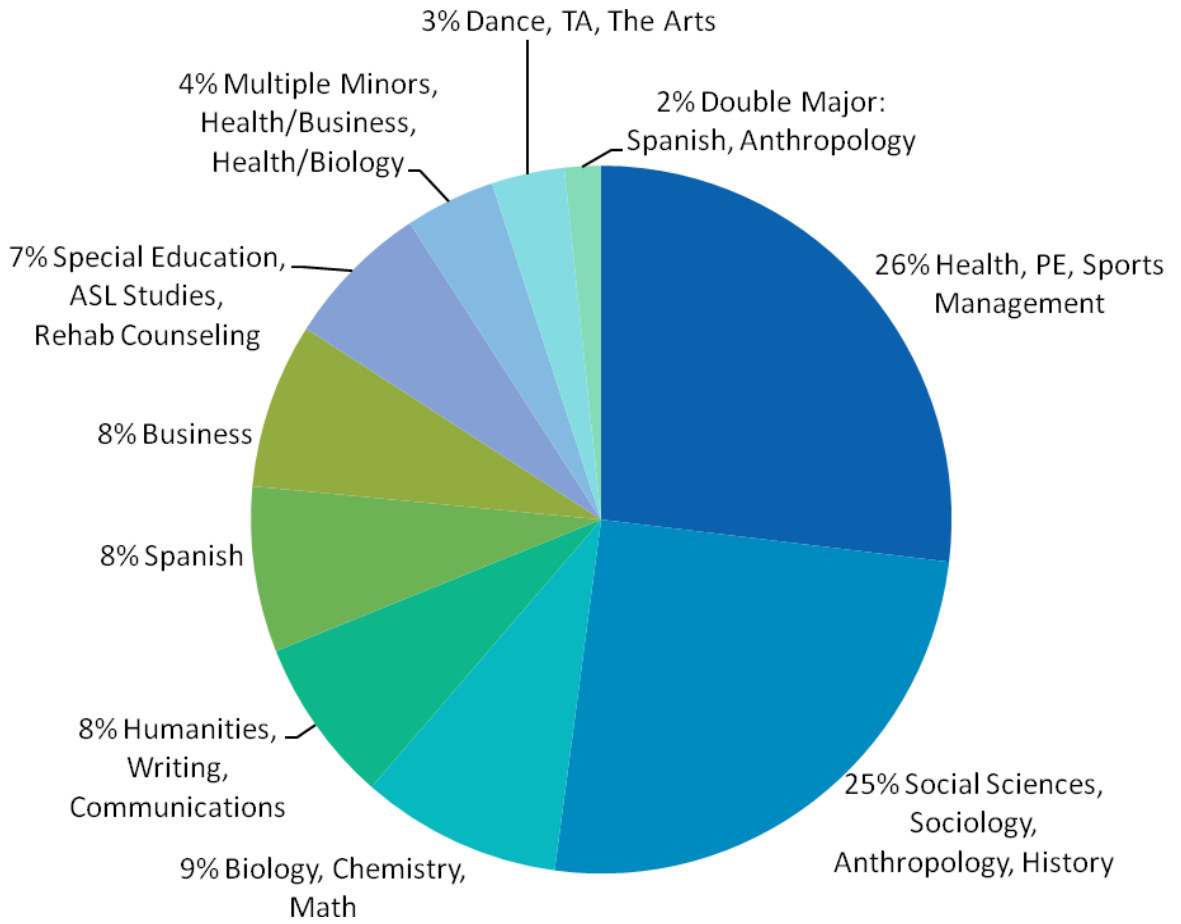
Participants

The WOU Alumni Association provided names and addresses for all psychology graduates from Winter 2001 through Spring 2010. Surveys were mailed to 663 Alumni, 58 were returned as undeliverable and 125 were returned completed (19% response rate). Of those responding 82% were Female and 18% were Male $M_{age} = 29.59$ ($SD = 7.29$). The mean reported GPA at graduation was 3.50 ($SD = .32$), and 26% earned a BA degree while 74% earned a BS. Response rates across graduating years appear below.



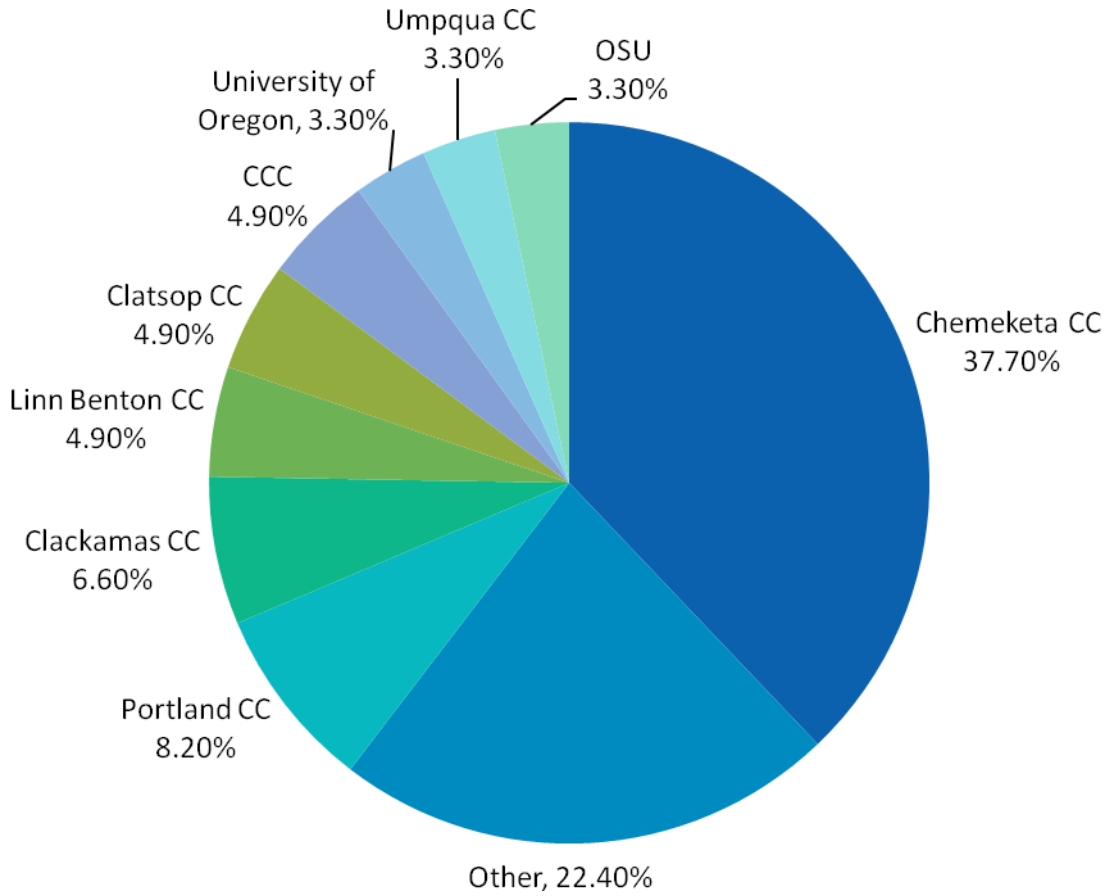
Alumni Minors

Alumni reported over 35 different minors, the most frequently reported were Health (26%), Social Sciences (25%) and Natural Sciences and Math (9%).



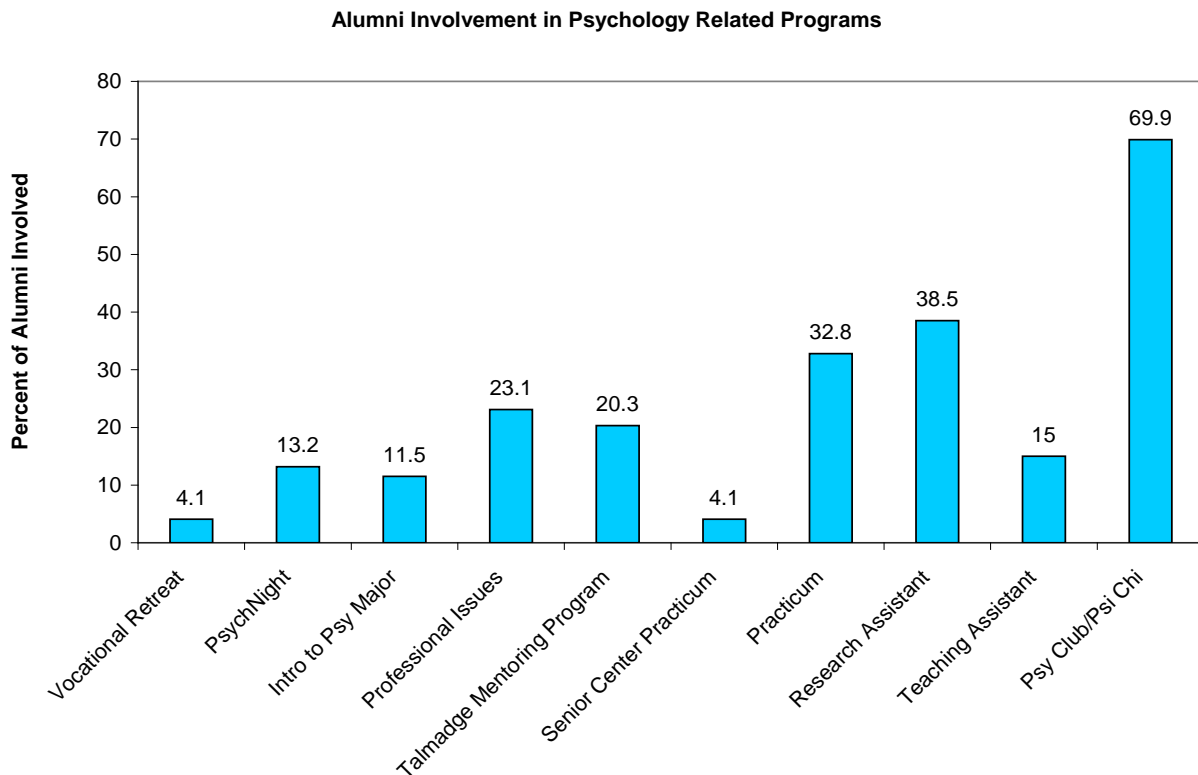
Transfer students

Alumni sampled were equally likely to have transferred to WOU from another institution (50%) as they were to have started college at WOU (50%). Transfer students came from over 20 different institutions, with the majority transferring from Chemeketa Community College (38%). The distribution of transfer institutions appears below. The majority of transfer students (63%) completed an Associates of Arts Oregon Transfer (AAOT) degree prior to transferring to WOU.



Participation in psychology related activities

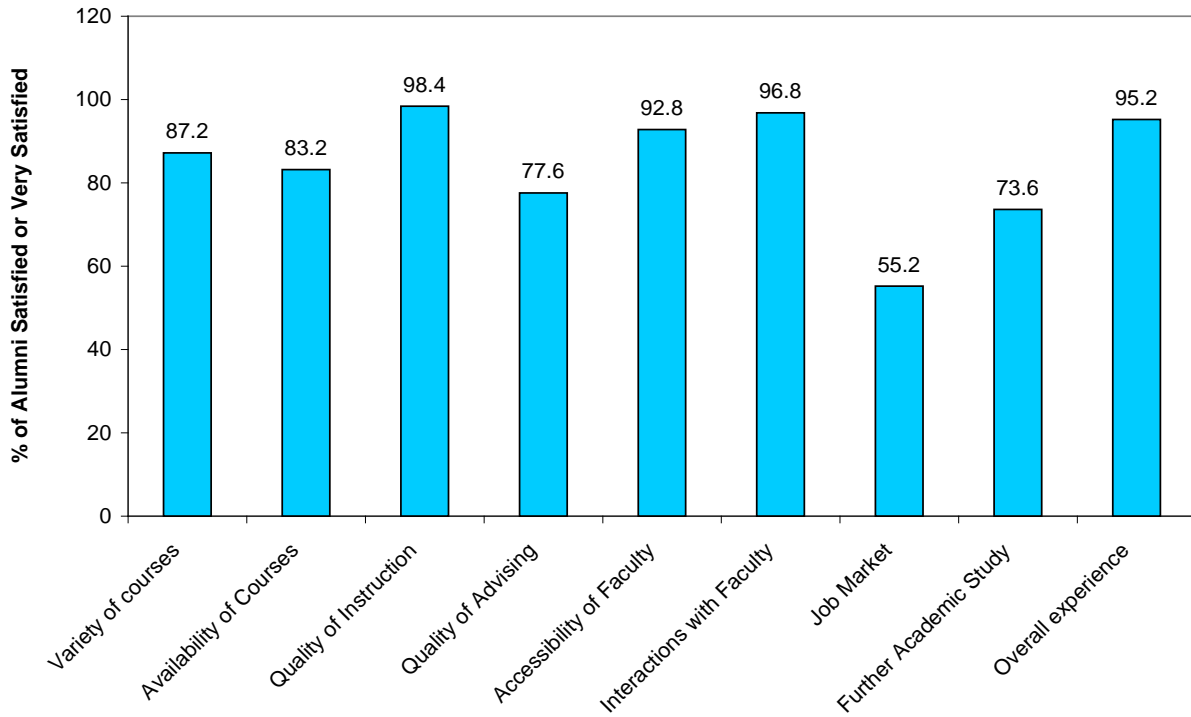
We asked Alumni about their participation in various psychology related activities. A significant number of graduating seniors had the opportunity to get hands on experience prior to graduating; 33% of respondents participated in a Practicum and 20% participated in the WOU-Talmadge Mentoring Program. Additionally 39% of students served as Research Assistants and 15% were Teaching Assistants, indicating that these students had the opportunity to work one-on-one with a faculty member. Finally 70% of respondents indicated involvement in the Western Oregon University Psychology Student Association (WOUPSA), the Psychology Club, or Psi Chi reflecting the opportunity to gain social and professional experiences with other psychology students. Alumni participation in psychology related activities is presented below.



Satisfaction with various aspects of the psychology major

We asked Alumni how satisfied they were with various aspects of the program. Overall Alumni were satisfied with their experiences with over 90% being satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction received, accessibility of psychology faculty, and interactions with psychology faculty, and overall experience with the psychology major. Conversely, only 55% were satisfied or very satisfied with their preparation for entering the job market, and 74% were satisfied or very satisfied with their preparation for further academic study. We anticipate increases in satisfaction for these variables in the coming years as more students take Psy 199 Introduction to the Psychology Major: Careers and Opportunities and participate in additional programming including the vocational discernment retreat and PsychNight.

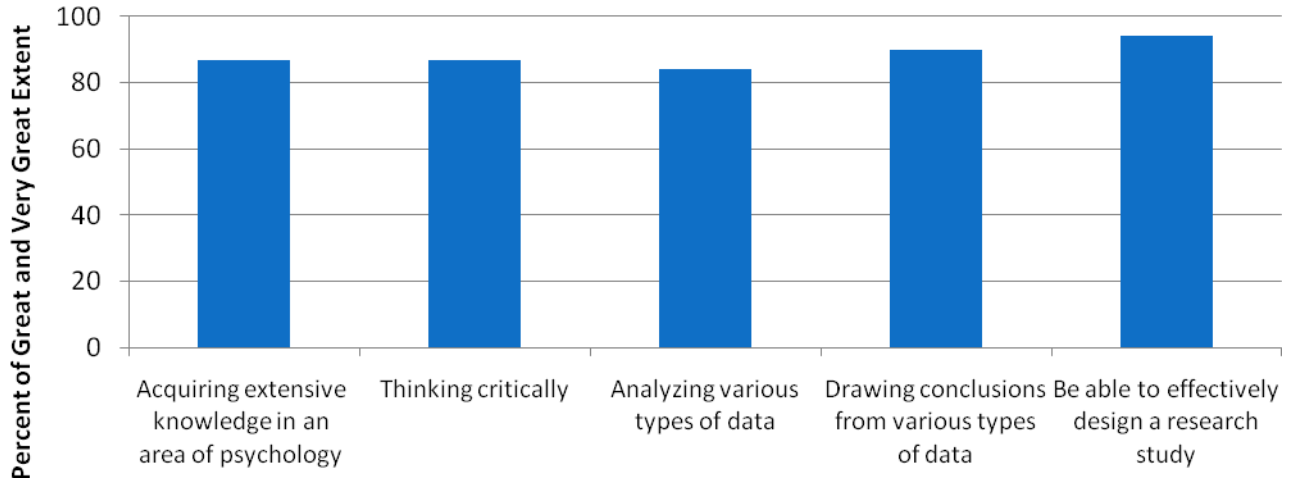
Alumni Satisfaction with Aspects of the Psychology Program



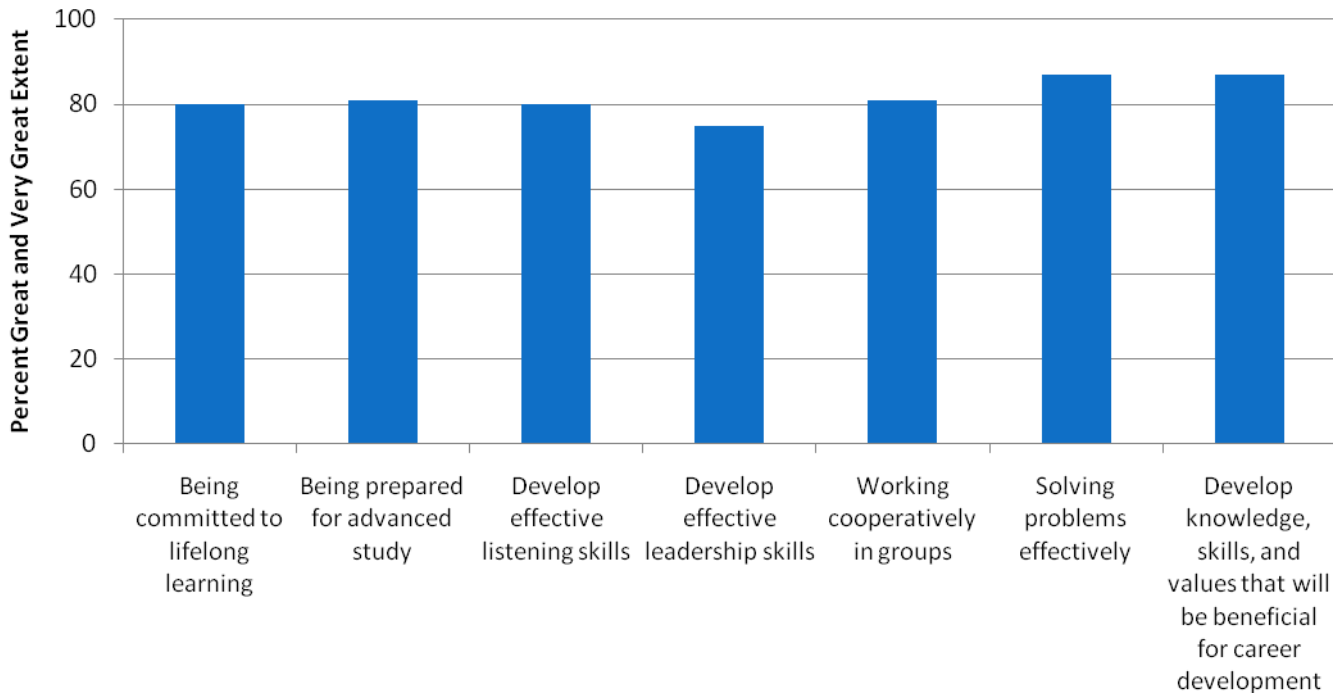
Development of Psychology Division objectives and WOU institutional aspirations for learning

We asked Alumni to indicate what impact the Psychology program had on their development of a number of broad-based competencies. Broad based competencies are described in terms of the psychology division objectives as well as institutional aspirations for learning (IAL). For detailed information on IAL, see the WOU catalog. The following figures show the percent of students who reported that majoring in psychology to a great extent or very great extent promoted the development of broad based competencies included in senior survey questions.

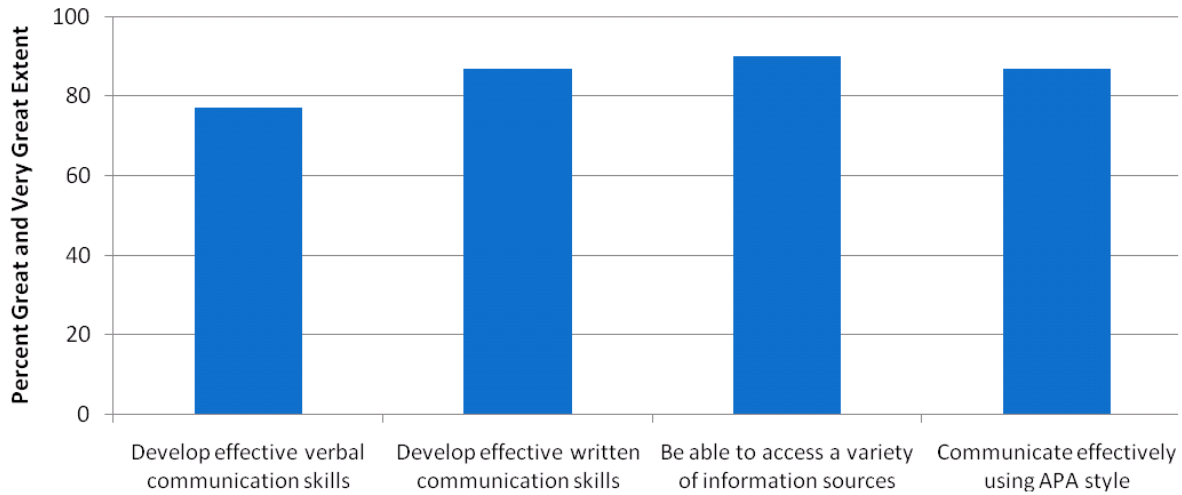
Objective 1. Students will learn principles of psychology and develop critical thinking/scientific method research skills (IAL 1, 4, 6)



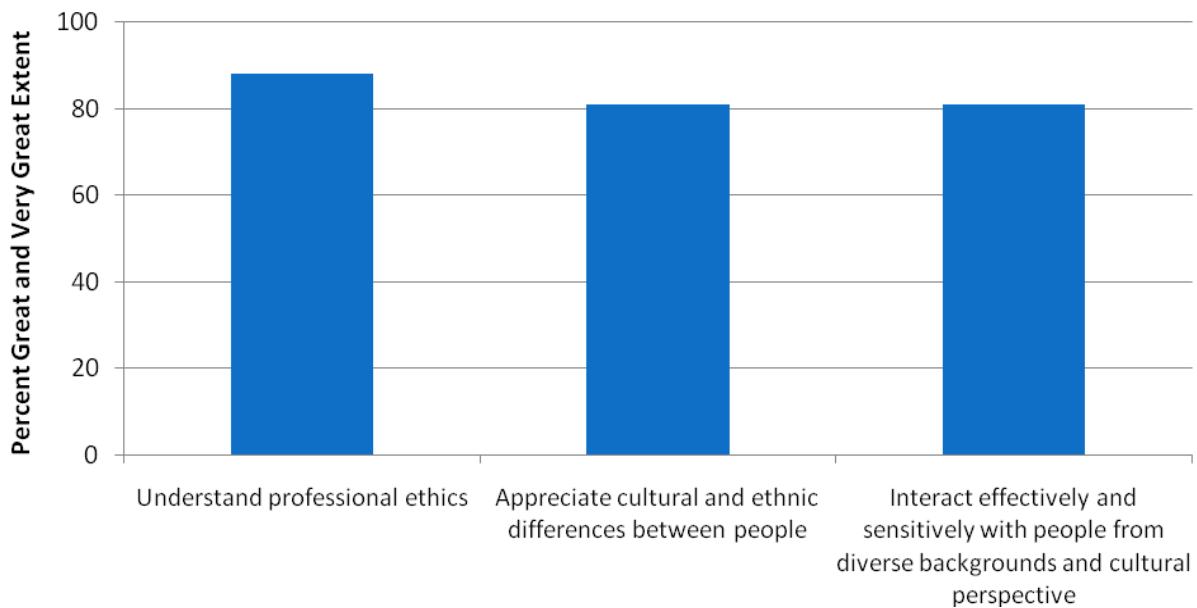
Objective 2. Students will apply psychological knowledge, skills, and values in personal and career development (IAL 2, 9, 10, 11)



Objective 3. Students will access, evaluate, and communicate information using various technologies (IAL 3, 7)



Objective 4. Students will be sensitive to and respond to sociocultural and international diversity (IAL 5, 8)



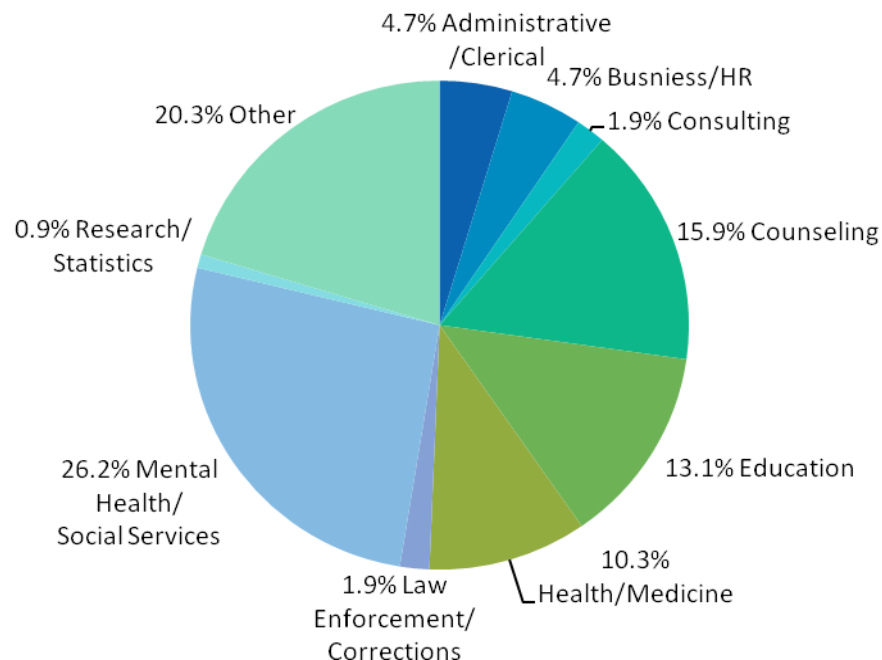
Career Paths of Psychology Alumni

When asked about employment, 86% of Alumni indicated that they were currently working or volunteering. The distribution of Alumni employment categories indicates that psychology graduates pursue a wide range of career options. The largest percentage of Alumni reported working in the mental health/social services field (26%).

Alumni Job Titles

Even within the most common job category designations a wide variety of employment titles were listed. For example, within the Mental Health/Social Services category Alumni job titles included Social Worker, Geriatric Care Manager, Bereavement Care, and Alzheimer’s Respite Care. Within the Other category Alumni held titles including Attorney, Paralegal, Firefighter, and Musician. In the Counseling category Alumni were employed as Adolescent Counselors, Marriage and Family Therapists and School Counselors. Within the Education category Alumni served as Teachers, Educational Assistants, and Special Education Teachers. Finally within the Health/Medicine category Alumni were working as Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants.

Alumni Employment Of the 125 participants, 107 (85.6%) are currently working or volunteering.

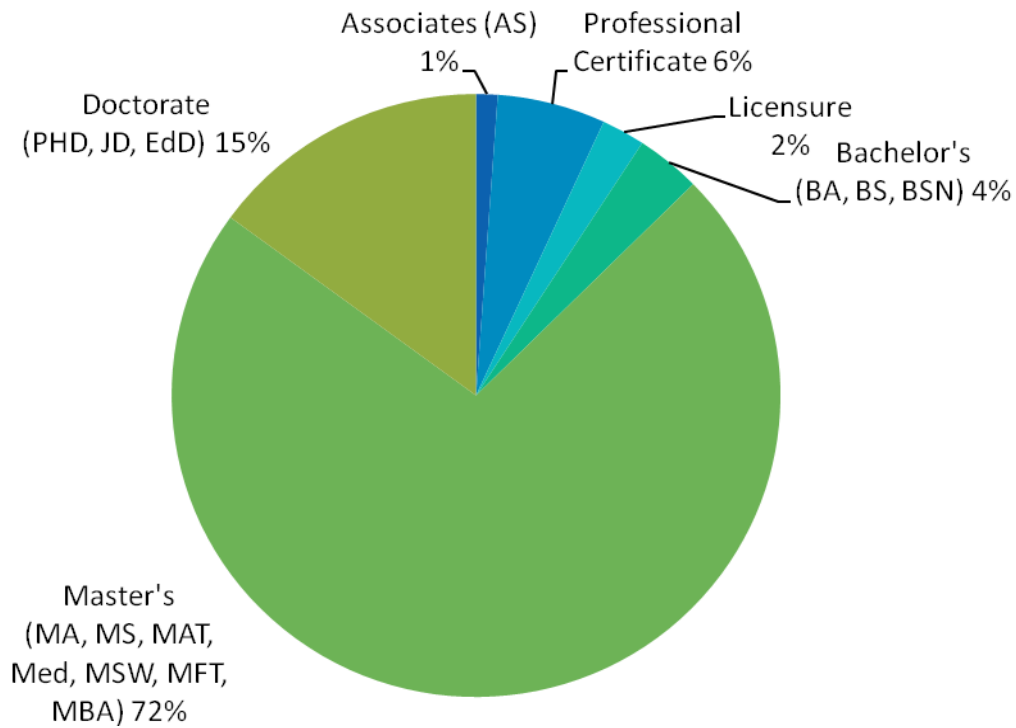


Populations Served and Income

With respect to age groups served, the largest percentage of Alumni worked with adults (22%). Alumni income reported was diverse. The mode income reported for was 30,001- 40,000, however 40% of Alumni reported earning 40,0001 or more for the past year. The diversity of income reported may be related to many factors including the current economy, Alumni volunteering and working part time, and the number of years post graduation. Additionally, as reported in the next section, pursuing graduate education may influence earnings as well.

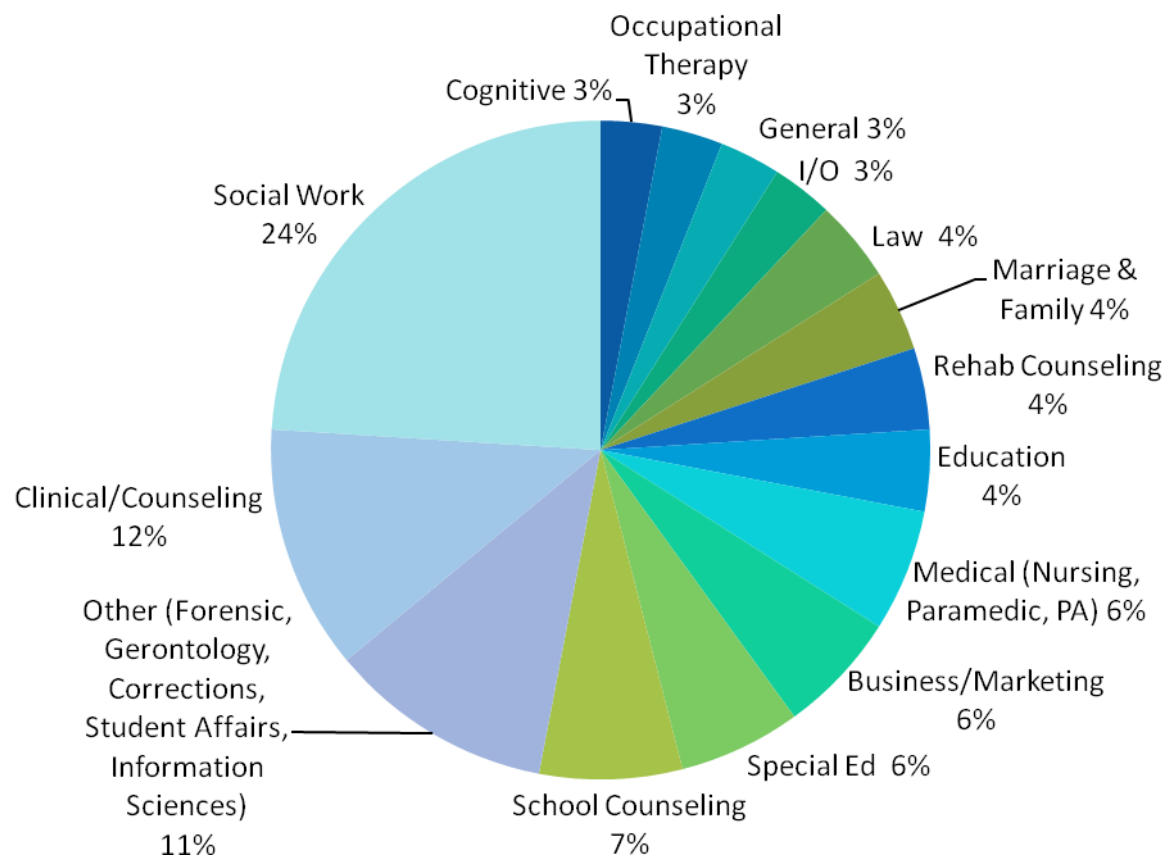
Further Education

When asked about further education, 38% of Alumni reported that they were in the process of or had completed further education. The distribution of Alumni further education appears below. Most Alumni had completed or were in the process of obtaining a Masters degree (72%).



Focus Areas within Further Education

For Alumni seeking further education, diverse paths were followed. As the following figure illustrates, the majority reporting further education, pursued a degree in Social Work, or Clinical/Counseling Psychology. However, resembling the diversity seen in career paths, Alumni further education spanned a wide spectrum of options from Cognitive Psychology, to Industrial/Organizational Psychology, to further education in Law and the Medical field. This suggests that an undergraduate degree in psychology prepared graduates to take on a wide range of advanced educational experiences.



Future educational plans

When asked about long range educational plans, over 20% of respondents indicated that they intended to start a Professional Certification, a Master's degree or a Doctoral degree in the future. Professional Certification Specialty areas ranged from Autism, Drug and Alcohol, Eating Disorders, to Oncology, ESL, and Forensic Psychology. For Alumni planning to pursue a Master's Degree, focus areas ranged from Social Work, School Counseling, Mental Health, Psychiatric Nursing, to Human Resources, Finance, and Special Education. Finally, for those planning to complete a Doctoral Degree, areas of specialization included Clinical or Counseling Psychology, Neuroscience, Education, Law, Pharmacy, Educational Leadership, and School Psychology. This combined with the above data for Alumni who have already completed further education highlight the importance of maintaining a variety of clinical and counseling psychology courses as well as advising students about opportunities to apply psychology content to other disciplines such as special education, business, and law.