

Wagner College Seniors 2014
and
“Great Jobs, Great Lives: The 2014 Gallup-Purdue Index Report”

Wagner senior responses related to workplace engagement and well-being

“For years, the value of a college degree has been determined not by the most important outcomes of a college education, but by the easiest outcomes to measure, namely, job and graduate school placement rates and alumni salaries (usually only from their first job out of college). While these metrics have some merit, they do not provide a holistic view of college graduates’ lives. These outcomes do not reflect the missions of higher education institutions, and they do not reflect the myriad reasons why students go to college. Responding to the call for increased accountability among higher education institutions, Gallup and Purdue University focused their research efforts on outcomes that provide insight into the common and essential aspirations for college graduates, no matter what type of institution they attend. Together, Gallup and Purdue created an index that examines the long-term success of graduates as they pursue a good job and a better life. This index provides insight into the relationship between the college experience and whether college graduates have great jobs and great lives. (p. 3)”

Wagner seniors completed a survey prior to graduation in April and May 2014. Selected responses that can be compared with the questions asked in the Gallup-Purdue Index are presented on the next page. On the whole, based on these responses, **Wagner seniors can be expected to thrive in their work and personal lives in the future.**

For more about the Gallup-Purdue Index Report, go to:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/168848/life-college-matters-life-college.aspx>

To download the full report go to:

<http://products.gallup.com/168857/gallup-purdue-index-inaugural-national-report.aspx>

For questions about Wagner senior responses or the HEDS Senior Survey, contact Dr. Anne Love, Associate Provost for Assessment (alove@wagner.edu).

Comparisons of Gallup-Purdue responses and Wagner senior responses

Gallup		Wagner		
Supportive Relationships	% strongly agree		% strongly agree	% agree
My professors cared about me as a person.	27%	Genuinely interested in students.	34%	58%
		Interested in helping students grow in more than just academic areas.	29%	56%
		Willing to spend time outside of class to discuss issues of interest and importance to students.	34%	51%
I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams.	22%	I developed a close, personal relationship with at least one faculty member.	43%	41%
I had at least one professor who made me excited about learning.	63%			
All of the above 3	14%			
Experiential and Deep Learning			% very much	% quite a bit
I had an internship or job that allowed me to apply what I was learning in the classroom.	29%	My experience in an internship (paid or unpaid) contributed to my learning and personal development.	33%	23%
		Working with faculty on research contributed to my learning and personal development.	17%	19%
I worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete.	32%	Participated in Senior LC	100%	
I was extremely active in extracurricular activities and organizations.	20%	Community service contributed to my learning and personal development.	25%	25%
		Intercollegiate activities contributed to my learning and personal development.	16%	10%
All of the above 3	6%			



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When thinking about the ultimate outcome of a college degree, there is almost universal agreement about the value people seek and expect: to increase the probability of getting a good job and having a better life. Yet, there is not a single college or university in the U.S. that has rigorously researched and measured whether their graduates have “great jobs” and “great lives.”

Findings from the inaugural administration of the Gallup-Purdue Index — which includes interviews with more than 30,000 U.S. graduates — yield important insights for colleges, educators, employers, and students on the factors that contribute to these outcomes for college graduates.

Chief among these is that where graduates went to college — public or private, small or large, very selective or not selective — hardly matters at all to their current well-being and their work lives in comparison to their experiences in college. For example, if graduates had a professor who cared about them as a person, made them excited about learning, and encouraged them to pursue their dreams, their odds of being engaged at work more than doubled, as did their odds of thriving in their well-being. And if graduates had an internship or job where they were able to apply what they were learning in the classroom, were actively involved in extracurricular activities and organizations, and worked on projects that took a semester or more to complete, their odds of being engaged at work doubled also. Feeling supported and having deep learning experiences means everything when it comes to long-term outcomes for college graduates.

That these six elements of the college experience are so strongly related to graduates’ lives and careers is almost hard to fathom. When it comes to finding the secret to success, it’s not “where you go,” it’s “how you do it” that makes all the difference in higher education. Yet few college graduates achieve the winning combination. Only 14% of graduates strongly agree they were supported by professors who cared, made them excited about learning, and encouraged their

dreams. Further, just 6% of graduates strongly agree they had a meaningful internship or job, worked on a long-term project, and were actively involved in extra-curricular activities. Those who strongly agree to having all six of these experiences during their college time are rare — only 3%.

The implications are broad. When a student is trying to decide between an elite Ivy League school, a large public university, or a small private college, what should he or she consider to help make the decision? When an employer is evaluating two recent graduates from different backgrounds and institutions, which educational background should distinguish one applicant over the other, and why? When colleges and universities are setting internal strategy, designing new programs and curricula, deciding what performance measures faculty should be compensated for, and attracting future students, what are they to do?

The answers to these questions are not simple enough to answer in one paragraph or one report. The data presented in this report suggest, however, that the answers lie in thinking about things that are more lasting than selectivity of an institution or any of the traditional measures of college. Instead, the answers may lie in *what* students are doing in college and *how* they are experiencing it. Those elements — more than any others — have a profound relationship to a person’s life and career. Yet they are being achieved by too few. It should be a national imperative — owned by higher education institutions, students, parents, businesses, non-profits, and government alike, to change this.