

Comments from Alumni

Addendum to Alumni Survey of Class of 1996

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The HEDS Alumni Survey that was administered in the spring of 2002 to the Class of 1996 allowed space for alumni to amplify on any of the responses to the questionnaire or on any aspect of their undergraduate experience. The comments received from the Class of 1996 mentioned many different facets of an Earlham education, in both a positive and a negative light.

There was a positive response to the Earlham's off campus programs. One alumnus said, "I would like to say that I learned more during my off-campus program than at any other time at Earlham. The experience of going off campus forced me to meet and interact with people I would probably never have associated with. I consider all of the folks I met on the program friends and have many fond memories of my time spent with them. I would highly recommend off campus programs to any and all students attending Earlham and as a college I would say that E.C. could do a better job of marketing these valuable opportunities to prospective students." Another said that her experience off campus in Northern Ireland was very impactful and changed her world view

Interdisciplinary programs were also reflected on positively, several alumni mentioned that the PAGES program was especially meaningful. "The student-faculty PAGES community has made a huge impact on who I am today and the extent that I am able to 'let life speak through my work'". One criticism of the PAGES department was they need more full time PAGES professors, especially with several of the interdepartmental professors retiring. Another alumnus said, "I really appreciated the interdisciplinary nature of my major: Human Development and Social Relations. It encouraged me to think of the world, cultures, and systems within it, holistically." Furthermore it was said, "I would most like to support interdisciplinary programs. They are the heart of Earlham, the majors that teach you to think across academic and cultural boundaries. They teach analytical and critical thinking skills while asking you to complete real-life projects. This is why I am better prepared than graduates from other schools."

Alumni appeared to be dissatisfied with the preparation they had received for the real world. One alumnus said, "Social change colleges like Earlham should train people to work effectively in industry, not merely critique it." Another said, "Earlham did a great

job of promoting critical thinking, social awareness, self development, and writing skills. Earlham was weak at encouraging students to think critically about our own futures. Career development should be emphasized more. I had a very diverse education but at the expense of a practical one.”

Although some of the alumni did not feel they were adequately prepared for the real world they did, on the whole, believe they were well prepared for further educational opportunities. “Educationally, Earlham prepared me extremely well for my graduate studies,” said one alumni. Another stated, “I have happily returned to the academic world, and am regularly impressed by my level of preparation for graduate school compared to my peers.”

The library service received mixed reviews. Positively one alumnus said, “The library was fabulous!! I appreciated it then, but even more so now.” Conversely, another said, “The library resources for a psychology major were laughable. I traveled to Oxford, Ohio to use Miami University’s library on a far too regular basis.”

A few alumni felt that Earlham needed to be more willing and prepared to address learning disabilities. One alumnus said, "The only dissatisfaction I have is from the failure of the Student Services to recognize, evaluate or refer me for academic difficulty. At 25 I was diagnosed with ADHD. I spoke with Student Services many times about my academic difficulties. Now my low G. P.A. is making it almost impossible to gain acceptance to graduate school." Another alumnus said, "I also found that although Earlham seems to be a liberal, understanding place, the teaching and expectations didn't accommodate people with different learning styles, or possible learning disabilities."

Alumni felt that Earlham's professors were supportive and committed to the students, but there were a few alumni who felt they did not receive the attention they needed. One alumni said, "There were many other unique qualities to the community present at Earlham, due in large part to the outstanding faculty and staff and their high level of commitment." Similarly, another alumni said, "I'm glad I have my degree and glad I got it from Earlham. It was important to me to be somewhere with supportive profs that encouraged discussion." Conversely another alumni stated, "Although I didn't get a lot of personal attention from professors, I thought the professors in the field of biology were good and the courses were good too."

On overall Earlham education the alumni appeared to be satisfied with their experience. One alumnus stated, “ I really enjoyed my time at Earlham and feel it prepared me very well for my master’s program and career. My closest friends are people I went to Earlham with and the relationships I made there will be with me always.” Another said, “I look back on my undergraduate education at Earlham with great love and fond memories. I felt challenged,

stimulated, and safe in a community of hard-working learners. I feel like Earlham prepared me for my life- and especially my future education. I feel a deep sense of gratitude to Earlham and all of my excellent professors there.”

Return to [Alumni Survey - Class of 1996](#)