

Alumni Survey – Classes of 1997 and 1998

Office of Institutional Research

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2003, 168 graduates from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 responded to an alumni survey that was produced by the Higher Education Data Consortium. (See [Appendix A](#)). The survey was sent to 391 alums. The names and addresses of these alumni were secured from the Institutional Advancement office. A cover letter was prepared by Nelson Bingham explaining the importance and uses of the survey. A follow-up letter was sent to those alumni who did not return their survey after a reasonable time. Email reminders were also sent to those who did not return their survey. Completed surveys were sent to Survey Resource Partners in Minnesota for scanning.

This survey was also utilized by some of our peer institutions to survey their graduates from the Classes of 1997 and 1998. HEDS prepared a report comparing Earlham to a Peer Group. (See [Appendix B](#) for a list of the institutions in the Peer Group.)

RESULTS

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The survey was completed by 84 alums from each Earlham class (44 males and 124 females), which was a 43% response rate. This was a better rate of return than any of the other institutions included in the Peer Group. (See [Appendix B](#).) Ninety-four percent of

the Earlham respondents were white (non-hispanic). Most of them (56%) were married or living with a partner and most (88%) had no children. Table 1 shows the majors of the Earlham respondents.

Table 1

Undergraduate Majors

Social Sciences	26.5%
Life Sciences	23.5%
Humanities	18.1%
Psychology	12.7%
Other Non-Science Fields	12%
Physical Sciences	8.4%
Arts and Music	7.2%
Business/Management	3%
Math/Computer Sciences	2.4%
Geosciences	2.4%
Education	0%

The majority (64%) of these EC alumni were employed full time immediately after graduation. This compares to 60% of the alumni from our peer institutions. The most popular occupation the year following graduation from Earlham was in some type of education (32.4%). This included teaching preschool, elementary school, secondary school, college, research or teaching assistant, or other teacher or instructor positions. Another 10% were working in social work and 9% were working in sales. Currently (5-6 years after graduation) there remain 31% of the Earlham alumni of the Classes of 1997 and 1998 working in the field of education with 10.5% in managerial and management related occupations, 10.5% in health related occupations, 7.8% as scientists and mathematicians, 7.8% are writers, artists, entertainers or athletes, and 5.9% are in administrative support positions. The largest percentage (17.4%) of the alumni from our peer institutions are currently working as educators. Almost 14% are in management related occupations, 10.3% in legal related occupations, 9% in health occupations and 8.7% are writers, artists, entertainers or athletes. Surprisingly, a greater percentage of alumni from these peer institutions are currently employed in the social work field (4.8%) than are Earlham alumni (3.3%).

Eighty-eight percent of the Earlham respondents from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 indicated that their major was indirectly or directly related to their career. Eighty-two percent of the respondents from peer institutions indicated the same.

A small percentage (20.4%) of the EC alum respondents were in graduate school full time immediately after graduation compared to 27.4% of alumni from our peer

institutions. However, 21.6% of the Earlham alumni are currently (5 and 6 years after graduation) full time graduate school students and 15% are part time graduate students. This compares to 20.8% of the alumni from our peer institutions currently in graduate school full time and 11% are part time graduate students. Most of the Earlham alumni respondents from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 (66%) are currently employed full time while 18% are employed part time. A higher percentage (71%) of the alumni from peer institutions are currently employed full time and 13% are employed part time.

Ultimately, 29.5% of the Earlham Classes of 1997 and 1998 would prefer to be educators compared to 22% of the alumni from our peer institutions. The second most popular occupation listed by 15% of Earlham graduates as the career they would ultimately like to have is in health diagnosing and treating occupations. Other occupations listed as ultimate goals for the Earlham grads included becoming writers, artists, entertainers or athletes (13.7%), scientists or mathematicians (7.5%), managerial positions (6.8%), social, recreational or religious work (6.2%), and legal related occupations (2.7%); whereas 17% of the alumni from peer institutions were interested in management occupations, 12.1% ultimately desired legal occupations, 9.9% were interested in health related fields, 9.3% wanted to be scientists or mathematicians, and 9.3% aspire to become writers, artists, entertainers or athletes.

Most of the Earlham alumni (47.9%) from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 estimated their current annual income to be between \$20,000 and \$40,000, and 32.7% of alumni from our peer institutions reported the same. Four percent of the peer group alums are making more than \$120,000 annually, whereas none of the Earlham alums had incomes in that bracket.

The alumni were asked to evaluate their undergraduate education. They indicated the importance in their current activities of various abilities and types of knowledge that may be developed in a bachelor's degree program and then indicated the extent those abilities or types of knowledge were enhanced by their undergraduate experience. Table 2 shows the mean scores for Earlham and our peer group.

Table 2**Evaluation of Undergraduate Education**

Ability/knowledge	Earlham		Peer Group
	Importance in current activities	Extent enhanced by undergraduate experience	Extent enhanced by undergraduate experience
CRITICAL THINKING	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Acquire new skills and knowledge	3.9	3.7	3.7
Think analytically and logically	3.7	3.7	3.7
Formulate creative/original ideas	3.6	3.6	3.5
Academic ability	3.2	3.6	3.6
SKILLS/LEARNING			
Write effectively	3.5	3.8	3.6
Use quantitative tools	3.0	2.9	2.9
Appreciate arts, literature, music, drama	3.1	3.3	3.2
Gain in-depth knowledge of a field	3.5	3.4	3.2
Read or speak a foreign language	2.2	2.8	2.4
SOCIAL/MORAL AWARENESS			
Develop awareness of societal problems	3.5	3.7	3.4
Place current problems in perspective	3.4	3.5	3.2
Understand moral/ethical issues	3.4	3.7	3.3
SELF DEVELOPMENT			
Understand myself	3.5	3.5	3.2
Function independently, w/o supervision	3.9	3.5	3.5
Develop self-esteem	3.5	3.3	3.1
Establish a course of action for goals	3.8	3.2	3.2
Intellectual self-confidence	3.7	3.6	3.4
Develop desire for continued learning	3.6	3.6	3.6
RELATIONSHIP SKILLS			
Lead /supervise tasks/groups of people	3.5	3.0	2.8
Relate well to people of dif. culture/races	3.5	3.4	3.1
Function effectively as member of team	3.6	3.5	3.1
Communicate well orally	3.8	3.4	3.3
Understand others	3.8	3.6	3.3
UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY			
Understanding the process of science	2.8	3.1	2.8
Use technology	3.2	2.7	2.8

Scale: 4=Greatly 3=Moderately 2= A Little 1=Not at All

Using the perspective gained since they graduated, the alumni from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 were asked how satisfied they are with various services or aspects of Earlham. Table 3 shows their degree of satisfaction compared with alumni from peer institutions.

Table 3
Satisfaction with College Experiences

College Experiences	Earlham	Peer Group
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Academic advising	3.1	3.1
Contact with faculty	3.8	3.7
Quality of teaching	3.9	3.7
Courses in major field	3.6	3.5
Courses outside major field	3.5	3.4
Independent study/research	3.5	3.5
CAMPUS SERVICES AND FACILITIES		
Career services	2.8	2.7
Financial services	3.2	3.3
Library resources	3.6	3.4
Recreation/athletics	3.1	3.4
Residential life	3.2	3.5
CAMPUS CLIMATE		
Student voice in policies	3.3	3.1
Campus safety	3.6	3.5
Sense of belonging	3.5	3.5
Ethnic/racial diversity	2.8	2.7
Social life on campus	3.2	3.4

Scale: 4=Very Satisfied 3=Generally Satisfied 2=Generally Dissatisfied 1=Very Dissatisfied

Table 4 shows to what extent their undergraduate experience fulfilled their original expectations in various areas.

Table 4

Expectations

Expectations	Earlham	Peer Group
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Enhance your intellectual growth	3.9	3.8
Foster your personal growth	3.8	3.6
Promote your ability to form relationships	3.5	3.4
Acquire in-depth knowledge in a particular field	3.4	3.3
Develop competence in career relevant skills	3.0	3.0

Scale: 4=Greatly 3=Moderately 2=A Little 1=Not at All

Seventy-seven percent of the Classes of 1997 and 1998 were very satisfied with their overall undergraduate education compared to 76% of the alumni from our peer group. Seventy-seven percent of the Earlham alumni respondents indicated that they definitely would encourage others to attend Earlham. Seventy-eight percent of our peer group alumni indicated the same.

The alumni were asked to evaluate their level of involvement in various activities while an undergraduate and then evaluate the contribution of each activity to their personal or professional life after graduation. Table 5 shows the mean scores for Earlham and our peer group.

Table 5

Contribution of Activities to Development

Activities	Earlham		Peer Group
	Level of Involvement	Contribution to your development	Contribution to your development
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Student or campus government	1.3	1.4	1.7
Intercollegiate athletics	1.8	2.0	2.2
Intramural sports	1.6	1.7	1.8
Student publications	1.4	1.6	1.7
Performing arts/music	2.2	2.5	2.1
Political organization or club	1.9	2.2	2.0
Community service	2.4	2.8	2.5
Fraternity/sorority	1.0	1.0	1.6
Religious groups	1.7	2.1	1.5
ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES			
Internships	2.1	2.5	2.4
Study abroad	3.0	3.5	3.0
Work on faculty research	1.7	2.1	2.0
Independent study	2.4	2.8	2.4
EMPLOYMENT ACTIVITIES			
On-campus employment	2.7	2.6	2.4
Off-campus employment	1.7	1.8	1.7

Scale: 4=Extensive 3=Moderate 2=A Little 1=None

Table 6 shows to what extent these graduates felt their undergraduate experience prepared them for various post-graduation activities.

Table 6

Level of Preparedness for Post-graduation Activities

Activities	Earlham	Peer Group
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Post-baccalaureate education	3.5	3.4
Interpersonal relationships	3.3	3.0
Current career	3.2	3.2
Social and civic involvement	3.2	3.0

Scale: 4=Greatly 3=Moderately 2=A Little 1=Not at All

To determine the amount of involvement these graduates have had with their alma mater, they were asked how frequently they participated in various activities that were sponsored by their undergraduate alma mater. Table 7 shows the degree of involvement of Earlham alumni compared to that of the alumni from our peer institutions.

Table 7

Involvement with Alma Mater

Activity	Earlham	Peer Group
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Maintained contact with other alumni	3.6	3.6
Read campus publications	3.2	3.3
Visited the institution's Web site	2.7	2.8
Maintained contact with faculty members	2.5	2.2
Visited campus for any purpose	2.3	2.3
Contributed to or solicited for the annual fund	2.0	2.7
Attended alumni functions on campus	1.5	1.7
Attended alumni functions off campus	1.4	1.7
Maintained contact with administrators	1.4	1.4
Attended alma mater sporting events	1.3	1.4
Participated in an alumni community svc. program	1.1	1.1
Participated in a career advisory program	1.1	1.4
Served as an alumni admissions volunteer	1.1	1.4
Participated in alumni continuing education prog.	1.0	1.0

Scale: 4=Frequently 3=Occasionally 2=Briefly 1=Never

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 indicated that they strongly or very strongly identified with their alma mater compared to 75% of the alumni from our peer institutions.

To what extent have the alumni voluntarily participated in organizations since graduation? Table 8 gives this information.

Table 8

Involvement in Organizations

Organization	Earlham	Peer Group
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Professional	2.2	2.3
Cultural/Arts	2.2	2.1
Civic/Community	2.1	2.3
Recreational (e.g., sports club)	2.0	2.2
Religious	1.8	1.6
Political	1.6	1.6
Educational Service (e.g., PTA)	1.5	1.5
Youth (e.g. little league, scouting)	1.4	1.5
Service (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)	1.3	1.3

Scale: 4=A Lot 3=Moderately 2=A Little 1=Not at All

Of the 64 Earlham alumni from the Classes of 1997 and 1998 who are currently pursuing further education, 18% are working toward a master's degrees in education. Another 12% are working toward master's degrees in the social sciences and 9.4% are working on master's degrees in the Life Sciences. This varies significantly from alumni from our peer institutions where 15% of their alumni are working toward master's degrees in business. Of the 93 Earlham alumni who indicated they have plans in the future to obtain higher degrees, 12.9% indicated a desire for a master's degree in education and 14% have plans to pursue a doctoral degree in education. Additionally, 9.7% of the alumni respondents from Earlham hope to obtain a doctoral degree in Psychology, and 8.6% hope to obtain a doctoral degree in the social sciences. An additional 9.7% hope to attain a doctoral degree in the social sciences. Alumni from the peer group institutions are more interested in business with 13.6% indicating an interest in pursuing an MBA in the future. An additional 10% of these peer group alumni hope to attain a master's degree in humanities and 9.7% hope to obtain a professional law degree.

Most of the Earlham respondents (83.3%) were recipients of financial aid while at Earlham. This figure is compared to 74.6% of the respondents at peer institutions who were recipients of financial aid. The majority of these alumni (79%) took out loans for their undergraduate study. Table 9 shows the effect of these educational loans

Table 9

Effect of Undergraduate Loans

Effect	Earlham	Peer Group
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Allowed me to get a degree at an otherwise unaffordable institution	2.5	2.4
Focused job search on higher paying fields	1.4	1.6
Postponed or canceled post-baccalaureate education	1.4	1.4

Scale: 3=To a great extent 2=Somewhat 1=Not at All

We chose to add supplemental questions to this survey. These questions are unique to Earlham and therefore we did not receive comparison data for other colleges.

The Classes of 1997 and 1998 were given specific educational objectives of Earlham's general education program and asked to rate the degree to which Earlham has helped them to develop that competency.

Table 10

Development of General Education Competencies

	<i>Mean score</i>
Proficiency in a non-native language	2.80
Awareness of one's self as a creator of art	2.43
Appreciation of artistic works	2.21
Awareness of one's self as a biological organism	2.20
Understanding of the methods and knowledge of science	2.12
Understanding of distinctive disciplinary frameworks	1.92
Global and cross-cultural knowledge	1.77
Personal creativity and confidence in one's own ideas	1.75
Awareness of one's self as a political and social being	1.69
Awareness of one's self as a moral person	1.62
A sense of the responsibility that comes with knowledge	1.60
Skills in group and cooperation learning	1.60
Understanding of interdisciplinary approaches	1.58
Ability to think about problems using different disciplines	1.55
Skills in gathering and evaluating information from diverse sources	1.49
Ability to interpret works, ideas, or cultures from different perspectives	1.41
Communication Skills-written and oral	1.36
A desire and the skills to be a lifelong learner	1.32
In your experience, to what extent has Earlham fulfilled its liberal arts mission?	1.24

Scale: 1=greatly 2=moderately 3=somewhat 4=slightly 5=not at all

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