

Virginia Educated: A Post-College Outcomes Study

Selected results

presented to the

State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and
the Council of Presidents

by

Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory, VCU

Structure of the presentation

- Major upshots
- Where the data come from
- Elaboration on major upshots
 - Satisfaction of graduates
 - Student debt
 - Mobility and residency
 - Transfers
 - Employment and underemployment
 - What would make students more successful
- Recap
- Next steps

Major upshots

- Satisfaction of graduates: good to excellent on multiple measures...
 - ...except for general education
- Student debt is a serious problem for a significant minority
 - Those who graduated with debt are less satisfied with the ROI
- Graduates are tied to geography – maybe more than some expect
 - Especially graduates of 2-year institutions
- Transfer is important
- Employment seems strong; underemployment more difficult to measure
- What graduates recommended institutions do to promote success
 - Personal financial education
 - Workplace skills
 - Experiential learning
- This rich, complex resource should be mined further

Where the data come from

Goal: Assess the impact and value of higher education in Virginia in a holistic way

- Undergraduate experiences and satisfaction with them
- Student debt
- Employment, underemployment & entrepreneurship
- Residence and mobility
- Community engagement
- Health and well-being
- Demographics
- Other areas

Robust data with high engagement

Total completions: 15,348

2-year graduates: 4,601

4-year graduates: 10,747

Primarily a web-based survey, graduates of public institutions 2007-2018

Probability sample

- n=50,495
- 32.4 minutes (median)
- 91.0% finished
- Data linkage: 68.4%
- Response rate: 26.3%
- Completions: 13,294

Email-only supplement

- n=52,173
- 30.0 minutes (median)
- 74.1% finished
- Data linkage: 70.0%
- Response rate: 3.94%
- Completions: 2,054

Confidence in representing graduates

Respondent demographics aligned well with our study population

Gender breakdowns

(2-year graduates, 4-year graduates)

- Female (61%, 56%)
- Male (38%, 44%)
- Non binary/self-describe (1%, 1%)

Racial/Ethnic breakdowns

(2-year graduates, 4-year graduates)

- Asian (4%, 8%)
- Black/African-American (17%, 12%)
- Hispanic/Latino (6%, 5%)
- Multiracial (4%, 4%)
- White (67%, 70%)

The survey data were weighted to known demographics for analysis

Two-thirds enrolled for a job-related reason

- 64.3% of graduates said the primary reason they started their undergraduate education was job- or career-related
 - 2-year graduates more likely to mention existing jobs
 - 4-year graduates more likely to mention aspirational jobs
- 35.7% percent gave a reason that was not job- or career-related
 - Family, friends, teachers expected you to attend: 10.2%
 - Have a well-rounded education: 8.3%
 - Figure out what you wanted to do: 7.6%
 - Learn new things: 3.2%
 - Feel empowered or independent: 2.0%
 - Meet new people, be somewhere different, other: 4.3%

Very high satisfaction overall

“Overall, how satisfied are you with the undergraduate education you received?”

- 88.1% of all graduates were satisfied
 - 44.3% “satisfied”
 - 43.8% “very satisfied”
- Essentially no difference here between 2-year (86.9%) and 4-year (88.7%) graduates

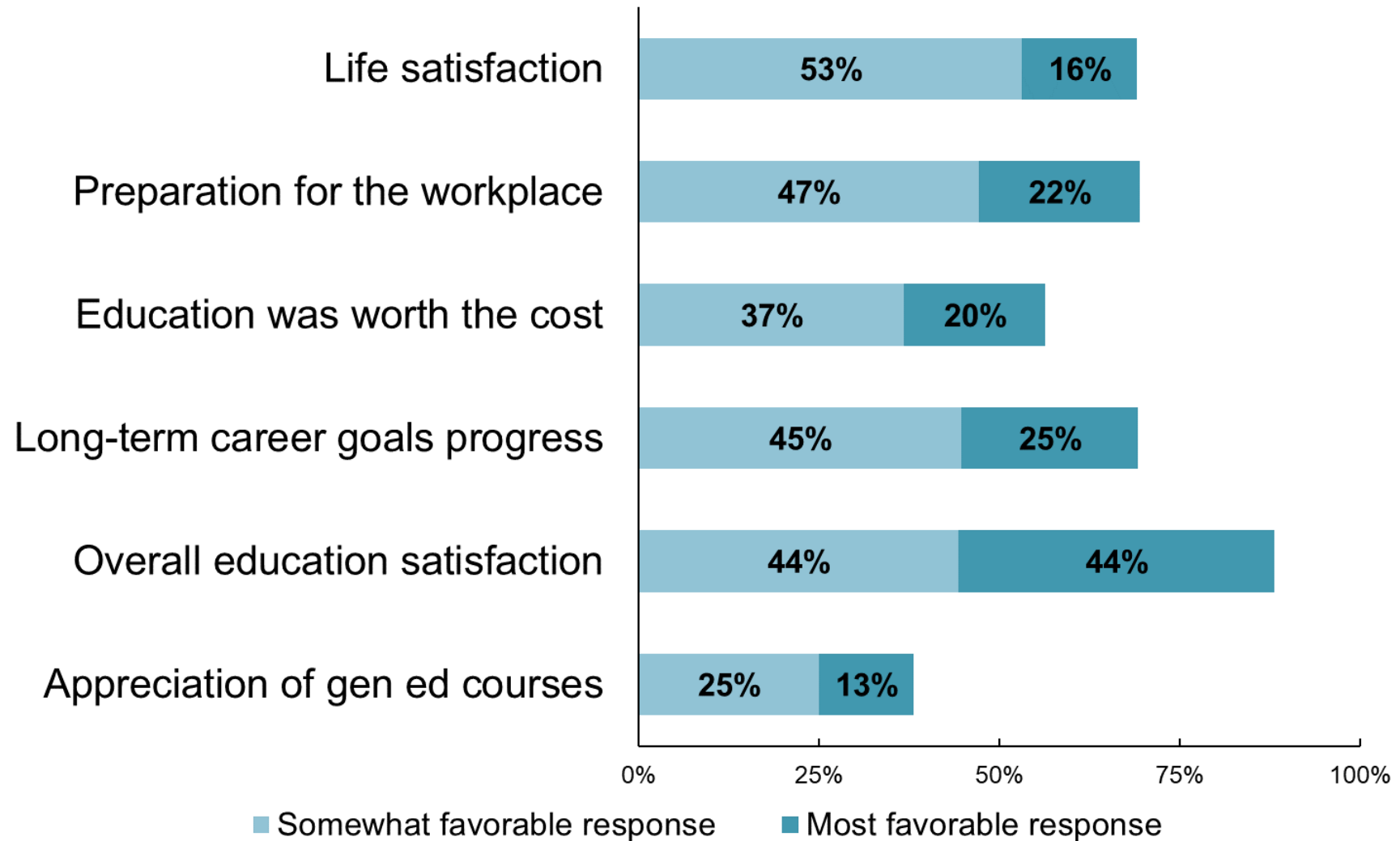
Majorities say education was worth the cost

“Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement: Your undergraduate education was worth the cost.”

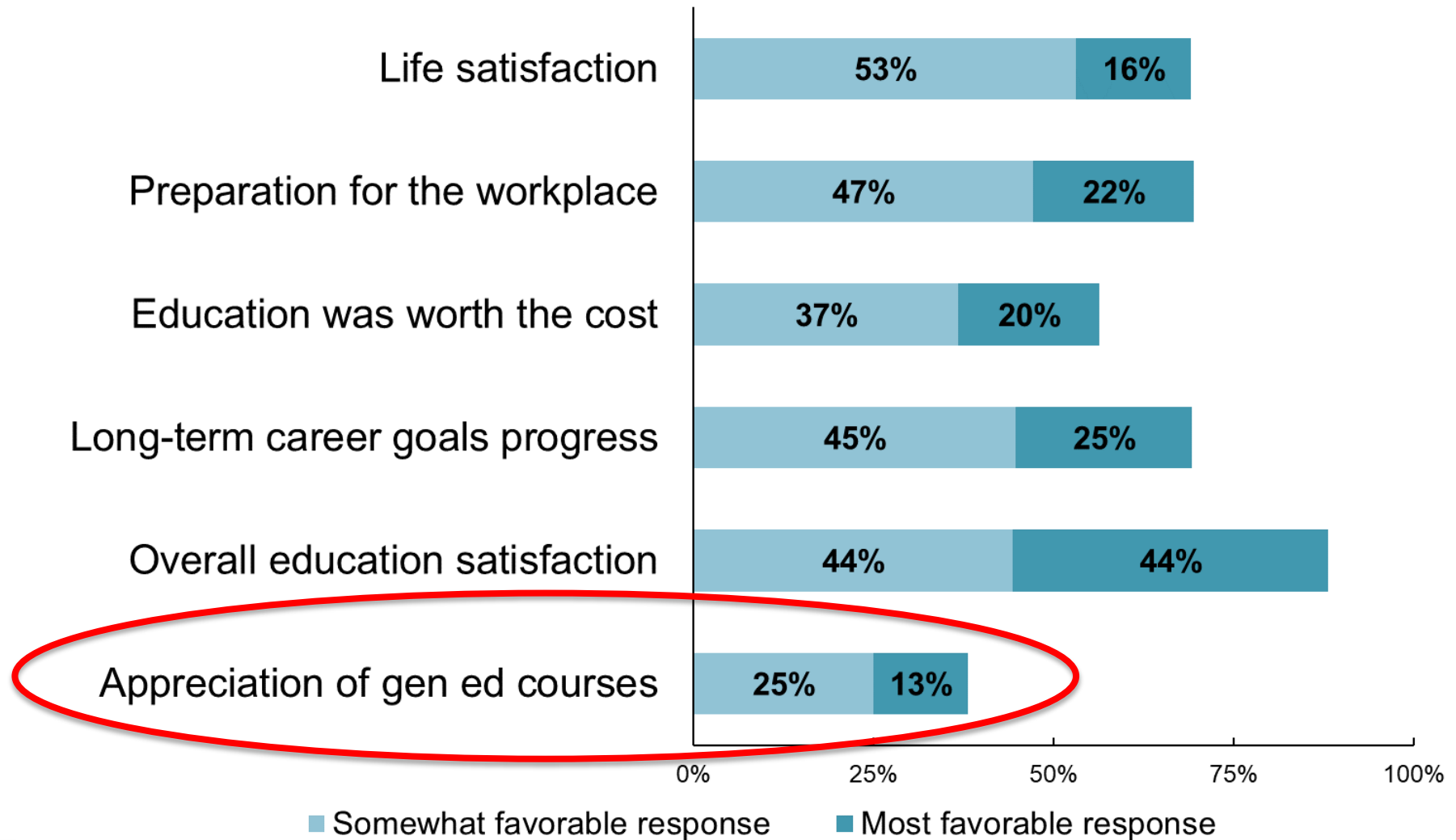
- Overall, 56.3% of graduates agreed...
 - 62.7% of 2-year graduates
 - 53.0% of 4-year graduates
- ...but not those who completed undergrad with student debt

	Total		2-year		4-year	
	Debt	No debt	Debt	No debt	Debt	No debt
Worth the cost?	45.9%	67.6%	46.0%	74.3%	45.8%	62.8%

Satisfaction is good across most aspects



Satisfaction is good across most aspects



Employment snapshot

- Overall, 87.3% were currently employed. Of them:
 - 78.7% worked 40 or more hours per week
 - 66.0% said their jobs related “very well” (41.0%) or “moderately well” (25.0%) to the discipline they studied
 - 79.9% got retirement contributions, 84.4% paid time off, 85.8% health insurance
 - 10.8% got student loan forgiveness or help with payments
 - 10.7% got no benefits
- Among unemployed:
 - 62.9% were retired, disabled, student, choose not work, family duties
 - 18.6% laid off due to COVID-19

Underemployment measures vary

- Self-reported underemployment: 12.5%
 - 13.1% for 2-years
 - 11.3% for 4-years
- Calculated underemployment: 42.4%
 - 45.1% for 2-years
 - 41.0% for 4-years
- Graduates who were calculated as underemployed but self-reported not being underemployed most frequently said (multiple responses accepted):
 - Their work/life combination is their choice: 58.5%
 - Their job makes meaningful use of their education/skills: 44.5%

Student debt is a big problem for some

- When they completed their undergraduate education:
 - 39.9% of 2-year and 56.0% of 4-year graduates had student debt
 - 57.7% of 2-year and 52.4% of 4-year graduates said that paying their undergraduate debt was more of a problem than they expected
- At the time of the survey:
 - 27.0% of 2-year and 23.1% of 4-year graduates had any student debt
 - Among these: 31.4% of 2-year and 23.3% of 4-year graduates are “very” or “extremely” worried about their current student debt situation
- Written comments about problems with student debt convey regret and desperation in many cases

Graduates are closely linked to geography

- Most graduates enrolled as in-state students
 - 97.1% of 2-year graduates
 - 80.5% of 4-year graduates
- Most graduates living in Virginia at the time of the survey
 - 86.9% of 2-year graduates
 - 61.8% of 4-year graduates
- 80.8% of out-of-state students were not living in Virginia at the time of the survey
- 74.1% of out-of-state students were from nearby/East Coast
 - 35.0% from **MD, NC**, DC, TN, WV and KY
 - 39.1% from **NJ, PA, NY**, MA and CT

Relocations often in-state for jobs, family

- Relocated: 48.9% of 2-years and 73.1% of 4-years
 - Changed where they lived since completing undergraduate education
- 71.0% of 2-years and 51.1% of 4-years relocated within Virginia
- Reasons for relocating
 - Employment opportunities (for self or other)
 - Family/personal reasons

Transfer is important

- Overall 34.9% said they had transferred at any point in their education
 - 42.4% of 2-year graduates
 - 30.9% of 4-year graduates
- If increasing the number of 4-year degree holders is a goal, transfer and transfer pathways are important

Making students more successful

“What information, opportunities or skills should Virginia’s colleges and universities focus on to make students more successful?”

- **Personal financial education** (e.g., budgets, loans, taxes, mortgage, retirement)
 - 58.2% of 2-year and 72.6% of 4-year graduates
- **Workplace skills** (e.g., salary negotiation, interviewing, conflict resolution)
 - 55.9% of 2-year and of 65.3% 4-year graduates
- **Experiential learning** (apprenticeships, internships, etc.)
 - 55.5% of 2-year and 62.7% 4-year graduates

Recap

- Most graduates are satisfied
- General education may benefit from attention
- Graduates suggest personal financial education, workplace skills, and more experiential learning
- Graduates are closely tied to geography
- Transfer is important for state goals
- Student debt is a problem for some
 - But it has significant impacts when it is a problem
 - Debt reduces perceived return on investment

Next steps

- Release executive summary and full report
- Finalize and release data tables to institutions
- Finalize and release multivariate analyses
- Transfer data files to SCHEV
- Close out contract
- Consider follow-ups with respondents who indicated they were open to them (as a separate project)
 - Understand student debt issues in more detail
 - Validate survey information (e.g., underemployment)
 - Respond to questions that may arise

Acknowledgments

SCHEV

The Council

Peter Blake

Dr. Joseph G. DeFilippo

Tod Massa

Ashley Lockhart

Others from SCHEV

Also...

Survey advisory committee

VEDP

National figures

Dr. Sarin Adhikari

VCU colleagues

SERL staff

Dr. Jim Ellis

Anne Buford

Daniel Davis

Taylor Jenkins

Laura Hazlett

Krista McDonald

Jessica Smith

Dr. Julie Charbonnier

Dr. Cydney Lowenstein

Tanushree Banerjee

SERL data team

Ganna Aboutabl

Christopher

Burroughs

Mac Bowman

Tatiana Kohlmann

Mahelet Mesfin

Fatima Toure

Atticus Johnson

Oluwarotimi Johnson

Terisa Rajbhandari

Pritesh Singh

Print/Mail vendor: Taylored Printing, Yorktown VA

Thank you!
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