

Introduction and Method

In this report, we describe various characteristics of our students as they are preparing to move beyond Earlham. This research summarizes such aspects as students' experiences with faculty and coursework, satisfaction with various co-curricular activities and satisfaction overall. In addition to this, the survey also looks at students' future plans and priorities.

This survey instrument was designed by the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS). We have included in this report comparative data from other participating institutions provided by HEDS. (At the end of this document is a list of schools included in this group.)

Characteristics of the Sample

Eighty seniors (30%) completed this survey online. Of the seniors who responded, 28% were male and 72% were female. A total of 70% of these students had at least one parent or guardian who has earned at least a bachelor's degree with 48% reporting a graduate school degree in the family. Of this group, 49% report Social Sciences as at least one of their major areas of study, 19% report Biology, 24% Humanities and 10% Business.

Faculty Involvement and Teaching

The following are students' reports of interactions with faculty both inside and outside the classroom. Earlham students rate their interactions with faculty slightly higher in almost all categories. They feel faculty are "genuinely interested" at a higher rate and also pose challenging ideas in the classroom at a higher rate.

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Genuinely interested	4.57	4.39
Interested in helping student grow more than just academics	4.33	4.08
Provide prompt and useful feedback	4.08	4.05
Spend time outside of class to discuss issues	4.59	4.36
Positive non classroom interactions with faculty for personal growth	4.31	4.15
Positive non classroom interactions with faculty for intellectual growth	4.19	4.19
Positive non classroom interactions with faculty for career growth	3.96	3.97
Close personal relationship with at least one faculty	4.24	4.21
Satisfied with opportunities to interact with faculty	4.06	4.08
Faculty posed challenging ideas in class	4.33	4.19
Faculty asked to apply course concept to actual situation	4.1	3.94
Faculty asked to point out fallacies in ideas	3.96	3.89
Faculty asked to argue for or against a point of view	4.01	4.02
Faculty challenged my ideas in class	3.99	3.95
Students challenged each other	4.16	3.88

Class assignments

Earlham students write essays more than any other activity and more than the comparison group. The next most frequent activity comes in "connecting learning in multiple courses." Despite these difference, all of these means are very close between Earlham and the comparison group.

Below are descriptions of the types of exams or assignments you may have had in your classes at this institution. About how often have you undertaken each?

1=never and 5=very often

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Wrote essays	4.58	4.41
Problem solving assignments	3.74	3.89
Oral presentations	4.0	3.87
Used course content for a problem not presented in the course	3.69	3.67
Compared or contrasted topics from a course	4.08	4.07
Pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of an argument	4.16	4.07
Argued for or against a particular point of view	4.06	4.08
Connected what I learned in multiple courses	4.24	4.16

Skills learned at Earlham

Earlham seniors attribute the Earlham contribution to almost all of these skills with a higher score than the peer schools. The only skill Earlham students score lower is in quantitative literacy with Earlham rating that skill as 2.96 compared to 3.12 for the peer schools.

To what extent has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development?

1=very little and 4=very much

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Careful reading	3.48	3.30
Critical thinking	3.7	3.49
Creative thinking	3.25	3.21
Information literacy	3.41	3.36
Quantitative literacy	2.96	3.12
Effective writing	3.44	3.4
Effective speaking	3.21	3.09
Teamwork	3.13	2.98
Problem solving	3.30	3.18
Civic engagement	2.80	2.73
Intercultural knowledge	3.28	2.93
Ethical reasoning	3.41	3.00
Integrative thinking	3.50	3.24

Co-curricular Activities

Note the highest mean for both Earlham and the peer schools is on-campus employment. This mean is probably an indication about the numbers of students who participate in employment as much as it is an indication of the satisfaction with learning. Performing arts, internships and study abroad each receive a rating greater than 3 for Earlham students while by comparison the HEDS schools rate performing arts with a much lower 2.47.

To what extent has your experience at this institution with each of the following contributed to your learning and personal development?

1=Did not participate and 5=very much

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Student or campus government	1.94	1.82
Intercollegiate athletics	1.99	2.34
Intramural or club sports	2.59	2.41
Student publications	2.26	1.99
Performing arts/music	3.24	2.47
Political organizations or clubs	2.53	2.1
Community service	2.8	3.06
Sorority/fraternity	1.09	2.31
Religious groups	2.03	1.82
Internships (paid or unpaid)	3.15	3.07
Service organizations	2.66	2.76
Multicultural student groups	2.7	2.14
Working with faculty on research	2.85	2.6
Study abroad	3.61	3.0
On-campus employment	3.89	3.04
Off-campus employment	2.26	2.29
Independent Study	2.6	2.5
Other (please specify):	1.7	1.76

Diversity activities

Earlham seniors' ratings for these diversity activities are higher in each case and especially so in the areas of encountering students with different beliefs and backgrounds. This is partly due to the fact that Earlham has a large percentage of international students on campus as well as an increasing percentage of minority students. Earlham seniors rate the frequency of having discussions with students of different backgrounds at 3.76 compared to 3.19 for the comparison group schools.

How often have you had the following experiences at this institution?

1=never and 4=very often

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Attended debate on current issues	3.49	3.11
Participated in cultural awareness workshop	3.00	2.67
Had discussions with students of different background	3.76	3.19
Had discussions with students of different lifestyle	3.95	3.54
Had discussions with faculty with different beliefs	3.15	2.90
Had discussions with students with different beliefs	3.76	3.43

Preparation for the future

In terms of preparation for the future, Earlham seniors feel they are slightly better prepared for graduate school, civic involvement and continued learning. The comparison school students rated career preparation, and post-graduate life slightly higher.

Overall, to what extent have your experiences at this institution prepared you for the following activities?

1=very little and 4=very much

	Earlham Mean	Comparison schools
Graduate or professional school	3.25	3.14

Career	2.88	2.95
Social and civic involvement	3.11	2.87
Interpersonal relationships and family living	3.06	2.87
Responsibilities of post-undergraduate life	2.38	2.47
Continued learning on my own	3.2	2.97

Overall satisfaction

On a five-point scale, Earlham seniors rated their satisfaction with Earlham as a 4.19, this compared to 4.31 from the comparison group schools. When asked if they would choose Earlham again, seniors rated Earlham 4.08 on a five-point scale and the comparison group is about at the same rate of 4.01.

After graduation

Important qualities of first job

Both Earlham seniors and comparison students are most interested in work that is meaningful and that will allow them to continue to learn, with Earlham students at slightly higher rates. The comparison students are significantly more interested in their career path, rating that quality by 53% of the student while Earlham seniors are only at 36%.

What are the most important qualities of your first job after graduation? (choose up to 3)

	Earlham Percentages (n=80)	Comparison schools Percentages (n=3807)
Relates to my major	21%	13%
Uses skills I gained in undergraduate	16%	15%
Related to desired career path	36%	53%
Work is meaningful	63%	59%
Allows me to continue to grow and learn	58%	52%
Pays enough to support lifestyle	43%	42%
Pays benefits	14%	10%
Location	39%	33%

Primary plan for fall

Of the Earlham students who plan to be employed, 36% report that they have already accepted a position while only 28% of the comparison students are in the same place. Nine percent of Earlham seniors are considering one or more offers while another 9% say they will begin to search after graduation.

Indicate the ONE activity that you consider your primary plan this fall.

	Earlham Percentages (n=80)	Comparison schools Percentages (n=3807)
Full-time, paid employment or internship	46%	58%
Part-time, paid employment or internship	10%	5%
Full-time graduate or professional school	18%	17%
Part-time graduate or professional school	0%	2%
Additional undergraduate course work	9%	2%
Military service	0%	1%

Volunteer/national service	8%	4%
Starting or raising a family	0%	0%
Traveling	1%	2%
Undecided	4%	6%
Other	5%	3%

Degree working toward this fall

Students who indicated plans for immediate graduate school were asked what degree and 60% from both Earlham and comparison schools plan to work toward a master's degree.

	Earlham Percentages (n=20)	Comparison schools Percentages (n=1015)
Master's Arts and Sciences	30%	41%
Other Master's	30%	19%
Law Degree	10%	10%
Medical	0%	11%
PhD	25%	12%
Other degree or certificate	5%	9%

Degree for the future –

	Earlham Percentages	Comparison schools Percentages
Master's Arts and Sciences	36%	28%
MBA	5%	15%
Other Master's	15%	7%
Law Degree	10%	7%
Medical	4%	5%
PhD	21%	12%
Other degree or certificate	4%	3%

Career planning

What career did/do you plan to pursue when

	Entering college	Upon graduation	Long-term
Arts, design and entertainment	4	2	1
Communications and media		2	1
Community and social service	13	7	17
Education and library	13	27	17
Health Care	14	2	14
Law and Government	13	2	12
Management, business and financial	4	7	5
Natural resources	3	7	6
Protection services			
Science, technology and engineering	9	14	10

Service and recreational		7	
Undecided	23	18	13
Other	6	5	4

Paying for college

Thirty-four percent of Earlham seniors did not use loans to finance their education. The next largest percent, 14%, borrowed between \$20,000 and \$29,999 for their education. In addition, 73% of these seniors say they will be personally responsible for paying back all of their student loans.

Participating schools:

Albright College

Bates College

Colgate University

Gettysburg College

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Hollins University

Macalester College

Muhlenberg College

Oglethorpe University

Reed College

Union College (NY)

Wagner College

Washington & Jefferson College