WKU Master of Public Administration Program Alumni Survey 2013

This survey was sent out by mail to 127 MPA graduates on July 29, 2013. The survey was sent to those who had graduated within the past five years (but not including the most recent grads from Fall 2012 or Spring 2013). Two surveys were returned as non-deliverable. The surveys were returned over a period of several weeks. The last survey was returned on September 12, 2013. 33 surveys were returned, and 32 were usable (26% response rate), although not all questions were answered on all survey forms. Further, 31 alumni directory sheets were returned. Alumni directory sheets and identifying information were removed before the data was entered and analyzed. Data was entered during the month of September and double-checked for accuracy during the first part of October. Several open-ended questions were included on the survey.

This survey was designed with several purposes in mind. The primary purposes were as follows:

1. To gather input on the revised Mission Statement of the MPA program;
2. To gather input on the proposed learning outcomes for students based on the graduates professional experience;
3. To understand what sector our graduates are employed in and if they are gainfully employed;
4. To understand if our graduates are satisfied with the MPA program as it was delivered to them, and to gather ideas for improvement to the program, courses, internship, networking and mentoring opportunities, etc. for our current and future students.

The survey results were disseminated to faculty, MPA advisory committee, students, and alumni. Results were posted on the WKU MPA Program website, and selected results were included in the January 2014 newsletter which was distributed to current students and alumni.

WKU Master of Public Administration Program Alumni Survey 2013

The WKU MPA Program is approaching our 40th anniversary and as part of our ongoing efforts to prepare graduate students for public service, we ask for your assistance as an alum of the program. Please complete the enclosed short survey and return it in the postage-paid reply envelope as soon as possible. The MPA program will use this information to better understand the professional experiences of our graduates and to improve the MPA program for current and future students. This information collected is for internal review and improvement only.

As a graduate of the MPA program, we value your input into this assessment process and hope that you will provide us with information about your employment history, career progression and some demographic information. Please use the open-ended question section to include any additional information you would like us to consider in our assessment of the MPA program.

If you would like your comments regarding the MPA program to remain anonymous, please return the alumni directory sheet in a separate envelope (same address as on the postage-paid envelope).   All individual survey responses will be kept confidential, so even if you return the survey form and the alumni directory sheet in the same envelope, they will be separated before your responses are reviewed or tabulated, thus ensuring that your contact information will not be linked with your survey responses. Thank you for your time and for your participation.

The MPA and Employment History

What was your primary student status while completing the MPA degree?

   18 (56%) full-time   14 (44%) part-time

What was your primary objective when you entered the MPA program?

(Note: multiple answers allowed.)

24 job advancement   6 career change   16 personal goal   3 Other

Please explain. _____

What type of position did you hold immediately prior to entering the MPA program? _____

If employed <u>while a student</u>, which of the following best describes your employment sector?

Federal	2	(7%)
State or regional	7	(26%)
City, County or other Local	10	(37%)
Nonprofit	4	(15%)
Private sector	4	(15%)

   5   No response   Percentages based on 27 responses for this question.

Please list your current job title and how long you have been in this position.

Title _____   Length of time in this position Minimum 1 month
                                                                          Maximum 15 years

Which of the following best describes your <u>current employment sector</u>?

Federal	2	(7%)
State or regional	5	(17%)
City, County or other Local	9	(31%)
Nonprofit	6	(21%)
Private sector	7	(24%)
3 No response		Percentages based on 29 responses for this question.

Current Employment Sector

- Federal — 7%
- State or Regional — 17%
- City, County or Other Local — 31%
- Nonprofit — 21%
- Private Sector — 24%
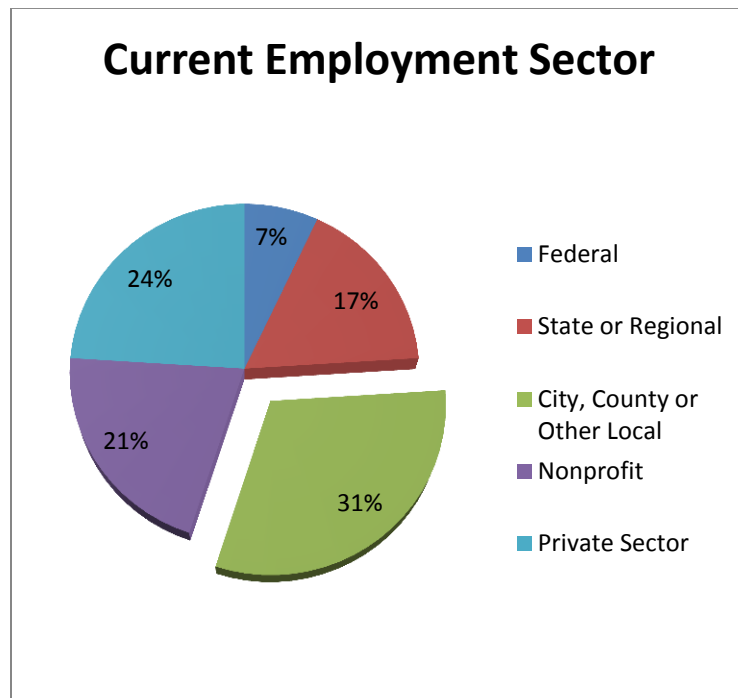
What is your <u>current</u> annual salary?

Less than $20,000	1 (3%)	$60,000 to 69,999	5 (16%)
$20,000 to 29,999	3 (10%)	$70,000 to 79,999	2 (7%)
$30,000 to 39,999	5 (16%)	$80,000 to 89,999	1 (3%)
$40,000 to 49,999	8 (26%)	$90,000 to 99,999	1 (3%)
$50,000 to 59,999	5 (16%)	Over $100,000	0 (0%)

1   No response   Percentages based on 31 responses for this question.

Current Annual Salary
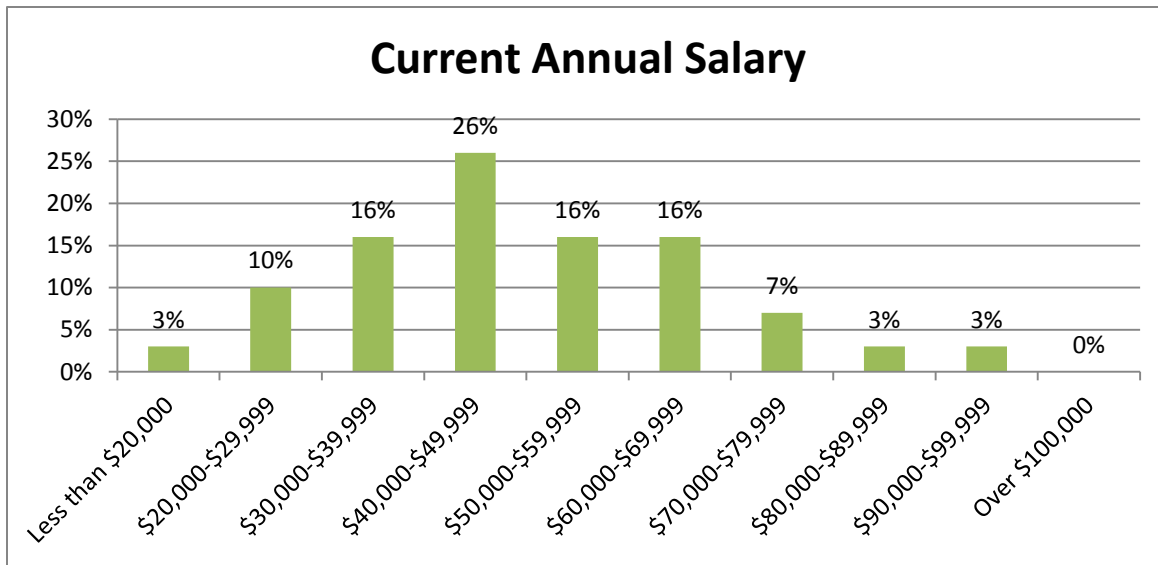
Overall, how important was your MPA degree in obtaining your current position?

10 (32%) Very important
5 (16%)   Important
8 (26%)   Not too important
8 (26%)   Not important at all
    1   No response   Percentages based on 31 responses for this question.
Comments? _____

If you are not employed, which best describes your current situation?

In transition and looking for a position	4 (12%)
Obtaining further education	0
Unemployed and not currently job hunting	0
No response	28 (88%)

Comments? _____

Overall, how satisfied are you with the education you received in the MPA program?

22 (69%) Very satisfied
10 (31%) Satisfied
0   Dissatisfied
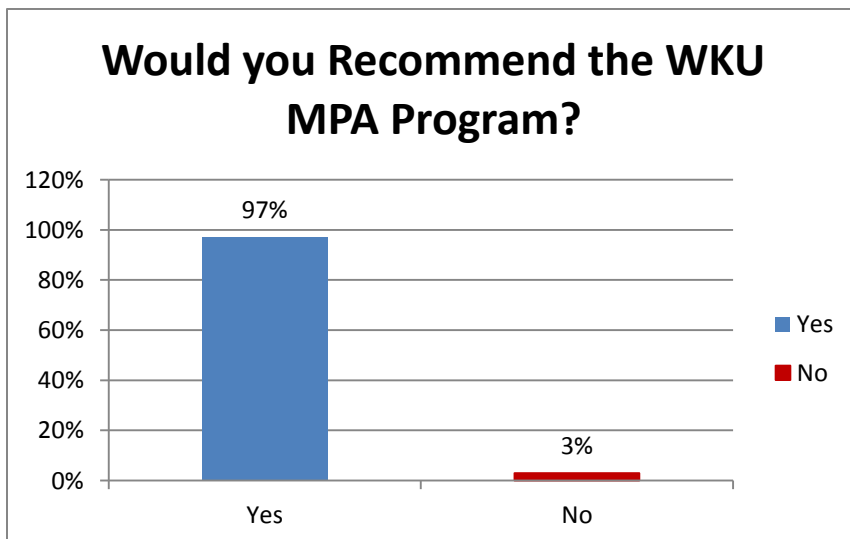0   Very dissatisfied
Comments? _____

Satisfaction with MPA Program Education

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

69%   31%   0%   0%
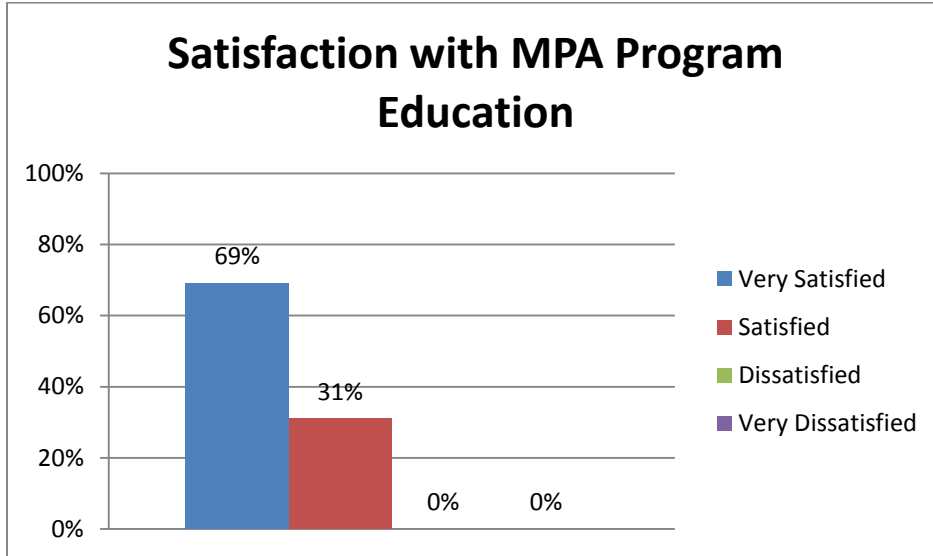
Overall, would you recommend the WKU MPA program to a colleague or friend?
Yes   31 (97%)
No   1   (3%)
Comments? _____

Would you Recommend the WKU MPA Program?

- Yes
- No

97%   3%

Yes   No

At the time you attended the WKU MPA program, what were our strengths?

This question turned out to be somewhat problematic as some respondents wrote comments about their own personal strengths.

At the time you attended the WKU MPA program, what were our weaknesses?

This question turned out to be somewhat problematic as some respondents wrote comments about their own personal weaknesses.

Demographic Information
In what subject area was your undergraduate degree? _____
When did you start your MPA degree (month and year)?   Earliest 2005
When did you finish your MPA degree (month and year)?   Most recent August 2012

At which campus did you primarily attend classes?
Bowling Green   19 (59%)
Owensboro   12 (38%)
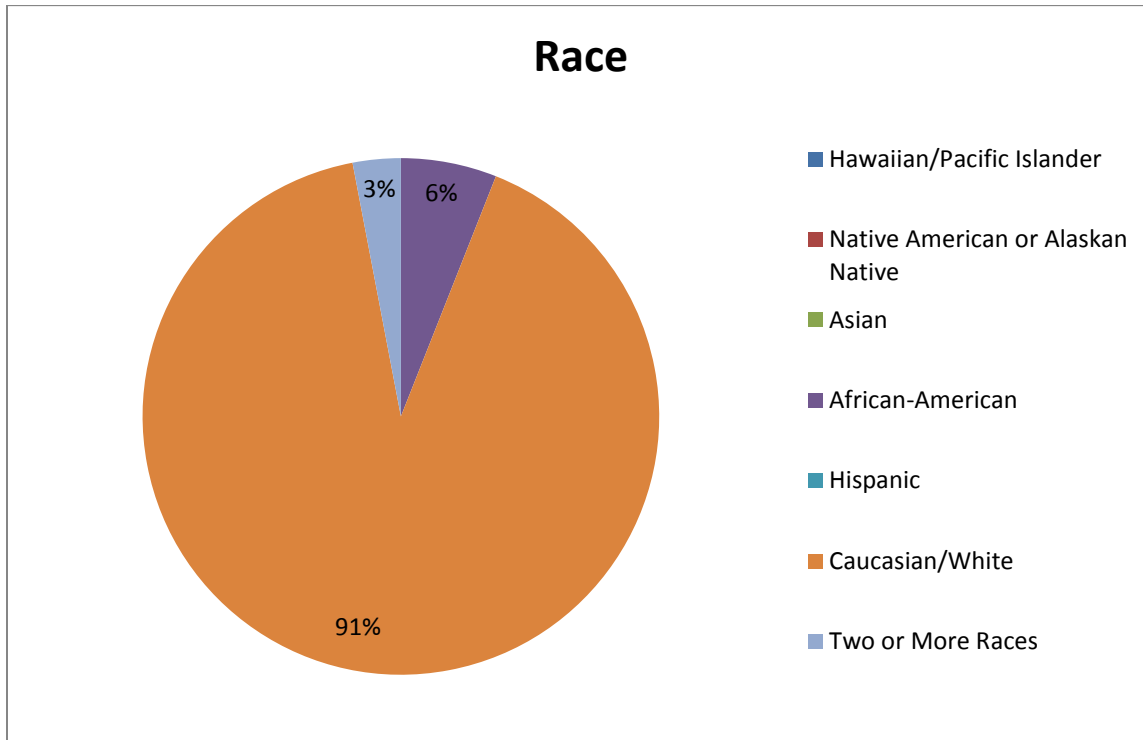Ft. Knox/Elizabethtown   1   (3%)
Glasgow   0

What is your gender?
Male   22 (69%)
Female   10 (31%)

What category best describes your ethnic background?

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0
Native American or Alaskan Native	0
Asian	0
African-American	2 (6%)
Hispanic	0
Caucasian/White	29 (91%)
Two or more races	1 (3%)
Other	0

Race

During the time you were an MPA student, were you considered to be an international student?

Yes   0   (0%)   If yes, country of origin? _____

No   32 (100%)

Are you currently active military?   Are you currently a military veteran?

Yes   1   (3%)   Yes   4   (12%)

No   31 (97%)   No   28 (88%)

Please indicate your current age category:

20-25	0	(0%)
26-30	11	(34%)
31-35	10	(31%)
36-40	5	(16%)
41-45	4	(13%)
46-50	1	(3%)
51-55	0	(0%)
56-60	1	(3%)
Over age 60	0	(0%)

Current Age of Respondents

Legend:
- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46-50
- 51-55
- 56-60
- Over age 60

Pie chart values: 34%, 31%, 16%, 13%, 3%, 3%
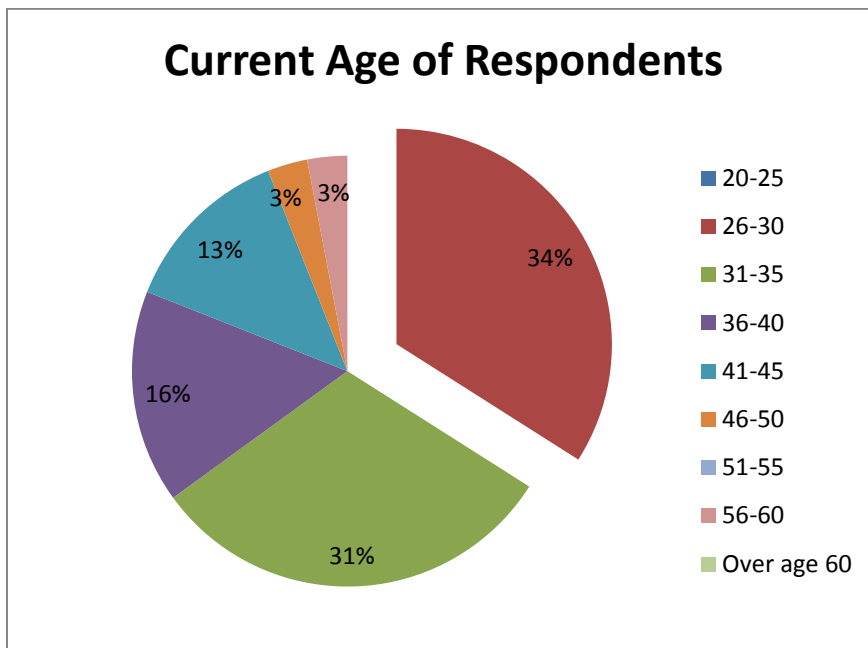
Current home zip code: 24 (75%) in KY   8 (25%) out of KY

NASPAA is the Global Standard in Public Service Education

The MPA program mission statement was recently reviewed and updated. It currently reads as follows:

The MPA program prepares graduate students from diverse backgrounds to be productive leaders and managers in public service by sharing knowledge, encouraging excellence in research and practice, and fostering an environment of professionalism within the communities we serve.

Do you think the above MPA program mission statement adequately describes the mission of the MPA program as you experienced it?

Yes   30   (94%)
No   2   (6%)

How Accurately Does the MPA Mission Statement Reflect your Experience?
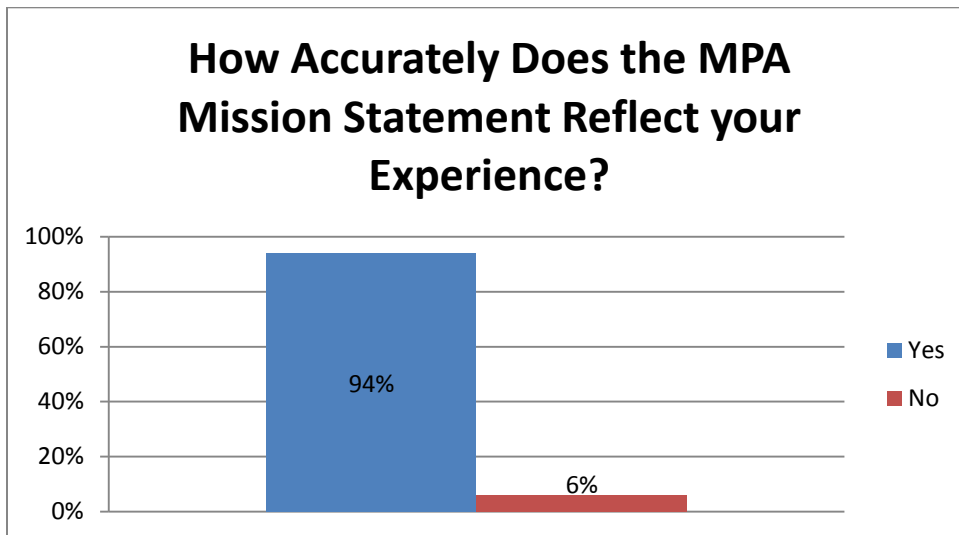
What changes would you make to this mission statement? Please explain.

_____

As part of the mission statement review and revision process the following questions and concerns came up with regard to learning outcomes for MPA students. Please answer the following questions based on your professional experience.
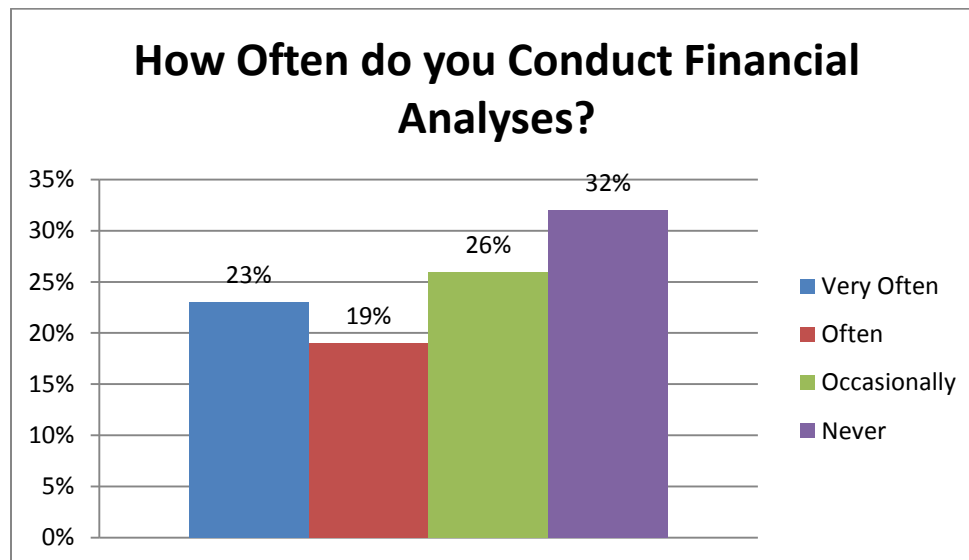
To what extent in your current position do you prepare, administer and/or monitor budgets?

10 Very Often	6 Often	8 Occasionally	7 Never
(32%)	(19%)	(26%)	(23%)
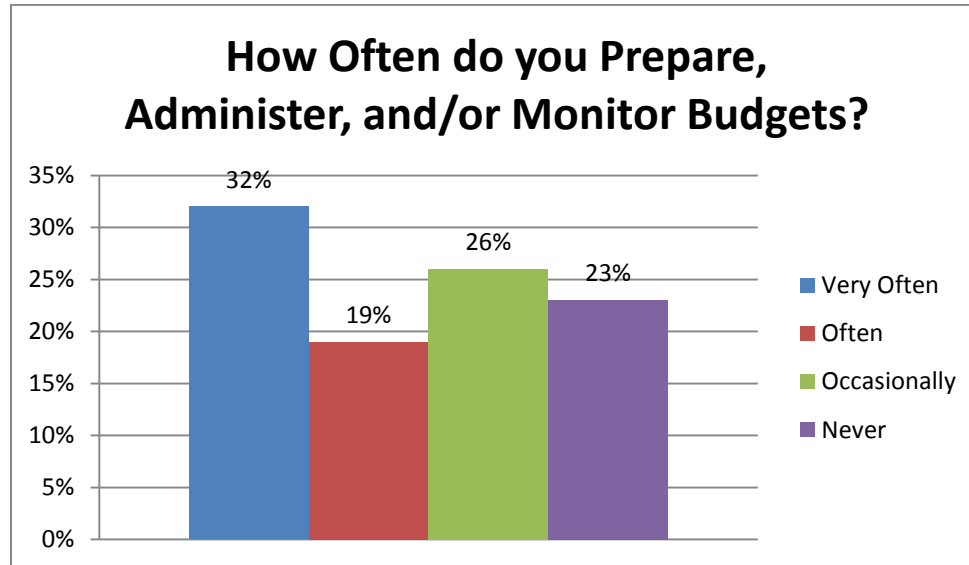
To what extent in your current position do you conduct financial analyses?

7 Very Often	6 Often	8 Occasionally	10 Never
(23%)	(19%)	(26%)	(32%)

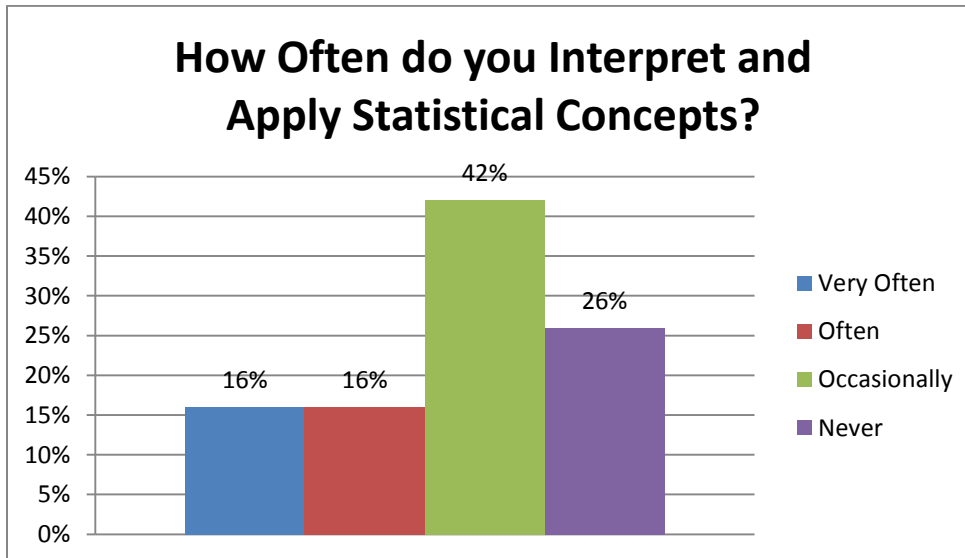To what extent in your current position do you conduct surveys?

5 Very Often (16%)   8 Often (26%)   13 Occasionally (42%)   5 Never (16%)

How Often do you Conduct Surveys?

- Very Often — 16%
- Often — 26%
- Occasionally — 42%
- Never — 16%
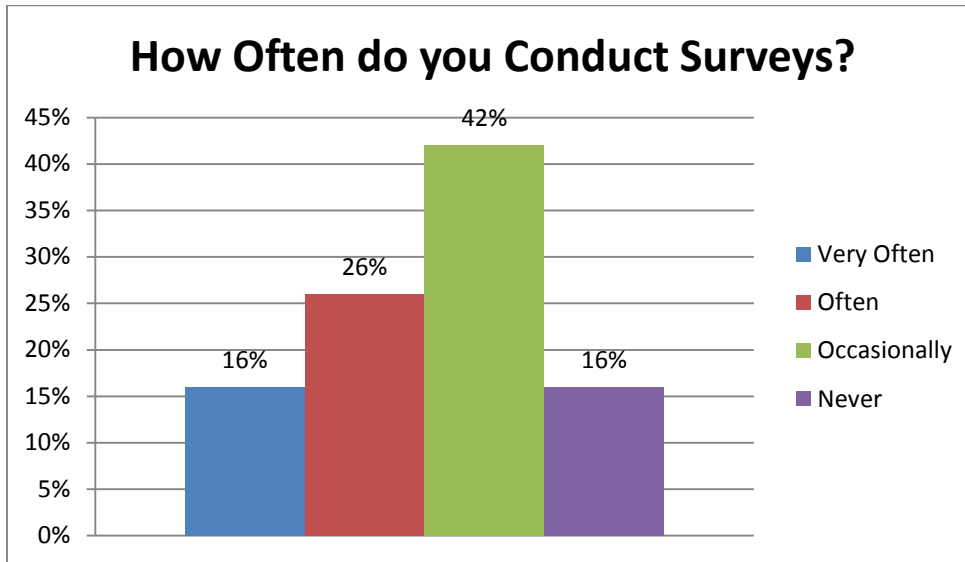
To what extent in your current position do you interpret and apply statistical concepts?

5 Very Often (16%)   5 Often (16%)   13 Occasionally (42%)   8 Never (26%)

How Often do you Interpret and Apply Statistical Concepts?

- Very Often — 16%
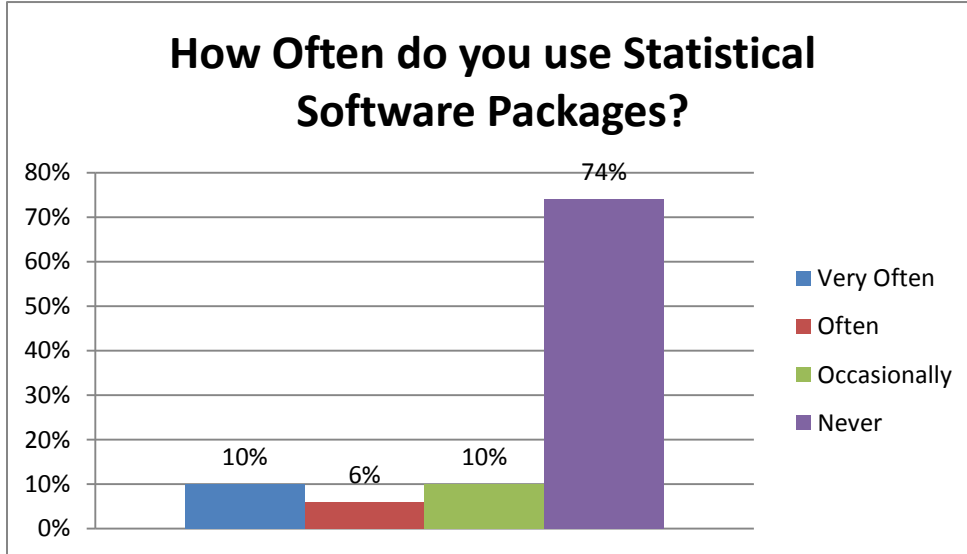- Often — 16%
- Occasionally — 42%
- Never — 26%

To what extent in your current position do you conduct data analyses that require the use of statistical software packages, such as SPSS?

3 Very Often (10%)   2 Often (6%)   3 Occasionally (10%)   23 Never (74%)

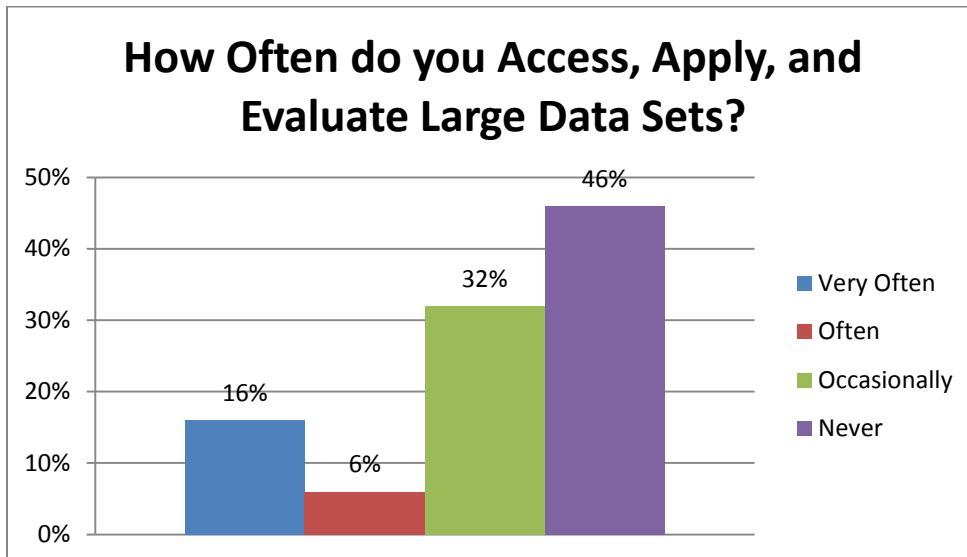## How Often do you use Statistical Software Packages?

To what extent in your current position do you access, apply and evaluate large data sets, such as U.S. Census data?

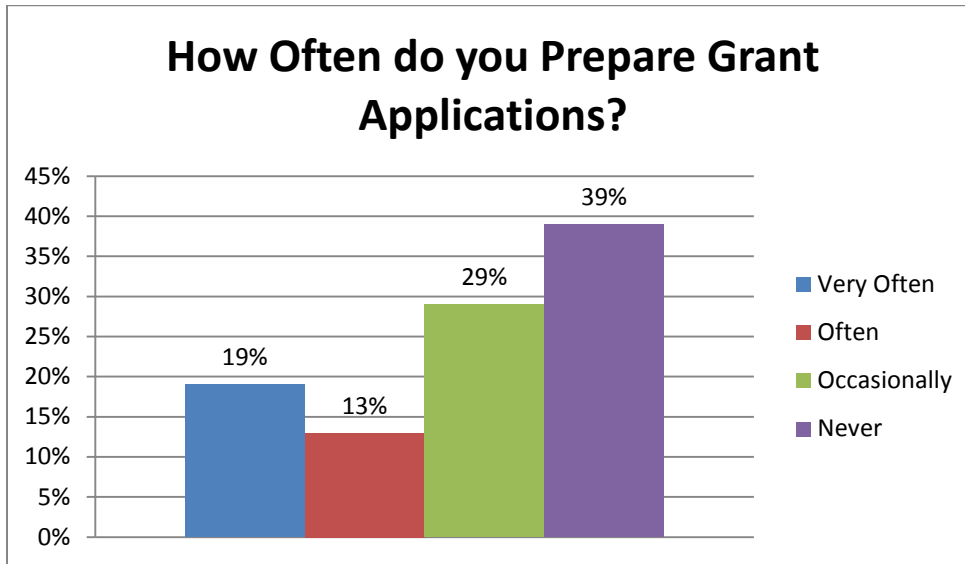5 Very Often (16%)   2 Often (6%)   10 Occasionally (32%)   14 Never (46%)

How Often do you Access, Apply, and Evaluate Large Data Sets?

To what extent in your current position do you prepare grant applications?
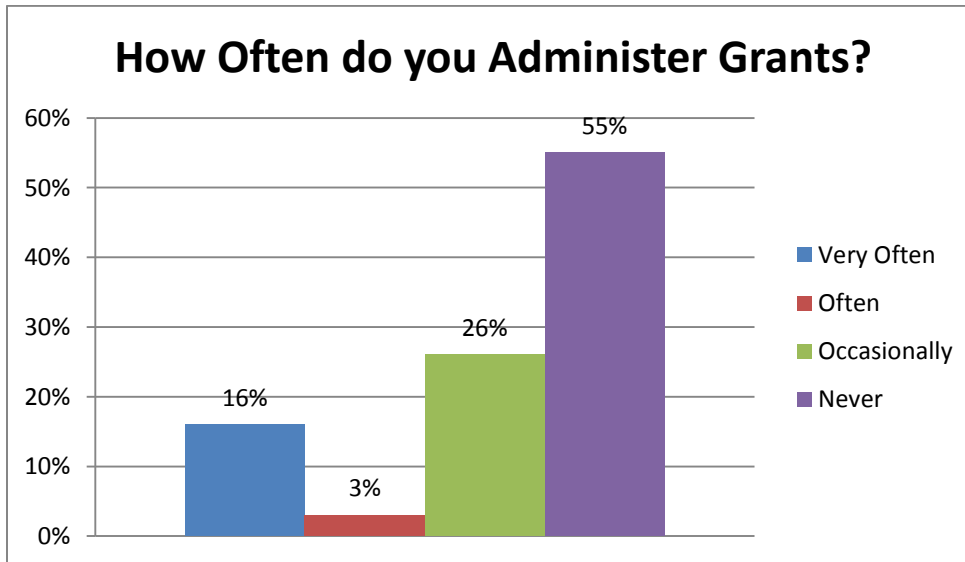6 Very Often   4 Often   9 Occasionally   12 Never
(19%)   (13%)   (29%)   (39%)

How Often do you Prepare Grant Applications?

To what extent in your current position do you administer grants?
5 Very Often   1 Often   8 Occasionally   17 Never
(16%)   (3%)   (26%)   (55%)

How Often do you Administer Grants?
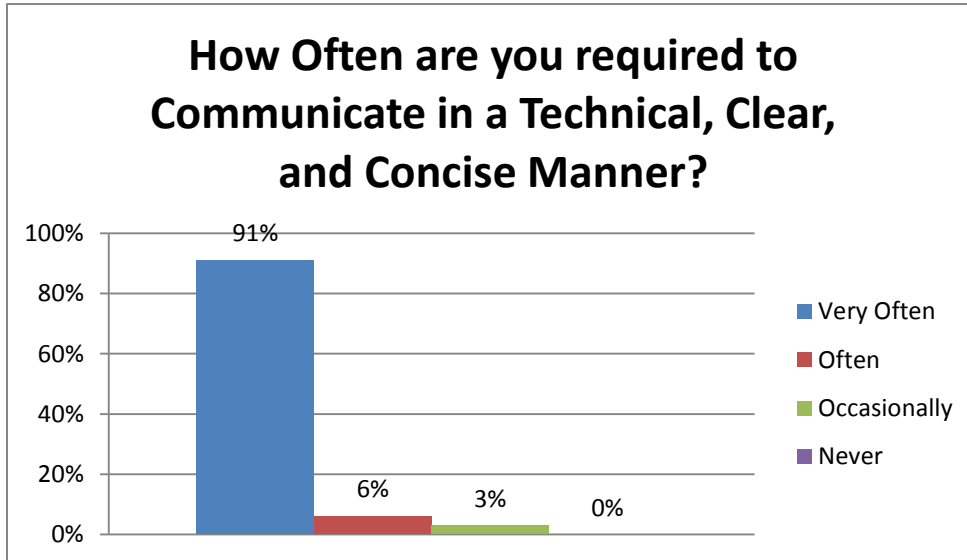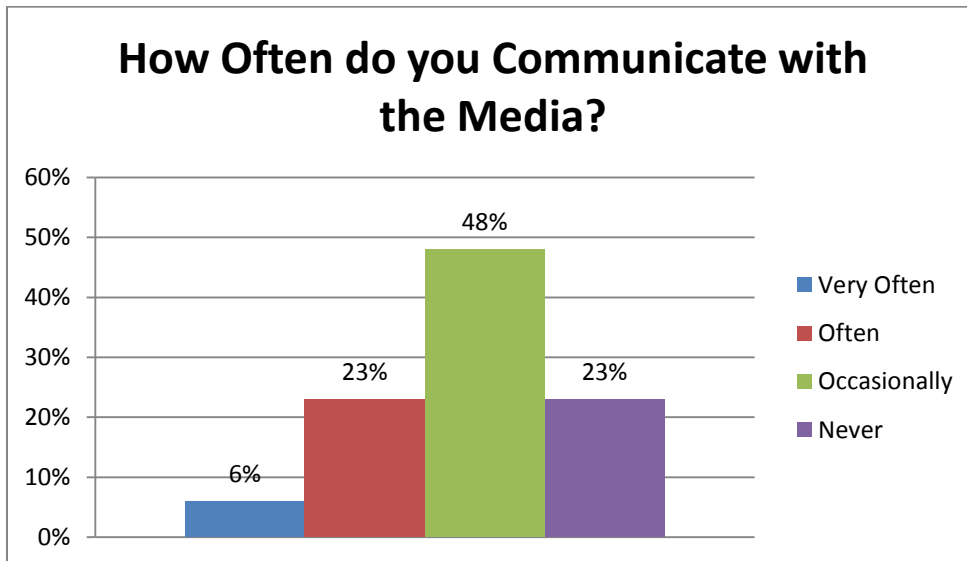
To what extent in your current position are you required to communicate in a technical, clear and concise manner?

28 Very Often (91%)　　2 Often (6%)　　1 Occasionally (3%)　　0 Never (0%)

To what extent in your current position are you required to communicate with the media?

2 Very Often (6%)　　7 Often (23%)　　15 Occasionally (48%)　　7 Never (23%)

Reflecting on each of these questions above as they apply to your specific job, are there particular areas in which you wish the MPA program had better prepared you? Please describe what training might have helped you be better prepared.

If you could name one area of focus that was not offered as a part of the MPA program that would assist in preparing students for future employment in the public sector, what would it be?

In what specific ways do you think the MPA program could and/or should better utilize its alumni?

Please feel free to make any additional comments or suggestions about the MPA program here. We want and value your input!

Alumni Directory and Helping the MPA Program

Please provide complete contact info here.

Name   _____

Address_____

      _____

Best Email   _____

Best phone number   _____

Current job title: _____

Current employer: _____

Year you graduated from MPA program:_____

May we include this info in a MPA alumni directory?

Yes   30

No   1

Would you be interested in participating in networking opportunities with former and current MPA students?

Yes   26   (84%)

No   5   (16%)

Percentages based on 31 responses for this question.

Would you be interested in providing an internship for a MPA student?

Yes   9   (32%)

No   19   (68%)

No response 3   Percentages based on 28 responses for this question.

Would you be interested in serving as a mentor for a MPA student?

Yes   16   (55%)

No   13   (45%)

No response 2   Percentages based on 29 responses for this question.

Would you be interested in serving on the MPA Advisory Committee?

Yes   23   (74%)

No   8   (26%)

Percentages based on 31 responses for this question.

Would you be interested in helping to plan the 40th anniversary celebration of the MPA program? (scheduled for spring 2014)

Yes   13   (45%)

No   16   (55%)

No response 2   Percentages based on 29 responses for this question.

If you do not want to return this page with the survey, you may return this page to the following address:

Dr. Victoria Gordon, MPA Director

Department of Political Science

Western Kentucky University

1906 College Heights Blvd #11060

Bowling Green, KY 42101-1060