

## NMSU Alumni Survey – The Student Experience, Summer 2017

### New Mexico State University

The Office of Institutional Analysis at New Mexico State University conducted a survey of its alumni during the summer of 2017. The two-fold purpose of the survey included questions related to perceived effectiveness of the education received at NMSU, and the graduate's current employment situation. This analysis focuses on the effectiveness of the bachelor degree education received, i. e., the student experience.

The survey link was emailed to over 15,000 alumni who graduated with at least one degree from NMSU one, five, ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago. Of the 536 graduates who completed the survey, 368 (69%) had received only a bachelor degree (thus far) from NMSU, and their responses are reviewed in this analysis.

Seven questions were asked about how well prepared graduates felt after receiving their bachelor degree from NMSU (Table 1a and b, Figure 1). At least 85% of respondents stated they were at least somewhat prepared in all seven areas. Seventy-three percent felt they were well prepared by NMSU for taking responsibility for their own learning, while 61% felt well prepared to think critically or solve difficult problems. However, less than half (48%) felt they were well prepared to use technology effectively. In reviewing comments, this appears to be affected by length of time since completing the bachelor degree; some graduates from 15 to 20 years ago felt less technologically prepared than more recent graduates. Of concern, only 47% of respondents felt the NMSU educational experience made them well prepared to be an informed citizen; 16% felt they were not prepared.

On the other hand, more than three-fourths (78%) of respondents agreed (36%) or strongly agreed (42%) that by attending NMSU they developed a greater openness to diverse experiences and opportunities (Table 2 and Figure 2). Slightly fewer (74%) respondents agreed (46%) or strongly agreed (28%) that by attending NMSU they developed a greater awareness of biases (Table 3 and Figure 3).

Although there were a handful (n=23) of negative reactions, most students said that NMSU helped to foster their creativity, through personal expression, original and innovative work, and problem solving. Approximately half (51%) of respondents said their NMSU experience helped somewhat, while an additional 43% admitted NMSU helped a lot (Table 4 and Figure 4).

The final question on this section of the survey asked about the graduate's identity or connection with NMSU. Approximately 40% of respondents continue to feel a strong identity or connection with NMSU, and another roughly 40% feel an identity or connection, although they would not characterize it as strong (Table 5 and Figure 5). Because this includes responses of students who may have been away from NMSU for up to twenty years, this is very positive. However, it is noted that most graduates who were offered the opportunity to complete the survey did not. It is possible the response to this question may be more reflective of the responding alumni rather than for all of the alumni.

This survey was NMSU's first attempt to contact alumni regarding their NMSU baccalaureate experience in more than a decade. It was very encouraging to receive responses from alumni across the spectrum of time since graduation. It was also encouraging to see the positive impact NMSU has had on our graduates. Admittedly, there are a few areas on which to focus for improvement, specifically strengthening effective use of technology, and helping students to become better informed citizens. Providing more experiences for students to help them recognize both their own biases and the biases of others, and more effort to foster creativity will benefit our students after they graduate from NMSU. Subsequent NMSU Alumni surveys will focus on other avenues of alumni contact as email addresses expire, and email messages are more and more likely to be seen as spam. NMSU is committed to evaluating the baccalaureate experience of our graduates; how best to do so remains difficult.

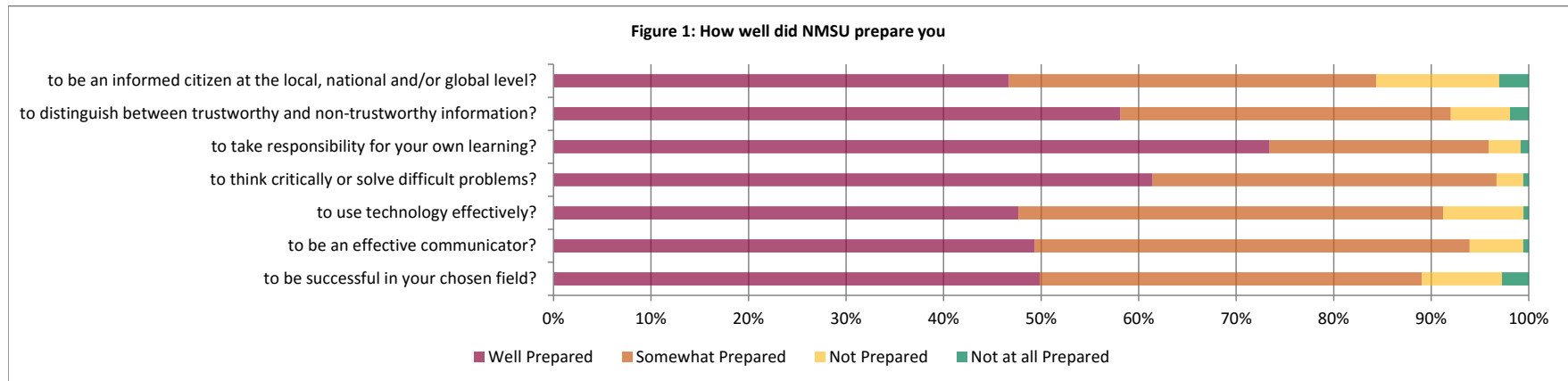
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**Table 1a: How well did NMSU prepare you (frequencies)**

Question:	Well Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared	Not at all Prepared	Total	Mean
to be successful in your chosen field?	182	143	30	10	365	3.36
to be an effective communicator?	179	162	20	2	363	3.43
to use technology effectively?	174	159	30	2	365	3.38
to think critically or solve difficult problems?	223	128	10	2	363	3.58
to take responsibility for your own learning?	268	82	12	3	365	3.68
to distinguish between trustworthy and non-trustworthy information?	211	123	22	7	363	3.48
to be an informed citizen at the local, national and/or global level?	170	137	46	11	364	3.28

**Table 1b: How well did NMSU prepare you (percentages)**

Question	Well Prepared	Somewhat Prepared	Not Prepared	Not at all Prepared	Total
to be successful in your chosen field?	50%	39%	8%	3%	100%
to be an effective communicator?	49%	45%	6%	1%	100%
to use technology effectively?	48%	44%	8%	1%	100%
to think critically or solve difficult problems?	61%	35%	3%	1%	100%
to take responsibility for your own learning?	73%	22%	3%	1%	100%
to distinguish between trustworthy and non-trustworthy information?	58%	34%	6%	2%	100%
to be an informed citizen at the local, national and/or global level?	47%	38%	13%	3%	100%



Notes: Results include only alumni whose last earned degree was a bachelors

Likert scale values (Prepared/Not Prepared): 1=Not at all Prepared, 2=Not Prepared, 3=Somewhat Prepared, 4=Well Prepared

Mean values: Higher numbers indicate better overall performance

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**Table 2: Because of attending NMSU, I have developed a greater awareness of my own biases, and the biases of others.**

Category	Percentage	Count
Strongly agree	28%	104
Agree	46%	168
Neither agree nor disagree	20%	75
Disagree	4%	16
Strongly disagree	1%	4
Total	100%	367

Note: Includes only alumni whose last earned degree was a bachelors

**Table 3: Because of attending NMSU, I have developed a greater openness to diverse experiences and opportunities.**

Category	Percentage	Count
Strongly agree	42%	153
Agree	36%	132
Neither agree nor disagree	16%	60
Disagree	5%	19
Strongly disagree	1%	4
Total	100%	368

Note: Includes only alumni whose last earned degree was a bachelors

**Table 4: How much did your NMSU experience foster your creativity, through personal expression, original and innovative work, problem solving, etc.?**

Category	Percentage	Count
A lot	43%	157
Some	51%	188
None at all	6%	23
Total	100%	368

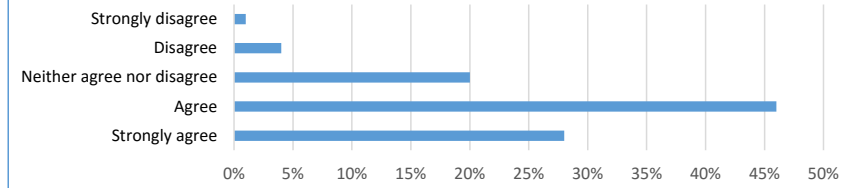
Note: Includes only alumni whose last earned degree was a bachelors

**Table 5: How much of an identity or connection do you have with NMSU?**

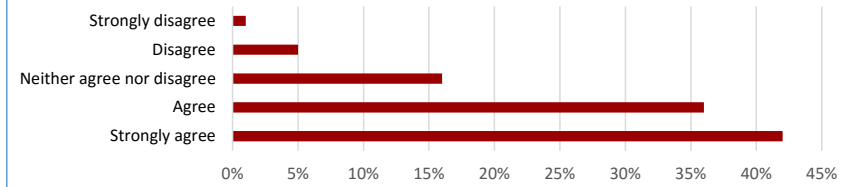
Category	Percentage	Count
Strong identity/connection	41%	151
An identity/connection but it's not strong	41%	150
A weak identity/connection	15%	54
No identity/connection	3%	12
Total	100%	367

Note: Includes only alumni whose last earned degree was a bachelors

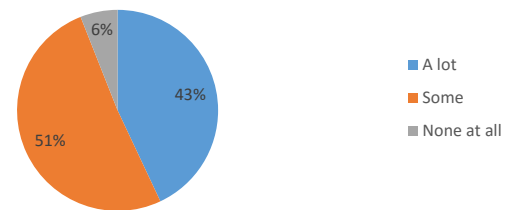
**Figure 2: Developed Greater Awareness of Biases**



**Figure 3: Developed Greater Openness to Diverse Experiences**



**Figure 4: NMSU Experience Fostered Creativity**



**Figure 5: Identity or Connection with NMSU**

