

The Long View

“I think that being skeptical of a liberal arts education is a very short-sighted view,” summarized Whitney Griffin Randolph, '03 business graduate and current First Vice-President – Energy Lending at One West Bank in Dallas, TX. “I think you have to take a more long-term view with a liberal arts education. You know, I think statistics are powerful. I don't know what the statistics are, but it seems like, just from what I see from my graduating class, there are a lot of people doing a lot of really interesting things that aren't necessarily using a specific trade, or specific skill set, or even a specific, very concentrated degree. But they're doing a lot of really neat things, and they're leading companies, or are high up in companies, or have moved up quickly within companies. So I think long-term statistics would be pretty powerful.”

“I think you have to take a more long-term view with a liberal arts education.”

— Whitney Griffin Randolph '03

For decades Southwestern University Career Services has been collecting traditional first-destination data through annual surveys of new graduates within the first year after graduation. Relationships with our alumni, such as Randolph, and a growing “gap year” trend nationally, however, led us to believe that a one-year time horizon does not adequately tell the career story of liberal arts graduates. In 2013, Career Services conducted a first-ever 10-year-out survey of the Class of 2003 to gather data to support our anecdotal evidence.

About the Survey

All graduates with email addresses received the survey electronically in May 2013. The survey adapted our first-destination survey questions to make sense for graduates 10 years out and added questions about graduates' current activities, experiences while in college and reported satisfaction with their Southwestern experience from the vantage point of 10 years after graduation.

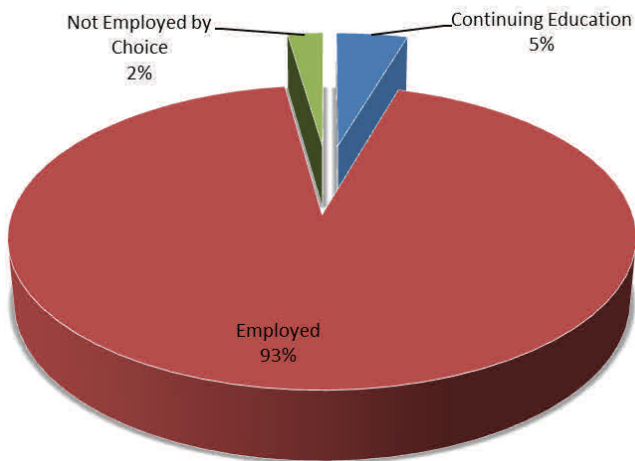
Using social media, we researched and reached out where possible to non-respondents or alumni for whom we didn't have accurate contact information. Of the 312 graduates from August 2002, December 2002, and May 2003 who made up this reporting class, Career Services obtained responses from 89 (29 percent of the class). The longer time horizon since graduation and more limited contact with graduates during the survey process necessarily resulted in a lower response rate than on our first-destination surveys (e.g. 97-99 percent), but the outcome still provides us with much-needed insight.

We also sought to gather more qualitative data from the Class of 2003. Forty-eight graduates who completed the electronic survey, listed themselves as “employed” and represent diverse professions and genders received an email inviting them to participate in the Southwestern University Alumni Oral History Project. The resulting 17 interviews with nine men and eight women averaged 49 minutes in length and provided information about graduates' career trajectories and reflections on the effect of their Southwestern University education on their careers. Given this cohort's experience of graduating in the midst of a struggling economy, we asked each participant about the value of a liberal arts education, based on their own experience.

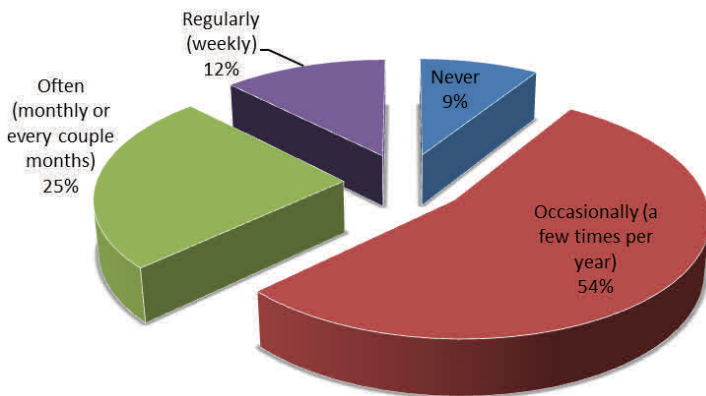
The 10-year-out outcomes study itself is not our only innovation. Rather, the process by which both the survey and oral history project were conducted is itself innovative. Both occurred as collaborative research projects with current students. An economics and business student helped design and analyze the results of the survey, while a sociology student conducted the oral history project. Leveraging partnerships with undergraduate researchers and their faculty mentors allows a small career center to ask new research questions, as well as analyze the large amount of data we regularly collect. At the same time we provide valuable career development opportunities for our partnering students to exercise their research skills.

Demographics

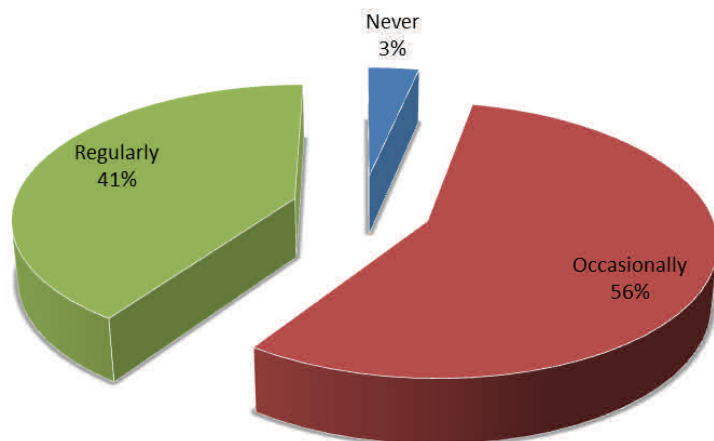
What is their employment status?



How often do they volunteer/take part in civic groups?



How often do they donate financial/material resources?



What is their family status?

- 72% Married/in a domestic partnership
- 70% One or more children

Where do they live?

- 64% Texas
- 34% Out of state
- 2% Internationally

How much debt did they have at graduation?

- Average debt was \$13,438
- Debt ranged from \$2,000 to \$100,000
- 29 respondents had no debt

How much did they work in college?

- 76% Worked part-time during the academic year (73% worked fewer than 30 hours per week)
- 90% Worked during breaks (26% worked full-time)

How many internships did they complete in college?

- 33% At least one internship for academic credit
- 40% At least one internship for experience only

Employment

Ninety percent of employed graduates work full-time. Their diverse careers span education, government, healthcare, law, business, media, spiritual life, the arts, fitness, a zoo and more.

United States Army Captain Fernando Garcia, '03 political science grad, summed up the reason for this wide-ranging career success. "I've seen a lot of arguments nowadays that pit a liberal arts and a more [vocational science or business] education against each other," he said, "and I don't think a liberal arts education excludes either of the other two. I think it actually enhances the two. And if anything, I think that focus on making sure that students think critically, see all sides of an issue, makes them adaptable. And I think that's really what's most key in today's world. I think you can take that type of student and put them in a lot of situations, [especially] a situation that's pretty ill-defined — kind of like our economy now — and they'll be able to adapt, and thrive, and succeed. I'm not sure that's a skill that you can get, or get as well, outside of the liberal arts curriculum."

“...adaptable....[T]hat’s really what’s most key in today’s world.”

— Fernando Garcia '03

Selected employing organizations and positions of the Class of 2003 in 2013

Aircraft Performance Group, Castle Rock, CO, *Aircraft Analyst*

Akre Law, Houston, TX, *Attorney/Owner*

Amegy Bank, Houston, TX, *Senior Vice President*

Baker Hughes, Houston, TX, *Marketing Coordinator*

Baylor Healthcare System, Irving, TX, *Staff Chaplain II*

Bazaarvoice, Austin, TX, *Content Analyst*

Brazos Valley Counseling and Assessment Clinic, Bryan, TX,
Licensed Psychologist

Cambridge Associates, Boston, MA, *Managing Director*

Camp Gladiator, Austin, TX, *Region Manager*

Carroll Insurance Agency, Houston, TX, *Account Executive*

Cegi Technology, Dallas, TX, *Marketing Manager*

Children's Medical Center, Dallas, TX, *RN*

Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, Houston, TX, *Physical Therapist*

City of Austin, Austin, TX, *Environmental Conservation Program Manager*

Community Impact Newspaper, San Marcos, TX, *General Manager*

Connected Nation, Washington, DC, *Communications Specialist (digital media focus)*

Cooper Fitness Center, Dallas, TX, *Fitness Director / Professional Trainer*

Corpus Christi ISD, Corpus Christi, TX, *Teacher and Coach*

Damco USA, Madison, NJ, *HR Consultant*

Dell Inc., Round Rock, TX, *Microsoft Business Development Manager*

Emory University, Atlanta, GA, *Postdoctoral Fellow*

Erin Ross, Ph.D., LMFT, San Antonio, TX, *Marriage and Family Therapist*

Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, Dallas, TX, *Media Relations Coordinator*

Garland ISD, Garland, TX, *Bilingual 1st Grade Teacher*

Global Encounters, Buenos Aires, Argentina, *Managing Director*

Harris County District Attorney's Office, Houston, TX, *Assistant District Attorney (Chief)*

Harvard Business School, Cambridge, MA, *Administrative Director of the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness*

HEB Grocery, Austin, TX, *Manager*

Houston Relationship Therapy, PLLC, Houston, TX, *President*

Hurst-Eules-Bedford ISD, Bedford, TX, *Instructional Specialist*

IBM, Washington, DC, *Managing Consultant*

Information ArchiTECH, Lafayette, LA, *Owner/CEO*

Invivoscribe Technologies, San Diego, CA, *Development Scientist I*

Judson Area Aquatic Club, San Antonio, TX, *Swim Coach*

Krizzly Designs, Marietta, GA, *Designer / Blogger*

Labanowski & Associates, Houston, TX, *Attorney*

Learning Leaders, Inc., New York, NY, *Social Media Manager*

Lone Star Circle of Care, Georgetown, TX, *Pediatric Nurse Practitioner*

Manor ISD, Manor, TX, *Assistant Principal*

Medical Economics, Austin, TX, *Owner/President*

Metropolitan Opera/Freelance, New York/Worldwide, *Costume Supervisor/Costume Designer*

National Institutes of Health – Neurological Disorders and Stroke, Bethesda, MD, *Postdoctoral Fellow*

National Instruments, Austin, TX, *Operations Specialist – Corporate Design Group*

New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM, *Assistant Professor*

Northland College, Ashland, WI, *Assistant Professor*

Office of Attorney General of Maryland, Baltimore, MD, *Assistant Attorney General*

Onelouder Inc., Southlake, TX, *Director of Operations & Site Management*

OneWest Bank, Dallas, TX, *First Vice-President – Energy Lending*

Pradco, Cleveland, OH, *Management Consultant*

Rosetta Resources, Houston, TX, *Sr. Human Resources Representative*

SAIC/NASA, Houston, TX, *Sr. Systems Analyst V*

Saint Louis Zoo, Saint Louis, MO, *Zoological Manager of Great Apes*

Salesforce.com, San Francisco, CA, *Patent Counsel*

Sanderson Marketing, Copperas Cove, TX, *Owner*

Schlumberger, Houston, TX, *Business Development Manager*

Scholastic, New York, NY, *Conference and Event Planner*

Sears Hometown and Outlet Stores, Inc., Hoffman Estates, IL, *Assistant General Counsel*

Southwestern University, Georgetown, TX, *Assistant Director of Student Activities*

Sprint, Columbia, MD, *Program Manager II*

State of Texas, Austin, TX, *Disability Specialist*

Stony Brook University, Stony Brook, NY, *Post-Doctoral Fellow*

Synapse Energy Economics, Cambridge, MA, *Associate*

Target, Minneapolis, MN, *Manager – Direct Marketing & Loyalty*

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Austin, TX, *Attorney*

The Maresh Yoshida 401k Group, Austin, TX, *Consultant*

Thomas Surveyors, Cuero, TX, *General Partner – R.P.L.S.*

Travis County Attorney's Office, Austin, TX, *Assistant County Attorney*

Tutor Doctor, Garland, TX, *Owner / Franchisee / Education Consultant*

University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO, *Assistant Professor*

University of Colorado, Denver, CO, *Assistant Professor*

US Army, Fort Bragg, NC, *Captain*

US Small Business Administration, Washington, DC, *Presidential Management Fellow*

UT MD Anderson Cancer Center, Houston, TX, *Senior Research Assistant*

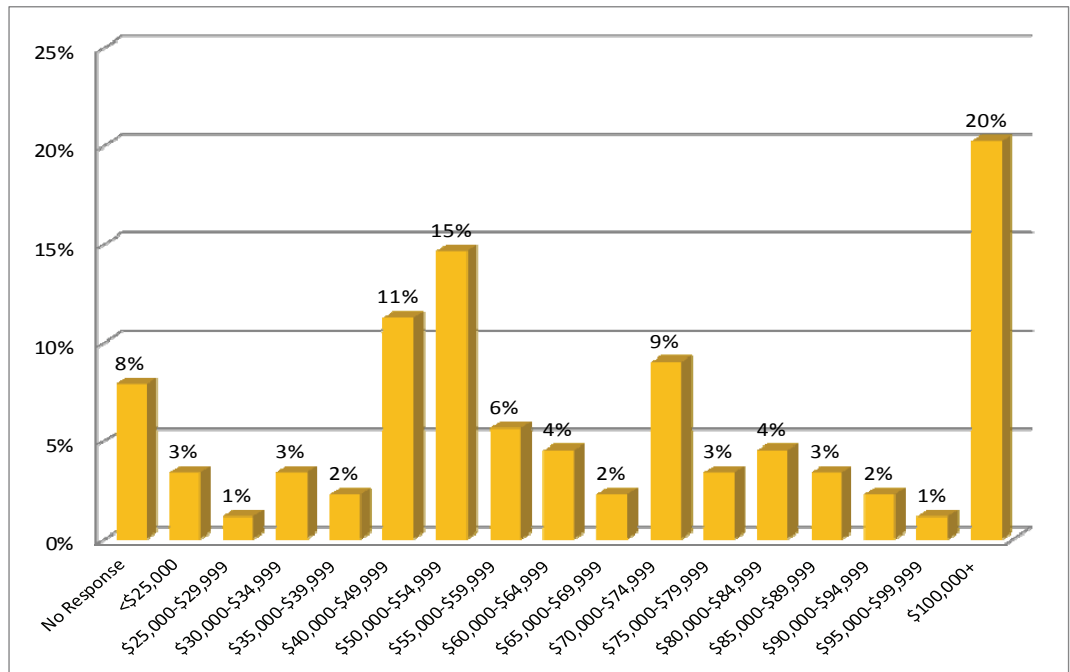
Vubeology, Inc., Austin, TX, *Software Development Manager*

Williamson County District Attorney, Georgetown, TX, *Assistant District Attorney*

Employment

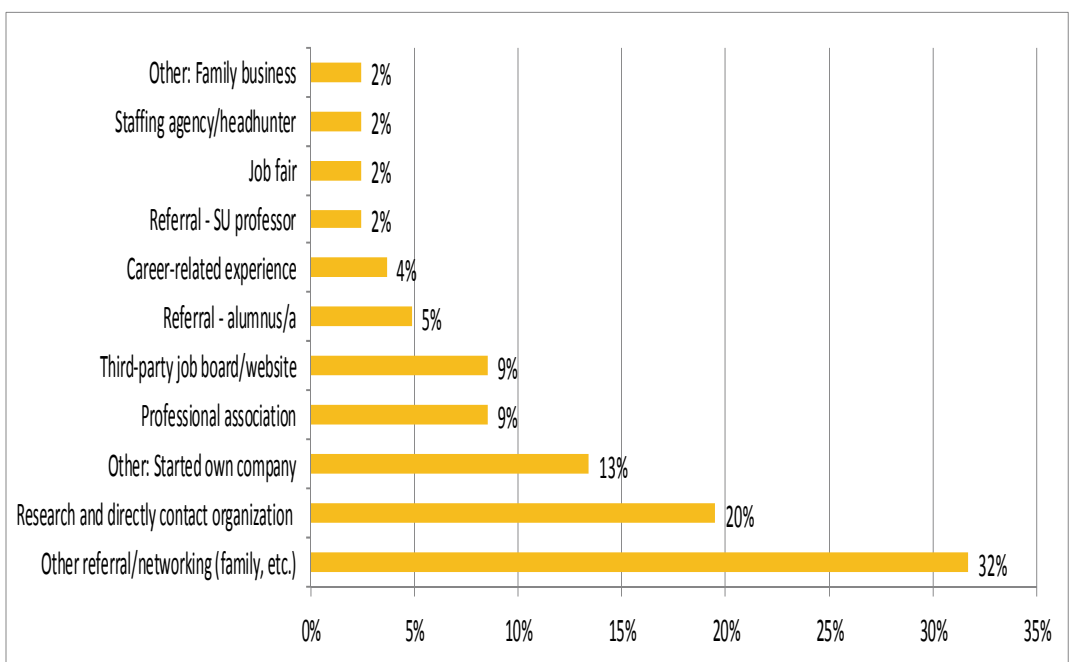
What do they earn?

The majority of starting salaries for new Southwestern graduates employed full-time range between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. After 10 years of employment and continuing education, however, salaries rise dramatically. The mean annual salary of respondents (using the mid-point of ranges) was \$67,591, while the largest percentage of respondents (20 percent) earn more than \$100,000.



How did they locate positions?

For employed graduates who reported the method by which they secured their positions, networking remains the most impactful search strategy, just as it did when those alumni first graduated. Experienced job seekers also leveraged professional organizations more so than do new job seekers. Striking out on their own as entrepreneurs ranked highly for experienced graduates, in contrast to new graduates who rarely start their own businesses right away.



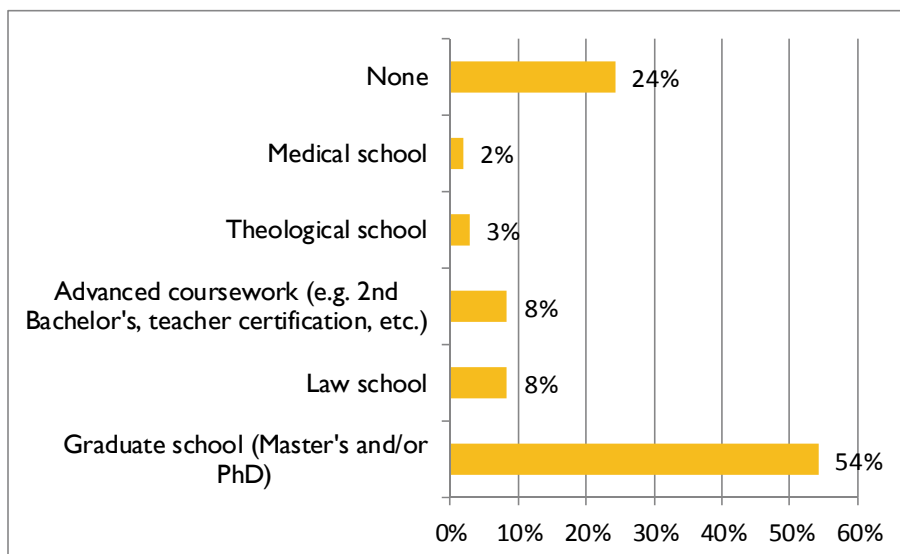
Graduate / Professional School and Advanced Coursework

Immediately after graduation about 26 percent of the Class of 2003 continued their education, while 10 years later, nearly 71 percent of respondents to this survey had done so, some earning multiple graduate degrees.

“I told people that Southwestern, in my opinion, almost over-prepares you for grad school,” explains Aaron Rohre '03, Region Manager for Camp Gladiator in Austin, about earning an MDiv at the Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology. “The high requirement for writing, reading, and participation put me in a place that almost seemed a little bit unfair in a field that has a lot of second career people who are coming back to academics.”

“Southwestern, in my opinion, almost over-prepares you for grad school.”

— Aaron Rohre '03



Select Institutions/Programs of Study

American University, *MFA in Art (Painting)*
 Arizona State University, *PhD in Social Psychology*
 Baylor University, *MA in Journalism*
 California State University, San Marcos, *MA in Experimental Psychology*
 Colorado State University, *MS in Agricultural Economics*
 Emory University, *PhD in Chemistry*
 Georgia Institute of Technology, *MS in Analytical Chemistry*
 Gonzaga University, *MA in Organizational Leadership*
 Harvard Law School, *JD*
 Iteachtexas, *State of Texas Teacher Certification*
 Lamar University, *MEd in Education Administration*
 Missouri University of Science & Technology, *MS in Geological Engineering*
 Mount Sinai School of Medicine, *MD*
 Nova Southeastern University, *Doctor of Marriage and Family Therapy*
 Rice University, *MS in Bioengineering*
 Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions, *DPT*
 Sarah Lawrence College, *MFA in Creative Nonfiction*
 Southern Methodist University, *Certificate in Entrepreneurship*
 Southern Methodist University Perkins School of Theology, *MDiv*
 St. Mary's University, *MA in Communication Studies*
 Syracuse University, *MA in Journalism*
 Texas A&M University, *MS in Sports Physiology*
 Texas A&M University, *BS in Biomedical Engineering*
 Texas A&M University, *MEd and PhD in Counseling Psychology*
 Texas A&M University, *PhD in Computer Science*
 Texas State University, *MA in Educational Administration*
 Texas Tech University, *PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy*
 Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, *MSN*
 Texas Woman's University, *PhD in Health Studies*
 The University of Texas at Arlington, *MS in Social Work*
 Thunderbird School of Global Management, *MBA*
 Trinity University (Washington, DC), *MA in Communication*
 University of Arizona, *MM in Music Education*
 University of Arkansas School of Law, *JD*

University of California, Davis, *PhD in Agricultural and Environmental Chemistry*
 University of California, Hastings College of the Law, *JD*
 University of California, Los Angeles, *PhD in Social Psychology and Developmental Psychology*
 University of Denver, *JD*
 University of Houston Law Center, *JD*
 University of Houston – Clear Lake, *MS in Statistics*
 University of Iowa, *PhD Candidate in English*
 University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law, *JD*
 University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, *MA in International Education*
 University of Missouri – Kansas City, *MFA in Costume Design*
 University of Montana School of Law, *JD*
 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, *MPA in Government and Nonprofit Management*
 University of North Texas, *PhD Candidate in English Literature*
 University of St. Andrews, *PhD in Evolutionary Psychology*
 University of Texas at Austin, *PhD in Sociology*
 University of Texas at Austin, *MS in Social Work*
 University of Texas at Austin, *MBA*
 University of Texas – Pan American, *MA in English*
 University of Texas at Arlington, *MA in English Literature*
 University of Texas at Dallas, *MBA*
 University of Texas at Tyler, *BSN*
 UT Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Houston, *PhD in Neuroscience*
 UT Health Science Center – Houston, *PhD in Biomedical Sciences*
 UT Health Science Center – Houston, *PhD in Pathology/Immunology*
 UT Health Science Center – Houston, School of Public Health, *MPA in Behavioral Sciences*
 UT Health Science Center – San Antonio, *MD*
 UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, *PhD in Neuroscience*
 University of Wisconsin – Madison, *MS in Environmental Science*
 University of Wisconsin – Madison, *MA in Agricultural & Applied Economics*

Evaluation

In addition to knowing exactly what our graduates are doing, we also asked them to report on their satisfaction and expectations regarding Southwestern, their careers and their career preparation.

Career Expectations and Satisfaction

“How well does your current outcome meet your expectations of what you thought you would be doing after you graduated?”

- 42 % Meets my expectations
- 20 % Close to meeting my expectations
- 34 % Does not match but I am happy
- 3 % Does not match and I am unhappy
- 1% No response

“How satisfied are you with your career journey (i.e. the sum total of your post-SU career and educational experiences) to date?”

- 46 % Very happy
- 39 % Satisfied
- 10 % Slightly unsatisfied
- 2 % Completely unsatisfied
- 1% No response

Satisfaction with Southwestern

“Based on your SU experience, how satisfied are you with your preparation for your current job/graduate school program?”

- 40 % Very happy
- 48 % Satisfied
- 8 % Slightly unsatisfied
- 2 % Completely unsatisfied
- 1 % No response

“Based on your SU experience, how satisfied are you with your preparation for your career journey to date?”

- 36 % Very happy
- 52 % Satisfied
- 8 % Slightly unsatisfied
- 3 % Completely unsatisfied
- 1 % No response

“That’s really the thing I feel like Southwestern is best at: it’s really attracted a great group of educators.”

— Wade Kothman '03,
Postdoctoral Fellow,
National Institute of Health

“On a scale of 1-4 (not at all prepared to fully prepared), how well did your undergraduate experience prepare you for:”

- 3.525 Graduate and professional school
- 3.390 Continued learning on my own or outside a degree program (e.g. a new language, professional certification, etc.)
- 3.379 Civic involvement
- 3.341 Interpersonal relationships and family life
- 3.341 Self-management (e.g. managing finances, maintaining health, etc.)
- 3.195 Current or most recent employment

In Their Own Words

While our survey helped us understand the Class of 2003's career trajectories, the oral history project really helped articulate the impact of the Southwestern liberal arts education on those careers:

Aaron Rohre, Region Manager for Camp Gladiator, Austin

"The **interdisciplinary focus** of the liberal arts [has] helped me especially... in a start-up environment [where you are] basically required to do as much as you can in a lot of different areas."

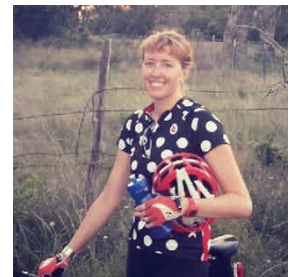
"...everything became about presentations: not only crafting and writing your ideas, but being able to present those to a group of people in a way [that is] engaging and interesting. And I think that's translated into being able to approach a lot of different kinds of people, and a lot of different problems, and **communicating** those in an efficient way that helps get to solutions instead of just reiterating the problem."

"... we would probably have somewhere in the range of ten to fifteen different jobs....And the people who are going to have a leg-up on that are people who are fearless about **encountering and engaging with things that you're not an expert on, that you're going to be open to learn about**, and to continue to grow as a person, and continue to, in essence, remake who you are in a professional way."



Melissa Nicewarner Daly, General Manager, Community Impact Newspaper, San Marcos

"The curriculum was challenging, and I think because it was very hands-on and we worked in groups a lot, that mirrors real life. In real life you're **working on teams**."



Whitney Griffin Randolph, First Vice-President – Energy Lending, One West Bank, Dallas

"Because of my liberal arts education, I guess my mind was trained to think outside of the box, so rather than thinking, "Oh, you know what, I don't have the qualifications for that, I didn't take all those classes that these people that I'm competing against for jobs took," I used my resources and **taught myself what I needed to learn**."

"I think that Southwestern, given the small size of the school and sometimes the lack of knowledge about how good of a school it is, **you have to prove yourself a little bit more**. It makes you work a little bit harder to use your networking and your resources. But I think we have the tools to do that, from the education that we receive and the interaction that we have throughout school. So it's a double-edged sword to some extent, and I think in the short-term it can be frustrating for graduates coming out of school, **but in the long-run I do feel like it serves us very well**, and we're able to move ahead of our peers who didn't have that experience that we had, and who weren't necessarily forced outside of their comfort zones, or forced to market themselves a little bit more, or to use the resources that they have available."



Michael Nguyen, Patent Counsel at Salesforce.com, San Francisco

It's not like one person told me, "I encourage you to **be more creative about your career path**." You know, nobody said that. It was just sort of the culture....

