

Northern Illinois University

Visualizing Multi-Year Trends in Alumni Survey Data with Static Dashboards

Advantages and Challenges Experienced While Informing Academic Programs of their Programmatic Outcomes

Sarah Coley
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Assessment at NIU





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Contact Us

Main Office
Altgeld Hall 312
815-753-1035
815-753-8378
ie@niu.edu

Academic Planning
Altgeld Hall 312
815-753-8378

Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation
Adams Hall B20
815-753-3545

Decision Support and Analysis
Altgeld Hall 215
815-753-7997

Institutional Research
Lowden Hall 103
815-753-6001

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The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, as a leader in a data-informed culture and as a model of best practices in data-informed decision-making, is committed to working with the university community on issues of accreditation, assessment and evaluation, institutional research, and decision support and analysis.

Announcements

- View the latest [alumni survey results](#)
- Submit your work to the [University Writing Project](#)

Resources

- [NIUReports](#) (login required) An online repository that provides access to standardized, institutional reporting.
- Review schedules for [programs](#), [academic degree programs](#) (mid-status) and [academic support units](#) reviewed by the University Assessment Panel.
- [Student Learning Outcomes](#)
- [Lynda.com](#) is free to NIU faculty, staff and students and offers online courses on hundreds of topics.

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Alumni Survey Dashboards



- NIU Alumni Survey data collected at least one year post-graduation
 - e.g., Fall 2014/Spring 2015/Summer 2015 graduates collected in “survey year” 2016
- Dashboards used to demonstrate program health...
 - ...with visualizations
 - ...across time

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Which Questions to Choose?



There were many alumni survey questions...

“How many internships?”
 ? “Satisfaction with degree?”
 “Time to first employment?”
 ? “Relevance of job to major?”
 “Annual income?”
 ?

... but we needed a set of questions for the dashboards

???



What would be informative to programs?

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How Did We Choose?



- Important questions involving student outcomes and programmatic outcomes:
 - Employment
 - University/degree satisfaction
 - Length of time to accomplish career milestones
- Consistent questions across time
 - However, response options varied slightly each year

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Changes in Questions Over Time



- Most question prompts were very similar
- However, for some questions...
 - Response option wording changed, and reverse-coding was necessary

Prepared for Current Job	2014-2015	1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly disagree; 4 = Slightly agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly agree
	2011-2013	1 = Very well; 2 = Well; 3 = Adequately; 4 = Inadequately; 5 = Poor; 6 = Very poorly

- The number of response options changed

Satisfied with Time to Degree	2014-2015	1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Slightly disagree; 4 = Slightly agree; 5 = Agree; 6 = Strongly agree
	2011-2013	1 = Yes; 2 = No
Time to First Job	2015	1 = ≤ 6 mos. 2 = > 6 mos., < 1 yr.; 3 = 1+ yr(s).
	2011-2014	1 = < 1 mo.; 2 = 1-3 mos.; 3 = 3-6 mos.; 4 = 6-9 mos.; 5 = 9+ mos.

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Final Alumni Survey Items for Dashboard Visualization



1.	Current Employment	1 = Yes, full-time; 2 = Yes, part-time; 3 = No, but am seeking employment; 4 = No, and am not seeking employment
2.	Pursuing/Completed Additional Degree	1 = Yes; 2 = No
3.	Time to First Job	1 = ≤ 6 mos.; 2 = > 6 mos.
4.	Prepared for Current Job	1 = Strongly disagree → 6 = Strongly agree
5.	Satisfied with Time to Degree	1 = Yes; 2 = No
6.	Satisfied with Degree	1 = Strongly disagree → 6 = Strongly agree

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Which Format Did We Use?

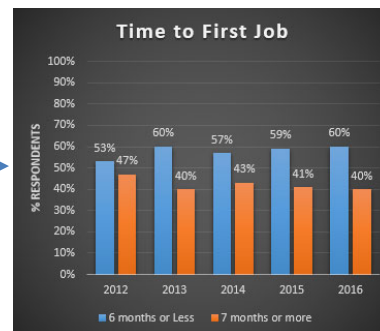


Old Format

Time to First Job (Scale values in italics)		
2015		
	Resp. N	%
Less than 6 months (1)	22	59%
More than 6 months but less than a year (2)	9	24%
One year or more (3)	6	16%
Total Responses	37	
2014		
	Resp. N	%
Less than 1 month (1)	1	3%
Between 1 and 3 months (2)	8	27%
Between 3 and 6 months (3)	8	27%
Between 6 and 9 months (4)	3	10%
More than 9 months (5)	10	33%
Total Responses	30	

etc... (2013 – 2011 not shown)

New Format

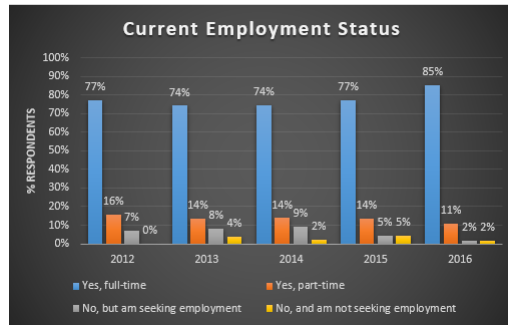


Trends are much easier to visualize in the new format!

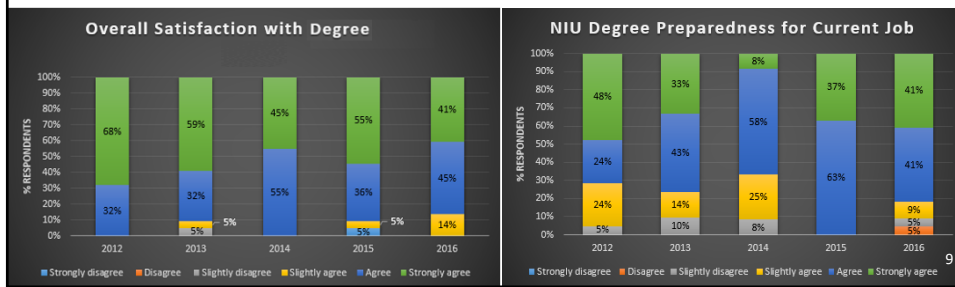
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Examples:

Same throughout all years:

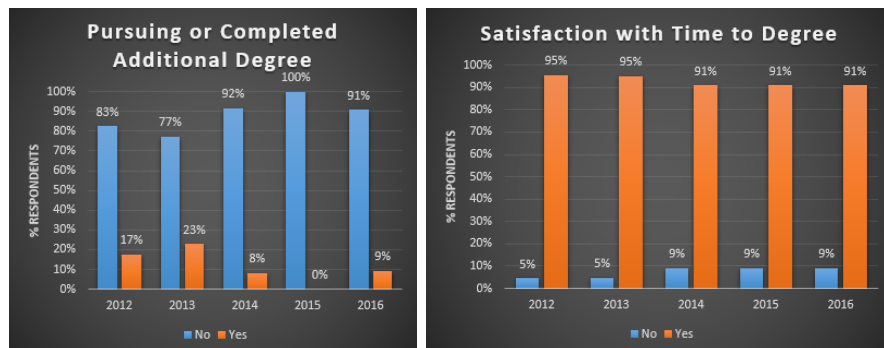


Reverse-coded and reworded response options:

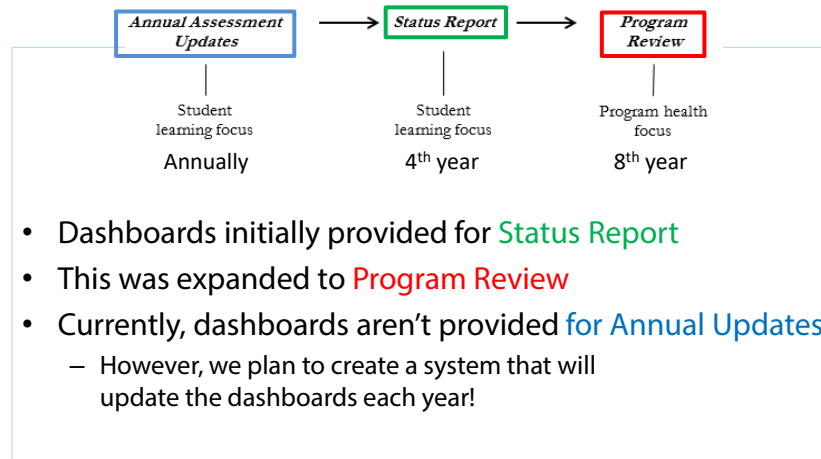


Examples:

Condensed number of response options:



Expanding the Use of the Dashboards



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What Are Our Next Steps?



- Add More Questions
 - Newer data do not have “incompatible scales” issue
 - Tailor questions to evolving university initiatives (e.g., engagement) while maintaining core questions
- Get feedback from Alumni Survey users
 - Is this format useful? Should it be changed?

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Thank you for your time!



Questions?

You can contact me at scoley1@niu.edu
Sarah Coley
Accreditation, Assessment, and Evaluation (AAE)
Institutional Effectiveness
Northern Illinois University