

POST-GRADUATION PLANS OF CARNEGIE MELLON UNDERGRADUATE SENIORS

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INTRODUCTION

- Research Question
 - What are the post-graduation plans of graduating seniors and how did they make their decisions?
- Motivations
 - Reveal trends in which direction(s) students are heading immediately after graduation
 - Better understandings on who or what has greatest influence on the decision making process
- Got suggestions from Career Center to provide useful survey questions
- Career Center can use our results to improve their programs and advising techniques



QUESTIONNAIRE - DEMOGRAPHICS

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Nationality
- Region of home-state, if in America (e.g., Midwest)
- Number of siblings
- Highest level of education completed by mother
- Highest level of education completed by father
- College of primary major (e.g, H&SS)
- Primary major
- Personality type (e.g., extroverted)
- Average GPA at the end of Fall 2009 semester



QUESTIONNAIRE – SAMPLE ITEMS

- Which of the following statements apply to you?
 - I have accepted a full-time job offer.
 - I have accepted an admission offer from a graduate program.
 - I have received job or admission offer(s) but I have not made a final decision yet.
 - I have applied but not received yet any job or admission offers.
 - I have not yet applied but I plan to do so soon.
 - I have willingly decided to take time off.
 - Other:
- If you plan to pursue a **full-time job**, to what degree has each of the following factors influenced you the most? (1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree)
 - Salary
 - Location
 - Ranking/Reputation
 - Mission of the organization
 - Opportunity for promotion
 - Relation to your area of study
 - Other:



- To which degree have each of the following helped you in deciding your post-undergraduate plans? (1 Strongly disagree 2 Disagree 3 Neither agree nor disagree 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree)

Family

Boyfriend/Girlfriend

Friends

Academic advisor

Career Consultant/Career Fairs/TartanTrak

Other:

- What obstacles have you faced while pursuing your post-undergraduate plans? Select all that apply.

Lack of experience for potential opportunities

Complicated application processes

Disqualification for opportunities based on nationality

Potential discrimination from employers or schools

Bad economy (i.e., rough job market)

Rejection from a potential employer or school

Long-term illness

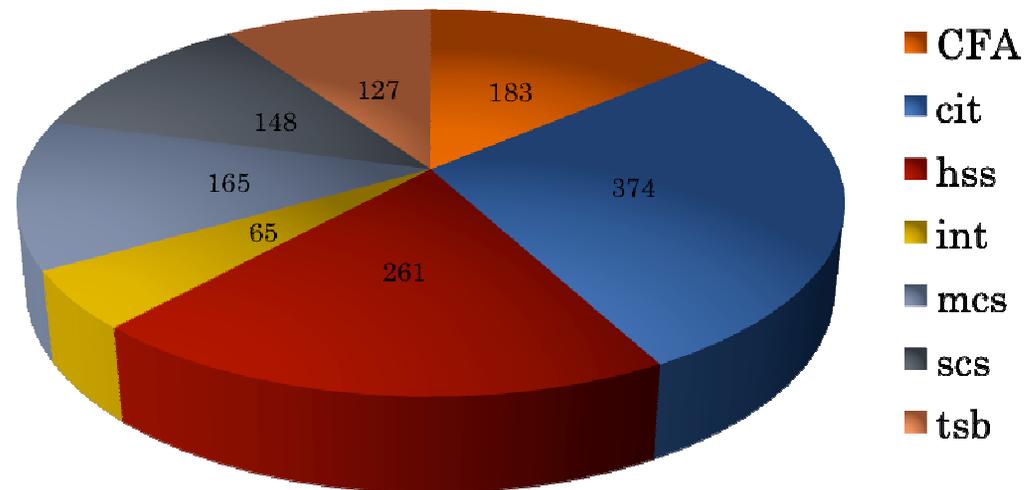
General Financial difficulties

Conflicts with family and/or friends



COLLECTING A RANDOM SAMPLE

- There are 1323 Seniors at Carnegie Mellon University



This would allow us to determine percentages as we had initially planned to stratify the sample. However, we later decided post-stratification would work best.



COLLECTING A RANDOM SAMPLE (CONT.)

- In order to have a Margin of Error of .10 and an expected response rate of 25%, we came up with a sample size of 360, and expected to receive 90 responses.
- The sample was randomly generated using Carnegie Mellon's C-Book. We used the method of choosing a random start number and a fixed increment of 20.
- If the names chosen were not seniors, we went down to the next person that was a senior.
- The names were chosen, the majors were listed, and the andrew id was added to the list.



SETTING UP THE SURVEY

- We used a SurveyMonkey Pro account, which allowed us to include more than 10 questions and receive more responses than the basic account
- We added logic to the questionnaire
 - to ensure that participants agreed to the conditions in the informed consent form
 - to ensure that participants were part of the target population (“expected to graduate with a Bachelors degree in 2010)



CONTACTING RESPONDENTS

- We sent an email with the link to our random sample of seniors from the C-Book
- Our “name”: Carnegie Mellon Graduate Questionnaire Committee
- Our email address: CMUpostgraduateplans@gmail.com
- The subject line and greeting in the body of the email were similar to those from the HUB
 - Subject of the email: “Graduation: May 2010 Graduation Questionnaire”
 - Greeting: “Dear Expected May 2010 Graduate”



RESPONSE RATE

- We recently emailed 360 students, 5 bounced back
 - 76 students began the survey but didn't complete it
 - 52 students completed the survey (as of last night)
- Response rate (so far): 14.44%



FUTURE STEPS - NONRESPONSE

- Send out a reminder email on Sunday, April 3rd at 7pm
- If we have 90 respondents by Tuesday morning, we will stop collecting; If not, we will contact our friends in the sample to encourage them to participate
- Then we will send out a “last call” email on Wednesday evening and close the survey on Saturday, April 10th



FUTURE STEPS – IMPUTATION AND POST-STRATIFICATION

- After data collection, no imputation (hopefully)
 - No item nonresponse since responses are required for each question to submit the survey
- We will compare the proportion of respondents in each school to the proportion of our target population in each school
- If necessary, we will conduct post-stratification
 - As of now, post-stratification seems unlikely



FUTURE STEPS – ANALYZING DATA AND ANSWERING OUR RESEARCH QUESTION

- What are the post-graduation plans of graduating seniors and how did they make their decisions?
 - Descriptive statistics of the overall graduating class
 - Descriptive statistics of each strata (based on school)
- Other interesting questions that can be addressed from responses to our questionnaire:
 - What are some of the common obstacles faced by students while pursuing their post-graduation plans?
 - In which school do students feel the most pressure to compete for prestigious post-graduation plans?
 - In which school are students more concerned with happiness than making a lot of money?



QUESTIONS?

