

Connecting

Psychology Alumni Newsletter

ISSUE #1
Spring 2019

Au Sable Hall

Welcome to *Connecting*! This is the inaugural issue of the Psychology Department's alumni newsletter. The title reflects its purpose. This newsletter is all about making and maintaining connections. Our hope is that it will help us stay connected with our Psychology majors. Just as Grand Valley has grown and changed since its inception, so has the Psychology department, and there are now *many* of you who have graduated from Grand Valley with a major in Psychology. We'd like to know what's happening in your lives, and we'd like you to know what's happening in the department.

We also hope this newsletter helps you to connect with each other. We know that some of you remain in touch with each other. But as the years go by and you are living further and further afield, we hope this newsletter provides you with an opportunity to maintain or renew connections with former friends and classmates. We are also thinking this newsletter could foster connections between alumni and our current students. For starters, the newsletter will appear on the Psychology Department webpage. That means current students have access to it and can learn a bit about those who've come before them.

Over the decades we have had increasing numbers of majors. Some of you have majored in Psychology generally, and others have specialized in Behavioral Science, Special Education, Biopsychology and, more recently, Behavioral Neuroscience (our newest major). You've gone off to engage in all kinds of work, and while many of you are still living in Michigan, increasingly you're living in other states as well and, in fact, all across the globe. As time goes by, we'd like to hear more about your lives and the experiences you've had since leaving Grand Valley. In this initial issue, we're going to share some data that you've already provided to us.



Alumni Survey Responses

Back in the summer of 2016, we sent out a survey to all Psychology alumni to ask you about your experiences at Grand Valley and your life experiences since your graduation, your career pursuits, volunteer and work experiences; your satisfaction with life, your challenges and what's going well in your life.

Many of you, 845 to be exact, responded to the survey. Thanks to all of you who responded. Your responses provide a glimpse into what unfolds in our alumni's lives after they have left Grand Valley. As you know, preparing our students for lives in the world outside of the university has always been a goal that we strive to fulfill. That's why we

were excited that so many of you have responded to the survey. We've been working hard coding your responses to open-ended questions and analyzing the quantitative parts of the survey so the results can be compiled to show you a clear picture of what we have learned from you.

In the first issue of this newsletter, we are going to focus on your career paths. We'll report on the very first job that you had right after you graduated from GVSU and how long it took you to land your first job. But before we get into the numbers, we

would like to let you know who responded to the survey so you know what the data represent (remember issues of sampling and generalizability from your research methods class – sound familiar?).

Who responded?



Some of the 845 of you who submitted surveys did not respond to the demographic questions, but among those of you who did, about 79% identified as women, 21% as men, and less than 1% as transgender. The average age was 38. The vast majority identified as White/Caucasian (91%). Less than 4% identified as African American; 3% as Hispanic/Latino(a); and less than 1% as Asian/Asian American, Middle Eastern, or Native American. Just over 1% identified as “other” or mixed race.

We also have data on the year of graduation for everyone. Broken down by decade of graduation, fewer than 2% of the respondents graduated in Grand Valley’s very early years, the 1960s; 5% in the 1970s; 6% in the 1980s; 20% in the 1990s; 34% in the 2000s; and 35% in the 2010s. Because there were so few graduates in the 1960s, we collapsed graduates from the 60s and 70s into a single group. Now let’s look a little closer at graduates grouped by decade. The data are shown in the following graphs:

Gender (%)		
	Women	Men
1960/70s	54	46
1980s	73	27
1990s	80	20
2000s	85	15
2010s	80	20

Mean Age	
1960/70s	65
1980s	54
1990s	46
2000s	35
2010s	27

Race %							
	White	African American	Hispanic	Asian American	Middle Eastern	Native American	Mixed/ Other
1960/70s	92	--	3	--	3	--	3
1980s	94	6	--	--	--	--	--
1990s	89	8	2	--	--	1	--
2000s	91	4	3	1	--	<1	<1
2010s	91	1	3	4	--	<1	3

Marital Status %				
	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed
1960/70s	5	83	12	--
1980s	11	76	14	--
1990s	10	74	16	<1
2000s	23	71	6	--
2010s	63	34	2	<1

A Glimpse Into the Careers of Alumni

Below, we are going to show you the kinds of first jobs that alumni have taken as well as their current jobs. We also compiled the top five most popular jobs by decade to give a closer look at what our alumni are doing. We classified the jobs you reported using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) coding system provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics

(<https://www.bls.gov/soc/>). All of the two digit numbers are the SOC codes.

Before we present the data on the jobs, here is a table on the length of time for our alumni to find a job and the percentage of graduates who looked for a job. All of the data were presented by decades so you can see the trends over time.

Year of Graduation	N	Length of Time to Find a Job (In Months)		Whether Looked for a Job (Percentage)	
		Mean	Median	Looked for	Did not Look for
All	783	3.4	2	69.4	30.4
2010-2015	283	4.6	3	60.7	38.9
2000-2009	270	3.1	2	70.9	29.1
1990-1999	150	2.8	2	78.5	21.5
1980-1989	44	2.5	1	85.0	15.0
1967-1979	46	1.9	1	69.6	28.3

First jobs

Here are the five most common jobs by decade:

Rank	2010-2015 (N=283)		2000-2009 (N=270)		1990-1999 (N=150)		1980-1989 (N=44)		1967-1979 (N=46)	
	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%
1	Community and Social Service	20.5	Educational Instruction and Library	30	Educational Instruction and Library	40.9	Educational Instruction and Library	27	Educational Instruction and Library	33.3
2	Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	15.2	Community and Social Service	19.6	Community and Social Service	22	Management	13.5	Community and Social Service	23.8
3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	9.4	Office and Administrative Support	10	Office and Administrative Support	11	Community and Social Service	13.5	Sales and Related	7.1
4	Office and Administrative Support	8.9	Management	8.7	Management	6.3	Personal Care and Service	8.1	Management	4.8
5	Food Preparation and Serving Related	8.0	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5.7	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4.7	Sales and Related	8.1	Life, Physical, and Social Science	4.8

To give you a better idea about the specific first jobs taken by our alumni, we compiled the first jobs that have ever been ranked as the top five most popular ones across the decades. The exemplar jobs were the actual jobs held by our alumni.

SOC code	SOC Title	Exemplar jobs held by alumni
25	Educational Instruction and Library	Teaching in special education, K-12, college, elementary resource room teacher
21	Community and Social Service	School counselor/psychologist, mental health counselor, community health worker, medical social worker, child welfare support, disabilities support, protective service coordinator, foster care social worker, counselor for at risk, abused, neglected youth, crisis hotlines/intervention, domestic violence and substance abuse prevention, family therapist, student support and outreach coordinator, life skill and career coach, academic support personnel, mental health case manager, community programs, area agency on age-adult with disabilities, community health educator.
11	Management	Manager, program director, educational administrator, school principals, business owners. Managing non-profit programs, office supervisors/HR.
43	Office and Administrative Support	Secretary, teller, transcribing psych reports, data entry, administrative or executive assistant, planner, volunteer coordinator, VP assistant, office worker (HR, business, medical office), receptionist, staffing coordinator, Parks and Rec, crew member, recruiter, scheduler.
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Occupational therapist (disabilities, brain injuries), mental health therapist (for substance abuse, trauma, sexual assault, domestic violence, prisoners), physical therapy, ABA services, outpatient therapist, clinician, clinical nurse, psychological assessment for VA, therapy and supervision, case worker with DHS, patient care provider at mental health facilities.
41	Sales and Related	Cashier, sales (books, computers, retail, jewelry, gas station), customer service, marketing coordinator.
39	Personal Care and Service	Childcare worker, nanny, resident care provider, housekeeping, special occasion consultant, direct care, head coach, personal banker.
35	Food Preparation and Serving Related	Server, baker, bar tender
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Licensed clinical practice, social worker, psychology researcher, professor.

To show you a complete picture of what kinds of first jobs that our alumni have had, the following table shows all of the first jobs that alumni had across the whole sample. They are ranked by popularity.

First Job	N of People	% of People
Educational Instruction and Library	180	27.2
Community and Social Service	134	20.3
Office and Administrative Support	60	9.1
Management	52	7.9
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	43	6.5
Sales and Related	31	4.7
Personal Care and Service	29	4.4
Graduate school & medical school	27	4.1
Food Preparation and Serving Related	23	3.5
Life, Physical, and Social Science	16	2.4
Business and Financial Operations	12	1.8
Healthcare Support	9	1.4
Legal	6	0.9
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	6	0.9
Protective Service	6	0.9
Production	6	0.9
Volunteering	6	0.9
Computer and Mathematical	4	0.6
Architecture and Engineering	2	0.3
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2	0.3
Military Specific	2	0.3
Construction and Extraction	1	0.2
Transportation and Material Moving	1	0.2



Current Jobs

In the survey, we asked what jobs people have right now and the specific responsibilities associated with their job. Similar to what you have seen for the first jobs, we will show you the top five most popular jobs held by alumni by decade and then all jobs held across the entire sample.

Here are the five most common current jobs across the decades:

Rank	2010-2015 (N=283)		2000-2009 (N=270)		1990-1999 (N=150)		1980-1989 (N=44)		1967-1979 (N=46)	
	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%	Job	%
1	Community and Social Service	22.9	Educational Instruction and Library	23.7	Educational Instruction and Library	36.4	Educational Instruction and Library	27.8	Management	13.9
2	Educational Instruction and Library	13.2	Community and Social Service	16.2	Community and Social Service	19.7	Management	16.7	Sales and Related	11.1
3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	13.2	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	12.4	Management	15.2	Community and Social Service	11.1	Educational Instruction and Library	8.3
4	Business and Financial Operations	11.9	Management	11.6	Business and Financial Operations	9.8	Business and Financial Operations	8.3	Business and Financial Operations	5.6
5	Life, Physical, and Social Science	8.4	Business, Financial Operations	9.5	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	5.3	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	8.3	Life, Physical, and Social Science	5.6

SOC code	SOC Title	Exemplar jobs held by our alumni
25	Educational Instruction and Library	Teaching in special education, K-12, college, elementary resource room teacher.
21	Community and Social Service	School counselor/psychologist, mental health counselor, community health worker, medical social worker, child welfare support, disabilities support, protective service coordinator, foster care social worker, counselor for at risk, abused, neglected youth, crisis hotlines/intervention, domestic violence and substance abuse prevention, family therapist, student support and outreach coordinator, life skill and career coach, academic support personnel, mental health case manager, community programs, area agency on age-adult with disabilities, community health educator.
11	Management	Manager, program director, educational administrator, school principals, business owners. Managing non-profit programs, office supervisors/HR.
13	Business and Financial Operations	HR-related, financial & insurance, marketing operation, event and program coordinator
29	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	Occupational therapist (disabilities, brain injuries), mental health therapist (for substance abuse, trauma, sexual assault, domestic violence, prisoners), physical therapy, ABA services, outpatient therapist, clinician, clinical nurse, psychological assessment for VA, therapy and supervision, case worker with DHS, patient care provider at mental health facilities.
41	Sales and Related	Cashier, sales (books, computers, retail, jewelry, gas station), customer service, marketing coordinator.
19	Life, Physical, and Social Science	Licensed clinical practice, social worker, psychology researcher, professor.

The following table shows all of the jobs currently held by the alumni who responded to the survey. They are presented in the order of popularity.

Current Job	N of People	% of People
Educational Instruction and Library	148	22.0
Community and Social Service	122	18.1
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	70	10.4
Business and Financial Operations	68	10.1
Management	65	9.6
Life, Physical, and Social Science	47	7.0
Office and Administrative Support	36	5.3
Sales and Related	28	4.2
Graduate school & medical school	14	2.1
Legal Occupations	9	1.3
Healthcare Support	9	1.3
Computer and Mathematical	6	0.9
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	6	0.9
Protective Service	6	0.9
Personal Care and Service	5	0.7
Food Preparation and Serving Related	2	0.3
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2	0.3
Military Specific	2	0.3
Architecture and Engineering	1	0.1
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1	0.1
Production	1	0.1
Transportation and Material Moving	1	0.1
Retired	25	3.7

STAY TUNED!

We hope these data from the alumni survey give you a good idea about the kinds of jobs that alumni across the decades

started out in and currently hold. Through the survey, we have collected a lot more information about our alumni besides their careers (such as their life satisfaction, perceived obstacles in their lives, and reflections on experiences at Grand Valley). In the next issue of *Connecting*, we plan to share more data from your survey

responses. But, we also want to know what you would like to see in upcoming issues. If you have any personal news, photos, or recollections from your life as a psychology major here at GVSU, please share them with us! If you have any thoughts, questions, or ideas about what might be featured in future issues, let us know!

[CONNECT with us!](#)