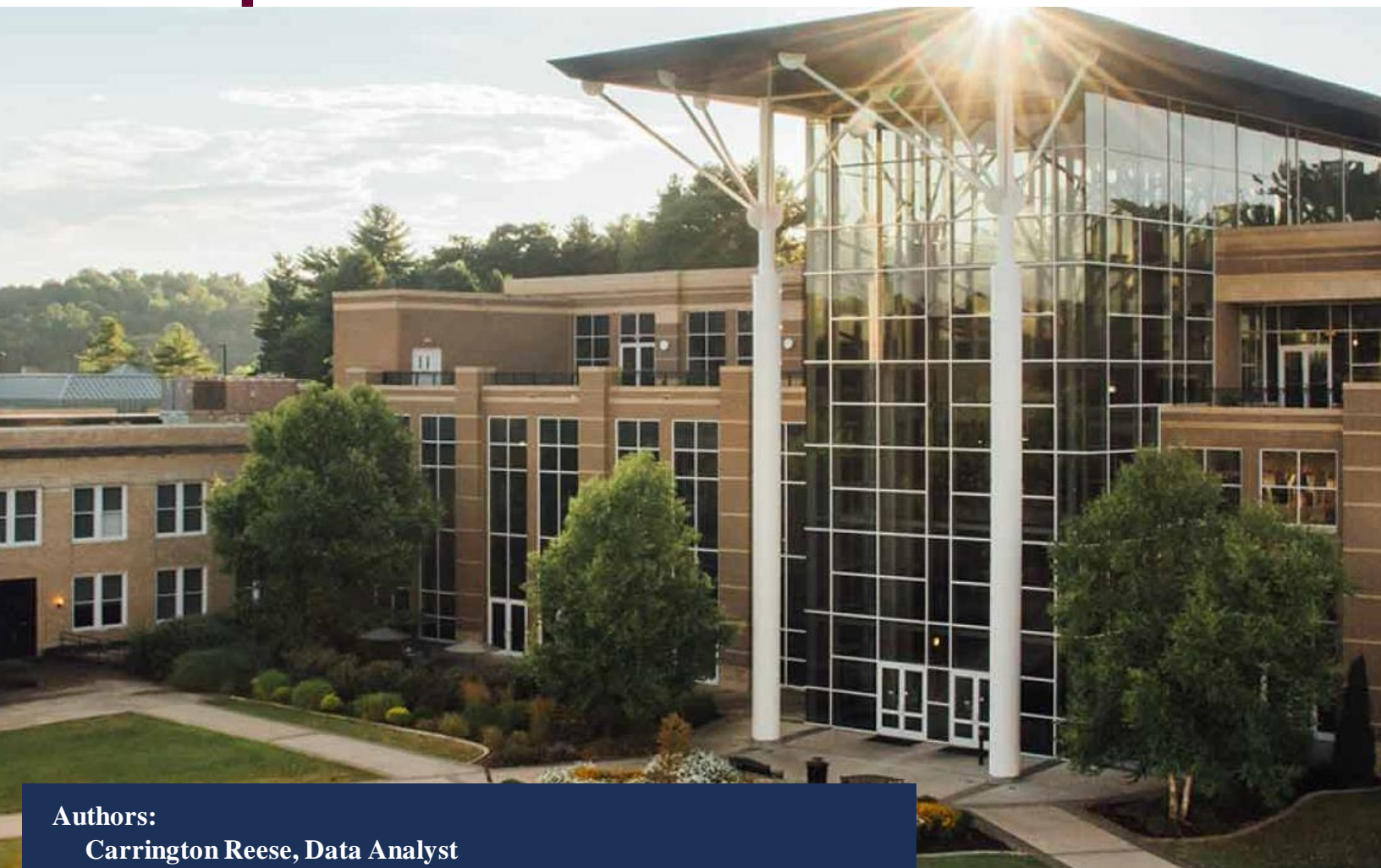




**FAIRMONT STATE
UNIVERSITY™**

Institutional Research and Effectiveness

2021 Graduate Outcome Report: Undergraduates



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2021 Graduation Survey Report

Associate and Baccalaureate Level Graduates

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

The primary function of this survey was to gather perceptual data on employment status, location, and salary information of recent Fairmont State University graduates and to assess indications of how well Fairmont State University prepared graduates for career success. Survey questions were aligned to NACE¹ and U.S. News and World Report (USNWR)² standards. The survey was created using Qualtrics, an online survey software suite. Individualized survey links were distributed to recent Spring 2021 graduates of Fairmont State University along with two emailed reminders to students who had not yet completed the survey. No paper or ancillary material were utilized as survey instruments. The survey was distributed to emails of students who had a degree pending as of April 22nd, 2021, initially identified by the Registrar's office and verified by the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness. Data were sourced from Banner, Fairmont State University's student information system. Respondents were provided with the option to participate in a gift card incentive as part of their completion of the survey.

Email addresses of respondents who requested to receive further communications from Career Services were collected; respondents opting for additional communication were advised that they may receive information regarding career opportunities and other forms of support in the future. After the response period ended, emails of students indicating an interest in further communication were forwarded to Career Services.

Limitations

Individual survey links were sent out to recent graduates via their campus email; as such, it is assumed that the participant has access to the Internet and their campus email. Students who had such levels of access may be systematically different from students who did not have such access during the distribution period, meaning that results may only be indicative of students from one of two distinct student populations.

In addition, the proximity of distribution to conferral ceremonies may have resulted in lower response rates overall, as some graduates may not have been checking their email frequently.

Further, incentivizing the survey limits interpretation of results. A respondent may be more likely to answer in a way that shows favor to Fairmont State University if they believe the incentive is correlated to favorable answers. Lower income graduates may have been more likely to take the survey because of the incentive than higher income graduates, which may have resulted in results skewed toward lower income graduates. A quote from an article on SurveyMonkey³ demonstrates

¹ <https://www.nacweb.org/job-market/graduate-outcomes/first-destination/standards-and-protocols/>

² <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-us-news-collects-rankings-data>

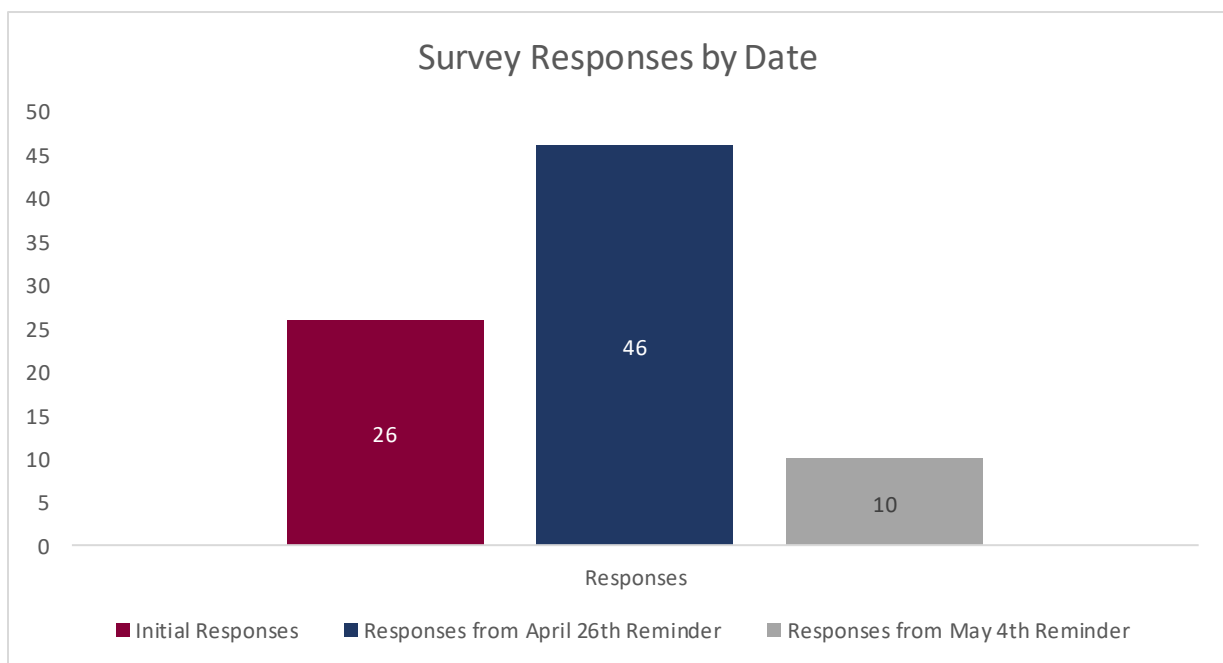
³ <https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/offer-survey-incentives-without-sacrificing-good-data/>

this point: "...because a biasing incentive type was offered, those surveyed could look vastly different from those who did not respond."

Finally, this survey was non-randomly distributed. Thus, inferences made on the results of this survey may only be concluded about the sample of graduates who responded to the survey, not of all graduates.

Timeframe

The survey was initially sent out to participants on April 22nd, 2021; this date was two or three days prior to commencement ceremonies, depending on the day on which the respondent's graduation was held. Emailed reminders were sent out on April 26th at 2pm and May 4th at 1:30pm. Reminders yielded 56 out of 82 total responses.



Definitions

Full-time employment: a graduate working in a temporary, freelance, long-term, short-term, military, or paid or unpaid post-graduation position 30 hours or more a week

Part-time employment: is defined as working in a temporary, freelance, long-term, short-term, military, or paid or unpaid post-graduation position less than 30 hours a week

Continuing education: includes graduate, professional, or another type of further study beyond undergraduate study

FULL REPORT

Foreword

Tracking career outcomes is key to gathering the necessary information to provide future students with the resources they need during and after their time at the institution. Degree information can be used to identify what programs need more recruitment efforts.⁴ Salary information can be used to inform future students what they can expect based on the salaries of alumni in their degree program⁵. Place of employment data can be used to show what type of positions graduates with a certain degree attain following graduation;⁶ institutions may also reach out to the employer with this information and set up an internship or shadowing program for future students.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, a survey-based study from the National Association of Colleges and Employees (NACE) found that outside employers are not planning on changing when they recruit, but rather how they recruit.⁷ Of the employers who answered the survey from NACE, "...more than half of respondents report that they will recruit virtually..."⁸. As such, the NACE report for 2019 including information about employment/continuing education for recent graduates provides a sufficient basis for comparison to Fairmont State's own data.

NACE reports that 55.3% of graduates were employed full-time and 3.7% were employed part time in 2019.⁹ NACE also broke down employment rate by school size; the national full-time employment for universities with graduating classes under 2,000—like Fairmont State University—is 61.3%. The average starting salary of graduates (full-time and part time) was reported as \$54,488 while the average starting salary of universities with graduating classes of under 2,000 was report as \$44,305.

Survey Response Rate

The graduation survey was sent out to 557 upcoming Spring 2021 graduates via their campus email. A total of 81 responses were received. 31 individuals opened the link to the survey and gave some responses, but did not complete all questions, 2 emails bounced back, and 14 duplicate emails were purged from the distribution list. As such, the total number of unduplicated graduates who received the email is 541, yielding a survey response rate of 14.97%.

71 respondents graduated in April 2021, one respondent is to graduate in August 2021, and 10 respondents left the graduation question blank.

⁴ <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1252&context=etd>

⁵ <https://www.nacweb.org/career-development/best-practices/collecting-and-using-outcomes-data/>

⁶ <https://www.lifescied.org/doi/10.1187/cbe.19-08-0150>

⁷ <https://www.nacweb.org/job-market/trends-and-predictions/pandemic-prompted-significant-changes-to-recruiting-methods-not-schedules/>

⁸ Ibid.

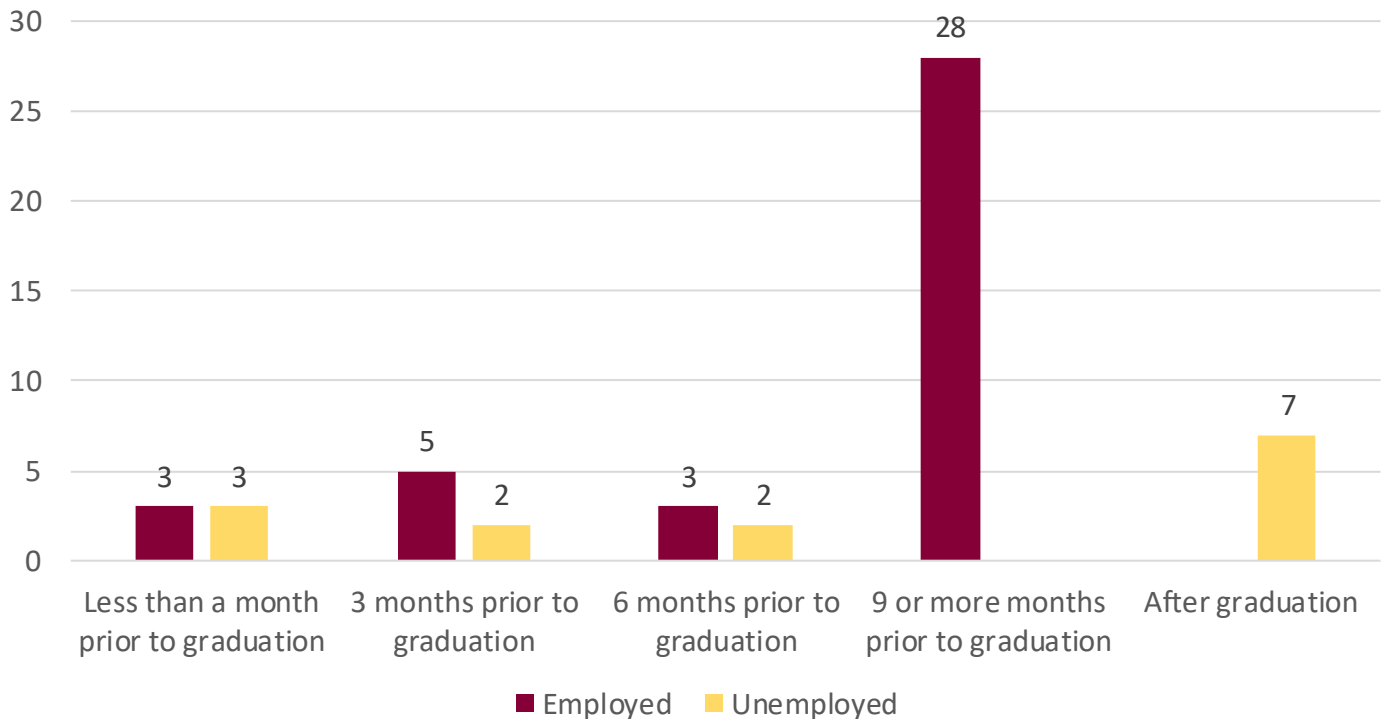
⁹ <https://www.nacweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2021/publication/free-report/first-destinations-for-the-class-of-2019.pdf>

Searching for Employment

Of the respondents that indicated that they are employed in some capacity (full-time, part-time, current employment, delayed start date) (n=42), 92.86% (n=39) gave a response when asked when they started looking for employment. Of those 39 responses, 7.69% (n=3) indicated that they began looking less than a month before graduation, 12.82% (n=5) indicated that they started looking 3 months prior to graduation, 7.69% (n=3) indicated that they started looking 6 months prior to graduation, and 71.79% (n=28) indicated that they began looking 9 or more months prior to graduation.

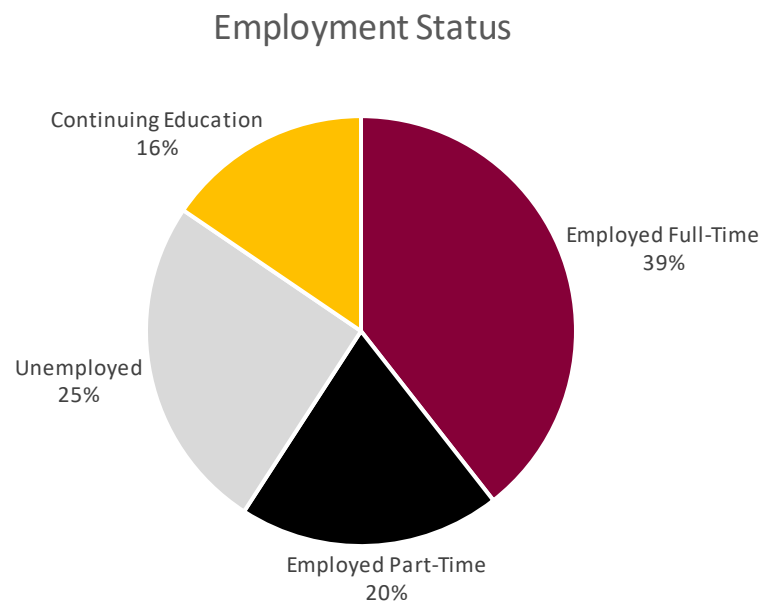
Of the respondents that indicated they were unemployed and actively seeking employment (n=16), 87.5% (n=14) gave a response when asked when they started looking for employment. Of the 14 responses, 21.43% (n=3) indicated that they began looking less than a month before graduation, 14.29% (n=2) indicated that they started looking 3 months prior to graduation, 14.29% (n=2) indicated that they started looking 6 months prior to graduation, and 50% (n=7) indicated that they were going to begin looking after graduation.

When Respondents Indicated They Started Looking for Employment

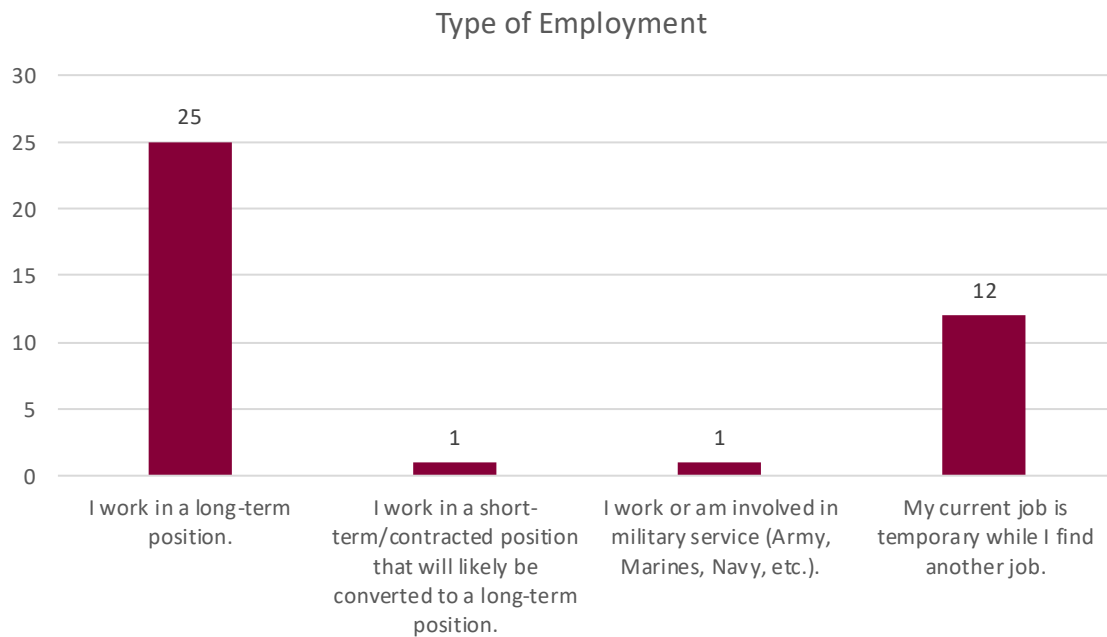


Employment Status

Results indicated that 59.15% (n=42) of respondents were employed in some capacity (full-time or part-time) before graduation while 25.35% (n=18) —approximately one out of every four respondents— indicated that they were unemployed. Of the respondents that were unemployed, 88.89% (n=16) were actively seeking employment. 15.49% (n=11) plan to or already have begun a form of continuing education beyond undergraduate study.



39 respondents answered what type of position in which they are currently employed. 64.10% (n=25) indicated they were in a long-term position, 2.56% (n=1) indicated they were in a short term/contracted position that will likely become a long-term position, 2.56% (n=1) indicated they were employed in military services, and 30.77% (n=12) indicated they are in a temporary job while they look for other employment.



Employment Compensation

Of the respondents that indicated they were employed full-time, the average annual base salary is \$44,577.06. The interquartile range was used to determine an outlier of \$161,000. This salary was not reflective of the experience reported by most of the respondents of this survey and is inconsistent with a typical entry-level salary on a national level provided in the NACE report.¹⁰

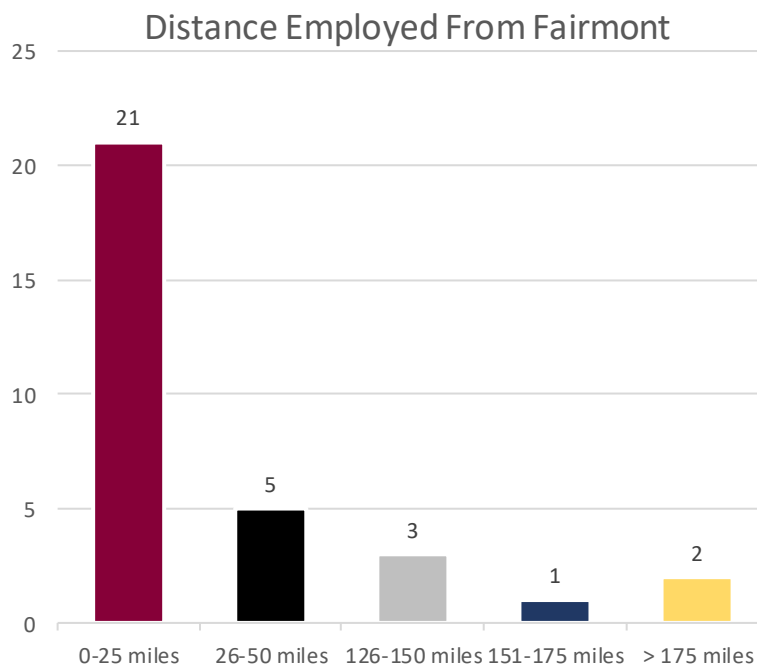
Of the respondents that indicated they were employed full-time and gave an hourly salary, the mean is \$12.83 per hour. One respondent who indicated they were employed part-time provided a salary; the other respondents indicated their hourly salaries. The average is \$11.94 per hour exclusive of the salary from the latter respondent.

¹⁰ <https://www.naceweb.org/job-market/graduate-outcomes/first-destination/standards-and-protocols/>

Employment Location

33 respondents indicated where their place of employment is located when they indicated they were employed. Of those respondents, 24.24% (n=8) indicated they are employed in Fairmont, 15.15% (n=5) indicated they are employed in Bridgeport, and 15.15% (n=5) indicated they are employed in Morgantown. 2 out of the 33 respondents indicated that they are employed out-of-state; those states are South Carolina and California.

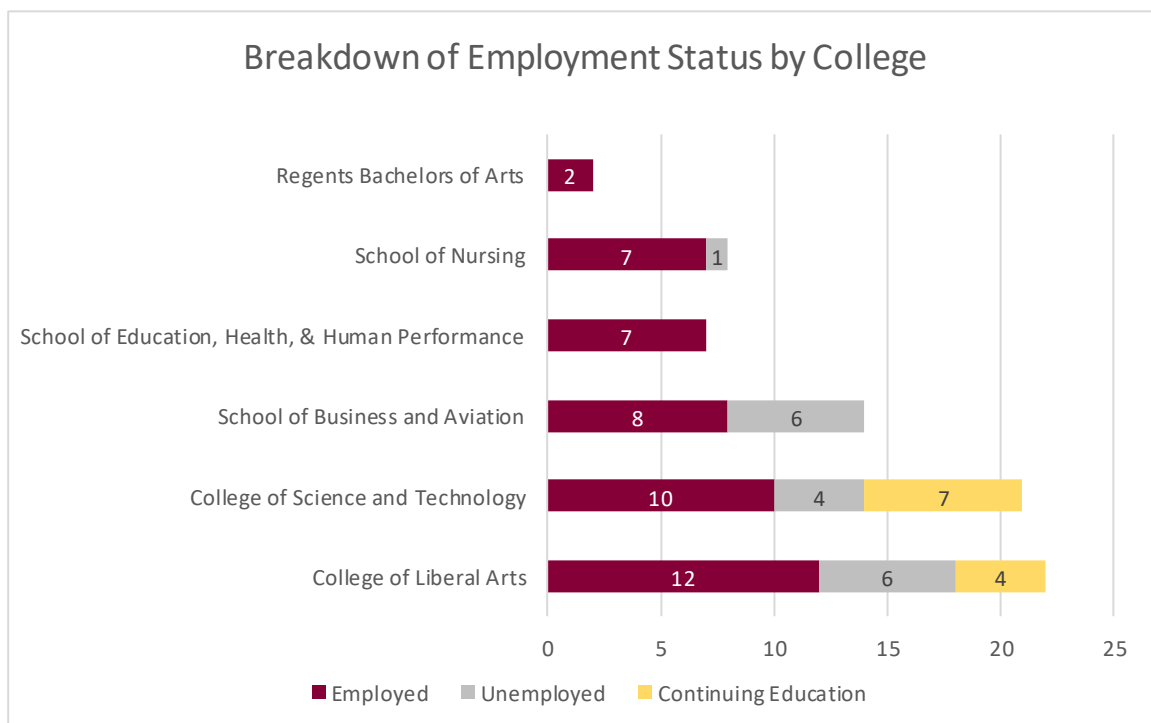
Below is a graph showing how far, in miles, a graduate's place of employment was compared to Fairmont, WV.



A majority of employed graduates are working in jobs close to Fairmont. 66% (n=21) of respondents indicated that their place of employment was within 25 miles of Fairmont, WV. Of that 66%, 61.90% (n=13) indicated that they are employed full-time and 38.10% (n=8) indicated that they are employed part-time.

Employment Status by College

Respondents who graduated from the School of Education, Health, & Human Performance and the Regents Bachelors of Arts both indicated to have 100% (n=7) employment rates. The School of Nursing posted a 87.5% (n=7) employment rate, the School of Business and Aviation a 57.14% (n=8) employment rate, the College of Liberal Arts a 54.55% (n=12) employment rate, and the College of Science and Technology a 47.62% (n=10) employment rate. Note that these employment rates are based on the answers the respondents gave and may not be reflective of all graduates at Fairmont State University. For example, the Fairmont State University’s School of Nursing has found a 100% employment rate of graduates who “choose to be employed in their accreditor-required surveying of graduates¹¹”. While this percentage varies from the above data, methodology and time frame may likely be responsible for the difference.

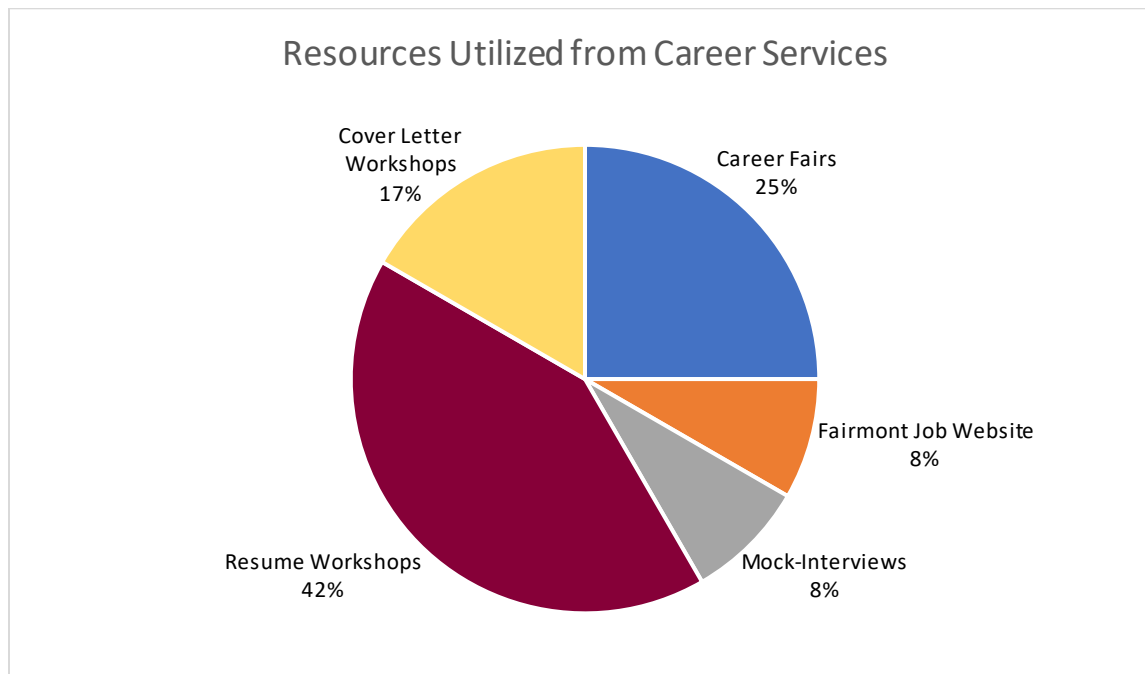


¹¹ <https://www.fairmontstate.edu/schoolofnursing/academics>

Graduate Uses of Career Services

Of the respondents who answered which resources they utilized from Career Services, Resume Workshops were most utilized at 71.43% (n=5) followed by Career Fairs at 42.85% (n=3), Cover Letter Workshops at 28.57% (n=2), and Fairmont Jobs Website and Mock-Interviews both at 14.29% (n=1).

Of the respondents who indicated they used one or more resources from Career Services, 100% (n=7) are employed in some capacity. 28.57% (n=2) of respondents who indicated that they utilized a resource from Career Services also reported that they graduated from the College of Science and Technology; the same is true for the School of Business and Aviation at 28.57% (n=2) and the College of Liberal Arts at 28.57% (n=2). Of the respondents that indicated they used resources from Career Services, 14.29% (n=1) indicated they graduated from the School of Nursing.



Perceptions of University Preparation for Career

Respondents who indicated that they were employed in some capacity (full-time, part-time, currently employed, and delayed start-date) were asked additional questions pertaining to their degree and experience gained at Fairmont State University in relation to their job. These respondents were asked if their job is directly related to their major. Of the 31 responses received, 64.52% (n=20) said they agreed in some capacity (somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree), 25.81% (n=8) said they disagree in some capacity (somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree), and 9.68% (n=3) said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the above question.

This same group of respondents was then asked if their job utilizes skills and knowledge they gained in the course of their studies at Fairmont State University. Of the 30 responses received, using the same delineation of degrees of agreement and disagreement as above, 73.33% (n=22) said they agreed in some capacity, 20% (n=6) said they disagree in some capacity, and 6.67% (n=2) said they neither agree nor disagree.

Survey Questions

Which of the following most accurately describes your current employment status?

- [I am employed full-time \(I work 30 hours or more per week\)](#)
- [I am employed part-time \(I work less than 30 hours per week\)](#)
- [I am employed full-time, but my start date is deferred](#)
- [I am employed part-time, but my start date is deferred](#)
- [I plan to or have started my own business](#)
- [I plan to or have begun graduate, professional, or another type of further study](#)
- [I am unemployed and actively seeking employment](#)
- [I am unemployed and not seeking employment or further study \(graduate school, professional school, second BA, etc.\) at this time](#)

[If a, b, c or d is selected:](#)

What is your current start date? If you don't know, you can provide the month and year you expect to be employed in your position.

Tell us about your current job? Check all that apply.

- My current job is temporary while I find another job.
- I work on a freelance basis right now.
- I work in a long-term position.
- I work in a short-term/contracted position that is unlikely to be converted to a long-term position.
- I work in a short-term/contracted position that will likely be converted to a long-term position.
- I work in a paid post-graduation fellowship, research, volunteer, or internship position.
- I work in an unpaid post-graduation fellowship, research, or internship.
- I work or am involved in military service (Army, Marines, Navy, etc.)

When did you accept the job offer for your current position?

- Less than a month before graduation
- 3 months prior to graduation
- 6 months prior to graduation
- 9 months (or longer) prior to graduation
- After graduation

When did you begin looking for your current job?

- a. Less than a month before graduation
- b. 3 months prior to graduation
- c. 6 months prior to graduation
- d. 9 months (or longer) prior to graduation
- e. After graduation

What is the name of the organization at which you are currently employed?

What is the title of your current position?

What is your employment location (city, state)? If you are employed internationally, please provide the city and country of your employment location.

What is your annual base salary (i.e. your total yearly pay without bonuses, commissions, sign-on incentives, etc.)? If you don't know your base salary, please provide how much you are paid hourly.

If you received one, what is the amount of your guaranteed bonus, commission, or sign-on incentive?

Rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).

- a. My job is directly related to my major.
- b. My job utilizes skills and knowledge I gained in the course of my studies at Fairmont State.
- c. The skills and knowledge I gained at Fairmont State helped me during the job search.

What classes or experiences at Fairmont do you believe best prepared you for your current position?

Did you receive any other job offers prior to graduation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

How many job offers did you receive?

What, if any, resources from career services did you utilize in your job search? Check all that apply.

- a. Fairmont jobs website
- b. Mock-interviews
- c. Resume workshops
- d. Cover letter workshops
- e. Career Fairs

Which best describes how you found your current job?

- a. On campus career fair
- b. Off campus career fair
- c. From previous employment/internship
- d. Contacts from Fairmont State University faculty
- e. Contacts from friends or family
- f. Newspaper
- g. Online resources (Google, LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.)

What type of interview process did you complete before you received the job offer for your current position? Check all that apply.

- a. On-site interview
- b. Phone interview
- c. Skype, Zoom, Facetime interview
- d. Other (open text response)

Did you engage in any of the following while you were a student at Fairmont State? Check all that apply.

- a. Internships
- b. Research Assistantships
- c. Teaching Assistantships
- d. Work Study
- e. Study Abroad

Would you like to receive further communications from Career Services at Fairmont State University about career opportunities or support?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please provide an email that we can best contact you at.

Can we share the location of your job, the name of your employer, and your job title in future publications, webpages, or reports that may utilize data from this survey?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If e is selected:

What is the name of your business or organization?

Where is your business or organization located (city/state)? If it is located internationally, please provide the city and country of your employment location. If you have multiple locations or operate an online, please provide the location of your main office or branch.

How long have you been planning to start your business or organization?

- a. Within the last 6 months
- b. Within the past year
- c. Within the past 3 years
- d. I just recently decided
- e. Other (open text response)

What do you estimate your annual base salary will be (i.e. your total yearly income after business costs, upkeep, employee compensation, etc. are taken out)? If you don't know what your annual base salary will be, please provide how much you estimate to be paid hourly.

Did you utilize any programs or resources at Fairmont State in starting your business or organization?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please tell us what resources or programs you utilized at Fairmont State that were most helpful to starting your business or organization

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, disagree, strongly disagree).

- a. My business/organization is directly related to my major.
- b. My business/organization utilizes skills and knowledge I gained in the course of my studies at Fairmont State.
- c. The skills and knowledge I gained at Fairmont State helped me start my business or organization.

What classes or experiences at Fairmont do you believe best prepared you to start your business/organization?

Did you engage in any of the following while you were a student at Fairmont State? Check all that apply.

- a. Internships
- b. Research Assistantships
- c. Teaching Assistantships
- d. Work Study
- e. Study Abroad

Did you apply for any job opportunities prior to starting your business or organization?

Did you receive any job offers?

How many job offers did you receive?

Would you like to receive further communications from Career Services at Fairmont State University about career opportunities or support?

- c. Yes
- d. No

Please provide an email that we can best contact you at.

Can we share the location of your job, the name of your employer, and your job title in future publications, webpages, or reports that may utilize data from this survey?

- c. Yes
- d. No

If f is selected:

What is the name of the graduate, professional, or other type of school you are or will be continuing your education at?"

When will you formally start your program?

- a. Fall 2019
- b. Spring 2020
- c. Already started
- d. Other (open text response)

What type of degree will you be pursuing (e.g. second Bachelors, PhD, JD, MBA, MPP, MFA, MA in History, MS in Biology, etc.)?

Did you apply to any jobs before deciding to continue your studies?

Did you receive any job offers?

- a. Yes
- b. No

How many job offers did you receive?

Did you engage in any of the following while you were a student at Fairmont State? Check all that apply.

- a. Internships
- b. Research Assistantships
- c. Teaching Assistantships
- d. Work Study
- e. Volunteer Service

Which of the following gave you the greatest difficulty during the application process to continue your education?

- a. Graduate School Interviews
- b. Application Fees
- c. Standardized Tests (LSAT, GRE, MCAT, etc.)
- d. Personal Statement(s)
- e. Resume
- f. Finding graduate schools or programs aligned with my interests
- g. Letters of recommendation (i.e. finding recommenders or getting them in on time)
- h. Travelling to tour potential graduate or professional programs

Would you like to receive further communications from Career Services at Fairmont State University about career opportunities or support?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please provide an email that we can best contact you at.

Can we share the type of degree you will be pursuing and the name and location of the school that you will be attending in future publications, webpages, or reports that may utilize data from this survey?

- a. Yes
- b. No

If g is selected:

When did you begin your job search?

- a. After graduation
- b. Less than a month before graduation

- c. 3 months prior to graduation
- d. 6 months prior to graduation
- e. 9 months (or longer) prior to graduation

How many job opportunities have you applied for?

How many job interviews (you can include phone interviews, Skype, or another type of formal interview) have you completed?

Which of the following best describes the difficulties you are facing in your job search?

- a. I'm receiving interviews but no offers
- b. I'm applying to jobs but not receiving interviews
- c. I'm having difficulty traveling to interview locations
- d. I'm having difficulty finding job opportunities in the place(s) I wish to be employed
- e. Other (open text response)

Did you engage in any of the following while you were a student at Fairmont State?

- a. Internships
- b. Research Assistantships
- c. Teaching Assistantships
- d. Work Study
- e. Study Abroad
- f. Volunteer Service

Would you like to receive additional support from career services throughout your job search?

- a. Yes
- b. No

What types of support would you like to receive? Check all that apply.

- a. One-on-one advising sessions
- b. Weekly emails of job opportunities in your location and area of interest
- c. Resume or cover letter review
- d. Access to job search engines such as Guidestar and Symplicity
- e. Other (open text response)

Please provide your name and an email and/or phone that we can best contact you at.

Would you like to receive other further communications from Career Services at Fairmont State University in the future?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please provide an email that we can best contact you at.

If h is selected:

Which of the following best describes the reason you are not currently seeking employment or further education?

- a. Family obligations (caring for children or other family members)
- b. Travel
- c. Taking time off for my physical and/or mental health
- d. Taking time off, but plan to begin the job search in the future
- e. Other (open text response)

Would you like to receive further communications from Career Services at Fairmont State University in the future?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please provide an email that we can best contact you at.