

# Research in BRIEF

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## Chapman University's Alumni Survey Graduating Class of 2006–2007

Orange Campus

(Administered Summer-Fall 2008)

Data collected from alumni surveys are often used to assess the extent to which universities and colleges are meeting their institutional goals and priorities. Chapman University is no different. This report summarizes survey findings from a sample of Chapman alumni who graduated between August 2006 and May 2007. The Alumni Survey was designed to assess alumni's current educational plans, satisfaction with Chapman University, and employment history. The survey also allows alumni to describe, in their own words, Chapman University's strengths and weaknesses. As a whole, the findings from this survey provide a snapshot of the current activities of the graduating class of 2006-2007 and point to some areas that may require attention in order to move Chapman University further toward national prominence and visibility.

### Response Rate and Sample Representation

Exactly 1,286 names and addresses were obtained for the administration of the Alumni Survey. The survey was created in 1993 and minimally revised and made into an online survey in 2008. The over 1,200 names and addresses represent the population of undergraduates and graduate students with degrees conferred between 2006 and 2007 from the Orange Campus.

The data collection period lasted from August 2008 to December 2008. A total of 400 surveys were completed, yielding a response rate of 31.1%. The findings show that the sample characteristics closely match the population on many important dimensions. The sample, like the population, is skewed towards females and undergraduates.

### Graduating Class of 2006-2007: Demographic Characteristics

	Population (N=1,286)	Sample (N=400)
Female	62.3%	65.6%
Male	37.7%	34.4%
<i>Class Level</i>		
Undergraduate	69.1%	70.0%
Graduate	30.9%	30.0%

The next table reports college/school enrollment and degree earned information. The data show that the type of degree earned by alumni closely matches the population parameters. Not surprisingly, then, the sample college/school breakdown closely matches the population.

### Graduating Class of 2006-2007: College/School Enrollment and Degree Earned

	Population (N=1,286)	Sample (N=400)
<i>Last College/School Enrolled*</i>		
Dodge College of Film and Media Arts	20.8%	18.8%
School of Education	15.9%	14.3%
Wilkinson College of Letters and Sciences	35.8%	39.0%
Argyros School of Business & Economics	21.0%	23.8%
School of Arts and Communication	6.5%	4.3%
<i>Degrees Earned in 2006-2007</i>		
B.A./B.S./B.F.A./B.M.	69.1%	70.3%
D.P.T.	2.7%	1.0%
Ed.S.	1.5%	1.5%
M.B.A./Executive M.B.A.	5.5%	6.4%
M.A./M.F.A./M.S.	21.2%	20.8%

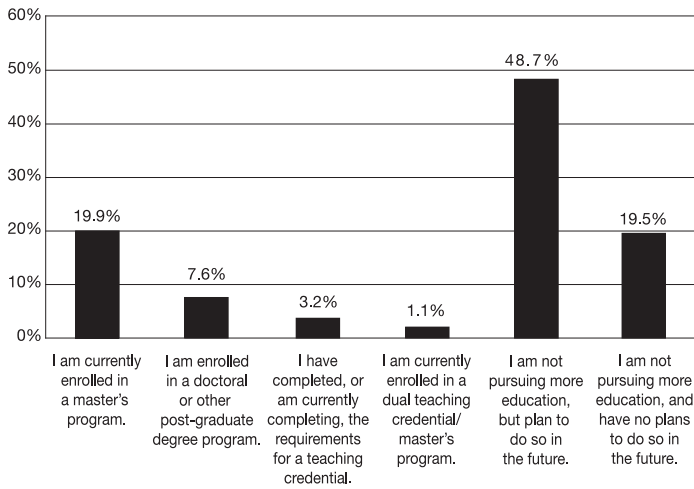
\*Reflects the organization of college/school in the 2006-07 school year.

## FINDINGS

### Advanced Education

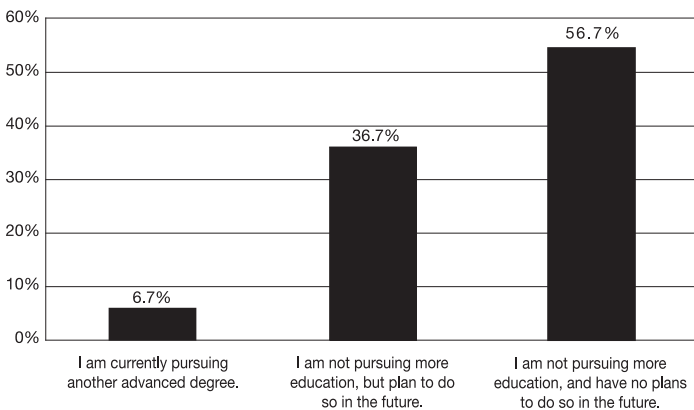
Alumni were asked to describe their current educational status. The results show that 68.2% of all undergraduate alumni are not pursuing more education, but 48.7% of all undergraduate alumni may do so in the future. The results also show that 27.5% of undergraduate alumni are pursuing either a Master's degree or Ph.D. Lastly, a very small percentage of alumni, 4.3%, have either completed a teaching credential or are earning one at the time of the survey.

Current Educational Status - Undergraduate



The vast majority of graduates are not pursuing another graduate degree one year after graduation. But 36.7% of graduates plan on pursuing another degree in the future. Only 6.7% of them are currently enrolled in another graduate degree program.

Current Educational Status - Graduate



Alumni who indicated that they were pursuing an advanced degree or had earned a credential were asked to identify which degree they had or were currently pursuing. Of the undergraduates who fit this description, 43.8% indicated that they were pursuing a Master's degree. About 16% of undergraduates were pursuing a law degree, the second most popular degree.

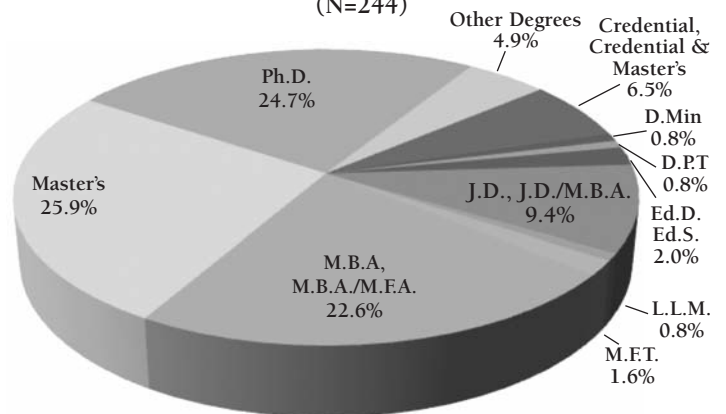
Degree Pursued One Year After Graduation

	Undergraduate (N=89)	Graduate (N=8)
Credential only	11.2%	25.0%
Credential & Master's Degree	4.5%	0.0%
D.P.T.	1.1%	0.0%
Ed.S.	1.1%	0.0%
J.D.	15.7%	0.0%
Master's*	43.8%	37.5%
Ph.D.	4.5%	25.0%
M.B.A.	9.0%	0.0%
M.F.T.	1.1%	0.0%
Other Degree	7.9%	12.5%

\*Master's include M.A./M.F.A./M.A.T./M.Div./M.Ed./M.L.S./M.S.

Alumni were asked to identify the highest degree they planned to pursue at any institution. Of the Chapman University undergraduates and graduates who responded to this question (n=244), data show that the majority of these students plan to pursue either a doctorate degree (24.7%), a Master's degree (25.9%), or an M.B.A. (22.6%, includes joint M.B.A./M.F.A.) in the future.

Degree Aspirations  
All Respondants  
(N=244)



## Employment

Graduates were asked to respond to several questions regarding their employment activities after leaving Chapman University. Respondents were asked to recall how long before (1) they were *offered* at least one position of employment and (2) they *accepted* a position of employment.

### Employment Timeline - Undergraduate

	Offered (N=280)	Accepted (N=279)
Before Graduation	26.4%	24.4%
0-3 months after graduation	34.6%	34.8%
4-6 months after graduation	11.4%	12.9%
7 or more months after graduation	6.8%	8.6%
No offers yet	7.9%	5.7%
Not applicable, already employed was not seeking employment.	12.9%	13.6%

The findings show that the majority of undergraduates were offered (61%) and accepted (59.2%) at least one position of employment within three months of graduating from Chapman University. Data also show that almost 13% of undergraduates were not looking for employment because they were already employed at the time of graduation.

### Employment Timeline - Graduate

	Offered (N=120)	Accepted (N=119)
Before Graduation	27.5%	21.0%
0-3 months after graduation	25.8%	26.1%
4-6 months after graduation	16.7%	16.8%
7 or more months after graduation	5.0%	10.1%
No offers yet	5.8%	5.9%
Not applicable, already employed was not seeking employment.	19.2%	20.2%

Graduates show a similar pattern. The findings show that the majority of graduates were offered (53.3%) and accepted (47.1%) at least one position of employment within three months of graduating from Chapman University. While these numbers are slightly lower in comparison to undergraduates, the percentage of graduates not seeking employment is about 7% higher than undergraduates.

Alumni were also asked to describe their current employment status. Data show that 80.7% of undergraduates were employed or self-employed one year after graduating from

Chapman. Only about 10% of undergraduates reported that they were unemployed and 9.3% of undergraduates (N=27) indicated they were unemployed and not seeking work. Out of the 27 alumni who were not employed and not seeking employment, 13 alumni were currently enrolled in a doctoral or postgraduate program, 9 alumni were currently enrolled in a master's program, and 1 alumnus had just completed or was completing the requirements for a teaching credential.

The findings show that a greater percentage of graduates (95.8%) were able to secure employment in comparison to undergraduates (80.7%). About 96% of graduates were employed or self-employed a year after graduation and only 4.2% of graduates were unemployed. Out of the pool of unemployed graduates (5 respondents), only 1 respondent (.8%) is not seeking work.

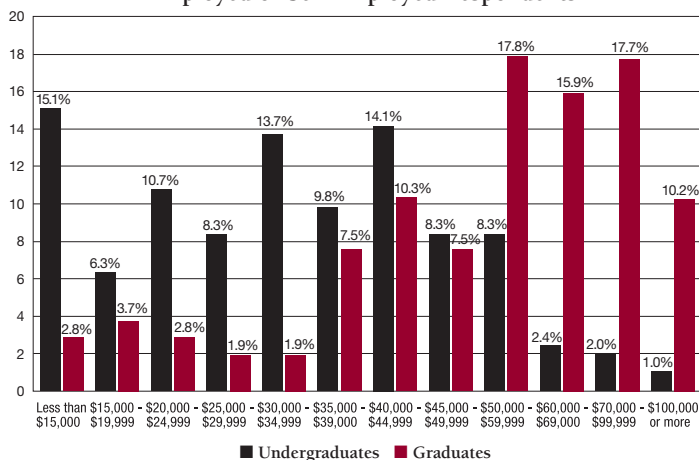
### Current Employment Status (N=398)

	Overall	Undergraduate	Graduate
Employed	80.2%	75.6%	90.8%
Employed in the armed services	0.3%	0.4%	0.0%
Self-employed	4.8%	4.7%	5.0%
Unemployed, seeking work	8.0%	10.0%	3.4%
Unemployed, not seeking work	6.8%	9.3%	0.8%

Alumni were also asked to indicate if their current employment position was in the same field as their degree. Graduates were much more likely to report finding employment in their field (81.9%) than undergraduates (52.5%). This finding is not surprising considering graduate studies are intended to prepare an individual for a specialized field.

With respect to respondents who were employed or self-employed, graduates were also asked to disclose their annual income. Data reveal that the majority of undergraduates earn anywhere from \$30,000 to \$59,999 annually (54.2%). As would be expected given the additional years of education and preparation, data show that Chapman University alumni who received a graduate degree in 2006-2007 were more likely to report earning more money a year. For example, while 61.6% of the alumni who received a graduate degree reported that they made \$50,000 or more annually, only 13.7% of those who graduated with an undergraduate degree reported the same yearly income.

**Annual Income by Class Level  
Employed or Self-Employed Respondents**



### Preparedness

Using a 5-point scale from 1-“not prepared” to 5-“very prepared,” graduates were asked to indicate how well they believed Chapman University prepared them for their careers and furthering their education. While all mean scores were above average, data suggest that, as a group, undergraduates and graduates are more likely to believe that Chapman University prepared them better for furthering their education as opposed to preparing them for their careers. The findings show minor differences between undergraduate and graduate alumni.

### Preparedness

	Mean (SD)	
	Undergraduate (N=280)	Graduate (N=120)
<i>On a scale of 1-5, rate how well you believe Chapman prepared you for:</i>		
Your career	3.79 (1.02)	3.97 (1.03)
Further education	4.16 (.88)	4.06 (1.04)

### Quality

Using a 5-point scale from 1-“low quality” to 5-“high quality,” alumni were asked to rate the quality of their educational experience at Chapman University in a variety of areas. Data show that undergraduates and graduates were more likely to indicate that the quality of their educational experiences was higher than that of their social experiences. Both groups also reported a high level of quality associated with instruction and course content in their field of study. Only undergraduate alumni were asked to rate the quality of the General Education program. The mean score, 3.68, is significantly lower than the “educational experience” score (4.35). Likewise, the quality of “academic advising from your faculty advisor” is similarly low among undergraduates and graduates.

### Quality

	Mean (SD)	
	Undergraduate (N=280)	Graduate (N=120)
<i>On a scale of 1-5, indicate the overall quality of:</i>		
Your educational experience at Chapman/department	4.35 (.78)	4.23 (1.00)
Your social experiences at Chapman/department	3.99 (1.07)	4.20 (.94)
Instruction in your major/field of study	4.33 (.84)	4.33 (.89)
General Education courses	3.68 (.92)	N/A
Course content in your major/field of study	4.22 (.84)	4.18 (.92)
Research opportunities	N/A	3.51 (1.12)
Academic advising from your faculty advisor	3.65 (1.42)	3.72 (1.23)
Library holdings relevant to your field of study	N/A	3.92 (.99)
Intellectual environment of your department or program	N/A	4.23 (.95)

Library holdings relevant to your field of study and intellectual environment of your department were asked only of graduate degree recipients. Respondents gave high quality ratings for these two areas.

### Growth and Development

Using a 5-point scale from 1-“none” to 5-“quite a bit,” graduates were asked to indicate the overall amount of growth that could be credited to their Chapman University experience in certain areas. Findings suggest that undergraduates feel that their experience here contributed minimally to their spiritual development and their desire to participate in community service.

Both undergraduates and graduates believe that their experience here contributed to their development in: ability to critically examine ideas and issues; ability to relate knowledge with practice; ability to integrate knowledge from several different fields of study; speaking ability in a group setting, and ability to express ideas, opinions, beliefs, and facts to others in writing. Findings also indicate that undergraduates and graduates feel that their educational experience also contributed in the following areas but to a slightly lesser extent: understanding traditions, values, and histories of people; developing a sense of values and ethical standards; quantitative skills, and reading comprehension.

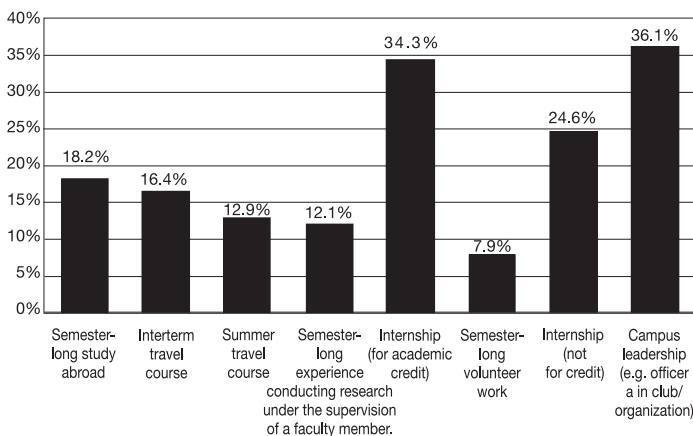
## Growth and Development

	Mean (SD)	
	Undergraduate (N=280)	Graduate (N=120)
<i>On a scale of 1-5, indicate the overall amount of growth you attribute to your Chapman experience with respect to:</i>		
Reading comprehension	3.43 (1.08)	3.51 (1.16)
The ability to express ideas, opinions, beliefs, and facts to others in writing	3.92 (1.04)	3.86 (1.06)
The ability to integrate knowledge from several different fields of study	3.96 (.96)	3.82 (1.06)
Speaking in a group setting	3.94 (1.07)	3.87 (1.04)
The ability to critically examine ideas and issues	4.05 (.91)	4.10 (.96)
Understanding traditions, values and histories of people different from you	3.76 (1.07)	3.70 (1.19)
Developing a sense of values and ethical standards	3.65 (1.14)	3.50 (1.22)
Quantitative skills	3.51 (1.13)	3.48 (1.23)
The ability to relate knowledge with practice	3.88 (.94)	3.89 (1.08)
Spiritual development	2.71 (1.37)	N/A
Participating in community service	2.94 (1.26)	N/A
Research skills	N/A	3.61 (1.18)

## Co-curricular Participation

The Alumni Survey asked undergraduate alumni if they participated in a variety of co-curricular activities. Data show that about 35% of undergraduates participated in an internship for credit or a campus leadership position. Only 7.9% of undergraduate alumni participated in semester-long volunteer work. For the rest of the items (travel courses, study abroad, research experiences, and non-credit internships), the percentage of undergraduates indicating participation ranged from 12.1% to 24.6%.

Co-curricular Participation  
Undergraduate Alumni  
(n=280)



## Overall Satisfaction and Perceptions of Chapman University

Alumni were asked to disagree or agree, using a 5-point scale from 1-“strongly disagree” to 5-“strongly agree,” with a variety of statements focused on the Chapman University experience. The findings show that overall satisfaction with Chapman University and satisfaction with Chapman’s ability to provide a personalized education are high among all alumni. Graduates reported an especially high level of satisfaction with faculty accessibility outside-of-the-classroom. Given the high level of overall satisfaction, it is no surprise that data also show that the majority of undergraduate and graduate alumni would recommend Chapman University to their family and friends. The Alumni Survey also included a question asking if the Chapman experience has improved the quality of their life regardless of financial benefits. Most alumni reported “definitely” in response to this question.

## Overall Satisfaction and Perceptions of Chapman University

	Mean (SD)	
	Undergraduate (N=280)	Graduate (N=120)
<i>On a scale of 1-5, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:</i>		
My classes were challenging.	3.90 (.81)	3.99 (.90)
I have a strong feeling of identification with Chapman University/graduate program.	3.87 (1.22)	3.81 (1.23)
I would recommend Chapman University to my family and friends.	4.29 (.95)	4.15 (1.20)
Overall, I am satisfied with my Chapman University experience.	4.34 (.87)	4.24 (1.10)
Chapman University provided me a personalized education of distinction.	4.25 (.93)	4.08 (1.16)
Faculty members in my department or program were accessible outside the classroom.	N/A	4.44 (.80)

## Areas for Improvement: Open-Ended Responses

Graduates were asked to respond to two open-ended questions: (1) What changes would you suggest for improving Chapman’s academic programs and services? and (2) What would you identify as Chapman University’s greatest strengths?

Graduates and undergraduates both identified the following three areas as needing improvement: (1) help with job placement; (2) increasing diversity in various aspects of the university, and (3) academic advising. Specifically, many



undergraduate and graduate respondents suggested that Chapman University could improve job placement services, career development, and more networking and internship opportunities for students. For example, one undergraduate alumnus said, “I think that Chapman would benefit from a stronger job placement program, such as requiring internships during the program, and aiding in internship/job placement. 60% or 70% job placement in and after college is pretty low for the expense of the program.”

With regards to increasing diversity, alumni indicated that Chapman University could be improved if, for example, it provided more diverse course offerings, increased the diversity of its faculty, and provided more opportunities for cultural/diverse experiences. As one undergraduate alumnus said, “The school lacks cultural diversity and understanding, including in the student body, faculty, and course offerings. Considering its mission to help us become global citizens, opportunities to foster that global citizenship were very limited on campus.”

Lastly, academic advising is another area some undergraduate degree recipients indicated needed improvement. They noted the lack of communication and personalized contact as problematic elements. For example, one undergraduate alumnus said, “I was passed around between three different advisors and by the time I was in my senior year I was scrambling to take the courses needed to graduate. Lack of communication is a problem and as a freshman I didn't know who to talk to.”

With regard to Chapman University's greatest strengths, both undergraduates and graduate degree recipients who responded to this question consistently identified the following four areas: (1) outstanding faculty; (2) small class size; (3) personalized education, and (4) campus facilities. Specifically, the community feeling, the location, and the facilities were mentioned by undergraduate and graduate degree recipients. As one undergraduate alumnus summarized, “Small campus that is growing rapidly, great atmosphere and beautiful buildings. Overall great experience, great teachers.”

## CONCLUSION

Chapman University's Operational Response to the Academic Strategic Plan calls for tracking the success of our alumni. Findings from this study show that many of our graduates go on to continue their education. Data show that 31.8% of undergraduates were pursuing a post-baccalaureate degree one year after graduating from Chapman University. In addition, data from the survey suggest that Chapman University

undergraduates have high degree aspirations. For example, while 31.8% reported that they were currently pursuing a post-baccalaureate degree, an additional 48.7% reported that they planned on pursuing their education further in the future. While not as high as the undergraduate, 36.7% of graduates reported the desire to earn another graduate degree. One year after leaving Chapman University, graduates were more successful in finding employment than undergraduate alumni. The findings show that 90.8% of graduates found employment a year after graduation in comparison to 75.6% of undergraduates. A greater percentage of graduate alumni were able to secure employment in their respective field than undergraduate alumni.

Chapman University prides itself on offering a personalized education to students. The quantitative and qualitative results from the Alumni Survey indicate that the University is succeeding in this regard. As noted in the open-ended comments, many alumni cite Chapman's “small classes” as the University's greatest strength. The quantitative data show that the average mean score in response to the question, “Chapman University provided me a personalized education of distinction,” was quite high for both undergraduates and graduates.

This study provides a starting point from which we can begin to identify our strengths and areas for improvement. More specifically, the findings from this study suggest that the following issues/concerns may warrant further investigation/exploration:

- The quality of academic advising
- Job placement services, career development, and networking opportunities for students
- Spiritual development of students
- Desire of our students to participate in community service
- Campus diversity

Progress in addressing these concerns is already underway. In the Fall of 2007, the Academic Advising Center opened in order to provide personalized attention to students. In 2008, the Department of Student and Campus Life created the Diversity and Equity Initiatives in order to provide new programs to address diversity issues. For example, the Next Step Social Justice Retreat and the Stonewall Discussion Group represent two new programs. Both programs organize students into discussion groups in order to promote understanding about gender, racial, and sexual identities. Future alumni studies should allow Chapman University the opportunity to track longitudinal improvement in these areas.

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Prepared by: Chapman's Institutional Research Office (CIRO)  
<http://www.chapman.edu/CHANCELLOR/ciro/>