Appalachian Region Alumni Outcomes Survey 2000-2001

Appalachian College Association (ACA)
The study focused on graduates from Appalachian colleges and universities and was designed to learn more about their educational, social, and economic impact on the region.
Berea College and 30 other institutions participated in a survey of graduates.

• 22 ACA colleges
• 5 public universities
• 3 other work/labor colleges
Berea College Surveyed 2200 graduates from the 70s, 80s, and 90s (5, 15, and 25 years ago)

Return rate = 42%, 946 grads (second highest response rate among all institutions)
Major Areas on Survey
• Background/Demographic Information

• Employment History

• Undergraduate Educational Outcomes
- Participation in Non-Work Activities
- Lifestyle Information
- Geographic Location and History
- Written Comments and Additional Questions
- Berea Specific Questions
Highlights of Results
“Overall satisfaction with education received at your college”

“Very satisfied” graduates

- Berea: 67%
- ACA: 47%
- Public: 34%
Graduates who reported student loans under $7,500

Berea: 97%
ACA: 75%
Public: 85%
Advanced Degrees:

- No Advanced Degree: 68%
- Advanced Degree: 32%
  - Master’s: 24%
  - Specialist: 3%
  - Doctorate: 2%
  - MD, JD, etc.: 3%
Respondents who are employed by an educational or service organization (nonprofit)
Graduates were “exceptionally well” or “more than adequately” prepared for their current job.
Contribution of College Experiences to Personal Growth in Selected Areas (Ratings of Educational Outcomes)
Highest rated of 28 items (contribution was rated “great”):

• Interacting well with people from racial groups or cultures different from my own (sig. trend)

• Getting along with people whose attitudes and opinions are different from my own (sig. trend)
• Engaging in life-long learning
• Improving thinking and reasoning skills (sig. trend)
• Appreciating literature and the fine arts. (sig. trend)

(all more highly rated than other institutional groups)
Trends Over Three Decades of Graduates

- **Interacting well with people from different racial groups or cultures**
  - 1970s: None
  - 1980s: Very Great
  - 1990s: Great

- **Applying computer skills and related technology**
  - 1970s: Little
  - 1980s: Moderate
  - 1990s: Great

- **Engaging in life-long learning**
  - 1970s: None
  - 1980s: Moderate
  - 1990s: Great
Participation in the labor program positively influenced later work life. 87% agreed
My overall experience at BC has contributed to a generally positive view of life.

82% agreed
BC experience helped me to develop the intellectual ability to address complex problems from multiple disciplines and perspectives.

81% agreed
Compared to my co-workers who have college degrees, I believe my education at BC better prepared me for my work.

71% agreed
My overall experience at BC influenced me positively in regard to serving my community.

71% agreed
591 Open-Ended Comments
First, indicate the most valuable aspect of your education at this college.

Then, write any other comments you would like to share.
“As I serve the youth of our region, I strive to produce a quiet confidence in their lives that Berea gave me...”
“The most valuable aspect was meeting people of other races and nationalities. It changed the way I viewed the world and others.”
“Through my various jobs at Berea, I learned that I could do anything if I wanted to do it.”
“My experience attending Berea College, without a doubt, completely changed my life and perspective in a most positive way.”
“If it were not for Berea, I don’t know where I would have gotten an education.”
“Berea helped me to understand my abilities and self-worth and taught me the attitude of being a ‘servant’ to my fellow man.”
“The liberal arts structure of my education has made me a more well-rounded person. I’m going to see Pavarotti in Louisville this December. That is because of Berea College.”
“The most valuable aspects of my college education included my exposure to the arts and humanities through the liberal arts curriculum and most importantly, the extensive research and writing requirements.”
“Work-study program coupled with the high academic standards. The education of a student at Berea goes beyond that of pure academics --the ability to reason and grow in a changing world.”
“Wherever I travel, the ‘Berea College’ name is well known and well regarded.”
“Math and science education! I learned to manage school, work, sports, and social activities in an effective manner while pursuing my dream of becoming a physician.”
“Most valuable aspect--my professional development as an R.N.  Next most valuable--appreciation of the Appalachian culture…I am very thankful for Berea.”
“When I arrived at Berea I was a non-Christian yet because of the positive influence this college had on my life, I left it a Christian.”
“I grew up with such a small, shallow view of life. BC added depth, color; they filled my head with so many wonderful new concepts it is difficult absorbing it all at once. I am an associate professor of chemistry who owns her own house and land…”
“Most valuable--being a member of Country Dancers. It taught me service, friendship, communication, and how to work with and appreciate folks of different ages and cultures.”
“The thing I most value from my time at Berea College is, simply put, just being there… working, studying, living there for four years with an extraordinary community of teachers and fellow students.”