

2003 and 2004 ACT Alumni Outcomes Surveys  
**2006 ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey**

**2006:** 'The purpose of the survey is to measure the value that graduates place on their educational experiences while at one of the eleven NDUS institutions, as well as their success after graduation.' The instrument has 6 main sections: Background information; employment history and experiences; educational outcomes: importance to student; educational experiences: impact of school experiences; activities and organizations; and local questions.

**The results of the survey delivered to UND Alumni in 2006 are the focus of this report.**

1. The data collected addresses information relating to what university group or situation?

*Primarily Administration:*

*C Kupchella, President (2003, 2004, 2006)*

*J Ettling, VP Academic Affairs & Provost, 2003; Martha Potvin, Interim, 2004, **Greg Weisenstein, 2006***

*R Boyd, VP Student & Outreach Services (2003, 2004, 2006)*

*A Hoffert, Assoc VP for Enrollment Management, 2003, 2004;  
**Name, 2006***

*K Ruit, Assistant Provost, 2003, 2004; **Joan Hawthorne, 2006***

*N Krogh, Registrar (2003, 2004, 2006)*

*D Vorland, Director of University Relations (2003, 2004, 2006)*

*M Thompson, Director of Career Services (2003, 2004, 2006)*

*Assessment Committee (2003, 2004, 2006)*

2. How often is this tool used and analyzed? What time of year?

*The 2003 ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey was mailed in January 2003 to alumni graduating between December 1999 through August 2000. For the first survey use, 2119 surveys were sent; 557 were returned, for a 26 percent return rate. The cost of the survey was \$3500, or \$6.70 per respondent.*

*The second 2004 ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey was mailed in February 2004 to alumni graduating between December 2000 and August 2001. Two thousand fifty-five (2055) surveys were sent; 1952 were delivered; 367 were analyzed; the overall net response rate was 19%. The cost of the survey was \$3595.35, or \$9.80 per respondent.*

***The third ACT Alumni Outcomes Survey was mailed in spring 2006 to alumni graduating between December 2002 and August 2003. Two thousand one hundred twenty five surveys were sent, 2044 war delivered and 228 analyzed. The overall net response rate was 11.2%. The cost of the survey was \$3398.00, or \$14.90 per respondent.***

3. To whom does the assessment group believe that an analysis of this report would be beneficial? In other words, what individuals, departments, or programs need this information in order to have reliable information to 'close the loop' on their assessment process?

*While a review of the report could be of interest to academic departments, little could be gleaned relative to the assessment of student learning. **This analysis applies to each of the 3 survey years.***

4. Who is responsible to provide the assessment group the information for this report?

*The Office of Institutional Research. Carmen Williams, Director and Jean Chen, Research Analyst. 2002, 2003, 2006*

5. What UND student learning goals are being assessed?

*2202, 2003: Nothing specific to UND's mission or student learning goals; some "Educational Outcomes" (see Section III of the survey instrument) go toward UND goals, but the information sought is not useful for assessment of student learning. It is difficult to analyze UND's contribution to growth when the individual's entering and growth data are unknown.*

*Section IV "Educational Experiences" seems to address perceptions of the environment (which would allow or promote student learning). But again, there is nothing specific to UND's student learning goals.*

***2006: Alumni rated the abilities and skills deemed most necessary for success personally or professionally in today's world. The 5 (of 19) skills ranked as most important include:***

- 1. recognizing and using effective verbal communication skills***
- 2. living my personal and professional life according to ;my own standards/ethics***
- 3. working cooperatively in groups or working as a team member***
- 4. defining and solving problems***
- 5. making and exercising a lifelong commitment to learning***

***The 5 skills Alumni identified as being most impacted (positively) by UND include:***

- 1. recognizing and using effective written communication skills***
- 2. accessing and using a variety of information sources***
- 3. working cooperatively in groups or working as a team member***
- 4. making and exercising a lifelong commitment to learning***
- 5. defining and solving problems***
- 6. recognizing and using effective verbal communication skills***

***While the above rankings do not address student learning, they do parallel UND goals of communication, critical/creative thinking, making informed choices, and lifelong***

***learning. It would seem that UND and its Alumni share similar goals and Alumni do indicate UND has impacted the ‘attainment of the skill.’***

6. What evidence is provided or should be provided to support the group’s findings?

*This question cannot be answered without knowing what conclusion might, or might not, need to be supported.*

***2006: See Question 5 above. Comments are based upon Section III: Educational Outcome portion of the survey.***

7. What evidence does the assessment group believe should be collected/compiled for the focused visit or the next accreditation visit?

*Whatever pertains to the specific comments in the HLC reports about deficiencies in assessment of student learning at UND, plus information generally required on assessment programs under the HLC criteria for accreditation. (2003, 2004, 2006)*

8. Is this tool a direct measure, an indirect measure, or a non-measure of student learning?

*The tool is an indirect measure at best, and more probably a non-measure of student learning. The purpose of the ACT Alumni Survey was to measure the value that graduates place on their educational experiences while [here], as well as their success after graduation. (“The NDUS contracted with ACT’s Research Division to administer the Alumni Outcomes Survey to graduates of all 11 state-supported institutions of higher education.”) (2003, 2004, 2006)*

9. Does this tool empower individuals or the university to better understand and assess student learning at the university? If so, how?

*No, see #8 above.*

***2006: Shared goals and an Alumni perception that UND has impacted the attainment of skill does not allow the school to understand when, where, or how a skill was attained. Educational decisions and closing the loop activities for student learning could not be performed using information from this survey.***

10. Is there a better way to obtain or report the data to be analyzed?

*The data obtained and the reporting of those data is interesting. However, see 8 and 9 above. (2003, 2004, 2006)*

11. At what level of assessment is the tool being used; beginning level, making progress level, or maturing stage of continuous improvement? Is there any evidence to support the assessment group’s deduction?

*Unknown level.*

***2006: This survey has been delivered 3 times. Local questions were added to the 2006 survey. The impact of the survey(s) on decisions is unknown.***

12. Does the tool reflect a culture of assessment at UND?

*While use of this tool does evidence the University's interest in outcomes, it does not address student learning and could not be used to close any loop relative to student learning. (All survey years.)*

13. Does the tool need increased university or administrative support or faculty involvement in order to make it more useable or effective?

*Neither the 2003 or 2004 survey used the opportunity to add up to 30 local questions. If this instrument is to have any future utility in the assessment of student learning, local questions should be drafted that might provide information useful to that task. The local questions must be drafted to reach learning goal elements of the mission statement and other specific learning objectives identified by the University (for instance, in the general education requirement). In addition, UND as a user should press ACT to revise or expand Section III of the instrument "Educational Outcomes," to get responses which would enable us to better understand the respondent's view of the University's contribution to his or her growth.*

***2006: UND asked 10 locally generated questions. Alumni were asked about their UND experiences with experiential learning; satisfaction with their education within and outside of their major; experiences with a research project; and post-graduation employment offerings and entrance to the job market.***

14. Does the assessment group need any administrative insight or guidance in order to analyze the tool effectively?

*2003, 2004: No. The report is clearly and well presented. The group will provide its analysis, and, if the group's analysis becomes the committee's analysis, administration can use that as best it can in the improvement of the University.*

***2006: Both the executive report and the full report are clearly presented. The results from this survey, in conjunction with data from other sources, may be used by administrators when addressing infrastructure support for student learning.***

15. What value does the group place on this tool for helping to achieve the university's assessment plan?"

*The tool is not designed to assist in direct or indirect assessment of student learning. The report analyzing the survey responses describes the purpose of the survey as " . . . to measure the value that graduates place on their educational experience while . . .*

*[here].” That is not a purpose that can directly assist in assessment of student learning.  
(All survey years.)*

16. What are the findings of the assessment of this assessment tool?

*See 15, above.*

17. Summary -- See 12, above.

18. Recommendations of the Reviewers:

*2002, 2003: The University should consider using the "local questions" option to gather information from alumni on whether UND's general education objectives are served, and how well, by the University's General Education program.*

*The University should consider contacting ACT to make the instrument more useful in Section III.*

*The University must determine which areas of University-wide assessment belong to the Assessment Committee. If student learning is the focus of the Committee, this survey would not be of use to the Committee. See #15 above, and the comments which follow.*

*2003, 2004, 2006. The tool, as currently written, would be best interpreted by the administrators identified in Question 1. The survey addresses the 'value' that students place on their educational experiences. It also seems to address factors which enable or promote learning, but not the learning itself.*

*It would be difficult for the Assessment Committee to interpret, suggest change, or promote 'closing the loop' on areas currently addressed by this survey. Information from other sources, for triangulation purposes, is not available to the Committee. Administrators can best utilize the results in concert with data available to them from other tools, other sources.*

*Finally, much of the information necessary for triangulation is held by, and the responsibility of, administrative departments of the University. The Assessment Committee is not directed to make administrative decisions.*

Respectfully Submitted by,

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