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Quick Facts

- For the first time this fall, graduate students received the Newly Admitted Graduate Student Survey. Almost 600 new students received an e-mail invitation to participate; 107 or 18 percent responded.
- Eighty percent of graduate student survey respondents are in pursuit of their first master's degree.
- Most (65 percent) of the respondents were employed directly prior to enrolling in their graduate program; 49 percent in a field directly related to their program of study; and 74 percent of those who were employed are/were working full-time.
- When asked about what sources they used to learn about their WP programs, 29 percent said from WP alumni, 23 percent said from current WP students, and 16 percent said from the graduate open house.
- Eighty-three percent of respondents said William Paterson University was their first choice of colleges to attend. Three-quarters of respondents said they had applied to other institutions as well.
- Almost all respondents reported being "somewhat to very satisfied" with finding information about their program, and 94 percent were "somewhat to very satisfied" with the meeting they had with the graduate director of their program. However, 22 percent were "somewhat to very dissatisfied" with finding information about graduate assistantships.
- Over one-quarter of respondents attended the graduate open house; unlike the findings from the new undergraduate questionnaire where almost three-quarters report attending the open house. For those graduate students who attended, many gave positive feedback, often saying that it was "informative," "helpful," and "organized." Eighty-two percent of participants found it to be "somewhat to very influential" on their decision to attend WP.
- Factors that were considered "very important" in respondents' decisions to enroll were the availability of this academic program (81 percent) and areas of specialization in the program that match students' interests (78 percent). The least important factor was an on-campus experience (34 percent).
- Respondents stated that it would take them between one to five years to complete their degrees. On average, newly entering fall 2017 graduate students estimate that it will take 2.4 years to complete their degrees.

Overview

This is the first time a New Graduate Student Questionnaire has been administered at the University. It complements the two prior undergraduate reports that summarized findings for [New First-Time](#) and [New Transfer](#) undergraduate students. For a demographic portrait of the University's new graduate students, see chapter 3 in the [2017 Fact Book](#).

Graduate students often have different priorities, concerns, and requirements from those of undergraduate students when deciding which college to attend for post-baccalaureate studies. The New Graduate Student Questionnaire asks our new graduate students about their backgrounds, their reasons for selecting William Paterson University, and about their experiences with the application process.

Methodology

The questionnaire was designed and administered by the Institutional Research and Assessment Office. An email invitation was sent to all 595 newly admitted graduate students, followed by two reminder emails. Because the survey was administered prior to census, 21 students subsequently did not enroll. As of the fall census date, 574 new graduate students enrolled at WP. Of the 595 new graduate students surveyed, 107 or 18 percent responded.

Selected Student Background Characteristics

For most of the incoming graduate students, this will be their first time enrolled in graduate school (79 percent). The majority of survey respondents enrolled in the business administration program (15 percent), 10 percent enrolled as non-degree students, and 7 percent enrolled in the clinical and counseling psychology program at WP (see Appendix 1). Eighteen percent of respondents have already obtained a master's or a doctoral degree (Table 1).

Table 1. To date, what is the highest degree you have earned?

	N	%
Bachelor's degree	85	79.4%
Master's degree	17	15.9%
Doctoral degree	2	1.9%
Other	3	2.8%
Total	107	100.0%

The most popular degree for those who hold a bachelor's degree was psychology, followed by a bachelor's in business administration, accounting, and communication. For those entering with a master's degree it is most often nursing, followed by a special education degree. Two entered with doctoral degrees, one in business administration, and the other in physics. Those who reported an 'other' type of highest degree held degrees in law and music. The full list is available at the end of this report in Appendices 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d.

As Table 2 shows, respondents most often reported being employed prior to enrolling at WP; 49 percent were employed in a related field and 16 percent in a field unrelated to their WP program. Twenty-four percent were coming to us from their undergraduate programs. Four percent of respondents were enrolled at another graduate school and 2 percent were volunteering/participating in community service activities. If respondents

selected 'Other,' they were asked to elaborate. Three respondents reported that they were taking some courses prior to formally enrolling in their graduate programs (Table 2a).

Table 2. What were you doing directly prior to your enrollment at WP?

	N	%
Employed in a field related to proposed study area	52	48.6
Undergraduate student	26	24.3
Employed in the field unrelated to proposed study area	17	15.9
Other (please specify)	6	5.6
Graduate student	4	3.7
Volunteer/Community service	2	1.9
Total	107	100.0

Table 2a. What were you doing directly prior to your enrollment at WP? (Other)

Employed in a field somewhat related
Have 30 Master's credits from MSU
I was taking ESL class at BCC
On disability
Post-bac pre-medical requirements
Stay at home parent

For those who were employed, almost three-quarters were working in full-time positions (Table 3).

Table 3. If you are/were employed, were you working full/part-time?

	N	%
Full-time	51	73.9
Part-time	18	26.1
Total	69	100.0

The Application Process

Information Sources

The New Graduate Student Survey asked respondents which sources they used to learn about the WP programs in which they enrolled. Respondents were able to choose more than one source. Table 4 shows that 29 percent of respondents spoke with WP alumni (29 percent), 23 percent with current WP students enrolled in the programs they were interested in, and 16 percent learned about their program by attending the graduate open house. As well, many respondents learned about their programs from sources not initially listed in the survey question; almost half listed an 'other' or additional source.

For those who reported hearing about WP from another source, a number of these students learned about their programs by conducting online searches (N=12) and looking at the WP website (N=5); the complete list can be found in Appendix 3 at the end of this report.

Table 4. Where did you learn about your WP program? Choose as many as apply.

	N	% of Respondents
Other (please specify)	49	46.2%
WP alumni	31	29.2%
Current WP students in the program	24	22.6%
Graduate Open House	17	16.0%
WP brochures given to you at college fairs/other events	10	9.4%
Academic advisor at my undergraduate institution	9	8.5%
Information on social media	7	6.6%
Printed/online college guides	6	5.7%
Total	153	

Note: Because respondents could select more than one answer, percentages should not be summed.

Other Colleges

Newly admitted graduate students were asked to which other colleges they applied (Table 5); 14 percent of those who responded to this question stated that they had applied to Montclair State University, followed by Rutgers University (8 percent), and Fairleigh Dickinson University (5 percent).

Table 5. Please tell us what other schools (excluding WP) you applied to

	N	%
Montclair State University	11	13.8
Rutgers University	6	7.5
Fairleigh Dickinson University	4	5.0
Kean University	2	2.5
New Jersey City University	2	2.5
New Jersey Institute of Technology	2	2.5
New York University	2	2.5
Other	51	63.8
Total	80	100.0

Note: The 'Other' category includes cases in which n=1

Program Choice

Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that William Paterson University was their first choice of graduate institution to attend; 13 percent stated that WP was their second choice (Table 6).

Table 6. Among the schools to which you applied, was WP your:

	N	%
First choice	88	83.0
Second choice	14	13.2
Third choice or lower	4	3.8
Total	106	100.0

Selected Aspects of the Application Process

Looking more specifically at certain aspects of the application process may help identify areas where WP is strongest and areas where improvement may be needed. Table 7 shows that, on the whole, new graduate students were satisfied with the various aspects of the application process they were asked about. Eight in ten new WP graduate students had meetings with a program director and 84 percent were “extremely satisfied” with these meetings. As well, two thirds said they were “extremely satisfied” with: finding information about the program of their choice, the correspondence they received from the graduate admissions office, and the ability to meet with faculty in their respective areas. Only one aspect of the application process received mixed reviews. The 72 or 67 percent of all respondents who were looking for information about graduate assistantships had mixed experiences. Only 46 percent reported they were “extremely satisfied” and 22 percent reported they were “somewhat or extremely dissatisfied” with finding information about graduate assistantships.

Table 7. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the application process

	Extremely satisfied		Somewhat satisfied		Somewhat dissatisfied		Extremely dissatisfied		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Meeting with the graduate director of my program	76	84.4%	9	10.0%	3	3.3%	2	2.2%	90
Finding information about the program	69	67.6%	30	29.4%	1	1.0%	2	2.0%	102
Graduate admissions office correspondence	65	66.3%	26	26.5%	6	6.1%	1	1.0%	98
Ability to meet with faculty in my area	54	66.7%	22	27.2%	4	4.9%	1	1.2%	81
Finding information about graduate assistantships	33	45.8%	23	31.9%	13	18.1%	3	4.2%	72

Graduate Open House

The majority of graduate student respondents did not attend the Graduate Open House (74 percent), in contrast to the findings from the 2017 [New First-Time Undergraduate Student Report](#), where 73 percent of first-time undergraduate students reported attending the open house visit before making the decision to enroll.

Table 8. Did you attend the Graduate Open House at WP before making your decision to enroll?

	N	%
Yes	28	26.4
No	78	73.6
Total	106	100.0

Of the 28 respondents who did attend the open house, 20 chose to expand upon their experiences. Seven of the respondents indicated that the open house was informative, three stated that the open house was helpful, and three said that it was organized (Table 9).

Table 9. What were your overall impressions from the Graduate Open House?

1	A little underwhelming
2	Engaged leadership stood out above all
3	Helpful
4	I don't remember it actually. Just remember the flier.
5	I found the Graduate Open House to be informative and well organized.
6	I received many tips on the program. Everyone was very friendly.
7	I thought it was well organized
8	I was really blown away by how thorough the program was.
9	I was very satisfied that I could enroll on that day.
10	Impressive, convenient, flexible, dedicated
11	Informative, friendly, personal, open
12	IT was very informative
13	Positive
14	Small program with good teaching and technological base
15	Staff was unaware of my specific program and directed me to incorrect organizations.
16	The faculty were very helpful and everyone was willing to go above and beyond to answer my questions
17	Very informative
18	Very organized and informative
19	When I went, I had a different career path in mind.
20	Wonderful

For the 28 students who did attend the open house, the majority, 82 percent, found the visit to be “somewhat to very influential” on their decision to attend William Paterson University (Table 10).

Table 10. How would you describe the impact the Graduate Open House had on your decision to attend WP?

	N	%
Very influential	15	53.6
Somewhat influential	8	28.6
Slightly influential	3	10.7
Not influential	2	7.1
Total	28	100.0

Factors Affecting the Decision to Enroll at William Paterson University

Reasons for Enrolling

Understanding graduate students’ reasons for enrolling in their graduate programs confirms the strong link between graduate education and the demands of the job-market. As Table 11 shows, the most often cited reason, 46 percent, for enrolling in a graduate program at WP was that an advanced degree was required for their field/career. An additional 12 percent reported an advanced degree was needed because they were changing careers and 11 percent linked it to increased earning potential.

Table 11. Which of the following best describes your reason for enrolling in a graduate program at WP?

	N	%
Advanced degree required for my field/career	49	46.2
Change of career	13	12.3
Life stage (e.g. have the opportunity now)	13	12.3
Academic challenge and skill development	12	11.3
Increased income-earning potential	12	11.3
Personal intellectual enrichment	5	4.7
Other (please specify)	2	1.9
Total	106	100.0

University-Specific Factors Affecting the Decision to Enroll at WP

The survey also asked participants to rate the importance of various aspects of William Paterson in general and of the graduate program of their choice on their decision to enroll at WP. As Table 12 shows, the availability of this academic program was cited as “very important” for 81 percent of the respondents, closely followed by the areas of specialization within the program, 78 percent. While 85 percent of graduate students found campus location to be “somewhat to very important in their decision to enroll at WP, almost half (48 percent) of graduate students reported that an on-campus experience was “slightly to not at all important” in their decision to enroll.

Table 12. Please tell us how important each of the following was in your decision to enroll at WP

	Very important		Somewhat important		Slightly important		Not at all important		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Availability of this academic program	84	80.8%	15	14.4%	4	3.8%	1	1.0%	104
Areas of specialization in the program match my interests	81	77.9%	16	15.4%	4	3.8%	3	2.8%	104
The cost of tuition	76	73.1%	18	17.3%	7	6.7%	3	2.9%	104
Campus location	67	64.4%	22	21.2%	6	5.8%	9	8.7%	104
Academic reputation of the faculty in my major	62	60.2%	26	25.2%	4	3.9%	11	10.7%	103
Academic reputation of my major	60	57.1%	29	27.6%	9	8.6%	7	6.7%	105
WPs graduates get good jobs	54	51.9%	26	25.0%	11	10.6%	13	12.5%	104
Overall reputation of WP	46	43.8%	41	39.0%	11	10.5%	7	6.7%	105
Availability of graduate assistantships	42	40.4%	19	18.3%	11	10.6%	32	30.8%	104
An on-campus experience	35	33.7%	19	18.3%	17	16.3%	33	31.7%	104

When asked how long graduate students anticipate it will take them to complete their degrees, the responses ranged between one and five years; the mean response was 2.4 years.

Table 13. How many years do you anticipate it will take you to complete your degree?

N	Min.	Max.	Mean Years
103	1	5	2.37

Other Comments or Concerns

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide any comments, concerns or suggestions they may have. Those who took the time to write provided constructive feedback with some easily implemented suggestions. Table 14 lists these comments. Areas of concern to students involved graduate assistantships or admissions processes. In turn, a few students mentioned how easy the process was in entering William Paterson University.

Table 14. Concerns, suggestions, or comments regarding the graduate application process

1	Due to the BA/MS program for the communication disorders majors, I think the selection graduate assistantship positions were not as fair to us as we did not fill out the application for grad school and all the required paperwork with it.
2	Extremely difficult to get in touch with people in admissions in the summer. Found out at the last minute I'd be teaching classes and had to go back to school. One professor was very helpful and responded to me on a Friday night in August. Answered my questions and made the process easier.
3	Flexible course structure was most important factor of my decision to enroll. I had to be able to take as few as one class per semester. Also important, was the MBAs ability to accept my undergrad credits.
4	Hoping the college offers a Masters Degree Program with School Nurse certification component.
5	I chose William Paterson Associate Media Specialist certificate because it is a completely online program and is approved by the NJDOE. When I called a different school from the list, it was unable to guarantee that the program was online. This was the primary factor in my decision besides in state tuition.
6	I found i was unable to go back and edit or add information I had previously entered and saved. I didn't not realize edit was not possible until it was to late then had to go through the hassle of contacting the graduate admissions office for assistance. They were very helpful but a simple edit option would have been easier.
7	I have had a wonderful experience with this university and have told others about applying.
8	I just want to take some classes that were not offered at RCNJ in environmental science
9	I suggest updating the information on your website to align with what is on the applications for the Teacher of Students with Disabilities program. The application process was confusing since they currently do not align and there are multiple application choices given for essentially the same program. I had to contact the program director to find out what to apply for.
10	I was in search of an MBA program concentrated in accounting that would allow me to sit for the CPA exam. I had no requirements other than this. I looked at two other schools, one in nj and another in ny. Most programs required a GMAT score. After considering cost and my reasoning behind going back to school, I decided to see what William Paterson had to offer. Initially, I did not consider this school because I saw there was a minimum undergraduate gpa requirement that I did not meet. Eventually I decided to reach out for info and was immediately put in contact with REDACTED who ultimately is the reason I enrolled. He was extremely efficient and helpful. Within one week I was regostered. He introduced me to the pathway program which wasn't offered at my other two schools. Its a great program that helps people like me who do not want to be held back professionally for undergrad reasons. A big thank you to REDACTED .
11	instructions should be more clear. Things should not be repetetive.
12	It should be more organized. I heard too much conflicting information.
13	It was very easy and intuitive process. My adviser was working with me during the process and it makes it easy.
14	it was very easy, but I would suggest that applicants leave themselves enough time to get all necessary paperwork in on time, it is a time consuming process
15	It's extremely unfortunate that there aren't many scholarships/assistant for those in need who are pursuing graduate studies.

Continued...

Table 14. Concerns, suggestions, or comments regarding the graduate application process (continued)

16	Looking forward to a great learning experience!
17	My only concern is that when a program is specified that classes can be taken online, try to make sure that all of the classes of that major is being offered every semester. I have come into the issue where I have had to take off a semester because the classes that I need are not being offered that semester. This prolongs my graduation date.
18	Program seems great so far.
19	Thank You
20	The application process and deadlines for the graduate assistantship NEED to be clearer. In addition, how they pick (allotting departments with a limited number of spots) is unfair. Assistantships should be based upon who deserves the assistantship, regardless of major.
21	The application process was smooth. People were always available to answer questions pertaining to the process. I personally recommend Mr REDACTED because he does his work to perfection. So far so good.
22	The graduate assistant application process was a bit confusing. I was given information at the open house that did not correspond with the information I was later given by the director of the GA program. However, I do understand that the program was undergoing some changes so I understand if that's the case.
23	The interview and writing sample parts of the application process are a waste of time. We already write a personal statement/essay, so there is no point in giving another writing sample. Also, very few colleges require an interview, which didn't even ask any in-depth questions.
24	The Masters in Library Media Programs has an unnecessary Thesis component. This was the only reason why I hesitated enrolling in the program. There is a field work semester and a portfolio required and then a thesis. I feel that taking free elective courses would better serve me than writing a thesis.
25	The offices need to know how to deal with matters. One office will tell you to do 1 thing and another office will tell you to do something else. It's very confusing and time consuming.
26	Transcript was "lost in the mail" first time I requested it to be sent to WP. Had to order another transcript from my undergrad university and pay another fee. Wish WP would have at least offered to pay for the 2nd transcript because I had provided documentation that it was mailed and delivered, etc. Seems like a poor process in the admissions office making a tedious application process that made me question even attending this school.
27	Would have loved to hear and see what actual graduates from the grad program are doing. That could help me paint a picture of what possibilities are out there graduating with a masters from here.

Appendix 1 Respondents' Majors at WP

	N	%
Business Administration (M.B.A.)	16	15.0
Non-Degree	11	10.3
Clinical & Counseling Psychology (M.A.)	7	6.5
Professional Counseling (M.Ed.)	6	5.6
Teacher of Students with Disabilities Certificate	6	5.6
Communication Disorders (M.S.)	5	4.7
MBA Pathways Certificate	5	4.7
Higher Education Administration (M.A.)	4	3.7
Professional Communication (M.A.)	4	3.7
School Nurse Certificate	4	3.7
Educational Media Specialist Certificate	3	2.8
Music (M.M.)	3	2.8
Nursing (M.S.N.)	3	2.8
Nursing Practice (D.N.P.)	3	2.8
Secondary Education (M.A.T.)	3	2.8
Special Education (M.Ed.)	3	2.8
Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.)	2	1.9
Creative and Professional Writing (M.F.A.)	2	1.9
History (M.A.)	2	1.9
Middle Level Education (M.Ed.)	2	1.9
Applied Sociology (M.A.)	1	0.9
Art (M.F.A.)	1	0.9
Bilingual Education/ESL Certificate	1	0.9
Biotechnology (M.S.)	1	0.9
Curriculum and Learning (M.Ed.)	1	0.9
Educational Leadership (M.Ed.)	1	0.9
English (M.A.)	1	0.9
Exercise and Sports Studies (M.S.)	1	0.9
Learning Disabilities Consultant Certificate	1	0.9
Literacy (M.Ed.)	1	0.9
Post Masters Education	1	0.9
Psychology (B.A.)	1	0.9
School Supervisor Certificate	1	0.9
Total	107	100.0

Appendix 2a
Major of Highest Degree, if Graduated with Bachelor's

	N	%
Psychology	12	14.3
Business Administration	6	7.1
Accounting	5	6.0
Communication	5	6.0
History	4	4.8
Nursing	4	4.8
Business Management	3	3.6
Communication Disorders	3	3.6
Criminal Justice	2	2.4
Elementary Education	2	2.4
Jazz Studies	2	2.4
Literature	2	2.4
Sociology	2	2.4
Africana-World Studies	1	1.2
American Studies	1	1.2
Applied Health	1	1.2
Biobehavioral health	1	1.2
Biome Science	1	1.2
Certified School Nurse	1	1.2
Community Health	1	1.2
Early Childhood Education	1	1.2
Early Childhood/Elementary Education	1	1.2
Education	1	1.2
Engineering	1	1.2
English	1	1.2
English Literature	1	1.2
Family & Child Studies	1	1.2
International Relations and Political Science	1	1.2
Linguistics, Spanish, P-3 Cert	1	1.2
Marine Biology	1	1.2
Marketing	1	1.2
Music	1	1.2
Music Education	1	1.2
Music Industry	1	1.2
Nutrition	1	1.2
Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Business	1	1.2
Physical Education	1	1.2
Physical Training and Sports Teaching	1	1.2
Political Science	1	1.2
Public Health	1	1.2
Public Relations	1	1.2
Social Rehabilitation	1	1.2
Social Work	1	1.2
Speech Pathology and Audiology	1	1.2
Supply Chain Management	1	1.2
Total	84	100.0

Appendix 2b
Major of Highest Degree, if Graduated with Master's

	N	%
Nursing	3	21.4
Special Education	2	14.3
Administration and Supervision	1	7.1
Business	1	7.1
Clinical and Counseling Psychology	1	7.1
Library Science	1	7.1
Nurse Practitioner	1	7.1
Nursing Education	1	7.1
Secondary Education	1	7.1
Sociology	1	7.1
Teaching	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Appendix 2c
Major of Highest Degree, if Graduated with Doctoral

	N	%
Business Administration	1	50.0
Physics	1	50.0
Total	2	100.0

Appendix 2d
Major of Highest Degree, if Other Degree

	N	%
Law	2	66.7
Music	1	33.3
Total	3	100.0

Appendix 3

Where did you learn about your WP program, if other?

by making a contact to Director of the department who was REDACTED
CACREP website
Colleague
Colleagues - I currently work at WPU
completed undergrad at wpu
Dept of Education website
Direct Email from Wpunj director for MBA program
Education Job Fair at WP
Email
Email from WPUNJ introducing the MBA Pathway Program
Emailed director of the program
Friend recommendation
From a website listing schools offering school nurse certification programs
Google
Google search
I always knew that William Paterson had a great communication program.
I completed my master's degree at WP before starting my doctorate
I graduated from Willy P (undergrad)
I learned about my graduate program by searching all of the possible Communication Disorders and Sciences programs in NJ.
I looked up approved graduate programs for media specialist in NJ.
I reached out to the Office of Graduate Admissions
I used a search engine to see if WPU offered my program.
I was an undergraduate student here
I work at WP
i work at WPU
I'm in an accelerated program offered by the university
Internet search
Investigated myself
Just looked it up
Live local
NJDOE
Online
Online research
Online research about nearby schools that offered the program I wanted.
Online search
Previous lab supervisor helped look for potential programs
Professor at Montclair State University
Research
school districted currently employed by
Spoke with the director of the program

Continued...

Appendix 3 (Continued)
Where did you learn about your WP program, if other?

through the Graduate director
Website
William Paterson Web Site
WP Faculty
WP Website
WPU website
WPUNJ website