

Understanding the Graduate Student Experience: Survey Results from the Midwest Region

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The goal of this research is to provide an empirical foundation to suggestions on how to increase the proportion of doctorate degrees in political science being successfully conferred. By examining the correlates of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among current and former graduate students, our research should help to determine ways to improve retention and success rates. Such information will allow faculty members and departmental leaders to take the necessary steps to begin working towards the elimination of the obstacles that graduate students face. In addition, these results may inform the strategies and the tactics undertaken by the graduate students themselves, as they seek to improve their own prospects for professional advancement.

The decision to leave graduate school prior to the completion of the Ph.D. degree is a multi-faceted decision. While there are many good reasons for graduate students to leave a graduate program prior to the attainment of a Ph.D., an improper reason would be that the climate of the departments is less hospitable to the career ambitions of some students as compared with others. The Midwest Political Science Association Executive Council and the Midwest Committee on the Status of Women in conjunction with the Midwest Women's Caucus expressed concern as to whether differential climates by gender or race do exist in graduate programs. If such differential climates do exist, the documentation of their existence could be used as a call to action to improve our collective graduate student environment.

Thus, our goal is to provide valid and reliable empirical data on graduate students' perceptions that can then be used as a basis for actions to increase the proportion of students successfully completing doctoral degrees. To begin to realize this goal, we undertook a survey in the spring of 1997. The target population for the study was all currently active graduate students in Ph.D.-granting institutions in the Midwest region. A listing of the population for

study was compiled with the aid of departmental chairs and executive secretaries (see Appendix A). A sample of the students was contacted and asked to complete a mailed questionnaire comprised of queries about current experiences and statuses in their graduate programs.¹

Panel Study: First Wave

The results of the first part of a panel study were published as follows:

Vicki Hesli, Evelyn C. Fink and Diane Duffy, "The Role of Faculty in Creating a Positive Graduate Student Experience: Survey Results from the Midwest Region, Part II," PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, October 2003 (pp. 801-804).

Vicki Hesli, Evelyn C. Fink and Diane Duffy, "Mentoring in A Positive Graduate Student Experience: Survey Results from the Midwest Region, Part I," PS: Political Science and Politics, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3, July 2003 (pp. 457-460).

In the first wave of the panel study, we asked in an open-ended format, if the student should decide to quit graduate school, what would be the primary reason. For men, the single most frequently cited reason was the lack of employment opportunities; for women, it was an unfriendly (unsupportive) work environment. Women were more likely than men to speculate about dropping out because of dissatisfaction with political science as a field of study, problems with relations in the department, and reappraisal of their choice of career track.

Using responses to the question about having seriously considered leaving graduate school, we built a logistic regression model based on a priori expectations about both endogenous and exogenous factors that would most likely affect the decision to leave graduate school. The set of factors that best predicted the probability of giving serious thought to quitting graduate school can be summarized as follows: Negative reports about the availability of faculty

¹ A copy of the original questionnaire that was mailed to graduate students is available from the authors of this report. The questionnaire went through several revisions and was pilot tested among graduate students before being finalized. Standard procedures for such surveys were followed, including guarantees of anonymity and follow-up mailings to increase response rates.

encouragement and consultation (i.e. poor mentoring as measured by questions about the accessibility of faculty members, the positive or negative evaluations of mentoring, and advising relationships between faculty and students) are significantly tied to a higher probability of serious consideration of leaving graduate school. While good mentoring works against attrition, the most important factor that contributes to the thought of leaving graduate school is knowledge of inappropriate conduct (either in terms of physical behavior or verbal communication) by a department member. Another factor influencing expected attrition is whether a department offers an orientation program to incoming students. This finding provides additional evidence that what departments do to help their graduate students does matter. The provision of an orientation program significantly reduces the probability of seriously thinking about leaving.

As one would expect, those who report having seriously considered leaving graduate school also reveal higher levels of dissatisfaction with their graduate student experience. Thus, to investigate this further, we developed an index of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the graduate student experience using seven questionnaire items. Using OLS regression, we determined that the single best predictor of level of dissatisfaction with the graduate student experience is whether the graduate student receives sufficient encouragement, mentoring and consultation from faculty. The second best predictor of dissatisfaction in graduate school is a scale that measures whether the respondent thinks that incidents of sexual or racial harassment would be handled promptly and appropriately by the department. A negative perception of departmental response has a significant deleterious effect on satisfaction with one's graduate program. Related again to the previous findings, the provision of an orientation program to incoming students does help to reduce the average level of dissatisfaction. The presence of an adequate orientation program substantially increases satisfaction with the graduate program.

The last important independent factor is gender -- males tend to have higher levels of satisfaction and females tend to have lower levels of satisfaction. This finding becomes even more telling when we recognize that controls have been introduced for other factors that we expected to be relevant, such as the quality of the mentoring relationships. The data reveal that the graduate student experience is different in the eyes of the men when compared with the eyes of women, and that the women are more unhappy on average than are men.

One of the clearest findings was that faculty mentoring and departmental orientation programs do contribute to a favorable experience for graduate students. We cannot say whether the orientation programs were a causal factor that resulted in an overall positive experience for graduate students, or if having a positive atmosphere causes the department to develop an orientation program as one intervention to help students. If the former is the case, it would appear that the orientation programs serve as a vehicle to "level the playing field" by letting all graduate students know departmental norms and expectations, operating policies and procedures, and opportunities available. In either case, orientation programs contribute considerably to a student's cultural capital by providing important information about the department and how to proceed to achieve one's aspirations.

The question that arises is what else can be done to help women achieve higher levels of satisfaction, that is, levels more comparable to those of men. The findings suggest several places to start. Departments need to reassess the extent of sexual and racial harassment and whether measures heretofore instituted are adequate. Data indicate that a significant number of students (28% of the women and 18% of the men) have, regrettably, been exposed to behavior they considered inappropriate. The awareness of inappropriate conduct is more widespread. Given the many years that universities have had operant harassment policies, the unequal power

between faculty and students, and the data reported here, departments cannot be complacent in thinking their policies are working. Failure to act on any single experience will affect not only the specific party but, through common knowledge, harm the experience for other women and men as well. Departments can do better by setting, promoting, and enforcing a zero tolerance policy towards harassment. They can also back up that policy when necessary through appropriate investigation and action.

We were able to show that departmental attention to faculty mentoring, regularized communication, orientation programs, and decisive action when incidents of discrimination and harassment occur can increase the retention of graduate students and completion of doctoral degrees. Departments can improve their faculty's response to graduate student concerns generally and can take responsibility to see that each student has a mentor. This would significantly improve satisfaction for both men and women. If left unaddressed, these issues create a reverberating wave of ramifications, with a portion of women and minorities failing at each level, and leaving the profession deficient in their perspectives.

Panel Study: Second Wave Literature review and Expectations

The second wave of the panel study occurred in the fall of 2003. We contacted the same people who first filled out a questionnaire in 1997, while enrolled in Midwestern graduate programs. It has several goals:

First, to ascertain whether previous expectations and perceptions affected subsequent decisions regarding degree completion and the early stages of careers;

Second, to determine if the obstacles encountered by women (and men) in their graduate school experience were directly related to degree completion;

Third, to document what these obstacles were, and relate them to previous findings on issues related to a hostile climate for women in graduate programs; and

Finally, to contribute to an assessment of the value of recent efforts in the profession to improve both mentoring in the graduate experience, and overall preparation for the roles of teaching, research, and service associated with entry level academic positions.

The advantage of a panel study lies in the fact that previous studies of graduate retention in other fields have pointed out that issues of climate typically manifest themselves in altering the career aspirations of students (Moore and Keith, 1992; Keith and Moore, 1995). By the time students actually leave a program, they typically have arranged for some other plan for their careers. These changes in plans are typically reported in any exit interview or ad hoc storytelling. While people do change their plans for many reasons, those who change their aspirations partly as a result of climate would typically be lumped in together with all of the others. Moore and Keith (1992) found that the effect of climate on career aspirations can occur as quickly as within the first semester of a graduate student's program. Our panel study, by initially surveying graduate students at different stages of their studies, will eventually be able to test for differential changes in career aspirations.

The panel study was prompted by a demographic pattern of women reaching near parity with men in political science graduate enrollments, yet being under represented to a considerable extent in doctoral degrees awarded. A trend noted earlier (National Science Foundation 2002), for political science to lag among the social sciences generally in the proportion of doctorates awarded to women continued throughout the 1990's. In 1992, 36% of all doctorates awarded in the social sciences were granted to women; by 2001 that percentage had increased to 42.9%. In some fields, most notably psychology, a majority of doctorates is now granted to women.

Sociology awarded 58.4% of its doctorates to women in 2001. Political science increased the percentage of doctorates going to women from 29.2% in 1992 to 33.4% in 2001. Only economics, awarding 28.2% of doctorates to women in 2001, and history/philosophy of science, with 20% of doctorates going to women, had smaller percentages than political science (National Science Foundation 2000).

The increase (just over 4%) in the percentage of doctorates going to women was comparable in the decade of the 1990's and in the preceding decade. In 1980, 19.73% of the doctorates were awarded to women, while in 1990 the percentage was 23.16%. The greatest increase occurred in the 1970's, with the percentage increasing from 9.75% in 1970 to 19.73% in 1980. Also of note is the increasing number of doctorates granted in recent decades; the total rose from 636 in 1970, to 730 in 1980 and 734 in 1990, and increased to 986 in 2000 (National Science Foundation October 2002).

The disturbing pattern here is that while women are making gains toward PhD degree completion as measured as a percentage of total degrees awarded, the progress is not increasing proportionately to the increasing numbers of women admitted to graduate study in the discipline. Further, in the mid-1990's a majority of the larger graduate departments reported a decline in the total number of enrollments, though this trend reversed late in the decade (Mann 1998).

Literature on graduate school experience suggests that the causes for these differences remain similar to those previously documented: the lack of the "social capital" of effective mentoring and support networks continues as a compelling influence on female graduate students (Davis 1997; Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession 2001). This also affects women's success at seeking "symbolic capital" such as awards and assistantships, and prestige/respect in the community, lack of which also promotes dissatisfaction with graduate

school and attrition (Moore and Keith 1992; Davis 1997). Sexual and other types of harassment also contribute to dissatisfaction and attrition (National Research Council 1996).

Research into doctoral education consistently emphasizes the importance of student-faculty relationships. The interaction directly affects whether students complete degrees, the time to degree, and student satisfaction with the experience of obtaining a doctoral degree. Baird (1993), Bowen and Rudenstine (1992), Hodgson and Simoni (1995), Nerad and Cerny (1993), Tinto (1993) and numerous others have cited the advisor-advisee relationship as a crucial factor. Five years of exits surveys among UCLA doctoral recipients in the 1990's substantiate the importance of advising/mentoring in degree completion (Benkin, Beazley, Jordan, 2000). Among those completing the doctorate, slightly more women than men said they would again choose the same advisor, though men were more positive on items including professional relations, quality of faculty mentoring assistance in finding professional employment, and the time spent with their advisors. Within political science, as well, the advisor-advisee relationship is currently recognized as critical (Wasby 2003; Anderson 2001; Benesh 2001; Farrar-Myers 2001).

Acknowledging the importance of "social capital" in the graduate experience, the discipline has undertaken notable mentoring efforts. Some universities have their own mentoring programs, but the majority of political scientists are not involved in a mentoring experience (Munroe 2003). Recognizing the need, the APSA Council established a Task Force on Mentoring in the fall of 2002. Prior to this umbrella effort, mentoring programs had been initiated by several of the regional units of the Women's Caucus for Political Science. The national task force will coordinate mentoring in the Association for a three-year period and promote the program through columns in *PS* and panel discussions at regional and national

meetings (Munroe 2003). Examining the experience and impact of mentoring on the career and degree decisions of our panel survey will thus may provide useful input for this reinvigorated mentoring effort. The fact that the attrition among women remains a concern suggests the need to again assess the importance of social capital, mentoring and the like in the decisions of our panel members.

The first survey with this panel of respondents also bore out the importance of sexual and racial harassment policies of departments. Nationally, a high percentage of graduate students continue to report incidents of harassment, and since a majority of these are against women and racial minorities, it is fair to assume they directly impact retention of these groups (Mink 2000). The National Research Council (1996) suggests that harassment—both *quid pro quo* and hostile environment—are part of an environment of “benign neglect” many graduate students experience, and that contributes to dropout rates. Other important factors in departmental climate for women include attitudes of “tokenism”, inadequate mentoring, devaluing research on women and minorities, and issues of “hypervisibility” (due to small numbers) of these groups in departments (National Research Council 1996; Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession 2001).

In addition to these influences, we hypothesize that changes in the dynamics of the discipline as a whole may also contribute to attrition among female graduate students. Sarkees and McGlen convincingly reason (1999) that the decline in available teaching positions, along with the increased numbers of women enrolled in graduate programs, is producing a new “backlash” against women in graduate departments. The basis of this backlash appears to be the conclusion that women are in an advantaged (not disadvantaged) position within the profession. Sarkees and McGlen argue that “a disturbing aspect of this backlash is the degree to which these

attitudes are being transmitted to graduate students, who thus gain a distorted picture of the profession and their chances of success within it.” In fact, earlier studies suggest women are disadvantaged in political science (Hesli and Burrell 1995; McGlen and Sarkees 1988; Meyer and Baker 1991; Committee on Status of Women in the Profession 2001). A similar backlash against women in academe has been suggested by others (Collins 1998).

A majority of both male and female graduate students in recent studies aspire to academic positions (Dolan, Kropf, O’Connor, and Ezra 1997). A tightening market for such positions may be discouraging both men and women from degree completion, perhaps in varying proportions. Women have increased their numbers among doctorate recipients, but not at the same rate as the hiring of women into teaching positions (Committee on the Status of Women 2001). Women are now a majority of undergraduate students at traditional four-year institutions; in a period during which women earned 47% of the bachelor’s degrees and 50% of the master’s degrees in political science, they were only 22% of the faculty (Committee on Status of Women 2001). These factors contribute to a social environment of more hostility, and since social capital is so important to women, may support a new wave of attrition at the graduate level.

Another factor that may have impacted recent doctoral perseverance is the changing nature of academic positions and career patterns. “There has been a steady decline in the overall status of and financial reward for employment in academia, as can be seen in limited job prospects (or a shortage of jobs coupled with an increase in the number of applicants), the increasing proportion of part-time and temporary jobs and less-than-desirable faculty salaries.” (Sarkees and McGlen 1999) A recent analysis of statistical studies of academic positions suggests that the academy is quickly moving into a three-tier system: full-time, tenure track; full-time, non-tenure track term appointments; and non-tenure, part-time adjunct appointments.

In 1994 only two-fifths of full-time tenure track jobs were held by women, and their salaries were only 79.9% of men's. Further, the salary disparity between male and female full professors teaching at public baccalaureate institutions has grown worse over the past twenty years (Glazer-Raymo 1999).

The assessment of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession documents a similar picture in political science (2001). While women received 39% of the doctorates in political science in 1998 (National Science Foundation July 2002), most of the increases in numbers of women faculty during the 1990's were at the assistant professor level, whereas only a slight increase occurred at full professor level (Committee on the Status of Women 2001). Data on recent job searches do not, however, indicate that women and men are significantly different in terms of the types of jobs they accepted. In 1998, 71% of the men and 73% of the women conducting APSA recorded job searches accepted positions. For men 36% of the positions were permanent, while for women 39% were permanent. Temporary positions were accepted by 33% of the men and 29% of the women. Twenty six percent of the men and 22% of the women were not placed in a position that year (Davis 2000). These data do not distinguish between types of institutions offering the positions. In other research, women have reported greater willingness to accept positions in teaching institutions than have men (Cook 2001). Our second survey will contribute further understanding of which academic career paths are pursued and achieved by recent graduate students in the Midwest, and any gender differences.

Another important recent development in academia, generally, as well as political science in particular has been a concerted effort to improve the preparation of doctoral students for their first academic positions. Anticipating large numbers of retirements in this decade, and many new entries into college teaching, national and professional groups have stressed the need for

better preparation for academic positions, especially teaching, during graduate school (Association of American Colleges 1993; Austin 2001; Association of American Universities 1998; Henschen 1993). Graduate students frequently complain that their preparation for teaching is inadequate; in a recent national survey of graduate students the average grade given to their preparation to teach was a “C” (National Association of Graduate and Professional Students 2002; Cook 2001).

In political science, a recent assessment indicated that only about half of a sample of graduate students had participated in either teaching seminars or actual classroom experience; an overwhelming majority participated in academic conferences, and about 33% had submitted research for journal review (Dolan, Kropf, O’Connor, and Ezra 1997). This study also confirmed the importance of encouragement by faculty mentors to participate in these activities. Differences between the experiences of male and female graduate students were not documented, but will be forthcoming in the second stage of the research reported here. Numerous pieces devoted to advice about the effective job search have stressed the importance of independent teaching experience (Carter and Scott 1998). Given the overwhelming interest among our graduate students in teaching, and the greater willingness of women to accept positions in teaching institutions, the experiences of our panel related to teaching encouragement and preparation may be significant in their decisions to complete the degree.

A related but less studied issue in preparation for academic positions relates to training for service. There seems to be almost no training for service such as committee work, often a major component of faculty positions. Some research suggests women are more interested in campus service, and more interested in and confident about community service, while men are more confident and prepared by their graduate experience for service to the discipline (Cook

2001). Assessing the role of graduate school experiences related to service in our panel's decisions about degree completion and in the early stages of their careers will thus also inform the current efforts to improve graduate preparation for academe.

Overall the research will indicate the continued importance of previously documented causes of graduate school attrition among women, strengthening our sense of what issues are most important to address in the structuring of the graduate experience. Recent efforts within the profession, directed at some of the important factors—such as providing effective mentoring and teaching experience—can also be validated and refined if the findings here, as expected, bear out their importance in the career decisions and early career experiences of the panel members.

Panel Study: Second Wave Preliminary Results

A few preliminary results of the second wave of our panel study are presented below.

To begin our analysis we report responses to three “outcome variables.” These are whether the (former) student left graduate school prior to completing Ph.D. degree, whether the former student is currently a faculty member at a university or college, and (if a faculty member) the type of institution where they are currently employed. As can be seen from Chart 1, only 20% did not complete the degree. Out of the total (including those who did not and who did complete their degree), 52% are currently faculty members (Chart 2). Among those who are faculty members at either a Ph.D. granting university/college, a M.A. granting institution, or a 4 year college, 51% are at a Ph.D. granting institution.

To help us predict these outcome variables, we developed a set of multiple-item scales from a series of agree-disagree questions in the mailed questionnaire. We then calculated the mean score for each of these scales, first among those left their Ph.D. program prior to getting a Ph.D. and, second, among those who completed the degree (Tables 1 a-b). A significance test for the difference between the two means is reported in the last row of the tables. From column 1 of Table 1a, we see that positive and negative evaluations of the treatment received by the *Departmental Leadership* do not differ significantly between those who completed the degree and those who did not. *Faculty Advisor Support of Career*, *Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship*, and *Relationship With Faculty*, however, are all perceived more positively among those who completed their degree in contrast to those who did not complete their degree. Table 1b lists a series of other factors that we expected to be related to the decision to leave graduate school before completing the degree. Only the provision of an orientation program makes a significant difference, while the other factors appear to have no significant effect (i.e. no significant effect is associated with whether the departmental leadership handled incidents of racial harassment appropriately, whether socialized with other graduate students, and the proportion of women faculty and racial/ethnic minority in graduate department).

In Table 2a, the average scores for the scales are broken down by whether or not the former student is a currently faculty member. Average scores on four of the scales are significantly different when faculty members are compared to those who do not currently have a faculty position. *Faculty Advisor Support of Career*, *Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship*, *Relationships with Faculty* and *Coursework* are all rated on average more positively among those with faculty positions. Table 2b shows that orientation programs, socializing with other

graduate students, career placement assistance and financial support, are also related to whether the former student has become a faculty member.

As can be seen in Table 3a, the single evaluation scale that appears to be related to the type of institution where the former student is currently employed is: *Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship*. None of the factors in Table 3b are significant.

Table 4 is a report of the factor analysis that was used to confirm the appropriateness of the scale construction.

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APPENDIX A Survey Information

Data for this study were collected from graduate students in political science in the Midwest region. Lists of currently active graduate students were solicited from departments of political science at twenty-eight institutions in the Midwest region:

Case Western Reserve University, Indiana University, Kent State University, Loyola University at Chicago, Miami University, Michigan State University, Northern Illinois University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Purdue University, Southern Illinois University, University of Chicago, University of Cincinnati, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Iowa, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky University of Michigan, University of Minnesota, University of Missouri at Columbia, University of Missouri at St. Louis, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, University of Notre Dame, University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Washington University, and Wayne State University

An initial letter was sent to department executive officers in political science departments at twenty-eight institutions in the Midwest region requesting the names and addresses of graduate students enrolled as of 1 September 1996. Details of the study were provided along with assurances that all information would be kept confidential. Approximately five weeks after the initial letter, a second letter was sent to departmental executive officers stressing in stronger terms the importance of the study and the need for their individual assistance. Of the list above, nineteen departments eventually provided lists of their students. (Numbers in parentheses are the number of students reported by the respective department.)

Indiana University	(143)
Loyola University of Chicago	(77)
Miami University	(27)
Michigan State University	(35)
Northern Illinois University	(105)
Northwestern University	(65)
Ohio State University	(142)
Purdue University	(60)
University of Chicago	(210)
University of Iowa	(42)
University of Kentucky	(53)
University of Michigan	(291)
University of Missouri at Columbia	(47)
University of Missouri at St. Louis	(65)
University of Nebraska at Lincoln	(39)
University of Notre Dame	(81)
University of Wisconsin-Madison	(128)
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	(37)
Washington University	(40)

The list of 1687 subjects was reduced by half. A case from the initial two cases in the sample was selected at random along with alternating cases thereafter. Questionnaires were sent to the 844 randomly selected subjects. Of these, 382 responses were received after an initial mailing and 128 after a second mailing, bringing the total number of valid returned questionnaires to 510. Thus the response rate is 60.5%.

Appendix B

Variables Used in the Analysis

Dependant Variables:

- 24. Did you leave graduate school at any time without completing your degree?
- 27. Are you currently a faculty member at a university or college?
- 28. Type of institution you are employed by:

Independent Variable Scales:

Scale 1: Departmental Leadership

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

- 12 c. The department treated everyone fairly & equitably according to merit.
- 12 f. The Chair or Head treated everyone fairly and equitably
- 12 g. The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate studies treated all graduate students fairly and equitably
- 12 h. The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies offered opportunities in the department to everyone

Scale 2: Faculty Advisor Support of Career

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

- 12 i. My faculty advisor treated me with respect.
- 12 m. My faculty advisor seemed more interested in picking apart my work than in helping me succeed (REVERSED)
- 12 n. My faculty advisor encouraged me to pursue my own career path and goals
- 12 o. My faculty advisor was easy to approach and talk to

Scale 3: Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

- 12 p. My faculty advisor helped me to meet other important people in my field.
- 12 q. My faculty advisor offered to co-author articles with me
- 12 r. My faculty advisor encouraged me to present my work at conferences and/or submit it for publication.
- 12 s. I had a close working relationship with my faculty advisor

Scale 4: Relationship With Faculty

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

- 12 a. I am very satisfied with my graduate career experience

12 t. Besides my official faculty advisor, I had good relationships with other faculty who advised and/or mentored me

12 u. Most of my professors were very encouraging of my academic progress

12 v. In my seminars, professors made sure that all students' participation was valued

Scale 5: Gender Racial Equity

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

12 z. My department treated female students worse than male students

12 aa. My department treated racial minority students worse than majority students

12 bb. Graduate students were divided socially along gender lines

12 cc. Graduate students were divided socially along racial lines

Scale 6: Coursework

12 w. I feel the courses emphasized research methodology too much

12 x. I feel the courses on statistics that I was required to take were not relevant to my career goals

12 y. There was too much of a focus on theory in my classes

Appendix C
Mailed Questionnaire

Second-Stage Panel Study of Graduate Students in Political Science

Approximately, five years ago, you completed a survey for us while you were a graduate student.

1. Please tell us about your educational experience since that time. Check all that apply.

- a. I am currently/still working on a graduate degree in Political Science.
- b. I have worked/am working on a graduate degree in another field.
- c. I have left graduate school without completing a degree.
- d. I completed a masters degree in Political Science. Year completed _____
- e. I completed a Ph.D. in Political Science. Year completed _____



How many years did it take you to complete your dissertation? # years _____

Has your dissertation been published? 1. Yes 2. No

Have you engaged in any post-doctoral work since completing your Ph.D.?

1. Yes 2. No

2. How often have you attended political science conferences in the past 3 years? # of times _____

3. Have you had any publications while in graduate school? 1. Yes 2. No

4. Have you had any publications since graduate school? 1. Yes 2. No 3. Not applicable

5. What has been your area of concentration in your research? _____

6. How well or poorly do you feel that your graduate program coursework has prepared you for the challenges you face or will face in your career?

1. Very well 2. Quite well 3. Rather poorly 4. Very poorly

7. How would you rate the career planning and placement assistance you received from your graduate program?

- 1. It helped me get a position I wanted
- 2. It was helpful, but I did not get a position I wanted through it
- 3. I used it, but it was not personally helpful to me
- 4. It was not at all helpful to me
- 5. No assistance available
- 6. Have not sought career placement yet

Graduate School Experience

8. Were you funded as a graduate/teaching assistant or with a fellowship **at any time** during your graduate program?

- 1. Yes
- 2. Yes, but only outside of department
- 3. Partial assistantship or fellowship only
- 4. No **[Go to question 12]**

9. If funded, what were your duties? (*Check all that apply.*)

- a. Teaching or assisting professors with their classes
- b. Assisting professors with their research
- c. Both teaching responsibilities and research
- d. On a fellowship with no duties required
- e. Other; please specify _____

10. If funded, for how many years were you funded?

- 1. For the entire time I was a graduate student.
- 2. For _____ years out of my _____ years in graduate school.

11. Did you hold any other job outside of your assistantship? 1. Yes 2. No

12. The following are some statements about things a graduate student experiences in graduate school. Reflecting back on your years as a graduate student, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each one.

Using the scale below circle the number that corresponds to your opinion

1=Strongly agree 2= Agree 3=Neutral 4=Disagree 5=Strongly disagree

a. I am very satisfied with my graduate career experience.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The department provided an orientation as to what I needed to do to be a successful graduate..	1	2	3	4	5
c. The department treated everyone fairly & equitably according to merit.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The program had an adequate number of courses on the books to fill my needs	1	2	3	4	5
e. Many courses I needed for my degree were not regularly taught	1	2	3	4	5
f. The Chair or Head treated everyone fairly and equitably.....	1	2	3	4	5
g. The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate studies treated all graduate students fairly and equitably	1	2	3	4	5
h. The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies offered opportunities in the department to everyone	1	2	3	4	5
i. RA (GA) and TA jobs were assigned by a system of favoritism.	1	2	3	4	5
k. My faculty advisor helped me plan my courses to fit my needs as					

24. Did you leave graduate school at any time without completing your degree?

1. Yes 2. No (**Go to question 27**)
↓

25. Did any of the following enter into your decision to leave graduate school? (*Check all that apply*)

- a. Needed more time for my family
 - b. Had an opportunity to take a more financially rewarding job
 - c. Had an opportunity to take a more personally rewarding job
 - d. Graduate school was academically too difficult for me
 - e. Issues related to financially supporting myself through graduate school
 - f. No longer saw the need for graduate school
 - g. I had no support from friends or family
 - h. Racial harassment
 - i. Sexual harassment
 - j. Other negative environment at graduate school
 - k. Other. Please list anything else in your life that you feel is relevant to your decision to leave.
-
-

26. How would you rate your decision to leave graduate school?

- 1. It was the best decision for me (whether or not I plan to return someday).
- 2. I believe it was necessary to leave at that time, but I want to return to graduate school someday (or I have since returned to graduate school).
- 3. I should not have left and I plan to go back (or I have returned already).
- 4. I should not have left, but I don't plan to return to graduate school.

Current Employment Status

27. Are you currently a faculty member at a university or college?

1. Yes 2. No [**Go to Question 43**]
↓

28. Type of institution you are employed by:

- 1. Ph.D. granting university/college
- 2. M.A. granting institution
- 3. Other 4 year college
- 4. 2 year college
- 5. Other academic institution (specify) _____

29. Is this a public or a private institution? 1. Public 2. Private

30. Title of your current position _____

31. Number of years in position # _____

32. What type of position is this?

- 1. Full time, tenure track
- 2. Full time, non-tenure track
- 3. Part time

33. If in a tenure track position, where in the tenure process are you?

- 1. Tenured
- 2. Working on tenure (How many years until your tenure decision? _____)
- 3. Denied tenure, in process of moving

34. Did you come up for tenure early? 1. Yes 2. No



35. Was it on your own initiative or did one of your senior colleagues tell you to apply early?

- 1. My own initiative
- 2. I was told to apply early

36. Field of major research interest _____

37. Do you hold a joint appointment?

- 1. Yes → please name the units where you hold an appointment _____

- 2. No

38. On average, how many courses do you teach per semester? _____
Or per quarter? _____

39. Would you describe the leave policy (including sick leave and/or maternity/family leave) at your university as being progressive and flexible?

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Progressive | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No |
| b. Flexible | <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> 2. No |

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

40. Students are equally respectful of male and female faculty members at my institution.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

41. The administration of this institution treats male and female faculty equally.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

42. Male faculty members treat women faculty with respect.

1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly disagree

Please complete the following section (Questions 43-51) if you are not currently employed as a faculty member in a college; otherwise go to Question 52.

43. What is your current employment status?

1. Administrator or researcher at a university or college
 2. Work for a government agency
 3. Work for a private business
 4. High school or elementary school teacher
 5. Unemployed or looking for work (Skip all remaining questions)
 6. Homemaker or not employed outside home, but not looking for work (Skip all remaining questions)
 0. Other; please specify _____

44. In what type of institution are you employed?

1. Educational
 2. Government
 3. Private business
 4. Nonprofit agency
 0. Other; please specify _____

45. What is the title of your current position? _____

46. Are you employed:

1. Full time 2. Part time

47. How many years have you worked in your current position? ____

48. Is this the only position you have held since receiving your Ph. D?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Have not received my Ph.D.

49. What is the size of the company or organization that you work for? _____

50. Did your education prepare you for the work that you have experienced after graduation?

1. Yes 2. No

51. How satisfied are you with your current position?

1. Very satisfied
 2. Somewhat satisfied
 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 4. Somewhat dissatisfied

- 5. Very dissatisfied

All Respondents

52. How does your current position compare with where you thought you would be this long after leaving your graduate program?

- 1. This job is exactly what I thought I would be doing.
- 2. This job is nothing like I what I wanted to be doing.
- 3. This job is not quite where I thought I would be, but it is a step in the right direction.
- 4. I did not have a clear idea of exactly what I thought I would be doing.
- 5. Not applicable; I am not currently employed.

Please use the following area to tell us anything else you think would be important for us to know about your graduate and employment experiences since you were first surveyed.

Thank you very much for the time that you have given to answering this questionnaire. Please place your completed questionnaire in the return envelope that we have provided and mail it to us today.

**Public Opinion Laboratory
Northern Illinois University
148 No. 3rd Street
DeKalb, IL 60115**

Did You Leave Graduate School at Any Time Without Completing Your Degree?

Midwest Region Panel Study

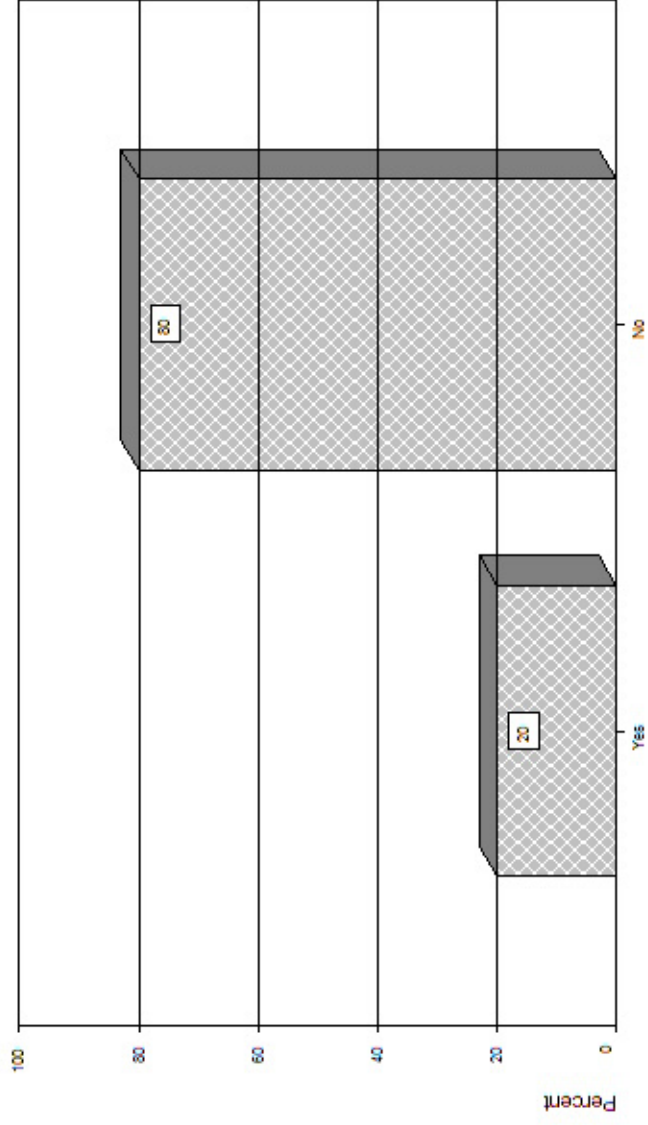


Chart 1

Are You Currently a Faculty
Member at a University or College?

Midwest Region Panel Study

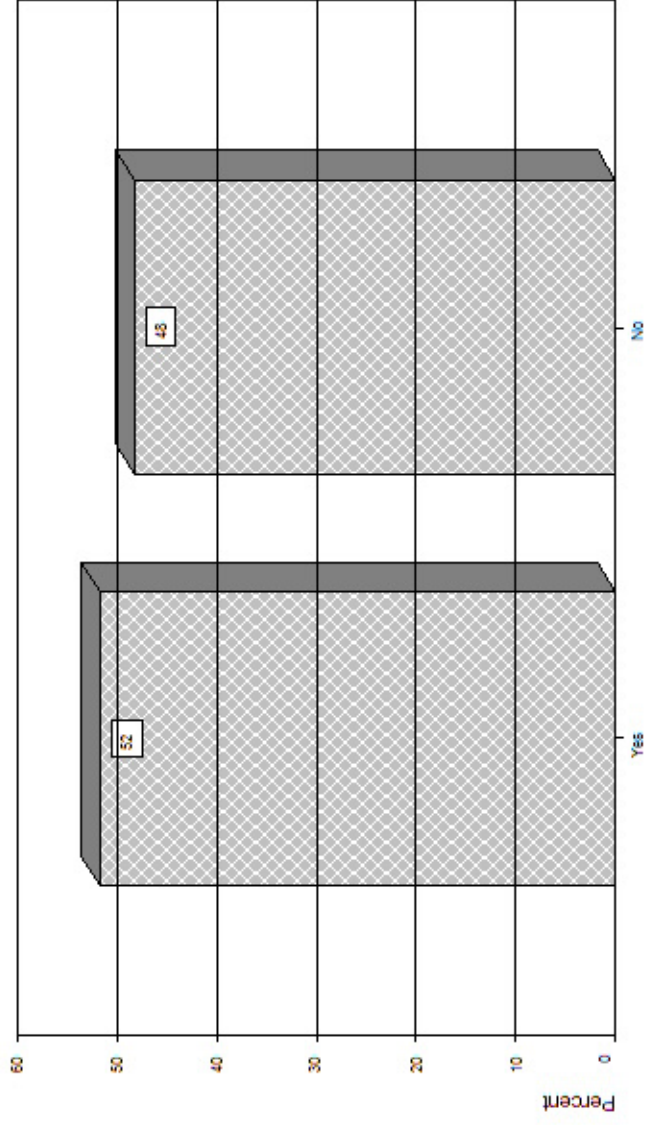


Chart 2

Type of Institution You are Employed By:

Midwest Region Panel Study

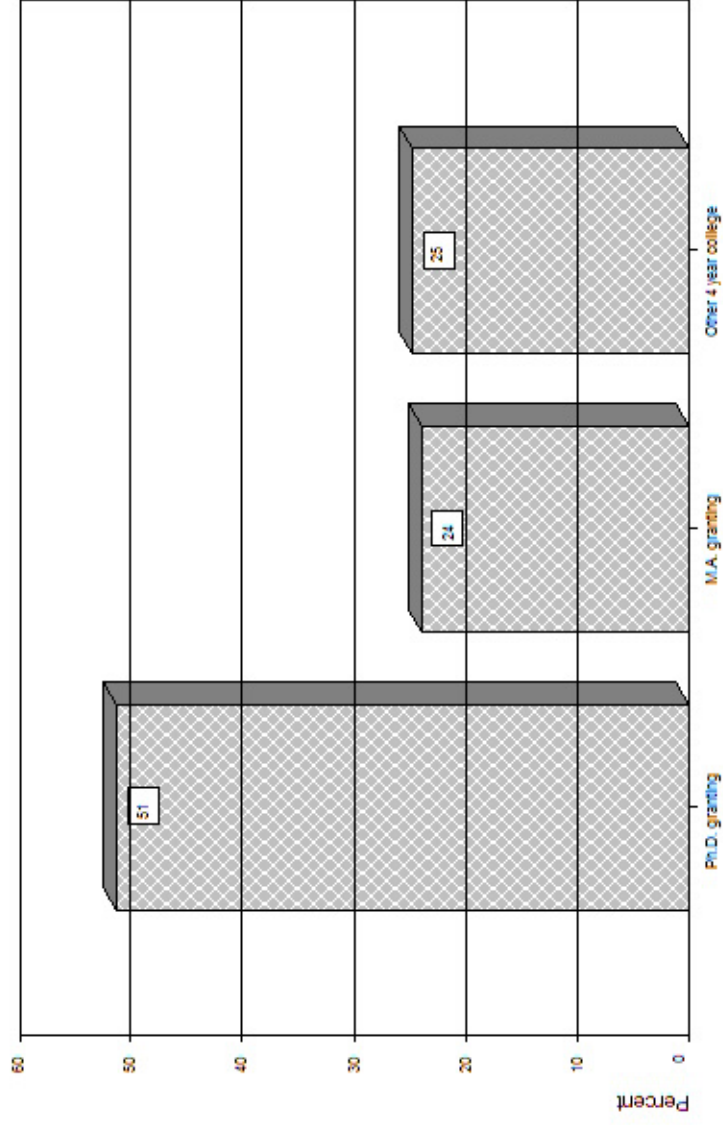


Chart 3

Table 1a: Decision to Leave Graduate School by Scales

Did you leave graduate school at any time without completing your degree?		Departmental Leadership	Faculty Advisor Support of Career	Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship	Relationship with Faculty	Gender/Racial Equity	Coursework
Yes	Mean	13.6512	9.3673	12.6327	12.6327	14.6000	10.8600
	N	43	49	49	49	50	50
No	Std. Deviation	4.27553	3.74552	4.36699	4.17679	3.83326	2.49906
	Mean	12.7515	7.0650	11.0905	11.3030	14.6335	11.3800
Total	N	169	200	199	198	191	200
	Std. Deviation	4.32432	3.14168	4.35448	3.66339	3.53951	2.50940
	Mean	12.9340	7.5181	11.3952	11.5668	14.6266	11.2760
	N	212	249	248	247	241	250
	Std. Deviation	4.31962	3.38770	4.39141	3.79915	3.59420	2.51098
	Significance	.224	.000	.027	.028	.953	.191

Table 1b: Decision to Leave Graduate School by Other Indicators

Did you leave graduate school at any time without completing your degree?		The department provided an orientation as to what I needed to do to be a successful graduate	I believe the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Chair or Department Chair handled incidents of racial harassment appropriately	How often did you socialize with other graduate students?	Proportion of women faculty in graduate department	Proportion of faculty in graduate department who were of a racial/ethnic minority
Yes	Mean	3.12	2.72	1.76	2.84	2.08
	N	51	46	51	49	51
	Std. Deviation	1.211	.834	.764	.921	.483
No	Mean	2.71	2.72	1.66	2.94	2.12
	N	199	171	202	201	201
	Std. Deviation	1.169	.799	.738	.630	.454
Total	Mean	2.80	2.72	1.68	2.92	2.11
	N	250	217	253	250	252
	Std. Deviation	1.187	.805	.743	.695	.459
	Significance	.030	.989	.362	.351	.570

Table 2a: Currently a Faculty Member (or Not) by Scales

Currently a faculty member at a university or college?		Departmental Leadership	Faculty Advisor Support of Career	Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship	Relationship with Faculty	Gender/Racial Equity	Coursework
Yes	Mean	12.9615	6.6107	10.5308	10.9542	14.6393	11.6947
	N	104	131	130	131	122	131
No	Std. Deviation	5.04720	2.97831	4.57528	3.90239	3.83344	2.30349
	Mean	12.9545	8.4590	12.3115	12.2833	14.6393	10.7561
Total	N	110	122	122	120	122	123
	Std. Deviation	3.56689	3.53763	3.98361	3.61180	3.31055	2.67147
	Mean	12.9579	7.5020	11.3929	11.5896	14.6393	11.2402
	N	214	253	252	251	244	254
	Std. Deviation	4.33926	3.38252	4.38219	3.81719	3.57418	2.52760
	Significance	.991	.000	.001	.006	1.000	.003

Table 2b: Currently a Faculty Member (or Not) by Other Indicators

Currently a faculty member at a university or college?		The department provided an orientation as to what I needed to do to be a successful graduate	I believe the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Chair or Department Chair handled incidents of racial harassment appropriately	How often did you socialize with other graduate students?	How well or poorly do you feel that your graduate program has prepared you for the challenges you face or will face in your career?	Rate the career planning and placement assistance you received from your graduate program	Funded as a graduate/teaching assistant or with a fellowship at any time during your graduate program?
Yes	Mean	2.55	2.64	1.54	1.87	2.59	1.17
	N	131	107	132	131	130	132
	Std. Deviation	1.204	.915	.647	.661	1.583	.671
No	Mean	3.07	2.81	1.81	2.20	4.48	1.46
	N	123	112	125	116	116	125
	Std. Deviation	1.117	.704	.810	.649	1.465	1.012
Total	Mean	2.80	2.73	1.67	2.02	3.48	1.32
	N	254	219	257	247	246	257
	Std. Deviation	1.190	.817	.742	.674	1.795	.865
	Significance	.000	.109	.003	.000	.000	.007

Table 3a: Type of Institutional Employment by Scales

Type of institution where employed		Departmental Leadership	Faculty Advisor Support of Career	Faculty Advisor Support of Scholarship	Relationship with Faculty	Gender/Racial Equity	Coursework
Ph.D. granting university/college	Mean	12.6383	5.9180	9.1774	10.5323	14.6610	12.2742
	N	47	61	62	62	59	62
M.A. granting institution	Std. Deviation	4.98879	2.44469	4.34015	3.82707	3.52141	2.41694
	Mean	12.6923	7.3667	11.4643	11.0333	15.0385	11.1667
Other 4 year college	N	26	30	28	30	26	30
	Std. Deviation	5.05782	3.46891	4.59857	4.11459	4.39528	2.08580
Total	Mean	12.3636	6.7097	12.0000	11.1290	14.3214	11.4667
	N	22	31	31	31	28	30
	Std. Deviation	4.82598	2.38318	4.33590	3.59390	3.89733	2.09652
	Mean	12.5895	6.4754	10.4298	10.8049	14.6637	11.8033
	N	95	122	121	123	113	122
	Std. Deviation	4.91955	2.76104	4.55307	3.82112	3.80228	2.29854
	Significance	.970	.053	.006	.727	.790	.061

Table 3c: Type of Institutional Employment by Other Factors

Type of institution employed at		Proportion of faculty in graduate department who were of a racial/ethnic minority	I believe the Director of Graduate Studies/Graduate Chair or Department Chair handled incidents of racial harassment appropriately	The department provided an orientation as to what I needed to do to be a successful graduate	How often did you socialize with other graduate students?	Proportion of women faculty in graduate department
Ph.D. granting university/college	Mean	2.00	2.57	2.45	1.48	2.90
	N	63	49	62	62	61
	Std. Deviation	.440	.764	1.183	.565	.597
M.A. granting institution	Mean	2.14	2.69	2.50	1.77	3.00
	N	29	26	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	.516	1.087	1.196	.774	.695
Other 4 year college	Mean	2.06	2.48	2.48	1.45	2.77
	N	31	23	31	31	31
	Std. Deviation	.359	.994	1.092	.675	.617
Total	Mean	2.05	2.58	2.47	1.54	2.89
	N	123	98	123	123	122
	Std. Deviation	.441	.907	1.155	.656	.627
	Significance	.371	.712	.980	.100	.372

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix for Multiple-Item Scales

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am very satisfied with my graduate school experience	.321	.284	.238	-.205	.511	-.100
The department treated everyone fairly & equitably according to merit	.806	.125	-.048	-.207	.214	-.046
The Chair of Head treated everyone fairly and equitably	.794	.107	-.043	-.198	.176	-.084
The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies treated all graduate students fairly and equitably	.849	.052	.113	-.104	.112	-.013
The Graduate Advisor/Director of Graduate Studies offered opportunities in the department to everyone	.785	.112	.235	-.081	.081	-.077
My faculty advisor treated me with respect	.239	.805	.149	-.032	.206	-.049
My faculty advisor encouraged me to pursue my own career path and goals	.015	.749	.201	-.028	.152	-.033

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
My faculty advisor was easy to approach and talk to	.076	.743	.365	-.086	.126	.015
My faculty advisor helped me to meet important people in my field	.058	.316	.757	.014	.168	.044
My faculty advisor offered to co-author articles with me	.035	.082	.820	-.007	.046	-.246
My faculty advisor encouraged me to present my work at conferences and/or submit it for publication	.153	.266	.743	-.023	.154	-.055
I had a close working relationship with my faculty advisor	-.057	.533	.639	-.102	.165	-.058
Besides my official faculty advisor, I had good relationships with other faculty who advised and/or mentored me	.065	.199	.158	.045	.759	-.056

Most of my professors were very encouraging of my academic progress	.237	.191	.173	-.176	.746	-.204
In my seminars, professors made sure that all students' participation was valued	.374	.117	.026	-.291	.509	-.038
I feel the courses emphasized research methodology too much	-.085	-.036	-.055	.045	-.069	.829
I feel the courses on statistics that I was required to take were not relevant to my career goals	-.134	.095	-.111	.163	.008	.815
There was too much focus on theory in my classes	.042	-.203	-.074	-.167	-.232	.618
Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
My department treated female students worse than male students	-.415	-.038	-.009	.729	.115	.064
My department treated racial minority students worse than majority students	-.471	-.022	.123	.659	.027	.063
Graduate students were divided socially along gender lines	-.030	-.094	-.043	.703	-.275	.100

Graduate students were divided socially along racial lines	-.083	-.008	-.090	.791	-.129	-.099
My faculty advisor seemed more interested in picking apart my work than in helping me succeed Reversed	.127	.792	.113	-.017	.096	-.057