

## HEDS Alumni Survey 2008

Analysis of key findings and trends for  
HMC and Peer Alumni from Classes of 2002 and 2003

prepared by  
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### Methodology

During the spring 2008 semester, Harvey Mudd College participated in the annual survey of alumni that is administered by the Higher Education Data Sharing (HEDS) Consortium. This survey is designed to understand in more detail the extent to which graduates of participating colleges attribute their postsecondary education to a variety of personal, intellectual and artistic achievements and skills. The survey also gathers key demographic data regarding the professional and educational accomplishments of respondents, and the year in which they graduated from their undergraduate institution.

Harvey Mudd College (HMC) alumni celebrating a reunion<sup>1</sup> during the spring 2008 semester were invited to participate. In addition, colleges participating in the 2008 survey were asked to also invite graduates from the Class of 2002 to complete the survey. This enabled the HEDS consortium to identify a consistent cohort of participants for which comparative data could be collected.

A total of 1,004 HMC alumni were invited to participate in the survey, 232 of whom completed the survey. This resulted in a response rate of 23%.

Table 1 illustrates the number of participants from each alumnus cohort who completed the survey in comparison to the number of individuals in each class invited to participate. Table 2 summarizes key demographic data for HMC and peer college participants.

**Table 1. Number of HMC Alumni in participating cohorts, percent of total, and response rate**

	Number in Class	Percent of Invited Respondents	Number Respondents	Yield
1963	27	3%	7	26%
1968	55	5%	18	33%
1973	64	6%	12	19%
1978	95	9%	20	21%
1983	90	9%	20	22%
1988	121	12%	20	17%
1993	116	12%	13	11%
1998	131	13%	35	27%
2002	165	16%	30	18%
2003	140	14%	36	26%
Unknown	0	0%	21	NA
<b>Total</b>	<b>1004</b>		<b>232</b>	<b>23%</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Reunions for the Classes of 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998 and 2003 were celebrated in spring 2008.

**Table 2. Demographic Characteristics: HMC and Peer Classes of 2002 and 2003**

	HMC 2002		Peer 2002		HMC 2003		Peer 2003	
	N	%	Avg. N	Avg. %	N	%	Avg. N	Avg. %
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	25.9%	2	7.8%	3	8.6%	2	5.0%
Black/Non-Hispanic	1	3.7%	2	10.0%	0	0.0%	2	5.1%
Hispanic	0	0.0%	3	9.8%	0	0.0%	8	21.0%
Native American	1	3.7%	3	11.7%	1	2.9%	1	3.0%
White/Non-Hispanic	22	81.5%	20	83.6%	31	88.6%	17	74.0%
Other	0	0.0%	2	7.1%	1	2.9%	2	12.0%
Male	22	75.9%	12	42.3%	25	69.4%	NA	NA
Female	7	24.1%	16	57.7%	11	30.6%	NA	NA

**Data Analysis: Key Findings**

In the spirit of considering HMC alumni's responses within the context of responses of alumni from peer colleges, the responses from alumni cohorts for whom comparative data were available are included in this analysis. In 2002, there were three<sup>2</sup> additional colleges whose student enrollment and liberal arts emphasis aligned most closely with HMC's; in 2003, only two<sup>3</sup> colleges met these criteria. To maintain the confidentiality of all alumni responses, data from peer colleges were averaged.

The HEDS 2008 Alumni Survey includes more than 140 questions that investigate respondents' satisfaction with their college experiences, their level of involvement in collegiate academic and co-curricular activities, and the extent to which they attribute their current successes – personal, professional and academic – to their postsecondary education. Therefore, particular attention was paid to those variables for which a noticeable difference – either positive or negative – occurred between the number (n) of HMC and peer respondents who answered each question **most favorably** (e.g., "Greatly," "Very Satisfied," "Extensive" or "Frequently"). A delta of 10 or greater between HMC and average peer college scores were considered for analysis.

**Table 3. Data with frequencies of 10 or greater for HMC and Peer Colleges: Class of 2002**

<i>"Great" Importance in Current Activities</i>	HMC 2003 (n = 36)		Peer 2003 (avg. n = 27)		$\Delta$	
	N	%	Avg. N	N	%	Avg. N
Develop self-esteem	5	17.2%	21	71.5%	-16	-54.3%
Develop societal awareness	8	27.6%	22	75.7%	-14	-48.1%
Lead and supervise	8	27.6%	20	68.5%	-12	-40.9%
Relate well to others	11	37.9%	23	78.4%	-12	-40.5%
Place current problems in perspective	12	41.4%	23	80.9%	-11	-39.5%
Appreciate the arts	4	13.8%	14	46.2%	-10	-32.4%
Understand moral issues	11	37.9%	21	72.9%	-10	-35.0%

<sup>2</sup> Hampshire College, Pitzer College and Scripps College

<sup>3</sup> Hampshire College and Pitzer College

**Table 3. Data with frequencies of 10 or greater for HMC and Peer Colleges: Class of 2002 (con't)**

	HMC 2003 (n = 36)		Peer 2003 (avg. n = 27)		Δ	
	N	%	Avg. N	Avg. %	N	%
<b>"Greatly" Enhanced by Undergrad Experience</b>						
Develop societal awareness	5	17.2%	23	78.6%	-18	-61.4%
Write effectively	6	20.7%	22	77.9%	-16	-57.2%
Place current problems in perspective	5	17.2%	20	68.3%	-15	-51.1%
Understand moral issues	3	10.3%	18	63.1%	-15	-52.8%
Appreciate the arts	5	17.2%	17	58.6%	-12	-41.4%
Formulate ideas	11	37.9%	22	78.6%	-11	-40.7%
Develop self-esteem	5	17.2%	16	58.2%	-11	-41.0%
Relate well to others	5	17.2%	15	50.9%	-10	-33.7%
<b>Understand the process of science</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24.8%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33.8%</b>
<b>Use technology</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>58.6%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>24.7%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33.9%</b>
<b>"Extensive" Level of Involvement</b>						
Social and civic involvement	2	6.9%	15	49.6%	-13	-42.7%
On-campus employment	3	10.3%	15	52.0%	-12	-41.7%
Interpersonal relationships	1	3.4%	12	40.4%	-11	-37.0%

**Table 4. Data with frequencies of 10 or greater for HMC and Peer Colleges: Class of 2003**

	HMC 2003 (n = 36)		Peer 2003 (avg. n = 27)		Δ	
	N	%	Avg. N	Avg. %	N	%
<b>"Great" Importance in Current Activities</b>						
Develop societal awareness	6	16.7%	18	63.0%	-12	-46.3%
Self-understanding	10	27.8%	21	81.0%	-11	-53.2%
<b>Understanding scientific methods</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>44.4%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>27.4%</b>
<b>Using technology</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>69.4%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>38.4%</b>
<b>Using quantitative tools</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26.0%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40.7%</b>
<b>"Greatly" Enhanced by Undergrad Experience</b>						
Develop societal awareness	3	8.3%	20	70.0%	-17	-61.7%
Place current problems in perspective	3	8.3%	18	67.0%	-15	-58.7%
Understand moral issues	4	11.1%	15	50.0%	-11	-38.9%
Appreciate the arts	3	8.3%	13	51.0%	-10	-42.7%
<b>Using quantitative tools</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>41.9%</b>

The data in Tables 3 and 4 show that HMC alumni indicated that their undergraduate education greatly enhanced *quantitative* and *scientific* skills more often than did alumni at peer colleges. In addition, HMC alumni indicated more frequently than their peers that *using quantitative tools* and *technology* played an important role in their current activities.

When considering one of the key initiatives defined by Harvey Mudd College in its 2006 Strategic Plan – *Nurturing and Developing the Whole Person* - it is perhaps of particular concern that fewer HMC alumni attribute their ability to *write effectively* (Table 3), *develop societal awareness* (Tables 3 and 4), *place current problems in perspective* (Tables 3 and 4) and *understand moral issues* (Table 3 and 4) to their college education.

Appended to this report are the data frequencies for each question included in the 2008 HEDS Alumni Survey. While not included in Tables 3 and 4, there are several other data trends among HMC and peer group responses that are worth noting:

- For the HMC Class of 2003, there was a difference of - 42% between the percentage of HMC and peer alumni who stated that *placing current problems in perspective* was important to current activities.
- HMC alumni from the Classes 2002 and 2003 reported consistent levels of satisfaction (“generally” or “very satisfied”) with key academic services and opportunities at HMC, including *academic advising, contact with faculty, quality of teaching, courses in major field, courses outside major field, independent study/research, and residential life*.
- Alumni from the Class of 2002 reported higher levels of satisfaction with the *diversity on campus* (80.8%) than did the Class of 2003 (64.3%)
- In contrast to their peers, more HMC alumni from both the Classes of 2002 and 2003 stated that their college experience fulfilled their expectations for developing *competency in skills*; fewer HMC alumni stated their college education fulfilled their expectations for *fostering personal growth* or *promoting the ability to form relationships*.
- In general, HMC alumni report “occasional” current engagement with the campus, including *reading campus publications, visiting the website, visiting the campus for any purpose, and attending alumni functions*. The frequency of HMC alumni engagement in such activities was similar to that of their peers at other campuses.
- Similar to their peers, HMC alumni most often reported that they “strongly” or “very strongly” *identified with their alma mater*.
- The extent to which HMC alumni received financial aid and loans was consistent with their peers. Of particular note, though, is the percentage of HMC alumni, both from the Classes of 2002 and 2003, who indicated that taking on educational loans did “not at all” cause them to *postpone or cancel plans for further education*. Alumni from other colleges were more likely to indicate that educational loans prompted the cancellation or postponement of further education.