

SNAAP Overview

1. About SNAAP

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) is pleased to be distributing institutional reports of 2022 alumni survey data to 120 participating arts and design colleges, schools, and post-secondary programs. This is SNAAP's seventh nation-wide survey of graduates earning credits in a vast range of arts, design, and related concentrations. The SNAAP survey adheres to rigorous standards of survey research delivering comprehensive insights into the lives and careers of alumni at the lowest viable cost to participating schools.

For over a decade, SNAAP has generated rich, detailed information about the lives and careers of people with intensive training in the arts, broadly defined. SNAAP provides anonymized, proprietary data and results to individual colleges and schools about their graduates, while also aggregating all those data in research reports to create a national profile of the lives and careers of arts and design school graduates.

2. History of SNAAP

SNAAP grew out of the Surdna Foundation's interest in helping arts training institutions across the country learn more about their graduates. Following several years of planning, three field tests of the survey were conducted beginning in 2008. The first national administration occurred in fall 2011 and was repeated in 2012 and 2013, creating a database of nearly 100,000 respondents. SNAAP's second three-year cycle took place in 2015, 2016, and 2017. In 2022, SNAAP administered the newly revised questionnaire with 120 participating institutions; the largest number of institutions to ever participate in SNAAP in any given year. The 2022 survey data represents the most diverse set of institutions yet and provides innovative insight into new topic areas such as sense of belonging in arts and design programs, and experiences in arts and design during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 61,000 alumni responded to SNAAP's new questionnaire, resulting in close to 300,000 alumni responding since SNAAP's inception.

In 2020, SNAAP transitioned from [Indiana University School of Education's Center for Postsecondary Research](#) where it spent its first decade, to a new consortium of institutions, led by the [University of Texas at Austin](#) and the [University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign](#). (SNAAP "does business as" Arts + Design Alumni Research a nonprofit organization governed by a nationally diverse [Board of Directors](#).)

In addition to survey participation fees, SNAAP's mission is supported by several sources, including the sponsorship of the University of Texas at Austin; the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign; more than a dozen other sponsoring colleges and universities; and the generous support of SNAAP's governing board. SNAAP was awarded a transformative three-year grant of \$650,000 from [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) to administer the

2022 survey. SNAAP received additional grant funding from the [Emily Hall Tremain Foundation](#) to further support the survey. With these generous sponsors, SNAAP has been able to reduce its participation fees by over 50%, enabling a much greater diversity of institutions to participate in 2022.

With its new leadership, institutional partnerships, and funding, SNAAP set out to make numerous improvements to its approach in 2022.

3. 2022 Questionnaire updates

SNAAP worked to expand the questionnaire to address new information needs; update its questions to align with SNAAP's new five-year surveying interval; and revise the questionnaire to help improve the respondent experience. The process included extensive outreach for feedback and input through focus groups, interviews, and opportunities for public feedback. SNAAP also adjusted survey questions based on alumni input from the 2022 pilot survey, administered in July 2022, to enhance inclusivity and readability. The questionnaire was expanded in important substantive areas, including:

- Questions to garner more insight on alumni experiences in terms of their sense of belonging during their educational experience.
- Demographic questions about how a person identifies themselves, as well as ableness and disability, that aim to provide the means to examine alumni data with greater nuance.
- Questions to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and implications for training, education, and employment - with the goal of gathering alumni perspectives on modifications in their work environments and potential shifts in needed skills and opportunities for sustaining creative lives and work in the future.

4. Benefits of SNAAP Participation

Educational institutions with degree programs in the arts need high quality, actionable data for planning and assessment. Accreditation requirements also increasingly require information about alumni outcomes. SNAAP data can be critical to both.

SNAAP data can identify and inform ways to better connect arts training to artistic careers, making it possible for arts leaders, educators, and researchers to understand and address the systemic factors that help or hinder the career paths of alumni, whether they work as artists or in other occupations.

Colleges and universities confront a growing demand for accountability measured by graduate financial success—especially indebtedness—and a rising tide of skepticism about

the “ROI” of degrees in the arts and humanities. The “educational debt crisis,” a crisis of affordability and accessibility, is a long way from being resolved. Colleges are increasingly being evaluated and ranked by employment outcomes data cross referenced with educational data on majors and degree programs. Prospective students are being advised by ROI dashboards that forecast professional employment, earnings, and debt, based on choice of colleges and majors. SNAAP provides participating colleges and schools with a much richer, less-averaged understanding of the lives and careers of their graduates.

Administrative leaders and faculty can use SNAAP results to:

- inform, develop, and reform their institution’s curriculum with evidence of what aspiring artists need to advance in rapidly changing arts fields;
- strengthen alumni engagement and support;
- clarify what their alumni learned as students and how they have used this in both arts and non-arts contexts;
- address the career needs of their students and alumni;
- enhance their institution’s recruitment, public relations, marketing, strategic planning, and development efforts;
- provide evidence of the value of an arts education and alternative measures of success, including school and work satisfaction, for alumni working both inside and outside the arts.

5. Some Uses of SNAAP Data

Your SNAAP data are rich grounds for insights and inquiry. Some lines of inquiry include:

- How relevant are the skills and training alumni received at your school for their current work, whether as artist, doctor, lawyer, teacher, or in any other occupational role?
- How satisfied are your alumni with various aspects of their experience at your institution in respect to its perceived strengths and weaknesses?
- How do your graduates think your school could have better prepared them for work or further education?

- What additional degrees, in which fields, and from what types of institutions, did your alumni pursue after graduation?
- What alternative measures of alumni success, such as levels of satisfaction with several aspects of their current primary jobs, would provide useful information for your institution?
- How important are the arts in the lives of your alumni who are not currently working as artists?
- What barriers do your graduates face as they pursue work, and how can your institution better support the careers of its alumni?

6. Survey Data and Methodology

The data were collected over six weeks in October and November of 2022¹ from alumni of 120 institutions. Participating alumni represented a diverse array of institution types. Of the participating alumni, 69% reported on their undergraduate degrees or coursework, and 31% reported on their graduate degrees or coursework. Figures 1 and 2 provide an overview of the composition of institutions that participated in the 2022 SNAAP survey.

Figure 1. All SNAAP 2022 Institutions by Basic Carnegie Classifications

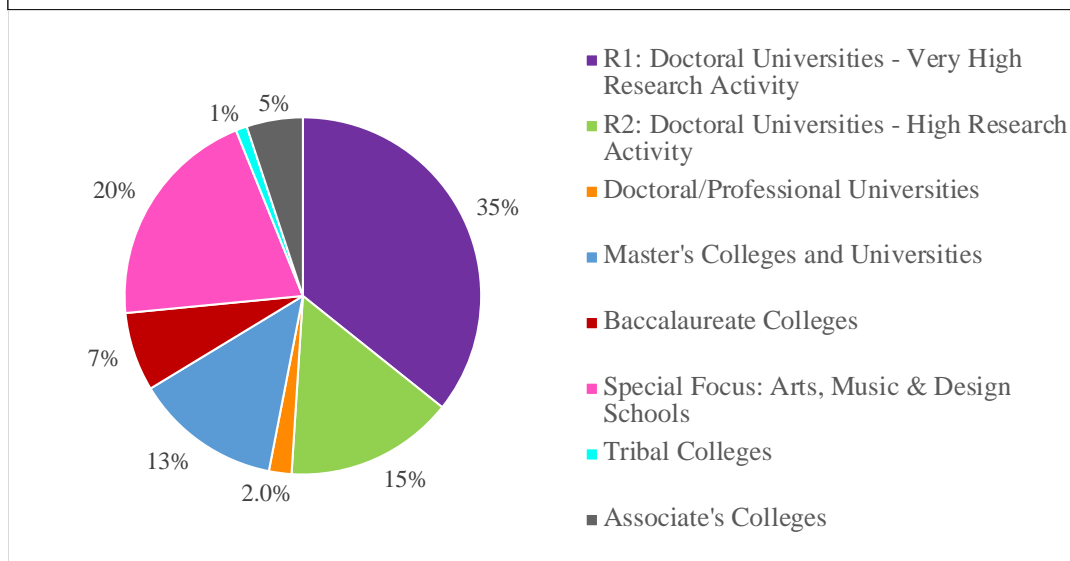
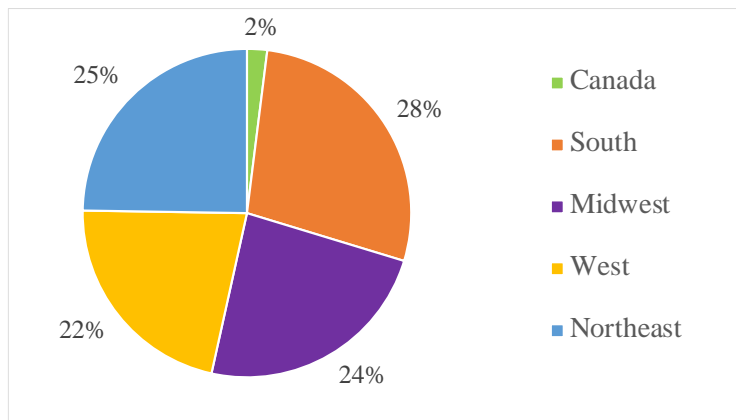


Figure 2. All SNAAP 2022 Institutions by Region

¹ For the institutions that participated in the pilot survey (summer 2022), pilot participants are also included in the Institutional Reports and aggregate data.



a. Response Rate Calculations

A total of 664,046 alumni with valid email addresses were invited to participate, and 61,225 alumni responded to the online survey. To calculate response rates for individual institutions, SNAAP uses industry standard methodology recommended by the [American Association for Public Opinion Research](#) (AAPOR). Using the AAPOR Response Rate 6 (RR6) method, the numerator includes all respondents (partial responses and complete responses). The denominator includes the full population that was contacted, meaning that alumni who did not have an institution-provided email on record, had an email that bounced back, never responded to the email provided by our search vendor, or were already included in another institution’s sample, were removed from the population count (the denominator).

Please refer to the table below for your institutional response rate and sampling error. The sampling error is an estimate of the margin by which the true response on a given item could differ from the reported response. As an example of sampling error interpretation, assume that 60% of your alumni reply "very satisfied" to a particular item. If the sampling error is +/- 5%, then the true population value is most likely between 55% and 65%. Results may still not represent "true" values for all alumni when response rate is very low and nonrespondents are markedly different than respondents on the survey measures. Such differences are unknown, so caution is advised when interpreting and drawing conclusions from the results. The sampling error reported here represents all respondents. Individual questions may have different sampling errors based on those who respond to the question.

SAMPLE Institution		
	Response Rate	Sampling Error
Overall Institution		

To calculate response rates for the overall administration, SNAAP averaged the response rates from each participating institution (calculated per the above description). **The resulting average institutional response rate was 11%.**

To provide some context on your institution's response rate, an alumni survey conducted by Fordham University in 2019 yielded a 5% response rate, and one by Cornell University in 2017 yielded a 7% rate. Similarly, an alumni survey of perceptions of curricula at the University of North Georgia's College of Business yielded a 5.3% rate (Garner et al., 2019). Recent research suggests that survey response rates are on a decline and survey fatigue is on an incline, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic (de Koning et al., 2021). Due to a recent increase in web-based surveys, increased spam messages, and other reasons, web-based surveys have been linked to lower response rates than other methods (Daikeler et al., 2020).

Given an overall decline in web-based survey responses among alumni over the past several years, the average institutional response rate of 11% exceeded SNAAP's expectations.

b. Reliability of Institutional Data

SNAAP collaborated with Indiana University Center for Survey Research and a national alumni search firm, AlumniSync, to test the validity of all alumni email addresses prior to survey distribution to increase the likelihood that alumni would receive and complete the survey. Through this verification process, the test discovered 66% of the alumni addresses submitted to SNAAP had a valid email address on file. After the first survey invitations were emailed to all alumni with valid addresses, AlumniSync searched for new, valid email addresses for all addresses that bounced back, and succeeded in generating new, valid addresses for 54% of those bounces.

To address concerns of reliability in previous administrations, researchers from the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research studied the issues of bias and response representativeness of SNAAP data. Their study, based on a SNAAP field test, did not discover significant biases that would prevent schools from drawing conclusions from their data (Kennedy et al., 2010). Additionally, a study using SNAAP data found that respondents to alumni surveys are just as representative as respondents to student surveys, which are commonly used for purposes of assessment (Lambert & Miller, 2014). A more recent study using simulated college student assessment tested the assumption that low response rates produce biased results. The results showed that the bias identified among a sample with a low response rate was *similar* to the bias identified among samples of that data (Fosnacht et al., 2017). Thus, low response rates do not necessarily impact the reliability of the data.

It is also worth noting that in addition to your institutional reports' topline data, the open-ended alumni comments provide unedited, qualitative feedback from graduates that can further illuminate your findings.

References

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