

**ALUMNI SURVEY  
 CORNELL UNIVERSITY CLASSES OF '89 AND '94  
 INTRA-INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS  
 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT**

**SURVEY DESCRIPTION**

- The survey, designed by a consortium of institutional researchers from highly selective private research universities and liberal arts colleges, was sent to select alumni classes of 28 educational institutions during January-February 2000. At Cornell University, surveys were mailed to 2767 alumni from the Class of '89 and 2766 alumni from the Class of '94. Response rates were 50.9% and 53.0%, respectively, for the Classes of '89 and '94 (Tables 89-1 and 94-1).

**ALUMNI CHARACTERISTICS**

- Advanced degrees have been earned by 77.9% of the Class of '89 and by 50.1% of the Class of '94. In both classes, the Masters degree was the most frequently earned degree (Tables 89-2 and 94-2).
- The current primary activity of most alumni is employment for pay in a management-related field. Most work for a private for-profit corporation. In both classes, females are more likely than males to be engaged in raising a family or working for a private non-profit organization. Males are more likely to be engineers/architects and working for private, for-profit organizations. Asian American alumni are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be working in a health or technician position, and international alumni are more likely to be working in a management-related field or as engineers/architects. Graduates are generally working in occupations that correspond to the focus of their undergraduate colleges (Tables 89-3A, 89-3B, 94-3A, 94-3B).
- In general, Cornell graduates have relatively high individual and household incomes. Of those who reported being employed for pay, the median individual incomes are about \$67,500 for the Class of '89 and \$52,500 for the Class of '94. In both classes, males have higher average incomes. In the Class of '89, Asian American alumni, international alumni, and Engineering, Hotel, and ILR alumni have higher individual and household incomes (Tables 89-4A, 89-4B, 94-4A, 94-4B).
- Most alumni (91.8% of Class of '89, 92% of Class of '94) reported being either "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their lives. In both classes, Asian American and international alumni are less satisfied. In the Class of '89, under-represented minority (URM) alumni are also less satisfied (Tables 89-5A, 89-5B, 94-5A, 94-5B).
- The Class of '89 identified their five most important goals (scale 1="not at all" to 5="essential") and the extent to which they had achieved these goals (scale 1="not at all" to 5="very much") (Tables 89-6A and 89-6B):

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Goal Importance</b>	<b>Goal Achievement</b>
<b>Raising a family</b>	4.12	2.89
<b>Helping others in difficulty</b>	3.72	3.08
<b>Being very well off financially</b>	3.67	3.22
<b>Keeping up with science and technology</b>	3.54	3.17
<b>Recognition from colleagues: contributions to special field</b>	3.50	3.25

- Males gave higher importance ratings to "being well off financially," "keeping up with science and technology," and "recognition from colleagues for contributions to my special field."
- Females gave higher importance ratings to "helping others in difficulty."
- Underrepresented minority alumni identified "helping others in difficulty" as their most important goal.
- AAP alumni rated "artistic activities" as their most important goal.
- "Being very well off financially" was the second most highly rated goal for Asian American alumni, international alumni, and Engineering, Hotel, and ILR alumni.

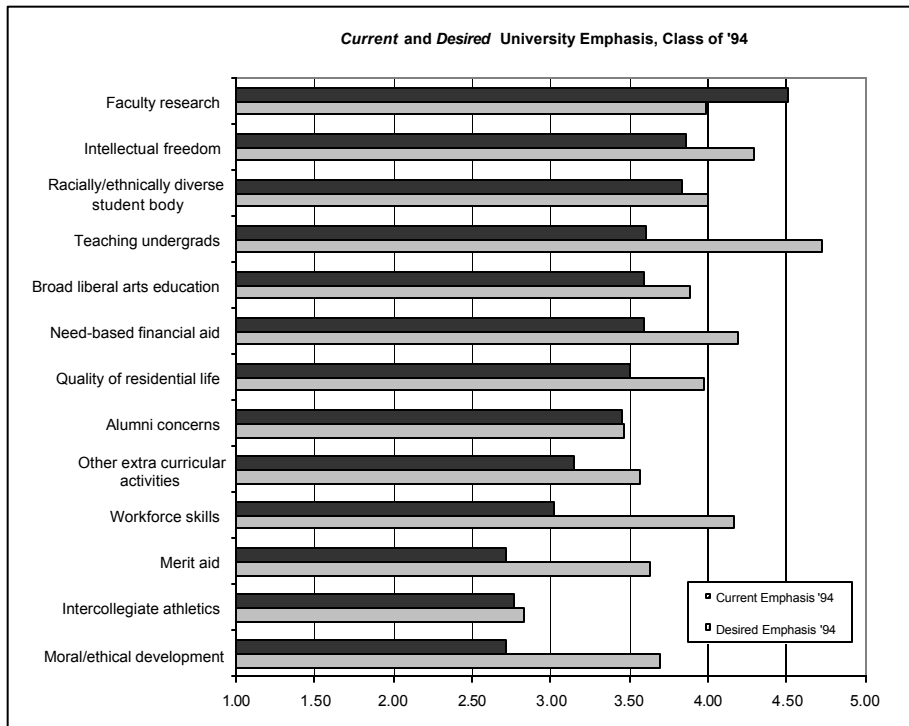
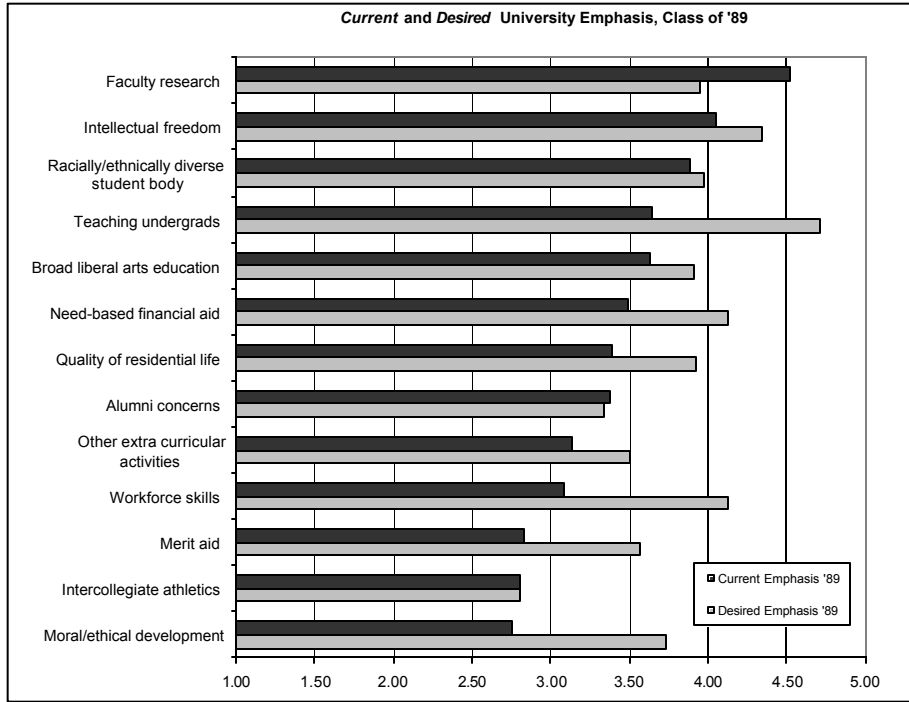
This set of questions was not included in the Class of '94 survey.

### **GENERAL VIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY**

- Most alumni (91.2% for Class of '89, 89.8% for Class of '94) were "generally satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their undergraduate education. Females and ILR alumni were generally more satisfied (Tables 89-7A, 89-7B, 94-6A, 94-6B).
- Most alumni (90.3% for Class of '89, 88.8% for Class of '94) would be likely to recommend Cornell to a high school senior with similar background, ability, interests, and temperament (Tables 89-8A, 89-8B, 94-7A, 94-7B).
- Alumni from both classes identified "faculty research," "intellectual freedom," "racially/ethnically diverse student body," "broad liberal arts education," and "need-based financial aid" as areas where they believe the university *currently* places the most emphasis. The areas with the greatest *desired* emphasis were "teaching undergrads," "intellectual freedom," "workforce skills," "need-based financial aid," and "racially/ethnically diverse student body" (Tables 89-9A, 89-9B, 94-8A, 94-8B).

The largest differences (greater than 1.0 on a 1="very little/none" to 5="a great deal" scale) between perceived *current* and *desired* emphasis ratings were present in both classes for "teaching undergraduates" (1.07 difference for Class of '89, 1.12 for Class of '94) and "skills valuable in the workforce" (1.04 difference for Class of '89, 1.14 for Class of '94).

The following graphs compare, for both classes, areas of *current* and *desired* university emphasis.



**THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE**

- During their college years, alumni from both classes had the greatest interaction with White students, followed in decreasing frequency by students of different religions, Asian Americans, students from outside the U. S., African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. Members of each racial/ethnic group had significantly more contact with students of their own racial/ethnic group. For both classes, Engineering alumni had more college interaction with Asian American students. Overall, alumni reported that their current patterns of interaction with different groups are similar to their college patterns of interaction (Tables 89-10A, 89-10B, 94-9A, 94-9B).
- Considering different beliefs or values that were questioned during college, alumni from both classes (34.5% for Class of '89, 33.6% for Class of '94) were most likely to report that questioning about the "nature of humans or society" produced the most valuable insights. (Tables 89-11A, 89-11B, 94-10A, 94-10B).
- "Lectures and course-related readings" was the campus contact identified by alumni as having the greatest contribution to their questioning of beliefs and values (45.6% for Class of '89, 49.5% for Class of '94). Contacts with students from other socio-economic classes, religions, races, backgrounds, regions, or countries were identified as major contributors by 25.3% - 31.9% of alumni (Tables 89-12A, 89-12B, 94-11A, 94-11B).
- Levels of involvement in various undergraduate activities are listed in Tables 89-13A, 89-13B, 94-12A, 94-12B). Alumni from both classes reported highest levels of involvement in "coursework in major" and "coursework outside major." Class of '94 alumni reported higher levels of involvement than Class of '89 alumni for most activities.

In both classes:

- males were more involved with intramural and intercollegiate sports;
  - females were more involved with "coursework in major," "on-campus employment," "contact with faculty outside class," "community service," and "study abroad;"
  - white alumni were more involved with "fraternities or sororities;"
  - underrepresented minority alumni were more involved with "on-campus employment" and "contact with campus staff;"
  - AAP alumni were more involved in "study abroad;"
  - Arts and Sciences alumni were more involved in "coursework outside major;" and
  - Hotel alumni were more involved with "on-campus employment" and "internships."
- The university activities rated by alumni as having the greatest contribution to their personal development were the following (scale 1="very little" to 5="a great deal") (Tables 89-14A, 89-14B, 94-13A, 94-13B):

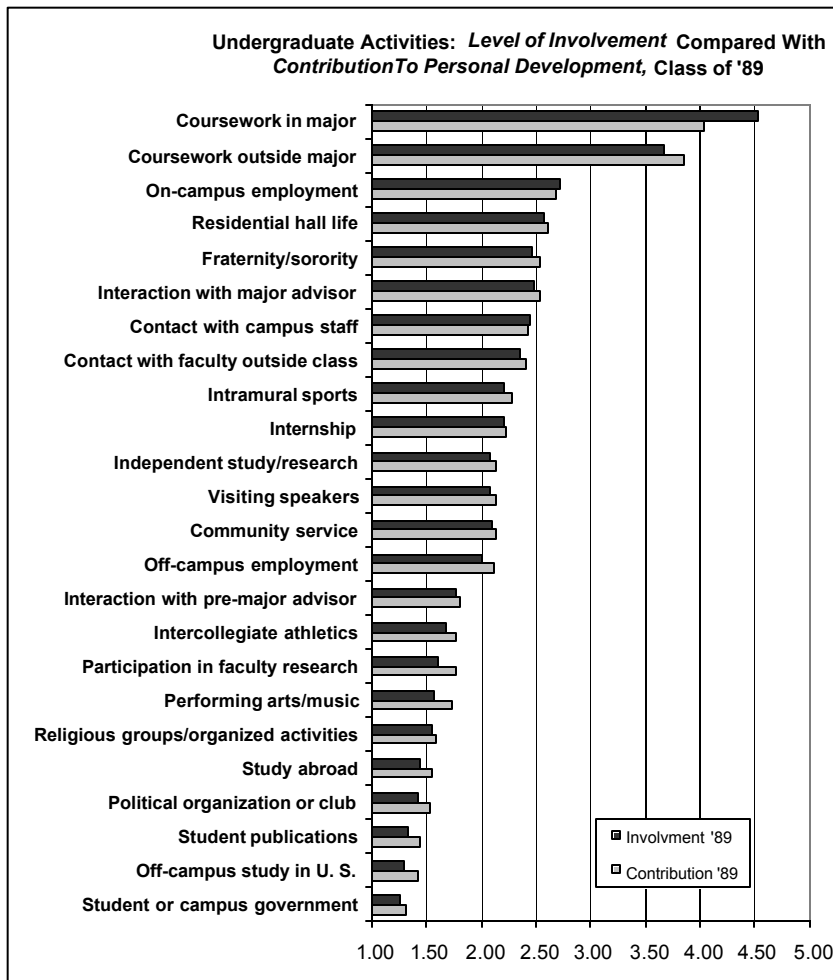
<b>Class of '89</b>		<b>Class of '94</b>	
<b>Coursework in major</b>	4.04	<b>Coursework in major</b>	4.04
<b>Coursework outside major</b>	3.86	<b>Coursework outside major</b>	3.89
<b>Residential hall life</b>	2.68	<b>On-campus employment</b>	2.76
<b>On-campus employment</b>	2.60	<b>Community service</b>	2.71
<b>Fraternity/sorority</b>	2.54	<b>Contact with faculty outside class</b>	2.70

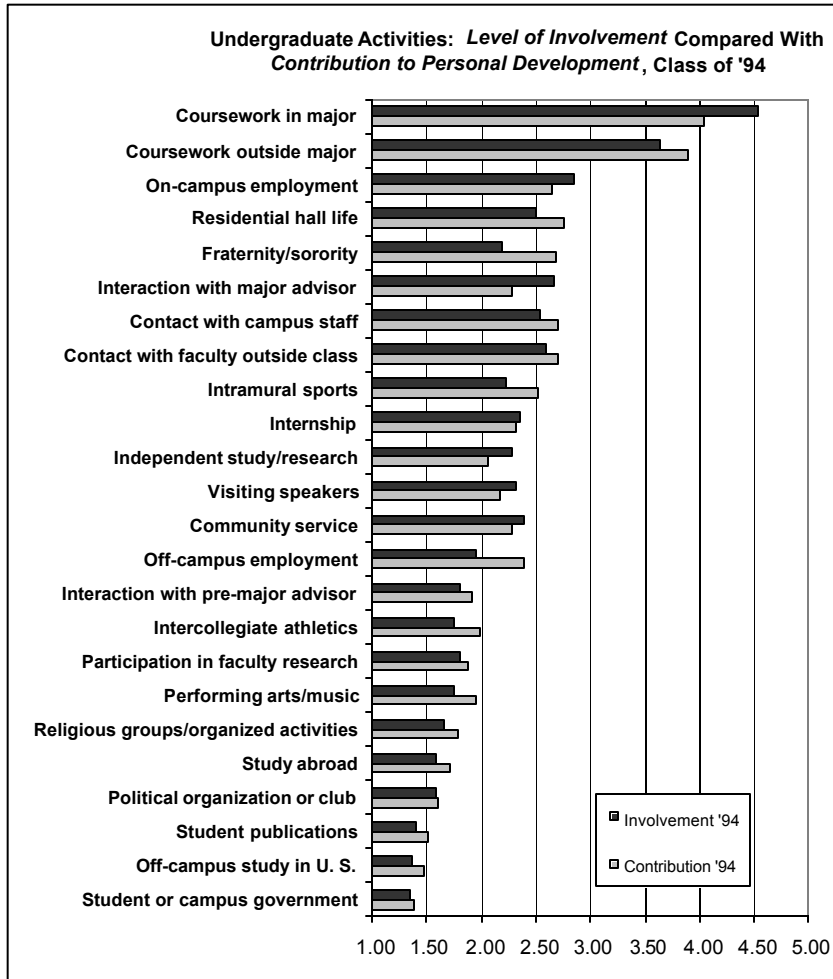
In both classes:

- males reported higher contributions to personal development from intramural and intercollegiate sports;

- females reported higher contributions from "coursework in major," "residential hall life," "contact with faculty outside class," and "study abroad;"
- whites reported higher contributions from "fraternities and sororities;"
- underrepresented minority alumni reported higher contributions from "contact with campus staff" and from "political organizations or clubs;" and
- AAP alumni reported higher contributions from "study abroad."

Levels of involvement in an undergraduate activity tended to correspond with reported high contributions to personal development. The following graphs compare, for both classes, undergraduate activity involvement with perceived activity contribution to personal development.





- Alumni from both classes reported that the most important skills, types of knowledge, and personal qualities in their lives since college were the following (scale 1="not at all important" to 5="very important") (Tables 89-15A, 8915-B, 94-15A, 94-15B):

Skill, Knowledge, Personal Quality	Class of '89	Class of '94
Communicate well orally	4.77	4.72
Acquire new skills/knowledge independently	4.66	4.68
Write effectively	4.58	4.51
Synthesize and integrate ideas and information	4.52	4.55
Formulate creative/original ideas	4.50	4.49

In both classes:

- males were more likely to give higher importance ratings to "quantitative abilities;"
  - females were more likely to give higher importance ratings to "communicate well orally," "write effectively," "self-esteem and confidence," "self-understanding," "healthy lifestyle," "relate well to people of other races/religions," "identify ethical/moral issues," "appreciate art, literature, music, drama," and "awareness of social problems;"
  - Arts and Sciences alumni were more likely to give higher importance ratings to "broad knowledge of arts and sciences;" and
  - Engineering alumni were more likely to give higher importance ratings to "use computers" and "quantitative abilities."
- Alumni from both classes agreed on the following top five ratings for university contributions to individual skills, knowledge, and personal qualities (scale 1="none" to 5="the most") (Tables 89-16A, 89-16B, 94-15A, 94-15B):

<b>Cornell's Contribution to Individual Skills, Knowledge, Personal Qualities</b>	<b>Class of '89</b>	<b>Class of '94</b>
<b>Synthesize and integrate information</b>	4.01	3.97
<b>Acquire new skills/knowledge independently</b>	3.93	3.94
<b>Gain in-depth knowledge of a field</b>	3.81	3.74
<b>Write effectively</b>	3.80	3.82
<b>Formulate creative/original ideas</b>	3.66	3.70

In both classes:

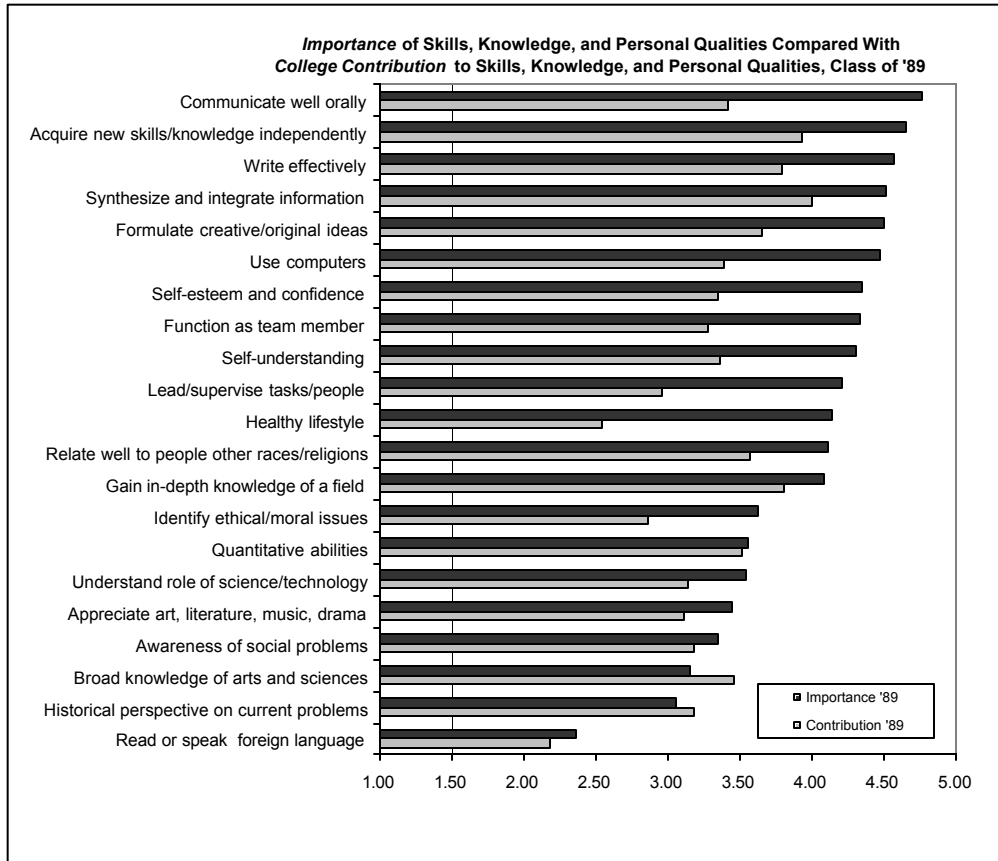
- males gave higher ratings to the university's contribution to "quantitative abilities;"
- females gave higher contribution ratings to "communicate well orally," "acquire new skills/knowledge independently," "synthesize and integrate information," "identify ethical/moral issues," and "awareness of social problems;"
- ALS alumni gave higher contribution ratings to "understanding role of science/technology;"
- AAP alumni gave higher contribution ratings to "formulate creative/original ideas" and "appreciate art, literature, music, drama;"
- AS alumni gave higher contribution ratings to "broad knowledge of arts and sciences," "appreciate art, literature, music, drama," and "read or speak foreign language;"
- Engineering alumni gave higher contribution ratings to "quantitative abilities" and "use computers;" and
- Hotel alumni gave higher contribution ratings to "use computers," "function as team member," and "lead/supervise tasks/people."

Overall, the ratings of Cornell's contribution to the development of individual skills, types of knowledge, and personal qualities were lower than the levels of importance given to each of these attributes. The largest discrepancies (greater than 1.0 on a 1 - 5 scale) between alumni ratings of importance and ratings of university contributions were for the following:

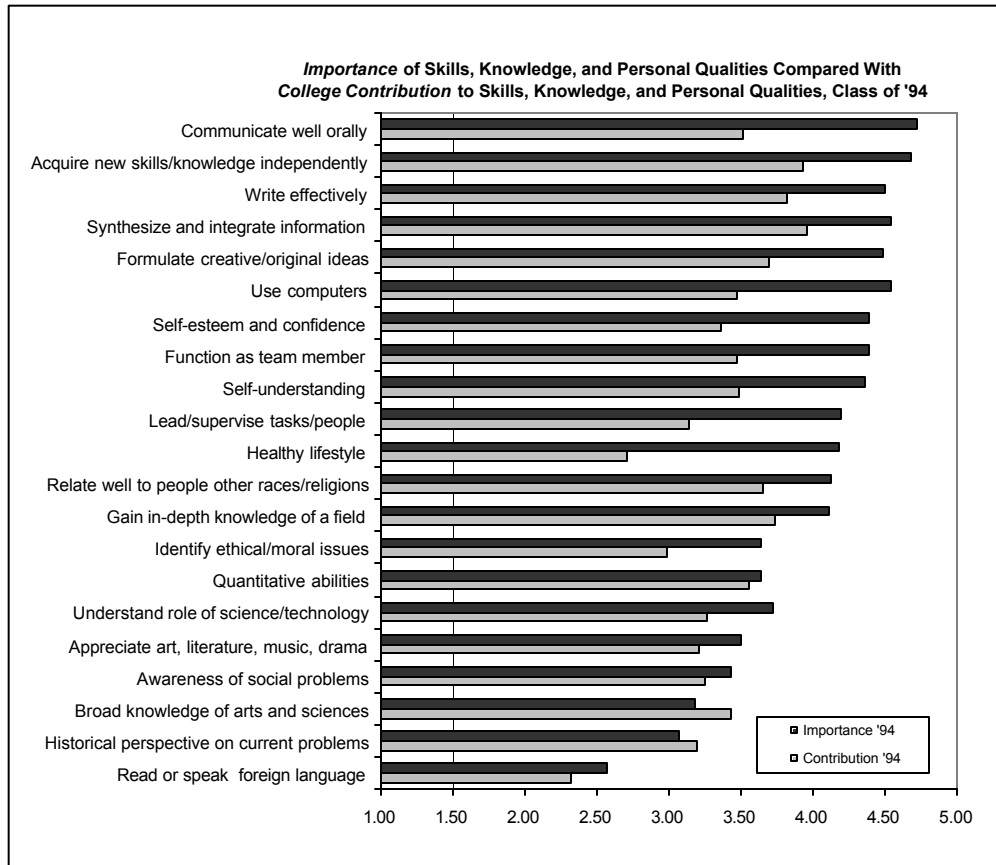
<b>Skill, Knowledge, Personal Quality</b>	<b>Class of '89</b>			<b>Class of '94</b>		
	<b>Imp</b>	<b>CUContrib</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Imp</b>	<b>CUContrib</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Communicate well orally</b>	4.77	3.42	-1.35	4.72	3.52	-1.20
<b>Use computers</b>	4.47	3.39	-1.08	4.54	3.48	-1.06
<b>Lead/supervise tasks/people</b>	4.22	2.96	-1.26	4.20	3.14	-1.06
<b>Healthy lifestyle</b>	4.15	2.55	-1.60	4.18	2.71	-1.47

Alumni from both classes rated Cornell's contributions higher than importance for "broad knowledge of arts and sciences" and "historical perspective on current problems."

The following graphs compare, for both classes, *importance* ratings of skills, knowledge, and personal qualities with ratings of *Cornell's contribution* to the development of skills, knowledge, and personal qualities.







**FINANCIAL AID**

- Parental resources were the major source (75.1% for Class of '89, 76.5% for Class of '94) of undergraduate education financing, followed by Cornell financial aid, other personal resources, and other sources. Underrepresented minority alumni were most likely to have financed their education with Cornell financial aid (Tables 89-17A, 89-17B, 94-16A, 94-16B).
- A significant proportion of alumni reported that they did not take out loans for their undergraduate education (47.2% for Class of '89, 50.3% for Class of '94). Of those who did take out loans, the median amount was about \$11,500 for the Class of '89, about \$13,750 for the Class of '94.
- Among those who attended graduate school, a smaller proportion of alumni reported that they did not take out loans for their graduate education (44.5% for Class of '89, 39.4% for Class of '94). Of those who did take out loans, the median amount was about \$27,500 for the Class of '89, about \$35,000 for the Class of '94 (Tables 89-19A, 89-19B, 94-18A, 94-18B).

**ALUMNI ACTIVITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

- For both classes, university-sponsored activities with the greatest alumni participation were the following:

Activity	Class of '89	Class of '94
Read campus publications	83.8%	82.5%
Visited institution's web site	59.0%	75.6%
Visited the campus	55.9%	72.8%

In both classes, females were more likely to have participated as alumni admissions volunteers. ALS alumni were more likely to have participated in the undergraduate career advisory program, and Hotel alumni were more likely to have attended functions off campus (Tables 89-20A, 89-20B, 94-19A, 94-19B).

- Tables 21-A and 21-B list the Class of '89 reported alumni contributions in 1999. Most alumni contributed less than \$100. Class of '94 alumni were not questioned about alumni contributions.