

*The Bernard P. McDonough Center
for Leadership and Business
at Marietta College*

COHORT 14

TEN-YEAR OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT

(Summer 2014)

Background

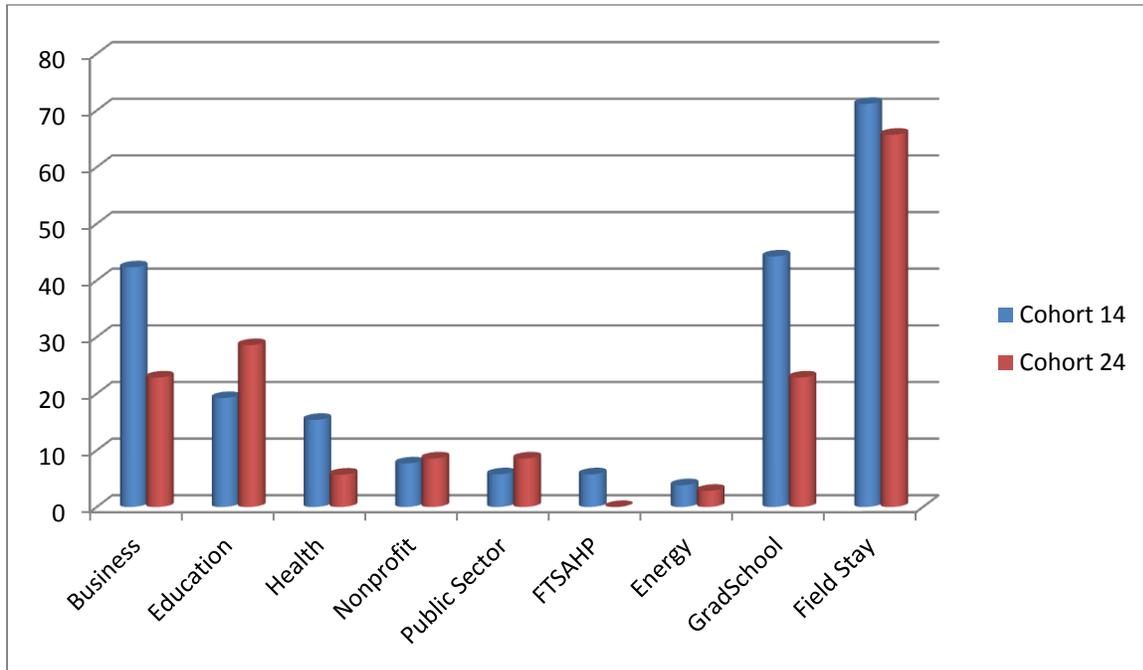
The stated purpose of the McDonough Leadership Program is to help students “gain a deeper understanding of leadership, practice their leadership skills, and in the process grow as engaged leaders.” Our educational strategy is grounded in the Liberal Arts, which encourages students to be critical thinkers, innovative, creative contributors to society, and to draw connections through the acquisition of knowledge and experience in different fields of study. Knowledge, when combined with experiential education, becomes a powerful developmental tool.

The McDonough leadership development experience does not end with graduation. Rather, the four years in the program are only the beginning of what we expect to be a meaningful and purposeful life for our McDonough Scholars. We challenge our graduates to LIVE the McDonough mission – “Giving Back the Gift” – from the moment they step onto our campus for the first time, and then afterwards, when they venture out into the world of work. We do not follow the traditional definitions of “success” (e.g., fame, power). Rather, we expect our graduates to live a life that gives them personal and professional fulfillment, while at the same time contributing to society in a purposeful way. If our graduates can achieve those two expectations (fulfillment and engagement), we consider them successful in life.

This report provides a ten-year outcomes assessment of Cohort 14, which graduated in May of 2004. We collected data from 88.14 percent of the graduates (52 alumni) – a very strong response rate. For this report, we focused on three main data points: (1) Their current life track; (2) Whether this track aligned with their undergraduate studies (“Field Stay”); and (3) Graduate studies.

Consistent with our interdisciplinary tradition, McDonough Scholars are drawn from a wide variety of academic fields. Not surprisingly, they choose to pursue an equally varied number of “life tracks.” For the purpose of this report, we grouped the graduates around seven different tracks: (1) Business (for-profit); (2) Education (Early Childhood, K-12, Higher Education); (3) Health; (4) Nonprofit; (5) Public Sector (Local, State, Federal); (6) Energy (Petroleum Engineering); and (7) Full-Time Stay-at-Home Parent (FSAHP).

Table 1 – Life Tracks (Percentage of Cohort Respondents)



For comparison, we also looked at Cohort 24 (35 students who graduated in May 2014 – 94.59 percent response rate). While the two cohorts are distinct and represent different personal and career interests, we can at least get a sense of different opportunities and interests available to the two groups.

Current Life Tracks

Table 1 is set up with the categories listed in descending order from left to right for Cohort 14. We can see that Cohort 14 has decidedly pursued a business (for-profit) track – 42.30 percent of the cohort respondents. Several McDonough graduates have taken more responsibilities within their organizations, with three of them already occupying vice presidential positions. Common titles in this category included manager, director, and analyst. As for the types of businesses, they primarily include technology, consulting, finance, and manufacturing – consistent with trends in the world of work in the past decade. The organizational size varied greatly – from small startups to large corporations (e.g., Dell). One of the graduates has become a highly successful entrepreneur, having started several companies and recently co-authoring a book on “organic entrepreneurship.”

Education (19.23 percent) is the next largest group for Cohort 14. We include in this category graduates working within areas such as early childhood (preschool), the K-12 school system, and Higher Education. Although Cohort 14 did not benefit from our Teacher Leadership Certificate Program, which was developed after they graduated, all of the K-12 respondents seem to have embraced the teacher leadership perspective by becoming involved in areas such as counseling services and in the classroom (e.g., Grades 6-8 Social Studies teacher at Ann Arbor Learning Community in Ann Arbor, Michigan). Unlike other cohorts, Cohort 14 does not have K-12 senior school administrators, although the cohort has a center director for one of Knowledge Universe’s early childhood education schools. As for the Higher Education

group, they have taken on both teaching (e.g., English Instructor at Gillette College in Wyoming; Psychology Instructor at Sam Houston State University in Texas) and staffing (e.g., Director of Student Athlete Services at Georgia Southern University; Transfer Admissions Office at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge) positions.

In the Health category (15.38 percent), Cohort 14 graduates have pursued many different fields – occupational therapist, registered nurse, physician assistant, counselor at the Cleveland Clinic Taussig Cancer institute, epidemiology investigator at Ohio Department of Health, and wellness coordinator at a large nonprofit healthcare system.

In the Nonprofit sector (7.69 percent), our graduates are working in particularly meaningful areas – e.g., credit counseling and a historic estate museum operated by a foundation. Two graduates have reached the director level in their organizations (e.g., Executive Director at Alliance Area Habitat for Humanity in Alliance, Ohio; Regional Director at Working America in Washington, D.C.).

As for the Public Sector (5.77 percent), two of the graduates have attained a law degree and are currently working at the state (Attorney in the Public Defenders’ Office in the 7th Judicial Circuit of Florida) and federal (Legislative Counsel for a U.S. Senator) levels. Another graduate majored in Public Accounting and currently works for the U.S. Department of the Treasury in the Division of Federal Investments (Funds Management Branch).

The three graduates in the Full-Time Stay-at-Home Parents (FTSAHP) category (5.77 percent) have decided to purposefully use their leadership development experiences to focus on their family and children. One of the respondents cited that this choice provided an “ideal life.”

The low number of graduates working in the Energy sector (3.85 percent) reflects the difficulty that Petroleum Engineering majors had ten years ago to pursue one of the leadership curricular tracks. We should expect those numbers to increase in the future now that we have the Engineering Leadership Certificate (ELC). The two Energy graduates in Cohort 14 are currently working in Texas (Portfolio Manager at Anadarko Petroleum and Reservoir Engineer at Occidental Permian Ltd.).

Finally, we also checked on the professional mobility of our graduates. We were surprised by the “Field Stay” number for Cohort 14 – the percentage of the graduates who are still in their undergraduate field of study (71.15 percent). Many recent studies have suggested that college graduates rarely manage to stay within their undergraduate field over their career. Cohort 14 has bucked this trend. Its percentage is even higher than that of Cohort 24 (65.71 percent), which just graduated.

Graduate Studies

Consistent with our expectation, Cohort 14 displayed a higher percentage of graduate school degrees (44.23 percent) compared to Cohort 24 (22.86 percent). In the space of ten years, Cohort 14 members have earned a wide variety of degrees, most notably from George Washington University (Physicians Assistance and Master’s in Public Health), Wake Forest University (Master’s in Business Administration), Case Western Reserve University (Master’s in Applied Social Science Administration), Miami University (Ph.D. in Microbiology), Ohio University (Master’s of Science in Recreation and Sports Sciences, Master’s in Experimental Psychology, Master’s in Business Administration), and The Ohio State University (Law Degree, Master’s Degrees in Education, English, Journalism, Communication, Occupational Therapy).

Few Remarks About Cohort 24

While the focus of this outcomes assessment report is on Cohort 14, we used Cohort 24 as a way to draw some useful comparisons between a class that just graduated and another 10 years out. What is particularly striking about Cohort 24 is the high number of graduates (five – or, 14.28 percent of the respondents) who opted to take short-term English teaching positions overseas. This choice inflated the Education category (28.57 percent), while at the same time lowering the “Field Stay” number. Once they complete their short-term teaching assignment abroad, it will be interesting to see whether they will seek jobs in their undergraduate field of study, or switch to another professional field. We believe that three factors are driving the selection of this option (short-term teaching abroad) by our graduates: (1) the increasing offerings at McDonough of international study trips, which helps fuel a desire to travel abroad after graduation; (2) the current difficult job market at home, which drives graduates to take on short-term positions abroad; and (3) a sense of adventure in the Millennials, which shapes a desire to “take a break” before they join the world of work.

Overall Assessment – Living the Mission

What are the takeaways from the Cohort 14 data? From an assessment perspective, there are two areas that could receive more attention: (1) Since Cohort 14 graduated, we have seen a decline in the number of McDonough Scholars pursuing the Business “life track.” We should take a look at this decline and assess what it means for the McDonough curriculum and experiential education; and (2) Despite the positive difference between Cohort 14 and Cohort 24 in terms of the number of students going into graduate school, we think we could improve those percentages even more. Should we be encouraging more of our McDonough Scholars to consider graduate studies? This question needs to be further investigated.

Overall, we are pleased with the work that Cohort 14 has done since graduation and are looking forward to Cohort 24’s work in the next 10 years. The members of Cohort 14 are impacting many lives through their work in critical fields – e.g., counseling to cancer patients, digital marketing, high school debate coaching, financial advising, parenting young children, providing accounting services, researching how the spread of diseases can be controlled, teaching both K-12 and college students, enhancing logistics and supply-chain expertise in a large corporation, and caring for the physical wellbeing of patients, to name a few. They are living the mission (“Giving Back the Gift”) through meaningful ways.