MASTER’S PROGRAM
SELECTION AND
SATISFACTION FACTORS
FOR AGRICULTURAL
EDUCATION ALUMNI

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Iowa State University
BACKGROUND

- ISU CALS has offered distance master’s degrees for 40 years
- Master of Agriculture began in 1979
- Master of Science in Agricultural Education began in 2007
- Master of Agriculture discontinued in 2014
OBJECTIVES

1. Describe and compare selected demographic characteristics

2. Describe and compare factors influencing program selection

3. Describe and compare satisfaction with the master's program
POPULATION

135 graduates of the MS program in Ag Ed at ISU
QUESTIONNAIRE

Content and face validity

Suitability

Reliability for summated Likert-type scales

- Satisfaction (.87)
  - getting started (.81)
  - courses (.80)
  - interaction (.82)
  - financial (.71)
DATA COLLECTION

- US Mail: 4 contacts
- E-mail: 5th contact
- Social media
- Respondents: 94 (70%)
- No differences between early and late respondents
LOCATION OF STUDENTS

On-campus: 60%
Distance: 40%
GENDER

Distance

- Female: 67%
- Male: 33%

On-campus

- Female: 73%
- Male: 27%
### Demographic Characteristics of Program Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>-2.56*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of coursework taken online</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>-9.47*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>90.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time to degree in months</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>-1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05
### Factors Related to Program Selection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% Rating Factor Important or Very Important</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The curriculum</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Flexible schedule</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>5.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Reputation of program faculty</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>-2.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean is based on respondents’ ranking of factors 1-9.  
*p < .05
### Factors Related to Program Selection (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% Rating Factor Important or Very Important</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Reputation of university</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>-2.63*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Time to degree</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.31*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Costs</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>.44</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Distance</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>2.38</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean is based on respondents’ ranking of factors 1-9.

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Factors Related to Program Selection (CONTINUED)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% Rating Factor Important or Very Important</th>
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<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Instructor /advisor</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>75.6</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>-3.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommendation</td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>2.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Peer recommendation</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>-1.14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>1.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Marketing</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>8.31</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-.86</td>
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<td>Distance</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean is based on respondents’ ranking of factors 1-9.
*p < .05
Percentage of Graduates Satisfied or Very Satisfied with:

- Time on courses
- Tech requirements
- Admission process
- Overall satisfaction

[Bar chart showing satisfaction percentages for different aspects, comparing Distance and On-campus]
Percentage of Graduates Satisfied or Very Satisfied with:

- Assistance starting
- Approval of POS
- Interaction-Staff
- Access to materials

[Bar chart showing satisfaction levels for various categories.]
Percentage of Graduates Satisfied or Very Satisfied with:

- Avail. req. courses
- Interaction - Faculty
- Qual. req. courses
- Program costs

Distance and On-campus satisfaction levels are compared across these categories.
Percentage of Graduates Satisfied or Very Satisfied with:

- Interaction - Students
- Estab. committee
- Qual. elect. courses
- Avail. elect. courses
Percentage of Graduates Satisfied or Very Satisfied with:

- Financial aid:
  - Distance: 50
  - On-campus: 80

- Scholarships:
  - Distance: 20
  - On-campus: 60
### Program Satisfaction Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getting started</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-1.19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>-.65</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.70</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aspects</td>
<td>On-campus</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.43</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Distance</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The mean is based on this scale: 1=very dissatisfied; 2=dissatisfied; 3=satisfied; 4=very satisfied.
SUMMARY - DEMOGRAPHICS

- Distance vs on-campus learners
  - Older
  - Take higher percentage of online courses
  - Take an additional 9 months to finish
SUMMARY – PROGRAM SELECTION

- Most important is the curriculum
- Least important is marketing
- Flexibility is especially important to distance learners
- Instructor/adviser recommendations are relatively more important to on-campus students
SUMMARY — SATISFACTION

- Graduates were satisfied with the master's program
- Graduates were less satisfied with financial aspects
- Distance learners were significantly less satisfied with financial aspects when compared to on-campus learners
THANK YOU!