

Fall 2013 VCU Postdoctoral Survey Summary

All VCU postdoctoral scholars (N=227) were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in our annual web-based survey to solicit feedback on issues related to being a postdoc at VCU. The original invitation and 2 follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage participation. A total of 133 responses were received, providing us with a 59% response rate, more than 10 percentage points higher than any previous year.

The survey included questions related to demographic information as well as questions asking how satisfied postdocs are on such topics as their scholarly productivity, opportunities for networking, career development activities, and services available at VCU. Below is a brief summary of the findings from the survey:

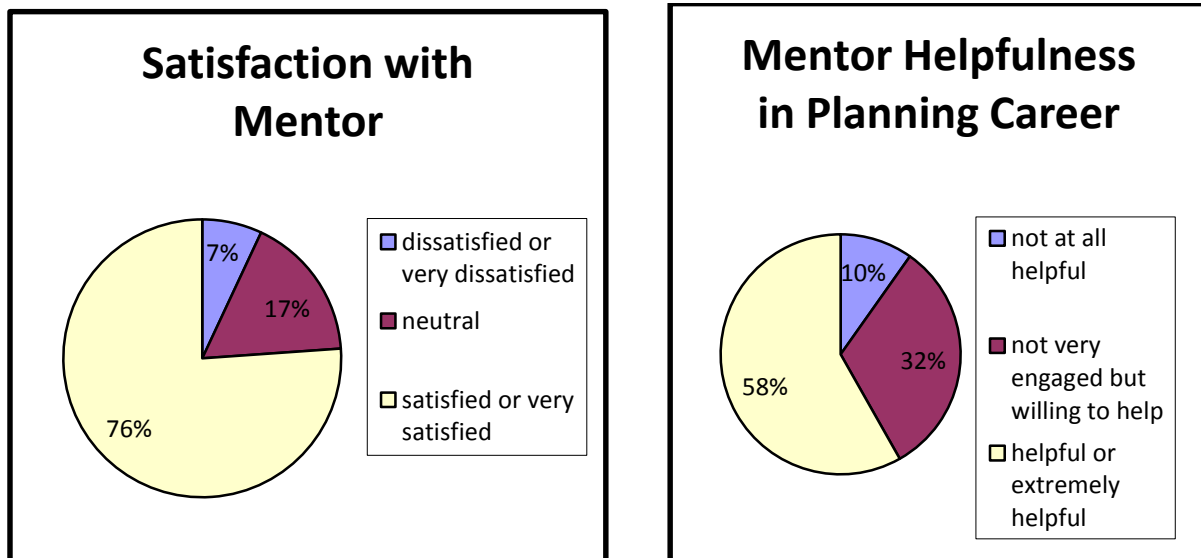
The Respondents: Below is information about the respondents compared to what we know about all postdocs at VCU. There appear to be some differences between respondents and all postdocs on the characteristics for which we have data. Respondents were somewhat more likely to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and female, they were more likely to have been at VCU for less than a year, they were more likely to have held more than one postdoc position (31.5% of respondents have been in more than one position, compared to 21.7% of all postdocs),. A smaller percentage of the respondents were in the School of Medicine compared to the overall postdoc population.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents compared to all VCU postdoctoral scholars

	Respondents N = 133	All postdoctoral scholars N = 227
Citizenship	47% citizens or permanent resident	32% citizens or permanent resident
Gender	49.2% female	42% female
Age	<31 years = 23.7% 31–39 years = 59.6% 40+ years = 16.8%	NA
Marital Status	61.1% married or w/partner	NA
Children <18	38% w/children	NA
Time as postdoc at VCU	<1 year = 39% 1-4 years = 55% 5+ years = 6%	<1 year = 30% 1-4 years = 63% 5+ years = 7%
Total # postdoc positions	1 position = 69% 2 positions = 26% 3 or more = 5%	1 position = 73% 2 positions = 19% 3 or more = 3%
School/College of Respondents	Medicine = 66% H & S = 11% Pharmacy = 11% Engineering = 8% Other = 4%	Medicine = 74% H & S = 7% Pharmacy = 8% Engineering = 9% Other = 2%

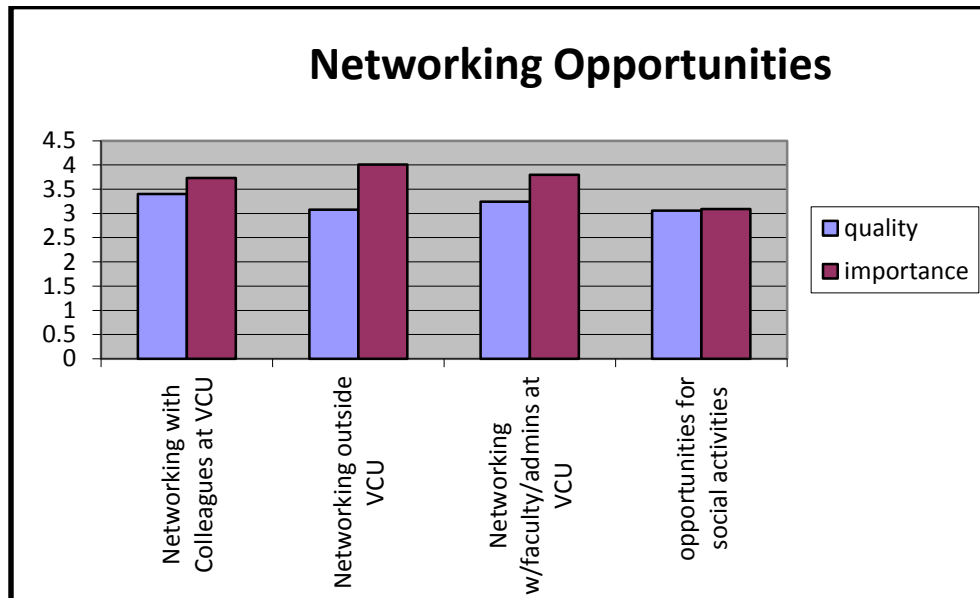
Career aspirations: 45.4% of the respondents indicated that their main career goal was to be a tenure-track faculty member, with another 18.5% stating that some other type of academic position was their main career goal. 13.8% were interested in working in industry, 9.3% were interested in positions ranging from government (NIH, CDC, etc.) to science writing, and over 9% were not sure of their main career goal. 26% are actively looking for their next position, and over 42% plan to actively start seeking their next position within 12 months.

Career preparation: Over 33% of respondents stated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their publication record, up from just 20% of respondents in the previous year. Over 48% felt they had not presented their research at conferences often enough. Despite this level of dissatisfaction with opportunities for dissemination, most felt their research training and experience was good (52.8%) or excellent (22.8%), with only 5.5% (N=7), responding that their training was poor. Most postdocs also rated the mentoring they are receiving as good (41.7%) or excellent (30.7%), with 18.1% being neutral and 9.4% indicating their mentoring was poor or very poor. We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their mentor and how engaged their mentor was in helping them plan their next career move. As can be seen below, most are satisfied and find the mentor helpful, however, there are a significant minority who do not find their mentor helpful in planning their next career move. When asked how often they meet with their mentor to discuss work and career, 14.5% responded that they meet daily and 61.3% responded that they meet weekly.

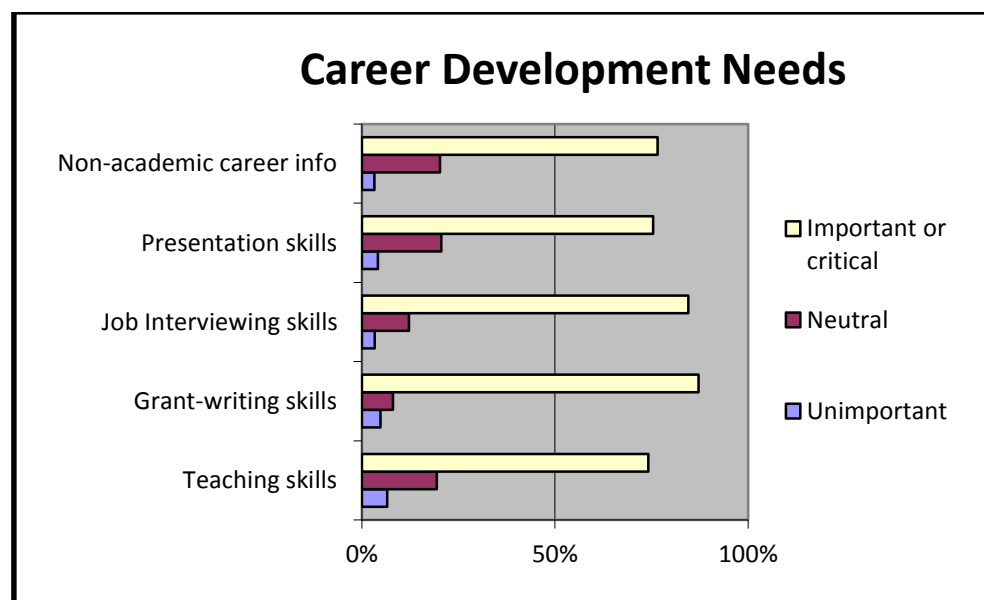


We asked respondents if they had developed a written career plan for themselves and if they had shared that plan with their mentors. Just over 22% of the respondents indicated they had completed a career plan, this is slightly up from the 18% of respondents in last year's survey who indicated they had a career plan. However, of those who completed a plan, almost a quarter of them had not shared that plan with their mentor. Most postdocs perceived their mentors to be helpful or extremely helpful (58%), or at least be willing to help in their career planning (32%).

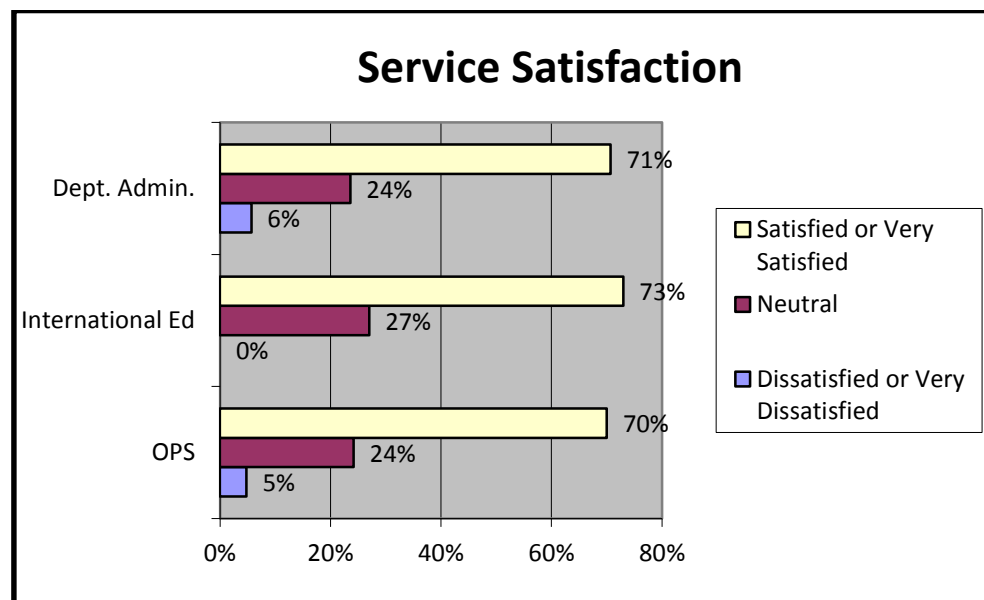
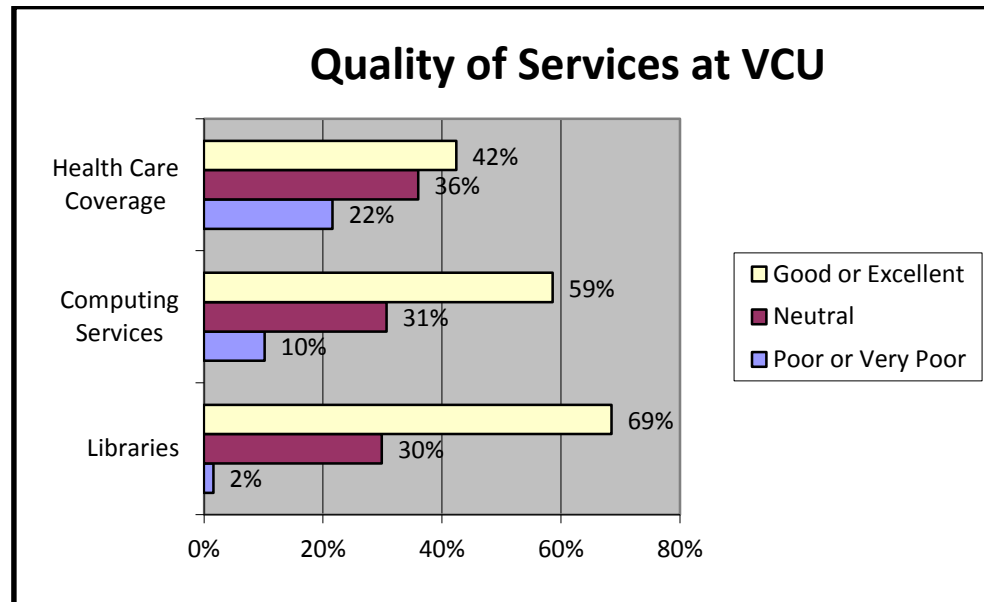
Networking: Postdocs were asked to assess the quality of various networking opportunities and social activities at VCU, and to rate how important these opportunities/activities were to them. On a scale of 1 (low) to high (5), the mean rating for the quality of networking activities whether at VCU or outside VCU, is lower than the importance the respondents place on these activities. As with respondents in past surveys, networking outside VCU was rated as very important, but a substantial percentage (over 25%) of the respondents rated the quality of their networking opportunities as poor or very poor.



Career development activities: To help the Office of Postdoctoral Services in its planning, respondents were asked how important it is for them to receive training in a variety of areas. These responses will guide us in implementing programming for postdoctoral scholars in the coming year. While grant writing has consistently been the most important need expressed by respondents, job interviewing skills has increased in importance among respondents over the years. In this year's survey, over 85% of all respondents indicated that job interviewing skills were important or critical to them.



Services available to Postdocs: Respondents were asked to rate the quality and satisfaction of a variety of services available to them at VCU. We do see a substantial number of respondents who indicated they were “neutral” on these questions. This is likely a function of the percentage who have been at VCU for less than a year (39%), and thus have had limited experience with the service. In general, postdoctoral scholars are satisfied with the services available to them at VCU. Healthcare coverage continues to be one area of concern, particularly as it relates to cost and family coverage.



Overall satisfaction with postdoctoral experience at VCU: Almost 70% of the respondents rated their experience at VCU as a postdoc as either satisfied (57.7%) or very satisfied (12.2%), whereas 8.1% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 22% were neutral. When asked for additional comments to explain their level of dissatisfaction, respondents noted such things “postdocs are not considered students, staff, or faculty and this hinders our opportunities and well-being at the University;” “considered as ‘temporary employees’ is an insult;” and, “it is not fair to deny us the benefits that the rest of the staff receives.”

Fall 2012 VCU Postdoctoral Survey Summary

All VCU postdoctoral scholars (N=221) were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in our annual web-based survey to solicit feedback on issues related to being a postdoc at VCU. The original invitation and 2 follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage participation. A total of 107 responses were received, providing us with a 48% response rate, the same as last year.

The survey included questions related to demographic information as well as questions asking how satisfied postdocs are on such topics as their scholarly productivity, opportunities for networking, career development activities, and services available at VCU. Below is a brief summary of the findings from the survey:

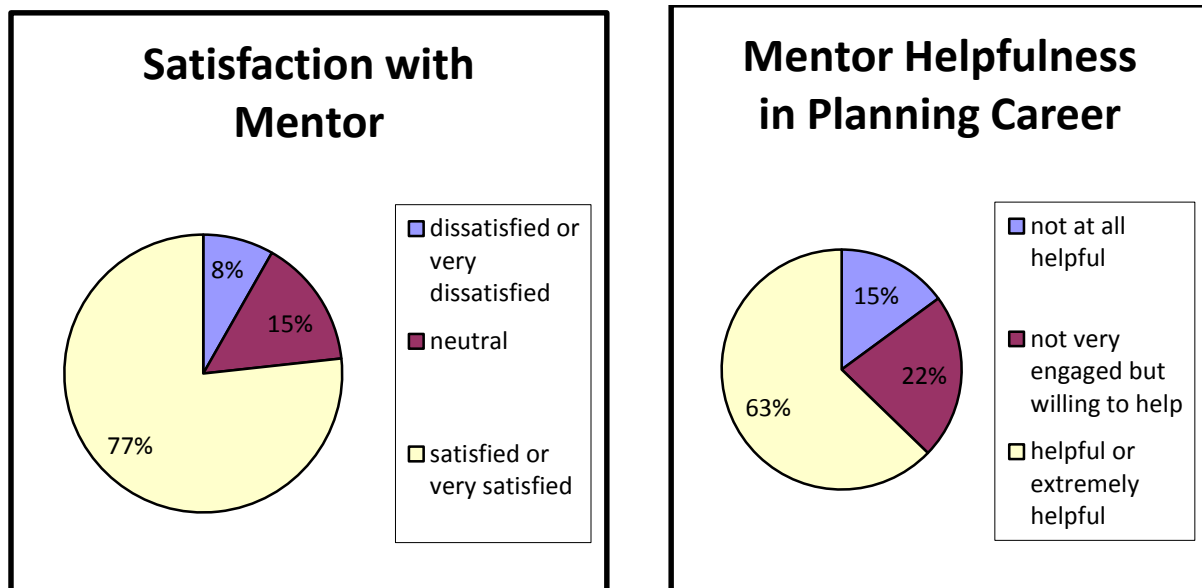
The Respondents: Below is information about the respondents compared to what we know about all postdocs at VCU. There appear to be some differences between respondents and all postdocs on the characteristics for which we have data. Respondents were somewhat more likely to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and female, they were more likely to have been at VCU for less than a year, they were more likely to have held more than one postdoc position (31.5% of respondents have been in more than one position, compared to 21.7% of all postdocs),. A smaller percentage of the respondents were in the School of Medicine compared to the overall postdoc population.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents compared to all VCU postdoctoral scholars

	Respondents N = 107	All postdoctoral scholars N = 221
Citizenship	42.2% U.S. citizen or permanent resident	33.9% citizens or permanent resident
Gender	47.2% female	42.5 % female
Age	<31 years = 24.1% 31–39 years = 56.7% 40+ years = 19.2%	NA
Marital Status	63.5% married or w/partner	NA
Children <18	33.7% w/children	NA
Time as postdoc at VCU	<1 year = 39% 1-4 years = 58.1% 5+ years = 2.9%	<1 year = 31.2% 1-4 years = 66.5% 5+ years = 2.2%
Total # postdoc positions	1 position = 68.6% 2 positions = 22.9% 3 or more = 8.6%	1 position = 78.3% 2 positions = 16.7% 3 or more = 5%
School/College of Respondents	Medicine = 69.4% H & S = 13.3% Pharmacy = 10.2% Engineering = 5.1% Other = 2.0%	Medicine = 76.9% H & S = 7.7% Pharmacy = 7.7% Engineering = 6.3% Other = 1.4%

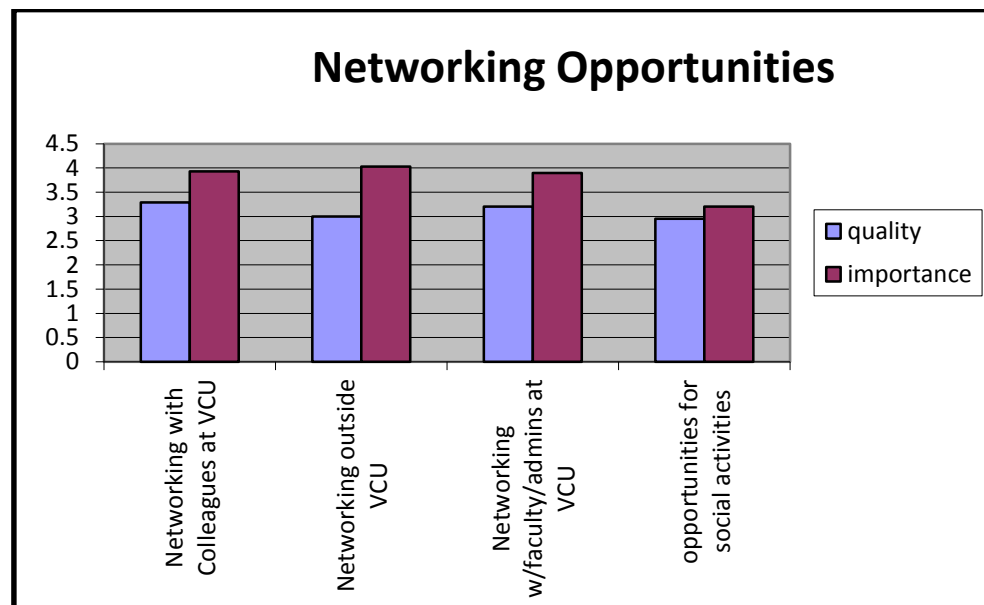
Career aspirations: 48.6% of the respondents indicated that their main career goal was to be a tenure-track faculty member, with another 13.3% stating that some other type of academic position was their main career goal. 12.4% were interested in working in industry, 6.8% were interested in positions ranging from government (NIH, CDC, etc.) to science writing, and over 16% were not sure of their main career goal. 25% are actively looking for their next position, and over 41% plan to actively start seeking their next position within 12 months.

Career preparation: 20% of respondents stated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their publication record, and over 51% felt they had not presented their research at conferences often enough. Despite this level of dissatisfaction with opportunities for dissemination, most felt their research training and experience was good (44.1%) or excellent (24.5%); however, almost 9% perceived this training to be poor or very poor. Most postdocs also rated the mentoring they are receiving as good (43.6%) or excellent (23.8%), with 21.8% being neutral and 11% indicating their mentoring was poor or very poor. We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their mentor and how engaged their mentor was in helping them plan their next career move. As can be seen below, most are satisfied and find the mentor helpful, however, there are a significant minority who do not find their mentor helpful in planning their next career move. When asked how often they meet with their mentor to discuss work and career, 22.4% responded that they meet daily and 57.1% responded that they meet weekly.

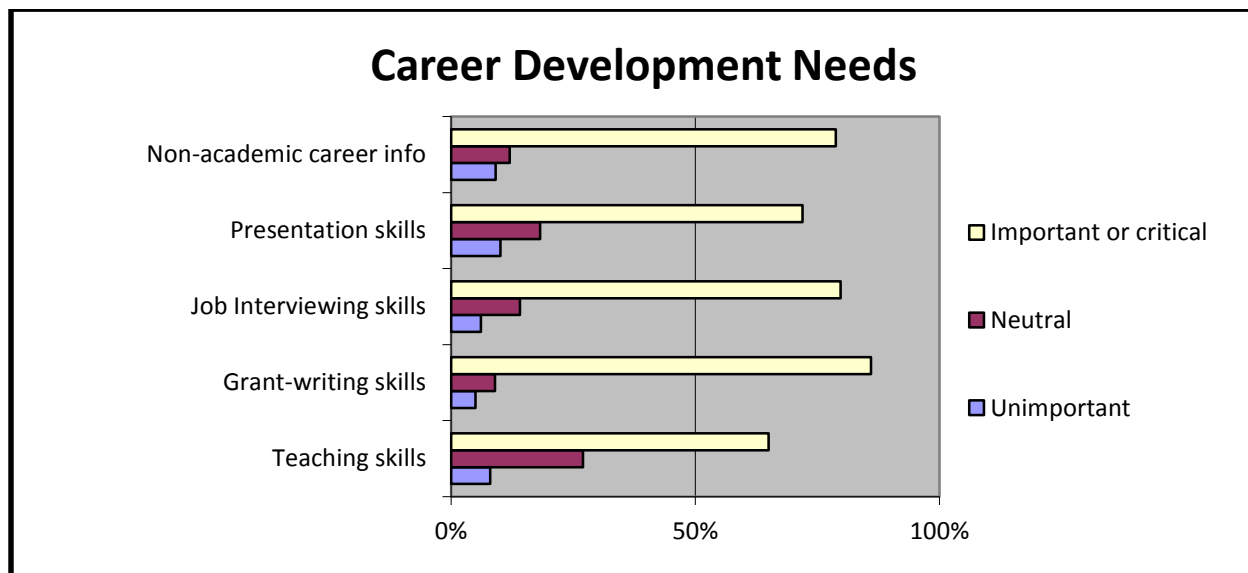


We asked respondents if they had developed a written career plan for themselves and if they had shared that plan with their mentors. Just over 18% of the respondents indicated they had completed a career plan. Of those who completed a plan, over a quarter of them had not shared that plan with their mentor. Compared to the 2011 respondents, a larger percentage of the 2012 postdoc respondents felt that their mentors were helpful in career planning (47% in 2011 compared to 63% in 2012 who indicated their mentor was helpful or very helpful).

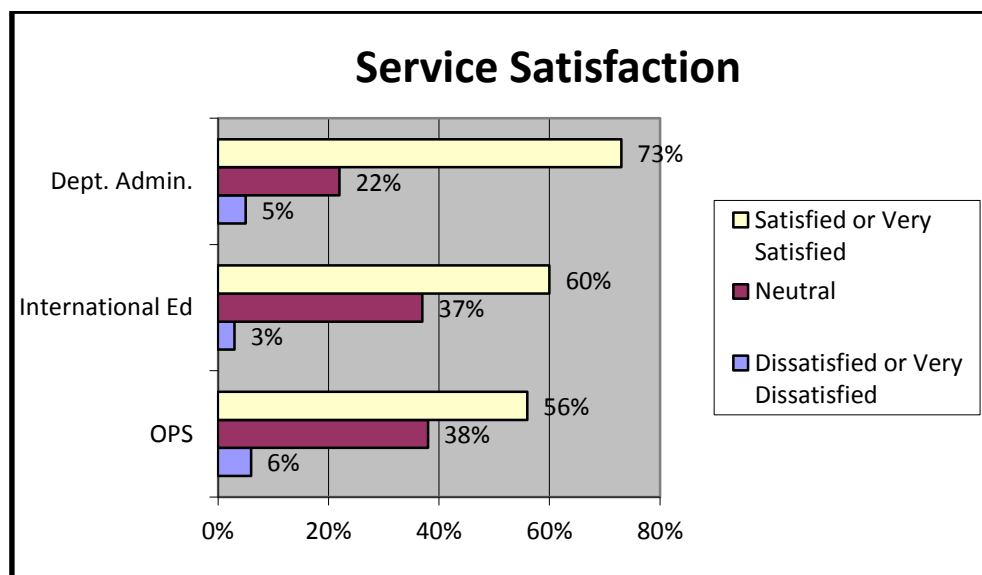
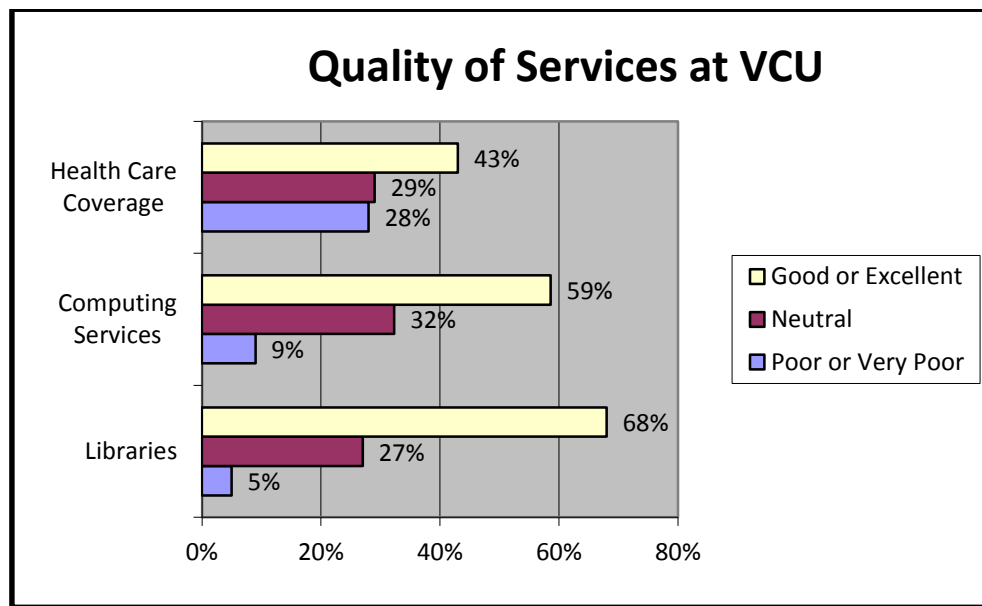
Networking: Postdocs were asked to assess the quality of various networking opportunities and social activities at VCU, and to rate how important these opportunities/activities were to them. On a scale of 1 (low) to high (5), the mean rating for the quality of networking activities whether at VCU or outside VCU, is lower than the importance the respondents place on these activities. There were a few comments about the need for more social activities for those new to the area, whereas some noted they didn't have time for social activities.



Career development activities: To help the Office of Postdoctoral Services in its planning, respondents were asked how important it is for them to receive training in a variety of areas. These responses will guide us in implementing programming for postdoctoral scholars in the coming year. While grant writing has consistently been the most important need expressed by respondents, other areas of career development, such as teaching and job interviewing skills, are also seen as very or critically important by the respondents.



Services available to Postdocs: Respondents were asked to rate the quality and satisfaction of a variety of services available to them at VCU. We do see a substantial number of respondents who indicated they were “neutral” on these questions. This is likely a function of the percentage who have been at VCU for less than a year (39%), and thus have had limited experience with the service. Of particular note is that the level of satisfaction for health care coverage has decreased this year despite a change in health plans. In 2011, 46% rated health care coverage as good or excellent and 24% rated it as poor or very poor. This year those percentages were 43% for good or excellent and 28% for poor or very poor. Comments from postdocs continue to focus on the high cost of health care for families and co-pays.



Overall satisfaction with postdoctoral experience at VCU: 67% of the respondents rated their experience at VCU as a postdoc as either satisfied (50%) or very satisfied (17%), whereas 7% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and 26% were neutral. When asked for additional comments, respondents noted such things as feeling like “cheap labor,” wanting a payscale more in line with NIH standards, improvement in the mentoring, and funding opportunities for postdocs.

Fall 2011 VCU Postdoctoral Survey Summary

All VCU postdoctoral scholars (N=225) were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in our 3rd annual web-based survey to solicit feedback on issues related to being a postdoc at VCU. The original invitation and 2 follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage participation. A total of 108 responses were received, providing us with a 48% response rate, just slightly above last year's response rate of 45%.

The survey included questions related to demographic information as well as questions asking how satisfied postdocs are on such topics as their scholarly productivity, opportunities for networking, career development activities, and services available at VCU. Below is a brief summary of the findings from the survey:

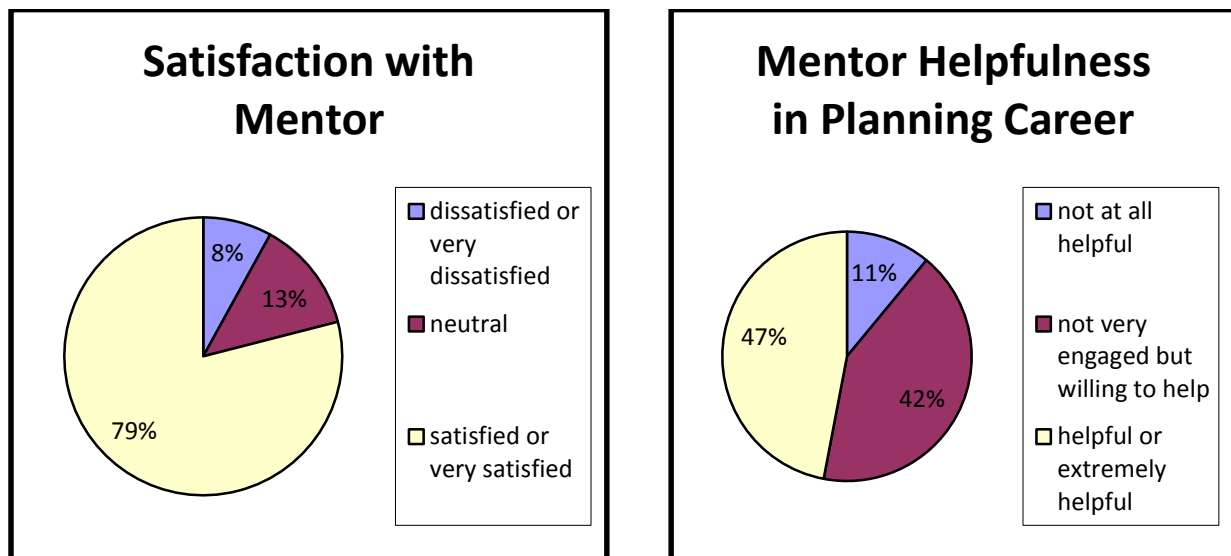
The Respondents: Below is information about the respondents compared to what we know about all postdocs at VCU. There appear to be some differences between respondents and all postdocs on the characteristics for which we have data. Respondents were somewhat more likely to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents and female, they were slightly more likely to have been at VCU for less than a year, they were more likely to have held more than one postdoc position (31.5% of respondents having been in more than one position, compared to 17% of all postdocs), and less likely to be in the School of Medicine.

Characteristics of Survey Respondents compared to all VCU postdoctoral scholars

	Respondents N = 108	All postdoctoral scholars N = 225
Citizenship	50% U.S. citizen or permanent resident	39% citizens or permanent resident
Gender	54% female	45% female
Age	<31 years = 29% 31–39 years = 63.5% 40+ years = 7.5%	NA
Marital Status	73% married or w/partner	NA
Children <18	34% w/children	NA
Time as postdoc at VCU	<1 year = 36% 1-4 years = 63% 5+ years = 1%	<1 year = 39% 1-4 years = 58% 5+ years = 3%
Total # postdoc positions	1 position = 68.5% 2 positions = 25% 3 or more = 6.5%	1 position = 83% 2 positions = 14% 3 or more = 3%
School/College of Respondents	Medicine = 69% H & S = 17.5% Pharmacy = 4.8% Engineering = 1% Other = 7.7%	Medicine = 79% H & S = 7.6% Pharmacy = 6.8% Engineering = 3.8% Other = 2.5%

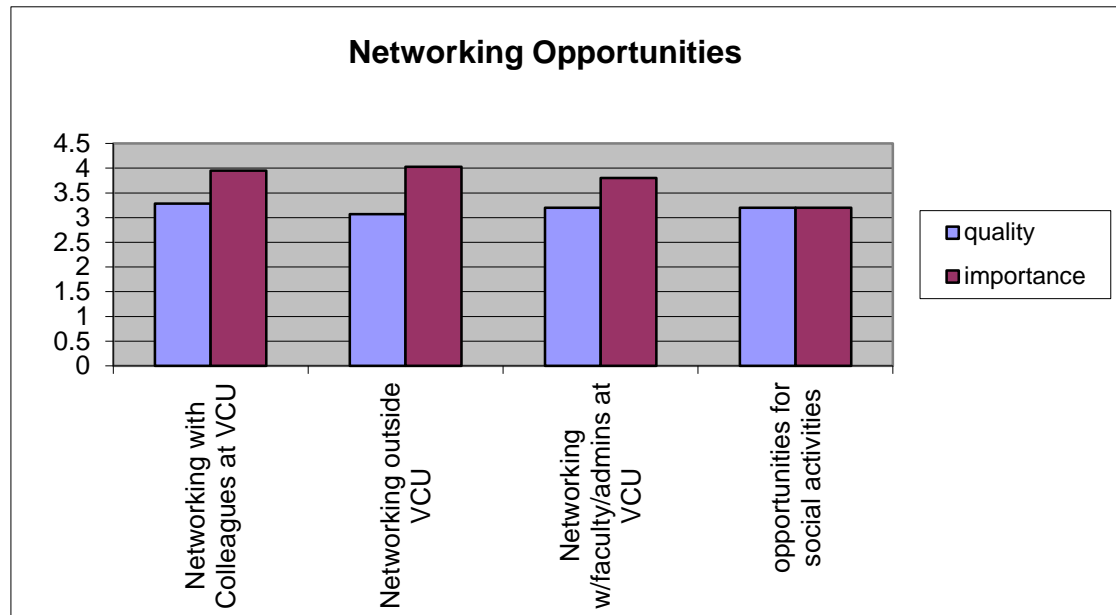
Career aspirations: 56% of the respondents indicated that their main career goal was to be a tenure-track faculty member (36%) or in some other type of academic position (20%). Another 16% were interested in working in industry, with the remaining respondents having main career goals in positions ranging from government (NIH, CDC, etc.) to science writing. Over 64% are either currently looking for their next position or plan to actively start seeking their next position within 12 months.

Career preparation: Almost 28% of all respondents stated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their publication record, and 48% felt they had not presented their research at conferences often enough. Despite this level of dissatisfaction with opportunities for dissemination, most felt their research training and experience was good (51%) or excellent (25%); less than 4% (4 respondents) perceived this training to be poor or very poor. Most postdocs also rated the mentoring they are receiving as good (40%) or excellent (33%), with just over 8% indicating it was poor or very poor. We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their mentor and how engaged their mentor was in helping them plan their next career move. As can be seen below, most are satisfied and find the mentor helpful, however, there are a significant minority who do not find their mentor helpful in planning their next career move. When asked how often they meet with their mentor to discuss work and career, 14% indicated that they only met once or twice a year with one respondent indicating that he/she had never met with their mentor, whereas almost 18% meet daily and 48% meet weekly.

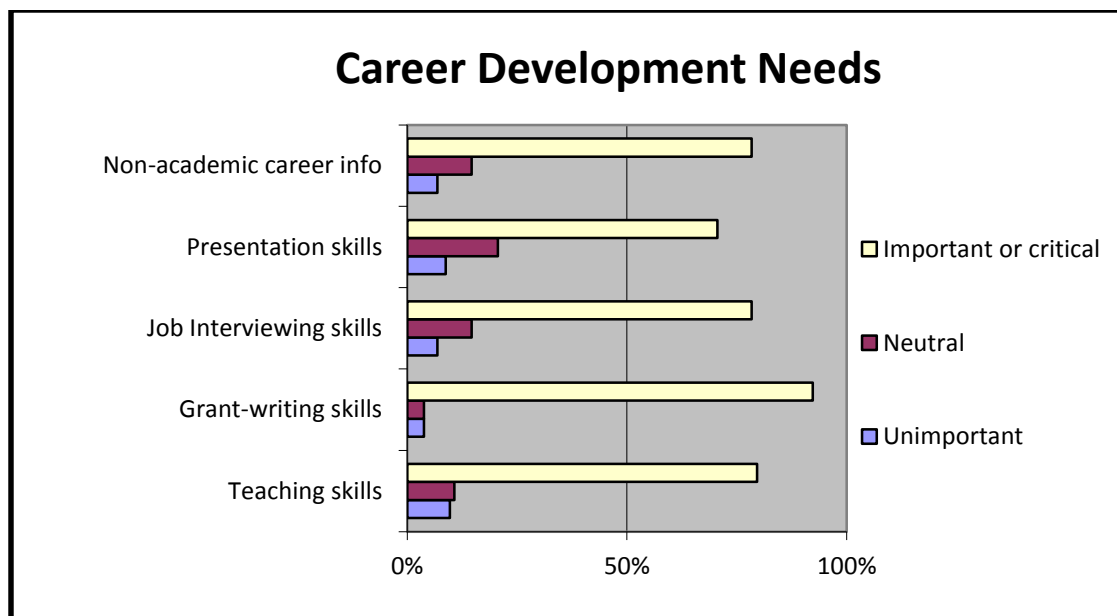


We asked respondents if they had developed a written career plan for themselves and if they had shared that plan with their mentors. Only 15% of the respondents indicated they had completed a career plan, which is significantly less than the 30% of last year's respondents who indicated they had completed a career plan. This is particularly surprising given that the majority of postdocs had been in their position for more than one year. Compared to last year, a smaller percentage of postdocs responded that their mentors were helpful in career planning. A few postdocs noted that they would like to have a workshop on creating a career plan. There was also interest in learning more about careers outside a major research university.

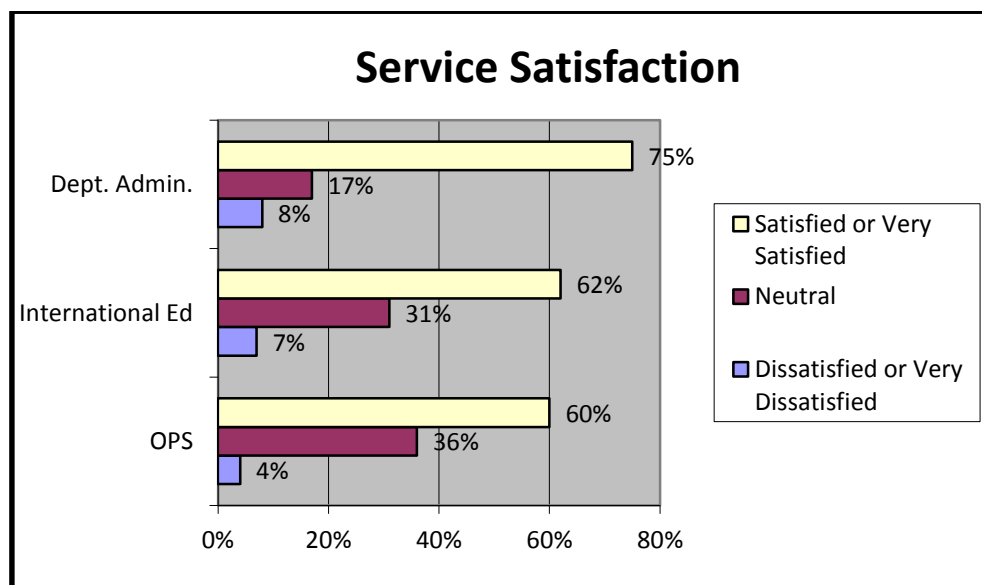
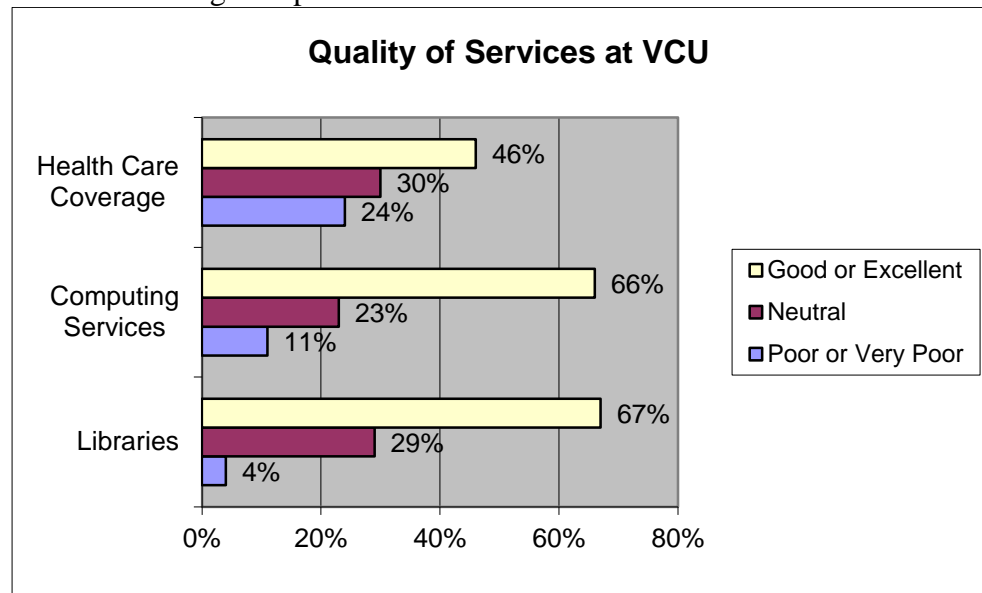
Networking: Postdocs were asked to assess the quality of various networking opportunities and social activities at VCU, and to rate how important these opportunities/activities were to them. On a scale of 1 (low) to high (5), the mean rating for the quality of networking activities whether at VCU or outside VCU, is lower than the importance the respondents place on these activities. The mean rating on the opportunities for social activities is the same as the rating for importance of these activities. There were a few comments about the need for more social activities and for reaching out to the Monroe Park campus postdocs.



Career development activities: To help the Office of Postdoctoral Services in its planning, respondents were asked how important it is for them to receive training in a variety of areas. These responses will guide us in implementing programming for postdoctoral scholars in the coming year. While grant writing has consistently been the most important need expressed by respondents, other areas of career development, such as teaching and job interviewing skills, are also seen as very or critically important by the respondents.



Services available to Postdocs: Respondents were asked to rate the quality and satisfaction of a variety of services available to them at VCU. We do see a substantial number of respondents who indicated they were “neutral” on these questions. This is likely a function of the percentage who have been at VCU for less than a year (36%), and thus have had limited experience with the service. Of particular note is that the level of satisfaction for health care coverage has decreased this year despite a change in health plans. In 2010, 61% rated health care coverage as good or excellent and 15% rated it as poor or very poor. This year those percentages were 46% for good or excellent and 24% for poor or very poor. Comments from postdocs continue to focus on the high cost of health care for families and co-pays. Some respondents noted that VCU does not have same level of coverage for postdocs as other institutions.



Overall satisfaction with postdoctoral experience at VCU: 71% of the respondents rated their experience at VCU as a postdoc as either satisfied (51%) or very satisfied (20%), whereas 5% were dissatisfied and 24% were neutral. When asked for additional comments, respondents noted such things as more focus on postdoc who are in areas other than biomedical, increased salary, improvement in the mentoring, and more opportunities for collaborations with other areas.

Fall 2010 Postdoctoral Survey Summary

All VCU postdoctoral scholars (N=247) were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in our 2nd annual web-based survey to solicit feedback on issues related to being a postdoc at VCU. The original invitation and 2 follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage participation. A total of 111 responses were received, providing us with a 45% response rate.

The survey included questions related to demographic information as well as questions asking how satisfied postdocs are on such topics as their scholarly productivity, opportunities for networking, career development activities, and services available at VCU. Below is a brief summary of the findings from the survey:

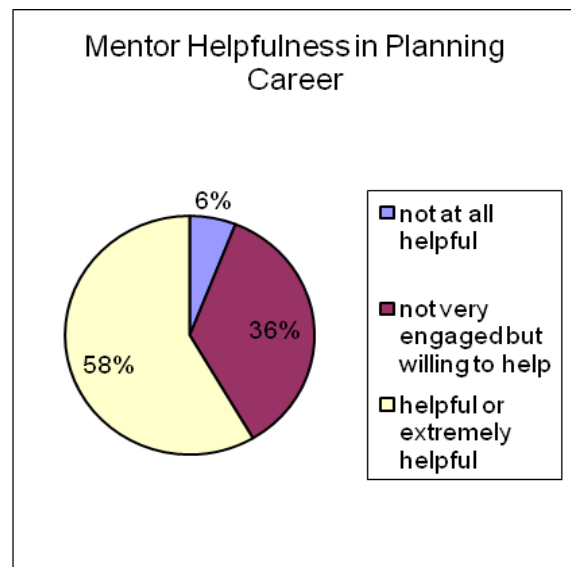
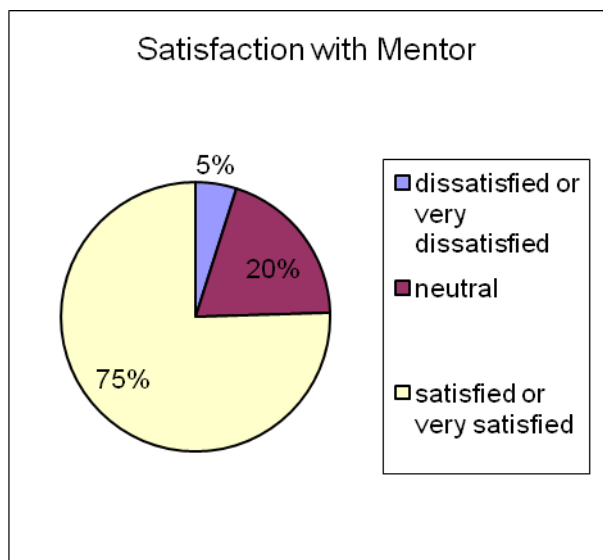
The Respondents: Below is information about the respondents compared to what we know about all postdocs at VCU. There appear to be minimal differences between respondents and all postdocs on the characteristics for which we have data. Exceptions are that the respondents were somewhat more likely to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, they were more likely to have been at VCU for less than a year, and they were more likely to have held more than one postdoc position (36% of respondents having been in more than one position, compared to 17% of all postdocs).

Characteristics of Survey Respondents compared to all VCU postdoctoral scholars

	Respondents N = 111	All postdoctoral scholars N = 247
Citizenship	47% U.S. citizen or permanent resident	35% citizens or permanent resident
Gender	50% female	43% female
Age	<30 years = 40% 31–39 years = 49% 40+ years = 15%	NA
Marital Status	68% married or w/partner	NA
Children <18	28% w/children	NA
Time as postdoc at VCU	<1 year = 47% 1-4 years = 47% 5+ years = 6%	<1 year = 34% 1-4 years = 61% 5+ years = 5%
Total # postdoc positions	1 position = 64% 2 positions = 25% 3 or more = 11%	1 position = 83% 2 positions = 13% 3 or more = 4%
School/College of Respondents	Medicine = 71% H & S = 10% Pharmacy = 8% Engineering = 4% Other = 7%	Medicine = 77% H & S = 6% Pharmacy = 7% Engineering = 6% Other = 4%

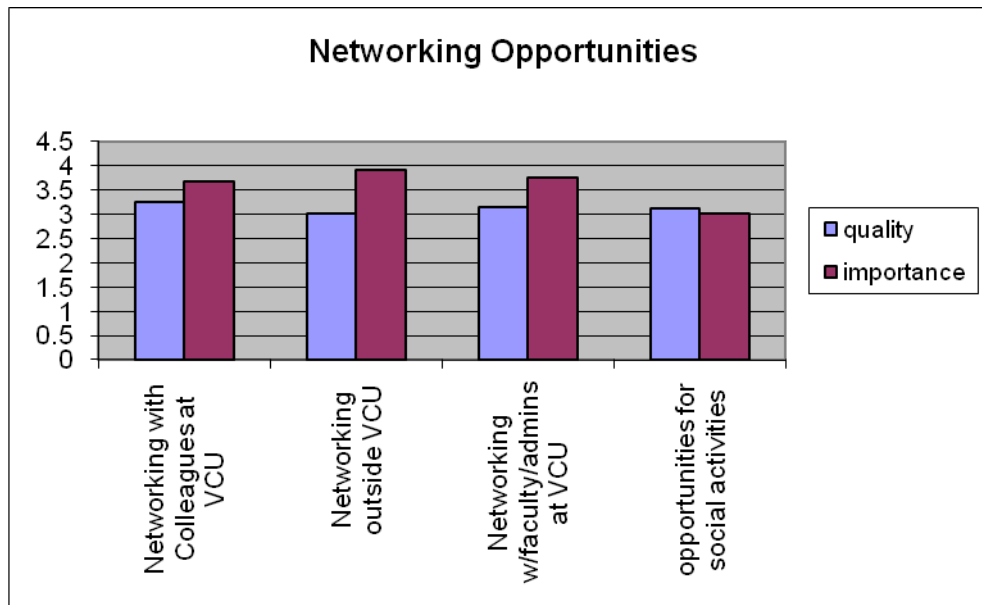
Career aspirations: 49% of the respondents indicated that their main career goal was to be a tenure-track faculty member (38%) or in some other type of academic position (11%). This is 10 percentage points lower than the 59% of 2009 respondents who indicated their career goal was a position in academia, suggesting there may be some concern about job opportunities in the academic setting. Among the 2010 respondents, another 18% were interested in working in industry, with the remaining respondents having main career goals in positions ranging from government (NIH, CDC, etc.) to science writing. Over 57% plan to actively start seeking their next position within 12 months.

Career preparation: Almost one-quarter of all respondents (24%) stated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their publication record, and 45% felt they had not presented their research at conferences often enough. Despite this level of satisfaction with opportunities for dissemination, most felt their research training and experience was good (57%) or excellent (9%); only 7% (8 respondents) perceived this training to be poor or very poor. Most postdocs also rated the mentoring they are receiving as good (38%) or excellent (26%), with only 7% again indicating it was poor or very poor. These ratings are very similar to those reported in last year's survey. We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their mentor and how engaged their mentor was in helping them plan their next career move. As can be seen below, most are satisfied and find the mentor helpful, however, there are a significant minority who do not find their mentor helpful in planning their next career move. When asked how often they meet with their mentor to discuss work and career, 12% indicated that they only met once or twice a year, whereas 73% meet daily (10%) or weekly (63%). Again, these responses were very similar to last year's responses.

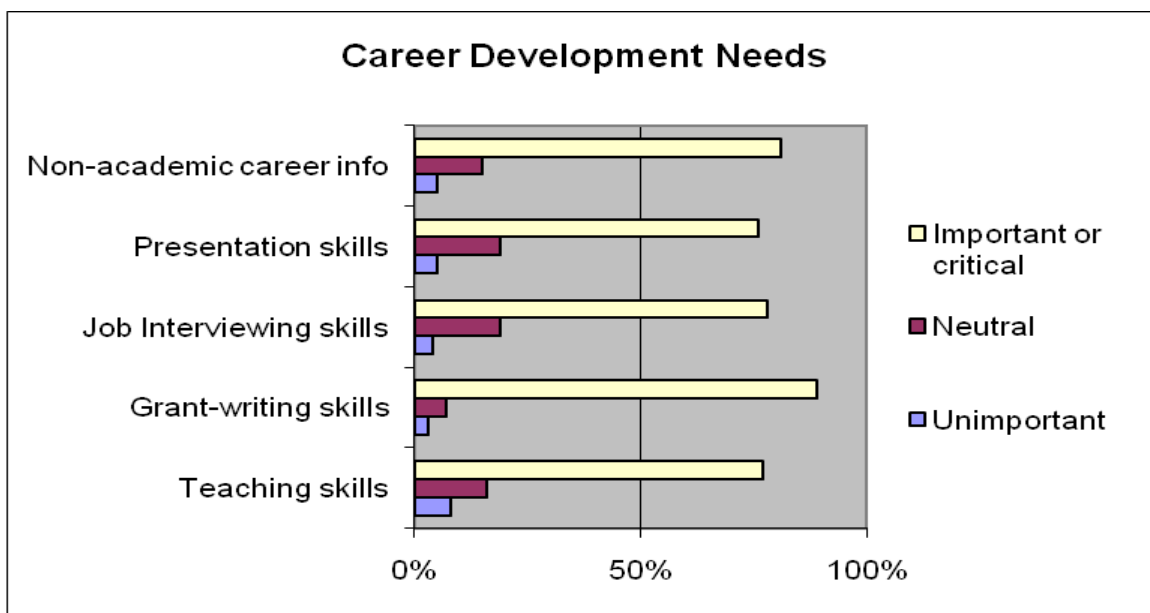


In this year's survey we asked respondents if they had developed a written career plan for themselves and if they had shared that plan with their mentors. Only 30% of the respondents indicated they had completed a career plan. Of those who had done a plan, 85% had shared it with their mentor. A few postdocs commented that they would like to see the completion and discussion of a career plan mandatory.

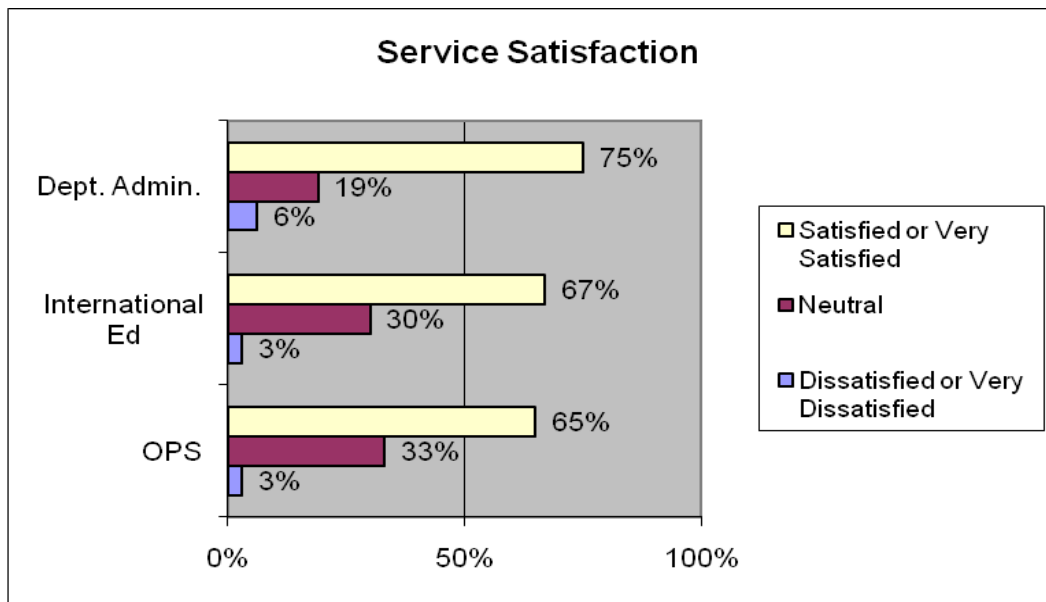
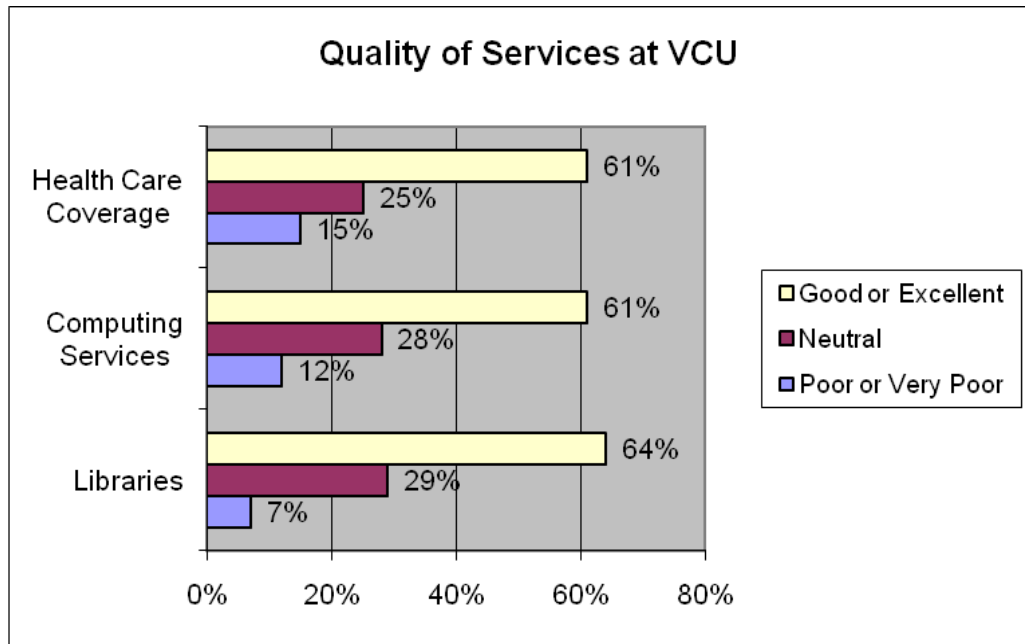
Networking: Postdocs were asked to assess the quality of various networking opportunities and social activities at VCU, and to rate how important these opportunities/activities were to them. On a scale of 1 (low) to high (5), the mean rating for the quality of networking and social activities at VCU is lower than the importance the respondents place on these activities. The mean rating on the networking questions were similar to the ratings in 2009, however, the opportunities for social activities increased slightly from a mean of 2.8 to 3.1. This is likely a function of the social activities offered through the newly formed Postdoctoral Association during the past year.



Career development activities: To help the Office of Postdoctoral Services in its planning, respondents were asked how important it is for them to receive training in a variety of areas. These responses will guide us in implementing programming for postdoctoral scholars in the coming year. Interestingly, an expressed need for non-academic career information is only second to their desire for training in grant-writing skills, with 81% indicating an interest in this career information.



Services available to Postdocs: Respondents were asked to rate the quality and satisfaction of a variety of services available to them at VCU. We do see a substantial number of respondents who indicated they were “neutral” on these questions. This is likely a function of the large percentage who have been at VCU for less than a year (47%), and thus have had limited experience with the service. Of particular note is that the level of satisfaction for health care coverage increased from the previous year. In 2009, only 47% rated it as good or excellent and 26% rated it as poor or very poor. We instituted a new health plan in 2010, and the numbers changed to 61% and 15% respectively. Comments from postdocs, however, continue to focus on the high cost of health care for families. In general, postdocs believed quality to be high and were satisfied with the level of services provided in other service areas at VCU.



Overall satisfaction with postdoctoral experience at VCU: 62% of the respondents rated their experience at VCU as a postdoc as either satisfied (54%) or very satisfied (8%), whereas 7% were dissatisfied and 31% were neutral.

When asked for additional comments, respondents again noted such things as increased salary, reduced cost for family health care coverage, and improvement in the mentoring. There was also a request for more networking between departments and among investigators.

Fall 2009 Postdoctoral Survey Summary

All VCU postdoctoral scholars (N=242) were sent an e-mail invitation to participate in a web-based survey to solicit feedback on issues related to being a postdoc at VCU. The original invitation and 2 follow-up e-mails were sent to encourage participation. A total of 98 responses were received, providing us with a 41% response rate.

The survey included questions related to demographic information as well as questions asking how satisfied postdocs are on such topics as their scholarly productivity, opportunities for networking, career development activities, and services available at VCU. Below is a brief summary of the findings from the survey:

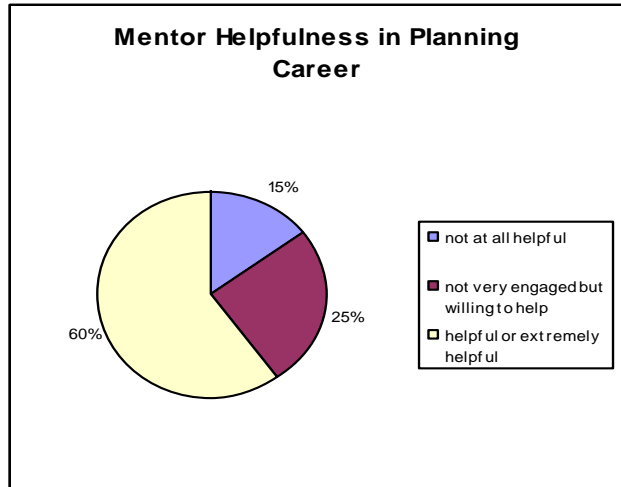
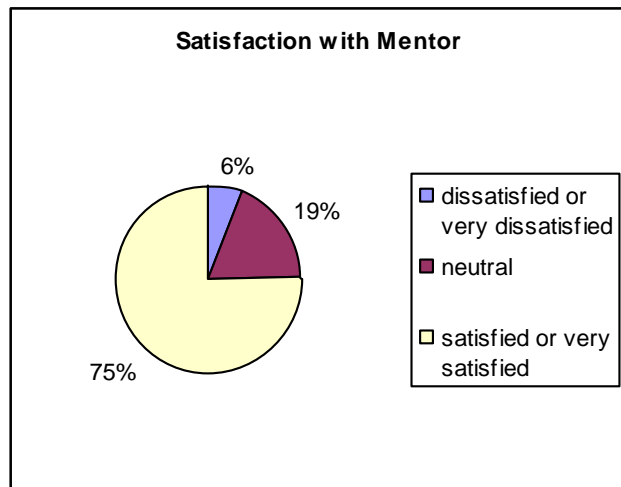
The Respondents: Below is information about the respondents compared to what we know about all postdocs at VCU. There appear to be minimal differences between respondents and all postdocs on the characteristics for which we have data. Exceptions are that the respondents were somewhat more likely to be U.S. citizens or permanent residents, and they were more likely to have held more than one postdoc position (36% of respondents having been in more than one position, compared to 20% of all postdocs).

Characteristics of Survey Respondents compared to all VCU postdoctoral scholars

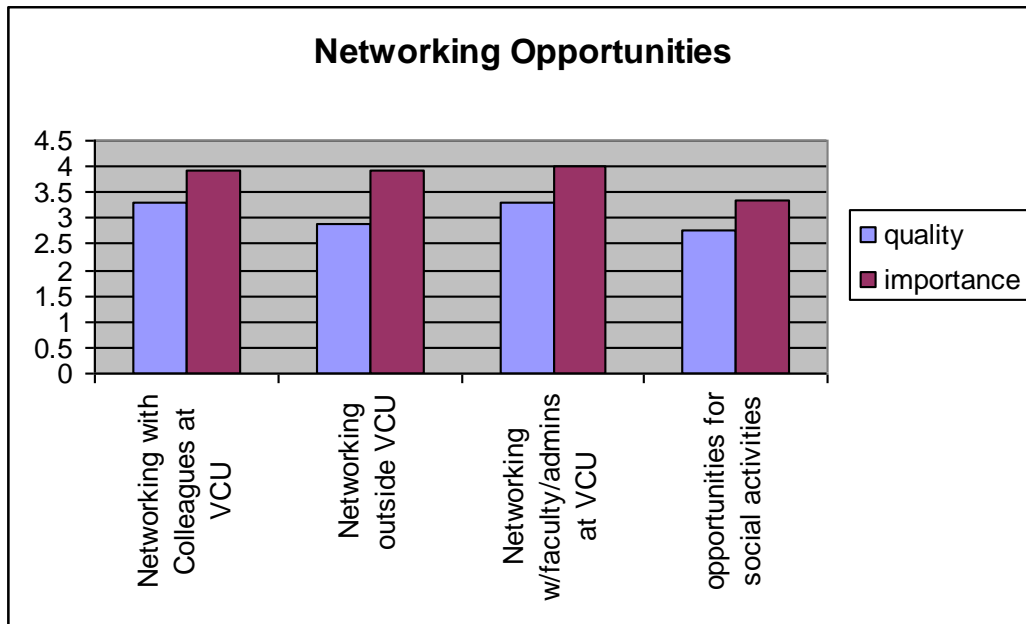
	Respondents N = 98	All postdoctoral scholars N = 242
Citizenship	40% U.S. citizen or permanent resident	32% citizens or permanent resident
Gender	49% female	46% female
Age	<30 years = 25% 31–39 years = 60% 40+ years = 15%	NA
Marital Status	70% married or w/partner	NA
Children <18	28% w/children	NA
Time as postdoc at VCU	<1 year = 42% 1-4 years = 53% 5+ years = 5%	<1 year = 41% 1-4 years = 55% 5+ years = 4%
Total # postdoc positions	1 position = 64% 2 positions = 25% 3 or more = 11%	1 position = 80% 2 positions = 15% 3 or more = 5%
School/College of Respondents	Medicine = 76% H & S = 10% Pharmacy = 7% Engineering = 4% Other = 3%	Medicine = 74% H & S = 7% Pharmacy = 7% Engineering = 5% Other = 7%

Career aspirations: 59% of the respondents indicated that their main career goal was to be a tenure-track faculty member (45%) or in some other type of academic position (14%). Another 17% were interested in working in industry, with the remaining respondents having main career goals in positions ranging from government (NIH, CDC, etc.) to science writing. Over 50% plan to actively start seeking their next position within 12 months.

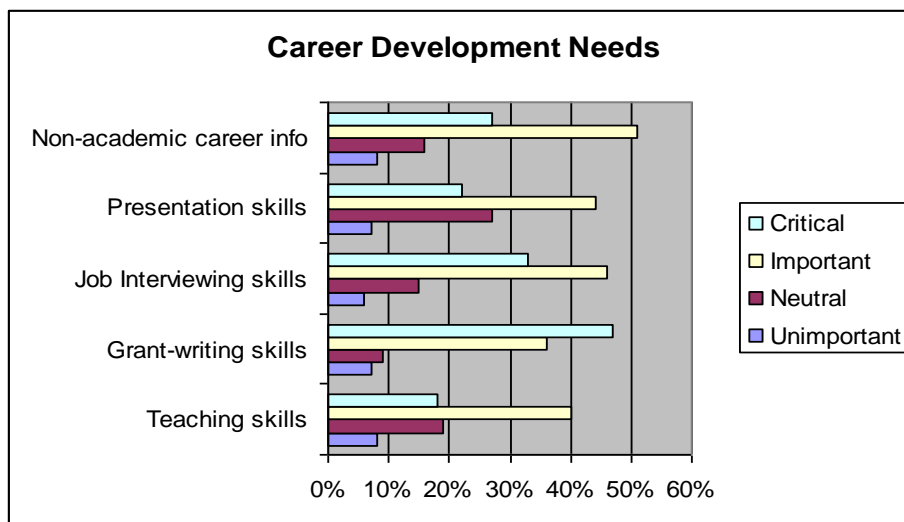
Career preparation: Almost one-quarter of all respondents (24%) stated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their publication record, and 46% felt they had not presented their research at conferences often enough. Despite this level of satisfaction with opportunities for dissemination, most felt their research training and experience was good (49%) or excellent (23%); only 8% (7 respondents) perceived this training to be poor or very poor. Most postdocs also rated the mentoring they are receiving as good (40%) or excellent (34%), with only 8% again indicating it was poor or very poor. We also asked respondents how satisfied they were with their mentor and how engaged their mentor was in helping them plan their next career move. As can be seen below, most are satisfied and find the mentor helpful, however, there are a significant minority who do not find their mentor helpful in planning their next career move. When asked how often they meet with their mentor to discuss work and career, 10% indicated that they only met once or twice a year, whereas 70% meet daily (21%) or weekly (49%).



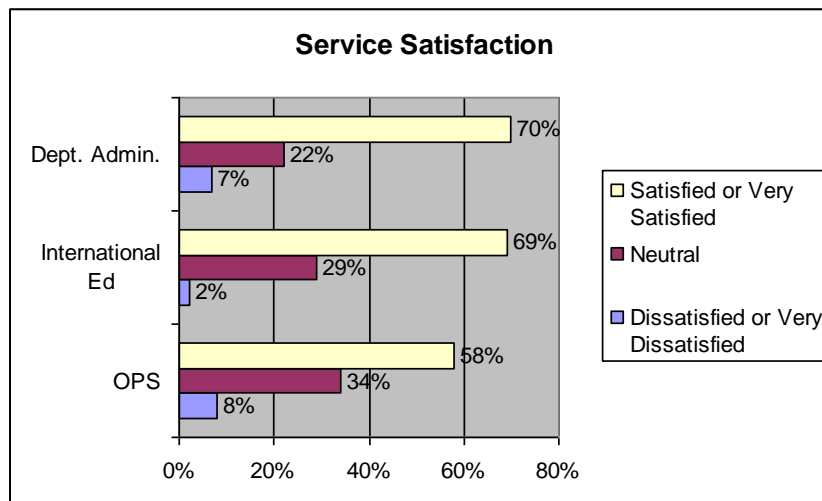
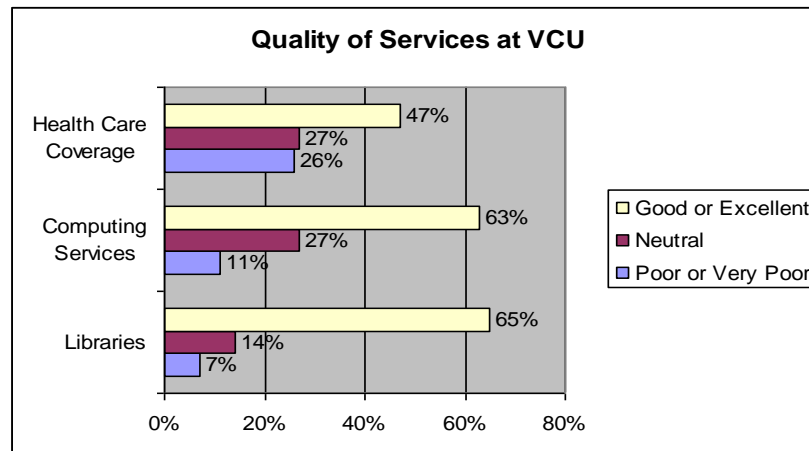
Networking: Postdocs were asked to assess the quality of various networking opportunities and social activities at VCU, and to rate how important these opportunities/activities were to them. On a scale of 1 (low) to high (5), the mean rating for the quality of networking and social activities at VCU is lower than the importance the respondents place on these activities.



Career development activities: To help the Office of Postdoctoral Services in its planning, respondents were asked how important it is for them to receive training in a variety of areas. These responses will guide us in implementing programming for postdoctoral scholars in the coming year.



Services available to Postdocs: Respondents were asked to rate the quality and satisfaction of a variety of services available to them at VCU. In general, postdocs believed quality to be high and were satisfied with the level of services provided. The one exception was health care coverage, where 26% rated it as poor or very poor.



Overall satisfaction with postdoctoral experience at VCU: 65% of the respondents rated their experience at VCU as a postdoc as either satisfied (54%) or very satisfied (11%), whereas 14% were either dissatisfied (12%) or very dissatisfied (2%), and 21% were neutral.

When asked for additional comments, respondents noted such things as:

- Providing postdocs with better salaries
- Dealing with the politics of this place and getting out alive
- The need for a postdoctoral association
- PIs should have training on how to be a good mentor
- Postdocs must be encouraged to write grants while at VCU
- There is a need for an orientation session for new postdocs
- More information needed for female postdocs
- Difficulty in finding postdoctoral information on the VCU website
- Postdocs should have opportunity to rate mentors