

Report on Continuing Education Survey Conducted by OARDC Staff Council, February 10, 2005—March 10, 2005

Background

Over many years OARDC staff have identified continuing education opportunities and the OSU tuition assistance benefit as issues of concern. The concerns focus on a few specific issues:

- insufficient continuing education and course opportunities in Wooster,
- difficulties associated with taking classes at OSU Columbus or OSU regional campuses, including cost and time needed to travel to another campus and coordinating education with job responsibilities
- desire to be able to utilize tuition assistance benefit at other nearby educational institutions, such as College of Wooster or Wayne College

OARDC Staff Council has attempted to address these concerns through a number of efforts, including surveys, studies of reciprocal tuition benefits, and resolutions. In 2003, the OARDC Staff Council forwarded a series of resolutions to the OARDC Administration and to Dr. Moser. These resolutions favored distance education and technology-based delivery of courses as possible means to address the staff concerns. Dr. Moser encouraged OARDC Staff Council to attempt to identify specific educational or training areas that would benefit staff so that we could assess whether resources exist or could be developed to meet these needs. OARDC Staff Council responded in two ways: 1. Gail Peters of the Ohio Learning Network was invited to make a presentation on distance learning initiatives in Ohio at the OARDC Staff Forum in September 2004; 2. in February/March 2005, the OARDC faculty, staff and students were surveyed regarding continuing education questions.

The web-based survey attempted to learn several things about staff interest in continuing education: is there still an interest in taking advantage of the educational assistance benefit; in what subject areas are survey respondents interested; is distance education an acceptable option; do employees have access to computers; and are they familiar with what is currently available through OhioLearns or OSU. Ninety-seven usable responses to the survey were received. The general results are presented in the charts appended to this report and in the summary that follows.

General summary of survey results

Demographics

- 55% of the respondents are classified as administrative and professional; 29% as classified civil service
- 70% of the respondents are from academic departments; 30% from service departments

- approximately 1/3 of the respondents have over 20 years of service; another 1/3 have 5 or less years of service

Interest in continuing education/tuition assistance program

- over 70% are interested in taking advantage of the OSU tuition assistance program
- 38% are not interested in pursuing any specific degree or certification; 23% are seeking Master's level courses; 20% are seeking Bachelor's level courses
- from a list of general subject categories, the top areas of interest are:
 - agriculture/biology
 - business/accounting/economics
 - computer science
- nearly 60% of people interested in taking classes would do so out of personal interest; 37% identify coursework as a contributor to their current job or towards advancement at OSU/OARDC
- when queried about barriers to taking classes, travel to Columbus in order to take desired classes is the main obstacle in taking classes according to 63% of those surveyed; 15% are unable to arrange their work schedule to allow classes; 15% cannot afford tuition at an institution other than OSU

Distance learning as an option

- 89% of respondents would be willing to take courses online or via other distance learning methods
- 99% have use of a computer with internet access; 50% have a computer at home; 43% have access to a computer at their workplace
- nearly 50% of the respondents are not familiar with classes available through the distance learning classroom in Fisher Auditorium; 73% are not familiar with online opportunities cataloged by the Ohio Learning Network
- 96% of respondents would be willing to accumulate credits from institutions other than OSU if there were a way to apply tuition assistance benefits to online classes
- given the opportunity to list a class or discipline of interest, 21% listed some area of business; 17% listed computing/computer science; 10% listed animal sciences

Recommendations

Based on the results of this survey, the OARDC Staff Council makes the following recommendations:

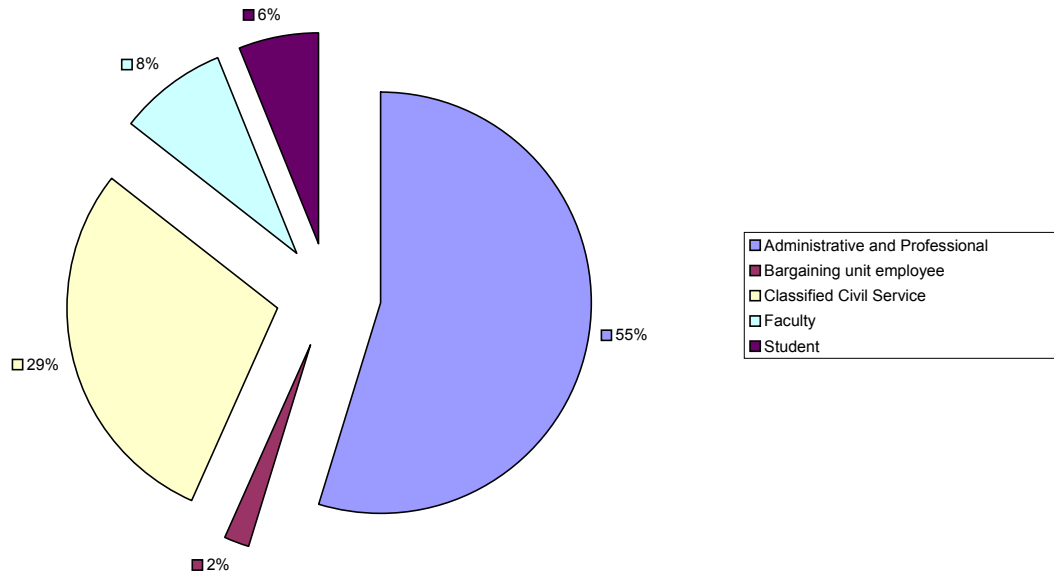
- We believe that distance education opportunities will help meet the desire of OARDC employees to further their education and will be effective in

helping to overcome the barriers of time and distance between Columbus and other campuses. Employees should be able to enroll in distance education/online classes using the OSU employee tuition assistance benefit.

- We encourage the administration of the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences to work with other OSU colleges and departments within CFAES to make distance courses available, especially in the areas of business, computer science, and animal sciences
- We encourage the College and the University to explore options for reciprocal arrangements among the Ohio colleges and universities participating in the Ohio Learning Network to allow employees to apply their local tuition benefits against courses offered by other universities.
- In order to assist employees in utilizing these opportunities, greater effort must be made to inform employees about courses that are available. This information can best be disseminated through email announcements and links to catalogs of courses on the OARDC Staff Council website and on CenterNet.
- OARDC Staff Council will share the results of this survey with the OSU Office of Continuing Education, with the University Staff Advisory Council, the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Staff Advisory Council, and with the staff councils of other OSU regional campuses to engage other partners in the effort to extend distance education opportunities university-wide.

Appendix: Charts

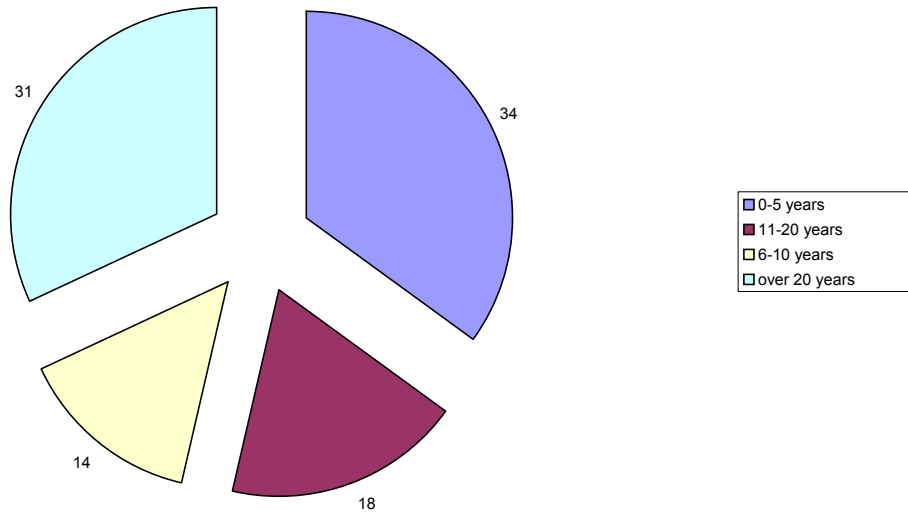
I. Employment category:



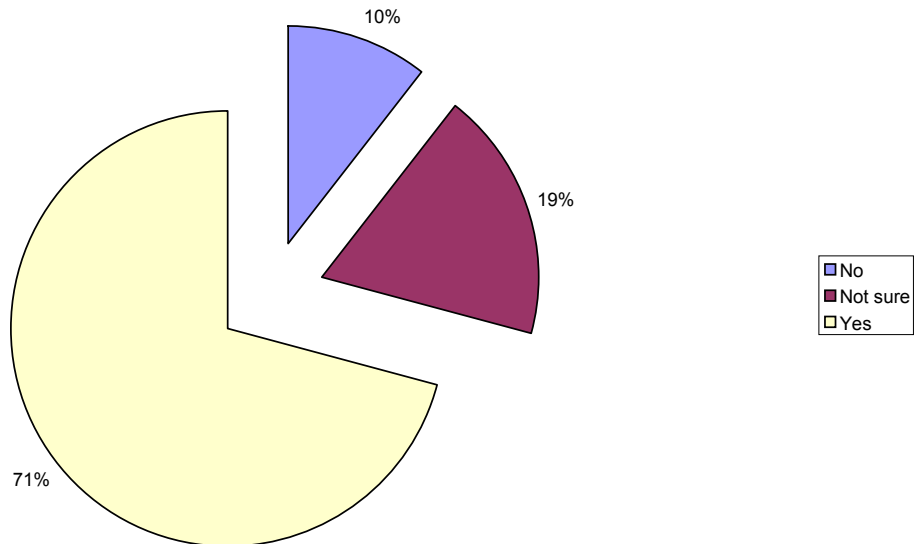
II. Respondents' Departments

Animal Sciences	11
OSU Extension Center at Wooster	1
Communications and Technology	3
Computing and Statistical Services	3
Director's Office	5
Entomology	11
Facilities Services	6
Food Animal Health Research Program	9
Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering	3
Horticulture and Crop Science	11
Human and Community Resource Development	1
Human Resources	3
Interdisciplinary	4
Library	1
Outlying Agricultural Research Stations / Research Operations	7
Plant Pathology	5
Police/Safety	4
School of Natural Resources	6

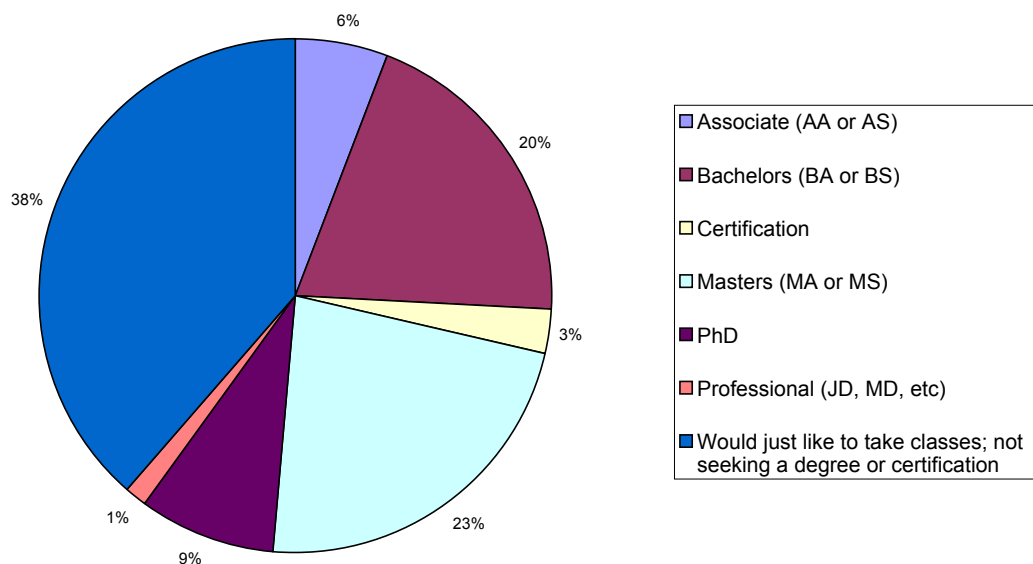
III. Years at OSU:



1. Are you interested in taking advantage of the employee tuition assistance program?



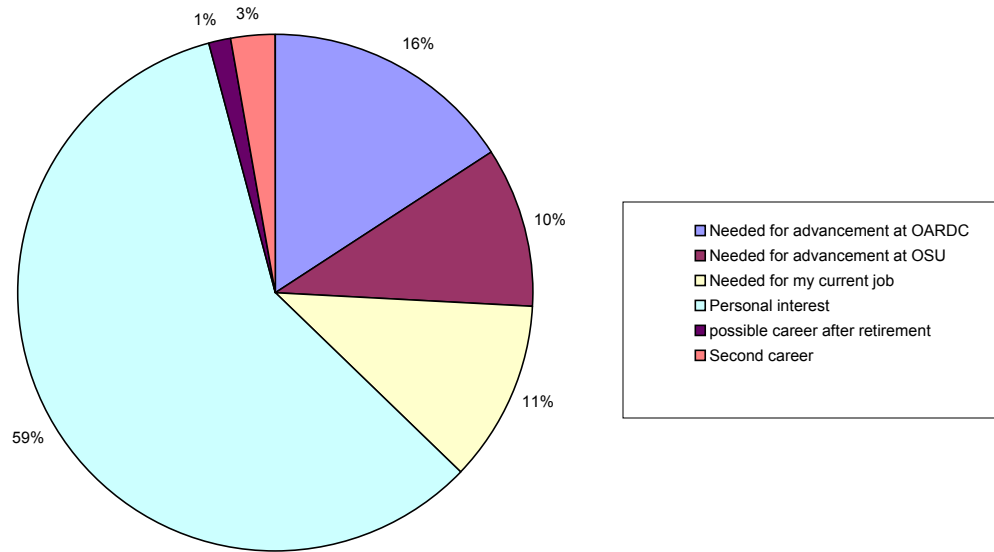
3. If you had the opportunity to take college courses, what initial degree or certification are you interested in attaining?



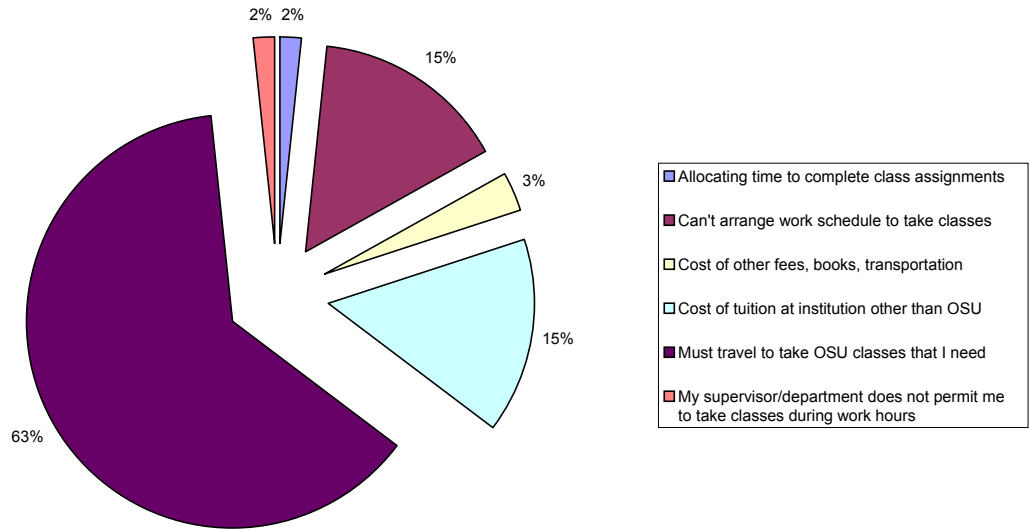
4. In what general subject area would you like to take courses?

Ag Education	1
Agriculture	11
animal/public health	1
Biology	11
Business/Accounting/Economics	14
Communications	1
Computer Science	8
Criminology/ Criminal Justice	1
Education	1
Engineering	1
General education	1
Immunology	1
International studies	1
Languages (including English)	3
Law	1
Molecular biology	2
molecular genetics and genomics	1
Not sure	1
Public Administration	2
several of above	1
Social Sciences	3
Special Ed/LD	1

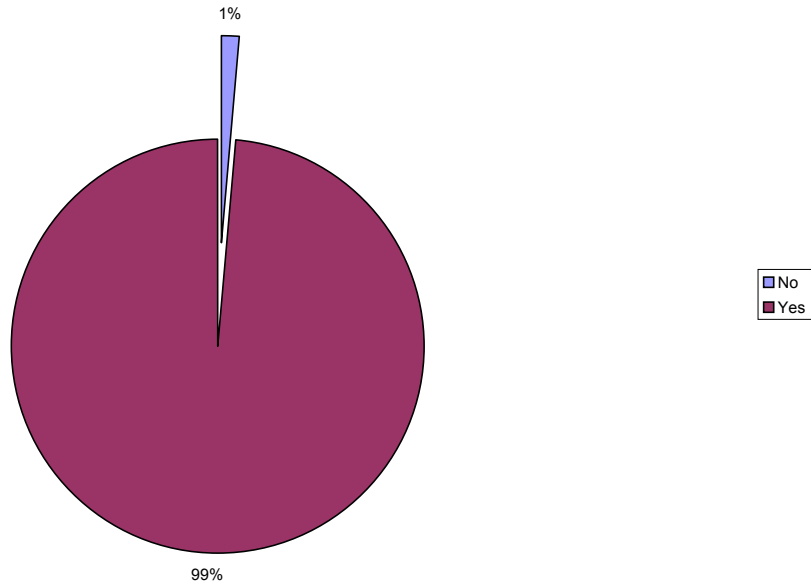
5. What is the main reason for your interest in taking classes?



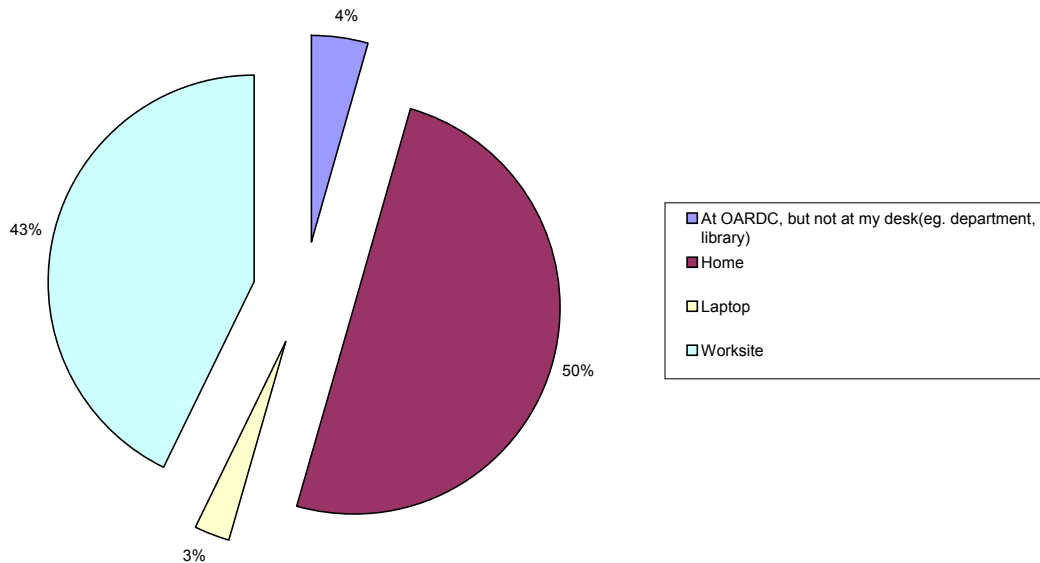
6. What is the biggest problem you face in taking classes?



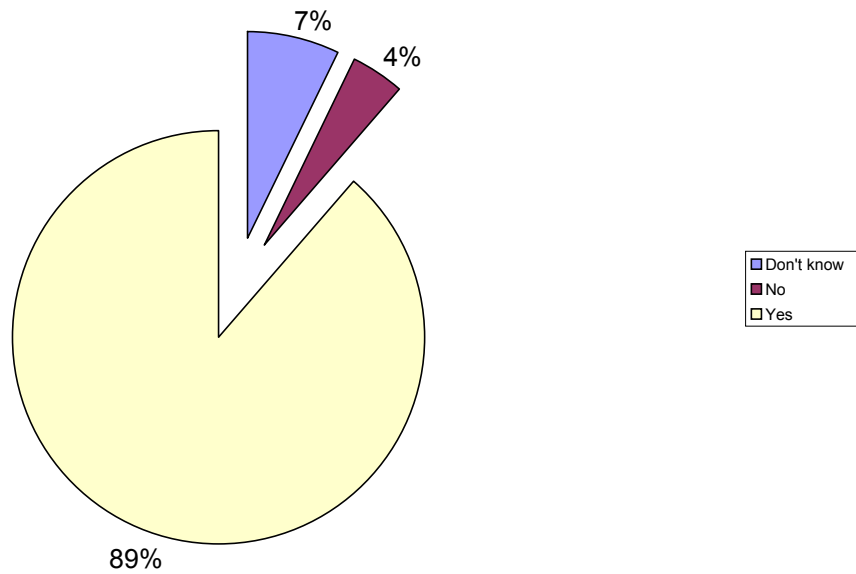
7. Do you have use of a computer that has Internet access?



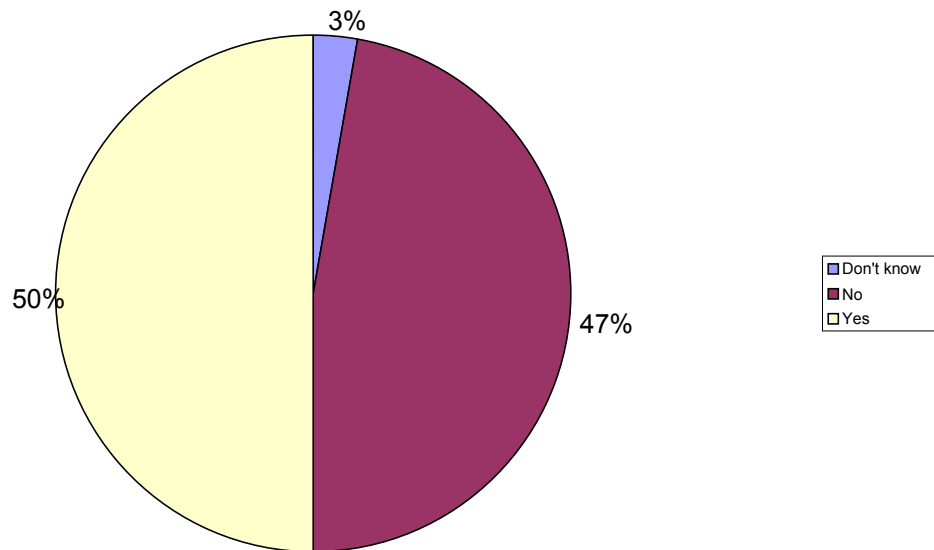
8. Where is the computer which you would most likely use for distance learning classes located?



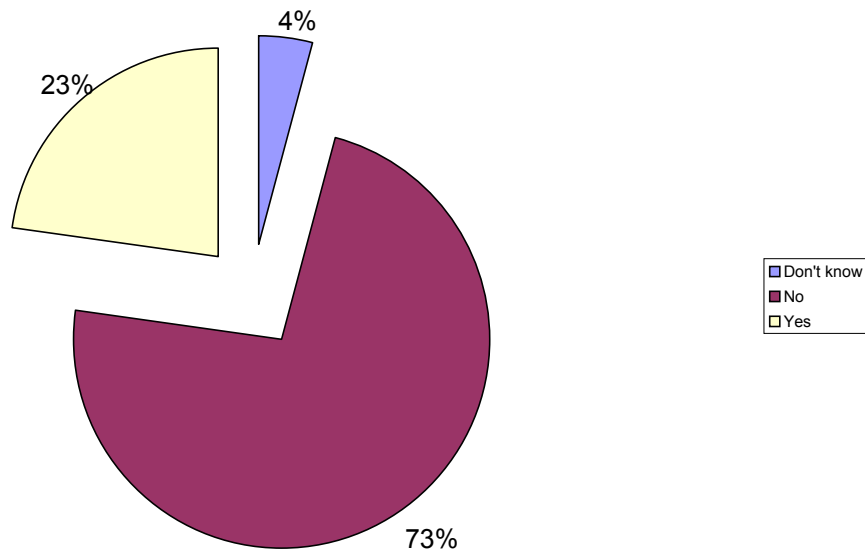
9. Would you be willing to take courses online or through other distance learning methods?



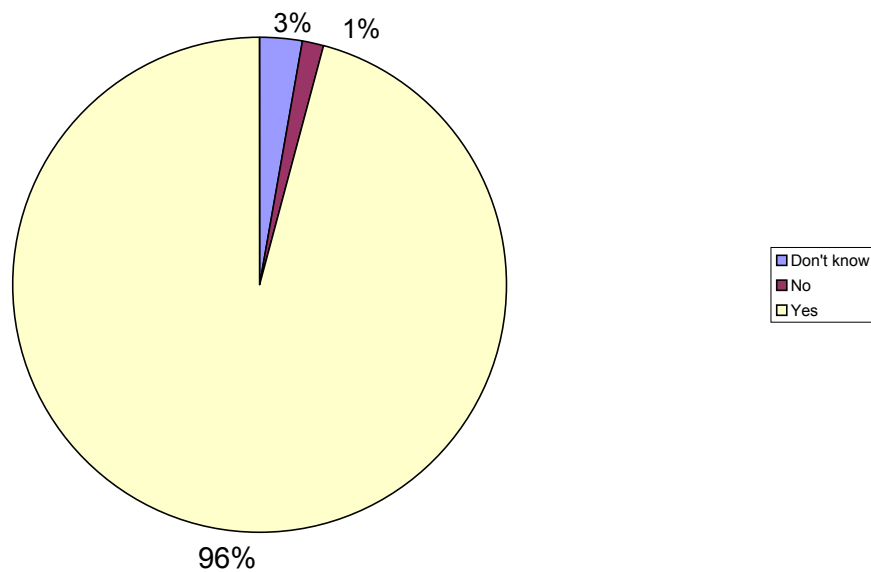
11. Are you familiar with the classes offered via microwave link in the Fisher Auditorium classroom?



12. Are you familiar with the Ohio Learning Network or OhioLearns?



13. If there were a way to apply tuition assistance benefits to online classes, would you be willing to accumulate credits from universities/colleges other than OSU?



Continuing Education Survey OARDC Staff Council

OARDC staff members have identified a need for assistance in continuing their education. This survey is intended to measure the current level of interest in continuing education and to determine the acceptance of distance-based delivery methods. Please complete the survey even if you are not currently interested in continuing education opportunities. **Your responses will be anonymous.** Results will be reported to OARDC and CFAES administration, along with OARDC Staff Council recommendations to bring more educational opportunities to staff members who are not based on the Columbus campus.

You may also complete this survey online: <http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~cteh/cgi/EventHandler.pl?action=entryform&filename=event1&id=cbritton>

Please return your completed survey by March 10, 2005 to Connie Britton, OARDC Library.

Please circle the appropriate response to the following questions. (97 surveys)

I. Your employment category:

- a. Classified Civil Service (27)
- b. Bargaining unit employee (2)
- c. Administrative and Professional (53)
- d. Faculty (8)
- e. Student (6)

II. Your department:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural, Environmental & Development Economics • Animal Sciences (12) • Director's Office (5) • Communications and Technology (3) • Computing and Statistical Services (3) • Entomology (11) • Facilities Services (6) • Fiscal Office • Food, Agricultural and Biological Engineering (3) • Food Animal Health Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Horticulture and Crop Science (11) • Human and Community Resource Development (1) • Human Resources (3) • Library (1) • MCIC • Outlying Agricultural Research Stations (3) • Plant Pathology (5) • Research Operations (4) • Safety (4) • School of Natural Resources (6) • Secest Arboretum
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program (9) • Food Science and Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Centers • Other (4)
--	--

III. Your years at OSU:

- a. 0-5 (33)
- b. 6-10 (14)
- c. 11-20 (18)
- d. over 20 (32)

1. Are you interested in taking advantage of the employee tuition assistance program (which offers 10 credits of course work free, exclusive of fees, each quarter for staff with at least 75 percent of full-time)?
 - a. Yes [*continue to question #3*] (68)
 - b. No [*go to question #2*] (10)
 - c. Not sure [*go to question #2*] (18)

2. If you are unsure or if you are not interested in the tuition assistance program, briefly describe why not. (see comments at end)

You are finished. Thank you for completing this survey.

3. If you had the opportunity to take college courses, what initial degree or certification are you interested in attaining? (*choose one*)
 - a. Associate (AA or AS) (4)
 - b. Bachelors (BA or BS) (15)
 - c. Masters (MA or MS) (15)
 - d. PhD (6)
 - e. Professional (JD, MD, etc) (1)
 - f. Certification (please specify)_ (2)_____
 - g. Would just like to take classes; not seeking a degree or certification (27)

4. In what general subject area would you take courses? (*choose one*)
 - a. Agriculture 11
 - b. Biology 10
 - c. Business/Accounting/Economics 15
 - d. Chemistry
 - e. Computer Science 8

- f. Engineering 1
 - g. English as a Second Language
 - h. General education 1
 - i. Humanities
 - j. Languages (including English) 3
 - k. Social Sciences 3
5. What is the main reason for your interest in taking classes? (*choose one*)
- a. Needed for my current job 8
 - b. Needed for advancement at OARDC 12
 - c. Needed for advancement at OSU 7
 - d. Personal interest 40
 - e. Other (please specify) 3 (second career) _____
6. What is the biggest problem you face in taking classes? (*choose one*)
- a. Cost of tuition at institution other than OSU 11
 - b. Cost of other fees, books, transportation 2
 - c. Must travel to take OSU classes that I need 41
 - d. Can't arrange work schedule to take classes 10
 - e. My supervisor/department does not allow me to take classes during work hours 1
 - f. Other (please specify) 2 (time) _____
7. Do you have use of a computer that has internet access?
- a. Yes 69
 - b. No [*continue with question 9*] 1
 - c. Don't know [*continue with question 9*]
8. Where is the computer which you would most likely use for distance learning classes located?
- a. Home 34
 - b. Worksite 29
 - c. At OARDC, but not at my desk (e.g. department, library) 3
 - d. Other 2 (laptop)
9. Would you be willing to take courses online or through other distance-learning methods?
- a. Yes [*go to question 11*] 62
 - b. No [*go to question 10*] 3
 - c. Don't know [*go to question 10*] 5
10. Please explain why you answered "no" or "don't know" to the previous question.
- a. Computer skills are not good enough
 - b. Distance learning does not meet my learning style 6

- c. Classes I cannot be offered through distance learning (e.g., laboratory classes) 1
- d. Other (please specify)___1 (need more info)_____

11. Are you familiar with the classes offered via microwave link in the Fisher Auditorium classroom?

- a. Yes 34
- b. No 34
- c. Don't know 2

12. Are you familiar with the Ohio Learning Network or OhioLearns!(<http://www.ohiolearns.org/>)?

- a. Yes 15
- b. No 52
- c. Don't know 3

13. If there were a way to apply tuition assistance benefits to online courses from other universities, are you willing to accumulate credits from universities/colleges other than OSU?

- a. Yes 67
- b. No 1
- c. Don't know 2

14. If you could take Ohio State courses offered online or via the microwave link in the Fisher Auditorium classroom, in what academic department (eg. Animal Sciences, FAB Engineering) would you be most interested in taking classes? (see cumulative list at end)

15. Comments:
(see comments at end)

Please return your completed survey by March 10, 2005 to Connie Britton, OARDC Library.

Thanks for completing the survey! The OARDC Staff Council will evaluate the results and consider options to present to the OARDC Administration and to OARDC staff.

#2.

If you are unsure or if you are not interested in the tuition as

My work load

I would probably want to take classes at Wayne College and tuition assistance is not applicable there.

several years from retirement

I don't have the time or motivation to take courses.

The uncertainty is not due to tuition assistance but classes that are offered. I currently have my Master's Degree.

If there were classes either on ATI campus, via video link or possibly at Kent or Akron I may have interest. However between my responsibilities both at work and at home, driving to Columbus for class work is out of the question.

I WOULDN'T WANT TO TRAVEL 35 TO 90 MILES.

It's not apply to me

I have used the program previously and enjoyed the opportunity very much. I am about to retire so don't have a current need to use it.

ATI has limited classes, and even fewer available during non-working hours (evenings/weekends), and don't want to drive to Columbus.

Time constraints make me unsure if I could participate.

would depend on final cost and course offerings

I am unsure primarily due to time constrains.

I have no interest at this time to attend any type of class.

I'm not interested in taking courses at this time. I'm 56 with 24 years at OSU, I could have used it when I was younger.

not sure if i would use this

Not planning on taking courses for credit.

not sure if time allows, and courses have not been available in past

I am satisfied with the resources I ahve for continuing my education

Depends on classes/times offered

Have used the system in the past but don't know if I would use it this Spring. Courses are limited and I cannot take the courses I would really like to take e.g. art classes

close to retirement - too late!

probably wouldn't be of benefit to me

I was very interested earlier on in my career but not at this stage. I continue taking courses as offered by the staff development committee.

Dependant on PI approval

At this time I do not know what would be offered.

about to graduate

Well, when I took my job I knew that I was working in Wooster - not Columbus. I believe that OSU will give us distance ed for all courses, etc. when they are ready. If we can tuition assistance from OSU, we should move to Columbus. Period.

I currently have my Masters and would be interested in language classes (Spanish)

#4. Answers to "other"

- Ag Educ
- Animal/public health
- Communications

- Criminology/criminal justice
- Immunology
- International studies
- Law
- Molecular biology (3)
- Public administration (2)
- Special edu/LD

#14

If you could take Ohio State courses offered via online or via t

Business Administration

General

General Education classes

Business

Even if available, I would avoid classes taught online. I would always opt for a

Business, Urban Planning, Sociology

School of Natural Resources

PP or Hort and Crop

Geography

Not sure

College of Business

Education or Ag Education

Animal Sciences

Molecular Genetics, Computer Science

University College

Engineering

Animal sciences

Plant Pathology, Horticulture and Crop Sciences

Education

biological sciences, animal sciences

Computer

Computer

GIS, molecular biology, and library sciences

Computer science

Business

Law School

business

Ag Edu

chemistry or biology

None that I can think of at the moment

EEOB

agr.

Computing

pathology

Molecular Biology

business

Political Science

Sociology

animal sciences

Computer Sciences
Not sure.
Computer Sciences,Economics,Horticulture and Crop Sciences
Computer Science
business
Animal Sciences
Business Management
science
Fisher Business School
Language
Statistics, molecular genetics
Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Statistics
Education

#15

Please add any other comments#

I work at the OARDC - travel time to and from class locations is difficult
The ability to attend classes at Wayne College and apply our tuition assistance benefit would be a wonderful plus!

I've been taking classes for the past four quarters and it has worked out very well.

A distance PhD degree or tuition assistance to attend a local college with credit tranfering to OSU would be wonderful.

None

Thank you for doing this survey. Continuing education is a valuable resource that should be available for staff outside of Columbus.

There are very limited options for people to persue advanced business degrees from OSU without traveling to columbus. There are other universities in Ohio that offer the degrees, but the cost can be prohibiting. Any progress in this area would benefit our

There is a need for both faculty and staff to have access to information regarding new or different techniques available in the lab. Real time PCR, Flow Cytometry, GC etc. We have these instruments on campus but often few that have a good knowledge and

Good luck!

N/A

I would be interested in some highly technican courses if possible.

next time please include a back prompt for each question

The College of Wooster among other universities totally waives tuition to its employees and families.

I hope that we can get something worked out so that we as a campus can take advantage of this benefit.""

I am only 65% time so I think this does not apply to me.

The major problems I have and hear from others is that the classes are in Columbus and that they are during our normal working hours. Most of us are just not willing to drive to Columbus three of four times a week on top of working a full work schedule.I

Being one of the people who would operate the Microwave Link I am concerned about the extra time it would add to my already full week.

more info needed about what is available. Thanks.

It would be nice if we could 'hire' instructors for specific classes if there was a demand for that class here.

OSU needs to finally provide better educational opportunities for the Wooster campus.

my interest is exploratory at this time...something to do after retirement.

I think that any oppportunity to make continued education more accessible would be very beneficial to employees.