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A Follow-up Study of Old Dominion University Fashion Graduates

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY FASHION
GRADUATES

A RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES AT
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTERS OF SCIENCE

BY
ALLISON DORSEY
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SIGNATURE PAGE

Allison L. Dorsey prepared this research paper under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of the Masters of Science.

Approval By: _____ Date _____
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SIGNATURE PAGE	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
TABLE OF TABLES	vii
CHAPTERS	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of Problem	2
Research Goals	2
Background and Significance	2
Limitations	4
Assumptions	4
Procedures	4
Definition of Terms	5
Overview of Chapters	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	7
Fashion Industry Profile	7
Career Paths	9
Career Descriptions and Skills	9
Effectiveness of Fashion Merchandising Programs	15
Program Offerings	17
Summary and Overview	18

III.	METHODS AND PROCEDURES	19
	Population	19
	Instrument Design	19
	Methods of Data Collection	20
	Statistical Analysis	21
	Summary	21
IV.	FINDINGS	22
	Results	22
	Research Goal 1 Analysis: Survey Questions One through Three.	22
	Research Goal 2 Analysis: Survey Questions Five and Eight.	24
	Research Goal 3 Analysis: Survey Question Six.	25
	Research Goal 4 Analysis: Survey Questions Nine and Eleven	25
	Research Goal 5 Analysis: Survey Question Seven.	27
	Research Goal 6 Analysis: Survey Questions Ten and Twelve.	28
	Research Goal 7 Analysis: Survey Question Four.	30
	Summary	30
V.	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	31
	Summary	31
	Conclusions	32
	Recommendations	36
	REFERENCES	38
	APPENDICES	40
	APPENDIX A. Sample of Alumni Survey	41

APPENDIX B. Sample Initial Cover Letter	43
APPENDIX C. Sample Follow-up Cover Letter	44
APPENDIX D. Sample Follow-up Cover Letter	45

TABLE OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Responses for Questions 5-8	23
Table 2. Most Useful Courses in the Fashion Program	26

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Fashion Program at Old Dominion University prepares its graduates to enter careers in the fashion industry. The “curriculum is specific to the marketing of fashion and includes a solid base of fashion and marketing courses” (Undergraduate Fashion Program, 2005, para 3). “Graduates are prepared for careers in the fashion industry as buyers, fashion coordinators, merchandise managers, visual merchandisers, and fashion writers” (Old Dominion University Catalog, 2002, p. 160). Graduates can also choose to get a license to teach Fashion Marketing in the public school system.

Due to the diverse nature of the career choices in the fashion industry, the program must prepare graduates with many different skill sets. The program focuses on developing business skills, management skills, and training skills. The program delves deeply into the fashion industry. Each student must complete the required technical courses and can then choose fashion electives he/she feels will help him/her become more marketable. The elective courses are from many different disciplines: Arts, Counseling, English, Psychology, Marketing, Communications, and from within the department.

The Fashion Program must keep up with the fast paced world of the fashion industry. In order to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University, the curriculum must be evaluated. This evaluation will ensure that students are prepared to successfully enter the fashion industry with all of the appropriate skills employers want. This study was a follow-up study of graduates of the Old Dominion Fashion Program in order to determine the effectiveness of the program.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Old Dominion's Fashion Program on preparing graduates for the fashion industry.

Research Goals

The study was completed in order to answer the following research objectives:

1. What is the current employment status of the graduates?
2. Do the required major courses for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepare students for fashion positions in the business world?
3. Were the elective courses offered helpful to students in their future careers?
4. What were the strengths of Old Dominion's Fashion Program?
5. Did completing a degree in Fashion at Old Dominion University improve the student's chances for career growth in the fashion industry?
6. What recommendations did the graduates have to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University?
7. What was the student's minor or cluster at Old Dominion University?

Background and Significance

The Fashion Program at Old Dominion University began as a part of the Marketing Education major in 1985 (D. Netherton, Personal Communication, June 8, 2006). In 1987 the program was developed as a purely fashion curriculum and has been a major in the Occupational and Technical Studies Department since that time (D. Netherton, Personal Communication, June 8, 2006). Since 1987, the department has added numerous courses to Old Dominion's Fashion Program. Old Dominion's Fashion curriculum is in line with that of other universities across the country. Aulicino (2004)

found that Old Dominion's Fashion Program was comparable to that of other universities with similar programs.

The Fashion Program at Old Dominion University is a 120 credit undergraduate program that prepares graduates for jobs in the fashion industry (Undergraduate Fashion Program, 2005). "Classes begin at the freshman level with their basic general education courses in English, mathematics, science, social studies, communications, and computer literacy" (Undergraduate Fashion Program, 2005, para 4). Students then progress through a series of required courses and elective courses to prepare them for a career in the fashion industry.

The program aims to provide its graduates with the skills needed to be successful in a variety of jobs within the fashion industry. The results of this study will help the department to better prepare its graduates for careers in the fashion world. Surveying the alumni of the Fashion Program who graduated between 1998 and 2003 will allow for a wide variety of graduate responses. Graduates from those years will be able to provide the program with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that have helped to make them successful in their career choices. The results of this survey will be helpful in designing the curriculum for future graduates of Old Dominion University's Fashion Program.

Curriculum needs to be evaluated in order to better serve the learners. Since the inception of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University, there have been no previous studies of its graduates. It is important to provide learner feedback when evaluating a curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Surveying graduates provides the department with the best feedback about the effectiveness of the courses offered on job

readiness. This will enable curriculum planners an opportunity to update the curriculum if necessary.

Limitations

The following limitations were recognized to have an effect on this study:

1. The study was limited to Old Dominion University Fashion Program graduates from 1998 to 2003.
2. This study was limited to mailed surveys of graduates identified by reviewing names identified through commencement catalogues and the Alumni Foundation data-base mailing list.

Assumptions

The results of this study were based on the following assumptions:

1. Graduates of the program would seek careers in the fashion industry upon graduation.
2. The Fashion Program at Old Dominion University prepares students to obtain careers in the fashion industry.
3. The study was based on the graduation requirements for the 1998 to 2003 academic years.
4. The curriculum provided alumni with the skills needed to obtain supervisor or management positions in the fashion industry.

Procedures

The study was conducted using a survey. The survey consists of both open and closed ended questions for the recipients to answer about their education at Old Dominion University and their current careers. The survey questions were directly

related to the research goals of the study. The survey will be sent to graduates of Old Dominion's Fashion Program who graduated between 1998 and 2003. The names and addresses of Fashion Program graduates were obtained from the Old Dominion University Alumni Association. Each graduate was sent a survey, cover letter, and self addressed return envelope. The surveys were mailed on the same date and re-mailed to non-responders two additional times in order to obtain the most accurate data possible in this study. Completed surveys were collected and the data analyzed to determine the effectiveness of Old Dominion's Fashion Program.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined in order to clarify the meaning of the terms as they relate to this study:

1. Fashion Program- The set of general education requirements, technical content courses, and electives determined by the Department of Occupational and Technical Studies that must be completed in order to receive a Bachelor of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies with an emphasis in Fashion.
2. Technical content courses- The courses that a student must take in their field in order to equip them with the skills needed in the fashion industry.
3. Fashion industry- Any organization involved in the making, selling, or marketing of apparel, accessories, or home furnishings.
4. Fashion electives- Courses chosen by the student and their advisor to strengthen the student's particular fashion interests.

Summary and Overview

Chapter I introduced the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. The study focused on examining the effectiveness of Old Dominion's Fashion Program based upon the response of its graduates over a five-year period. The study was designed to provide the graduate's current employment status, their attitudes about the program, and their recommendations for improving the program. This study was needed for several reasons: to provide feedback on the Fashion Program curriculum and to evaluate the program based on graduate success. Chapter II covered a review of literature of the fashion industry, career paths, employment skills, research on the effectiveness of Fashion Merchandising programs, and a program overview. Chapter III details the methods and procedures used to collect the data in this survey. Chapter IV includes the findings from the data gathered by the survey given to the Fashion Program graduates over the five year period. Chapter V provides a summary of the findings in the study. Chapter V also includes the conclusions made about the effectiveness of Old Dominion's Fashion Program on preparing graduates for the fashion industry. Recommendations for improving the program and future study of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University were included in the final chapter of the study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of Old Dominion University's Fashion Program on preparing graduates for management or executive fashion positions. A review of literature was conducted on the state of the fashion industry and job prospects. Possible careers and the skills needed for the positions were discussed. Research on the effectiveness of other fashion merchandising program graduates was reviewed. Finally, the program offered at Old Dominion University was discussed.

Fashion Industry Profile

The fashion industry involves all of the industries that work together to produce apparel, accessories, and home fashions. The industry consists of several components: textile, apparel, and retail. The fashion industry employs many Americans. The industry has undergone great changes in the past decade to become a global business. Most textile and clothing production takes place overseas. Nationwide, retailers are seeing growth in the fashion industry (Vogt, 2002).

Retail outlets are the largest employer of fashion related jobs in the United States. "Clothing, accessory, and general merchandise stores are one of the largest employers in the Nation..." (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 104). In 2004, clothing, accessory, and general merchandise stores accounted for "4.2 million jobs in the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 104). While traditional fashion retailers such as department stores and small specialty stores are competing with large discount stores for America's fashion purchases, the industry is predicted to see growth. "Overall, the

number of wage and salary jobs in clothing, accessory, and general merchandise stores is expected to increase 10 percent over the 2004-14 period” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 106).

The textile and apparel manufacturing market in the United States are becoming more specialized in order to deal with globalization. “In 2004, 416,000 workers were employed by the textile mills and textile product industries, while 285,000 worked in the apparel manufacturing industry (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 86).

The fashion industry offers many different levels of employment. “Most jobs do not require formal education; many people get their first jobs in this industry” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 104). In clothing, accessories, and general merchandise stores, the majority of jobs available are sales positions, which account for 65 percent of workers in the 2004 government statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 104). “Office and administrative support occupations make up the next largest group of employees, accounting for 19 percent of total employment in the (retail) industry” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 104). Other opportunities in the retail environment include management positions, buyers, merchandise managers, and visual merchandisers. While a high school diploma is all that is required for many entry level positions, more education is often required for an employee to move up in the business. “Traditionally, capable salespersons with good leadership skills, yet without a college degree, could advance to management positions; however, a college education is becoming increasingly important for managerial positions such as department manager, store manager, or buyer” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006, p. 106). To advance in the retail industry a college education is becoming a necessity.

Career Paths

The fashion industry has many different career paths in fields varying from textiles, production, retail, promotions, media, and education. Jobs in the textiles industry include: Fabric Librarian, Market Researcher, Product Manager, Sales Representative, Textile Colorist, Textile Conversion Manager, Textile Designer, Textile Research Scientist, and Textile Stylist (Vogt, 2002). Production and manufacturing are other areas with plentiful employment opportunities. Production and manufacturing jobs include: Designer, Costing Engineer, Cutter, Fashion Forecaster, Merchandiser, Pattern Grader, Pattern Maker, Piece Good Buyer, Product Manager, Sales Representative, Samplemaker, and Sewing Machine Operator (Vogt, 2002). Retail positions include: Boutique Owner, Cashier, Department Manager, Distribution Planner, Fashion Buyer, Fashion Coordinator, Merchandise Manager, Retail Sales Associate, Store Manager, and Visual Merchandiser (Vogt, 2002). Fashion positions in media include fashion writers, photographers, illustrators, stylist, and editors (Vogt, 2002). Other possibilities for careers in the fashion industry are in fashion promotion and education. The majority of Fashion Program graduates seek work in the retail industry.

Career Descriptions and Skills

Jobs in the retail industry are available at several different levels. Sales Associates are in the entry level positions in retail. Store Managers make up the next level of the retail industry. Executive and corporate positions make up the top level in the retail industry. Buyers, Department Managers, Merchandise Managers, and Fashion Coordinators are all considered executive positions (Vogt, 2002).

Sales Associates are the foundation of any successful retail business. Sales staffs are responsible for conducting the sale of accessories and apparel to consumers. The position of Retail Associate or Sales Associate does not require formal education. However, previous sales experience and on the job training are essential. Sales Associates must be personable, have a working knowledge of fashion trends, be enthusiastic, and have good listening and speaking skills (Vogt, 2002). There are numerous Sales Associate positions available. With the skills learned working as a Sales Associate and a college degree the career growth opportunities are numerous.

Store Managers are responsible for overseeing the day to day operations of retail outlets. “Managers are ultimately responsible for sales, inventory, promotions and merchandising, and financial activities” (Vogt, 2002, p. 118). Store Managers are in charge of the sales staff and it is their job to keep things running smoothly. Sales Managers need a wide variety of skills in order to oversee a retail operation. They obtain these skills in two ways: with formal education, usually a bachelor’s degree in “Business, Management, or Marketing” and through on the job experience (Vogt, 2002, p. 118). Store Managers are able to advance to higher levels within many companies.

Fashion Buyers play an integral role in the success of a fashion business. “Fashion Buyers, often called Buyers, shop for and buy clothes and accessories from manufactures and wholesalers in the hopes of reselling them to retail customers at a profit” (Vogt, 2002, p. 103). Buyers are responsible for the purchase of all of the merchandise in a department, the entire store, or a chain of stores (Vogt, 2002). The buyer’s job responsibilities include developing detailed buying plans and discounting merchandise. The buying plan should include “what fashions will be purchased, in what

quantities, and from whom” (Vogt, 2002, p. 103). The buying plan must be prepared at least several months in advance and provide “projected profits” (Vogt, 2002, p. 103). Buyers must travel to trade shows and manufacturer showrooms in order to analyze the market for the following year. Buyers must also constantly monitor the day-to-day sales of merchandise in order to evaluate their sales plans and decide when to reorder merchandise. Buyers must be able to “track the performance of the current plan, while they must simultaneously research and develop the plan for the following year (Vogt, 2002, p. 104).

In order to become a Fashion Buyer a person must work their way up starting out as an Assistant Buyer. Buyers must have a degree in Fashion Merchandising or a related field (Vogt, 2002). Buyers must possess several different skills. They must have good negotiation skills, mathematics skills, and strong interpersonal skills (Vogt, 2002). Career growth prospects are possible from a position of Fashion Buyer into higher levels of management. Buyers often become Merchandise Managers or Fashion Coordinators.

Merchandise Managers are the people who “oversee the buying and distribution of apparel and accessories for a retail store, department, division or chain” (Vogt, 2002, p. 109). The responsibilities of a Merchandise Manager include “researching the apparel and accessories marketplace”, as well as researching their company’s customer bases and competition (Vogt, 2002, p. 109). Merchandise Managers are in charge of overseeing the buyers and helping to guide their choices (Vogt, 2002). Merchandise Managers are also responsible for ensuring that distribution of the merchandise is running smoothly. They are also responsible for overseeing the inventory of all of the merchandise under their control.

The position of Merchandise Manager requires a great deal of experience, education, training, and skill. Merchandise Managers are expected to have their degree in “Fashion Merchandising, Retail Merchandising, Business, or Marketing” (Vogt, 2002, p. 110). Merchandise Managers are expected to have at least “10 years experience in the retail apparel industry: fashion buying and retailing experience are essential” (Vogt, 2002, p. 109). Skills that are important for Merchandise Managers to have are problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, analytical skills, and research skills (Vogt, 2002). Merchandise Managers must also have “expertise in pricing, planning, forecasting, product development, and sales” (Vogt, 2002, p. 109). Merchandise Managers with experience will have little trouble finding work or advancing their careers.

Fashion Coordinators serve a special purpose in the retail store. Fashion Coordinators are responsible for “coordinating the various departments, particularly the Fashion Buyers and Salespeople, of a retail store or chain to ensure that all departments and stores offer consumers a consistent fashion look” (Vogt, 2002, p. 106). Fashion Coordinators must research the market in order to predict future trends. They are responsible for ensuring that all of the departments have a similar feel and give the store a cohesive image. Fashion Coordinators have extensive experience in all aspects of retail from sales to merchandise production (Vogt, 2002). “Fashion Coordinators must also have superior communication skills so that they can work with a diverse range of people...” (Vogt, 200, p. 107).

Fashion Coordinators are highly skilled professionals. The position of Fashion Coordinator requires a college degree in a field such as Fashion Merchandising (Vogt, 2002). Most Fashion Coordinators “also received considerable on the job training by

working in other fashion related jobs, like Fashion Buying or Fashion Merchandising” (Vogt, 2002, p. 107). Fashion Coordinators are already in a high level position so advancement opportunities are few (Vogt, 2002).

Another position that deals with the image of a store is that of the Visual Merchandiser. Visual Merchandisers are responsible for “overseeing the conceptualization, design, and execution of visual displays of apparel in stores, at trade shows, and in fashion showrooms” (Vogt, 2002, p. 121). Visual Merchandisers are extremely design oriented people. Visual Merchandisers are responsible for designing the layout of the store or section as well as any displays. They must have a working “knowledge of color, lighting, theatrical staging, and forms and lines” (Vogt, 2002, p. 122). Visual Merchandisers are often called upon to use their creativity to design and construct props for use in their displays. Additionally the Visual Merchandiser must meet with others in the store or department to review concepts and to evaluate the performance of their displays.

Visual Merchandising requires a degree “in a field that combines creativity and technical abilities” (Vogt, 2002, p. 122). Skills that are important to the success of a visual merchandiser are technical design and construction skills, along with organization, and communication skills. “Employment prospects for Visual Merchandisers are expected to rise faster than average in the next few years” (Vogt, 2002, p. 122).

Career opportunities for fashion graduates exist in fields other than retail. Those interested in entering the fashion industry can find work with manufacturers and in the media. Manufacturers and producers employ fashion graduates in positions such as

Merchandisers and Sales Representatives. Other positions that fashion graduates have entered are Fashion Editors and Fashion Writers.

Merchandisers are employed by apparel and accessories manufacturers.

Merchandiser positions are considered to be that of a high level executive in apparel production (Vogt, 2002). Merchandiser's duties include "determining the product "direction" an apparel manufacturer will take each fashion season by closely studying apparel market trends and forecasts, previous sales results, production costs, and other production considerations" (Vogt, 2002, p. 50). Merchandisers are constantly conducting market research. Merchandisers must be "highly analytical; able to gather data and translate research into profitable production" (Vogt, 2002, p. 50). Merchandisers often have five or more years of fashion industry experience and a degree in either Fashion Merchandising or Apparel Production (Vogt, 2002). Employment prospects for Merchandisers are abundant because all apparel manufacturers employ one or more merchandisers (Vogt, 2002). Those who have previous apparel industry experience such as former "Sales Representatives" often have the highest chance of advancing to the position of Merchandiser.

Apparel and accessories manufacturers employ Sales Representatives to sell their products to retailers. There are two main types of Sales Representatives: Showroom Sales Representatives and Manufacturer's Sales Representatives. Showroom Sales Representatives duties include "showing Fashion Buyers a manufacturer's or designer's new lines of apparel and accessories; attempts to convince each buyer to place orders for merchandise; ensuring that the merchandise ordered reaches the buyers' stores on time and in saleable condition" (Vogt, 2002, p. 78). Manufacturer's Representatives "travel to

a store in a predetermined territory to present a manufacturer's newest apparel lines to Fashion Buyers" (Vogt, 2002, p. 70). While a college degree is not required in the limited job market, those with a degree and retail experience are most likely to get the available positions (Vogt, 2002).

Fashion Writers are an integral part of the fashion industry. Fashion Writers are responsible for writing fashion related articles in consumer and trade publications (Vogt, 2002). Writers play an important part in the fashion forecasting circle. Trade publication writers are often the link between the industry experts and Buyers and Merchandisers. Fashion Writers for consumer publications can help to fuel a trend. Fashion Writers need a degree in "Communication, Journalism, English, or the Liberal Arts" and fashion knowledge is a plus in this field (Vogt, 2002, p. 138). Fashion writers must have excellent writing and research skills. The employment prospects for Fashion Writers are small because it is a specialized field (Vogt, 2002). However, Fashion Writers who are successful have a chance at becoming a Fashion Editor.

Effectiveness of Fashion Merchandising Programs

Several research studies have been conducted in order to ascertain what skills employers are looking for in fashion graduates. Hyman-Parker's (1993) research included surveying and interviewing thirty retail professionals from both department and specialty stores as well as 21 professional educators. Hyman-Parker (1993), in her study, *Bridging the Gap Between Fashion Retail Education and Employment*, found that internships and externship programs when in collaboration with industry professions were highly effective in preparing students for future careers. Hyman-Parker also noted that when it comes to what type of education is needed for successful entry into the

fashion industry there is some debate over what type of degree is best. Hyman-Parker (1993) found that:

fifty percent of the educators and twenty seven percent of the retailers felt a four year fashion retailing program was best. Twenty-five percent of educators and twenty-three percent of the retailers felt that a four year liberal arts program was best (p. 106).

Hyman-Parker states that a “four year” college degree and work experience in the form of an intern or externship are instrumental in obtaining a position. After conducting her research, Hyman-Parker recommends, “Educators should place more emphasis on developing students’ skills in the area of human relations, communications, decision making, problem solving, and critical thinking” (1993, p. 108).

Braguglia (1994) conducted a study of retailers to determine the effectiveness of the curriculum in fashion merchandising. The Braguglia population was comprised of “thirty participants that were selected human resource professionals from textile and apparel manufacturing, retail stores, and buying offices” (1994, p. 100). Braguglia (1994) found that industry professionals identified several entry level positions in textile and apparel production that fashion merchandising graduates were prepared for: “sales representative or showroom sales, merchandising assistant, product developer, and assistant production manager” (p. 69).

In retailing, the positions of executive trainee to assistant buyer or manager, executive trainee to sales manager, assistant store manager, and sale associate were mentioned. In resident buying offices, the positions of assistant marketing

representative and assistant product manager were named (Braguglia, 1994, p. 69).

Braguglia's (1994) study found the skills most sought after by employers were "communication skills, interpersonal skills, customer service orientation, listening skills, ethical behavior, team worker, and leadership ability" (p. 79). The study noted "83.3% of the participants believed that product knowledge courses in textiles and apparel are needed for entry level employment" (pp. 79-80). According to the participants in Braguglia's study, the most important product knowledge courses were "customer service management, fashion merchandising, product development, visual merchandising, internships, apparel construction, merchandising math, and textiles" (1994, p. 84). "A total of 93.4 percent stated that they believed that business courses were needed," according to Braguglia's 1994 study (p. 85). Marketing and management courses were considered to be the most influential business courses that an entry level job applicant needed. Also Braguglia's (1994) study found fashion merchandising curriculums needed to be designed with both business and product knowledge courses. Additionally, the course considered the least important was a historical dress course.

Program Offerings

Old Dominion graduates have completed a 120 hour program of required courses and elective courses. The required course work in Old Dominion's Fashion Program provides graduates with the skills needed to obtain supervisory and executive positions. Communication skills are gained in Public Speaking, Sales Techniques, Training Methods, Composition, and Introduction to Technical Writing. Product knowledge skills are obtained in Sales Techniques, Advertising and Promotions, The Fashion Industry,

Buying, and Fashion Design. Computer skills are gained in Computer Literacy. Management skills are gained in Supervision of Personnel and Principles of Management. Business related courses are Accounting, Advanced Merchandising, Consumer Behavior, Principles of Marketing, and Directed Work Experience. Old Dominion's Fashion Program provides courses so students will have both the business and fashion skills they need to start entry level work in the fashion industry.

Summary and Overview

Chapter II covered a review of literature related to the following topics: fashion industry employment overview, career paths, skills by field, effectiveness of Fashion Merchandising programs, and the skills and competencies gained in Old Dominion's Fashion Program. The review of literature revealed that employers look for employees with both business skills and fashion skills. Employers also look for employees who have work experience such as internships. The Review of Literature also concluded that Old Dominion's Fashion Program requires courses that fulfill all of the employer's qualifications for entry-level employment. Chapter III then details the methods and procedures used to collect the data in this survey. Chapter III outlines the population, the instrument design, the methods of data collection, and the statistical methods of analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Chapter III of this study sought to determine the attitudes of Old Dominion University Fashion Program alumni on the effectiveness of the curriculum to prepare them for work in the fashion industry. This chapter includes a description of the population and the design of the instrument. This chapter also details the data collection procedures used to collect and analyze the data.

Population

The population of this study was comprised of Occupational and Technical Studies alumni who graduated with a Fashion Emphasis between 1998 and 2003. The population was comprised of female participants. The population was made up of undergraduate degree seeking students at Old Dominion University. There were 42 graduates between 1998 and 2003. The names and addresses of the alumni were obtained from the Alumni Affairs Office and from graduation book lists. The population was selected from a group at least three years from graduation. This allowed for work experience so the graduates could better assess their preparedness from completing the program.

Instrument Design

The instrument used for this research was comprised of both open and close-ended survey questions. The instrument used a Likert scale to determine the attitudes of the Fashion Program alumni. The first three survey questions addressed the first research question, which was, “What is the current employment status of the graduates?” Question 4 answered the seventh research goal, which was, “What was the student’s minor or

cluster at Old Dominion University?” Question 5 and 6 addressed the second and third research questions. The second research question was, “Do the required major courses for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepare students for fashion positions in the business world?” The third research question was, “Were the electives courses offered helpful to students in their future careers?” The former student’s rated their feelings of preparedness from the Fashion Programs major and elective courses in Questions 5 through 8. Question 8 was designed to answer the fifth research question, which was, “Did completing a degree in Fashion at Old Dominion University improve the student’s chances for career growth in the fashion industry?” Questions 9 to 12 were open-ended questions used to determine the participant’s views on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Question 11 addressed the fourth research goal, which was, “What were the strengths of Old Dominion’s Fashion Program?” Questions 10 and 12 addressed the sixth research goal, which was, “What recommendations did the graduates have to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University?” See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Methods of Data Collection

A list with the names of graduates was determined from the commencement books and addresses were obtained from the Alumni Association. The survey, along with a cover letter and self-addressed return envelope, were sent on October 4, 2006. The surveys were coded in order to identify the non-responders. As the surveys were received their codes were recorded. Follow-up surveys and letters were sent October 18, 2006, to the non-responders. Additional follow-up surveys were sent November 1, 2006, to the non-responders. See Appendices B, C, and D for the survey letter and follow up

letters.

Statistical Analysis

The answers to the survey questions were analyzed to determine the attitudes of the Fashion alumni. The data were tabulated to find the mean of the responses. The open-ended questions were reviewed and recorded according to similarities.

Summary

Chapter III detailed the methods and procedures used to determine the attitudes of Old Dominion Fashion alumni on the effectiveness of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. The population and instrument were described. The method of data collection and analysis were also described in this chapter. Chapter IV reports the findings from the data collected in this research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This study examined the attitudes of Old Dominion University Fashion Program alumni on the effectiveness of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. This chapter presents the data that were collected and provides the statistical analysis of the data.

Data

The findings were compiled from surveys mailed to the 42 alumni of the Fashion Program. Of the study population, 18 respondents returned the survey. There was a 42.85% response rate to the survey.

Research Goal 1: What is the current employment status of the graduates?

The first three questions on the instrument were designed to answer the first research goal of determining the respondents' employment status. Question 1 was, "Are you employed in the fashion industry?" Of the 18 respondents six respondents, 33.33%, were currently employed in the fashion industry. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, were not currently working in the fashion industry.

Question 2 was, "If no, were you employed in the fashion industry after graduation?" Of the 12 responders who were not currently working in the fashion industry, five had been previously employed in the fashion industry. Five respondents, 41.66%, of those not currently working in the fashion industry upon graduation, worked in the fashion industry.

Question 3 was, "What is your current employment status?" Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, were employed in positions other than the seven listed on the

survey. Two respondents, 11.11%, were employed as storeowners. Two other respondents, 11.11%, were employed as merchandisers. Two respondents, 11.11%, were employed as managers. Two respondents, 11.11%, were employed in marketing. One respondent, 5.55%, was employed as a teacher.

Questions 5 through 8 on the survey were used to determine the answer to the Research Goals 2 through 6. A Likert scale was used to determine the participant's opinions towards the survey questions. The Likert scale used was scored with 5 representing strongly, 4 representing agree, 3 representing undecided, 2 representing disagree, and 1 representing strongly disagree. The results are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Responses for Questions 5-8.

Respondent	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8
1	3	3	3	3
2	3	4	4	4
3	4	4	4	3
4	5	4	4	5
5	4	4	3	4
6	0	0	4	4
7	2	2	2	2
8	4	4	4	3
9	4	2	4	5
10	4	4	4	4
11	4	5	4	5
12	4	4	5	5
13	4	4	4	4
14	3	3	3	4
15	4	4	4	4
16	0	0	4	4
17	4	4	4	4
18	4	2	2	4
total	60	57	66	71
mean	3.33	3.16	3.66	3.94

Research Goal 2: Do the required major courses for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University prepare students for fashion positions in the business world?

Question 5 was, “The required major course for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepared me for my career in the fashion industry.” One of the respondents, 5.55%, strongly agreed that the required major courses for the fashion program helped to prepare them for their future career. Eleven of the respondents, 61.11%, agreed that the required major courses for the fashion program at Old Dominion University helped to prepare them for their careers in the fashion industry. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, were undecided about how the major courses prepared them for future careers. Two of the respondents, 11.11%, disagreed that the required courses prepared them for their future career. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the question. Finally two of the respondents, 11.11%, did not provide an answer to the question. The overall mean for the respondents on Question 5 was 3.33, determining that the respondents were undecided that the Fashion Program prepared them for a job in the fashion industry.

Question 8 also addressed the second research question. Question 8 was, “I have directly used skills or knowledge gained from Occupational and Technical Studies required courses on the job.” Four of the respondents, 22.22%, strongly agree that they have used knowledge gained from the required course on the job. Ten respondents, 55.55%, agreed that the program helped to prepare them for a job. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, were undecided about the effect their course work had on their future jobs. One respondent, 5.55%, disagreed with Question 8. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement in Question 8. The mean for the scores on this

question was 3.94, concluding that the majority of respondents agreed that the skills or knowledge they gained was useful in their careers.

Research Goal 3: Were the elective courses offered helpful in their future careers?

Question 6 was, “The elective course offered for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University prepared me for my career in the fashion industry.” One respondent, 5.55%, strongly agreed that the elective courses were helpful in preparing them for their career. Ten of the respondents, 55.55%, agreed that the elective courses were useful in preparing them for their future career. Two respondents, 11.11%, were undecided about the helpfulness of the elective courses on their jobs. Three respondents, 16.66%, said that they disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the question. Two respondents, 11.11% did not answer the question. The mean of the scores was 3.16, determining that the effectiveness of the elective course is undecided among fashion graduates.

Research Goal 4: What were the strengths of Old Dominion’s Fashion Program?

Questions 9 through 12 were open-ended questions determining the respondent’s attitudes on improving the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. Question 9 was, “What courses in your opinion were the most important courses in the program?” Sixteen of the respondents, 88.88%, responded to Question 9 of the survey. Two respondents, 11.11%, did not answer question nine. The most common responses to Question 9 were Buying with eight respondents, 44.44%, and Marketing with seven respondents, 38.88%, feeling that these courses one of the most important courses in their opinion. Five respondents, 27.77%, felt that Sales was one of the most important courses. Advanced Merchandising and Management both had five respondents each,

31.25%, who felt those courses were the most important. Computer Skills and Human Resources were cited by three respondents, 16.66%, as one of the most important courses in the curriculum. Other courses that were mentioned by respondents included History of Fashion, Internship, Psychological Aspects of Clothing, Occupational and Career Transition, Advertising, Visual Merchandising, and Elective courses were mentioned. Refer to Table 2 for the responses to Question 9 on the survey.

Table 2. Most useful courses in the fashion program

Course	Number of Respondents
1. Buying	8
2. Marketing	7
3. Sales	5
4. Advanced Merchandising	5
5. Management	5
6. Computer Skills	3
7. Human Resources	3
8. Advertising	2
9. Psychological Aspects of Clothing	1
10. Occupational and Career Transition	1
11. History of Fashion	1
12. Internship	1
13. Visual Merchandising	1
14. Elective Courses	1

Question 11 also answered Research Goal 4. Question 11 was, “What were the strengths of Old Dominions Fashion Program in your opinion?” Fifteen of the 18 respondents, 83.33%, responded to Question 11. Three respondents, 16.66%, did not respond to the question. Eight respondents, 44.44%, stated the major strength of the program was the instructor’s knowledge of the fashion industry. Two instructors who were mentioned were Dr. Threlfall and Mrs. Sharon Davis. Two respondents, 11.11%, said the major strength were the hands-on projects in the program. Other strengths of the program are mentioned below:

- Small classes, more attention given to students creating a more unified group.
- The ability to speak to any advisor at anytime-open door policy.
- The internship program.
- Projects related to the fashion industry done in courses.
- The business focus is useful.
- Coverage of other related subjects such as Advertising and Marketing.
- The marketing courses included in the program.

Research Goal 5: Did completing a degree in Fashion at Old Dominion University improve the student’s chances for career growth in the fashion industry?

Question 7 was, “Completing my degree in Occupation and Technical Studies with a fashion emphasis helped to enhance my opportunity for career growth.” One of the respondents, 5.55%, strongly agreed that completing their degree enhanced their opportunities for career growth. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, agreed that completing their degree helped them enhance their opportunity for career growth. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, were undecided about the effect of degree completion on

career growth potential. Two of the respondents, 11.11%, disagreed that completing their degree helped them to further their career. None of the respondents strongly disagreed that completing their degree enhanced their opportunities for career growth. The mean of the scores was 3.66, determining that the respondents agree that the program helped them enhance their opportunities for career growth.

Research Goal 6: What recommendations did the graduates have to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University?

Question 10 was, “What courses need to be added to the curriculum in order to better serve future graduates?” Fifteen of the respondents, 83.33%, responded to Question 10. Three respondents, 16.66%, did not write anything down for Question 10. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, mentioned the addition of design and construction courses. Three of the respondents, 16.66 %, suggested additional merchandise display courses. Two of the respondents, 11.11, suggested additional internship opportunities as a way to improve the program. Two respondents 11.11% recommended the increased use of hands-on projects in the courses. Two of the respondents, 11.11%, mentioned the addition of Computer Aided Design Courses. Another two respondents, 11.11%, suggested the inclusion of an Interior Design course. The respondents recommended the inclusion of additional Textiles, Fashion Design, Licensing, Import/Export course, Tradeshow course, Excel and Access course, a networking course, a conflict resolution course, and an extended internship courses. Two of the respondent’s comments focused on the overall improvement of the curriculum. Two respondents suggested including more real world course work in the course. The second respondent suggested including career centered activities in relation to the course work.

Question 12 was, “What recommendations do you have for improving Old Dominion’s Fashion Program?” Question 12 also answered Research Goal 6. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, answered Question 12. Six of respondents, 33.33% did not answer Question 12. Five of respondents, 27.77%, recommended improving the internship course to better prepare the students for the workforce. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, suggested a more hands-on approach within the curriculum. Two of the respondents, 11.11%, recommended the addition of more course choices in the program. The respondent’s further suggestions were as follows:

- Higher standards need to be implemented.
- More hands-on creative opportunities in the courses.
- Clarify the degree more to the students, is it a business degree or a fashion degree.
- A more rigorous program for preparing students in the workforce. For example, a more developed internship program. While employers today value education, they value work experience and on the job training even more.
- Visiting a city such as New York for an elective or course work would have better prepared me for my future career.
- Add some more hands on courses.
- Fashion changes on a monthly basis; keep it fresh, the numbers are always changing.
- Get speakers from the industry to come in and speak with the classes about the business.
- The major is hard to describe on a resume. Instead of majoring in OTS, could it be Fashion instead.

- Improving promotion of the program to area schools, businesses, and the community.
- Adding an interior design program and design program to the course of study.
- Visiting a tradeshow.
- Encourage association memberships.
- Provide connections to fashion related employers at the corporate level.

Research Goal 7: What was the student's minor or cluster at Old Dominion University?

Question four was, "What was your minor or cluster at Old Dominion University?" Ten of the respondents, 55.55%, minored in marketing. One respondent 5.55% minored in sociology. Seven of the respondents, 38.88%, did not provide this information.

Summary

In this chapter the responses to the Fashion Alumni survey were reported. The research objectives were re-stated and the data reported for each objective. Of the 18 responders less than half were employed in the Fashion Industry. The effectiveness of the required major courses and the elective courses were undecided among the respondents. However, respondents agreed that they had been able to use skills or knowledge gained in the program on the job. The respondents suggested the addition of additional coursework in order to improve the program. Chapter V provides a summary of the findings reported in Chapter IV. Chapter V also reports the conclusions based on the findings of the study and states recommendations.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the research. This chapter also explains the conclusions that were drawn based on the findings of the survey. It answers all of the research goals outlined in the study. The researcher's recommendations for further study and improvements to the Old Dominion Fashion Program are included in this chapter.

Summary

The problem of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Old Dominion's Fashion Program on preparing graduates for the fashion industry. This study was a follow-up study of Occupational and Technical Studies majors with a Fashion Major who graduated from 1998 to 2003. The purpose of this study was to solicit feedback from the graduates in order to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. The study was completed in order to answer the following research objectives:

1. What is the current employment status of the graduates?
2. Do the required major courses for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepare students for fashion positions in the business world?
3. Were the elective courses offered helpful to students in their future careers?
4. What were the strengths of Old Dominion's Fashion Program?
5. Did completing a degree in Fashion at Old Dominion University improve the student's chances for career growth in the fashion industry?
6. What recommendations did the graduates have to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University?
7. What was the student's minor or cluster at Old Dominion University?

In order to ensure the validity of this survey all 44 graduates of the Occupational and Technical Studies Fashion Program between 1998 and 2003 were sent surveys. Two of the surveys were returned with no forwarding address. The study was limited to alumni who graduated from the Fashion Program between 1998 and 2003. The study was further limited to alumni whose names were collected from the commencement books. The names gathered were then given to the Alumni Affairs Office and the population was then limited to those individuals with current mailing addresses.

The population was comprised of 42 individuals who were alumni from the Fashion Program who graduated between 1998 and 2003. Eighteen alumni responded to the survey.

The survey instrument was comprised of both open and closed ended questions. There were twelve questions developed in order to answer the research goals outlined in the study. A survey and cover letter were sent to each of the 42 respondents. The surveys were coded in order to determine non-responders. In addition to the first mailing there were two additional mailings. In total there were 18 respondents to the survey, which was a 42.85% response rate. Once all of the surveys were received the data was compiled for the questions. The Likert scale questions were analyzed to determine a mean. The open-ended questions were analyzed in order to find similarities in responses.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study are based on the research findings and will be addressed by answering the research goals. The conclusions were based on statistical analysis of the survey questions. The conclusions drawn help to evaluate the effectiveness of the Fashion Program.

Research Goal 1, what is the current employment status of the graduates? It was concluded that of 18 respondents, six respondents, 33.33%, were currently employed in the fashion industry. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, were not currently working in the fashion industry. Of the 12 responders who were not currently working in the fashion industry, five, 41.66%, had been previously employed in the fashion industry. Therefore 11 respondents, 61.11%, of the graduates were employed in the fashion industry upon graduation from the Fashion Program. One respondent was teaching fashion related courses and therefore using their knowledge of the fashion industry. The remaining respondents were employed in business fields. Because the fashion degree is business based, Fashion Program graduates were trained for many business positions.

Research Goal 2, do the required major courses for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepare students for fashion positions in the business world? It was concluded that four of the respondents, 22.22%, strongly agree that they have used knowledge gained from the required courses on the job. Ten of the respondents, 55.55%, agreed with the statement. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, were undecided about the effect their course work had on their future jobs. One respondent, 5.55%, disagreed with the statement. The mean score on this question was 3.94, determining that the respondents agreed that the skills or knowledge they gained was useful in their careers. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, either agreed or strongly agreed that the major courses were relevant. Therefore the required major courses for the Fashion Program are adequate at preparing students for a position in the business world. Because more than half of the graduates were able to obtain employment in the fashion industry, the Fashion Program at

Old Dominion University adequately prepares graduates for a position in the fashion industry.

Research Goal 3, were the elective courses offered helpful to students in their future careers? One respondent, 5.55%, strongly agreed that the elective courses were helpful in preparing them for their career. Ten respondents, 55.55%, agreed that the elective courses were useful in preparing them for their future career. Two respondents, 11.11%, were undecided about the helpfulness of the elective courses on their jobs. Three respondents, 16.66%, disagreed with the statement. Two respondents, 11.11%, did not answer the question. The mean of the scores was 3.16, determining that the effectiveness of the elective course is undecided among fashion graduates. The effectiveness of elective courses on preparing graduates for their future careers is not conclusive. The majority, eleven, of the respondents felt that the elective courses offered were useful in their future careers. Fashion Program students get to choose their own Fashion Electives and therefore may have simply chosen to take courses that were not helpful later in life.

Research Goal 4, what were the strengths of Old Dominion's Fashion Program? Fifteen of the 18 respondents, 83.33%, responded to Question 11. Three respondents, 16.66%, did not respond to the question. Eight respondents, 44.44%, stated the major strength of the program was the instructors and their level of knowledge of the fashion industry. Two instructors who were mentioned were Dr. Threlfall and Mrs. Sharon Davis. Two respondents, 11.11%, said the major strength was the hands-on projects in the program. In conclusion, the major strengths of the fashion program at Old Dominion University are the knowledgeable instructors and the availability of the instructors to meet with students. Both of these characteristics help to make the program very student

friendly. Hands-on experiences were another asset of the program. The other major strength of the program was the business content of the courses along with the work experience gained during the internship.

Research Goal 5, did completing a degree in Fashion at Old Dominion University improve the student's chances for career growth in the fashion industry? One respondent, 5.55%, strongly agreed that completing a degree in Fashion enhanced their chances for career growth. Twelve of the respondents, 66.66%, agreed that completing their degree helped them enhance their opportunity for career growth. Three of the respondents, 16.66%, were undecided about the effect of degree completion on career growth potential. Two respondents, 11.11%, disagreed that completing their degree helped them to further their career. The mean score was 3.66, determining the respondents agreed the program helped them enhance their opportunities for career growth. In conclusion, the alumni felt completing a degree in Occupational and Technical Studies enhanced their chances for career growth. Therefore the Fashion Program must have given graduates the skills and knowledge needed to advance in the career of their choice.

Research Goal 6, what recommendations did the graduates have to improve the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University? Fifteen of the respondents, 83.33%, answered Question 12. Three of the respondents suggested the addition of design and construction courses as well as additional visual merchandising and display courses. Three of the respondents recommended improving the internship course to better prepare the students for the workforce. Two of the respondents suggested a more hands-on approach to the industry as an improvement. In conclusion, the findings support that in order to improve the current program several areas must be addressed. Suggestions

include the addition of more fashion design oriented coursework and visual merchandising oriented coursework. Courses need to increase the amount of work experience graduates have before going out into the business world in order to better prepare the graduates.

Research Goal 7, what were the graduates minor or cluster at Old Dominion University? Ten of the respondents, 55.55%, minored in marketing. One of the respondents, 5.55%, minored in Sociology. Seven of the respondents, 38.88%, did not answer the question. In conclusion, the minors of the graduates played a small role in their future occupations based on the study findings. Two of the graduates were employed in the marketing field. Only 11.11% of respondents were employed using their minor, while 61.11% of respondents were employed in their major after graduation. Therefore, the respondent's major was a much better predictor of their future career path than their minor or cluster.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. The curriculum for the Old Dominion University Fashion Program should include increased emphasis on hand-on real world problems. Providing real world problems in instruction would lead to enhanced learning retention among the graduates. It would produce graduates with more real world skills needed in the work place.
2. The curriculum for the Old Dominion University Fashion Program should include an expanded form of the internship in order to give graduates more real world

experience. The internship requirements should be raised to either two internships or 1000 hours to be completed during the sophomore and junior year in the program. Upon graduation this real world experience again would help ease the transition into the workforce.

3. The curriculum for the Old Dominion University Fashion Program should include more design and display coursework. In the study, Fashion Program alumni felt that the program was too business oriented and did not provide enough fashion courses to meet the needs of the graduates. The addition of more design and display coursework would make the curriculum more fashion based than business based.
4. There should be a follow-up survey given to graduates one year, three years, and five years from graduation in order to better determine the success of the graduates. More intense evaluations of the program will ensure that the needed changes can be implemented into the curriculum to keep Old Dominion University's Fashion Program competitive with the fashion industry.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Occupational and Technical Studies Fashion Program Follow-up Study 1998- 2003

Please answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box.

1. Are you employed in the fashion industry?

	Yes		No
--	-----	--	----

2. If no, were you employed in the fashion industry after graduation?

	Yes		No
--	-----	--	----

Position title: _____

3. What is your current employment status?

	Buyer		Assistant Buyer
	Manager		Assistant Manager
	Merchandiser		Visual Merchandiser
	Marketing		Other

Other (please specify) _____

4. What was your minor or cluster at Old Dominion University?

Please answer the following questions by choosing a response that reflects your feelings from the following choices: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Undecided, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

5. The required major course for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion prepared me for my career in the fashion industry.

SA A U D SD

6. The elective course offered for the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University prepared me for my career in the fashion industry.

SA A U D SD

7. Completing my degree in Occupation and Technical Studies with a fashion emphasis helped to enhance my opportunity for career growth.

SA A U D SD

8. I have directly used skills or knowledge gained from Occupational and Technical required courses on the job.

SA A U D SD

Please write your answers to the following questions.

9. What courses in your opinion were the most important courses in the program?

10. What courses need to be added to the curriculum in order to better serve future graduates?

11. What were the strengths of Old Dominions Fashion Program in your opinion?

12. What recommendations do you have for improving Old Dominion's Fashion Program?

APPENDIX B

October 4, 2006

Dear,

As a graduate from Old Dominion's Occupational and Technical Studies Fashion Program, we are seeking your assistance in completing a follow-up survey of Fashion alumni. This survey collects important and useful information for making improvements to the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University.

The surveys are coded in order to identify non-responders. Your information will be kept confidential and your name will not be identifiable in the results. By you completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate. Participation is voluntary.

As a graduate of the Fashion Program you have the first hand experience to tell the department how well your degree has prepared you for your current position. With your completion of this survey the Occupational and Technical Studies Department will be able to make changes to the curriculum. This is your chance to make an impact of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. The purpose of this survey is to find ways that the Fashion Program can better prepare students for the workforce.

Please complete and return the enclosed survey in the self addressed envelope provided. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey please feel free to contact me. My email address is axdorsey@odu.edu and my phone number is (757) 683- 4305.

Sincerely,

Allison L. Dorsey
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Fashion Program

APPENDIX C

October 18, 2006

Dear,

As a graduate from Old Dominion's Occupational and Technical Studies Fashion Program, we are seeking your assistance in completing a follow-up survey of Fashion alumni. This survey collects important and useful information for making improvements to the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. Without your completion of this survey we will not have graduate input to help us grow the Fashion Program.

The surveys are coded in order to identify non-responders. Your information will be kept confidential and your name will not be identifiable in the results. By you completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate. Participation is voluntary.

As a graduate of the Fashion Program you have the first hand experience to tell the department how well your degree has prepared you for your current position. With your completion of this survey the Occupational and Technical Studies Department will be able to make changes to the curriculum. This is your chance to make an impact of the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. The purpose of this survey is to find ways that the Fashion Program can better prepare students for the workforce.

Please complete and return the enclosed survey in the self addressed envelope provided. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey please feel free to contact me. My email address is axdorsey@odu.edu and my phone number is (757) 683- 4305. Thank you for taking the time to help the Occupational and Technical Studies Program improve our program offerings.

Sincerely,

Sharon R. Davis
Occupational and Technical Studies
Fashion Merchandising

Allison L. Dorsey
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Fashion Program

APPENDIX D

November 1, 2006

Dear,

I need your help in gathering data about your experience in the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. We need more information to make sound recommendations to the department concerning the addition of new courses for the growing fashion program. As a graduate from Old Dominion's Occupational and Technical Studies Fashion Program, we are seeking your assistance in completing a follow-up survey of Fashion alumni. This survey collects important and useful information for making improvements to the Fashion Program at Old Dominion University. If you feel that you have been sent this survey in error please write remove from the survey list on the top of the survey and return it in the no postage-required envelope.

The surveys are coded in order to identify non-responders. Your information will be kept confidential and your name will not be identifiable in the results. By you completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate. Participation is voluntary.

Please complete and return the enclosed survey in the self addressed envelope provided. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey please feel free to contact me. My email address is axdorsey@odu.edu and my phone number is (757) 683- 4305.

Sincerely,

Sharon R. Davis
Occupational and Technical Studies
Fashion Merchandising

Allison L. Dorsey
Graduate Teaching Assistant
Fashion Program