

Research Briefs

KEY FINDINGS

- 94 percent of BAT graduates are employed.
- 100 percent of BAT graduates agree that there is good communication between faculty and students.
- 98 percent of BAT graduates believe that “faculty were willing” to take the time to discuss their academic performance.
- 95 percent of BAT graduates would re-enroll in the same program if they had to do it again

IMPLICATIONS

For Practice:

- Continue to administer the exit survey to evaluate and assess graduate perceptions about the BAT programs.
- Modify the survey questions to include bachelor degree competencies in the core curriculum and in content areas.

For Policy:

- Continue development of regionally needed BAT degrees.
- Use the survey data to confirm the quality and augment support for new programs.

For Research:

- Trend analysis can be applied as the exit survey continues to be administered.
- Use triangulation with other existing qualitative and quantitative data regarding the quality of education received from the BAT programs.

An Analysis of the Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT) Exit Survey 2009

Recent Graduates’ Opinions of the BAT Program

As part of South Texas College’s (STC) BAT programs’ continuing effort to evaluate and assess the quality of education, the BAT Exit Survey was administered to give recent graduates an opportunity to evaluate their experiences and impressions of the program and to provide information to help understand the development of students as well as their opinions concerning their educational experiences. The results of the survey were consistently positive across all areas of inquiry. When asked “If you could take college over, would you select the same program you are completing?” 95 percent of respondents answered yes meaning an overwhelming majority were satisfied with their programs.

Background

Since its inception in fall of 2005, the BAT programs’ rate of enrollment and graduation have grown exponentially (365 percent and 50 percent respectively) making it evident that there is a need for more bachelor programs at STC. In order to ensure that the current BAT programs are of the highest quality, this study was designed collaboratively by Research and Analytical Services (RAS) and the BAT Division to measure the extent to which BAT graduates perceive what they have learned. There are four areas of inquiry: employment or status after graduation, satisfaction with instruction, satisfaction with student-faculty interaction, and satisfaction with mentoring. Out of 75 in the graduating class at the time, 68 completed the online exit survey during the months of April and May of 2009. Four surveys were excluded because they were incomplete yielding a response rate of 85% (64 out of 75).

Purpose of Study

The survey was designed to serve

two purposes: to give recent graduates an opportunity to evaluate and express their experiences and impressions of the BAT programs; and to provide information to help STC understand the development of students as well as their opinions concerning their educational experiences while enrolled in the BAT programs.

Methodology

The survey design was conducive to the research methodology leading the respondent from general to very specific questions. Analyses were also conducted in that order. First, percent of frequencies for polar (yes/no) questions were observed. Then, the Likert-type scale questions were analyzed by looking at the frequencies of levels of agreement and scale means by giving each of these levels a number value (Strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree=1). Finally, these scale questions were grouped by area of inquiry and level of agreement and scale mean were analyzed.

Research Questions

The research questions included, but not limited to, the following:

- Are BAT graduates employed, and or what are their impressions of the BAT programs relative to employment?
- Are they satisfied with the instruction they received while in the program?
- Are they satisfied with the level of interaction with program faculty?
- Are the BAT faculty supportive in offering guidance to their students?

Key Findings

Because of the overall positive responses, linear relationships, or correlations, between any of the questions on the survey were disregarded as unreliable due to the positive skew, or right-skewed distribution.

Employment or Status After Graduation

Results from the survey indicate that 94 percent of the recent BAT graduates that responded were currently employed. Furthermore, 94 percent agreed that course work from STC helped them to

An Analysis of the Bachelor of Applied Technology (BAT) Exit Survey 2009 (cont.)

improve their current job while 92 percent believed the education they received from their program met their expectations, and 95 percent concurred that they would re-enroll in

the same program if they had to do it again (see Table 1). Accordingly, this high satisfaction level gives clear evidence that these students' educational and related occupational expectations were achieved. Based on their BAT degree,

78 percent were confident that they expected to change jobs. While 62 percent responded that they plan to enroll in a graduate level program, 60 percent of them specified the name of the graduate school they planned to attend in the follow-up comment question. (Baylor

University, Lamar University, Sam Houston State University, Texas A & M University, and The University of Texas are just a few mentioned.) Therefore, it is apparent that having attained a four year degree is an incentive to acquire a graduate level degree.

Instruction

For all three of the instruction area questions together, the majority (96 percent) of BAT graduates responded (with responses of

"Strongly Agree" and "Agree") that they received a well delivered and quality education (see Table 2).

Student-Faculty Interaction

This area of inquiry earned the highest

cated that "Faculty were helpful and supportive" when they searched for employment. Virtually all of the respondents (98 percent) believed that "faculty were willing" to take the time to discuss their academic performance.

Table 1

Employment or Status After Graduation	Yes	No
Are you currently employed?	93.5%	6.5%
Did having course work from STC help you get your current job?	54.8%	45.2%
Did the course work from STC help you to improve your current job?	93.5%	6.5%
Do you expect to change jobs based on your BAT degree from STC?	75.8%	24.2%
Do you currently have a job offer:	24.2%	75.8%
Do you expect to receive a promotion based on your BAT degree from STC?	59.7%	40.3%
Did the education you received in the Bachelor Programs meet your expectations?	91.8%	8.2%
If you could take college over, would you select the same program you are completing?	95.1%	4.9%
Are you planning to enroll in a graduate program?	62.3%	37.7%

Table 2

Likert Scale Questions by Area of Inquiry	% Strongly Agree/Agree	4 Point Scale Mean
Instruction		
Courses listed in the degree plans are offered frequently enough for timely completion of degree requirements.	95.0%	3.37
The courses I took were well taught.	98.4%	3.38
Faculty members were well qualified to teach their courses.	95.0%	3.40
Aggregate	96.1%	3.38
Student-Faculty Interaction		
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding student needs.	96.6%	3.6
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding concerns.	95.0%	3.55
There was good communication between faculty and students regarding suggestions.	100.0%	3.63
There were many opportunities outside the classroom for interaction between students and faculty.	96.7%	3.57
Aggregate	97.1%	3.59
Mentoring		
Faculty were helpful and supportive in my search for professional employment.	86.7%	3.23
Faculty were willing to meet with me to discuss my academic performance.	98.3%	3.55
Aggregate	92.5%	3.39

percentage of agreement (97 percent). All of the graduates (100 percent) agreed that "There was good communication between faculty and students regarding suggestions." The majority also agreed that there were opportunities outside the classroom to meet with faculty members about their needs and concerns.

Mentoring

As mentioned earlier, a large proportion of BAT graduates are employed. Comparatively, it is worthy of noting that a near equal proportion (87 percent) indi-

Implications for Further Research

Now that there is baseline data, the BAT Division should continue administering the exit survey to evaluate and assess their graduates on a periodic basis so trend analysis can be applied. Additionally, the survey questions should be modified to closer address whether graduates have acquired basic intellectual competencies in both program specific and in the core curriculum: Reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy.