

Research Briefs

KEY FINDINGS

- 24 associate level and 20 certificate level programs within the BT division are represented in survey responses.
- 58% of BT graduates are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in a college/university since graduating.
- 91% of BT graduates furthering their education state that their preparation at STC was as good or better than their peers'.
- 98% of BT graduates say that they would attend STC again, if they had to start over.
- 69% are employed in a field directly or somewhat related to their major.
- 98% say that they have good or very good preparation for their jobs.

IMPLICATIONS

For Practice:

- Increase alignment of programs with four year degree requirements and job related skill-sets

For Policy / Procedure:

- Establish the Graduate Follow-Up Survey as an annual effort.

For Research:

- Consider additional skills, qualities and learning outcomes that can be used to measure the preparedness of the graduates for workplace and continued education.

An Analysis of the Status and Opinions of South Texas College's BT 2008-09 Graduates

In order to ensure that South Texas College (STC) is producing quality graduates that are able to find employment and/or successfully continue their educational endeavors after graduation, STC conducted a Graduate Follow-Up Survey of its 2008-09 graduates. Disaggregation of this data has allowed STC to take a closer look at how well STC graduates from specific divisions are being prepared to enter the workforce or continue their education. Findings suggest that, overall, graduates from STC's Business and Technology (BT) division had positive feelings concerning their preparation for continuing their education and being successfully employed.

Background

The 2008-09 Graduate Follow-Up Survey was an attempt by STC to collect graduates' opinions of their college experience and its contribution to their successful employment or continued education. This year the survey methodology changed from previous years to include a random stratified telephone survey in efforts to increase the response rate and gain a broader coverage of program representation. As a result of this these efforts a total of 868 (40% of the total 2147 graduates for the 2008-09 year) responses were collected. These responses were highly comprehensive across academic disciplines including 80 distinct program degree combinations (88% representation). These procedures have allowed researchers to disaggregate survey results in efforts to examine responses from specific divisions within STC.

Of the 868 total Graduate

Follow-up responses, 222 were from the BT division. These responses were also highly representative of programs and award types within the BT division, with 20 certificate programs and 24 associate programs represented. This report presents findings based on responses collected

from graduates within the BT division. (See the research brief on the [2008-09 Graduate Follow-up](#) for more information regarding this study.)

Findings

Due to the categorical nature of the data, percent frequency distributions were used to organize the responses to the questions. The overall positive survey results indicate that STC and the BT division are succeeding in

Table 1—Further Education of STC BT Graduates

Have you enrolled at a college/university since graduating from STC?		
	Count	%
Yes, I am currently enrolled in one or more colleges/univ.	115	52
Yes, but I am not currently enrolled in any college/univ.	13	6
No, but plan to.	57	26
No, and don't plan to.	37	17
TOTAL	222	100
Names of colleges/univ. STC graduates attended:		
University of Texas - Pan American	38	40
STC	51	54
Other	6	6
TOTAL	95	100
At the first school I attended after graduating from STC, I felt		
better prepared than most of my classmates.	62	56
as prepared as most of my classmates.	39	35
not as prepared as most of my classmates.	7	6
much less prepared	2	2
Unknown	18	N/A
TOTAL	128	100
If you could start college over again, would you choose to attend STC?		
Yes	213	98
No	5	2
Unknown	4	N/A
TOTAL	222	100

providing BT certificate and associate degree holders with skills needed to enhance the quality of their lives.

Further Education

A total of 58% of the respondents claimed they were currently enrolled or had been enrolled in a college or university since graduating from STC; another 26% declared that they were not enrolled but were planning on doing so. Out of

the 95 respondents who identified which institution they had enrolled in since graduating, 40% were enrolled at the University of Texas-Pan American, 54% at STC and 6% mentioned other institutions (i.e. Texas A&M Kingsville and University of Phoenix). Concerning their preparation to further their education, 56% of these graduates felt that they were better

STC again if they could start college over (See Table 1).

Employment

A large proportion (72%) of the respondents stated they were currently employed.

Nine percent of the respondents who stated they were currently unemployed reported to have been employed at some point since graduating from STC. Of the

those students who are continuing their education and therefore, likely to be working only part-time.

Regarding the preparation for their careers, 98% of graduates who had been, or were currently, employed indicated having “Good” or “Very Good” preparation. The responses were also highly positive when asked about their specific skill levels (See Table 3).

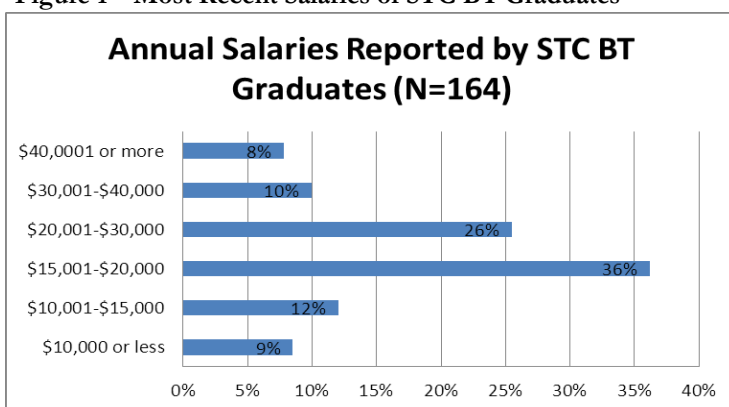
Implications for Research and Practice

The Graduate Follow-Up Surveys contribute to continuous quality improvement efforts at STC. By means of the analyses of the data collected through these surveys, STC is able to answer, to a certain degree, the question “How well our graduates are prepared for employment and further education?” Disaggregation of this data further allows researchers to assess how well STC is preparing graduates from specific divisions. Results suggest that STC BT graduates feel well prepared to enter the workforce and continue their education. However, focusing on moving responses concerning training and skill sets (see Table 3) from “good” to “very good” will increase the excellence of BT graduate preparation. The Graduate Follow-Up Survey will be administered annually in order to continually assess the impact STC is having on its students.

Table 3—Training and Skills of STC BT Graduates

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
How well did STC train you for your most recent job?	45%	53%	1%	1%
Managerial skills	29%	69%	2%	0%
Critical thinking skills	40%	58%	2%	0%
Leadership skills	36%	61%	4%	0%
Communication skills	46%	52%	2%	0%
Technological skills	43%	53%	4%	0%
Problem solving skills	47%	52%	1%	0%

Figure 1—Most Recent Salaries of STC BT Graduates



prepared than most of their classmates at the schools they were attending and 35% felt as prepared. Lastly, an overwhelming majority (98%) of respondents said they would choose to attend

respondents who either had been or were currently employed, 44% reported holding jobs directly related to their majors and 18% reported holding a job somewhat related to their major. Also worth mentioning

Table 2—Employment of STC BT Graduates

Are you currently employed/self-employed?			
	Count	%	
Yes	159	72	
No	62	28	
Unknown	1	N/A	
TOTAL	222	100	
Have you been employed since graduating from STC?			
Yes	5	9	
No	52	91	
Unknown	5	N/A	
TOTAL	62	100	
How is your most recent job related to your major at STC			
It is/was directly related to my major	71	44	
It is/was somewhat related to my major	41	25	
It is/was not related to my major	50	31	
Unknown	2	N/A	
TOTAL	164	100	
How long did it take you to find a job after graduating from STC?			
I was hired before graduating	98	62	
I was hired within three months after graduating	44	28	
I was hired 4 to 6 months after graduating	15	10	
Unknown	7	N/A	
TOTAL	164	100	

is that 62% were employed before finishing their studies at STC; another 28% acquired jobs within three months after graduating (See Table 2).

The salaries of STC BT graduates are presented in Figure 1 (adjusted to annual if they reported otherwise). A large majority (62%) of respondents reported earning between \$15,001-\$30,000 annually. It is important to note that respondents include