

Research Briefs

KEY FINDINGS

- 17 program/degree combinations within NAH are represented in survey responses.
- 33% of NAH graduates are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in a college/university since graduating.
- 98% of NAH graduates say that they would attend STC again, if they had to start over.
- 82% are employed in a field directly related to their major.
- 95% said they had good or very good preparation for their jobs.
- 55% reported making an annual salary of more than \$40,000.

IMPLICATIONS

For Practice:

- Increase alignment of programs with specific careers related to the field of study.

For Policy / Procedure:

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

For Research:

- Consider additional skills/qualities that can be used to measure the preparedness of graduates for workplace and continued education.
- Use student learning outcome data to refine managerial, technological, and leadership skills.

An Analysis of the Status and Opinions of South Texas College's NAH 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 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 Nursing and Allied Health (NAH) division had high rates of employment, high annual salaries and thought their education at STC prepared them well.

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 study employed a telephone survey in attempts to increase the response rate and to gain a broader coverage of programs than previous attempts. As a result of these efforts, a total of 868 usable responses (40% of the total 2147 graduates for the 2008-09 school year) were collected. 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 opinions of graduates from each division within STC. Of the 868 total Graduate Follow-up responses, 217 were from NAH. These responses were also highly comprehensive with 17 NAH program/degree combinations represented. This report presents findings of responses from graduates within

the NAH 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 positive survey

results indicate that STC and the NAH division are succeeding in providing NAH graduates with the skills to enhance the quality of their lives as well as the lives of others through quality medical care.

Further Education

A total of 33% of the respondents claimed they were currently enrolled or had been enrolled in a college or university since graduating from STC; another 44% declared that they were not enrolled but were planning on doing

Table 1—Further Education of STC NAH Graduates

Have you enrolled at a college/university since graduating from STC?		
	Count	%
Yes, I am currently enrolled in one or more colleges/univ.	61	28
Yes, but I am not currently enrolled in any college/univ.	10	5
No, but plan to.	95	44
No, and don't plan to.	51	23
TOTAL	217	100
Names of colleges/univ. STC graduates attended:		
University of Texas - Pan American	2	4
STC	40	82
Other	7	14
Unknown	22	N/A
TOTAL	71	100
At the first school I attended after graduating from STC, I felt		
better prepared than most of my classmates.	27	47
as prepared as most of my classmates.	30	52
not as prepared as most of my classmates.	1	2
Unknown	13	N/A
TOTAL	71	100
If you could start college over again, would you choose to attend STC?		
Yes	205	98
No	5	2
Unknown	7	N/A
TOTAL	217	100

so. Out of the 49 respondents who identified which institution they had enrolled in since graduating, 82% were enrolled at STC, 4% at the University of Texas-Pan American, and 14% mentioned other institutions (i.e. University of North Dakota, Texas A&M Kingsville, University of Texas at Brownsville).

Concerning the preparation such students received to further pursue their education, 47% of the graduates felt that they were better prepared than most of

Holding Jobs Directly Related to Their Major

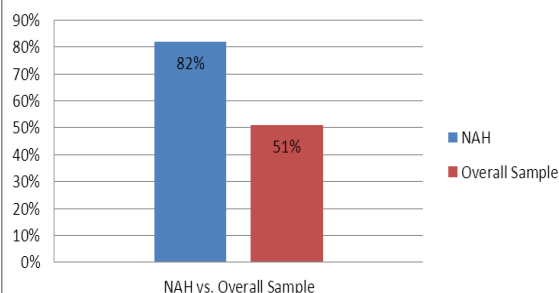


Figure 1—Graduates reporting holding jobs directly related to their major

their classmates at the schools they were attending and 52% felt as prepared. Lastly, an overwhelming majority (98%) of respondents said they would choose to attend STC again if they could start college over (See Table 1).

Employment

A large proportion (82%) of the respondents stated they were currently employed. Twenty two percent of the respondents who stated they were currently unemployed reported to have been employed at some point since graduating from STC. Of the respondents who either had been or were currently employed, 82% reported holding jobs directly related to their majors.

Table 2—Employment of STC NAH Graduates

Are you currently employed/self-employed?			
	Count	%	
Yes	177	82	
No	37	17	
Unknown	3	N/A	
TOTAL	217	100	
Have you been employed since graduating from STC?			
Yes	8	22	
No	29	78	
TOTAL	37	100	
How is your most recent job related to your major at STC			
It is/was directly related to my major	145	82	
It is/was somewhat related to my major	10	6	
It is/was not related to my major	22	12	
Unknown	8	N/A	
TOTAL	185	100	
How long did it take you to find a job after graduating from STC?			
I was hired before graduating	71	40	
I was hired within three months after graduating	95	55	
I was hired 4 to 6 months after graduating	9	5	
Unknown	10	N/A	
TOTAL	185	100	

This response is considerably higher than that of the overall 2008-09 Graduate Follow-up sample (51%) (See Figure 1). Also worth mentioning is that 40% were employed before finishing their studies at STC and another 55% acquired jobs within three months after graduating (See Table 2). The salaries of STC NAH graduates are presented in Figure 2 (adjusted to

annual if they reported otherwise). More than half (55%) of respondents reported to earn more than \$40,000 annually.

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 Practice and Research

It is clear that NAH division is producing quality graduates in the healthcare field that are serving a vital need in the community. Results of this survey demonstrate that NAH graduates have high rates of employment within their field of study, high annual salaries and feel well prepared to perform their required job duties. STC should always seek to further improve the education it

provides its students. Therefore, efforts should be made to determine how STC can change the perceptions of students’ skill levels from “Good” to “Very Good”, particularly in managerial, leadership, and technological skills (see Table 3). The use of student learning outcomes data can be utilized in this regard

The Graduate Follow-Up Surveys contribute to continuous quality improvement efforts at STC. Analyses of the

Table 3—Training and Skills of STC NAH Graduates

	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
How well did STC train you for your most recent job?	60%	38%	1%	1%
Managerial skills	32%	67%	1%	0%
Critical thinking skills	54%	45%	1%	0%
Leadership skills	45%	54%	1%	0%
Communication skills	54%	45%	0%	0%
Technological skills	37%	59%	3%	1%
Problem solving skills	50%	48%	2%	0%

data collected through these surveys allows STC to answer, to a certain degree, the question “How well our graduates are prepared for employment and further education?” Disaggregation of this data further enables STC to assess how well STC is preparing graduates from specific divisions. In order to continually assess the impact STC is having on the lives of its graduates, the Graduate Follow-Up Survey will be administered annually.

Figure 2—Most Recent Salaries of STC NAH Graduates

