

## Troy University 2006-07 Graduating Student Survey Report

### Executive Summary

As an annual effort of institutional effectiveness, Troy University Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness conducted the *Troy University Graduating Student Survey* on all campuses of the University in Fall 2006 through Summer 2007. The purpose of this survey is to identify student satisfaction with their experiences at Troy University, recognize student developments as a result of Troy education, and find out areas that need to be improved. Data collected in this survey are used to help the University strengthen its academic programs, better serve the needs of its students, and become more effective and efficient in accomplishing its mission and goals.

On a continuous basis, data for the *Graduating Student Survey* is collected in Fall, Spring, and Summer each year using an online survey program. The survey can be accessed either through a survey link sent to the students via email or from the IRPE website. The results are reported annually after summer data collection is completed.

The questionnaire for the survey contained 33 questions. The first 22 questions ask for information regarding students' demographics, academics, employment, and financial aid. Question 32 is seeking information regarding student involvement in student organizations or social activities and Question 33 is encouraging respondents to give additional comments on the University. Questions 23 – 31 of the survey, with a high reliability, focus on measuring students' perceptions about and satisfaction with their Troy experiences.

For data analysis, descriptive methods were used for the overall university as well as for each individual campus. Questions 23 to 31 were tabulated and items were ranked based on the means of the items so that comparison, if necessary, could be made between campuses or between campus and the overall university. Questions 23, 24, and 25, which contain measures in 60 areas, are analyzed based on the factors defined from the same measures in the previous survey. Importantly, comparison was made between 05-06 and 06-07 responses to identify any possible improvement, as well as between campuses to explore in detail areas where improvement efforts can be focused. In the end, frequency tables for all survey questions were provided as appendices for the overall responses as well as for each of the campuses.

### Major Findings

The *Troy University Graduating Student Survey 2006 – 07* started in Fall 2006 and continued through Summer 2007. During this time, students who intended to graduate in Fall 2006, Spring 2007, and Summer 2007 were emailed the link to the survey by term of graduation (three times). By the time data collection was closed in the middle of July 2007, 1,936 responses were received, of which 1,934 were determined to be valid and used for data analyses. The characteristics of the survey respondents were determined to be similar to those of the total graduates of the year although some variation existed. Therefore, the responses to the survey could be considered representative of the ideas and opinions of the students who were graduating in Fall 2006, Spring 2007, and Summer 2007.

In the 2006 – 07 academic year, Troy University awarded 5,774 degrees, with 2,208 (38%) in Fall 2006, 2,468 (42.7%) in Spring 2007, and 1,098 (19%) in Summer 2007. The 1,936 respondents to the survey represented a 34% survey participation rate, of which 43% graduated from Fall 2006, 30% from Spring 2007, and 14% from Summer 2007.

### Demographic Information

Of the 1,934 respondents, 69% were female (62% of the total were female), 56% were White vs. 34% Black (52% White vs. 36% Black of the Total), and 72% were aged 25 or older (80% of the total were over 24). While the majority (94%) were US citizens, the 6% international student participants represented 24 countries and regions in various parts of the world. Of all the respondents, 37% were residents of Alabama (39% of the total were Alabama residents), 21% were from Florida (11% of the total were from Florida) and 18% from Georgia (26% of the total were from Georgia). On the other hand, about 33% of the respondents were graduating from Troy Campus, 36% were University College students, and students from Dothan, Phenix City, and Montgomery made up about 8%, 13%, and 9% of the respondents respectively. Additionally, University College students responded from over 40 different sites.

### Academic Information

Academically, 55% of the respondents were expecting to receive a Bachelor's degree and 36% would be awarded a Master's degree, while the Associate and Education Specialist degree recipients making up around 6% and 2% of the respondents respectively. (Of all graduates, 42% received Bachelor's degrees, 49% received Masters' degrees, 8% received Associate degrees, and 2% received Education Specialist degrees.) About 28% of the respondents were planning to graduate from the College of Arts and Sciences, 33% from Business, approximately 26% from Education, 10% from the College of Health and Human Services, and only about 3% from the College of Communication & Fine Arts.

According to the responses, approximately 60% of the students had transferred credit hours from other institutions and over half of them transferred more than 30 credit hours. While attending Troy University, 60% of the students had taken online courses, and 47% reported that their cumulative GPA's were between 3.5 and 4.0, and 32% had GPA's between 3.0 and 3.49. Of the 1,934 respondents, about 53% indicated that they had studied at Troy University for 2-3 years, while the longest time a student studied at Troy University was over 10 years (1%) and the shortest was just 1 year (17%), with an overall average of 2.86 years, 2.30 years for graduate students and 3.21 years for undergraduate students.

### Employment and Plan after Graduation

Approximately 83% of the respondents reported that they worked while attending Troy University with over 70% working full-time (40 hours or over). Upon graduation, about 42% were planning to work in areas related to their majors at Troy University, 19% would continue to work in the jobs they had already, and approximately 28% were going to continue their education. The survey also found that about 40% of the respondents would pursue a Master's degree after they graduated, 24% would study for a doctoral degree, around 6% would seek an

educational specialist degree, and another 6% would pursue a professional degree as their ultimate goal in education.

### Financial Aid Information

The survey found that over 80% of the graduating students had received financial aid of one kind or another while going to school at Troy University. While the financial aid options varied, half of the respondents (50%) had received student loans, 21% obtained grants, 16% had scholarships or graduate assistantships, and about 15% received tuition assistance. Additionally, about 14% received a third party pay or other kind of financial aid, mostly from military or VA benefits. Approximately 20% of the respondents did not receive any financial aid.

### Student satisfaction

- Student self-rated development (Report 1 – Q23)

Eighteen items related to knowledge, skills, and abilities were provided for the students to rate their development as a result of Troy University education. From the 18 items, two factors were identified - ***Intellectual Development*** and ***Leadership Development***. In comparison, the 06-07 and 05-06 respondents shared about the same opinions regarding their development in the areas measured, with an average rating for ***Intellectual Development*** as 4.12 for 06-07 vs. 4.09 for 05-06 and a mean rating for ***Leadership Development*** as 4.27 for 06-07 vs. 4.26 for 05-06, all in a 5-point scale with 1 as “Poor” and 5 as “Excellent.”

As indicated in Table 1, the majority of the areas measured for student ***Intellectual Development*** were rated high above 4.00 and 80% or more of the students rated their development in these areas as either “Excellent” or “Good.” In addition, almost all ratings on areas related to ***Intellectual Development*** were slightly better than those in 05-06 survey even though the difference is not significant.

Table 1. Ratings on areas related to ***Intellectual Development***: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	Mean	Excellent/ Good	Mean
Critical thinking skills	91%	4.28	90%	4.28
Problem solving skills	88%	4.26	89%	4.26
Reading Skills	88%	4.26	87%	4.26
Writing skills	87%	4.26	87%	4.21
Research skills	87%	2.24	86%	4.22
Speaking/presentation skills	83%	4.16	81%	4.12
Understanding different philosophy/culture	80%	4.09	78%	4.04
Computer technologies	80%	4.07	79%	4.07
Scientific principles & methods	73%	3.91	70%	3.86
Appreciation of the arts	68%	3.86	68%	3.83

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	Mean	Excellent/ Good	Mean
Mathematical skills	69%	3.84	66%	3.81
Overall average ratings	4.12		4.09	

Similar to the ratings on *Intellectual Development*, ratings on *Leadership Development* were also excellent. As illustrated in Table 2, more than 80% of the students gave positive ratings of either “Excellent” or “Good” to their development in the areas related to *Leadership Development*. All mean ratings for items were higher than 4.00, the factor mean was 4.28, and these were slightly higher than those found in 05-06 survey.

Table 2. Ratings on areas related to *Leadership Development*: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	M	Excellent/ Good	M
Planning and carrying out projects	90%	4.35	89%	4.35
Management and organizational skills	88%	4.33	88%	4.31
Strategies for applying skills in the field	88%	4.30	88%	4.28
Working collaboratively in groups	88%	4.29	86%	4.27
Time management	87%	4.28	86%	4.28
Leadership skills	86%	4.25	84%	4.21
Citizenship skills	81%	4.15	82%	4.13
Overall average ratings	4.28		4.26	

For detailed ratings on areas included in these two factors, please see Report 1.

- Student ratings for quality of education and academic support services (Report 2 – Q24)

Eighteen items were measured in terms of what students thought about the quality of education and academic support services at Troy University. Again a factor analysis identified two factors, which include *Academic Support Services* and *Instruction*. The factor *Instruction*, or *Academics*, includes areas relating to instruction and faculty and has an average rating of 4.03 for 06-07 vs. 4.02 for 05-06 respondents on a 5-point scale with 1 as “Poor” and 5 as “Excellent.”

Table 3. Ratings on areas of *Instruction*: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	M	Excellent/ Good	M
Overall quality of academic program	88%	4.25	87%	4.24
Instruction in major courses	85%	4.19	86%	4.19

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	M	Excellent/ Good	M
Instruction in general education	81%	4.08	80%	4.02
Communication between faculty and students	80%	4.08	79%	4.07
Faculty's use technologies to enhance teaching	80%	4.07	78%	4.02
Faculty accessibility	76%	4.00	76%	4.02
Course availability in your major	75%	3.98	78%	4.00
Registration procedures	74%	3.92	74%	3.90
Academic advising	70%	3.85	71%	3.86
IMPACT/New Student Orientation Program	68%	3.82	67%	3.75
Overall average ratings	4.03		4.02	

As indicated in the table above (Table 4), the majority of the students rated the areas related to *Instruction* as either “Excellent” or “Good,” which is about the same as found in the 05-06 survey. Four areas, however, were rated below 4.00 in 06-07, with the ratings on IMPACT/New Student Orientation Program and Academic Advising being the lowest. Further examination by campus (Table 4) found that Dothan and Troy students gave the lowest ratings to the new student orientation programs, Montgomery and Troy students rated academic advising the lowest, and Dothan students gave the lowest ratings on course availability and registration procedures. Ratings from Troy students were also low for registration procedures.

Table 4. Average ratings on *Instruction* by campus:

	Dothan	Mont- gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Overall quality of academic program	4.15	4.25	4.27	4.16	4.34
Instruction in major courses	4.23	4.16	4.19	4.10	4.29
Instruction in general education courses	4.02	4.12	4.14	3.88	4.26
Communication between faculty and students	4.06	4.00	4.07	4.00	4.17
Faculty's use of technologies to enhance teaching	3.99	4.09	4.11	3.93	4.20
Faculty accessibility	3.89	3.98	3.95	3.96	4.10
Course availability in your major	3.47	3.88	4.18	3.83	4.19
Registration procedures	3.49	3.86	3.97	3.72	4.20
Academic advising	3.85	3.79	3.86	3.78	3.94
IMPACT/New Student Orientation Program	3.76	3.86	3.91	3.75	3.88

The *Academic Support Services* include Library, Computer labs, Writing Center, Reading Center, Center for International Programs, etc., and the average rating for this factor is 3.82 for 06-07 and 3.85 for 05-06, relatively lower than expected. Overall, as indicated in

Table 5, no areas in *Academic Support Services* had an average rating of 4.00 or higher nor did they have ratings of “Excellent” or “Good” for more than 80% of the respondents.

Table 5. Ratings on areas related to *Academic Support Services*: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent/ Good	M	Excellent/ Good	M
Reading Center	71%	3.91	70%	3.86
Natural Science Center	70%	3.89	68%	3.86
Writing Center	70%	3.89	71%	3.89
Center for International Program	70%	3.88	69%	3.80
Testing Center	70%	3.87	70%	3.83
Computer labs	70%	3.83	71%	3.90
Library	70%	3.83	71%	3.86
Laboratory/instructional equipment	67%	3.78	69%	3.82
Overall average ratings	3.82		3.85	

However, further examination by campus showed that ratings of students from different campuses varied (Table 6). The average ratings from students in Dothan, Montgomery, Phenix City were found more likely to be better than those from Troy Campus and University College. Please be aware that only students who have used the services gave their ratings. The Reading Center, Natural Science Center, and Writing Center were rated by mostly Troy Campus students and only international students rated the Center for International Programs.

Table 6. Average ratings on *Academic Support Service* by campus:

	Dothan	Mont- gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Reading Center	4.08	4.08	4.12	3.80	3.89
Natural Science Center	4.07	4.08	4.03	3.83	3.83
Writing Center	4.03	4.15	4.12	3.78	3.89
Center for International Program	3.92	4.16	4.08	3.75	3.90
Testing Center	3.97	4.13	4.02	3.73	3.85
Computer labs	4.22	4.05	4.22	3.50	3.86
Library	3.89	4.23	3.92	3.65	3.87
Laboratory/instructional equipment	3.88	3.82	4.09	3.61	3.84

- Student satisfaction with services provided by Troy University (Report 3 – Q25)

Twenty-four offices and services of the University were measured in terms of student satisfaction. Two factors were identified. They were *Student Services* and *Administration*. *Student Services* includes such areas as Career Services, Placement Services, Student Health

Services, Recreational and Intramural Activities, Student Organizations, etc, while **Administration** includes the Admissions Office, Registrar/Records Office, Business Office, Financial Aid Office, Trojan WebExpress, and so on. Comparisons found that the participants in 06-07 and 05-06 surveys shared about the same level of satisfaction with **Student Services** and services provided by the **Administration** offices, with the overall average ratings for **Administration** being 3.96 in 06-07 and 3.93 in 05-06 ( on a 5-point scale with 1 as “Very Dissatisfied” and 5 as “Very Satisfied”).

As can be seen from Table 7, under **Administration**, Trojan WebExpress and Admissions Office were rated the best, both averaging above 4.00 (4.00 = Satisfied), with around 80% of the students feeling “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with their services. Other areas in **Administration** had relatively low ratings, below 4.00 (4.00 = Satisfied) on average, with the Financial Aid and Veteran Services offices being rated the lowest and with less than two-thirds of the students feeling satisfied with the services they provided.

Table 7. Ratings on areas related to **Administration**: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Satisfied	M	Satisfied	M
Trojan WebExpress	81%	4.08	81%	4.07
Admissions Office	78%	4.03	77%	4.01
Information Technology Services	75%	3.94	74%	3.92
Registrar/Records Office	74%	3.93	74%	3.92
Business Office	73%	3.92	73%	3.90
Veteran Services	66%	3.83	68%	3.91
Financial Aid Services	66%	3.75	63%	3.65
Overall average ratings	3.96		3.93	

Note: “Satisfied” = “Strongly Satisfied” + “Satisfied”

A breakdown by campus showed that students from Phenix City, Troy, and Montgomery had the lowest level of satisfaction with the Financial Aid Services, and the Veteran Services at Phenix City and Troy received lower ratings compared to other campuses. The findings also showed that Troy students tended to feel less satisfied with the services provided by the Registrar/Record Office, Business Office, Information Technology, and Admissions Office. University College students were found to be most satisfied regarding services provided by the administration offices compared to students from other campuses.

Table 8. Average ratings on **Administration** by campus:

	Dothan	Mont-gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Trojan WebExpress	3.96	4.27	4.12	3.90	4.21
Admissions Office	3.92	4.08	4.08	3.87	4.16
Information Technology (IT) Services	4.12	4.03	4.01	3.72	4.05
Registrar/Records Office	3.96	3.97	4.04	3.68	4.10

	Dothan	Mont-gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Business Office	4.02	4.02	3.96	3.71	4.05
Veteran Services	4.11	3.94	3.69	3.62	4.01
Financial Aid Services	3.92	3.64	3.50	3.59	4.04

In both 06-07 and 05-06 surveys, it seems that students were least satisfied with *Student Services*. As shown in Table 9, none of the areas in *Student Services* received an average rating of 4.00 or higher, and except for Buildings and Grounds, less than 70% of the students felt satisfied with the services in *Student Services*, with Parking Facilities, Housing and Residential Life, and Placement Service being the lowest. The overall average rating for 06-07 was 3.79 for 06-07 and 3.84 for 05-06,

Table 9. Ratings in *Student Services*: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Satisfied*	M	Satisfied*	M
Buildings and Grounds	74%	3.96	73%	3.93
University media	69%	3.88	70%	3.85
Safety and Security	67%	3.82	70%	3.85
Student Support Services	66%	3.81	66%	3.80
Student organizations	63%	3.77	62%	3.74
Athletic programs	63%	3.76	60%	3.70
Adaptive Needs Service	61%	3.75	61%	3.76
Bookstore service	67%	3.74	68%	3.75
Recreational and intramural activities	62%	3.74	59%	3.66
Counseling service	62%	3.70	63%	3.71
Student Health Services	60%	3.70	59%	3.67
Trojan Fitness Center	59%	3.62	57%	3.62
Career Service	58%	3.63	62%	3.70
Placement Service	55%	3.57	56%	3.59
Housing and Residential Life	54%	3.57	54%	3.54
Parking facilities	50%	3.26	48%	3.14
Overall average rating		3.79		3.84

Note: "Satisfied" = "Strongly Satisfied" + "Satisfied"

For Parking Facilities, approximately 30% of the students indicated that they were "Very Dissatisfied" or "Dissatisfied" in both 06-07 and 05-06 surveys. Further analysis found that Troy and Montgomery students were very dissatisfied with Parking Facilities and their satisfaction ratings were well below 3.00. Table 10 shows mean ratings on each of the areas related to *Student Services*. Further studies may be needed before actions are taken for improvement. Detailed ratings can be found in Report 3.



Table 10. Average ratings on *Student Services* by campus:

	Dothan	Mont-gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Buildings and Grounds	4.30	4.12	4.01	3.87	3.88
University Media	3.81	4.02	3.93	3.78	3.96
Safety and Security Services	4.01	3.93	3.88	3.70	3.88
Student Support Services (SSS)	3.80	4.08	3.77	3.68	3.88
Student organizations	3.72	3.45	3.58	3.89	3.71
Athletic programs	3.76	3.43	3.62	3.83	3.75
Adaptive Needs Services	3.83	3.72	3.76	3.65	3.91
Bookstore Services	3.58	3.68	3.70	3.71	3.88
Recreational and intramural activities	3.88	3.49	3.51	3.80	3.70
Counseling Service	3.54	3.61	3.74	3.70	3.77
Student Health Services	3.66	3.56	3.60	3.73	3.75
Trojan Fitness Center	3.68	3.31	3.63	3.65	3.66
Career Service	3.54	3.59	3.64	3.65	3.67
Placement Service	3.51	3.59	3.63	3.52	3.63
Housing and Residential Life	3.81	3.55	3.54	3.49	3.78
Parking facilities	3.49	2.89	3.90	2.67	3.95

- Student perceptions about Troy University (Report 4 – Q26)

In this section, 10 statements regarding the University in a broad sense were provided for the students to rate their agreement. As indicated in Table 11 (derived from Report 4), over 80% of the students “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the first 4 statements, indicating strong satisfaction with the academic programs and confirming the findings in Table 3 above (derived from Report 2).

Table 11. Ratings on *Student Perceptions* about Troy University: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Agree*	Mean	Agree*	Mean
The degree program in which I enrolled is valuable for me in my employment.	86%	4.18	83%	4.14
Courses in my curriculum contributed to the skills and knowledge required in my field.	86%	4.16	86%	4.14

My academic program was intellectually challenging and stimulating.	85%	4.16	85%	4.10
The goals, objectives, and requirements for my academic programs were clearly defined.	81%	4.01	82%	4.02
The tuition and fees I paid at Troy University were a worthwhile investment.	76%	3.97	76%	3.95
Troy University faculty care about students as individuals.	76%	3.96	75%	3.94
Courses were offered frequently enough for timely completion of my degree program.	75%	3.89	76%	3.90
The intellectual caliber of students in my academic program was high.	71%	3.83	69%	3.79
Troy University is responsive to the needs of its students.	69%	3.80	68%	3.78
Troy University faculty were helpful with my career plan.	65%	3.75	65%	3.74
Overall average ratings		3.97		3.95

*Note: "Agree" = "Strongly Agree" + "Agree"*

The lowest ratings in this section were “The University faculty were helpful with my career plan” (65% Agree; M=3.75) and “Troy University is responsive to the needs of its students” (69% Agree; M=3.80). (These were also the lowest rated areas in the 05-06 survey.) Course offering and student intellectual caliber were rated low as well.

The following table (Table 12) shows a breakdown by campus for the four lowest rated areas under *Student Perceptions*. Dothan students were seen more likely than students from other campuses to think low of these areas measured in this section, specially in “Courses were offered frequently enough for timely completion of my degree program,” further confirming the findings revealed in Report 2. (See details in Report 4)

Table 12. Lowest ratings on *Student Perceptions* by campus:

	Dothan	Mont-gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
Courses were offered frequently enough for timely completion of my degree program.	3.31	3.70	4.10	3.78	4.08

	Dothan	Mont-gomery	Phenix City	Troy	Univ. College
The intellectual caliber of students in my academic program was high.	3.72	3.73	3.82	3.78	3.93
Troy University is responsive to the needs of its students.	3.60	3.63	3.88	3.64	4.00
Troy University faculty were helpful with my career plan.	3.66	3.63	3.81	3.67	3.85

- Overall ratings of Troy University (Report 5 – Q27)

In Question 27, students were asked to rate their Troy preparation for employment and further education as well as to give an overall rating of their college experiences at Troy University. Over 80% of the students gave a positive rating to their overall college experiences at Troy University, with an mean rating of 4.14, while around 75% of the respondents gave a rating of either “Excellent” or “Good” to their Troy preparation for employment and for further education, with a mean = 3.95 and 4.05 respectively. The 06-07 and 05-06 graduating students shared about the same opinions in their overall ratings of the University.

Table 13. Overall ratings on Troy University: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Excellent /Good	M	Excellent /Good	M
How would you rate Troy University’s preparation of you for employment?	74%	3.95	75%	3.88
How would you rate Troy University’s preparation of you for further education?	78%	4.05	77%	3.94
What is your overall rating of your college experiences at Troy University?	81%	4.14	84%	4.07

Recommendation of Troy University (Report 6 – Q28-Q31)

Important satisfaction indicators used by colleges and universities include whether students would re-enroll in the university, re-enroll in the same academic program, and recommend their university to others. The surveys over the past two years found that over 85% of the students indicated that they would enroll in the same academic programs and attend Troy University again if they could start all over. The most important finding, which indicates student satisfaction with Troy University and academic programs, is that over 90% of the respondents would recommend Troy University and their academic programs.

Table 14. Recommendation of Troy University: 06-07 vs. 05-06

	06-07		05-06	
	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes
If you were starting over, would you enroll in the same program?	53%	34%	54%	32%
If you could start college over, would you attend Troy University again?	52%	35%	51%	38%
Would you recommend your academic program to other students?	59%	33%	59%	34%
Would you recommend Troy University to someone planning to go to college?	59%	32%	62%	32%

Implications

1. Overall, Troy University’s graduating students were satisfied with their college experiences over the years they studied at TROY. In particular, the students were satisfied with their educational experiences at the University – instruction, the quality of education, and their academic programs, specifically. Furthermore, the students thought highly of their intellectual development and leadership development as a result of their education at Troy University.
2. The survey findings that for the past two years over 85% of the graduating students would attend Troy University and enroll in the same programs again if they started over and that more than 90% would recommend Troy University and their academic programs strongly suggest that Troy University was effective in offering quality education to its students.
3. However, the *Graduating Student Survey’s* satisfaction measures have identified areas that need to be improved, especially in the areas of **Academic Support Services** and **Student Services**. Because many of the weak areas found in the 05-06 survey results still remain the same in the 06-07 survey results, University personnel (administrators, faculty, and staff) need to pay more attention to assessment information and use assessment results to improve University services.
4. Furthermore, based on survey responses, faculty should do more to help students in their career planning, the University should be more responsive to student needs, efforts should be made to raise student intellectual caliber, and more courses should be offered each term so that students can graduate as they have planned.