

Troy University Graduating Student Survey Fall 2005

The *Graduating Student Survey* is administered online to students who have filed their Intent to Graduate form. The results presented here are for 606 students who graduated in fall 2005. These results are provided to assist in planning for Troy University. Additional information can be obtained by calling the IRPE office at (334) 670-3640. The major report from the *Graduating Student Survey* will be an annual report and will provide information for students in fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006. *Graduating Student Survey* reports will be published on the IRPE website in fall 2006.

Executive Summary

In Fall 2005, Troy University's Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness began administering the *Troy University Graduating Student Survey* on a continuous basis. The purpose of this *Survey* is to identify graduating students' satisfaction with their experiences at Troy University, recognize students' development as a result of their Troy education, and find out areas of the University that need to be improved. Data collected in this *Survey* is 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.

Using an online survey program, data for the *Graduating Student Survey* is collected in Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters each year, and results will be reported annually after Summer data collection is completed. As a pilot study of the *Survey*, an initial analysis was performed on the fall 2005 data, and a preliminary report was produced of the results of this data analysis. However, all future reports will be published annually in the fall semester and will be based on the data collected over the previous year.

The *Graduating Student Survey* was developed as a result of joint efforts, with the IRPE Office initiating the questionnaire and with University constituencies providing feedback for revisions. The final *Survey* contained 33 questions with the first 22 questions asking for the respondents' demographic, academic, employment, and financial aid information; with Question 32 seeking information regarding student involvement in University organizations or social activities; and with Question 33 encouraging respondents to give additional comments regarding the University.

Questions 23 – 31 of the *Survey* are designed to seek students' opinions, perceptions, and satisfaction with their Troy experiences. Based on the Fall 2005 responses to the *Survey*, a reliability test was conducted and found that Question 23 – 27 each had a reliability score of .91 or higher, and Questions 28-31 together had a reliability score of .85. This level of reliability suggests high reliability of the *Survey* questions and information collected through this *Survey*.

For the analysis of the Fall 2005 data, descriptive methods were used for the overall University as well as for each individual campus. Questions 23 to 31 were tabulated, and items in those questions were ranked based on the means of the items so that comparison could be made between campuses or between individual campuses and the overall university. 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. Only the overall responses for Troy University will be provided in this *Fact Book* summation.

Major Findings

The *Troy University Graduating Student Survey* started in fall 2005. On September 23, 2005, the *Survey* was published online, and the link to the *Survey* was emailed to students who intended to graduate in fall 2005 and spring 2006. With follow-up emails sent every other week thereafter, over 1,100 responses were received by the end of 2005 via the online program. Of all the responses, 606 were from students who were graduating in fall 2005, and based on the 606 students, data elements were analyzed and the current report was produced.

Demographic information

Most of the respondents were female (73%), White (60%), and over the age of 24 (70%). While the majority of respondents were US citizens, three percent (3%) were international students representing 13 countries in various parts of the world. Of the American students, 50% were residents of Alabama, 18% were from Georgia, and 13% had their homes in Florida. Approximately 30% of the students were graduating from Troy Campus, 25% were University College students, 13% were from Dothan, 15% were from Phenix City, and 18% were from Montgomery. Additionally, University College students responded from 20 different sites.

Academic information

Academically, approximately 60% of the students were receiving a Bachelor's degree, 30% were being awarded a Master's degree, 8% were receiving Associate degrees, and 3% were receiving the Education Specialist degree. In addition, the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, and Education were each graduating around 30% of the total graduates with 8% of the graduates from the College of Health and Human Services and 4% from the College of Communication and Fine Arts.

According to the findings, over 60% of the students had transferred credit hours from other institutions and over half of the students transferred more than 30 credit hours. While attending the University, approximately two-thirds of the students had taken online courses, and over 50% reported their cumulative GPA's as between 3.5 and 4.0. Of the 606 respondents, more than 50% indicated that they had studied at Troy University for 2 or 3 years while one student reported studying at Troy University over 10 years and another student attended TROY just one year. There was an average of 2.8 years of study at Troy University for the group of students graduating in fall 2005.

Employment and plan after graduation

More than 80% of the graduating students worked while going to school at Troy University and approximately 70% worked full-time (40 hours or over). Upon graduation, over 40% of the students were planning to work in areas related to their programs of study at Troy University, around 20% would continue to work in their current jobs, and 30% indicated that they would continue their education. Approximately 60% of the graduating students indicated that they would pursue a Master's degree after they graduated, 5% would seek a professional degree, and 30% expressed interest in the doctoral degree as their ultimate goal in education.

Financial aid information

More than 80% of the graduating students indicated they received financial aid while attending Troy University. While the financial aid options varied, the majority (56%) had received Federal student loans, 28% obtained Grants, 16% had scholarships, and approximately 14% received tuition assistance.

Student satisfaction

- Students' self-rated development (Report 1 – Q23): In eighteen areas related to knowledge, skills, and abilities, students rated their development as a result of their Troy University education. More than 80% of the respondents rated their development in 13 of the areas as “Excellent” or “Good,” with an average of 4.12 or higher (on a scale of 1-5). Ninety percent (90%) of the respondents gave ratings of “Excellent” or “Good” in regard to their development in “Planning and carrying out projects,” “Reading skills,” “Critical thinking skills,” and “Problem solving skills.”
- Students' ratings for quality of education and academic support services (Report 2 – Q24): In terms of education and academic support services, 9 out of 10 respondents rated the “Overall quality of academic program” as either “Excellent” or “Good,” and approximately 85% gave these same ratings to “instruction in major courses.” In addition, approximately 80% of the students highly rated “Communication between faculty and students,” “Instruction in general education,” and “Faculty’s use of technologies to enhance teaching.” These areas had a mean rating of 4.00 or higher. However, ratings for 13 other areas were moderate or relatively low, with a mean lower than 4.00 and with 65 - 75% of the respondents rating the items as “Excellent” or “Good.”
- Students' 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. The survey found that 88% of the students were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with the services provided by the Admissions Office, and 82% had the same level of satisfaction for Trojan WebExpress. Both areas had the highest levels of student satisfaction with means over 4.00. Information Technology Services, Buildings and Grounds, Registrar/Records Offices, Business Offices, and Safety and Security Services had good satisfaction ratings with around 70-76% of the students indicating positive satisfaction. However, 17 other offices or services measured in Question 25 (Q25) had less than 70% satisfaction ratings from the students. In particular, almost 40% of the students indicated that they were “*Very Dissatisfied*” or “*Dissatisfied*” with “Parking facilities,” and less than 60% of the students were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with “Placement Service,” “Financial Aid Service,” and “Housing and Residential Life” of the University.
- Students' perceptions about Troy University (Report 4 – Q26): Ten questions were asked in this section to seek students' opinions about the University in a broad sense. Indicating strong satisfaction with the academic programs, over 80% of the students “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the following 4 statements,:
 - My academic program was intellectually challenging and stimulating. (87%)
 - The degree program in which I enrolled is valuable for me in my employment. (86%)
 - Courses in my curriculum contributed to the skills and knowledge required in my field. (85%)
 - The goals, objectives, and requirements for my academic programs were clearly defined. (82%)

The lowest rating in this section was “The University faculty were helpful with my career plan.” Only 65% of the students indicated their agreement with this statement.

- Overall ratings of Troy University: 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. While all three items had a mean rating of 4.00 or higher, 84% of the students rated their overall college experiences at Troy University as “Excellent” or “Good,” and approximately 80% gave a rating of either “Excellent” or “Good” to their “Troy preparation for employment and further education.”

Recommendation of Troy University

One of the satisfaction indicators used by many colleges and universities is whether students would recommend their universities. The survey found that 95% of the students indicated that they would recommend Troy University to others planning to go to college (63% - Definitely yes and 32% - probably yes), while 93% indicated that they would recommend their academic programs to other students (60% - Definitely yes and 33% - Probably yes). In addition, 90% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they would attend Troy University again if they could start college over, while 87% indicated they would enroll in the same programs if they were starting over.

Implication

1. Overall, graduating students of Troy University in fall 2005 were satisfied with their college experiences at Troy University.
2. The fact that nine out of 10 graduating students would attend Troy University and enroll in the same program again if they were starting over and that approximately 95% would recommend Troy University and their programs of study to others is a strong indication of Troy University’s effectiveness in providing quality education to its students.
3. Troy University’s fall 2005 graduating students provided high positive ratings of their educational development in knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired at Troy University for employment and further education, and they were particularly satisfied with the quality of education and their academic programs.
4. The fall 2005 *Graduating Student Survey’s* satisfaction measures identified areas needing improvement, especially in the service areas provided by non-academic offices and services. Further investigation may be needed in these areas to determine improvements needed and actions to be taken to better serve the needs of students.
5. Generalization of the *Survey* results to all graduating students should be done with caution since only about 20% of the students responded to the survey.
6. Both descriptive and comparative methods will be used in the analysis of the data collected in the *Troy University Graduating Student Survey* for future annual reports.