

# Troy University 2006 Alumni Survey Report

## Executive Summary

As an annual institutional effectiveness effort, the Troy University Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness (IRPE) Office conducted the *Troy University 2006 Alumni Survey* in Summer 2006. The purpose of the *Survey* was to determine the outcomes of Troy University education by examining the employment information of TROY graduates and their satisfaction with the educational experiences at Troy University. Additionally, the *Survey* attempted to establish contact between Troy University and students who graduated from the University.

On June 24, 2006, the *Survey* was sent to 6,944 alumni (6,307 by mail and 637 via email) who graduated between 2000 and 2005 from the different campuses of Troy University. By the end of September 2006, after a second mailing of postcards at the end of July and two email follow-ups in July and August, the IRPE Office had received 1,071 responses - 697 by mail and 374 online. Excluding the undeliverable *Surveys* due to incorrect mailing and email addresses, the responses represented a 16% return rate in total, while the return rate was 11.4% for the paper version (mailing) and 67.1% for the web-based format (email).

Respondents: Of the 1,071 respondents, females and whites made up 64% and 62% respectively. Approximately 25% of the respondents completed their degree programs before 2002 and two-thirds graduated between 2004 and 2005, with 65% of the total enrolled primarily full-time when attending Troy University. Additionally, while over 40% of the graduates took between 3 to 5 years to complete their programs, 38% finished in 2 years and 18% in only one year. Furthermore, the *Survey* found that of the five campuses, University College and Troy graduated most of the students, 35% and 21% respectively. While the respondents graduated from approximately a hundred different programs, Business Administration and Management graduated the most students. Fifty-four percent graduated with a Master's degree, 40% with a Bachelor's degree, 4% with an Education Specialist degree, and 3% with an Associate degree (See page 72).

## Highlights of the Findings

Overall, the TROY alumni who participated in the Survey held their Troy University education in high regard and were satisfied with their experiences at the University. The highlights of the Survey findings are as follows:

1. Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents indicated that they would recommend Troy University to a potential student.
2. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the respondents indicated that their college education at Troy University improved the quality of their life.
3. Eighty-one percent (81%) of the respondents indicated that they would choose Troy University if they could start over again.
4. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the respondents continued their formal college education after they graduated from Troy University. Of these students, 85% indicated that Troy University had prepared them "Well" or "Very Well" for further or advanced education.
5. Within 6 months upon graduation, 93% of the respondents obtained their first full-time jobs. 75% of these graduates worked full-time while attending Troy University.
6. Nine out of every 10 alumni were currently employed, most of them working full-time.
7. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the alumni thought that Troy University had prepared them "Well" or "Very Well" for their current employment.
8. Fifty-two percent (52%) of the respondents were working on jobs directly related to their major fields of study at Troy University, while 34% were doing work partially related to their majors.

9. Educational institutions and government agencies were the two largest employers of TROY graduates.
10. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the respondents made between \$30,000 – 59,999 a year, while approximately 18% made less than \$30,000 and 24% made \$60,000 or more annually.
11. More than 85% of the respondents rated the following seven areas at Troy University as “Excellent” or “Good” experiences. These were the same 7 areas rated the best in the Summer 2005 *Survey*. These 7 areas were identified as the strengths of Troy University for the past two years:
- Class size (95.8%)
  - Academic/educational experiences (92.2%)
  - Quality of instruction (91.2%)
  - Professors (90.6%)
  - Courses (90.2%)
  - Grading procedures (88.2%)
  - Availability of classes (86.0%)
12. Seventy to seventy-seven percent of the respondents indicated that their education at Troy University had added “Very Much” or “Quite A Lot” to the development of their knowledge, skills, or abilities in the following areas, and these areas may be considered adequate areas for Troy University:
- Writing competency (77.1%)
  - Critical and creative thinking skills (75.8%)
  - Reading comprehension (73.6%)
  - Oral communication (73.1%)
  - Problem solving skills (71.4%)
  - Listening skills (70.5%)
13. Forty-one to sixty-two percent (41% - 62%) of the respondents thought that their TROY education had added "Very Much" or "Quite a Lot" to their knowledge, skills, or abilities in the areas listed below, and these are areas that may need to be improved:
- Multi-media presentation skills (62.2%)
  - Understanding global cultural difference and diversity (61.8%)
  - Information technology (60.7%)
  - Ability to obtain employment in the major field (60.1%)
  - Scientific principles and methods (53.2%)
  - Mathematical skills and concepts (45.6%)
  - Understanding and appreciating the arts (41.2%)
14. Fifty-six to sixty-eight percent (56% - 68%) of the respondents rated the following services as “Excellent” or “Good” and these services may require action for improvement:
- Recreational/intramural activities (67.6%)
  - On-campus residence halls/apartments (65.0%)
  - Dining facilities (63.7%)
  - Counseling services (63.3%)
  - Health services (63.2%)
  - Career services (56.1%)

### Implications

Based on the responses of the alumni *Surveyed* over the past 2 years, the following conclusions have been reached in terms of Troy University’s effectiveness in fulfilling its goals to help the students succeed in their academic pursuits and personal development.

1. Overall, the outcomes of Troy University education are satisfactory and Troy University has been effective in delivering quality education to develop college graduates, both undergraduate and graduate for its service areas.
2. Troy University alumni were satisfied with their college experiences at Troy University, and most of them thought that Troy University had prepared them well for employment as well as for further or advanced education.
3. With the majority of the alumni working in areas related to their major fields of study, the academic programs of Troy University were able to provide qualified personnel for the job market and meet the needs of its service areas.
4. A Troy education had considerable impact on the financial well-being of the Troy University alumni - The annual income of over 80% of the Troy University alumni was higher than the average personal income in Alabama, which was \$27,695 in 2004; and approximately 60% or more of the alumni had their annual income higher than the national average, \$33,050 in 2004. In addition, the annual income of the Troy University alumni parallels the national trend: the higher the degrees received, the more money earned in annual income.
5. At Troy University, professors cared about students and devoted themselves to quality instruction, courses were well organized and taught, and the appropriate class size enabled professors to interact well with students. All these were the strengths of the University.
6. The *Survey* findings over the 2 years revealed the weaknesses of the University and areas that need to be improved in order for the University to better serve the needs of the students. For these areas that need improvement, the University should consider taking action for improvement, but because some of the areas needing improvement are specific to certain campuses, it is recommended that the individual campus results, in the appendices, be examined when developing plans for improvement.
7. The majority of the alumni care about Troy University, want to learn more about the University, and want to be in contact with the University.

Although alumni have already graduated and left the University, their opinions and perceptions are invaluable for the University because alumni base their judgment of the quality of their education on the real world environment in which they live and work. Thus, findings from alumni surveys should always be taken seriously and should be acted upon for improvement wherever necessary. Additionally, alumni are a good channel to help advertise a university. Troy University should make use of every possible means to track alumni and remain in contact with as many alumni as possible to gain more support of the University from the alumni.