The Texas State University-San Marcos Graduate Alumni Survey is administered each summer to collect information from alumni who received master’s or doctoral degrees during the previous calendar year. Academic departments are invited to contribute graduate program-specific survey items. In the 2011 survey, items were added by the McCoy College of Business Administration, the School of Family and Consumer Science, the School of Social Work, and the departments of Accounting, Criminal Justice, and History.

Method

The target population for this survey consisted of alumni who received master’s or doctoral degrees from Texas State in calendar year 2010 (May, August, or December); graduates had finished their degrees seven to 14 months prior to the survey administration which began in July of 2011. A total of 1,300 graduates met eligibility requirements for the graduate alumni survey.

In an effort to research the effect of monetary incentives and paper survey mailings on survey response rates, a random sample of 160 graduates was selected from the larger group and was sent paper surveys. Three groups of forty graduates each received an incentive of either $1, $2 or $5 in their mailed survey invitation, and the fourth group of 40 graduates received a paper survey invitation but no monetary incentive. The remaining 1,140 graduates were sent postcard invitations to participate in the survey, with a link to the web survey included on the card. Initial mailings were sent during the week of July 18, 2011.

On August 3, e-mails were sent to graduates for whom we had an e-mail address on file and who had not responded to the survey. Follow up reminder messages were e-mailed on August 15 and August 26, and the survey was closed on September 2. A total of 250 usable responses were received, for an overall response rate of 20 percent after adjusting for bad addresses. Response rates for the subgroups based on survey method and incentive were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Survey with no incentive</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Survey with $5 incentive</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Survey with $2 incentive</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Survey with $1 incentive</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Survey with no incentive</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings

**Employment**
- Seventy-three percent of graduates are employed full-time. Twelve percent of graduates are unemployed but seeking employment.
- Thirty-four percent of employed graduates hold jobs that require a graduate degree.
Fifty-seven percent of employed graduates work at a job that is directly related to their graduate education, and an additional 30 percent report that their job is somewhat related to their graduate education.

The most frequent (23%) current annual salary range reported by employed graduates is $40,000 to $49,999, followed by 18 percent earning $50,000 to $59,999 and 18 percent earning $30,000 to $39,999.

Seventy-one percent of graduates reported that their Texas State graduate education prepared them well or very well to compete with peers at their place of employment.

Continuing Education

Eight percent of recent graduates have enrolled full-time at a college or university after receiving their graduate degree, and an additional four percent have enrolled part-time.

Forty-eight percent of graduates who have enrolled in coursework since graduation are working on a Ph.D., 34 percent are working on a master’s degree, and fourteen percent are not working towards another degree.

Texas State experiences

Grades rated Graduate College workshops well. The most highly rated workshop was “hands-on formatting,” rated as good or very good by 89% of graduates who attended.

Grades rated Graduate College services and programs positively, with more than 80 percent agreement that services were useful or provided in an appropriate manner.

In general, grades rated their program faculty as knowledgeable, available, and interested in students’ progress. Ninety-six percent of grades agreed that professors were available outside the classroom; 96 percent agreed that professors had adequate knowledge about their field; and 91 percent agreed that professors were interested in student progress.

Nearly one-third (31%) of grades reported they sometimes had problems enrolling in required courses because all seats were filled with 22% disagreeing that courses were offered frequently enough to complete degree requirements within the time planned.

Fifty-eight percent of grades have belonged to a professional organization or association since completing their degree.

Twenty-nine percent of grades felt themselves members of the Texas State community to the extent of quite a bit or a great deal, while another 34 percent felt somewhat part of the community.

Sixty-seven percent of the responding grades were enrolled full-time during most of their graduate work, and 82 percent of grades attended most of their graduate classes on the San Marcos campus.

Sixty percent of grades enrolled mostly in evening classes while working on their degree; and 26 percent enrolled in a mix of daytime and evening classes.

The greatest area of dissatisfaction with general university services was the availability of parking, with 59 percent indicating dissatisfaction. Other areas of concern include career services (40%), dining facility hours of operation (28%), and availability of buses/tram (23% dissatisfaction).