

Chapter IX: ALUMNI SURVEY

Who takes it?

University alumni five and ten years after graduation.

When is it administered?

Every year during the late summer/early fall.

What office administers it?

Assessment and Testing Office.

Who originates the survey?

ACT and Truman State University.

When are the results typically available?

In the Spring.

What type of information is sought?

The Alumni Survey first asks some demographic information on the former students. The alumni are also asked when they graduated and what their highest planned degree is. Other information is sought about why Truman was selected and how they financed their college education. Alumni are then asked to rate various aspects of their University and curricular experience and their satisfaction with different services on campus; how their major affected their knowledge, abilities, and attitudes; how their experience affected their ability to continue their education (if they did) and to select and carry out their employment; and whether they are willing to have their employer be sent a survey and whether they wish to add any additional comments.

From whom are the results available?

The Assessment and Testing Office, Violette Hall 1130.

To whom are the results regularly distributed?

University averages are sent to the President, VPAA, Deans, Assessment Committee, selected administrators, and to the campus community through this *Almanac*.

Are the results available by division or discipline?

Yes, if requested.

Are the results comparable to data of other universities?

No.

ALUMNI SURVEY SUMMARY

The 2004 Alumni Survey was mailed to alumni who graduated in fiscal year 1994 or 1999 with either a baccalaureate or graduate degree from Truman. A total of 2,348 surveys were mailed in late November. Unfortunately, many of these surveys were destroyed in a postal truck wreck between Quincy, IL, and St. Louis, MO, resulting in an extremely low return rate. Given the fact that the mail was burned, it was impossible to re-order surveys and do a duplicate mailing on a timely basis. Only 152 (6.5%) of the surveys were completed, so the results of this survey should be viewed with caution. A complete SPSS report of the survey is available from the Assessment & Testing Office in Violette Hall 1130. This report is 53 pages in length and may be shared electronically in an SPSS file if desired.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The survey was completed by 152 alumni, consisting of 36.8% males and 63.2% females, predominately white, non-Hispanics between the ages of 24 and 34. Among respondents 39.5% of the alumni now hold baccalaureate degrees while 44.1% hold master's degrees and 13.1% hold doctoral or professional degrees. During their years at Truman, 65.8% were classified as in-state and 34.2% were classified as out-of-state residents. Over 60% attended Truman for four years or less while 40% were here for more than four years. 56.6% of the alumni now reside in the state of Missouri and 39.5% reside in a bordering state.

Only 11.3% of the respondents transferred to Truman from another college or university, with 41.2% of these alumni transferring to Truman because of its academic reputation and 29.4% transferring because they finished their associate's degree at a community college. The primary and secondary reasons why alumni completed their degree at Truman were the institution's academic reputation and its cost/overall affordability respectively.

COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

Of the 152 alumni, 84.9% would probably or definitely choose to attend Truman again if they could start college over. Regarding their major 71% would probably or definitely choose to graduate with the same major, while 20.4% would probably or definitely not choose the same major. Attitudes toward Truman were positive as 91.9% felt that their college education prepared them well for their career and 90.9% felt that it prepared them well for post-baccalaureate study. Relative to other institutions, 75% felt that their academic preparation was better than their current work colleagues' and 80.3% felt it was better than the students' in their post-baccalaureate educational programs. Over 88% of the alumni believe that they understand the purpose of liberal arts and sciences, and 98% believe that they were able to perform as well or better than their colleagues who may have earned degrees with non-liberal arts backgrounds and heavy discipline emphasis.

When asked to rate Truman's alumni association's programs and services, alumni rated the publications, homecoming activities/reunions, fund raising programs, and alumni chapter activities as at least fair and working toward good. Alumni were also asked how frequently they

participated in a variety of activities during the past five years. At some point, 97.4% have read the Truman Review; 73% have visited Truman's website, and 71% have visited campus. However, 88.8% have never attended an alumni function on campus, 81.6% have never attended an alumni function off campus, and 92.8% have never attended an alumni chapter-related event as a member. As might be expected, 98% have never served on an alumni-related committee and 55.9% have never contributed to or solicited for the annual fund. However 94% have maintained some contact with other alumni and 62.5% have maintained contact with faculty members.

In general, alumni felt that the Liberal Studies Program or co-curriculum education/experiences at Truman were more than adequate. In particular, the alumni felt that Truman was more than adequate with respect to using writing as a mode of learning, growing socially and personally through on-campus residential experiences, growing intellectually from co-curricular experiences, and using speech skills appropriate to the topic, purpose, and audience. Areas where alumni felt Truman was a little less than adequate were recognizing the unethical use of technology, including copyright and privacy issues, and understanding the unifying principles of life and repeatable patterns in nature.

Alumni were also asked how satisfied they were with the experiences and services at Truman. Overall, alumni seem to be more than satisfied with most services/experiences on campus. In particular, alumni appear to be very satisfied with the accessibility of instructors in their respective majors, faculty enthusiasm for classes in the major, the overall quality of instruction in the major, the friendliness of campus, the intellectual climate on campus, and their sense of belonging to the campus. Alumni were less than satisfied, however, with the helpfulness of faculty assisting them with career plans, the academic advising by residence hall/RCP advisors, the services available at the Career Center, and the helpfulness of the Career Center in assisting them with career plans.

The alumni indicated that their major more than adequately prepared them with respect to knowledge related to their major, their ability to think critically and find information by interpreting and applying findings, and their attitude of believing that learning is a life-long process and understanding multiple perspectives. The alumni were asked how adequately their Truman experience provided them with knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in a variety of areas. Alumni indicated that they were adequately prepared in all of the areas and especially prepared with respect to thinking critically, performing effectively in their current position, applying concepts from their area of study, writing effectively, speaking and presenting effectively, and combining knowledge from multiple areas to solve problems.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Since graduating from Truman, 56.8% of the alumni responding to the survey indicated that they have attended graduate or professional school. The major reasons cited for continuing their education were to prepare for a new occupation (28.6%) and to increase their earning power/potential for promotion (22.6%). Of those continuing their education, 41.9% plan to obtain a masters degree and 43% plan to obtain a doctorate or professional degree.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

The alumni were asked to indicate current employment status. The majority of the alumni (74%) indicated that they are employed full-time. 7.3% are employed and continuing their education and 6.7% are not employed outside of the home. When asked from which source they learned about the first full-time job they held after graduating, 20.1% of the alumni learned of the job from a newspaper/trade publication, 10.1% from the Career Center/Career Expo, 10.1% from an internship, and 9.4% from another student/friend.

Some alumni noted that finding a job that paid enough, finding the kind of job they wanted, and deciding what they wanted to do were slight challenges they faced when obtaining their first job after graduation. Over 41% of the alumni indicated that they obtained a job prior to leaving college, 31.9% obtained a job within less than a month to 3 months, while 15.3% took over 12 months to find their first full-time job. The majority of the alumni have held from 2 to 3 different full-time jobs since completing their most recent degree from Truman.

Over 44% of the alumni indicated that their current occupation is highly related to their major at Truman and 21.5% indicated that their current occupation is not related to their major. Alumni are mostly satisfied with the location, working conditions, challenge, career potential, and benefits of their present job, but are not quite satisfied with their salary and advancement potential.

When asked to indicate the three areas that they would be most interested in financially supporting at Truman if they are able to do so, the top three areas were selected the ranked scholarships, their division or major, and where the need was greatest. Over 36% of the alumni indicated that they would be interested in taking Truman courses offered on the web, and 50.8% indicated that they would like to receive the Truman Newsletter via e-mail. Some are also willing to assist current students as 28.9% marked that they would be willing to serve as a resource for current students seeking career information.