

## Chapter VI: ALUMNI SURVEY

*Who takes it?*

University alumni five and ten years after graduation.

*When is it administered?*

Annually.

*What office administers it?*

Assessment & Testing Office.

*Who originates the assessment?*

ACT and Truman State University.

*When are results typically available?*

Late summer.

*What type of information is sought?*

The Alumni Survey first asks 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; 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?*

Assessment and Testing Office, Violette Hall 1130.

*Are the results available by college/school or discipline?*

Yes, if requested.

*Are the results comparable to data of other universities?*

No.

## ALUMNI SURVEY SUMMARY

The fiscal year 2009 Alumni Survey was mailed to alumni who graduated in fiscal year 1998 or 2003 with either a baccalaureate or graduate degree from Truman. A total of 2,183 surveys were mailed. 337 or 15.4% of the surveys were completed, so the results of this survey should be viewed with this response rate in mind. A complete report of the survey is included in Volume III of this *Assessment Almanac*.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The survey was completed by alumni, consisting of 30.4% males and 69.6% females, predominately white, non-Hispanics between the ages of 24 and 34. Among respondents 36.8% of the alumni currently hold baccalaureate degrees while 43.3% hold master's degrees and 18.4% hold doctoral or professional degrees. During their years at Truman, 71.8% were classified as in-state and 27.6% were classified as out-of-state residents. Only 6.5% of the respondents transferred to Truman from another college or university. 69.8% attended Truman for four years or less while 25.1% attended for five years and 5.1% attended for 6 or more years. The primary and secondary reasons why alumni completed their degree at Truman were the institution's academic reputation and its cost/overall affordability respectively. 50.3% of the alumni now reside in the state of Missouri and 22.5% reside in a bordering state.

### COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

Of the 337 alumni, 89.3% would probably or definitely choose to attend Truman again if they could start college over. Regarding their major 65.9% would probably or definitely choose to graduate with the same major, while 22.2% would probably or definitely not choose the same major. Attitudes toward Truman were positive as 87.1% felt that their college education prepared them well for their career and 93.4% felt that it prepared them well for post-baccalaureate study. Relative to other institutions, over 82.2% felt that their academic preparation was better than their current work colleagues' and 78.2% felt it was better than the students' in their post-baccalaureate educational programs. 89.2% of the alumni believe that they understand the purpose of liberal arts and sciences, and 97.3% 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 towards good. Alumni were also asked how frequently they participated in a variety of activities during the past five years. At some point, 94.9% have read the *Truman Review*; 81.1% visited Truman's website, 60.5% visited campus, 54.0% read the *Index*, 43.8% read the Truman e-mail newsletter, and 39.9% contributed to or solicited for the annual fund. However, 87.1% have never attended an alumni function on campus, 82.6% have never attended an alumni function off campus, and 93.1% have never attended an alumni chapter-related event as a member. As might be expected from the lack of attendance, 97.3% have never served on an alumni-related committee, 85.3% have never attended sporting events,

and 60.2% have never contributed to or solicited for the annual fund. However 95.5% have maintained some contact with other alumni, 54.5% with faculty members, and 23.1% with administrators or staff.

In general, alumni felt that the Liberal Studies Program or co-curriculum education/experiences at Truman were 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 from co-curricular experiences, growing socially and personally through on-campus residential experiences, growing intellectually from co-curricular experiences, integrating approaches or methods from two or more disciplines, and generating topics for writing via critical thinking and discussion.

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 really satisfied with the friendliness of campus, faculty enthusiasm for classes in the major, their sense of belonging to the campus, the accessibility of instructors in their respective majors, the overall quality of instruction in the major, intellectual climate on the campus, overall impression of courses in the major, and opportunities to be involved in student life and co-curricular activities. Alumni were less than satisfied, however, with the academic advising by residence hall/RCP advisors, the helpfulness of the Career Center in assisting them with career plans, the services available at the Career Center, and the helpfulness of faculty assisting them with career plans.

The alumni indicated that their major more than adequately prepared them with respect to their attitude of believing that learning is a life-long process, their ability to think critically, finding information by interpreting and applying findings, understanding multiple perspectives, ability to apply knowledge in defining problems and solving them, and knowledge of the subject matter in their major. 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, writing effectively, applying concepts from their area of study, getting along with others, combining knowledge from multiple areas to solve problems, and performing effectively in their current position.

#### CONTINUING EDUCATION

Since graduating from Truman, 65.8% 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 satisfy job/career requirements (24.4%), to increase their earning power/potential for promotion (22.8%), and to prepare for a new occupation (21.2%). Of those continuing their education, 39.7% plan to obtain a masters degree and 42.6% plan to obtain a doctorate or professional degree.

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

The alumni were asked to indicate current employment status. The majority of the alumni (73.1%) indicated that they are employed full-time. 4.9% are employed part-time, 4.1% are continuing their education (formal study), 5.5% are employed and continuing their education, 6.0% are not employed outside of the home, and 5.5% are self-employed. When asked from which source they learned about the first full-time job they held after graduating, 15.3% of the alumni learned of the job from a newspaper/trade publication, 13.9% from the internet, 10.2% were recruited by the employer, and 9.9% from the Career Center/Career Expo.

Some alumni noted that finding a job that paid enough, finding the kind of job they wanted, deciding what they wanted to do, knowing how to find job openings, finding a job where s/he wanted to live were slight challenges they faced while obtaining their first job after graduation. Over 40% of the alumni indicated that they obtained a job prior to leaving college, 15% obtained a job in less than one month, 20.9% within 1 to 3 months, and 10.4% took over 12 months to find their first full-time job. The majority of the alumni have held 1 to 3 full-time jobs since completing their most recent degree from Truman.

Forty-seven point eight percent of the alumni indicated that their current occupation is highly related to their major at Truman and 19.9% indicated that their current occupation is not related to their major. Alumni are mostly satisfied with the challenge, location, working conditions, 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 selected were scholarships, their division or major, and where the need was greatest. Almost 46% of the alumni indicated that they would be interested in taking Truman courses offered on the web, and 59.5% indicated that they would like to receive the Truman Newsletter via e-mail. Some are also willing to assist current students as 36.7% marked that they would be willing to serve as a resource for current students seeking career information.