

Vocational Education Graduate Survey

Introduction: Students from Palomar College, who graduated during the 2002-2003 academic year earning an Associate of Arts degree or a Certificate of Achievement from a vocational education program, were asked to participate in a telephone survey. The survey was conducted in June of 2004 and the survey addressed student attitudes regarding their vocational education program at Palomar College and how their educational experiences relate to their current career.

This research in brief summarizes the findings of the current study. The study was performed through an interviewing technique, in which former students of Palomar College were surveyed over the telephone. The survey was conducted by the Social & Behavioral Research Institute (SBRI) at California State University San Marcos and utilized a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system to assist with data collection.

The sample consisted of 645 Palomar graduates of which, 118 surveys were completed. Of these graduates 38.1% were female and 61.9% were male. The results that follow briefly describe our findings.

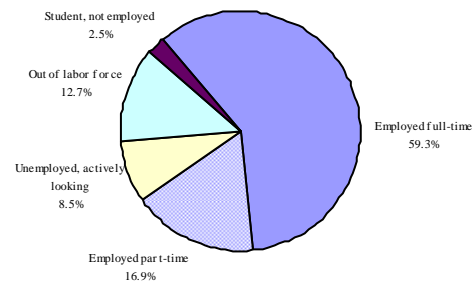
Results:

- 81.4% of the former students interviewed indicated that Palomar College was their first choice in academic institutions.
- Graduates were asked what their main objective was when they enrolled at Palomar. Five of the responses are as follows; 30.5% of the graduates indicated that they wanted to obtain skills for a new or different job, 11.0% indicated that they wanted to improve their skills for their current job, 8.5% desired to transfer to another college or university, 8.5% were

preparing to change careers, and 7.6% were interested in self-improvement.

- 66.7% of graduates completed their degree or certificate in three years or less.
- 81.1% of the graduates indicated that their current job is related or somewhat related to the skills they developed at Palomar College.
- 79.6% of the graduates interviewed are employed. Figure 1 represents the current employment status of the graduates.

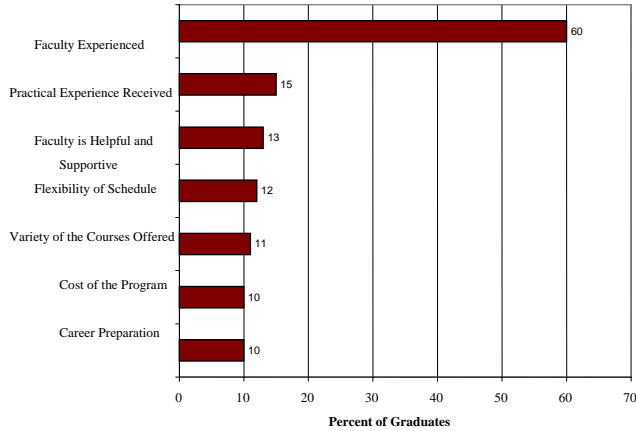
Figure 1.
Current Employment Status



- The median salary of graduates working full-time was reported to be \$40,000 per year.
- The top three independent responses to the question, “What were the three best things about your program?” were: 1) Faculty Experience (50.8%), 2) Faculty Helpfulness and Supportiveness (12.7%), and 3) Flexibility of Schedule (11.1%).

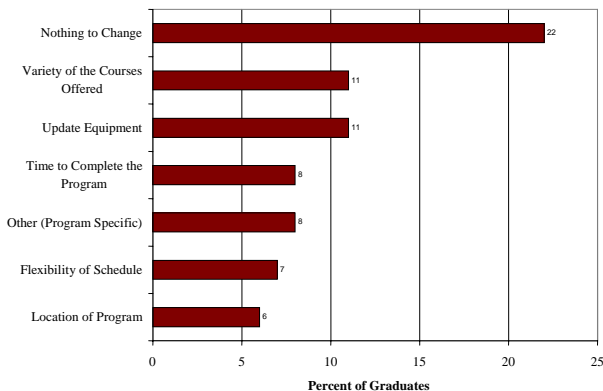
- Figure 2 below depicts seven of the top responses concerning the best things about the program.

Figure 2.
Three Best Things about the Program



- The top three independent responses to the question, “If you could change three things about your program, what would you change?” were, 1) Nothing to Change (20.9%), 2) More Variety of Courses Offered (10.5%), and 3) Update the Equipment (10.5%).
- Figure 3 below depicts seven of the top responses concerning things to be changed about the program.

Figure 3.
Things to Change about the Program



Graduates were read a statement about general features or components concerning their program and asked to indicate their agreement with the statements using a scale with values that ranged

from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” The top five responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
General Features or Components of Program

Description of Question	Agreed/ Strongly Agreed
Content of Courses was good	98.3%
Quality of Lecture classes was good	96.5%
Helpfulness from Faculty was good	94.0%
Quality of Lab classes was good	92.1%
Courses/training was relevant to current job	82.8%
Variety of Courses was good	72.4%

In addition, the graduates were asked if they used any of the following services; academic advising and counseling, career center, transfer center, and student orientation process. If the graduates indicated they used the services, they were asked a series of questions about the services that were available to help them reach their educational goal. Graduates were asked to indicate their satisfaction with the statements using a scale with values that ranged from “Very Satisfied” to “Very Dissatisfied.” Some of the findings are as follows;

- Sixty-six or 55.9% of graduates used academic advising and counseling services. Of these, 78.9% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Thirty-seven or 31.4% of graduates used the career center services. Of these, 81.1% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Twenty-three or 19.5% of graduates used the transfer center services. Of these, 86.9% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Sixty-three or 53.9% of graduates interviewed went through the orientation process at Palomar College. Of these, 79.3% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the orientation process.

Summary and Conclusions: The results of the study showed that the majority of the graduates are working full-time after the completion of their programs. Over half of the graduates finished their program in three years or less. A majority of the graduates indicated that their current job is related or somewhat related to the skills they developed at Palomar College. Graduates liked the level of experience of the faculty at Palomar. In addition, a large portion of the graduates would not change a thing about their experience in their programs.

Readers should use caution when interpreting the results from this study. The study participants are from a specific population of Palomar graduates — That is, the graduates are from the 2002-2003 class of the vocational education programs only, and do not represent the entire graduate population of Palomar College or all vocational graduates from previous years.

Complete quantitative and qualitative results of the study can be obtained in the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

More information? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning if you have any questions about this or other research and planning issues (760-744-1150 Ext. 2360).