

Research In Brief

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Vocational Education Graduate Survey

Introduction: Students from Palomar College, who graduated during the 1999-2000 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 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 obtain participants.

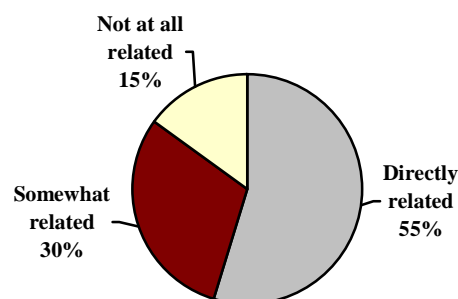
The sample consisted of 590 Palomar graduates of which, 194 surveys were completed. All participants had received an Associates Degree or certificate in a vocational education program during the 1999-2000 academic year. The telephone interviewing began in July of 2001 and ended in October of the same year. The phone interviews lasted 19.78 minutes on average. The results that follow briefly describe our findings.

Results:

- 54.1% of the respondents surveyed were female and 45.9% were male with a mean age of 38.52.
- Respondents were asked what their main objective was when they enrolled at Palomar. Five of the responses are as follows; 26.8% of the respondents indicated that they wanted to obtain skills for a new or different job, 16.5% indicated that they wanted to improve their skills for their

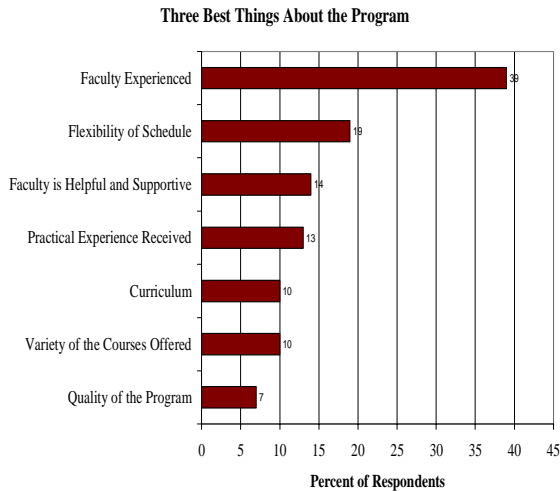
current job, 11.3% desired to transfer to another college or university, 9.8% were preparing to change careers, and 8.8% were interested in self-improvement.

- 58% of respondents completed their degree or certificate in three years or less.
- 70.1% of the respondents are currently employed in full-time positions (30+hours per week) and 15.1% of the respondents are employed in part-time positions (<30 hours per week).
- 49% of the respondents reported earning \$35,000 or more per year.
- The chart below shows the distribution of responses to the question: "Is your current employment related to the skills you developed at Palomar." 85% of respondents indicated that their current employment is related to the skills they developed at Palomar.

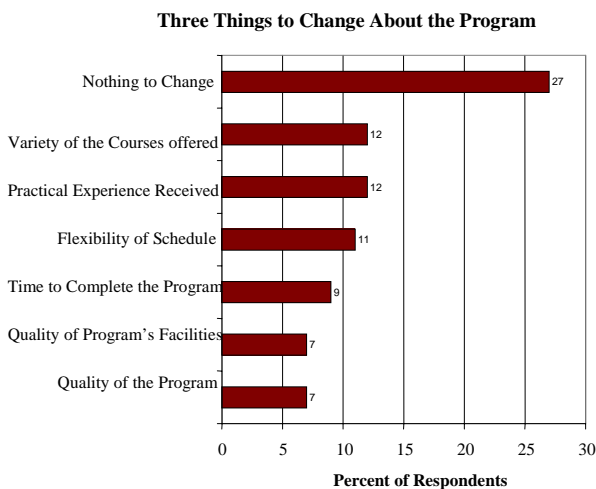


- The top three independent responses to the question, "What were the three best things about your program?" were: 1) Faculty Experience (39%), 2) Flexibility of

Schedule (19%), and 3) Faculty Helpfulness and Supportiveness (14%). The graph shown depicts seven of the top responses concerning the 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 (27%), 2) More Practical Experience Received (12%), and 3) More Variety of the Courses Offered (12%). The graph shown below depicts seven of the top responses concerning things to be changed about the program.



In addition, the graduates were asked a set of questions about services available to help students reach their educational goal. The services included; academic advising and counseling, career center, transfer center, and student orientation process.

Graduates were asked if they used the services and if they were very satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied, dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the service. The results of the student support services provided are as follows;

- One-hundred-eleven or 57.8% of respondents used academic advising and counseling services. Of these, 74.6% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Fifty-eight or 30.1% of respondents used the career center services. Of these, 79.3% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Forty-one or 21.7% of respondents used the transfer center services. Of these, 87.8% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.
- Ninety or 48.9% of respondents used the student orientation process. Of these 78.1% indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the services they received.

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. That graduates liked how experienced the faculty were. In addition, a large portion of the graduates would not change a thing about their experience in their programs.

Generalizability of the results should be used with caution. The participants in this study are from a specific population of Palomar graduates—That is, the graduates are from the 1999-2000 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).