

# **Results of the Alumni Survey A Comparative Study 2000-2002**

## **Introduction**

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness has continued to conduct the alumni survey over the past several years. The survey is intended to acquire the alumni's academic and/or employment status a year after their degrees has been conferred by Texas Southern University (TSU). The surveys are mailed to the alumni a year after graduation. Therefore those students included in the 2001 and 2002 samples are graduates whose degrees were conferred in 2000 and 2001, respectively. The 2000 sample consists of a three-year alumni study that includes graduates whose degrees were conferred from 1997 through 1999. The objectives of the survey are as follows:

- to gather information concerning the alumni's current employment status or continuing education level,
- to determine if the alumni would choose to attend TSU, if given the opportunity to begin college again,
- to note any types of problems alumni encounter in obtaining their first position upon graduation and
- to gauge how well TSU prepares the alumni to perform academic, professional, and social tasks.

A profile of the typical TSU alumnus is generated based on an analysis of the data. This allows the University to determine the alumni's view of TSU as well as note their educational and career status after graduation.

## Demographic Comparisons

Table 1 displays a comparative analysis of the university's alumni population and the samples selected for analysis for years 2000, 2001 and 2002. The samples appear to adequately reflect the overall composition of the alumni population for their respective years.

**Table 1: Demographics<sup>∂</sup>**

	2000		2001		2002		
	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	
Ethnicity	<b>Percentages</b>						
	African-American	78	86	80	90	81	85
	Indian	>1	1	>1		>1	
	White	3	4	5	3.0	3	9
	Mexican/ Puerto Rican/ Hispanic	7	4	7	3.0	5	
	Asian	5	4	4	2	4	2
	International or Other	7	1	4	2	7	4
	2000		2001		2002		
	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	
School or College	<b>Percentages</b>						
	Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences	31	49	30	53	28	44
	Business	15	20	10	16	16	23
	Education	17	18	16	15	11	15
	Pharmacy & Health Sciences	12	6	12	8	13	17
	Science & Technology	16	6	14	8	13	1
	Law	17	-	18	-	18	-
	2000		2001		2002		
	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	TSU	Sample	
Highest Degree Obtained	<b>Percentages</b>						
	Bachelors	58	59	54	53	51	54
	Masters	21	25	17	29	19	24
	Doctoral	2	9	2	10	2	15
	Professional	18	7	18	8	28	7
	<b>Total N</b>	871	487	856	137	896	101

<sup>∂</sup> The 2000 sample is composed of a three-year study of 1997-1999 graduates.

The demographic characteristics reveal that in 2002 the majority of the total alumni populations and corresponding samples were African-Americans receiving undergraduate degrees. The largest percentage of students receives degrees in majors housed in the college of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences. Noteworthy is the growth in the

percentages of professional degrees obtained, from 18% in 2000 and 2001 to 28% in 2002. This is an increase of 10% in the percentage of professional degrees awarded. A limitation of the above analysis is the absence of responses from our law school graduates. Despite our continuous efforts, we have not been successful in getting our law graduates to respond to the survey.

### **Background Characteristics of Samples Selected**

Table 2 displays additional demographic data associated with the selected samples. The majority of the alumni are females enrolled as full-time students. They tend to be in the 25 to 29-age range in 2000 and 2001, and slightly older in 2002 with 31% and 33% in the 30 to 39-age and 40 and over-age ranges respectively. Consistently, the vast majority is classified as in-state students. Most alumni indicate that they continue to reside in Texas.

Approximately 20% of our alumni attend TSU for 4 years prior to obtaining their degrees (Table 3). This is less than the national average of 33%. Each year, half of the alumni attend TSU for at least 5 years prior to graduation while the national percentage is 32 percent. These results suggest that alumni from other public colleges appear to be completing their degree requirements more quickly when compared to our alumni. Further research is required to better understand the underlying factors that extend the time to graduation of our alumni. Our sample includes alumni from graduate and professional programs that may require 5 years or more to complete. Alumni from similar programs are considered in the computation of the national average.

**Table 2: Additional Demographics<sup>1</sup>**

	2000		2001		2002		
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	
<b>Sex</b>	Male	176	36.4	54	39.7	29	28.7
	Female	307	63.6	82	60.3	72	71.3
	Total	483	100.0	136	100.0	101	100.0
	Did Not Respond	4		1			
	Total	487		137			
<b>Enrollment Status</b>							
	Full-Time	380	79.0	108	80.0	86	86.0
	Part-Time	101	21.0	27	20.0	14	14.0
	Total	481	100.0	135	100.0	100	100.0
	Did not Respond	6		2		1	
Total	487		137		101		
<b>Current Age</b>							
	20 & Under	1	.2				
	21 to 24	44	9.1	15	10.9	11	10.9
	25 to 29	166	34.3	45	32.8	26	25.7
	30 to 39	113	23.3	42	30.7	31	30.7
	40 or Over	160	33.1	35	25.5	33	32.7
	Total	484	100.0	137	100.0	101	100.0
	Did Not Respond	3					
Total	487						
<b>Residence Classification while at TSU</b>							
	In-State	439	91.1	117	86.0	93	92.1
	Out-of-State	30	6.2	14	10.3	4	4.0
	International Student	13	2.7	5	3.7	4	4.0
	Total	482	100.0	136	100.0	101	100.0
	Did not Respond	5		1			
Total	487		137				
<b>Current Residence</b>							
	In-State	443	91.9	119	88.1	98	97.0
	Out-of-State	39	8.1	16	11.9	3	3.0
Total	482	100.0	135	100.0	101	100.0	

<sup>1</sup> The 2000 sample is composed of a three-year study of 1997-1999 graduates.

**Table 3: Number of Years in College<sup>1</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
1 Year	1.2	1.5	0.0	1.2
2 Years	7.4	6.6	11.9	15.7
3 Years	22.4	19.7	14.9	17.5
4 Years	22.0	21.2	19.8	32.8
5 or More Years	46.0	51.1	53.5	31.5
Total N	487	137	101	17990

∂ National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

**Rationale for Attending TSU and Sources of Funding**

The majority of TSU’s alumni is originally from Texas and continues to reside here. It is not surprising therefore that the primary reason alumni choose to attend Texas Southern University is location (Table 4).

**Table 4: Reasons for Attending TSU<sup>∂</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
Location	22.3	22.8	25.0	41.0
Other	13.1	11.8	14.0	4.9
Cost	9.7	11.8	12.0	9.0
Type of Programs Available	9.9	15.4	10.0	18.6
Advice of Parents or Relatives	6.3	8.1	9.0	3.3
Social Atmosphere	7.6	4.4	9.0	1.2
Availability of Scholarship (FA)	7.8	5.9	8.0	4.9
To be with Friends	.4	1.5		1.4
Admissions Standards	8.8	11.8	5.0	5.7
Academic Reputation	10.9	3.7	5.0	5.7
Size	2.1	1.5	2.0	5.2
Advice of High School Personnel	1.1	1.5	1.0	.5
Total N	475	136	100	17990

∂ National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

“Location” is indicated as the primary reason for attending TSU by 22% in the 2000 sample, 23% in 2001 and 25% in 2002. To some surprise, alumni stated that a reason “other” than the choices listed has an influence on their decision to attend TSU.

A majority of our alumni report that TSU was their first choice of universities to attend (Table 5). Approximately 30% indicate that TSU was their second choice.

**Table 5: Rating of TSU<sup>∂</sup>**

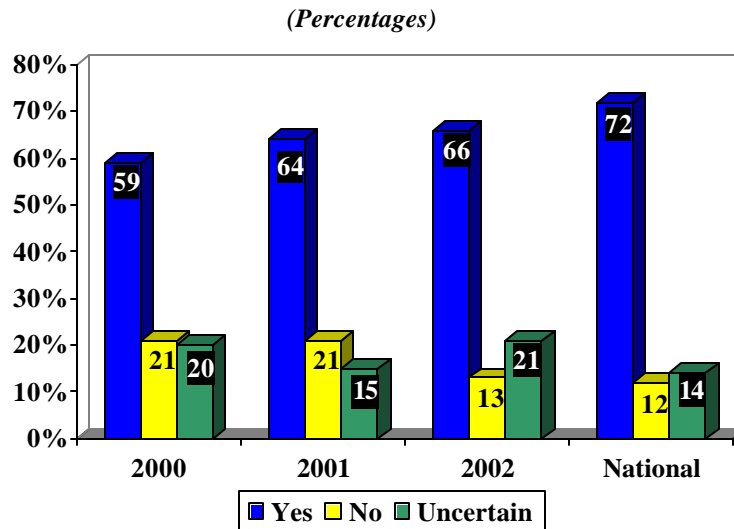
Rating of TSU When You Applied	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
First choice	52.4	54.8	55.4	71.3
Second choice	28.2	29.6	27.7	20.4
Third choice	12.1	6.7	11.9	4.0
Fourth choice or lower	7.3	8.9	5.0	2.2
Total	479	135	101	17990

<sup>∂</sup> National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

As part of the survey graduates are asked whether they would choose to attend TSU again, if given the opportunity to reselect a college to attend. These results are displayed in Figure 1. A majority of alumni replied that they would attend TSU again. This percentage has steadily increased over the years and is slightly less than the national average of 72%.

In 2000 and 2001, twenty-one percent of TSU’s alumni also indicate that they would not choose to attend TSU again. This percentage has improved significantly in 2002, dropping to 13%, which is only a percent above the national average. The remaining alumni report that they are uncertain about choosing to attend TSU again.

**Figure 1: Choosing to Attend TSU Again<sup>1,2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup>National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges. <sup>2</sup>Original responses “Definitely Yes” and “Probably Yes” were combined and are displayed as “Yes”. Original responses “Definitely No” and “Probably No” were combined and are displayed as “No”.

Alumni utilize a combination of sources to finance their college education (Table 6). The primary source of funds consistently appears to be student loans. TSU’s percentages of 64% in 2000, 56% in 2001, and 65% in 2002 continue to exceed the national average of 45.1%. Other sources of funding that are consistently mentioned are educational grants and personal savings. The remaining sources as well as their corresponding percentages are displayed in Table 6.

The most relevant finding of the results is the larger percentage of TSU’s alumni who rely on student loans and grants to fund their education when compared to the national average. An average of 17% more TSU alumni fund their education through the use of student loans or grants than alumni of other public colleges.

**Table 6: Sources of College Funding<sup>1,2</sup>**

Source	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
Student Loans	63.8% <i>N=450</i>	55.9% <i>N=127</i>	65.3% <i>N=95</i>	45.1%
Parents or Relatives	49.5% <i>N=440</i>	51.6% <i>N=122</i>	53.2% <i>N=94</i>	58.5%
Grants	55.3% <i>N=443</i>	52.9% <i>N=121</i>	52.6% <i>N=97</i>	35.9%
Personal Savings	59.2% <i>N=441</i>	52.8% <i>N=123</i>	51.0% <i>N=96</i>	55.9%
Summer Employment	49.3% <i>N=426</i>	49.2% <i>N=120</i>	46.2% <i>N=91</i>	53.7%

<sup>1</sup> National Comparison is based on other public colleges. <sup>2</sup>Original responses “Major Source” and “Major Source” were combined and categorize “Source of College Funding”.

### **Educational Contributions of TSU**

This portion of the survey attempts to evaluate TSU’s contribution to the personal development of our alumni. The alumni are asked if TSU contributed “very much,” “somewhat,” or “very little” to their ability to carryout specified tasks. In order to simplify and better view the results, the leading five items are displayed. Table 7 indicates those items alumni believe TSU contributes “very much” to them being able to perform.

Alumni report that TSU contributes “very much” to such tasks as working independently, working cooperatively in a group, learning on one’s own, organizing time effectively and persisting at difficult tasks. It is believed that the ability to perform these types of tasks is not only derived from course-related experiences, but from other collegiate experiences as well. These experiences may also include involvement in extra-



curricular activities. TSU's percentages are consistently higher than those of other public colleges.

**Table 7: Contributions of College Education<sup>1, 2</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)						Other Colleges	
	2000		2001		2002		National	
	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Much	Somewhat
Learning on Your Own	58.9%	27.6%	57.0%	34.1%	63.4%	24.8%	49.8%	35.1%
Persisting at Difficult Tasks	59.3%	28.7%	59.8%	26.5%	63.3%	25.5%	47.2%	38.2%
Working Cooperatively within a Group	54.2%	33.5%	54.5%	31.3%	61.6%	28.3%	45.3%	39.7%
Organizing Your Time Effectively	53.3%	30.8%	54.1%	30.8%	57.6%	33.3%	46.5%	37.1%
Working Independently	53.1%	31.5%	51.9%	31.9%	56.4%	28.7%	50.0%	34.2%

<sup>1</sup>National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges. <sup>2</sup> Original survey responses include “very much” “somewhat” and “very little” the response category “very little” is not displayed in Table.

### Alumni's Current Employment Status

This portion of the survey attempts to determine the alumni's current employment status (Table 8). The options reflect educational choices as well as various levels and types of employment.

**Table 8: Current Employment Status<sup>3</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
Employed Full-Time	74.5	72.3	76.8	68.4
Employed & Continuing Ed.	7.4	3.6	8.1	6.1
Employed Part-Time	4.5	3.6	2.0	5.8
Continuing Education	4.2	4.4	2.0	4.7
Unemployed	2.5	4.4	4.0	3.4
Home Maker	1.3	1.5	2.0	3.3
Self-employed	3.2	5.8	2.0	3.0
Other	2.3	2.9	3.0	1.7
Serving in Armed Forces	0.0	1.5	0.0	.5
Total	471	137	99	17990

<sup>3</sup> National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

The results indicate that in excess of seventy percent of TSU's alumni are employed full-time each year, slightly higher than the nationally reported rate. Approximately 8% of the alumni sampled in 2000 and 2002 report that they are currently employed and continuing their education. The percentages reported by TSU alumni are marginally higher than that of the other public colleges.

### **Factors Relating to Employment**

The survey contains various items that pertain to certain aspects of employment (Table 9). These range from assessing difficulties encountered with finding employment, to alumni's current salary and level of satisfaction associated with their current occupation.

The following section considers the problems alumni encounter in obtaining their first job upon graduation. The most prevalent difficulty appears to be obtaining a position that offered a suitable income. This also is the most difficult problem on the national level. Obtaining a position that pays enough is a problem for about 10% more TSU alumni than those on the national level.

More than half of the TSU alumni experience difficulty obtaining the type of employment that they desire. Forty-five percent of other public colleges alumni have a similar difficulty. In 2000, forty-five percent of TSU alumni report having problems finding employment for which they are trained. This percentage decreases to 40% in 2001 and then to 37% in 2002. This decreasing trend may suggest that Texas Southern University's graduates are becoming better prepared for the workforce.

**Table 9: Difficulty Obtaining Employment<sup>∂</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)						Other Colleges
	2000		2001		2002		<i>National</i>
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
Finding a Job that Paid Enough	61.8	1	58.9	1	58.3	1	49.7
Finding the Kind of Job I Wanted	55.1	2	50.4	2	50.6	2	45.1
Finding a Job for Which I had Training	45.2	3	40.4	3	36.9	3	35.8
Finding a Job Where I Wanted to Live	30.5	5			29.8	4	34.4
Deciding What I Wanted to do			32.2	4	24.7	5	28.1
Knowing how to find Job Opening	31.9	4	28.9	5			33.2

<sup>∂</sup> National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

An analysis of the data suggests that the University may want to take a more active role in assisting students in their search for appropriate employment. TSU’s percentages relating to alumni “deciding what they wanted to do” as well as “knowing how to find job openings” is only marginally different from national percentages. This suggests that these difficulties are consistent with those of alumni of other public colleges. In 2001, thirty-two percent report “experiencing difficulties with deciding what they wanted to do.” This percentage decreases to 25% in 2002. Additionally in 2000 and 2001, approximately 30% report “having difficulty in knowing how to find a job opening.” This is potentially another area of opportunity in which the university may provide useful assistance to its alumni.

On the issue of length of time taken to obtain employment, approximately 40% of TSU’s alumni secure a job prior to graduation (Table 10). This percentage is 10% higher than the national average. In 2000, twenty-one percent of TSU’s alumni are able to gain employment 1 to 3 months after graduation. This percentage decreases to 16% in 2001, but then increases to twenty-six percent in 2002.

**Table 10<sup>∂</sup> Time Taken to Obtain Full-time Employment**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
Obtained Job Prior to Graduation	42.6	43.4	40.4	32.1
Less than 1 Month	11.4	13.9	7.9	12.1
1 to 3 Months	20.7	16.4	25.8	18.6
4 to 6 Months	12.6	6.6	15.7	9.3
7 to 12 Months	7.4	7.4	5.6	5.2
Over 12 Months	5.3	12.3	4.5	6.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

∂ National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

A large percentage of alumni did not have significant difficulties finding employment. An interesting anomaly appears in 2001. Twelve percent of TSU’s alumni report that they sought employment for more than a year after graduation, which is more than twice the rate in 2000 or 2002. These results also indicate that an overwhelming majority of alumni are currently employed.

Table 11 discusses how well our alumni believe TSU prepares them for their current occupation. During 2000 and 2001, eighty two percent believed that they were either “very well” or “adequately” prepared for their current occupation. This percentage increases to 86% in 2002. TSU’s faculty are doing a commendable job in preparing alumni for their respective careers.

**Table 11: Preparation by TSU for Current Position<sup>1,2</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National
Well or Adequate	81.7	81.5	86.0	72.7
Poor	5.8	6.7	3.5	4.0
Not at All	12.5	11.8	10.5	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup>National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges. <sup>2</sup> Original survey responses were “very well” and “adequately” the responses were combined into one category represented by well or adequate.

Approximately 12% report that TSU did not prepare them at all for their current occupation. This percentage decreases to 10.5% in 2002. These findings offer a degree of subjective interpretation. Alumni who are reporting that they were not at all prepared could be stating that they are employed in an occupation that is not related to their major field of study or it may mean that the preparation received from TSU is deemed insufficient.

The section that follows offers a comparison of alumni's salary obtained upon graduation to the salary of their current position (Table 12).

**Table 12: Alumni's Salary<sup>∂</sup>**

Annual Income of First Job After Graduation	TSU (Percentages)				Other Colleges	Current Salary	TSU (Percentages)				Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	National	2000		2001	2002	National		
Less Than \$15,000	10.4	4.2	5.8	20.1	6.7	5.2	1.2	10.0			
\$15,000 to \$23,999	23.1	22.9	18.6	32.0	12.4	12.2	11.8	18.4			
\$24,000 to \$29,999	28.5	14.4	14.0	17.6	18.1	11.3	14.1	19.9			
\$30,000 to \$50,000	29.2	44.9	41.9	13.1	47.6	53.0	38.8	26.2			
Over \$50,000	8.9	13.6	19.8	1.8	15.2	18.3	34.1	8.2			
Total N	425	118	86	17990	420	115	85	17990			

<sup>∂</sup> National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges.

For each of the surveyed years, the largest percentage of alumni indicate that the salary received upon graduation, ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000. Interestingly, the highest percentage of TSU's alumni remains within this salary range in their current position. Concerning their first job upon graduation, results show that alumni from other public colleges are in a lower salary category (\$15,000 to \$23,000) when compared to TSU alumni.

The final portion of the survey relates to the alumni’s level of satisfaction with various aspects of their jobs. The survey items and the corresponding percentages are displayed in Table 13.

**Table 13: Current Job Satisfaction<sup>1, 2</sup>**

	TSU (Percentages)			Other Colleges
	2000	2001	2002	<i>National</i>
Location of Job	71.2	76.3	80.2	64.9
Working Conditions of Job	61.3	67.2	67.1	60.8
Career Potential of Job	57.8	68.9	64.0	50.2
Challenge of Job	65.9	70.2	63.2	64.9
Salary & Benefits of Job	43.5	42.4	53.5	46.4
Advancement Potential of Job	46.9	53.4	48.8	40.5

<sup>1</sup>National Comparison is based on other Public Colleges. <sup>2</sup> Original survey responses were “Very Satisfied” and “Satisfied” have been combined and represented as “satisfied”.

For each of the surveyed years, alumni are most satisfied with the location of their current position. A higher percentage of TSU alumni are satisfied with the location of their job, working conditions, career potential, and the advancement potential of their occupation than alumni of other public colleges when compared to the national average at other colleges. Similar levels of satisfaction are present amongst TSU and other colleges’ alumni concerning the challenge of the job and the salary and benefits of their current occupation. In 2000 and 2001, approximately 43% are satisfied with their salary and benefits. This percentage increases to 54% in 2002.

**Summary**

The typical TSU alumnus is a resident of Houston who chooses to attend the University primarily because of its location. The largest percentage of alumni obtain their

degree from the college of Liberal Arts & Behavioral Sciences while attending TSU as full-time students. The majority of alumni fund their education with student loans/grants, financial support from parents/relatives, as well as finances from their personal savings. The findings are similar to national averages.

TSU alumni seem to be satisfied with the quality of education they receive from TSU. Approximately 60% of the alumni report that they would choose to attend TSU again. On the choice of colleges to attend, 55% report that Texas Southern University was their first choice and nearly 30% indicate that was their second choice. Although these percentages are favorable, they still are fall below the national average. Seventy-one percent of alumni from other public colleges select their particular college as their first choice.

An interesting finding that is reflected by TSU and consistent with other public colleges is the small percentage (>2%) of alumni from TSU and other colleges who choose to attend their particular college based on the recommendation of their high school personnel. This is potentially an area of opportunity to further network with high schools and present TSU as a resource for academic, professional and personal development.

Our alumni appear to be satisfied with the education they receive form TSU. Eighty percent of our alumni believe that they are very well or adequately prepared to perform their current job. This is 10% higher than the national average. Approximately forty percent of alumni report that they are employed prior to graduating from TSU. This is almost 10% higher than the national average.

On the issue of education from their particular college contributing to the alumni's ability to perform specific tasks, alumni of Texas Southern University

consistently have higher percentages than alumni of other public colleges. Sixty percent believe that the education they receive while at TSU assisted them “very much” in their ability to learn on their own and persist at difficult tasks. Fifty percent of other public colleges alumni report that their institutions contributes “very much” to them being able to learn on their own, while 47% believe their college assists them in being able to persist at difficult tasks. An average of 57% indicate that education at TSU prepares them well to work cooperatively in a group. This compares to 45% for alumni of other public colleges.

The alumni of Texas Southern University seem to be satisfied with their collegiate experiences. They feel well prepared by the University to perform their occupational tasks and would choose to attend TSU again if given the opportunity. These findings offer positive reinforcement to the University in its ability to prepare alumni for the job market and/or to continue their education. Opportunities for improvement include the recruitment of students and changing the perceptions of potential students so that they may select TSU as their first choice when evaluating colleges. Additional assistance may also be helpful to alumni in finding the type of position they are seeking. Half of the alumni report this as being a difficulty associated with their first position upon graduation. The fact that approximately 40% of alumni obtain employment prior to graduation is gratifying. Texas Southern University has done well in educating its alumni and preparing them for the job market. On-going efforts to enhance these areas will continue to not only benefit our alumni, but the University as well.