

16-17 AY Alumni Survey Summary - Draft

Arthur Thomas and Steve Lochmann - 3/29/17

Alumni surveys are one way to assess a university's success at preparing graduates for life, the world or work and/or graduate studies. Surveys measure the effects of programs and extra-curricular activities on the achievement of learning outcomes vital to a student's complete development. Alumni surveys were conducted during the fall term. Two cohorts were surveyed, one three years after graduation and one five years after graduation. Email addresses were acquired from career services, departments, schools, and alumni associations. Initial contact was in the form of a letter from the Chancellor, announcing the survey and indicating that the survey instrument would come from LiveText. One day later, the survey instrument was distributed via email. One week later, non-respondents received a second correspondence requesting participation in the survey. One day later, the survey was re-sent from LiveText.

Response rates to alumni surveys are quite variable. Response rates can be affected by the campus environment, the type of institution, the relevance of the survey to alumni, and the manner in which the survey is conducted. For example, Purdue University saw a 21% response rate to the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project. This survey was conducted by a direct marketing firm. A meta-analysis of response rates in web- or internet-based surveys showed response rates ranging from less than 5% to as high as 90% (Cook et al. 2000). Response rates were higher with precontacts, more total contacts, high salience to the survey population, and incentives. The alumni survey conducted in Fall 2017 utilized a precontact, included a total of 4 contacts, and emphasized the importance of alumni information to improvement of student learning outcomes at UAPB. The survey did not utilize an incentive.

The following is a summary of survey results.

Fall 2011-Spring 2012 Cohort (5 years after graduation)

Five hundred and six alumni surveys were distributed and fourteen responses were received, generating a response rate of 2.8%. Seventy-seven percent of respondents have a job in their field. Three respondents in this cohort have obtained masters degrees. Few respondents (7.1%) participated in specialized programs such as AmeriCorps or Peace Corps. Respondents said leadership, oral communication, resourcefulness, discipline-specific skills, time management, written communication, statistics, and research skills were skills important in their career and acquired at the university. Respondents indicated that interviewing, further discipline-specific skills, further written and oral communication skills, and professional networking were skills they needed, but had to acquire on the job.

Seventy-eight percent of respondents participated in at least one co curricular activity (Figure 1). Respondents recommended professional clubs, mentorship programs, the debate team, research organizations, and Greek life as useful co curricular programs. Twenty-one percent of

respondents indicated Greek life influenced them to become engaged in civic organizations after graduation.

About 57% of respondents participated in an internship and 37% of those internships led to a job. Respondents were generally satisfied with academics at the University (Figure 2). It appears that they show the most concern over academic advisement. Respondents were satisfied, but slightly less so, with non-academics, showing most concern for the living and dining facilities.

Fall 2013-Spring 2014 Cohort (3 years after graduation)

Four hundred and thirty six surveys were distributed and nine responses were received, generating a response rate of 2.1%. Sixty-seven percent have jobs in their field. Two of nine respondents (22%) obtained masters degrees after graduating and the same percentage participated in special programs. Respondents said paying attention to details, resourcefulness, discipline-specific skills, community involvement, statistics, and research skills were skills important in their career and acquired at the university. This cohort indicated data analysis tools and a more in-depth knowledge of organic chemistry were skills they needed, but had to acquire on the job.

Seventy-eight percent of respondents participated in at least one co curricular activity (Figure 1), with Greek life having the highest participation rate. Respondents recommend participation in discipline-specific clubs. Forty-four percent of respondents were engaged in civic organizations after graduation, and Greek life and Honors College were given as the reasons for that engagement. A little over half of the respondents completed an internship and 80% of respondents completing an internship said the internship led directly or indirectly to a job in their field.

Respondents from this cohort appear to be satisfied with academic aspects of their university experience (Figure 2). They were least satisfied with the academic facilities on campus. Students were also asked about non-academics on campus. Respondents were somewhat less satisfied with non-academic aspects of their university experience, showing the most concern for living and dining facilities.

Overall Observations

We acknowledge this summary is based on small sample sizes. The Office of Assessment will work to increase response rates of future surveys. Nevertheless, these data indicate a relatively small proportion of alumni are earning graduate degrees. Respondents appeared to want more in-depth discipline specific skills, but were generally satisfied with their academic and non-academic experiences at UAPB. Respondents were least satisfied with the dorms and the dining area. Greek life is an important co curricular activity. Participation in Greek organizations influenced alumni to be active in civic organizations after graduation. Maybe there is a need for Greeks to do more on campus.

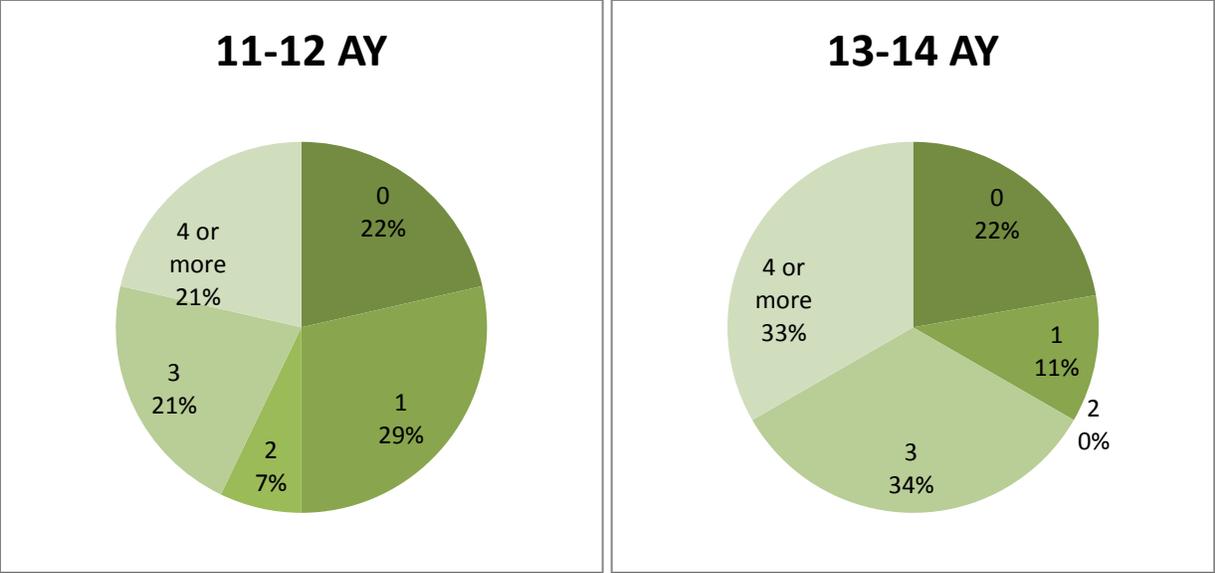


Figure 1. Percent of survey respondents participating in varying numbers of co-curricular activities.

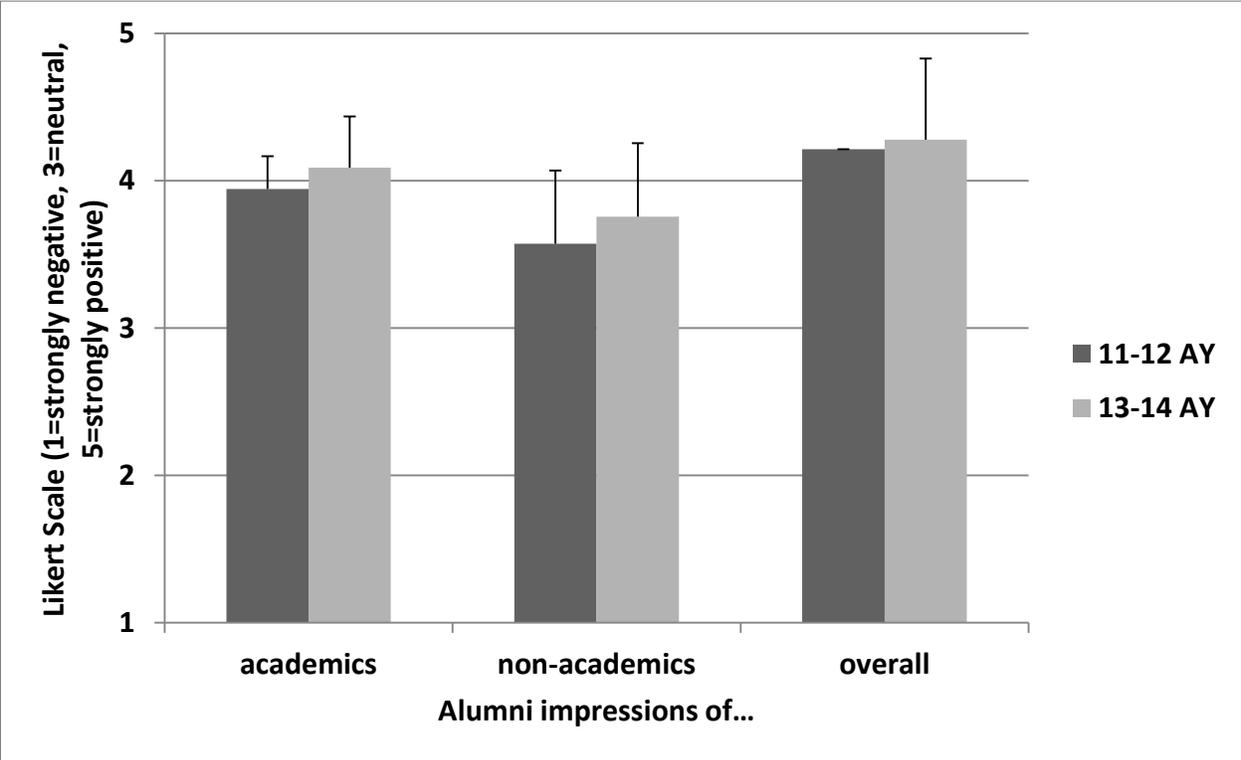


Figure 2. Mean responses to questions regarding academic and non-academic issues, as well as overall impression of the educational experience of UAPB alumni. Error bars are 1 SD.