Alumni Satisfaction Project

Office of Academic Affairs
Tennessee Technological University
Dr. Theresa Ennis, University Assessment
Introduction

Rationale

The proposed Alumni Satisfaction project at TTU focuses on three areas as mandated by performance funding standards. Tennessee Tech has opted to modify the Alumni Survey used in years past. The survey was revised to encompass the following areas: Alumni Outcomes, Student Engagements/Competencies, and Alumni Giving.

The survey contains various questions pertaining to Alumni Outcomes. Questions concerning job satisfaction, income, occupational attainment, and civic engagement are contained in numbers 18-21. Civic Engagement information will be specifically gathered by the additional questions Tennessee Tech added as an adaption to the survey. We are asking that Alumnus indicate their willingness to participate in various activities in addition to community service opportunities.

Student Engagement/Competencies are an important aspect to the survey. Tennessee Tech is interested in the student experience at our institution that led our Alumni to become successful graduates. In this regard, the engagement as a student is important to analyze what works for successful graduates. The section in our survey about their experience at Tennessee Tech explores this engagement and competencies that are needed to be successful in their chosen careers. Questions 4 and 5 analyze the student engagement and involvement on campus, in and outside of the classroom. Question 6, 7, and 8 emphasize an inquiry on competencies gained from their experience at Tennessee Tech.

Most importantly, in these times of constrained budgets, our survey will assess Alumni Giving and post graduate involvement with the institution. Questions are included that assess the factors that encourage Alumni support to Tennessee Tech. Questions 1, 2 and 3 investigate their overall satisfaction and impression with the quality of their educational experience at Tennessee Tech. Number 4, 5, and 8 additionally can be used to gauge the extent to which Tennessee Tech prepared them for a career, faculty involvement with these previous students, and their history of involvement with the institution. A new section of questions was developed to determine various ways that Alumni would be willing to do on behalf of the institution. Questions 30 and 31 assess the extent that Alumni intend to give to the institution, and willingness to participate in volunteer activities, at both the institution and in the community.

Methodology

Sampling Plan and Population

Tennessee Tech has opted to survey the total cohort of graduates that received their degree two years prior to the implementation of the Alumni survey. We propose to survey the total cohort from a prospective academic year in order to provide more valid results when disaggregating the data to the disciplinary level. The participants are to remain confidential and we intend to have a record of the response rates in a separate spreadsheet.
As mandated by the performance funding assessment calendar, our next implementation of the Alumni Survey will be in the Spring 2012 semester. Our population for the 2012 implementation of the Alumni Survey will be graduates from the 2009-2010 academic year. This cohort surveyed will be undergraduates only, who received Bachelor’s degree from our institution during the prescribed timeframe per implementation.

Materials and Implementation Procedures

For future implementations of the Alumni Survey at Tennessee Tech, we propose to use a web-based only survey (Appendix C). We feel that we can incorporate a web-based survey that will capture data efficiently and effectively. The previously used Alumni Survey was revised by editing language in certain questions, and adding a section on Alumni Giving. Some aspects of the survey will remain the same in order to conduct a longitudinal assessment of historic data. We are also interested in any comments that the Alumnus may have, therefore, we added a comment section at the end of the survey.

A letter from the president (Appendix B) will be included at the beginning of the online survey. This letter focuses on the importance of completing the survey and informs the participants of procedures, incentives, and confidentiality.

Prior to sending out the survey link via email, a postcard (Appendix A) introducing the survey will be sent to participants. This postcard will contain information on how to access the survey (in case the email contact we have in our system is incorrect) and also a specific code for each participant to log in to their personal survey invitation. We want to ensure we have a secure system for collecting data and the code will be used to verify they are indeed alumni and that they can only fill out the survey one time. This system also allows for them to complete one section of the survey and to return for completing the next sections of the survey at their convenience.

An email from the Tennessee Tech Alumni Relations Office will be sent out to perspective Alumni approximately two weeks after the initial Alumni Survey postcard information is sent out. This email invitation to complete the survey will also include how to access the survey and contain their personal code to complete the survey. An email reminder to complete the survey will be sent via the Alumni Relations office weekly until close of the survey. Utilizing social media like FaceBook, the Alumni Relations office will continue to keep the importance of completing the survey in the forefront of communication and alumni discussions. Notable results from previous implementations of the Alumni Survey will be published via an article in “Visions” the Tennessee Tech publication for Alumni.

In order to provide an incentive to complete the survey, Tennessee Tech Alumni Relations has opted to provide iPods as prizes for a drawing at the competition of the survey. Again as mentioned above, the participants are to remain confidential so we have a record of the response rates in a separate spreadsheet with which we will choose at random winners from those participants that have completed the survey. Research shows that incentives do work in improving response rates.
Results

Dissemination of results will be executed through a partnership between the director of Alumni Relations and the Director of University Assessment. Data will be presented at various Alumni committee meetings and through diverse communication avenues. Disciplinary reports will be accessible to departmental chairpersons and be presented to various committees on campus that impact program changes. Data collected will be used to identify program areas for improvement and in the development of strategies to enhance student learning, engagement, and impact the completion of degrees. The Alumni Survey results will be included in the Comprehensive Satisfaction Studies Report in relation to program changes and strategies for improvement as a result of the data collected through this process.

Conclusion

Engagement and satisfaction with higher educational experiences continue to be an integral part of the success in the completion of college degrees. At Tennessee Tech, we strive to assess and improve our programs to impact the success of our students. The Alumni Satisfaction Project is one way to understand these experiences and the perspectives of our students. Data collected from this project will be combined with other assessment metrics, and will drive our program changes and improvements for the future.

Timeline

Week 1 of April 2012: Send out Introductory Postcards
Week 2 of April 2012: Send out link to Alumni Survey via Email
Week 3 & 4 of April 2012: Follow up Reminders to Complete the Survey

Appendices

Appendix A: Introductory Postcard
Appendix B: Letter from the President
Appendix C: Alumni Satisfaction Survey
Appendix A

Introductory Postcard

Dear Alumnus:

In about one week, you will receive an invitation via email seeking your opinions about your experiences at Tennessee Technological University.

We ask that you check your email frequently and visit the Alumni Survey link provided in the email you will receive. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes and is broken down by sections. You are provided a code above your name on the address section of this postcard for you to log in and complete the survey. It is extremely important that we receive your completed survey for the results to accurately reflect the opinions of TTU graduates.

If by chance you do not receive your Alumni Survey invitation link via email, you may also access the survey at www.tntech.edu/alumnisurvey. If you have any questions about the Alumni Survey, please call Academic Affairs at 931-372-3463.

Most Cordially,

Robert R. Bell
President
Appendix B

Letter from the President

Dear Alumnus:

Educational quality continues to be an important issue in Tennessee and the nation. In an effort to determine the perception of graduates regarding the quality of education they received, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has recommended that the 2009-2010 graduates of Tennessee colleges and universities be surveyed. In the spirit of this recommendation, Tennessee Technological University would like to ask for your help. The University is attempting to assess the reaction of graduates to their campus experience and to determine how well the institution prepared them for employment and their role in society.

In order for the survey results to truly represent the perception of TTU alumni, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and submitted online. Additional comments can be written and submitted at the end of the survey. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. Results will be reported as a group—as a total university or by major.

As an incentive to complete and submit your valued input via the survey, you will automatically be entered in a drawing to win an iPod, upon submission of your completed survey.

The results of this research will be made available to senior University officials for the purpose of promoting quality improvements and program modifications.

Responding by April 30 would be greatly appreciated. Thank you so very much for your assistance in this important matter.

Most cordially,

Robert R. Bell

President
Appendix C

Alumni Survey

Note: Appendix C is a word document version of an online survey. The survey will look differently online, include the TTU logo, and the user will be able to rate each question at the click of a mouse. Questions in this word document are worded exactly as they would be in the online survey.
LOG IN PAGE

To answer the alumni survey online you must login using your designated login ID and password. Login in IDs are found on the mailing label that is on the postcard and in the invitation email that you received from Tennessee Technological University.

The login ID is the 6-digit code located above your name on the left.
The password is your last name.

Enter your Login ID: ___________________________
Enter your Password: ___________________________

Introductory President’s Letter

Dear Alumnus:
Educational quality continues to be an important issue in Tennessee and the nation. In an effort to determine the perception of graduates regarding the quality of education they received, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has recommended that the 2009-2010 graduates of Tennessee colleges and universities be surveyed. In the spirit of this recommendation, Tennessee Technological University would like to ask for your help. The University is attempting to assess the reaction of graduates to their campus experience and to determine how well the institution prepared them for employment and their role in society.

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Most cordially,
Robert R. Bell
President

If you have any questions about this online survey contact TTU Academic Affairs at 931-372-3463, or the Director of University Assessment at 931-372-6124.

LOGIN (Click here to continue)
SECTION 1 OF SURVEY

In this questionnaire, you are asked to respond to your experience at Tennessee Technological University (TTU). Using your mouse, choose the appropriate answers and at the end of each section click the Next Page button.

1. How satisfied are you with the overall educational experience you had at TTU?
   Very Dissatisfied  Dissatisfied  Satisfied  Very Satisfied

2. If you could start college again, would you enroll at TTU?
   Definitely Not  Probably Not  Probably Yes  Definitely Yes

3. Would you recommend TTU to others?
   Definitely Not  Probably Not  Probably Yes  Definitely Yes

4. Thinking back to your experience at TTU, how often will you say you did each of the following?
   Very Often  Often  Sometimes  Never
   a) Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
   b) Made a class presentation
   c) Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in
   d) Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources
   e) Included diverse perspectives (different races, religions, genders, political beliefs, etc.) in class discussions or writing assignments
   f) Came to class without completing readings or assignments
   g) Worked with other students on projects during class
   h) Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
   i) Put together ideas or concepts from different courses when completing assignments or during class discussions
   j) Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
   k) Participated in a community-based project (e.g., service learning) as part of a regular course
   l) Used social media (Facebook, Twitter, discussion boards, texting) to discuss or complete an assignment
   m) Used e-mail or other electronic methods to communicate with an instructor
   n) Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
   o) Talked about career plans with a faculty member, advisor, or Career Services
   p) Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
   q) Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance (written or oral)
   r) Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations
   s) Worked with faculty members on activities other than coursework (community service, committees, orientation, student life activities, etc.)
   t) Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others (non-faculty) outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)
   u) Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own
   v) Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values
   w) Attended campus sponsored activities for students
   x) Participated in one or more student organization/s or club/s

NEXT PAGE (Click here to continue)
SECTION 2 OF SURVEY

What was your major? (Please type in the box) __________________________

5. Please indicate if you used any of the following services while at Tennessee Technological University, and rate your overall satisfaction with each. If you did NOT use (N/A) any of the services, please mark the corresponding box and move to the next item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USE</th>
<th>SATISFACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Library Facilities/Services
b) Registration Services
c) Financial Aid Services
d) Information Technology Services (ITS)
e) Advising Services
f) Practicum/intern/service learning experience
g) Career Services
h) Counseling Center
i) Disability Services
j) Health Services/Infirmary
k) Campus Recreation/Fitness Center
l) Food/Dining Services

6. Thinking back to your experience at TTU, how much did your coursework emphasize the following mental activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Little</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Quite a Bit</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

a) Memoriizing facts, ideas, or methods from your courses and readings so you can repeat them in pretty much the same form
b) Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory, such as examining a particular case or situation in depth and considering its components
c) Synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships
d) Making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods, such as examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions
e) Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations

NEXT PAGE (Click here to continue)
SECTION 3 OF SURVEY

7. To what extent did Tennessee Technological University emphasize each of the following?

   Very Little   Some   Quite a Bit   Very Much

   a) Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations
   b) Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college
   c) Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial and ethnic backgrounds
   d) Using technology in academic/career work

8. To what extent did your experience at Tennessee Technological University contribute to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?

   Very Little   Some   Quite a Bit   Very Much

   a) Acquiring a broad general education
   b) Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills
   c) Writing clearly and effectively
   d) Speaking clearly and effectively
   e) Thinking clearly and effectively
   f) Analyzing quantitative or qualitative problems
   g) Using computing and information technology
   h) Working effectively with others
   i) Learning effectively on your own
   j) Understanding yourself
   k) Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds

9. The following questions relate to your major. Thinking about your major, please rate the quality of each item below.

   Poor   Fair   Good   Excellent

   a) Availability of your faculty advisor
   b) Quality of information provided by your advisor
   c) Clarity of degree requirements in the major
   d) Clarity of objectives for courses in the major
   e) Opportunities for student evaluation of instruction
   f) Availability of faculty to help students outside of class
   g) Quality of courses to prepare you for employment
   h) Quality of instruction in major
   i) Opportunities to express ideas effectively in your major
   j) Usefulness of information learned in class in day-to-day activities

10. How would you characterize the preparation you received at TTU for further study at another college or university?

    Poor   Fair   Good   Excellent

11. How would you characterize the preparation you received at TTU for employment in your field?

    Poor   Fair   Good   Excellent

NEXT PAGE (Click here to continue)
SECTION 4 OF SURVEY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
The series of questions below are related to a variety of basic demographic areas that are needed in order to better serve Tennessee Technological University. TTU assures you that all of the material provided is anonymous and will remain confidential. Please choose one answer that best represents your status.

12. What year did you graduate?  
   2009  2010

13. What is your gender?  
   Female  Male

14. How old were you when you first began at TTU?  
   Under 22  31 to 45  22 to 24  46 or 60  25 to 30  Over 60

15. What is your present age?  
   Under 22  31 to 45  22 to 24  46 or 60  25 to 30  Over 60

16. What is your race / ethnic group?  
   Asian-American/Pacific Islander  
   Caucasian  
   Native American/American Indian  
   Hispanic/Latino  
   African American  
   Other ______________

17. For the most part, were you a part-time or full-time student?  
   Full-time  Part-time

18. While attending Tennessee Technological University, about how many hours did you work per week?  
   Did not work  
   Employed fewer than 10 hours  
   10 to 19 hours  
   20 to 29 hours  
   30 to 40 hours  
   More than 40 hours

19. Which of the following best describes your present employment situation?  
   Working full-time (not self employed)  
   Working part-time (not self employed)  
   Self employed  
   Unemployed, seeking employment  
   Unemployed, not seeking employment  
   Full-time student/not employed

20. Are you employed in the field in which you were educated? If not, why not? (Choose the best Response.)  
   I am employed in my major field  
   The jobs in my field did not pay well  
   I could not find a job in my field
21. How did you become aware of the opening which became your first job after graduation from college?
   - I was already working in the job
   - Newspaper advertisement
   - Cooperative education project/faculty contact/service learning
   - Contact through a friend or relative
   - Career Services
   - Employment/placement agency
   - Other

22. What is your current annual salary?
   - Less than $20,000
   - $20,000 to $35,999
   - $36,000 to $49,999
   - $50,000 - $64,999
   - $65,000 or more
   - Not applicable

23. Are you presently enrolled in a college or university?
   - Yes, part-time undergraduate
   - Yes, full-time undergraduate
   - Yes, part-time graduate/professional student
   - Yes, full-time graduate/professional student
   - Not presently enrolled in a college or university

*The Following Questions relate to your experience and involvement with TTU post graduation:

24. Since graduation, TTU has provided opportunities for me to participate in professional development courses/seminars that would help me be more successful.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

25. Since graduation, I have participated in professional development courses/seminars at TTU that have helped me be more successful.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Somewhat Disagree
   - Somewhat Agree
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

26. Since graduation, TTU has provided opportunities for me to work with current students and new graduates to help them be more successful.
   - Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Somewhat Disagree
Somewhat Agree
Agree
Strongly Agree

27. Since graduation, I have participated in activities to help TTU students or new graduates be more successful.
   Strongly Disagree
   Disagree
   Somewhat Disagree
   Somewhat Agree
   Agree
   Strongly Agree

28. Since graduation, TTU has provided opportunities for me to make suggestions about how to improve programs and services.
   Strongly Disagree
   Disagree
   Somewhat Disagree
   Somewhat Agree
   Agree
   Strongly Agree

29. Since graduation, I feel that TTU has tried to maintain contact with me.
   Strongly Disagree
   Disagree
   Somewhat Disagree
   Somewhat Agree
   Agree
   Strongly Agree

30. Please rate the likelihood of your involvement with the university as a TTU alumnus.
    Never  Sometimes  Often  Very  Often

   a) Willingness/intent to use influence on behalf of the university.
   b) Willingness/intent to consider gifts to the university foundation.
   c) Willingness/intent to participate in volunteer activities with the university.
   d) Willingness/intent to serve as a liaison to Alumni Relations, representing your area of residence/business

31. Please check all that apply concerning activities that you would want to participate in as an alumnus at the university.
    Mentoring Programs
    Community Service Opportunities
    Coordinating or assisting in events on campus
    Coordinating or assisting in events off campus
    Reunions/Homecoming
    Other (Please type in the box)________________________

Additional Comments: (Please type in the box)________________________

SUBMIT SURVEY (Click here to continue)
Thank you for taking the time to fill out the Alumni Survey online. We appreciate your input.

The TTU Alumni web site provides you with all kinds of information on our events, other alumni, services, merchandise, and more. You can update your address in our online alumni directory.

If you have not yet registered, go to TTU Alumni web site and click “Register.” Complete the first time user form to request access to the Alumni site. Your request will be processed within two business days.

Once you are registered, you can return to the directory and look for former friends or classmates, update your personal information, upload a photo, send a web postcard, and more.