UTILIZING THE GRADUATE EXIT SURVEY TO INVESTIGATE STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES AND TEXAS CORE CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

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The higher education sector is a rapidly growing industry in the US and throughout the world - enrollment and graduation rates have grown significantly over the past ten years.

Changing economy and reductions in government spending on education - forcing universities to adapt and become more competitive.

Better understanding stakeholders (students/graduates) experiences and the factors that contribute to the relationship between the university and students are important considerations in assessing how well the university is accomplishing its mission.

Much research has reiterated the importance of ongoing measurement of relationships in an effort to seek continuous improvement.

Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Fombrun, Gardberg, & Sever, 2000; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Petresko, 2011; Ressler, 2010; Riketta, 2003
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board revised the Texas Core Curriculum (TCC) rules in October 2011, which began in the fall 2014 semester.

Revisions were based on the recommendations of the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC), which is comprised of faculty members from Texas public community colleges and universities.

The TCC is a 42 Semester Credit Hour (SCH) core curriculum for all undergraduate students in Texas – elements include a statement of purpose, six core objectives, and nine common component areas which are required to be assessed and reported.

Per Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board at: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=417252EA-B240-62F7-9F6A1A125C83BE08
CURRENT STUDY

- **Purpose:**
  - The current study investigates undergraduate students’ perceptions of academic experiences and how much progress they felt they made upon graduation in terms of the Texas Core Curriculum Outcomes.

- **Participants:**
  - In the current study, 647 undergraduate students out of 686 applicants for graduation completed the GES survey - response rate of 94.3%.
  - A total 1406 graduate and undergraduate students applied for graduation, 1311 completed the GES in Fall 2015 – response rate of 93%.

- **Method:**
  - Upon application for graduation, all students are emailed and asked to complete the GES.
CURRENT STUDY

Instrument:

- The GES contained two areas of particular interest in the current study:

A nine item construct for Texas Core Curriculum Outcomes –
utilizing a 5-point Likert Scale choices from Poor to Excellent

1. Critical Thinking Skills - creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
2. Writing Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written communication
3. Oral Communication Skills - effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through oral and visual communication
4. Empirical and Quantitative Skills - the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts in informed conclusions
5. Personal Responsibility - the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
6. Social Responsibility - intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
7. Discipline Specific Knowledge - Mastery of the depth of knowledge required for my degree program
8. Integration of Broad Knowledge - synthesize knowledge from general and specialized studies
9. Globalization and Cultural Diversity - the interconnectedness of diverse peoples in the global environment
10. Overall, I had a satisfying educational experience at A&M-Commerce.
11. I would definitely recommend A&M-Commerce to prospective students.
12. I felt a sense of community in my time at A&M-Commerce.
13. If I could start over, I would choose to graduate with the same major.
14. If I could start over, I would still choose A&M-Commerce.
15. My academic program has high standards.
16. My academic program integrates current developments in the field.
17. My academic program was intellectually challenging and stimulating.
18. My academic program encourages student collaboration and teamwork.
19. My academic program has prepared me well for my profession.
The overall average rating was extremely positive: Academic Experience at 92%
As a result of studying at A&M-Commerce, how much progress do you feel you have made in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Percent of Good and Above</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Critical Thinking Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Writing Communication Skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oral Communication Skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Empirical and Quantitative Skills</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal Responsibility</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Social Responsibility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Discipline Specific Knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Integration of Broad Knowledge</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Globalization and Cultural Diversity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>593</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall average rating was extremely positive: Texas Core Curriculum Outcomes at 95%
RESULTS

Undergraduate Students' Self-Reported Texas Core Curriculum Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3.99</td>
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CONCLUSIONS

- This research endeavor has provided a wealth of information, by not only providing evidence to show institutional effectiveness, but also providing in-depth student feedback which can be used to improve students’ living and study experiences.
- The results are currently used by a wide variety of university leaders and decision makers.
- Overall, the results are useful in assessing how well the university is doing in meeting the mission, and contribute to ongoing efforts for striving toward excellence.
QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU!