A Comparison of Student Satisfaction and Post-graduation Outcomes of Competency-Based Education and Traditional Programs

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Introduction

- Competency-based education (CBE) is an approach that measures mastery of competencies rather than seat time.

- The goal of CBE is to offer flexible, affordable and quality post-secondary education to a growing base of non-traditional learners (Bonnie Ordonez, 2014).

- The analysis and results in this study include three key areas of dissimilarities in the findings: staff and faculty interaction, affordability and acceleration, and post-graduation outcomes.
This comparative study surveyed the graduates of both the traditional AAS program and its competency-based counterpart, the TAB-ORGL program, at A&M-Commerce.

The goals of this study were to assess both student satisfaction with the degree program and employment outcomes.

At the time that the survey was administered, the TAB-ORGL program had 122 graduates and the AAS program had 353, for a potential maximum of 475.
**CBE vs. Traditional programs**

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<th>CBE</th>
<th>Trad.</th>
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<td><strong>Focus</strong> = outcomes</td>
<td><strong>Focus</strong> = inputs (e.g. seat time)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning is constant. Time is the variable.</td>
<td>Time is the constant. Learning is the variable.</td>
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<td><em>All</em> students master the material.</td>
<td><em>Some</em> students master the material; others may not.</td>
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Students in both programs share similar characteristics such as:

- **Age:**
  Majority of students in both programs are between ages 25 – 60yrs. Average age (ORGL: 38; AAS: 39)

- **Ethnicity Distribution:**
  A large portion of students enrolled in both programs are white (ORGL: 66%; AAS: 61%), but there is a growing base of Hispanic (ORGL: 16%; AAS: 14%) and African American student enrollment (ORGL: 14%; AAS: 19%).
Transfer Students:
Over 95% students for both the programs enrolled as transfers, bringing high numbers of semester credit hours from previously attended institutions. SCH transferred in (ORGL: 72 SCHs; AAS: 90 SCHs)

Marital Status:
A majority of graduates who answered the survey are married or previously had been married (ORGL: 78%, N = 50 schs; AAS: 85%, N = 40) and had a dependent spouse or children (ORGL: 66% N = 50; AAS: 67.5% N = 40).

Employment:
Most graduates were employed full time prior to beginning their respective programs (ORGL: 82% N = 49; AAS: 87% N = 39).
 Nearly 78% (N=50) of TAB-ORGL program graduates agreed they received weekly feedback from faculty, compared to a much lower 42% (N=41) for the traditional AAS program graduates.
Nearly half (50%, N=50) of the TAB-ORGL graduates felt they received weekly feedback from their advisors compared to a much lower 12% (N=41) for the Traditional AAS Graduates.
Affordability and Acceleration

Importance of Cost and Attendance when selecting their perspective program of study

- Traditional BAAS Graduates
- TAB Program Graduates

- Ability to Accelerate: 18% (Traditional) vs. 56% (TAB)
- Cost of the Program: 29% (Traditional) vs. 58% (TAB)
Did this program allow you to accelerate time to degree completion?

- **To a great extent:**
  - Traditional BAAS Graduates: 37%
  - TAB Program Graduates: 84%

Did this program allow you to reduce cost to degree?

- **To a great extent:**
  - Traditional BAAS Graduates: 21%
  - TAB Program Graduates: 84%
As a result of the time and cost effectiveness shared by graduates, only 42% (N=50) TAB-ORGL students reported additional debt, compared to 67% (N=38) for traditional AAS students.
Did you experience any of the following career development opportunities after obtaining your degree?

- Received a promotion
- Obtained a better position with a new employer

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<th>Traditional BAAS Graduates</th>
<th>TAB Program Graduates</th>
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<td>Received a promotion</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obtained a better position with a new employer</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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The research outlined in this presentation supports an argument for augmented results for graduates of the TAB-ORGL Program.

While we believe continuing to track these student populations is a good start, certainly more hard data supporting the efficacy of competency-based education is needed.

The earliest data available for the TAB Program is from Spring 2014 thus, it is still too early for any conclusive results.

As the program matures, hopefully better results will be available to determine the true impact of a competency-based model versus traditional.
Any Queries?