**California State University San Marcos**

**Fall 2010 Alumni Survey**

 In Fall 2006, Institutional Planning and Analysis, in cooperation with the Career Center and the Development Office, developed an electronic survey that was sent to alumni who graduated from California State University San Marcos prior to Fall 2006. The same survey has been sent annually to students who graduated three years earlier and to our most recent graduates. This fall we sent surveys to 2,529 2006-07 and 2009-10 graduates; 497 were returned yielding a responses rate of 20% (14.9% of total graduates).[[1]](#footnote-1)

 As has been the case in previous years, most of the respondents are recent graduates; consequently, this report will focus primarily on the responses of 2009-10 graduates and look at differences by survey year, highest degree earned at CSUSM and level of involvement in campus activities while attending CSUSM. This report is a brief summary of the survey findings and focuses on three areas: involvement with the university since graduation, employment and educational activities since graduation, and views of the usefulness of selected curricular features at CSUSM.. [[2]](#footnote-2)

 More than 90% respondents earned their Bachelor’s degree from CSUSM and 10% earned more than one degree from our campus. The most common major among respondents was in a Social Sciences discipline followed by Business.

 As in previous surveys, nearly all respondents say they are proud to be a Cal State San Marcos graduate and three-quarters say that their years at CSUSM were some of the best of their lives. One respondent summed it up nicely:[[3]](#footnote-3)

*My experience at CSUSM has been more inspirational and thought provoking than any education I have had. I believe CSUSM is a very rewarding university that maybe most don't realize until we leave it. I realize how much we have learned when I find myself sometimes reiterating thoughts and ideas I could have only come across in our classrooms and using in our daily lives (professions). Thank YOU!!!*

Unfortunately, the percentage of respondents who reported positive memories of their time at CSUSM has continued to drop in all areas since 2008. Nearly 70% say they feel part of the CSUSM community but fewer feel a strong tie to the university itself. Furthermore, just 31% of respondents say they have at least occasional involvement with the university since they graduated, and 40% say they are not involved at all. However, as was true in previous surveys, respondents who participated in activities while they were in school are much more likely to have positive associations with the university.

Students who were involved in the university as students are much more likely to report at least occasional involvement with the campus (43% vs. 20%) and to feel connected to the university.

 Also, dropping since 2008 are the percentage of respondents who say they have recommended the university to others (64% vs. 75% of respondents in 2008) or returned to campus to visit faculty or staff. However, they are more likely than 2008 respondents to have used the Career Center and to have taken courses through Extended Learning—a possible consequence of the current economic downturn.

*Employment*

 The percentage of recent graduates who are employed bumped up for 2009-10 graduates with 76% saying they are employed; however this increase is partnered with an increase in part-time employment. Furthermore, 38% of recent bachelor’s degree graduates continued in a position they held before graduation and 19% say their current job in not in line with their career goals. Many of respondents’ comments showed frustration with the job market and with the support they received from the university:

*The degree that I earned has not served me in my career pursuits. I'm currently working the same job before I started my attendance to CSUSM. My current job doesn't require me to have a degree. Therefore the degree that I worked for at CSUSM has only contributed to my interpersonal growth and development. Coming from a perspective of upgrading my career, I have yet to see if all my work in education was in vain.*

*I wish the teachers would give more help with finding a job after graduation. They talk about all these amazing things that you can do with your degree, but in the real world, the opportunities are not available. I would have liked to know more about job opportunities before I was thrown into the real world not knowing what opportunities are available with a CSUSM degree.*

Although most respondents stay in San Diego County, the percentage of respondents who are working in North San Diego County has declined and the percentage working in the city of San Diego has increased. Finally, among 2010 Bachelor degree recipients, two-thirds earn no more than $40,000/year and 36% say they earn $20,000/year or less. Among respondents earning a credential or Master’s degree, 44% - 50% earn more than $40.00/year.

*Education*

More than half of respondents who graduated recently plan to attend graduate school. Of the 14% who are currently enrolled in a postbaccalaureate program, a majority are seeking a Master’s degree. In addition, this year’s respondents say they are planning to enroll in graduate school sooner than previous survey respondents.

 Respondents continue to be very positive about the utility of the skills they gained from their coursework at CSUSM. The majority said their writing skills, critical thinking skills and speaking skills, as well as their ability to work as part of a team were enhanced by their education and these same skills have been useful to them since graduation. As one respondent commented:

*I often reflect fondly of my experiences there. Upon graduation, I was sent to a 26 week [military training] course along with 250 other new college grads from all over the country. The population was extremely diverse in terms of academic experience. Backgrounds ranged from those of Ivy-League status, to state schools, to military universities/academies. I was astounded by my ability to stand toe-to-toe academically. I was also quite frankly, surprised to find that many lacked the array of critical thinking skills that myself and other CSUSM alumni seem to obtain at Cal State.*

However, it should be noted that the percentage of respondents who say their skills were enhanced has been steadily declining since 2007.

In many ways these survey results reflect the current economic times and the budget cuts that have been a reality in recent years. Overall, recent graduates seem less happy with their college experience than in previous years and just 59% say they have to recommended CSUSM to others.

1. A special thanks to Alumni Services for providing the email addresses of our alumni. Of the 3,333 graduates, we were able to successfully contact 2,529 of them (75.8%). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For additional results from the survey, including detailed comparisons of early and most recent graduates, contact Pat Morris in IPA at pmorris@csusm.edu. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The last question in the Fall 2010 Alumni Survey invited respondents to make additional comments about their “experience at CSUSM and the utility of the undergraduate education you received”; 150 respondents took advantage of this opportunity. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)