

CAREER STATUS OF SAN BEDA COLLEGE CAS GRADUATES: AN ONLINE TRACER STUDY

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Abstract

The study examined the current career status of graduates from the SBCA CAS from SY 1999-2010. The study explored the employment status, relevance of jobs with completed course and the impact of SBCA programs on their current career competencies. The study utilized an online survey that was electronically mailed to a purposively sampled 100 CAS graduates. A total of (N=78) responded to the survey. Findings show that (59) 80% of the respondents are employed and majority (82%) gained employment in six months or less from their graduation in San Beda. Only 79% of the alumni respondents are in jobs related to their college course.

Graduate employability is often a predominant and consistent theme in any higher education institution. Industry employers and alumni alike agree that college preparation is essential to workplace readiness. According to Harvey (2002), employability is an individual property; it is about equipping individuals to secure their own economic success.

Previous tracer study by Talusig (2004) and Adrao (2007) has already indicated that employability among SBC graduates is moderately high or around 70% of the respondent alumni. They however recommended the periodic follow up on the careers of alumni to see their development.

This study aimed to determine the employability of SBC CAS graduates. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions: “What is the profile of alumni in terms of employment, monthly salary, and locale of work?”, “Are the alumni in occupations related to their college courses?” “What is the perceived impact of the different SBC CAS programs on the jobs of the alumni?”

Method

The study employed a descriptive approach through an online survey using shared Google Documents.

A hundred alumni respondents (N=100) were selected purposively based on available email addresses and referrals. Links to the online survey were emailed to respondents requesting for their participation to the study.

A ten-item questionnaire was developed for the study containing the key questions of the study. The survey included a 5-point Likert type format in evaluating the different programs (ex. General Education, Major subjects, Formation, Extra Curricular, etc).

The study was conducted for a month from June 26 to July 26, 2010. A tabulation and computation of descriptive statistics was done after the end of the month long survey.

Results

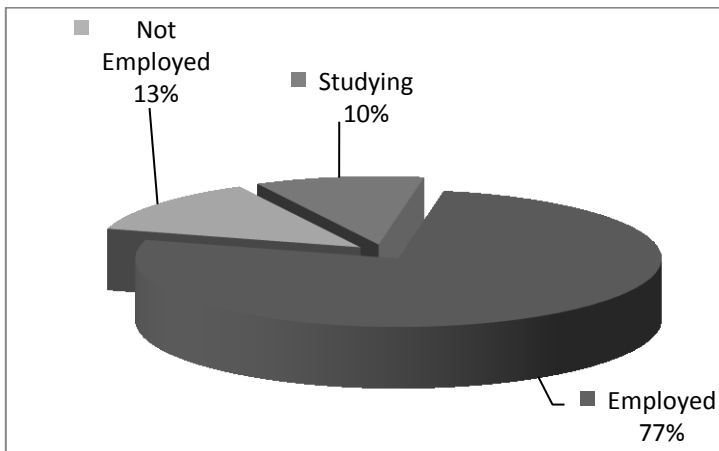
Out of the 100 respondents emailed only 78 (78%) responded, 35 were males and 43 were females. Most of the respondents (32%) were graduates of the BA International Studies program.

Degree Program Completed	Female	Male	Grand Total
BA Communication and Media Studies	4	2	6
BA International Studies (all majors)	21	4	25
BA Psychology	6	4	10
BS Accountancy		1	1
BS Information Systems (all majors)	1	6	7
BS Information Technology	2	6	8
BS Legal Management		1	1
BSBM Entrepreneurship	3		3
BSBM Financial Management	1	2	3
BSBM Marketing and Sales	5	9	14
Grand Total	43 (55%)	35 (45%)	78

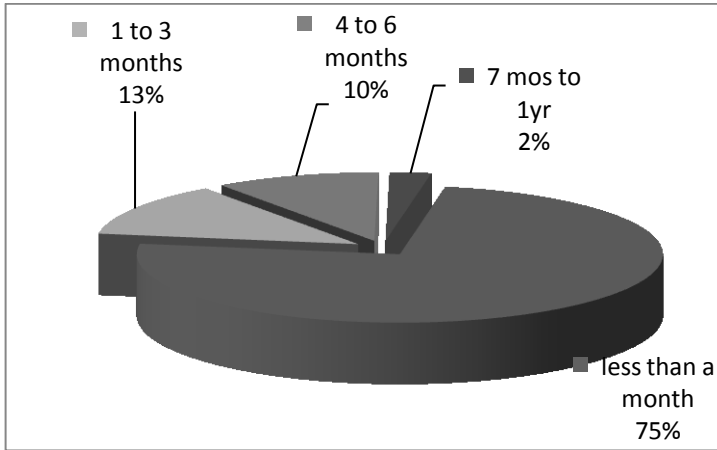
Majority of the respondents were from Class 2010 with 27 % of the respondents followed by Class 2008 with 24%.

Degree Program Completed	Year Graduated from SBCA CAS									Grand Total
	2000	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
BA Communication and Media Studies		1					3	2		6
BA International Studies (all majors)			3	2	2	4	5		9	25
BA Psychology	1					2	4		3	10
BS Accountancy						1				1
BS Information Systems (all majors)	1	1					2	1	2	7
BS Information Technology	2	2					2		2	8
BS Legal Management								1		1
BSBM Entrepreneurship		1		1			1			3
BSBM Financial Management								1	2	3
BSBM Marketing and Sales	1		3	1			2	4	3	14
Grand Total	5	5	6	4	2	7	19	9	21	78

A good number of the respondents are currently employed while a few are unemployed given the following reasons: currently studying (10%), not actively looking for work (13%). Based on the responses, majority of the alumni are employed in the country.



In the survey, most of the alumni reported finding employment in less than six months from graduation. This is an improvement from the findings of Talusig (2004) when graduates reported difficulty in job application due the lack of “brand” recall of the school which was named St. Benedict College then.



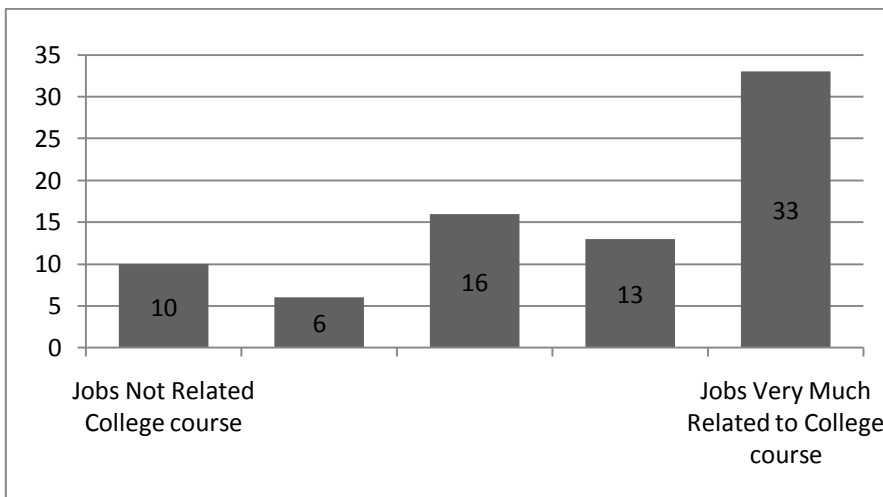
Employed alumni report earning an average of PHP 10-20 thousand a month. Differences in the number of years employed partly account for the range of salaries of the respondents. Entry-level salaries are generally lower for most industries. An exception would be for BPO related work were respondents, even if they are fresh graduates, are paid more. IT related work however, fetch a relatively higher entry-level pay than the other courses.

	BA CMS	BAIS	BAP	BSA	BSIT	BSLM	BSBM	Total
Below 10 K		5	4				5	14
10 - 15K	2	5	5	1	1		3	18
15 - 20K	1	5	1		4	1	4	16
20 - 25K	2	5			3		2	12
25 - 30K		2			1			3
30 - 35K					1			1
35 - 40 K					1			1
40 - 60 K	1	1			4		2	8
60 - 65 K							1	1
above 65 K		1					2	3
N/A		1						1
Total	6	25	10	1	15	1	20	78

Majority of the alumni acknowledge the role of communication skills (83%) as being the most useful in their first jobs, followed by human relations skills (69%) and critical thinking skills (60%). Notably, alumni respondents in their comments allude to the importance of developing communication skills particularly in the job application phases of their

careers. Job interviews with employers are particularly crucial to their budding careers.

More than 79% of respondent alumni reported that their first jobs are related to the college courses they finished in San Beda College Alabang. Based on the respondent's assessment, it could be reliably noted that their employment in their first jobs were guided by the degrees that they finished. Since it was not asked in the survey, it would be interesting whether their current careers are still related to their degrees or realignments have taken place.



A common suggestion in improving the quality of education of their alma mater revolves on the theme of increasing the industry readiness of the graduates.

“Focus on improving the personality of the students. I’ve learned that the companies are looking for vibrant, confident, pro-active graduates for hiring.” (Alumni A)

“I think SBCA’s doing great. However, my current job needs good communication skills, so I think SBCA should train their students more on how to handle themselves inside/outside campus, not on spoon feeding type of education. I had a hard time at first on how to communicate and express myself in front of people, and it’s a learning process, so I think it’s better to start at school.” (Alumni B)

The alumni's experience in the workplace appear to have given them a realization of the value and importance of a functional school career development program.

“Approach in curricula has to be more practical and industry-based in order for academic programs to be relevant to current trends of employment. However, academic programs should not cater to such industries which have the highest demand at the moment, but rather to the industry where growth and career development is most sustainable.” (Alumni C)

“Make sure that the students are taking the course they wanted and give them an idea what kind of jobs, qualifications for those jobs and what real world is really like...also a seminar on rules of work and professionalism is also a must for graduating students” (Alumni D).

In addition, specific suggestions called for the lengthening of the hours for OJT or practicum as well as the inclusion of subjects that deals with the skills demanded currently by the industry (ex. Usage of ticketing software, etc.).

“Prolong the OJT hours, hire competent and knowledgeable professors preferably those who are really working the field of media (for CMS), upgrade the computer system of CAS, practical applications instead of pure lecture and discussions. Expose the students more on field works.” (Alumni E)

“Internship should at least be in 3 different working environments (clinical, school, and in corporate settings) so we could have a 'feel' of different careers for a psychology graduate even though we're just took up Bachelor in Arts- so there's application or connection of what we have studied” (Alumni F)

“I would suggest For IT department, more fieldwork. It is a very different world out in the corporate world. More hands on than lectures, field trips and OJT etc. Add more subjects like, network security, data encryption, etc... Linux training would also be a really big help.” (Alumni G)

The suggestions and comments of the respondent alumni reveal the insights that they gained in dealing the world of work. These realizations of what they should have been equipped with when they graduated provide valid basis for improving current programs.

The current curriculum programs have in fact been revised with the recommended increase in the number of OJT hours. The push for a curriculum that trains students towards industry-valued competence is a thrust that is shared by the CAS administrators.

In conclusion, given the snapshot of alumni careers, the study reveals that majority of the SBCA alumni readily find employment within three months from graduation. They are in occupations that are generally aligned with their courses. Communication and human relation skills are felt by the alumni as very useful in their jobs. The insights and realizations gained while looking for employment by alumni are valuable basis for improving the different academic programs of SBCA CAS. The findings support the current curriculum revisions that lengthen the OJT period to 300-400 hours from the previous 200 hours. The OJT program is currently being strengthened through different MOAs with industry partners that assure the holistic exposure of students to “real” work environment. The OJT programs of BA Psychology¹ is now scheduled on the second semester to take facilitate practicum in the school setting.

In addition, the findings support the directions of the college periodically updating² the program curriculum in response to developments in industry. Further, the findings suggest the possible role of a strong placement program that would facilitate job applications, mock job interviews and job fairs in preparing graduating students.

References:

- Adrao, A. (2007) A career tracer study of CAS graduates of San Beda College Alabang Muntinlupa City : unpublished thesis..
- Harvey, L. and Locke, W. with Morey, A., (2002), *Enhancing employability, recognising diversity*. London, Universities UK and CSU.
- Talusig D.L (2004) Career tracer study of college graduates of San Beda College Alabang Batch 2000, unpublished thesis

¹ Summer OJT makes it difficult to have exposures in schools because of the school’s summer break.

² The CAS updated and revised the different program curriculums more than three times since the college started.