

# EMPLOYABILITY OF SBCA CAS IT STUDENTS: INPUTS FOR IT PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT

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## Abstract

A limited online survey among SBCA CAS IT alumni was conducted to identify possible improvements in the current IT program. Fifteen alumni conveniently sampled respondents (N=15) were surveyed on their current employment status and their inputs for the improvement of the IT program. Findings reveal that 100% of the respondents are employed within 3-6 months of graduation. Majority of the respondents suggest further improvement in the current program.

One of the characteristics of quality education is the value placed in continuous improvement based on evaluation and utilization of feedback from graduates. This is an aspect of education that is often neglected. Too often college programs are offered in response to the popular demand for degree courses that “promise” high paying salaries. It can lead to what Milan (2010) describes as a disastrous condition where the education system fails to consider what their graduates really need in the aspect of employment.

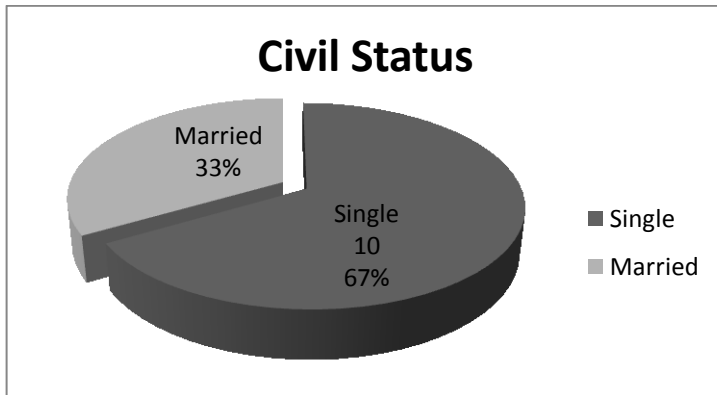
The Information Technology (IT) program of San Beda College Alabang is being offered since 1996 (SBCA Course Catalogue, 2010) and has gone through several review and revisions. Reasons for the changes were directives and CMOs from the CHED as well as inputs from industry experts. As the field of IT is an ever-changing field, it is always important to find out the inputs from the industry and the graduates of the program.

The need for formal and empirical inputs motivated the IT department to conduct the short study as part of its efforts to improve the quality of the IT program. The study attempts to know the current employability conditions of the graduates, particularly the relevance of job to IT, salary, and employability. The study also attempted to solicit recommendations from the graduates on the improvements to the IT program.

## Method

### Respondents

Fifty Respondents were conveniently sampled from a list of alumni with email addresses and Facebook accounts. Emails were sent to possible respondents with the link to the online survey. Of fifty targeted, only 15 alumni who graduated from SY 2000-2010 responded. Three of the fifteen respondents were females. Most of them are single.



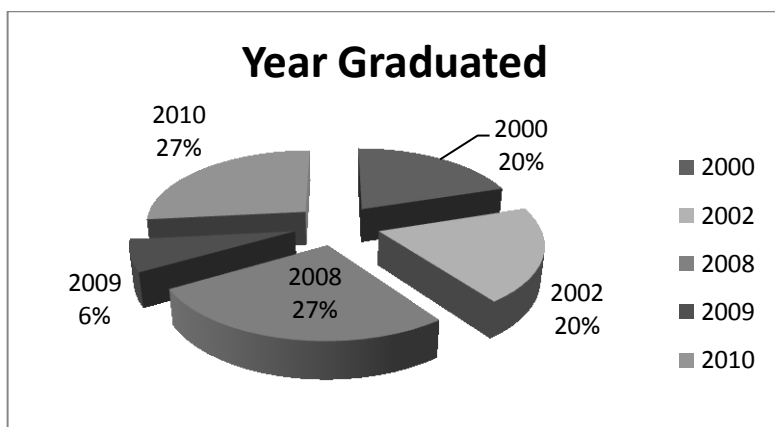
### Instrument

The study utilized a 10-item survey questionnaire. The items include questions that inquire about the respondents' demographic data, employment condition, salary, and inputs about how the CAS IT program can be improved.

The instrument likewise requested the respondents to indicate their opinion about the relatedness of their current job to their degree program.

### Results and Discussion

The fifteen respondents to the study came from the following batches. All of the respondents are employed except for one who is running his own IT-related enterprise.



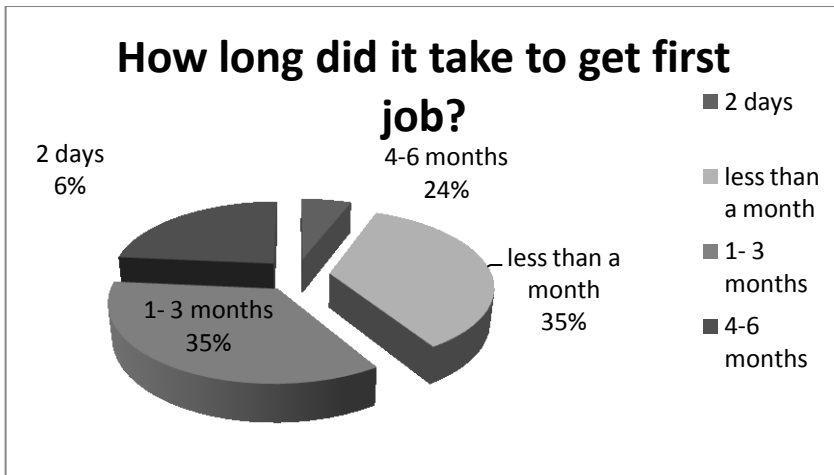
Majority of the respondents report monthly incomes ranging from PHP 20,000 and above. Relative to other industry, the income range for IT related jobs as shown by the table. The higher income range increases further depending on length of job experience and industry certification earned by the graduate.

Monthly Income	Total	%
10 K to less than 15K PHP	1	6%
15 K to less than 20K PHP	4	27%
20 K to less than 25K PHP	3	20%
25 K to less than 30K PHP	1	6%
30 K to less than 35K PHP	1	6%
35 K to 40 K PHP	1	6%
above 40 K PHP	4	27%
Grand Total	15	100%

The prevailing trend of BPO industries in the country has made it possible for the high demand for IT workers in the Philippines. Majority of the respondents are able to earn well while staying in the country.

Place of Work	Total	%
in the Philippines	13	88%
Saudi Arabia	1	6%
USA	1	6%
Grand Total	15	100%

More than 73% of the respondents were able to land their first job in one to three months from their graduation. Forty percent of the respondents found employment less than amount from graduation. This data consistently agrees with the different tracer studies conducted by Talusig (2004) and Adrao (2007).



Remarks and suggestions from the IT alumni reveal the following trends and themes.

First, the alumni encountered the need for more skills preparation in terms of what the industry requires. Their experience made them realized that their knowledge and skills are not enough in relation to what they need at work. Several alumni emphasized this need in their recommendation.

*“Offer advanced programming courses for IT. The skills that I acquired were not enough for the level used at work and thus I was advised to undergo advanced training.” (Alumni A)*

*“An example in my field is to ensure the students are aware of the Software Development Lifecycle (Plan, Analyze, Design, Build, Test, Deploy). This is a basic knowledge an IT or Information Systems student should be aware of.”(Alumni B)*

The value of certain industry-needed subjects became apparent to the alumni as they were exposed to the demands of their work. Hence, investment in additional training and industry certification became a

necessity. The alumni view this as a gap in what their SBCA education should provide.

*“During our time the curriculum had some lapses in terms of preparing us in the real business world. I'm not sure if the following courses are already available in the school: - Visual Studio .Net programming or other programming languages (e.g. Java) - SQL programming, - Web development, - Server Administration and Management” (Alumni C)*

*“I guess in relation with Information Technology course tackle the basics of IT but focus more on the advance topics of IT and also help the senior students to have an idea or introduce the certifications (CCNA, HP, etc...) that the IT people needed as they go in the corporate world.” (Alumni D)*

Next, the comments reveal the need for more industry or job related exposure as part of their college preparation. The appreciation of the value of a good OJT program is made evident. The entry of the graduates into the world of work proved to be a revelation for all the respondents. Even the respondents' distinction of 'real-life' with their college life indicates the contrast in perception that they had to go through. The importance of extracurricular activities was seen as a good venue for exposing students to world of work.

*“For major subjects, focus on the practical applications that will help simulate the 'real-life' scenario. The students need to learn how to take initiative in solving problems and use available resources to their advantage.” (Alumni E)*

*“Give the students more opportunities to showcase their leadership skills in extracurricular activities. Also, provide them with more opportunities to learn about their chosen fields outside of the campus environment.” (Alumni F)*

*“Apply and teach latest technologies for easier understanding for the future. Better to have more physical interaction/demonstration than just lectures. Let the students experience what is like in the real world.”(Alumni G)*

In conclusion, the suggestions and comments from the IT graduates reveal a gap in the current IT program. Though the existing curriculum

complies with the required provisions of the CMOS issued by the CHED, the perceived inadequacies may be in the areas of software technology that rapidly changes. Hence, what a student learns in four years may already be obsolete by the time they graduate. The insights shared by the alumni are in agreement with the current department's belief for the need to review periodically the IT curriculum.

It is also apparent from the remarks of the graduates that the SBCA CAS IT curriculum should have more flexibility in offering IT subjects that would be needed and expected from the graduates by the time they graduate. This can be over and above the required subjects<sup>1</sup> by CHED. Any future revisions of the curriculum however, should consider the addition of advanced IT subjects without bloating further the units of the existing program.

#### References:

- Adrao, A. (2007) A career tracer study of CAS graduates of San Beda College Alabang Muntinlupa City : unpublished thesis..
- Milan, Leandro (2010) <http://planetphilippines.com/migration/a-disastrous-oversupply-of-unemployable-graduates/> accessed July 2010.
- Talusig D.L (2004) Career tracer study of college graduates of San Beda College Alabang Batch 2000, unpublished thesis

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<sup>1</sup> The current curriculum has a total of 166 units, 33 units for IT professional courses, 18, basic IT core courses