

## **Employer Survey:**

### **Methodology**

A total of 299 survey forms were mailed to employers who had recruited Business Administration majors through Career Services. Also included were members of the Accounting Advisory Group, the CIS Industry Advisement Council, the Latin America Business Advisory Group, Finance and Economics Advisory Council, Marketing/Management Advisory Council, and the College of Business Administration Advisory Council. A total of 57 surveys or 19.1% were returned.

### **Results**

#### **Characteristics of respondents are:**

<b><u>Location</u></b>	
Austin	25
Brocton, MA	1
Bryan	1
Dallas	1
Fort Worth	2
Houston	5
Midland/Odessa	1
North Texas	2
San Antonio	15
Unknown	4
Total 57	

Nearly half of the respondents were from Austin and 70% were from either Austin or San Antonio. While a large group of Texas State BBAs work in Houston, the sample does not reflect this, as 71.6% of those surveyed were from the Career Services list. This suggests a lack of recruiting through the Texas State Career Services by Houston companies.

Of those responding, 39 or 68.4% had hired Texas State Business graduates in the last five years. In addition, respondents were asked to indicate all areas in which they hired. The responses shown below range from 50.9% for Finance to 22.8% for Economics.

***Please check the areas in which you hire. Please check all that apply.***

	<b><u>#</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
Accounting	28	49.1
Economics	13	22.8
Finance	29	50.9
Information Systems	21	36.8
Management	22	38.6
Marketing	23	40.4

*The following are the core learning areas found in a business administration degree (BBA). Graduates, regardless of individual major, should be knowledgeable in each of these areas. Please rate ( \_ ) how you would compare Texas State Graduates to those of other universities.*

	Above Avg.		Avg.		Below Avg.		Cannot Rate	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Accounting	12	21.05%	21	36.84%	2	3.51%	22	38.60%
Economics 7	7	12.28%	18	31.58%	1	1.75%	31	54.39%
Finance 8	8	14.04%	30	52.63%	0	0.00%	19	33.33%
Information Systems	9	15.79%	18	31.58%	3	5.26%	27	47.37%
Management	10	17.54%	19	33.33%	2	3.51%	26	45.61%
Marketing	10	17.54%	16	28.07%	2	3.51%	29	50.88%
CBA Totals	56	16.37%	122	35.67%	10	2.92%	154	45.03%

	# Rating	Above Avg. (3)	Avg. (2)	Below Avg. (1)	Points	Average
Accounting	35	12	21	2	80	2.29
Marketing	28	10	16	2	64	2.29
Management	31	10	19	2	70	2.26
Economics	26	7	18	1	58	2.23
Finance 38 8 30 0 84 2.21	38	8	30	0	84	2.21
Information Systems	30	9	18	3	66	2.20
CBA Avg.						2.25

When comparing Texas State BBAs to other universities, Finance and Accounting majors were rated the most often. Accounting also had the highest percentage (21.05%) of above average. When points were assigned (3:above average, 2:average, 1:below average) Accounting and Marketing rated the best with a 2.29 average and Information Systems the lowest with 2.21. All were rated close to the same with a range from 2.29 to 2.20.

*All Texas State business graduates (regardless of major) are expected to have skills/abilities in the following areas. Please indicate how you would value these skills and abilities in BBA graduates. (Circle Answer)*

The number of responses in each area is shown next followed by an analysis based on a weighting scale of 5 to 1, the few who skipped one of the categories were counted as not important. In the second table, the spread of points is 100 and the blank lines indicate each

quartile. It should be noted that half of the expected skills/abilities list were in the top quartiles of importance. It is also noteworthy that oral and written communications are both in the top three most important areas.

	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	
	<b>Very Important ----- Not Important</b>					
<b><u>AREAS</u></b>						
Oral Communications	47	8	1	0	0	
Written Communications	38	14	3	1	0	
Computer Applications	12	31	11	1	1	
Ethical Issues	37	12	7	0	0	
Global Issues	8	18	20	9	2	
Critical Thinking/Reasoning	33	19	4	0	0	
Leadership Skills	25	22	8	1	0	
Interpersonal Skills	29	25	2	0	0	
Diversity Issues	11	18	23	3	1	
Information Technology Uses	8	29	15	2	2	
Political/Social Issues	2	16	23	13	1	
Legal/Regulatory Issues	4	22	24	5	1	
Work Ethic	41	13	2	0	0	
Teamwork Skills	29	23	3	1	0	
Quantitative Skills	15	32	8	1	0	
Problem Solving	34	18	3	1	0	
	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	<b>Very Important ----- Not Important</b>					<b>POINTS</b>
<b><u>AREAS</u></b>						
Oral Communications	47	8	1	0	0	270
Work Ethic	41	13	2	0	0	263
Written Communications	38	14	3	1	0	257
Ethical Issues	37	12	7	0	0	254
Critical Thinking/Reasoning	33	19	4	0	0	253
Problem Solving	34	18	3	1	0	253
Interpersonal Skills	29	25	2	0	0	251
Teamwork Skills	29	23	3	1	0	248
Leadership Skills	25	22	8	1	0	239
Quantitative Skills	15	32	8	1	0	229
Computer Applications	12	31	11	1	1	220
Information Technology Uses	8	29	15	2	2	207
Diversity Issues	11	18	23	3	1	203
Global Issues	8	18	20	9	2	192
Legal/Regulatory Issues	4	22	24	5	1	191
Political/Social Issues	2	16	23	13	1	170

Next, the rankings of each area were compared to those of a previous survey of employers done by the CBA Curriculum Committee in 2000. The change in rank is shown as positive (moving up in importance) versus negative (moving down in importance) in the last column.

<b>Ranking of Areas of Importance</b>			
<b>Area</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>Change 2000-2003</b>
Oral Communications	8	1	+7*
Written Communications	16	3	+13*
Computer Applications	3	11	-8*
Ethical Issues	9	4	+5*
Global Issues	15	14	+1
Critical Thinking/Reasoning	5	5	-
Leadership Skills	10	9	+1
Interpersonal Skills	4	7	-3
Diversity Issues	12	13	-1
Information Technology Uses	7	12	-5*
Political/Social Issues	13	16	-3
Legal/Regulatory Issues	13	15	-1
Work Ethic	1	2	-1
Teamwork Skills	2	8	-6*
Quantitative Skills	11	10	+1
Problem Solving	6	6	-

Those with significant increases are: written communications (16 to 3), oral communications (8 to 1) and ethical issues (9 to 4). Those with high declines were: computer applications (3 to 11), teamwork skills (2 to 8), and information technology issues (7 to 12).

***Can you suggest any skills/abilities other than those listed previously that are needed by today's business employee?***

1. Structured problem solving. For example, Six Sigma Black Belt Training
2. Moral judgment and decision-making
3. Flexibility – able to shape themselves into new role / new situation / new problems
4. Adaptability / coping with change, small business management.
5. Ability to anticipate next question
6. Initiative
7. I think “analytical” skills are covered here but clearly, we see a lack of their ability in current graduates from any school.
8. Innovative, creative
9. Flexibility; Initiative; Professional courtesies and demeanor and dress
10. Global financial markets, strategy, language, and regional specialization
11. Bi- or Tri-Lingual
12. Bilingual, motivation
13. Foreign Accounting Skills, ability to adapt to change(s)
14. Increased focus on oral and written communication skills.
15. Most important, communication and analytical – Texas State students should have the availability of new written skill education in their community.

16. Interviewing skills. Having participated in recent job fairs, many of students coming in were very unprepared for an interview. Many expected to be handed a job just because they were graduating.
17. You have covered, very broadly, the entire range I can think of. From a new graduate, the broad perspective is the most important. Technology specifies change throughout career.
18. Teach what goes on in a work environment (office politics, jealousy, back stabbing).
19. Make your courses more challenging.
20. Marketing, honesty, promptness, and manners (yes sir, no sir or ma'am, say thank you and your welcome).
21. Customer service background
22. I would note interpersonal and diversity as strong skills.
23. You have a comprehensive list; the key is where you focus.
24. Project management, process focus (business)
25. Resource management - both financial and human capital; Project management (milestones and logistics and administration); Salesmanship (beyond marketing)

An attempt was made to group some of the similar responses by category. The categories used, in order, were: Flexibility/decision making/initiative (9), global/international (4), communication (3). The reader should note that these comments range from very general/broad to specific subjects.

***Based on your knowledge of BBA graduates, what areas of basic business knowledge could be changed and improved?***

1. I believe all students need a good sales foundation be it in selling themselves, and learning to be more aggressive in today's society.
2. Marketing in the real world
3. More accounting required of all BBA grads
4. Incorporate internships to give students exposure to people/problems/companies
5. More real world case studies etc.
6. Real world experience to realize textbooks are the foundation, but real world experience requires you to look for same controls and answers in different ways
7. More practical and "hands-on"
8. Management and Marketing: Need real world case studies
9. Communication skills – both oral and written
10. Writing skills
11. Written communication skills; Global business
12. Written communication, applying knowledge to solve problems
13. Problem solving, written communication
14. More technical than theory when it comes to writing and computers
15. Written communication skills – improve
16. With the retirement of the WWII, highly civic generation, today's new baby boom generation leaders have given us Enron/Worldcom. This is only my personal view but it seems ethics and leadership need more than lip service.
17. Benchmarking and skills relating to developing and understanding business models/strategy
18. Ability to solve problems with little or no guidance – Critical Thinking!
19. Leadership, small business management, practical finance
20. A core understanding of basic accounting and controls is a must.
21. More emphasis on business/accounting basics – core skills
22. More general and production operations management skills and knowledge
23. International trade
24. People over money. Most seem salary oriented with disregard for other elements in life.
25. Internal operating financials over "SEC" type financials
26. Understanding of recruiting process; knowing what they are looking for in a job
27. Students need to understand what they can realistically expect from employers
28. International could be strengthened

29. More exposure to the business services industry as a profession
30. Additional technology computer applications

These responses were also somewhat grouped as practical/real world (8), communications (7), critical thinking/strategy (4) and others.

***Are there any other areas of concentration you would like to see in BBA majors.***

The areas on the left below were suggested in the survey and those on the right are the responses to the 'other' option. It should be noted that the Latin American Business program is in place and Entrepreneurial Studies has been recently approved.

**Concentration**

Entrepreneurial Studies	17
Information Security	13
Latin American Business	7
Human Resources	6
Other	

**Other (1 each)**

Public Works/Community Service  
CFP  
Global Markets  
International Business  
Accounting  
Web Services  
Sales

***Additional Comments by Employers:***

1. We are a smart, cunning, savvy bunch, but we do not have the community service mentality that our parents had. I regret that I do not have a quick recommendation for what could be done at the university level to solve. I am however, very admiring of Texas State's community outreach and information initiatives. The most vigorous that I have seen
2. To repeat: Texas State appears to have a wonderful program for CFP designation. More students should take advantage of this program.
3. I believe the School of Business is giving a better education than when I attended. The quality of Texas State's professors appears to be a cut above. I am very impressed by the students and faculty I have been associated with.
4. Your average graduates (product) as compared to other university graduates tend to lack initiative. Although your top graduates are evenly matched – though they are few.
5. Our focus has been in CIS recruiting. As such, we have not had an opportunity to evaluate Texas State candidates in other core learning areas outside CIS. As to CIS, we feel Texas State has an outstanding development program and well prepares students for application of skills in the workplace.
6. Regarding the ever-expanding borders of the USA, graduates have to be flexible with communication attitudes and expectations. The business world is expanding fast and experience is a must, experience that shows how they took the initiative. After six years in retail management, I joined Peace Corps. Time well spent.
7. I think the graduates from Texas State have a good work ethic and are very enthusiastic and eager to learn.
8. Over the past five years, we have offered internships to dozens of Texas State Students. Most are offered full-time positions on graduation. We anticipate continuing to hire 10-15 Texas State interns each year for the foreseeable future. We currently have interns in Accounting, IT, and one in HR.
9. Students need to spend less time learning knowledge and more time applying knowledge.
10. Latin American Business is a very hot topic especially in Texas. Would like to see additional emphasis put on modeling with multiple factors/inputs.
11. We look for people – regardless of major – who demonstrate the skills and abilities that are listed on the opposite side.

12. The only room for improvement I see out of your students is to have realistic professional expectations set for themselves once they graduate.
13. I wish we could identify those who are creative or who possess unique skills. For example, business students with musical skills tend to bring a creative energy to our organization.
14. Overall, I am impressed with the quality of the SWT graduates. The new classes for the CIS program have helped the students compete with other Texas university's students.
15. Basic fundamentals of accounting can always be stressed more. Students should have more opportunities to practice public speaking.
16. Emphasis on internship importance, leadership development
17. Problem solving and communication skills are what we seek. Need to overlay ethical considerations personal integrity, in all courses.
18. Know certifications available in each field.

## **Observations**

1. Of those responding, 68% had hired graduates (BBA) from Texas State in the last five years, indicating their ability to compare Texas State BBAs to those of other universities.
2. Texas State graduates (BBA) were rated at a 2.25 average (scale 3 to 1) or somewhere between average and above average when compared to BBA graduates of other universities.
3. The areas indicated as most important were: oral communication, work ethic, written communications, ethical issues, critical thinking/reasoning, problem solving, interpersonal skills, and teamwork.
4. Global issues, political/social issues, legal/regulatory, and diversity were rated towards the unimportant side in both the 2000 and 2003 surveys.
5. Both Information Technology, computer applications, and teamwork skills have declined in importance (2000 to 2003), however teamwork is still in the top quartile.
6. Oral communication, ethical issues, and especially, written communication have increased in importance in the 2000 – 2003 period.
7. Flexibility, adaptability, and initiative are other skills/abilities needed. Also global/international skills are important (which seems to conflict with areas of importance noted previously).
8. As for areas for improvement, it seems that the two areas that stand out are practical/real world and communications, especially written.
9. In areas of concentration, there was support for current and forthcoming programs in Latin American Business and Entrepreneurial Studies. There was also interest in a concentration in Information Security.
10. General observations were more positive (5) then negative (2). However, comments about lack of initiative and unrealistic expectations are cause for concern.