Academic Program Survey
Executive Assessment Brief
Spring 2008
Academic Program Experience Survey
The Office of Institutional Research administers the Academic Program Experience Survey (APES) which analyzes students’ perceptions on various topics. The APES survey is an annual survey that is administered three times a year (e.g., fall, spring and summer) to graduating students. The APES survey, in conjunction with other institutional assessments, is used to improve institutional impact. The current assessment brief analyzes undergraduate and graduate students’ responses from the Spring 2008 APES Survey.

Survey Objectives
The Academic Program Experience survey will be used to:
• strengthen the mission of the university.
• enhance educational quality.
• modify services and activities to fit the needs of the population we serve.
• ensure student access to campus resources.
• improve the quality of campus services.

Methodology
Undergraduate and graduate students who were eligible for Spring 2008 graduation completed the Academic Program Experience Survey (APES), which is a self-administered instrument.

The APES survey is a self-administered instrument of 13 questions that addresses the following concepts:
• attitudes about the academic program (e.g., “the program in my major met my expectations;” “I was generally treated fairly in course grading;” and “I would recommend my degree program to others”);
• access to campus resources (e.g., “academic advisement guided me appropriately to graduation;” “I was able to secure library and other learning resources needed to complete assignments;” and “specialized equipment for my major, including computer, was available to me in my college or elsewhere on campus”);
• preparation (e.g., “I am well-prepared in my major as graduates from any other public college the size of PVAMU;” “my degree prepared me to enter jobs in my field;” and “with my degree I am prepared to pursue a more advanced degree”); and
• perceptions about faculty (e.g., “courses are well-developed and expertly taught by faculty;” “faculty in department set a good example of professionalism;” and “faculty required students to make extensive use of library and other out-of-class resources”).

Sample
The target population was graduating undergraduate and graduate students for Spring 2008. Institutional researchers employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique and obtained a final sample size of 307 undergraduate and graduate students by selecting students who participated in graduation rehearsal exercises the night before the graduation ceremony. The response rate for this survey is 37.5%. Twenty-percent of the students who responded to the survey were undergraduates and 80% of the respondents were graduate students.

Survey Findings
For the purpose of this brief, the findings of the study are divided into two sections: total responses and student responses by college. However, if you are interested in more information about specific programs, please con-
Section 1: Total Sample Responses

In general, students favorably rated their experience at Prairie View A & M University (n=307). The responses to the questions range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly disagree). For example, undergraduate and graduate students agreed with the following statements:

- The program in my major met my expectations (4.12).
- I am as well-prepared in my major as graduates from any other public college the size of PVAMU (4.14).
- My degree has prepared me to enter jobs in my field (4.11).
- Faculty in my department set a good example of professionalism (4.08).
- I was generally treated fairly in course grading (4.22).
- With my degree I am prepared to pursue an advanced degree (4.23).
- I was consistently provided an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of my teachers and classes (S.O.S. forms or other instruments) (4.23).
- I would recommend my degree program to others (4.09).

Alternatively, a percentage of the undergraduate and graduate students did not express an opinion (neither agree nor disagree) with the following statements:

- I was able to secure library and other learning resources needed to complete assignments (3.78).
- Academic advisement guided me appropriately to graduation (3.79).
- Courses were well-developed and expertly taught (3.97).
- Specialized equipment for my major, including computer, was available to my college or elsewhere on campus (3.78).

Survey Implications
Prairie View A & M students generally reported positive feedback with regard to their respective academic programs, perception of fairness, perception of faculty and job and advanced education preparation. However, students did not provide opinions (neither agree nor disagree) concerning campus services and resources (e.g., academic advising, whether courses were well taught, access to equipment necessary for class assignments, and access to library resources). This information provides is useful for campus decision-makers (e.g., administrators, faculty and staff) to examine the quality of campus services.

Discussion of Findings/Recommendations

• First, with regard to the questions where students did not provide any opinion on some of the questions. The neutral responses may be an indication that students felt that some of the questions did not apply to them. The category ‘not applicable’ was not an available choice in the response set. Similarly, students may not have the necessary information to determine whether they agree or disagree with the statement. For instance, students may not be able to determine whether their courses were well-developed and expertly taught if they do not know what the criterion is for a ‘well-developed’ course. Additionally, students may have had difficulty in comprehending the questions. However, the lack of students expressing their opinions should be taken with caution. Further investigation in the specific areas that students did not give an opinion should be undertaken.

• Second, students gave no opinion with regard to whether academic advisement guided them appropriately through graduation. It is likely that students may not have understood the role and responsibilities of academic advisors during the course of their academic career. Therefore, university faculty and staff in the University College should educate students in their first year at PVAMU and clearly define for students the ways in which they will assist them throughout their academic career at PVAMU and how this assistance will change as students’ transition from first-year students to upperclassmen.

• Third, administrators, faculty and staff should engage in systematic review of campus practices and resources to ensure the quality of services students receive. Tinto (2003) suggest that lack of quality of education services influences students’ sense of overall satisfaction with the university, which may indirectly impact student retention rates.

• Fourth, Department Heads along with faculty should take an inventory of the necessary equipment (e.g., labs, computers, etc.) that students need in their particular degree programs to complete homework, projects and assignments and ensure that the equipment is available and in adequate condition. Similarly, students should be exposed to specialized equipment before entrance into their chosen field. Terenzini (1986) advocates the coordination of campus facilities and departments to provide tools and equipment to provide students with practical applications that they are expected to know and some experience with before college graduation. Student access and experience with specialized tools and equipment enhances students’ sense of efficacy, competency and confidence.

• Faculty should coordinate their program with library personnel to provide workshops on library resources and how these resources can assist students in their courses and homework and project assignments. In addition, faculty and library personnel should determine barriers as they relate to students accessing library materials.