



# **A tracer study of the Business Administration and Accountancy Graduates, 2012 to 2017**

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## **Abstract**

Since the image of an educational institution in the Philippines is tied to its reputation of producing excellent graduates who easily land a job, they commonly conduct graduate tracer studies. The study traced the employability of the University of Baguio's School of Business Administration and Accountancy graduates from 2012 to 2017. It determined the graduates' transition to employment and investigated the relevance of the respondents' course content and extra-curricular activities on their employment. Their perception of UB's competitiveness was recorded. The graduates' level of preparedness for employment and satisfaction level on the school's services were measured. 130 SBAA graduates, mostly female, participated in the study. Results revealed that 96% were employed within the six years traced, and 50% landed land a job in less than a month after graduation. The



graduates reported that they were more than adequately prepared for employment by the university, ( $M = 3.62$ ), and they were very satisfied with the education that they received from the university ( $M = 3.32$ ). The competitive edge of the university came primarily from its scholarship and financial assistance program. Accessibility to the Central business district area, the curriculum the school offers, the faculty, and accessibility to transportation completed the list of its top 5 competitive factors. Based on the results of the tracer study, SBAA graduates met employability expectations, with the university's minimal deficits considered as room for improvement. The parameters used in this tracer study needs to extend to the details of employability factors, job preparation, and level of satisfaction

**Keywords:** employability, competitive edge, accountancy, business administration

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## Introduction

Education and training are key to ensuring that opportunities are provided so individuals can develop their skills continually in a lifelong learning process and adapt to a rapidly changing labor market (Schomburg, 2016). Tertiary education institutions are tasked to train the nation's manpower in the skills required for national development and to instill and foster appropriate and relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enable each individual to become useful, productive and gainfully employed members of society (De Ocampo, 2012; Menez, 2014; Ragaas & Basillote, 2018).

Education institutions primarily aim to produce competent and highly qualified graduates who are globally employable. They employ strategic



approaches to realize such a relevant goal. The curricula are continuously enhanced by a competent faculty, upgraded instructional facilities, and appropriate student services. Together they foster a culture of quality and excellence. With equally competent management support, the preparation for high-quality education will certainly provide graduates with better employment opportunities. (Aquino et al., 2015)

The School of Business Administration and Accountancy (SBAA) of the University of Baguio shares the above endeavors not only to impart knowledge but also to contribute to maintaining a competitive economy by securing graduates with the necessary skills and competencies required by the industries.

Studies provide information that is valuable for all education sectors. They inspire education, training and employment policies, curricula of education and training courses, guidance to help individuals decide on their education and training paths, and career judgments about re-skilling the labor force. (Schomburg, 2016)

According to Schomburg (2012), graduate and employer surveys provide valuable information for evaluating the results of the education and training of a specific institution of higher education. Apart from measuring the employability of graduates and obtaining feedback to improve the study program, tracer studies evaluate horizontal (relevance of the field of study for the tasks done in the job) and vertical matching (appropriate position regarding the level of formal qualification) (Schomburg, 2016).

An analysis at the institutional level is an essential way of transforming feedback on the study program into improvements in the study conditions and content. The analysis gathers information on job search, employment conditions, and the use of competences at work. The alumni are appropriate sources of evidence on a program's effectiveness gauged in terms of their employment and positions held (Orejana et al., 2010). Moreover, they are



a good source of feedback regarding the program's relevance in the current labor market.

Aquino, et. al., (2015) investigated the case of teacher education graduates in a state university in Batangas, Philippines. They found that the jobs of its graduates were mostly professional in nature, was their first, and was relevant to their degree. Aquino, et al. (2015) noted that it took a moderate time for most graduates to land a job. A tracer study on the graduates of La Salle University's College of Engineering revealed that the graduates were employable as they were hired within the first six months after graduating (Hazaymeh & Dela Peña, 2013). Related to these studies, De-Ocampo (2012) noted that the Filipino youth have a strong cultural preference for secure jobs in the employment route.

The image of tertiary education in the Philippines is most likely tied to the reputation of producing an excellent graduate who easily lands a job after graduation. Graduate tracer studies provide evidenced-based recommendations that guide school administrators in improving the curriculum and enhancing the subject content. The goal of revising curricula is to increase the graduates' employability and to boost industry linkages and global competitiveness.

The result of this survey can help teachers stay updated and improve the delivery of lessons and instruction to meet the demands in the field. It can serve as an inspiration to students pursuing the course to put their best effort in preparation for their promising careers. It may also encourage the alumni officers to foster relationships and partnerships with the graduates and industries. Finally, the study can help other researchers who conduct tracer studies to determine the different variables for examining the changes in the career pattern of graduates.



## Methodology

Covering the period of May 2012 to December 2017, the study used a descriptive research design with a total enumeration of 130 accountancy and business graduates. The primary purpose of the study was to collect and present information relative to the graduates' demographics and their perceptions of the usefulness of skills and values they developed from their college education.

The survey questionnaire was designed by the Research and Development Center (R&DC) of the University of Baguio. It adopted some parts of the Commission on Higher Education's (2012) graduate tracer study (GTS). The first part of the questionnaire dealt with the respondents' personal information; the second part included 16 questions related to the degree or program they obtained, their licensure examination experience, employment history, and professional development. The baccalaureate graduates from UB answered 16 questions. Those who took their baccalaureate degrees in other universities but completed their graduate studies in UB were instructed to answer only the second part of the questionnaire, which had nine questions regarding the graduates' perception of the UB education.

The data gathering process began in the last quarter of 2017 and ended in December 2018. To reach the graduates, the university facilitated the online accomplishment of the survey forms through the university portals. The forms were shared by the employees and faculty members in their social media accounts. The Institutional Documentation Office (IDO) and the R&DC of the University technically assisted the researchers in extracting the graduates' automated responses.

The respondents also had the option to accomplish the questionnaires through paper-and-pencil, aside from the electronic means. The data gathered through paper-and-pencil were turned over by the dean's office to the researchers on May 29, 2019. The automated responses were retrieved and



updated through the R&DC office on several occasions. All the responses were consolidated to facilitate data analysis.

The data were tabulated and processed using a.) frequency to determine the number of respondents with respect to a specific variable, b.) percentage to analyze the profile of the respondents with respect to the selected variables and perception of the graduate respondents in the school factors related to their job, c.) mean to determine the adequacy of job preparedness of graduates as well their level of satisfaction on their education, and d.) ranking to determine the competitive edge of UB.

Data cleaning was done for unclear responses or when the respondent's year of graduation cannot be verified from the admission office's master list of graduates. Those who graduated in the years outside the scope of the study were excluded. The analysis of the survey data, which used Excel, took long due to the several attempts made to improve the reporting structure and to enhance the quality and level of analysis.

The respondents' participation in this tracer study was voluntary. The target population had the option to withdraw or refuse to answer the survey questionnaire. Pursuant to the Data Privacy Act, all the personal information and responses were treated as confidential. The results of this study will be furnished to any respondent who wishes to be informed through the research presentation and the university journal publication.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Profile of SBAA Graduates from 2012-2017**

**Graduates' Degree.** The SBAA graduates' profile, as presented in Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents (41.54%) studied Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major Financial Management (compared with 52.29% in the population). After the BSBA major in



Financial Management graduates, the sample is composed mostly of those with a BSBA major in Marketing Management (MM), 20.77% (20.58); Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSAC), 16.92% (10.21%); BSBA major in Human Resource Development Management (HRDM), 14.62% (8.38%) and BSBA major in Operations management (OM), 6.15% (8.54%).

**Sexual Orientation.** There was a high response rate from female graduates who composed 70% of the sample. A review of the number of graduates from the admission and records center reveals that females dominated graduates, as they composed 72.12% of the said population. From 72.12%, 66.67% are BSAC graduates while 72.75% are BSBA graduates. Related to this observation is a study that looked at potential gender bias in online survey responses. Smith (2008) found a difference in the online survey response rates of female and male participants, with females having higher response rates than males.

**Marital Status.** A very high percentage of respondents were single at 91.54% after graduation compared with only 8.56% who were married. Most of the respondents were born and raised in the 21st century, which is the age of living single (DePaulo, 2017). As the potential for living a full and meaningful single life becomes more widely known, being single will become more of a genuine choice. Also, the statistics on Philippine marriages released last year provides evidence that in a span of 10 years, the reported number of marriages decreased by 14.4% from 2007 to 2016. (PSA, 2018)

**Year of Graduation.** The turnout of respondents was concentrated on the recent three years at 26.15% in 2016, 23.85% in 2017, 20% in 2015, while a smaller representation from the earlier years was recorded at 14.62% in 2015, 10.00% in 2012 and only 5.38% in 2013. A data review data revealed that connectivity with recent graduates was eased by online platforms, which made the university portal accessible to the alumni.



**Awards and Distinction.** Service awards topped the recognition and distinction awarded to the graduates at 42.22%. Academic achievers and leadership awards followed the list, with 17.78% of the respondents awarded the said recognition. Loyalty awards were given to 4.44% of the respondents. While these results show that the school met its vision of providing a balanced and quality education, the graduates realized that surviving the workplace jungle goes beyond their transcript records (Alejo, 2018) as employers seek applicants who have professional experience. The various efforts exerted by the graduates to earn a distinction indicate that they proactively responded to the challenges of employment.

**Scholarship availed.** With the various scholarships and financial assistance offered by the university, 44.19% pursued their degree through the university's student assistance program. The academic scholarship was availed by 18.60% of the respondents, while 9.30% had the scholarship awarded to the university athletes. The directors' grantees composed 6.98% of the sample, followed by government grantees, FRB Foundation scholars, and UB High school alumni scholars at 4.65% each. The scholars via employee dependent and performing arts composed 2% of the population each. One percent were awardees of the entrance scholarship. Aside from taking advantage of opportunities to improve their employment credentials, the university students are aware of university programs subsidizing the cost of college education, with 33% of the respondents availing the scholarships. The service awardees had a consensus concerning the positive influence of work experience during the years in higher education as a preparation for the labor. The reported effects include stronger chances of further employment, higher income, and greater satisfaction (Monteiro & Almeida, 2017).





Table 1  
*Demographic Profile of SBAA Graduates*

<b>Profile Variables</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Degree Earned</b>		
Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSAC)	22	16.92
BSBA major in FM	54	41.54
BSBA major in HRDM	19	14.62
BSBA major in MM	27	20.77
BSBA major in OM	8	6.15
<b>Year Graduated</b>		
2012	13	10.00
2013	7	5.38
2014	19	14.62
2015	26	20.00
2016	34	26.15
2017	31	23.85
<b>Awards and Distinction Received</b>		
Academic	8	17.78
Athletic	4	8.89
International OJT	4	8.89
Leadership	8	17.78
Loyalty	2	4.44
Service	19	42.22
<b>Scholarship Availaed</b>		
Athlete	4	9.30
Academic	8	18.60
Directors Grantee	3	6.98
Employee Dependent	1	2.33
Entrance Scholarship	1	2.33
FRB Foundation	2	4.65
Government grantee	2	4.65
UB High School Alumni	2	4.65
Performing Arts	1	2.33
Student Assistant	19	44.19



### The graduates' activities in the transition from student to employee

A majority (61.54%) of the graduates worked in local companies after graduation, as presented in Table 2. Others (13.08%) chose to be self-employed, while 6.15% of the accountancy graduates decided to enroll in a review course to prepare for the Certified Public Accountant Licensure Exam (CPALE). Other paths taken by the graduates are also reported in Table 2.

SBAA graduates ably managed their transition to employment through local companies who serve as industry partners, and whose needs matched the curricular offerings of the school helped. The students' education eased their transition to employment. One respondent stated that the partner institution employed her even before graduation.

The choice to work for local companies made by the graduates is considered as a factor that contributes to graduate resilience since they become proximate to morale-boosting support systems such as family and friends, live in a location where they graduated, and have people to turn to for career conversations (Christie, 2016).

Table 2  
*Graduates' activities after graduation*

Activities	<i>f</i>	%
Enrolled in Graduate School	4	3.08
Enrolled in a Second Course	6	4.62
Establish Own Business	7	5.38
Worked as Self-Employed	17	13.08
Worked in Local Company	80	61.54
Worked in the Government	3	2.31
Worked Abroad	5	3.85
Others – enrolled in CPA review	8	6.15



## Employability of SBAA Graduates

The overall employability of the School of Accountancy and Business Administration graduates in six years is reflected is 96%, as shown in Table 3. The SBAA graduates reported 100% employability from 2012 to 2014. BSBA graduates who majored in Human Resource Development Management, Marketing Management, and Operations Management recorded a 100% employability during the six years traced in this stud. An accountancy graduate who did not state their reason for being unemployed decreased the employability rate so that it was at 66.67%, resulting in an overall employability rate for the accountancy program to 95.45% for six years. The BSBA major in Financial Management program had one graduate each in 2015 and 2017 while another 2 in 2016 remained unemployed. Thus, its employability was 92.59%.

The SBAA graduates are highly employable since they were more than adequately prepared for the job with the training and seminars they received from the university (Tables 12 & 16). Needing a shorter transition from university to the workplace, as reflected in Table 4, the SBAA graduates' chances of finding a suitable job increases because of their marketability to employers. (Bird, 2015) Likewise, the SBAA graduates are employable in the roles of their choice within one year with about 97% chance. This rate is in contrast with the national average across various industries, which state that 65% are unemployable in the roles of their choice. (Aspiring Minds, 2017). Employability was also influenced by graduates' licenses and professional certifications, as it was for 32% of the graduates.



Table 3

*Employability of SBAA Graduates from 2012-2017*

Degree	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	6 yrs
BSAC	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%	95%
BSBA FM	100%	100%	100%	88%	88%	93%	93%
BSBA HRDM	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BSBA MM	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BSBA OM	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Overall							96%

**The graduates' transition period to employment**

Half of the SBAA graduates were employed in jobs aligned to their degrees in less than a month. In one case, the graduate was employed before graduation since she was absorbed by the university's industry partner in delivering on-the-job training. Sixteen percent of the Accountancy graduates decided to review for and pass their licensure exam to increase their likelihood of employment. Fifteen percent were gainfully employed in 4 to 6 months, while 10.47% were employed in one to three months. Those who were hired within 10 to 12 months extended the search for a job aligned to their course. This usually happened when they were unable to meet qualifications. However, the longest time spent by graduates in a job search was over 12 months, as experienced by 2.33% of the respondents. These results are relatively better than that of the national performance where it takes an average college graduate up to 2 years to find a regular wage job (Bird, 2015).

The high rate of employability (96%) of the SBAA graduates reflected the ease of transition from graduation to employment. Despite the reported lack of qualification, graduates were still able to land a job within two weeks from graduation. Accountancy graduates recorded a more extended transition because they undergo six months of review preparations for the CPA Licensure examinations considering that the accountancy profession is among the regulated professions in the Philippines.



Although all were able to find employment in less than ten months, 27.78% were employed outside their field in four to six months, while the remaining 11.11% were able to land in an off-tangent job in less than a month. The school-to-work transition (composed of the active job search, temporary work, and inactivity) for the SBAA graduates was shorter compared to the national average, where 75% of college graduates needed a year to find a job (Bird, 2015).

### **The time gap between obtaining a degree and first employment**

The SBAA graduates reported that the main reason for the time gap between obtaining a degree and first employment is their lack of work experience, as stated by 31.88% of the respondents. Others are affected by the length of time spent in job search (19.32%), the limited employment opportunities in one's field (10.14%), and uninterested employers in the graduates' qualification (9.18%). Age preferences among employers and other reasons, such as taking the CPALE review, affected 7.25% of the respondents. Not possessing the required qualifications was reported by 6.28% of the respondents. Five percent reported that gender preferences among employers hindered their employment, while 3.86% was delayed in getting employed because the employers were not interested in their area of specialization.

Table 4

#### *Reasons for time gap between obtaining a degree and first employment*

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
Takes too long to find one	40	19.32
Employers not interested in my qualification	19	9.18
Employers not interested in my specialization	8	3.86
Gender preferences among employers	10	4.83
Age preferences among employers	15	7.25
Lack of work experience	66	31.88
Limited employment opportunities in my filed	21	10.14
Not possessing the required qualifications	13	6.28
Others	15	7.25



## The graduates' employment profile

The graduates reported that most of them were employed in the local private sector (78%). Fourteen percent of the respondents chose to be self-employed, while 4.80% are in the civil service, and 3.20% are employed in privately-owned global companies.

As to the status of employment, an extremely high percentage with 92.80% of employed graduates are working full time while only 4.80% chose to work part-time. Very few with 1.60% and 0.80% are working with a fixed term or coterminous and contractual appointments, respectively.

Table 5

*Employment profile of SBAA Graduates from 2012 to 2017*

Sector	<i>f</i>	%
Private (Local companies)	98	78.40
Private (Global Companies)	4	3.20
Public Sector	6	4.80
Self-employed	17	13.60
Status of appointment		
Full time	121	92.80
Part-time	6	4.80
Fixed Term/co-terminus	2	1.60
Contractual	1	0.80

## Distribution of the graduates' occupation

According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, the nation's graduates occupation from their first employment were as clerical support workers (40%), professionals (23%), and technicians and associate professionals (21%). Managers, sales and marketing managers, shift managers, and consultants accounted for 8.80% of the said population. Clerical support workers include service representatives, personnel or administrative



assistant, office secretary, bookkeepers, and cashiers. Professionals include accountants, auditors, project engineers, team leaders, facilitators, and assistant managers. Specialist, quality control officers, assurance associate, assistant resident manager, and executive assistant were classified as technicians and associate professionals.

### **The graduates' mobility**

As shown in Table 6, most SBAA graduates held their first job (60%), while 19.20% of the respondents moved to another job once primarily for a better opportunity and higher compensation. Almost thirteen percent changed jobs twice, while 7.20% changed jobs three times. One respondent reported changing jobs more than three times in pursuit of security of tenure. These results suggest that most employers realize the importance of internal enterprise-wide talent mobility (Volini, et al., 2019). As such, mobility occurred as a normal progression instead of a significant change in one's career. Opportunities to move are extended to workers at all levels. There were minimal movements in the careers of the employed SBAA graduates.

Table 6

*Mobility of SBAA Graduates in the labor market*

Degree of frequency	<i>f</i>	%
None	75	60.00
Once	24	19.20
Twice	16	12.80
Thrice	9	7.20
More than 3 times	1	0.80



### **Factors influencing the graduates' mobility**

The graduates identified the terms and conditions of work as factors of job mobility. A better opportunity and higher compensation were two of the most cited reasons why graduates changed jobs. Twenty-one percent of the respondents cited these reasons. Almost thirteen percent said they moved for a change of environment. Eleven percent pursued a different job to gain security of tenure and career growth. Five percent of the respondents cited for health, conflict with the superior, and change in work schedule as reasons for leaving their jobs. Almost three percent of the graduates moved due to a toxic workplace, promotion, end of the contract, and unethical practice of the employer.

The results reflect that the SBAA graduates are mostly influenced by an internal career mobility strategy. The employer and employee mutually benefit in the said strategy. With internal career mobility, the employee need not navigate several onboarding processes with different employers to find career satisfaction, while the employers improve talent retention levels, reduce recruitment costs, and increase productivity (Is internal career mobility the answer to your talent shortage?, 2018).

### **Connection with the Alma Mater**

When asked which opportunity facilitated the graduates' connection with the university, 57.69% of the respondents checked the alumni website updates, 46.15% the reunions, 40.00% the annual university event, and 14.62% the E-newsletters. The said options are the university's mechanisms of motivating the alumni's connection with the university.

### **Collaboration with the school**

Most SBAA graduates preferred to collaborate with the school by conducting a training workshop with 41.54% signifying their intentions for topics in their





field of expertise and those relating to employment. Accounting, business, finance, taxation, leadership and management, marketing, and investment are among the topics preferred by the graduates. The job-related topics suggested by the graduates included job preparedness, career workshop, work relationship, personality development, work ethics, team building, and sports clinic.

Those who chose to collaborate through outreach activities (24%) listed literacy training and civic welfare options such as feeding program, medical mission, medical and dental mission, gift-giving, working student program, bloodletting, and charity for street children. Five percent signified their intention to research with the university. Some of the topics that interested them included emerging trends in business and effective marketing mix strategies for the business sector.

### **Licensure, Eligibility Examinations, and Certifications**

The Career Service Professional Eligibility Exam was taken by 42.86% of the sampled SBAA graduates, as shown in Table 8. The Licensure Examination for Teachers attracted some business administration graduates (7%). A similar percentage (7%) of CPAs also applied for the National Institute of Accounting Technicians for Bookkeeping National Certificate III. The Business Administration and Accountancy graduates pursued other competencies in real estate, food, and servicing NCIII and Computer Proficiency (2.38% each). Another 2.38% passed the Career Sub-professional eligibility while they were still in college. With minimum standards, SBAA graduates believed that licenses may protect consumers from incompetent practitioners. Such an attitude is affirmed by their efforts for licensing, certification, and examination.



Table 7

*The graduates' credentials*

Licensure/Board/Certification/Examination passed	<i>f</i>	%
Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination	14	33.33
Licensure Exam for Teachers	3	7.14
Real Estate Broker	1	2.38
CS Professional	18	42.86
CS Sub-Professional	1	2.38
NIAT Bookkeeper NCIII	3	7.14
Food and Beverage Servicing NCIII	1	2.38
Computer Proficiency Exam	1	2.38

According to Bailey and Belfield (2018), the consumers' confidence in the quality of the good or service increases when such are provided by licensed workers (Bailey & Belfield, 2018). Likewise, the graduates attained licensing and certification because professionals with a license earn higher pay than those unlicensed, are more likely to be employed, and have a higher probability of being offered employer-sponsored health insurance (Gittleman, 2018).

**The graduates' affiliation with professional and civic organizations**

Certified Public Accountants alumni representing 44.44% of the sample, recognized the need to affiliate with professional organizations like the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), as reflected in Table 8. Simultaneously, 33.33% of the same group are members of the National Institute of Accounting Technicians. The Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers and Cordillera Youth Network for Global Change completed the roster of organization affiliations of the SBAA graduates.



Table 8

*Current membership in professional and civic organizations*

<b>Name of organization</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants	4	44.44
National Institute of Accounting Technicians	3	33.33
Philippine Institute of Civil Engineers	1	11.11
Cordillera Youth Network for Global Change	1	11.11

**The alumni's research endeavors**

Relative to the graduates' quest for employment and professional growth, some members of the alumni saw the need to pursue graduate school. A marketing management graduate conducted a study on the impact of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino. It was sponsored by the Ifugao State University (IFSU) and was published in the same university's journal.

**Subjects helpful in the graduates' job**

As shown in Table 9, 42% of the graduates assessed that all the major subjects they studied were instrumental. Meanwhile, 22% said that all the subjects were helpful in their job. Accounting was reported to be helpful by 12.38% of the graduates, while 4.76% considered both accounting and business law subjects as helpful.

Employers seek business candidates that possess high levels of emotional intelligence, communication skills, and organization skills (Doyle, 2019). It is for this reason that the SBAA integrated a variety of soft and hard skills in most major subjects for its graduates to succeed in a business role.



Table 9

*Graduates' perception on subjects helpful in their job*

Subjects	<i>f</i>	%
Accounting	13	12.38
Accounting and Business Law	5	4.76
Accounting and Taxation	4	3.81
Accounting, English	3	2.86
Accounting review	1	0.95
Accounting, ACMPTR, Taxation	1	0.95
Accounting and Business Math	1	0.95
Accounting, finance, management, ethics	1	0.95
All Business Related Subjects	3	2.86
All Major Subjects	44	41.90
All my business law subjects	4	3.81
All Subjects	23	21.90
Computer and Math Subjects	1	0.95
Practicum	1	0.95

### **The graduates' suggestion on areas of improvement**

The graduates listed ACMPTR1, basic accounting, Business Law, E-commerce, English, Operations Management, and Taxation when asked which subjects needed improvement.

For ACMPTR1, a graduate suggested that the content should be enhanced with SAP solutions applicable to the industry of data intelligence, cloud-based solutions, and digital innovation system. Relative to improvements in co-curricular activities, the graduates suggested adding hands-on and work simulation in the courses. They also suggested topics such as cash management and control system, requiring the study of stock investment, studying research and effective writing, conducting educational outdoor activities and seminars, and including extra-curricular activities relevant to the subject.



### **Extra-curricular activities useful to current employment**

With the school's commitment to develop the relevant social skills of the graduates, several extra-curricular activities are conducted. The conduct of seminars turned out to be the most useful to graduates' current employment, as checked by 30.30% of the respondents. It was followed by organization activities selected by 18.18% of the respondents.

The inclusion of seminars as a practicum requirement for graduating students resembled the seminars and professional development workshops in the business community. The organization officers are required to accomplish these activities. Thus, the human resource development management major conducts the same as one of their primary subject requirements on top of the practicum requirement.

The SBAA graduates' answers showed that extracurricular activities are of great value as they have a positive impact on personal and professional development. Participation in academic or student unions is related to higher levels of institutional adaptation, autonomy, facilitating peer relationships, and career development (Monteriro & Almeida, 2017).

### **The graduates' most memorable extra-curricular events**

Graduates reported that some extra-curricular events are memorable to them. The university-wide extra-curricular activities include the Academic Olympics where literary competitions are packaged, followed by the celebration of a university foundation, specifically the search for Mr. & Ms. UB, intramurals, and cheer dance competition. Freshmen idol, fusion, interschool debate, yuletide bliss, outreach, sports league, graduation, and testimonial dinner complete the list of university-wide memorable events.

For school-based extra-curricular activities, the business expo, which is an entrepreneurial management subject requirement, is not only memorable to



them but also helpful in their job as discussed earlier — completing the roster of subject requirements that they remember are, role-playing, organizing and conducting a seminar, mock interview, NSTP activities, sales presentation, and research defense. Quiz bee, SBAA day and night during the foundation celebration and sports fest are also memorable to the graduates.

### **The competitive edge of the university as perceived by the graduates**

When graduates were asked to rank the university's top five competitive factors, they identified the scholarship and financial assistance as its primary competitive factor. The next four competitive factors are its accessibility to the central business district area, the School's curriculum, the faculty, and accessibility to transportation. Library resources, curricular activities, the policies for students and employees, geographical location, and the facilities and infrastructures completed the top ten competitive factors of the university. Some factors rated by graduates as competitive included the various student organizations, the quality of services of the dean's office and non-teaching offices, the campus design, tuition fees, and miscellaneous fees.

While the university took its social responsibility to promote more significant social equity in the locality, the results indicate that graduates also took advantage of economic opportunities that abound in the university. Philippine universities and other tertiary institutions have been vital channels for economic and social development (The World Bank, 2012).

### **Values acquired from the university**

Ten percent of the respondents said that they learned integrity in the university. Close to integrity is patience, as selected by almost 9% of the respondents, while 7% chose professionalism.

The graduates reflected that they had adopted one of the university's core values – Integrity. Considering that integrity fosters a positive workplace



(Miles, 2017), it is one of the fundamental values that employers seek (Heathfield, 2019). The SBAA graduates made it the foundation of building effective interpersonal relationships and trust with coworkers, customers, and stakeholders. With integrity, people become trustworthy and dependable. They are principled, and one can count on them to behave in honorable ways even when no one is watching or no one knows about their performance. One respondent mentioned that he resigned from his previous job to protect his integrity.

### **Job preparation gained from the University of Baguio**

Accountancy and business administration graduates perceived that the job preparation they gained from the University of Baguio is more than adequate, ( $M = 3.62$ ). This result aligns with the graduates' overall employability at 96%, shown in Table 2. The Business Administration graduates who majored in Human Resource Development Management recorded the highest rating at 3.84, followed by most accountancy graduates with 3.73.

The result indicates that the university fulfilled its mission of graduating employable professionals who match the employers' preference for graduates who are better prepared for the workplace (Docherty, 2014). Fundamental to this is the School's collaboration with industry partners, which help determine the prospective employers' job requirements (Tran, 2016). When such as known, they are integrated into the discipline.

### **The graduates' satisfaction level with the University of Baguio Education**

The Accountancy and Business Management graduates reported that overall, they were very satisfied with the education they obtained from the university, ( $M = 3.38$ ). The Accountancy graduates recorded the highest mean at 3.67, while the Business Administration graduates who majored in operations management averaged 3.25.



## Conclusion and Recommendations

The high rate of employability of the Accountancy and Business Administration Graduates from 2012 to 2017 implies that the programs offered in the School of Business Administration and Accountancy are relevant and responsive to the industry's needs. The curriculum enhancement helps the graduates in the fast-growing requirements of industries. The researchers recommend the following given the changing employment landscape and the limitations of the study:

- Strengthen the link between education, training, and the labor market. This includes revisiting the apprenticeship program and TESDA certification to determine the possibility of negotiating a policy which will reward employer and employee tax rebates for training;
- Enhance employment facilitation programs such as career guidance, internship placement with the employers, and including enthusiasts (not just graduating students) in the internships.
- Use labor market information system: build on DOLE's existing systems such as skills registry system and PhilJobsNet; and
- Familiarize students with JobStart Philippines (JSP), DOLE's Youth employment program.





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