

CPA Examination Performance of Candidates from the AAA Southwest Region

Gordon Heslop
Texas A&M University-Commerce

Virginia Fullwood
Texas A&M University-Commerce

This study investigates reports issued by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy regarding the pass rate on the Certified Public Accountancy Examination in the AAA Southwest Region for three years, 2009-2011. The larger, more well-known schools dominate in terms of the number of sections passed. The percentage passing rate per student is a better indicator of candidate participation and success than the total number of sections passed. Several of the institutions in the Southwest Region with the highest passing rates are not AACSB accredited. The same is true in relation to the average score. By analyzing data according to percentage passing rates, and average scores versus total number of sections passed, the success rate of a wider range of institutions becomes apparent.

INTRODUCTION

Every year since 1985 the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) has published a detailed report on the performance of candidates on the Uniform CPA Examination. Candidates are classified according to the school where they received their most recent degree. These university based statistics provide useful information regarding one aspect of the strength of different accounting programs, and supply the profession data with respect to where new CPA's studied, and in what percentage. They provide information that universities can use to help evaluate their accounting programs, and that state policy makers could potentially use to aid in future planning and funding decisions

The NASBA reports, however, do emphasize that the data is not intended to represent the quality of each institution. The report does not take into consideration other factors that affect examination pass rates such as the time and effort many students have to expend earning money to support their studies. The report is not intended to infer that any institutions main focus is to prepare students for the examination, or that any institution should focus on improving their results. The statistics presented in this paper are for the three year period 2009-2011 and were compiled from Appendix A of the reports: "Summary Performance by Institution Attended – All Testing Events". This appendix presents the most comprehensive listing of examination performance.

TABLE 1
CPA EXAMINATION SECTIONS PASSED – BY STATE

States	Sections Passed
Texas	22,129
Oklahoma	4,155
Louisiana	3,056
Arkansas	1,837
New Mexico	877

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

CPA PASS RATE STATISTICS

A better measure of the success of the candidates from each state is provided by the pass rate statistics. Texas has the highest percentage pass rate with 50.9% of sections taken resulting in a passing score, followed by Oklahoma with 47.1%. The range of pass rates is 8.8%, which although significant, is less than that in some other regions. The Northeast region, for example, had a range in pass rates of 11.3% for the same three year period. The pass rate for each state is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
CPA EXAMINATION PASS RATES – BY STATE

States	Sections Passed (%)
Texas	50.9%
Oklahoma	47.1%
Louisiana	45.2%
Arkansas	43.6%
New Mexico	42.1%

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

CPA EXAMINATION AVERAGE SCORE – BY STATE

Another statistic provided in the report is the average score. Here there is only a 2.9% difference between the states with the highest and lowest average scores. Texas has the highest average score with 72.6%, followed this time by Louisiana with 70.7%. The average score for each state is shown in Exhibit 3.

TABLE 3
CPA EXAMINATION AVERAGE SCORE – BY STATE

	States	Average Score
1	Texas	72.6
2	Louisiana	70.7
3	Oklahoma	70.5
4	Arkansas	70.0
5	New Mexico	69.7

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

CPA EXAMINATION SECTIONS PASSED – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS

The above exhibits show the data for each state. However, most of the report breaks the data down according to institution attended. The tables below list the performance on an individual institution basis. Schools from all of the different states rank highly in these results. Some are leading universities in their respective states, while others are much smaller and less well known. As would be expected, the large schools dominate with respect to the total number of sections passed. Texas A&M University has the most sections passed, with 3483, followed closely by the University of Texas at Austin with 3,243. There are a total of 122 schools reported in the data, but the 20 largest ones in terms of sections passed are certainly dominant, accounting for the majority of all sections passed. These 20 top institutions accounted for 22,045 of the total of the 32,053 sections passed – 68.8% of all sections passed. The top 20 institutions for sections passed are shown in Table 4. All of these 20 schools are AACSB accredited.

TABLE 4
CPA EXAMINATION SECTIONS PASSED – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS

Institutions	Sections Passed
Texas A&M University	3,483
University Of Houston Main	1,956
Louisiana State University	1,354
Baylor University	1,,071
Texas Tech University	1,033
Oklahoma State University	901
University Of Texas Arlington	887
Texas State University San Marcos	847
Southern Methodist University	833
University Of Oklahoma	798
University Of North Texas	751
Texas Christian University	624

Tulane University	549
University Of Texas San Antonio	542
University Of New Mexico	487
Sam Houston State University	486
University Of Arkansas	485
University Of New Orleans	412
Total (Top 20 Schools)	22,045
Total (All 122 Schools In The Region)	32,053

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

CPA EXAMINATION PASS RATES – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS

The list of the top 20 schools by pass rate percentage includes 11 of the schools from Table 4 with the highest number of sections passed. However, it also highlights the performance of some of the regions smaller schools which cannot compete with the big schools in terms of size, but can in terms of the percentage of sections passed. The two top schools are the same as in Table 4, but in reverse order. The University of Texas at Austin has the highest pass rate at 71.3%, followed by Texas A&M University with 69.6%. Five of the schools on the list are very small, with less than 60 sections passed in the three year period. A total of 60 sections passed would equate to 20 per year; the equivalent of five students passing all four sections per year. The top ranked of these five schools is John Brown University, ranking third overall with a pass rate of 68.3%. The 20th ranked school, Saint John's College, has a pass rate of 52.2%. The top 20 institutions by percentage of sections passed are shown in Table 5. Seven of these schools rank in the top 20, despite not being AACSB accredited. They are shaded.

**TABLE 5
CPA EXAMINATION PASS RATES – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS**

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)
Univ. Of Texas Austin	1,500	4,550	3,243	71.3%
Texas A&M University	1,519	5,006	3,483	69.6%
John Brown University	18	41	28	68.3%
Texas Christian Univ.	308	944	624	66.1%
Southwestern Assemblies Of God Univ.	15	40	26	65.0%
Southwestern Univ.	47	145	91	62.8%
Baylor University	574	1,711	1,071	62.6%
Trinity University	222	650	396	60.9%
Southern Methodist Univ.	466	1,371	833	60.8%
Tulane University	327	906	549	60.6%
Rice University	48	106	64	60.4%
Oklahoma Baptist Univ.	26	64	38	59.4%
University Of Oklahoma	535	1,360	798	58.7%
Oklahoma State Univ.	580	1,566	901	57.6%
Louisiana College	5	7	4	57.1%
Oral Roberts University	100	273	152	55.7%
Texas Tech University	666	1,881	1,033	54.9%
University Of Arkansas	311	887	485	54.7%
Louisiana State Univ.	911	2,547	1,354	53.1%
Saint John’s College	11	23	12	52.2%
Total (Top 20 Schools)	8,189	24,078	15,186	63.1%
Total (All 122 Schools In The Region)	23,977	65,490	32,053	48.9%

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

CPA EXAMINATION AVERAGE SCORE – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS

Seventeen of the top 20 schools for pass rate percentage are also on the list of the top 20 schools for the average examination score, although all but three of them have a different, although fairly similar, ranking. Only #5 Southwestern Assemblies of God University, #15 Louisiana College, and #20 Saint John’s College are not on the list. They are replaced on the top 20 by average examination score by Abilene Christian University (#17), Centenary College Louisiana (#19), and Midwestern State University (#20). The University of Texas Austin has the highest average score with 79.3, followed by Texas A&M University with 78.4 and Texas Christian University with 78. The 20th school, Midwestern State

University, has an average score of 72.7%. The average scores for the top 20 institutions are shown in Table 6. Four of these schools are not AACSB accredited and are shaded.

TABLE 6
CPA EXAMINATION AVERAGE SCORE – TOP 20 INSTITUTIONS

Institutions	Average Score
University Of Texas Austin	79.3
Texas A&M University	78.4
Texas Christian University	78.0
Southwestern University	77.0
Baylor University	76.5
Southern Methodist University	76.1
Trinity University	75.8
Rice University	75.4
John Brown University	75.1
Oral Roberts University	75.1
Oklahoma Baptist University	74.9
Tulane University	74.7
Oklahoma State University	74.6
University Of Oklahoma	74.4
Texas Tech University	73.8
Louisiana State University	73.8
Abilene Christian University	73.5
University Of Arkansas	73.4
Centenary College Louisiana	73.1
Midwestern State University	72.7
Average (Top 20 Schools)	76.4
Average (All 122 Schools In The Region)	71.8

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

A complete listing of all 122 reported institutions in the Southwest region of the AAA is shown in Table 7. It shows five items for each school: the number of unique candidates, the total sections taken, the sections passed, the percentage of sections passed and the average score.

TABLE 7
CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Arkansas					
Arkansas State Univ.	144	375	140	37.3%	68.2
Arkansas Tech Univ.	81	229	108	47.2%	71.1
Harding University	243	715	304	42.5%	70.1
Henderson State Univ.	45	123	40	32.5%	66.0
Hendrix College	43	124	35	28.2%	65.1
John Brown University	18	41	28	68.3%	75.1
Lyon College	5	9	3	33.3%	62.3
Ouachita Baptist Univ.	63	161	71	44.1%	69.9
Southern Arkansas Univ.	60	160	65	40.6%	70.4
University Of Arkansas	311	887	485	54.7%	73.4
Univ. Of Arkansas Little Rock	148	403	160	39.7%	67.4
Univ. Of Arkansas Monticello	32	85	20	23.5%	65.0
Univ. Of Arkansas Pine Bluff	10	29	2	6.9%	54.2
Univ. Of Central Arkansas	284	870	376	43.2%	70.2
Arkansas Total	1,487	4,211	1,837	43.6%	70.0
Louisiana					
Centenary College Louisiana	31	85	41	48.2%	73.1
Dillard University	30	84	5	5.9%	47.8
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TABLE 7 (continued)

CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Grambling State Univ.	48	109	26	23.9%	60.8
Louisiana College	5	7	4	57.1%	72.6
Louisiana State Univ.	911	2,547	1,354	53.1%	73.8
Louisiana State Univ. In Shreveport	105	257	129	50.2%	72.2
Louisiana Tech Univ.	185	524	229	43.7%	70.7
Loyola Univ. New Orleans	91	258	123	47.7%	70.7
McNeese State Univ.	156	412	147	35.7%	67.4
Nicholls State Univ.	99	254	100	39.4%	70.1
Northwestern State Univ.	74	207	72	34.8%	68.4
Our Lady Holy Cross College	30	68	13	19.1%	51.0
Southeastern Louisiana Univ.	389	1,045	352	33.7%	67.3
Southern Univ. Baton Rouge	76	204	54	26.5%	66.9
Southern Univ. New Orleans	24	47	4	8.5%	52.4
Tulane University	327	906	549	60.6%	74.7
Univ. Of Louisiana Lafayette	308	791	385	48.7%	72.2
Univ. Of Louisiana Monroe	115	330	139	42.2%	70.3
Univ. Of New Orleans	391	992	412	41.5%	69.6
Xavier Univ. Louisiana	34	63	18	28.6%	59.9
Louisiana Total	3,429	9,190	4,155	45.2%	70.7
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TABLE 7 (continued)

CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
New Mexico					
College of Santa Fe	20	54	13	24.1%	56.6
Eastern New Mexico Univ.	50	119	48	40.3%	68.7
New Mexico Highlands Univ.	26	71	25	35.2%	67.5
New Mexico State Univ.	239	663	273	41.2%	70.3
Saint John's College	11	23	12	52.2%	72.5
Univ. Of New Mexico	398	1,082	487	45.0%	70.4
Western New Mexico Univ.	26	70	19	27.2%	66.3
New Mexico Total	770	2,082	877	42.1%	69.7
Oklahoma					
Cameron University	62	129	40	31.0%	63.0
East Central University	74	171	47	27.5%	64.9
Langston University	65	111	16	14.4%	54.1
Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College	11	32	6	18.8%	64.3
Northeastern State Univ.	162	346	142	41.1%	67.0
Northwestern Oklahoma State Univ.	36	85	42	49.4%	72.2
Oklahoma Baptist Univ.	26	64	38	59.4%	74.9
Oklahoma Christian Univ.	95	257	103	40.1%	68.2
Oklahoma State Univ.	580	1,566	901	57.6%	74.6
Oklahoma State Univ. In Oklahoma City	12	22	3	13.6%	60.9
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TABLE 7 (continued)

CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Oklahoma City Univ.	102	266	111	41.8%	69.0
Oral Roberts University	100	273	152	55.7%	75.1
Rogers State University	5	8	3	37.5%	61.9
Southeastern Oklahoma State Univ.	54	123	43	34.9%	66.0
Southern Nazarene Univ.	44	111	28	25.2%	64.0
Southwestern Oklahoma State Univ.	103	230	61	26.5%	62.6
Univ. Of Central Oklahoma	451	1,027	378	36.8%	66.5
University Of Oklahoma	535	1,360	798	58.7%	74.4
University Of Tulsa	128	312	143	45.8%	71.6
Oklahoma Total	2,645	6,493	3,056	47.1%	70.5
Texas					
Abilene Christian Univ.	253	716	371	51.8%	73.5
Amberton University	29	58	13	22.4%	64.8
Angelo State University	114	328	154	47.0%	71.6
Baylor University	574	1,711	1,071	62.6%	76.5
Dallas Baptist Univ.	88	255	83	32.5%	66.2
DeVry University Irving	49	136	34	25.0%	60.0
East Texas Baptist Univ.	11	20	10	50.0%	63.6
Hardin Simmons Univ.	35	88	42	47.7%	72.5
Houston Baptist Univ.	100	238	88	37.0%	68.2
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TABLE 7 (continued)**CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE**

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Howard Payne Univ.	6	19	10	52.6%	71.1
Lamar College	145	448	156	34.8%	67.9
Letourneau University	43	92	26	28.3%	67.3
Lubbock Christian Univ.	23	69	31	44.9%	70.3
Midwestern State Univ.	103	259	130	50.2%	72.7
Our Lady The Lake Univ.	50	89	20	22.4%	61.6
Prairie View A & M Univ.	39	105	25	23.8%	61.9
Rice University	48	106	64	60.4%	75.4
Saint Edward's Univ.	120	323	151	46.8%	71.5
Saint Mary's University	92	236	99	42.0%	70.0
Sam Houston State Univ.	432	1,204	486	40.4%	69.9
Schreiner University	18	40	8	20.0%	63.7
Southern Methodist Univ.	466	1,371	833	60.8%	76.1
Southwestern Adventist Univ.	11	46	17	37.0%	50.7
Southwestern Assemblies Of God Univ.	11	25	10	40.0%	71.8
Southwestern Univ.	47	145	91	62.8%	77.0
Stephen F. Austin State Univ.	277	735	312	42.5%	70.3
Sul Ross State Univ.	5	16	10	62.5%	75.4
Tarleton State Univ.	102	250	123	49.2%	71.7
Trinity University	222	650	396	60.9%	75.8
Texas A&M Intl Univ.	49	97	34	35.1%	65.5
Texas A&M University	1,519	5,006	3,483	69.6%	78.4

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TABLE 7 (continued)**CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE**

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Texas A&M Univ. Commerce	138	386	143	37.0%	67.4
Texas A&M Univ. Corpus Christi	163	383	139	36.3%	68.8
Texas A&M Univ. Kingsville	42	95	23	24.2%	62.2
Texas A&M Univ. Texarkana	26	64	30	46.9%	71.7
Texas Christian Univ.	308	944	624	66.1%	78.0
Texas Lutheran Univ.	101	257	101	39.3%	70.0
Texas Southern Univ.	70	154	25	16.2%	57.6
Texas State Univ. San Marcos	646	1795	847	47.2%	71.5
Texas Tech University	666	1,881	1,033	54.9%	73.8
Texas Wesleyan Univ.	49	130	49	37.7%	69.0
Texas Woman's Univ.	68	173	63	36.4%	68.5
University Of Dallas	124	339	140	41.3%	69.4
Univ. Of Houston Clear Lake	437	1,043	399	38.3%	68.4
Univ. Of Houston Downtown	508	1,102	292	26.5%	63.0
Univ. Of Houston Main	1,734	4,546	1,956	43.0%	69.8
Univ. Of Houston Victoria	89	230	77	33.5%	67.8
Univ. Of Incarnate Word	83	185	51	27.6%	60.0
Univ. Of Mary Hardin Baylor	48	127	47	37.0%	68.7
Univ. Of North Texas	579	1,633	751	46.0%	71.5

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TABLE 7 (continued)**CPA EXAMINATION RESULTS OF ALL INSTITUTIONS BY SECTIONS PASSED, PASS RATE AND AVERAGE SCORE**

Institutions	Candidates Total	Sections Total	Sections Passed	Sections Passed (%)	Average Score
Univ. Of Saint Thomas	255	589	256	43.5%	69.4
Univ. Of Texas Arlington	677	1,871	887	47.4%	72.3
Univ. Of Texas Austin	1,500	4,550	3,243	71.3%	79.3
Univ. Of Texas Brownsville	50	108	31	28.7%	65.2
Univ. Of Texas Dallas	1,029	3,035	1,302	42.9%	70.0
Univ. Of Texas El Paso	157	390	190	48.7%	72.0
Univ. Of Texas Pan American	128	289	108	37.4%	67.3
Univ. Of Texas Permian Basin	86	211	80	37.9%	68.8
Univ. Of Texas San Antonio	494	1,290	542	42.0%	69.7
Univ. Of Texas Tyler	138	362	146	40.3%	69.9
Wayland Baptist Univ.	14	43	19	44.2%	70.9
West Texas A&M Univ.	158	428	151	35.3%	69.0
Texas Total	15,646	43,514	22,129	50.9%	72.6
Grand Total For All 5 States	23,977	65,490	32,053	48.9%	71.8

Compiled from NASBA Reports and Commentary on the 2009-2011 CPA Examinations

REFERENCE

National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (2009-2011). *Uniform CPA Examination: Candidate Performance -2009-2011 Editions* (Nashville, TN: NASBA).