

# 2010 CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAM GRADUATE SURVEY OVERVIEW

The Career and Technical Program Graduate Survey is conducted annually by all Illinois community colleges. The ICCB requests survey results for specific career and technical programs on a five-year review cycle, and requests a 50% response rate for the graduates of those programs. The ICCB collects and aggregates the survey data and reports on the findings. Illinois Central College's response rate for FY 2010 career and technical program graduates designated for collection by the ICCB was **46.46%**. However, it is important to note that in an effort to enhance the program review efforts of all of the college's career and technical programs, the Office of Institutional Research annually surveys *each* program's graduates. The overall response rate for FY 2010 career and technical graduates was **52.21%**.

## METHOD

Career and technical program graduates are surveyed six months following completion of the term during which they received their credential(s). July graduates are surveyed the following January, December graduates the following June, and May graduates the following November. This allows for greater comparability among graduates with respect to employment and educational status, as well as the distance from which they assess the college's programs and services, among other variables. FY 2010 includes summer 2009, fall 2009, and spring 2010 graduates.

The Office of Institutional Research provides the survey materials, which include a paper-based survey, a standard cover letter, and a postage-paid envelope. Program coordinators are invited to provide a personalized cover letter and to include a program-specific survey with the mailing. Graduates who return their survey prior to the response deadline are entered into a random drawing for incentive prizes. The survey is mailed to non-responders up to three times. For FY 2010, the Office of Institutional Research mailed 823 total surveys, of which 814 were deemed deliverable and 425 (52.21% of deliverable surveys) were returned.

Meeting the 50% response rate requested by the ICCB has become a greater challenge over time for community colleges statewide. At ICC, overall response rates have decreased 12 percentage points since FY 2006, falling from 64.48% to 52.21% in FY 2010 (Exhibit 1). Response rates for ICCB required programs have followed a similar trend (Exhibit 2). Declining response rates elicit concerns about negative bias. People are more likely to report an unhappy experience; thus, lower response rates may mean an overrepresentation of negative opinions about ICC programs and services, as well as students' life experiences after graduation.

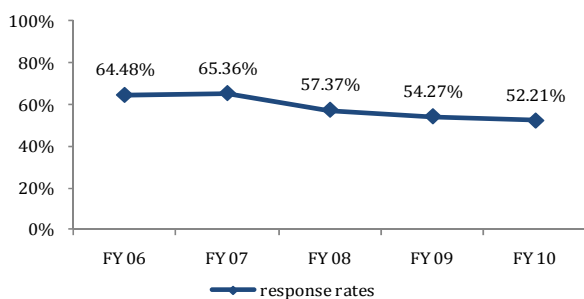


Exhibit 1. Overall response rates

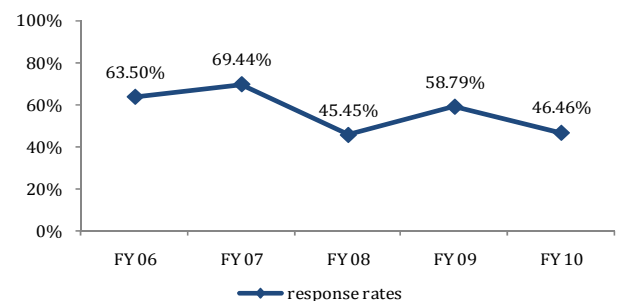


Exhibit 2. ICCB required programs response rates

## RESULTS

### Primary Attendance Objective and Academic Goal

The majority of respondents (72.73% or 304) indicated that they attended ICC to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job. These percentages have remained stable for several administrations of the survey, varying between 69% and 73% since FY 2006. Nearly all respondents (97.63% or 413) agreed that they achieved

their primary academic goal(s) while at ICC; nearly 77% (325) strongly agreed. Since this question was added to the survey in FY 2007, the percentage of agreement has consistently fallen between 97% and 98%.

### Current Educational Status

The percentage of respondents pursuing additional education at the time that they completed the survey continued to decrease. For FY 2010, 27.66% (117) of respondents reported being currently enrolled in a field of study either related or unrelated to their previous ICC program, the lowest percentage since FY 2006. Of these respondents, 81.20% (95) were taking courses related to their ICC program of study.

### Current Employment Status

**Employment Rates.** For FY 2010, 84.63% (358) of respondents reported that they were currently employed, the lowest percentage since FY 2006. Overall employment for the last five years peaked in FY 2007 at 92.74%.

**Employment Status.** Compared to previous years, a smaller percentage of respondents were working full-time. For FY 2010, 65.01% (358) of respondents reported being employed full-time (30 hours or more per week), a decrease of 12.53 percentage points compared to FY 2008. Almost 20% (83) were working only part-time compared to 11.7% for FY 2008 (Exhibit 3).

**Unemployment Rates.** Nearly 9% (37) of respondents reported that they were unemployed and seeking employment. That percentage has been increasing since FY 2008 (Exhibit 4). Of the 6.38% (27) who were unemployed and *not* seeking employment, 40.74% (11) were full-time students.

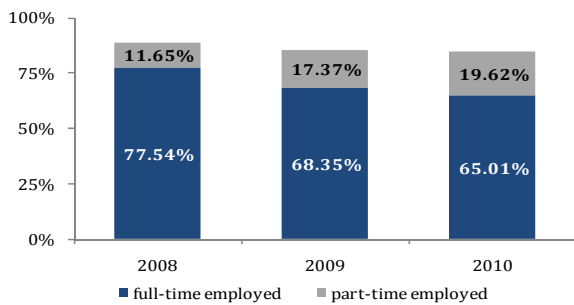


Exhibit 3. Current employment status

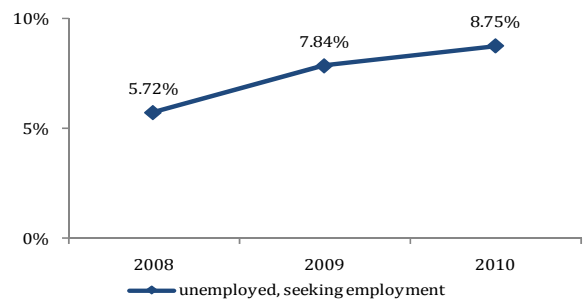


Exhibit 4. Current employment status - unemployed and seeking

**Job Related to Program.** About 76% (274) of employed respondents reported having a job related to their ICC program of study. That percentage has ranged between 76% and 82% since FY 2006. Of the nearly 24% (86) with a job unrelated to their program of study, 35.37% (29) reported being unable to find a job in their field of preparation. That percentage has been higher than 30% since FY 2008.

**Job Satisfaction.** For FY 2010, the average rating for job satisfaction was 3.04, the lowest rating observed for the last five years. Job satisfaction is rated on a four-point scale (4 = very satisfied). Ratings had improved each year since FY 2006, peaking at 3.28 for FY 2009.

**Hours per Week/Rate of Pay.** Employed respondents worked an average of 36 hours/week, excluding overtime. For the first time since FY 2006, average pay decreased, falling to \$15.65/hour, \$0.60 less than FY 2009 (Exhibit 5).

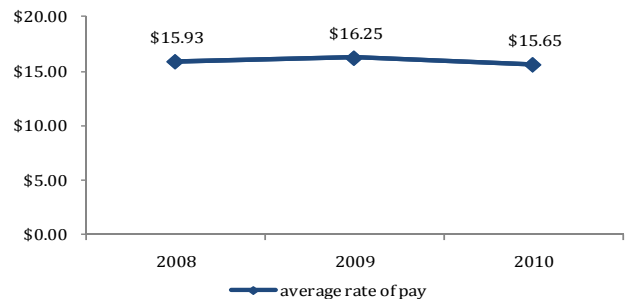


Exhibit 5. Average rate of pay

**Job Location.** Over 79% (283) of respondents remained within the ICC district to work, unchanged from FY 2009. Since FY 2006, this percentage has ranged from 77% to 81%.

Each year, it is important to make note of the percentage of graduates who remain within the district to work. These graduates enhance the well-being of all residents by contributing to the pool of workforce skills, adding to the tax base, reducing the burden on social services and the levels of publicly supported subsidies, and increasing the overall level of economic activity through purchases of goods and services. It is particularly important as the local economy recovers from the recent recession and the state's ongoing budgetary issues.

## Programs and Services Assessment

Average ratings for programs and services assessment are based on a four-point satisfaction scale (4 = very satisfied). Each year, respondents are usually **most satisfied with the content of courses taken within their program**. FY 2010 was no exception; the average rating for course content was 3.64. Average ratings have ranged from 3.58 to 3.68 for the last five years. Respondents are consistently **least satisfied with information on current employment opportunities and trends**. The average rating climbed to 3.27 in FY 2009, but dropped to 3.10 in FY 2010, the lowest average rating since FY 2006.

Outside of their program, respondents are consistently **most satisfied with equipment, facilities, and materials**. The average rating for this item has ranged from 3.38 to 3.47 for the last five years. Respondents are **least satisfied with job preparation** outside of their program. The average rating dropped to 3.01 for FY 2010 (Exhibit 6). Since FY 2006, ratings for this item have ranged from 3.01 to 3.09.

| <i>Within major program of study</i>     |  | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 |
|--|--|---------|---------|---------|
| Most Satisfied                           | Content of courses   | 3.60    | 3.68    | 3.64    |
| Least Satisfied                          | Information on current employment opportunities and trends | 3.25    | 3.27    | 3.10    |
| <i>Outside of major program of study</i> |  | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 |
| Most Satisfied                           | Equipment, facilities and materials                        | 3.44    | 3.45    | 3.40    |
| Least Satisfied                          | Job preparation  | 3.04    | 3.07    | 3.01    |

**Exhibit 6. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to courses**

Over 53% of students used **financial aid services**, which were rated the **most satisfactory** service with an average rating of 3.44. Over the last five years, the lowest rating observed for this item was 3.26 in FY 2008. **Library/audiovisual services** were **most used** and **most satisfactory**, with 72.71% (309) of respondents indicating that they used the service at an average rating of 3.44. Since FY 2006, average ratings have ranged from 3.44 to 3.55. **College transfer planning** was both the **least used** and the **least satisfactory** service; the 25.41% (108) of respondents who used the service gave the item an average rating of 2.96 (Exhibit 7). Ratings have been declining since FY 2007 when the average was 3.08.

|                 |                                 | FY 2008 | FY 2009 | FY 2010 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Most Satisfied  | 1) Financial Aid Services       | 3.26    | 3.31    | 3.44    |
|                 | 2) Library/Audiovisual Services | 3.51    | 3.46    | 3.44    |
| Least Satisfied | 1) College Transfer Planning    | 3.03    | 3.02    | 2.96    |
|                 | 2) Counseling                   | 3.30    | 3.17    | 3.15    |

**Exhibit 7. Most, least satisfied items pertaining to services**

*Questions or comments? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research at (309) 694-5285 or at [InstResearch@icc.edu](mailto:InstResearch@icc.edu).*