

2008 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, which are directly linked to performance-based funding, and reports on the findings. Illinois Central College's response rate for FY 2008 career and technical program graduates designated for collection by the ICCB was **45.5%**. It is important to note, though, 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 of FY 2008 career and technical graduates was **57.4%**.

METHOD

The Office of Institutional Research surveys career and technical program graduates 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.

The survey is paper-based. The Office of Institutional Research provides the materials, including a standard cover letter and the incentive prizes that are awarded to randomly selected respondents. Program directors may opt to use a personalized letter instead, if they so choose, and are also invited to include a program-specific survey with the mailing. Each graduate is provided with a postage-paid response envelope. The survey is mailed to non-responders up to three times. For FY 2008, staff mailed 838 total surveys, of which 828 were deemed deliverable and 475 (57.4% of deliverable surveys) were returned.

RESULTS

Primary Attendance Objective and Academic Goal

Nearly 73% (331) of respondents indicated that they attended ICC to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job. About 9% (41) were seeking to improve skills needed at their present job, while another 7% (32) cited transfer to another college as their primary objective. Nearly all respondents (98.3%) at least somewhat agreed that they achieved their primary academic goal(s) while at ICC; over 75% (356) strongly agreed.

Current Educational Status

Over 31% (148) were taking college courses at the time that they completed the survey. Of those, 79.7% (118) were taking courses related to their ICC program of study.

Current Employment Status

It appears that our FY 2008 graduates may have experienced some effects of the recent economic downturn. While nearly 78% (366) of respondents were employed full-time (30 hours or more per week) and 11.7% (55) were employed part-time for a total of 89.2% employed, this is a decrease of almost 3.6% compared to FY 2007 graduates (Exhibit 1).

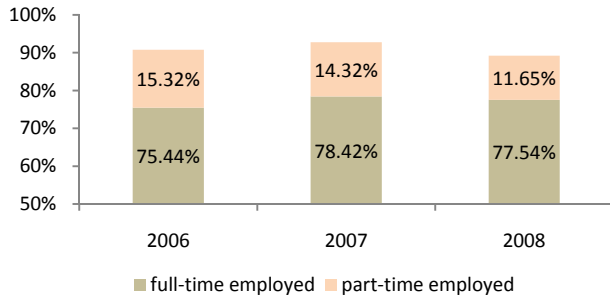


Exhibit 1. Current employment status

About 6% (27) reported that they were unemployed and seeking employment, a 2.4% increase (Exhibit 2). Of the almost 5% (23) who were unemployed and *not* seeking employment, the majority (56.5%) were full-time students. Almost 82% (342) of our employed respondents reported having jobs related to their ICC program of study. Of the 18% (76) graduates with jobs unrelated to their program of study, nearly 36% (26) reported being unable to find a job in their field of preparation (Exhibit 3). About 22% (16) either preferred another field or found a better paying job outside of their field.

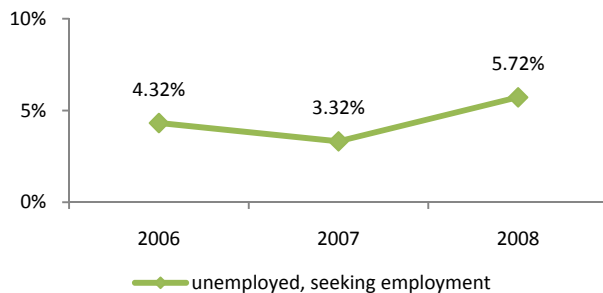


Exhibit 2. Current employment status -- unemployed



Exhibit 3. Could not find a job in field of preparation

Employed graduates worked an average of 38 hours per week, not including overtime. Average rate of pay was \$15.93 per hour for the 82.7% (393) of respondents willing to disclose salary information, an increase of \$0.38 compared with FY 2007 graduates and an increase of \$1.63 over FY 2006 graduates. Almost 79% (327) of respondents reported being at least somewhat satisfied with their current job.

Over 81% (337) remained within the ICC district to work, an increase of nearly 4% over FY 2007 graduates (Exhibit 4). Each year, it is important to make note of this percentage. Graduates who remain within the district to work 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. This is particularly important as the nation is currently experiencing a recession that has impacted the local area.

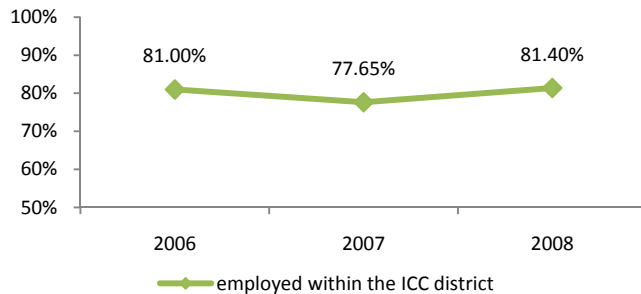


Exhibit 4. Primary place of employment

Programs and Services Assessment

Respondents were most satisfied with the content of the skills courses taken within their program, as indicated by an average rating of 3.60 on a four-point satisfaction scale (4 = very satisfied). At 3.25, they were least satisfied with information on current employment opportunities and trends, although the average has improved by 0.08 since FY 2006. For general education and other courses outside of their program, they were most satisfied with equipment, facilities, and materials for an average of 3.44. Job preparation was the least satisfactory at 3.04, a decrease of 0.05 compared to FY 2007.

Academic advising was used by more respondents than any other service (373 or 78.5%). The fewest respondents (108 or 22.7%) used tutoring services, although it was rated among one of the more satisfactory services at 3.44. Library/audiovisual services were rated most highly, with 328 (69.1%) respondents indicating that they used the service for an average rating of 3.51. College transfer planning, although used by far fewer students (118 or 24.8%), was rated the least satisfactory item at 3.03, a decrease of 0.05 from FY 2007.

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