

2007 Career and Technical Program Follow-up Study Overview

The Career and Technical Program Follow-up Study (formerly known as Occupational Follow-up) is a survey of career program completers conducted annually by each of Illinois' 48 community colleges. The ICCB requests survey results for specific career and technical programs on a five-year review cycle, and requires a 50% response rate from 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 rate of response for FY 2007 career and technical program graduates designated for collection by the ICCB came in at 69.4%. 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 2007 career and technical graduates was 65.4%.

METHOD

The Office of Institutional Research surveys career and technical program graduates at six months following the completion of the term during which they received their credential(s). For example, July graduates are surveyed the following January, December graduates the following June, and May graduates the following November. This provides for greater comparability among each term's graduates with respect to employment or continuing educational status, employment retention, and the "distance" from which graduates make assessments about the effectiveness and quality of instruction and services, among other variables. A staff member labels the envelopes and surveys, obtains cover letters from program directors or associate deans, provides postage-paid response envelopes, and administers the survey, mailing it to non-responders up to three times. For the FY 2007 career and technical program graduates, staff mailed 752 total surveys. Of these, 739 were deemed deliverable and 483 (65.4% of deliverable surveys) were returned.

RESULTS

Over 72% (345) of respondents indicated that they attended ICC to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job. About 9% (43) were seeking to improve skills needed at their present job, while another 6.3% (30) cited transfer to another college as their primary objective. Just over 30% (144) indicated that they were taking college courses at the time that they completed the survey. Of those, 76.4% (110) were taking courses related to their ICC program of study. Nearly all respondents (98.1%) at least somewhat agreed that they achieved their primary academic goal(s) while at ICC; seventy-six percent (363) strongly agreed.

Seventy-eight percent (378) of respondents reported that they were employed full-time (30 hours or more per week), while 14.3% (69) were employed part-time. Only 3.32% (16) reported being unemployed and seeking employment. Eighty percent (350) of employed respondents reported having jobs related to their ICC program of study. Of the 90 (20.5%) graduates with jobs unrelated to their program of study, 28.7% (25) reported being unable to find a job within

their field as the primary reason. About 16% (14) either preferred another field or found a better paying job outside of their field. Only two graduates (2.3%) reported that they had not passed licensing tests required to work in their chosen field. Employed graduates worked an average of 36.9 hours per week, not including overtime. Average rate of pay was \$15.55 per hour for the 424 respondents (87.8%) willing to disclose salary information, an increase of \$1.25 compared with FY 2006 graduates and an increase of \$0.65 over FY 2005 graduates.

From year to year, it remains important to note the percentage of our graduates who work within the ICC district after graduating. Despite a decrease of over 3% from FY 2006, nearly 78% (344) of respondents indicated that they have remained in the district to work. The implications here are simple, but important. ICC graduates who stay in the district 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. Furthermore, these graduates are ambassadors of the college, hopefully with good impressions of what ICC did for them and what it could do for family members, friends, and coworkers.

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please contact the Office of Institutional Research by telephone at (309) 694-5285 or by email at InstResearch@icc.edu.