

2006 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 Fiscal Year 2006 career and technical program graduates designated for collection by the ICCB came in at 63.5%. 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 Fiscal Year 2006 career and technical graduates was 64.5%.

METHOD

The IR Office surveys career and technical program graduates at six months following the completion of the term in which they received their credential(s). For example, July graduates are surveyed in the following January, December graduates in the following June, and May graduates in 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. The IR staff labels the envelopes and surveys, obtains cover letters from program directors or associate deans, provides postage-paid response envelopes, and administers the survey. For the FY 2006 career and technical program graduates, a total of 808 surveys were mailed. Of these, 791 were deemed deliverable and 510 (64.5% of deliverable surveys) were returned. The 510 returns came as a result of three mailings.

RESULTS

Seventy percent of respondents indicated that their main objective in attending ICC was to obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job, and 10.7% reported their objective as improving skills needed in their present job. Another 7.9% cited transfer to another college as their primary objective. Thirty-two percent (162) of the respondents reported that they were enrolled in college at the time they completed the survey, and 80.2% (130) of those respondents reported that they were enrolled in a field of study related to their ICC program of study.

Three hundred eighty-four graduates (75.4%) reported that they were employed full-time (30 hours or more per week) and 78 (15.3%) reported being employed part-time. Only 4.3% (22) reported being unemployed and seeking employment.

Seventy-six percent of employed respondents indicated their jobs were related to their ICC program of study. Of the 109 graduates (23.8%) employed in a position not related to their ICC program of study, 31 (29.5%) cited the inability to find a job in their field of preparation as the primary reason. Another 21.9% reported that they either preferred to work in another

field or found a better paying position in another field. None of the graduates reported that they had not passed licensing tests required to work in their educational field.

Graduates who reported being employed worked an average of 37.3 hours per week, not including overtime. Although 49 graduates (9.6%) refused to disclose salary information, the responding 90.4% reported an average income of \$14.30 per hour. This figure reflects a decrease of \$0.60 from that reported for FY 2005 graduates and a decrease of \$0.50 from that reported by FY 2004 graduates.

It remains, from year to year, important to note the percentage of our graduates who report working within the ICC district after graduating. FY 2006 was no exception, with 81.0% of respondents indicating 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 of its residents by contributing to the pool of workforce skills, adding to its 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 at extension 5285 or e-mail to InstResearch@icc.edu.