



TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS BRIEF

2002 GRADUATE SURVEY STUDY

In fall 2002, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness surveyed 1,866 Tidewater Community College (TCC) graduates from the class of 2002. Every two years the survey is conducted for purposes of program assessment and to gain knowledge of demographic, enrollment, attendance, employment, educational, and attitudinal data about TCC graduates. Highlights of the study are provided below.

- Almost half (46%) of the graduates attended another college or university at some point prior to enrolling at TCC, while 21% enrolled directly from high school. The vast majority (79%) of graduates were working either full- or part-time while enrolled, and 16% were on active duty or discharged from the military service.
- The top three reasons for attending TCC have remained the same for the last 20 years: close to home (72%), low tuition (71%), and courses/curriculum of interest (56%). Approximately two-thirds (66%) of the respondents indicated their primary goal was to obtain an associate degree for transfer. The majority of associate degree graduates completed their degree requirements in five years or less, while most certificate awards required three years or less.
- Almost half of the respondents (49%) reported receiving financial aid. This characteristic parallels the fact that TCC has more students receiving financial aid than any of the other 22 Virginia Community College System (VCCS) colleges.
- After graduation, 54% of the graduates were employed full-time. Over half of those employed full-time earned more than \$26,000 per year. Approximately 3 out of 5 graduates were working for the same company that employed them during their enrollment, and 25% of this group received a promotion or pay raise after earning their degree. Sixty-eight percent of the employed graduates were working in a curriculum-related field, and 95% of this group indicated TCC preparation for employment was good to excellent. For graduates employed in a job unrelated to their curriculum, the primary reason cited was that they were already working for their present employer before completing the program.
- Over half (54%) of the respondents met their primary goal for attending TCC and continued their education after graduation, and for those who did not, 71% planned to continue their education within two years. For those who continued, 79% enrolled in a four-year college/university, and the majority enrolled full-time (68%) in a TCC-related curriculum (78%). Eighty-eight percent rated their academic performance as expected or higher than expected after transfer. Approximately three-fourths of the respondents cited TCC's preparation as satisfactory or excellent for continuing their education.
- Between 84% and 90% of the graduates indicated they were adequately prepared in writing, speaking, math skills, defining problems, understanding written information, and thinking creatively.
- Graduates are overwhelmingly satisfied with their TCC experience: 94% would recommend the same curriculum and 99% would recommend the college, in general, to others.
- Demographic data points to a growing traditional student body with younger students, enrolled soon after high school, who are focused primarily to prepare for the baccalaureate degree.