



2004

# GRADUATE SURVEY STUDY

Office of

**Institutional Effectiveness**

September 2005



TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
From here, go anywhere.™

The 2004 Graduate Survey Study may be found on the world Wide Web at  
<http://www.tcc.edu/welcome/collegeadmin/OIE/reports/index.htm>

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In fall 2004, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness surveyed 1,825 Tidewater Community College (TCC) graduates from the class of 2004. 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.

- Consistent with recent demographic data, information collected for the 2004 Graduate Survey Study continued to indicate a growing traditional student body with younger students, enrolled soon after high school, who are focused primarily on preparing for the baccalaureate degree. As the TCC student population shifts, survey data yielded changes in demographics, perceptions, usage rates, and performance.
- The college is committed to expanding the reach of higher education to women and minorities. As a result of this commitment, in part, the percentage of female graduates steadily increased from 54% in 1994 to 64% in 2004, while the proportion of African-American graduates increased from 16% in 1994 to 25% in 2004.
- Regardless of the purpose when enrolled (either an affordable start toward a baccalaureate degree or access to high-quality occupational and technical training), 94% of all responding graduates indicated that their TCC experience contributed to the fulfillment of their goals. Clearly, the overwhelming majority of graduates actualized the TCC tagline “from here, go anywhere.”
- Nearly all respondents (99%) said they would recommend TCC to others wishing to continue their education. Additionally, 95% said they would recommend their curriculum to others wishing to enter the same field.
- Eight of nine aspects of instruction were perceived by at least 70% of respondents as either good or superior, with five items being perceived as good or superior by at least 90%. Graduates expressed high levels of satisfaction with the average class size, the overall quality of instruction, the quality of instruction in major curriculum, content of courses in major curriculum, and with grading and testing.
- Nine of the ten items related to the preparation of various knowledge and skill sets acquired at TCC were rated by at least 70% of respondents as either adequate or more than adequate, with one item being similarly perceived by at least 90%. Graduates continued to express high levels of preparation with technical job-related knowledge, technical job skills, understanding written information, writing skills, defining problems, solving problems, decision-making skills, speaking skills, mathematical skills, and thinking critically.
- Today’s students are much more mobile than in the past and are no longer limited by physical campus boundaries or geographical proximity. A new model for student services was developed to accommodate students seeking greater flexibility of access to services at the college. Over the past decade student service usage rates

increased for nine items: career counseling, financial aid, student activities, laboratory facilities, veterans' affairs, academic counseling, co-op program, admissions and records, and registration. The increased usage rates were due in large part to several factors such as the implementation of the new Student Information System in spring 2003 and related online services.

- Respondents were generally positive with regard to the satisfaction of student services received at TCC. Ten of the twelve items were rated by at least 70% of respondents as either good or superior, with four items being perceived as adequate or more than adequate by at least 80%. Over the past ten years, satisfaction levels have increased for student activities, laboratory facilities, career counseling, academic counseling, and learning resources/library services.
- Of the students that continued their education after graduating, 80% found that the courses completed at TCC provided adequate preparation. In fact, when compared to the transfer institution, approximately 85% of respondents considered the quality of the instruction provided by TCC to be at least the same or better than their current institution.
- Similarly, of the respondents employed in a field related to their curriculum at TCC, the majority (76%) indicated that their studies satisfactorily prepared them for their job. Forty-two percent (42%) of employed respondents indicated that their curriculum helped, at least to some extent, with obtaining their current employment. Sixty percent (60%) of employed graduates found that the curriculum helped to develop new job skills. Mirroring findings from previous years, 55% of employed respondents indicated that their TCC curriculum helped improve job performance and expertise.
- Of the respondents that were employed with the same company as when attending TCC, 31% received promotions or pay increases upon graduation. This represented a 6% increase from 2000 and 2002.
- Although several economic conditions such as minimal job and salary growth had been experienced across much of the nation, TCC graduates who were employed full-time were self-reporting a slightly higher salary than previous graduating classes. The majority of respondents (56%) employed full-time earned over \$26,000 with approximately 35% earning between \$26,000 and \$39,999.
- Overall, graduates were satisfied with their TCC experience. Graduates' comments illustrate that the college is fulfilling its two-prong mission core of college transfer education and workforce development: "I feel that TCC was a perfect fit for me. I wasn't ready to go away to a university and TCC was a great stepping stone." And, from an entrepreneurial graduate, "The skills, confidence, and knowledge gained at TCC prepared me for an opportunity to open my own business."

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# **2004 GRADUATE SURVEY STUDY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 2004 Graduate Survey Study is a critical component of the college's commitment to accountability, achievement and quality assurance. In November 2004, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted the semi-annual TCC Graduate Survey. This study examines graduates' self-reported information and perceptions on enrollment, instruction, student services, employment, and continuing education endeavors. Areas of strength and those needing improvement are identified in this study and incorporated into the college's data-driven decision making processes. In an effort to reflect of the changing student body, this study highlights some of the changing trends over the past ten years.

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

### **Population**

The graduate survey population included students who successfully completed the requirements for and received an award in one or more of the approved college transfer or occupational/technical programs during the time period of July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004. A total of 1,825 students met these requirements. Demographic descriptions of the population are provided in the Graduate Profile section of the report.

### **Data Collection Process**

A cover letter, survey, and postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope were mailed via United States postal services to each of the 1,825 graduates during fall 2004. Approximately two weeks later a reminder postcard was sent to all graduates. One month after the initial mailing, a second survey package containing another copy of the questionnaire, a letter of explanation, and a pre-addressed stamped envelope was mailed to all graduates who had failed to return a completed survey (1,417).

### **Survey Instrument**

The 34-item survey was designed to investigate a variety of aspects of the graduate's experience while attending and after graduating from TCC (see Appendix A). Divided into five sections, the survey focused on the graduate's enrollment at TCC (10 items), perceptions of instruction and student services (6 items), post-graduate employment (9 items), continuing college or university education (8 items), and general comments (1 item). A table summarizing college five-year data are provided in Appendix B, and selected open-ended comments are provided in Appendix C.

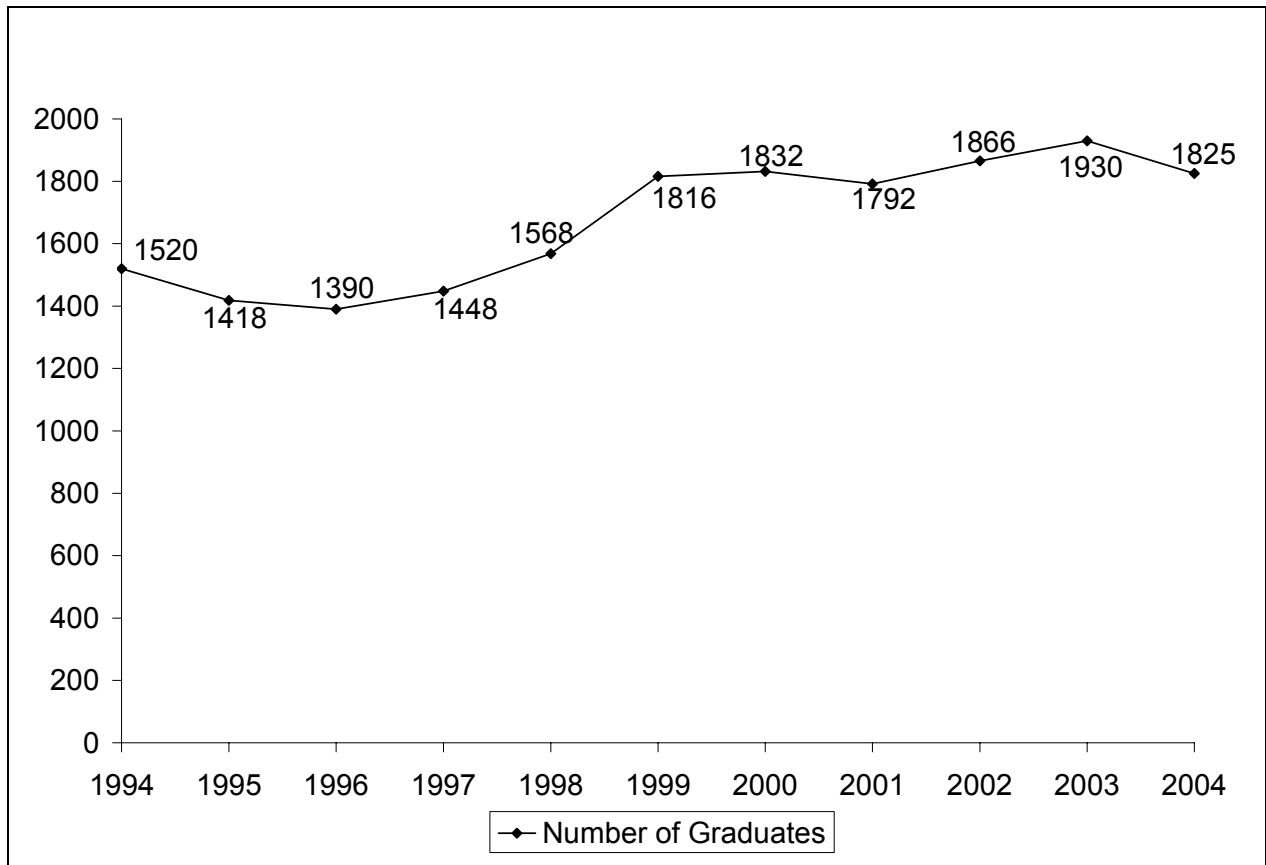
### **Respondent Profile**

The survey results were based on 807 responses, representing a 44.2% return rate. As in previous years, sampling procedures successfully yielded a respondent profile that closely mirrored that of the population (graduating class of 2004). Fifty-eight

percent (58%) of respondents received a college transfer degree, compared to 55% of all TCC graduates. Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents were African-American, which mirrored exactly the proportion of all graduates. To a slightly lesser degree, the gender and age distribution mirrored the 2004 graduate profile. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents were female compared to 64% of all graduates. While 36% of all respondents were within the 22 to 29 age group, this age group represented 43% of the graduating class of 2004. These differences are considered nominal and do not negatively impact the ability to generalize findings to the population.

## GRADUATE PROFILE

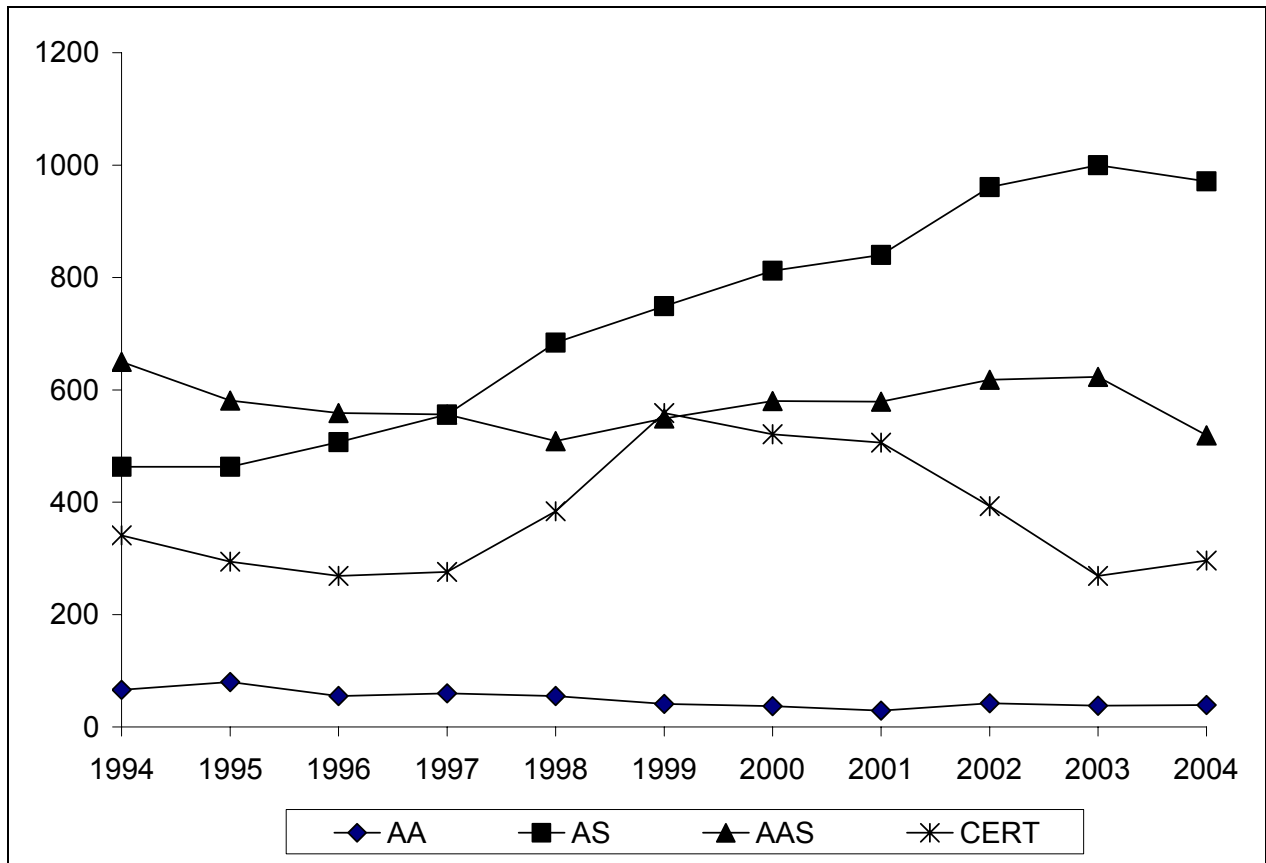
Figure 1 depicts the number of graduates between 1994 and 2004. The graduating class of 2004 represented a slight decline from 2003, which may be the result of statistical fluctuation as in 2001. Causal data should be sought if the number of graduates continues to decrease.



**Figure 1.** Number of Graduates (1994 to 2004)

Growth patterns for the AA, AS, and AAS degrees, as well as the certificate/diploma awards, are illustrated in Figure 2. As cited in previous reports, the distribution of graduates from college transfer degree programs (AA, AS) steadily increased, while graduates from occupational/technical degree programs (AAS, certificate, diploma) continued to decline. Fifty-five percent (55%) of graduates received a college transfer degree in 2004, which represented a 4% increase from 2002 and a 17% increase from 1994. As the percentage of college transfer degree graduates increased over the recent ten years, the percentage of occupational/technical degree

graduates decreased from 41% of graduates in 1994 to 29% in 2004. When analyzing individual degree types, the number of AS awards steadily increased over the past ten years, while the number of AAS awards declined to a ten-year low in 2004. The number of AA awards showed the least fluctuation between 1994 and 2004, while the number of certificate/diploma awards fluctuated more substantially.



**Figure 2.** Number of Degrees and Certificates by Award Type (1994 to 2004)

The majority of AA graduates (73%), AS graduates (66%), and AAS graduates (54%) completed their requirements in five years or less. Fifty-four percent (54%) of certificate/diploma program graduates completed their award requirements within three years of initial enrollment. Analysis of student course work indicates that 43% of the graduates enrolled in developmental English, while 53% enrolled in at least one developmental math course. For those who enrolled in developmental English, the largest portion of graduates enrolled in a writing course (63%), with a much smaller percentage enrolled in a reading course (37%).

The age distribution of TCC graduates grew progressively younger between 1998 and 2004. The proportion of graduates in the 22 to 29 age group experienced the largest increase (+8%) between 1998 and 2004, while the 30 to 44 age group had the largest decline (-11%) over the same period. In 2004, the largest proportion of graduates was the 22 to 29 age group (43%), followed by the 30 to 44 age group (33%). However in 1998, the largest proportion of graduates was the 30 to 44 age group (44%), followed by the 22 to 29 age group (35%). Coupled with the changing pattern of awarded degree types, this demographic data indicates that TCC graduates are younger and more likely to obtain college transfer degrees compared to five and ten

years ago. This suggests that younger students are choosing TCC in preparation for transfer to four-year institutions of higher education.

Since 1994, the percentage of female graduates steadily increased. The proportion of female students increased from 54% in 1994 to 64% in 2004, with a 6% increase between 2002 and 2004. Since 1994, graduates' ethnic distribution has changed to mirror the increase in minority enrollments at TCC. Twenty-five percent (25%) of graduates in 2004 were African-American compared with 22% in 2002 and 16% in 1994. The percentage of Caucasian graduates declined from 76% in 1994 to 66% in 2002 and 63% in 2004. The percentage of other minority graduates remained moderately stable between 8% in 1994 to 12% in 2002 and 2004.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

### **Enrollment Information**

Enrollment information comprised the first of five sections on the survey instrument and contained ten items that addressed a variety of issues. A majority (53%) of responding graduates indicated full-time enrollment while at TCC, which represented a 3% increase from 2002 and a reversal from 1994 when 54% indicated part-time enrollment. Consistent with longitudinal trend data, 53% reported that they attended primarily during the day. Additional analysis revealed increases in the proportions of full-time day students and full-time night students between 1994 and 2004 (3% and 4% increases, respectively). The percentage of part-time day students declined 5% from 1994 to 2004, while part-time night students declined 3% in the same period.

The proportion of respondents indicating attendance at another college or university prior to attendance at TCC remained consistent between 1994 and 2004. Forty-six percent (46%) of the survey respondents in 1994, 2002, and 2004 had at some point attended another institution of higher education before TCC.

Mirroring previous survey data, the majority of respondents described themselves as either employed (42%), recent high school graduates (21%), or homemakers (13%) when they enrolled at TCC. A smaller proportion of respondents either transferred from another college (9%), were on active military duty (7%), or were discharged from the military (6%). The largest change between 1994 and 2004 was the percentage of respondents enrolled directly from high school, which increased from 16% in 1994 to 21% in 2004.

The majority of respondents indicated that they were employed full-time (50%) while enrolled at TCC, a 7% decline from ten years earlier. Thirty-two percent (32%) of respondents were working part-time, a 15% increase from 1994. The proportion of homemakers increased from 3% in 1994 to 7% in 2004. Unemployed students declined from 15% in 1994 to 7% in 2004, while the proportion of respondents indicating full-time military status was 4% in 1994 and 2004.

Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents employed while attending TCC indicated that their employment was directly or somewhat related to their college curriculum. Almost half of the respondents (46%), indicated their employment while attending TCC was not related to their curriculum.

Financial aid continued to be an important factor in student enrollment. Nearly one-half (48%) reported receiving financial aid; this compared to 34% in 1994, 44% in 1998, and 49% in 2002. This large proportion appears consistent with data provided in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) 2003-2004 Financial Aid Summary Report. According to the VCCS report, TCC had the largest number of students receiving financial aid and total amount of aid awarded as compared to any of the other 22 VCCS colleges.

The percentage of respondents that entered TCC with the primary goal of transferring to a four-year college or university increased substantially from 50% in 1994 to 68% in 2004. Twenty-eight percent (28%) cited occupational/technical training as a primary goal for enrolling at TCC, which was a 14% decline from 1994. As cited in previous graduate survey reports, very few respondents enrolled for the purpose of certification renewal or to take advantage of employer training opportunities (both 1%). Three percent (3%) indicated that their primary goal in attending TCC was to satisfy personal interests. Regardless of students' goals in attending TCC, 94% indicated that their TCC experience contributed to the fulfillment of their goals.

Closely mirroring previous reports, the most frequently cited reasons for choosing TCC continued to be closeness to home (73%), low tuition (71%), and courses/curricula of interest (59%). Other important reasons included availability of evening classes (46%), small classes (36%), and the opportunity for personal improvement (32%). Of these select responses, an increasing percentage of graduates (+7%) chose "closeness to home" as compared to ten years earlier.

## **Evaluation of Instruction and Student Services**

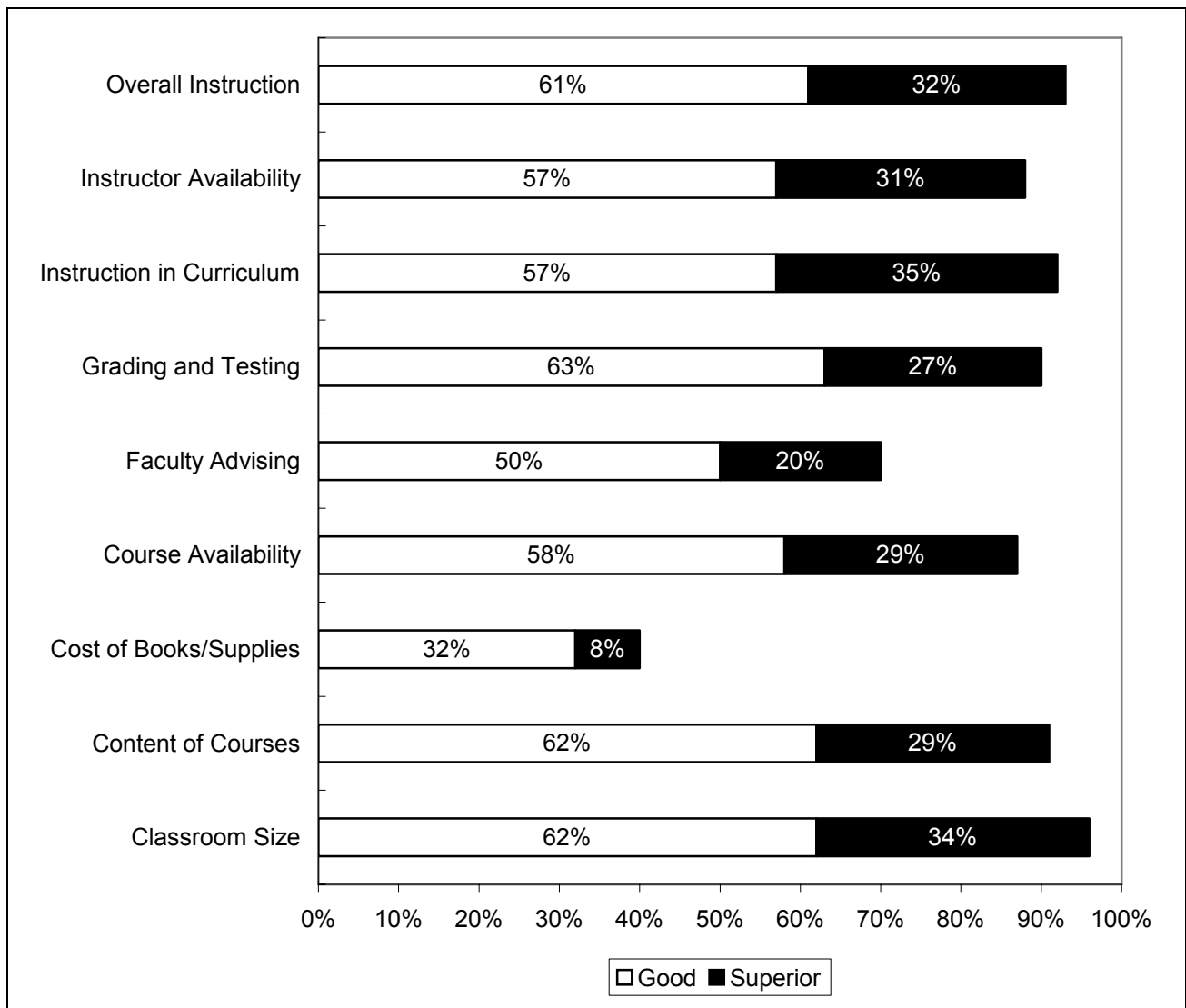
Evaluation of instruction and student services was the second of five sections and contained six survey items that addressed a number of issues regarding instruction, student services, personal achievement, and overall satisfaction.

### **Instruction**

The first item asked respondents to rate nine aspects of instruction. All results are provided graphically in Figure 3. Eight of the nine items were rated by at least 70% of respondents as either good or superior, with five items being perceived as good or superior by at least 90%. Consistently since 1994, graduates expressed high levels of satisfaction with the average class size (96%), the overall quality of instruction (93%), the quality of instruction in major curriculum (92%), content of courses in major curriculum (91%), and grading and testing (90%). To a slightly lesser degree, respondents were satisfied with their instructors' availability (88%), course availability/scheduling (87%), and course advisement from faculty members (70%). Respondents continued to express minimal satisfaction regarding the cost of books and supplies.

When comparing current perceptions with survey data from 1994, levels of satisfaction remained largely consistent across most of these items. The differentials in satisfaction ranged from -2% to +11%, with six items experiencing increased levels of satisfaction: course availability/scheduling (+11%), average class size (+5%), instructor

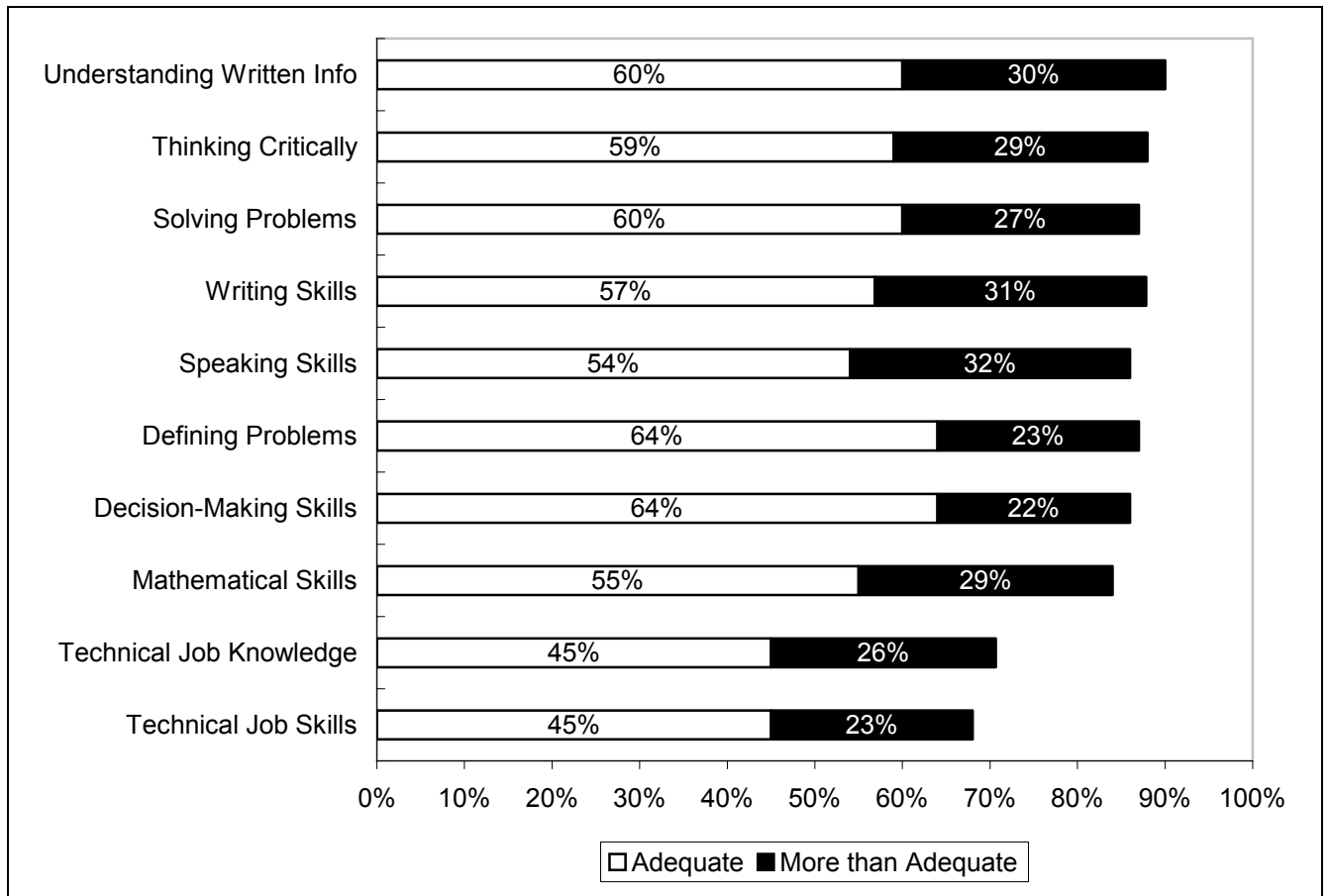
availability (+4%), content of courses in major curriculum (+3%), grading and testing (+3%), and course advisement from faculty members (+2%).



**Figure 3.** Satisfaction Rates for Various Aspects of Instruction (2004)

Graduates were also asked to rate the adequacy of preparation received at TCC across ten critical areas of knowledge and skills. All results are provided graphically in Figure 4. Respondents were generally positive about the adequacy of the various knowledge and skills acquired at TCC. Preparation in nine of the ten items was rated by at least 70% of respondents as either adequate or more than adequate, with one item being similarly perceived by at least 90%. Graduates continued to express high levels of satisfaction with their preparation in the following: understanding written information (90%), writing skills (88%), defining problems (87%), solving problems (87%), decision-making skills (86%), speaking skills (86%), mathematical skills (84%), and thinking critically (81%). To a slightly lesser degree, respondents were satisfied with technical job-related knowledge (71%) and technical job skills (68%). The lower satisfaction rates for the two technical-related skills may be due to a large proportion of respondents with a college transfer degree. After removing the “Not Applicable” responses, the satisfaction rates increased substantially for both items: technical job-related knowledge (95%) and technical job skills (94%).

The proportion of favorable perceptions improved across most of the ten items when comparing current perceptions with survey data from 1994. The changes in satisfaction ranged from 0% to +12%. None of the items declined over the 10-year period, and six items showed increased satisfaction: speaking skills (+12%), writing skills (+6%), technical job-related knowledge (+4%), understanding written information (+4%), technical job skills (+3%), and mathematical skills (+2%).



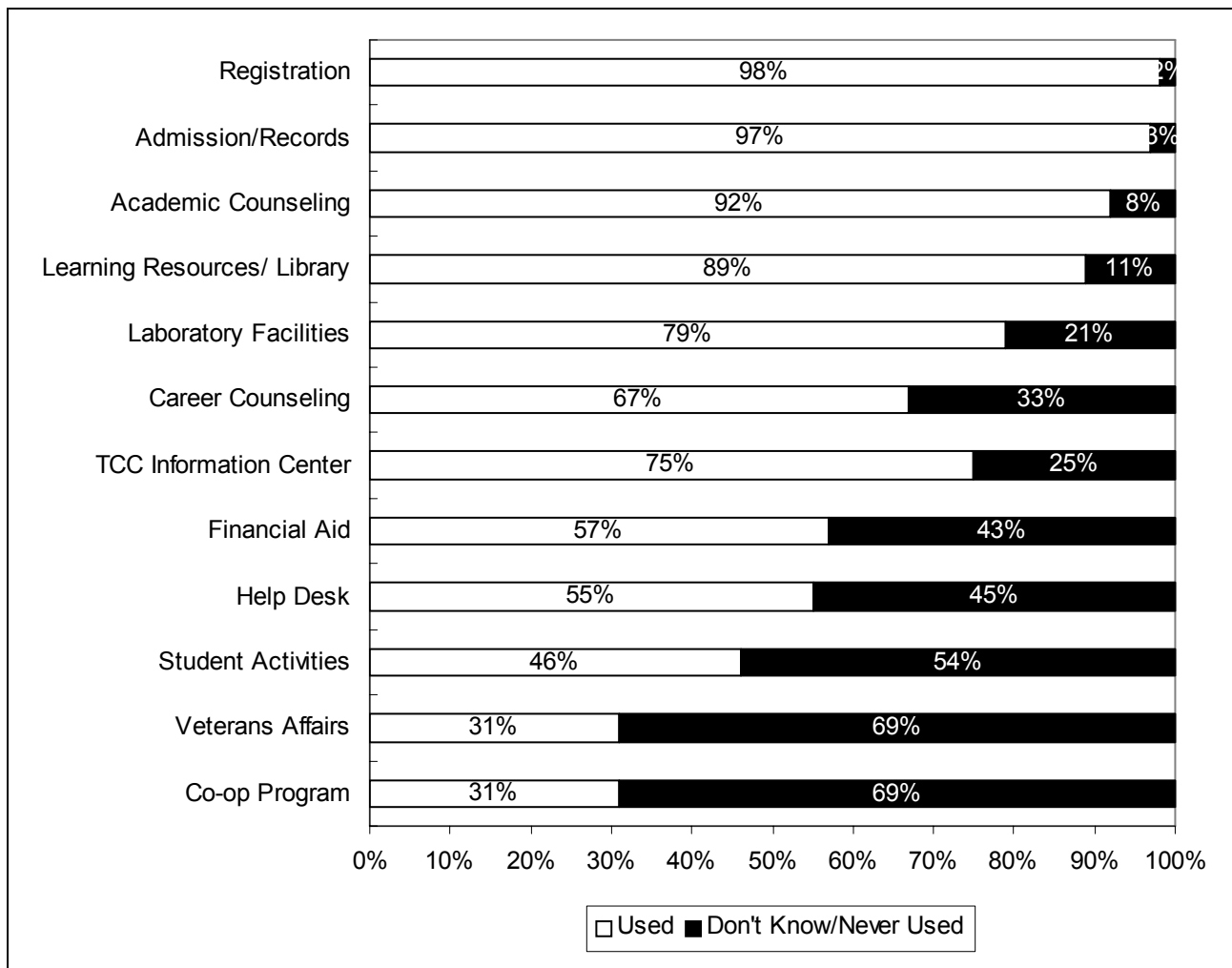
**Figure 4.** Satisfaction Rates for Preparation of Various Skill Areas (2004)

### Student Services

Graduates were asked to estimate their level of usage across twelve areas of student services and express their degree of satisfaction with each service. Figure 5 provides a graphical representation of service utilization. Respondents indicated mixed levels of usage. Six of the twelve items were used by at least 70% of respondents, with three services being used by at least 90%. Survey data indicates graduates' high usage rates with registration (98%), admissions and records (97%), academic counseling (92%), learning resources/library services (89%), laboratory facilities (79%), and TCC Information Center (75%). To a slightly lesser degree, respondents used career counseling (67%), financial aid (57%), Help Desk (55%), student activities (46%), co-op program (31%), and veterans' affairs (31%).

A longitudinal 10-year analysis revealed usage rate differentials that ranged from -1% to +23%. Between 1994 and 2004, usage rates declined for only one student service (learning resources/library services), and increased for nine items: career

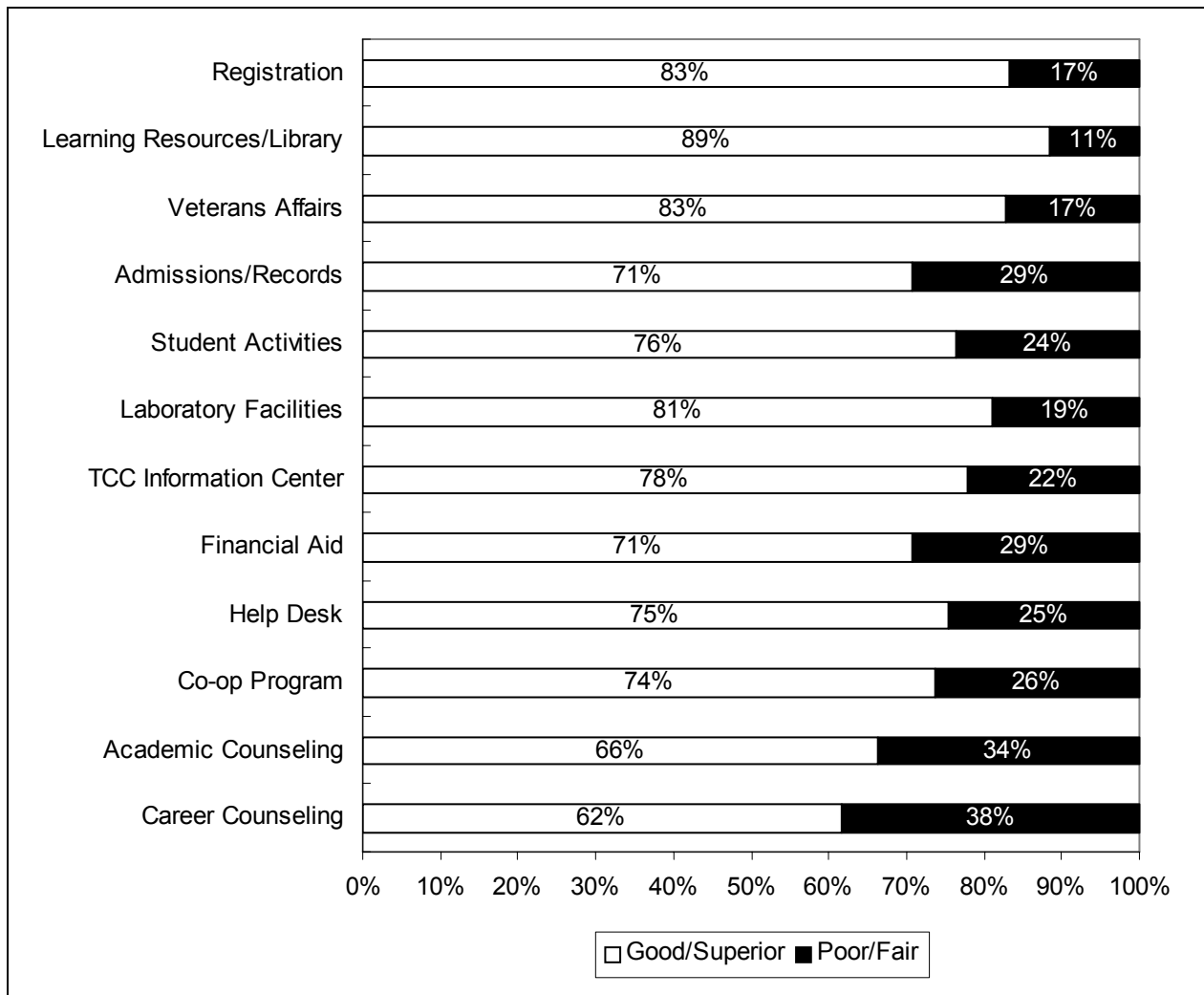
counseling (+23%), financial aid (+14%), student activities (+12%), laboratory facilities (+10%), veterans' affairs (+6%), academic counseling (+5%), co-op program (+3%), admissions and records (+1%), and registration (+1%). Similarly, usage rates increased substantially for the two items added to the 2002 survey: TCC Information Center (+11%) and Help Desk (+10%). The increased usage rates were due in large part to the implementation of the new PeopleSoft Student Information System in spring 2003 and related online services.



**Figure 5.** Usage Rates for Various Student Services (2004)

Satisfaction rates were based on respondents that used each student service. Results for the twelve student services are provided in Figure 6. Respondents were generally positive with regard to the satisfaction of student services received at TCC. Ten of the twelve items were rated by at least 70% of respondents as either good or superior, with four items being perceived as adequate or more than adequate by at least 80%. Only the two counseling items (academic counseling and career counseling) were perceived as satisfactory by less than 70% of respondents (66% and 62%, respectively). Graduates continued to express satisfaction with most student services: learning resources/library services (89%), veterans' affairs (83%), registration (83%), laboratory facilities (81%), TCC Information Center (78%), student activities (76%), Help Desk (75%), co-op program (74%), admissions and records (71%), and financial aid (71%).

Longitudinal analysis showed changes in satisfaction rates ranging from -9% to +12%. Over the 10-year period, the level of satisfaction declined for five student service areas, and increased for another five areas. Student service areas with increased levels of satisfaction included: student activities (+12%), laboratory facilities (+10%), career counseling (+6%), academic counseling (+4%), and learning resources/library services (+3%). Areas that experienced declining satisfaction rates were: admissions and records (-9%), veterans' affairs (-3%), registration (-3%), financial aid (-1%), and co-op program (-1%). Current satisfaction rates for the two items added in 2002, TCC Information Center and Help Desk, were compared against the rates in 2002. The level of satisfaction with the TCC Information Center increased 2% from 76% in 2002 to 78% in 2004, while satisfaction with the Help Desk remained unchanged (75%).



**Figure 6. Satisfaction Rates for Various Student Services (2004)**

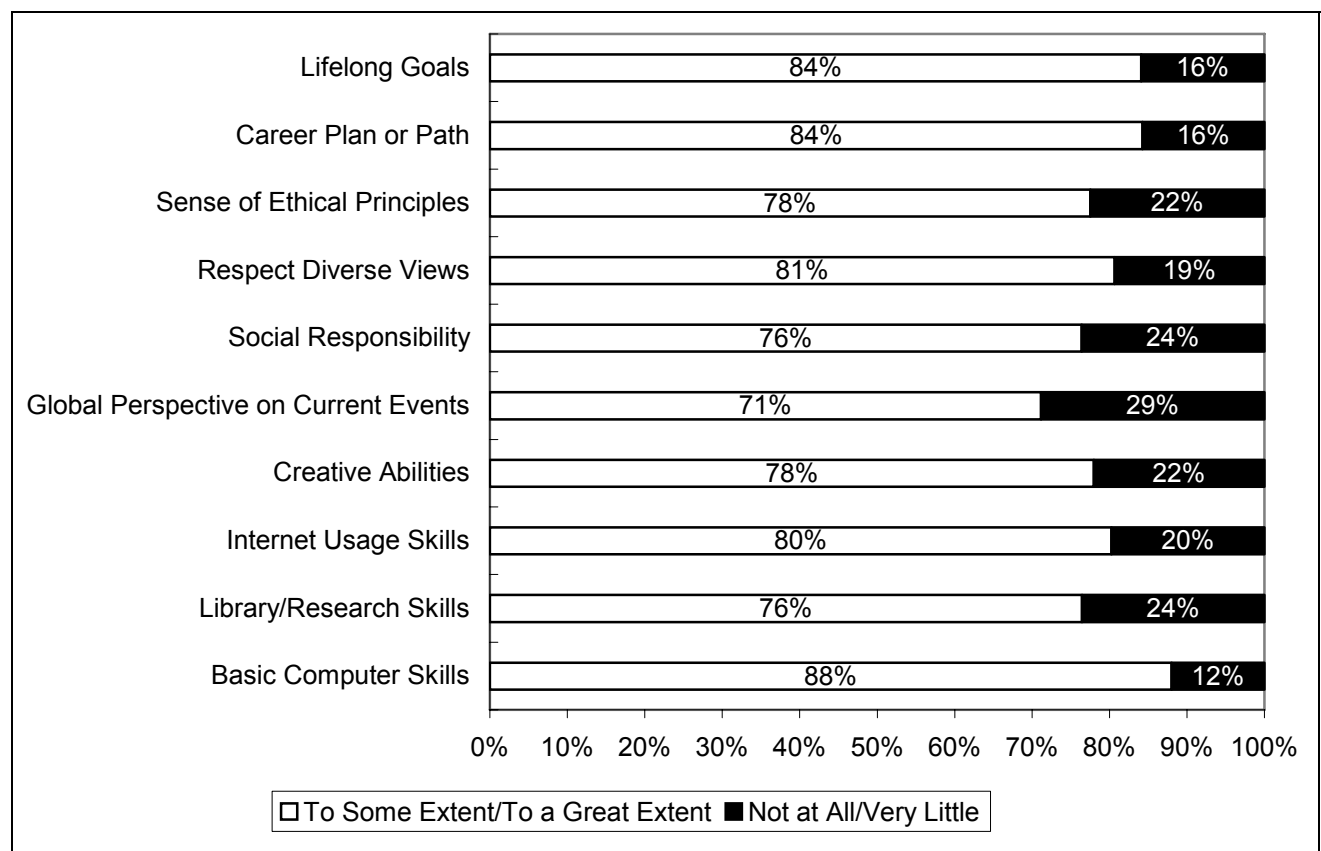
### Personal Achievement

Overall, respondents perceived improvements across ten areas of personal development and general attitudes as a result of their experience at TCC. Results for the ten personal development and attitudinal areas are provided in Figure 7. All ten items were rated by at least 70% of respondents as making progress either to some extent or to a great extent, with five items being viewed as improved by at least 80%.

All ten items increased their respective improvement/attainment rate when comparing current perceptions with those from 2002. From 2002 to 2004, most items increased between two and three percent, while “respect for the diverse views and beliefs of others” increased 5% and “locating, evaluating, and using information on the Internet” increased 4%.

Current improvement rates for the four new items added in 2002 were compared with 2004 survey results. The level of improvement for “locating, evaluating, and using information in the library” increased 3% from 73% in 2002 to 76% in 2004; “locating, evaluating, and using information on the Internet” increased 4% from 76% to 80%; “lifelong goals” increased 3% from 81% to 84%; and “career plan or path” increased 2% from 82% to 84%.

Six of the ten items asked in 2004 were asked in 1994. A ten-year comparison produced somewhat different findings from the two-year analysis. While the improvement rates for all ten items increased from 2002 to 2004, only one of six items increased from 1994 to 2004. Over the ten-year period, the differential in improvement rates ranged from -18% (respect for the diverse views and beliefs of others) to +17% (basic computer functions and applications). The computer skills item was the only one to experience an increased improvement rate. This perception is indicative of positive results of the college’s strategic effort to provide technology-based resources/services, and consistent with the exponential growth in online course enrollment figures.



**Figure 7.** Improvement Rates for Various Areas of Personal Development and General Attitudes (2004)

## Overall Satisfaction

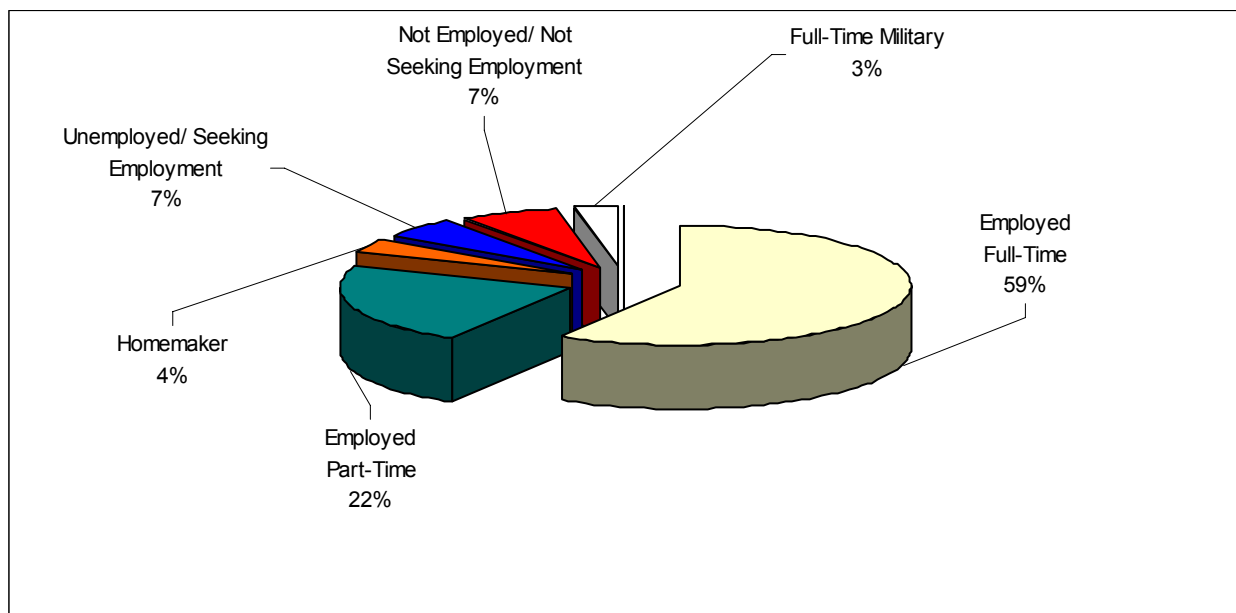
The evaluation of instruction and student services section concluded with two items regarding the likelihood of recommending TCC to others. Similar to previous survey data, graduates responded positively to their overall experience at TCC. As in 1994 and 2002, nearly all respondents (99%) said they would recommend TCC to others wishing to continue their education. Additionally, 95% said they would recommend their curriculum to others wishing to enter the same field. This represented a 2% increase from 1994 and 1% increase from 2002. Selected comments from survey respondents are provided in Appendix C.

## Employment Information

Employment information was the third of five sections and contained nine survey items that addressed a number of issues related to post-graduate employment such as employment status, gross annual income, job description, and preparation provided by TCC.

## Current Employment Status

The current or post-graduate employment status as self-reported by respondents remained relatively unchanged throughout the past ten years. Figure 8 provides a breakdown of survey respondents' employment status based on 2004 survey data. The majority of graduates (58%) continued to be employed full-time at the time of the survey. Twenty-two percent (22%) of respondents were employed part-time. Far fewer respondents cited one of the other five employment conditions, and ranged between 0% and 7% of the remaining respondents. Seven percent (7%) of respondents were not employed and not seeking employment. Another 5% of responding graduates were unemployed but seeking unemployment. Four percent (4%) of respondents were currently homemakers, and 3% were full-time military or other service. Less than 1% was employed in an apprenticeship program.

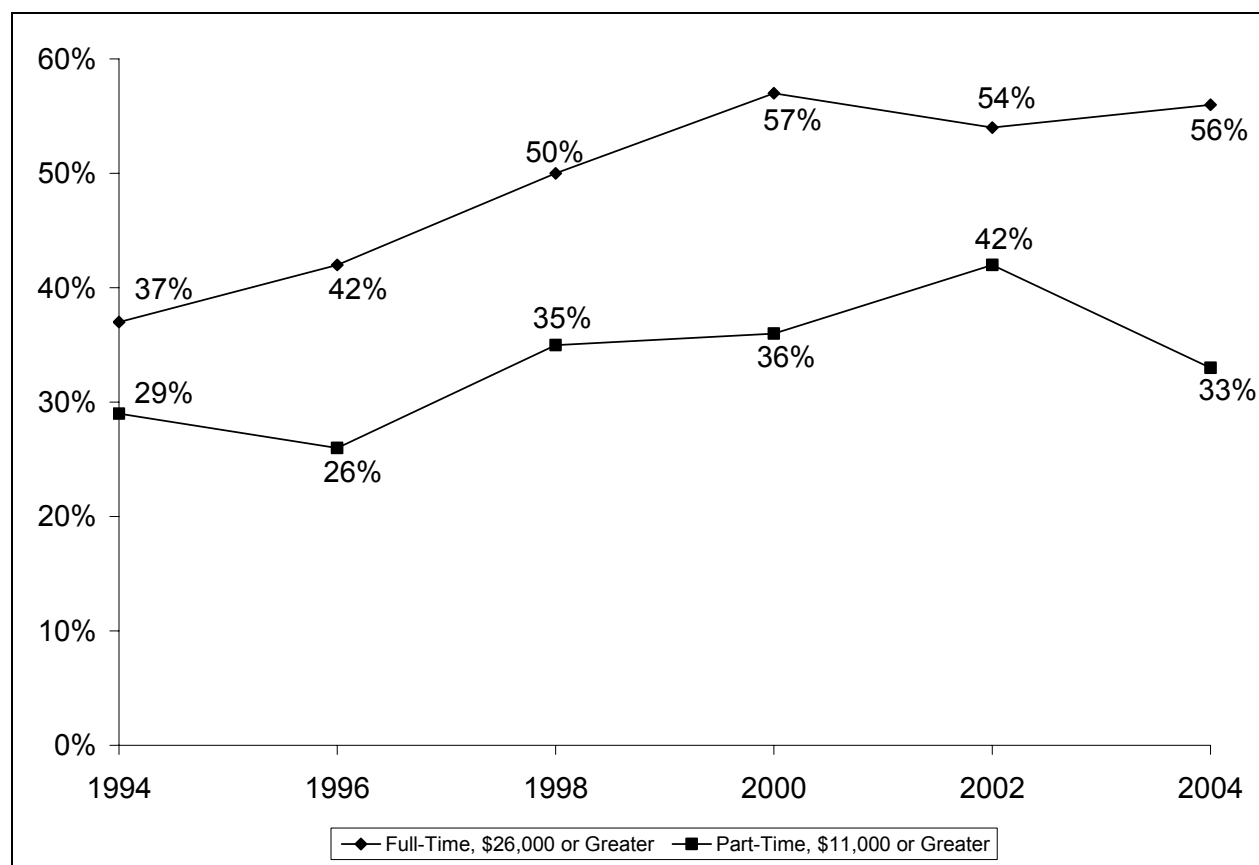


**Figure 8.** Employment Status After TCC Graduation (2004)

## Gross Annual Income

Respondents were asked to self-report their current gross annual income by selecting one of twelve pay bands. Salaries of TCC graduates who were employed full-time were slightly greater than previous graduates. Approximately 35% of full-time employed respondents earned between \$26,000 and \$39,999. Fourteen percent (14%) earned between \$26,000 and \$29,999; 11% earned between \$30,000 and \$34,999; and 10% earned between \$35,000 and \$39,999. This aggregated pay band (\$26,000 to \$39,999) represented an upward shift in pay band from both 2002 and 1994 when the top three bands ranged from \$23,000 to \$34,999. The nominal shift in pay bands was indicative of several economic conditions such as minimal job and salary growth.

For the past ten years, \$26,000 represented the minimum salary that was established by the college to benchmark success for full-time employed graduates from year to year. Fifty-six percent (56%) of full-time respondents earned at least this amount in gross annual salary. This represented a 2% increase from 2002 and 19% increase from 1994. As seen in the figure shown below (Figure 9), the proportion increased substantially between 1994 and 2000, and then remained stable between 2000 and 2004. Similarly, \$11,000 was established as the minimum standard denoting success for part-time employed graduates. In 2004, 33% of part-time employed graduates earned at least \$11,000, which was a modest 4% increase from 1994, but a 9% decrease from 2002. With an increasing number of graduates continuing on to the baccalaureate degree, graduates employed part-time may be working fewer hours. A ten-year historical trend line for salary is provided in Figure 9.



**Figure 9.** Earnings After TCC Graduation (2004)

## **TCC Curriculum and Field of Employment**

Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents indicated that they were presently employed in a field that was at least somewhat related to their curriculum at TCC, a 6% decline from 1994. Forty-four percent (44%) of graduates from college transfer programs perceived a relationship between curriculum and employment: AA (22%, n=2) and AS (44%, n=157). Eighty-three percent (83%) of occupational/technical program graduates cited this relationship between curriculum and employment: AAS (80%, n=174), Diploma (100%, n=2), and Certificate (90%, n=73).

Of those graduates currently in positions not related to their TCC curriculum, most respondents (43%) indicated that they were already working with their employer before completing the TCC program. Historically, this was the most frequently cited reason: 48% in 2002 and 37% in 1994. Other commonly cited reasons included not being sufficiently qualified for jobs in their field of study (19%) and changed career goals or preferences (15%). Several plausible explanations, such as weak economic conditions, could justify graduates accepting employment not related to their studies.

Students who cited that they were not sufficiently qualified for jobs in their field were graduates of 11 TCC curricula: six college transfer programs and five occupational/technical programs. All five college transfer programs noted in 2002 were again cited in 2004 (Science/Computer Science, Social Sciences, General Studies, Business Administration, Liberal Arts), with the addition of Engineering. Regarding the occupational/technical programs, Information Systems Technology was cited in 2002 and 2004, with the addition of Internet Specialist, Accounting, Legal Assisting, and Computer Aided Drafting/Design.

As in previous years, the majority (76%) of respondents employed in a field related to their curriculum indicated that their studies satisfactorily prepared them for their job. Another 21% of respondents perceived their preparation as “good in some areas.” When disaggregating by employment status, 88% of full-time military respondents found their preparation to be at least satisfactory, which was a 5% increase from 2002 and a 13% increase from 1994. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of full-time (non-military) employed respondents perceived a satisfactory level of preparation, representing a 4% increase from 2002 and a 2% increase from 1994. Part-time employed respondents had the lowest level of satisfaction (67%), which was an 8% decline from 2002 and a 12% decline from 1994. One hypothesis accounting for this low and declining satisfaction rate could be the effects of a prolonged “soft” economy: an increased proportion of underemployed part-time respondents or lack of opportunity in their field of training.

## **TCC Curriculum Impact on Current Position**

Consistent with previous graduate surveys, 60% of the responding graduates were employed with the same company as when attending TCC. Of these respondents, 31% received promotions or pay increases upon graduation. This represented a 6% increase from 2000 and 2002, and a 2% increase from 1994.

Respondents were asked to determine the extent to which their curriculum helped them across four areas related to their employment. Table 1 provides percentage rates of graduates perceiving the TCC curriculum helping, at least to some

extent, four aspects of employment. Forty-two percent (42%) of respondents indicated that their curriculum helped, at least to some extent, with obtaining their current employment. Forty-seven percent (47%) of full-time employed respondents indicated their curriculum at TCC helped them obtain employment. However, an increasingly smaller percentage of part-time employed respondents cited that their curriculum helped them obtain their present job. Thirty-four percent (34%) of part-time employed graduates perceived this help, which was a 10% decline from 2002 and a 16% decline from 1994.

When asked the extent to which their curriculum helped to develop new job skills, 60% found that the curriculum helped at least to some extent. This was a 5% increase from 2002 and a 2% increase from 1994. Data disaggregated by employment status showed that 74% of full-time military acknowledged new skill development, which was an 11% increase from 2002 and 13% increase from 1994. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of full-time employed respondents indicated new skills development to at least some extent, which was an 8% increase from 2002 and a 6% increase from 1994. Similar to the previous item, part-time employed had a lower perception of new job skills development (39%).

Graduates were then asked the extent to which the curriculum assisted them in upgrading job performance and expertise. Mirroring findings from previous years, 55% of respondents indicated help to some extent. Further disaggregation showed that 80% of military personnel found that their TCC curriculum helped them improve job performance and expertise, which represented a 23% increase from 2002 and a 5% increase from 1994. Sixty-two percent (62%) of full-time employed respondents attributed improved performance to their curriculum, which was a 4% increase from 2002 and a 2% increase from 1994. Yet again, the group perceiving the least help was the graduates employed part-time (35%).

The last of this series of four items asked for the degree to which the curriculum aided graduates in qualifying for promotions or pay increases. As in previous years, approximately 39% of all respondents perceived help at least to some extent in this area. Sixty percent (60%) of military personnel responded that their TCC curriculum helped them to qualify for promotions or pay increases, an 11% increase from 2002 and a 27% increase from 1994. Forty-six percent (46%) of full-time employed graduates noted this level of assistance. Lastly, only 20% of part-time employed graduates acknowledged that their curriculum helped them to qualify for promotion or pay raise.

Aspects of Employment Impacted Positively by Curriculum	Employment Status											
	Military			Full-Time			Part-Time			Total		
	2004	2002	1994	2004	2002	1994	2004	2002	1994	2004	2002	1994
Obtain Present Job	10%	14%	13%	47%	48%	46%	34%	44%	50%	42%	44%	46%
Develop New Skills	74%	63%	61%	68%	60%	62%	39%	44%	41%	60%	55%	58%
Upgrade Performance and Expertise	80%	57%	75%	62%	58%	60%	35%	46%	39%	55%	55%	56%
Qualifying for Promotions or Pay Increases	60%	49%	33%	46%	44%	46%	20%	22%	24%	39%	38%	40%

**Table 1.** Percentage of Graduates Perceiving TCC Curriculum Impacting Various Aspects of Employment (2004, 2002, 1994)

### **Educational Information**

Educational information was the fourth of five sections and contained eight items that addressed educational plans, current enrollment and performance information, and preparation received at TCC.

### **Current Enrollment Status**

Fifty-five percent (55%) of responding graduates indicated current enrollment at an institution of higher education, up 1% from 2002 and a 9% increase from a ten-year low in 1994. For graduates who continued their educational endeavors, 82% transferred to four-year institutions. This proportion represented a 3% increase from 2002, 5% increase from 2000, and 13% increase from 1994. As in 2002, a large majority of graduates (70%) who were not continuing their education in fall 2004 indicated plans to continue within two years.

For those enrolled in a four-year institution, the majority (58%) enrolled full-time and another 25% enrolled part-time. Longitudinal analysis revealed that the proportion of graduates enrolled full-time at four-year institutions increased from 51% in 1994 to 54% in 2002, to its current level of 58% in 2004. Additionally, 11% of all respondents continued their education on a part-time basis at a two-year institution and 3% enrolled on a full-time basis.

### **Continuing Education**

Of those attending an institution of higher education, 74% were enrolled in a major related to their curriculum at TCC. This proportion remained relatively steady between 1994 and 2004.

When asked to rate their performance at their current institution of higher education, 93% cited that their performance was about the same as expected or better than expected. This represented a 3% increase from both 2002 and 1994. Further analysis yielded 44% perceiving their performance as either higher than expected or much higher than expected, which was an 8% increase from 2002 and a 9% increase from 1994. Historically, the proportion that felt their performance was lower than expected or much lower than expected ranged between zero and one percent.

According to 80% of respondents, the courses completed at TCC prepared them for continuing their education. For respondents at four-year institutions, 78% perceived adequate preparation, a 4% increase from 2002. Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents currently attending another two-year institution felt that their preparation at TCC was either satisfactory or excellent.

Between 1994 and 2000, the survey included an open-ended question asking respondents to compare the quality of their instruction at TCC against the instruction provided at their current institution. The response format changed in 2002 to a five-point Likert scale. In 2004, approximately 85% of responding graduates considered the quality of the instruction provided by TCC to be at least the same or better than at their current institution. Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents perceived the TCC instruction to be superior to that of their current institution, 19% slightly better at TCC, and 52% about the same.

## **CONCLUSION**

Consistent with recent demographic data, information collected for the 2004 Graduate Survey Study continued to indicate a growing traditional student body with younger students, enrolled soon after high school, who are focused primarily on preparing for the baccalaureate degree. Over the past ten years, the proportion of students enrolled full-time and those who state that transfer to a four-year institution is their primary goal has increased dramatically. As the TCC student population shifts, survey data yielded changes in demographics, perceptions, usage rates, and performance.

Students are using student services at higher rates than in the past, and satisfaction with services remains relatively high. The most prevalent comments regarding services related to the inability to obtain transcripts and diplomas in a reasonable amount of time. Since the college's transition to a new student information system, a focus has been placed on Central Records to clear up these two issues. Graduates continued to rate instruction with satisfaction; 95% of the graduates stated that they would recommend their curriculum to others wishing to enter the same field.

Regardless of the purpose when enrolled either an affordable start toward a baccalaureate degree or access to high-quality occupational and technical training, 94% of all responding graduates indicated that their TCC experience contributed to the fulfillment of their goals. Nearly all respondents (99%) said they would recommend TCC to others wishing to continue their education. Graduates' comments illustrate that the college is fulfilling its two-prong mission core of college transfer education and workforce development: "I feel that TCC was a perfect fit for me. I wasn't ready to go

away to a university and TCC was a great stepping stone.” And, from an entrepreneurial graduate, “The skills, confidence, and knowledge gained at TCC prepared me for an opportunity to open my own business.” Clearly, the overwhelming majority of graduates actualized the TCC tagline, “from here, go anywhere.”



**APPENDIX A**

**2004 Graduate Survey Instrument**





TIDEWATER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

From here, go anywhere.™

2004 Graduate Survey

\*\*Please check the appropriate answer in the boxes provided\*\*

A. ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

- 1) Did you attend TCC primarily as a:      1  Full-time student (12+ credit hours)      2  Part-time student
- 2) Did you attend class primarily during the:      1  Day      2  Night (after 6 p.m.)
- 3) Before you enrolled at TCC, had you ever attended another college/university?      1  Yes      2  No
- 4) Which **ONE** of the following was true when you enrolled at TCC?      (choose the one that best fits)
  - 1  Enrolled directly from high school
  - 2  Enrolled while on active duty
  - 3  Enrolled upon military discharge
  - 4  Enrolled while working
  - 5  Homemaker, enrolled AFTER raising a family
  - 6  Homemaker, enrolled WHILE raising a family
  - 7  Transferred from another community college
  - 8  Transferred from a four-year school
- 5) During the time you attended TCC, were you:
  - 1  Employed full-time (35 or more hours per week)
  - 2  Employed part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
  - 3  Unemployed and seeking employment
  - 4  Homemaker, not employed outside the home
  - 5  Not employed and not seeking employment
  - 6  Full-time military
- 6) If you were employed while attending TCC, was your job related to your curriculum at the college?
  - 1  Yes, directly related      2  Yes, somewhat related      3  No, not related
- 7) Did you receive financial aid while attending TCC?      1  Yes      2  No
- 8) What was your primary goal in attending TCC? **(CHECK ONLY ONE)**
  - 1  To obtain occupational/technical training that would improve present employment or future employment
  - 2  To obtain an occupational/technical degree or certificate
  - 3  To obtain an associate degree in order to transfer to a four-year college/university
  - 4  To obtain specific course credits that would transfer to a four-year college/university
  - 5  To enroll in courses that would satisfy specialized/personal interests
  - 6  To take advantage of employer training opportunities (i.e. Shipyard Apprentices Program)
  - 7  To obtain or renew a certification
- 9) To what extent do you feel your educational experience at TCC contributed to the fulfillment of your goal?
  - 1  To a great extent      2  To some extent      3  Uncertain      4  Hardly at all      5  Not at all
- 10) Please indicate the most important reasons you attended TCC : **(CHECK AS MANY AS APPLY)**
  - 1  Low tuition
  - 2  Open admission policy
  - 3  Close to home
  - 4  Good academic reputation
  - 5  Availability of financial aid
  - 6  Offered courses/curriculum of interest
  - 7  Employer requirement/suggestion (i.e. NNSY Apprenticeship)
  - 8  Small classes/individual attention
  - 9  Only program offered locally in my area of interest
  - 10  Availability of evening courses
  - 11  Personal improvement
  - 12  To obtain a job
  - 13  To obtain better pay/promotion
  - 14  Availability of public transportation

**B. EVALUATION OF INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SERVICES**

11) INSTRUCTION: Please rate the instruction at TCC.

	Superior	Good	Fair	Poor
1 Average class size	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Content of courses in major curriculum	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Cost of books and supplies	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Course advisement from faculty members	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Course availability/scheduling	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
6 Grading and testing	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
7 Instructor availability	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
8 Overall quality of instruction	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
9 Quality of instruction in major curriculum	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

12) STUDENT SERVICES: Please rate the services and facilities at TCC.

	Superior	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know/Never Used
1 Academic Counseling	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Admissions and Records	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Career Counseling	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Co-op Program	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Financial Aid	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
6 Help Desk (computer/technical problems)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
7 Laboratory Facilities	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
8 Learning Resources/Library Services	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
9 Registration	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
10 Student Activities (SGA, intramurals, cultural events, etc.)	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
11 TCC Information Center at 822-1122	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
12 Veterans' Affairs	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

13) How adequately did TCC's academic program prepare you in the following areas?

	More than Adequate	Adequate	Needs Improvement	Not Applicable
1 Decision-making skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Defining problems	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Mathematical skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Speaking skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Solving problems	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
6 Technical job-related knowledge	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
7 Technical job skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
8 Thinking critically	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
9 Understanding written information	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
10 Writing skills	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

If you answered "Needs Improvement" to any of the areas in question 13, please explain:

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14) As a result of your experience at TCC, to what extent do you feel you have gained or made progress in the following areas:

	To a great extent	To some extent	Very little	Not at all
1 Basic computer functions and applications	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Locating, evaluating, and using information in the library	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Locating, evaluating, and using information on the Internet	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Creative abilities	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
5 Global perspective on current events	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
6 Social responsibility	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
7 Respect for the diverse views and beliefs of others	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
8 Sense of ethical principles	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
9 Career plan or path	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
10 Lifelong goals	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

Tidewater Community College Graduate Survey (Cont'd)

- 15) Would you recommend TCC to someone wishing to continue their education? 1  Yes 2  No
- 16) Would you recommend TCC to someone wishing to enter the same curriculum you completed? 1  Yes 2  No

**C. EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

- 17) What is your current employment status?
- 1  Employed full-time (35 or more hours per week)
  - 2  Employed part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
  - 3  Unemployed and seeking employment
  - 4  Homemaker, not employed outside the home
  - 5  Not employed and not seeking employment
  - 6  Full-time military or other service (Volunteer, Peace Corps, etc.)
  - 7  Employed in apprenticeship program

**If you are employed, whether full-time or part-time, please answer Questions 18 through 25 below. If you currently hold more than one job, respond to the following items as they apply to your PRIMARY employment. If you are not now employed, skip to Section D.**

- 18) Please describe your job:

1 Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

2 Name of Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

3 Employer's Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

4 Employer's City: \_\_\_\_\_

5 Employer's State and Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

- 19) 1 May we contact your employer to conduct an employer follow-up survey? 1  Yes 2  No
- 2 Supervisor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- 20) What is your gross annual income from this job? (Do not include supplemental income, i.e. retirement, investment income.)
- 1  Under \$5,000
  - 2  5,000 – 7,999
  - 3  8,000 – 10,999
  - 4  11,000 – 13,999
  - 5  14,000 – 16,999
  - 6  17,000 – 19,999
  - 7  20,000 – 22,999
  - 8  23,000 – 25,999
  - 9  26,000 – 29,999
  - 10  30,000 – 34,999
  - 11  35,000 – 39,999
  - 12  40,000 – 44,999
  - 13  45,000 – 49,999
  - 14  Over \$50,000

- 21) 1 Are you currently employed by the same company that employed you during your attendance at TCC? 1  Yes 2  No
- 2 → If yes, did you receive a promotion or pay raise (other than cost of living raise) after obtaining your degree? 1  Yes 2  No

- 22) Are you presently employed in a field related to your curriculum at TCC?
- 1  Yes, directly related
  - 2  Yes, somewhat related
  - 3  No, not related (SKIP TO QUESTION 24)

- 23) If your present job is related to your curriculum at TCC, to what extent did the curriculum you completed prepare you for this job?
- 1  My preparation was excellent
  - 2  My preparation was satisfactory
  - 3  Good in some areas only
  - 4  Fair, but all areas could have been better
  - 5  My preparation was inadequate

- 24) For each area listed below, to what extent did your curriculum at TCC help you in your present job?

	To a great extent	To some extent	Very Little	Not at all
1 Helped to obtain present job	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
2 Helped to develop new skills in job held while attending TCC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
3 Helped to upgrade performance and expertise in job held while attending TCC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
4 Helped in qualifying for promotions or pay increases in job held while attending TCC	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

25) If your present job is **NOT** related to the curriculum you completed at TCC, please indicate the **PRIMARY** reason why. **(Select only ONE response)**

- 1  Am active duty military
- 2  Was already working with present employer before I completed the program
- 3  Not sufficiently qualified for jobs in my field of preparation
- 4  Changed career goal or preferred to work in another field
- 5  Best opportunities were out of related fields
- 6  Could not find a job in my field of preparation
- 7  Could not find a job in my field without relocating

#### D. EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

26) If you have not continued your education, do you plan to continue within the next two years?    1  Yes  
2  No  
3  Undecided

**If you have CONTINUED your education since graduation from TCC, please answer Questions 27 through 32 below.**

27) What type of institution are you currently attending?  
1  Two-year community college                      2  Four-year college/university                      3  Other

28) Please indicate your current enrollment status and classification.

1 Status:    1  Full-time student (course load of 12 or more credit hours)  
2  Part-time student

2 Classification:    1  Freshman                      2  Sophomore                      3  Junior                      4  Senior

29) Is your current major the same as or related to the curriculum you completed at TCC?    1  Yes    2  No

30) How would you rate your performance at your current college/university?

- 1  Much higher than expected
- 2  Higher than expected
- 3  About the same as expected
- 4  Lower than expected
- 5  Much lower than expected

31) How well did the courses you completed at TCC prepare you for continuing your education?

- 1  My preparation was excellent
- 2  My preparation was satisfactory
- 3  Good in some areas only
- 4  Fair, but all areas could have been better
- 5  My preparation was inadequate

32) How does the quality of instruction at TCC compare to that of the school in which you are currently enrolled?

- 1  Superior
- 2  Slightly better
- 3  About the same
- 4  Slightly worse
- 5  Significantly worse

Comments? \_\_\_\_\_

#### E. GENERAL COMMENTS

The faculty and staff of TCC would appreciate any comments which you may have concerning the curricula or services offered at TCC. Please feel free to use the back of this page for this purpose. Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

**APPENDIX B**

**College Five-Year Summary Table**



## **College Five-Year Summary Table Data Interpretation**

The selected data in the table on the following page indicate the five-year compiled responses to questions from the 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004 graduate questionnaires. A total of 3,741 responses were received from 8,481 graduates. The percentages may not always add to 100 percent because not all respondents answered every question.

### **NOTES:**

**1. Tidewater Community College Employed in Curriculum Related Field:**

The percentage column is calculated on the total number of respondents who indicated that their current employment status was full-time, part-time, or apprenticeship, not the total number of respondents.

**2. Tidewater Community College Preparation for Employment in a Related Field:**

The percentage column is calculated on the total number of respondents who were employed in a related field, not the total number of respondents.

**3. Tidewater Community College Preparation to Continue Education:**

The percentage column is calculated on the total number of respondents who indicated they were currently attending another institution.

**1996 - 2004 GRADUATE SURVEY SUMMARY  
TOTAL COLLEGE**

TOTAL RESPONDENTS = 3741

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**EDUCATIONAL/EMPLOYMENT DATA**

<b>PRIMARY GOAL IN ATTENDING</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
O/T TRAINING FOR DEGREE OR JOB	1253	33.5%
TRANSFER DEGREE OR COURSES	2289	61.2%
PERSONAL SATISFACTION	102	2.7%
EMPLOYER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	28	0.7%
OBTAIN/RENEW CERTIFICATION	35	0.9%

---

**CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

FULL-TIME	2070	55.3%
PART-TIME	752	20.1%
UNEMPLOYED AND SEEKING	220	5.9%
NOT IN LABOR FORCE	468	12.5%
MILITARY	155	4.1%
APPRENTICESHIP	10	0.3%

---

**EMPLOYED IN CURRICULUM RELATED FIELD**

YES	1843	65.1%
NO	944	33.3%

---

**TCC PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN RELATED FIELD**

EXCELLENT	788	40.8%
SATISFACTORY	669	34.6%
GOOD IN SOME AREAS	362	18.7%
FAIR	49	2.5%
INADEQUATE	17	0.9%

---

**TYPE INSTITUTION CURRENTLY ATTENDING**

2 YEAR	339	9.1%
4 YEAR	1520	40.6%
OTHER	88	2.4%

---

**(A) EMPLOYED IN CURRICULUM RELATED FIELD**

**(B) CURRENTLY ATTENDING AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION**

A OR B	3097	82.8%
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**TCC PREPARATION TO CONTINUE EDUCATION**

EXCELLENT	689	35.4%
SATISFACTORY	807	41.4%
GOOD IN SOME AREAS	274	14.1%
FAIR	74	3.8%
INADEQUATE	23	1.2%

---

**RECOMMEND TCC TO SOMEONE IN SAME CURRICULUM**

YES	3493	93.4%
NO	219	5.9%

**1996 - 2004 GRADUATE SURVEY SUMMARY**  
(Continued)

**INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

<b>INSTRUCTIONAL EVALUATION</b>	<b>SUPERIOR # %</b>	<b>GOOD # %</b>	<b>FAIR # %</b>	<b>POOR # %</b>	<b>N/R* # %</b>	<b>TOTAL # %</b>
OVERALL QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION	1161 31%	2344 63%	192 5%	13 -	31 1%	3741 100%
QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION IN CURR	1356 36%	2063 55%	248 7%	29 1%	45 1%	3741 100%
INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY	1183 32%	2066 55%	407 11%	37 1%	48 1%	3741 100%
COURSE ADVISEMENT FROM FACULTY	822 22%	1785 48%	845 23%	196 5%	93 2%	3741 100%
CONTENT OF COURSES IN MAJOR	1088 29%	2249 60%	295 8%	39 1%	70 2%	3741 100%
AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	1248 33%	2254 60%	185 5%	9 -	45 1%	3741 100%
GRADING AND TESTING	901 24%	2449 65%	309 8%	33 1%	49 1%	3741 100%
COST OF BOOKS/SUPPLIES	310 8%	1295 35%	1606 43%	466 12%	64 2%	3741 100%
COURSE AVAILABILITY/SCHEDULING **	870 23%	2091 56%	651 17%	84 2%	45 1%	3741 100%

**STUDENT SERVICES EVALUATION**

<b>STUDENT SERVICES EVALUATION</b>	<b>SUPERIOR # %</b>	<b>GOOD # %</b>	<b>FAIR # %</b>	<b>POOR # %</b>	<b>N/R* # %</b>	<b>TOTAL # %</b>
ACADEMIC COUNSELING	715 19%	1570 42%	755 20%	296 8%	405 11%	3741 100%
CO-OP PROGRAM	180 5%	512 14%	168 4%	55 1%	2826 76%	3741 100%
VETERANS AFFAIRS	390 10%	480 13%	114 3%	33 1%	2724 73%	3741 100%
FINANCIAL AID	511 14%	863 23%	369 10%	175 5%	1823 49%	3741 100%
LEARNING RESOURCES/LIBRARY	917 25%	1889 50%	448 12%	30 1%	457 12%	3741 100%
ADMISSIONS AND RECORDS	690 18%	2101 56%	667 18%	141 4%	142 4%	3741 100%
REGISTRATION **	1011 27%	2098 56%	452 12%	56 1%	124 3%	3741 100%
STUDENT ACTIVITIES	310 8%	830 22%	295 8%	65 2%	2241 60%	3741 100%
LABORATORY FACILITIES	472 13%	1655 44%	603 16%	95 3%	916 24%	3741 100%
CAREER COUNSELING	363 10%	977 26%	657 18%	235 6%	1509 40%	3741 100%
HELP DESK **	163 10%	443 27%	171 10%	30 2%	823 50%	1630 100%
TCC INFORMATION CENTER **	253 16%	611 37%	228 14%	27 2%	511 31%	1630 100%

\* No response for Instructional Evaluation; No response/Don't know/Never used for Student Services

\*\*Course Availability and Registration were not evaluated until 1996. The Help Desk and TCC Information Center were not evaluated until 2002.



## **APPENDIX C**

### **Selected Comments by 2004 Survey Respondents**



## SELECTED COMMENTS BY 2004 SURVEY RESPONDENTS\*

- I think TCC is a great place for students to begin. Also, it's a great place to start a career change.
- This is my third time coming back to TCC. I graduated in 1988 with an Associate's in Applied Science degree in Drafting and Design. I obtained a job and have remained in that field for over twenty years. The second time I started back was in 2001. I was thinking about a career change. I completed a certificate in Gerontology in 2004. This curriculum was excellent!! Now having finished that. I have returned a third time to work in a General Studies degree so I can transfer to a University (\_\_\_\_\_). I need to finish approximately six to seven more courses. I never considered going to a university because I was busy raising three children. I always figured I'd have to put them through school. So with my first degree, I was able to get a decent job and in the beginning that was fine. But after twenty (+or -) years, I need a change. So I came back hoping to finish some courses and transfer to \_\_\_\_\_ and work on a degree in "Human Services". Also, all three of my children have attended TCC. All three have good jobs. I feel that TCC was a great experience for our whole family. Thanks
- The faculty at TCC is awesome; they are always willing to go the extra mile to help a student in need. The disabilities counselor at the Virginia Beach is a great man. He helped me all through the time that I spent at TCC. I enjoyed my time at TCC very much.
- I feel that TCC was a perfect fit for me. I wasn't ready to go away to a university, and TCC was a great stepping stool to ready to me.
- I miss the instructors at TCC. They seemed to have been more accessible and caring than my current professors. Attending TCC was a great source of enjoyment for me. The Virginia Beach campus offers a small, close learning atmosphere that is hard to beat. I also worked part-time in Admissions, and later in Counseling and the assessment lab. My co-workers and boss were fantastic. I still visit them and treasure the friendships I made while working there.
- I am retired from the Federal Government and what I've learned at TCC has been a plus for me.
- The skills, confidence and knowledge gained at TCC prepared me an opportunity to open my own small business.
- Degree is relative and helpful but in an indirect way. Excellent experience beginning to end.
- What I did like about TCC were my instructors. I got to know them and they got to know me. The classes weren't so big that I got lost. My instructors were willing to give me the assistance I needed, which was great since I was returning as a full-time student after 25 years. I had taken classes before but one here or there. Thanks for the "Women's Center".
- I would like to see more involvement in helping people find work related to education. Also, I would like to see more things for alumni whether it be an association or to allow alumni to use facilities after goal of degree is obtained.

- I spent four years at TCC and loved it! Comfortable, flexible and accommodating! Thanks sincerely. Teachers at TCC were understanding of the realities balancing school with life's demands (i.e. work) TCC was always a comfortable place for me after a hectic day at work or home. I always appreciated the organization among faculty and teachers, classes were organized as were counseling/registration services. One instructor was extremely knowledgeable in her field and brought instruction to life -- not just existing within the classroom walls. More instructors should take the perspective of looking beyond the book. It can better prepare students for the real world.
- TCC should focus more study on tech. writing skills - as related to 4 year degree (APA format, etc.) I am very grateful for my Associates Degree from TCC. For the most part, all of my instructors were knowledgeable, approachable and a pleasure to study with. Overall, my instructors were concerned with the class' progress and advancement, and there was cohesion between lecture and test material. Thanks again!
- TCC is great for a student re-entering college. The small classes where professors know your first name is exactly what I needed. With my low grades, no other college would have accepted me. I was able to afford the classes, improve scores, and succeed. I would not have been able to do that anywhere else.
- I obtained my associate's degree in science (general). The trips/cruises that TCC requires for their geology and oceanography classes are extremely beneficial. Overall I enjoyed my experience at TCC. (Primarily attended the Chesapeake Campus)
- All-in-all, TCC is a good school. My writing skills were all ready descent when I started at TCC. My math skills are lacking, but I blame myself for that. Because I did not study as much as I could have in math. Most of my other life skills I picked up before enrolling at TCC.
- I love TCC! I am in the top 5% of my class - I have been prepared well! Thanks to all!
- I am very grateful to many of the instructors for providing me with a challenging, yet supportive learning environment.
- On-line classes helped me to be able to take more classes at one time.
- The only difference is, we have to write a lot in each class. For example, fifty percent of our tests are essays in each class. Please have the students write more! TCC is an excellent college, I wish that I could have finished my degree program at your school. Presently, I'm enrolled at \_\_\_\_\_, but my heart will always be with TCC. At work, I'm always telling my co-worker and patients to go attend TCC because of the small class sizes and the care of the professors. I really miss having professor who wanted all their students to grow and would talk to us individually. Also, the major problem that I had going from TCC to a four-year college was the writing aspect. It is so important to be able to express yourself in written form. Therefore, please have all your professors help their students with writing!

\* Comments were edited for style, but the substance remains unchanged.  
Names of individuals and other institutions were deleted.