

SURVEY OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS: CLASS OF AY95

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SUMMARY

The demographic make-up of the respondent sample was similar to that of the graduating class with the exception of the time to graduation for the class which was longer than the time reported by the respondents. This raised the questions of whether the respondents tended to be those students who are better prepared, transfer students, or full-time students who did not stop out once they began attending college.

Most of the respondents were working full-time at the time of the survey, were satisfied with their majors, felt JCSC prepared them well for furthering their education, had engaged in some sort of applied learning experience, and did not participate in extra-curricular activities on campus. With regard to their jobs, most graduates were working full-time at the time of the survey and were working at jobs they had prior to graduating.

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Method

The same survey instrument used in past years was administered to the graduates of Academic Year 1995. Seven hundred and seventy-seven survey packets were mailed¹; a follow up mailing sent as well. Each packet contained: a survey form which consisted of 38 items; a machine-readable (scannable) form for responses made by the graduates; a postage-paid, self-addressed return envelop; and, in half of the packets of each mailing, a pencil the respondents could use to complete the survey. (Historically, all of the packets contained pencils. They were only provided in half of the packets to assess the effect of including them. In actuality, all recipients eventually received a pencil because of the nature of the randomization process used--but each recipient only received one packet with a pencil. Further details are contained in the appendix). Thirty-eight surveys were returned because of bad addresses. A total of 305 usable forms were returned, for a response rate of 41%.

Demographic Data of Respondents

Sex/Ethnicity/Age

A comparison with the graduating class shows that the sexual composition of the respondent sample is similar to that of the class (class: male = 45.7%; female=54.3%) (respondents: male = 42.5%; female 57.5%). The ethnic composition of the sample similarly approximates the class, as a whole. Slightly over half of the respondents were white; equivalent percentages were of African ancestry and from Spanish-speaking countries; and, the percentage of Asian/Pacific Island respondents also was of a magnitude analogous to the populations.

Most of the respondents were between 22 and 29 years of age, and at the time of the survey living in Hudson County. A majority were single, although over one-third were married. Most did not have children living at home.

Sex of the respondents

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Male	134	42.5	
Female	181	57.5	

¹ The mailing labels were produced from the a file containing known addresses of the graduates. Other institutional data reveal that there were 783 students who graduated--therefore only six current addresses were missing.

Race/ethnic group (respondents)	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Afro-American	57	18.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	36	11.6
Hispanic/Latino	57	18.3
Native American/Alaskan	-	-
White	161	51.8

Institutional data	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
African-American/Black	146	20.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	70	9.6
Hispanic/Latino	145	19.5
Native American	-	-
White	367	50.4

Age of respondents	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
21 years or under			
22-25	100	31.8	
26-29	183	26.4	
30-34	219	11.5	
35 or over	95	30.3	

Residence

Data showing where graduates were living at the time of the survey compared with data showing where they lived while attending college revealed that a smaller proportion were living in Hudson County following graduation. There were also more respondents living out of state after graduation. This may be skewed by some who lived in the College's residence halls or the county only for the purpose of attending JCSC.

Residence while attending JCSC	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Bergen	69	8.8
Essex	91	11.6
Hudson	481	61.4
Other NJ	132	16.9
Out of State	10	1.3

Residence at time of survey	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Bergen	30	9.5	
Essex	32	10.2	
Hudson	168	53.3	
Other NJ	69	21.9	
Out of State	16	5.1	

Marital Status/Children

Marital status	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Single	184	58.4	
Married	116	36.8	
Divorced	12	3.8	
Widowed	3	1	

Children living at home	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Yes - 1 child	40	12.7	
Yes - 2 or more children	60	19	
No	213	67.6	

These data permit judging the respondent sample to be representative of the class on a demographic basis.

Primary Goal In Attending College

When asked their primary goal for attending college, most respondents said it was to prepare for a first career (36.5%). A substantial proportion also said that they wanted to further their education (28.2%). The lowest rates of response were given to skill

improvement and personal enrichment. Most of the respondents reported that they achieved their primary objective by the time they graduated.

Primary objective	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Further education	88	28.2	
Improve job skills	32	10.3	
Prepare for first career	114	36.5	
Prepare for a different career	43	13.8	
Personal enrichment	35	11.2	

Achieve primary objective	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Yes	256	82.1	
No	56	17.9	

Enrollment Patterns

Two-thirds of the respondents reported that they attended on a full-time basis (n=212) and never changed their major (n=213). Three-quarters did not stop out (n=239). It still took five years or more for 45% of the respondents to graduate (n=141) [It took five years or more for close to 60% of the class to graduate.] Most of those who did stop-out did so for one or two semesters, but one third of the stop-out students were out for more than two semesters (n=8).

The student data-base shows that 31% of the graduates started as freshmen at JCSC and did not stop-out (n=240); 25% did stop-out for some amount of time (n=198); and 44% (n=342) were students who transferred into JCSC.²

Enrollment status	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Full-time	212	67.7	
Part-time	101	32.3	

Often changed JCSC enrollment	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Never	213	67.8	
Once	77	24.5	
More than once	24	7.6	

"stop out"	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
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² One unanswerable question is how many of the respondents were transfer students. This could lead to a comparison between transfer and native students with regard to time to graduation.

No	239	76.1
Yes - 1 semester	27	8.6
Yes - 2 semester	23	7.3
Yes - more than 2 semester	25	8

Years attended	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
2 or less	37	11.7	
3	64	20.3	
4	73	23.2	
5	92	29.2	
6 or more	49	15.6	

The most often stated reason for stopping out was “financial or job related” (n=27; 34.2% of the stop out students--8.8% of all respondents). Also receiving a high percentage of the responses was family responsibility (n=22; 27.8% of the stop outs). Twenty-five students said they had other reasons but did not say what those were. Only five students said they stopped out for college-related reasons, but these were not specified.

Reason "stop out"	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 11
Financial or job related	27	8.8	
Family responsibility	22	7.2	
College related	5	1.6	
Other	25	8.1	
Not applicable	228	74.3	

Basic Skills

Most of the respondents said they did not take any remedial courses during their first year at JCSC. But it is unknown how many respondents were transfer students who took remedial courses prior to transferring to JCSC. The highest percentage of graduates who reported having taken a remedial course during their first year at JCSC took college writing (n=93; 29.8%). The lowest percentage took math (n=76; 24.4%).

College Writing	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Yes	93	29.8	
No	219	70.2	

Reading for College	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
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Yes	84	27	
No	227	73	
Basic Math: Arithmetic	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Yes	76	24.4	
No	236	75.6	

Satisfaction with Academics

Most of the graduates were satisfied with the quality of the courses in their major; 87% said the quality was good or excellent. Although they were pleased with the other courses they took, it was not to as high a degree as the courses in their major. They were least content with some of ‘college’ services provided --22.3% rated them fair to poor; almost 30% were neutral in their response to services.

Overall quality of major courses	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Excellent	89	28.3	
Good	184	58.6	
Neutral	26	8.3	
Fair	12	3.8	
Poor	3	1	

Overall quality of other acad. courses	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Excellent	35	11.2	
Good	166	63.6	
Neutral	58	18.5	
Fair	17	5.4	
Poor	4	1.3	

Quality of college services	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Excellent	21	6.7	
Good	130	41.4	
Neutral	93	29.6	
Fair	55	17.5	
Poor	15	4.8	

Most of the graduates felt that their experiences at JCSC offered good to excellent opportunities for personal development.

Opportunity for personal development	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Excellent	41	13.1	
Good	133	42.4	
Neutral	96	30.6	
Fair	35	11.1	
Poor	9	2.9	

Sixty percent of the graduates felt that they were prepared well for continuing their educations.

Preparation for further education	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Excellent	46	14.7	
Good	144	46.2	
Neutral	77	24.7	
Fair	33	10.6	
Poor	12	3.8	

Over 60% of the graduates did not participate in any extracurricular activity on campus.

Extracurricular activities	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 7
One	60	19.2	
Two or three	45	14.4	
Four or more	12	3.8	
Not applicable	195	62.5	

Career Development

Over one half of the graduates participated in some form of applied learning experience e.g., in the form of cooperative education, or an internship. Of those that did participate about 60% felt the faculty member was helpful, 43% felt their placement supervisor was helpful, and 47% responded that the overall experience was helpful.

Applied learning experience	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 7
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Yes - Co-op	73	23.5
Yes - Internship	47	15.1
Yes - Co-op & internship	43	13.8
No	148	47.6

(Responses of only those who participated in Co-op/internship)

Co-op Ed. Faculty Supervisor	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 6
Very helpful	34	20.8	
Somewhat helpful	59	35.1	
Not too helpful	29	17.3	
Not helpful at all	14	8.3	
Not Applicable	25	14.9	

Co-op Ed. Job Placement Supervisor	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Very helpful	26	15.5	
Somewhat helpful	44	26.2	
Not too helpful	17	10.1	
Not helpful at all	26	15.5	
Not applicable	51	30.4	

Overall Co-op Experience	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Very helpful	30	17.9	
Somewhat helpful	46	27.4	
Not too helpful	27	16.1	
Not helpful at all	26	15.5	
Not Applicable	34	20.2	

Less than 40% of the respondents felt that the course Career Dimensions, was helpful. However, almost one-third of the sample replied that this survey item did not apply to them. This could be an indication of the number of transfer students who responded to the survey--these students may have taken an analogous course elsewhere and therefore did not need to take it at JCSC. However, over half of the respondents did feel the the career development library was helpful.

Career Dimensions Courses	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Very helpful	50	16	
Somewhat helpful	71	22.7	
Not too helpful	59	18.8	
Not helpful at all	34	10.9	
Not applicable	99	31.6	

Career Development Library	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Very helpful	48	15.3	
Somewhat helpful	116	36.9	
Not too helpful	51	16.2	
Not helpful at all	15	4.8	
Not applicable	84	26.8	

Current Educational Status

A total of 65% of the respondents were either currently enrolled in further study or were planning to enroll in the near future. Thirty percent of the respondents had enrolled in graduate studies since graduating from JCSC (n=94); most on a part-time basis. Another 35% had plans to enroll within the upcoming year.

Current educational status	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Full-time degree program	34	10.8	
Part-time degree program	60	19.1	
Enroll in an ed. prog. within next year	110	35	
Not enroll & no plan to enroll in an ed.	109	34.7	

Of the respondents who stated that they were enrolled or planning to enroll in the next year, almost half intend to obtain a master's degree and 28% are planning on a doctoral degree. About 12% are not certain how far they want to pursue their education, and some are apparently only taking courses with no intent on earning a graduate degree.

(Only those presently enrolled or who plan to enroll within the next year.)

Highest degree plan to obtain	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Bachelor's degree	13	6.2	
Master's degree	100	47.8	
Professional diploma	10	4.8	
Doctorate or professional degree	58	27.8	
Not certain	24	11.5	

Although a majority of respondents (56.8%; n=179) said they would choose to attend JCSC if they were to start college again, almost one quarter said they were unsure and one fifth said they would not chose JCSC. Close to two thirds of the respondents would choose the same major.

Start again, choose to attend JCSC	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Definitely yes	58	18.4	
Probably yes	121	38.4	
Uncertain	72	22.9	
Probably no	45	14.3	
Definitely no	19	6	

Start again, choose the same major	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 3
Definitely yes	137	43.5	
Probably yes	73	23.2	
Uncertain	33	10.5	
Probably no	45	14.3	
Definitely no	27	8.6	

Employment Status

Almost 90% of the graduates (n=276; 88.2%) were employed at the time of the survey; most of them on a full-time basis. Less than 11% were unemployed, but many of the unemployed graduates reported that they were unavailable for employment at the time. Almost half of those who were employed had obtained their jobs prior to graduating; over 75% reported that their jobs were related to their major field of study. For those who were not employed at graduation, 45% found a job within three months following receipt of their degree, and it took over three months for about 55% of the others to find employment.

Most of the employed graduates were employed in business or private industry. This was followed by the fields of education, health care, and criminal justice. With regard to their annual salary, almost one-third were earning less than \$25,000 year, another third over \$35,000, and another third between \$25,000-\$35,000.

Employment status	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Full time	249	79.5	
Part time	27	8.6	
Not employed	29	9.3	
Not available for employment	8	2.6	

(Responses in the next four tables are from those who were employed at the time of the survey)

Field of employment	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 4
Business/Private Industry	147	53.5	
Criminal Justice	28	10.2	
Education	52	18.9	
Health Care	43	15.6	
Not Applicable	4	1.5	

Obtain a job after graduated from JCSC	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 1 month	21	7.7
1 - 3 months	41	15.1
More than 3 months	75	27.6
Obtained job prior to graduation	126	46.3
Not applicable	9	3.3

Job related to major	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 5
Highly	143	52	
Somewhat	69	25.1	
Not At All	60	21.8	
Not Applicable	3	1.1	

Annual salary	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	Missing 7
Less than \$25,000	86	31.6	
\$25,000 - \$29,999	65	23.9	
\$30,000 - \$34,999	38	14.0	
\$35,000 or more	81	29.8	
Not Applicable	2	.7	

Data from those who obtained jobs following graduation reveal that 74% (n=107) found employment in a field related to their major: a majority were in private business (n=81; 56.3%), followed by education (n=39; 27.1%), health care (n=11; 7.6%), and criminal justice (n=9; 6.3%).

Conclusion

The sample was similar to the class with regard to demographic make up but differed in the time it took to graduate--it took a larger proportion of the class five or more years to graduate than what was reported by the respondents. This raises two questions concerning the self-selecting nature of the respondents: Why do those students who are either more prepared, transfer, or full-time students who do not stop out respond with greater frequency than the rest of the class and, of the aforementioned categories, into which do the respondents fall?

The former comes from the response regarding basic skills. Seventy percent of the respondents said they did not take any remedial courses their first year. This shows that most of the respondents were well prepared for college-level studies when they first enrolled at JCSC.

No matter what their level of preparation when they started, when they graduated, a high percentage were satisfied with the quality of the cognitive component of their education. Fewer students were as satisfied with college services and few of the respondents participated in extra-curricular activities.

Over half of the graduates participated in either Cooperative Education or an internship. They were most satisfied with their respective faculty member.

A high percentage were either actively engaged in graduate study or planning for it in the near future, and would choose the same major if they were to start again. A majority also said they would choose JCSC again.

Almost all of the graduates were employed at the time of the study and most stated that their jobs were related to their major. The fields in which most were were of private business and industry. This was followed by criminal justice, education, and health care.

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

ADDENDUM

Historically, pencils were provided with the survey materials, the assumption being this would increase the response rate. In order to assess the effect of including a pencil as an incentive to completing the survey, pencils were included with the materials in each mailing for half of the population. A randomized selection process was used to determine who would receive a pencil--every other person on the mailing list received one. In actuality, everybody received a pencil because the selection process began with an odd-numbered person in the first mailing and an even-numbered person in the second. The rates of return of completed surveys is as follows:

In performing this study the introductory statement on the survey instrument had to be modified slightly. There was a sentence in the second paragraph of that statement which read “Please use the attached Jersey City State College pencil or any other No. 2 pencil.” That sentence had to be change. For the packets that did not contain the pencil, it read only “Please use a No. 2 pencil.”

Crosstabulation of respondent conditions

	First mailing	Second mailing	Total
With a pencil	117	47	164
Percent of row	71.3	28.7	
Percent of column	54.9	51.1	
Percent of total	38.4	14.8	53.8
Without a pencil	96	45	141
Percent of row	68.1	31.9	
Percent of column	45.1	48.9	
Percent of total	31.5	14.8	46.2
Total	213	92	305
Percent of total	69.8	30.2	

The total number of surveys sent out in the first mailing was 739; the 213 returns amount to a 29% response rate. The same number of surveys was sent out in the second mailing. The 92 responses obtains a response rate of 12%. The 305 responses achieves a total rate of return of 41%.

Analysis supported the theory that the pencils did effect the response rate, but only in the first mailing (n=117; 54.9%) ($\chi^2=33.30$; $p<.001$; $df=1$). The effect on the entire response rate was found to be not significant ($\chi^2=2.07$; $p>.10$; $df=1$)

Response rates

No. in mailing = 739

	First mailing	Second mailing
with pencil	= 370	= 370
returned	= 117	= 47
rate	= 31.6%	= 12.7%
without pencil	= 369	= 369
returned	= 96	= 45
rate	= 26.0%	= 12.2%