

## Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> Project Students' Perceptions of Their Experiences as New Students at Oakton

As noted in our January 2006 *In the Abstract*, Oakton is one of ten community colleges participating in the Foundations of Excellence<sup>®</sup> project sponsored by the Policy Center on the First Year of College in North Carolina. The project marks an important step in recognizing that community colleges must employ strategies for welcoming, informing, and supporting new students designed specifically for the nature of the institution's mission and its student population. The project includes an assessment of our current practices for new students, and will lead to action plans for improving what we do.

For the purposes of this project, new students are defined as students who have earned fewer than 24 credit hours at Oakton and indicate on their applications that they have not earned an associate or higher college degree elsewhere.

As part of the project, a survey of students enrolled in a random sample of courses that draw primarily new students was conducted this fall. Approximately 675 students completed their survey, though not all students answered every item. Faculty and staff who work with new students were invited to participate in a companion survey, conducted online.

This *In the Abstract* summarizes students' responses to questions related to overall perceptions of their experience as students at Oakton. We provide the number of respondents who answered the question and the percent who responded with a rating of 1-2, 3, or 4-5 on a 5-point scale, where 5 was the most positive response.

Survey Question	Rating	Number of Respondents			Percent of Respondents		
		1-2	3	4-5	1-2	3	4-5
Are you satisfied with your decision to attend this college?		124	172	407	18%	24%	58%
Would you recommend this college to friends?		120	183	402	17%	26%	57%
Comparing the cost of attending this college to the quality of the educational experience, please rate the overall value of the experience.		100	209	398	14%	30%	56%
Overall, to what degree has [this] college							
Been a good place for college students like you?		142	240	314	20%	34%	45%
Helped you succeed as a student?		157	246	295	22%	35%	42%
Provided you the right amount of attention and support?		154	293	254	22%	42%	36%
Helped you make the transition to college?		183	250	230	28%	38%	35%

The Foundations of Excellence project team at Oakton will be talking with faculty, staff and students about how to improve programs and services for new students. For more information, contact Donna Younger, Director of the Learning Center, x1655.