

**Correction. The original January 2006 *In the Abstract* contained erroneous data. We apologize.**

## ***In the Abstract***

***January 2006***



***Office of Institutional Research***

### Foundations of Excellence® Project Employee Perceptions of Services to New Students at Oakton

Oakton is one of ten community colleges participating in the Foundations of Excellence® 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. Faculty and staff who work with new students were invited to participate in a companion survey, conducted online. They were asked to identify whether their main work at Oakton is instruction or in another area that supports students. A total of 116 instructional and 60 non-instructional staff answered the survey.

This *In the Abstract* summarizes employee responses to questions related to services for new students at the College. We provide the number of respondents who answered the question and the percent who responded with a score of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, where 5 was the most positive response.

	Instructional Staff		Other Staff	
	N	% rating 4-5	N	% rating 4-5
Do you believe that your institution has a special commitment to the success of new students?	111	62%	56	59%
To what degree has this institution effectively organized itself to develop an integrated educational process that supports routine communications among discrete units/functions?	95	40%	49	33%
To what degree does your department/unit leadership communicate to you the institution's philosophy for working with students?	110	51%	54	46%
To what degree does this institution assure that new students experience ... individualized attention from faculty/staff?	103	67%	47	51%
Please rate the overall effectiveness of academic advising for students at this institution.	100	52%	50	58%
To what degree does the institution demonstrate that the success of new students is an important institutional goal?	108	54%	54	39%

Results suggest instructional staff (primarily faculty) have somewhat more positive views about Oakton's commitment to and work with new students than do non-instructional staff, except in their judgments of the overall effectiveness of academic advising for students. Both groups believe there is room for improvement overall. Subsequent *In the Abstracts* and other reports will provide additional results of the Foundations of Excellence employee survey and the student survey.

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.

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