

Perceptions of Oakton: Name Badge Research Project

In May 2006 volunteers from Oakton Community College's faculty, staff and administrators participated in an unusual research project intended to elicit information about perceptions of the College held by area residents and employees. Participants implicitly invited community members to make comments and ask questions about Oakton by wearing their name badges, thereby suggesting they were affiliated with the College. The study was explorative in nature.

During the first week in May, May 1-7, all participants wore their official Oakton name badges as they went about their normal business and leisure time activities, including on week-ends. The badge was the implicit invitation to make comments and ask questions about Oakton.

A total of 21 employees submitted completed logs reflecting comments from 68 individuals. Several other participants indicated that while they had worn their name badges in public places, no person made comments or asked questions related to Oakton. Thirty-nine respondents were non-minority, 18 were minority, and no information was provided for the remainder. Forty-nine respondents were female, 20 were male, and no information was provided for the remainder. The number of respondents in each estimated age group was as follows: teen-age, 3; twenties, 13; thirties, 15; forties, 18 and fifties or older, 19. Participants had conversations with respondents at a variety of locations, including stores, homes, churches and synagogues, and restaurants.

Comments were grouped into broad categories; the number of comments in each is in parentheses. Examples of comments are also provided.

- **Comment about name badge or participants' involvement with Oakton** (22). Examples: You forgot to take your nametag off. I didn't know you teach at Oakton—how long have you been there? Are you a sales clerk?
- **Question about Oakton** (16). Examples: Do you have computer classes for beginners? When do summer classes begin? Do you have pure online classes?
- **Positive experience with Oakton**—self or someone known to person (13). Examples: Oh, my son goes to Oakton (RHC); he likes it very much. My son's friend's father mentioned to me that he has taken classes at OCC and thought they were all good and that it is easy to find your way around and the cost for classes is very reasonable. Daughter goes there -- graduated from college in May 05 in art-decided wanted to be a nurse -- took classes at OCC to qualify for nursing school and likes it so well she may apply to OCC nursing program.
- **General conversation about Oakton** (8). Examples: Wow—now there is a good idea [Oakton]—when my kids get to go to college I should remember this.

Other categories of comments, with fewer in each, include financial aid and college costs, availability of jobs at Oakton, and other (could not be categorized).

For a complete report on the project see the Office of Research website at <http://www.oakton.edu/resource/oir/> and click on Research.