

Students' Perceptions of Oakton's Mission

In November, we reported on perceptions of baccalaureate alumni regarding their familiarity with statements in Oakton's mission statement, and whether they thought the statements accurately reflected the College. This month we report on perceptions of students enrolled in Fall 2005 and also compare their views with those of our baccalaureate alumni.

Data for Fall 2005 students come from our annual Current Student Survey. The survey was given during the third and fourth weeks of the fall semester to a sample of classes that included more than 21 percent of currently enrolled students. Seventy percent of these students (N = 1,409) responded to the survey. Survey responses were statistically weighted in order to obtain results that are representative of the student population at Oakton. Results are presented from this weighted sample of respondents.

Here is what our Fall 2005 students told us, along with a comparison with baccalaureate alumni on perceptions of each statement's accuracy. The statements were rated on a 5-point scale with 5 = Highest level of familiarity/accuracy.

Mission Statement	Fall 2005 Students' Mean Scores		Baccalaureate Alumni's Mean Scores
	Familiarity	Accuracy	Accuracy
Oakton is dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning.	3.56	4.02	4.47
Oakton demands tolerance, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and integrity.	3.59	4.03	4.47
Oakton provides education and training for and throughout a lifetime.	3.29	3.87	4.41
Oakton expects students to assume responsibility for their own learning, to exercise leadership, and to apply ethical principles.	3.53	4.05	4.41
Oakton recognizes that education must be for the future.	3.52	4.06	4.33
Oakton encourages students to entertain and question ideas, think critically, solve problems, and engage with other cultures.	3.45	3.93	4.27
Oakton challenges our students to experience the hard work and satisfaction of learning that leads to intellectual growth.	3.39	3.96	4.24
Oakton promotes a caring community of staff and faculty, students, administrators, and trustees who work together to fulfill our mission.	3.21	3.80	4.24
Oakton challenges our students to be capable global citizens.	3.22	3.80	4.08
Oakton seeks to improve and expand the services in the communities we serve.	3.11	3.67	4.07

As data illustrate, both Fall 2005 students and baccalaureate alumni perceive that Oakton's mission statements accurately reflect the College. Alumni's ratings are somewhat higher than the Fall 2005 students, perhaps because they have more experience with Oakton than many of the Fall 2005 survey respondents and also have the perspective of time. Sometimes the characteristics of an organization are not as apparent to those still involved as they are to those who have been away from it.