

# Baccalaureate Alumni Survey

## 2003 Report

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary: Baccalaureate Alumni Survey, 2003 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>I. Overview and Methodology .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>II. Profile of Baccalaureate Program Alumni .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>Age, Gender, and Racial-ethnic Identity</i>	
<i>Purposes and Intentions</i>	
<i>Credits, Grades, and Oakton Degrees Earned</i>	
<b>III. Educational Experiences at Other Colleges and Universities .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Experiences before Oakton</i>	
<i>Experiences after Oakton</i>	
<i>Improvement in Skills and Utility of Oakton Experience to Courses after Transfer</i>	
<b>IV. Experience at Oakton.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>Preparation for new learning situations</i>	
<i>Core values</i>	
<i>Overall satisfaction with Oakton</i>	
<i>Outstanding Persons, Courses, or Events</i>	
<b>V. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>14</b>

### Appendices

- A. Collection and Analysis of Data**
- B. Student Characteristics – Alumni Population and Survey Respondents**
- C. Survey Instrument with Results**
- D. Institutions Attended after Oakton**

## **Acknowledgments**

This is the sixteenth annual survey of alumni of Oakton's baccalaureate program. The College very much appreciates the participation of College alumni. The survey requires extensive behind-the-scenes support from staff members at the Office of Research. Particular thanks are due to the Office's support staff persons, Pat Miller and Brenda Manfredini, who handled the preparation and mailing of the comments given in response to the open-ended item about "outstanding" persons, courses, or events at the College to the faculty and staff members remembered and to their administrative supervisors.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **BACCALAUREATE ALUMNI SURVEY, 2003**

Annually the Office of Research surveys transfer program alumni with at least 30 Oakton credits or an associate's degree, and who were last enrolled one or three years ago. In 2003, 517 alumni responded to the survey, which was conducted by telephone during the summer of 2003. The survey required 10 to 15 minutes to complete, and the College very much appreciates these alumni giving their time to this project. The 30-credit criterion (about half an associate's degree program) ensures that the alumni surveyed were sufficiently experienced at Oakton to be fairly knowledgeable about the College. Survey findings include the following:

#### **Profile of the Population Selected for the Baccalaureate Alumni Survey**

- At the median, baccalaureate program alumni enroll at age 19 and leave at age 24. Slightly more than half are women. Two thirds are white and the largest minority group is of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry.
- At the median, these alumni earned 53 credits at Oakton, with GPAs of 2.75. Thirteen percent of these alumni completed associate's degrees at Oakton.
- Sixty percent of survey respondents came to Oakton with no prior college enrollment. Thirty percent had some college elsewhere before coming to Oakton, and another ten percent had already earned a bachelor's degree before their last enrollment at Oakton. Students with the bachelor's degree may have taken most of their Oakton courses before earning that degree, but returned to Oakton for just a course or two afterwards.

#### **Educational Experience at Other Colleges and Universities**

- Of the 517 survey respondents, 383 (72%) report they attended another college or university after Oakton, and 211 (57%) of the transfers say they earned a bachelor's or associate degree after transfer.
- Most alumni transferred to schools in the Chicago area. Northeastern Illinois University and University of Illinois at Chicago drew 34 percent of the transfers.
- Of students who did not already have a bachelor's degree and who transferred, 71 percent who last attended Oakton in 1999-2000 had earned their bachelor's degree since leaving Oakton, compared to 37 percent of those who last attended in 2001-02.
- The most popular majors for Oakton alumni are in business, social and behavioral sciences, and education.
- Respondents who transferred rated the utility of skills learned at Oakton for their courses after transfer. The percent who said each skill was useful were: speech 67%, writing 66%, problem-solving 56%, teamwork 58%, mathematics 54%, and computer skills 50%.

**Experience at Oakton**

- Respondents who transferred rated the extent to which, while at Oakton, they improved skills in several areas. The percent who said they improved in each skill was speech 62%, writing 61%, problem-solving 50%, teamwork 52%, mathematics 49%, and computer skills 43%.
- Respondents evaluated how their Oakton experiences prepared them for new learning situations at school or work. The percent who said they agreed with each attribute was confident in learning new things, 89%; asking questions and seeking support, 86%, adapting study habits and learning strategies to new situations, 82%; organizing and planning when learning new things, 79%; finding learning enjoyable and personally rewarding, 82%, and realistically assessing strengths and weaknesses, 83%.
- A higher percentage of students who took Speech 103 at Oakton said they improved their presentation skills at Oakton than the percentage of those who did not take the course (68% vs. 42% rated their improvement a 4 or 5 on the scale). There was no real difference in how students who had taken composition courses at Oakton rated the extent to which they improved writing skills compared to students who did not take composition at the College.
- Alumni perceive that, overall, Oakton is living up to its core values of fairness, integrity, responsibility, tolerance and compassion.

**General Assessments**

- Eighty-seven percent of respondents report that had they to do it over, they would again choose to attend Oakton.
- More than 140 Oakton faculty and staff members received positive comments in response to a question about there being an especially outstanding person, course or event at Oakton. There were fewer than a dozen negative comments.

## **BACCALAUREATE ALUMNI SURVEY, 2003**

This year's report of the 2003 survey of baccalaureate program alumni includes five sections. The first section provides overview information about the survey and methodology. Section II describes baccalaureate program alumni. Section III presents information about alumni's experiences at other colleges and universities, both before and after Oakton. Section IV is about experiences at Oakton, and a fifth and final section concludes the report. A number of appendices provide additional information about the methodology as well as detailed data.

### **I. Overview and Methodology**

Each summer, Oakton Community College conducts a telephone survey of baccalaureate program alumni. This year 517 transfer program alumni who earned at least 30 credits at the college, and were last enrolled in either 1999-2000 or 2001-02, whether or not they completed an Oakton associate's degree, completed telephone interviews.

Purposes of the survey are to

- investigate perceptions of these alumni about their experiences and satisfaction with various Oakton programs and services;
- gain information about their experience at the colleges and universities to which they transferred to complete baccalaureate degree programs or additional courses;
- gather information for program reviews of Oakton programs and services.

The questionnaire was developed in consultation with administrators and instructional programs and support service departments scheduled for program review in 2003-2004.<sup>1</sup> Appendix A provides more detailed information about the survey methodology and

Appendix B provides data about survey respondents compared to the overall population of alumni eligible to be surveyed. Respondents were very representative of the overall population in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, age, and academic achievements at Oakton.

When responses do not differ by year of last enrollment, the combined responses of alumni from the two years can reasonably be interpreted as evidence for alumni last enrolled throughout the three years, including the middle year not surveyed. Differences by year of last enrollment may be evidence of

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<sup>1</sup> Oakton also surveys career program alumni as mandated by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). These surveys are done by program on five-year cycles tied to the Program Review schedule. While ICCB only requires surveys of graduates, Oakton augments the state procedure in two ways: in addition to graduates, we survey career alumni who took courses but did not complete programs. In addition to the questions in the state survey, we add a few questions developed collaboratively with program chairpersons and their deans, to whom the results are reported for discussion in their reports of program review.

change that will warrant further inquiry. In this report, the survey text and over-all responses are presented in Appendix C. Throughout this survey, scales were consistently constructed so that the highest values represented the most positive responses.

## **II. Profile of Baccalaureate Program Alumni**

Demographic information was extracted from the College's database. The survey is the source for information about the purposes and intentions of these alumni as students. Detailed data about the alumni population that met criteria for inclusion in the survey and the actual survey respondents is provided in Appendix B.

### ***Age, Gender, and Racial-ethnic Identity***

Eight-two percent of alumni eligible for the survey (alumni population), and 73 percent of actual respondents, were first enrolled at the College before they were 24 years of age, and half of the population and respondent group had completed their work at Oakton before age 24. The median entry age for both groups was 19 and the median exit age was 24. Women comprised slightly over half the alumni population (53%) and a slightly higher percentage of the respondent group (57%). About three in five of these alumni identified themselves as Caucasian. The largest minority group (17% of the population and 15% of the respondent group) comprised students of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry, and another 13% of both groups either did not give a race-ethnic category or responded "other."

### ***Purposes and Intentions***

It helps to understand the purposes alumni had when they enrolled at the College. The survey includes two questions to provide some insight into objectives of these alumni when they were enrolled as students. Nearly three quarters (73%) of survey respondents said their main objective was to take coursework for transfer to another college, 18 percent were taking courses for occupational or career reasons, and 9 percent were taking courses for personal interest or self-development. The second question asked whether, when they first enrolled, they planned to earn an Oakton associate's degree or merely to take courses. Just over one-third (34%) said they planned to earn a degree.

### ***Credits, Grades, and Oakton Degrees Earned***

Academic data show how the extent of the experience of these alumni at Oakton. Just over one-third earned 30-44 credits, another quarter earned 45-59 credits, and about two in five earned 60 or more credits. The mean number of credits for the alumni population was 54. These data indicate students had a substantial experience at Oakton, an expected finding since the survey includes only students with 30 or more credits.<sup>2</sup> Students did relatively well, as measured by their grade point averages. The mean GPA for the alumni population was 2.75, and for the respondent group, 2.91.

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<sup>2</sup> Grade point average and credits are based on college-level courses in which a grade was awarded (A, B, C, D, F).

A common indicator of institutional performance is degrees awarded, yet Oakton, like community colleges nationwide, confers relatively few degrees on its students. Alumni data indicate that only 13 percent of students eligible to be surveyed received an Oakton associate's degree, and 16 percent of survey respondents did so. Because it would make little sense for a person who already had a bachelor's degree to earn an associate degree later, we backed out the 52 respondents who already had bachelor's degrees when they last attended Oakton. Of the 465 respondents remaining, 16 percent of those last enrolled in 1999-2000 and 20 percent of those last enrolled in 2001-02 earned associate degrees at Oakton.

Of the 73 percent of alumni respondents who said their main objective while at Oakton was to take courses for transfer, nearly all (86%) did, in fact, transfer after leaving the College. Others might still transfer though they had not done so by summer 2003.

Of the 34 percent of respondents who said they intended to earn a degree at Oakton, just 36 percent did so. How might we explain the apparent discrepancy between plans and reality? First, to be eligible for financial aid, a student must be seeking a degree or certificate, so that financial aid rather than educational considerations might be prompting students to say they are degree-seeking. Second, it may be socially acceptable for students to say they are seeking a degree. Third, students may plan to earn an associate's degree but then discover they can transfer without the degree and decide to do so.

There are different ways in which credit can be accepted in transfer. For example, courses can be accepted toward total minimum count, but not to meet certain prerequisites or certain general education requirements. Certain Oakton courses have been "articulated" with certain public and private universities in Illinois, enabling students to know in advance the precise way in which credits will be accepted in transfer. Since there is often no advantage to presenting a degree over simply presenting the constituent courses, many students are more concerned with transferring at a convenient time than with how much credit they can present.

### **III. Educational Experiences at Other Colleges and Universities**

#### *Experiences before Oakton*

The survey asked these alumni to indicate whether they attended another college or university or earned a bachelor's degree before their last enrollment at Oakton.<sup>3</sup> Forty percent of survey respondents said they had attended another college or university before Oakton, with sixty percent being new college students. Of all respondents, 10 said they had already earned a bachelor's degree before they last

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Remedial courses and courses from which a student withdrew or was dropped are not included. Consequently many students in the alumni group will actually have taken more courses at Oakton than are counted in the GPA or number of credits earned.

<sup>3</sup> The survey script listed the four 2-year and eleven 4-year area institutions most often mentioned in previous surveys, and provided space to write in two additional institutions. A standard coding system (federal FICE codes) was used to avoid varied abbreviations of same institutions and to facilitate accurate tallies by institution.

attended Oakton. While this may seem to be a very high percent, a student may have taken most Oakton credits prior to earning the bachelor's degree, then earned the bachelor's degree and then later returned to Oakton for a course or a few courses and technically met criteria for inclusion in the alumni population survey.

### *Experiences after Oakton*

Respondents were asked whether they had attended another college or university after Oakton and, if so, whether they earned a degree. Table 1 presents results (Appendix D contains the complete list of transfer schools identified by respondents). Of the 517 respondents, 373 (72%) reported they had attended another college or university after Oakton. Of these alumni, 211 said they graduated. When we back out students who already had a bachelor's degree when they last attended Oakton, the percentage of students who transferred goes up to 75 percent. Chicago area institutions drew most alumni, with Northeastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Chicago drawing 34 percent of the transfers. The attractiveness of local colleges and universities to Oakton alumni remains consistent over time.

To gain more insight into the extent to which Oakton students earned bachelor's degrees we again backed out the survey respondents who said they had a bachelor's degree before they were last at Oakton and then, for the remaining alumni, looked at the year they were last at Oakton and subsequent attainment of a bachelor's degree. Table 2 presents findings. Results show students who left Oakton three years before the survey and transferred to four-year institutions were twice as likely to have completed their bachelor's degrees than students who last attended Oakton only one year before the survey. Clearly students who last attended Oakton in 2001-02 may not have had time to complete bachelor's degree yet, and even students who left in 1999-2000 may still be working toward their degrees on a part-time basis.

**Table 1**  
**Colleges and Universities After Oakton**

College / University	Total Who Attended	Number Who Graduated	Percent Who Graduated
University of Illinois at Chicago	68	36	53%
Northeastern Illinois U	59	22	37%
DePaul University	34	19	56%
Loyola University	27	17	63%
National-Louis University	19	12	63%
Illinois State University	16	11	69%
Roosevelt University	16	8	50%
Northern Illinois U	15	8	53%
University of Illinois at Urbana	14	8	57%
DeVry Institute of Technology	10	4	40%
Elmhurst College	10	6	60%
Columbia College	9	6	67%
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	8	5	63%
William Rainey Harper College	8	0	0%
Wright College	6	1	17%
Elgin Community College	1	0	0%
Triton College	1	0	0%
Parkland College	1	1	100%
College of Lake County	1	0	0%
Other schools	95	47	49%
<b>Total Students Transferred</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>57%</b>

**Table 2**  
**Percent of Transfers Who Earned Degrees after Oakton**  
 (Excluding Those Who Had Bachelor's Degree Before Last at Oakton)

Last at Oakton	Type Institution			
	Two-year		Four-year	
	Total Who Attended	Pct. Graduated	Total Who Attended	Pct. Graduated
1999-2000	8	13	142	73
2001-2002	10	10	188	37

In Table 3 we present data from the past seven alumni surveys indicating majors selected at institutions after Oakton. Business-related curricula continue to draw the largest percentage of transfers, though in the 2003 survey the percentage of respondents who said they were majoring in an area not listed or were undecided tripled from the prior year and, at 18 percent, matched the percentage of business majors.

**Table 3**  
**Major after Transfer**

Survey Year	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Area of Major	(N=484)	(N=401)	(N=331)	(N=134)	(N=227)	(N = 385)	(N=373)
Business-related	21 %	26 %	18 %	25 %	21 %	20%	18%
Computer-related	*	*	*	10 %	16 %	11%	9%
Education	13 %	8 %	8 %	10 %	15 %	16%	13%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	17 %	18 %	19 %	18 %	12 %	19%	14%
Humanities, Fine Arts	14 %	13 %	15 %	9 %	9 %	14%	9%
Health-related	11 %	11 %	11 %	11 %	8 %	6%	7%
Sciences or mathematics	9 %	9 %	12 %	7 %	6 %	5%	7%
Engineering	7 %	7 %	7 %	3 %	5 %	5%	5%
Other, including undecided	8 %	7 %	10 %	5 %	8 %	6%	18%

\* Computer-related majors were not separately identified prior to the year 2000 survey.

### *Improvement in Skills and Utility of Oakton Experience to Courses after Transfer*

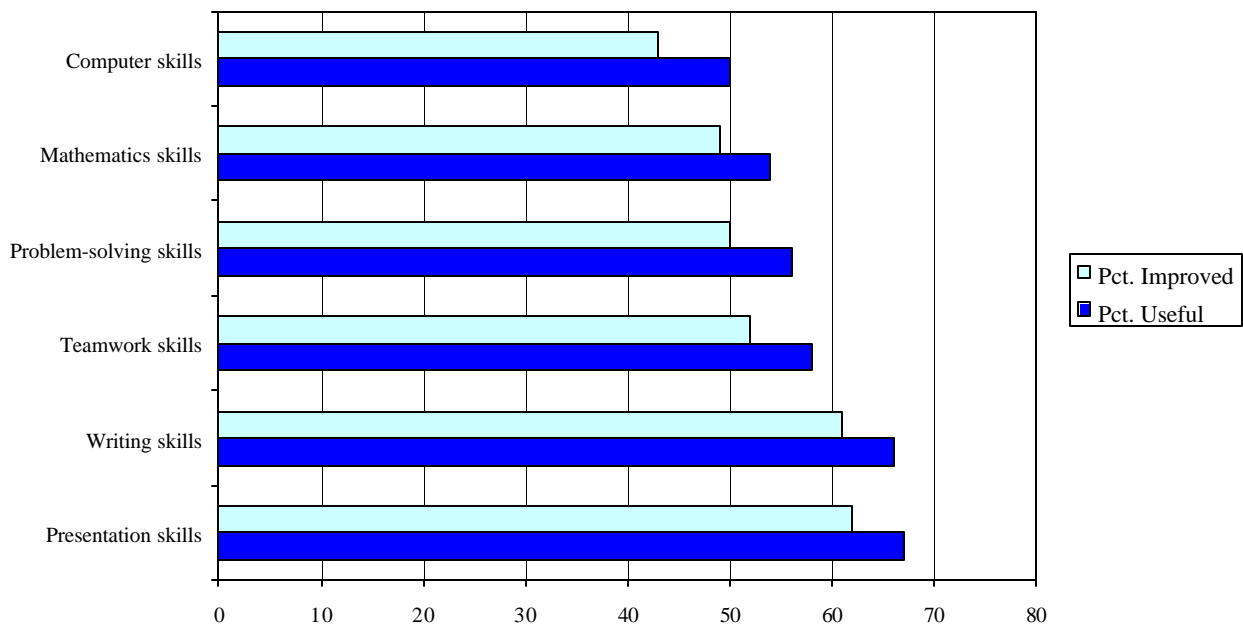
This year's survey asked alumni who had transferred to four-year schools to indicate, on a 5-point scale, the extent to which they improved skills at Oakton (5 = significant improvement; 1 = did not improve) and how useful these skills were in courses taken after transfer (5 = extremely useful; 1 = not very useful). Respondents could also indicate they did not apply a skill after transfer. Note the survey did not ask respondents specifically whether a skill was required of them in courses taken after transfer.

Figure 1 provides a graphical description of findings. The percentage of respondents who said what they learned was useful (ranked the skill 4 or 5 on the 5-point scale) is presented, and the skills are arrayed in descending order based on the percentage of respondents who said what they learned was useful. Respondents who said the skill "did not apply" to them and those who did not transfer after Oakton are not included in the percentage calculations.

Figure 1 indicates that, overall, students did perceive that they improved skills at Oakton in these areas, and found them to be useful in courses after transfer.



**Figure 1**  
**Percent Saying They Improved Skills at Oakton and What They Learned Was Useful in Courses after Transfer**



To probe further into the association between experiences at Oakton and alumni perceptions about improvements in their skills, we compared improvement ratings in presentations between students who did and did not take Speech 103 at Oakton, and improvement ratings in writing between students who did and did not take English 101 and/or English 102 at Oakton. Of the 373 students who transferred after Oakton, 191 (51%) had taken Speech 103 at Oakton within six years of their last year of attendance at the College. A higher percentage of those who took the course said they improved their presentation skills at Oakton than the percentage of those who did not take the course (68% vs. 42% rated their improvement a 4 or 5 on the scale). There was no real difference in how students who had taken composition courses at Oakton rated the extent to which they improved writing skills compared to students who did not take composition at the College.

In 2001 and 2002 respondents were asked to rate the utility of skills in courses after transfer, enabling us to compare the percentages from the three surveys who said skills learned at Oakton were useful after transfer. Table 4 presents data, arrayed in descending order based on 2003 respondents. Findings should be treated with caution because we cannot determine whether alumni took courses after transfer that required these skills. It is interesting to note that in all skill areas except computers, the percent indicating the skill was useful after transfer declined in 2003. It is also interesting to note the increase in utility of teamwork skills in both 2002 and 2003 compared to 2001, and the 14 percent decline between 2001 and 2003 in the percentage of respondents who said that mathematics skills learned at Oakton were useful in courses after transfer.

**Table 4**  
**Usefulness of Skills Learned at Oakton in Courses Taken After Transfer**  
**By Year of Survey**

Skill	Survey Year	Pct. Indicating Skill was Useful After Transfer		
		2001	2002	2003
Speaking (presentation) skills		74%	70%	67%
Writing skills		69%	69%	66%
Teamwork skills		50%	61%	58%
Problem-solving skills		62%	65%	56%
Mathematics skills		68%	61%	54%
Computer skills		53%	50%	50%

To learn more about the usefulness of what was learned at Oakton we also looked at the percentage of respondents who indicated they did not apply these skills after transfer, with results presented in Table 5. The table reveals at several interesting findings. In every area, the percentage of respondents who said skills were not useful after transfer dropped from the previous survey. In two skill areas the drop was quite dramatic, from 41 to 25 percent in computer skills and from 20 to 11 percent in speaking skills.

**Table 5**  
**Skills Not Applied After Transfer by Year of Survey**

Skill	Survey Year	Pct. Respondents Who Transferred & Indicated Skill Not Applied After Transfer	
		2002	2003
Computer skills		41%	25%
Mathematics skills		26%	21%
Speaking (presentation) skills		20%	11%
Teamwork skills		15%	12%
Problem-solving skills		14%	8%
Writing skills		11%	8%

## IV. Experience at Oakton

Survey items discussed in this section of the report were asked of all alumni, regardless of whether they transferred after they departed from Oakton. This year's survey asked these alumni the extent to which their Oakton experiences prepared them for new learning situations at work or school, about core values they experienced at the College, and about their general satisfaction with Oakton as measured by responses to the question "If you had it to do over, how likely would you be to attend Oakton again?"

### *Preparation for new learning situations*

To gain sights into how alumni perceive their response to new learning situations, respondents were asked to rate, on a 5-point scale (5 = strongly agree; 1 = strongly disagree) a number of statements describing their attitudes or behavior regarding learning. Figure 2 presents the percentage of respondents who rated each statement with a score of 4 or 5 (agree), 3 (neutral), and 1 or 2 (disagree). The complete wording for each item is:

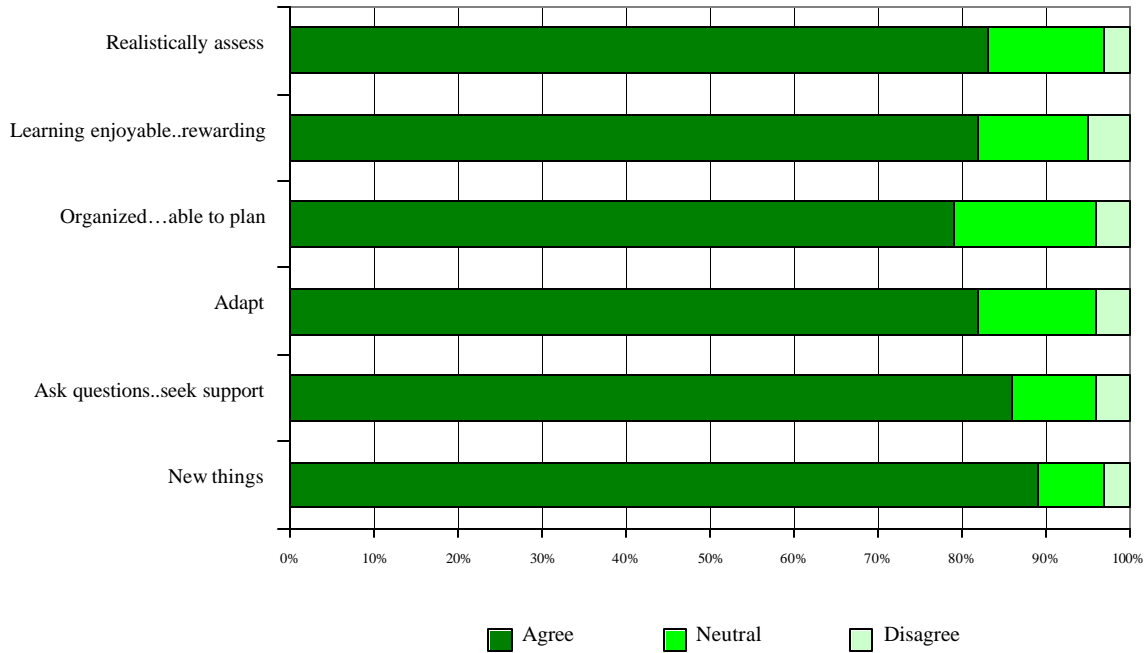
- I am able to realistically assess my strengths and weaknesses in new learning situations.
- I find learning enjoyable and personally rewarding.
- I am organized and able to plan when I learn new things.
- I am able to adapt study habits and learning strategies to new situations.
- I am likely to ask questions and seek additional support.
- I am confident learning new things.

The figure clearly indicates that alumni perceive themselves to be capable, organized learners who are able to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, seek help when needed, and enjoy learning. Absent data about students' perceptions of these attributes when they first began at Oakton, it is difficult to assess the extent to which the College contributed to these positive self-evaluations other than through the students' own agreement with the statement that their experiences at Oakton contributed to them.

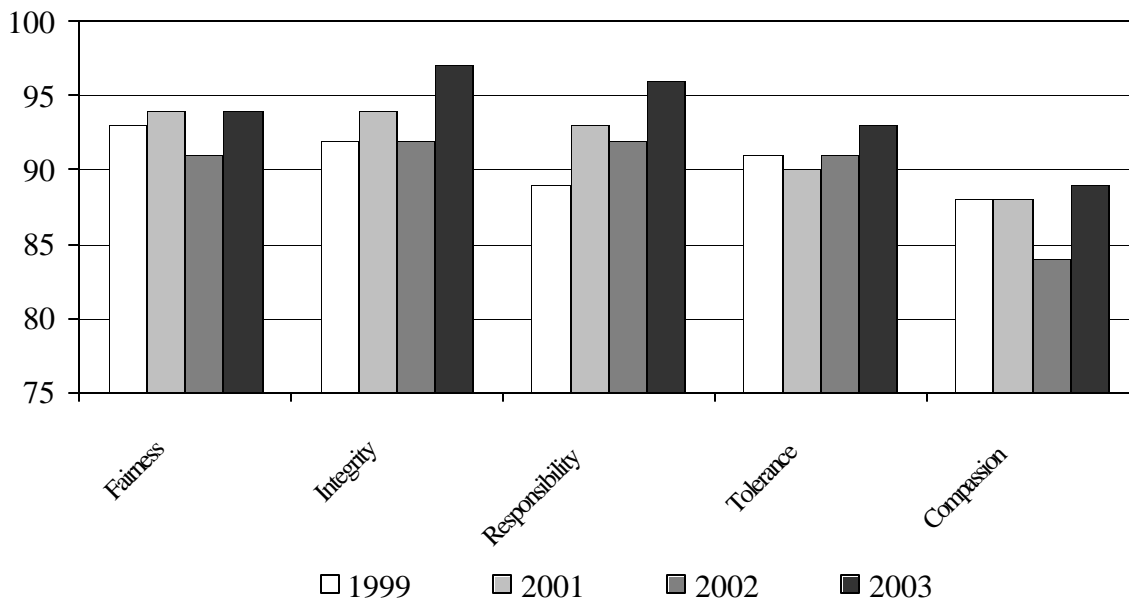
### *Core values*

Oakton has placed substantial emphasis on its core values, which are central to ethical conduct. College values fairness, integrity, tolerance, responsibility, and compassion. Beginning in 1999, respondents to the baccalaureate alumni survey were asked to rate College staff members (faculty, administrators, and others) on the extent to which they lived up to these values. Figure 3 below provides a comparison of the findings from these four surveys.

**Figure 2**  
**Responsiveness to New Learning Situations**



**Figure 3**  
**Living up to Oakton’s Core Values by Survey Year**  
**Percent Responding 3 or 4 on 4-point scale, where 1 = very poorly and 4 = very well**

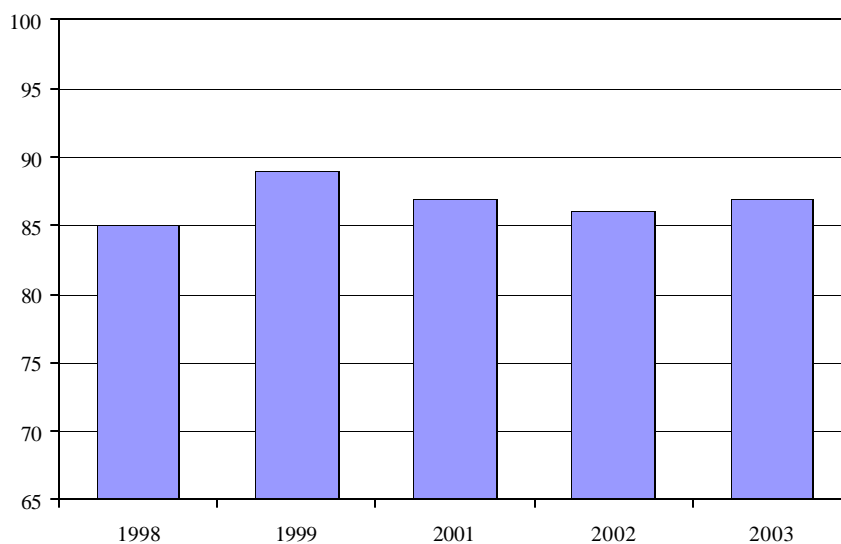


Comparison of these findings from these four surveys shows relative stability across the values. It is interesting to note that in 2003, the percentage of respondents who gave scores of 3 or 4 to each core value was the highest of the four years except for Fairness, where in both 2001 and 2003 94 percent of respondents gave scores of 3 or 4 to this value. While it may be gratifying to see this improvement, it should also be noted that a relatively small shift in the number of respondents providing a rating can affect the percentages. Unless changes are fairly dramatic, variations in the percentage of respondents giving scores of 3 and 4 should be expected across time.

### ***Overall satisfaction with Oakton***

To elicit alumni perceptions of their experience at the College as a whole, we asked “If you had it to do over, how likely would you be to attend Oakton again?” A seven-point scale was used, (1 = “Very unlikely”, 7 = “Very likely”). Eighty-seven percent responded at the 5, 6 or 7 level. The same question was asked in the 1998, 1999, 2001 and 2002 alumni surveys. Figure 4 presents results from these years and 2003. Data show that, over time, the percent of alumni who, if they had it to do over again, would still have attended Oakton remains high, between 85 and 89 percent.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 4**  
**Percent Who Would Attend Oakton Again**



<sup>4</sup> Again, findings refer to alumni who meet criteria for inclusion in the annual Baccalaureate-Transfer Alumni survey.

### ***Outstanding Persons, Courses, or Events***

As it has for some years, the survey included an open-ended qualitative item providing alumni an opportunity to identify and describe any “especially outstanding person, course, or event” at Oakton. The telephone interviewers were asked to probe to elicit as complete a response as possible. Alumni mentioned more than 140 different individuals in their comments. Almost all comments were highly laudatory and provide additional evidence of the general satisfaction of our alumni with their experience at Oakton. The Office of Research consolidated comments about any single individual, and sent memos and letters conveying these comments to the recipient or, if the individual was deceased, to his or her immediate family. Copies were provided for administrative supervisors. Anecdotal feedback from recipients indicates that this mailing is much appreciated by members of the College faculty, staff, and administration.

## **V. Conclusion**

The annual Baccalaureate Alumni survey continues to provide Oakton with information about and perceptions of alumni of baccalaureate transfer programs. What respondents tell us is valuable in planning for new initiatives and improving existing programs. Much of this information can be obtained from no source other than direct feedback from alumni. Alumni survey topics and specific questions are constructed in consultation with administrators, departments, and offices doing program reviews. In this way, the research needs of many constituencies can be met with a single survey.

Alumni perceptions of Oakton continue to be highly positive, both in terms of overall evaluations of the College and comments about individuals who made a significant impact on students. The College can take pride in the quality of programs and services provided, the high regard alumni have for faculty and staff, and the institution’s commitment to continuing its research to identify not just strengths, but also areas in need of attention.

Additional copies of this report are available at the College Office of Research. The Report is also posted on the Office of Research web site at <http://www.oakton.edu/resource/oir/>.

## Appendix A Collection and Analysis of Data

As has been the case for some years, baccalaureate program alumni were selected for the survey if they had last attended the College either one or three years previously, and either had been awarded an associates' degree or had earned at least 30 college level credit hours at Oakton.<sup>5</sup> Initially, in June 2003, student ID numbers, home phone numbers, names and other relevant biographic-demographic variables were downloaded from files extracted from the College's student database. These additional variables included gender, birth year, race-ethnicity, first and last terms of enrollment, curriculum, earned credit, cumulative GPA, and Oakton degree information.<sup>6</sup>

Two telephone lists were prepared, with separate lists for each year of last enrollment. Telephone interviewing was out-sourced to a firm specialized in such surveys. Survey forms and telephone lists were prepared in matching colors, a set for each of the two years of last enrollment at Oakton. In July, the phone lists, survey scripts, and a list of commonly used college and university FICE were sent to the interviewing firm. The firm used trained telephone interviewers who did the calling on site, with a supervisor present. Oakton asked for no more than 600 interviews, 300 for each of the two lists.

Of the 2,447 baccalaureate program alumni who met the survey criteria, 1,090 were last enrolled in 1999-2000 and 1,357 in 2001-02. Of these, 324 alumni had earned Associate's degrees from Oakton.

Telephone logs show that some alumni were called as often as ten times. Where possible, messages were left, and where changed telephone numbers were available, they were followed up. Nonetheless, our vendor experienced 770 disconnected or otherwise invalid telephone numbers.<sup>7</sup> The vendor indicated this percentage of disconnected or invalid numbers is typical for a population like Oakton's baccalaureate alumni.

Subtracting these 770 alumni reduced the effective survey population to 1,677 alumni. Altogether, the vendor completed 517 interviews.

Interview responses were entered on forms with pre-coded response positions. Upon completion of the telephoning, the vendor entered student identification numbers from identity codes on each survey,

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<sup>5</sup> Since curriculum codes are carried forward in the student base from previous terms unless updated, codes were initially selected from the term table for the last term of enrollment. Then, since new codes are entered when degrees or certificates are awarded, any award table codes superseded term table codes. If more than one degree was awarded, the code for the most recent degree program was selected.

<sup>6</sup> An advantage to using the telephone method for this survey is that data from the student database can be associated reliably with each respondent.

<sup>7</sup> Data available in the student database do not reflect phone numbers changed since last enrollment.

and college code numbers for those colleges less often attended. The vendor then outsourced the forms for keying to electronic files. The data were read into SAS software by Office of Research staff. The student identification number was used to merge the survey data and the biographic-demographic data. Data were analyzed using standard statistical procedures and SAS software. Microsoft Word and Excel were used in preparing the report, tables, figures, and appendices. Appendix C contains the survey instrument and the over-all numeric results for each item.

### ***Responses***

The 517 alumni with whom telephone interviews were completed constituted 31 percent of the 1,677 alumni in the effective survey population, slightly more than has been obtained in recent years (30% in 2002, 21% in 2001, 27% in 2000, 30% in 1999, and 28% in 1998). The telephone survey method has shown itself to have several advantages over the mail survey method. It is not biased against those who set aside mail surveys to be done “later,” and reduces the time frame for responding to “now.” However, out-of-date telephone numbers and public skepticism engendered by telemarketers claiming to be “conducting a survey” appear to adversely affect responses.

Responses were slightly stronger for alum who earned an Oakton degree (27%) than for those who had not (20%), and was slightly weaker for those away from the college for three years (19%) than that for those last enrolled one year previously (21%).

### ***Response Bias***

Can information about these respondents be interpreted as representative of the population surveyed when interviews were completed with 31 percent of the population? The argument that it can depends on comparison on a variety of key demographic variables for the 517 respondents and for the whole population (N = 2,447).

Appendix B shows the data for these two groups. On all of the standard demographic variables — gender, racial-ethnic identity, age at entry, age at exit,<sup>8</sup> credit earned, grade point average, and whether awarded an Oakton degree — differences between the two groups are small, suggesting the respondent group is highly representative of all alumni who met criteria for inclusion in the study.

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<sup>8</sup> Ages when first and last enrolled were calculated as the year of the first or last enrollment minus the birth year. This takes account of differences for alumni last enrolled three years or one year before the survey.

**Appendix B**  
**Student Characteristics – Alumni Population and Survey Respondents**

Alumni Characteristic	Alumni Population		Survey Respondents		Difference Btwn Respondents and Population
	(N=2447)		(N=517)		
	n	%	n	%	
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	1,292	53 %	293	57 %	+ 4 %
Male	1,155	47 %	224	43 %	- 4 %
<b>Entry Age</b>					
Less than 24	2,015	82 %	377	73 %	- 9 %
24-25	85	3 %	16	3 %	- 0 %
26-39	239	10 %	82	16 %	+ 6 %
40-59	97	4 %	39	8 %	+ 4 %
60 or older	11	<1 %	3	1 %	+ 0 %
Mean Age	21.7		23.4		1.7
Median Age	19.0		19.0		0.0
<b>Exit Age</b>					
Less than 24	1,211	49 %	257	50 %	+ 0 %
24-25	338	14 %	45	9 %	- 5 %
25-39	605	25 %	100	19 %	- 5 %
40-59	253	10 %	101	20 %	+ 9 %
60 or older	40	2 %	14	3 %	+ 1 %
Mean Age	27.4		30.0		2.6
Median Age	24.0		24.0		0.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>					
African American	74	3 %	13	3 %	- 1 %
Asian or Pacific Island	425	17 %	79	15 %	- 2 %
Caucasian	1,483	61 %	326	63 %	+ 2 %
Hispanic	114	5 %	20	4 %	- 1 %
Native American	4	<1 %	4	1 %	+ 0 %
Other/No Response	315	13 %	68	13 %	+ 0 %
<b>Credit Hours Earned</b>					
30-44 hours	892	36 %	181	35 %	- 1 %
45-59 hours	626	26 %	129	25 %	- 1 %
60 or more hours	929	38 %	207	40 %	+ 2 %
Mean Hours	54.1		54.7		0.6
Median Hours	53.0		54.0		1.0
<b>Oakton Degree Received</b>					
AA	312	13 %	84	16 %	+ 3 %
AFA	3	<1 %	1	<1 %	+ 0 %
AS	9	<1 %	2	<1 %	+ 0 %

**Appendix C**  
**Survey Instrument with Results**  
**Summer 2003 Telephone Survey**  
**Transfer Program Follow-Up**

\_\_\_\_\_ ID Number of this respondent. **(FROM CALL LIST)**

Hello, This is \_\_\_\_\_ calling former students from Oakton Community College.

May I speak to \_\_\_\_\_ please?

\_\_\_\_\_ **If you find that a former student is deceased, please enter a code 2 at the left.**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling on behalf of Oakton Community College. The College is surveying students formerly enrolled in courses that transfer to 4-year colleges or universities. Information and insights you have are important to the College as it reviews its programs and services. We have some questions about your experience at the college that we'd like to ask you. *There are no right or wrong answers.* We are interested in your honest opinion. Your privacy will be fully protected. Responses will be statistically summarized along with those of other former students, and nothing will be reported that could identify you individually. Is that OK?

**(CIRCLE ONLY ONE RESPONSE) unless otherwise directed**

<b>EVERYONE (Questions 1 – 6)</b>
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1. Which one of the following was your main objective in attending Oakton? **(Circle one.)**  
(N=514)
- 73% Take coursework for transfer to another college.
  - 8% Explore courses to decide on a career.
  - 6% Improve skills needed in my present job.
  - 4% Obtain skills needed for entry into a new or different job.
  - 9% Take courses for personal interest or self-development.

2. When you first enrolled at Oakton, did you plan to earn an Oakton degree, or only to take courses?  
(N=517) 34% **Degree** 66% **Courses only**

3. How successful were you in achieving your objective? Please use a 5-point scale where 1 means “Not at all Successful” and 5 means “Very Successful.”

	<b>Not at all Successful</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Very Successful</b>
(N=515)		3%	3%	12%	23%	60%	

4. Had you attended another college or university BEFORE coming to Oakton?

(N=515) 40% **Yes** 60% **No**

**(If “No”, skip to Question 6.)**

5. Had you already earned a bachelor’s degree before you last attended Oakton?

(N=512) 10% **Yes** 90% **No**

6. Did you attend any colleges or universities AFTER leaving Oakton?

(N=517) 72% **Yes** 28% **No**

**(If “Yes”, continue with Questions 6a, 6b. If “No”, skip to Question 15.)**

**6a.** Which colleges or universities have you attended after leaving Oakton?

**6b.** Did you GRADUATE (earn a degree) from these colleges/universities?

(For each school mentioned, check column if attended and earned degree. Read back for accuracy. If an “other” school is mentioned, probe for its city, state, country).

	<u>Question 6a</u> Attended?	<u>Question 6b</u> Earn Degree?
De Paul University	_____	_____
De Vry Institute of Technology (in Illinois)	_____	_____
Illinois State University	_____	_____
Loyola University	_____	_____
National-Louis University	_____	_____
Northeastern Illinois University	_____	_____
Northern Illinois University	_____	_____
Roosevelt University	_____	_____
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale	_____	_____
University of Illinois at Chicago	_____	_____
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	_____	_____
College of DuPage	_____	_____
College of Lake County	_____	_____
Harper College	_____	_____
Wright College of the City Col. of Chicago	_____	_____
Other (Name) _____	_____	_____
(Location) _____	_____	_____
Other (Name) _____	_____	_____
(Location) _____	_____	_____

*Findings from Questions 6a-6b are reported in Appendix D.*

**FOUR-YEAR TRANSFERS ONLY (Questions 7 – 14)**

7. Since you transferred, what has been your most recent major?  
**(Do not read list; circle the best fit for the response.)**

(N=368)

- 18%            **Business-related** (accounting, finance, marketing, management, etc.)
- 9%            **Computer-related** (computer information systems, computer programming, computer science, computerized graphic design, information technology, tele-communications.  
 Note: For computer engineering, use # 4 engineering.)
- 14%           **Education** (early childhood, elementary, secondary, special, etc.)
- 5%            **Engineering** (chemical, civil, computer, electrical, mechanical, etc.)
- 7%            **Health-related** (nursing, allied health, medical technology and records, etc.)
- 9%            **Humanities, fine arts** (art, communications, film, language, literature, music, philosophy, theater; also general liberal arts, cultural studies, English, etc.)
- 14%           **Social and behavioral sciences, studies** (anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, sociology, social problem studies, etc.)
- 1%            **Physical sciences** (astronomy, chemistry, ecology, physics, etc.)
- 4%            **Biological sciences** (biology, zoology, etc.)

2% **Mathematics**  
 18% Other, including undecided: **(Please specify)** \_\_\_\_\_)

8. At Oakton, did you take any science courses? 82% **Yes** 18% **No** (N=370)

(If “Yes”, continue with Question 8a. If “No”, skip to Question 13.)

- 8a. In what core areas were your Oakton Science courses?

(Check all that apply)

(N=303) **Core Area**

66% **Biology**  
 34% **Chemistry**  
 50% **Earth Science, Geology, or Physics**

(For Questions 9-12, ask only those items that are related to the core area(s) of their Oakton science courses.)

9. Since you transferred from Oakton, how many additional courses at your transfer institution have you taken in...

<b>Core Area</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4 or more</b>
Biology?	199	69%	10%	6%	3%	13%
Chemistry?	102	66%	12%	12%	1%	10%
Earth Science, Geology, or Physics?	149	84%	8%	7%	0%	1%

(If all are “0” skip to Question 11.)

10. How well do you feel that Oakton’s science courses prepared you for the science courses you have taken at the four-year college (or university) to which you transferred? Use a 5-point scale where 1 means “Very poorly and 5 means “Very well.”

<b>Core Area</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Very Poorly</b>			<b>Very Well</b>		<b>Took no more courses</b>	
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Biology	62	0%	5%	21%	34%	40%	137	69%
Chemistry	35	3%	3%	14%	43%	37%	67	66%
Earth Science, Geology, or Physics	25	0%	12%	24%	20%	44%	125	83%

11. I'm going to read you a list of Oakton science course sequences. If you have taken both courses in the sequence at Oakton, how well did the first course prepare you for the second? Use a 5-point scale where 1 means "Very poorly" and 5 means "Very well."

(Refer to Question 8a for Core Area.)

Core Area	N	Very Poorly					Very Well	Did not take both courses	
		1	2	3	4	5	N	%	
Physics	College Physics I and II (PHY131,132)	30	0%	0%	23%	37%	40%	40	57%
	General Physics I and II (PHY221,222)	18	0%	0%	28%	28%	44%	47	72%
	General Physics II and Modern Physics (PHY222,223)	9	0%	0%	44%	22%	33%	56	86%
Chemistry	General College Chemistry I and II (CHM121,122)	47	0%	6%	13%	28%	53%	44	48%
	Organic Chemistry I and II (CHM223,224)	16	0%	6%	0%	38%	56%	62	79%
Biology	General College Biology I and II (BIO121,122)	63	0%	3%	17%	33%	46%	108	63%
	Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II (BIO131,132)	43	2%	9%	16%	21%	51%	116	73%

12. I'm going to read you a list of Oakton science courses. If you have taken any of the courses, how well were you prepared for continued study in that subject area at the transfer institution? Use a 5-point scale where 1 means "Very Poorly" and 5 means "Very Well".

(Refer to Question 9 for Core Area.)

Core Area	N	Very Poorly					Very Well	Did not take
		1	2	3	4	5	%	
Chemistry (CHM 101) Intro to General College Chemistry	13	0%	8%	15%	46%	31%	58%	
(CHM 105) Elements of Chemistry	5	0%	20%	40%	20%	20%	84%	
(CHM 121) General College Chemistry I	23	4%	0%	26%	39%	30%	28%	
(CHM 122) General College Chemistry II	18	0%	6%	33%	44%	17%	44%	
(CHM 223) Organic Chemistry I	8	0%	0%	13%	38%	50%	75%	
(CHM 224) Organic Chemistry II	6	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	81%	
Physics (PHY 101) Applied Physics	5	0%	0%	20%	40%	40%	62%	
(PHY 131) College Physics I	8	13%	0%	13%	38%	38%	38%	
(PHY 132) College Physics II	7	0%	0%	14%	43%	43%	46%	
(PHY 221) General Physics I	8	0%	13%	0%	38%	50%	43%	
(PHY 222) General Physics II	7	0%	14%	0%	29%	57%	50%	
(PHY 223) Modern Physics	4	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%	71%	

13. To what degree did you learn or improve at Oakton in each of the following skills: Please use a 5-point scale where 1 means "Did not improve" and 5 means "Significant improvement".

(N=353-354)	Did not improve		Significant improvement			Did apply	Did not apply
	1	2	3	4	5	N	%
Mathematics skills	10%	9%	32%	30%	19%	314	11%
Presentation skills	3%	9%	26%	40%	22%	334	5%
Writing skills	5%	7%	27%	38%	23%	333	6%
Computer skills	13%	14%	30%	24%	20%	276	22%
Problem-solving skills	8%	8%	34%	37%	13%	336	5%
Teamwork skills	6%	15%	27%	34%	18%	321	9%

14. Thinking back over what you learned at Oakton, what has been especially useful to you in courses you have taken at your transfer institution? Please rate the following on a 5-point scale where 1 means “Not very Useful”, and 5 means “Extremely Useful.” Or if this does not apply for you, please tell me that. **(If respondents say this does not apply or doesn’t much apply, mark “0.”)**

(N=353-354)	Not very Useful					Extremely Useful	Did apply N	Did not apply %
	1	2	3	4	5			
Mathematics skills	10%	8%	28%	27%	27%	278	21%	
Presentation Skills	2%	8%	23%	38%	29%	315	11%	
Writing skills	3%	6%	25%	38%	28%	325	8%	
Computer skills	9%	12%	29%	27%	23%	266	25%	
Problem-solving skills	4%	7%	33%	36%	20%	326	8%	
Teamwork skills	5%	10%	28%	36%	22%	311	12%	

### EVERYONE (Questions 15 – End)

15. Are you planning to enroll in college in the coming year? 51% **Yes** 49% **No** (N=505)
16. Based on your experiences at Oakton, how would you rate the following statements as they apply to your new learning situations at work or school? Please use a 5-point scale where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 means “Strongly Agree”.

(N=507-510)	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident learning new things.	2%	1%	8%	25%	64%					
I am likely to ask questions and seek additional support.	2%	2%	10%	28%	58%					
I am able to adapt study habits and learning strategies to new situations.	1%	3%	14%	33%	49%					
I am organized and able to plan when I learn new things.	2%	3%	17%	34%	45%					
I find learning enjoyable and personally rewarding.	2%	3%	13%	28%	54%					
I am able to realistically assess my strengths and weaknesses in new learning situations.	1%	3%	14%	36%	47%					

17. While at Oakton, did you use the services provided by Instructional Support Services (tutoring,

STEPS, ASSIST, ESL support, etc.)? 43% **Yes** 57% **No** (N=517)

**18.** At Oakton, did you enroll in any honors courses? 10% **Yes** 90% **No** (N=515)

**(If “Yes”, continue with Questions 18a, 18b. If “No”, skip to Question 19.)**

**18a.** How would you compare the honors courses to your other courses at Oakton?

Please use a 5-point scale where 1 means “Strongly Disagree” and 5 means “Strongly Agree”.

(N=51)	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>				<b>Strongly Agree</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Honors classes were more challenging.	2%	0%	18%	31%	49%
Honors classes greatly improved my writing skills.	4%	8%	20%	27%	41%
Honors classes better prepared me for transfer.	6%	2%	12%	35%	45%
Other _____					

**18b.** How did you find out about the Honors Program?  
**(Check all that apply)**

(N=51)

- 6% Oakton Students
- 59% Oakton Faculty/Staff
- 2% Oakton Counselor
- 2% Postings at College
- 22% Mailing at home
- 14% Other \_\_\_\_\_

**19.** How well did Oakton College staff members (faculty, administrators, and others) live up following values? (This time, please use a 4-point scale where 1 means “Very Poorly” and 4 means “Very Well”.)

(N=513-516)

	<b>Very Poorly</b>		<b>Very Well</b>	
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Compassion	2%	9%	35%	55%
Fairness	1%	5%	30%	64%
Integrity	1%	3%	25%	72%
Responsibility	2%	3%	26%	70%

Tolerance 2% 5% 25% 68%

20. Was there an especially outstanding person, course, or event at Oakton? Please describe:  
**(Probe)**

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21. If you had it to do over, how likely would you be to attend Oakton again? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means "Very Unlikely" and 7 means "Very Likely."

	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Very</b>
(N=515)		4%	1%	2%	5%	12%	16%	60%		

22. Would you like to receive a summary of the findings from this survey?

(N=516) 44% **Yes** 56% **No**

**(Please Say)** Thank you for participating in this survey.  
 Oakton very much appreciates your help

**Appendix D**  
**Institutions Attended After Oakton**  
**(In Alphabetical Order)**

<b>Institution Attended</b>	<b>Total Who</b>	<b>Institution Attended</b>	<b>Total Who</b>
American Academy of Art	1	National-Louis University	19
Arizona State University	3	North Park University	4
Arkansas State University - Beebe	1	Northeastern Illinois U	59
Barat College	1	Northern Illinois U	15
Benedictine University (IBC)	1	Northwestern Business College	1
Bowling Green State Univ., OH	1	Northwestern U	4
Carroll College, WI	1	Oklahoma State University	1
Christian Life College	1	Parkland College	1
College of Lake County	1	Ravenswood Hosp. - Nursing	1
Columbia College	9	Roosevelt University	16
Cooking & Hosp. Inst.of Chicago	1	Rush University	3
DePaul University	34	School for Internat'l Training, VT	1
DeVry Inst of Tech	10	Sonoma State University, CA	1
Dominican University (Rosary C)	5	Southern IL Univ. - Carbondale	8
Eastern Illinois University	3	Texas A and M University	1
Elgin Community Collge	1	Trinity International University	2
Elmhurst College	10	Triton College	1
Goshen College, IN	1	University of California, Irvine	1
Harrington College of Design	1	University of IL at Chicago	68
Howard University, DC	1	University of IL at Urbana-	14
Huntington College, IN	1	University of Iowa	3
IL Institute of Technology	4	University of Minn, Minneapolis	1
Illinois State University	16	University of Oregon	1
Institute of Creation Research	1	University of WI - River Falls	1
Kendall College	4	University of WI - Whitewater	2
Lake Forest College	1	Western Illinois University	1
Lewis University	1	Westwood College of Technology	1
Loras College, IA	1	Wilbur Wright College, CCC	6
Loyola University	27	William Rainey Harper College	8
Marquette University, WI	3		
Miami Univ. Middletown, OH	1	U.S., not identified	2
Moody Bible Institute	1	Outside of the United States	17
		Not given	6