

Baccalaureate Alumni Survey 2006 Report

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December 2006

Table of Contents

Executive Summary: Baccalaureate Alumni Survey, 2006	i
I. Overview and Methodology	1
II. Profile of Baccalaureate Program Alumni	2
<i>Age, Gender, and Racial-ethnic Identity</i>	
<i>Purposes and Intentions</i>	
<i>Credits, Grades, and Oakton Degrees Earned</i>	
III. Preparation for Transfer and Experience at Transfer Institution.....	4
<i>Educational Experiences before Oakton</i>	
<i>Educational Experiences at Oakton</i>	
<i>Utility of Oakton Experience to Courses at Transfer Institution</i>	
<i>Transfer Institutions Attended and Degrees Earned</i>	
IV. Assessments of the Oakton Experience.....	8
<i>Assessment of Selected Oakton Services</i>	
<i>Living up to Core Values</i>	
<i>Oakton Mission and Values</i>	
<i>Outstanding Persons, Courses, or Events</i>	
<i>Overall Satisfaction with Oakton</i>	
V. Conclusion	14

Appendices

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

Acknowledgments

This is the nineteenth 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 Pat Miller, 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.

Special thanks this year, as well, to Jim Kostecki. As manager of research and assessment, Jim was the key person who drafted and supervised the survey. In December 2006 Jim left Oakton to join the American Academy of Dermatology. We shall miss him and wish him well in his new position.

Please telephone the Office of Research at 847-635-1894 or e-mail tbbers@oakton.edu or drudden@oakton.edu with comments, questions, or suggestions for items that might be included in the next annual survey.

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Baccalaureate Alumni Survey 2006 Report

Executive Summary

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 2006, 581 alumni responded to the survey, which was conducted by telephone during the summer of 2006. 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 enrolled at age 19 and left at age 24.* Slightly more than half are women. Nearly sixty percent are white and the largest minority group is of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry.
- At the median, these alumni earned 53 credits at Oakton and a GPA of 2.98. Fifteen percent of these alumni completed associate's degrees at Oakton.
- Sixty-two percent of survey respondents came to Oakton with no prior college enrollment. Twenty-seven percent had some college experience elsewhere before coming to Oakton, and another eleven 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.

Preparation for Transfer and Experience at Transfer Institutions

- Respondents who transferred rated the utility of skills learned at Oakton for their courses after transfer. The following percentages reflect how many of these students said that each skill was useful: speech 65%, writing 64%, teamwork 60%, problem-solving 58%, mathematics 57%, and computer skills 49%.
- Respondents who transferred also rated the extent to which, while at Oakton, they improved skills in several areas. The following percentages reflect how many of these students said that they improved in each skill: speech 66%, writing 63%, teamwork 56%, problem-solving 54%, mathematics 53%, and computer skills 51%.

* "At the median" means that half the group is below this range and half the group is above it.

- Of the 581 survey respondents, 380 (65%) reported that they attended another college or university after Oakton, and 158 (41%) of the transfers say they earned a bachelor's or associate degree after transfer. Because a number of respondents had been away from Oakton for only one year, they probably had insufficient time to complete their bachelor's degree prior to the survey and are still attending college.
- Most alumni transferred to schools in the Chicago area. Northeastern Illinois University and University of Illinois at Chicago drew a combined 30 percent of the transfers.
- Of students who did not already have a bachelor's degree and who transferred, 58 percent who last attended Oakton in 2002-2003 had earned their bachelor's degree since leaving Oakton, compared to 32 percent of those who last attended in 2004-2005.
- The most popular majors for Oakton alumni are in business, social/behavioral sciences, education, humanities/fine arts, and health-related areas.

Assessment of the Oakton Experience

- For those alumni who have reported that they requested academic transcripts from Oakton, 90% reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with this process.
- For those alumni who have reported that they transferred after attending Oakton, 52% reported that they were aware of articulation and/or dual admission agreements with institutions that they were considering. Of the students who aware of these agreements, 74% reported that this agreement was helpful to them, and 40% reported that an agreement played a role in their transfer decision.
- Alumni perceive that, overall, Oakton is living up to its core values of compassion (91%), fairness (94%), integrity (96%), responsibility (94%), and tolerance (92%).
- Alumni were asked to rate their familiarity with a number of statements reflecting Oakton's mission and values statement, and whether the statements accurately reflected the College. Respondents were familiar with these statements (the average rating for each statement was 2.9 or higher on a 5-point scale measuring familiarity), and they believe that the statements accurately reflect Oakton (every rating was 3.8 or higher on a 5-point scale measuring accuracy).
- Eighty percent of respondents reported that, had they to do it over, they would again choose to attend Oakton.

Baccalaureate Alumni Survey 2006 Report

This year's report of the 2006 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 preparation at Oakton and experiences at the transfer institution. Section IV summarizes alumni's assessments of their Oakton experience, and a fifth and final section concludes the report. A number of appendices provide additional information about the methodology as well as detailed statistics of the responses and alumni demographics.

I. Overview and Methodology

Each summer, Oakton Community College conducts a telephone survey of baccalaureate program alumni. To be considered a "baccalaureate program alumnus," a student must have earned at least 30 credits or an associate degree in a transfer program at Oakton, and last have enrolled in either 2002-03 or 2004-05. This year 2,713 alumni met these criteria, and 581 completed telephone interviews. The survey is not intended to reach all alumni; rather, they are randomly sampled.

Purposes of the survey are to:

- investigate perceptions of 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 2006-2007.¹ 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.

¹ 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.

When responses do not differ by year of last enrollment, the combined responses of alumni from the two years can be reasonably 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 change that will warrant further inquiry. In this report, the survey 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

Data on age, gender and racial-ethnic identity come from the College's official student records, based on information provided by students on their Applications for Admission. Eighty-two percent of alumni eligible for the survey (alumni population), and 78 percent of actual respondents, were first enrolled at the College before they were 24 years of age. Fifty percent of the population and 48 percent of the respondent group had completed their work at Oakton before age 24. The median entry age for both groups was 19. The median exit age for the population was 23, and for the respondent group it was 24. As in past years, women comprised slightly more than half of the alumni population and respondent groups (52% and 51% respectively). Fifty-four percent of the population and 57 percent of the respondents identified themselves as Caucasian. The largest minority group (19% of the both population and respondent groups) comprised students of Asian or Pacific Island ancestry. Eighteen percent of the population and 16 percent of the respondents either did not identify their ethnicity 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. Note that survey respondents were asked to think back to when they first came to Oakton and to identify their objectives at that time. Seventy-one percent 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 11 percent were taking courses for personal interest or self-development. Overall, 83% of alumni reported that they were successful or very successful in achieving their objectives. The second question asked whether, when they first enrolled, they planned to earn an Oakton associate's degree or merely to take courses. Thirty-nine percent said they planned to earn a degree.

Credits, Grades, and Oakton Degrees Earned

Academic data illustrate the extent of the experience of these alumni at Oakton. Thirty-one percent earned 30-44 credits, another 29 percent earned 45-59 credits, and 40 percent earned 60 or more credits. The mean number of credits for the respondents was 56. These data indicate students had a substantial experience at Oakton, an expected finding since the survey includes only students with 30 or more credits.² Students did relatively well, as measured by their grade point averages. The mean GPA for the respondents was 2.89.

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 14 percent of students eligible to be surveyed received an Oakton associate's degree, and 15 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 64 respondents who already had bachelor's degrees when they last attended Oakton. Of the 517 respondents remaining, 16 percent of those last enrolled in 2004-2005 and 18 percent of those last enrolled in 2002-2003 earned associate degrees at Oakton.

Of the 71 percent of alumni respondents who said their main objective while at Oakton was to take courses for transfer, more than three-quarters (78%) did, in fact, transfer after leaving the College. Others might still transfer though they had not done so by summer 2006.

Of the 223 (39%) respondents who said they intended to earn a degree at Oakton, just 67 (30%) 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. Interestingly, of those alumni who intended to earn a degree but did not, 69 percent still reported that they were successful in meeting their objectives, which appears to provide support for the third explanation for the discrepancy mentioned above.

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.

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

III. Preparation for Transfer and Experiences at Transfer Institution

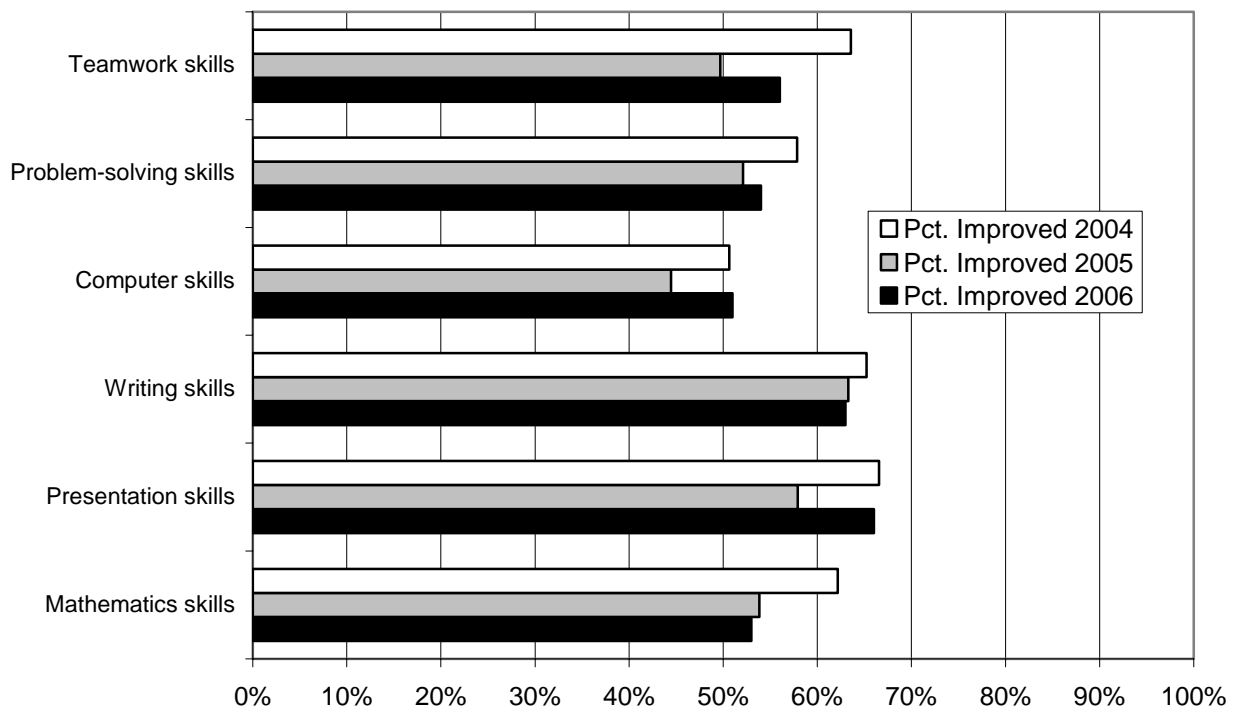
Educational Experiences before Oakton

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.³ Thirty-eight percent of survey respondents said they had attended another college or university before Oakton. Of all respondents, 11 percent said they had already earned a bachelor's degree before they last attended Oakton. 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.

Educational Experiences at Oakton

This year's survey again asked alumni to rate, on a 5-point scale, the extent to which they improved general education skills at Oakton (5 = significant improvement; 1 = did not improve). Figure 1 provides a graphical description of the percent of respondents who said they improved their skill at Oakton (ranked the skill 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale), excluding responses from students who said the skill was not applicable.

Figure 1
Percent Saying They Improved Skills at Oakton
By Year of Survey



³ 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.

Utility and Quality of Oakton Experience to Courses at Transfer Institution

To gather data relevant to 2006-07 program reviews in computer science, mathematics, and business this year's survey asked those alumni who transferred to another college/university about the courses they enrolled in while at Oakton. Eighty-one percent had taken mathematics, 29 percent had taken a computer programming course, and 37 percent had taken a business course. More students from 2005 thought that they improved their math skills at Oakton than from 2003 (56% vs. 47%) and more students from 2005 found that their math skills were useful than students from 2003 (59% vs. 54%). It should be noted that students who said they took computer programming courses may have taken computer science (CSC) or computer information systems (CIS) courses because we did not specify specific course prefixes. CSC courses are designed for transfer while CIS courses are designed primarily for career preparation.

Respondents were also asked about courses taken at their transfer institution. Of those who had taken at least one mathematics course at Oakton, 50 percent of respondents had also taken a mathematics course at their transfer institution. Sixty-six percent of these students said Oakton prepared them well or very well for their post-transfer mathematics courses. Thirty-five percent of students who had taken a computer programming course at Oakton had also taken a computer programming course after transfer, with 67 percent of these students saying Oakton had prepared them well or very well for the courses. Finally, 66 percent of students who had taken a business course at Oakton also enrolled in a business course after transfer, 76 percent of who said Oakton had prepared them well or very well for the courses. More transfer students from 2003 took computer (31% vs. 16%) and business courses (49% vs. 35%) after leaving Oakton than from 2005, though the 2005 group has not had as many years after Oakton to enroll in such courses at transfer institutions.

Beginning in 2001, alumni survey respondents were asked to rate the utility of general education skills in courses after transfer, enabling us to compare the percentages from the five surveys for those who said skills learned at Oakton were useful after transfer. This year's survey again asked alumni to rate, on a 5-point scale, 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. Table 1 presents data.

Table 1
Usefulness of Skills Learned at Oakton in Courses Taken After Transfer
By Year of Survey
(Percentages exclude those who said skill was not applicable after transfer)

Skill	Survey Year	Pct. Indicating Skill was Useful After Transfer					
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Speaking (presentation) skills		74%	70%	67%	72%	69%	65%
Writing skills		69%	69%	66%	66%	71%	64%
Teamwork skills		50%	61%	58%	69%	61%	60%
Problem-solving skills		62%	65%	56%	65%	61%	58%
Mathematics skills		68%	61%	54%	62%	62%	57%
Computer skills		53%	50%	50%	59%	53%	49%

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 2. The table reveals that the percent of respondents who said these skills were not applied after transfer varied. The large jumps in the percentage of students who said they did not apply computer skills or mathematics skills after transfer seem strange. It may be that earlier questions about computer programming may have prompted respondents to think only of programming courses when responding to this question rather than considering computer skills more generally. It is also clear that key skills of speaking/giving presentations, working in teams, problem solving and writing are expected after transfer, whereas computer and mathematics skills are not as widely expected. This may in part be due to students' majors after transfer.

Table 2
Skills Not Applied After Transfer by Year of Survey

Skill	Survey Year	Pct. Respondents Who Transferred & Indicated Skill Not Applied After Transfer			
		2003	2004	2005	2006
Computer skills		25%	36%	26%	54%
Mathematics skills		21%	35%	19%	30%
Speaking (presentation) skills		11%	17%	9%	16%
Teamwork skills		12%	15%	6%	11%
Problem-solving skills		8%	14%	8%	10%
Writing skills		8%	12%	6%	7%

In addition, in 2006 respondents who had transferred were asked specifically whether they had taken any speech courses at Oakton, and if so, how well they think Oakton's speech course(s) prepared them for presentations they have needed to make since then. Sixty-two percent of respondents who had transferred said they had taken a speech course at Oakton. Of these alumni, 80 percent said Oakton prepared them well (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, with 5 = very well).

Transfer Institutions Attended and Degrees Earned

Respondents were asked whether they had attended another college or university after Oakton and, if so, whether they earned a degree. More students from 2003 transferred than from 2005 (71% vs. 63%). Table 3 presents results, which are duplicated headcounts. That is, a student who attended more than one institution is counted for each institution. (Appendix D contains the complete list of transfer schools identified by respondents). Of the 581 respondents, 380 (65%) reported they had attended at least one other college or university after Oakton. Chicago area institutions drew most alumni, with Northeastern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Chicago drawing 30 percent of the transfers. It is interesting to note that DePaul University drew nearly as many transfers as the University of Illinois – Chicago, despite being

significantly more expensive. It is not possible to determine whether DePaul financial aid packages may have lowered the actual price to students to make this institution such a strong draw or what other factors have made it so popular. The attractiveness of local colleges and universities to Oakton alumni remains consistent over time.

Table 3
Colleges and Universities After Oakton

Transfer College or University	Total Who Attended	Number Who Graduated	Percent who Graduated
Northeastern Illinois U	62	17	27%
University of Illinois - Chicago	58	28	48%
DePaul	54	24	44%
Columbia College	18	8	44%
Loyola University of Chicago	18	6	33%
Roosevelt University	17	9	53%
Illinois State University	16	6	38%
National-Louis University	14	5	36%
Elmhurst College	10	5	50%
Northern Illinois University	10	4	40%
Triton College	8	1	13%
University of IL at Urbana-Champaign	8	3	38%
William Rainey Harper College	7	4	57%
DeVry Inst. Of Tech.	6	1	17%
Northwestern U	6	1	17%
Other Schools	93	27	29%

In Table 4 we present data from the last eight alumni surveys indicating self-reported majors selected at institutions after Oakton. Business-related curricula continue to draw a large percentage of transfers, with Social and Behavioral Sciences majors continuing to draw the second-highest percentage of Oakton transfers. Computer-related and Education majors continued to decline from their 2001 peak and 2002 peaks, respectively.

Table 4
Major after Transfer

Survey Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Area of Major	(N=331)	(N=134)	(N=227)	(N = 385)	(N=373)	(N=378)	(N=336)	(N=380)
Business-related	18 %	25 %	21 %	20%	19%	23%	20%	21%
Computer-related	*	10 %	16 %	11%	9%	7%	8%	5%
Education	8 %	10 %	15 %	16%	13%	13%	12%	10%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	19 %	18 %	12 %	19%	17%	15%	16%	17%
Humanities, Fine Arts	15 %	9 %	9 %	14%	10%	11%	13%	13%
Health-related	11 %	11 %	8 %	6%	10%	8%	11%	11%
Sciences or mathematics	12 %	7 %	6 %	5%	8%	6%	8%	9%
Engineering	7 %	3 %	5 %	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Other, including undecided	10 %	5 %	8 %	6%	8%	6%	5%	7%

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

Of students who transferred and did not already have a bachelor's degree, 144 (41%) reported they had earned a bachelor's degree since leaving Oakton.

In 2006, we were interested in exploring the extent to which alumni who had transferred were aware of, used, and evaluated the usefulness of articulation or dual admission agreements. To help respondents understand what these agreements entail, the question included this description: "these agreements are intended to make transfer easier for students by specifying Oakton courses that transfer, along with other admission requirements, to the receiving school." Fifty-two percent of alumni who had transferred said they were aware Oakton had articulation/dual admission agreements with a transfer institution they were considering. Of these individuals, 40 percent said agreements played a role in their transfer, and 74 percent said the agreements were useful to them. Put another way, approximately 38 percent of alumni who transferred found articulation/dual admission agreements to be useful.

Absent any other data regarding students' awareness, use and evaluation of assessment/dual admission agreements, no judgment can be made about whether the agreements are truly valuable. Perhaps more importantly, while a brief definition of agreements was given, we have no way to determine whether respondents were actually referring to the formal agreements or to other transfer information that might appear to be such agreements, including listings of transfer courses that appear on many institutions websites.

IV. Assessments of the Oakton Experience

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 about transcript services, attendance at various Oakton Performance Arts Center events, and

ways in which they learned about Oakton, especially courses offered in a specific semester or summer session.

Assessment of Transcript Services

Seventy-four percent of respondents said they had requested a transcript from Oakton, and 90 percent of these students said they were satisfied with the requesting process ((ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, where 5 = very satisfied). Oakton has now changed to making transcripts available at a modest fee from a third-party vendor (there was no charge for transcripts when the 2006 survey respondents were at Oakton). It will be interesting to replicate this question in several years to compare satisfaction ratings for the new approach.

Attendance at Oakton Performing Arts Center Events.

As Table 5 indicates, attendance at an Oakton Performing Arts Center Event ranged from 18 percent who had attended a play to 3 percent who had attended a dance program. Overall, a total of 146 respondents (25%) had attended at least one type of event at the Center.

Table 5
Attendance at an Oakton Performing Arts Center Event

	Percent who attended
Plays	18%
Musical Concerts	11%
Family Theater	7%
Performances by TV, Movie, or Stage Personalities	5%
Dances	3%

Informing Students about Oakton

Respondents were asked how important each of a number of media and communication approaches was to their learning about Oakton, especially courses offered in a specific semester or summer session. Table 6 provides results. Clearly the Oakton class schedule mailed to homes remains an important vehicle of communication, with the catalog and Oakton website also noted as important. It should be noted, however, that most media on the list do not provide specific information about classes offered in a given term, so they may be more important for providing general information and visibility for the College even if they are rated lower because they don't provide term-specific data. The only communication vehicle cited under "other" by a number of respondents was word of mouth / family and friends.

More students from 2003 learned about Oakton from the radio than from 2005 (14% vs. 7%) and more students from 2005 learned about Oakton from the website than 2003 students (71% vs. 56%).

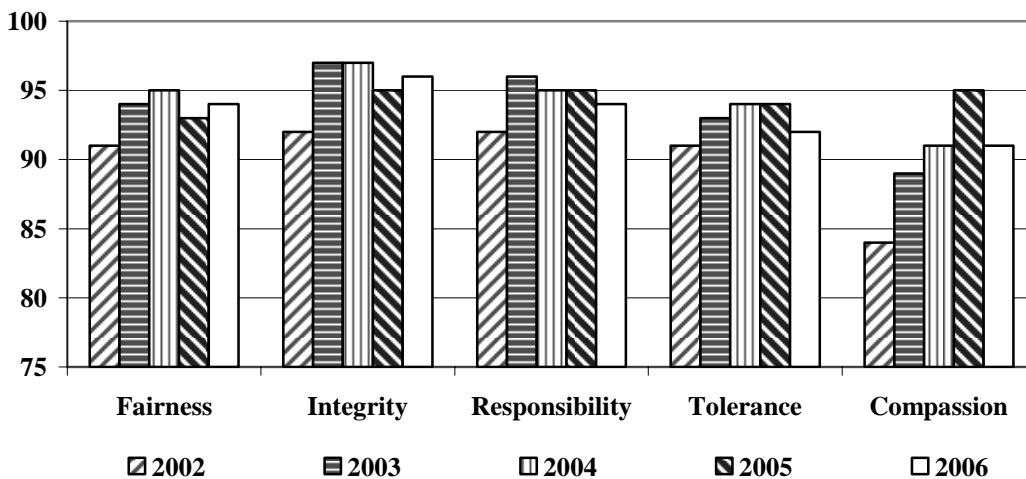
Table 6
Learning About Oakton

	Percent rating important	Mean rating (5=extremely important; 1 = not important at all)
The Oakton (class schedule mailed to home)	74%	4.09
College Catalog (print version)	66%	3.82
Oakton website	66%	3.78
Brochures and flyers available on campus	40%	3.04
High school counselors or teachers	30%	2.43
Brochures and flyers available off-campus (at libraries, community centers, etc.)	29%	2.65
Ads on buses	14%	1.85
Billboards	13%	1.89
Radio	10%	1.72
Advertisement in local movie theaters	10%	1.71
Other	27%	2.09

Living up to Core Values

Oakton has placed substantial emphasis on its core values, which are central to ethical conduct. The College values fairness, integrity, tolerance, responsibility, and compassion. As in the past, 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 2 provides a comparison of the findings from surveys of the past six years.

Figure 2
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)



A comparison of these findings from surveys over six years shows relative stability across the values. It should 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 interpreted as random fluctuations across time.

Oakton Mission and Values

All respondents were asked to evaluate their level of familiarity with each of 10 statements reflecting the College's mission and values on a five-point rating scale. Students were then asked to rate how accurately that statement described Oakton, on a similar five-point scale. In order to make the survey a reasonable length, we divided the mission statements into two groups and randomly selected half the alumni to think about one group of statements and the other half to think about the second group of statements. Table 7 presents the summary of these results for respondents to the 2005 and the 2006 Baccalaureate Alumni Survey.

It appears that students are somewhat familiar with each of Oakton's mission statements. However, perhaps more importantly, the ratings concerning the accuracy of each of these statements are consistently high. At the same time, there is an overall drop in ratings for both the familiarity with and accuracy of statements from the 2005 to the 2006 survey respondents. Rushing to judgment with only two data points (2005 and 2006) is unwise; consequently Oakton may be well served by repeating these questions on the 2007 survey to assess whether the drop in familiarity and perceptions of accuracy continue.

Table 7
Familiarity and Accuracy of Oakton's Mission Statements

Mission Statement	Mean Scores (5 = Highest level of familiarity/accuracy)			
	2005 Survey		2006 Survey	
	Familiarity	Accuracy	Familiarity	Accuracy
Oakton is dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning.	3.93	4.47	3.53	4.27
Oakton demands tolerance, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and integrity.	3.70	4.47	3.32	4.12
Oakton provides education and training for and throughout a lifetime.	3.48	4.41	3.29	4.10
Oakton expects students to assume responsibility for their own learning, to exercise leadership, and to apply ethical principles.	3.65	4.41	3.26	4.09
Oakton recognizes that education must be for the future.	3.53	4.33	3.49	4.30
Oakton encourages students to entertain and question ideas, think critically, solve problems, and engage with other cultures.	3.48	4.27	3.18	4.00
Oakton challenges our students to experience the hard work and satisfaction of learning that leads to intellectual growth.	3.32	4.24	3.07	4.02
Oakton promotes a caring community of staff and faculty, students, administrators, and trustees who work together to fulfill our mission.	3.41	4.24	3.20	3.98
Oakton challenges our students to be capable global citizens.	3.17	4.08	2.89	3.76
Oakton seeks to improve and expand the services in the communities we serve.	3.13	4.07	2.96	3.80

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 100 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.

Sample comments reflect the general tone of comments received:

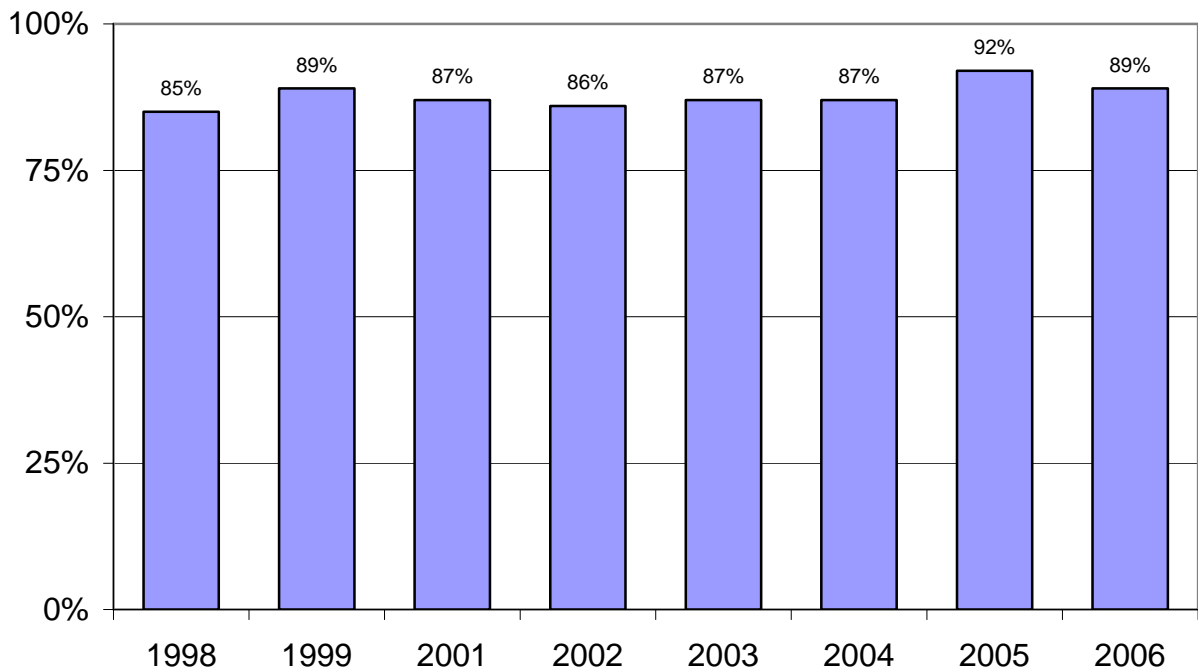
- I had many well-prepared courses and very good teachers.
- All teachers were great
- Teachers [at Oakton] were more accessible than any other college that I’ve attended.
- As a whole the school was very good. I felt the courses were challenging
- Every teacher I had was very organized.
- It was overall a wonderful experience.
- Overall, the courses had excellent quality.
- Teachers at Oakton were awesome compared to other schools. They were more knowledgeable.
- The entire staff was outstanding.
- The seminar courses were outstanding. They were enjoyable and very knowledgeable.
- The teachers were all marvelous.
- They were all good. It was just an overall good experience. All the teachers were great.

The Office of Research consolidated comments about any single individual and sent memos and letters conveying these comments to the recipient. Comments about former instructors and staff members were sent to them or their surviving family members. 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.

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-nine percent responded at the 5, 6 or 7 level. The same question was asked in previous baccalaureate alumni surveys as well. Figure 3 presents results from these years and 2006. 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 92 percent.⁴

Figure 3
Percent Who Would Attend Oakton Again by Survey Year



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.

⁴ Again, findings refer to alumni who meet criteria for inclusion in the annual Baccalaureate-Transfer Alumni 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. The sample selection process began in June 2006 when 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, curriculum⁵, earned credit, cumulative GPA, and Oakton degree information.⁶

Four telephone lists were prepared, with separate lists for each year of last enrollment with each year's list having a separate sub-list for each of two versions of the survey. In order to make the survey a reasonable length, we divided the questions related to Oakton's 10 mission statements into two versions of the questionnaire. Approximately half of the alumni were randomly selected to think about five of these statements and the other half to think about the other five statements. Telephone interviewing was out-sourced to a firm specialized in such surveys. In July, the telephone 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, approximately 150 for each of the four lists.

Of the 2,713 baccalaureate program alumni who met the survey criteria, 1,136 were last enrolled in 2002-2003 and 1,577 in 2004-2005. Of these, 382 alumni had earned Associate's degrees from Oakton.

Telephone logs show that some alumni were called as often as twelve times. Where possible, messages were left, and where changed telephone numbers were available, they were followed up. Nonetheless, our vendor experienced 690 disconnected or otherwise invalid telephone numbers.⁷ The vendor indicated this percentage of disconnected or invalid numbers is typical for a population like Oakton's baccalaureate alumni.

Subtracting these 690 alumni reduced the effective survey population to approximately 2,023 alumni. Altogether, the vendor completed 581 interviews. Thus, 29% of the 2,023 alumni in the effective population completed the survey.

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, and college code numbers for those colleges less often attended. The vendor then

⁵ If a student was not awarded a degree, then the self-reported major during the last term of enrollment (from the term table of the student database) represents that student's curriculum. If a student was awarded a degree, the curriculum code for the degree awarded (from the awards table of the student database) always superseded the curriculum code from the term table. If more than one degree was awarded, the code for the most recent degree program was selected.

⁶ A significant advantage to using the telephone method for this survey is that data from the student database can be reliably associated with each respondent.

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

outsourced these forms for keying to electronic files. The electronic data files were read into databases using 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 of SAS software. Microsoft Word and Excel were used in preparing the report, tables, figures, and appendices. Appendix C contains the over-all numeric results for each item.

Responses

The 581 alumni with whom telephone interviews were completed constituted 29 percent of the 2,023 alumni in the effective survey population, not significantly different than in prior years. The telephone survey method has shown itself to have several advantages over the mail survey method. It does not allow for the potential bias, often associated with mail surveys, of under-sampling respondents who procrastinate by setting aside mail surveys to be done “later”. However, out-of-date telephone numbers and public skepticism engendered by telemarketers claiming to be “conducting a survey” have also adversely affected response rates.

Response rates were nearly identical when comparing alumni who earned an Oakton degree (23%) than for those who had not (21%), and were slightly weaker for those away from the college for three years (17%) than for those last enrolled in 2004-2005 (25%).

Response Bias

Can information about these respondents be interpreted as representative of the population surveyed when interviews were completed with only a subset of the population? The argument that it can depends on the comparison between the 581 respondents and the whole population (N = 2,713) on a variety of key demographic variables.

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,⁸ credit earned, grade point average, and whether awarded an Oakton degree — differences between the two groups are small, suggesting that the respondent group is highly representative of all alumni who met criteria for inclusion in the study.

⁸ 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**Alumni Demographic Characteristics of Population and Survey Respondents**

Student Characteristic	Population (N=2713)		Survey Respondents (N=581)		Difference Btwn Respondents and Population
	n	%	n	%	
Gender					
Male	1292	48 %	286	49 %	+ 2 %
Female	1421	52 %	295	51 %	- 2 %
Entry Age					
Less than 24	2237	82 %	453	78 %	- 4 %
24-25	82	3 %	15	3 %	- 0 %
26-39	267	10 %	68	12 %	+ 2 %
40-59	114	4 %	36	6 %	+ 2 %
60 or older	13	0 %	9	2 %	+ 1 %
Median Age	19.0		19.0		0
Mean Age	21.8		23.0		+ 1.2
Exit Age					
Less than 24	1357	50 %	279	48 %	- 2 %
24-25	356	13 %	57	10 %	- 3 %
26-39	693	26 %	140	24 %	- 1 %
40-59	260	10 %	83	14 %	+ 5 %
60 or older	47	2 %	22	4 %	+ 2 %
Median Age	23.0		24.0		+ 1
Mean Age	27.2		29.3		+ 2.1
Ethnicity					
African American	97	4 %	12	2 %	- 2 %
Asian or Pacific Island	504	19 %	110	19 %	+ 0 %
Caucasian	1462	54 %	333	57 %	+ 3 %
Hispanic	147	5 %	29	5 %	- 0 %
Native American	11	0 %	3	1 %	+ 0 %
Multiple	0	0 %	0	0 %	+ 0 %
Other	269	10 %	52	9 %	- 1 %
No Response	223	8 %	43	7 %	- 1 %
Credit Hours Earned					
30-44 hours	933	34 %	180	31 %	- 3 %
45-59 hours	703	26 %	167	29 %	+ 3 %
60 or more hours	1077	40 %	234	40 %	+ 1 %
Median Hours	53.0		53.0		0.0
Mean Hours	54.6		55.6		+ 1.0
Grade Point Average					
Median	2.85		2.98		+ 0.13
Mean	2.77		2.89		+ 0.12
Oakton Degree Received					
AA	365	13 %	86	15 %	+ 1 %
AFA	1	0 %	1	0 %	+ 0 %
AS	16	1 %	2	0 %	- 0 %

**Appendix C
Baccalaureate Alumni Survey 2006 Results**

Which one of the following was your main objective in attending Oakton?

	Responses	
	n	%
Take coursework for transfer	411	71%
Take courses for personal interest	65	11%
Improve skills needed in present job	46	8%
Explore courses to decide a career	35	6%
Obtain skills needed for new job	22	4%
Total	579	100%

When you first enrolled at Oakton, did you plan to earn a degree or only to take courses?

	Responses	
	n	%
Degree	223	39%
Courses Only	356	61%
Total	579	100%

	Ratings					
		Not at all Successful				Very Successful
	n	1	2	3	4	5
How successful were you in achieving your objective?	578	3%	3%	10%	21%	62%

Had you attended another college or university BEFORE coming to Oakton?	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	222	38%
No	359	62%
Total	581	100%

Had you already earned a bachelor's degree before you last attended Oakton?	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	64	29%
No	158	71%
Total	222	100%

Did you attend any colleges or universities AFTER leaving Oakton?	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	380	65%
No	201	35%
Total	581	100%

If yes, did you graduate (earn a degree) from these colleges/universities?	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	148	39%
No	232	61%
Total	380	100%

Since you transferred, what has been your most recent major?

	Responses	
	n	%
Business-related	81	21%
Social & Behavioral Sciences	65	17%
Humanities & Fine Arts	51	13%
Health-related	42	11%
Education	38	10%
Engineering	24	6%
Computer-relates	18	5%
Physical Sciences	18	5%
Biological Sciences	12	3%
Mathematics	3	1%
Other or Undecided	27	7%
Total	379	100%

At Oakton, how many Math, Computer Science, and/or General Business courses did you take?

	n	Number of Courses			
		0	1	2	3+
Math	379	19%	17%	27%	37%
Computer Programming	379	71%	18%	7%	3%
General Business	378	63%	13%	9%	15%

How many of your courses were online?	n	Number of Courses				No Response
		0	1	2	3+	
Math	301	93%	6%	<1%	0%	2%
Computer Science	104	93%	6%	0%	0%	4%

If you have taken both courses in the following sequences at Oakton, how well did the first course prepare you for the second?

First Course	Second Course	n	Rating					Did not take both courses
			Very Poorly				Very Well	
			1	2	3	4	5	
C++ Computer Science I (CSC155)	Data Structures (CSC 240)	8	13%	0%	0%	63%	25%	97%
Java Computer Science I (CSC156)	Data Structures (CSC 241)	4	25%	0%	25%	50%	0%	96%

Since you transferred from Oakton, how many additional courses at your transfer institution have you taken in these subject areas

	n	Number of Courses				
		0	1	2	3	4 or more
Math	313	50%	18%	16%	8%	7%
Computer Science	226	78%	9%	4%	2%	7%
Business	252	60%	5%	4%	4%	27%

How well do you feel that Oakton courses prepared you for courses in the same subject that you have taken at the 4-year college to which you transferred?

	n	Rating					Did not take courses
		Very Poorly				Very Well	
		1	2	3	4	5	
Mathematics	154	5%	3%	26%	33%	33%	2%
Computer Science	46	8%	3%	23%	20%	48%	13%
Business	100	2%	4%	18%	41%	35%	2%

At Oakton, did you take any computer science courses for engineers?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	3	6%
No	51	94%
Total	54	100%

If you've taken any of these courses, how well were you prepared for continued study in computer science at your transfer institution?

	n	Rating					Did not Take
		Very Poorly				Very Well	
		1	2	3	4	5	
C Programming for Engineers	3	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	33%
FORTTRAN90 Programming for Engineers	3	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	67%
Java Programming for Engineers	3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Did you take any Speech courses?	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	233	62%
No	145	38%
Total	378	100%

How well did Oakton speech courses prepare you for presentations that you've needed to make since then?	Rating					
	n	Very Poorly				Very Well
		1	2	3	4	5
	232	3%	2%	14%	29%	51%

To what degree did you learn or improve at Oakton in each of the following skills?	Ratings					Did not use	Average Rating	
	(percentages exclude who did not use skills at Oakton)							
	Did not improve				Significant improvement			
n	1	2	3	4	5			
Presentation Skills	376	4%	7%	23%	35%	31%	15%	3.81
Writing Skills	376	3%	5%	30%	36%	27%	6%	3.79
Teamwork Skills	375	7%	8%	28%	29%	27%	10%	3.61
Problem-Solving Skills	376	6%	5%	35%	34%	20%	8%	3.56
Mathematics Skills	376	7%	8%	32%	28%	25%	19%	3.56
Computer Skills	376	12%	12%	26%	32%	19%	54%	3.35

Thinking back over what you learned at Oakton, what has been especially useful to you in courses you have taken at your transfer institution?

	n	Ratings (percentages exclude those who did not use skills at transfer institution)					Did not use	Average Rating
		Not very Useful	1	2	3	4		
Writing Skills	374	3%	8%	26%	31%	33%	7%	3.83
Presentation Skills	374	4%	6%	24%	33%	32%	16%	3.82
Teamwork Skills	374	6%	8%	26%	29%	31%	11%	3.71
Problem-Solving Skills	374	5%	9%	28%	36%	22%	10%	3.62
Mathematics Skills	374	8%	11%	24%	28%	29%	30%	3.59
Computer Skills	373	8%	10%	34%	30%	19%	54%	3.42

When you were at Oakton, were you aware of articulation/dual admission agreements between Oakton and a transfer institution that you were considering?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	196	52%
No	156	41%
Not Sure	26	7%
Total	378	100%

If yes, did an agreement play a role in your transfer decision?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	79	40%
No	117	60%
Total	196	100%

If yes, was the agreement helpful to you?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	143	74%
No	49	26%
Total	192	100%

Are you planning to enroll in college in the coming year?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	306	53%
No	273	47%
Total	579	100%

Have you ever requested academic transcripts from Oakton?

	Responses	
	n	%
Yes	430	74%
No	150	25%
Total	580	100%

	n	Rating				
		Very Dissatisfied				Very Satisfied
		1	2	3	4	5
How satisfied were you with the transcript request process?	429	2%	1%	7%	16%	74%

Have you ever attended any of the following types of events at Oakton's Performing Arts Center?

	Responses	
	n	% yes
Plays	580	18%
Musical Concerts	579	11%
Family Theater	580	7%
Performances by TV, Movie, or Stage Personalities	578	5%
Dances	579	3%

Please think about how you learn(ed) about Oakton, especially courses offered in a specific semester or summer session. How important has each of these been for you?

	n	Rating					Average Rating
		Not at all Important	1	2	3	4	
The Oakton (class schedule mailed to home)	580	8%	4%	14%	20%	54%	4.09
College Catalog (print version)	580	11%	6%	17%	22%	44%	3.82
Oakton website	581	14%	5%	15%	20%	46%	3.78
Brochures and flyers available on campus	581	23%	12%	24%	18%	22%	3.04
Brochures and flyers available off-campus (at libraries, community centers, etc.)	580	33%	15%	23%	12%	17%	2.65
High school counselors or teachers	578	46%	8%	16%	15%	15%	2.43
Billboards	581	57%	15%	15%	7%	6%	1.89
Ads on buses	578	62%	11%	12%	8%	6%	1.85
Radio	580	64%	14%	12%	6%	4%	1.72
Advertisement in local movie theaters	580	66%	13%	11%	5%	5%	1.71
Other	162	69%	1%	3%	6%	21%	2.09
<i>Word of Mouth (family and/or friends)</i>	27						
<i>Mailed Brochures/Flyers</i>	3						
<i>Ads in local newspaper</i>	2						
<i>Oakton Professor</i>	2						
<i>Television</i>	2						
<i>Email</i>	1						
<i>Performing Arts Center performance</i>	1						

How well did Oakton College staff members live up to the following values?

	n	Rating			
		Very Poorly			Very Well
		1	2	3	4
Compassion	580	3%	6%	32%	59%
Fairness	580	2%	4%	28%	66%
Integrity	580	1%	3%	24%	72%
Responsibility	580	2%	5%	26%	68%
Tolerance	577	3%	5%	27%	65%

If you had it to do over, how likely would you be to attend Oakton again?

	n	Rating						
		Very Unlikely						Very Likely
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	577	3%	1%	2%	5%	16%	18%	55%

Oakton has developed a number of statements depicting the College's mission and values

For each statement, please indicate if you are familiar with the mission statement.

	n	Rating					Average Rating
		Not at all Familiar	1	2	3	4	
Oakton is dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning	268	21%	5%	16%	17%	41%	3.53
Oakton provides education and training for and throughout a lifetime	299	26%	5%	15%	21%	33%	3.29
Oakton challenges our students to experience the hard work and satisfaction of learning that leads to intellectual growth	268	28%	8%	18%	19%	26%	3.07
Oakton seeks to improve and expand the services in the communities we serve	297	30%	9%	20%	16%	24%	2.96
Oakton encourages students to entertain and question ideas, think critically, solve problems, and engage with other cultures	268	26%	6%	21%	15%	31%	3.18
Oakton promotes a caring community of staff and faculty, students, administrators, and trustees who work together to fulfill our mission	296	26%	9%	13%	22%	30%	3.20
Oakton expects students to assume responsibility for their own learning, to exercise leadership and to apply ethical principles	268	26%	7%	14%	18%	34%	3.26
Oakton recognizes that education must be for the future	296	23%	5%	13%	18%	41%	3.49
Oakton demands tolerance, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and integrity	268	26%	6%	14%	16%	37%	3.32
Oakton challenges our students to be capable global citizens	296	31%	13%	16%	17%	24%	2.89

For each statement, please indicate if you believe it describes Oakton.	n	Rating					Average Rating
		Does not describe Oakton at all	1	2	3	4	
Oakton is dedicated to excellence in teaching and learning	267	1%	3%	15%	26%	54%	4.27
Oakton provides education and training for and throughout a lifetime	298	4%	3%	19%	28%	46%	4.10
Oakton challenges our students to experience the hard work and satisfaction of learning that leads to intellectual growth	267	4%	7%	17%	28%	45%	4.02
Oakton seeks to improve and expand the services in the communities we serve	295	5%	7%	23%	31%	34%	3.80
Oakton encourages students to entertain and question ideas, think critically, solve problems, and engage with other cultures	267	6%	4%	19%	25%	45%	4.00
Oakton promotes a caring community of staff and faculty, students, administrators, and trustees who work together to fulfill our mission	295	5%	7%	15%	31%	42%	3.98
Oakton expects students to assume responsibility for their own learning, to exercise leadership and to apply ethical principles	267	4%	6%	16%	26%	48%	4.09
Oakton recognizes that education must be for the future	296	3%	1%	12%	29%	54%	4.30
Oakton demands tolerance, fairness, responsibility, compassion, and integrity	267	4%	6%	15%	26%	50%	4.11
Oakton challenges our students to be capable global citizens	295	6%	10%	23%	24%	37%	3.76

Appendix D**All Institutions Attended after Oakton****(Note: total count includes students who attended multiple institutions after leaving Oakton)**

Institution	Total	Institution	Total
Northeastern Illinois University	62	Triton College	8
University of Illinois - Chicago	58	University of IL Urbana-Champaign	8
DePaul University	54	William Rainey Harper College	7
U.S., non-Illinois, not identified	25	DeVry Institute of Technology	6
Columbia College	18	Northwestern University	6
Loyola University	18	Southern Illinois Univ - Carbondale	5
Roosevelt University	17	Wright College	5
Illinois State University	16	North Park University	4
National-Louis University	14	Eastern Illinois University	3
Elmhurst College	10	Western Illinois University	3
Northern Illinois University	10		

Two students each: Bradley University, College of DuPage, College of Lake County, Dominican University (Rosary C), Harrington College of Design, Kendall College, Lake Forest College, University of WI – Parkside, Outside of the United States

One student each: Barat College, Benedictine University (IBC), Chicago State University, Concordia University, Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago, Elgin Community College, Evergreen State College, Governors State University, IL Institute of Technology, Indiana University at Bloomington, International Academy of Merchandise & Design, ITT Technical Institute, Marquette University, Miami University Middletown OH, Michigan State University, Midwestern University (Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine), Milwaukee School of Engineering, Moody Bible Institute, Murray State University, North Central College, Rush University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Spoon River College, St. Francis Medical Center College of Nursing, The Art Institute of Atlanta, University of Arizona, University of Kansas, University of Tampa, University of WI – Madison, University of WI – Oshkosh, West Suburban School