

Follow-Up Survey of Graduates Class of 2017-2018

December 3, 2019

Institutional Research, Planning
and Institutional Effectiveness

Executive Summary

Introduction

Since 1974, Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) has conducted annual surveys of its graduates to collect feedback and information about their PVCC experience, further education, and employment. Survey findings are used in assessment of college programs and services, evaluation of our success in preparing students for work and/or transfer, reports to external audiences, and preparation of grant proposals. Results of the 42nd Follow-Up Survey of Graduates are presented in this report.

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (IRPIE) surveyed transfer degree graduates. Graduate employment for other degree categories is tracked by PVCC's Office of Career Services as well as by IRPIE using Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) data. This year's PVCC Follow-Up Survey of Graduates was mailed to 353 AA and AS graduates whose degrees were conferred in the summer, fall, and spring terms of the 2017-2018 academic year. Sixty-nine (n = 69) graduates returned the survey, for a response rate of 20%.

The PVCC Experience

The majority of graduates (81%) were "very much" satisfied the quality of their academic program and 65% were "very much" satisfied with the quality of student services, overall. Almost all (97%) reported that PVCC helped them further their academic and/or professional goals.

Further Education

Enrollment in College

Sixty-three graduates (91% of respondents) are currently enrolled in college. *Of those currently enrolled*, 81% (n = 51) are full-time and 97% (n = 61) are attending a 4-year college.

Bachelor's Degree

Sixty-one graduates (97% of those currently enrolled in college) are pursuing a bachelor's degree. Of the graduates who provided this data (n = 61), the average self-reported GPA at their four-year schools is 3.36.

Transfer

Fifty-five graduates (90% of bachelor's degree-seeking graduates) reported transferring to their first-choice college and 56 (92% of bachelor's degree-seeking graduates) said that the credits they earned at PVCC transferred as expected.

Preparation at PVCC

In relation to their current studies, 47 graduates (77% of bachelor's degree-seeking graduates) rated their academic preparation at PVCC as either "excellent" or "good." Fifty-two percent (n = 32) said that their bachelor's degree is "very much" related to their PVCC degree program. Compared with students who started as freshmen at their current colleges, 77% (n = 47) of bachelor's degree-seeking graduates (n = 61) said they were "about as well prepared" or "better prepared."

College Comparison

According to bachelor's degree-seeking graduates, 49% (n = 30) reported PVCC rates more and 38% (n = 32) rated PVCC the same in terms of individual attention shown to students. In terms of friendliness of faculty and staff, 39% (n = 24) rated that PVCC has more and 49% (n = 30) rated PVCC as about the same. Sixty-six percent (66%, n = 40) rated PVCC about the same in quality of instruction. For strictness of grading policies, 49% (n = 30) rated PVCC about the same and 33% (n = 20) rated that PVCC as less. Fifty-nine percent (59%, n = 36) reported PVCC has less in terms of degree of student competitiveness.

Summary

The successful transfer of graduates to four-year colleges and universities is an important measure of the effectiveness of a PVCC education. Of the survey's respondents, 91% are currently pursuing further education.

These findings, together with data from the Graduate Exit Survey, National Student Clearinghouse, Virginia Employment Commission, and other research, are used in assessments of college programs and services, and evaluations of our success in preparing students for work and/or transfer. Supplemental analysis for program review/evaluation will be posted on the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness website and also provided to departments and program coordinators.

Follow-Up Survey of Graduates – Class of 2017-2018

Introduction

Since 1974, Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) has conducted annual surveys of its graduates to collect feedback and information about their PVCC experience, further education, and employment. Survey findings are used in assessment of college programs and services, evaluation of our success in preparing students for work and/or transfer, reports to external audiences, and preparation of grant proposals. Results of the 42nd Follow-Up Survey of Graduates are presented in this report.

Methodology

The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (IRPIE) surveyed 353 transfer degree graduates over six weeks from April 17, 2019 to May 29, 2019. The survey was mailed to graduates whose degrees were conferred in the summer, fall, and spring terms of the 2017-2018 academic year. Surveys were also emailed to graduates using their preferred email. The email addresses used were from the PeopleSoft Student Information System. Sixty-nine (n = 69) graduates completed the survey for a response rate of 20% which was lower than the previous survey (25% in 2014-2015).

Limitations

Survey results represent the opinions and experiences of approximately 20% (IRPIE, 2017-2018 Graduate Award Report) of the AA/AS class of 2017-18. Findings should be generalized with caution and reported only with reference to the surveyed population. As data are disaggregated, it should be noted that the number of students included in analysis becomes smaller and generalization becomes more problematic.

Results: The PVCC Experience

Satisfaction with Services and Programs

The majority (n = 56; 81%) of graduates were “very much” satisfied the quality of their academic program. Sixty-five percent (n = 45) were “very much” satisfied with the quality of student services. Some 97% (n = 67) responded that PVCC helped them further their academic and/or professional goals.

PVCC’s Contribution to Skill Development

Graduates were asked to indicate the extent to which PVCC helped them develop skills essential to success in college and the workplace. Table 1 on the next page shows the percentage of graduates indicating that PVCC helped them “very much”, “somewhat”, “very little”, or “not at all.”

Table 1: Contribution of PVCC Education to Skill Development	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
Write clearly and effectively	45%	40%	12%	3%
Speak clearly and effectively	42%	43%	12%	3%
Solve problems ¹	57%	30%	10%	3%
Reason logically ¹	56%	32%	10%	2%
Understand & use computers ¹	43%	34%	16%	7%
Understand & use math	48%	36%	12%	4%
Research a topic	58%	33%	7%	2%
Understand social institutions and cultures	45%	29%	20%	6%
Set personal wellness goals	36%	28%	29%	7%
Make informed personal decisions ¹	53%	27%	16%	4%

Results: Further Education

Enrollment in College

Sixty-three (91%) respondents are currently enrolled in college, and another three graduates (4%) have plans to enroll in college in the coming year. *Of those currently enrolled:*

- 81% (n = 51) are full-time
- 97% (n = 61) are attending a four-year college

Of the 61 respondents currently enrolled at a four-year college, 98% (n = 60) reported their current institution. Figure 1 describes the overall distribution of those institutions and Figure 2 shows the details for the respondents at public, in state, four year colleges.

CURRENT FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

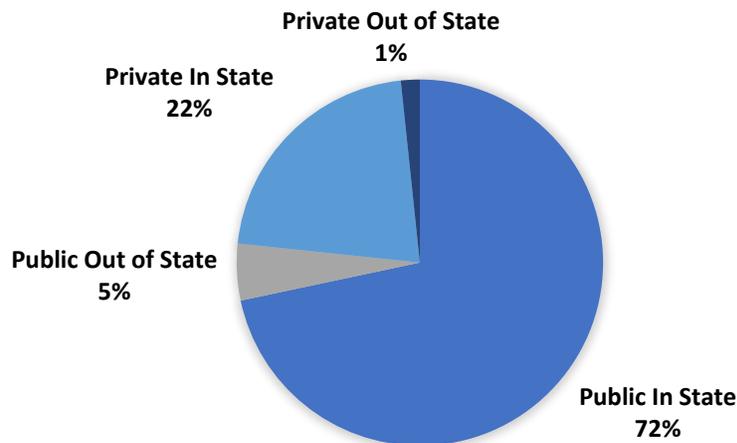


Figure 1. Institution Type

¹ n = 68; 1 non-respondent

IN STATE, PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES

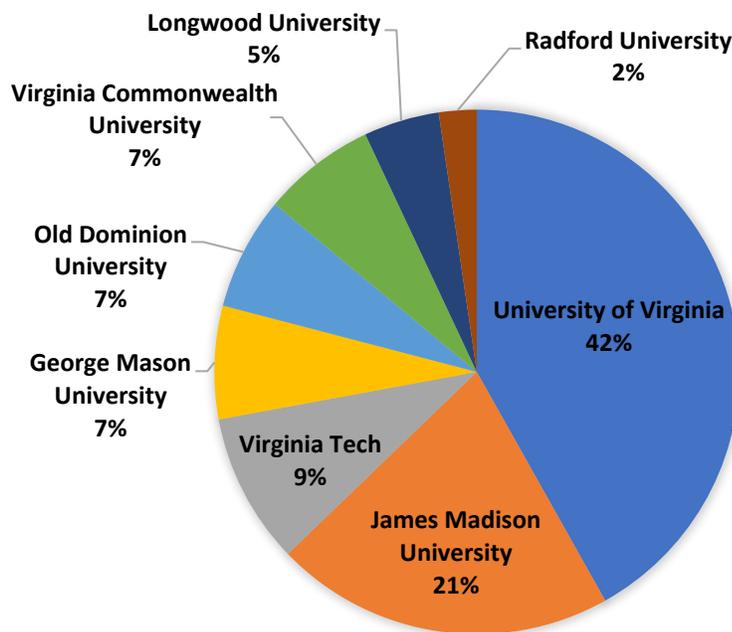


Figure 2. Public, In State, Four-Year Colleges

Pursuit of a Bachelors' Degree

Eighty-eight percent ($n = 61$) of responding graduates are currently enrolled in college and pursuing a bachelor's degree. Of graduates who provided this data, the average self-reported GPA at their four-year schools is 3.36.

Preparation for Further Education

The graduates who responded that they were currently enrolled in college and pursuing a bachelor's degree were asked how well their PVCC education prepared them for education at four-year colleges and universities.

Specifically, graduates pursuing a bachelor's degree were also asked to rate:

- 1) the level of academic preparation they received at PVCC in relation to their current studies
- 2) the level of preparation at PVCC compared to students who started as freshman at their current college
- 3) the level of relation between their current bachelor's degree and their PVCC degree program.

The results are shown in Figures 3, 4, and 5 on the next pages.

Academic Preparation at PVCC

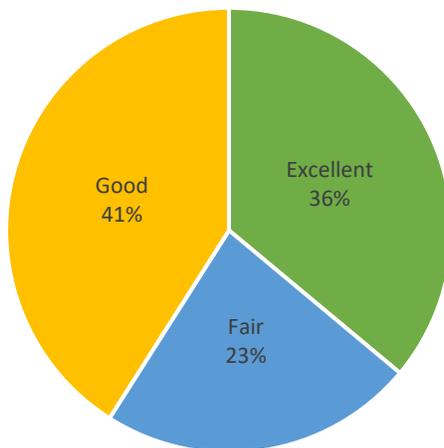


Figure 3. Level of Academic Preparation at PVCC in Relation to Current Studies

Preparation at PVCC Compared to Students who Started as Freshman at Current College

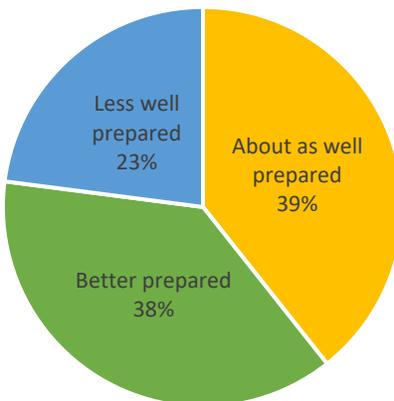


Figure 4. Level of Preparation at PVCC Compared to Students who Started as Freshmen at their Current College

Level of Relation between Current Degree and PVCC Degree Program

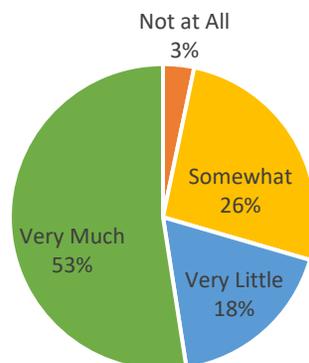


Figure 5. Level of Relation Between Current Bachelor’s Degree Program and their PVCC Degree Program

Comparison of PVCC to Four-Year Colleges

According to bachelor’s degree-seeking graduates (and in broad terms), PVCC rates more or about the same in terms of individual attention shown to students and friendliness of faculty and staff. They also rate PVCC about the same in quality of instruction, about the same or less in strictness of grading policies, and less in terms of student competitiveness. Table 3 below shows the details of the comparison of PVCC with the graduates’ current college.

Table 3: Comparison of PVCC with Current College Environment	PVCC has more	About the same	PVCC has less
Degree of student competitiveness	10%	31%	59%
Friendliness of faculty and staff	39%	49%	12%
Individual attention is shown to students	49%	38%	13%
Quality of instruction ²	17%	66%	17%
Strictness of grading practices	18%	49%	33%

Transfer Process

The graduates who were currently enrolled in college and pursuing a bachelor’s degree were asked questions about the transfer process to their current college. Ninety percent (90%; n = 55) of graduates transferred to their first-choice college and 92% (n = 56) said that the credits they earned at PVCC transferred as expected. *Of those who transferred to a public four-year school in Virginia*, 62% (n = 50) were “very much” satisfied with the transfer process, 26% were “somewhat” satisfied, 4% indicated “very little” satisfaction, and 8% reported “not at all” satisfied with the process.

Twenty-five graduates (41% of those enrolled in four-year institutions and pursuing a bachelor’s degree) said they transferred under a Guaranteed Admission Agreement and 56% (n = 34) of those same students stated they received assistance from PVCC in transferring to their current college. Of the 34 students who received assistance, 56% (n = 19) were “very much” satisfied with the transfer assistance they received from PVCC and 44% (n = 15) were “somewhat” satisfied, with no students responding, “very little” or “not at all”.

² n = 60; 1 non-respondent

Summary

The successful transfer of graduates to four-year colleges and universities is an important measure of the effectiveness of a PVCC education. Ninety-one percent (91%; n = 63) of 2017=2018 transfer program graduates who responded to this survey are currently pursuing further education.

These findings, together with data from the Graduate Exit Survey, National Student Clearinghouse, VEC, and other research, are used in assessments of college programs and services, and evaluations of our success in preparing students for work and/or transfer. Supplemental analysis for program review/evaluation will be posted on the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness website and also provided to departments and program coordinators.

Reference(s):

IRPIE. (2019). Graduate Awards by Curriculum: 2014-15 to 2018-19. Retrieved from <https://www.pvcc.edu/research-statistics>