Graduate Follow-Up Survey Report



Perceptions of 2020-2022 Graduates

Bergen Community College | Center for Institutional Effectiveness

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Executive Summary

- The Center for Institutional Effectiveness at Bergen Community College (BCC) conducts an annual Graduate Follow-up Survey of graduates one year after they have completed their course of study. The following information relates to the students who received degrees and certificates between 2020 and 2022.

- Of the 2,068 graduates from 2022 who were sent the Graduate Follow-up Survey, 113 graduates responded, providing a response rate of 5%. The response rate has dipped since 2020 (8%).

- The majority of 2022 graduates' primary objectives were educational; 86% stated that they either wanted to earn a degree, take courses for transfer, or to prepare for career change. Ninety-six percent of respondents stated that they had reached their primary objective.

- Throughout the past three administrations, the Library/Learning Resource Center has remained the most highly rated service at Bergen Community College. Other highly valued services included services for students with disabilities, the quality of American Language Program instruction, and the quality of major course instruction.

- Sixty-five percent of 2022 graduates reported transferring to another institution after graduating from BCC. These graduates rated their preparedness, on average, for further education as being "Good".

- Seventy-seven percent of 2022 graduates indicated that they were employed either full- or part-time at the time of survey administration. Sixty percent of respondents stated that they were working in a directly related or somewhat related field to their field of study at Bergen.

- When asked how well Bergen Community College prepared them for employment, respondents from all three years typically responded that the job training they received was "Average" to "Good."

- The skill in which 2022 graduates most improved was in "Ability to think critically" followed by "Tolerance and understanding of other people in our diverse society" and "Ability to apply bodies of knowledge within and across disciplines."

- On average, over the past three administrations of the survey, 95% of graduates stated that they would recommend attending Bergen Community College to prospective students.

Introduction

The Center for Institutional Effectiveness (CIE) conducts an annual survey of Bergen Community College (BCC) graduates one year after they have completed their course of study. The primary objective of this survey is to assess the extent to which students feel the College's programs, facilities and services have enabled them to achieve their personal, educational and professional goals. The information obtained from the Graduate Follow-up Survey may be employed in the following ways:

A. To provide information on the effectiveness of academic programs.
B. To evaluate the quality of instruction, services and facilities.
C. To provide useful feedback that can foster curriculum modifications and development.
D. To provide data to fulfill the College's accountability requirement to the Federal Government, State, County, other external agencies and most importantly the community and students it serves.

The report that follows is a summary of results from three administrations of the Graduate Follow-up Survey, based on the responses of students who received degrees and/or certificates between the 2020 and 2022 academic years. The purpose of this report is to provide a succinct assessment of the major findings between administrations.

In order to simplify the reading of this report, the graduates will be referred to by their year of program completion: as "2020 graduates," "2021 graduates," etc. Also, select open-ended comments from 2022 graduates' responses were highlighted in the report. Additional open-ended comments can be obtained by submitting a CIE Data Request.

Method

The Survey Instrument

The Graduate Follow-up Survey is an online survey instrument. The beginning questions address the graduates' initial goals for attending Bergen Community College and their assessment of the College's services and facilities. The survey questions are then directed at the graduates' educational status after graduating from BCC. Questions about the graduates' employment status and related career opportunities are presented in the final part of the survey. Additionally, the questions instruct the graduates to assess the effect their experiences at BCC have had on their personal and academic development, specifically the extent to which certain skills have improved. The graduates were also given the opportunity to comment on their experiences while at BCC and to voice their opinions on what could be done to improve the College.

Online Survey Administration

Each administration year, during the spring semester, a list of names and email addresses of the graduates from the previous year was compiled. An email invitation was sent to the 2022 graduates' Bergen and personal email addresses. Three email reminders were sent to those who had not yet participated. In addition to a common question set, program-specific questions were sent to Nursing, Dental, Information Technology, Criminal Justice, Accounting, and Paralegal Studies Bergen graduates[1].

Analysis

Data were collected and aggregated from all responses for quantitative analysis. Analyses were separated into seven sections: Respondents, Educational Objectives, Student Services, Transfer Enrollment, Employment, Improvement of Skills, and Overall Impressions. In some cases, these data were paired with historical responses from the previous two years to show three-year trends.

Qualitative student feedback was requested in a comments section at the end of each survey. A small, but representative sample of these comments was selected and added to each of the seven sections, named above, in order to add depth and context to the quantitative data.

[1] The results of the program-specific questions will be shared with the leadership of respective departments.

Results

Respondents

Table 1 below shows the response rate of the 2020-2022 Graduate Follow-up Surveys, derived from the total number of surveys distributed and the number of graduates who responded. Despite increased efforts to contact graduates the response rate decreased since 2020.

Table 1. Response Rate

	2020	2021	2022
# Sent	2,125	2,316	2,068
# Responded	171	141	113
Response Rate	8%	6%	5%

As shown below in Table 2, looking at the breakdown of respondents by program type, 57% of respondents graduated from transfer programs and 37% graduated from career programs in 2020.

Table 2. Respondents by Program

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	#	#	%	#	%
Associate of Arts (AA)	17	10%	18	13%	11	10%
Associate of Fine Arts (AFA)	0	0%	2	1%	0	0%
Associate of Science (AS)	107	63%	90	64%	53	47%
All Transfer Programs	**124**	**73%**	**110**	**78%**	**64**	**57%**
Associate of Applied Science (AAS)	36	21%	26	18%	33	29%
Certificates (CERT)	2	1%	0	0%	7	6%
Certificates of Achievement (COA)	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%
All Career Programs	**8**	**22%**	**26**	**18%**	**42**	**37%**
Unknown	9	5%	5	4%	7	6%
ALL RESPONDENTS	**171**	**100%**	**141**	**100%**	**113**	**100%**

Educational Objectives

The majority of respondents in 2022 (39%) stated that their primary goal for attending Bergen was to earn a degree. Additionally, 34% of respondents, stated that their primary objective for attending Bergen was to complete courses for transfer.

Table 3. Which statement best describes your PRIMARY objective for first attending BCC?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
To improve job skills	4	3%	3	2%	2	2%
To prepare for first career	25	17%	17	14%	8	9%
To prepare for career change	11	7%	12	10%	12	13%
To earn a degree from BCC	53	36%	48	38%	36	39%
To complete courses for transfer	55	37%	45	36%	32	34%
To take courses for personal interest	1	1%	0	0%	3	3%

According to Table 4, 95% of 2022 graduates stated that they had achieved their primary objective by the time they had left the College. This percentage has remained steady since 2020.

Table 4. Did you achieve your primary objective by the time you left the college?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	139	95%	118	94%	87	95%
No	8	5%	7	6%	4	4%

Regarding their objectives, our graduates said[2]:

"The Vet Tech Program is VERY good thought challenging."

"Bergen has so many elective courses for those who are undecided about what to do with their path."

[2] These highlighted are presented in respondents' words verbatim.

Student Services

Table 5 shows the composite scores of those who responded to the question: how well did the following services at our college meet your needs as a student? Composite scores were calculated as the average value using the scale shown below and are based on responses of graduates who indicated that they had used the service.

(Excellent = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1)

The most highly rated service in 2022 was the Library/Learning Resource Center. The Library/LRC has continued to be the most highly rated service over the past three administrations (3-YR Average=4.37). Additionally, the quality of the services for students with disabilities has been a highly rated service from 2020 to 2022 as the 3-year average is 4.24.

Table 5. How well did the following services at our college meet your needs as a student?

	2020	2021	2022	3-YR AVERAGE
Library/Learning Resource Center	4.39	4.37	4.35	4.37
Services for students with disabilities	4.32	4.30	4.10	4.24
Quality of American Language Program instruction	4.11	4.05	4.36	4.17
Quality of major course instruction	4.17	4.18	4.12	4.16
Tutoring services	4.19	4.05	4.20	4.14
Quality of General Education course instruction	4.12	4.20	4.09	4.14
Quality of developmental English instruction	4.15	3.98	4.22	4.12
Admissions	4.05	4.13	4.13	4.10
Cooperative Education	4.13	4.05	4.00	4.06
Registration procedures	3.98	4.06	3.99	4.01
Quality of developmental Math instruction	4.11	3.83	4.08	4.01
Financial aid	3.85	3.97	3.94	3.92
Student Life activities	3.87	3.85	3.92	3.88
Transfer advisement	3.74	3.81	3.81	3.79
Counseling	3.65	3.90	3.80	3.78
Academic advisement	3.56	3.83	3.89	3.76
Career counseling	3.34	3.71	3.55	3.53
Job placement assistance	3.02	3.60	3.17	3.26

Regarding services, our graduates said[3]:

"We need more practice hours if possible. Professors are very good at BCC."

[3] These highlighted are presented in respondents' words verbatim.

Transfer Enrollment

Sixty-five percent of 2022 graduates, as shown in Table 6, enrolled in a degree-granting institution after graduating from Bergen Community College.

Table 6. Have you enrolled at another institution in a degree granting program since your graduation from BCC?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	115	77%	91	72%	60	65%
No	34	23%	35	28%	32	35%

Of the 60 respondents who transferred after graduating in 2022, 44 responded to the question about their current enrollment status. As Table 7 shows, 75% of respondents said they were enrolled full-time. The most frequently cited transfer institutions were Montclair State University (7 respondents), New Jersey Institute of Technology (5 respondents), William Paterson University (5 respondents), and Rutgers University (5 respondents).

Table 7. Please indicate your current status.

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Full-time Student	82	73%	61	69%	44	75%
Part-time Student	16	14%	14	16%	7	12%
No Longer Enrolled	14	13%	13	15%	8	14%

Table 8 shows the composite scores that indicate how well the graduates' courses at BCC prepared them for future education. Composite scores were calculated as the mean value of responses using the scale shown below:

(Excellent = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1)

According to these composite score ratings, students indicated "Good" preparation for further education after completing their course of study at Bergen.

Table 8. How well did the courses you completed at BCC prepare you for further education?

	2020	2021	2022
Composite Score	4.16	4.18	3.97

Regarding transfer enrollment, our graduates said[4]:

"All of BIO, micro-Biology, writing, communication and speech are transfer credit. The rest of the course that I have taken where NOT credited."

"I only went to BCC for a semester to complete my associates before taking time off but the transition back into school was seamless and I only had a year left to complete to finish my bachelor's! I graduate next semester"

"I graduated from Saint Peters University in 2023."

[4] These highlighted are presented in respondents' words verbatim.

Employment

As Table 9 shows, 77% of 2022 graduates reported being employed, either full- or part-time at the time of survey administration. Eleven percent of respondents stated that they were seeking employment at the time of the survey.

Table 9. What is your current employment status?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Employed full-time	61	41%	55	44%	41	45%
Employed part-time	37	25%	32	26%	29	32%
Not employed, but seeking employment	33	22%	22	18%	10	11%
Not available for employment	16	11%	15	12%	11	12%

Table 10 shows that of the 2022 graduates who reported being employed either full- or part-time, the majority (46%) stated that they were hired three months after graduating from Bergen.

Table 10. When did you get your job?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Before entering BCC	14	15%	19	23%	10	15%
While attending BCC	21	23%	12	15%	8	12%
Within 3 months after graduation	16	18%	15	18%	18	27%
More than 3 months after graduation	40	44%	36	44%	31	46%

Sixty-three percent of 2022 graduates reported annual earnings of $30,000 or more, as shown in Table 11. This was a decrease from last year's findings (68%). Sixteen percent of respondents in 2022 reported earning over $40,000 per year which is an increase with data from the two previous survey administrations.

Table 11. Please indicate your approximate annual salary.

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Below $15,000	21	24%	10	13%	11	17%
$15,000-$19,999	6	7%	6	8%	7	11%
$20,000-$29,999	8	9%	9	12%	6	9%
$30,000-$39,999	13	15%	7	9%	5	8%
$40,000-$49,999	10	11%	8	10%	10	16%
$50,000-Up	30	34%	37	48%	25	39%

Employment (Continued)

Sixty percent of employed 2022 graduates reported working in a position either directly related or somewhat related to their program of study at Bergen Community College, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Is your current job related to your program of study?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes, directly related	35	38%	26	32%	32	48%
Yes, somewhat related	17	18%	21	26%	8	12%
No, not related	40	43%	35	43%	26	39%

Graduates were asked how well their studies at BCC prepared them for their current position. In Table 13, composite scores were based upon a mean of responses using the scale shown below:

(Excellent = 5, Good = 4, Average = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1)

Based on the composite scores for the past three administrations of the survey, respondents, on average, stated that they received between "Average" to "Good" preparation at BCC for their current job.

Table 13. How well did the training you received at BCC prepare you for your current job?

	2020	2021	2022
Composite Score	3.48	3.68	3.64

Expectations for Improvement

In addition to their primary objectives for attending Bergen Community College, graduates were asked to assess the effect their experiences at BCC have had on their personal and academic development, specifically the extent to which certain skills have improved. In Table 14, the composite scores for improvement of these skills were calculated using the following scale:

(Very much = 4, Somewhat = 3, Very little = 2, Not at all = 1)

The skill in which 2022 graduates most improved was in "Ability to think critically". Respondents also improved in the areas of "Tolerance and understanding of other people in our diverse society" and "Ability to apply bodies of knowledge within and across disciplines".

Table 14. How much did BCC help your improvement in the following areas?

	2020	2021	2022
Communication Skills	3.33	3.22	3.05
Ability to apply bodies of knowledge within and across disciplines	3.38	3.28	3.25
Mathematical and computational ability	3.28	2.93	2.93
Computer fluency – retrieve, organize, and analyze information	3.12	3.02	2.85
Personal Responsibility – managing yourself and your commitments	3.47	3.35	3.22
Ability to think and express ideas creatively	3.40	3.26	3.17
Tolerance and understanding of other people in our diverse society	3.48	3.35	3.28
Ability to cope with new situations	3.52	3.32	3.17
Ability to think critically	3.51	3.32	3.41
Interpersonal skills – maintain professional relationships and engage in meaningful teamwork	3.45	3.23	3.00

Overall Impressions

Participants were asked whether they would recommend Bergen Community College to prospective students. As shown in Table 15, most graduates from all three years responded "yes" to this question.

Table 15. Would you recommend Bergen Community College to prospective students?

	2020		2021		2022	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	132	97%	111	96%	76	93%

Appendix I: After Graduation

In 2022, 54 respondents graduated from a transfer program. Of these respondents, 48 transferred to a degree-granting institution (89%). Below, Table 18 shows the institutions in which our transfer graduates in particular most frequently enrolled. Montclair State University was the most frequently transferred to institution (7 respondents), followed by New Jersey Institute of Technology (5 respondents), Rutgers University (5 respondents), and William Paterson University (5 respondents).

Table 18. Top Transfer Institutions for 2022 Transfer Program Graduates

Transfer Institution	#
Montclair State University	7
New Jersey Institute of Technology	5
Rutgers University	5
William Paterson University	5
Ramapo College of New Jersey	4
Fairleigh Dickinson University	3
Columbia University	2
Saint Peters University	2
Transferred to Other Institutions	*15*
TOTAL	**48**

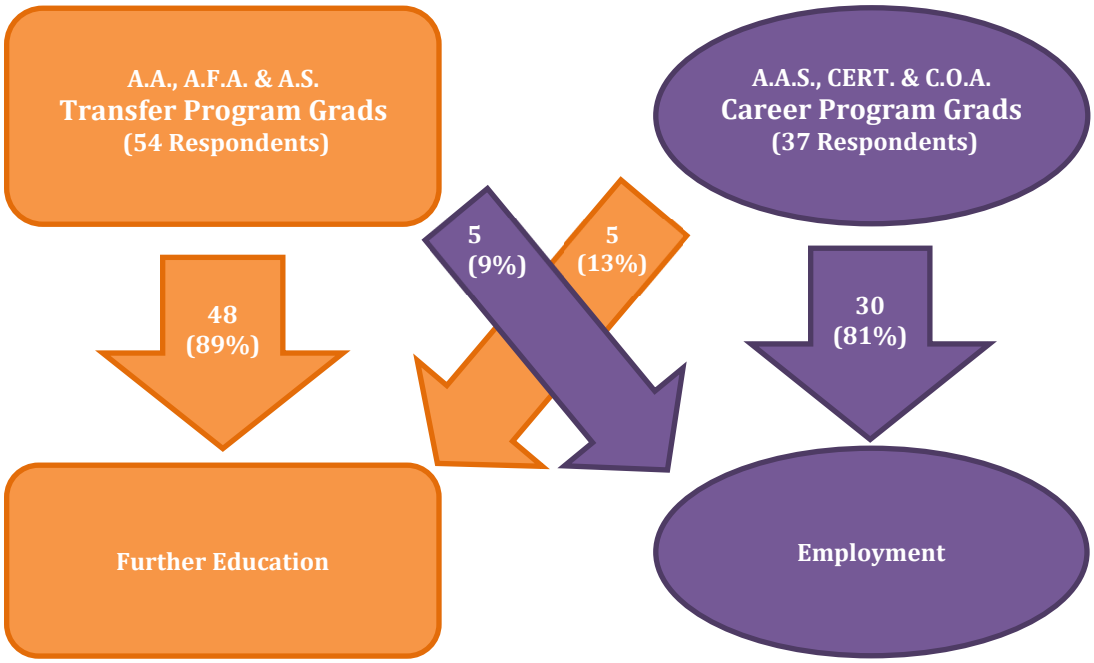
In 2022, 37 respondents graduated from a career program. Of these respondents, 30 were employed either full- or part-time after graduating (81%). The most frequently cited job titles were Dental Hygienist (5 respondents), Registered Nurse (3 respondents), Radiation Therapist (2 respondents), and Veterinary Technician (2 respondents).

Table 19. Top Occupations for 2022 Career Program Graduates

Job Title	#
Dental Hygienist	5
Registered Nurse	3
Radiation Therapist	2
Veterinary Technician	2
Other Professions	*18*
TOTAL	**30**

While it is important to see how transfer and career program graduates fared in regards to the primary objective of the program (i.e. how many students from transfer programs transferred and how many students from career programs joined the workforce), it is equally important to see if there was any crossover between these two groups. The flow chart below shows the crossover between students who graduated in transfer programs, but instead of transferring joined the workforce and students who graduated from career programs, but instead of joining the workforce transferred to a different institution.

Of the 54 respondents who graduated from a transfer program in 2022, 48 (89%) enrolled at a four-year institution and 5 respondents (9%) entered the workforce. Of the 37 respondents who graduated from a career program in 2022, 30 (81%) joined the workforce, and 5 respondents (13%) transferred to a four-year institution. This chart shows that while the majority of students who graduate from a transfer or career program stick to the primary objective of that program, there are some students who decide to take a different path after graduation.



Appendix II: The Graduate Follow-up Survey

Attached is the current version of the survey form. The survey form has been edited for space; items have been moved and resized to fit the format of this report.

BERGEN COMMUNITY COLLEGE- GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

Initial Goals and Satisfaction with Bergen

1. Which statement best describes your PRIMARY objective for first attending BCC?
   - O To improve job skills
   - O To prepare for first career
   - O To prepare for career change
   - O To earn a degree from BCC
   - O To complete courses for transfer
   - O To take courses for personal interest

2. Did you achieve your primary objective by the time you left the college? O Yes O No

3. Please rate the following services at our college on how well they met your needs as a student:

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	FAIR	POOR	DID NOT USE
Academic advisement	O	O	O	O	O	O
Admissions	O	O	O	O	O	O
Counseling	O	O	O	O	O	O
Financial Aid	O	O	O	O	O	O
Job Placement Assistance	O	O	O	O	O	O
Transfer Advisement	O	O	O	O	O	O
Library/Learning Resource Center	O	O	O	O	O	O
Registration Procedures	O	O	O	O	O	O
Student Life Activities	O	O	O	O	O	O
Career Counseling	O	O	O	O	O	O
Tutoring Services	O	O	O	O	O	O
Services for Students with Disabilities	O	O	O	O	O	O
Cooperative Education	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quality of American Language Program Instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quality of Major Course Instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quality of Developmental English Instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quality of Developmental Math Instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O
Quality of General Education Course Instruction	O	O	O	O	O	O

Education After Bergen

4. Have you enrolled at another institution in a degree granting program since your graduation from BCC?
   O Yes (proceed to next question) O No (skip to section C)

5. Please indicate your current status:
   O Full-time student O Part-time student O No longer enrolled

6. What is the name of your current or most recently attended institution?
   Name:_____ Major:_____

7. How well did the courses you completed at BCC prepare you for further education?

Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
O	O	O	O	O

8. Did you have any of the following problems while transferring to the college that you indicated? Please mark all that apply. If you did not have any problems, please leave blank.
   O Transferring credits from BCC to new institution O Sending transcript from BCC
   O Receiving transfer credits earned at BCC O Receiving transcript at other institution

Employment After Bergen

9. What is your current employment status?
   O Employed full-time O Not employed, but seeking employment
   O Employed part-time O Not available for employment

10. Is your current job related to your program of study?
    O Yes, directly related O Yes, somewhat related O No, not related

11. Please provide the following information.
    Job Title:_____
    Employer:_____ State: _____

12. When did you get your job?
    O Before entering BCC O Within 3 months after graduation
    O While attending BCC O More than 3 months after graduation

13. How well did the training you received at BCC prepare you for your current job?

Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
O	O	O	O	O

14. Please indicate your approximate annual salary.
    O Below $15,000 O $20,000 – $29,999 O $40,000 – $49,999
    O $15,000 – $19,999 O $30,000 – $39,999 O $50,000 – Up

15. Through what source did you first hear about your current position?
    O College Placement Office/ BCC faculty or Staff O Friend/relative
    O Web Search/Employment website(s) O Other _____

16. How much did BCC help your improvement in the following areas?

	Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at All
1. Communication Skills	O	O	O	O
2. Ability to apply bodies of knowledge within and across disciplines	O	O	O	O
3. Mathematical and Computational Ability	O	O	O	O
4. Computer Fluency-retrieve, organize and analyze information	O	O	O	O
5. Personal Responsibility-manage yourself and your commitments	O	O	O	O
6. Ability to think and express ideas creatively	O	O	O	O
7. Tolerance and understanding of other people in our diverse society	O	O	O	O
8. Ability to cope with new situations	O	O	O	O
9. Ability to think critically	O	O	O	O
10. Interpersonal Skills-maintain professional relationships and engage in meaningful team work	O	O	O	O

Wrap-Up Question

17. Would you recommend Bergen Community College to prospective students?
    O Yes O No

18. Do you have any additional comments?