



# MEDIA RELEASE

Association of Canadian Community Colleges

---

200-1223 rue Michael St. N., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1J 7T2 Tel./Tél.: (613) 746-2222 Fax/Télé.: (613) 746-6721 www.accc.ca

## The Grades are In: Unique Pan-Canadian Study of First Year College and Institute Students

**Ottawa, August 30, 2007:** College and institute students say Canadian colleges and institutes are doing a great job equipping them with the knowledge and skills they will need to be successful in the workforce, according to a recent study entitled the *Pan-Canadian Study of First Year College Students*.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) today released this study, which provides the most comprehensive national description of first-year students in Canadian colleges, institutes, cégeps and university colleges.

“A positive first semester experience is critical to a student’s decision to continue his or her post-secondary education,” said Gerry Brown, President of ACCC. “The more insight we have on the experiences of students in their first year of college, the better equipped we are in helping ensure they remain in college and are prepared for life in the workforce. This unique study, undertaken by ACCC and HRSDC, provides us with the information we need.”

The Government of Canada, which funded this study, recognizes that the future economic prosperity and social well-being of the country is dependent on having the best educated, most skilled, and most flexible workforce in the world. Nation-wide, over the next 10 years, two-thirds of job openings will be in occupations that will normally require some form of post-secondary education.

Some of the key findings of the study include:

- Just as many students attending colleges and institutes came from the workplace (29 percent) as from high school (30 percent);
- Although most students’ educational goals were focused on accessing a specific occupation (90 percent) or for career advancement (62 percent), a significant proportion of respondents also viewed college and institute programs as a stepping-stone to attending university (42 percent).
- Many students expressed a lack of confidence in their study, test-taking and math skills as well as uncertainty about the occupations they would hold upon graduation. These issues highlight the importance of enhancing support services and providing more comprehensive and readily-available career and occupation-related information and counseling.
- Despite the lack of confidence in academic skills and the career uncertainty expressed by survey respondents, the majority of students began college confident that they would succeed in their studies and achieve a post-secondary certificate.
- College and institute students’ experiences during the first term:
  - The results demonstrated that during the first term the majority of first year students had positive interactions with their peers and faculty, and overall had considered their first year college academic experience to be positive.
  - Students reported their greatest difficulty in college was balancing the demands of their studies with those of work. Additionally, many experienced financial difficulties.

The study involved two surveys of first year students at colleges and institutes: the Survey at College Entry identified the characteristics of these students; and the End of First Term Survey provided an understanding of the nature of their experience during the first term. Almost 29,000 students completed the Survey at College Entry, from 102 colleges and institutes and a total of 17,642 students completed the End of First Term Survey, from 92 colleges and institutes.

ACCC is the national and international voice of Canada's public sector post-secondary colleges, institutes of technology, cégeps and university colleges. To download the report, visit the Association's website at [www.accc.ca](http://www.accc.ca)

- 30 -

**Contact:**

Anna Toneguzzo  
Senior Policy Research Officer  
Member Services and Public Policy  
Association of Canadian Community Colleges  
Tel: 613-746-2222, ext. 3103  
[atoneguzzo@accc.ca](mailto:atoneguzzo@accc.ca)