



## SURVEY OF COLLEGE AND INSTITUTE STUDENTS: EDUCATION AND CAREER GOALS

### HIGHLIGHTS

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and the Public Policy Forum collaborated to conduct a survey of college and institute students' education and career goals, with the financial support of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency. The main purpose of the survey was to assess college and institute students' interest and motivation in working for the federal public service. However the survey also provides some insights on college and institute students' perspectives on future career choices and preferences, the skills they gained at college, and preferred job search strategies and approaches.

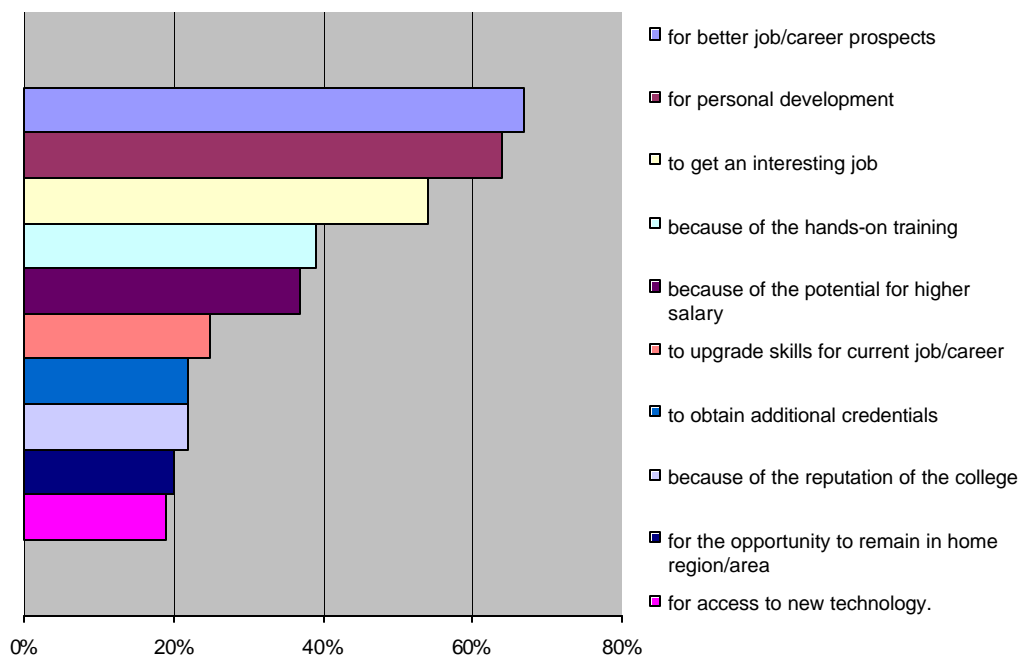
Survey results will be used to inform the Government of Canada about the significant potential that college and institute students have for many public service jobs. In particular, the Public Policy Forum has recommended that the federal government:

- expand post-secondary recruitment programs to include graduates and students of community colleges and institutes;
- expand student co-op recruitment programs to include community college and institute students;
- lead by example by promoting lifelong learning; and
- arrange for federal human resource managers and senior officials to visit college and institute campuses across the country to witness first-hand what colleges and institutes can provide.

The on-line survey of college and institute students ran from March to April 2005. ACCC invited all member colleges and institutes to participate and then followed up by targeting colleges and institutes located in key cities across the country with potential for employment with the federal public service. In total, 18 of colleges and institutes, from all regions of Canada and in key cities with federal government presence, accepted to send the on-line survey link to their students via institutional email systems and intranets. In total, 6,194 college and institute students responded to the survey.

The following are some of the key messages from respondent college and institute students:

#### ➤ **The 10 primary factors motivating students' decision to obtain a college or institute credential:**



➤ **College and institute students were asked how their college and institute education helped to improve their skills.**

The following are the skills aligned with the Essential Skills promoted by HRSDC as being important for enhanced employability.

### **Thinking Skills**

- 87 percent of respondents affirm their college education improved their ability to think critically, act logically to solve problems and make decisions.
- 86 percent affirmed that their college education improved their ability to plan, design or carry out a task from start to finish with well-defined objectives and outcomes; and assess situations and identify problems.
- 82 percent improved their ability to respond appropriately to complex and real-life situations

### **Working with Others**

- 86 percent affirmed that their college education improved their ability to work in teams and/or with other people.

### **Continuous Learning**

- 85 percent indicated that they recognize that learning is a life-long process.

### **Computer Use**

- 81 percent have improved their skills in using computers, technology, tools and information systems effectively.

### **Reading Text and Document Use**

- 78 percent affirmed they have improved their ability to read and comprehend text to perform specific tasks; and
- 73 percent improved their capacity to read and synthesize text.

### **Writing**

- 78 percent affirmed they improved their ability to communicate effectively in writing.

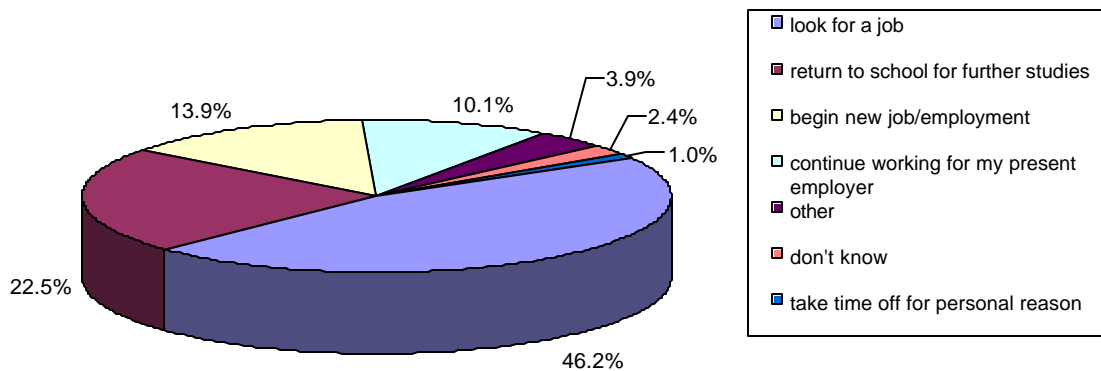
### **Oral Communication**

- 78 percent affirmed they improved their ability to communicate effectively verbally.

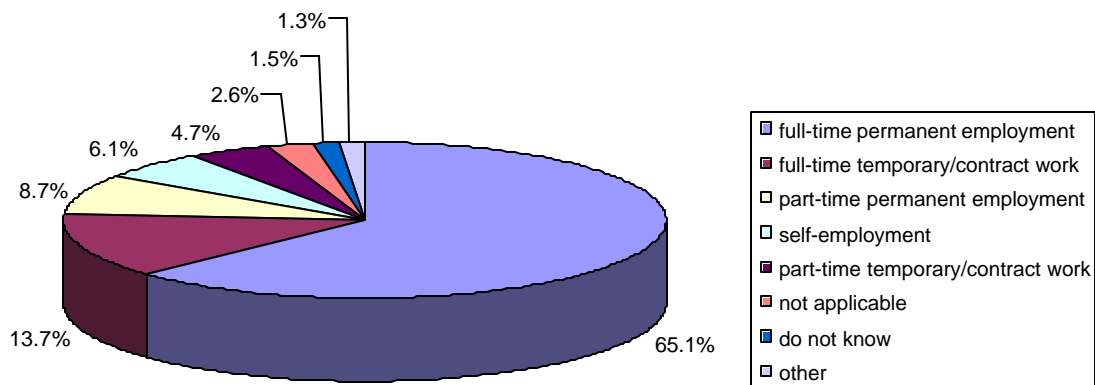
### **Numeracy**

- 66 percent improved their numeracy skills, including the ability to use numbers for practical measurement, calculations and/or estimates

➤ **Plans upon Graduation from students' current college/institute program:**



➤ **Type of work students will be looking for upon graduation from college/institute:**



➤ **College and institute students are confident their job search efforts will be successful:**

80 percent of respondents indicated they thought they would find the type of work they are seeking within 6 months of graduation

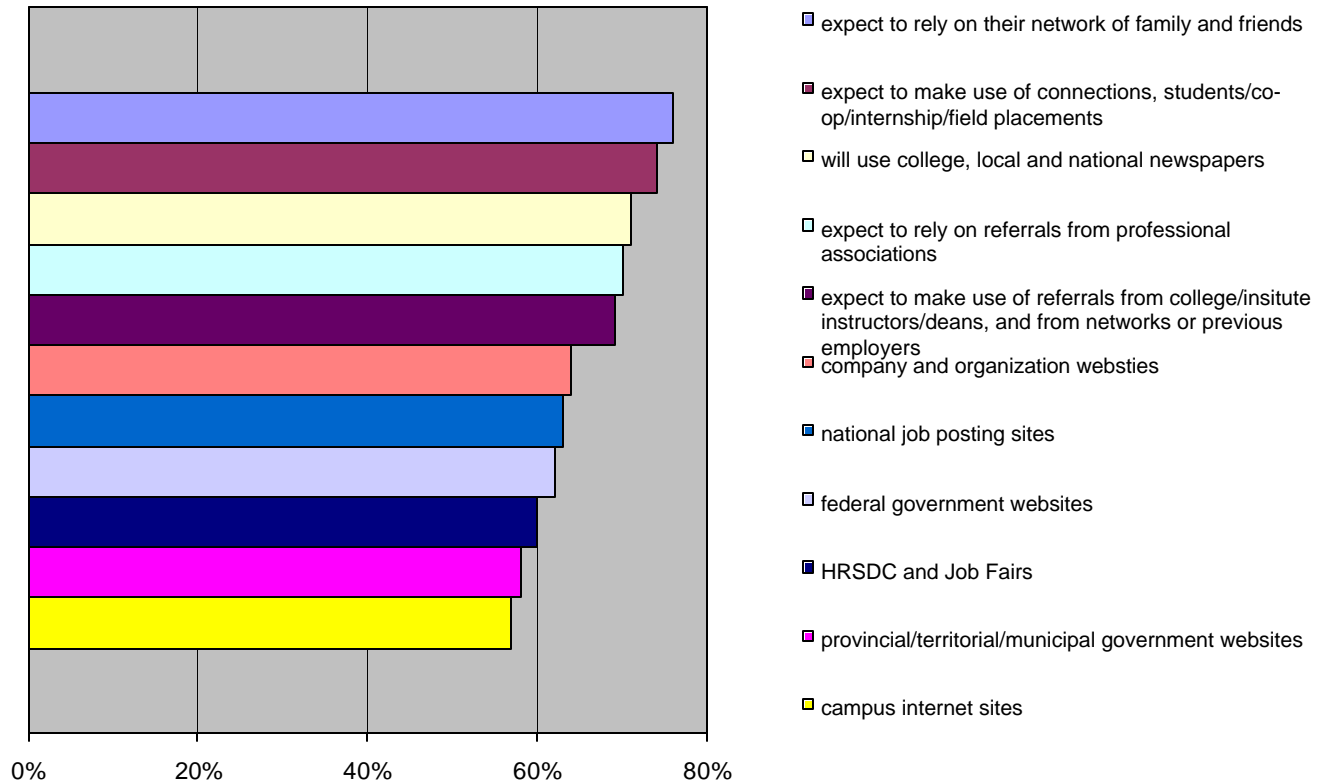
➤ **Students' career expectations and preferences, and perceptions on employment opportunities:**

- nearly half of respondents indicated they expect to work for 2 to 3 different employers;
- 40 percent would prefer a career with one employer;
- 24 percent would prefer a career with a number of different employers; and;
- 20 percent would prefer to be self-employed.
- More students perceive that there are more employment opportunities in the private sector (45 percent of respondents), followed by the provincial/territorial government (22 percent of respondents); and then the federal public service (14 percent of respondents).
- When asked which sector they would prefer to work, 30 percent would choose the private sector, 29 percent would choose the federal public service, and 22 percent would choose the provincial/territorial public service.

**Employment in the Public Service**

- When asked whether they would seek a career in the public sector, it seems that students clearly consider public sector work as a viable option. 36 percent are certain, 29 percent indicated they probably would, and 25 percent said they maybe would seek a career in the public sector.
- Most (43 percent) indicated they would prefer the federal public service, followed by 35 percent indicating they would prefer the provincial/ territorial public service, 16 percent would target municipal government.
- Over half of respondent students indicated that they feel it is difficult to find out about employment opportunities within the federal public service.

➤ **The most common job search methods and approaches used by college and institute students:**



➤ **The most important factors for College and Institute students' future career:**

