

News Release

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Board of Governors for Higher Education
Department of Higher Education
State of Connecticut



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Connecticut Employers Very Satisfied with Public College Graduates

Hartford, Sept. 28 — Connecticut public college graduates rate very high on the first-ever survey conducted of Connecticut employers by the Connecticut Department of Higher Education.

The pilot survey was conducted last spring and measures employer satisfaction with the state's public college graduates from the class of 2003. The survey was part of a four-state project titled, "Defining Best Practices for Responsible Accountability Models in Higher Education," funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). Department staff presented the findings to the monthly meeting of the Board of Governors for Higher Education held this afternoon at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford.

The study found that 4,300 Connecticut companies employed 9,260 graduates of the class of 2003 from the University of Connecticut, Connecticut State University and the community colleges. This yielded an overall in-state employment rate of 89 percent. Of these companies, the Department surveyed 3,007 about their satisfaction with four categories of the graduates: 1) basic skills, 2) professional skills, 3) personal attributes and 4) job skills. In all, the Department received completed 696 surveys for an overall response rate of 17 percent. Major findings are:

- Overall satisfaction with public graduates was *very high*. On a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 meaning 'very satisfied' and 1 meaning 'very dissatisfied,' Connecticut employers rated overall satisfaction at 3.45, falling between 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied.'
- The lowest rated area was in professional skills at 3.32, which includes such attributes as critical thinking, problem solving and team building.
- Job Skills were rated an overall 3.43 percent, followed by Basic Skills (3.49) and Personal Attributes (3.58).
- Although previous studies of workforce competencies in other states have found some deficiencies in basic skills and personal attributes, this does not appear to be the case for Connecticut's graduates. The rankings held true across types of institutions, although employers rated community college graduates highest on job skills and University of Connecticut graduates highest on basic skills.

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- About 44 percent of the employers indicated that the employees in question were working in jobs closely related to their degree program and another 25 percent said the jobs were somewhat related.
- The vast majority (79%) of the respondents indicated that the graduates evaluated in the survey had the necessary skills for promotion in the business. Almost 95 percent indicated that they would hire other graduates from that institution.
- The majority (54.5%) of the respondents indicated they would like to set up internship programs in the institution in question.

“This is great news for Connecticut colleges,” stated Higher Education Commissioner Valerie Lewis. “While we all know Connecticut college graduates excel, we now have the data to prove it. The state’s colleges are doing a terrific job of preparing graduates for the workplace. We hope sharing this information with college administrators will lead to expanded opportunities for internships and broader diversity among our graduates, especially in fields of workforce shortages.”

Copies of the survey may be downloaded from www.ctdhe.org.