

# Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

## 2007 SURVEY OF GRADUATES

Office of Institutional Research and Planning

June 15, 2007

### *Survey Purpose*

The purpose of the Graduation Survey<sup>1</sup> for Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College is to gather institutional opinion data with respect to student learning, student goals and general aspects of college life from the most important student population at Gulf Coast, our graduates. The survey is designed to measure the institution's impact on the personal growth of graduates in fourteen areas of student learning. Data collected to determine the future plans of our graduates will assist the research office in conducting follow-up studies of alumni. Aspects of college life were collected to determine overall quality of the institution.

### *Survey Error*

Of our 1,412 graduates from summer 2006, fall 2006 and spring 2007, 468 graduates participated in the graduate survey. To increase participation, the survey was reward-based. One graduate was randomly selected to receive a notebook computer donated by Howard Computers. Increased participation insures reliability of survey results. The sample of graduates responding yielded a 99% confidence level, with a 5% confidence interval for the results presented in this report.

### *Survey Demographics*

Of the respondents to the 2007 Graduation Survey, 328 were female (70%) and 140 were male (30%) and 65% of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 29. Most survey participants were enrolled as full-time students. Ninety-one percent of respondents reported having primarily a full-time status while attending Gulf Coast.

Respondents were composed of academic, career and technical graduates. 198 (42%) of respondents were academic, 132 (28%) respondents are technical graduates, 102 (22%) respondents are career graduates and 36 (7%) did not respond to the degree-type question. While the percent of respondents by degree type is disproportionate to the actual 2007 graduating class (14% career, 30% technical, and 56% academic), a number of career and technical graduates consider their degree from Gulf Coast a terminal degree, and thus more likely to respond to the exit survey for graduates.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.GulfCoast.edu/~instr\\_aff/factbook/graduate\\_survey\\_2007.pdf](http://www.GulfCoast.edu/~instr_aff/factbook/graduate_survey_2007.pdf)

Survey response by campus is listed in the table below. Survey results are representative of graduates from all campuses of Gulf Coast.

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Survey Participation by Campus

	Perkinston <sup>(a)</sup>	Jefferson Davis <sup>(b)</sup>	Jackson County	Campus Unknown
<i>Respondents</i>	120	145	180	23
<i>Percent Respondents</i>	25.6%	31.0%	38.5%	4.9%

(a) includes respondents from the George County Center

(b) Includes respondents from Keesler, West Harrison and Navy Base.

*College Life*

Graduates rated “availability of technical and career programs” as the number one reason for attending Gulf Coast. The second and third reasons for attending were “cost of attendance” and “quality of instruction.” The most frequent comment for “other” reasons to attend involved the athletics and band programs at Gulf Coast.

Availability of career and technical programs rated #1 reason to attend Gulf Coast by 2007 graduates

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Reasons for attending Gulf Coast

Reason	Count	Percent
<i>Quality of instruction</i>	87	19.8%
<i>Availability of programs</i>	102	23.2%
<i>Flexible format of classes</i>	56	12.7%
<i>Cost of attendance</i>	90	20.5%
<i>Convenience of location</i>	83	18.9%
<i>Wanted to be with friends</i>	3	0.7%
<i>Other</i>	19	4.3%

The top reason graduates attend Gulf Coast differs from the opinion of our general student body. The results of the 2007 ACT Student Opinion Survey<sup>2</sup> cite “convenient location” as the top rated reason for attending Gulf Coast.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mgccc.edu/~instr\\_aff/factbook/2007\\_SOS\\_ACT.pdf](http://www.mgccc.edu/~instr_aff/factbook/2007_SOS_ACT.pdf)

Most graduates believe Gulf Coast offers a higher quality education than other colleges. Sixty-two percent of those who were able to judge Gulf Coast against other colleges rated Gulf Coast a higher quality institution than other colleges, and 36.2% believe that Gulf Coast is at least equal in quality to other colleges. Two percent believe that Gulf Coast offers a lower quality education than other colleges.

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Comparison of quality of Gulf Coast with other colleges

Educational Quality	Count	Percent
<i>Higher Quality</i>	199	61.6%
<i>About the Same</i>	117	36.2%
<i>Lower Quality</i>	7	2.2%
<i>Unable to Judge</i>	108	-

***Future Plans***

The Graduate Survey indicates that most Gulf Coast graduates intend to transfer to four-year universities. Twenty-one percent of graduates surveyed had plans to begin a new job related to their degree studies at Gulf Coast. Eight percent were currently in search of a job, six percent of graduates plan to continue their current employment, and one percent planned to either travel or join the U.S. military.

**64%** of graduates plan to transfer  
**21%** of graduates will begin a new job

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Immediate future plans of graduates

Plan for future	Count	Percent
<i>Plan to transfer</i>	278	63.9%
<i>Begin employment</i>	91	20.9%
<i>Continue employment</i>	27	6.2%
<i>Seeking a job</i>	35	8.0%
<i>Travel</i>	2	0.5%
<i>Serve in the U.S. military</i>	2	0.5%

## *Learning Outcomes*

Graduates were asked to rate how their educational experiences at Gulf Coast contributed to their personal growth in fourteen areas of general education. While these ratings of student learning represent indirect evidence of student learning, the results of this survey are considered an important component of the assessment program at Gulf Coast.

The three highest-rated general learning outcomes were the following:

- working independently
- critical thinking/problem solving
- following complex directions

The three lowest-rated general learning outcomes were the following:

- heightening sense of cultural awareness
- scientific reasoning
- increased reading speed

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#### Percent response of learning outcome ratings

Outcome	very much	somewhat	very little	does not apply
<i>Effectively communicate in writing</i>	71%	26%	1%	2%
<i>Effectively communicate orally</i>	74%	22%	2%	1%
<i>Working cooperatively in a group</i>	73%	25%	2%	0%
<i>Critical thinking/problem solving</i>	76%	23%	1%	0%
<i>Application of technology</i>	71%	25%	2%	2%
<i>Scientific reasoning</i>	61%	32%	4%	3%
<i>Values awareness</i>	72%	23%	3%	1%
<i>Processing written information</i>	72%	24%	2%	2%
<i>Working independently</i>	81%	16%	3%	1%
<i>Heightening sense of cultural awareness</i>	67%	26%	5%	3%
<i>Following complex directions</i>	76%	21%	2%	0%
<i>Increasing reading speed</i>	63%	26%	9%	2%
<i>Organizing and managing your time</i>	77%	20%	3%	1%
<i>Recognizing your rights, responsibilities and privileges as a citizen</i>	74%	19%	5%	2%

An overall score was derived for each learning outcome by computing the simple weighted average by category of respondents. The overall score is based on a four-point scale, where a score of 4.00 is considered the highest possible rating. The rankings are shown in the table below.

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### Ranking of general learning outcomes

Rank	Outcome	Overall Score/4.0
1	<i>Work independently</i>	3.76
2	<i>Critical thinking/problem solving</i>	3.75
3	<i>Following complex directions</i>	3.73
4	<i>Organizing and managing your time</i>	3.73
5	<i>Effectively communicate orally</i>	3.70
6	<i>Working cooperatively in a group</i>	3.70
7	<i>Process written information</i>	3.67
8	<i>Values awareness</i>	3.66
9	<i>Effectively communicate in writing</i>	3.66
10	<i>Recognizing your rights, responsibilities and privileges as a citizen</i>	3.66
11	<i>Application of technology</i>	3.65
12	<i>Heightening sense of cultural awareness</i>	3.56
13	<i>Scientific reasoning</i>	3.52
14	<i>Increasing reading speed</i>	3.50

## Gulf Coast rated high-influence on learning

The results of the survey indicate that graduates generally perceive their experiences at Gulf Coast a positive impact on their overall learning.