

Harper College
Results of 2009 Career Graduate Survey

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Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the Career Graduate Survey of all 2009 graduates of Harper College career programs.

Similar to graduates in 2008, the overall responses were positive. Nearly 70 percent reported that their main objective in attending Harper was to obtain skills needed for a new job, while 20 percent reported taking coursework for transferring to another institution. Thirty-three percent of the 2009 graduate respondents have been enrolled in another college or university since leaving Harper.

More than 70 percent of the respondents reported being employed at least part-time, with nearly 50 percent of those respondents employed full-time. Of those not seeking employment, 61 percent stated that they were full-time students and 10 percent indicated being a full-time homemakers. In terms of job experience, more than 60 percent of the employed respondents were working in a job related to their Harper major, and employed graduates reported working an average of 31.72 hours per week with an average wage of \$18.54 per hour. Both the average number of hours worked and average wage are slightly lower than reported by 2008 graduates. The majority of 2009 respondents, 80% reported being “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with their jobs, which is consistent with 2008 graduates. Slightly more than 40 percent reported finding their jobs after leaving Harper; similarly 43 percent were employed before enrolling at Harper.

Graduates in 2009 were satisfied with their educational experiences at Harper. Approximately 90 percent of the respondents were either “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with 4 out of 5 categories involving their major program of study. Seventy percent were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with information on current employment opportunities.

When respondents were asked to rate facets of Harper instruction, at least 90 percent of the respondents were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with 3 out of 5 of the categories involving courses outside their major program. More than 80 percent were at least “*satisfied*” with their preparation for further education. Similarly, 76 percent were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with the job preparation. This shows very positive outcomes for 2009 graduates.

In general, recent graduates of Harper’s career programs appear to be employed, satisfied in their job experience, and satisfied with the services and instruction that Harper provides. For most of the items in the table that asked about the use of various services provided by Harper, most students indicated “*did not use*”. This seems to be an expected trend with the Career program students based on data from previous years.

Introduction

The Harper College Career Graduate Survey was conducted via mail during the fall 2009 semester. Harper alumni who graduated in fiscal year 2008 with A.A.S. degrees and various career program certificates were asked to participate. The questions on the survey are largely based on the Occupational Follow-Up Survey, which is required by ICCB for career programs under review. For those graduates whom did not return the mailed survey, the Career Graduate Survey was conducted via telephone¹ in the spring 2010 semester.

The report is organized into four sections: Executive Summary, Introduction, Results and Discussion, and Summary. The Executive Summary presents a synopsis of the overall results. The Introduction provides an overview of the report, specifically the process and basic organization of the data. The Results and Discussion Section displays the data in tabular format. The Summary section highlights results of interest. The Appendix presents contains a copy of the survey instrument.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics (racial/ethnic group, gender, and age group) for all 2128 graduates in 2009, as well as the demographic characteristics of the graduates from the previous year.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Graduates

Racial/Ethnic Group	Graduates 2008		Graduates 2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Asian/Pacific Islander	205	9%	202	9%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5	<1%	2	1%
African American	83	4%	44	3%
Hispanic	225	10%	185	9%
White	1602	69%	1474	69%
Other/Unknown	210	9%	192	9%
Gender				
Female	1453	62%	1369	64%
Male	877	38%	759	36%

Table 1: Continued

Age Group	Graduates 2008		Graduates 2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
18 and Under	83	4%	28	1%
19 to 24	1079	46%	966	45%
25 to 40	800	34%	1004	38%

¹ Beginning in 2005 with the survey of 2004 graduates, the survey was administered by telephone in an effort to increase response rate and shorten cycle time.

Over 40	368	16%	330	16%
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The number of graduates who self identified within specific ethnic groups remained consistent between both the 2008 and 2009 cohorts; with white being the overwhelming majority at 69 percent. Similarly, the majority (64%) of graduates were female. In terms of age, the largest proportion graduates were between 19 and 24 years old (45%).

The first question of the survey asks respondents for their main objective in attending Harper College. The following outlines the outcomes related data as reported by the respondents. For the purpose of comparison data, each table shows responses from both the 2008 and 2009 graduates.

Table 2: Question 1 – Main Objective in Attending Harper

What was your main objective in attending Harper College?	2008 (N=718)		2009 (N=425)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Obtain skills needed for entry into new or different job	345	48.1%	285	67.1%
Improve skills needed in present job	101	14.1%	30	7.1%
Explore courses to decide on a career	25	3.5%	7	1.6%
Take coursework for transfer to another college	199	27.7%	81	19.1%
Personal interest or self-improvement	48	6.7%	22	5.2%

More than half of the respondents indicated that their main objective at Harper was to obtain skills needed for entry into a new job, while approximately 20 % (n=81) reported that they were taking coursework in order to transfer to another college. Only 7% (n=30) reported that they were attending Harper to improve skills needed in their present jobs.

Table 3: Question 2 – Educational Status

What is your educational status?	2008 (N=716)		2009 (N=425)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Have not been enrolled in a college/university since leaving Harper	477	66.6%	260	61.2%
Have been enrolled in another college/university since leaving this college but not currently enrolled	22	3.1%	8	1.9%
Currently enrolled in a field of study related to previous community college program	176	24.6%	142	33.4%
Currently enrolled in a field of study unrelated to previous community college program	41	5.7%	15	3.5%

- Slightly more than 60 percent of respondents reported that they have not been enrolled in another college since leaving Harper.
- One-third of the surveyed graduates reported that they are currently enrolled in a field related to their previous program at Harper.

Table 4: Question 3 – Employment Status

What is your present employment status?	2008 (N=714)		2009 (N=425)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Employed full-time – 30 hours or more per week	427	59.8%	200	47.1%
Employed part-time – less than 30 hours per week	165	23.1%	111	26.1%
Full-time military service	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Unemployed, seeking employment	71	9.9%	65	15.3%
Unemployed, not seeking employment	51	7.1%	48	11.3%
Of those unemployed and not seeking employment :	2008 (N=79)		2009 (N=49)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Full-time student	36	36	30	61.2%
Full-time homemaker	14	14	5	10.2%
Health disability	3	3	3	6.1%
Family responsibilities	6	6	5	10.2%
Other	20	20	6	12.2%

Nearly three-fourths of the respondents indicated that they were employed at least part-time, with 60% (n=200) having full-time jobs. Of the 11% of respondents who stated that they were unemployed and not seeking employment 61% (n=30) were full-time students. This is nearly double the percent of those whom responded to the same question in 2008.

The respondents who were employed were asked to complete questions 4 through 9. Those not currently employed were asked to go directly to question 10. Data tables 5 through 9 report results for the employed respondents only.

Table 5: Question 4 and 4-1 – Relationship of Current Job to College Program

How closely is your present job related to your former community college program?	2008 (N=594)		2009 (N=308)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Related	422	71.0%	195	63.3%
Not related (please mark the one best reason why)	172	29.0%	113	36.7%
Of those present jobs not related:	(N=166)		(N=100)	
Preferred to work in another field	12	7.2%	11	11.0%
Found better paying job in another field	12	7.2%	5	5.0%
Could not find a job in my field of preparation	43	25.9%	1	1.0%
Worked previously in my field of preparation, but changed	1	0.6%	24	24.0%
Preferred not to move to new locality	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
Temporary job while in transition – either in college, between jobs, or summer employment	63	38.0%	0	0%
Took job in order to get preferred working hours	3	1.8%	57	57.0%
Did not complete program or pass licensing test to be eligible to work in my field	4	2.4%	0	0%
Health problems prevented me from working in my field of preparation	0	0.0%	1	1.0%

- A clear majority of respondents 63% (195) indicated that their present job was related to their former program at Harper.
- Of the respondents that indicated that their jobs were not related, 57 percent did not complete program or pass licensing test to be eligible to work in my field.

Table 6: Questions 5 and 6 – Hours Worked and Salary

Question Text	2008		2009	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
On the average, how many hours do you work each week? Do not include overtime hours.	589	35.33	308	31.72
What is your present hourly salary before deductions? Include commission but not overtime pay.	355	\$19.22	117	\$18.54

- Harper graduates in 2009 reported working an average of 31.72 hours per week and earned an average hourly salary of \$18.54.
- The salary earned and hours worked are slightly lower than those reported by the 2008 graduates.

Table 7: Question 7 – Job Satisfaction

In general, how satisfied are you with your present job?	2008 (N=591)		2009 (N=311)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	316	53.5%	148	47.6%
Somewhat satisfied	203	34.3%	103	33.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	40	6.8%	45	14.5%
Very dissatisfied	32	5.4%	15	4.8%

- Respondents reported a high level of job satisfaction with 80 percent being with “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*”.
- By comparison to last year data, slightly more graduates indicated that they were “*somewhat dissatisfied*” with their present job.

Table 8: Question 8 – Time in Present Job

When did you begin working in your present job?	2008 (N=593)		2009 (N=311)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Before entering the college program	226	38.1%	135	43.4%
While enrolled in the college program	129	21.8%	51	16.4%
After leaving the college program	238	40.1%	125	40.2%

- The largest group of Harper graduates, 43 percent reported finding their job before leaving Harper.
- Similarly, 40 percent began working after enrolling in their college program.

Table 9: Question 9 – Location of Employment

Where is the location of your primary place of employment?	2008 (N=584)		2008 (N=311)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Within Harper College district	329	56.3%	177	56.9%
Outside Harper College district, but in Illinois	236	40.4%	131	42.1%
Outside Illinois	19	3.3%	3	1.0%

- A majority of respondents 57 percent indicated that they are employed within the Harper district.
- On the other hand, 40 percent indicated being employed outside Harper’s district though in Illinois.

Questions 10, 11, and 14 ask respondents to report on their satisfaction with their experience at Harper: coursework in their major field of study, coursework outside their major field, and Harper’s support services.

Table 10: Question 10 – Satisfaction with Major Program of Study

Rate your satisfaction with the following items as they pertain to skill courses in your major program of study.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Content of courses in your program	(N=714)		(N=423)	
Very satisfied	439	61.5%	290	68.5%
Somewhat satisfied	236	33.1%	112	26.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	34	4.8%	19	4.5%
Very dissatisfied	5	0.7%	2	0.5%
Lectures, lab experiences, and group and individual projects	(N=706)		(N=421)	
Very satisfied	412	58.4%	270	64.2%
Somewhat satisfied	239	33.9%	124	29.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	46	6.5%	22	5.2%
Very dissatisfied	9	1.3%	4	1.1%

Table 10: Continued

Rate your satisfaction with the following items as they pertain to skill courses in your major program of study.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Equipment, facilities, and materials	(N=706)		(N=421)	
Very satisfied	455	64.4%	305	72.4%
Somewhat satisfied	191	27.1%	97	23.0%
Somewhat dissatisfied	49	6.9%	18	4.3%
Very dissatisfied	11	1.6%	1	0.2%
Job preparation	(N=649)		(N=362)	
Very satisfied	342	52.7%	214	59.1%
Somewhat satisfied	217	33.4%	108	29.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	68	10.5%	31	8.7%
Very dissatisfied	22	3.4%	8	2.3%
Preparation for further education	(N=656)		(N=387)	
Very satisfied	384	58.5%	237	61.2%
Somewhat satisfied	215	32.8%	118	30.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	49	7.5%	27	7.0%
Very dissatisfied	8	1.2%	5	1.3%
Information on current employment opportunities and trends	(N=607)		(N=311)	
Very satisfied	241	39.7%	118	37.9%
Somewhat satisfied	190	31.3%	104	33.4%
Somewhat dissatisfied	119	19.6%	64	20.6%
Very dissatisfied	57	9.4%	25	8.1%
Overall, how satisfied are you that your program provided you with the skills for your job?	(N=630)		(N=368)	
Very satisfied	361	57.3%	236	64.1%
Somewhat satisfied	219	34.8%	110	29.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	37	5.9%	20	5.4%
Very dissatisfied	13	2.1%	2	0.6%

- Approximately 90 percent of the respondents were either “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with 4 out of 5 categories involving their major program of study.
- Seventy percent were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with information on current employment opportunities.

Table 11: Question 11 – Satisfaction with General Education

Rate your satisfaction with the following items as they pertain to skill courses outside your major program of study.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Content of courses outside your program	(N=322)		(N=130)	
Very satisfied	192	59.6%	83	63.8%
Somewhat satisfied	113	35.1%	39	30.0%
Somewhat dissatisfied	13	4.0%	7	5.4%
Very dissatisfied	4	1.2%	1	0.8%
Lectures, lab experiences, and group and individual projects	(N=318)		(N=127)	
Very satisfied	187	58.8%	78	61.4%
Somewhat satisfied	115	36.2%	43	33.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	4.4%	5	3.9%
Very dissatisfied	2	0.6%	1	0.8%
Equipment, facilities, and materials	(N=321)		(N=128)	
Very satisfied	195	60.7%	87	68.0%
Somewhat satisfied	110	34.3%	36	28.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	4.4%	4	3.1%
Very dissatisfied	2	0.6%	1	0.8%
Job preparation	(N=250)		(N=74)	
Very satisfied	131	52.4%	38	51.4%
Somewhat satisfied	86	34.4%	19	25.7%
Somewhat dissatisfied	23	9.2%	14	18.9%
Very dissatisfied	10	4.0%	3	4.0%
Preparation for further education	(N=302)		(N=91)	
Very satisfied	179	59.3%	56	61.5%
Somewhat satisfied	105	34.8%	21	23.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	13	4.3%	11	12.1%
Very dissatisfied	5	1.7%	3	3.3%

At least 90 percent of the respondents were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with 3 out of 5 of the categories involving courses outside their major program. More than 80 percent were at least “*satisfied*” with their preparation for further education. Similarly, 76 percent were “*satisfied*” or “*very satisfied*” with the job preparation. The data in the above table displays very positive outcomes for both the 2008 and 2009 graduates.

Questions 12 and 13 ask respondents to report on the instruction and convenience of Harper's various locations, respectively. Table 12 displays the results of how graduates rated the instruction at Harper College. For each item listed below, 90 percent of the respondents rate that aspect of instruction as either "excellent" or "good".

Table 12: Question 12 – Rating Harper Instruction

Rate the instruction at Harper College.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Class Size	(N=710)		(N=425)	
Excellent	410	57.7%	270	63.5%
Good	236	33.2%	117	27.5%
Average	60	8.5%	34	8.0%
Poor	4	0.6%	3	0.7%
Not applicable			1	0.2%
Quality of instruction	(N=714)		(N=425)	
Excellent	377	52.8%	245	57.6%
Good	259	36.3%	140	32.9%
Average	73	10.2%	33	7.8%
Poor	5	0.7%	5	1.2%
Not applicable			2	0.5%
Course content	(N=714)		(N=424)	
Excellent	370	51.8%	252	59.4%
Good	299	41.9%	151	35.6%
Average	41	5.7%	20	4.8%
Poor	4	0.6%	1	0.2%
Not applicable			0	0%
Fairness of grading	(N=710)		(N=425)	
Excellent	401	56.5%	254	59.8%
Good	250	35.2%	141	33.2%
Average	50	7.0%	27	6.4%
Poor	9	1.3%	3	0.6%
Not applicable			0	0%
Faculty teaching ability	(N=712)		(N=425)	
Excellent	390	54.8%	247	58.1%
Good	242	34.0%	141	33.2%
Average	71	10.0%	32	7.5%
Poor	9	1.3%	5	1.2%
Not applicable			0	0%
Faculty concern for students	(N=710)		(N=425)	
Excellent	377	53.1%	256	60.2%
Good	236	33.2%	127	29.9%
Average	77	10.8%	32	7.5%
Poor	20	2.8%	10	2.4%
Not applicable			0	0%
Faculty availability	(N=708)		(N=425)	
Excellent	394	55.6%	260	61.2%
Good	232	32.8%	126	29.6%
Average	66	9.3%	31	7.3%
Poor	16	2.3%	6	1.4%
Not applicable			2	0.5%

Table 13: Question 13 – Rating Course Convenience of Harper Locations

Rate the location of the courses taken in terms of convenience.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Harper main campus – Palatine	(N=685)		(N=425)	
Very convenient	554	80.9%	348	81.9%
Convenient	111	16.2%	57	13.4%
Not convenient	20	2.9%	10	2.4%
Not applicable			10	2.4%
Northeast Center – Wheeling	(N=93)		(N=425)	
Very Convenient	55	59.1%	44	10.3%
Convenient	16	17.2%	24	5.6%
Not convenient	22	23.7%	10	2.3%
Not applicable			347	81.6%
WEB or Internet based – from home or office	(N=282)		(N=425)	
Very convenient	204	72.3%	162	38.1%
Convenient	62	22.0%	36	8.5%
Not convenient	16	5.7%	5	1.2%
Not applicable			222	52.2%
Harper Professional Center – Schaumburg	(N=71)		(N=425)	
Very convenient	43	60.6%	11	2.6%
Convenient	18	25.4%	2	0.5%
Not convenient	10	14.1%	0	0%
Not applicable			412	97%
Other	(N=29)		(N=424)	
Very convenient	20	69.0%	6	1.4%
Convenient	8	27.6%	4	0.9%
Not convenient	1	3.4%	1	0.2%
Not applicable			413	97.5%

- In rating the course convenience of Harper locations 4 of the 5 items were identified as “not applicable” by the 2009 graduates.
- More than 90 percent rated the Harper main campus as “convenient “or “very convenient”.

Table 14: Question 14 – Satisfaction with College Services

Rate your satisfaction with each office or service listed below.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Financial Aid services	(N=195)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	116	59.5%	78	18.4%
Somewhat satisfied	47	24.1%	35	8.2%
Somewhat dissatisfied	19	9.7%	19	4.5%
Very dissatisfied	13	6.7%	14	3.3%
Did not use	518	n/a	279	65.6%
Career planning	(N=214)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	95	44.4%	63	14.8%
Somewhat satisfied	72	33.6%	38	8.9%
Somewhat dissatisfied	30	14.0%	9	2.1%
Very dissatisfied	17	7.9%	11	2.7%
Did not use	497	n/a	304	71.5%
College transfer planning	(N=153)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	69	45.1%	52	12.2%
Somewhat satisfied	53	34.6%	29	6.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	19	12.7%	13	3.1%
Very dissatisfied	12	7.8%	6	1.4%
Did not use	556	n/a	325	76.5%
Counseling	(N=221)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	111	50.2%	55	12.9%
Somewhat satisfied	69	31.2%	28	6.6%
Somewhat dissatisfied	28	12.7%	6	1.4%
Very dissatisfied	13	5.9%	5	1.2%
Did not use	488	n/a	331	77.9%
Tutoring	(N=201)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	114	56.7%	61	14.4%
Somewhat satisfied	61	30.3%	36	8.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	18	9.0%	7	1.6%
Very dissatisfied	8	4.0%	7	1.6%
Did not use	509	n/a	314	73.9%
Library/audio visual services	(N=466)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	331	71.0%	206	48.5%
Somewhat satisfied	110	23.6%	57	13.4%
Somewhat dissatisfied	17	3.6%	8	1.9%
Very dissatisfied	8	1.7%	1	0.2%
Did not use	248	n/a	153	36.0%
Student activities	(N=155)		(N=423)	
Very satisfied	85	54.8%	44	10.4%
Somewhat satisfied	54	34.8%	22	5.2%
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	7.7%	5	1.2%
Very dissatisfied	4	2.6%	2	0.5%
Did not use	557	n/a	350	82.7%

Table 14: Continued

Rate your satisfaction with each office or service listed below.	2008		2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Registration procedures	(N=686)		(N=424)	
Very satisfied	444	64.7%	273	64.4%
Somewhat satisfied	178	25.9%	101	23.8%
Somewhat dissatisfied	44	6.4%	29	6.8%
Very dissatisfied	20	2.9%	15	3.6%
Did not use	28	n/a	6	1.4%
Access for disabled on campus	(N=93)		(N=424)	
Very satisfied	63	67.7%	105	24.8%
Somewhat satisfied	22	23.7%	17	4.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	6	6.5%	4	0.9%
Very dissatisfied	2	2.2%	1	0.2%
Did not use	617	n/a	297	70.0%
Availability of computers for out-of-class use	(N=492)		(N=423)	
Very satisfied	363	73.8%	251	59.4%
Somewhat satisfied	110	22.4%	57	13.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	14	2.8%	4	0.9%
Very dissatisfied	5	1.0%	1	0.2%
Did not use	221	n/a	110	26.0%
Career Center	(N=213)		(N=423)	
Very satisfied	133	62.4%	287	20.5%
Somewhat satisfied	57	26.8%	40	9.4%
Somewhat dissatisfied	16	7.5%	5	1.2%
Very dissatisfied	7	3.3%	1	0.2%
Did not use	498	n/a	292	68.7%
Academic Advising	(N=379)		(N=425)	
Very satisfied	208	54.9%	133	31.3%
Somewhat satisfied	112	29.6%	65	15.3%
Somewhat dissatisfied	42	11.1%	33	7.8%
Very dissatisfied	17	4.5%	17	4.0%
Did not use	335	n/a	177	41.6%

- For most of the items in the above table, students indicated “*did not use*” as related to the varying services listed.
- With the exception of “*registration procedures*” all services listed above were rated noticeably lower by the 2009 graduates than the 2008 graduates.

Question 15 asks about the respondents' appreciation for diversity and varying cultures and Harper.

Table 15: Question 15 – Diversity at Harper

As a result of my experiences at Harper, I have a better appreciation for diversity and different cultures and values?	2008 (N=703)		2009 (N=421)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Definitely yes	154	21.9%	108	25.4%
Yes	419	59.6%	233	54.8%
No	115	16.4%	77	18.1%
Definitely no	15	2.1%	3	0.7%

- Most respondents indicated that they had a better appreciation for diversity and different cultures as a result of their experiences at Harper.
- Nearly 20 percent (n=77) of the participants indicated that they did not have a better appreciation for diversity and different cultures as a result of their experiences at Harper.

Questions 16 and 17 ask respondents if they would recommend Harper to others and return themselves

Table 16: Question 16 – Student Recommendation of Harper

Would you recommend Harper College to your friends and family?	2008 (N=713)		2009 (N=424)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Definitely yes	394	55.3%	244	57.5%
Yes	300	42.1%	170	40.2%
No	11	1.5%	6	1.4%
Definitely no	8	1.1%	4	0.9%

Ninety-seven percent of Harper graduates would recommend Harper to their friends and family. This is consistent with the responses of the 2008 graduates.

Table 17: Question 17 – Future Educational Plans at Harper

Would you return to Harper for educational or personal enrichment courses in the near future?	2008 (N=713)		2009 (N=425)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Definitely yes	301	42.2%	185	43.5%
Yes	353	49.5%	206	48.5%
No	45	6.3%	26	6.1%
Definitely no	14	2.0%	8	1.9%

Approximately 92 percent of Harper graduates would return for educational or personal enrichment courses in the near future. This is consistent with the responses of the 2008 graduates.

The following tables for questions 18 through 20 involve open-ended questions regarding what respondents liked best about Harper and ways for Harper to improve its instruction and services, respectively. Tables for these questions include the most prevalent comments made by respondents and involve the total number of comments stated by respondents to each question. In some instances respondents provided more than one comment per question. Similarly, some respondents opted not to provide comments to specific questions.

Table 18: Question 18 – Positive Comments about Harper

What did you like best about Harper? (N=400)	Number	Percent
Faculty	117	29.2%
Affordability/Low Cost	101	25.2%
Location/Close to Home	93	23.2%
Campus and Facility Upgrades	32	8.0%
Variety/Amount of Courses/Curriculum	21	5.3%
Specific Programs	16	4.0%
Class Schedule Hours/Availability	13	3.3%
Other/No General Trend	7	1.8%

Respondents indicated that they most liked the faculty at Harper College. One graduate reported “the teachers are very easy to understand”. Still another simply stated, “the faculty was interested in student progress”. Other prevalent comments involving what respondents liked best about Harper included affordability (25%) and campus location or being close to their homes (23%).

Table 19: Question 19 – Comments about Instructional Improvements

How can the College improve its instruction? (N=87)	Number	Percent
Improve Experience/Quality of Teachers	46	52.8%
Create New Courses/Improve Class Availability	16	18.4%
Add/Improve Specific Programs	9	10.3%
Offer Four-Year Degrees	6	7.0%
Add/Improve Technology/Equipment	4	4.6%
Other/No General Trend	4	4.6%
No Change	2	2.3%

Despite the number of positive comments made in response to question 18, many graduates indicated that improving the quality of teachers was most needed (52%). One graduate recalled as an example, “The corporate income tax class I took. I received a B in it but if I were to take a test in it I would receive an F. Because the class was all lecture and no hands on. I couldn’t even do an income tax form. I had a couple of classes like this unfortunately. Teachers need to do hands on so we can retain the knowledge.” Likewise, another respondent stated, “The faculty are very hard on the students and it fosters a “cut-throat” environment”. There were also a number of comments related course availability (18%). Graduates suggested that more online courses be made available.

Table 20: Question 20 – Comments about Service Improvements

How can the College improve its services? (N=129)	Number	Percent
Improve Quality of Specific Office/Personnel	53	41.1%
Add/Improve Parking	24	18.6%
Other/No General Trend	20	15.5%
More Information on Available Services	12	9.4%
Improve Academic Advisor Access	11	8.5%
No Changes	9	6.9%

When asking how Harper can improve its services, the most prevalent comment involved the need to improve the quality of specific offices (41%) for the purposes of this report, no one office will be identified specifically. An additional 19 percent of respondents commented on the need to improve parking.

Summary

The 2009 Career program graduates were very positive about their experiences at Harper. The vast majority of graduates indicated that their main objective was to obtain job skills for entry into a new or different job, while the percentage of respondents that indicated taking coursework to transfer to another college increase from 28 percent in 2008 to 20 percent in 2009.

As in previous years, the skills acquired in the Career programs at Harper were beneficial to the graduates in seeking and acquiring employment. Most respondents (70%) reported being employed at least part-time with nearly 50 percent being employed full-time. Additionally, more than 60 percent of the respondents reported working in a field that was related to their college program. The Career graduates of 2009 averaged 31.72 hours per week and earned an average wage of \$18.54 per hour. Harper graduates in 2009 were satisfied with their present employment situation (80% satisfied). This is very consistent with the responses of the graduates of both 2007 and 2008.

Consistent with the experiences of graduates in recent years, most respondents in 2009 were satisfied with all aspects of their major program of study and with their general education courses. Also consistent with graduates in previous years, Harper career graduates continued to rate instruction favorably, especially regarding course content and class size.

The graduates' survey response varied greatly as related to listed college services. For most of the items listed as college services, students indicated they did not use many of them. With the exception of "*registration procedures*" all services listed were rated noticeably lower by the 2009 graduates than the 2008 graduates. Interestingly, 97 percent stated that they would recommend Harper to family and/or friends. In addition, more than 90 percent indicated that they would return to Harper in order to take educational or personal enrichment courses.

As previously stated in this report, recent graduates of Harper's career programs appear to be employed, satisfied in their job experience, and satisfied with the services and instruction that Harper provides. This is a positive trend which has continued since 2004. As evidence of this, the graduates indicated that they would be willing to recommend Harper to their family and friends. However, it can be argued that many graduates did not receive the full benefit of what Harper has to offer because often the respondents indicated that they did not use many of the services offered to watch. Although it is not uncommon, it may be useful to explore the reasons why graduates do not use many of the Harper service.

Appendix
Responses to Open-Ended Questions
Survey Instrument

Career Graduate Follow-up Survey



Harper College

HARPER COLLEGE 2006 CAREER GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP

Congratulations on your graduation from Harper College. In order to improve programs and services, we need your feedback concerning the time you spent at Harper. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed pre-stamped envelope. Thank you!

Survey number

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Use pencil/black ink

1. What was your main objective in attending Harper college? Mark **ONE** response.

- a. Obtain skills needed for entry into new or different job
- b. Improve skills needed in present job
- c. Explore courses to decide on a career
- d. Take coursework for transfer to another college
- e. Personal interest or self-improvement

2. What is your educational status? Mark **ONE** response.

- a. Have not been enrolled in a college/university since leaving Harper
- b. Have been enrolled in another college/university since leaving this college but am not currently enrolled
- c. Currently enrolled in field of study related to previous community college program
- d. Currently enrolled in field of study unrelated to previous community college program

3. What is your present employment status? Mark **ONE** response a-e.

- a. Employed full-time - 30 hours or more per week
- b. Employed part-time - less than 30 hours per week
- c. Full-time military service
- d. Unemployed, seeking employment
- e. Unemployed, not seeking employment - mark **ONE** reason below, if "e" selected.
 - 1. Full-time student
 - 2. Full-time homemaker
 - 3. Health disability
 - 4. Family responsibilities
 - 5. Other - specify: _____

Continue with questions 4 through 9 only if employed. If not employed skip to question 10.

4. How closely is your present job related to your former community college program?

- a. Related - (go directly to question 5)
- b. Not related - (answer question below before going to question 5)

If your present job is **NOT** related to your college program, what is the **ONE BEST** reason why?

- a. Preferred to work in another field
- b. Found better paying job in another field
- c. Could not find a job in my field of preparation
- d. Worked previously in my field of preparation, but changed
- e. Preferred not to move to new locality
- f. Temporary job while in transition - either in college, between jobs, or summer employment
- g. Took job in order to get preferred working hours
- h. Did not complete program or pass licensing test to be eligible to work in my field
- i. Health problems prevented me from working in my field of preparation
- j. Other - specify: _____

Continue on next page

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12. Please rate the instruction in general in each of the following:

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Not applicable
a. Class size.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Quality of instruction.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Course content.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Fairness of grading.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Faculty teaching ability.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Faculty concern for students.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Faculty availability.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Please rate the location of the courses taken in terms of convenience:

	Very convenient	Convenient	Not convenient	Not applicable
a. Harper main campus in Palatine.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Northeast Center in Wheeling.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. WEB or Internet based from home or office.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Harper Professional Center in Schaumburg.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Other - specify:.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Rate your satisfaction with each office or service listed below: Mark the ONE that most clearly represents the opinion.

	Did not use	Very dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
a. Financial Aid services.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Academic advising.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Career planning.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. College transfer planning.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Counseling.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Tutoring.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Library/audio visual services.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Student activities.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Registration procedures.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Access for disabled on campus.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Availability of computers for out-of-class use.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Career Center.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. As a result of my experiences at Harper, I have a better appreciation for diversity and different cultures and values.....

	1. Definitely no	2. No	3. Yes	4. Definitely yes
15. As a result of my experiences at Harper, I have a better appreciation for diversity and different cultures and values.....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. On a one to four scale where one is "definitely no" and four is "definitely yes", would you recommend Harper College to your friends and family?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Would you return to Harper for educational or personal enrichment courses in the near future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. On a one to four scale where one is "definitely no" and four is "definitely yes", would you recommend Harper College to your friends and family?

17. Would you return to Harper for educational or personal enrichment courses in the near future?

Continue on next page

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18. What did you like best about Harper?

19. How can the College improve its instruction?

20. How can the College improve its services?

May we have your permission to send your supervisor a questionnaire regarding how well graduates of Harper College perform on the job? Please fill in information below.

Supervisor name: _____

Title: _____

Name of company: _____

Company address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

Thank you for completing this survey

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