



Austin Community College

Graduate Follow-up Survey Analysis  
AY 2011 – AY 2014

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## Graduate Follow-up Survey Analysis AY 2011 – AY 2014

### Executive Summary

Six months after graduation, Austin Community College (ACC) graduates are surveyed via telephone and by email regarding their: employment status, perception of how well ACC education improved their abilities, satisfaction with ACC services, future educational plans, transfer of credits to other institutions, and participation as a volunteer in a position related to their ACC training. The Graduate Follow-up Survey provides a unique perspective from ACC graduates regarding the quality and applicability of ACC programs and curriculum.

This report covers the survey responses from AY 2011 thru AY 2014. A total of 2,219 responses were received during this period. This represents an overall response rate of 23.0% for the four academic years.

- **Employment Outcomes for ACC Graduates:**
  - Employed (78% averaged across 4 academic years):
    - Full-time, ≥ 35 hours (55.3%)
    - Part-time, < 35 hours (17.8%)
    - Self-employed (5%)
    - Reporting to job in next 30 days (1.5%)
    - ❖ *Trend: Increase in self-employment (3.8% in AY11 to 5.7% in AY14) and decrease in full-time employment (AY11, 58.5% to AY14, 54.7%)*
  - Not-employed (20.4% averaged across 4 academic years):
    - Not employed and actively seeking work (9.2%)
    - Not employed and not seeking work (11.2%)
    - ❖ *Trend: Increase in not currently employed but actively seeking work (6.6% in AY11 to 8.2% in AY14)*
  
- **Marketability of Degree for Employed Graduates:**
  - Degree required for job (42.7%):
    - ❖ *Trend: Slight decrease since AY 11 (42.5% in AY11 to 41.1% in AY14)*
  - Degree not required but use training/skills on job (36.1%):
    - ❖ *Trend: Substantial increase since AY 11 (31.3% in AY11 to 39.5% in AY14)*
  - Degree not related to job (21.2%):
    - ❖ *Trend: Moderate decrease since AY11 (26.3% in AY11 to 19.4% AY14)*
  - Program completion increased opportunities at current position (66.8%):
    - ❖ *Trend: Substantial increase since AY11 (59.6% in AY11 to 68.5% AY14)*
  
- **Graduates' Perception of how well ACC education improved ability:**  
(To ease interpretation Improvement = Very Much + Quite a Bit responses)
  - Improvement: Very Little to Very Much Range:
    - High: Critical thinking (79.8%)  
Learn on Your Own (78.6%)  
Solve Problems (77.2%)
    - Low: Ethics (70.1%)  
Understand Cultures (69.3%)

- **Graduates' Perception of how well ACC education improved ability** (continued):
  - ❖ *Trends:*
    - ACC was rated relatively high as improving ability in all 11 areas. More than two thirds of the students responded either "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" (averaged across AY11 to AY14)
    - Ten Areas showed a percentage point decrease and one showed an increase in the percent of graduates rating ACC as improving their ability "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit".
      - Areas with largest decreases included:
        - Q12\_3 Your ability to recognize differences among commonalities among people from different backgrounds and cultures (74.5% in AY11 to 67.0% AY14)
        - Q12\_5 Your ability to work with others to achieve a common goal (77.6% in AY11 to 71.7% AY14)
      - One Area showed a percentage point increase
        - Q12\_8 Your ability to use data and other types of evidence to solve problems (77.6% in AY11 to 71.7% AY14)
- **Graduates' Graduates' Satisfaction with Various ACC Services:**

(To ease interpretation Satisfaction = Very Satisfied + Satisfied responses; averaged across AY11 to AY14)

  - Satisfaction: Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied:
    - High: Overall Quality of Teaching (92.1%)  
Overall Quality of Classes (91.6%)  
Overall Experience (90.8%)
    - Low: Veterans Services (55.9%)  
Job Placement Services (47.1%)
  - ❖ *Trends:*
    - Student satisfaction is relatively high. Thirteen of the fifteen areas received satisfaction ratings > than 70%
      - Satisfaction with Admissions & Records and Tutoring Services has increased (79.8% in AY11 to 87.1% in AY14).
      - Getting Transcripts has shown a steady increase (86.7% in AY11 to 90.8% in AY14)
      - Satisfaction with Academic Advising has decreased slightly while satisfaction with Counseling Services has fluctuated, but did increase (74.1 in AY11 to 73.5% in AY14 , 72.9% in AY11 to 74.3% in AY14 respectively)
      - Satisfaction with Financial Aid has increased (76.9% in AY11 to 78.2% in AY14) .
      - Satisfaction with Availability of Classes and Location of Classes both increased (81.0% in AY11 to 85.0% in AY14, 77.4% in AY11 to 79.2% in AY14)
      - Satisfaction with Job Placement Services and Veterans Services both showed a substantial increase overall across the four academic years (41.3% in AY11 to 52.9% in AY14; 46.4% in AY11 to 64.3% in AY14).

- **ACC Graduates' Future Educational Plans:**
  - Currently enrolled or planning to continue education (58%)
  - Institutions chosen by ACC Graduates:
    - ACC (34.4%)
    - Other in Texas (27.2%)
    - Texas State University at San Marcos (12.9%)
    - Undecided (10.8%)
    - University of Texas at Austin (9.6%)
    - Other Out-of-state (5.1%)
  
- **Transferring Credits to Other Institutions (ACC not included):**
  - All of ACC credits accepted:
    - Yes (48%)
    - No (32%)
    - Do not know yet (20%)
  - ACC Credits Not Accepted for Transfer:
    - 1 to 3 (42.2%)
    - 4 to 12 (36.4%)
    - 13 to 30 (13.9%)
    - 30 > (7.5%)
  
- **ACC Graduates who Volunteer in Areas Related to their ACC Training:**
  - Yes (13.2%)
  - No (86.8%)

## **Graduate Follow-up Survey Analysis AY 2011 – AY 2014**

### **Analysis of Key Findings**

#### Purpose of the Graduate Follow-up Survey

In an age of increasing globalization, growth in flexible and alternative means of delivery of higher education, and demands for accountability, graduate follow-up surveys are an important means to determine how well an educational institution meets the needs and expectations of its students. Graduate follow-up surveys provide especially valuable feedback about the quality and applicability of an institution's programs and curricula. Such surveys provide a unique perspective from an institution's students, who now are either competing in the marketplace or pursuing additional education. Austin Community College, therefore, conducts a survey of every semester's graduates. The following sections review the methodology of the survey, and then provide a synopsis of key findings from each section of the survey.

#### Survey Methodology & Response Rates

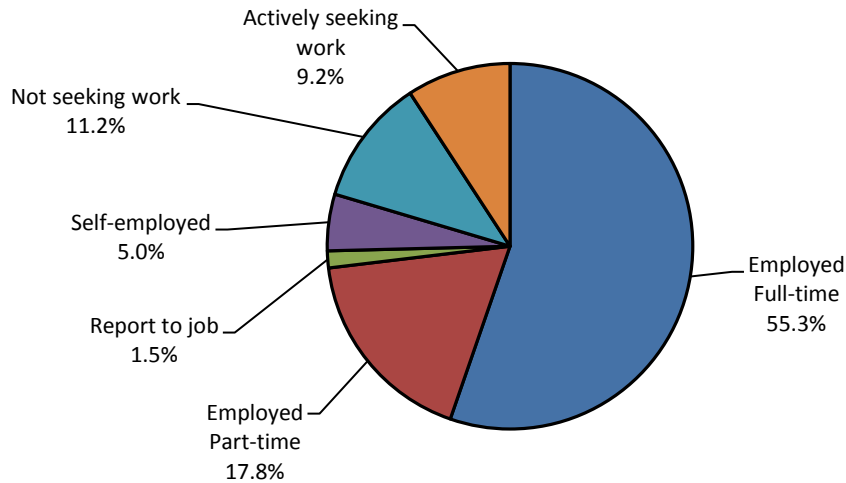
Six months after the end of every semester, Austin Community College (ACC) graduates are surveyed via telephone and by e-mail on their employment status, perception of how well ACC education improved their abilities, satisfaction with various services provided by ACC, future educational plans, transfer of credits to other institutions, and volunteer service in a position related to their ACC education. Response rates for the survey ranged between 19.0% to 29.1% (see Table 17). In generalizing the results of this survey to all students, however, it should be remembered that graduates represent a small subset of students who attend ACC. Students that transfer prior to graduating or do not complete a degree may have different perspectives than graduates.

For this report, survey responses were analyzed from 2,219 graduates over four academic years. This aggregation of responses for each academic year provides a more comprehensive picture of student outcomes than analyzing the semesters separately, and also provides a means to identify trends in the data. The tables accompanying this report present the results for each academic year and then the totals for the four academic years combined in the far right hand column.

## Employment Status and Outcomes

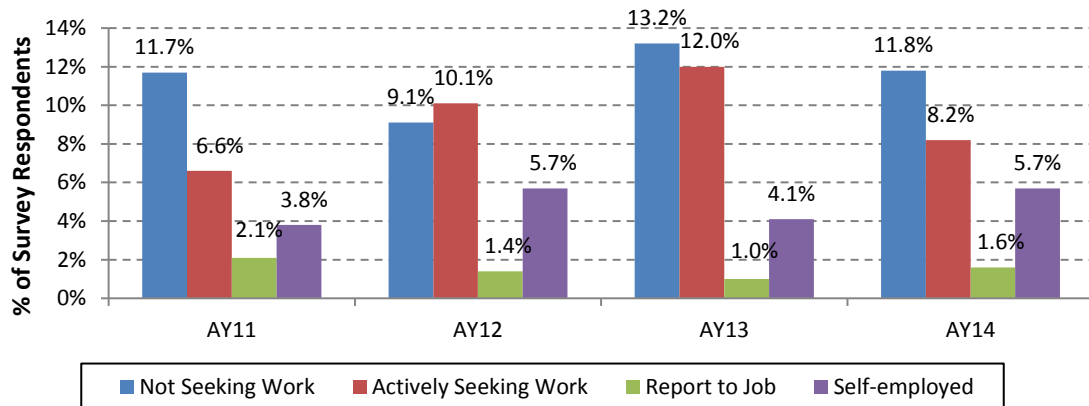
ACC graduates are asked on the survey to describe their current employment status. Across the four academic years, 55.3% of survey respondents reported being employed full-time ( $\geq 35$  hours), 17.8% reported being employed part-time ( $< 35$  hours), 5% reported being self-employed, and 1.5% stated that they were reporting to a job within thirty days (see Chart 1). Assuming the 1.5% report to work, 79.6% of ACC graduates are employed (see Chart 1).

**Chart 1  
Employment Outcomes  
Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



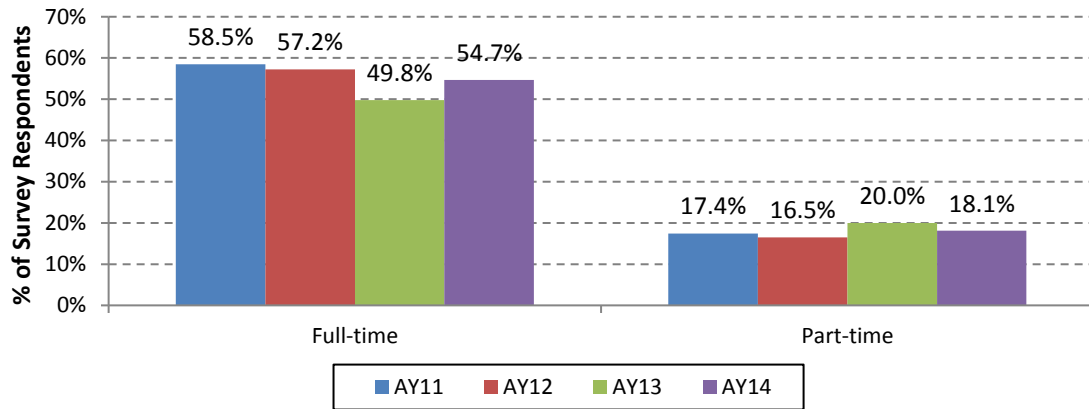
For the unemployed, 9.2% of the survey respondents reported they were actively seeking work while being unemployed, and 11.2% stated that they were not seeking work while being unemployed. For unemployed workers actively seeking work there has been an upward trend between AY11 to AY13 followed by a decrease in AY14, while the percentage of those not seeking work has fluctuated (see Chart 2).

**Chart 2  
Not Seeking Work, Actively Seeking Work,  
Report to Job & Self-employed  
Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



The percentage of graduates reporting full-time employment gradually decreased from AY11 to AY14, 58.5% to 54.7%. Part-time employment fluctuated between AY11 and AY14, from 17.4% to 18.1% (see Chart 3).

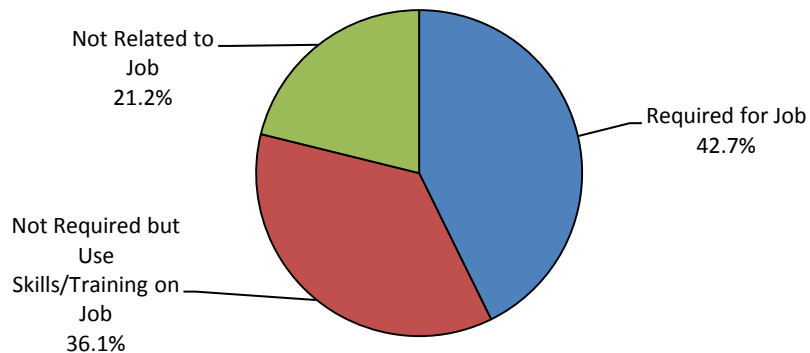
**Chart 3**  
**Full-time vs. Part-time Employment**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



**Marketability of Degree for Employed Graduates**

Employed ACC graduates were asked about their experience regarding the marketability of their ACC degree, and of the skills they learned in their degree program. Of those who answered the question 42.7% reported that their certificate or degree is required for their job, 36.1% stated that their certificate or degree is not required but they use the training and skills from their ACC program in their job, and 21.2% of employed graduates reported that their job is not related to their degree or certificate (see Chart 4).

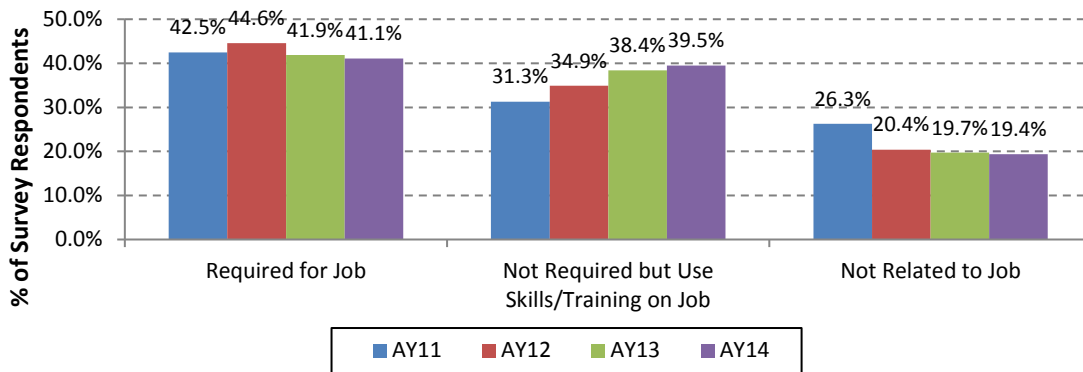
**Chart 4**  
**Certificate/Degree & Skills Relationship with Job**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**





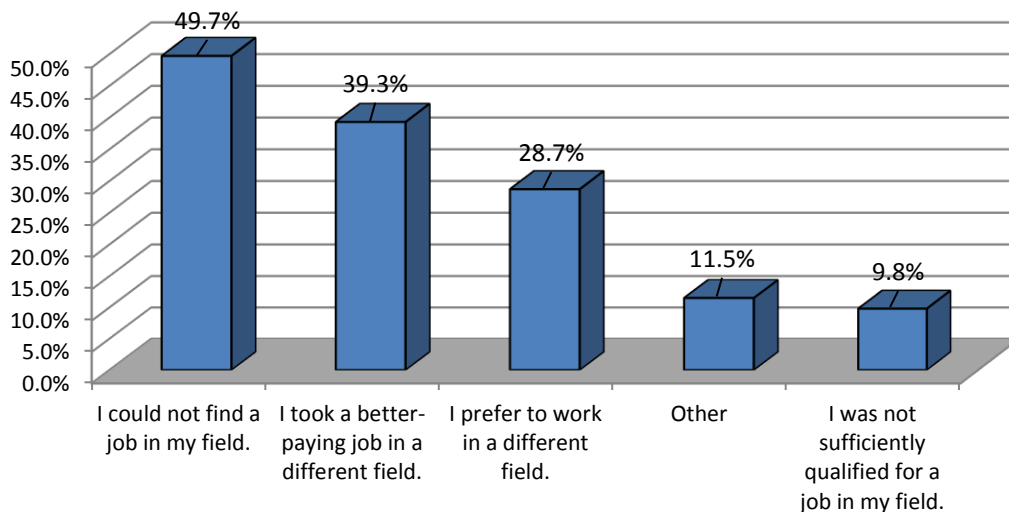
Across the four academic years the percentage of graduates that reported their certificate or degree is required for their job decreased (in AY11, 42.5% to AY14, 41.1%) , while the percentage reporting that they use their skills and training from ACC at their job has increased (in AY11, 26.3% to 19.4% in AY 14) (see Chart 5).

**Chart 5**  
**Certificate/Degree Required for Job, Not Related to Job & Relevance of Training**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



Graduates who responded that their job was not related to their degree or certificate program were asked to indicate the reasons why (multiple answers allowed). Forty-nine percent indicated that could not find a job in their field, 39.3% took a better-paying job in a different field, 28.7% prefer to work in a different field, 11.5% checked "other," and 9.8% stated they were not sufficiently qualified for a job in their field (see Chart 6).

**Chart 6**  
**Reasons Job Not Related to Degree (Multiple responses allowed)**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**

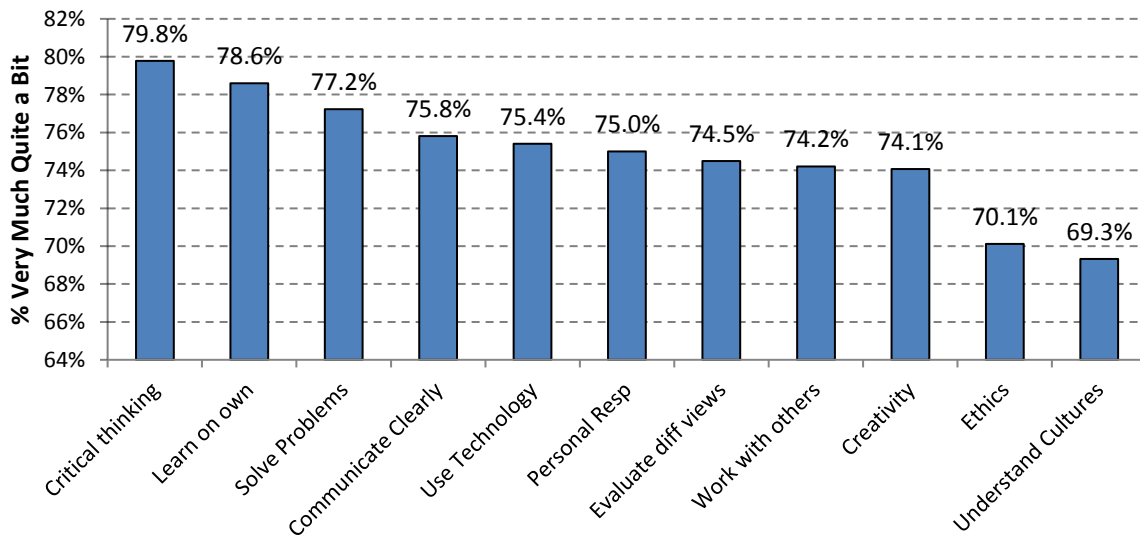


### Graduates' Perception of how well ACC education improved ability (averaged AY 11 to AY14)

Graduate perceptions of how well ACC education improved ability in eleven areas were rated on a 4-point scale, ranging from "Very Much" to "Very Little." To facilitate comparisons, the percent of respondents who answered either "Very Much" or "Quite a Bit" were combined into an overall impact rating and are rank ordered in Chart 7. Please note that the percentages listed in Chart 7 are the results for the four academic years combined.

Three of the eleven areas were rated relatively high: Critical thinking "Your critical thinking skills (problem solving and the ability to analyze and evaluate information)", Learn on own "Your ability to learn on your own" and Solve Problems "Your ability to use data and other types of evidence to solve problems", 79.8%, 78.6% and 77.2% respectively. The two areas where ACC had the lowest perceived impact on improving ability were Ethics "Your ability to recognize the role ethics play in your life" and Understand Culture "Your ability to recognize differences and commonalities among people from different backgrounds and cultures", 70.1% and 69.3% respectively (see Chart 7).

**Chart 7**  
**Improved Ability ACC Education**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



### **Trends in Graduates' Perception of how well ACC education improved ability (AY 11 to AY14)**

Six of the eleven areas showed more than five percentage point decline in the percent responding "Very Much" and "Quite a Bit" combined between AY 11 and AY14. These six areas are:

- "Your ability to evaluate the pros and cons of different points of view." (78.7% to 73.4%)
- "Your ability to recognize differences and commonalities among people from different backgrounds and cultures." (74.5% to 67.0%)
- "Your ability to recognize the role ethics play in your life." (73.8% to 68.5%)
- "Your ability to work with others." (77.6% to 71.7%)
- "Your ability to think creatively (problem solving, thinking out of the box, etc.)" (76.9% to 71.8%)
- "Your ability to use appropriate technology tools to collect, analyze and present information. (Research topic on internet, use Excel to analyze data, use Word or PowerPoint to do a presentation or report)." (78.7% to 73.4%)

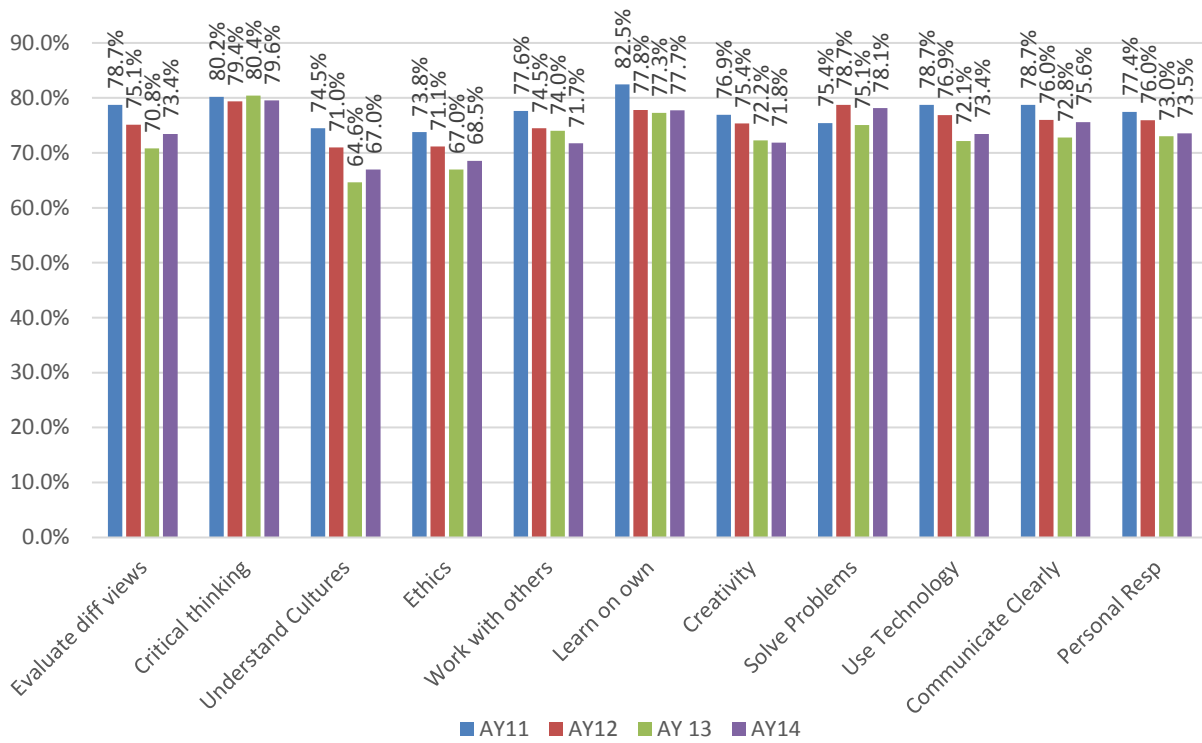
Skill areas that fluctuated include:

- "Your critical thinking skills (problem solving and the ability to analyze and evaluate information)." (80.2% to 79.6%)
- "Your ability to learn on your own." (82.5% to 77.7%)
- "Your ability to communicate clearly to different groups using appropriate styles and methods." (78.7% to 75.6%)
- "Your sense of personal responsibility (work/life balance, managing time, etc.)." (77.4% to 73.5%)

The skill area which increased:

- "Your ability to use data and other types of evidence to solve problems." (75.4% to 78.1%)

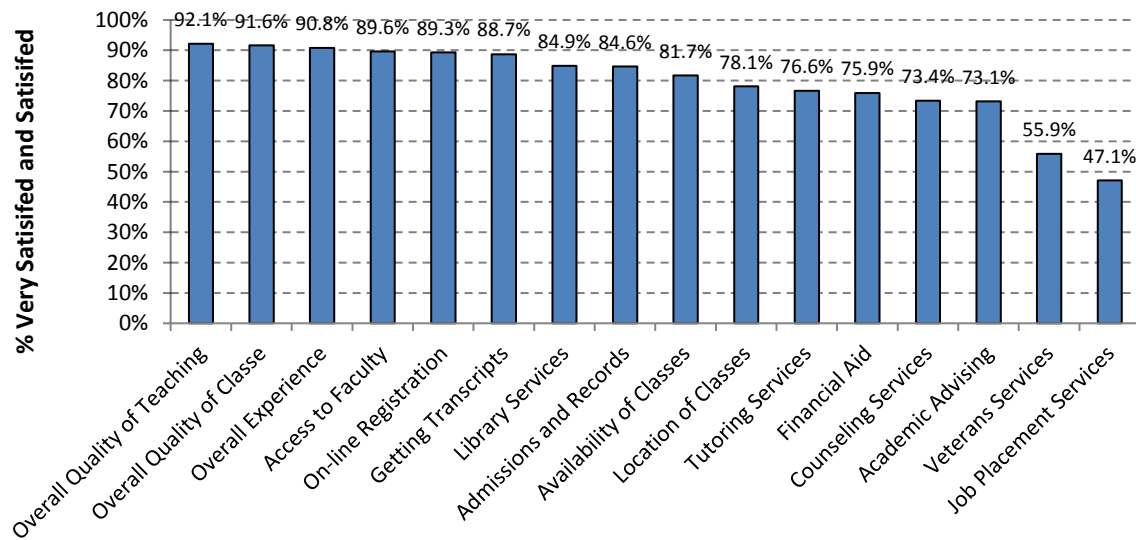
**Chart 8**  
**ACC Education Improved Ability**  
**Very Much & Quite a Bit (AY11 -- AY14)**



## Graduate Satisfaction with Various ACC Services

Sixteen ACC services were rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from “Very Satisfied” to “Very Dissatisfied.” To facilitate comparisons, the percent of respondents who answered either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” were combined into an overall satisfaction rating and are rank ordered in Chart 9. Please note that the percentages listed in Chart 9 are the results of four academic years combined. Nine of the 16 categories scored high satisfaction marks (>80%), including: Overall Quality of Teaching, Overall Quality of Classes, Overall Experience at ACC, Access to Faculty, On-line Registration, Getting Transcripts, Library Services, Admissions and Records, and Availability of Classes. Five service areas were rated in the 70 – 80% satisfaction range. These service areas included Location of Classes, Tutoring Services, Financial Aid, Counseling Services and Academic Advising. The two service areas that were at the lower end of the satisfaction ratings are Veterans Services and Job Placement Services. However, it should be noted that these two services have lower sample sizes than the other services because not all graduates used Veterans Services or Job Placement Services, they answered “Not Applicable,” and were therefore not included in the satisfaction analysis (see Chart 9).

**Chart 9**  
**Satisfaction ACC Services**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 - AY14)**

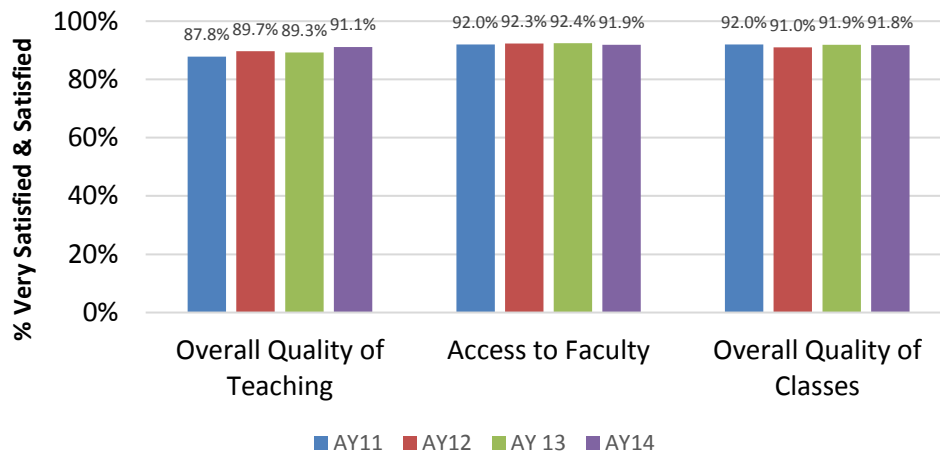


Charts 10 through 14 display graduates' satisfaction, across four academic years, for these 16 services. These services are divided into six categories: Instructional Quality (Overall Quality of Teaching, Access to Faculty, Overall Quality of Classes), Access to Classes (Availability of Classes, Location of Classes), Academic Support (Tutoring Services, Library Services), Student Services (Financial Aid, Counseling Services, Academic Advising, Job Placement Services, Veterans Services), Admissions and Records (Admissions and Records, Getting Transcripts, On-line Registration), and Overall Experience (Overall Experience at ACC).

Instructional Quality

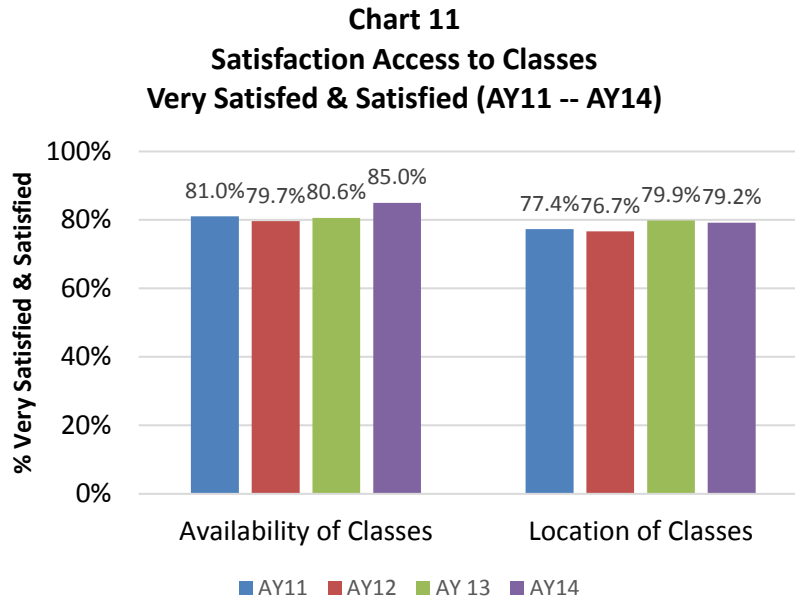
Instructional quality includes three of the nine high satisfaction services. Two of the areas Overall Quality of Classes (92.0% in AY11 to 91.9% in AY14) and Access to Faculty (92.0% in AY11 to 91.9% in AY14) have consistently hovered at or above the 90% satisfaction mark. Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Teaching has increased slightly over the four academic years (87.8% in AY11 to 91.1% in AY14) (see Chart 10).

**Chart 10**  
**Satisfaction Instructional Quality**  
**Very Satisfied & Satisfied (AY11 -- AY14)**



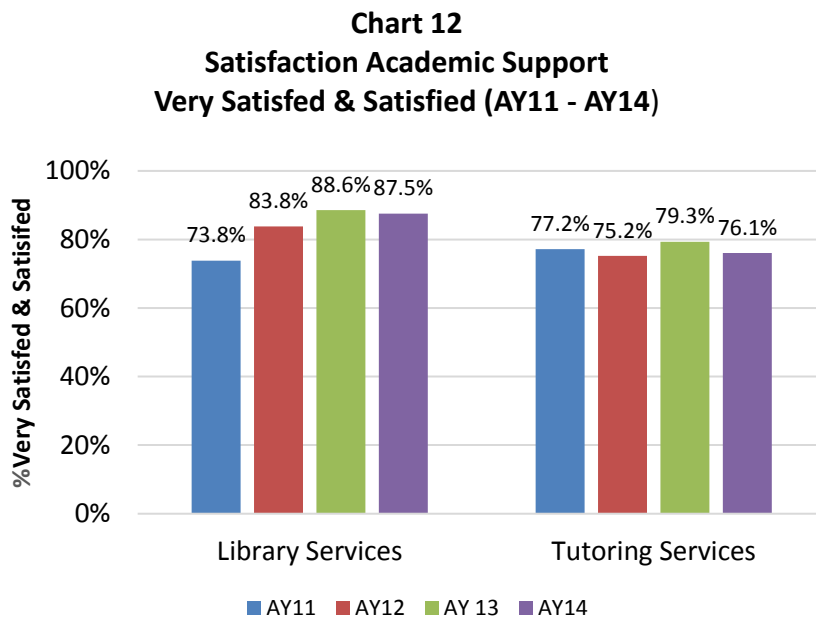
## Access to Classes

Satisfaction with Availability of Classes hovered around 80% for three academic years, but in AY14 satisfaction increased to 85.0%. Satisfaction with Location of Classes has fluctuated slightly but has shown a slight overall increase (77.4% in AY11 to 79.2% in AY14)(see Chart 11).



## Academic Support

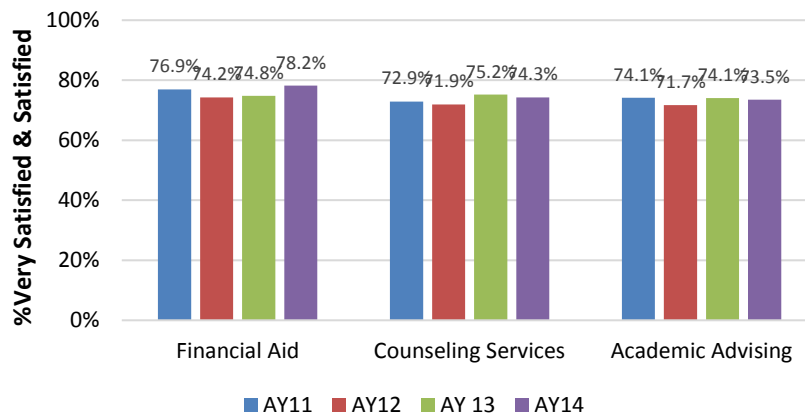
Satisfaction with Library Services increased from AY11 to AY13 and then decreased slightly in AY14. Overall across the four academic years satisfaction is high (73.8 in AY11 to 87.5% in AY15). Satisfaction with tutoring services has fluctuated and shown a slight decline (77.2% in AY11 to 76.1% in AY14) (see Chart 12).



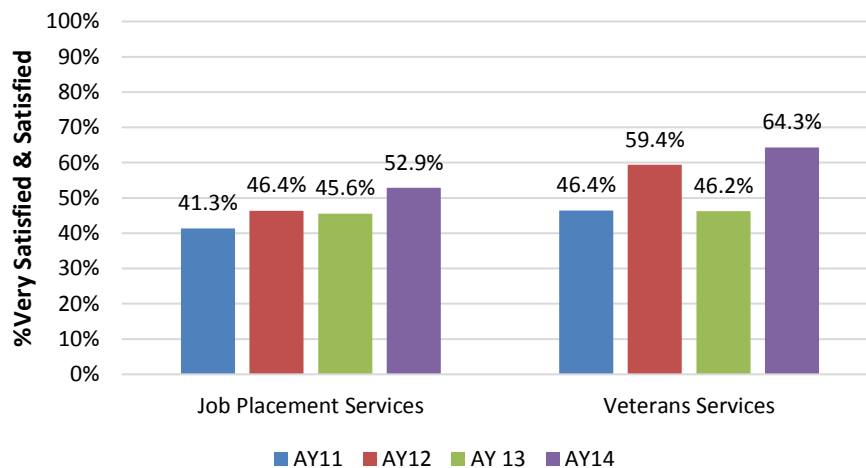
Student Services

Satisfaction with Financial Aid declined from AY11 to AY12 and then climbed for the next two academic years for an overall increase over the four academic years (76.9% in AY11 to 78.2% in AY14). Satisfaction with counseling services fluctuated but still had an overall increase (72.9% in AY11 to 74.3% in AY14). Satisfaction with academic advising also fluctuated but showed an overall decrease (74.1% in AY11 to 73.5% in AY14). Satisfaction with Job Placement Services showed a substantial increase overall across the four academic years (41.3% in AY11 to 52.9% in AY14). Veterans Services had large fluctuations in satisfaction levels but still showed a substantial increase in satisfaction between AY11 and AY14 (46.4% in AY11 to 64.3% in AY14). Once again it is important to take into account the high number of people who answer “Not Applicable” for Job Placement Services and Veterans Services, and thus are not included in the satisfaction percentage (see Charts 13a and 13b).

**Chart 13a**  
**Satisfaction Student Services**  
**Very Satisfied & Satisfied (AY11 -- AY14)**



**Chart 13b**  
**Satisfaction Student Services**  
**Very Satisfied & Satisfied (AY11 -- AY14)**

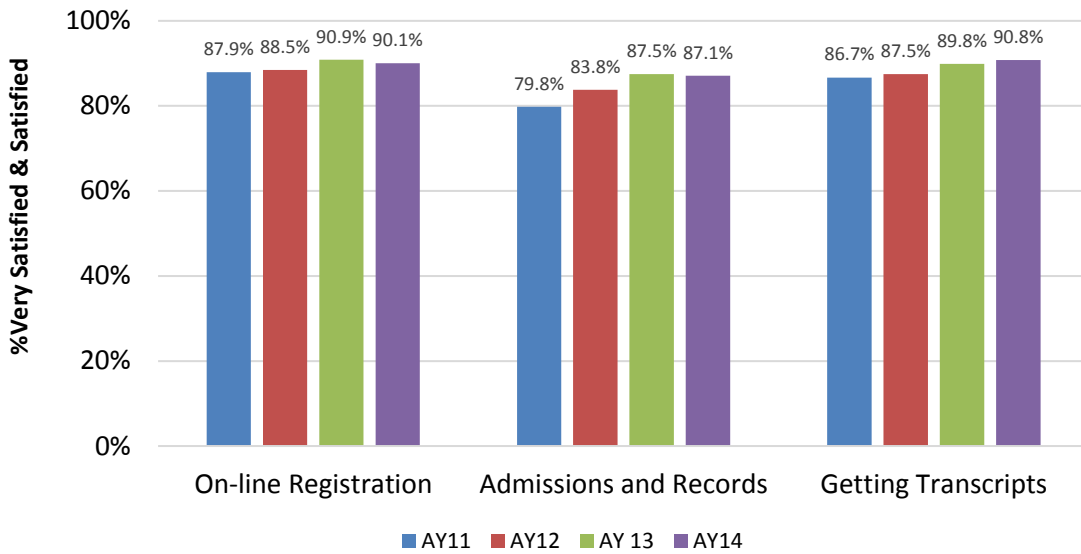




Admissions and Records

All three areas increased in satisfaction. Satisfaction with online registration increased to 90% (87.9% in AY11 to 90.1% in AY14) and satisfaction with admissions and records increased to 87% (79.8% in AY11 to 87.1% in AY14). Satisfaction with getting transcripts increased steadily across the four academic years (86.7% in AY11 to 90.8% in AY14).

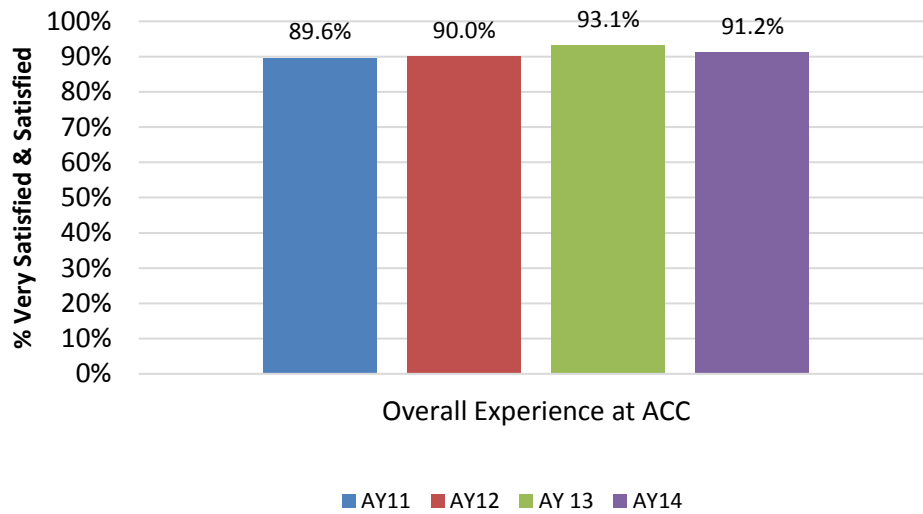
**Chart 14**  
**Satisfaction Admissions and Records**  
**Very Satisfied & Satisfied (AY11-AY14)**



## Overall Experience at ACC

Graduates' satisfaction with their Overall Experience at ACC has consistently remained at a high level at or slightly above 90% across the four academic years (89.6% in AY11 to 91.2% in AY14) (see Chart 15).

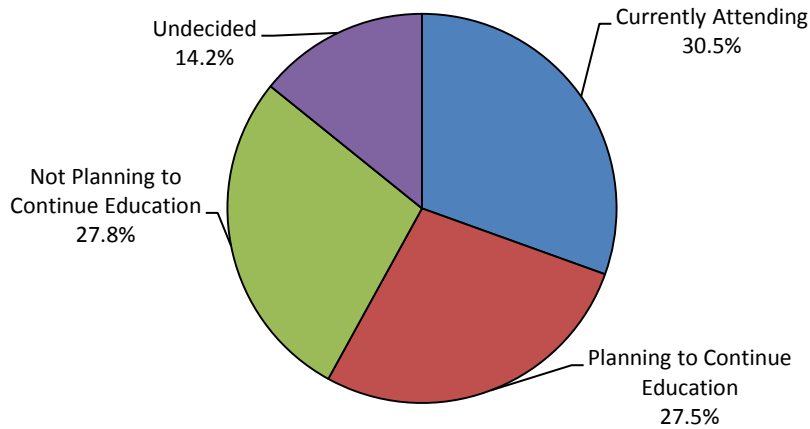
**Chart 15**  
**Satisfaction Overall Experience**  
**Very Satisfied & Satisfied (AY11-AY14)**



## ACC Graduates' Future Educational Plans

ACC graduates were also asked if they are currently continuing their education or planning to do so within the next 12 months. Thirty and a half percent of the survey respondents indicated they were currently enrolled, and 27.5% reported that they were planning to continue their education. However, 27.8% responded that they were not planning to continue their education and 14.2% responded that they were undecided (see Chart 16).

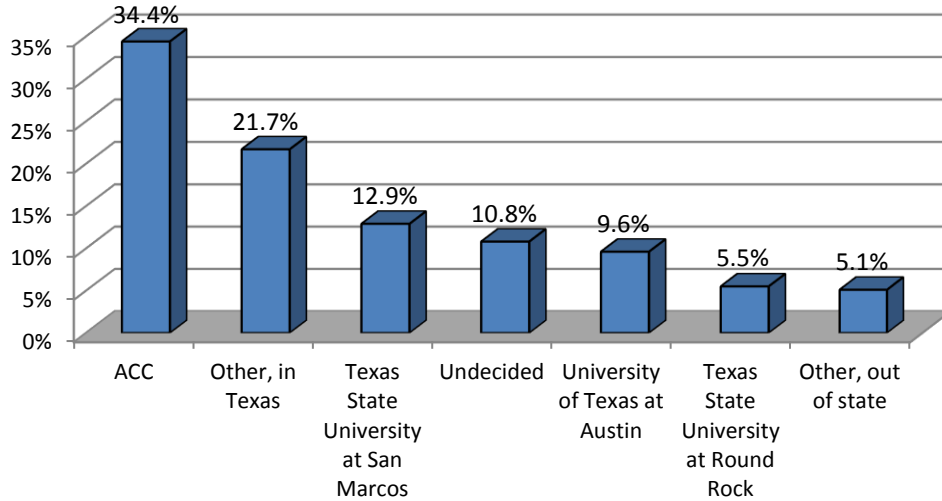
**Chart 16**  
**Future Educational Plans**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 – AY14)**



As shown in Chart 17, the largest percent of graduates were enrolled in or planning to reenroll at ACC. *(Please note that multiple responses were allowed for the question “where are you currently continuing your education or plan to attend?”)*

- Austin Community College (34.4%)
- Other, in Texas (21.7%)
- Texas State University at San Marcos (12.9%)
- Undecided (10.8%)
- University of Texas at Austin (9.6)
- Texas State University at Round Rock (5.5%)
- Other, Out-of-State (5.1%)

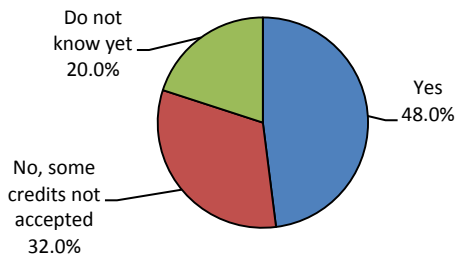
**Chart 17**  
**Institution Currently Attending or Plan to Attend**  
**(multiple responses allowed)**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



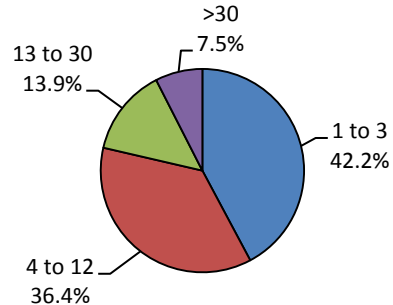
**Transferring Credits to Other Institutions (ACC not included)**

ACC graduates who transferred to another college were asked if all of their ACC credits were accepted at their current institution. (*Graduates pursuing an additional degree at ACC or that were undecided about pursuing additional education are not included.*) Forty eight percent responded that all of their ACC credits were accepted, and 32% responded that some of their ACC credits were not accepted (see Chart 17). The percent distribution of the number of credits that did not transfer is shown in Chart 18.

**Chart 17**  
**ACC Credits Accepted by Current College**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11--AY14)**



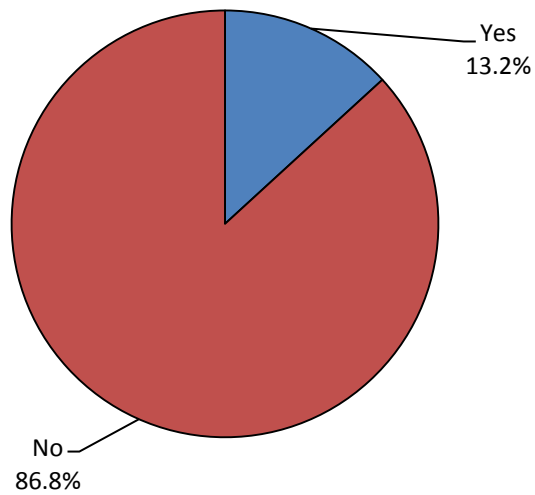
**Chart 18**  
**ACC Credits that Did Not Transfer**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11--AY14)**



### ACC Graduates' Volunteering in Areas Related to ACC Training

ACC graduates were asked if they served as a volunteer in an area related to their ACC training (see Chart 19); 86.8% percent of the survey respondents stated they did not volunteer in a position related to their ACC training, and 13.2% responded "Yes."

**Chart 19**  
**Volunteering in Areas Related to ACC Training**  
**Graduate Follow-up Survey (AY11 -- AY14)**



## **Illustrative Comments**

Approximately 690 comments were categorized into either positive or negative categories. Listed below are illustrative positive comments and then illustrative negative comments.

### **Illustrative Positive Comments**

Graduates were very positive on a number of aspects of their ACC experience and the value of their education. Many graduates felt the quality of their education exceeded what they had received at a four year institution

“I love ACC. Great place to learn and go to school. I feel the quality of education far exceeded the level of education I received at a 4 year school” and “I have already obtained a Bachelors and a Master’s degree. I returned to ACC to get the Peace Officer Sequence courses to become a commissioned Peace Officer. The Criminal Justice area is probably the best in the state. You should be proud of what is offered through ACC.”

“I attended UT and University of Houston before attending ACC. I think I got a better education at ACC than either of those institutions.”

Many ACC transfers also expressed similar assessments of the quality of their education “I really enjoyed attending ACC. I learned so much. It's a great college to start one's education. ACC prepared me well for my education at Texas State.”

“Attending ACC was one of the best choices I ever made. ACC gave me a strong foundation and is helping succeed at UT Arlington in the Civil Engineering program.”

Graduates expressed appreciation for the affordability, convenience, helped provided to nontraditional and the disabled, and as a starting place to pursue higher education

“Overall, good experience and a good way to begin secondary learning. Affordable prices for courses, different schedule times and many campuses to go to. Overall good teachers with great knowledge and experience.”

“Loved ACC. It is so convenient for a person with a family and full time job. You almost spoiled me. Thanks ACC”

“It was a good experience. I'm a non-traditional student (older on disability). ACC got me ready!”

“ACC really accommodates students of any age and circumstance. I love ACC!”

Graduates noted the high quality of instruction, individualized attention of faculty and concern by staff

“Teachers pushed hard and made you apply yourself”

“ACC is a treasure with gifted professors and instructors. It was an incredibly wonderful, and unique experience. Austin Community College is a gem for diversity and I measure St. Edward's University to the high standard of Austin Community College.”

“I really learned a lot at ACC. I found good teachers who were always trying to help me when I sought help. The teachers were not there to teach only, but to be friends with students. And I appreciated that friendship. So my educational experience at ACC was great--I will miss its great teachers when I finish taking classes here at ACC!”

### **Illustrative Negative Comments**

Students were negative about poor advising, complexity of registration, parking, lack of availability of classes, financial aid, lack of tutors in challenging subjects, and the quality of some instructors.

“The advisors should be better prepared to help those who are less experienced in the college arena. I wasted quite a lot of time and money on classes that I didn't need to take because some advisors told me to take them. They should be able to help and not hinder the educational process.”

“Payments come late or paid partial; bunch of finger pointing between Financial Aid and Veteran's Affairs. Big disconnect!”

“The tutoring program was dismal, the department couldn't provide any tutoring for my program”

“Very dissatisfied with the teaching, advising, counseling. There was absolutely no job placement or mentoring help!!”

“Overall I felt the teachers were spot on. However, the admissions office combined with the entire process of initial registering to be a student at ACC and applying and such, was an absolute nightmare. Several years ago, it was the reason I gave up before I even started. The faculty working behind the various desks of the main office, admissions especially, were typically cold, uninformed, and terrible at customer service. There was a lot of bouncing around back and forth. I often tell people looking to join ACC, that if they can get through that initial process, they'll be fine....”

“I had one very bad instructor who spoiled the whole experience”

“Some professor doesn't have good people skills and seemed to "talk down" to students who didn't have the background in the subject matter.”

“Parking was a terrible problem!”

## APPENDIX