



## **Graduate Follow-Up Survey Winter 2015 Results**

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Office of Institutional Research

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# Graduate Follow-Up Survey

## Winter 2015 Results

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### Overview

Each year, College of the Mainland (COM) conducts a follow-up survey of its most recent graduates. This report includes students who graduated during the 2013-2014 academic year and focuses on graduates' experiences at COM, perceptions about education quality, and post-graduation educational activities and employment.

In February 2015, invitations to complete the survey were distributed by e-mail to the 562 graduates from the previous academic year. One follow-up reminder e-mail was also sent. As an incentive to participate, respondents were given the option to provide contact information to be entered into a random drawing to receive one of two \$50 gift cards. The survey was open for three weeks, and responses were received from 90 graduates for an overall response rate of 16.01%.

### Academic Characteristics

Table 1 displays the academic characteristics of the survey respondents. The data show that associate degree earners accounted for 84% of respondents. The field of study pursued most often was general studies (32.2%), followed by nursing (15.6%).

**Table 1. Distribution of Academic Characteristics of Respondents**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
<b>Most Recent Award Earned from COM</b>		
Certificate	14	15.6%
Associate Degree	76	84.4%
<b>Field of Study</b>		
Business	3	3.3%
Business Administration	3	3.3%
Cosmetology	2	2.2%
Fire Protection Technology	2	2.2%
General Studies	29	32.2%
Graphic Design	2	2.2%
Health Information Management	3	3.3%
Law Enforcement	4	4.4%
Medical Assistant	6	6.7%

Natural Science	6	6.7%
Nursing	14	15.6%
Occupational Safety and Health Technology	1	1.1%
Pharmacy Technician	2	2.2%
Process Technology	9	10.0%
Teaching	2	2.2%
Visual Arts	2	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Skills, Values, Licensing and Certification

Graduates were asked to rate their agreement with several statements concerning the skills, values, and competencies they gained while attending COM. The rating scale ranges from 1, Strongly Disagree, to 5, Strongly Agree. Table 2.1 displays the frequencies of responses for each of the items related to skills, values, and competencies. At least 70% of graduates agree that their work at COM resulted in a mastery or improvement of each of the skills.

**Table 2.1. Frequencies for Skills, Values, and Competencies Questions**

As a result of my work at COM, I have...	Strongly Agree or Agree		Neutral		Disagree or Strongly Disagree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Mastered the ability to develop, interpret and express ideas through written communication.	74	82%	11	12%	5	6%
Mastered the ability to develop, interpret and express ideas through oral communication.	75	84%	9	10%	5	6%
Mastered the ability to demonstrate creative thinking, innovation and the ability to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.	71	80%	13	15%	5	6%
Developed the ability to work effectively with others to support and accomplish a shared goal while recognizing and respecting different viewpoints.	71	79%	13	14%	6	7%
Developed the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information.	72	80%	9	10%	9	10%

Mastered the ability to demonstrate intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities.	63	70%	19	21%	8	9%
Mastered the ability to manipulate and analyze observable facts, evidence or numerical data and arrive at an informed conclusion.	72	80%	11	12%	7	8%
Gained the ability to use quantitative and qualitative skills to evaluate ideas and empirical claims, and to develop alternative perspectives and conclusions.	72	80%	10	11%	8	9%
Improved my leadership skills.	74	82%	10	11%	6	7%
Mastered the ability to evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	78	87%	8	9%	4	4%
Developed my ability to be independent and self-reliant.	76	84%	8	9%	6	7%

At the time of the survey, 37.8% of graduates had taken a licensing or certification exam related to their studies at COM, and 18.9% had plans to make an attempt in the future (Table 2.2). Of those who reported pursuing licensing or certification, all but one were successful on the first attempt.

**Table 2.2. Graduate's Attempts at Licensing or Certification Exams Related to Course of Study**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
Taken and passed	33	36.7%
Taken but did not pass	1	1.1%
Plan to take	17	18.9%
Do not plan to take	39	43.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Post-Graduation Academic Activity

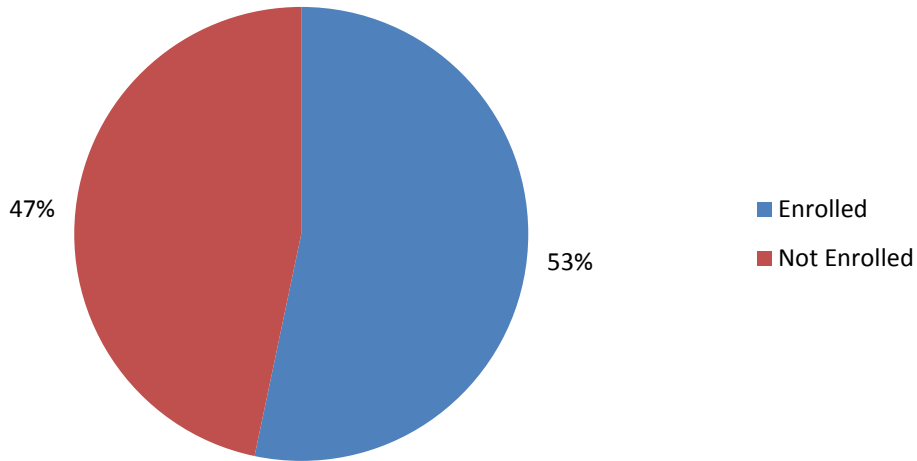
Graduates answered several questions concerning their academic activities since leaving the institution. Most respondents (85.6%) expressed a desire to obtain at least a bachelor's degree. Of those seeking at least a bachelor's degree (n=77), more than half (63.6%) plan to pursue a

master’s degree or higher at some point (Table 3.1). At the time of the survey, 53% of graduates had enrolled in another college or university since leaving COM (Figure 3.1).

**Table 3.1. Educational Aspirations of Graduates**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
Certificate	3	3.3%
Associate Degree	6	6.7%
Bachelor's Degree	28	31.1%
Master's Degree	32	35.6%
Professional Degree	5	5.6%
Doctoral Degree	12	13.3%
No Answer	4	4.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 3.1. Percent of Graduates Enrolled in Another College or University Post-Graduation**



The majority of respondents who continued their education had done so at a public four-year or upper-level institution (83.3%; Table 3.2) and were pursuing a bachelor’s degree (77.1%; Table 3.3).

**Table 3.2. Institutional Type of Most Recent College/University Attended**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
<b>Institutional Type</b>		
Public 2-year college	6	12.5%
Private college or university	1	2.1%
Public 4-year, or upper level, college or university	40	83.3%
Other	1	2.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.3. Distribution of Most Recent Degree Pursued**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
<b>Degree Pursued</b>		
Certificate	1	2.1%
Associate	5	10.4%
Bachelors	37	77.1%
Masters	2	4.2%
Doctoral	1	2.1%
No Answer	2	4.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

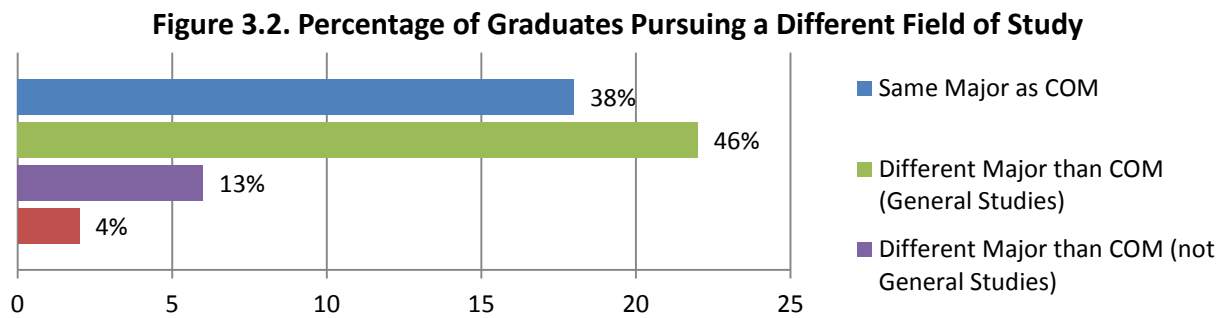
Respondents who had continued their education were asked to name the school they most recently attended (Table 3.4). The majority remained in-state, mostly in the greater Houston area. The University of Houston-Clear Lake was the most frequently cited institution.

**Table 3.4. Graduates' Most Recently Attended Institutions**

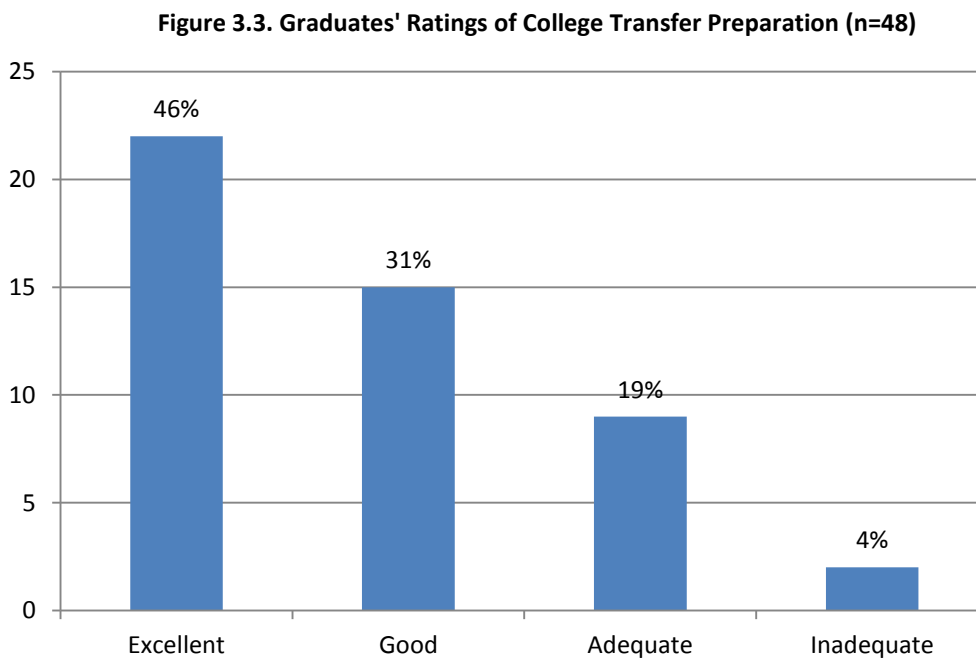
	Respondents	
	N	%
University of Houston-Clear Lake	18	41.9%
University of Houston	4	9.3%
Alvin Community College	3	7.0%
Galveston College	2	4.7%
Texas A&M	2	4.7%
University of Texas at Arlington	2	4.7%
University of Texas at Austin	2	4.7%
University of Texas Medical Branch	2	4.7%
Sam Houston State University	1	2.3%
Texas Southern University	1	2.3%

Texas State University	1	2.3%
Texas Tech Health Sciences Center	1	2.3%
University of Phoenix	1	2.3%
University of Texas Health Science Center	1	2.3%
University of Texas of the Permian Basin	1	2.3%
Waldorf College	1	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of graduates whose most recent field of study differed from their major at COM (13%), those who pursued general studies first and went on to another major (46%), and those who continued the same course of study (38%).

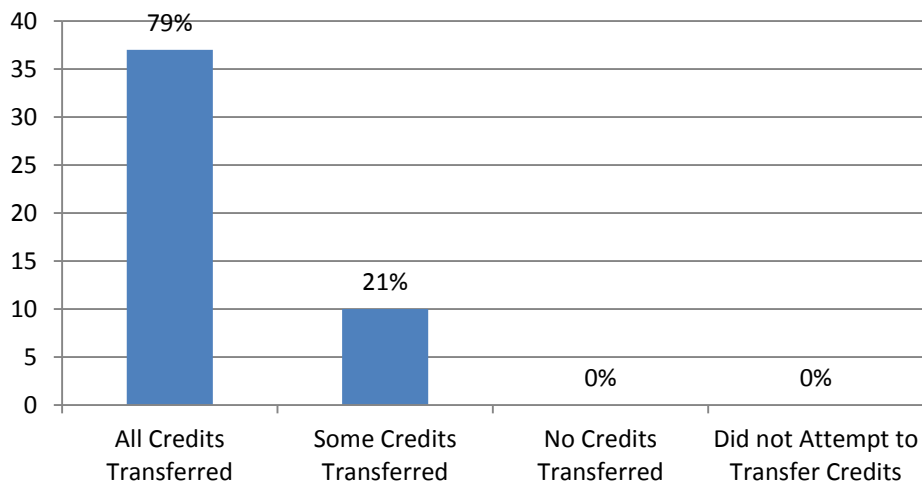


When asked to rate how well their educational experience at COM prepared them for additional college work, 77% of respondents rated their preparation as *good* or *excellent* (Figure 3.3).



Respondents who continued their education after graduation were also asked if they transferred any credits from COM toward additional college work; if any credits were not transferred, they were asked to identify the reason why. More than three-fourths of respondents (79%) successfully transferred all of their credits, and all graduates were able to transfer at least some credits (Figure 3.4). The most frequently cited reason for failure of classes to transfer was *course content*.

**Figure 3.4. Transfer Credit Acceptance (n=47)**



### Graduates' Employment Activities

Respondents were asked several questions about post-graduation employment. Since graduating from COM, most respondents (83.3%) had been employed. Several programs had 100% of respondents employed. Of those who reported being unemployed, 60% have been enrolled in another college or university since completing their program at COM. Of those working part-time, 72% have been enrolled at another institution. Six of the respondents (6.6%) are unemployed and have not pursued further education.

**Table 4.1. Employment Status by COM Program (n=90)**

	Full-Time		Part-Time		Self-Employed		Unemployed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Business	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	1	33.3%	0
Business Administration with Emphasis in Accounting	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Business Administration with Emphasis in Management	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Criminal Justice	2	66.7%	1	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Esthetic Specialty	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
Fire Academy	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%



Fire Technology	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
General Studies	10	34.5%	13	44.8%	0	0.0%	6	20.7%
Graphic Design	0	0.0%	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%
Health Information Management	2	66.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%
Leading to Initial Texas Teacher Certification - EC - 6	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Medical Assistant	2	33.3%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	3	50.0%
Natural Science	0	0.0%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	4	66.7%
Nursing	11	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Occupational Safety and Health Technology	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
Petrochemical Process Technology	9	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Pharmacy Technician	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Visual Arts	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Vocational Nursing	3	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
No Answer	1	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>52.2%</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>27.8%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3.3%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

Table 4.2 highlights the number and percentage of employed respondents whose jobs relate to their academic course of study. The majority of employed graduates are working in a field related to their COM major (70.7%). Of those who are employed in a field different from their COM program, the most commonly cited reason is *not sufficiently qualified for a job in my field of college preparation* (n=10); however, over half of those citing this reason (60%) received an award in General Studies.

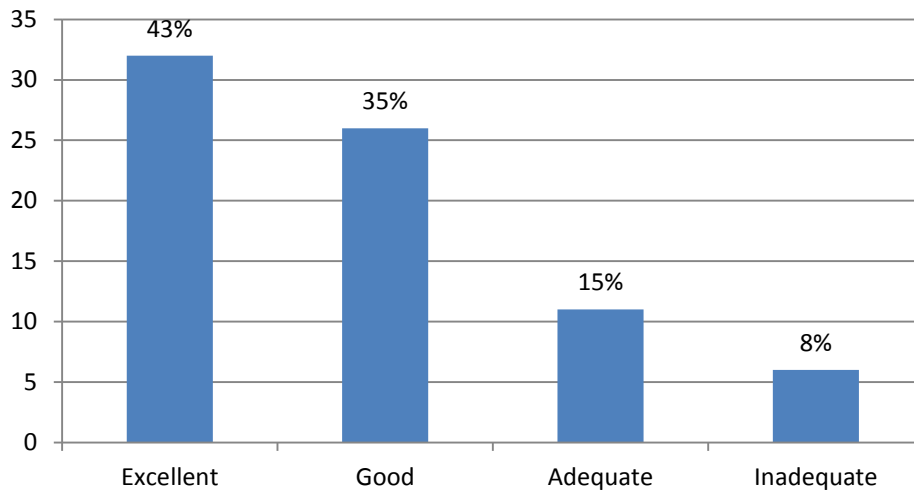
**Table 4.2. Relation of Employment to COM Program (n=75)**

	Related Field		Different Field	
	N	%	N	%
Business	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
Business Administration with Emphasis in Accounting	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Business Administration with Emphasis in Management	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
Criminal Justice	1	33.3%	2	66.7%
Esthetic Specialty	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
Fire Academy	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
Fire Technology	1	100.0%	0	0.0%
General Studies	11	47.8%	12	52.2%
Graphic Design	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
Health Information Management	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
Leading to Initial Texas Teacher Certification - EC - 6	2	100.0%	0	0.0%
Medical Assistant	2	66.7%	1	33.3%
Natural Science	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Nursing	11	100.0%	0	0.0%

Petrochemical Process Technology	8	88.9%	1	11.1%
Pharmacy Technician	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Visual Arts	1	50.0%	1	50.0%
Vocational Nursing	3	100.0%	0	0.0%
No Answer	0	0.0%	1	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>70.7%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29.3%</b>

Overall, COM is effectively preparing students to enter the workforce; over three-quarters of respondents (77%) rated the employment preparation they received as *good* or *excellent* (Figure 4.1). In addition to using their acquired skills in the workplace, 8.9% of all graduates surveyed reported participating in volunteer activities related to their college training.

**Figure 4.1. Respondents' Ratings of Job Preparation by COM (n=75)**



Over half of employed graduates (54.7%) already had their current job or obtained their current job prior to graduation (Table 4.3). Of those who did not have a job prior to graduation, 18.2% engaged in a job search for six months or longer before finding employment. The most common source of job referrals was friends or relatives (34.7%), followed by online job searches or placement services (28%).

**Table 4.3. Length of Job Search and Job Referral Sources**

	Survey Respondents	
	N	%
<b>Length of Job Search</b>		
Had a job and continued after graduation	30	40.0%
Obtained a job just prior to graduation	11	14.7%
Obtained a job less than six months after graduation	27	36.0%
Obtained a job six or more months after graduation	6	8.0%
No Answer	1	1.3%

### Job Referral Sources

COM Job Placement Center	0	0.0%
Employment agency	1	1.3%
Faculty Member	4	5.3%
Friend or relatives	26	34.7%
Newspaper advertisement	1	1.3%
Online job search/placement service	21	28.0%
Other	20	26.7%
No Answer	2	2.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Summary

The purpose of this analysis was to describe the academic characteristics, community college experiences, and post-graduation education and employment activities of the 2013-2014 COM graduates.

There were several major findings from the analysis. First, the most often represented major for graduates was general studies, and most graduates plan to attain at least a bachelor's degree, indicating that many students study at COM with the intention of transferring to a four-year institution. The analysis shows that most graduates who continue their education do so at public colleges and universities in the greater Houston area, indicating that they have opportunities to maintain connections with and contribute to the Gulf Coast community.

Another finding is that most graduates responding to the survey reported positive outcomes of their work at COM. Survey results indicate that the College helps students develop key skills that successfully prepare them for additional college-level work and employment opportunities.

Finally, when compared to the previous year, a higher percentage of graduates responding in 2015 have enrolled in a college or university (53%, compared to 43.8%) and have been employed (83.3%, compared to 78%). None of the students surveyed reported using the job placement assistance that the College offers, indicating that there may be an opportunity to increase student awareness of the Career Services Office and the programs and services that are available.