

# Board of Trustees Monitoring Report

## **Student Success: Professional-Technical Programs**

### **Board Ends Policy:**

Skagit Valley College exists to provide the college district community with the skills and knowledge sufficient for enrichment, successful employment and/or educational achievement [E-3.]

Skagit Valley College shall embrace an open door policy and shall provide students and the community with user-friendly and efficient access to a learning-centered education [E-4]

### **Strategic Plan Goal/Objective:**

Develop community partnerships that promote jointly the goals of the college and the needs of the community [Goal #5]

Increase Student Access and Success [Goal #3]

Cultivate an environment that encourages diversity and supports learning for all members of the college community [Goal #1]

**April 11, 2006**



## **Executive Summary**

### **Background:**

This report provides data associated with student success, including student engagement and student employment rates and hourly wages after leaving the college. General employment data for the college district is also presented.

### **Conclusions:**

SVC Professional-Technical students were more likely than students at other medium colleges in the nation to engage in collaborative learning activities, use technology to support their learning, have conversations with students different from themselves, and spend time preparing papers and presentations for their courses.

The employment picture for the state and for the district's counties has brightened considerably. The January 2006 unemployment rate for Skagit County is 5.6% compared to 7.6% a year ago. As is typical, this increasing employment rate has resulted in a corresponding decline in enrollments in professional-technical programs.

Eighty percent (80%) of the students in 2003-04 who completed a professional/technical certificate or degree program were employed nine months after leaving SVC, slightly lower than the system average (81%). Note that last year these numbers were reversed. The SVC leavers' employment rate of 70% was lower than the 74% system average.

The available data on employer characteristics indicates that the majority of students leaving SVC are employed either in Skagit County (32%) or with a multiple-county employer (31%). Students who earn a degree have the highest average hourly wage of all leavers--\$16.60. The average hourly wage of students who complete a program and are working full time is \$15.62. Last year, that hourly wage was \$13.36.

### **Change from Prior Year Monitoring:**

There were no significant changes from last year in terms of employment rates. However, the average hourly wages for both early leavers and completers increased substantially over the previous year.

Note that we no longer survey employers' satisfaction with the SVC students they hire due to increasing difficulties with low response rates and employment confidentiality issues.

## Section I: Student Engagement

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was administered at Skagit Valley College in Spring 2005. This survey gives us an opportunity to examine factors highly correlated with student learning and engagement. The results for selected survey items are presented in Table 1.1. Professional-Technical students were those who indicated that their primary goal at SVC was to “Obtain or upgrade job-related skills.” That group was 255 students, or 37% of the total taking the CCSSE in Spring 2005. The comparison group, “All Medium Colleges,” is the CCSSE designation for colleges whose enrollments are similar to ours—between 4,500 and 7,999 students. The total number of student responses for all medium colleges is approximately 39,000.

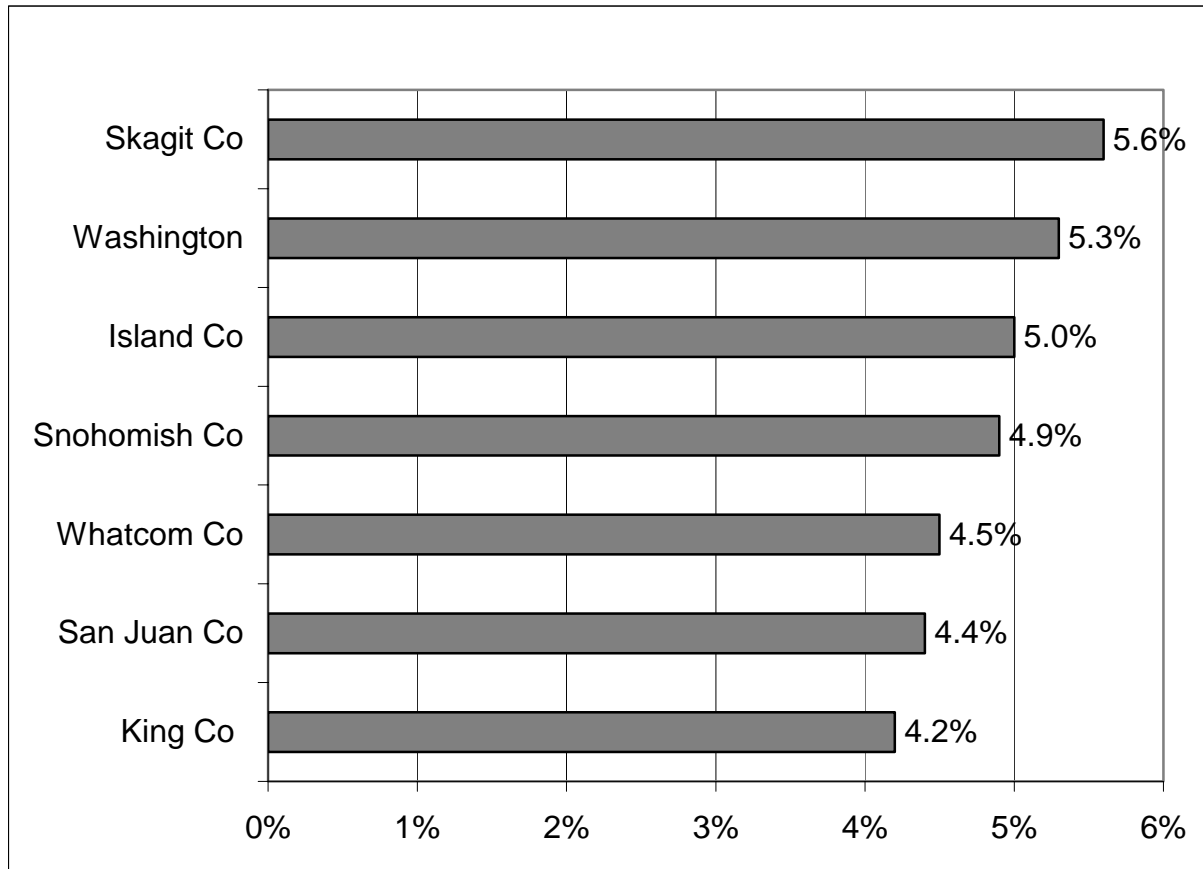
Table 1.1: CCSSE Responses: SVC Professional-Technical Students and All Medium Colleges

	SVC Prof-Tech Students	All Medium Colleges
<i>Papers and Presentations</i>		
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper before turning it in.	28.6%	20.2%
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	28.2%	21.7%
Made a class presentation	9.4%	7.2%
<i>Student Diversity</i>		
Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity other than your own.	19.0%	16.2%
Had serious conversations with students who differ from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values	18.1%	15.3%
<i>Technology</i>		
Used email to communicate with an instructor	22.4%	15.4%
Used the Internet or instant messaging to work on an assignment	37.9%	28.8%
<i>Collaborative Learning</i>		
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers, etc.)	20.8%	17.8%
Worked with other students on a project during class	23.9%	12.9%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.	8.4%	5.5%

## Section II: Regional Employment Data

The most recent unemployment information (January 2006) for the three counties in the SVC district and selected counties is presented in Figure 2.1. A comparison of the unemployment rates from last year (January 2005) for the SVC district counties is presented in Table 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Unemployment Rate for Washington State and Selected Counties, January 2006



Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, Washington Workforce Explorer, [www.workforceexplorer.com](http://www.workforceexplorer.com).

Table 2.1: Unemployment Rate for SVC District Counties, January 2005 & 2006

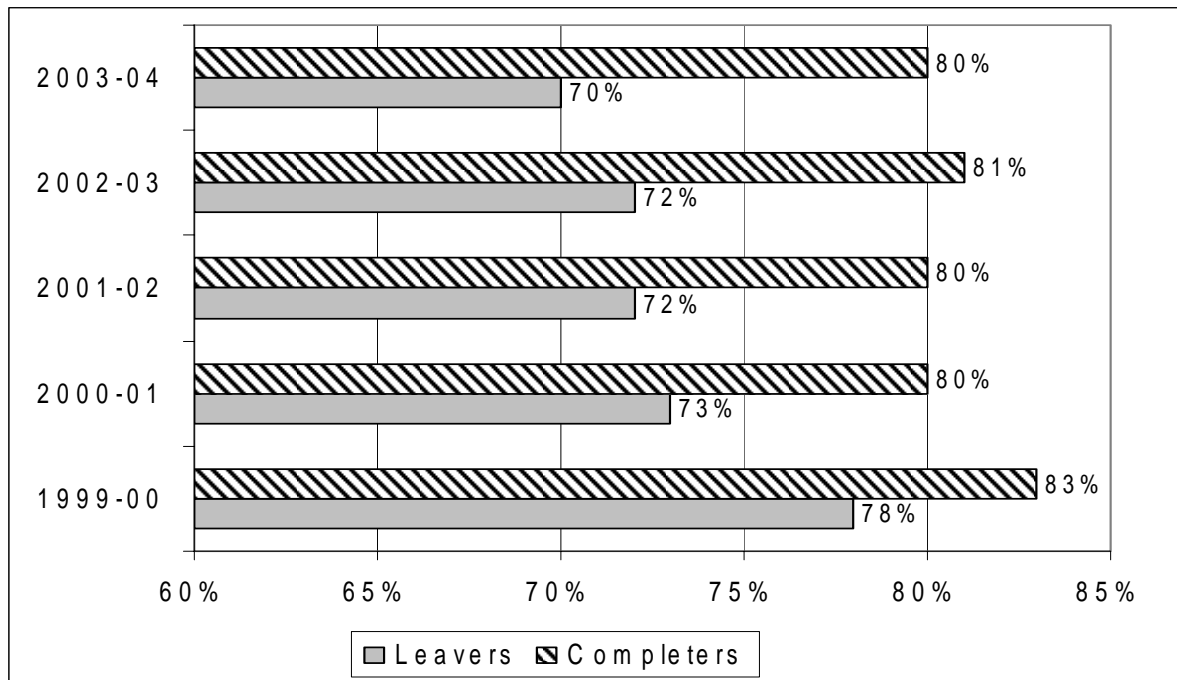
County	Unemployment Rate	
	2006	2005
Island	5.0%	6.3%
San Juan	4.4%	5.8%
Skagit	5.6%	7.6%

### Section III: Student Progress Attainment

#### Employment Rates

Figure 3.1 presents the employment rates calculated by the SBCTC for the college for both completers and leavers. As a point of reference, the 2003-04 system rates for completers and leavers are 81% and 74%, respectively.

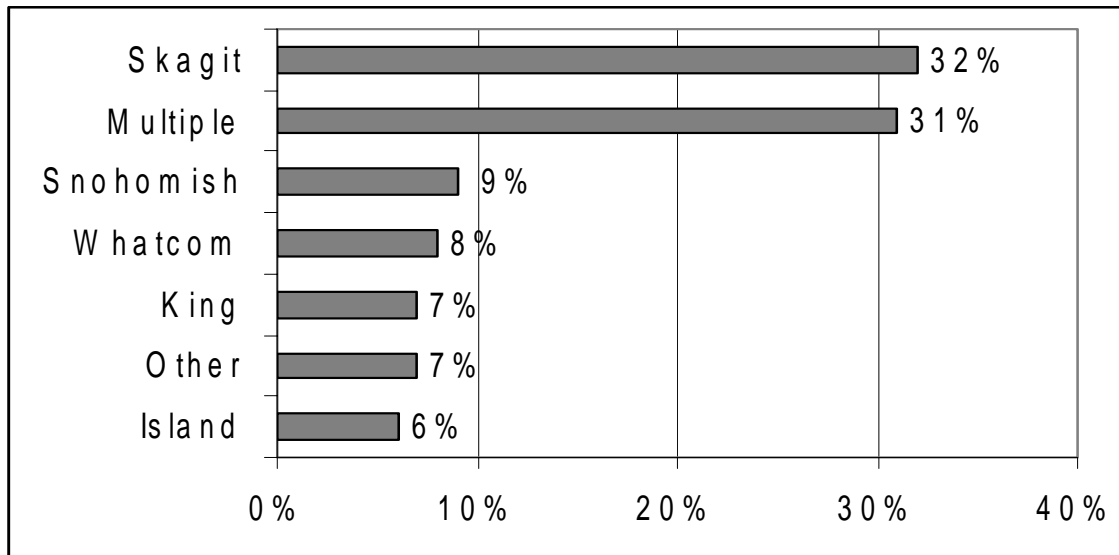
Figure 3.1: Employment Rates for SVC Job Prep Students Nine Months after Leaving College



The data in the remainder of this section were retrieved from the SBCTC database that links students to the Unemployment Insurance records for Washington as well as several other states. This allows colleges to get valid employment information; however, the process creates a significant time lag. The most current data is for the job preparatory students who left SVC during 2003-04. The total number of cases in the SVC database is 998.

### Employer Characteristics

Figure 3.2: Employers by Location



### Hourly Wages

Figure 3.3: Average Hourly Wages by Exit Type

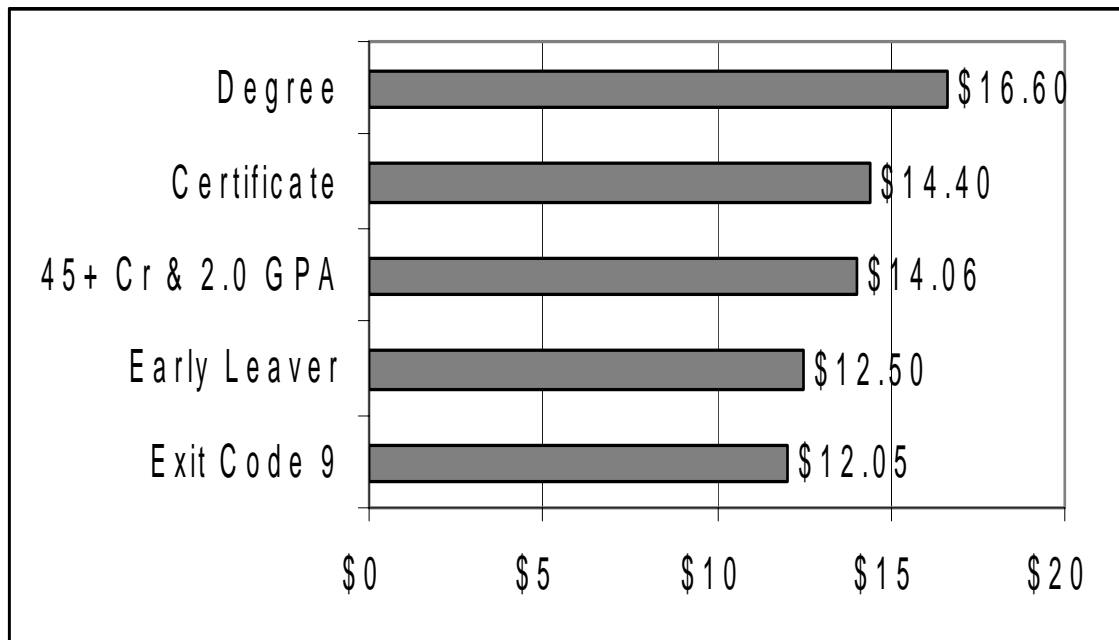


Table 3.4: Hourly Wages for Leavers and Completers by Lower-, Medium- & Higher-Wage Programs

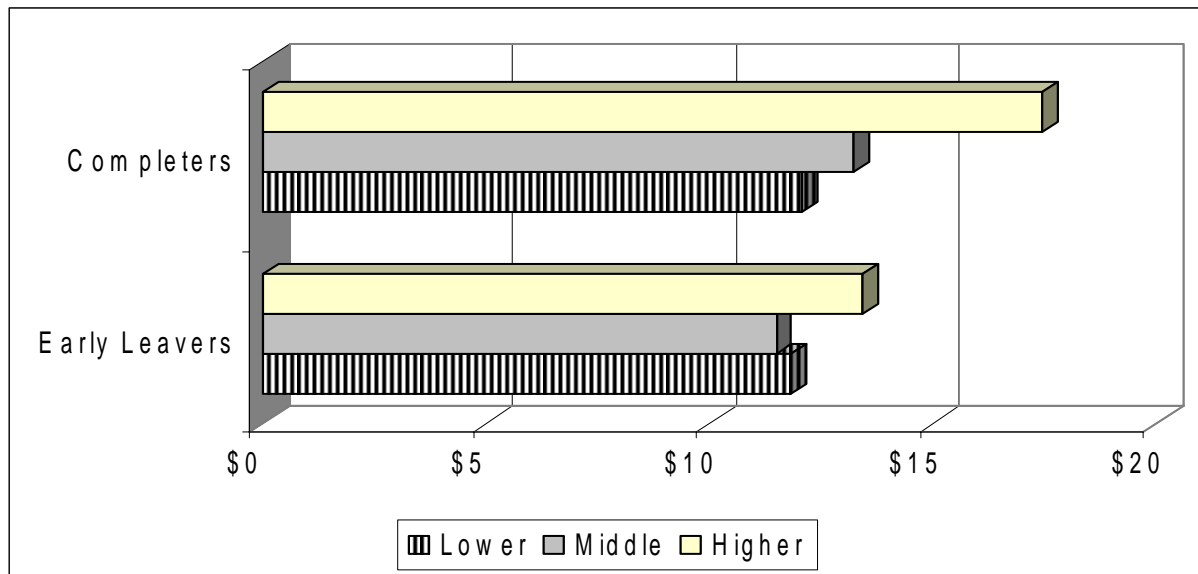
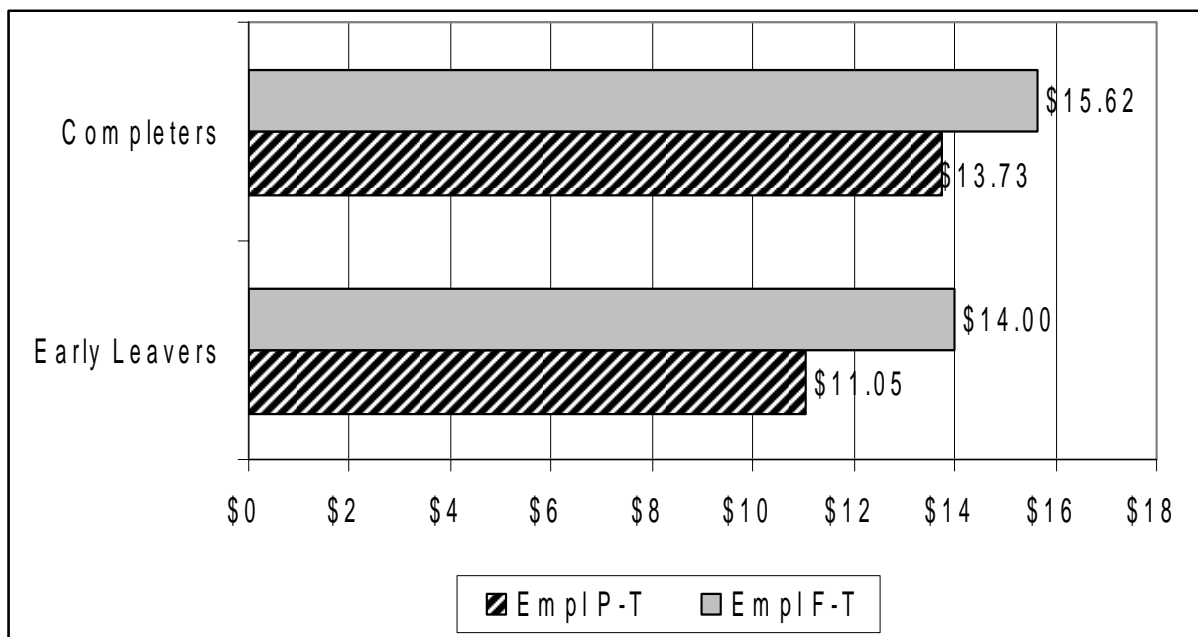


Figure 3.5: Hourly Wages by Exit Status and by Full-Time or Part-Time Employment



Note: “Completers” includes students who completed 45 credits or more with a 2.0 + GPA, or who were awarded a certificate of any kind or a degree. “Full-time” for the purposes of the State Board’s reporting is defined as 30 or more hours per week.

**Board Plus/Delta**  
**“What is good about this report?**  
**What would you like to see changed?”**

**April 11, 2006**

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