

# **BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE**

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Student Employee Survey and Focus Group Findings

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## Executive Summary:

In the fall of 2016, Bakersfield College hired 520 student employees. Of those students, 179 (34 %) were returning employees and 341 (65%) were new hires. The average GPA for student employees in the F'16 was 2.91. In order to gain perspective into the students' experience as employees of the college a survey was deployed, followed by a focus group. The student survey questions were compartmentalized based on Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards and the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs). Preliminary findings reveal that student workers are engaged on campus and develop skills that align with those outlined in the ILOs.

## Alignment of Survey Questions:

The following outline was followed in the development of the survey questions, data collection, and evaluation.

CAS Standards on Student Learning and Development Domains, Dimensions, and Bakersfield College's Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

### **Domain: Knowledge Acquisition, Integration, Construction, and Application**

*Dimensions: understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, and experiences; constructing knowledge; and relating knowledge to daily life.*

My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my responsibilities as a student.

My job has helped me to deal more effectively around situations of uncertainty.

### **Domain: Cognitive Complexity**

*Dimensions: critical thinking, reflective thinking, effective reasoning, and creativity.*

*ILO: Think critically and evaluate sources and information for validity and usefulness.*

My job has helped me develop critical thinking skills to form opinions.

My job has helped me develop critical thinking skills for effective problem-solving.

My job has helped me to weigh different perspectives and formulate my own opinion.

My job has helped me develop conflict resolution skills.

### **Domain: Intrapersonal Development**

*Dimensions: realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, and self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics and integrity; and spiritual awareness.*

My job has helped me to effectively manage my time.

My job has helped me become more comfortable working independently.

My job has helped me to consider the repercussions of my actions.

**Domain: Interpersonal Competence**

*Dimensions: meaningful relationships, interdependence, collaboration, and effective leadership.*

My job has helped me to understand that working with others may create better outcomes.

My job has helped to become more involved with the campus by participating in activities, organizations, and events.

**Domain: Humanitarianism and Civic Engagement**

*Dimensions: understanding and appreciation of cultural and human differences, social responsibility, global perspective, and sense of civic responsibility.*

*ILO: Engage productively in all levels of society-interpersonal, community, the state and nation, and the world.*

My job has helped me to engage with my peers, faculty, staff, the campus community, and/or my community as a whole.

Because of my job, I am more equipped to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.

**Domain: Practical Competence**

*Dimensions: pursuing goals, communicating effectively, technical competence, managing personal affairs, managing career development, demonstrating professionalism, maintaining health and wellness, and living a purposeful and satisfying life.*

*ILO: Communicate effectively in both written and oral forms.*

*ILO: Demonstrate competency in a field of knowledge with job-related skills.*

My job has helped me improve my oral communication skills.

My job has helped me improve my written communication skills.

My job has helped me gain the competency skills needed to demonstrate my knowledge base for future employment opportunities.

My job has helped me to acquire new skills that connect to my academic and professional aspirations.

My job has helped me better understand what it means to be responsible in the workplace.

## Methodology

The survey was deployed to all 520 Bakersfield College student workers employed at both the main and satellite campuses (Delano, Fresno Pacific, and the Weil Institute). The survey was created and monitored using Qualtrics as the survey software. The survey link was emailed to all students and five follow-up emails were sent out during the 18-day period. At the close of the survey, there were a total of 156 responses collected. The survey was originally sent to 460 students. However, a few days after sending the initial email, we got an updated student employee list from the Assistant Director of Admissions and Records. With the new list, the survey was sent out to a total of 520 student employees. The response rate, based on the total number of student reached, totaled 30 percent. Of the participating students, 42 students indicated willingness to participate in a focus group, their email addresses were collected to allow for a formal focus group invitation. The required response rate for this population size (520) with a 2 percent margin of error, and a 95 percent confidence level is 20 percent. Fortunately, the response rate was above the required rate. The survey format includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis. A total of 20 questions, framed by the CAS and ILOs, were asked using a Likert scale for measurement; see table 1. There were also three open-ended questions used to collect qualitative feedback:

1. (Q6) List three (3) things your experience as a BC student worker has taught you or helped you develop.
2. (Q7) List three (3) things BC could do to improve your employment experience.
3. (Q9) Any Additional comments?

## Survey Findings:

The survey findings reveal that a majority of student employees enroll full-time (52.6%). This is a significant difference from the general student population; according to the “Unit Load Summary” query in the CCCCO’s Data Mart cite, only 23.9 percent of students enrolled in the F’16 term registered for 12 units or more. Another data point gathered from the survey indicates that more than half (58.2%) of survey

participants are returning employees. Additionally, 78.8 percent of survey correspondents reported some form of campus involvement through clubs, organizations, and programs.

*Table 1:* Demographic information collected from the survey

<b>Questions number</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Response rate</b>
How many units are you enrolled in?	80 (52.6%) FT 72 (47.3%) PT	152 (97.4%)
Are you a new or returning student employee?	63 (41.7%) New 84 (55.6%) Returning 4 (2.6%) New to current position	151 (96.7%)
Campus involvement	123 (78.8%) involvement rate	123 (78.8%)

**Table 2: Likert Scale Questions**

Listed below are a number of statements that pertain to your employment at Bakersfield College. Please respond to the degree of how you agree or disagree with each statement.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Total</b>
My job has helped me learn more about my career options	4.35%	6.52%	2.90%	11.59%	13.04%	31.88%	29.71%	138
My job has trained me for the for full-time employment after graduation	2.92%	8.03%	3.65%	11.68%	25.55%	24.09%	24.09%	137
My job has helped me to effectively manage my time	2.92%	1.46%	0.73%	8.76%	14.60%	39.42%	32.12%	137
My job has helped me develop critical thinking skills to form opinions	3.65%	1.46%	1.46%	9.49%	13.87%	32.85%	37.23%	137
My job has helped me develop critical thinking skills for effective problem-solving	2.19%	2.19%	1.46%	6.57%	16.79%	35.04%	35.77%	137
My job has helped me improve my oral communication skills	2.19%	0.73%	0.73%	5.84%	13.87%	33.58%	43.07%	137
My job has helped me improve my written communication skills	2.92%	3.65%	0.73%	18.25%	13.14%	37.96%	23.36%	137
My job has helped me gain the competency skills needed to demonstrate my knowledge base for future employment opportunities	3.65%	2.19%	0.00%	9.49%	14.60%	35.04%	35.04%	137
My job has helped me to engage with my peers, faculty, staff, the campus community, and/or my community as a whole	1.46%	2.92%	0.73%	4.38%	13.87%	29.20%	47.45%	137
Because of my job, I am more equipped to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures	1.46%	0.00%	0.73%	5.84%	11.68%	33.58%	46.72%	137

My job has helped me to weigh different perspectives and formulate my own opinion	2.19%	3	2.19%	3	0.73%	1	10.22%	14	11.68%	16	36.50%	50	36.50%	50	137
My job has helped me develop conflict resolution skills	2.21%	3	1.47%	2	2.21%	3	12.50%	17	16.91%	23	37.50%	51	27.21%	37	136
My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my responsibilities as a student	5.84%	8	1.46%	2	2.92%	4	9.49%	13	8.76%	12	29.93%	41	41.61%	57	137
My job has helped me become more comfortable working independently	2.92%	4	0.00%	0	2.92%	4	8.03%	11	10.22%	14	35.77%	49	40.15%	55	137
My job has helped me to consider the repercussions of my actions	1.47%	2	1.47%	2	2.21%	3	13.97%	19	10.29%	14	32.35%	44	38.24%	52	136
My job has helped me to understand that working with others may create better outcomes	2.96%	4	0.00%	0	0.74%	1	5.93%	8	11.11%	15	32.59%	44	46.67%	63	135
My job has helped me to deal more effectively around situations of uncertainty	1.47%	2	3.68%	5	0.74%	1	9.56%	13	14.71%	20	35.29%	48	34.56%	47	136
My job has helped me better understand what it means to be responsible in the workplace	2.21%	3	0.74%	1	0.00%	0	8.82%	12	5.15%	7	30.88%	42	52.21%	71	136
My job has helped to become more involved with the campus by participating in activities, organizations, and events	4.41%	6	2.21%	3	2.21%	3	16.91%	23	16.18%	22	26.47%	36	31.62%	43	136
My job has helped me to acquire new skills that connect to my academic and professional aspirations	2.94%	4	0.74%	1	0.00%	0	8.82%	12	12.50%	17	33.82%	46	41.18%	56	136



Table 3: Coded Survey Responses by Overarching Themes

Q: List three (3) things your experience as a BC student worker has taught you or helped you

<b>Emerging themes:</b>	<b>Total number of responses: 118</b>
<b>Emerging Theme 1:</b> Communication Skills	67 or 56% of respondents indicated that they have developed communication skills as a result of their employment at Bakersfield College.
<b>Emerging Theme 2:</b> Time Management	47 or 39% of respondents indicated that they have developed time management and organizational skills as a result of their employment at Bakersfield College.
<b>Emerging Theme 3:</b> Self-confidence	18 or 15% of respondents indicated that they have developed or increased their self-confidence as a result of their employment at Bakersfield College.
<b>Emerging Theme 4:</b> Campus involvement and increase awareness of campus resources	18 or 15% of respondents indicated that they have become more involved and are more aware of campus resources as a result of their employment at Bakersfield College.

develop?

Table 4: Coded Survey Responses by Overarching Themes (2)

Q: List three (3) things BC could do to improve your employment experience:

<b>Emerging themes:</b>	<b>Total number of responses: 94</b>
<b>Emerging Theme 1:</b> Improve employee benefits (hours, health benefits, higher wages, and promotions).	41 or 43% of respondents indicated that Bakersfield College can improve the overall work experience of student workers by increasing hours, wages, promotions, and offering health benefits.
<b>Emerging Theme 2:</b> Improve structural support (work space, parking space, and facilities).	22 or 23% of respondents indicated that Bakersfield College can improve the overall work experience of student workers by developing the structural support by offering better and more work space and providing student employee parking.
<b>Emerging Theme 3:</b> Improve communication channels.	18 or 19% of respondents indicated that Bakersfield College can improve the overall work experience of student workers by enhancing the communication channels.
<b>Emerging Theme 4:</b> Improve hiring process and increase training opportunities.	19 or 21% of respondents indicated that Bakersfield College can improve the overall work experience of student workers by augmenting the hiring process and increasing training opportunities.

Quotes from the open-ended sections for both Table 2 and 3 include the following quotes:

### Table 3

*“I have learned about eh different resources available in school.”*

*“Working at BC helped me to open up again, gain back my confidence, and time management.”*

*“I have learned the value in becoming involved and active in my own learning experience.”*

*“I learned to not be that shy while working with my fellow student workers.”*

*“It has helped me develop better communication skills with disabled students.”*

*“Ability to communicate difficult concepts to others.”*

### Table 4

*“Events where student employees get to meet with members of other departments to familiarize themselves with other student services available on campus.”*

*“Provide more resources to workers not stationed at the main campus.”*

*“Better connecting between departments.”*

*“Job value (more benefits in learning something while working).”*

*“Also have more job opportunities so we can move up as student workers over time.”*

Tables 1 thru 4 identify the compiled findings from the survey. Overall, student employees reported satisfaction with their employment at the college and reveal alignment with ILOs and CAS standards.

*ILO: Demonstrate competency in a field of knowledge with job-related skills:*

1. 74.3% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have learned more about career options because of campus employment.
2. 84.0% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have gained competency skills needed for future employment opportunities
3. 84.3% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their supervisor helps them to make a connection between their work and their responsibilities as a student.
4. 88.2% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have developed a better understanding about responsibility in the workplace.
5. 87.5% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have acquired new skills that connect them to their academic and professional aspirations.

*ILO: Communicate effectively in both written and oral forms:*

1. 90.5% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have improved their communication skills as a result of campus employment.
2. 74.4% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that they have improved their written communication skills as a result of campus employment.

*ILO: Engage productively in all levels of society-interpersonal, community, the state and nation, and the world:*

1. 90.5% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that campus employment has helped them to engage with their peers, faculty, staff, the campus community, and/or their community as a whole.
2. 91.9% of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has equipped them to work with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and cultures.
3. 74.2 % of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has helped them to become more involved on campus by participating in activities, organizations, and events.

*ILO: Think critically and evaluate sources and information for validity and usefulness:*

1. 83.9 % of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has helped them to developed the necessary critical thinking skills to form opinions.
2. 87.6 % of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has helped them to develop the necessary critical thinking skills from effective problem solving.
3. 84.6 % of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has helped them to weigh different perspectives and formulate their own opinion.
4. 81.6 % of student employees agree, somewhat agree, or strong agree that their job has helped them to develop conflict resolution skills.

### **Focus Group Finding:**

A total of six students participated in the focus groups. The participants were employed in various areas throughout the campus and all, but one, self-identified as a returning student worker. Similar to the survey findings, students identified that on-campus employment allowed them to connect with their peers and the campus. Students in the focus group also articulated that campus employment allowed them to focus on their development as a student while gaining valuable skills for future employment. Below are a few quotes taken from the focus groups to support the two overarching themes:

“My job gave me many opportunities to get involved. It has forced me out of my comfort zone to being seen in the public eye” (Focus group, Student B).

“My job allows me to keep [my] English skills sharp” (Focus group, Student F).

“I would recommend campus employment [to others]. Other placed don’t care about school work as BC does. I learned a lot, this is my first job and helping others in this job makes me feel good about myself. It offers the opportunity to interact with faculty and staff on a personal level” (Focus group, student D).

“It is important to help students understand [the] full benefits of being a student worker” (Focus group, Student A).

The focus group findings support the survey findings. Overall, students claimed that campus employment helped them to maintain oral, written, and critical thinking skills while also developing a sense of identity and commitment to the campus. One student identified that their current position is their first job (student D) and they have learned to grow professionally while also engaging with their role as a student.

**Discussion:**

Based on the findings it is important to consider the effect that campus employment has on student success evidenced by measurable progression of ILOs. Students that participated in the survey spoke heavily about the positive effect that campus employment had on them as they learned to develop the skills to be successful in the classroom as well as the workplace. It is important to continue to consider ways to onboard professional development opportunities for student workers so that they continue to engage with the student success efforts of the campus.

This model of training will allow student workers to be at the forefront of the efforts of leading their peers towards academic success.