

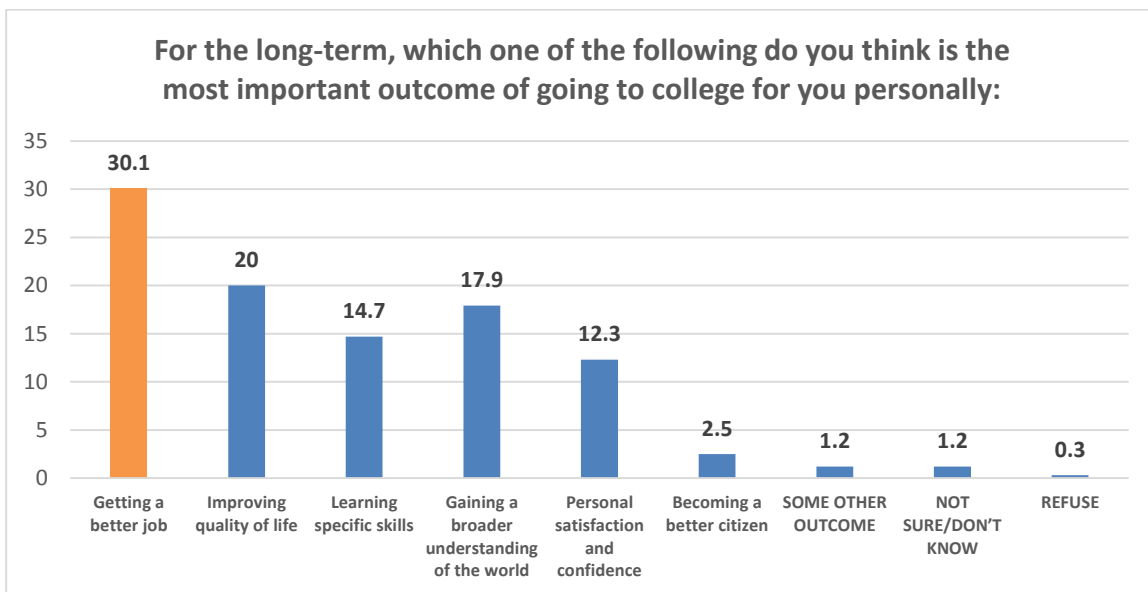
Stockton Poll: N.J. Recent College Graduates Think Colleges Need To Do More to Tie Academic and Practical Learning

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Galloway, NJ - Stockton University research reveals that recent college graduates believe the most important college outcome is to get a better job, with 30 percent naming that as their top priority. However, only about one in three (35 percent) says colleges are doing “extremely well” in preparing them for a job and career.



“Measuring College Outcomes,” was authored by Darryl Greer, Ph.D., Stockton University’s William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy’s Senior Fellow, and based on a statewide poll of 770 adults who were either recent graduates of public and private colleges or had at least two years of college. The poll was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute, which surveyed recent college graduates and students to uncover their opinions on their college experience and desired outcomes. The research was conducted as part of Greer’s Higher Education and Strategic Information and Governance Project (HESIG).

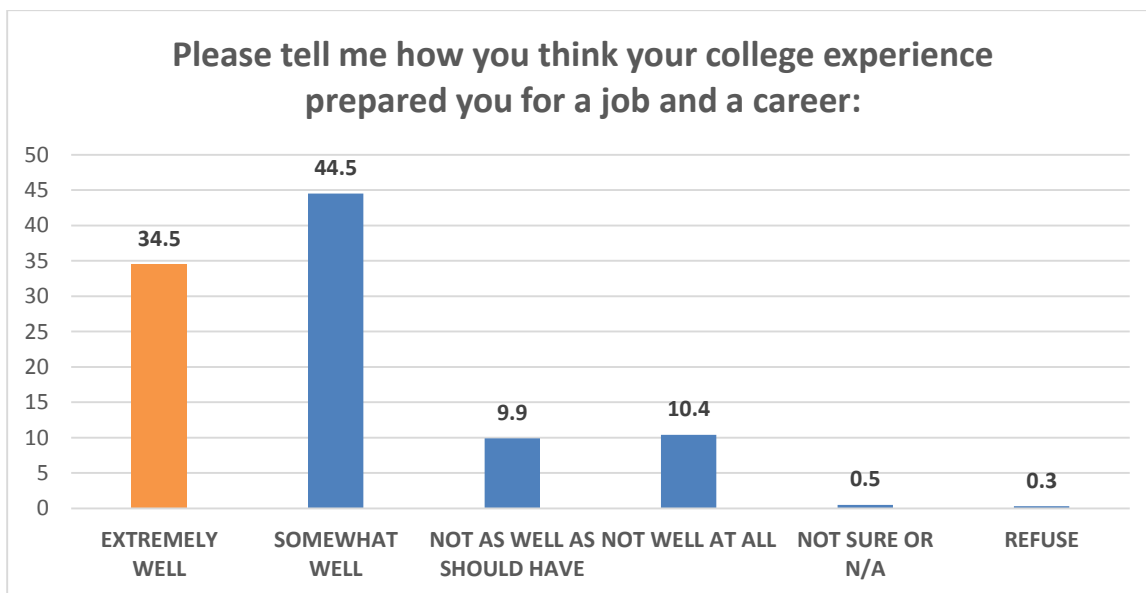
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Seventy-eight percent of recent graduates identified “internships or practical experience in college” as the most important factor to ensure success in a current or future job and career. Eighty-four percent viewed internships as “very important” to overall success in developing a career and finding a job. Seventy-three percent of recent graduates felt that college is worth the cost. However, 31 percent felt that the most significant change their college could have made to add greater value to their higher education experience would be to provide “more hands-on practical experience, such as internships.” About one-half of graduates and those with at least two years of college reported having had an internship.

On Wednesday, June 15, HESIG and the Hughes Center will host a symposium on Achieving Student Outcomes: Linking Academic Success, Workforce Preparation and Civic Participation at Stockton University’s Campus Center Event Room. The event seeks to bring together collegiate professionals across New Jersey to discuss best practices for collegiate advising and career counseling, and will apply the “Measuring College Outcomes” findings. The symposium is hosted in support with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education’s Student Success Collaborative. Free registration is available [here](#).

“Colleges in New Jersey aspire to meet students’ college outcome expectations,” said Greer. “By gaining further understanding of student opinion on these issues, we can facilitate a more informed direction on change needed to help students succeed.”



The research also delved deeper to interpret recent college graduates’ opinion on specific skills gained from college experience. When asked about the most important skills and abilities learned in college, the top results were “problem solving” (84 percent), “communicating orally” (83 percent), “understanding and gathering information” (79 percent), “writing clearly” (79 percent), and “using technology” (77 percent.)

When asked which skill or ability gained in college is valued most by an employer, “problem solving” was once again the most popular answer (32 percent), with “teamwork” (21 percent), and “writing and speaking skills” (19 percent) as other top choices.

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The survey builds on recently released HESIG research on current college students conducted for the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education, and from previous HESIG and Hughes Center research on college value and outcomes conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute.

The 2016 findings and prior reports can be downloaded at stockton.edu/hughescenter. They contain supplemental graphics and charts.

Methodology

The survey was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (www.stockton.edu/hughescenter). Live interviewers on the Stockton campus called both landlines and cell phones from January 27 to February 8, 2016. The poll was conducted with 770 adults throughout New Jersey who are college graduates or whose education level includes at the minimum two years of college. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.5 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets.

About Higher Education Strategic Information and Governance (HESIG)

HESIG serves as an agent for constructive higher education policy change, by recommending strategic policy action aligned with a public agenda to serve the public good. Guiding principles include: enhancing college access, affordability, completion, productivity, accountability, and building partnerships to achieve these ends. HESIG is a partner with the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education's Student Success Collaborative.

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy (stockton.edu/hughescenter) at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes the civic life of New Jersey through engagement, education and research. The Center is named for William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Center can be found at [facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter](https://www.facebook.com/StocktonHughesCenter) and can be followed on [Twitter@hughescenter](https://twitter.com/hughescenter).

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