



NEWS Release

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For immediate release
April 17, 2008

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Technical college graduates making financial gains in Wisconsin

MADISON – The growth in earnings by Wisconsin’s Technical College graduates was nearly twice the rate of inflation over the past five years. According to the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) *Longitudinal Follow-Up Study*, more than three-quarters of the 2001-02 graduates are working in their fields of training. These graduates experienced median salary growth of 33 percent over a five-year period (5.9 percent annually) to nearly \$36,000. The change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 16 percent for the same period.

The *Longitudinal Follow-Up Study*, which looks at changes in employment five years after graduation, also concluded that technical college graduates had much lower unemployment rates (2 percent) than all Wisconsin workers during that time (5.1 percent).

“Changes in the economy dictate that employees are highly skilled and ready for employment in a number of Wisconsin’s established and new sectors, many of which are technology driven,” said Dan Clancy, president of the WTCS. “Wisconsin’s Technical Colleges provide the most relevant education for these new and emerging technology careers,” he said.

To align education with business and industry, technical colleges use advisory committees made up of business and industry representatives to provide input on their most critical employment needs. The Longitudinal Study evaluates the success of employees and their respective education.

“Our advisory committees make sure our programs are relevant to the jobs and careers available. Our graduates are prepared to excel in those jobs. This survey is one of our measurement tools to verify the success of our students and satisfaction of employers,” Clancy added.

In the survey, nearly all respondents (93 percent) agreed their technical college education played an important role at the start of their career and an even greater number (95 percent) said they are likely to recommend technical college to others. Also, roughly nine of every ten (89 percent) are employed in Wisconsin.

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A total of 7,359 of 17,833 graduates completed the survey in late 2007 for a 41 percent response rate. The WTCS conducts the *Longitudinal Follow-Up Study* every four years and compares it with the *Graduate Follow-Up Study* for that same class. The *Graduate Follow-Up Study* evaluates employment six months after graduation.

The Wisconsin Technical College System has 16 technical college districts throughout Wisconsin, which offer more than 300 programs awarding two-year associate degrees, one and two-year technical diplomas and short-term technical diplomas. In addition, the System is the major provider of customized training and technical assistance to Wisconsin's business and industry community. More than half of all adults in Wisconsin have accessed the technical colleges for education and training. Find more about educational programs at www.witechcolleges.org.

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