

Education Outcomes

Quick Look

February 2012



A Snapshot of Iowa Community College Graduates 2000-2010 Graduating Classes

This *Quick Look* report is an Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) education outcomes research publication, reporting an overview of employment and wages of Iowa community college students. This research is a cooperative effort between IWD and the Iowa Department of Education (IDE).

The focus of the analysis in this report is to provide a snapshot of employment and earnings in the 2011 fiscal year (July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011) for each of the collective Iowa community college graduating classes between 2000 and 2010 — where graduate is defined as any student that received an award (Associate's, certificate, diploma, etc.). This is accomplished by matching IDE student records with Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records, which include wage information. Some basic summary statistics for each of the graduating classes are shown in **Table 1**. The UI wage records used do not cover other states, so the statistics in this report are limited to wages earned in the state of Iowa.

Illustrated in **Figure 1** is a count of the number of graduates in Iowa community colleges (the entire bar). Also shown is the number of graduates that earned wages in Iowa during the 2011 fiscal year (the dark portion of the bar). The number of graduates per class has grown over the last decade, peaking in 2009-10 with 14,506 unique individuals (some earned more than one award). More recent graduating classes, however, had higher proportions of graduates earning wages in the state of Iowa in the 2011 fiscal year. As an example, 63.9 percent of 2000-01 graduates were employed in Iowa in FY2011, while 80.1 percent of 2009-10 graduates were employed in Iowa during the same period. This trend suggests that Iowa community college graduates trickle out of the state over time, a tendency supported by past studies conducted by IWD and IDE.

The wages of Iowa community college graduates in the 2011 fiscal year show a strong pattern, as well. **Figure 2** shows the median 2011 gross fiscal year wage for each academic class. The classes who graduated more recently have lower median wages than those that graduated earlier in the decade. An obvious explanation for this is that those who graduated earlier have, on average, more work experience which usually leads to higher wages. Recent graduates are also more likely to be enrolled in a four-year university and not working full-time. The median 2011 gross fiscal year wage for the 2009-10 graduating class was \$15,569, while the median wage for the 2000-01 graduating class was \$35,865.

Graduates who received awards from Iowa community colleges in the last decade earned wages of over **\$2.7 billion** in Iowa in the 2011 fiscal year.

Class	Median Wage	Total Wages Earned	Number Employed	Number in Class
2009-10	\$15,569	\$218,274,625	11,625	14,506
2008-09	\$19,962	\$225,628,934	10,231	13,257
2007-08	\$23,988	\$251,086,527	9,930	13,132
2006-07	\$27,272	\$283,585,231	10,054	13,575
2005-06	\$29,376	\$291,682,765	9,739	13,406
2004-05	\$31,118	\$313,535,759	9,926	14,018
2003-04	\$32,517	\$302,887,009	9,123	12,983
2002-03	\$34,249	\$298,877,531	8,610	12,674
2001-02	\$35,446	\$280,738,255	7,794	11,890
2000-01	\$35,865	\$263,884,221	7,173	11,222
Grand Total		\$2,730,180,857	94,205	130,663

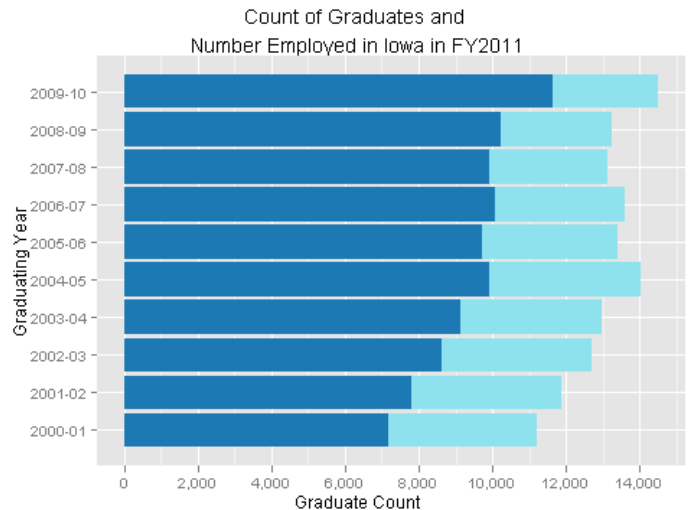


Figure 1: Total number of graduates in each academic class (entire bar), as well as the number employed in Iowa during the 2011 fiscal year in each class (dark portion).

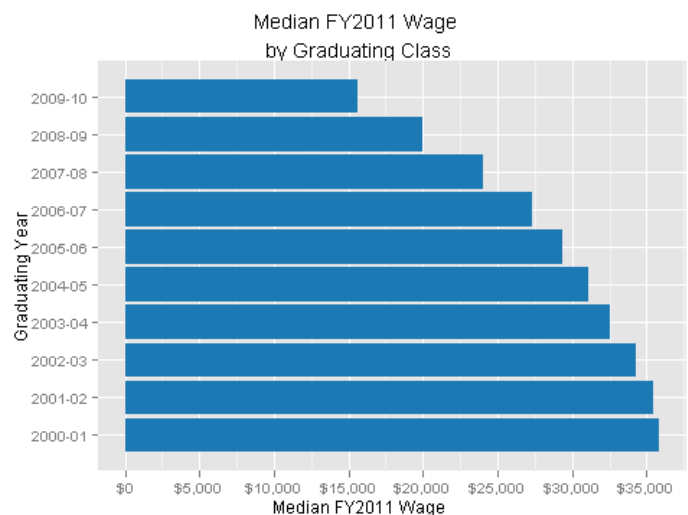


Figure 2: Median 2011 gross fiscal year wage by each academic class. Wages shown are limited to those that are earned in Iowa.

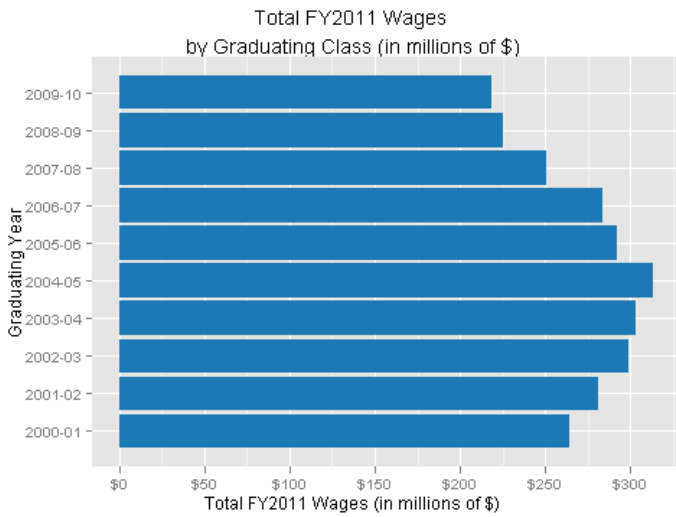


Figure 3: Total gross wages earned in the 2011 fiscal year by each academic class. Wages shown are limited to those that are earned in Iowa.

While Figure 2 illustrates the median 2011 wages of Iowa community college graduates, **Figure 3** shows the total 2011 gross wages earned by all Iowa community college graduates in the state of Iowa for each academic class. Two major factors have to be considered when thinking about the total wages earned; while classes that graduated earlier typically earn higher wages, a higher proportion of them have migrated out of the state as well. As a result, the 2004-05 graduating class collectively earned the most wages in Iowa in the 2011 fiscal year, with \$313.5 million.

As an addition to summary wage information, analyzing the distribution of a class' wages can be very informative. **Figure 4** shows the distribution of 2011 fiscal year wages for each graduating class, with blue lines to indicate the class' median wage. There is a clear pattern between the classes; more recent classes have lower median wages and generally have a much larger number of graduates with wages between \$0 and \$20,000. Classes that graduated earlier have higher medians and more spread out wages that follow a symmetric distribution. All classes have at least a small peak close to \$0 earned; this could correspond to graduates that only spent a small portion of the year in Iowa earning wages. Also, there are a number of graduates in each class that earned more than \$100,000 that aren't shown in Figure 4; **Table 2** has the number in each class that earned as much.

2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
73	64	57	42	42	30	18	17	7	8

A Technical Note

The UI wage records used to generate the summaries in this report do not have perfect coverage. The state UI program does not cover federal employees, members of the armed forces, the self-employed, proprietors, unpaid family workers, church employees and railroad workers covered by the railroad unemployment insurance system, as well as students employed in a college or university as part of a financial aid package. The UI program does provide partial information on agricultural industries and employees in private households. Therefore, the retention rates and total gross wages reported are under-estimated.

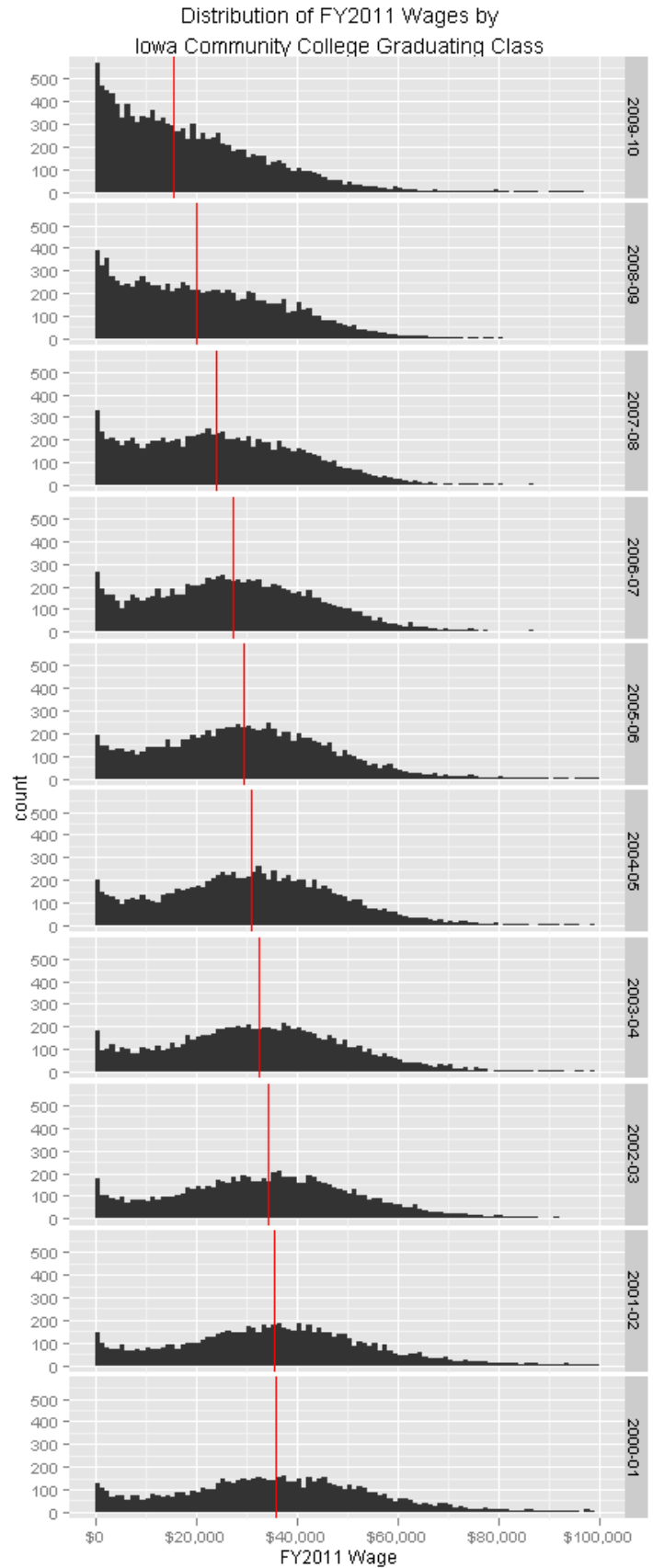


Figure 4: The distribution of 2011 gross fiscal year wages by Iowa Community College graduating class, with the blue line representing the median gross wage for each cohort. The graph is cut off at \$100,000 to make the shape of the distribution more visible; there are a relatively small number of completers earning more than that amount in each cohort (Table 2). The wages included are only those earned in Iowa.

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