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New Study Highlights Importance of Workplace Skills Education

ACICS Launches ‘Success Model’ that Students Need, According to Employer Survey

(Washington, DC) December 5, 2011 – Today, a survey commissioned by the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) will be released at the National Press Club, showing that many hiring decision-makers believe that the post-secondary education system could do a better job preparing students for the workplace. The study, conducted by FTI Consulting, surveyed 1,006 professionals – representing various industries in the United States – who make hiring decisions on whether job applicants have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the workplace.

“We want the institutions we accredit to focus on a student success model versus a sales model,” said Dr. Al Gray, Executive Director of ACICS, which recently launched an initiative to address a series of workforce development problems related to economic competitiveness, economic recovery and economic strength.

Only seven percent of hiring decision-makers believe the post-secondary education system does an “excellent” job preparing students for the workforce, while 54 percent say it does a “good” job and 39 percent say “only fair” or “poor.” Forty-five percent of decision-makers believe that most students would be better served by an education that specifically prepares them for the workplace.

The graduates from independent career colleges and schools, such as the more than 170,000 students who completed programs at 800 ACICS-accredited campuses last year, are crucial to sustaining the economic competitiveness of the nation.

Overall, hiring decision-makers say it’s difficult to find the right applicants to fill open positions. Fifty-four percent of hiring decision-makers report that the process of finding applicants with the necessary skills and knowledge set is difficult, and only 16 percent say that applicants are “very prepared” with the knowledge and skills they would need for the job. Sixty-three percent say applicants are “somewhat prepared” and nearly one-quarter say applicants are unprepared. Furthermore, employers indicate that finding qualified applicants is getting more difficult.

“ACICS-accredited institutions are focused on providing exactly the sort of workplace-appropriate skills that employees need to succeed in a tough economy,” said Dr. Gray.

To view the research presentation and panel discussion live Monday, December 5 at 3:30 p.m. EST, go <http://acics.org/events/content.aspx?id=4718>. Questions can be submitted via Twitter using the hashtag #ACICSaccredits.

About the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

Founded in 1912, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) is one of the most respected and longest established national accreditors of academic institutions in the United States. It is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). ACICS accredits more than 800 private post-secondary institutions offering certificates or diplomas, as well as institution offering associate’s, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees in programs designed to educate students for professional, technical, or occupational degrees. For more information, please visit www.acics.org.