

African-Canadian Career Excellence Undergraduate Survey 2011-2012

Summary Report

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CEDEC

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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This summary report provides the final data analysis and interpretation of the 2011-2012 undergraduate student survey on perceptions of transition to employment in Montreal. As one step in the African-Canadian Career Excellence (ACCE) initiative aimed at countering the migration of Black graduates from Montreal, this summary will inform the design of development training for young graduates to facilitate their career launch and advancement in Quebec.

Information and insights herein were provided by the following members of ACCE: Dorothy W. Williams of the Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC), Dwight Best of the African and Caribbean Students' Network of Canada (ACSioN), Tamara Hart of the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, Velda Bourne, Karima West, and Nina Kim and Larissa Milo-Dale of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC). Preliminary data analysis and interpretation were contributed by Jan Warnke J W COMM INC.

African-Canadian Career Excellence

Context

Recent studies by a McGill University consortium (MCSSEP) revealed that the Black unemployment rate in Montreal is twice that of non-Blacks, at 13.4% compared to 6.6%. Blacks are underrepresented in higher-paying jobs, occupying only 1.8% of posts in management, 1.4% of judges, lawyers, and 1.8% of doctors (Torczyner 2001, 1997).

In Quebec, the proportion of visible minorities among employees in the civil service was 10.1% in 2004-2005 (Task Force Report on the Full Participation of Black Communities in Quebec Society, 2006). Blacks are over-represented in sectors where salaries are comparatively low and unemployment rates are higher, such as sales and manual work (Caribbean and African Self-Reliance International, CASRI, 2004).

Several studies point out that even highly educated ethnic minorities regularly encounter discrimination when seeking employment in Quebec (Piché, 2002; Fortin, 2002). Blacks with university degrees face difficulty finding work (Flegel, 2002), a consistent wage gap as compared to their colleagues (Milan & Tran, 2004,) and fewer opportunities for advancement (Modibo, 2004). The spotlight was recently turned on this issue when the Quebec Superior Court found the City of Montreal guilty of systemic racial discrimination in promotion, ordering it to change its practices and pay damages to an urban planning employee (The Montreal Gazette, June 12, 2013).

Since the 1990s, Montreal has had a steady out-migration of its educated visible minority immigrants, despite being a major starting destination for newcomers to Canada (Hou & Bourne, 2006; Symons, 2002). After fruitless attempts at penetrating the job market in Montreal, both foreign-born and Canadian-born Blacks often move on to Toronto. Most cite systemic barriers to fulfilling careers in Montreal and the belief that Toronto offers better career opportunities (Hautin, 2008; Krahn, Derwing & Abu-Laban, 2005; Moghaddam & Perreault, 1992).

This 'brain-drain' of educated young people to other cities inevitably has a negative impact on the numbers and vitality of Montreal's Black middle-class community. In the *Learn Canada 2020* declaration, the Council of Ministers of Education, representing all Canadian provinces and territories, underscored the direct link between a well-educated population and a vibrant knowledge-based economy and enhanced personal growth opportunities for all Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2009).

ACCE was created from a concern that the ongoing underemployment and out-migration of educated Blacks has been taking a toll on the Black communities in Quebec. Project funding has historically targeted employment remediation at local community organizations and para-government offices to address issues of the Black unemployed or the working poor in Quebec. Few resources have been directed at integration of university-educated Blacks into the careers they want in Quebec (Comitee Aviseur-Jeunes, 2004). ACCE's mandate is to facilitate the transition to meaningful local careers for this group by better preparing both the career-seekers and their potential employers.

The Partners

The Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC)

As Quebec's only province-wide organization with an economic and labour force development mandate, CEDEC helps communities throughout Quebec identify, assess, and prepare to act on social, cultural, and economic development opportunities.

CEDEC supports communities by lending planning expertise and follows through by brokering the strategic partnerships that make their plans a reality. A volunteer-driven organization, CEDEC sparks economic innovation in building forward-looking, prosperous and confident communities.

The Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC)

BCRC is a growing, resource-based organization that strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need. The Centre is committed to helping visible minority youth rekindle their dreams and achieve their full potential.

BCRC takes a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of English-speaking youth and community service (the "Holistic Project"). In recognizing that youth have many needs (socio-cultural, educational, and economic) that must be addressed in order for them to achieve, the Centre's multi-interventionist, holistic strategy is progressive and unique. At

its foundation is the idea of leveraging partnerships and encouraging collaboration in order to support individuals, families and organizations.

BCRC provides and implements professional innovative support services to individuals, communities, para-public and public organizations. The Centre also develops and runs health, education, socio-culture, and community economic development programs.

The African and Caribbean Students' Network of Canada (ACSioN)

Formally inaugurated in September 2006 and headquartered in Montreal, ACSioN is the organization pioneering the greatest collaboration of post-secondary students and professionals of African descent in Canada.

With a robust organizational framework and common value system supported by its national boards, chapters, and various member-associations, the ACSioN Network provides programs which allow students and professionals of African descent to successfully pursue a united vision and mission centred upon academic, economic, and sociocultural excellence.

The ACSioN Network envisions a community of prosperous, confident, magnanimous, respectable and respected people of African descent, united through their pursuit of the utmost excellence and their willingness to serve the community.

Together, CEDEC, BCRC, and ACSioN are striving to engage key partners and stakeholders to help mitigate the exodus of young educated Blacks from Montreal. This partnership aims to: encourage networking within Montreal's Black community; enhance professional capacity building; strive toward having a civic work force with a representative number of Black employees; help Montreal's Black graduates find gainful and sustainable employment in their various areas of specialisation with salaries commensurate to their qualifications; provide potential employers with highly qualified professionals; and reduce the unemployment rate in Montreal, especially within the Black community.

The ACCE initiative intends to 1) encourage Black graduates, in particular, to stay in the province of Quebec in order to contribute to the vitality of the middle-class community as a whole; and 2) assist employers as they move toward diversifying their workforce. This initiative hopes to mitigate the exodus of educated Black youth by helping them attain meaningful and sustainable local employment that is commensurate with their skills. Currently in the first phase of a 20-year project, ACCE undertook this undergraduate student survey in order to better understand the demographics, career interests, and migration plans of Black graduates, with a view to designing career-launch and advancement support to stay in Quebec.

Background and Purpose of Study

This report arose from a relationship between ACSioN and BCRC, which began in 2008. Over several years, BCRC had worked with ACSioN to develop an annual orientation program for Black student leaders to acquaint them with the historical contours of Montreal and its Black communities (note that 93% of Blacks living in Quebec are located in the Greater Montreal Area: Statistics Canada, 2006). Through this collaboration, BCRC had the privilege of meeting dynamic Black undergraduates who were engaged in student leadership in the universities and who desired to establish their careers in Montreal.

Over time, it became apparent that, despite their initial enthusiasm, many graduates found themselves unable to secure work in their chosen professions within the city. BCRC was concerned by the loss of these highly educated young adults from the region. ACSioN shared this concern, as its alumni members often left the city before they could mentor the organization's younger student members. Mindful of the struggles of the Black community 1) to sustain its own institutions, 2) to build vital and dynamic neighbourhoods, and 3) to support economic growth, BCRC approached CEDEC in 2009 with a proposal to create a joint initiative to stem this out-migration.

In 2010, CEDEC marshalled its resources to support a committee called the "Black Graduate League." It was comprised of several Black community volunteers and leaders from BCRC, ACSioN, and Montreal's Black community. The committee worked on a blueprint for collectively moving forward, including plans to poll current university students about 1) their desire to remain in the city and 2) their willingness to participate in career advancement training.

By the fall of 2010, BCRC had secured an intern from the School of Community and Public Affairs at Concordia University to actively build relationships with Black student associations and Black community organizations, as well as to promote the survey. In those initial months, the committee, now called the "Black Graduate's Initiative," continued to refine a working timeline and plans were made to secure external funding.

In March 2011, the Committee's working name was changed to "ACCE" or African-Canadian Career Excellence, and energies were put into creating a distinctive logo for use in promotions and communications with ACSioN members and with the community at large. During these committee discussions in the spring of 2011, significant time was spent developing the first undergraduate student survey for launch in the fall of that year. The target group began completing the survey in September 2011.

In March 2012, CEDEC began posting a story on its blog about the difficult job search undertaken by a Black Montreal citizen named "Tamara" (whose true identity was protected for her privacy). The blog posts gave readers a glimpse into the complex and frustrating task of finding meaningful work in Montreal for a well-qualified and experienced Black woman.

As the 2011-2012 academic year wound down, ACSioN, through its connections with various student associations, made a major push to increase the number of participants in the undergraduate student survey. These efforts paid off as the survey totals met and then surpassed expectations. The survey captured original data from a sample of close to 100 Black undergraduate students, a demographic which previous migration studies may have overlooked due to its extremely transient and non-mainstream nature.

Since the spring of 2012, ACCE's resources have focused on 1) preparing the analysis of the 2011-2012 undergraduate survey, 2) establishing a pilot series of career development workshops for Black undergraduate students and recent graduates, 3) preparing a similar survey for graduate students for the 2013-2014 academic year, and 4) planning for the public release of the survey findings in Fall 2013. Data Collection and Analysis

The survey designed by ACCE consisted of 34 categorical and open-ended questions in an online format, accessible in English through an application called Survey Monkey. The ACSioN student team, through on-campus promotion and in-person solicitation, targeted undergraduate university students of Black African descent from Concordia University, McGill University, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Université de Montréal, and the École du Barreau. Once candidates had confirmed they were of African ancestry, they were encouraged to participate in the online survey either independently or with an ACSioN team member ready to assist them.

Data provided by the Survey Monkey analysis function, as well as data transferred to Microsoft Excel and SPSS statistical analysis programs, were used to create the following tables and charts summarizing the results.

The 17 tables and charts comprise the major results of the survey. Collectively, they form a snapshot of the attitudes, beliefs, and aspirations of Black undergraduates attending Montreal's post-secondary institutions between September 2011 and February 2012. For clarity, findings are introduced in terms of their value to the study. The main finding in each group of tables or charts is summarized. Observations are then offered to enhance interpretation of the results, followed by recommendations for tailoring career advancement training modules.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Age Group

Respondents' ages were recorded in order to determine career stage and, ultimately, to compare to existing and future research on youth, undergraduate and graduate student migration, etc.

Table 1

What age group do you belong to?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
17-20 years of age	15.7%	14
21-29 years of age	60.7%	54
30-35 years of age	18.0%	16
36 years of age and over	5.6%	5
	Answered question	89
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

Approximately three-quarters of respondents (76.4%) were under 30 years of age, a typical undergraduate student age. The fact that approximately one-quarter of the group were over the age of 30 suggests a return to school for career advancement or change in career direction for these respondents.

Module consideration:

Career launch and advancement trainers should take into account the group's age range and employment history to incorporate any relevant workplace experiences that participants may be able to share with one another.

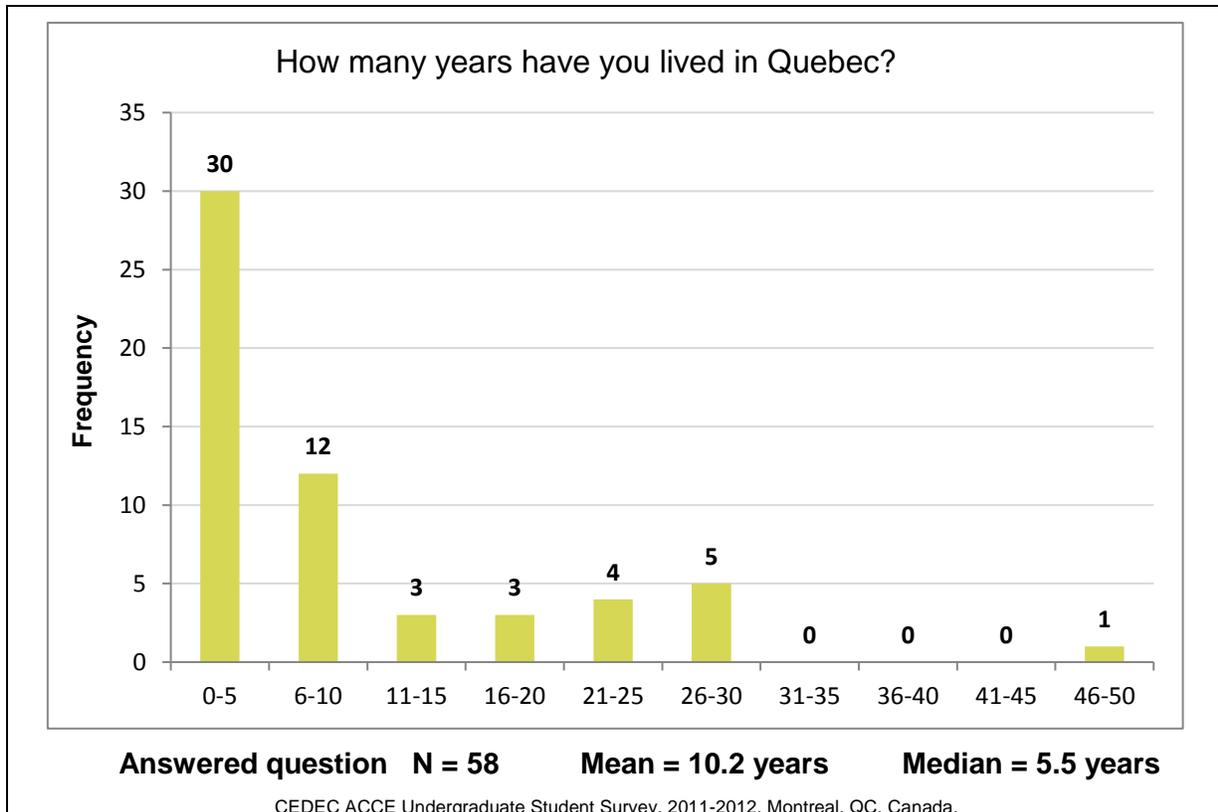
Residency in Quebec

Respondents were asked to indicate their location and length of time as a member of Montreal or Quebec society, as a measure of their familiarity with and ties to the city and culture.

Table 2

Do you live in the Greater Montreal Area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	94.5%	86
No	5.5%	5
	Answered question	91
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Chart 1



Observation:

As shown above, **about 95% of survey participants live in the Greater Montreal Area (GMA)**, consistent with studies showing that 93% of Blacks living in Quebec are located in the GMA (Statistics Canada, 2006) and reinforcing ACCE’s focus on this region.

The average duration of residency in Quebec of those who answered this question was 10.2 years. **Half of the respondents have lived in Quebec for more than 5.5 years.** Other results, not shown, indicate that **approximately 60% of respondents were born in Canada (half in Quebec, half in other provinces) and 40% were born abroad.**

Module consideration:

Career launch and advancement training should take into account that close to 70% of the students may have been born in other Canadian provinces or beyond. A review of relevant aspects of Quebec’s unique multicultural, political, and business context may be useful to this group.

Gender

The survey sought to determine the gender distribution of the sample for comparison to other research and statistics, as well as to consider gender differences affecting career decision-making.

Table 3

What is your gender?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	37.1%	33
Female	62.9%	56
	Answered question	89
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

As shown, **the ratio of female to male respondents was approximately 60:40, respectively**. This ratio validates our sample's gender composition, as it reflects the ratio of female to male undergraduate students across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2009).

Module consideration:

Career launch and advancement trainers must bear in mind that a larger proportion of participants may be female, with career path interests and workplace concerns that differ from those of their male counterparts, and tailor the training accordingly.

MIGRATION AND CAREER PLANS

Post-graduation: Intentions & Aspirations

In order to capture the students' current migration intentions, several questions addressed their post-graduation plans. Students were asked if they were obligated to leave Quebec upon graduation (e.g., as part of their bursary contract), if they already had plans to move elsewhere, or if they hoped to launch careers in Quebec, if possible.

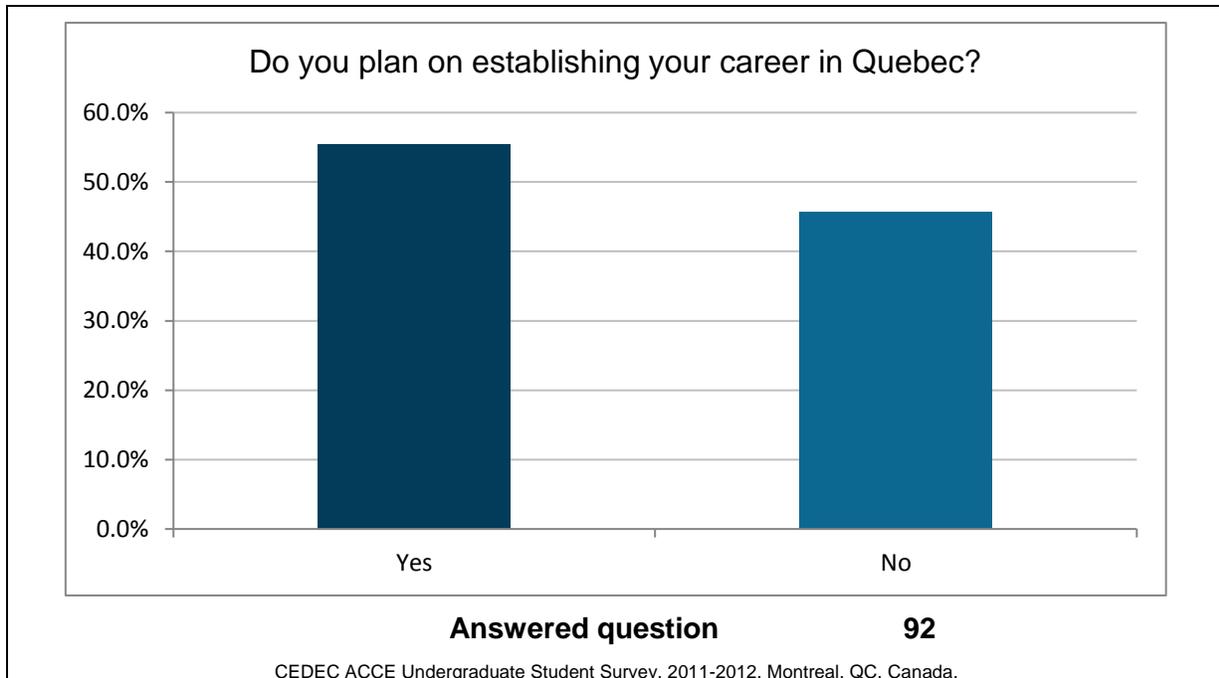
Table 4

Are you under any obligation (contractual or otherwise) to leave Quebec upon graduation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	6.5%	6
No	93.5%	86
	Answered question	92
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Table 5

Are you planning to stay in the province of Quebec upon graduation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.2%	37
No	14.1%	13
Do not know yet	47.8%	44
	Answered question	92
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Chart 2



Observation:

As shown in Table 5, only 14% of respondents indicated an intention to leave upon graduation (including the six respondents who were under obligation to leave). Thus, **a vast majority (86%) plan to stay in Montreal or are still undecided**. When asked specifically if they planned on establishing a career in Quebec, indicating a longer term commitment to the province, respondents were split more or less evenly: **55.4% envisioned their careers evolving in Quebec** (Chart 2, above).

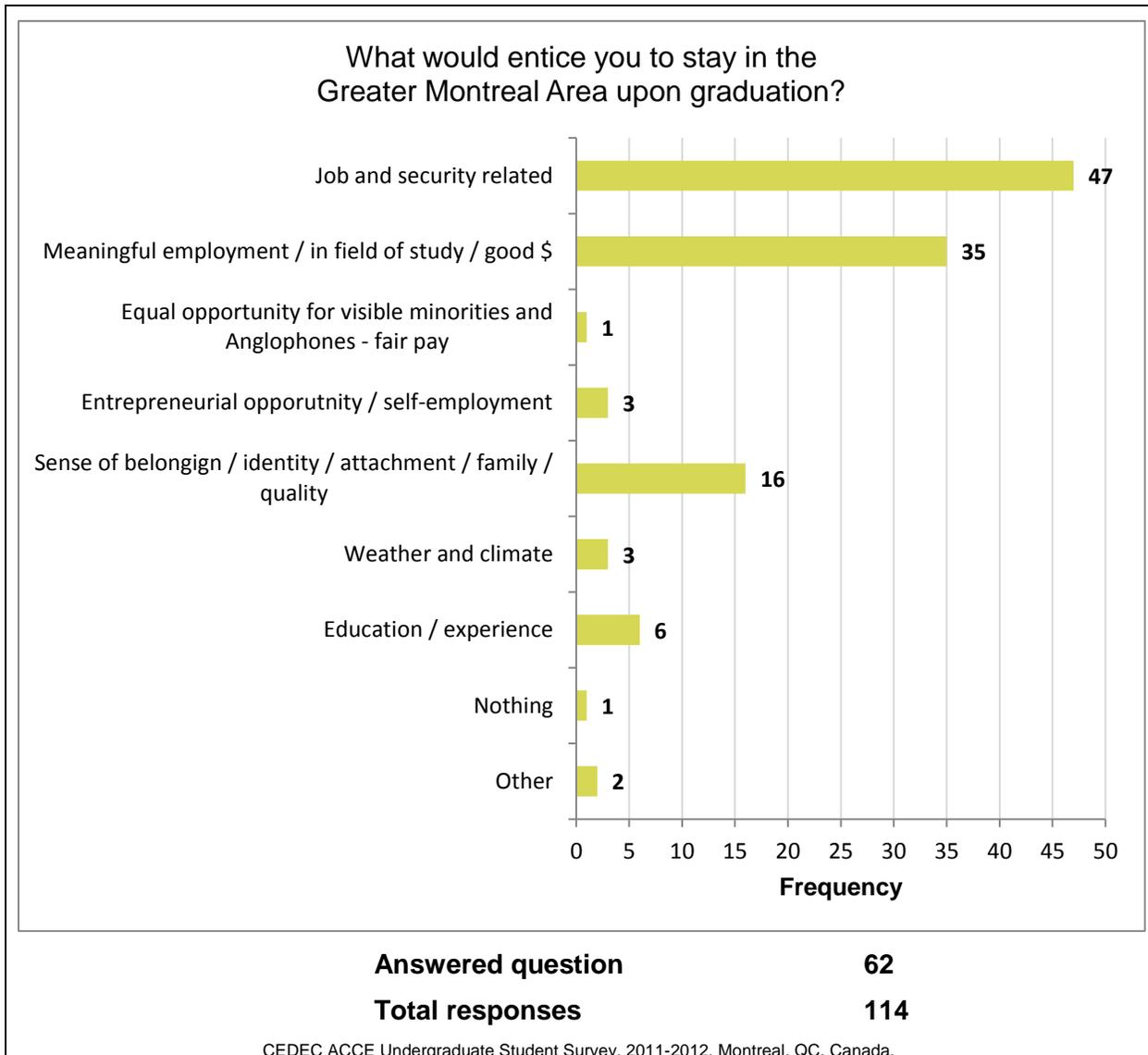
Module Consideration:

Given that 86% of the Black students surveyed envision staying or are still open to staying in Quebec, this period in their lives provides a critical opportunity to address concerns that may soon influence a decision to work elsewhere. Even though many students do not envision a long-term career plan in Quebec, the ACCE group hopes to increase that probability by helping to support strong career foundations.

Post-graduation: Career motivations

For a broader understanding of the reasons for out-migration, participants were asked what would entice them to stay in Montreal. Respondents provided a total of 114 responses which were then coded into nine major categories of reasons to stay in the GMA.

Chart 3



Observation:

Of the 144 reasons participants listed as inducements to stay in Montreal, **41.2% referred to “job security” and 31% were concerned with “meaningful employment in their field of study with good pay”**. The third most popular response category was “sense of belonging / identity / attachment / family”, at 14%.

Module Consideration:

Career advancement training must address their concerns of job security, meaningful employment, and good pay. The students will benefit from exploring the range of local employers that may provide meaning and sense of belonging, exploring careers both within and beyond their fields of study, and weighing salaries with quality of life factors.

Entrepreneurship opportunity in Montreal was not considered an enticement to stay for the vast majority. Trainers may wish to address this topic, providing relevant resources or information that the group may not be aware of.

WORKPLACE SKILLS AND PLANS

Work Experience

The following table provides a list of industries in which the students have gained work experience (both paid and volunteer). Multiple free-entry responses were permitted to this question and results were then grouped into categories.

Table 6

In what industries have you previously worked?		
Industry	Response Count	Response Percent
Business, management, finance, marketing, sales	67	32%
Customer Service	34	16%
International, humanitarian, non-profit, community	25	12%
Education	19	9%
Politics, government	13	6%
Hospitality, tourism, real estate	12	6%
Health Care	12	6%
Construction and manufacturing	7	3%
Computer science, information technology, management information systems	5	2%
Art, fashion, culture	5	2%
Other	5	2%
Transportation, warehousing	4	2%
Primary and extractive	3	1%
	Answered question	76
	Total responses	211

CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.

Observation:

Of those who responded to this question (76 of the original 92), a total of 211 industries were cited, indicating that most participants had worked in more than one industry.

Most (32%) had worked in some aspect of business/ management/ finance/ marketing/ sales, with the next largest categories being customer service (16%) and humanitarian or community-type work (12%). Other common employers were the education sector and work in politics/government. Three-quarters of respondents indicated that this work had taught them skills that would help them in their future careers.

Module Consideration:

Training should ensure that these students market and sell their experience when seeking local employment: through tailored resumes, persuasive work-related references, and interview techniques that maximize the skills they have acquired.

Career Path

Students were asked to indicate the industries in which they desired to find work after graduation. This information provides greater detail for tailoring career launch strategies than simply noting the students' programs of study. It will also inform ACCE's selection of participant employers for future project phases. Again, multiple free-entry responses were permitted to this question, and results were grouped into the categories below.

Table 7

In what industry would you like to find employment?		
Industry	Response Count	Response Percent
Business, management, finance, marketing, administration	14	25%
Politics, government, community development	9	16%
International organizations, humanitarian, non-profit	7	13%
Engineering, research and development	5	10%
Education, social sciences	5	10%
Computer science, information technology, mgt info systems	4	7%
Hospitality, tourism, real estate	4	7%
Art, fashion, culture	3	5%
Law	3	5%
Health care	1	2%
	Answered question	48
	Total responses	55

CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.

Observation:

Approximately one-third (35.6%) of respondents hope to build their careers in the same industry in which they have worked prior to or during their studies, while the remaining two-thirds (64.4%) seek careers in a different industry, one in which they may not have experience or contacts.

One-quarter of respondents aim to work in some aspect of business, be it management, finance or marketing. The next largest category was municipal, provincial or federal government. These results indicate an interest in working in larger, established organizations with standardized employment practices and perhaps job security.

Module consideration:

Note that only 48 of the total 92 subjects chose to answer this question, perhaps indicating uncertainty as to opportunities or future plans. As such, any career launch and advancement training should take the group's uncertainty and openness into consideration and should include guidance in identifying suitable careers. In addition to elaborating on the current job marketing supply and demand, this should particularly highlight local opportunities in the popular categories of business and government.

Workplace Skills: Language Ability

A few survey questions addressed the student's facility with languages. Particularly of interest was ability to use both French and English in the workplace, often a deterrent to finding work in Montreal (Hautin, 2008).

Chart 4

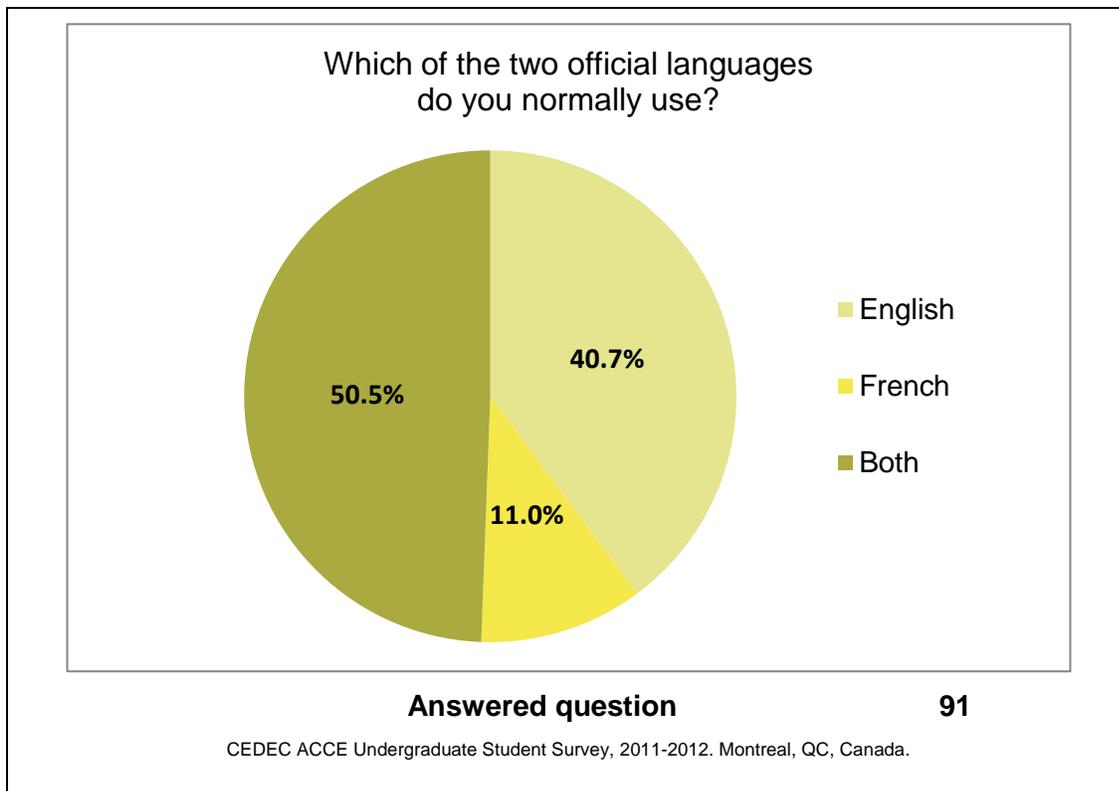


Table 8

Is your level of French an obstacle in finding employment?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	14.9%	11
Somewhat	24.3%	18
Not at all	60.8%	45
	Answered question	74
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Table 9

Is your level of English an obstacle in finding employment?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	2.7%	2
Somewhat	1.4%	1
Not at all	95.5%	70
	Answered question	73
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

Chart 4 shows that approximately half of the respondents regularly use both official languages (English and French). However, as shown in Table 8, **close to 40% of respondents believed that their French-language skills may not be at the level employers are seeking in Quebec.** Only 4% were similarly concerned about their English-language skill level.

Module consideration:

As bilingualism, and the ability to speak French in particular, is of importance when seeking a job in Quebec, career advancement training should emphasize continued improvement of written and spoken French at a level used in the sector or industry participants are considering.

Workplace Skills: Computer Competency

A variety of skills are required in the workplace, including facility with computers. While most students use computers for their academic assignments and social networking, employers may use computer programs specific to an industry or company.

Table 10

Is your level of computer skills an obstacle in finding employment?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	4.1%	3
Somewhat	6.8%	5
Not at all	89.9%	65
	Answered question	73
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

Close to 90% of respondents felt confident that their current level of computer skill was adequate for landing employment. Only 10% of respondents consider their computer skill “Somewhat” to “Very much” an obstacle to employment. However, 20% of subjects chose not to answer this question, perhaps indicating uncertainty of the current requirements of their future employers.

Module consideration:

These students self-identify as being highly computer literate. Career advancement training should encourage students to research and upgrade their computer skills if necessary to match those required in their desired job. This will provide an additional resume and interview selling point during their job search.

Workplace Skills: General

To gain an overall impression of the students’ perceptions of their readiness to launch a job search and their confidence in their abilities, participants were asked to rate whether they thought their current skills would be attractive to employers.

Table 11

Do you feel that your skills would be desired in today’s job market?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very much	58.1%	43
Somewhat	36.5%	27
Not at all	5.4%	4
	Answered question	74
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

As shown in Table 11, **about 60% of survey participants felt confident that the skills they have acquired thus far will be desirable to potential employers.** The other 40% felt less prepared. As with the previous question, a relatively high number of participants declined to answer, also suggesting uncertainty.

Module consideration:

Training should emphasize the transferability of skills already acquired to a variety of employment opportunities, building the students' awareness of their marketability as well as drawing attention to any skills gaps.

Employment Resource Awareness

Black graduates seeking to launch local careers will need to avail themselves of all resources that can connect them with their first and future jobs. Participants were asked to rate their familiarity with such services and then list the resources they would access.

Table 12

Are you aware of the available resources in your area for finding employment?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	44.6%	33
No	55.4%	41
	Answered question	74
CEDEC ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey, 2011-2012. Montreal, QC, Canada.		

Observation:

As the Table 12 indicates, **just under half of the respondents are aware of the resources in their area for finding employment.** The resources students listed fell into the following categories: university career services, government job banks and online job listings (e.g. Craigslist, IBM).

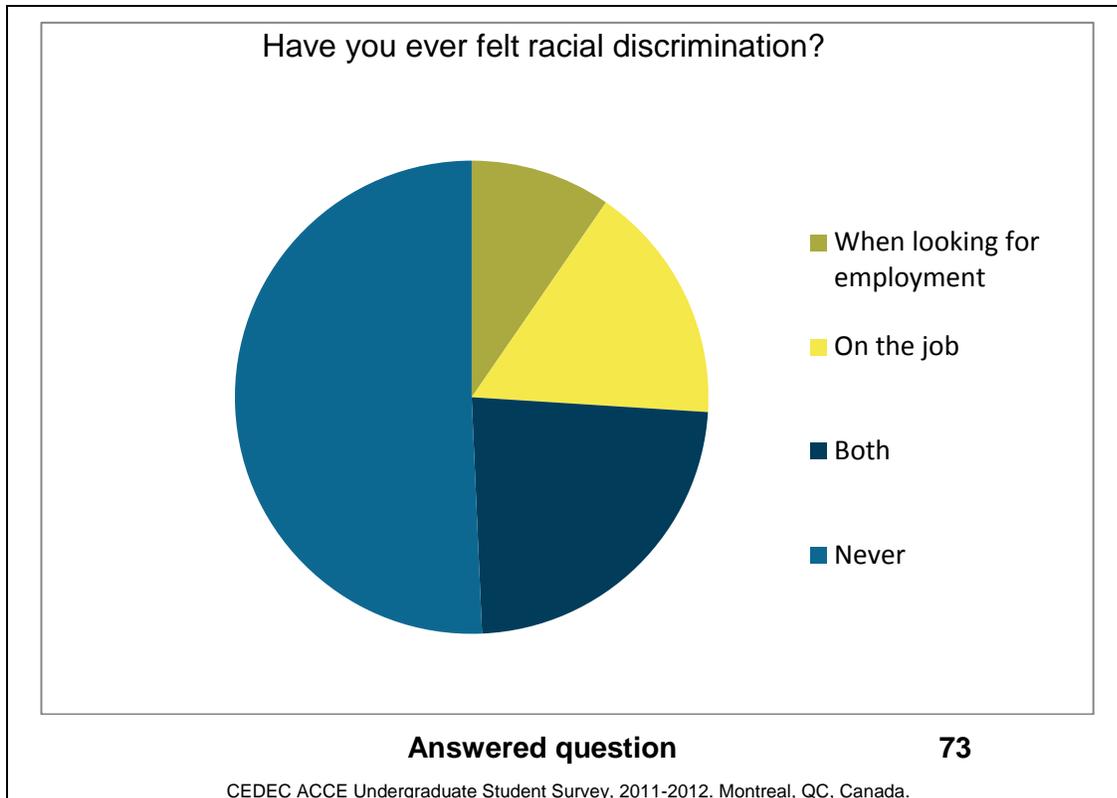
Module consideration:

There is a need for informing the participants of the variety of useful local employment resources, including placement agencies, networking groups, alumni activities, mentorship etc.

Discrimination

Preparing the students for racial discrimination they may encounter in the local job market will form the crux of ACCE's career preparation modules. Ultimately the training aims to provide Black university graduates with the awareness, tools, and support to integrate into local workplaces that may have traditions of discrimination in their hiring and promotion practices. For this first phase of the ACCE initiative, survey participants were simply asked to indicate if they had experienced workplace discrimination.

Chart 5



Observation:

Half of respondents indicated that they had experienced racial discrimination – either when looking for employment, on the job, or in both situations. The remaining half of respondents reported that they had never felt work-related racial discrimination. Approximately 20% of the total 92 survey participants chose not to answer, perhaps a reflection of the limited response options offered by our survey. This question will be expanded on and fine-tuned in future surveys.

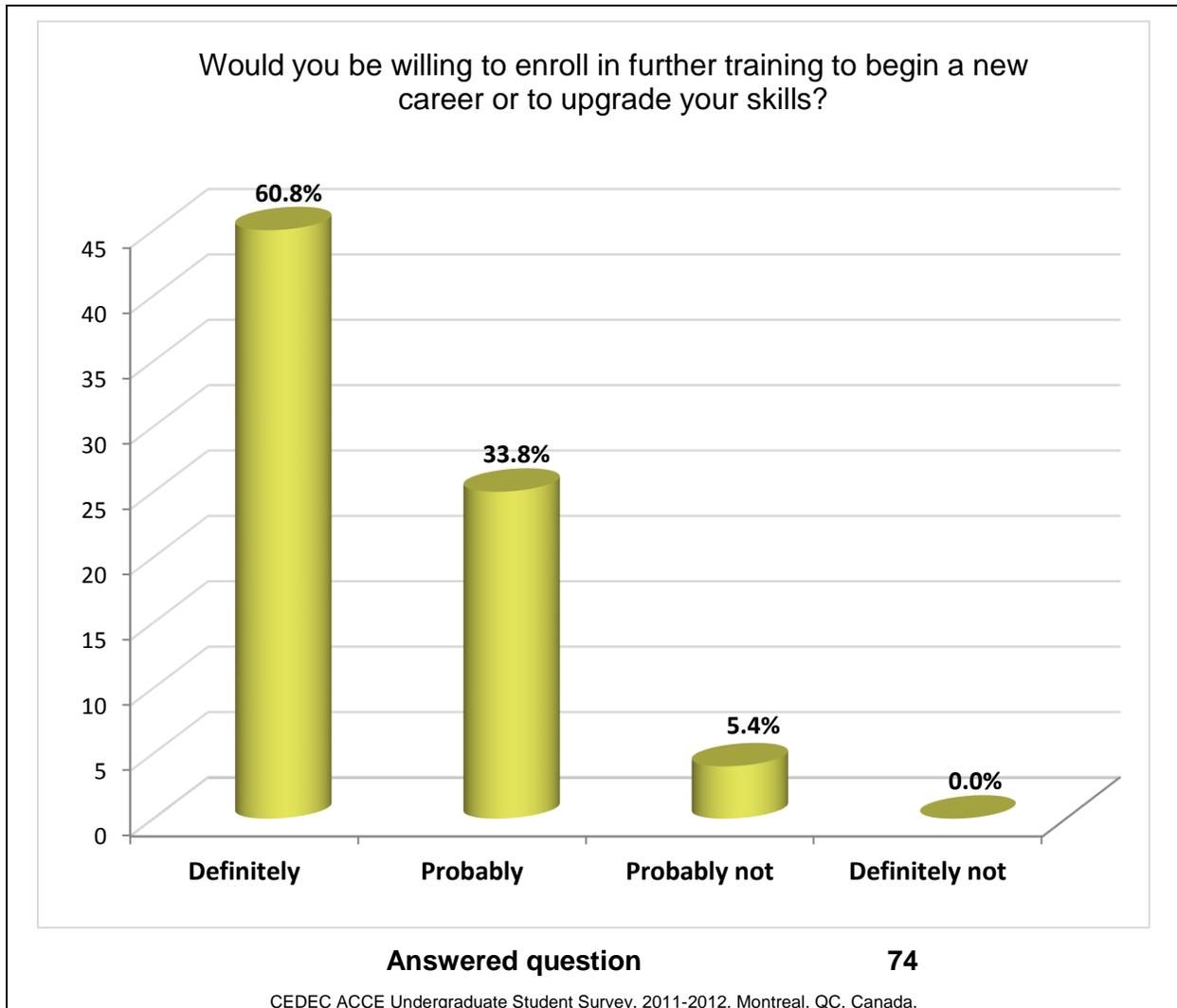
Module consideration:

Career training should raise the group's awareness of discrimination in local workplaces (common situations, typical encounters, etc.). As young workers in student jobs, part-time jobs and volunteer posts, many survey respondents have not experienced the wage gap or promotion pass-overs documented in studies of Blacks pursuing careers in Montreal. Sharing strategies for dealing with racial discrimination in the workplace, redress procedures, intra- and inter-personal approaches, and means of dealing with the stress resulting from discriminatory encounters will be invaluable to all Black graduates.

INTEREST IN CAREER ORIENTATION & INTEGRATION TRAINING

The second phase of the ACCE initiative involves tailoring the career launch and advancement training modules to support Black graduates' integration into their careers of choice in Montreal. A major purpose of the undergraduate student survey was to determine if the target group showed interest in participating in such a program. Responses to the question "Would you be willing to enroll in further training to begin a new career or upgrade your skills?" are shown in Chart 6, below.

Chart 6



Observation

Of the 74 respondents to this question, 70 or **95%** indicated that they would "Definitely" or "Probably" enroll in further training to help begin a new career. Respondents were clearly interested in participating in a program that may enhance career success. These students recognize the potential value of additional career awareness and skill acquisition to their transition from school to work.

Module Consideration

These results reveal the students' perception of the utility of such training to improve their chances for meaningful employment after graduation. It can be assumed for facilitators that the module participants will be personally motivated to attend sessions.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING

The results of this survey suggest that the Montreal population of Black undergraduates expect to follow an appropriate career path in their desired field, integrating smoothly into their future employer's work and social structures. However, a large body of research on African-Canadian employment integration, current practices, and systemic ethnic or racial bias in the labour market portends that this cohort of graduating students may face particular challenges that their peers may not (Williams, 1989, 1997; Henry & Tator, 2002, 2005; Agocs & Jain, 2001).

As detailed in the Context section at the beginning of this report, Black graduates find they have fewer opportunities than their peers in Quebec, leading them to seek and accept employment offers outside the province. ACCE operates on the belief that this scenario must change and posits that a strong Black community in Montreal must have positive economic opportunities to enhance its growth and economic participation.

This snapshot of Black undergraduate students' perceptions, desires, and expectations shows a group of talented, engaged individuals who are willing to expand their career development at this early stage. They acknowledge the value of career orientation as an adjunct to the training and experience they have acquired at university and in paid and volunteer positions. Almost all of the students surveyed indicated an interest in participating in ACCE's career launch and advancement training to enhance their chances of landing meaningful and sustainable local employment commensurate with their skills.

Developing the ACCE Undergraduate Training Modules

Themes

In 2012, ACCE identified a set of career orientation themes which it believes are important to address with Black undergraduates in Montreal:

Personality profile development – capitalizing on strengths, networking with peers and mentors, dealing with stress, creating support/community outside the office

Professional relationship management and office rules – sense of business self-awareness; boundaries; adapting behaviours to improve business relationships with colleagues, supervisors and clients; collaboration and teamwork; understanding, managing, and working in an environment with office politics

Work norms – unions, paycheques and taxable benefits, accessing human resources services, business etiquette, corporate dress, communication strategies, time management, negotiating salary, understanding formal evaluations

Cross-cultural communication – strategies to develop awareness and knowledge of corporate culture / individual cultural differences, working with diverse teams, handling racial / gender conflict with co-workers and bosses

Topics

From the analysis of the ACCE undergraduate 2011-2012 student survey, the following topics have emerged as pivotal to the successful development of training modules to be offered to Black undergraduate students in the Greater Montreal Area:

Consider the training group's age range and employment history to incorporate any relevant workplace experiences that participants may be able to share with one another.

Consider that close to 70% of Black students participating may be coming from outside Quebec; highlight Quebec culture, political and business content relevant to these job seekers.

Consider that a greater proportion of participants may be female (60:40) and that their career path interests and workplace concerns may differ from those of their male counterparts.

Ensure that these students market and sell their experience when seeking local employment, through tailored resumes, persuasive work-related references, and interview techniques that maximize the skills they have acquired.

Emphasize the transferability of skills already acquired to a multitude of employment opportunities, building the students' awareness of their marketability as well as drawing attention to any skills gaps.

Consider the students' indecision with respect to career plans, as well as the wide variety of potential careers in the respondents' desired categories of *business* and *government*; include a segment to support participants in identifying their ideal career field and the current job market supply and demand.

Address students' lack of interest entrepreneurship, address concerns and direct them to resources and support for self-employment such as Afrofund Entrepreneurial, Ujamaa Initiative.

Emphasize continued improvement of written and spoken French and English to a level used in business communication.

Identify computer skills upgrading that is required to reach the levels, including software, currently used in desired jobs.

Make the employment resources in the area known to the students, including placement agencies, networking groups, alumni activities, mentorship etc.

Address psychological preparedness for transition to the work world, critical self-assessment of skills gaps and training needs, as well as methods for researching their preferred job's daily activities.

The students will benefit from exploring the range of local employers that may provide meaning and sense of belonging, exploring careers both within and beyond their fields of study, and weighing salaries with quality of life factors.

Raise awareness of current statistics on salary comparisons and employment rates for Blacks, situations and types of encounters typically faced, strategies for dealing with racial discrimination in the workplace, including redress procedures, intra- and inter-personal strategies, dealing with the stress resulting from discriminatory encounters at work.

Next Steps

During the summer academic session of 2013, ACCE will develop a series of workshops based on the themes and topics identified by the ACCE Project Team and the survey findings analysed in this report. These career launch and advancement training modules are to be piloted with a small group of undergraduate students recruited through ACSioN in order to obtain evaluative feedback. This feedback, together with the training facilitator's report on the development and execution process, will provide guidance for tailoring future modules.

It is ACCE's intention to offer a final, complete series of workshops annually to the educated Black population in the GMA. It is expected that the learning acquired in these workshops, while targeted specifically to employment in Quebec, will enhance this group's success in acquiring gainful employment anywhere in the world.

ACCE will also continue its studies on the educated Black community, with surveys forecast for the 2013-2014 academic year at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. ACCE's intention, over the course of our long-term Action Plan, is to analyse and compare annual statistics that monitor trends related to employability issues including racism, changes in career path interest, and students' experiences related to job acquisition in Quebec. A significant aspect of work related to our objectives will be undertaken in late-2014 with the creation of workplace advancement training for businesses, which aims to help Montreal employers attract and integrate this valuable demographic before they take their skills, knowledge and energy elsewhere.

Please visit the CEDEC website for all the latest information about ACCE and to access our publications: <http://www.cedec.ca/>

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