



**DATA FOR DECISIONS: THE HIM
WORKFORCE
AND
WORKPLACE**

**2002
Educator
Survey**

fore
Foundation of
Research & Education

AHIMA
AMERICAN HEALTH INFORMATION
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION®

DATA FOR DECISIONS: THE HIM WORKFORCE AND WORKPLACE

2002 Educator Survey

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Report on Responses to the 2002 AHIMA Program Director Survey

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Summary of Responses to the 2002 AHIMA Education Program Director Survey

Executive Summary

As part of a larger study of the Health Information Management (HIM) workforce for AHIMA, The Center for Health Workforce Studies at the University at Albany gathered data on a variety of topics related to the supply, demand, use, distribution, and education of HIM professionals in the United States in 2002. The broad objectives of the study are to:

- Develop an accurate description of the AHIMA membership in 2002
- Describe the HIM employment environment in the US in 2002
- Gather information and insights about AHIMA-accredited education programs in 2002

This report summarizes the responses to one of two surveys conducted to gather information and insights about AHIMA-accredited education programs in the U.S. The survey, administered in the late Spring of 2002 to the program directors of all 224 AHIMA-accredited HIA and HIT education programs, collected information on: characteristics of the program directors; characteristics of the education programs; graduates and enrollments; characteristics of students; credentials of students; program marketing; job opportunities for graduates; issues facing programs; student experiences in the job market; and geographic variations.

Overall, 131 HIM program directors responded out of a possible 224 for a 58% response rate. For HIA program directors the response rate was 67% (31 of 46 program directors), and for HIT program directors it was 56% (100 of 178 programs). A copy of the instrument is provided in Appendix A.

Major Findings

- HIA program directors tend to be slightly older on average than HIT program directors (3.6 years older) and on average had seven more years of teaching experience (18.7 years for HIA program directors versus 11.9 years for HIT program directors).
- HIA program directors more often had at least one graduate degree (100%) than did HIT program directors (56%).
- There were few HIM programs with more than four full-time faculty members (5% HIA and 8% HIT) and the majority of faculty were part time (53%) and not tenured.

- Almost half of the programs (45%) reported secure funding for their programs while 15% reported “tenuous” funding. HIT program directors were more likely to report that their funding was “secure” (45%) than HIA program directors (35%).
- The most successful form of marketing is word of mouth (65% of programs), apparently in part to a limited marketing budget. 80% of programs spend less than \$500 per year. Both HIA and HIT reported that word of mouth (69% of HIA program directors and 64% of HIT program directors) and the internet (14% of HIA program directors and 9% of HIT program directors) were the most successful marketing methods. It is likely that word of mouth is rated most successful because most programs had \$500 or less budgeted for marketing.
- On average HIT programs had a steady increase in enrollment between 1999 and 2001, with an increase of almost 18% in enrollment and 13% in graduations. HIA enrollment levels fluctuated over this same period, experiencing a slight increase, while graduations generally remained stable.
- About half of both HIA and HIT programs had some difficulty in placing students in professional practice experiences (45% for both HIA and HIT programs).
- Program directors reported that HIA students are likely to sit for the RHIA exam, while HIT students are less likely to sit for the exam. More than three out of four (77%) of HIA program directors reported that more than 75% of their students took the test in the last five years, while only 42% of HIT program directors reported that more than 75% of their students took the exam.
- The top four concerns for all HIM program directors (both HIA and HIT) were low enrollment (31%), time and effort of recruitment (14%), recruitment of qualified faculty (12%), and having a crowded curriculum (12%). The top three issues for HIA program directors were low enrollment (35%), recruiting qualified faculty (22%), and the time and effort of recruitment (16%). HIT program directors listed their primary concerns as low enrollment (30%), having a crowded curriculum (16%), and the time and effort of recruitment (11%).

- Program directors had an optimistic view of student outcomes in the HIM job market, with about 70% reporting that finding employment is easy or very easy for their students. The most common employer for HIM students is in Hospital Inpatient settings according to 84% of HIT program directors and 79% of HIA program directors.
- The job search by students is typically less than 3 months (86% of HIA Directors and 90% of HIT directors), with 46% and 41% reporting 0 to 1 month, respectively.
- Program director assessments of the HIM job market often differed from student experiences. While program directors and students provided similar assessments of the length of the job search, a larger percentage of program directors (61%) than students (37%) indicated that there were more jobs than graduates.

Remainder of the Report

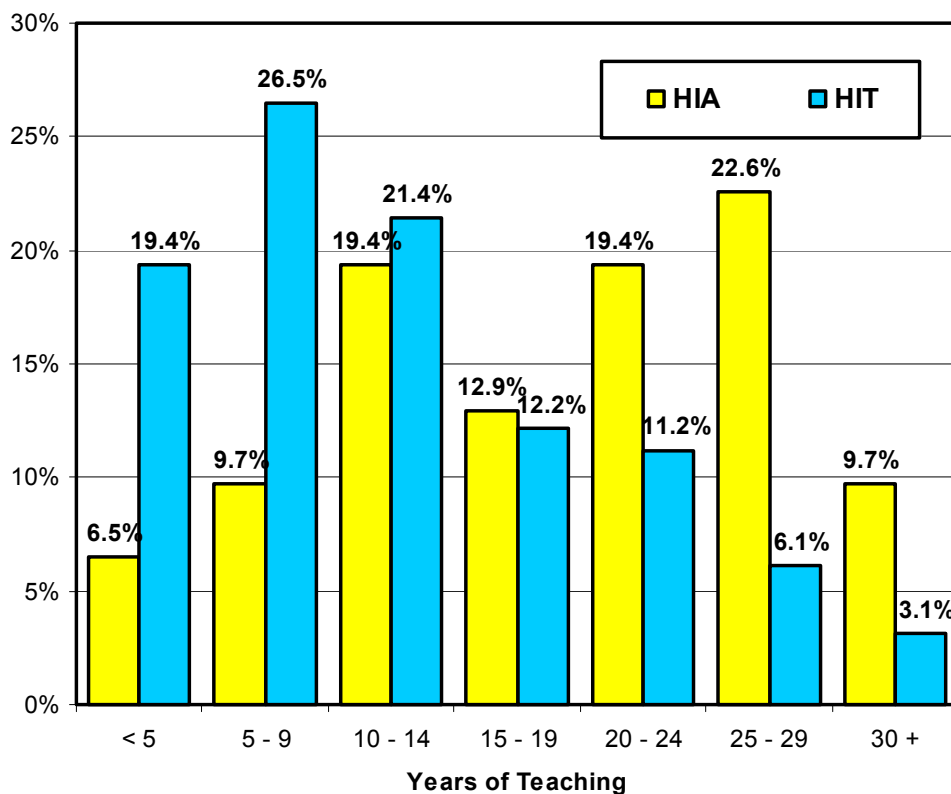
Section 1 of the report summarizes the characteristics of the respondents. Section 2 describes the characteristics of the education programs. Section 3 presents data on enrollments and graduates of the education programs. Section 4 describes the respondents perceptions of the characteristics of their students. Section 5 presents an overview of student participation in AHIMA credentialing. Section 6 reports the most common methods of marketing the program. Section 7 summarizes program director perceptions of the job market for their graduates. Section 8 describes the most important issues facing the HIM programs. Selected comparisons of program director and student experiences in the job market are presented in Section 9. Finally, Section 10 provides comparisons of responses to selected questions across six geographic regions in the U.S.

Section 1: Respondent Characteristics

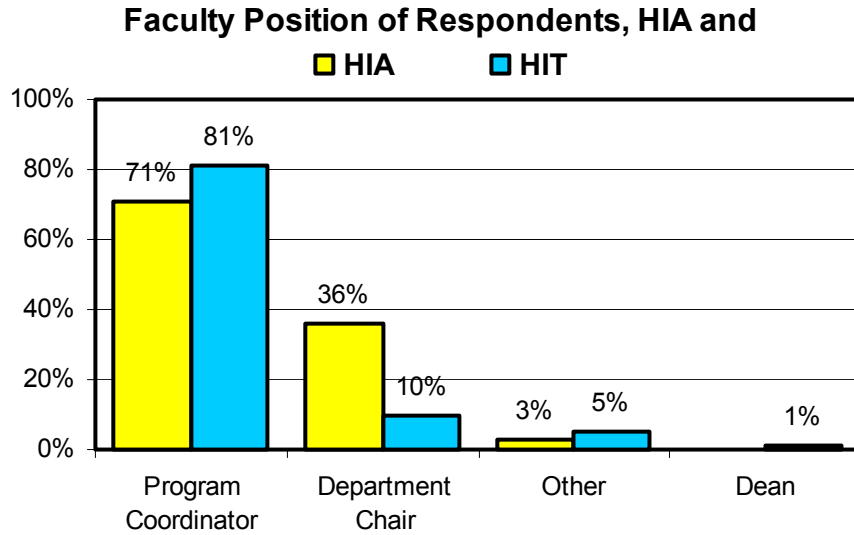
This section reports demographic information about the program directors responding to the survey, including faculty position, years teaching, and other characteristics.

1. Mean age is 51.1 for HIA respondents and 47.5 for HIT respondents.
2. HIA program directors had on average taught for more years (18.7 years on average) than HIT program directors (11.9 years on average).

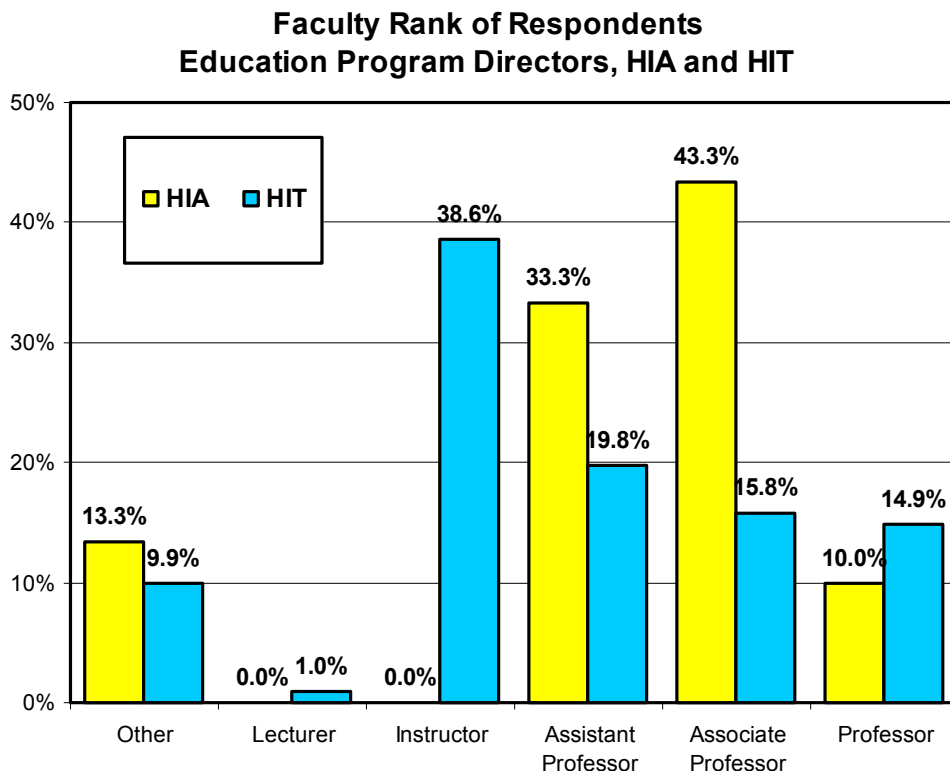
Years Teaching By Respondents



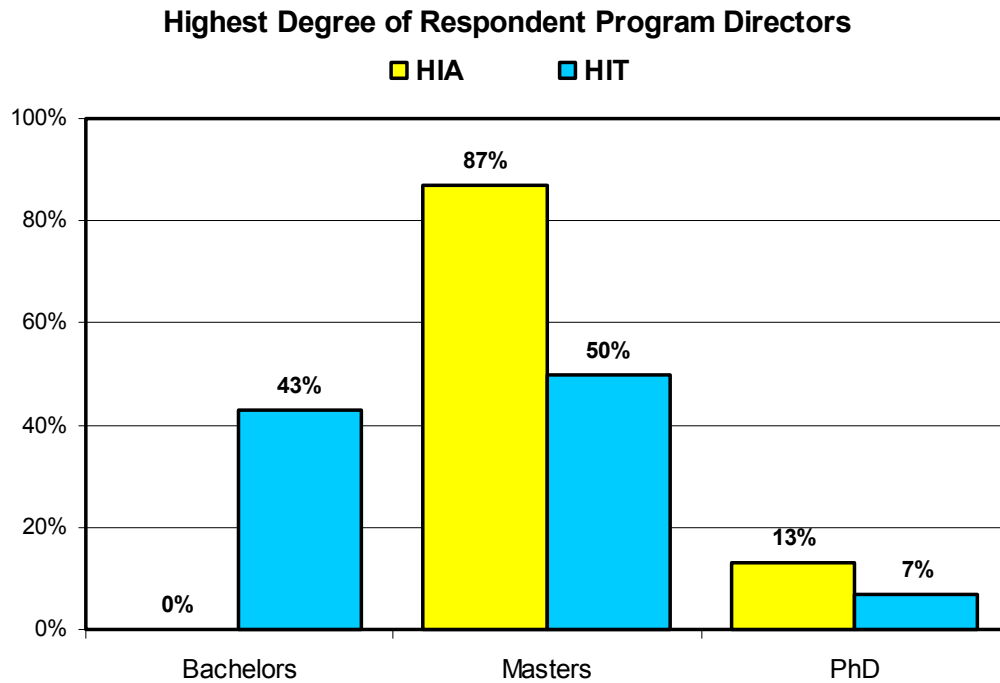
3. Nearly all respondents were either Program Directors/Coordinators (81%) or Department Chairs (16%). HIA respondents were Program Coordinators (71%) and Department Chairs (36%), while HIT program directors were Program Directors/Coordinators (81%), Department Chairs (10%) or Deans (1%).



4. Of those indicating faculty appointments, the most common faculty ranks were Instructors (30%), Assistant Professor (23%) and Associate Professor (20%). HIA program directors most often reported having faculty rank of Associate Professor (43%) and Assistant Professor (33%). HIT program directors tended to be Instructors (39%) and Assistant Professors (20%).

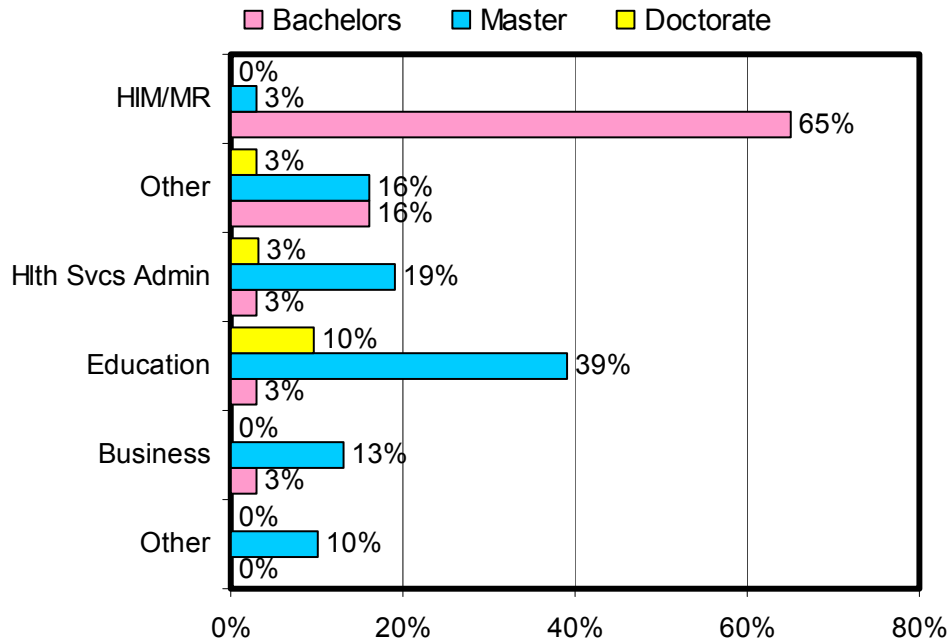


5. HIA program directors had a significantly higher education profile than did HIT program directors. HIA program directors most often had Master's Degrees as their highest degree (87%), with the remaining 13% holding a doctorate. More than two of five (43%) of HIT program directors held only a bachelor's degree.

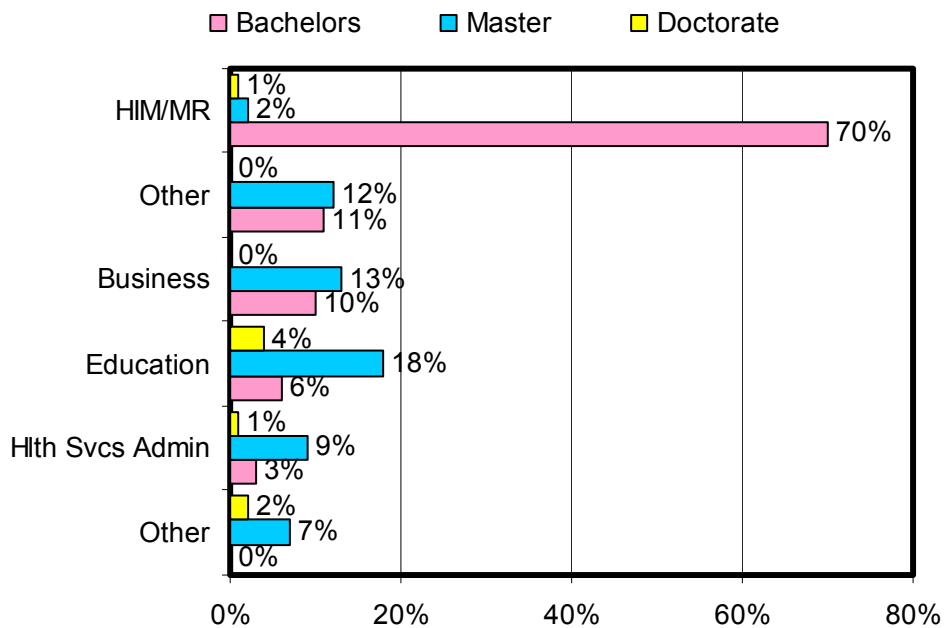


6. The largest percentage of respondents held a BS in HIM or Medical Records. The next most frequent category was Master's in Education, followed by Master's in Business, and Other Master's. Not surprisingly, HIA program directors have generally higher levels of degrees than HIT program directors.

Percentages of HIA Program Directors with Degrees in Selected Fields



Percentages of HIT Program Directors with Degrees in Selected Fields



Section 2: Program Characteristics

This section provides an overview of the characteristics of the education programs in which the respondents work.

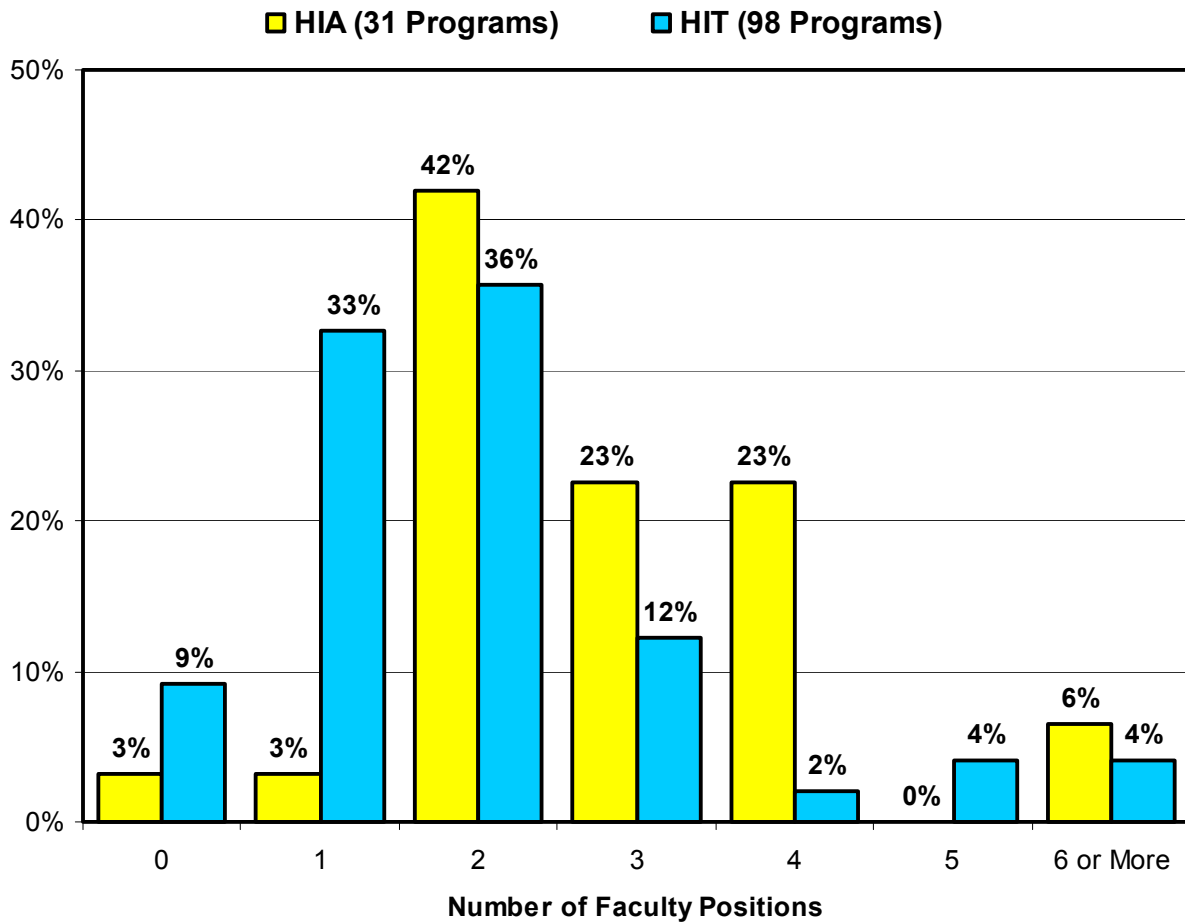
1. A majority of HIA program directors (60%) reported that their programs were in a School of Allied Health. The percentage of HIT programs in a School of Allied Health was 63%.

School in Which HIM Program is Located

School	HIA	HIT
Allied Health	60%	63%
Other		
Health Sciences	13%	6%
Life Sciences	13%	2%
Business/Tech	7%	7%
Health Prof/Occup	7%	6%
Community College	-	9%
Missing	-	4%

2. HIM programs are generally small. Most had three or fewer full-time faculty members, including the respondent (69% of HIA and 90% of HIT), while 8% had only one full-time faculty member and 30% had 4 or more faculty. Ten programs (8%) reported no full-time faculty positions and 33 (25%) reported only one full-time faculty position. The average number of full-time faculty members reported by HIA program directors was 2.4 full-time. The comparable number of full-time faculty reported by HIT program directors was 1.9.

**Percentage of HIM Programs
With Different Numbers of Full-Time Faculty Positions**

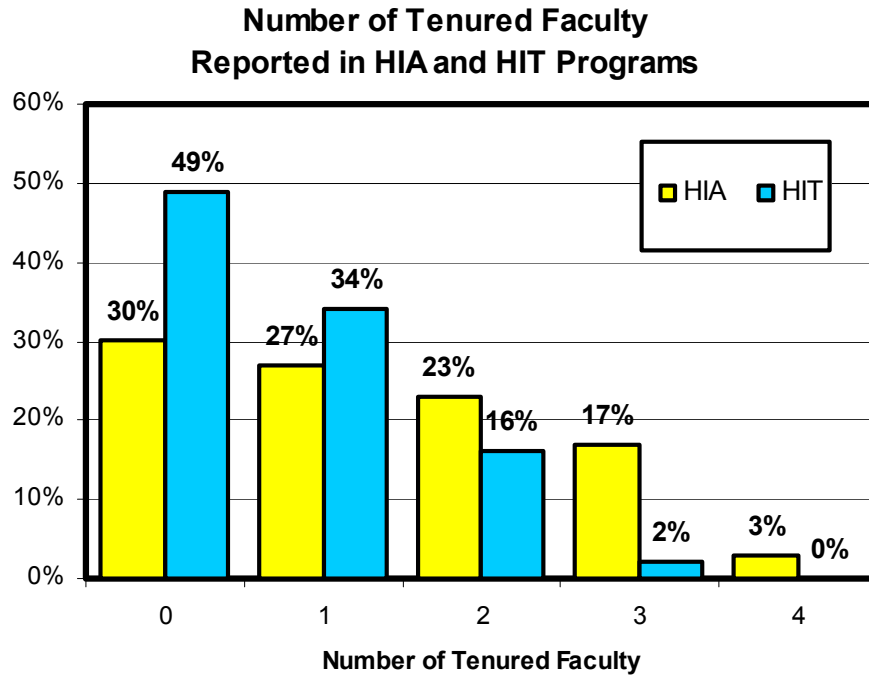


3. A majority of program directors reported that more than half of their faculty were part-time. More than 65% of HIA program directors and nearly 75% of HIT program directors reported that over half their faculty were part-time.

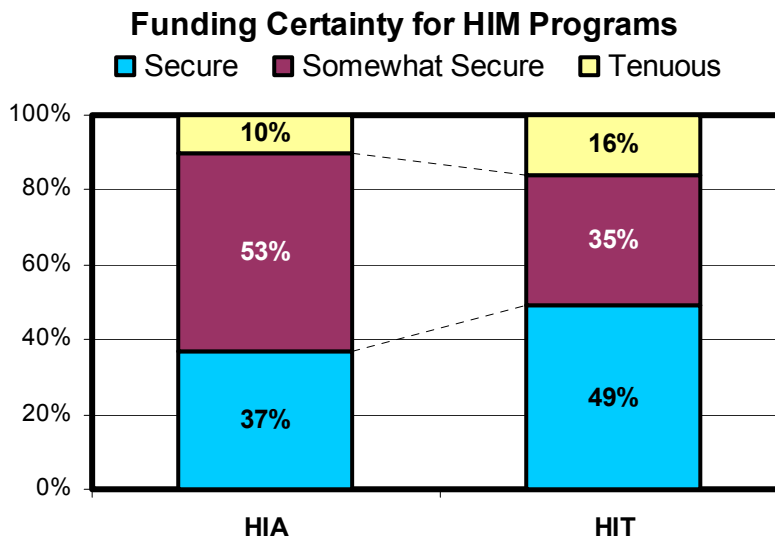
**Percentage of Part Time Faculty in HIA and HIT Programs
as Reported by Program Directors**

% of Faculty Part Time	HIA Programs		HIT Programs	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0%	4	13.8%	11	11.3%
1% - 24%	3	10.3%	1	1.0%
25% - 50%	3	10.3%	13	13.4%
51% - 75%	11	37.9%	39	40.2%
76% - 99%	8	27.6%	32	33.0%
100%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%

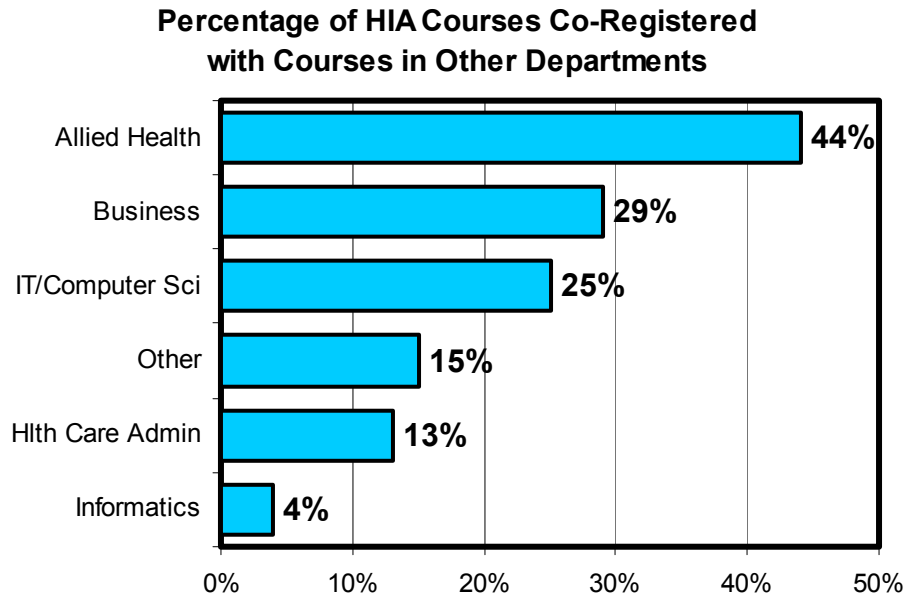
4. Faculty in HIM education programs tend not to be tenured. Forty-four percent of program directors reported no tenured faculty, and another 32% reported only one. The average number of tenured faculty reported in HIA programs was 1.1, while the average for HIT programs was 0.7.



5. A majority of HIM program directors reported that their programs were financially secure. For HIA programs, 35% of directors feel secure and 55% somewhat secure; while 45% of HIT program directors feel secure and 33% feel somewhat secure. Overall, 15% of all reporting program directors indicated that their funding was “tenuous.”



6. HIA program directors reported that their HIM courses were co-registered with courses in Allied Health (44%), Business (29%) and other departments. No co-registered programs were identified by HIT program directors.

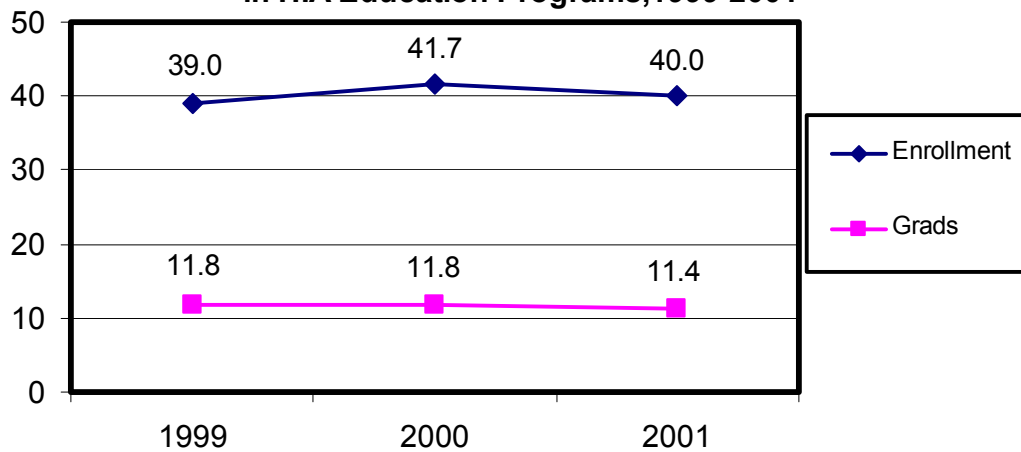


Section 3: Graduates and Enrollments

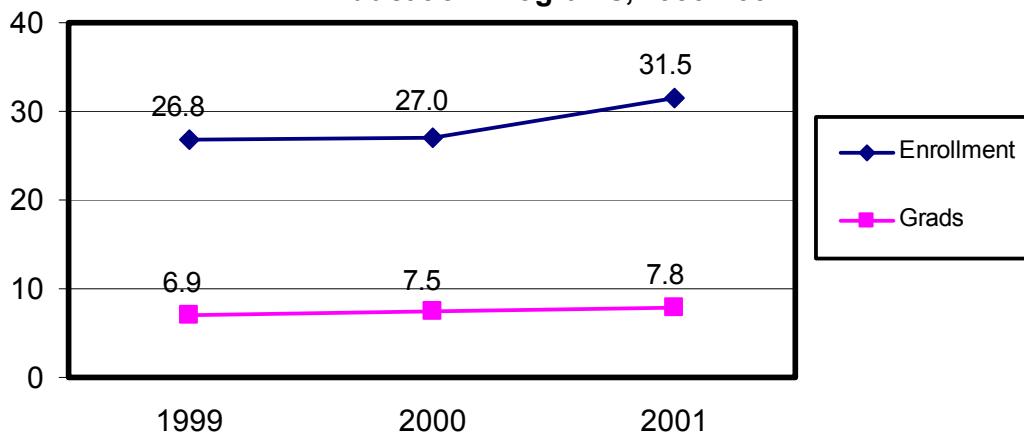
Perhaps the two most important statistics describing education programs are enrollments and graduations. Enrollment and graduation numbers increased somewhat between 1999 and 2001.

1. The average number of graduates declined slightly for HIA programs from 1999 to 2001, from 11.8 to 11.4. The number of students enrolled in HIA programs fluctuated around 40 students per year over the same period.
2. For HIT programs, the average number of graduates increased slightly from 6.9 to 7.8 per year, and the average enrollment increased noticeably from 22 to 28 students between 1999 and 2001, an increase of almost 18%. The number of graduates is less than one would expect of two year programs of this size, which suggests either significant enrollment attrition in the programs or significant numbers of part-time students which would extend enrollment past two years.

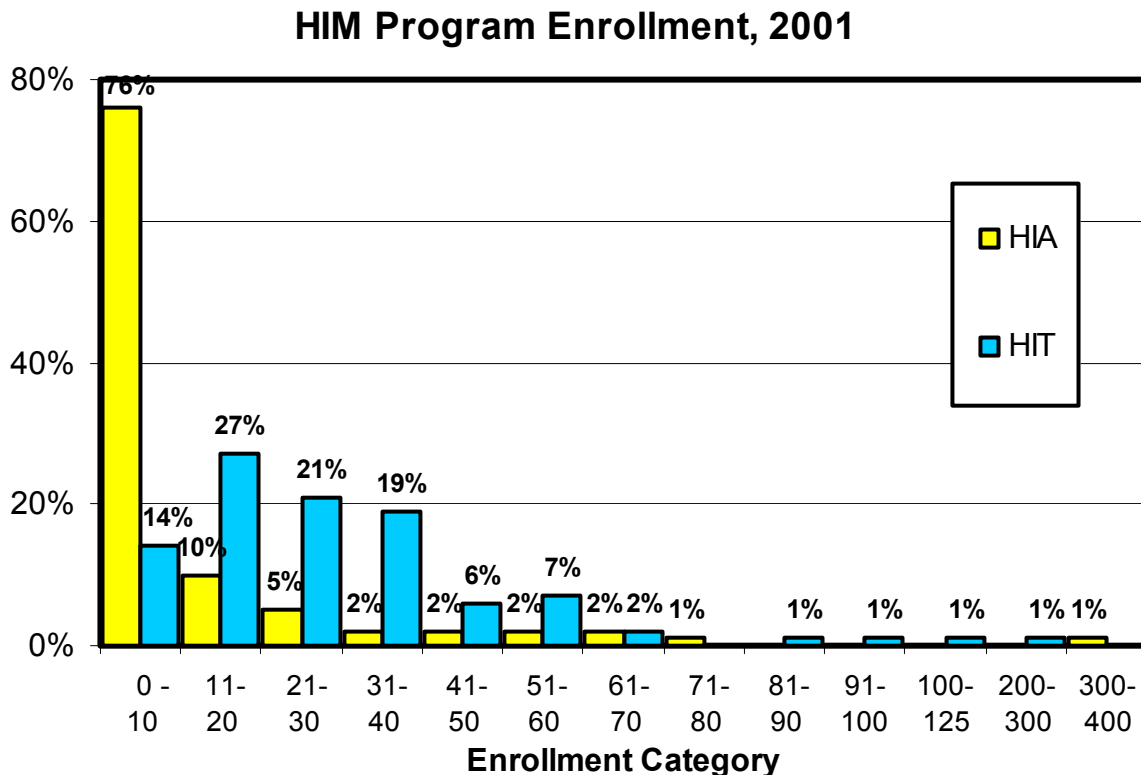
**Average Enrollment and Graduations
in HIA Education Programs, 1999-2001**



**Average Enrollment and Graduations
in HIT Education Programs, 1999-2001**

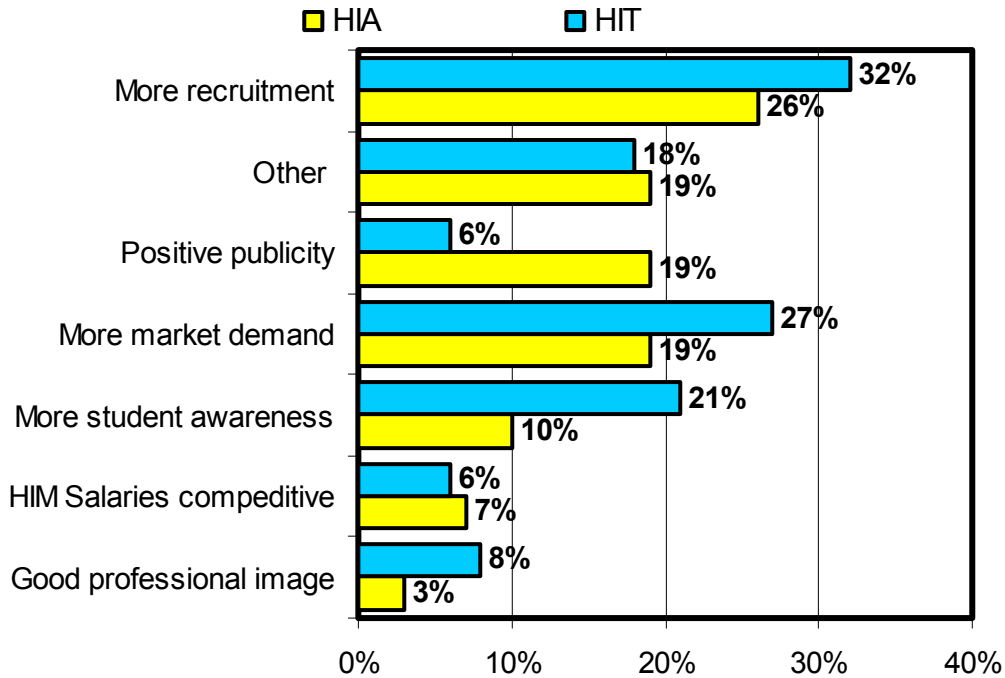


- Enrollment in some HIM programs is very small. Three-quarters of HIA programs and 14% of HIT programs had 10 or fewer students enrolled in 2001. While this may afford students better access to faculty and other related benefits, these programs may not be economically viable in the long-run.



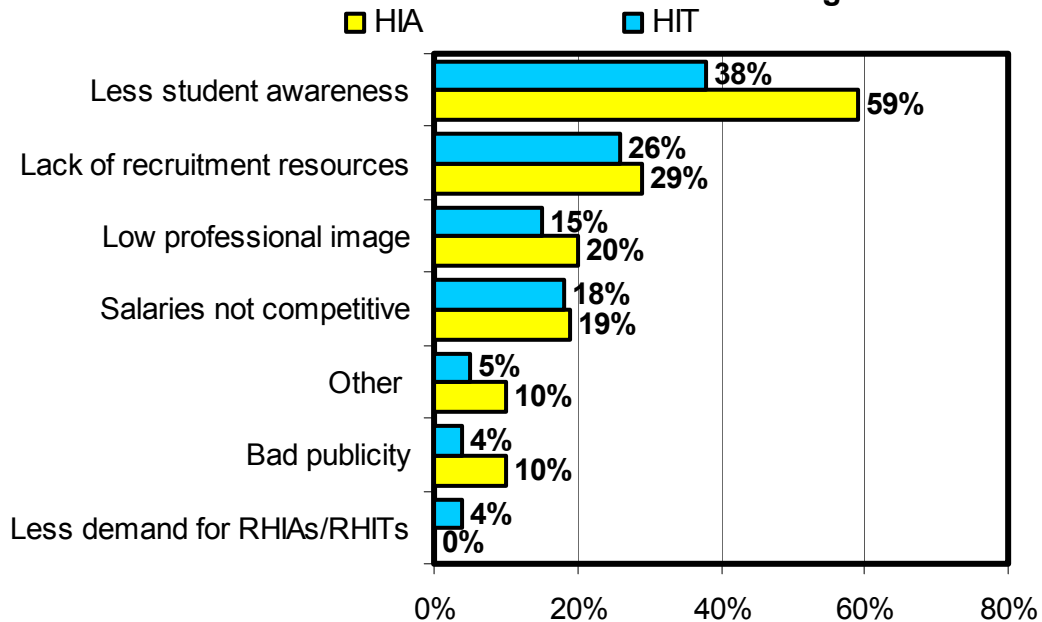
- HIT and HIA program directors were more likely to perceive admissions and enrollments to be “about the same” as the past few years (about 46% for each), rather than increasing or decreasing. There were consistent messages from both HIA and HIT respondents about factors driving enrollment changes. Increased marketing/publicity and greater student awareness resulted in increased enrollment. Less of these factors was associated with enrollment decreases.
- More recruitment was the primary reason cited for increased enrollment in HIA programs (26%), followed by increased market demand for HIM workers and positive publicity for health care (both at 19%). Increased enrollment for HIT programs was explained primarily by more recruitment (32%), a rise in market demand (27%), and more student awareness (21%).

Reasons for Increased Enrollment in HIM Programs



6. The most frequent explanations for decreased enrollment in HIA programs were lack of student awareness (59%) and lack of recruiting resources (29%), followed by salary concerns (19%) and low professional image for HIM workers (19%). HIT program directors indicated that decreased enrollment was due mostly to a lack of student awareness (38%), lack of recruiting resources (26%) and noncompetitive salaries for graduates (18%).

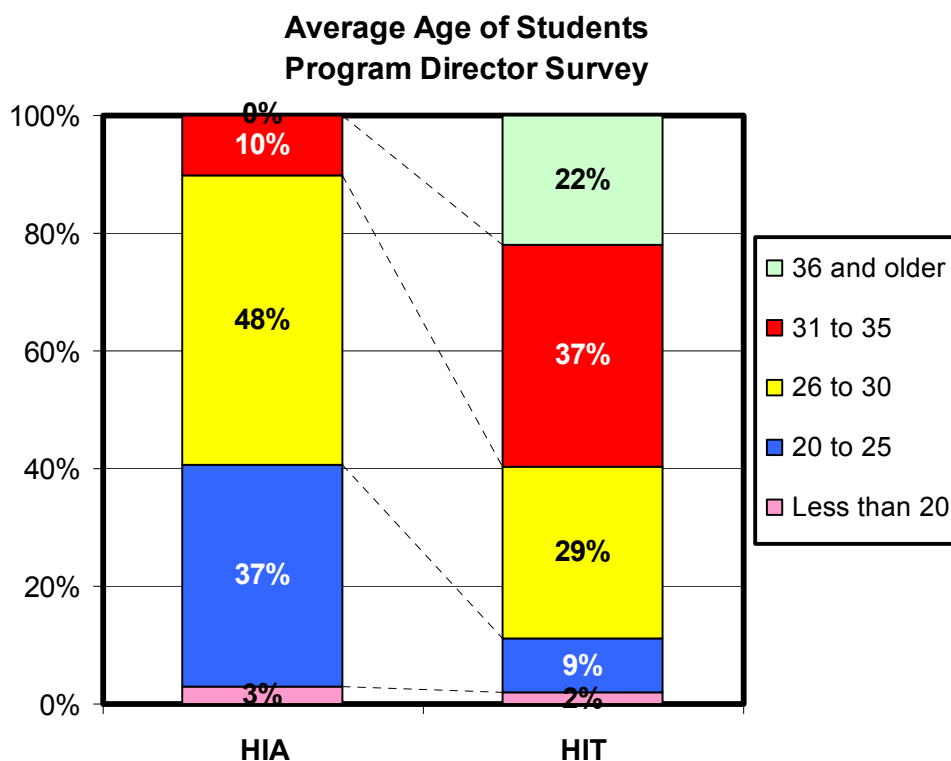
Reasons for Decreased Enrollment in HIM Programs



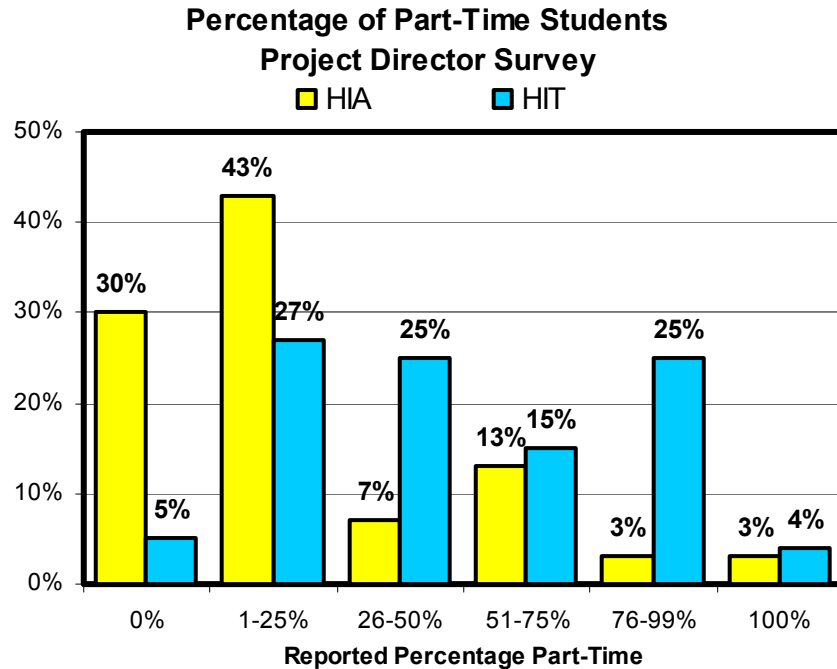
Section 4: Student Characteristics

Program directors were asked to describe a few characteristics of their student population. Their responses are summarized below.

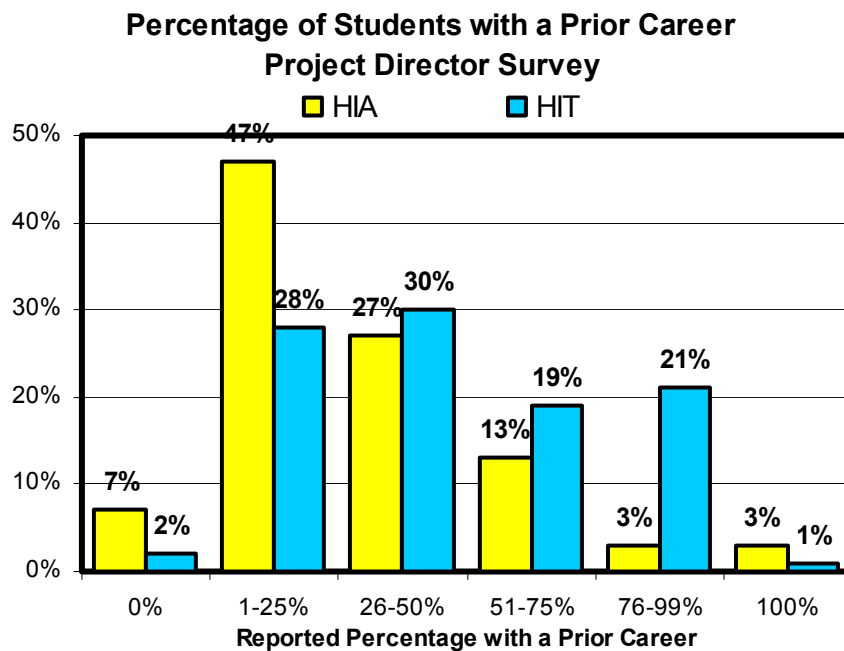
1. HIA program directors generally estimated their students to be younger than did HIT program directors. Nearly half of HIA directors reported that the average age of their students was between 26 to 30 years old. Thirty-seven percent of HIT program directors reported that the average age of their students was from 31 to 35. Both groups of program directors indicated that the ages of their students have generally remained stable (53% of HIA programs reported stable rates and 73% of HIT programs). Age is an important characteristic to measure because it is related to the maturity level/focus of students (e.g., students returning after an earlier career will have a very different orientation), as well as their longevity in the workforce.



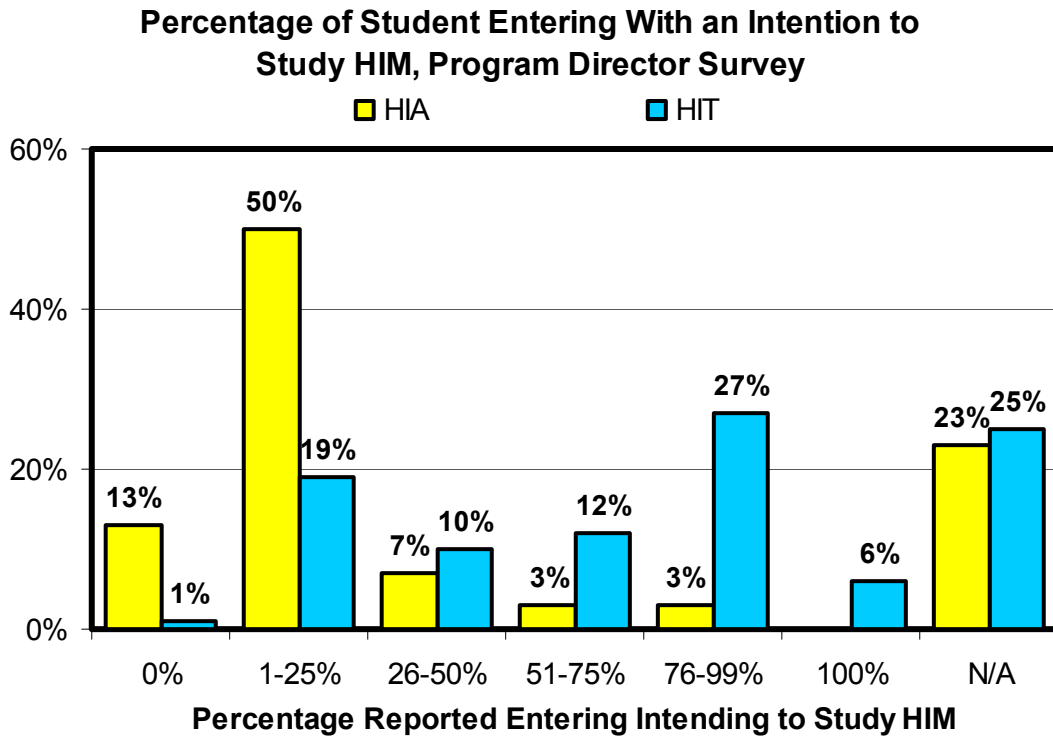
2. Forty-three percent of HIA program directors reported that between 1% and 25% of their students were part time, and 30% reported no part time students. HIT program directors reported greater proportions of part-time students than did HIA program directors.



3. Nearly half (47%) of HIA program directors reported that between 1% and 25% of their students were training for a second career; and 7% reported no second career students. HIT program directors reported greater proportions of students seeking a second career than did HIA program directors.

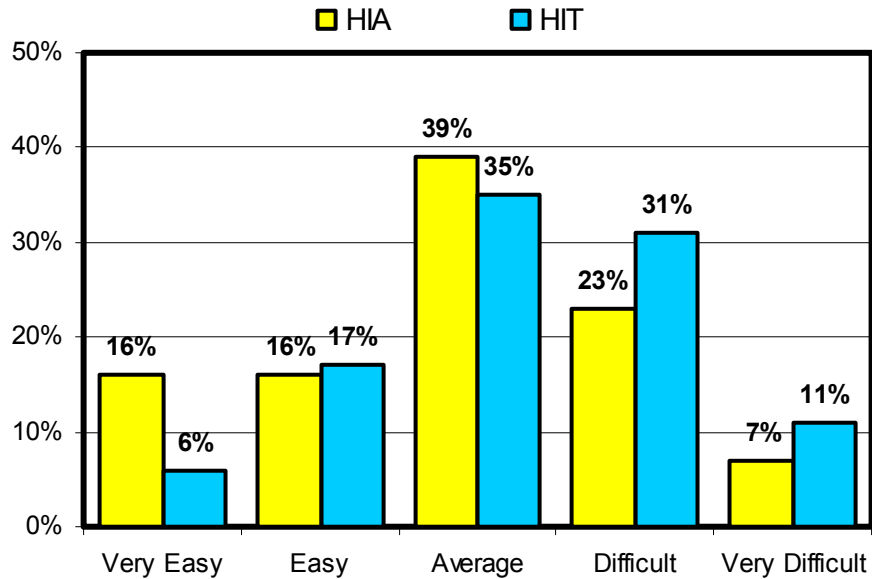


4. Half of HIA program directors responded that from 1-25% of students entering their programs intended to major in HIM. On the other hand, 27% of HIT program directors responded that 76% to 99% of their entering students intended to be HIM majors, and another 6% of directors reported that all of their entering students intended to major in HIM.

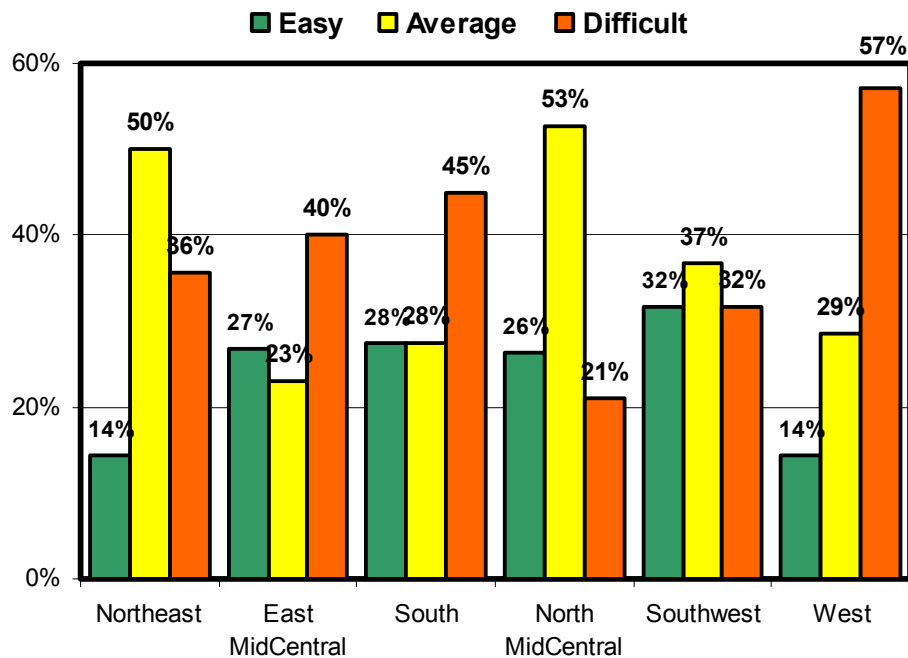


5. Larger percentages of HIT program directors than HIA program directors reported that it was difficult or very difficult to find practicum placements and internships. More than half (57%) of program directors in the West reported difficulty finding sites for professional practice experiences. Even in the Southwest, which had the lowest percentage reporting difficulty, one in five (21%) program directors reported difficulty finding sites for professional practice experiences.

**Difficulty in Finding Practicum Placements
Project Director Survey**

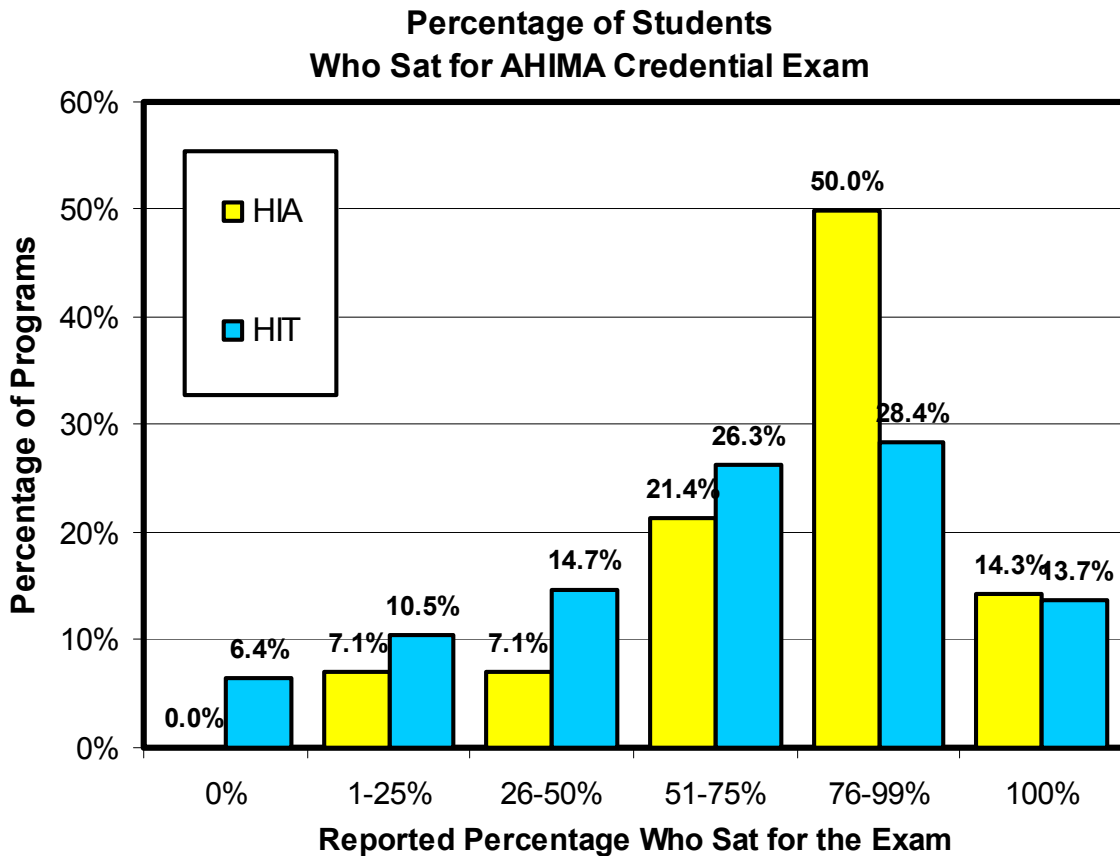


**Difficulty in Finding Professional Practice
Experiences, by Region, 2002**



Section 5: Students Taking RHIA/RHIT Exam

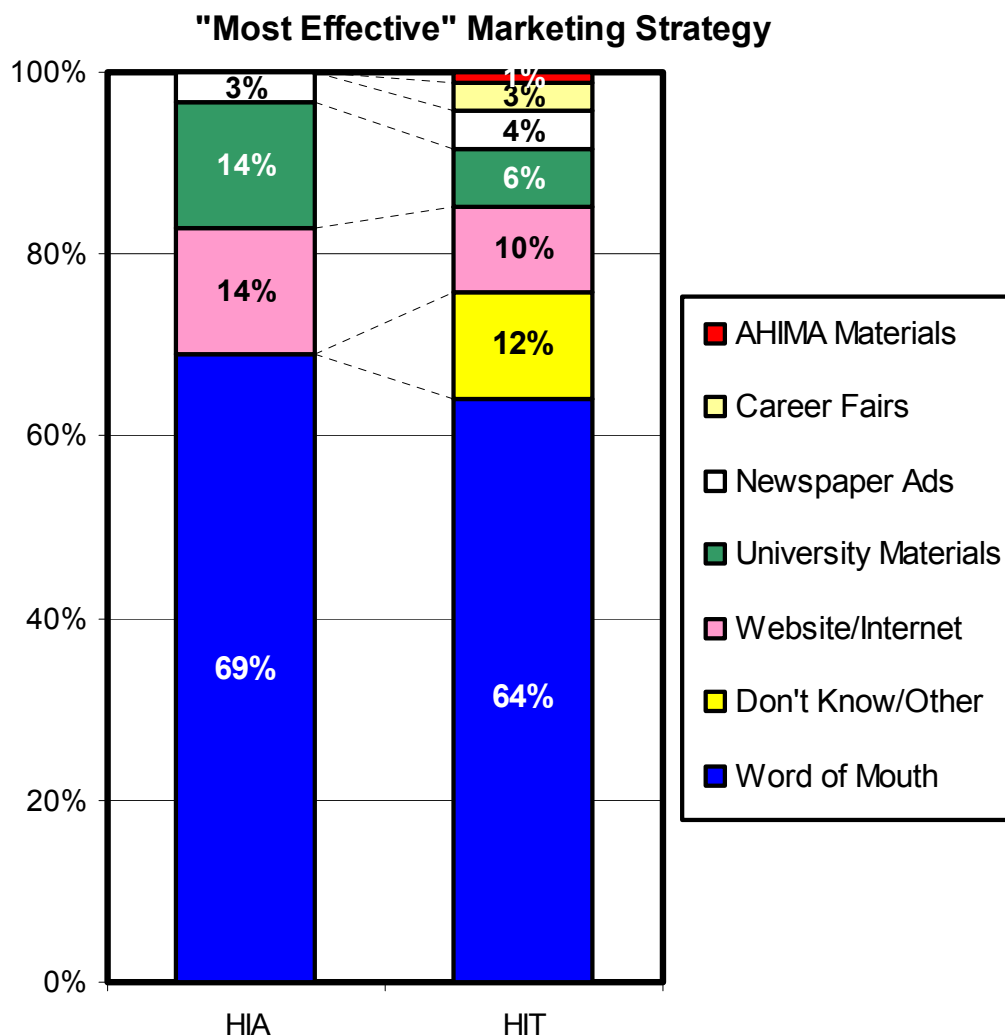
1. Credentialing rates provide one possible assessment of the value of HIM credentials to students. The educator survey indicates that the majority of HIM programs have 75% or more of their students take the credentialing exam (64% of HIA programs and 42% of HIT programs).
2. Only 14% of both HIA and HIT program directors estimated that all of their 2001 graduating students had already sat for the corresponding AHIMA credential exam. Half of HIA directors and 28% of HIT directors estimated that the percentage of their students who had already sat for the exam was between 76% and 99%. Six percent of HIT program directors indicated that none of their graduates had sat for the exam.



Section 6: Program Marketing

The small size of HIT programs and some HIA programs suggests a need for more effective marketing of the programs to prospective students. This section summarizes the current marketing strategies and budgets of responding program directors.

- Nearly 7 of 10 (69%) of HIA program directors reported that word of mouth was the most effective marketing strategy followed by their website and university-specific materials (both at 14%). Sixty-four percent of HIT program directors also rated word of mouth as most effective, followed by the internet (9%). This finding must be tempered by the fact that program directors generally did not have significant resources for other marketing strategies.

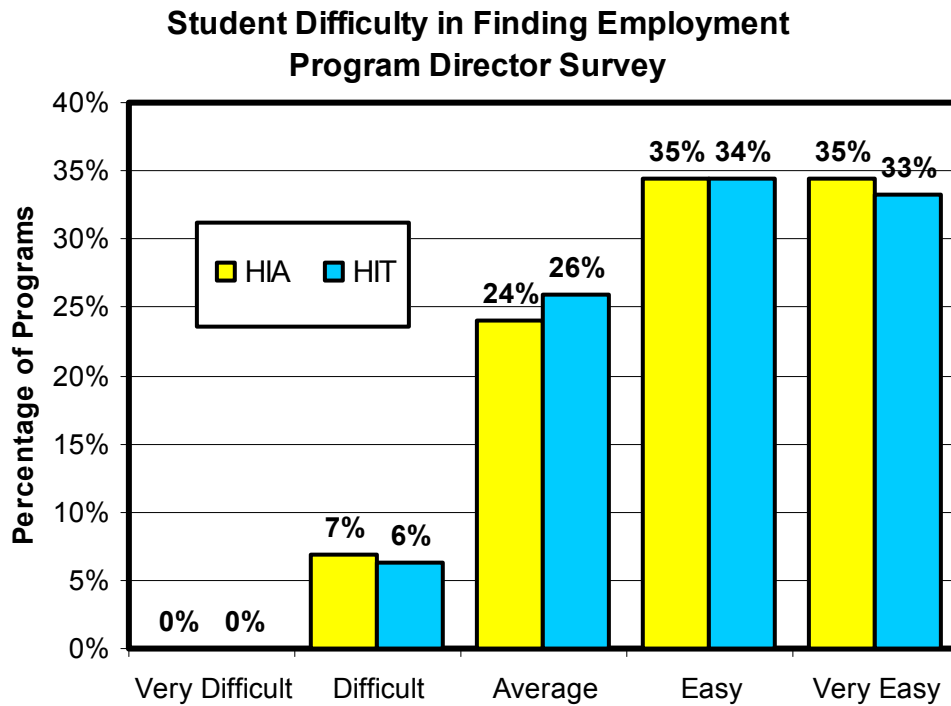


2. Most HIA programs and HIT programs spend less than \$500 on marketing (72% and 84%). Fourteen percent of HIA programs spend over \$1,500 annually as do 3% of HIT programs.

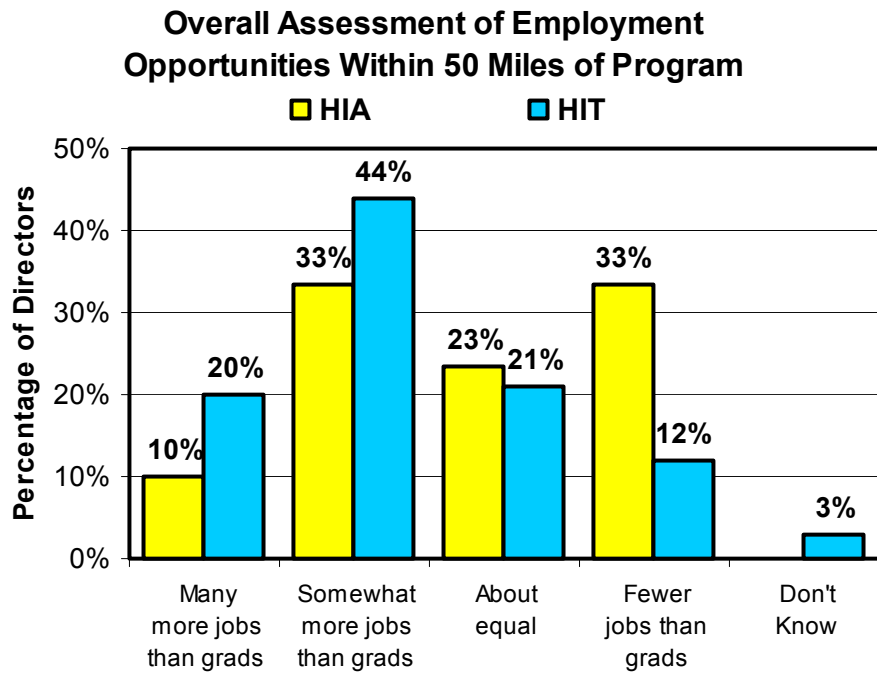
Section 7: Job Opportunities for Graduates

Educator estimates of employment rates are valuable because program directors generally have tracked student post-graduate employment for several years.

1. Both HIA and HIT program directors agreed that finding work is generally easy (70% and 67% respectively, easy or very easy).

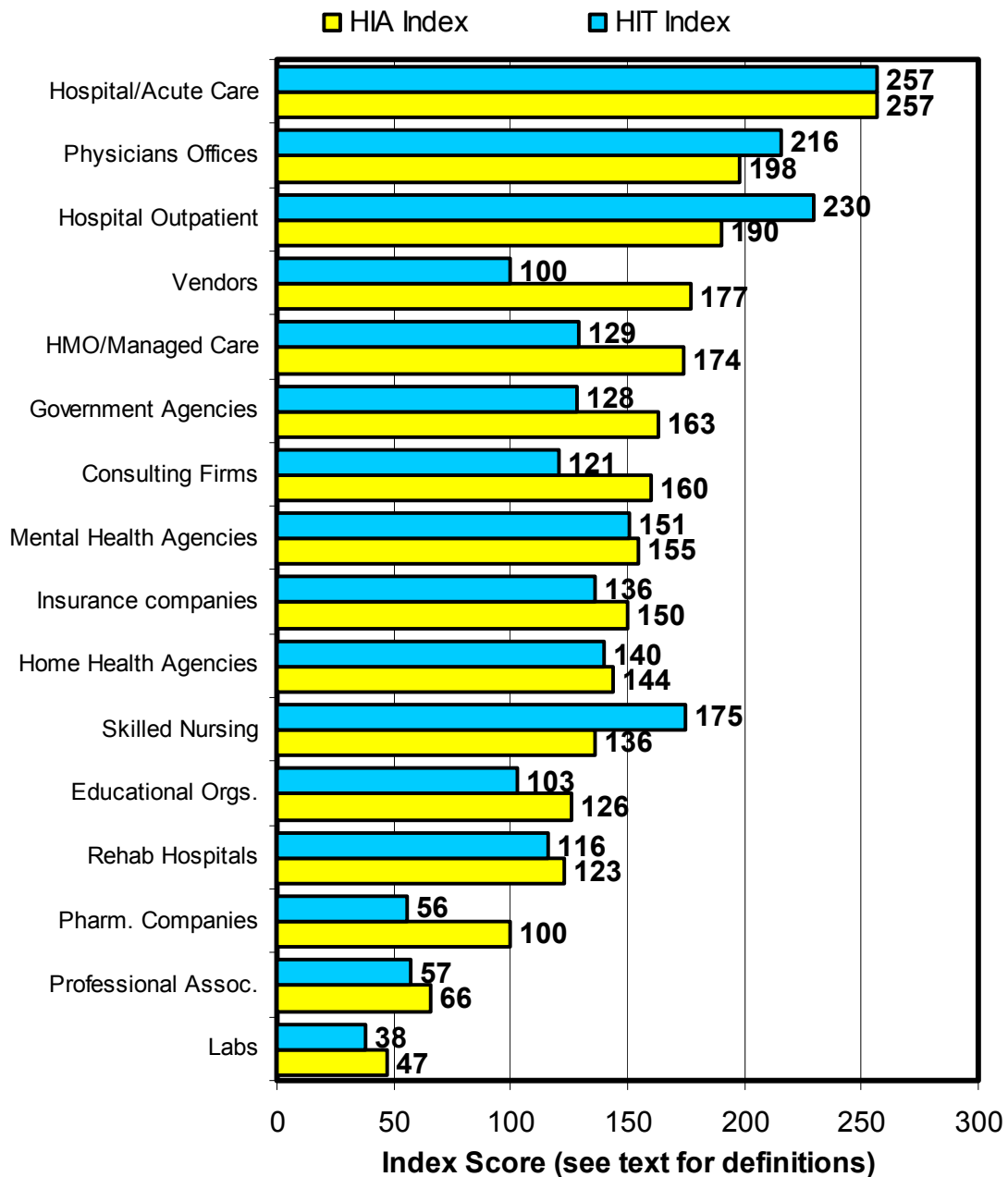


2. Although the majority of directors of both programs reported that there are as many or more jobs than graduates, HIT program directors generally have a more favorable view of the job market than do HIA program directors. Sixty-four percent of HIT program directors perceive many or somewhat more jobs than graduates, compared to only 43% of HIA program directors.



3. Program directors were asked about opportunities for graduates in several employment settings, rated as Many Openings, Some Openings, or No Openings. The table below ranks various settings according to the amount of opportunities for graduating HIM students. [The index is a weighted average with a maximum possible score of 600. The index was computed by multiplying the proportion choosing a primary option by 300, those choosing a second option by 200, and those choosing a third option by 100, and then summing the three resulting products.]

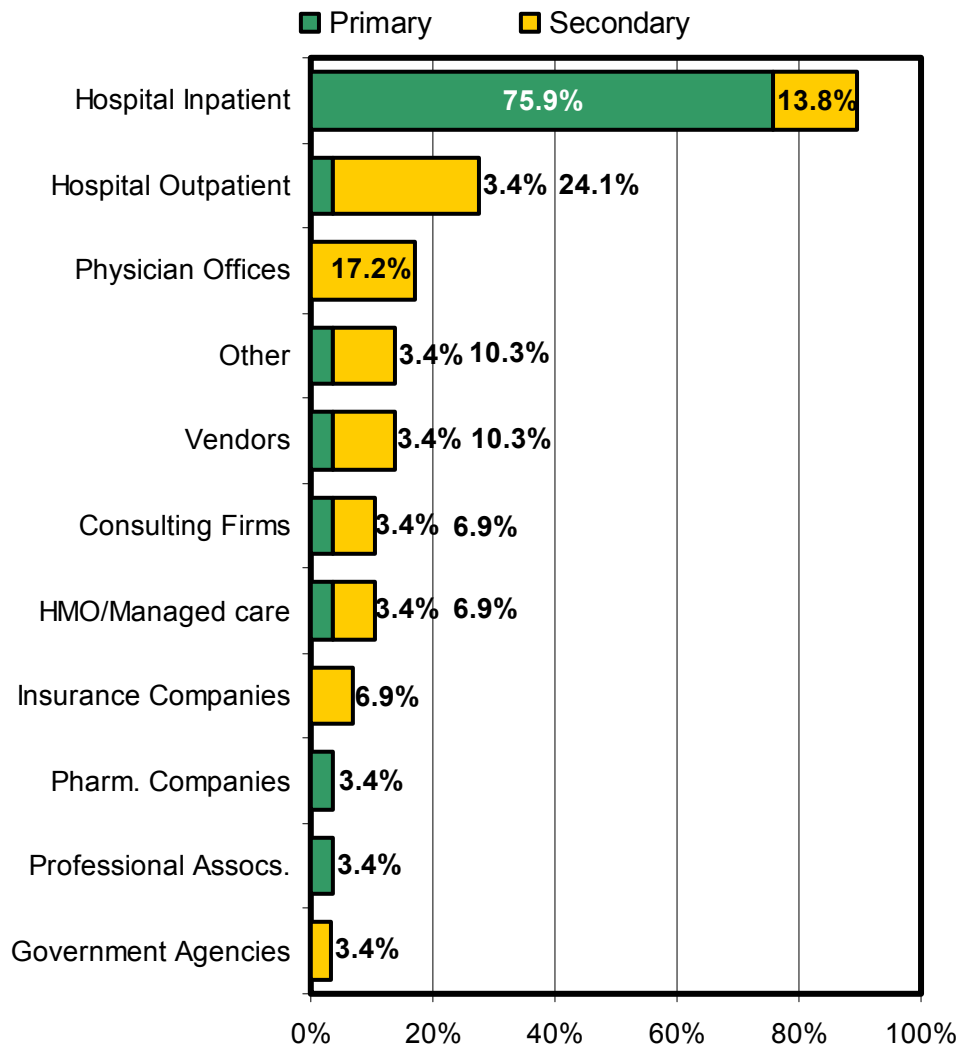
Assessment of Job Opportunities for Students in Different Settings, Program Director Survey



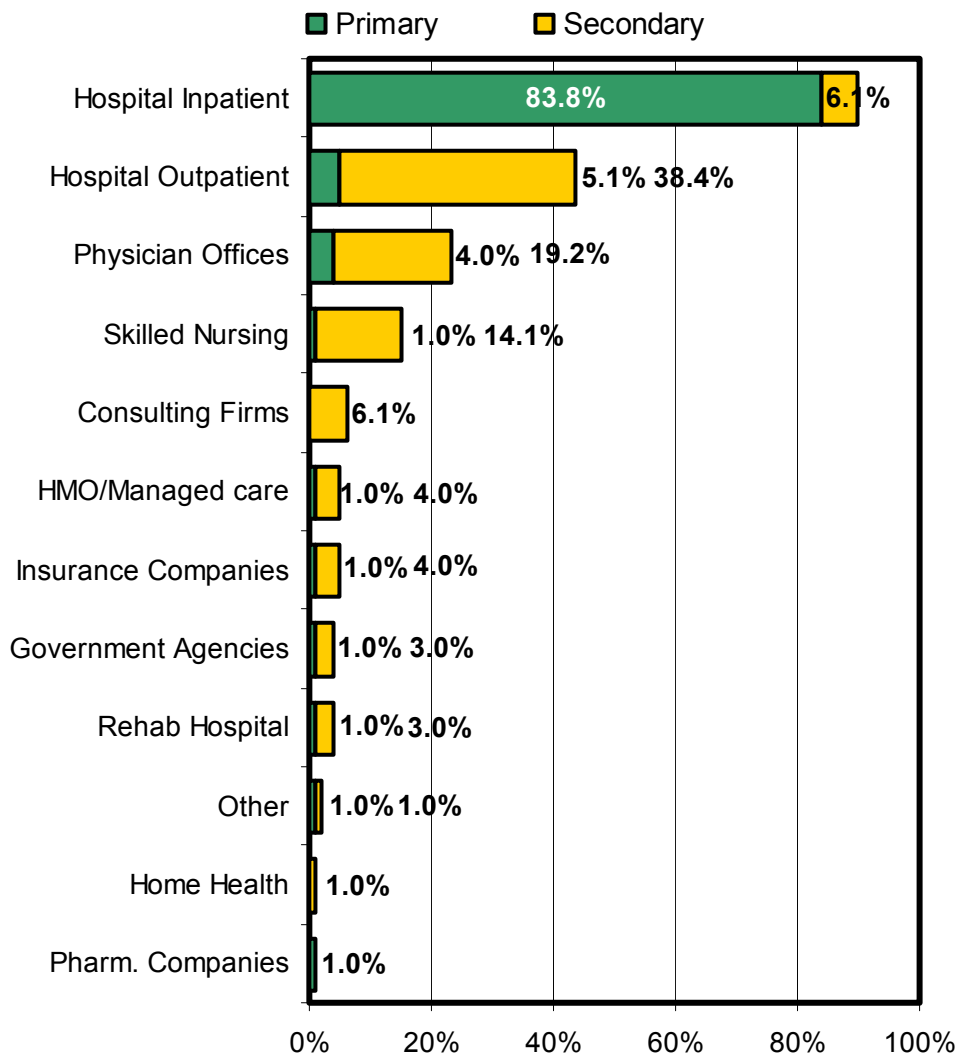
4. The top-ranked employer of graduating students mentioned was Hospital Inpatient (82% of all Program Directors), followed by Hospital Outpatient (5%). There were some differences between HIA and HIT respondents. For HIA programs, Hospital Inpatient tend to employ the most graduates (90%), followed by Hospital Outpatient (28%). For HIT programs, Hospital Inpatient (90%) also employ the most graduates, followed by Hospital Outpatient (44%).

The first table presented below shows the percentages of HIA program directors who rated different employers as hiring the most and second most graduates. The table on the next page summarizes the responses of HIT program directors.

**Most Common Employers of New Graduates,
HIA Program Directors, 2002**



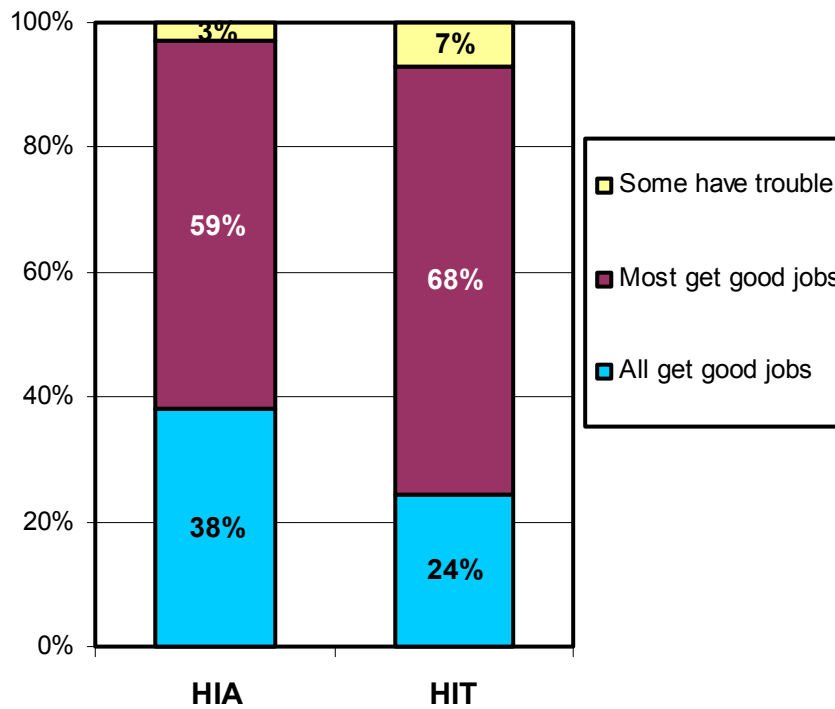
Most Common Employers of New Graduates, HIT Program Directors, 2002



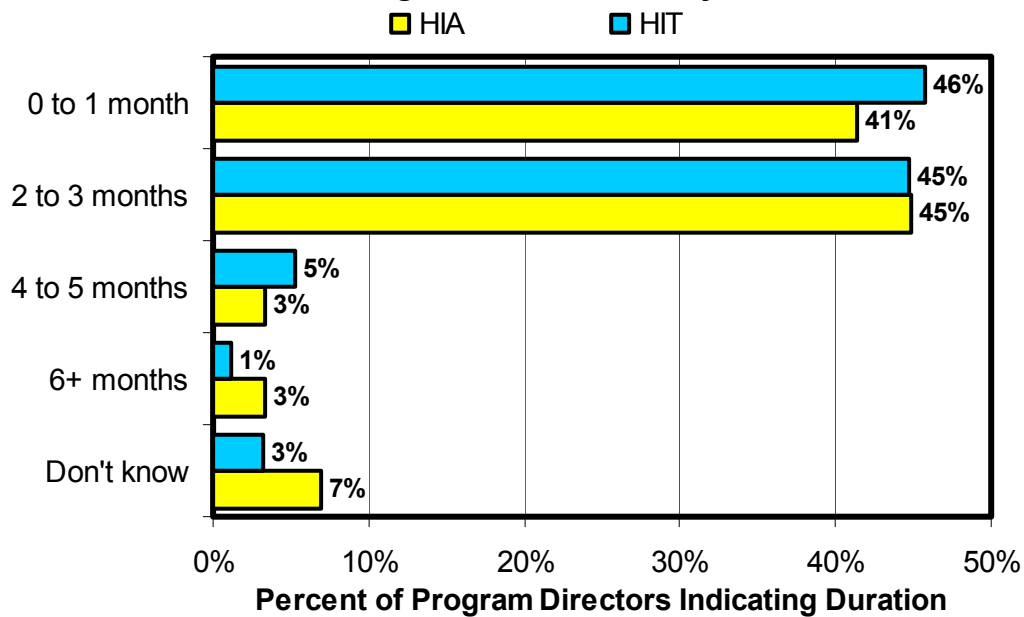
5. Sixty-one percent of HIA programs have employers recruit on campus and 62% of HIT programs. This measure is an indicator of the difficulty that employers are having in recruiting new workers in HIM and the high demand for new HIM graduates.

6. Almost all program directors report that the majority of their students get good jobs (97% for HIA and 93% for HIT). The second chart below shows that, according to program directors, the job search is typically less than 3 months (86% of HIA Directors and 91% of HIT directors), with 46% and 41% reporting 0 to 1 month, respectively.

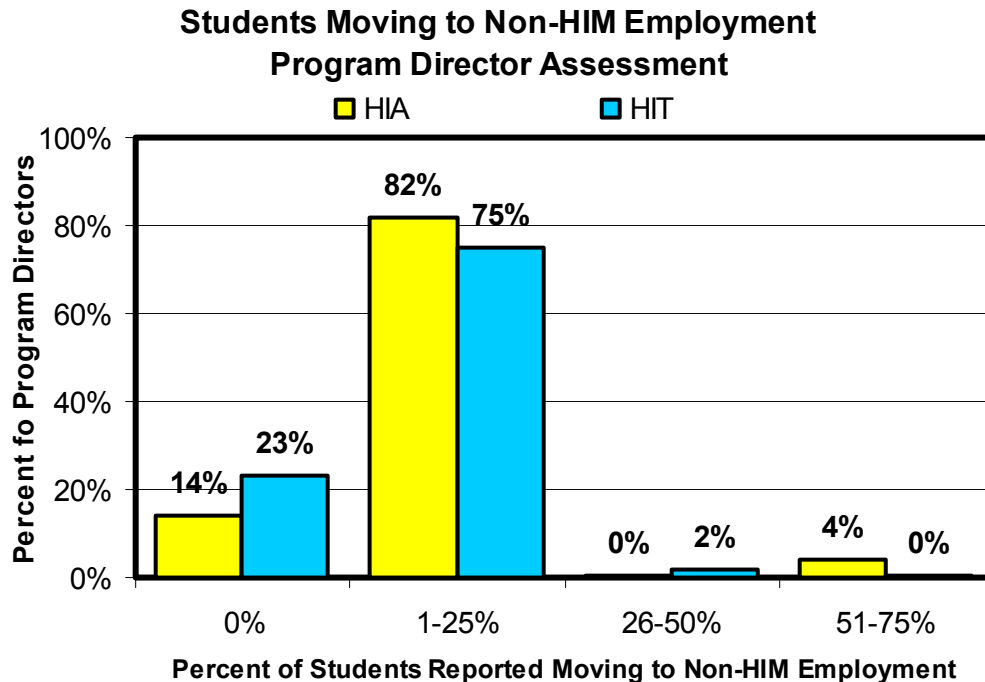
**How Graduates Do In the Job Market,
Program Director Survey**



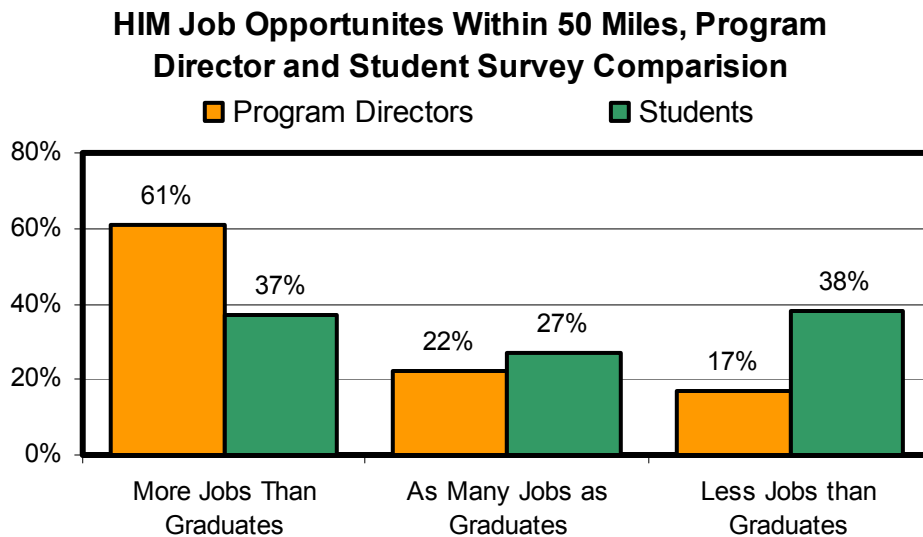
**Length of Job Search for Graduates
Program Director Survey**



7. Respondents estimated that fewer than one quarter of graduating students take non-HIM jobs. The percentages reported by HIA and HIT program directors were 18% and 24%, respectively.



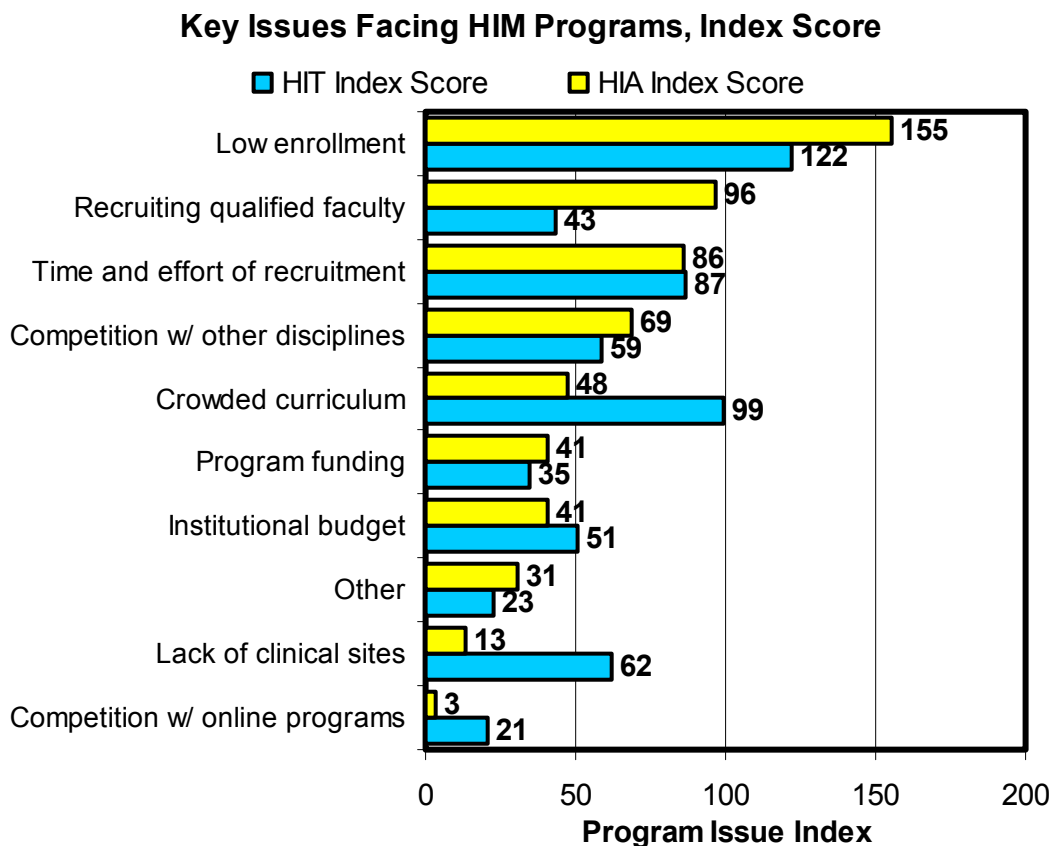
8. The chart below compares program director and student responses to questions about the HIM job market within 50 miles of the program. While 61% of program directors perceived more jobs than graduates, only 37% of students found that jobs outnumber graduates. These differences suggest a lack of mutual understanding of local job markets. [Note: 10% item missing on student survey and 33% listed ‘Don’t Know’, compared with 1% missing on the program director survey and 3% ‘Don’t Know’.]



Section 8: Key Issues Facing HIM Programs

Program directors cited a wide variety of concerns about their HIM programs. The chart below presents a statistical index that is a weighted average of the top three issues based on responses to question B.19, with a maximum possible score of 600 for each issue. The index was calculated by multiplying the percentage responding that an issue was most important to them by 300, multiplying by 200 if the issue was of secondary importance and by 100 if the issue was of tertiary importance. The three elements were then summed to obtain the final index score.

- The top three issues for HIA program directors were low enrollment, recruiting qualified faculty, and the time and effort of recruitment. The primary concerns of HIT program directors were low enrollment, the crowded curriculum, and the time and effort of recruitment.

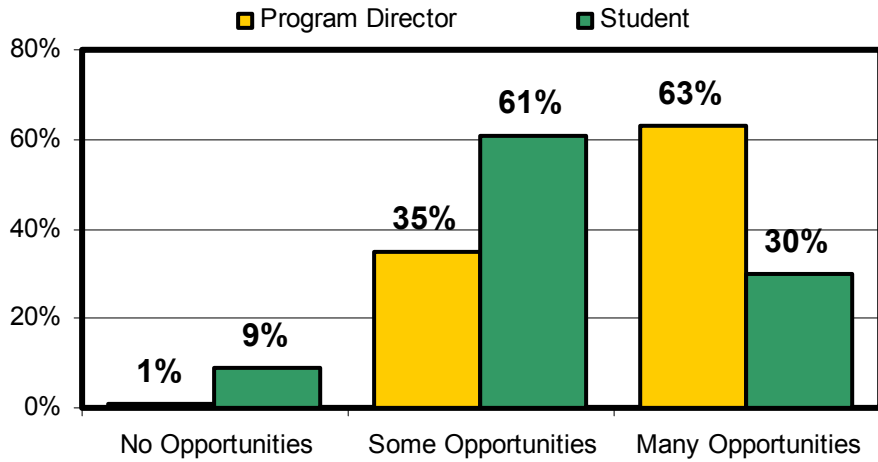


Section 9: Comparison of Program Director and Student Assessments of the Job Market

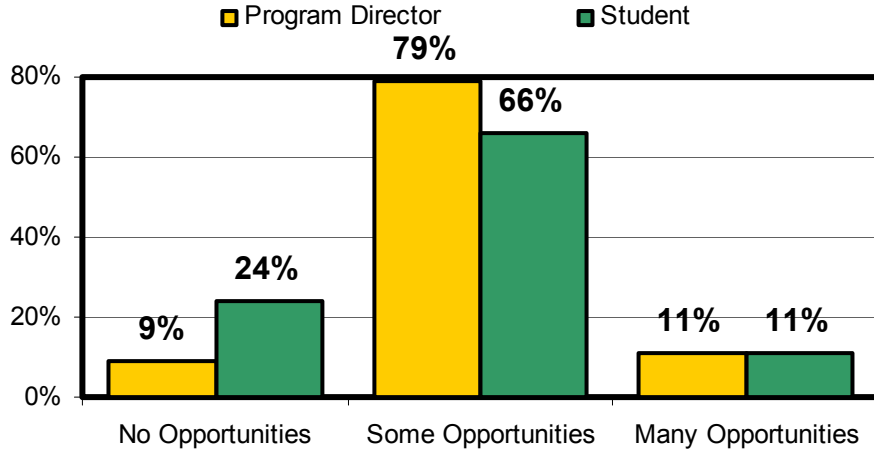
It is interesting to compare program directors' perceptions of students' experiences in the job market, with the students' responses (in the student survey) to determine whether program directors have an accurate understanding of the job situation that graduating HIM students face. The section below compares the difficulty that students have in finding jobs in various settings.

1. Program directors generally had a more optimistic assessment of the job market than students. Sixty-three percent of program directors reported "many opportunities" in hospitals and only 30% of the students had the same response. The assessments of program directors and students for nursing homes were more congruent, with 11% of both groups indicating that there were many opportunities. The assessments for vendors were also relatively congruent, although 23% of students and only 10% of program directors reported many opportunities. Charts for other types of employers were not prepared because of relatively small numbers of responses. [NOTE: There were high percentages of 'Missing/Don't Know' for students: 26% for Hospital, 61% for skilled nursing facilities, and 72% for vendors.]

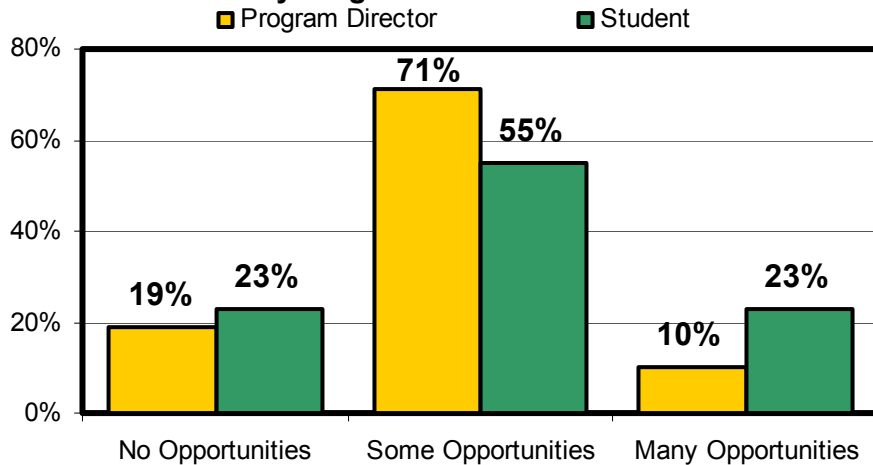
Assessments of Employment Opportunities in Hospitals by Program Directors and Students



Assessments of Employment Opportunities in Nursing Homes by Program Directors & Students



Assessments of Employment Opportunities in Vendors by Program Directors and Students



Section 10: Comparisons Across Geographic Regions

The charts and tables below present a variety of comparisons of the responses of program directors by region. The table below indicates the numbers of HIA and HIT program directors who responded by region.

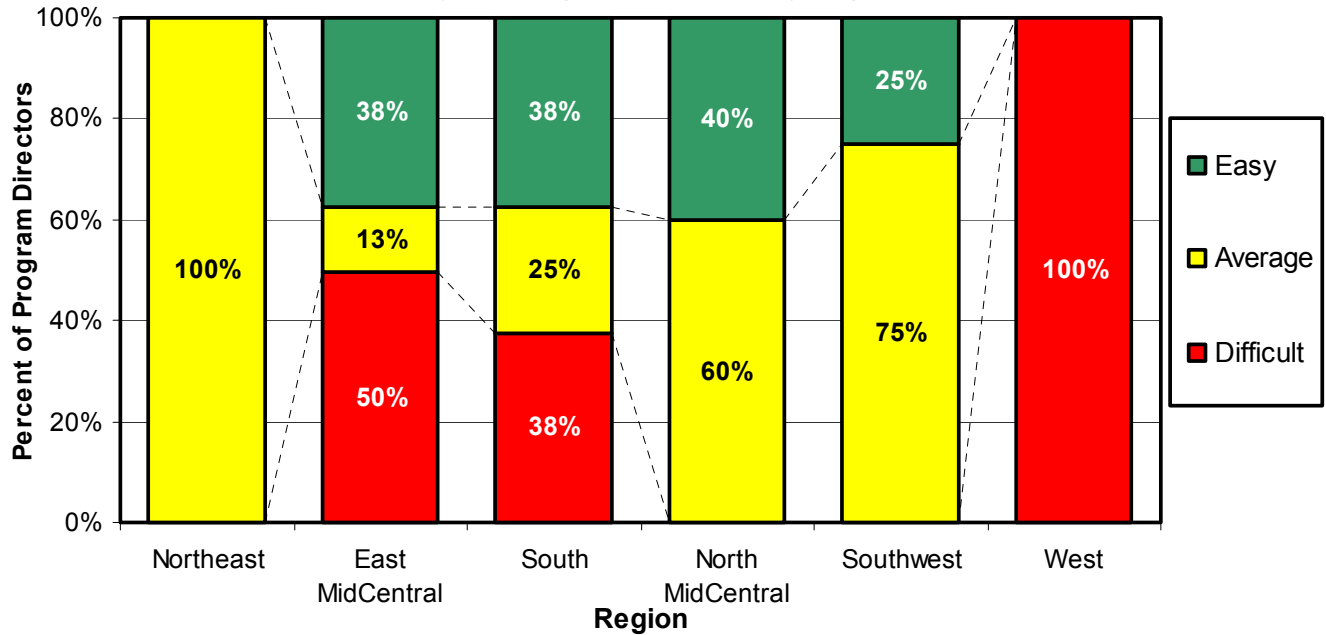
The figures for Puerto Rico have been omitted from the regional charts and tables in this report due to small numbers of programs. The Puerto Rico numbers are included in the tables with no regional breakouts.

Numbers of Respondents by Program and Region

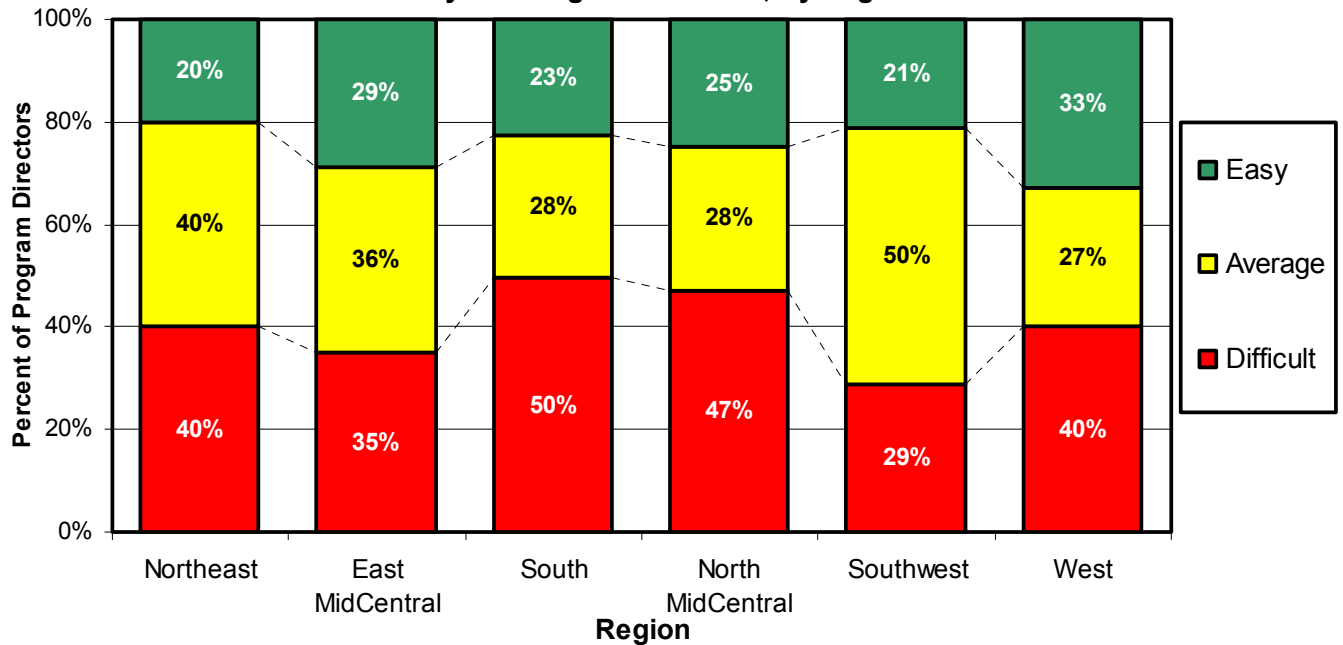
Region	HIA	HIT	Total
Northeast	3	11	14
East MidCentral	8	18	26
South	8	32	40
North MidCentral	5	14	19
Southwest	4	15	19
West	2	5	7
Puerto Rico	1	2	3
Total	31	97	128

- The first two charts compare assessments of difficulty in finding professional practice opportunities for HIA and HIT students. The obvious outlier in the group is HIA programs in the West, where all the program directors reported difficulty.

**Assessments of Difficulty Finding Professional Practice Opportunities
by HIA Program Directors, By Region**

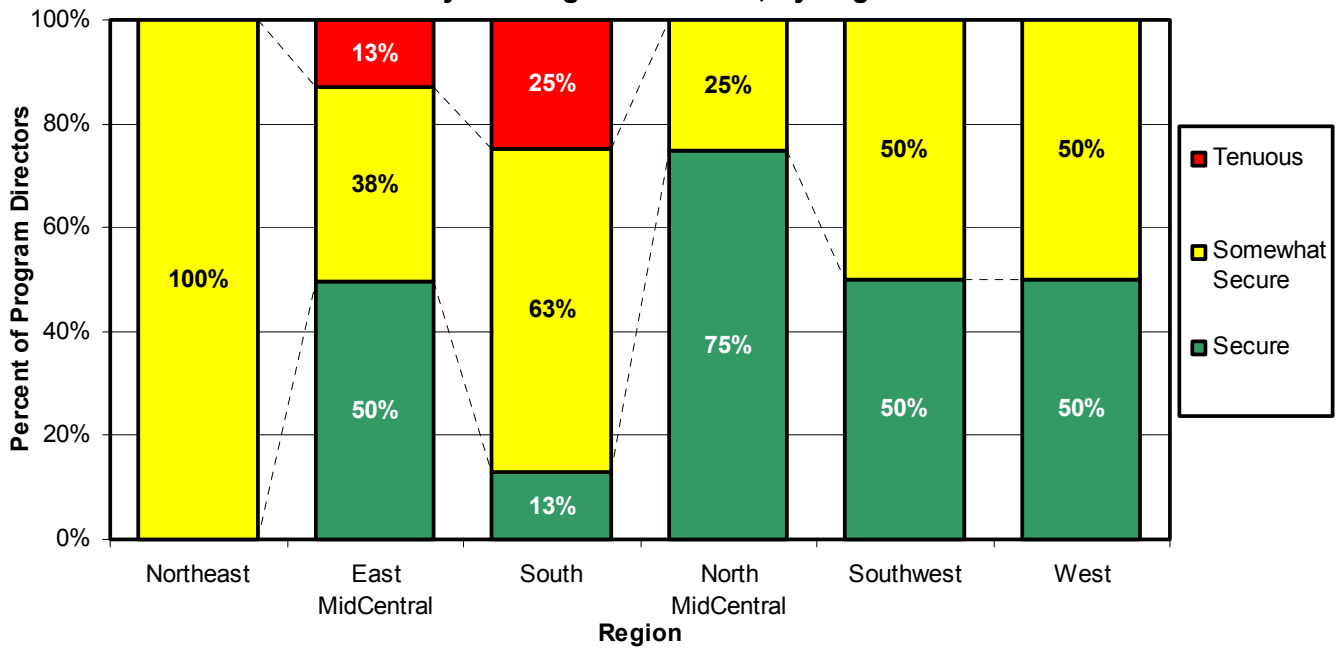


**Assessments of Difficulty Finding Professional Practice Opportunities
by HIT Program Directors, By Region**

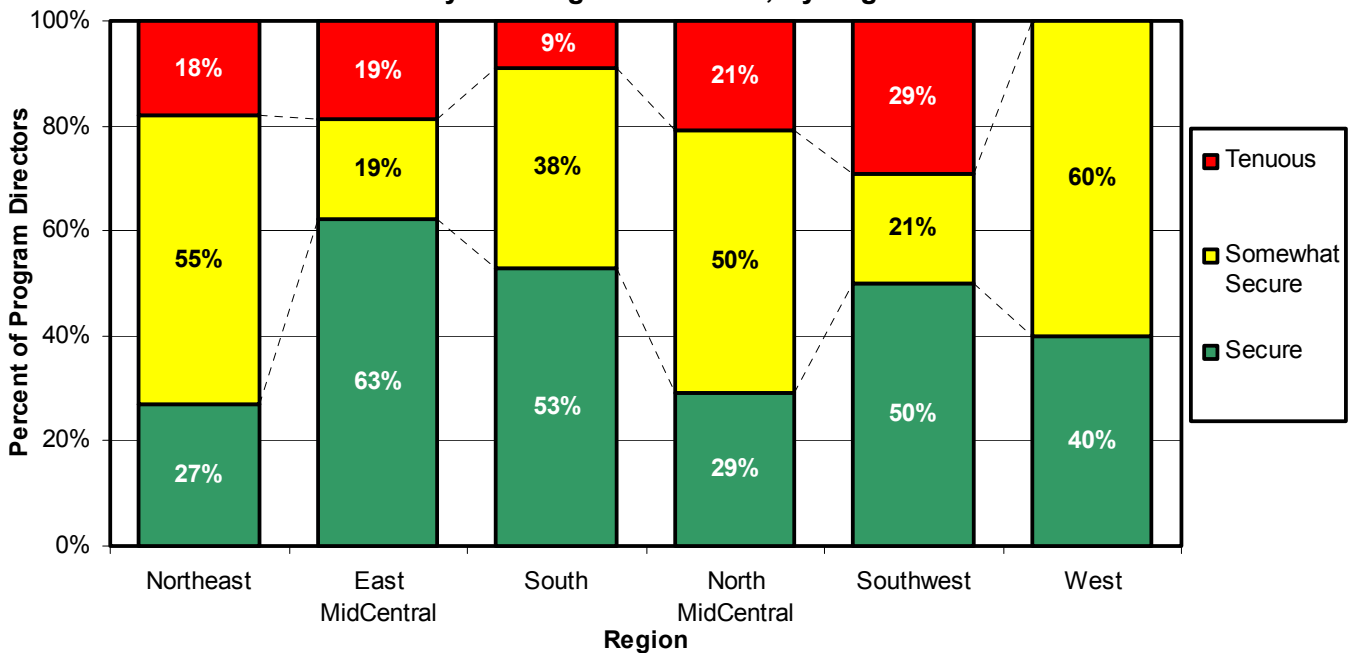


2. Among HIA program directors, those in the North MidCentral region reported feeling most certain about future funding. The South had the largest proportion of program directors that reported tenuous funding and the smallest proportion who reported secure funding. Only the West region had no HIT program directors reporting tenuous funding.

**Assessments of Certainty of Future Funding
by HIA Program Directors, By Region**

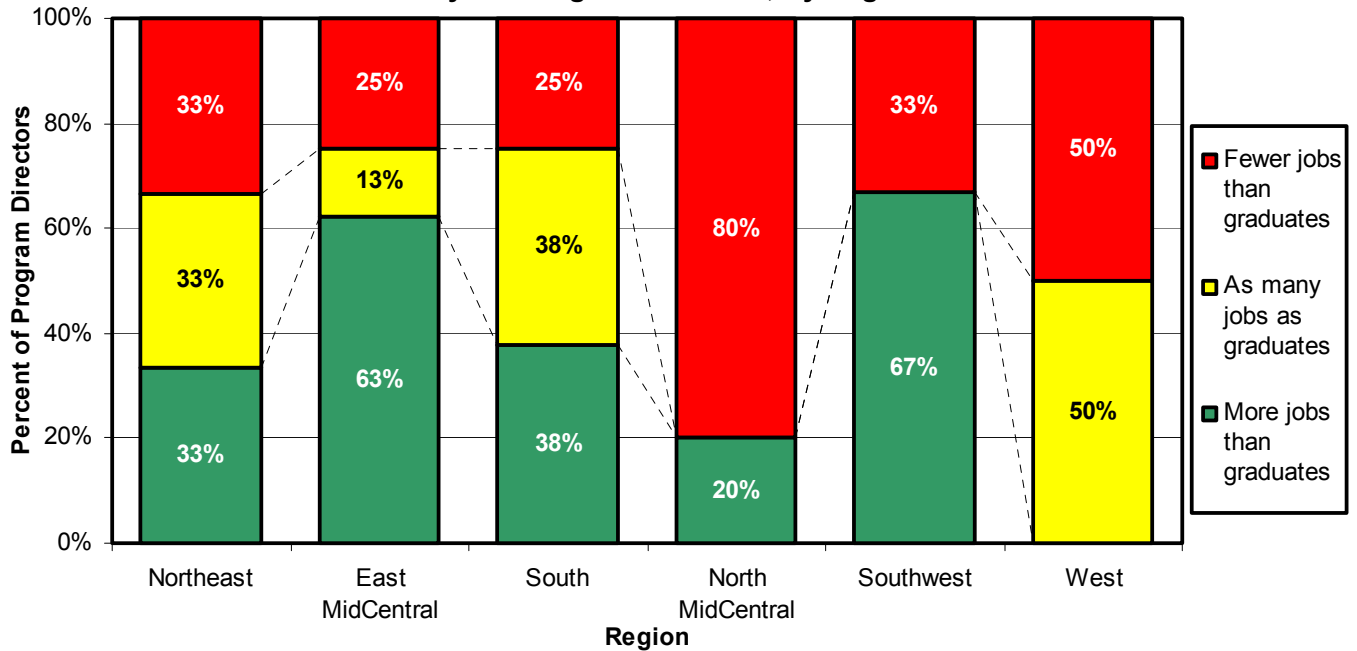


**Assessments of Certainty of Future Funding
by HIT Program Directors, By Region**

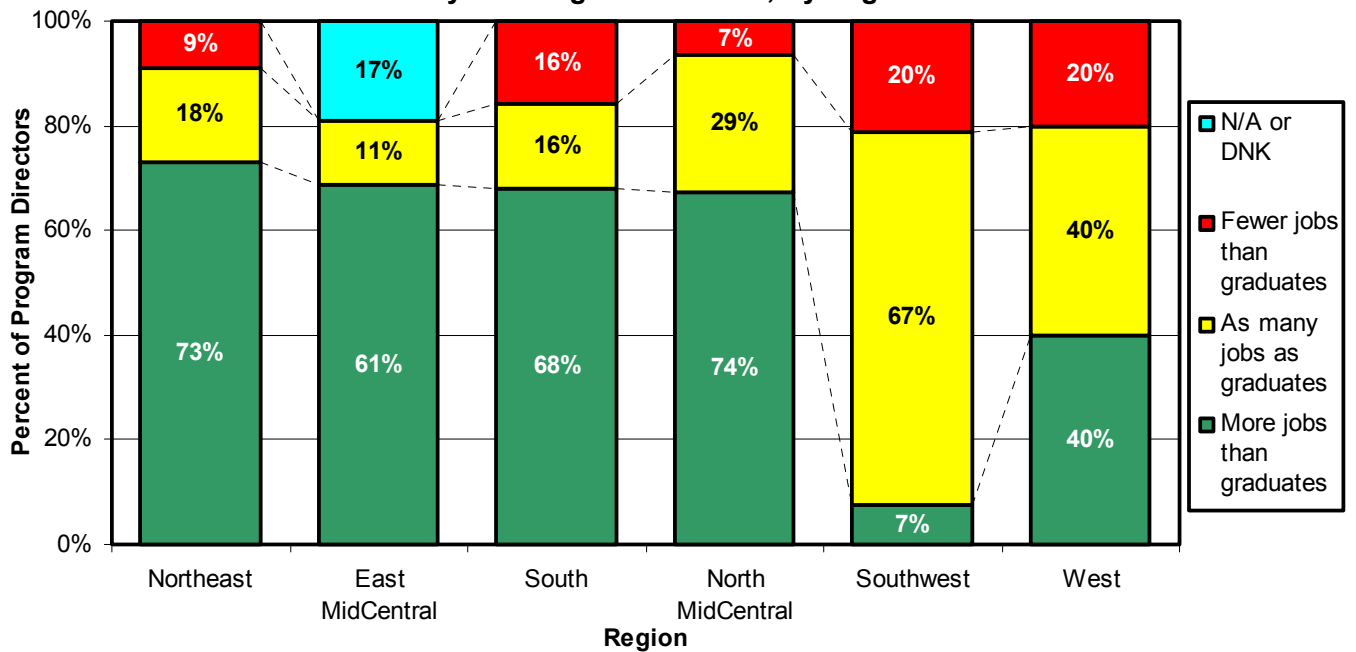


3. HIA program directors in the East MidCentral and Southwest regions reported the most favorable local job opportunities and the North MidCentral reported the worst. HIT program directors in the Southwest reported the worst local job opportunities, and those in the West were second worst.

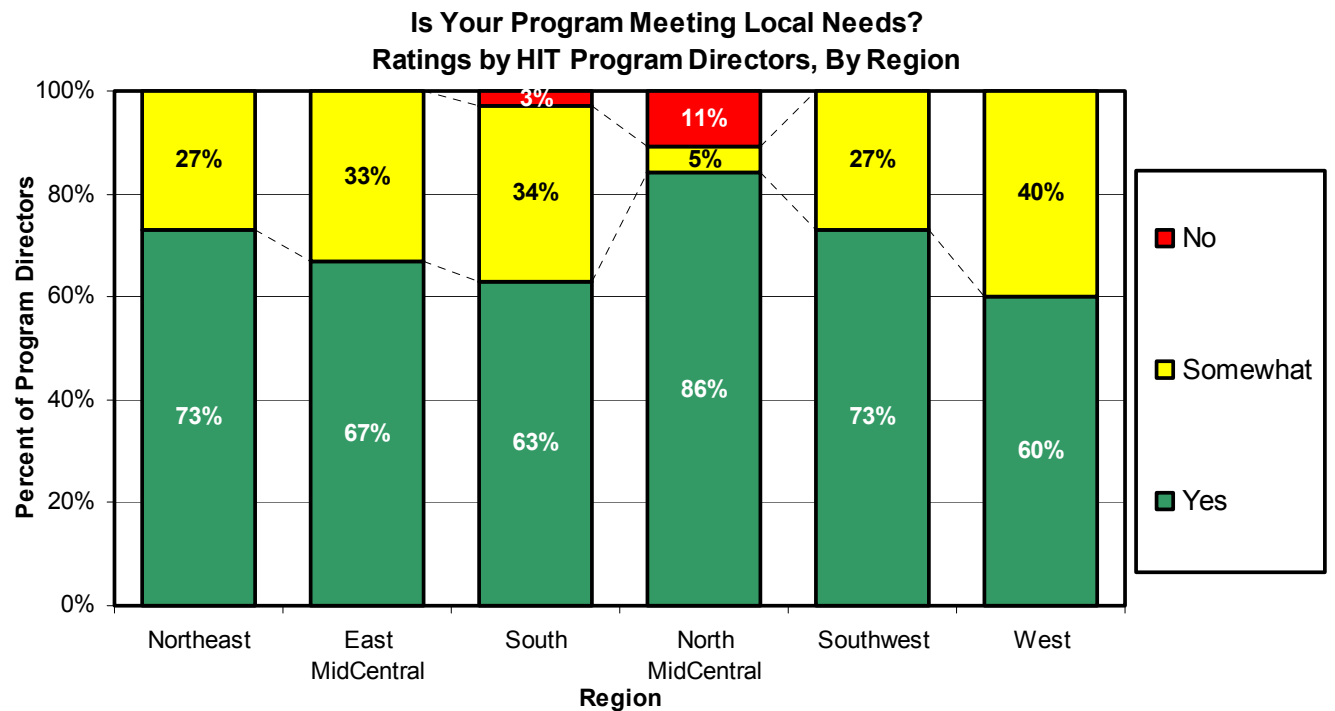
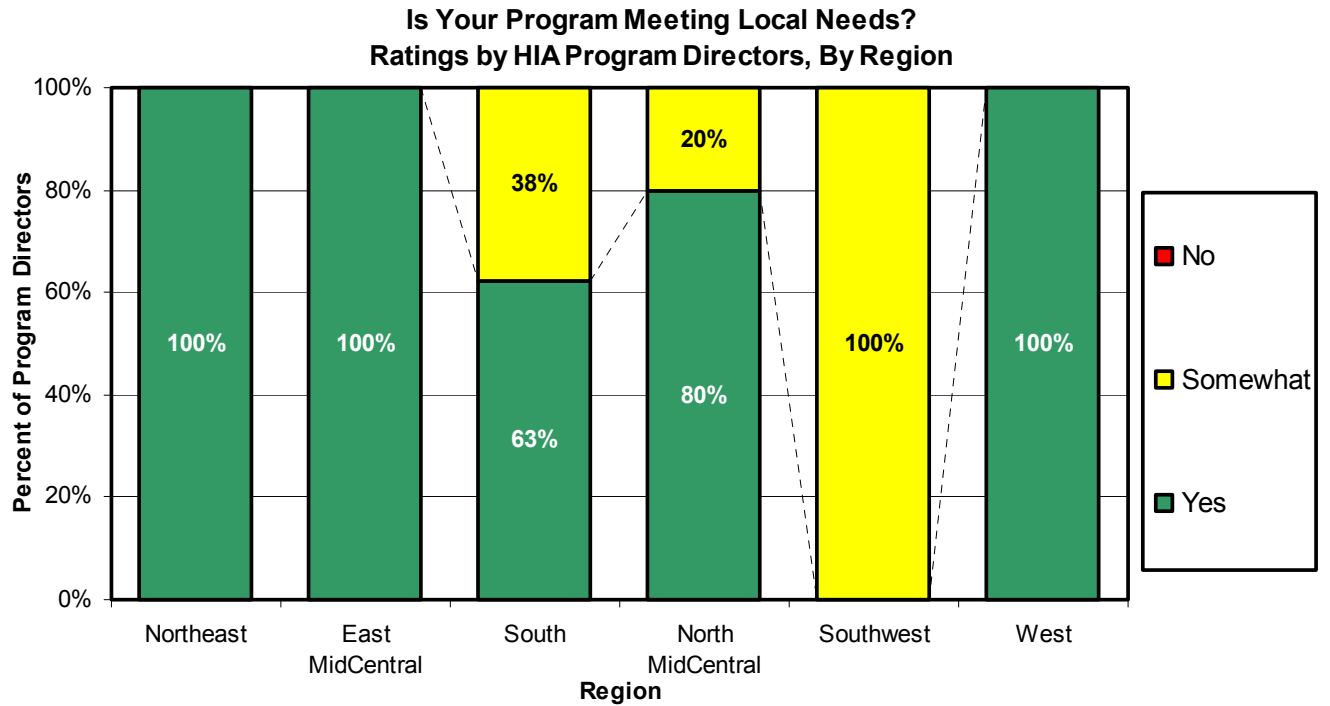
**Assessments of Local Job Opportunities
by HIA Program Directors, By Region**



**Assessments of Local Job Opportunities
by HIT Program Directors, By Region**

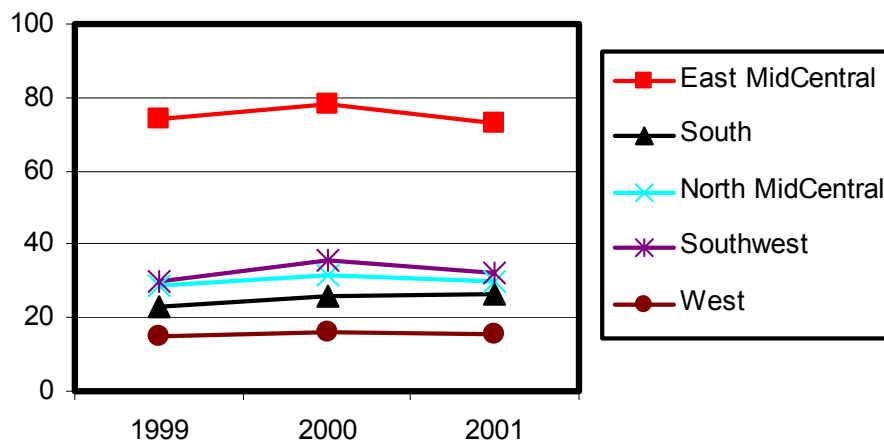


4. Most program directors reported that their programs were “meeting the needs of their community of interest” [Question E.5]. All the HIA program directors in the Southwest and some in the South and North MidCentral reported that their programs were *somewhat* meeting local needs. Some HIT program directors in the North MidCentral and the South reported that their programs were *not* meeting local needs, and some in every region reported that their programs only *somewhat* met local needs.

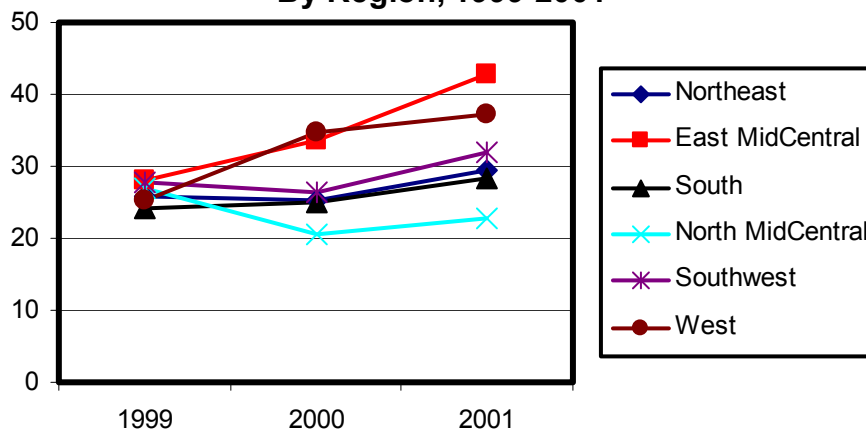


5. The tables that follow present regional averages for enrollments and graduates for HIA and HIT programs. There are significant differences which may have important implications for the future of the programs. In particular, program sizes outside of the East MidCentral region are relatively small, which may create problems for future viability in times of financial stress. The enrollment figures for the Northeast are missing because respondents did not provide numbers.

**Mean Enrollment Levels in HIA Programs
By Region, 1999-2001**

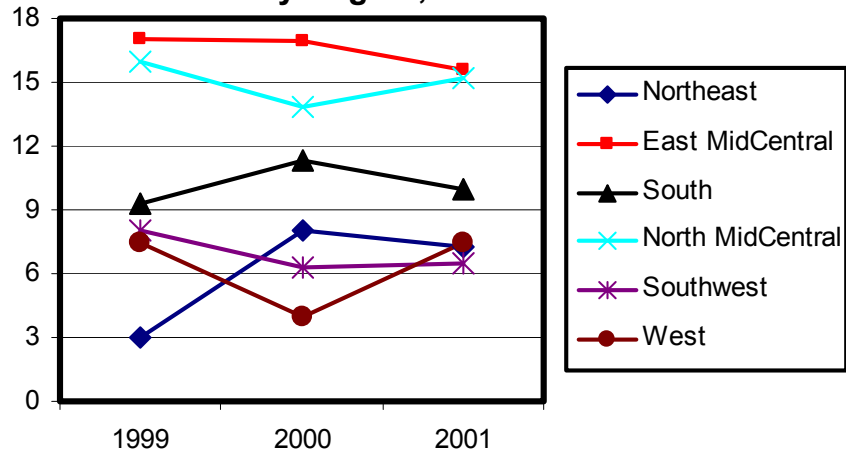


**Mean Enrollment Levels in HIT Programs
By Region, 1999-2001**

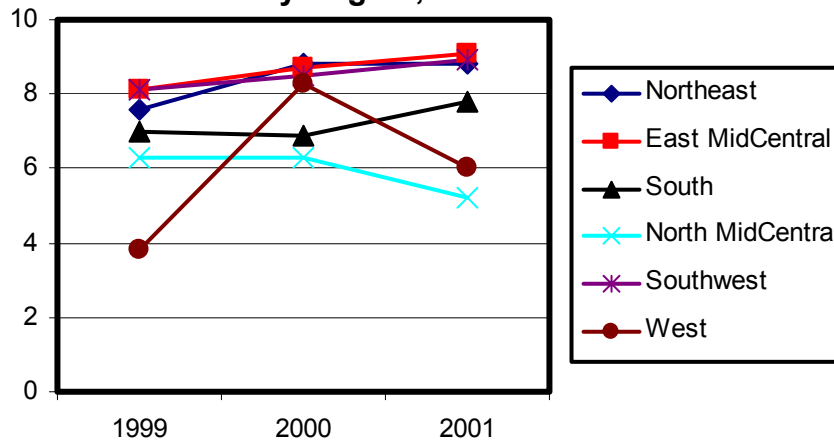


6. The tables that follow present average numbers of graduates from HIA and HIT education programs in six regions in the U.S. Regions with larger enrollments generally having larger numbers of graduates.

**Mean Number of Grads from HIA Programs
By Region, 1999-2001**



**Mean Number of Grads from HIT Programs
By Region, 1999-2001**



7. The tables that follow summarize several of the questions on the program director survey.

Percentage of HIM Courses Online												
% Online	Northeast		East MidCentral		South		North MidCentral		Southwest		West	
	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT
100%	0%	0%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%
76-99%	0%	9%	0%	6%	0%	6%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%
51-75%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
26-50%	33%	0%	13%	0%	13%	0%		8%	25%	67%	0%	0%
1-25%	33%	55%	50%	33%	50%	47%	20%	31%	25%	33%	0%	20%
0%	33%	27%	38%	44%	38%	47%	80%	62%	25%	60%	100%	60%

Percentage of Students that Had Sat for the AHIMA Credential Exam												
% Taken Exam	Northeast		East MidCentral		South		North MidCentral		Southwest		West	
	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT
100%	0%	36%	0%	24%	0%	13%	40%	14%	33%	0%	50%	0%
76-99%	33%	9%	75%	29%	63%	28%	0%	29%	33%	33%	50%	20%
51-75%	66%	27%	0%	45%	38%	28%	20%	36%	0%	20%	0%	40%
26-50%	0%	27%	25%	48%	0%	13%	0%	14%	0%	7%	0%	20%
1-25%	0%	0%	0%	18%	0%	6%	40%	7%	33%	27%	0%	20%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%	0%	13%	0%	0%

Percentage of Students Entering with the Intention to Study HIM												
% Intending HIM	Northeast		East MidCentral		South		North MidCentral		Southwest		West	
	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT
100%	0%	18%	0%	6%	0%	3%	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
76-99%	33%	18%	0%	11%	0%	34%	0%	14%	0%	40%	0%	40%
51-75%	0%	18%	0%	11%	0%	12%	0%	7%	0%	13%	0%	20%
26-50%	0%	18%	0%	11%	0%	9%	0%	7%	0%	13%	50%	0%
1-25%	33%	9%	50%	17%	63%	19%	80%	29%	33%	7%	0%	40%
0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	13%	0%	20%	7%	33%	0%	0%	0%
N/A or DK	33%	18%	25%	44%	25%	22%	0%	28%	33%	27%	50%	0%

Percentage of Students for Whom HIM is a Second Career												
% Second Career	Northeast		East MidCentral		South		North MidCentral		Southwest		West	
	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT
100%	0%	0%	13%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
76-99%	0%	27%	0%	24%	0%	13%	20%	21%	0%	27%	0%	40%
51-75%	33%	36%	0%	12%	25%	10%	0%	21%	0%	20%	50%	20%
26-50%	33%	27%	25%	29%	13%	33%	0%	29%	100%	27%	0%	0%
1-25%	33%	9%	66%	29%	50%	40%	60%	29%	0%	27%	50%	20%
0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	13%	3%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%

Percentage of Students Who Are Part-time												
% Part-Time	Northeast		East MidCentral		South		North MidCentral		Southwest		West	
	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT	HIA	HIT
100%	0%	9%	0%	6%	0%	3%	0%	8%	0%	0%	50%	0%
76-99%	0%	27%	13%	41%	0%	23%	0%	8%	0%	14%	0%	40%
51-75%	33%	18%	0%		13%	10%	0%	42%	33%	14%	0%	20%
26-50%	33%	18%	13%	29%	0%	30%	0%	17%	0%	36%	0%	0%
1-25%	33%	18%	50%	24%	25%	33%	80%	25%	33%	21%	50%	20%
0%	0%	9%	25%	0%	63%	0%	20%	0%	33%	14%	0%	20%

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Appendix A

The Survey Instrument

The instrument used to collect the data summarized in this report is provided on the next pages.

SURVEY OF CURRENT HIM EDUCATION PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Program Identifier _____

Last Name _____

Center for Health Workforce Studies
University at Albany, School of Public Health

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) has retained the Center for Health Workforce Studies at the University at Albany to conduct a major study of the HIM workforce in the US. This survey of AHIMA education program directors is an important component of this study designed to obtain up-to-date information about the education, job settings, work activities, job markets, and career plans of HIM professionals. Please fill in the bubbles that correspond most closely to your situation or opinion and please print legibly for the open-ended questions. Your responses will be confidential and will be reported only in national, regional, and other tabulations and summaries..

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Year of Birth: 19 2. Years Teaching HIM:
- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 1 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 2 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 2 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 4 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 4 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 5 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 5 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 6 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 7 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 7 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 8 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 8 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 9 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 9 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |
| 0 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> | 0 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> |

3. What is your current position?
Please mark all that apply
- Full-time Faculty
 - Part-time Faculty
 - Adjunct Faculty
 - HIM Program Director/Coordinator
 - Dean
 - Department Chair
 - Other: _____

4. What is your faculty rank?
- Professor
 - Associate Professor
 - Assistant Professor
 - Instructor
 - Lecturer
 - Other: _____

5. Please indicate your highest level of education:
- Bachelors Degree
 - Masters Degree
 - Post-Masters Certificate
 - Doctoral Degree
 - Other: _____

6. Please mark the fields that apply to your degrees.

	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate
Business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Computer/Info Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Services Admin.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Library Science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Medical Informatics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please define Other: _____

B. ABOUT YOUR HIM PROGRAM

1. The college or school in which your HIM program is located is:
- Allied Health
 - Other: _____
- When answering questions 6 - 8, please include only faculty who teach in the HIM program. Please do not include yourself.*
2. How many HIM faculty lines are budgeted and filled in your program?
- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 or more |
3. How many faculty members are currently teaching full-time in your HIM program?
- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 or more |
4. How many faculty members are currently teaching part-time in your HIM program?
- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 | <input type="radio"/> 8 | <input type="radio"/> 9 |
| <input type="radio"/> 10 | <input type="radio"/> 11 | <input type="radio"/> 12 or more |
5. How many of your HIM faculty are tenured?
- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 | <input type="radio"/> 6 or more |

6. Please indicate the faculty rank of all full-time HIM faculty members:

	Prof	Assoc.	Assist.	Inst.	Lect.
Faculty #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. What is the length of service in years of all full-time faculty members in your program?

	1-3	4-7	8-10	11-15	>15
Faculty #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. What is the age of all of the full-time faculty members in your program?

	<30	30-40	40-50	50-60	>60
Faculty #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty #6	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Please identify any special emphasis/concentration in your HIM program. *Please mark all that apply*

- MIS/Computer Programming
- IS/IM Management
- Cancer or other specialized registry
- Compliance/Ethics
- Coding/Reimbursement
- Other: _____

10. Continued College funding for your program is:

- Secure Somewhat secure Tenuous

11. If you co-register courses with other departments, with which departments, schools, or colleges do you co-register?

- Business
- Health Care Administration
- Information Technology/Computer Science
- Informatics
- Other Allied Health
- Other _____

12. Please indicate the size of the HIM graduating class for the indicated years.

	Graduates		
	99/00	00/01	01/02
HIT			
HIA			

13. Please indicate the total number of students enrolled in the HIM program for the indicated years.

	Enrollment		
	99/00	00/01	01/02
HIT			
HIA			

14. What is your estimate of the number of 2002/03 applications and admissions in your program, compared to 2001/02?

2002/03 Applicants	2002/03 Admissions
<input type="radio"/> Much higher	<input type="radio"/> Much higher
<input type="radio"/> Somewhat higher	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat higher
<input type="radio"/> About the same	<input type="radio"/> About the same
<input type="radio"/> Somewhat lower	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat lower
<input type="radio"/> Much lower	<input type="radio"/> Much lower

15. If there has been a significant change in enrollment in the past few years, please suggest possible reasons. *Please mark all that apply.*

If enrollment has **decreased**:

- Lack of recruitment resources
- Decreased market demand for HIAs/HITs
- Lack of student awareness about the profession
- Salaries not competitive with other disciplines
- Bad publicity surrounding healthcare work
- Low professional image for HIMs
- Other _____

If enrollment has **increased**:

- More recruitment effort (resources, career days, etc.)
- Increased market demand for HIAs/HITs
- More student awareness of profession
- Positive publicity surrounding healthcare work
- Salaries competitive with other disciplines
- Good professional image for HIMs
- Other _____

16. What percentage of your courses are taught online?

- 0% 26 – 50% 76 – 99%
 1 – 25% 51 – 75% 100%

17. Are you planning to increase this percentage significantly over the next two years?

- Yes No

2. What is your overall assessment of employment opportunities for new HIM graduates within 50 miles of where your program is located?

- Many more jobs than HIM graduates
- Somewhat more jobs than HIM graduates
- About as many jobs as graduates
- Fewer jobs than graduates
- Don't know/Can't estimate

3. For the state in which your program is located, please indicate your assessment of employment opportunities for HIM in the following settings:

N = No Openings S = Some M = Many DK = Don't Know
 N S M DK

- Hospital Inpatient/Acute Care
- Rehabilitation Hospitals
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Hospital Outpatient/Ambulatory
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Laboratories
- Home Health Agencies
- Physician Offices
- Insurance companies
- HMOs/Managed Care Organizations
- Consulting Firms
- Professional associations
- Vendors
- Educational organizations
- Government Agencies
- Mental Health agencies
- Other _____

4. Please indicate in rank order the three employers that hire the most new graduates of your program. Please mark only one in each column.

1st 2nd 3rd

- Hospital Inpatient/Acute Care
- Rehabilitation Hospitals
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Hospital Outpatient/Ambulatory
- Pharmaceutical companies
- Laboratories
- Home Health Agencies
- Physician Offices
- Insurance companies
- HMOs/Managed Care Organizations
- Consulting Firms
- Professional associations
- Vendors
- Educational organizations
- Government Agencies
- Mental Health agencies
- Other _____

5. In your opinion is your program meeting the needs of your community of interest?

- Yes Somewhat No

6. If somewhat or no, why? *Please mark all that apply.*

- Can't produce enough graduates to meet needs
- Lack qualified faculty
- Lack staff help to support program activities
- Curriculum can't change fast enough
- Other: _____

7. Do employers recruit on campus for your graduates?

- Yes No

8. How well do new graduates from your program do in the job market, for those actively searching for jobs?

- All my graduates get good jobs.
- Most of my graduates get good jobs.
- Some of my graduates have trouble finding jobs.
- Most of my graduates have trouble finding jobs.
- Don't know/ Not sure

9. Approximately how long does it take, on average, for your new graduates to find jobs after graduation?

- Immediate to one month 4 to 5 months
- 2 to 3 months 6 months or more
- Don't know/Can't estimate

10. What percentage of your new graduates move to a job in a non-HIM job sector?

- 0% 1-25% 26-50%
- 51-75% 76-99% 100%

F. GRADUATE PROGRAM

1. Does your institution currently offer a graduate degree in HIM or a closely related field?

- Yes No

2. If no, does your strategic plan include beginning a graduate program in HIM?

- Yes No

3. I foresee a time when entry level for HIA at my school will be at the graduate level:

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree
-

4. What percentage of your graduates in the past 5 years have gone on to pursue a graduate degree?

- 0% 1-25% 26-50%
- 51-75% 76-99% 100%
- Don't know

H. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Feel free to use additional sheets, if necessary, indicating which question is being answered. Please write legibly or type.

1. Please describe any important changes in the student population and student needs that you have experienced in the past few years, including changes in technical proficiency, demographics, or other important changes.

2. Has distance learning affected your educational program? If so, please describe the impact(s)?

3. Please detail any HIM workforce related concerns or issues that you feel have not been adequately addressed in this survey.

Thank You For Completing This Survey!

When we receive your completed questionnaire and the completed questionnaires from students who will graduate this spring, we will enter your program in the drawing for a \$500 AMEX gift card. We will also see that you receive a summary of the study findings when they are available later this year.

Please send the completed questionnaires in the pre-addressed, postage paid envelope to:

Margaret Langelier
The Center for Health Workforce Studies
School of Public Health, University at Albany
One University Place, Suite 200
Rensselaer, NY 12144-3456

Appendix B

HIA Educator Responses to Narrative Questions (Only 2 of 30 respondents had no written comments.)

Question 1: Please describe any important changes in the student population and student needs that you have experienced in the past few years, including changes in the technical proficiency, demographics, or other important changes.

- More student are enrolling in the HIM program with the intention of becoming a pharmaceutical rep.
- Overall academic ability has improved over the past few years – admissions requirements have increased.
- Please take into account, my organization is an all-women’s college and we have both HIA and HIT. The students who completed the questionnaire are in a non-traditional weekend format at the HIT level. Recently we have had several students who have already completed a BS in another field.
- Attitudinal change – less responsibility taken – external
- The student population has shifted from a predominantly high school graduate (18-22 year old) to one that is more mature. The program has been successful in recruiting a larger African American population than previously. Technical (computer) skills are a challenge for older students.
- The need for technologically and web-based courses has significantly impacted student enrollment.
- The more dramatic change in students needs have been the virtual technology related to information systems.
- The only major change is my student population is that they are coming from further away. This is due to on-line courses.
- Greater lack in the following areas: preparation in math, basic writing skills, professionalism (behavior), oral presentation. Greater preparedness in computer skills.
- 1) declining enrollment. 2) Need for distance education.
- 1) More students must work; school takes backseat to job. 2) More diversity, foreign students poses issues related to understanding cultural differences.
- The increase in age of students is offset by totally new students switching careers at younger ages. Most of our students are already employed in the field and are enrolled to enhance their marketability in their facility or in the field.
- Students in RHIT progression programs are older, taking courses via web-based instruction, are working in HIM and already have the RHIT credential. This means we have two distinct student populations which has created a number of challenges.
- Increased competition with other health disciplines for students such as health care administration students entering the program.

- An older student population with greater educational support needs. Students require greater flexibility in course load and hours.
- The greatest change to the HIM program at UAB over the last two years has been the development and implementation of web-based courses. We are receiving more requests for information, applications, and admissions. We are currently looking at some study demographics with these students and it seems that most are employed full time and are older (about 29 yrs old on average). Student appear to be more computer literate. This may be due to job responsibilities or increased personal use of the Internet.
- Our applicant pool has declined significantly during the past 4/5 years, but it is up somewhat for the coming year [2002].
- We are seeing an increase in Asian applicants, and many ESL students. They have difficulty with the curriculum. They also have difficulty with written English skills.
- Recent students are entering the program with a greater technical proficiency, but the needs of the job market are also requiring greater computer competency. Students are more management focused and less client focused.
- Decreased technical proficiency. Decreased preparation from high school, especially in math and English.
- Students have more outside commitments—family, work—than in the past.
- Students are becoming more technically proficient. More want to work with technology and change management. Diverse career-change students (pharmacy, lab tech, dietician) in the certificate program. Some students come with advanced degrees.
- I just need more students. We only teach our upper division HIM courses online because we do not have a large enough base of students to justify classroom courses.

Question 2: Has distance learning affected your educational program? If so, please describe the impact(s).

- Yes, as more students are asking for distance learning, we feel the need to develop more classes in this manner which takes a lot of time.
- We offer a “progression program” for RHITs to complete the HIA bachelor’s program in distance learning.
- Yes, we began with hybrid courses (part www and face-to-face) and will now move to on-line (with exception of capstone and PPE).
- We have been able to provide opportunities for place-bound students by offering courses and off-campus sites. This has enabled us to increase enrollment slightly.
- Our ability to provide distance learning at this time has greatly limited our program growth and development over the past few years.
- Yes, Increased numbers and given students flexibility.
- Not greatly, though we offered an interactive teleconferenced program a few years ago. The greatest effect was on the time required for faculty and staff to prepare for courses.
- Yes, captured students that would have sought other alternatives.

- No, would like to engage in more course development but time, money, and lack of faculty to develop or transition courses to online format is a problem.
- While ours is not a distance program, I get many inquiries about it. Our competition in the state is an RHIT program, but we attract different student populations.
- Yes, increased enrollment, much more visibility, both on an doff campus. Workload has increased significantly. I did come with a new funded faculty position and increase in operating budget.
- ?Distance for what? Coming to class or distance to clinical sites? If for program, somewhat of a factor as we are a rural-based program.
- Implemented it. Has increased enrollment.
- Yes. About two years ago we decided to implement all HIM didactic courses in a web-based format. This has broadened our student population, both regionally and culturally. It is not easy to teach courses on line without face to face interaction. Seems some students do not like it at all. So we still offer campus courses for those students that do not want online courses. We have not looked at other types of distance learning because web-based format seems to fit our needs.
- We are getting many more requests for web courses and we are in the process of converting many courses to web-enhanced courses.
- We offer one class completely online and some web-based content in other courses. There \has been an increase in requests for a distance program, although we do not plan to offer a completely distance program.
- Not at this point. We refer students to on-line programs.
- Yes, it has increased the number of students in our program.
- I don't think so, but I have had a number of inquiries from people who were interested in a program taught by distance learning methods.

Question 3: Please detail any important changes that have taken place in your program in the past year or two, or any problems you have been facing regarding the program.

- 1) Recruitment is increasingly difficult due to low profile of HIM as a profession. 2) Increase in online courses.
- Low enrollment. The recruitment totals have helped tremendously. We have made 4 recruitment presentations this semester.
- Initially our program was part of the Biology Department. In 1998, the Health Sciences Department was founded and included our program along with three other programs: medical technology, radiology technology, and nursing. This change has been favorable, bringing together many related disciplines and enriching each other. The collaborative efforts on accreditation process, budgeting allocation, resource distribution, and assessment tools preparation has also been very positive. There are four HIT programs in Puerto Rico, two of which are close in distance (about 30 miles) and serving the same population. There is a fifth program which is very close in distance but not yet accredited.

Fro these reasons the enrollment has been adversely affected and recruitment efforts doubled.

- A temporary faculty contract was not renewed. Also, SACS demanding master's for faculty makes it difficult to get adjunct faculty.
- The behavior of students is an increasing problem. They lack basic courtesy and are demanding and sometimes defiant. Administrative support continues to be strong. More faculty time required for recruitment.
- Declining enrollment
- Loss of faculty – very difficult to replace, find doctorally-prepared faculty with a research program or focus.
- No changes in particular, just an overall lack of visibility of the program. I constantly hear—even from nurses—“I didn't know you existed!” We need more media attention.
- Positive: new facilities, new computer equipment, HIM faculty in the Health Care Administration program. Negative: no \$ for recruitment. No time for recruitment.
- The HIA program has closed (5/02) . A new graduate program in Medical Informatics will start in Sept 2003.
- We started the web-based program with a grant from the UAB provost. We applied for a grant because of competition from schools who might begin a web-based program and a decline in the number and quality of students. There have been major obstacles to overcome in implementing a web-based curriculum. Finding faculty who would develop course materials and teach in a web-based program is difficult. Convincing faculty already teaching in the program to offer web-based courses is difficult. The faculty member has to revise course materials and spend additional time monitoring student progress in a web-based course.
- We are transitioning from a one-year program (senior only) to a two-year program (junior entry). This has necessitated redesigning the curriculum to better fit the needs of the students, program, and profession.
- Two faculty are approaching minimum retirement age for our state system and may consider leaving. There is a question about who we could hire as replacements.
- Fewer applicants. Capacity is only 15.
- The 2001-02 year is the first year of a degree program. Combined certificate and degree students expended curriculum challenges. Project enrollment up to 30+ for coming year.
- We lost one full-time faculty position and did not have any applicants with HIM background apply.
- Difficulty in getting clinical sites to take students and difficulty in getting contracts agreed upon by the clinical site attorney and university attorneys.

Question 4: Please detail any HIM workforce-related concerns or issues that you feel have not been adequately addressed in this survey.

- Very thorough survey. We have two definite groups of students, one with families who need stable jobs and stable hours in their communities. The second group are single and

able to move and/or able to move and take on more responsibility , and therefore better jobs.

- HIT level are going to another college to get a BS in a degree completion program because of the window of opportunity to take the RHIA exam.
- Shortage of HIM faculty (i.e.,
- RHIA professionals that are master's prepared and that are interested in academics.
- I would like to see a question about recruitment of faculty.
- Our area has several master's prepared RHIAs but with increasing workloads, they are less inclined to take on teaching a class. This may impact us soon. Also, our school does not have tenure—only multi-year contracts—so don't want our "0" tenure answer to mean that we didn't achieve it. That should have been a question.
- Types of jobs graduates get right out of school. Is it mostly coding for both HIT and HIA? or is there a difference?
- A greater emphasis on computerized information systems; creation of multiple tracks; health information administration; public health information management; privacy; coding and reimbursement; legal; computerized information systems.
- We are currently in a strategic planning phase in the HIM program at UAB to look at workforce issues in the next five years. Based on literature I have been reading, I think one major issue will be the threat to the HIA credential. Once AHIMA and other agencies begin to offer so many specialized credentials, our limited student population may elect to work toward one of these other specialized credentials instead of the (generalized) HIA. It might take the student less time and money to work toward one of these credentials unless AHIMA builds more value in holding the RHIA.

A few of our current students think you have to be a coder to get jobs because "all I see advertised are coding positions." The market will drive employment of our graduates.

Another issue is a dwindling pool of qualified students. Since we are still a professions largely dominated by women, we are not getting the quality applicants we had 10 years ago. Many of these women are choosing careers that were not open to them at one time, such as medicine, engineering, and business. The younger, brighter HIM graduates are entering other fields at the master's level and leaving the HIM practitioner environment.

There are decreasing resources in higher education. I am teaching more students with decreasing budget dollars. Salaries are so low in higher education that it is almost impossible to find a PhD in HIM who would work for this salary and universities are demanding PhDs. I think the decreasing dollars and the aging of the current program directors will force some HIM programs to close.

- Jobs continue to be plentiful for RHIAs in our area.
- We need to make the public/potential students aware of this profession and education. Also, employer demand must increase so that jobs are created.

- The lack of availability of PPE and Internship sites has forced the program to put a cap on enrollment. The lack of availability is becoming one of the most significant problems facing the program.
- Salaries.
- The salaries are still not what they should be, and people are still hiring nurses in positions our students should fill.
- Not enough job variations were included: research, decision support analyst, cost analyst, systems analyst are job titles of recent graduates.

Appendix C
HIT Educator Responses to Narrative Questions
(14 of 96 respondents had no written comments.)

Question 1: Please describe any important changes in the student population and student needs that you have experienced in the past few years, including changes in the technical proficiency, demographics, or other important changes.

- The student population is not motivated.
- There is a lack of understanding of the HIM profession on campus.
- The lack of understanding about the HIM profession effects everyone from the Dean to the counselors.
- The lack of understanding has influenced enrollment greatly.
- Students studying online require different resources.
- Worsening economy has shifted students in technology field into retraining.
- Quality of students is declining.
- 75 % of students are female.
- Many students are single mothers.
- Many students work part time or full time and can only attend evening classes.
- Student population seems to be older. Younger students lack writing or critical thinking skills. They also lack basic computer skills even though they have grown up with them. They also have no keyboarding speed and cannot write a business letter, probably from a lack of a basic typing class. The older students are more frightened of the computer.
- Students lack basic computer skills, which does not make them marketable upon graduation. College and HIT Program have the technology available but it is not being used.
- Large amount of students in early 20's and forties. Fewer in between.
- Students are becoming less prepared and proficient.
- Technical or Associate degree students want a quick course. Many of my students are coming to our program because it is available on-line.
- High school graduates often need to brush up on their English, Math and Reading skills.
- Most students are older and established, cannot easily relocate to areas where the job market and compensation is better.
- Increasing number of students coming from greater distances to the college.
- More students come to college for retraining after they have been laid off from the industry.
- Fewer foreign students, more students choosing a second career and more rehab students.

- Implementation of Health Information Technology program with a coding specialist certificate.
- Our program is still relatively new. It will be a few more years before significant data will be available. We are seeing an increase in interested individuals as well as an increased recognition by employees seeking our graduates.
- Feel the need to recruit more students.
- Not enough new students due to:
 - a) HIM is thought of as a clerical position
 - b) Nursing compensation is increasing
 - c) Salaries for HIM do not reach salaries from other fields
 - d) There is a lot of job competition for good students
 - e) Other AH fields get more recognition
- Decrease in the number of high school students taking remediation class as well as Anatomy and Physiology. Program enrollment cut by almost one-half as result.
- Students are more computer literate. They want information provided for them instead of searching for it.
- More students are married and/or with financial concerns, which slows down their progress.
- Reading and writing skills are weak.
- Most students are from minorities or recent immigrants who are learning English. It is difficult to teach them, when they cannot speak the language. Students are able to do the work, but because of frustration due to communication problems, they leave without completion of the program.
- Students decreasing in quality and are more demanding. More complication in life such as jobs, kids, car issues, etc.
- Enrollment decreased due to inadequate marketing of the profession by AHIMA.
- There is strong competition for students with the AAPC quick coding credential education.
- Older students, second career, limited computer skills.
- Students not adequately prepared for college-level courses. Some arrive from re-training programs, because they have been laid off from factories. Many have been out of high school for many years and did not take “college-trail” courses in high school.
- Students have poor work habits and want to be given a grade instead of earning it. More students have special needs.
- Students do not have enough experience to complete assignments in the first class. More teaching in that area required.
- Increase in the number of Russian and Bosnian students.

- Students are more computer literate.
- A lot of English as a second language students entering. Require more work for instructors.
- Older students usually attend the programs, usually returning from the workforce or retraining. Tend to be lacking in computer skills.
- No admission screening criteria exist due to low numbers of applicants. Admit all interested students, which can lead to negative effects on national exam scores. If admission numbers remain low for a longer time, the program could be in jeopardy.
- Students are older, cannot move around as much if they find new career opportunity.
- The young traditional students have good technology skills. The non-traditional students have better people skills and are more task oriented.
- Other students are more interested in telecommuting career and salary ranges upon admission to program
- Traditional students study with non-traditional students. All have different degrees of entry-level knowledge. More students are working part time or fulltime or both and going to school.
- Basic keyboarding and transcription courses have been eliminated and more computer classes have been added.
- More students enrolled, who are looking for second career.
- Younger students more proficient in using computer.
- More non-traditional and part-time students and students who require remedial courses.
- Student enrollees are now much more likely to be part-time, which affects FTSE production and eventually funding and resources. Students are concerned about the traffic in a growing metropolitan area, therefore they would like the timing of the classes to be more flexible.
- Basic knowledge of incoming students is on decline.
- I have seen a decline in the quality of students over the past few years. We still get older students but the motivation and interest in the profession is not what it used to be. I am hoping that with distance learning we will reach people who have worked or are working in departments who will have the opportunity to upgrade. These people know the field already and I think will make better students and future members. I am hoping that the supervisors of these individuals will be supportive of giving these employees the chance to upgrade. In the past couple of years, many local directors of HIM departments have talked to the college about opportunities for current employees, but never followed through with our distance learning classes or flexible schedules for working individuals.
- Program has become national and demand for courses by students has increased three-fold with no indication that the trend will slow down. Technical proficiency has also increased dramatically as has technology for on-line course delivery.
- Population of students is remaining steady for now. Technical proficiency is accelerating.

- Most come with computer expertise. Consumer oriented/consumer rights vs. standards. 50-50 mix of ESL/minority vs. Caucasian students. ESL students have major communication problems. One-third or more are part time during first year. 50% want distance learning, 50% do not.
- Technical proficiency is increasing. Availability of information on the web impacts teaching in every course.
- Students in this area of the country have not been schooled well in their younger years. Students take 2 or 3 developmental courses to get into the regular curriculum
- We are getting about 25% of students who are not prepared for college level work. About 40-50 % need remedial reading, math and writing skills.
- The college is growing at a fast pace.
- We have a new facility which we have outgrown.
- Students have a better opportunity to learn, because advanced technology is used in the classes.
- New faculty. Change in faculty has helped the program
- Students want more flexible hours for classes but when online alternatives are suggested, they are not interested. They want face-to-face classes when it suits them. Also, more students already have some HIM experience/exposure.
- Students understanding the importance of professionalism. Student lack of motivation to participate in their learning.
- Students have better technical skills now and less time is spent on teaching technical skills, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.
- Students are less qualified, overall. Their math skills are weak which affects their ability to reason and problem-solve. They don't want to dig; they want everything stated or restated for them. This isn't necessarily due to laziness; almost all of our students work at least 25 hours per week, some work full-time and most have family responsibilities. When I started teaching 14 years ago, none of our students were employed until the last few weeks of the program.
- More need for courses in computerization. Student population is growing more demanding and needy.
- Increased level of computer proficiency upon entrance. Graduates are much less interested in returning to their home communities. Less grateful and more demanding.
- All students now come in with email and compute proficiency and these are older, career students who work during the day. This was not so 5 years ago.
- Students expect and demand higher salaries-want challenge but less stress, less management positions do not want to deal with personal issues. High tech environment in consulting and vendor attract students.
- None
- Students are coming in much more computer literate.

- All students want a “quick fix” in their learning.
- Students coming out of high school are not prepared academically. Students have difficulty thinking and applying knowledge.
- Since the majority of our students are non-traditional and female, many are juggling the demands of school, family, and jobs. At the request of the students, we schedule classes back-to-back from 8 to 3 Monday through Thursday to accommodate their needs.

Question 2: Has distance learning affected your educational program? If so, please describe the impact(s).

- Demand for distance learning from students is rising, increased enrollment
- Distance learning has made the program is more viable
- Increases the number of students who can access the program across the state.
- Yes, I think distance learning will increase enrollment. I have many prospects that call about a distance program. We currently only offer one course via Internet.
- More people are inquiring about distance education opportunities. There are people out of the area. Students in the area usually do not wish to take distance education courses offered through the college in general education courses. The types of DL courses range from ITV, video or Web courses.
- We are interested in developing on-line courses and get several inquiries from students not enrolled at our institution. However in discussion with our students almost all indicate they want the face to face contact with an instructor. There are indications that the University may soon require all students to complete at least one on-line course.
- Increased usage of Web computer technology in blended or hybrid courses.
- Increased the number of students in program who are working at the same time.
- Some programs developed internet delivery systems to reach CSA members.
- Offer external degree for working people to increase volume.
- Students prefer full-time instructors to adjuncts from the field
- Not enough faculty to teach regular classes while youth option courses are taught to high school students.
- It has doubled my students and for us has been a positive impact.
- Have referred students to take online classes from other institutions, which are not offered at the program in a particular semester.
- Try to reach more rural areas by creating more on-line classes.
- Students prefer the classroom setting.
- Loose students to on-line programs taught at other two competing schools.
- Online courses using Blackboard.

- Huge increase in my time, a lot of inquiries, etc. Has gotten the name of our program out, nationwide.
- Three years ago, our program was moved from our College of Science, Technology and Health to our community college. We may be moved again to a newly formed College of Health. Hard to maintain program stability and student recognition being moved from place to place. Also, the State Council on Secondary Education is scrutinizing the dropping number of grads and majors. Ideally we would accept only the best and brightest, those students with a high probability of succeeding in the classroom, passing the RHIT exam and doing well in the HIM field. In reality, we have to accept some borderline students to maintain enrollment numbers. These students tend to “squeak” by, not the kind of professionals, the HIM field needs. We are also competing for students with schools offering HIM programs not accredited by CAAHEP/AHIMA. These challenges are not unique to our program, but can be challenging.
- Computer campus, but students want to have hands on instruction, not compute instruction as their primary learning.
- Not yet
- Some impact, too early to tell. On-line classes only offered for one year so far. Planning on expanding across state. Not able to tell whether this will create a long lasting interest.
- Increased accessibility and flexibility leads to higher employment
- Distance learning is required by the university, even though there is no support staff or equipment to implement the classes. Progression program created from HIT to HIA by distance education.
- No, but many people have been asking for such a program and there is not enough faculty to implement it.
- Not yet, concerns arising that perhaps program should be put on-line to remain viable.
- Not yet
- Compete with distance learning programs, but students prefer the classroom setting.
- Very little impact on program from distance learning.
- Distance learning is attracting part-time students in the medical workforce. Offsets low FT employment somewhat. Burden on already busy faculty.
- Enrollment should increase if distance learning were available on our campus. Loose 3 to 4 applicants per year, due to the lack of distance education.
- One person surveyed is angry that she spent four years getting a degree, when some can study at home and receive it in a shorter time
- Students can take more non-HIT courses on-line
- Mores students calling to inquire about an on-lie program
- Students inquiring about on-line classes at program. Some potential students take course on the web from other institutions. School advises to teach as many course on-line as possible. One week distance learning course offered.

- Not at this time
- Program receives a lot of requests about distance learning, but there is not enough funding or time to develop this.
- One program director's goal is to offer 1 or 2 classes online for the year 2003/2004
- We have seen a huge increase in medical terminology, legal aspects and medications, but since the entire program was not on-line, there has been no increase in the number of graduates. As we have now begun to advertise that the entire program will be on-line in September 2002, we have had an excellent response and it would appear, our number of first year students should double next year.
- Yes, our entire program is distance and students find it meets their life-style
- Yes, some classes are now on-line totally. Lots are hybrid. (1/2 online, 1/2 in class)-students really enjoy the hybrid classes and so do faculty.
- Yes, we have begun to offer courses via distance and will be increasing the number of online courses in the next year.
- No distance learning in HIT program
- No, because the only course we offer is Medical Terminology. However, the faculty is being trained in order to offer more courses via distance learning.
- I don't think so
- No noticeable effect.
- Not at this time
- Some interested callers are interested only in finding out if we offer our coding program online, and when I say no, they tell me that is all they're interested in. My experience has been that most of these individuals are looking for a quick fix. They don't want to enroll in a program, they want to take a course online and to be finished, have a certificate and credential yesterday. We're not willing to sacrifice quality for ease/speed. We're considering offering a limited number of on-line courses however.
- Curriculum Reviews. Demand to meet learner's needs in a much more different modality. Building community, faculty loads.
- Yes, we are growing. Finding qualified students is a concern. Many local applicants don't qualify.
- We would like to pursue the on-line program for our graduate offerings.

Question 3: Please detail any important changes that have taken place in your program in the past year or two, or any problems you have been facing regarding the program.

- Top level administrators do not give enough support
- Lack of faculty members to create web-based courses to help increase enrollment
- Programs only consisting of part-time employees
- Lack of funding.

- Implementing an advanced coding course
- Decreased enrollment, competition from other HIT programs for placement of interns. There are 5 accredited programs and 2 more within 50 miles that are in the processes of accreditation.
- Resequenced program to accommodate students having A&P, MT, Pharmacology and concurrent employment in pathology while taking ICD-9CM. Students are still not sure what they want to do. With the option of taking the certifying exam at their leisure-they put it off longer.
- Combining information technology content with quality assessment class
- One program implemented RHIT Review course with weekly on-line practice tests. Helps students prepare for the national certification exam and to get used to online testing.
- Challenging to recruit higher quality students.
- Lost secretary due to budget cuts.
- Increase in online enrollment and the need to consider limiting the number of possible students.
- Lack of support from facilities regarding student clinicals.
- Few preceptors participate in Advisory Board.
- Implementing internet based coding software.
- New changes to certification: When student finishes first year they become coder/biller certified; when finishing second year upgrade to an associates degree.
- Diploma coding program established to increase employment and satisfy need for coders in area.
- Some programs experienced institutional budget cuts because of the lack of legislative support.
- Internet provision of classes allows for easier negotiation for clinical sites in unfamiliar territory.
- Important changes identified in relation to course content and delivery. We continue to update to meet community needs.
- My program has moved from Business Technology to the Health and Human Services division.
- Program changed from day program to a combination of evening, weekend and distance program.
- More students graduate in the fall, which effects clinical rotations in the summer.
- Fall 2001, one program did not have enough students for a freshman class for the first time in 30 years.
- Program closing in three years after current HIT students finish.

- Established a coding certificate program to satisfy the needs of the community.
- Difficult to meet the needs of the students: those who want to study on-line and those who don't.
- Changed course titles to reflect the content of the course.
- Software used in hospitals for students for learning purposes before starting the clinical experience.
- One program in Indiana is no longer accepting new applicants due to financial reasons and will not offer HIT core courses after May, 2003. Budget of Indiana has cut millions of dollars from education.
- Departure of coding instructor, difficult to refill position due to low salary offered. Person answering survey is left as only full-time faculty member who teaches every class in HIT curriculum except coding. She is unable to teach coding at the moment.
- Students coming straight from high school perform poorly in English composition, basic math and interpersonal skills. As a result, the program has to teach basic math and English in courses.
- Shaky leadership of program until recently. Struggling to maintain accreditation and meeting accreditation requirements. Strong administrative support on the other hand.
- Completion of new health sciences building in December, 2001 with an HIT program. Latest technology computer lab and library/classroom with offices. Increased visibility and morale.
- When University moves into higher educational standards, associate degree programs will be closed.
- Difficulties in hiring qualified faculty
- Biggest challenge is survival. Added certificate programs to attract students
- Lower enrollment due to rising tuition costs
- Working diligently on enrollment, feel they are making good progress
- Not enough time to make changes needed to keep up with technology or to offer online classes.
- One program increased the emphasis on claims management and processing.
- There is not enough space to build a classroom because of increased college enrollment. Higher enrollment programs receive priority for funding and classrooms.
- Low enrollment, problems with recruitment or retention, time limitations, funding, HIT Program Director's role.
- Technical college requires students to have laptop computers, but software used is not compatible with laptops. Therefore library computers have to be used.
- Two new coding certification programs.
- Class time had to be switched to evenings, since more students are working during the day.

- Trouble attracting and keeping students. Some students left for LVN and RN programs, because of the publicity about the nursing shortage and higher salaries.
- Purchasing new equipment fast enough to keep up with changing technology.
- Funding cuts and time demands on faculty prevent program from marketing to and attracting new students.
- Program has been completely improved with respect to course set up and curriculum content.
- The problem facing our program was a decline in the number of students. This has been on-going for the past 10 years. The program was moved 10 years ago and never recovered the move. I moved from the main campus to an inner city location. I have also seen a decline in the quality of students interested in the program.
- Decreased enrollment has caused funding for full-time positions to be frozen which affects program management.
- State budgetary cuts have put small programs in risk of closure.
- Our state is big on vocational technical training. We have recruiting problems competing with freestanding coding classes. The public does not understand the need for support for related classes for coding. People want to hear “six week wonder”.
- Added a pharmacy class to curriculum.
- Little to no money for meetings and travel.
- Increased enrollment, recruitment of new faculty, increased technological tools.
- Budget constraints, faculty changes, class size (small).
- Huge enrollments = HIT plus coding certificate and medical reimbursement. Only 2 fulltime faculty. We finally got the computers we needed, because of AHIMA survey citation. Adequate lab space is a big problem.
- Enrollment has increased as our coding certificate students decide to pursue the Associate’s degree.
- Lack of funding and support from within
- Change in faculty, moved to new facility, new technology.
- Money is tight. Two years ago we were ready to close down the program, because of low enrollment. Enrollment is up high now and we evaluate on a yearly basis.
- I’m trying to give more course credit for work experience and make it easier for other health care professionals (like RNs + LPNs) to waive some of the HIT courses
- Starting a coding certificate program for Fall 2002.
- Changing the program to an evening/Saturday program works best for the working students. However, we do not attract the traditional students in this format
- The Texas Coordinating Board of Higher Education implemented the Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) last year with final changes implemented this year. Courses had to be renamed and renumbered for consistency throughout the state, and

course content was mandated for each course. Implementing these changes was time-consuming but the outcome has been positive. My biggest problem is staying abreast of coordinator responsibilities while teaching a full-load.

- Changes in Texas Higher Education Coordination Boards core curriculum and matching course requirements.
- Administrative mandate to lower credit hours on the vocational side. Accrediting agency recommendation to increase the number of contact hours.
- Lost a faculty member, growth is slow, maintaining stability is hard enough for now.
- Lower enrollment, although comparing numbers to other programs, we are on the high end: 28/year
- Important changes identified in relation to course content and delivery. We continue to update to meet community needs and professional skills.

Question 4: Please detail any HIM workforce-related concerns or issues that you feel have not been adequately addressed in this survey.

- There are many more jobs than students.
- Coding positions require 2 years coding experience, but programs have less and less experienced individuals and not enough graduates to replace them.
- When questions whether topics taught are appropriate and whether or not to add/remove topics from curriculum.
- We are a compliance profession. We do not provide value added services that employers need.
- Too many HIT programs in Pennsylvania. The jobs are concentrated in the bigger cities.
- Educational programs affected by on-line courses offered by organizations other than colleges who offer coding and billing courses.
- Hospitals should have a practicum for students in their coding department so that they can gain experience and become more marketable.
- Lack of respect in community for qualified professionals.
- There is competition with other credentials such as CP, with non-related, non-accredited coding and HIM programs.
- Not too many students per one teacher.
- There are competing programs within the same college.
- Current HIM workers do not work on getting new graduates or credentialed workers.
- Your Survey is really directed at Bachelor-HIA programs not associate HIT. I answered this one on my HIT students, not my HIA-so they would need to complete a Bachelors as an advanced or next degree not a masters.

- One part of graduates passed RHIT exam, the other part are not planning on finishing quickly because they can take the test anytime.
- Survey was comprehensive.
- Potential place that could hire HIM services such as LTC, Home Health are not aware of HIM. RHITs have trouble.
- Placing students, because of training of professionals inside large facilities.
- Even though medical transcription has been eliminated by AHIMA as a required task, the transcription profession claims that the program credentials are appropriate for transcription careers or the supervision of transcription. The demand for generalist HIT positions is constrained to cover all areas of HIM in small rural facilities the person surveyed deals with.
- Incoming students want to know what kind of jobs the graduates are getting and their salaries. Students do not want to go to school for minimum wage jobs.
- Association needs to market career.
- The employment community wants coders that are experienced and many are not willing to give new graduates a chance.
- HIM (HIT/HIA) resources for educational programs need to be addressed as they are in short/limited supply.
- I found having 2 full-time faculty including the Program Director to be a serious problem. Too much to do and not enough time. I often find surveys or reports I need to complete for AHIMA or CAAHEP based on a model that does not fit us. We accept both full- and part-time students-open enrollment-all 4 quarters, and with students moving from full- to part-time to full status-to leave of absence, back to full or part time. We do not have people starting in the fall and working as a cohort full time and grad together. This is our “new” reality- and our community of interest; our chances are increased tremendously.
- I don’t have any concerns or issues.
- The concern that I have with respect to workforce is that we do not attract the “young traditional student” to the HIM field. This may be an effect felt after the present generation moves on. Who will replace us? The younger generation can support the dynamic changes in the field and they need to support the “experienced professionals.”
- My frustration is that HIT graduates are tested at a very advanced level on the management, human resources, quality improvement sections of the RHIT exam, yet the largest percentage of my graduates are employed as coders and do not use those skills, at least not in the early part of their career. In this area coding salaries are very competitive, so our graduates usually wait several years before moving into management supervision.
- Occupational outlook handbook or website lists the technician of HIM to be one of the top jobs from now to 2010, so hard to see why the 4 degrees are needed and the big push. I am looking at adding the 4-year program to the 2-year program.

- We must redefine what we consider HIM sector for employment-enlarge our scope. We need to educate at the higher level-to compete for the higher skilled/better jobs. Have technical and graduate level prepared-better differentiation.