

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGE SURVEY OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: MAJOR FINDINGS**

### **Background**

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) (pronounced “sessie”) was distributed in 93 colleges across the United States in spring 2003. Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) was one of the participating colleges. Some 1,103 Mt. SAC students’ surveys were returned.

CCSSE is a survey that examines different aspects of students’ educational activities (e.g., ask questions in class). These educational activities have been shown to be related to student success. The survey was developed based on the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at Indiana University. The project is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lumina Foundation for Education.

The following excerpt from the main report will outline one of many aspects of the survey useful for accreditation and planning purposes. The main report can be found at <http://research.mtsac.edu/factbook.html> under *Student Engagement Survey*.

### **Major findings**

#### **Engagement**

1. The item that students do the most (63%) is work on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources.
2. Student indicated that 52% of the time or less, they were interacting with the faculty.
3. On average, students are interacting more with their peers than with faculty when it relates to having serious conversations either about the readings or with others with different beliefs or from a different race.
4. The most students have done with other students is to work with them on projects during class (55%).
5. Over half of the students (54%) indicated that they had completed extra work to finish an assignment or meet an instructor’s standards or expectations
6. Thirty-four percent (34%) indicated that they use some type of electronic medium (e.g., list serv) to discuss or complete an assignment and they use email to communicate with faculty

#### **Mental Activities**

7. When Mt. SAC students were asked to chose to what extent their course work emphasized mental activities (i.e., challenging the students), at least 60% of the students felt that they had been challenged by the course work. The highest ranked mental activity done very often or quite a bit was “analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory” (68%).

#### **Quality of Relationships**

8. Students felt that they had a strong, supportive relationship with instructors (82%) and other students (75%). The highest, unsupportive, relationship was noted with administrators (21%).
9. Seventy-five percent of the students indicated that their friends were extremely or somewhat supportive of them attending Mt. SAC.
10. When asked how supportive their immediate family was of them attending Mt. SAC, 79% said they were extremely or somewhat supportive.

## Satisfaction

11. Most students (83%) rated their Mt. SAC education experience as excellent or good. The majority of students, 95%, said they would recommend Mt. SAC to a friend or family member.

## Campus Climate

12. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the students said that Mt. SAC encourages them to spend significant amounts of time studying.
13. Mt. SAC provides students with support they need to succeed at college (73%). Mt. SAC emphasizes using computers in the students' academic work (71%).
14. Only 28% of the students said that Mt. SAC was helping them cope with their non-academic responsibilities. Other areas in need of improvement included providing students with the help they need to thrive socially (32%) and to finance their education (32%).
15. Only 52% find that the climate very much or quite a bit encourages or provides students with the emphasis needed to be successful.

## Time Spent on Task

16. Almost half the students (47%) spend one to five hours a week preparing for class.
17. Those who work off campus, tend to work 31 or more hours per week (36%).
18. Fifty-one percent (51%) are providing care for dependents living with them.

## Knowledge, Skills and Personal Development

19. When students were asked how much their experience at Mt. SAC had influenced them, almost three-quarters (73%) indicated that Mt. SAC had a strong influence on them acquiring a broad general education.
20. Over 60% felt that Mt. SAC had influenced their ability to learn on their own, their ability to think critically and analytically, writing style, speaking style, working effectively with others and their ability to understand themselves.

## Student Services<sup>1</sup>

21. When students were asked to indicate how important certain services were to them at Mt. SAC, they said that the "very important" items were academic advising/planning (62%) and career counseling (57%).
22. Of all the services listed, students are using the computer (69.2%) and skills labs (56.8%) more than the other services. Predictably, fewer students are using child care services (12.2%).
23. Most students are satisfied with the computer (92.1%) and skill labs (81.2%). The highest level of dissatisfaction is with child care (41.4%).

## Goals and Retention Factors

24. Most students (69%) indicated that their primary goal was to transfer to a four-year college.
25. When students were asked to rate the barriers to them withdrawing from class or from this college, the most frequent item chosen was because they would "transfer to a four-year college or university" (66%).

The most salient findings to each department of the College should be celebrated if it is a success and addressed with an intervention process if it is a barrier to success for students. Formative evaluation should be done throughout the next year to determine if the intervention is successful.

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<sup>1</sup> Service feedback is more relevant when obtained directly from the users of the services on-site and when questions are asked from numerous perspectives.

