

CAMPUS CLIMATE

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.

Critical Assessment

As a College, Mt. SAC needs to decide two factors with all results/items in this report:

1. Which of the items are relevant to Mt. SAC and its students?
2. Of those items that are relevant, what are the percentage benchmarks for deciding if the results are acceptable or not. For example, if 60% or more of the students are satisfied with their learning experiences, does that mean that Mt. SAC should be proud of that outcome or should interventions be suggested?

Campus Climate

Students were asked how much the College emphasizes certain aspects of their life at Mt. SAC and beyond (e.g., work on computers). Seventy-six percent of the students said that Mt. SAC encourages them to spend significant amounts of time studying (table 1). Mt. SAC also provides students with support they need to succeed at college (73%) and the College emphasizes using computers in the students’ academic work (71%).

Although students felt Mt. SAC was doing a great job in some others, there were other areas on which they felt the College could improve. The major improvement needed was related to helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (e.g., work, family). 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%).

As noted in Table 1, the last column contains the “campus climate” (Kuh, 2001). These five items give a good example of how the students perceive the climate at Mt. SAC. Only 52% find that the climate very much or quite a bit encourages or provides students with the emphasis needed to be successful.

Survey Question #6	Table 1. Emphasize at Mt. SAC	Very much (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Some (%)	Very Little (%)	very much & quite a bit (%)	Campus Climate
	How much does <u>this college</u> emphasize each of the following?						
a.	Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	30	45	21	3	76	√
b.	Providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college	28	45	23	4	73	√
g.	Using computers in academic work	37	34	22	7	71	
c.	Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	19	31	33	16	51	√
e.	Providing the support you need to thrive socially	9	23	39	29	32	√
f.	Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	14	18	30	38	32	
d.	Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	8	20	36	36	28	√
	Group Average					52%	52%

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.

Reference

Kuh, G.D. (2001). *The National Survey of Student Engagement: Conceptual framework and overview of psychometric properties*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research and Planning. (pp. 1-24 from CCSSE binder results)

