

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

Knowledge, skills and personal development

There are three grouping of questions which related in some way to knowledge, skills and personal development. The first grouping is known as a personal-social context (table 1a). Within this context, students rated Mt. SAC as helping them ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ in them learning effectively on their own (70%). Students did not see much of an influence from the College on their ability to contribute to the welfare of their community (28%).

Table 1a. Personal-Social

To what extent has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT MT. SAC contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Some (%)	Very little (%)	Very Much & Quite a bit (%)
i. Learning effectively on your own	27	42	25	6	70
h. Working effectively with others	22	40	30	8	62
j. Understanding yourself	24	37	27	12	61
k. Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds	22	31	32	15	52
l. Developing a personal code of values and ethics	16	30	33	21	47
m. Contributing to the welfare of your community	8	20	36	36	28
Group Average					53%

In table 1b, practical competence is examined from two perspectives: using information technology and acquiring knowledge. In both cases, student felt that their time at the College had contributed ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’ to their practical competence. Student felt more strongly that the College has assisted them in their use of computing and information technology resources (55%) than in their acquisition of knowledge and skills for employment (48%).

Table 1b. Practical Competence

To what extent has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT MT. SAC contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Some (%)	Very little (%)	Very Much & Quite a bit (%)
g. Using computing and information technology	23	32	30	15	55
b. Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills	20	28	33	19	48
Group Average					51%

When examining the general education components in Table 1c, it is clear that students feel their time at the college has contributed to their general education knowledge. 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. On average, some 68% of the students felt that the College had contributed to their general education knowledge and/or skills either ‘very much’ or ‘quite a bit’.

Table 1c. General education

To what extent has YOUR EXPERIENCE AT MT. SAC contributed to your knowledge, skills and personal development in the following areas?

	Very much (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Some (%)	Very little (%)	Very Much & Quite a bit (%)
a. Acquiring a broad general education	31	42	22	5	73
e. Thinking critically and analytically	25	44	26	4	69
c. Writing clearly and effectively	20	47	27	6	67
d. Speaking clearly and effectively	20	42	29	8	62
Group Average					68%

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.

