



MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

# INSIGHTS

*on the college*

Research and Institutional Effectiveness

December 2003

Barbara McNeice-Stallard

Volume 13, No. 8

\* \* \*

### WHAT'S INSIDE?

Remedial Skills.....	1
Why students come to College.....	1
College of Choice.....	2
Financing Education.....	2
What students want to do.....	2
Normative Comparative Group.....	2
Mt. SAC Specific Questions.....	3
Conclusion.....	3

\* \* \*

Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness (RIE)

Barbara McNeice-Stallard  
*Director*

Ann Marie West  
*Research Analyst*

Odette Richardson  
*Research Assistant*

\* \* \*

For more information, contact the office at:

909.594.5611 x5408 or

Visit our web-site at:

<http://research.mtsac.edu/>

## **FIRST-TIME STUDENTS: COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH PROGRAM**

### **2000, 2001, 2002 COMPARISON**

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) is a national longitudinal study of the American systems of higher education. The survey explores the demographics, attitudes, and opinions of ***first time students*** at colleges. Students' responses reflect their experiences in the last year of high school and their expectations for college.

Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) has participated in this freshmen survey for 19 years since implementation of the survey began, with this year being the sixth consecutive year of participation. The following is a brief summary of the CIRP survey key findings from the survey administration fall semesters 2000, 2001 and 2002:

#### **Remedial Skills**

- ✓ In the year 2002, mathematics (46.9%), writing (25.6%), and English (25.4%) topped the list of areas students feel they needed assistance.
- ✓ Mathematics is the area in which the largest numbers of students need help, and the percentage of students saying they need help in this subject is increasing yearly.

#### **Why do students come to College?**

- ✓ Students come to college to get a better job. Students also want to be able to make more money, get training for a specific career and learn more.
- ✓ By 2002, more than three-quarters of students are also becoming more interested in preparing for graduate or professional school and are using College to help them reach that goal.

## *College of Choice*

- ✓ In every year, 70% or more of the students rank Mt. SAC as their first choice.
- ✓ The top reasons for attending Mt. SAC are: (1) its good academic reputation (2) its low tuition, (3) its offering of special programs, (4) it is close to where they live and (5) its good social reputation.
- ✓ For the majority of respondents, Mt. SAC is 50 miles or less from their permanent home.

## *Financing Education*

- ✓ More than 60% of the students of Mt. SAC say they have 'some' or 'major' concerns about how they can finance their education. It is important to note that concern about the ability to finance education is continually increasing between year 2000 and 2002.

## *What students want to do while at Mt. SAC*

- ✓ Students feel most likely that they would be socializing with someone of another race/ethnic group during their time at Mt. SAC (53.5% in 2002).
- ✓ From fall 2000 to 2002, there is an increasing need for students to get a job to pay for school (51.8% in 2002).
- ✓ From fall 2000 to 2002, there is an increasing trend for students to be more interested in developing close relationships with other students (41.9% in 2002).
- ✓ Transferring to another college before graduating from Mt. SAC is also a trend in which more students are likely to think they would do during their time at Mt. SAC in fall 2002 (35.2%) versus fall 2000 (27.2%).

## *Normative Comparative Group*

- ✓ Mt. SAC students are more likely to live ten miles or less from the institution (34.2%) than students from other public two Colleges across the US (8.5%).
- ✓ Mt. SAC students are less likely to have English as their first language (60.3%) than the normative group (97.5%).
- ✓ Mt. SAC students are more likely to rate themselves as needing assistance in English (22.9%), math (46.8%) and writing (23.7%) than the normative group (11.5%, 27.7, and 10.2% respectively).
- ✓ Mt. SAC students are more likely to have ONLY applied to Mt. SAC for admission (70.9%) than the other public two-year colleges (46.8%).
- ✓ Mt. SAC students are more likely to transfer to another college before graduating (39.0%) when compared to the normative group response of 19.2%.
- ✓ Socializing with someone of another racial/ethnic group was considered more often (55.3%) by the Mt. SAC students than the other group (39.3%).

### **Mt. SAC specific questions**

- ✓ Although a lot of students are unemployed (38.3%), some 35.1% are also working part-time. The full-time employed Mt. SAC incoming students make up 18.6% of the group.
- ✓ The first generation College students in this group represent 41.4% of those who responded to the question.
- ✓ Students who started in fall 2002 say they know very little about Mt. SAC (34.9%). Some 30.3% feel that Mt. SAC is a well-respected College and is better than most community colleges. While this latter percentage is respectable, it is a decrease from around 50% for the fall 2001 group.
- ✓ A high percentage of students (45.0%) have seen information about Mt. SAC from their high school newspaper. The other popular place for seeing information about Mt. SAC is at the College's web site (35.6%) – [www.mtsac.edu](http://www.mtsac.edu) .

### **Conclusion**

***Based on the results, one could say that the average Mt. SAC first-time student attending selected this College because of its good academic reputation, its proximity within ten miles of their home, and its low cost. Students are also likely to be less proficient in English and basic skills.***

Each department within the College should review the report and assess the implications and determine a course of action to celebrate the positive and do interventions for the negatives.