



# ***FIRST-TIME STUDENTS***

***COOPERATIVE INSTITUTIONAL  
RESEARCH PROGRAM (CIRP)***

***2000, 2001, & 2002 COMPARISON***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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) .

***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.

## *INTRODUCTION*

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) is a national longitudinal study of the American systems of higher education. Established in 1966 by the American Council on Education, the CIRP is now the largest continuing empirical study of higher education involving data on some 1,800 institutions and over 10 million students. The survey explores the demographics, attitudes, and opinions of *first time students* at public two-year 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. See the conclusions section for an overall summary of the key findings.

## *WHO PARTICIPATED?*

In the fall semesters of each year, during student orientation, 1,000 surveys were distributed to incoming Mt. San Antonio College students. From the distributed surveys, typically 800+ were returned.

The survey consists of 54 questions. This report provides highlights of selected data and compares the data to the responses made by previous groups as well as the appropriate two-year public college normative group.

Analyses of the data provide a snapshot of the students who started at Mt. SAC. A benefit of the CIRP is its consistency over time. Key components of the College focus on enhancing ones knowledge of new, incoming students and developing plans to meet the needs of our freshmen student. The CIRP report provides us keen insight to our new, freshmen students.

## *TUTORING OR REMDIAL WORK*

Before students started classes at Mt. SAC, they were asked to indicate their level of assistance needed in remedial work (table 1). In the year 2002, mathematics (46.9%), writing (25.6%), and English (25.4%) topped the list of areas students feel they needed assistance. Similar patterns were observed in 2001 and 2000. 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.

**Table 1. Needed Remedial work**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Needed Remedial Work: Year 2000</b>	<b>Needed Remedial Work: Year 2001</b>	<b>Needed Remedial Work: Year 2002</b>
Mathematics	35.1	39.9	46.9
Writing	24.2	22.3	25.6
English	24.7	22.1	25.4
Foreign Language	14.9	15.9	17.2
Science	14.9	15.9	15.5
Reading	14.3	13.5	14.5
Social Studies	12.0	10.8	11.0

## *WHY DO STUDENTS COME TO COLLEGE?*

Students come to college to get a better job (table 2). 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.

**Table 2. Reasons for attending College (very important %)**

<b>Reason for coming to College</b>	<b>Year 2000 (%)</b>	<b>Year 2001 (%)</b>	<b>Year 2002 (%)</b>
To get a better job	81.7	82.0	82.0
To be able to make more money	81.1	79.1	82.3
To get training for a specific career	73.4	75.3	78.3
To learn more about things	81.9	78.2	79.2
To prepare for graduate/professional school	72.5	71.2	77.4

## COLLEGE OF CHOICE

When students complete this survey, they indicate whether Mt. SAC was their first choice for a College. In every year, 70% or more of the students rank Mt. SAC as their first choice (table 3).

**Table 3. College of Choice**

	Year 2000 (%)	Year 2001 (%)	Year 2002 (%)
1 <sup>st</sup> choice	71.3	70.0	74.7
2 <sup>nd</sup> choice	17.9	18.7	18.0
3 <sup>rd</sup> choice	5.2	4.2	3.5
Less than 3 <sup>rd</sup>	5.7	7.0	3.8

The top reason for attending Mt. SAC is its good academic reputation (table 4). Students also attend Mt. SAC because of its low tuition and its offering of special programs. Students' place of residence being close to Mt. SAC is also a factor in their attendance as well as the good social reputation of Mt. SAC.

**Table 4. Why do students attend Mt. SAC?**

Category	Year 2000 (%)	Year 2001 (%)	Year 2002 (%)
Good academic reputation	37.2	40.1	46.8
Low Tuition	35.1	38.2	42.0
Offer special programs	29.0	31.1	37.6
Wanted to live near home	25.0	27.0	30.9
Good social reputation	21.9	22.0	30.5

For the majority of respondents, Mt. SAC is 50 miles or less from their permanent home (table 5). Each incoming students' response patterns for this question is similar for all three years.

**Table 5. Student Transportation patterns**

	Year 2000 (%)	Year 2001 (%)	Year 2002 (%)
5 miles or less	18.2	18.8	17.2
6 to 10 miles	35.4	34.0	35.6
11 to 50 miles	43.9	44.3	44.5

## *CONCERNS ABOUT ABILITY TO FINANCE EDUCATION*

More than 60% of the students of Mt. SAC say they have ‘some’ or ‘major’ concerns about how they can finance their education (table 6). It is important to note that concern about the ability to finance education is continually increasing between year 2000 and 2002.

**Table 6. Concerns about ability to finance their education**

	Year 2000 (%)	Year 2001 (%)	Year 2002 (%)
None	32.7	27.5	25.7
Some	43.1	46.0	46.4
Major	24.2	26.5	27.8

## *WHAT STUDENTS WANT TO DO WHILE AT MT. SAC*

Every year students are asked the likelihood of certain events happening during the course of their studies. Comparing their responses over three years, some interesting trends appear (table 7). 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. During this same time period, there is also a clear 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 are more students were likely to do in 2002 (35.2%) than 2000 (27.2%).

**Table 7. What the students want to do if they get a chance**

	Year 2000 (%)	Year 2001 (%)	Year 2002 (%)
Socialize with someone of another race/ethnic group	51.4	55.8	53.5
Get a job to help pay for school	43.3	47.4	51.8
Get a Bachelor’s degree	48.5	53.4	50.2
Have at least a “B” average	43.7	42.9	42.6
Develop close relationships with other students	35.3	38.3	41.9
Be satisfied with my college	33.0	36.5	36.8
Transfer to another college before graduating	27.2	28.7	35.2
Communicate regularly with my professors	21.0	27.3	26.2
Work full-time while attending school	29.8	22.0	22.2
Seek personal counseling	16.0	20.5	19.4
Participate in student clubs/groups	16.8	17.1	13.4

## *NORMATIVE GROUP COMPARISON*

In 2002, how do the Mt. SAC results compare to that of the first-time full-time<sup>1</sup> normative group of public two-year colleges? The following are areas in which Mt. SAC differed from the normative 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).
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## *MT.SAC SPECIFIC QUESTIONS*

At the end of the survey, students were asked to respond to some questions created by Mt. SAC Student Services. Based on their answers, the following information was compiled for the 2002 results:

- ✓ Students' main reasons for coming to Mt. SAC are because their parents wanted them to go to College (26.4%) or they were encouraged by a teacher/counselor to come to Mt. SAC (25.4%).
- ✓ When students first come to Mt. SAC, many have a general idea of a major and/or career goal but they need help specifying it (38.6%).
- ✓ Some 43.3% of students can speak, read and write English and another second language.
- ✓ Their main form of transportation is their own car (64.2%).
- ✓ They are most concerned about their level of preparation in English and math, their study skills, note-taking and test taking skills (53.6%).

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<sup>1</sup> These full-time first time students are a sub-set of the whole group of first-time students who completed the survey. This group is only available for comparison purposes to the normative group. As such, the percentages noted within this section will differ from that quoted throughout the rest of the report.

- ✓ Most students have their own personal computer at home for completing assignments (72.5%).
- ✓ Few students (14.9%) would be interested in taking a course from home over the internet.
- ✓ 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 2000 say they know very little about Mt. SAC (34.9%). In fall 2002, 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).
- ✓ The majority of the students do have medical insurance (77%).
- ✓ Most students (57.1%) felt that they would likely use the College's employment services to help them find part-time jobs and to help them find a full-time career position when they graduate.

## CONCLUSION

CIRP data provides a profile of a sample of Mt. SAC first-time freshmen students. The profile can be used as the basis for understanding students' demographics and possible needs while at the College.

Throughout the report, responses from the most recent freshmen class were compared to other year's freshmen classes as well as the normative group. ***On numerous occasions, the Mt. SAC freshmen group had more favorable responses than did the normative group.*** Key findings from this report include the following:

### Remedial Skills

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***Based on the results, one could say that the average Mt. SAC first-time, full-time student attending the Fall 2000 term selected this College because of its good academic reputation, traveled 10 miles to attend classes, is concerned about how he/she will finance his/her education, and is 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.