

### Executive Summary

The Office of Institutional Development and Technology conducted the fifth annual survey of students enrolled in online classes during the Spring 2012 semester. Awareness of student perceptions and needs in online classes (hybrid and 100% online) is very important, especially in light of the significant changes in the College's growth in online sections. The number of 100% online sections offered increased from 14 to 167 from Fall 2005 to Fall 2008. During that same time period, the unduplicated student headcount for these sections increased from 436 to 3,942. Due to reduced state funding, the number of 100% online sections offered decreased from 167 in Fall 2008 to 79 in Fall 2010. Subsequently, as the result of the college's enrollment management strategy in response to the overall need for additional sections, the number of 100% online sections has increased from 79 in Fall 2010 to 106 in Fall 2011. The unduplicated headcount for these sections has increased from 2,115 to 2,180. The number of 100% online sections offered in Fall 2011 mirror the number of 100% online sections offered in Fall 2007 (110 sections). To obtain feedback on students' experiences at COC and in an effort to determine whether students' online course and service needs are being met, the Office of Institutional Development and Technology, along with input from the Dean of Educational Technology, Learning Resources, and Distance Learning, designed a survey to assess students' perceptions and needs related to online courses at COC. The following results were observed:

**Demographics.** Of the respondents who indicated their gender, 77 percent indicated their gender to be female and 23 percent indicated male. Respondents indicated their age to be *18 years or younger* (6 percent), between the ages of *19 and 24 years* (49 percent), between the ages of *25 and 30 years* (21 percent), between the ages of *31 and 50 years* (19 percent), and *51 years or older* (5 percent). Just over half of the respondents indicated they were *White* (53 percent), followed by *Hispanic/Latino* (22 percent). Ten percent of respondents indicated that they "decline to state" their race/ethnicity.

**Hours Worked Per Week.** The majority of respondents indicated that they work (78 percent). While the majority of students work, 74 percent of respondents work part-time.

**Educational Goal(s).** Respondents were asked to indicate which educational goal(s) they intend to pursue at COC. Respondents were instructed to mark all that apply. The majority of respondents indicated that they intend to *transfer to a four-year university* (77 percent) or *obtain an associate degree* (56 percent).

### **Awareness and Helpfulness of Online Services**

**Awareness of the COC Website and the Distance Learning Website.** Ninety-five percent of respondents indicated that they are aware of the different types of information provided by the COC website and the Distance Learning website.

**Helpfulness of the Distance Learning Website.** Seventy percent of respondents indicated that the Distance Learning website is "helpful" or "very helpful." Seventeen percent of respondents indicated a "neutral" response regarding the helpfulness of the Distance Learning website.

**Awareness of Online Service Offerings.** Seventy percent or more of respondents are aware of the following online services offered: search for classes, registration, payment of tuition and fees, application, Financial Aid website, account balance, orientation, transcript requests, scheduling counseling appointments, and Library databases/resources.

### **Factors Contributing to Success in Online Classes at College of the Canyons**

The top three aspects of the Distance Learning website that respondents indicated have contributed to their success as an online student are the *orientation letter from the instructor* (65 percent), *Blackboard tutorial* (62 percent), and *scheduling details* (56 percent). Only 10 percent of respondents indicated that *no aspects* of the Distance Learning website have been important to their success as an online student.

**Student Learning Outcomes.** The majority of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are *familiar with the student learning outcomes in their course(s)*, *familiar with the student learning outcomes for their program/major*, and that *the syllabus for their course specifies the course student learning outcomes*.

### **Other Online Course Information / Needs**

**Minimum Hardware/Software Recommendations.** The majority of respondents were *aware* of the minimum hardware/software recommendations prior to registering for their online class(es).

**Number of Online Classes Taken.** Just over one-third of the respondents (35 percent) indicated that they have taken *1-2 classes* that consisted of some online components, 31 percent that have taken *3-4 classes* that consisted of some online components, and 34 percent indicated that they have taken *5 or more classes* that consisted of some online components.

**Experience with Computers.** The majority of respondents (93 percent) indicated that they have *4 or more years* of experience using computers.

**Preferred Operating System.** The majority of respondents (69 percent) indicated that they prefer *Windows/PC*, followed by 29 percent that prefer *Apple/OSX/Mac* and 1 percent that prefer "other" operating systems.

**Adult Reentry Program.** The majority of respondents ages 28 and older\* (66 percent) indicated that they *would* use student support services to help them transition back to school after being away several years. \*The Adult Reentry Program is intended for adults 28 years of age and older. Delimiting the data by eligible age categories of 25 years and older provides a

more accurate depiction of the percentage of respondents that would use the support services offered in the Adult Reentry Program

**Assistive Technology.** Four respondents indicated that they use special technology to assist with a disability. Respondents were asked to indicate what special technology they use and were instructed to mark all that apply. Two respondents indicated that they utilize *screen readers*, two respondents indicated that they utilize speech recognition software, one respondent utilizes *closed captioning*, and one respondent utilizes a *tape recorder*.

### **Satisfaction with COC Online Classes**

Overall, respondents indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with online classes offered at College of the Canyons. The areas receiving the most satisfaction were the *College website* (82 percent) the *stability of the Blackboard course management system* (78 percent), and the *overall quality of online courses at College of the Canyons* (77 percent).

The areas receiving the least satisfaction were the *availability of online courses offered* (50 percent), the *variety of online courses offered* and *Cooperative Work Experience Education* (54 percent, *each*), and the *Adult Reentry Program\** (56 percent). \*The Adult Reentry Program is intended for adults 28 years of age and older. Delimiting the data by eligible age categories of 25 years and older provides a more accurate depiction of satisfaction with the Adult Reentry Program.

As compared with 2011, satisfaction with the following aspects of online courses have increased 5 percent or more: online services through the Library (increased 8 percent in 2012), tutoring assistance through the TLC Lab (increased 7 percent in 2012), and test proctoring services offered through the TLC Lab (increased 6 percent in 2012).

### **Satisfaction with MyCanyons**

The majority of respondents indicated that they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the online registration system, MyCanyons; specifically, the *ease of use* (82 percent), the *availability* (73 percent), and *options available* (69 percent).

### **Textbook Preferences**

**Textbook Purchase Preferences.** Nearly half of the respondents (42 percent) indicated that they prefer to purchase textbooks *online through a source other than the COC Bookstore*, followed by *rent from another source* (15 percent), *purchase online through the COC bookstore* (12 percent), *rent from the COC bookstore* (9 percent), and *download/access online for free* (5 percent).

**Price of Textbooks.** Just over half of the respondents (54 percent) indicated that the price of a textbook *does not* influence their course selection.

### **Student Awareness/Needs**

**Cooperative Work Experience Education (CWEE).** *More than half* of respondents (56 percent) indicated that they are *aware* that they can earn elective units through CWEE.

**Career Services.** *More than two-thirds* of respondents (68 percent) indicated that they are *aware* that Career Services can assist them with exploring careers and with the job search process.

**COC Honors Program.** *More than half* of respondents (52 percent) indicated that they are *aware* of the COC Honors Program. A significant percentage of respondents indicated a “neutral” response (25 percent).

**UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP).** Forty percent of respondents indicated that they are *aware* of the UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP). A significant percentage of respondents indicated a “neutral” response (31 percent).

### **Admissions and Records**

**A&R Services.** The majority of respondents indicated that they would like to have the following services provided by A&R:

- Deadline dates for classes on My Canyons (98 percent)
- Verification of current enrollment on MyCanyons (96 percent)
- Send transcripts electronically to other institutions (95 percent)
- View transcripts received from other colleges on MyCanyons (92 percent)
- Submit forms or petitions online (91 percent)
- Live Chat with an A&R staff member (85 percent)
- Access tutorials on how to use MyCanyons (78 percent)
- Provide one-on-one or workshops to learn how to complete A&R processes online (65 percent)

The majority of respondents indicated that they would prefer to process various services offered by A&R *online*; specifically *more than ninety* percent of respondents indicated that they would prefer to process the following services online:

- View grades
- View/print class schedule
- View/receive registration dates
- View waitlist status
- Change username or password
- Register for a class
- Drop a class
- Change contact information
- View their registration holds
- Find out their student ID number
- Request an unofficial transcript
- Receive an enrollment verification
- “How to” tutorials
- Apply to the College

**Transcript Options.** Respondents indicated that they would like to have the following services available for their College of the Canyons transcript:

- Ability to send their transcript electronically to other institutions or third parties (86 percent)
- Ability to pick up their transcript the day they order it (80 percent)
- Ability to pick up their transcript from the Canyon Country campus (61 percent)
- Ability to use FedEx overnight delivery (51 percent)

**Registration Process – Proposed Changes.** The majority of respondents agreed that the following proposed changes should be implemented to the registration process:

- Students in good standing should get priority over those on probation or dismissal status (82 percent)
- Students who are graduating this term should register first (77 percent)
- First time students should register after continuing students (76 percent)

Less than half of the respondents agreed that the following proposed changes should be implemented to the registration process:

- First time students should register before returning students (15 percent)
- Students in the Honors Program should have priority over all other students (26 percent)
- Students with over 100 units should register last (30 percent)
- Students with higher GPA’s should have priority over those with lower GPA’s (36 percent)
- All college units should be used in calculating total units for registration priority (45 percent)

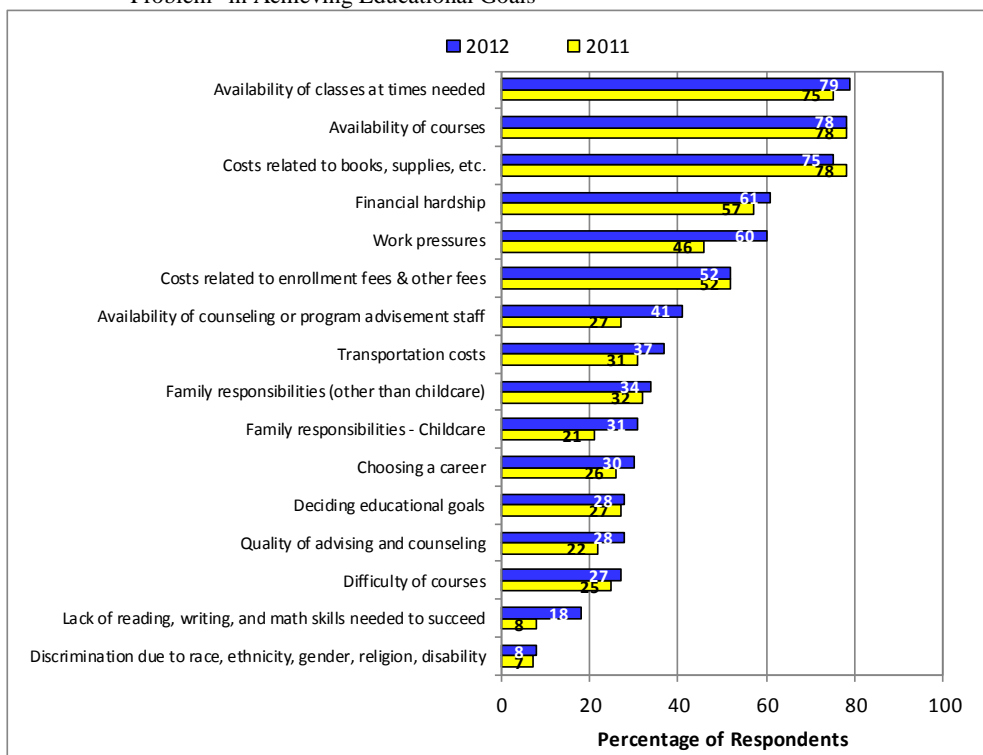
**Barriers to College**

As illustrated in Figure 1, *more than half* of respondents indicated the following as barriers to achieving their educational goals: availability of classes at times needed, availability of courses, costs related to books, supplies, etc., financial hardship, work pressures, and costs related to enrollment fees & other fees.

As compared to 2011 there was a significant increase (more than 5 percent) in the percentage of respondents who indicated that the following have become barriers to achieving their educational goals:

- Work pressures (14 percent increase),
- Availability of counseling or program advisement staff (14 percent increase),
- Family responsibilities – Childcare (10 percent increase),
- Lack of reading, writing, and math skills needed to succeed (10 percent increase),
- Transportation costs (6 percent increase), and
- Quality of advising and counseling (6 percent increase).

Figure 1. Problems or Barriers that Respondents Indicated are a “Major Problem” or “Somewhat a Problem” in Achieving Educational Goals



Note: Excludes respondents who indicated N/A

**Placement Test Center**

**Testing Center Webpage.** Twelve percent of respondents indicated that they have visited the testing center webpage. Respondents who indicated that they had visited the testing center webpage were asked what information they were looking for. Respondents indicated that they were primarily looking for the *hours/days the Placement Center is open* (44 percent), *contact information for the Placement Center* (41 percent), and for *help in preparing to take the placement test* (37 percent).

**Assessment Center Services.** The majority of respondents indicated that they would sign up for the free services of a *program advisor* to help them figure out what classes to take or to discuss different major choices and *utilize available computers* to study the online preparation materials or complete the online orientation.

### Assessment Test - Time Preferences.

The majority of respondents indicated that it was the most convenient time for them to take the assessment on the following days and times:

- Monday - Thursday before noon (24 percent),
- Saturday between 9 a.m. and noon (24 percent),
- Monday-Thursday between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. (17 percent),
- Monday-Thursday between noon and 5 p.m. (16 percent),
- Friday morning before noon (11 percent), and
- Friday between noon and 3 p.m. (9 percent).

**Fee Increase.** More than half of the respondents indicated that a fee increase from \$36 per unit to \$46 per unit would be a barrier to their education to a “very great” or “great” extent (53 percent), followed by “somewhat” of an extent (26 percent), and a “small” or “very small” extent (21 percent).

### **Dianne G. Van Hook University Center**

Awareness. The majority of respondents (78 percent) indicated that they *are aware* of the University Center.

Pursuit of an Advanced Degree through the University Center. Fifty-two percent of respondents indicated that they are interested in pursuing an advanced degree (e.g., Bachelor’s, Master’s, etc.) in the University Center. Respondents indicating that they were interested in pursuing an advanced degree were asked to indicate the program or major they are interested in pursuing. The most commonly identified areas of interest were in Nursing, Business/Marketing, and Psychology.

### **Reasons for Attending COC, Reasons for Taking Online Classes, Communication with Students, and Mobile Applications**

Due to a programming error, these questions had a sample size less than ten. Please refer to Appendix B for the responses to the questions regarding *reasons for attending COC, reasons for taking online classes, communication with students, and mobile applications.*

### **Recommendations**

Upon review of the results the following recommendations should be taken into consideration. Specifically, consideration should be given to suggestions and comments provided by respondents.

- Explore ways to improve satisfaction with the availability of online courses offered and the variety of online courses offered as the budget permits.
- Explore ways to increase instructor responsiveness to online students in a timely manner.
- Explore ways to improve awareness with online services that showed a low level of awareness, specifically student technical support, program evaluation, and counseling tutorials.
- Explore ways to increase awareness of the UCLA Transfer Alliance Program (TAP).
- Explore ways to remove respondents’ top three barriers to college, especially related to the availability of courses, costs related to books, supplies, etc., and availability of classes at times needed.
- The Admissions & Records office should explore the ability for students to process various services online; specifically view grades, view waitlist status, registration dates, class schedule, change username/password, receive an enrollment verification, change contact information, register for a class, and view registration holds.
- The Admissions & Records office should explore ways to provide additional options for students regarding transcripts; specifically the ability to send transcripts electronically and the ability to pick up transcripts the day they are ordered.
- Consideration of student opinions on the proposed changes to the registration process should be made when planning changes to the current process. For example, 75 percent or more of respondents agreed with the following proposed changes:
  - Students in good standing should get priority over those on probation or dismissal status,
  - Students who are graduating this term should register first, and
  - First time students should register after continuing students.

Proposed changes not supported by the majority of respondents included:

- First time students should register before returning students,
- Students in the Honors Program should have priority over all other students,
- Students with over 100 units should register last,
- Students with higher GPA’s should have priority over those with lower GPA’s, or
- All college units should be used in calculating total units for registration priority.
- The Matriculation office should explore ways to expand the services of the Assessment Center; specifically how program advisement can be included in the available services offered and providing access to computers for online test preparation and online orientation.
- Consider adding programs of interest that are not currently offered in the University Center.