

7th Annual Student Survey – Online Classes: Fall 2014

Executive Summary

The Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted the seventh annual survey of students enrolled in online classes during the Fall 2014 semester. Understanding of student perceptions and needs in online classes (hybrid and 100% online) is very important, especially in light of the growth in online sections. The number of 100% online sections offered increased from 14 to 152 from Fall 2005 to Fall 2014. During that same time period, the unduplicated student headcount for these sections increased from 348 to 3,708. 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 this survey. Out of the possible 3,708 online students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 479 students (13 percent response rate). The following results were observed:

Awareness and Helpfulness of Online Services

Awareness of the COC Website and the Distance Learning Website. Ninety-three 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. Sixty-three percent of respondents indicated that the Distance Learning website is "helpful" or "very helpful". Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated a "neutral" response regarding the helpfulness of the Distance Learning website.

Awareness of Online Service Offerings. The majority of respondents are aware of the following online services offered: search for classes (97 percent), registration (96 percent), payment of tuition and fees (88 percent), orientation (76 percent), application (72 percent), Financial Aid website (70 percent), library databases/resources (67 percent), and transcript requests (66 percent). As compared to Fall 2013, awareness of the following online services have decreased more than 5 percentage points in Fall 2014: counseling tutorials (decreased 15 percentage points in 2014), student technical support and account balance (decreased 10 percentage points in 2014, each), Financial Aid website (decreased 9 percentage points in 2014), and transcript requests (decreased 7 percentage points in 2014).

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 (61 percent), scheduling details (50 percent), and Blackboard tutorial (49 percent). Only 13 percent of respondents indicated that no aspects of the Distance Learning website have been important to their success as an online student.

Reasons for Attending College of the Canyons

The top four reasons that respondents indicated for attending College of the Canyons were location (72 percent), cost (67 percent), transferability of courses to four-year colleges/universities (60 percent), and availability of needed classes (55 percent).

Reasons for Taking Online Classes

The top three reasons that respondents indicated for taking online classes were the convenient schedule (80 percent), unable to attend other "face-to-face" sections of the same classes (61 percent), and comfort with technology (56 percent).

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 (85 percent), overall quality of online courses at College of the Canyons (84 percent), and the stability of the Blackboard course management system (83 percent).

As compared with Fall 2013, satisfaction with the following aspects of online courses have increased more than 5 percentage points in Fall 2014: computer and software training (increased 11 percentage points in 2014), test proctoring services through The Learning Center (increased 10 percentage points in 2014), tutoring assistance through The Learning Center (increased 9 percentage points in 2014), and technical support offered through The Learning Center (increased 8 percentage points in 2014).

Campus Life

The majority of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" the College provides a positive learning environment for all students (85 percent), College staff are helpful in answering questions about the College (79 percent), College faculty treat all students fairly and respectfully (78 percent), the College has clearly defined general education requirements for all of its academic and vocational degree programs (75 percent), faculty on the campus incorporate values, ethics, civic responsibility, and diverse perspectives into their courses (73 percent), and adequate academic advisement for courses, programs, and transfer to universities is provided (72 percent). A relatively smaller percentage of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that they are aware what role students play in governance of the College (48 percent) and that they have the opportunity to participate in the College's planning processes, either directly or through representatives (45 percent).

Communication with Students Regarding Online Classes

Prior to registering for an online class, respondents indicated the top sources of information for online classes at COC were the College's website (69 percent) and the schedule of classes (58 percent). After registering for an online class, respondents indicated that the top sources of information for online courses were the College's website (61 percent), the instructor (43 percent), and the College's Distance Learning website (40 percent).

Use of Mobile Devices to Access College Information

Accessing the COC website. Eight-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they have a smart phone that they use to access the web. Of those that indicated that they have a smart phone that they use to access the web, 87 percent indicated that they have accessed the COC website from their mobile device. More than one-third of the respondents indicated that they access the COC website at least once per week (39 percent), followed by at least once a month (35 percent) and at least once a day (26 percent).

Accessing a COC Mobile Webpage. Two-thirds of the respondents (66 percent) indicated that they are "likely" or "very likely" to access a COC mobile webpage from their mobile device, while 26 percent of respondents are "somewhat likely" and 8 percent are "not likely at all". The top three features that respondents indicated that they would like to see on a COC mobile webpage are the schedule of classes (83 percent), campus map (65 percent), and counseling information (59 percent).

Blackboard Access. Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated that they have accessed Blackboard from a mobile device.

Use of Learning Resources

Use of the Library - In Person. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they *sometimes* access the library in person (45 percent), followed by *never* (34 percent), and often and very often (10 percent, each).

Use of the Library - Online. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they sometimes access the library online (46 percent), followed by never (36 percent), often (12 percent), and very often (5 percent).

Use of Library Services. The area that respondents indicated that they access most in the Library are online databases (70 percent).

Library Staff Assistance. About one-quarter of the respondents have asked the library staff for assistance (26 percent). The majority of respondents that have asked the library staff for assistance are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the assistance they have received from the library staff (84 percent).

Library Resources. Eleven percent of the respondents indicated that there were resources that they were unable to locate in the library that were needed for their classes.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)/Learning Experiences. The majority of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" with the following statements regarding student learning outcomes and learning experiences:

- The syllabus for this course contains information on student academic honesty/plagiarism and the consequences for dishonesty. (93 percent)
- The syllabus for this course specifies the course student learning outcomes. (92 percent)
- I have a clear understanding of how I am graded in this course. (90 percent)
- I am familiar with the student learning outcomes in my course(s). (88 percent)
- I am familiar with the student learning outcomes for my program/major. (83 percent)

Emphasis on General Aspects of Learning. The majority of respondents indicated that the College "often" or "very often" emphasizes the following aspects of learning:

- Coursework and assignments challenged the respondent to do their best. (89 percent)
- Encouraged to spend significant time studying and preparing for class. (84 percent)
- Provided with the support they need to succeed at COC. (81 percent)
- Encouraged to read or research beyond the materials covered in their classes. (75 percent)

Less than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that they are "often" or "very often" encouraged to interact with students from different backgrounds (62 percent).

Student Awareness/Needs

Career Services. The majority of respondents (70 percent) indicated that they are aware that Career Services can assist them with exploring careers and with the job search process. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that they would like additional information about events such as job fairs, recruitments, and career-related workshops via email.

Service-Learning. The majority of respondents (67 percent) indicated that getting involved in their community through service-learning or volunteering is important to them.

EOPS/CARE. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that they are not aware of the services provided by the Extended Opportunities, Programs and Services program.

Canyons Peer Advisor (CPA). The majority of respondents (88 percent) indicated that they have not visited a Canyons Peer Advisor at one of the carts on campus. The majority of respondents (83 percent) that have visited a CPA were satisfied with the assistance they received from the CPAs.

Weekend College/Learning Communities. More than half of the respondents (52 percent) indicated that they are interested in taking classes on the weekend as part of Weekend College. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated that they are interested in taking classes as part of a learning community.

Education Plan. The majority of respondents (74 percent) indicated that they have a two-year education plan that they are using to plan their classes. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (60 percent) indicated that they have seen a counselor to develop their education plan.

Community Services/Volunteer Service. More than half of the respondents (55 percent) indicated that they have volunteered or completed any voluntary community service for no pay in the past year. The majority of respondents (68 percent) that have volunteered or provided community service for no pay in the past year indicated that they contribute 1-50 hours per year.

Earned College Credit. More than half of the respondents (52 percent) indicated that it would benefit them if they could earn college credit by demonstrating what they have learned in on-the-job training, followed independent learning (45 percent), internships (44 percent), and military experience (5 percent). Twenty-two percent of the respondents indicated that they would not benefit from this option.

Other Online Course Information / Needs

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

Number of Online Classes Taken. One-third of the respondents (33 percent) indicated that they have taken 1-2 classes that consisted of some online components, 35 percent that have taken 3-4 classes that consisted of some online components, and 32 percent indicated that they have taken 5 or more classes that consisted of some online components.

Assistive Technology. Seven respondents indicated that they use special technology to assist with a disability. Respondents were asked to indicate what special technology they use. Three respondents indicated that they utilize screen readers, three respondents utilize closed captioning, and one respondent utilizes Dragon Speech to text software.

College Policies and Procedures

The top three ways that respondents indicated that they learn about the College's policies and procedures through the COC website (62 percent) and instructors/counselors and emails from the College (47 percent, each).

Academic Programs and Services. Respondents were asked if there were any additional academic programs that they would like to see the College offer. Respondents indicated 47 programs, specifically Medical Assistant/Billing (7 respondents), Animal Science (5 respondents), Pre-Law (3 respondents), Dental Hygiene (2 respondents), Health Administration (2 respondents), Music/Music Management (2 respondents), Pre-Med (2 respondents), Public Relations (2 respondents), Radiology (2 respondents), Registered Nursing (2 respondents), and Web Design/Development (2 respondents).

Student Health Wellness Center

Respondents indicated that they are aware that the College has a Student Health Wellness Center (85 percent). Relatively fewer respondents are aware of the following services provided by the Student Health Wellness Center:

- The Health Center offers health education outreach (69 percent),
- The Health Center provides nutritional counseling (60 percent),
- The Health Center provides 6 free personal counseling sessions each semester (58 percent), and
- The Health Center offers peer-to-peer counseling (51 percent).

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the Health Center (70 percent) and the services provided by the Health Center are offered at times that are convenient for their schedule (68 percent).

Performing Arts Center (PAC). About one-quarter of the respondents have attended a performance in the Performing Arts Center (28 percent). The majority of respondents that have attended a performance have attended a COC theatre, music, or dance department performance (83 percent). Respondents that have not attended a performance indicated that they don't have the time (48 percent) or were not interested (47 percent).

International Education. Nearly half of the respondents (45 percent) indicated that they are interested in study abroad opportunities. The countries that respondents indicated they are most interested in visiting as part of the study abroad program are Italy, France, Spain, Australia, Germany, and Ireland.

Communication

Communication about activities/events on campus. The majority of respondents prefer to receive communication about activities or events occurring on campus by email (90 percent), followed by social networking sites (25 percent), flyers on campus (24 percent), and postal mail (17 percent).

Social media. The majority of respondents indicated that they use Facebook (71 percent), Instagram (59 percent), and YouTube (54 percent). Half of the respondents are aware that the College has a Facebook page (50 percent), while about one-quarter are aware that they College has Twitter (22 percent), Instagram (20 percent), and YouTube (19 percent). About one-quarter of the respondents use the College's Facebook page (27 percent), followed by Instagram (13 percent), YouTube (12 percent), and Twitter (19 percent).

Local media. The two local media outlets that respondents use the most are the Magazine of Santa Clarita (41 percent) and The Signal – online (36 percent).

Internet Usage. About one-third of the respondents (34 percent) use their personal computers 3-5 hours per day. About one-third of respondents use their tablets less than one hour per day and 1-2 hours per day (35 percent and 30 percent, respectively). Nearly one-third of respondents use their mobile devices more than 9 hours per day. The majority of respondents spend more than 3 hours online per day.

College Advertisements. More than one-third of the respondents have seen College advertisements on Facebook (39 percent), followed by billboards (30 percent), bridge banners (20 percent), mobile apps (19 percent), movie theaters (13 percent), and ad pop-ups while surfing the internet (13 percent).

Radio. The top five stations that respondents listen to are Pandora (62 percent), KISS (40 percent), Power 106 and Spotify (26 percent, each), and KROQ 106.7 (25 percent).

Television. About two-thirds of the respondents watch TV at home (65 percent) and the majority indicated that they watch TV less than three hours per day (74 percent). Respondents utilize the following TV providers: Time Warner cable (29 percent), DirecTV (23 percent), U-Verse (22 percent), and Dish Network (8 percent).

Demographics. Of the respondents who indicated their sex, 72 percent indicated their sex to be female and 28 percent indicated male. Respondents indicated their age to be 18 years or younger (12 percent), between the ages of 19 and 24 years (44 percent), between the ages of 25 and 30 years (13 percent), between the ages of 31 and 50 years (25 percent), and 51 years or older (6 percent). More than one-third the respondents indicated they were White (43 percent) and about one-quarter indicated Hispanic/Latino (28 percent). Seven percent of respondents indicated that they “decline to state” their race/ethnicity.

Hours Worked Per Week. The majority of respondents indicated that they work (72 percent). While the majority of respondents work, the majority of respondents work part-time (68 percent).

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 (71 percent), followed by obtain an associate degree (65 percent), develop job skills, including obtaining a certificate (28 percent), enroll in classes for personal development (10 percent), and develop job skills, without obtaining a certificate (4 percent). Respondents indicating that they take classes for personal development alone were significantly lower; specifically less than one percent of respondents take classes for personal development alone.

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 awareness with online services that showed a low level of awareness, specifically account balance, degree and enrollment verification, student technical support, and counseling tutorials.
- Consider ways to increase student awareness of the benefits students receive if they pay the Student Support Fee.
- Explore ways to increase student awareness of the role students have in governance at the College.
- Consider ways to promote student participation in College planning processes.
- Consider student use of mobile devices when developing Marketing/Advertising (e.g. development of apps) and in instructional delivery.
- Explore ways to increase awareness of the services provided by the Student Health and Wellness Center, specifically nutritional counseling, free personal counseling sessions, and peer-to-peer clubs.
- Explore ways to increase awareness and usage of the social media platform that the College utilizes, specifically Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.
- Consider ways to promote the use of the Canyons Peer Advisors.