RISC

Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT
RISC STUDENT SURVEY FALL 2020
MONROE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

RISC SURVEY OVERVIEW 01

SURVEY DESCRIPTION

The Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges (RISC) Survey provides detailed, actionable data about student success, using the latest advances in survey research and technology. Survey results pinpoint where students are experiencing obstacles and identify campus offices that excel in helping students succeed in college. The survey has three main sections.

The survey first asks students about facing challenges during the current semester in five broad areas: academic support services, campus environment, finances and financial aid, succeeding in their courses, and work and personal issues. Each section has multiple challenges, with over 80 unique challenges to student success across the five areas, such as errors with financial aid paperwork, not being told to take a course necessary for their degree, or difficulty using course technology in online classes.

Next, the survey asks students about their interactions with campus offices. Our research indicates that students want office staff who are accessible, concerned about helping them, and able to effectively solve their problem. Students describe five campus offices on these three dimensions; MCCC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to MCCC, so that students saw office names they recognized.

Finally, students provide their overall perceptions of the college. Students are asked if they would recommend the college to a friend, whether the college is a good value, and how well the college is helping them meet their enrollment goals, such as improving job and career opportunities or preparing for a four-year degree.

Students are also given two open-response questions, where they could write out an answer: what is MCCC's greatest strength, and if MCCC could change one thing to increase student success, what should it change? See your college contact for the written responses to these two questions.

The survey concludes with a section asking about student demographic information.

Interactive and printable versions of the survey can be found at:

https://www.risc.college/two-year-survey

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was administered in Fall 2020 to 2,629 MCCC students. There were 356 responses used in this report, for a 13.5% response rate. Median time MCCC students spent taking the survey was 8.4 minutes.

The table below provides some background information about your college's benchmark sample. Twenty-four other community colleges participating in the survey during the past two years are used for the benchmark numbers in this report; each college is weighted equally when calculating benchmarks. Your benchmark sample has a total of 14,332 respondents.

Table 1.1   Community colleges in the benchmark sample

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	20%	City	20%	Under 1,000	10%
Mixed	40%	Suburb	35%	1,000-4,999	40%
High Transfer	30%	Town	25%	5,000-9,999	30%
Other	10%	Rural	20%	10,000-19,999	20%
				20,000 and above	0%

CHALLENGES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

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MAIN CHALLENGE AREAS

The RISC survey contains over 80 unique challenges that students face during college, and students can indicate they faced more than one challenge. The specific challenges are divided into five main areas:

- ▶ Academic support services
- ▶ Campus environment
- ▶ Finances and financial aid
- ▶ Success in courses
- ▶ Work and personal

The survey begins by asking students if they faced challenges in each of these these areas, and then asks about more specific challenges, depending on how students initially respond. The challenge order is randomly assigned for each respondent.

For example, students are asked:

Think about your finances and financial aid. Have you had any challenges in the following areas?		
	Yes	No
Paying college and living expenses	○	○
Working with financial aid office	○	○
Military and employer tuition benefits	○	○

Students choosing "yes" to one or more of these response options are coded as having a challenge with finances and financial aid.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the main challenges students faced at MCCC in Fall 2020 in the five main areas. *Success in courses* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 67% reporting one or more challenges in this area.

A negative number in the *Diff.* column indicates a lower proportion of students at your institution reported challenges in an area, compared to the benchmarking group. These are presented graphically with green bars. Positive numbers indicate a greater proportion of your students are reporting challenges, and are presented with red bars.

Table 2.1   Major challenges to student success

	MCCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	*n*	
Success in courses	67	60	**+7**	238	
Work and personal issues	59	58	+1	210	
Finances and financial aid	31	39	**−8**	112	
Academic support services	23	33	**−10**	83	
Campus environment	13	20	**−7**	47	

Notes

Green indicates that MCCC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates MCCC has a higher proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, $p < .05$). Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges across the five topic areas. *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area at your college; overall sample n=356.

Tables 2.2 to 2.6 provide more detail about student challenges. For example, if a student answered "yes" to "Paying college and living expenses", they were prompted with a follow-up question:

> **Where did you have issues paying expenses? Please check all that apply.**
>
> ☐ Tuition and fees
> ☐ Paying college and living expenses
> ☐ Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)
> ☐ Childcare
> ☐ None of the above

To help uncover where your students are facing challenges, we rank the major categories of challenges in descending order. We then rank the more specific challenges within each major category in descending order.

For example, 67% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Success in courses*. The most common subcategory was *Online classes*, with 54% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Online classes* subcategory was *Difficulty learning the material on my own*, with 37% of your students mentioning this as a challenge to their success. All percentages in these tables are calculated as the percentage of the entire respondent sample.

Table 2.2   Challenges with success in courses

	MCCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Success in courses	67	60	+7	238
Online classes	54	45	+9	192
Difficulty learning the material on my own	37	31	+6	131
Lack of interaction with faculty	34	23	+11	122
Difficulty keeping up because of no regular class times	26	21	+5	94
Lack of interaction with other students	26	19	+7	93
Difficulty using course technology	14	14	+0	51
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	5	4	+1	17
None of the above	3	4	−1	12
Faculty	22	17	+5	78
Did not teach well	17	11	+6	59
Not concerned about my academic success	13	7	+6	47
Feedback on assignments not helpful	12	8	+4	42
Not helpful outside of class	9	6	+3	33
Not responsive to email	7	7	+0	26
Took too long to grade assignments	7	6	+1	26
Not available to meet in person	4	2	+2	14
None of the above	2	2	+0	6
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	19	21	−2	69
Courses were too hard	7	7	+0	25
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	4	4	+0	16
Required to take too many	3	4	−1	12
Courses were too easy	1	1	+0	2
None of the above	8	10	−2	30
Doing college-level work	18	18	+0	63
Poor planning and time management skills	11	9	+2	38
Not motivated to study	8	9	−1	29
Poor study skills	8	8	+0	29
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	4	6	−2	16
Required level of math was difficult	4	5	−1	15
Took too many classes	1	3	−2	4
Skipped too many classes	0	1	−1	1
None of the above	3	3	+0	9

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.3   Challenges with work and personal life

	MCCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Work and personal issues	59	58	+1	210
Work	42	38	+4	149
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	26	22	+4	94
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	18	16	+2	64
Work schedule conflicts with classes	13	13	+0	48
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	13	12	+1	47
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	11	10	+1	39
None of the above	6	6	+0	20
Family	39	37	+2	139
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	29	26	+3	105
Difficulty dealing with health of family	15	14	+1	55
Difficulty finding childcare	3	5	−2	12
Family does not support me going to college	3	3	+0	12
None of the above	4	5	−1	16
Health and disability issues	26	20	+6	93
Emotional/mental health issue	19	13	+6	69
Physical health issue	12	10	+2	42
Faculty did not provide necessary accomodations	2	1	+1	6
Pregnancy and childbirth	1	1	+0	4
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	0	+1	2
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	0	0	+0	1
None of the above	3	2	+1	10
Transportation to campus	5	9	−4	19
Car or carpool not reliable	3	4	−1	10
Public transportation system not reliable	1	2	−1	4
Travel to campus takes a long time	1	3	−2	4
Campus transportation system not reliable	0	1	−1	0
None of the above	1	2	−1	5

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.4   Challenges with finances and financial aid

	MCCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Finances and financial aid	31	39	−8	112
Paying college and living expenses	29	32	−3	102
Books, software, and other supplies	19	20	−1	67
Tuition and fees	19	19	+0	67
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	17	21	−4	62
Childcare	4	4	+0	15
None of the above	1	1	+0	2
Working with financial aid office	7	14	−7	24
Process was unclear	3	7	−4	10
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	2	7	−5	8
Unable to answer questions	2	5	−3	8
Errors processing financial aid	2	6	−4	7
Delays in getting money	1	5	−4	4
Gave me wrong information	1	3	−2	2
None of the above	2	2	+0	7
Military and employer tuition benefits	1	2	−1	5
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	3
Experienced delays receiving benefits	1	1	+0	3
Received wrong information about benefits	0	0	+0	0
None of the above	0	0	+0	1

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.5   Challenges with academic support services

	MCCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Academic support services	23	33	−10	83
Registering for courses	13	15	−2	45
Course not offered at times I needed	4	5	−1	14
Course was offered but full	4	5	−1	14
Had a registration hold	3	4	−1	10
Course not offered this semester	2	4	−2	8
None of the above	5	6	−1	18
Academic advising	10	14	−4	36
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	6	9	−3	21
Not told to take necessary course	3	4	−1	11
Course/program materials were incorrect	2	2	+0	8
Told to take unnecessary course	2	3	−1	8
None of the above	3	3	+0	9
Tutoring	6	8	−2	23
Tutors not available when I need assistance	3	3	+0	12
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	3	2	+1	9
Tutoring hours not convenient	1	3	−2	4
Tutoring not helpful	1	2	−1	4
None of the above	1	2	−1	5
Computer and science labs	5	7	−2	17
Problems using computers and equipment	1	3	−2	5
Lab hours not convenient	1	2	−1	4
Lab busy when needed	1	1	+0	2
None of the above	2	3	−1	8
Library	3	5	−2	12
Resources I needed not available online	2	2	+0	6
Hours not convenient	1	2	−1	2
Staff not helpful	1	1	+0	2
Study spaces not available when needed	0	1	−1	1
None of the above	1	2	−1	3

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.6 Challenges with the campus environment

	MCCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Campus environment	13	20	−7	47
Interactions with other students	9	9	+0	32
Did not know many other students	6	6	+0	22
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	1	0	+1	3
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	1	0	+1	2
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	0	1	−1	0
None of the above	3	3	+0	10
Parking	5	9	−4	19
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	4	8	−4	16
Difficulty getting parking pass	0	1	−1	0
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	0	1	−1	0
None of the above	1	1	+0	3
Safety and crime	1	2	−1	4
Campus not safe	1	1	+0	2
Parking lots not safe	0	1	−1	0
Was a victim of a crime	0	0	+0	0
None of the above	1	1	+0	2

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

STUDENT-OFFICE INTERACTIONS **03**

Table 3.1 shows the administrative support units your college chose for the RISC Survey. Unit names appeared on the survey exactly as they are listed in this report. Bookstore was the most commonly used office, with 70% reporting using the office during the Fall 2020 semester, followed by Admissions Office (41%) and Financial Aid Office (37%).

Table 3.1   Office usage

	MCCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	*n*
Bookstore	70	86	**−16**	
Admissions Office	41	34	+7	
Financial Aid Office	37	44	−7	
Learning Assistance Lab	20			
Library	15	22	−7	

If students indicated they interacted with an office during the semester, they were asked three questions about their interactions with staff:

How available were [unit name] staff when you interacted with them?

○ Very available
○ Somewhat available
○ Somewhat unavailable
○ Very unavailable

How concerned were [unit name] staff about addressing your issue?

○ Very concerned
○ Somewhat concerned
○ Somewhat unconcerned
○ Very unconcerned

How effective were [unit name] staff when addressing your issue?

○ Very effective
○ Somewhat effective
○ Somewhat ineffective
○ Very ineffective

Results are presented in Table 3.2, which shows the percentage of respondents choosing the top category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Because each college chose the administrative offices for this set of questions, the table only presents benchmarks comparisons for an administrative office when at least 5 other colleges surveyed students about the same type of office.

Table 3.2   Student-administration interactions

|	MCCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	n	
Admissions Office					
Available	67	62	+5	144	
Concerned	56	53	+3	144	
Effective	68	66	+2	142	
Bookstore					
Available	79	76	+3	248	
Concerned	68	58	**+10**	245	
Effective	82	74	**+8**	244	
Financial Aid Office					
Available	68	56	**+12**	132	
Concerned	60	47	**+13**	132	
Effective	71	58	**+13**	132	
Learning Assistance Lab					
Available	67			70	
Concerned	70			69	
Effective	59			68	
Library					
Available	62	75	**−13**	52	
Concerned	54	64	−10	50	
Effective	66	76	−10	50	

Notes

Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that MCCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates MCCC has a lower proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, $p < .05$). n in table row is the total number of students at your college rating an office on that dimension; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage.

STUDENT VIEWS OF THE INSTITUTION

04

Besides challenges and office interactions, students were asked several questions about MCCC overall.

The first question, "Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend MCCC to a friend?", is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with MCCC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 92% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to to recommend MCCC. The MCCC distribution of responses is not statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.1   Would student recommend MCCC to a friend?
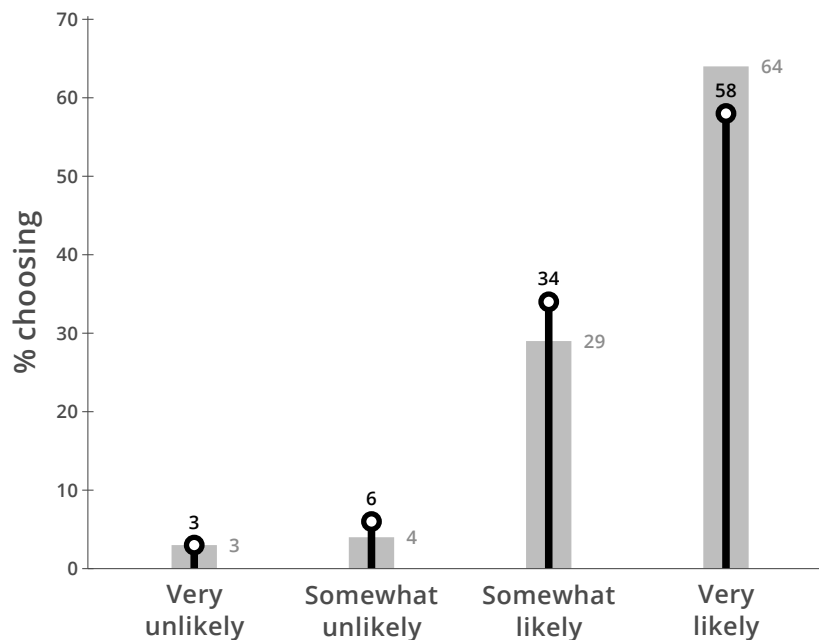
Notes
MCCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 6.2, p < .11; n = 353$.

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at MCCC (see Figure 4.2). 93% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The MCCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.2   Overall value of education?
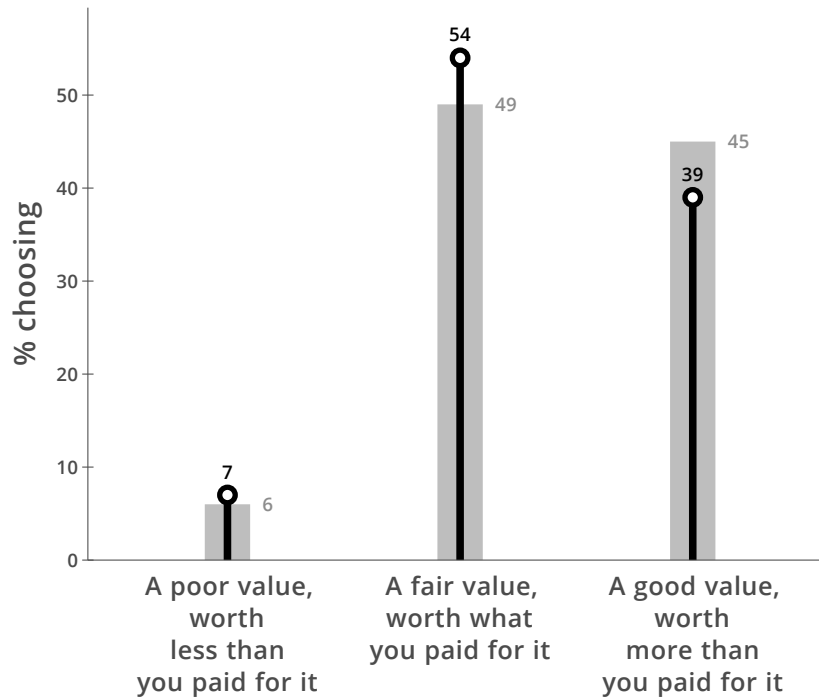
Notes

MCCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 6.1$, $p < .05$; $n = 351$.

The last set of questions asks students how well your college is doing in preparing students for their educational goals. The top half of Table 4.1 lists students' responses to their primary reason for attending MCCC. 57% chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well MCCC is helping them achieve the specific goal they chose. Students could choose from *very well*, *fairly well*, *somewhat*, or *not at all*. Responses from the top category are presented in the bottom half of Table 4.1. For example, 37% of the students who chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary goal indicated that MCCC is doing *very well* in terms of preparing them for a four-year degree.

Table 4.1   How well is education helping accomplish goals

	MCCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	n	0 10 20 30 40 50 60
Purpose of taking courses at MCCC					
Prepare for a four-year degree	57	50	**+7**	202	■—○
Increase job and career opportunities	37	42	−5	131	○—■
Self-improvement	5	8	**−3**	19	○■
How well is education at MCCC …					
Prepare for a four-year degree	37	44	**−7**	201	○—■
Increase job and career opportunities	38	44	−6	130	○—■
Self-improvement	47	44	+3	19	■○

Notes

Top panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing one of the three educational goals. Bottom panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing *very well* in response to the preparation question for that goal. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, *p* < .05). *n* in table row is the total number of students responding to the question; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage. Difference bars in the top panel of the table are in black, to reflect that schools may score high or low on these measures, depending on their institutional mission. In the bottom panel, green indicates that MCCC has a higher proportion of students reporting that MCCC is helping them achieve their educational goal compared to the benchmark sample; red indicates a lower proportion.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Table 5.1 Gender identity

	%	n
Female/Woman	70	238
Male/Man	27	93
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	1	2
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	1	3
Another gender identity	1	5

Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity

	%	n
African American or Black	6	19
Asian American or Asian	1	5
Native American or Alaska Native	1	5
Hispanic or Latino	3	9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
White	94	320

Notes

Percentages may not sum to 100 because students could choose more than one category.

Table 5.3 Age

	%	n
18 or younger	32	110
19-24	37	128
25-34	14	49
35-44	9	30
45-54	5	18
55 or older	2	7

Table 5.4   Part-time/full-time status

	%	n
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	50	168
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	50	171

Table 5.5   Total credit hours earned at MCCC

	%	n
None	19	65
1-15 credits	27	93
16-29 credits	21	73
30-45 credits	16	55
46 or more credits	16	54