

8th Annual Student Survey – Online Classes: Spring 2016

Executive Summary

The Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office conducted the eighth annual survey of students enrolled in online classes during the Spring 2016 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 206 from Fall 2005 to Spring 2016. During that same time period, the unduplicated student headcount for these sections increased from 348 to 4,027. 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 Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office, along with input from the Dean of Educational Technology, Learning Resources, and Distance Learning, designed this survey. Out of the possible 4,027 online students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 514 students (13 percent response rate).

The following results were observed:

Online Instruction

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 (63 percent), scheduling details (49 percent), and Blackboard tutorial (46 percent). Only 16 percent of respondents indicated that no aspects of the Distance Learning website have been important to their success as an online student.

Satisfaction with COC Online Classes

Overall, respondents indicated that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the online classes offered at College of the Canyons. The areas receiving the most satisfaction were the College website and overall quality of online courses at College of the Canyons (81 percent, each) and the overall quality of their program of study/major (80 percent).

Awareness and Helpfulness of Online Services

Awareness of Online Service Offerings. The majority of respondents are aware of the following online services offered: registration and search for classes (95 percent, each), payment of tuition and fees (88 percent), application (78 percent), orientation (76 percent), library databases/resources (74 percent), Financial Aid website and scheduling counseling appointments (72 percent, each), and transcript requests (70 percent).

As compared to Fall 2014, awareness of counseling tutorials increased 11 percentage points in 2016.

Reasons for Taking Online Classes

The top three reasons that respondents indicated for taking online classes were the convenient schedule (79 percent), unable to attend other "face-to-face" sections of the same classes (57 percent), and comfort with technology (57 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 schedule of classes (64 percent) and the College's website (61 percent). After registering for an online class, respondents indicated that the top sources of information for online courses were the College's website (54 percent), the instructor (51 percent), and the schedule of classes (43 percent).

Use of Mobile Devices to Access College Information

Accessing the COC website. Ninety-seven 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, 90 percent indicated that they have accessed the COC website from their mobile device. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they access the COC website at least once per week (45 percent), followed by daily (28 percent) and at least once a month (27 percent).

Accessing a COC Mobile Webpage. The majority of the respondents (68 percent) indicated that they are "likely" or "very likely" to access a COC mobile webpage from their mobile device, while 25 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 (80 percent), campus map (62 percent), and counseling information (55 percent).

Blackboard Access. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they have accessed Blackboard from a mobile device.

Awareness and Helpfulness of Online Services

Awareness of the COC Website and the Distance Learning Website. Ninety-three percent of the 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-six percent of the respondents indicated that the Distance Learning website is “helpful” or “very helpful”. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated a “neutral” response regarding the helpfulness of the Distance Learning website.

Other Online Course Information / Needs

Type(s) of Class(es) Taken this Semester. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they are taking online classes, 50 percent of the respondents are taking on-ground classes, and 5 percent of the respondents are taking hybrid classes.

Awareness of Minimum Hardware/Software Recommendations. Sixty-six percent of respondents were aware of the minimum hardware/software recommendations prior to registering for their online classes.

Number of Online Classes Taken. Nearly one-third of the respondents (32 percent) indicated that they have taken 1-2 classes that consisted of some online components, 36 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. Fourteen respondents indicated that they use special technology to assist with a disability. Respondents were asked to indicate what special technology they use. Eight respondents indicated that they utilize screen readers, five respondents utilize closed captioning, and one respondent utilizes Jaws, Majic, Learning Ally, Firefly, and KNFB Reader.

Student Services

Admissions & Records and Counseling

Admissions & Records and Counseling Policies

More than two-thirds of the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that the College provides accurate and current information on the following A&R policies:

- Academic Regulation, including Academic Honesty (81 percent),
- Nondiscrimination (72 percent),
- Acceptance of Transfer Credits (70 percent),
- Refund of Fees (70 percent), and
- Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault (68 percent).

A relatively lower percentage of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that the College provides accurate and current information on Grievance and Complaint Procedures (59 percent).

A&R Website Access. The majority of respondents indicated that they have accessed the A&R website (71 percent).

Student Email Access. The majority of respondents indicated that they have accessed their @mycanyons.edu email address provided by the College (94 percent).

Ask Canyons. Nearly half of the respondents have not accessed the Ask Canyons tool on the COC website to receive answers to their questions about the College (49 percent), while 33 percent of the respondents have accessed the Ask Canyons tool and 18 percent have not heard of Ask Canyons.

Counseling Services

About two-thirds of the respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that:

- The student educational plan clearly indicates the classes they need to complete their educational goal (71 percent),
- In general, students receive educational, personal, and program advisement in a courteous and supportive manner (70 percent),
- The services they receive from the academic Counseling office are satisfactory (64 percent), and
- The academic Counseling office website provides useful information (63 percent).

Education Plan. The majority of the respondents indicated that they have a two-year education plan that they are using to plan their classes (73 percent) and that they have seen a counselor or academic advisor to develop their educational plan (68 percent).

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that they have accessed the new Online Education Planning Tool available through My Canyons to develop their education plan.

Online Counseling Appointments. Forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they are aware that the College offers online counseling. Of those indicating that they are aware that the College offers online counseling, 19 percent have attended a counseling appointment using WebEx.

Other Information Regarding Majors. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they can easily find online information regarding classes required for their major.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid Online Services Awareness. The majority of respondents indicated that they are aware they can access the following financial aid services online:

- View financial aid status (83 percent),
- View financial aid documents (82 percent),
- Receive financial aid documents (78 percent),
- Apply for a Board of Governor (BOG) waiver (77 percent),
- View standard of progress for financial aid (76 percent), and
- Apply for a student loan (73 percent).

Financial Assistance Awareness. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that they know that financial assistance is available to students.

Financial Aid Information Access. Three-quarters of the respondents indicated that they have accessed financial aid information from the College’s website (66 percent).

Satisfaction with Financial Aid Information. The majority of respondents that have accessed financial aid information from the College’s website indicated that their financial aid application was processed in a timely manner (92 percent), the financial aid information from the College’s website was provided in a clear manner (91 percent), and financial aid eligibility and academic standards are communicated effectively (89 percent).

As compared to the results from the survey of classes held on campus, respondents indicated the following:

- Their financial aid application was processed in a timely manner (16 percentage points lower in classes held on campus),
- The financial aid information from the College’s website was provided in a clear manner (13 percentage points lower in classes held on campus), and
- Financial aid eligibility and academic standards are communicated effectively (11 percentage points lower in classes held on campus).

Student Health Wellness Center

Respondents indicated that they are aware that the College has a Student Health Wellness Center (84 percent). Relatively fewer respondents are aware of the following services provided by the Student Health Wellness Center:

- The Health Center offers health education outreach (67 percent),
- The Health Center is a place to go for victims of sexual assault (66 percent),
- The Health Center provides 6 free personal counseling sessions each semester (64 percent),
- The Health Center provides nutritional counseling (63 percent), and
- The Health Center offers peer-to-peer counseling (57 percent).

The majority of the respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the Health Center (69 percent) and indicated that the services provided by the Health Center are offered at times that are convenient for their schedule (66 percent).

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statements regarding the Student Health and Wellness Center were more than 10 percentage points lower in classes held on campus; specifically:

- I am aware that the Student Health and Wellness Center offers peer to peer club (17 percentage points lower in classes held on campus) and
- I am aware that the Student Health and Wellness Center provides six free personal counseling sessions each semester (12 percentage points lower in classes held on campus).

Reasons for Attending College of the Canyons

The top three reasons that respondents indicated for attending College of the Canyons were location (74 percent), cost (67 percent), and transferability of courses to four-year colleges/universities (65 percent).

Results from the survey of online classes varied slightly from results of the survey of classes held on campus; specifically, the following reasons for attending COC were more than 10 percentage points lower from respondents of classes held on campus:

- Availability of needed classes (16 percentage points lower in classes held on campus)
- Beauty of campus facilities/grounds (11 percentage points lower in classes held on campus)

Campus Life

The majority of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” the College provides a positive learning environment for all students (78 percent), College staff are helpful in answering questions about the College (75 percent), College faculty treat all students fairly and respectfully (73 percent), the College has clearly defined general education requirements for all of its academic and vocational degree programs (73 percent), and adequate academic advisement for courses, programs, and transfer to universities is provided (73 percent).

A relatively smaller percentage of respondents “agree” or “strongly agree” that they are aware what role students play in governance of the College (49 percent) and that they have the opportunity to participate in the College’s planning processes, either directly or through representatives (46 percent).

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that “agree” or “strongly agree” with the following statements were more than 10 percentage points lower in classes held on campus:

- The ASG is communicating and representing student concerns to the Administration (12 percentage points lower in classes held on campus) and
- I am aware of what role students have in governance of the College (11 percentage points lower in classes held on campus).

College Policies and Procedures

Respondents indicated that they learn about the College’s policies and procedures primarily through the COC website (56 percent) and instructors/counselors (51 percent).

As compared to Fall 2014, the percentage of respondents that learn about the College's policies and procedures through the College catalog decreased 13 percentage points in 2016 and the percentage of respondents that learn about the College's policies and procedures through the schedule of classes increased 11 percentage points in 2016.

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that learn about the College's policies and procedures by word of mouth was 11 percentage points lower from respondents in classes held online.

Student Awareness/Needs

Career Services. Two-thirds of the respondents (66 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 (53 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 (55 percent) indicated that they are not aware of the services provided by the Extended Opportunities, Programs and Services (EOPS) program.

Small Business Owners. Twenty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they provide services, sell products, make products, create content, sell services, write songs, write books, act, or perform for money.

Earned College Credit. More than half of the respondents (55 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 by internships (42 percent), independent learning (37 percent), and the military (5 percent). Twenty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they would not benefit from those options. As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that indicated they would benefit from earning college credit through independent learning was 15 percentage points lower in classes held on campus and on-the-job training was 13 percentage points lower in classes held on campus.

Canyons Peer Advisor (CPA). The majority of respondents (88 percent) indicated that they have not visited a Canyons Peer Advisor (CPA) at one of the carts on campus. The majority of respondents (86 percent) that have visited a CPA were satisfied with the assistance they received.

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that were satisfied with the assistance they received from the CPA was 45 percentage points lower in classes held on campus.

Community Services/Volunteer Service. Nearly half of the respondents (45 percent) indicated that they have volunteered or completed voluntary community service for no pay in the past year. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62 percent) that have volunteered or provided community service for no pay in the past year indicated that they contribute 1-50 hours per year.

Instruction

Use of Learning Resources – Library

Use of the Library - In Person. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they sometimes access the library in person (42 percent), followed by never (36 percent), often (14 percent), and very often (8 percent).

Use of the Library - Online. Nearly half of the respondents indicated that they sometimes access the library online (43 percent), followed by never (38 percent), often (15 percent), and very often (5 percent).

Use of Library Services. The areas that respondents indicated that they access most in the Library are online databases (71 percent) and computers (40 percent).

Library Staff Assistance. More than one-quarter of the respondents have asked the library staff for assistance (27 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 (78 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.

Use of Learning Resources – The Learning Center (TLC)

Use of the The Learning Center - In Person. More than one-third of the respondents indicated that they *sometimes* access The Learning Center in person (37 percent), followed by never (33 percent), often (17 percent), and very often (14 percent).

Use of the The Learning Center - Online. The majority of respondents indicated that they never access The Learning Center online (76 percent), followed by sometimes (15 percent), often (6 percent), and very often (2 percent).

Use of The Learning Center Services. The areas that respondents indicated that they access most in The Learning Center are tutoring in English and tutoring in math (42 percent, each), workshops (37 percent), and Guided Learning Activities (32 percent).

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 (90 percent),
- The syllabus for this course specifies the course student learning outcomes (88 percent),
- The syllabus provides a clear understating of the course content and instructor expectations for students (87 percent),
- I have a clear understanding of how I am graded in this course (85 percent),
- My syllabus lists faculty office hours and additional campus resources that assist students (85 percent),
- I am familiar with the student learning outcomes in my course(s) (83 percent),
- I am familiar with the courses needed and overall recommended pathway for my program/major (76 percent), and
- I am familiar with the student learning outcomes for my program/major (76 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:

- Encouraged to spend significant time studying and preparing for class (84 percent),
- Coursework and assignments challenged the respondent to do their best (80 percent),
- Provided with the support they need to succeed at COC (77 percent),
- Faculty incorporate values, ethics, civic responsibility and diverse perspectives into their courses (74 percent),
- Encouraged to read or research beyond the materials covered in their classes (75 percent),
- Attend faculty office hours for assistance and support in their classes (68 percent), and
- Encouraged to interact with students from different backgrounds in a constructive manner (67 percent).

Weekend College/Learning Communities

Nearly half of the respondents (48 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.

As compared to the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they are interested in taking classes on the weekend as part of Weekend College was 17 percentage points lower in classes held on campus.

Barriers

The top four barriers that respondents indicated that they have personally experienced in achieving their educational goals were availability of courses (64 percent), costs related to textbooks (60 percent), lack of time for homework and studying (43 percent), and work conflicts/pressures (42 percent).

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they experienced the following barriers were more than 10 percentage points lower in classes held on campus:

- Availability of courses (15 percentage points lower in classes held on campus) and
- Family responsibilities (13 percentage points lower in classes held on campus).

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 55 programs, including: Administration of Justice (2 respondents), Anthropology (3 respondents), Business (6 respondents), Languages (4 respondents), Math (2 respondents), Dentistry (2 respondents), Finance (2 respondents), Paramedics (2 respondents), Public Relations/Marketing (3 respondents), Real Estate (4 respondents), and Kinesiology (2 respondents).

International Education

Nearly half of the respondents (44 percent) indicated that they are interested in study abroad opportunities.

Communication/Social Media

Communication about activities/events on campus. The majority of respondents prefer to receive communication about activities or events occurring on campus by email (89 percent), followed by text message (31 percent), flyers on campus (27 percent), social networking sites (21 percent), and postal mail (10 percent).

Social media. The majority of respondents indicated that they use Facebook (72 percent), followed by Instagram (66 percent), YouTube (58 percent), and Snapchat (57 percent).

As compared to the results of the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they use the following social media were more than 10 percentage points lower in classes held online:

- Snapchat (14 percentage points lower in online classes) and
- YouTube (12 percentage points lower in online classes).

College of the Canyons Social Media. The majority of the respondents indicated that they use the College's Facebook page (66 percent), while about one-quarter use the College's Instagram (30 percent), Twitter (30 percent), and YouTube (21 percent).

As compared to Fall 2014, the percentage of respondents that indicated they use the following College of the Canyons' social media platforms increased more than 10 percentage points in Spring 2016:

- Facebook (increased 39 percentage points in Spring 2016),
- Instagram (increased 17 percentage points in Spring 2016),
- YouTube (increased 15 percentage points in Spring 2016), and
- Twitter (increased 11 percentage points in Spring 2016).

College Advertisements. More than one-third of the respondents have seen College advertisements on Facebook and in local magazines/newspapers (49 percent, each), followed by ad pop-ups while surfing the internet (24 percent), movie theaters (20 percent), and mobile apps (19 percent). As compared to Fall 2014, the percentage of respondents that have seen College ads pop-up while surfing the net was 11 percentage points higher in Spring 2016. As compared to the survey of classes held on campus, the percentage of respondents that have seen College advertisements in local magazines was 11 percent points lower in classes held on campus.

Demographics. Of the respondents who indicated their sex, 75 percent indicated their sex to be female and 25 percent indicated male. Respondents indicated their age to be 18 years or younger (12 percent), between the ages of 19 and 24 years (51 percent), between the ages of 25 and 30 years (14 percent), between the ages of 31 and 50 years (17 percent),

and 51 years or older (6 percent). More than one-third the respondents indicated they were White (40 percent) and about one-third indicated Hispanic/Latino (34 percent).

Hours Worked Per Week. The majority of respondents indicated that they work (79 percent). Twenty-one percent of the respondents work 40 or more hours per week. While the majority of respondents work, the majority of respondents work part-time (72 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 (76 percent), followed by obtain an associate degree (57 percent), develop job skills, including obtaining a certificate (34 percent), enroll in classes for personal development (9 percent), and develop job skills, without obtaining a certificate (9 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.

Online Instruction

- 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 student use of mobile devices when developing Marketing/Advertising (e.g. development of apps) and in instructional delivery.
- Consider student interest in the following aspects they would like to utilize on the COC mobile webpage: schedule of classes, campus map, and counseling information.

Student Services

- Explore ways to increase student awareness of the following:
 - Admissions & Records policies, specifically Grievance and Complaint and Refund of Fees procedures,
 - Online counseling offered by the college,
 - Student Health and Wellness Center services; specifically nutritional counseling, personal counseling sessions, and peer-to-peer clubs,
 - The Ask Canyons tool,
 - The benefits students receive if they pay the Student Support Fee,
 - The Online Education Planning tool,
 - The role students have in governance at the College, and
 - The role of the Associated Student Government (ASG).
- Consider ways to promote student participation in College planning processes.
- Explore additional options to provide low cost or savings on textbooks.
- Explore ways to increase satisfaction with the usefulness of the information on the counseling website.
- Consider ways to promote the use of Canyons Peer Advisors.

Instruction

- Explore ways to increase student satisfaction with computer and software training.
- Consider ways to increase student awareness and use of The Learning Center services available online.
- Explore ways to encourage students to read/research beyond the materials covered in their classes.
- Explore ways to increase usage of the social media platform that the College utilizes, specifically Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.
- Explore ways to remove barriers to college, especially related to the availability of courses and costs related to textbooks - respondent's top two barriers.
- Consider student interest in the following when planning:
 - Study Abroad program,
 - Learning communities, and
 - Weekend College.