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Student Engagement Survey
Spring 2023
Numbered Report 338

College of the Canyons

Santa Clarita Community College District

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Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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Introduction

The College's 2023-26 Strategic Plan contains the goal of Engagement with the objective of increasing student participation in "civic, social, global, and cultural engagement, along with trainings and events, according to the District's plans on Civic and Community Engagement." To assess this using 2022/23 as the baseline, the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness (IRPIE) Office conducted a student engagement survey during the Spring 2023 semester. The baseline data collected from this survey will inform the College's actions over the three-year strategic planning cycle for achieving its Engagement goal, as it pertains to civic and community engagement. An annual distribution of this survey will provide ongoing data to assess the College's progress in increasing students' civic engagement to better foster an inclusive and welcoming campus community.

Methodology

The online survey was created on SurveyMonkey and distributed to students by email (via SurveyMonkey), text (via Blackboard), and a post on Canvas. Each distribution method used a distinct link to assist in tracking which method was used by respondents. The survey was distributed at the end of April 2023 and was open for three weeks.

The distribution list of actively enrolled 12,995 students was obtained from the College's 320 file. Instructional Service Agreement (ISA) students were excluded from the list.

The survey included 24 questions, two of which were open-ended. The first 16 questions focused on the students' level of civic engagement, in general and specifically at College of the Canyons, and the remaining eight questions asked about background and demographic information. Survey instrument available upon request.

A total of 468 responses were collected—a response rate of 3.6%. Of these, 465 were included in the analysis based on their response indicating active enrollment during the spring 2023 semester. Responses were downloaded from SurveyMonkey and analyzed in SPSS. Of the three collection methods used, 46% of respondents used the email link (n=215), 33% used the Canvas post link (n=153), and 21% used the text message link (n=97).

Results

Demographics/Background

In order to assess how representative the respondents were to the general student population, survey demographics (race/ethnicity and gender) were compared to the demographic profile of the Fall 2022 student body (excluding ISA's) in Table 1 and Table 2 below. With regard to race/ethnicity, there was underrepresentation of students who identified as Latinx (44% of survey respondents vs. 52% of Fall 2022 students) and overrepresentation of students who identified as White (34% of survey respondents vs. 26% of Fall 2022 students). For gender, there was a higher proportion of female student respondents (63%) compared to that of the Fall 2022 student body (53%) and a lower proportion of male respondents (28% compared to 46% of Fall 2022 students).

Table 1. Race/Ethnicity percentages for survey respondents and Fall 2022 students.

Race/Ethnicity	Survey Respondents (N=246)	Fall 2022 Student Profile (N=13,215)
Hispanic/Latinx	44%	52%
White	34%	26%
Asian/Filipino	9%	11%
Black/African American	8%	5%
Multiracial	5%	5%
Other	<1%	<1%

Table 2. Gender percentages for survey respondents and Fall 2022 students.

Gender	Survey Respondents (N=270)	Fall 2022 Student Profile (N=13,215)
Female	63%	53%
Male	28%	46%
Non-Binary	6%	not available
Unknown/Decline to state/Other	3%	1%

When asked about age/generation (Figure 1), 49% of the 269 respondents indicated they are Generation Z/New Silent Generation (born 2001 to 2009), 32% are Generation Y/Millennials (born 1980-2000), 13% are Generation X (born 1965-1979), and 6% are Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964).

Figure 1. Age/Generation of survey respondents.
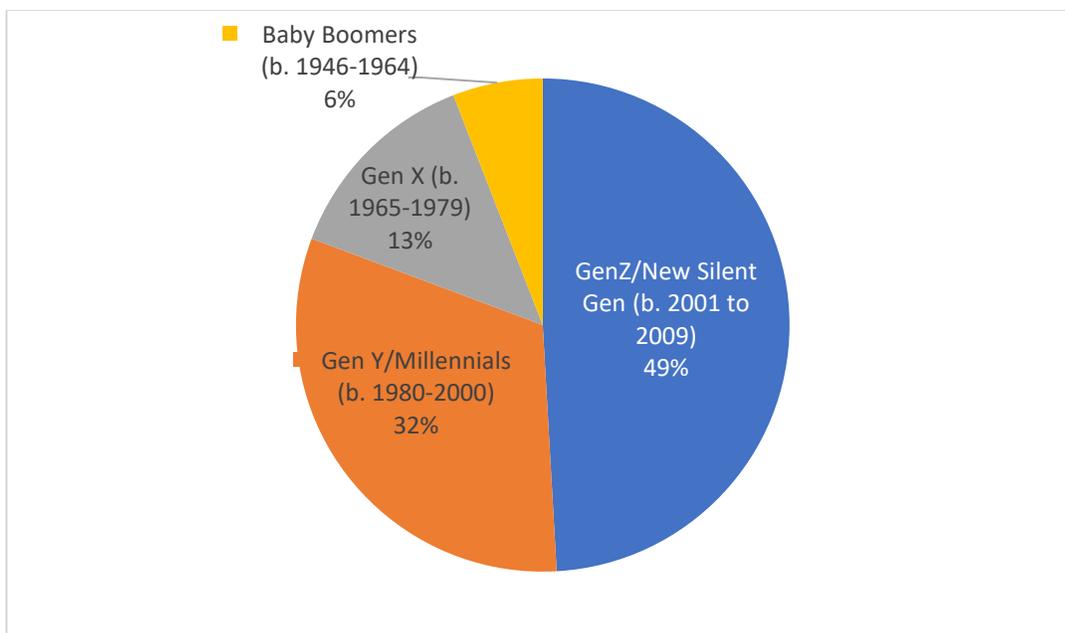
There were 258 respondents who indicated their gender identity as either cisgender (80%), transgender (7%), or declined to state (13%). Of the 271 respondents who responded to the question on being a caretaker, the majority (79%, n=213) indicated they are not a primary caretaker to someone who is younger than 18 years old.

Most of the 465 respondents indicated they were enrolled in less than 12 units (52%, n=243), followed by enrollment in 12 units or more (42%, n=194), and finally, enrollment in only Non-credit courses (6%, n=28). As indicated in Figure 2 below, the top two educational goals selected by students were degree or certificate (n=174) and transfer to a four-year institution (n=172).

Figure 2. Responses to "What is your goal as a student at College of the Canyons? Mark all that apply."

Students were asked to indicate which department/area their current major or program of study belonged in. Of the 262 students who responded to this question, the top five departments were Business (n=32), Psychology (n=25), Biology (n=20), Nursing (n=14), and Computer Science (n=12).

Social Issues/Problems

Students were asked to identify the top three social issues/problems that are important to them from a list of 22 topics and the option to write in different issues in an "other" category. The top three social issues selected were cost of living (n=147), mental health (n=123), and gun violence (n=120). Figure 3 provides details on responses to this question. The "other" responses included: politicization of students on college campuses, government overreach, the economy, anti-capitalism (eco-anarchism), prison abolition, disabled rights/accessibility, and wealth inequality.

Figure 3. Responses to "Identify the top three social issues/problems that are important to you."
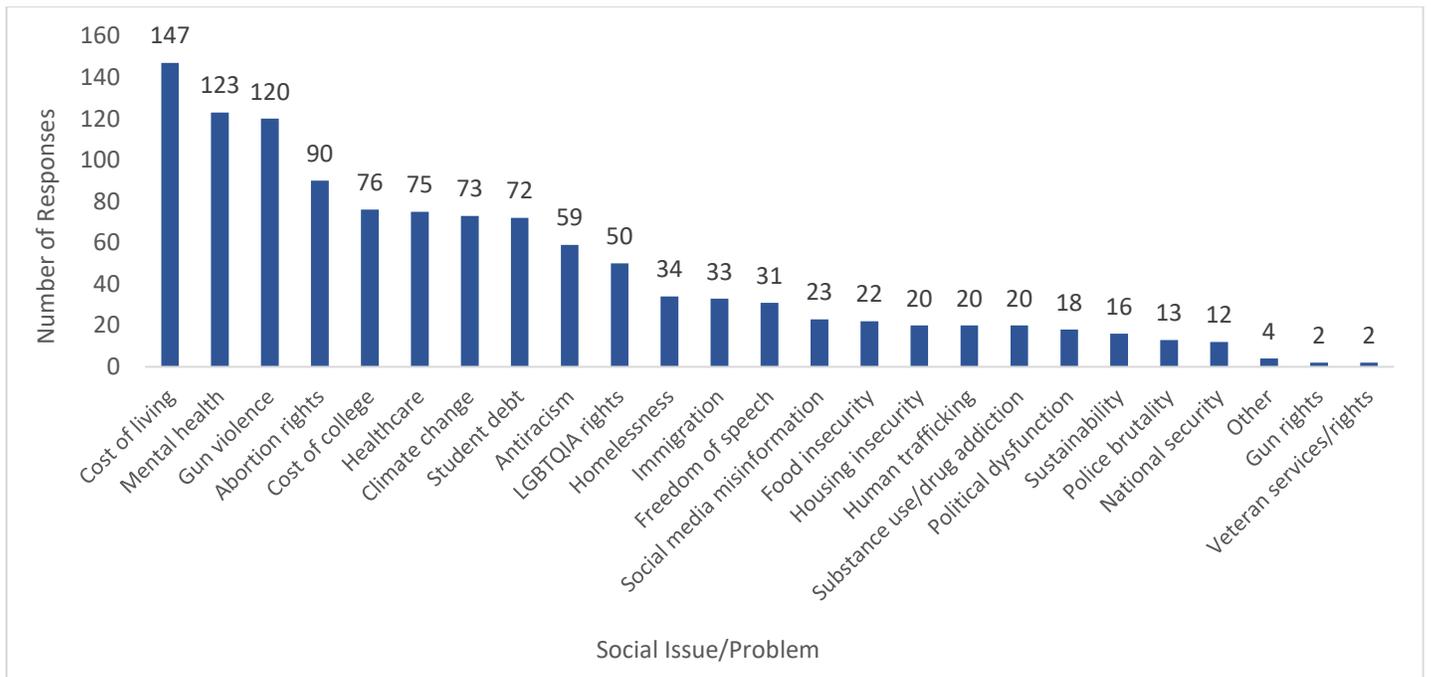
Students were asked what their favorite way to examine/learn about a social issue is. There were 390 respondents to this question, and the top response was research/reading/analyzing (37%), followed by conversation/dialogue/interview (26%), experiential/hands-on/exploration (18%), video/photography/drawing (13%), and, lastly, essay/writing/reflecting (6%).

The survey then asked students to select which types of activities they have previously participated in to address a social problem (Figure 4). Students could select one or more options from a list of ten common activities. The top three responses were voted in a local, state or national election (n=188), volunteered (n=178), and refused to purchase something from a certain company/business because they disagree with its social or political values (n=177).

Figure 4. Responses to "Have you ever done any of the following to address a social problem? Mark all that apply."
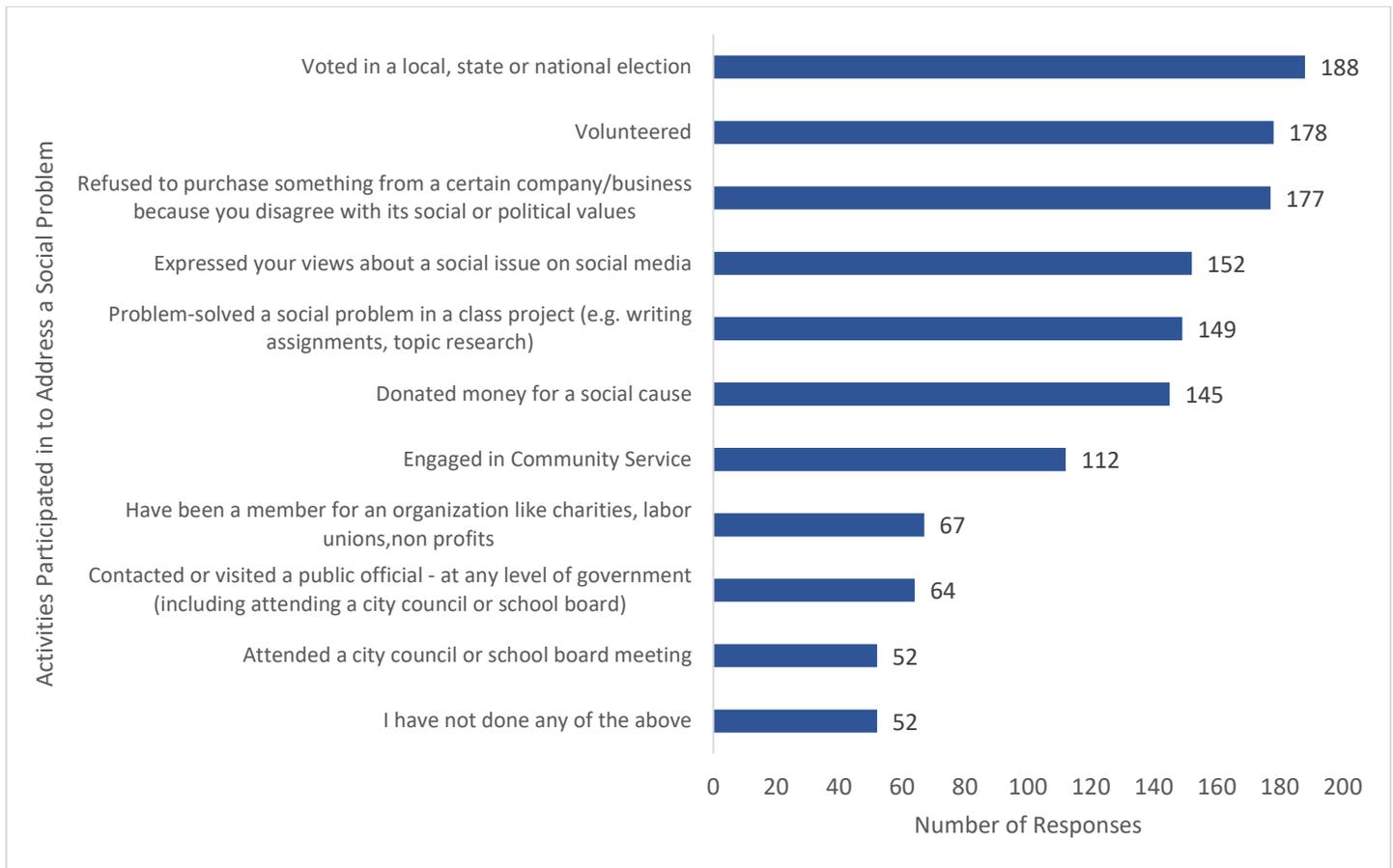
Students' responses to this question were counted to evaluate the average number of activities students have participated in to address a social problem. The means of aggregated demographic groups were compared against one another and against the overall average for each demographic category of race/ethnicity (m=3.7), age/generation (m=3.7), and gender (m=3.7) (see Tables 3-5 below). Those groups that are higher than their demographic average include Multiracial (m=4.4), White (m=4.2), Generation X (m=4.5), Generation Y/Millennials (m=3.8), and Non-Binary (m=4.1). The remaining groups' averages are near their demographic average except for the race/ethnicity group of Black/African American (m=3.0), which has the greatest difference below the total race/ethnicity average (m=3.7).

Table 3. The average number of activities done to address a social problem by race/ethnicity, excluding Unknown/Decline to State and Other.

Race/Ethnicity	Mean Number of Activities
Multiracial (N=13)	4.4
White (N=83)	4.2
Latinx (N=107)	3.4
Asian/Filipino (N=21)	3.4
Black/African American (N=20)	3.0
Total (N=244)	3.7

Table 4. The average number of activities done to address a social problem by age/generation.

Age/Generation	Mean Number of Activities
Generation X, 1965-1979 (N=36)	4.5
Generation Y/Millennials, 1980-2000 (N=85)	3.8
Baby Boomers, 1946-1964 (N=16)	3.5
Generation Z/New Silent Generation, 2001 to 2009 (N=132)	3.4
Total (N=269)	3.7

Table 5. The average number of activities done to address a social problem by gender, excluding Decline to State/Other.

Gender	Mean Number of Activities
Non-Binary (N=17)	4.1
Female (N=168)	3.7
Male (N=75)	3.5
Total (N=260)	3.7

Elections and Political Engagement

A number of survey questions asked students about their civic/political engagement and involvement in electoral processes (Table 3). Most students have not volunteered for a political organization or candidate (88%) or a political cause (86%). However, the majority of students indicated that they are registered to vote (72%), have voted (63%), and are aware of local elected officials (60%) and state elected officials (68%).

Table 6. Responses to civic/political engagement questions.

Question	Total Responses (N)	Yes	No
Are you currently registered in your voting district?	358	72%	28%
Are you aware of state elected officials (e.g. Assembly, Congress, Governor)?	354	68%	32%
Have you ever voted in a local, state or national election?	356	63%	37%
Are you aware of your local elected officials (e.g. Mayor, City Council)?	354	60%	40%
Have you ever volunteered for a political cause?	355	14%	86%
Have you ever volunteered for a political organization or candidate running for office?	355	12%	88%

Civic Engagement at College of the Canyons

The next series of questions asked students to reflect on their experience at College of the Canyons, what opportunities they have encountered to discuss social issues, and whether they have or plan to participate in such opportunities. Survey takers were first asked to what extent they believed students had the opportunity to discuss issues across campus. Over

half of the 360 respondents thought students were only provided such opportunity "sometimes" (55%, n=197), while 33% (n=117) believed students could discuss issues on campus "often" or "very often", and 13% (n=46) thought students were "never" provided this opportunity (Figure 5). As Figure 6 details, students said that discussions of issues most often take place at College of the Canyons in a class setting (n=181). When asked to provide examples of these opportunities to debate and discuss issues, students mostly referred to classroom assignments, projects, and discussions (in-person and online), and they highlighted courses in English, Political Science, Philosophy, and Sociology as places this frequently occurs. Other examples included webinars, service projects, and emails from campus organizations such as the Multicultural Center (see Appendix B for open-ended responses).

Figure 5. Student perception of opportunities to discuss issues at College of the Canyons.
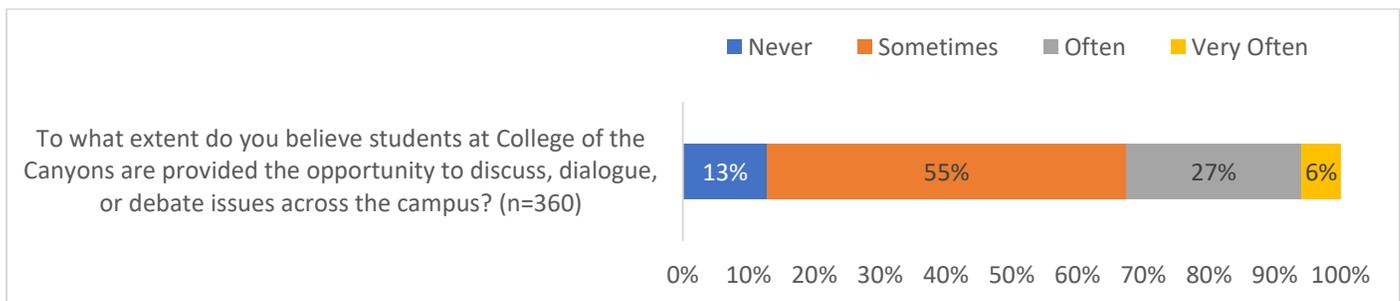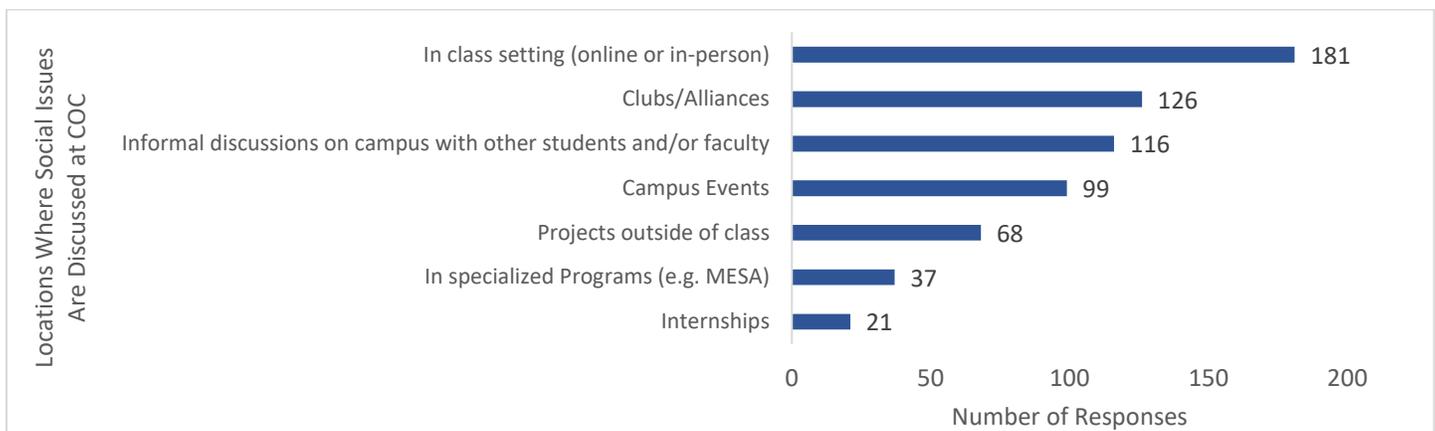

Figure 6. Where discussion of issues often take place at College of the Canyons.

In order to gauge current levels of student participation and engagement in social issues on campus, the survey asked students how often they participate in various types of activities. Figure 7 details students' levels of participation in activities while they have been at College of the Canyons, and Figure 8 details their current and planned levels of participation in programs and offerings at the College. Half or more of the respondents have never engaged with instructors on co-curricular activities/projects (50%), participated in a project addressing a local issue and/or involving a local non-profit or business (64%), or participated in an internship (82%). The activities with the highest levels of participation, where students have participated sometimes, often, or always, were collaborating with other students on projects during class (83%) and asking questions, debating issues, or contributing to class discussions (82%). While most students have not participated in an internship yet, a large portion of them indicated that they plan to participate in one (44%). Just over half of respondents indicated they have participated in or planned to participate in community engagement/service/volunteerism (52%), project-based learning (51%), or a student club, honor society, and/or action

team (51%). College programs with the lowest levels of participation include Associated Student Government (88% do not participate or plan to participate), honors courses (68% do not participate or plan to participate), and specialized programs such as Inspire or MESA (68% do not participate or plan to participate).

Figure 7. Student participation levels in various activities at College of the Canyons.
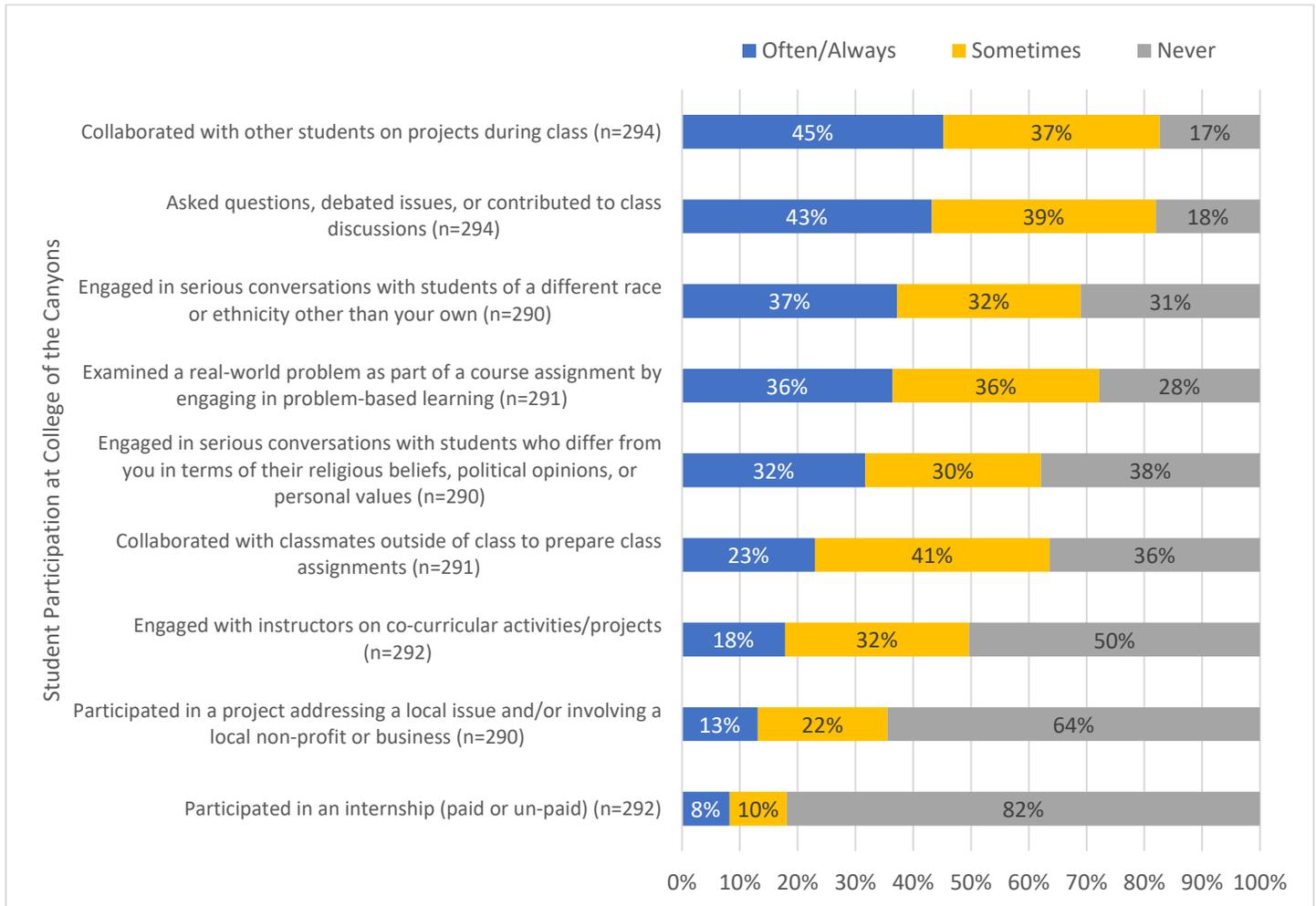
Figure 8. Students' current and planned participation levels at College of the Canyons' programs and offerings.
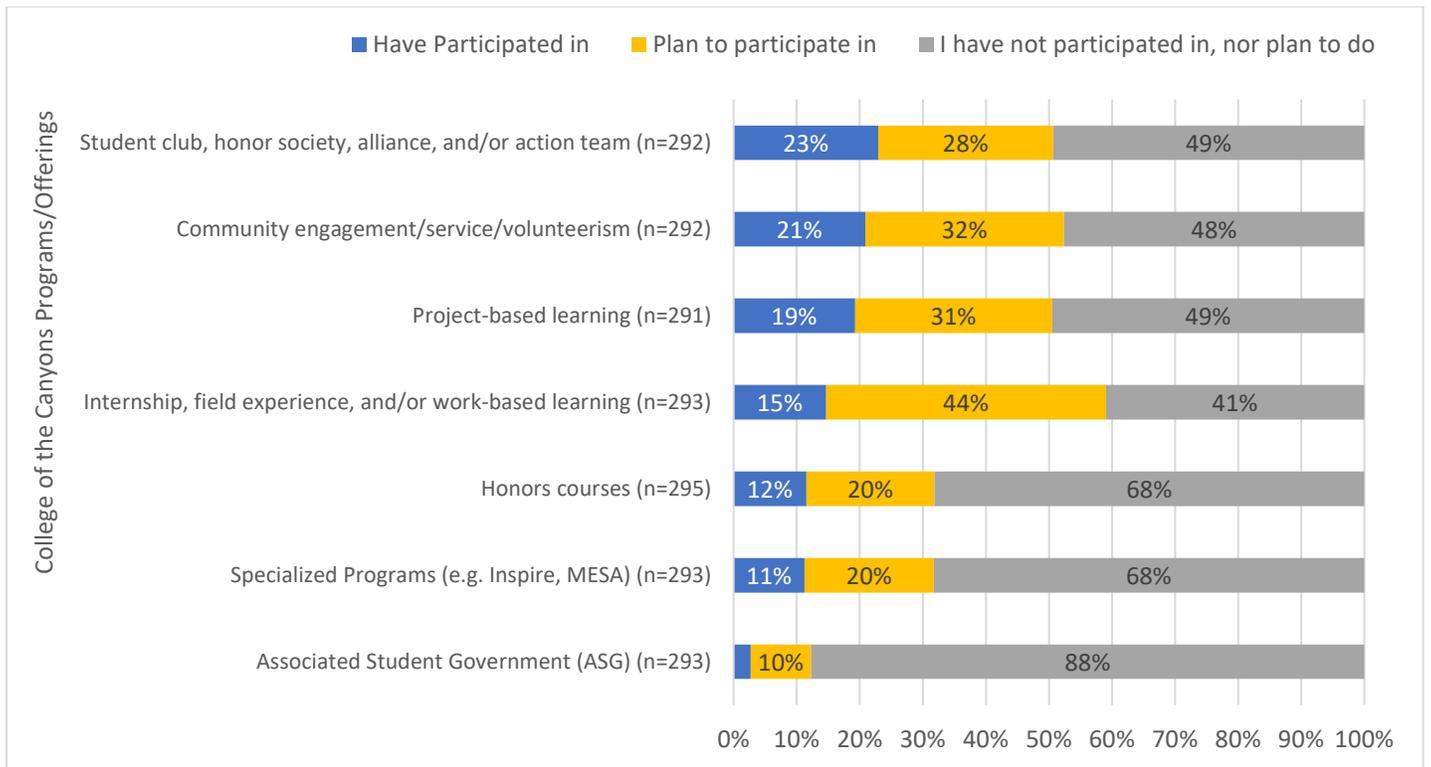
Civic Engagement Initiative at College of the Canyons

The next set of questions asked students about their awareness of the College's Civic Engagement Initiative and their interest and participation in events that foster public good. These events include those where participants learn how to address a social problem, or make a difference at the community, national, or global level.

When asked if they were aware of the College's Civic Engagement Initiative, 299 students responded, 86% (n=256) said they were not aware of it, and 14% (n=43) said they were aware of it. For those who answered that they were aware of the Civic Engagement Initiative, they were then asked about how they learned about it (Figure 9). "Email" had the highest number of responses (N=27) followed by "Associated Student Government (ASG)" (N=10) and a "friend" (N=9). The responses in the "other" category included Googling it and parents employed at the College.

Figure 9. Responses to "How did you learn about the College's Civic Engagement Initiative? Mark all that apply."
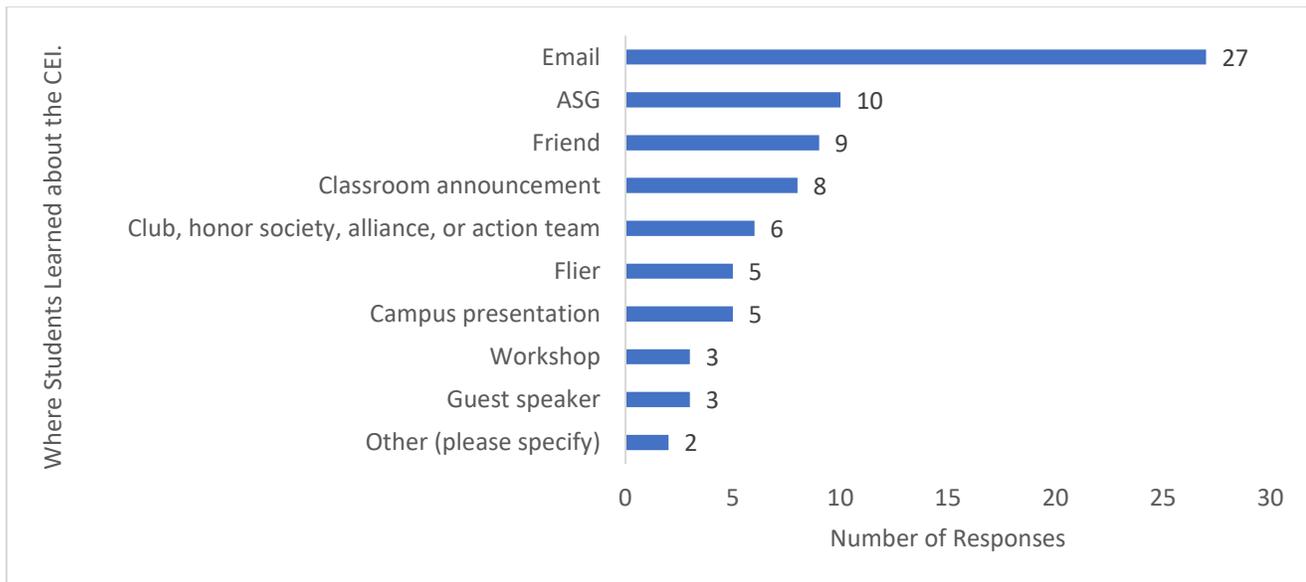
The remaining questions in the section were about events that foster public good. First, students were asked which types of events they would be interested in participating in. "Workshops" received the highest number of responses (N=125) while the second highest number of responses was for indicating they are not interested in participating in these types of events (N=96). Figure 10 details the responses for each event type. Responses in the "other" category included: direct action training, online resources, peer mentor programs, student-created and led opportunities, and volunteering.

Figure 10. Responses to "Considering events that foster public good, which of the following would you be interested in participating in? Mark all that apply."

Students were then asked about what might encourage their participation in events that foster public good or other civic engagement events (Figure 11). The top three responses were "class credit" (N=199), "opportunity to network" (N=117), and "opportunity to gain internship hours" (N=108). Responses in the "other" category included: civic engagement

experience, fostering public good, belief/interest in the subject, opportunity to learn, communication about it, and events with conservative guest speakers.

Figure 11. Responses to "Which of the following would encourage you to participate in civic engagement events or events that foster public good? Mark all that apply."
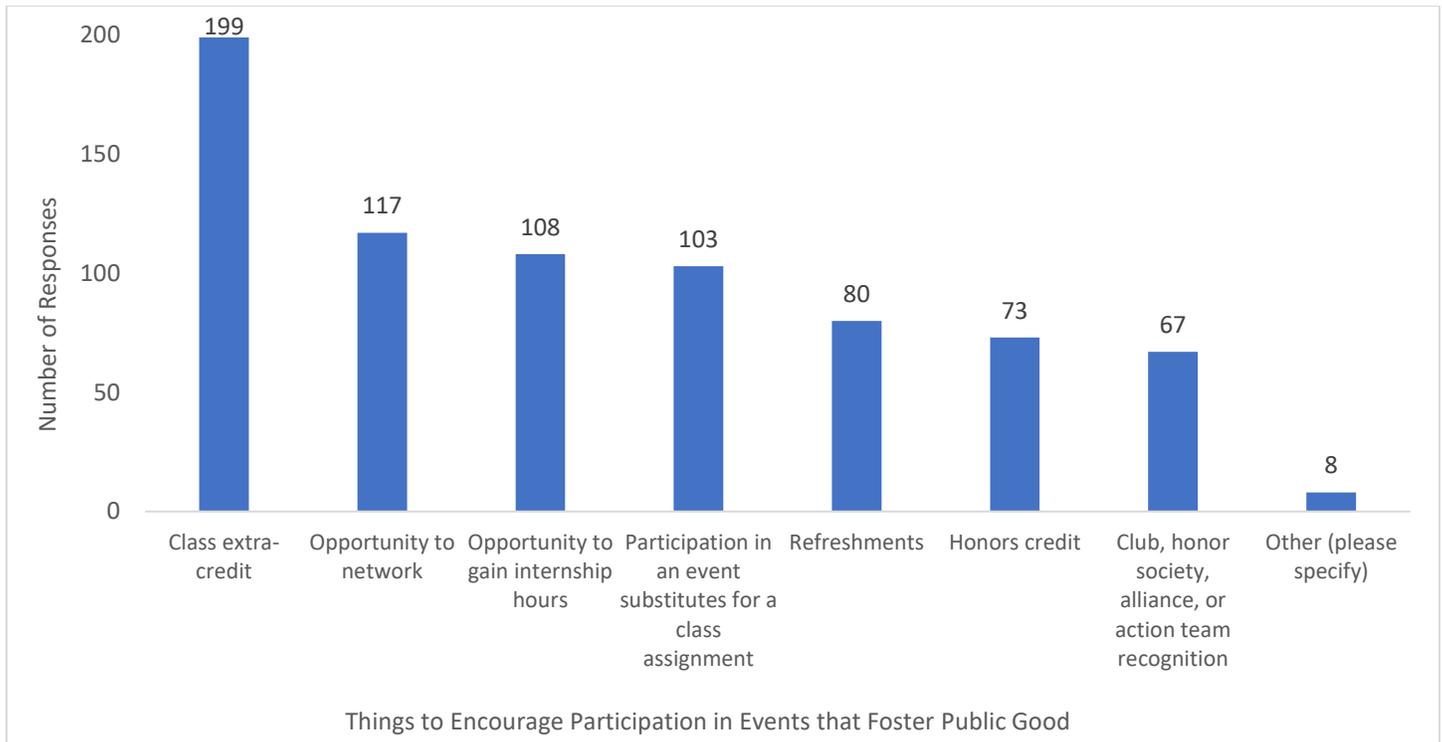
Lastly, students were asked to provide their preferred method of communication for news about events that foster public good (Table 7). The majority of respondents indicated "email" as their preferred method of communication (n=161, 61%). "Other" responses included in person or by phone, and using all communication methods.

Table 7. Best way to alert students about events that foster public good.

Communication Method	Responses (N=265)	%
Email	161	61%
Class announcements through Canvas	56	21%
Twitter or Instagram	16	6%
Fliers and posters	12	5%
Club, honor society, alliance, or action team announcements	10	4%
Facebook	4	2%
Text	4	2%
Other (please specify)	2	<1%

Sense of Belonging

In addition to asking about students' college and civic engagement, this survey also asked students two questions about their perception of belonging at College of the Canyons. The first asked how "at home" they feel at the College (Figure 12), and the second asked how much they feel like they belong at the College (Figure 13). More than half of respondents feel "Slightly/Somewhat at home" (51%) and just under half feel "Quite/Extremely at home" (42%). Similar proportions responded that they "Belong Quite a Bit/Completely Belong" (49%) or they "Belong a Little/Belong Somewhat" (47%). Less than 10% of respondents said they feel "Not at All at home" (7%), or they "Do Not Belong at All" (4%).

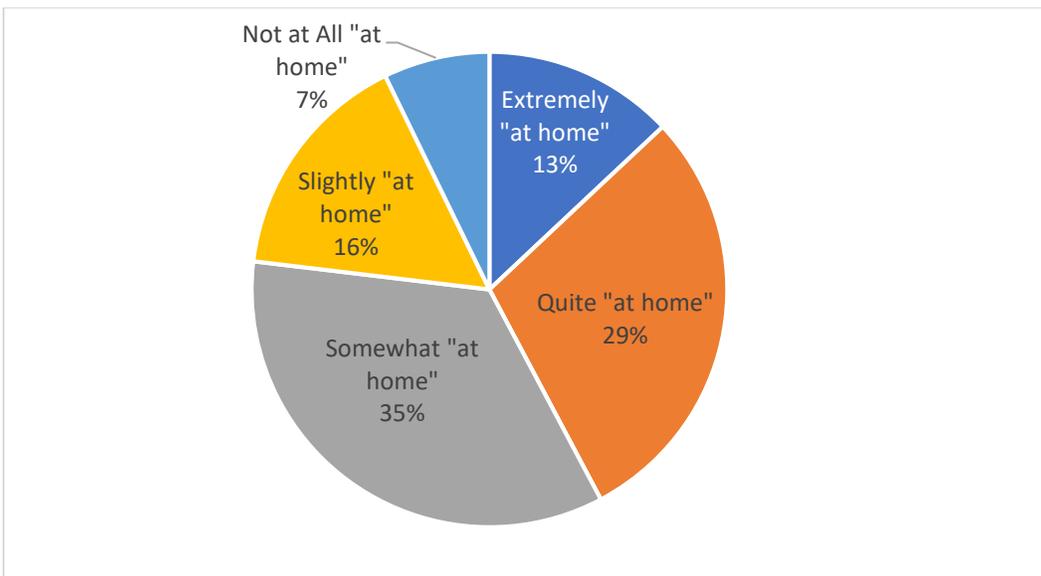*Figure 12. How "at home" do you feel at College of the Canyons? (N=277)*

Figure 13. Overall, how much do you feel like you belong at College of the Canyons? (N=280)
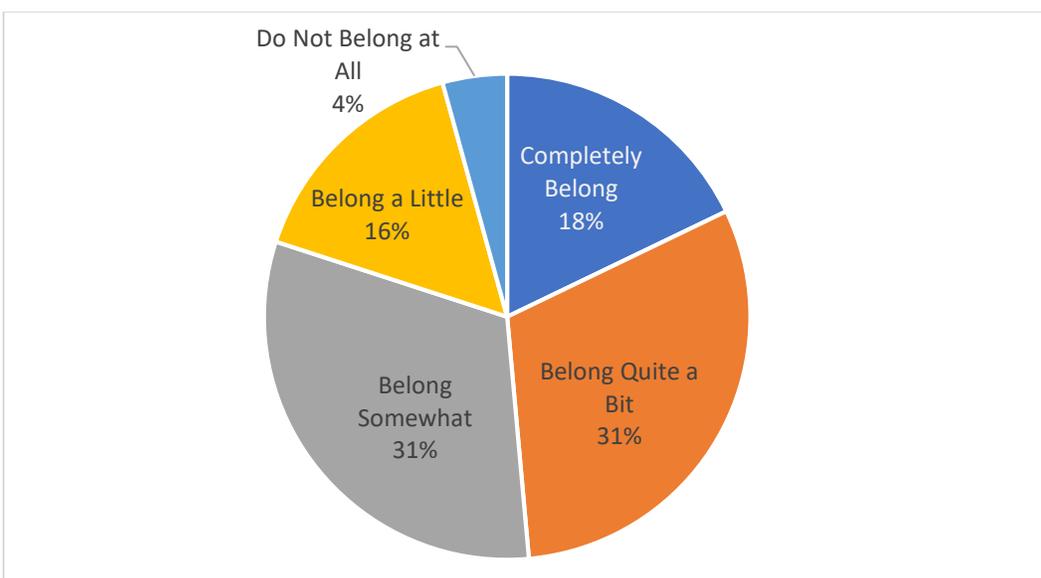
There are similar breakdowns in these responses when looking at race/ethnicity. In Figures 14 and 15 below, Black/African American, Asian/Filipino, Other, and Multiracial have been combined into Other race/ethnicity category due to the lower number of respondents in each group. There is a similar pattern in responses to both questions, with the majority of each group feeling some sense of belonging or being at home, and the Other groups has slightly higher proportions of responses in the Quite/Extremely "at home" and Belong Quite a Bit/Completely Belong categories when compared to Latinx and White ethnicity groups.

Figure 14. Feeling of being "at home" at College of the Canyons by race/ethnicity, excluding Unknown/Decline to State (N=246).
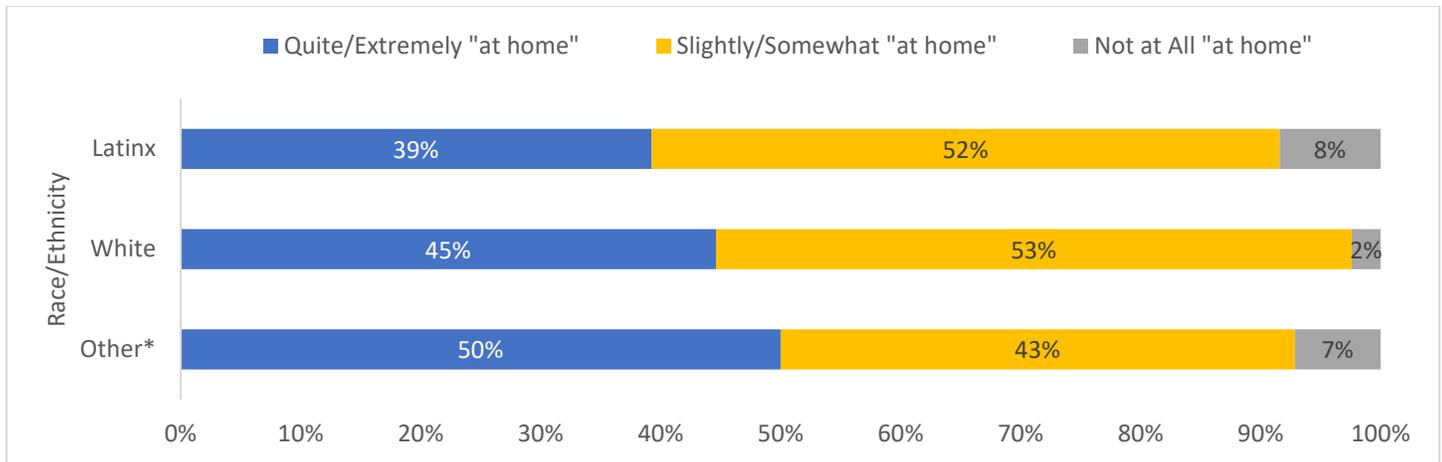
*Other includes Black/African American, Asian/Filipino, Other, and Multiracial. Excludes Unknown.

Figure 15. Feeling of belonging at College of the Canyons by race/ethnicity, excluding Unknown/Decline to State (N=246).
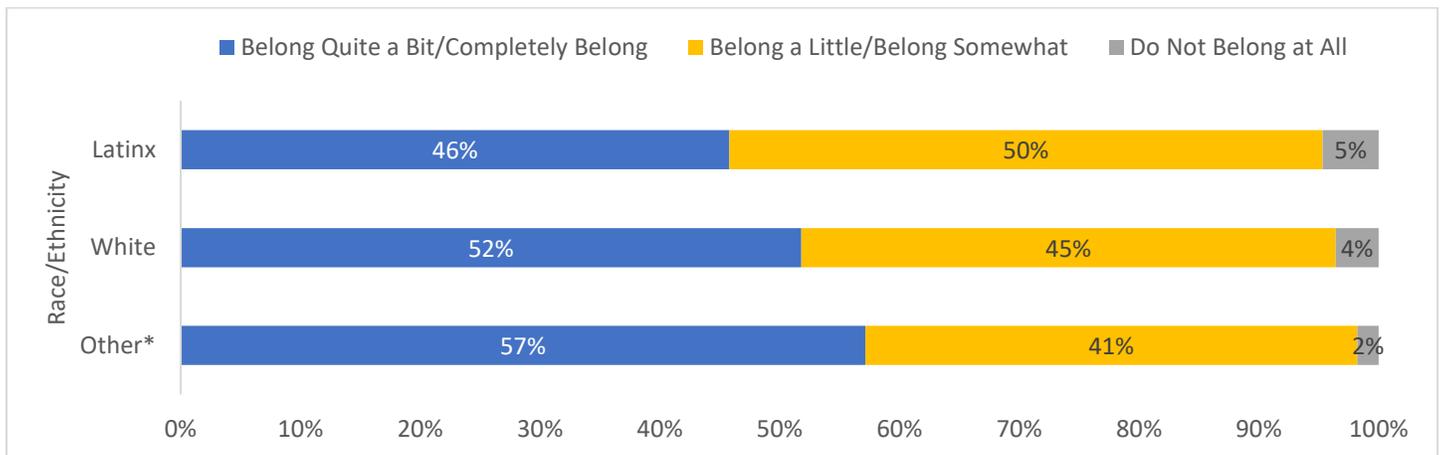
*Other includes Black/African American, Asian/Filipino, Other, and Multiracial. Excludes Unknown.

Summary Findings

- Survey respondents were generally demographically similar to that of the overall student body, though there was a higher proportion of female respondents and a lower proportion of male respondents when compared to the Fall 2022 student body. Additionally, Latinx students were underrepresented and White students were overrepresented when compared to the Fall 2022 student body.
- Respondents identified cost of living, mental health, and gun violence as the top three social issues that are important to them.
- More students indicated they had voted in an election to address a social problem than any other activity. Volunteering was the second most common activity selected to address a social problem, but few respondents indicated that they have volunteered for a political cause or organization.
- The majority of students believe that the College provides an opportunity to discuss social issues, and most often these discussions take place in a class setting.
- Nearly half or more of respondents indicated they had not, and did not plan to, participate in various College programs and offerings such as Associated Student Government (ASG), honors courses, internships, or specialized programs.
- A majority of respondents indicated they feel "Somewhat/Quite/Extremely at home" (77%) and that they "Belong Somewhat/Quite a Bit/Completely Belong" (80%).
- Few respondents are aware of the College's Civic Engagement Initiative.

Recommendations

Upon review of the results of the Student Engagement survey, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Consider ways to further promote opportunities related to social issues and civic engagement and the College's Civic Engagement Initiative.
- Continue to expand opportunities for students to engage in meaningful civic engagement activities.
- Explore ways of engaging more students in programs and offerings such as ASG, internships etc. as well as in-class activities such as collaborations with other students, contribute to discussions etc.

For questions, or more detailed information on this research brief, contact Meredith Hamilton, Research Analyst at meredith.hamilton@canyons.edu or Preeta Saxena, Ph.D., Director Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at preeta.saxena@canyons.edu.

Implications

The Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness office collects information on how data and research conducted assist the campus community in making evidence-based decisions. In light of this, we ask that requestors, and/or members of any department/area that utilize the data, provide action implications for each report. Using the following Action Implication Form, please report actions and/or decisions that emerge from the data and findings presented in this report.

Once completed, action implications will be made available upon request.

Appendix B: Open-ended Responses

Responses to "Provide an example(s) of the kind of opportunities provided students to debate and discuss issues."

- A debate class.
- Assignments in speech and debate classes, like presentations.
- Assignments on subjects like this that require student collaboration.
- Assignments, class discussions, and events that the campus or clubs hold.
- At the local level, politics or political involvement in addressing issues is hardly ever addressed. Most of the time students talk about things they can do individually at a local level or talk about wanting national officials to deal with the said issues.
- Being an older student and retired Military, I am often in discussions with fellow students who are interested in the perspective of someone who has had actual experience in some area rather than theoretical "expertise"
- Class projects
- Class projects that require discussions about social problems
- Classes may assign a project to let students experience debate and discuss issues on a specific topic.
- Classroom assignment
- Classroom assignments or projects
- clubs
- Clubs
- could create a group
- Cultural clubs and alliances, mental health seminars and events. (Specialized courses)
- Debates or any sort of political discussion only happens in humanities classes on online discussion posts
- Debating and writing essays in English and political science courses.
- discussed political issues in a Sociology class I took and with a co-worker
- Discussion about issues affecting our communities and across our country might be discussed amongst faculty and or students. Discussions about specific and concerning current events are discussed in clubs and alliances on campus.
- Discussion board assignments.
- During discussion posts, people usually state what they think
- Emails, notifications about clubs discussing these issues, many forums to discuss these topics, teachers
- English class discussions and essays.
- Especially in COMS classes or any class that gives speeches, I gave a politically-charged speech in the winter term.
- For me it has always been in an English or Philosophy class. A lot of issues come up that involve the way that somebody feels about a certain issue in the world. Especially right now in my English class I am writing about the MeToo movement. The great thing about it is that it is meant to be informative rather than persuasive, that way you get to teach rather than preach.
- From different classes, I have been able to freely discuss different debate topics and issues that are going on in society today
- Have not attended any but often receive emails from the Multicultural Center inviting students to discuss a wide range of topics regarding culture and social issues.
- Homeless- everybody should participate in the solution.

- I attend the paralegal program remotely so I cannot speak to the clubs or campus events, but in the paralegal program we are often discussing cases that have relevance to issues that are still socially and culturally relevant.
- I do believe there to have been events of awareness of certain issues.
- I think during discussion boards for certain classes. For example, in my sociology class, we had talks about these topics but had to basically do the reading before just saying our opinion.
- I think zoom meetings or these projects really enable students to debate or discuss about issues that are concerning not only about college debt, housing, but others that could affect us like the banning of books, which has been happening [in] the south lately
- I took a Social Problems course over winter semester and we were able to discuss and debate over social issues in our world today.
- I'm my English class we talk about the world and where we see us struggling. we talk about our personal struggles
- I'm only guessing, based on what I've seen
- I'm not sure, I haven't really been interested in issues
- I've received invitations to attend clubs and webinars.
- in a classroom, or at the beginning of class.
- In a philosophy class I am taking, we often discuss real-world issues.
- In any case a student has the opportunity to speak amongst peers or other adults and they let their voice be heard.
- [In] class conversation
- In class discussing social issues.
- In class during psych or sociology courses or during online discussions.
- In class, we sometimes discuss the social climate after certain news events.
- In classes like Philosophy and Sociology, students are able to go into deeper discussions regarding major social issues impacting society.
- In many of the Political Science courses we are provided time to debate and share ideas with other students but sometimes it does devolve into shouting matches.
- In my English 103 online class, there were often discussion boards as assignments that allowed the discussion of topics important to people and share perspectives
- In my English class, we talked about our opinions on important topics a lot. I also see a lot of clubs with names directed about social issues which I think is very good. I also took an Environmental Ethics class and it was absolutely amazing.
- In the classroom with certain courses.
- in the student hall
- In the various debate and English classes, students are able to discuss the issues that plague society.
- It would be cool if an event was hosted in the library, where students can discuss the events that are happening in our world today and just a safe place to hear each other's political standings.
- It's hardly ever a debate but it can be depending on the class you're taking. Like English courses or political courses. Alternatively just when these kinds of things are brought up naturally in a conversation.
- Lecture
- Most events I viewed were through clubs.
- my classes in the past that I have attended, provided ample opportunities to discuss and debate current social issues, particularly government and English class.

- One example I can think of was my first year here at COC where I had a group project on homelessness. How we are affected by it and how others are affected by it
- Online discussion boards, campus events focused on issues
- Open discussions on global warming in class
- Oppression with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.
- Political club talks about public issue
- Political science class English classes
- Political Science UN meetings.
- Politics
- Projects and discussion tabs
- PTK discusses and addresses social issues when planning and carrying out service projects
- Social media, a zine, or on campus event
- Some clubs provide an opportunity to get people talking about certain topics, and their views on them. They are able to engage in conversation and debate with another student, and hear multiple points of view. I think the most obvious club for this topic would be the COMS club or speech and debate team.
- Some issues are presented to us as discussion boards and we should respectively [share] our opinion and respectively respond to other students' ideas.
- Students have been able to discuss about issues while they are walking around campus. This happens when someone asks them to sign for a particular cause, and this takes place around campus.
- Students with an immigration status
- Students with an immigration status.
- team work online, we can discuss other than the professor's subject or if it is about
- [They] can debate at the class of in zoom meeting
- The kind of opportunities that I've been involved in were through Discussion Forums hosted and guided by members of the Multicultural Center. I've also randomly walked up to groups of students or individual students and engaged in conversations about certain issues.
- There have been various opportunities in the classes I have taken that allowed students to debate and discuss issues, especially in classes like English, Psychology, Sociology, etc. I have also seen booths set up around campus to spread information for things such as voting.
- They always ask us to ask questions on whatever that's not clear to us in class and during personal counseling session
- To decide on the good of our entire community to share ideas, options and comments that equally benefit our community to learn, analyze and perhaps discover a new topic of interest
- When brought up, it is a safe space and everyone is very kind of each other's opinions whether it be about the subject we are learning or our regular daily lives.
- Whole campus events
- With these issues being ever present in our day to day, they come up in settings that facilitate regular conversation. I've only experienced what I checked, though I wouldn't be surprised if these happened there as well.
- Youth organizations, NAACP, outside organizations
- Zoom seminars.
- Zoom webinars, anywhere on campus