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COVID19 Student Survey Spring 2020: Access to Services

Research Brief #207

College of the Canyons

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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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Introduction & Background

As part of the adjustment to, and assessment of the impact of the shift to remote/online operations the office of Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness administered a student survey to examine experiences and needs of students' in light of this drastic change in college operations and instruction. One component of the survey was to assess experiences of students with regard to their access to services since the transition to remote operations in spring 2020, and this report (#207), as one in the series of research briefs on the COVID19 student survey (#203 thru #209), presents the results pertaining to these topics. In addition to instruction being remote, many student services were also transitioned to virtual support.

Method

Survey Instrument

The online survey consisted of access to services questions on:

- Whether students *used* a service listed before and after the transitions to remote/online operations (Online, Admissions & Records, CalWorks/CARE, Counseling, DSPS, EOPS, Financial Aid, Library, Online Education, Student Business Office, Student Health Center, The Hub/Career Services, Tutoring, Veterans)
- How students rated their access to services by indicating if their access was the "same/better" or "not as good as before" for each service listed.
- Open-responses for how their access was the same/better, and how their access was not as good as before, respectively.

Responses to questions related to these topics from 3,697 students were analyzed and disaggregated by various factors. Some of the questions provided students the option to further expand on their responses in open-responses. These responses were coded into themes and where relevant, when an open-response aligned with a given response alternative, it was included in the frequency count for that response alternative. A list of all open-ended responses are available upon request.

Results

Access to Services: Use

Survey questions included items on students' experiences with accessing various student services online after the transition to remote operations. In particular, students were asked to indicate from a list, which of the types of services (e.g. counseling, financial aid, library etc.) they had used and were further asked to indicate whether they used the service "before only", "after only", or "both before and after". The largest proportion of the students surveyed indicated that they accessed at least one of the services listed, both *before and after* the transition (64%). A total of 792 students (26%) indicated that they used at least one of the services listed *before* the transition, and 302 students (10%) indicated they used at least one of the services only *after* the transition (Table 1).

Table 1. Use of service by pre/post transition to remote

	Used before and after	*Used before only*	*Used after only*
Total Number of unduplicated students*	1928	792	302
Admissions & Records	930	555	67
Counseling	1018	513	72
Online Education	1480	266	216
Financial Aid	774	308	47
Tutoring (includes both online or in-person)	665	268	58
Library	758	374	55
Student Health Center	381	140	23
Student Business Office (payments, refunds etc.)	599	258	34
The Hub/Career Services	312	133	25
DSPS	244	71	21
EOPS	195	41	14
CalWORKs/CARE	136	27	9
Veterans Resource Center	119	32	101

**Number of students (unduplicated) who accessed at least one of the services listed either before, after or both.

Access to Services: Assessment Rating

In addition to questions regarding use of services, respondents were asked to indicate whether their access was the "same or better than or not as good as before" or "very helpful, somewhat, or not helpful". In order to cross reference 'use' of the service pre and post transition to remote, in the sections below, assessment ratings are shown for each of the different 'use' groups. Figures 1 and 2 provide the difference between ratings among students who used the specified service before only, in comparison to those who used it after only. Figure 3 presents the assessments for those who used the services before *and* after.

When comparing respondent groups who used services before only, to respondents who used the service after only, fewer indicated "Very/somewhat helpful" across all but one service. EOPS service users had similar ratings across the before and after use groups. The largest drop was for tutoring with 96% of before users indicating it was very/somewhat helpful and 57% of after users indicating so.

Figure 1. Assessment of Service among those who used it before only and after (Services A-E)
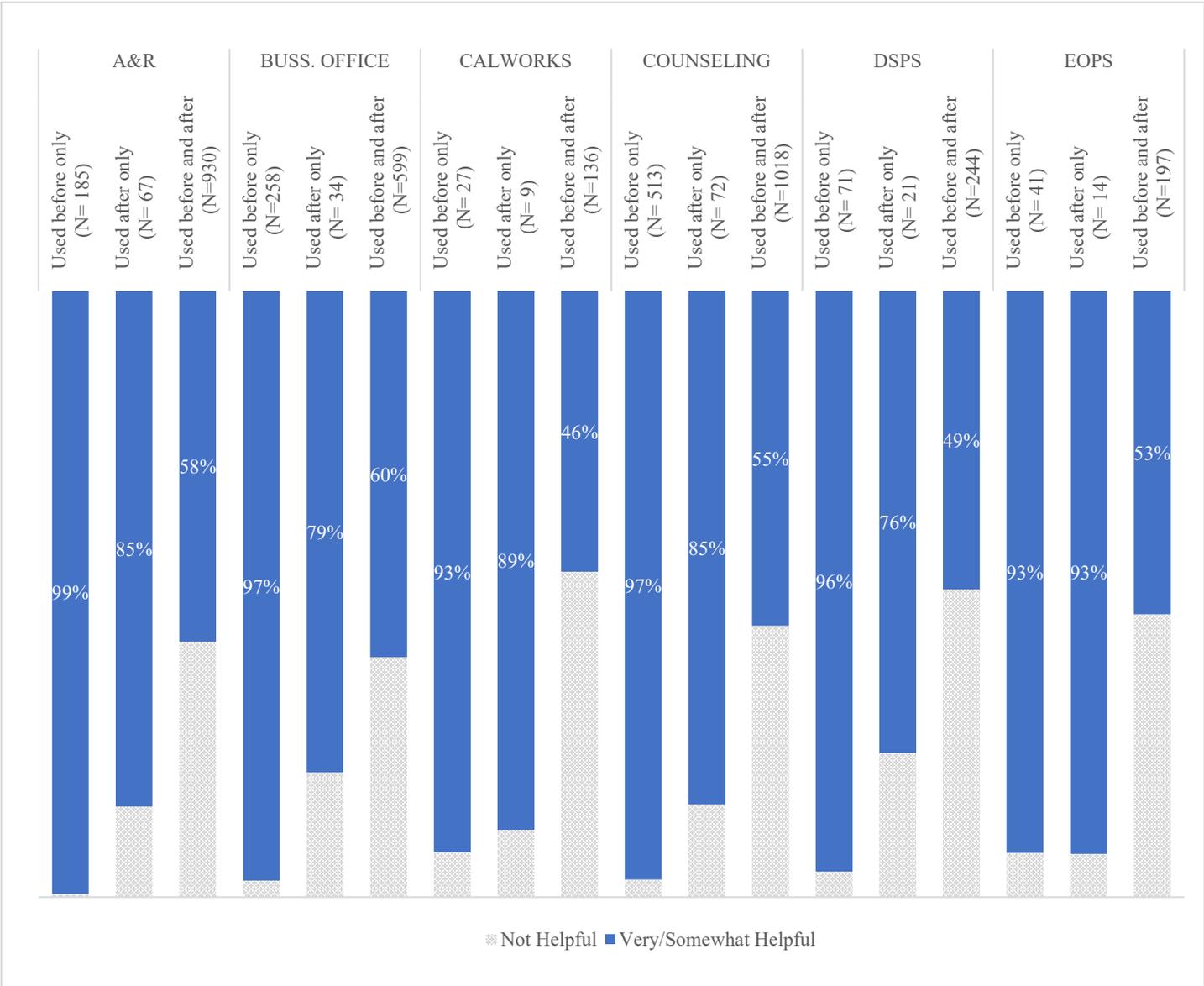
Figure 2. Assessment of Service among those who used it before only, and after, only (Services F-V)
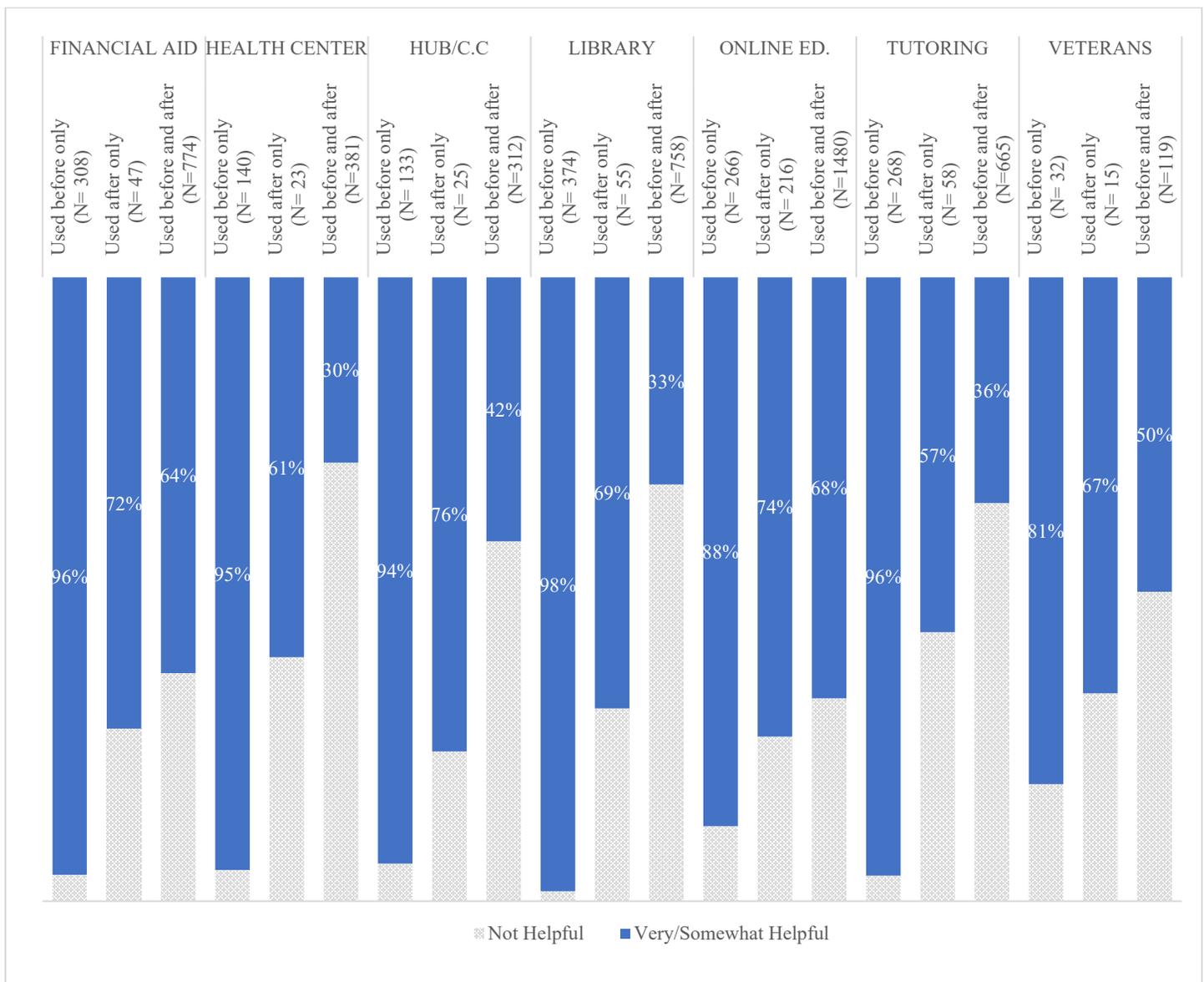
When limited to students who only indicated that they had used the particular service before *and* after the transition, Half, or more than half of the respondents indicated that Access is the 'same or better' with regard to Online Education (68%), Financial Aid (64%), Student Business Office (60%), Admissions & Records (58%), Counseling (55%) EOPS (53%), and Veterans Resources (50%).

*Figure 3. Assessment of Access to service for those who used it before **and** after the transition to remote*
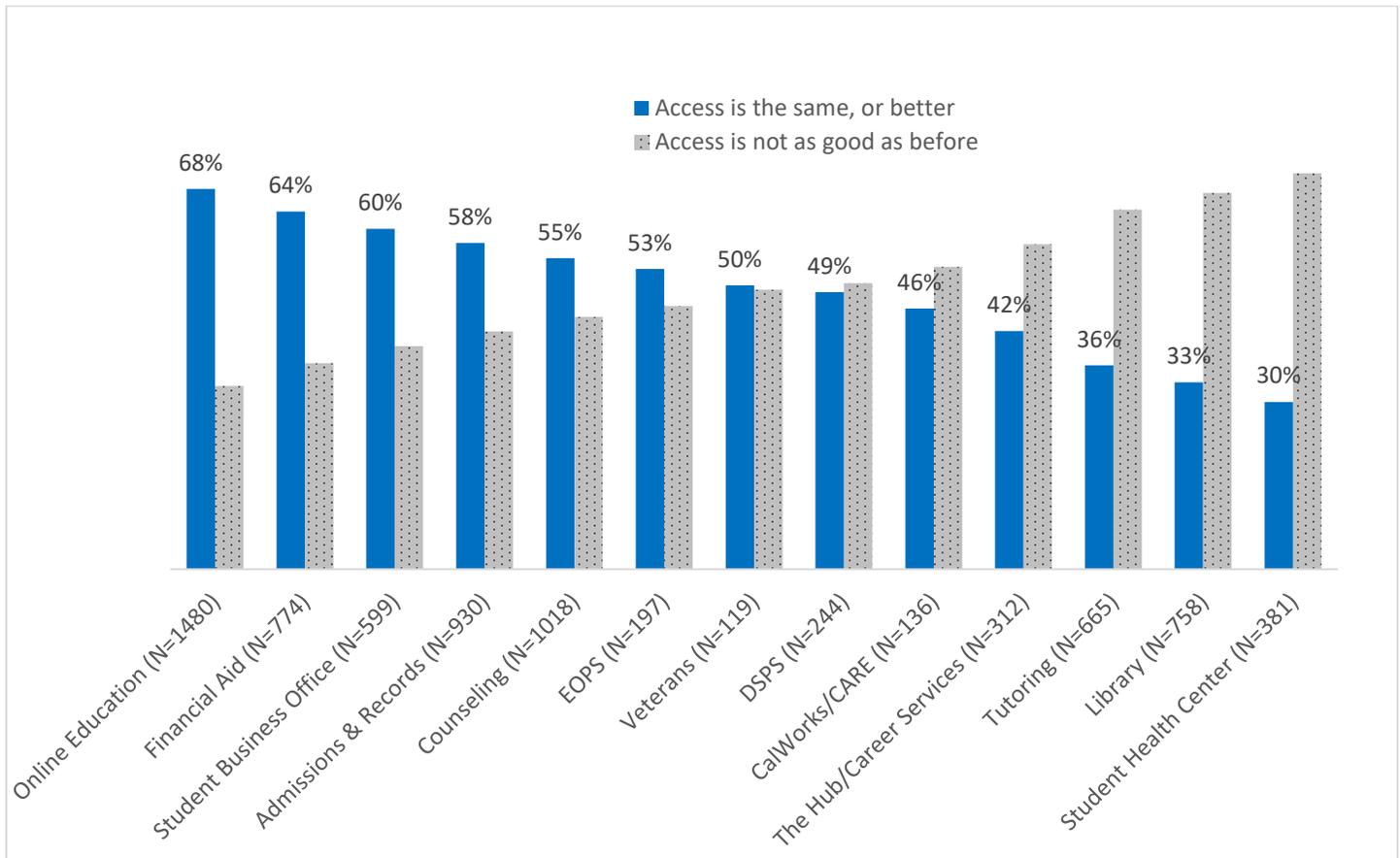
Access is better than before, what has worked well?

In addition to closed-ended rating questions, students were also asked to provide comments to further clarify their responses to the question, "If your access to a service is better than before, what has worked well?" A total of 327 students provided comments on this question. Based on these responses, six general themes were created and responses were coded into one or more of these categories. These themes, and the number of responses in each, are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Themes for open-ended responses to "If your access to a service is better than before, what has worked well?"

Themes	N
Access to Counseling and other Offices/Student Services	95
Communication/Response Times	58
Instruction	49
Technology/Zoom/Website/Online Resources	37
Convenience	29
Other	35

Examples of responses in each theme are listed below.

- **Access to Counseling and other Offices/Student Services:**
    - o "For counseling, it seemed easier to get an appointment and easier to talk one on one. For admissions, I got quick email responses and clarification."
    - o "Getting assigned to a tutor was very simple and required no waiting time at all."
    - o "I think the counseling for classes is better because it's easier to get a counseling appointment. Before it was nearly impossible and there was always a wait."
- **Communication/Response Times:**
    - o "Easy to contact via email and the response time was very fast."
    - o "More marketing (so to speak). They have reached out and I am more aware of their services."
    - o "Response time is great."
- **Instruction:**
    - o "Flexibility in completing assignments and attending lectures, but still getting the same amount of information."
    - o "Instructor preparedness and ability to integrate virtual tools to teach us."
    - o "Teachers are more communicative and finding assignments is easier."
- **Technology/Zoom/Website/Online Resources:**
    - o "More online resources are better for my schedule."
    - o "The accessibility and navigability of the website."
    - o "Zoom was good for counseling. Very efficient."
- **Convenience:**
    - o "I never had time to go into tutoring because I had to work so it being online is a big help."
    - o "I personally liked how easy the online option was for counseling. I found it convenient as a stay-at-home mom."
    - o "Not having to drive all the way to the campus is working better for me."
- **Other:**
    - o "Easier to manage time."
    - o "I feel that the service is more personal. It was easy to get help."
    - o "User friendly."

Access is not as good, what can be improved?

Additionally, an option was provided for students to comment on the question, "If your access to a service is not as good as before, what can be improved given the need for social distancing?" A total of 723 students provided comments on this question. Several of the themes for these responses were similar to those in the previous question that students had indicated worked well. Table 3 detail the themes and count of responses in each theme.

Table 3. Themes for open-ended responses to "If your access to a service is not as good as before, what can be improved given the need for social distancing?"

Themes	N
Communication/Response Times	155
Instruction	142
In-Person	131
Technology/Zoom/Website/Online Resources	124
Campus Services Availability & Quality	119
Other	94

Examples of responses in each theme are listed below.

- **Communication/Response:**
    - "Clear communication, regular updates/notifications."
    - "Communication isn't as available as it should be."
    - "Faster reply times, more people on the phones answering or replying to emails."
- **Instruction:**
    - "I think the most important thing for online learning, is to require all courses to have a canvas shell…"
    - "Teachers need to change their methods of teaching, especially testing, considering the switch and the given circumstances…"
    - "There are some classes that are too complicated and in depth to teach online. Accessing the course is fine but I feel that I truly haven't been understanding what I've been working on; therefore, I feel like I really am not earning my grade in the course."
- **In-person:**
    - "A live person. It's difficult to ask a computer a question."
    - "Appointments for visiting campus for tutoring, dsps, any other needs, of course with health regulations in place with face masks, cleaning etc."
    - "Some things require in-person meetings, especially for those of us with accommodations."
- **Technology/Website/Resources:**
    - "Living outside the metropolitan area makes it hard to learn due to limited internet access and lack of a reliable laptop or desktop. Maybe for future reference the college can lend out hotspots and or a laptop of some sort to help students get through the course."
    - "More resources online and suggestions on how to use the service in online format."
    - "There have just been some issues with classes that are now using the Zoom platform…"
- **Campus Services Availability & Quality:**
    - "I suggest counseling should be given more time per student…"
    - "Just finding a way to let students access the materials…I had to buy a textbook because I could no longer access the library copy."
    - "Tutoring online has proven quite difficult as it's better in person. The reason for that comes from the fact that one is more interactive that way…"
- **Other:**
    - "…Honestly we should make the option to opt out of this semester more accessible…"
    - "Make it feel more connected."
    - "Maybe have books shipped to you…"

Recommendations

Based on the results of the COVID19 student survey items related to access to services, the following are recommended.

- Consider in-person components as part of providing remote access to various services.

For questions about this research brief, please contact Preeta Saxena, Ph.D., Director Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at (661)362-3072.