




Revealing Institutional  
Strengths and Challenges



INSTITUTIONAL REPORT  
RISC STUDENT SURVEY FALL 2020  
**WOODLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

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# 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; WCC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to WCC, 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 WCC's greatest strength, and if WCC 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 2,864 WCC students. There were 268 responses used in this report, for a 9.4% response rate. Median time WCC students spent taking the survey was 9.6 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 14,420 respondents.

**Table 1.1 Community colleges in the benchmark sample**

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	15%	City	20%	Under 1,000	10%
Mixed	45%	Suburb	30%	1,000-4,999	40%
High Transfer	30%	Town	25%	5,000-9,999	30%
Other	10%	Rural	25%	10,000-19,999	20%
				20,000 and above	0%

# CHALLENGES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

## 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 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?**

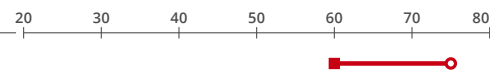




	Yes	No
Paying college and living expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with financial aid office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Military and employer tuition benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 WCC in Fall 2020 in the five main areas. *Success in courses* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 75% 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**

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Success in courses	75	60	<b>+15</b>	202	
Work and personal issues	63	58	+5	170	
Academic support services	41	32	<b>+9</b>	109	
Finances and financial aid	40	39	+1	108	
Campus environment	21	20	+1	55	

**Notes**

Green indicates that WCC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates WCC 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  $n=268$ .

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, 75% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Success in courses*. The most common subcategory was *Online classes*, with 62% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Online classes* subcategory was *Difficulty learning the material on my own*, with 45% 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**

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	75	60	+15	202
Online classes	62	45	+17	167
Difficulty learning the material on my own	45	30	+15	121
Difficulty keeping up because of no regular class times	34	21	+13	92
Lack of interaction with faculty	30	23	+7	80
Lack of interaction with other students	29	18	+11	78
Difficulty using course technology	16	14	+2	43
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	6	4	+2	17
None of the above	4	4	+0	10
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	36	20	+16	96
Courses were too hard	15	6	+9	40
Required to take too many	9	3	+6	24
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	6	4	+2	15
Courses were too easy	1	0	+1	3
None of the above	15	10	+5	40
Doing college-level work	24	18	+6	65
Not motivated to study	15	8	+7	41
Poor study skills	13	7	+6	35
Poor planning and time management skills	12	9	+3	33
Required level of math was difficult	9	5	+4	25
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	9	6	+3	23
Took too many classes	4	3	+1	12
Skipped too many classes	1	1	+0	3
None of the above	2	3	-1	5
Faculty	17	17	+0	46
Did not teach well	12	11	+1	31
Feedback on assignments not helpful	8	8	+0	21
Not concerned about my academic success	7	7	+0	18
Not responsive to email	6	7	-1	17
Took too long to grade assignments	6	6	+0	17
Not helpful outside of class	4	6	-2	12
Not available to meet in person	1	2	-1	4
None of the above	2	2	+0	6

**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**

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	63	58	+5	170
Family	47	36	+11	127
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	32	26	+6	85
Difficulty dealing with health of family	21	14	+7	55
Difficulty finding childcare	7	5	+2	20
Family does not support me going to college	3	3	+0	9
None of the above	7	5	+2	20
Work	37	38	-1	100
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	18	22	-4	47
Work schedule conflicts with classes	15	13	+2	40
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	14	16	-2	37
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	12	12	+0	31
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	9	10	-1	25
None of the above	9	6	+3	25
Health and disability issues	26	20	+6	71
Emotional/mental health issue	19	13	+6	50
Physical health issue	13	10	+3	34
Pregnancy and childbirth	1	1	+0	3
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	0	+1	2
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	1	1	+0	2
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	0	0	+0	1
None of the above	4	2	+2	12
Transportation to campus	9	9	+0	23
Car or carpool not reliable	4	4	+0	10
Public transportation system not reliable	3	2	+1	8
Travel to campus takes a long time	3	3	+0	7
Campus transportation system not reliable	2	1	+1	5
None of the above	1	2	-1	4

**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 academic support services**

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	41	32	+9	109
Registering for courses	21	15	+6	55
Course was offered but full	9	4	+5	23
Course not offered at times I needed	8	5	+3	21
Course not offered this semester	7	3	+4	19
Had a registration hold	6	4	+2	15
None of the above	5	6	-1	14
Academic advising	18	13	+5	49
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	11	8	+3	30
Not told to take necessary course	6	4	+2	16
Told to take unnecessary course	4	3	+1	11
Course/program materials were incorrect	2	2	+0	6
None of the above	4	3	+1	10
Tutoring	15	8	+7	39
Tutoring hours not convenient	7	3	+4	18
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	6	2	+4	16
Tutors not available when I need assistance	5	3	+2	14
Tutoring not helpful	2	2	+0	6
None of the above	4	2	+2	10
Computer and science labs	11	7	+4	29
Problems using computers and equipment	4	2	+2	12
Lab hours not convenient	3	2	+1	8
Lab busy when needed	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	4	3	+1	11
Library	8	5	+3	22
Resources I needed not available online	3	1	+2	9
Hours not convenient	3	1	+2	8
Study spaces not available when needed	3	1	+2	7
Staff not helpful	0	1	-1	1
None of the above	2	2	+0	6

**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 finances and financial aid**

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	40	39	+1	108
Paying college and living expenses	34	32	+2	90
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	25	21	+4	66
Books, software, and other supplies	22	20	+2	59
Tuition and fees	12	19	-7	32
Childcare	4	4	+0	12
None of the above	1	1	+0	4
Working with financial aid office	18	14	+4	47
Errors processing financial aid	10	5	+5	28
Process was unclear	8	7	+1	22
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	7	7	+0	20
Delays in getting money	6	5	+1	17
Unable to answer questions	6	4	+2	17
Gave me wrong information	4	3	+1	12
None of the above	1	2	-1	4
Military and employer tuition benefits	1	2	-1	4
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	4
Experienced delays receiving benefits	0	1	-1	1
Received wrong information about benefits	0	0	+0	1
None of the above	0	0	+0	0

**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**

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	21	20	+1	55
Interactions with other students	15	9	+6	41
Did not know many other students	10	6	+4	27
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	1	1	+0	4
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	0	0	+0	1
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	0	0	+0	0
None of the above	5	3	+2	13
Parking	5	9	-4	13
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	3	8	-5	7
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	1	1	+0	4
Difficulty getting parking pass	0	1	-1	1
None of the above	1	1	+0	4
Safety and crime	4	2	+2	10
Campus not safe	1	0	+1	4
Parking lots not safe	1	1	+0	3
Was a victim of a crime	1	0	+1	2
None of the above	1	1	+0	4

**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

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. Counseling was the most commonly used office, with 64% reporting using the office during the Fall 2020 semester, followed by Financial Aid (55%) and Admissions and Records (41%).

**Table 3.1 Office usage**

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff. <i>n</i>	
Counseling	64	47	+17	
Financial Aid	55	43	+12	
Admissions and Records	41	36	+5	
Student Success Center-Tutoring	23	18	+5	
Library	21	22	-1	

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**

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					40 50 60 70 80 90
<b>Admissions and Records</b>					
Available	67	63	+4	111	
Concerned	57	54	+3	111	
Effective	66	67	-1	111	
<b>Counseling</b>					
Available	70	65	+5	172	
Concerned	60	60	+0	172	
Effective	72	68	+4	172	
<b>Financial Aid</b>					
Available	61	56	+5	146	
Concerned	54	47	+7	145	
Effective	60	58	+2	144	
<b>Library</b>					
Available	70	75	-5	56	
Concerned	68	64	+4	56	
Effective	84	75	+9	56	
<b>Student Success Center-Tutoring</b>					
Available	79	68	+11	62	
Concerned	74	62	+12	61	
Effective	75	65	+10	60	

### Notes

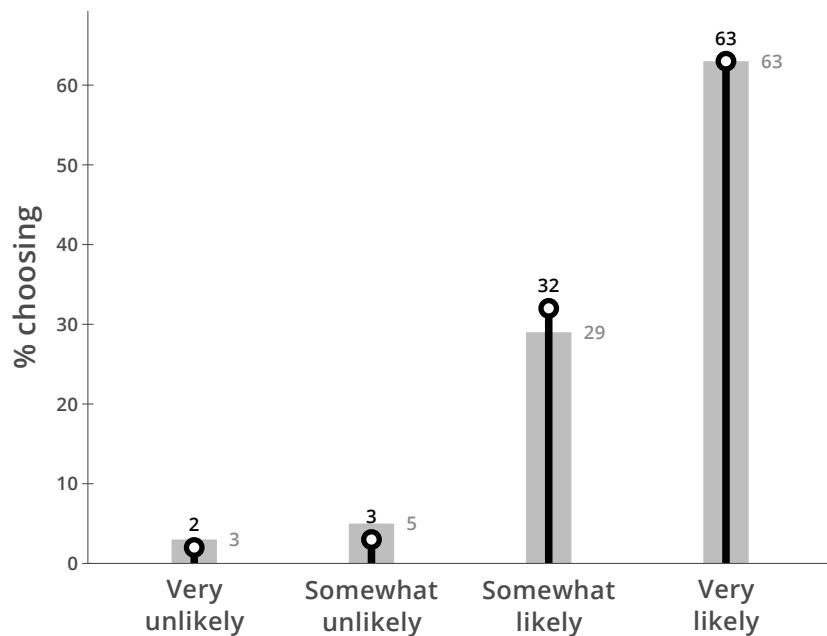
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that WCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates WCC has a lower proportion. Bold 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

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

The first question, “Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend WCC to a friend?”, is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with WCC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 95% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to to recommend WCC. The WCC distribution of responses is not statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.1 Would student recommend WCC to a friend?

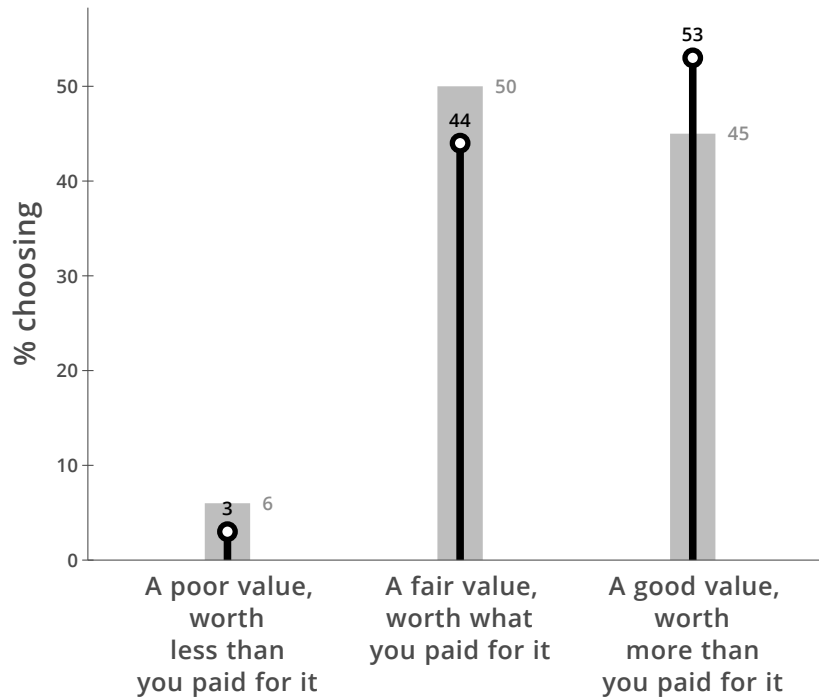


**Notes**

WCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 3.2, p < .37; n = 264$ .

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at WCC (see Figure 4.2). 97% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The WCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.2 Overall value of education?**



**Notes**

WCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 7.8, p < .03; n = 263$ .

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 WCC. 61% chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well WCC 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, 44% of the students who chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary goal indicated that WCC is doing *very well* in terms of preparing them for a four-year degree.

**Table 4.1 How well is education helping accomplish goals**

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
<b>Purpose of taking courses at WCC</b>					
Prepare for a four-year degree	61	50	<b>+11</b>	160	
Increase job and career opportunities	31	42	<b>-11</b>	82	
Self-improvement	8	7	+1	22	
<b>How well is education at WCC ...</b>					
Prepare for a four-year degree	44	44	+0	159	
Increase job and career opportunities	33	44	<b>-11</b>	81	
Self-improvement	50	44	+6	22	

**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 WCC has a higher proportion of students reporting that WCC is helping them achieve their educational goal compared to the benchmark sample; red indicates a lower proportion.



# RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

**Table 5.1 Gender identity**

	%	<i>n</i>
Female/Woman	76	185
Male/Man	23	55
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	0
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	1	2
Another gender identity	0	1

**Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity**

	%	<i>n</i>
African American or Black	6	14
Asian American or Asian	15	35
Native American or Alaska Native	6	13
Hispanic or Latino	52	122
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3	6
White	40	94

**Notes**

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

**Table 5.3 Age**

	%	<i>n</i>
18 or younger	15	35
19-24	34	81
25-34	26	62
35-44	16	38
45-54	7	18
55 or older	3	7

**Table 5.4 Part-time/full-time status**

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	53	131
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	47	114

**Table 5.5 Total credit hours earned at WCC**

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
None	13	31
1-15 credits	20	49
16-29 credits	22	54
30-45 credits	20	48
46 or more credits	24	58