




Revealing Institutional
Strengths and Challenges

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INSTITUTIONAL REPORT
RISC STUDENT SURVEY SPRING 2023
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 Spring 2023 to 637 WCC students. There were 433 responses used in this report, for a 68% response rate. Median time WCC students spent taking the survey was 7.7 minutes.

The table below provides some background information about your college's benchmark sample. Forty-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 28,853 respondents.

Table 1.1 Community colleges in the benchmark sample

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	24%	City	48%	Under 1,000	7%
Mixed	41%	Suburb	21%	1,000-4,999	28%
High Transfer	24%	Town	14%	5,000-9,999	31%
Other	10%	Rural	14%	10,000-19,999	28%
				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 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 Spring 2023 in the five main areas. *Work and personal issues* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 64% 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>	
Work and personal issues	64	60	+4	277	
Success in courses	54	52	+2	233	
Finances and financial aid	45	38	+7	193	
Academic support services	35	32	+3	152	
Campus environment	13	19	-6	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 $n=433$.

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, 64% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Work and personal issues*. The most common subcategory was *Family*, with 43% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Family* subcategory was *Difficulty balancing demands of family and college*, with 33% 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 work and personal life

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	64	60	+4	277
Family	43	35	+8	188
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	33	25	+8	145
Difficulty dealing with health of family	21	13	+8	90
Difficulty finding childcare	10	5	+5	42
Family does not support me going to college	6	4	+2	26
None of the above	5	6	-1	22
Work	38	38	+0	164
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	21	22	-1	93
Work schedule conflicts with classes	18	14	+4	76
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	18	17	+1	76
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	16	10	+6	70
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	15	13	+2	63
None of the above	5	5	+0	21
Health and disability issues	29	23	+6	124
Emotional/mental health issue	21	16	+5	91
Physical health issue	17	12	+5	73
Pregnancy and childbirth	2	1	+1	8
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	1	+0	6
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	1	1	+0	4
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	1	1	+0	3
None of the above	3	2	+1	11
Transportation to campus	18	15	+3	76
Car or carpool not reliable	11	7	+4	48
Travel to campus takes a long time	8	6	+2	34
Public transportation system not reliable	6	4	+2	28
Campus transportation system not reliable	3	1	+2	11
None of the above	2	3	-1	10

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 success in courses

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	54	52	+2	233
Online classes	30	30	+0	130
Difficulty learning the material on my own	19	17	+2	83
Difficulty keeping up because no regular class time	14	12	+2	59
Lack of interaction with faculty	12	14	-2	52
Lack of interaction with other students	12	10	+2	51
Difficulty using course technology	9	8	+1	39
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	3	3	+0	15
None of the above	5	4	+1	21
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	27	21	+6	119
Courses were too hard	13	7	+6	58
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	7	4	+3	29
Required to take too many	5	4	+1	21
Courses were too easy	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	11	9	+2	47
Doing college-level work	20	20	+0	88
Poor planning and time management skills	12	11	+1	50
Not motivated to study	9	9	+0	38
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	8	7	+1	36
Required level of math was difficult	8	5	+3	35
Poor study skills	8	9	-1	35
Took too many classes	3	3	+0	14
Skipped too many classes	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	3	3	+0	12
Faculty	14	18	-4	59
Did not teach well	9	11	-2	40
Feedback on assignments not helpful	7	8	-1	32
Not responsive to email	6	6	+0	28
Took too long to grade assignments	6	7	-1	27
Not concerned about my academic success	6	7	-1	24
Not helpful outside of class	5	6	-1	22
Not available to meet in person	1	2	-1	6
None of the above	2	3	-1	7

Notes

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

Table 2.4 Challenges with finances and financial aid

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	45	38	+7	193
Paying college and living expenses	39	34	+5	171
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	33	24	+9	143
Books, software, and other supplies	22	19	+3	97
Tuition and fees	12	20	-8	54
Childcare	6	4	+2	27
None of the above	1	1	+0	5
Working with financial aid office	16	13	+3	70
Process was unclear	9	6	+3	40
Errors processing financial aid	7	5	+2	31
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	7	5	+2	29
Delays in getting money	7	5	+2	29
Unable to answer questions	6	4	+2	27
Gave me wrong information	4	3	+1	18
None of the above	2	2	+0	7
Military and employer tuition benefits	2	2	+0	8
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	6
Received wrong information about benefits	1	0	+1	3
Experienced delays receiving benefits	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	0	1	-1	1

Notes

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

Table 2.5 Challenges with academic support services

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	35	32	+3	152
Registering for courses	22	18	+4	96
Course not offered at times I needed	11	7	+4	46
Course was offered but full	9	7	+2	39
Course not offered this semester	6	4	+2	28
Had a registration hold	5	4	+1	22
None of the above	6	6	+0	27
Academic advising	14	14	+0	60
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	7	8	-1	31
Not told to take necessary course	6	5	+1	25
Told to take unnecessary course	3	3	+0	14
Course/program materials were incorrect	3	2	+1	12
None of the above	3	3	+0	13
Tutoring	8	8	+0	36
Tutoring hours not convenient	4	3	+1	17
Tutors not available when I need assistance	3	3	+0	15
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	3	3	+0	13
Tutoring not helpful	2	2	+0	10
None of the above	1	2	-1	5
Library	7	5	+2	31
Hours not convenient	4	1	+3	16
Resources I needed not available online	3	1	+2	11
Study spaces not available when needed	1	1	+0	5
Staff not helpful	0	1	-1	1
None of the above	1	2	-1	5
Computer and science labs	6	6	+0	28
Problems using computers and equipment	4	2	+2	16
Lab hours not convenient	2	1	+1	8
Lab busy when needed	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	1	2	-1	5

Notes

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

Table 2.6 Challenges with the campus environment

	WCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	13	19	-6	55
Interactions with other students	7	10	-3	31
Did not know many other students	5	6	-1	20
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	1	1	+0	5
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	0	0	+0	2
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	3	3	+0	13
Parking	6	13	-7	24
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	2	10	-8	9
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	1	1	+0	6
Difficulty getting parking pass	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	2	2	+0	10
Safety and crime	4	3	+1	19
Parking lots not safe	2	1	+1	7
Campus not safe	1	1	+0	6
Was a victim of a crime	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	1	1	+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.

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 Department was the most commonly used office, with 69% reporting using the office during the Spring 2023 semester, followed by Financial Aid Office (51%) and Admissions and Records (42%).

Table 3.1 Office usage

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Counseling Department	69	47	+22	299	
Financial Aid Office	51	37	+14	221	
Admissions and Records	42	27	+15	184	
Library	40	35	+5	174	
Tutoring Support Services	24	19	+5	104	

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 five other colleges surveyed students about the same type of office.

Table 3.2 Student-administration interactions

	WCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					50 60 70 80 90
Admissions and Records					
Available	75	67	+8	184	
Concerned	61	56	+5	183	
Effective	74	68	+6	182	
Counseling Department					
Available	65	58	+7	296	
Concerned	66	56	+10	295	
Effective	70	63	+7	295	
Financial Aid Office					
Available	67	63	+4	221	
Concerned	57	51	+6	219	
Effective	68	62	+6	219	
Library					
Available	85	81	+4	173	
Concerned	70	63	+7	172	
Effective	84	78	+6	171	
Tutoring Support Services					
Available	69	72	-3	104	
Concerned	74	60	+14	103	
Effective	69	67	+2	103	

Notes

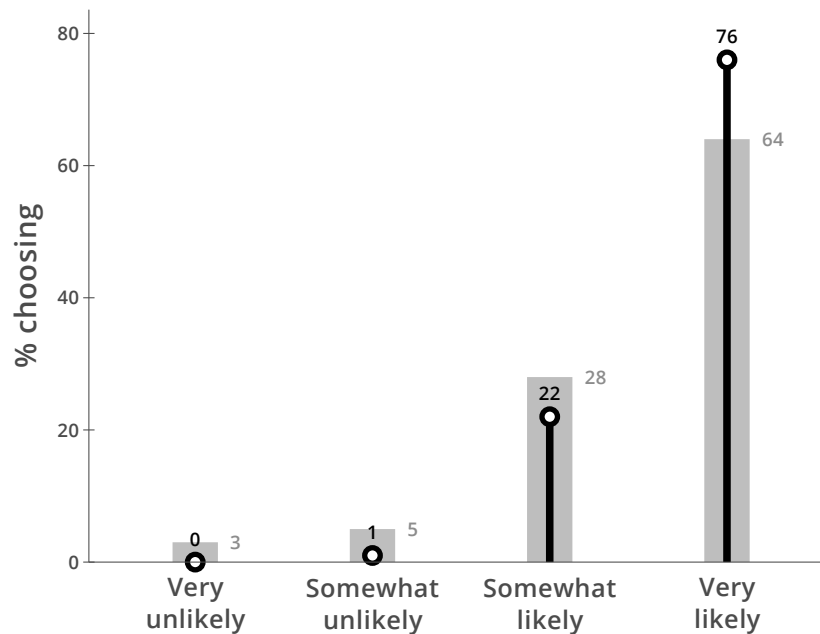
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that WCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates WCC has a lower proportion. Bold 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. 98% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to recommend WCC. The WCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.1 Would student recommend WCC to a friend?

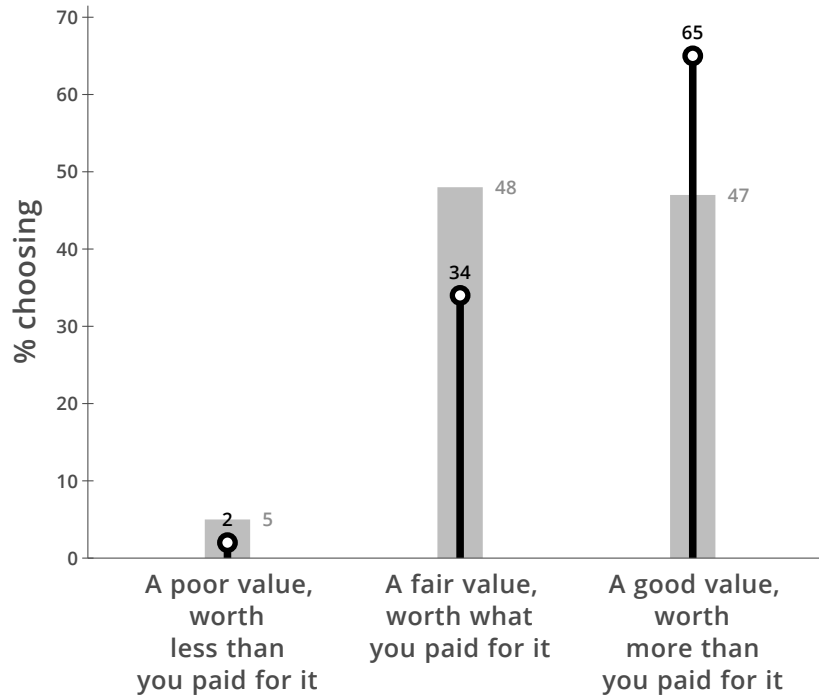


Notes

WCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 24.4, p < .01; n = 426$.

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at WCC (see Figure 4.2). 99% 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. $\chi^2 = 34.8, p < .01; n = 426$.

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. 57% 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, 58% 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>	
Purpose of taking courses at WCC					
Prepare for a four-year degree	57	48	+9	243	
Increase job and career opportunities	35	42	-7	151	
Self-improvement	8	10	-2	33	
How well is education at WCC ...					
Prepare for a four-year degree	58	47	+11	243	
Increase job and career opportunities	50	46	+4	150	
Self-improvement	64	48	+16	33	

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

05

Table 5.1 Gender identity

	%	<i>n</i>
Female/Woman	75	311
Male/Man	22	93
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	0
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	1	3
Another gender identity	2	9

Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity

	%	<i>n</i>
African American or Black	5	21
Asian American or Asian	16	64
Native American or Alaska Native	4	15
Hispanic or Latino	49	201
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	9
White	38	158

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	12	49
19-24	40	165
25-34	21	86
35-44	15	63
45-54	10	40
55 or older	3	14

Table 5.4 Part-time/full-time status

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	56	234
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	44	182

Table 5.5 Total credit hours earned at WCC

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
None	9	36
1-15 credits	32	132
16-29 credits	21	85
30-45 credits	17	72
46 or more credits	21	88