



Revealing Institutional  
Strengths and Challenges

Three vertical bars of varying heights are positioned in the background. The leftmost bar is medium height, the middle bar is the shortest, and the rightmost bar is the tallest. They are all a light gray color.

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT  
RISC STUDENT SURVEY FALL 2020  
**YUBA COLLEGE**

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# RISC SURVEY OVERVIEW

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## 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; YC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to YC, 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 YC's greatest strength, and if YC 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 5,526 YC students. There were 870 responses used in this report, for a 15.7% response rate. Median time YC students spent taking the survey was 8.4 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 13,818 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	45%
High Transfer	30%	Town	25%	5,000-9,999	25%
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 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 YC in Fall 2020 in the five main areas. *Success in courses* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 66% 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**

	YC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Success in courses	66	60	<b>+6</b>	572	
Work and personal issues	58	58	+0	508	
Academic support services	40	32	<b>+8</b>	345	
Finances and financial aid	36	39	-3	316	
Campus environment	18	20	-2	157	

**Notes**

Green indicates that YC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates YC 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  $n=870$ .

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, 66% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Success in courses*. The most common subcategory was *Online classes*, with 51% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Online classes* subcategory was *Difficulty learning the material on my own*, with 39% 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**

	YC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	66	60	+6	572
Online classes	51	45	+6	444
Difficulty learning the material on my own	39	31	+8	340
Difficulty keeping up because of no regular class times	28	21	+7	243
Lack of interaction with faculty	27	23	+4	239
Lack of interaction with other students	26	19	+7	223
Difficulty using course technology	17	14	+3	149
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	6	4	+2	48
None of the above	2	4	-2	18
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	28	21	+7	242
Courses were too hard	11	7	+4	98
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	5	4	+1	42
Required to take too many	5	4	+1	40
Courses were too easy	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	12	10	+2	103
Doing college-level work	21	18	+3	187
Not motivated to study	11	8	+3	93
Poor planning and time management skills	10	10	+0	91
Poor study skills	9	8	+1	78
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	8	6	+2	71
Required level of math was difficult	7	5	+2	64
Took too many classes	3	3	+0	28
Skipped too many classes	1	1	+0	13
None of the above	3	3	+0	30
Faculty	16	17	-1	137
Did not teach well	10	11	-1	86
Feedback on assignments not helpful	6	8	-2	52
Not concerned about my academic success	6	7	-1	51
Not responsive to email	6	7	-1	48
Not helpful outside of class	5	6	-1	41
Took too long to grade assignments	4	6	-2	34
Not available to meet in person	1	2	-1	12
None of the above	4	2	+2	33

**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**

	YC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	58	58	+0	508
Family	41	36	+5	355
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	33	26	+7	283
Difficulty dealing with health of family	14	14	+0	125
Difficulty finding childcare	5	5	+0	46
Family does not support me going to college	3	3	+0	27
None of the above	5	5	+0	45
Work	35	39	-4	303
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	18	22	-4	156
Work schedule conflicts with classes	14	13	+1	118
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	13	16	-3	113
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	10	10	+0	87
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	10	12	-2	86
None of the above	6	6	+0	50
Health and disability issues	20	20	+0	175
Emotional/mental health issue	14	13	+1	125
Physical health issue	10	10	+0	87
Pregnancy and childbirth	1	1	+0	10
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	0	+1	6
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	1	1	+0	6
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	0	0	+0	4
None of the above	2	2	+0	16
Transportation to campus	10	9	+1	89
Car or carpool not reliable	6	4	+2	51
Travel to campus takes a long time	3	3	+0	29
Public transportation system not reliable	3	2	+1	26
Campus transportation system not reliable	1	1	+0	11
None of the above	2	2	+0	16

**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**

	YC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	40	32	+8	345
Registering for courses	22	15	+7	192
Course not offered at times I needed	11	5	+6	93
Course was offered but full	9	4	+5	75
Course not offered this semester	7	3	+4	64
Had a registration hold	5	4	+1	41
None of the above	7	6	+1	60
Academic advising	18	13	+5	157
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	12	8	+4	101
Not told to take necessary course	6	4	+2	54
Told to take unnecessary course	5	3	+2	41
Course/program materials were incorrect	3	2	+1	24
None of the above	3	3	+0	27
Tutoring	13	8	+5	110
Tutors not available when I need assistance	6	3	+3	48
Tutoring hours not convenient	5	3	+2	43
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	3	2	+1	29
Tutoring not helpful	3	2	+1	29
None of the above	3	2	+1	30
Computer and science labs	10	7	+3	88
Problems using computers and equipment	4	2	+2	33
Lab hours not convenient	3	2	+1	22
Lab busy when needed	1	1	+0	10
None of the above	5	3	+2	43
Library	6	5	+1	51
Hours not convenient	2	2	+0	17
Resources I needed not available online	2	2	+0	17
Study spaces not available when needed	1	1	+0	12
Staff not helpful	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	2	2	+0	19

**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**

	YC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	36	39	-3	316
Paying college and living expenses	29	32	-3	254
Books, software, and other supplies	22	20	+2	190
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	20	21	-1	172
Tuition and fees	7	20	-13	57
Childcare	4	4	+0	35
None of the above	1	1	+0	9
Working with financial aid office	15	14	+1	134
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	8	7	+1	67
Process was unclear	7	7	+0	59
Errors processing financial aid	6	5	+1	56
Delays in getting money	6	5	+1	50
Unable to answer questions	3	5	-2	30
Gave me wrong information	3	3	+0	25
None of the above	2	2	+0	14
Military and employer tuition benefits	1	2	-1	11
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	5
Experienced delays receiving benefits	0	1	-1	3
Received wrong information about benefits	0	0	+0	3
None of the above	0	0	+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.

**Table 2.6 Challenges with the campus environment**

	YC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	18	20	-2	157
Interactions with other students	11	9	+2	94
Did not know many other students	8	6	+2	67
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	1	1	+0	10
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	1	0	+1	5
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	0	0	+0	2
None of the above	3	3	+0	23
Parking	7	9	-2	63
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	4	8	-4	38
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	2	1	+1	16
Difficulty getting parking pass	1	1	+0	13
None of the above	1	1	+0	9
Safety and crime	3	2	+1	28
Parking lots not safe	1	1	+0	13
Campus not safe	1	1	+0	9
Was a victim of a crime	0	0	+0	1
None of the above	1	1	+0	13

**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 59% reporting using the office during the Fall 2020 semester, followed by Financial Aid (49%) and Admissions and Records (34%).

**Table 3.1 Office usage**

	YC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>
Counseling	59	46	+13	
Financial Aid	49	43	+6	
Admissions and Records	34	36	-2	
Library	19	22	-3	
Tutoring	16	19	-3	

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 benchmark 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**

	YC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					40      50      60      70      80
<b>Admissions and Records</b>					
Available	60	63	-3	298	
Concerned	50	54	-4	293	
Effective	69	66	+3	289	
<b>Counseling</b>					
Available	60	67	<b>-7</b>	510	
Concerned	58	60	-2	506	
Effective	69	68	+1	502	
<b>Financial Aid</b>					
Available	53	56	-3	426	
Concerned	50	47	+3	424	
Effective	62	58	+4	421	
<b>Library</b>					
Available	77	74	+3	161	
Concerned	61	64	-3	160	
Effective	76	75	+1	159	
<b>Tutoring</b>					
Available	71	68	+3	138	
Concerned	65	63	+2	136	
Effective	67	66	+1	136	

### Notes

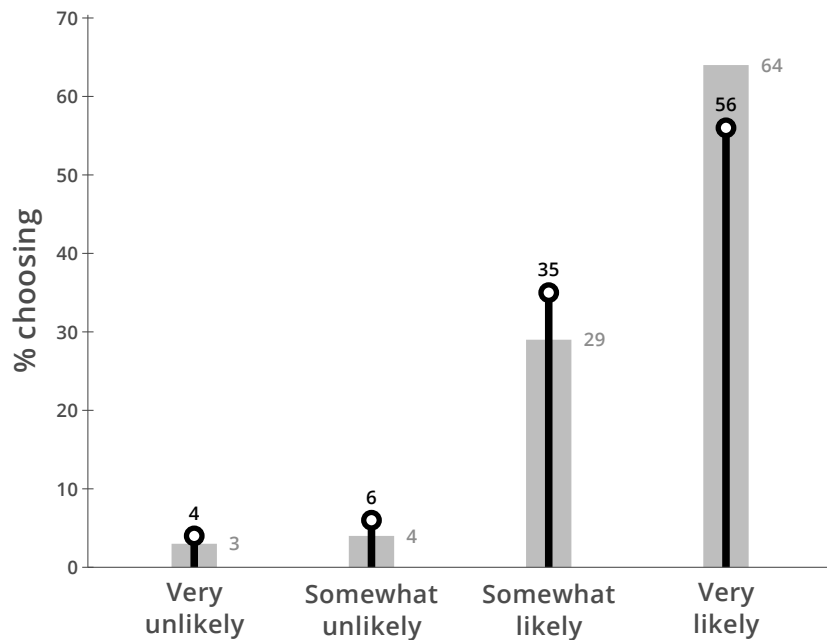
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that YC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates YC has a lower proportion. Bold indicates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

The first question, “Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend YC to a friend?”, is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with YC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 91% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to to recommend YC. The YC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.1 Would student recommend YC to a friend?**

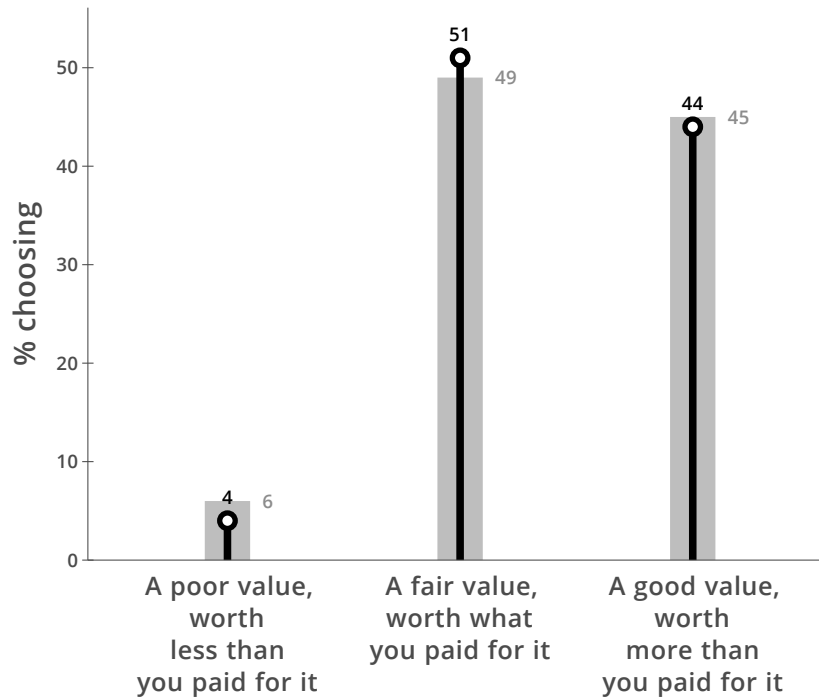


**Notes**

YC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 25.4, p < .01; n = 854.$

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at YC (see Figure 4.2). 95% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The YC distribution of responses is not statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.2 Overall value of education?**



**Notes**

YC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 3.0, p < .23; n = 850$ .

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 YC. 57% chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well YC 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, 39% of the students who chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary goal indicated that YC is doing *very well* in terms of preparing them for a four-year degree.

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

	YC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
<b>Purpose of taking courses at YC</b>					0 10 20 30 40 50 60
Prepare for a four-year degree	57	50	<b>+7</b>	490	
Increase job and career opportunities	36	42	<b>-6</b>	312	
Self-improvement	6	8	<b>-2</b>	53	
<b>How well is education at YC ...</b>					
Prepare for a four-year degree	39	44	<b>-5</b>	489	
Increase job and career opportunities	43	44	-1	311	
Self-improvement	42	44	-2	53	

**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 YC has a higher proportion of students reporting that YC 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	71	571
Male/Man	28	225
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	0
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	1	5
Another gender identity	0	3

**Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity**

	%	<i>n</i>
African American or Black	7	52
Asian American or Asian	24	189
Native American or Alaska Native	5	38
Hispanic or Latino	34	266
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	16
White	43	342

**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	24	192
19-24	39	315
25-34	19	154
35-44	12	99
45-54	4	34
55 or older	2	16

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

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	49	393
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	51	413

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

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
None	17	135
1-15 credits	25	201
16-29 credits	18	142
30-45 credits	16	126
46 or more credits	25	196