

# **Executive Summary of the Findings and Recommendations from the 2016 Santa Barbara City College Student College Experiences Survey**

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The Student College Experiences survey conducted in the 2016 spring semester was designed to learn about the degree to which students enrolled in credit classes were satisfied with the college in general and with the instruction and support services they received. The survey included questions to measure the degree to which students took advantage of in-class and out-of-class opportunities provided by the college to promote their learning, development, and achievement of educational and/or career objectives. The survey also included questions related to students' pre-college experiences, living conditions, and the degree to which they felt they made progress toward achieving each of the institutional student learning outcomes.

This report provides a summary of the major findings for each of the topics included in the survey. Each section of this summary provides a link to the full report for the topic. The full reports show the responses to each of the survey questions and comparisons of responses by ethnicity/race and, where appropriate, other variables such as part-time vs full-time enrollment status, educational objectives and residency.

## **Methodology**

The 2016 spring semester SBCC Student College Experiences Survey was completed in class during the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> week of the term. Of the 167 on-campus credit class sections that were randomly selected to take part in this study, with a total of 4,339 students enrolled, responses were received from 3,136 students (72%) in 141 sections (84%). The sample did not include totally online, Dual Enrollment, or lower level ESL classes.

Survey respondents were generally representative of the SBCC students enrolled in the 2016 spring semester on most demographic characteristics. Students 26 and older were slightly underrepresented, while 18-20 year olds and full-time students were somewhat overrepresented. Latino students were slightly underrepresented, which could be attributed to the decision to not include ESL classes below level four in the sample of classes selected for this study. A more complete description of the methodology for this study is provided in [this report](#).

## **Pre-College Engagement**

- A much higher percentage of students completed their orientation to the college online than coming to the campus to do so (66% vs. 21%). Those who completed their orientation on-campus were more likely than those who did so online to

indicate that the information they received was very helpful to their success at the college (41% vs. 34%). All but 11% of the students who completed the orientation online and 6% of those who did so on campus, reported that the orientation to college was somewhat or very helpful to their success at the college.

- Nineteen percent of the respondents said they participated in the Vaquero Week pre-fall semester activities (1.5 days), of which 31% found the experience was very helpful with the remaining indicating that it was somewhat (55%) or not helpful (14%) in preparing them to be successful at the college.
- Over 80% of the students felt that they were placed in the appropriate level of English (82%) and math (81%), while 74% reported that their ESL course placement was appropriate.

A more detailed analysis of students' pre-college engagement is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. Consideration should be given to following-up with a sample of students several weeks after the start of their first semester at the college to gain insights on what information and experiences covered in the college orientations (online and on-campus) and/or the Vaquero week they found valuable in helping them to get off to a good start at the college. The study should also identify the types of information and experiences students wish would have been included in the orientation to the college and/or in the Vaquero week.

## **Student Housing**

- A high percentage of the students reported that the availability of affordable housing is an obstacle to their being successful at the college. The percentage of those who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement was highest among out-of-district California residents (59%) and out-of-state (59 %) students followed by international (45%) and local area students (39%).
- More than one-third of the out-of-district California residents and out-of-state students reported that they were experiencing the following challenges concerning their housing situation: have challenges in paying the rent (34% for out-of-district students and 41% for out-of-state students); their living conditions distract them from their studies (40% and 49%). Thirty percent of the international students reported that they have had challenges paying the rent and 28% reported their living conditions distract them from their studies.
- When asked if they used the college's housing services, the percentage of nonlocal area students reporting that they did so ranged from 25% for out-of-state students, 19% of the international students, to 18% among those from other areas of the state. Between

22% and 29% of the students in each of these residency groups indicated they would have used the college's housing services if they knew about them.

A more detailed analysis of students' experiences with housing is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. The college should consider conducting a survey and/or focus groups to gain a fuller understanding of the challenges students are having with their rental situations, how they are interfering with their being successful at the college, and to identify suggested steps they believe the college could take to help alleviate these challenges.
2. Consideration should be given to identify housing services the college could refer new and continuing students to assist in locating suitable housing situations and serve as ombudsmen in helping to resolve property manager-renter and room/house mate disagreements.
3. The college should consider including information about its student housing services in its outreach efforts and out-of-area marketing materials and in its new student orientations.

## **Student Satisfaction with the College**

- Between 89 and 90% of the students strongly agreed or agreed with each of the following statements: SBCC is fulfilling its vision statement (89%); SBCC is fulfilling its mission statement (90%); and they are proud to attend SBCC (90%).
- When asked if they could start the process of selecting a college over again, would they choose to attend SBCC, 83% indicated they would do so. The percentage of students who would choose to attend SBCC if they were able to start over again ranged from a high of 86% for local area students, to 84% for out-of-area California resident students, to 78% for out-of-state students and 75% for international students.
- Over 90% of the students agreed with each of the following statements: in general, the campus and the classrooms were well maintained (94%); there are adequate places on campus to meet and study with other students (93%); and the campus facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities (97%).
- Well over 90% of the students reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the academic support services (tutoring, Library, and Writing Center)) and the student support services (e.g., Career Center, College Store, DSPS, Office of Student Life, Personal Counseling, Transfer Center, and Veteran's services) they used at the college. Slightly lower percentages of the students reported satisfaction with the following support services they used: Life Fitness Center (88%), Academic Counseling (88%), and Financial Aid Office (85%), and campus food services (81%).

A more detailed analysis of students' satisfaction with the college is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. The vast majority of students expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their overall experiences at the college and with the academic and student support services that they used. It may be worthwhile to conduct a follow-up study to identify the reasons why close to 20% of the students were not satisfied with the campus's food services.
2. Consideration should be given to identifying the reasons a significant number of out-of-state and international students would not choose to attend the college if they were to start over again. The data could be gathered from focus groups and/or from counselors in their meetings/interactions with out-of-state and international students.

## **Student Experiences with Faculty**

- Ninety percent or more of the students agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements about the experiences they had with the faculty and their courses in most of the classes they have taken at the college:

My instructors expect me to do high quality of work in completing assignments, and on quizzes and exams (97%).

My instructor includes a disability statement on the course syllabus (97%).

The quality of instruction in most classes is excellent (95%).

My instructors make me feel that I can succeed in their courses (94%).

My instructors encourage me to work hard (94%).

My instructors make me feel that they want me to succeed in their courses (92%).

My instructors review the student learning outcomes for their classes (91%).

My instructors discuss how the assignments, quizzes and exams are related to the course goals (91%).

My instructors make me feel valued (90%).

- Between 71 and 87% of the respondents to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements (the remaining students either disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements):

My instructors provide me with adequate and timely feedback on my performance in their classes (87%).

At least one faculty member has taken an interest in my development (83%).

My instructors know my name when they interact with me inside and outside of class (83%).

My instructors show me how the course materials are related to my educational, career and/or personal interests (82%).

One or more of my instructors asked me about my educational and/or career goals (78%).

I have had discussions outside of class with my instructors about the course (74%).

Faculty and/or staff encouraged me to get involved in campus activities (72%).

My instructors make an effort to get to know me (71%).

A more detailed analysis of students' experiences with faculty is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. Students expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the quality of their courses, the instruction provided, and the encouragement and support they received from their instructors.
2. Over 90% of the students said that their instructors reviewed the student learning outcomes (SLOs) of their classes and discussed how the assignments, quizzes and exams are related to the course goals, which indicates that faculty are paying attention to the SLOs for their courses.
3. Between 13 and 29% of the respondents did not feel their instructors provided them with adequate and timely feedback on their performance in their classes, or made an effort to get to know them. While it is challenging, especially for adjunct faculty and faculty teaching large size class sections, all faculty should identify strategies they could use to get to know each of their students without taking an unreasonable amount of time to do so.

## **Student Experiences with the Library**

- More than three-quarters (78%) of the students reported that they were required to use the SBCC Library for at least one of their courses in the current academic year. Of these students, all but 4% said that the SBCC Library's resources and services supported their learning experience either very well (58%) or somewhat well (39%).

A more detailed analysis of students' experiences with the library is provided in [this report](#).

## **Access to Computers, Tablet Devices and Cell Phones**

- All but five percent of the respondents reported having internet access off campus. Non-ESL students were more likely than ESL students to have internet access off-campus (96% vs. 88%).
- With respect to technology, 90% of the students indicated that they owned a cell phone, 86% owned a laptop computer, 28% owned a tablet computer, and 22% had a desktop computer. A higher percentage of white/non-Hispanic students owned a cell phone and/or a laptop computer (93%, 89%) than Latino/Hispanic (91%, 83%), Asian-American/Filipino (81%, 80%), and African American/black (77%, 81%) students.

A more detailed analysis of students' access to technology is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. Faculty should continue to be sensitive to the fact that a few of the students in their classes may not have off-campus access or convenient access to the internet to complete assignments. Similarly, faculty should take into account that a few of their students may not have a smart phone, tablet or laptop computer they can use in class. Faculty could discuss alternative options for gaining free access to the internet on and off campus.
2. Consideration should be given to incorporating information on gaining out-of-class on-campus and off-campus access to the internet into new student orientations, tutor training, and, where appropriate, in the meetings counselors and program advisors have with students.

## **Experiences with Counseling and Advising**

- Of those students with a goal of certificate, degree, and/or transfer, 86% reported that they met with a counselor/advisor to discuss their progress towards achieving their educational or career goals. Part-time students with these goals were much

less likely than those attending full-time (77% vs. 90%) to have met with a counselor or advisor to discuss their goals.

- Of those students who entered the college in the 2016 spring semester with a goal of certificate, degree and/or transfer, 36% said they had not met with a counselor or advisor as of the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> week of the term.
- Ninety percent or more of both full-time and part-time students who met with a counselor said the counselor they met with helped them identify and/or clarify their educational objectives, made them feel that they wanted to help them succeed in college, and found the meeting with the counselor/advisor to develop their educational plan to be valuable.
- When asked if the counselor/advisor they met with helped them identify and/or clarify their career objectives, 85% of the full-time and 79% of the part-time students reported that they had done so.
- The vast majority of full-time and part-time students with a goal of certificate, degree and/or transfer were satisfied or very satisfied with the following counseling services they used: Academic Counseling, Career Counseling, Personal Counseling, the Career Center, and the Transfer Center. Full-time students were more likely than part-time students (86% vs. 79%) to report that they were able to see a counselor/advisor in a timely manner about items important to their success at the college.

A more detailed analysis of students' experiences with counseling and advising is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

Overall, students were satisfied with the counseling services they received.

1. The college should identify the reasons why 23% of the part-time students with a goal of certificate, degree and/or transfer had not met with a counselor/advisor in the year the survey was conducted (2015-16) and the reasons why 21% of the part-time and 14% of the full-time students reported that they were not able to see a counselor/advisor in a timely manner about items important to their success at the college.
2. The Counseling department should examine its procedures to assess the degree to which it is accommodating the time constraints of part-time students needing to schedule an appointment with a counselor in a timely manner. Finding ways to ensure that part-time students meet with a counselor and are able to do so in a timely manner that is sensitive to their time constraints may help close the substantial achievement gaps that exist between full-time and part-time students.
3. Given the importance of one's first term in college, the Counseling department should examine its processes to determine how 38% of the students who entered the college in

the spring semester had not met with a counselor as of the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> week of the term.

### **Student Engagement in Out-of-Class Co-Curricular Activities**

- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of the students said they participated in a study group with other students for at least one of their classes during the year and 36% did so in more than one of their classes. Less than half of the students whose classes were all in the evening took part in a study group with other students.
- One-third of the students reported that they participated in a college sponsored out-of-class activity. Full-time students were more likely than those attending part-time to report that they participated in a college co-curricular activity outside of class (37% vs. 24%) or attended a meeting of a student club or organization (31% vs. 21%).
- Between 21 and 28% of the students participated in one or more of the following co-curricular activities: a meeting of a student club or organization; a lecture outside of class; a career development or transfer activity on campus; an art, music and/or theatre exhibit or event; an SBCC athletic event; and/or an off-campus theater production or music event.

A more detailed analysis of students' engagement in out-of-class activities is provided in [this report](#).

### **Observations**

1. A high percentage of the students reported that they have participated in a study group with other students for at least one of their classes. The college should consider conducting a research study to gain a fuller understanding of how the student study groups are formed and conducted and to assess the extent participation in study groups contributes to student successful course completion and grades in the classes to which the study groups were connected.
2. With the rich array of out-of-class co-curricular activities that are available at the college and the concerted efforts taken to promote them, it is not surprising that a third of the students reported taking part in one or more of these activities. Where appropriate, faculty should be encouraged to sponsor and/or promote discipline-related clubs, organizations, competitions, and other activities such as out-of-class guest lectures and panel discussions designed to increase student learning about the fields in which they are majoring or are considering pursuing.

## Classroom-Related Experiences

Students were asked to indicate how often they engaged in each of 15 classroom-related activities. The response scale was “Very Often”, “Often”, “Sometimes”, “Rarely”, and “Never”.

- Eighty-five percent or more of the respondents said they: tried to finish assignments even when they are difficult (84% Very Often/Often and 14% Sometimes); worked harder than they thought they could to meet an instructors’ standards or expectations (57%, 32%); asked their instructor for assistance when needed (56%, 32%); and worked with other students on projects during class (53%, 33%).
- Eighty-two percent of the respondents reported that they had meaningful discussions with students from other areas of California or the nation, and 71% said that they had meaningful discussions with students from a country other than their own.
- A high percentage (41%) of the survey respondents said that they frequently (very often/often) worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments, and 41% discussed ideas from their readings or classes with other students outside of class.
- Twenty-six percent of the students said they often left a class session without fully understanding the concepts presented by their instructor, and 24% said they frequently came to class without completing the readings or assignments.

A more detailed analysis of students’ classroom-related experiences is provided in [this report](#).

## Observations

1. Faculty should continue to experiment and share with one another strategies for reducing the number of their students who do not ask for assistance when needed, leave class sessions without fully understanding the concepts presented by their instructor, and who come to class without completing the readings or assignments. The Faculty Resource Center team could take the lead in identifying and disseminating strategies being used to address these concerns.
2. The findings that such a high percentage of the survey respondents reported that they had meaningful discussions with students from other areas of California, the nation and/or a country other than their own reinforces the importance of having a geographically diverse student population attending the college. The quality of the educational experience the college provides to its local area students is greatly enriched by interacting with students from other areas of the state, nation and the world.

## **Relationship between Hours Spent Studying Outside of Class, Hours Spent Working, and GPA**

Students were asked to indicate the number of hours per week on average they spent studying for their courses outside of class and the average number of hours per week they were working in a paid job while classes were in session. The responses to these items were analyzed by units enrolled and by grade point average (GPA).

- The higher the number of classes enrolled the less likely students were to spend an average of one to two hours per week per course studying for their courses outside of class. For example, of those students enrolled in three classes, 55% devoted an average of 7 or more hours per week outside of class studying for their classes. For students enrolled in five classes, 25% reported spending an average of 11 or more hours per week preparing for their courses.
- There was a strong relationship between the number of hours studied outside of class and student GPA. A high percentage of the students with GPAs under 2.0 (less than a “C” average), reported studying for 1 to 2 hours per week. Similarly, a greater percentage of students who spent two or more hours per week per course studying outside of class reported having a GPA of 3.0 or higher than those who studied fewer hours per week for the classes in which they were enrolled.
- Of the students enrolled in 12-14.9 units in the 2016 spring semester, 35% reported working an average of 20 or more hours per week in paid employment compared to 24% who were enrolled in 15 or more units.

A more detailed analysis of the relationship between hours spent studying, hours spent working, and GPA is provided in [this report](#).

## **Observations**

1. The findings of this survey, which are consistent with what was learned from past SBCC student college experiences surveys and with data from other community colleges, is that a large percentage of students are not devoting the minimum expected time preparing for their classes. Similarly, the results of this survey and those of surveys conducted at other community colleges, indicate that a sizable percentage of students enrolled in 12 or more units are spending an average of 20 or more hours per week in paid employment, which could interfere with the time they devote to their studies.
2. The college could consider taking the following steps to increase the likelihood of students devoting the appropriate amount of time preparing for their classes: (1) build a time management plan into the preliminary and comprehensive student education plans; (2) the time management components of the student educational plan should take into account such factors as the number of and type of courses enrolled, number of hours spent working, reading speed and comprehension (from their score on the

reading assessment and/or student self- assessment), other factors such as amount of time spent traveling to class and to work; and (3) if and when available, information from predictive analysis software on the grades the student is predicted to receive in the courses they want and/or actually take.

## **Student Self-Assessment of their Abilities to Perform Each of the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes**

Students were asked to rate their degree of confidence in performing each of the college's 39 Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs) competencies. These core competencies the institution identified as ones students should be confident in performing by the time they complete an associate's degree at the college and/or fulfill lower division transfer requirements are in the following six areas: (1) Critical thinking, problem solving and creative thinking; (2) Communication; (3) Quantitative analysis and scientific reasoning; (4) Social, cultural, environmental and aesthetic perspectives; (5) Personal, academic and career development; and (6) Information, technology and media literacy.

### **Critical Thinking, Problem Solving and Creative Thinking**

- Close to 70% of the students reported being confident of their abilities to: select relevant information in order to answer a question or solve a problem (69%), distinguish facts from opinions and biases (69%), and use valid evidence and sound reasoning to support conclusions drawn about issues, problems, or questions they have been asked to address.
- Between 61 and 64% of the students felt they were confident in performing the following activities: drawing insights from multiple reliable sources to create solutions to problems, and identify possible consequences of those solutions (64%), defining the issues, problems, assumptions, or questions they have been asked to address (61%), and proposing a solution to problems using relevant information drawn from multiple reliable sources (61%).

### **Communication**

The three ISLO competencies the highest percentage of students felt confident in performing were:

- Understanding visual images such as diagrams, graphic displays, film video and other forms of observable communication (73%), employing the conventions of standard

English to create original texts that clearly communicate ideas and information (68%), and reading texts critically in order to participate in class discussions (68%).

The communication-related competencies the lowest percentage of students felt confident in performing were:

- Applying quantitative and qualitative skills to interpret data (62%), writing a clear, grammatically correct term paper and responses to questions on quizzes or exams (62%), and orally communicating clear, well-founded and developed ideas in an organized manner (61%).

### **Quantitative Analysis and Scientific Reasoning**

Compared to the other five ISLO categories, substantially fewer of the students felt confident in performing the ISLOs related to quantitative analyses and scientific reasoning. The three competencies in this category which the highest percentage of students felt confident performing were:

- Solving a mathematical equation (e.g., putting numbers into a given equation) (58%), looking at a graph and interpreting its meaning (53%), and creating a graph to present information (51%).

Fewer than 50% of the respondents reported feeling confident performing the following ISLO competencies related to quantitative analysis and scientific reasoning:

- Employing scientific methods to form and test hypotheses (42%), translating a word problem into a mathematical equation (40%), and distinguishing empirical evidence from speculation (39%).

### **Social, Cultural, Environmental and Aesthetic Perspectives**

- The two competencies in this ISLO category in which the highest percentage of the students felt confident were interacting with people from cultures different from their own (68%) and recognizing the social and ethical responsibilities of the individual in society (60%).
- Smaller percentages of the students reported being confident in their ability to recognize the contributions of the fine arts, visual arts, literature and performing arts in influencing human experience (50%), and describing how the interaction among social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and historic factors affects the individual, society and the environment (48%).

### **Personal, Academic and Career Development**

- Seventy-two percent of the students felt confident in working effectively and civilly with others, respecting their culture, gender and other group and individual differences.
- Fewer than 60% of the students reported being confident in developing, implementing and evaluating progress toward achieving personal goals (57%), academic goals (52%), and career goals (50%).

### **Information, Technology and Media Literacy**

- The two Information, Technology and Media Literacy ISLO competencies students felt confident in doing were determining how media influences opinions and beliefs (62%) and using technology effectively to organize, manage, integrate, create, and communicate information and ideas (59%).
- Half of the students reported being confident in performing the remaining ISLOs in this category: critically evaluating how information is created and communicated (51%), selecting and evaluating the accuracy, credibility, and relevance of multiple sources of information (50%), and identifying the legal, ethical, social, and economic rights and responsibilities with the creation and use of information in various media and formats (50%).

### **Relationship between Units Completed and Achievement of Institutional Student Learning Outcomes**

- Fewer than 65% of the students who completed 46 units or more at the college reported that they were confident in their ability to perform 26 of the 36 ISLO competencies.
- Contrary to what would be expected, with the exceptions of the competencies in the Quantitative Analysis and Scientific Reasoning ISLO and those in the Information, Technology and Media Literacy ISLO categories, there was not a clear relationship between units completed (1-15, 16-30, 32-45, 46 or higher) and student reports of being confident in performing the desired outcome for many of the competencies in the other four ISLO categories.
- There was a strong relationship between units completed and the percentage of students who reported being confident on each of the eight competencies in the Quantitative Analysis and Scientific Reasoning ISLO and each of the seven competencies related to the Information, Technology and Media Literacy ISLO.

- For most of the competencies in the Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, and Creative Thinking and in the Communication ISLO categories, a higher percentage of students who completed between 1 and 15 units rated their ability to perform these activities than those who completed over 46 units.

A more detailed analysis of students' abilities to perform each of the Institutional Student Learning Outcomes is provided in [this report](#).

## Observations

1. While 91% of the respondents to this survey reported that the instructors in most of their classes reviewed the course SLOs, the survey did not include a question about whether or not faculty discussed the ISLOs that pertained to their courses. The relatively weak relationship between units completed and student assessment of their abilities to perform many of the ISLOs suggest many students may not have had a full understanding of the knowledge and skills required to perform these competencies.
2. Consideration should be given to revisiting the institutional student learning outcomes to: (1) identify ISLOs that faculty will focus on in their classes; (2) develop rubrics for each of the ISLO competencies that faculty will be able to use in developing assignments, quizzes and exams; and (3) reduce the number of ISLOs (currently 36 competencies in six ISLO categories) to a more manageable number.
3. To increase the accuracy of student self-assessment of their abilities to perform the ISLO competencies, consideration should be given to developing questions that present an assignment that corresponds to the ISLO being measured and ask students to assess their ability to complete the assignment on a scale ranging from A to not able to do so at a passing level.