



Revealing Institutional
Strengths and Challenges

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

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT
RISC STUDENT SURVEY SPRING 2023
MADERA 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; MCC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to MCC, 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 MCC's greatest strength, and if MCC 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 4,866 MCC students. There were 527 responses used in this report, for a 10.8% response rate. Median time MCC students spent taking the survey was 8.5 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 28,759 respondents.

Table 1.1 Community colleges in the benchmark sample

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	28%	City	48%	Under 1,000	7%
Mixed	41%	Suburb	24%	1,000-4,999	31%
High Transfer	24%	Town	14%	5,000-9,999	31%
Other	7%	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 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 MCC 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

	MCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	64	60	+4	337
Success in courses	50	52	-2	263
Finances and financial aid	44	38	+6	231
Academic support services	31	32	-1	162
Campus environment	19	19	+0	101

Notes

Green indicates that MCC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates MCC 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 $n=527$.

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 32% 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

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	64	60	+4	337
Family	43	35	+8	227
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	32	25	+7	169
Difficulty dealing with health of family	15	14	+1	79
Difficulty finding childcare	9	5	+4	50
Family does not support me going to college	5	4	+1	25
None of the above	4	6	-2	22
Work	36	38	-2	189
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	18	17	+1	95
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	17	22	-5	90
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	14	13	+1	76
Work schedule conflicts with classes	13	14	-1	70
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	12	10	+2	64
None of the above	5	5	+0	26
Health and disability issues	24	23	+1	129
Emotional/mental health issue	15	16	-1	81
Physical health issue	10	12	-2	51
Pregnancy and childbirth	2	1	+1	10
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	2	1	+1	9
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	1	+0	6
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	4	2	+2	22
Transportation to campus	20	14	+6	104
Car or carpool not reliable	10	7	+3	54
Public transportation system not reliable	6	4	+2	30
Travel to campus takes a long time	6	6	+0	30
Campus transportation system not reliable	2	2	+0	10
None of the above	5	3	+2	27

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

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	50	52	-2	263
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	27	21	+6	142
Courses were too hard	12	7	+5	62
Required to take too many	5	4	+1	28
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	5	4	+1	27
Courses were too easy	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	10	9	+1	55
Doing college-level work	25	20	+5	131
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	11	6	+5	60
Poor planning and time management skills	11	11	+0	59
Poor study skills	10	9	+1	55
Not motivated to study	9	9	+0	48
Required level of math was difficult	6	5	+1	31
Took too many classes	4	3	+1	23
Skipped too many classes	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	4	3	+1	22
Online classes	24	30	-6	129
Difficulty learning the material on my own	15	17	-2	77
Lack of interaction with faculty	9	14	-5	48
Difficulty keeping up because no regular class time	9	12	-3	47
Lack of interaction with other students	6	10	-4	33
Difficulty using course technology	6	8	-2	29
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	1	3	-2	6
None of the above	4	4	+0	23
Faculty	11	18	-7	57
Did not teach well	5	11	-6	24
Not concerned about my academic success	3	7	-4	18
Took too long to grade assignments	3	7	-4	16
Feedback on assignments not helpful	3	8	-5	15
Not responsive to email	2	7	-5	12
Not helpful outside of class	2	6	-4	11
Not available to meet in person	0	2	-2	2
None of the above	4	3	+1	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 2.4 Challenges with finances and financial aid

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	44	38	+6	231
Paying college and living expenses	39	34	+5	206
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	31	24	+7	161
Books, software, and other supplies	27	19	+8	140
Tuition and fees	14	20	-6	74
Childcare	7	4	+3	39
None of the above	1	1	+0	4
Working with financial aid office	14	13	+1	73
Delays in getting money	6	5	+1	33
Process was unclear	6	6	+0	31
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	4	6	-2	20
Unable to answer questions	3	4	-1	18
Errors processing financial aid	3	5	-2	16
Gave me wrong information	2	3	-1	12
None of the above	3	2	+1	15
Military and employer tuition benefits	0	2	-2	2
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	0	1	-1	1
Experienced delays receiving benefits	0	1	-1	1
Received wrong information about benefits	0	1	-1	0
None of the above	0	1	-1	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 2.5 Challenges with academic support services

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	31	32	-1	162
Registering for courses	18	18	+0	97
Course not offered at times I needed	9	7	+2	46
Course was offered but full	6	7	-1	33
Course not offered this semester	5	4	+1	28
Had a registration hold	3	4	-1	15
None of the above	6	6	+0	31
Academic advising	13	14	-1	70
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	6	8	-2	31
Not told to take necessary course	4	5	-1	21
Told to take unnecessary course	4	3	+1	19
Course/program materials were incorrect	3	2	+1	14
None of the above	4	3	+1	22
Tutoring	8	8	+0	44
Tutoring hours not convenient	3	3	+0	17
Tutors not available when I need assistance	3	3	+0	16
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	3	3	+0	15
Tutoring not helpful	1	2	-1	5
None of the above	2	2	+0	10
Library	6	5	+1	33
Hours not convenient	2	1	+1	11
Study spaces not available when needed	2	1	+1	10
Resources I needed not available online	0	1	-1	2
Staff not helpful	0	1	-1	0
None of the above	3	2	+1	16
Computer and science labs	5	6	-1	25
Problems using computers and equipment	2	2	+0	11
Lab hours not convenient	1	1	+0	7
Lab busy when needed	1	1	+0	3
None of the above	2	2	+0	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 2.6 Challenges with the campus environment

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	19	19	+0	101
Parking	11	12	-1	58
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	9	10	-1	47
Difficulty getting parking pass	1	1	+0	7
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	2	2	+0	9
Interactions with other students	7	10	-3	39
Did not know many other students	5	6	-1	28
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	0	1	-1	2
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	0	0	+0	1
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	0	1	-1	0
None of the above	2	3	-1	12
Safety and crime	4	3	+1	20
Parking lots not safe	1	1	+0	6
Campus not safe	1	1	+0	4
Was a victim of a crime	1	1	+0	3
None of the above	2	1	+1	11

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 53% reporting using the office during the Spring 2023 semester, followed by Financial Aid (44%) and Admission and Records (28%).

Table 3.1 Office usage

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff.	n
Counseling	53	48	+5	280
Financial Aid	44	37	+7	231
Admission and Records	28	29	-1	145
Tutorial	14			75
Health Services	11			59

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

	MCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					50 60 70 80 90
Admission and Records					
Available	77	65	+12	144	
Concerned	58	53	+5	143	
Effective	74	66	+8	141	
Counseling					
Available	76	58	+18	280	
Concerned	70	56	+14	279	
Effective	76	62	+14	279	
Financial Aid					
Available	69	63	+6	230	
Concerned	53	51	+2	229	
Effective	64	62	+2	228	
Health Services					
Available	84			58	
Concerned	78			58	
Effective	81			58	
Tutorial					
Available	76			75	
Concerned	73			74	
Effective	79			73	

Notes

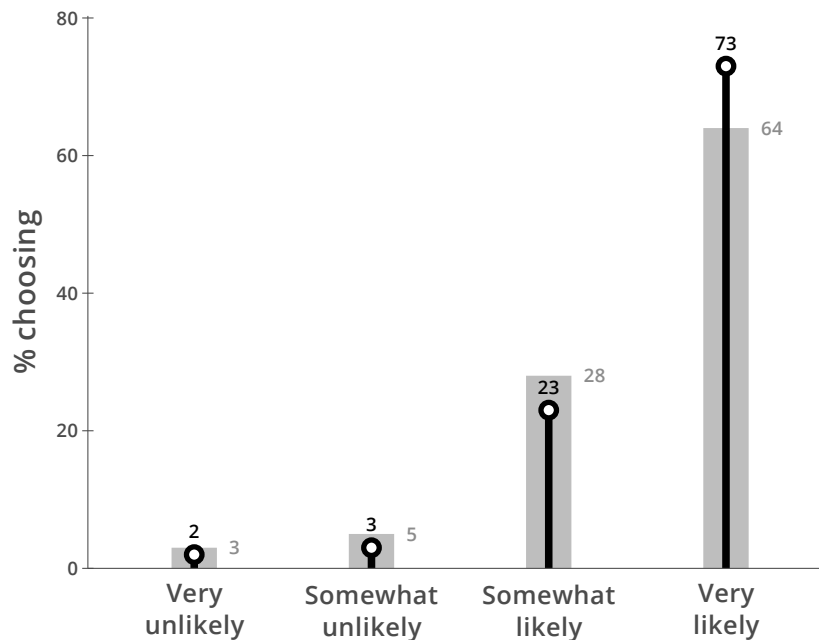
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that MCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates MCC has a lower proportion. Bold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

The first question, “Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend MCC to a friend?”, is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with MCC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 96% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to recommend MCC. The MCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.1 Would student recommend MCC to a friend?

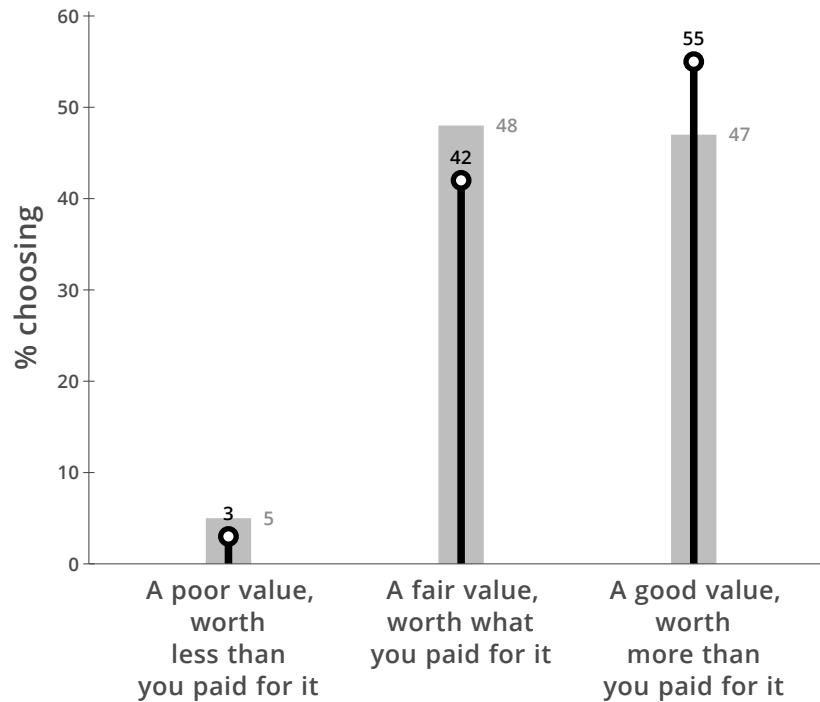


Notes

MCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 9.4, p < .03; n = 521$.

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at MCC (see Figure 4.2). 97% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The MCC distribution of responses is not statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.2 Overall value of education?



Notes

MCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 5.1, p < .08; n = 520$.

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

Students were then asked how well MCC 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, 59% of the students who chose *Prepare for a four-year degree* as their primary goal indicated that MCC is doing *very well* in terms of preparing them for a four-year degree.

Table 4.1 How well is education helping accomplish goals

	MCC %	Bench. %	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					0 10 20 30 40 50 60
Purpose of taking courses at MCC					
Prepare for a four-year degree	57	48	+9	294	
Increase job and career opportunities	33	42	-9	172	
Self-improvement	10	10	+0	54	
How well is education at MCC ...					
Prepare for a four-year degree	59	47	+12	293	
Increase job and career opportunities	47	46	+1	172	
Self-improvement	44	49	-5	54	

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 MCC has a higher proportion of students reporting that MCC 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	376
Male/Man	21	103
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	0
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	0	2
Another gender identity	2	12

Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity

	%	<i>n</i>
African American or Black	3	17
Asian American or Asian	9	42
Native American or Alaska Native	5	26
Hispanic or Latino	73	353
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	6
White	24	118

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	14	70
19-24	36	177
25-34	27	135
35-44	14	70
45-54	6	32
55 or older	2	9

Table 5.4 Part-time/full-time status

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	51	251
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	49	239

Table 5.5 Total credit hours earned at MCC

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
None	17	83
1-15 credits	43	209
16-29 credits	18	87
30-45 credits	8	39
46 or more credits	14	69