

College of San Mateo Student Campus Climate & Satisfaction Survey: Spring 2013 Highlights of Findings

In June 2013, CSM conducted the CSM Student Campus Climate and Satisfaction Survey, the fourth year in which the survey has been administered. The survey contained 101 question-items probing at students' perception of campus climate and their overall student experience. All students were invited to participate and a link to the online survey was emailed to those students enrolled in Spring 2013 (8,860 email addresses). CSM received 888 unique responses, a return of 10%.¹

This survey was first administered in 2010 by CSM's Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness.

Student Overall Positive Experience at CSM

- High levels of satisfaction are reflected in a variety of question items that probed at overall campus climate and the extent to which students feel valued, welcomed, and a sense of campus pride. Key questions demonstrating overall satisfaction include these findings:
 - 94.1% indicated that they "were proud to be a CSM student."
 - 97.7% indicated they "like the CSM campus and feel comfortable here."
 - 93.8% indicated they would "choose to attend CSM" (if starting over).
 - 97.8% would recommend CSM to "a family member or friend."
 - When asked to rate their educational experience, 94.7% had a positive response. Of them, 55.4% rated their overall experience as "excellent" and 39.3% rated it "good."

Very High Levels of Satisfaction Throughout the Survey

- In the Spring 2013 survey, students generally indicated the highest levels of satisfaction as compared to previous the 3 years' survey responses.
- 90% or greater numbers of students indicated satisfaction with the vast majority of questions.
- In only 12 question-items were the satisfaction levels lower than 90%. Nine questions evoked 80-89%; 2 questions, 74-78%; and one item, 64%.²
- Question-items frequently showed significant improvement from 2010 when the survey was first administered, except for one item.³ The question showing the biggest improvement in satisfaction (12.4%) asked whether students are able to "get the classes [they] want most of the time": 75.9% in 2010 vs. 88.3% in 2013.

¹ Students were offered the opportunity of winning an iPad as an incentive to participate in the survey. The gift was made possible through donations to CSM held by the San Mateo County Community Colleges Foundation.

² This excludes the 3 negatively worded question-items: #9 "I think sexual harassment is a problem at CSM," #11 "I perceive racial or ethnic tensions in the classroom," and #7 "At times, because of my background, I feel isolated with the CSM community." These are discussed on page 2.

³ This excludes the 3 negatively worded question-items indicated above. The one statement showing a lower level of satisfaction compared to previous years asked whether CSM is "cutting-edge." In 2010, 94.6% indicated agreement with the statements in 2013, 88%, a change of -6.8%.

Additional Strengths: Selected Highlights

- Overall students continue to indicate a view of CSM as a place that highly values diversity.
 - The section, "CSM as a Respectful Place," asks students to rank how CSM "respects" students according to 12 distinct demographic delimiters (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age groups, etc.). Satisfaction levels were very high, ranging 95.7% to 98.7%.
 - In the section "Impressions of CSM," the phrase, "tolerate of diversity," has the highest level of agreement, 98.9%.
 - In the section, "My CSM Experience" the three highest rated items concern campus safety (98.2%), support for "a community of diverse cultures," (98.1%) and whether CSM is "supportive" of students regardless of their individual demographics (97.8%).
- Overall, students see CSM as a friendly, tolerant, welcoming place as indicated by several questions that probed at their attitudes and relations with staff, faculty, and students.
 - For example, in the section Impressions of CSM," the highest ranked adjectival phrases are "Tolerant of Diversity," "Safe," "Respectful," "Welcoming," and "Friendly," 98.7% to 98%.
- *General Education (GE)SLO's*: The survey included a 10-item section in which students were asked to indicate agreement with statements about their skills or knowledge as defined by the GE SLO's. Student indicated very high levels of agreement, 98.8% to 96.8%.

Themes for Further Investigation: Selected Highlights

- *Channels for Complaints*: As in previous years, students were asked whether they know where to get help for a class in which they are having problems or to register a complaint about a faculty or staff member. While improved, these were among the overall lowest ranking items for satisfaction, 85.6% and 63.8% respectively.
- Also among the lowest rated items was the issue of "being notified early if they are doing poorly in classes"(74.8%).
- *Negatively worded questions*: All three negatively worded questions suggested higher levels of dissatisfaction than in previous years. Whether this is feature of test-taking behavior—survey respondents tend to skim questions, for example—or a reflection of issues at CSM needs to be probed further. Focus groups would be the best venue for exploring such questions. They include:
 - *Sense of Isolation for Some*: 30.6% (231 students) report feeling "isolated within the CSM community...because of my background." The ethnic groups who indicated the highest level of agreement with this item-question were Asians (38.1%/51 individuals) and Multi-ethnic (36.5%/23 individuals). However, generalizations about the collective perceptions of ethnic groups need to be made cautiously as the numbers of some ethnic-group respondents are low in this survey.
 - 21.5% (165 students) indicated agreement with the statement, "I perceive racial tensions in the classroom."
 - 17.3% (128 students) indicated agreement with the statement, "I think sexual harassment is a problem at CSM."