

STUDENT OPINION SURVEY OF SPRING 2009 CREDIT STUDENTS

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Introduction

In the spring of 2009, the Office of Organizational Development and Planning (now called Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness) administered a survey to students that measured their opinions about the college's programs, services, and environment. The purpose of the survey was to gather data in support of the college's institutional planning efforts. A key element of the college's integrated planning process is self-assessment, through which the college seeks to understand trends related to student needs and preferences so that programs and services for students can be improved.

The survey instrument used was the *ACT Student Opinion Survey (2-Year College Form)*. (It was also administered in 2007; findings and analysis of the 2007 survey analysis can be viewed at <http://www.marin.edu/com/ODP/InstitutionalPlanningPage.htm>.) Survey forms were distributed in 109 classes. The total number of forms distributed was 2,646, a "duplicated" total, since some students received forms in more than one of their classes. A total of 1,160 surveys from 76 classes were returned. Only credit classes that met at specific times were selected to be surveyed.

The four-page survey took about twenty minutes to complete. It was organized as follows:

I. Background: Seventeen multiple-choice items about the respondent's demographic background.

II. College Impressions: Four multiple-choice items regarding broad impressions of the college.

III. College Services: Twenty multiple-choice items regarding various support services.

IV. College Environment: Forty-four items about a wide variety of subjects, including instruction, advising, student services, job preparation, facilities, student life, facilities, and campus climate.

V. Additional Questions: (The college chose not to add more questions to the survey.)

VI. Comments and Suggestions: This section invited students to write "comments or suggestions concerning this college."

ACT prepared a report that presents data from sections I, II, III, and IV in the form of several bar graphs and pie charts. College of Marin's data is compared to national norms. Given the incredible diversity in the size, demographics, and programs in the nation's community colleges, the comparison to national norms may be of limited value. However, the Marin data by itself

may yield some useful insights, especially to leaders responsible for particular programs and services.

The ACT report does not include an analysis of what the students wrote in the last section, VI. Comments and Suggestions. There were 250 responses, some focusing on a single subject, others addressing several subjects, and still others very general or ambiguous. Given the subjective nature of open-ended responses, the comments should not be read as “representative” of the student body.

Nevertheless, in a review of all of the comments, it appears that five themes or categories of concern emerged: *curriculum/instruction*, *student support*, *facilities*, *parking*, and *faculty*. We have provided a sampling of these student voices below for the first four categories. As for the comments about faculty, we will simply note that there were a total of 30 comments about instructors, sixteen of them positive, ten of them negative, and four that cite what they consider to be both good and bad instructors. Some instructors were referred to by name, but we chose to mask the names of instructors (and in some cases the disciplines), even if the comments were generally positive.

Sampling of Student Comments

Curriculum/Instruction: 38 responses

- Many students in the arts work early in day and can take classes only in afternoons and early evenings. 8:00 a.m. classes do not work well for most continuing education students.
- Not enough class sections; outdated or insufficient equipment....extremely impacted major/not enough availability (sic)
- It is difficult to get prerequisites for RN/BSN: for Microbiology and Physiology. Other classes are required which were not required to be completed yrs. before. Which adds another 6 months to my pre-req. time.
- I think the people in charge of scheduling classes do not take any account of student requirements and wishes, only those of faculty and administration.
- The classes you have in the morning during one semester put them in the afternoon the next one.
- I think there should be more classes that help prepare for the trades such as expanding the electrical department.
- I would like to see a better choice for language classes. Arabic would be nice because we live in a ever changing world in post 9/11.
- More science intructures, maybe some with actual degrees in the subjects they teach. And enough intructures to teach nursing prerequisites!
- I want fire science courses that deal with fire, not medical.... Where is wildland fire, fire protection systems, Haz-mat response, firefighter 1 &2, and other fire science courses.
- Have more good English tutors in English lab and extend longer labs hours in evening for students who work during day-time.

- I am a Sonoma County resident who wishes to apply to the College of Marin Nursing program but was told by an advisor that only Marin County residents get accepted. I hope this changes....
- Change to a +/- grading system.
- It would be of great benefit to the students that live in the Northern part of the county to have some of the Health Science and general education courses at the Indian Valley campus.
- The website and enrollment online were MOST CONFUSING! These enrollment procedures are much easier to navigate, for instance, online for City College of S.F. I know of one student who did not sign up for class because enrollment was just too confusing.
- No classes available between 2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Students forced to take night classes.
- My experience has been good so far. However, some class scheduling does not favor the needs and interests of myself and fellow jewelry design students, in terms of optimum class times, and future limitations on class repetition.
- I would like to see a lot more courses and a lot more use of the Novato Indian Valley college facilities.
- Depending on the instructor the same courses vary greatly from instructor to instructor, there needs to be similar course expectations.
- More evening and weekend classes.

Student Support: 17 responses

- Not enough qualified counseling....unsatisfactory financial aid assistance.
- COM should establish a program to help students pick a major, advisors aren't very helpful.
- I have attended other schools whose counseling dept. makes Marin's seem like amateurs.
- I live in Sonoma county and don't like some of the things that have happened up there. I like how College of Marin has responded to my needs.
- The layout and accessibility of your online site can be annoying/confusing.
- The Media Center staff often go out of their way to be unhelpful (or anti-helpful) for no reason except some kind of addiction to control. FRUSTRATING!
- Your website/registration is impossible to navigate. Personnel on phone fairly non-plus, not particularly helpful.

Facilities: 29 responses

- Conditions have deteriorated in the last couple of years.
- Weeds are ignored.
- Athletic facilities are downright dangerous.
- There isn't much of a social center for students.
- The tables in the student center area always dirty.
- Buildings in need of upgrading, poor utilization of square footage.

- Attention to classroom cleanliness could greatly improve.
- The lighting in the parking lot on Sir Francis Drake needs to be better
- Excellent lab resources for a community college (ex. Cadaver, slides for histology, bones etc.).

Parking: 23 responses

- The parking situation is horrendous
- Trying to park here is very difficult.
- Parking really is a problem in the beginning of the semester. I pay for a parking permit and there is no parking available. There should be a lot more parking officers checking for people's cars who do not have permits. It's really unfair to people who pay for permits.
- Parking is HORRIBLE!
- Bad parking here at Kentfield and VERY BAD on NEW PLANS FOR PARKING AND ESPECIALLY DISABLED PARKING.

Survey Results

Survey results are posted on the college's website under the *Report* column at <http://www.marin.edu/com/ODP/InstitutionalPlanningPage.htm>.