

Cosumnes River College Education Plan Survey, Fall 2016

Background

During fall 2016, the College was visited by an Institutional Effectiveness Planning Initiative's (IEPI) Partnership Response Team (PRT) regarding enrollment management. In preparation for the second meeting, the Research Office administered a short online survey to its currently enrolled students who have an educational plan. The purpose of the survey was to gather feedback from students on how and when they used their plans to make decisions about enrollment.

Survey Method

Towards the end of the fall 2016 semester, the Research Office administered a brief 5-item online survey to CRC's students who had an educational plan created at CRC (n=8,562). The survey was active from November 28th through January 5th, 2016. Students were emailed unique links to access the survey; a reminder email was sent out on December 5th. Out of the 8,562 students, 1,049 participated in the survey (12.3% response rate).

Findings

Survey Respondent Demographics. The table below displays the ethnicity/race of the target population and the survey respondents. Female students, older students (40 years or older), and students who are Asian were overrepresented in the respondent population when compared to the target population; students between the ages of 20-24, male students, and students who are Hispanic were underrepresented in the respondent group. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1. Ethnicity/Race Breakdown by Surveyed Population and Respondents.

Student Characteristics	% of Student Respondents	% of Target Population*	% Difference
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	11.5%	11.8%	-0.2%
Asian	28.5%	23.9%	4.6%
Filipino	4.9%	5.1%	-0.2%
Hispanic/Latino	25.5%	28.7%	-3.1%
Multi-Race	5.7%	6.7%	-1.0%
Native American	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%
Other Non-White/Unknown	1.2%	1.2%	0.0%
Pacific Islander	1.3%	1.9%	-0.5%
White	20.8%	20.5%	0.3%
Gender			
Female	63.4%	53.9%	9.5%
Male	35.6%	44.1%	-8.5%
Unknown	1.0%	2.1%	-1.0%
Age Group			
19 or younger	34.1%	32.9%	1.2%
20-24	30.3%	38.9%	-8.6%
25-29	10.5%	11.2%	-0.7%
30-39	10.5%	9.1%	1.3%
40 or older	14.6%	7.9%	6.7%
Socio-Economic Status			
Low-income	79.4%	79.0%	0.4%
Not low-income	20.6%	21.0%	-0.4%

First Generation			
Yes	35.3%	33.1%	2.2%
No	64.7%	66.8%	-2.1%
Unknown	0.0%	0.1%	-0.1%
Individuals w/disabilities			
Yes	92.6%	94.3%	-1.8%
No	7.4%	5.7%	1.8%
Foster Youth			
Yes	1.8%	2.1%	-0.2%
No	98.2%	97.9%	0.2%
Total	1,049	8,562	
<i>Response Rate</i>	<i>12.3%</i>		
*Target population: Fall 2016 Cosumnes River College students with an educational plan as of November 28, 2016.			

Survey Results. The first question asked students if they created an educational plan with their counselor before they enrolled in the fall 2016 semester. Out of the 1,049 students who took the survey, 75.4% answered “yes.” Students who replied “no,” were then directed to the end of the survey. The intent was to gather feedback from students who had their educational plan before the term, so that they could provide feedback on how their educational plans were used.

The second question asked students if they use their educational plan when deciding which courses to take. A majority of the students replied “yes” (670 of 729, 91.9%). Of the 59 students who indicated they did not use their educational plans, 57 students shared feedback. Student respondents most frequently shared they were not able to enroll in courses from their educational plan, were not satisfied with their experience working with the counselor, changed their educational plan, felt their educational plan did not reflect the classes they needed or wanted, or still did not understand or forgot to use their educational plans.

The third survey item asked students to indicate if the classes outlined in their educational plan are offered when they need them. Half of the students (360 out of 718) reported that “*all of their courses are offered when they need them*” (50.1%). This means that the other half were not able to enroll in all their courses when they needed them, which may have a negative impact on their ability to complete their educational plans/goals on-time. Eleven students reported none of their classes were offered when they needed them. Students who answered “*none*” were asked to identify which courses were not offered. Various classes were identified, but not consistently among the small group of students; however, several students shared that they enrolled at another Los Rios college because they were not able to enroll in the courses they needed. See table 2 for details.

Table 2. To what degree are courses in your education plan offered when you need them?

To what degree are courses in your education plan offered when you need to take them? - Selected Choice	Count	Percentage
All of my courses are offered when I need them.	360	50.1%
Some of my courses are offered when I need them.	297	41.4%
Few of my courses are offered when I need them.	50	7.0%
None of my courses are offered when I need them. Please identify the courses that have not been offered.	11	1.5%
Grand Total	718	100.0%

Students were then asked if they enrolled in at least one of the courses identified in their educational plan in the fall 2016 semester. Of the 738 students who answered the question, nearly all responded “yes” (94.6%). Students who answered “no” were asked to share why they did not enroll in at least one of the courses identified in their educational plan. Of the 40 students who answered “no,” 33 provided feedback; Student respondents most frequently shared they were either still waiting to enroll (for spring 2017), the courses they needed were full by the time they were able to register, or their majors/educational plan changed.

The last question asked students if they would be interested in participating in a focus group on improving student educational plans. Slightly more than one-third – 251 students – said “yes” (34.1%).

Conclusion

CRC students who participated in the survey indicated they use their educational plans when deciding which courses to take; however, only half of the students with educational plans reported they enrolled in all their courses when they needed. The other half who are not able to enroll in the courses are then delayed in their ability to complete their educational plan and complete their educational goal “on-time.” The college is currently developing strategies and action plans through its strategic plan and other institutional initiatives to improve students’ on-time completion; technology and human resources will be funded to improve the enrollment management process and the student experience in the educational planning process. Lastly, the Research Office will use the results from this survey to develop and conduct a follow-up focus group with students.