



## Santiago Canyon College Student Satisfaction with the Distance Education Program, Fall 2013

March 2014

For years program staff has reviewed the Distance Education Program quantitatively in terms of course offerings, course success and retention as compared to the traditional classroom delivery, as well as student demographics. However, staff also realizes that student perception, opinions and needs is an integral part of program evaluation. At the end of Fall 2013, staff implemented an online survey to all students enrolled in online and hybrid courses.

One hundred fifty-one students responded and the following is their feedback. More than half (59%) had an educational goal to obtain an associate degree and transferring to a four-year institution, 22% to transfer directly to the university without an associate degree, 19% to prepare for a new career by acquiring additional job skills, 14% to advance in their current job, 12% to develop themselves for intellectual and cultural reasons, and 11% to obtain an associate degree without transfer. The remaining 17% goals varies from earning a vocational certificate, formulating a career plan, maintaining certificate or license, improving basic skills, and undecided.

Slightly more than half (51%) have enrolled in one to two online classes, 28% enrolled in 3 to 4 online classes and 21% have taken more than five online classes. Many (87%) of the respondents had more than four years experience using computers prior to taking their first online class. The others were scattered from one, two, three and even no experience prior to enrolling in their first online class (2% to 5% each category).

### **Findings:**

Overall, respondents were satisfied (85% “satisfied” and “very satisfied”) with their online courses at SCC. Participants expressed similar satisfaction with instructor initiated feedback to their questions/inquiries (82%). Three-fourths of the respondents were satisfied with the availability of online course offerings, but slightly less satisfied with the variety of online courses offered (64%). Many respondents stated “not applicable” for “online services offered through the library” (33%), technical support (22%) and test proctoring services (15%) which may mean that they are not aware of or have not used these services. Other findings include:

The top three main sources of learning about online classes are from the schedule of classes (51%), college website (29%), family and friends (13%). SCC instructors and counselors and magazines and/or newspapers contributed very little to respondents’ knowledge of online classes (a total 7%). Respondents were given an opportunity to select many choices as to why they enrolled in online classes. More than half of the respondents took online classes due to flexible schedule (67%), convenient schedule (59%) and work schedules (56%). Other reasons for choosing online classes

are save gas (35%), unable to attend “face-to-face” sections of the same classes (33%), comfort with technology (30%) and ease of registration (22%). Reputation of instructors and ease at which online classes accommodate students’ disability were minor reasons why respondents selected online classes.

Respondents are very aware of online services that allow them to apply for admissions, search for classes, to register, to make tuition and fees payments (85% or more of the respondents), but not as many know of the online services for financial aid (70%), transcript requests (69%), library services (56%), scheduling counseling appointment (51%) and orientation (39%).

Respondents are not aware of the many support programs and services that the college offers to them as online students. Of the student programs and services identified, only the Admissions and Records (56%) and Bookstore (42%) were found to be “helpful” to respondents as an online student. The Library, Counseling, and Financial Aid were helpful to about one-quarter of the respondents. Technical support was “helpful” to 9% of the respondents. The remaining seven programs (Student Business Office, Career Center, Disabled Students Programs and Services, Extended Opportunities Programs and Services, Student Government Clubs, Tutoring and Transfer Center) received 1% to 7% each.

Blackboard orientation (37%), orientation from the instructor (35%) and course information from the class schedule (28%) contributed to respondents’ success as online students. Two-thirds of (68%) the respondents preferred Windows/PC to Apple/OSX/Mac (32%). None of the respondents used a special technology to assist with a disability.

Overwhelmingly, respondents preferred to receive communications from the college via Email (96%). Smart phone App with Push notifications (3%), social networking sites (2%), smart text messages (2%), postal mail and flyers on campus (1% each) were other selections that respondents did not find to be great communication channels.

Barriers to achieving their educational goals identified by respondents include: availability of classes at times needed (71%), costs related to books, supplies, or enrollment fees (60%), work pressures (47%), transportation (21%), availability of counseling or program advisement staff (20%), difficulty of courses (15%), and lack of support network (10%).

In general, respondents find online instruction satisfactory. Students appreciate being able to take courses toward their studies using a delivery mode that is flexible and convenient to their busy personal schedules. Many are not aware of the student support programs and services and perhaps more emphasis could be towards helping students seek out these supports for their education. Some respondents mentioned faculty who have made a positive impact on their online studies; however, there were also many comments that reflect dissatisfaction in faculty and staff’s lack of response to students’ inquiries. It is recommended that additional research be used to truly assess the effectiveness of the overall program.

## Additional Comments Respondents Shared

- My class was great; however, the final exam was too hard and covered things which were not covered in the class. 3/4 of the class did not finish the exam by the end of class. I went from having a A to a C in one night because of the FINAL.
- The Online Platform is great! Some of the online teachers are limited on their communication with students and seem to be ineffective. Specifically my online history teacher, she takes a week to reply to posts, 3-4 days to get back to emails, and rarely answers questions fully or with the right response (seemingly answering a question I didn't ask). Other than that I feel that the Online Course option has been extremely helpful in getting my classes completed.
- I have really enjoyed taking my Algebra course through My Open Math, especially since the text book was made available for free! I have greatly appreciated the My Open Math approach and it has been extremely helpful financially as well as educationally. The course format works really well for me. And **Darlene Diaz** is a excellent instructor who really shows the care and concern for her students progress!
- My high school experience was online with few campus meetings. I loved it, it taught me how to manage my time, and it allowed me to dedicate more of my time to my job and my sport.
- Please think about adding additional online classes as they are extremely helpful for working adults. Thank you.
- I prefer distant learning class above any other because it allows me to learn at my own pace and I memorize material quicker. I'd like to see math online one day. I feel pressured in class and find it harder to focus on what is important especially with math.
- I really like the online classes, but I get discourage when the classes are full, or when some of the classes that I could take online are not available. Also, I would like some of the courses to be 16 weeks because I feel under pressure when the classes are 8 weeks. Online classes work great for me since I am a full time worker and a parent.
- I just finished an online psychology class with Prof. \_\_\_\_\_. They class was organized, simple (not easy, but simple), and straight forward...however the professor would not respond to any emails OR blackboard posts. Even if the answer is a flat out "NO, I won't change that about the class" at least I would've had a response. In my opinion, not responding at all is rude. Besides that issue, I love having the option of taking online classes.
- Honestly, it was a terrible experience and wouldn't recommend the class nor the professor to anyone at all. I did fine in the class and achieved a well above passing grade but, the instructor was awful. She put little to no effort into her grading and had to wait sometimes months to get back graded assignments. On top of that she had horrible communication skills as well.
- We need more information from the teacher, especially \_\_\_\_\_. I did manage to get an A, but every time I emailed her no response no feedback. On the other hand a great teacher who gave feedback and participated in class discussions was **Lynda Armbruster!** Great online teacher because she believes that online can be just as challenging, another great very hard class with a critical thinking format was **Christiansen?** With theatre online. He was great!
- Good work (2)
- Please offer more online classes (GEs)!
- Please offer more class variety.

- The Distance Education Department does a poor job communicating with students, and making support and services available. When I have contacted them, they never bother to respond to me. How many times do you have to call them/email them to actually get someone to respond? Because, they've never actually bothered to respond!! Also, most of the teachers that are responsible for the online courses I've had are distant, lazy, unresponsive, etc....They do little to no instructing, rarely respond to messages/emails, rarely post updates, and never offer feedback. It's ridiculous really. Does administration at SCC supervises distance education at all? Does anyone on staff have ownership of anything? I've never dealt with such unmotivated, emotionless people. They have no pride or passion whatsoever. Are they held responsible for anything? Granted, there are exceptions, as I have had two online instructors that were AMAZING, but sadly, it's the exception, not the rule. The bad instructors outnumbered the good, and they are so bad that they darken and ruin it for those few that are doing a great job. I advise administration to check ratemyprofessor.com or other similar sites, and to pass out AND PAY ATTENTION to surveys. You need to have surveys that actually ask questions that matter...and then actually follow through with the information you learn from said surveys. When you have that information, you need to coach the instructors that are performing poorly and/or continue to receive horrible reviews. And, after coaching if they don't improve--GET RID OF THEM. \_\_\_\_\_ is as bad as it gets. But seriously, to continue handing out these surveys while failing to follow through is so ridiculous, and such a waste of everyone's time. Maybe administration can't do anything...maybe the unions are too strong, and the teacher's are too protected. Maybe administration is too lazy/incompetent. Maybe they just don't care. Who knows? But, I can tell you one thing, it isn't improving. It is getting worse every semester.
- My teacher \_\_\_\_\_ was absolutely horrible. She had almost zero work to grade, but somehow made excuses for herself in the length of time it takes her to grade. Not to mention the tests were EXTREMELY difficult and I could guarantee you she would not even get an A on her tests.
- It would be so great if there were more online classes offered at SCC.
- I really enjoy taking the classes online. I can go at my own pace, which is sometimes faster than a regular class and sometimes slower. Please add more! Thank you
- There is some loss in continuity and retention by not having face to face (FTF) meetings at least once per week. The online course I took met only once per week so there were 2 weeks between FTF meetings.
- Didn't like the idea of taking online class but I got a bad registration date so I had to. Also didn't like the online math environment. Not going to take online again.
- Since I am unable to attend school due to a disability, I cannot take English online, which is a problem for me to earn my degree.
- The only PowerPoint offered is jumbled and the text overlapped so it wasn't readable. I had to teach myself through the textbook which wasn't even offered at the library. I felt as if it was almost impossible to succeed in this class.
- The online accounting class offered at SCC is extremely difficult. There is no time to sit down and learn the work because of how many assignments are given each week. Many of the assignments take several hours each leaving no time for studying, even if you are only in this one class. There should also be more classes offered in the evenings.
- Most of the online instructors are good; however, there are some that are not and should not be online instructors, such as \_\_\_\_\_.

- SCC does a poor job communicating services, especially when it comes to distance education. I have personally emailed \_\_\_\_\_ questions I had, and called him at his extension at least 6 times, and he never emailed me back or responded to my calls. Additionally, certain instructors/classes have been a major disappointment. Administration needs to do a much better job monitoring these courses/instructors to make sure they are actually putting forth an acceptable effort with these courses. I've had two classes with a history instructor who never once updated the class, posted on the message board, responded to emails/posts, bothered to grad a single exam, paper, assignment until the end of the semester, etc....It was as if a robot was teaching her courses. How can this be acceptable? It is disheartening to have such unmotivated, passionless "teachers".
- More online classes need to be available in major subject areas. Ex. online biology, earth science, and English. As a returning student I have taken almost all of the online classes that SCC has to offer.
- Wanted to commend **Alicia Frost** for her genuine care of students during our course work. Not only did she demonstrate expertise in the course matter...but somehow managed to communicate a source of community and care through the online process and in those times when we were gathered together for midterm and final.
- I LOVE Blackboard. I wish Blackboard classes were offered in mathematics! Thank you for the opportunity to share my comments suggestions about SCC distance education learning!
- I really wanted to express that I enjoyed this class very much!
- Could provide more online classes especially since the transportation from schools is getting harder.
- The math lab tutors should be instructed on how to use all systems related to online math that the school offers. The instructor should also respond to emails in a timely manner.
- This has been a wonderful course for me and I wish I would have taken it my first semester at SCC. Thanks to **Dr. Nena Baldizon-Rios** for her quick replies via email and for her making sure her students were able to achieve their full potential.
- Of the two online classes I took this semester, both were inadequate. I took Math 080 and political science. Thankfully, Math 080 was remedial for me, and was easy to pick back up, but for a new student, the instruction was not enough. I had to do independent research to find answers to coursework. Additionally, the instructor took 3 days to a week to reply to questions regarding homework, while each quiz was due weekly. With my second online class, the instructor simply didn't reply to email. I feel that an online student's only resources are their professor and the internet. With neither of my "online instructors" being speedy with their replies, I took it upon myself and got the work done and do independent research. While educating myself is fine and well, I paid for these classes and got next to 0 support in accomplishing them. I feel like this goes against what a community college stands for, in letting their students go unnoticed. I hope my input can further develop your curriculum.
- I really like online classes. Sometimes it is easier with my work schedule. I wish there were more online classes available.
- Will not be taking another online class again.
- Since I am a working parent trying to get an education, I would like to have more online courses available, as well as have online classes that last the whole semester, instead of 8 weeks because I feel under pressure when they are that short. Thank you for reading my suggestion.