

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*)

Overview of 2009 Survey Results *HAZARD COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE*

Introduction

The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*) provides information about effective educational practice in community colleges and assists institutions in using that information to promote improvements in student intake processes, support systems, learning, and persistence. *SENSE*'s goal is to provide member colleges with results that can be used to inform decision making and target institutional improvements. *SENSE* 2009 data provide a look at the experiences reported by more than 50,000 entering students in community colleges and thus offer important insights into areas where colleges are doing well and areas where there are substantial opportunities for improvement. This information is unprecedented in the community college field, and *SENSE* member colleges are to be commended for their willingness to contribute to new understanding – both of their own entering students' experiences and of community college education more broadly.

SENSE Member Colleges

The 2009 *SENSE* Cohort is comprised of a total of 120 institutions from 30 states and the Northern Marianas Islands. Fifty-one of these member colleges are classified as small (< 4,500), 42 as medium (4,500-7,999), 18 as large (8,000-14,999), and 9 as extra-large institutions (15,000 +) credit students.¹ Twenty-seven of the colleges are classified as urban-serving, 31 as suburban-serving, and 62 as rural-serving. Our college falls into the small size category and is classified as being located in a rural-serving area.²

Student Respondents

The 2009 *SENSE* administration yielded 86,246 usable surveys after exclusion rules were applied (see page 3). Of the 86,246 usable surveys received, 50,327 were completed by entering students. The *SENSE* survey was administered in classes randomly selected from the population of all first college-level English and math courses and all developmental education courses, excluding ESL courses.

The number of completed surveys can be viewed by percentage of surveys completed within classes, by percentage of total classes surveyed, and by overall percentage of surveys completed as compared to number mailed.³

¹ These enrollment statistics are based on the most recent IPEDS data.

² Carnegie Foundation Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education

³ Please note that these calculations are based on maximum enrollments provided to *SENSE* by member colleges.

2009 Student Respondent Profile

To compare the characteristics of entering student respondents with the characteristics of the underlying student population for each participating college, *SENSE* uses the data reported by the institution in its most recent IPEDS Enrollment Report for the following variables: gender, race/ethnicity, age, and enrollment status (part- or full-time).

Gender (survey item #29)

Of the 359 entering student respondents at our college who answered this item, 35.4% (or 127) are male and 64.6% (or 232) are female.

Age (survey item #30)

2009 *SENSE* entering student respondents at HCTC range in age from 18 to 65+ years old. Approximately 91% are between 18 to 39 years old; 74% are 18 to 24 years old while 17% are 25 to 39 years old.

Racial/Ethnic Identification (survey item #35)

92 % of entering student respondents identify themselves as White/Non-Hispanic, 0% as Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, 1% as Black or African American, and 0% as Asian. 1 % of the entering student respondents are Native American. 1 % marked "other" when responding to the question, "What is your racial/ethnic identification?"

International Students (survey item #34)

5 % of our entering students responded yes to the question, "Are you an international student or nonresident alien?"

Enrollment Status (survey item #2)

89 % of the entering student respondents at HCTC report attending college full-time, while 26% of the 2009 *SENSE* Cohort colleges' total student population attended full-time. Only 11% of surveyed students report being part-time college students, compared to 74% as reported to IPEDS.

This inverse representation is a result of the in-class administration process. In the *SENSE* sampling procedure, classes are selected, not students. As a result, full-time students, who by definition are enrolled in more classes than part-time students, are more likely to be surveyed. Consequently, *SENSE* data are weighted based on the most recent publicly available IPEDS data to more accurately represent the entering student population. Under certain circumstances, deactivating weights may be a more informative way to examine institutional *SENSE* data.

Limited English Speaking Students (survey item #33)

Students with limited English speaking skills, or those whose native language is not English, comprise a significant proportion of students in community colleges. At our institution, 1.1% of enrolled entering students are non-native English speakers.

First-Generation Status (survey item #38)

74.6% of entering students indicate that no family member or legal guardian has college experience; accordingly, these students are considered "first-generation" status. 61.7 % of entering students indicate that their mother has no college experience, and 80.3% indicate that level for their fathers.

Educational Attainment (survey item #3)

90.8% of our entering students report starting their college careers at this community college.

Courses Dropped (survey item #9)

10.5% of surveyed entering students report dropping at least one course after the first day of class.

Orientation (survey items #11)

69.9% of surveyed entering students report attending an on-campus orientation prior to the beginning of classes, while 6.8% of surveyed entering students indicate enrolling in an orientation course during their first semester/quarter at the college.

External Commitments (survey items #24a, #24b)

8.1% of entering students at our college work 21 or more hours per week; and 56.9% of students spend at least 1-5 hours per week preparing for class.

Excluded Respondents

The total counts of respondents in an institution's raw data file will differ from the numbers reported in the institutional reports due to intentional exclusion of certain surveys. Exclusion in accord with consistent decision rules serves the purpose of ensuring that all institutional reports are based on the same sampling methods and that results therefore are comparable across institutions. Respondents may be excluded from institutional reporting for the following reasons:

- The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was enrolled part- or full-time at the institution.
- The respondent did not indicate whether he or she was an entering or returning student.
- The survey is invalid (specifically, a survey is determined to be invalid if a respondent answered all items in #19 as either *Never* or *Four or more times*).
- The student reported his or her age as under 18.
- The student indicated that he or she had taken the survey in a previous class or did not respond to item #1.

Custom Reports

The Custom Reports tab on the reporting website allows member colleges to create comparison reports based on the main survey instrument or the college's selected special-focus module question sets by size, state, or the comparison group of the member college's choice. Further, these reports can be broken out by enrollment status (Part-Time vs Full-Time); developmental needs (Developmental vs Non-Developmental); age (Traditional-Age vs. Nontraditional-Age); first-generation status (First-Generation vs Not First-Generation); race/ethnicity; and gender.