Oregon Community College Student Association (OCCSA)

State-Wide Survey

Results for Portland Community College – All Campuses

Survey Administered First Week of Fall Term 2005; September 26-30, 2005
Created and Compiled by Melanie J. Serrou and Kerr Mahnke
During the first week of fall term the following survey was administered across Cascade campus. People in book lines, walking through the Student Center main hallway, getting books from the ASPCC book exchange as well as various classes during class raps filled out this survey. The survey was administered at all PCC campuses and on the MyPCC website.

The survey results have been grouped into three main categories. Though the survey was initially set up with State and School issues it has now been arranged in a different manner. To begin there is a section titled Cost of Education. Students were nearly unanimous in their concern for the issues in this category. Second is a section on various Campus Issues from credit transferability to parking availability. Last but not least is a section on Essential Services which gives a good idea of what sort of students took the survey and what issues are important to them judging by the distribution of responses.

When viewing the graphs, bear in mind this is a voluntary survey meaning that people are more inclined to comment if they are dissatisfied with something. However, given the high number of responses it seems fair to conclude that the surveys accurately portray the feelings of students on the given issues. We can also conclude that any duplication, i.e. students filling out two or three surveys to shift results, would not have had a dramatic effect on the overall outcome and conclusions.
Survey Results for Cascade Campus: Cost of Education

Rock Creek Campus Survey Results: Cost of Education
Cost of Education

In the last decade the cost of an education has risen at an astronomical rate and the burden has been passed onto the students. According to a study by the Oregon Community College Council of Institutional Research (OCCCIR), PCC has had to cut 35 academic programs and increase tuition 28 percent from 2002 to 2004 as a result of budget cuts at the state level. With more cuts looming at the federal level, the future is looking unpleasant. Just a short time ago in this country, 80% of the financial burden of higher education was covered by the government while the remaining 20% was passed onto the students. Today are completely reversed and the burden is becoming more than most students can bare as they work up to 40 hours a week just to go to school, eat, and pay rent. As the above graphs show, this is a nearly unanimous concern among PCC students. One student wrote, “I feel that I am not getting any more than I was two years ago”, and another student points out that, “…tuition has gone up two times in two years”. Students often expect to go into a little debt to get their degree, but the level of urgency conveyed in these findings is extremely high.

The written responses to the survey regarding cost of education issues were numerous and impassioned. One student wrote, “…I don’t have financial aid, so I had to drop 5 classes to be able to pay my tuition on Oct. 7, 2005.” Another student wrote, “I know several friends who can’t go [to PCC] because of cost. I dropped my math class because the book and calculator cost so much!” These may be students who are unaware of existing services that might help them stay in school, but since the concern surrounding these issues is so strong, these results must be read to mean that further cost increases will result in students deciding not to go to college, or not to go to PCC.

Of these three categories, the single most commented on issue was book prices. Here are some of the responses: “I can’t believe I need a $150 text for Biology 55! Unbelievable!” “…[I] had to drop a class because the textbook is over $200, [I] could not afford it.” “I’m standing in the bookstore getting ripped off again.” “…books can be found for cheaper other places. Should we have to go there?”

These issues combined clearly are the greatest concerns for students at PCC. Without having the money to pay for an education then people can not attend PCC and can not further their education like many people would like to do. Continuously rising tuition and book costs tied with reduced financial assistance could affect the student population of PCC and the future generation’s ability to move forward. School administrators and legislators need to be aware of the severity of this issue and remember it when making decisions that affect students.
Internet Survey Results for All PCC Campuses - Campus Issues

Survey Results Cascade Campus: Campus Issues
Campus issues

Credit transferability represents the largest response, which shows that many students plan on transferring and want the credits they take here to easily transfer with them. This issue is tied with advisor assistance which is shown in some of the quotes. One person wrote, “Advisor assistance [is the most important]– to make sure my classes will transfer so I know I’m not wasting my time”. Students want their credits to transfer and they want knowledgeable advisors that will let them know which of their credits will or won’t transfer. One student felt that the level at Cascade is not where it needs to be, “I went to PSU for advising because I found such a lack of help with the people here”.

They also showed a lot of concern for the classes available at each of the campuses. Students want and need more classes to be available to them here. There were direct requests from students for more career-oriented classes, architecture classes as well as higher level classes. Another issue raised is not having classes available every term. As one student wrote, “I could have my degree at the end of fall but some of the classes were not available”. The issue with the distance between campuses and the commute goes along with parking and is summed up well by one student, “more classes at the campus I attend”, and another one, “it’s hard to get to Sylvania”. Since students showed such strong interest in having more classes available, the logical conclusion is that students would drop-out and go elsewhere if more classes got cut.

Parking is a perennial issue at every PCC campus. With new buildings up and more student enrollment the parking spaces available need to accommodate students and/or provide alternatives to driving. Having incentives for riding the bus would help this issue but can not help every student as people have children to pick up across town and jobs to get to in a minimum amount of time which makes driving mandatory. One student wrote, “Parking, it is a pain to get here early and still be late because of no parking”. This shows that the issue is affecting students getting to class on time which in turn affects the education they are receiving.
Internet Survey Results for All PCC Campuses- Essential Programs

Survey Results for Cascade Campus: Essential Services
Rock Creek Campus Survey Results: Essential Services

Survey Results for Sylvania Campus
Essential Services

1 = not important, 5 = very important
Essential Services

The diversity of responses in these graphs is a direct reflection of the diversity of the PCC student population at all campuses. Younger students don’t care about child care or health care if they’re still living with their parents. Older students are very concerned with these issues. One could infer from the proportion of respondents rating housing as 4 or 5 on the importance scale that many students at PCC are at or below the poverty line and concerned with making rent. And, judging from the distribution of responses, some are not concerned with these issues at all which may imply that they are more stable financially or living with their parents or family.

At all campuses and on the online survey, many students rated healthcare as 4 or 5 indicating that many students are un- or underinsured. This reflects a mounting trend nationwide as more and more employers cut healthcare benefits due to rising costs. If PCC could do anything to help make healthcare services more available, students would greatly appreciate it.

Conclusion

PCC should adapt the OCCSA specifically to its own campuses due to its size and importance to the state. These numbers were compiled along with results from Treasure Valley Community College and Umpqua Community College. There were many similarities in the surveys and only a few major differences. The results of a PCC-wide survey could thus be said to have some meaning to community colleges in other parts of the state. Also, comparisons to surveys of other colleges might illuminate solutions that other colleges are using that, for the time being seem inappropriate, ill-suited or cost prohibitive for PCC campuses.
OCCSA State-Wide Survey  
2005-06 School Year

**How important are these issues to you?**
Please rate on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important to you.

### Issues relating to your school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>School Issues</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health Care Options</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Child Care Options</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tuition Rate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Advisor Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parking Availability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More Class Choices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Other _______________</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the above issues, which is most important to you and why? (please be specific)
__________________________________________________________________________

### Issues relating to the State of Oregon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B</th>
<th>State Issues</th>
<th>Not</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Very</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Credit Transferability</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Book Prices</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Housing Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other _______________</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the above issues, which is most important to you and why? (please be specific)
__________________________________________________________________________

7 Is there anything you feel was left out? Why do you think it is important?