

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE)

Overview of 2008 Survey Results El Camino College Compton Center

Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides information about effective educational practice in community colleges and assists institutions in using that information to promote improvements in student learning and persistence.

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), designed as a companion to the CCSSE, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices, the ways they spend their professional time, both in and out of class, and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences.

The CCFSSE report enables participating institutions to view faculty expectations and perceptions of student engagement alongside student responses. However, it is important to remember that the side-by-side tables, while illustrative, are not entirely equivalent – that is, the CCSSE asks students to report perceptions and experiences across the period of the current academic year. Faculty, in contrast, are asked to describe their practices in a specific selected course, as well as to indicate their perceptions of student experiences in the college more generally.

The CCFSSE was administered through the Internet. To view a sample copy of the faculty survey, visit: <http://www.ccsse.org/facsamp.cfm>.

CCFSSE Member Colleges

CCFSSE utilizes a 3-year cohort of 286 participating colleges (2006 through 2008) in all of its data analyses,¹ including the computation of benchmark scores. This cohort is referred to as the **2008 CCFSSE Cohort**. This approach increases the total number of institutions and faculty contributing to the national dataset; this in turn increases the reliability of the overall results.

¹ For returning participants, the college's most recent year of participation is included in data analyses. For example, if a college participated in 2007 and 2008, only the 2008 data would be used in the 3-year cohort.

The college summary is divided into two sections and is organized to provide a general understanding of survey administration and of selected findings from the 2008 CCFSSSE Cohort. In the first section, a profile of El Camino College Compton Center faculty respondents is provided. This is followed by a summary of selected findings from the engagement and professional activity questions found in the remainder of the survey.

Frequency and percentage responses are provided on each survey question for all faculty with an additional breakdown by employment status (full-time/part-time) in tables published on ECC's Institutional Research website (www.elcamino.edu/administration/ir - click on "Surveys" on the left-hand menu bar).

Faculty Respondents and Sampling of Course Sections

Faculty teaching at least one credit, non-lower-level-ESL course on campus in Spring 2008 were selected to participate in the CCFSSSE. Out of 101 faculty invited to participate in the online survey, 50 responded (a 50% response rate, $\pm 9.9\%$ margin of error with 95% confidence). The average institutional response rate for the 2008 CCFSSSE administration was 30%. A total of 41 (82%) full-time and 9 (18%) part-time faculty responded to the survey. Part-time employees were underrepresented on the survey, since they made up 44% of the instructional faculty in fall 2007. For this reason and the small sample size, separate breakdowns for full- and part-time faculty are not provided; only total full-time or faculty responses will be published.

On many survey items, faculty were asked to respond considering one selected course they were currently teaching. For all faculty meeting the above criteria, one class was randomly selected from their spring 2008 teaching load to serve as the focus. For faculty who taught sections selected for the *student* survey, this course section may or may not have been the same one selected for the student survey.

2008 Faculty Respondent Profile

Compton's faculty were queried on a variety of demographic, educational and employment characteristics. Where notably different, percentages for the entire instructional workforce at Compton are provided.

Gender (survey item #25)

Of the 50 faculty respondents at Compton Center who answered this item, 38% are female and 62% are male. This is similar to the full population of Compton's faculty, comprised of 43% female and 57% male.

Racial Identification (survey item #27)

Thirty-five percent of respondents identify themselves as African American, 22% as Asian, 11% as Latino/Hispanic, and 30% as White/non-Hispanic. Two percent marked "other" when responding to the question, "What is your racial or ethnic identification?" These response rates contrast to some degree with the ethnic distribution of faculty at Compton Center, composed of 47% African American, 8% Asian, 14% Latino and 28% White.

Age Group (survey item #24)

The 2008 CCFSSSE respondents at Compton Center range in age from 25-29 to over 65 years old. Approximately 38% are between 25 and 49 years old, while 61% are aged 50 or older.

Teaching Experience (survey item #22)

Reflecting in part the current faculty age distribution, 36% of respondents have been teaching for 20 years or more. Over half (55%) have been teaching for 5 to 19 years. Nine percent have been teaching for less than 5 years.

Education (survey item #23)

Twenty-eight percent of faculty respondents have earned a doctorate or professional degree, higher than the *CCFSSE* cohort average (18%), while nearly two thirds (62%) claim a Master's degree. Four percent have bachelor's degrees.

Employment Outside Compton Center (survey item #28)

Faculty respondents frequently are employed in other positions outside of El Camino College Compton Center (47%). Twelve percent are self-employed, 31% are teaching at another college, and 2% are in non-teaching positions.

Selected Findings

This section of the overview features selected findings from Compton Center faculty about their perceptions of student engagement and how faculty spend their professional time both inside and outside the classroom.

Faculty Perceptions about Student Engagement

On the *CCFSSE* survey, faculty members are asked how often their students participate in activities that encourage engagement, mirroring similar questions asked of students. In the *CCFSSE* frequency reports available online, responses from both faculty and students are set side by side to compare perceptions from each group.

Tables 1 through 4 summarize these comparisons grouped under 4 of the 5 *CCSSE* benchmarks of effective educational practice: Active and Collaborative Learning, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners (see also *Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice*, available on El Camino College's Institutional Research website). Each table shows the percentages of faculty and students who indicated that the activity occurred *Often* or *Very Often*. Frequency percentages with larger gaps between faculty and student are highlighted in bold italics.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Table 1 highlights response percentages on items related to Active and Collaborative Learning. Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaboration with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with the kinds of situations and problems they will encounter in the workplace, community, and their personal lives.

On most of the items, faculty perceived higher frequencies of active learning inside and outside the classroom. Items with larger gaps include asking questions in classes and tutoring or teaching other students. Students perceived that they discussed ideas from readings or classes with other students outside of class with much *greater* frequency than faculty thought.

Table 1: Active and Collaborative Learning (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)

Active & Collaborative Learning Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	90%	69%
Made a class presentation	44%	34%
Worked with other students on a project during class	74%	61%
Worked with other students outside of class to prepare class assignments	44%	35%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	38%	16%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class	38%	63%

Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Items related to academic challenge showed a similar pattern with faculty indicating higher frequency of academically challenging activities than students on many items (see Table 2 and further discussion below).

Although differences between faculty and student responses are large on some items, most students consider Compton Center courses to be academically rigorous. In fact, Compton Center students indicated higher frequencies of academic challenge on most items than compared to colleges in the 2008 *CCSSE* student cohort.

Table 2: Academic Challenge (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)

Academic Challenge Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Worked harder than they thought they could to meet your standards or expectations	66%	64%
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory	86%	68%
Synthesized and organized ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	78%	64%
Made judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments or methods	74%	56%
Applied theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	78%	57%
Used information they have read or heard to perform a new skill	72%	69%

In addition to the items above, students and faculty were both queried about the volume of work asked of students. In question 6, when asked about the number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books and reading packets, most faculty (80%) indicated that they typically assign 1 to 3. However, about 36% of *students* indicated that they read 4 or fewer textbooks, books or

reading packets during the entire school year. This breaks out by educational status as 40% of part-time students and 27% of full-time students; 64% of full-time students read between 0 and 10 books per year. Similar results were found in terms of the number of papers students were asked to write.

Another indicator of academic challenge is the perceived difficulty of examinations in terms of challenging students to do their best work. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is easy and 7 is extremely challenging, the mean faculty rating was 5.3, while the mean student rating was 5.1. On average, students found their current-year exams only slightly easier than faculty evaluating their selected course.

Finally, both faculty and students were asked how much Compton Center encourages students to “spend significant amounts of time studying.” Sixty-seven percent of faculty and 74% of students indicated “Quite a bit” or “Very much.”

Student-Faculty Interaction

The more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Personal interaction with faculty members strengthens students’ connections to the college and helps them focus on their academic progress.

As Table 3 highlights, on every item listed, faculty reported higher rates of interaction than students did, most notably with respect to discussing grades and assignments, receiving prompt feedback (written and oral), and discussing ideas from readings or classes.

Table 3: Student-Faculty Interaction (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)

Student-Faculty Interaction Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Used e-mail to communicate with you	56%	41%
Discussed grades and assignments with you	78%	56%
Talked about career plans with you	58%	39%
Discuss ideas from their readings or classes with you outside of class	46%	24%
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from you about their performance	88%	63%
Worked with you on activities other than coursework	20%	17%

Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus. Community college students also benefit from services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skill development, and other issues that may affect both learning and retention.

Table 4 highlights faculty and student evaluations of Compton Center's support for learners. A much larger percentage of faculty than students on three items felt that the college emphasized activities and services that support learners quite a bit or very much.

Table 4: Support for Learners (Responses of “Quite a bit” or “Very Much”)

How much does Compton emphasize...	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Providing students the support they need to help them to succeed at this college	64%	60%
Encouraging contact among students from different econ., social and racial backgrounds	72%	56%
Helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc)	50%	35%
Providing students the support students need to thrive socially	42%	40%
Providing the financial support students need to afford their education	64%	44%

How Students Spend Their Time

Faculty and students also were queried about the number of hours students spend, on average, doing a variety of tasks. Students indicated that they spent more hours preparing for class than faculty thought. While 27% of all students said that they spent at least 11 hours per week on studying and other class preparations, faculty perceived that percentage to be about 18%.

A more dramatic difference was found in terms of working for pay. All faculty respondents thought that students worked at some kind of job 6 or more hours per week, with 29% indicating that students worked 6 to 20 hours per week and 71% that they worked 21 hours or more. Twenty-eight percent of students reported not working at all (25% of part-time, 34% of full-time), while 17% indicated they worked 6 to 20 and 48% worked more than 20. Similarly, all faculty perceived that students spend at least some hours per week providing care for dependents (parent, child, spouse, etc). In comparison, 68% of students indicated that they provide some level of care to a dependent in a typical week. Six percent of students indicated heavier obligations of 11 or more hours per week, while 52% faculty perceived that students were so involved. In terms of commuting to and from classes, faculty and student perceptions on weekly commute times were also somewhat dissimilar. On average, faculty thought students commuted longer distances than students indicated.

Finally, a much larger percentage of faculty thought students spent more time participating in college-sponsored activities, such as clubs, campus publications, student government and sports. Eighty percent of faculty thought students were involved on campus at some level, while only 29% of students indicated any involvement. However, most faculty (71%) thought that the involvement was low (1 to 5 hours per week).

How Faculty Spend Their Time

Faculty were queried about how they spend their time in a typical week both inside and outside the classroom. Table 5 summarizes time spent on teaching-related and other professional tasks for full-time faculty, while Table 6 examines in-class activities for all faculty.

Question 15 highlights the teaching-related and other professional activities on which faculty reported spending their time in a typical 7-day week. Responses for full-time faculty are shown in Table 5. Compared to the national CCSSE faculty cohort ², Compton faculty spent longer hours reflecting and working on ways to improve their teaching as well as on research and scholarly activities. Compton faculty also are more likely to spend time advising students, working with students on activities other than course work, and conducting service activities.

Table 5: Hours Spent on Selected Activities in a Typical 7-day Week

Hours per week spent on ...	Full-time Faculty		
	1-12	13-20	21+
Teaching-related Activities			
Teaching students in class	38%	43%	20%
Grading papers	78%	20%	0%
Giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students	90%	10%	0%
Preparing for class	86%	10%	5%
Reflecting and working on ways to improve my teaching	88%	3%	10%
Other Professional Activities			
Research and scholarly activities	78%	5%	10%
Working with honors projects	20%	0%	0%
Advising students	88%	5%	3%
Supervising internships or field experience	18%	8%	0%
Working with students on activities other than course work	68%	3%	0%
Involvement in other interactions with students outside the classroom	75%	5%	3%
Conducting service activities	48%	5%	0%

Question 16 asks faculty to report the percentage of class time spent on activities such as lecture, student computer use, and small group activities. The highest percentages for each

² Information about the national CCSSE faculty cohort can be found in the report *Overview of National 2008 CCFSSSE Cohort Survey Results*, available on the Institutional Research website.

activity are in bold italics. Compton faculty tend to devote much more class time than the national cohort average to teacher-student shared responsibility, in-class writing, experiential work and hands-on practice. Also at Compton Center, students are involved with computer work more often than the cohort average (67% indicate spending at least some class time with computers vs. 50% nationally). Faculty at Compton spend more time on testing and evaluation in class, with 29% indicating they spend 30% of class time or more on this work. This contrasts with 9% on the national level.

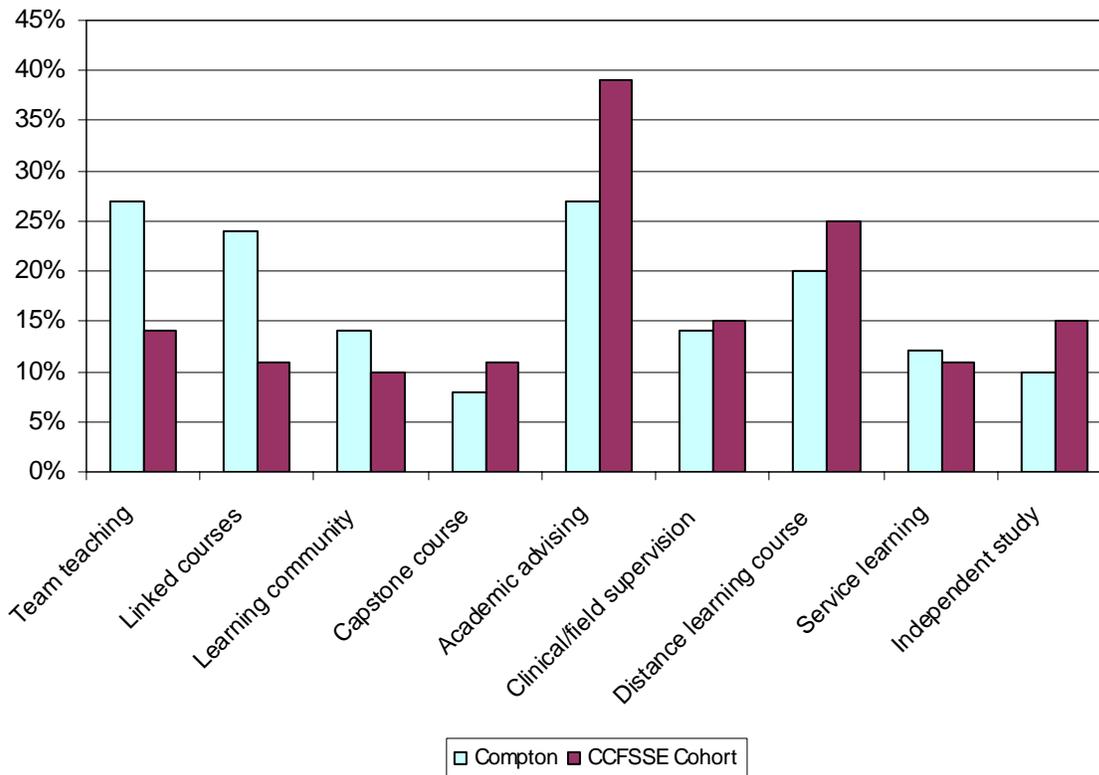
Table 6: Percent of Class Time Spent on Various Activities (All Faculty)

Percent spent on ...	0%	1-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-74%	75-100%
Lecture	0%	6%	8%	21%	10%	19%	29%	6%
Teacher-led discussion	0%	17%	25%	17%	21%	13%	8%	0%
Teacher-student shared responsibility	9%	23%	16%	20%	9%	11%	11%	0%
Student computer use	33%	25%	10%	8%	6%	13%	2%	2%
Small group activities	11%	19%	28%	21%	4%	9%	9%	0%
Student presentations	23%	21%	27%	15%	4%	4%	6%	0%
In-class writing	27%	29%	16%	4%	11%	7%	7%	0%
Testing and evaluation	4%	23%	29%	15%	21%	4%	4%	0%
Performances in applied and fine arts	84%	7%	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%
Experiential (labs, field work, art exhibits, clinical)	50%	7%	11%	4%	13%	7%	7%	2%
Hands-on practice	27%	8%	15%	2%	10%	13%	19%	6%

Finally, question 19 asked faculty about aspects of their teaching role that further support student engagement. Figure 1 on the next page highlights the percentage of participation in each area, comparing Compton faculty responses with those of the 2008 national CCFSSSE cohort.

Faculty at Compton were more likely than the national cohort to be involved with team teaching (27% vs. 14%) and linked courses (24% vs. 11%), but less likely to conduct academic advising (27% vs. 39%). The latter difference may be partially due to the fact that some colleges provide departmental-based academic advising (60% nationally).

Figure 1: Aspects of Teaching Role



Conclusion and Future Directions

In general, faculty at Compton Center (as at other institutions) perceive that students participate in engagement activities more often than students perceive they do themselves. The survey also revealed important information on students' lives outside the classroom, which found them working and supporting families much less, on average, than faculty perceived they did. Finally, faculty reported on the current levels of engagement activities they pursue in a variety of questions. Responses revealed that courses offered at Compton Center had a higher level of engagement activities (e.g., teacher-student shared responsibility and experiential work) and is more involved than the national cohort with instructional innovations such as team teaching and learning communities.

The evidence is strong and often unequivocal that increasing engagement of students improves academic success and persistence. This can be achieved in a variety of ways both inside and outside the classroom. Since engagement research guided the development of questions for both the CCSSE student survey and CCFSSSE faculty survey, local responses and their comparison within the campus and to other survey participants can suggest areas where El Camino College Compton Center might expand its successes or benefit from greater focus.