



2003 SACE Student Satisfaction Survey

Highlights from the SACE

- **The *Student Assessment of the College Environment* (SACE) was administered in randomly selected day and evening classes at the Southern and Dobson and Red Mountain campuses in September 2003.**
- **Overall results show that MCC students perceive a healthy campus climate.**
- **The areas of highest satisfaction are instructors' expertise and attitudes toward students, clear grading policies and course requirements, opportunities to participate actively in class, and quality of the library.**
- **2,110 students of 3,183 surveyed (66.3%) at both campuses responded to the survey.**
- **At Dobson and Southern, 1,525 students responded. At Red Mountain, 314 students responded. (217 students did not indicate campus location.)**
- **Compared to the total MCC student population, SACE respondents were younger and more attended full time during the day; respondents were similar to the total population on ethnicity and gender.**

Background on the SACE

The *Student Assessment of the College Environment* (SACE) was first administered at Mesa Community College's Dobson and Southern Campus in October of 2000. Subsequently, the survey was re-administered at the Dobson and Southern and Red Mountain Campuses in September of 2003. The purpose of the survey is to learn how students perceive their experiences, programs, and services at the college and to identify areas that may need to be improved.

The SACE is a standardized measure of student perceptions developed by the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) at North Carolina State University. Students rate their satisfaction with 58 items categorized into five major areas: Instructional Services, Student Services, Administrative and Physical Services, Student Focus, Social and Cultural Services. Ten

additional customized items relate to areas of specific interest to MCC.

The survey was coordinated and administered through the MCC Office of Research and Planning. A random sample of 125 sections was selected to participate; sections were stratified by day and evening and by campus. Students who attend both in the day and evening were included in the "day" group since they have the day student experience. Students who attend in the evening only constituted the "evening" group.

Completed survey response forms were sent to NILIE for analysis, and a comprehensive report was prepared by the MCC Office of Research and Planning.

(Copies of the full report may be obtained by [clicking here](#).)

Who responded to the SACE?

Student respondents were similar to the total MCC population on several characteristics. The respondent group did have a higher percentage of full-time students who attend during the day than the total MCC population.

- 48% were 20 years old or younger; 39% were 21-30; 7% were 31-40; 6% were 41 or older.
- 56% were female; 44% male.
- 73 % were Caucasian; 14% Hispanic; 13% from other racial/ethnic groups.
- 65% attended full time; 35% attended part time.
- 20% were evening and 80% were day students.

What did students tell us?

2003: Overall Results

Students expressed a level of satisfaction that is consistent with the other colleges and universities in the norm group. The overall average score for all respondents was 3.68 reflecting a positive rating. The overall ratings for each of the six areas and their highest and lowest rated items are as follows (sorted highest to lowest):

Instructional Services (3.93)

Instructors' expertise (4.25)

Opportunity to evaluate instructors (3.52)

Social and Cultural Services (3.84)

Instructor and staff sensitivity to gender (3.95)

Instructor and staff sensitivity to students of all ages (3.95)

Instructor and staff sensitivity to different ways students learn (3.69)

Student Focus (3.68)

Feeling safe on campus (3.96)

Assistance with personal development (3.49)

Administrative and Physical Services (3.52)

Library/learning resource center (3.98)

Availability of parking spaces (2.55)

Student Services (3.40)

Learning assistance and tutorial services (3.57)

Financial aid services (3.28)

The rating scale: 5=very satisfied; 4=satisfied; 3=neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; 2=dissatisfied; 1=very dissatisfied.

Highest rated items (highest to lowest)

- Instructors' expertise in subjects taught (4.25)
- Instructors' attitude toward students (4.15)
- Extent to which instructors clearly define grading policies (4.09)
- Extent to which I have an opportunity to participate actively in class (4.08)
- Extent to which instructors clearly define course requirements (4.01)
- Quality of library/learning resource center (3.98)

Lowest rated items (lowest to highest)

- Availability of parking spaces (2.55)
- Convenience/proximity of parking (2.83)
- Availability of public transportation (3.23)
- Financial aid services (3.28)
- Advice in making educational decisions (3.30)
- Academic advising services (3.32)

Custom Items

Ten custom items were developed based on research questions generated by the MCC self-study committee. Of these custom items, the highest rated was the extent to which the college provides a supportive learning environment (3.78) and the lowest rated item was the availability of courses students want to take (3.45).

2003: Differences between day and evening students

Analyses were conducted to determine whether ratings between day and evening students were statistically different (i.e., the differences were not due to chance).

Dobson and Southern Campus

- Day students were significantly more satisfied than were evening students with 26 of 68 items rated. Evening students were more satisfied than day students with five of 68 items rated.

Red Mountain Campus

- Of the seven items that showed significant differences between day and evening students, day students were significantly more satisfied than evening students with all seven.

Differences between 2000 and 2003 Results

Analyses were conducted to determine whether ratings between 2000/2003 day and evening students were statistically different (i.e., the differences were not due to chance). Since only the Dobson and Southern campus was sampled in 2000, comparisons between years are limited to this campus.

Day students: 2000 to 2003

- Day students rated the Student Services domain statistically higher in 2003 (3.43) than in 2000 (3.36).
- Day students rated the following 10 items statistically higher in 2003 than in 2000: learning assistance and tutorial services, career planning and placement services, academic advising services, athletic services, classrooms, laboratories, food services, public transportation, importance of ethnic and cultural diversity, and instructors and staff sensitivity to student sexual harassment concerns.
- Day students rated the following four items lower in 2003 than in 2000: computer labs, computer services, library/learning resource center, availability of parking spaces.

Evening students: 2000 to 2003

- Evening students rated the following item higher in 2003 than in 2000: instructors and staff sensitivity to students' sexual harassment concerns.
- Evening students rated the following five items lower in 2003 than in 2000: opportunity to evaluate instructors, academic advising services, counseling services, availability of parking spaces, and convenience and proximity of parking spaces.

2003 Comparisons between MCC and the National Norm Group

- MCC domain means compare favorably to the national domain means and they exhibit the same response pattern. This suggests that MCC's results are similar to what is being found in 30 community colleges administering the SACE nationwide.

- The national data set contains data from 30 two-year institutions and two four-year institutions participating between 1999 and the present. Institutions included in the national data ranged in size from 525 credit students to 32,000 credit students.

How can this information be used?

The results from the SACE survey serve as an indicator of student perceptions and satisfaction with the college. While this summary report includes highlights from the study, the full report includes numerous details that will be of interest to specific departments and individuals within and outside the MCC community. Relative satisfaction rankings, as well as differences in perceptions between various groups of students, can provide insights into areas for improvements.

These survey results are valuable for better understanding the degree to which the college is achieving its mission. They are particularly useful for documenting student satisfaction and making programmatic and other planning decisions. In making use of the results it is important to keep in mind that, while some items were rated low relative to other items, the ratings overall and by category show that students perceive a "healthy climate" at Mesa Community College.

