

---

# Community College Survey of Student Engagement

---

Analysis of  
Montgomery County  
Community College  
2011 Results

---

Leon Hill, Director of Institutional  
Research and Assessment

---

# **Community College Survey of Student Engagement: Montgomery County Community College 2011 Results**

## **Introduction**

During the Spring 2011 semester the College administered the CCSSE to a select group students in targeted classes at both the Central and West campuses, and CCFSSSE, to all (full time and part time faculty). This was the third administration of the survey at the College. There were a total of 864 completed student surveys, and 372 completed faculty surveys. Below is a summary of the findings, followed by a more detailed analysis for each survey.

## **Summary of Findings**

### CCSSE Highlights

Our scores in three of the five metrics decreased over the last administration of the survey. Student-Faculty Interaction increased over last year to 50.2 and Support for Learners (49.8) has increased over the last three survey administration.

Some of the more interesting aggregated findings include:

- 75% of students noted that they have never participated in community based projects as part of a class project.
- 48% of students indicated that they never worked with classmates outside of class.
- 68% of students rarely or never not use tutoring services.
- 40% of students suggested they spend no time/zero hours preparing for class.
- 72% of all students suggested that the College, quite a bit or often, encouraged them to spend significant amount of time studying.
- 70% of students corresponded with faculty via email often/very often.
- 60% of students indicated they received prompt feedback from faculty often/very often.
- 68% of students argued they rarely/never use the Career Counseling at the College.
- 74% of students suggested that all their faculty members clearly explained the class attendance policy that specified how my classes that could be missed without penalty.

## CCFSSE Highlights

In most instances, the responses of our faculty mirrored those provided by the entire 2011 Faculty cohort responding to the survey.

Some of the differences in perception between our students and our faculty include, as well as some faculty specific questions:

- 75% of students indicated they have never participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course assignment, whereas faculty suggested that less than half (46%) of students have never participated in such an event; 32% of faculty noted they did not even know if students ever participated in these events.
- 17% of students suggested that they never prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in; 42% of faculty indicated the students never prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
- 94% of faculty noted they give prompt feedback to students about their performance often or very often, while 60% of students suggested the same.
- 70% of faculty noted that the College either quite a bit or very much does encourage contact among students from different economic, social, and racial/ethnic backgrounds, while half (50%) of students agreed.
- 67% of our faculty indicated that they spend 1-4 hours a week providing feedback (written and oral) to students (64% for all cohort faculty).
- 42% of faculty noted they administered a written assessment, 27% provided an oral assessment, and 10% did an online assessment to assess the academic preparation of students in their classes. Thirty-three percent (33%) of faculty suggested they did not do any type of student preparedness assessment.

If faculty assess that students are not prepared for the rigors of the class, faculty follow-up consists of:

- 71% indicate that they have a discussion about the issue with the student outside of class; 66% communicate with the student during class; 55% refer students to the College's tutoring services; and 43% notify someone else in the college who will then contact the student as part of the early academic warning system.

## 2011 CCSSE: Student Summary Results

- 864 completed student surveys
- 94 courses selected for administration; 82% participation rate by faculty (77/94).

### Results

The analysis below provides the overall scores for each benchmark as well as comparisons to the “large community college” cohort group. Furthermore, within the five benchmarks, our College data have been segmented by the following subgroups of students. Only those where the mean scores were statistically different were included in this initial analysis.

- Full-time and Part-time students,
- Gender (male-female),
- Race (White-African American/Black),
- Developmental/Non-Developmental (Yes-No),
- Traditional Aged/ Non-Traditional Aged (24 or younger-25 or older),
- First Generation/Non-First Generation (neither parent attended college-at least one parent attended college), and
- Central/West (campus site where the student completed the survey).

### *Overall Results*

When compared to the entire 2011 CCSSE cohort (all colleges), our scores on the five major benchmarks ranged from the low zero percentile for Active and Collaborative Learning and Student Effort to a high in the 50th percentile for Student Faculty Interaction.

In comparison to other large community colleges, our benchmarks scores ranged from a low of zero percentile for Active and Collaborative Learning to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile for Student-Faculty Engagement.

### *Active & Collaborative Learning (44.0)*

This score decreased from 45.1 in 2009 and decreased from 47.7 during 2007 the administration of the survey. This benchmark was our lowest standardized score of the five constructs. When compared to other large community colleges<sup>1</sup>, as well as the entire 2011 cohort, we were significantly below the mean on the average response to working with other students on projects during class, as well as working with classmates outside of class in preparation for course work. Students did respond higher than the large community college benchmark group in terms of asking questions in class and contributed to the discussion, albeit not significantly.

Our students who did respond to the series of questions which compose this benchmark, had some interesting responses:

- 76% of students suggested that they never tutored students (for free or pay).
- 75% of students noted that they have never participated in community based projects as part of a class project.
- 48% of students indicated that they never worked with classmates outside of class.

### Segmentation of College Data

Part time (73%) and non-traditional aged students (83%) were more likely to ask questions, or contribute to course discussions than full time (65%) or traditional aged students (60%).

More than 33% of part-time students never made a class presentation compared to 15% of full-time students.

More developmental students (42%) worked with other students on class projects, often or very often, during class than non-traditional students (28%).

---

<sup>1</sup> Scores were compared to Large Community Colleges (9,000 to 14,999) and not the entire CCSSE cohort since the entire CCSSE cohort includes all community colleges.

More than 56% of part-time students never worked with classmates outside of class to prepare for the class compared to 47% of full-time students. White students (50%) noted they never worked with other students out class, compared to 40% of African American students.

Females students (51%), West campus students (54%), non-traditional aged (54%) and African-American students (55%) were more likely to discuss their ideas with other outside class (i.e., students, family, co-workers, etc.), than male students (41%), Central students (44%), traditional aged (44%), and White students (45%).

### *Student Effort (45.7)*

This benchmark score decreased from 46.3 in 2009 and from a high of 47.2 during the Spring 2007 administration of the survey. Our score of 45.7 was lower than both the benchmark colleges and the 2011 cohort.

In most cases our students responded about the same as others to questions in this construct. One area where we were significantly below the mean was in terms of students indicating their frequency of using various skill labs on campus (i.e., writing, math etc.) as well as their use of computer labs when compared to both the benchmark colleges and 2011 Cohort. While not significant, our mean score was lower in terms of students indicating how much time they spent preparing for class (i.e. doing homework, studying, reading, writing, etc.).

Some of the interesting findings from our aggregate data suggests:

- 68% of students rarely or never not use tutoring services.
- 60% of students rarely or never use writing/math labs.
- 40% of students suggested they spend no time/zero hours preparing for class.

### Segmentation of College Data

Developmental students (64%), African-American students (64%) indicated that they prepared two plus drafts of an assignment before turning it in versus those where not developmental (44%) or White (51%).

More full-time students (77%) suggested they worked on papers or projects that integrated knowledge from various sources compared to part-time students (56%).

While 26% of full-time students indicated they “never” came to class without completing assignments/readings, 41% of part-time students responded similarly. Forty-seven percent

(47%) of non-traditional aged students indicated they “sometimes” came to class without doing their work, 62% of traditional aged students suggested that they “sometimes” do come to class without doing their assignments.

Forty-eight percent (48%) of part-time students, 43% of male students, 46% of traditional-age students, and 42% of non-developmental students agreed that they spend little to no time preparing for class compared to 36% of full-time students, 37% of female students, 28% of non-traditional students, and 38% of developmental students.

African-American students (25%) were more likely than White students (8%) to use tutoring services.

While 75% of students at the West Campus sometimes/often use the computer labs at the College, 61% of Central students indicated the same.

#### *Academic Challenge (48.6)*

This benchmark score decreased from 50.7 in 2009 and from a high of 51.2 during the Spring 2007 administration of the survey. The metric score was relatively close to the large two benchmark groups (49.7 for large community colleges, and 50 for the 2011 Cohort).

While none of the item scores were significant in relation to those of the benchmark groups' scores, we did score higher than both groups of colleges on the number of papers or reports written by students.

Some additional highlights from our data:

72% of all students suggested that the College, quite a bit or often, encouraged them to spend significant amount of time studying.

71% of students indicated their coursework, quite a bit or often, emphasized analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory.

63% of students noted that their coursework, quite a bit or often, emphasized that they use information they read/heard to perform a new skill.

60% of students argued that the College, quite a bit or often, emphasized that they apply theories to practical problems or in new situations.

## Segmentation of College Data

More non-traditional students (64%) indicated that they worked harder, often or very often, than they thought they would have to in order to meet instructors' standards or expectations than traditional aged students (49%).

Full-time students (74%) suggested they were able to analyze the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory versus those of part-time students (62%).

African American students (88%) suggested that the College encouraged them to spend significant amounts of time studying, compared to 70% of White students.

There were few significant differences between the seven subgroups of students within this metric. This may indicate that all types of students were reacting to the high level of academic rigor of the College.

### *Student-Faculty Interaction (50.2)*

This area had a nominal increase over the last administration of the survey. During 2009, the metric score was 49.7, and in 2007 the College scored 50.2. Although not significant, we had a slightly higher score than other large community colleges (49.3) and were basically tied with the 2011 cohort (50.0).

No items were significant in this construct as compared to the benchmark groups. However, we did score higher in that students did indicate that they used email to communicate with faculty much more than students at other larger community colleges or compared to the 2011 cohort. The College also scored higher with students indicating that they received prompt feedback from instructors on their assignments. One area where we scored lower than the other comparison groups was in students suggesting that they did not as readily discuss their ideas from their class work with their instructors outside of the classroom.

Other findings:

- 70% of students corresponded with faculty via email often/very often.
- 60% of students indicated they received prompt feedback from faculty often/very often.
- 49% of students discussed their grades or assignments with an instructor.
- 46% of students indicated that they "never" discussed ideas from readings or classes with faculty outside of class.



### Segmentation of College Data

More full-time students (76%) than part time (55%) students used email to correspond with faculty. Also, more traditional aged students (74%) used the media to “talk” to faculty than non-traditional aged students (61%).

Full-time students (52%) often or very often discuss their grades with faculty, while only 40% of part-time students do the same.

While nearly 50% of White students suggested they “never” discuss readings or course assignments outside of class with their faculty member, just 36% of African-American students provide a similar response.

### *Support for Learners (49.8)*

Our score with this metric has increased each of the last three survey administrations (49.4 in 2009 and 48.1 for 2007). The College score was almost identical to the large community colleges score (49.1) and the 2011 cohort score (50.0).

As with the two other benchmarks, there were no significant differences in item scores between our College and those at other institutions. One area where we seemed to have a higher average score than the two comparison groups was in reference to students suggesting that they were utilizing academic advising/planning. However the College did score below the mean of the two other groups in terms of students using career counseling.

Some of the highlights from this benchmark:

73% of students indicated that that the College provides support to them to help them succeed either often or very often.

55% of students noted that either often or very often, the College provides the financial support they need to afford their education.

50% of students suggested that the College often or very often encourages contact among students from different economic, social, and/or racial and ethnic groups.

68% of students argued they rarely/never use the Career Counseling at the College.

### Segmentation of College Data

African American students (83%) seem to suggest more than their White counterparts (72%) that the College provides them the support they need to succeed.

African American students (62%) indicate that the College encourages contact among diverse groups of student groups than White students (47%).

African American students (67%), more than their White peers (53%), argue that the College provides financial support they need to afford their education.

More White students (73%) indicated they rarely/never use Career Counseling versus African American students (59%) indicating a similar response. College-ready students (75%) also were less likely to use Career Counseling than Developmental students (62%).

African American students (48%) noted they believed the College provides them support they need to thrive socially more than White students (32%). Developmental students suggested the same (41%) versus College-ready students (27%).

### **Special Focus Questions**

The series of questions for this section of the survey was focused on students' experience with testing, placement, class attendance, and support service at the College.

When asked if students participated in one or more accelerated fast-track programs, to help them through developmental courses more quickly, 78% of those responding indicated they did not.

A majority of students (74%) suggested that all their faculty members clearly explained the class attendance policy that specified how many classes that could be missed without penalty.

An even percentage of students suggested that while they were in high school they completed a placement test (40%), while 43% did not take any type of placement tests in high school.

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of students indicated that before they could register for their first class at the College, they completed the institution's placement test. Six (6%) percent noted they were required to take the placement test but did not and enrolled at the College anyway.

When asked if they used online or printed materials from the College to help them prepare for the placement test, 63% noted they did not do use College materials. Of those that did reference using the materials, 23% suggested that the study materials were helpful.

Students noted that based on the placement test results, 36% indicated they needed to take one developmental course. Twenty-three percent (23%) noted they needed to take more than one developmental course at the College. Twenty-six percent (26%) suggested they were college-ready.

Forty-four percent (44%) of students suggested that before the end of the semester, an advisor helped them develop an academic plan. Forty-six (46%) indicated they currently do not have an academic plan.

More than half (56%) of students suggested that they do not receive contact from someone from the College if they are struggling with their studies in order to get their assistance. Thirty-five percent (35%) indicated that they were not having academic difficulties and therefore did not need to be contacted.

Three questions asked students to provide how many times they used certain types of academic support services at the College. A large majority of students suggested that they never participated in the services. For instance, 65% noted they did not actively participate in any required group learning; 75% argued they never used the tutoring services offered by the College; and 82% noted they never participated in any type of supplemental instruction.

### **Possible Implications**

Response to the question concerning participating in a community-based project as part of a class assignment still shows most of our students are not engaged in this endeavor. A possible combination of them not taking part in the project or that community-based projects are not offered as part of the course curriculum.

Our students are not taking advantage of the tutoring services available to them. Either they do not perceive the need for them, do not have time to attend them, or are not aware of their existence.

A good percentage of students suggest they spend relatively little to no hours preparing for their classes. This is a stark contrast in that they do indicate that the College does emphasize the need for them to spend significant amounts of time studying; an interesting paradox.

Students do seem to suggest that they communicate with faculty, in class and via email, and in most cases receive a feedback promptly. There is still a large percentage of students who still do not sit and have conversations with their faculty after class. Maybe with the new spaces at the College, there will be an increase in after class faculty-student engagement in these social spaces.

The one overall area where the College showed an increase in one of the benchmarks was with the Support for Learners. While students gave relatively high marks for the support the College provides them, the responses of African American students was very telling. In this case, this group of students seemed to respond positively to how well they feel the College has helped

support their social and financial needs. So if the same focus on engagement was given to all types of cohorts of students, we may possibly see subsequent rates of engagement increase for all students.

## 2011 CCFSSSE: Faculty Summary Results

### Method

675 full-time and part-time faculty were invited to participate in the CCFSSSE during the Spring 2011 semester. The faculty were emailed a link to the survey which included a personal user name and id in order to access the site. Three follow-up emails were sent throughout the administration of the survey to those who had not completed the questionnaire. The survey closed on May 18, 2011.

372 faculty completed the survey on-line for a response rate of 55%. Our faculty response rate in 2009 was 51% (n=334) and in 2007 the response rate was 36% (n=236). The number of full-time faculty responding was 126, while the number of part-time faculty who completed the survey totaled 246.

### National Cohort of Faculty vs. Montgomery County Community College Faculty

When comparing our faculty's responses to questions which form the five benchmarks; our faculty and the national group almost follow each other's answers. For example, when asked if faculty provide prompt feedback to students about their academic performance, 94% of our faculty indicated that they did often or very often, while 92% of those nationally suggested a similar answer.

Another area of agreement were in the faculty's responses to the question that the college provides the financial support students need to afford their education. Seventy-three percent (73%) of our faculty responded that the College provides this support often or quite a bit, while 76% nationally suggested the same.

Both groups of faculty suggested that their courses emphasize analyzing the basic elements of an idea, expression, or theory. Eighty-one percent (81%) of both groups of faculty indicated that this occurred quite a bit or very much in their classes.

While 81% of our College faculty indicated that they communicated with students often or very often via email, the percentage was 74% for all faculty participating in the survey.

Other areas where our faculty and the national faculty were mostly in agreement included:

Faculty indicating that sometimes students come to class without completing readings or assignments (57% for national faculty cohort; 55% for MCCC faculty).

Faculty noted that they often or very often, have students working on projects with other students during class (51% for national faculty cohort; 46% for MCCC faculty).

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of both groups suggested that students work harder than they thought they had to in order to meet faculty expectations.

### **College Faculty Responses vs. Student Responses**

The CCSSE project generated reports which provided information on how faculty and students responded to similarly worded questions<sup>2</sup>. The following analysis reviews those differences between students' responses and faculty responses to similar questions which compose the five benchmarks.

#### *Active and Collaborative Learning*

Faculty for the most part indicated that they believed students often or very often ask questions in class (81%), while 68% of students suggested they ask questions or contribute to class discussions.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of students indicated they have never participated in a community based project as part of a regular course assignment, whereas faculty suggested that less than half (46%) of students have never participated in such an event; 32% of faculty noted they did not even know if students ever participated in these events.

Forty-six percent (46%) of faculty indicated that students sometimes worked with other on projects during class, while 48% of students indicated a similar response.

Almost of quarter (24%) of faculty suggested that students never work with other students outside of class; 20% did not know. Forty-eight percent (48%) of students indicated that they did not work out side of the classroom with their peers.

#### *Student Effort*

Seventeen percent (17%) of students suggested that they never prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in; 42% of faculty indicated the students never prepare two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.

---

<sup>2</sup> Faculty questions are not specifically equivalent to student questions. CCSSE ask students to report their perceptions across the academic year, while the CCFSSSE asks faculty to indicate their perception of the student experience at the college.

Faculty (55%) indicated that students sometimes come to class without completing their assignment. Students somewhat agree, in that 57% of them also agree that they attend class sometimes without completing their coursework/assignment.

There were vast differences in students' and faculty responses to the tutoring and skill lab questions. For example, 67% percent of students indicated they rarely/never use tutoring services at the College. Yet, 76% of faculty noted they often or sometimes refer students to tutoring for additional assistance if needed.

### *Academic Challenge*

In most cases, faculty and students' answers were relatively similar in terms of how they responded to the academic rigor of the College. For instance, faculty (59%) and students (54%) each indicated that students have to work harder than they thought in order to meet faculty expectations.

However there were some questions where there were differences in how both groups responded. For instance, 76% of faculty suggested that they either quite a bit or very much, required synthesizing and organizing ideas, information or experiences in new ways in their courses, while 60% of students suggested that courses they are taking require the same.

In addition, while 67% of faculty suggested their coursework emphasizes making judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or methods very much or quite a bit, 57% of students thought that their courses emphasized this skill quite a bit or very much.

While 75% of faculty indicated they have students apply theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations, 60% of students had the same response.

Students (72%), more so than faculty (63%), noted that the College does encourage students to spend a significant amount of time studying.

### *Student-Faculty Interaction*

One area of somewhat agreement between both groups is that students communicate with faculty via email. Students noted they converse with faculty often or very often via email (70%), while faculty suggest they talk via email with students at a higher rate (81%).

While the two groups mostly agreed on the email question, there are other perception differences with both groups in their engagement with each other.

Seventy-four percent (74%) of faculty indicated that students often or very often discuss grades or assignments with students, while 49% of students suggested they often or very often have these same discussions.

Almost half (46%) of students suggested that they never discuss ideas from readings from their courses with faculty outside the classroom environment, while only 5% of faculty answered similarly on this question. Most faculty (55%) indicated that they sometimes discuss readings with students outside the classroom.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of faculty noted they give prompt feedback to students about their performance often or very often, while 60% of students suggested the same.

A majority of students (68%) indicated that they never worked with faculty on activities other than coursework often or very often, just over half (52%) of faculty noted they never have had these experiences with students either.

### *Support for Learners*

Both groups were in agreement that the College does provide students the support they need to be successful. Ninety percent (90%) of faculty thought this support was provided quite a bit or very much, while 73% of students had similar responses.

Seventy percent (70%) of faculty noted that the College either quite a bit or very much does encourage contact among students from different economic, social, and racial/ethnic backgrounds, while half (50%) of students agreed.

A little more than a quarter (26%) of students suggested that the College helps them cope with their non-academic responsibilities either quite a bit or very much, almost half (54%) of faculty suggested the same.

Faculty were more likely to suggest that the College either, quite a bit or very much, assists students by providing the financial support they need to afford college education (73%); just over half (55%) of students agreed.

While 74% of faculty suggested that they sometimes or often refer students to academic advising/counseling, 60% of students suggested they actually use this service often or sometimes.



## Faculty Specific Questions

There were some questions asked on the survey that were more germane to faculty and that did not “crosswalk” or map to student questions. A few of the highlights from these item sets are below:

- 67% of our faculty indicated that they spend 1-4 hours a week providing feedback (written and oral) to students (64% for all cohort faculty).
- 76% of the College faculty suggest they spend between 1-8 hours a week preparing for class (73% for all cohort faculty).
- 67% of instructors note that they spend 1-4 hours a week reflecting and working on ways to improve their teaching (63% for all cohort faculty).
- 70% of the College faculty spend no time/zero hours during a week working with students on activities other than course work. Twenty-three (23%) do indicated they spend 1-4 hours working with students (65% for all cohort faculty in regards to no time and 27% who spend 1-4 hours a week).
- 44% of the faculty spend no time/zero hours in a week involved in other interactions with students outside the classroom, while 48% suggest they do this activity at least 1-4 hours a week (37% for all cohort faculty in regards to no time and 51% who spend 1-4 hours a week).
- 79% of the Colleges’ faculty indicate that they spend no time/zero hours in a week conducting service activities (70% for all cohort faculty).

## Promising Practice Questions

A series of questions were asked of faculty for this year's iteration of the Promising Practice section of the survey. The Promising Practice questions were focused on how faculty were integrated and a part of the various structures which would involve new students (i.e., freshman seminar, first year experience, etc.), if faculty required students to work together inside and outside of class, assessment of students, and how to counsel students if not performing well in the classroom.

When faculty were asked if they had been involved in any "structured experience" for new students, the majority of our faculty (74%) indicated that they were not involved in with these practices. The "not involved" responses were the majority answers to a majority of the questions. For instance, involvement in organized learning communities (80% non involvement); College Orientation (74% non involvement)<sup>3</sup>; student success course (76% non involvement).

Questions were also asked as to how faculty administered assessments to determine a student's preparedness to succeed in the course. Forty-two percent (42%) of faculty noted they administered a written assessment, 27% provided an oral assessment, and 10% did an online assessment. Thirty-three percent (33%) of faculty suggested they did not do any type of student preparedness assessment.

As a follow up, if faculty who did administer assessments to students, CCFSSSE wanted to know the most common follow-up strategy if a student was underprepared for the class. Most (47%) faculty noted they recommend that the student use the tutoring/support services of the College, while 37% indicated they would adjust their course or teaching approach.

The next series of questions pertain to faculty "requiring" students to engage/work together inside and outside the classroom. In almost all instances, faculty suggested that they never assign work that students are then required to meet and work on as a group, especially outside of the classroom.

For example, 74% of faculty responded that they do not assign work in which they require students to study together outside of class. However, 42% of faculty do suggest that sometimes they require students to study together in the class in order to complete an assignment (40% indicated they never do this practice).

Furthermore, 60% of faculty never assign work that require students to collaborate using technology (i.e., blogs, wikis, social networking, etc.), yet there were 24% of faculty who

---

<sup>3</sup> 80% of part-time faculty were not involved as opposed to 63% of full-time faculty.

indicated that they sometimes do require students to work together using technology for their course assignments.

Ninety-three percent (93%) of our faculty noted that they do not require students to be involved in service learning (i.e., community service as part of a regular college course).

The last set of questions pertains to how faculty respond to students who are struggling academically during the semester. The majority of faculty (71%) indicate that they have a discussion about the issue with the student outside of class; 66% communicate with the student during class; 55% refer students to the College's tutoring services; and 43% notify someone else in the college who will then contact the student as part of the early academic warning system.