RISC

Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT
RISC STUDENT SURVEY SPRING 2022
IOWA WESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

RISC SURVEY OVERVIEW

SURVEY DESCRIPTION

The Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges (RISC) Survey provides detailed, actionable data about student success, using the latest advances in survey research and technology. Survey results pinpoint where students are experiencing obstacles and identify campus offices that excel in helping students succeed in college. The survey has three main sections.

The survey first asks students about facing challenges during the current semester in five broad areas: academic support services, campus environment, finances and financial aid, succeeding in their courses, and work and personal issues. Each section has multiple challenges, with over 80 unique challenges to student success across the five areas, such as errors with financial aid paperwork, not being told to take a course necessary for their degree, or difficulty using course technology in online classes.

Next, the survey asks students about their interactions with campus offices. Our research indicates that students want office staff who are accessible, concerned about helping them, and able to effectively solve their problem. Students describe five campus offices on these three dimensions; IWCC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to IWCC, so that students saw office names they recognized.

Finally, students provide their overall perceptions of the college. Students are asked if they would recommend the college to a friend, whether the college is a good value, and how well the college is helping them meet their enrollment goals, such as improving job and career opportunities or preparing for a four-year degree.

Students are also given two open-response questions, where they could write out an answer: what is IWCC's greatest strength, and if IWCC could change one thing to increase student success, what should it change? See your college contact for the written responses to these two questions.

The survey concludes with a section asking about student demographic information.

Interactive and printable versions of the survey can be found at:

https://www.risc.college/two-year-survey

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was administered in Spring 2022 to 3,167 IWCC students. There were 740 responses used in this report, for a 23.4% response rate. Median time IWCC students spent taking the survey was 8 minutes.

The table below provides some background information about your college's benchmark sample. Fifty-seven other community colleges participating in the survey during the past two years are used for the benchmark numbers in this report; each college is weighted equally when calculating benchmarks. Your benchmark sample has a total of 53,920 respondents.

Table 1.1   Community colleges in the benchmark sample

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	23%	City	33%	Under 1,000	7%
Mixed	30%	Suburb	23%	1,000-4,999	40%
High Transfer	33%	Town	21%	5,000-9,999	21%
Other	14%	Rural	23%	10,000-19,999	28%
				20,000 and above	0%

CHALLENGES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

02

MAIN CHALLENGE AREAS

The RISC survey contains over 80 unique challenges that students face during college, and students can indicate they faced more than one challenge. The specific challenges are divided into five main areas:

- ▶ Academic support services
- ▶ Campus environment
- ▶ Finances and financial aid
- ▶ Success in courses
- ▶ Work and personal

The survey begins by asking students if they faced challenges in each of these these areas, and then asks about more specific challenges, depending on how students initially respond. The challenge order is randomly assigned for each respondent.

For example, students are asked:

> **Think about your finances and financial aid. Have you had any challenges in the following areas?**
>
> | | Yes | No |
> |---------------------------------------|-----|-----|
> | Paying college and living expenses | ○ | ○ |
> | Working with financial aid office | ○ | ○ |
> | Military and employer tuition benefits| ○ | ○ |

Students choosing "yes" to one or more of these response options are coded as having a challenge with finances and financial aid.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the main challenges students faced at IWCC in Spring 2022 in the five main areas. *Work and personal issues* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 58% reporting one or more challenges in this area.

A negative number in the *Diff.* column indicates a lower proportion of students at your institution reported challenges in an area, compared to the benchmarking group. These are presented graphically with green bars. Positive numbers indicate a greater proportion of your students are reporting challenges, and are presented with red bars.

Table 2.1 Major challenges to student success

	IWCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	n	10 20 30 40 50 60
Work and personal issues	58	60	−2	430	
Campus environment	46	20	**+26**	340	
Success in courses	45	56	**−11**	334	
Finances and financial aid	42	37	**+5**	312	
Academic support services	22	33	**−11**	166	

Notes

Green indicates that IWCC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates IWCC has a higher proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, $p < .05$). Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges across the five topic areas. n in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area at your college; overall sample n=740.

Tables 2.2 to 2.6 provide more detail about student challenges. For example, if a student answered "yes" to "Paying college and living expenses", they were prompted with a follow-up question:

Where did you have issues paying expenses? Please check all that apply.

☐ Tuition and fees
☐ Paying college and living expenses
☐ Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)
☐ Childcare
☐ None of the above

To help uncover where your students are facing challenges, we rank the major categories of challenges in descending order. We then rank the more specific challenges within each major category in descending order.

For example, 58% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Work and personal issues*. The most common subcategory was *Work*, with 39% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Work* subcategory was *Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school*, with 22% of your students mentioning this as a challenge to their success. All percentages in these tables are calculated as the percentage of the entire respondent sample.

Table 2.2 Challenges with work and personal life

	IWCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	n
Work and personal issues	58	60	−2	430
Work	39	38	+1	288
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	22	15	+7	163
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	21	22	−1	156
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	12	12	+0	92
Work schedule conflicts with classes	12	14	−2	89
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	11	10	+1	79
None of the above	4	6	−2	32
Family	35	37	−2	262
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	25	26	−1	183
Difficulty dealing with health of family	14	15	−1	102
Difficulty finding childcare	4	5	−1	32
Family does not support me going to college	4	3	+1	29
None of the above	5	6	−1	37
Health and disability issues	25	22	+3	187
Emotional/mental health issue	19	14	+5	139
Physical health issue	14	11	+3	102
Pregnancy and childbirth	2	1	+1	13
Faculty did not provide necessary accomodations	1	1	+0	8
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	1	+0	7
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	2	3	−1	12
Transportation to campus	11	11	+0	80
Travel to campus takes a long time	5	5	+0	40
Car or carpool not reliable	5	5	+0	38
Public transportation system not reliable	1	3	−2	11
Campus transportation system not reliable	1	1	+0	4
None of the above	2	2	+0	14

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.3 Challenges with the campus environment

	IWCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Campus environment	46	20	+26	340
Parking	39	10	+29	291
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	36	8	+28	266
Difficulty getting parking pass	2	1	+1	15
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	1	2	−1	7
None of the above	3	1	+2	25
Interactions with other students	11	10	+1	83
Did not know many other students	6	7	−1	42
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	1	1	+0	10
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	1	0	+1	8
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	1	0	+1	7
None of the above	5	3	+2	35
Safety and crime	5	3	+2	38
Campus not safe	2	1	+1	15
Parking lots not safe	2	1	+1	15
Was a victim of a crime	1	0	+1	7
None of the above	2	1	+1	14

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.4 Challenges with success in courses

	IWCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	n
Success in courses	45	56	−11	334
Online classes	23	39	−16	171
Difficulty learning the material on my own	14	26	−12	103
Lack of interaction with faculty	11	20	−9	84
Difficulty keeping up because no regular class time	10	18	−8	71
Lack of interaction with other students	6	16	−10	47
Difficulty using course technology	5	11	−6	37
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	3	4	−1	19
None of the above	3	4	−1	22
Faculty	16	17	−1	121
Did not teach well	12	10	+2	89
Not concerned about my academic success	6	7	−1	48
Feedback on assignments not helpful	6	7	−1	47
Took too long to grade assignments	6	6	+0	46
Not responsive to email	6	6	+0	45
Not helpful outside of class	6	5	+1	44
Not available to meet in person	1	2	−1	11
None of the above	2	2	+0	16
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	16	22	−6	120
Courses were too hard	5	7	−2	39
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	4	4	+0	27
Required to take too many	2	4	−2	15
Courses were too easy	0	1	−1	3
None of the above	8	10	−2	61
Doing college-level work	13	19	−6	96
Poor planning and time management skills	6	10	−4	48
Poor study skills	6	8	−2	48
Not motivated to study	6	9	−3	48
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	4	6	−2	26
Required level of math was difficult	2	5	−3	16
Took too many classes	2	3	−1	12
Skipped too many classes	1	1	+0	10
None of the above	2	3	−1	14

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.5 Challenges with finances and financial aid

	IWCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Finances and financial aid	42	37	+5	312
Paying college and living expenses	38	32	+6	281
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	26	21	+5	191
Tuition and fees	24	18	+6	180
Books, software, and other supplies	12	19	−7	91
Childcare	4	4	+0	33
None of the above	1	1	+0	7
Working with financial aid office	12	12	+0	88
Process was unclear	5	6	−1	36
Delays in getting money	4	4	+0	29
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	4	6	−2	28
Errors processing financial aid	4	4	+0	27
Unable to answer questions	3	4	−1	24
Gave me wrong information	2	2	+0	15
None of the above	3	2	+1	20
Military and employer tuition benefits	2	2	+0	16
Experienced delays receiving benefits	1	1	+0	6
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	4
Received wrong information about benefits	0	0	+0	1
None of the above	1	1	+0	7

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

Table 2.6   Challenges with academic support services

	IWCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	*n*
Academic support services	22	33	−11	166
Registering for courses	11	16	−5	80
Course not offered at times I needed	4	6	−2	29
Course was offered but full	3	6	−3	24
Had a registration hold	3	4	−1	19
Course not offered this semester	2	4	−2	16
None of the above	5	5	+0	35
Academic advising	10	14	−4	77
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	5	8	−3	39
Not told to take necessary course	3	4	−1	20
Told to take unnecessary course	2	3	−1	16
Course/program materials were incorrect	1	2	−1	8
None of the above	4	3	+1	28
Tutoring	6	8	−2	45
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	2	2	+0	16
Tutoring hours not convenient	2	3	−1	12
Tutors not available when I need assistance	1	3	−2	10
Tutoring not helpful	1	2	−1	6
None of the above	2	2	+0	15
Library	5	5	+0	34
Hours not convenient	1	1	+0	11
Resources I needed not available online	1	1	+0	8
Staff not helpful	1	1	+0	5
Study spaces not available when needed	0	1	−1	2
None of the above	2	2	+0	16
Computer and science labs	4	7	−3	30
Problems using computers and equipment	2	3	−1	13
Lab hours not convenient	0	2	−2	1
Lab busy when needed	0	1	−1	1
None of the above	2	3	−1	15

Notes

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

STUDENT-OFFICE INTERACTIONS 03

Table 3.1 shows the administrative support units your college chose for the RISC Survey. Unit names appeared on the survey exactly as they are listed in this report. Advising was the most commonly used office, with 66% reporting using the office during the Spring 2022 semester, followed by Library (34%) and Admissions (30%).

Table 3.1   Office usage

	IWCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	n	
Advising	66	52	**+14**	491	
Library	34	21	**+13**	254	
Admissions	30	30	+0	221	
Housing/Residence Life	17			126	
Safety and Security	15			113	

If students indicated they interacted with an office during the semester, they were asked three questions about their interactions with staff:

How available were [unit name] staff when you interacted with them?

○ Very available
○ Somewhat available
○ Somewhat unavailable
○ Very unavailable

How concerned were [unit name] staff about addressing your issue?

○ Very concerned
○ Somewhat concerned
○ Somewhat unconcerned
○ Very unconcerned

How effective were [unit name] staff when addressing your issue?

○ Very effective
○ Somewhat effective
○ Somewhat ineffective
○ Very ineffective

Results are presented in Table 3.2, which shows the percentage of respondents choosing the top category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Because each college chose the administrative offices for this set of questions, the table only presents benchmarks comparisons for an administrative office when at least five other colleges surveyed students about the same type of office.

Table 3.2   Student-administration interactions

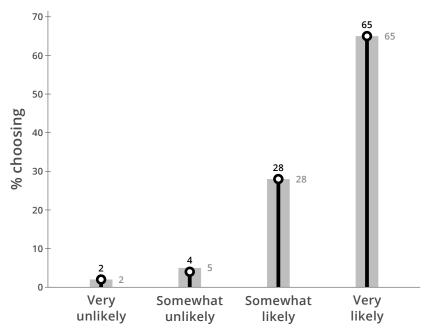|	IWCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	*n*	
Admissions					
Available	70	63	**+7**	220	
Concerned	54	54	+0	218	
Effective	68	67	+1	217	
Advising					
Available	72	63	**+9**	490	
Concerned	59	59	+0	487	
Effective	72	66	**+6**	487	
Housing/Residence Life					
Available	37			126	
Concerned	32			126	
Effective	42			126	
Library					
Available	81	75	**+6**	254	
Concerned	53	62	**−9**	253	
Effective	76	76	+0	251	
Safety and Security					
Available	59			113	
Concerned	53			112	
Effective	63			112	

Notes

Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that IWCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates IWCC has a lower proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, $p < .05$). *n* in table row is the total number of students at your college rating an office on that dimension; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage.

STUDENT VIEWS OF THE INSTITUTION

04

Besides challenges and office interactions, students were asked several questions about IWCC overall.

The first question, "Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend IWCC to a friend?", is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with IWCC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 93% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to recommend IWCC. The IWCC distribution of responses is not statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

Figure 4.1   Would student recommend IWCC to a friend?

Notes
IWCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 0.3, p < .96; n = 730$.

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at IWCC (see Figure 4.2). 94% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The IWCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.
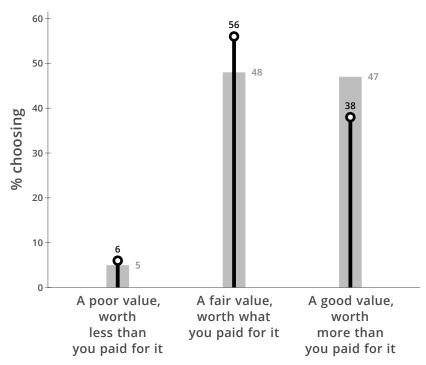
Figure 4.2   Overall value of education?

Notes
IWCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray. $\chi^2 = 40, p < .01; n = 733$.

The last set of questions asks students how well your college is doing in preparing students for their educational goals. The top half of Table 4.1 lists students' responses to their primary reason for attending IWCC. 47% chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well IWCC is helping them achieve the specific goal they chose. Students could choose from *very well*, *fairly well*, *somewhat*, or *not at all*. Responses from the top category are presented in the bottom half of Table 4.1. For example, 54% of the students who chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary goal indicated that IWCC is doing *very well* in terms of increasing their job and career opportunities.

Table 4.1   How well is education helping accomplish goals

	IWCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	n	0 10 20 30 40 50 60
Purpose of taking courses at IWCC					
Increase job and career opportunities	47	41	**+6**	348	
Prepare for a four-year degree	45	50	**−5**	329	
Self-improvement	8	9	−1	56	
How well is education at IWCC …					
Increase job and career opportunities	54	45	**+9**	347	
Prepare for a four-year degree	39	46	**−7**	328	
Self-improvement	34	47	**−13**	56	

Notes

Top panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing one of the three educational goals. Bottom panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing *very well* in response to the preparation question for that goal. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions, $p < .05$). *n* in table row is the total number of students responding to the question; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage. Difference bars in the top panel of the table are in black, to reflect that schools may score high or low on these measures, depending on their institutional mission. In the bottom panel, green indicates that IWCC has a higher proportion of students reporting that IWCC is helping them achieve their educational goal compared to the benchmark sample; red indicates a lower proportion.

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS 05

Table 5.1 Gender identity

	%	*n*
Female/Woman	67	482
Male/Man	31	219
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	1
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	1	4
Another gender identity	1	9

Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity

	%	*n*
African American or Black	12	85
Asian American or Asian	3	22
Native American or Alaska Native	1	10
Hispanic or Latino	9	64
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	5
White	79	560

Notes

Percentages may not sum to 100 because students could choose more than one category.

Table 5.3 Age

	%	*n*
18 or younger	11	76
19-24	54	386
25-34	18	132
35-44	11	77
45-54	5	35
55 or older	2	12

Table 5.4   Part-time/full-time status

	%	n
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	33	232
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	67	481

Table 5.5   Total credit hours earned at IWCC

	%	n
None	6	46
1-15 credits	32	227
16-29 credits	22	160
30-45 credits	19	135
46 or more credits	21	149