

Pearson Foundation Community College Student Survey Summary of California Results



This summary of results highlights the major conclusions from a nationally represented online poll of 1,434 U.S. community college students ages 18–59, 260 of whom were enrolled in California colleges. The Pearson Foundation Community College Student Survey was conducted by Harris Interactive between September 27 and November 4, 2010.

The major **conclusions for California community college students** are as follows:

1. Almost one out of every three California community college students surveyed experienced difficulty enrolling in courses that he or she needed during the fall 2010 semester, compared to one out of six students in the rest of the United States.
2. California students are more likely to value having access to academic advisors (65 percent surveyed in California vs. 55 percent of students in the rest of the United States).
3. Almost 60 percent of the community college students surveyed in California reported having taken at least one course online.

Community colleges serve a variety of individuals, from those who are continuing their education after graduating from high school to those who are pursuing a degree after joining the workforce, and to those who are looking for self-improvement or enjoyment. A majority of students enter community college with the goal of using it as a stepping stone in their education and ultimately transferring to a four-year college. In the first national survey of its kind, community college students identified the factors that get in the way of success, as well as the supports needed to help foster success.

The California Community Colleges System (CCCS) consists of 112 community colleges across the state. The CCCS is the largest system of higher education in the world, serving more than 2.9 million students with a wide variety of educational and career goals.

A “Detailed Tables” document providing answers to each survey question, segmented by population, is available upon request.

1. Course enrollment difficulties are a barrier to student success.

- Almost one out of every three California community college students surveyed experienced difficulty enrolling in courses that they needed during the fall 2010 semester, compared to one out of six students in the rest of the United States.
- Almost twice as many California students surveyed (47 percent) compared to the rest of the United States (28 percent) had been unable to enroll in some courses because they were full.
- About four in ten California students surveyed (41 percent) enrolled in fewer courses than they had originally planned on taking, compared to about three in ten students (28 percent) from the rest of the United States.
- California community college students placed an emphasis on course availability as a key to success: 19 percent surveyed in California cited this factor, versus 8 percent in the rest of the United States.



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2. Having access to academic advisors and building relationships with professors and fellow students are also helpful factors for success.

- California students are more likely to value having access to academic advisors (65 percent surveyed in California vs. 55 percent of students in the rest of the United States).
- Students in California also place more value on establishing relationships with other students (41 percent surveyed in California vs. 31 percent in the rest of the country).

3. There is a growing demand for online learning; however, California community college students also like the in-person classroom setting.

- Almost 60 percent of the California community college students surveyed reported having taken at least one course online.
- Thirty-six percent of the California students said they would like to take all of their courses online.
- Students surveyed in California community colleges were more likely than their peers in the rest of the United States to take their courses in person (64 percent vs. 54 percent).

The Pearson Foundation will make the cross tabulations and the underlying SPSS data file available upon request.

When referenced in publications, the source of this copyrighted survey should be cited as Pearson Foundation Community College Student Survey. For details, please contact media@pearsonfoundation.org.