



STUDENT SATISFACTION AND ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE REPORT

January 2025

Introduction

The Essex County College (ECC) Office of Institutional, Planning, and Assessment (IEPA) administers the Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey annually each fall semester. The aim of the survey is to understand students' attitudes, perceptions, and level of academic engagement, as well as their satisfaction with the resources the school provides. The survey instrument comprises of a combination of multiple-choice questions, matrix tables and open-ended comment sections. The survey opened on October 22nd, 2024 and closed on November 19th, 2024. The survey was sent to 7,026 ECC students and 551 responses were received, yielding a 7.8% response rate.

Student Body Makeup

The gender makeup of this sample was 71% female, 26% male and 1% non-binary. Women were overrepresented and men were underrepresented when compared to the general ECC population. The sample was made up of 53% Black or African students, 29% Hispanic students, 5% White students, 2% Asian students, 2% Multi-Racial students, and 9% of respondents declined to answer. This is mostly reflective of the general ECC population with the Black or African population being slightly overrepresented.

This sample was made up of 92% college level students and 8% high school students. The majority of respondents were continuing students (58%) and the rest were new students (42%). Within this group of respondents, 53% have been attending ECC for less than a year, 31% have been attending between 1-2 years and 15% have been attending for two or more years. The enrollment status was 66% full-time and 34% part-time. The part-time students were slightly underrepresented.

According to this sample, 34% of students do not work while school was in session, 38% work part-time, and 30% work full-time. The main goal for attending ECC for this sample is to earn a degree from ECC (58%), followed by taking credits to transfer to a four-year school (28%), and then taking credits that are needed to help advance their career (11%).

The ECC Student Experience

There were multiple questions which asked students about their academic expectations. The majority of students found their courses to be somewhat challenging (52%). The sample was split on how they would characterize the academic expectations that faculty place on students: 38% characterized it as somewhat high expectations, 35% reported very high expectations, and 23% reported neither high nor low expectations. When asked how often faculty members encourage interactions with themselves outside of class: 11% reported never, 14% reported rarely, 31% reported sometimes, 26% reported often and 18% reported very often. The majority of students have access to a laptop (85%) and a smartphone (71%) at home to complete their course work. In addition, 19% had a desktop computer, 31% had a tablet and 35% had broadband internet access.

A series of questions were asked to better understand what ECC students are actively doing during their time on campus. Most students report coming to class prepared with all assignments completed either “frequently” or “very frequently” (84.4%). Participants were least likely to meet with their professors outside of class time (62% reporting to do this “never” or “rarely”), meet with their professors outside of class time (62% reporting “never” or “rarely”), and more than half of the students report receiving little extra help from a professor, tutor, or success coach (52.3% reporting “never” or “rarely”). See Table 1 below for the full results.

Table 1: Academic Expectations

During the current academic year, how often have you engaged in each of the following:	Never		Rarely		Occasionally		Frequently		Very frequently	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Contributed to a class discussion	13	3.6%	22	6.0%	96	26.3%	99	27.1%	135	37.0%
Met with a professor outside of class time	139	38.9%	81	22.7%	91	25.5%	20	5.6%	26	7.3%
Received extra help from a professor, tutor or success coach	127	35.7%	59	16.6%	91	25.6%	39	11.0%	40	11.2%
Participated in an extra-curricular activity	179	50.4%	63	17.7%	56	15.8%	28	7.9%	29	8.2%
Discussed career or future plans with a professor, advisor, or someone in career services	106	29.7%	76	21.3%	84	23.5%	48	13.4%	43	12.0%
Came prepared to class with all assignments completed	4	1.1%	6	1.7%	46	12.9%	123	34.5%	178	49.9%
Discussed concepts from class, outside of the classroom	52	14.6%	36	10.1%	87	24.4%	90	25.3%	91	25.6%
Worked on a group project for a class	94	26.7%	47	13.4%	99	28.1%	52	14.8%	60	17.0%
Made an in-class presentation	89	25.5%	52	14.9%	89	25.5%	66	18.9%	53	15.2%
Studied with other ECC students	99	28.0%	62	17.6%	81	22.9%	52	14.7%	59	16.7%

A series of questions in a matrix table asked participants about their awareness and usage of student services on campus. Awareness of student services increased for 60% of the services, such as Personal Counseling and Transfer Services who had about an 8-percentage point increase. The services that students are the most aware of is the Welcome Center, the Library and Student Clubs. Students are the least aware of SNAP Benefits and Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering, and awareness for those two decreased when compared to 2023 results.

The student usage followed a similar trend to awareness with 60% of services experiencing an increase in student usage. The Library decreased from 50.9% of students

using it to 38.5% due to the on-going construction of the library. Services such as the Computer Labs (which increased by about 7 percentage points) and the Student Support Assistants (increased by 5 percentage points) saw the biggest difference in scores when compared to 2023. See Table 2 below for the full results.

Table 2: Awareness and Usage of Student Services*

Services	Aware		Used		Total	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Academic Counseling (in-person and virtual)	71.9%	74.9%	31.2%	31.1%	1150	821
Student Support Assistants (in-person and virtual)	59.5%	64.6%	17.9%	23.0%	1087	793
Career Counseling (in-person and virtual)	59.6%	62.0%	16.1%	15.9%	1084	793
Financial Aid Counseling (in-person and virtual)	72.4%	74.3%	30.1%	29.7%	1085	798
Mental Health Counseling (in-person and virtual)	66.3%	69.7%	11.0%	12.8%	1073	789
Personal Counseling (in-person and virtual)	56.8%	62.7%	12.1%	12.7%	1067	785
Transfer Services (in-person)	55.7%	63.1%	11.2%	12.7%	1052	773
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (in-person and virtual)	41.5%	35.5%	5.6%	6.6%	1052	768
SNAP Benefits (in-person and virtual)	43.9%	41.8%	7.7%	7.2%	1041	764
Transportation Assistance (in-person)	49.2%	52.0%	8.4%	11.0%	524	383
Disability Services (in-person and virtual)	58.2%	58.2%	8.1%	10.5%	1034	759
Tutoring Services (in-person and virtual)	81.6%	79.0%	21.7%	22.1%	1041	757
Childcare	60.3%	64.9%	7.0%	5.6%	527	376
Computer Labs	87.2%	89.4%	48.9%	55.1%	522	385
Food Pantry	76.3%	75.0%	22.5%	21.3%	524	380
Information Commons	66.9%	69.8%	24.5%	26.8%	519	377
Library	90.4%	86.6%	50.9%	38.5%	530	382
Student Clubs	87.9%	86.2%	25.3%	25.7%	522	378
Tax Preparation	47.2%	43.8%	9.2%	6.4%	523	377
Welcome Center	87.5%	86.4%	44.8%	46.1%	520	382
Computer Loan Program	67.7%	66.1%	17.0%	13.0%	523	378
Office of Student Care Services	57.3%	61.3%	16.1%	17.2%	522	377

*The green numbers refer to an increase when compared to 2023 and red numbers refer to a decrease.

Participants who reported using a service were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the service. When compared to 2023, satisfaction decreased for most services (17 out of 22 services saw a decrease in satisfaction). The only service with a noticeable increase in satisfaction was for Childcare which saw a 5% increase in satisfaction. There were five services that decreased in satisfaction by more than ten percentage points: Mental Health Counseling, Transfer Services, Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering, Disability Services, and the Computer Loan Program. The Computer Loan Program had the largest change with satisfaction from 80.3% in 2023 to 63.2% in 2024 – a decrease of 17.1 percentage points. The Computer Labs and the Welcome Center have the highest rates of

satisfaction (87.1%), although it is important to note that this is still a decrease from their scores from the previous year.

Table 3: Satisfaction of Student Services*

Services	Dissatisfied		Neither		Satisfied		Total	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Academic Counseling (in-person and virtual)	6.3%	4.9%	13.9%	14.6%	79.9%	80.6%	288	206
Student Support Assistants (in-person and virtual)	4.2%	4.5%	12.7%	17.9%	83.1%	77.6%	142	134
Career Counseling (in-person and virtual)	2.9%	4.3%	14.3%	14.0%	82.9%	81.7%	140	93
Financial Aid Counseling (in-person and virtual)	6.4%	6.0%	14.7%	17.9%	78.9%	76.1%	265	184
Mental Health Counseling (in-person and virtual)	1.2%	2.9%	9.6%	22.9%	89.2%	74.3%	83	70
Personal Counseling (in-person and virtual)	2.1%	4.2%	15.5%	14.1%	82.5%	81.7%	97	71
Transfer Services (in-person)	0.9%	2.0%	8.5%	19.6%	90.6%	78.4%	106	51
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (in-person and virtual)	0.0%	2.9%	10.3%	23.5%	89.7%	73.5%	39	34
SNAP Benefits (in-person and virtual)	0.0%	2.7%	15.8%	18.9%	84.2%	78.4%	57	37
Transportation Assistance (in-person)	5.9%	7.4%	15.7%	24.1%	78.4%	68.5%	51	54
Disability Services (in-person and virtual)	0.0%	5.7%	7.5%	13.2%	92.5%	81.1%	67	53
Tutoring Services (in-person and virtual)	3.4%	3.8%	13.5%	19.7%	83.1%	76.5%	178	132
Childcare	3.2%	0.0%	16.1%	14.3%	80.6%	85.7%	31	14
Computer Labs	2.8%	1.6%	5.6%	11.3%	91.5%	87.1%	213	186
Food Pantry	5.5%	1.5%	13.2%	15.4%	81.3%	83.1%	91	65
Information Commons	3.0%	0.0%	9.1%	18.4%	87.9%	81.6%	99	87
Library	2.2%	3.2%	6.6%	10.5%	91.2%	86.3%	226	124
Student Clubs	3.6%	2.6%	20.0%	17.9%	76.4%	79.5%	110	78
Tax Preparation	2.9%	0.0%	5.9%	16.7%	91.2%	83.3%	34	18
Welcome Center	1.0%	1.9%	8.7%	11.0%	90.3%	87.1%	195	155
Computer Loan Program	3.0%	21.1%	16.7%	15.8%	80.3%	63.2%	66	38
Office of Student Care Services	1.5%	0.0%	11.9%	21.2%	86.6%	78.8%	67	52

*The green numbers refer to an increase when compared to 2023 and red numbers refer to a decrease.

An analysis was done on the comments to determine themes and trends. The largest theme that came up in the comments was an emphasis on a good experience at ECC (35%). The most concerning theme that came up was staff and faculty rudeness, with 30% of the comments mentioning these issues. These comments state the students' difficulties getting into contact with instructors, advisors and all student support staff. Specific comments of concern are being shared with Student Affairs.

Another notable theme was that 16% of comments were regarding course scheduling. Many requested that course offerings, tutoring, and other student services are open at night-time and on weekends. About 10% of comments expressed frustrations over technology issues.

Conclusion

The majority of ECC students are at the College to earn a degree from ECC while employed. Although awareness and usage did not change drastically, satisfaction of those services decreased overall from last year. Open-ended comment indicates a worsening problem with student's interactions with employees. ECC should consider more professional development that focuses on responsiveness and improving customer service. ECC should aim to increase scores of awareness and satisfaction by the next administration of this survey.