

Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey Report

JANUARY 2026

Essex County College

THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, PLANNING, AND ASSESSMENT

Introduction

The Essex County College (ECC) Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 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, level of academic engagement and 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 21st, 2025 and closed on November 16th, 2025. The survey was sent to 6,459 ECC students and 466 responses were received, yielding a 7.2% response rate.

Student Body Makeup

The gender makeup of this sample was 74% female, 23% male and 2% non-binary. Women were overrepresented and men were underrepresented when compared to the general ECC population. This sample was made up of 53% Black or African students, 29% Hispanic students, 6% White students, 3% Asian students, and 2% multi-Racial students. This is relatively reflective of the ECC population with Black students being slightly overrepresented compared to the college average. The majority of respondents were continuing students (62%) and have been at the college for less 1 year (52%). The majority of respondents were full-time students (63%).

Multiple-Choice Questions

Students were evenly spread in the number of hours they work: 37% work 0 hours a week, 32% work part-time hours (1-30 hours a week), and 31% work full-time (31-40+). Respondents were asked what their goal for attending ECC is and 59% reported that their goal was to earn a degree from ECC, 29% reported to take credits and transfer to a four-year school, 9% reported to take credits that are needed to help their career advance and 3% reported other.

When asked about how challenging the respondents found their courses, 50% of respondents reported somewhat challenging, 22% reported very challenging, 20% reported neither challenging nor easy, 6% reported somewhat easy and 2% reported very easy. Next, they were asked about the academic expectations that faculty placed on students and 41% reported very high expectations, 38% somewhat high expectations, 18% neither high nor low expectations, and 3% reported somewhat low expectations. Respondents were also asked how often their faculty members encouraged interaction outside of class and 33% reported sometimes, 28% reported often, 18% reported very often, 14% reported rarely, and 6% reported never. Students were then asked what they have access to at home in order to complete their coursework and 90% have a laptop, 72% have a smartphone, 37% have broadband internet access, 32% have a tablet, and 19% have a desktop computer. The majority of students find that there are enough spaces on campus to study, do homework, and work with classmates on projects outside of the classroom (85%).

Matrix Tables

Students were asked about their awareness and usage of ECC's student services. See the table below for the results:

Table 1: Awareness and Usage

Student Service	Aware %		Used %		Total	
	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
Academic Counseling (in-person)	85.0%	91.6%	45.1%	53.5%	419	357
Academic Counseling (virtual)	64.4%	69.4%	16.4%	23.0%	402	343
Student Support Assistants (in-person)	72.6%	76.2%	31.4%	34.0%	401	344
Student Support Assistants (virtual)	56.4%	61.6%	14.3%	14.5%	392	331
Career Counseling (in-person)	68.4%	75.4%	20.8%	24.9%	399	337
Career Counseling (virtual)	55.6%	60.9%	10.9%	14.2%	394	330
Financial Aid Counseling (in-person)	84.0%	86.2%	41.7%	43.4%	405	341
Financial Aid Counseling (virtual)	64.4%	70.0%	17.3%	20.6%	393	330
Mental Health Counseling (in-person)	74.7%	81.5%	14.9%	17.1%	396	340
Mental Health Counseling (virtual)	64.6%	69.4%	10.7%	10.9%	393	330
Personal Counseling (in-person)	67.8%	67.3%	17.5%	19.9%	395	336
Personal Counseling (virtual)	57.4%	59.9%	7.9%	12.5%	390	329
Transfer Services (in-person)	68.6%	73.3%	17.0%	16.8%	389	333
Transfer Services (virtual)	57.6%	62.7%	8.3%	10.4%	384	327
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (in-person)	44.2%	51.8%	7.8%	8.4%	387	334
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (virtual)	40.2%	46.8%	5.5%	7.3%	381	331
SNAP Benefits (in-person)	51.3%	62.4%	8.8%	10.4%	386	335
SNAP Benefits (virtual)	46.6%	54.8%	5.6%	8.4%	378	332
Transportation Assistance (in-person)	52.0%	53.8%	11.0%	12.0%	383	333
Disability Services (in-person)	60.3%	67.4%	12.8%	14.8%	383	331
Disability Services (virtual)	56.1%	59.8%	8.2%	9.8%	376	328
Tutoring Services (in-person)	86.1%	88.6%	32.5%	29.8%	382	332
Tutoring Services (virtual)	71.7%	74.7%	11.5%	14.6%	375	328
Childcare	64.9%	64.7%	5.6%	9.1%	376	329
Computer Labs	89.4%	89.2%	55.1%	48.5%	385	334
Food Pantry	75.0%	78.7%	21.3%	21.3%	380	334
Information Commons	69.8%	72.7%	26.8%	30.3%	377	330
Library	86.6%	95.3%	38.5%	67.4%	382	337
Student Clubs	86.2%	92.8%	25.7%	29.7%	378	333
Tax Preparation	43.8%	48.2%	6.4%	8.1%	377	332
Welcome Center	86.4%	89.5%	46.1%	54.1%	382	333
Computer Loan Program	66.1%	73.1%	13.0%	12.5%	378	335
Office of Student Care Services	61.3%	63.8%	17.2%	18.5%	377	329
Student Life and Activities	72.6%	79.2%	18.2%	27.1%	379	332
Veteran Services	51.7%	53.3%	6.1%	7.9%	379	330
Student System Support Center	66.8%	71.9%	20.4%	27.8%	382	331

The most used student services were the library (67.4%), Welcome Center (54.1%), and Academic Counseling (in-person) (53.5%). Those were also the services that

students were the most aware of. The majority of services increased in usage and awareness (marked by green numbers in the table above). The services that increased the most in usage was the library (likely due to the completion of the renovations, 28.9% percentage change). The service that grew the most in awareness was the SNAP Benefits (in-person).

The students who reported using the services were asked about their satisfaction about said service. See table 2 below for results:

Table 2: Satisfaction

Student Service	Satisfied		
	2024	2025	Difference
Academic Counseling (in-person)	82.2%	82.0%	-0.1%
Academic Counseling (virtual)	75.5%	83.6%	8.1%
Student Support Assistants (in-person)	80.6%	84.1%	3.5%
Student Support Assistants (virtual)	69.4%	92.7%	23.2%
Career Counseling (in-person)	85.9%	76.3%	-9.6%
Career Counseling (virtual)	72.4%	80.5%	8.1%
Financial Aid Counseling (in-person)	79.9%	81.3%	1.4%
Financial Aid Counseling (virtual)	64.4%	81.7%	17.2%
Mental Health Counseling (in-person)	72.1%	82.7%	10.6%
Mental Health Counseling (virtual)	77.8%	72.7%	-5.1%
Personal Counseling (in-person)	86.5%	83.9%	-2.7%
Personal Counseling (virtual)	68.4%	80.6%	12.1%
Transfer Services (in-person)	78.4%	78.8%	0.4%
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (in-person)	80.0%	72.0%	-8.0%
Housing Assistance/Emergency Sheltering (virtual)	64.3%	75.0%	10.7%
SNAP Benefits (in-person)	76.0%	83.9%	7.9%
SNAP Benefits (virtual)	83.3%	75.0%	-8.3%
Transportation Assistance (in-person)	78.1%	73.0%	-5.2%
Disability Services (in-person)	80.0%	71.7%	-8.3%
Disability Services (virtual)	83.3%	71.4%	-11.9%
Tutoring Services (in-person)	76.0%	72.2%	-3.7%
Tutoring Services (virtual)	78.6%	81.4%	2.8%
Childcare	85.7%	79.3%	-6.4%
Computer Labs	87.1%	90.4%	3.3%
Food Pantry	83.1%	87.9%	4.8%
Information Commons	81.6%	86.0%	4.4%
Library	86.3%	91.7%	5.4%
Student Clubs	79.5%	83.0%	3.5%
Tax Preparation	83.3%	80.0%	-3.3%
Welcome Center	87.1%	89.2%	2.1%
Computer Loan Program	63.2%	79.5%	16.3%
Office of Student Care Services	78.8%	87.7%	8.9%
Student Life and Activities	N/A	78.3%	N/A
Veteran Services	N/A	79.2%	N/A

Student System Support Center	N/A	90.9%	N/A
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Out of the 32 services that could be compared, the majority saw an increase in students reporting “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” (65.6%). The virtual student support assistants had the largest increase in satisfaction (by 23.2 percentage points) and was also the service with the highest level of satisfaction (92.7%). The service that declined the most in satisfaction was the virtual disability services (by 11.9 percentage points) and it was also the service that had the lowest level of satisfaction for 2025 (71.4%).

Students were asked about the frequency of engagement in academics. See table 3 below:

Table 3: Academic Engagement

Statement	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently
Contributed to a class discussion	2.7%	9.3%	17.7%	27.8%	42.5%
Met with a professor outside of class time	37.9%	23.9%	19.6%	8.9%	9.8%
Received extra help from a professor, tutor or success coach	37.0%	17.4%	23.5%	10.7%	11.3%
Participated in an extra-curricular activity	46.9%	18.7%	14.1%	8.9%	11.3%
Discussed career or future plans with a professor, advisor, or someone in career services	30.4%	20.9%	19.6%	14.7%	14.4%
Came prepared to class with all assignments completed	1.9%	2.2%	9.0%	32.4%	54.6%
Discussed concepts from class, outside of the classroom	14.2%	14.2%	25.0%	21.0%	25.6%
Worked on a group project for a class	26.1%	12.7%	21.1%	21.4%	18.6%
Made an in-class presentation	27.6%	14.6%	19.2%	18.6%	20.1%
Studied with other ECC students	29.8%	14.6%	18.0%	17.1%	20.5%

Students most frequently “Came prepared to class with all assignments complete” (87% reporting frequently or very frequently). Students least frequently “Met with a professor outside of class time” (18.7% reporting frequently or very frequently). Compared to the year prior, most statements saw an increase in students reporting “Frequently” or “Very Frequently”. The statement with the biggest increase was for the statement “Worked on a group project for a class” which increased by 8.2 percentage points. The only statement that had a notable decrease was “Discussed concepts from class, outside of the classroom” (decreased by 4.2 percentage points.)

When breaking out these questions by gender, it was found that female students were less likely to meet with an instructor outside of class time compared to male students (19.0% difference). Female students however were more likely to very frequently work on a group project for class (13.5% difference). When looking at difference between ECC’s three largest ethnic populations, Hispanic students were less

likely to report “Frequently” or “Very Frequently” on all of the above statements when compared to Black/African and White students. This suggests that ECC could do more to help these students to become more academically engaged.

Open-Ended Comments

There were two open-ended comment sections on this survey: one asking specifically about student services and another for any comments about the school as a whole. When it came to the first comment section, there were 44 comments left. The majority of these comments focused on how the student services could improve in their communication, availability, and customer services (52.3%). About 20% of comments emphasized a positive experience with student services.

There were 55 comments left in the last comment section. The themes that arose were issues with instructor and staff rudeness (32.7%), emphasis on a positive experience at ECC (30.9%), and the need for more spaces for students to study and hang out on campus (9.1%). It is important to note that in 2024, 30% of comments were outlining experiences with staff rudeness suggesting that this problem has not been properly addressed over the past year despite it being a strategic activity in the FY2025 Strategic Plan: “Continue to build on the implemented customer services training program with a focus on inter-departmental communication.”

Conclusion

Students at ECC are engaged in the college academically and personally. This year saw an increase in both the usage and satisfaction of the majority of student services. Students were also more academically engaged overall when compared to last year. There is room for improvement in engaging ECC’s Hispanic students, addressing issues of rudeness with staff and faculty, and improving the virtual disability services.