Southeast COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges at SCC
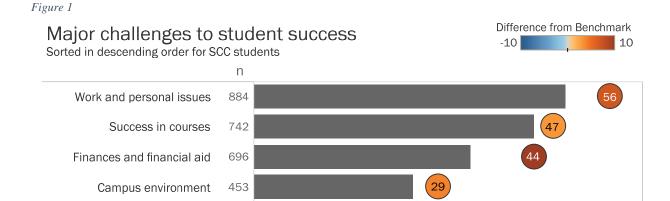
January 2019

SCC administered the *Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges* (RISC) Survey to our students in fall 2017. Survey items asked whether students were facing challenges during the current term in five broad areas and with three levels of detail.

The survey was administered online to 7,720 students in late fall 2017. Several email contacts resulted in 1,583 responses, for a 21% response rate. Nine other community colleges who administered the survey in Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 are used for benchmark numbers in this report.
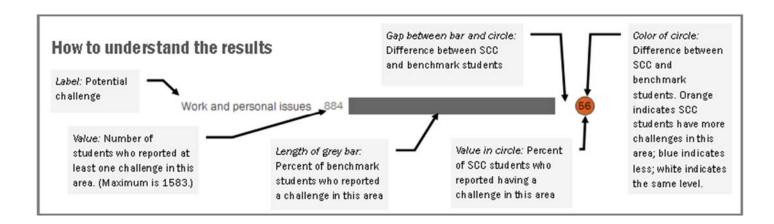
Figure 1 shows the overall results about the type of challenges that SCC students are facing, as compared to benchmark schools, in five major categories of potential challenges. Nearly half of SCC students reported they experience challenges related to *work and personal issues* (56%), *success in courses* (47%), and *finances and financial aid* (44%). A smaller proportion have challenges with *campus environment* (29%) and *academic support services* (27%).

SCC students were more likely than students at the benchmark schools to report challenges in all categories. The biggest gap between SCC and benchmark students was in the area of *finances and financial aid;* the smallest gap was for *academic support services*. In other words, SCC students reported notably more challenges with finances and financial aid than students at other schools.
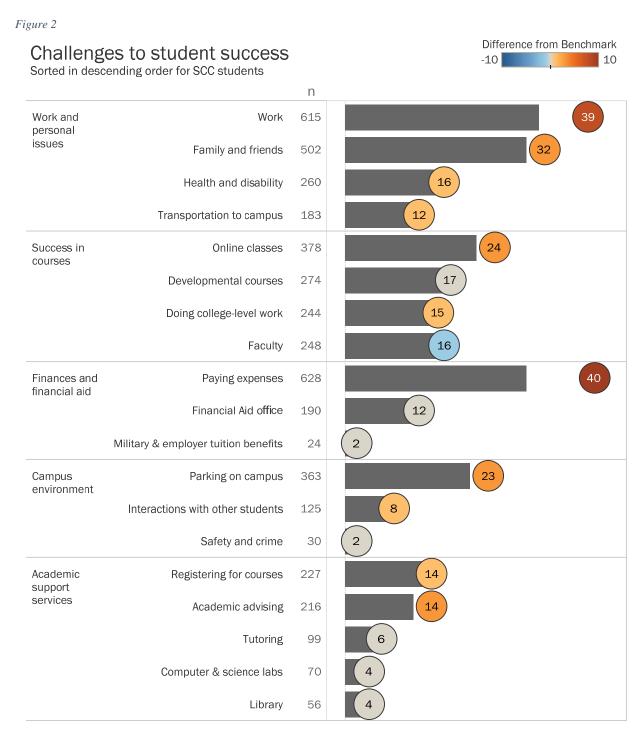
Figure 1

Within each of the five broad categories, there are three to five more detailed categories of challenges. Those results are shown in Figure 2. There were three of these categories in which 30 percent or more of SCC students indicated challenges to their success: *work* (39%), *family and friends* (32%), and *paying expenses* (40%). Notably, SCC students were *less* likely than benchmark students to report that faculty were a challenge to their success (as indicated by the blue circle).

Figure 2

Challenges to student success
Sorted in descending order for SCC students

Difference from Benchmark
-10   10

Category	Subcategory	n		Value
Work and personal issues	Work	615		39
	Family and friends	502		32
	Health and disability	260		16
	Transportation to campus	183		12
Success in courses	Online classes	378		24
	Developmental courses	274		17
	Doing college-level work	244		15
	Faculty	248		16
Finances and financial aid	Paying expenses	628		40
	Financial Aid office	190		12
	Military & employer tuition benefits	24		2
Campus environment	Parking on campus	363		23
	Interactions with other students	125		8
	Safety and crime	30		2
Academic support services	Registering for courses	227		14
	Academic advising	216		14
	Tutoring	99		6
	Computer & science labs	70		4
	Library	56		4

Figures 3-7 shows the most detailed level of detail about each area of potential challenges. Generally speaking, SCC students reported <u>more challenges</u> than benchmark schools in the detailed areas of *work* (Figure 3), *online classes* (Figure 4), and *paying expenses* (Figure 5); and <u>fewer challenges</u> in detailed areas of *faculty* (Figure 4), *financial aid office* (Figure 5), and *registering for courses* (Figure 7).

Figure 3

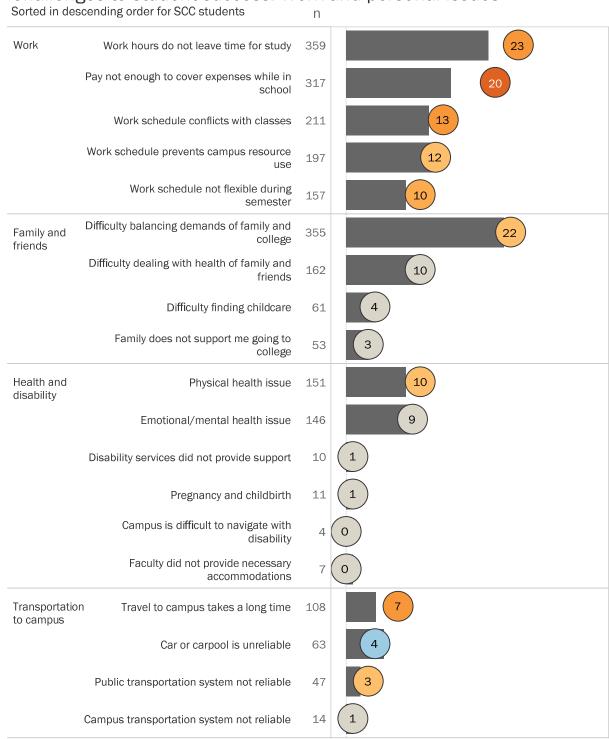## Challenges to student success: Work and personal issues
Sorted in descending order for SCC students

		n	
Work	Work hours do not leave time for study	359	23
	Pay not enough to cover expenses while in school	317	20
	Work schedule conflicts with classes	211	13
	Work schedule prevents campus resource use	197	12
	Work schedule not flexible during semester	157	10
Family and friends	Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	355	22
	Difficulty dealing with health of family and friends	162	10
	Difficulty finding childcare	61	4
	Family does not support me going to college	53	3
Health and disability	Physical health issue	151	10
	Emotional/mental health issue	146	9
	Disability services did not provide support	10	1
	Pregnancy and childbirth	11	1
	Campus is difficult to navigate with disability	4	0
	Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	7	0
Transportation to campus	Travel to campus takes a long time	108	7
	Car or carpool is unreliable	63	4
	Public transportation system not reliable	47	3
	Campus transportation system not reliable	14	1

Figure 4

Challenges to student success: Success in courses

Sorted in descending order for SCC students

		n	
Online classes	Difficulty learning material on my own	197	12
	Difficulty keeping up because of no regular class times	166	10
	Lack of interaction with faculty	164	10
	Difficulty using course technology	105	7
	Lack of interaction with other students	93	6
	Difficulty taking exams at testing center	41	3
Developmental courses	Courses were too hard	106	7
	Required to take too many	76	5
	Did not prepare me for college-level courses	61	4
	Courses were too easy	16	1
Doing college-level work	Poor planning & time management skills	125	8
	Poor study skills	113	7
	Not motivated to study	86	5
	Writing assignments were difficult	68	4
	Required level of math was difficult	52	3
	Took too many classes	43	3
	Skipped too many classes	20	1
Faculty	Did not teach well	168	11
	Feedback on assignments not helpful	103	7
	Took too long to grade assignments	93	6
	Not concerned about my academic success	85	5
	Not responsive to email	75	5
	Not helpful outside of class	55	3
	Not available to meet in person	27	2

Figure 5

Challenges to student success: Finances and financial aid
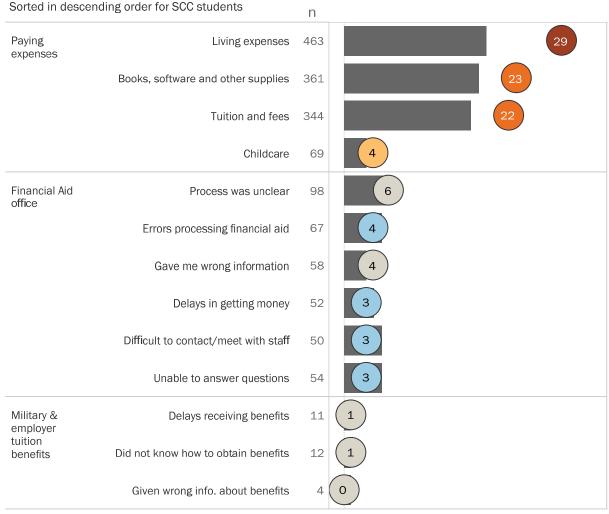Sorted in descending order for SCC students

		n	
Paying expenses	Living expenses	463	29
	Books, software and other supplies	361	23
	Tuition and fees	344	22
	Childcare	69	4
Financial Aid office	Process was unclear	98	6
	Errors processing financial aid	67	4
	Gave me wrong information	58	4
	Delays in getting money	52	3
	Difficult to contact/meet with staff	50	3
	Unable to answer questions	54	3
Military & employer tuition benefits	Delays receiving benefits	11	1
	Did not know how to obtain benefits	12	1
	Given wrong info. about benefits	4	0

Figure 6

Challenges to student success: Campus environment
Sorted in descending order for SCC students

		n	
Parking on campus	Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	308	19
	Parking on or near campus is too expensive	55	3
	Difficulty getting parking pass	15	1
Interactions with other students	Did not know many other students	88	6
	Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	9	1
	Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	7	0
	Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	7	0
Safety and crime	Campus not safe	7	0
	Parking lots not safe	6	0
	Was a victim of a crime	6	0

Figure 7

Challenges to student success: Academic support services
Sorted in descending order for SCC students

		n	
Registering for courses	Course not offered at times I needed	86	5
	Course not offered this semester	50	3
	Course was offered but full	53	3
	Had a registration hold	25	2
Academic advising	Difficult to contact/meet with advisor	125	8
	Not told to take necessary course	61	4
	Told to take unnecessary course	48	3
	Course/program materials were incorrect	25	2
Tutoring	Tutoring not available when I needed assistance	44	3
	Tutoring hours not convenient	39	2
	Tutoring not available in subject area	31	2
	Tutoring not helpful	25	2
Computer & science labs	Lab busy when needed	13	1
	Lab hours not convenient	15	1
	Problems using computers and equipment	19	1
Library	Hours not convenient	9	1
	Resources I needed not available online	12	1
	Study spaces not available when needed	13	1
	Staff not helpful	7	0

Contact the SCC Office of Institutional Research at ir@southeast.edu with questions about this document.
Read more about the RISC survey at *https://www.risc.college*.