

Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges at SCC

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 (i.e., academic support services, campus environment, finances and financial aid, succeeding in their courses, and work and personal issues) 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. This edition provides an overview of these survey results.

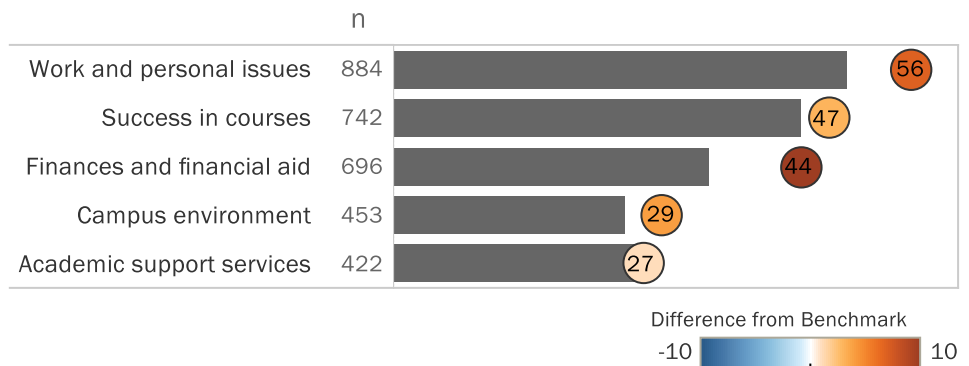
Figure 1 shows the overall results about the type of challenges that SCC

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. Challenges to student success by major category



How to understand the results

Label: Potential challenge

Value: Number of students who reported at least one challenge in this area. (Maximum is 1583.)

Work and personal issues 884

Length of grey bar: Percent of benchmark students who reported a challenge in this area

Gap between bar and circle: Difference between SCC and benchmark students

Value in circle: Percent of SCC students who reported having a challenge in this area

Color of circle: Difference between SCC and benchmark students. Orange indicates SCC students have more challenges in this area; blue indicates less; white indicates the same level.

The mission of Southeast Community College is to empower and transform its students and the diverse communities it serves. The SCC Office of Institutional Research contributes to this mission by providing and promoting the effective use of valid data in decision-making, planning, and communication (Strategic Objective 9.8). *The Nine Point Eight Series* has been developed to communicate some of the information developed for decision-making and planning purposes. For more information, contact ir@southeast.edu.

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 by category

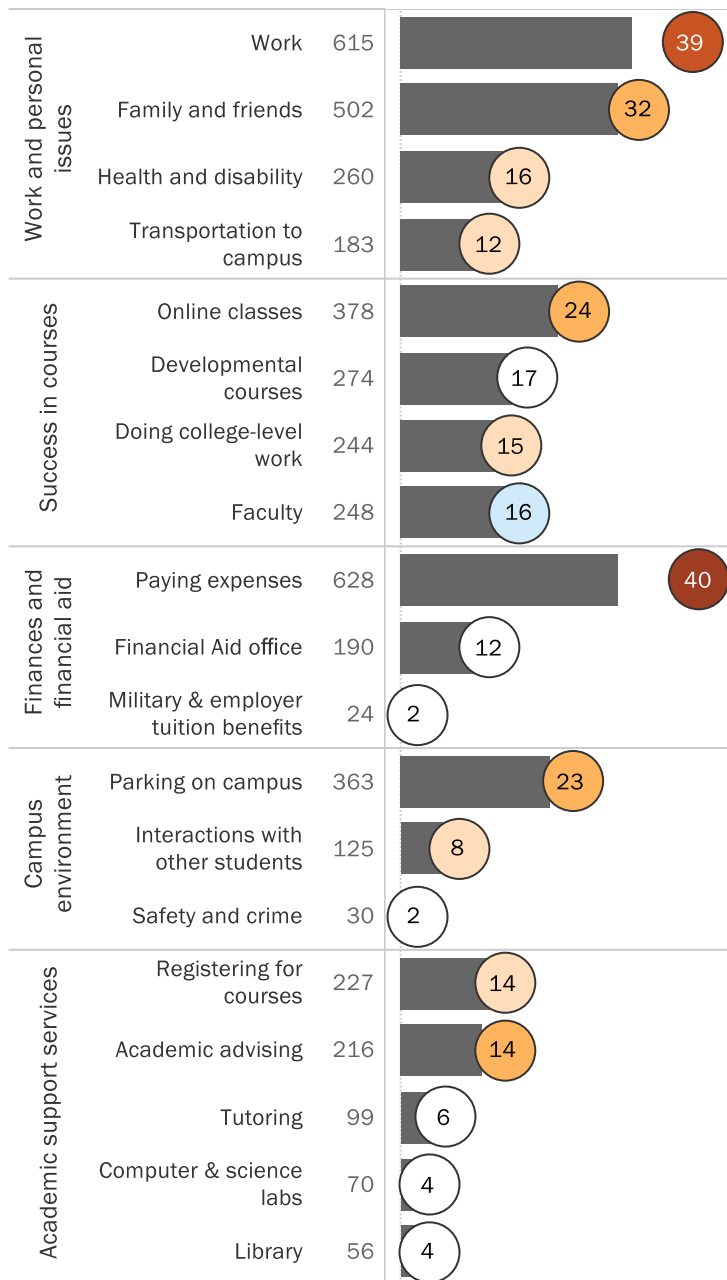


Figure 3 shows the most specific level of detail about challenges to student success, focusing on the areas identified as problematic in Figure 2. As shown below, concerns about time and money were the theme.

Among the items related to work, the issues that were most challenging for SCC students are: *work hours do not leave time for study* (23%) and *pay not enough to cover expenses while in school* (20%).

Of the items in family and friends, *difficulty balancing demands of family and college* (22%) was the most reported obstacle.

The category of paying expenses had the highest of all problematic areas. Three were frequently reported: *living expenses* (29%), *books, software, and other supplies* (23%), and *tuition and fees* (22%).

Figure 3. Challenges to student success | Select detail

