



Community College Survey of Student Engagement Benchmark Report | 2023

Executive Summary

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) was administered to 5,859 students at Southeast Community College (SCC) during the spring 2023 term.

CCSSE, a product and service of the Center for Community College Student Engagement, provides information about effective educational practice in community colleges and assists institutions in using this information to promote improvements in student learning and persistence. The Center's goal is to provide member colleges with results that inform decision-making and target institutional improvements. *Student engagement*, or the amount of time and energy students invest in meaningful educational practices, is the underlying foundation for the Center's work. The CCSSE survey instrument is designed to capture student engagement as a measure of institutional quality.

The Center reports national benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges. The five benchmarks denote areas that educational research has shown to be important to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. Therefore, they provide colleges with a useful starting point for analyzing institutional results and to making comparisons between their performance and other colleges.

Three benchmark scores for Southeast Community College fell *slightly above* the national average: Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Academic Challenge. Two benchmark scores for SCC were *below* the national average: Support for Learners and Student Effort.

The specific survey items CCSSE identified as the highest aspects of student engagement at SCC were:

- Extent to which examinations challenged students to do their best work: 83% of SCC students reported their examinations were very or extremely challenging, compared to 77% of the full cohort of colleges surveyed. (Academic Challenge)
- Frequency students asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions: 73% of SCC students reported often or very often compared to 67% of the full cohort. (Active and Collaborative Learning)
- Amount of emphasis in students' course work on applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations: 71% of SCC students reported quite a bit or very much compared to 66% of the full cohort. (Academic Challenge)
- Amount of emphasis in students' course work on using information read or heard to perform a new skill: 77% of SCC students reported quite a bit or very much compared to 70% of the full cohort. (Academic Challenge)

The items identified as the lowest aspects of student engagement included:

- Frequency of using academic advising/planning services: 58% of SCC students reported using these services two or more times during the academic year compared to 61% of the full cohort. (Support for Learners)
- Frequency of using career counseling services: 15% of SCC students reported using these services two or more times during the academic year compared to 20% of the full cohort. (Support for Learners)
- Frequency of using skills labs: 7% of SCC students reported using skills labs five or more times compared to 11% of the full cohort. (Student Effort)
- Frequency of using email to communicate with an instructor: 71% of SCC students reported using email to communicate with an instructor very often or often compared to 76% of the full cohort (Student-Faculty Interaction)

When asked about their goals for attending SCC, students most frequently reported (1) *obtain an associate degree* (79%), (2) *obtain or update job-related skills* (76%), (3) *self-improvement/personal enjoyment* (74%), and (4) *complete a certificate program* (56%). The two least frequently mentioned goals were *transferring to a 4-year college or university* (41%) and *changing careers* (38%). The relatively low percentage of students who aim to transfer to a 4-year college or university differentiates SCC from the full CCSSE cohort in which 62% of students aim to transfer.

Methodology

CCSSE Member Colleges

CCSSE data analyses include a three-year cohort of participating colleges. This approach increases the total number of institutions and students contributing to the national dataset, which increases the reliability of the overall results. In addition, the three-year cohort approach minimizes the impact, in any given year, of statewide consortium participation. The 2023 CCSSE Cohort includes all colleges that participated in CCSSE from 2021 through 2023 and is comprised of students from 653 community and technical colleges from 46 states, District of Columbia, Bermuda and Marshall Islands.

CCSSE Participation

The online CCSSE survey invitation was sent to all eligible students during the Spring 2023 term. Eligible students included all students who were 1) at least 18 years old, 2) registered for at least one credit-granting (or for-credit) course, and 3) not exclusively enrolled in dual-credit classes. 5,859 Southeast Community College students received the invitation and 1,141 students completed the survey.

During the survey administration, students received four emails. The initial email was an announcement of the upcoming survey by Dr. Illich, SCC President. Students were emailed when the survey opened and received two email reminders when there was one week remaining and three days remaining. A notification providing details about how to access the survey was also posted on the Learning Management system, Canvas. Faculty and staff also received emails asking them to encourage students to complete the CCSSE survey. A random drawing for prizes, ranging from \$25-\$250, was done to encourage students to complete the survey.

Benchmark Scores

To assist colleges in their efforts to reach for excellence, the Center reports national benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges. Research shows the more actively engaged students are—with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter—the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals.

CCSSE benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement—and are positively related to student learning and persistence. Benchmarks are used to compare each institution's performance to similar institutions and with the CCSSE Cohort. Each individual benchmark score is computed by averaging the scores on survey items that make up that benchmark. Benchmark scores are standardized so the mean (the average of all participating students) always is 50 and the standard deviation is 25.

The five benchmarks of effective educational practice in community colleges are:

- Active and Collaborative Learning
- Student Effort
- Academic Challenge
- Student-Faculty Interaction
- Support for Learners

The five benchmarks denote areas educational research has shown to be important to students' college experiences and educational outcomes. Therefore, they provide colleges with a useful starting point for analyzing institutional results and gauging and monitoring their performance in areas that are central to their work. In addition, the benchmarks provide the opportunity to make appropriate and useful comparisons between their performance and groups of other colleges.

Figure 1 provides the overall benchmark scores for SCC and the three comparison groups. As noted above, the benchmark scores were established such that the mean score for the overall cohort equals 50 with a standard deviation of 25. Additional detail about the items included in the benchmarks is provided on following pages.

Figure 1. Overall Benchmark Scores for SCC and Comparison Groups

	Southeast Community College	Nebraska Community Colleges	Large Colleges	Full Cohort
Active and Collaborative Learning	52.2 (0.0)	52.5 (0.3)	48.5 (-3.7)	50.0 (-2.2)
Student Effort	48.3 (0.0)	47.6 (-0.8)	49.5 (1.2)	50.0 (1.7)
Academic Challenge	50.6 (0.0)	51.0 (0.4)	49.6 (-1.1)	50.0 (-0.6)
Student-Faculty Interaction	51.3 (0.0)	52.3 (1.0)	48.7 (-2.6)	50.0 (-1.3)
Support for Learners	49.9 (0.0)	50.1 (0.2)	49.5 (-0.4)	50.0 (0.1)

How to understand the charts on the following pages.

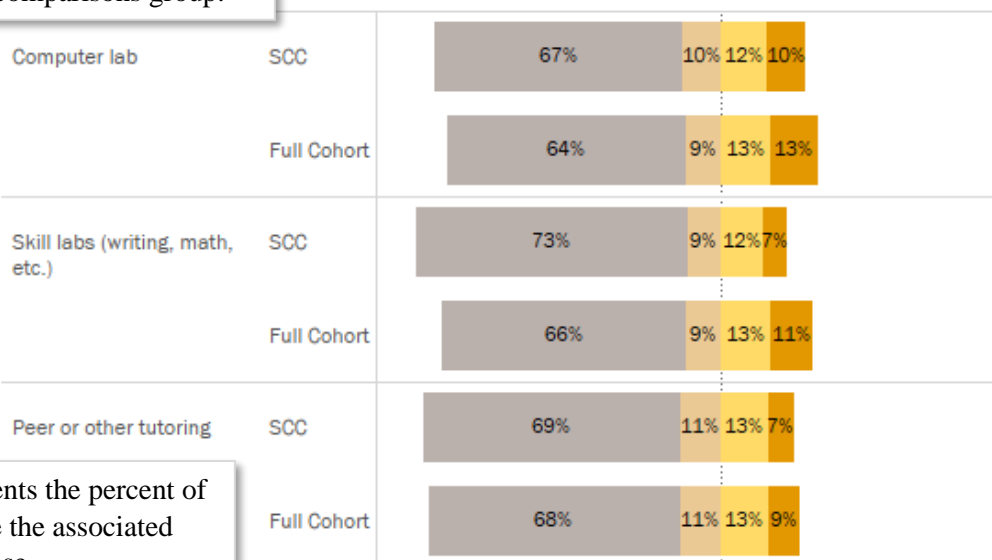
The following table shows: (a) the items that contribute to the benchmark and (b) the distribution of responses for SCC and the comparison group. The axis separates the responses by *valence* (positive/negative groupings) so positive responses (and in some cases, half the neutral responses) are on the right side of the axis; each color represents a different response; and the length of the bar indicates the percentage of the population that provided that response. (c) Items are sorted in descending order by the *percent of positive* responses. Percentage totals may vary slightly due to rounding. The information presented below provides explanations about the pieces included in each summary.

Benchmark Name

Paragraph includes description of the benchmark.

Graphs provide a visualization of the response distribution for SCC and full CCSSE cohort comparisons group.

How often have you used the following services during the current academic year?



Length of bar represents the percent of students who gave the associated response.

Never

1 time

2 to 4 times

5 or more times

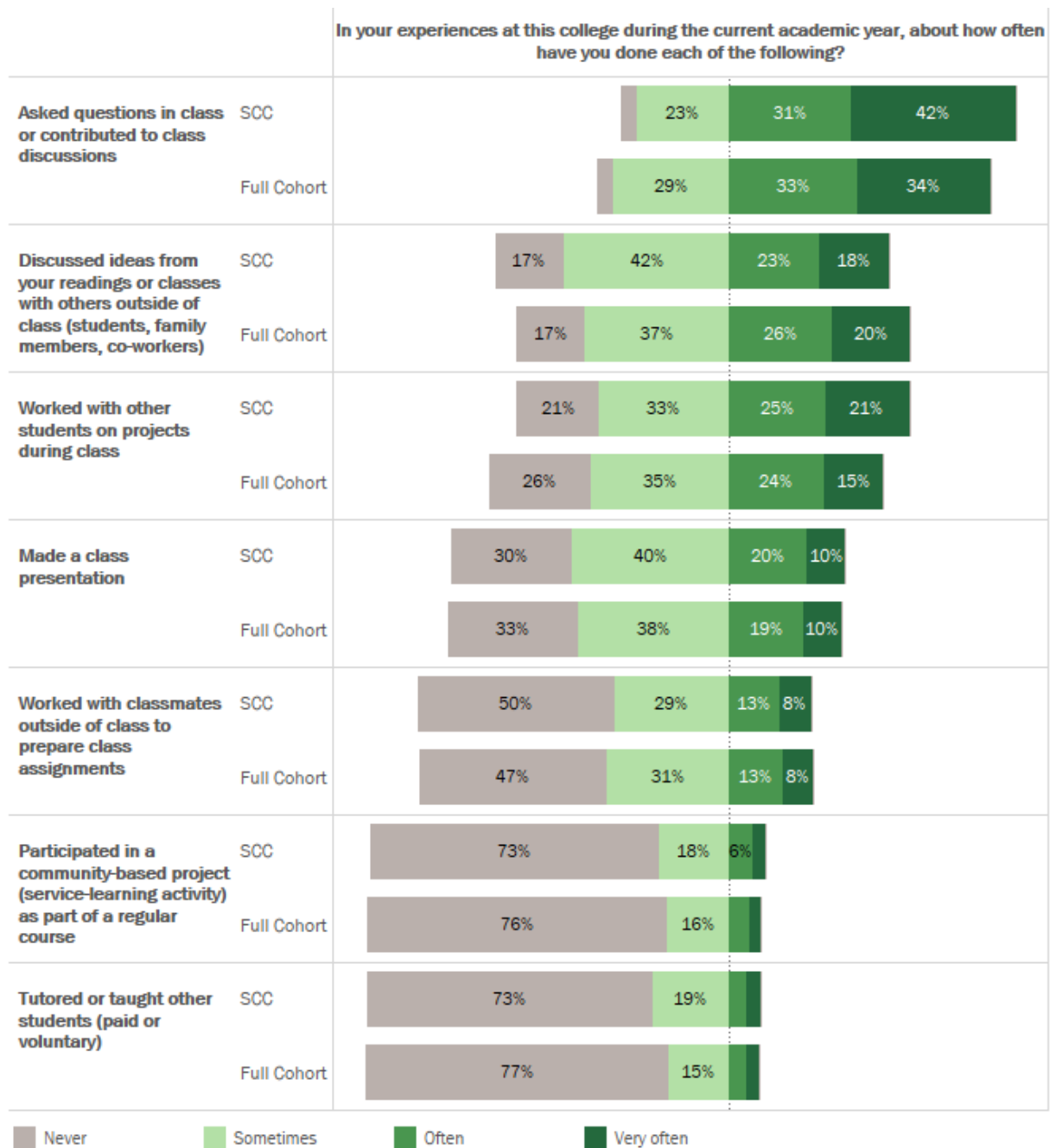
Axis separates the responses into positive/negative groups.

Benchmark Detail

Active and Collaborative Learning

Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaborating with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with real-life situations and problems. Results displayed as a data table can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

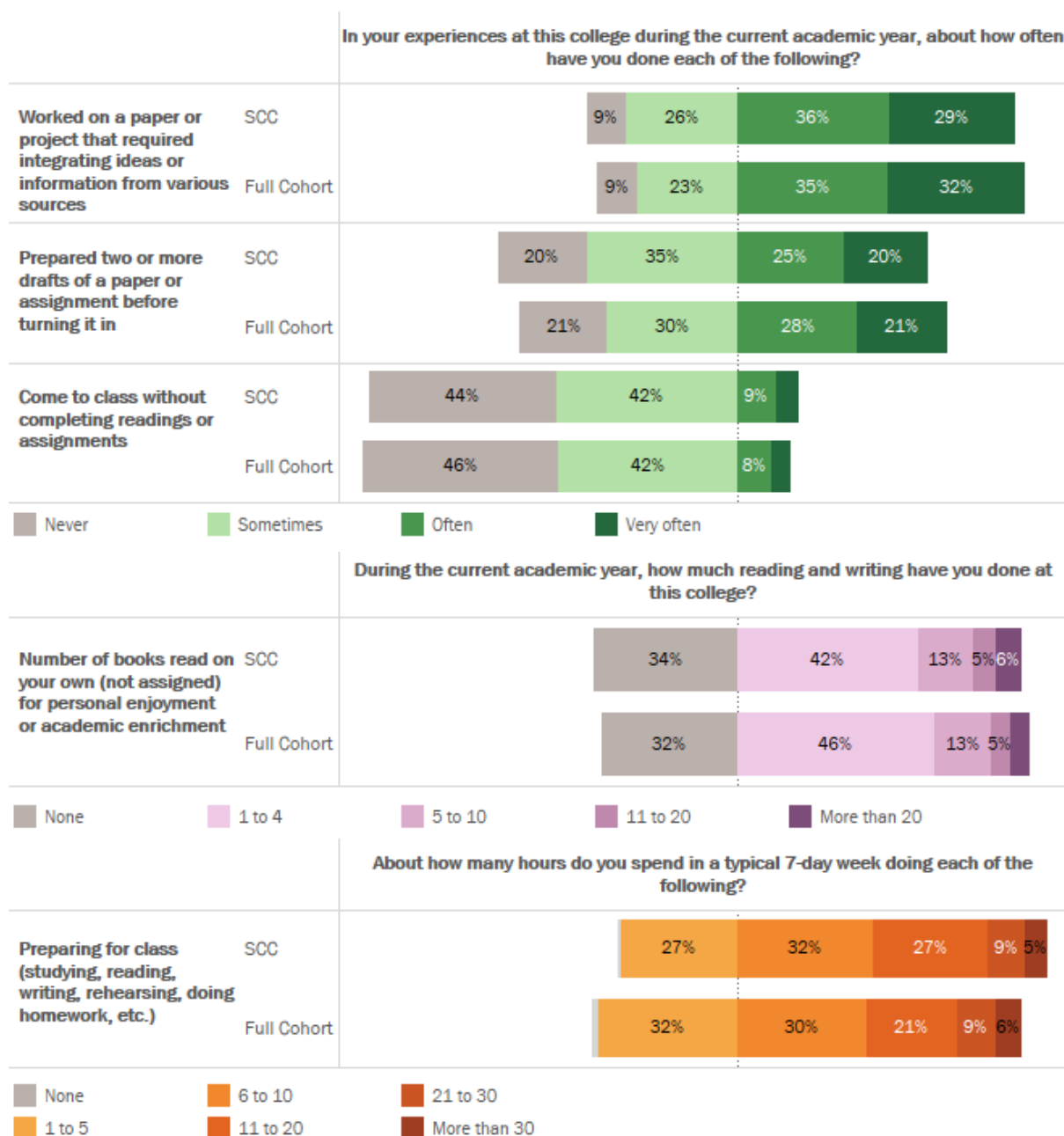
Figure 2. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark Items

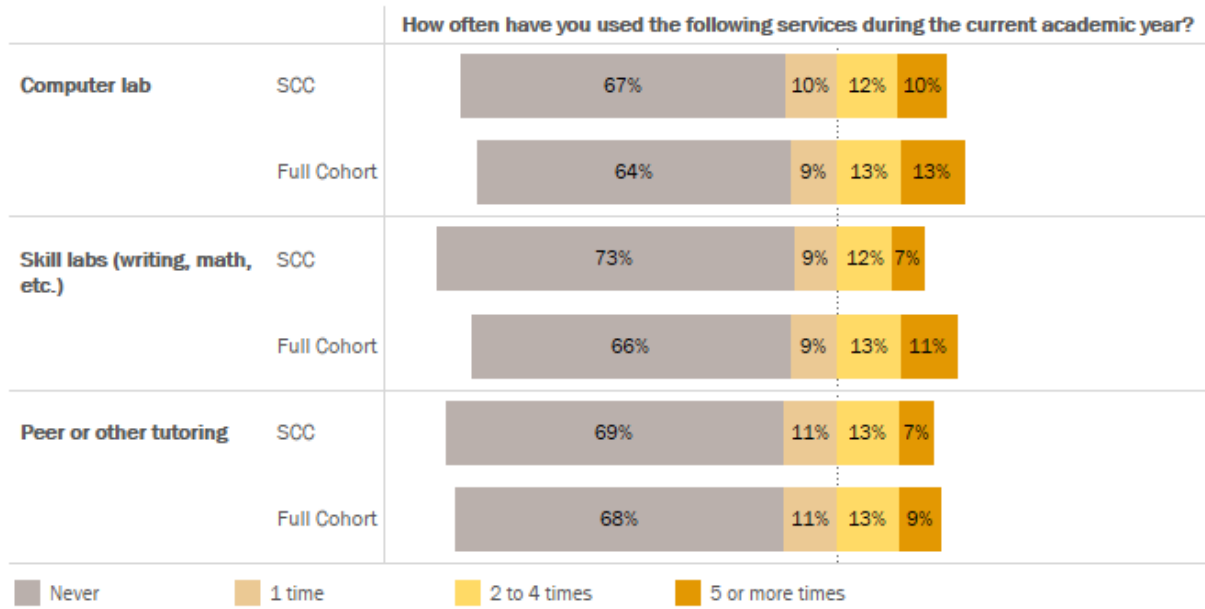


Student Effort

Students' own behaviors contribute significantly to their learning and the likelihood they will successfully attain their educational goals. Results displayed as a data table can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

Figure 3. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Student Effort Benchmark Items

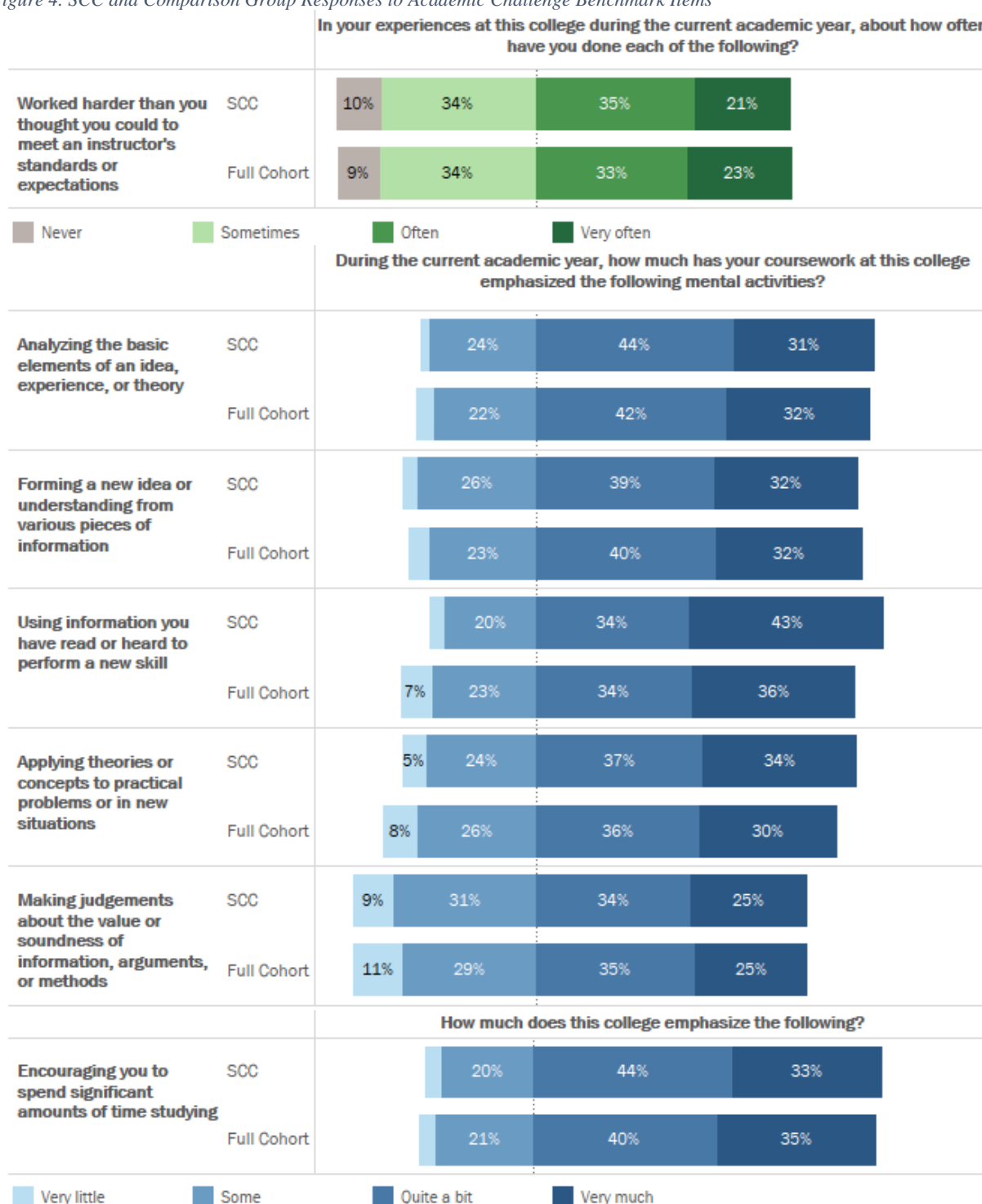


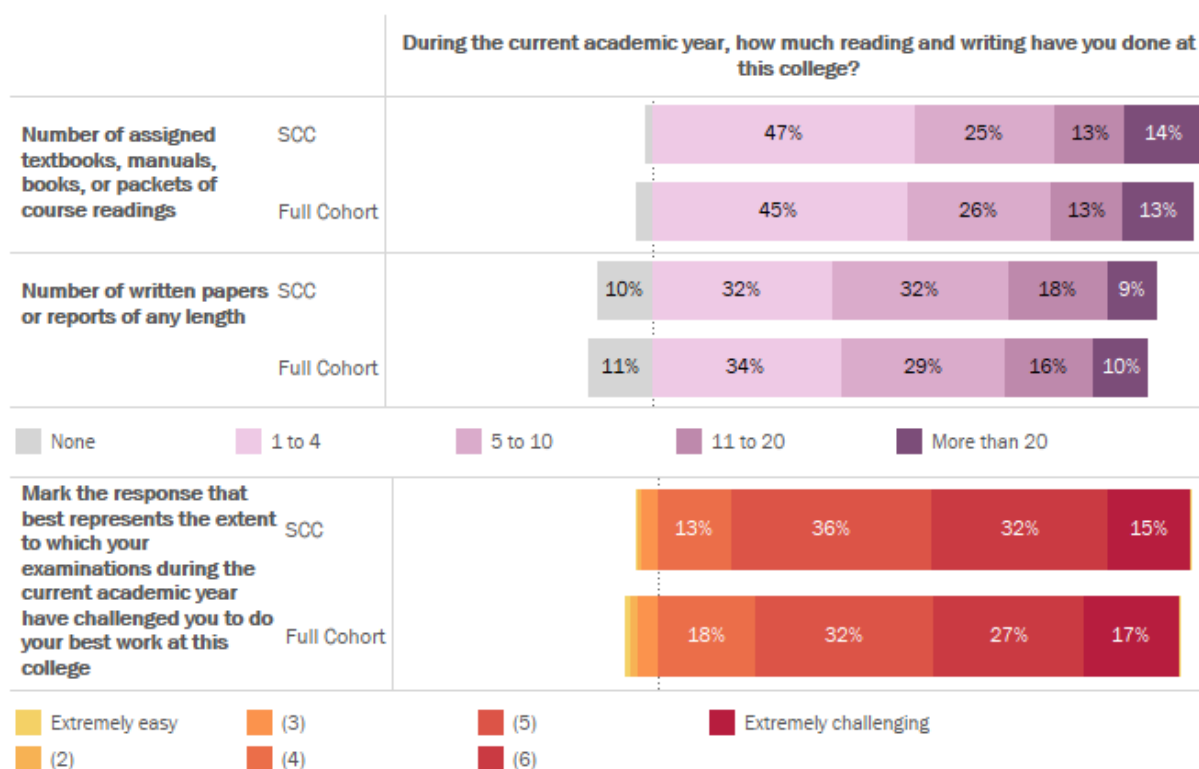


Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. These survey items address the nature and amount of assigned academic work, the complexity of cognitive tasks presented to students, and the rigor of examinations used to evaluate student performance. Results displayed as a data table can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

Figure 4. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Academic Challenge Benchmark Items

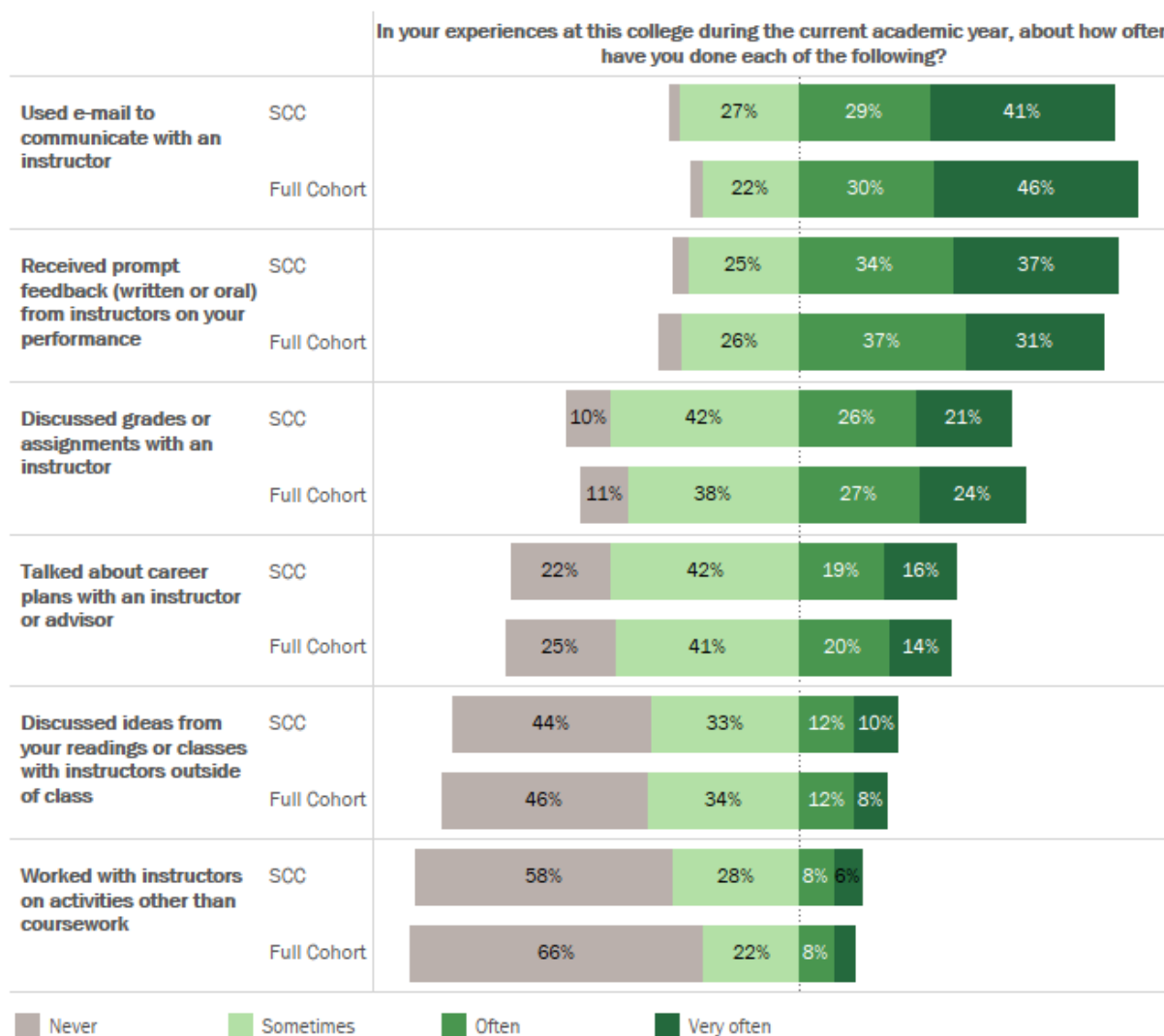




Student-Faculty Interaction

In general, the more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Through such interactions, faculty members become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning. Results displayed as a data table can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

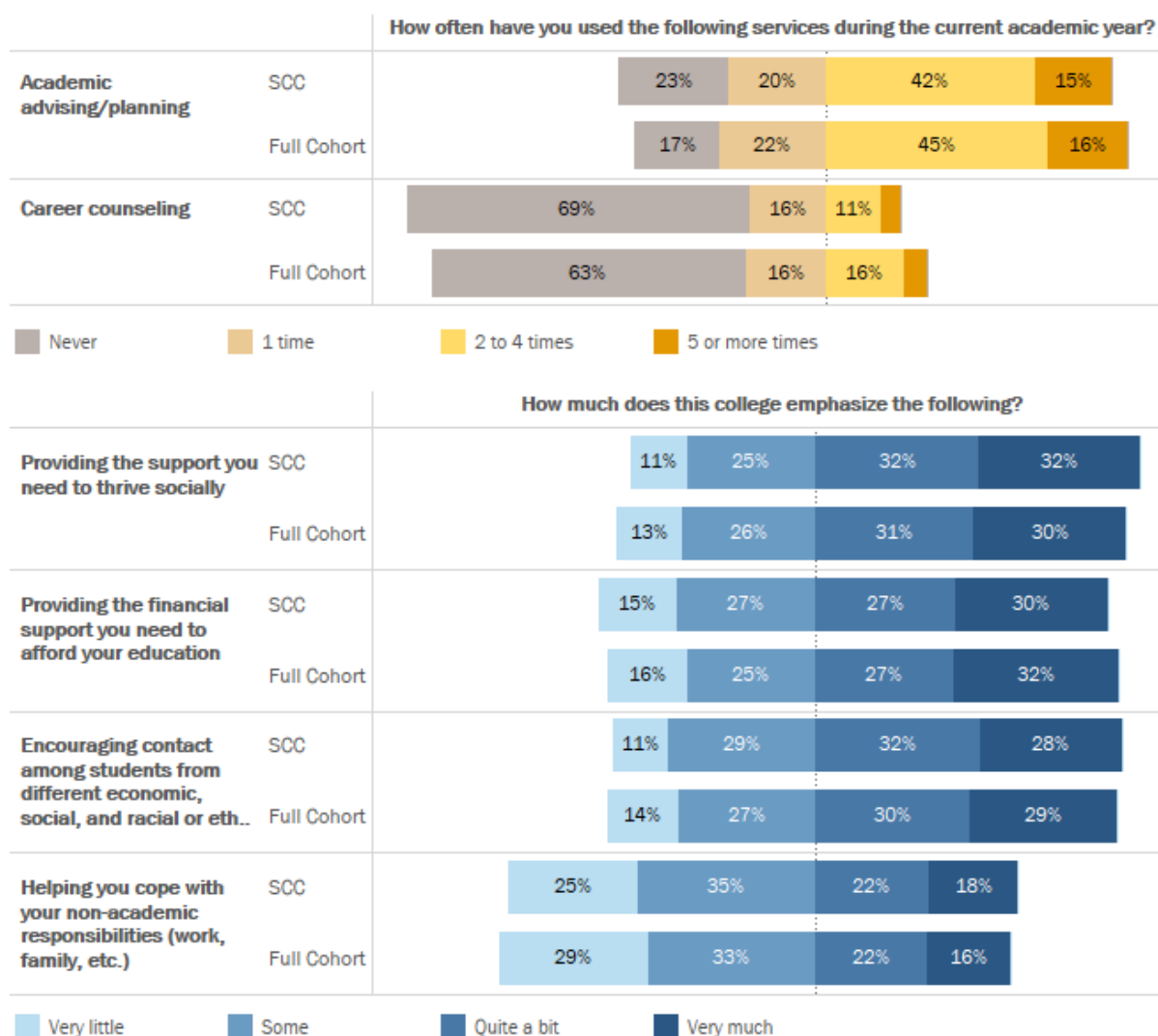
Figure 5. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark Items



Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that provide important support services, cultivate positive relationships among groups on campus, and demonstrate commitment to their success. Results displayed as a data table can be found in the Appendix at the end of the report.

Figure 6. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Support for Learners Benchmark Items

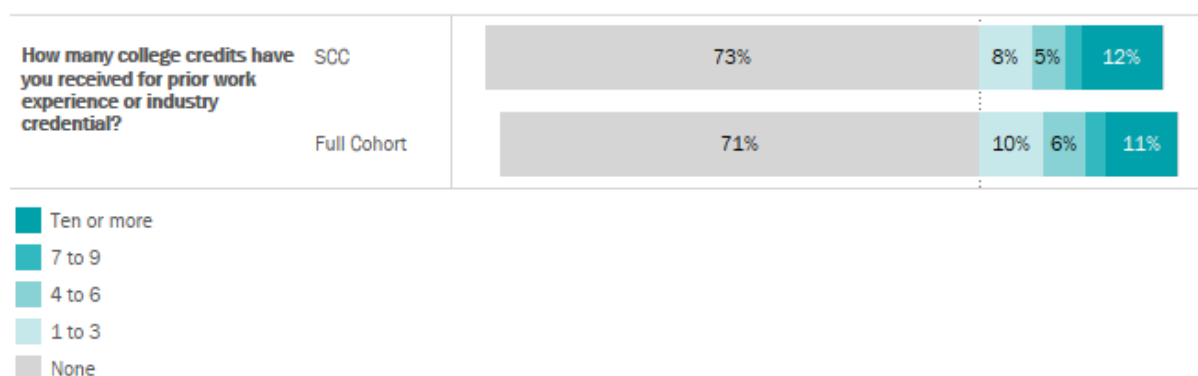


Special-Interest Results

The following items depict the results of student responses to the special interest items on the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). The 2023 administration special interest section focused on guided career pathways. Each administration CCSSE develops new item sets that enable colleges to explore more deeply certain issues that are key to improved student engagement and student success. This allows the survey to address issues of current importance to both colleges and their students, while also keeping the core survey stable. The 2023 administration special interest section focused on guided career pathways.

Students were asked the number of college credits they have received for prior work experience or industry. More than a quarter of SCC students (27%) received one or more college credits, while compared to 29% of the full cohort (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percent of SCC and comparison group who indicated they have received college credits for prior work experience



In Figure 8, 61% of SCC students reported *very much* of their coursework at SCC provided information about the skills needed for their chosen career path, compared to 48% of the full cohort. The axis provides a visual separation between 'positive' and 'negative' responses. The response *I have not chosen a career path* is on a separate axis to allow for the comparison of 'positive' and 'negative' responses.

Figure 8. Percent of SCC and comparison group who indicated the amount their coursework provided information about the skills needed for chosen career

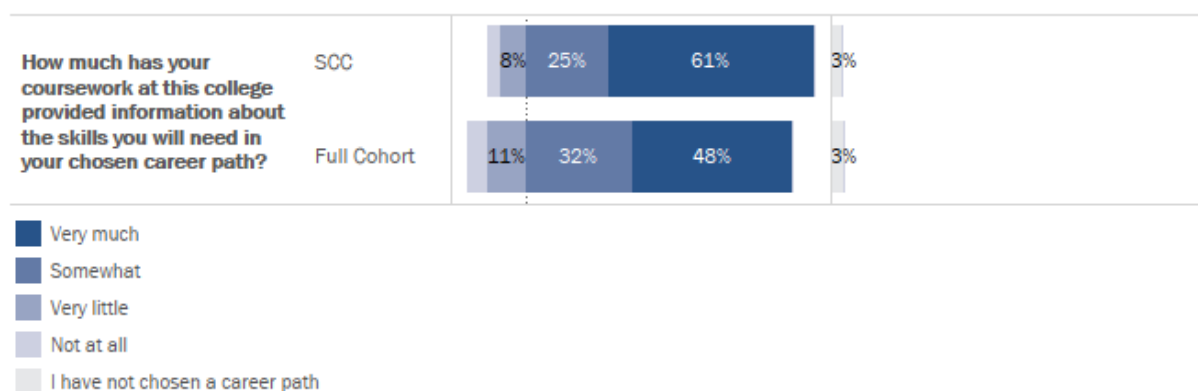
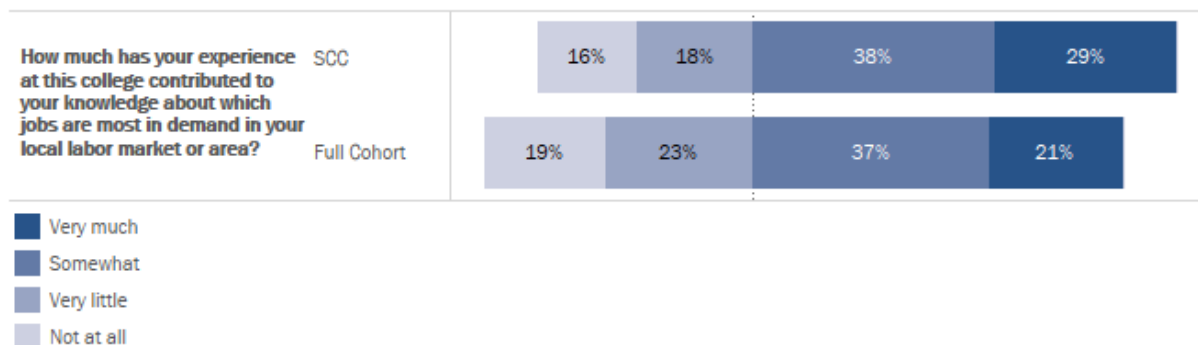


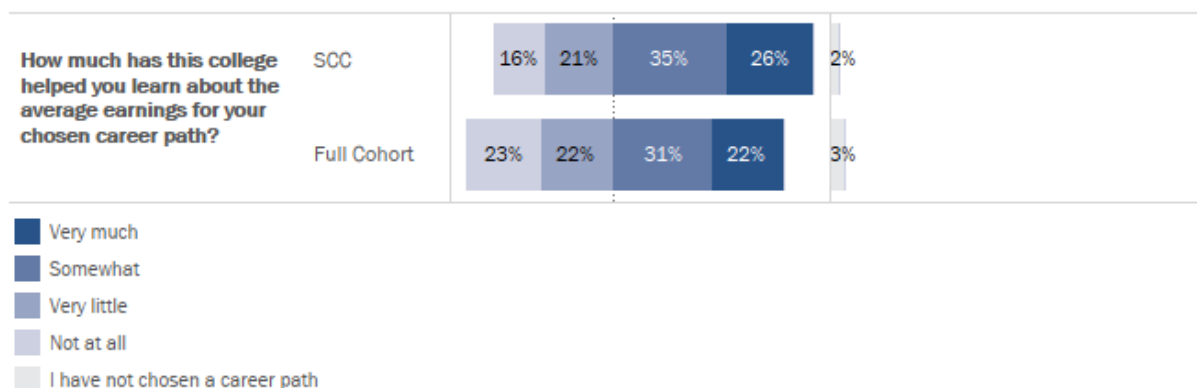
Figure 9 shows 67% of SCC students reported their experience at SCC has very much or somewhat contributed to their knowledge of high demand jobs in the area compared to 58% of the full cohort.

Figure 9. Percent of SCC and comparison group who indicated the amount their experience at the College contributed to their knowledge of in demand jobs



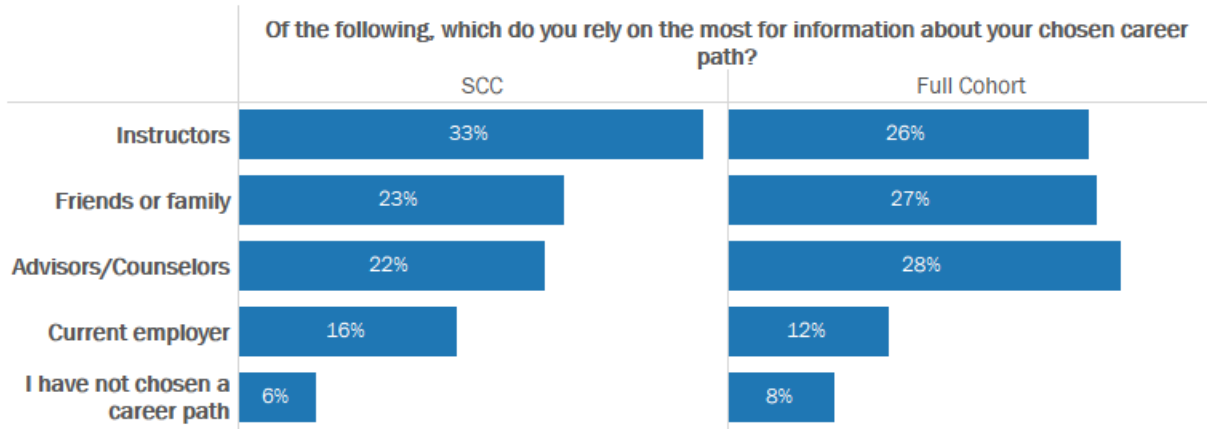
Students were asked the amount the college has helped students learn the average earnings of their chosen career. Nearly two-thirds of SCC students (61%) reported SCC has *very much* or *somewhat* helped them learn the average earnings of their chosen career, while only 53% of the full cohort. The axis provides a visual separation between 'positive' and 'negative' responses. The response *I have not chosen a career path* is on a separate axis to allow for the comparison of 'positive' and 'negative' responses (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percent of SCC and comparison group who indicated the amount the College helped explain average earnings for a chosen career



As shown in Figure 11, more than a quarter of SCC students (33%) rely on instructors the most for information about their career path compared to 26% of the full cohort.

Figure 11. Which do you rely on the most for information about your chosen career path?

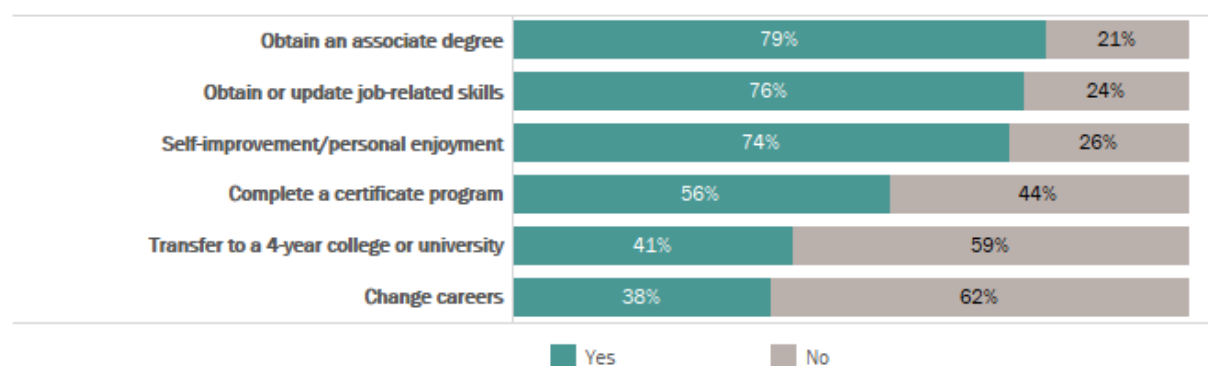


Other Results

Though this report has focused on CCSSE-specified benchmarks, the survey does include other items of interest. This section provides an overview of the responses to several such questions.

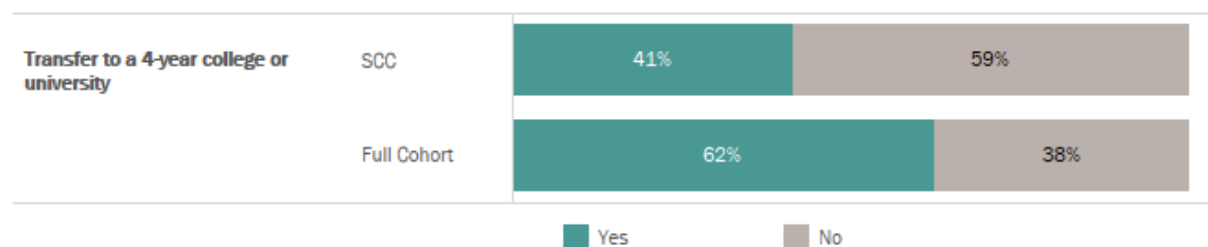
When asked about their *reasons/goals* for attending SCC, the most frequently selected responses were (1) *obtain an associate degree*, (2) *obtain or update job-related skills*, and (3) *self-improvement/personal enjoyment* (see Figure 12). The least frequently selected was *change careers*.

Figure 12. Percent of SCC students who indicated they have each of the following goals for attending SCC



The goal of transferring to a 4-year college or university ranked fifth among SCC students with 41% indicating this is a reason they are attending SCC. As shown in Figure 13, this value is significantly lower than students in the comparison group, where 62% of the complete CCSSE cohort have a goal of transferring to a 4-year college or university.

Figure 13. Percent of SCC and comparison group who indicated they intend to transfer to a 4-year college



As shown in Figure 14, when asked to indicate which financial sources they use to pay for tuition, more than three-quarters of SCC students reported they use *their own savings* (78%), with 49% identifying it as a major source. Nearly half rely on *scholarships* (48%) to pay tuition while 41% use *grants*.

As shown in Figure 15, a larger percentage of SCC students used their *own income or savings* as a major source for paying tuition (49%) than the overall cohort (38%).

Figure 14. Percent of SCC students who indicated they use a variety of methods to pay tuition

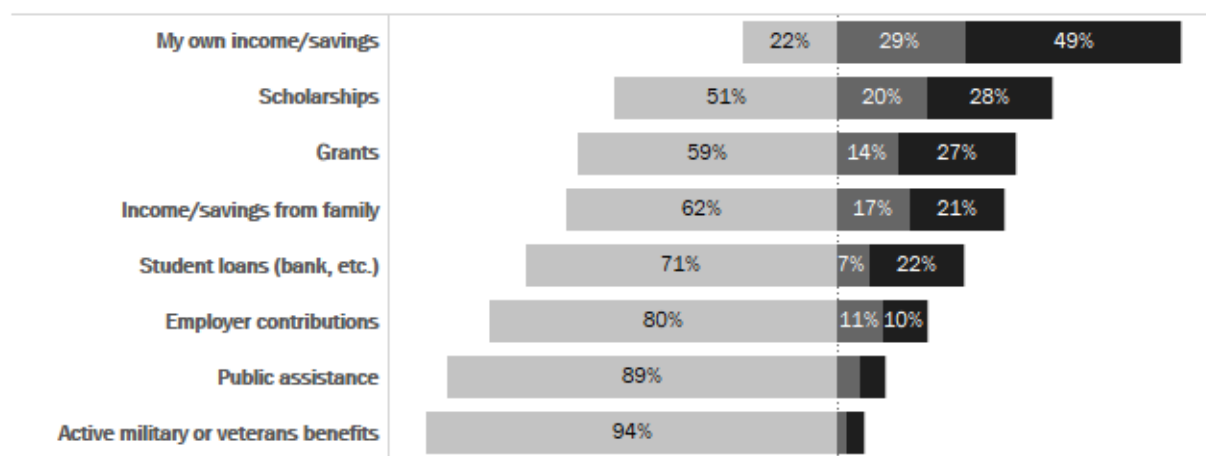


Figure 15. Percent of SCC and peer group students who indicated they use student loans to pay tuition

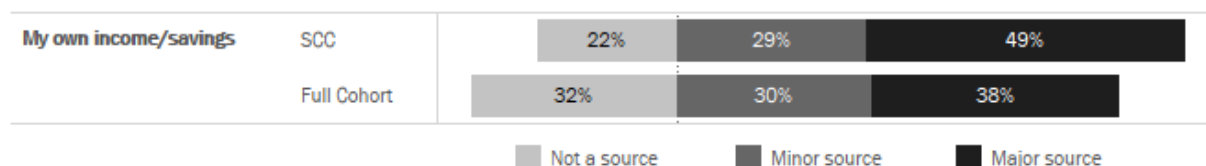
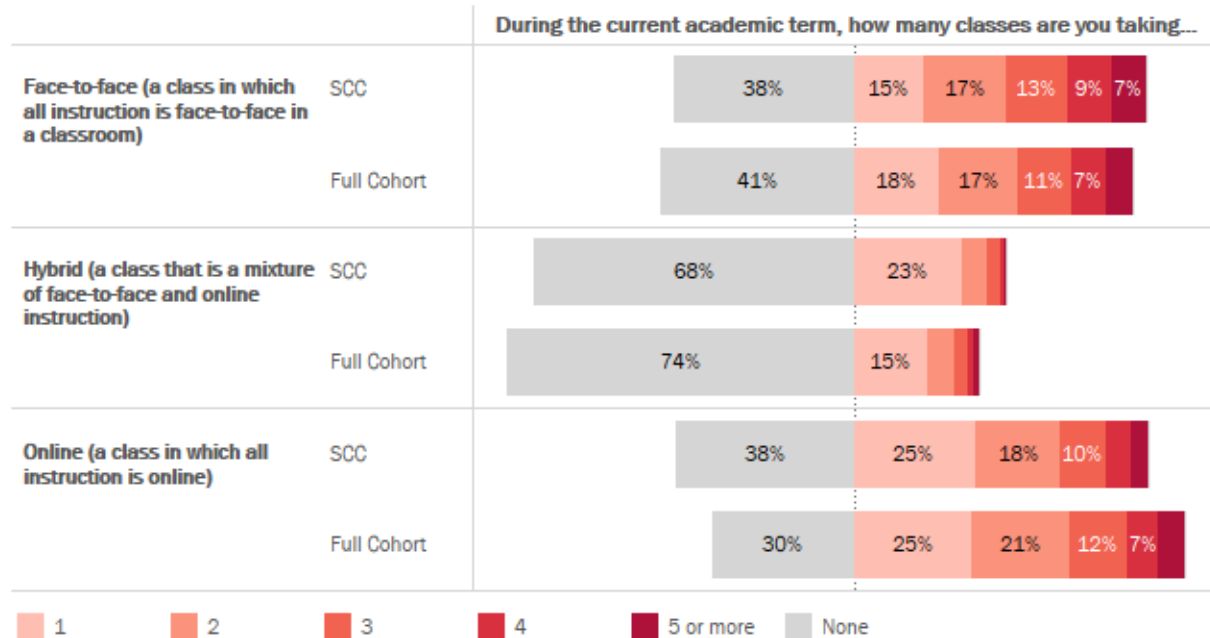


Figure 16 compares the percentage of SCC students who took face-to-face, online, and hybrid classes in the spring 2023 term to the full cohort. One notable difference is a higher percentage of SCC students (32%) took at least one hybrid class compared to the comparison group (26%).

Figure 16. During current academic term, how many classes are you taking....

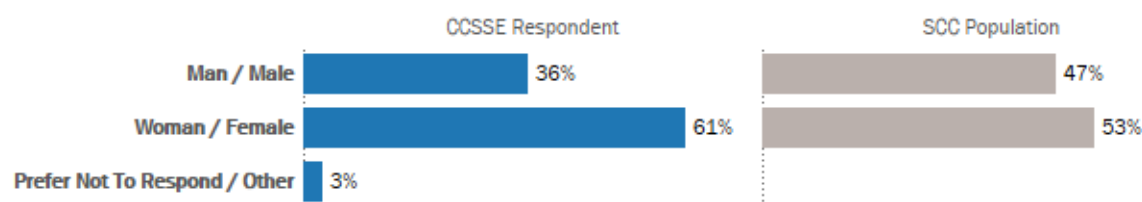


Demographics

The following section provides a summary of SCC's survey respondent demographics (blue) as compared to the student population during spring 2023 (grey).

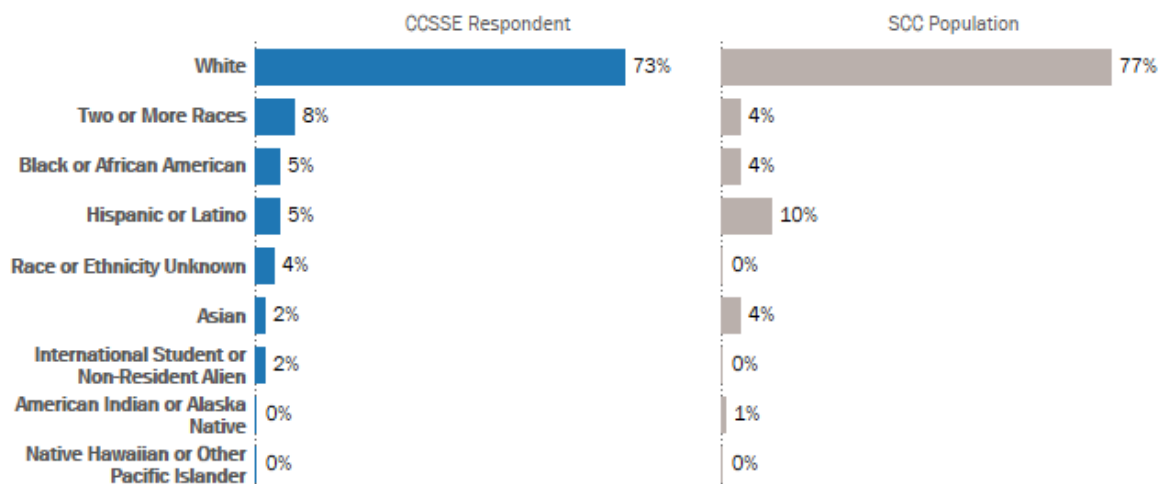
Females were over-represented among the survey respondents. Of all survey respondents, 61% were female, 36% were male, and 3% were classified as other or indicated they prefer not to respond. The population of enrolled students during spring 2023 was 53% female and 47% male.

Figure 17. Gender



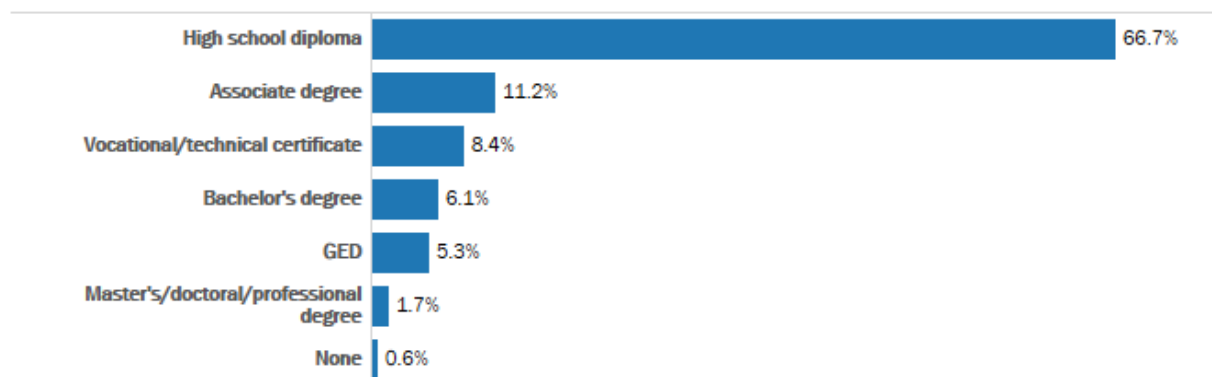
The percentage of white students compared to students of color was very similar between survey respondents and the total SCC population (73% of survey respondents compared to 77% of the college population). Differences in the specific non-white groups are difficult to interpret as categories vary between sources.

Figure 18. Race and Ethnicity



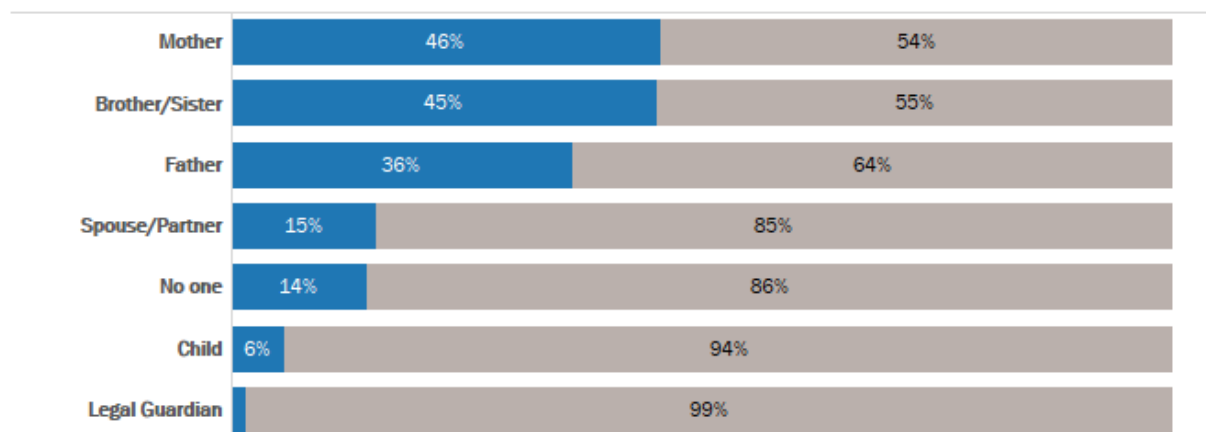
Most respondents indicated the highest educational level they had achieved was a high school diploma or GED (66.7%). Smaller percentages indicated they had already received a vocational/technical certificate (8.4%), bachelor's degree (6.1%), GED (5.3%), or advanced degree (1.7%).

Figure 19. Highest degree attained



Respondents were asked to indicate whether any of their family members have attended at least some college. As shown in the following chart, nearly half of respondents indicated their mother (46%) or brother/sister (45%) have attended some college. Respondents were asked to “mark all that apply,” thus the absence of a mark can indicate either the specific family member did not attend any college or the question was skipped. Therefore, the percentages shown in this chart may be underestimates.

Figure 20. Family members that attended some college



Appendix

Benchmark Tables

Table 1. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Active and Collaborative Learning Benchmark Items

		In your experiences at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?			
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	SCC	3.8%	23.5%	31.0%	41.7%
	Full Cohort	4.1%	29.3%	32.7%	33.9%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class (students, family members, co-workers)	SCC	17.1%	42.2%	23.0%	17.7%
	Full Cohort	17.3%	36.6%	26.1%	20.0%
Worked with other students on projects during class	SCC	21.3%	32.9%	24.7%	21.1%
	Full Cohort	25.9%	34.9%	24.1%	15.1%
Made a class presentation	SCC	30.4%	40.1%	19.7%	9.9%
	Full Cohort	33.0%	38.4%	18.9%	9.7%
Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments	SCC	49.8%	29.1%	13.0%	8.0%
	Full Cohort	47.2%	31.3%	13.5%	8.0%
Participated in a community-based project (service-learning activity) as part of a regular course	SCC	73.3%	17.7%	6.2%	2.8%
	Full Cohort	76.3%	15.8%	5.1%	2.9%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	SCC	72.6%	19.2%	4.4%	3.7%
	Full Cohort	77.4%	15.2%	4.5%	3.0%

Table 2. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Student Effort Benchmark Items

		In your experiences at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?					
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often		
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas or information from various sources	SCC	9.2%	25.9%	35.5%	29.3%		
	Full Cohort	9.3%	23.4%	35.1%	32.2%		
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	SCC	20.5%	35.1%	24.8%	19.6%		
	Full Cohort	20.6%	30.4%	28.2%	20.9%		
Come to class without completing readings or assignments	SCC	43.7%	42.0%	9.2%	5.1%		
	Full Cohort	45.7%	41.7%	8.1%	4.4%		
		During the current academic year, how much reading and writing have you done at this college?					
		1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20	None	
Number of books read on your own (not assigned) for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment	SCC	42.3%	12.9%	5.3%	6.0%	33.5%	
	Full Cohort	46.1%	13.0%	4.6%	4.7%	31.5%	
		About how many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?					
		1 to 5	6 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	More than 30	None
Preparing for class (studying, reading, writing, rehearsing, doing homework, etc.)	SCC	26.9%	31.7%	26.9%	8.6%	5.1%	0.8%
	Full Cohort	32.4%	30.2%	21.2%	9.1%	5.8%	1.3%
		How often have you used the following services during the current academic year?					
		Never	1 time	2 to 4 times	5 or more times		
Computer lab	SCC	66.7%	10.4%	12.4%	10.4%		
	Full Cohort	64.3%	9.4%	13.4%	13.0%		
Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	SCC	73.3%	8.6%	11.5%	6.6%		
	Full Cohort	65.7%	9.3%	13.5%	11.5%		
Peer or other tutoring	SCC	69.3%	10.8%	12.9%	7.0%		
	Full Cohort	67.6%	10.8%	12.9%	8.7%		

Table 3. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Academic Challenge Benchmark Items

		In your experiences at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?						
		Never	Sometimes		Often		Very often	
Worked harder than you thought you could to meet an instructor's standards or expectations	SCC	10.0%	33.8%		35.1%		21.1%	
	Full Cohort	9.2%	34.4%		33.4%		22.9%	
		During the current academic year, how much has your coursework at this college emphasized the following mental activities?						
		Quite a bit	Some		Very little		Very much	
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience, or theory	SCC	43.7%	23.5%		2.0%		30.8%	
	Full Cohort	41.9%	22.4%		3.9%		31.9%	
Forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	SCC	39.2%	26.1%		3.2%		31.6%	
	Full Cohort	39.7%	23.4%		4.7%		32.2%	
Using information you have read or heard to perform a new skill	SCC	33.5%	20.3%		3.0%		43.2%	
	Full Cohort	34.2%	22.9%		6.7%		36.2%	
Applying theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	SCC	36.7%	24.2%		5.1%		34.0%	
	Full Cohort	35.9%	26.1%		7.6%		30.5%	
Making judgements about the value or soundness of information, arguments, or meth...	SCC	34.1%	31.5%		8.9%		25.5%	
	Full Cohort	34.9%	29.3%		10.9%		24.9%	
		During the current academic year, how much reading and writing have you done at this college?						
		1 to 4	5 to 10	11 to 20	More than 20		None	
Number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books, or packets of co...	SCC	47.0%	24.8%	12.6%	14.3%		1.3%	
	Full Cohort	45.4%	25.6%	13.0%	12.8%		3.2%	
Number of written papers or reports of any length	SCC	31.9%	31.6%	17.8%	8.7%		9.9%	
	Full Cohort	33.6%	29.4%	15.5%	10.0%		11.4%	
		Extremely easy	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6) Extremely challenging	
Mark the response that best represents the extent to which your examinations during the cur...	SCC	0.3%	0.8%	2.9%	13.2%	36.1%	32.0%	14.8%
	Full Cohort	0.7%	1.4%	3.6%	17.6%	32.0%	27.4%	17.2%
		How much does this college emphasize the following?						
		Quite a bit	Some		Very little		Very much	
Encouraging you to spend significant amounts of time studying	SCC	43.5%	20.0%		3.8%		32.7%	
	Full Cohort	40.1%	21.3%		3.7%		34.9%	

Table 4. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Student-Faculty Interaction Benchmark Items

		In your experiences at this college during the current academic year, about how often have you done each of the following?			
		Never	Sometimes	Often	Very often
Used e-mail to communicate with an instructor	SCC	2.4%	26.7%	29.5%	41.4%
	Full Cohort	2.6%	21.6%	30.1%	45.7%
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from instructors on your performance	SCC	3.4%	24.8%	34.3%	37.4%
	Full Cohort	5.2%	26.4%	37.3%	31.1%
Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor	SCC	10.1%	42.4%	26.1%	21.4%
	Full Cohort	10.6%	38.4%	26.9%	24.1%
Talked about career plans with an instructor or advisor	SCC	22.2%	42.5%	19.0%	16.4%
	Full Cohort	24.5%	41.2%	20.1%	14.2%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	SCC	44.4%	33.4%	12.4%	9.9%
	Full Cohort	46.0%	34.1%	12.3%	7.6%
Worked with instructors on activities other than coursework	SCC	57.6%	28.3%	7.9%	6.1%
	Full Cohort	65.8%	21.8%	7.8%	4.7%

Table 5. SCC and Comparison Group Responses to Support for Learners Benchmark Items

		How much does this college emphasize the following?			
		Quite a bit	Some	Very little	Very much
Providing the support you need to thrive socially	SCC	32.2%	25.0%	11.1%	31.7%
	Full Cohort	30.9%	26.1%	12.8%	30.2%
Providing the financial support you need to afford your education	SCC	27.5%	27.3%	15.2%	30.0%
	Full Cohort	27.1%	25.0%	15.6%	32.3%
Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds	SCC	32.3%	28.8%	10.9%	28.0%
	Full Cohort	30.5%	26.9%	13.8%	28.9%
Helping you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)	SCC	22.1%	34.7%	25.5%	17.7%
	Full Cohort	21.9%	32.7%	29.1%	16.3%

		How often have you used the following services during the current academic year?			
		Never	1 time	2 to 4 times	5 or more times
Academic advising/planning	SCC	22.5%	19.8%	42.3%	15.4%
	Full Cohort	17.5%	21.6%	44.8%	16.2%
Career counseling	SCC	69.1%	15.7%	11.0%	4.1%
	Full Cohort	63.4%	16.3%	15.7%	4.6%