

LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT SURVEY - SPRING 1996

Survey Results

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June 1996



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Introduction

As one part of a larger effort to better serve the needs of students at Lane Community College, LCC contracted with the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory at the University of Oregon (OSRL) to conduct research focused on students use of and satisfaction with various student services offered by LCC. Working closely with representatives of the Students First! group at LCC, OSRL planned, pretested and implemented a telephone survey of 413 LCC students in May 1996. This report summarizes the survey methodology and results.

Survey Methodology

Survey Instrument

The broad goals of the survey were to obtain valid and reliable information from LCC students regarding their needs, use of student services, and evaluation of the quality of those services at LCC. More specifically, the survey targeted:

1. **How students obtain information about LCC** including accessibility and source;
2. **Use of LCC services** including Classline, student identification cards, student records, billing statements, bookstore, new student orientation, career information and services, academic advising, job placement, assessment and testing, and whether respondents would recommend LCC to a friend;
3. **Satisfaction with LCC and LCC services** received, helpfulness of LCC personnel, and LCC's strengths;
4. **Ease of using services and suggestions for improvement**, including how specific services can be improved, and things students wished they had known about LCC before enrolling;
5. **Interest in new services**, including internet access for a fee, LCC information on the World Wide Web, and child care;
6. **Computer skills and ownership**, including type of computer owned, modem ownership, computer knowledge (an Oregon Benchmark question), internet access and use, and WWW access; and
7. **Demographic and student characteristics**, including age, race/ethnicity, sex, disability status, marital status, parental status, citizenship, foreign language proficiency, employment, and educational attainment, as well as LCC student database information provided with the sample on current credit hours, cumulative credit hours, and both continuing education and adult basic education contact hours..

In designing the survey instrument, OSRL used a multipath approach which included: drawing from OSRL's survey archives and professional networks for questions related to LCC's needs; creating original survey questions; and extensively pretesting individual questions and the entire survey instrument with members of the survey population, professionals, survey experts, and potential users of the data from LCC.

Although most of the survey questions were originals by OSRL, some questions are direct parallels to those from Oregon State System of Higher Education student surveys conducted at various colleges and universities throughout the state. The survey instrument was revised and pretested several times, in consultation with representatives of LCC. The survey instrument was programmed into OSRL's computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system and further pretested.

A facsimile of the survey instrument is provided in Section 2 of this documentation. All interviews were completely confidential, and human subjects approval was obtained.

Sample and Data Collection

A random sample of 900 LCC students was drawn from all those thought to be enrolled Spring term 1996. All students with telephones had an equal chance of being selected.

Interviewer training was conducted on May 21, 1996; see Section 3 for interviewer instructions. Interviewing was conducted all times of the day and all days of the week (except Memorial Day weekend) until the target sample size was achieved. Altogether, OSRL interviewers made 3,456 telephone calls to complete 413 interviews with LCC students between May 22 and May 29, 1996.

Of the original 900 randomly selected students, 247 were determined to be ineligible for the survey because they said they were not currently enrolled, or the telephone number was wrong, disconnected or nonresidential, etc. The overall sample coverage rate was 80%, the response rate was 69%, and the refusal rate was just 3.5%. See Section 5 for the sample and response rate report. The average length of the interviews was 13.5 minutes.

Survey sampling errors are calculated to assist data users in assessing how much confidence to place in a particular survey result. Larger random samples reduce sampling error. Results for survey questions in which there is low variability also have less sampling error; for example, a variable with a 50/50 proportional split has wider confidence intervals than a variable with a 5/95 proportional split. For this study, the sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points on a variable with a 50/50 proportional split (at the 95% confidence level). For a variable with a 5/95 proportional split, the sampling error is ± 1.6 percentage points.

Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Before turning to the results of the survey, we provide a demographic profile of survey respondents in the sample, which will serve to contextualize their answers to the survey questions.

Sixty percent of LCC students in the sample are female. The age distribution of respondents is 13% age 55 and greater, 25% age 40-54, 26% age 25-39, 32% age 18-24, and 3% age 17 or less. Fully 84% are white, 6% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and each other minority group falls below 2%. Five percent have a disability which makes it difficult for them to learn or get around campus. Ninety-three percent are U.S. citizens, and 92% say English is their native language. Among native English speakers, 15% are proficient in a language other than English. Three-quarters of the sample are not parents of children age 12 or younger, 8% are single parents, and 18% are parents with partners. Sixty percent work for pay, and over half work full time. Of those who are employed, average weekly hours of work are 0-20 hours 21%, 21-30 hours for 26%, 31-40 hours for 42%, and 11% work more than 40 hours per week.

About one quarter of the sample (26%) took their first LCC course in 1996, 25% in 1995, 12% in 1994, 17% between 1990 and 1993, 10% in the 1980s, 9% in the 1970s, and 1% in the 1960s. Sixty percent of the survey respondents reported taking LCC classes for credit spring term 1996, 37% were taking non-credit classes only, and 2% were taking both credit and non-credit classes. This corresponds closely to the database information provided with the sample, which shows 39% taking non-credit courses, 19% taking 1-5 credits, 17% taking 6-11 credits, 22% taking 12-16 credits, and 3% taking 17 or more credits. In addition, 41% of the sample show zero cumulative credit hours, 12% have 1-10 cumulative credits, 20% have 11-30 cumulative credits, 8% have 31-50 cumulative credits, 13% have 51-99 cumulative credits, and 6% have 100 or more cumulative credits. Note, however, that two-thirds of those with a bachelors degree or better show zero cumulative credits. About one-third of the sample show some continuing education contact hours: 6% have 41 or more, 18% have 21-40, 11% have 1-20, and 64% have zero. In addition, just 7% of the sample show any adult basic education contact hours: 3% have 100 or more, 4% have 1-99, and 93% have zero.

Among those taking non-credit classes, 64% say they are taking them for personal enrichment, 20% to enhance job skills, 13% for adult basic education, and 3% other. Only 34% of these students have ever taken for-credit courses at LCC.

Among students taking classes for credit, their educational goals at LCC are 70% aim for a two-year associate's degree, 7% take classes for fun, 7% wish to enhance their job skills, 6% are undecided, 5% seek a vocational certificate, 2% are working on a high school diploma or GED, and the remaining 3% said "other" or "don't know."

Sixty-one percent of the respondents report taking college-level classes, 4% high school level classes, 2% said both, 31% said "something else," and 3% were not sure. Three-fifths of the respondents take classes at the main LCC campus, 16% take classes at the Downtown Center, 6% at the Cottage Grove and Florence campuses, and 16% take classes at various other locations around the county.

LCC students also were asked about their own and their parent's educational attainment. The highest level of education completed by students is 8% with "some high school," 28% hold a high school diploma or GED, 35% have "some college," 9% hold an associates degree or vocational certificate, and 19% have a bachelors degree or higher. Thirty-five percent of LCC students report that at least one of their parents has a Bachelor's degree.

Survey Results

The presentation of the survey results is organized around the first six survey subject areas identified on page 1. Readers of this report may refer to the 87 banner-style tables in Section 4 for more detail.¹ In the banner tables, all questions asked in the survey were cross-tabulated with 16 key variables: credit or non-credit classes, educational goal at LCC, overall satisfaction with LCC services received, location students take classes, taking college or high school level courses, highest level of education completed, whether a parent has a bachelor's degree, age, sex, race/ethnicity, U.S. citizenship, parental status, year first started attending LCC, ever attended new student orientation, ever received academic advising, and helpfulness of academic advising. The banner data include counts and percentages for each question overall, and counts and percentages for each row and column of the cross-tabulation.

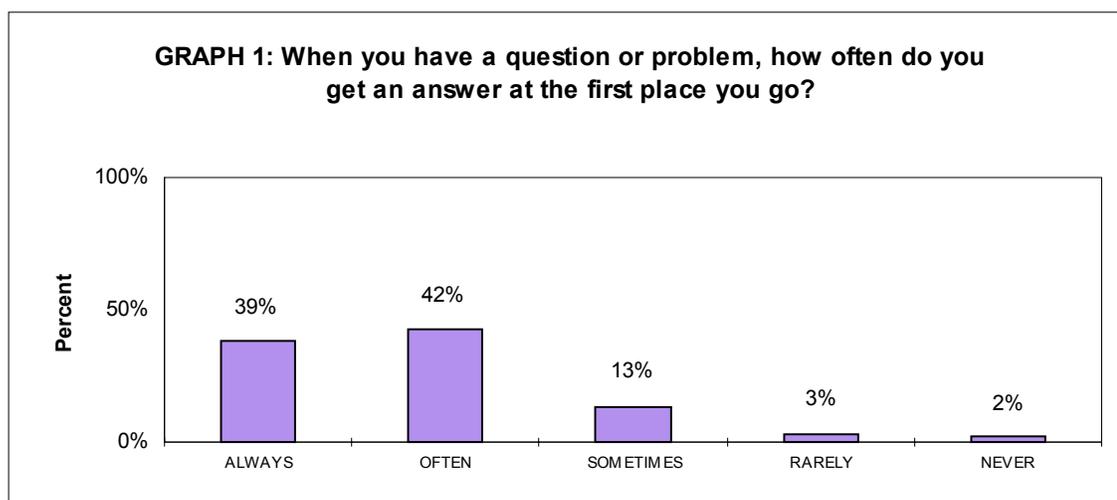
Narrative responses to open-ended questions are provided in Section 6. Codes developed for those responses are provided in Section 7. The coded narratives are also included in tabular form at the end of the banners, Tables 74-87. LCC student database information which was merged with the interview data are in Tables 88-91.

How Students Obtain Information about LCC

¹ At LCC's request, the banner tables also may be placed at OSRL's World Wide Web site for greater public usage: <http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~osrl>.

In this group of questions, we examine how students obtain information about LCC. When asked where they go first when they have a question or problem, 30% of students report that they go to individuals at LCC (teachers, advisors, receptionists, etc.), 6% go to friends and family members, 23% go to various student services centers (information desk, counseling, dislocated workers, career center, etc.), 18% go to other LCC offices (admissions, registration, administration, etc.), 5% go to the LCC catalogue, 12% say “it depends on the problem,” and 11% said they have not had a question or problem.

When they have a question or problem, respondents were asked how often they get an answer at the first place they go. The purpose of this question was to assess “the bounce factor;” that is, how many students “bounce” from one place to another seeking answers to questions and problems. The results show very little “bounce.” Four-fifths of students responded that they find solutions “always” and “often” at the first place they go (see Graph 1).



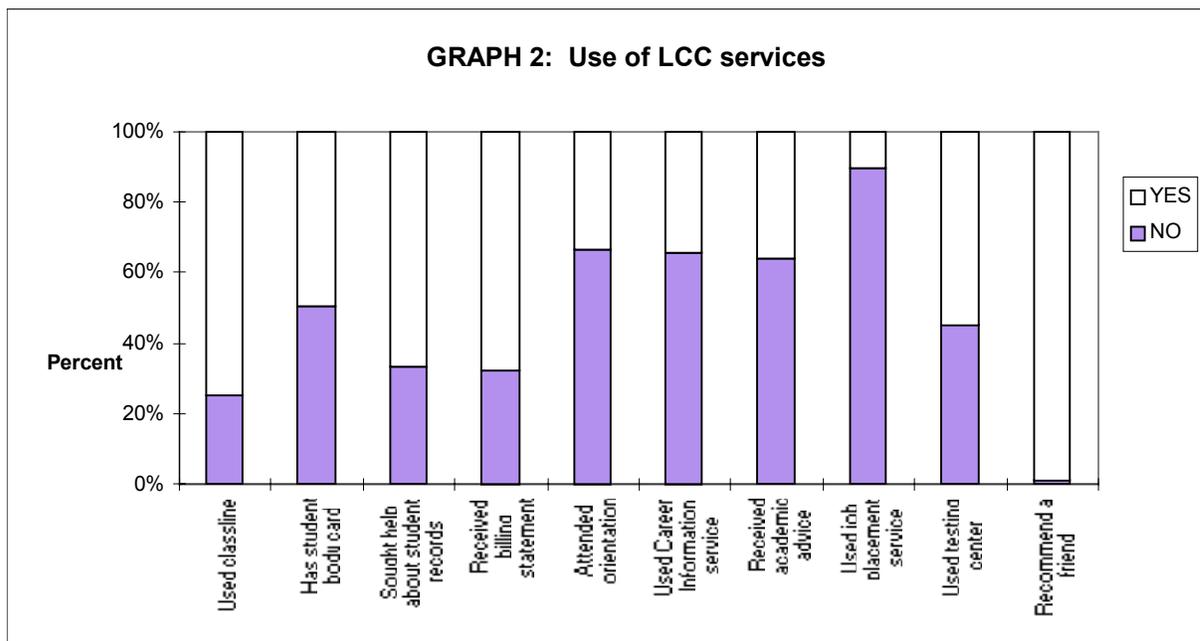
Students also were asked where they go first, or what they do first, to find out how to sign up for a class at LCC. Three quarters (76%) reported that they use the class schedule, 8% go to the admissions staff, 7% go to counselors or advisors, 4% go to instructors or department offices, and 3% or fewer use other support services and friends or family.

Use of LCC Services

The major goal of the survey was to assess students’ use of services that LCC provides. Graph 2 summarizes students’ use of LCC services and the narrative below provides greater detail about variations in that use. Subsequent sections of the analysis examine students’ assessments of the quality and value of these services, ease of use of the services, as well as suggestions for improvements.

Classline (Tables 17-21): Three-quarters of students taking classes at LCC Spring term used Classline to register. Another 16% registered in person, 2% registered by mail, 2% were registered by someone else, 4% said “other,” and 2 persons faxed their registration. Those who did not use Classline were asked if they had ever used it; 28% responded “yes.” Those who used Classline were asked how they learned to use it. Seventy-four percent said that they learned by reading instructions, 6% learned by watching a video, 6% learned from LCC staff, 6% learned from friends and family members, 6% said “other,” and 1% were taught at the Admissions Office. Fully 97% of students are satisfied with the information they received on how to use Classline (80% “very satisfied” and 17% “somewhat satisfied”). Fully 97% find Classline easy to use (85% “very easy” and 12% “somewhat easy”).

Students who did not use Classline are more likely to take non-credit classes, less likely to take classes at the main campus, less likely to be taking college level classes, and more likely to have already completed a bachelor’s degree than those who used Classline. They are also more likely to be over age 55, non-white, and female, less likely to have attended orientation or seen an advisor, and more likely to have just begun classes at LCC.



Student ID Card (Tables 22-24): Half of the students interviewed reported having an LCC student identification card. Those who do not have them are much more likely to be non-credit students than those with an ID card (92% compared to 8%), their educational goals at LCC are less oriented to an academic degree, they are more likely to take classes away from the main campus, they are more often female, with a college degree and over age 55, and they are less likely to have received academic advising or orientation services. Only 36% of those without an ID card are interested in obtaining one, and an additional 10% are not sure.

Student Records (Tables 25-26): Students were asked where they go first when they need help with student records, like getting grades, transcripts and a list of classes they are taking. One third had never sought such help. Of the two-thirds who had sought student records information, 26% first go to the Student Records Office, 18% go to the Atlas kiosks, 6% go to the counseling and advisor offices on the main campus, 3% go to instructional department offices, 3% go to the Outreach Center front desk, 1% go to other support services offices, and 8% said “other.” Students who do not seek these services fit a similar profile as those who do not have ID cards and who do not use Classline, i.e., they take non-credit classes, have non-academic goals, take classes away from the main campus, do not take college-level classes, and more often older, female, and new students, and lack orientation or advising.

Monthly Billings and Financial Issues (Tables 27-31): Two-thirds of LCC students have received monthly billing statements, 31% have not, and 2% said billings do not apply to them. Those who have not received them are more likely to be new students, less likely to have received advising or orientation, more likely to attend classes away from the main campus, and are less oriented to an academic degree. Not surprisingly, those who have not received a billing statement are also slightly more satisfied with the services they have received from LCC.

Of those students who have received a monthly bill, 88% find them easy to read and 79% find it helpful to have a list of classes on the statement. Fully 87% said they would pay their bills early if they received a discount (of an unspecified amount), and 7% volunteered that it would depend on the amount.

Eight percent said that they had been unable to register for classes at LCC at some time because they were unable to pay their bill. These students tend to have been at LCC longer, are well integrated in terms of advising and orientation, have academic goals, and are more likely to be single parents, ages 18-24, and nonwhite.

Tuition and fees are paid by the students themselves in most cases (60%). For another 13%, these expenses are covered by a parent or relative, 12% by financial aid, 7% by a government agency, 5% by an employer, and 3% other. Books and supplies are covered by students themselves 65% of the time, 10% by a parent or relative, 10% by financial aid, 6% by an agency, 3% by an employer, 2% other, and 4% say they never buy books and supplies. Those whose parents or relatives pay tend to be younger and have better educated parents. Those covered by financial aid are more likely to be females, single parents, academically oriented, and more integrated via orientation and advising. Those covered by agencies and employers are disproportionately male, older, building job skills, and most satisfied with LCC's services.

Bookstore (Tables 34-35): Nearly two-thirds of students buy their books and supplies at the campus bookstore (64%), 13% buy them at the Downtown Center, 16% somewhere else, 2% multiple places, and 5% say they do not need books or supplies. Fully 86% say that it is easy for them to get books and supplies. Those who find access to books and supplies difficult are more likely to take classes away from the major LCC instructional sites.

New Student Orientation (Tables 36-37): One third of students have attended new student orientation. Those most likely to attend take their classes at the college level, for credit, toward an academic goal, on the main campus, and tend to be younger and enrolled a year or longer. Fully 87% found orientation to be helpful.

Career Information and Career Counseling Services (Tables 38-39): About one-third of LCC students (34%) have used LCC's career services. Students less likely to use them tend to be taking non-credit and non-college classes, have non-academic goals at LCC, take classes away from the main campus, have just begun taking classes, and are less integrated into the campus via orientation and advising. Demographically, they are more often male, younger than average or older than average, non-citizens, and non-parents. Eighty-five percent of those who have used the services found them helpful.

Academic Advising (Tables 40-42): Thirty-six percent of LCC students have received academic advising. The profiles of non-users matches the profile of those who do not use career services. Of those who have received academic advising, 76% saw an LCC counselor, 10% were advised in an instructional department, 5% used multiple sources, 3% saw a faculty member, 1% used other LCC support services, 1% used family and friends, and 1% said "other." Fully 92% found the advising to be helpful.

Job Placement Service (Tables 43-44): Ten percent of the survey respondents have used LCC's Job Placement Service. Those most likely to use it are undecided in their educational goals at LCC, take classes on the main campus, have completed some college but not a degree, have been at LCC a few years, are ages 18-24, are male, are non-white and non-Asian, are single parents, have attended orientation, and have received academic advising. Eighty-eight percent found the services helpful.

*Assessment and Testing Center*² (Tables 45-47): Overall 55% of the students asked have used LCC’s assessment and testing services. Those most likely to have used it take classes for credit, aim for two-year degrees or are undecided, take classes at the main campus, have completed some college but no degree, are ages 18-24, are single parents, have attended orientation, and have received academic advising. Ninety-six percent received these services on the main campus. One hundred percent found the services helpful.

Overall, students seemed very pleased with LCC, as 94% said they would recommend LCC to a friend. Only 1% said they would not recommend LCC, and the rest were undecided.

Satisfaction with LCC and LCC Services

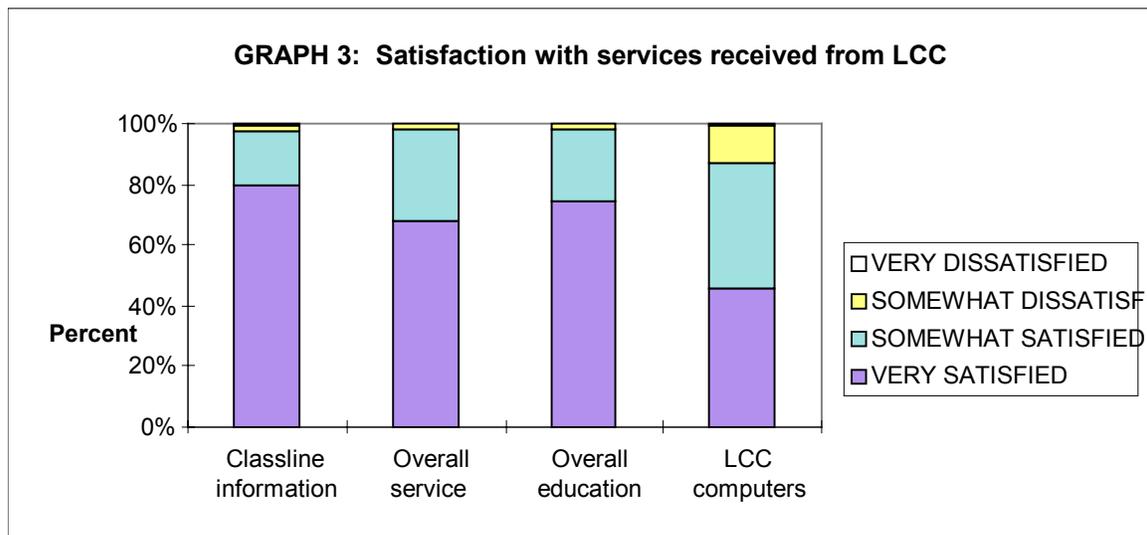
Students seem very satisfied with the services LCC provides (Graph 3) and they find most services helpful (Graph 4).

Almost 80% report being “very satisfied” with the information they received on how to use Classline, 17% report “somewhat satisfied,” and less than 3% report being dissatisfied.

When students were asked about their overall experiences with LCC services, 68% said they are “very satisfied,” 30% are “somewhat satisfied,” and less than 2% are dissatisfied.

Students are also pleased with the overall education they have received at LCC. Almost 75% report being “very satisfied,” 23% “somewhat satisfied,” and less than 3% dissatisfied.

The LCC computer lab has the highest percentage of dissatisfaction among students, but still an overwhelming majority were satisfied. Forty-six percent are “very satisfied” and 41% are “somewhat satisfied” with the convenience, hours and cost of the computer lab, while 12% reported that they are “somewhat dissatisfied” and 1% are “very dissatisfied.”



² Note: The survey questions on job placement and testing services were added to the survey at the very last minute by LCC. Due to this, an error in skip logic occurred which was not caught in CATI pretesting. That is, only the 42 students who had used LCC’s job placement services were asked if they had also used the testing services; those who had not used job placement services were inadvertently skipped past to the next group of questions.

Similarly, among those students who have used specific services, large majorities found them helpful (Graph 4). For student records information, 68% found the information they received “very helpful,” 27% “somewhat helpful,” 4% not very helpful, and just 1 person said “not at all helpful.”

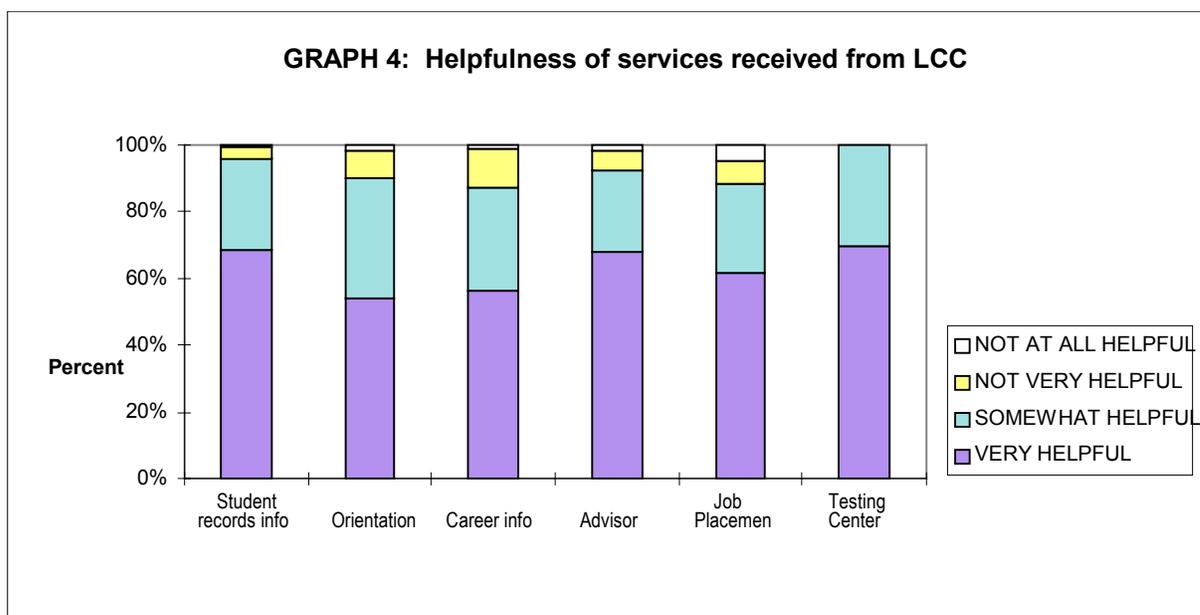
Among those who have attended new student orientation, 52% found it “very helpful,” 35% “somewhat helpful,” 8% “not very helpful,” and just 2 students said “not at all helpful.”

Among those who have used career information and career counseling services, 55% said the information they received was “very helpful,” 30% said “somewhat helpful,” 11% said “not very helpful,” and just 2 persons said “not at all helpful.”

Among those who have seen an academic advisor, 68% said the experience was “very helpful,” 24% said “somewhat helpful,” 5% said “not very helpful,” and 3 persons said “not at all helpful.”

Among those students who have used LCC’s job placement services, 62% said the assistance was “very helpful,” 26% said “somewhat helpful,” 7% said “not very helpful,” and 5% said “not at all helpful.”

Among the students who reported using LCC’s testing and assessment services, 70% found it “very helpful,” 30% “somewhat helpful,” and none said not helpful.



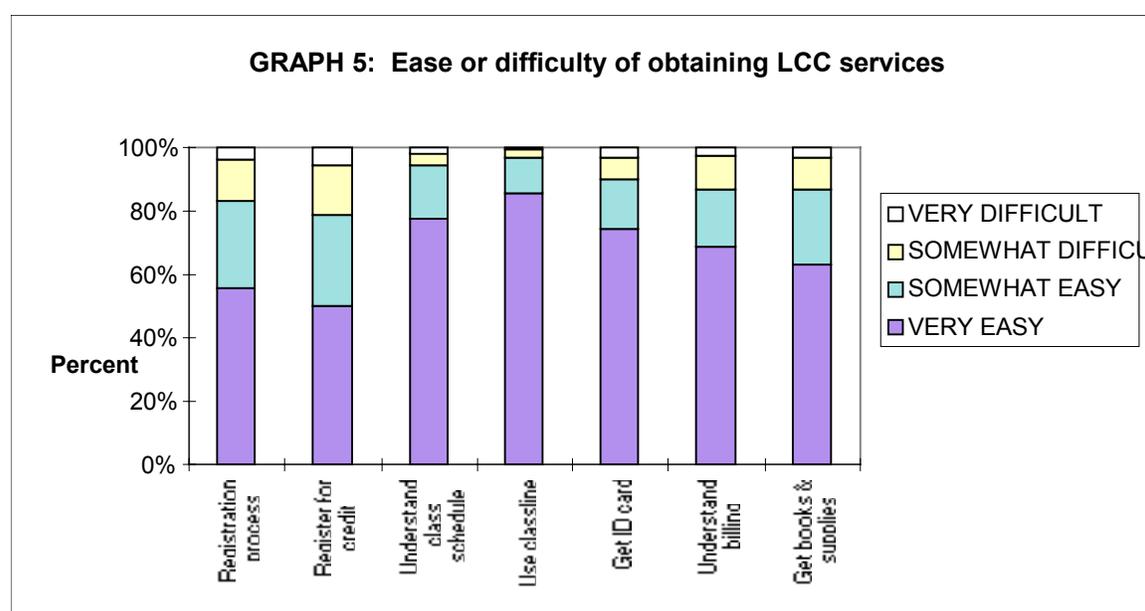
When asked what they believe LCC’s one greatest strength is, three-quarters commented upon the high quality of education, including many specific comments about faculty, staff, particular programs and departments, the quality and availability of classes, and the general educational opportunities offered. Thirteen percent mentioned the physical and emotional environment of LCC (friendliness, diversity, location). Five percent mentioned low costs.

Ease of Using Services and Suggestions for Improvement

Graph 5 below summarizes key questions from the survey relating to ease or difficulty of obtaining LCC services, from students who had used the services. The results are overwhelmingly positive. Students reported “very easy” for a majority of questions in this section.

Eighty-five percent said Classline is “very easy” to use, 78% said it is “very easy” to understand the class schedule, 75% said that getting an ID is “very easy,” 69% said it is “very easy” for them to understand monthly billing statements, 63% said it is “very easy” for them to get books and supplies needed for LCC classes, 55% said signing up for classes is “very easy,” and half said that registering for credit classes is “very easy.”

Combining categories “somewhat difficult” and “very difficult,” we find only 17% think the registration process is difficult, 22% feel it is difficult to register for credit classes, 5% have difficulty understanding the class schedule, 3% think Classline is difficult to use, 13% have difficulty understanding their billing statement, and 14% have difficulty getting the books and supplies they need for class.



Those few students who reported not using certain services, or who voiced dissatisfaction or lack of helpfulness with various student services, were asked open-ended questions about how those services could be improved. Again, the narrative answers to these open-ended questions are provided in Section 6.

Among the 73 persons asked why they had not used Classline, 32% said it is too complicated, 16% had never heard of it, 10% would rather register in person, 12% were signed up Spring term by someone else, 14% believe they are not eligible to use it, and the remaining are distributed over various miscellaneous categories. Of those who had used Classline, only a handful voiced dissatisfaction. These students are more likely than the average student to be older and female, are more likely to have completed a bachelor’s degree, and fewer had attended new student orientation. These students’ main suggestion is that Classline needs to be made easier to understand.

For the 21 students who had suggestions on how to make it easier to obtain ID cards, 62% said that waiting time should be reduced and 14% commented upon the limited hours and days it is possible to get an ID card.

Just 15 students had suggestions on how to improve student records information, and the answers were all over the map. The most frequent comments (40%) concerned difficulties obtaining information.

Just 34 students had comments on how monthly billing statements could be made more helpful. A majority (53%) had suggestions on making them easier to understand, e.g., making it clear what specific fees are for. Another 30% of comments concerned making the statements easier to look at.

As for getting books and supplies needed for classes, 51 dissatisfied students suggested having more cashiers (26%), stocking adequate supplies (22%), making it possible to purchase supplies at other places (14%), better availability (12%), and better signs (12%).

Eighteen students provided comments on orientation information presented by LCC. A plurality (44%) complained that it was identical to information provided elsewhere.

Among the 18 students who offered suggestions on how career information could be made more useful, 38% said that the counselors should be better informed and 24% said that more information, or a different kind of information, was needed. Similarly, among the 11 students who had suggestions on how advising could be made more helpful, 73% suggested that the advisors didn't know what they were talking about.

All survey respondents were asked what they would like to change or improve at LCC. Nearly one quarter (23%) said nothing needs improving. However, 22% reported issues related to academics (class size, selection, timing, content, requirements, standards, resources), 13% commented upon financial issues (high costs, improvements needed in buildings, grounds, equipment, furniture), 12% complained about issues related to administration and services (counseling, advising, registration, bureaucracy, transportation, bookstore, cafeteria), just 6% commented upon teachers (quality, availability, attitudes), and 24% had miscellaneous comments (e.g., location, accessibility).

All students also were asked what one thing they wished they had known in advance about LCC before taking classes there. One fifth didn't know (21%). However, 14% commented on education issues, both positive and negative (e.g., class availability, variety, content, presentation, requirements, standards, equipment, faculty), 10% commented on administrative and student services issues, 5% commented on costs, and 8% discussed the physical and/or emotional environment of the campus.

Interest in New Services

LCC students also were asked questions regarding their interest in new services. Among those students who already have access to the World Wide Web (37%), interest in LCC providing information on classes, financial aid and student services on the WWW is high: 26% said they would use it "often," 36% "sometimes," 22% "rarely," and 15% "never."

Among all students, 40% would pay \$10 per month for unlimited access to electronic mail and the internet through LCC. Interest in this service does not vary significantly by students' current access to e-mail or current access to the WWW.

Twenty-six percent of the survey respondents are parents of a child 12 years old or younger, and of those parents, 30% are single. If LCC provided child care to parents of young children, 13% would "always" use it, 10% would use it "often," 17% "sometimes," 15% "rarely," and 43% "never." Those students most likely to use it are ages 18-24, taking classes at the Downtown Center, taking high school classes, are female and single parents, and have just begun taking classes at LCC.

To re-cap previously mentioned findings, about 50% of students do not have student body cards, and of those who do not have one, only 36% would like one. When asked if they would pay their LCC bills early if there was a discount, 87% said "yes."

Computer skills and ownership

Sixty-five percent of LCC students interviewed own a computer. Of those, 74% own IBM compatible computers, 20% own Macintoshes, and the remaining are various types. Of those who own a computer, 58% have a modem. Students least likely to own computers are less oriented to academic goals, have lower levels of educational attainment, and tend to be ages 18-24, non-white, non-citizens, and single parents.

Overall, 71% of LCC students know how to edit documents or analyze data with a computer. Students without computer skills tend to be taking non-credit classes, at the high school level, aiming for a high school diploma or are undecided about their educational goals, take classes at the Downtown Center or other non-central locations, are age 55 and over, are non-white, are non-citizens, and are new to LCC.

Twenty-nine percent of all students have an electronic mail account, and 36% of students have access to the World Wide Web (WWW).

Forty-six percent of students never use LCC computer labs, about 19% use them "often," 19% "sometimes," and 16% "rarely." As mentioned above, of those who use the LCC computer labs, over 85% are satisfied with the convenience, hours, and cost.

Conclusions

The purpose of this survey was to develop an instrument for LCC that would assist in meeting its information and evaluation needs regarding students' use of services and their assessment of the value and quality of those services. The result of this survey is an exceptionally rich source of current information on the behaviors, views, and demographic characteristics of LCC students. These data will serve as a baseline against which LCC can measure the effects of process re-design and other policy innovations over the next several years. This survey also serves as a model which other community colleges can use to guide their data collection efforts in addressing their unique goals and strategies for achieving those goals.