

**Oregon Community College**

# **Student Opinion Survey**

using  
**American College Testing Service  
(ACT)  
Questionnaire**  
(Northwest Edition)

**April, 2006**

**Summary Report**

for

# **Southwestern Oregon Community College**

Summary Compiled by  
Oregon Council of Community College Institutional Researchers  
(OCCICIR)

**November, 2006**

# Oregon Community College Student Opinion Survey (ACT SOS-NW) April 2006)

## Introduction

Beginning in 1994, the Oregon Community College Deans of Students Association have authorized studies of student opinion about college environment and college student services at two year intervals using the ***Student Opinion Survey (NW edition) developed by American College Testing Program (ACT)***.

The survey reported here is the latest in the series and was conducted with the assistance and support of the institutional research departments at **9 of the 17 community colleges in Oregon** during the months of **April-May, 2006**. The students from all colleges returned **3,313 usable surveys**. ACT scanned the results and prepared an aggregate data set which was then tabulated and summarized by the Oregon Community College Council of Institutional Researchers (OCC CIR). The results are summarized in an aggregate report for the whole state, and then in individualized reports containing the data for each of the 9 participating colleges. ACT has also prepared a national comparison norm based on 85,859 students at 107 different community and junior colleges from January 1, 2002 through March 31, 2005. The national normative information is included in the report for comparison.

The results reported here in the narrative section and in the tables is a **state-wide summary report**, with the addition of **comparison figures from the national norm**. Included are the answer frequencies and the average answers to the questions, and the question rank according to average response. Observed deviations between the Oregon results and the national norms are noted.

The survey asks questions about:

- Reasons you selected this college
- Use of college services
- Satisfaction with college services.
- Satisfaction with components of the college environment

The **institutional specific reports** containing the data for each of the 14 participating colleges are distributed in **separate appendices specific to each college**.

The state summary report and the local college reports were compiled by an OCC CIR task force headed by Paul Guthrie (Institutional Research, Chemeketa Community College) under the direction of representatives from each college. Any question should be directed to him at 503-399-5238, e-mail [guth@chemeketa.edu](mailto:guth@chemeketa.edu), or to Institutional Research at Southwestern Oregon Community College, e-mail [IR@socc.edu](mailto:IR@socc.edu).

## **Summary for Southwestern Oregon Students**

The Southwestern Oregon Community College students responding to the survey were generally typical of the college population: 67.6% white, 56.1% age 19-25. The sample included slightly fewer males (40.5%) than females (59.0%), and mostly full-time students (79%) who attended day classes (90%). About one-half of the respondents (52.3%) entered Southwestern Oregon straight from high school, and 18.5% entered after some work experience. About 10% were transfers from another community college (7.4%) or university (2.8%).

### **Reasons Students Selected this College (See Table 3)**

Access and quality of instruction play a key role in students' reasons for selecting a community college. The major reasons most respondents list for why they chose Southwestern Oregon Community College include "Convenient Location" - 59.7%, "Low Cost" - 42.1%, "Available Scholarship/Financial Aid" - 37.3%, and "Offered the Classes I Wanted" - 31.2%. Financing their education is a major concern for students and 28.9% of students indicated the "Ability to Work While Going to School" combined with the "Availability of Financial Aid" as a major reason to attend, and 56.89% state they are "Receiving Financial Aid."

### **Use of and Satisfaction with College Services (See table 2)**

(5-point scale where 1 = excellent, 3 = average and 5 = very poor)

Educational support services are highly used by the respondents, with a generally high rate of satisfaction. When asked to list which college services they used and how they rated their satisfaction with them, the highest used services (50% or more) were "Parking," "Academic Advising" "Library/Learning Resources," "Computer Labs/Services," and "Financial Aid." The services with the highest combined use and satisfaction are "Computer Labs," receiving a use rate of 82.5% and an average satisfaction rating of 1.81, followed by "Library" with a use rate of 85.9% and a satisfaction score of 2.00. Other high satisfaction services are "Tutorial Services" (satisfaction 2.11) and "Cooperative Work Experience - CWE" (satisfaction 2.28), but these services were used by only 54.8% and 44.9% of the students. The satisfaction ratings for the other high-use services are "Parking" - 2.27, "Academic Advising" - 2.32, and "Financial Aid" - 2.46.

### **Satisfaction College Environment Factors (See Table 3)**

(5-point scale where 1 = excellent, 3 = average and 5 = very poor)

When asked to rate their satisfaction with 44 different college environmental factors ranging from facilities, to faculty behaviors, to academic policy, the highest rated were "Class Size" and "Attitude of Teaching Staff Toward Students" ( 1.94 and 1.90), followed closely by "Library and Learning Resources," "Class Schedule" and "Building/grounds condition and appearance," each with a satisfaction rating greater than 2.11. Other high satisfaction services are "Study Areas" (2.15), "Bookstore" (2.15), "Quality of Instruction" (2.16), and "Testing and Grading" (2.17).

The lowest rated factors were "Purpose for Activity Fees" and "Student Input College Policy," receiving scores of 2.75 and 2.74.

On the question of the "College in General," Southwestern Oregon Community College students rate their college very highly at 2.21 (average state rating of 2.55).

## Oregon Community College Student Opinion Survey (ACT SOS-NW) April 2006)

### Summary for All Oregon Community College Students

The Oregon community college students responding to the survey were generally typical of the college population: 74% white, and 50% age 19-25. The respondents included fewer males (42%) than females (58%), and mostly full-time students (68%) who attended day classes (85%). One third of the respondents (34%) entered their community college straight from high school, and another one-third (34%) entered after some work experience. About 10% were transfers from either another community college (5%) or a university (5).

Students generally rate their colleges well on both the summary question of

**Overall Quality of Education** (28% Excellent and 53% "Good", and only 2% "Poor" and 1% "Very Poor")

and the environment factor question of

**This College in General** (24% "Highly Satisfied", 42% "Satisfied", although a significant number were not pleased with 11% "Dissatisfied" and 6% "Highly Dissatisfied").

Two thirds of the respondents answered that

**This College Was my First Choice** (67%),

and two thirds

**Would Choose This College Again** (35% "Definitely Yes" and 36% "Probably Yes", and only 7% "Probably No", 4% "Definitely No").

#### **Reasons Students Selected this college (see Table 1)**

Access and quality of instruction play a key role in students' reasons for selecting a community college.

The major reasons most respondents list for why they chose their college include

**Convenient Location** (62%), and  
**Offered the Classes I Wanted** (54%).

Financing their education is a major concern for students.

**Low Cost** (46%) was the third most common selection criteria given,  
**Ability to Work While Going to School** (36%) and  
**Availability of Financial Aid** (31%) were listed as a "Major Reason" to attend, with 57% stating they are **Receiving Financial Aid** and 38% **Working** more than 20 hours per week.

Oregon students have consistently for the last 12 years cited **Convenient Location, Offered the Classes I Wanted** and **Low Cost** as the top three reasons for selecting their college, with **Convenient Location** the clear leader. Nationally, these reasons are also the top three, but **Offered the Classes I Wanted** is rated first instead of second, and nationally the three reasons are more nearly equally rated.

Oregon and national respondents rank the remainder of the reasons in similar order, but far fewer Oregon students cite the other reasons than does the national sample. As an example, 8% more of the students in the national sample list **Ability to Work While Going to School** as a major reason.

Students in generally do not use **Advice of High School Teacher** (Oregon 4.4%) or **Advice of Counselor** (Oregon 3.5%) or **To Be With Friends** (Oregon 4.4%) as reasons to choose their college, and in Oregon those reasons are less common than they are nationally.

#### **Use of and Satisfaction with College Services (see Table 2)**

Educational support services are highly used by the respondents, with a generally high level of satisfaction. When asked to list which college services they used and how they rated their satisfaction with them, the **highest used** services (50% or more) were

**Parking** (Oregon 92% use),  
**Library** (Oregon 83%),  
**Academic Advising** (Oregon 79%),

## Oregon Community College Student Opinion Survey (ACT SOS-NW) April 2006)

**Computer Labs** (Oregon 79%),  
**Food Service** (Oregon 66%), and  
**Vocational Guidance** (Oregon 54%)

The use of

**Financial Aid** (Oregon 66%) increased dramatically from the level reported in 2004 (37%) to slightly above the rate in 2002 (Oregon 62%).)

The services with the **highest combined "usage" and "satisfaction"** in Oregon are

**Library**, receiving a use rate of 83% and the second highest average satisfaction rating (2.22 where a score of 1 is "highly satisfied", 2 is "satisfied", and 3 is "neutral") followed by **Computer Labs** with a use rate of 79% and the highest satisfaction score of 2.19, while **Financial Aid** with a use rate of 66% and the fourth highest satisfaction score of 2.38 and **Academic Advising** (usage 79%, satisfaction 2.42) also had high use with relatively high satisfaction.

Other high satisfaction services are

**Tutoring** (Oregon satisfaction 2.35, usage 44%),  
**Course Related Work Experience** (satisfaction 2.42, usage 40%), and  
but these services were used by less than half of the students.

The satisfaction ratings for the other high-use services are

**Parking** (2.73 ranked 16th, or third-to-last in satisfaction), and  
**Food Service** (2.66, ranked 12th).

In Oregon, **Parking** is consistently the highest rated use and the second lowest in satisfaction. Nationally the pattern is the same, although the national use is lower than Oregon's and the national satisfaction level is slightly higher.

**Academic Advising** is much more commonly used in Oregon (79% compared to nationally 58%) and is ranked fifth in Oregon satisfaction compared to thirteenth nationally, but the absolute level of satisfaction in Oregon is lower than it is nationally (2.42 in Oregon compared to 2.11 nationally, where 1 is "Very Satisfied", 2 is "Satisfied" and 3 is "Neutral".) **Computer Labs** and **Library** and **Tutoring** also have much higher usage and lower satisfaction than the national norm.

This pattern of much higher use of services and lower absolute satisfaction ratings for service in Oregon compared to the national norm is generally true of all the services. There are some indications that usage and satisfaction are related to student age and type of program, so the differences between Oregon scores and national norms may be due to differences in population characteristics between the two samples rather than real differences in the quality of service.

### Satisfaction with College Environment Factors (see Tables 3a and 3b)

When Oregon students were asked to rate their satisfaction with 44 different college environmental factors ranging from facilities, to faculty behaviors, to academic policy, the highest rated factors on a 5-point scale (where 1 is "very satisfied", 2 is "satisfied" and 3 is "neutral") were

**Attitude of Teaching Staff Toward Students** (2.23) and  
**Class Size** (2.23), followed closely by  
**Library and Learning Resource Center** (2.30).  
**Quality of Instruction in Major** (2.32) and  
**Campus Appearance** (2.32),

Since 1996 when it was added to the questionnaire, the Library service has steadily climbed from tenth place to third place. Attitude of Staff, Class Size, and Quality of Instruction have been ranked one, two, three for every year from 1994 through 2004, although the absolute satisfaction for each has declined slightly over time.

Other top-10 high satisfaction factors, each with an average satisfaction rating of near "satisfied" (2.00) are:

**College in General** (2.34),  
**Challenge of Study** (2.36),  
**Flexibility to Design Your Program** (2.40),  
**Class Schedule** (2.40), and  
**College Catalog** (2.40),

The lowest rated environmental factors (where a score of 2 is "satisfied" and 3 is "neutral") were

**Activity Fees** (2.81)  
**Availability of Courses at the time I wanted** (2.78)  
**Student Government** (2.76)

## Oregon Community College Student Opinion Survey (ACT SOS-NW) April 2006)

### **Student Voice in College Policy (2.76) and College Media (2.71).**

The patterns identified above are quite consistent for Oregon students over all ten years of the study, with satisfaction with the **Library** steadily increasing, **Food Service** rebounding to 1994 levels after an eight year decline, **Campus Appearance** holding steady, and only slight improvement in satisfaction with **Parking**. The **College in General** is consistently ranked fourth in satisfaction, with slightly declining average satisfaction scores.

Oregon has generally lower satisfaction with college environmental factors when compared to the national norm but the services are ranked in about the same order, with the exceptions being **Registration Procedures** and **Technical Program Facilities and Equipment** which Oregon students ranked higher than the national norm, and **Study Areas** and **Variety of Classes and Availability of Classes When I Want Them** which are generally ranked much lower than the national norm.

**Technical Program Facilities and Equipment** is the only factor where, until 2006, Oregon students are more satisfied than the national norm

Similar to the case for services, there are some indications that satisfaction with college environment factors is related to student age and type of program, so the differences between Oregon satisfaction scores and national norms may be due to differences in population characteristics between the two samples rather than objective differences in college environment. Also, Oregon students may just have higher expectations.

Regardless of the reason, the Oregon respondents are significantly less satisfied than the students in the national norm, and this trend is particularly pronounced in 2006.

Oregon students in 2006 compared to the 2004 respondents indicated an almost across-the-board decrease in satisfaction for almost every college service and campus environment factor. The Oregon study in 2006 included only 9 of the 17 Oregon community colleges, down from 15 in 2004, and from all 17 colleges in 2002, a decline of about half the number of respondents. The loss in 2006 of the largest college in the state, accounting for almost 20% of the total sample, may also be a factor in the change in mean scores, particularly if the loss of this urban population drastically shifted the characteristics of the respondent population. The data in the respondents' self-reported demographic questions does not show any dramatic change in characteristics. There is a slight decrease in the percentage respondents reporting their race as "white" and a corresponding increase in "Hispanic"; there is a slight increase in "part-time" enrollment; a slight increase in entered college from "work"; and a slight decrease in the number of respondents whose goal is "transfer." Each of these shifts probably corresponds to a more critical respondent, and in combination, may explain the general decrease in satisfaction. Additional research is needed to explain the recent decrease in respondent satisfaction.