

# ***The Mississippi Virtual Community College***

## **Fall 2000 Semester Survey Results**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

In January 2000, the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC) began its first semester of operation with an enrollment of 1382. An approximately 230% expansion led to a Fall 2000 enrollment of 3206. As a result of this dramatic enrollment increase and interest in the program, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) is continually reaffirming its commitment to the project. Part of that ongoing commitment seeks to collect and distribute data, which will enhance all aspects of the MSVCC. Hence, the first MSVCC student, faculty, and trainee, surveys were implemented in December of 2000.

It is the intent of this report to provide the data collected by the three surveys implemented. Specific student survey goals included: 1) development of an MSVCC student profile, 2) investigation of instructional quality, 3) discovery of student reasons for taking courses online, and 4) evaluation of MSVCC student services, courses, and instructors. Similarly, faculty survey goals include: 1) investigation of instructional quality and integrity, 2) technology and support evaluation, and 3) evaluation of MSVCC courses and students. Training surveys seek a standard evaluation of provided training in order to improve and advance future sessions.

## **SURVEY METHODS**

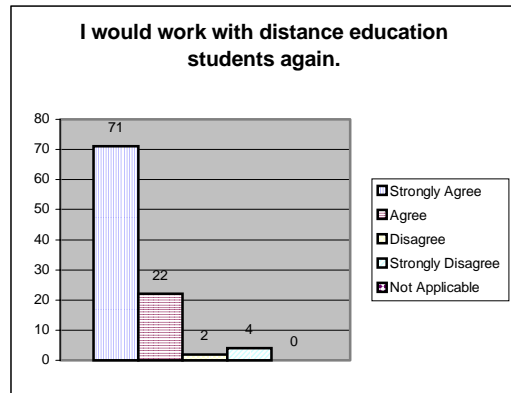
In keeping with the MSVCC online medium, all surveys were conducted online. SBCJC personnel drafted survey questions and programming with input from a variety of sources. Once brought online, collected data was fed into a database maintained by SBCJC. Dissemination of survey links was done via the college Distance Learning Coordinators, email to all MSVCC affiliated instructors, and email to all MSVCC students.

Investigations included descriptive, qualitative, and quantitative explorations. Descriptively, investigations consisted of providing demographic pictures of MSVCC students. Qualitatively, the survey sought to discern quality and integrity issues associated with traditional and online learning. Finally, quantitative exploration provides the percentages associated with each survey inquiry.

## STATEWIDE RESULTS SUMMARY

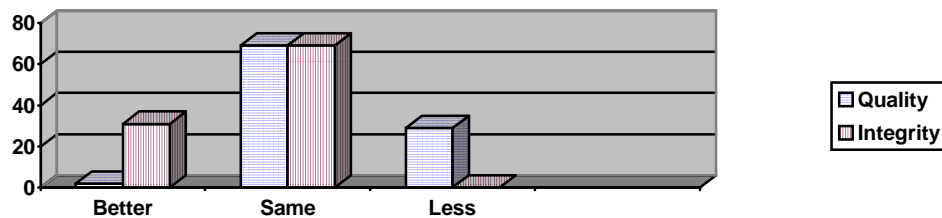
### Faculty

The MSVCC faculty survey consisted of twenty-nine questions in five content areas; general information, course evaluation, interaction and communication evaluation, student evaluation and technology evaluation. Response rate for the survey was 40% of the active fall semester MSVCC instructors. Overall, results were positive as indicated in the student evaluation arena where 93% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that they would work with distance students again.



Likewise, it is notable that technology and support evaluations are positive with 80% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that technical support was available. Eighty-five percent of respondents responded favorably to the support provided by their local distance learning coordinator's office.

### Comparison of Quality and Integrity of Online Classes to Traditional Classes



Instructional quality and integrity issues were also questioned. Seventy-one percent of instructors responding felt that online quality was better than or equal to that of the traditional classroom. Similarly, 90% found online integrity better than or the same as that of the traditional classroom. Perhaps most encouraging is that 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the MSVCC met their expectations of providing a quality learning experience. Question by question faculty results can be found in Appendix A.

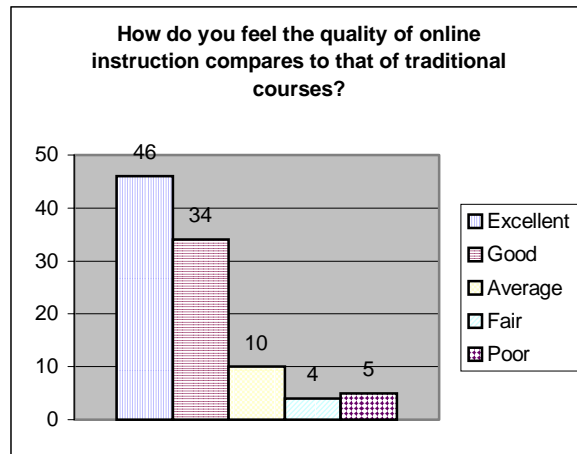
### Student

Once again, positive results were obtained by the MSVCC. Thirty-eight questions were presented to MSVCC students. Response rate for the student survey cannot be calculated on this initial MSVCC student survey due to several factors including survey timing and students taking multiple courses. There were 496 individual student responses collected.

STUDENT PROFILE							
# Of MSVCC Courses Enrolled In	Previous Online Classes	Academic Standing	Major Field	Race	Gender	Age Group	Marital Status
1	0	Sophomore	Academic	White – Non Hispanic	Female	25-34	Married
Primary reason for taking an online class: Online classes fit my job/work hours better.							

The initial section of the survey sought data pertaining to a student profile and student perceived instructional quality. An online student profile indicates a white, non-Hispanic, married, female, between the ages of 25 and 39. The majority (68%) indicates that online classes fit job/work hours better, and that online courses aid in family/home responsibilities. Most (73%) are on an academic track and are taking only one online course (64%). Twenty-five percent indicate that a traditional class would not have been probable.

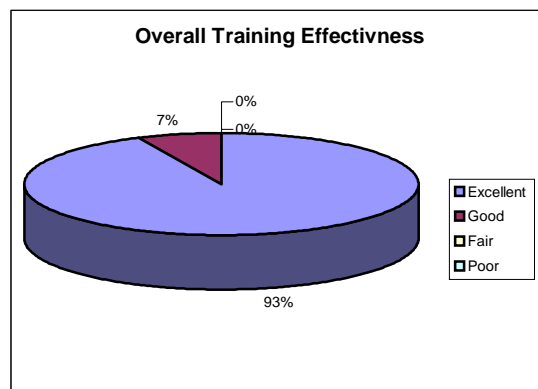
As with the faculty, student results indicate that online course quality compares favorably with traditional instruction. Instructional quality was deemed better than or about the same as that of traditional methodologies by 71% of respondents. This figure is echoed in the instructor evaluation section with 80% of responding students either strongly agree or agree that the instructor worked with the student to insure a quality learning experience.



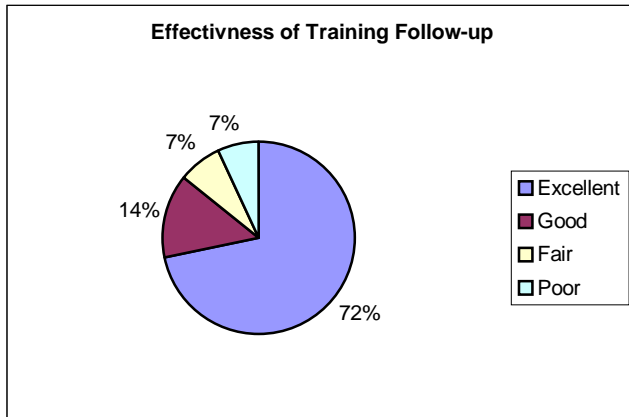
In the student services area, once again positive comments are found. In particular, here again we find the instructor taking a lead role with 83% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that instructor contact was easily made. Considering the current mechanics of MSVCC and the relatively high marks in the student services arena, the conclusion can be drawn that current traditional student services within the colleges are aiding online students. Question by question student survey results can be found in Appendix B.

### November BB Training

Beginning in November 2000, the MSVCC began the first of two rounds of advanced and beginning training on Blackboard 5, the most recent update of the MSVCC course delivery software. In all, ten sessions were held. In an attempt to assess the effectiveness of the



November training sessions, and better prepare for the February sessions, November trainees were asked to evaluate the process. The survey consisted of seven questions rating the trainers, the overall training, and asking for suggestions. Response rate for the survey was approximately 23%. Results were encouraging, with 93% of respondents rating the overall effectiveness of the training as excellent.



One atypical feature of the sessions was the four-week training follow-up that trainees could participate in. This follow-up allowed trainees communication with the trainers after the initial seminars. Survey results indicate that 71% of trainees deemed the follow-up periods' effectiveness as excellent, while 7% found it to be poor. Based on these results, efforts will be made to enhance the training follow-up

periods for the February sessions. Question by question training survey results can be found in Appendix D.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As is evident with any survey data, there exists room for improvement and advancement with MSVCC endeavors. However, colleges, faculty, administration, and staff associated with MSVCC should be encouraged by the current data. Future revisions of survey methods are planned in order to better assess all areas of service. The current Spring 2001 semester provides yet a larger student and instructor base from which to draw data. Collection of such data and its subsequent processing and action will be undertaken in order to sustain and enhance the MSVCC mission of providing educational opportunities to all Mississippians

**APPENDIX A**  
**(Statewide Faculty Results by Question)**  
(Numerical results are given as percentages of total respondents.)

<u>I. General Information</u>					
2) How many MSVCC courses are you teaching during the fall?	<b>One</b> 71		<b>Two</b> 22		<b>Three or More</b> 6
3) Based on your experience so far, how do you feel the quality of online instruction compares with traditional classroom courses you teach?	<b>Better than traditional classroom instruction.</b> 2		<b>About the same as traditional classroom instruction.</b> 69		<b>Traditional classroom instruction is better.</b> 29
4) Based on your experience so far, how do you feel the integrity of online instruction compares with traditional classroom courses you teach?	<b>Better than traditional classroom instruction.</b> 31		<b>About the same as traditional classroom instruction.</b> 69		<b>Traditional classroom instruction is better.</b> 0
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
5) My distance learning coordinators office promptly responded to my questions.	61	24	8	4	2
6) The MSVCC met my expectations of providing a quality learning experience.	39	51	18	0	2
7) I would recommend participation in the MSVCC to other instructors.	51	31	14	2	2
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<u>II. Course Evaluation</u>					
1) The course development process and expectations were made clear to me.	31	45	14	10	0
2) The distance learning methodologies and pedagogies were explained to me.	24	41	24	8	2
3) Adequate preparation was given to assist me in developing MSVCC course materials.	20	47	18	14	0
4) Technical support and assistance processes were adequate.	27	43	24	6	0
5) I was able to develop a well-designed and understandable method of presentation.	41	51	6	0	2
6) The development process contributed to my learning.	59	35	6	0	0
7) I was able to provide a supportive textbook for student use.	61	24	10	0	4
8) I was able to develop supplemental materials that contributed to the learning experience.	53	31	4	10	2

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b><u>III. Interaction and Communication</u></b>					
1) I was able to create student interaction with the course materials.	35	49	14	0	2
2) I had adequate interaction with the students.	37	47	14	2	0
3) Students had adequate interaction with other students.	12	45	33	2	8
4) The discussion groups were supportive of the learning experience.	18	27	14	6	35
5) The chat rooms were supportive of the learning experience.	6	20	14	6	53
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b><u>IV. Student Evaluation</u></b>					
1) I found the students different from those of the traditional classroom.	14	35	35	14	2
2) I was able to meet the needs of the students throughout the course.	41	47	12	0	0
3) The students were prepared for taking classes through distance learning.	4	35	41	16	4
4) The students were provided a quality learning experience.	31	59	6	4	0
5) I would work with distance students again.	71	22	2	4	0
	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b><u>V. Technology</u></b>					
1) I was given adequate preparation for the distance-learning medium.	31	35	22	12	0
2) The technology functioned properly with minimum failure.	35	43	18	2	2
3) The technology contributed to my learning new technology based skills.	45	41	10	0	2
4) Technical support was available for me.	49	31	16	4	0

**APPENDIX B (Statewide Student Results by Question)**  
(Numerical results are given as percentages of total respondents.)

I. <u>Student Profile</u>										
4) How many classes are you taking during through the Mississippi Virtual Community College?	One 64			Two 21			Three or More 13			
5) How many previous on-line courses have you completed?	None 74		One 14		Two 5		Three or More 6			
6) Your academic standing.	Freshman 20		Sophomore 53		Associates or Higher 17		Don't Know 10			
7) Your race.	Asian/pacific Islander 1		Black, Non-Hispanic 13	Hispanic 3		Native American 0	White, Non-Hispanic 76		Prefer not to say 6	
8) Your gender.	Female 78			Male 19			Prefer not to say 2			
9) Your age group.	Under 18 1	18-19 11	20-21 13	22-24 9	25-29 17	30-34 17	35-39 13	40-49 14	50-64 3	65 & over 0
10) Your marital status.	Single 35		Married 50		Divorced/Separated 11		Widow/Widower 1		Prefer not to say 3	
11) Your general major field.	Academic 73		Technical 17		Vocational 4		Don't Know 5			
12) What is your primary reason for taking online classes?	0 – Transportation issues.									
	8 – The class was not available or a regular classroom section was not open.									
	48 – Online classes fit my work/job hours better.									
	20 – Family/home (including childcare) responsibilities.									
	1 – My advisor recommended online classes.									
	2 – A friend recommended online classes.									
	8 – I enjoy computers and the internet. I wanted to try taking classes this way.									
	4 – I have previously taken online classes and the experience was positive.									
13) If online classes were not available, would you have enrolled in a regular classroom course?	6 – I thought this would be an easy alternative to regular classes.									
	3 – Other.									
	46 – Definitely would have taken a regular class.									
	28 – Probably would have taken a regular class.									
14) Based on your experience so far, how would you rate the <u>quality of instruction</u> provided in online classes?	18 – Probably would not have taken a regular class.									
	7 – Definitely would not have taken a regular class.									
15) Based on your experience so far, how do you feel the <u>quality of online instruction</u>	Excellent 46		Good 34		Average 10		Fair 4		Poor 5	
	18 – Online instruction is better than traditional classroom instruction.									
	53 – Instructional quality is about the same online as in the traditional classroom.									

compares with traditional courses you have taken?	28 – Traditional classroom instruction is better than online instruction.				
<b>II. Student Services</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1) I had access to adequate support and assistance in registration.	47	38	7	2	2
2) College procedures were adequately described or provided to me.	45	36	9	4	2
3) Advisement services were provided to me to assist in course selection and placement.	40	36	11	3	5
4) Contact was easily made with the instructor.	60	23	7	5	1
5) Student services were available to me throughout the time period of the course.	47	32	9	5	4
<b>III. Interaction and Communication</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1) I had adequate interaction with the course materials.	52	34	5	3	2
2) I had adequate interaction with the instructor.	52	30	7	6	3
3) I had adequate interaction with other students.	26	31	17	8	14
4) The discussion groups were supportive of the learning experience.	27	22	13	7	25
5) The chat rooms were supportive of the learning experience.	19	19	14	7	34
6) I adequately felt a part of a learning community.	31	32	13	9	9
<b>IV. Course Evaluation</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1) This course was what you expected.	41	37	10	6	3
2) The course site was well organized and easy to navigate	55	28	6	4	3
3) The content of the course presentations contributed to my learning.	49	31	8	5	3

4) The textbook supported the course presentations and was appropriate.	55	29	6	3	2
5) The supplemental materials contributed to the learning experience.	46	31	6	3	8
6) The course evaluations were fair and supported the learning experience.	45	35	7	4	3
<b><u>V. Instructor Evaluation</u></b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1) The instructor designed the course to accomplish stated objectives.	57	29	4	3	3
2) The instructor contributed to my learning experience.	55	25	7	6	3
3) The instructor promptly responded to request for assistance.	61	20	6	6	4
4) The instructor was prepared for conducting classes through distance learning.	54	26	6	6	4
5) The instructor worked with me to insure a quality learning experience.	56	24	6	6	1
6) The instructor was fair in grading.	59	28	4	5	4

**APPENDIX C**  
**(November BB Training Results by Question)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
2) Indicate the performance of the instructor:				
Quality of Instruction	93%	7%	0%	0%
Relevance of Information	93%	7%	0%	0%
Preparation of Instructor	100%	0%	0%	0%
Organization of Presentation	85%	15%	0%	0%
3) Indicate the overall effectiveness of the Blackboard 5 training	93%	7%	0%	0%
5) Indicate the effectiveness of the four-week follow-up period	71%	14%	7%	7%
4) How does this workshop compare with others you have participated in?	The Best	Among the Best	Comparable	Not as Good
	7%	64%	29%	0%
6) Do you plan to teach an online course for MSVCC after this training?	Yes = 93%		No = 7%	