

The Mississippi Virtual Community College

Spring 2001 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 387% expansion led to a Spring enrollment of 5349 students. 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 MSVCC student and faculty, surveys were implemented in December of 2000. This report is from the second survey, which was done in the spring of 2001.

It is the intent of this report to provide the data collected by the surveys. 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.

SURVEY METHODS

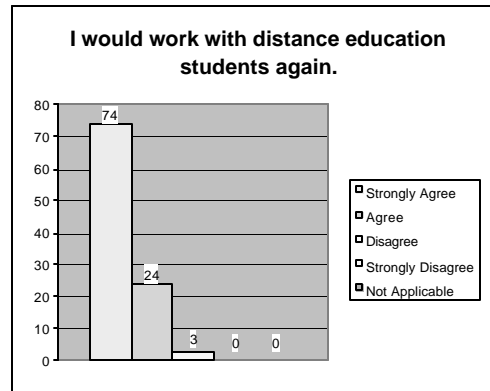
In keeping with the MSVCC online medium, all surveys were conducted online. Survey questions were the same as those for the first survey, in order to establish trend data. Dissemination of survey links was done via the college Distance Learning Coordinators, email to all MSVCC affiliated instructors, and a blackboard announcement 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

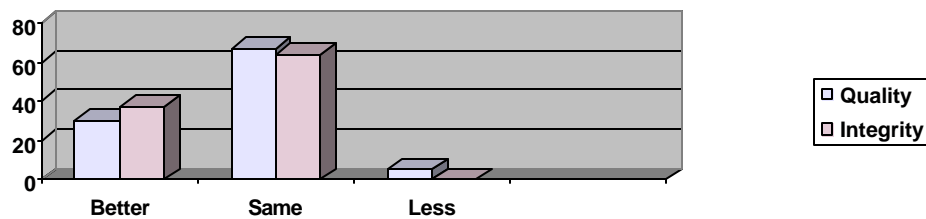
Faculty

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 spring semester MSVCC instructors. Overall, results were positive as indicated in the student evaluation arena where 98% 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 90% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that technical support was available. Ninety-two percent of respondents responded favorably to the support provided by their distance learning coordinators office.

Comparison of Quality and Integrity of Online Classes to Traditional Classes



Instructional quality and integrity issues were also questioned. Seventy two percent of instructors responding felt that online quality was better than or equal to that of the traditional classroom. Similarly, 100% found online integrity better than or the same as that of the traditional classroom. Overall results indicate improvement and begin to show areas of need. Question by question faculty results can be found in Appendix A.

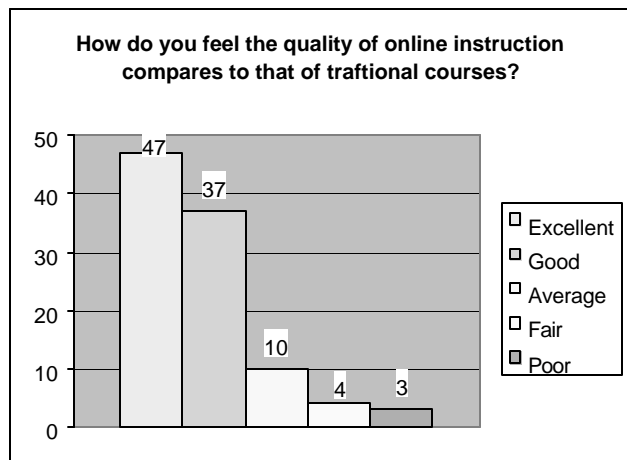
Student

Once again, positive results were obtained by the MSVCC. Thirty-eight questions were presented to MSVCC students. It appeared that most students completed the survey only once, even when enrolled in multiple classes. Hence, a response rate of 41% is estimated. There were 1449 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: I have previously taken online classes and my experience was positive.							

The initial section of the survey sought data pertaining to a student profile, and student perceived instructional quality. An online student profile indicates white non-Hispanic, married female, between the ages of 25 and 39. The majority (61%) indicates that previous online classes and computer enjoyment were primary in the decision to take online courses. Most (71%) are on an academic track and are taking only one online course (57%). Seventy-six 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 84% of respondents. This figure is echoed in the instructor evaluation section with 81% of responding students either strongly agree or agreeing 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. Question by question student survey results can be found in Appendix B.

CONCLUSIONS

As is evident within any survey data, there exists room for improvement and advancement within MSVCC endeavors. However, colleges, faculty, administration, and staff associated with MSVCC should be encouraged by the current data. 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 continue to be undertaken in order to sustain and enhance the MSVCC mission of providing educational opportunities to 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 spring?	One 67	Two 27	Three or More 8		
3) Based on your experience so far, how do you feel the quality of online instruction compares with traditional classroom courses you teach?	Better than traditional classroom instruction. 5	About the same as traditional classroom instruction. 67	Traditional classroom instruction is better. 30		
4) Based on your experience so far, how do you feel the integrity of online instruction compares with traditional classroom courses you teach?	37	64	0		
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
5) My distance learning coordinators office promptly responded to my questions.	61	31	8	2	0
6) The MSVCC met my expectations of providing a quality learning experience.	42	42	14	2	0
7) I would recommend participation in the MSVCC to other instructors.	46	43	9	3	0
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
<u>II. Course Evaluation</u>					
1) The course development process and expectations were made clear to me.	43	42	9	8	0
2) The distance learning methodologies and pedagogies was explained to me.	37	40	15	9	0
3) Adequate preparation was given to assist me in developing MSVCC course materials.	40	37	14	11	0
4) Technical support and assistance processes were adequate.	37	47	11	6	0
5) I was able to develop a well-designed and understandable method of presentation.	49	46	3	2	2
6) The development process contributed to my learning.	71	27	2	0	2
7) I was able to provide a supportive text book for student use.	64	27	2	2	3
8) I was able to develop supplemental materials that contributed to the learning experience.	55	37	3	0	3
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable

<u>III. Interaction and Communication</u>					
1) I was able to create student interaction with the course materials.	34	56	9	2	0
2) I had adequate interaction with the students.	37	49	14	2	0
3) Students had adequate interaction with other students.	14	34	37	5	12
4) The discussion groups were supportive of the learning experience.	20	25	18	8	31
5) The chat rooms were supportive of the learning experience.	14	15	24	5	45
<u>IV. Student Evaluation</u>					
1) I found the students different from those of the traditional classroom.	25	31	33	5	8
2) I was able to meet the needs of the students throughout the course.	31	61	8	2	0
3) The students were prepared for taking classes through distance learning.	6	36	39	18	3
4) The students were provided a quality learning experience.	34	58	8	0	2
5) I would work with distance students again.	74	24	3	0	0
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
<u>V. Technology</u>					
1) I was given adequate preparation for the distance-learning medium.	45	40	11	6	0
2) The technology functioned properly with minimum failure.	14	49	25	12	2
3) The technology contributed to my learning new technology based skills.	46	47	6	2	0
4) Technical support was available for me.	40	50	11	0	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 57			Two 25			Three or More 19			
5) How many previous on-line courses have you completed?	None 74		One 13		Two 6		Three or More 7			
6) Your academic standing.	Freshman 25		Sophomore 55		Associates or Higher 14		Don't Know 8			
7) Your race.	Asian/pacific Islander 1	Black, Non-Hispanic 19	Hispanic 2		Native American 1	White, Non-Hispanic 74		Prefer not to say 5		
8) Your gender.	Female 79			Male 20			Prefer not to say 2			
9) Your age group.	Under 18 1	18-19 13	20-21 19	22-24 12	25-29 16	30-34 15	35-39 12	40-49 12	50-64 2	65 & over 0
10) Your marital status.	Single 43		Married 44		Divorced/Separated 10		Widow/Widower 1		Prefer not to say 3	
11) Your general major field.	Academic 71		Technical 19		Vocational 6		Don't Know 4			
12) What is your primary reason for taking online classes?	4 – Transportation issues.									
	8 – The class was not available or a regular classroom section was not open.									
	5 – Online classes fit my work/job hours better.									
	7 – Family/home (including childcare) responsibilities.									
	2 – My advisor recommended online classes.									
	3 – A friend recommended online classes.									
	18 – I enjoy computers and the internet. I wanted to try taking classes this way.									
	43 – I have previously taken online classes and the experience was positive.									
	9 – I thought this would be an easy alternative to regular classes.									
13) If online classes were not available, would you have enrolled in a regular classroom course?	0 – Other.									
	7 – Definitely would have taken a regular class.									
	17 – Probably would have taken a regular class.									
	33 – Probably would not 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?	43 – Definitely would not have taken a regular class.									
	Excellent 47		Good 37		Average 10		Fair 4		Poor 3	
	15) Based on your experience so far, how									
	28 – Online instruction is better than traditional classroom instruction.									

do you feel the <u>quality of online instruction</u> compares with traditional courses you have taken?	54 – Instructional quality is about the same online as in the traditional classroom.				
	18 – Traditional classroom instruction is better than online instruction.				
II. Student Services	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1) I had access to adequate support and assistance in registration.	50	36	7	4	4
2) College procedures were adequately described or provided to me.	46	38	10	4	3
3) Advisement services were provided to me to assist in course selection and placement.	41	34	14	6	6
4) Contact was easily made with the instructor.	57	26	9	5	3
5) Student services were available to me throughout the time period of the course.	45	35	10	4	7
III. Interaction and Communication	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1) I had adequate interaction with the course materials.	52	36	6	4	3
2) I had adequate interaction with the instructor.	52	31	9	5	4
3) I had adequate interaction with other students.	26	31	18	10	15
4) The discussion groups were supportive of the learning experience.	26	27	14	9	24
5) The chat rooms were supportive of the learning experience.	21	22	14	10	32
6) I adequately felt a part of a learning community.	32	33	14	9	11
IV. Course Evaluation	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1) This course is what you expected.	42	36	12	7	4
2) The course site was well organized and easy to navigate	53	31	9	4	3
3) The content of the course presentations	50	35	8	4	4

contributed to my learning.					
4) The textbook supported the course presentations and was appropriate.	45	31	7	4	4
5) The supplemental materials contributed to the learning experience.	48	33	8	4	7
6) The course evaluations were fair and supported the learning experience.	49	34	8	4	4
<u>V. Instructor Evaluation</u>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1) The instructor designed the course to accomplish stated objectives.	59	30	5	4	3
2) The instructor contributed to my learning experience.	54	29	8	5	4
3) The instructor promptly responded to request for assistance.	59	25	7	5	4
4) The instructor was prepared for conducting classes through distance learning.	56	28	6	5	5
5) The instructor worked with me to insure a quality learning experience.	55	26	9	5	5
6) The instructor was fair in grading.	61	26	5	4	4