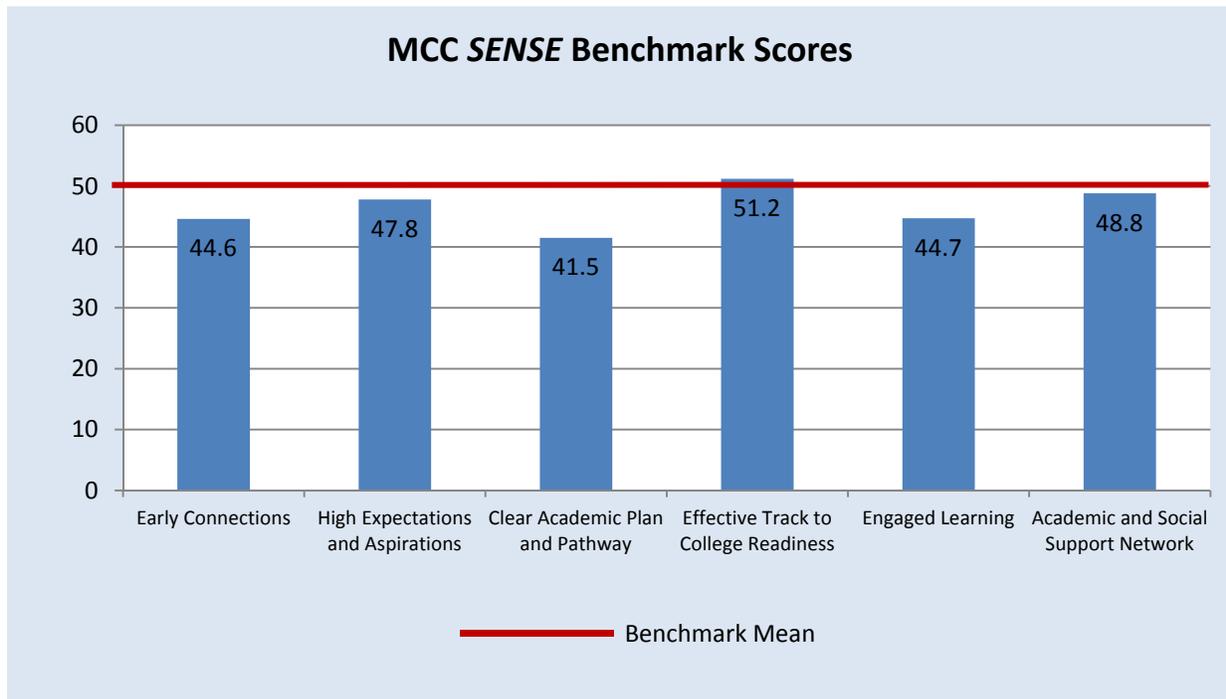


Part II: MCC Results by Benchmark

Looking at MCC's results on their own, without a comparison to another college or cohort, can help college administrators and staff link the results to internal goals and strategic priorities. In addition, this MCC-only look can allow for the creation of goals and action items to help bridge the important gap between where MCC is now and where the college WANTS to be in the future (CCCSE claims this as the most important comparison colleges should make). The college's next chance to gauge these SENSE-based goals will be the next SENSE administration in fall 2014.

Many sections in this report will be organized by *SENSE* benchmarks. These benchmarks, according to CCCSE, "focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement early in the college experience—and that are positively related to student learning and persistence."⁶ In other words, these benchmarks are key indicators of MCC's front door experience. At some point in time, any college employee can play a role in an entering student's front door experience, from the moment they first step on campus, through the complex registration and financial aid processes, through the end of their first semester courses. It's easy to see that the items discussed here impact everyone at MCC. Findings for each SENSE item are presented graphically in Section IV for further examination.

Note: much of the text in the following sections is adapted from CCCSE's own SENSE Key Findings Report for the national SENSE cohort. This report can be found here: <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>



⁶ "Survey Results." <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/survey/survey.cfm>

Early Connections

According to CCCSE's, "When students describe their early college experiences, they typically reflect on occasions when they felt discouraged or thought about dropping out. Their reasons for persisting almost always include one common element: a strong, early connection to someone at the college." At MCC, a majority of entering students said they felt welcome at college, but smaller percentages of students report that they received information and support that is critical for their success.

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they felt welcome the first time they came to MCC. However, 24% express no opinion on this item (*neutral*)—a response that might prompt both curiosity and concern.
- Respondents are largely split as to whether MCC provided them with adequate information about financial assistance: 40% *agree* or *strongly agree* and 33% *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.
- Just under one-third of respondents (30%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that a college staff member helped them determine whether they qualified for financial assistance, while 44% disagree or strongly disagree.
- Less than half of respondents (42%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned their names, and an equal percentage (42%) *disagree* or *strongly disagree*.
- About one out of every ten entering students (12%) say that a specific person was assigned to them so they could see that person each time they needed information or assistance.

Item	MCC Mean	% Strongly Agree or Agree	Scale
18a. The very first time I came to this college I felt welcome	3.91	72%	Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)
18i. The college provided me with adequate information about financial assistance (scholarships, grants, loans, etc.)	3.10	40%	
18j. A college staff member helped me determine whether I qualified for financial assistance	2.82	30%	
18p. At least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned my name	3.01	42%	
Item	MCC % Yes	MCC % No	Scale
23. Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?	12%	88%	Yes/No

High Expectations and Aspirations

This benchmark measures items related to student perceptions of instructors, their own motivation and preparation, and the frequency of negative study habits. According to CCCSE, "Nearly all students arrive at their community colleges intending to succeed and believing that they have the motivation to do so. When entering students perceive clear, high expectations from college staff and faculty, they are more likely to understand what it takes to be successful and adopt behaviors that lead to achievement."

Entering MCC students say they have high motivation and strong preparation, but students' reports of their first three weeks of college indicate that many are adopting behaviors that do not lead to success.

High Levels of Student Motivation and Preparation

- Nine of ten students (90%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college.
- Most respondents (85%) believe that they are prepared academically to succeed in college.
- More than three-quarters of respondents (86%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that MCC instructors want them to succeed.

High Levels of Negative Student Behaviors

- Almost one-third of entering MCC students report that they did not turn in an assignment at least once (31%) or turned in an assignment late at least once (32%) within the first three weeks of class.
- Nearly half (48%) report coming to class without completing readings or assignments at least once.
- Just over one-quarter (28%) report skipping class one or more times, and 7% report skipping class two or more times within the first three weeks of the semester.

<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>% Strongly Agree or Agree</i>	<i>Scale</i>
18b. The instructors at this college want me to succeed	4.21	86%	Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)
18t. I have the motivation to do what it takes to succeed in college	4.41	90%	
18u. I am prepared academically to succeed in college	4.27	85%	
<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>% At Least Once</i>	<i>Scale</i>
19c. Turn in an assignment late	1.41	32%	Four or more times (4), Two or three times (3), Once (2), Never (1)
19d. Not turn in an assignment	1.40	31%	
19f. Come to class without completing readings or assignments	1.67	48%	
19s. Skip class	1.36	28%	

Clear Academic Plan and Pathway

This benchmark focuses on entering students' experiences with advising at MCC between the time of their decision to attend MCC through their first three weeks of classes. CCCSE frames this benchmark in the following way: "When a student, with knowledgeable assistance, creates a road map—one that shows where he or she is headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal—that student has a critical tool for staying on track. Students are more likely to persist if they not only are advised about what courses to take, but also are helped to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them."

About half of entering MCC students report that they had contact with an advisor, but a smaller percentage say they had help setting academic goals and developing plans.

- Just under half (46%) of entering student respondents *agree or strongly agree* that they were able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for them.
- Just over half (54%) *agree or strongly agree* that an advisor helped them identify the courses they needed to take during their first semester/quarter.
- Exactly half (50%) *agree or strongly agree* that an advisor helped them select a course of study, program, or major.
- Only three in ten (30%) entering MCC students *agree or strongly agree* that an advisor helped them set academic goals and create a plan for achieving them, and slightly more than four in ten (42%) *disagree or strongly disagree*.
- Over half (56%) of entering respondents *disagree or strongly disagree* that a college staff member talked with them about their commitments outside of school to help them figure out how many courses to take; two in ten (20%) *agree or strongly agree*.

<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>% Strongly Agree or Agree</i>	<i>Scale</i>
18d. I was able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for me	3.34	46%	Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)
18e. An advisor helped me to select a course of study, program, or major	3.31	50%	
18f. An advisor helped me to set academic goals and to create a plan for achieving them	2.86	30%	
18g. An advisor helped me to identify the courses I needed to take during my first semester/quarter	3.43	54%	
18h. A college staff member talked with me about my commitments outside of school (work, children, dependents, etc.) to help me figure out how many courses to take	2.51	20%	

Effective Track to College Readiness

At MCC, 69% (4,337 of 6,252 testing) of all new students taking a placement test were referred to at least one developmental course in reading, writing, or math, and 31% tested into two or more developmental courses.⁷ This is in line with the CCCSE statement that “nationally, more than six in 10 entering community college students are underprepared for college-level work. Thus, significant improvements in student success will hinge upon effective assessment, placement of students into appropriate courses, and implementation of effective strategies to ensure that students build academic skills and receive needed support.”

While nearly all entering MCC students report that they were required to take a placement test, a lower percentage report that they were required to enroll in classes indicated by their placement tests.

- Nearly all students (92%) report that they were required to take a placement test to assess their skills before they could register for classes.
- About three quarters (77%) of entering students required to take a placement test report that their college also *required* them to enroll in classes indicated by their placement test scores during their first semester/quarter.
- More entering students reported testing into developmental math (48%) than reading (30%) or writing (23%). The share of respondents that report testing into developmental reading and writing is similar to the actual percentage of new students referred to developmental education for those subjects (30% reading and 21% writing for Fall 2011); however, the amount reporting developmental math results is much lower than the actual percentage (73%).

<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>% Strongly Agree or Agree</i>	<i>Scale</i>
21a. I learned to improve my study skills (listening, note taking, highlighting readings, working with others, etc.)	3.86	69%	Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)
21b. I learned to understand my academic strengths and weaknesses	3.79	64%	
21c. I learned skills and strategies to improve my test-taking ability	3.52	51%	
<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC % Yes</i>	<i>MCC % No</i>	<i>Scale</i>
12a. Before I could register for classes, I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math	92%	8%	Yes/No
12b. I took a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.)	93%	7%	
14. This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester/quarter	77%	23%	

⁷ “MCC Student Success & College Completion Factsheet.”
<http://www.mesacc.edu/about/orp/statistics/documents/FinalMCCCollegeCompletionFactsheet.pdf>

Effective Track to College Readiness (continued)

While the majority of all entering student respondents report learning college success skills through a class or other experience at the college, higher percentages of developmental education students⁸ report gaining such skills.

- Just over two-thirds of respondents (69%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned to improve their study skills through a class or other experience at MCC; 72% of developmental education students *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned to improve their study skills compared to 64% of students not enrolled in developmental courses.
- Just under two-thirds of respondents (64%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned to understand their academic strengths and weaknesses through a class or other experience at MCC; 65% of developmental education students *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned to understand their academic strengths and weaknesses compared to 62% of other students not enrolled in developmental courses.
- About half (51%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned skills and strategies to improve their test-taking abilities through a class or other experience at MCC; 54% of developmental education students *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned skills and strategies to improve their test-taking ability compared to 45% of other students not enrolled in developmental courses.

Engaged Learning

This benchmark focuses on the frequency of entering student participation in key student engagement areas. According to CCCSE, “instructional approaches that foster engaged learning are critical for student success.” Overall, many entering MCC students keep their learning activities confined to the classroom. For example, only 32% of entering students reported working with classmates outside of class time at least once, only 12% reported attending a student-led study group outside of class time, and just over half of respondents (54%) have electronically communicated (email, text, Facebook, etc.) with other students about coursework. The chart on the next page illustrates benchmark activities in which entering MCC students participate at a low rate within their first three weeks of college:

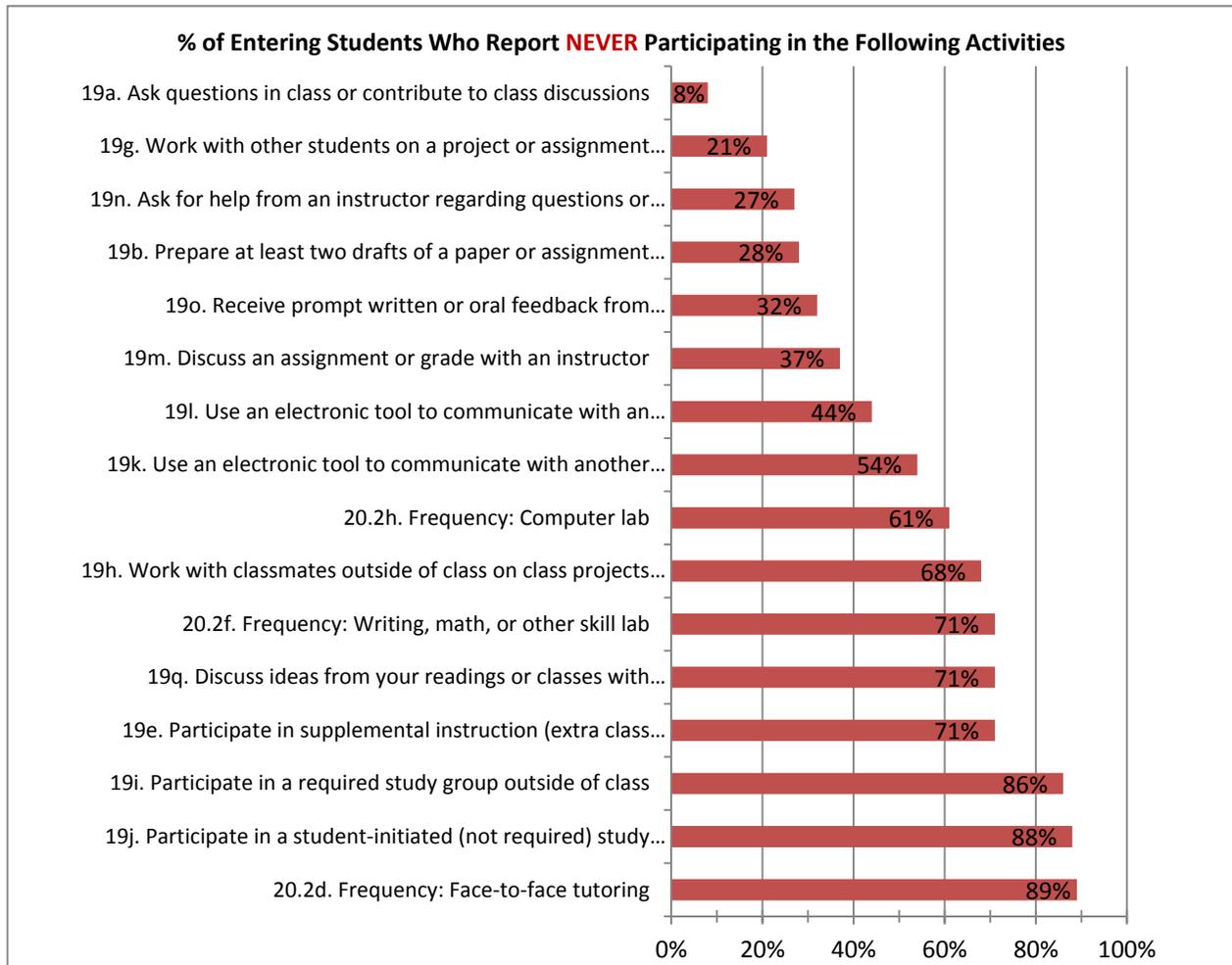
<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>Ex-Large Colleges Mean</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Scale</i>
19a. Ask questions in class or contribute to class discussions	2.83	2.84	-0.01	Four or more times (4), Two or three times (3), Once (2), Never (1)
19b. Prepare at least two drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in	2.10	2.15	-0.05	
19e. Participate in supplemental instruction (extra class sessions with an instructor, tutor, or experienced student)	1.45	1.53	-0.08	
19g. Work with other students on a project or assignment during class	2.51	2.45	0.06	
19h. Work with classmates outside of class on class projects or assignments	1.36	1.49	-0.13	
19i. Participate in a required study group outside of class	1.21	1.27	-0.06	
19j. Participate in a student-initiated (not required) study group outside of class	1.18	1.25	-0.07	

⁸ Respondents who report that they enrolled in one or more developmental education courses (reading, writing, or math). By this definition, 61% of entering MCC student respondents were classified as developmental students.

Engaged Learning (Continued)

Item	MCC Mean	Ex-Large Colleges Mean	Difference	Scale
19k. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with another student about coursework	1.84	2.04	-0.2	Four or more times (4), Two or three times (3), Once (2), Never (1)
19l. Use an electronic tool (e-mail, text messaging, Facebook, MySpace, class Web site, etc.) to communicate with an instructor about coursework	1.97	2.07	-0.1	
19m. Discuss an assignment or grade with an instructor	1.94	2.01	-0.07	
19n. Ask for help from an instructor regarding questions or problems related to class	2.24	2.31	-0.07	
19o. Receive prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on your performance	2.19	2.27	-0.08	
19q. Discuss ideas from your readings or classes with instructors outside of class	1.47	1.51	-0.04	
20.2d. Frequency: Face-to-face tutoring	1.16	1.27	-0.11	
20.2f. Frequency: Writing, math, or other skill lab	1.57	1.75	-0.18	
20.2h. Frequency: Computer lab	1.77	2.03	-0.26*	

*Significant Difference ($p < 0.01$ and effect size > 0.20)



Academic and Social Support

The final benchmark examines measures of interaction and support between students, their peers, and instructors. CCCSE believes that “students benefit from having a personal network that enables them to obtain information about college services, along with the academic and social support critical to student success. Because entering students often don’t know what they don’t know, colleges must purposefully create those networks.”

The majority of students respond positively to these survey items, reflecting MCC’s efforts to build support networks.

- Two-thirds of respondents (66%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at their colleges.
- 88% *agree* or *strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course grading policies.
- 92% *agree* or *strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course syllabi.
- 85% *agree* or *strongly agree* that they knew how to get in touch with their instructors outside of class.
- 80% *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one other student whom they didn’t previously know learned their name.
- 84% *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one instructor learned their name.
- 83% *agree* or *strongly agree* that they learned the name of at least one other student in most of their classes.

<i>Item</i>	<i>MCC Mean</i>	<i>% Strongly Agree or Agree</i>	<i>Scale</i>
18l. All instructors clearly explained academic and student support services available at this college	3.76	66%	Strongly agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly disagree (1)
18m. All instructors clearly explained course grading policies	4.26	88%	
18n. All instructors clearly explained course syllabi	4.37	92%	
18o. I knew how to get in touch with my instructors outside of class	4.21	85%	
18q. At least one other student whom I didn’t previously know learned my name	4.06	80%	
18r. At least one instructor learned my name	4.17	84%	
18s. I learned the name of at least one other student in most of my classes	4.16	83%	