

# Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) Benchmark Results – Fall 2017

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The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), created by the Center for Community College Student Engagement at the University of Texas at Austin,<sup>1</sup> helps community colleges discover important factors affecting entering students' persistence and success. Administered during the 4th and 5th weeks of the Fall 2017 semester, SENSE asked Sacramento City College students to reflect on their earliest experiences (academic and services-related) with the college.

The report begins with a brief description of the sample at Sacramento City College. The next sections present the SCC survey results according to the SENSE Benchmark 2018.<sup>2</sup>

## SCC Survey Sample

The student distributions by gender and race/ethnicity in SENSE survey sample are similar to those of the college as a whole—there are more female students than male and the three largest groups by race/ethnicity are Hispanic, Asian, and White. Nevertheless, there are some variations in the specific distribution of students by these characteristics. There is a higher percentage of male students in the survey sample than in the college overall. By race/ethnicity, there are more Hispanic students, less Asian and White students, and more African American students in the survey sample compared to the college overall. A majority of the SENSE survey participants (over 80%) are in the 18-24 years age group, a much higher percentage compared to the college's overall value of about 59%. About 52% of the survey participants are first generation college students, compared to about 30% of the college's overall population.

Characteristics	Survey Participants	SCC Overall – Fall 2017
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Native American/Native Hawaiian	2.2	0.4
Asian, Asian American, Filipino, or Pacific Islander	20.3	22.8
Black or African American, Non-Hispanic	14.9	10.2
White, Non-Hispanic	20.3	26
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish	34.5	32.4
Other	7.4	8.1

<sup>1</sup> See more at <http://www.ccsse.org/sense/aboutsense/>

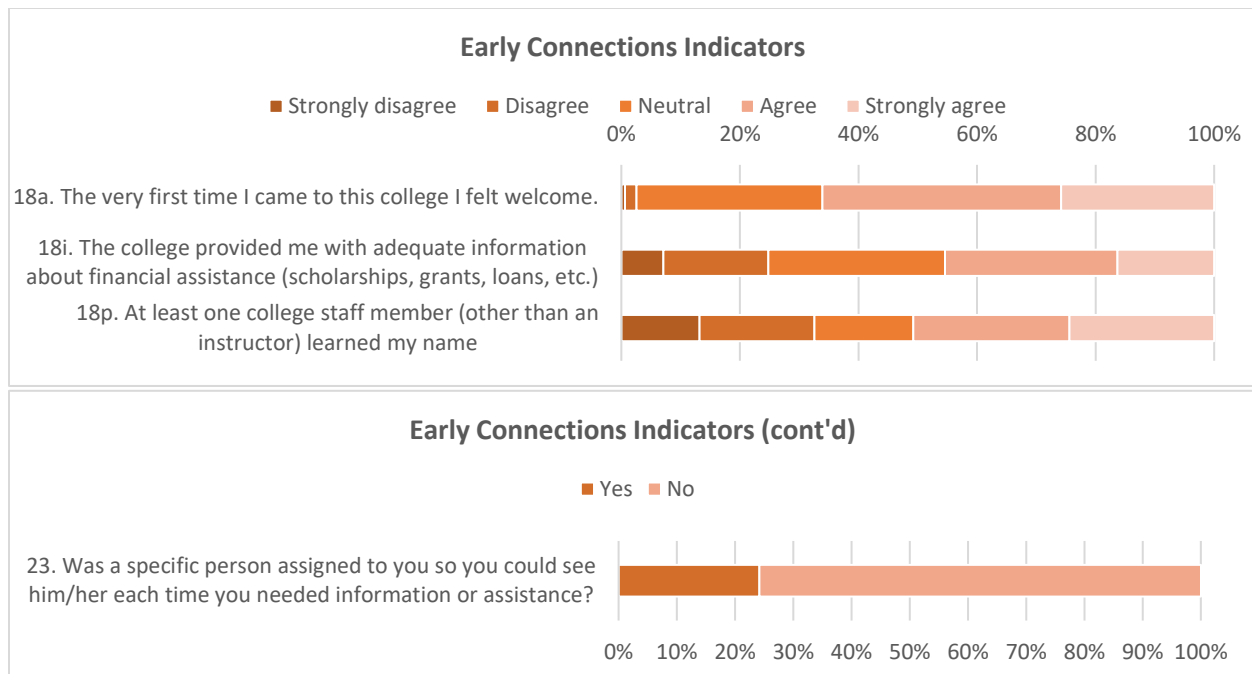
<sup>2</sup> SENSE Benchmarks 2018. Benchmarks of Effective Practice with Entering Students. [http://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools/docs/working\\_with\\_results/SENSE\\_Benchmarks.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/sense/tools/docs/working_with_results/SENSE_Benchmarks.pdf). Accessed 06/19/2018.

Characteristics	Survey Participants	SCC Overall – Fall 2017
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	56.5	57.1
Male	43.5	40.8
<b>Age</b>		
18 - 24	80.1	58.7
25 - 29	8.8	16.3
30 - 39	5.7	13.0
40 and Over	5.4	10.0
<b>First Generation College Students</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>29.6</b>

## Benchmark Results

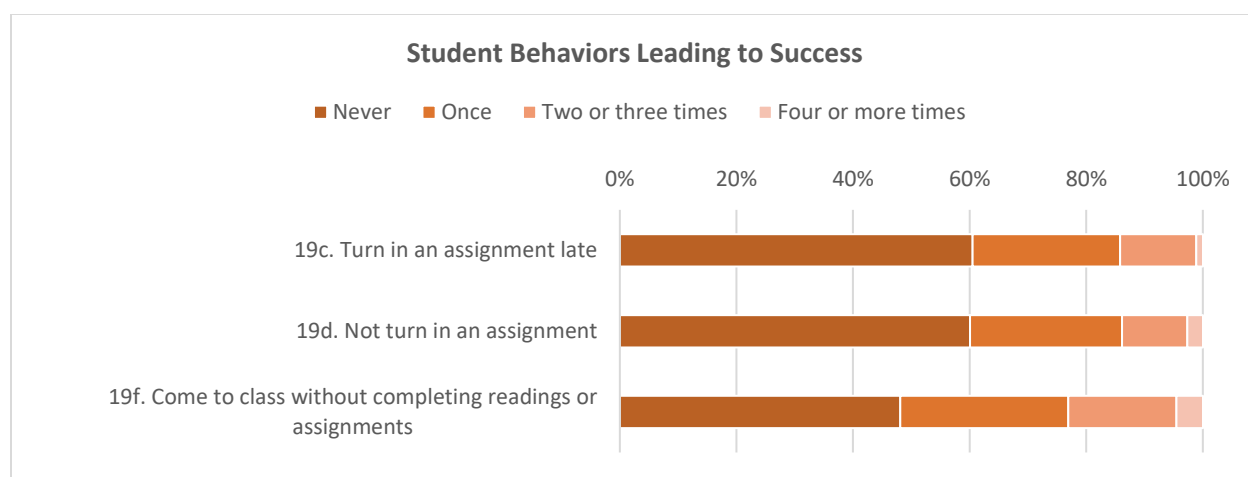
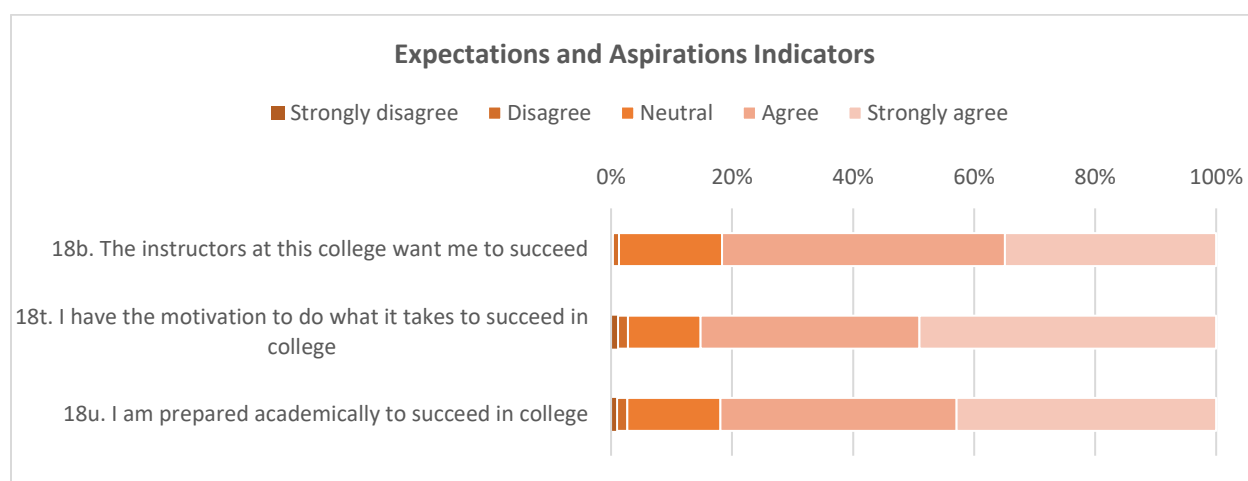
### Early connections

Positive early college experience, particularly a strong, early connection to someone at the college, is important in student persistence in college, (SENSE Benchmark 2018). Over 66% of the students participating in the SENSE survey expressed that they felt welcome the very first time they came to the college. Over half of the students said that at least one college staff member (other than an instructor) learned their names and about a quarter of the students mentioned that they were assigned a specific person whom they could see for information or assistance. Nearly half of the students (45.4%) agreed that the college provided them with adequate information about financial assistance, such as scholarship, grants, and loans.



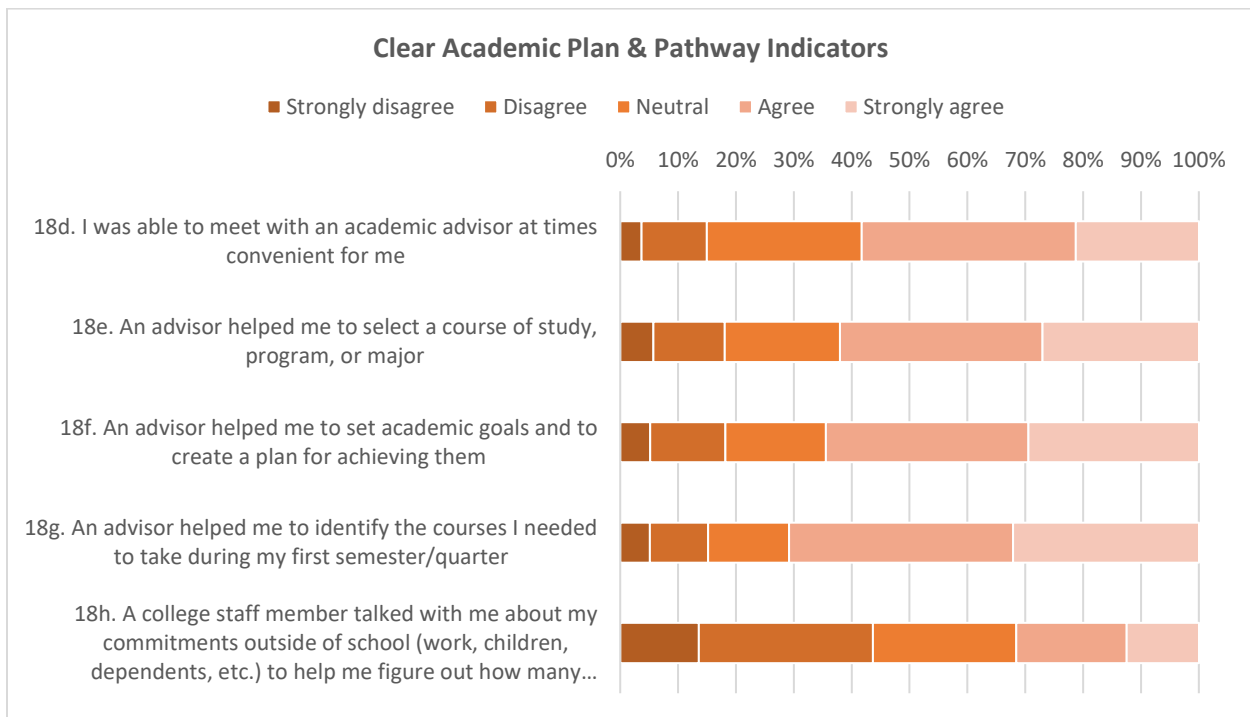
## High expectations and aspirations

Students are more likely to understand what it takes to succeed and adjust their behaviors accordingly when they enter community colleges with intention and motivation to succeed and when they perceive clear and high expectations from college staff and faculty (SENSE Benchmarks 2018). Over 80% of the students thought that SCC instructors wanted them to succeed. A similar percentage expressed motivation to do what it would take to succeed in college and felt prepared academically to succeed. Specifically, during the first three weeks of the semester, a majority of students indicated that they never turned in an assignment late, failed to turn in an assignment, or skipped class. Nearly half of the students never came to class without completing readings or assignments.



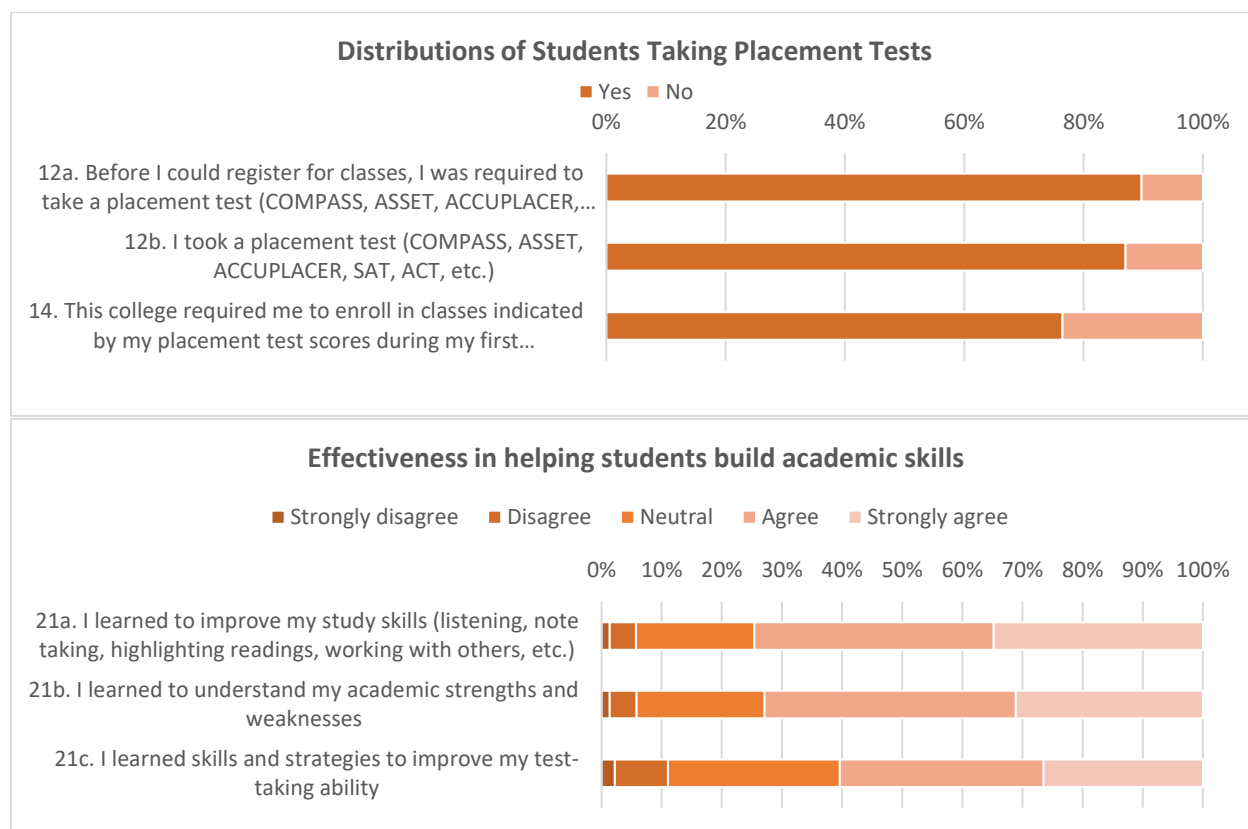
## Clear academic plan and pathway

According to SENSE Benchmarks 2018, students are more likely to persist when there is a clear road map that shows where they are headed, what academic path to follow, and how long it will take to reach the end goal. It is important that the college provide early assistance in creating this critical tool for students to stay on track through academic advising and student services (SENSE 2018). About 58% of the students said that they were able to meet with an academic advisor at times convenient for them. A majority indicated that they received help from academic advisors during the first three weeks of the semester in selecting a course of study/program/major, setting academic goals and creating a plan for achieving them, and identifying the courses they needed to take during their first semester. However, less than a third of the students agreed that there were staff members helping them in finding ways to balance between out-of-school and school-related commitments.



## Effective track to college readiness

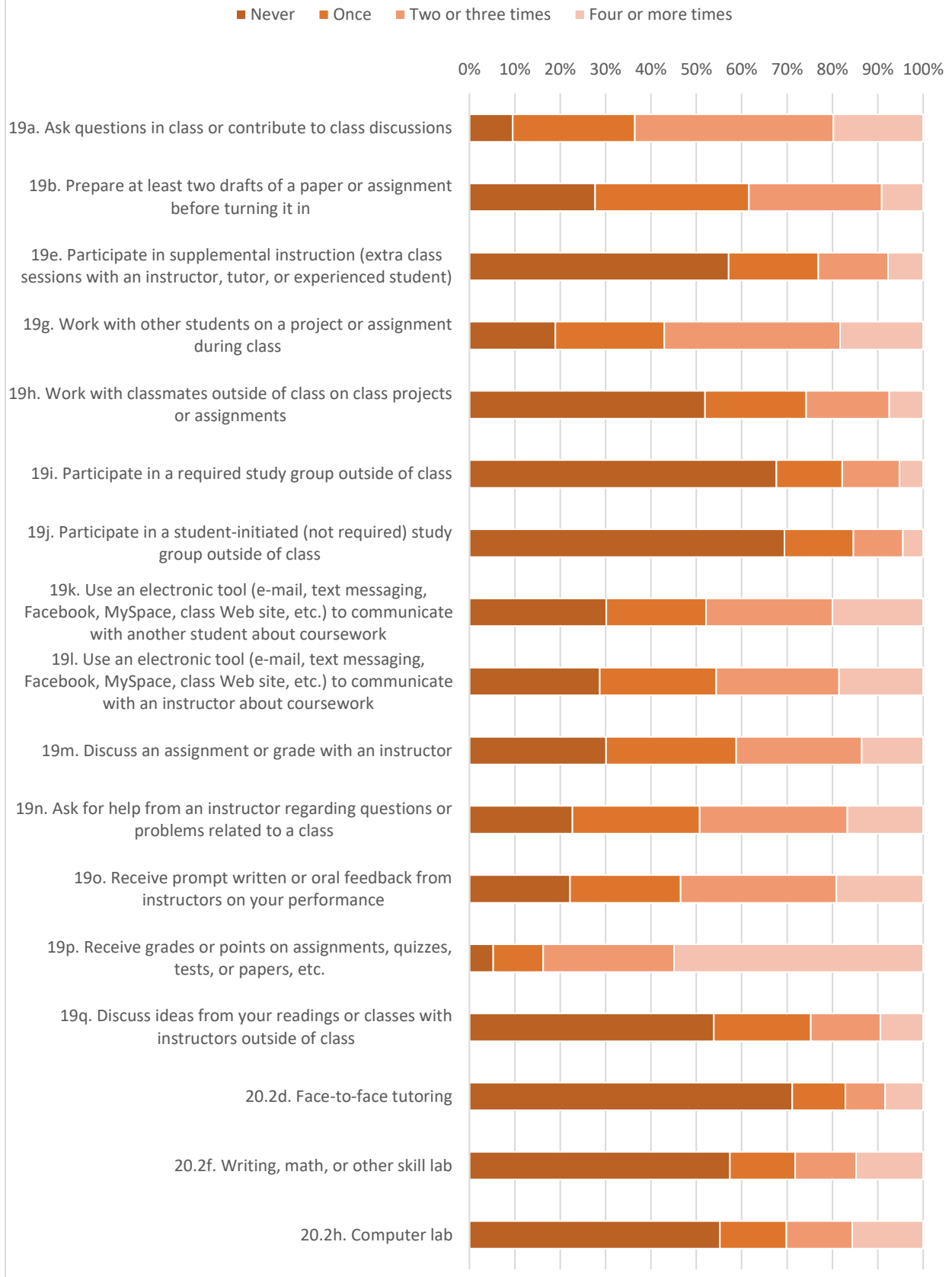
With a majority of students entering community colleges being unprepared for college-level work, in order to increase success rates, the college needs to offer effective assessment and placement of students into appropriate courses and to provide supports to help students build academic skills (SENSE Benchmarks 2018). Among SCC students participating in the survey, about 90 percent were required to take a placement test, about 87 percent took a placement test, and 77 percent were required to enroll in classes indicated by their placement test results. About three quarters of the students agreed that they had learned to improve their study skills and understand their academic strength and weakness by the end of the third week of the semester. A majority of the students indicated that they learned skills and strategies to improve their test-taking ability.



## Engaged learning

SENSE Benchmark 2018 suggests that fostering engaged learning are critical for student success, as most community college students are part-timers and a lot of whom have to balance between work, study, and family responsibilities. Among the engaged learning indicators asked in the survey, a majority of the students indicated that they engaged in the learning activities at least once during the first three week of the semester (See graph next page). Activities that have less than half of the students engaging are outside-of-class ones, including participation in supplemental instruction, outside-of-class required or student-initiated group study, discussions of class-related ideas with instructors outside of class, face-to-face tutoring, and using skill labs or computer labs.

## Engaged Learning Indicators



## Academic and social support network

Colleges are encouraged to purposefully create academic and social support network for students as these networks are important to student success—they help students, especially entering students, obtain information about academic requirements and college services (SENSE Benchmarks 2018). Most of SCC students participating the SENSE survey agreed that, by the end of the third week of the semester, all instructors clearly provided information about college services, grading policies, and course syllabi. Most of the students said that they knew how to get in touch with their instructors outside of class, and that at least one instructor knew them by name. Most of the students also got to know at least one other student that they had previously not known, at least by name.

