

INVER HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Student Satisfaction Inventory Results at IHCC

2010 Survey Results for the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)

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This report summarizes the satisfaction of students at IHCC in multiple areas of college operations. Results for part-time students as compared to full-time students are also discussed. Comparison data is provided for the national cohort of community colleges that administered the Student Satisfaction Inventory.

Executive Summary

The Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) assesses student perception in terms of satisfaction and importance regarding a broad range of college operations. Inver Hills Community College uses these results to determine areas of strength and challenge in the college make improvements as needed. Previously, the SSI was administered each year between 2002 and 2006.

In Spring 2010, the SSI was administered in on-ground classes to 69 class sections that were selected through a random sample, stratified for time of day, location, and length. There were 1,011 surveys completed, which is 27% of the full-time equivalent students that semester. Survey respondents were representative of the IHCC student body in terms of race and gender, and traditional age students are slightly overrepresented in the survey respondents. There was an inverse representation of full-time and part-time students due to the survey administration method. Where appropriate, results are broken down by part/full time students to ensure that the perceptions of part-time students are represented. Comparison data is provided for students at other community colleges nationwide.

Summary of Findings

Most Important Areas

The survey questions are grouped into scales, listed here in order of descending importance to students. This provides an overview of what general items are most important to IHCC students. These priorities are similar to those of community college students nationally.

1. Instructional Effectiveness
2. Registration Effectiveness
3. Academic Advising/Counseling
4. Concern for the Individual
5. Academic Services
6. Admissions and Financial Aid
7. Student Centeredness
8. Safety and Security
9. Campus Climate
10. Service Excellence
11. Campus Support Services

IHCC Internal Strengths

Internal strengths are items that students rated both highly important and highly satisfied.

Students feel that it's an enjoyable experience to be a student at IHCC, and that IHCC is a welcoming campus for students. Students also report that that campus staff are caring and helpful, and that admissions staff are knowledgeable. Additionally, students report feel that the campus is safe and secure, and well-maintained.

Many of IHCC's internal strengths are in instruction. Students feel that faculty are knowledgeable in their fields and available after class and during office hours. Students report that there is a good variety of courses and that course syllabi clearly state course objectives/learning outcomes. Students also feel that they have the possibility for intellectual growth at IHCC.

Students are also highly satisfied with academic services such as library resources and services and tutoring services. Registration is another area of strength: convenient ways to pay tuition bill, and clear and well publicized policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection.

IHCC Internal Challenges

Internal challenges are items that students rated as highly important but had low satisfaction.

Students reported low satisfaction on the college doing "whatever it can" to help student reach educational goals, and showing concern for students as individuals.

While instruction is a source of much strength at IHCC, it is also a source of several challenges. Areas of low satisfaction include: excellence in quality of instruction, faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students, faculty provide timely feedback about student progress, faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances, and students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.

Course schedules and registration is another area of low satisfaction for some items. Students report low satisfaction with courses being scheduled at convenient times, and they also report challenges in registering for needed classes without conflicts.

Advising and counseling is another area of challenge. Students reported low satisfaction in academic advisors being knowledgeable about program requirements and transfer requirements of other schools.

Students report low satisfaction related to parking on campus: they feel that the amount of parking space on campus is not adequate, and that parking lots are not necessarily well-lighted and secure. Additionally, students reported low satisfaction on the amount of financial aid available.

Areas of Focus

Areas for focus are items that may be targets for improvement efforts. They are areas where IHCC students perceive as highly important but express low satisfaction, and where the satisfaction score for IHCC is significantly lower than the national cohort of community colleges. Three items may be possible areas for focus: *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate; Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course; Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.*

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Method

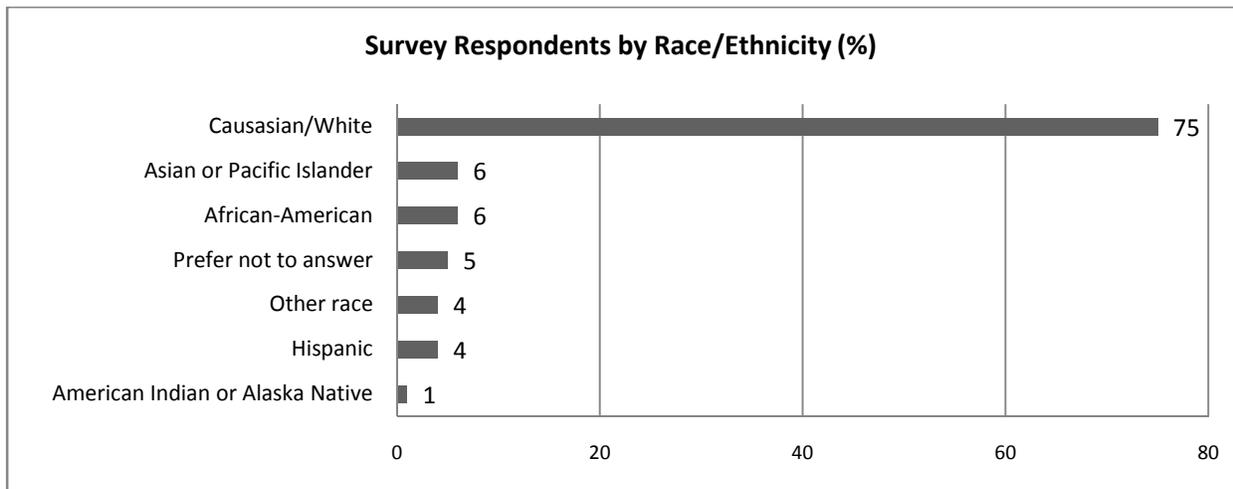
A random sample of 74 on-ground classes was chosen, stratified for time of day, length (accelerated vs. full semester) and location (on campus vs. off campus) such that the classes surveyed would match the types of classes that are offered by the college. Sixty-nine classes were surveyed between mid-February and late April 2010, during class time on dates chosen by the instructor. Surveys were administered by staff and students participated on a voluntary basis – it was not a requirement. There were 1,011 surveys completed, which is 27% of the full-time equivalent students that semester.

The survey consists of 113 questions and takes students 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Most survey questions ask students to rate items in terms of both importance and satisfaction, such that each importance/satisfaction question had two responses. There is a seven-point response scale where seven is the highest value (very important and very satisfied, respectively), four is neutral, and one is the lowest value (not important at all and not satisfied at all, respectively).

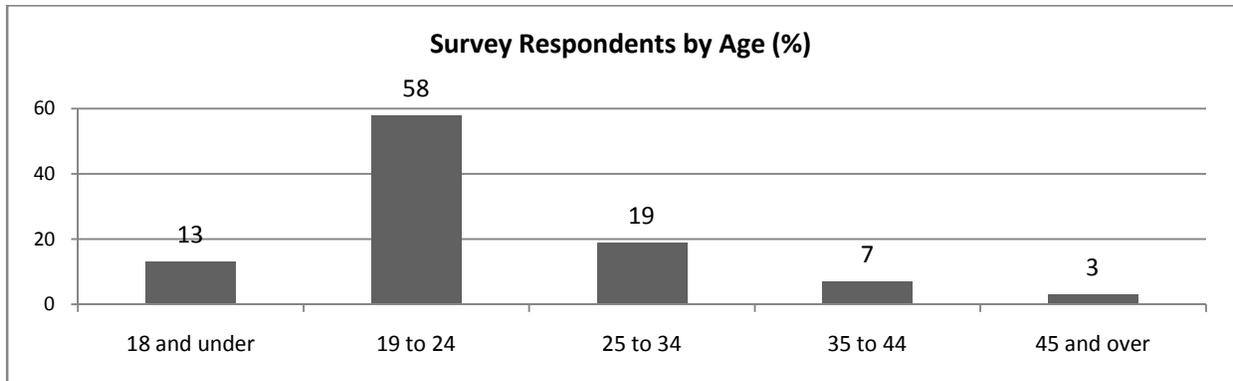
Demographics

Gender, Race, Age

Survey respondents are representative of the IHCC student population in terms of gender and race. Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents were female, and 42% were male. Seventy-five percent were white and 16% were students of color. The graph below shows race/ethnicity broken down further.



Survey respondents were somewhat representative of the IHCC student body in terms of age, although traditional age students are slightly overrepresented in the survey participants. More than half were 19 to 24 years old (58%) and 19% were ages 25 to 34, and further information is shown below. Thirty-eight percent of students at IHCC are age 26 and older, while survey participants were 29% age 25 or older.

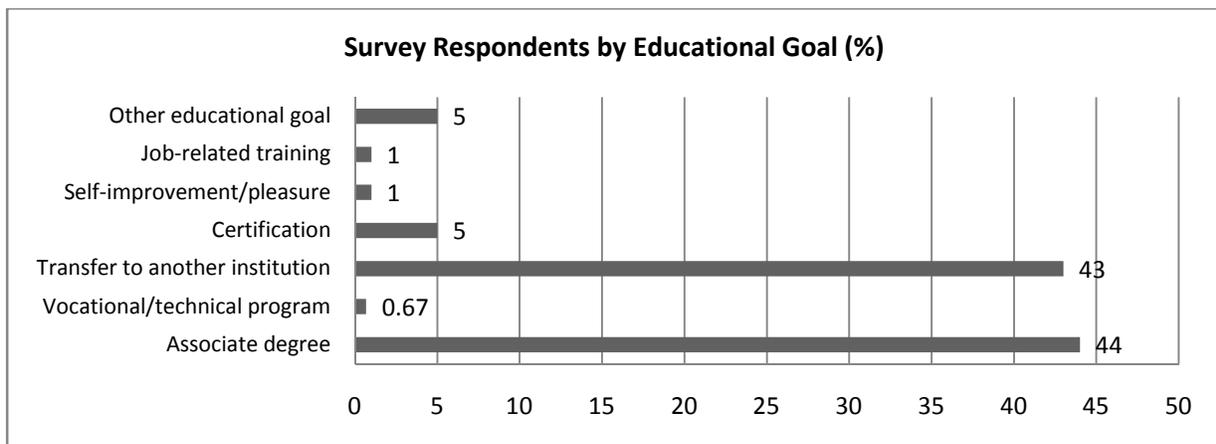


Enrollment and Goals at IHCC

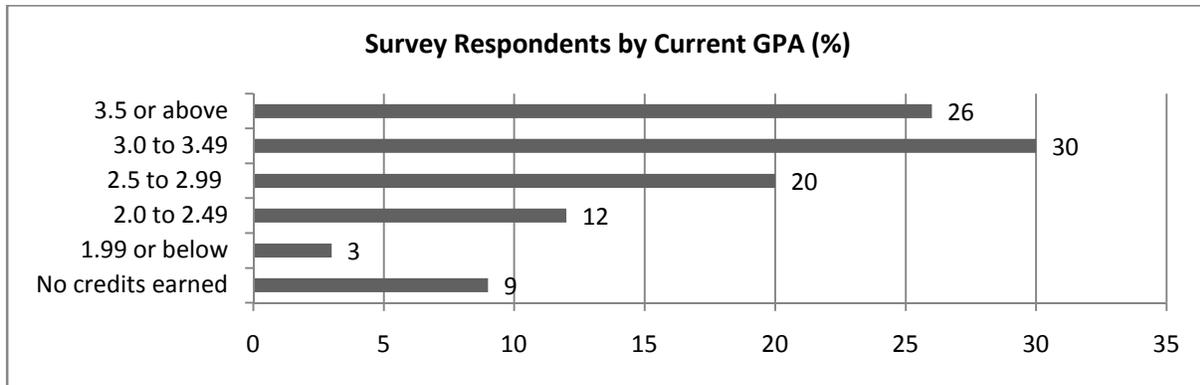
Seventy-one percent of the respondents were full-time students and 29% were part-time students, while the student body at IHCC is 40% full-time and 60% part-time. This inverse representation is due to the survey method.

Eighty-four percent described themselves as day students, 16% as evening students, and less than one percent as weekend students. The majority of respondents had attended IHCC for one year or less (48%) or for two years (34%), and some students had attended for three years (11%), or four or more years (6%).

The most common educational goals were to attain an associate’s degree (44%) or transfer to another institution (43%). The percentages of students with other goals are shown below.



Students were also asked to report their current GPA. Thirty-percent reported a current GPA between 3.0 and 3.49, while 26% reported a 3.5 or higher, and 20% reported a GPA of 2.5 to 2.99. Twelve percent reported a GPA between 2.0 and 2.49, and only three percent reported a GPA under 2.0. (See graph below.)



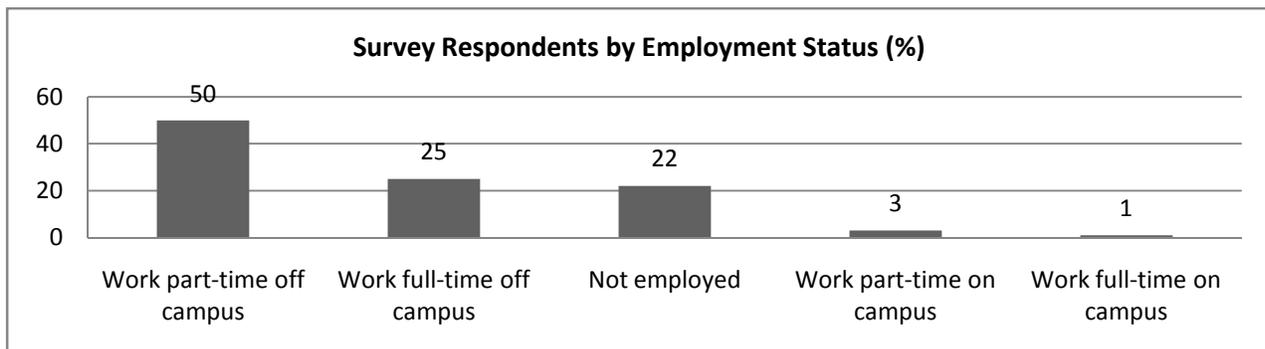
Compared to the cumulative GPAs of students enrolled at IHCC in Fall 2010, this is only somewhat representative of the college overall. While only 3% of survey participants reported a GPA below 2.0, 16% of students in Fall 2010 had a GPA in this range.¹ It is unclear whether the survey sample included relatively fewer students earning a 2.0 or lower than exist in the population, or a more likely reason for the discrepancy is that students did not report their GPA accurately.

Additional Demographic Data

Only nine percent of survey respondents report having a disability.

The vast majority of survey respondents were from Minnesota (96%), although two percent were from out-of-state, and two percent described themselves as international (not US citizen). More than half of respondents (55%) said that they live in their parent's home, 24% rent a room or apartment, and 16% own their home.

The majority of survey respondents are employed at least part-time. Further data is provided in the graph below.



Two thirds of survey respondents said that Inver Hills was their first choice college to attend, 23% reported that it was their second choice college, and 11% said that it was their third or lower choice.

¹ Spring data was not yet available as of the writing of this report.

Strategic Planning Overview

The strategic planning overview focuses on internal strengths and challenges, as well as external benchmark comparisons to help the college identify areas that the college could focus on in institutional improvement efforts.

Strengths and Challenges

Strengths are items that have high scores for both importance and satisfaction.² Challenges are items that have high scores for importance but low satisfaction scores, or areas where there was a large performance gap between satisfaction and importance.³ Strengths and challenges are determined relative to scores of other items and are not based on comparison to the national cohort.

Strengths

IHCC's strengths, listed in descending order:

Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.

I am able to experience intellectual growth here.

There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.

The campus is safe and secure for all students.

Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.

Course syllabi clearly state course objectives (learning outcomes).

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.

There are convenient ways of paying my school bill.

Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.

Policies and procedures regarding registration and course selection are clear and well-publicized.

Admissions staff are knowledgeable.

Library resources and services are adequate.

On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

The campus staff are caring and helpful.

Tutoring services are readily available.

Challenges

IHCC's challenges, listed in descending order:

Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.

The quality of instruction I receive in most of my classes is excellent.⁴

I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.⁵

Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.

The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.

² Strengths are items above the mid-point in importance and in the upper quartile of the satisfaction scores.

³ Challenges are items above the mid-point in importance and either in the lower quartile of the satisfaction scores, or in the top quartile of the performance gap scores.

⁴ This item was originally listed as both a strength and a challenge. The satisfaction score is above the midpoint but there is a large performance gap. Noel Levitz recommends considering these types of items weaknesses.

⁵ See footnote #4.

My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.
Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.
Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.
The college shows concern for students as individuals.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks are items in where there is a statistically significant difference between IHCC and the national cohort of two-year colleges. This includes only items in the top half of importance scores – the items most important to students.

Higher Satisfaction than National Community Colleges

Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.
There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
The campus is safe and secure for all students.
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.
Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
Admissions staff are knowledgeable.
Library resources and services are adequate.
Counseling staff care about students as individuals.
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.
On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.

Lower Satisfaction than National Community Colleges

The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.
Computer labs are adequate and accessible.
Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.

Possible Areas for Focus

The combination of focusing on both internal strengths and challenges and external (benchmark) comparisons to the national cohort of community colleges allows the college to identify areas that are both internal and external strengths, and internal and external challenges. While all items are important and it is valuable to understand strengths, it is also necessarily to focus on areas where the college could improve.

Areas for focus are items that may be targets for improvement efforts. They are areas where IHCC students perceive as highly important but express low satisfaction, and where the satisfaction score for IHCC is significantly lower than the national cohort of community colleges. These items are in both the challenges list and “lower satisfaction than national community colleges” list. Three items may be possible areas for focus:

The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.

Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.

Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.

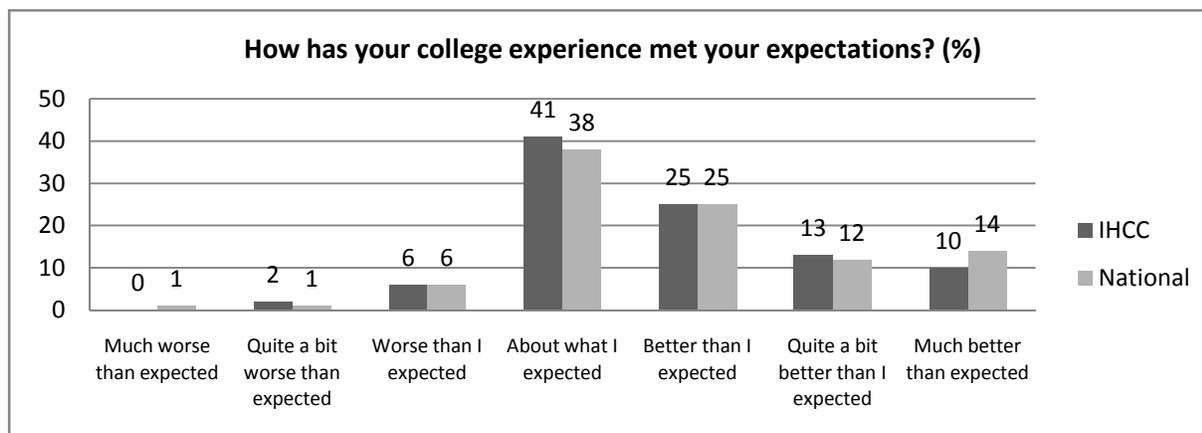
Overall Satisfaction

Students were asked several questions addressing overall satisfaction. A mean for each item was calculated and compared to the national cohort of community colleges. Frequency distributions are also reported for each question.

So far, how has your college experience met your expectations?

Inver Hills' mean score was 4.70, which corresponds to the response choice *About what I expected*. This score was significantly lower than the national mean (4.79), a statistically significant difference at the .05 level. The means for part-time and full-time students were similar.

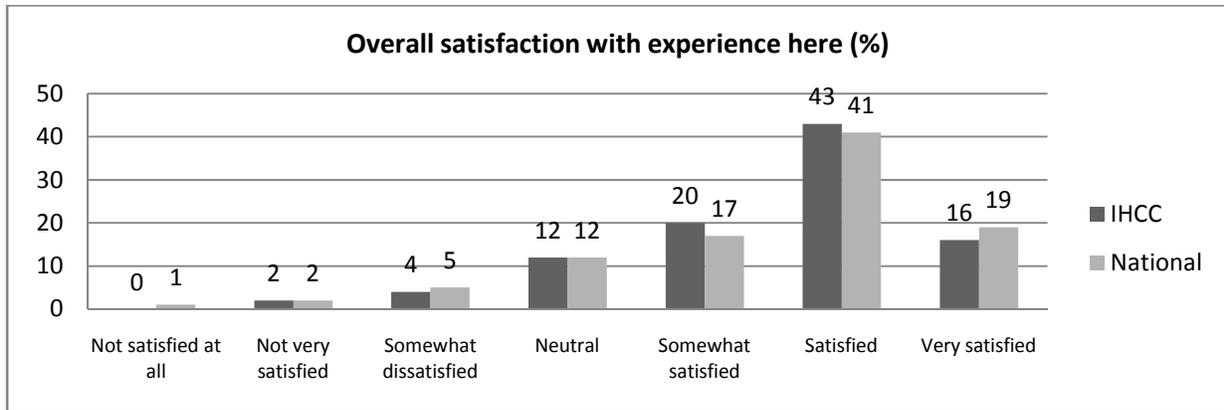
While IHCC students felt that the college met their expectations at a lower level than the national mean, the frequency distribution shows that 48% of students felt that their experience was better, quite a bit better, or much better than expected; while 41% felt it was what they expected; and only 8% felt that it was worse, quite a bit worse, or much worse than expected.



Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far

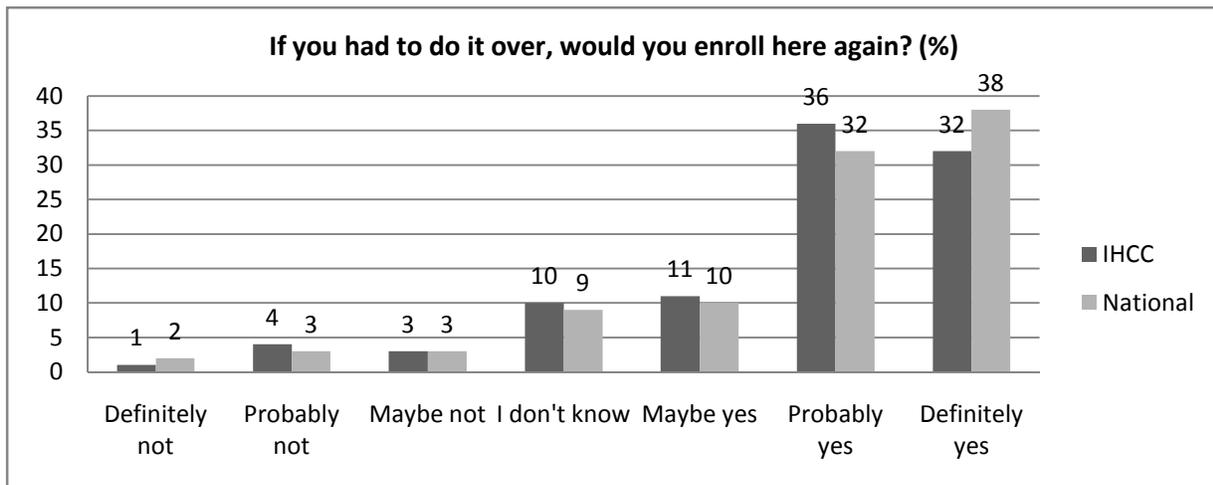
The mean score for Inver Hills was 5.45, which corresponds to the response choice *Somewhat satisfied*. This was similar to the national mean (5.46). The mean for part-time students was higher (5.57), and the mean for full-time students was lower (5.41), which indicates that part-time students are slightly more satisfied.

The frequency distribution below shows that 59% of students are satisfied or very satisfied and a relatively small percentage fall into the dissatisfied range.



All in all, if you had to do it over, would you enroll here again?

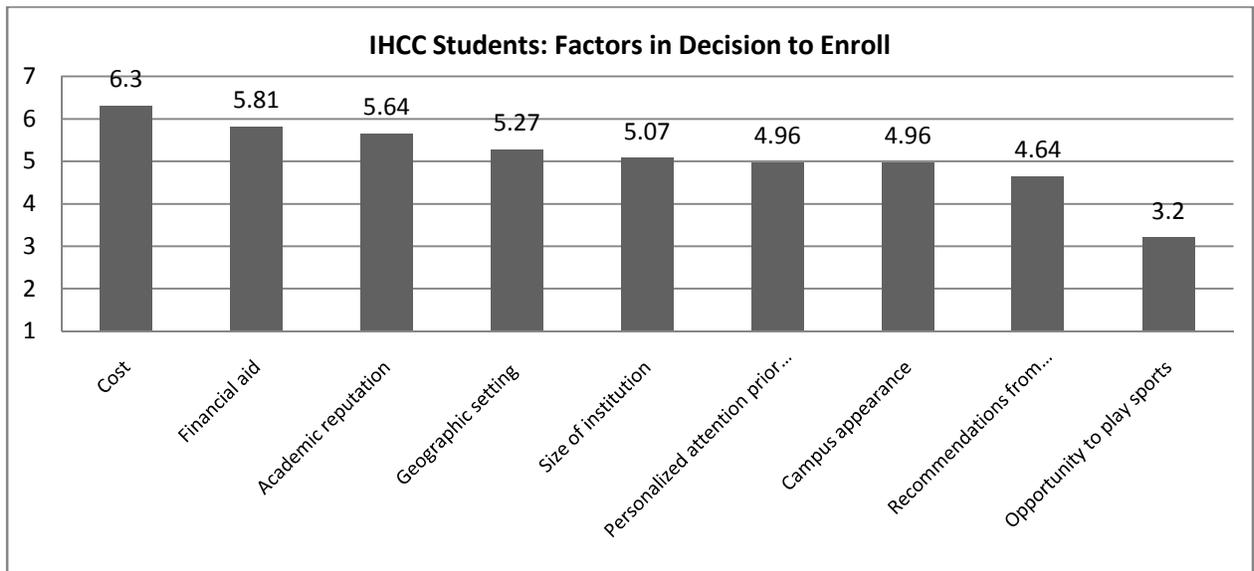
Inver Hills had a mean of 5.64, an equivalent to the response choice *Maybe yes*. The mean was higher (5.82) for part-time students and lower (5.57) for full-time students, meaning that part-time students were more likely to respond positively to the question. Inver Hill’s mean was similar to the national mean (5.72). The frequency distribution shows that most students (79%) said maybe, probably, or definitely yes – they would enroll at IHCC again.



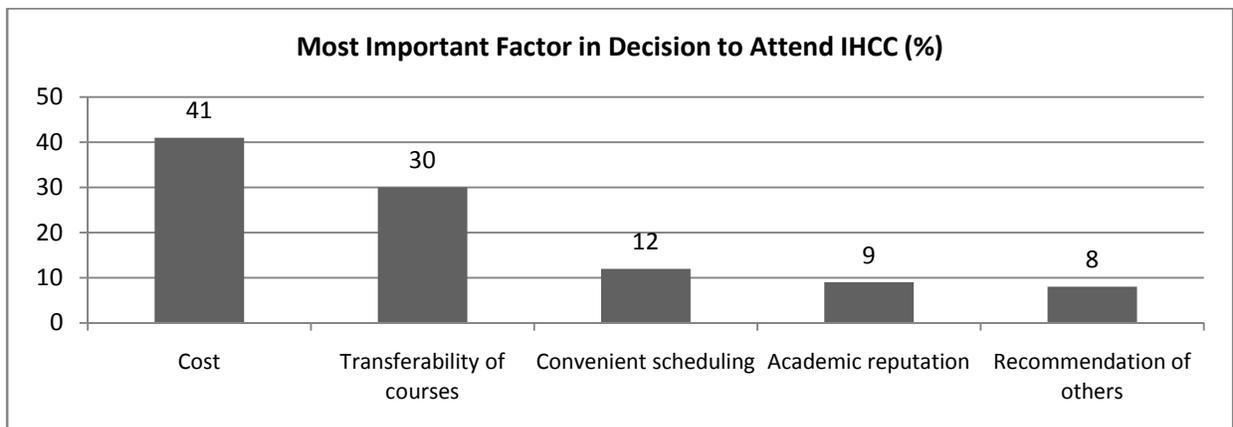
Factors in Decision to Enroll

Students were asked to rate the importance of factors they considered when enrolling at the college. For each question, students were asked to rate importance on a seven-point scale where seven is the highest value (very important), four is neutral, and one is the lowest value (not important at all).

The top three most important factors students reported are: cost, financial aid, and academic reputation. The lowest means score (and the only score in the *Unimportant* range) was opportunity to play sports. Other items are shown below. The ranking of these factors was similar when comparing full-time and part-time students.



Students were also asked a multiple choice campus-defined question: what the most important factor was in their decision to attend IHCC. The top reason was cost, followed by transferability of courses. The other response choices were chosen by considerably fewer students, as shown below.



Scale Report

The Student Satisfaction Inventory uses 12 scales to determine a global score for major areas that affect the student experience. Each scale is made up of five to fifteen survey questions asking students to rate both importance and satisfaction on specific aspects of the scale topic.

Importance

The scales are listed in order of descending importance to students at IHCC⁶:

1. Instructional Effectiveness
2. Registration Effectiveness
3. Academic Advising/Counseling
4. Concern for the Individual
5. Academic Services
6. Admissions and Financial Aid
7. Student Centeredness
8. Safety and Security
9. Campus Climate
10. Service Excellence
11. Campus Support Services

Part-time and full-time students had similar responses.

Satisfaction

Scale results in the table below show that IHCC students have similar levels of satisfaction for most scales when compared to the national cohort. The mean difference column shows a positive number where IHCC's mean is greater than the national mean, and a negative number where IHCC's mean is lower than the national mean. The scales are listed below in order of satisfaction, with the highest satisfaction scales listed first. There are two scales where there is a statistically significant difference showing that IHCC students are more satisfied than the national cohort. These are in *Admissions and Financial Aid* and *Service Excellence*.

All Students: Satisfaction Compared to National Cohort			
Scale	IHCC	National	Mean Difference
Academic Services	5.5	5.45	0.05
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	5.45	5.47	-0.02
Registration Effectiveness	5.44	5.42	0.02
Student Centeredness	5.42	5.37	0.05
Instructional Effectiveness	5.37	5.4	-0.03
Campus Climate	5.34	5.3	0.04
Service Excellence	5.33	5.26	0.07*

⁶ The *responsiveness to diverse populations* scale did not ask students to rate importance.

Concern for the Individual	5.23	5.22	0.01
Admissions and Financial Aid	5.22	5.13	0.09*
Academic Advising/Counseling	5.21	5.2	0.01
Campus Support Services	5.02	4.97	0.05
Safety and Security	4.95	5.01	-0.06

*Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

Upon examining the data by full-time and part-time students, it is evident that full-time students report higher satisfaction than part-time students in seven scales, while part-time students report higher satisfaction for these three scales: *Responsiveness to Diverse Populations*, *Instructional Effectiveness*, *Concern for the Individual*, and *Safety and Security*.

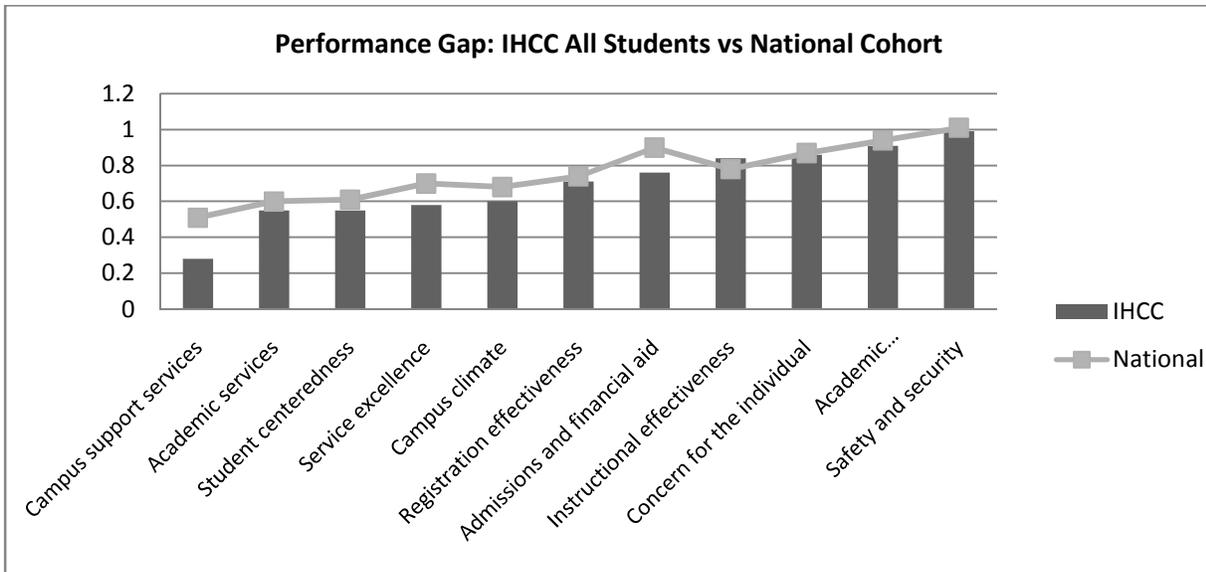
IHCC Students: Satisfaction Full-time and Part-time		
Scale	Full-time	Part-time
Responsiveness to Diverse Populations	5.46	5.48
Academic Services	5.52	5.47
Instructional Effectiveness	5.33	5.47
Registration Effectiveness	5.45	5.43
Student Centeredness	5.44	5.4
Campus Climate	5.35	5.34
Service Excellence	5.34	5.28
Concern for the Individual	5.22	5.28
Academic Advising/Counseling	5.23	5.19
Admissions and Financial Aid	5.25	5.16
Campus Support Services	5.03	4.99
Safety and Security	4.93	4.97

This data was not tested for statistical significance.

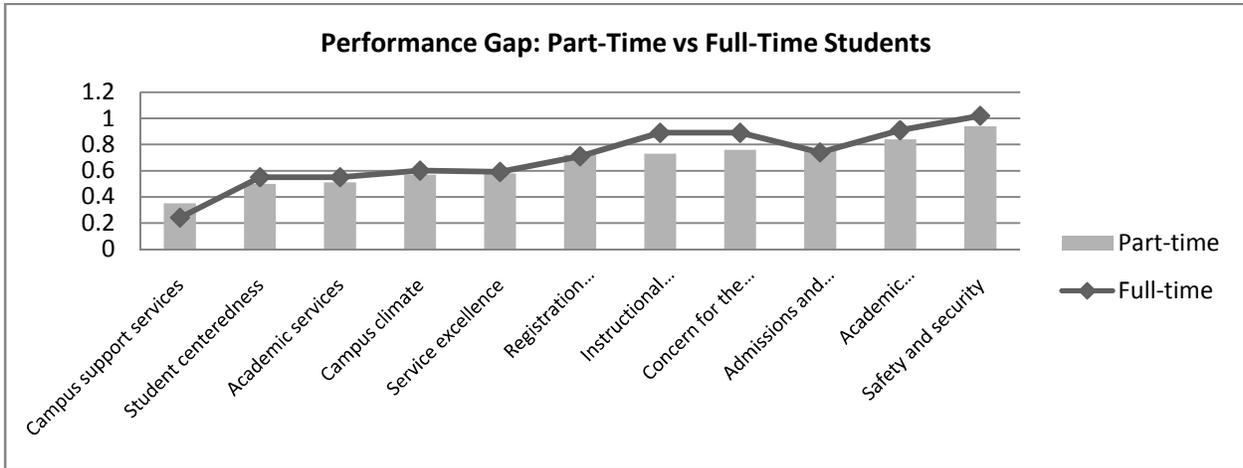
Performance Gap

A large gap between importance and satisfaction indicates an area that is important to students, but with which they are dissatisfied. Smaller performance gaps indicate that students are satisfied with areas that are important to them.

As shown below, Inver Hills has a smaller performance gap than the national cohort in all scales except *Instructional Effectiveness*. The graph below also shows that the smallest performance gap for IHCC is in *Campus Support Services* while the largest performance gap is in *Safety and Security*.



When examining the data by full-time and part-time students, it is evident that there is a larger performance gap for full-time students than part-time students in most areas, with the exception of *Campus Support Services*, *Registration Effectiveness*, and *Admissions and Financial Aid*. That is, while full-time students report higher satisfaction than part-time students in most areas, full-time students also place higher importance on many items.



Item Report

Items are reported here only where there is a statistically significant difference in satisfaction with the national cohort. All statistically significant items showed higher mean satisfaction than the national cohort.

The first table shows areas where IHCC has higher satisfaction than the national cohort, in order of decreasing satisfaction.

IHCC Higher Satisfaction than National Cohort: Statistically Significant Items			
Item	IHCC	National	Mean Difference
On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.	5.84	5.75	0.09*
Library staff are helpful and approachable.	5.83	5.51	0.32***
Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields.	5.81	5.66	0.15***
Library resources and services are adequate.	5.76	5.59	0.17***
Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.	5.76	5.60	0.16***
Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	5.75	5.56	0.19***
There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.	5.72	5.59	0.13**
The campus is safe and secure for all students.	5.69	5.53	0.16***
Tutoring services are readily available.	5.60	5.41	0.19***
Admissions staff are knowledgeable.	5.54	5.37	0.17***
Counseling staff care about students as individuals.	5.39	5.18	0.21***
The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their leisure time.	5.39	5.22	0.17***
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.	5.29	5.12	0.17**
Adequate financial aid is available for most students.	5.26	5.12	0.14*
Parking lots are well-lighted and secure.	5.22	5.10	0.12*
Financial aid counselors are helpful.	5.18	5.04	0.14*
I generally know what's happening on campus.	5.09	4.94	0.15**
Child care facilities are available on campus.	4.93	4.46	0.47***

*Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level, **Statistically significant at the $p < .01$ level, ***Statistically significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Trends are similar for part-time and full-time students. Full-time students report higher satisfaction than part-time students on all of these items except *Nearly all of the faculty are knowledgeable in their fields* and *The campus is safe and secure for all students*.

The second table shows areas where IHCC has lower satisfaction than the national cohort, in order of decreasing satisfaction.

IHCC Lower Satisfaction than National Cohort: Statistically Significant Items			
Item	IHCC	National	Mean Difference
The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students.	5.26	5.37	-0.11 *
Computer labs are adequate and accessible.	5.35	5.57	-0.22 ***
The quality of instruction in the vocational/technical programs is excellent.	5.26	5.40	-0.14 **
The assessment and course placement procedures are reasonable.	5.18	5.30	-0.12 *
Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course.	5.09	5.3	-0.21 ***
Faculty are interested in my academic problems.	5.05	5.18	-0.13 **
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	4.93	5.06	-0.13 *
The career services office provides students with the help they need to get a job.	4.84	5.00	-0.16 **
Internships or practical experiences are provided in my degree/certificate program.	4.84	5.03	-0.19 ***
Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.	4.78	4.91	-0.13 *
Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.	4.74	4.91	-0.17 **
This campus provides effective support services for displaced homemakers.	4.64	4.77	-0.13 *
Security staff are helpful.	4.59	4.92	-0.33 ***
Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.	4.42	4.91	-0.49 ***
The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate.	4.37	4.56	-0.19 **

*Statistically significant at the p<.05 level, **Statistically significant at the p<.01 level, ***Statistically significant at the p<.001 level.

When broken down by full-time and part-time students, it appears that full-time students are less satisfied than part-time students for all items except the following three items: *The business office is open during hours which are convenient for most students*, *The career services office provides students with the help they need to get a job*, and *Security staff respond quickly in emergencies*. Both groups have the same mean for the item *Security Staff are helpful*.

More specific summaries showing department-specific item results are available in short department reports.

Campus-Defined Items

Ten campus-defined questions asked students asked importance and satisfaction on the same scale used throughout the survey.

Civic Engagement Questions

Students were asked five questions related to civic engagement. As shown below, mean importance and satisfaction scores were in the four (neutral) to five (somewhat important or somewhat satisfied, respectively) range. In most cases, the performance gap was negative, meaning that students rated their satisfaction as higher than importance.

SSI 2010: Civic Engagement Questions			
Items	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Inver Hills provides opportunities to participate in service learning, volunteering, or giving blood.	5.24	5.53	-0.29
Inver Hills creates opportunities to engage in the democratic process, such as by helping me to register to vote or to voice my opinions at candidate forums.	4.77	4.94	-0.17
Inver Hills provides opportunities to take leadership roles in student organizations and clubs, such as student senate.	4.88	5.21	-0.33
Leadership skills I learned at Inver Hills have helped me to take an active role in my community.	5.03	4.87	0.16
Inver Hills provides opportunities to be introduced to diverse communities on campus.	5.13	5.36	-0.23

Student Life Questions

Students were also asked two questions related to Student Life. The mean score for question about whether IHCC should become a smoke-free campus was 4.78, which is in the neutral range. For the question about the variety of clubs, activities and events offered, the mean score was 5.18 (somewhat satisfied), and there was no performance gap.

SSI 2010: Student Life Questions			
Items	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Inver Hills should become a smoke-free campus.	4.78	na	na
Student Life offers a wide variety of clubs, activities and events that contribute to my learning.	5.18	5.18	0

Additional Questions

Several additional questions were asked. Of these, *Course syllabi clearly state course objectives (learning outcomes)* was determined to be an internal strength for the college due to the relatively high importance and satisfaction ratings given by students.

Students responded in the “somewhat important” and “somewhat satisfied” range for the question asking whether IHCC is an environmentally conscious college.

For the item *Having a faculty or staff member who talks to me about my academic goals helps me succeed*, the mean score was 6.1 (in the “important” range) and the mean score for satisfaction was 5.37 (in the “somewhat satisfied” range). The performance gap was fairly high for this item.

SSI 2010: Additional Campus-Defined Questions			
Items	Importance	Satisfaction	Gap
Inver Hills is an environmentally conscious college.	5.45	5.13	0.32
Course syllabi clearly state course objectives (learning outcomes).	6.21	5.76	0.45
Having a faculty or staff member who talks to me about my academic goals helps me succeed.	6.1	5.37	0.73

Conclusion

Students are satisfied with many areas of the college, however, it is important to note that Inver Hills students report lower satisfaction overall than the national cohort, with a statistically significant difference for the item addressing whether the college has met student expectations. Many of Inver Hills’ internal strengths are also areas where IHCC students have higher satisfaction than the national cohort. However, many of Inver Hills’ challenges are also areas where IHCC students have lower satisfaction than the national cohort. These areas may be worth focusing on in institutional improvement efforts: *The amount of student parking space on campus is adequate; Faculty provide timely feedback about student progress in a course; Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly in a class.*