

Business Student Survey Report of Findings

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Key Findings

The following bullet points provide a summary of the major overall findings of the study:

- Approximately 8 in 10 respondents reported a primary goal of transfer to 4-year, associate degree, or certificate.
- About 92% of student respondents reported being satisfied with their business courses.
- A large majority of students, about 9 in 10 reported that the business course in which they enrolled helped them to achieve their educational goals.

Introduction & Background

In fall of 2013, the Business Department administered a survey to students enrolled in business courses. The purpose of the survey was to assess whether the business course fulfilled students' expectations and helped them to achieve their educational goals. Traditionally, student success is measured by certificates and degrees and transfers to four-year institutions. However, many students enroll in business courses without the intent to earn a certificate or degree, or to transfer to a 4-year university. Instead, some students enroll in business courses to discover/formulate career interests, plans, and goals, acquire job skills, advance in current job/career, or for personal development; these are goals that are not measured by awards and transfer. The survey was developed and piloted in the fall 2010 term to document the success of students with all goals in business courses. The survey was administered again in fall 2011 and again in fall 2013 with minor changes. The present report describes the findings from the fall 2013 survey.

The survey was administered in the Business disciplines: accounting (ACCTG) and business (BUS). Students completed paper surveys in on-ground classes which were and online surveys in distance education classes. The instructors distributed either the paper surveys or the URL for the online survey during the final weeks of the term. A total of 1,101 surveys were completed, of which 148 (13.4%) were completed online. Ninety-two respondents (8.4%) were enrolled in distance learning courses in the department.

Findings

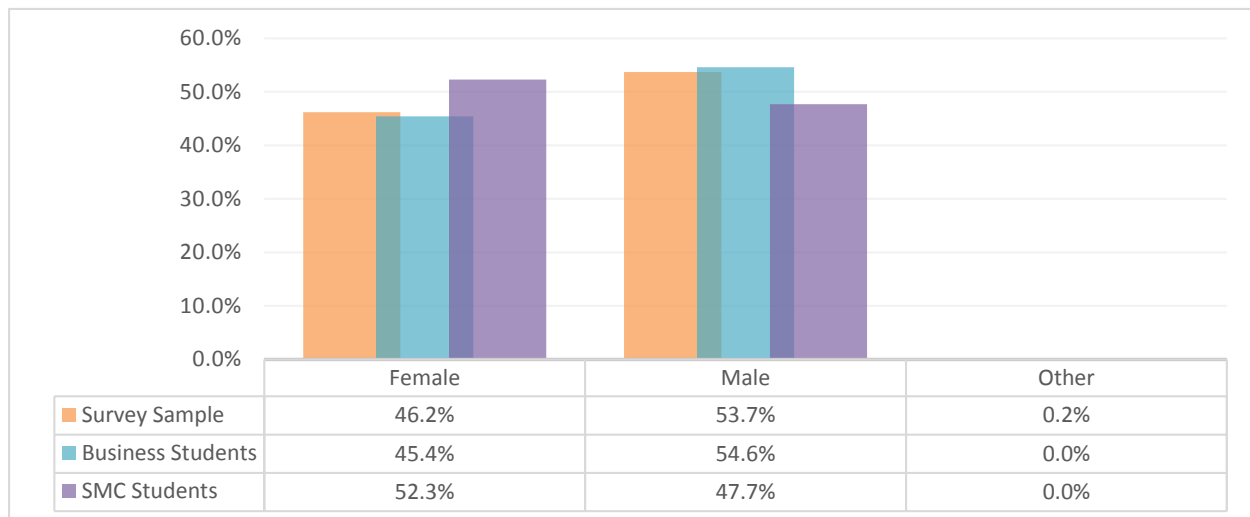
Profile of Survey Respondents

The following section provides a description of demographic information provided in the survey responses and provides a comparison to the demographic profile with all business students (students enrolled in at least one ACCTG or BUS course) and all SMC students in fall 2013.

It is important to note that students were asked to complete a survey for each business course in which they were enrolled, thus individual students may be represented more than once in the total count of survey responses (i.e. there are likely to be some duplicates across students).

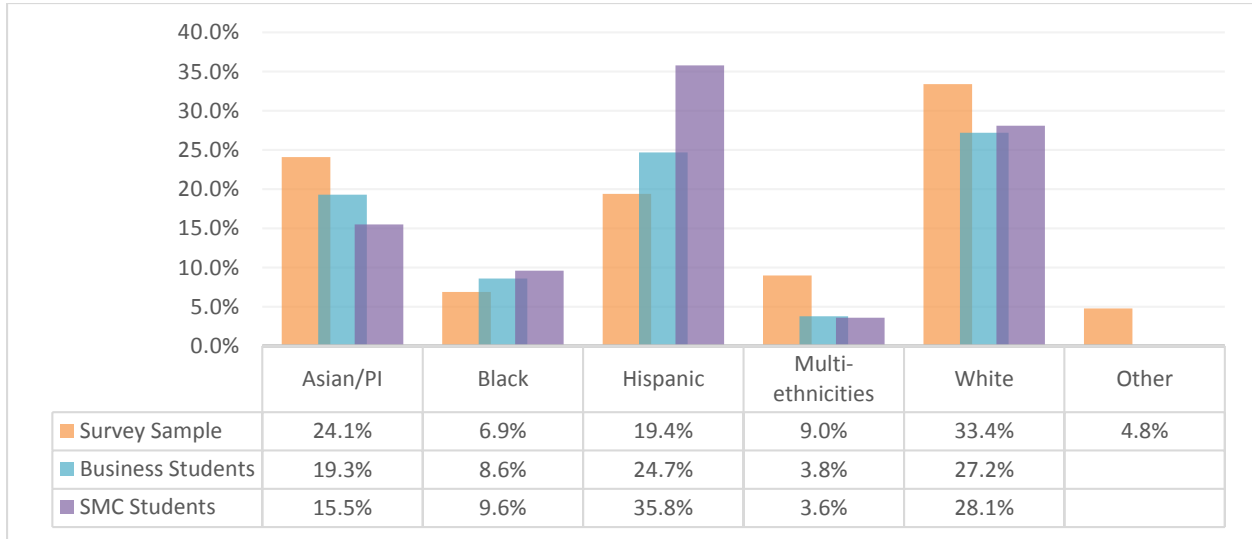
In the pilot, which was administered in the fall 2010 term, demographic items contained an explicit “decline to state” option on the surveys. After noting that this option was utilized more than expected (nearly 7% of the 2010 sample did not indicate their gender, 10% did not indicate their ethnicity, and about 7% did not indicate their age), it was modified to remove the explicit option. However, students still retained the option to skip the question. This change helped to reduce the proportions of these responses in the subsequent and present administrations of the survey; this year only 1.8%, 2.4%, and 2.2% of respondents did not report their gender, ethnicity, or age, respectively.

Gender



About 46% of respondents identified themselves as female and 54% identified as male. A new response option of “other” was added for students who may have a different gender identity (e.g. transgender, neither, etc.) and it was selected by .2% of respondents. Presently, the state has not added any other gender categories, therefore the college data which are provided for the department and college-wide comparisons did not include a third “other” option. The proportion of female and male respondents is representative of the proportions in business department as a whole. However, compared to the college-wide proportions, female students are slightly underrepresented in the business department.

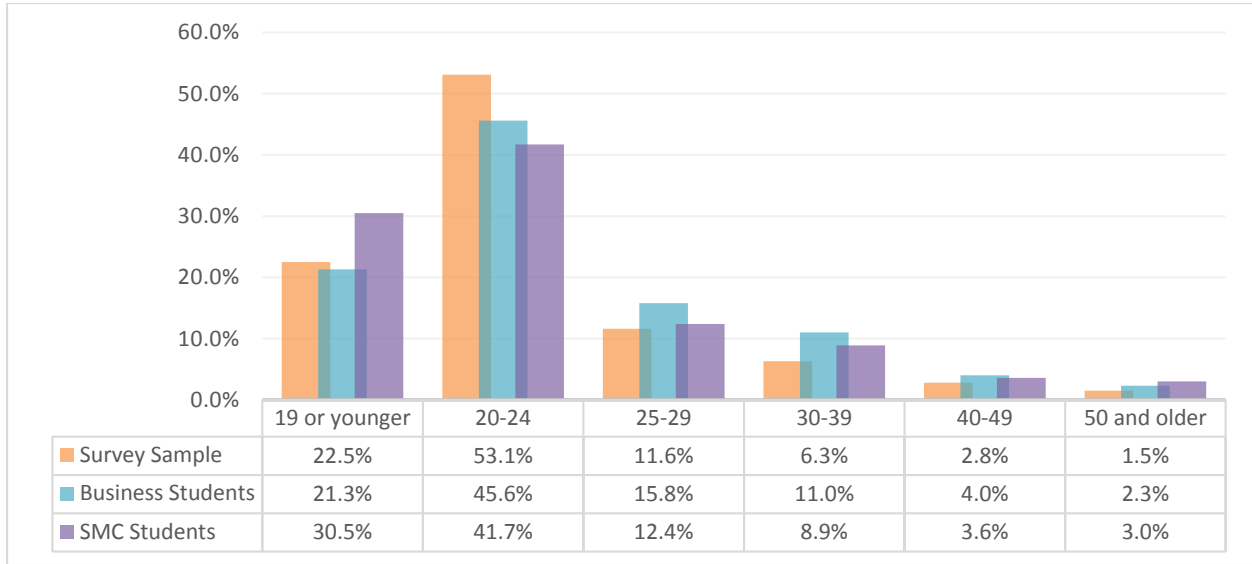
Ethnicity/Race



The figure above describes the ethnic/race breakdown of survey respondents. The college does not provide an “other” option on the application for enrollment, therefore comparisons of the ethnic profile of all SMC and Business department students to the survey sample is imperfect. Further, college-wide, about 7% of students decline to state their ethnicity, whereas in this sample only 2.4% of students didn’t provide this information. Native American/Alaskan (not included in the figure above) was selected by 0.1% of the survey sample.

The largest groups represented by survey respondents were White (33.4%) and Asian/Pacific Islander (24.1%), followed by Hispanic (19.4%). Among all business department students, Hispanic students are slightly underrepresented by nearly 10% and Asian students by about 4% compared to the college-wide credit student population. The differences between the provided response categories make it difficult to make meaningful comparisons of the survey sample data to the department and college-wide figures. The survey sample reflects an ethnic profile more similar to that of the business department as a whole, but the survey sample under-represents Hispanic students and over-represents Asian, multi-ethnic, and White students by roughly 5% each.

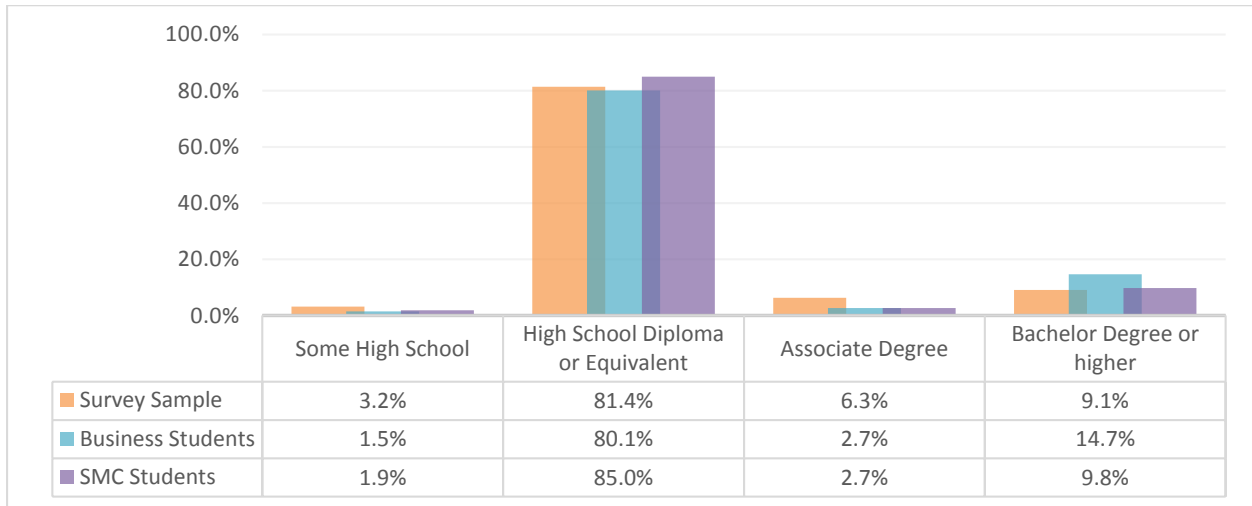
Age



Survey respondents were asked to select the age range that corresponded with their age at the time of the survey which was administered near the end of term. The ages of students in the business and SMC comparison groups are calculated from their birthdates as of October 15th, 2013, which is earlier in the term.

Traditional college-aged students (24-years or younger), a majority (75.6%), were overrepresented in the sample compared to the proportion of traditional college-aged students enrolled in Business department classes as a whole.

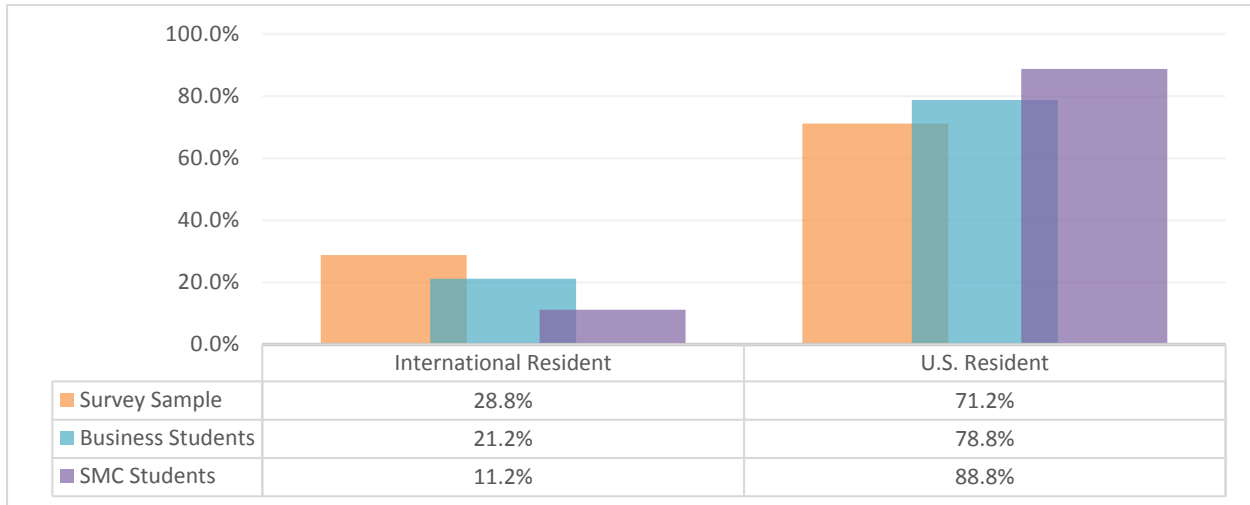
Educational Background



Respondents were asked to select the highest level of education completed at the time of the survey. Respondents with high-school diplomas or its equivalent (e.g. GED or foreign degree) made up the largest proportion of survey responses (81.4%), which is consistent with the proportion in the business department (80.1%), both of which are slightly smaller than the proportion among the college population (85.0%). Disproportionately more survey respondents have an associate degree or higher (15.4%) when compared with the college-wide population

(12.5%). The data show that a larger proportion of students taking courses in the business department (17.4%) have earned an associate degree or higher are college graduates than among the SMC student population as a whole (12.5%). There is also a noteworthy difference in the proportion of students with bachelor degrees or higher, where the proportion among business department students is about 5% greater than among SMC students overall. This finding has important implications related to educational goals because students who have already earned a college degree would be less likely to have a degree or transfer goal than students who have yet to earn a college degree.

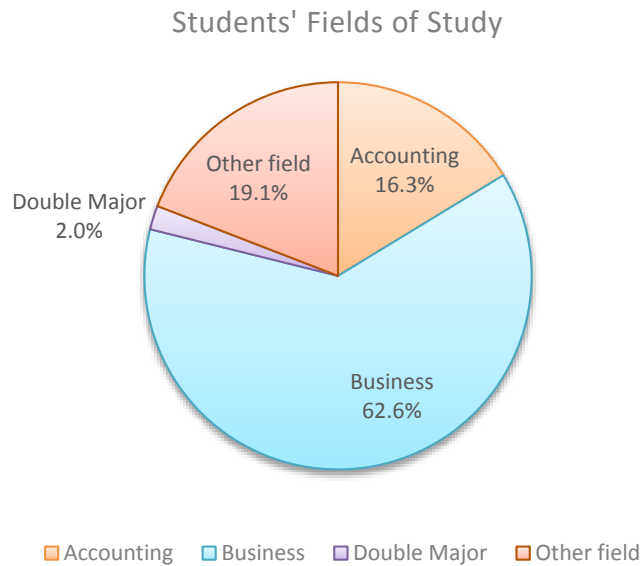
Residency Status



Survey Respondents were asked to indicate whether they are an international (F-1 Student Visa) student. Nearly 30% of the survey sample identified as international students which is an overrepresentation of the proportion of international students in the business department (21.2%). Foreign residents make up 11.2% of the SMC student population.

Field of Study or Major

Students were asked to report their major or field of study. The answers “Accounting” and “Business” were listed along with an “Other” category that provided students the option to specify a different field of study. About 6 in 10 respondents identified Business as their field of study. Accounting was selected by 16% of respondents. Because a number of students selected “other” and specified two majors (2%), these responses were categorized separately from the remainder of the “other” responses (19%). Students specified “other” fields of study are presented in the appendix.



Overall Summary of Survey Responses

Goal/Reason for Enrolling in Course

Goal/Reason	2011	2013
Transfer to a 4-year	55.5%	59.2%
Associate Degree	13.2%	14.7%
Certificate	6.3%	4.3%
CPA	-	3.2%
Self-Improvement/Personal	12.1%	10.2%
Skills for career	7.4%	6.6%
Other	5.5%	1.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Students were asked to report their primary reason or goal for taking the business classes in which they had enrolled. They were asked about five specific goals/reasons and given an opportunity to specify others (please see appendix for “other” goals/reasons). Students were asked to identify only their primary goal which is a change from the pilot (fall 2010) version of the survey where respondents indicated for each goal whether it was a primary goal, secondary goal, or not a goal. Therefore in the pilot, students were able to identify more than one primary or secondary goal. Respondents tended to identify several “primary” goals which made interpretation of the data difficult; therefore the survey question was modified to require only one goal to be identified above others as the primary reason or goal in taking the course.

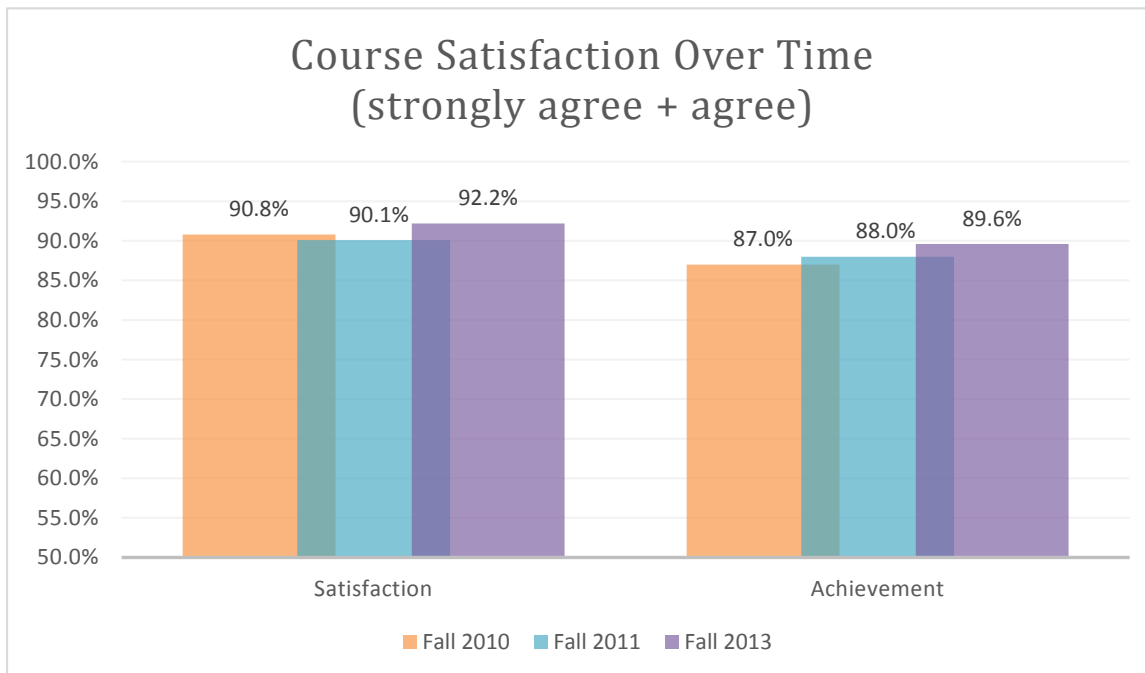
The goals/reasons respondents selected among included: “meet a requirement for transfer to a four-year college/university”, “meet a requirement for an associate degree in business”, “meet a requirement for a certificate in business”, “obtain or update job-related skills for career advancement/own business”, “for self-improvement/personal enjoyment”, “other”, and “meet a requirement for CPA certificate” which was added to the current survey after being a popularly specified “other” reason identified by respondents in the fall 2011 survey.

Nearly 6 in 10 respondents (59.2%) indicated that transfer to a 4-year was their primary goal, a proportion similar to but slightly greater than the proportion in 2011 (55.5%). About 15% indicated that an associate degree in business was their primary goal and about another 4% indicated that their goal was to earn a business certificate. These three are also the outcomes which are traditionally used to measure student success. In this survey sample, considering these three outcomes would not account for the goals of about 20% of the business students. These data suggest that about one in every five students had a goal which would not be captured by these traditionally-applied success metrics.

Course Satisfaction

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Overall, I am satisfied with the current course.	61.1%	31.1%	5.5%	1.3%	0.4%	0.6%
The current course helped me achieve my educational goals.	55.4%	34.2%	8.2%	1.2%	0.4%	0.6%

Students were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the course and whether taking the course helped them to achieve their educational goals. Students responded by indicating their level of agreement with the questions below, on a 6-point Likert scale. It is difficult to articulate a meaningful difference between “strongly agree” and “agree” responses; therefore for greater ease of interpretation, these categories are traditionally combined. Combining the “strongly agree” and “agree” categories, 90.1% of respondents indicated they are satisfied with the course in which they enrolled and 88% indicated the course helped them to achieve their educational goals. These figures are nearly identical to those from the 2010 pilot study where 90.8% of respondents reported being satisfied and 87% reported that the course helped them to achieve their educational goals. These data reveal that a very large majority of business students were satisfied with their business courses and that the courses met the students’ educational needs.



The figure above shows the trends over the three administrations of this survey. The measures have largely been stable, but with a slight increase in the most recent, 2013, year.

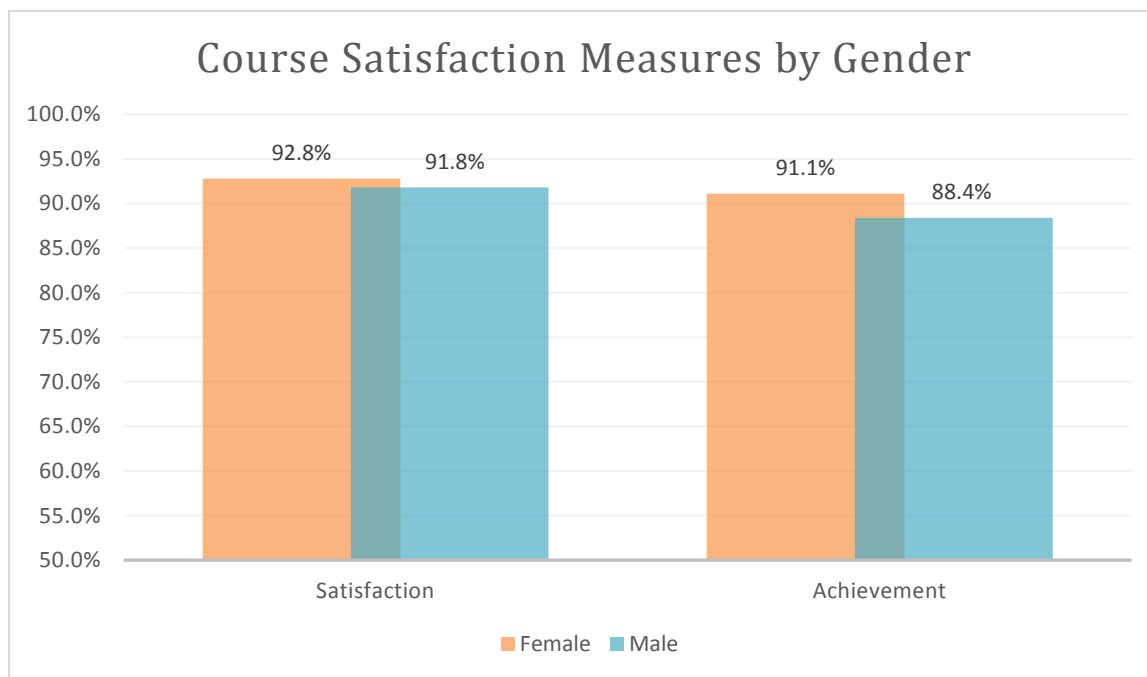
Summary of Survey Responses by Gender

Primary Goals

Goal/Reason	Females	Males
Transfer to a 4-year	53.2%	64.3%
Associate Degree	18.1%	11.7%
Certificate	5.8%	3.1%
CPA	4.2%	2.4%
Self-Improvement/Personal	10.2%	9.8%
Skills for career	6.2%	7.1%
Other	2.2%	1.6%

A smaller proportion of female students reported a transfer goal (53.2%) than male students (64.3%), but a larger proportion of female students indicated associate degree (18.1%) and certificate goals (5.8%) than male students (11.7% and 3.1% respectively). The remaining goals are similarly represented among male and female students.

Course Satisfaction



Female and male respondents rated their satisfaction with the course similarly. Taking the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' categories together about 9 in 10 students of each gender agreed that they were satisfied. Large majorities of both gender groups reported being satisfied with their business courses. In students' ratings regarding their courses helping them to achieve their educational goals, male and female students ratings were again similar with roughly 9 in 10 students providing an "agree" or "strongly agree" response.

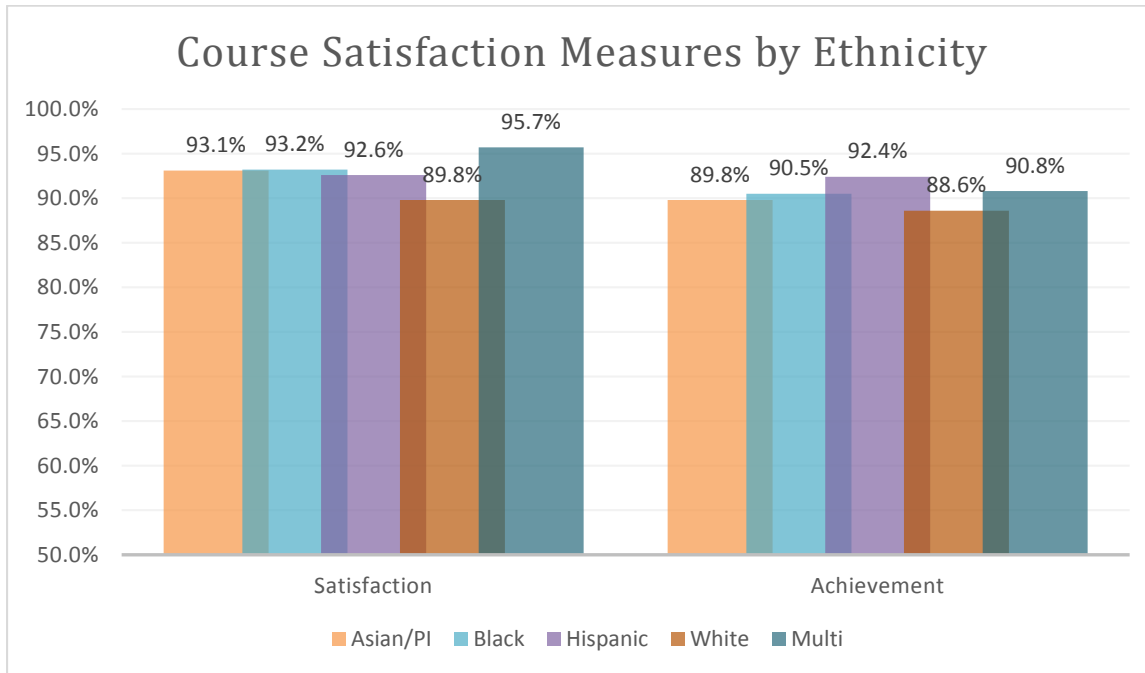
Summary of Survey Responses by Ethnicity

Primary Goals

Goal/Reason	Asian/PI	Black	Hispanic	White	Multi-Ethnicity
Transfer to a 4-year	66.4%	56.6%	55.6%	52.9%	65.7%
Associate Degree	15.9%	18.4%	19.3%	13.9%	5.1%
Certificate	3.4%	1.3%	4.3%	6.3%	3.0%
CPA	4.5%	1.3%	2.4%	3.0%	6.3%
Skills for career	4.2%	6.6%	8.0%	7.9%	10.1%
Self-Improvement/Personal	4.9%	13.2%	8.5%	13.4%	11.1%
Other	0.8%	2.6%	1.9%	2.7%	1.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Disproportionately more Asian/Pacific Islander (66.4%) and multi-ethnic students (65.7%) reported that transferring to a four-year institution was their primary educational goal when compared with African American/Black, Hispanic, and White students (56.6%, 55.6%, 52.9% respectively). Fewer multi-ethnic students (5%) reported their goal was earning an associate degree compared to the other groups which ranged from about 14-19% in the proportions reporting an associate degree goal. Asian/Pacific Islander students were less likely to indicate self-improvement or career-skill building reasons (9.1%) than other ethnic groups (16.5-21.3%).

Course Satisfaction



All ethnic groups gave high ratings of satisfaction with the courses in which they had enrolled. A slightly smaller proportion of White students agreed (89.9%) that they were satisfied than the other ethnic groups (92.6-95.7%). The proportions of students agreeing that the courses helped them to achieve their educational goals were likewise high, but there was less variability in agreement between the different ethnicities of students.

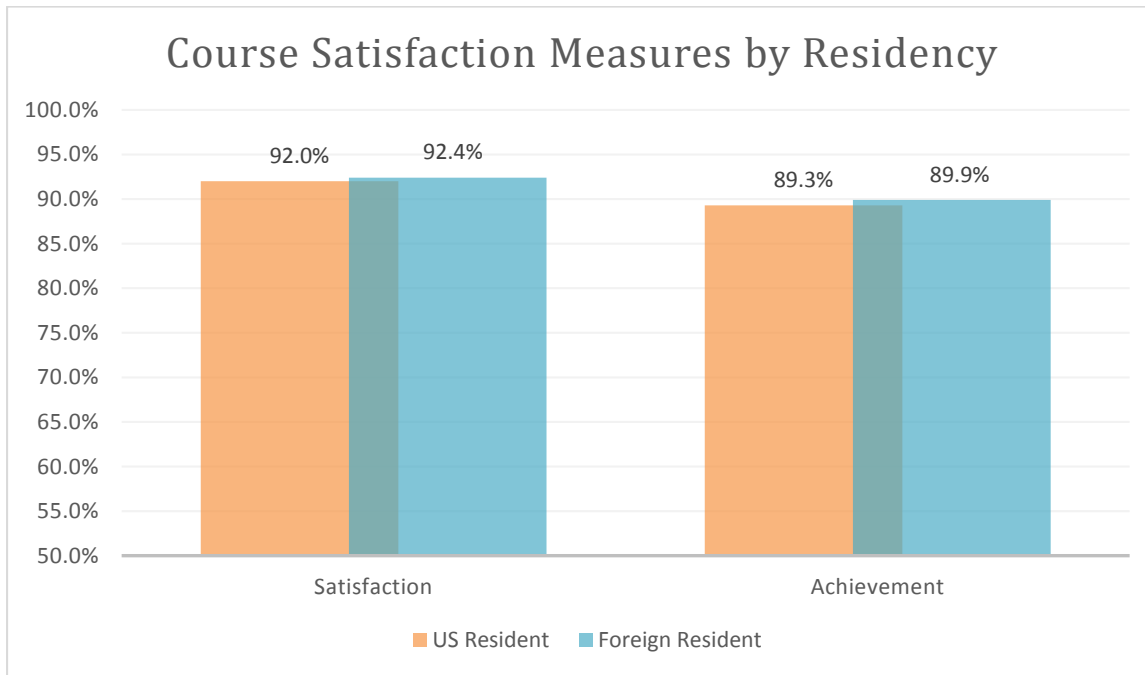
Summary of Survey Responses by Residency Status

Primary Goals

Goal/Reason	U.S. Residents	Foreign Residents
Transfer to a 4-year	61.3%	53.9%
Associate Degree	11.6%	21.1%
Certificate	3.5%	6.5%
CPA	4.3%	0.7%
Self-Improvement/Personal	10.1%	10.7%
Skills for career	7.3%	4.9%
Other	1.7%	2.3%
Total	100%	100%

A smaller majority of foreign students (53.9%) identified their primary goal as being transfer to a 4-year university than students who are U.S. residents (61.3%). More students who are foreign residents reported a primary goal of earning an associate degree (21.1%) and certificate (6.5%) than did students who are US residents (11.6% and 3.5%, respectively).

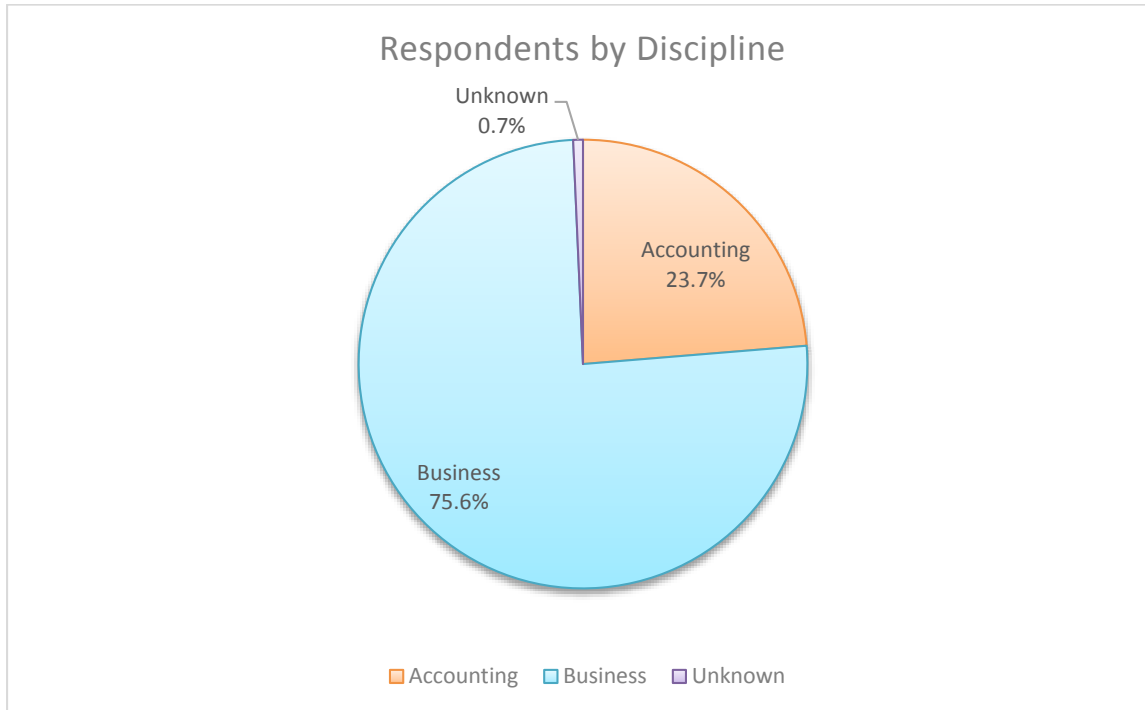
Course Satisfaction



Both U.S. and foreign resident respondents rated their satisfaction with the course similarly, with large majorities reporting being satisfied. Taking the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ categories together about 92% of each group agreed that they were satisfied.

U.S. and foreign resident respondents were also very similar in their ratings of whether the course helped them to achieve their educational goals. Among U.S. residents, 89.3%, and among foreign residents, about 89.9% agreed that the course helped them to them to achieve their educational goals.

Summary of Survey Responses by Discipline



Students were asked to specify the business course in which they are enrolled (i.e. the course in which the survey was distributed). Survey respondents could therefore be divided according to discipline. In some cases, students did not provide unambiguous answers. For instance, some students listed the course title (e.g. Advanced Business Law) but not the course name. This was problematic in a few instances where a course was cross-listed in multiple disciplines; for example ACCTG 26 and BUS 6 are both “Advanced Business Law.” Where this occurred and no means of disambiguation were available, the course was attributed to Business discipline.

About three-quarters of the survey respondents were enrolled in courses in the business discipline and nearly one quarter were enrolled in accounting discipline courses. A very small subset of students (0.7%) did not specify a course and therefore could not be classified.

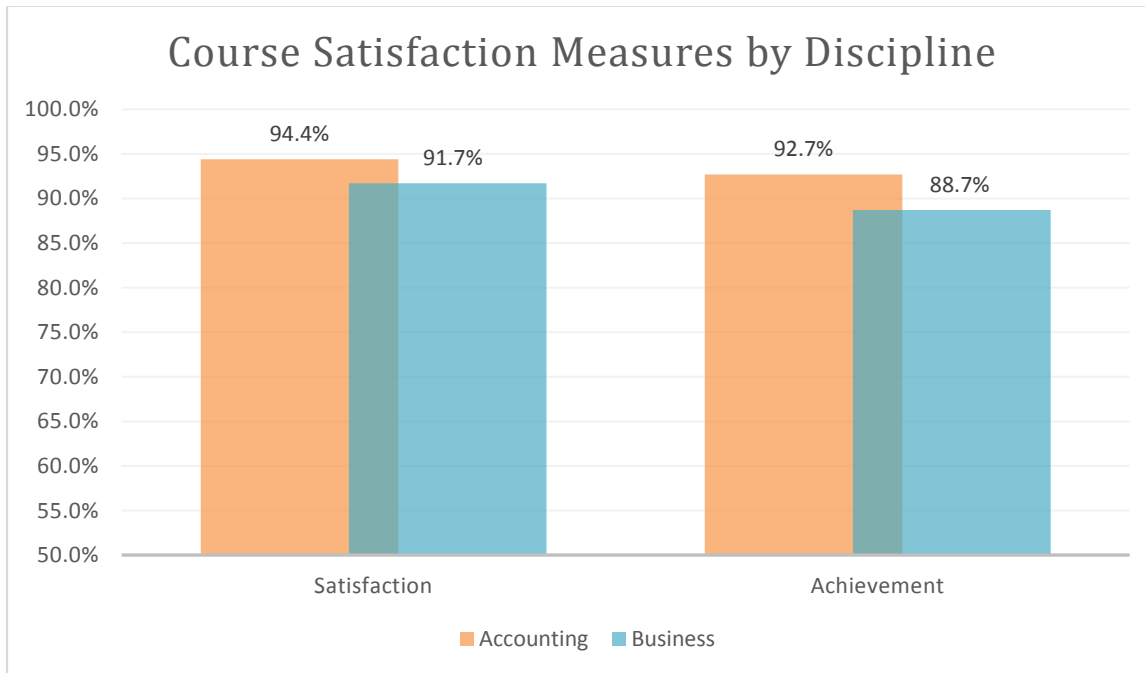
Primary Goals

Goal/Reason	Primary Goals		
	Accounting	Business	Overall
Transfer to a 4-year	75.4%	54.3%	59.2%
Associate Degree	7.3%	16.9%	14.7%
Certificate	2.7%	4.8%	4.3%
CPA	7.3%	1.8%	3.2%
Self-Improvement/Personal	2.7%	12.5%	10.2%
Skills for career	4.2%	7.5%	6.6%
Other	0.4%	2.3%	1.8%
Total	100%	100%	100.0%

Three-quarters of respondents enrolled in the accounting discipline courses identified transfer to a 4-year the primary goal in enrolling in the course, whereas closer to half of respondents enrolled in Business discipline

courses identified transfer the primary goal. A larger proportion of students in business courses (16.9%) had the primary goal of earning an associate degree than students in accounting courses (7.3%). Also, students enrolled in Business courses were more likely to have enrolled in the course for the goal of self-improvement (12.5%) than students in accounting courses (2.7%). More courses in the accounting discipline meet the educational requirements for the state CPA exam, therefore it is not surprising that more students in accounting courses (7.3%) said they had enrolled in the course for the reason of fulfilling a requirement for the CPA exam than students in business courses (1.8%).

Course Satisfaction



A slightly larger proportion of students enrolled in accounting courses (94.4%) indicated they were satisfied with the course taken than the proportion in business classes (91.7%). Similarly, a slightly larger proportion of students enrolled in accounting courses reported that the course helped them to achieve their educational goal than the proportion of students enrolled in business classes (88.7%).

Summary & Conclusions

Community colleges have traditionally relied on counts of transfers and awards (degree or certificate). While this is valuable information, it ignores the needs of those students who do not enroll with the intention of achieving any of those outcomes. This student survey provides information about the broader range of reasons and goals which may motivate students to enroll in courses. Approximately 20% of the students who completed the survey reported that their primary purpose for enrolling in the course was something other than transfer or earning a degree or certificate (e.g. updating job skills, fulfilling requirements for the state CPA exam, personal enjoyment, etc.).

The survey results demonstrate that very large majorities of students are satisfied with their course and find their courses to be helpful towards meeting the education goals which led them to enroll in the course.

Appendix

Double Majors	# of Mentions
Business/Film	2
Liberal Arts/Economics	2
Accounting/Investing	1
Biology/Pre-Med	1
Biology/Pre-Med	1
Business/Accounting	1
Business/Communications	1
Business/Economy	1
Business/History	1
Business/Psychology	1
Business/Social & Behavioral Science	1
Law/Communications	1
Linguistics/Merchandising	1
"Other" Majors	# of Mentions
Economics	14
Communications	13
Undecided	13
Psychology	10
Engineering	8
Political Science	8
Computer Science	7
Film	5
Finance	5
English	4
History	4
Photography	4
Sociology	4
Advertising	3
Biology	3
Criminal Justice	3
Fashion Merchandising	3
No Major	3
Theatre Arts	3
Business Economics	2
Civil Engineer	2
Computer Engineering	2
Graphic Design	2
Hospital Management	2
Interior Design	2
International Relations	2
Kinesiology	2

Management	2
Math	2
Merchandising	2
Nursing	2
Architectural Interior Design	1
Art	1
Arts and Humanity	1
Child Development	1
Child Psychology	1
CMA & CPA	1
Computer Applications	1
Computer Information Systems	1
Construction	1
Cosmetology	1
Dance	1
Design	1
Early Childhood Education	1
Education	1
Education or Fashion Merchandising	1
Educational leadership	1
Entertainment	1
Environmental Economics	1
Event Management	1
Fashion	1
Fashion Design	1
Fashion Marketing	1
Fine Art	1
General Science	1
Global Studies	1
Graphic Arts	1
High school concurrent	1
Hospitality and Tourism Management	1
Hospitality Management	1
Human Resources	1
International Business	1
International Law	1
International Studies	1
Journalism	1
Legal Admin Assistant	1
Liberal Arts	1
Literature	1
Logistics/Supply Chain Management	1
M.B.A.	1
Management Leadership	1
Marketing	1

modern languages	1
Music Industry	1
Office Technology	1
Personal Finance	1
Pharmacy	1
Philosophy	1
Physical Therapy	1
Policy, Planning, Develop.	1
Public Policy	1
Science	1
Semester Abroad	1
Social Science	1
Teaching	1
Urban Planning	1
Zoology	1

“Other” goals or reasons for enrollment in course	# of Mentions
Studying Abroad	3
Elective	2
Get a general idea of Business	2
Career advancement/own business/self-improvement/personal enjoyment	1
Curiosity	1
Global Citizenship	1
I wanted to test what a business class at SMC feels like	1
Learn the business side of art	1
M.B.A	1
Professional development	1
Relevant to my career	1
Semester Abroad	1
To see if I like accounting and if I could do it my whole life.	1
UC transferable credits	1