

Student Success and Academic Resources Survey

Open-Ended Themed Comments

Spring 2024

Themes for improving student services and academic resources at Allan Hancock College:

Accessibility of Technology and Supplies:

- Providing free access to electronic devices like computers or iPads, especially for students who do not qualify for financial aid.
- Offering more affordable options for schoolbooks and supplies. Improving Wi-Fi connectivity to ensure students can access online resources without interruptions.

Financial Aid Services:

- Improving responsiveness and accessibility of financial aid services, including better phone support and timely callbacks.
- Considering offering services outside regular business hours to accommodate working students.
- Better customer service

Student Support and Counseling:

- Offering workshops on study skills, time management, and academic success strategies.
- Providing flexible counseling hours, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate diverse student schedules.

Library:

- Increasing library space and resources, including more tables and access to textbooks.

General Campus:

- Making campus maps searchable and improving signage to help students navigate the campus effectively.

Promotion of Services and Programs:

- Increasing promotion of student services, clubs, and volunteer opportunities through various channels.
- Ensuring professors actively promote resources available to students.

Student Feedback and Engagement:

- Establishing regular channels for student feedback and suggestions for improvement.

- Encouraging professors to discuss available resources at the beginning of classes to raise awareness among students.

Basic Needs:

- Ensuring timely appointments and assistance for students seeking basic needs services.

Health Services:

- Providing comprehensive information on health services, including mental health support and sexual health education.

Tutoring and Academic Support:

- Improving tutoring services by recruiting more qualified tutors and expanding subject coverage.
- Increasing availability of tutoring sessions, including early mornings and late evenings, to accommodate diverse student schedules.

Career Services and Mentorship:

- Enhancing career counseling and job placement assistance, including workshops and local partnerships.
- Implementing peer mentorship programs to support students through academic challenges and career exploration.

Inclusivity and Staff Attitude:

- Fostering a welcoming and supportive environment by ensuring staff are approachable and helpful.
- Promoting inclusivity and diversity on campus to make all students feel valued and supported.

Themes for fostering a strong sense of community at Allan Hancock College:

Desire for More On-Campus Opportunities:

- Students expressed a desire for increased on-campus events, activities, and clubs to cater to a diverse range of interests and backgrounds.
- They want more opportunities to engage with the college community and with each other.

Improved Communication and Advertising:

- There's a call for better communication about campus events and resources.
- Some students mentioned missing out on activities because they weren't aware of them.

- Suggestions include using social media, bulletin boards, and other channels to improve communication.

Timing of Activities:

- Some students express concerns about the timing of campus activities, particularly for full-time students with busy schedules.
- They suggest scheduling events at times that are more accessible to all students.

Support for Specific Student Groups:

- Students mentioned the need for support tailored to specific groups, such as first-year and first-generation students, older students, and those with specific needs like financial assistance or mental health support.
- Suggestions include mentorship programs, peer support groups, and initiatives to address these needs.

Inclusivity and Diversity:

- Several comments highlighted the importance of inclusivity and diversity in campus events and initiatives.
- Students want to feel welcomed and represented, regardless of their background or identity.

Enhancing the Campus Environment:

- Some students suggested ways to improve the physical campus environment, such as adding more decorations, creating comfortable spaces for relaxation and socializing, and providing more amenities like food options.

Overall Satisfaction and Appreciation:

Many students expressed satisfaction with the current state of the campus community and appreciated the efforts made by the college to foster a sense of belonging.

Themes regarding factors influencing students' ratings of academic counseling services:

Quality of Interaction with Counselors:

- Students value personalized and supportive interactions with counselors.
- They appreciate when counselors take the time to understand their individual needs and academic goals.

Effectiveness of Referrals and Suggestions:

- Students appreciate when counselors suggest helpful resources and support services, such as the LAP program for test anxiety. However, they express dissatisfaction when referrals are not followed up or when assistance is not provided as promised.

Accessibility and Availability of Counseling Services:

- Students highlight challenges in accessing counseling services due to limited availability of appointments, especially during late afternoon or evening hours.
- Students mention need for remote options, such as Zoom meetings, to accommodate online learners or those with transportation barriers.

Inclusivity and Support for Diverse Student Groups:

- Students appreciate counseling services that cater to specific student populations, such as first-generation college students, low-income students, parents, and students with disabilities.
- Note the importance of inclusive practices that support all students, regardless of their background or program affiliation.

Program-Specific Support:

- Students enrolled in special programs like EOPS, CARE, CAN-TRIO, and others highlight the valuable support they receive from counselors within these programs.
- They mention assistance with academic planning, financial support, and referrals to resources specific to their program's focus.

Staffing and Service Improvement:

- Students suggest reducing wait times, providing more accurate information to students, and ensuring that counselors are knowledgeable and helpful across various academic and support areas.
- Some students difficulties in scheduling appointments, and challenges in finding the right counselor for their needs.

Positive Experiences and Satisfaction:

Many students express overall satisfaction with counseling services and appreciate the assistance they receive in navigating their academic journey.

Themes regarding factors influencing students' ratings regarding counseling appointments:

Appointment Scheduling Process:

- Students appreciate the ease of scheduling appointments online or by phone.
- Some express frustration with long wait times, limited availability, and difficulty finding suitable appointment slots, especially with specific counselors
- Desire for more flexibility in scheduling, especially for students with busy schedules or those needing urgent appointments.
- Availability of appointments varies depending on the counselor and the program.

Counselor Availability and Responsiveness:

- Students value counselors who are readily available to assist them and provide timely responses to inquiries.
- Some students have experienced delays in getting responses or scheduling appointments due to counselor availability.
- Recognition of the workload counselors face, leading to occasional delays in scheduling appointments.

Program-Specific Support:

- Students enrolled in specific programs like EOPS and MESA appreciate the dedicated support and streamlined appointment scheduling processes within those programs.
- However, concerns about availability and scheduling even within specialized programs exist.

Resource Accessibility and Website Usability:

- Students find it helpful when counselor contact information and appointment scheduling procedures are easily accessible on the college website.
- Complaints about difficulties navigating the website or finding relevant information also exist.

Appointment Wait Times:

- Long wait times for appointments, especially during peak periods, are a common concern among students.
- Some students feel that the wait times are excessive, particularly when needing urgent assistance.

Themes regarding course textbooks and materials:**Cost and Expense:**

- Many students express concerns about the high cost of textbooks and materials.
- Students find books expensive and often feel that they are a financial burden, especially for students with limited financial resources.

- Some students mention that even the less expensive options like rentals or used books can still be pricey.

Limited Use of Textbooks:

- Several students note that they end up not using the textbooks they purchase or that the textbooks are not utilized frequently in class.
- This leads to a feeling of waste and frustration, particularly when they spend a significant amount of money on materials that are not essential to their learning.

Alternative Resources and Accessibility:

- Students appreciate alternative resources such as the Books for Bulldogs program, library resources, and online materials provided by instructors. They find these resources helpful in reducing the financial burden of purchasing textbooks. However, some students also mention challenges in accessing these resources, such as limited availability or delays in obtaining materials.

Instructor Communication and Clarity:

- There are comments about the importance of clear communication from instructors regarding the necessity of textbooks and materials.
- Students appreciate when instructors inform them about alternatives or provide guidance on which materials are essential for the course.

Desire for Affordability and Free Options:

- Many students express a desire for more affordable options for textbooks, such as free online resources or lower-cost alternatives.
- They suggest that the college explore options for reducing the financial burden on students, including the creation of free textbooks and increased access to online resources.

Themes regarding open and positive communication between students and classroom faculty:

Office Hours:

- Many students appreciate the opportunity for one-on-one discussions or clarification on course material during regular office hours. This direct interaction fosters open communication and allows students to address concerns or questions.

Email Communication:

Email is a widely preferred method of communication for students, as it provides a convenient way to reach out to faculty members for inquiries or updates regarding coursework.

In-Person Interaction:

- Some students emphasize the importance of face-to-face communication, either through in-person meetings or classroom interactions. This personal connection helps build rapport and a sense of community between students and faculty.

Use of Canvas and Online Platforms:

- Utilizing online platforms like Canvas for communication, announcements, and discussions is favored by students. It offers accessibility and ensures important information reaches all students in a timely manner.

Encouraging Social Interaction:

Creating opportunities for social interaction, such as events, gatherings, or group activities involving both students and faculty, can facilitate positive communication and relationship-building.

Feedback Channels:

Establishing regular feedback channels, such as surveys or suggestion boxes, allows students to anonymously share thoughts and suggestions, contributing to a more inclusive and responsive learning environment.

Themes regarding open and positive communication between students and counselors:

Zoom Meetings:

- Several students mentioned Zoom meetings as their preferred method, highlighting the importance of face-to-face interaction even in a virtual setting.

Email Communication:

Email emerged as a popular choice for communication due to its convenience and accessibility for both students and counselors.

In-Person Meetings:

Many students expressed a preference for in-person meetings, indicating the value of personal interaction and connection.

Texting/Chat Options:

- Some students suggested texting or chat options as a way to facilitate quick communication for simple questions or concerns.

Regular Check-Ins:

Students emphasized the importance of regular check-ins and appointments to maintain communication and build rapport with counselors.

Creating a Welcoming Environment:

- There were suggestions to create a welcoming environment where students feel comfortable reaching out for support, whether through scheduled appointments or drop-in hours.

Encouraging Engagement:

- Encouraging students to engage with counselors through events, workshops, or informal gatherings emerged as another theme to foster communication and collaboration.

Active Listening and Empathy:

- Students highlighted the importance of counselors actively listening to their concerns, showing empathy, and understanding their perspectives to facilitate open communication.

Improved Accessibility:

- Suggestions were made to improve the accessibility of counselors through easy-to-use booking systems, multiple communication channels, and clear instructions on how to access counseling services.

Reducing Judgment and Increasing Trust:

- Some students mentioned the need for counselors to be less judgmental and more open-minded, fostering a sense of trust and safety in communication.

Themes of courses students would like to see more of:

- **STEM Fields:** This includes majors like Engineering (various disciplines), Computer Science, Astrophysics, Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Environmental Science, and Robotics.
- **Health Sciences:** This theme encompasses majors related to healthcare, such as Nursing, Radiography, Medical Lab Technician, Physical Therapy, Phlebotomy, Medical Office Administration, Speech Language Pathology, Medical Social Work, and Sports Medicine.
- **Arts and Humanities:** Majors in this category include Fine Arts, Sculpture, Music Industry, Journalism, Broadcasting, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Film Production, Creative Writing, Philosophy, **Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Science.**
- **Business and Management:** This includes majors like Business Administration, Marketing, Accounting, Economics, Organizational Management, International Business, Public Administration, Real Estate, Recreation Management, and Sports Management.

- **Education and Social Services:** Majors related to education and social work fall under this theme, such as Education, Early Childhood Education, Counseling, Social Work, Youth Development, and Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL).
- **Technology and Innovation:** This theme encompasses majors like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, Information Technology, Digital Media, Web Development, Machine Learning, Electronics, and Automation.
- **Environmental Studies:** Majors related to environmental conservation and sustainability, such as Environmental Science, Horticulture, Wildlife Management, and Urban Planning, fall under this theme.
- **Healthcare Support and Allied Health:** Majors in this category include Dental Hygiene, Audiology, Phlebotomy, Medical Lab Technician, Radiography, and Ultrasound Technician.
- **Public Policy and Law:** This theme includes majors like Public Policy, Law, Criminal Justice, Legal Studies, and Administration of Justice.
- **Creative and Media Industries:** Majors related to creative arts, media production, and communication sciences, such as Fine Arts, Film Production, Graphic Design, Broadcasting, Journalism, and Communication Sciences, fall under this theme.

Themes regarding clubs and programs:

Lack of Awareness and Promotion:

- Many students expressed a lack of awareness about clubs and programs, indicating that better promotion and advertising are needed.
- Some mentioned missing out on activities because they were not well-promoted or because they did not know where to find information.

Accessibility and Information Availability:

- Students highlighted the need for easier access to information about club activities, meeting times, and locations.
- Suggestions included having clear communication channels, such as online platforms or bulletin boards, to provide information about clubs and programs.

Timing and Scheduling Conflicts:

- Several students mentioned scheduling conflicts with club activities, particularly for those with work or class commitments.
- They suggested offering more flexible meeting times or alternative ways to engage with clubs for students with busy schedules.

Inclusivity and Representation:

- Some students expressed concerns about the inclusivity and diversity of clubs and programs, suggesting that they should cater to a broader range of interests and backgrounds.
- Others mentioned feeling excluded or marginalized by clubs with specific political or societal agendas.

Communication Channels:

- Students highlighted the importance of effective communication channels for promoting clubs and programs, such as emails, social media, and announcements.
- They emphasized the need for timely and relevant information to encourage participation.

Physical Marketing Materials:

- Several students suggested the use of physical marketing materials, such as flyers and posters, to promote clubs and programs. However, they also mentioned the importance of not overwhelming the campus with excessive signage.

Campus Environment and Spirit:

- Some students mentioned the importance of creating a vibrant campus environment with events, activities, and displays that promote school spirit and community engagement.
- Suggestions included incorporating banners, flags, and other visual elements to attract attention to clubs and programs.

Ease of Access for Non-Campus Students:

- Students attending satellite campuses, such as Lompoc, expressed a desire for more accessible club activities and programs at their location.
- They suggested offering more opportunities for engagement and promoting awareness of available resources.

Themes regarding tutoring services:

Availability and Access:

- Many students mentioned the availability and accessibility of tutoring services, both in terms of physical location and scheduling.
- Some praised the ease of scheduling appointments, while others highlighted challenges in finding available tutors, especially for specific subjects or during certain times.

Quality of Tutors:

- Students expressed varying opinions about the quality of tutors.
- While some praised the knowledge and helpfulness of tutors, others criticized their experience level or perceived lack of expertise in certain subjects.

- Some also mentioned feeling unsupported by tutors who seemed disinterested or unhelpful.

Subject Coverage:

- Several students noted limitations in subject coverage, with some mentioning specific areas like human services, industrial technology, and nursing that lacked tutoring support.
- Others highlighted the absence of tutors for classes associated with certain professions or the need for more variety and availability of tutors across different subjects.

Positive Experiences:

- Despite criticisms and suggestions for improvement, many students shared positive experiences with tutoring services.
- They appreciated the availability of tutoring options, the helpfulness of tutors, and the convenience of both in-person and online tutoring sessions.

Ease of Use and Process:

- Some students commented on the ease of using tutoring services, including the simplicity of scheduling appointments and the flexibility of tutoring formats (e.g., drop-in sessions, online appointments).
- However, others mentioned challenges in accessing tutoring due to complex processes or limited availability.

Themes regarding bus transportation:

Ease of Use and Functionality of the App:

- Some students initially faced difficulties with registering their accounts or using the app, but these issues were eventually resolved.
- Auto-renewal of passes and the convenience of using a student ID were appreciated by some.

Technical Issues and Reliability:

- Several students mentioned experiencing technical issues with the app, such as passes not loading or disappearing, especially when they expired.
- Some encountered delays in pass activation or experienced difficulties with QR codes when boarding buses.

Limited Awareness or Utilization:

- Many students indicated that they were not aware of the bus transportation service or had never used it. Some didn't know about the app or were unsure if it was free.

- Others mentioned having their own transportation or living within walking distance of the college.

Positive Experiences with Bus Transportation:

- Some students expressed satisfaction with the bus transportation service, mentioning that it helped them with transportation and that they appreciated the availability of free transportation for students.

Themes regarding food choices on campus:

Price and Affordability:

- Many students expressed concerns about the high prices of food items on campus, considering them unreasonably expensive for the portion size and quality offered.
- Some students mentioned feeling that the prices were too high for a college budget, making it difficult for them to afford meals on campus regularly.

Variety and Healthier Options:

- Students desire a wider variety of food options, including healthier choices such as fresh foods, salads, and meals with lower calorie and sugar content.
- They expressed a need for more diverse options beyond traditional vending machine snacks, with a particular emphasis on providing options for different dietary needs such as vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, and low-sodium diets.

Quality and Taste:

- Concerns were raised about the quality and taste of the food offered on campus, with some students expressing dissatisfaction with the flavor and overall value of certain items, particularly those from the cafeteria.
- Suggestions included improving the taste of cafeteria meals and offering more flavorful options.

Convenience and Accessibility:

- Several students mentioned issues with the convenience and accessibility of food options on campus.
- This included concerns about the limited hours of operation, especially for students with evening classes, as well as difficulties accessing the cafeteria due to its location or parking challenges.

Vending Machine Reliability:

- Many students reported frequent issues with vending machines, including machines not working, rejecting payments, or dispensing expired or incorrect items.

- There were calls for better maintenance and stocking of vending machines to ensure they function properly and offer a wider range of options.

Customer Service:

- Positive comments were made about friendly and helpful cafeteria staff,
- Some negative experiences were also mentioned, including perceived rudeness and concerns about food handling practices.

Themes regarding physical spaces on campus that needs more development:

Parking Availability and Accessibility:

- Across all campuses (SM, LVC, SYVC), there is a consistent demand for more parking spaces, particularly in areas near popular buildings or where classes are held.
- Many students express frustration with the limited parking options, which can lead to stress and tardiness.

Outdoor Seating and Study Spaces:

- Students desire more outdoor seating areas equipped with benches, tables, and shaded spots where they can study, socialize, or eat.
- Enhancing these spaces can contribute to a more comfortable and inviting campus environment.

Improvement of Campus Facilities:

- Several suggestions focus on improving existing campus facilities, such as updating furniture, providing more amenities like charging stations and trash cans, and ensuring accessibility for all students, including those with disabilities.

Enhanced Lighting and Safety Measures:

- There are concerns about insufficient lighting in certain areas of the campuses, particularly around athletic fields and parking lots.
- Better lighting and safety measures, such as crosswalks and pedestrian signs, are recommended to improve nighttime visibility and security.

Specific Infrastructure Needs:

- Some students highlight specific infrastructure needs, such as the installation of more benches, picnic tables, or umbrellas for outdoor dining areas. Others suggest improvements to facilities like the gym, dance rooms, or library study rooms to better serve student needs.

General Satisfaction and Appreciation:

- While there are areas for improvement, some students express overall satisfaction with the campus environment and facilities.
- They appreciate the efforts made by the college administration but still provide suggestions for further enhancements.

Themes regarding popular spots where students hang out:**Cafeteria:**

- The cafeteria emerged as the most popular spot mentioned by numerous respondents, both inside and outside the cafeteria building.

Student Center:

- The student center was also frequently mentioned as a popular hangout location, offering amenities and seating for students.

Library:

- Many students mentioned the library as a place where they see people gathering, both inside and outside the building.

Quad/Area Outside Buildings:

- Areas such as the quad, courtyard, and outdoor spaces outside various buildings were noted as popular spots for students to hang out and socialize.
- Tables, benches, and seating areas outside buildings like the bookstore, cafeteria, and library were mentioned as common gathering places.

Fine Arts Building:

- Particularly at the Fine Arts Building, including areas near the dance and music departments, where students often congregate.

Math/Writing Centers:

- Some students mentioned spending time in academic support centers like the math and writing centers.

MESA Center:

- The MESA center was highlighted as a popular spot for students to gather, particularly for those seeking academic support.

Themes regarding amenities that could enhance their time on campus:

Study Spaces and Study Rooms:

- Many students mentioned the need for more study spaces and study rooms, particularly at the Santa Maria (SM) campus.
- They expressed a desire for quiet areas where they can focus on their work without distractions.

Charging Areas for Phones and Laptops:

- Several respondents across different campuses highlighted the need for more charging areas for phones and laptops.
- They suggested that these charging areas should be conveniently located throughout the campus and equipped with modern and functional charging stations.

Food Options and Cafeteria Improvements:

- Students expressed varying opinions regarding food options and cafeteria facilities.
- Some suggested adding more food choices, including healthier and more affordable options, while others mentioned specific improvements like better seating arrangements and more diverse cuisine.

Lounge Chairs and Relaxation Areas:

- Many students expressed a desire for comfortable lounge chairs and relaxation areas where they can unwind between classes or during breaks.
- They emphasized the importance of creating inviting spaces for socializing and relaxation.

Additional Amenities for Specific Activities:

- Suggestions for recreational activities like adding pickleball courts.

Themes regarding safety:

Safety Concerns:

- Some students expressed concerns about safety and security on campus, including incidents of theft, the presence of unhoused individuals, and the need for better lighting, especially in parking lots and outdoor walkways.
- Visible security measures and foot patrols were suggested to improve feelings of safety.

Physical Environment and Accessibility:

- Concerns were raised about the campus environment, including difficulties finding buildings due to inadequate signage, issues with transportation, and the campus feeling too empty or lonely.
- Improving signage, accessibility, and transportation options could enhance feelings of security and belonging.

Additional Comments:

- **Positive Feedback and Appreciation:** Several students expressed gratitude and appreciation for the services provided by Allan Hancock College, acknowledging the efforts of the staff and expressing satisfaction with the resources available.
- **Desire for More Classes and Flexibility:** Some students highlighted the need for more class offerings, particularly at the Lompoc Campus, and expressed a desire for increased flexibility in scheduling and course formats, such as online classes.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Students offered suggestions for improvement, such as providing better financial aid counseling, offering incentives for returning students, and improving customer service interactions.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** There were mentions of the importance of accessibility and inclusivity, including the need for information to be available in multiple languages and for services to be accessible to all students.
- **Concerns about Facilities:** A few students raised concerns about specific facilities, such as the design of the F building bathrooms, suggesting areas for improvement.
- **Encouragement and Positive Outlook:** Many students conveyed a positive outlook and encouragement, expressing pride in being a student at Allan Hancock College and offering words of support to the staff and team.