

# The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE)

## Overview of 2008 Survey Results El Camino College

### Introduction

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) provides information about effective educational practice in community colleges and assists institutions in using that information to promote improvements in student learning and persistence.

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE), designed as a companion to the CCSSE, elicits information from faculty about their teaching practices, the ways they spend their professional time, both in and out of class, and their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences.

The CCFSSE report enables participating institutions to view faculty expectations and perceptions of student engagement alongside student responses. However, it is important to remember that the side-by-side tables, while illustrative, are not entirely equivalent – that is, the CCSSE asks students to report perceptions and experiences across the period of the current academic year. Faculty, in contrast, are asked to describe their practices in a specific selected course, as well as to indicate their perceptions of student experiences in the college more generally.

The CCFSSE was administered through the Internet. To view a sample copy of the faculty survey, visit: <http://www.ccsse.org/facsamp.cfm>.

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### CCFSSE Member Colleges

CCFSSE utilizes a 3-year cohort of 286 participating colleges (2006 through 2008) in all of its data analyses,<sup>1</sup> including the computation of benchmark scores. This cohort is referred to as the **2008 CCFSSE Cohort**. This approach increases the total number of institutions and faculty contributing to the national dataset; this in turn increases the reliability of the overall results.

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<sup>1</sup> For returning participants, the college's most recent year of participation is included in data analyses. For example, if a college participated in 2007 and 2008, only the 2008 data would be used in the 3-year cohort.

The college summary is divided into two sections and is organized to provide a general understanding of survey administration and of selected findings from the 2008 CCFSSSE Cohort. In the first section, a profile of El Camino College faculty respondents is provided. This is followed by a summary of selected findings from the engagement and professional activity questions found in the remainder of the survey.

Frequency and percentage responses are provided on each survey question for all faculty with an additional breakdown by employment status (full-time/part-time) in tables published on ECC's Institutional Research website ([www.elcamino.edu/administration/ir](http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/ir) - click on "Surveys" on the left-hand menu bar).

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## Faculty Respondents and Sampling of Course Sections

Faculty teaching at least one credit, non-lower-level-ESL course on campus in Spring 2008 were selected to participate in the CCFSSSE. Out of 759 faculty invited to participate in the online survey, 217 responded (29% response rate,  $\pm 5.6\%$  margin of error with 95% confidence). The average institutional response rate for the 2008 CCFSSSE administration was 30%. A total of 128 (59%) full-time and 89 (41%) part-time faculty responded to the survey, similar to the 2008 CCFSSSE cohort.

On many survey items, faculty were asked to respond considering one selected course they were currently teaching. For all faculty meeting the above criteria, one class was randomly selected from their spring 2008 teaching load to serve as the focus. For faculty who taught sections selected for the *student* survey, this course section may or may not have been the same one selected for the student survey.

## 2008 Faculty Respondent Profile

ECC faculty were queried on a variety of demographic, educational and employment characteristics. Where notably different, percentages for the entire instructional workforce at ECC are provided.

### Gender (survey item #25)

Of the 204 faculty respondents at El Camino College who answered this item, 59% are female and 41% are male. This contrasts with the full population of ECC faculty, comprised of 51% female and 49% male. An even larger percentage of part-time respondents were female (63%) compared to male (37%).

### Racial Identification (survey item #27)

Six percent of respondents identify themselves as African American, 15% as Asian, 11% as Latino/Hispanic, and 65% as White/non-Hispanic. Full-time respondents are more likely to be White/non-Hispanic (71%). Less than 1% of the faculty respondents are Native American. Three percent marked "other" when responding to the question, "What is your racial or ethnic identification?" These response rates are similar to the ethnic distribution of faculty at El Camino College.

### Age Group (survey item #24)

The 2008 CCFSSSE respondents at ECC range in age from 25-29 to over 65 years old. Approximately 46% are between 25 to 49 years old, while 54% are aged 50 or older.

### **Teaching Experience (survey item #22)**

Reflecting in part the current faculty age distribution, 28% of respondents have been teaching for 20 years or more. Over half (55%) have been teaching for 5 to 19 years. Just under 17% have been teaching for less than 5 years.

### **Education (survey item #23)**

Twenty-three percent of faculty respondents have earned a doctorate or professional degree, higher than the CCFSSSE cohort average (18%), while two thirds claim a Master's degree. Nine percent have other degrees or experience.

### **Employment Outside ECC (survey item #28)**

Faculty respondents frequently are employed in other positions outside of El Camino College (58%). Of these, 14% are self-employed, 30% are teaching at another college, 2%-5% are in full-time or part-time non-academic positions, and 4% are in a non-teaching position. Thirteen percent are working in a field related to their teaching position. The percentage of part-time employees working outside ECC was 83%, while 40% of full-timers worked elsewhere.

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## **Selected Findings**

This section of the overview features selected findings from El Camino College faculty about their perceptions of student engagement and how faculty spend their professional time both inside and outside the classroom. Many responses are sub-grouped by employment status.

### **Faculty Perceptions about Student Engagement**

On the CCFSSSE survey, faculty members are asked how often their students participate in activities that encourage engagement, mirroring similar questions asked of students. In the CCFSSSE frequency reports available online, responses from both faculty and students are set side by side to compare perceptions from each group.

Tables 1 through 4 summarize these comparisons grouped under 4 of the 5 CCSSE benchmarks of effective educational practice: Active and Collaborative Learning, Academic Challenge, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Support for Learners (see also *Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice*, available on ECC's Institutional Research website). Each table shows the percentages of faculty and students who indicated that the activity occurred *Often* or *Very Often*. Frequency percentages with larger gaps between faculty and student are highlighted in bold italics.

### **Active and Collaborative Learning**

Table 1 highlights response percentages on items related to Active and Collaborative Learning. Students learn more when they are actively involved in their education and have opportunities to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Through collaboration with others to solve problems or master challenging content, students develop valuable skills that prepare them to deal with the kinds of situations and problems they will encounter in the workplace, community, and their personal lives.

On most of the items, faculty perceived higher frequencies of active learning inside and outside the classroom. Items with larger gaps include asking questions in classes, working on projects with students in class, and tutoring or teaching other students. Students perceived that they

discussed ideas from reading or classes with other students outside of class with much *greater* frequency than faculty thought.

**Table 1: Active and Collaborative Learning (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)**

Active & Collaborative Learning Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions	<b>84%</b>	53%
Made a class presentation	24%	22%
Worked with other students on a project during class	<b>63%</b>	53%
Worked with other students outside of class to prepare class assignments	28%	24%
Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)	<b>17%</b>	9%
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with others outside of class	30%	<b>51%</b>

### Academic Challenge

Challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning and collegiate quality. Items related to academic challenge showed a similar pattern with faculty indicating higher frequency of academically challenging activities than students (see Table 2 and further discussion below).

Although differences between faculty and student responses are large on some items, most students consider ECC courses to be academically rigorous. In fact, El Camino College students indicated higher frequencies of academic challenge than other colleges in the 2008 CCSSE student cohort.

**Table 2: Academic Challenge (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)**

Academic Challenge Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Worked harder than they thought they could to meet your standards or expectations	<b>56%</b>	49%
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea, experience or theory	<b>80%</b>	72%
Synthesized and organized ideas, information, or experiences in new ways	<b>82%</b>	63%
Made judgments about the value or soundness of information, arguments or methods	60%	57%
Applied theories or concepts to practical problems or in new situations	<b>70%</b>	59%
Used information they have read or heard to perform a new skill	67%	62%

In addition to the items above, students and faculty were both queried about the volume of work asked of students. In question 6, when asked about the number of assigned textbooks, manuals, books and reading packets, most faculty (80%) indicated that they typically assigned 1 to 3. However, about 44% of *students* indicated that they read 4 or fewer textbooks, books or reading packets during the entire school year. This breaks out by educational status as 51% of part-time students and 27% of full-time students; 66% of full-time students read between 0 and 10 books per year. Similar results were found in terms of the number of papers students were asked to write.

Another indicator of academic challenge is the perceived difficulty of examinations in terms of challenging students to do their best work. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is easy and 7 is extremely challenging, the mean faculty rating was 5.4, while the mean student rating was 4.8. Students tended to find their current-year exams slightly easier than faculty evaluating their selected course.

Finally, both faculty and students were asked how much El Camino College encourages students to “spend significant amounts of time studying.” Sixty-eight percent of faculty and 74% of students indicated “Quite a bit” or “Very much.”

### Student-Faculty Interaction

The more contact students have with their teachers, the more likely they are to learn effectively and to persist toward achievement of their educational goals. Personal interaction with faculty members strengthens students’ connections to the college and helps them focus on their academic progress.

As Table 3 highlights, on every item listed, faculty reported higher rates of interaction than students did, most notably with respect to communicating via email, discussing grades, receiving prompt feedback (written and oral), and discussing grades or assignments.

**Table 3: Student-Faculty Interaction (Responses of *Often* or *Very Often*)**

Student-Faculty Interaction Items	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Used e-mail to communicate with you	<b>63%</b>	44%
Discussed grades and assignments with you	<b>78%</b>	42%
Talked about career plans with you	<b>42%</b>	23%
Discuss ideas from their readings or classes with you outside of class	<b>31%</b>	14%
Received prompt feedback (written or oral) from you about their performance	<b>93%</b>	52%
Worked with you on activities other than coursework	11%	9%

### Support for Learners

Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relationships among different groups on campus.

Community college students also benefit from services targeted to assist them with academic and career planning, academic skill development, and other issues that may affect both learning and retention.

Table 4 highlights faculty and student evaluations of El Camino College’s support for learners. Although some gaps are much wider than others, a much larger percentage of faculty than students on many items felt that the college emphasized activities and services that support learners. ECC student ratings on items in this category were, overall, above the national average.

**Table 4: Support for Learners (Responses of “Quite a bit” or “Very Much”)**

How much does ECC emphasize...	Faculty Responses	Student Responses
Providing students the support they need to help them to succeed at this college	<b>83%</b>	72%
Encouraging contact among students from different econ., social and racial backgrounds	<b>66%</b>	55%
Helping students cope with their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc)	<b>51%</b>	27%
Providing students the support students need to thrive socially	38%	37%
Providing the financial support students need to afford their education	<b>66%</b>	42%

### How Students Spend Their Time

Faculty and students also were queried about the number of hours students spend, on average, doing a variety of tasks. Students indicated that they spent only slightly more time preparing for class than faculty thought.

A more dramatic difference was found in terms of working for pay. Nearly all faculty thought that students worked at some kind of job, with 38% indicating that students worked 6 to 20 hours per week and 61% that they worked 21 hours or more. Twenty-two percent of students reported not working at all (17% of part-time, 32% of full-time), while 28% indicated they worked 6 to 20 and 50% worked more than 20. Similarly, most faculty (86%) perceived that students spend at least some hours per week providing care for dependents (parent, child, spouse, etc). In comparison, 55% of students indicated that they provide some level of care to a dependent in a typical week. Twenty-three percent of students indicated heavier obligations of 11 or more hours per week, while 48% faculty perceived that students were so involved. Faculty and student perceptions on weekly commute times were more similar to each other. However, on average, faculty thought students commuted longer distances than students indicated.

Finally, a much larger percentage of faculty thought students spent more time participating in college-sponsored activities, such as clubs, campus publications, student government and sports. Eighty-five percent of faculty thought students were involved on campus at some level, while only 17% of students indicated any involvement. However, most faculty (76%) thought that the involvement was low (1 to 5 hours per week).

## How Faculty Spend Their Time

Faculty were queried about how they spend their time in a typical week both inside and outside the classroom. Table 5 summarizes time spent on teaching-related and other professional tasks, while Table 6 examines in-class activities.

Question 15 highlights the teaching-related and other professional activities on which full- and part-time faculty reported spending their time in a typical 7-day week (Table 5). As expected, full-time faculty reported spending more hours teaching students than their part-time counterparts. Interestingly, though, roughly equal percentages of both groups spent 1 and 12 hours a week on many other teaching-related activities. However, a much larger percentage of full-time faculty spent between 1 and 12 hours on other professional activities such as advising students, working with students on activities other than coursework, and interactions with students outside the classroom.

**Table 5: Hours Spent on Selected Activities in a Typical 7-day Week**

Hours per week spent on ...	Part-time			Full-time		
	1-12	13-20	20+	1-12	13-20	20+
<b>Teaching-related Activities</b>						
Teaching students in class	72%	29%	9%	27%	57%	17%
Grading papers	92%	6%	1%	82%	12%	4%
Giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students	96%	2%	1%	93%	6%	1%
Preparing for class	89%	8%	3%	91%	8%	1%
Reflecting and working on ways to improve my teaching	92%	7%	1%	95%	3%	2%
<b>Other Professional Activities</b>						
Research and scholarly activities	76%	6%	1%	82%	4%	1%
Working with honors projects	16%	0%	0%	18%	0%	0%
Advising students	75%	2%	1%	84%	2%	2%
Supervising internships or field experience	17%	1%	0%	18%	4%	0%
Working with students on activities other than course work	27%	0%	0%	56%	3%	1%
Involvement in other interactions with students outside the classroom	57%	0%	0%	74%	1%	3%
Conducting service activities	36%	0%	0%	31%	0%	1%

Question 16 asks faculty to report the percentage of class time spent on activities such as lecture, student computer use, and small group activities. The highest percentage for each



activity is in bold italics. Twenty-nine percent of faculty respondents revealed spending 50% or more of their class time lecturing, slightly lower than the 2008 CCFSSSE cohort. El Camino College faculty tend to spend more time on small group activities compared to faculty at other participant colleges, with 58% of ECC faculty devoting 10% of class time or more compared to 47% at other colleges. A greater percentage of ECC faculty also spend class time with hands-on practice and experiential activities such as lab and field work, performances, clinical placements, and internships; 44% devote at least some time to experiential activities compared with 35% nationally. ECC faculty spend slightly less time on teacher-led discussion than the cohort average.

**Table 6: Percent of Class Time Spent on Various Activities (All Faculty)**

Percent spent on ...	0%	1-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-39%	40-49%	50-74%	75-100%
Lecture	0%	9%	15%	17%	13%	16%	<b>20%</b>	9%
Teacher-led discussion	3%	20%	<b>30%</b>	17%	10%	7%	7%	6%
Teacher-student shared responsibility	24%	<b>27%</b>	18%	13%	6%	3%	4%	5%
Student computer use	<b>49%</b>	24%	7%	6%	3%	3%	6%	1%
Small group activities	14%	<b>28%</b>	21%	17%	7%	6%	5%	2%
Student presentations	33%	<b>42%</b>	15%	4%	3%	0%	1%	1%
In-class writing	36%	<b>38%</b>	15%	5%	1%	1%	3%	0%
Testing and evaluation	3%	<b>42%</b>	36%	8%	5%	2%	2%	1%
Performances in applied and fine arts	<b>93%</b>	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Experiential (labs, field work, art exhibits, clinical)	<b>56%</b>	16%	8%	4%	3%	2%	9%	0%
Hands-on practice	<b>23%</b>	19%	18%	8%	6%	9%	13%	4%

Finally, question 19 asked faculty about aspects of their teaching role that further support student engagement. Figure 1 highlights the percentage of participation in each area by employment status.

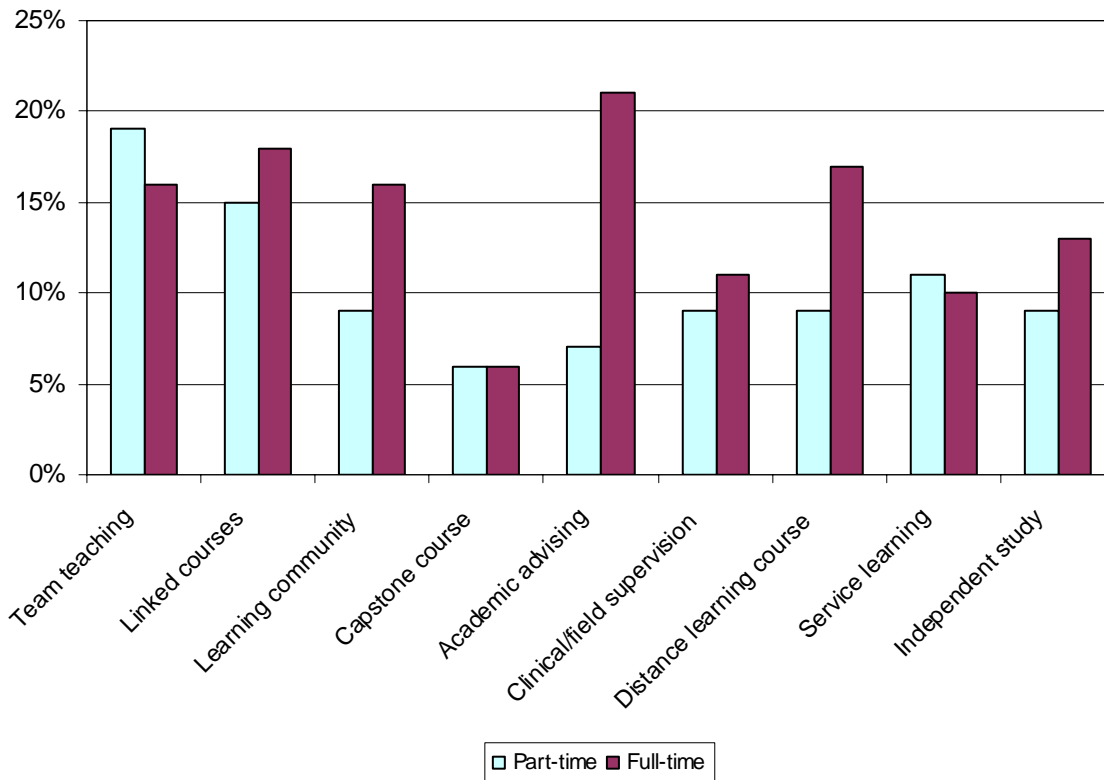
Part-time ECC faculty were more likely to than their full-time colleagues to participate in team teaching and more than twice as likely to participate in such activities compared to the 2008 CCFSSSE cohort (19% vs. 9%). Part-timers were less likely than full-timers to participate in other engagement activities with the exception of clinical/field experiences and service learning.

Full-time faculty were much more likely to provide students with academic advising than part-time faculty, but at a much lower rate when compared to the CCFSSSE cohort. This may be partially due to the fact that some colleges provide departmental-based academic advising (60% nationally). Full-timers were more likely to teach linked courses (18%) and within learning



communities (16%) than the national cohort (13% and 12%, respectively). However, they were much less likely to teach a capstone course (6% vs. 16% nationally). In addition, full-time faculty at ECC were less than half as likely to participate in distance education (17%) compared to the national average (35%).

**Figure 1: Aspects of Teaching Role**



## **Conclusion and Future Directions**

In general, faculty at El Camino College (as at other institutions) perceive that students participate in engagement activities more often than students perceive they do themselves. The survey also revealed important information on students’ lives outside the classroom, which found them working and supporting families much less, on average, than faculty perceived they did. Finally, faculty reported on the current levels of engagement activities they pursue in a variety of questions. Responses revealed that ECC is at the vanguard in some areas (part-time faculty involvement, team teaching, learning communities), but less involved than average in others (capstone courses, distance learning courses).

The evidence is strong and often unequivocal that increasing engagement of students improves academic success and persistence. This can be achieved in a variety of ways both inside and outside the classroom. Since engagement research guided the development of questions for both the *CCSSE* student survey and *CCFSSE* faculty survey, local responses and their comparison within the campus and to other survey participants can suggest areas where El Camino College might expand its successes or benefit from greater focus.