



Introduction

This study was conducted to record and measure the experiences of students who have not reenrolled at Kapi`olani Community College during the academic year 2015-2016. These students include those who have graduated, transferred or dropped out of college. Student retention and graduation is a major goal for the Kapi`olani Community College and its "55 by 25" initiative. This study was conducted to see how Kapi`olani Community College initiatives have improved and identify any deficiencies/obstacles students experienced during their time at Kapi`olani Community College. Kapi'olani Community College's efforts to fulfill its strategic directions 1 and 3 in 2016-2021 are assessed by this survey which identifies elements that have led to the successful transfer of students to a UH 4-year campus as well as increase degree completion (strategic outcome 1). The study also helped identify barriers which impede student re-enrollment toward their higher educational goals (strategic outcome 3).

Methodology

Survey questions were identical to those of the Grad Leavers Survey which was conducted in the 2014-2015 academic year. Surveys were distributed on-line through Survey Monkey to 1,039 student University of Hawaii email addresses, beginning on January 20th and ending on

March 15th. Students were given a period of 3 months to complete the study. There were 104 survey completions or 10.0% of all those eligible to complete the survey. Weekly reminders were sent to grad leavers every week (for those who have either left the study incomplete or have not participated) during the first half of the survey period. During the second half of the survey period, a reminder was sent to grad leavers who had not yet responded to the survey and to those who left the survey incomplete. Survey answers collected from the 2015-2016 study were compared to the 2014-2015 Grad Leavers Survey. The number of respondents to the survey was 104, a decline from the 220 respondents to the 2014-15 survey.

Question Responses

Response to question one of the survey was positive, with 86.6% of respondents rating the overall quality of their academic experience at Kapi'olani CC as good or excellent.

Q1: How would you rate the overall quality of your academic experience at Kapi'olani Community College?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Excellent	43.6%	96	48.1%	50
Good	45.0%	99	38.5%	40
Fair	9.6%	21	8.7%	9
Poor	1.8%	4	4.8%	5
Totals	100%	220	100%	104

Respondents to Question 2 indicated 92% thought the quality of academic programs at Kapi'olani Community College met or exceeded their expectations.

Q2: How would you rate the quality of academic programs at Kapi'olani Community College?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Better than expected	54.1%	119	55.8%	58
About what Expected	42.7%	94	36.5%	38
Worse than Expected	3.2%	7	7.7%	8
Totals	100%	220	100%	104

Almost 90% (89.5%) of respondents to Question three were satisfied or very satisfied in regards to the academic preparation they received.

Q3: How satisfied were you with the academic preparation you received?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Very Satisfied	34.5%	76	33.7%	35
Satisfied	57.7%	127	55.8%	58
Dissatisfied	6.4%	14	6.7%	7
Very dissatisfied	1.4%	3	3.9%	4
Totals	100%	220	100%	104

The overwhelming majority of respondents (93%) rated the quality of their Kapi'olani CC degree as average or better.

Q4: How would you rate the quality of your degree or certificate from Kapi'olani Community College?				
	Response Percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Above average	44.9%	97	43.0%	43
Average	50.9 %	110	50.0%	50
Below average	4.2 %	9	7.0 %	7
Totals	100%	216	100%	100

In answers to Question 5, just under three-fifths of survey respondents indicated they achieved their educational objectives in full at Kapi'olani Community College.

Q5: Did you achieve your educational objective at Kapi'olani Community College?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Yes, Fully	55.9%	123	57.3%	59
Yes, Partially	39.5%	87	34.0%	35
No	4.6%	10	8.7%	9
Totals	100%	220	100%	103

Over three out of four respondents are interested in pursuing additional education. Of the 24 2015-16 survey respondents not interested in pursuing further education 17 are either employed full time or unemployed by choice.

Q6: Are you pursuing additional education?				
	Response Percent 2014-2015	Response Count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Yes	82.2%	180	76.9%	80
No	17.8%	39	23.1%	24
Totals	100%	219	100%	104

Of those respondents who are employed part-time or unemployed by choice, 54 out of 62 are pursuing further education. This suggests respondents are choosing to either finance additional education through part-time employment or, in the interests of timely graduation, by accepting a debt burden.

Q7: What is your current employment status?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Employed full time	33.3%	73	33.0%	34
Employed part-time	42.0%	92	41.8%	43
Unemployed by choice	11.0%	24	18.5%	19
Unemployed seeking work	11.9 %	26	4.9 %	5
Full time homemaker/ caregiver	1.8%	4	1.9%	2
Totals	100%	219	100%	103

Nearly three of five respondents (56.8%) say their job (if employed) is directly or indirectly related to their KCC education, a decline from the 78.0% reported in the 2014-15 survey.

Q8: Is your job related to the education and training you received?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Closely Related	51.8 %	85	39.2 %	29
Indirectly related	26.2%	43	17.6%	13
Not at all related	22.0%	36	43.2%	32
Totals	100%	164	100%	74

And 82% of respondents say their KCC education at least adequately prepared them for their job.

Q9: How well did the education and training you received prepare you for your current job?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Well prepared	32.9%	53	26.0%	19
Moderately Well Prepared	41.0%	66	32.9%	24
Adequately prepared	23.6%	38	23.3%	17
Poorly prepared	2.5%	4	17.8%	13
Totals	100%	161	100%	73

About two out of three respondents to the survey (70%) are graduates of Kapi'olani Community College

Q10: Are you a graduate from Kapi'olani Community College?				
	Response percent 2014-2015	Response Count 2014-2015	Response percent 2015-2016	Response count 2015-2016
Yes	67.6%	140	70.2%	66
No	32.4%	67	29.8%	28
Totals	100%	207	100%	94

Question 11 was an open-ended item asking students who graduated from KCC to list important factors that got them through KCC. The 49 responses to this question were grouped into the following categories:

- 1) Internal motivation (18 responses)
- 2) Positive interactions with faculty (14 responses)
- 3) Kapi'olani CC support networks (peers, staff) 14 responses
- 4) Financial support (3 responses)

Excluding internal motivation which is not amenable to change by Kapi'olani CC, students broadly cited positive personal contact and support as helping them succeed at KCC. The respondents who wrote "The most important thing to me was the feeling of ohana and having such an Aloha based environment..." and the respondent who wrote "Teachers and the small class atmosphere..." reflected overall comments in these two categories.

Question 12 is the second half of the follow up to question 10 and asks students who reported not graduating from KCC what prevented them from re-enrolling. There were 21 responses to this question.

- 1) Transferred to other schools and/or left Honolulu or are still pursuing studies at KCC (Nine responses)
- 2) Financial reasons (3 responses)
- 3) A three-way tie at two respondents each between persons citing procedural obstacles blocking enrollment, inability to successfully learn course material and criticism of instruction at KCC in general.

When students were asked in Question 13 about the things that they found most beneficial the top 5 responses are as follows:

- 1) Interaction with faculty and staff (12 responses)
- 2) Items related broadly to instructional mode (availability of distance learning sections-five responses, study facilities-4 responses and hands-on/practical training-seven responses)
- 3) Interaction with students (7 responses)

One respondent cited all help offered by KCC "All the available resources. From tutoring, to financial aid, extended library hours, a range of class times, online classes, and clubs that help get students involved. Responses to Question 13 did suggest that the responders found "things beneficial" and "things that helped them to graduate", (i.e. Question 11) to be nearly identical questions.

Question 14 asked respondents what obstacles they encountered while attending KCC. There were 49 responses to this question. Responses are as follows, with the top categories being:

- 1) Competing obligations (The need to work to pay for their studies, care-giving responsibilities, commuting time requirements-21 respondents)
- 2) Lack of knowledge in navigating the educational system, from registration to financial aid and the transfer process-9 respondents
- 3) Negative experiences with faculty-6 responses
- 4) Difficulty with the coursework-4 responses

When grad leaver students were asked in Question 15 “What could be done to enhance the educational experience at KCC?” the largest category of responses broadly covered the topic of providing support to faculty for instructional improvement (9 respondents). The other broad category of responses dealt with improving advising and expanding facility hours, on-line section offerings and hands-on instruction (9 respondents).

When graduates were asked what the most important thing that KCC could do to support students graduating the top answers were as follows:

- 1) Improve and enhance advising (14 respondents)
- 2) Improve job placement services and programs (6 respondents)

Summary of responses

Respondents are positive about the quality of education and their experiences at Kapi’olani Community College, both in the 2015-16 academic year survey and in the preceding 2014-15 academic year Graduates and Leavers Survey.

The best things about education at Kapi’olani CC according to respondents are the opportunities for personal interaction and supportive relationships with faculty, staff and peers. To that end, respondents stress the value of academic advising, counseling and student support services. Their greatest hindrance to a successful educational experience at KCC involve lack of the same and lack of time. This includes negative experiences with faculty and staff, difficulty in navigating the educational system, and lack of availability of needed facilities at times needed by them. As in the 2014-15 survey, students show interest in improving hours of operation of study facilities such as the S.T.E.M. center, Library, or even the cafeteria as a place to study. Lack of time due to competing obligations-work, family and the commuting time necessary to go from work to school to caregiving obligations. In relief of this burden, they support expanded on-line course offerings, evening and weekend classes and facility use and greater financial aid.

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