RISC Survey Results

CUSTOM QUESTIONS SUMMARY | SPRING 2022

The AVC community was given the opportunity to ask ten custom questions within the Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges (RISC) survey administration in Spring 2022, with a total of 1,290 respondents. Students were asked several closed-ended questions about their most significant challenges, course type preferences, use of services, and their interest in returning to campus. Additionally, students were asked an open-ended question about their interest in returning to campus. The themes that emerged from the analysis of the open-ended questions are presented in the report.

The following section presents the results of the closed-ended questions that were asked in the custom set. Questions captured students' course-type preferences, greatest challenges, learning and skill-building, the likelihood of returning to campus, and use of services.

Course-Type Preferences

Students were asked about modality type preferences. Most students (65%) would like to see a mix of face-to-face and online classes, with 36% having a preference of 'mostly face-to-face with some online classes.' The next highest selected option was 'mostly online but some face-to-face classes.'
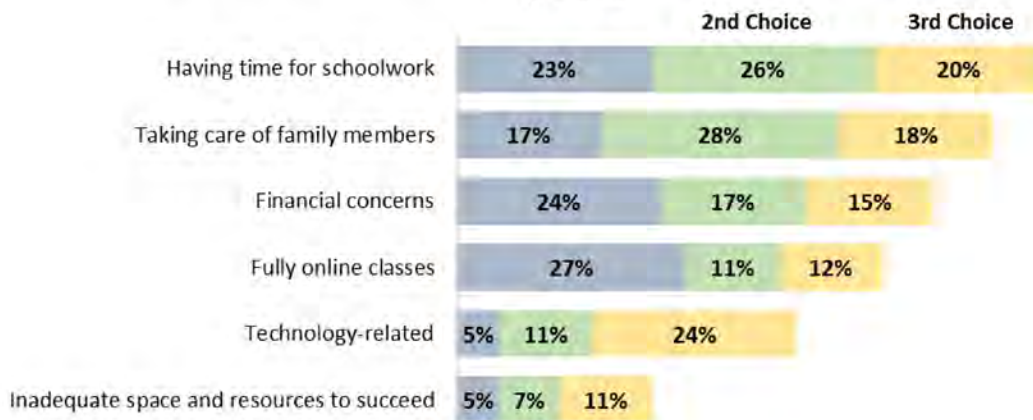
Figure 1. Which type of courses do you prefer? (N=1199)

Course Type	Percentage
Fully Online Classes (n=283)	24%
Mostly Online but Some Face-to-Face Classes (n=344)	29%
Mostly Face-to-Face with Some Online Classes (n=426)	36%
Only Face-to-Face Classes (n=146)	12%
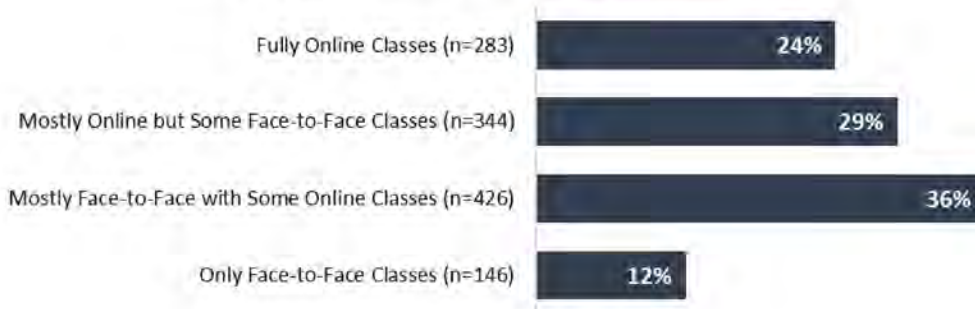
Greatest Challenges

Students were asked to rank their greatest challenges in the past year. When looking at just the first choice, we see that having fully online classes was their greatest challenge (27%), followed by finding time for schoolwork (23%). However, when we look at all the choices combined, we see that most students selected 'having time for schoolwork' as their greatest challenge in the past year.
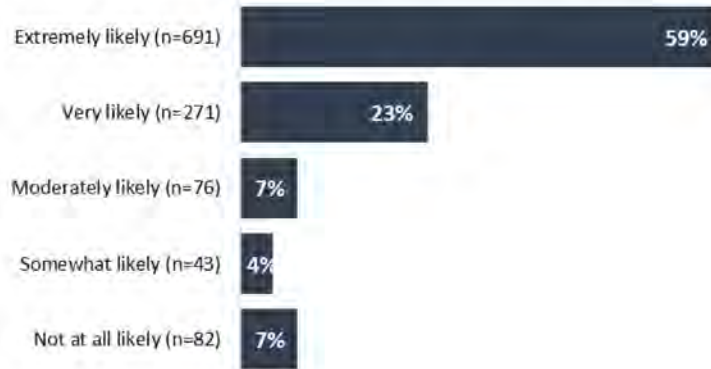
Figure 2. During the past year, what were your greatest challenges? Please rank the challenges listed below with the most challenging at the top. (N=1213)

Challenge	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice
Having time for schoolwork	23%	26%	20%
Taking care of family members	17%	28%	18%
Financial concerns	24%	17%	15%
Fully online classes	27%	11%	12%
Technology-related	5%	11%	24%
Inadequate space and resources to succeed	5%	7%	11%

Return to Campus

Students were asked about how likely they were to return to campus in Fall 2022. The majority of students indicated that they were 'very likely to 'extremely likely' to return to campus in the Fall term.
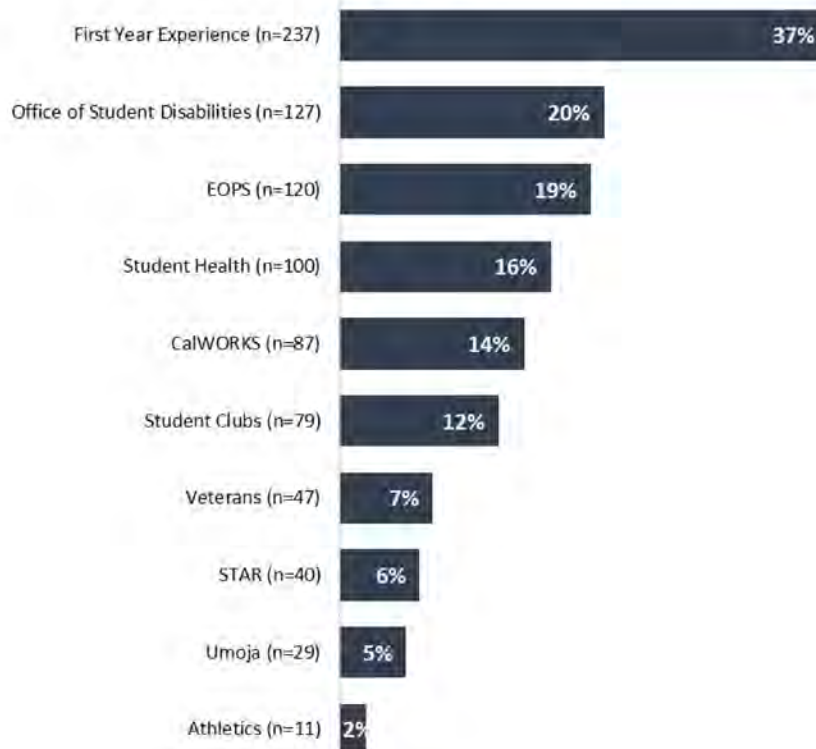
Figure 4. If you are not graduating or transferring, how likely are you to return to campus in fall 2022? (N=1163)

Category	Percentage
Extremely likely (n=691)	59%
Very likely (n=271)	23%
Moderately likely (n=76)	7%
Somewhat likely (n=43)	4%
Not at all likely (n=82)	7%

Use of Services

Students were asked which services they used in the last year. The most accessed services by students who took the survey were First Year Experience, Office of Student with Disabilities, and EOPS.

Figure 5. Are you using the following services? Check all that apply. (N=877)

Service	Percentage
First Year Experience (n=237)	37%
Office of Student Disabilities (n=127)	20%
EOPS (n=120)	19%
Student Health (n=100)	16%
CalWORKS (n=87)	14%
Student Clubs (n=79)	12%
Veterans (n=47)	7%
STAR (n=40)	6%
Umoja (n=29)	5%
Athletics (n=11)	2%

The findings of the open-ended questions students were asked are summarized in the following section.

When asked, **"What might keep you from returning to campus?"** Students revealed a multitude of reasons that might keep them from returning to campus. The reasons included things that occurred both on campus and at home. The themes related to their campus experience are highlighted.

Return to Campus

Do Not Feel Supported

Students' comments related to this theme said they did not feel supported based on interactions on campus. A few students did not feel supported by staff and instructors on campus. Here are a few examples of what students said relating to support:

> *"The lack of attention and help I have asked for regarding a professor. My feelings didn't seem to care and when I reached out no one ever got back to me."*

> *"Uncaring Professors, professors who are rude and flirting with students, staff who has little to no knowledge of what students need answers too."*

Classes Needed Are Not Available

In addition to issues with scheduling, some students said that the classes they needed to graduate were not available. A few students said that the Ethnic studies course required to fulfill the transfer requirement was unavailable at AVC. Others said that classes were full or the classes they needed were not available. Below are a few examples of what students are saying about class availability:

> *"A decrease in the number of classes available for my degree or the time[s] they are available."*

> *"AVC does not have enough capacity to allow me to enroll in classes as per my Ed Plan even with priority registration and I do not have 2 years to complete what should take 1 year."*

> *"Classes I need not being offered in time for graduation. Lack of space in classes offered."*

> *"Classes [I need] aren't available because they're full and I can't even get on the waitlist."*

Course Scheduling/Modality Options

Many students said schedules and modalities were not varied enough or that class schedules did not fit with their work or life schedules. Based on student responses, having choices in their class schedule was essential for their return to campus. Presented are a few examples of what students said about AVC's course schedules and modality options:

> *"Availability in classes and the class schedule. I work full time during the day, most classes are offered during the day. I cannot take time off from work. Cost of living is too high to not work."*

> *"All classes are in person. Online classes have helped me continue to work and get my studies done."*

Furthermore, students also revealed personal hardships that would keep them from returning to campus. The major themes related to students' personal lives are presented below.

Child Care and Other Familial Responsibilities

Some students identified childcare and other family responsibilities as reasons for not returning to campus. A few students said that online courses allowed them to balance their home life to advance their education.

> *"… I lost my hours for childcare for school due to my GPA being low because I had dropped my summer and fall classes in 2021 due to losing both of my parents."*

> *"Family and financial concerns may keep me from returning to campus."*

> *"I am currently trying to get approved to get my 7-month-old nephew out of the foster system."*

Financial Hardship

Financial hardship was one of the main issues for not returning to campus. A few students mentioned the **cost of books**. Others said they could not secure **financial aid**, or it was not enough to **cover their living expenses**. Additionally, a few students mentioned needing to work full-time to support their families. Presented are just a few of their responses:

> *"Finances. If I were not able to secure Financial Aid or Student Loans to be able to take care of my family, it would be impossible to continue."*

> *"Financial concerns. When you make too much on paper but, you don't make enough to survive."*

> *"I need to gain resources to receive childcare and since my unemployment is running out, I need to establish full-time work. Ultimately my goal would be to balance work/school/family life well and actually make good grades, but I can't do so without the aforementioned resources."*

> *"…As for finances, the parking pass is inconvenient at best, and financial hardship at worst. I've known some homeless students, and I imagine with increased gas prices, the price of parking would be rough on them. Additionally, only one or two companies are selling the textbooks, which might be why the price is so unjustly high. The colleges ought to either figure out a way to lower those prices or at least stop pushing students and professors to use those expensive textbooks…"*

Transportation/Commute

Transportation/Commute is a burden for students who do not have a reliable mode of transportation or live far away from campus. A few students also said that **gas prices** were a reason that may keep them away from campus or would prefer to take classes online.

> *"Transportation because I only have one car and that's my mom's car, and it's about 40 minutes away from my house. Transportation is the only keeping me away from my face-to-face classes. Without online classes, I don't think I will be able to go to college at all."*

> *"Also taking in the consideration of gas at the moment if I have to go to the Lancaster campus that's a huge increase in gas/car usage. I would appreciate more diversity of classes available at the Palmdale Center."*

Increase in COVID Cases

A few students expressed that an increase in COVID-19 cases would affect their return to campus.

> *"At the moment nothing, only if covid case continue to rise I will resort to online."*

> *"Another mandate/closure imposed by the Corona Virus."*

> *"I would say health and safety since AVC has reported a lot of Covid-19 cases over the past year because I do not feel that I would be comfortable on a campus with so many Covid cases."*

Other Opportunities Present

Some students said that if other opportunities that provided them financial stability were presented, they would forgo continuing at AVC. Respondents in this theme mainly identified **full-time work** as a factor.

> *"A potential career with the county which will require me to enroll in a tech school in Los Angeles."*

"Applying for jobs or getting a full-time job."

"Being in a position where I need to choose between financial stability and school."

When asked, **"What can AVC do to further improve the student experience?"** students made several insightful recommendations for improving their experience here on campus. The larger themes listed in this section were related

to improving the campus environment, student support resources, and accessibility.

Campus Life

Many students said they would like the campus environment to be livelier. They would like to see more social events, distractions to keep their minds off stressors, more food options, and/or a café. Here are a few suggestions students made regarding the campus environment:

"AVC could have some more things to do outside of class during a semester. Whether it be a band performing or a play being acted out. Anything creative to take the students' mind away from off-campus stressors."

"Add more life to the school. One subway isn't enough to keep students happy and is inconvenient when students feel they have to drive off-campus for meals because they're tired of just Subway. More food opportunities and even a cafe would not only bring more life to the campus but also more opportunities for students who want to work..."

"Have more fun social events. Students usually come to class and leave. It would be great to bring some excitement to AVC. Update building. Vending machines are always broken or have the same things. The bookstore and the lounge area need a serious makeover. It's not inviting whatsoever. Bring a culinary arts program that could possibly solve the cafeteria issue."

"We need a coffee shop at the campus. I have to drive to Starbucks, and they want between $5-8 for one cup of coffee. The coffee out of the machine is very hot, and sometimes students will accidentally bump into me. This causes the coffee to spill because it does not have a lid from the vending machine."

Safety

Students that brought up safety would like to see a designated ride-share pick-up/drop-off zone and a better campus security presence. Presented are some examples of what students are saying about safety on campus:

"It would be nice to have a drop-off spot or drop-off roundabout in one of the parking lots. I don't drive so it would be really nice to have somewhere to wait for my ride that's covered and well-lit. I've seen many students wait for rides after class and it'd be nice to have somewhere to wait. Pasadena City College has a great drop-off area that seems very convenient..."

"Better presence of campus security especially evenings."

Classroom Environment

Some students mentioned that they had taken classes where they felt instructors could connect with students more. 'Empathy', 'compassion', and 'understanding' were words used to describe what they would like to see in the classroom. A few students mentioned better conflict resolution when issues arise in the classroom and collecting regular feedback from students. Here is what students had to say about improving the classroom environment:

"...have teachers who are willing to connect with students on a personal level and actually care about how they are doing both inside and outside the class. HAVE COMPASSIONATE PROFESSORS!!!!!"

"Fairly handle classroom conflict with teachers and students better than the way mine has been handled."

"Do more audits on Professors. Ask students to give feedback mid-semester to ensure they are getting the right support from professors."

"Making sure the teachers TEACH the material. Not just read off a PowerPoint. Explain, break down, explore, whatever. That will help some actually understand and retain the information."

New Student On-Boarding/Outreach

Some students felt that new student onboarding could be improved. A few students suggested having staff around campus to give new students directions, others said they would like guidance on college life, such as clubs and student services, and a student suggested that we improve community outreach in our service area. Here are some examples of what students had to say about new student onboarding/outreach:

"AVC can start by motivating students on campus to join helpful/educational clubs and tutoring. Most students are confused when they enter the community college. A simple field trip tour of the campus is not enough."

"AVC can have helpers around the school and have them help students with directions if they are first-time comers."

"I would like to see more prospective student outreach all over the community. I don't think it is wise to only do outreach at high schools. They should also attend other community events. In many communities, people do not know anyone who has attended college. They might just need some face-to-face interaction and information. More trades and certificates should be offered more visible about services offered to incoming students."

Registration process

A few students said that facilitating the registration process would improve the experience at AVC.

"Honestly, figure out how to make enrolling easier. Other than that, your staff is very helpful and professional. The environment is great. The professors are so amazing. My peer mentor has been so helpful all semester. I'm learning so much. I'm proud to be a marauder."

"Make it easier to register. fix the website so it is easier to navigate through the process of registering for classes."

Communication About student resources

Some felt that information about the resources available on campus and graduation are not clearly communicated. One student pointed out that the website and the information on some web pages need to be updated.

"Advertise all the available resources so students can know about them. As well as create more events for students to be a part of."

"…update the website (MANY pages are outdated)."

"There should be more knowledge readily available on the topics of how to apply for graduation, how to apply for transfer, what we can do with our associate degrees, and what degrees we can further pursue in a university. These are several things that I've never been taught or learned about."
Advising."

Advising

Some students said would like clear advising on their academic journey. A few students felt that counselors were not on the same page on requirements or that the course requirements posted on the website did not match with what they were being told. Others felt that when given disparate advice, their student journey was prolonged more than necessary. Presented are a few examples of what students suggested can be improved with our advising services:

"Again, just better academic advisors. Lots of time wasted and classes are taken that don't even apply to the degree attained."

"Have an understandable course requirement info available that doesn't contradict what counseling states."

"…for counselors to be on the same page. I have had different appointments with different counselors and have had different things being told."

Course Scheduling

Students felt the class schedule was not meeting their needs. They would like to see more classes scheduled throughout the day and have the choice of online and in-person modalities. A few students mentioned that they were not able to register for the classes they needed because were not available or many classes were overlapping. Below are some examples of what students are saying about course scheduling:

"Anything to help me take courses with my varied work schedule. Whether it be more varied course times or fully online courses for more subjects. I'm able to dedicate one or two days to on-campus classes, but I'm not always able to find courses that all line up on those days, especially for my major."

"I wanted to take more classes, but they overlap so I have to continue as a part-time student."

"Make additional courses available during the evening and weekend hours (even online courses, if they are only offered during daytime working hours they are inaccessible). Don't publish a schedule for the next term and then make changes and remove options once it's published."

"Preparing enough classes, because I am in the waiting list and could not register in the class which I need to finish as a prerequisite. This is not fair."

Affordability

Many students felt that attending college should be much more affordable. Students mentioned that along with increases in the cost of living, the cost of attending AVC also increased. They said the cost of textbooks, transportation to college, and few resources for part-time students.

"Lower the cost of attendance all across the board. The money required to attend since I started has more than doubled."

"They should make it so that part-time students can have bus transportation too. The public transportation is not always reliable, but it would help lots. Also giving food cards so that those who can't drive out to eat somewhere between classes can afford to eat. Offering more help to people who don't qualify for financial aid, BOG, or a scholarship."

Inclusivity/Diversity

Students would like to see more diversity at AVC. They would like to see increased staff diversity, faculty involvement in spaces like the DREAM Center, and the creation of welcoming spaces for students of minoritized backgrounds.

"Be more inclusive and supportive of their minority students. More faculty should involve themselves with departments such as the Dreamers Center and clubs."

"Have a more diverse staff - More African American Staff."

"Help students get involved more and offer more opportunities for undocumented students."

"Increase awareness on diversity and create a more welcoming space for LGBTQ and POC students."
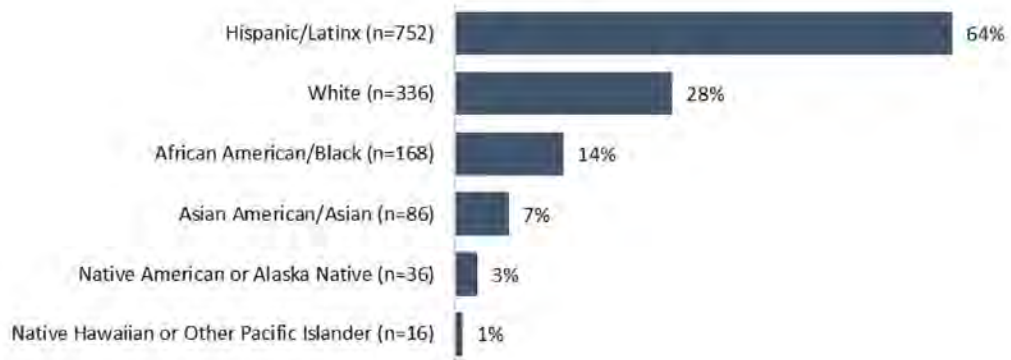
Technology

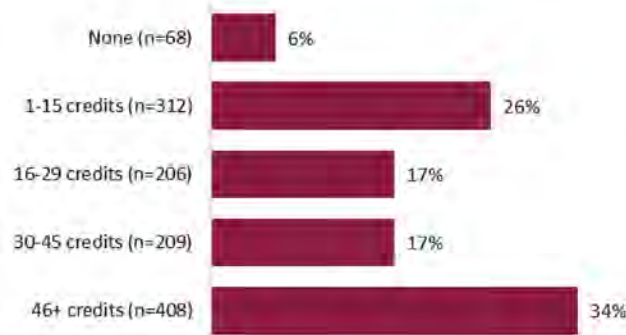A couple of students said they would like tools for their class available in computer labs.

"Provide more resources for some computer labs such as tablets (screen or not) so that it can help students who need them such as digital media students."
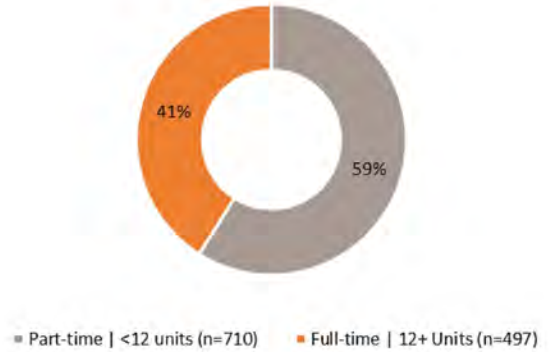
Race/Ethnicity

- Hispanic/Latinx (n=752): 64%
- White (n=336): 28%
- African American/Black (n=168): 14%
- Asian American/Asian (n=86): 7%
- Native American or Alaska Native (n=36): 3%
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n=16): 1%

Total Credit Hours Earned at AVC

- None (n=68): 6%
- 1-15 credits (n=312): 26%
- 16-29 credits (n=206): 17%
- 30-45 credits (n=209): 17%
- 46+ credits (n=408): 34%

Part-time/Full-time Status

- Part-time | <12 units (n=710): 59%
- Full-time | 12+ Units (n=497): 41%

Age Group

- 18 or younger (n=121): 10%
- 19-24 (n=576): 48%
- 25-34 (n=240): 20%
- 35-44 (n=152): 13%
- 45-54 (n=71): 6%
- 55 or older (n=47): 4%

ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE