

Executive Summary

Non-Returning Students Questionnaire Analysis: Spring and Fall 2021

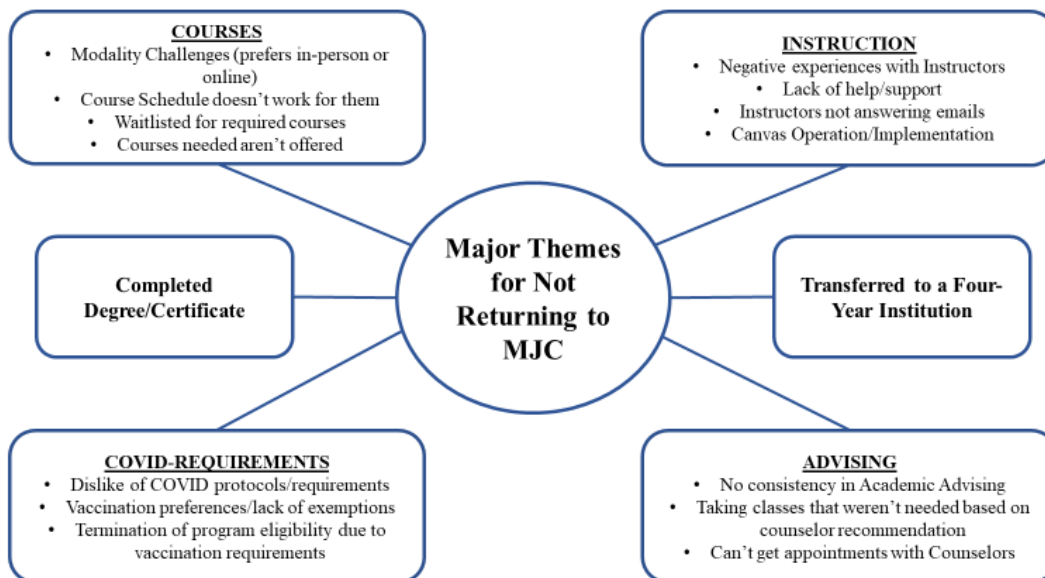
Background & Purpose

Modesto Junior College (MJC) remained above the national average in terms of first-year fall to spring retention rates from 2016-2019 (73%, 73%, 72%, and 70%, respectively). Academic year 2020 took a toll on MJC's first-year fall to spring retention rates, dropping to only 67%. Additionally, the institution's retention rate from Spring 2021 to Fall 2021 decreased 11%, down to only 56% of students.

The purpose of this questionnaire was to (1) identify why non-returning students who were enrolled in Spring 2021 or Fall 2021 decided to no longer attend MJC, (2) explore potential areas of focus to improve the overall MJC experience, and (3) provide a basis for future questionnaire development that explores early attrition indicators among MJC students.

Results

- Total # of Responses: 324 out of 14,006 non-returning students
- 30% not returning due to 4-Year Transfer; 13% due to graduating MJC
- Thematic Analysis conducted to derive common themes present in comments provided by respondents who selected 'other' as their primary reason for not re-enrolling.



- Correlational Analysis
 - Strong positive correlation between academic program/major and course, $r(317) = .80, p < .001$
 - Strong positive correlation between academic program/major and instruction at MJC, $r(319) = .70, p < .001$
 - Moderate positive correlation between academic program/major and academic advising, $r(317) = .49, p < .001$.

Discussion & Recommendations

The thematic analysis conducted identified six overarching themes that may point to why students are not returning to MJC: Courses, Instruction, Advising, COVID Requirements, 4-Year Transfer, and Graduation from MJC. Although transferring to a 4-Year institution and graduating from MJC are positive reasons for students to not return, there still remain four themes that are largely negative and internal in nature. Further research should be conducted to determine the extent to which these themes impact student attrition rates at MJC.

Additionally, these four internal themes (Courses, Instruction, Advising, and COVID Requirements) accentuate potential areas of focus to improve the overall MJC experience. More specifically, the correlational analyses conducted showed strong positive relationships between (1) an individual's experience with instruction and their experience with their major/program of study, (2) an individual's experience with academic advising and their experience with their major/program of study, and (3) an individual's experiences with courses and their experience with their major/program of study. This suggests that student interactions with advising and instruction greatly impact their experience with the major, and therefore, MJC as a whole. Future research should be conducted to dive deeper into these concepts and identify more precise attributes of these themes that impact student experience at MJC and their decision to continue attending.