

**MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
COMMUNITY ASCERTAINMENT SURVEY:**

2011

C O N T E N T S

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a report of seven surveys conducted on behalf of Muskegon Community College (MCC) under the auspices of MCC's Community Relations Department. These surveys are collectively aimed at describing and ascertaining MCC's constituent groups. Two approaches were used in gathering data: telephone survey research and online survey data gathering using Survey Monkey™.

In terms of the telephone survey of the *General Public*, households were called at random throughout the following counties: Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, and Ottawa during the month of October, 2010. The sample consists of 500 completed surveys. The remaining six surveys were all developed as online surveys. These constituent group online surveys, including their respective sample sizes, are as follows: *General Public (n=65)*, *Current MCC Students (n=37)*, *Recent MCC Graduates (n=34)*, *Prospective Students (n=23)*, *High School Faculty/Counselors/Principals (n=16)*, and *the Business Community (n=88)*. Constituent groups were contacted and invited to complete an online survey. In the case of the general public, however, the appropriate survey was made available for a period of time on the MCC website. It should be noted that the sample sizes for the six online surveys are modest. Modest and small sample sizes are more the norm today when conducting online research, and the reader is advised to exercise care in the interpretation of the findings.

This report organizes the findings into the following five sections: *Perceptions of Community Colleges and Related Issues*, *Evaluating Muskegon Community College*, *Facts about Muskegon Community College*, *Information*, and *Demographics*. It should be noted that, while the questionnaires for the various surveys are quite similar, often using the same or similar questions, they are not identical. The committee reviewing the overall research needs of this collective research effort deemed it necessary to adjust the questionnaires to suit the particularities of the respective constituent groups. It also should be noted that not all seven constituent groups will necessarily have findings identified under each one of the aforementioned five sections in the narrative, as there might not have been questions pertinent to a particular section.

Throughout the narrative, as specific questions are discussed, they are denoted Q1, Q2, Q3, and so forth. Also, where percentages are discussed in the narrative, they are presented, for simplicity sake, rounded to the nearest whole. The narrative is followed by the section titled *Tables*, where the findings for all questions, for all seven surveys, are presented in table form. The reader is urged to review the tables directly, as this will provide the most complete understanding of the findings. The narrative that precedes the tables is by design a summary and, therefore, will not impart the full complexity found in the data for these seven surveys.

PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND RELATED ISSUES

GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY

When asked in open-ended questioning which college comes to mind first that offers associate degrees and certificates (Q1), the top three responses are MCC (33%), Grand Rapids Community College (14%), and Montcalm Community College (10%). When further asked where they, or a family member, might consider taking classes leading to an associate degree or a certificate (Q2), the top three choices are MCC (38%), Grand Rapids Community College (16%), and Montcalm Community College (09%), which is tied with Baker College (09%). Q3 presents criteria upon which to identify community colleges that are best known for these particular nine qualities. In each instance, MCC is in the lead position (21%-37%), though a high percentage (15%-49%) remain unsure.

GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY (online)

Individuals completing the online survey, overwhelmingly (89%) identified MCC as the college that comes to mind first that offers associate degrees and certificates (Q1). Similarly, the vast majority (77%) identified MCC when asked (Q10), "If you or a family member were considering taking classes leading to an associate degree or a certificate, which college would you consider or would you recommend?" Respondents were asked to consider nine qualities or functions and asked to identify the two-year college in West Michigan best known for each of the nine. The data show MCC in first place with Baker College in second place (Q11).

CURRENT MCC STUDENTS (online)

According to participants, the top 3 obstacles to pursuing higher education (Q20) are having to work while in school (49%), tuition costs (43%), and their own motivation (31%). As for the top 3 factors considered in selecting a college (Q21), these are location of the college (76%), tuition costs (67%), and reputation of the college (39%).

RECENT MCC GRADUATES (online)

According to recent graduates, the most significant obstacle to pursuing higher education (Q29) is tuition (61%), followed very distantly by having to work while in school (18%).

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS (online)

Prospective students were asked to identify the greatest obstacles to pursuing higher education (Q7): tuition (65%), having to work while in school (50%), and their own motivation (25%), among other things. They were also asked to identify factors they consider when selecting a college (Q8). These are: location (79%), tuition (63%), and a three-way tie for third are reputation of the college (37%), college provides career preparation (37%), and college provides job placement (37%). It appears that high school students are more likely to have had a discussion about college (Q9) with friends (77%) and parents (59%) than with high school counselors (29%), or their teachers (24%), or the high school principal (18%). About 79% of

respondents have considered attending a 2-year college (Q10/11). The following are the top 3 two-year colleges respondents have considered attending (Q12): MCC (84%), Baker College (58%), and Grand Rapids Community College (21%).

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY/COUNSELORS/PRINCIPALS (online)

While high school faculty/counselors/principals (FCP) do not fully agree on the most significant educational needs facing their community (Q1), or their students (Q2), they tend to agree that “making higher education more affordable” and “increasing high school graduation rates” are the top two issues facing their communities (Q3). Even though FCP do not agree on how students make decisions about which college to attend (Q4), they do agree that tuition costs (86%) and students’ own motivation (57%), among other things, are students’ greatest obstacles to pursuing higher education (Q5). FCP also agree on the factors students primarily consider when selecting a college: tuition (93%), location of the college (86%), and reputation of the college (43%) are the top 3 factors (Q6). When asked to review a series of attributes about which a college could be known, participants identified the 2-year college that is best known for each attribute: MCC is the clear first choice, with Baker College a distant second, with others following even more distantly (Q7).

FCP were asked to indicate the frequency with which they mention attending a 2-year college when discussing college options with their students: 69% indicate “every time,” and 23% indicate “about 75% of the time” (Q16/17). FCP were further asked, “When you think of colleges that offer associate degrees and certificates in the broad region of West Michigan, which name comes to mind first?”: 85% identified MCC (Q18).

BUSINESS COMMUNITY (online)

Members of the business community were asked to rank several social factors by order of significance to their business. In these respects, “Increasing high school graduation rates” (49%) and “Increasing college education” (38%) are their top 2 selections (Q1). Participants were asked to identify the most significant training and educational needs for their business (Q2). The following are their top 3 choices: “communication skills” (60%), “enhancement of skill sets so employees can do their current job better” (44%), and “technologically-based skills” (42%). About one-third (34%) indicate that they offer tuition reimbursement incentives for their employees (Q3). When asked how well they believe area colleges are meeting the educational needs of individuals, businesses, and the community (Q4), respondents indicated as follows: individuals (87%), community (71%), and businesses (60%).

When asked, in open-ended questioning, to identify the college that comes to mind first that offers associate degrees and certificates (Q5), 70% of those responding identified MCC and another 14% mention MCC and Baker College together. When asked which training service providers they currently use or have used in the past for training employees (Q6), participants indicate sometimes use/have used frequently/use exclusively as follows: in-house (80%), community college (51%), consultant (51%), trade organization (49%), software/service vendor (47%), and 4-year university (36%).

Although members of the business community offer a variety of opinions concerning the community's post-secondary educational needs over the next 5 – 10 years (Q7/8), there is a tendency toward increasing skills training and better understanding of technology. Participants were asked, "Based on classes leading to an associate degree or certificate, which college would you recommend to your employees or others?" (Q10). Their first choice was MCC (91%) with Baker College in second place (65%).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Within its service area, MCC is highly regarded and is generally seen as the leading 2-year college. MCC is identified as the first choice for pursuing a 2-year degree or certificate.
- Among present, past, and prospective students, tuition cost is among the greatest obstacles to pursuing higher education, and is a primary consideration in selecting a college. This perception is supported by high school faculty and counselors.
- Prospective students are not as likely to speak with teachers and counselors about attending college as they are to speak with parents and friends.
- A high percentage (79%) of high school students actively consider attending a 2-year college.
- Most high school counselors and teachers indicate that they mention attending 2-year colleges to their students.
- The business community is highly favorably disposed toward MCC, with 91% indicating that they would recommend MCC to their employees and others. The business community identifies "increasing high school graduation rates" and "increasing college education" as the top two issues of the Muskegon community.

EVALUATING MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY

Respondents report various ways in which they have connected with MCC over the years (Q4). The majority (52%) indicate that a friend or family member has taken courses at MCC. Others indicate that they have taken classes at MCC (21%), or that they are aware of MCC through the media (15%), etc. The majority (66%) describe MCC as good, very good, or excellent, though 23% are unsure (Q5). As for MCC's perceived impact on the community (Q6), 69% identify it as good, very good, excellent, though 21% are unsure. Similarly, 68% and 72%, respectively, believe that MCC's responses to individual (Q7) and community (Q8) needs are good, very good, excellent. In terms of a more detailed evaluation on nine criteria, 48%-80% described MCC as good, very good, or excellent (Q9).

As for the community's greatest educational need or challenge (Q10), the top three responses are changing economy/jobs/career prep/vocational training (23%), tuition cost/education cost/financial aid (21%), and high school drop-outs/graduation rates (09%), though 31% were unsure. In these respects, 39% believe MCC is doing a good, very good, excellent job

addressing these concerns, though 41% are unsure (Q11). In terms of their own greatest education need (Q12), the top three responses are jobs/employment/career prep/vocational training (32%), be more prepared for changes in workplace (25%), and do my job better/work smarter/job advancement (16%).

GENERAL PUBLIC SURVEY (online)

Respondents rated MCC's commitment to offering programs that respond to individual and community needs very positively. In these respects, 82% rated the college good-very good-excellent, with 55% rating the college very good-excellent (Q2). While many opinions were offered concerning the community's one greatest educational challenge (Q3), 65% rated MCC's efforts in dealing with these challenges as good-very good-excellent (28% very good-excellent), with 28% rating the college fair-poor (Q4). As a follow-up question, individuals were asked to rate MCC on nine criteria (Q5). In these respects, 62%-87% rated the college good-very good-excellent. The highest score was given to "Preparing students to enter 4-year colleges" (87%), and the lowest, though still quite positive, to "Responding rapidly to changing needs of business" (62%). When asked to point out personal educational needs that they thought MCC could meet, or meet better, there were few comments and little patterning (Q6). Finally, when asked how they have connected with MCC over the years (Q12), the top 5 responses are: A friend or family member has taken courses at MCC (64%), I have taken classes--but not graduated (42%), and I am aware of MCC through the media (38%), I am simply aware of MCC (31%), and I am a graduate--received Associates Degree and/or Certificate (29%).

CURRENT MCC STUDENTS (online)

Participants were asked to describe the quality of education they are receiving at MCC. In this connection, 83% believe the education at MCC is good-very good-excellent, with 60% identifying the education as very good-excellent (Q1). Participants were asked to evaluate MCC on 12 criteria/qualities, ranging from ease of registration process to having a positive impact on the region's economy to offering relevant technical and vocational skills (Q2): 68%-92% evaluated the 12 criteria as good-very good-excellent, with the top 3 evaluations given to "Ease of registration process" (92%), "Quality of instructors" (92%), and "Quality of academic programs" (89%). The top 3 evaluations of very good-excellent are given to "Quality of instructors" (65%), "Providing continuing education that serves the community" (62%), "Friendly and welcoming staff" (59%) and "Quality of academic programs" (59%). It was indicated to participants that MCC is committed to offering programs that respond to individual and community needs. Then they were asked to rate MCC's efforts (Q9): 81% rated MCC good-very good-excellent, whereas 35% rated MCC very good-excellent. Q22 offers some open-ended comments as to MCC's best qualities or features that pleasantly surprised respondents. They note the high quality of education and instructors, the beauty of the campus, that the courses are challenging, pleasant and caring staff, a safe campus, and so forth. Moreover, 86% indicate that they would recommend MCC to others (Q23/24).

RECENT MCC GRADUATES (online)

In terms of the education they received at MCC, 97% believe it was good-very good-excellent, with 76% saying that it was very good-excellent (Q1). In terms of nine criteria of evaluation (Q2), 53%-82% rate MCC good-very good-excellent and 32%-59%

rate MCC very good-excellent. In each situation, "Responding rapidly to changing needs of business and industry" receives the lowest rating, though still reasonably high. In the good-very good-excellent rating, "Encouraging/supporting diversity" is most highly rated at 82% as is "Preparing students to enter 4-year colleges" (59%) in the very good-excellent rating. When asked "If you could start college over, would you begin at MCC," 87% responded "yes" (Q6). Also, 79% indicate that the quality of education at MCC is equal to or better than the education received at their transfer school (Q7).

Recent graduates are quite favorable about the impact MCC has had on the region it serves: 80% rate MCC good-very good-excellent, and 57% rate MCC very good-excellent (Q12). Furthermore, 73% believe that MCC's efforts to offer programs that respond to individual and community needs is good-very good-excellent, with 63% describing it as very good-excellent (Q13). The top 3 factors (Q24) they considered when selecting MCC were tuition (93%), location of the college (90%), and small classes (40%), followed closely by reputation of the college (37%). A very substantial 90% indicate that they would recommend MCC to others (Q26): open-ended comments are provided as to MCC's best qualities (Q25) and open-ended comments concerning why they would, or would not, recommend MCC (Q27).

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS (online)

Participants were asked to rate MCC on 10 criteria ranging from preparing students for jobs to improving the culture of the region to offering quality courses compared to other colleges. In these respects, 42%-79% rate MCC good-very good-excellent, and 5%-53% rate MCC very good-excellent (Q13). In both the very good-excellent category (5%) and the good-very good-excellent category (42%), "prepare students for jobs" receives the lowest rating. The highest rating in the very good-excellent category is received by "providing continuing education that serves the community" (53%) and by "encouraging/supporting diversity" (79%) in the good-very good-excellent category. It should be pointed out that 16%-32% of respondents remain unsure.

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY/COUNSELORS/PRINCIPALS (online)

High school faculty/counselors/principals (FCP) were asked to indicate how well they believe MCC is doing in each of 10 areas, ranging from preparing students for jobs to improving the culture of the region to online programs (Q8). The most positive response (very good-excellent) was given to "Preparing students to enter 4-year colleges" (86%). The least positive response (36%, very good-excellent) was received by "online programs," followed closely by "improving the culture of the region" (43%, very good-excellent), "reaching out to the community with special programs (43%, very good-excellent), and "responding rapidly to changing needs of business" (43%, very good-excellent).

About 86% maintain that the customer service they receive from MCC is good-very good-excellent, with 71% describing customer service as very good-excellent (Q9). Furthermore, 100% describe the value of education at MCC as good-very good-excellent, with 79% describing it as very good-excellent (Q10), and 86% describe MCC's impact on the region it serves as

good-very good-excellent (Q13). Also, 57% of FCP feel that MCC's efforts to respond to individual needs are good-very good-excellent, though 29% are unsure (Q14). In terms of community needs, 64% believe that MCC's efforts are good-very good-excellent, though, again, 29% are unsure (Q15). As for awareness of MCC (Q19), FCP note that they have advised students to attend MCC (100%), they have attended an event at MCC (79%), and a friend or family member has taken courses at MCC (64%), among others. Finally, 93% describe the quality of education at MCC as good or better, with 79% rating the quality of education as very good-excellent (Q20).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The data suggest that the public is well aware of MCC and well connected with MCC. Moreover, the public holds MCC in high regard, though are slightly less certain that MCC responds rapidly to the needs of business and industry.
- Past and present students alike rate MCC highly for the quality of education, quality of instructors, and so forth. In this connection, 90% of recent graduates would recommend MCC to others. However, not unlike the general public, students are not quite sure that MCC responds rapidly to the needs of business and industry.
- High school teachers and counselors hold MCC in high regard and feel that MCC does an especially good job preparing students for transfer to 4-year colleges. High school teachers and counselors believe that MCC offers an excellent education.

FACTS ABOUT MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In this section, a variety of multiple-choice questions were asked in an effort to determine, or test, respondents' factual knowledge about MCC.

GENERAL PUBLIC

When asked how many areas of study are offered by MCC (Q16), 33% indicated 50 or fewer, 19% thought more than 50, and 48% were unsure. In terms of MCC's annual cost of full-time enrollment (Q17), compared to other community colleges in Michigan, only 13% thought MCC is one of the lowest, whereas 41% thought MCC to be about average in terms of cost, 7% thought MCC is one of the highest in the state, and 39% were unsure. When asked to comment on student-faculty ratio (Q18), the majority (64%) were unsure. Although 21% knew that MCC admits everyone who wishes to attend, 55% were unsure (Q19). In terms of financial aid, 61% were unsure (Q20), and only 27% indicated that they knew that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several institutions (Q21).

GENERAL PUBLIC (online)

Nearly half (47%) were unsure about the number of areas of study offered by MCC (Q13). However, a considerable majority (59%) correctly identified MCC is among those institutions with the lowest tuition for full-time enrollment (Q14). A total of

76% believe that the average class size at MCC is 25 or fewer (Q15). The vast majority of respondents (80%) correctly identify MCC as having an open enrollment policy (Q16). Furthermore, 58% believe that 50% or more of MCC students receive financial aid (Q17), and 76%-87% maintain that FSU, GVSU, and WMU have satellite campuses at MCC (Q18).

CURRENT MCC STUDENTS (online)

Though current students are quite positively disposed toward MCC, they register consider uncertainty (36%) as to the number of areas of study (Q10). Similarly, though 44% correctly identified MCC's tuition to be among the lowest, 25% are unsure and 31% think the tuition is about average in the state (Q11). Furthermore, while some participants reasonably estimated the student-faculty ratio (Q12), 25% are uncertain and many others are off the mark. In yet another context, considerable uncertainty is expressed. When ask whether it is true or false that MCC admits everyone who wishes to attend, 39% are unsure, while 14% disagree (Q13). Concerning the matter of financial aid, 31% are unsure what percentage of MCC students receive financial aid, though a majority (53%) correctly indicate "about 75%" (Q14). While slightly more than one-fifth (22%) are unsure whether it is true or false that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several universities, which then provides the opportunity for students to work on baccalaureate degrees in Muskegon, 75% indicate affirmatively (Q15).

Branch Campus: Current Students were asked to consider the possibility of branch campuses in downtown Muskegon and in Grand Haven. In terms of downtown Muskegon, 45% believe it is important-very important to have such a campus (Q16), and prefer that arts and media courses (46%) and technical training (46%) be offered there (Q17). As for Grand Haven, 49% believe that such a campus would be important-very important (Q18), though participants seem to indicate that everything (Q19) ought to be offered there (46%-49%), except, perhaps, science (30%).

RECENT MCC GRADUATES (online)

Recent graduates offer various guesses as to the number of areas of studies at MCC, with more than one-quarter (27%) indicating that they are unsure (Q14). Although 50% correctly indicate that MCC has one of the lowest tuition costs, 30% believe it is about average, and 20% are unsure (Q15). Furthermore, 70% maintain that there are 30 students or fewer for every faculty member (Q16), and 47% believe that MCC admits anyone who wishes to attend, while the remaining disagree or are unsure (Q17). While 63% more-or-less correctly identify that 50%-75% of student at MCC receive financial aid, 33% are unsure (Q18). The vast majority (90%) correctly indicate that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several universities (Q19).

Branch Campus: When asked about the importance of a downtown Muskegon campus, recent graduates are mixed, with 43% indicating this to be important-very important, and 40% indicating it is unimportant-very unimportant (Q20). As for what ought to be taught in such a downtown campus (Q21), the top 2 responses are technical training (58%) and courses in arts and media (42%). A similar question was asked about an MCC campus in Grand Haven (Q22). In this connection, recent graduates are less divided, with 55% indicating that this would be important-very important. However, in terms of Grand Haven, recent

graduates feel that general education (69%), technical training (46%), and business (42%) would be the most important course work to offer (Q23).

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS (online)

Recent graduates offer various guesses as to the number of areas of studies at MCC, with 53% being unsure (Q14). Although 26% correctly indicate that MCC has one of the lowest tuition costs, 42% believe it is about average, and 32% are unsure (Q15). Furthermore, 53% maintain that the average class size is around 30 (Q16), and 74% believe that MCC admits anyone who wishes to attend (Q17). While 37% more-or-less correctly identify that 50%-75% of student at MCC receive financial aid, 47% are unsure (Q18). The majority (68%) correctly indicate that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several universities (Q19).

Branch Campus: When asked about the importance of a downtown Muskegon MCC campus, prospective students are inclined to think that such a campus is important-very important (56%), though 33% are unsure (Q20). Similarly, 61% believe it is important-very important to have an MCC campus in northern Ottawa County/Grand Haven (Q21).

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY/COUNSELORS/PRINCIPALS (online)

High school faculty/counselors/principals (FCP) express considerable uncertainty (50%) about the number of areas of study available at MCC (Q21). Concerning tuition, only 21% correctly identified MCC's tuition cost to be among the lowest in the state (Q22), whereas the remainder is either uncertain (36%) or believe it is about average for the state (36%). Furthermore, 50% do not know the student-faculty ratio at MCC (Q23), though the vast majority (79%) correctly indicated that MCC admits everyone who wishes to attend (Q24). Although 50% were unable to say what percentage of MCC students receive financial aid (Q25), 100% correctly noted that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several universities (Q26).

Branch Campus: FCP express a mix of opinion concerning a downtown Muskegon MCC campus (Q28), with 40% maintaining such a campus is important-very important, and 50% maintaining that it is not. When asked what should be taught at such a campus, a considerable mix of opinion is offered, with each category receiving significant response (Q29). FCP are evenly divided (50% each) whether a campus in Grand haven would be important or not (Q30).

BUSINESS COMMUNITY (online)

Branch Campus: Members of the business community appear to be quite positively disposed toward an MCC campus in downtown Muskegon, as 71% believe such a campus is important-very important (Q9).

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is evident from the data that there is a general lack of factual knowledge about some of MCC's hallmark features, such as low tuition, percentage of students receiving financial aid, admitting everyone who is interested in attending, the

number of areas of study at MCC, class size or student-faculty ratio, and that MCC is home to satellite campuses for several universities.

- The idea of branch campuses in downtown Muskegon and in Grand Haven receive positive, yet mixed, results. However, the strongest support for a downtown Muskegon campus comes from the business community: 71% indicate it is important-very important.

INFORMATION

GENERAL PUBLIC

In open-ended questioning (Q13) about sources of news and information, the top three responses are Internet (33%), television/cable (26%), and newspapers/magazines (20%). As for where they would look for information concerning education (Q14), the top three responses are Internet (41%), television/cable (23%), and newspapers/magazines (19%). Finally, respondents indicate that what they most want to know about MCC (Q15) concerns tuition/costs (22%), availability of academic programs/courses/continuing education (19%), and special programs (17%).

GENERAL PUBLIC (online)

Respondents receive most of their news and information (Q19) from websites (40%) or television (29%). In terms of where are they most likely to look for information about educational opportunities, a resounding 93% indicates websites (Q20).

CURRENT MCC STUDENTS (online)

A total of 68% maintain that MCC's efforts to keeping them informed are good-very good-excellent, with 38% identifying MCC's efforts as very good-excellent (Q7), though 30% indicate that these efforts are only fair-poor. The vast majority say that the best way for MCC to keep in touch with them is with email (78%) and social media (11%)--(Q8).

RECENT MCC GRADUATES (online)

When asked how they would evaluate instructors' success in keeping them informed about crucial deadlines, events, and other activities, 94% rated their MCC instructors good-very good-excellent, with 84% rating them very good-excellent (Q11).

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS (online)

Primary source of news and information for prospective students are family/friends (42%) and the Internet (37%), among others (Q22). A total of 83% indicate that they have received information from MCC (Q23), and 84% have spoken to a representative from MCC (Q24).

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY/COUNSELORS/PRINCIPALS (online)

The clear majority (86%) of high school faculty/counselors/principals (FCP) feel that MCC keeps them well informed (Q11); respondents offer little in the way of suggestions for improvement (Q12).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The data point up the importance of the Internet as a place individuals are increasingly looking for information.
- More than two-thirds of current students feel that MCC does a good job keeping in touch with them. About 94% of recent graduates feel that MCC instructors did a good or better job keeping them informed about crucial deadlines, events, etc.
- High school teachers and counselors feel well-informed by MCC.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND RELATED ISSUES

GENERAL PUBLIC

A total of 24% of respondents are high school graduates, 14% are college graduates, 9% have associate degrees, and 36% did not respond (Q22); 13% indicate interest in continuing their education (Q23); and, Q24 displays county information.

GENERAL PUBLIC (online)

A considerable majority of respondents (76%) reside in Muskegon County (Q7). A total of 24% of respondents have some college, 9% have received an associates degree, 7% are college graduates, 59% have either some graduate education, or they have completed a graduate program (Q8). Finally, 66% indicate that they are interested in continuing their education (Q9).

CURRENT MCC STUDENTS (online)

About 68% of participants believe they will transfer to a four-year college (Q3), 22% participate in extracurricular activities (Q4), which usually means (Q5) student clubs/organizations (63%) or theatre (38%). Of those who responded, 100% indicate that their extra-curricular experience as been good-very good-excellent, with 88% indicating very good-excellent (Q6).

RECENT MCC GRADUATES (online)

Approximately 59% indicate that they transferred to another institution after attending MCC (Q3), with the majority transferring (Q4) to Grand Valley State (53%) and Ferris State (26%). In terms of transfer credits, 91% believe their credits were treated fairly by their transfer institution (Q5). As for extra-curricular activities, 38% indicate that they did participate (Q8), though mostly in student clubs and organizations (70%) and student services council (20%), with 76% indicating that their experience was good-very good-excellent (Q9/10).

PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS (online)

In terms of prospective student respondents, 96% currently are not high school students (Q1/2/3), 76% are from Muskegon (Q4), and 85% are considering attending a college in the near future (Q5/6).

HIGH SCHOOL FACULTY/COUNSELORS/PRINCIPALS (online)

Most respondents (71%) work in Muskegon County (Q27) and most (86%) are counselors (Q31).

BUSINESS COMMUNITY (online)

While the respondents represent a wide range of businesses (Q12), about 69% of respondents have businesses with 25 or fewer full-time employees (Q13).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The data strongly suggest a high regard for MCC among its various constituent groups. In today's social and economic reality, information and communication are central to the continued success of a public organization. At this juncture, it would be useful to review MCC's public relations and information efforts, to ensure that MCC maintains its lead. For example, despite high regard for MCC, many, including high school counselors, are not well informed about MCC's hallmark characteristics.
2. The research points to the growing importance of the Internet and social media. It may be useful to review MCC's efforts in these regards to determine next steps in the evolution of MCC's connection with the public, current students, alumni, prospective students and their families, high school teachers/counselors/principals, members of the business community, as well as with those within MCC. The Internet and social media are organizational tools that are essential to the maintenance and development of an organization's constituent base.
3. There is a perception that MCC may not be as responsive to the needs of business and industry. Although the sentiment is not very pronounced, it bears further investigation and review, as the success of an educational institution is often dependent upon its relationship with the business community.
4. This set of surveys provides MCC with baseline data concerning a range of opinion-based topics. With these data as an aid to decision-making, it is possible to establish target goals for change/improvement in the coming years.
5. It is recommended that MCC establish an on-going research program to periodically monitor its information and communication progress with constituent groups.

T A B L E S