



Running Start Survey 2010

April 29, 2010

Introduction

During winter quarter 2010, a survey was conducted for the purposes of evaluating Running Start seniors' satisfaction with the services they received from the Running Start Office.

Methodology

The survey was conducted via the internet with the 807 Running Start seniors. Emails were sent both to seniors' home addresses and to the email addresses provided to the seniors by the institution. Because participation in previous surveys was compulsory and tied to face-to-face registration and participation in this survey was voluntary, the response rate for this survey was much lower than the response rate in previous surveys.

Results

Relative to previous Running Start surveys, the response rate for this survey was relatively low (254 of 807 seniors; 31%).

Satisfaction with services

When asked if they were satisfied with the services they received from the Running Start Office, 96% of seniors responded that they were satisfied. Additionally, many of the seniors responded appreciative of the Running Start Office when asked, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?"

Difficulty of adjustment

Running Start seniors as a group do not appear to have significant difficulties adjusting to college life. A total of 44% of seniors reported have no difficulty adjusting, and only 14% reported the adjustment being “somewhat difficult” or “very difficult.”

Difficulty of Adjustment		
	Seniors	Percent
Very Difficult	2	1%
Somewhat Difficult	34	13%
Not Very Difficult	106	42%
Not Difficult at All	110	44%

In the comments related to adjustment difficulties, Running Start seniors mentioned that there is a lot more responsibility at college than in high school and that they were more “on their own.” They also mentioned being scared of the transition, and that they had initial difficulties with time management.

Transfer intent

Most Running Start seniors (87.3%) intend to transfer to a four-year institution. Slightly more than a quarter of Running Start seniors intend to transfer to WSUV, making it the most popular institution.

Receiving Institutions		
	Seniors	Percent
Other	72	35.6%
WSUV	53	26.2%
UW	29	14.4%
PSU	12	5.9%
Other WSU Branch	12	5.9%
WWU	10	5.0%
UW Branch	6	3.0%
ESC	5	2.5%
EWU	2	1.0%
CWU	1	0.5%
Total Transfer Intent seniors	202	100.0%

Running Start seniors showed great interest in STEM (Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology) fields, with 31.6% of seniors who plan to go on to a four-year institution planning to major in a STEM field.

Intended Majors		
	Seniors	Percent
Undecided	38	17.7%
Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Physics	21	9.8%
Anthropology, Economics, Psychology, Social Work, Political Science, Sociology, Criminal Justice	19	8.8%
Accounting, Business Administration, Marketing, Finance	17	7.9%
Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinarian	16	7.4%
Nursing, Pharmacy	16	7.4%
Dual Major	15	7.0%
Other	15	7.0%
Engineering	14	6.5%
Art, Music, Theatre/Drama	11	5.1%
Biology, Environmental Science	11	5.1%
English, Journalism, Communications	7	3.3%
Computer Science	5	2.3%
Mathematics	5	2.3%
Law	3	1.4%
Architecture	1	0.5%
Occupational, Physical or Speech Therapy	1	0.5%
Philosophy, History, Theology	0	0.0%

Running Start seniors who did not intend to transfer to a four-year institution accounted for 12.7% of respondents. Of these seniors, at least four gave answers to the question, “Why don’t you intend to transfer to a four-year institution?” The answers indicated that they had answered the previous question incorrectly, with one senior stating the intention to join the military and earn a nuclear engineering degree. The seniors who did not intend to go on to a four-year institution gave a variety of answers when asked why they did not intend to transfer. Several expressed an intent to finish a career and technical program at Clark College or another school. Others only expressed interest in an associate degree.

Favorite thing about Running Start

Several themes emerged regarding seniors’ favorite things about Running Start. As with previous years, many seniors emphasized the importance of the tuition waiver and/or the help paying for books. Additionally, they expressed gratitude for the wider variety of classes, and the freedom and independence granted them. Many also mentioned the differences in the social environment, including the higher maturity level of peers, and the lack of what seniors call “drama.”

Other seniors appreciated the opportunities that Running Start opens for them, such as earning an AA with their high school diploma, the chance to “get ahead,” and the chance to take classes at times and locations that are convenient for them. Several seniors were grateful for the higher level of instruction, and the ability to “save time” by only going to class a few hours a day.

Missing information

When asked what they wished they had known, Running Start seniors discussed a wide variety of information they found to be lacking or missing. While some seniors stressed that classes at Clark College were no harder than classes at their high school, other seniors stressed that they wished they had known that the classes were much harder than classes at their high school.

Many seniors mentioned topics that suggest the advising they sought or received did not meet their needs. These seniors mentioned that they wished they had spoken with advisors, created educational plans, had more information about transferability, and understanding course sequencing. Additionally, seniors mentioned a need for better study skills and awareness of available resources such as tutoring. Other seniors mentioned that they wished they had understood how bad parking was, and how to find good instructors (several mentioned ratemyprofessor.com).

The final theme of the comments pertained to the ways the senior interacted with the high school. Some seniors expressed regret over “missing out” on high school, and others mentioned poor communication with their high schools regarding requirements, especially about senior projects.

Summary

In general, Running Start seniors are happy with the level of service provided by the staff of the Running Start office. As was found in previous surveys, they enjoy the additional freedoms and responsibilities found in Running Start, and the greater variety of classes available at Clark College. Some seniors feel as though they are missing out on the high school experience, while others do not. Seniors generally value the tuition savings they achieve through Running Start.