

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

# Los Angeles Mission College Student Survey - Fall 2013

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CONTENT ANALYSIS

## **Introduction**

The Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC) Office of Institutional Effectiveness conducted a comprehensive survey of campus services and student experiences during the Fall 2013 term to determine the level of student satisfaction with existing programs and services and to identify areas for improvement. The entire student body was surveyed and 954 valid responses were received, a fairly high response for a voluntary survey. Respondents included all types of students taking courses at LAMC, including LAMC students (75 percent), students from other community colleges (12 percent), students from four-year colleges and universities (12 percent) and high school students (one percent).

This report summarizes the comments made by respondents in two open-ended questions regarding student support services at LAMC. The main areas for improvement identified by students include:

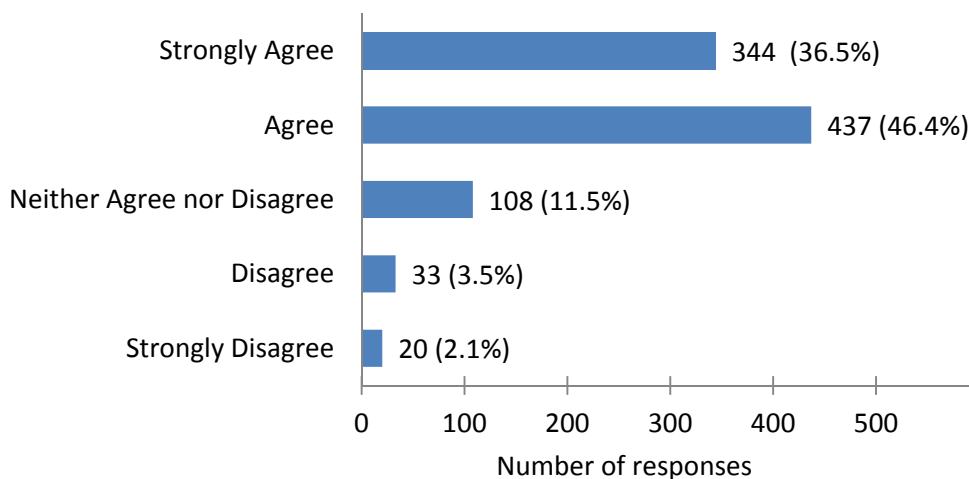
- Lack of availability of classes. Students mentioned classes being full, cancelled or not offered and the associated difficulty of completing academic programs on time. Non-traditional students mentioned limited evening, weekend and online offerings;
- Limited services for evening and weekend students. Students who are unable to come to campus during normal working hours are often unable to use services available to day students, including counseling, tutoring, the library, the bookstore/student store and the cafeteria;
- Lack of effective communication between the College and the student body. Students may be unaware of existing programs and services and of student life activities, such as student clubs and on-campus events, which need to be more widely publicized; and
- Unprofessional staff in several offices, including Admissions, Financial Aid and Counseling. Students also expressed dissatisfaction with Counseling Services, including difficulty obtaining appointments and the inability to obtain the desired information in the short time allotted to each student.
- Improving the on-campus computing centers, including providing computers and printers at the East Campus, and making the College website more user-friendly and keeping it up-to-date.

While this report focuses on areas needing improvement, it is important to bear in mind that the majority of respondents (83 percent) indicated that "LAMC provides sufficient student support services to meet my educational needs." On the whole, female students reported a slightly higher degree of satisfaction with student support services than male students and Black or African American students reported the highest level of satisfaction among all ethnic groups. Those self-reporting "Other" as their ethnicity reported the lowest level of satisfaction. There were no significant differences among other demographic groups.

## Student Support Services: Areas for Improvement

Question 21 on page 3 of the Fall 2013 Student Survey asks respondents to rate their level of agreement with the statement: "Overall, LAMC provides sufficient student support services to meet my educational needs." Respondents chose one of the following options from a drop-down menu: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree or Not Applicable/No Experience with This. 942 valid responses (excluding those who chose "not applicable") were received for this question. A total of 781 student (83 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed. Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 1: Responses to "Overall, LAMC provides sufficient student support services to meet my educational needs." (N=942)



Less than six percent of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (53 students). These students were given the opportunity to explain the reason(s) for their disagreement in question 21a on page 3 of the survey. The responses are summarized in Appendix A. In addition, question 43 on page 5 of the survey gives all respondents an additional opportunity to comment on any campus program or service. The responses are summarized in Appendix B.

Based on their responses to these two questions, 15 areas for improvement were identified which can be grouped thematically into four main focal areas: I) course scheduling; II) communication; III) administrative and teaching staff; and IV) technology. Each focal area is explained below. Appendix A shows all 15 areas needing improvement and the number of students who commented on each area (students could comment on more than one area).

### **I. Course scheduling.**

Students mentioned two areas for improvement pertaining to scheduling. The first involves too few course offerings and the related difficulty of completing requirements for graduation or transfer on time due to classes being full, cancelled or not offered. For example, one student wrote, "We need more classes, it's very difficult to graduate when so many people are trying to squeeze into one class." Evening students in particular, complained of not enough evening course offerings. More online courses were also requested. One student expressed frustration that many classes are scheduled to meet only one day a week for four hours and would prefer shorter class meeting times multiple times per week.

The second area related to scheduling is the open hours of student services such as counseling, tutoring, the library and the math tutoring lab. Evening students are often unable to take advantage of these services due to limited open hours in the evenings. As one student put it, "I attend LA Mission at night or weekends so a lot of resources are not open to use... For students who attend at night maybe something could be arranged to extend hours: for example, the bookstore." Another mentioned that the "library is closed while evening classes are taking place, bathrooms are not maintained". These issues potentially affect a large proportion of the student body as 30 percent of survey respondents indicated that they prefer to use student services after 4pm.

### **II. Communication.**

The lack of communication of information to students was another concern voiced by several respondents. Campus life, in particular, suffers due to students being unaware of activities that are taking place on campus as well as information on clubs and other student organizations not being circulated to students or not being kept up-to-date on the website. As one student noted, "They don't make any of the information publicly known."

As new services and programs are added on campus, they need to be publicized in a systematic manner to the entire student body and given a strong web presence on the LAMC website, otherwise students will remain unaware of the services.

One student also complained of poor internal communication between different administrative units at the College and having to waste time coordinating between them.

### **III. Administrative and Teaching Staff.**

A large number of students expressed dissatisfaction with the services provided by the staff in the counseling office and in other offices such as admissions and financial aid. Rude or unfriendly staff and professors were reported as well as uncaring and unhelpful staff. The counseling office was a source of frustration for many students. One student said, "I wish that the counseling office was open longer and allowed more students to visit and talk to the counselors." Understaffing in the counseling office seems to be a serious problem as additional counselors could alleviate the bottleneck at two levels. One issue

is the inability of students to obtain an appointment with a counselor in a reasonable time frame (one student reported having to make appointments six months in advance). The other is the short amount of time that students have with a counselor; several students reported that they did not have enough time with the counselor to have all of their questions answered. As one student stated, "Counselors should spend a bit more time with students and have more flexible hours that fit everyone's needs." The hiring of additional counselors would ease both concerns.

A few students also requested "a specific channel dedicated to complaint handling" as "student complaints are dismissed or never resolved."

Appendix B shows all of the programs and services mentioned by students as needing improvement and the number of students who commented on each program or service (students could comment on more than one program or service).

#### **IV. Technology.**

Technology is the final focal area where improvements can be made. Students expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of user-friendliness of the College website (West Los Angeles College was mentioned as a better model) and the fact that information is not current, especially the sections pertaining to the ASO and clubs or associations. One student reported that "Hours of operation of many places are incorrectly posted online, few places are open at times convenient for working students."

Old and/or slow computers in the computer labs were also a source of frustration. One student mentioned that professors had to wait for students on slow computers, disrupting the flow of the class. In addition, several students requested a computing center and/or print stations on the East Campus.

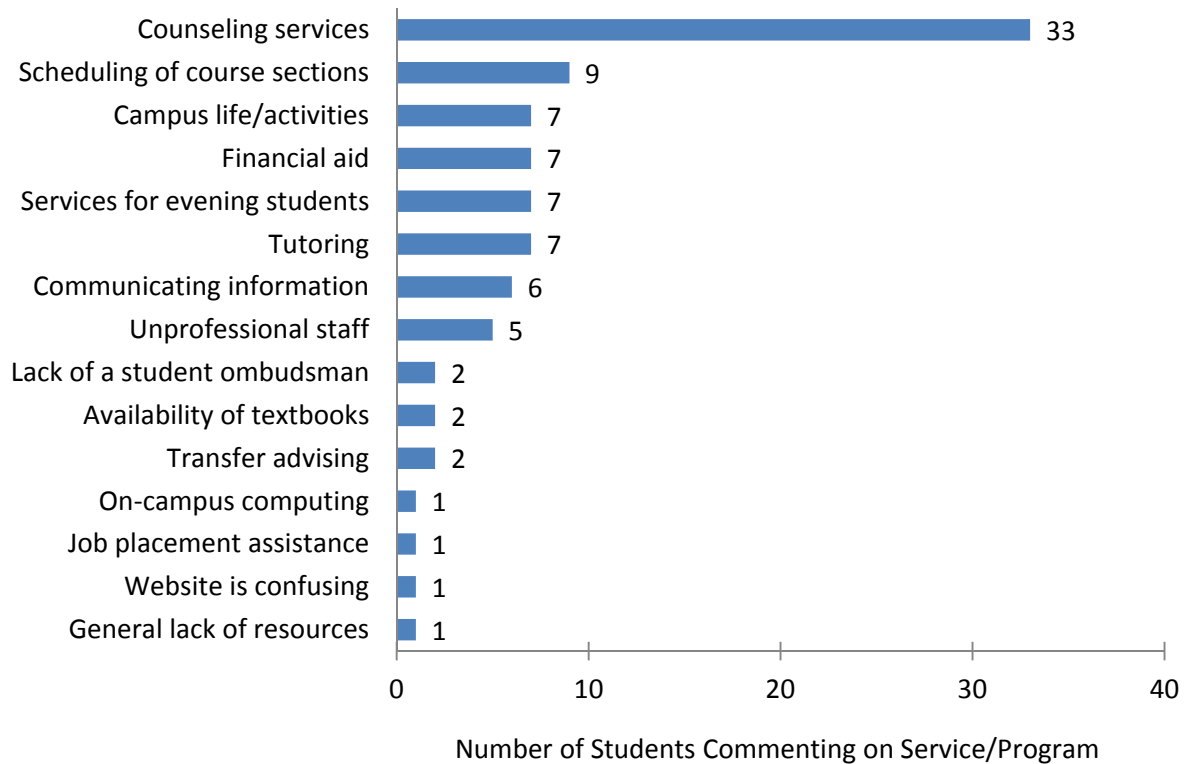
## **Summary**

In general, dissatisfied students seemed to expect a higher level of customer service than is currently being provided as well as better access to services. While the needed services do exist on campus, it is often difficult to use them due to limited hours and/or lack of availability due to the popularity of the program or service. As one student noted, LAMC "has everything but sometimes it takes a lot of work to get there." Students with outside commitments, such as full-time employment, are particularly impacted as these students may not be able to return if the service is not available when they first seek it. In addition, first generation college students and those unfamiliar with the community college system may not know where to turn for services or what questions to ask when they come for services. Four-year college/university students reported a higher level of satisfaction with student services than LAMC and other community college students, and this may be due to those students already being familiar with the system and not needing additional assistance.

In addition, one student mentioned that "the college is great for itself but is not sufficient in preparing students for the amount of work that comes from four year campuses and may need to improve in challenging their students that plan to move on."

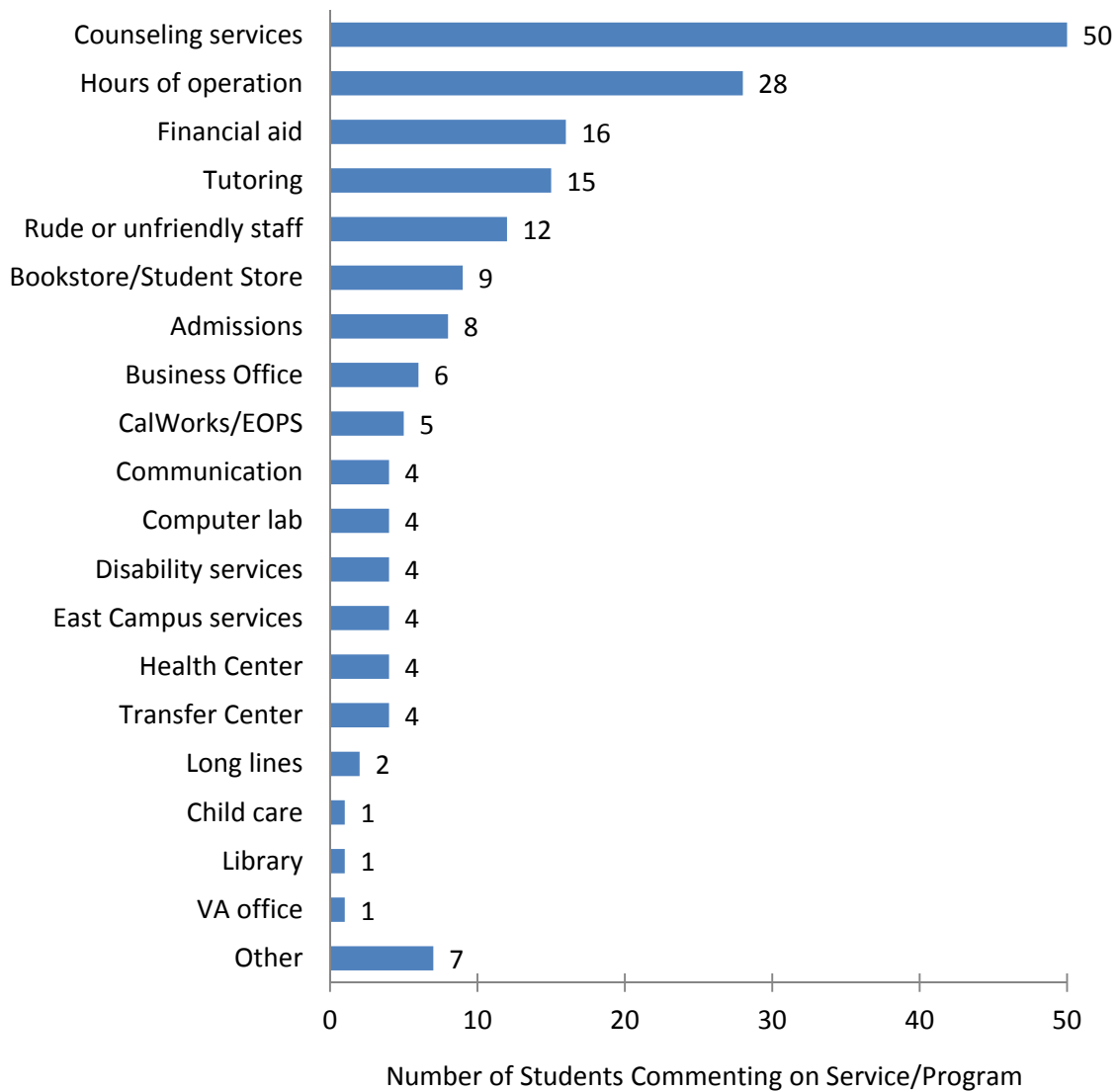
While this report has focused on areas for improvement, overall, the majority of respondents (83 percent) believe that "LAMC provides sufficient student support services to meet my educational needs."

### Appendix A: Areas Reported by Students where LAMC Provides Insufficient Student Support Services\*



\* Based on question 21a on page 3 of the LAMC Student Survey - Fall 2013, which states: "If you Disagree/Strongly Disagree with the statement, "Overall, LAMC provides sufficient student support services to meet my educational needs", please explain.

### Appendix B: LAMC Campus Services and Programs Reported by Students as Needing Improvement\*



\* Based on question 43 on page 5 of the LAMC Student Survey - Fall 2013, which states: "Please make any comments you wish regarding ANY of the above campus services and programs."



**Appendix C: Summary of Open-Ended Responses to:  
 "How could LAMC better meet your learning needs?"**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
More class offerings	196	38.9%
More tutoring	74	14.7%
Better professors	71	14.1%
Longer open hours	44	8.7%
More online classes	44	8.7%
Better counseling	43	8.5%
Better scheduling of classes	43	8.5%
Lower fees	30	6.0%
Better communication	28	5.6%
More evening/weekend classes	27	5.4%
Better library	23	4.6%
Cheaper textbooks	22	4.4%
More evening services	19	3.8%
Change registration policies	18	3.6%
More morning classes	17	3.4%
More financial aid	16	3.2%
More programs	11	2.2%
Better technology	10	2.0%
Shuttle van	6	1.2%
More resources	6	1.2%
Friendlier staff	6	1.2%
More East Campus services	4	0.8%
Provide child care	3	0.6%
More on-campus jobs	3	0.6%
Better student life	3	0.6%
Cleaner campus	3	0.6%
Better facilities	3	0.6%
Provide motivation	3	0.6%
Finish construction	2	0.4%
More parking	1	0.2%

**Appendix D: Summary of Open-Ended Responses to:**

**"What is the one thing you most want to change about LAMC?"**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
"Nothing"	96	12.8%
More Class Offerings	131	17.5%
Fewer Closed/Full Classes	68	9.1%
Counseling	61	8.1%
Parking	52	6.9%
Cleanliness/Maintenance	47	6.3%
Facilities	46	6.1%
Shuttle	45	6.0%
Unfriendly Staff/More Staff	39	5.2%
Registration Policies	35	4.7%
Professors	35	4.7%
Open Hours	34	4.5%
Cost	32	4.3%
Student Life	28	3.7%
Food/Cafeteria	27	3.6%
More Evening Classes	25	3.3%
Website/Communication with Students	25	3.3%
More Online Classes	24	3.2%
More Programs	21	2.8%
Financial Aid	18	2.4%
Construction	18	2.4%
More Services	14	1.9%
Atmosphere/Size	13	1.7%
More Daytime Classes	13	1.7%
Library	13	1.7%
Lighting/Safety on Campus	12	1.6%
Classroom Temperature Too Cold	9	1.2%
Bookstore	9	1.2%
Tutoring	9	1.2%
More East Campus Services	7	0.9%
Smaller Class Sizes	6	0.8%

**Appendix E: Summary of Open-Ended Responses to:  
 "How else could your experience at LAMC be improved?"**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
More classes offered	76	19.0%
Better student life	50	12.5%
Better faculty	32	8.0%
Better counseling	29	7.2%
Better communication with students	29	7.2%
Better scheduling of classes	28	7.0%
Shuttle to East Campus	23	5.7%
Lower costs	22	5.5%
Extended open hours	22	5.5%
Food/cafeteria options and hours	21	5.2%
Better facilities	20	5.0%
More and friendlier staff	20	5.0%
Better maintenance/cleanliness on campus	19	4.7%
More parking/traffic control	15	3.7%
Improve/maintain technology	14	3.5%
More tutoring	13	3.2%
Cheaper books	13	3.2%
Registration policies	12	3.0%
More evening classes	10	2.5%
More online classes	9	2.2%
Better security/more lighting at night	9	2.2%
Better library/more open hours	6	1.5%
Friendlier financial aid staff and shorter lines	6	1.5%
Finish construction	6	1.5%
Giving the students a voice	6	1.5%
More morning classes	5	1.2%
More services on the East Campus	5	1.2%
More weekend classes	4	1.0%
Better wifi	4	1.0%
More on-campus jobs	4	1.0%
More academic programs	3	0.7%
More study areas on campus	3	0.7%
More afternoon classes	2	0.5%
Be more eco-friendly	2	0.5%
Smaller class sizes	2	0.5%
More academic rigor	2	0.5%

**Appendix F: Summary of Open-Ended Responses to:  
 "What do you like most about LAMC?"**

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
"Everything"	16	2.0%
Faculty	230	29.4%
Campus Atmosphere	182	23.3%
Location	150	19.2%
Staff	146	18.7%
Small Size	94	12.0%
Classes/Programs	83	10.6%
New & Clean	61	7.8%
Facilities	57	7.3%
Availability of Classes	28	3.6%
Ease of Use	25	3.2%
Students	24	3.1%
Tutoring	22	2.8%
Food/Cafeteria	20	2.6%
Culinary Arts Program	16	2.0%
Library/LRC	16	2.0%
Convenient Schedule	14	1.8%
Low Cost	10	1.3%
Multimedia Program	10	1.3%
Bookstore	8	1.0%
Child Development Center	8	1.0%
Gym	8	1.0%
Safety	8	1.0%
Growing/Expanding	7	0.9%
Parking	7	0.9%
Diversity	6	0.8%
Counseling	4	0.5%
East Campus	3	0.4%
Transfer Center	3	0.4%
Athletics	1	0.1%
Website	1	0.1%