



Revealing Institutional  
Strengths and Challenges

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INSTITUTIONAL REPORT  
RISC STUDENT SURVEY FALL 2022  
**IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**

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Suggested citation: Porter, Stephen R. and Umbach, Paul D. (2022). Institutional Report RISC Student Survey Fall 2022, Iowa Central Community College. Raleigh, NC: Percontor. LLC.

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# RISC SURVEY OVERVIEW

01

## SURVEY DESCRIPTION

The Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges (RISC) Survey provides detailed, actionable data about student success, using the latest advances in survey research and technology. Survey results pinpoint where students are experiencing obstacles and identify campus offices that excel in helping students succeed in college. The survey has three main sections.

The survey first asks students about facing challenges during the current semester in five broad areas: academic support services, campus environment, finances and financial aid, succeeding in their courses, and work and personal issues. Each section has multiple challenges, with over 80 unique challenges to student success across the five areas, such as errors with financial aid paperwork, not being told to take a course necessary for their degree, or difficulty using course technology in online classes.

Next, the survey asks students about their interactions with campus offices. Our research indicates that students want office staff who are accessible, concerned about helping them, and able to effectively solve their problem. Students describe five campus offices on these three dimensions; Iowa Central chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to Iowa Central, so that students saw office names they recognized.

Finally, students provide their overall perceptions of the college. Students are asked if they would recommend the college to a friend, whether the college is a good value, and how well the college is helping them meet their enrollment goals, such as improving job and career opportunities or preparing for a four-year degree.

Students are also given two open-response questions, where they could write out an answer: what is Iowa Central's greatest strength, and if Iowa Central could change one thing to increase student success, what should it change? See your college contact for the written responses to these two questions.

The survey concludes with a section asking about student demographic information.

Interactive and printable versions of the survey can be found at:

<https://www.risc.college/two-year-survey>

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was administered in Fall 2022 to 3,057 Iowa Central students. There were 872 responses used in this report, for a 28.5% response rate. Median time Iowa Central students spent taking the survey was 7.7 minutes.

The table below provides some background information about your college's benchmark sample. Fifty-seven other community colleges participating in the survey during the past two years are used for the benchmark numbers in this report; each college is weighted equally when calculating benchmarks. Your benchmark sample has a total of 42,926 respondents.

**Table 1.1 Community colleges in the benchmark sample**

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	21%	City	47%	Under 1,000	6%
Mixed	35%	Suburb	15%	1,000-4,999	35%
High Transfer	32%	Town	18%	5,000-9,999	21%
Other	12%	Rural	21%	10,000-19,999	32%
				20,000 and above	0%

# CHALLENGES TO STUDENT SUCCESS

## MAIN CHALLENGE AREAS

The RISC survey contains over 80 unique challenges that students face during college, and students can indicate they faced more than one challenge. The specific challenges are divided into five main areas:

- ▶ Academic support services
- ▶ Campus environment
- ▶ Finances and financial aid
- ▶ Success in courses
- ▶ Work and personal

The survey begins by asking students if they faced challenges in each of these these areas, and then asks about more specific challenges, depending on how students initially respond. The challenge order is randomly assigned for each respondent.

For example, students are asked:

**Think about your finances and financial aid. Have you had any challenges in the following areas?**

	Yes	No
Paying college and living expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with financial aid office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Military and employer tuition benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Students choosing “yes” to one or more of these response options are coded as having a challenge with finances and financial aid.

Table 2.1 provides an overview of the main challenges students faced at Iowa Central in Fall 2022 in the five main areas. *Work and personal issues* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 54% reporting one or more challenges in this area.

A negative number in the *Diff.* column indicates a lower proportion of students at your institution reported challenges in an area, compared to the benchmarking group. These are presented graphically with green bars. Positive numbers indicate a greater proportion of your students are reporting challenges, and are presented with red bars.

**Table 2.1 Major challenges to student success**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Work and personal issues	54	60	-6	474	
Success in courses	50	55	-5	433	
Campus environment	46	20	+26	405	
Finances and financial aid	40	38	+2	351	
Academic support services	20	33	-13	172	

**Notes**

Green indicates that Iowa Central has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates Iowa Central has a higher proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions,  $p < .05$ ). Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges across the five topic areas. *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area at your college; overall sample  $n=872$ .

Tables 2.2 to 2.6 provide more detail about student challenges. For example, if a student answered “yes” to “Paying college and living expenses”, they were prompted with a follow-up question:

**Where did you have issues paying expenses? Please check all that apply.**

- Tuition and fees
- Paying college and living expenses
- Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)
- Childcare
- None of the above

To help uncover where your students are facing challenges, we rank the major categories of challenges in descending order. We then rank the more specific challenges within each major category in descending order.

For example, 54% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Work and personal issues*. The most common subcategory was *Work*, with 35% choosing challenges in this subcategory. The most common specific challenge within the *Work* subcategory was *Work hours do not leave me enough time to study*, with 19% of your students mentioning this as a challenge to their success. All percentages in these tables are calculated as the percentage of the entire respondent sample.

**Table 2.2 Challenges with work and personal life**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	54	60	-6	474
Work	35	38	-3	301
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	19	22	-3	165
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	15	16	-1	133
Work schedule conflicts with classes	8	14	-6	71
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	8	13	-5	67
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	7	10	-3	59
None of the above	7	5	+2	61
Family	34	37	-3	298
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	22	25	-3	190
Difficulty dealing with health of family	10	15	-5	91
Family does not support me going to college	3	4	-1	29
Difficulty finding childcare	3	5	-2	25
None of the above	8	5	+3	71
Health and disability issues	17	23	-6	145
Emotional/mental health issue	12	15	-3	107
Physical health issue	8	12	-4	68
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	1	1	+0	7
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	1	1	+0	5
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	1	+0	5
Pregnancy and childbirth	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	2	2	+0	17
Transportation to campus	11	13	-2	92
Travel to campus takes a long time	5	5	+0	40
Car or carpool not reliable	4	6	-2	31
Public transportation system not reliable	1	3	-2	11
Campus transportation system not reliable	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	3	2	+1	27

**Notes**

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

**Table 2.3 Challenges with success in courses**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	50	55	-5	433
Doing college-level work	24	20	+4	212
Not motivated to study	14	9	+5	120
Poor planning and time management skills	13	11	+2	110
Poor study skills	12	8	+4	106
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	7	7	+0	62
Required level of math was difficult	5	5	+0	45
Skipped too many classes	3	1	+2	24
Took too many classes	2	4	-2	21
None of the above	4	3	+1	38
Online classes	22	34	-12	192
Difficulty learning the material on my own	13	21	-8	110
Difficulty keeping up because no regular class time	9	15	-6	78
Lack of interaction with faculty	8	16	-8	67
Difficulty using course technology	4	9	-5	39
Lack of interaction with other students	4	14	-10	39
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	2	3	-1	21
None of the above	4	4	+0	35
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	19	22	-3	166
Courses were too hard	7	7	+0	60
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	5	4	+1	44
Required to take too many	2	4	-2	21
Courses were too easy	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	8	10	-2	70
Faculty	12	17	-5	104
Did not teach well	8	10	-2	69
Took too long to grade assignments	4	6	-2	37
Not concerned about my academic success	4	7	-3	35
Not responsive to email	4	6	-2	35
Feedback on assignments not helpful	4	7	-3	35
Not helpful outside of class	3	5	-2	28
Not available to meet in person	2	2	+0	15
None of the above	2	2	+0	21

**Notes**

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

**Table 2.4 Challenges with the campus environment**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	46	20	+26	405
Parking	39	11	+28	343
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	37	9	+28	324
Difficulty getting parking pass	1	1	+0	6
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	0	2	-2	3
None of the above	2	1	+1	20
Interactions with other students	13	10	+3	110
Did not know many other students	6	7	-1	56
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	2	1	+1	14
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	1	0	+1	7
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	1	0	+1	6
None of the above	5	3	+2	44
Safety and crime	6	3	+3	52
Parking lots not safe	3	1	+2	22
Campus not safe	3	1	+2	22
Was a victim of a crime	2	1	+1	16
None of the above	1	1	+0	11

**Notes**

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

**Table 2.5 Challenges with finances and financial aid**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	40	38	+2	351
Paying college and living expenses	37	32	+5	324
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	25	22	+3	217
Tuition and fees	24	18	+6	207
Books, software, and other supplies	14	19	-5	121
Childcare	3	4	-1	23
None of the above	2	1	+1	20
Working with financial aid office	10	13	-3	84
Process was unclear	4	6	-2	37
Errors processing financial aid	3	5	-2	30
Unable to answer questions	3	4	-1	23
Gave me wrong information	2	3	-1	20
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	2	6	-4	20
Delays in getting money	2	4	-2	18
None of the above	2	2	+0	20
Military and employer tuition benefits	2	2	+0	14
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1	1	+0	6
Experienced delays receiving benefits	1	1	+0	6
Received wrong information about benefits	0	0	+0	2
None of the above	0	1	-1	4

**Notes**

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

**Table 2.6 Challenges with academic support services**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	20	33	-13	172
Academic advising	9	14	-5	76
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	4	8	-4	34
Told to take unnecessary course	3	4	-1	22
Not told to take necessary course	2	5	-3	20
Course/program materials were incorrect	1	2	-1	8
None of the above	3	3	+0	23
Registering for courses	8	17	-9	74
Course not offered at times I needed	3	6	-3	22
Course was offered but full	1	6	-5	11
Course not offered this semester	1	4	-3	11
Had a registration hold	1	4	-3	7
None of the above	5	6	-1	43
Tutoring	7	8	-1	59
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	3	2	+1	23
Tutors not available when I need assistance	2	3	-1	17
Tutoring hours not convenient	1	3	-2	12
Tutoring not helpful	1	2	-1	12
None of the above	2	2	+0	19
Computer and science labs	6	7	-1	52
Problems using computers and equipment	3	3	+0	24
Lab hours not convenient	1	2	-1	11
Lab busy when needed	0	1	-1	4
None of the above	2	3	-1	19
Library	4	5	-1	35
Hours not convenient	1	1	+0	10
Study spaces not available when needed	1	1	+0	7
Resources I needed not available online	1	2	-1	6
Staff not helpful	1	1	+0	5
None of the above	2	2	+0	19

**Notes**

Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within this topic area. Denominator for percentages is the total number of survey respondents; *n* in table row is the number of students choosing a challenge in that area.

# STUDENT-OFFICE INTERACTIONS

Table 3.1 shows the administrative support units your college chose for the RISC Survey. Unit names appeared on the survey exactly as they are listed in this report. Advising was the most commonly used office, with 55% reporting using the office during the Fall 2022 semester, followed by Financial Aid (48%) and Academic Resource Center (ARC) (44%).

**Table 3.1 Office usage**

	IC %	Bench. %	Diff.	n
Advising	55	54	+1	477
Financial Aid	48	36	+12	419
Academic Resource Center (ARC)	44	26	+18	387
Admissions	34	27	+7	295
Housing	24	16	+8	209

If students indicated they interacted with an office during the semester, they were asked three questions about their interactions with staff:

**How available were [unit name] staff when you interacted with them?**

- Very available
- Somewhat available
- Somewhat unavailable
- Very unavailable

**How concerned were [unit name] staff about addressing your issue?**

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Somewhat unconcerned
- Very unconcerned

**How effective were [unit name] staff when addressing your issue?**

- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Somewhat ineffective
- Very ineffective

Results are presented in Table 3.2, which shows the percentage of respondents choosing the top category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Because each college chose the administrative offices for this set of questions, the table only presents benchmark comparisons for an administrative office when at least five other colleges surveyed students about the same type of office.

**Table 3.2 Student-administration interactions**

	IC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					30      40      50      60      70      80
Academic Resource Center (ARC)					
Available	79	78	+1	387	
Concerned	56	62	-6	385	
Effective	71	76	-5	380	
Admissions					
Available	73	63	<b>+10</b>	294	
Concerned	61	54	<b>+7</b>	292	
Effective	71	66	+5	291	
Advising					
Available	70	64	<b>+6</b>	477	
Concerned	58	59	-1	477	
Effective	75	67	<b>+8</b>	473	
Financial Aid					
Available	70	61	<b>+9</b>	417	
Concerned	48	50	-2	412	
Effective	67	61	<b>+6</b>	409	
Housing					
Available	61	77	<b>-16</b>	209	
Concerned	33	62	<b>-29</b>	206	
Effective	50	74	<b>-24</b>	205	

**Notes**

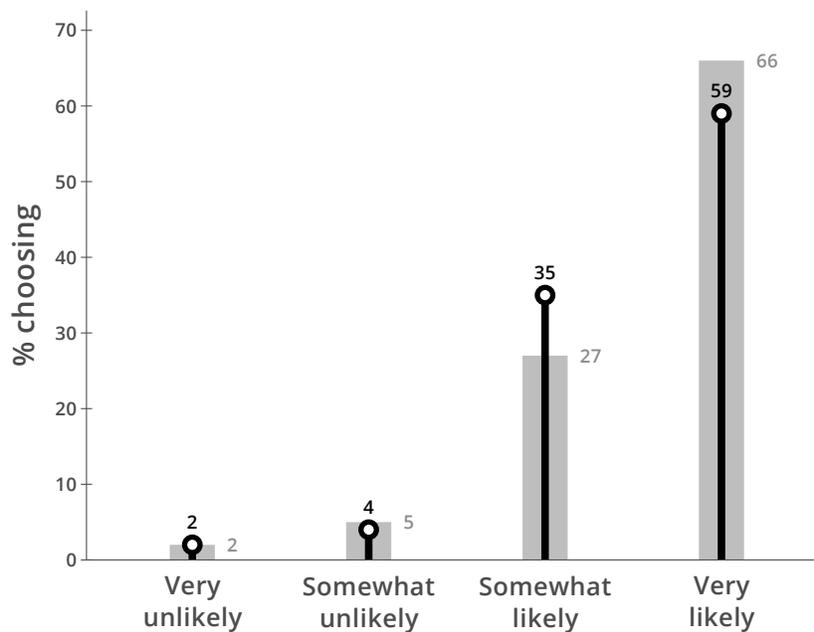
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that Iowa Central has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates Iowa Central has a lower proportion. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions,  $p < .05$ ). *n* in table row is the total number of students at your college rating an office on that dimension; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage.

# STUDENT VIEWS OF THE INSTITUTION

Besides challenges and office interactions, students were asked several questions about Iowa Central overall.

The first question, “Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend Iowa Central to a friend?”, is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with Iowa Central represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 94% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to recommend Iowa Central. The Iowa Central distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.1** Would student recommend Iowa Central to a friend?

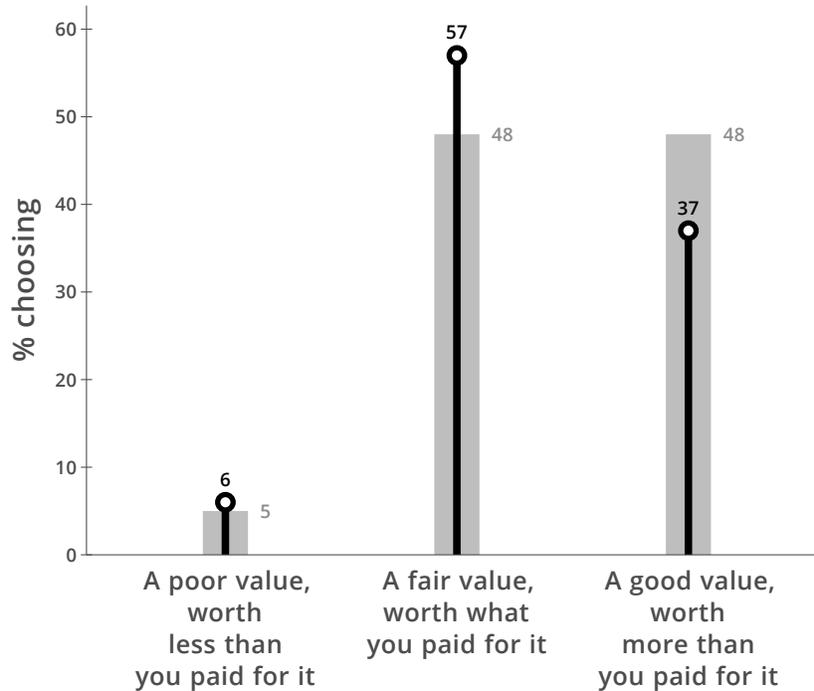


**Notes**

Iowa Central is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 32.6, p < .01; n = 855.$

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at Iowa Central (see Figure 4.2). 94% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The Iowa Central distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.2 Overall value of education?**



**Notes**

Iowa Central is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 58.7, p < .01; n = 855$ .

The last set of questions asks students how well your college is doing in preparing students for their educational goals. The top half of Table 4.1 lists students' responses to their primary reason for attending Iowa Central. 53% chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well Iowa Central is helping them achieve the specific goal they chose. Students could choose from *very well*, *fairly well*, *somewhat*, or *not at all*. Responses from the top category are presented in the bottom half of Table 4.1. For example, 48% of the students who chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary goal indicated that Iowa Central is doing *very well* in terms of increasing their job and career opportunities.

**Table 4.1 How well is education helping accomplish goals**

	IC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
<b>Purpose of taking courses at IC</b>					
Increase job and career opportunities	53	41	<b>+12</b>	454	
Prepare for a four-year degree	40	49	<b>-9</b>	345	
Self-improvement	7	10	<b>-3</b>	58	
<b>How well is education at IC ...</b>					
Increase job and career opportunities	48	46	+2	453	
Prepare for a four-year degree	38	48	<b>-10</b>	345	
Self-improvement	53	48	+5	58	

**Notes**

Top panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing one of the three educational goals. Bottom panel row percentage is the proportion of students choosing *very well* in response to the preparation question for that goal. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference from the benchmark sample (two-sample test of proportions,  $p < .05$ ). *n* in table row is the total number of students responding to the question; i.e., the denominator for the row percentage. Difference bars in the top panel of the table are in black, to reflect that schools may score high or low on these measures, depending on their institutional mission. In the bottom panel, green indicates that Iowa Central has a higher proportion of students reporting that Iowa Central is helping them achieve their educational goal compared to the benchmark sample; red indicates a lower proportion.

# RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

05

**Table 5.1 Gender identity**

	<b>%</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
Female/Woman	64	528
Male/Man	35	293
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	3
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	0	2
Another gender identity	1	5

**Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity**

	<b>%</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
African American or Black	13	107
Asian American or Asian	2	20
Native American or Alaska Native	3	22
Hispanic or Latino	12	99
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	8
White	79	652

**Notes**

Percentages may not sum to 100 because students could choose more than one category.

**Table 5.3 Age**

	<b>%</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
18 or younger	24	197
19-24	52	433
25-34	12	98
35-44	7	60
45-54	3	29
55 or older	1	12

**Table 5.4 Part-time/full-time status**

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	16	129
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	84	701

**Table 5.5 Total credit hours earned at Iowa Central**

	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
None	21	174
1-15 credits	29	241
16-29 credits	20	161
30-45 credits	18	145
46 or more credits	12	97