



Revealing Institutional  
Strengths and Challenges

Three vertical bars of varying heights are positioned in the background. The left bar is medium height, the middle bar is the shortest, and the right bar is the tallest. They are all a light gray color.

INSTITUTIONAL REPORT  
RISC STUDENT SURVEY FALL 2024  
**IOWA CENTRAL COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE**

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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; ICCC chose the specific offices that appeared in the survey. The survey used office names specific to ICCC, 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 ICCC's greatest strength, and if ICCC 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 2024 to 3,136 ICCC students. There were 857 responses used in this report, for a 27.3% response rate. Median time ICCC students spent taking the survey was 7.1 minutes.

The table below provides some background information about your college's benchmark sample. Thirty-three 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 16,286 respondents.

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

Carnegie classification		Urbanicity		Student enrollment	
High Career & Technical	40%	City	25%	Under 1,000	0%
Mixed	35%	Suburb	30%	1,000-4,999	45%
High Transfer	10%	Town	20%	5,000-9,999	30%
Other	15%	Rural	25%	10,000-19,999	20%
				20,000 and above	5%

# 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?**

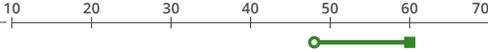
	Yes	No
Paying college and living expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working with financial aid office	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Military and employer tuition benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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 ICCC in Fall 2024 in the five main areas. *Work and personal issues* is the area where your students most frequently reported having challenges, with 48% 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**

	ICCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Work and personal issues	48	60	<b>-12</b>	415	
Campus environment	47	22	<b>+25</b>	402	
Success in courses	40	49	<b>-9</b>	346	
Finances and financial aid	38	39	-1	327	
Academic support services	14	31	<b>-17</b>	118	

**Notes**

Green indicates that ICCC has a lower proportion of students reporting a challenge compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates ICCC 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  $n=857$ .

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, 48% of your students chose one or more challenges in the major category of *Work and personal issues*. The most common subcategory was *Work*, with 30% 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 17% 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**

	ICCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Work and personal issues	48	60	-12	415
Work	30	36	-6	260
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	17	20	-3	144
Pay is not enough to cover expenses while in school	14	16	-2	123
Work schedule prevents campus resource use	8	12	-4	71
Work schedule conflicts with classes	8	12	-4	70
Work schedule is not flexible during the semester	7	9	-2	62
None of the above	5	5	+0	39
Family	27	35	-8	231
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	18	24	-6	153
Difficulty dealing with health of family	10	13	-3	83
Family does not support me going to college	3	4	-1	22
Difficulty finding childcare	2	5	-3	15
None of the above	6	6	+0	50
Health and disability issues	16	21	-5	138
Emotional/mental health issue	11	15	-4	91
Physical health issue	9	11	-2	77
Faculty did not provide necessary accommodations	1	1	+0	8
Disability services did not provide necessary support	1	1	+0	6
Pregnancy and childbirth	1	1	+0	6
Campus is difficult to navigate with my disability	0	1	-1	3
None of the above	2	3	-1	19
Transportation to campus	8	15	-7	65
Travel to campus takes a long time	4	6	-2	30
Car or carpool not reliable	3	7	-4	28
Public transportation system not reliable	1	4	-3	8
Campus transportation system not reliable	0	2	-2	4
None of the above	1	3	-2	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 2.3 Challenges with the campus environment**

	ICCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Campus environment	47	22	+25	402
Parking	39	14	+25	332
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	37	11	+26	317
Difficulty getting parking pass	0	1	-1	3
Parking on or near campus is too expensive	0	1	-1	3
None of the above	2	2	+0	13
Interactions with other students	13	11	+2	108
Did not know many other students	6	7	-1	50
Did not feel welcome due to my race or ethnicity	1	1	+0	8
Did not feel welcome due to my sexual orientation	1	1	+0	5
Did not feel welcome due to my gender identity	0	1	-1	0
None of the above	6	3	+3	51
Safety and crime	8	4	+4	71
Campus not safe	3	1	+2	29
Parking lots not safe	3	1	+2	27
Was a victim of a crime	2	1	+1	14
None of the above	2	2	+0	18

**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 success in courses**

	ICCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Success in courses	40	49	-9	346
Doing college-level work	20	20	+0	172
Not motivated to study	10	8	+2	83
Poor planning and time management skills	9	10	-1	79
Poor study skills	9	9	+0	79
Reading or writing assignments were difficult	4	6	-2	36
Required level of math was difficult	4	5	-1	31
Skipped too many classes	2	2	+0	15
Took too many classes	1	3	-2	12
None of the above	3	3	+0	29
Online classes	17	28	-11	148
Difficulty learning the material on my own	10	15	-5	86
Difficulty keeping up because no regular class time	8	11	-3	65
Lack of interaction with faculty	5	12	-7	43
Lack of interaction with other students	3	9	-6	26
Difficulty using course technology	3	8	-5	26
Difficulty taking exams at testing center	2	2	+0	14
None of the above	3	4	-1	29
Developmental courses (math, reading, or writing)	16	19	-3	135
Courses were too hard	5	6	-1	44
Did not prepare me for college-level courses	3	4	-1	29
Required to take too many	2	4	-2	13
Courses were too easy	0	1	-1	4
None of the above	7	8	-1	62
Faculty	9	16	-7	76
Did not teach well	6	9	-3	53
Not concerned about my academic success	4	5	-1	30
Feedback on assignments not helpful	3	7	-4	27
Took too long to grade assignments	3	6	-3	25
Not responsive to email	2	5	-3	20
Not helpful outside of class	2	5	-3	18
Not available to meet in person	0	2	-2	3
None of the above	1	3	-2	9

**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**

	ICCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Finances and financial aid	38	39	-1	327
Paying college and living expenses	35	33	+2	300
Living expenses (housing, food, healthcare)	24	23	+1	202
Tuition and fees	21	19	+2	183
Books, software, and other supplies	10	17	-7	85
Childcare	3	4	-1	25
None of the above	2	1	+1	19
Working with financial aid office	10	13	-3	85
Process was unclear	4	6	-2	34
Errors processing financial aid	4	5	-1	34
Delays in getting money	3	5	-2	22
Unable to answer questions	2	4	-2	16
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	1	5	-4	12
Gave me wrong information	1	3	-2	9
None of the above	3	2	+1	23
Military and employer tuition benefits	1	2	-1	10
Experienced delays receiving benefits	1	1	+0	5
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	0	1	-1	1
Received wrong information about benefits	0	1	-1	0
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**

	ICCC %	Bench. %	Diff. %	<i>n</i>
Academic support services	14	31	-17	118
Academic advising	6	13	-7	48
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	3	7	-4	22
Not told to take necessary course	1	4	-3	12
Told to take unnecessary course	1	3	-2	11
Course/program materials were incorrect	1	2	-1	7
None of the above	2	4	-2	16
Tutoring	5	8	-3	39
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	2	3	-1	18
Tutors not available when I need assistance	2	3	-1	14
Tutoring hours not convenient	2	2	+0	14
Tutoring not helpful	1	2	-1	5
None of the above	1	2	-1	11
Registering for courses	4	19	-15	37
Course was offered but full	2	7	-5	15
Course not offered at times I needed	2	7	-5	14
Course not offered this semester	1	4	-3	9
Had a registration hold	0	5	-5	3
None of the above	2	6	-4	16
Computer and science labs	4	6	-2	31
Problems using computers and equipment	1	2	-1	11
Lab busy when needed	1	1	+0	5
Lab hours not convenient	0	1	-1	3
None of the above	2	2	+0	14
Library	3	5	-2	27
Study spaces not available when needed	2	1	+1	14
Resources I needed not available online	1	1	+0	6
Hours not convenient	0	1	-1	4
Staff not helpful	0	1	-1	2
None of the above	1	3	-2	9

**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. Financial Aid was the most commonly used office, with 57% reporting using the office during the Fall 2024 semester, followed by Academic Resource Center (46%) and Advising (44%).

**Table 3.1 Office usage**

	ICCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>
Financial Aid	57	40	+17	490
Academic Resource Center	46			394
Advising	44	55	-11	377
Housing	29	20	+9	249
Distance Learning	10			82

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 benchmarks 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**

	ICCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
					30    40    50    60    70    80    90
<b>Academic Resource Center</b>					
Available	84			395	○
Concerned	54			390	○
Effective	74			390	○
<b>Advising</b>					
Available	79	65	<b>+14</b>	376	■————○
Concerned	67	58	<b>+9</b>	374	■————○
Effective	77	68	<b>+9</b>	372	■————○
<b>Distance Learning</b>					
Available	63			81	○
Concerned	59			79	○
Effective	62			76	○
<b>Financial Aid</b>					
Available	79	66	<b>+13</b>	489	■————○
Concerned	50	50	+0	487	■
Effective	73	63	<b>+10</b>	486	■————○
<b>Housing</b>					
Available	63	77	<b>-14</b>	249	○————■
Concerned	36	62	<b>-26</b>	247	○————■
Effective	55	74	<b>-19</b>	247	○————■

**Notes**

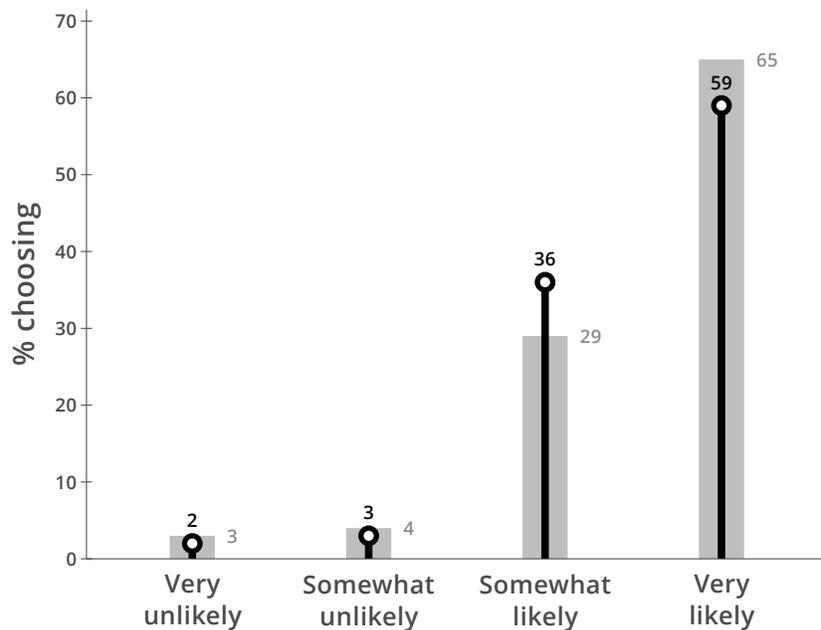
Percentage is the proportion of students rating an office in the top response category (*very available/concerned/effective*). Green indicates that ICCC has a higher proportion of students choosing the category compared to the benchmark sample proportion; red indicates ICCC has a lower proportion. Bold 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 ICCC overall.

The first question, “Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend ICCC to a friend?”, is a summative measure of how students view your institution. Results are presented in Figure 4.1, with ICCC represented by the black line and the benchmark sample by the gray line. 95% of your students would be somewhat or very likely to recommend ICCC. The ICCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.1 Would student recommend ICCC to a friend?**

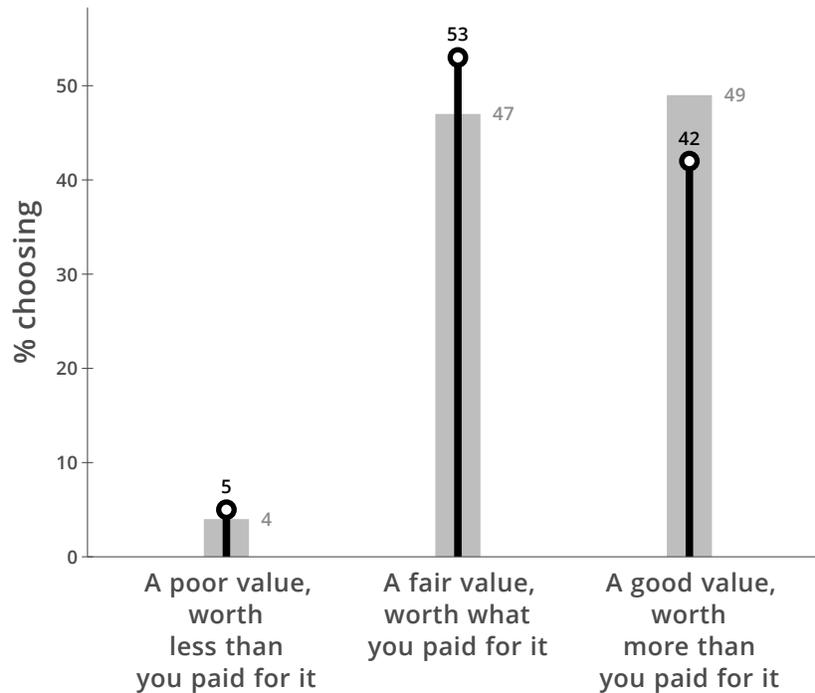


**Notes**

ICCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 37.2, p < .01; n = 849$ .

Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at ICCC (see Figure 4.2). 95% of your students believe their education is worth what they paid (or even worth more). The ICCC distribution of responses is statistically significantly different from the benchmark sample.

**Figure 4.2 Overall value of education?**



**Notes**

ICCC is the black bar; benchmark sample is gray.  $\chi^2 = 22.3, p < .01; n = 849$ .

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 ICCC. 50% chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary purpose for attending your institution.

Students were then asked how well ICCC 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, 51% of the students who chose *Increase job and career opportunities* as their primary goal indicated that ICCC is doing *very well* in terms of increasing their job and career opportunities.

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

	ICCC % ○	Bench. % ■	Diff.	<i>n</i>	
Purpose of taking courses at ICCC					
Increase job and career opportunities	50	45	<b>+5</b>	426	
Prepare for a four-year degree	40	45	<b>-5</b>	344	
Self-improvement	10	10	+0	81	
How well is education at ICCC ...					
Increase job and career opportunities	51	46	<b>+5</b>	425	
Prepare for a four-year degree	44	47	-3	344	
Self-improvement	43	47	-4	81	

**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 ICCC has a higher proportion of students reporting that ICCC 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	63	515
Male/Man	36	297
Transgender Female/Transgender Woman	0	0
Transgender Male/Transgender Man	0	3
Another gender identity	1	6

**Table 5.2 Race/ethnicity**

	<b>%</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>
African American or Black	14	117
Asian American or Asian	2	15
Native American or Alaska Native	2	18
Hispanic or Latino	11	86
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	9
White	79	647

**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	27	223
19-24	55	452
25-34	10	85
35-44	5	40
45-54	2	20
55 or older	1	5

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

	%	<i>n</i>
Part-time (less than 12 credit hours)	12	101
Full-time (12 or more credit hours)	88	717

**Table 5.5 Total credit hours earned at ICCC**

	%	<i>n</i>
None	21	173
1-15 credits	30	241
16-29 credits	21	169
30-45 credits	19	155
46 or more credits	9	71