

Research Brief

MJC Non-Returning Students Survey 2018 Results

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Report Produced By: Scott Kerlin

Background: The purpose of this study was to assist the MJC campus community in determining factors most commonly associated with students departing the college (i.e. student attrition). The first annual Non-returning Student Survey of 2018 at MJC was distributed by email during the period of February 28 to March 16, 2018 to approximately 5000 former students who did not re-enroll at MJC after attending the previous term. A total of **415 former students responded**, resulting in a **response rate of 8.3%**.

This survey was modeled after a similar study that is conducted twice per year, every year by De Anza College. De Anza has been surveying its non-returning students twice per year since 2003. Response rates at De Anza ranged between 5% and 11% during most semesters.

Important Highlights

(1) Terms enrolled: 48% of respondents indicated they completed 1 or 2 terms at MJC. 30% indicated they completed 5 or more terms, while 23% indicated they completed 3 or 4 terms.

(2) Primary reasons for not returning: 18% of respondents (70 former students) indicated they had graduated and/or transferred to a 4-year university/college after completing the last term. More than 20% of respondents (76 former students) indicated they could not get the class they needed. Among these 76 students, the course(s) they were unable to get into were most commonly in Mathematics (25% of total). More than 10% indicated they could not afford to attend any longer. Nearly 10% indicated they had obtained a job.

(3) Primary reasons for not returning (Open-ended responses): 50% of survey respondents (209) chose to submit an open-ended response. Primary listed reasons included personal matters such as health/medical concerns, conflict with work responsibilities, family responsibilities, relocating (i.e. moving away from MJC region), or financial concerns. Other concerns included unavailability of needed classes, need for more online classes, and taking a semester off from current studies.

(4) Programs with largest numbers of survey respondents (including graduates and not still enrolled): (1) General Education (80 respondents); (2) Nursing (65 respondents); (3) Business Administration (29 respondents); (4) Psychology (23 respondents).

(5) Respondents unable to afford attending: Among the 41 respondents who indicated they could not afford to remain enrolled, the top three reasons were (1) book costs were too expensive (90%); (2) personal financial pressing matters (87%); and (3) no longer eligible for financial aid

(6) Respondents who obtained a job: Respondents who indicated they got a job were subsequently asked if their jobs were related to their field of study at MJC. Nearly 75% of these respondents answered “no”.

Respondents who indicated they got a job, were also asked to indicate if they obtained their jobs through the MJC career center or other MJC services. All of the respondents marked "no."

(7) Respondents who transferred to another community college: 21 respondents (5% of total) indicated they had transferred to another community college in spring 2018 and 16 of them identified the college where they transferred. The most common colleges were San Joaquin Delta College and Merced College. The primary fields of study among these students, while still enrolled at MJC, were Nursing and General Education.

(8) Reasons for transferring to another community college: When asked the primary reason for transferring to another community college, the largest proportion of respondents marked "It was closer to home" (32%) and "the program or classes that I wanted to study were offered there" (32%). The third most common choice was "I liked it better than MJC" (21%).

(8) Respondents who transferred to a 4-year institution: 60 respondents (12% of total) indicated a specific 4-year institution that they had transferred to. By far, the largest percentage (70% of transfers) enrolled at CSU Stanislaus, and most of the remaining enrolled in another CSU campus. The four academic majors most popular among MJC students who transferred to 4-year institutions are (1) Sociology; (2) Psychology; (3) Business Administration; and (4) Administration of Justice.

(10) Factors aiding successful transfer or completion of educational goal at MJC: Respondents who indicated they have achieved their academic goal at MJC through transferring and/or obtaining a degree/certificate found the following to be most helpful:

- Being supported by family and friends (92%)
- Developing an educational plan (82%)
- Ability to take a variety of online courses (73%)
- Guidance from a counselor/advisor (72%)
- Being supported by faculty and staff (71%)
- Selecting a major/program of study early on (65%)

(11) Students requesting follow-up support from MJC staff: Nearly 100 survey respondents indicated that they would like to be contacted by someone at MJC to help them explore their options for continued study. The topics of greatest emphasis among these respondents were (1) educational planning; and (2) financial aid.

(12) Plan to return to MJC: More than 50% of survey respondents indicated they definitely had plans to return to MJC in the future. The majority of these students had only attended MJC during one or two previous semesters. Of these respondents, the majority indicated that they left MJC because either (1) they had not been able to get the class(es) they needed or (2) they could not afford to continue their studies. Another 28% indicated that they were uncertain about future plans at this time.

(13) Demographic profile of respondents—Gender: 69% of respondents are female, 31% are male.

(14) Demographic profile of respondents—Age: Nearly half (48%) of respondents are between ages 18 and 24; another 34% are ages 25-39, and 18% are ages 40 and over.

(15) Demographic profile of respondents—Race/Ethnicity: The largest proportions of responding students are (1) Hispanic (39%); (2) White (34%); (3) Two or more (13%); (4) Asian (6%); (5) African-American (5%).

Crosstabs

(1) Transfers to 4-year institutions by gender: 80% of respondents who transferred to a 4-year institution were female; 20% were male

(2) Transfers to 4-year institutions by race/ethnicity: Highest percentage of respondents by ethnicity who indicated they had transferred to a 4-year institution or graduated: Asians (31%) and Hispanics (26%)

(3) Students indicating primary reason for not enrolling in spring 2018 (Quantitative data only):

Primary Reason for Not Enrolling (Non-Grads/Transfers)	Afr-Amer	Asian	Hispanic	White
Couldn't get the class(es) I needed	25%	33%	37%	27%
Enrolled at another 2-year college	0%	22%	5%	14%
Couldn't afford to attend	37%	0%	17%	26%
Got a job	25%	22%	23%	23%
Wasn't sure where to turn for help	13%	11%	17%	5%
Didn't like the class(es)	0%	12%	5%	5%

(4) Students most likely to return in a subsequent semester by race/ethnicity: Hispanics: 59% "yes", 28% "not sure"; Asians: 46% "yes", 29% "not sure"; Whites: 43% "yes", 28% "not sure"

(5) Students most likely to return in a subsequent semester by specific cost issues: Of the respondents who indicated they would definitely like to return to MJC in a subsequent semester, the leading financial concerns among students who departed due to financial issues were "having other needs that made paying for college less of a priority" (85% of "yes" respondents); "the cost of books was too expensive" (69% of "yes" respondents); and "I applied for financial aid but was not eligible" (54%).

(6) Students reporting financial difficulty as cause of non-return, by race/ethnicity:

Primary Financial Concern Among Respondents Unable to Afford Continued Enrollment (% agreeing)	Afr-Amer	Asian	Hispanic	White
Tuition and fees were too expensive	67%	0%	62%	47%
My financial aid did not cover all of the costs	67%	0%	54%	53%
I applied for financial aid but was not eligible	33%	0%	58%	71%
Transportation was too expensive	67%	0%	17%	18%
I had other financial needs that made paying for college less of a priority	67%	0%	92%	76%
The cost of books was too expensive	100%	0%	77%	94%

(7) Factors most commonly associated with graduation/transfer success by race/ethnicity:

<u>Rating of Factors for Successful Graduation/Transfer</u>	<u>Afr-Amer</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>White</u>
Being supported by family and friends	75%	69%	85%	75%
Developing an educational plan	92%	56%	70%	70%
Ability to take a variety of online courses	83%	75%	66%	69%
Guidance from a counselor/advisor	75%	63%	66%	64%
Being supported by faculty and staff	42%	100%	62%	66%
Selecting a major/program of study early on	67%	56%	61%	63%
Being mentored/guided by a faculty or staff member	42%	100%	50%	54%
Being supported by other students	83%	31%	64%	54%