



Aiken Technical College

SOAR Student Survey-Fall 2014

Executive Report

Office of Planning & Research

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Methodology	4
Survey Development	4
Sampling	4
Contact Method	4
Survey Administration	4
Survey Respondents Compared to Student Body	5
Table 1. Academic Division Proportions, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body	5
Table 2. Major Race & Gender Groups, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body	5
Table 3. Part-Time/Full Time Status, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body.....	6
Table 4. Age Bands, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body.....	6
Table 5. Student Schedule, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body	6
Survey Highlights	7
<i>Technology</i>	7
<i>Computer/IT Support</i>	7
<i>ATC Email</i>	7
<i>ATC Website</i>	7
<i>Test Center</i>	7
<i>Academic Success Center (ASC)</i>	8
<i>Scheduling</i>	8
<i>Financial Aid</i>	9
<i>Marketing</i>	9
<i>Enrollment Services Center</i>	9
<i>Counseling Services</i>	9
<i>Academic Advising</i>	9
<i>Career Services</i>	10
<i>Bookstore</i>	10
<i>Cashier's Office</i>	10
<i>Security and Grounds</i>	10

Executive Summary

The SOAR Student Survey was administered during Fall 2014 over a 3-day period to a sample of 300 ATC students. The assessment included questions regarding the non-classroom services offered to ATC students. This report includes a summary of the findings, methodology used, comparison of the respondents to the currently enrolled student body, and highlights from the survey findings.

Technology

Students recognize that technology devices and services are an important component of their personal and academic life. Based on the SOAR Student Survey, 91% of students own and use a smart phone, and 79% own and use a laptop. This finding is parallel to survey responders choosing school email as their preferred method of contact on ATC deadlines and activities. Most students reported checking their email at least twice per week.

Results also confirmed the importance of technology in students' academic success. 94% of students indicated they used technology devices for viewing course materials. In addition, students utilized devices for communicating with their instructor and/or administrator, and well as completing/posting assignments. 84% of the students revealed that technology devices contribute "very much" to their learning experience.

Distance Education/ Online Courses

When respondents were asked about their level of interest in taking distance education (online) courses at ATC, 31% were "very interested" and 32% were "interested". If presented with the option of having their entire academic program in an online format, 27% of students were "very interested" and 24% were "interested". This shows a strong interest in online coursework in general.

Student Utilization of Services

Based on the survey results, there are 5 identifiable areas that had a low utilization of students. These areas are related to (a) ISM Help Desk, where 82% of the respondents (245 of 300) report that they never request support from the Computer/IT Help Desk; (b) Counseling Services, 50% of students were aware of the services but have not used them; (c) Career Services, 52% indicated they were aware but have not used their services; (d) Academic Success Center Workshops, only 4% of the respondents have attended a workshop at the ASC; and (e) Cashier's office, 23% of students reported they had never used the cashier's office.

Student Awareness of Services

In most areas, student awareness of services was at least moderate to high. There are 4 areas where awareness levels had considerable opportunity for improvement, such as: (a) Counseling services, 45% were not aware of free counseling services; (b) Career Services, 25% were not aware of Career Services; (c) Library, only half of the students reported being aware of access to books from off-campus sources; and (d) Academic Success Center, about half the students indicated they were not aware the workshops offered by the ASC.

Academic Success Center

Of those students who have received tutoring from the ASC, 86% of students agreed and/or strongly agreed that the ASC helped them to succeed as a student. 62% of students pointed out their grades improved about one letter grade.

Enrollment Services Center

60% of the students were able to complete their enrollment process in one or two visits to ATC. For other students, 40% needed three or more visits to complete the enrollment process. From the latter group, survey results revealed that 31% were related to documentation and 25% for financial aid concerns.

In the advisement process, the findings revealed positive results. When students were asked if they knew their assigned advisor, 89% indicated that they did. After meeting with their ATC advisor, 64% of students completed their online registration while 58% of students strongly agreed that their advisor helped them to understand how their program of study will improve their career options. 36% completed online registration before meeting with their ATC academic advisor.

Marketing

41% of the respondents learned about or knew of ATC thru a friend or family member. 26% of respondents discovered ATC through personal research. Interestingly, T.V. and internet advertisement ranked last with only 5%.

Financial Aid

82% of the students who took the survey indicated that they have received financial aid from ATC for their college expenses. 90% expressed that they were satisfied with the Financial Aid Office with 10% of survey responses showing some level of dissatisfaction.

Cashier's Office

Of those who have used the Cashier's office, 94% of students indicated the system for making payments at the ATC Cashier's Office is efficient. 23% stated they had not used the Cashier's office. The results also showed a 90% level of satisfaction with the Higher One student refund process. Students also scored the Cashier's office's reliability for sending payment information on time at 96%.

Extracurricular Activities, Security & Grounds

While this survey primarily focused on student support and services, respondents indicated the importance of extracurricular activities. The majority of respondents indicated they would like to see more social events held on the ATC campus, such as sports events, workshops/professional development, and family events. As to the campus itself, students strongly agree that the grounds and buildings are kept clean while the campus is safe and has adequate security.

Methodology

Survey Development

A committee was convened and tasked with developing the survey, which was intended to gather student feedback on the ATC services and operations that interact with students. The committee was led by the office of Planning and Research, but also included staff from the Press Grant, Human Resources, ISM, Marketing, and Training. Survey Monkey was the tool used to develop and administer the survey. Survey drafts were repeatedly sent out for review to the leadership of areas represented in the survey questions. It was determined that a \$30 Walmart gift card would be used as incentive for students to participate in the survey.

Sampling

Students were randomly selected from a list of currently enrolled students, with the modification being that the academic divisions were taken into account in order to have the random sample of the same proportions by division as the currently enrolled student body. The initial sample was 600 students, but, as response traffic slowed, we ultimately invited an additional 600 using the same method in order to reach our target of 300 students surveyed.

The survey used a sample of 300 students to represent approximately 2200 currently enrolled students, which is about 13% of the students. The ending sample is deemed likely to be a strongly representative one because of:

- 1) the random selection of the invited sample of students, modified only by academic division proportions, and
- 2) the similarity of the respondents to the general student body in terms of academic division, race, gender and age.

Contact Method

The initial 600 participants selected were contacted via email a week before the initial date of the survey. An additional 300 students were invited during the first day of the survey via email and text message. Finally, another 300 eligible students were extended an invitation via email and text message to be part of the survey, for a total of 1200 invitees.

Survey Administration

A computer room in the library was used to host the students coming to complete the survey. The survey administration was coordinated by staff present at all times during the survey availability, which was 9:00 AM to 7:30 PM January 20-23, 2015. Students were checked in and out using a list of invitees, identity was confirmed by student ID, and signature was required to confirm completion of the survey and receipt of their \$30 gift card. The survey was terminated when the target of 300 was reached, which occurred at the end of day 3 on January 22nd.

Survey Respondents Compared to Student Body

We explored the degree to which the final sample of students taking the survey was representative of the currently enrolled students. To this end, we compared the survey respondents and student population by race/ethnicity, gender, full/part-time students, academic divisions, and age groups.

Table 1. Academic Division Proportions, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body

Division	Survey Respondents (n=300)	ATC Student Body* (n=2170)	Percentage Difference
GEN	37.3%	40.7%	-3.4%
HSC	34.0%	31.4%	2.6%
BCTT	17.0%	13.9%	3.1%
TEC	11.7%	14.0%	-2.3%

*Per Enrollment on 2/2/15

Table 1 Discussion: The proportions of the respondents by division were about 97% reflective of the proportions of the currently enrolled student body.

Table 2. Major Race & Gender Groups, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body

Race/Gender	Survey Respondents (n=300)		ATC Student Body* (n=2170)		Differences	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
White	38.3%	17.3%	37.2%	23.7%	1.10%	-6.40%
Black / African American	26.3%	9.0%	22.6%	8.5%	3.70%	0.50%
Hispanic	3.3%	1.3%	3.0%	1.5%	0.30%	-0.20%
Other Minorities	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	1.5%	0.40%	0.50%
Gender Only	70.3%	29.7%	64.8%	35.2%	5.5%	-5.5%

*Per Enrollment on 2/2/15

Table 2 Discussion: The survey respondents' race/gender groups followed largely the same percentage distribution of the student body for most groups. White males were under-represented in the survey, while black female were over-represented to a lesser degree. Females in general were over-represented by 5.5%. Overall, race and gender were consistently represented by around 95% or higher rate of similarity in the sample.

Table 3. Part-Time/Full Time Status, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body

FTE*	Survey Respondents (n=300)	ATC Student Body* (n=2170)	Percentage Difference
Part-time	58.0%	65.7%	-7.7%
Full-time	42.0%	34.3%	7.7%

*Full/Part-time classification followed IPEDS definition, which is the total number of credits ÷ by 12.

**Unduplicated enrollee figures are as of 2/2/15

Table 3 Discussion: Part-time students were somewhat under-represented in the sample, possibly due to the fact that full-time students spend more time on campus, so would have more opportunity to take the survey.

Table 4. Age Bands, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body

AGE CLASS	Survey Respondents (n=300)	ATC Student Body* (n=2170)	Percentage Difference
Under 18	1%	2%	-1%
18 – 20	34%	29%	5%
21 – 25	24%	29%	-5%
26 – 30	15%	14%	1%
31 – 40	16%	16%	0%
41 – 50	7%	7%	0%
Over 50	3%	2%	1%

*Unduplicated enrollee figures are as of 2/2/15

Table 4 Discussion: Overall the respondents' ages matched the student body very well. The difference in the 21-25 age group being under-represented while the 18-20 was over-represented is of interest.

Table 5. Student Schedule, Survey Respondents vs. Student Body

Schedule*	Survey Respondents (n=299)	ATC Student Body** (n=2170)	Percentage Difference
Day-time	96%	97%	-1.2%
Evening-time	4%	3%	1.2%

*A day-time student is defined as a person who is taking the majority of classes before 6 p.m. An evening-time student is a person attending the majority of classes after 6 p.m.

***Unduplicated enrollee figures are as of 2/2/15

Table 5 Discussion: Overall the survey sample matched the student body very closely in term of student schedule.

Survey Highlights

Technology

- 91% of students report that they own and use a smart phone and 79% own and use a laptop.
- 94% of students indicated they used technology devices for viewing course materials.
- 84% of students indicate that the use of technology devices contributes “very much” to their learning experience.

Computer/IT Support

- 82% of the respondents (245 of 300) report that they never request support from the Computer/IT Help Desk.
- Of the 55 respondents using the Help Desk, Blackboard was the most common area needing support (64%). Also the most preferred method of requesting support (51%) was walking in to contact the Help Desk.
- Based on their most recent experience with the IT help desk, these 55 students had very high satisfaction rates in all areas, including speed of response, solving the problem, helpfulness, and professionalism.

ATC Email

- 93% of students report checking their ATC email at least once or twice a week, and two-thirds check their email accounts daily.

ATC Website

- Approximately 90% of students agreed that it is easy to find information they need about their program of study on the ATC website and that the information was easy to understand.
- When students were asked if there is enough information on the ATC website to make decisions about their program of study, 84% indicated they agreed or strongly agreed.
- 93% of the respondents agreed that the information on the ATC website is up to date.

Test Center

- The satisfaction rate was around 90% for the services provided by the ATC Test Center.

Library

- 75% of the students surveyed report using the ATC library to some degree.
- Most students (70% -80%) showed at least some awareness of access to the online library catalog and off-campus access to library online services. However only about half of the students reported being

aware of services involving access to books from off-campus sources such as inter-library loan, borrowing agreements with USCA, and PASCAL delivers.

- 94% of students pointed out that the ATC Library regular hours are adequate for their needs.
- Nearly 100% of students who use the library indicate satisfaction in the availability of books/periodical articles, Library website information, and ample information for assignments. However, most students (65%-80%) indicate they rarely or never utilize library staff, library website, EBSCO, and the library catalog. The most used library resource is internet access.
- Students showed strong satisfaction with library staff, the environment, and the availability of computers, printers, and study areas.

Academic Success Center (ASC)

- 33% of students indicated that they have received tutoring from the ASC. Reasons for not getting tutoring were fairly evenly distributed between not knowing the services were free, not needing the services, and inconvenient hours. About 10% were not aware of the ASC's tutoring services.
- Of the 143 respondents using tutoring services, 86% agreed and/or strongly agreed that it helped them to succeed as a student. Most reported (about 62%) that the tutoring increased their grades by at least one letter grade.
- 53% of the responses indicated that the tutor's knowledge of the subject matter is excellent. 31% rated it as good while 13% rated the tutor's knowledge as adequate.
- Only 4% of respondents have attended a workshop at the ASC, and about half the students indicated they were not aware of the ASC workshops.
- The ASC Services were generally highly rated by the students in all areas evaluated, related to tutoring, staff, and availability of computers and study areas.

Scheduling

- 92% of students agreed that it was easy signing up for classes, and 86% agreed that it was easy to put together a class schedule that meets their needs.
- On the level of interest in taking distance education (online) courses, 31% are very interested and 32% of students are somewhat interested. 37% responded as either "not very interested" or "no interest at all".
- For taking their entire program online, 27% indicated "very interested" and 24% were "somewhat interested". 49% responded as either "not very interested" or "no interest at all".
- 60% of survey takers preferred to take classes at ATC in the mornings. 28% favored taking classes in the early or late afternoon (12pm-6pm). 12% were interested in taking classes after 6 pm.

Financial Aid

- 82% of the students who took the survey received financial aid from ATC for their college expenses.
- 90% expressed that they were satisfied with the Financial Aid Office with 10% of survey responses showing some level of dissatisfaction.

Marketing

- When asked how they learned about ATC, 41% indicated that a Friend or family member was their source, and 26% indicated personal research. 27% indicated other sources, and only 5% indicated their source as either TV or internet advertisement.

Enrollment Services Center

- Survey responders expressed a 92% level of satisfaction with the staff at the Enrollment Services Center.
- One or two visits to the enrollment center were sufficient for about 60% of the students to complete their enrollment. 17% completed in only one visit. 40% indicated that it took three or more visits.
- There was a high satisfaction rate (89%-93%) for the following enrollment center services: Staff helpfulness with online registration, ability to get information quickly from the staff, and the courtesy and knowledge of the staff.
- There was a relatively lower satisfaction rate with the following areas: ability to get information over the phone from the Enrollment Services Center (73%), and return of phone calls within 24 hours (69%).
- 78% of survey respondents reported they did not speak with ATC recruitment staff.
- ATC email ranked highest (51%) as the preferred method of contact on ATC deadlines and activities. Personal email ranked next (23%) followed by text message, and ATC website. Social media was preferred by only 1%.
- When asked what type of events students would like to see more of on campus, all categories displayed strong responses; with almost half of respondents indicated they would like to see more social events. Other selections included sports, workshops/professional development, family events, educational and cultural events.

Counseling Services

- Nearly half (45%) of respondents were not aware of the free counseling services offered by ATC. About 5% reported that they had used the services.
- Of those 14 respondents who have used the counseling services, the satisfaction rate was 100%.

Academic Advising

- 89% of respondents reported that they knew their assigned advisor. Of these, 48% indicated that their advisor is in the enrollment center and 49% stated that their advisor is a faculty member.

- A high level of satisfaction with advisors (90%) was expressed in the following areas:
 - Help with understanding how the program of study improves career options.
 - Help with understanding how courses fit into program of study.
- 92% of respondents felt their advisor provided helpful information and 90% felt their advisor understood their program of study and academic goals.
- 36% of respondents completed registration before meeting with their advisor.

Career Services

- 52% of students indicated that they were aware of Career Services, but have not used their services. 26% were helped by Career Services in various ways. 25% students stated that they were not aware of ATC Career Services.

Bookstore

- 53% of respondents pointed out the experience of buying textbooks in the ATC bookstore works quickly most of the time.
- Overall, students rated the ATC bookstore in satisfactory terms (84%-90%) for courteous treatment, being helped promptly, and finding needed items.

Cashier's Office

- Of those who have used the Cashier's office, 94% of students indicated the system for making payments at the ATC Cashier's Office is efficient. 23% stated they had not used the Cashier's office.
- Of those who have used both the Higher one card and the Cashier's office (162 students), there was a 90% satisfaction rate with the Higher One student refund process. At least 63% of students were satisfied with the Higher One student refund process. 30% stated they didn't use the Higher One card.
- 96% of the respondents received information from the ATC Cashier's Office in time to be prepared for payments.
- 98% of students indicated that their experiences at the Cashier's Office have been pleasant and the staff is helpful.

Security and Grounds

- Nearly all students agreed the grounds and buildings of ATC are kept clean and the campus is safe with adequate security.