

STUDENT PREFERENCES & EXPERIENCES - SPRING 2024

**Office of Institutional Research
Tarrant County College**



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Includes demographic information about students who responded to the survey.

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Includes questions about barriers student respondents face which could hinder their success at TCC.

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Includes questions about student respondents' top considerations when deciding to attend TCC, perceptions on the value of college, and attitudes on the environment on campus.

Section IV: Students' Preferences on the Schedule

Includes student respondents' scheduling preferences and their potential impact on enrollment.

SECTION I: SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics of the Spring 2024 *Student Preferences and Experiences Survey* respondents are presented in this section.

Methodology

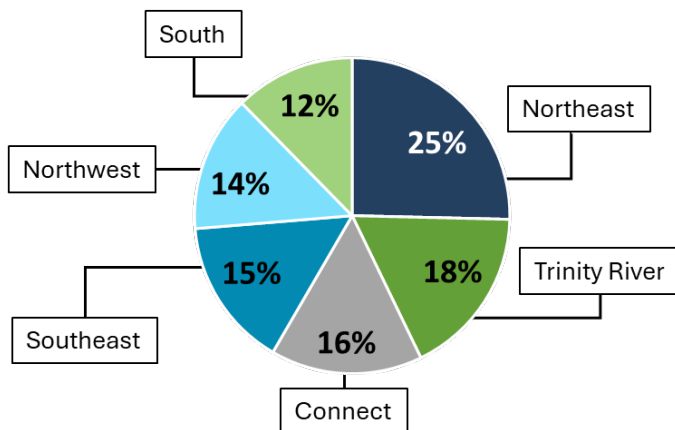
All 2024SP students (N~44,000) received the survey invitation by email. In addition, posters with a survey link were placed on campuses, and students received a text with the link. About 1,200 (~3%) participated with roughly 70% completing the entire survey.

Since not all respondents answered every question, the analysis of each question is based on the total number of respondents who answered that question.

Respondent Demographics

- About **66%** of respondents were female, and **29%** were male. About **1%** identified as another gender, and about **4%** preferred not to respond. The 2024SP TCC population was about **58%** female.^[1] (N = 876)
- Respondents chose First Time in College (FTIC) about **27%** of the time. The 2024SP TCC population was about **5%** FTIC.^[1] (N = 874)
- About **45%** of respondents selected full-time, however, only about **27%** of the 2024SP TCC population were full-time students.^[1] (N = 882)
- About **25%** of respondents selected Northeast as their primary campus; however, Connect Campus had the highest headcount for 2024SP TCC students and was almost double that of Northeast.^[1] (N = 745)

Respondent Campus



- About **28%** of respondents indicated that they were primarily online students. This is similar to the rate of about **27%** of 2024SP TCC students whose primary campus by hours was CN. (N = 882)



- **32%** were solely a student (i.e., did not work or care for dependents in addition to school) (N = 862)



- **56%** stated that they had a job outside of school (N = 862)



- **26%** stated that they cared for dependents (e.g., a child or older relative) (N = 862)



- **13%** stated that they worked outside of school **and** cared for dependents (N = 862)

Students reported the language they primarily spoke at home (N = 865):

- About **83%** reported speaking primarily English
- About **10%** reported speaking primarily Spanish
- About **2%** reported speaking primarily Vietnamese
- About **2%** reported speaking primarily French
- About **3%** reported speaking some other language



Generalizing Results

Survey respondents were not necessarily reflective of the entire population. Results are not intended to be used as estimates for all students but rather to gain insights about their perspectives and experiences at TCC.

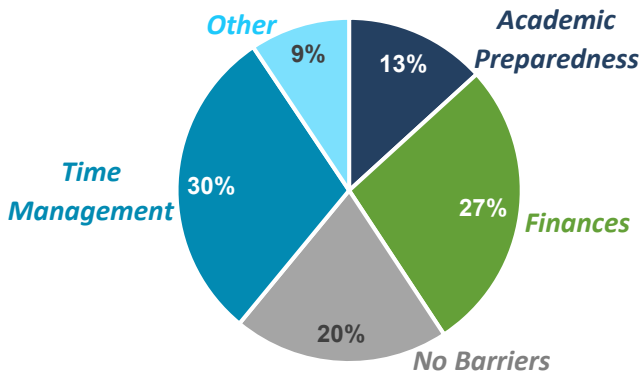
[1] 20024SP Statistical Handbook

SECTION II: BARRIERS TO SUCCESS AT TCC

Questions gauging and exploring various barriers which could hinder a student's success at TCC were included in the Spring 2024 student survey. Results from those questions are presented in this section.

Barriers to Success at TCC

When selecting their biggest barrier to success at TCC, about 30% of respondents selected **Time Management** and about 27% of respondents selected **Finances**. (N = 884)



- **Time Management** (e.g., commitments outside of school, awareness of time expectations for coursework) – 30%
- **Finances** (e.g., paying for school, needing to work, living expenses) – 27%
- **I don't currently feel there are barriers impacting my success** – 20%
- **Academic Preparedness** (e.g., test taking, difficult course material, math/reading skills) – 13%
- **Other** – 9%

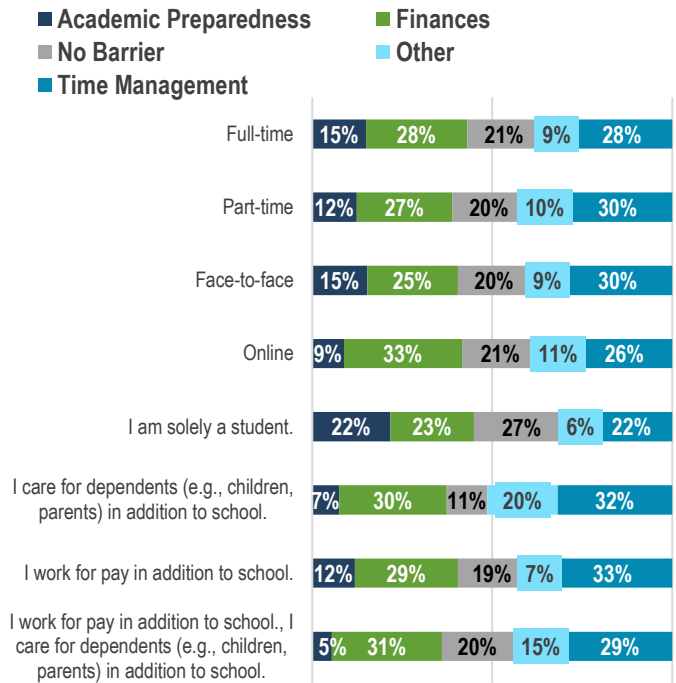
Other Comments

About 83 respondents selected **Other** and provided a comment. Roughly 1 in 3 comments mentioned difficulties with instructors, staff, or administration (communication issues, teaching styles, trouble meeting with an advisor, etc.), and another 1 in 5 comments related to class/course offerings not being available. About 10% of comments mentioned physical or mental health concerns.

“Clinical / rotations for programs offered are not for returning adult students. There are no night hours for programs for adults that must work full time and only do part time school hours. RN program does not offer night / weekends for adult students.”
– Student Respondent

“Communication with the department head and teacher for my specialty program has proved difficult.”
– Student Respondent

Barrier Selection by Demographics



Course Load

About 15% of **Full-Time** respondents selected **Academic Preparedness** as their top barrier to success versus about 12% of **Part-Time** respondents. (N FT = 388, N PT = 470)

Modality

About 30% of **Face-to-Face** respondents selected **Time Management** as their top barrier to success compared to about 26% of **Online** respondents.

About 1 in 4 **Face-to-Face** respondents selected **Finances** as their top barrier to success compared to about 1 in 3 **Online** respondents. (N Face-to-Face = 621, N Online = 238)

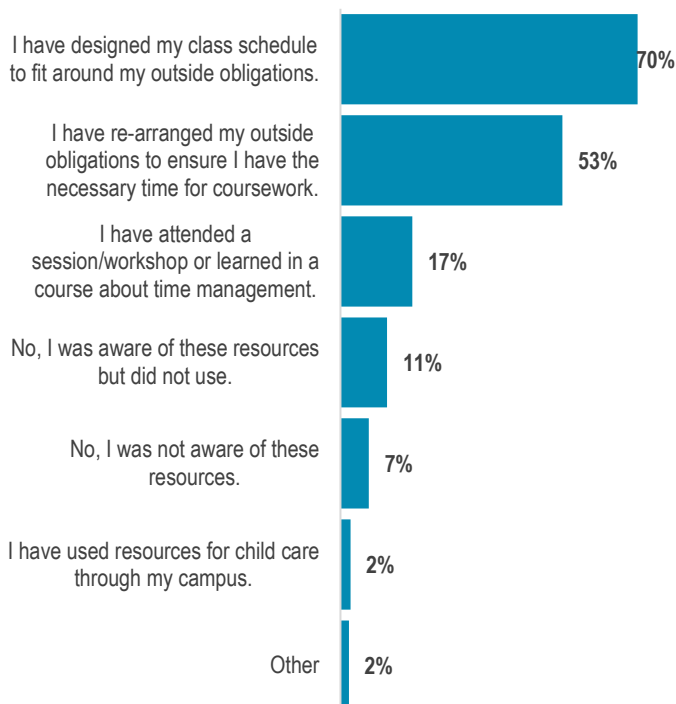
Working & Dependent Care

- “I am solely a student.” – barriers were equally selected by respondents who did not have outside work or dependent commitments. (N = 267)
 - About 27% of respondents selected “**I don't currently feel there are barriers impacting my success.**”

- “I care for dependents in addition to school.” – about 32% of respondents selected **Time Management** as their top barrier. (N = 107)
 - About 7% of respondents selected **academic preparedness** as their primary barrier.
- “I work for pay in addition to school.” – about 33% selected **Time Management** as their top barrier. (N = 363)
- Respondents who selected both caring for dependents and working for pay in addition to school – about 31% selected **Finances** as their top barrier. (N = 111)
 - About 5% of respondents selected **academic preparedness** as their primary barrier.

TIME MANAGEMENT

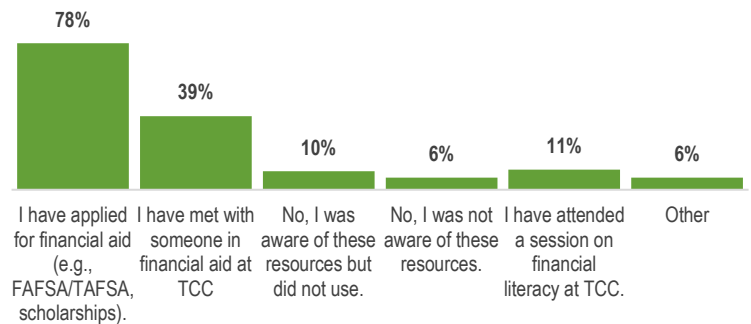
When respondents who selected **Time Management** as their greatest barrier listed coping mechanisms or utilizing various TCC resources, about 70% indicated designing their class schedule to fit around their outside obligations. About half of respondents (53%) indicated rearranging their outside obligations to ensure they had the time for coursework. (N = 253)



FINANCES

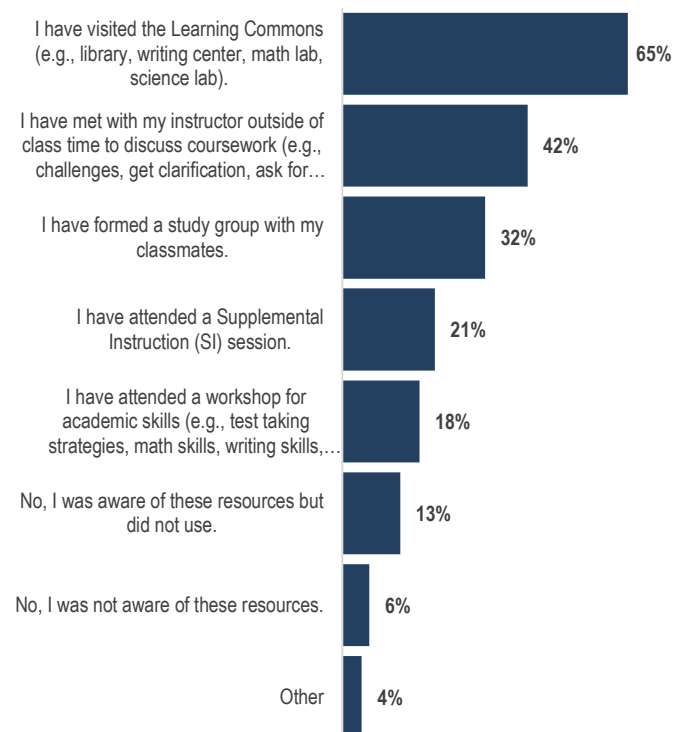
When respondents who selected **Finances** as their greatest barrier reported utilizing or awareness of various TCC resources, about 78% indicated that they had applied for financial aid (e.g., FAFSA/TAFSA, scholarships). About 39% of respondents had met with someone in Financial Aid at TCC. Some respondents who selected “Other” reported not being qualified for financial aid. (N = 235)

“I can’t utilize because I only have time to take one class at a time. I have a child at home.” – Student Respondent



ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS

When respondents who selected **Academic Preparedness** as their greatest barrier were asked about utilizing or awareness of various TCC resources, about 65% indicated utilizing the Learning Commons. (N = 114)



Conclusion

Respondents provided insight into the greatest barriers to their success at TCC, with almost 1 in 3 respondents indicating **Time Management** as their greatest barrier. Just over 1 in 4 respondents selected **Finances** as their greatest barrier. For respondents who selected **Other** as their greatest barrier, about 1 in 3 comments related to difficulties with instructors, staff, or administration.

When the top barriers were disaggregated by various demographics, working outside of class and caring for dependents seemed related to the selection of the top barrier. About 32% of respondents who cared for dependents selected **Time Management** as their top barrier compared to 22% of respondents who indicated being solely a student.

For respondents who selected **Time Management** as their top barrier, over two-thirds had designed their class schedule to fit around their outside obligations. About half of respondents indicated rearranging their outside obligations to ensure they had the time for coursework. Only 2% of respondents indicated utilizing childcare through their campus.

For respondents who selected **Finances** as their top barrier, about 3 in 4 respondents stated that they had applied for financial aid. About 11% of respondents had attended a session about financial literacy.

Of respondents who selected **Academic Preparedness** as their top barrier, about 2 in 3 respondents reported using the Learning Commons. Less than half of respondents had met with their instructor outside of class, and about 1 in 3 respondents had formed a study group with their peers.

Considerations

- **Explore expanding modality offerings:** **Finances** and **Time Management** appear related such that a student needs to work to pay for school and work hours sometimes interfere with course times. By offering certain courses in all modality formats, students would be able to complete their academics as they need while balancing their outside commitments.

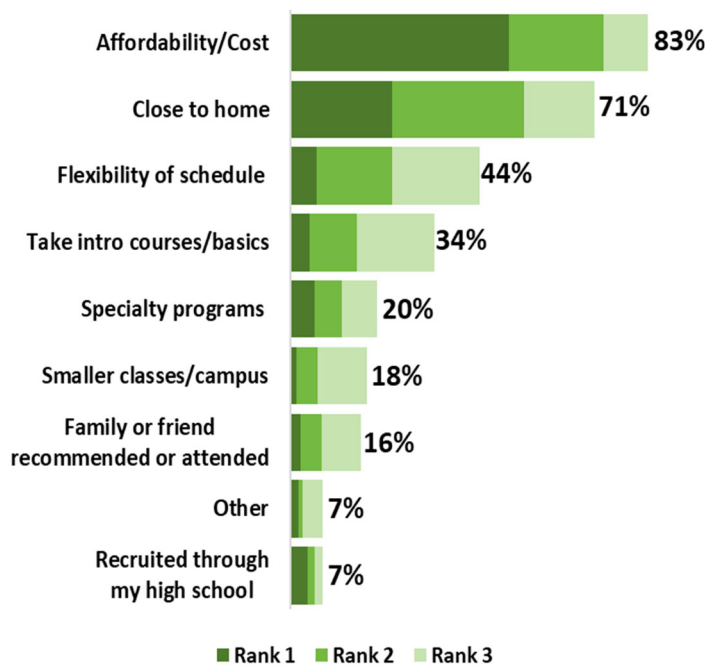
- **Showcase aid options:** About 3 in 4 respondents who selected **Finances** as their main barrier indicated applying for financial aid, yet these students continue to experience difficulties with finances. Providing additional awareness of and access to more aid options may assist these students.
- **Promote multi-modal academic support:** For those students who indicated **Academic Preparedness** as their top barrier, less than half met with their professor outside of class. Less than one-third of respondents formed a study group, and about 20% attended an SI session or academic skills workshop. By promoting the use of Canvas and Microsoft Teams, students may be able to virtually attend study sessions, meet with instructors virtually, or create virtual study groups that better fit with their schedules.
- **Continue efforts to reduce changes in scheduling:** About 70% of respondents who selected **Time Management** as their top barrier indicated rearranging their course schedule to fit their personal schedule. About 50% of respondents stated the opposite: rearranging their personal schedule to fit the needs of their course schedule. Limiting the number of course cancellations as the start of term approaches will aid students in ensuring their course schedules fit within their obligations outside of TCC.

Section III: Attitudes on College and Campus Environment

In the continuous effort towards a student-centered schedule, a survey was administered in Spring 2024 with questions to evaluate students' top considerations when deciding to attend TCC, to assess students' perceived value of college, and to gauge student attitudes on the environment on campus. Results from those questions are presented in this section.

Top Reasons for TCC

Respondents ranked their top 3 reasons for choosing to attend TCC. Among these, *Affordability/Cost*, *Close to Home*, and *Flexibility of Schedule* were the three most cited reasons. (N = 880)



Reason for Choosing TCC	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Affordability/Cost	51%	22%	10%
Close to home	24%	31%	16%
Flexibility of schedule	6%	18%	20%
Take intro courses/basics	4%	11%	18%
Specialty programs	6%	6%	8%
Smaller classes/campus	1%	5%	11%
Family/Friend Recommended	2%	5%	9%
Other	2%	1%	5%
Recruited through my high school	4%	2%	2%

- *Affordability/Cost* was very frequently cited by respondents as being a reason for choosing TCC, with **83%** of respondents ranking it in their top 3.

- *Affordability/Cost* was also ranked as the top reason for over half of respondents.
- Out of the 124 respondents who ranked affordability as their number one reason for choosing TCC **AND** who report that their top barrier was *Finances*, about **85%** (105) stated that they had applied for financial aid, met with someone in financial aid, or attended a session of financial literacy.
- While *Schedule flexibility* was frequently placed in the top 3 (chosen by **44%** of respondents), only **6%** of respondents ranked it as their number one reason for attending.

Top reason for Choosing TCC	Student Classification					
	Student Only	Caregiver	Worker	Caregiver and Worker	Face-to-face	Online
Affordability/Cost	47%	45%	56%	53%	49%	54%
Close to home	25%	31%	21%	22%	26%	20%
Family/Friend Recommended	3%	4%	2%	0%	3%	1%
Flexibility of schedule	2%	10%	7%	10%	3%	15%
Other	2%	1%	2%	4%	2%	1%
Recruited in High School	7%	3%	2%	1%	4%	2%
Smaller classes/campus	3%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%
Specialty programs	5%	3%	6%	7%	7%	2%
Take intro courses/basics	6%	2%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

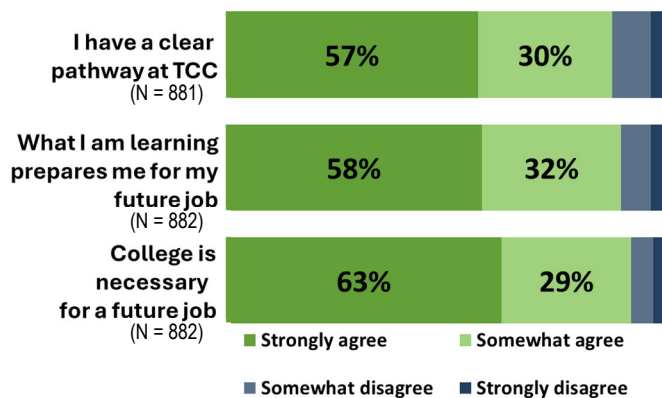
(N = 259) (N = 103)(N = 345) (N = 104)(N = 596)(N = 225)

Respondents who differed in their current life situation (e.g. being only a student, caring for dependents, working) also tended to differ in their choice as the top reason for attending TCC. Respondents who indicated that they cared for dependents in addition to school (but did not work) tended to rank being *Close to home* and *Schedule flexibility* higher when compared to other classifications. Respondents who identified as working outside of school tended to rank *Affordability/*

Cost higher than respondents in other groups. Those who identified as solely a student were more likely to indicate that they had been recruited in high school. Respondents who identified as mainly taking classes online were about 5 times more likely than face-to-face students to state that *Schedule flexibility* was their top reason for choosing TCC. Meanwhile, respondents who identified as mainly taking courses face-to-face were about 1.3 times more likely than online students to list *Close to home* as their top priority.

Student Perspectives on College

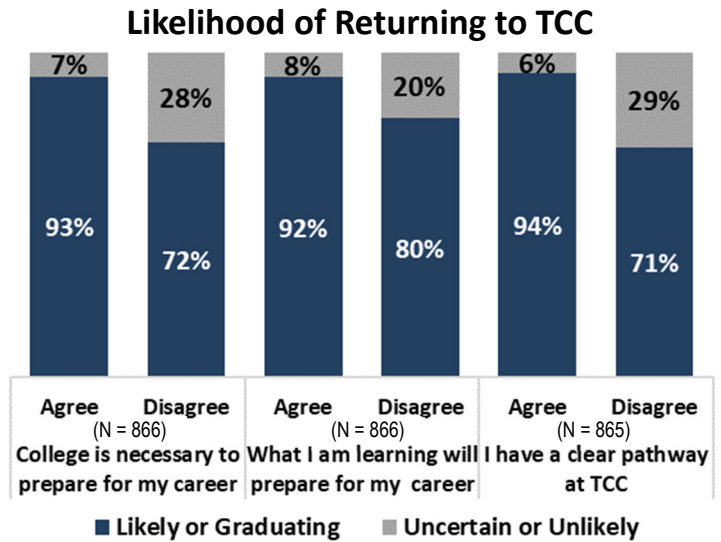
Respondents indicated whether they had a clear pathway and whether they felt college prepared them for their future job.



- Respondents overwhelmingly stated that they either **somewhat** or **strongly** agreed that:
 - College was necessary to prepare them for their future jobs (**92%**)
 - When disaggregated, **65%** of face-to-face students strongly agreed compared to **57%** of online students.
 - What they were learning was preparing them for their future careers (**90%**)
 - They had a clear pathway at TCC (**87%**)

Respondents appeared to have different outlooks on returning to TCC depending upon whether they agreed or disagreed with the prior statements.

Generally, respondents who disagreed with each statement also tended to state that they were less likely to return to TCC the following summer or fall semester.



Campus Environment

Respondents answered questions about the environment provided at TCC. Overall, respondents either **somewhat** or **strongly** agreed that they felt:

- Safe on campus - **96%**
- Welcomed on campus - **95%**
- Respected by other students - **96%**
- Respected by TCC employees - **92%**

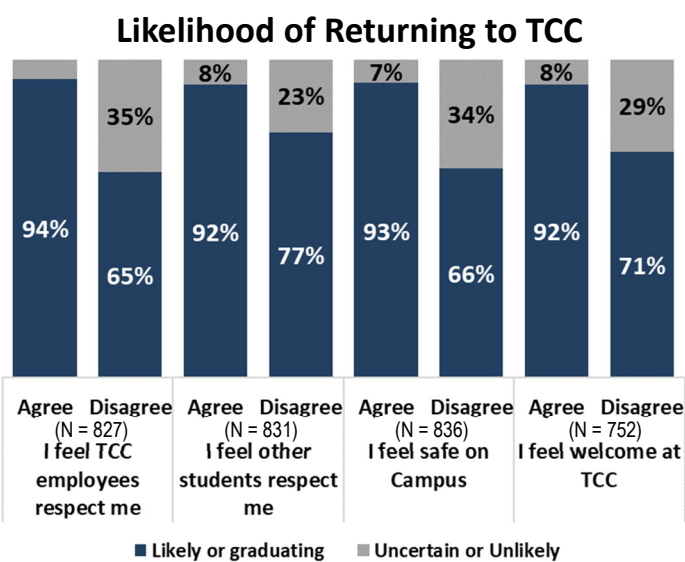
There were some differences in the strength of agreement with these statements depending upon various factors. For example:

- While both male and female respondents' rates of agreement were similar when aggregated, **74%** of male respondents **strongly agreed** that they felt safe on campus compared to **64%** of female respondents. Conversely, **70%** of female respondents strongly agreed that they felt welcome compared to **64%** of male respondents.
- While the different Race/Ethnicity groups had similar rates of agreement when

aggregated, they had some notable disparities when disaggregated.

- **52%**, **57%**, and **64%** of Asian students **strongly agreed** that they felt safe, welcomed, and treated with respect by other students. These were compared to roughly **70%** or more for the other racial subgroups.

While it might not be surprising, students who felt safe on campus, welcomed at TCC, and respected by TCC employees and other students were much more likely to indicate that they were either graduating or planning to return to TCC.



Conclusions

The results from this survey yielded some powerful insight into the lives and motivations of TCC respondents. From a list of potential reasons for valuing TCC, our respondents identified those for which they gave the most weight when deciding to attend. *Affordability/Cost* and *Close to Home* were overwhelmingly the two top reasons for attending TCC with 83% and 71% selecting these reasons among their top three respectively. About half ranked affordability as their number one reason, and about one-quarter ranked campus proximity as their number one reason. Encouragingly, respondents who cited affordability also appeared to be likely to have taken advantage of financial services offered. Some of the crosstabulations provided some basis for understanding *why* a particular respondent indicated that one of these reasons was a high

priority for them. For example, caregivers who did not work were more likely than other respondents to state that being close to home was their top reason for choosing TCC – perhaps because they needed to stay close to the people for whom they were responsible. Respondents who worked but did not care for dependents placed even more importance on affordability than other respondents – perhaps reflective of higher monetary concerns for those who worked.

Respondents overall agreed with statements affirming the value of a college education, and importantly, differed in their perceived likelihood of returning based on whether they agreed or disagreed with those statements. Respondents who perceived college as a valuable preparation for their career were more likely to state that they would be returning next summer or fall. Additionally, while overall our respondents indicated that they felt safe, welcomed, and respected, some differences in subgroups existed. Moreover, a sense that one was safe, welcomed, and respected appeared to be strongly related to the likelihood of a student returning.

Considerations

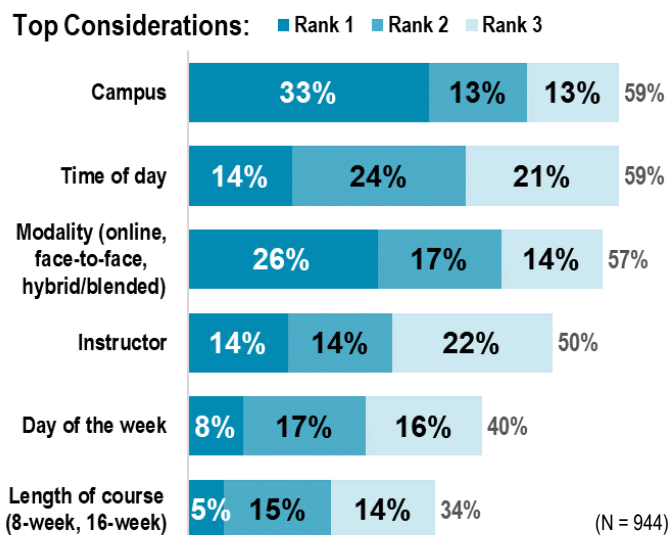
- **Get to know our students** – Respondents differed greatly in their priorities based on their lives outside of school. By knowing what responsibilities our respondents have, we could be more effective with resource allocation by providing targeted assistance. Additionally, building a rapport may impart that students are respected by staff, which may influence their decision to reenroll.
- **Demonstrate the value of education** – Overall, respondents who did not see education as valuable appeared less likely to return. While we may have less direct means over students’ perceptions that what they are learning will directly help them with their future job, we do have direct ways to assist those students who do not feel as though they have a clear pathway at TCC.
- **Market TCC’s Affordability** – Given that a large number of students indicated being at TCC because of *Affordability/Cost*, it may be advantageous to emphasize it in marketing efforts. In a prior survey regarding the student experience (2022FL), respondents reflected on TCC’s tagline in an open-ended question, “Success Within Reach”, where roughly 10% commented on affordability.

SECTION IV: STUDENTS' PREFERENCES ON THE SCHEDULE

In the continuous effort towards a student-centered schedule, a survey was administered in Spring 2024 with questions to evaluate students' top considerations when selecting their schedule and to determine if these factors appeared to influence whether a student was able to select their preferred schedule and whether they would return to TCC. Results from those questions are presented in this section.

Top Considerations

When selecting courses, *campus* was the top consideration with about one-third of respondents ranking it as their number one factor and about 59% ranking it among their top three factors. *Time of day* and *modality* were the next highest considerations. While slightly more respondents ranked *time of day* among their top three factors (59%) compared to *modality* (57%), over one-fourth ranked *modality* as their number one factor, which was double the percentage who ranked *time of day* as their number one factor.



The distribution of number one considerations did not differ markedly by full-time status but did differ substantially by type of student. *Campus* was the top factor for respondents who were solely students while *modality* was the top factor for respondents who cared for dependents only or cared for dependents and worked for pay.

Number one Consideration by Type of Student:

	Solely Student	Care for dependents (only)	Work for Pay (only)	Care for dependents & Work for Pay
Campus	40%	23%	31%	22%
Day of the week	5%	7%	9%	8%
Instructor	18%	12%	13%	10%
Length of course	3%	7%	5%	7%
Modality	19%	42%	25%	43%
Time of day	15%	10%	18%	9%

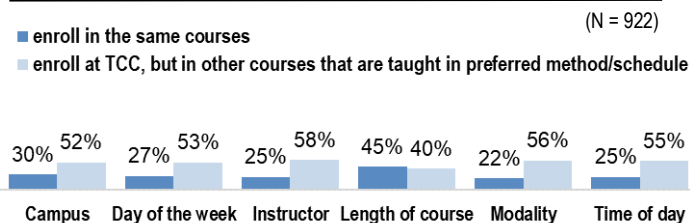
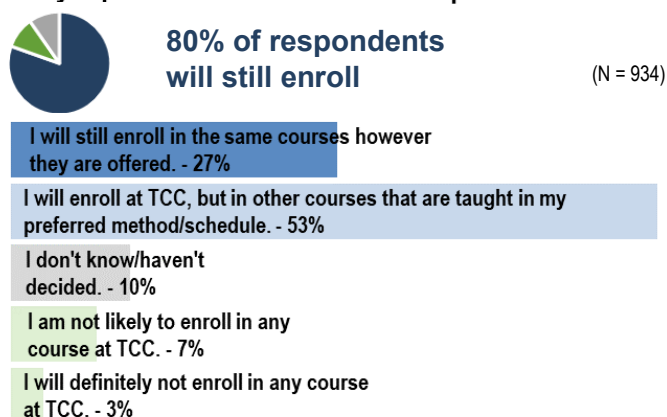
(N = 818)

For those who worked for pay only, *campus* was the number one factor but was followed somewhat closely by *modality*. In addition, *time of day* seemed a bit more important to this group.

Enrollment Based on Top Considerations

Overall, about 80% of respondents indicated that they would still enroll even if their top considerations were not an option. About 53% placed precedence on their top considerations while about 27% placed precedence on the course (e.g. ENGL-1301). Precedence remained on the respondents' top considerations unless the top consideration was *length of course*. When *length of course* was a top consideration, respondents were more willing to stay in the same course even if this top consideration was not an option.

If my top considerations are not an option...



- For respondents whose number one consideration was *modality*, about 5% indicated that they would *definitely not enroll in any course at TCC* if their top considerations were not an option – more than double the rate for other top considerations.

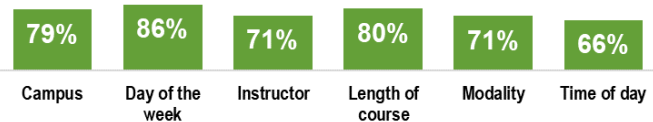
Preferred Schedule

Overall, about three-fourths of respondents reported being able to select their preferred schedule (i.e., classes offered on the days and times needed, in the format needed). This percentage mirrored the percentage who were able to select their preferred schedule from what was reported in the 2023FL survey. Respondents whose top consideration was *time of day*, *modality*, or *instructor* were more likely to report not being able to select their preferred schedule. For example, about 7 in 10 whose top consideration was *modality* could select their preferred schedule; whereas, about 8 in 10 whose top consideration was *campus* could select their preferred schedule.



75% Respondents who reported that they were able to select their preferred schedule. (N = 936)

Percent able to select their preferred schedule (by top consideration): (N = 924)



- Similar to results from the 2023FL survey, respondents who cared for dependents indicated that they were less likely able to select their preferred schedule. About 27% of those who cared for dependents and/or worked for pay indicated they could not select their preferred schedule compared to about 19% for those who were solely students.

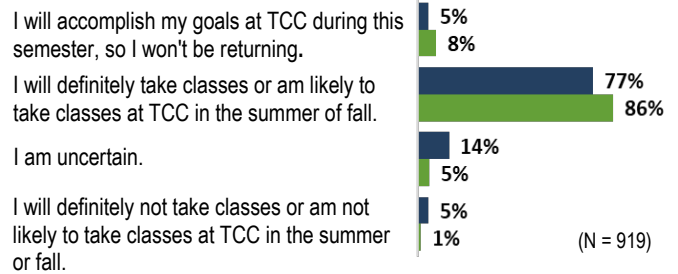
Connections between Preferred Schedule and Future Enrollment

Overall, overwhelmingly respondents (91%) indicated that they either *accomplished their goals* or they would *definitely or likely enroll at TCC next year*. This percentage mirrored the percentage that was reported in the 2023FL survey. However, the percentage who were *definitely or likely* to enroll next year was 9 percentage points lower for those who reported that they were unable to select their preferred schedule in 2024SP compared to those who were able to select their preferred schedule in 2024SP.



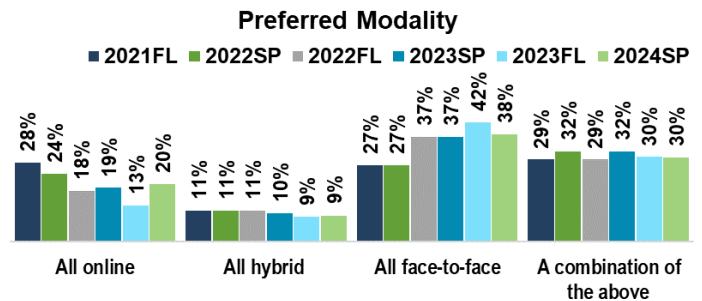
91% Respondents either accomplished their goals or would definitely or likely enroll at TCC in summer or fall (N = 921)

■ were unable to select preferred schedule in 2024SP
■ could select preferred schedule in 2024SP



Preferred Modality

A plurality (38%) of respondents preferred all face-to-face classes. The reported preference for online waned to 13% in 2023FL and returned to about 20% in 2024SP. This shift back toward face-to-face could be indicative of a reversion of preferences, stabilization of post pandemic preferences, and/or changing demographics of the respondents – see 2023FL survey results and the December 2023 issue of IR Corner for further analysis.



N= 938 for 2024SP; No preference ranged from 2% to 6% from 2021FL to 2024SP.

- In 2024SP, respondents who worked for pay (only) at a job were about 1.4 times more likely to prefer an all-online schedule compared to those who were solely students.
- In 2024SP, respondents who cared for dependents (only) were about 1.9 times more likely to prefer an all-online schedule compared to those who were solely students.
- In 2024SP, respondents who cared for dependents and worked for pay were about 2.2 times more likely to prefer an all-online schedule compared to those who were solely students.

Alignment between Preferred Method and Enrolled Method

In 2023FL, about 98% of respondents who preferred all face-to-face reported that they were primarily enrolled in face-to-face, while only 87% of respondents who preferred all online reported that they were primarily enrolled in online.

2023FL Preferred Method	Reported Primarily Enrolled In:	
	Face-to-face	Online
All online	13%	87%
All hybrid	87%	13%
All face-to-face	98%	2%
A combination of the above	78%	22%

In 2024SP, there was a similar substantial mismatch between preferred method and primary enrollment method for those who preferred online. About 97% of respondents who preferred all face-to-face reported that they were primarily enrolled in face-to-face, while only 76% of respondents who preferred all online reported that they were primarily enrolled in online.

2024SP Preferred Method	Reported Primarily Enrolled In:	
	Face-to-face	Online
All online	24%	76%
All hybrid	72%	28%
All face-to-face	97%	3%
A combination of the above	75%	25%

Conclusion

Student respondents provided valuable information regarding what factors they considered most important when selecting their schedule. While *campus* was ranked the most important factor overall, type of student impacted this ranking heavily. Respondents who were solely students placed a higher precedence on *campus* while respondents who cared for dependents placed a higher precedence on *modality* with those caring for dependents much more likely to prefer online courses.

About 8 in 10 respondents indicated that they would still enroll if their top schedule considerations were not an option. Most of them would simply switch to a different course to find a better match for their top factors. However, those whose top consideration

was length of course, they were more likely to stay in the same course.

Matching results from the 2023FL survey, about three-quarters of respondents reported being able to select their preferred schedule, and about 91% reported they would accomplish their goals or would definitely or likely enroll at TCC in the summer or fall. Lastly, being able to select a preferred schedule was correlated with returning to TCC.

Considerations

- **Investigate misalignment between preferred modality and primary enrollment modality more deeply for online students:** While the vast majority of respondents who preferred face-to-face were enrolled primarily face-to-face, about 13% (2023FL) and 24% (2024SP) who preferred all online were not enrolled primarily online.
- **Determine reason for connection between caring for dependents and preferring online:** While respondents who care for dependents have consistently reported a preference for online courses, the reason is unclear. Do they prefer online courses because of the time flexibility they offer? Do they prefer online because they do not have access to childcare on a TCC campus? If so, would they prefer face-to-face if they had access to childcare on a TCC campus?
- **Leverage different course lengths where appropriate:** Respondents seemed to place the least importance on length of course when selecting their schedule. Moreover, they were more willing to stay in the same course, if their preferred length of course were not an option. Additionally research in IR Corner articles showed that success rates in 8-week courses were generally comparable to 16-week courses depending on the subject area. In addition, prior survey results indicated that about one-third of students who were part-time would switch to full-time status if 8-week classes were available. Lastly, dual credit students enrolled in 8-week courses had higher success rates and higher retention to the next “term” when compared to 16-week enrollments included in the respective analyses. While the dual credit 8-week outcomes were driven by a single campus model with few high schools (ENGL-1301 to ENGL-1302 model), they warrant discussion about whether 8-week courses could/should be explored for dual credit students, especially in light of HB8. Historically, dual credit students complete about 12 to 14 hours, on average, in their dual credit career. The eight-week model might allow for them to complete 15 hours - the threshold for HB8 funding.