



Fall 2023 Survey of Student Experiences and Challenges at LaGuardia Community College

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)

February 2024

Respondent Representativeness

934 students completed the survey - a 9% responses rate.

To gauge the representativeness of the respondents, their characteristics are compared to those of the overall population of surveyed degree students. Women, Asian and older students are overrepresented. Men, Hispanics, and students younger than 22 are underrepresented. Additionally, slightly more transfers responded, while the proportions of freshmen and continuing students were more similar.

	Respondents	Non-Respondents	Total
Number	934	9,475	10,409
Response rate	9.0%		
Gender			
Women	66.1%	57.7%	58.4%
Men	32.9%	41.5%	40.7%
Other	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Race/Ethnicity			
Asian/Pacific Islander	33.8%	23.5%	24.4%
Black/African American	15.5%	17.8%	17.6%
Hispanic	39.8%	48.3%	47.5%
Native American	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
White	8.3%	7.9%	7.9%
Unknown	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%
Age			
19 or younger	18.6%	25.0%	24.5%
20 -21	18.9%	23.9%	23.5%
22 - 24	14.9%	18.3%	18.0%
25 - 29	12.5%	14.4%	14.3%
30 - 39	20.5%	12.6%	13.4%
40 or older	14.5%	5.6%	6.4%
Average Age	27.9	24.5	24.8
Enrollment Status			
Freshmen	20.1%	22.2%	22.0%
Transfer	15.6%	12.5%	12.8%
Continuing/re-admits	64.3%	65.4%	65.3%
Full or Part time			
Full-time	71.4%	68.5%	68.8%
Part-time	28.6%	31.5%	31.2%

Experiences this semester

- At least half of the students are interested in evening and weekend courses - 60% agree or strongly agree that they would like the College to offer more courses in the evening, and 51% agree or strongly agree that they would like the College to offer more courses on the weekend.
- More than three-quarter of the students were satisfied with their academic and career pathways - 76% agree or strongly agree that the requirements for the degree they are pursuing are clearly communicated, and 78% agree or strongly agree that academic coursework was relevant to their career goals.
- Over 70% of respondents were satisfied with the support they receive - 71% agree or strongly agree that tutors, peer mentors, and peer advisors help support their academic success and 75% agree or strongly agree that faculty and staff are genuinely interested in supporting their success
- Respondents were least satisfied with their social life at LaGuardia – additionally, while 61% agree or strongly agree that it has been easy to connect with other students, only a quarter strongly agreed with that statement.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
would like my college to offer more courses in the evening	38.0%	21.8%	31.9%	4.5%	3.8%
would like my college to offer more courses on the weekend	31.7%	19.1%	35.4%	6.3%	7.5%
The requirements for the degree I am pursuing are clearly communicated	43.7%	32.3%	12.9%	8.3%	2.7%
My academic coursework was relevant to my career goals.	43.5%	34.7%	11.5%	7.2%	3.1%
Tutors, peer mentors, and peer advisors help support my academic success	44.6%	26.6%	18.0%	5.8%	5.0%
It has been easy to connect with other students.	25.5%	35.6%	21.2%	11.1%	6.6%
Faculty and staff are genuinely interested in supporting my success	44.1%	31.1%	14.8%	5.7%	4.2%

Course registration

Students were supposed to rank order their responses. However, because of coding issues, responses were recalculated based on the number of students selecting each option.

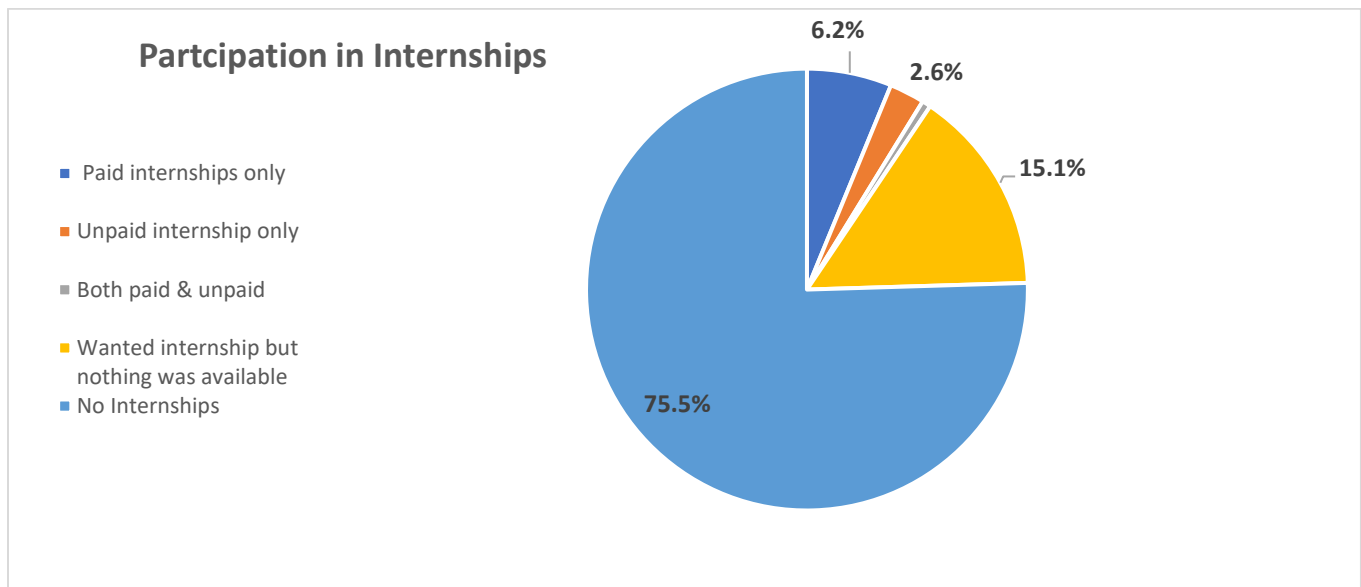
- Almost 70% of the students were able to register to the courses they wanted to take.
- The main reasons that students could not take the courses they wanted were because seats were not available when the respondents registered (27%), or that the seats that were available were not offered at a time slot in which the respondents could take the class (20%).
- Finally, 18% of the respondents indicated that the course was not available this semester.

Yes, I was able to register	69.3%
<i>More than one possible response</i>	
No, the course was offered, but no seats were available when I registered	26.6%
No, seats were available, but not when I was able to take the class	20.0%
No, the course was not offered at all this semester	17.7%

Participation in experiential learning

Internships

- Only 9% of the respondents participated in internships, 3% unpaid only, 6% paid only, and 0.6% participated in both.
- Of the 91% of respondents who did not participate in internships, 15% indicated they were interested in having internships but nothing was available.



- The top experiential learning activities were Campus-based work and/or leadership, Research/field study, Service learning/community service, and Clinical preparation/practicum,
- 59% did not participate in any of the listed activities (including internships).

Experiential learning	%
Service learning/community service	4.2%
Clinical preparation/practicum	3.1%
Research/field study	5.5%
Campus or university-based work and/or leadership	7.3%
Civic engagement	1.5%
I have not participated in any of the above	58.7%

Most challenging to academic progress

Students ranked issues that were most challenging to their academic progress.

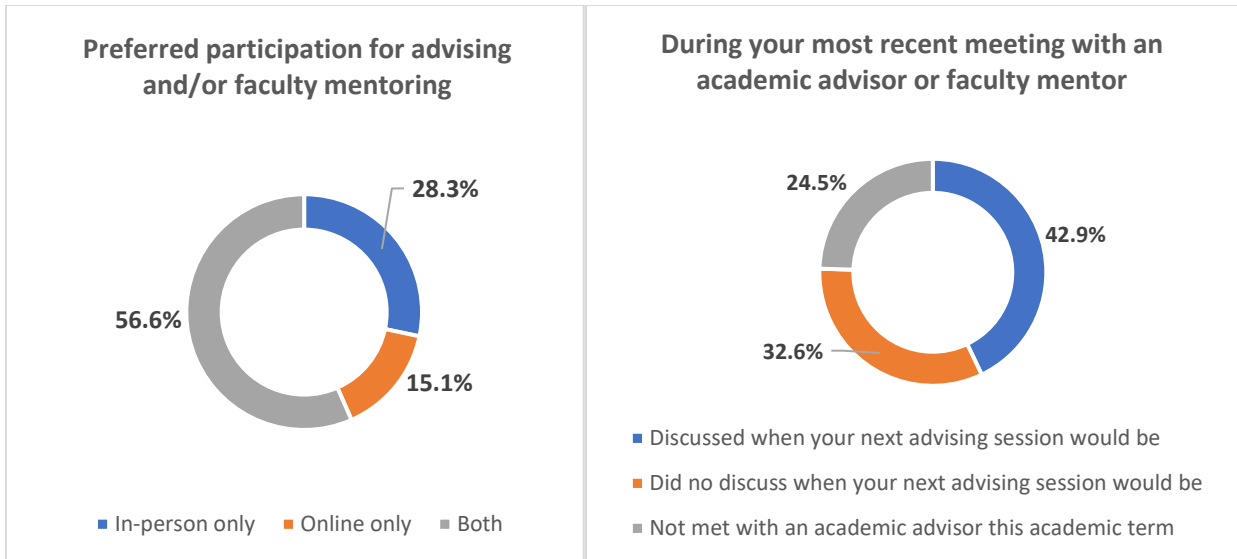
- “Balancing work/life” (38%), followed by “Paying for college” (36%) were selected as #1 by most students. Additionally, about a fifth of the students selected them as #2
- “Registering for courses that meet my scheduling needs” was selected as the #2 challenge by 32% of the students, with additional 15% selecting it as #1 and 23% as #3.
- The other three factors listed were selected as the most challenging by less than 5% of the respondents (“receiving timely and helpful feedback”, “connecting with faculty outside class” and “accessing tutoring”).
- When combining the top three issues students indicated as most challenging to academic their progress, the results are mostly similar to the rank order results:
 - The top challenge when all three ranks are combined is still “balancing work/family/school”.
 - However, “paying for college” and “registering for courses that meet scheduling needs”, have similar proportions of students selecting them as one of the top three challenges.
 - Support by faculty and staff including receiving timely and helpful feedback, connecting with faculty outside class, and accessing tutoring and study group opportunities were noted as challenging by a very small number of the respondents.

Top three most challenging issues to academic progress:

	#1	#2	#3	Top three
Balancing work, family, school	38.1%	22.5%	18.8%	79.4%
Paying for college	36.2%	19.8%	11.0%	67.0%
Registering for courses that meet my scheduling needs	15.0%	31.6%	23.4%	70.1%
Accessing tutoring or group study opportunities	2.0%	8.4%	17.6%	28.1%
Receiving helpful/timely feedback from faculty and advisors about my progress	4.9%	9.7%	16.7%	31.3%
Connecting with faculty outside of class	3.8%	8.0%	12.4%	24.1%

Advising

- Only 15% preferred to meet their advisors online only, while 28% preferred in-person advising only and 57% preferred a mix of both modalities.
- 43% indicated that their academic advisor or faculty mentor discussed when the next advising session would be, 33% indicated they did not, and 25% did not meet with an advisor this term.



Transfer

- 56% of the respondents indicated they plan on transferring to a 4-year college after graduation, 6% plan on transferring before graduation, 9% do not plan to transfer, and 28% are not sure.
- Respondents indicated that the services and resources most useful for transfer planning are: Academic advisors (36%), followed by financial aid (23%), ASAP/College Discovery advisors (16%) and Transfer events & workshop (10%)

What services and resources are most useful for your transfer planning? (check all that apply)

	%
Academic advisors	35.7%
Faculty mentors	4.8%
Peer mentors	2.4%
ASAP / College Discovery advisors	16.3%
Honors program	2.7%
Financial aid	22.5%
Transfer webpage	5.4%
Transfer events & workshops	10.1%

Extracurricular activities

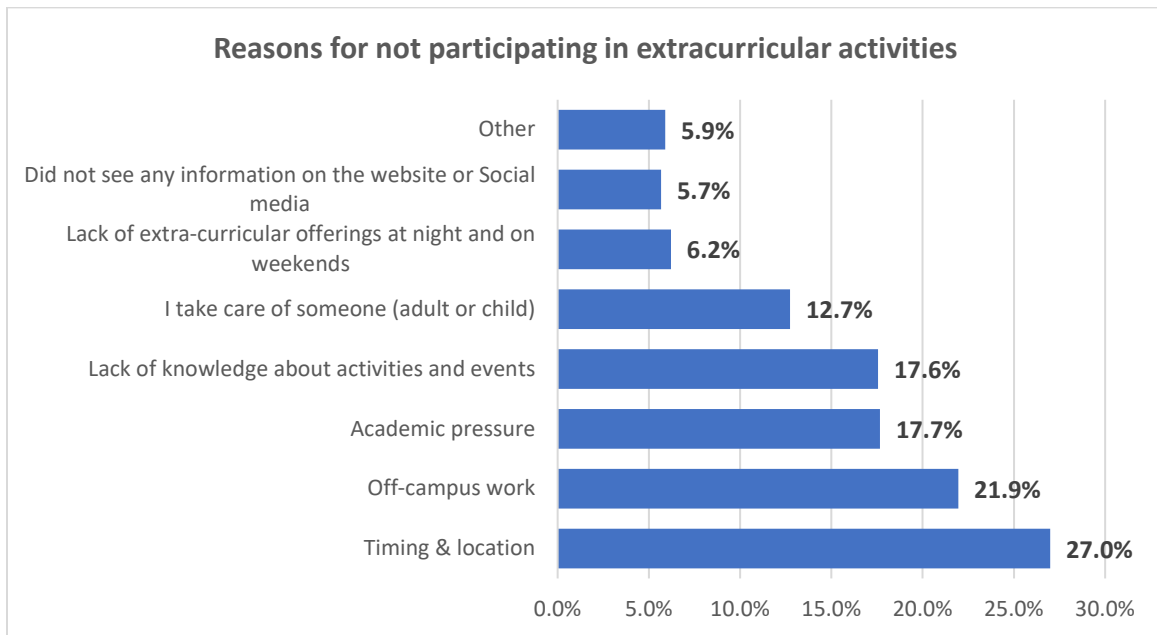
- Only 18% of the respondents participated in extracurricular activities (campus clubs, student organizations, student government, sports, campus events, other activities).

Below are the reasons cited by the students (all reasons that apply were selected):

- The reason selected most frequently for not participating is *“timing & location – not living near campus, meeting times/days that fit better with schedule”* (27%), followed by *off-campus work* (22%), *academic pressure* and *lack of knowledge about activities and events* (18% for each), and

taking care of someone (13%). Not seeing information about the activities and lack of extra-curricular offering at nights or on weekends were selected by very few responders (6% for each).

- The most cited reason by the respondents who specified reasons for the “Other” category was work, followed by respondents who expressed a lack of interest – for example, “... I am not really into the activities”, “I have no use for this”, “Uninterested”. It should be noted that a few respondents indicated that they expressed interest in the activities, but there was no follow-up.

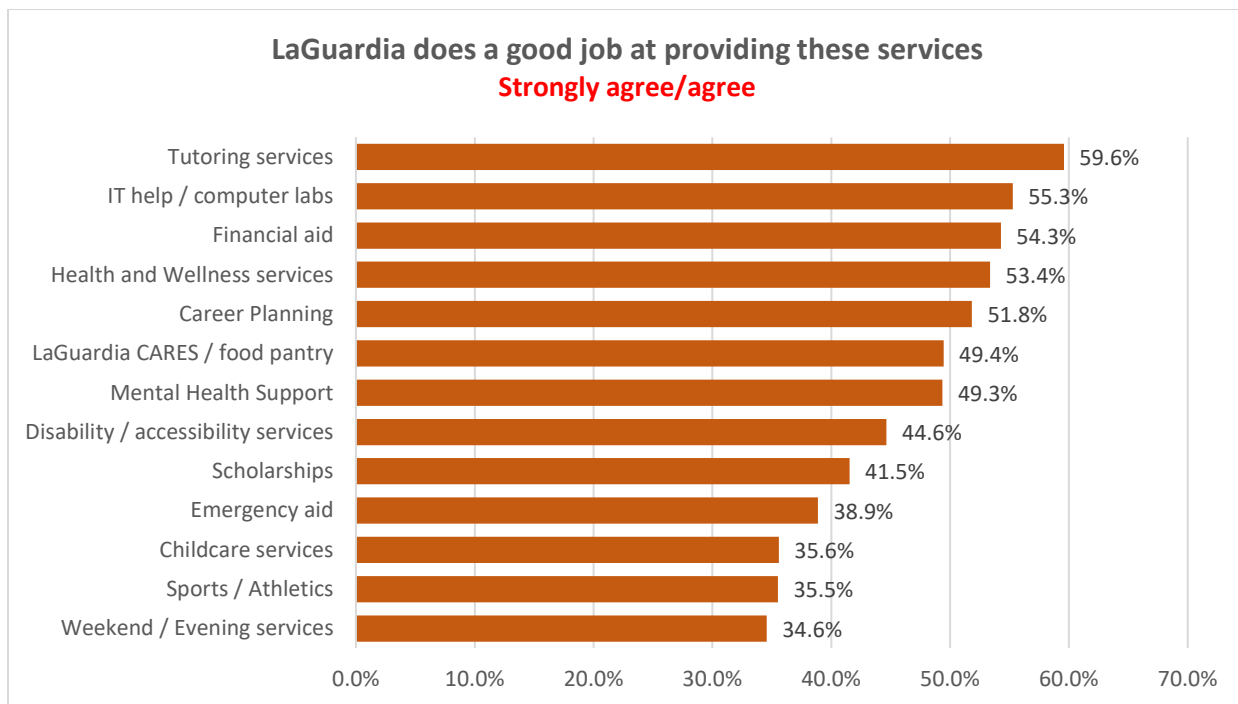


Satisfaction with services

The data was analyzed by usage and satisfaction. “Not applicable” responses were used to calculate usage but were excluded from the ratings of the services. It should be noted that none of the services were rated as doing a good job by more than 60% of the respondents.

- Tutoring services (96%), Financial aid (93%), and Career Planning (92%) were used by the vast majority of respondents.
- Childcare services used the smallest proportions of respondents (64%), followed by disability services (74%), sports / athletics (73%), and emergency aid (73%).
- Over half (range from 52% to 60%) of the students agreed or strongly agreed that LaGuardia does a good job at providing the following services: Tutoring services (60%), IT help / computer labs (55%), Financial aid (54%), Health and Wellness services (53%), and Career Planning (52%).
- LaGuardia CARES (49%), Mental Health Support (49%), Disability / accessibility services (45%), were rated as doing a good job by slightly lower than 50%.
- The services with the lowest ratings were: Weekend / Evening services (35%), Sports / Athletics (36%), Childcare services (36%), Emergency Aid (39%), and scholarships (42%).

LaGuardia does a good job at providing these services	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Total Valid	Used
Financial aid	17.0%	13.5%	15.2%	20.2%	34.1%	100.0%	93.3%
Tutoring services	15.8%	9.7%	15.0%	24.4%	35.2%	100.0%	95.7%
Disability / accessibility services	15.6%	7.5%	32.3%	16.1%	28.6%	100.0%	73.6%
IT help / computer labs	12.7%	9.1%	22.9%	22.1%	33.2%	100.0%	88.2%
Health and Wellness services	12.6%	6.9%	27.2%	23.1%	30.3%	100.0%	83.6%
LaGuardia CARES / food pantry	14.3%	8.5%	27.7%	20.0%	29.5%	100.0%	82.0%
Scholarships	15.2%	12.6%	30.7%	19.6%	22.0%	100.0%	85.1%
Career Planning	14.1%	10.3%	23.7%	23.8%	28.0%	100.0%	92.1%
Sports / Athletics	14.6%	7.9%	41.9%	19.3%	16.2%	100.0%	72.7%
Weekend / Evening services	15.1%	12.6%	37.7%	19.7%	14.9%	100.0%	79.3%
Childcare services	11.9%	4.8%	47.7%	14.6%	21.0%	100.0%	64.3%
Emergency aid	12.1%	7.6%	41.4%	16.6%	22.2%	100.0%	73.1%
Mental Health Support	11.5%	7.1%	32.1%	22.8%	26.6%	100.0%	78.5%



Responses to the three open-ended questions

The survey included three open ended questions where students were asked for recommendations, opinions about available resources and challenges. Below are emerging themes and some examples from the students' responses. In addition, all responses are provided in the appendices.

1. What recommendations do you have to improve advisement?

Many students indicated were satisfied with the advisement they received *"all is well"*, *"They doing great already"*, *"None, they're spectacular"*.

Frequent themes by those with recommendations were:

- **The need for more advisors and increasing their availability:** *"Hope, chance to get connected to my advisor cause one advisor for all international students is not enough"*, *"increase availability"*, *"Actually let people speak with an advisor BEFORE registering for classes, assign advisors earlier"*, *"Availability on weekends and reaching out to new students at least for the firsts 2 semesters to outline plan"*, *"I would like to request to improved schedule night time"*
 - Some indicating that they had met an advisor yet – *"I don't even know who my advisor is"*, *"I have not met with my advisor this semester"*.
- **More knowledge about specific topics** *"Advisors need to have better communication with faculty about courses offered"*, *"All advisement should know more categories of questions on each subject"*, *"Stop using ASAP advisors instead of academic advisors"*, *"All advisement should know more categories of questions on each subject"*.
- **Many mentioned issues with financial aid** *"I need more help about the financial aid"*, *"Financial Aid (its so difficult to deal with. Very slow to process the forms when holding the accounts)"*, *"Advisor and financial aid can do way better"*.
- **More empathy:** *"More caring"*, *"Care more about the student"*, *"Advisors always rude, and try to rush things"*, *"An advisor with a heart and have empathy to students"*, *"Attitudes need improvement. Professionalism"*.
- **Better Communication:** *"Posting more on social media"*, *"More communication through email"*, *"Improve communication"*, *"Better Communication Skills and Face to Face Interactions"*, *"Get communication on who can advise me - am I supposed to get advisement from my major dept?"*.

2. What are some support services or resources you would like to see be available at the college? Are there any gaps in the college's support system that could be filled?

Many of the students indicated that they were satisfied with the services and resources. *"I feel well supported by the college"*, *"So far I'm extremely satisfied it just need app updates for scheduling"*, *"To be honest I am not sure I feel everything they have is pretty helpful"*, *"As of now I would say we have more than enough"*, *"Everything we need is there"*.

Below are themes that emerged about the services and resources that students mentioned most frequently, including some examples:

- **Transfer services:** *“transfer support system and transfer office”, “More transfer help”, “There should be more transfer services at LaGuardia”.*
- **Evening and weekend services:** *“you have a whole community of evening students. Where are the services for them. Making it to college early in the day is impossible when you have to work and could only attend classes in the evening”, “I would like to see more resources available for working students. I was not able to attend study hall practice exams for anatomy because most of them were on weekends when I work”,*
- **Work opportunity:** *“Work opportunity events on Saturdays would be helpful”, “A room or a section where a group of staff control all the work available on campus so people can see more efficiently and clearly on what working opportunities are available”, “More work in college”.*
- **Advisement:** *“Advisement and registration class availability”, “Advisors!”, “Assigned advisor appointments are hard to get”.*
- **Food:** *“Better food options in and around campus”, “Healthy food”, “Pls open canteen and sell foods for evening students”, “better food at the cafeteria”, “Pls open canteen and sell foods for evening students”.*
- **Financial aid:** *“Financial aid workshop. So there is no any gaps”, “A service that help students understand how their credits and class performance will affect their financial aid”, “Aid! Financial Aid! Clear communication on deadlines and opportunity windows!”, “Better financial aid advisor”.*
- **Subject area tutoring:** *“No tutoring for RN program, lack resources tutoring study hall for microbiology”, “Tutoring. I reached out to my professor for tutoring, and help but some of them just don’t care and replay that the dept doesn’t have tutors for some subjects”, “Tutoring hours for SCB208”, “Tutoring for my major”.*
- **International Student support:** *“Some financial aid for overseas F-1 students such as covering traveling and textbook costs”, “Special support for international students”, “To let me up to date along with the new rules for international students since I am always planning ahead”, “Improvement in international advisory service”.*
- **Counseling, Metal health:** *“Better mental health out reach”, “counseling / mental health support. Registered in September, heard back quickly, got assigned in Nov, and never heard back after the end of the term”, “mental health check ins, getting flagged down if you are failing multiple courses at a time”, “More mental health and academic support workshops”, “extended hours in wellness center”.*

3. What are some common challenges you have faced as a student?

Below are themes that emerged most frequently about challenges faced by respondents, including some examples:

- **Academic Pressure:** *“Academic pressure”, “Academic stress, but the tutoring and help from professors made it a lot easier to handle”, “Adjusting to the environment”, “Absorbing too much study material within a very limited study time”, “Assignment and exam”, “Stress over the academic hardness”.*
- **Advisement:** *“Not being able to speak with an advisor before the day of class registration, that advisor not taking into account my long term plan and therefore registering for the wrong chemistry class..”, “Proper guidance or advisement...”, “Unable to meet the Advising faculty for guidance due to schedule difference”.*
- **Work / school/ life balance:** *“balancing college and outside responsibilities...”, “Balance school and life especially being the first one on attendance college in my family, so it’s something new that I still need to get used to and handle”, “Balancing life, work, school & family”*

- **Resources for working adults:** *“As a working woman I find it really difficult to get time for the advisors. I let would be great if you can make more time slot in the evening”, “Attending events during weekdays are difficult. I work full time and am not able to participate”, “as a mom, full time worker and as student it is very difficult for me to be a full time student which allows me to apply for financial aid, we need a program to help students as me that we want to study but we cannot left our work because of our obligations with our families”, “Classes availability for full time work”,*
- **Financial challenges:** *“college expenses such as Tuition fees and transportation since being unemployed”, “College canteen very expensive”, “Financial issues but LaGuardia Community College has helped me establish a payment plan”, “I don’t have any financial support because I’m an international student. I think it’s unfair”, “Paying bills and transportations while studying full time”, “paying for college”.*
- **Class scheduling** *“One of the most significant challenges has been the difficulty in securing available classes for computer science and mathematics courses in both the long and short sessions”, “very few classes that meet twice a week actually meet on days other than Tuesday and Wednesday...”, “Schedule classes for people with full time careers”, “I need to take classes that are not available so it is setting me back”.*
- **Social Interaction:** *“I am rather confident but I fear every conversation that I had with classmates has been shallow no bonds were created”, “Some challenges I faced as a new student it’s socializing”, “Speaking to other students”, “Communicate with others students and make friends”.*
- **Time Management was mentioned multiple times.**

Conclusion

The respondents were not entirely representative of the student population that was surveyed, especially with regard to overrepresentation of women (+8%), Asian (+9%) and older students (+15% over 30) and underrepresentation of Hispanic students (-8%). However, the differences between the respondents and the student population are not very large, and we should keep in mind that the respondents are the students who are more involved, and consequently their opinions merit a greater weight. Additionally, while some of the results might be somewhat skewed, especially regarding students’ concerns about working, school/work/life balance and evening and weekend scheduling, these issues were raised by the majority of all respondents.

Below are the main themes that emerged from responses to questions in the survey:

- **Course work, pathways and scheduling:**
 - At least half the students, especially those who are working (based on working students’ comments), indicated they prefer evening and weekend classes. They also requested more resource services at these times.
 - Only 70% of the students could register to courses they wanted to take. Those who could not register, indicated that seats were not available (27%), the courses were scheduled when they could not take them (20%), or the courses were not offered this semester (18%).
 - The vast majority of students indicated that their degree requirements are clear and their coursework is relevant to their career goals.

- **Advisement:**
 - The vast majority of respondents would like to have at least some of their advisement in-person.
 - An area of concern is that 25% of the respondents did not meet with advisor this term, and additional 33% indicated that their advisor did not schedule their next session. The issue was also raised in the responses to the open-ended questions where respondents raised the need for more advisors, and scheduling issues.
 - Academic and ASAP advisors were mentioned as the most useful to transfer planning.
 - Many of the open-ended responses mentioned the need to advisors (and tutors) who are familiar with the subject areas.
- **Experiential learning and extracurricular activities:**
 - Only 41% of the respondents participated in experiential learning – most of them in internships (9%, including 7% paid), campus-based work or leadership (7%), and research/ field study (6%).
 - Only 18% of the respondents participated in extracurricular activities (campus clubs, student organizations, student government, sports, campus events, other activities)
 - The most mentioned reasons for not participating were timing and location, off-campus work, academic pressure and lack of knowledge.
- **Support and services:**
 - Close to three-quarter of the respondents agreed that tutors, and peer mentors and advisors help support their academic success (71%).
 - Most respondents indicated that faculty and staff were genuinely interested in supporting their success (75%).
 - Tutoring services (96%), Financial aid (93%), and Career Planning (92%) were used by the vast majority of respondents.
 - None of the services were rated as doing a good job by more than 60% of the respondents. Services that were rated as doing a good job by over half of the respondents were tutoring, IT help & computer labs, financial aid and health and wellness and career planning. The services with the lowest ratings were weekend/evening services, sports/athletics and childcare.
- **Challenges:**
 - The most frequent challenges to academic progress mentioned were *balancing work/family/school*, followed by *paying for college* and *registering to courses that meet the respondents scheduling needs*.
 - Social connections and interaction with fellow students were also noted as a challenge. Only a quarter of the respondents strongly agree that it is easy to connect with other students. The issue was also mentioned in many of the students' responses to the open-ended questions.
 - *Financial aid, financial difficulties, and access to scholarships and emergency aid* were mentioned as issues in the survey responses and comments.
 - Academic pressure, course difficulty and time management were mentioned in the comments.
 - Finally, international students mentioned the unique challenges they are facing, including not enough services, lack of financial support and difficulty with the language.