

# Center for Teaching & Learning

Mercer County Community College



*2022/2023 Report*

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## **Mission Statement**

*The mission of The Center for Teaching & Learning is to research, cultivate & disseminate innovative & impactful instruction and engagement strategies to advance student well-being and success.*

*2022/2023 Focus Area: Student Engagement*

## **CTL Team Members**

Mitchell Canter	Dr. Gonzalo Perez
Guy Armour	Chinaza Onyile
Patrick, Natale, III	Laura Sosa
Michael Dalton	Kevin Duffy
Erin Rybicki	Robert Kleinschmidt
Sarmite Catalfomo	
Ron Smith	

## CTL Faculty Job Description

Committee Charge: Identify and propose ways to address the most pervasive issues affecting the success of our students.

In concert with the rest of the CTL staff, the CTL Faculty will support the goals of the CTL through these three essential duties and responsibilities:

- Designing and organizing events and resources for faculty and instructional staff
- Providing faculty and instructional staff with support in their teaching
- Catalyzing collaboration on matters relating to teaching and learning

Faculty of the CTL will have opportunities for faculty development, evolving their own teaching using insights from educational research, applying their leadership skills, and continuing to collaborate across the college. This position is more than a service opportunity—it is also an excellent opportunity for faculty to advance their own teaching and scholarship, particularly as it connects to teaching and learning.



## Fall 2022

### Accomplishments

- The CTL team collaboratively developed questions for a college-wide student experience survey addressing the educational barriers of traditional, non-traditional, and online students at MCCC. See page 6 for a full list of the survey questions.
- The survey was sent out weekly via email and Blackboard Connect from 11/15/23-12/22/23.
- A total of 527 students responded to the survey with the following:
  - Population size: 5,820
  - Sample Size: 456 (only complete responses are counted)
  - Margin of error: 4.41 with the 95% confidence level (it's acceptable)
  - Small Group Discussions: 48
- The small group discussions (student interviews) provided valuable qualitative data to complement the survey results, enhancing the overall understanding of the student experience at MCCC.

## Spring 2023

### Accomplishments

- The MCCC Instructional Designer presented a Remote Synchronous Teaching Best Practices training during preclass week, which was approved by CTL members.
- The CTL team collaboratively developed questions for student interviews addressing the educational barriers of traditional, non-traditional, and online students at MCCC. See page 9 for a full list of the interview questions.
- The student interviews were conducted on 2/21/23, with two students participating.
- The CTL team worked collaboratively to develop and implement training that highlighted the data gathered from the student experience survey and student interviews.
- The training was held on 4/5/23, providing valuable insights for faculty and staff to better understand and address the educational barriers faced by students at MCCC.

# Student Experience Survey Questions

## Section 1

1. Please select your student status.
  - a. **Traditional student:** You are considered a traditional student if you graduated high school, began college full-time within one year of graduation, do not work full time, are 18-24 years of age, is not a veteran and have no dependents
  - b. **Non-traditional student:** You are considered a non-traditional student if you didn't attend college immediately after graduating from high school; attend college only part-time; work full-time (35 hours or more per week); are financially independent; have children or dependents other than a spouse; have a GED, not a high school diploma; or are a veteran.
  - c. **Online student:** You are considered an online student if you do not attend classes on campus and you complete your studies online.
  
2. What generation do you identify with?
  - a. **Silent:** Born 1928-1945
  - b. **Baby boomer:** Born 1946-1964
  - c. **Gen X:** Born 1965-1980
  - d. **Millennial:** Born 1981-1996
  - e. **Gen Z:** Born 1997-2012
  
3. Please select your program of study.
  - i. Accounting
  - ii. Advanced Manufacturing Technology
  - iii. Advertising + Graphic Design
  - iv. Architecture
  - v. Audio Production
  - vi. Automotive Technology
  - vii. Aviation Flight Technology
  - viii. Airline Transport Pilot (ATP)
  - ix. Aviation Management
  - x. Biology
  - xi. Business Administration
  - xii. Business Studies
  - xiii. Management, Software Professional
  - xiv. Chemistry
  - xv. Civil Engineering Technology
  - xvi. Communication
  - xvii. Communication: New Media
  - xviii. Communication: Speech and Theatre
  - xix. Computer Information Systems
  - xx. Computer Science
  - xxi. Criminal Justice - Corrections
  - xxii. Criminal Justice - Law Enforcement
  - xxiii. Culinary Arts
  - xxiv. Culinology / Food Science
  - xxv. Dance
  - xxvi. Digital Film

- xxvii. Digital Media Arts
- xxviii. Early Childhood Education / Special Education Assistant brochure (PDF)
- xxix. Education (K-12)
  - xxx. Electronics Engineering Technology
  - xxxi. Engineering Science
  - xxxii. Entertainment Technology
  - xxxiii. Exercise Science
  - xxxiv. Fashion/Apparel Design
    - xxxv. Fashion Merchandising
    - xxxvi. Fire Science Technology
  - xxxvii. Funeral Service
- xxxviii. Funeral Service Preparatory
  - xxxix. Game Design
    - xl. Game Programming
    - xli. Health Information Technology
    - xlii. Health Science
    - xliii. Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning
    - xliv. Hotel, Restaurant and Institution Management
    - xlv. Illustration
    - xlvi. Information Technology
    - xlvii. Liberal Arts
  - xlviii. Mathematics
    - xlix. Medical Laboratory Technology
      - l. Music
      - li. Nursing
      - lii. Occupational Therapy Assistant
      - liii. Ornamental Horticulture
      - liv. Paralegal
        - lv. Photography
        - lvi. Physical Therapist Assistant
      - lvii. Physics
      - lviii. Plant Science
        - lix. Public Health
        - lx. Radiography
        - lxi. Respiratory Care
      - lxii. Security Systems Technology
      - lxiii. Sustainability
      - lxiv. Technical Studies
        - lxv. Television
        - lxvi. Theatre
      - lxvii. Visual Arts

4. Do you face any economic struggles that interfere with your ability to be successful at Mercer?
  - a. Yes (If yes is selected, go to questions 5 and 6)
  - b. No (If no is selected, go to question 7)
  
5. If you answered yes to the question above, please select all that apply.
  - a. having to work a full-time job
  - a. lack of financial aid

- b. access to transportation
- c. other

6. If you selected “other”, please explain the economic roadblocks you face without providing personal details.

7. Do you face any academic obstacles that interfere with your ability to be successful at Mercer?

- a. Yes (If yes is selected, go to questions 8 and 9)
- b. No (If no is selected, go to question 10)

8. If you answered yes to the question above, please select all that apply.

- a. lack of preparation from high school
- b. lack of study habits
- c. college workload is too high
- d. other

9. If you selected “other”, please explain the academic roadblocks you face without providing personal details.

10. Are there any other struggles you would like to share here that interfere with your ability to be successful at Mercer? If so, please explain without providing personal details.

11. Are you aware of the resources that the college offers to deal with potential economic, academic, psychological, physical, emotional, or family struggles?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. What do you like least about your classes right now?

13. What do you like most about your classes right now?

14. How comfortable are you using Blackboard?

- a. 1 – Very uncomfortable
- b. 2 – Uncomfortable
- c. 3 – Neutral
- d. 4 – Comfortable
- e. 5 – Very comfortable

## Section 2

We would like to conduct small group discussions to better support students by understanding their barriers.

Please visit <https://forms.office.com/r/MjZbMVJMpS> to provide your contact information if you want to participate. We will contact you in the spring with more details.

## **Student Interview Questions**

1. Our initial survey indicated that a lot of students faced issues with financial aid. Would you please share your experiences with this and how it has impacted your learning?
2. Do you face any economic struggles that interfere with your ability to be successful at Mercer? If so, please share.
3. What is working well at Mercer that is helping you with your economic struggles? What can we do differently?
4. Our initial survey indicated that a lot of students faced issues with study habits and college preparedness. Would you please share your experiences with this and how it has impacted your learning?
5. Do you face any academic obstacles that interfere with your ability to be successful at Mercer? If so, please share.
6. What is working well at Mercer that is helping you with your academic struggles? What can we do differently?
7. Without naming specific professors or classes, what works best for you in your class? (teaching styles, class type, presentation style)
8. Is there anything else you would like to share?

# Student Experience Survey Report

December 2022

By Moses Kim, Research Analyst

**Population: 5,820**

**Sample Size: 456**

**Margin of Error: 4%**

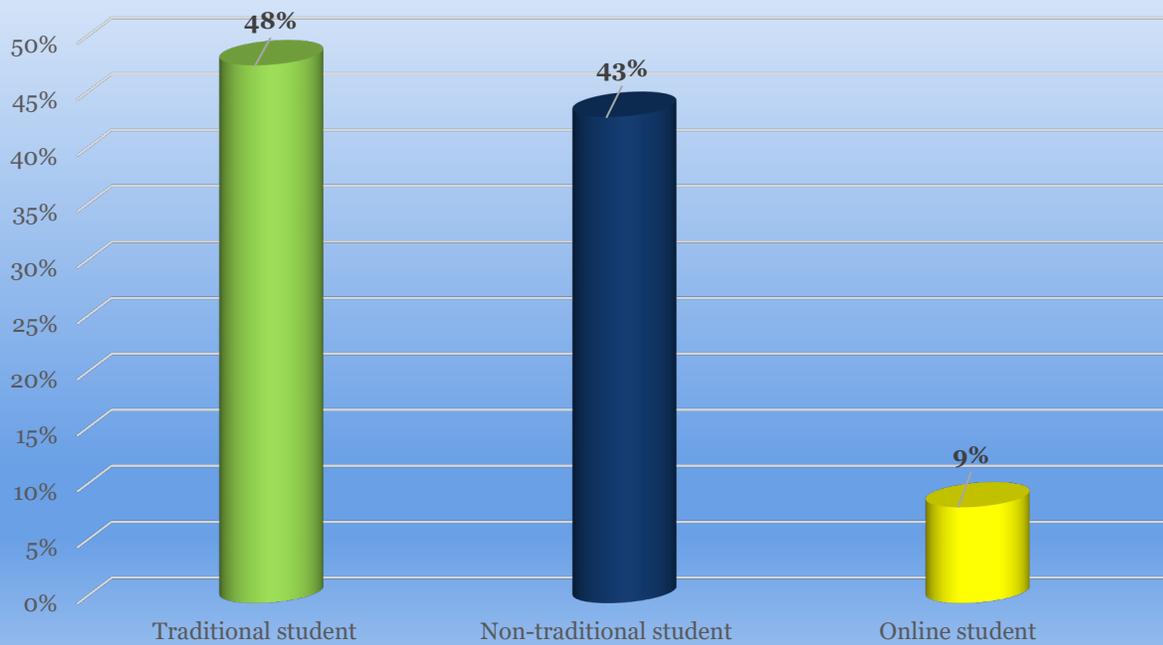
**Confidence Level: 95%**

## **Key Findings:**

- 38% of the survey respondents face economic struggles and 34% of them face academic struggles. The non-traditional (48%) and online students (44%) have more economic struggles than the traditional students (28%). Gen X (54%) and Millennial (48%) generations face more economic struggles than Gen Z (31%). Nursing students (53%) face more economic struggles than Liberal Arts students (27%).
- Regarding the academic struggles, there are statistically no significant differences among the student status groups and the generation groups
- Overall, there is no significant difference between the economic struggles (38%) and the academic struggles (34%)
- The non-traditional students (61%) are less aware of the resources than the traditional students (74%). On the other hand, statistically no significant differences between the generations
- Overall, 89% of the students are very comfortable or somewhat comfortable using Blackboard. And statistically no significant differences among the student status groups and the generation groups
- Among the students who face economic struggles, 57% of them have full-time jobs and 55% of them lack financial aid, and 20% of them have limited access to transportation. The full-time job and lack of financial aid problems are more significant than the transportation problem
- Among the students who face academic struggles, 54% of them lack study habits, 33% of them lack preparation, and 26% of them have high college workload. Lack of study habits problem is more significant than lack of preparation or high college workload problems

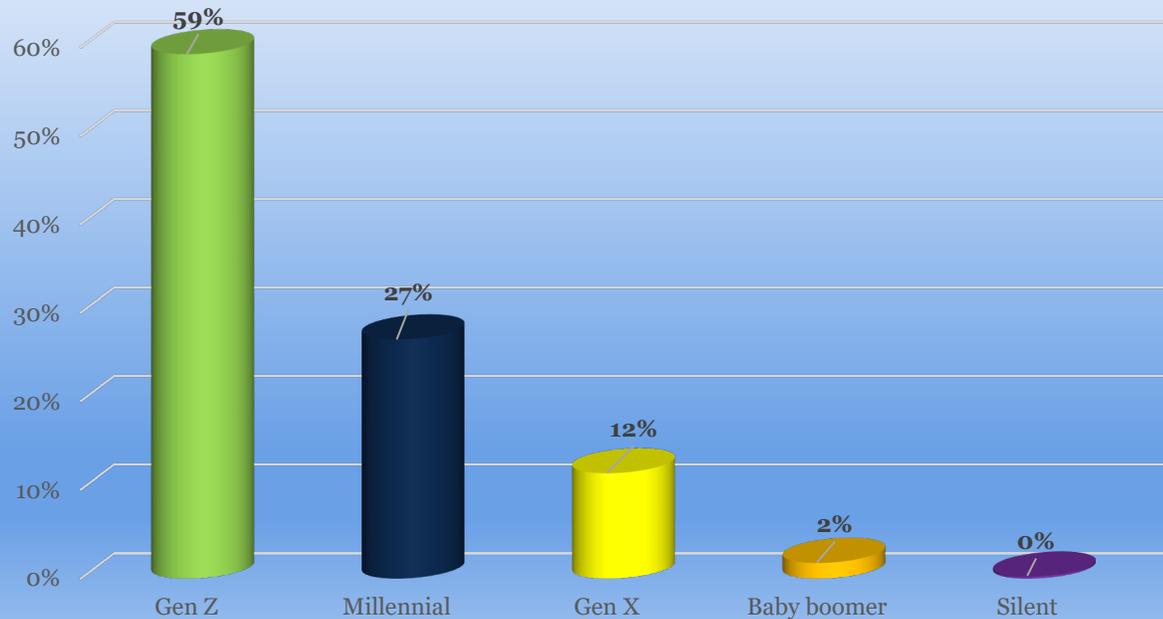
### % of Survey Responses by Student Status

(n=456)



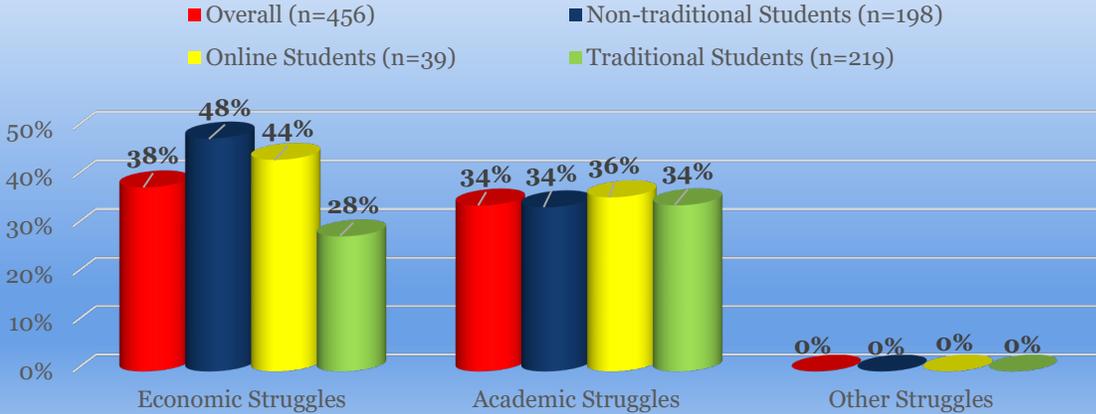
### % of Survey Responses by Generation

(n=456)



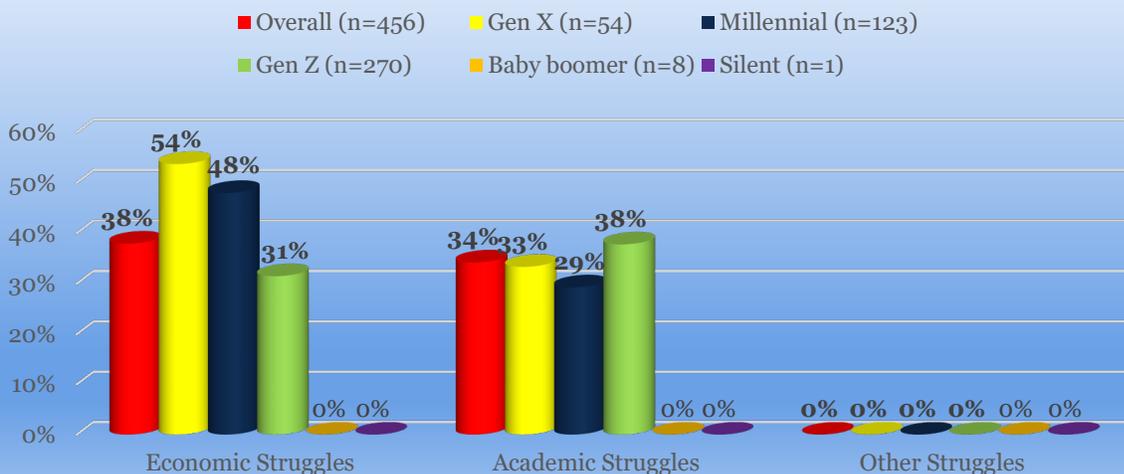
- The sample sizes of Baby boomer (n=8) and Silent (n=1) groups are too small for comparisons.

## Economic or Academic Struggles Per Student Status



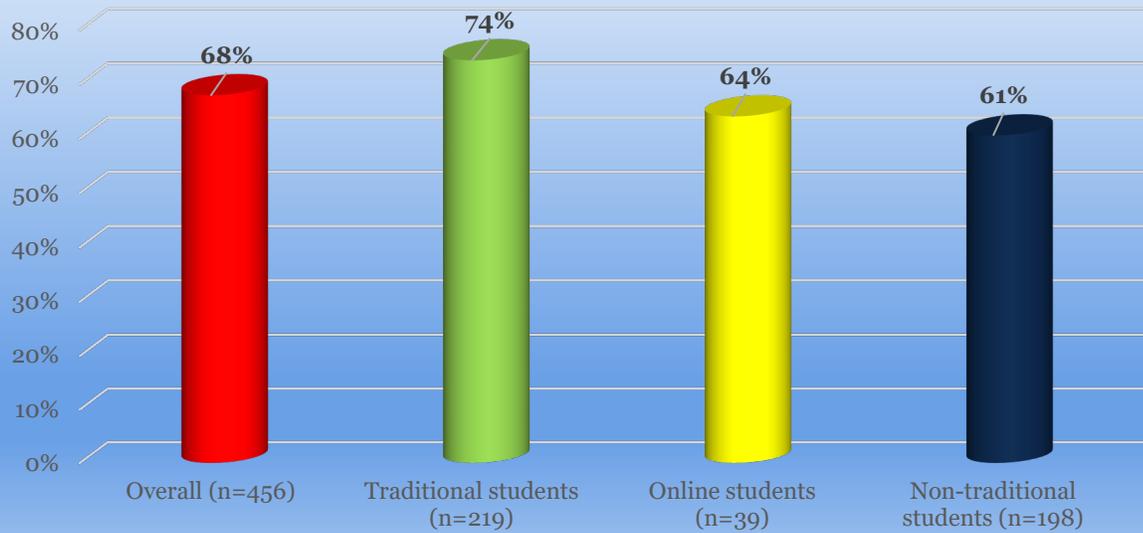
- Overall, 38% of the survey respondents face economic struggles and 34% of them face academic struggles.
- Statistically there is no significant difference between the economic struggles and the academic struggles at the 95% confidence level
- The non-traditional (48%) and online students (44%) have more economic struggles than the traditional students (28%) (statistically significant at the 95% confidence level).
- Regarding the academic struggles, there are no significant differences between the groups.

## Economic or Academic Struggles Per Generation



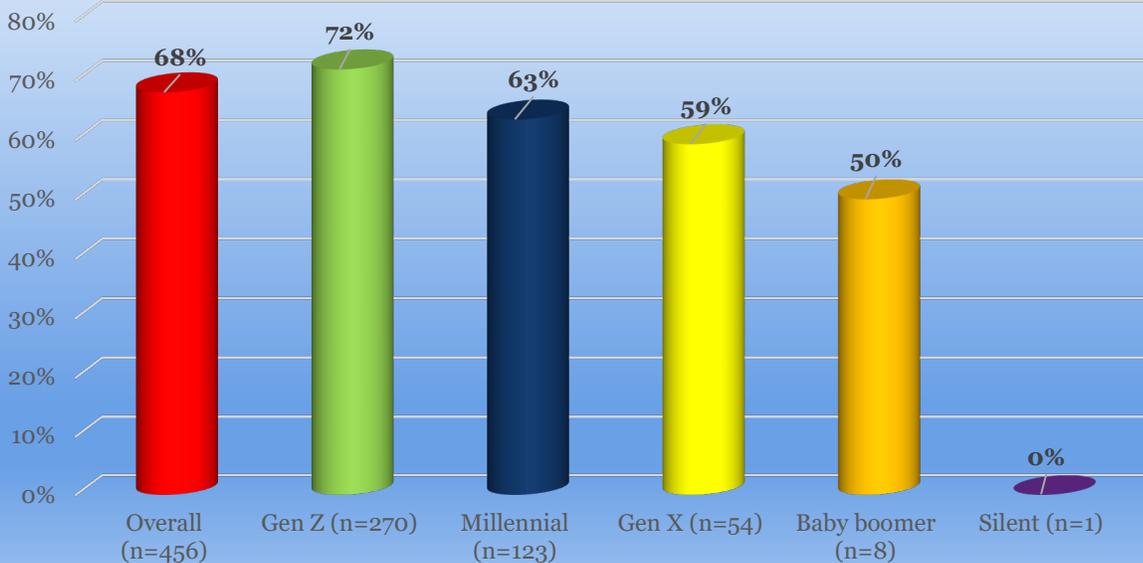
- Gen X (54%) and Millennial (48%) generations face more economic struggles than Gen Z (31%) (statistically significant at the 95% confidence level)
- There are no significant differences for the academic struggles between the generations

## Students Who Are Aware of the Resources by Student Status



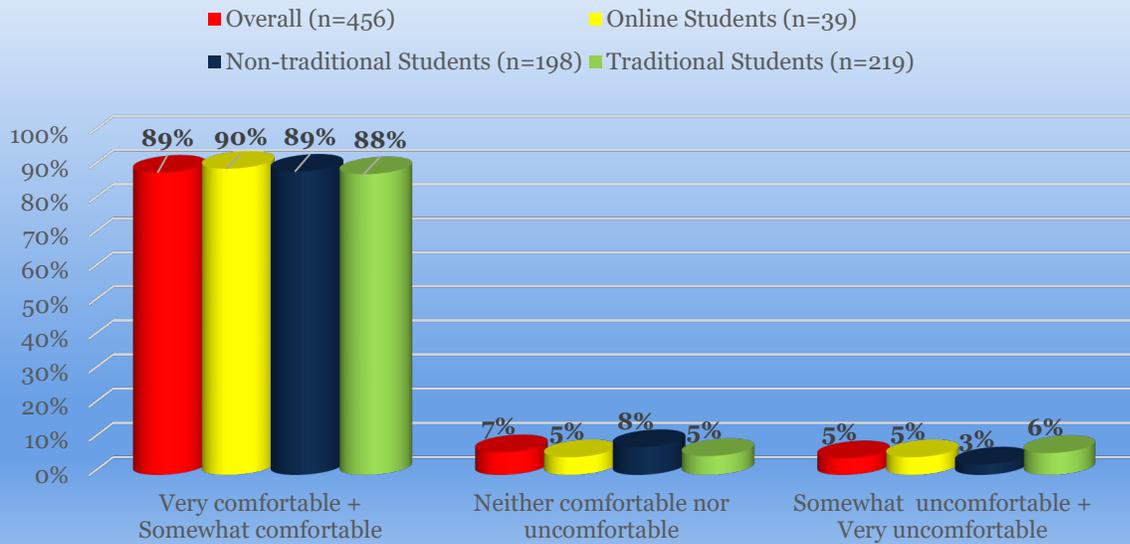
- The non-traditional students (61%) are less aware of the resources than the traditional students (74%) (statistically significant at the 95% confidence level)

## Students Who Are Aware of the Resources by Generation



- Statistically no significant differences between the generations though their percentages look quite different.

## Comfortably Using Blackboard by Student Status



- Overall, 89% of the students are very comfortable or somewhat comfortable using Blackboard
- Statistically no significant differences between the students status groups

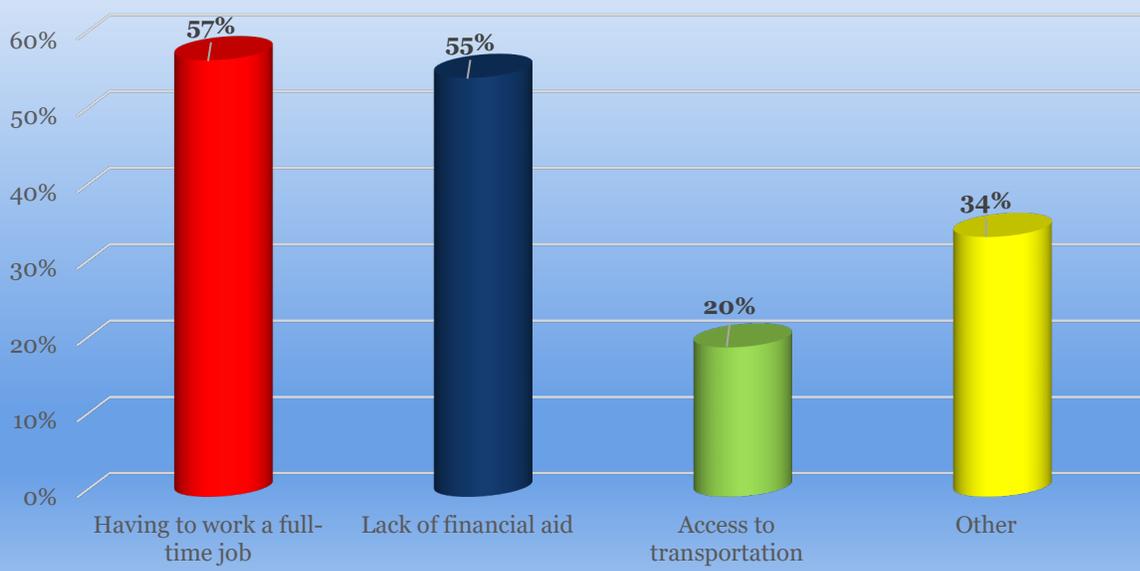
## Comfortably Using Blackboard by Generation



- Overall, 89% of the students are very comfortable or somewhat comfortable using Blackboard
- Statistically no significant differences between the generations though their percentages look quite different (note: the Silent and the Baby boomer generations cannot be compared due to small sample sizes)

## Students with Economic Struggles

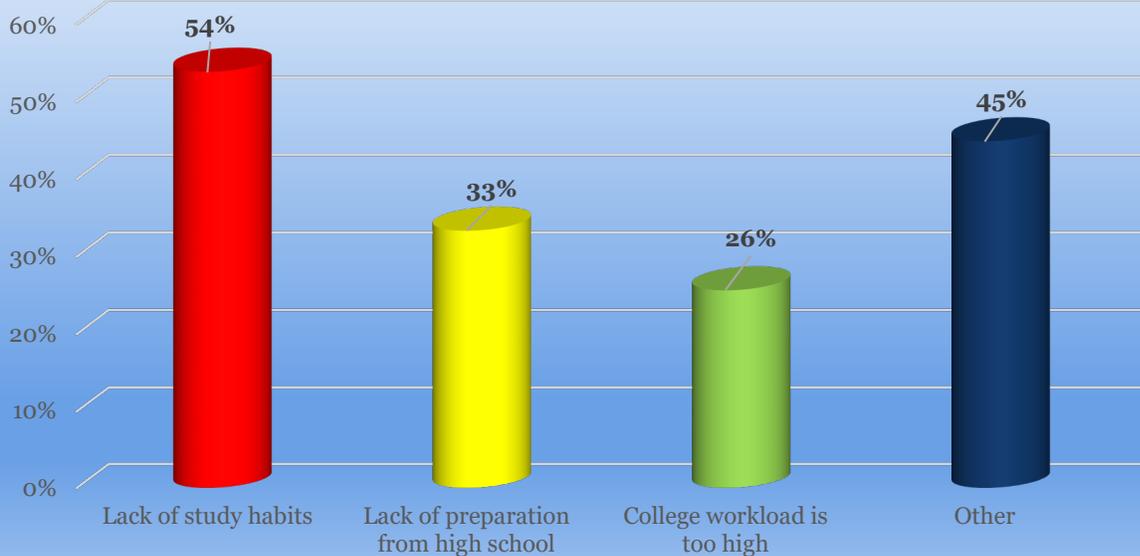
(n=173, duplicate)



- The full-time job (57%) and the financial aid (55%) problems are statistically more significant than the transportation problem (20%) at the 95% confidence level.

## Students with Academic Struggles

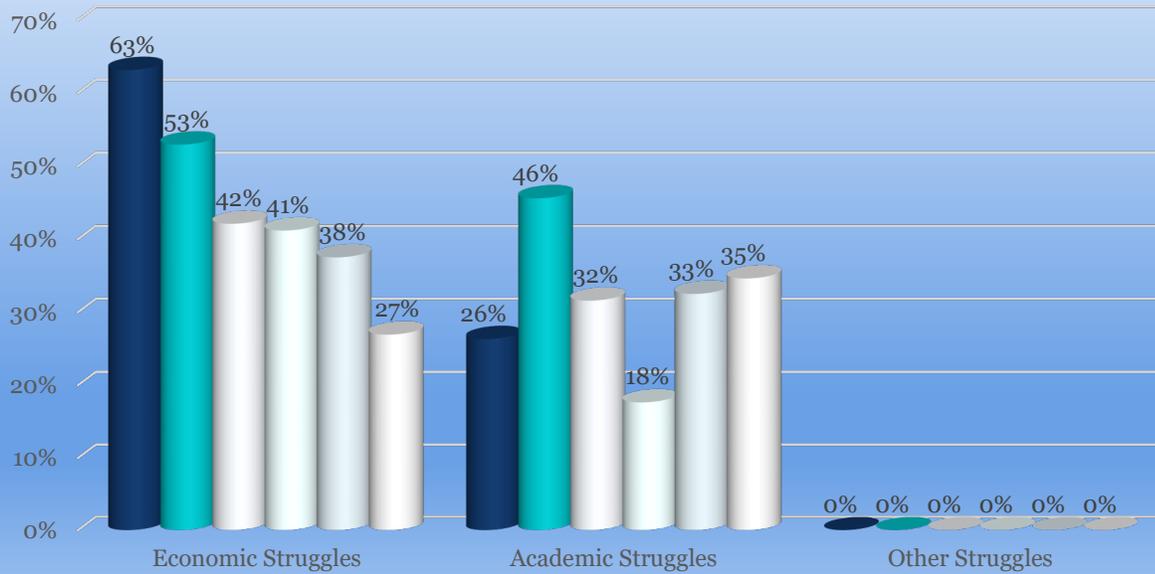
(n=156, duplicate)



- Statistically Lack of study habits (54%) is more significant than lack of preparation (33%) or college workload (26%) at the 95% confidence level.

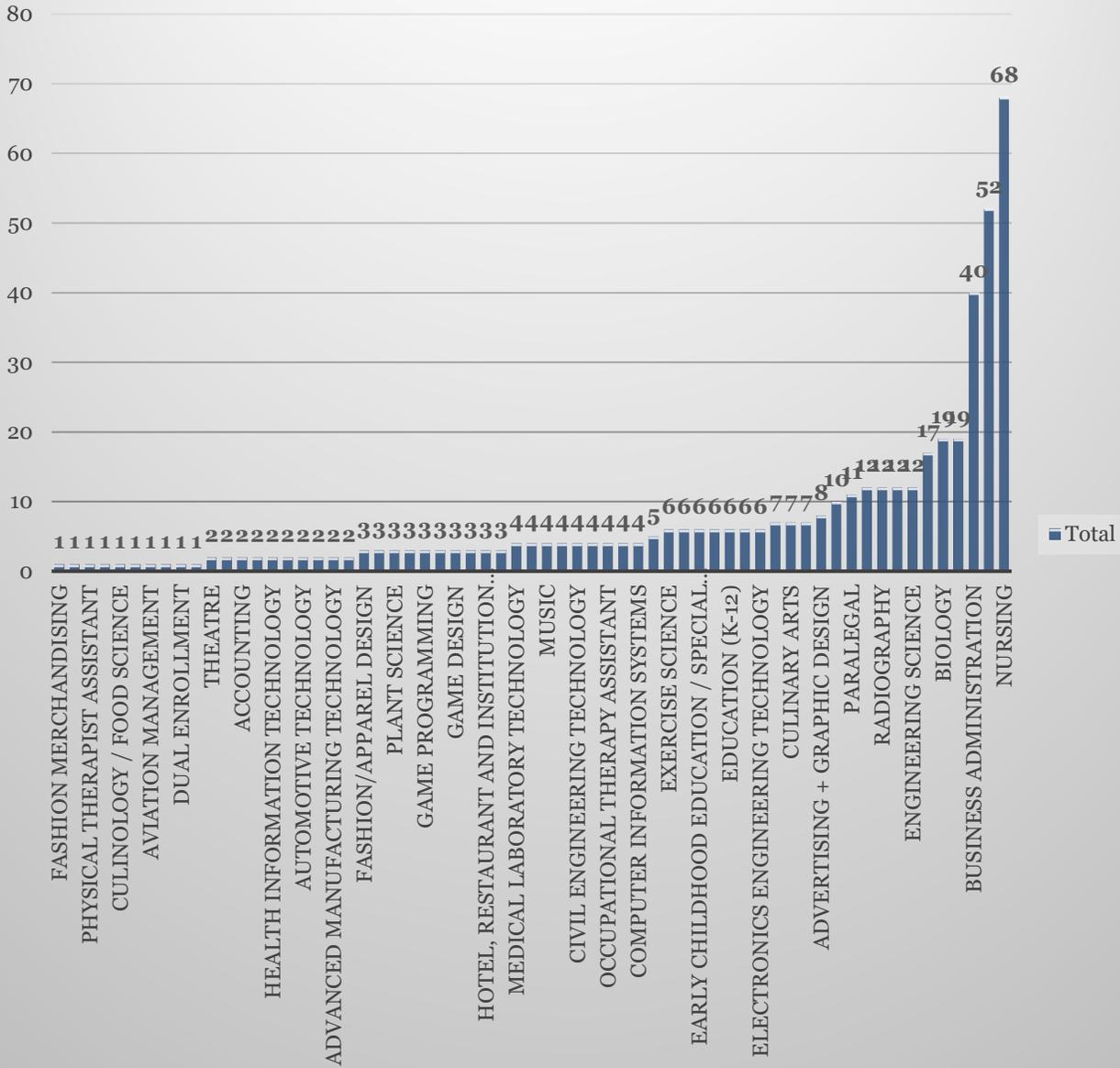
## Economic or Academic Struggles Per Program

■ Health Science (n=19)     
 ■ Nursing (n=68)     
 ■ Biology (n=19)  
■ Funeral Service (n=17)     
 ■ Business Administration (n=40)     
 ■ Liberal Arts (n=52)



- Nursing students (53%) face more economic struggles than Liberal Arts students (27%) (statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The other program students cannot be compared due to small sample sizes)
- Nursing students (46%) seem to face academic struggles more than any other program students, but there are statistically no significant differences.

## Program of Study (n=456)



## Student Anecdotes

### What's Working Really Well at Mercer

- The overall results indicate that learning at Mercer is successful.

"My classes are engaging and my professors are available and personable."

"EOF and its sub-groups prepared me for academic success."

- Many respondents highlighted beneficial services and courses at Mercer.

- Some respondents expressed appreciation for the food pantry.

"I don't have enough money to pay for certain things and the food pantry was helpful."

### Academic Barriers: Time Management

A recurring theme in both the survey and focus groups was issues with time.

Some students expressed they lack the time management skill set

"I struggle with deadlines and work specifically done out of class."

"High School really did not prepare me for college because they mainly "babied" us and did not give us challenges that could give us...an experience for what college might be like."

"Lack of study habits, Time management."

## Academic Barriers: Time Management

A recurring theme in both the survey and focus groups was issues with time.

Some students expressed they simply lack time

"I work full-time at a hospital and take care of my 3 kids and mom. Time seems to not be enough for the workload."

"Working full time and having to run a household can make it challenging to find a time to study enough."

"I have an extremely hard time scheduling studying and working at the same time."

"Trying to find a good time to study due to my full time work schedule."

## Economic Barriers: Jobs and Financial Assistance

37% of student respondents identified economic challenges as barriers to success.

"Yes, I do struggle economically. I don't make a lot of money. I'm a single mom. I'm over 25 years old. I'm not where I wish I could be in my life. So, I do struggle a lot economically where I have to work full-time or I have to work during the day. That is hard because I have to balance work and I have to balance school."

"I am a homeless youth. I live in a transitional living program, and so I don't really have to pay rent. I don't have to pay for food and shelter because that's provided by the state, but I don't have enough money to pay for certain things. And so sometimes, I have to make sure that I file for financial aid as soon as the first deadline is revealed to students, because I don't want to have my needs be put on the back burner. I don't want to get in the way of other people receiving their aid, but I don't want to get the scraps..."

## Economic Barriers: Jobs and Financial Assistance

37% of student respondents identified economic challenges as barriers to success.

"I have been experiencing troubles with transportation due to losing a car, and lack of financial aid because my parents are considered to be making enough money, but we are living paycheck to paycheck."

"I have parents who don't speak English and I'm the only child so they constantly always ask me for help...[which makes it hard to give] my attention to my education."

"I do not qualify for federal aid so the amount I get for financial aid is not a lot and does not cover for everything."

"I am independent. I have study expenses, my personal expenses, and I help my family financially. The biggest obstacle is that I am undocumented and what I earn is only enough to cover my expenses."

"Everyone has to work, Mercer doesn't offer enough evening/weekend classes."

## Economic Barriers: Jobs and Financial Assistance

37% of student respondents identified economic challenges as barriers to success.

"New Jersey is too expensive to live in. Without an upper class household salary, it is almost impossible for me to go to school full time because basic living expenses don't help me live a practical lifestyle. Due to me having to work at least 40 hours a week, (sometimes more), I have to take less classes. This causes me to get my degree later."

"My parents aren't financially supporting me at all, either with tuition or housing, but they still need to go on my FAFSA so it's really hard to get financial aid or scholarships."

"Financial aid partially covers my tuition, however, I am spending approximately \$500.00 on textbooks each semester, with some classes partially or hardly using them for studies."

"I have to work full time to pay my bills and tuition. I submitted a financial aid application during the onset of my study, but I was not eligible. With this drawback, I still strive to work and maintain good grades with an ultimate hope of securing financial aid, which could ease my financial burden."

"Going to school and having kids is a struggle, especially when there is no child care onsite."

# Mental Health Barriers (partial account of what students shared)

