



**FALL 2020**

# **QUERY PROJECT**

(OR: REMEMBER THAT 1-QUESTION SURVEY FROM AROUND MIDTERM?...HERE'S WHAT STUDENTS SHARED)

**PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

PREPARED BY THE  
HWC ASSESSMENT  
COMMITTEE

# ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

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The student population enrolled in credit courses for Harold Washington in Fall 2020 is 6,150. A total of 858 respondents completed the Query Project Assessment. The Query Project was a 1-question survey, administered around midterm, seeking open-ended responses to the question:

- ***"Thinking about all of your experiences at Harold Washington College (HWC): What can we do to help you feel comfortable, safe, valued, and/or able to be yourself in all HWC physical and virtual spaces?"***

Of these 858 respondents, 716 (83.45%) had valid and unique student identification numbers, which were cross referenced in the Openbook database. With 11.64% of HWC's population completing the survey, a margin of error of 3% at 95% confidence was obtained.

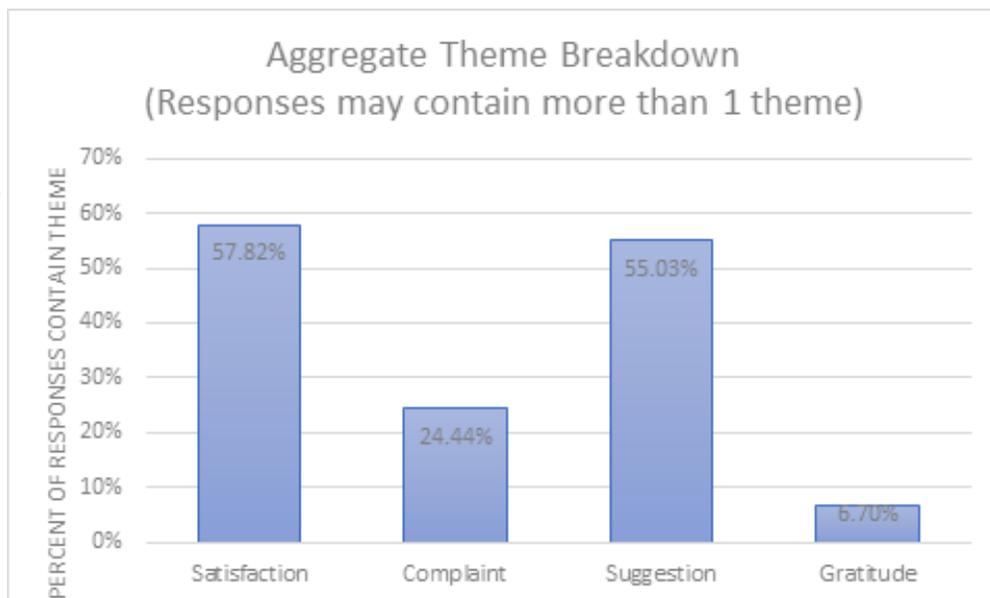
The analysis of the Query Project was a mixed methods approach of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The 716 responses were anonymized, and all personal identifiers within the responses were redacted. One volunteer performed scoring of categories predetermined by the committee, and two coders performed qualitative analysis for emergent themes. Additionally, natural language processing using the Natural Processing Toolkit (NLTK 3.5) was implemented to perform lemmatization and word frequency analysis on the responses. This mixed methods approach allowed for the coders to draw themes that typically present in phrases or subtext, while NLP would reduce human error in counting.

## AGGREGATE THEMES

### SCORING

The responses were scored with four broad categories: satisfaction, complaint, suggestion, and gratitude.

Scoring for these categories was not mutually exclusive, and a single response could fall within multiple categories.



# EMERGENT THEMES

## 59.36% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF COLLEGE

The most prominent theme to arise out of the analysis was "college," with 59.36% of responses explicitly using the language of the question. As this is what the questions asked the students to respond to, it demonstrates the students' effort to take the question seriously at face value and provide the feedback it requested

As many of the services, in addition to classes, have been moved to remote, it is important (now more than ever) to remember HWC is a community, and collaboration between departments and services is vital for our students

## 30.87% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF TIME

Time was mentioned by 30.87% of respondents and was one of the most unprompted prominent themes mentioned by students.

Even if students did not mention that they don't have sufficient time, students are clearly thinking about time as a finite resource and are therefore making economic decisions based in its availability. Faculty should consider their lesson plans during the synchronous periods of Zoom to ensure they are utilizing that time effectively.

.....  
**A single response could address multiple themes.**

## 37.85% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF COURSE

While "college" was the primary theme based on frequency, "course" was the next most prominent theme with 37.85% of responses. As a student's main focus in college is their coursework, it is not surprising to see this emergent theme.

## 30.31% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF TEACHING MODALITY

The theme of remote learning was mentioned in 30.31% of student responses. These responses primarily broke down between responses from students feeling safe because classes were remote (76.96% of these responses) and responses from students having a difficult time learning online or missing in-person collaboration (23.5% of these responses).

A significant portion of our students are struggling with this modality and, more importantly, are having a difficult time connecting with peers and professors. Incorporating community-building and more explicit support structures for students may be beneficial. Zoom breakout rooms, group chats, and forums may ameliorate these concerns.

## 34.08% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF PROFESSOR

Professors as a group or mention of a particular professor appeared in 34.08% of responses. These responses primarily broke down between those who perceived professor(s) to be providing sufficient support (59.02% of these responses) and those who reported instructors not providing sufficient support (16.8% of these responses).

## 29.47% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF ANXIETY

The theme of anxiety concerns were mentioned in 29.47% of responses with terms like "deadline," "due date," "stress," "pressure," and "difficulty." While many issues affecting anxiety are beyond the institution's immediate control, Wellness services can be expanded and emphasized, and faculty can consider coursework modifications to reduce some of the components contributing to student stress and anxiety, particularly by demonstrating flexibility when it comes to due dates.

## 12.71% OF STUDENT

### RESPONSES ADDRESSED THE THEME OF PANDEMIC

The pandemic was mentioned in 12.71% of student responses. The primary way this was mentioned was in terms of safety, with 78.02% of the responses in this theme explicitly tying feelings of safety to Covid-19 responses.



# What can I do?

*(according to the HWC Fall 2020 students who responded to the Query Project)*

## EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US CAN:

- Reach out--with questions, with compliments, with resources, with needs.
  - Community and connection are crucial in normal times and more so in this time of forced social isolation and dislocation. Taking steps to build personal connections with others is good for them and for you.
- Reply to emails promptly and with respect and compassion.
- Expect confusion (and don't take it personally)--in times of change and stress, both memory and priority lists are difficult to maintain; everyone is battling to do their best. Assume that, and then work to clarify what's unclear.
- Add your pronouns to your email signature and zoom profile.
- Use the names and pronouns with which people self-identify, and work to pronounce every name correctly.
- Make things happen.
  - Do you wish for more of something in your classes? Then be the first!
  - Want students to share more? Share first!
  - Do you wish people would talk in breakout rooms? Be the first to talk.
  - Want a Discord server to facilitate a study group? Start one!
- Be the agent of change you want to see.

**For additional suggestions specifically geared toward faculty, students, staff, and administration, see next page.**

# What can I do?

## FACULTY

## STUDENTS

## STAFF

- Recognize additional challenges facing students (heightened stress, unreliable technology, children at home, food and housing insecurity, etc.), and extend as much understanding and flexibility as possible when it comes to assignment quantity and due dates.
- Encourage but do not require students to use camera on zoom.
- Revise syllabi to promote equity.
- Share recordings of synchronous sessions when possible and if those recorded have consented.
- Engage students with texts and lessons that reflect the diverse humanity of our student body, city, and world.
- Time is in short supply for all, so help students prioritize; and arrange synchronous sessions to use student time effectively and respectfully
  - (i.e.: if it would work as well as an asynchronous recording, then don't spend synchronous time on that activity. Prioritize interactive components instead).
  - consider holding office-hours "group study" sessions.
- Attend zoom and Brightspace training sessions
- Offer reminders of campus resources and support services.
- Help students develop time management strategies.
- Teach effective learning and study techniques.
- Remember that all students' classes are set up differently, so some additional explanation to help students navigate your specific course site may be required.
- Try to arrange due dates on a predictable schedule (same day of the week, same time).
- Use the Brightspace calendar and weekly announcements to clarify upcoming coursework.
- Try something new. Even if there are mistakes, experiment and grow.

- Check student email and Brightspace course pages regularly.
- Make (and consult daily) a single calendar that lists ALL assignments and due dates for ALL classes.
  - Mark when you should *start* working on each assignment as well to help you stay on track.
  - If you need an extension, ask in advance of the due date. (And if necessary, ask *after* the due date. Your teacher may say no, but they can't say yes if you don't ask.)
- Familiarize yourself with campus support services (including virtual services) such as the Wellness Center, Tutoring, and use them frequently.
  - Attend Wellness Center workshops on time management and anxiety management
- Students want more face time with peers, so if you can do so safely, please make the choice to have your camera on during zoom calls.
- While noting that learning remotely to minimize Covid-19 exposure correlated with an increased sense of safety, students want to feel more like a community. If you can, participate in Student Government Association, clubs, and attend HWC-sponsored events to build connections.
- Consider applying time management strategies like the Pomodoro Method
- Consult Brightspace help and other resources to navigate technology.

- Ensure accurate information is provided consistently to students via phone, email, and website.
- In addition to replying to phone and email messages promptly, students express an interest in having staff, especially advisors, initiate more check-ins with students.
- Keep every part of the building clean and safe, and maintain quiet spaces for rest and work.

## ADMINISTRATION

- Continue to send frequent emails about upcoming events as well as reminders of existing campus services (such as Wellness and Tutoring).
- Make HWC gear available to foster school pride and community.
- Improve website navigation and registration processes.
- Hire more advisors and tutors.
- Generate and publicize a school message board or community forum to combat feelings of isolation.
- Create more quiet spaces on campus, including some where food is allowed.
- Record more campus events so students who couldn't attend the live event can watch the recording afterwards.
- Ensure that college-wide policies, like those regarding optional video on zoom calls, are communicated clearly to entire HWC community.
- Offer additional training to faculty, staff, and students on using technology.
- Add temperature checks to other measures like disinfecting, distancing, and mask use to protect our community.



Please visit our website  
and contact us for more  
information

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