

2013
East Central College
District Resident Poll

A Summary Report

Submitted by
The Warren Poll
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2013 EAST CENTRAL COLLEGE DISTRICT RESIDENT POLL: A SUMMARY REPORT

Executive Summary

The Warren Poll interviewed at random 585 East Central College adult district residents (i.e., 18 years and older) by phone from January 10 – January 23, 2013. The error margin for 585 randomly interviewed respondents is +/- 4% at 95% confidence. The sample was weighted for age and gender to more closely represent the demographics of the ECC community college district.

As expected, *The Warren Poll* found that the demographics were virtually the same as the demographical findings from the 2006 and 2009 surveys conducted by *The Warren Poll* for ECC. That is, most ECC district residents have lived in the area for a long time with over fifty percent (54.1%) having lived in the district over twenty years. As is fairly typical of demographical data nationwide, almost half of ECC's area residents (48.5%) live in households with no children eighteen years or younger. Residents were found to have an educational level somewhat lower than the national average, yet quite in line with rural Missourians overall, although a very low percentage (3%) reported not holding at least a high school degree, which is way lower than the national average and even far low below the Missouri average. This odd finding is addressed more thoroughly in the body of this report. ECC residents were found to have annual family income levels well below the national average and below the average family incomes for urban Missourians, yet in line with average family incomes reported for rural Missourians. A very representative sample was found for age with 21% of the sample under 35 years old and 21% 65 years or older with the balance being in the middle age categories. Fifty-

three percent of the sample was female and 47% male, reflecting the gender distribution in ECC's 18 years and over population just perfectly.

The vast majority of ECC district residents (85.8%) were found to be "familiar" to "very familiar" with ECC and almost all of these residents (96.9%) feel that ECC is "important" to "very important" to the area. A very high percentage (92.6%) rated the quality of education provided by ECC as "good" to "excellent". Almost all residents (99.4%) "agree" or "agree strongly" that the area benefits from ECC expanding as a community college (i.e., by adding educational opportunities and programs). Almost the same unanimous percentage of respondents believe that ECC helps promote economic development in the area (97.4%) and feel having an excellent community college in the area helps to improve property values (97.9%). Most of the residents (98%) held that ECC is conveniently located, a rather surprising finding considering that ECC's community college district is quite large with some of its residents living many miles from ECC's main campus. When asked about how they get information about ECC, respondents noted that they rely mostly on ECC's "mailings" (36%), "family and friends" (24%), and the "newspaper" (19.5%).

A large percentage of respondents (44%) said that they or a member of their family have been enrolled at ECC, giving as their chief reason or a member of their family's chief reason for enrolling at ECC its "convenience" (32.7%), "affordability" (26.6%), and "academic program offerings" (16.6%). Relatively few respondents (21.9%) felt that ECC's \$81.00 per credit hour or its \$1260 tuition per semester was "expensive" (19.8%) to "very expensive" (2.1%). Nonetheless, almost a third of the respondents (31%) noted that the weak economy in the past five years has affected their ability or a

member of their family's ability to attend college, very likely making ECC a more affordable option than more expensive colleges or universities. District residents were also asked when it would be most convenient to take classes at ECC if they wanted to take classes at the college. Weekday evenings (31.7%) and mornings (17.6%) were quite popular, but on-line courses were mentioned by the largest plurality (35.5%) with Saturday morning (3.8%) or afternoon times (2.6%) not popular time slots.

When ECC district residents were asked to rank the importance of several services, facilities, or "items" provided by ECC, respondents ranked items associated with academic quality and making ECC affordable at the top with "well qualified faculty", "scholarships", "financial aid", and a "four year 'feeder' program" ranked one through four. Respondents ranked as least important those items not usually considered critical to the educational mission of any college (cultural events, non-credit courses, student activities, and intercollegiate athletics).

A fairly high percentage of respondents (47.2%) noted that they would be "likely" to "very likely" to attend ECC if they could take all of the courses on-line. A high percentage of respondents also felt that on-line degrees were "just as valuable" (59.2%) or even "more valuable (2%) as traditional on-campus degrees, although a significant percentage (38.8%) held such on-line degrees to be "less valuable".

Respondents were also asked what they thought about the number of sports programs at ECC. A sizable majority (75.7%) said that ECC has "about the right amount", while 5.8% said "too many" with "18.4%" saying "too few". When asked what sports program they would add if they could, football was mentioned the most often followed by basketball and baseball. Respondents were asked the same about cultural

events. The vast majority (88.8%) noted that they believed ECC has “about the right amount” of cultural events with only 2.9% saying ECC has “too many” and 8.3% saying “too few”. If these respondents could add just one more cultural event at ECC, they would add more “plays” first, followed by “concerts” and a “speaker series”.

The Warren Poll found that ECC district residents felt that East Central College has done a very laudable job preparing students in all career areas, but doing the best job in preparing students for nursing first, followed by engineering, vocational/technical fields, and computer technology and teaching, and least well in business and fine arts, although it must be stressed that ECC was perceived as doing a commendable job in preparing students in these career areas as well.

Finally, in an open-ended question respondents were asked to suggest just one thing that ECC could do to improve its strength as a community college. The four most prevalent suggestions were: (1) improve communications or inform people better (16.4%); (2) expand program/course offerings (14.4%); (3) add more on-line courses (9.9%); and (4) improve credit transfers to four year colleges (8.5%).

Methodology

The Warren Poll interviewed 585 adult residents (18 years old or older) living in the ECC community college district by phone from January 10 - January 23, 2013. Landline and cell phones were included in the sample to increase representativeness. The original deadline for completing the interviews was January 21, 2013, but the interviewing period was extended to January 23rd to increase the sample size. Given the 585 interviewed, the error margin for this citizen survey is plus or minus 4.0% at 95% confidence. This means that, for example, if 55% of the respondents answered "yes" to a

question, we could be 95% confident that no more than 59% answered "yes" or no less than 51% answered 'no' with the highest probability being the 55% 'yes' response, not percentages at the extreme ranges of the 4% error margin. This 4% error margin range is a very respectable or low error margin for survey research studies, meaning that you can put a lot of confidence in the results.

The sample was weighted for age and gender to reflect the population of the ECC district quite closely, according to 2010 U.S. Census Data. Most pollsters today weigh for both gender and age because it is almost impossible to interview enough younger and male residents. It should be noted that the computer printout for the weighted sample acknowledges 583 respondents interviewed, not 585. This is because two respondents did not report their age and therefore could not be included in the weighted sample. The unweighted sample of 585 is quite representative but is not used in this report because the weighted sample reflects ECC demographics better and is therefore, statistically speaking, more representative. However, as expected in survey research, comparisons between the weighted and unweighted responses to questions show very little difference with the statistical difference being usually less than 1%. This is because very few of the questions are gender or age sensitive. In the few questions that seem to be gender or age sensitive, the statistical difference in the responses may vary a few percentage points. Both the weighted and unweighted printouts of frequencies have been submitted to ECC, so comparisons can be made, if desired. It should also be noted that any percentages in this report that do not add up perfectly to 100% or when combined with other percentages (e.g., combining "good" to "excellent" percentages) is due to rounding. Additionally, a comment should be made about the use of cross-tabulations (cross-tabs) in this summary

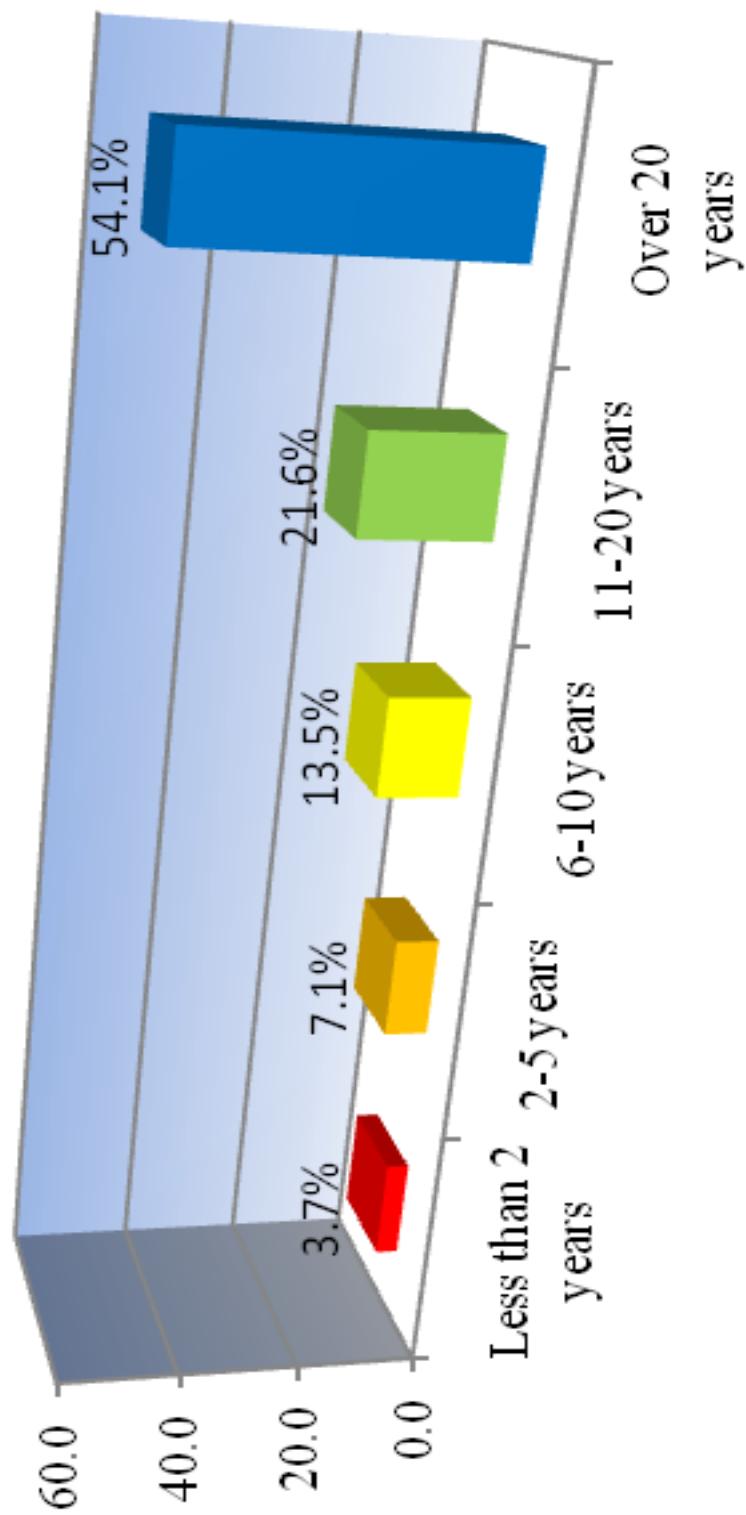
report. A cross-tab is when one variable in the survey (e.g., age) is run against another variable (e.g., perceptions of tuition costs at ECC), often revealing additional worthwhile insights. However, most cross-tabs do not really show anything that is worth noting (i.e., that is statistically significant). References to cross-tabs will be mentioned when they reveal something worthwhile, but will not be discussed in detail to save space, since this is a summary report. However, cross-tabs will be attached to this report and cross-tabs can always be run since ECC has SPSS capability and the SPSS file is attached.

Demographical Characteristics of ECC District Residents

The Warren Poll found the vast majority of ECC residents have lived in the college district for a long time with 54.1% reporting that they have lived in the district for "over 20 years". Another 21.6% said that they have lived in the district from "11-20 years", 13.5% said "6-10 years", 7.1% responded "2-5 years", while only 3.7% said that they have lived in the ECC college district "less than 2 years". Of course, it must be remembered that *The Warren Poll* only interviewed adult residents, so it is expected that respondents would report relatively long residency in the district (See Graph 1).

The survey conducted by *The Warren Poll* generated a sample that is very representative of the general population in ECC's district, according to 2010 U.S. Census figures. As noted, slight weighting was done to reflect age and gender distributions almost perfectly for the 18 years and older population in the district. *The Warren Poll* found the following respondent age distribution: 6% "under 25 years old", 15% "25-34", 22% "35-49", 36% "50-64", 14% "65-74", and 7% "75 years or older". As to gender, 53% of the residents were female and 47% male, reflecting exactly the gender breakdown for

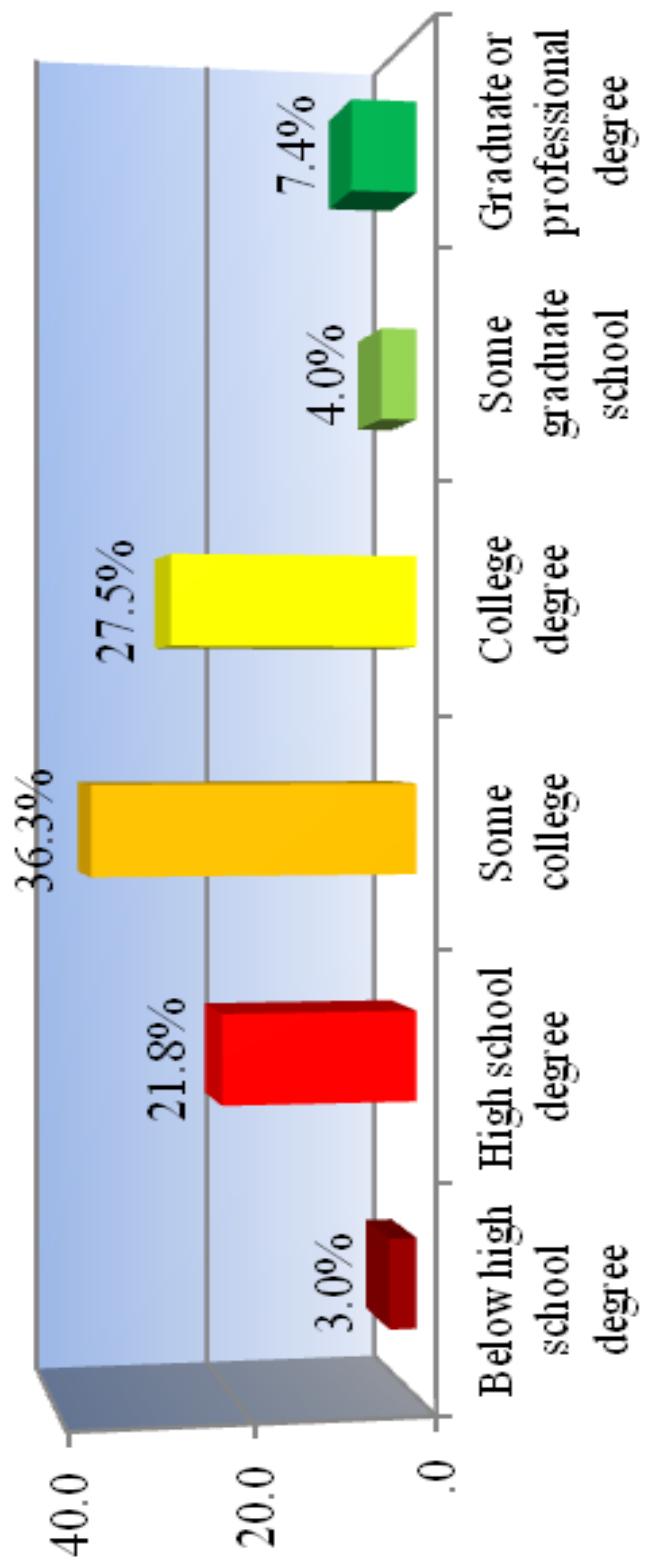
Graph 1: Respondent Tenure In District



those 18 years and older in the population. Household sizes were also quite typical with about half of the residents reporting having children 18 years or younger living in the household (51.5%), while about half did not (48.5%). Here is the specific breakdown of the number of households having 18 year olds or younger living in the household: zero (48.5%), one (15%), two (25.1%), three (8.6%), four (1.3%), five (1.0%), six (.7%), and seven or over (0%).

Those living in the East Central College district reported the following educational attainment: 3% do not hold a high school degree; 21.8% said they do hold a high school degree; 36.3% said they have some college education; 27.5% said they graduated from college; another 4% noted that they have had some graduate school education, while 7.4% said they hold a "graduate or professional degree" (See Graph 2). Although not directly comparable, according to the 2010 U.S. Census for those over 25, 12.9% reported having a high school degree; 18.4% said they hold a college degree, while 10.5% noted that they hold a graduate degree. The 2009 statistics for educational achievement in Missouri are somewhat lower with 13.2% saying they do not hold a high school degree; although 25.2% contend that they hold a college degree and another 8.3% note that they have earned a graduate degree. Except for the rather large difference between those saying they do not hold at least a high school degree in the ECC district (only 3%) compared to those nationally and in Missouri who say they do not (12.9% nationally and 13.2% in Missouri), reported educational achievement seems to be similar (e.g., 7.4% of ECC district residents report holding a graduate or professional degree, while it is 10.5% nationally and 8.3% in Missouri). Frankly, this 3% reporting of those not holding a high school degree should be questioned since in my last poll conducted for

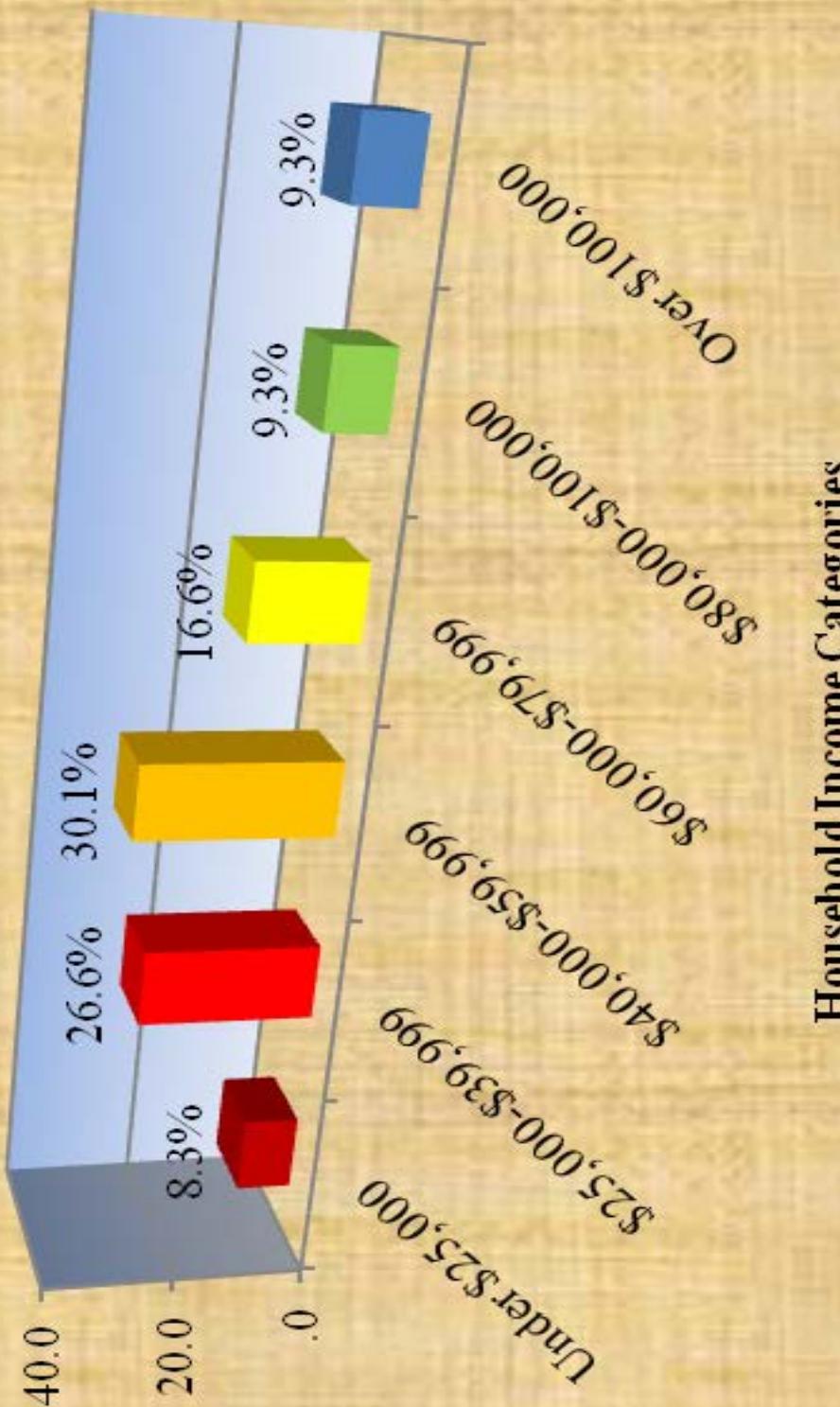
Graph 2: Respondent Educational Attainment



ECC a more realistic percentage, 8.3%, reported that they did not hold a high school degree, while in the Attitude Research Company (ARC) survey conducted for ECC in 1998, 10.5% reported not holding a high school degree (both survey findings are close to the government percentages). However, it is known that in survey research respondents tend to inflate their educational achievement somewhat, but it is a little perplexing that respondents tended to do this more in this survey than in past surveys. To reiterate, however, the reporting of educational achievement seems to be quite accurate for the other categories.

Residents were also asked to provide an estimate of their yearly family income. Although 18.8% of the respondents refused to provide an estimate of their yearly family income, about 10% above the average refusal rate for this question, 81.2% did respond to the question. ECC district residents reported relatively low yearly family incomes, as compared to national statistics, but not for statistics for rural Missourians. Only 9.3% of respondents acknowledged having yearly family incomes exceeding \$100,000, although the national average is 21% and 9% for rural Missourians, so ECC residents reporting family incomes above \$100,000 are very much in line with government statistics for rural Missourians. Another identical 9.3% report incomes of between \$80,000 - \$100,000; 16.6% say they make between \$60,000 - \$79,999; 64.9% report that they have family incomes between \$40,000 - \$59,999; while 34.9% say they have family incomes below \$40,000 per year (see Graph 3). Nationally, those with yearly family incomes exceeding \$60,000 are in the top 35.1% and the top 28% for those living outside the Metro areas in Missouri (Source: “What Percent Are You”, *NY Times*, February 14, 2012).

Graph 3: Respondent Household Income



General Impressions of ECC by Residents

The Warren Poll asked ECC residents several general questions pertaining to ECC to find out how familiar they were with East Central College, whether in fact they or any member of their family had attended ECC, and what their impressions were of ECC. The answers to the questions were consistent to the answers recorded by *The Warren Poll* in its 2006 survey. That is, most residents are quite familiar with ECC and most have very positive impressions of ECC. As noted previously, most residents have lived in the ECC district for many years with the majority (54.1%) noting that they have lived in the ECC district for over 20 years. Obviously, then, we would expect most of the residents to report that they are quite familiar with ECC. In fact, this is what was found with 85.8% saying that they were either “familiar” (43.4%) or “very familiar” (42.3%) with ECC, while only 10.2% said they were “not familiar” with just 4% saying they were “very unfamiliar” with ECC. Cross-tabs revealed the obvious. Those who have lived in the ECC district for a long time reported great familiarity with ECC, while those who had lived in the district a short time (e.g., under 5 years) reported the least familiarity with ECC. Those living in the district less than 2 years were almost five times more likely to say they were “very unfamiliar” with ECC than those living in the district more than 20 years. These findings provide “food for thought” for people involved in public relations at ECC. Clearly, ECC should obtain data on the new residents to their district and target them with promotional news about ECC to permit them to become more familiar with ECC and what opportunities await them at ECC.

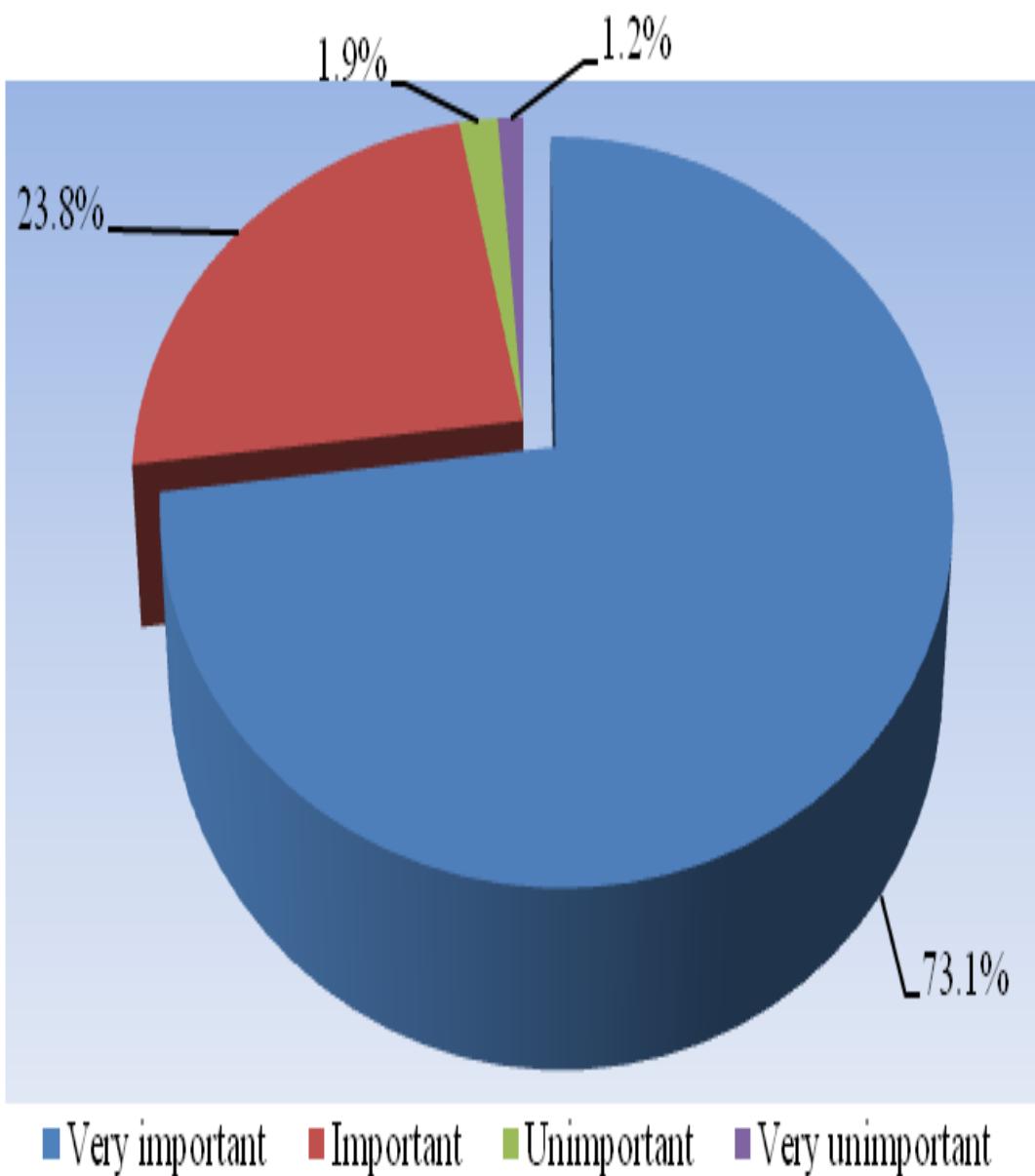
When residents were asked to rate the overall importance to East Central College to their area, almost all respondents (96.9%) rated ECC as “important” (23.8%) or “very important” (73.1%) to their area. Note in particular the high percentage that said “very important”. The percentage of respondents saying “unimportant” or “very unimportant” constituted only 3.1% of all respondents, hardly a noteworthy percentage (See Graph 4).

A similarly high percentage of ECC district residents also rated the quality of education provided by ECC as high with 92.6% rating the educational quality “good” (48.1%) to “excellent” (44.4%) with only 7% saying “fair” and .4% saying “poor” (See Graph 5).

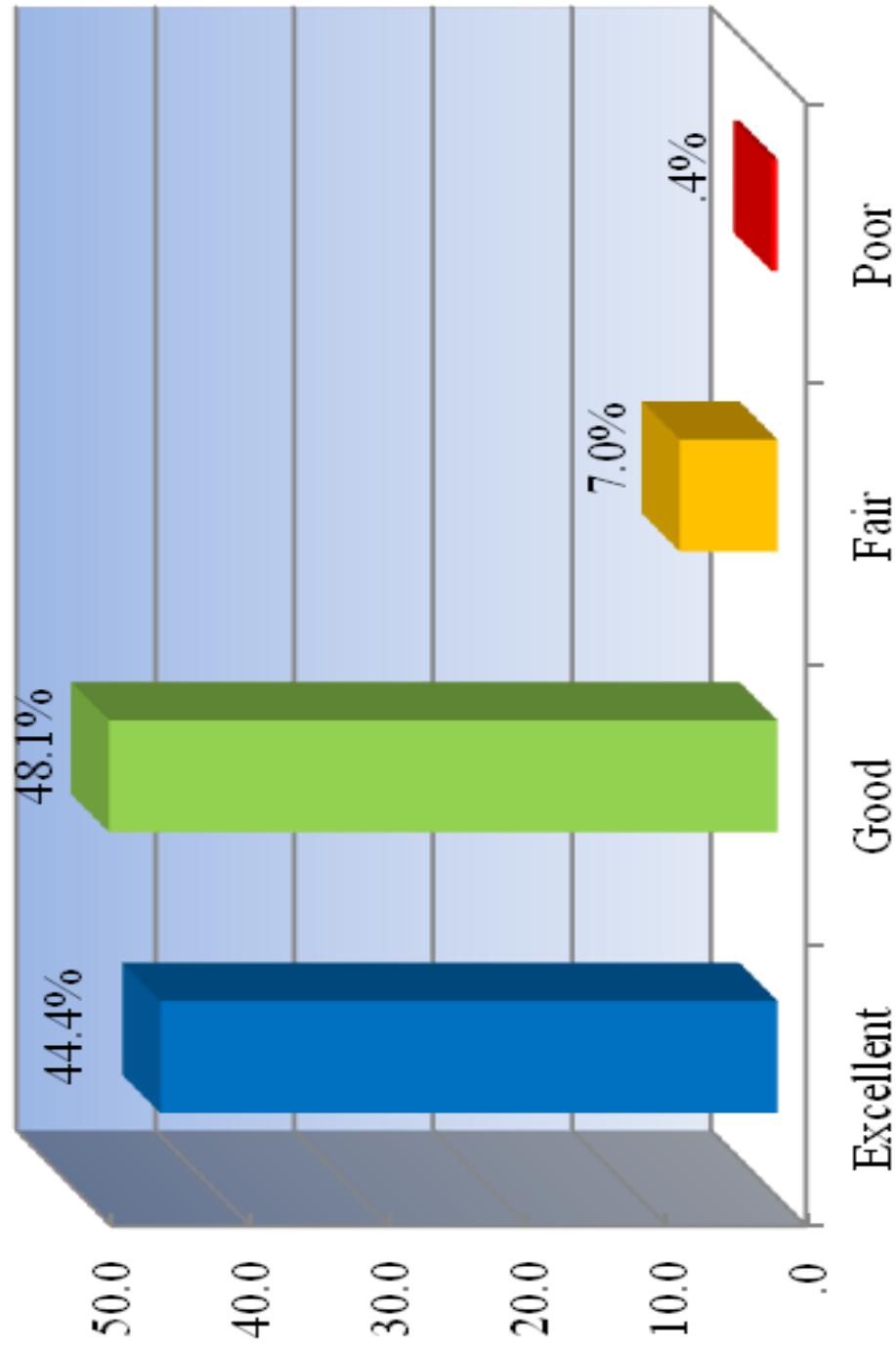
A very impressive percentage of respondents (44%) said that they or a member of their family had been enrolled at ECC with 56% saying ‘no’. Of the respondents who said that they or a member of their family had attended ECC, they gave three chief reasons for why they or a member of their family had attended: (1) “convenience” (32.7%); (2) “affordability” (26.6%); and “academic program offerings” (16.6%). A small percentage, 4.2%, mentioned the “A+ program”, while only 3.2% mentioned “scholarship”. The remainder, 16.8%, cited a variety of “other” reasons.

As noted, one of the key reasons given by respondents for attending ECC was its affordability, so it was not surprising that most ECC residents, when asked to rate the affordability of ECC, rated its \$81 per credit hour or its \$1260 per semester tuition as “inexpensive” (65.4%) to “very inexpensive” (12.7%) with 19.8% saying “expensive” and only 2.1% saying “very expensive”. As one would expect, when respondent perceptions of ECC costs were cross-tabulated with yearly family income, those with the

Graph 4: Overall Importance of ECC to Area



Graph 5: Quality of ECC Education

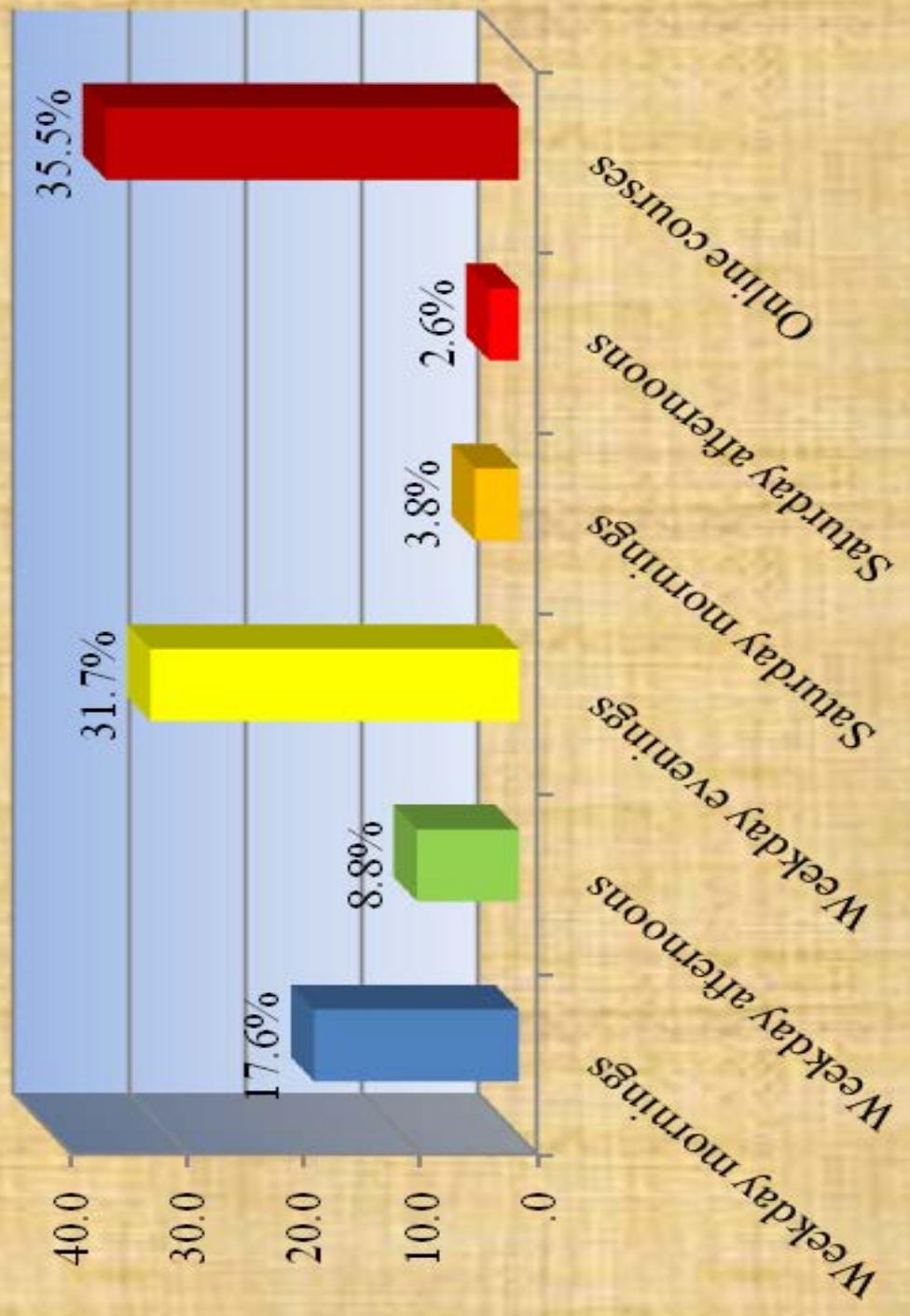


lowest family incomes tended to rate costs as expensive relative to those reporting higher family incomes.

Unquestionably, the bad economy in recent years has also played a role in resident perceptions of the cost of college tuition or in particular ECC's tuition costs. Close to half of the respondents (45.8%) in this survey noted that the "weak economy in the past five years" has affected their ability or a member of their family's ability "a little" (14.8%), "some" (17.5%) or "a lot" (13.5%) to attend college, although 54.2% said the "weak economy" had not affected their ability to attend college at all. Cross-tabs revealed a perfect pattern between the respondents' rating of the cost of tuition at ECC and their perceived impact of the "weak economy" on their or a member of their family's ability to attend college. The greater they perceived the impact of the "weak economy" on their ability to attend college, the more likely they were to rate ECC's tuition as expensive.

ECC planners wanted to know when residents of their district would find it most convenient to take classes. The results were quite definitive, thus providing ECC planners with pretty good direction in the planning of their course offerings. There was almost no support for courses offered during Saturdays (Sunday was not given as an option) with only 3.8% of the respondents mentioning "Saturday mornings" as convenient and just 2.3% saying "Saturday afternoons". However, a significant percentage of residents felt "weekday evenings" were convenient (31.7%), while 17.6% felt weekday mornings would be convenient. Yet the greatest plurality of residents (35.5%) mentioned that on-line courses would be the most convenient (See Graph 6).

Graph 6: Most Convenient Times to Take Classes



Answers to two other questions suggest that ECC district residents are quite intrigued by the possibility of taking on-line courses at ECC. Residents were asked if they would be more likely to attend ECC if they could take all of the courses on-line. Close to half of the respondents (47.2%) said they would be more likely to attend (31.5% said “likely” and 15.7% answered “very likely”), while 25.4% said “unlikely” and another 27.4% said “very unlikely”. The fact that almost half of the respondents expressed a likeliness to attend ECC if all of the courses could be offered on-line should make ECC think about offering more on-line courses.

Positive reaction to the possibility of ECC offering more on-line courses at the convenience of district residents is probably bolstered in part by the growing popularity of on-line courses/degrees nationwide. On-line courses and degrees are still controversial, but a response to another follow-up question regarding on-line degrees suggests that they are gaining more respect, especially among ECC district residents. Respondents to this survey were asked point blank: “How valuable do you feel an on-line degree is compared to an on-campus degree?” Somewhat surprisingly, over three-fifths of the respondents (61.2%) felt that on-line degrees are “just as valuable” or even “more valuable” than an on-campus degree, yet only 2% of this 61.2% actually said an on-line degree was “more valuable”. Also, it cannot be ignored that a very high percentage of respondents (38.8%) felt that on-line degrees are “less valuable” than on-campus degrees. To a pollster, it is always important to look at the “non-neutral” responses to a question. When we do to this here, we recognize that 19 times more respondents said that an on-line degree was “less valuable” than “more valuable”. Frequently, the respondents that take polar positions, rather than answering in the neutral category (in this case, the “just as valuable”

response), are normally the ones who have given more thought to the question. If this is the case here, ECC officials should think deeply about the resident response to the question pertaining to the true perceived value of on-line degrees because, if ECC is perceived as a mostly an on-line degree college, it could damage the laudable reputation that ECC presently enjoys.

ECC also wanted to know where residents get their most information about ECC. Table 1 below rank orders what residents said was their chief source of information on ECC. Note that almost 80% of residents claim that their “chief source” of information about ECC comes from just three “chief” sources.

Table 1: Resident Ranking of Their Chief Source of Information about EC

1. Mailings	36.0%
2. Family and Friends	24.0%
3. Newspaper	19.5%
4. ECC website	4.7%
5. Social media	3.5%
6. Radio	1.2%
7. Television	.5%
8. Other	6.4%
9. Get no information	4.3%

The Perceived Importance of Various Services, Facilities, and Items Relating to ECC’s Operations as a Community College

ECC administrators sought to find out how district residents rated the relative importance of certain services, facilities, and other items relating to the operations of ECC as a community college. Table 2 below shows that certain ECC services, facilities,

Table 2: Resident Rankings by Perceived Importance of the Service, Facility, or “Item” Relating to the Operations of ECC as a Community College

Item	Very Important (%)	Combined Very/Important (%)
1. Well qualified faculty	81.2	99.9
2. Scholarships	73.1	98.5
3. Financial aid	72.1	99.3
4. Four year “feeder” programs	71.0	99.9
5. Career/technical programs	69.4	99.2
6. A+ program	68.8	97.5
7. Modern facilities/equipment	58.7	98.9
8. Health/life/science programs	50.0	98.3
9. Local business training	46.2	97.6
10. Off-campus programs/services	37.3	93.5
11. Cultural events	28.8	87.1
12. Non-credit courses	18.1	85.6
13. Student activities	17.1	81.2
14. Intercollegiate athletics	14.5	74.2

and items were all ranked quite high in term of importance when the “important” and “very important” categories are combined. In fact, the first nine “items” receive a combined rating of 97.6% importance rating or higher. Even the lowest scoring item, “intercollegiate athletics”, receives a combined score of 74.2%. Consequently, Table 2 is only discriminating when focus is on the “very important” scores. To illustrate in a way the reliability of survey research, it is not coincidental that the top four rated items in this 2013 ECC poll received the same top four rankings in *The Warren Poll’s* 2006 survey and in the same exact order. In addition, the bottom five rankings in both surveys were the same as well, indicating that the priorities have not changed for residents in ECC’s district. “Well qualified faculty”, “financial aid”, “four year ‘feeder’ programs”, and “career/technical programs” rounded out the top four in both polls, although “scholarships” was a new item added to the 2013 survey, so no comparison can be made. However, if we take out “scholarships” from the 2013 survey, the four top rated items are ranked in identical order. When we take out the A+ program that was included in the 2013 survey, but not in the 2006 survey, the top five rankings remain the same.

Clearly, resident rankings show they want ECC to be most concerned with achieving and maintaining academic excellence and making education at ECC affordable since all of the top rated items in terms of importance have to do with academic quality and affordability. Respondents ranked having “well qualified faculty” as most important with an 81.2% rating, well above any other ranking. This seems appropriate since qualified faculty are certainly essential to providing quality education.

Thus, as expected, ECC district residents ranked in the bottom five items that could be considered less essential to providing quality education leading to college degrees and successful careers: “cultural events”, “non-credit courses”, “student activities”, and last, “intercollegiate athletics”. In sharp contrast, while the top four ranked items in importance received respectively a 71%, 72.1%, 73.1%, and 81.2% “very important” rating, the bottom four received only a 28.8%, 18.1%, 17.1%, and 14.5% rating. It is interesting to note that ECC district residents assigned almost identical percentages to the last three items in the 2006 and 2013 surveys with the lowest ranked item, “intercollegiate athletics” being off by only a tenth of a percent (14.6% in 2006 and 14.5% in 2013).

Additional ECC Resident Opinion on Sports and Cultural Events

Relative to other items in Table 2, respondents did not rate as very important to ECC operations “cultural events” or “intercollegiate athletics”. This seems understandable since people generally rank in polls “peripheral” programs at universities/colleges as less important to a university/college’s mission than programs related directly to academics. Nonetheless, this does not mean that people are against colleges and universities sponsoring cultural events and sports programs. In fact, ECC district residents, when asked about the number of sports programs ECC presently has, many more respondents answered “too few” (18.4%) than “too many” (5.8%), while the vast majority answered “about the right amount” (75.7%). When respondents who answered “too few” (only 50 respondents) were asked if they could add just one more sports program at ECC, they answered in rank order: football (33.6%), basketball (29.8%), baseball (16.9%), soccer (9.5%), and a host of “other” sports.

ECC district residents were also asked to express their opinion about the number of cultural events held at ECC. While 8.3% said “too few”, only 2.9% said “too many” with the vast majority saying “about the right amount” (88.8%). When those who answered “too few” (only 25 respondents) were asked what one cultural event they would add to the cultural events ECC hosts, “plays” finished first with 30.1%, followed by “concerts” (29.8%), “speakers series” (12.3%), “art exhibits” (9%), and “other cultural events” (18.8%).

ECC District Resident Opinion on How Well ECC Does in Preparing Students for Careers in Various Career Areas

ECC district residents were asked to rate ECC’s efforts to prepare students for careers in various career areas. Table 3 displays their rankings, but also conveys how well ECC is doing in preparing their students for all careers listed in Table 3. All career areas received over a 90% “good” to “excellent” rating from respondents. These same

Table 3: ECC District Resident Ranking of How Well ECC Prepares Students for Careers in Various Professions*

Career Areas	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Nursing	47.9	48.7	2.9	.5
2. Engineering	39.5	52.0	7.4	1.1
3. Vocational/Technical fields	39.2	55.6	4.7	.6
4. Computer technology	38.2	57.6	3.5	.6
5. Teaching	37.8	57.2	4.6	.3
6. Prepare for 4-yr. colleges	37.3	54.6	6.7	1.4
7. Business	32.6	60.1	7.0	.3
8. Fine Arts	28.6	61.6	9.4	.4

- **Note: Ranking is based upon the percentage rating career area as "excellent"**

positive ratings were seen in the 2006 survey conducted by *The Warren Poll*. In that poll only “Fine Arts” fell below a 90% plus positive rating with an 87.2% “good” to “excellent” rating, yet still one would have to consider such a rating quite strong. In both the 2006 and 2013 surveys nursing came out on top receiving a 46.4% and 47.9% “excellent” rating respectively, while business ranked next to last (32.6% in both polls)

and fine arts ranked last (31% in 2006 and 28.6% in 2013). Teaching, engineering, computer technology, and “preparing for transferring to four-year colleges” ranked in the middle in the 2013 survey with percent differences all within the margin of error from each other ranging from 37.3% to 39.5%, so pollsters would consider the differences in these rankings as statistically insignificant. The 2006 survey showed these categories bunched in the middle as well, although the range was slightly larger, ranging from 34.5% to 41.5%. The 2006 survey did not include “preparing for transferring to four-year colleges” as a category.

The bottom line is that ECC officials should be proud of their accomplishments in preparing students for careers in these various career areas. That is, ECC district residents perceive consistently ECC administrators as doing a laudable job over the years in preparing students for higher education and various professions. Given other positive perceptions of ECC by area residents, it is clear that ECC carries much prestige as a community college in ECC’s community college district.

Other Perceptions of ECC by District Residents

The Warren Poll asked a final set of miscellaneous questions to gain further insights into how district residents perceive ECC’s position in the community. ECC district residents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to five statements, ranging from “agree strongly” to “disagree strongly”. The first question was: “Students attending 4-year colleges or universities receive a better education than those attending a community college.” Less than one-third of the respondents agreed with this with 6% answering “agree strongly” and 25.3% saying “agree”, while 58% said “disagree” with another 10.6% saying they “disagree strongly”. This is quite an endorsement of the quality of education they believe students are getting at ECC. Although the statement did not mention ECC in particular as a community college in the statement, it is pretty safe to say that respondents were thinking of ECC when they responded to the statement since the whole poll was about ECC. Past surveys conducted by Attitude Research Company and *The Warren Poll* found similar results. For example, in the 2006 *Warren Poll* survey the response to the statement was as follows: 7%, “agree

strongly”; 38% “agree”, 46% “disagree” and 9% “disagree strongly”, although slightly more respondents disagreed with the statement in the 2013 poll (See Graph 7).

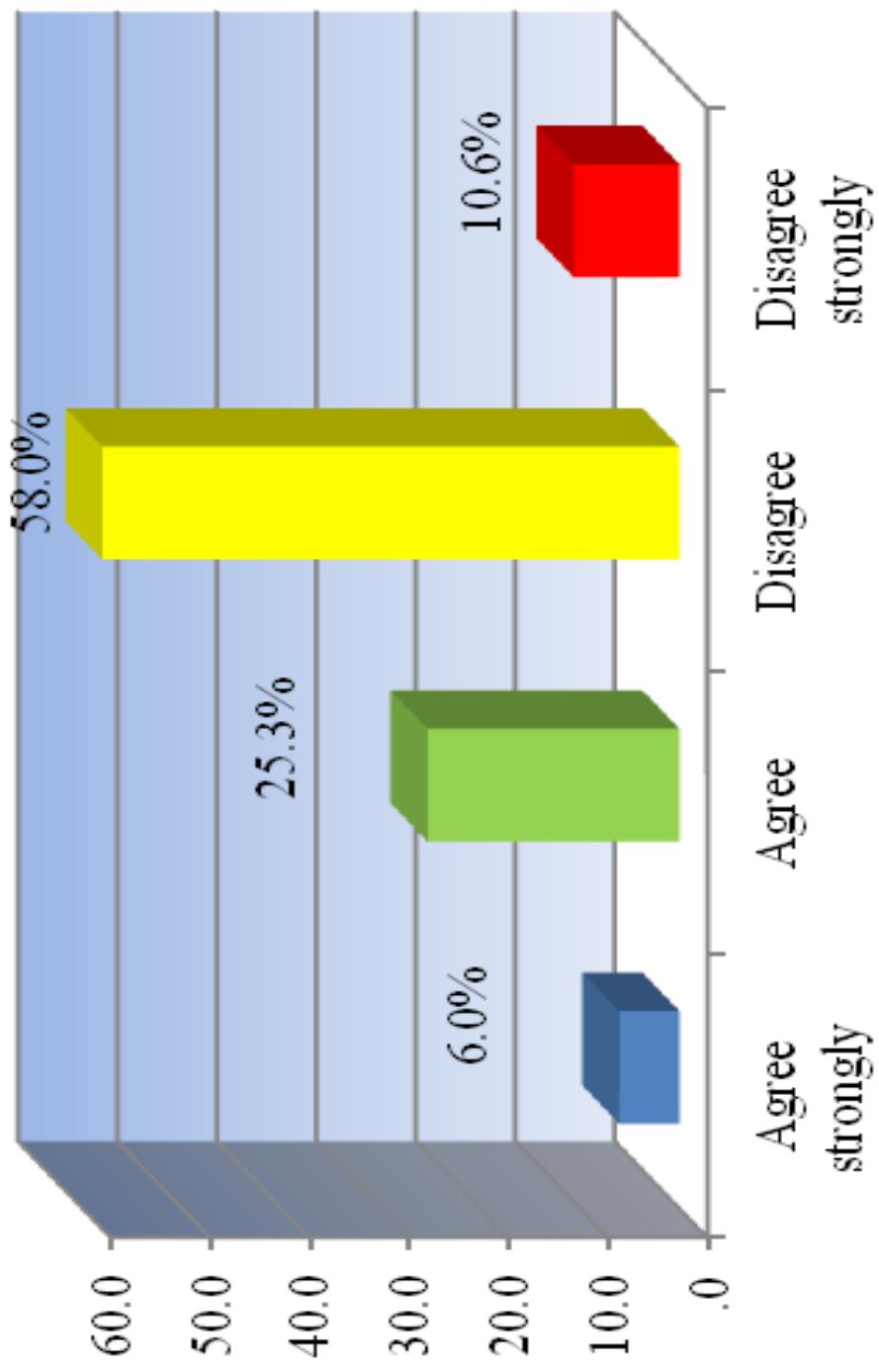
The second statement read as follows: “Our area benefits from adding educational opportunities and programs at East Central College”. About a third of the respondents (33%) “agreed strongly” and just under two-thirds (66.4%) “agreed”, while only .6% “disagreed” with no respondents “disagreeing strongly”. Results to this statement were almost the same in the 2006 survey with 29% “strongly agreeing” and 70% “agreeing” with 1% “disagreeing” and 0% “strongly disagreeing”. Obviously, area residents believe that the community benefits from the growth of ECC as a community college (See Graph 8).

The third statement read: “Having an excellent community college in our area helps improve property values”. Again, a very similar positive response was found with about a third of the respondents (30.5%) “agreeing strongly” and another two- thirds (66.4%) “agreeing” with only .6% saying that they “disagree” with no respondents found in the “disagree strongly” category (See Graph 9).

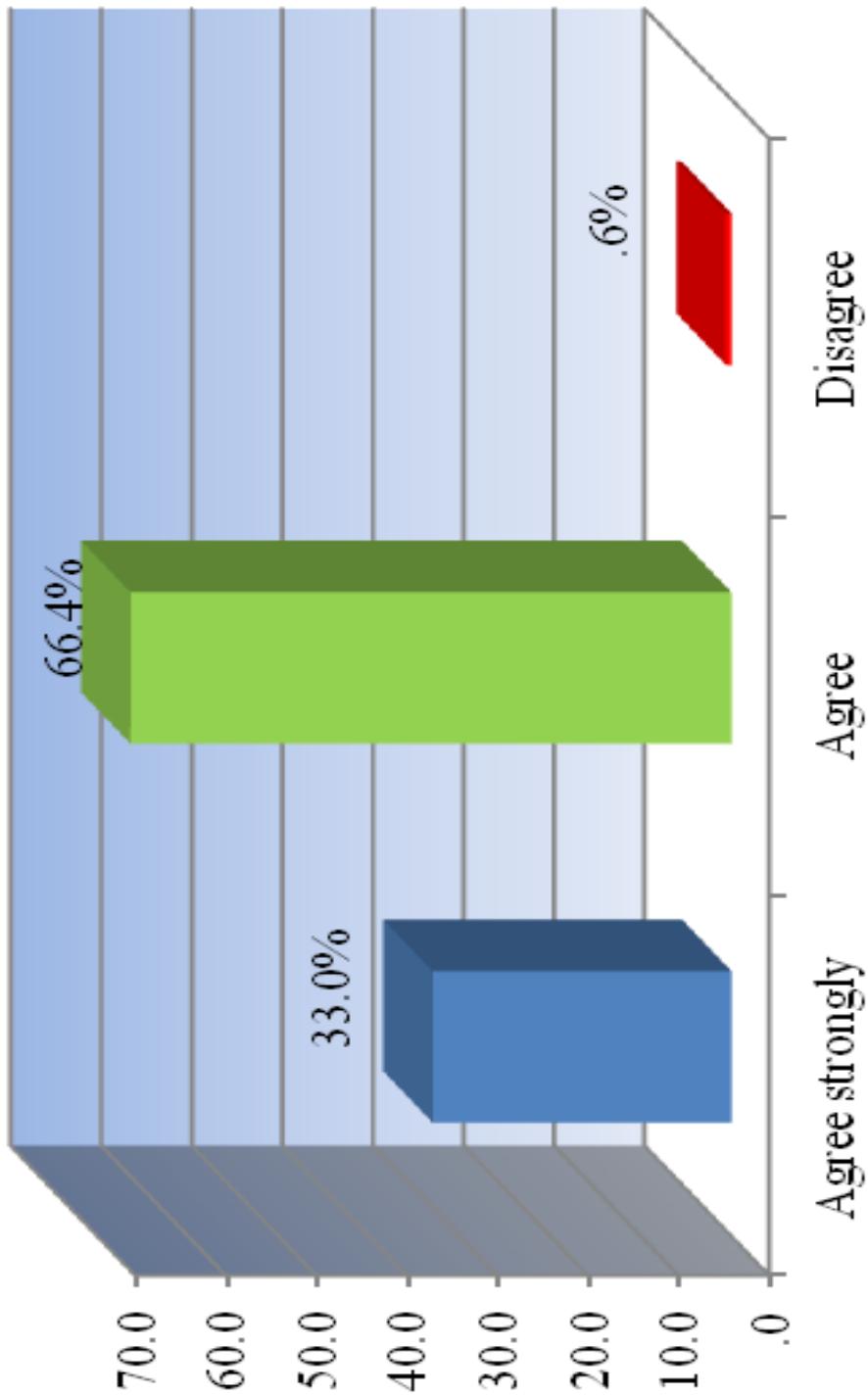
ECC district residents also agreed overwhelming with this fourth statement: “East Central College promotes economic development in our area”. Fewer respondents “agreed strongly” (25.6%) with this statement than with statements two and three, but 71.8% “agreed” with only 2.4% saying they “disagree” and just .2% saying they “disagree strongly”. Although the intensity of the “agree” response is not quite as strong for this statement as for statements two and three, the combined “agree” response is still very high at 97.4% or about equal to the combined “agree” responses for statements two and three (See Graph 10). Taking the responses to statements three and four together, it is clear that ECC district residents believe the presence of ECC in the area contributes very positively to the viability of the local economy because ECC helps to improve property values and to stimulate the local economy.

The final statement reads: “East Central College is conveniently located”. Again, about a third of the respondents (33.2%) “agreed strongly” and almost two-thirds “agreed” (64.9%). Only 1.6% “disagreed” and .3% “disagreed strongly” (See Graph 11). *The Warren Poll* has conducted many polls for clients where this “convenient location”

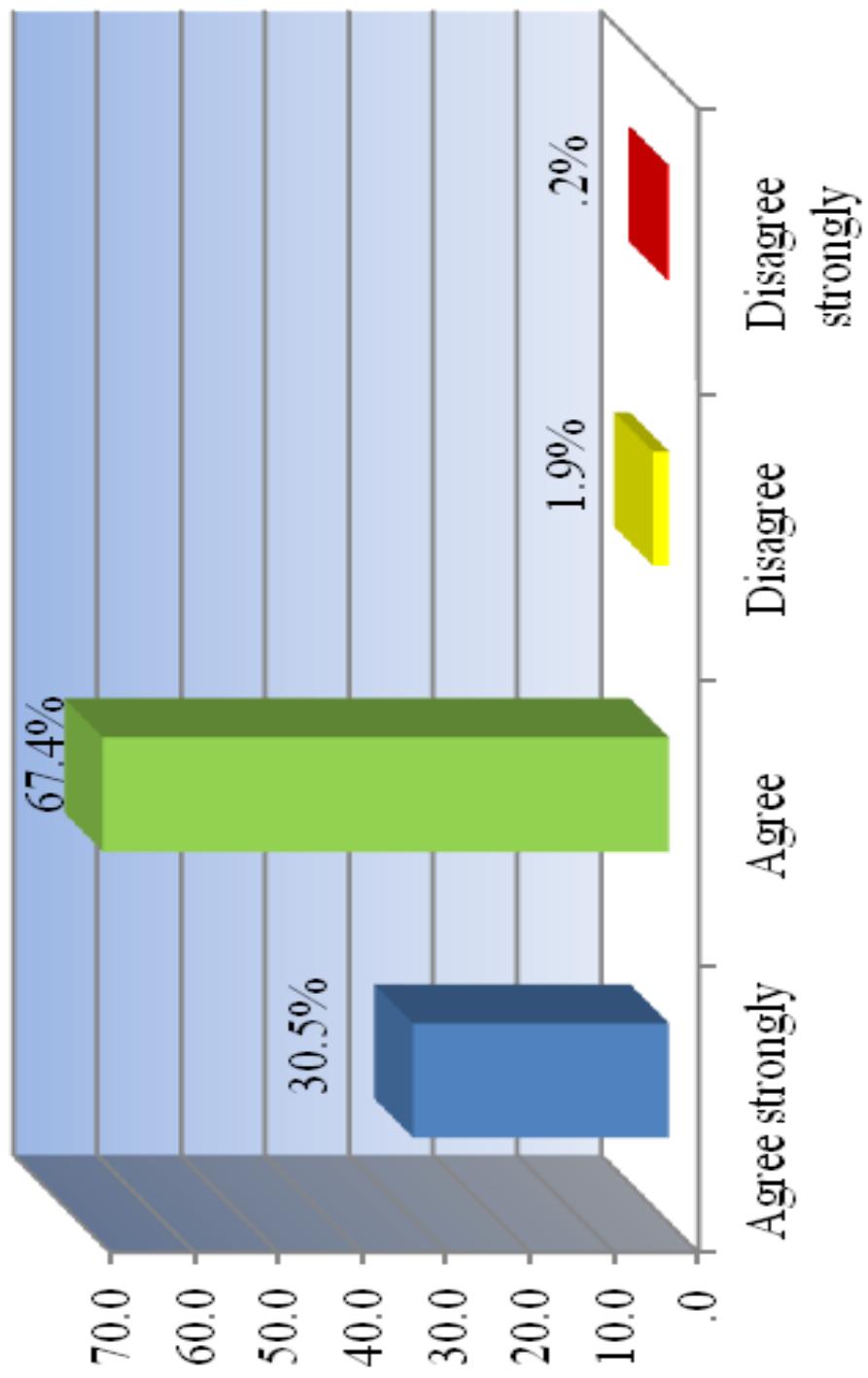
Graph 7: Four-Year College Students Receive a Better Education Than Community College Students



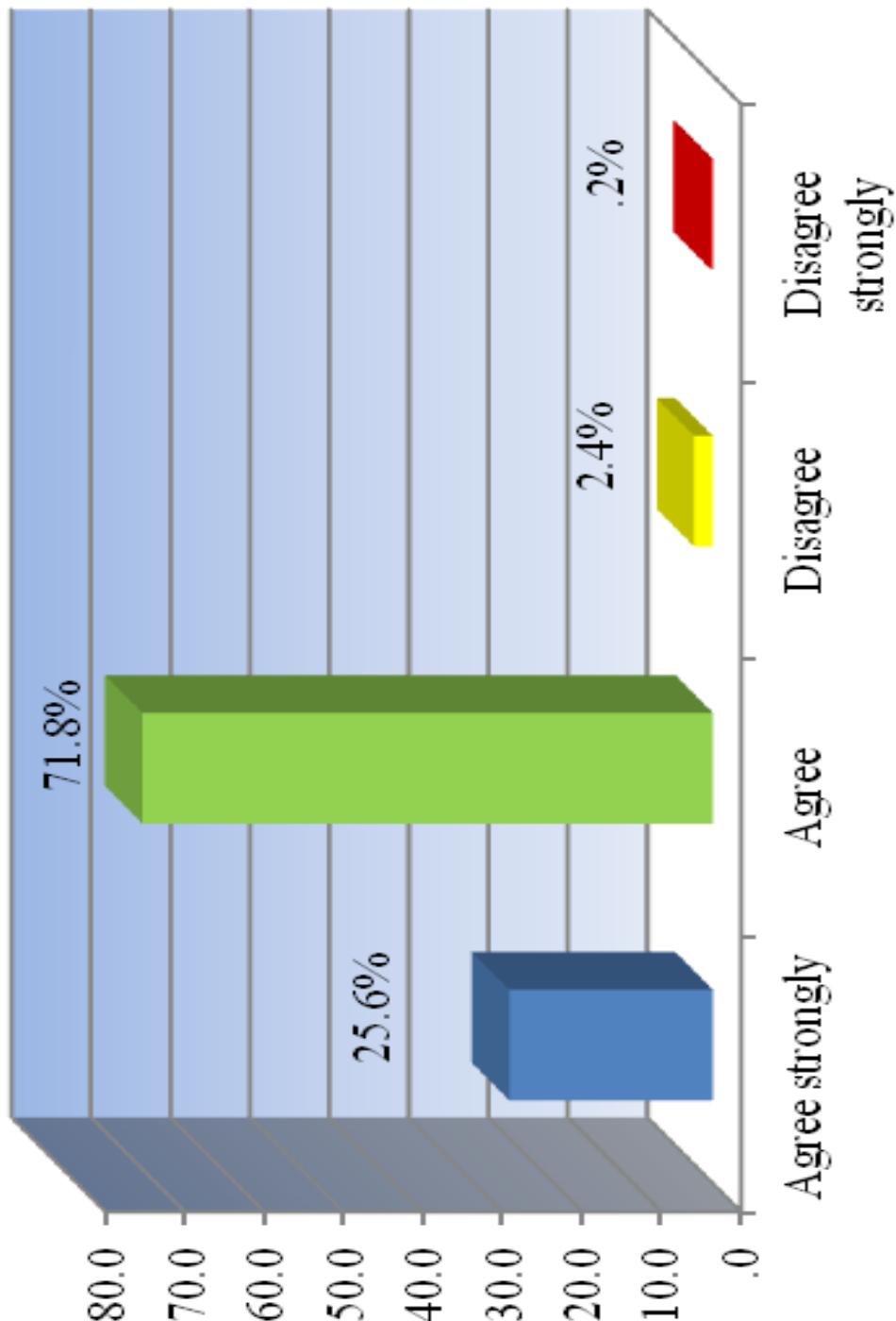
Graph 8: Area Benefits From Adding Educational Opportunities At ECC



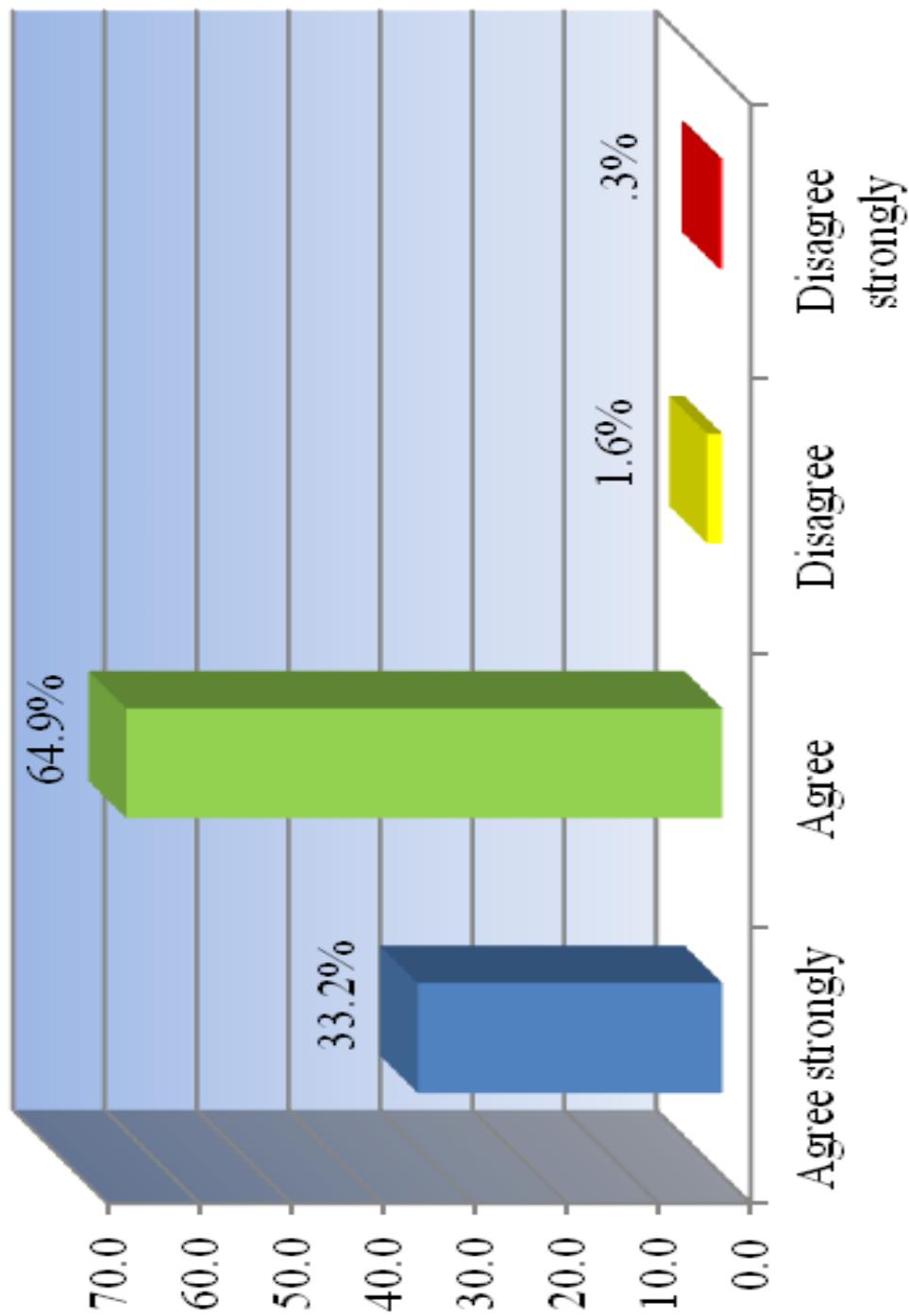
Graph 9: Excellent Community College Helps Improve Property Values



Graph 10: ECC Promotes Economic Development



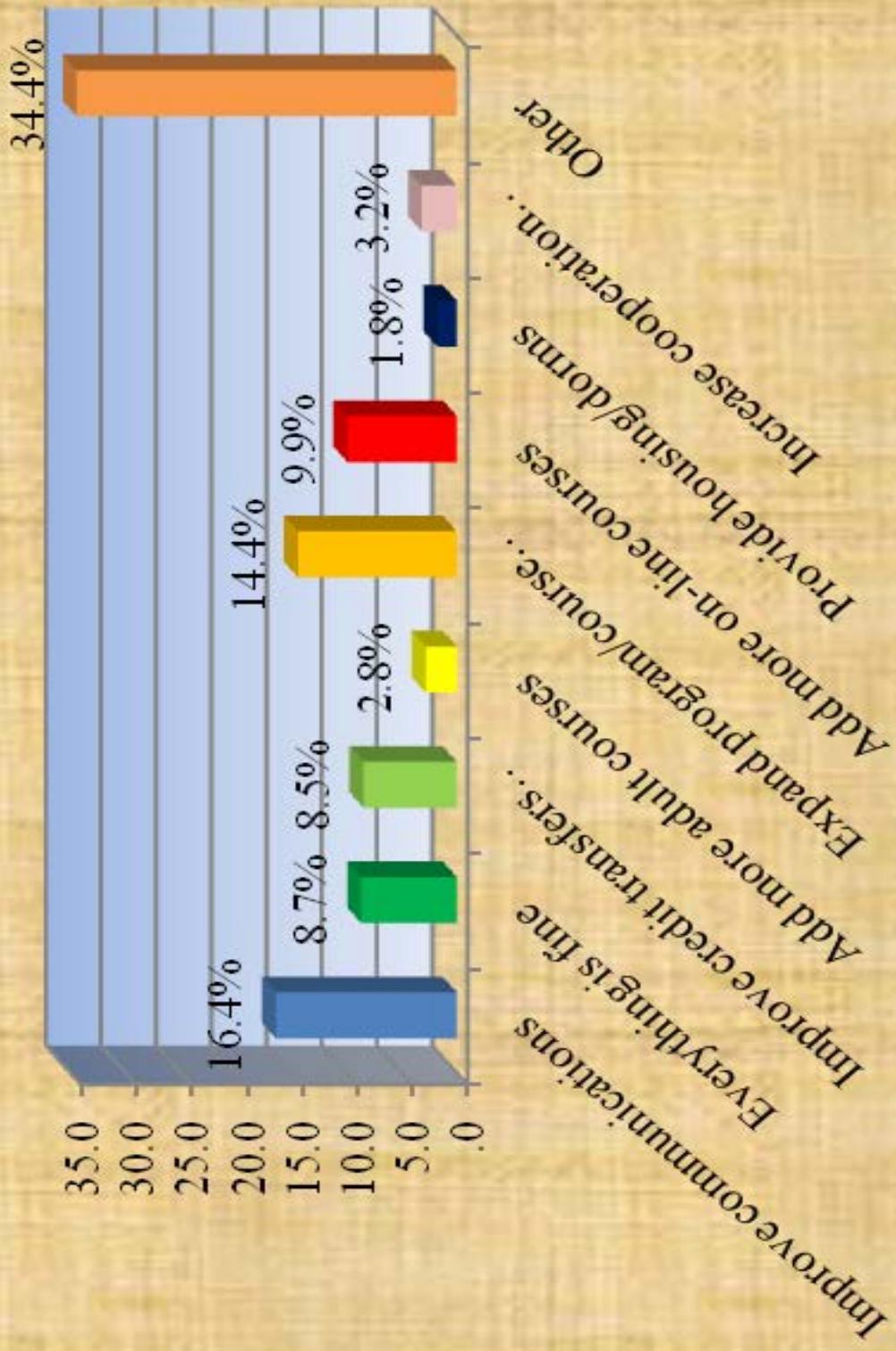
Graph 11: ECC Is Conveniently Located



question has been asked, but the response almost always varies as a result of the distance from the respondent's home to the place in question, whether it is the respondent's place of work or some other place such as a college. Normally, those who live quite far from the place in question answer that the location is not convenient or very inconvenient, but this was not found to be the case in this survey. For sundry reasons, practically all respondents (98% or 523 respondents out of 534 answering the question), found ECC to be conveniently located for them, regardless of how far ECC is from their home. From *The Warren Poll*'s surveying experience, we would expect a much higher percentage of respondents saying that ECC is not conveniently located for them, especially since ECC's district is quite large and many of the respondents must live many miles away from ECC's main campus.

The Warren Poll asked one final question which was structured as an open-ended question: "If you could suggest just one thing that ECC could do to improve its strength as a community college, what would it be?" Graph 12 shows the various recommendations from ECC area residents. As usual with open-ended questions, most respondents failed to respond (62% or 363 respondents; 220 did respond), commonly saying that they "really can't think of anything". Nonetheless, the 220 who did respond provide some suggestions for ECC administrators to consider. The most prevalent single response, if respondents could do one thing to improve ECC, would be for ECC to "improve communications to keep people better informed" (16.4%). However, the most common suggestions seemed to be related to ECC expanding programs and course offerings with 14.4% generally saying "expand programs/course offerings", 9.9% suggesting "adding more on-line courses", while 2.8% called on ECC to offer "more courses for adults". Another significant percentage of respondents collectively (11.9%) seemed to want ECC to improve its relationship and cooperative efforts with other colleges. Specifically, 8.5% of the respondents suggested that ECC should "improve its system involving the transfer of credits to four-year colleges" and another 3.2% simply wanted ECC to "increase its cooperation with other colleges". A small percentage (1.8%) recommended that ECC should "provide housing/dorms for students", while 8.7% said that they would do nothing because "everything is fine".

Graph 12: Improve ECC As A Community College



APPENDIX

NOTE: Numbers in responses are in percent. Percentages are not calculated for DK/NA to provide more meaningful data. DK/NA responses are shown in the printout.

Hello, I am (give your name) and I am conducting an opinion poll for *The Warren Poll*, hired by East Central College to obtain citizen opinion on matters important to East Central College. Your phone number, not identified with your name, was selected randomly. We need to interview only adult residents (18 years or older) living in the East Central College District and this can be determined by the local school district that you live in. Of the following, which school district do you live in? (% not calculated)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Washington | <input type="checkbox"/> Bourbon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Union | <input type="checkbox"/> Strain-Japan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> St. Clair or Lonedell | <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Bluff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sullivan | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above/Don't Know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Haven or Franklin County R-2 | |

(Interviewer Note: If the respondent does not live in any of the above school districts, the person does not live in the East Central College District, so thank them and call another number.)

Let's start with a few general questions.

1. How long have you lived in the East Central College District?
3.7 Less than 2 years 21.6 11-20 years
7.1 2-5 years 54.1 Over 20 years
13.5 6-10 years
2. How familiar are you with East Central College?
42.3 Very Familiar 43.4 Familiar 10.2 Not Familiar 4.0 Very Unfamiliar
3. Overall, how would you rate the importance of East Central College to your area?
73.1 Very Important 23.8 Important 1.9 Unimportant 1.2 Very Unimportant
4. How would you rate the quality of education provided by East Central College?
44.4 Excellent 48.1 Good 7.0 Fair .4 Poor
5. Have you ever been enrolled at East Central College?
44.0 Yes 56.0 No
6. (**Interviewer note: Ask only if respondent answered "Yes" to Question #5**). What was your chief reason for attending ECC? 26.6 Affordability 16.6 Academic program offerings 32.7 Convenience 4.2 A+ program 3.2 Scholarship
16.8 Other (please specify) _____
7. Students pay \$81 per credit hour or about \$1260 per semester to attend East Central College. How would you rate this cost?
2.1 Very Expensive 19.8 Expensive 65.4 Inexpensive 12.7 Very Inexpensive

8. How much has the weak economy in the past five years affected your or a family member's ability to attend college? 13.5 A lot 17.5 Some 14.8 A little 54.2 Not at all
9. If you wanted to take classes at ECC, what would be the most convenient for you?
17.6 Weekday Mornings 8.8 Weekday Afternoons 31.7 Weekday evenings
3.8 Saturday mornings 2.6 Saturday afternoons 35.5 Online courses
10. What has been your chief source for information about East Central College in the past year?
19.5 Newspaper 24.0 Family and friends
1.2 Radio 4.7 ECC Website
.5 Television 6.4 Other (Please specify: _____)
36.0 Mailings 4.3 Have not received any information about
3.5 Social media (e.g., Facebook) ECC in the year

Now, how would you rank the importance of each of the following to those served by East Central College?

	Very Important	Important	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	DK/NA
11. Programs that enable students to transfer to four-year institutions	71.0	28.9	.1	0.0	
12. Career and technical programs that prepare students for immediate employment after graduation	69.4	29.9	.5	.2	
13. Non-credit courses and workshops	18.1	67.5	13.3	1.1	
14. Intercollegiate athletics	14.5	59.8	22.6	3.2	
15. Programs to prepare students for the health and life science professions	50.0	48.3	1.7	0.0	
16. Student activities such as clubs, campus events	17.1	64.1	18.4	.4	
17. Cultural events for the community, such as concerts, art exhibits, and plays	28.8	58.4	12.5	.4	
18. Training for local businesses	46.2	51.3	2.2	.2	
19. Modern facilities and equipment	58.7	40.2	1.1	0.0	
20. Financial aid for students	72.1	27.2	.5	.1	
21. Scholarships for students	73.1	25.3	1.5	0.0	
22. Well-qualified faculty	81.2	18.6	0.0	.1	
23. Programs and services at off-campus locations	37.2	56.1	6.5	0.0	
24. A+ program	68.8	28.7	2.1	.4	

25. Regarding online courses, how much more likely would you be to attend ECC if you could take all of the courses online? 15.7 Very likely 31.5 Likely
25.4 Unlikely 27.4 Very unlikely

26. How valuable do you feel an online degree is compared to an on-campus degree?
2.0 More valuable 59.2 Just as valuable 38.8 Less valuable DK/NA

27. Regarding the number of sports programs at ECC presently, would you say ECC has:
5.8 Too many 75.7 About the right amount 18.4 Too few DK/NA

28. (**Interviewer Note: Ask only if respondent answered “Too Few” to Question # 27.**) If you could add just one more sports program, what would you add? _Football
(33.6); Basketball (29.8); Baseball (16.9); Soccer (9.5) Cross-country/track (2.2);
Swimming (2.2); Tennis (1.9); Other (3.9)_____

29. Regarding the number of cultural events at ECC, would you say ECC has:
2.9 Too many 88.8 About the right amount 8.3 Too Few DK/NA

30. (**Interviewer Note: Ask only if respondent answered “Too Few” to Question # 29.**) Of the cultural events at ECC listed below, which one would you like to see more of:
30.1 Plays 29.8 Concerts 9.0 Art exhibits 12.3 Speaker series
18.8 Other cultural events (please specify) _____

Next, how well do you believe East Central College does in preparing students for careers in the following?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	DK/NA
31. Nursing	47.9	48.7	2.9	.5	
32. Teaching	37.8	57.2	4.6	.3	
33. Fine Arts	28.6	61.6	9.4	.4	
34. Business	32.6	60.1	7.0	.3	
35. Engineering	39.5	52.0	7.4	1.1	
36. Computer technology	38.2	57.6	3.5	.6	
37. Vocational or Technical Fields	39.2	55.6	4.7	.6	
38. Prepare students for transferring to four year colleges	37.3	54.6	6.7	1.4	

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following.

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	DK/ NA
39. Students attending 4-year colleges or universities receive a better education than those attending community colleges.	6.0	25.3	58.0	10.6	
40. Our area benefits from adding educational opportunities and programs at East Central College.	33.0	66.4	.6	0.0	
41. Having an excellent community college in our area helps improve property values.	30.5	67.4	1.9.	.2	
42. East Central College promotes economic development in our area.	25.6	71.8	2.4	.2	
43. East Central College is conveniently located for you.	33.2	64.9	1.6	.3	

44. If you could suggest just one thing that ECC could do to improve its strength as a community college, what would it be? Improve communications (16.4); Expand programs/courses (14.4); Add on-line courses (9.9); Improve transfer credits (8.5); Increase cooperation with other colleges (3.2); Add more adult courses (2.8); Provide housing (1.8); Other (34.4) _____

Finally, so we can plot citizen opinion by various categories, we need your help on these few questions.

45. How many in your household are 18 years old or younger. 48.5 Zero 15.0 One 25.1 Two 8.6 Three 1.3 Four 1.0 Five .7 Six 0 Seven or More

46. Could you please indicate your general age category?
6 Under 24 15 25-34 22 35-49 31 50-64 14 65-74 7 75 or older

47. Could you please indicate your education level?

<u>3.0</u> Below High School Degree	<u>27.5</u> College Degree
<u>21.8</u> High School Degree	<u>4.0</u> Some Graduate School
<u>30.3</u> Some College	<u>7.4</u> Graduate or Professional Degree

48. Could you please give an estimate of your yearly family income?

<u>8.3</u> Under \$25,000	<u>16.6</u> \$60,000-\$79,999
<u>26.6</u> \$25,000-\$39,999	<u>9.3</u> \$80,000-\$100,000
<u>30.1</u> \$40,000-\$59,999	<u>9.3</u> Over \$100,000

49. (**Interview Note: Don't ask, just indicate gender.**) 47 Male 53 Female