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Community College Student Mental Health Challenges Are Widespread and Threatening Academic Success

AUSTIN, TX –

A new report released by CCCSE, *Supporting Minds, Supporting Learners: Addressing Student Mental Health to Advance Academic Success*, explores mental health and well-being among community college students and highlights the challenges many students experience.

When asked about the last two weeks, sixty percent of Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) respondents said they had been bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things. Sixty-six percent reported that they had been bothered by feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge.

Additionally, thirty percent of CCSSE respondents said they wouldn't know where to go if they needed help for their mental health, and forty-two percent of the respondents who said they needed help never sought it.

Not surprisingly, mental health challenges are hurting students' chances of academic success:

- More than half (56%) of CCSSE respondents reported that emotional or mental difficulties had hurt their academic performance in the previous four weeks.

- Over a third (37%) of *CCSSE* respondents said mental health issues could cause them to withdraw from classes or college.

“Given the impact mental health concerns have on academics, colleges should take a more active role in both understanding and addressing students’ mental health and well-being,” said Linda García, CCCSE’s Executive Director. “Community colleges have an opportunity to be the place where students find the mental health support they need.”

High percentages of *CCSSE* respondents said their college made their mental health a priority, yet one in five disagreed with this. And thirty percent of Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*) respondents did not think their college prioritized their mental health. “These findings underscore the importance of providing information about mental health resources early in students’ interactions with the college and repeatedly throughout their college experience” said García.

The data presented in this report are based on a special-focus item set administered with *CCSSE* 2023 to over 60,000 community college students from 149 institutions and a special-focus item set administered with *SENSE* 2023 to almost 14,000 students from 61 institutions.

CCCSE is a service and research initiative in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin.

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Supporting Minds, Supporting Learners: Addressing Student Mental Health to Advance Academic Success will be available publicly on October 30, 2024.