

January 2021

Commencement Survey: Spring 2020

College of the Canyons

Santa Clarita Community College District
26455 Rockwell Canyon Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Institutional Research, Planning, and
Institutional Effectiveness

Alicia LeValley

Daylene M. Meuschke, Ed.D.



Table of Contents

Table of Figures	2
Tables.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Introduction & Background	2
Method.....	2
Results.....	2
AB 540 Students	Error! Bookmark not defined.
First-Generation Students	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Summary of Findings.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Recommendations.....	4
References.....	4

Table of Figures

Figure 1. Respondents' Preferences for Spring 2020 Graduation Ceremony	3
--	---

Introduction & Background

In March 2020, in order to minimize the effects of the Coronavirus, College of the Canyons, with guidance and support from the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CA Community College Chancellor's Office, 2020), transitioned all in-person classes to online instruction. While this transition was initially considered to be short-term, the Coronavirus pandemic required an extension of mandatory online classes through, at a minimum, the end of the Spring 2020 semester. In order to recognize the success of the College's Spring 2020 graduates, the Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness Office, at the request of the Commencement Committee, conducted a survey of students that petitioned to graduate in Spring 2020. The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback on alternative options for the graduation ceremony. The results from the survey will provide information for the Commencement Committee to guide planning efforts for the Spring 2020 graduation ceremony.

Methods

Procedures. The list of students that petitioned to graduate in Spring 2020 were provided by the College's Admission and Records office.

Subjects. Out of the possible 3,616 students who were invited to participate in the survey, completed surveys were received from 791 students (22 percent response rate).

Instrument. The survey included three closed-ended questions intended to assess graduates' preference regarding a virtual graduation or an in-person graduation to be held in the future. The survey included one open-ended question to allow students to provide additional comments or suggestions regarding the College's plan for the Spring 2020 graduation ceremony.

Results

Preferences for Graduation. As indicated in Figure 1, the majority of respondents (56 percent) indicated that they prefer to postpone the Spring 2020 in-person graduation; specifically until Spring 2021 (28 percent) and December 2020 (27 percent). Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated that they prefer a virtual (all online) graduation in June 2020 that highlights the respondent and their degree (41 percent). Five percent of the respondents indicated that they do not plan to participate in graduation.

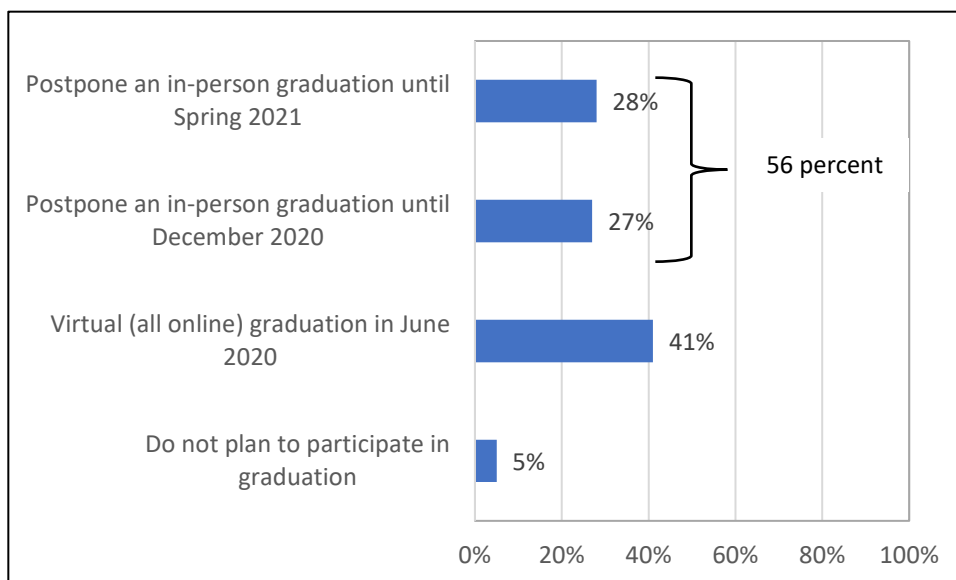


Figure 1. Respondents' Preferences for Spring 2020 Graduation Ceremony

In-Person Graduation Ceremony

When presented with **only** the option of an in-person graduation ceremony, with no virtual option offered, respondents indicated the following:

In-Person Graduation Ceremony in December 2020

- Would attend – 45 percent (as compared to 27 percent that chose this option when presented with multiple options)
- Would not attend – 30 percent
- May attend – 25 percent

In-Person Graduation Ceremony in Spring 2021

- Would attend – 23 percent (as compared to 28 percent that chose this option when presented with multiple options)
- Would not attend – 46 percent
- May attend – 31 percent

Additional Comments/Suggestions. Two hundred ten respondents provided additional comments or suggestions regarding the College's plans for the Spring 2020 graduation ceremony. Sixty-four of the respondents indicated that they had no additional comments or suggestions. One hundred forty-six comments/suggestions indicated the following:

- Prefer an in-person graduation – 68 respondents, specifically:
 - Prefer a December graduation – 18 respondents
 - Prefer a separate ceremony – 16 respondents
 - Prefer a summer ceremony – 13 respondents
 - Specified that they do not want a virtual ceremony – 10 respondents
- Will not be attending graduation – 24 respondents, specifically:
 - Unable to attend due to transferring to another school – 10 respondents
- Positive comments regarding the College – 19 respondents
- Concerns about the size of graduation if combining Spring 2020 and Spring 2021 ceremonies – 15 respondents
- Prefer a virtual ceremony – 11 respondents
- Indicated that the ceremony should not be postponed – 10 respondents
- Questions/comments regarding receiving their degree/certificate – 10 respondents
- Social distancing concerns/comments – 8 respondents

Recommendations

Upon review of the survey results, the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

- Consider the results of this survey when planning future graduation ceremonies; specifically during the mandatory online education in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

References

California Community College Chancellor's Office. (2020, March 23). *California Community Colleges Chancellor Takes Additional Actions to Help Students and Ensure Continuity of Instruction at 115 Colleges*. Retrieved: <https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/News-and-Media/Press-Releases/2020-COVID-Updates-PR>

For questions, or more detailed information on this research brief, contact Alicia LeValley, Assistant Research Analyst, alicia.levalley@canyons.edu or Daylene Meuschke, Ed.D., Associate V.P. Institutional Research, Planning and Institutional Effectiveness at daylene.meuschke@canyons.edu.