

TECHNICAL NOTES

General

Students: Are those individuals enrolled in credit classes at Census (or the rough equivalent for positive-attendance classes) receive one of the following marks for each class on their official transcript: A, B, C, D, F, CR (Credit), NC (Non-Credit), I (Incomplete), W (Withdrawal), or MW (Military Withdrawal). For this publication, the presence of such a mark for a given class or term in the enrollment history file of the Student Records database determines who is counted. Numbers for NC and I may not be reported because so few students receive these grades. Except for the chapters on noncredit students and the Fall Student Survey, all students referred to in this book are credit students. They may or may not have also been enrolled in noncredit courses. Students referred to in the noncredit chapter are noncredit students who may have been enrolled in credit courses. All enrollment data used in this publication were from our PCC history database.

Percentages: The percentages in the tables and figures may not add up to 100%, due to rounding. The percentages in pie charts are given as integers. This can produce differences from the tables, which report the numbers to the tenth of a percent. Additionally, when the percent unknown is less than 0.5%, it is not reported.

Data Source: Most of the information about PCC students reported in this book has been obtained from the Student Records database. The data presented in *Observations* does not exactly match the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office data due to differences in data extraction processes. If you find data that appear unreasonable or inconsistent with your own reliable information, please contact the Institutional Planning and Research Office immediately.

Time of Data: This book uses Fall Census as the defining statistical moment for each academic year because most State and federal authorities (e.g., California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office and the National Center for Education Statistics) use it, and because listing every statistic for four terms (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer) for every year soon wearies even the most interested reader. Note that some numbers do not match the numbers on the Enrollment Management report and other reports because those reports are run on the actual Census date. Data for this book, on the other hand, were run on later dates using the Fall Census date as a defining variable when pulling from the Student Records database. Some changes to historical data do occur over time in the Student Records database. For some data, such as a student's address, only the most recent value is kept. Thus, information about prior years becomes increasingly inaccurate as the data are overwritten with more recent data. Additionally, small changes occur throughout the Student Records database as inaccurate data is found

and corrected. In order to provide consistent data, this edition of *Observations* froze prior year data to the value it had when first published in a previous edition of *Observations*.

Specific Data

Residence code/address: Analyses of where students come from may be based on either residence code or address, both of which suffer limitations. Residence code, assigned by the Admissions Office, indicates whether a student qualifies as a California resident for tuition purposes at the time of admission. For California residents, it indicates the community college district within which the student lives. For other students, it distinguishes only between out-of-state and foreign tuition payers, without regard to their physical address. Thus, the district within which California residents reside is known, but not the districts within which all tuition-paying students reside. Residence code is stored for each term, and is updated as students notify the college of a change in their residency status, or as California-resident students notify the college of a change in address. So residence code is a coarse indicator of where California-resident PCC students come from over time, but says nothing about nonresident students.

Using either city or ZIP code from a student's address is a much finer indicator of location, and applies to all students regardless of their tuition-paying status. However, it is overwritten upon each reapplication or official change of address, so the data on file reflect only the most recent address of each student, not necessarily his or her address during the term reported. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that PCC students are moving systematically into or out of the district over time, so the picture portrayed by address is likely to be reasonably accurate. Residence code is reported in Chapters 1 and 3, address in Chapters 1 and 4.

Age: The age groups used here are those used by the Chancellor's Office Research and Analysis Unit. Age is computed using students' birthdates, and reflects each student's age as of the *beginning* of each reported term. The calculation rounded non-whole values down to the next whole value in accord with common usage; for example, any student who was 19.6 or even 19.9 years old at the start of the term was coded as 19.

High School Data Sources: In Chapter 1, the number of graduates from each high school is taken from the High School Performance Reports published by the California Department of Education, Evaluation and Technology Division (<http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/welcome.asp>). The number of graduates who enrolled at PCC is taken from Feeder High School Reports (Institutional Planning and Research Office). Since the data depend on students voluntarily providing information on their high school

education, the accuracy and completeness of the data are uncertain. Thus, extreme changes from year to year may result from reporting errors rather than real differences.

New College Students: Chapter 3 reports on first-time college students. Issues of *Observations* prior to 2002-2003 also reported on students who were new to PCC, having transferred from other colleges. While preparing the data for the 2002-2003 issue, an administrative error was discovered which had been incorrectly modifying these data for several years. It is possible to reconstruct a list of likely first-time college students, but not of transfer students new to PCC. Thus, only first-time college students are described, and prior year data is different from what was reported in *Observations* prior to 2002-2003.

Ethnicity: Data on ethnicity is based on students' self-report using the 23 ethnic categories present on the application. These are summarized into various levels of detail at different points in this issue of *Observations*. As many as eight categories are reported in some places, while other places describe only the largest four ethnic groupings. It is important to distinguish between the categories of "Other" and "All other." "Other" is used only for students who checked either "Other Non-White" or "Other" on their application. In contrast, "All Other" is used for all students who are not part of one of the specific groups included in that particular table or chart.

DSPS: The definition used to define DSPS students in *Observations* is different from that used by the Chancellor's Office. DSPS students have to be enrolled past Census to be counted in *Observations*, whereas the Chancellor's Office stipulates that DSPS students only need to be served by DSPS.

Non-Credit Students: Some students taking particular credit classes also register for non-credit labs and/or tutoring sessions. Students whose only non-credit enrollment is for these specific labs and tutoring sessions are not counted as non-credit students when we report on them in *Observations*.