

Chabot College Persister Study: Fall 1998

Why students stay in college

The study

The Fall 1998 Persister Study sought to understand what motivates students to persist and stay in college and to identify their major obstacles and sources of support. Focus groups in 15 classes and a written survey in 40 classes produced data from continuing (including returning & transfer) students.

The classroom survey

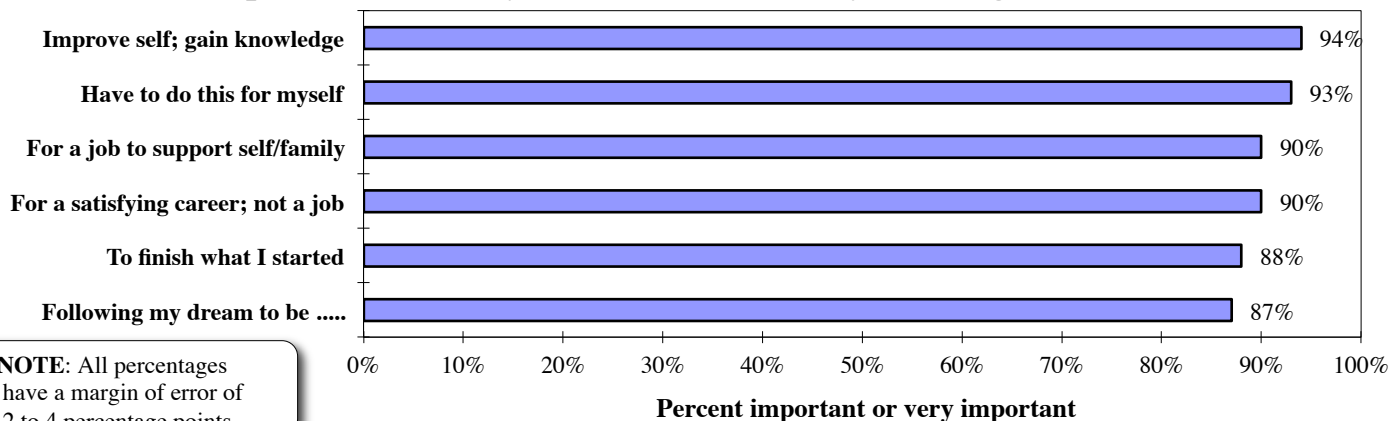
The classroom survey confirmed that most students persist in their education for the purpose of self improvement, success and satisfaction in the labor market, and realizing their dreams. Many also want to make their parents proud, be a role model, and teach or give back to their community. Maintaining financial support and not knowing what else to do were the least important reasons for staying in college. These results reflect the value of community colleges in general and Chabot in particular in the eyes and futures of our students.

The focus groups

The focus groups provided moving testimonies by students about the importance of their education at Chabot, what they go through to remain here, and how Chabot does or does not help them stay. Students from recently immigrated as well as long-established families expressed a deep faith in Chabot to provide them with an education that would lead to better jobs than those of their parents.

Most remained in college because they knew they needed more education to succeed in the labor market. However, many students also viewed their education as necessary for their self development. Most students were pursuing long-term educational goals. They had a very strong commitment to those goals and an inner motivation that got them to campus each day and each semester. However, students in technical/vocational programs, on athletic teams, and in performance courses were also motivated to stay in college by the joy of doing what they loved in their major program or activity.

Top six reasons why Chabot students stay in college



Reasons Chabot students continue and persist in college: ordered by importance

Percent who rated reason as important or very important to them		Percent who rated reason as important or very important to them	
To improve myself; be more knowledgeable	94%	To have more flexible work hours	67%
Have to do this for myself	93%	To make my parent(s) proud, not disappointed	67%
Want a job to support myself or family	90%	Am a role model for younger people	66%
Want a satisfying job: a career and not a job	90%	To do better than my parent(s)	62%
To finish what I started; don't want to quit	88%	To teach/give back to community	59%
I am following my dream to be	87%	To prove to friends/family that I can succeed in college	58%
Want job skills that will be in demand	85%	Have to do this for my children	57%
To have more options in my life	85%	To do better than or as well as my friends	56%
Want a high-paying job	81%	To do as well as my parent(s)	51%
Am sacrificing now for future gains	77%	Owe it to my parent(s); feel obligated to them	40%
Enjoy education and/or my major here	77%	Enjoy my activities here (athletics, clubs, etc.)	35%
To have an easier life	70%	Following in the steps of a role model	33%
Want more power and responsibility in job	70%	To keep financial support or benefits	21%
Parent(s) expect me to obtain higher education	68%	Don't know what else to do	14%