

“Supportive and excellent quality of teaching teachers.” - Hispanic/Latino, Female, ARC Graduate in Early Childhood Education



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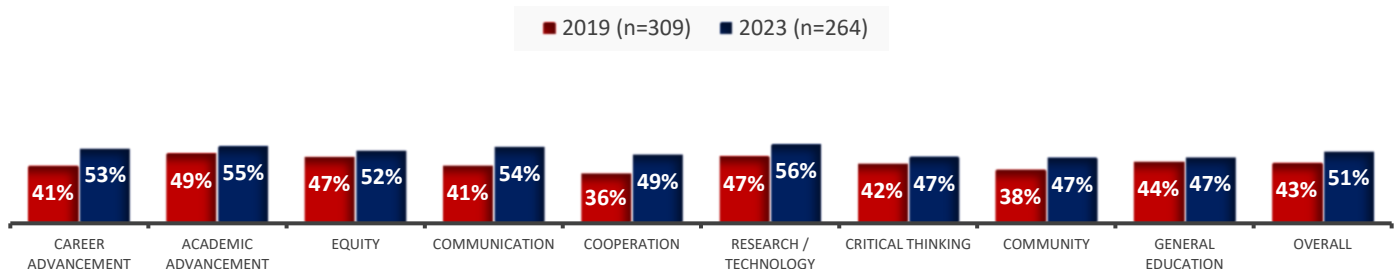
The 2023 American River College Graduate Survey: Quantitative Improvements in Student Learning and Qualitative Shifts in Tone from 2019 to 2023

The ARC Graduate Survey was administered by ARC’s Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee in May 2023 (n=264)¹. Results were compared to the initial implementation of the graduate survey conducted in May 2019. ARC graduates’ ratings of their student learning improved from 2019 to 2023. In addition, an analysis of their qualitative, open-ended comments revealed a remarkable shift in tone, particularly around topics such as social justice and equity, which comprised the majority of negative open-ended comments received in 2019. By contrast, the most common themes that emerged from the 2023 survey were expressions of gratitude, transformation, celebration, and an appreciation for the breadth of learning experiences received at ARC, including on topics such as social justice and equity.

Positive ratings of student learning outcomes by ARC Graduates improved from 2019 to 2023

The ARC graduate survey asked ARC graduates to rate their agreement on 35 likert-scale items regarding how their experiences at ARC impacted their knowledge, skills, or preparation in 9 areas aligned with ARC’s institutional student learning outcomes. The charts in this report display the percentage of “strongly agree” responses, the most positive response category available on the graduate survey. From 2019 to 2023, ratings by ARC graduates improved across all 9 areas (see below). The largest gains occurred in the areas of communication and cooperation (13 percentage point (pp) gain for both areas). The average overall gain across all 9 areas was 8 percentage points (pp), from 43% to 51%.²

Percentage of ARC Graduates that “Strongly Agree” that their experiences at ARC improved their knowledge, skills, or preparation for each of ARC’s Institutional Student Learning Outcomes



The percentage of positive qualitative (open-ended) comments regarding student learning outcomes by ARC Graduates also improved from 2019 to 2023

The ARC Graduate Survey also provided an opportunity for graduates to share additional, optional, open-ended comments regarding their experiences at ARC and how those experiences impacted their ratings. These comments were evaluated by the Office of Institutional Research and categorized as positive, negative, mixed, or miscellaneous. From 2019 to 2023, the percentage of comments expressing positive sentiments improved from 68% (48/71) to 80% (33/41)³.

Ratings of survey items by area of student learning are presented below, along with associated comments/testimonials (where applicable) to illustrate the impact that the college has made on ARC graduates’ lives in each of these areas.

¹ Students who graduated from ARC in Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023, and students who had petitioned to graduate in Spring 2023 were invited to participate in the graduate survey (n=2637). 264 graduates responded to the survey (10% return rate).

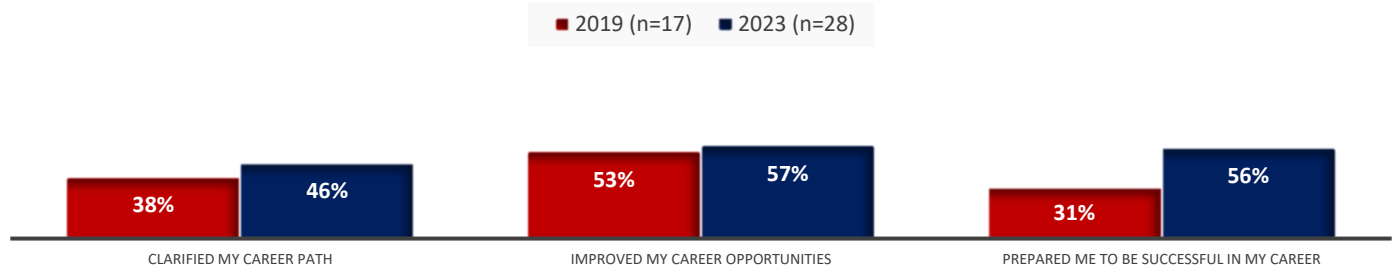
² Full survey results for the 35 likert-scale items can be found [here](#). ARC’s ISLOs (basis for the graduate survey) can be found [here](#).

³ Excluding miscellaneous comments.

Career Advancement

Questions regarding career advancement were only asked if respondents selected “obtain a certificate” or “job upgrade” as their primary purpose for attending ARC on the graduate survey (10.6% of respondents). As the survey pool included students who had either earned a degree or had petitioned for a degree, the sample sizes of graduates responding to these 3 items were relatively small (n’s = 17 & 28). Nonetheless, ratings of career advancement increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +4 pp and + 25 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.

Percentage of ARC Graduates that "Strongly Agree" that ARC improved their **Career Advancement**
(Asked if Certificate/Job Upgrade was selected as primary purpose for attending ARC) "My experiences at ARC..."



“Completing these courses and obtaining two degrees has given me career confidence and a real path forward.” – White, Male, ARC Graduate in CSU General Education

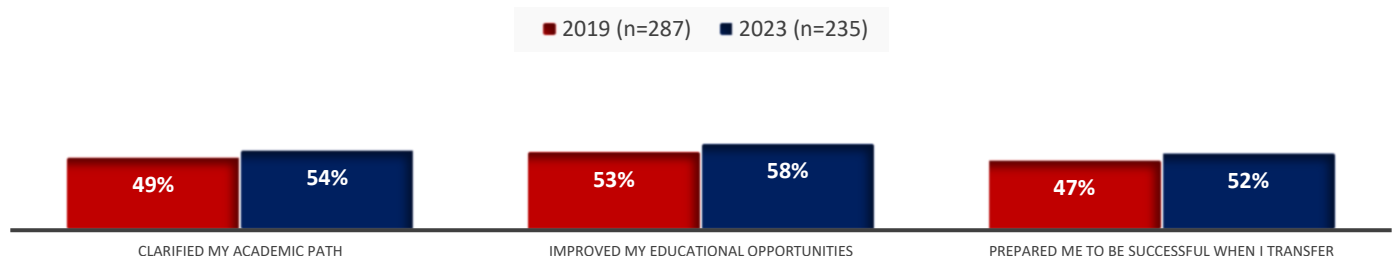
“I attended an informational seminar hosted by ARC about how and why to become a CPA. I learned about the variety of career paths available in accounting and particularly to a CPA. After attending the seminar, I applied for a new job (which I am currently at) that would give me the work experience needed to qualify, and I am currently studying for the CPA exam.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Accounting

“Professors Kaman Liu and Michael Earles are amazing teachers who do anything and everything to make sure we understand the material and help us succeed for our future in the workforce.” – Filipino, Male, ARC Graduate in Biomedical Equipment Technology

Academic Advancement

Questions regarding academic advancement were only asked if respondents selected “obtain a degree” or “transfer to a university” as their primary purpose for attending ARC on the graduate survey (89.4% of respondents). Ratings of academic advancement increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains of +5 pp on each item). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.

Percentage of ARC Graduates that "Strongly Agree" that ARC improved their **Academic Advancement**
(Asked if Degree/Transfer was selected as primary purpose for attending ARC) "My experiences at ARC..."



“ARC gives me hope to push further on my education. I will and forever be grateful for the lessons I’ve learned in this institution.” – Filipino, Female, ARC Graduate in General Science

“I selected strongly agree for, 'My experiences at ARC clarified my academic path' This is because going into ARC I had a different career path and once taking classes it was evident that it was not the right one for me and it was through the resources and councilor at ARC that clarified my path and assisted me in creating a new one.” – Middle Eastern or North African, Female, ARC Graduate in Psychology for Transfer

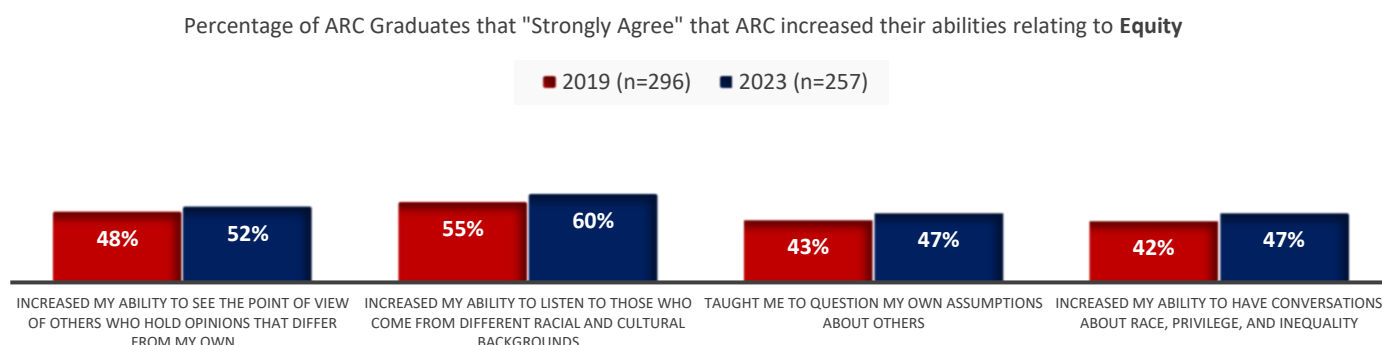
“My instructors were amazing and made returning so easy and were so patient with the process.” – Native American, Female, ARC Graduate in Social Sciences

“My studies at ARC gave me the opportunity to learn and improve my skills and knowledge. I am very glad that I had this opportunity. Thanks to all the professors and all the staff of the college for their work and their concern for students, for giving their part of themselves so that we can study in peace and not disadvantaged.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Human Services

“I am deeply grateful for the educational opportunities ARC has provided to me. I wish the Honor certificate program was better established and supported at ARC to facilitate honor transfer to 4 year school.” – Unknown Race/Ethnicity, Female, ARC Graduate in General Science

Equity

Ratings regarding equity increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +4 pp and +5 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.



“I really think ARC does a great job of making equality and social justice important and I’ve taken a lot from ARC especially from Professor Crowder in the English department and Professor Heningburg in the History department. They made it a very important notion in their classes to promote racial equality and educating me (as a white woman) on what is socially acceptable and the important history behind it. I cannot thank these two professors enough and I’m not sure they know the impact they have left on me, I hope they are able to know how much they changed my perspective.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Business Admin 2.0 Transfer IGETC

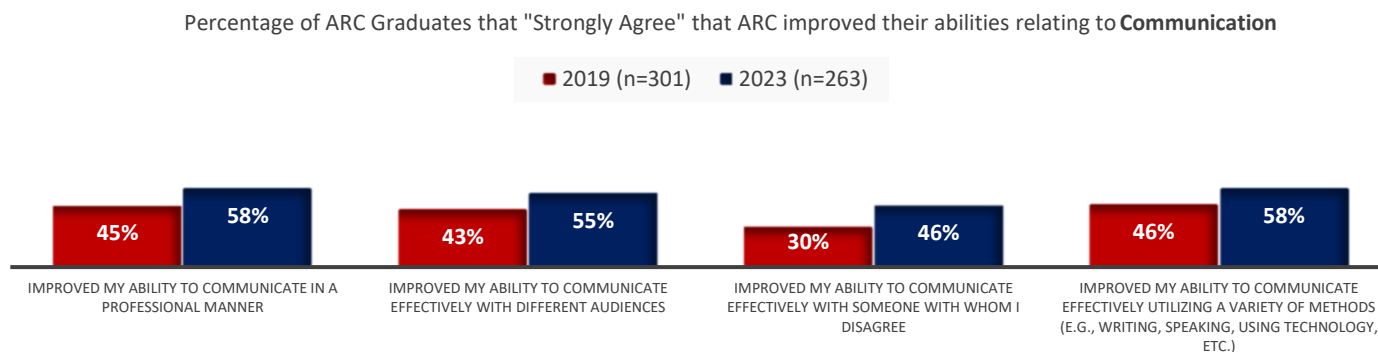
“I feel the education I have received in the American River College registered nurse program has been exceptional. It has prepared me to interact with people of all backgrounds in an effective and empathetic way.” – Hispanic/Latino, Female, ARC Graduate in Registered Nursing

“My Humanities classes gave me deeper perspectives about different people’s beliefs and values.” – Asian, Male, ARC Graduate in Culinary Arts/Restaurant Management

"I am an older student and I really hadn't realized how much I had to learn. I now realize that my ADN RN degree is simply the beginning of a lifelong learning process. So much diversity and cultural awareness was bestowed upon me. Eternally grateful!" – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Registered Nursing

Communication

Ratings regarding communication increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +12 pp and +16 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.



"As an ESL student, ARC community and staff helped me improve my language and communication skills without any frustrations." – Asian, Female, ARC Graduate in Early Childhood Education

"As a non-native English speaker, my experience at ARC helped me to get better at learning the language in writing, reading and speaking which helped me a lots in my other major classes. Learning English gave me the opportunity to access to higher studies and a better future. My very grateful for all your support!" – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Early Childhood Education

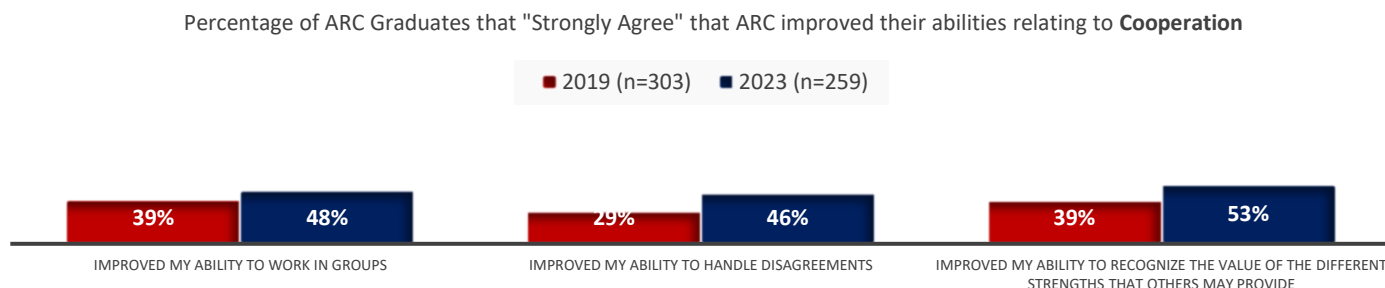
"It was a great advantage for me to be a student in the ARC. College classes really expanded the knowledge, improved my English, gave me the opportunity to get an education. I have marked all the points 'strongly agree'. Thank you very much for your time, patience and understanding." – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Language Studies

"I chose 'strongly agree' because those areas helped me to grow mentally and to utilize all avenues possible to make critical decisions and to communicate effectively." – African American, Female, ARC Graduate in Paralegal Studies

"The communications course I took with Professor Coleman changed the way I communicate." – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Social Sciences

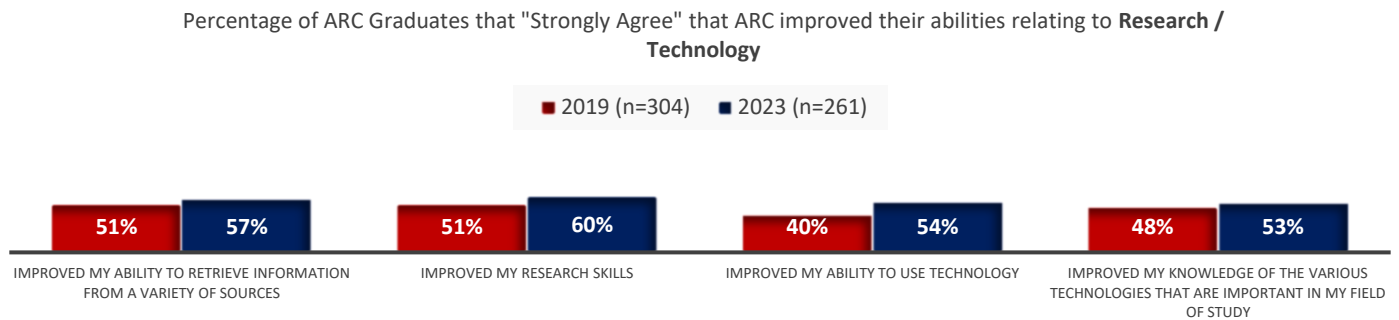
Cooperation

Ratings regarding cooperation increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +9 pp and +17 pp).



Research / Technology

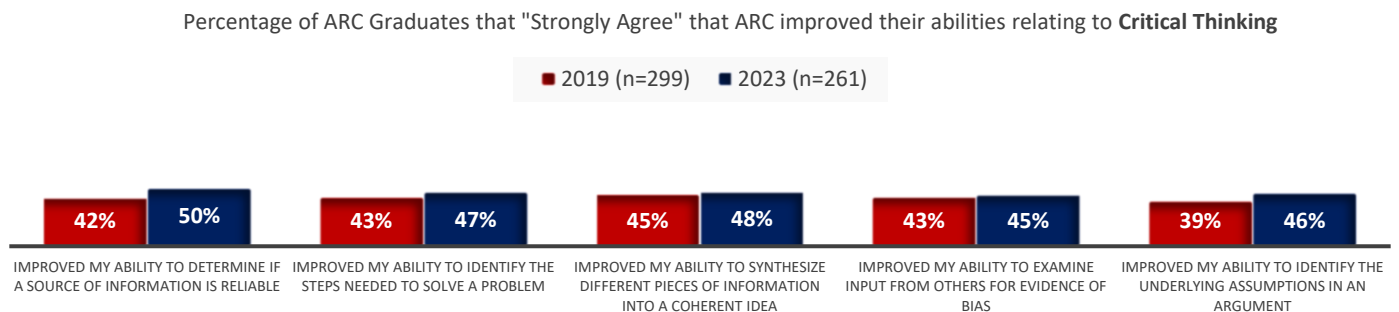
Ratings regarding research and technology increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +5 pp and +14 pp).



"I'm a bit older, so I already practice most of the questions above. However, my use of technology improved as it was quite frustrating at times, due to the lack of use in my everyday life." – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Psychology for Transfer

Critical Thinking

Ratings regarding critical thinking increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +2 pp and +8 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.



"My experience with finding out whether an information was reliable not only helped me in school throughout the rest of my education but it has helped me in my career and will continue to help me for the rest of my life!" – African American, Female, ARC Graduate in Paralegal Studies

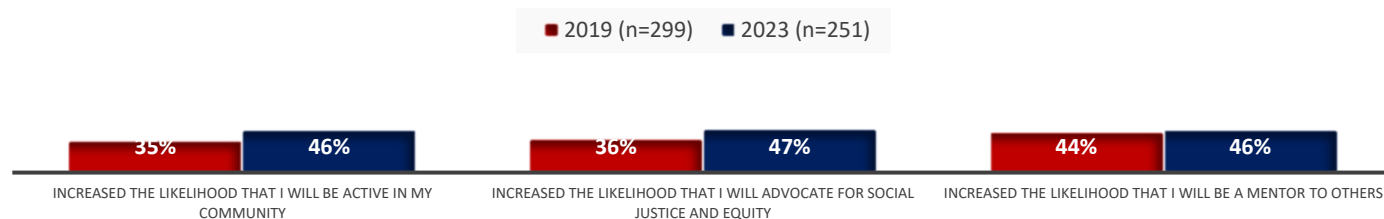
"I took a library studies course that was based in internet research that helped so much with my ability to navigate the internet, create a collection of highly informative sites, and critically analyze any information I come across." – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Social Sciences

"Learning the different types of subjects taken here at ARC really helped me to comprehend different ways to approach an situation by brainstorming." – African American, Male, ARC Graduate in General Business

Community

Ratings regarding community increased from 2019 to 2023 (gains between +2 pp and +11 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.

Percentage of ARC Graduates that "Strongly Agree" that ARC increased their likelihood of participating in activities relating to **Community**



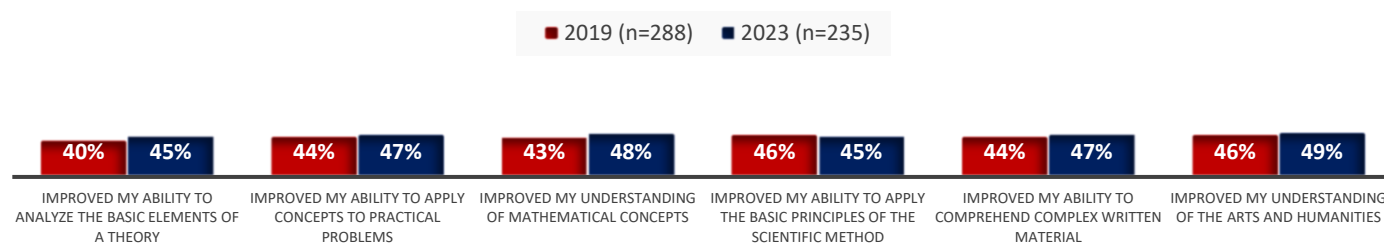
"Many of my 'strongly agree' answers are due to the specific courses I took, and not because of actions by the school at large. Professor Sara Smith was instrumental in increasing my ability to see and understand people different from myself, and to look at events (current and past) more deeply to see the complexities around issues of social justice. Professor Kate Chang taught me many skills that are necessary for my field of study that will also translate into everyday life. The skills she helped me hone have greatly increased my critical thinking abilities, as well as my ability to efficiently and effectively conduct research. Both have exceeded my expectations of a college level professor and encouraged me (just by way of example) to advocate for social justice and equity." – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Paralegal Studies

"Aspects of history of racial injustice were included not only in my history course, but in English and Nutrition courses as well, which helped to paint a very detailed picture of the systemic racial issues in the USA." – White, Male, ARC Graduate in CIS - Computer Programming

General Education

Ratings regarding general education (generally) increased from 2019 to 2023 (between -1 pp and +5 pp). See below chart for associated student comments/testimonials.

Percentage of ARC Graduates that "Strongly Agree" that ARC improved their abilities relating to **General Education**
(Asked if Degree/Transfer selected as primary purpose for attending ARC)



"I developed very strong reading comprehension from ARC that I have carried over in my undergrad education and now in the workplace. I could not have done it without the RAD program." – Hispanic/Latino, Male, ARC Graduate in Physical Sciences/Mathematics

"I had best learning experience with Prof. Sonya Reichel and Prof. Will Davis in General Education. Also the English professors of all the English classes I attended were wonderful; I wanted to thank to Prof. O'Brien, Prof. Angelone, Prof. Bradford, Prof. Hess, Prof. Logan, Prof. Shapiro who gave me fascinated learning experiences! Also thanked to Prof. Casper-Denman who helped me finding my passion in Anthropology." – Asian, Female, ARC Graduate in English Communication and Literature

"Biological Psychology many years ago was so valuable to help me to understand the relationship of diseases to mental illnesses. All classes at ARC have been awesome. I was thrilled to get to take Piano for Beginners at 78 years of age,

even though my hearing aid fell off and the class had to wait until I found it and could go on with my part. LOL. Some classes I had always wanted to take were after retirement and raising a family, but managed to get many classes while working. Everyone has been welcoming and inspiring, students and staff.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Psychology

“The art department faculty and class selection at ARC is superb compared to 4-year schools and other community colleges I've attended. I wish they would receive more funds, particularly the fine art area.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Physical Sciences/Mathematics

Additional kudos for ARC:

“I would like to say, ARC has been great to me. Everyone I have been in contact with at ARC has really made my college career smooth and welcoming.” – White, Female, ARC Graduate in Interdisciplinary Studies

“I had a great time studying here at ARC even though it was during covid :)” – Asian, Female, ARC Graduate in Economics for Transfer AA-T

Negative qualitative (open-ended) comments from the 2023 ARC Graduate Survey

As illustrated in the wide-ranging comments above, many comments from the 2023 ARC Graduate Survey were positive (4 in every 5, or 80%). However, 1 in 5 were either negative or mixed. What concerns were raised by these negative or mixed comments?

These comments included struggling in math (1) and science courses (1), wanting an expansion of course offerings in some disciplines (1), experiencing inconsistencies in information provided by counselors (2), difficulty in making counseling appointments (1), experiencing non-working lab equipment in the STEM building (1), and negative comments about bias (1) and racism (1) (see below).

“You do not believe in what you teach about bias. That is all glad to be moving on.” –Hispanic/Latino, Female, ARC Graduate in Early Childhood Education

“I feel there are more hateful racist people here than anywhere else I’ve been in the US” –Unknown Race/Ethnicity, Unknown Gender, ARC Graduate in Paralegal Studies

Negative qualitative (open-ended) comments regarding race, equity, and social justice from the 2019 ARC Graduate Survey

However, it should be noted that these negative comments differ drastically from the tone, content, and volume of negative comments regarding race, equity, social justice, diversity, and related topics from the **2019 ARC Graduate Survey**. Below is a sampling of those comments:

“Honestly I think my experience here showed me how unprofessional and hypocritical people are when they are 'triggered', or when they start making claims that others are 'privileged'...”

“... I feel that all are equal and it seems to me that ARC allows a lot of movements that realistically are supporting a racism double standard. It's to the point it's just annoying.”

“Stop asking nonsense questions about the asinine topics of “social justice” and “privilege”, there is no such thing. They are constructs of the left leaning “Grievance” Studies (so-called) disciplines. It’s nothing more than Neo-Marxist class warfare. Stop it.”

“The reason that I chose strongly disagree for all of the community questions was because at ARC I felt like the minority. A lot of the social justice and equality things made me feel targeted for being white...”

“...I do not see that it is right for the professors to force their political views down our throats...ARC showed true bias! I also do not see a place for professors to provide their negative opinions against President Trump...Unfortunately, the bias and prejudice remarks by your professors will always leave a little black mark on my ARC experience. I’m just glad that I am older and smarter and they were not able to brainwash me. I am a free thinker.”

“... I think all this talk about privilege, race, and inequality is fabricated by the elites to keep us separated and from banning together for more social and environmental justice and reform and this hate and ignorance trickles down the ladder and eventually into institutions such as this one to the point where it is not racist to say Black Lives Matter and it is to say White Lives Matter. My black, Asian, and Hispanic wife all agree with my ginger self and talk about these issues when it is brought up by others but it doesn't need to be said. Stop trying to divide the student body is all I am saying.”

“I learned a lot more in high school than I did while obtaining my AA degree. Every General Ed teacher I took was a joke and taught me things I learned 5 years ago. This may be due to the fact that I went to a prestigious high school where we were held at high standards. Unfortunately, this was not the case at ARC. I, a young, smart, Caucasian female, was part of the minority in every class I was in. This was unfortunate as the level of education was minimized to fit the majority of the class, and I was left relearning what I had in high school. Waste of 2 years in my opinion.”

“The amount of antisemitic points of views being discussed in a classroom environment by professors is disturbing and makes me feel that I am unable to discuss my culture and heritage as a Jew on the American River College campus. Antisemitism is on the rise and nothing is being done about it on campus.”

“...This survey represents everything that is wrong with education in this country and especially this state. The simple fact that there are other perspectives doesn't mean that it is worth college level credit to study how somebody else feels about their life. I am a minority student and I have never felt that I could discuss or that I should seek privilege for being a minority. As for my ability to identify bias, it was the first thought that entered my mind when I saw these questions. Eventually because of all the crap being forced down the throats of California students, the rest of the world will come to know what I already know. California schools are very over rated. This school like all of the California schools is only about the money and how much of it you can suck out of your students before they are allowed to graduate...”

“I will not be advocating for social justice because every moment it was present during campus life both in and out of class it was disruptive, inapplicable to myself, and often at direct odds with my perspective or desires. It only got in the way and made it feel like the school and staff were looking out for everyone except people like myself.”

“I definitely feel like the campus is primarily liberal and caters to those ideas. As a conservative student I notice that those who do not agree with the campus views, such as ProLife groups, are not considered welcome. Safe spaces are only safe if you agree with the liberal ideology and as a conservative it does not feel safe to voice my opinions or beliefs...”

“The concept of advocating for 'social justice' as a mark of success at ARC seems wrong. If each individual is on their own 'educational journey' then the concept of advocating for people based on groups seems in opposition to the individual measures attempted by the college to get people to graduate.”⁴

⁴ In addition, the 2019 ARC Graduate survey contained negative comments regarding denial of DSPS accommodation (1), wanting an expansion of course offerings in some disciplines (1), experiencing inconsistencies in information provided by counselors (1), scheduling of student events that conflicted with course schedules (1), financial aid (2), general education (2), and faculty (2).