

*Ventura County Community College District
Planning, Accreditation, Communication, and Student Success Committee*

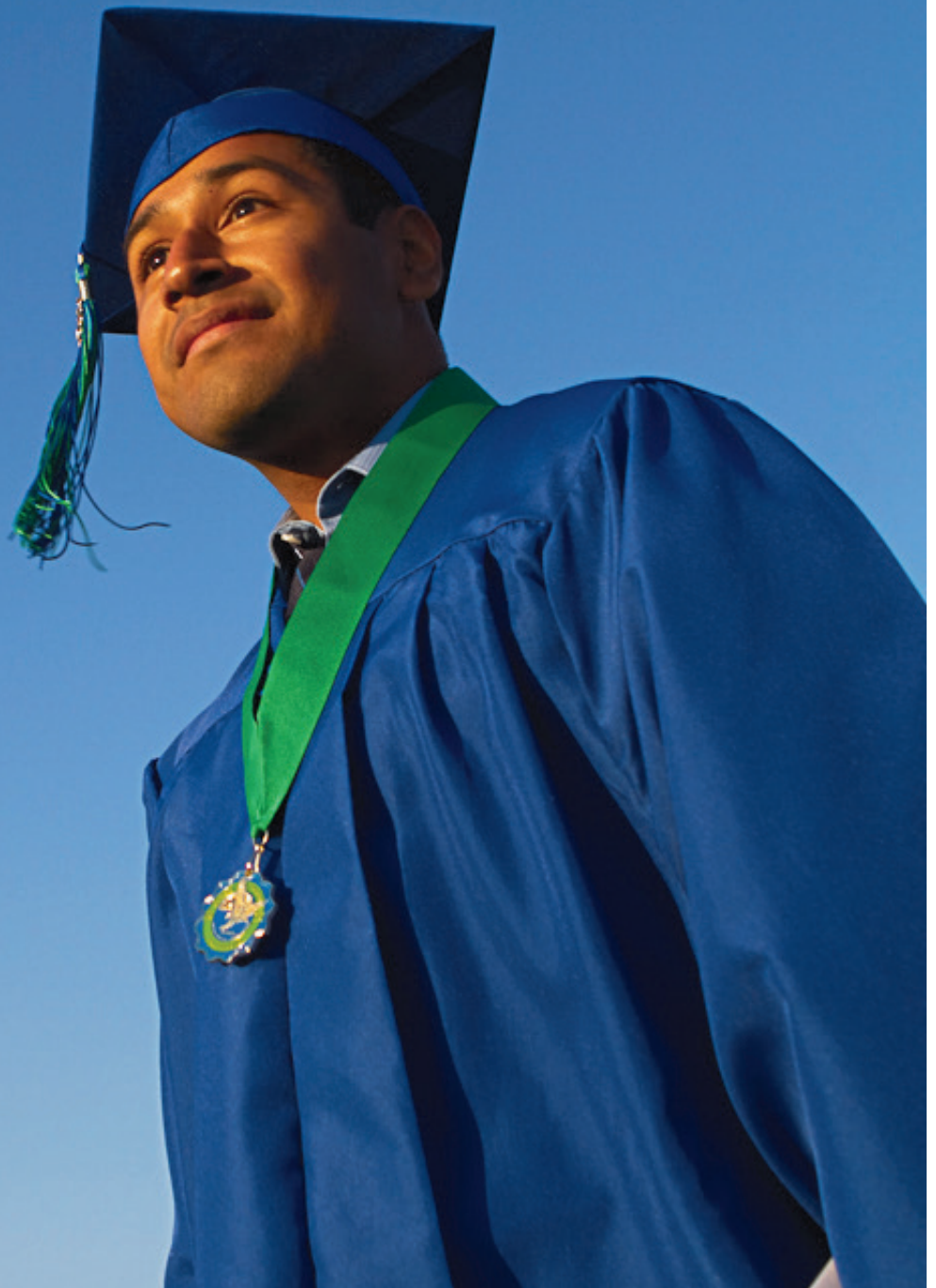
Informational Student Success Policy Hearing

May 6, 2014

12:00 P.M. – 12:45 P.M. Reception (light refreshments)

1:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Moorpark College
7075 Campus Drive
Moorpark, CA 93021
Campus Conference Center





Tuesday, May 6, 2014
Student Success Policy Hearing

PLANNING, ACCREDITATION, COMMUNICATION, AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE
POLICY HEARING

ORDER OF THE AGENDA

VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Moorpark College

Campus Conference Center

7075 Campus Drive, Moorpark, CA

12:00 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. - Reception (light refreshments)

1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Policy Hearing

1. Call to Order

1.01 Vice Chair McKay will call the meeting to order.

2. Public Comments

2.01 Chair will ask for public comments. Pursuant to the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need any special accommodation or assistance to attend or participate in the meeting, please direct your written request, as far in advance of the meeting as possible, to the Office of the Chancellor, Dr. Jamillah Moore, VCCCD, 255 W. Stanley Avenue, Suite 150, Ventura, CA.

3. Changes to the Agenda

3.01 Vice Chair McKay will announce changes to the agenda.

4. Student Success: Statewide Perspective

4.01 Senator Jack Scott, Foundation of Student Success

5. SB 1456 Task Force - 1:15 p.m.

5.01 Ms. Mary Rees, Moorpark College Academic Senate President

5.02 Dr. Richard Duran, Oxnard College President

5.03 Dr. Erika Endrijonas, Oxnard College Executive Vice President

6. Student Success: Dual Enrollment - 1:45 p.m.

6.01 Get Focused Stay Focused Program, Dr. Lauren Wintermeyer, Santa Barbara City College Director, Dual Enrollment

6.02 VCCCD Dual Enrollment, Dr. Bernard Luskin, Moorpark College, Interim President

7. Break - 2:00 p.m.

7.01 Break

8. Student Success: Equity - 2:15 p.m.

8.01 Dr. Estela Bensimon, University of California, Center for Urban Education Professor and Co-Director

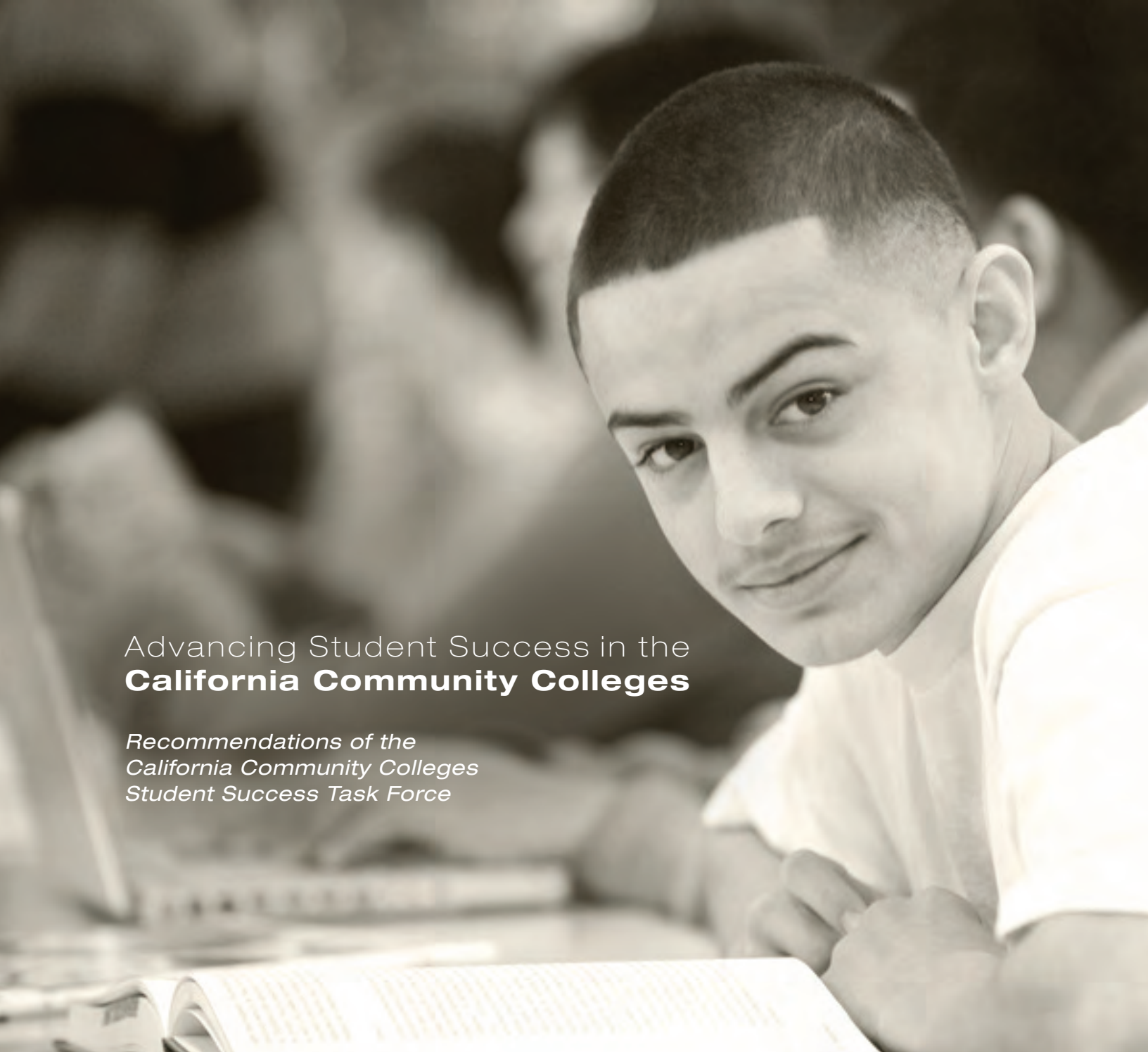
9. Student Success: the Student Perspective - 2:45 p.m.

9.01 Student Representatives

10. Closing Remarks/Adjournment

10.01 Vice Chair Dianne McKay

10.02 Trustee Larry Kennedy



Advancing Student Success in the
California Community Colleges

*Recommendations of the
California Community Colleges
Student Success Task Force*

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**STUDENT
SUCCESS**

TASK FORCE

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- 2.1. Develop and implement common centralized diagnostic assessments
- 2.2. Require students to participate in diagnostic assessment, orientation and the development of an educational plan
- 2.3. Develop and use technology applications to better guide students in educational processes
- 2.4. Require students showing a lack of college readiness to participate in support resources
- 2.5. Require students to declare a program of study early in their academic careers

page 33 | **Recommendation 3**
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- 3.1. Adopt system-wide enrollment priorities reflecting the core mission of community colleges
- 3.2. Require students receiving Board of Governors Fee Waivers to meet various conditions and requirements
- 3.3. Provide students the opportunity to consider attending full time
- 3.4. Require students to begin addressing basic skills deficiencies in their first year

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Align Course Offerings to Meet Student Needs
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5.2. Develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing basic skills education in California

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6.1. Create a continuum of mandatory professional development opportunities
6.2. Direct professional development resources toward improving basic skills instruction and support services

page 57 | **Recommendation 7**
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7.4. Develop and support a longitudinal student record system

page 65 | **Recommendation 8**
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page 71 | **A Review of Outcome-Based Funding**

PART I

ADVANCING STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Introduction

Each year, the California Community Colleges provide instruction to approximately 2.6 million students, representing nearly 25 percent of the nation's community college student population. Across the state, our 112 community colleges and 71 off-campus centers enroll students of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of academic preparation. We are a system that takes pride in serving the most diverse student population in the nation, and we value that diversity as our greatest asset. Most of our students are seeking enhanced skills, certificates, or college degrees that will prepare them for well-paying jobs. Community colleges also offer, though in fewer numbers than in the past, enrichment courses that serve students who seek personal growth and life-long learning.

The California Community Colleges have a strong record of benefiting our students and the communities we serve:

- The California Community Colleges are the state's largest workforce provider, offering associate degrees and short-term job training certificates in more than 175 different fields.
- The California Community Colleges train 70 percent of California nurses.
- The California Community Colleges train 80 percent of firefighters, law enforcement personnel, and emergency medical technicians.
- 28 percent of University of California graduates and 54 percent of California State University graduates transfer from a community college.
- Students who earn a California Community College degree or certificate nearly double their earnings within three years.

Background on the California Community Colleges

The California Community Colleges is the largest of California's three segments of public higher education, which also include the University of California and the California State University. With 2.6 million students, the California Community Colleges is the largest system of community college education in the United States.

Operating through 112 colleges and 71 off-campus centers, California's two-year institutions provide primary programs of study and courses, in both credit and noncredit categories, that address its three primary areas of mission: education for university transfer; career technical education; and basic skills. The community colleges also offer a wide range of programs and courses to support economic development, specialized populations, leadership development, and proficiency in co-curricular activities. The student population served by all of the community college programs is characterized by enormous diversity in age, in ethnicity and cultural heritage, in walks of life, in their economic situations, in academic preparation, and in their purposes and goals.

The differentiated missions and purposes of the California Community Colleges, the University of California, and the California State University system were clearly outlined in the Master Plan for Higher Education in 1960. The community colleges were designated to have an open admission policy and bear the most extensive responsibility for lower-division, undergraduate instruction. The community college mission was further revised in 1988 with the passage of Assembly Bill 1725, which called for comprehensive reforms in every aspect of community college education and organization.

Other legislation established a support framework, including the Matriculation Program, the Disabled Students Programs & Services, and the Equal Opportunity Programs & Services, to provide categorical funding and special services to help meet the needs of the diverse range of students in the California Community Colleges. Although many of these categorical programs have been seriously underfunded as a result of the state's fiscal crisis, they still afford an outline for addressing such needs as assessment, placement, counseling, adaptive education, and other approaches designed to promote student learning and student success.

The California Community Colleges can and should take pride in these positive impacts. For the students who successfully navigate our colleges, we provide tremendous opportunity for self-improvement and economic benefit.

However, there is another set of statistics that is a cause of concern. These figures relate to the large numbers of our students who never make it to the finish line:

- Only 53.6 percent of our degree-seeking students ever achieve a certificate, degree, or transfer preparation. For African-American and Latino students, the rate is much lower (42 percent and 43 percent respectively).
- Of the students who enter our colleges at one level below transfer level in Math, only 46.2 percent ever achieve a certificate, degree, or transfer preparation. Of those students entering four levels below, only 25.5 percent ever achieve those outcomes.
- Of our students who seek to transfer to a four-year institution, only 41 percent are successful. For African Americans, only 34 percent succeed. For Latinos, the figure is 31 percent.

While these statistics reflect the challenges many of our students face, they also clearly demonstrate the need for our system to recommit to finding new and better ways to serve our students.

Overview of Recommendations

This report, the product of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force, contains recommendations aimed at improving the educational outcomes of our students and the workforce preparedness of our state. The 22 recommendations contained herein are more than just discrete proposals. Taken together, these recommendations would strengthen the community college system by expanding those structures and programs that work and realigning our resources with what matters most: student achievement. This report presents a vision for our community colleges in the next decade, focused on what is needed to grow our economy, meeting the demands of California's evolving workplace, and inspiring and realizing the aspirations of students and families.

The Task Force's student success plan relies on the following key components to move students more effectively through our community college system:

- Development and implementation of a common diagnostic assessment tool to more accurately determine the skill levels of entering students;
- New technology and additional counselors to create more robust student services, including broader and more widespread use of student educational plans;
- Structured pathways to help students identify a program of study and get an educational roadmap to indicate appropriate courses and available support services;
- Enhanced professional development for both faculty and staff, especially related to the instructional and support needs of basic skills students;
- Revised financing, accountability, and oversight systems to ensure that financial and organizational resources are better aligned with student success;
- Stronger statewide coordination and oversight to allow for the sharing and facilitation of new and creative ideas to help students succeed, including the ability for California to "take to scale" the many good practices already in place; and
- Better alignment of local district and college goals with the education and workforce needs of the state.

This plan calls for greater coordination between K-12 schools and community colleges. Under the proposal, K-12 education and community colleges will align standards with meaningful definitions of college and career readiness so that students receive consistent messages about expectations throughout their educational careers about what it takes to be

ready for, and successful in, college and the workforce. We will develop consistent policies, programs, and coherent educational pathways across our colleges in order to better serve the many students who attend more than one college. The colleges, while retaining their local character, will function as a system with common practices to best serve students.

The community college system will leverage technology to better serve students, because this generation and future generations of students are increasingly comprised of digital natives. These students expect to use technology to access the world around them as they conduct commerce, socialize, and learn. While technological solutions cannot take the place of human contact and will not work for all students, they have shown tremendous potential to help diagnose student learning needs, to enhance the delivery of instruction, to improve advising and other support services, and to streamline administrative costs.

This report envisions restructuring the community college system to provide students with more structure and guidance to encourage better choices and increase their probability of success. A primary curricular goal is to increase the effectiveness of basic skills instruction by identifying and disseminating strategies that have proven effective at preparing students for college-level work.

More than 70 percent of community college students enter the system under-prepared to do college-level work. A majority of these are first generation college students, low-income, and/or are from underrepresented groups. These students face the most challenging obstacles for success and, unfortunately, have the lowest completion rates in the system. A major focus of the Task Force is to give these students the tools, support, and academic foundation to succeed.

While we emphasize the need for our system to improve basic skills instruction through innovation

and flexibility, we urge state leaders to examine the larger, and critical, issues of adult education in California. There is a large and growing population of adults who lack the basic proficiencies necessary for gainful employment; the state needs to develop the overarching K-12 and community college policies and delivery systems to address this challenge.

The community college system envisioned in this plan rewards successful student behavior and makes students responsible for developing education plans. Colleges, in turn, will use those plans to rebalance course offerings and schedules based on students' needs. Enrollment priorities will emphasize the core missions of transfer to a four-year college or university, the award of workforce-oriented certificates and degrees, and the basic skills development that supports both of these pathways. Student progress toward meeting individual educational goals will be rewarded with priority enrollment into courses and continued eligibility for financial aid.

Together, the recommendations contained in this report will improve the effectiveness of the community colleges and help more students to attain their educational objectives.

Defining Student Success

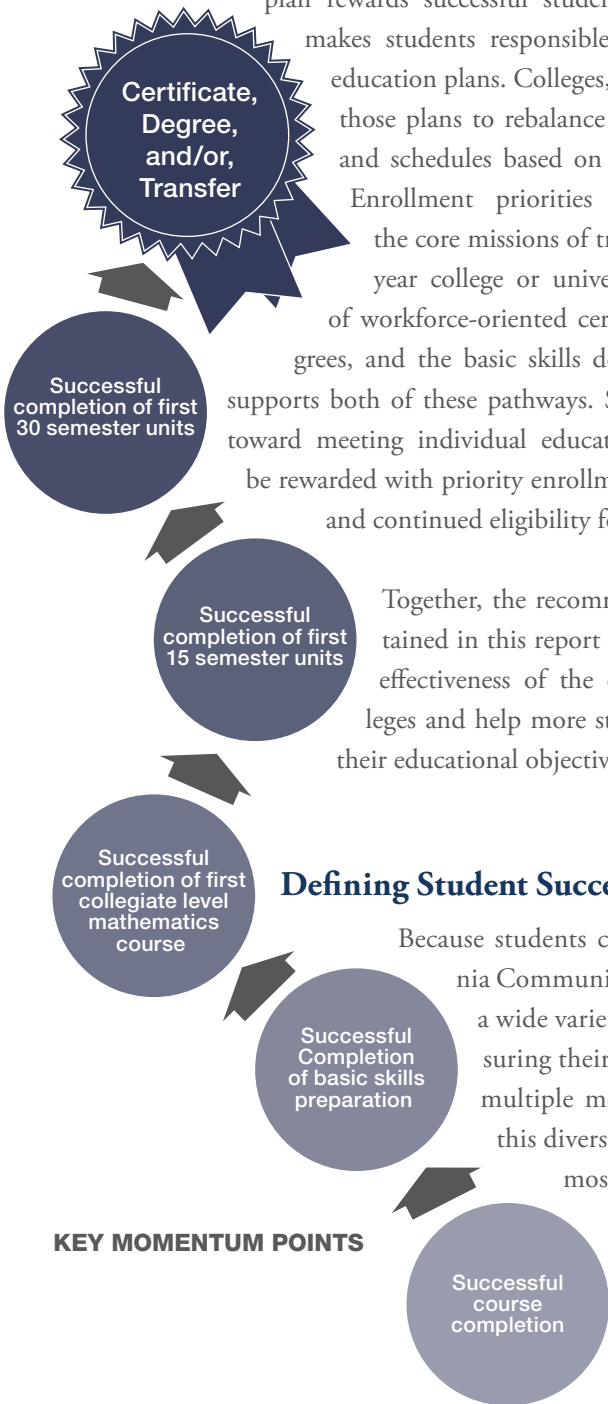
Because students come to California Community Colleges with a wide variety of goals, measuring their success requires multiple measures. Despite this diversity of objectives, most students come to community colleges with the intention

of earning a degree or certificate and then getting a job. For some, entering the workforce is a longer term goal, with success defined as transferring to, and subsequently graduating from, a four-year college. For others, the academic goal is earning an associate degree. Still other community college students are looking to acquire a discrete set of job skills to help them enter or advance in the workforce in a shorter time frame. This could be accomplished by either completing a vocational certificate program or through any number of skill-oriented courses. Regardless of their goals, the vast majority of students come to community colleges in need of basic skills in reading, writing, and/or mathematics.

Acknowledging the varied educational goals of students, the Task Force adopted a set of student success outcome metrics. The Task Force recommends that the system define success using the following metrics:

- Percentage of community college students completing their educational goals
- Percentage of community college students earning a certificate or degree, transferring, or achieving transfer-readiness
- Number of students transferring to a four-year institution
- Number of degrees and certificates earned

While the above-noted metrics are key measures of student achievement, recent research has highlighted the value of also monitoring intermediate measures of student progress. Specifically, along the path to completion, there are a number of key “momentum points” associated with an improved probability of success. Each time a student progresses beyond a momentum point the likelihood of reaching his or her educational goal increases. The recognition of these momentum points guided the work of the Task Force and helped structure recommendations



aimed at improving completion rates. Examples of progression metrics include:

- Successful course completion
- Successful completion of basic skills courses
- Successful completion of first collegiate level mathematics course
- Successful completion of first 15 semester units
- Successful completion of first 30 semester units

To place additional focus on these critical progression metrics, the Task Force recommends that system-wide accountability efforts be updated to include the collecting and reporting of both the outcomes and the progression measures for the system, and for each college. These measures will be disaggregated by race/ethnicity to aid the system in understanding how well it is performing in educating those historically disadvantaged populations whose educational success is vital to the future of the state.

A Commitment to Equity

As the Task Force deliberated over strategies to improve student success rates in the community colleges, they were unanimous and resolute in their belief that improvements in college success rates should not come at the expense of access. The California Community Colleges take great pride in being the gateway to opportunity for Californians of all backgrounds, including traditionally underrepresented economic, social, and racial/ethnic subgroups. Our system “looks like California” and we are committed to maintaining that quality. The goal of equitable access—and the commitment to help all students achieve success—is a driving force behind the recommendations contained in this report.

The Task Force’s recommendations are aimed at increasing the number of students from all demographic and socioeconomic subgroups who attain a

certificate, complete a degree, or transfer to a four-year college or university. As such, improving overall completion rates and closing achievement gaps among historically underrepresented students are co-equal goals. The Task Force’s commitment to educational equity is reflected throughout the recommendations, but perhaps most explicitly in its proposal to establish statewide and college-level performance goals that are disaggregated by racial/ethnic group. Doing so will allow the system and state leaders to monitor impacts of the policy changes on these subgroups while also focusing state and local efforts on closing gaps in educational attainment. Given California’s changing demographic profile, the success of these historically underrepresented groups will determine the fortunes of our state.

Task Force Origins and Process

Chronology of This Effort

In January 2011, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors embarked on a 12-month strategic planning process to improve student success. Pursuant to Senate Bill 1143 (Chapter 409, Statutes of 2010), the Board of Governors created the Student Success Task Force. The resulting 20-member Task Force was composed of a diverse group of community college leaders, faculty, students, researchers, staff, and external stakeholders. The Task Force delved deeply into complex college and system-level policies and practices. It worked for seven months to identify best practices for promoting student success and to develop statewide strategies to take these approaches to scale while ensuring that educational opportunity for historically underrepresented students would not just be maintained, but bolstered.

Each month, from January through June 2011, the Task Force met to examine topics critical to the success of students, ranging from college readiness and assessment to student services, from basic skills in-

STATE AND NATIONAL

Fiscal Reality

The California Community Colleges are in the midst of a serious fiscal crisis brought on by unprecedented cuts in state funding. Historically, the community colleges have been the lowest funded of California's segments of public education. For many decades, lean funding has forced an overreliance on less expensive part-time faculty and resulted in too few counselors and advisors. Course offerings are often insufficient to meet local needs.

While funding has always been scarce, the state's current fiscal crisis and resulting cuts in funding to the California Community Colleges have greatly exacerbated these significant challenges. Deep cuts to categorical programs in the 2009-10 State Budget reduced by roughly half the funding available to support critical student services such as counseling, advising, assessment, and tutoring. Cuts in base apportionment funding in the 2009-10 and 2011-12 State Budgets, totaling over 8 percent, have forced colleges to reduce thousands of course sections, barring access to hundreds of thousands of potential students. The lack of cost-of-living allocations in the State Budget, going back to 2008-09, has eroded the spending power of community colleges by 10.88 percent. It is hard to overstate the cumulative strain that these budget reductions have placed on community colleges and the students and communities they serve.

In its deliberations, the Task Force discussed at length how underfunding has diminished the capac-

ity of the community colleges to meet the education and training needs of California. It is clear that the community colleges, with additional funding, would serve many thousands more Californians and be more successful at helping students attain their educational objectives. In particular, additional funding would allow the colleges to hire more full-time counseling and instructional faculty, and student support personnel—all of which have been shown to increase institutional effectiveness.

The Task Force wishes to make clear that its recommendations are in no way meant as a substitute for additional funding. To the contrary, the Task Force expressed a strong belief that the community college system should continue to advocate strongly for additional resources to support access and success for our students. Additional investment in the community colleges on the part of the state will be essential if California is to reach levels of educational attainment needed to be economically competitive.

The Task Force recommendations represent policy changes that will support fundamental improvements in the effectiveness of the community college system. All the recommendations will yield greater benefits to students more quickly if matched with significant additional state investment. In the absence of additional funding, however, the Task Force recommendations make good policy sense and will help ensure that the community colleges are leveraging all available resources to help students succeed.

CONTEXT

National and State Student Success Efforts

In recent years a growing body of research has documented a national decline in educational attainment at the very time when our economic competitiveness is increasingly tied to a highly skilled workforce. This trend, seen in national data, is even more pronounced in California. Projections from the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) demonstrate that California is at risk of losing its economic competitiveness due to an insufficient supply of highly skilled workers. Specifically, NCHEMS found that California's changing demographics, combined with low educational attainment levels among our fastest-growing populations, will translate into substantial declines in per capita personal income between now and 2020—placing California last among the 50 states in terms of change in per capita personal income.

As state and national leaders have become aware of this looming crisis, there has been a concerted call for reforms to improve levels of educational attainment. Due to their large scale and relatively low cost, community colleges nationwide have been identified as the most viable option capable of producing college graduates and certificate holders in the large numbers necessary to reverse current trends. Perhaps most notable was President Obama's 2010 White House Summit and "Call for Action" in which he highlighted the community colleges as the key to closing our nation's skills gap. This message resonated with employers, economists, and educators here in California.

It should be noted that the work of the Student Success Task Force builds on other state-level reform efforts. Notably, the Community College League of California's recent *Commission on the Future* report served as a basis for many of our recommendations, as did prior community college reform efforts, including the *2006 System Strategic Plan*, the *Partnership for Excellence* program, and various reviews of the *California Master Plan for Higher Education*.

Task Force Vision

There's a story that each member of this Task Force wants to be true—true at every community college and for every student, regardless of their background or educational goals. It's the story of a student who walks onto a California Community College campus for the first time, unsure of what they want to do, but knowing generally that they want to find a direction in both life and career.

The student is able to go online or get an appointment to meet with a counselor or advisor to learn about the wide variety of options available at the college and maybe a few offered elsewhere. The options presented aren't discrete classes but rather pathways toward different futures. Not all of them are easy; some require a lot of time and work, but the student sees where they lead and understands what needs to be done to succeed in each pathway.

The student participates in a college orientation and prepares for the assessment tests. They learn that most paths will require work on basic skill mathematics and English.

The student easily finds the financial aid office where they learn of the various financial aid opportunities available. They see that they can maximize financial aid opportunities by deciding to enroll full time and understand that accepting financial aid means accepting responsibility for their academic future.

Using either online or in-person counseling support, the student develops an education plan and determines a program of study. The student enrolls in basic skills coursework in the first term and follows the counselor's lead in selecting a college-level course that is appropriate to their level of preparation. The basic skills class may rely heavily on tutoring or use other approaches that help the student learn more effectively than in high school. The results of the diagnostic assessment test let the professor know what specific areas the student needs help with, so that they are able to focus on those particular things, moving at a pace that's comfortable. The student succeeds and takes the college-level coursework needed to complete their program of study. The student's educational plan provides a roadmap, and they find that they're able to enroll in all the required courses in the semester in which the courses are needed. The student meets their educational goal, whether it be gaining concrete work-place skills, earning a certificate and/or associate degree, or transferring to a four-year college with an associate degree in hand. Wherever the path leads, the student successfully reaches their academic and career goals thus able to advance their career and earn a wage sufficient to support themselves and their family.

This is the vision that the recommendations of this Task Force are designed to support. Taken alone, no single recommendation will get us there, but taken together, these policies could make the vision a reality for every student, at every college.

While it is entirely natural for readers to skim through this report looking for the two or three recommendations that most affect their particular constituency, we encourage readers to resist this temptation and consider the set of recommendations as a whole and how they will benefit students. In making these recommendations, each member of the Task Force strived to do just that, at times setting aside their particular wants and making compromises for the greater good.

We hope you will join us in that effort.

struction to performance-based funding. The Task Force turned to state and national experts (such as Dr. Kay McClenney, Dr. David Conley, Dr. Vincent Tinto, and Dr. Alicia Dowd, among others) for the latest research-based findings and had frank discussions about what works to help students achieve their educational objectives.

Beginning in July, the Task Force spent three months forming the recommendations contained in this report. Recommendations were chosen based on their ability to be actionable by state policymakers and college leaders and to make a significant impact on student success, as defined by the outcome and progression metrics adopted by the group.

To foster public input, during October and November the Task Force held four public town hall meetings, made presentations to dozens of community college stakeholder groups, and hosted a lively online dialogue. In these venues, the Task Force heard from both supporters and critics of the recommendations and received substantial input that has been used to inform its deliberations. That input helped shape the final recommendations and elevated the public discussion about improving outcomes for community college students.

Limitations of Scope

There are a variety of topics related to community colleges and student success that the Task Force was either unable to address or chose not to address. For example, policy issues related to the system's governance structure have been well vetted elsewhere and thus were not discussed by the group. Further, the group chose not to address policies surrounding student fees.

Due to time constraints, career technical education, transfer, and distance education also were not addressed directly by the Task Force. That

said, the recommendations in this report are intended to strengthen the core capacity of the community colleges to serve all students, regardless of instructional program. Improved student support structures and better alignment of curriculum with student needs will increase success rates in transfer, basic skills, and career technical/workforce programs.

Implementation Process

The recommendations in this report represent policies and practices that the Task Force believes will help the California Community Colleges to improve student success. Some of the recommendations reflect changes that are already underway, while others would chart entirely new territory. In each case, the recommendations will require that in-depth, discrete, and specific implementation strategies be developed in consultation with the appropriate practitioners and stakeholders. The strategies employed will vary depending on whether the proposed change is statutory, regulatory, or involves disseminating best practices. The community college system has a rich history of shared governance and local collective bargaining; nothing in this report is designed to upend those processes. Further, the Task Force recognizes that to be successful, these recommendations will need to be implemented over time, in a logical and se-

quential manner. The recommendations contained herein will not be achieved overnight.

After approval of this report by the Board of Governors, the Chancellor's Office will develop and distribute a separate document that will lay out various strategies for implementing the recommendations contained within this report. Implementation groups composed of the relevant internal and external stakeholders, including the Student Senate and the Academic Senate, will be involved at each step of the process. Implementation of these recommendations will take time, and it is the intent of the Task Force that the parties work together to address the practical matters associated with the eventual success of the recommendations.

Conclusion


The Task Force recommendations present the California Community Colleges with an opportunity for transformative change that will refocus our system's efforts and resources to enable a greater number of our students to succeed. Our colleges have a long, proud history of helping Californians advance. This plan for student success will help us be even more effective in achieving our mission.

Implementation of Student Success Task Force Recommendations



IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations approved by Board of Governors in January 2012 Type of Action Required Action Initiated Status and Next Steps Expected Implementation Date

Increase College and Career Readiness				
1.1 Collaborate with K-12/ Common Core Standards	Statewide Policy	Yes	Chancellor's Office, with faculty engagement, is working with K-12, CSU, UC and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium on implementation of new 11th grade college and career readiness assessments. The Chancellor's Office has convened a College and Career Readiness and Common Core Advisory Committee to increase CCC awareness and understanding of the new K-12 standards. SB 490 passed, authorizing transition of Early Assessment Program to the new 11th grade standards-based assessment. California received a National Governors Association grant to facilitate inter-segmental support for implementation of the Common Core.	2014 to 2015
Strengthen Support for Entering Students				
2.1 Develop & Implement common centralized assessments	Budget and Statute	Yes	Funding provided in 2013-14 budget to implement common assessment and multiple measures data warehouse. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office is conducting a competitive bid process to select a lead district to begin selection/development.	2013 to 2014
2.2 Diagnostic assessment, orientation & educational plan	Regulation	Yes	BOG-approved regulations: 1) provide enrollment priority to students who have participated in assessment, orientation and developed an education plan; and 2) implement provisions of SB 1456 to require all new students to complete core services.	2013 to 2014
2.3 Technology applications to better guide students	Budget	Yes	Funding provided in 2013-14 budget to develop education planning tools and common distance education delivery platform and services; CCCC is conducting a competitive bid process to select a lead district to begin development.	2013 to 2014
2.4 Support resources for students lacking college readiness	Budget and Regulation	Yes	Research and identify multiple measures that can be used to develop a college readiness indicator, along with effective practices to assist students demonstrating a lack of college readiness.	Begin in 2014
2.5 Declare a program of study	Statute and Regulation	Yes	The California Community Colleges Board of Governors adopted regulations to implement the Student Success Act of 2012 requirement that students declare a course of study by the time they complete 15 degree-applicable units or their third semester.	 Complete


Incentivize Successful Student Behaviors

3.1 System-wide enrollment priorities	Regulation	Yes	BOG adopted enrollment priorities in 2012. Districts required in Spring 2013 to notify students that accumulating 100 or more degree-applicable units or being on academic or progress probation for two consecutive terms will result in the loss of enrollment priority in Fall 2014. New students who complete orientation, assessment and have a student education plan will receive higher enrollment priority.	 Complete
3.2 Board of Governors Fee Waiver requirements	Statute and Regulation	Yes	The Student Success Act of 2012 provides authority to the BOG to establish and implement academic standards for fee waivers. Proposed regulations to be presented for board consideration in November 2013.	2015
3.3 Promote benefits of full-time attendance	Best Practice	Yes	Financial aid policies that promote full-time attendance identified and discussed with financial aid community. Chancellor's Office has disseminated model policies and strategies throughout the system.	 Complete
3.3 Begin Addressing Basic Skills deficiencies in first year	Best Practice and/or Regulation	Yes	Work groups have met to examine this recommendation; specific policies and initiatives will be developed. Possible next steps include identification and dissemination of best practices.	2014

Align Course Offerings to Meet Student Needs

4.1 Base course offerings & schedules on student needs	Best Practice and/or Regulation	Yes	Chancellor's Office convened committee of administrators, faculty and students to develop strategies to improve alignment of course offerings. Resulting report will be developed and presented to BOG.	2014
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Improve the Education of Basic Skills Students

5.1 Alternative basic skills curriculum	Best Practice and Budget	Yes	Chancellor's Office led Basic Skills summit in July 2012 and published <u>Basic Skills Completion: The Key to Student Success in California Community Colleges</u> in early 2013 to guide colleges on successful practices.	 Complete
5.2 Statewide strategy for Non-Credit & Adult Education in California	Statute and Budget	Yes	The 2013-14 State Budget launched an initiative to build a more unified Adult Education system consisting of K-12 schools, community colleges, community based organizations, and other providers. The Chancellor's Office will distribute and oversee \$25 million in local grants to fund regional planning efforts to support transition to the new Adult Education model. In September 2013, the Chancellor's Office and the California Department of Education held a statewide kick-off. (See AB86.cccco.edu for more information)	Spring 2015

Revitalize and Re-Envision Professional Development

<p>6.1 Enhanced professional development opportunities, including improved use of flexible calendar</p>	<p>Best Practice and Budget</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In Fall 2012, the Chancellor’s Office established the Professional Development Committee to develop options for implementing SSTF recommendations 6.1 and 6.2. The Committee’s report was presented to the BOG at its September 2013 meeting. The Committee’s findings and recommendations are currently under review by the BOG and the Chancellor’s Office. The BOG’s system budget request for 2014-15 proposes \$8 million in ongoing funding to support professional development for faculty and staff.</p>	<p>2014</p>
<p>6.2 Improved use of professional development resources to spur improvements in Basic Skills</p>	<p>Statute, Regulation, Budget and Best Practice</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In Fall 2012, the Chancellor’s Office established the Professional Development Committee to develop options for implementing SSTF recommendations 6.1 and 6.2. The Committee’s report was presented to the BOG at its September 2013 meeting. The Committee’s findings and recommendations are currently under review by the BOG and the Chancellor’s Office. The BOG’s system budget request for 2014-15 proposes \$8 million in ongoing funding to support professional development for faculty and staff.</p>	<p>2014</p>

Enable Efficient Statewide Leadership & Increase Coordination Among Colleges

<p>7.1 Stronger community colleges system office</p>	<p>Statute and Budget</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>2013-14 State Budget added five positions to CCCC to assist with implementation of adult education reform, online education, and apprenticeship programs. Proposal for additional staffing submitted to Finance and Governor’s Office for consideration in development of 2014-15 State Budget.</p>	<p>2014</p>
<p>7.2 State and local student success goals</p>	<p>Statute/BOG Policy</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>BOG will consider establishment of system-wide goals following deployment of Student Success Scorecard.</p>	<p>2014</p>
<p>7.3 Accountability scorecard</p>	<p>Statute/BOG Policy</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Chancellor’s Office in consultation with an advisory committee developed a college scorecard that measures persistence (3-terms); 30 units completed; remedial course progression rate; combined graduation and transfer rates; and CTE rates. Scorecard was deployed in first quarter of 2013. Salary Surfer application, showing graduates’ wage outcomes, developed & implemented Spring 2013.</p>	<p> Complete</p>

Recommendations approved by Board of Governors in January 2012	Type of Action Required	Action Initiated	Status and Next Steps	Expected Implementation Date
7.4 Longitudinal student record system	Inter-segmental Policy	Yes	California Community Colleges, UC and CSU, along with EDD and CDE, have completed a draft “federated” database design that allows for segmental management of data, but promotes ease of data sharing, and also creates a common data element dictionary among the segments.	Prototype in 2013
Align Resources with Student Success Recommendations				
8.1 Categorical program streamlining and cooperation	Best Practice	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review of Student Services categorical program guidelines and forms. Cross-training provided for EOPS, CARE, CalWORKS, DSPS, and Financial Aid program directors. • Policy unification of Economic and Workforce Development, SB 1070, and Perkins 1c under the Doing What MATTERS for Jobs and Economy framework. “Braid” resources for these programs in the Request for Applications process. 	 Complete
8.2 Invest in Student Support Initiative	Statute and Budget	Yes	SB 1456 refocuses funding for existing matriculation programs under the new Student Success and Support Program for orientation, assessment and counseling and advising to develop student education plans. The 2013-14 budget includes an augmentation of \$50 million for Student Success and Support Program, as well as some restoration of funding for other categorical support programs. The system budget request for 2014-15 will continue to prioritize restoration of categorical funding for student support. Implementation regulations have been adopted by the BOG.	2013 to 2015
8.3 Alternative Basic Skills funding model	Budget and Regulation	Yes	Recommendation has been referred to the Chancellor’s Advisory Work group on Fiscal Affairs for further review and policy development. Work group’s findings will help inform the BOG’s future budget and legislative proposals.	Fall 2015

Senate Bill 1456

**Senate Bill 1456
Student Success Act of 2012**

Goal of Ed Code Changes:

- First step to begin implementation of SSTF recommendations 2.2 (mandated services), 3.2 (BOGFW conditions), and 8.2 (Student Support Initiative)
- Provide a “policy framework”
- Target funding to core matriculation services of orientation, assessment, counseling and advising, and development of education plans
- When State budget conditions improve and CCC’s receive new monies, first priority of BOG, after funding COLA’s, is augmenting funding for the Student Success Act of 2012
- Ensure impacts to student equity are considered by disaggregating data and requiring college plans that are coordinated with institutional equity planning efforts

Summary of Key Elements in Proposed Bill Language for Matriculation

EC 78210	Renames Matriculation Act of 1986 as the Seymour-Campbell Student Success Act of 2012
EC 78211	<p>Delineates the Legislature’s intent for the Student Success Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocuses and updates Matriculation language to align with the recommendations from the SSTF regarding services needed to support students in developing an “informed” ed goal, developing ed plans and declaration of a course of study. • Shared responsibility between instruction and student services, based on “evidenced-based” practices of what works. • Targets funding on core matriculation services, such as counseling and advising, through a broad array of service delivery mechanisms.
EC 78211.5	<p>Provides strong framing of purpose, in line with SSTF agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of orientation, assessment and placement, and education planning in promoting students’ successful completion of educational goals. • Focus on entering students. • Focus on completion of degrees, certificates, and transfer. • Reinforces need to harness new technologies to assist in delivering these support services.
EC 78212	<p>1) Delineates the student’s and the institution’s responsibility for the purpose of achieving the student’s educational goals and completing the student’s program of study.</p> <p>2) To ensure students are not unfairly impacted, requires the BOG to establish a reasonable, phase-in implementation period based on resources available to serve nonexempt students.</p> <p>Funded program named “Student Success and Support Program,” with funding targeted to core matriculation services for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation services • Assessment • Counseling, advising, and other educational planning services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance to students in the exploration of educational and career interests, etc.

- Provision of services through broad array of delivery mechanisms, guided by sound counseling practices and principles
- Development of education plans leading to a course of study and guidance on course selection.

3) Specifies that once the BOG adopts a system of common assessment, districts and colleges may use supplemental assessments or other measures for placement.

4) Adoption of policies, definition of terms, and implementation determine by BOG through title 5 regulations.

5) Referral to support services as needed (as available)

EC 78213	<p>BOG authorization required for districts or colleges to use assessment instruments. Specifies requirements for use of assessment instruments, such as accessibility, use to advise students on course placement.</p> <p>Defines assessment in broad terms to include standardized assessments and other multiple measures.</p>
EC 78214	<p>Clarifying changes to more effectively align institutional research to evaluate the effectiveness of the Student Success and Support Program and evaluate impact on student equity.</p>
EC 78215	<p>Defines role of BOG in developing policies and processes for: requiring student participation in core matriculation services; exempting specific student groups; and requiring an appeals process.</p> <p>To ensure students are not unfairly impacted, delineates process the BOG will use to develop policies and requires the BOG to establish a reasonable, phase-in implementation period based on resources available to serve nonexempt students</p>
EC 78216	<p>Clarifies the use of existing matriculation funds for Student Success and Support Program services and BOG's role in developing criteria for the funding formula.</p> <p>Identifies some considerations for funding formula, including numbers of students served.</p>
EC 78216(b)(4)	<p>As a condition of receipt of funds, requires districts to implement common assessment (if a district chooses to use an assessment instrument for placement) and student success scorecard, once these are established by the BOG.</p>
EC 78216(b)(5)	<p>Provides BOG with the authority to fund other services, as funding allows.</p>
EC 78216(c)	<p>Requires colleges to submit plans for use of funds, describing services provided and process to identify students at risk for academic or progress probation and interventions for students.</p> <p>Links college Student Success and Support Program plans to college student equity plans—reinforces SSTF equity agenda.</p>

BOG Fee Waiver

EC 76300

Places conditions on eligibility for BOG Fee Waiver. Students must:

Meet academic and progress standards, as defined by the BOG (developed in consultation with CCC stakeholders);

- These conditions will be phased in over a reasonable period of time as determined by the BOG.
 - Include an appeals process and sufficient notification to students
-

Taking Student Success Seriously

Taking Student Success Seriously in the College Classroom

Vincent Tinto – Syracuse University

February 2011

This paper was written with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Why Classrooms Matter

Education plays a critical role in the economic health and competitiveness of our nation. Without an increasingly well-educated citizenry, the United States runs the risk of falling behind other nations in the global economy. Moreover, education is the cornerstone of our democracy. Jefferson said it best: “if a nation expects to live ignorant and free, it wants what never was and what never will be.” Yet the evidence indicates that we are falling further behind other countries in our ability to graduate our college students.

For over 40 years access to higher education has improved, and college enrollments swelled from nearly 9 million students in 1980 to over 20 million today. But while enrollments have more than doubled, overall college completion rates have increased only slightly. Only about half of all college students in the U.S. earn a degree or certificate within six years.ⁱ For community college students the numbers are worse-- a little over a third earn a degree or certificate. The struggles of low-income and first-generation community college students are most troubling – only one-quarter of them complete a credential.ⁱⁱ

The facts are clear. Despite our success in improving access to college, we have been unable to convert those gains into higher completion rates, especially among the low-income students who most need the economic payoff that comes with a degree or credential.

It is not for lack of effort. Over the past 20 years, if not more, colleges, universities, states and private foundations have all invested considerable resources in the development and implementation of a range of improvement programs. Though several of these efforts have achieved some degree of success, most have not made a significant impact on college completion rates, for two reasons. First, most innovations have failed to reach significant scale. While a new program might produce favorable results for some students at a particular college, it means little if we do not expand the program to reach a critical mass of students. Second, most innovations fail to substantially improve the classroom experience—the one place where students connect with faculty and students to engage in learning.

This is critical when we consider the majority of students today lead lives that, just a few years ago, were considered unconventional, or “non-traditional.” Most students today do not live on campus. A great many work while in college, especially those of low-income backgrounds, and attend part-time. They commute to class and once class is over, they leave to tend to other obligations, like work and family. For them the experience of college is the experience of the classroom. Their success in college is built upon their success in the classroom often one class at a time.

If we are to substantially increase college completion, especially among low-income students, we must focus on improving success in the classroom, particularly during a student’s first year. We must be sensitive to the supports low-income students need to be successful in college, and lead efforts to dramatically improve their classroom experience. For working, low-income students these moments for teaching and learning are limited; we must make the most of these precious opportunities.

Attributes of Effective Classrooms

A long history of research has identified the attributes of classrooms in which students are more likely to succeed. These can be described by the terms expectations, support, assessment and feedback, and involvement. Unlike the attributes of students, these are within the grasp of institutions to modify if they are serious about enhancing student success.

Expectations

Student performance is driven, in part, by the expectations that faculty have for their students, and that students have of themselves. Student success is directly influenced not only by the clarity and consistency of expectations but also by their level.ⁱⁱⁱ High expectations are a condition for student success, low expectations a harbinger of failure. Simply put no one rises to low expectations. A faculty member's expectations are communicated to students, sometimes implicitly, through syllabi, assignments, course management sites, and conversations. Students pick up quickly what is expected of them in the classroom and adjust their behaviors accordingly.

Support

It is one thing to hold high expectations; it is another to provide the support students need to achieve them. Without academic, social, and, in some cases, financial support, many students, especially those who enter college academically under-prepared, struggle to succeed in college.^{iv} At no time is support, in particular academic support, more important than during the critical first year of college when student success is still so much in question and still malleable to institutional intervention. A key feature of such support is its being aligned to the demands of the classroom. That is the case because alignment of support enables students to more easily translate support into success in the classroom.

Assessment and Feedback

Students are more likely to succeed in classrooms that assess their performance and provide frequent feedback about their performance in ways that enable everyone – students, faculty, and staff alike – to adjust their behaviors to better promote student success in the classroom. This is especially true during the first year when students are trying to adjust their behaviors to the new academic and social demands of college life.

Involvement

A fourth and perhaps the most important condition for classroom success is involvement or what is now commonly referred to as engagement.^v Simply put, the more students are academically and socially engaged with faculty, staff, and peers, especially in classroom activities, the more likely they are to succeed in the classroom. Such engagements lead not only to social affiliations and the social and emotional support they provide, but also to greater involvement in learning activities and the learning they produce. Both lead to success in the classroom.

Efforts to Enhance Classroom Effectiveness

Though still limited in scope, there are now a number of efforts to reshape the classroom by altering the way academic support is provided, improving the usability of assessment and feedback techniques, and restructuring patterns of student engagement in the curriculum and classroom. Several of these deserve special attention not only because of evidence that supports their effectiveness, but also because of their capacity to reshape the nature of classroom learning. These efforts embed basic skills within content courses, automate classroom assessment and early warning systems, develop basic skills learning communities, and develop programs for new faculty.

Embedded Academic Support in the Classroom

To address the issue of basic skills in technical and vocational fields, specifically language skills, the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges developed the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) initiative.^{vi} It enables students to get academic support from basic skills instructors while earning credit toward a certificate or degree. As such, it challenges the conventional assumption that basic skill instruction should precede the beginning of college-level work. This is achieved through the collaboration of basic skills instructors and faculty who jointly design and teach college-level technical and vocational courses. As a result, students learn basic skills and program content at the same time from a team of faculty. Early results show that I-BEST students fare better on a variety of outcomes (e.g. credits earned, completion of workforce training), when compared with traditional students at the same proficiency level.^{vii} While the program is more expensive to run, recent data show that students are nine times more likely to graduate.

Automating Classroom Assessment, Feedback, and Early Warning

There are a variety of assessment techniques that can be used to assess student learning and trigger academic intervention when necessary. Classroom assessment techniques like the “one-minute” paper and the “muddiest point” have been in practice for decades.^{viii} What is new is the availability of technologies that allow us to easily capture and analyze more and different data in ways that can provide a clearer view into student learning.^{ix}

The *Signals* project at Purdue University, for instance, identifies students who are “at-risk” of doing poorly in a course by analyzing data from mini-exams as well as how they use course materials in their learning management system.^x Once identified, the system alerts faculty and then emails the student, urging them to seek help via available resources, such as office hours, study materials, and various academic support services. Though employed throughout the university, it has proven most effective for students in their first two years of coursework.^{xi}

The Action Analytics Symposium has featured an array of these types of systems and strategies for the last two years. The conversations at these events have centered on bringing real-time assessment and insight as close to the learning moment as possible. Learning management software providers are working to imbed analytic tools in their software, providing both teachers and learners resources to better inform the learning journey and focus the classroom. Again, while these tools

may feel new, they are simply enabling teaching and learning strategies that the best teachers have used for decades—if not centuries.

Basic Skills Learning Communities: Aligning Basic Skills to the Curriculum

Learning communities connect one or more basic skill or developmental courses, such as writing, to other content courses, such as history, so that the writing skills being acquired in the developmental course can be directly applied to a credit-bearing course in history. In other cases, basic skills learning communities also include a student success or counseling course. In this and other ways, learning communities, such as those at DeAnza College and Valencia Community College, provide a structure that enables the institution to align its academic and social support for basic skills students in ways that enable students to obtain needed support, acquire basic skills, and learn content at the same time.^{xii}

In their fullest implementation learning communities not only change the manner in which students experience the curriculum but also the way they experience learning. They do so by employing pedagogies of engagement, such as cooperative and problem-based learning, that require students to collaborate and become accountable for the learning of the group and classroom peers. In this way, students share not only the experience of the curriculum, but also of learning within the curriculum. By asking students to construct knowledge together, learning communities seek to involve students both socially and intellectually in ways that promote cognitive development as well as an appreciation for the many ways in which one's own knowing is enhanced when other voices are part of that learning experience.

Building Effective Classrooms: Enhancing Faculty Skills

These strategies as well as others that seek to enhance student classroom success ultimately depend on the skills of the faculty to effectively implement them. Yet the faculty who teach those classes, unlike those who teach in primary and secondary schools, are not trained to teach their students. This is not to say that there are not many talented college faculty who bring considerable skills to the task of teaching students. There are. Rather, college faculty are not, generally speaking, trained in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessment in ways that would enable them to be more effective with their students, particularly with those who are academically under-prepared.^{xiii}

Colleges are, of course, not blind to the issue of faculty skills. For years they have invested in faculty development programs, yet little change is apparent because most programs are not well conceived, are voluntary in nature, and/or attract a small segment of the faculty.^{xiv}

Fortunately this is beginning to change at a limited, but growing, number of colleges, such as Chandler-Gilbert Community College and Richland College in the Dallas Community College District. These institutions have established faculty development programs that require all new faculty to engage in activities in which they work with their colleagues to acquire the pedagogical, curricular, and assessment skills they will need to assist, in particular, students requiring basic skills instruction.

Meeting the Challenges Ahead

Though the initiatives described in the previous section have the potential to substantially improve student classroom success, there is still much to do to transform that potential into lasting results that span campuses and institutions. Working together, there is much that faculty, institutional leadership, states, and philanthropy can do to achieve that end.

Faculty

- Employ classroom assessment techniques that provide feedback to them, support staff, and their students about classroom learning.
- Work together with support staff to develop early warning systems that trigger intervention in as close to real time as possible.
- Acquire a range of pedagogical skills that actively engage students in learning with others within the classroom.

Institutional Leadership

- Develop systems of data collection and analyses that provide faculty, staff, and administration the timely information they need to improve student classroom success.
- Develop systems of analysis that enable programs and their lead faculty to ascertain how courses in their program are aligned so as to provide a coherent sequence that allows students to successfully complete the program within a reasonable time. Nowhere is this more important than in the sequence of courses that make up the basic skills curriculum.
- Provide support and incentives for faculty and programs to invest in innovations to enhance classroom effectiveness.
- Take steps to ensure that all new faculty acquire the skills and knowledge they need to construct effective classrooms. In the same way that institutions must take student success seriously, so too must they take faculty development seriously.

State Leadership

- Provide support and incentives for classroom innovation in ways that move innovation beyond individual classrooms to reshape institutions. This is particularly important for first-year courses and the key gateway and basic skill courses that dot the higher educational landscape.
- Provide support and incentives for institutions to work together in ways that make improvement matter and move innovations beyond the borders of their individual campuses.
- Support the development of new faculty development programs in both two- and four-year colleges that provide new faculty the skills and knowledge they need to construct effective classrooms.

Philanthropy

- Support, through the funding of empirically based demonstration projects, the development of new technologies to facilitate the work of faculty within the classroom so as to improve classroom effectiveness. Nowhere is this more important than in the way we go about addressing basic skills.
- Bring together knowledge of what works in enhancing classroom success and help promote conversations about innovations that break down the many silos in which they now take place.
- Work with states to promote the formation of consortia of institutions whose members work together to learn how to develop more effective classrooms and scale up their efforts beyond their individual campuses.

There are many challenges facing efforts to transform the college classroom in ways that have lasting and widespread impact on student success. Several that are most pressing are:

Implementation at Scale. It is one thing to start an innovative effort, it is another to implement it in ways that enables it to endure and reach classrooms more widely. We continue to struggle with the challenge of turning what works for a few classrooms or institutions into large-scale change that makes a difference for many. Unless we address issues of institutional capacity, support, and incentives, it is unlikely that we will move existing efforts beyond the isolated settings in which they are now found.

Dearth of Practical Examples. Though there is much promise to a range of innovations in classrooms, there is not the evidentiary base necessary to scale up our efforts to transform the classroom. Where evidence exists, it is typically of single, isolated cases that do not easily translate into the type of proof needed to support institution-wide and multi-institutions initiatives.

Knowledge Management. Knowledge of innovations remains fragmented. The silos within which conversations about classroom innovation take place hinder our efforts to move classroom improvements from the margins to the mainstream of educational practice. Moreover these closed conversations limit the types of cross-effort conversations out of which further innovation arises.

Efforts to increase student success in college are not new. States, institutions, and foundations have invested substantial resources trying to do so. But for all their well-intended efforts, student success in higher education has not changed substantially and the completion gap between high- and low-income students remains largely unchanged. This is because most efforts have ignored the college classroom, the one place where most students interact with their teachers and engage in formal learning activities. If students do not find success there, it is unlikely that they will succeed in college.

Past efforts, even when successful, have been isolated, sometimes idiosyncratic, and often not implemented beyond individual classrooms and institutions. Institutions must come together in an institutional learning community to learn as one how to adapt particular innovations to each of their campus and achieve a scale of change whose impact will be more broadly felt. In the same way we know that students learn better together, so too can institutions.

We need to develop a system of institutions within states that are well aligned– from classroom to campus–around student success; that provides incentives for improvements in student classroom

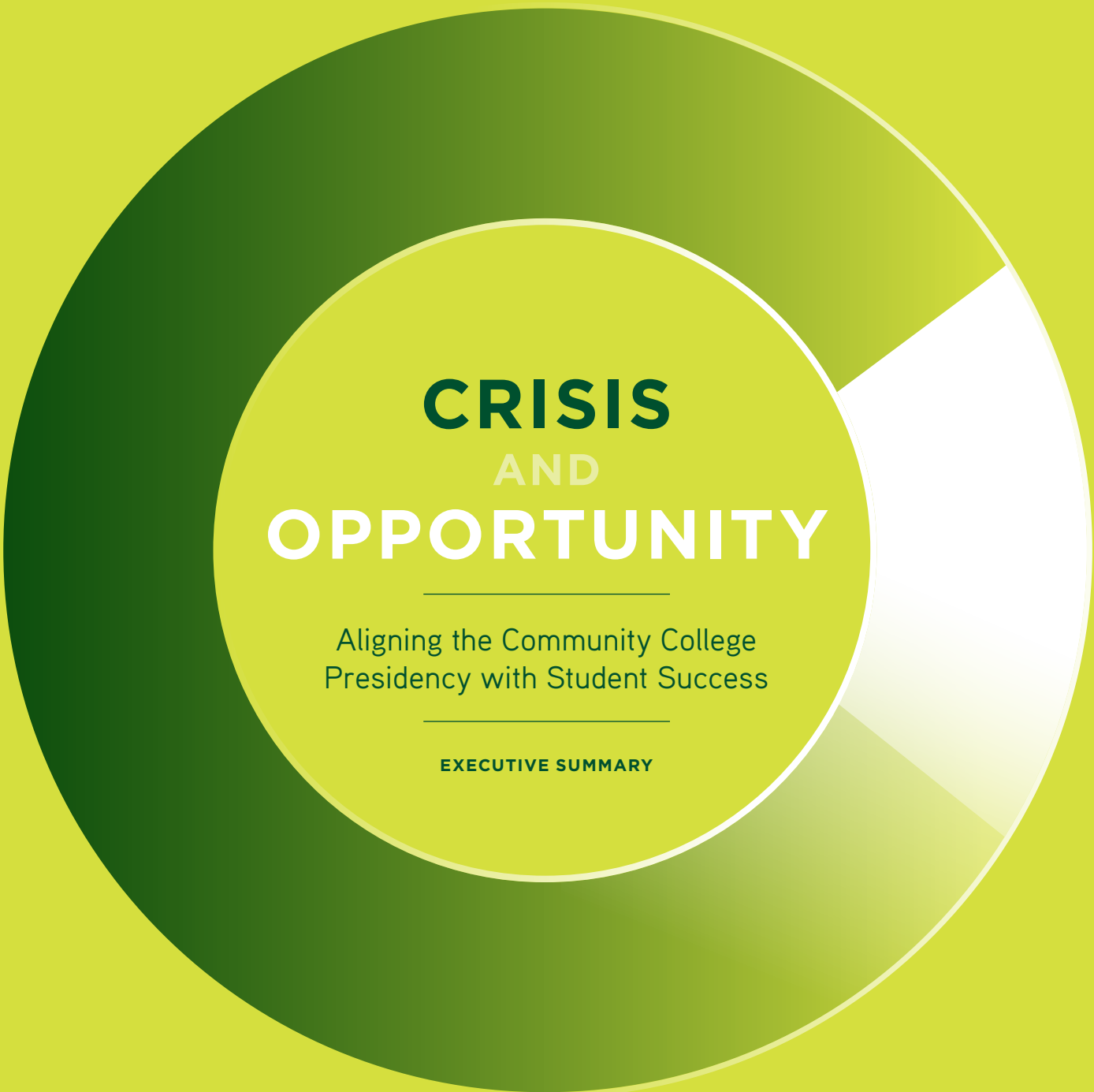
success at all levels; makes full use of technology and other innovations to enhance student classroom success; effectively engages and supports students in learning within and beyond classrooms; and is staffed of well-trained, well-supported caring professionals who work together to construct effective classrooms.

If we are serious in our efforts to enhance college success, much must change. We must focus our efforts on the classroom and reshape the work of faculty and the experience of students. We must build upon emerging initiatives, some of which have been described here, and use them to guide institution and statewide change. We must enhance the capacity of institutions to act, provide support for their actions and incentives that reward those who move effectively to improve student classroom success. Our students deserve no less. Our nation requires no less.

Endnotes

- ⁱ National Center for Education Statistics, 2003. Descriptive Summary of 1995-1996 Beginning Postsecondary Students: Six Years Later. Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, NCES 2003-151. Table 2.0A.
- National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions Fall 2008; Graduation Rates, 2002 and 2005 cohorts; and Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2008: First Look. Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, NCES 2010-152.
- ⁱⁱ Engle, J., A. Bermeo, and C. O'Brien, 2008. *Straight from the Source: What Works for First-Generation College Students*. Washington D.C.: The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education. p.14.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Reason, Terenzini, and Domingo (2006), for instance, study found that students who viewed their institution as more academically challenging were more likely to report greater gains in academic competence during the first year than similar students who saw their institution as less cognitively challenging.
- ^{iv} The U.S. Department of Education reported that at least twenty-eight percent of all beginning college students in the 2000 academic year enrolled in at least one basic skills or "remedial" course in reading, writing, or mathematics. That percentage was twice as high in two-year colleges than in four-year institutions (42 percent and 20 percent respectively). But even these percentages may substantially underestimate the number of students in college who should take such courses since not all students who are referred to those courses actually take them.
- ^v Tinto, V.1993. *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- ^{vi} For more information visit www.highereducation.org/reports/Policy_Practice/IBEST.pdf.
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- Jenkins, D., M., Zeidenberg and G. Kienzl. 2009. *Educational Outcomes of I-BEST Washington State Community and Technical College System's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program: Findings from a Multivariate Analysis*. New York: Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University. CCRC Working Paper No.16.
- ^{viii} Angelo, T. and P. Cross. 1993. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*. (2nd ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- ^{ix} Murphy, L. and D. Wolff, 2005. "Take a minute to complete the loop: using electronic Classroom Assessment Techniques in computer science labs." *Journal of Computing Sciences in Colleges* 21(1): 150-159.
- Becker, A. and M. Devine, 2007. Automated assessments and student learning. *International Journal of Learning Technology*. 3(1): 5-17.
- ^x The interested reader should visit the Signals website: <http://www.itap.purdue.edu/tit/signals/>.
- ^{xi} Arnold, K. 2010. Signals: Applying Academic Analytics. *Educause Quarterly*. 22.
- ^{xii} Engstrom, C. and V. Tinto, 2007. *Pathways to Student Success: The Impact of Learning Communities on the Success of Academically Under-Prepared College Students*. Final Report Prepared for the Lumina Foundation for Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.
- ^{xiii} Grubb, N., and Associates. 1999. *Honored but Invisible: An Inside Look at Teaching in Community Colleges*. New York: Routledge.
- Waiwaiole, E. and C. Noonan-Terry. 2008. The need to equip, prepared community college faculty has never been greater. *Community College Forum*, 14:20.
- ^{xiv} The same can be said of the very few efforts that have focused on basic skills instruction. The most recent of these is the Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC) project. Undertaken as a partnership between the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, it was three-year effort involving eleven California community colleges whose goal was to improve the teaching of basic skill courses. It did so through the development of campus-based faculty inquiry groups whose members worked together to change how they teach basic skills. The project has had mixed results. Some campuses have made substantial changes to their practice. Others have not. Some changes appear to be sustainable, others less so. Furthermore like most efforts that are voluntary, faculty participation has been quite variable. Despite good intentions, the fact remains that such efforts have yet to put into place structures for faculty development that can endure and reach all faculty, not just some.

Crisis and Opportunity



CRISIS AND **OPPORTUNITY**

Aligning the Community College
Presidency with Student Success

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



FUNDED BY **THE KRESGE FOUNDATION**

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Achieving the Dream, Inc. is a national nonprofit leading the nation's most comprehensive non-governmental reform network for student success in higher education history. The Achieving the Dream National Reform Network, including nearly 200 institutions, more than 100 coaches and advisors, and 15 state policy teams—working throughout 32 states and the District of Columbia—helps 3.75 million community college students have a better chance of realizing greater economic opportunity and achieving their dreams. For more information, visit www.achievingthedream.org.

The Aspen Institute mission is twofold: to foster values-based leadership, encouraging individuals to reflect on the ideals and ideas that define a good society, and to provide a neutral and balanced venue for discussing and acting on critical issues. **The Aspen College Excellence Program** aims to identify and replicate practices, policies and leadership that significantly improve college student outcomes. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org/cep.



CRISIS **AND** **OPPORTUNITY**

Aligning the Community College
Presidency with Student Success

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The world around community colleges is changing quickly. States, students, and families face serious resource constraints; demographic shifts are ushering in a more diverse student population; and technology is opening the door to new forms of educational delivery and ever more competitors. Shifting with equal force is the definition of community college success. Driven by stiffening international competition and urgent domestic economic challenges, state and federal policymakers—not to mention parents and students—increasingly expect community colleges not just to provide broad access to higher education, but also to deliver success for students, many of whom enter college underprepared.

In sum, community colleges will for the foreseeable future be expected to produce more degrees of a higher quality at a lower per-student cost to an increasingly diverse population. Gone are the days when expanding access alone will be equated with success. Meeting new expectations will require a new vision for leadership. The skills and qualities that made community college presidents effective when the dominant benchmark of success was access alone are no longer the same now that expectations extend to higher levels of completion, quality, and productivity.



The average age of community college presidents has been steadily pushing upwards, and by the end of this decade over half the current cohort of leaders will likely be retired. Moreover, individuals in positions that typically lead into the presidency, such as chief academic officers, are also approaching retirement age or are not aspiring to the presidency. In ten years, most community colleges are likely to have different, younger leaders than they do today.

The question, then, is where to find and how to develop the next generation of leaders needed to dramatically improve student success? The Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream (ATD) have worked with many community colleges around the nation that are making significant improvements in their completion rates and ensuring high levels of success for their students. Several of these colleges have been spotlighted as Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence finalists and/or as Achieving the Dream Leader Colleges. They range

from large, urban institutions that serve over 50,000 students in a wide variety of vocational and academic programs to small, rural colleges that offer a limited number of high-value technical credentials. All of these institutions have one important thing in common: leaders with the strong skills needed to create organizational structures, processes, and policies aligned—explicitly and aggressively—with student success goals. The ability of these leaders to align their core responsibilities—in communication, relationship-building, budgeting, fundraising, and advocacy—to achieving high levels of student success makes all the difference.

With this in mind, Aspen and ATD have, over the past year, researched and explored the qualities of presidents who have led community colleges to high and improving levels of student success. After completing a literature review, conducting focus groups, and synthesizing responses to extensive interviews with presidents and search consultants, we have concluded that:

While educational and professional development programs provide some of the skills that make leaders effective, they underemphasize several critical skills and often fail to deliberately and explicitly connect their curricula to student success goals.

When recruiting and hiring new presidents, boards of trustees often do not value—and sometimes completely overlook—many of the critical qualities that presidents have brought to institutions achieving high and improving levels of student success.

For the presidents of today and tomorrow to collectively contribute to the national priority of dramatically improving community college student success, we must question past assumptions about the community college presidency and join with others to overhaul the way presidents are developed, trained, recruited, hired, and evaluated. By doing so, we believe that the looming leadership void can become—must become—a transformative leadership opportunity.

BY THE END OF THE DECADE, OVER HALF OF THE CURRENT COHORT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS WILL LIKELY HAVE RETIRED, USHERING IN A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS.

FINDINGS

At the center of this report lies a description of the qualities of highly effective community college presidents, which we define as those whose institutions have achieved high and/or significantly improving levels of student success. Based on research and reflection, we conclude that there are five qualities, above all others, common among highly effective presidents, regardless of the context within which they lead.



QUALITIES:

Deep Commitment to Student Access and Success

While those who devote their careers to community colleges often care deeply for the populations and missions these unique institutions serve, it is clear that some leaders, more than others, demonstrate a persistent, almost zealous drive to ensure student success, while at the same time maintaining access for the broad range of students community colleges have traditionally served. This commitment drives them to become community college presidents and informs the great majority of their actions.

Willingness to Take Significant Risks to Advance Student Success

Exceptional presidents demonstrate that skillfully taking risks is a vital step toward improvement. For example, they publicly admit and take ownership of low success rates as a tactic to build urgency around an improvement agenda, and they make bold decisions to reallocate resources when needed to advance student outcomes.



The Ability to Create Lasting Change within the College

Community college presidents that have brought about substantial improvement in student success spend substantial time and effort working to create that change internally. These presidents generally lead change through four critical steps:

- **Building urgency** by using data and the bully pulpit to communicate about student success challenges without laying blame.
- **Creating strong plans**, operationalized with sustainable strategies that are proven to improve student success and that involve the whole institution.
- **Collaborating with and listening to faculty and support staff** who have the most direct contact with and impact on students.
- **Implementing and evaluating change strategies**, holding faculty and staff throughout the institution accountable for executing against plans and demonstrating with data that their practices are effective.



Having a Strong, Broad, Strategic Vision for the College and Its Students, Reflected in External Partnerships

Highly effective presidents work to serve students not just while on campus, but also in ways other college leaders might deem beyond their control or responsibility. In particular, they focus on who in their community gets access to a college education, whether students are positioned to succeed when they arrive, what non-educational services they receive on campus, and whether they succeed after they graduate. These leaders build strong relationships with other organizations—including K-12 school districts, universities, employers, community-based non-profit organizations, and policymakers—that are tailored to deliver what students need most to succeed.



Raise and Allocate Resources in Ways Aligned to Student Success

Exceptional community college presidents craft and expertly implement strategies for raising revenue – and deploying resources – that support and align with their goals for improving student success. They are unusually entrepreneurial in raising revenue and consistently strategic when allocating resources.

CREATING A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS EQUIPPED TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE FOR STUDENTS



Most of the exceptional community college presidents we interviewed for this report rose to their positions through traditional leadership pathways: doctoral degrees followed by upward movement through faculty or administrative positions in community colleges. Many have participated in professional leadership development programs designed and implemented by leading national associations and universities. These academic and professional experiences were essential to their success and will continue to be vital to the development of new and future leaders. Similarly, new efforts to train trustees hold promise to impart important learning relevant to achieving higher rates of community college student success.

But our research revealed two major areas in which current efforts are not adequately aligned to ensure that more presidents have the ability to drive reforms that lead to high levels of student success. First, the processes and criteria by which trustees recruit and select presidents must be improved to ensure that more candidates possess a set of essential skills and competencies and have demonstrated the ability to apply those skills to achieve high levels of success for students. Second, training and professional development programs must be better aligned with the qualities demonstrated by presidents who have transformed community colleges into institutions that achieve high and continually improving levels of student success.

CHANGING THE HIRING PERSPECTIVE



Our conversations with search consultants revealed a consistent finding: In the hiring process, trustees tend to neglect whether candidates have three core qualities present in highly effective community college presidents: a deep commitment to student access and success, the ability to purposefully create institutional change aligned with student success goals, and a willingness to take the risks needed to bring about student success reforms.

Each of these characteristics can be evaluated during the search process, if the right questions are asked. Accordingly, it is important that trustees understand these characteristics and can identify a leader who is able to prioritize actions necessary to achieve high levels of student success even if they deviate from common practice in ways that may upset some colleagues and stakeholders. In order to do so, when evaluating presidential candidates, trustees and other hiring authorities should:

- **Look for proof of a deep commitment to students.** Identify individuals who reflect a consistent focus on student success in all of their interviews and other communications and have experience achieving results over the several years it takes to improve outcomes at

community colleges. Ask questions such as how they define institutional success and what broad and specific goals they would set for improving institutional effectiveness.

- **Assess candidates' ability to change culture and practice.** Look for evidence of consistently using simple and powerful data to build urgency; of using planning or other means to build consensus and plans for specific results; of collaborating with and inspiring leadership teams and staff; and of leading organizations that implement effectively, evaluate success regularly, and change course quickly when needed. Ask how they would inspire a sense of urgency, develop a plan for moving forward, ensure strong implementation, benchmark success, and evaluate progress.
- **Ensure willingness to take risks in order to achieve organizational success.** Look for specific examples of leaders who have taken risks that resulted in higher levels of success. Examples include admitting failure as a rallying call to action and reallocating resources (or taking other actions) that are aligned with proven student success strategies but most would avoid as unpopular or countercultural.

- **Consider non-traditional candidates.** There are many exceptional future presidents currently sitting in administrative or faculty positions in community colleges. But there are also many dedicated and talented leaders who come from outside academia, including from industries that depend on community college graduates and understand deeply the value of ensuring students' success in and beyond college.

Those who select and work with community college trustees should take additional steps to focus trustees on student success by creating assessment tools and related materials to use in presidential searches, conducting training on the hiring process for both new trustees and existing boards, developing guidelines and tools for state political leaders and their staffs on the connection between hiring and governance and student completion and success, and producing voter guides to enable communities to better understand the connection between the qualities of exceptional trustees and the recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly effective presidents.

CHANGING THE WAY PRESIDENTS ARE PREPARED AND DEVELOPED

Current community college presidential preparation and continuing education programs target many of the skills and knowledge areas critical to leading institutions to higher levels of student success. However, programs sometimes neglect to ground the teaching of skills in the context of improving student outcomes. Self-assessment tools should be developed to help all programs that prepare and develop community college leaders determine the extent to which their curricula are aligned with, and identify gaps in the teaching of, the skills held by highly effective community college presidents. As well, faculty and administrators of PhD, EdD, and professional development programs with a mission of preparing future community college leaders should do the following to ensure that topics and skills are framed in terms of their utility in ensuring student success:

- **Improve change management skills.** Create new courses and programs that prepare future leaders to lead organizational transformation aligned with student success. Such courses and programs would be built around using data as a communications tool and as the foundation for a shared vision, using planning to define specific institution-wide strategies, collaborating for success, and ensuring strong implementation and evaluation.
- **Better align all courses with student success goals.** Teach core skills such as budgeting, fundraising, and advocacy in ways that enable them to be used to improve student success, not just to keep the college afloat.

- **Develop new teaching strategies for the new environment.** Create and deliver curricular units to address difficult issues all community colleges face in a changing environment, including how to increase productivity, how to succeed with students starting with developmental needs, how to reinvent pathways and systems in decentralized cultures, and how to monitor and close equity gaps.
- **Include more nontraditional candidates.** Recruit for programs broadly from within and beyond academia to find future leaders with both the skill and the personal commitment needed to ensure that community colleges effectively prepare students for further education and careers.

The number of individuals served by current community college leadership programs is not nearly great enough to meet the coming demand. One way to potentially increase the pool of highly effective leaders would be to build open-access curricular units for all community college leadership programs to share in areas of emerging and unresolved concerns, such as reforming developmental education, using technology effectively, and building cultures of inquiry throughout an institution. In addition, nontraditional candidates should be provided new opportunities to acquire the skills needed to pursue community college presidencies, including through hands-on mentorship from those who have succeeded within the sector. The creation of additional national communities of highly effective new leaders is needed to provide more structured opportunities for leaders to learn with and from one another and, over time, could form the backbone of future community college reform efforts.

CONCLUSION

There are community colleges around the United States that are succeeding in securing strong outcomes for students—in learning, persisting, transferring to four-year colleges, graduating with degrees and certificates, and finding good jobs. These colleges have exceptional leaders who align their actions every day with the goal of monitoring and improving these outcomes for all students. We cannot leave to chance whether our nation’s community colleges will have such leaders in the future. We must act wisely, proactively, and urgently to adapt the way we recruit, train, and hire new presidents so that even more can meet the challenge of helping our students succeed while on campus and beyond.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO DOWNLOAD THIS SUMMARY OR THE FULL REPORT, VISIT:

- www.aspeninstitute.org/cep
 - www.achievingthedream.org
-



The Heart of Student Success

2010 Findings



The Heart of Student Success

Teaching, Learning, and College Completion



Acknowledgments

This report is dedicated to those who teach, in whatever role, at whatever level, in whatever location ... to those who believe deeply that all students, given the right conditions, can learn ... who affirm that students' right to learn to succeed trumps their right to fail ... who expect much from their students and then support them so they can rise to those expectations ... who refuse to accept as tolerable the attainment gaps that separate low-income students and students of color from their classmates.

We extend our respect and gratitude to those who are passionate about teaching ... who use that passion to light the fire of curiosity in their students' minds and to instill a lifelong habit of inquiry ... who go the extra mile to work with struggling students and to challenge those who shine with promise.

To those who join with colleagues in claiming collective responsibility for student success ... who see themselves as learners, seeking new strategies and skills for improving student success.

To those who take time to notice, to connect, to care.

To those who match their love of learning with love of learners.

Kay McClenney

Director

Center for Community College Student Engagement

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“All my [high school] teachers told me, ‘Your teachers in college, they wouldn’t care whether you showed up, they wouldn’t care if you turned in your assignments, they wouldn’t care if you failed.’ But at the community college, all my teachers are really showing that they are interested in us succeeding. I didn’t expect that.”

— STUDENT

Foreword

“The American education system today is experiencing the most sustained, diverse, wide-spread, and persistent challenge ever to confront it. Virtually everyone agrees that something has gone wrong, that corrective action is needed.”

The quotation above is from 1970, part of a presentation by Leon Lessinger, then Associate Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Lessinger’s challenges to American schools and colleges rang true as my colleagues, George Baker and Richard Brownell, and I were writing our first book, *Accountability and the Community College* (AACC, 1972). The book highlighted calls (now almost four decades old) for increased attention to student progress and success, including course completion rates, persistence rates, and the number of entering community college students who graduate with certificates or degrees.

Since these early calls to accountability, augmented by numerous reports in the mid-1980s, we have seen too little improvement in the success of our students in public schools and community colleges. It is well known that the great majority of students enrolling in community colleges require remediation in one or more of the basic academic skills and that most community colleges function as “emergency rooms” for many of their entering students.

Not only are many students still alarmingly underprepared for college, but they too often have developed an active aversion to mathematics, English, and the educational process more generally. This poses a double whammy challenge for instructors, who must then address not only skill deficits but students’ lack of confidence in themselves as learners and a pervasive sense that what students are asked to learn — particularly in developmental and introductory college courses — has little to do with what really matters to them in their lives.

The Center for Community College Student Engagement, part of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, has for the past decade been at the forefront of work with community colleges across the nation and beyond to improve educational quality and outcomes for their students. Amidst the renewed calls for national leadership and for policy change at state and federal levels, it is critical to remember that the goal of ensuring that more of our students attain high-quality certificates and degrees can ultimately be achieved

only by strengthening the purposeful interactions that occur between students and faculty, between students and student services professionals, and among the students themselves.

Further, improved community college outcomes will not be achieved without the heart-and-soul commitment of college faculty and staff. Most of our faculty have been well prepared in the disciplines they teach, but too few have been prepared for the reality of today’s students — the ways they learn, and the cognitive and affective challenges they bring with them through the open door.

We must focus on hiring and developing faculty members who enjoy working with students even more than they enjoy their discipline, who are convinced that students are capable of learning, and who have the skills to engage students actively in the learning process. In so doing, we will increase the odds that our faculty and staff are well prepared to “make magic” in community college classrooms.

The calls for increased college completion come at a time of increasing student enrollments and draconian budget cuts; and too often in those circumstances, efforts to develop faculty and staff take low priority. It is essential to invest in professional development if we are to make good on the promise of the open door. In this report, the Center focuses on teaching and learning as the heart of student success. The focus could not be more timely or more important.

*John E. Roueche
Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair
Director, Community College
Leadership Program
The University of Texas at Austin*



Defining College Success

College completion is on the agenda — from the White House to the statehouse to the family house. Improving college completion is essential, but increased degree and certificate completion, in and of itself, is not a sufficient measure of improvement. Genuine progress depends on making sure that degree completion is a proxy for real learning — for developing thinking and reasoning abilities, content knowledge, and the high-level skills needed for 21st century jobs and citizenship.

The Unquestionable Importance of College Completion

Educational attainment and college completion matter — for the prospects of individual students and for the future viability of both the U.S. economy and the American democracy.

The higher a person's educational attainment, the more likely he or she is to be gainfully employed, pay taxes, volunteer, participate in the democratic process, and be capable of taking care of the health and educational needs of his or her children. Conversely, higher levels of education make it less likely for individuals to be publicly dependent.¹

Today's collective focus on college completion is a shift in U.S. higher education, and particularly in community colleges, from the historical emphasis on providing access to postsecondary education opportunities. A legitimate point of pride is that almost three-quarters of American young people enter some kind of postsecondary training or education within two years of graduating from high school.²

However, for far too many community college students, the open door also has been a revolving door:

- Only 28% of first-time, full-time, associate degree-seeking community college students graduate with a certificate or an associate degree within three years.³

A Shared Commitment to Increasing College Completion

For many years now, the Center for Community College Student Engagement, together with colleagues in the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, has focused its efforts on improved college completion.

Working with community colleges across the United States and beyond, the Center focuses colleges and other stakeholders on using data about effective practice to improve educational experiences for community college students — and thus to strengthen student learning, persistence, and completion.

In spring 2010, the Center for Community College Student Engagement joined five other national community college organizations in signing the Community College Completion Commitment — a pledge to promote and support the goal that U.S. community colleges will produce 50% more students with high-quality degrees and certificates by 2020, while also increasing access and quality. The Center's partners in this pledge are the American Association of Community Colleges, the Association of Community College Trustees, the League for Innovation in the Community College, the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development, and Phi Theta Kappa.⁴

The commitment and leadership within the community college field are consistent with the challenge issued by President Barack Obama as he established the ambitious 2020 goal — and urged the United States to once again lead the world in the proportion of citizens with postsecondary credentials. U.S. Undersecretary of Education Martha Kanter, a former

community college chancellor, has asserted, "We are solely, deeply and personally committed to what President Obama has set for us to achieve . . . Everything we are doing in the Department of Education is aimed at achieving this goal."⁵

Further impetus comes from leading foundations that support the community college student success agenda. The Lumina Foundation's Big Goal is "to increase the proportion of Americans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025."⁶

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's postsecondary success goal is "to help double the number of low-income adults who earn a college degree or credential with genuine marketplace value by age 26."⁷

Regional and state-based foundations have made similar commitments. As one example, the Greater Texas Foundation aspires to "increase rates of post-secondary enrollment and completion for all Texas students, with a particular focus on students who may encounter barriers to post-secondary success."⁸

In the policy arena, Complete College America, a new organization funded by at least five major foundations, is building an Alliance of States (23 states and growing) that have committed to taking "bold actions to significantly increase the number of students successfully completing college and achieving degrees and credentials with value in the labor market and close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations."⁹



- Fewer than half (45%) of students who enter community college with the goal of earning a degree or certificate have met their goal six years later.¹⁰
- Slightly more than half (52%) of first-time full-time college students in public community colleges return for their second year.¹¹

In addition, America is losing ground in educational attainment, not only by comparison with other countries but also, unfortunately, when comparing successive generations of its own citizens.

- The United States, long ranked first worldwide, now ranks 10th in the percentage of young adults who hold a college degree.¹²
- If current trends hold, the current generation of college-age Americans will be less educated than their parents, for the first time in U.S. history.¹³

“Set unreasonable goals, and then chase them unreasonably.”

— LALITA BOOTH

Formerly a child of poverty, high school dropout, and homeless single mother.

Today, a graduate of Florida’s Seminole State College (formerly Seminole Community College) and candidate for joint Master of Public Policy and Master of Business Administration degrees at Harvard Business School.

- American employers are reporting shortages of workers with the skills needed to fill jobs, and there is the growing risk that more and more of those opportunities will be exported to other countries.

Connecting Improved Learning to College Completion

College completion alone won’t address all of these challenges. In fact, it is easy to imagine scenarios in which more degrees are awarded but less learning occurs. That outcome must be rejected as unacceptable. The push for more degrees will produce the desired results for individuals and the society only if *college completion* reflects the learning required for family-supporting jobs, effective citizenship, and further studies.

Teaching quality is an essential link between improved college completion and improved learning. Just as access to college is an empty promise without effective practices that promote student success, improved college completion will have real meaning only with serious and sustained attention to the quality of what goes on between teachers and students.

This year, the Center for Community College Student Engagement focuses its national report on college completion — and the teaching and learning that must be the foundation for high-quality certificates and degrees. Effective teaching and meaningful learning: They are the heart of student success.

Characteristics of Community College Students

Each semester, community colleges meet the needs of a diverse student body that includes recent high school graduates, workers returning to college to learn new skills, and first-generation college students. These students come to college with widely differing goals and a range of academic preparation.

As different as they are, most community college students share one attribute: limited

time. Most are attending classes and studying while working; caring for dependents; and juggling personal, academic, and financial challenges.

The student characteristics described on these pages are the reality of community colleges today. To help more students succeed, colleges must not use these challenges to rationalize low expectations. Instead, they

must use these facts to connect with their students — to understand their needs, help them address barriers to their success, and build relationships that help them stay in college and succeed.

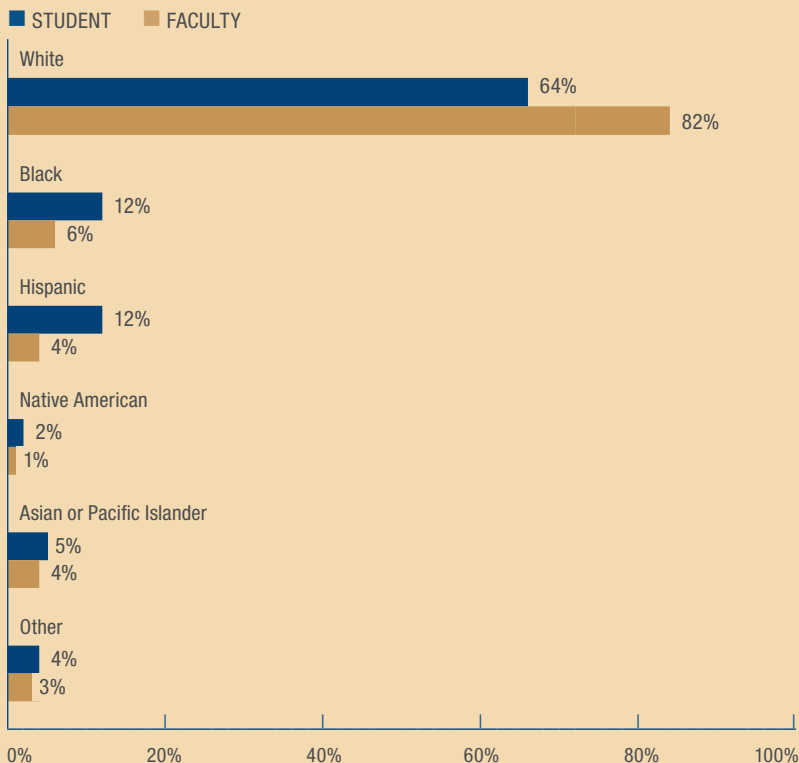
“We have to work across the cultures so that most students grasp most of what we are teaching.”

— FACULTY MEMBER

Student and Faculty Demographics

Differences in student and faculty demographics often are a concern for colleges in that they may restrict students’ opportunities to interact with role models or mentors from similar backgrounds.

Key Demographics: Students and Faculty Members



Sources: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data and 2010 CCFSE Cohort data.

Students’ Aspirations

Not all students attend community college to earn a certificate or degree. However, the data show a sizable gap between the percentage of students who aim to complete a credential and the percentage of those who actually do. Among CCSSE respondents, 52% report that completing a certificate is a goal, and 84% say obtaining an associate degree is a goal. Yet fewer than half (45%)¹⁴ of students who enter community college with the goal of earning a degree or certificate have met their goal six years later.

Students’ Goals

Indicate which of the following are your reasons/goals for attending this college.

	SENSE respondents (entering students)		CCSSE respondents	
	A goal	Not a goal	A goal	Not a goal
Complete a certificate program	58%	42%	52%	48%
Obtain an associate degree	79%	21%	84%	16%
Transfer to a four-year college or university	74%	26%	75%	25%
Obtain or update job-related skills	N/A		70%	30%
Self-improvement/personal enjoyment	N/A		74%	26%
Change careers	N/A		43%	57%

Note: Respondents may indicate more than one goal.

Sources: 2009 SENSE data and 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

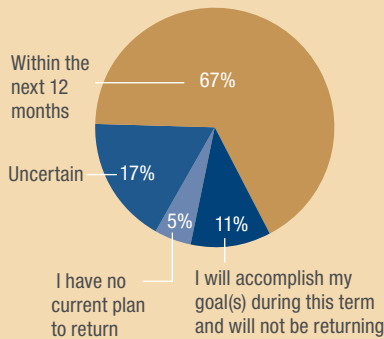
Students' Persistence

The contrast between student and faculty responses shows that faculty are far more likely than students to believe that various circumstances, including working full-time, caring for dependents, or being academically underprepared, would be likely causes for students to drop out of college.

Asked about their plans after the current semester, 22% of students report that they have no plan to return or are uncertain about their future plans. These data clearly point to an opportunity for colleges, through strengthened academic planning and advising, to help students establish an academic plan and pathway that will help them persist in college.

Students' Plans after the Current Semester

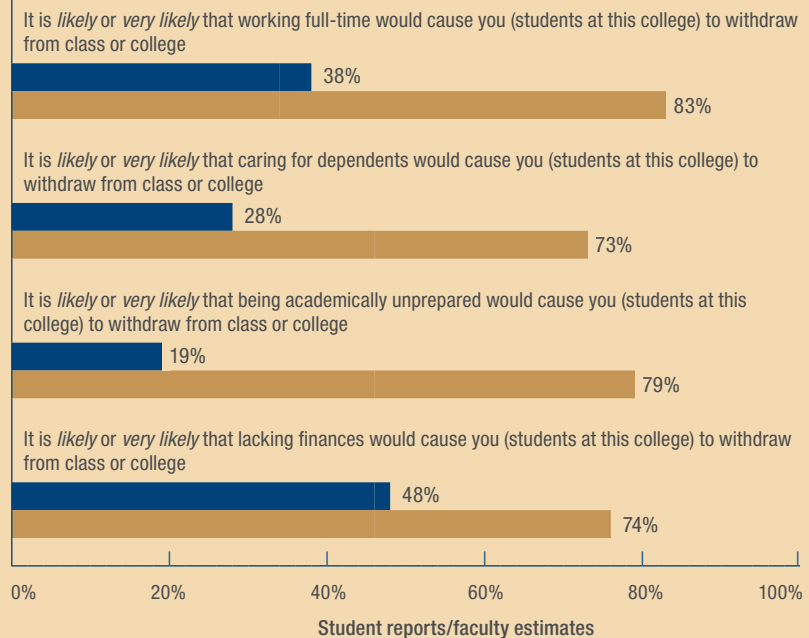
When do you plan to take classes at this college again?



Source: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

Barriers to Returning to College: Student and Faculty Perceptions

■ STUDENT ■ FACULTY



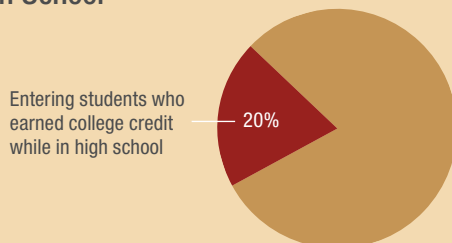
In addition, 49% of students and 46% of faculty say that transferring to a four-year college or university is a likely or very likely reason that they (or their students) would not return to this college.

Sources: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data and CCFSSSE Cohort data.

Contrasts in College-Going Backgrounds

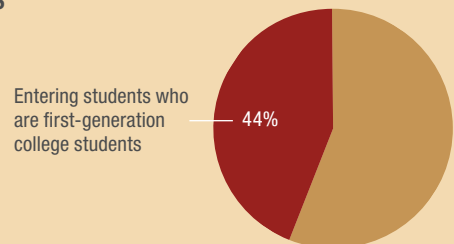
Students come to community college with varying levels of college experience — and corresponding levels of comfort and confidence. For example, one in five entering students earned college credit in high school, while more than two in five are first-generation college students (neither their mothers nor their fathers attended college).

Entering Students Who Earned College Credit while in High School



Source: 2009 SENSE data.

Entering Students Who Are First-Generation College Students



Source: 2009 SENSE data.

The Center: Collecting Data from Many Perspectives

CCSSE, CCFSSSE, and SENSE

The Center for Community College Student Engagement administers three surveys that complement one another: *CCSSE*, *CCFSSE*, and *SENSE*. All are tools that assess student engagement — how engaged students are with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with their studies.

Each of the three surveys collects data from a particular perspective, and together they provide a comprehensive view of educational practice on community college campuses.

Why student engagement? All of the Center's work is grounded in a large body of research about what works in strengthening student learning and persistence. Research shows that the more actively engaged students are, the more likely they are to learn, to persist in college, and to attain their academic goals. Student engagement, therefore, is an important metric for assessing the quality of colleges' educational practices and identifying ways colleges can help more students succeed.

- The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*), now in its eighth year, surveys more experienced students and gathers information about their overall college experience. It focuses on educational practices associated with higher levels of learning, persistence, and completion. In this report, *CCSSE* data include only respondents who indicate that they do not currently hold a college degree.
- The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*), now in its sixth year, is always administered in conjunction with *CCSSE*. The faculty survey provides instructors' perspectives on student experiences as well as data about faculty members' teaching practice and use of professional time.
- The Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), now in its second national administration, focuses on students' experiences from the time of their decision to attend their college through the end of the first three weeks of the fall academic term. The survey assesses practices that are most likely to engage entering students and ensure that they successfully complete the critical first term of college and create pathways for further advancement. In this report, *SENSE* data include only entering students who indicate that they do not currently hold a college degree. Entering students are those who indicate that this is their first time at their college.

The Center works with participating colleges to administer the surveys, and then the colleges receive their survey results, along with guidance and analyses they can use to improve their programs and services for students.

The Center encourages colleges to compare faculty perceptions with student responses and share those data with faculty members. The comparison is not perfect because students report their personal experiences while faculty members indicate their perceptions of student experiences in the college. Nonetheless, the comparison can inspire powerful conversations because faculty and students typically have different perceptions regarding the degree of student engagement.

Qualitative and Quantitative Data

The Center for Community College Student Engagement uses two approaches to better understand students' college experiences: the surveys, which provide detailed quantitative data, and the *Initiative on Student Success*, which provides qualitative data.

The *Initiative on Student Success*, supported by Houston Endowment Inc. and the MetLife Foundation, conducts focus groups and interviews at select colleges, gathering the perspectives of students, faculty, student services professionals, and presidents to paint a more complete picture of the student experience.

The surveys' rich data help colleges better understand *what* is happening. Data from the focus groups and interviews can help them begin to figure out *why*.

Core Surveys and Special-Focus Items

Both *CCSSE* and *SENSE* include a core survey, which is the same from year to year, and special-focus items that examine an area of student experience and institutional performance of special interest to the field.

CCSSE includes five special-focus survey items that are different each year. The 2010 special-focus items are about educational practices and experiences that promote deep learning.

SENSE offers several optional special-focus item modules, each of which delves deeply into a key issue related to entering student engagement. The 2009 administration included four special-focus options — commitment and support, financial assistance, student success courses, and engagement through technology. Participating colleges may choose to include zero, one, or two modules in the survey of their students.

Strategies to Promote Learning That Matters

In the following pages, *The Heart of Student Success* describes four key strategies to promote the strengthened classroom experiences that ultimately are requisite to both increased levels of college completion and deeper levels of learning. In this report, the term *classroom experiences* refers to any activity that takes place as part of a regularly scheduled course.

The key strategies are:

- Strengthen classroom engagement
- Integrate student support into learning experiences
- Expand professional development focused on engaging students
- Focus institutional policies on creating the conditions for learning

Using data from its three surveys — the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE), the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE), and the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) — the Center explores the challenges associated with college completion and how these strategies address them.

Strengthen Classroom Engagement

Moving the needle on student outcomes at community colleges substantially depends on what happens in the classroom. Colleges must make the most of the time students spend with their instructors. To do so, they should raise expectations; promote active, engaged learning; emphasize deep learning; build and encourage relationships; and ensure that students know where they stand.

Raise expectations

In school, work, and play — in life generally — people perform better when they are expected to do so. To help students reach their potential, colleges must demand high performance. Instructors should set high standards and communicate them clearly, deliberately, and consistently.

Unfortunately, there are many people who believe that some students cannot or will not succeed. But when instructors believe this about their students, the potential for damage is most severe. Addressing these issues requires courageous conversations, but

discussing, and if necessary shifting, faculty attitudes has great power in closing student achievement gaps.

For example, colleges should actively ascertain whether faculty and staff believe that “some students don’t belong in college — they just aren’t college material.” Students readily sense this belief, and it too often negatively affects their ability to learn. Conversely, students attest to the powerful effect of faculty and advisors who believe in their potential and hold high expectations for their performance.

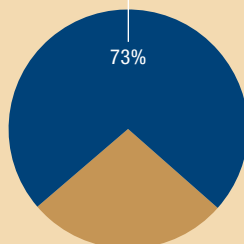
“Students need someone to show them empathy, kick them in the butt, and raise the bar.” — FACULTY MEMBER

SENSE and CCSSE data indicate that instructors typically explain expectations for students in their classes. For example, almost nine in 10 (88%) of SENSE respondents *agree* or *strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course grading policies, and 91% *agree* or *strongly agree* that all instructors clearly explained course syllabi.

Expectations: Student and Faculty Perceptions

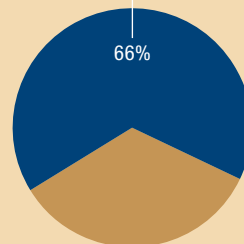
The college's role in encouraging studying

Percentage of students saying their college encourages them to spend significant amounts of time studying quite a bit or very much



Source: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

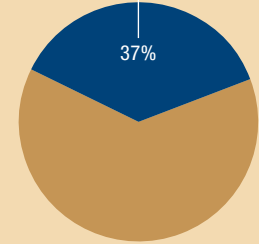
Percentage of faculty members saying their college encourages students to spend significant amounts of time studying quite a bit or very much



Source: 2010 CCFSSSE Cohort data.

Time spent studying

Percentage of full-time students who report spending five or fewer hours per week preparing for class



Source: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

On the other hand, there are indications that in some instances, expectations for students may not be as high as they need to be. While nearly three-quarters (73%) of CCSSE respondents say their college encourages them to spend significant amounts of time studying *quite a bit or very much*, a smaller percentage of faculty survey respondents (66%) indicate that their college encourages this behavior *quite a bit or very much*. Moreover, other more specific inquiries about student behaviors raise questions about how expectations for performance are expressed and enforced. For example:

- More than one-quarter (28%) of SENSE respondents and 19% of CCSSE respondents report that they *never* prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in.
- Approximately one third (37%) of full-time CCSSE respondents report spending *five or fewer hours per week* preparing for class.
- More than four in 10 (44%) of SENSE respondents and 69% of CCSSE respondents report that they came to class unprepared one or more times.
- Approximately one-quarter (26%) of SENSE respondents report skipping class one or more times in the first three weeks of class.

Initiative on Student Success focus group participants indicate that students appreciate faculty members who are both demanding

“If you can’t encourage your students to do better, then you don’t need to be a teacher.”

— STUDENT

The CCSSE and SENSE Benchmarks

Benchmarks are groups of conceptually related survey items that address key areas of student engagement. The CCSSE and SENSE benchmarks measure behaviors that educational research has shown to be powerful contributors to effective teaching, learning, and student retention.

The CCSSE Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice are **active and collaborative learning, student effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners.**

The SENSE Benchmarks of Effective Practice with Entering Students are **early connections, high expectations and aspirations, clear academic plan and pathway, effective track to college readiness, engaged learning, and academic and social support network.**

Visit www.ccsse.org to see descriptions of the benchmarks, specific survey items associated with each benchmark, key findings organized by benchmark, and information about how a college’s benchmark scores are calculated.

and supportive. For example, one student defines a good teacher as one who is “not too stern but stern enough to know when you’re slipping.” Another participant comments that when students come to class unprepared, faculty members don’t let them hide: “When they [instructors] ask questions, and you don’t know, it’s clear ... they pick on you.”

Faculty focus group participants report using a range of strategies to explain and remind students of expectations. One faculty member says, “I talk with them about rules — be nice to each other, listen when I speak, turn off cells. I tell them what I expect, what grades they’re going to get, what cheating is. I go through the syllabus. I give them a form that says they read the expectations and understood them. I have them sign the form, and I keep it.”

Colleges get to the heart of student success

In fall 2008, Kingsborough Community College, City University of New York (NY), centralized its work with students placed on academic probation. Through a partnership between the Health Careers and Retention Center and the registrar’s office, the new process includes a group experience (workshops)

and one-on-one interaction (advising). Both address the consequences of probation, the importance of students’ doing well in their current classes, tutoring, and other support.

In fall 2006, Houston Community College (TX) launched a new Freshman Success Course for entering students who require remediation and have not yet declared a major. The course, Guided Studies 1270: College and Career Exploration, teaches students cognitive strategies for academic success and introduces the expectations and responsibilities students will face in college and later as employees. Students develop experience in setting priorities, time management, effective listening, note-taking, critical thinking, problem-solving, and test-taking skills. They also attend two mandatory career conferences. By the end of that semester, students are required to declare a major and file a degree plan, actions that are known to increase persistence. The course was introduced at HCC-Southwest College and subsequently expanded to all HCC colleges in fall 2007. In fall 2008, the college began to require the course for all students entering HCC with 12 or fewer credits.

Promote active, engaged learning

Students learn and retain more information — and persist and succeed at higher levels — when they are actively involved in learning rather than passively receiving information. Student focus group participants say active instructional approaches that encourage engaged learning, such as small-group work and student-led activities, make them more enthusiastic about their classes and more likely to attend and participate.

Data from Center surveys indicate that there are opportunities to heighten the level of collaborative learning that happens both in and outside the classroom.

- Nearly one-quarter (22%) of *SENSE* respondents and 12% of *CCSSE* respondents report that they *never* worked with other students on projects during class.
- More than two-thirds (68%) of *SENSE* respondents and 40% of *CCSSE* respondents report that they *never* worked with

classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments.

In addition, students and faculty report similar views of the amount of collaborative learning in the classroom. Their responses differ, however, regarding the extent to which students work together on projects or assignments outside the classroom. This finding merits further consideration and raises the question of whether colleges should require out-of-class study groups or other collaborative work.

In *Initiative on Student Success* focus groups, students say that interactive classes are more interesting and engaging and help them better understand and retain the material.

One student praises an instructor’s approach, saying, “She has us team up, check on each other, make sure we’re getting our notes, and work together like a family.”

Faculty members also acknowledge that student interaction generates increased interest

in the subject matter and fosters relationships among students. In the words of one instructor, “Their personal relationships with each other get strengthened and their relationship with me gets strengthened.”

“Just because you have taught, it doesn’t mean students have learned.” — FACULTY MEMBER

Colleges get to the heart of student success

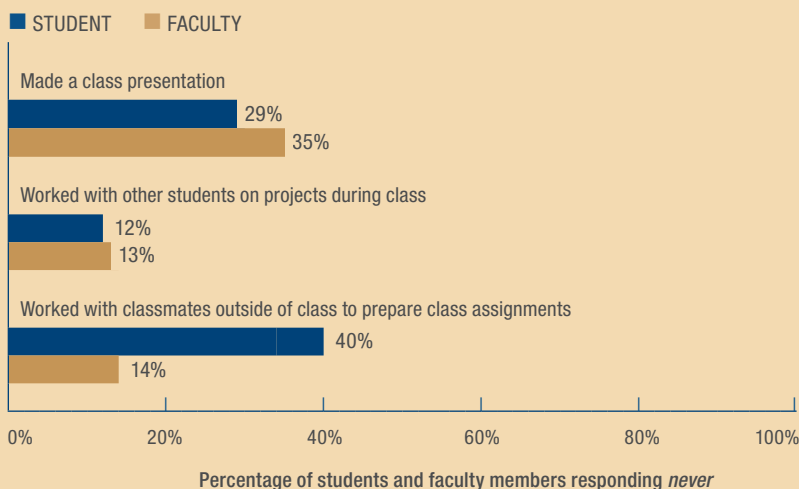
The Classroom Research Initiative at **The Lone Star College System** (TX) invites faculty members to explore how *CCSSE* data can be used to design classroom activities and promote student engagement. While the program includes professional development for all faculty, it centers on individual data analyses and action plans developed by faculty members. Ten faculty members from each of the system’s campuses participate. Each designs a data-based classroom strategy, implements it, evaluates it, and shares results with colleagues and administrators. In the past year, faculty projects have focused on increasing engagement with group projects, the value of learning students’ names, and using a blog to promote engagement among English composition students.

Santa Fe College (NM) redesigned its intermediate algebra class and compared final exam results for students in a pilot of the redesigned course with those of students in the traditional course. Each instructor teaching the redesigned class also taught a traditional class, and those sections formed the comparison groups. The traditional course was conducted predominantly by lecture, and all students were expected to complete homework assignments outside of class. The redesigned course, called the studio course, included smaller sections as well as required time in the math studio, which was staffed by instructors and tutors. The studio course focused on active learning and individualized assistance, both in person during time in the math studio and through the interactive software My Math Lab, which

Engaged Learning: Student and Faculty Perceptions

Students: In your experiences at this college during the current school year, about how often have you done each of the following activities?

Faculty: How often do students in your selected course section do the following activities?



Sources: *CCSSE 2010 Cohort data* and *CCFSSE 2010 Cohort data*.

“Our strategy for helping students master challenging course content has been guided by a single concentrated effort to get them talking. Our perfect world is students talking to students about course content, as soon as possible, as much as possible, and for as long as possible. ... Whoever does most of the talking does most of the learning.”

— F. KIM WILCOX¹⁵

was incorporated into the program. In the fall 2009 cohort, studio students’ average final exam score was 6% higher than the average score of non-studio students. Moreover, using the percentage of students that scored 70% or better as a measure of success, the studio students outperformed the non-studio students by 19 percentage points: 78% of studio students versus 59% of non-studio students scored 70% or higher. In the spring 2001 cohort, studio students’ average final exam score was 11% higher than the average score of non-studio students. The studio students outperformed the non-studio students by 25 percentage points: 72% of studio students versus 47% of non-studio students scored 70% or higher.

More than half of all students at **Cabrillo College (CA)** require developmental education, and the college’s learning communities help improve outcomes for these students. The Academy for College Excellence (ACE) learning community groups students in a cohort for all of their classes and uses interactive learning to help participants become successful students while preparing for a career. ACE also is piloting a new program to accelerate the learning process for developmental math and English students. Cabrillo has nine semesters of data for students who participated in ACE and accelerated ACE. The ACE students outperformed the comparison group on every measure, including college credits earned, transfer credits earned, and persistence. The accelerated ACE students did even better: 49 credits earned, as compared with 28 for the comparison group; 95% persistence for one semester and 82%

persistence for two semesters, compared with 80% and 63% for the comparison group; and 68% chance of passing transfer-level English as opposed to 37% for the comparison group.

The final project in one foreign language class at **College of the Siskiyous (CA)** is a group activity in which teams of students perform coffeehouse skits. The students research French cafés, write script directions that set the scene, write dialogue that includes exchanges between waiters and patrons (locals and tourists), and perform the skits. Students hone their language skills, learn how to assume specific responsibilities within a group, and become resources for one another.

Emphasize deep learning

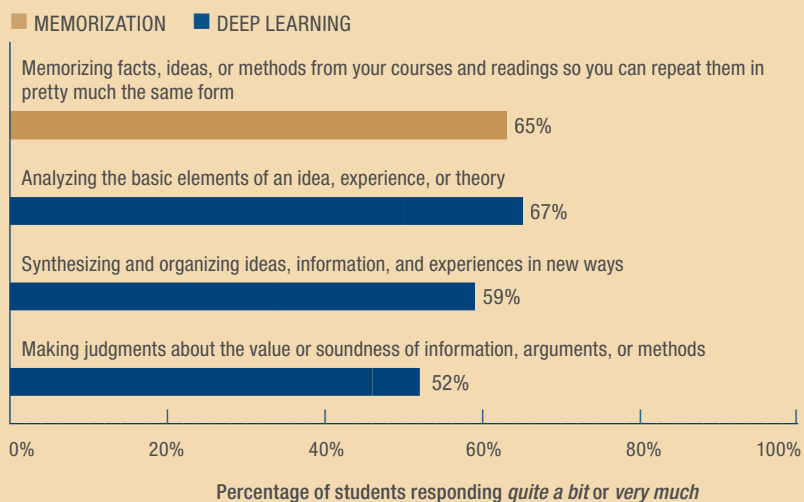
Deep learning refers to broadly applicable thinking, reasoning, and judgment skills — abilities that allow individuals to apply information, develop a coherent world view, and interact in more meaningful ways. Deep learning — learning associated with higher-order cognitive tasks — is typically contrasted with rote memorization. Memorization may help students pass an exam, but it doesn’t necessarily expand students’ understanding of the world around them, help them make connections across disciplines, or promote the application of knowledge and skills in new situations.

CCSSE’s 2010 special-focus items, along with several items from the core survey, explore a variety of experiences that promote deep learning. Differences in student and faculty perceptions can be used to illuminate conversations regarding the nature and quality of students’ learning.

- One in 10 CCSSE respondents (10%) report that they *never* worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas

CCSSE Respondents: Memorization vs. Deep Learning

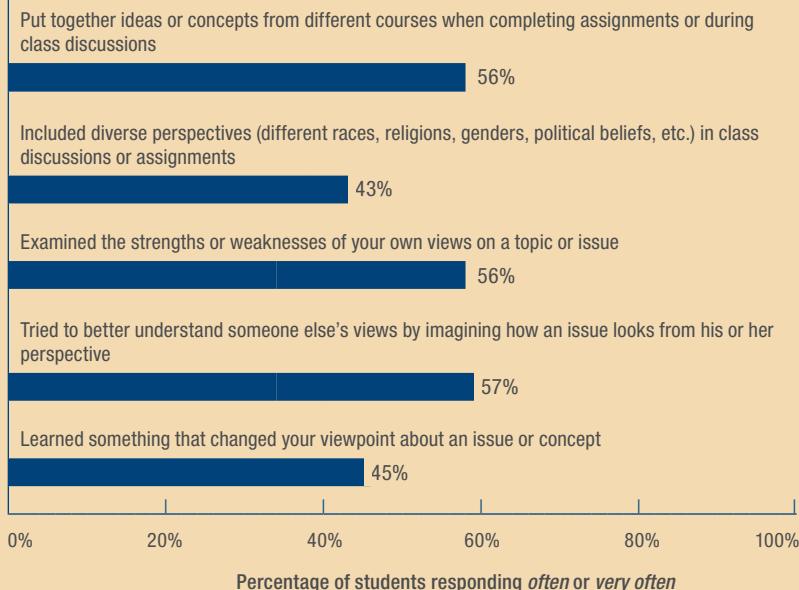
During the current school year, how much of your coursework at this college emphasized (does the coursework in your selected course section emphasize) the following mental activities?



Source: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

CCSSE 2010 Special-Focus Items: Deep Learning

In your experience at this college during the current school year, about how often have you:



Source: 2010 CCSSE data.

or information from various sources; about one-quarter (24%) of students report doing so *very often*.

- More than four in 10 CCSSE respondents (41%) say they *have not done, nor do they plan to do* an internship, field experience, or clinical assignment. Close to nine in 10 CCSSE respondents (87%) say it is *somewhat important* or *very important* for students to have these experiences, yet 66% of faculty do not incorporate these experiences into their coursework.

In *Initiative on Student Success* focus groups, when students are asked to comment on their

learning, they make it clear that deep learning better engages them. Asked to describe a good class, one student says, “When you have to do work, and you’re getting it. It’s linking what I already know to what I didn’t know.”

Deep learning also instills the habit of inquiry. As one student exclaims, “I’m just so excited about my computer science class. When I go home, the first thing that I do is my homework. It’s all of the information that I’m taking in from it. I read the book, even sections that I’m not required to read, just because I want to learn more. It inspires you to look into something a bit deeper than what your class is requiring of you.”

“One thing [that needs improvement] is writing across the curriculum. We are seeing students progress through college years without the ability to express and communicate.”

— FACULTY MEMBER

Colleges get to the heart of student success

Learning communities are the cornerstone of the student success agenda at **Bunker Hill Community College (MA)**. The college has three tiers of learning communities that have been taught by faculty and staff from a broad range of disciplines, and the college offers them professional development that focuses on engaged learning. Data from faculty interviews and student surveys indicate that the college’s most successful learning communities use active and interactive teaching and learning, collaboration and integration across disciplines, and integration of support services into the classroom. One learning community — the Alternative Spring Break Common Interest Community — brought students to the Gulf Coast for a service learning project. Fall-to-spring retention for students enrolled in learning communities in fall 2009 was 82%, compared to 73% for all BHCC students.

The Center Opposes Ranking

CCCSE opposes using its data to rank colleges for a number of reasons:

- There is no single number that can adequately — or accurately — describe a college’s performance; most colleges will perform relatively well on some benchmarks and need improvement on others.
- Each community college’s performance should be considered in terms of its mission, institutional focus, and student characteristics.
- Because of differences in these areas — and variations in college resources — comparing survey results between individual institutions serves little constructive purpose and likely will be misleading.
- CCCSE member colleges are a self-selected group. Their choice to participate in the survey demonstrates their interest in assessing and improving their educational practices, and it distinguishes them. Ranking within this group of colleges — those willing to step up to serious self-assessment and public reporting — might discourage participation and certainly would paint an incomplete picture.
- Ranking does not serve a purpose related to improving student outcomes. Improvement over time — where a particular college is now compared with where it wants to be — likely is the best gauge of a college’s efforts to enhance student learning and persistence.

Build and encourage relationships

Personal connections are an important factor in student success. Most students struggle at one time or another. Focus group participants report that relationships with other students, faculty, and staff members strengthened their resolve to return to class the next day, the next month, and the next year.

Survey results reveal both areas in which colleges are doing well and areas for improvement in creating multiple, intentional connections with students, beginning with the first point of contact with the college.

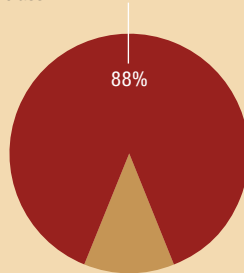
“Everyone in my student success course is networked. I still see those people. It’s like freshman year elsewhere. It keeps you in the community.”

—STUDENT

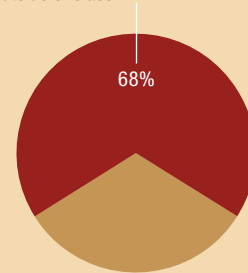
- Nearly nine in 10 *SENSE* respondents (86%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one instructor learned their names; 81% *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one other student learned their names; and 44% *agree* or *strongly agree* that at least one staff member (other than an instructor) learned their names.
- Nearly nine in 10 *SENSE* respondents (88%) *agree* or *strongly agree* that they knew how to get in touch with their instructors outside of class.
- More than half (56%) of *SENSE* respondents used an electronic tool to communicate with an instructor about classwork at least once during the first three weeks of the semester, and 52% used an electronic tool to communicate with another student about classwork at least once during the first three weeks of the semester.

Entering Students’ Interaction with Faculty

Percentage of entering students who *agree* or *strongly agree* that they knew how to get in touch with their instructors outside of class



Percentage of entering students who report that they *never* discussed ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class



Source: 2009 *SENSE* data.

However, there are survey results that clearly indicate opportunities for colleges to increase their intentionality in seeking to build meaningful connections with students:

- More than two-thirds (68%) of *SENSE* respondents and 47% of *CCSSE* respondents report that they *never* discussed ideas from readings or classes with instructors outside of class.

Personal connections may boost attendance and retention. *Initiative on Student Success* focus group participants suggest that just knowing someone else’s name can make a wary student feel more comfortable. Moreover, being called by name, which eliminates the option of hiding behind anonymity, is a powerful motivator. Thus, many community college instructors devise ways to learn students’ names — and help students learn one another’s names — in the first few class meetings.

Indeed, students remember these exercises positively. “My first year, I had a teacher who gathered all of us around and had us do a bunch of silly and embarrassing question-asking and storytelling, including saying what our name was. By connecting our names

with the stories, by the end of the first two days we knew everybody’s name.”

Colleges get to the heart of student success

To make relationships central to its daily operations, **Zane State College (OH)** codified a personal touch philosophy: Personal Touch — Respect, Responsibility, and Responsiveness in all relationships. The philosophy’s rollout included revising the college’s mission statement and adjusting individual job descriptions to include the personal touch. Employees’ annual reviews include rating their ability to approach their day-to-day work using the personal touch philosophy. The college also conducts student focus groups to assess students’ connection to the college.

The First Year Seminar at **Aims Community College (CO)** strengthens new students’ academic performance and increases their knowledge and use of student services. Perhaps most important, it promotes a sense of community among participants. The college offers the seminar in two formats: a three-credit class for students who test into three developmental classes and a one-credit format for students who test into fewer than

three developmental classes. The classes are mandatory for all students testing into developmental courses. From fall 2007 to spring 2008, retention in the one-credit class was 75%, and from fall 2008 to spring 2009, that figure increased to 76%. By comparison, the college's overall retention rate was 53%.

“I try to call students who stopped coming to class. They come back, and they are appreciative that you called.” — FACULTY MEMBER

In response to *CCSSE* and *SENSE* data showing that nearly 40% of students felt that the college did not provide the support they needed to help them succeed and that fewer than 25% of full-time students participated in orientation, **Sacramento City College (CA)** started using the complete community college experience to improve communication, better connect students, and show them that faculty and staff care about them. The outreach now begins before students arrive on campus and includes letters, postcards, e-mail, and phone calls. Once students are on campus the college uses a series of memorable slogans — including “It’s Not Over in October” and “Stay ’Til May” — to engage students, remind them of key deadlines, and connect them with advising and other services.

“Within the first week, students have an in-class paper that I have graded and given back with comments. If I see they have issues, I connect them with the writing center.”

— FACULTY MEMBER

Ensure that students know where they stand

Feedback on academic performance greatly affects student retention. Feedback identifies areas of strength and weakness, so students have a greater likelihood of improving and ultimately succeeding. In addition, regular and appropriate assessment and prompt feedback help students progress from surface learning to deep learning.

Some community college students may need help understanding where they stand and how to use feedback productively. In focus groups, students frequently report that they were unaware of their poor academic standing in a particular course until it was too late to salvage their grade.

- 27% of *SENSE* respondents and 8% of *CCSSE* respondents report that they *never* received prompt written or oral feedback from instructors on their performance. By contrast, fewer than 1% of *CCFSSE* respondents say their students *never* received prompt written or oral feedback on their performance.
- 35% of *SENSE* respondents and 9% of *CCSSE* respondents report that they *never* discussed grades or assignments with an instructor.

In faculty focus groups, participants describe a variety of strategies to give feedback, most of which also help build the instructors' relationships with the students. One faculty member explains, “In math lab, I am alerted on my computer if a student is having problems. If they've worked a lesson two times unsuccessfully, the computer locks up until I give them a code. Then I go to them individually and help them.”

Another faculty member describes a skills course that helps students assess their own progress as they learn about grade point averages (GPAs). “Students need to understand what the GPA is, how to calculate it, and [how it can put them] on the verge of probation. We designed a packet with which students project their GPAs. Then, when they have their mid-term grades, they can compare their [actual] GPA with the one they predicted.”

Colleges get to the heart of student success

Lone Star College-North Harris (TX) has a comprehensive early intervention program that addresses poor attendance; low test scores; incomplete assignments; and non-academic distractions such as transportation issues, job schedules, and personal or family health problems. When an instructor thinks a student needs additional support, he or she refers the student through an online or paper-based system. The intervention staff then contacts the student and encourages him or her to take advantage of services, including one-on-one tutoring. The college compares completion and retention for students who respond to the alert with those who are referred but do not respond and with non-referred students.

Kodiak College, University of Alaska Anchorage (AK), starts telling students where they stand before they even get to campus. The college provides early college placement testing to high school juniors and seniors so students and their parents can become more aware of what it means to be college-ready. The college advisors work on site with high school counselors to offer interventions to improve students' scores. If students are juniors, the two advisors recommend senior-year courses that will prepare the student for college-level work. For seniors, the advisors recommend interventions, such as practice testing, college-preparatory programs, tutoring, or labs to focus on specific skills. When students arrive at Kodiak College, they are given assessments to determine their “skill and will” for college success, and advising is based on the results.

Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences

Students are most likely to succeed when expectations are high and they receive the support they need to rise to those expectations. Community colleges offer a wide variety of support services, but students cannot use services if they are unaware of them. In addition, students don't take advantage of services when they don't know how to access them, find them to be inconvenient, or feel stigmatized by using them.

Among CCSSE respondents, 34% report *rarely* or *never* using academic advising/planning services. In addition, 37% report *rarely* or *never* using skill labs.

SENSE data show that while students are aware of some services, they too rarely take advantage of them. A cause for more concern is that SENSE data also indicate that many entering students do not even know that critical support services exist.

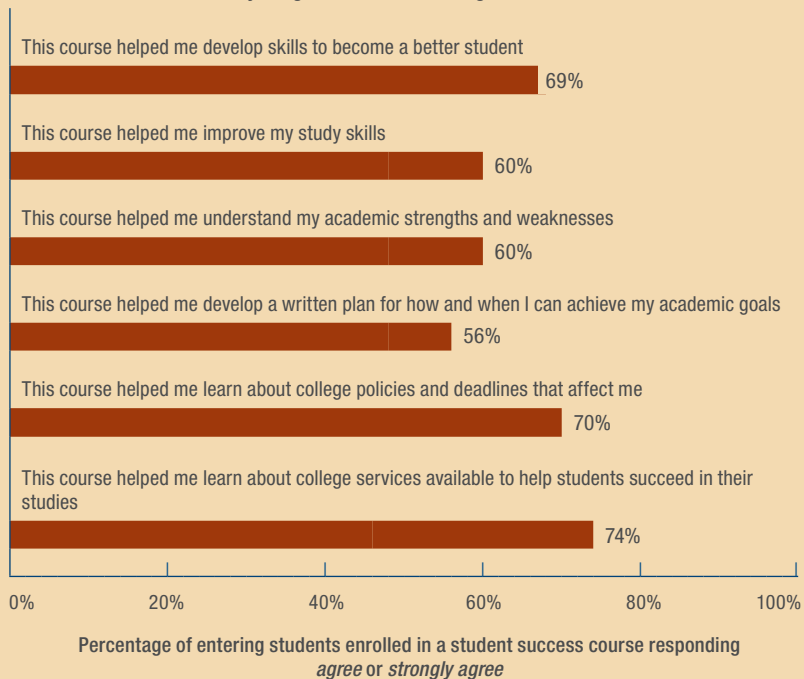
- Among SENSE respondents, 72% say *yes*, they know about their college's academic advising/planning services, yet 47% report *never* using these services.
- Among SENSE respondents, 70% say *yes*, they know about their college's writing, math, or other skill labs, yet 65% report *never* using these services.

- Among SENSE respondents, 19% are unaware that their college has an orientation program or course, 26% do not know about financial assistance advising, and 28% do not know about academic advising and planning.

Intentionally integrating student support into coursework circumvents many of the barriers that keep students from using services. Examples of this approach include requiring freshman seminars or student success courses; making participation in

SENSE: The Value of Student Success Courses

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement:



Source: 2009 SENSE Student Success Course Special-Focus Module respondents who indicated enrollment in a student success course (3,846 responses).

CCSSE: Students' Use and Value of Student Services

How important are the following services?

	Very	Not at all
Academic advising/planning	64%	8%
Career counseling	51%	19%
Peer or other tutoring	40%	27%
Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	45%	22%

Source: 2010 CCSSE Cohort data.

How often do you use the following services?

	Rarely/Never
Academic advising/planning	34%
Career counseling	51%
Peer or other tutoring	47%
Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	37%

CCFSSE: Faculty's Use of Student Services in Classes

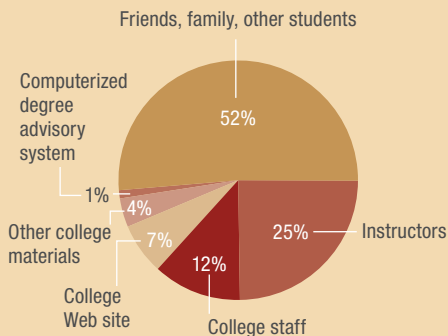
How much do you incorporate the use the following services in your selected course section?

	Rarely/Never
Academic advising/planning	36%
Career counseling	43%
Peer or other tutoring	27%
Skill labs (writing, math, etc.)	33%

Source: 2010 CCFSE Cohort data.

SENSE Respondents' Main Source of Academic Advising

What has been your main source of academic advising from the time of your decision to attend this college through the end of the first three weeks of your first semester?



Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: 2009 SENSE data.

supplemental instruction, tutoring, or skill labs mandatory; incorporating counseling and advising and academic planning into learning communities or first-year experiences; and including career counseling as part of technical and professional programs.

Wrapping student support into coursework makes the support services inescapable, eliminates obstacles of time and place, and takes advantage of the time when colleges have the best access to their students.

Moreover, integrating support services creates a new type of shared experience for the students, thereby nurturing their relationships and their ability to support one another. Students need not feel singled out or stigmatized by being referred for help because support becomes simply a feature of being a student at their college.

“Freshman Seminar was required [for me]. It’s an awesome class. It motivates you ... test taking, job experience, home ... it helps with a lot of fields.”

— STUDENT

In faculty focus groups, participants recognize that students are more likely to take advantage of support when it is not optional. A developmental education professor explains, “The added labs — the extra hour in reading, writing, and math — help the students who maybe need more time in class, need more support, because they’re not going to come after class for help.”

Another faculty member provides incentives for students to help each other: “I give one point for every 30 minutes of outside support to both the student giving the support and the student receiving it. Those who process information rapidly sit down and help those who take longer. Then each person signs off on each other’s sheet.”

Colleges get to the heart of student success

Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (AR) provides orientation in all entry-level English classes offered in the fall term. This program began because PCCUA students don’t enroll early enough to participate in a summer orientation, and the college wanted an orientation that would be meaningful to students, easy to launch quickly, and cost-effective for the institution. Key administrators conduct the orientations and distribute a resource guide to all students.

Delta College (MI) brings trained tutors into all first-level developmental math and English courses — the college’s courses with the greatest risk of student failure. By bringing tutors into the classroom, the college is offering intensive content-based study sessions to reinforce new material and discuss learning strategies. All students are invited, and students who are averaging a course grade lower than B are required to attend. The sessions

are scheduled with the class section, so the students can have no excuse for skipping them. In the first-level developmental English course, students who participate in the study sessions have an overall course GPA of 2.43 and a success rate of 67%, compared with an overall course GPA of 0.32 and a success rate of 8% for those who did not participate. In the first-level developmental math course, students who participate in the study sessions have an overall course GPA of 2.54 and a success rate of 75%, compared with an overall course GPA of 1.73 and a success rate of 20% for those who did not participate.

Hillsborough Community College (FL) added academic coaching to a study skills course that is required for students who enroll in both developmental reading and a success course. The courses are taught by instructors who also serve as success coaches. They provide a range of activities, strategies, and interventions designed to help students overcome traditional barriers to academic persistence. As part of the course, students are required to create an academic plan, which helps them understand course sequencing and progressive academic achievement.

Expand Professional Development Focused on Engaging Students

Research abounds about what works in teaching and learning. Instructors, however, must be given the opportunities necessary to learn more about effective teaching strategies and to apply those strategies in their day-to-day work.

Bringing effective strategies to scale to promote learning, persistence, and college completion for larger numbers of students is a complex endeavor. It requires venues and facilitation for faculty collaboration as well as administrative support through reallocation of scarce resources. *Any effective strategy for dramatically increasing college completion must include a substantial commitment to*

“The professional development ... is very stimulating. I think that’s what revitalizes you as a teacher. You’re not just standing in there regurgitating the same old stuff.” — FACULTY MEMBER

professional development for individual faculty members and for college teams.

CCFSSE data indicate that close to one-third (31%) of instructors report spending at least 50% of class time lecturing. Only 27% spend at least 20% of class time on small-group activities. Professional development can help more faculty members become skilled and comfortable using more engaging teaching strategies.

This professional development work is critical to teaching effectiveness, particularly when faculty are asked to implement new and promising practices to enhance student success. Moreover, professional development activities cannot be limited to full-time employees. Given that about two-thirds of community college faculty members teach part-time, opportunities to expand instructors’ skills and collaborative faculty efforts must be extended to include all faculty.

Instructors’ comments in focus groups underscore the divide in professional development opportunities for full-time and part-time faculty. A full-time faculty member notes, “One of the problems with having so many part-time adjuncts is it’s up to the teachers to take advantage of the professional development opportunities that are there. It causes an uneven experience for students when one classroom is using new techniques of engaging students and another is taught by an adjunct who has been doing the same thing for some time.”

That thought should be balanced with the input from an adjunct faculty member who says, “Frankly, part of your professional development equation is I don’t get paid money or benefits for this time. I have to calculate how close to McDonald’s wages I’m making for doing this work.”



National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD)

Since 1978, NISOD has been dedicated to the professional development of community college faculty, administrators, and staff and to the continued improvement of teaching and learning. A service and professional development initiative of the Community College Leadership Program in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin, NISOD hosts the International Conference on Teaching and Leadership Excellence, the largest community college conference of its kind, featuring an annual “Celebration of Excellence” to recognize the exemplary contributions of faculty members from around the country. For information on NISOD membership, resources including publications and webinars, and the NISOD conference, visit www.nisod.org.

How Faculty Members Use Class Time

Percentage of faculty reporting that they never engage in these activities

Lecture	2%
Teacher-led discussion	4%
Teacher-student shared responsibility	25%
Small group activities	21%
Student presentations	40%
In-class writing	50%
Experiential work	66%
Hands-on practice	27%

Source: 2010 CCFSSSE Cohort data.

Faculty Use of Professional Time, by Part-Time and Full-Time Status

How many hours do you spend in a typical 7-day week doing each of the following?

	0–4 hours		5–12 hours		13–20 hours		21+ hours	
	Part-time faculty	Full-time faculty	Part-time faculty	Full-time faculty	Part-time faculty	Full-time faculty	Part-time faculty	Full-time faculty
Teaching	35%	8%	52%	28%	10%	48%	4%	16%
Advising students	92%	73%	6%	22%	1%	3%	1%	1%
Supervising internships or other field experiences	97%	88%	2%	9%	1%	3%	<1%	1%
Other interactions with students outside the classroom	93%	82%	5%	15%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Source: 2010 CCFSSSE Cohort data.

Colleges get to the heart of student success

Florida State College at Jacksonville (FL) encourages its part-time faculty to participate in professional development. Through its online programs, CREOLE (Creating Optimal Learning Environments), and the college's Hybrid program, Florida State College provides a stipend to faculty for participating in this training. Upon completion, part-time instructors receive a certificate and are eligible to be paid at the same per credit-hour rate as full-time faculty.

The Common Standards of Good Teaching, introduced at **Central Oregon Community College (OR)** in 1994, outline faculty conduct standards that support student engagement and success. The standards give guidance about engaging students; monitoring progress; being accessible; and adapting course materials so they are appropriate for students of varied backgrounds, interests, and skills. Students' evaluations of faculty members include questions about the instructor's availability, timeliness and value of feedback, and other elements of the standards.

In 2008, a team of **Norwalk Community College (CT)** faculty, staff, and administrators attended the Washington Center National Summer Institute, which focused on planning, organizing, and conducting learning communities. The same year, in a separate intervention, the English department chair led a professional development session for adjunct faculty. The session focused on structuring curriculum and teaching around clearly articulated learning outcomes. After these two interventions, the department saw an increase in course completion rates and retention for developmental English. One of the successes of this program is a linked English and introductory criminal justice course, which is popular among African American men, who place into developmental education at a higher rate than the overall college

population. The percentage of students who passed this English class increased 6 percentage points from fall 2005 to fall 2008 (from 59% to 65%).

The learning loft at **Eastfield College (TX)** is a high-tech space where faculty can build their technology skills, develop practical ways to integrate technology into their curriculum, and collaborate with one another. The loft houses all of the equipment in the college's high-tech classrooms, including the symposium (a computer monitor that responds to the touch of a finger or pen), a document camera, a teacher interactive platform, and faculty workstations loaded with software. The college offers one-on-one training and support in curriculum development, and faculty can earn professional development credit for their time.

Focus Institutional Policies on Creating the Conditions for Learning

Institutional policies focused on student success are most effective when colleges mandate student participation in activities that are shown to increase persistence and improve student outcomes. For example, colleges can require students to participate in orientation or to meet with an advisor before registering for classes or to enroll in a student success course in their first academic term. Institutional policies also can help faculty members be consistent in their requirements of students. For example, an institution-wide policy can require student participation in study groups, and faculty can help enforce that policy by making it a requirement for their courses.

Survey data indicate mixed results on issues related to institutional policy:

- Only 58% of *SENSE* respondents participated in a college orientation program (either on campus or online) or as part of a course during their first semester.
- 16% of *SENSE* respondents report adding or dropping classes within the first three weeks of college, including 7% who did so without discussing their decision with a staff member or instructor.
- 4% of *SENSE* respondents registered for courses after classes began.

Initiative on Student Success focus groups indicate that faculty and students alike benefit from institutional policies that go beyond encouraging students to engage. Faculty want policies requiring students to engage in behaviors that improve student success. For example, one faculty member touts the value of a freshman seminar class but laments the value is limited because students aren't required to participate: "Students in the freshman seminar class get a very good experience for career planning, the whole works. As that stands right now that's not required . . . It's encouraged but not required."

While clarifying institutional policies for faculty members is essential, directly involving them in discussions of institutional policy has greater benefits, including uncovering misconceptions, generating robust ideas, and building internal support for college-wide policies that enhance student outcomes.

Students also value policies that help them stay on track. One student recalls learning about — and initially dismissing — her college's policy of introducing consequences for

“One of the problems is that our orientation doesn't orient them. We just talk at them. Even if it's mandatory and provided ... just because there's output doesn't mean there is input.”

— FACULTY MEMBER

“We have found that if students are going to invest in themselves and give of themselves ... we owe it to them to provide them with the support systems they need ... to graduate.”

— ADMINISTRATOR

missing classes: “When I got the letter from my advisor, I realized they were serious. I read it and tore it up because I didn’t want my mom to see it. I’ve been on time ever since, passing my quizzes and reading.”

Colleges get to the heart of student success

Starting in fall 2008, **Linn State Technical College (MO)** began preregistering new students and provided them with a class schedule when they attended a new-student registration session. This policy was created to help students prepare to enroll and to jump-start progress on their individual education plans. The college also administers the COMPASS test every week. After completing the test, students meet with an admissions representative, who interprets their score and gives them an overview of LSTC programs and admission requirements. Campus tours also are available, and students are invited to meet with other faculty and staff on campus.

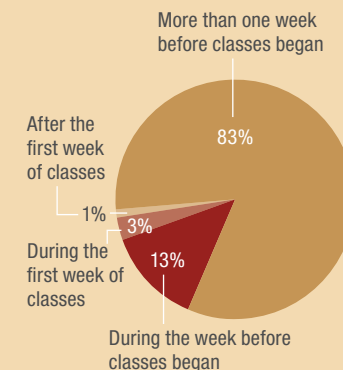
Beginning with the fall 2009 semester, **Bay College (MI)** revamped its academic advising and orientation program in response to student dissatisfaction and operational inefficiencies. The college always offered

academic advising after orientation, but students often had to stand in long lines while they waited for an academic advisor. Then, students would see the next available faculty advisor, not necessarily an advisor from the student’s declared discipline. Changes began with the orientation program itself. Orientation facilitators incorporated iClickers into their sessions so students could answer questions and provide immediate feedback. For academic advising, students now are directed to their own faculty advisor’s office. This significantly reduces students’ waiting time and allows them to create a personal connection with their advisors before leaving orientation.

Several successful interventions at **Broward College (FL)**, including learning communities, got their start when the administration and faculty union leadership agreed on how to fairly compensate participating faculty. Administrators and the leadership of United Faculty of Florida set a precedent when they came to an understanding about the commitment required of faculty who design and deliver learning communities. All parties agreed to follow the contractual zone schedule for stipends and supplements, a practice that remains in place today. The same contractual zone stipends became the standard for other programs in which compensation for faculty engagement (beyond the contractual commitment) is recognized.

SENSE Respondents’ Registration Timing

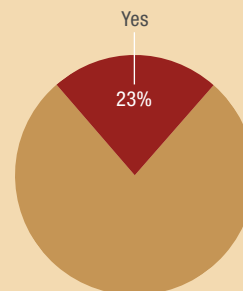
When did you register for your courses for your first semester?



Source: 2009 SENSE data.

SENSE Respondents’ Early Connections

Was a specific person assigned to you so you could see him/her each time you needed information or assistance?



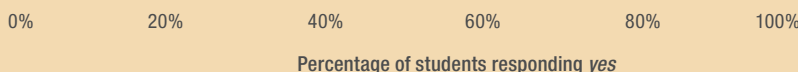
Source: 2009 SENSE data.

SENSE Respondents’ Enrollment in Courses Based on Placement Scores

Before I could register for classes, I was required to take a placement test (COMPASS, ASSET, ACCUPLACER, SAT, ACT, etc.) to assess my skills in reading, writing, and/or math



This college required me to enroll in classes indicated by my placement test scores during my first semester



Percentage of students responding yes

Source: 2009 SENSE data.

Teaching and Learning Matters

It is time for community colleges to start imagining what is possible. It is time to challenge the notion that some students will not succeed. It is time to relinquish our resistance to *require*. It is time to raise not just our students' aspirations but to raise our own.

Perhaps most of all, it is time to assert that access to college is just not enough. Student success matters. College completion matters. And teaching and learning — the heart of student success — matter.

What will it take to change the view of what is possible at community colleges — and then to convert possibility into reality? Colleges should:

- **Reconceptualize the classroom.** Colleges can improve student success by integrating critical student support services — academic advising and planning, tutoring, career planning, and the like — into the experience traditionally called a course. Most students cannot succeed only by showing up for class and then leaving. However, given the limited time community college students are on campus, the time they spend in their classes is often the only time to engage them. The traditional model of referring students to academic and student support services is likely to be ineffective because great numbers of students don't use support services outside of the classroom. Thus, both colleges and their students must think of — and use — the classroom experience in new ways.
- **Build a culture of evidence.** Good education is driven by passion, but it must be firmly rooted in evidence. Since its inception, the Center has encouraged colleges to build a culture of evidence — one in which administrators, faculty, and staff use data to set goals, monitor progress, and improve practice. Individuals operating in a culture of evidence embrace data and share it widely because they know transparency builds credibility, ownership, and support for change.



- **Conduct courageous conversations.** The use of data may uncover uncomfortable truths — facts that are difficult to acknowledge or long-held beliefs that aren't supported by the facts. Whether these uncomfortable truths are about lower expectations for a particular group of students, the value of a specific program, or a college policy, it is better to air them than to hide them. Colleges must be willing to have honest dialogue that addresses the stickiest, most sensitive issues. They must create environments in which faculty, staff, and students feel safe airing their observations, their ideas, and even their fears because they are confident they will be met with a thoughtful, constructive response.
- **Maintain standards while affirming that all students can learn.** In discussions about increasing the number of students earning credentials, faculty members' first concern typically is about lowering

standards. It is not acceptable to lower standards so more students pass courses and earn credentials. At the same time, faculty and staff at community colleges must convey the conviction that all students can learn. Language matters — and the difference between describing students in terms of strengths rather than deficits is palpable.

- **Look for leadership across the campus.** Everyone must play a leadership role in advancing the college completion agenda, particularly faculty members, who can have the most direct effect on student success. According to analysis across colleges participating in the national community college initiative Achieving the Dream, colleges that more successfully engage faculty get more traction on their success agendas than do colleges where faculty engagement is limited.

- **Revise academic policies.** How many papers should students write? How many books should they read? Is a grade of D considered a successful outcome? Is class attendance important enough to require it? Faculty can set the standard so it is consistent across the college — and rigorous enough to promote high expectations, real learning, and increased success.
- **Engage unions.** Involved early and often, unions can be powerful leaders for promoting a student success agenda, particularly with clarification of commonly sought outcomes, discussion of stakeholder roles and issues, and continuing attention to communication and transparency.
- **Provide strategically targeted professional development for all faculty.** All instructors, both full- and part-time, must have the training they need to fully engage their students and to implement effective practice at scale. Engaging full-time faculty with part-time faculty, as well as supporting and compensating part-time faculty for participation in professional development, cannot be overlooked.
- **Design institutional policies that foster student success.** Policy should make it clear that student success is everyone's job. When properly implemented, policy creates the conditions within which faculty, staff, and administrators can improve their practice. These policies empower and require faculty to do — and appropriately support them in doing — work that will lead to higher levels of student learning, persistence, and completion.

The Center: What's New and What's Next

- **The Community College Completion Commitment.** Through a variety of ongoing activities and special projects — research, special studies, publications, workshops, work with individual colleges and state systems, and providing national leadership — the Center will promote and contribute to collaborative efforts to dramatically increase community college completion rates.
- **Special Study to Identify High-Impact Practices in Community Colleges.** The Center will build on emerging knowledge about high-impact practices — those that most effectively promote student success in community colleges — with a special-focus module to be included in the spring 2011 national administration of CCSSE. Practices included in the high-impact module will be based on a vetted list of promising practices. The 2011 CCFSSSE administration will explore the extent of faculty members' use of the identified promising practices. Finally, a companion online institutional survey will explore institutional policies and practices related to student engagement through high-impact practices.
- **New Key Findings Summaries for CCSSE and SENSE Member Colleges.** In response to member college requests, the Center has introduced localized executive summaries of each college's student engagement survey results. Starting with CCSSE 2010, upon data release for each survey administration, member college presidents and system leaders receive copies of a *Key Findings* booklet. These customized-for-each-college booklets provide college-specific data in an easy-to-read and easy-to-share format. Additional copies are downloadable free of charge or available from the Center for a modest fee.
- **On-site Training for Colleges, Consortia, and State Systems.** In addition to hosting an annual Center workshop in conjunction with the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) convention in Austin each May, Center staff and associates travel nationwide to assist member colleges in interpreting and using survey results for improving student outcomes.
- **The Center Goes Greener.** Member colleges frequently express concern about the amount of paper and shipping the Center's survey operation requires. To address this concern, the Center developed *SENSE* with a robust electronic reporting system, and CCSSE moved to similar electronic reporting in summer 2010. The *SENSE* and CCSSE online reporting systems offer intuitive, point-and-click access to data and flexibility in creating custom reports, while helping to radically reduce our carbon footprint.
- **Supporting Implementation of Evidence-Based Strategies for Entering Student Success.** The Center's Entering Student Success Institute (ESSI) brings together teams from colleges that have participated in *SENSE*, helping them better understand and make productive use of their *SENSE* findings and other institutional data. Teams drill down into their data and develop written action plans for communicating about their *SENSE* results and identifying ways to improve the entering student experience at their colleges.

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Overview of the Respondents

The *CCSSE* and *CCFSSE* 2010 Cohorts

Each year, *CCSSE* is administered in the spring during class sessions at *CCSSE* member colleges. All institutions that participate in the *CCSSE* administration are invited to participate in *CCFSSE*, which is administered online. At colleges that choose to participate in *CCFSSE*, every faculty member teaching credit classes in the spring term is eligible to respond to the survey.

All *CCSSE* and *CCFSSE* data analyses use a three-year cohort of participating colleges. Using a three-year cohort increases the number of institutions and students in the national data set, optimizes representation of institutions by size and location, and therefore, increases the stability of the overall results.

This year's three-year cohorts — called the 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort and the 2010 *CCFSSE* Cohort — include data from all colleges that participated in *CCSSE* from 2008 through 2010.

All *CCSSE* data presented in this report include only respondents who indicate that they do not currently hold a college degree.

- More than 400,000 students from 658 institutions in 47 states as well as British Columbia, the Marshall Islands, Nova Scotia, and Ontario are included in the 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort.

- 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort member colleges enroll a total of 4,373,761 credit students — approximately 62% of the total credit-student population in the nation's community colleges.

- Of the 658 participating colleges, 322 (49%) are classified as small (up to 4,499 students), 163 (25%) as medium (4,500–7,999 students), 110 (17%) as large (8,000–14,999 students), and 63 (10%) as extra large (15,000 or more students). Nationally, 54% of community colleges are small, 21% are medium, 15% are large, and 10% are extra large.

- According to the Carnegie Classifications,¹⁶ the 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort includes 126 (19%) urban-serving colleges, 139 (21%) suburban-serving colleges, and 393 (60%) rural-serving colleges. Fall 2008 data indicate that among all U.S. community colleges, 18% are urban, 21% are suburban, and 61% are rural.

- 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort respondents generally reflect the underlying student population of the participating colleges in terms of gender and race/ethnicity. Part-time students, however, were underrepresented in the *CCSSE* sample because classes are sampled rather than individual students. (About 25% of *CCSSE* respondents are enrolled part-time, and 75% are enrolled full-time. IPEDS reports the national figures as 62% part-time and 38%

full-time.) To address this sampling bias, *CCSSE* results are weighted by part-time and full-time status to reflect the institutions' actual proportions of part-time and full-time students.

- 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort respondents are 58% female and 42% male. These figures mirror the full population of *CCSSE* Cohort community college students, which is 57% female and 43% male.
- 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort respondents range in age from 18 to 65 and older.
- *CCFSSE* respondents generally mirror the national two-year college faculty population. The notable exception is employment status: Nationally, 31% of two-year college faculty members are employed full-time, and 56% of 2010 *CCFSSE* Cohort respondents indicated they are employed full-time.

2009 *SENSE* Respondents

In this report, *SENSE* data include only entering students who indicate that they do not currently hold a college degree. Entering students are those who indicate that this is their first time at their college.

- The *SENSE* survey is administered during the fourth and fifth weeks of the fall academic term.

- The 2009 *SENSE* survey was administered at 120 community colleges from 30 states and yielded more than 50,000 usable surveys from entering students. These colleges represent a total enrollment of 789,012 students.
- The survey was administered in classes randomly selected from the population of all first college-level English, first college-level math, and developmental education courses (excluding ESL courses). These are the courses most likely to enroll entering students.
- In *SENSE* sampling procedures, students are sampled at the classroom level. As a result, full-time students, who by definition are enrolled in more classes than part-time students, are more likely to be sampled. To adjust for this sampling bias, *SENSE* results are weighted based on the most recent publicly available IPEDS data.

With respect to race/ethnicity, 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort respondents, 2009 *SENSE* respondents, and the national community college population may be compared as described below.

Respondent and Population Characteristics

Race/ethnicity	<i>CCSSE</i> respondents	<i>SENSE</i> respondents	National percentages
White	64%	53%	55%
Latino/Hispanic	13%	20%	16%
Black	12%	17%	13%
Asian	5%	4%	6%
Native American	2%	2%	1%
Other	4%	4%	8%

Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Sources: 2010 *CCSSE* Cohort data; 2009 *SENSE* data; IPEDS, fall 2008.

Endnotes

¹The College Board. (2010). *Education Pays 2010*. Available at: http://trends.collegeboard.org/files/Education_Pays_2010.pdf

² Available at: www.completecollege.org/completion_shortfall/

³ Available at: www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=24&year=2008&level=nation&mode=graph&state=0

⁴ Available at: www.ccsse.org/ and www.aacc.nche.edu/newsevents/News/articles/Documents/collection_04202010.pdf

⁵American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) address. (April 2010).

⁶ Available at: www.luminafoundation.org/goal

⁷ Available at: www.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondary_education

⁸ Available at: www.greatertexasfoundation.org

⁹ Available at: www.completecollege.org

¹⁰ Available at: www.achievingthedream.org/Portal/Modules/936b3989-b5a5-4cf9-ac87-93495e5eea3b.asset?

¹¹ Available at: www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=229&year=2008&level=nation&mode=graph&state=0

¹² Available at: www.oecd.org/document/62/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_43586328_1_1_1_1,00.html#4

¹³ Available at: www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/?level=nation&mode=data&state=0&submeasure=240

¹⁴ Available at: www.achievingthedream.org/Portal/Modules/936b3989-b5a5-4cf9-ac87-93495e5eea3b.asset?

¹⁵ Wilcox, F.K. (2008). "Thirty-Five Years of Supplemental Instruction." *Supplemental Instruction: Improving First-Year Student Success in High-Risk Courses*. The Freshman Year Experience: Monograph Series No. 7. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina.

¹⁶*CCSSE* uses the Carnegie Classifications (from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching) to identify colleges as urban-serving, suburban-serving, and rural-serving.

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CCSSE and SENSE Member Colleges

For lists of CCSSE and SENSE member colleges, visit www.cccse.org.



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The Equity Scorecard

6

The Equity Scorecard, a nationally recognized and widely used organizational learning process designed to foster institutional change through the identification and elimination of racial disparities among college students, is described in this chapter. The effectiveness of this process and its potential impact are also discussed.

The Equity Scorecard: A Collaborative Approach to Assess and Respond to Racial/Ethnic Disparities in Student Outcomes

Frank Harris III, Estela Mara Bensimon

Despite recent efforts to increase accountability in higher education, racial/ethnic disparities in student outcomes are a reality at most of the nation's colleges and universities (Bensimon, 2004). Disparate completion rates and a host of inequitable outcomes between racial/ethnic minorities and White students persist. Although most states have accountability systems, equity has not been incorporated as an indicator of institutional accountability or as an aspirational benchmark. Moreover, while many institutions monitor minute changes in the average SAT scores of entering first-year students obsessively, they do not keep track of how effectively they are performing based on the production of successful outcomes for minority students (Bensimon, Hao, and Bustillos, 2006). Neither external accountability systems nor internal institutional reports incorporate measures that would enable policymakers or institutional leaders to answer questions such as, "What proportion of African American students who earned bachelor degrees in 2007 had a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher?" or "What proportion of a community college's Latina/o students are in the honors program that guarantees transfer to selective four-year colleges?"

Also, little attention is paid to how institutions can be more proactive in increasing the number of African American and Latina/o students who

graduate from college with high grade point averages (Gándara, 1999). By all indications, what institutions seem to pay attention to is whether they are admitting sufficient numbers of minority students and whether, once admitted, those students survive academically. The need for intentional monitoring of minority students' educational outcomes is made clear by Massey, Charles, Lundy, and Fisher (2003), whose analysis led them to conclude that "despite a variety of retention efforts . . . once admitted to institutions of higher education, African Americans and Latinos/as continually underperform relative to their White and Asian counterparts, earning lower grades, progressing at a slower pace, and dropping out at higher rates" (p. 2).

We assert that leaders in higher education pay attention to what is measured (Bensimon, 2004; Birnbaum, 1988), so it follows that if the academic outcomes of minority students are not assessed regularly and treated as measurable evidence of institutional performance, we can expect inequalities in outcomes to remain structurally hidden and unattended to. We believe that collecting data on student outcomes disaggregated by race and reporting on them regularly should be a standard operating practice in colleges and universities. At the same time, we also recognize that the value of student outcome data depends on the capacity and willpower of institutions to transform data into actionable knowledge. As Dowd (2005) points out, data provide information but in and of themselves do not drive change. People make change happen. Data are necessary for organizational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1996), but without people who have the willingness to become engaged with the data and have the know-how to unpack data tables by asking questions, looking for patterns, forming hunches, challenging interpretations, and putting a story to those data, the knowledge contained in data will be concealed and unavailable. Indeed, most accountability systems, in both K–12 and in higher education, lack the structures, tools, and processes to be an effective means of organizational learning. Postsecondary institutions are rich in data but poor in the means and know-how of organizational learning. The barriers to organizational learning inherent in the structure and culture of institutions of higher education are explanatory factors for the limited impact accountability systems have within the classroom, the counseling center, the student activities office, and the learning resources center, among others.

Recognizing that data and campus-level practitioners are at the heart of organizational learning and change, researchers at the University of Southern California's Center for Urban Education created an intervention that involves practitioners in data practices designed to create new knowledge and bring about change within themselves and their institutions (Bauman, 2005; Bauman and others, 2005; Bensimon, 2004; Bensimon, Polkinghorne, Bauman, and Vallejo, 2004; Pena, Bensimon, and Colyar, 2006). This intervention, which goes by the name of Equity Scorecard, is being implemented in two- and four-year public and independent colleges throughout California, the University of Wisconsin system, and several

other states. In this chapter, we describe the principles of the Equity Scorecard as well as its core components.

The Equity Scorecard: A Learning and Change Intervention

Modeled after the Balanced Scorecard for business (see Kaplan and Norton, 1992) and the Academic Scorecard for Higher Education (see O’Neil, Bensimon, Diamond, and Moore, 1999), the idea for the Equity Scorecard was initially developed when it became evident that equity, although valued, is not measured in relation to educational outcomes for traditionally marginalized students in higher education. The scorecard is a tool and an established process to develop evidence-based awareness of race-based inequities among practitioners and to instill a sense of responsibility for addressing these gaps. Simply put, the outcome sought through the Equity Scorecard is for campus practitioners, including presidents, faculty members, counselors, deans, and directors, to become local experts on the educational outcomes of minority students within their own campus and to come to view these outcomes as a matter of institutional responsibility.

These two goals (awareness of outcomes inequities and accountability for eradicating inequitable outcomes) are stressed for two reasons. First, we have found that campus participants in institutions that are racially diverse, in fact even in minority-serving institutions (Contreras, Malcom, and Bensimon, forthcoming), are often impervious to racially stratified educational outcomes. Second, when race-based disparities become evident, campus actors are more likely to externalize the problem and attribute it to student characteristics or circumstances that lessen their own responsibility or institutional fault (Bensimon, 2007). The prevalence of special compensatory programs to address the educational and social needs of minority students on virtually every college campus is indicative of the extent to which student success is understood as being primarily a student responsibility. Although we do not deny the power of individual student agency to determine the quality of the collegiate experience, we also believe that institutions have a responsibility for creating the necessary conditions for equitable educational outcomes. Just as institutions are now expected to be accountable for student retention and graduation, the same expectation should be held for equity. Institutions, through their policies as well as the practices, attitudes, and knowledge of their members, have the power to create the conditions that make student success possible or perpetuate race-based inequalities.

Unlike the great majority of campus interventions intended for minority students, the Equity Scorecard is an intervention designed to create learning and change among practitioners. The prevalence of inequality, we believe, reflects a learning problem of practitioners. Specifically, the taken-for-granted knowledge that practitioners have acquired over time about

teaching and learning, and which they have found to be effective in the past, now may be failing them. Many faculty members lament that students today are not like the students from the past. This jeremiad is often heard on campuses that, as a consequence of unplanned demographic changes, are experiencing a cultural chasm between their predominantly White faculty and predominantly minority students.

Higher education practitioners have been socialized to a model of teaching and learning that is based on individualism; thus, when students do not do well academically, we are inclined to look into their behaviors for explanations. For example, we may notice that the student has not attempted to seek assistance during designated office hours or take advantage of the tutoring services that are available in the learning center. Lack of cultural knowledge may keep us from noticing the ways in which we, unknowingly and unintendedly, create the conditions that prevent students from behaving according to our expectations (Pena, Bensimon, and Colyar, 2006; Steele, 1997).

Simply stated, the learning problem of institutions and practitioners lies in the failure to recognize that one's best practices may not be effective with students who are not familiar with the hidden curriculum of how to be a successful college student. The challenge is to uncover what might enable educational practitioners to address unequal educational outcomes among minority students as a problem of institutional and practitioner knowledge.

The Equity Scorecard as a Means of Learning and Change

The guiding principle of the Equity Scorecard is that “learning and change are made possible by the engagement of practitioners in a collaborative and productive activity setting” (Bensimon, Polkinghorne, Bauman, and Vallejo, 2004; Wenger, 1998). By practitioners, we mean just about any campus professional whose beliefs, knowledge, and practices can affect the outcomes of minority students. For example, extremely high percentages of new minority students are placed in noncredit basic math and English courses. One of the biggest obstacles to minority student success is getting through basic math courses successfully, and a great number of students drop out without ever having taken a college-level math course. In the Equity Scorecard framework, the basic skills math instructors are practitioners whose unconscious actions, informed by tacit knowledge, can be a tremendous source of motivation and support for minority students—or one of despair and self-doubt.

Accordingly, the involvement of math instructors as members of an Equity Scorecard team is a means of increasing their awareness with the hope of moving them to reflect on the role they can play to ameliorate unequal outcomes. The same is true for counselors who help students plan their future, administrators who control the allocation of resources, program directors who oversee student support services, and so on (for a more in-depth discussion of the theoretical grounding of these ideas, see Bensimon,

Polkinghorne, Bauman, and Vallejo, 2004; Bensimon, 2007; Pena, Bensimon, and Colyar, 2006).

The means of engaging practitioners in a collaborative activity is by the formation of small campus teams that typically work together for a year, meeting monthly for about two hours. The activity on which these teams collaborate involves making sense of easily accessible institutional data that are disaggregated by race and ethnicity. During the meetings, team members collaborate by examining the disaggregated data collectively, raising questions about the data, deciding what additional data they should look at to answer their questions, and challenging others' assumptions and interpretations about the data. In community colleges, one outcome of the teams' collaboration is the creation of an Equity Scorecard with key indicators of student success, organized by four concurrent perspectives: academic pathways, retention and persistence, transfer readiness, and excellence. Each perspective focuses on specific aspects of institutional performance with respect to equity in student outcomes.

Examining Disaggregated Student Outcomes Data. Prior to the first team meeting, we ask the institutional researcher to complete a data spreadsheet that we refer to as the “vital signs.” The vital signs consist of data that are routinely collected on most campuses, disaggregated by race/ethnicity. We call them vital signs because they provide insight into the health and status of an institution with respect to equity in student outcomes (Bensimon, Hao, and Bustillos, 2006). For example, “the number and percentage of students who earn an associate degree within six years” is a vital sign for the retention and persistence perspective for the Equity Scorecard. At a community college, “completion of 60 or more transferable units” and “transfer to a four-year institution in three years or less” are vital signs for the transfer readiness and excellence perspectives, respectively. The vital signs provide a starting point for the teams' examination of data by highlighting potential gaps and inequities in student outcomes. The format of the vital signs is tailored for people who are not accustomed to examining data. Based on our observations, the capacity to make sense of data requires specialized practices that are underdeveloped on most college campuses. This is reinforced by a point we made earlier: institutions have a wealth of data but are impoverished in their capacity to make sense of them.

While reviewing and discussing the vital signs data collaboratively, team members are encouraged to ask questions. Say, for instance, that a team discovers a gap among Latino/a students who earn associate degrees. The following questions may be raised by team members: “How many Latino/a students in the cohort indicated that earning the associate degree is their educational goal?” “How many Latino/a students in the cohort have completed the English and math courses that are required for the associate degree?” “How engaged are Latino/a students in educationally purposeful activities that enhance learning and produce desired outcomes?” “Are they earning grades in their courses that would allow them to persist to the completion of

the associate degree?” As questions like these are raised about the data, team members discuss and agree on those that should be pursued in subsequent meetings. This step entails deciding what new data they would like the institutional researcher to prepare and present at the next team meeting. For instance, the team may decide to examine data that illustrate students’ educational goals in order to learn how many Latino/a students are pursuing an associate degree. The team may also look at student progression through math and English course sequences to see if Latino/a students have completed the associate degree requirement in these subject areas. Finally, to answer questions about students’ academic performance, the team may choose to look at grade point averages and course completion rates.

What is unique about this process is that team members take the role of researchers rather than relying on the knowledge produced by outsiders, such as consultants or university researchers. In this research model, the researchers, all team members, assume the role of facilitators and learners. As facilitators, we create the structures, tools, and processes of organizational learning that the great majority of colleges, regardless of selectivity or wealth, lack. As learners, we observe and document the impact of practitioner-driven research as a means of self- and institutional change. That is, we observe whether the math or English instructor, counselor, or others in the team are more open to reconsidering their own practices and how they might change them in order to improve student outcomes.

Constructing an Equity Scorecard. Once the team has gone through the cycle of reviewing vital signs data, discovering potential areas of inequity, asking questions about the data, and reviewing subsequent data, they work collectively to agree on indicators that will be included in the Equity Scorecard they will construct on behalf of the campus. For example, if the team finds that Latino/a students are disproportionately enrolled in basic skills English and math courses that are not applicable to the associate degree, they may decide to include “successful progression from basic skills to college-level English” and “successful progression from basic skills to college-level math” as indicators in the academic pathways perspective of its Equity Scorecard. They may also discover that many Latino/a students do not persist beyond a critical gateway course within the sequence, English 100, for example. Gateway courses are those that serve as entry or exit points to graduation, transfer, or completion of basic skills requirements. Thus, students who are not successful in these courses are disadvantaged in several respects, notably time to degree completion. As such, the team may decide to include “successful completion of English 100” as one of its Equity Scorecard indicators. The team continues this type of analysis and collaborative sense making until they have examined data and developed indicators for all four of the Equity Scorecard perspectives. Once the team has constructed the scorecard, their next task is to disseminate their findings to stakeholders who can use the knowledge to mobilize change.

Sharing Equity Scorecard Findings with Stakeholders. In addition to working collaboratively to learn about the state of equity on behalf of their institution and constructing an Equity Scorecard, team members are charged with disseminating their findings to the campus. As noted in Bensimon, Polkinghorne, Bauman, and Vallejo (2004), “The opportunity for institutional change lies in the possibility that individual participants will transfer their learning to other contexts within the institution, and in doing so, enable others to learn and to change” (p. 113). The teams disseminate their learning and findings by way of a comprehensive written report to the president of the institution. In the report, the team discusses the data that served as the focal points of its analysis, the gaps and inequities they discovered within each perspective, and recommendations for actions and further inquiry. Moreover, throughout the process, the team disseminates its findings by making presentations to stakeholder groups that shape and influence campus policies and practices with a direct impact on equity in student outcomes. The academic senate, strategic planning committee, academic deans, and academic departments in which the most significant inequities exist (for example, math and English) are examples of some of the groups to which the team presents its findings. Finally, team members take their new-found knowledge and awareness of inequities in student outcomes to other committees, task forces, and other groups in which they participate. We ensure that the learning that takes place among the members of the Equity Scorecard team is diffused throughout the campus by including team members who are boundary spanners, serving on institution-wide committees which have access to multiple audiences.

Conclusion

Racial/ethnic disparities in student outcomes are a reality at most colleges and university in the United States. We believe that the intellectual capital and resources that are necessary to respond effectively to this unfortunate reality are often situated within institutions. We also believe that compensatory programs that aim to eliminate racial/ethnic student deficits alone are not sufficient to bring about equity in student outcomes. Alternatively, the Equity Scorecard approach has proven to be an effective institutional learning and change intervention.

Applying Harper and Bensimon’s concept of color consciousness (2003), responding to the realities of race requires institutional leaders to focus purposefully and intentionally on equity in student outcomes to ensure that their institutions are welcoming, affirming, and responsive environments for groups that historically have been denied access to the benefits of higher education. The Equity Scorecard provides the means and the context for institutional leaders to develop color-consciousness and thereby build their capacities to assess and respond to race-based disparities in student outcomes.

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