

Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges

A Research and Practice-Improvement Initiative of THE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Center for Community College Student Engagement has launched a special initiative on “**identifying and promoting high-impact educational practices in community colleges**”—a project that links four related Center survey instruments, augmented by focus groups with students and faculty. Undertaken in response to increasing demand from the community college field and to escalating national emphasis on college persistence and completion, this initiative will make valuable new information available to individual institutions and to the field more broadly. Following are some details.

- **Special student survey items focused on promising practices.** The Center has developed a special item set that will be administered at colleges in conjunction with the [Community College Survey of Student Engagement \(CCSSE\)](#). Students at all CCSSE 2011 institutions (except colleges that have chosen to use their own set of custom items) were asked, while completing the core survey, to respond to 20 additional items regarding educational practices for which there is evidence of promising results in terms of enhanced student success. This additional item set also will be administered *free of charge* in conjunction with CCSSE 2012.
- **Special faculty survey items focused on promising practices.** A parallel item set has been incorporated into the online [Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement \(CCFSSE\)](#) to explore the extent of faculty members’ use of the identified promising practices in their teaching. CCFSSE is administered in conjunction with CCSSE (for an additional but modest fee), at colleges that have registered online.
- **Online institutional survey.** The third component of the study is a new online institutional survey, which will provide highly valuable information about the institutional context for these promising practices. The initial national administration (all U.S. community colleges) was in spring 2011. *There is no charge for participation.* Data from this survey will be reported back to each college, but public reports will not include institutional identifiers. This survey, known as the Community College Institutional Survey, will be administered again in 2012.
- **An additional opportunity** to explore promising practices for strengthening student engagement and success is available through a new special-focus module for the [Survey of Entering Student Engagement \(SENSE\)](#). Colleges that administer SENSE 2011 and SENSE 2012 will have the option to add the Promising Practices for Community College Student Success module *free of charge* – a \$500 savings.

This work will produce unprecedented information of significant value for community colleges. Through the **student surveys** and subsequent data analysis, we will gain empirical confirmation of “high-impact” educational practices in community colleges; quantification of the extent to which those practices are part of the current experience of our students; analysis of whether participation in high-impact educational practices varies across subgroups of students; new evidence of how student participation in these practices is related to overall student engagement, academic progress and college completion; and exploration of the extent to which student participation levels in defined promising practices are aligned with the efficacy of those respective practices in influencing an array of positive outcomes for students. **Faculty survey** results will illuminate the current realities of teaching practice, and proposed follow-up focus groups with full- and part-time faculty will provide their perspectives on the benefits and challenges of employing high-impact practices at scale. The **institutional survey** will address questions about whether those key practices (when offered) are required or optional, what key components they include, for what target student populations, and at what current scale. Finally, focus groups conducted with students and faculty will contribute additional depth and insight to the field’s emerging understanding of how best to strengthen community college student learning, persistence and completion.