



HIGHLIGHTS

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CCSSE IN ACTION USING DATA TO DRIVE DECISIONS

CCSSE's national benchmarks for effective educational practice in community and technical colleges address these five issues: 1) active and collaborative learning, 2) student effort, 3) academic challenge, 4) student-faculty interaction, and 5) support for learners.

Research shows that the more actively engaged students are — with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter — the more likely they are to learn and to achieve their academic goals. CCSSE benchmarks focus on institutional practices and student behaviors that promote student engagement and that correlate highly with student learning and persistence.

This issue of *CCCSE Highlights* features brief descriptions of how colleges participating in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement are using their results to focus conversations and target improvement initiatives.

CCSSE Results Are Being Used...

To Create "Buy-In" at All Levels

Institutional improvement is unlikely to occur without effective communication and institutional commitment to using data to inform decisions. **St. Petersburg College (SPC)**, in Tampa, FL, provides an example of how a college can create "buy-in" at various levels to move an institution forward. Carol Copenhaver, Senior V.P. of Educational and Student Services, enlisted the help of SPC's Executive Leadership Cohort to interpret and disseminate 2003 CCSSE survey results. The Leadership Cohort members drilled into the CCSSE data and identified SPC's effective educational practices and opportunities for improvement. Next, they met with key faculty, administrative, and student support groups to present this information and obtain feedback. Engaging these stakeholders was a priority in building support for the CCSSE survey.

To Respond to an Accrediting Agency

SPC's Leadership Cohort also used the CCSSE survey results to identify critical achievements and challenges to satisfy a core requirement of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. CCSSE results were helpful as a measurement of internal quality and also brought about the opportunity for external benchmarking against institutions of similar size. In addition, the cohort recommended to SPC's administration several initiatives resulting from CCSSE benchmarks. In order to address the high student withdrawal rate, for example, one recommendation was to require under-prepared students to take a newly designed one-credit-hour success skills course as part of their first year experience.

As SPC's President, Carl M. Kuttler, pointed out, "St. Petersburg College is intent on being a leader in education, and this survey can assist us in identifying where we are and what further action may be helpful in our continuing work to support and strengthen teaching and learning."

To Fulfill Requirements of a National Project Evaluation Plan

In addition to within-college assessment, CCSSE benchmarks are being used to fulfill requirements of the evaluation plan for the **League for Innovation's College and Careers Transition Initiative (CCTI)**. Seventeen CCSSE member colleges participate in CCTI, a national initiative designed to develop collaboration among outstanding site partnerships which consist of high schools, colleges, and the workforce. The site partnerships are committed to serving as leaders in expanding promising college and career transition strategies and programs of study. CCTI colleges will use CCSSE data and CCTI high schools will use data from the High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE) to respond to CCTI's evaluation criteria.

To Engage Faculty

Located in Champaign, IL, **Parkland College (Parkland)** was one of eight colleges that joined CCSSE's 2003 membership as part of CCSSE's Illinois Consortium. Parkland not only communicated about CCSSE and its value before the survey administration period, but also encouraged faculty involvement after receiving its results. For example, Parkland conducted a session on its 2003 CCSSE results during a faculty professional development session in August 2003. Then, during the *Welcome Back Week* for faculty in January 2004, Parkland presented a session on its benchmark scores relative to CCSSE's national benchmark scores and as compared to the Illinois consortium's benchmark scores. The session also highlighted frequency data on specific survey items that may offer opportunities for improvement.

Parkland next welcomed a group of faculty and staff to participate in a series of five round-table discussions focusing on benchmark scores. Participants were asked to discuss the meaning of the benchmarks and to indicate whether student responses were, in fact, realities in their classrooms. As a result, faculty identified issues surrounding student engagement. They discussed the role of student motivation; improving student preparation for class; encouraging out-of-classroom discussions among students as well as between students and faculty; and incorporating service learning as a college-wide objective. The faculty also suggested obtaining additional student input by continuing these discussions in the classroom.

Parkland's communication efforts, faculty involvement, and awareness of students' perspectives created a collaborative environment for effective change.

For more information about:

- SPC's Executive Leadership Cohort, contact Dr. Carol Copenhaver at Copenhaver.Carol@admin.spcollege.edu
- CCTI, visit the League for Innovation in the Community College website at <http://www.league.org/CCTI>.
- Parkland's use of CCSSE data to engage faculty, contact Dr. Sharon Kristovich at SKristovich@Parkland.edu

To Investigate Student Retention

CCSSE member colleges are reminded to **register now** for the **2004 CCSSE Annual Workshop – Effective Strategies for Student Retention**. The workshop will be held on Sunday, May 23, 2004, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel in Austin, Texas. The workshop will feature Betsy Barefoot, Co-Director of the Policy Center on the First Year of College and Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Brevard College. Dr. Barefoot will lead discussions on effective retention strategies for first-semester and first-year community college students. CCSSE welcomes leadership teams from its member colleges to attend this valuable workshop free of charge. To register, please visit the CCSSE Web Site at www.ccsse.org.

Take Part in the Action: CCSSE's 2005 Membership Deadline is November 1, 2004

TO BECOME A 2005 CCSSE MEMBER COLLEGE, PLEASE REGISTER ONLINE AT WWW.CCSSE.ORG

CCSSE Member Colleges Use Results As:

- A benchmarking instrument, providing opportunities for each college to benchmark its performance against community colleges nationally and against the aggregate performance of colleges of similar sizes;
- A diagnostic tool, identifying areas in which a college excels and areas in which the institution might target efforts to enhance students' educational experiences; and
- A monitoring device, enabling the documentation of improvements in institutional effectiveness over time.

Services to CCSSE Member Colleges Include:

- Sample selection, survey materials, and survey procedure guides
- Scanning, data file and analysis, and standard and benchmark reports on results for each college
- Free copies of CCSSE's **National Report** — defining national benchmarks and focusing on trends and issues for community and technical colleges — and **CCSSE Highlights**, a newsletter featuring research findings, CCSSE services, and best practices from participating colleges
- Access to the Members Only section of CCSSE's Web site, which provides additional resources and tools