



BULLETIN

Published by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement

Texas Small Colleges

Featured Texas Small Colleges Consortium Members: Trinity Valley Community College and Cedar Valley College

Building on Success

For the past four years, The Houston Endowment Inc. has funded the Texas Small Colleges Consortium, a project that has supported participation of 29 community colleges in the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) and made possible additional work with those institutions to help them understand and use their survey data in targeted efforts to improve student learning, persistence, and attainment. CCSSE has received a new grant from The Houston Endowment Inc., and we are delighted to be able to build on the success of this work. Under the new grant, colleges will receive a 50% grant-funded subsidy for their continued participation in CCSSE 2008 and 2010 or CCSSE 2009 and 2011 survey administrations. We look forward to this continued work together and appreciate our ongoing relationship with the Texas Small Colleges Consortium.

Members of the 2008 CCSSE Texas Small Colleges Consortium

Brazosport College
Clarendon College
Coastal Bend College
College of the Mainland
Frank Phillips College
Galveston College
Grayson County College
Howard College
Kilgore College
Lamar Institute of Technology
Lamar State College – Orange
Panola College
Paris Junior College
Ranger College
Southwest Texas Junior College
Texas State Technical College Harlingen
Texas State Technical College West Texas
Vernon College

Trinity Valley Community College has campus locations in Athens, Terrell, Kaufman, and Palestine. The college has grown to an enrollment of more than 5,800 students. TVCC continues to incorporate student engagement initiatives into the college's Learning Initiative, which was prompted by 2005 CCSSE results. The college is in its third year of the project and has a number of pilot programs in place, including student networking groups, a faculty learning academy, an open learning lab, and discipline-specific reading tests. These programs yielded positive results in the 2007 CCSSE benchmark areas. The open learning lab now has a permanent home and a full-time coordinator. The learning academy has enlarged to include a sophomore class as well as freshman class. TVCC's QEP, which is based on the Learning Initiative programs, has been accepted by the Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) and full implementation is under way. The goal of the QEP is to improve learning in crucial areas by increasing students' abilities to read through enhanced student engagement. That goal continues to be the driving force of the Learning Initiative as plans to participate in CCSSE 2009 are anticipated.

Cedar Valley College, one of seven colleges in the Dallas County Community College District, is located in southern Dallas County and serves more than 4,000 credit students. Cedar Valley College participated in the CCSSE survey for both students and faculty in the fall of 2004 in order to establish baseline data for creating improvement in student success. The college learned from its first administration of the survey that improvements were needed in student access to and use of career counseling, orientation, tutoring, job placement, and student organizations. College leaders focused their short-term strategies on data about making tutoring available to more students and on student involvement in orientation. They chose these areas of focus because they believed significant impact on student success could be made with improvements in these areas. Correspondingly, both of these projects became part of the CVC operational plan.

The first objective was to provide tutoring to every CVC student who needed it. Previously only students who met certain federal criteria were provided tutoring; but the new plan included creating a tutoring center located in the middle of the campus that would provide tutoring in all disciplines and for all students. The President committed funds to make the new tutoring center a first-class service: a director was hired and additional tutors were employed; extensive training for tutors was planned and implemented; the new tutoring center established relationships with faculty, who broadly advertised the center's services; and a software package was employed to keep track of students who were tutored. CVC recently completed a second administration of the *CCSSE* survey. The new data show that the college scored significantly higher than other

community colleges in the frequency of use of tutoring services. The college also learned from the survey that students ranked tutoring as one of the three services they were most satisfied with.

The second objective was to update the new student orientation and an online orientation was added as an option since the last *CCSSE*. Most recently, CVC has focused efforts on making improvements in student organizations. As a result of greater promotion and support, student involvement in student organizations and student leadership events has increased.

For more information about the *CCSSE* Texas Small Colleges Consortium contact Sandra Shannon, *CCSSE* College Liaison, at shannon@ccsse.org or 512-471-6907.

Upcoming Spring 2008 Conference Opportunities

CCSSE will be presenting two sessions at:

**Texas Association for Institutional Research (TAIR): Netting Knowledge in the Gulf of Information.
February 4 - 7 • Galveston, TX
www.texas-air.org**

The CCSSE-Texas Small Colleges Consortium: Working Together to Improve Student Success

This session will provide an overview of the *CCSSE* Texas Small Colleges Consortium, a group of twenty-nine Texas small community colleges that joined *CCSSE* in 2004 and 2005 to gain valuable information about the engagement, learning, and retention of the students they serve. With support from the Houston Endowment Inc., the colleges gathered and reviewed baseline data in their first year of participation, sought to implement necessary changes for improvement the following year, and then administered follow-up surveys in 2006 or 2007. After a look at the data collected over the last four years, two representatives from consortium colleges will discuss ways in which *CCSSE* results have been used for improvement efforts on their campuses.

Effective Practice with Entering Students: The Survey of Entering Student Engagement

This session will discuss *CCSSE*'s newest initiative, the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), which focuses on the earliest student experiences. By focusing on the front door, community and technical college can improve educational practice with their entering students. An overview of the *SENSE* instrument, including sampling and administration procedures will be presented. College participants from the fall 2007 *SENSE* Pilot will be invited to share their experiences.

CCSSE will also be attending the American Association of Community Colleges Convention and the League for Innovations in the Community College Conference. Feel free to visit us there!

American Association of Community Colleges: A New Vision for Community Colleges
April 5 - 8 • Philadelphia, PA
www.aacc.nche.edu

League for Innovation in the Community College: Innovations 2008 Conference
March 2 - 5 • Denver, CO
www.league.org