



BULLETIN

Published by the Center for Community College Student Engagement

Texas Small Colleges

CCSSE Texas Small Colleges Consortium Members Share Stories of Progress

CCSSE recently requested progress reports from the members of the Texas Small Colleges Consortium, and we are happy to share two of those updates in this Bulletin. Details about more exciting initiatives happening at our other partner colleges will be provided in future publications.

Featured Texas Small Colleges Consortium Member: El Centro College

Literature shows that, especially for Hispanic populations, the engagement of the family is an important factor in retention of students in college. As part of El Centro College's ongoing effort to improve student retention, several college administrators and faculty members have participated in conferences and workshops related to improving student retention. Through these conference and workshop experiences, the college decided to revise its student orientation program in an attempt to engage students more deeply in the learning environment from day one.

In Fall 2008, El Centro College began offering a "mandatory" new-student orientation program. Instead of the previous one-to-two hour orientation session, the college designed a full-day program, offered in a conference format. The college invited parents and other significant persons to share in the day's events, both as a means to enlist their help in engaging the new students—and to highlight for them, as well, the importance of the college community. Faculty members from each division and directors from each student services area, the learning center, and the library take part in the orientation sessions. The college president and other senior college officials are involved in the program as well.

El Centro College has had excellent response to this new student orientation process. Most of the incoming students participate in the orientation program and give praise in their event surveys. The new student orientation process was the El Centro College "Innovation of the Year" for the 2008-2009 academic year.

Featured Texas Small Colleges Consortium Member: Howard College

In 2007, Howard College provided CCSSE training at all campuses for all faculty members. The training agenda included an Introduction to CCSSE, CCSSE Benchmarks, results overview for 2004 and 2006, general information and resources available on the CCSSE Web site, and tips on how the survey data can be accessed and compared, along with brainstorming sessions and free time to explore the possible groups of students upon which to focus their research. The well-attended training received great reviews, and the brainstorming sessions provided material for a "best practices" list to be shared with all district faculty concerning *Ideas to Engage Students in the Classroom*. A few examples of these promising practices include the following:

- Each semester, give students a chance to share their ideas/input about how the course will work. Share course objectives and options for course components. Be creative about gaining student input and selection of course components (group projects, oral reports, exams and exam type, networking of students—student organization participation, study groups, etc.). Use 'critical thinking' vocabulary and encourage all students to participate.
- Show statistics about studying. Present a small planning session each semester to help encourage students to study. Tell them over and over to STUDY! (We expect it, but sometimes it helps to verbalize it more.)

Did You Know?

In comparison to the 2008 CCSSE Cohort, 2008 TSCC respondents:

- Are more likely to indicate that their college helps them (*quite a bit* or *very much*) to cope with their non-academic responsibilities such as work, family, etc. (30% vs. 25%).
- Are more likely to indicate that they plan to or have participated in a college orientation program or course (45% vs. 40%).
- Are more likely to indicate that their college contributed (*quite a bit* or *very much*) to their knowledge, skills, and

personal development in developing a personal code of values and ethics (47% vs. 42%).

- Are more likely to indicate (*often* or *very often*) that they worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments (25% vs. 21%).
- Are more likely to indicate that their college contributed (*quite a bit* or *very much*) to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in using computing and information technology (62% vs. 59%).

For more information about the CCSSE Texas Small Colleges Consortium contact April Juarez, CCSSE College Liaison, at juarez@ccsse.org or 512-232-3744.

2009 CCCSE Workshop

Tuesday, May 26, 2009 • 10:30 am to 4:00 pm • Austin, TX
(held in conjunction with the 2009 NISOD Conference)

FREE for Member Colleges

Morning Break-out Sessions:

CCSSE 101

STARTING RIGHT: What We Are Learning about Entering Students—Findings from the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE)

Making the Most of Online Resources: CCCSE Web site Tour

High Expectations and High Support: How Colleges Are Changing the Formula for Student Success

Lunch and Plenary Session:

*High Expectations and High Support:
How Colleges Are Changing the Formula for Student Success*

Afternoon Break-out Sessions:

Focus Groups: A Practical “How To” Session

Engagement in the Classroom

Entering Student Success Institute Preview

**For more information and to register for the CCCSE Workshop,
visit: www.ccsse.org**

Staff members working on CCSSE, SENSE, and the *Starting Right* Initiative will also present sessions throughout the NISOD conference. The NISOD conference will be held May 24-27, 2009 in Austin, TX.

Learn more at: www.nisod.org