



ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2001, twelve leading community colleges volunteered to participate in the pilot administration of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE). A subsequent field test helped survey designers fine-tune the instrument. By 2008, a similar process had produced the Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE). The rest is now Center history: Since 2002, 879 colleges from 50 states and the District of Columbia—plus Alberta, Bermuda, British Columbia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec—have participated in CCSSE and SENSE. The participating colleges have a total enrollment of 6,638,169 credit students (unduplicated), represented in the surveys by about 2.1 million student respondents.

As I prepare to retire from the Center and The University of Texas at Austin in April, 2014, I am deeply grateful to the community colleges that have stepped up to the tasks of regularly assessing the nature and quality of their students' educational experiences, using publicly posted survey results for benchmarking effective educational practice, and engaging their campuses in data-informed discussions aimed at improving student learning, retention, and attainment. To colleagues and friends across the field, in the national and state organizations, in philanthropy—and especially to the Center staff, my message is simple: Thank you for your continuing support of the Center and for your commitment to students and their success.

Kay M. McClenney



READ MORE

www.cccse.org/docs/KayMcClenneyRetirementAnnouncement.pdf
www.cccse.org/docs/McClenneysRetirementStatement.pdf

What to Expect From the Center in the Coming Months

Even while the Center is experiencing significant transition, the work continues—with several major projects underway, from producing four national reports and hosting three student engagement institutes in the span of a year to continually improving and expanding upon survey administration and reporting services. The following is a sampling of activities that will produce opportunities and information resources in the near future for our member colleges and the field at large.

HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES INSTITUTE

As part of a grant-supported initiative, the Center hosted the first of two High-Impact Practices Institutes in the spring of 2013 and is set to host the second March 31 – April 1, 2014, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The 2014 event is at full capacity, with cross-functional teams of five members each

from 25 community colleges across the country registered to participate. The Center is grateful for funds provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation to conduct research on high-impact practices and to organize the 2013 and 2014 institutes. Due to the success of these institutes, the Center will offer a similar opportunity in the spring of 2015. Colleges with recent Center survey data will be invited to attend. More information will be available on the Center's website, www.cccse.org.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Aspirations to Achievement: Men of Color and Community Colleges

Another initiative, funded by The Kresge Foundation, has enabled the Center to explore in-depth the experiences and outcomes of Latino and Black male

community college students. In late February at Achieving the Dream's Annual Meeting on Student Success (DREAM), the Center will release a special report and related video, both of which provide a call to action for racial equity in community colleges.

Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty Into Focus

In conjunction with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)'s national convention in April, the Center will release a special report focused on the major challenges faced by part-time faculty and featuring faculty perspectives gained through focus groups, data from the Center's faculty survey (CCFSSE), and descriptions of promising practices implemented in a variety of community colleges. The report, along with the related research and analyses, is funded by a grant from the MetLife Foundation.

NEW CENTER INITIATIVE

The work will explore factors impacting engagement, transfer, and completion for Latino students.

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COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) is now available free of charge to all institutions.

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DELVING INTO DATA

Principal components analysis seeks to further simplify the definition of promising practices.

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CENTER DEFINED

The **Center for Community College Student Engagement** is a research and service initiative of the Program in Higher Education Leadership at The University of Texas at Austin that provides important resources for assessing and improving educational practice in community colleges through the following projects and initiatives:

Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) /'se'sē/, administered to students in the spring, includes items that assess institutional practices and student behaviors correlated with student learning and retention.

Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) /'sē'sē'fesē/, an online companion to CCSSE, elicits information from instructors about their students' educational experiences, their teaching practices, and how they spend their professional time.

Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE) /sens/, administered in early fall to entering students, gathers information about their academic and non-academic experiences from the time of their decision to attend the college through the first three weeks of class.

Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS), developed as part of the High-Impact Practices Initiative, is a free tool that helps community colleges collect data about the implementation, design, and scale of high-impact educational practices on their campuses.

High-Impact Practices Initiative is a grant-funded project that combines quantitative and qualitative findings in efforts to identify proven effective educational practices.

Initiative on Men of Color is a grant-funded project that aims to assist colleges in improving educational outcomes for African American and Latino males.

Strengthening the Role of Part-Time Faculty is a grant-funded project that aims to identify major issues and promising solutions pertaining to the critical role of part-time faculty in promoting student success.

Latino Student Engagement and Transfer is a grant-funded initiative that brings together community colleges and baccalaureate institutions to strengthen Latino student engagement, transfer, and college completion. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and *Excelencia* in Education are partners in this work.

Initiative on Student Success conducts focus groups and interviews at select colleges, gathering student, faculty, staff, and administrators' perspectives to paint a rich picture of the student experience.

Student Success BY THE NUMBERS is a grant-funded initiative designed to build the capacity of community and technical colleges in Texas to understand and communicate data depicting student success and institutional performance.

Learn more about these projects and initiatives at www.ccsse.org

LISTEN UP

At the Center, we're always listening! Since 2001, the Center has been uplifting the student voice through surveys and focus groups, helping community college practitioners better understand their students' experiences.

Forthcoming Report to Feature Findings From Focus Groups With Male Students of Color

Data show that Black and Latino males have higher aspirations than White males when they begin college, but they are less likely to attain their goals. Why are their aspirations not matched by high outcomes? And, what steps can and must community college leaders take to close achievement gaps?

In February, at DREAM 2014, the Achieving the Dream Annual Meeting on Student Success, the Center will release a special report and companion video, *Aspirations to Achievement: Men of Color and Community Colleges*. The work will highlight data from surveys conducted by the Center; national research; and findings from the Center's focus groups with Black males, Latinos, and White males throughout the country.

“I struggled a great deal because I thought... ‘You have to work harder than the White guy does just to get close.’”

— Latino Community College Student

“Teachers are posing a question like, ‘How dare you not finish college?’ It’s like a challenge. . . . You’re not only expected to finish, you’re supposed to finish. Having that perspective is like . . . carrying a weight of responsibility...”

— Black Male Community College Student

Student voices tell the story of their diverse experiences before they enrolled in college, their varying perspectives on whether race matters in their educational outcomes, and what makes a difference in helping them succeed in college.

The report and video point to steps colleges can take to improve outcomes for men of color, beginning with courageous conversations—with students, faculty, and staff.

In late February, this special report and video will be available through the Center's website. Let's listen...

Center Launches New Project With NSSE, Excelencia

With support from The Kresge Foundation and Greater Texas Foundation, the Center has partnered with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and *Excelencia* in Education in a special project focused on helping institutions strengthen Latino student engagement, transfer, and college completion.

Twenty-four institutions from urban locations—that is, 12 pairs of community colleges and baccalaureate institutions—have committed to the work. Among other commitments, selected institutional pairs will bring teams of five leaders from each institution to an intensive, data-focused institute, September 11 – 13, 2014, in San Antonio, Texas. Stay tuned for more updates about this project.

COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

Six Colleges Partner With Center to Contribute to Ongoing Research on High-Impact Practices

A new report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement points the way for college leaders seeking deeper understanding of what works in promoting student success. *A Matter of Degrees: Engaging Practices, Engaging Students* is the second in a three-part series presenting key findings from a multi-year Center initiative—Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges—and features survey responses from entering students, experienced students, faculty, and institutions. Additionally, the report provides qualitative data to paint a complete picture of students' college experiences and highlights six partner colleges that hosted Center-conducted focus groups, each focused on a particular practice:

- Community College of Baltimore County (MD) — Accelerated/Fast-Track Developmental Education
- Durham Technical Community College (NC) — First-Year Experience
- Houston Community College System (TX) — Student Success Course
- Kingsborough Community College (NY) — Learning Community
- Tallahassee Community College (FL) — Orientation
- Zane State College (OH) — Academic Goal Setting and Planning

The Center is extremely grateful for these colleges' partnership. Following are two examples of the great work in which they are engaged.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE COUNTY (MD) established a focused response to developmental students who were not successfully moving into and completing college-level classes: the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). This model places a cohort of 10 high-level developmental education students in paired classes (English 101 and their developmental course) taught by the same instructor. ALP courses are scheduled for six hours each week during consecutive class periods, with half of these hours in small sections of 10 students.

In early pilots, developmental writing students' success rates doubled, capturing the attention of the Community College Research Center (CCRC). In 2012, the CCRC studied 592 ALP students and 592 students in the traditional upper-level developmental writing course. CCRC's findings indicated that 74% of the ALP students successfully completed English 101, as compared to 33% of students who had taken traditional developmental courses. Furthermore, 33% of ALP students went on to pass English 102, compared to 10% of students who had taken traditional developmental courses. ALP has proven easily scalable, now offering about 250 sections per year. Advisors eagerly recommend the program because developmental students begin college with a credit-level course and faculty members have expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work more individually with students.

Beginning in 2007, **HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (TX)** institutionalized a student success course requirement for all new and transfer students with fewer than 12 earned credit hours. This course, Education 1300: Learning Frameworks, emphasizes skills taught in a previous course,

GUST 1270, such as priority setting, time management, effective listening, retaining information, note taking, critical thinking, problem solving, research, test taking, academic planning, and decision making. In July 2012, the college reclassified GUST 1270 as a transferable, credit-bearing course that also incorporates financial literacy, learning theories and approaches, and career awareness, and requires students to meet with advisors twice during the semester, select a major, and file a degree plan.

The college has observed gains in persistence rates for developmental and non-developmental students taking the success courses. One analysis compared a fall 2009 cohort of students who participated in any freshman success course in their first fall semester or in the pre-summer session with all other students in the fall 2009 cohort. Participating students (n=5,783) persisted through three long semesters significantly more than the average for the entire fall 2009 cohort of 12,869 students, with persistence rates of 80% compared to the average 75% for fall to spring, 58% compared to the average 52% for fall to fall, and 52% compared to the average 46% for fall to second spring.

CCIS and Related Discussion Guide Are Now Accessible to All Colleges

The Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) was recently developed to complement the Center's ongoing national work on identifying and promoting high-impact educational practices in community colleges. CCIS allows colleges to systematically gather data about key promising practices, the target student populations for those practices, and the scale at which the practices are currently implemented.

When a community college completes CCIS (available on demand and free of charge), the Center provides an electronic version of the college responses back to the institution. At that point, the college may use the companion CCIS Discussion Guide for initiating strategic, data-informed conversations about the effectiveness and scope of current student success programs and policies.

These resources were created as part of the High-Impact Practices Initiative, through generous funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation. They are available on the Center website, www.cccse.org, via the section dedicated to the initiative.

SHARE YOUR COLLEGE'S STORY

Has your college used Center data to strengthen student engagement and improve student success? Are *CCSSE*, *CCFSSE*, and/or *SENSE* results included in materials submitted to your accrediting region? If so, please visit the Engagement in Action section of www.cccse.org to submit a vignette.

Your story may be featured in our publications, online, or as part of conference presentations.

ON THE ROAD

Look for our sessions at the following upcoming events:

TAIR — Annual Conference
February 18 – 21, 2014
Addison, TX
texas-air.org/conference/2014

Achieving the Dream — DREAM
February 23 – 27, 2014
Orlando, FL
achievingthedream.org/dream2014

League — Innovations Conference
March 2 – 5, 2014
Anaheim, CA
Center Booth: 323
league.org/i2014

Center — High-Impact Practices Institute
March 30 – April 1, 2014
Santa Fe, NM
BY INVITATION ONLY
cccse.org

AACC — Annual Convention
April 5 – 8, 2014
Washington, DC
Center Booth: 616
www.aacc.nche.edu/convention

NISOD — Annual Conference
May 24 – 28, 2014
Austin, TX
nisod.org/conference

AIR — Annual Conference
May 26 – 30, 2014
Orlando, FL
forum.airweb.org/2014

League — Learning Summit
June 8 – 11, 2014
Chandler, AZ
league.org/lcs

We can also come to you:

The Center offers to colleges and college systems custom workshops for working with survey results.

Many colleges also invite Center associates to speak at faculty/staff professional development events.

Direct inquiries to info@cccse.org. Book early to ensure availability!

Free workshops are provided to statewide systems in which all colleges administered a survey at the same time. For the 2012–2013 survey cycle, this includes systems in Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wyoming.

To view all events and more details, visit our calendar at www.cccse.org

DELVING INTO DATA

Second in Four-Part Series
What's in a Name?

A previous issue of *Engagement Matters* included discussion of the occurrence of 24 program and curricular elements across five structured group learning experiences (SGLEs) included in the Center's Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS). Results revealed a substantial overlap of these elements across the five SGLEs, especially among First-Year Experience, Learning Community, and Student Success Course. This overlap contributed to a First-Year Experience program at one college looking exactly like a Student Success Course at another college and vice versa. To understand the underlying relationship of these 24 elements with the five SGLEs, Center research staff conducted a principal components analysis (PCA).

One purpose of PCA is to summarize the correlational patterns among a set of measured variables in order to identify a smaller number of factors that can help elucidate the relationships among the original variables. Center researchers used data from 336 colleges that completed the CCIS in the spring of 2012. These colleges reported the program and curricular elements that composed a total of 1,047 SGLE programs. After several sets of analyses, the PCA solution deemed most interpretable was a six-component solution that accounted for (or explained) over 80% of the variance in the original set of 24 elements. The six components were labeled Academic Skills, Group/Cohort, Advising, Experiential Learning, Learning Support, and Technology Skills.

Principle Component Analysis for Structured Group Learning Experiences (SGLEs)

	Variable	Academic Skills Factor1	Group/ Cohort Factor2	Advising Factor3	Experiential Learning Factor4	Learning Support Factor5	Technology Skills Factor6
Academic Skills	Study skills	0.93814	0.15421	0.0074	0.05786	0.08839	0.1328
	Note-taking Skills	0.92082	0.20743	0.0396	0.11287	0.08054	0.17786
	Test-taking skills	0.91465	0.18505	-0.0149	0.02599	0.1316	0.1864
	Time management Skills	0.89376	-0.01337	0.22461	0.06405	0.10824	0.16691
	Learning style assessment	0.74369	0.34328	0.38224	0.12722	0.00471	0.04614
	Identification of personal strengths and challenges	0.72947	0.35312	0.44348	0.12515	-0.06706	0.04557
	Use of info. resources	0.5678	0.08454	0.29463	0.22522	-0.07527	0.45589
Group/ Cohort	Study/assignments focused on common theme	0.21501	0.90185	0.02832	0.08889	0.0618	0.02806
	Common reading(s)	0.23586	0.8582	0.08977	0.15388	0.03643	0.17702
	Contextualized curriculum or discipline-related activities	0.04957	0.83996	-0.06915	0.14052	0.18056	0.08363
	Assigned group projects/assignments	0.31153	0.77866	0.10949	0.2354	0.12261	0.05699
Advising	Assigned study groups	0.0992	0.6417	0.11788	0.19766	0.47383	-0.08483
	Info. about and/or use of academic support network	0.23136	-0.01835	0.82224	0.07423	0.20688	0.1581
	Info. about and/or use of personal/social support network	0.22108	-0.09665	0.82023	0.21873	-0.10933	0.23296
	Group advising	-0.10226	0.05516	0.72883	0.1504	0.13884	0.09489
Experiential Learning	Development of a written individual academic plan	0.48175	0.17383	0.67486	0.0607	0.04443	-0.15558
	Service learning	0.00504	0.26302	0.16585	0.88028	0.18371	-0.05223
	Campus or community service project(s)	0.18121	0.28084	0.10361	0.8641	0.16792	0.06703
Learning Support	Participation in campus activities/events outside classroom	0.20465	0.14646	0.42783	0.64324	0.11536	0.2633
	Tutoring	0.02821	0.09844	0.16234	0.06255	0.87017	0.15295
	Mentoring	0.26089	0.15949	0.22224	0.31752	0.65847	-0.06187
Technology Skills	Supplemental instruction	0.00681	0.4416	-0.15978	0.15272	0.60744	0.17017
	Basic technology skills	0.41863	0.10649	0.13343	0.04525	0.19481	0.75824
	Online learning skills	0.33525	0.23045	0.40283	0.04049	0.11659	0.62021
Variance explained by each component		5.7584395	4.1314014	3.3593309	2.3959789	2.0933816	1.5774599
Final communality estimates							19.3161922
Total variance explained by each component		23.99349792	17.2141725	13.99804542	9.983245417	8.722423333	6.572749583
Total variation in original correlation matrix explained by components							80.48413417

The Academic Skills component includes seven elements such as study skills, note-taking skills, test-taking skills, and other academically-related skills important to college success. The Group/Cohort component is defined by five elements focusing on shared group learning experiences such as common readings and assigned study groups. The Advising component is defined by four advising-related elements such as group advising and developing a written individual academic plan. The Experiential Learning component comprises three elements that address experiential learning outside the classroom, such as service learning. The Learning Support component consists of three elements: tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction. Finally, the Technology Skills component is defined by two elements focused on basic technology and online learning skills.

The complete item loadings matrix for the six component solution is presented in the table above.

Analysis of the elements incorporated in the five SGLEs showed that there was substantial overlap of the elements across programs, making it difficult to talk about which, if any, of these programs has a stronger effect on student outcomes. This question remains, though: Which elements and/or combinations of elements are critical? The PCA results suggest an alternative structure or common language for describing and comparing SGLEs that may help the field develop a clearer understanding of the impact of these programs on student success.

The next installment of this series will discuss process evaluation to determine whether the SGLE programs are accomplishing their expected results.

Please send questions for Center researchers to data@cccse.org

Center for Community College Student Engagement

Program in Higher Education Leadership

College of Education
The University of Texas at Austin
3316 Grandview Street
Austin, TX 78705
T: 512.471.6807 F: 512.471.4209

info@cccse.org
www.cccse.org

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