



ENGAGEMENT MATTERS



Dr. Evelyn Waiwaiole



Dr. Misha Turner

The Center Appoints New Director and Associate Director

The Center is pleased to jointly acknowledge the recent appointments of Evelyn Waiwaiole and Misha Turner. Upon the retirement of founding director Kay McClenney at the end of April, the Department of Educational Administration and College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin selected Evelyn as the new Director. Evelyn has many years of experience with the Center and also with leading other higher education organizations. Additionally, Misha Turner was hired earlier this year as Associate Director of College Relations. Misha comes to the Center with a strong background as a community college practitioner. While these changes in leadership represent a major transition, the Center would like to underscore that its mission and the quality of its services remain the same. Congratulations to Evelyn and a warm welcome to Misha!

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The Center's newsletter serves multiple purposes. Through the recurring sections and feature articles, we wish to provide our constituents with updates on new and continuing Center activities as well as to highlight and support the commendable efforts of community and technical colleges across the country. This issue of *Engagement Matters* is no different.

Prominently positioned on this cover is a piece that calls attention to a major change at our organization, one that was announced earlier this year. I am honored to have been selected as the Center's new Director upon founding director Kay McClenney's retirement.

It is very important for me to emphasize, however, that the Center's mission and vision, set forth by Kay over a decade ago, remain unchanged. We are not simply a survey shop. We are an organization that, through the commitment of its staff, helps colleges focus on meaningful organizational change—all in the pursuit of promoting student achievement.

The wheels keep turning as they always have, and you will see that reflected throughout this issue.



Two- and Four-Year Institutions Partner to Promote Successful Transfer and College Completion of Latino Students

With generous support from The Kresge Foundation and Greater Texas Foundation, the Center for Community College Student Engagement joined with the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and *Excelencia* in Education in a special project, Engaging Latino Students for Transfer and College Completion. The partner organizations recently hosted a Student Success Institute where teams from 24 pre-selected urban institutions convened to initiate or strengthen practices regarding the engagement, transfer, and college completion of their Latino students. The institutions were organized into 12 pairs, each pair consisting of a community college and a baccalaureate institution with existing transfer patterns.

In preparation for the institute, the participating institutions began collecting campus and survey data on Latino students in the spring of 2014. As part of this process, each institution met with its partner institution to examine the transfer rates between the two institutions. Additionally, each institution created a college profile highlighting ways in which they were supporting or planned to support the success of Latino students, including transfer between institutions.

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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.

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.

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

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During the institute, which was held September 11–13, 2014, participating institutions from California, Florida, Michigan, and Texas met in San Antonio, Texas, for a 2 ½-day intensive, hands-on learning experience. Modeled on past Center institutes, this event called upon college pairs to develop a collaborative action plan for implementation at both institutions. Participants also attended plenary and concurrent sessions that featured experts in the field—both academic and community leaders—who shared successful strategies and promising practices on Latino student success.

As part of their commitment to the overall project, a year from now, the participating institutions will take part in a workshop organized by *Excelencia* in Washington, D.C. College teams will share and reflect upon the progress of their initiatives, programs, and policies implemented, as well as the sustained collaboration with their partner institution. Each institutional pair will also augment their original profiles to produce a final singular vignette that captures the collaborative work.

Please visit www.ccsse.org/center/initiatives/els for more information about this initiative and the literature that served as inspiration.

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.

Center Brings Part-Time Faculty Into Focus as Key to Student Success

Part-time faculty teach over half of U.S. community college classes and manage learning experiences for more than half of all community college students. Yet, in most colleges their work is conditional; the college has no obligation to them beyond the current term and they do not know whether or how many classes they will be teaching the following term. They frequently have limited access to experiences and support needed to carry out their teaching responsibilities.

“Why are so many instructors named Staff?”
— Student

With a continuing focus on steps colleges can take to improve student success, the Center has highlighted voices of part-time faculty through a MetLife Foundation-supported initiative, Strengthening the Role of Part-time Faculty. Thirty-two focus groups with faculty and staff shed light on how colleges are addressing specific components of the part-time faculty experience: bringing part-time faculty into the organization (hiring, setting expectations, and orientation); strengthening skills and services for part-time faculty through professional development, mentoring, evaluation, incentives, and other

support; and integrating part-time faculty into the college community and the student success agenda.

To help college leaders work more effectively with part-time faculty, the Center website provides information, tools, and other resources at www.ccsse.org/center/initiatives/ptf. These include a special report, *Contingent Commitments: Bringing Part-Time Faculty Into Focus*; a faculty focus group toolkit; faculty video clips; and a discussion guide to engage faculty, staff, and administrators in critical conversations about issues related to part-time faculty—discussions that will lead to meaningful change that, above all, supports student success.

“We have to be sure that those values and beliefs we have about teaching and learning, and creating this exceptional culture for student success, aren't only directed at our full-time employees. The adjunct faculty ... have to be embraced in that overall vision.”

— College President

COLLEGE SPOTLIGHT

CCSSE and SENSE contribute to Chipola's successful Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) in support of student achievement and success

When **CHIPOLA COLLEGE (FL)** was developing its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), a variety of data helped identify issues to be addressed. The QEP Team collected and analyzed over 30 sets of institutional data, reviewed over 100 pieces of research, identified best practices of exemplary institutions, surveyed and interviewed faculty and students, and studied *CCSSE* and *SENSE* data.

Institutional data showed that 69% of the college's most underprepared students were leaving the college within the first year. Other data showed that only 24% of all Associate of Art (AA) degree-seeking students entering in fall 2002 had graduated by spring 2005. The college's response was *Learning to Persist*, a five-year plan to increase the three-year graduation rates of all AA degree-seeking students by implementing three components: (1) Supplemental Instruction (SI) in "high-risk" courses, defined as those in which at least 30% of students traditionally earned grades of D, F, or W; (2) a First-Year Learning Experience (FYLE) course; and (3) professional development to equip faculty to engage students in new ways.

The college monitored specific *CCSSE* items to track the culture change brought about by professional development. Over the five years of the QEP (2008–2013), students reporting that the college emphasizes "providing the support you need to help you succeed at this college" very much or quite a bit (support for learners benchmark item) increased from 72.0% to 83.2%. *CCSSE* results also revealed that the number of students reporting that they often or very often "talked

about career plans with an instructor" (student-faculty interaction benchmark item) increased from 23.0% to 31.6%.

SENSE data also played a part in the second year of the QEP when the college increased efforts to retain more students into the second semester. A four-member team attended the 2009 Entering Student Success Institute (ESSI), hosted by the Center. Analysis of specific 2008 *SENSE* responses related to orientation, advising, registration, and class attendance led to the decision to implement the following ESSI action plan to "improve the front door": (a) abolish (or shorten) late registration so students are not set up to fail before they begin; (b) allow 45–60 minutes for students' first advising appointment; (c) expand early registration so students can plan for work and family commitments; (d) change the names of "Curriculum Guides" to "Academic Plans" so students recognize them as incremental steps toward graduation; (e) encourage faculty to submit "Excessive Absence Reports" for advisor intervention; (f) write a successful Student Support Services (TRIO) grant to serve low-income, first-generation students—likely the college's most at-risk population; and (g) implement a mandatory workshop for developmental classes during the first two weeks of each semester.

By 2013 the success of *Learning to Persist* was obvious. In fact, the changes brought about by the QEP had increased the three-year graduation rates of Chipola's AA degree-seeking students from 24.0% to 30.9%.

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 our Engagement in Action page at www.ccsse.org to learn about sharing your college's story.

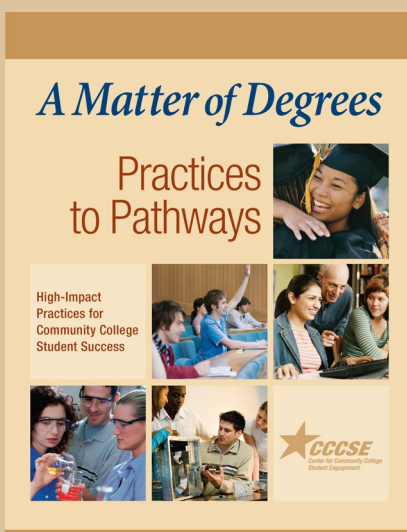
Your story may be featured in our publications, online, or as part of conference presentations.

Center Releases Third and Final High-Impact Practices Report

Last month the Center released the final report in a three-part series focused on high-impact practices in community colleges. The first report in the series described thirteen high-impact practices and provided a first look at data on institutional offerings and student participation. The second report focused on notable differences in engagement between students who participate in the practices and students who do not.

The final report, *A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways*, describes relationships between selected student outcomes and student participation in the identified educational practices. It also sets forth the critical next-level challenge in community college work: strengthening student success by identifying the educational practices that matter most and integrating them into intentionally designed academic and career pathways.

The Center's work on high-impact practices would not have been possible without the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation. Visit www.ccsse.org/center/resources/publications.cfm to review all three reports in the series.





IMPROVEMENT THROUGH FEEDBACK

The Center is committed to continually improving its services to better meet member colleges' needs. Accordingly, following each survey administration, the Center solicits feedback on survey materials and services, and invites suggestions for improvement.

To learn more about Center improvement efforts, please review the annual Improvement Through Feedback reports that provide responses to the most common questions and requests the Center receives from member colleges following a one-year *CCSSE-SENSE* administration cycle.

They are available online at www.cccse.org.

Colleges offer advice for boosting CCFSSSE response rates

Offered as a companion to *CCSSE*, the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*) is an online census survey that invites all faculty teaching credit classes at participating colleges to contribute their front-line perspectives on student engagement. *CCFSSE* elicits information from faculty about how they spend their time in and out of the classroom as well as their perceptions regarding their students' educational experiences.

During the 2014 administration, the average response rate for the 107 participating *CCFSSE* colleges was 49%. Many colleges have asked how they can increase response rates from their faculty. In turn, Center staff solicited advice from institutional contacts at five colleges with response rates over 85%. The following helpful tips emerged:

- Provide clear communication from the college president and other leaders in advance of the administration about the survey process, the expectations for completing the survey, and the important role the survey results will play in increasing student success.
- Choose an administration date well before the end of the spring academic term, avoiding the finals rush.
- Use the *CCFSSE* non-responder tool to send personalized reminders from the institutional contact, department chairs, deans, or other college leaders.

DELVING INTO DATA

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

The last two Delving Into Data columns discussed the prevalence of 24 program and curricular elements among five structured group learning experiences (SGLEs) included in the Center's Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS). Information from CCIS revealed that programs with the same names (e.g., student success course) are implemented differently across colleges, while programs with different names at different colleges look very much alike. Given this lack of consistency in labeling programs, it is important to clearly delineate the components of a program in order to understand its true nature and to be able to facilitate comparisons across colleges.

After examining all the components of a program, it is logical to ask whether the program has achieved its specified goals. In order to answer that overarching question, a number of critical intervening questions need to be answered:

- Was there support from the instructors and/or staff charged with program implementation?
- Did all instructors and/or staff who were involved in delivering program content receive the necessary professional development to be able to adequately deliver the content? How do you know?
- Did the instructors and/or staff adequately and accurately deliver all of the program content as it was designed to be delivered? How do you know?

- Did the students actually learn the program content?
- Did the students participating in the program achieve the larger goal (course completion, persistence, or completion of a credential)?

Building support, designing training for those delivering content, and developing evaluation protocols can be time consuming. However, skipping these steps in program implementation can obscure what really happened between the decision to implement the program and the final outcome of goal attainment. Not being able to see what is happening makes it impossible to determine if the outcomes (either positive or negative) can be attributed to the program, raising the question of whether scarce resources were appropriately allocated to this program.

Finally, when evaluating program outcomes, it is important to remember that decision-makers have to be patient. Robert Fullan (2001) noted that the implementation of new programs will not be flawless. Because new programs often involve utilizing new techniques and/or processes, the instructors will experience an initial learning curve as they learn to integrate new techniques into their instruction. Students will also be learning how to react to these new techniques. As a result, student outcomes may initially decline. Fullan (2001) called this initial decline an "implementation dip" and noted that it can take approximately three years to overcome the initial, unexpected negative results. Recognizing that this might

happen and providing proper support for both instructors and students can shorten and even reverse the implementation dip period, given the program actually works as originally expected (Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher, 2005).

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

References

- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change (3rd ed.)*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Fullan, M., Cuttress, C., & Kilcher, A. (2005). Eight forces for leaders of change. *Journal of Staff Development*, 26(4), 54-64.

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