



## NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Evelyn Waiwaiole, Center Director

Office: 512-232-8247

Cell: 512-762-6398

[waiwaiole@cccse.org](mailto:waiwaiole@cccse.org)

Alternate Contact:

Courtney Adkins, Assistant Director

Office: 512-475-6142

[adkins@cccse.org](mailto:adkins@cccse.org)

### **ACTIONS THAT HELP MOST COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS SUCCEED**

#### **NEW RESEARCH EXAMINES RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES AND STUDENT OUTCOMES**

With constrained budgets and greater demands for accountability, community colleges nationwide have difficult choices to make about how best to use limited resources. Adding urgent calls for higher college completion rates means that every decision must be guided by a single question: What actions will help the most students succeed? Many colleges have begun answering this question by recognizing the need to move beyond discrete interventions for small numbers of students to larger-scale redesign aimed at ensuring that all students have the experiences that evidence suggests will produce better outcomes.

*A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways*, released by the Center for Community College Student Engagement, is the third in a series of reports that focuses on identifying and promoting high-impact practices. The new report 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 first report in the series described thirteen high-impact practices and 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 earlier analysis also revealed that students' participation in multiple high-impact experiences leads to increasingly higher levels of engagement. However, while increasing numbers of institutions are offering such experiences, only small numbers of colleges require them, and far too few students are participating in them.

The newly released report describes positive relationships between high-impact practices and three student outcomes:

- Completion of at least one developmental course
- Completion of at least one gatekeeper course by developmental students (freshman-level English or math)
- Persistence (fall-to-spring and fall-to-fall)

Examples of findings include the following:

- Developmental students who reported that all instructors clearly explained a class attendance policy were nearly three times more likely to successfully complete a developmental math course.
- Developmental students who reported participating in a student success course were nearly four times more likely to successfully complete a gatekeeper English course.
- Non-developmental students who reported registering for all courses before the first class session(s) were over four times more likely to persist fall-to-spring and over 11 times more likely to persist fall-to-fall.

Participation in each high-impact practice is related to an increased likelihood of success in at least one of the outcomes for at least one group of students, and participation in one or more of the five high-impact practices that are classified as structured group learning experiences is also related to the likelihood of success. The structured group learning experiences are orientation,

accelerated or fast-track developmental education, first-year experience, student success course, and learning community.

The more engaging practices students experience, the more likely they are to reach key academic milestones. Further, emerging evidence from the literature and college practice suggests that students are more successful when institutions adjust the academic model so that these high-impact practices are intentionally integrated into coherent educational pathways. “However, these findings do not offer a checklist, and the goal shouldn’t be to have one of each practice. Instead, the goal should be to improve student engagement and success by intentionally building multiple high-impact practices into every student’s educational experience,” says Center Director Evelyn Waiwaiole.

Preliminary results of pathway effectiveness are promising. The report offers both institutional models of pathways at work and key design features for pathway models. Says Center Director Emeritus Kay McClenney, “Attending college should not be a series of disconnected classes and experiences, but instead, it should be a complete-and-completed-educational journey.”

— 30 —

*A Matter of Degrees: Practices to Pathways* is available online:

[http://www.ccsse.org/docs/Matter\\_of\\_Degrees\\_3.pdf](http://www.ccsse.org/docs/Matter_of_Degrees_3.pdf).

This report is the third in a series of three and is part of a multi-year Center initiative—Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges—funded by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.