

# Community College Institutional Survey Discussion Guide

## Exploring High-Impact Practices



## Acknowledgments

The Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) was developed as part of the Center's national study on identifying and promoting high-impact educational practices in community colleges. The survey is designed to deepen the understanding of high-impact practices on your college campus. This discussion guide is a companion to the survey, intended to serve as a tool for conversation on community college campuses as faculty, staff, and administrators assess their college's current student success initiatives. Armed with this knowledge, the campus community can consider the most effective ways to heighten the quality of educational experiences for larger numbers of students.

The Center's exploration of high-impact educational practices in community colleges builds on contributions by many people. We express appreciation to George Kuh, Chancellor's Professor of Higher Education Emeritus at Indiana University Bloomington, for his early work on high-impact educational practices, initially published in a 2008 research report, *High-Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Who Has Access to them, and Why They Matter*. This work also builds on past and continuing work by Carol Geary Schneider and her colleagues at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). Alexander McCormick, Jillian Kinzie, and others at the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) have shared generously their learning from NSSE's focus on high-impact practices in the baccalaureate college and university sector. Special thanks go to these Center staff for their tireless work to create the CCIS: Deryl Hatch, Research Associate, Mike Bohlig, Senior Research Associate, and Jeff Crumpley, Associate Director of Operations. And finally, the work has been generously supported by Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation.

We are grateful to all contributors. And we hope that this guide will contribute to your college's efforts to improve the success on your campus for *every* student.

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## Foreword

In response to increasing demand from the community college field and to escalating national emphasis on college persistence and completion, the Center for Community College Student Engagement has undertaken a large-scale research and practice-improvement initiative: Identifying and Promoting High-Impact Educational Practices in Community Colleges.

The Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) was developed as part of this initiative. CCIS collects information about whether and how colleges implement a variety of potentially high-impact practices, the target student populations, and current scale of implementation.

This instrument provides descriptions of 13 potentially high-impact practices implemented in community colleges that are strongly focused on student success—that is, student learning, persistence, and attainment. Responses to each survey item within the instrument provide quantitative data on observable aspects of the practices within a given institution.

The survey is not intended as a test, nor should it be used as a checklist. Rather it is offered as a tool for prompting reflection and discussion—and, ultimately, promoting collective action aimed at focused improvement.

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## Four Surveys, Four Perspectives

The Center administers four surveys that complement one another: Survey of Entering Student Engagement (*SENSE*), Community College Survey of Student Engagement (*CCSSE*), Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (*CCFSSE*), and Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS). All are tools that assess student engagement—how connected students are to college faculty and staff, other students, and their studies—and institutional practice.

Each of the four surveys collects data from a particular perspective, and together they provide a comprehensive understanding of educational practices on community college campuses, how they are implemented, and which students are participating in them.

***SENSE*** is administered during weeks four and five of the fall academic term in classes most likely to enroll first-time students. *SENSE* focuses on students' experiences from the time of their decision to attend their college through the end of the first three weeks of the fall term. The survey collects data on practices that are most likely to strengthen early student engagement. Entering students are those who indicate that it is their first time at the college where the survey is administered.

***CCSSE***, administered in the spring, surveys credit students and gathers information about their overall college experience. It focuses on educational practices and student behaviors associated with higher levels of learning, persistence, and completion.

***CCFSSE*** is administered in conjunction with *CCSSE* to all faculty teaching credit courses in the academic term during which the college is participating in the student survey. The faculty survey reports on instructors' perceptions about student experiences as well as data about their teaching practices and use of professional time.

***CCIS***, the Center's newest instrument, was developed as part of the Center's initiative on identifying and promoting high-impact educational practices in community colleges. CCIS collects information about whether and how colleges implement a variety of promising practices.

## How to Discuss CCIS Results

A strong foundation for an effective student success agenda is created when groups within colleges—governing boards, leadership teams, faculty, and student services staff—establish the institutional habit of coming together to assess the extent to which the college’s policies and practices are aligned with the best available evidence about student success.

Constituent groups on community college campuses may discuss the results of CCIS in a variety of ways:

- Scheduling an official “Data Retreat” of board members and executive leadership
- Facilitating discussion as part of a college-wide student success summit
- Conducting break-out sessions during convocations, professional development days, or other college-wide meetings
- Routinely reserving time in regularly scheduled meetings of the executive cabinet, divisions, and departments for ongoing discussion of results
- Communicating survey data in a newsletter

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## Instructions for Completing and Submitting CCIS

The Community College Institutional Survey (CCIS) is an online survey offered free of charge to encourage community colleges across the nation to examine their own institutional programs, policies, and procedures. The survey collects information about whether and how colleges implement a variety of promising practices (first-year experience/freshman seminars, learning communities, college orientation, etc.). The survey does not need to be completed in one sitting; it is designed for multiple individuals to contribute to its completion prior to final check and submission. (That is, different sections of the survey should likely be completed by different people, each with particular information to contribute.) Additionally, the Center recommends that the college president or chancellor designate a lead person to coordinate completion of the survey and final submission.

- To access CCIS and complete the online survey you will need an access code. If you do not know your access code, please request your access code by emailing [ccishelp@cccse.org](mailto:ccishelp@cccse.org).
- Once you receive your unique access code, go to the following Center website link to complete the online survey: [www.ccsse.org/center/ccis](http://www.ccsse.org/center/ccis)
- After completing the survey, you may access and download a printable copy of your institution’s completed CCIS here: [www.ccsse.org/center/ccis/reportlogin.cfm](http://www.ccsse.org/center/ccis/reportlogin.cfm)

## Community College Institutional Survey: Questions for Campus Discussions

After completing the survey, facilitated group discussions may be guided by questions such as the following:

- As a whole, what are college constituents' first impressions of results from the Community College Institutional Survey?
- What percentages of students at our college participate in each of the identified high-impact practices? What are the target levels of participation?
- What are the characteristics of students who participate—and of those who do not—in terms of enrollment status, day versus evening enrollment, race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.? In other words, which students appear to have access to these experiences, and which students do not?
- Do any particular groups of students appear to benefit from participation in one or more of these practices in disproportionately positive ways? Are there student groups at our college who do not experience those benefits?
- How do the institutional survey results compare with our student (*CCSSE* and/or *SENSE*) and faculty (*CCFSSE*) survey data? What are the relationships between participation in high-impact practices and students' overall levels of engagement?
- What are the college's strengths/weaknesses as indicated by the data reviewed?
- What are the implications for scaling up, discarding, or refining certain practices?
- What specific findings point to potential priorities for college action?
- Who else needs to be involved in the discussion about designing, implementing, scaling, and improving high-impact practices at the college?
- Based on this discussion, what are potential next steps for our institution? Who should be responsible for taking those steps?
- What are the plans and processes set in place for ensuring quality of implementation and routinely evaluating the effectiveness of these practices?
- What is the standard of evidence that would lead the college to make certain experiences mandatory for some or all students? What measures must the college take to ensure that experiences intended to be mandatory actually are mandatory?
- In what ways can the college analyze and document the return on investment in bringing high-impact practices to substantial scale?
- How should the college engage the entire college community in thinking about how high-impact practices can be integrated into clear, coherent, structured academic and career pathways for students?