



NEWS RELEASE

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A BARRIER TO GRADUATION: RETHINKING DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

AUSTIN, TX – While many in the field agree that developmental education is broken and is a barrier to completion, the job of the community college has always been and still is to educate the students who walk through its doors. *Expectations Meet Reality: The Underprepared Student and Community Colleges*, a report released today from the Center for Community College Student Engagement, describes the typical experience for those community college students in the areas of assessment, placement, and developmental education. The persistent reality is that the majority of students are underprepared for college-level work, are not successful in developmental coursework, and do not reach their goals. In fact, according to the National Student Clearinghouse, only 39% of students earn a certificate, associate degree, or bachelor's degree within six years.

The data used in the report analyses were collected from more than 70,000 community college student respondents across 150 institutions and more than 4,500 community college faculty respondents from 56 institutions.

Among the data highlighted in the report are these:

- While some colleges and the field at large are making strides in redesigning assessment and placement practices by modifying or restricting the use of placement tests or using multiple measures for placement, the **reality** is that 87% of students report being required to take a placement test to assess their skills.
- Eighty-six percent of students believe they are academically prepared to succeed in college, but the **reality** is that 67% test into developmental coursework, including 40% of students reporting a high school GPA of A.
- Over half of faculty use some form of early assessment to determine their students' preparedness, but upon finding students underprepared, the **reality** is that very few faculty (6%) recommend that they change courses.

Innovative work is happening with assessment, placement, and the delivery of developmental coursework—but at present these new approaches affect only small numbers of students nationwide.

One such approach featured in the report is corequisite remediation, in which students taking a developmental class concurrently enroll in a higher-level class, a model that accelerates progression through the developmental sequence. Students who report being enrolled in corequisite English and math courses have higher engagement scores across all five Community College Survey of Engagement (CCSSE) benchmarks. While these data are promising, the number of respondents enrolled in these types of courses varies widely across colleges.

“Expectations Meet Reality describes *what is,*” says Center Director Evelyn Waiwaiole, “and the innovative work featured in the report describes *where we can be.* The bridge between developmental education and student success must be shortened. Redesigning the educational pathway for all students needs to be an urgent priority for colleges.”

The Center is a research and service initiative of the Program in Higher Education Leadership in the Department of Educational Administration in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin.

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Expectations Meet Reality: The Underprepared Student and Community Colleges is available online at www.ccsse.org/docs/Underprepared_Student.pdf