

## Strategies for Increasing Student Success

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Community colleges play an essential role in our nation's economy, providing access to higher education for young people from diverse backgrounds, a path to higher-earning employment for low-income workers, and a supply of well-trained employees for local industry.

In order to remain competitive with other major economies, however, the U.S. will need to sharply increase its supply of educated workers over the coming decade. Accordingly, policymakers and private foundations have set ambitious goals for improving the rate at which Americans earn college credentials, and in particular associate degrees and less-than-two-year certificates. While the U.S. continues to be among the lead nations in attainment of bachelor's degrees, it lags many others in its share of young adults who attain subbaccalaureate credentials. Community colleges have thus become a key focus of a growing higher education completion agenda. To meet the goals of this agenda, community colleges will need to increase both the number of students they serve and the rate at which those students graduate. Currently, just over one third of first-time community college students earn a degree or certificate within six years.

Improving community college graduation rates will not be an easy undertaking. In today's state fiscal climate, some colleges may soon be forced to raise the cost of tuition or even turn away students. Many are already being asked to make significant budget cuts and to do more with less. And compared with four-year colleges, community colleges have long enrolled greater concentrations of low-income and first-generation students, many of whom attend part time. These students struggle with a variety of challenges, including significant job and child care responsibilities, transportation difficulties, financial limitations, poor high school acad-

emic preparation, and a lack of information about how to successfully navigate college. Nevertheless, community colleges, which enroll more than 40 percent of the nation's undergraduates, are now being called upon to improve student success on a scale needed to meet national goals for increased postsecondary attainment.

How can colleges and states best respond to this challenge? A new series of papers from the Community College Research Center (CCRC) will serve as an important resource for colleges and states committed to this cause. Over the past year, CCRC has gathered and synthesized a large body of research evidence on strategies aimed at improving the success of students who attend community college. Funded primarily through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the work has culminated in the CCRC Assessment of Evidence Series, a set of working papers that use the most valuable research findings available to draw conclusions and provide evidence-based recommendations in eight major topic areas (see box on p. 2): (1) developmental assessment and placement, (2) developmental accel-

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eration, (3) developmental mathematics pedagogy, (4) contextualization of basic skills instruction, (5) online learning, (6) non-academic support, (7) institutional and program structure, and (8) organizational improvement.

While each of these topic areas represents a significant component of community college functioning ripe for improvement, the topic of organiza-

tional change is crucial. In order to improve student success on a large scale, community colleges will need to move beyond implementation of innovative small-scale programs by cultivating a college culture that encourages and sustains broad institutional reform. This is a key finding of the series, and it is integral to strategies examined in other topic areas. To substantially improve developmental education,

### CCRC Assessment of Evidence Series

1. **Developmental Assessment and Placement:** Noting the widely shared view that assessment of all incoming students is crucial, Katherine Hughes and Judith Scott-Clayton argue that there is growing support for mandatory testing and placement and state-wide standardization. Nevertheless, some empirical evidence suggests that current assessment approaches do not lead to better student outcomes. The authors discuss emerging directions for reform, including more diagnostic and holistic assessments. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 19*, p. 17.
2. **Developmental Acceleration:** Nikki Edgecombe argues that although empirical evidence regarding student outcomes is limited, strategies to accelerate student progress through developmental education, including course restructuring and mainstreaming, show promise. She also discusses implications of the finding that most acceleration models involve alterations to courses or curriculum but pay little attention to pedagogical practices. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 30*, p. 17.
3. **Developmental Mathematics Pedagogy:** After examining six types of pedagogical reforms in mathematics, Michelle Hodara concludes that the evidence most strongly supports the effectiveness of two particular approaches—structured forms of student collaboration and instruction that focuses on problem representation. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 27*, p. 17.
4. **Contextualization of Basic Skills Instruction:** Dolores Perin finds that although the evidence is only suggestive at this time, contextualization is a promising direction for improving the reading, writing, and math skills of academically underprepared college students. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 29*, p. 17.
5. **Online Learning:** Shanna Jaggars concludes that while online learning affords flexibility and convenience, students also encounter challenges in online coursework that contribute to low completion rates among community college students. She provides recommendations to improve online learning access and success rates. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 26*, p. 18.
6. **Non-Academic Support:** Melinda Mechur Karp argues that effective non-academic services achieve results through four specific mechanisms: creating social relationships, clarifying aspirations and commitment, developing college know-how, and addressing conflicting demands of work, family, and college. She discusses theoretical and empirical support for each mechanism as well as implications for college practice. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 28*, p. 17.
7. **Institutional and Program Structure:** Judith Scott-Clayton argues that complexity in navigating college and in making important choices often confuses students. It leads to decisions about whether and how to persist toward a credential that may waste time and resources and reduce the chances of successful outcomes. She also highlights several promising programs and suggests directions for future experimentation and research. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 25*, p. 18.
8. **Organizational Improvement:** Davis Jenkins argues that in order to increase rates of student completion on a large scale, community colleges will have to make fundamental changes in the way they operate. Based on practices found to be effective among a broad range of high-performance organizations, he outlines practical steps community colleges can take to bring about continuous improvement in student learning and progression. See *CCRC Working Paper No. 24*, p. 18.

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online and face-to-face pedagogy, or academic and non-academic support services, the entire institution must be involved with and committed to fundamental change and improvement. No single strategy in isolation will increase student success rates on a substantial scale; rather, strategies must work together in concert across the college. The papers in the series address this insight by highlighting specific ways that college processes and services can be redesigned to improve student success.

Overall, the papers in the series build the foundation for four broad recommendations. *First, colleges should work to simplify the structures and bureaucracies that students must navigate.* To the incoming community college student, college represents a confusing and complex tangle of restrictions, recommendations, and requirements. Some rules and practices are in place because they support student success, but others are in place due to tradition, convenience, or inertia. For example, Hughes and Scott-Clayton's paper on developmental assessment and placement notes that almost all community colleges use commercially developed tests as the primary metric for placement of students into developmental education, despite the fact that these exams do not support colleges' efforts to provide appropriate programming and services to academically underprepared students. While they are convenient mechanisms for screening, these tests represent a barrier to student progression, and they provide little diagnostic information for students or faculty members concerning the particular problems individual students face and must overcome.

Likewise, most community colleges offer an impressive array of academic programs, but many do not map out their offerings in a way that makes it apparent to students—particularly those who lack clear goals for college and careers—what the employment and further education goals of particular programs are designed to lead to, and how students can successfully navigate program requirements to complete them as quickly as possible.

Colleges therefore need to re-examine policies, practices, and services to ensure that they are all aligned with the goal of student success. To do this, Jenkins, in his paper on college redesign, recommends that colleges form cross-functional committees or task forces of faculty, student services staff, and administrators to map out the experience of students from the time they first make contact with the college, examine the interactions between students and college programs and services at each

point along this “pathway,” and assess the extent to which college policies and practices help or hinder students from making progress toward successful completion.

*A second recommendation is that the broad engagement of all faculty should become the foundation for policies and practices to increase student success. This should include active faculty involvement in student support activities.* Jenkins highlights that a variety of research on effective organizations across multiple fields converges in a clear consensus that substantial organizational improvement is unlikely to occur without strong employee involvement. Considering these findings in light of the decentralized nature of authority in community colleges, it is clear that colleges cannot enact systematic reforms from the top down; faculty and staff must be motivated participants in efforts to improve organizational effectiveness.

Several papers in this series join in the conclusion that student support structures should be integrated into students' daily academic experience, which would require active faculty involvement in support activities. One clear explanation for this is that, for many reasons, students who need supports may never seek them out. Students may not think they need help; they may not know the services exist; they may think college-provided services will not be useful; they may feel intimidated about approaching others for help; they may be confused about how to find or use the service; or they may feel that using the support would flag them as being unworthy, unintelligent, or “not college material.” In her paper on online learning, Jaggars points out that many student services are offered only on the physical campus; she argues that online students are much more likely to use these services if the supports are integrated into activities in the online course itself. Similarly, in her paper on what makes non-academic supports effective, Karp recommends that colleges include non-academic support activities in the overall curriculum through student success courses and activities in academic courses.

*Third, colleges should be encouraged to align course curricula, define common learning outcomes and assessments, and set high standards for those outcomes.* Based on his review of research on K-12 school improvement, Jenkins finds that schools that are effective in serving educationally disadvantaged students are characterized by “instructional program coherence,” meaning that courses and teaching are guided by a common instructional framework, with clearly defined learning outcomes and inte-

grated assessment and academic supports. Community college programs are often weak in this regard. For example, the material covered in developmental courses is often misaligned with the skills necessary to succeed in college-level courses. In her paper on developmental education acceleration, Edgcombe notes that many acceleration programs have taken aim at this problem—they are designed to improve student success by eliminating redundant or misaligned material within a given program's curriculum.

To gain greater coherence, faculty within individual departments need to work together to make the goals of instruction explicit, providing a basis on which to measure actual learning outcomes and assess the quality of instruction. As Perin points out in her paper on contextualization of basic skills, the process of defining course learning outcomes can also help faculty from different disciplines communicate and align expectations across courses in terms of key reading, writing, and math skills. Moreover, learning outcomes can serve as the basis for a peer-review-driven continuous quality improvement process within individual departments and across the institution.

*Fourth, colleges should collect and use data to inform a continuous improvement process.* Using measurement and evidence to inform management decisions is a central feature of effective organizational improvement models outside of education. It is likewise a key part of K-12 school reform efforts and a primary tenet of college improvement models such as Achieving the Dream and the Academic Quality Improvement Program. Such models emphasize that major improvements to a system can best be achieved through a process of examining key outcomes, enacting policies that attempt to improve those outcomes, and re-examining outcomes, in a continuous cycle. Jenkins's paper outlines a five-step continuous improvement process (employing measures of student learning and progression) that colleges can follow as part of an overall effort to redesign themselves for improved student completion. The other papers in this series include recommendations for specific actions colleges can take to improve student success at each stage of students' experience in college.

Initial reaction to the CCRC Assessment of Evidence Series has been very positive. This response supports our view that educators and policymakers may want to give serious consideration to the findings and recommendations expressed in these papers. Meanwhile, using data from multiple

colleges and state systems, CCRC has begun to embark on seven Gates Foundation-funded research studies that further examine the questions undertaken in this series (p. 7). These studies, as well as others described in these pages, are fundamentally aimed at providing sound evidence that can help colleges and states improve the outcomes of the students they serve.

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## CCRC RESEARCH

Comprising both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, the research conducted by CCRC is of national importance in promoting adequate preparation, increased access, and educational success for all students. We are currently involved in a dozen projects (many of which are described in the pages that follow) in four core research areas. Although these areas focus on different activities and initiatives, the fundamental goal of each is to support and promote student success. In the first area, we conduct research on and provide technical assistance to state and national initiatives that assist colleges in undertaking data-informed strategic reform to improve student learning and student outcomes. Second, we investigate workforce education in the context of economic development activities. Third, we study developmental education and practices to improve the success of students with weak academic skills. And fourth, we explore education and career transition pathways, particularly those between the secondary and postsecondary education sectors and those for adults entering or re-entering higher education.



## National Center for Postsecondary Research

The National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR), led by and housed at CCRC, focuses on measuring the effectiveness of programs designed to help students make the transition to college and master basic skills needed to advance to a degree. While colleges employ multiple programs and policies designed to teach students the skills they need to succeed, there is little definitive research on the effects of some widely used practices. NCPR employs rigorous research methodologies, including random assignment experimental design, to evaluate such practices. NCPR was established through a grant (R305A060010) from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education in 2006 and is operated with partners MDRC, the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, and faculty from Harvard University.

The past year has been a very productive one for the NCPR team. Initial results were made available for experimental studies of developmental summer bridge and learning communities programs. Other studies underway, on the effectiveness of remedial programs and on career-focused dual enrollment, are also beginning to yield findings. In addition, NCPR hosted a national conference addressing one of the most difficult challenges in higher education: developmental education (for more about this conference, see p. 12).

***Developmental summer bridge (DSB) programs (Texas).*** These programs are designed to reduce or eliminate the need for developmental education in colleges. Students with weak academic skills in math or English are offered the opportunity to participate in an intensive, accelerated program during the summer before they begin college. DSB programs are designed to build students' skills and to increase their knowledge of, and comfort with, the college environment. Such programs are run by numerous colleges and universities in the state of Texas and have been encouraged and sometimes funded by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), a partner in NCPR's ongoing research.

In the summer of 2009, eight Texas colleges collaborated with NCPR and the THECB to study the effectiveness of their DSB programs. Using a random assignment evaluation design, those who applied for admission were selected either for the programs or the control group. All agreed to share their college records with NCPR, allowing

researchers to determine whether students who enroll in the programs do better in college subsequently than those who do not. Student outcomes are being tracked through the spring of 2011.

Some implementation and early impact findings were presented by NCPR researchers and Texas partners at the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) in Washington, DC, in December 2010; an AYPF Forum Brief from this event is available on the NCPR website. Early findings from the research suggest that the summer bridge programs did not have an impact on college enrollment rates or persistence. However, the research points to a shift in the average courseload taken by students who completed the programs, with students taking fewer developmental education credits and more college-level credits. The first formal report for this project, to be released in spring 2011, will describe how these programs are developed, designed, and implemented, and it will provide preliminary information on student outcomes. A full report on the results of this project will become available in spring 2012. Houston Endowment also contributed support for this project.

***College readiness partnerships (Texas).*** NCPR recently began a study to better understand ways that colleges and high schools work together to improve students' college readiness. In this project, researchers have been visiting colleges and high schools in Dallas and Houston and also reviewing websites of relevant initiatives throughout Texas. The project aims to describe and classify the range of college-connected programs and strategies available to help underprepared high school students become college ready. It also aims to identify one or more promising approaches that can be rigorously tested in future research. This project builds on the DSB research described above and is funded by IES and Houston Endowment.

***Learning communities.*** Led by researchers from MDRC, NCPR is evaluating learning communities, in which groups of students enroll together in two or more courses. The evaluation is being conducted at six community colleges around the country, with some colleges' programs focused on developmental math, others focused on developmental English or reading, and one with a career focus. These courses are linked with student success courses, other developmental courses, or college content courses in different configurations across the sites. Transcript-level data are being used to evaluate the impact of assigning students to a learning community, using a number of outcome measures that

include progress through developmental education, credit accumulation, and persistence.

Study intake began in mid-2007 and was completed in September 2009. The participating colleges have operated 161 learning communities over the course of the project, and nearly 7,000 students have been randomly assigned. A report titled *Scaling Up Learning Communities: The Experience of Six Community Colleges* (see p. 20) discusses strategies that colleges used to expand their programs while working to improve their quality. Evaluation findings from one college were released in a June 2010 report titled *Learning Communities for Students in Developmental Reading: An Impact Study at Hillsborough Community College* (see p. 20). The learning communities at this site became more comprehensive over the course of the study. While Hillsborough's learning communities program did not have a meaningful impact on students' academic success for the full sample, evidence suggests that the program had modest positive impacts on some educational outcomes for the third (fall 2008) cohort of students.

The most recent findings from this study are presented in *Learning Communities for Students in Developmental Math: Impact Studies at Queensborough and Houston Community Colleges* (see p. 18). Students in these learning communities attempted and passed their developmental math classes at higher rates than students in a control group, and they began the next semester a step ahead in the math sequence. However, in the one or two semesters following, program participation impacts on developmental math progress were far less evident, and neither college's learning communities program had an impact on persistence in college or cumulative credits earned. Results from the other sites will be released over the next year.

**Career-focused dual enrollment (California).** CCRC has for some time carried out research on dual enrollment programs, which enable high school students to enroll in college courses and earn college credits. While such programs were once limited to high-achieving, academically focused students, today many educators and policymakers view dual enrollment as a strategy to help a wider range of students, including career and technical education students, make the transition from high school to college.

To further strengthen the research base on dual enrollment, IES is, through NCPR, providing partial funding for the evaluation of the Concurrent Courses Initiative. Funded by the James Irvine Foundation and managed by CCRC, this initiative

supports eight secondary/postsecondary partnerships in California in developing, enhancing, and expanding career-focused dual enrollment programs, particularly for low-income or underrepresented youth (see p. 9).

**State data analysis.** NCPR is complementing its research on remediation and dual enrollment with large-scale statistical studies using state unit record data. Using longitudinal data from Tennessee, one recent analysis estimated the effects of student placement into varying levels of mathematics, reading, and writing courses. The results, discussed in a paper titled *Does Remediation Work for All Students? How Remedial and Developmental Courses Affect Students with Different Levels of Academic Preparation* (see p. 19), suggest that remedial and developmental courses impact students differently depending on their level of academic preparedness.

NCPR is partnering with the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) to conduct a quantitative analysis designed to help improve placement decisions by colleges in the system. The study will identify ways in which North Carolina community colleges could use high school transcript data to better identify which students may need remedial instruction and place these students in appropriate levels of English (writing), reading, and math.

Building on a project that began at CCRC, NCPR researchers are also conducting quantitative analysis on dual enrollment. Using data from two high school cohorts in selected Florida districts, this regression-discontinuity study found no evidence that simply taking a dual enrollment course improved outcomes among students whose high school GPA placed them at the margin of participation eligibility for dual enrollment. However, for students on the margin of participation eligibility for college algebra, it found that taking such a challenging dual enrollment course had large and significant positive effects on college enrollment and graduation rates. A paper on this study, titled *High School Dual Enrollment Programs: Are We Fast-tracking Students Too Fast?*, will be released later this year.

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Download NCPR reports and sign up for email updates at [www.postsecondaryresearch.org](http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org).

## Transforming Community Colleges to Accelerate Success for Low-Income Young Adults

CCRC continues work on a large research project it began in May 2009 to inform the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success (PS) initiative, which aims to double the number of low-income students who by age 26 earn a postsecondary credential degree or certificate. The goal of this research is to build a rigorous base of research knowledge on strategies for accelerating progression and increasing success among low-income young adult students, many of whom attend community colleges. CCRC recently released a set of working papers that gather and synthesize the most valuable research evidence available on strategies for improving community college student success. These papers offer evidence-based recommendations in eight major topic areas (see pp. 1–4). In addition, CCRC is conducting seven new studies described below. Six of these use community college system data (from Washington State, Virginia, and CUNY). The remaining study uses institutional data from community colleges in Colorado and California. Each of the studies will involve multivariate quantitative analysis as well as a qualitative component to investigate program-level mechanisms and underlying institutional policies and supports.

**Study 1. Evaluation of I-BEST (Washington State).** CCRC is carrying out an evaluation of the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program, or I-BEST, an innovative program model developed by the community and technical college system in Washington State to increase the rate at which adult basic skills students enter and succeed in postsecondary occupational education and training. In the I-BEST model, basic skills instructors and college-level career-technical faculty jointly design and teach college-level occupational courses for adult basic skills students. Instruction in basic skills is thereby integrated with instruction in college-level career-technical skills. The model has captured the attention of policymakers and funders who are interested in helping low-skill adults advance to postsecondary education and career-path employment.

Last year, CCRC conducted another in a series of quantitative analyses on I-BEST program outcomes using a methodology that allows for causal inferences about the effects of the program (see *CCRC Working Paper No. 20*, p. 19). The results suggest a causal relationship between exposure to

I-BEST and positive student outcomes. CCRC also produced a report on how I-BEST is implemented based on interviews with program staff and faculty at all 34 Washington State community and technical colleges and site visits to selected colleges (see *How I-BEST Works: Findings from a Field Study of Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program*, p. 19). In spring 2011, CCRC will conduct further field research on a sample of I-BEST programs found through quantitative analysis to have particularly good outcomes.

**Study 2. Practices of effective occupational programs (Washington State).** This study examines program organization and practices of community and technical college occupational programs that are effective in enabling low-income young adults to complete credentials and obtain employment. The study tests whether highly structured and focused programs that provide students with a more directed curriculum and proactive student supports lead to better outcomes for students who are not well prepared for college-level work. In spring 2011, CCRC will release papers on initial findings related to this “structure” hypothesis and on the progression and outcome patterns of low-income young adults in two-year college occupational programs. As part of this work, CCRC is developing a statistical methodology that community colleges can use to determine whether or not students are pursuing coherent programs of study that lead to credentials. This tool will be useful to colleges in determining, absent good data on students' goals, which programmatic pathways students are following and how their chances of success can be improved.

**Study 3. Gatekeeper success for remedial students (Virginia).** CCRC is partnering with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) to conduct three studies (studies 3, 4, and 5 in this listing) on the community college student experience. Utilizing mixed methods, these studies focus on how system-wide and college-wide policies and practices can improve student outcomes. The gatekeeper study explores students' patterns of progression from developmental education through introductory college-level or “gatekeeper” math and English courses. A previous quantitative analysis (titled *Promoting Gatekeeper Course Success Among Community College Students Needing Remediation: Findings and Recommendations from a Virginia Study*) found that among a cohort of first-time college students who enrolled in a Virginia community college in the summer or fall of 2004, a third of the students referred to developmental education did not enroll, and



gatekeeper course enrollments were low overall and varied by level of developmental course enrollment. Despite low gatekeeper course enrollments, pass rates were fairly high and similar for all students, whether or not they were referred to or took developmental education. Among the community colleges, there was substantial variation in the rates at which students enrolled in and passed developmental and gatekeeper courses. Fieldwork designed to answer questions raised by the quantitative analysis was conducted at several colleges in spring 2010 and data analysis is currently underway. A final report on the qualitative findings will be released in 2011.

**Study 4. Student success courses (Virginia).** This qualitative study builds on quantitative analyses that CCRC has conducted on student success courses as well as a framework on effective non-academic supports developed in a working paper in the Assessment of Evidence Series (see *CCRC Working Paper No. 28*, p. 17). CCRC is examining the content, structures, modes of delivery, and stakeholder perceptions of student success courses. Qualitative data collection, which consisted of intensive fieldwork at three Virginia community colleges, was completed in late 2010. Analysis of these data is currently underway, and findings are expected to be released in late 2011.

**Study 5. Online learning (Virginia).** This study explores factors that affect teaching and learning in online courses, including faculty development, faculty and student perceptions, students' online readiness, and online instructional activities. The research questions for this study aim to advance findings that emerged from a previous quantitative analysis (see *Online Learning in the Virginia Community College System*, p. 19) and a working paper in the Assessment of Evidence Series (see *CCRC Working Paper No. 26*, p. 18). The statistical analysis reviewed four years of VCCS data on online and face-to-face courses and found that while VCCS had increasing enrollment in online courses over the four-year period, completion rates were consistently lower for online courses than for face-to-face courses. Additionally, students in online courses were more likely to fail or withdraw than students enrolled in face-to-face courses. Fieldwork, primarily consisting of interviews and "virtual" classroom observations, will be conducted in spring 2011 and followed by data analysis. A report on findings is expected in late 2011.

**Study 6. Developmental education assessment, placement, programming, and outcomes (CUNY).** The CUNY system includes six community colleges,

which enroll large numbers of minority, low-income, and underprepared students. CUNY provides an excellent setting to examine the effectiveness of remedial placement policies because, unlike many other college systems, it tracks students' initial placement exam scores, remedial placement recommendations, developmental course enrollments, and exit exam scores. Individual CUNY community colleges have also implemented a wide variety of innovations to improve outcomes for developmental students, including acceleration, non-academic preparation, and contextualization. CCRC is using student unit record data from all six colleges to examine remedial assessment and placement policies, programmatic interventions, and the impact of each on students. The first reports for this study, to be released by the summer of 2011, will focus on the predictive validity of developmental education placement exams and student progression through developmental education and into college-level coursework.

**Study 7. Study of accelerated developmental education models (Community College of Denver, Colorado; Chabot College, Hayward, California).** With partial funding from Lumina Foundation for Education as part of the Achieving the Dream initiative, CCRC recently completed a study of the Community College of Baltimore County's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), in which upper-level developmental writing students are permitted to enroll directly in English 101 with additional supports (see *CCRC Working Paper No. 21*, p. 19). CCRC's analysis found that compared to the conventional approach, ALP provides a substantially more cost-effective route for students to pass the college-level English courses required for an associate degree. A rough cost-benefit analysis found that the benefits of ALP are more than double the costs. As part of the Gates suite of projects, CCRC is conducting similar studies of the Community College of Denver's FastStart math program, which provides intensive accelerated and contextualized instruction with extensive student supports, and Chabot College's accelerated English program, a one-semester accelerated course alternative to the college's traditional two-course developmental English sequence. The FastStart report will be released in the summer of 2011, and the Chabot accelerated English report will be released in the fall of 2011.

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## Student Achievement Initiative

In partnership with the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy (IHELP), CCRC is conducting an evaluation of Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative (SAI) performance funding policy. Under this innovative policy, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) provides financial rewards to colleges that are able to increase the number of students who attain intermediate milestones as well as complete credentials. The SBCTC also regularly provides colleges with data on student performance that can be used to identify opportunities for improvement. The SAI policy has attracted the attention of numerous other states that are seeking to encourage colleges to adopt systemic changes that lead to substantially improved student outcomes. The three-year study is being funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

CCRC recently released a state policy brief, *Performance Incentives to Improve Community College Completion: Learning from Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative* (see p. 17), based on observations made in conducting the first year of evaluation work on the SAI. The publication examines the key policy issues raised by Washington State's experience, focusing on three primary components: performance measures, performance funding, and support for institutional change. The brief highlights choices other states will likely confront in seeking to develop performance incentive systems that help to improve college performance while also ensuring accountability.

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## Concurrent Courses Initiative: Pathways to College and Careers

In 2008, the James Irvine Foundation launched the Concurrent Courses Initiative: Pathways to College and Careers in order to expand access to supportive, career-focused dual enrollment for students who are often underserved by such programs and underrepresented in higher education. Eight secondary/postsecondary partnerships from across California were selected to participate and provided funds to implement or enhance career-oriented education pathways that include introductory college courses for high school students. CCRC was charged with overseeing, directing, and evaluating the initiative, which will last through June 2011. Additional support for the evaluation research is

being provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences through the National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR).

Dual enrollment programs provide high school students with an opportunity to earn college credit—often for little or no cost. Although high-achieving high school students have long had the opportunity to take college courses, only recently has access been made available to other students. Educators theorize that providing such students with a college experience while in high school might motivate them to improve their academic achievement, help them understand what will be required of them in college, and encourage future college attendance by showing them that they are indeed capable of doing college work.

Most of the Irvine-funded partnerships are now in their third year of providing college courses and support services to the targeted students through career pathways. By design, the specific activities of each partnership in the initiative vary; there are a range of career areas, pathway structures, dual enrollment courses, course delivery modes, and support services. With the help of the Career Ladders Project, the initiative's Oakland-based technical assistance provider, the eight partnerships have been improving their programs and sharing ideas and practices with one another. Unfortunately, the economic situation in California is in some cases negatively affecting the ability of the partnering colleges to provide dual enrollment opportunities for high school students.

Early results from CCRC's quantitative analyses of student outcomes show some indications of positive effects. Descriptive information on the academic performance of students participating in dual enrollment courses shows a high pass rate. Using regression and propensity score techniques, we find that program participation at some of the sites is associated with higher GPA and greater likelihood of high school graduation. These results are preliminary and based on small sample sizes, but they are encouraging since they reflect the programs in only their first year of funding, the 2008–09 school year, and program implementation has since been strengthened. Additional results will be available this summer.

For a list of the funded partnerships, and to download reports, see the initiative's website: [www.concurrentcourses.org](http://www.concurrentcourses.org).

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## Completion by Design

CCRC will assist colleges and states involved in Completion by Design (CBD), a major new community college reform initiative spearheaded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The goal of CBD is to use data to accelerate the rate at which students enter and complete programs of study leading to credentials that prepare students to succeed in further education and in the labor market. In partnership with JBL Associates (JBLA), CCRC is developing a system for regularly collecting longitudinal data on student cohorts and providing colleges with data and reports that they can use to strengthen program pathways. Through this work, CCRC hopes to strengthen the capacity of participating colleges and states to engage in evidence-based continuous improvement.

*Lead contact:*

*Davis Jenkins, davisjenkins@gmail.com*

## Developmental Education Initiative

Launched in 2004, Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count is a national initiative aimed at improving success among community college students, particularly low-income students and students of color (see *Turning the Tide: Five Years of Achieving the Dream in Community Colleges*, p. 18). It now encompasses more than 130 institutions in 24 states and the District of Columbia. A partner in the initiative, CCRC is working with MDRC on its evaluation of Achieving the Dream's Developmental Education Initiative, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education. As part of their Achieving the Dream efforts, several colleges participating in the initiative piloted small-scale developmental education reforms with promising results. In an effort to build on these successes, 15 colleges from six states have been selected to participate in the Developmental Education Initiative, with the goal of expanding innovative developmental education strategies to a large scale across a three-year time frame. The evaluation of the initiative will examine factors that impact successful scale-up and will link program implementation and scale-up to trends in student completion and progression. An initial report on the initiative's first year will be available from MDRC in the spring of 2011.

*Lead contact:*

*Shanna Jaggars, jaggars@tc.edu*

## Higher Education Performance Funding in Eight States

Despite the popularity of performance funding among policymakers and policy advocates, only half of all states have ever created a performance funding system for higher education. State performance funding systems have also been surprisingly unstable. Nearly half of those states that established performance funding systems for higher education eventually discontinued these systems.

This recently completed project, funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, has examined three questions: What factors led to the development of performance funding in some states but not others? In the states that developed performance funding, why did it survive in some cases but not others? Finally, in states with performance funding systems that have survived to this day, how and why have those systems changed over time?

**Origins of performance funding.** This project first examined the factors that led to the establishment of performance funding for higher education in six states (Tennessee, Florida, South Carolina, Illinois, Missouri, and Washington), as contrasted with two states that never established it (California and Nevada). The study found that the main proponents were state officials, including higher education board officials, legislators (particularly Republicans), and, to a lesser degree, governors. In several states, community college officials and business leaders also supported performance funding. Legislators, governors, and business leaders were motivated primarily by a belief that government needed to become more efficient and that market-oriented methods would be a key means of doing so. However, state and local higher education officials believed that performance funding would allow securing additional funds for higher education institutions in a time of fiscal stringency. In some states, there was discernible opposition to performance funding from state universities (and in California, the community colleges), animated by fears that performance funding failed to adequately distinguish between institutions with different missions and student bodies, intruded on institutional autonomy, and excused cuts in regular state funding of higher education. A surprising feature of the politics of performance funding is how little discussion there was of how performance funding might enhance (or damage) access to and success in higher education for underserved populations. The results of this study appear in *CCRC Working Paper No. 22* (see p. 19). A journal article on the study is also in preparation.

**Demise of performance funding.** The project also analyzed the factors leading to the demise of performance funding programs in four states (Illinois, Missouri, Washington, and Florida). This demise was traceable to a combination of factors: sharp decline in higher education funding in the early years of this decade; lack of support from higher education institutions (particularly if performance funding involved withholding a portion of state appropriations and requiring institutions to earn back these funds through improved performance); loss of key governmental supporters of performance funding through retirement, term limits, and electoral defeat; and weakening of support by business leaders. The results of this study appear in *CCRC Working Paper No. 17*. A journal article for the *Teachers College Record* is in press.

**Transformation of continuing performance funding systems.** Finally, this project analyzed how the long-lasting performance funding systems in Tennessee and Florida have changed over time. After demonstrating considerable stability over the years, the system in Tennessee experienced a major change in the last couple of years. Its performance funding system has added momentum-point like performance indicators such as reaching certain credit-accrual thresholds. These major changes are due to the growing role of legislators and governors in the state politics of performance funding. Meanwhile, Florida's Performance Based Budgeting system has not experienced the same degree of intervention by legislators and the governor and therefore has not changed as much. Preliminary results of this study have appeared in *CCRC Working Paper No. 18*. A journal article is also forthcoming.

The final report is titled *The Politics of Performance Funding in Eight States: Origins, Demise, and Change* (see p. 17).

*Lead contact:*

Kevin Dougherty, [dougherty@tc.edu](mailto:dougherty@tc.edu)

### Federal Work-Study Program

Since 1964, the Federal Work-Study (FWS) program has provided funds to higher education institutions to subsidize the wages of financially eligible student employees. Although it is much smaller than the Pell Grant program, FWS delivers over \$1 billion in funds to nearly 700,000 students each year and helps set the standard for what is considered an "appropriate" level and type of student employment more broadly. Surprisingly, the program's impact on student outcomes has never been studied directly. Given heightened concern about college completion

rates, it is important to understand how participation in FWS impacts student outcomes—particularly in comparison with alternative aid policies.

This research, funded by the Spencer Foundation, aims to advance understanding of the effects of student employment by providing a direct, quasi-experimental examination of the consequences of FWS on student achievement, persistence, and completion, using nationally representative longitudinal data from the Beginning Postsecondary Student (BPS) database. The empirical strategy exploits the fact that FWS allocations vary idiosyncratically across institutions, generating plausibly exogenous variation in eligible students' likelihood of employment. Preliminary results are expected in May 2011.

*Lead contact:*

Judith Scott-Clayton, [scott-clayton@tc.edu](mailto:scott-clayton@tc.edu)

### Employer Perceptions of Two-Year Degrees in Information Technology

CCRC has completed a three-year study on the role of associate degrees in preparing graduates for information technology (IT) jobs in the Seattle and Detroit labor markets. Interviews with a range of employers in each labor market revealed that hiring managers expected associate degree holders to possess many positive qualities that they sought in IT technicians, particularly technical skills, thinking skills, communication skills, and a strong work ethic. However, they also expected that associate degree holders would be less skilled than bachelor's degree holders. This expectation was particularly common among Seattle hiring managers, highlighting the importance of the local labor market in understanding employer perceptions of associate degrees. A paper on these findings will soon be available.

An analysis of students' employment outcomes in Washington State (see *CCRC Working Paper 23*, p. 18) revealed that medium-sized employers, temporary placement firms, and educational organizations employed community college IT graduates more frequently than workers overall. Community college students who earned both an associate degree and a certificate in IT had the most positive employment outcomes, followed by those with an associate degree only and those with an IT certificate only. Those who earned no credential but completed concentrated coursework in IT had the weakest employment outcomes. These findings suggest that employers prefer students with more credentials, and they highlight the importance of helping students to complete full programs of study.



This research was conducted in partnership with the National Workforce Center for Emerging Technologies at Bellevue Community College (Washington State) and Macomb Community College (Michigan). The project was funded by the National Science Foundation's Advanced Technological Education program.

*Lead contact:*

*Michelle Van Noy, vannoy@tc.edu*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NCPR Hosts National Conference on Developmental Education

On September 23–24, 2010, the National Center for Postsecondary Research (NCPR) held a major national conference titled *Developmental Education: What Policies and Practices Work for Students?* at Teachers College, Columbia University. The conference presented the latest high-quality research on developmental education and provided an opportunity to discuss the implications of this research for practice, policy, and continued study. Two hundred people from 26 states attended the fully subscribed event.

U.S. Under Secretary of Education Martha Kanter, who gave the opening address, urged conference participants to strengthen the link between research and practice, since the nation's ability to meet President Obama's 2020 goal for increased numbers of associate and bachelor's degrees will depend heavily on the effectiveness of community colleges, which enroll large numbers of academically underprepared students.

Thomas Bailey, director of CCRC and NCPR, led the conference, which consisted of four panel sessions focusing on: (1) the overall effectiveness of developmental education; (2) assessment and placement practices for incoming students; (3) innovative developmental education strategies such as summer bridges, learning communities, I-BEST, and supplemental instruction; and (4) pedagogy and classroom practices. Presenters included Bridget Terry Long, David Conley, Norton Grubb, and other national experts, as well as researchers from NCPR partner institutions—the Community College Research Center, MDRC, and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. Breakout sessions paired researchers with practitioners, who facilitated lively discussions of the various panel presentation topics.

The closing address was given by John Easton,

director of the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Dr. Easton discussed the organizational context of reform, highlighting the qualities that effective schools have in common, such as strong leadership and use of data to improve programs and services.

A follow-up web conference, held on December 15, 2010, attracted more than 250 participants who engaged in discussions that arose at the original conference. Videos of conference presentations, accompanying papers, and additional information are available at the NCPR website ([www.postsecondaryresearch.org](http://www.postsecondaryresearch.org)).



*From left to right: Martha Kanter, U.S. Under Secretary of Education; Susan Fuhrman, President, Teachers College; Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC and NCPR.*

### White House Summit on Community College

On October 5, 2010, Dr. Jill Biden chaired the first-ever White House Summit on Community College. The summit brought together community college leaders, government officials, federal and state policymakers, and other experts to discuss how community colleges can better meet the job training and education needs of the nation's evolving workforce. CCRC contributed two briefs for the summit (*Developmental Education in Community Colleges and Community College and High School Partnerships*, see p. 19). CCRC director Thomas Bailey and CCRC advisory board member and Macomb Community College president James Jacobs participated in the event.

### CCRC Awarded Kresge Grant for Macomb Study

In October 2010, CCRC received a three-year, \$850,000 grant from The Kresge Foundation in support of a project designed to better understand and improve the student experience at Macomb



Community College, located in Warren, Michigan. In collaboration with Macomb, CCRC will identify complexities in the institutional system that create confusion or otherwise pose challenges to Macomb students, develop recommendations to simplify the system to improve the student experience, and implement and test the effectiveness of changes in institutional policy and process.

### Hewlett Foundation Funds CCRC Study of Developmental Education Instructional Reform

In March 2011, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded a \$1.5 million grant to CCRC to support the replication and evaluation of pedagogical innovations in developmental education. The project, titled *Scaling Innovation: Examining the Replication of Deeper Learning Instructional Reforms in Developmental Education*, builds on CCRC's Hewlett-funded work to identify promising instructional reforms and is supported as part of the Foundation's Deeper Learning initiative. Over two years, CCRC will partner with four colleges to support and conduct research on the replication and scaling of instructional innovations in developmental education designed to improve student outcomes.

### Bailey Appointed Chair of Committee on Measures of Student Success

On June 2, 2010, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced the appointment of 15 members of the Committee on Measures of Student Success (CMSS). CCRC director Thomas Bailey was appointed chair of the committee.

Created under the Higher Education Opportunity Act, the committee develops recommendations for two-year degree-granting institutions of higher education to comply with the law's graduation and completion rate disclosure requirements. The committee also develops recommendations regarding additional or alternate measures of student success that are comparable to completion or graduation rates, taking into account the mission and role of two-year degree-granting higher education institutions.

The committee held its first meeting on October 20, 2010, in Washington, DC; a second meeting was held February 9–10, 2011. Meetings are announced in the Federal Register and open to the public. The committee is to submit its recommendations to the Secretary no later than 18 months from the date of its first meeting.

### CCRC Researchers Earn Doctorates

In the past year, three CCRC staff members completed doctorates at Teachers College, Columbia University.



Monica Reid Kerrigan defended her EdD dissertation in the Higher and Post-secondary Education program in April 2010. The dissertation, *Data-Driven Decision Making in Community Colleges: New Technical Requirements for Institutional Organizations*, examines the external and internal influences on the breadth and depth of data-driven decision making at a sample of community colleges actively using data to make decisions about how to improve student outcomes. Kerrigan was a CCRC staff member from 2002 to 2010 and is now an assistant professor at Rowan University. She continues to work with CCRC on the Achieving the Dream initiative. Her research interests include how organizations, and community colleges in particular, are influenced by external pressures and how they respond.



Sung-Woo Cho, CCRC Research Associate, defended his PhD dissertation in the Economics and Education program in December 2010. In his dissertation, *Essays on Developmental Student Success and Program Impacts in Community Colleges*, Cho measures the effects of two academic reform initiatives, Washington State's I-BEST and Achieving the Dream, using a differences-in-differences methodology. Cho has been with CCRC since May 2008. His research interests include the impact of program design on outcomes for developmental students in community colleges and the analysis of longitudinal state data for evaluating student pathways.



Michelle Van Noy, CCRC Research Associate, defended her PhD dissertation in the Sociology and Education program in March 2011. Her dissertation, *Credentials in Context: The Meaning and Use of Associate Degrees in the Employment of IT Technicians*,

examines how hiring managers in different local labor markets and organizations view associate degrees when hiring for IT technician jobs. Van Noy has been with CCRC since August 2005. Her research focuses on the workforce development role of community colleges.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

### Council for the Study of Community Colleges

**53rd Annual Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana**  
April 7–9, 2011

#### What Is the Labor Market Effect of Different Types of Community College Credentials?

Friday, April 8, 2011, 9:00–10:30 AM  
New Orleans Marriott, Blaine Kern Ballroom F

*Session Participants:*

Mina Dadgar, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
Madeline Joy Weiss, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

#### Lessons for Researchers Seeking to Capitalize on the Growth of State Unit Record Data Systems

Friday, April 8, 2011, 9:00–10:30 AM  
New Orleans Marriott, New Levee

*Session Participants:*

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
John Lee, President, JBL Associates, Inc.

#### Supplementing Developmental Education with Contextualized Reading and Writing Practice

Friday, April 8, 2011, 3:30–5:00 PM  
New Orleans Marriott, Julia

*Session Participants:*

Dolores Perin, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Rachel J. Hare, Research Associate, CCRC

#### Getting with the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study

Saturday, April 9, 2011, 8:45–10:15 AM  
New Orleans Marriott, New Levee

*Session Participants:*

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Madeline Joy Weiss, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
Matthew Zeidenberg, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

#### Predicting Success in College: The Educational Experiences and College Performance of Middle-Early College High School Students

Saturday, April 9, 2011, 10:30 AM–12:00 PM  
New Orleans Marriott, Blaine Kern Ballroom F

*Session Participant:*

Elisabeth A. Barnett, Senior Research Associate, CCRC

#### Impact of a Texas Summer Bridge on Developmental Students' Outcomes

Friday, April 8, 2011, 3:30–5:00 PM  
New Orleans Marriott, Blaine Kern Ballroom F

*Session Participants:*

Heather Wathington, Assistant Professor, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia  
Elisabeth A. Barnett, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Joshua Pretlow, Research Assistant, Curry School of Education, University of Virginia

### American Association of Community Colleges

**91st Annual Convention, New Orleans, Louisiana**  
April 9–12, 2011

#### Strategies for Accelerating Student Success

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 8:45–11:00 AM  
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Room 222

*Session Participants:*

Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC  
Karen Stout, President, Montgomery County Community College  
James Jacobs, President, Macomb Community College  
Robert Johnstone, Vice President, Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges; Dean, Research & Planning, Skyline College  
Susan S. Wood, Vice Chancellor, Academic Services and Research, Virginia's Community Colleges

#### Next Generation Performance Funding: Paying for Progression

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 3:45–4:45 PM  
Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Room 205

*Session Participants:*

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Mark Mitsui, President, North Seattle Community College  
Nancy Shulock, Executive Director, Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy, California State University, Sacramento  
Charles N. Earl, Executive Director, Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Join our researchers, staff,  
and affiliates at the

# CCRC/NCPR

## Open Reception

at the

**91st Annual AACCC Convention**  
**Sunday, April 10, 2011**

7:00 – 9:00 pm

**Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel**  
**River Room, Riverside Building 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

**See you there!**

**Moving the Needle: Using Data to Promote Student Success**

Monday, April 11, 2011, 3:45–4:45 PM

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, Room 230

*Session Participants:*

Chris Baldwin, Program Director, Jobs for the Future  
 Keith Brown, Consultant (former Associate Vice President,  
 Planning, Accountability, Research & Evaluation,  
 North Carolina Community College System)  
 John Hughes, Associate Vice Chancellor for Evaluation,  
 Division of Florida Colleges, Florida Department of  
 Education  
 Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC

**College Completion: Accelerating Developmental Education is the First Step**

Tuesday, April 12, 2011, 8:45–9:45 AM

Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Grand Salon, Section 10

*Session Participants:*

Nikki Edgecombe, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Peter Adams, Professor of English and Director of  
 Accelerated Learning, Community College of  
 Baltimore County  
 Elaine DeLott Baker, Director, FastStart, Community  
 College of Denver  
 Katie Hern, English Instructor, Chabot College  
 Myra Snell, Professor of Mathematics, Los Medanos  
 College

## American Educational Research Association

**2011 Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana  
 April 8–12, 2011**

**Reading and Writing Intervention for Community College Developmental Education Students**

Friday, April 8, 2011, 12:00–1:30 PM

JW Marriott, Orleans

*Session Participants:*

Dolores Perin, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Rachel J. Hare, Research Associate, CCRC

**From “At-Risk” to “Disconnected”: The Youth Polity From 1973–2008**

Friday, April 8, 2011, 4:05–5:35 PM

Sheraton, Grand Ballroom D

*Session Participant:*

Rachel J. Hare, Research Associate, CCRC

**Thinking Outside the Box: Which Student Supports Are Necessary in High-Expectation High-Need Schools?**

Saturday, April 9, 2011, 8:15–9:45 AM

Astor Crowne Plaza, Astor Ballroom II

*Session Participants:*

Katherine L. Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC  
 Kristen Vogt, Assistant Director, Early College Initiative,  
 Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation  
 Rhona S. Weinstein, Professor Emerita of Psychology,  
 University of California, Berkeley  
 Leo White, Graduate Researcher, University of California,  
 Berkeley  
 Andrea Venezia, Senior Research Associate, WestEd  
 Laura Jaeger, Research Associate, WestEd  
 Megan Reed, Principal, California College Preparatory  
 Academy

**Measuring Student Success**

Saturday, April 9, 2011, 4:05–5:35 PM

JW Marriott, Frontenac

*Session Participant:*

Thomas Bailey, Director, CCRC

**How Does Intensity of Work While Studying Affect Academic Achievement of Community College Students?**

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 2:15–3:45 PM

JW Marriott, Frontenac

*Session Participant:*

Mina Dadgar, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

**Washington State’s I-BEST Program**

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 2:15–3:45 PM

JW Marriott, Ile de France III

*Session Participants:*

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Matthew Zeidenberg, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC  
 John Wachen, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
 Nancy Shulock, Executive Director, Institute for Higher  
 Education Leadership and Policy, California State  
 University, Sacramento

**Assessment and Placement in Community Colleges: Policies, Practices, and Student Outcomes**

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 2:15–3:45 PM

JW Marriott, Frontenac

*Session Participants:*

Shanna Smith Jaggars, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Judith Scott-Clayton, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
 Katherine L. Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC  
 Michelle Hodara, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
 Olga Rodriguez, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

**Determinants of Students’ Success: The Role of Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Programs**

Sunday, April 10, 2011, 2:15–3:45 PM

Doubletree, Rosedown A

*Session Participant:*

Cecilia Speroni, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC

PowerPoint slides for many of these presentations will  
 made available for download on the CCRC website  
 after the events have taken place.

Follow us on Twitter  
 for the latest updates.

 [CommunityCCRC](https://twitter.com/CommunityCCRC)

**Key Experiences That Predict Success in College Among Students in Middle-Early College High Schools**

Monday, April 11, 2011, 8:15–9:45 AM  
Sheraton, Grand Ballroom A

*Session Participant:*

Elisabeth A. Barnett, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Jennifer Kim, Senior Research Associate, National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University  
Carina Omoeva, Research Assistant, National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University

**Promoting College Access Among Underrepresented and Underprepared Students Through Supportive Career-Technical Dual Enrollment Programs**

Tuesday, April 12, 2011, 2:15–3:45 PM  
JW Marriott, Conde

*Session Participants:*

Katherine L. Hughes, Assistant Director, CCRC  
Linsey Edwards, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
Clive Belfield, Associate Professor of Economics, Queens College, CUNY  
Olga Rodriguez, Senior Research Assistant, CCRC  
Melinda Mechur Karp, Senior Research Associate, CCRC

**New England Workforce Network Conference**

**Wells, Maine  
April 22, 2011**

**Middle Skill Jobs: Meeting the Demand**

Friday, April 22, 2011, 10:00–11:15 AM  
York County Community College, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Michelle Van Noy, Research Associate, CCRC  
Matthew Zeidenberg, Senior Research Associate, CCRC  
Eric Seleznow, State Policy Director, National Skills Coalition

**National Education Finance Conference**

**Tampa, Florida  
May 4–6, 2011**

**Developmental Education Program Effect Analysis: A Within-State Difference-in-Differences Approach**

Thursday, May 5, 2011, 10:15–11:45 AM  
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

**New Evidence from a Causal Analysis of Washington State's I-BEST: A Differences-in-Differences Approach**

Thursday, May 5, 2011, 1:45–3:15 PM  
Grand Hyatt Tampa Bay, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

**Association for Institutional Research**

**51st Annual Forum, Toronto, Ontario  
May 21–25, 2011**

**Developmental Education Program Effect Analysis: A Within-State Difference-in-Differences Approach**

Monday, May 23, 2011, 11:00–11:40 AM  
Sheraton Centre, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

**New Evidence from a Causal Analysis of Washington I-BEST: A Difference-in-Differences Approach**

Monday, May 23, 2011, 3:00–3:40 PM  
Sheraton Centre, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

**Unexplored Issues in Referral and Enrollment in Developmental Education**

Tuesday, May 24, 2011, 11:00–11:40 AM  
Sheraton Centre, Room TBA

*Session Participant:*

Sung-Woo Cho, Research Associate, CCRC

Please check CCRC's website for conference details and updates: <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu>.

**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

**REPORTS AND PAPERS**

**Get with the Program: Accelerating Community College Students' Entry into and Completion of Programs of Study**

*Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 32, April 2011.*

This paper argues that it is essential for students to enter a program of study as early as possible and offers suggestions for how community colleges can increase rates of program entry and completion. It presents a simple method for measuring entry and completion rates using data on students' actual course-taking behaviors rather than declared major or intent.



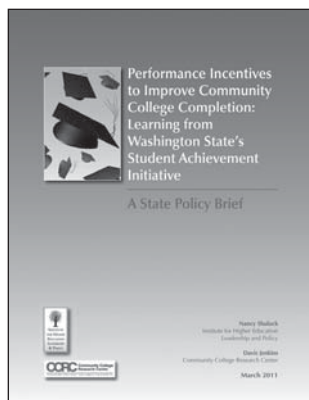


### Performance Incentives to Improve Community College Completion: Learning from Washington State's Student Achievement Initiative

Nancy Shulock and Davis Jenkins. *Community College Research Center and Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy*, March 2011.

In 2007, the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges launched the Student Achievement Initiative (SAI), a system-wide policy to reward colleges for improvements in student achievement.

This policy brief examines key issues raised by Washington State's experience to date with the SAI in order to inform the conversation currently occurring in many states on how to use state policy levers to meet ambitious state and national goals for increased college completion.



### Online and Hybrid Course Enrollment and Performance in Washington State Community and Technical Colleges

Di Xu and Shanna Smith Jaggars. *Community College Research Center*, CCRC Working Paper No. 31, March 2011.

This paper investigates enrollment patterns and academic outcomes in online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses among students at Washington State community and technical colleges. Students were tracked from fall 2004 until spring 2009. Results were similar to those found in a parallel study in Virginia (see *Online Learning in the Virginia Community College System*, p. 19).

### The Politics of Performance Funding in Eight States: Origins, Demise, and Change

Kevin J. Dougherty, Rebecca S. Natow, Rachel J. Hare, Sosanya Jones, and Blanca Vega. *Community College Research Center*, February 2011.

This report discusses political forces that shaped performance funding policies in eight states: Florida, Illinois, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, California, and Nevada. By examining the factors that contribute to the rise and fall of performance funding systems, the paper draws evidence-based recommendations for policymakers.

### Accelerating the Academic Achievement of Students Referred to Developmental Education

Nikki Edgecombe. *Community College Research Center*, *Assessment of Evidence Series*, CCRC Working Paper No. 30, February 2011.

This paper reviews the literature on acceleration, a strategy increasingly used at community colleges for expediting the completion of academic requirements by developmental education students. After considering the available evidence regarding the effects of acceleration on student outcomes, the paper offers recommendations for policy, practice, and research.

### Facilitating Student Learning Through Contextualization

Dolores Perin. *Community College Research Center*, *Assessment of Evidence Series*, CCRC Working Paper No. 29, February 2011.

This paper examines the available research on the nature and effectiveness of contextualization—the teaching of basic skills in the context of disciplinary topic areas—as a way to improve outcomes of academically underprepared college students. While the evidence is only suggestive at this time, contextualization appears to be a promising approach. Recommendations for both policy and future research are discussed.

### Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College

Melinda Mechur Karp. *Community College Research Center*, *Assessment of Evidence Series*, CCRC Working Paper No. 28, February 2011.

This paper reviews theories of student persistence and program evaluation literature and argues that effective non-academic support services achieve results through four specific mechanisms: creating social relationships, clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitment, developing college know-how, and addressing conflicting demands of work, family, and college.

### Reforming Mathematics Classroom Pedagogy: Evidence-Based Findings and Recommendations for the Developmental Math Classroom

Michelle Hodara. *Community College Research Center*, *Assessment of Evidence Series*, CCRC Working Paper No. 27, February 2011.

This paper reviews the evidence base for pedagogical reforms in the developmental mathematics classroom, examining the theoretical and empirical evidence on six innovative instructional approaches. It concludes by offering recommendations for future research and for the adoption of particular instructional practices.

### Assessing Developmental Assessment in Community Colleges

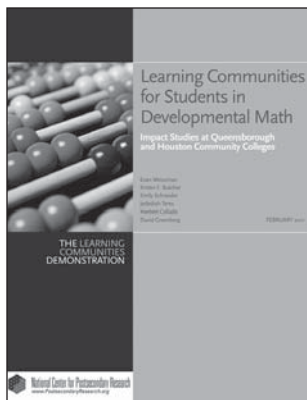
Katherine L. Hughes and Judith Scott-Clayton. *Community College Research Center*, *Assessment of Evidence Series*, CCRC Working Paper No. 19, February 2011.

This paper examines the research regarding the use of entry assessments for placement into remediation and questions common assumptions about whether this process improves outcomes for community college students. The paper considers alternative methods of assessment and placement and concludes by discussing implications for policy and research.

**Learning Communities for Students in Developmental Math: Impact Studies at Queensborough and Houston Community Colleges**

*Evan Weissman, Kristin F. Butcher, Emily Schneider, Jedediah Teres, Herbert Collado, and David Greenberg, with Rashida Welbeck. National Center for Postsecondary Research, February 2011.*

This report examines the impacts of one-semester learning communities for developmental math students at Queensborough Community College and Houston Community College. At both colleges, students in learning communities attempted and passed their developmental math class at higher rates than students in a control group. However, this impact generally did not translate into increased cumulative progress in math by the end of two or three semesters.



**Turning the Tide: Five Years of Achieving the Dream in Community Colleges**

*Elizabeth Zachry Rutschow, Lashawn Richburg-Hayes, Thomas Brock, Genevieve Orr, Oscar Cerna, Dan Cullinan, Monica Reid Kerrigan, Davis Jenkins, Susan Gooden, and Kasey Martin. MDRC and Community College Research Center, February 2011.*

This interim report examines the experiences of the first 26 colleges to join the ambitious Achieving the Dream initiative. Launched by Lumina Foundation for Education in 2004, Achieving the Dream helps community colleges collect and analyze student performance data in order to build a “culture of evidence,” enabling the colleges to use that knowledge to develop programs to increase students’ academic success.



**Introduction to the CCRC Assessment of Evidence Series**

*Thomas Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, January 2011.*

With its Assessment of Evidence series, CCRC has gathered and synthesized a large body of research evidence on strategies for improving the success of students who attend community college. The goal of the series is to help community colleges identify concrete strategies that have the potential to improve student success on a scale needed to meet national goals for increased postsecondary attainment. This introductory paper discusses our approach to the research literature, summarizes findings from the eight working papers in the series, and makes four broad recommendations based on these findings.

**Online Learning: Does It Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students?**

*Shanna Smith Jaggars. Community College Research Center, Assessment of Evidence Series, CCRC Working Paper No. 26, January 2011.*

This paper examines the research literature to determine the impact of online learning on the academic access, progression, and success of low-income and underprepared college students. Overall, the research evidence suggests that community college students are more likely to withdraw from courses if they take them online. The paper explores why students might struggle in these courses, discusses current access barriers to online education, and offers suggestions on how public policy and institutional practice could be changed to allow online learning to better meet its potential in terms of improving college access and student progression.

**The Shapeless River: Does a Lack of Structure Inhibit Students’ Progress at Community Colleges?**

*Judith Scott-Clayton. Community College Research Center, Assessment of Evidence Series, CCRC Working Paper No. 25, January 2011.*

This paper examines the role of structure in influencing student persistence in community colleges. Evidence from behavioral economics and psychology on the importance of context in decision-making lends support for the idea that community college students are more likely to persist and succeed in highly structured programs. The paper highlights several promising approaches for streamlining students’ paths to program and degree completion and suggests directions for future experimentation and research.

**Redesigning Community Colleges for Completion: Lessons from Research on High-Performance Organizations**

*Davis Jenkins. Community College Research Center, Assessment of Evidence Series, CCRC Working Paper No. 24, January 2011.*

In order to increase rates of student completion on a large scale, community colleges will have to make fundamental changes in the way they operate. This paper assesses the extent to which community colleges generally are following practices characteristic of high-performance organizations and provides evidence-based recommendations for engaging faculty and staff in community college reform. The paper concludes by recommending concrete steps community college leaders can take to redesign how they manage programs and services to increase rates of student completion.

**The Role of Community College Education in the Employment of Information Technology Workers in Washington State**

*Michelle Van Noy and Madeline Weiss. Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 23, October 2010.*

Understanding the role of subbaccalaureate programs in preparing students for the workforce has become increasingly important, particularly in quickly changing fields that require well-trained technical workers, such as information technology (IT). Using data on students in Washington State who pursued IT coursework at community colleges and then entered the labor market, this paper presents findings on the employment outcomes of IT students by the type of preparation they completed, and on the types of employers that tended to hire these students.

### Developmental Education in Community Colleges

Thomas Bailey and Sung-Woo Cho. *Community College Research Center, October 2010.*

Prepared for the White House Summit on Community College, this short paper discusses developmental education challenges and describes three initiatives designed to improve the performance of remedial services.

### Community College and High School Partnerships

Elisabeth A. Barnett and Katherine L. Hughes. *Community College Research Center, October 2010.*

Prepared for the White House Summit on Community College, this short paper discusses partnerships that promote enrollment in college, college readiness upon college entry, and postsecondary persistence.

### The Political Origins of State-Level Performance Funding for Higher Education: The Cases of Florida, Illinois, Missouri, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington

Kevin J. Dougherty, Rebecca S. Natow, Rachel J. Hare, and Blanca Vega. *Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 22, October 2010.*

Performance funding is a method of funding public institutions based not on inputs, such as enrollments, but on outcomes, such as retention, degree completion, and job placement. This report examines the origins of state performance funding in six states and concludes by drawing lessons for policymakers.

### A Model for Accelerating Academic Success of Community College Remedial English Students: Is the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) Effective and Affordable?

Davis Jenkins, Cecilia Speroni, Clive Belfield, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Nikki Edgcombe. *Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 21, September 2010.*

This paper presents findings from a quantitative analysis of the Community College of Baltimore County's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which permits upper-level developmental writing students to enroll directly in English 101 while simultaneously taking a companion course that provides extra academic support. Results suggest that ALP students are more likely than similar non-ALP students to pass English 101 and to take and pass English 102. Compared with the conventional approach, ALP provides a substantially more cost-effective route for students to pass the ENGL 101 and 102 sequence required for an associate degree. A rough cost-benefit analysis finds that the benefits of ALP are more than double the costs.

### Online Learning in the Virginia Community College System

Shanna Smith Jaggars and Di Xu. *Community College Research Center, September 2010.*

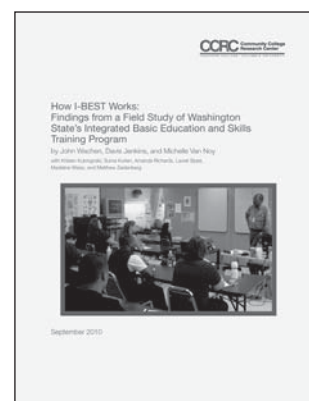
This report discusses a CCRC study on online course taking that used data on nearly 24,000 students who first enrolled in one of Virginia's 23 community colleges in summer or fall 2004. Nearly half of these students enrolled in an online course across the period of study, with online enrollments increasing dramatically over time. Among other results, the study found that regardless of their initial level of preparation, students were more likely to fail or withdraw from online courses than from face-to-face

courses. Overall, students who participated in more online courses had lower success rates on a variety of outcomes.

### How I-BEST Works: Findings from a Field Study of Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program

John Wachen, Davis Jenkins, and Michelle Van Noy. *Community College Research Center, September 2010.*

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) is an innovative strategy developed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges in conjunction with the state's community and technical colleges to increase the rate at which adult basic skills students enter and succeed in postsecondary occupational education. A companion to *CCRC Working Paper No. 20*, this paper reports on a study that examined how the 34 community and technical colleges in Washington State are implementing the I-BEST model and how I-BEST programs operate.



### Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST): New Evidence of Effectiveness

Matthew Zeidenberg, Sung-Woo Cho, and Davis Jenkins. *Community College Research Center, CCRC Working Paper No. 20, September 2010.*

This paper presents findings from a study that examined educational and labor market outcomes of students participating in I-BEST, an innovative program in Washington State designed to increase the rate at which adult basic skills students enter and succeed in postsecondary occupational education and training. Positive impacts were found for six of the seven educational outcomes examined.

### Does Remediation Work for All Students? How the Effects of Postsecondary Remedial and Developmental Courses Vary by Level of Academic Preparation

Angela Boatman and Bridget Terry Long. *National Center for Postsecondary Research, NCPR Working Paper, September 2010.*

Using longitudinal data from Tennessee, this NCPR study estimates the effects of placement into varying levels of mathematics, reading, and writing courses for students attending public four- and two-year colleges and universities. Using regression discontinuity techniques, the authors provide causal estimates of the effects of placement on a number of student outcomes, including persistence, degree completion, the number of total and college-level credits completed, and college GPA. The results suggest that remedial and developmental courses do differ in their impact by the level of student preparation.



**Effectiveness of Fully Online Courses for College Students: Response to a Department of Education Meta-Analysis**

*Shanna Smith Jaggars and Thomas Bailey. Community College Research Center, July 2010.*

A meta-analysis by the U.S. Department of Education suggests that student learning outcomes in online courses are often superior to those in face-to-face courses. However, the studies included in the meta-analysis that pertain to fully online, semester-length college courses display no trend in favor of the online course mode—and since their participants were relatively well-prepared university students, their results may not generalize to traditionally underserved populations. Thus, while online learning may have the potential to increase access to college, the Department of Education report does not present evidence that fully online delivery produces superior learning outcomes for typical college courses, particularly among low-income and academically underprepared students.

**Learning Communities for Students in Developmental Reading: An Impact Study at Hillsborough Community College**

*Michael J. Weiss, Mary G. Visher, and Heather Wathington, with Jed Teres and Emily Schneider. National Center for Postsecondary Research, June 2010.*



This NCPJR report presents results from a rigorous random assignment study of a basic learning community program at Hillsborough Community College in Tampa Bay, Florida.

Findings from this study show that overall, the learning communities program did not have a meaningful impact on students' academic success; however, the program became more comprehensive over time, and evidence suggests that it had modest positive impacts on the educational outcomes for the third cohort of students.

**Scaling Up Learning Communities: The Experience of Six Community Colleges**

*Mary G. Visher, Emily Schneider, Heather Wathington, and Herbert Collado. National Center for Postsecondary Research, April 2010.*

The Learning Communities Demonstration is a large-scale, random assignment evaluation of learning community programs at six community colleges. This report describes strategies the colleges used to scale up their programs while working to improve their quality and the many complex challenges involved in that process.

**ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS**

Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S.-W. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Education Review, 29*(2), 255–270.

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**CCRC Currents**

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