

# perspectives

## RP Group | February 2014

Print out your [Red Carpet Bingo sheets](#) and finalize your picks for the [Fantasy Oscar Draft Game](#), the 86th Academy Awards are here!

While film stars thank the Academy and their mothers on Sunday night, we would like to take a moment to recognize and thank our 2014 RP Awards recipients for their continued commitment to our students and institutions across the state. In an equally fun affair, we will formally celebrate the recipients of the 2014 RP Group at our upcoming [RP Conference](#) in April. Also, the recipients will present their work in individual conference sessions (like fun-sized film screenings!).

The RP Awards recognize excellent work in community college research and planning. The efforts of these deserving individuals, teams, and organizations increase our collective knowledge about our colleges and our students and provide us with additional approaches to strengthen our ability to act on this knowledge. We congratulate and thank them.

The recipients of the 2014 RP Awards are:

([Drumroll](#), please!)

### **Excellence in College Research**

*Relationship of the Fall 2012 Left Lane Cohort to Enrollments, Students Success and Fall to Spring Retention*

Recipient: Keith Wurtz, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Research and Planning, Crafton Hills College

### **Excellence in Dissertation/Thesis**

*A Conceptual Model on the Impact of Mattering, Sense of Belonging, Engagement/Involvement, and Socio-Academic Integrative Experiences on Community College Students' Intent to Persist*

Recipient: Esau Tovar, Associate Professor, Counseling, Santa Monica College

### **Excellence in State/Regional Research**

*Tracking Wages of California Community College Completers (Salary Surfer)*

Recipients: Alice Van Ommeren and members of the Technology, Research, and Information Systems (TRIS) Division, California Community College Chancellor's Office

### **Excellence in Planning**

*Integrated Online Program Review and Budget Planning*

Recipients: Barry Gribbons, Asst. Superintendent/V.P., Institutional Development & Technology, and Daylene Meuschke, Director of Institutional Research, College of the Canyons

### **Special Commendation for Excellence in Planning**

*From Departmental to Institutional Planning: SMC's Integrated Process*

Recipients: Hannah Lawler, Dean of Institutional Research, and Christine Schultz, Professor, Political Science, Santa Monica College

No black tie required for the reading of this issue but in the loosely-adapted words of Sally Field, we hope that you like it, you really, really like it!

Sincerely,  
The RP Group

## In This Issue

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## Announcement

### Explore RP Award-Winning Work

The RP Group Awards recognize the work of deserving individuals, agencies and organizations for excellence in community college research and planning. To learn more about this year's recipients, their efforts, the selection criteria and process, as well as the list of reviewers, visit [here](#).

### Peruse the RP Conference Program

The RP Conference (April 10 and 11 at Kellogg West in Pomona) features twenty-seven resource-focused sessions around institutional research, planning, assessment and practitioner engagement; a keynote address by Dr. Milbrey McLaughlin, Co-Director of the Center for Research on the Context of Teaching, and Director of the John Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities at Stanford University; and updates from the RP Group and the Chancellor's Office. Check out the Conference program and register [here](#).

### Submit a Proposal for the 2014 SSS Conference

This year's Strengthening Student Success Conference is focused on crossing boundaries in our work. If you would like to share your college's efforts to strengthen equitable student outcomes, consider submitting a proposal. Peruse the Conference goals, ten thematic strands, schedule and registration information [here](#).

## Statewide Spotlight: Estimating the Earnings of Our Graduates Using the Salary Surfer



**Author:** *Ryan Fuller*, Specialist in Research Analysis and Accountability, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Last year, the Chancellor's Office released the Salary Surfer tool, making available for the first time in California, a site that allows users to examine aggregated earnings of graduates before and after receiving a certificate or degree in a variety of disciplines. Additionally, the tool provides information on which colleges offer programs in those specific disciplines.

A user of the Salary Surfer tool can view system-wide median wages two years before, two years after and five years after the earning of a degree or certificate in a specific discipline. Wages are derived from California Employment Development (EDD) Unemployment Insurance (UI) data and joined with Chancellor's Office MIS awards data. Students who transferred to a four-year institution are excluded from the numbers. In the Data Mart, the Salary Surfer estimates are available in the "[System Wage Tracker](#)" within the "Outcomes" selection. The System Wage Tracker query tool lets you select and compare median wages for multiple disciplines and award types.

The earnings or wages of students after completing an award at a California community college has always been of interest to administrators and policy makers. With the increasing cost of education over the past decade, this interest has expanded to include students and families. Knowing the estimated earnings potential after completing an award at a California community college can be very valuable in supporting students as they decide which educational pathways to pursue.

### Resources:

- Salary Surfer [website](#), [query tool](#), [framework](#) and [methodology](#)
- [Other wage student resources](#), including the Salary Surfer
- Alternative approach: University of Texas System's [SeekUT](#)
- If you have any questions, please contact [salariesurfer@cccco.edu](mailto:salariesurfer@cccco.edu)

## Research: Ten Analyses to Provoke Discussion and Action on College Completion



**Author:** Priyadarshini Chaplot, Consultant, National Center for Inquiry and Improvement

***With an abundance of available data, which specific research analyses have been pivotal in supporting institutional discussions and informing actions to improve completion rates?***

The Education Trust (EdTrust) posed this question to eight leading four-year institutions across the country that had significantly improved their graduation rates--especially among students of color and for low-income students. Through site visits and phone interviews, administrators, faculty and staff shared the research findings that were most compelling, helped them better understand their students' experiences and informed how the institution could respond.

EdTrust compiled ten of these analyses in a guide titled [Learning From High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions: Top 10 Analyses to Provoke Discussion and Action on College Completion](#). The analyses range from tracking patterns of year-to-year retention to exploring the rate of second-year students who actually achieve sophomore standing to analyzing unit accumulation. The profile for each analysis includes the inspiration, the components and the insights as well as the impact, when available.

While these analyses from four-year institutions are most analogous to the segment of

community college students focused on transfer and two-year degrees, their value extends beyond serving as a collection of research questions. In fact, much can be learned from how these questions have been used by colleges as levers for change. Additionally, these analyses are not meant to be "new," but rather intended to add to the collection of research questions that can support broader engagement and meaningful dialogue on campus.

The ten analyses highlighted in the guide are below, with specific metrics listed in parentheses:

1. How many students do we lose along the way? (Year-to-year retention rates)
2. But are those returning students actually sophomores? (Rate of second-year students who achieve sophomore standing)
3. Why aren't our students accumulating the credits they need to be on track? (Impact of course withdrawals)
4. What are some of the other reasons students aren't accumulating the credits they need? (Success rates in the 25-35 courses with the largest annual enrollment)
5. Who's struggling with math: only developmental students? (Success rates in the first credit-bearing math course)
6. How many students who need remediation succeed at our institution? (Data on developmental courses, especially in math)
7. What is the role of the major--or a lack thereof--in student success? (Success for students in different fields)
8. How efficient are we in getting students to a degree without excess credits? (Units completed)
9. What pathways do our students take on their journey to a degree? (Analysis of Transcripts)
10. How do the pieces of student success--or failure--fit together? (Analysis of student pathways)

#### Resources:

- [Guide](#): "Learning From High-Performing and Fast-Gaining Institutions: Top 10 Analyses to Provoke Discussion and Action on College Completion"
- [Press Release](#): "Increasing College-Going and Graduation Rates for Low-Income Students," including a second guide featuring an in-depth case study

## Planning: How AB 86 Refocuses Attention to Adult Education



**Author:** *Alketa Wojcik*, Dean of Behavioral Sciences, History and Community Education, MiraCosta College

With the economic downturn and budget cuts in the past few years in California, adult education took a major hit. The system is currently serving over 1 million fewer adults than it did in 2008. According to Kim H. Tran's report, [Working Hard, Left Behind](#), "California has the largest number of adults without a high school diploma or equivalent in the country: more than 1 out of 10 adults over

24 years old have less than a ninth grade education and of the 24 million adults aged 18-64, almost 1 in 5 have not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent."

Assembly Bill 86 (AB 86), adopted in 2013, seeks to address the gap in adult education through collaborative work between community colleges and the K-12 system. In order to better serve the educational needs of adults, the goal of AB86 is to provide grant funds to regional consortia to develop regional plans for adult education. Each regional consortium must include at least one community college and one K-12 school district; however, other adult education providers and partners may also participate.

Through AB 86, each consortium develops a plan that outlines strategies to provide adults in the region with the following:

- Elementary and secondary basic skills, including classes required for a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate
- Classes and courses for immigrants eligible for education services in citizenship and English as a second language as well as workforce preparation classes in basic skills
- Education programs for adults with disabilities
- Short-term career technical education programs with high employment potential
- Programs for apprentices

While a few community colleges in the state have robust adult education programs through noncredit departments, many others have relied on their K-12 partners to meet the needs. AB 86 is beneficial in bringing community colleges, K-12 districts and other partners together to talk about adult education in a strategic and holistic way that will best serve the entire community.

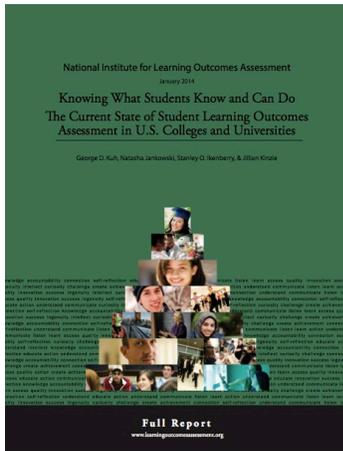
This month, each regional consortium submitted a plan that laid out how it would evaluate the current level and types of adult education, the needs for adult education within the region, and an approach to address the gaps identified through the needs assessment. Additionally, the plan calls for programs and strategies to accelerate students' progress towards their goals.

Since the plans are in the initial stages, currently there are more questions than answers. However, the grants provided through AB 86 to the consortia across the state will allow for more dialogue and better planning among the districts and partners in adult education to better serve the community. Final consortium plans are due in March 2015 and this year will be one of reflection and strategic thinking of necessary changes needed in adult education.

**Resources:**

- AB86 [website](#)
- Tran, Kim, H. (May 2013). [\*Working Hard, Left Behind\*](#).

## Assessment: A Growing Internal Interest in Assessing Student Learning Outcomes



**Author:** *Robert Pacheco*, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, MiraCosta College

The number and kinds of ways in which educators assess student learning continues to grow, according to the latest survey by the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA).

In [\*Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in U.S. Colleges and Universities\*](#), George Kuh and his team note that the drive behind looking at learning is shifting from external bodies, such as accreditors and state and national governments, to the institutions themselves.

The team surveyed 1200 baccalaureate and community colleges, paralleling a similar investigation done four years ago to measure growth of the assessment field. While the team found a marked increase in the number and methods of assessment used in higher education, including rubric-scored student work, evaluation of portfolios and classroom based assessment techniques, student surveys remain one of the most common ways to infer whether learning is taking place.

According to the NILOA survey, colleges still struggle with the use of the results for improvement, traditionally coined "closing the loop." Institutions do report using data often to improve curriculum, reexamine outcomes expectations and make programmatic improvements. Understandably, institutions are still less likely to share the results outside of the college settings such as posting findings on college websites.

Despite the increased critical mass at institutions to conduct assessments and use the results for improvement, the principal driver of the outcomes movement remains external requirements of regional and programmatic accreditors. Nevertheless, the team found that the internal desire of institutional personnel to improve has become increasingly important.

Kuh and his team point out that greater faculty involvement in the outcomes process, continued institutional support of assessment efforts and a fostered culture of assessment will likely be needed for continued growth in assessment to occur over the next decade.

### Resource:

- Kuh, G.D., Jankowski, N., Ikenberry, S.O., & Kinzie, J. (2014). [\*Knowing What Students Know and Can Do: The Current State of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment in US Colleges and Universities\*](#).