perspectives

RP Group | March 2015

Awards is the name of this issue's game! In addition to exploring the work of the 2015 RP Award winners, the California Department of Finance has just announced the recipients of its *Awards for Innovation in Higher Education*. These awards, totaling $50 million, have been awarded to California community colleges, CSUs and UCs that have innovated creative and cost-effective ways to increase the number of students who earn a bachelor's degree within four years and/or make it easier for students to transition from community colleges to four-year institutions--and, with models that could be replicated across the state.

We would like to highlight the community college recipients of these awards, especially the Leading from the Middle college team from City College of San Francisco who played a significant role in developing the Bridge to Success program as well as writing its submission for the Award.

You can read a page-long summary of each award-winning application here, or a tweet-sized summary below:

- **Hartnell College,** for its CSIT-in-3, a program that enables students in a cohort-model to earn a bachelor in computer science in three years, associated with CSU Monterey Bay
- **Riverside Community College District, Riverside Community College, Crafton Hills College** and **San Bernardino Valley College,** for the Federation of a Competitive Economy (FACE), a regional K-20 vision focused on college readiness in San Bernardino County in collaboration with local K-12 schools, UC Riverside and CSU San Bernardino
- **Long Beach City College,** for its Long Beach College Promise Program and close collaboration with local K-12 schools and CSU Long Beach, resulting in high rates of college preparedness
- **Santa Ana College,** for its Santa Ana Partnership, which provides a long history of structured pathways from high school to community college to CSU Fullerton and UC Irvine
- **Shasta College,** for its PACT (Promise for Access, Completion and Transfer) Program which supports participating high school students who enroll simultaneously at the college
- **City College of San Francisco,** for its Bridge to Success Program in collaboration with San Francisco public schools
- **College of the Redwoods,** for its participation in the Humboldt Post-Secondary Success Collaborative
- **City College of San Francisco**, **Diablo Valley College** and **Skyline College,** for the Metro College Success Program in collaboration with San Francisco State University
- **Butte College,** for its collaborative effort to improve student educational planning through its Student Progression and Completion Model
- **West Hills College Lemoore, West Hills College Coalinga** and the **West Hills Community College District,** for the design of REG365, an innovative approach to full year scheduling and registration for students

Congratulations to all of the award recipients! As a side note, most of the 2015 RP Award recipients will be presenting their work at the upcoming RP Conference.

Sincerely,
Priyadarshini Chaplot
The RP Group

In This Issue

- Announcements
- EXCELLENCE IN COLLEGE RESEARCH | Let Them In: Increasing Access, Completion, and Equity in College English
- EXCELLENCE IN COLLEGE RESEARCH | Performance Outcomes of First-Time, No Prior College Experience Students by Self-Reported Student Hope Levels
- EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL/STATEWIDE RESEARCH | Curricular Redesign and Gatekeeper Completion: A Multi-College Evaluation of the California Acceleration Project
- EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING | Design Support System
- EXCELLENCE IN DISSERTATION/THESIS | Efficacy of the California Basic Skills Initiative

Announcements

2015 Scorecard Released March 30
The third iteration of the annual accountability framework includes the addition of the percentage of first-generation students at each college, the display of cohort sizes and demographic profiles information of each metric, as well as the standard college-level information on student progress and success. These metrics are being used for Student Equity Plans and for the Institutional Effectiveness Partnership Initiative. Explore the Scorecard here.

Explore the Experiences of Leading from the Middle Academy Participants
The RP Group's Leading from the Middle Academy (LFM) is a year-long professional learning experience where cross-functional college teams work together on a designated college initiative by applying strategies of leadership and change. A new evaluation report shares the experiences of the 46 participants from 12 California community colleges who participated in the second annual LFM cohort. Peruse the full evaluation report here and the executive summary here.

EXCELLENCE IN COLLEGE RESEARCH | Let Them In: Increasing Access, Completion and Equity in College English

Award Recipients: *Leslie Henson*, Co-Chair, English and Journalism, Butte College; *Katie Hern*, Co-Founder and Director, California Acceleration Project; *Myra Snell*, Co-Founder and Math Lead, California Acceleration Project; *Eric Hoiland*, Director of Assessment, Butte College; *Wim McSpadden*, Office of Planning, Research, and Organizational Development, Butte College

Note: This article is reprinted from the November/December 2014 issue of Perspectives.

Article Authors: *Leslie Henson*, English Instructor, Butte College and *Katie Hern*, Director, California Acceleration Project

California's Student Success Scorecard shows a stark divide between "college prepared" and "unprepared" students. When incoming community college students are designated prepared for college-level work in English and math, they go on to complete degrees, certificates and transfer-related outcomes at a rate of 70% within six years. For students designated unprepared and required to enroll in remedial courses, that figure is just 40%. Unfortunately, most California community college students are in the "unprepared" group. Statewide, more than 70% of incoming students are required to enroll in one or more remedial courses.

But recent research suggests that students may not be as unprepared as we have believed. Two studies by the Community College Research Center have found that standardized placement tests--the primary mechanism community colleges use to assess student readiness for college-level courses--are poor predictors of students' performance in college. Analysis of data from a statewide community college system revealed that placement tests in reading/writing explain less than 2% of the variation in students' first college-level English grades. A study of a large, urban community college system estimated that 40-60% of students placed into remediation could pass college English with a C or higher if allowed to enroll directly, and that 29% of them could earn a B or higher. Long Beach City College found that when they quadrupled the number of students classified "college ready" through changes to their placement process (from 13% to 59%), there was no effect on pass rates inside the college-level course.

Butte College began its own examination of placement in March of 2011 when the English department replaced a previous placement test with the COMPASS exam. Under the new test and cut scores, faculty were surprised to see that many more students were being classified as "college ready." Instead of 23% of incoming students having access to the gateway college-level English composition course, 48% of students did. They considered lowering the cut scores back to the prior ratio of college-ready/remedial, but conscious of the high rates of attrition in remedial course sequences, they decided to let the new scores stand and see how students performed.

This article describes what happened. Overall, substantially more students completed college English across all ethnic groups, and achievement gaps between groups narrowed. Black and Hispanic students--who had fared the worst under the prior policy--saw the greatest gains, with both groups' completion of college English more than doubling. Examining grade distributions after the new policy, we found that among students who previously would have been placed into remediation, 40% earned As and Bs in the college-level course. While there was a modest decline in average course success rates in college English, the significance of this decline is uncertain given the huge variability in success rates across sections and instructors. The article closes with a discussion of implications for Butte College and community college placement and remediation policies.

Resources:

- Read the full article, Let Them In: Increasing Access, Completion, and Equity in College English
- Attend this session at the RP Conference (Wednesday, April 8, 4:10 p.m. - 5:10

p.m.) entitled "Let Them In: Increasing Access, Completion and Equity in College English"

Award Recipient and Article Author: *Jim Fillpot*, Dean of Institutional Research and Resource Development, Chaffey College

As an outgrowth of district-wide conversations related to educational master planning, strategic planning and development of a local institutional completion agenda that subsequently provided the foundation for the college's Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and Student Equity Plans, Chaffey College began incorporating hope, mindset and other non-cognitive factors into various district processes starting in Spring 2011. The integration of non-cognitive factors resonated throughout the district as authentic; rather than viewing student success and performance outcomes from a deficit standpoint, non-cognitive factors provide administrators, faculty and staff with opportunities to develop actionable strategies that positively impact all aspects of students' lives. As the focus on non-cognitive factors emerged and permeated the institutional culture, the need arose to examine the relationship between non-cognitive factors and student performance outcomes in order to facilitate on-going dialogue and evidence-based decision-making.

The first non-cognitive factor that Chaffey College elected to focus on was hope. Significant research (e.g., Snyder, et.al., 2002; Covington, 2000) suggests a strong relationship between hope and various student performance outcomes (e.g., GPA, graduation rate, lower dismissal and dropout rates). In order to determine whether a relationship existed between hope levels of incoming first-time, no-prior-college experience students and performance outcomes, the Adult Trait Hope Scale was embedded into the district's assessment process in July 2011. Approximately 90-93% of first-time, no-prior-college experience students who enter Chaffey College in the Fall semester participate in the assessment process, providing the Chaffey College Office of Institutional Research (OIR) an opportunity to capture significant Hope Scale baseline data prior to students' exposure to instruction and student services. In total, Hope Scale data was collected for 7,118 unique students representing three incoming student cohorts (Fall 2011: 611 students; Fall 2012: 3,257 students; and Fall 2013: 3,250 students). Utilizing the population standard deviation to identify high, average and low hope student groups, the Chaffey College OIR examined a number of performance outcome measures to determine whether differences existed between high, average, and low hope students on short- (e.g., first semester success rates), intermediate- (e.g., fall-to-spring-to-fall persistence) and long-term (e.g., degree completion) performance outcome measures.

Initial findings suggest that, while some statistically significant differences exist in hope group assignment, it is unlikely that hope group assignment is due to students' gender, race/ethnicity, age group, disability status or economically disadvantaged status (i.e., students are not more/less likely to be assigned to a particular hope group based upon one of the aforementioned demographic characteristics). Examining performance of the three groups (high, average, low hope) across the three cohorts (Fall 2011, Fall 2012, and Fall

2013) on seventeen unique outcome measures, a number of meaningful effect size differences were observed. Locally, findings have fueled conversations about actionable strategies to promote hopeful thinking and behavior in administrators, faculty, staff and students; have been integrated into faculty and classified staff professional development opportunities, including new faculty orientation; have been incorporated into Success Center directed-learning activities; and are part of a district-wide multimedia outreach and messaging campaign.

Resources:

- Attend this session at the RP Conference (Wednesday, April 8, 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.) entitled "Performance Outcomes of First-Time Students with No Prior College Experience by Self-Reported Student Hope Levels"
- If you have questions or would like to access the full report, please send an e-mail to Jim at jim.fillpot@chaffey.edu.

EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL/STATEWIDE RESEARCH | Curricular Redesign and Gatekeeper Completion: A Multi-College Evaluation of the California Acceleration Project

Award Recipients: *Craig Hayward*, Director of Research, Planning and Accreditation, Irvine College; *Terrence Willett*, Director of Planning, Research and Knowledge Systems, Cabrillo College; *Vinod Verma*, System Sofware Specialist, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office

Article Authors: *Craig Hayward*, Director of Research, Planning and Accreditation, Irvine College and *Terrence Willett*, Director of Planning, Research and Knowledge Systems, Cabrillo College

The evaluation was ambitious; the challenge, daunting. The task: evaluate 18 accelerated pathways at 16 California community colleges. The objective: determine if accelerated pathways increased completion of transfer-level coursework. There was already mounting evidence of their effectiveness around the country and in California, but critical questions remained unanswered. Did acceleration "work" for all students, regardless of background or placement level? Were there some students who would do better in the traditional sequence? In order to properly assess these research questions, we first had to develop an innovative data collection, transformation and loading system that would allow us to integrate detailed placement data with Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) data across a variety of Colleges. We would also need to bring in a large number of control variables and derive new controls that integrated placement information and course history. Once that was accomplished, we were able to study both first-time students and students who had already interacted with remedial sequences together in a way that captured the different paths that students took to enter accelerated courses.

Hypothesis testing was primarily conducted via multivariate logistic regression, assessing the odds of accelerated students completing transfer level coursework relative to the odds of students in traditional pathways. We controlled for a host of confounding variables including grade point average (GPA), placement level, ethnicity, gender, history of prior

successes and failures in the English or math sequence, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) membership, financial aid receipt, English as a Second Language (ESL) status and disability status. In April 2014, we released a 65-page report entitled, "Curricular Redesign and Gatekeeper Completion: A Multi-College Evaluation of the California Acceleration Project," which describes how multi-class remedial sequences in English and math were effectively being replaced with a single, accelerated remedial class for thousands of students. The bottom line was that well-implemented accelerated pathways had a powerful effect, regardless of placement level, ethnicity, course history or any other control variable. Importantly, there were no discernable negative effects for any identifiable student groups. Indeed, there was evidence that the positive effect of acceleration on the odds of completing transfer-level gatekeeper courses was relatively greater for students who had been placed lower in the sequence, particularly those at three or four levels below transfer.

Since the release of the evaluation last year, we have conducted additional analyses examining the equity implications of accelerated curricular reform. We see, by looking at the unadjusted or raw numbers of students at different placement levels, that scaling up acceleration would greatly increase the number of all students completing transfer-level work in English and math, but that it would especially benefit students of color. Because students of color are disproportionately placed at lower levels of remedial sequence, where the effects of attrition are the greatest, avoiding these low-level courses imparts a large boost to students' completion velocity.

Resources:

- Learn more about the California Accelerated Project Evaluation
- Join the California Acceleration Project's community of practice
- Read a four-page executive summary highlighting the major findings
- Attend this session at the RP Conference (Thursday, April 9, 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.) entitled "Equity Implications of the California Acceleration Project: Capturing Impact through Deliberate Design"

EXCELLENCE IN PLANNING | Design Support System

Award Recipient and Article Author: *Daniel Lamoree*, Senior Systems Analyst/Programmer, Mt. San Antonio College

Scheduling decisions have a wide array of impacts for the institution and the students of the institution. Limited offerings of high-demand courses create bottlenecks, significantly hampering student success and completion rates. Offering too many low-demand courses results in reduced enrollment and funding, and an inefficient use of resources. These resources could be better utilized by increasing the sections offered of high-demand courses. What are those low-demand and high-demand courses? How many sections should be cut from the low-demand courses and how many sections should be added of the high-demand courses? How might cutting or adding sections impact FTES generation?

While Mt. San Antonio College had excellent reports for current and historical data, scheduling decisions were made without the use of projections. As a result, the college recognized the need to build a dashboard for key institutional stakeholders that incorporated reports already developed using the institutional reporting tool (Argos) with new reports and features allowing for data-driven decisions to support the creation of optimal future schedules.

The development of a Decision Support System received widespread institutional support. The developer met regularly with key institutional stakeholders responsible for the development of schedules (e.g., President's Cabinet, deans) to present new features and enrollment data, while getting feedback to integrate into the next development cycle. The Decision Support System shows a number of key metrics in a user-friendly, graphical dashboard. These include:

- Sections not filling compared to projected course fill rate on a day-by-day comparison
- Courses with excess demand expressed as a function of either attempted registration on fully enrolled sections or the number of days before a course has almost fully filled
- Courses with improper section sizes
- Registration acceleration of divisions, departments, disciplines or courses

Most importantly, the dashboard also includes a sandbox feature to test the impact of scheduling decisions. All key members involved in scheduling processes have access to this sandbox feature and use it to test how adding, removing or modifying schedules at the section level will impact FTES. Newly-created sections in this sandbox receive a projected FTES calculation but the user is afforded the option to modify the projection; this gives users the flexibility to apply their experience to override the projection. To help guide users, the Decision Support System has the "suggest a course" feature, which presents three courses to the user and asks the user to select one; the courses are chosen using metrics defined by the user (i.e., highest fill rate and highest demand).

The Decision Support System was designed in Oracle using the cost-free rapid web development tool native to Oracle: Oracle Application Express (APEX). As such, any California community college using Oracle can leverage APEX to build a similar enrollment dashboard enabling key stakeholders to best create future schedules with the goal of maximizing FTES and minimizing course bottlenecks.

Resource:

- Peruse a PowerPoint presentation on the Decision Support System from the 2014 RP Conference.

Award Recipient and Article Author: *Erik Cooper*, Dean of Planning, Research, and Resource Development, Sierra College & Graduate, Educational Leadership, Sacramento State

In 2007, California community colleges (CCC) instituted the Basic Skills Initiative (BSI) in order to improve the learning outcomes of students who entered college under prepared for college-level coursework. To encourage colleges to adopt or expand practices associated with student success, the BSI provides colleges with financial resources along with professional development support, and requires annual progress reports. While multiple studies have evaluated individual practices or identified successful colleges, there has been no comprehensive attempt to account for all of the factors that contribute to student success. This study uses linear regression on a combination of publicly available data and survey results regarding college practices to determine (1) whether the BSI had a positive impact, (2) which factors significantly impacted colleges' ability to improve student success rates and (3) whether there were colleges--unidentified or underrepresented in the literature--that had seen high gains in student success.

For my dissertation, I used the available data to conduct two separate analyses: (1) an analysis focused solely on the colleges that responded to a practices survey and (2) an analysis that took into account the available data from all CCCs. As a result, I determined that the BSI did have a positive effect on rates of student success, but that improvement was very small--a 3.0 percentage point improvement in English and a 2.4 percentage point improvement in Math. While few colleges had adopted practices outlined in the [Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges (Poppy Copy)](#) to any significant extent, the following practices were positively associated with success in the data analyses:

- Integrated Counseling in English Courses (English success rate)
- Accelerated Curriculum (English success rate)
- Improved Assessment Practices (Math success rate)
- "Flipped Classroom" (Math success rate)
- Developmental faculty involved in professional development (Math success rate)

Finally, a handful of colleges that were not previously identified in the literature showed greater than expected improvements, including Citrus College, LA Pierce College and Modesto Junior College.

While the methodology of my dissertation has some limitations, it nevertheless points to some practices, such as those listed above, that colleges may want to adopt to improve their success. As an overall concern, as Grubb & Gabriner (2013) found, few colleges have adopted the practices outline in the Poppy Copy to any great extent. This suggests that colleges need to take a harder look at what they are doing to support student success and engage in difficult questions regarding access to support services and changes in pedagogy. This is particularly important as colleges further implement the Student Success and Support Program (SSSP) and the State of California continues to explore performance-

based funding models.

Resources:

- Glance through the <u>Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges (Poppy Copy)</u>
- Take a closer look at Erik's dissertation, <u>Efficacy of the California Basic Skills Initiative</u>
- Attend this session at the <u>RP Conference</u> (Thursday, April 9, 10:10 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.) entitled "Efficacy of the California Basic Skills Initiative"

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