



theRPgroup

the Research & Planning Group
for California Community Colleges

perspectives

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Hello, !

Recognition has its merits. We all benefit when we can observe any effort that is "best in class." Why? We get to see what works, and that knowledge can help us channel our own future efforts in new directions. If we have already begun to move down the path that has been recognized for its effectiveness and impact, then we can feel validated, and the reinforcement fuels us to continue moving forward. Even if we may not have responsibility for work in a given area (such as instruction, student support, or budgeting), we can share the joy when a person or team receives well-earned accolades for their effort in that area. When the recipient of recognition is a peer, then we may even feel a bit of special satisfaction in knowing that we, as a group, can achieve at a high level.

So it is a splendid event when we recognize our colleagues who have recently demonstrated a high level of achievement in research, planning, and dissertation development through the [RP Group Awards](#).

We have moved up our *Perspectives* publication process one month to feature the winners in this March issue, in advance of the awards ceremony and their presentations at the 2016 RP Conference next month. We hope to promulgate their best-in-class work, promote high aspirations in our field, and reward those who have recently reached a peak in the profession (but certainly not their last or only peak) with these awards. In line with this year's RP Conference theme, **Integrating Equity and Success into the Research and Planning Framework**, these award winners demonstrate the central role IRP can play in improving institutional effectiveness and success for all students.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the [RP Conference](#) in San Diego, April 7-8, and "talking" with all of you again in May, when *Perspectives* will highlight key conference sessions and resume its every-other-month schedule.

Sincerely,
Willard Hom

In This Issue

[Award Spotlight | What Gets to Count](#)

[Award Spotlight | Multiple Measures Assessment Project](#)

[Award Spotlight | How to Increase Data Democracy and Develop a Culture of Inquiry within Faculty and Staff](#)

[Award Spotlight | Looking at Developmental Education from Multiple Perspectives: Findings from my Dissertation and Lessons for Community Colleges](#)

[Award Spotlight | Making Integrated Planning User-Friendly](#)

Award Spotlight | Excellence in Regional/Statewide Research: What Gets to Count - Constructing a Skills-BUILDER Success Metric



Award Recipients: *Ryan Fuller, Research Specialist and Alice van Ommeren, Dean of Research, Analysis, and Accountability, and the Doing What Matters for Jobs and the Economy team, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office; KC Greaney, Director of Institutional Research, Santa Rosa Junior College; Peter Riley Bahr, Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan; the Statewide Vocational Education Research and Accountability*

Committee (VERATAC); and Kathy Booth, Senior Research Associate, WestEd

Article Author: *Kathy Booth, Senior Research Associate, WestEd*

Traditionally, success metrics have focused on completion outcomes such as attaining a certificate or degree, or transfer to a baccalaureate-level institution. In November 2015, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office expanded the definition of success to include skills-builders--experienced workers who take a limited number of courses to maintain and who add to skill sets for ongoing employment and career advancement.

Beginning in 2016, skills-builder earnings gains will appear as a metric on the Student Success Scorecard. Representing one in four career and technical education (CTE) students who leave colleges without meeting the traditional criteria for success, the Scorecard will show that these students are in fact successful, by securing a median earnings increase of 14%.

The decision to expand the definition of CTE success addresses one of the recommendations of the Board of Governors Task Force for Workforce and a Strong Economy and stems from a series of research projects conducted by Ryan Fuller, Kathy Booth, Peter Riley Bahr, and KC Greaney. These studies showed that in many CTE disciplines, skills-builders secured earnings gains that ranged from 8% to 66%. In some CTE fields, particularly Public Safety and Protective Services and Information and Communication Technologies, there are substantially more skills-builders than students who completed a degree or certificate. In others, such as Small Business and Retail, the number of skills-builders and completers is equivalent.

The methodology for the Scorecard metric was developed in close consultation with VERATAC and was publicized in a report written by Kathy Booth, Ryan Fuller, and Alice van Ommeren called [What](#)

[Gets to Count](#). The report clarified how many skills-builder students there are, their average change in earnings, and whether this change helped students attain a living wage. In addition to the statewide report, 16 related guides report results by economic regions, which were shared at regional meetings during summer 2015.

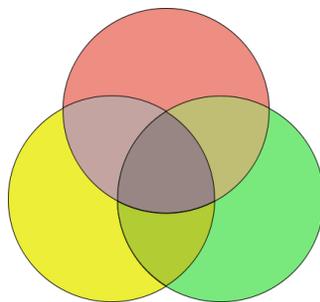
Including a skills-builder metric in the Student Success Scorecard has many important implications for the field. It provides a more complete picture of success in CTE programs, which include numerous pathways. In addition to providing comprehensive training in a discipline, many CTE programs help workers fill gaps in critical skills caused by rapid changes in technology or the job market. It is worth adding that the new metric recognizes the incremental contribution of those disciplines that tend to have a low degree completion rate. Without such recognition, planners and budgeters could be inclined to shrink or drop these sources of incremental workforce development, further disadvantaging those who struggle to enter or remain in the job market.

Lastly, the new skills-builder metric has important equity implications. Many employers have shifted the cost of training and skill development to the worker by cutting in-house professional learning options. So many workers who want to expand their job opportunities or to retain their jobs must depend upon short-term training at community colleges that offer them a more affordable option than courses at most for-profit institutions.

Resources:

- Read *What Gets to Count*, download the original research studies done by Fuller, Booth, Bahr, and Greaney, and view videos describing the research at <http://doingwhatmatters.cccco.edu/ForCollegeLeadership/SkillsBuilders.aspx>.

Award Spotlight | Excellence in Regional/Statewide Research: Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMA)



Award Recipients:

Terrence Willett, Director of Planning, Research, and Knowledge Systems, Cabrillo College; Mallory Newell, Director of Institutional Research and Planning, De Anza College; John Hetts, Senior Director of Data Science, Daniel Lamoree, Senior Research and Systems Analyst, and Ken Sorey, Executive Vice President, Educational Results Partnership; Craig Hayward, Director of Research, Planning, and Accreditation, Irvine Valley College; Danielle Duran, Executive Assistant to the President, Stuart Foundation; and Peter Bahr, Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan

Article Author: *Craig Hayward, Director of Research, Planning, and Accreditation, Irvine Valley College*

[**Editor's Note:** *Perspectives* published an article about this project in the December 2015 issue. Access that article, "Gains from Multiple Measures Assessment," at <http://rpgroup.org/content/december-2015-perspectives>. The MMA team has continued its work,

and the project's new developments are summarized below.]

The [Multiple Measures Assessment Project](#) (MMAP) is a collaborative effort led by the RP Group and Educational Results Partnerships' Cal-PASS Plus system, with support from the CCCCO. It aims to develop a data warehouse, create a comprehensive analytical model, and establish user tools for assessment and placement using multiple measures. MMAP is engaged with 28 (and counting) pilot colleges from across the state that are providing feedback on the predictive models and user tools to inform the process.

Since December 2015, MMAP has achieved the following:

- Released the "Phase II" rule sets and decision trees for English and math; they represent some important methodological advances and have superseded the rules in the Phase I document
- Released ESL and Reading decision trees for review and vetting
- Held a new series of MMAP pilot college webinars; all webinars are [archived](#); recent webinars include:
 - *Rolling Out the Reading and ESL Rule Sets* (Thursday, February 25, 1:30 - 2:30 pm)
 - *From Start to Finish: Overview of the Implementation Process for New Pilot Colleges* (Monday, February 29, 10:00 - 11:00 am)
 - *Lessons from the Field: Pilot Colleges Sharing Their Experiences with Multiple Measures* (Wednesday, March 9, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm)

The MMAP research team is currently focusing on incorporating feedback from pilot colleges on the recently released ESL and reading trees and decision rules. Additionally, we continue to examine the potential of various social-psychological or non-cognitive variables (NCVs) for assessment and placement purposes. Pilot colleges are pivoting from research and planning to implementation of strong multiple measures, and a number of colleges have begun to report positive results from early pilot projects.

John Hetts continues to present on the benefits of multiple measures at colleges up and down the state. Additionally, several MMAP team members have been presenting on MMAP at the recent series of workshops for the Community Colleges Basic Skills and Student Outcomes Transformation Program. Also of note, John Hetts, Terrence Willett, and Craig Hayward will be presenting on the MMAP at the AIR Forum in June 2016, while Peter Bahr and Loris Fagioli will be presenting at the ASHE conference in November 2016.

Resources:

- Access archives of recent webinars at <http://rpgroup.org/projects/multiple-measures-assessment-project/webinars>.
- Explore project resources at <http://rpgroup.org/projects/multiple-measures-assessment-project>.

Award Spotlight| Excellence in College Research: How to Increase Data Democracy and Develop a Culture of Inquiry within Faculty and Staff



Award Recipients and Article Authors:

Michael Hoffman, Professor of Math, Chialin Hsieh, Dean of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness, Tracy Huang, Planning and Research Analyst, Anniqua Rana, Dean of Athletic, Learning Resources, and Library, and Janet Stringer, Dean of Science and

Technology, Cañada College

In trying to develop a culture of inquiry at our college, we discovered that access to relevant and timely data was a major roadblock for faculty and staff. In the past, requests for data and research questions were submitted as part of the annual program review. The Research Office then compiled the requests for data and started working through the requests. Thus, a faculty member or department might have a robust discussion around student success in their program in February while writing their program review, but they may not receive the needed data until that summer. By then, the robust discussion was essentially lost, and the questions may have changed. The purpose of this project was to address these issues and provide a source for relevant and timely data.

Almost two years ago, the Research Office, working with our District Technology Group, developed a Data Dashboard tool using Argos™ reporting system. Since its initial development, the system has been modified and fine-tuned based on feedback from users. Early on, we decided that all persons using Data Dashboard had to receive training. This was accomplished by having the Research Office control access by being (1) the sole trainers on campus and (2) the single source for permission for access. Intensive, routine, and specific trainings--both basic and advanced--have been provided based on users' needs. To date, there are about 90 people (including faculty, staff, and administrators) with a access to the Data Dashboard, and all have received training. Through this training, participants learn how to (1) access the Data Dashboard, (2) obtain the report or information needed for their specific needs, and (3) ask more questions about their project and explore additional possibilities to examine their research questions.

Research is now embedded in the college. As more faculty and staff are trained in the use of the Data Dashboard, more programs are empowered to design and carry out projects using this immediate access to student data. The data are being used to inform decisions about interventions and program effectiveness that impact the success of our students. The beauty of this process is that it is a faculty- and staff-led process. Researchers are on the side to support faculty and staff. Thus, we have "generalized" the researcher's role by providing appropriate tools, training, and inquiries to increase data democracy and a culture of inquiry. Ready access to data allowed everyone to ask and answer questions about student success.

Now the word on the street is "you can find the data in the Data Dashboard" instead of "ask the Research Office!" In turn, the college researchers are now able to focus on the higher-level analyses that examine college-level interventions and their impact on student success.

Resources:

- Find training materials at [Canada PRIE Data Dashboard website](#).
- Explore examples of completed/ongoing projects that have utilized the easy access to student data in the Data Dashboard at [Student Equity Inquiry Projects](#).

**Award Spotlight | Excellence in Dissertation/Thesis:
Looking at Developmental Education from Multiple Perspectives -**



Award Recipient and Article Author: *Kristen Erin Fong, Research Analyst, Cerritos College*

My dissertation is comprised of independent but related papers, which together take an in-depth examination of developmental education and describe the importance of its complexities as they relate to student outcomes. Specifically, I examine the nuances of students' progression through their sequence and institutional assessment and placement policies. By approaching the study of developmental education in this way, I am also able to garner a more thorough understanding of where and how underrepresented racial minority students are most affected as well as identify what can be done to lessen the racial disparities in developmental math education.

Students' Progression through Their Developmental Math Sequence

In my first paper, I demonstrate an alternative approach to calculating pass rates, one that is based not on the number of students placed into a developmental math class but on the number of students who attempted to complete the work of that class. Specifically, I define and track student progression, how students move through their developmental math trajectory, in terms of both attempting and passing each level. Utilizing a sample of 54,879 students who were assessed and placed into developmental math between summer 2005 and spring 2008 then tracked through spring 2010, I find that the **largest barriers for developmental math students are attempting and passing their placed course**. I then build a comprehensive conceptual framework that accounts for the factors associated with the likelihood of students' progression, utilizing individual, institutional, and developmental math program factors. From this model, the most interesting finding was that **students who persisted through their math trajectory were more likely to attempt and pass each subsequent course compared to their initially higher placed peers**. Findings from this study suggest that colleges should implement programs and policies to increase attempt rates in developmental courses in order to increase pass rates of the math pre-requisite courses for associate degrees and transfer to baccalaureate institutions (see Fong, Melguizo, & Prather, 2015).

The Assessment and Placement (A&P) Process: Improving Placement Accuracy

In my second paper, I turn my focus to understanding how students are placed in order to improve placement accuracy and therefore students' likelihood of success. I first describe students' behavior through their institution's actual A&P process. I then apply an alternative A&P policy that includes additional measures such as prior math achievement that buffers against students' lack of confidence or knowledge of the A&P process. I examine changes in math placement distribution and success rates in students' first attempted developmental math course under these two placement criteria. I explore this at a single California community college that allows its students to choose the assessment sub-test the institution uses to place them. Of the 8,838 first-time students who were enrolled and assessed between summer 2005 and spring 2008, I find evidence of misalignment between their choice of assessment sub-test and what they reported as the highest math course completed with a passing grade. After correcting for this misalignment through an alternative placement criteria, I find that **utilizing an additional measure that assesses prior math preparedness alongside sub-test choice can increase students' access to higher levels**

of math while also maintaining students' success in their placed courses; this approach is especially beneficial to underrepresented racial minority students. As colleges rethink their A&P policies, it is important to identify how we can make multiple measures more meaningful in the placement process and which additional measures are most strongly related to student success.

Resources:

- Fong, K. E., Melguizo, T., & Prather, G. (2015). Increasing success rates in developmental math: The complementary role of individual and institutional characteristics, *Research in Higher Education*, 56(7), 719-749. doi: 10.1007/s11162-015-9368-9.
- Fong, K. E., & Melguizo, T. (revise and resubmit). Utilizing additional measures to buffer against students' lack of math confidence and improve placement accuracy in developmental math.

Award Spotlight | Excellence in Planning: Making Integrated Planning User-Friendly



Award Recipients: *Oleg Beshpalov, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness; Kathleen F. Burke, President; and Amari Williams, Assistant Research Analyst, Pierce College*

Article Author: *Oleg Beshpalov, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Pierce College*

Los Angeles Pierce College redesigned its Integrated Planning Model throughout 2014-2015 to increase employee participation. The key elements of our Integrated Planning Model are described below. The IRP field may find value in adopting elements of this approach to increase faculty and staff engagement in the planning processes at their respective campuses.

- We revised the *Decision Making and Planning Handbook* to include engaging language, examples, and a creative flowchart describing the five-step planning process.
- We designed the *Strategic Master Plan Dashboard* to provide a quick way for employees to gauge the progress of each metric, using familiar traffic light colors.
- We redesigned the resource allocation prioritization process to be more user-friendly; the committee tasked with prioritizing resource requests now gives increased attention to funding proposals that are linked to *Strategic Master Plan* goals with insufficient progress (i.e., goals marked as yellow or red on the *Strategic Master Plan Dashboard*). As a result, 83% of the top-ranked resource requests reviewed in 2014-2015 were linked to goals with insufficient progress. In other words, when the college falls behind in meeting its goals, the new resource allocation process ensures that those lagging goals receive higher priority for funding.
- For academic programs, the *Annual Program Plan Data Packets* (with additional *Program Learning Outcomes Supplement*) have been redesigned to include disaggregated data for student achievement and student learning, as well as program-set standards. To make these data packets more accessible, the Office of Institutional Effectiveness has flagged the specific metrics that exhibit an equity gap or that fall below the standard. This extra step of highlighting metrics is a creative way to reduce cognitive load for faculty and to focus dialog on the flagged metrics.

- For Student Services and Administrative Services annual planning, a new "Secret Shopper" program has been established to provide in-depth feedback that is more relevant and user-friendly than traditional survey data for staff who have student contact. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness works directly with all staff members of each office with student contact to come up with secret shopper scenarios, and it then reviews the feedback in an all-staff department meeting to ensure that the feedback is discussed and understood. For more information, see *Secret Shopper Program Description* and *Secret Shopper Results - Financial Aid* at <http://rpgroup.org/content/2016-rp-group-awards>.

Resources:

- Find the *Decision Making and Planning Handbook*, *Strategic Master Plan Dashboard*, *Annual Program Plan Data Packets*, *Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Supplement*, *Secret Shopper Program Description*, and *Secret Shopper Results - Financial Aid* at <http://rpgroup.org/content/2016-rp-group-awards>.

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